



## Iran: No to the veil!

"We will fight the veil", chanted thousands of women as they marched for hours in a driving snowstorm in Teheran on March 8. They had come from International Women's Day meetings at Teheran University and from government offices where they were turned away from their jobs because they wore Western-style clothes. They were joined by women and men until tens of thousands of demonstrators -- defