



After Carter's Camp David "miracle" —

Middle East peace hoax unravels



After 13 days of closed-door wrangling with Egyptian president Anwar Sadat and Israeli prime minister Menachem Begin, Jimmy Carter suddenly announced on Sunday, 17 September, that the tri-lateral summit meeting on the Middle East held at Camp David had resulted in a far-reaching "framework for peace". Amid much hugging, hand clapping and laughing between Sadat and Begin, Carter staged a theatrical televised ceremony where he outlined two pacts said to represent a dramatic breakthrough: peace was at hand for the Middle East, possibly within a matter of months.

Jimmy Carter was the hero of the day. While Begin hailed the "Jimmy Carter Conference", Sadat praised the racist peanut baron for being "most courageous". The modest Carter merely praised the Lord: "The prayers we asked for ... have been answered far beyond our expectations". But in a few days, the religious euphoria started wearing off. The reactionary feudal monarchies in Jordan and Saudi Arabia, whose support is key to a credible imperialist "peace" settlement, responded coolly. Carter immediately dispatched his secretary of state, Cyrus Vance, to the Middle East. But Vance returned home empty-handed.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) declared: "There will be no peace in the Middle East without the PLO" -- as much imploring Carter as threatening him. And PLO head Yassir Arafat denounced Carter's "dirty deal" as he headed off for Damascus for a summit of the five "hard-line" states, the "Front for Steadfastness and Confrontation" (Syria, Iraq, Libya, Algeria, Yemen), whose "steadfastness" is inversely proportional to their distance from Israel. The conference ended in a decision to cut off all remaining political and economic ties with Egypt (hardly noteworthy, since Egypt had cut ties with them ten months earlier) and a scarcely veiled plea to the Egyptian military by Syrian butcher Assad to stage a coup against the "traitor" Sadat. Then Assad went off to have his own "briefing" with Vance.

Indeed, while Sadat is hardly a traitor to the Palestinian and Egyptian masses, whose ruthless enemy he has always been, he did do the dirty on his Arab ruling-class colleagues. Sadat made major concessions -- agreeing to a separate peace settlement and to the presence of Israeli military forces in the Sinai up to three years after the treaty is signed -- in return for no hard commitments from the Zionists. Egyptian foreign minister Mohammed Ibrahim Kamel resigned in protest even before the agreement had been announced, foreshadowing mounting criticism Sadat is certain to face at home.

The ink was hardly dry when Begin made it clear to American Jewish audiences how little had actually been resolved by the two pacts: Jerusalem was "not negotiable"; the "ban" on new Zionist settlements in the West Bank was only a three-month freeze; even the question of vacating the thirteen settlements in the Sinai would have

to await a debate in the Knesset (parliament). "Scotch tape", ran the 22 September *Sydney Morning Herald* editorial's headline as it soberly observed: "It now seems clear that ... the Camp David formulas were so loosely drawn as to be, in some vital areas, virtually meaningless".

In the "framework" for an Egyptian/Israeli peace treaty Begin agreed to negotiate a phased troop withdrawal from the Sinai that would ultimately restore the Sinai to full Egyptian sovereignty. After two weeks, the Knesset finally gave its overwhelming approval (despite opposition from die-hards in Begin's own right-wing Likud coalition) to

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Top: Begin, Sadat, Carter at Camp David -- butchers embrace. Above: Zionist "peace" -- West Bank Palestinians being brutalised.

Bosses' darling heads ALP in NSW election

"He's not really a Labor man darling, he's a Liberal" -- so goes the comment a gossipy article in the *Australian* claims can be frequently heard in bourgeois circles about the NSW Labor premier, Neville Wran. In the approaching 7 October state election the ALP stands to gain strongly, riding Wran's unprecedented personal popularity and the wave of popular anger against the Liberal federal government's budget. But the political difference between Wran and his bungling Liberal/Country Party opponents is so slight that the election campaign has been uncommonly bland. Its most remarkable feature is the clear support for the Labor leader within the capitalist class.

The week before the snap election was announced on 12 September, the state budget of the ALP treasurer, Jack Renshaw, met with general bourgeois applause. The *Financial Review* (7 September) summed up the bosses' satisfaction with their current chief servant in the NSW government: "Perhaps the major virtue of Mr Wran's Budget and his government over the past couple of years is that they have been so careful not to rock the boat".

As for the Liberal/Country Party opposition and its unfortunate leader, establishment reactionary Peter Coleman, they are a constant source

of embarrassment to their big-business backers. The Liberal Party's attempts to paint the government as soft on crime and drugs have fallen flat or backfired; its demagogic promises of tax cuts, in the face of its federal leader's whole policy, lack all credibility. Neville Wran, at home in "high society", dominating both parliament and his own party with considerable political agility and panache -- the very image of sober "good management" conservatism -- has driven the Liberals from their own accustomed terrain.

A record no Liberal need be ashamed of

Indeed, no Liberal could be ashamed of the Wran government's record of zealous defence of property, law and order and all things dear to the ruling class. Preferring a course of "responsible economic management" to what he termed the "helter-skelter years of the Federal Labor Government", Wran has made a virtue of doing practically nothing for the workers and oppressed, even compared to Whitlam. At least Whitlam brought in Medibank -- Wran's equivalent is a slight cut in bus fares and a "reform" of the upper house which not only leaves this undemocratic relic intact but provides for its

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NSW elections ...

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members to face election only once every nine years! As minister for police Wran presided over the recent brutal mass arrests of gay-rights marchers. Earlier this year he defended Special Branch spying on leftists and trade unionists: "that is what a police force is for" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 January). Well might Queensland's reactionary premier, Bjelke-Petersen, label him a "mild-mannered conservative"!

To prisoners' just demands against slave-labour conditions, a refreshed Wran just back from a fashionable Lord Howe Island holiday snorted, "The prisons are not meant to be holiday camps [or] ... luxury hotels". Holiday camps! Even the eminently "respectable" Mr Justice Nagle in his report on the prison system spoke of "a regime which has now been revealed in all its horror and brutality". "Our man Wran" sent police against the Fairfax printing workers' picket lines in 1976 and threatened Newcastle shipyard workers with the sack in 1978. 26 September, in the midst of this election campaign, found Wran's minister for education and Liberal Coleman baying in unison for wholesale scabbing on a 24-hour teachers strike.

CPA, SWP - Wran's small-time allies

With an ALP leadership as rottenly right wing as Wran's, even the normally ALP-loyal "left" opportunists of the Communist Party (CPA) and Socialist Workers Party (SWP) might be expected to denounce Wran, however hypocritically. But let no one think that the CPA and SWP, both standing candidates in the elections, are running against the ALP -- they are more sycophantic than ever. The CPA scarcely mentions Wran at all, urging voters to "hit the Libs twice -- vote Communist, return Labor". And the SWP's *Direct Action* explains with great tact, "A vote for the SWP ... would allow voters to indicate to the ALP

leaders the kind of fighting socialist policies needed to defeat the Liberals". (Leave aside the fact that the SWP's "fighting socialist policies" amount to no more than a collection of left-sounding reforms, all carefully framed to be "realistic" for a NSW state parliamentary government; couldn't this objective just as well be served by having voters send Wran a letter?)

"The return of a Labor government", swears *Direct Action* (14 September), "... is essential if the coalition parties' offensive ... is to be turned back". Like the Labor government which is telling NSW teachers to bite the bullet? No! A general strike to bring down the Fraser government and force new elections, to put the ALP in power and drive a wedge between the ALP tops and their working-class base was essential against Fraser's austerity budget. But the SWP opposed this course, willing to let the ALP leaders off the hook as the parliamentary machine creaks along for another two years.

Following the gay-rights arrests, *Direct Action* (31 August) offered Wran some unsolicited advice on how to clean up his act and better deceive the oppressed: "If the Wran government wants to be seen as a government of the workers and the oppressed, rather than a government of big business, it will have to grant the demand: Drop the charges!" This does not even rise to the level of parliamentary cretinism. By whom (outside the SWP) would the Wran government be seen as a "government of workers and the oppressed"? If Wran wanted to appear "left", he could go the SWP's advice a good deal better -- like nationalise a few industries and shorten the workweek. But he would still head no more than a government of big business! *A Labor parliamentary government can never be a real workers government, and it is a lie and an illusion to say it can be!* What the oppressed need is not a better-disguised dictatorship of capital but the dictatorship of the proletariat -- the only genuine workers government. The existing state machinery, whose parliamentary facade is so much decorative tinsel, must be smashed through the

guidance of a revolutionary workers party, in order that the workers take state power into their own hands through direct organs of workers rule.

The ALP is the strategic obstacle to the creation of such a party; it binds the working masses to bourgeois parliamentarism. For Leninists, critical electoral support to the ALP is a tactic in our struggle to remove this obstacle by setting the base against the top, splitting the most conscious layers of the working class away from the Wrans, Haydens and Urens. At present this task is served by keeping the ALP in office, where the contradiction between the pro-capitalist leadership and the revolutionary interests of the ranks can be more easily unmasked. If the ALP has yet to hang itself, then let it have more rope! But part of its value as a tactic lies in the fact that critical support can be withdrawn as necessary. It would have been a betrayal of the working class to support Curtin's ALP -- as the SWP would have done -- while it was running the imperialist war effort in the 1940s.

We warn that the class traitor Wran, committed to preserving capitalist rule, is capable of launching savage attacks on the proletariat if that is demanded by his capitalist masters. The timid "left wing" in the ALP, which has scarcely uttered a squeak of protest against Wran's policies, is not one whit better. We call for a vote to Labor on 7 October not to give credence to Wran and company, but as part of the struggle to expose them and destroy their credibility within the working class.

Wedded to the ALP but lacking its mass base in the working class, the CPA and SWP deserve no support. We have no intention of building illusions in these left-talking minions of Wran where none already exist. No votes to the SWP and CPA! Vote Labor! Oust the Labor misleaders, both "left" and right! For a revolutionary leadership of the workers movement! For a workers government based on workers organisations! ■

SWP closes election rally to Trotskyists

On Friday, 15 September, several members and supporters of the Spartacist League (SL) were excluded from a Socialist Workers Party (SWP) election rally in Sydney. In barring our comrades, SWP leading member Jamie Doughney spuriously explained that attendance was "by invitation only". Not only had the rally been publicly advertised in *Direct Action*, but one person allowed to enter stated in the presence of Doughney and the SL supporters that he had not been invited either! So much for the SWP's honesty.

For two-and-a-half years, from April 1974 to November 1976, the SWP maintained an explicit, open policy of banning SL supporters from its *Direct Action* forums. Only when the SWP was compelled to carry out a joint campaign with the SL against gangsterism and other violations of workers democracy by the Healyite Socialist Labour League did it decide the ban against the SL had become too embarrassing to continue. Now its cravenly opportunist appetites lead it to exclude revolutionary Trotskyists from its public events once again. A letter by the SL to the SWP condemning the recent exclusion concluded:

"But this slavish imitation of ALP bureaucracy will not work, for we will not be silenced. We demand that you repudiate last Friday's exclusion. For workers democracy!"

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letters

Comrades,

A reading of your excellent article on the Port Kembla Wharf Labourers Strike [*ASP* no 57, September 1978] discloses a minor error of fact. You refer to the Workers Party as denouncing the settlement of the dispute in February 1939. In fact, in June 1938, the Workers Party of Australia fused with the Independent Communist League to form the Communist League of Australia (CLA). The *Militant*, previously the "organ of the Workers Party of Australia" continued publication as the "organ of the Communist League of Australia New South Wales Branch".

The *Militant* of 3 December 1938, announcing a forthcoming conference of the CLA for 6 January 1939, raised, as the most important question facing the conference, the question of formal affiliation with the recently founded Fourth International. Subsequently, in the February 1939 issue of the *Militant*, it is reported that two groups had split from the CLA, one of which rejected "in toto" the application of the Transitional Programme and "the organisational principle of democratic centralism" while the other tried to amend them so as to completely alter their meaning. The report goes on to describe the CLA as "a delimited organisation with membership conditional on acceptance of the programme and statutes of the Fourth International".

I hope that you can continue this important work of revealing and applying the true history of the Trotskyist movement.

Yours fraternally,
J Hird

ASP replies: We thank comrade Hird for his informative letter. It is indeed an important task in the construction of a Trotskyist vanguard nucleus in this country to pursue a serious study of the early history of the Australian Trotskyist movement, a task to which, albeit with modest resources, we have committed ourselves.

* * *

Comrades,

I read with some concern your article on the recent strike by SRC staff at Sydney University, and the scabbing by known "leftists". The hysterical and dishonest construction put on one SLer's remarks about the fate of scabs on the U.S. coalfields must be strongly denounced by all socialists. I am not a member of the SL, and my outrage does not flow merely from a need to defend the SL, but the implication of such charges are clear: first the SL is set up for "investigation" by the police and other forces of "law and order" with the result that a dangerous precedent is established for intervention by the

bourgeois state in the workers' movement. As an active trade unionist I can only feel contempt for such actions by alleged "leftists".

One does not need to be a member of the SL to know of its long history of strict adherence to the Trotskyist position on violence against opponents in the workers movement. Of all political groups on the left of which I am aware the SL has most consistently denounced such violence, even when committed against their most strident "leftist" enemies. In this context the "death threat" smear rings very hollow indeed.

None of this is to deny, however, that scabs such as Ramjan and Nicholls must be destroyed -- politically destroyed through the exposure of their political programme and practise for the frauds that they are.

Fraternally,
Ken Reid

Free Corrado Alunni

Corrado Alunni, a reputed leader of the Italian anarcho-Maoist, urban guerrilla Red Brigades, was arrested in Milan early in September and jailed following a farcical "trial" on arms possession charges. The Italian bourgeois state now plans to stage a spectacular show trial of captured Red Brigades members featuring Alunni as the alleged "mastermind" of the kidnapping/execution of former Christian Democrat Prime Minister Aldo Moro last May. The Red Brigades strategy of individual terrorism -- of which the Moro kidnapping was the most dramatic example -- is stupid and counterproductive, writing off the proletariat as a conscious revolutionary force. It is directly counterposed to the Trotskyist program of mobilising the working-class masses to overthrow the decaying Italian capitalist order. But however futile the Red Brigades terrorist actions, they are directed against the class enemy. The refusal of the pseudo-left in Italy and internationally to defend the Red Brigades against the capitalist state is a scandalous capitulation to the bourgeois "anti-terrorist" hysteria. Free Corrado Alunni and all the jailed Red Brigades members!

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Thursday: 5.30 to 9.30 pm
Saturday: 12 noon to 5 pm

Revolutionary literature

Scab "left", right wing squabble over SRC spoils Sydney Uni — cops off campus!

Two months after Student Representative Council (SRC) elections at Sydney University in which notorious right winger Tony Abbott beat out the "Broad Left" slate to win the SRC presidency, this elite institution was the stage for a comic-opera version of a Banana Republic coup d'etat. Within a matter of days nearly a dozen leaflets inundated the campus, as the right appealed to the cops to restore "order", the "left" appealed to the courts to impose "justice", and both sides appealed to "constitutional legitimacy".

On Friday, 22 September, president-elect Abbott, claiming that the outgoing "left" SRC officers had been undemocratically denying him the fruits of his election victory, stormed into the SRC office to demand that everybody clear out of "his property". Broad Left SRC acting president Gary Nicholls accused Abbott of ignoring SRC constitutional procedure, which specified that election results had to be published in two issues of the student paper, *Honi Soit*, before they could take effect. Abbott called the cops. When the cops arrived, Abbott presented a letter from the administration certifying him as president; Nicholls presented a letter from outgoing Broad Left SRC president Barbara Ramjan certifying him as acting president. The cops left in confusion.

The following day Abbott, accompanied by university administrators and his offsidiers, had the locks changed. That night the locks were re-changed. Sunday morning Abbott changed the locks yet again and decided to camp in. The "left" accused Abbott of removing SRC files; Abbott charged that files were already missing. On the Monday a fracas developed between Abbott's occu-

demanded "that the administration keep out of student affairs" and that the SRC "affirm the strongest opposition to cops, courts, administration interference in student affairs, demanding instead student-staff-worker control of the universities!"

Broad Left scabs "defend" SRC workers

Not only did Abbott call the cops and administration into SRC affairs, but he reportedly also threatened to sack the SRC's paid staff (who were later finally granted their longstanding demand for job permanency on 29 September). But two months earlier, when the SRC workers staged a three-hour strike demanding permanency, it was not Abbott who scabbed on them then -- it was Nicholls and Ramjan. For two months, Sydney University had been polarised by the Spartacist Club's exposure of Nicholls and Ramjan as scabs: the entire reformist left at Sydney Uni had been thrown into disarray; the Broad Left had split; Nicholls' Communist Group (CG) and the fake-Trotskyist Socialist Youth Alliance (SYA) had been provoked into an explicit defence of scabbing. Communist Party (CPA) member Nicholls and his cohorts in the Broad Left must have welcomed the opportunity afforded by Abbott's manoeuvres to try to revive their credentials as "fighters against the right".

Now Nicholls attacked Abbott for threatening to sack the workers. But less than three weeks earlier (in a leaflet dated 7 September) Nicholls and Ramjan had "defended" themselves against the SRC workers' condemnation of their scabbery by denouncing the strikers as dupes who had been "fed such a line by the Spartacists and some [!] members of the International Socialists". Shades of Fraser and Murdoch: strikers who become indignant at scabs must have been "fed a line" by some sinister "outsiders"! And these particular strikers were practically NCC infiltrators -- after all, they were striking against a "union" (the SRC!). "What a gift to all the forces of reaction", said the scabs responding to the Spartacist Club's argument against scabbing, "just plant some union employees, engineer a strike and smash a union".

Initially, it had been an SYA supporter, Liam Gash, who reportedly moved that Nicholls and Ramjan be expelled from the Broad Left. And SYA supporters John Adamson and Steve King seconded a motion put to an AUS regional council meeting in Melbourne by AUS delegate and LaTrobe Spartacist Club member Neil Florrimell condemning the scabbing and demanding Nicholls' recall from the AUS executive. But class principle was not about to stand in the way of tailing the CPA for these "Trotskyists". Five weeks after the elections, eight weeks after the scabbing incident, the SYA finally broke its public silence to "explain [!] the truth" (*Resistance*, "Say no to slander and intimidation", undated).

The SYA's lawyers' brief for Nicholls/Ramjan defines scabbing exclusively as "doing someone else's job to break their strike". The SYA thus spits upon the bitterly fought principle of industrial unionism -- "one out, all out!" The journo who crossed the printers' picket lines to go to work during the 1976 Fairfax strike were, in the SYA's eyes, not scabbing. But the printers saw them as scabs, and so would any class-conscious unionist. *Scabbing is keeping a struck enterprise working!* The "tradition" of craft unionism, particularly rife in Australia, to which the SYA appeals is a tradition of backwardness and treachery which allows picket lines to be crossed and strikes broken on the basis of craft divisions (not "doing someone else's job"), which reinforces crippling divisions within the working class and represents a formidable barrier to proletarian class consciousness.

Do bureaucrats have the "right" to scab?

But what does it all matter since for these "Trotskyists" union officers, "as officials of fighting organisations of the oppressed", have the right to scab on their striking staff:

"Would the Spartacists deny the right of elected officers of a workers' union to keep their union running during a strike by its unelected employees? Many situations can [be] envisaged where these officials would have to do typists' jobs and so forth to keep their union functioning during a crisis. Union officers and staff often have to work long hours, with low pay, to win a strike, for example."

What a tatty collection of red herrings! The SRC was not waging a strike. The SRC is not a "fighting organisation of the oppressed". Nicholls and Ramjan are not "union officials" -- they are a couple of small-time student parliamentarians. To be consistent the SYA would now have to designate right winger Abbott as a "union official" and member of the workers movement ... *against whom SRC employees should not strike!*



Harry Bridges crossing union employees' picket line, 1975.

But even in the case of genuine trade unions, staff must have the right to strike. And in fact the present-day trade-union officialdom consists of pro-capitalist bureaucrats who work their longest hours to prevent or sell out strikes, who treat their union staff even more arrogantly than they treat their own ranks! When "progressive" Harry Bridges, the former US wharfies bureaucrat, broke a strike by his staff in 1975, when CPA Builders Labourers "militant" Joe Owens worked in his office during a staff strike in 1974, they were no more defending the interests of their memberships than when they order their own union ranks to cross picket lines. Only within the narrow framework of reformism does the question of setting the interests of one group of workers against those of another arise. And when was the last time one of these situations "envisaged" by the SYA -- where a staff strike crippled a union in the midst of a struggle -- occurred? Even in those rare concrete cases of reactionary strikes, class-conscious workers and union officers would not simply walk through a picket line but dismantle it, disorganising the strike from within. Picket lines are battle lines in the class war -- they must not be crossed even when genuinely obstructive to workers interests.

"The only group putting a class line"

Not all of the Broad Left openly excused scabbing. A month after the election, fourteen members of the Nicholls/Ramjan fan club -- including two who had recently joined the workerist International Socialists (IS) -- finally "realised" that "class politics must come first", as their "discussion document" was titled. Their major complaint was not the scabbing, but: "... because they [the Spartacists] were the only group putting a class line, many leftists were forced to support them electorally despite their fundamental opposition to the Spartacist [sic]

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Direct Action says "No to Scabs!" while SWP/SYA defends scabbing at Sydney Uni. Shaw's letter to the Battler (18 August). For the IS class principle is a laughing matter.

pying forces and "left-wing" students seeking to gain entrance to the office. Abbott called the cops on campus again! Four of Abbott's opponents in turn threatened to prefer assault charges against him and Nicholls filed for an injunction against Abbott in the Equity Court. The court of course went with Abbott, ruling that he had indeed been president the past seven weeks. In the meantime the administration decided to lock everybody out, shutting down the SRC office entirely for several days.

The cops had invaded the campus. The administration had brazenly interfered in student affairs. During the upsurge against the war in Vietnam university administrations across Australia quaked in fear at the prospect of a student uproar should they intervene in student affairs or bring the cops onto the grounds. In 1972 when the cops invaded Sydney University campus to arrest anarchist draft resister Mike Matteson hundreds of students surrounded them to rescue him. But so wretched is the current reformist "left" that they have ignored the sinister police intervention; instead they were content to condemn Abbott (at a 27 September SRC meeting) for "disregard for the SRC Constitution!"

The Spartacist Club, campus supporters of the Spartacist League (SL), condemned Abbott too -- for "calling cops onto the campus". A *Campus Spartacist* (27 September) demanded "that Abbott be recalled and that there be immediate new elections! No cops on campus!" While the Broad Left attempted to "fight" administration interference through court interference, our comrades

Responsibility for election comment in this issue is taken by Marie Hotschilt, 112 Goulburn Street, Sydney, NSW.

DEBATE

What is the Soviet Union? Where is it going?

SPEAKERS: Albert Langer
of the Movement for Independence
and Socialism
versus

David Grumont
for the Spartacist League

Time: 1 pm, Thursday, 12 October

Place: Undercroft Lecture Theatre, LaTrobe University

A LaTrobe SRC Public Affairs Committee Seminar

Reformists balk at embarrassing Wran

For union action to defend gay rights now!

As among the first of the 104 gay-rights marchers rounded up by NSW police three weeks earlier appeared at Sydney Central Court on 22 September, twenty picketers were present outside the court to demand: "Drop the charges!" The picket was called by the Drop the Charges Committee (DCC), a united front initiated by the Spartacist League (SL). It represented one of the few militant defence activities organised since the current anti-homosexual rampage by Labor premier Neville Wran's cops began three

Alone on the left, the Spartacist League has fought for an effective united-front mobilisation which would seek to take the struggle against the cop attacks beyond the narrow confines of the "gay ghetto". This was the perspective that three months ago the CPA, joined by the workerist International Socialists (IS) and the SWP, destroyed when they subordinated the united-front Defend the Sixty Committee initiated by the SL to the gay-sectoralist Gay Solidarity Group (GSG) -- in order to politically drive out the SL and confine the "defence" to the "gay community". Now GSG spokesman Jeff McCarthy declares (at a 16 September public defence meeting): "We have to break out of our parochial ghetto and forge links with other movements of social protest, especially the trade unions". But it is the GSG which stays in the ghetto and eschews union support. It refused even to endorse, much less participate in, the current defence committee until three weeks after its formation.

The IS and SWP participate in the DCC, but with a degree of seriousness indicated by their "mobilisations" for the 22 September picket: respectively one and three supporters! At a

"Wran's police". Another SWPer, Richard Wilson, explained why: he wanted Wran to win, and such formulations could only serve to "embarrass" the premier!

Far from offering homosexual radicals a communist perspective against gay oppression, the SWP offers a "gay movement" perspective against communism. A position paper for the Fourth National Homosexual Conference (Sydney, 27-28 August) refuses to so much as *implicitly* identify with Lenin's Third International as against the degenerated Second International and instead implicitly attacks the Bolshevik government of Lenin and Trotsky for allowing homosexual oppression to be "neglected" and thus paving the way for later Stalinist repression. It bemoans the "unfortunate and regrettable", "sad errors" of Marx and Engels, painting them as hopeless anti-gay chauvinists. But the pre-war German Social Democracy, built under Engels' direct political guidance, with its impeccable record in defence of women and homosexuals was carrying out in practice the real program of Marx and Engels! Lauding such "socialists" as Oscar Wilde and the Fabians, the SWP *meritically* describes support by US homosexuals "for a progressive candidate in the 1948 election" -- the "progressive" was none other than *bourgeois* candidate Henry Wallace, denied even the most critical support by the then-Trotskyist US SWP. Need it be said? Engels and Lenin were *not* male chauvinists; the Bolshevik government did *not* neglect homosexual oppression -- and in fact carried out the most sweeping reforms yet seen; and the SWP, which panders to the most disgusting anti-communist prejudices to be found among petty-bourgeois gay-lifestyle radicals, is *not* Trotskyist!



Sydney, 19 September: picket in defence of arrested gay-rights marchers outside Wran's opening election rally. A Sp photo

months ago, when a brutal police charge on the 24 June Sydney "Gay Mardi Gras" resulted in 53 arrests. The victimisations went virtually unchallenged, and the number continued to mount -- first to 60, then to 74, finally with the arrests of 27 August to the current total of 178.

Significantly, the DCC has also made some attempts to seek support in the broader labour movement. The NSW state secretary of the Printing and Kindred Industries Union (PKIU) and a number of other PKIU officials, as well as the father of the chapel at Fairfax, endorsed a DCC statement condemning the attacks and demanding that all charges be dropped, as has one state ALP MLA, George Petersen. Both the Kings Cross and Surry Hills ALP branches and the NSW Young Labor Association have taken similar stands, and a motion to condemn the arrests, donate \$50 to the DCC and demand "full democratic rights for homosexuals" was narrowly defeated at the 12 September Petersham branch meeting of the Amalgamated Metal Workers (AMWSU).

The powerful AMWSU could with one sweep through industrial action put a stop to the Wran government's persecution of the gay-rights marchers. Four years ago Builders Labourers (BLF) banned a building site at Macquarie University to defend a gay student against discrimination. Only by drawing in the active support of the ranks of the ALP and the trade unions can this campaign avoid an isolating defeat which would lay the basis for further attacks on homosexual rights, emboldening the cops -- yes, even under the stewardship of a Labor premier -- to strike out at the *central* target of the bosses' state: the workers. The same cops who break up gay-rights marches also break up strike pickets! An injury to one is an injury to all!

"Educating" Wran to support gay rights?

But for the trade-union bureaucracy, anything which might embarrass Wran on the eve of the upcoming 7 October election is taboo, and the "left" reformists trail along behind, fundamentally no less loyal to this right-wing social-democratic government. Wallowing in defeatist despair that nothing can be done, they in fact do nothing. The Communist Party (CPA), whose membership includes a significant number of AMWSU officials, counsels an "educational campaign". The fake-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) wants a "Labor government that supports gay rights" (as an SWP placard at a small 19 September anti-Wran protest read). In fact, the "lefts" act only to ensure the victory of a Labor government that supports more of the same. By covering for Wran now simply to get him elected, they allow his coming election victory to become a mandate for "poofter-bashing".

28 September GSG meeting the SWP even argued against the necessity for coordinated action with the DCC on an upcoming GSG demonstration. The IS prattles about building gay-trade-union caucuses and enthuses over the "militant" Builders Labourers for Democratic Control (BLDC). But it was the SL which proposed (with unanimous approval in the DCC) that the militant Qantas job-site be asked to call a protest stopwork on the morning of the court picket. And the IS member mandated to contact the BLDC job delegates at Qantas simply shrugged it off and *did nothing*, fearing to expose the fact that if the BLDC "militants" had been approached, *they* would have done nothing.

SWP: lauding Fabians, denouncing Engels

The SWP has devoted the bulk of its energies to building the innocuous 16 September public meeting (which it billed as a "speak-out"). Its cavalier attitude to the defence campaign has been demonstrated by a series of small atrocities which could only discredit the DCC, such as advertising Patrick White as a speaker for the "speak-out" in the name of the DCC -- without consulting either White or the DCC! Horrified at alienating any ALP tops, SWPer Ken Davies even falsified the DCC endorsement statement he was circulating by scratching out a reference to

Victory against campus witchhunt in US

A victory against bourgeois repression on US university campuses was scored two months ago when the Chicago Circuit Court formally dropped charges of criminal trespassing brought by the University of Illinois Chicago Circle (UICC) against Sandor John, a member of the Spartacus Youth League (SYL -- youth section of the Spartacist League/US). Almost a year earlier the UICC administration had "permanently banned" our comrade from the campus for being an "outside agitator" and later ordered his arrest for defying their undemocratic, anti-communist dictate. Particularly in the wake of the McCarthyite "red scare" in the 1950s, university administrations have traditionally relied on rules barring non-student "outsiders" (primarily labour organisers and civil-rights and antiwar activists) in order to suppress labour and radical activities.

The SYL organised a vigorous, militant defence campaign, initiating a united-front Ad Hoc Committee to Stop Administration Harassment, and emphasising that John's arrest was an attack on basic democratic rights aimed at

the entire left. Indeed, shortly afterwards the administration ordered the arrest of Iranian anti-shah demonstrators, many of whom if deported face imprisonment and death at the hands of the shah's torturers.

"There are 'outsiders' who don't belong on this campus", said John, "They are the cops, whose job is to harass leftists, students and campus workers.... It is the administration and the Board of Trustees". The administration's attempt to silence the SYL backfired: the "outside agitator" case became a focus of significant media and public attention. This limited victory must now serve as a precedent to drive back all attempts to victimise left-wing student activists. But no court victory can change, however slightly, the racist, class-biased system of American "justice", to whose revolutionary destruction the young cadre of the SYL are dedicated.



Sandor John.

Down with Somoza — for a constituent assembly!

Nicaragua in flames

As the rubble smoulders in the seven cities and towns which rose up against the tyrant Somoza, the Nicaraguan people are burying their dead. The mercenary National Guard once again swaggers through the streets of Leon, Masaya and Matagalpa, but the obese dictator is still sweating in his air-conditioned concrete bunker in the capital. For if the pistol shots from the street barricades subsided for the moment, a nation-wide work stoppage continued unabated, its effectiveness due to near unanimous support from the local bourgeoisie as well as the workers.

As the insurrectionists return to the shadows, the Sandinista Liberation Front (FSLN) launched a second operation, an attempt to establish a "liberated zone" along the southern border with Costa Rica. And in the population hatred grows into cold fury against a rotting dynasty which in its death agony feeds on the blood of the youth in order to gain a few more weeks to line Miami bank accounts. The hours are numbered for "Tacho" Somoza, "president" and owner of Nicaragua, *caudillo* (boss) by the grace of the US Marines.

"The dictatorship of the flies", Pablo Neruda called it in his *Canto General*, "Trujillo flies, Tacho flies ... flies dripping with the thickened blood of the downtrodden, intoxicated flies buzzing over the people's graves ... learned flies skilled in tyranny". For 34 years Somoza, Inc has ruled this belt of the Central American isthmus as its private domain. Now the time is up for these parasitic insects.



Young Sandinistas man barricade in Matagalpa.

In spite of all the sacrifices and days of heroic struggle, the Nicaraguan working people will not become their own masters without a bitter political fight against the last-minute "allies" of the "democratic" businessmen and ranchers. Until yesterday they were the underpinning of the corrupt regime, and today their courage extends only far enough to send their teenage sons and daughters into battle. Tomorrow they hope to "reestablish" the country under the auspices of the Organization of American States (OAS), Truman's colonial ministry now turned into Jimmy Carter's overseer of "human rights" south of the Rio Grande.

The populist Sandinista Front is doing its best to ensure a "smooth transition". It sponsored the so-called "Group of Twelve", a blue-ribbon committee of anti-Somoza businessmen, Maryknoll Fathers, lawyers and technicians, formed last October, which calls for a provisional government dominated by bourgeois liberals, with only a minor role for the FSLN. And at the height of the uprising last week the Front gave its approval to a negotiating commission composed of a lawyer from the Group of Twelve, a businessman from the bourgeois opposition coalition UDEL (Democratic Union for Liberation) and a conservative industrialist supported by the State Department.

Nevertheless, for the past month the Nicaraguan masses have been fighting it out, guns in hand, with Somoza's praetorian guard. And in Washington the Carter administration seems paralysed with indecision over which horse to back, fearing that whatever it does the US will be denounced for "outside interference". State Department liberals are worried that the longer Somoza holds on the greater the chances will be for a "second Cuba". The spectre of Cuba is in fact so omnipresent that the Nicaraguan bour-

geoisie would not have made an alliance with the FSLN without the firmest guarantees.

But with armed workers in the streets the conditions are there for another Santo Domingo, where a mass "constitutional" movement against military rule threatened to escape the control of its bourgeois leaders. Trujillo, another CIA-backed dictator who had become an albatross, was removed by his masters in Washington with an assassin's bullet. The significance of the current uprising in Nicaragua is that it could be the first time in almost two decades that a Latin American despot is toppled by popular revolt. That prospect is unsettling both to US imperialism and its client strongmen throughout the region (particularly the military regimes next door in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras).

Carter praises Somoza's "human rights advances"

The beginning of the end for the Somoza family can be traced to the aftermath of a December 1972 earthquake which destroyed the capital, Managua, leaving 14,000 dead and 300,000 homeless. An international relief effort raised millions of dollars; but meanwhile the Somoza family was using the calamity to eliminate business competitors and grab the lion's share of the aid.

The second key event was the assassination of UDEL leader Pedro Joaquin Chamorro last January. With all of Jimmy Carter's "human rights" propaganda the local bourgeoisie figured they had a

green light from Washington and called a work stoppage that brought business to a standstill for two weeks. However, the State Department was not yet ready to flick its little finger and adopted a "hands-off" posture (an absurdity in a country where absolutely everything has always been done following instructions or signals from the US). And at the end of July the liberal opposition was dismayed by publication of a letter by Carter to Somoza praising alleged "human rights advances" in Nicaragua.

The dominant sector of the FSLN as well as the Broad Opposition Front (FAO), a body including everyone from conservative landowners to the Moscow-Stalinist Nicaraguan Socialist Party, had been banking on a move by Washington to ease out Somoza. So following Carter's letter the Nicaraguan opposition decided it would have to go it alone, or at least step up the heat. The Sandinistas' answer was a daring attack on the National Congress, a puppet body composed overwhelmingly of Somoza toadies. But instead of storming the palace where his few remaining cohorts were being held, Somoza was forced to allow the commandos to fly to Panama along with 59 released prisoners.

Somoza's capitulation was universally taken as a sign that the dictator's grip was weakening. Thus the kidnapping of the Congress was quickly followed by another national work stoppage, called by the FAO, which began the very next day (August 25). And in Matagalpa, the third largest city in the country, open revolt broke out as teenagers led by Sandinista guerrillas (and armed by the local populace) set up barricades. The sniping battle lasted until September 7, when the FSLN broke into a leading radio station and broadcast an appeal for a general armed uprising.

Immediately the cities of Masaya and Leon and four other towns (Esteli, Diriamba, Chinandega



Placard at anti-Somoza protest in US.

and Penas Blancas) fell into rebel hands. Somoza referred to a "Tet offensive" by the Sandinistas, slapped censorship on the opposition press (later extended to foreign reporters) and called up reserve troops.

After more than a week of bloody fighting, the National Guard was able to reoccupy the center of Leon, the second largest city. Journalists described a horrifying scene:

"A woman crying hysterically yelled, 'Tell your readers what a bunch of sons of whores the National Guard are. They are nothing but killers.... They are killing the youth of our town'...."

"About every 50 feet were swarms of flies buzzing over small scorched areas where the Red Cross had burned bodies to prevent outbreaks of disease...."

"The bodies of unidentified guerrillas were buried right in the dirt they had left at street intersections where they ripped up paving blocks to build barricades, residents said...." (UPI dispatch, 17 September)

In Nicaragua everyone can understand the urgent necessity of dismembering the existing state apparatus, which can only be an instrument of brutal repression of the masses.

For a Central American Workers Republic

After the events of the last month, even if the bourgeois opposition manages to remove Somoza through the "good offices" of Jimmy Carter, a smooth transition to a stable capitalist democracy is highly unlikely. But it is necessary that revolutionaries put forward demands which exacerbate the fundamental class divisions and thus frustrate efforts to "reform" the dictatorship or impose a bourgeois provisional government. Naturally Marxists would unite in action on the barricades with the populist petty-bourgeois FSLN and even with the bourgeois anti-Somoza opposition against the present bloody dictatorship. But we would at all costs fight for the *political independence* of the working class from all capitalist and pro-capitalist forces.

As Trotskyists we fight for the *class* program of the international proletariat. This includes numerous revolutionary democratic demands directed against autocratic and bonapartist rule. Thus we demand not a negotiated pact with liberal capitalist forces but a democratic *constituent*

Continued on page six

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Middle East ...

Continued from page one

the Sinai settlements plan, in large measure a recognition of the war-weariness of the Israeli masses. Recent demonstrations numbering in the thousands have been staged in Israel demanding concessions on the settlements.

While an Israeli/Egyptian settlement is not entirely inconceivable, the Camp David pact dealing with the West Bank and Gaza Strip is simply a truncated version of Begin's absurd 26-point plan. It does not even address the central issue of Palestinian self-determination (even in the deformed form of a mini-state). It projects a five-year "transition period" during which Israeli occupation forces will make the transition from the streets to their garrisons, while the Jordanian army, the butchers of the Palestinians during the "Black September" uprising, will be encouraged to join in maintaining "security".

Only after an Israeli/Jordanian treaty has been signed would certain unspecified "representatives" of the West Bank Arabs be permitted to express their opinion on the settlement. Not only the PLO but all Palestinians living outside the West Bank and Gaza, including the more than one million Palestinians who comprise the majority of the Jordanian population, would simply be excluded from this settlement.

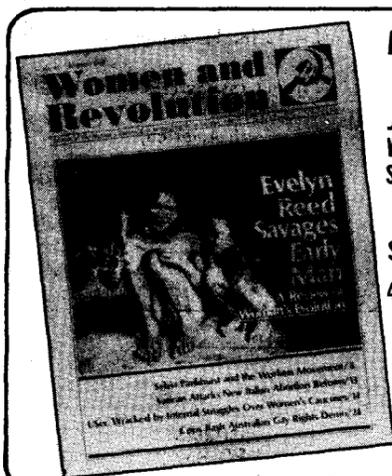
Regardless of whether the "framework" pacts lead to further summit meetings, Camp David clearly signified that US imperialism is moving ever closer to direct military presence in the Middle East as every one of its exercises in "shuttle diplomacy" or protracted talkathons ends in failure.

Even before the Camp David summit was convened Carter, faced with the intransigence of Begin, hinted that the US would consider introducing US military forces into the occupied territories if Israel, which has long been falsely regarded as simply a puppet of Washington by virtually the entire fake left, didn't make concessions. While the Camp David pacts do not mention possible US intervention, the Sinai accord explicitly stipulates that in return for Israeli withdrawal from two air bases in the Sinai the US would build two air bases in the Negev desert of Israel. No doubt these bases would be a cover for US military personnel.

In addition the Camp David pacts allow for the introduction of more United Nations "peace-keeping" forces to implement any treaties negotiated. But experiences since the Korean War have shown that such UN "peace-keeping" forces intervene to safeguard and advance the interests of imperialism. What kind of "peace" would result in the Middle East can be judged by the role of the UN forces in Cyprus, in the Sinai before

Free socialist militants in Brazilian jails!

On 22 August, Brazilian police rounded up 22 left-wing activists after a public meeting of the Socialist Convergence group in Sao Paulo. The 22 were originally charged with violating Brazil's draconian National Security Law banning "subversive" political parties. Amongst those arrested were two Argentinian socialists, Nahuel Moreno and his companion Rita Strasberg, who were threatened with deportation back to the torture chambers of the Videla regime in Argentina. Nahuel Moreno is a longtime self-proclaimed Trotskyist, head of the Bolshevik Tendency of the United Secretariat as well as the exiled leader of the Argentine Socialist Workers Party (PST). After an international campaign of protest the Brazilian military dictatorship was forced to free Moreno and Strasberg. But as we go to press eight of the Brazilian militants seized in the round-up remain in jail at the mercy of Brazil's infamous uniformed *esquadras da morte* (death squads). Those left in jail must not be forgotten! Release the imprisoned Brazilian militants! Drop all the charges against the Socialist Convergence activists!



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the 1967 war and on the Golan Heights and in southern Lebanon today.

Imperialist military presence, either directly by the US or through border guards for Israel, dressed in UN fatigues, not only represents a continuation of the brutal national oppression of the Palestinian masses and serves to stabilise the rickety regimes in Jordan and Israel: more significantly, it would qualitatively escalate the dangers of a direct US/USSR military confrontation in the Middle East. If the USSR were to respond to such an American provocation in kind, "human rights" Carter might very likely place the Pentagon on nuclear alert, as Nixon did during the 1973 war in response to the threatened Soviet intervention in the Sinai. Thus, not far behind any US/UN military intervention into the Middle East is the threat of a third world war.

The duty of the international workers movement is clear. It must oppose any imperialist military intervention in the Middle East, whether in the form of Marines who landed in Lebanon in 1958, CIA operatives working hand-in-hand with the Israeli army in the Sinai or the UN "peace-keeping" forces who have proved their mettle from the Congo to southern Lebanon. Peace will come to the Middle East only when the Sadats, the Begins and the Assads are overthrown by the revolutionary struggles of the Arab and Hebrew workers and poor peasants. Only in the framework of a soviet federation of the Middle East can a just solution to the legitimate national demands of the Palestinian Arabs be ensured while guaranteeing the national rights of the Hebrews. ■ (adapted from Workers Vanguard no 215, 22 September 1978)

Nicaragua ...

Continued from page five

assembly, which could give free expression to the will of the population after decades of silence enforced by the rifle butts of Somoza's hired guns. We also call for *smashing the National Guard* and the formation of a *people's militia based on the workers and peasants organizations*. That is the only way to guarantee against new massacres by these guard dogs of capital.

The proletariat does not follow the maxim of "forgive and forget", of which the priests and other treacherous advocates of "social peace" are so fond. So we call for *people's tribunals* to punish the criminals of the Somoza regime, tribunals staffed not by learned jurists but by the poor who were the victims of the tyranny. We call for *expropriation of the properties of the Somoza family and its accomplices*, but Marxists do not stop there. We must destroy the social bases and the imperialist domination which will give rise to new Somozas. Thus communists demand an *agrarian revolution*, distribution of the latifundia to the peasants who work the land, and *expropriation of the industry and commerce* of those who profited while the workers and peasants suffered under the yoke of the despot.

The accomplishment of such revolutionary aims requires breaking the political coalition with the "democratic" exploiters and the establishment of a *workers and peasants government* -- based on the democratic rule of soviets, not on nationalistic bureaucracies as in Cuba, Russia or China. And this requires above all the leadership not of the petty-bourgeois nationalist FSLN but of a *Trotskyist party* fighting for a *Central American Workers Republic* in a *Socialist United States of Latin America*.

Only with such a transitional program can the long-suffering working people of Nicaragua ensure that the "Tacho flies" are not replaced with another tyranny, cloaked in phrases of "human rights" but armed by the same Pentagon. The overthrow of the Somoza dynasty by a popular revolt would be a cause for rejoicing and a spur to revolutionary action throughout the Americas. The Sandinistas' efforts to achieve a negotiated solution are today the main obstacle, possibly leading to civil war as today's "democratic opposition" seeks to repress the armed masses. Don't stop now! ■

(abridged from Workers Vanguard no 215, 22 September 1978)

Iran ...

Continued from page eight

allegedly organizing plots against the shah. In the ranks, US reporters interviewed soldiers and non-commissioned officers who swore to commit suicide rather than fire upon civilians. It appears that on the 8th, some of these men were faithful to their word, and in at least one incident turned their guns on their commanding officer.

There remains one last resort for defending the shahanshah -- the same one that restored him to power in 1953, has stocked his arsenal with

billions of dollars of weapons and which has been his international press agent: the United States, the shah's godfather. No sooner were the bodies cold than Carter telephoned the shah to reaffirm the "close and friendly relationship" between Iran and US imperialism and to congratulate his client about the "progress" made in "liberalizing".

The American bourgeois press immediately sent up a chorus in praise of the shah and his "modernization" and "liberalization". Unanimously, in near-identical editorials, the *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Los Angeles Times* and other leading "molders of (bourgeois) public opinion" called for unambiguous US support for the Peacock Throne. Once again they explained that the Iranian workers and peasants "needed" the strong hand of a murdering despot. With all of the viciousness that a capitalist with an endangered bank account can muster, the *Wall Street Journal* (13 September) complained that "the Shah until now has been attempting to conciliate rather than crush what is obviously deep-seated unrest in Iran".

There are already more than 35,000 US military personnel in Iran. Secretary of Defense Brown is now discussing "the possible 'dispatch of appropriate U.S. forces to the scene'" and "100,000 U.S. troops are being trained for possible intervention in the Gulf" (*Los Angeles Times*, 17 August). US intervention -- no doubt to "save American lives" as in Santo Domingo in 1965 -- is a real possibility.

Carter's "human rights" demagoguery stands exposed as a cynical cover for propping up the Pahlavis' blood-stained rule. Instead of hat-in-hand pleas to Carter to honor his "promises" and timid protest telegrams to the shah, the situation cries out for the American left and labor movement to fight to free all victims of the shah's white terror, boycott arms shipments to Iran through trade-union action and demand a halt to all US aid to the shah!

No to Islamic reaction

But what is the political basis of the current opposition to the shah? It is not proletarian socialism. It is not even the bourgeois liberalism of Mossadegh, although liberals and leftists can be found in the movement -- and even apologizing for the Muslim preachers. No, fundamentally the current mass mobilizations against the Pahlavi family are under the ideological sway of Muslim fundamentalists whose idea of a golden age is the expansion of Islam by fire and sword in the seventh century AD.

The hold of the mullahs over the Iranian masses is on the basis of a petty-bourgeois populist ideology, represented in its most radical form by Khomeini, who calls for the confiscation of the "immorally" gained wealth of the rich. The lavish ostentation of the decadent, corrupt, jet-setting Imperial Court renders this Islamic puritanism all the more appealing to the Iranian masses. This reactionary "anti-imperialism" virulently hates all aspects of Western culture which erode traditional Islamic society. The core of the mullahs' social support is thus the traditional middle classes -- merchants and artisans, the small stratum of wealthy peasants and certain backward sections of the proletariat such as casual construction laborers.

The victory of a reactionary movement of Muslim traditionalism will represent a far-reaching historical *defeat* for communists, who seek a revolutionary emancipation from semi-feudal backwardness. The religious opposition stands on the heritage of the Middle Ages, opposed even to the paltry social advances for women in past decades.

Thus in the Muslim holy city of Qom, Shariatmadari's stronghold, every female over the age of four must wear the *chador*, the black cloak/veil which is the symbol of centuries of brutal oppression of women by Islamic society. As for Khomeini, he states, "We wish to liberate women from the corruption that is menacing them" (*Le Monde*, 6 May). His followers exposed the real meaning of this delicate phrase when they chanted "Death or the Veil" in the streets of Tabriz in February.

Placing themselves in the tradition of the Islamic religious leaders in the 1906 revolution against the monarchy, when they fought for a constitution and a parliament, Khomeini and Shariatmadari can pose as the champions of democratic rights against the shah's tyranny. Do not be fooled! Numerous cases of dictatorial Muslim states masked by forms of parliamentary democracy can be found, including Pakistan, Malaysia and Indonesia.

More importantly, the Muslim religious leaders' "democracy" does not extend to communists. Khomeini has ordered his followers not to

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engage in any collaboration with leftists against the shah. Shariatmadari opposes the legalization of the Tudeh party, as it would be contrary to the laws of Islam. Furthermore, at every key point in recent Iranian history (1906, 1946, 1953) there are many examples of anti-monarchical and "anti-imperialist" religious figures who returned to the side of the Peacock Throne because of their fear of the left and the plebeian masses.

Now that medievalist Muslims are calling for the overthrow of the shah in the streets of Iran, the cowardly reformists of the Socialist Workers Party [SWP; US co-thinkers of Australian SWP] have finally raised the slogan "Down With the Shah". The SWP believes that the mullahs' "anti-imperialism" and the call for parliamentary "democracy" have an inherently revolutionary thrust. But the SWP is confronted with the dilemma of reconciling its uncritical support to the Muslim preachers with its pose as the "best fighters" against the oppression of women. Once again these social democrats resorted to the "SWP school of falsification" by running a picture of the Teheran march, proclaiming that "Women played a prominent role in the September 4 protests" (*Militant*, 22 September). The caption fails to mention that every one of the women is swathed in a veil!

Furthermore, the entire Iranian left also trails behind the Muslim leaders. The Tudeh party accuses the shah of "pretending to respect the fundamental principles of Islam and ... taking demagogic measures ..." (*Le Monde*, 1 September). Their program goes no further than the confiscation of the property of the royal family. And what of the Maoist and guerrillaist groups which vehemently denounce Tudeh's reformism? They too speak only of the "progressive religious leaders", echoed by their supporters in the various wings of the Iranian Students Association [ISA]. A particularly grotesque example was a leaflet issued by the Federation of Iranian Students and the Southern California ISA, which allied itself with Khomeini by attacking "corrupt pornographic culture".

The Iranian left thus marches on the road to suicide. An Iranian Islamic "republic" would have numerous precedents for a campaign to exterminate the left, from Libya to Pakistan to Indonesia where the army, aided by fanatical Muslim students, slaughtered more than half a million leftist, worker and peasant militants. Whatever their "anti-imperialist" trappings, not one of the states which swear by the Koran has abolished capitalism or imperialist domination.

The hundreds of thousands who are now marching behind the mullahs are by no means all Muslim fundamentalists. Many are primarily motivated by hostility to the real crimes of the shah. Many leftist workers have probably joined what they view as a potentially successful opposition to the hated regime. But the masses, particularly the workers, who are now supporting the Khomeinis and Shariatmadaris can and must be won away from the present Islamic reactionary offensive in favor of a *social revolutionary* opposition to the shah.

For workers revolution in Iran

The Iranian proletariat has not always been simple foot soldiers of the ulema. After the reigning shah's father was deposed by the Allies in 1942, the new government's authority was minimal, with Russian forces occupying northwestern Iran and British troops in the south. But class war erupted across the country. The city of Isfahan, in central Iran, saw three general strikes and one lockout between 1942 and 1946. As a result of the lockout the starving workers occupied the granaries and factories and had to be suppressed by armed tribesmen.

In parts of the north, the Central Council of

the Trade Unions of Iran, organized by the Tudeh party, and its workers militia held sole administrative and judicial authority, collecting taxes, issuing travel permits, etc. Factories were taken over in Mazandaran, and armed strikers clashed with troops in the streets of Teheran. A bloody struggle was waged against the British oil companies in the southwestern province of Khuzistan. The working class, although armed and independently organized, lacked the revolutionary vanguard party which could lead them to victory. The Tudeh broke the 1946 oil strike in return for three cabinet positions. Again and again the Stalinists betrayed the struggles of the Iranian masses on behalf of the diplomatic maneuvers of the Kremlin bureaucracy.

Today Iran's working class has just begun to re-enter the battle. Throughout the 1960s a number of militant but scattered strikes were waged, but the veterans of the struggles of the 1940s and 1950s had been largely decimated and a new generation of proletarians had flowed into the factories from the villages. Under the leadership of a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party this proletariat, which confronts the vicious repression of the shah's dictatorship in its struggle for the most elementary demands, can bring into play its social power at the head of the other oppressed strata of Iranian society.

The Moscow and Peking Stalinists' support to the Muslim religious leaders serves only to tie the Iranian masses to treacherous class enemies. In contrast, revolutionary Trotskyism advances a program which can rip sections of the petty bourgeoisie away from its Islamic leadership: Smash the butcher shah with workers revolution! For a revolutionary democratic constituent assembly based on universal suffrage! Smash SAVAK! Land to the tiller! Only the victorious proletariat can guarantee these demands by sweeping away the social bases of the Pahlavi autocracy and of the ulema's religious obscurantism -- thus breaking Iran from imperialist domination. For a workers and peasants government! ■

(abridged from *Workers Vanguard* no 215, 22 September 1978)

Sydney Uni ...

Continued from page three

position and political practice".

But why was the Spartacist Club the "only group putting a class line"? Why didn't these fourteen put a class line ... and split from the Broad Left when it first endorsed the scabbing? Because their politics are fundamentally no different from the politics that led Nicholls and Ramjan to scab in the first place; that led the Broad Left to cover up for the scabbing for weeks; that led them all to ignore the intrusion of the cops onto the Sydney Uni campus. Because they all "fundamentally oppose" the politics of the class struggle.

Even a month after the elections, only six of the fourteen (including the two ISers) could bring themselves to split from this scab formation. And even then, not one repudiated their previous support to the Broad Left. They split not from the Broad Left's politics, but only from a particular, grossly discredited action, and only when there was nothing to be lost by splitting. For the IS such behaviour is the norm. These workerists are quite prepared to talk about "class politics" -- when it is not too unpopular. Their guideline is not a principled communist program but a workerist reflection of rank-and-file consciousness. It was easy for the IS to "oppose" the scabbing -- the SRC secretaries themselves condemned it! But throughout the elections the IS was to be found in the pro-scab Broad Left, on the wrong side of the class line it claimed to recognise.

The IS' politics are no different from the rest of the Broad Left. In a letter to the *Battler* (19 August) IS member David Shaw, referring to a recent Sydney hotel strike, complains:

"Not only were the pubs open during the strike but they were full of left-wingers buying beer from the strike-breakers.

"When I chipped some Communist Party and I.S. members, all they could do was laugh or make weak excuses....

"It's time a few of us woke up."

But for the IS all working-class principles are a laughing matter. What does Shaw spend his wide-awake hours doing? Imploring the Fraser government's Arbitration Court to bring the bosses' "democracy" into the Builders Labourers Federation. Since the BLF "rank-and-file militants" whom the IS tails don't draw the class line on the question of state intervention into the labour movement, neither does the IS! But such opportunism is no less pernicious or unprincipled than open scabbing.

As even the reformists recognise, there is one -- and only one -- group at Sydney University that puts a class line, that does not shrink from the opportunists' epithet of "sectarian" when de-

fence of the interests of the working class dictate momentary unpopularity. Only the Spartacist League sees beyond narrow student electoral contests, posing to students the fundamental class questions which tear this society apart; and sees beyond the small-change clique fights over SRC positions to recognise the danger posed by the bourgeois state. Only the Spartacist League is based on the Trotskyist program, the program of proletarian revolution. ■

Free Fawzi Khalid !

On 7 September, Fawzi Khalid Ali, a Palestinian-born Australian citizen, was seized by Israeli cops while visiting his family in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Since then he has been held incommunicado, with no charges laid against him and denied access to friends or lawyers. A well-known member of the United Palestinian Workers in Melbourne and a long-time member of the Tramways Union, Fawzi Khalid must be rescued from the clutches of the notorious torturers of the Shin Beth (Israeli secret police). The Israeli garrison state routinely deals out imprisonment, torture and even murder both to Palestinians in the occupied territories and its own citizens deemed to hold "dangerous views". But in arresting Fawzi Khalid -- as with Israel's recent imprisonment of two US citizens, Sami Esmail and Terry Fleener -- the supremely arrogant Zionist regime goes further still, trumpeting its "right" to punish anyone, anywhere in the world, for the crime of "anti-Israeli thoughts". The entire left and labour movement must mobilise in support of the demand: Free Fawzi Khalid NOW!

Victory to New York press strike!

For seven weeks pressmen at the New York Times, New York Post and Daily News, New York's biggest daily newspapers, have been on strike against the employers' attempt to slash press manning levels in half, force through drastic redundancies and smash hard won conditions. The rest of the industry's nine unions, including the Newspaper Guild (journalists), have respected the pressmen's picket lines, shutting down all three papers.

Heading up the newspaper barons' drive to smash the strike is Rupert Murdoch, head of the New York Publishers Association and publisher of the New York Post. Murdoch is bankrolling a joint publishers' scab paper, the Metro, which many fear he intends to continue as a scab operation after the strike ends. Murdoch has imported 20 Australian journalists -- obviously intending to use them as a scab force -- who answered Murdoch's call despite the concern of their union, the Australian Journalists Association (AJA). With nine craft unions in the industry, there is a long history of the employers setting one craft against another -- the strategy successfully employed by the Washington Post in a strike two years ago, and one Murdoch and company no doubt hope to exploit again.

Murdoch is testing out the strikebreaking weapons he will later turn on the Printing and Kindred Industries Union and AJA in Australia. Murdoch's Australian employees must actively support their striking brothers in New York. If the Australian journo presently in New York do any work for Murdoch while the strike is in progress, the AJA must immediately expel them. Stopwork meetings and other actions must be held here in support of the strike. Victory to the New York City newspaper strike!

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Imperial troops in review.



Anti-shah marchers carrying banner of exiled mullah Khomeini.

Down with the Shah! Down with the Mullahs!

Turmoil in Iran

For proletarian revolution, not Islamic reaction

On September 8, this summer's uninterrupted wave of massive protests against the brutal Iranian monarchy reached a grisly climax when the shah's Royal Guard poured machine gun fire into the ranks of an anti-government demonstration in Teheran. At least a thousand protesters were slaughtered in the greatest single massacre in decades. The London *Guardian's* Teheran correspondent, Liz Thurgood, gave this eyewitness account:

"In a brutal display of military force, troops and small tanks opened fire at 9.20 a.m. yesterday in Madan Jaleh [Jaleh Square] at a spot where between 5,000 and 10,000 young people had gathered for a peaceful demonstration against the Shah. Men, women, and young children, many splattered with blood, ran screaming, 'They're killing us, they're killing us'." (*Guardian*, 9 September)

According to other reports, tanks moved in from the corners of the square, crushing corpses and wounded alike. Hundreds of wounded swamped the hospitals, where many died because the supply of doctors and medical supplies was inadequate for the number of victims. Many more, fearing the likelihood of arrest at the hospitals, were treated by makeshift medical teams in the homes of sympathizers.

Scandalously, in the middle of this popular turmoil directed against the shah, Chinese Communist Party leader and prime minister Hua Kuo-feng winged into Teheran to demonstrate his solidarity with the hated Iranian dictator (see "Chairman Hua Embraces Butcher Shah", *Workers Vanguard* no 214, 8 September 1978). While riot police shot down demonstrators in the streets of Qom, Hua was given a 21-gun salute and conveyed to the Shahyad monument in the royal carriage to receive the keys to Teheran.

The shah has decided to drown the protests in blood. Not only have the demonstrations shown no sign of diminishing, but those of September 4 drew millions of participants throughout the country, and half a million or more in Teheran itself. The march was led by mullahs (preachers) reading from the Koran and banners called for the return of Ayatollah Khomeini, a Muslim religious leader exiled by the shah. Other banners signed by leftist guerrilla groups called for "U.S. out of Iran". But the dominant theme was set by the religious opposition.

The opposition shows no signs of being intimidated by the September 8 massacre. Only a short time ago, the self-proclaimed "light of the Aryans" boasted, "Nobody can overthrow me. I have the support of 700,000 troops, all the workers and most of the people.... I have the power" (*Los Angeles Times*, 17 August). Now the fragility of this mass murderer's rule is demonstrated for all to see. For the first time in 25 years (in 1953 a CIA-engineered coup overthrew

the bourgeois nationalist Mossadegh and restored the shah to his throne), the Imperial Palace is guarded by tanks.

Tension in Iran dramatically escalated after a fire killed nearly 400 people trapped inside a movie theater in the southern city of Abadan on August 19. The government immediately declared that the fire was the work of anti-shah arsonists, and claimed to have uncovered a plot by communist school teachers who turned their classes into sabotage rings. Nothing more has been heard of this obvious frame-up.

It is not impossible that the arson was the work of Muslim fundamentalists -- in the recent period, banks, restaurants, night clubs and liquor stores or breweries have been attacked or bombed by anti-shah protesters. In most cases the attacks were clearly based on the Koran's prohibition on interest-taking and against alcohol, or a more general opposition to "decadent" Western culture.

But there is much circumstantial evidence suggesting that the Abadan fire was in fact a government provocation. Despite Abadan's ultra-modern fire-fighting system, fire engines arrived at the scene (100 yards from the police station) only after three hours, one of them with an empty water tank. Abadan's police chief initially claimed that the arsonists had used incendiary bombs, but retracted the statement when it was pointed out that these bombs were in the hands of the police and army.

The "liberalization" fraud

On August 27, the shah announced a number of concessions designed to appease the Muslim fundamentalists and bourgeois liberals. Prime Minister Amuzegar resigned and was replaced by Sharif-Emami. The shah's "Imperial" calendar which began with the ancient Persian empire was replaced by the traditional Muslim calendar, and the new prime minister closed the casinos and other gambling spots. The post of women's affairs was abolished, and General Ayadi, a member of the Bahai sect, long hated by Iran's Shi'ite Muslims, resigned.

More important than these alleged proofs of the shah's devotion to Allah was the announcement that freedom of press, speech and assembly would be guaranteed to "legitimate" political parties (the pro-Moscow Stalinist Tudeh Party and other leftist groups continued to be banned). Free elections were promised for the summer of 1979. Within a day after this announcement 14 political parties had surfaced, testifying to the diversity of political currents which has so far been suppressed by the shah's autocratic rule.

While some of the "moderate" opposition politicians and the religious opposition led by Ayatollah Shariatmadari, were willing to test Sharif-Emami's sincerity, both the bourgeois liberals and religious opposition continued to demand

the dissolution of the Majlis ["parliament"] and the holding of new elections. Ayatollah Khomeini who, unlike Shariatmadari, calls for the overthrow of the shah, denounced the "liberalization" from exile in Iraq as a "plot to deceive the Muslim people and derail their movement". Certain of the liberals demanded the abolition of the shah's secret police, SAVAK.

End of the "Iranian spring"

But whether the concessions were the result of fright or a calculated maneuver, it soon became clear that they were meaningless. Two hundred and thirty imprisoned Muslim leaders remained in jail. The reactionary hard-liner General Abbas Garabaghi, head of the National Gendarmerie, became Minister of the Interior.

The "Iranian Spring" was soon seen as the act of a regime that had been weakened, yet was clearly unreformable. The stage was set for the demonstrations of September 4. The capital had been the scene of a week of almost continuous streetfighting, but the crowds demonstrating on the 4th were able to fraternize with the soldiers. Shouting, "Soldiers, you are from us", and "Why do you kill your brothers?" they showered the troops with flowers. From before dawn until late at night, the demonstrations remained unmolested, and Teheran took on a carnival atmosphere.

Four days later more than 1000 protesters lay dead in the street. The "Iranian Spring" lasted no more than 11 days.

When the "progressive", "modernizing" rhetoric of the "White Revolution" is stripped away what remains is but a brutal military dictatorship. And the shahanshah ["king of kings"] now faces the possibility that his only bulwark against the white-hot fury of the Iranian masses is eroding around him. At the top of the military machine both a major general and a leading official of the SAVAK were executed in the last year for

Continued on page six



In midst of massacre, Chairman Hua toasts shah's health.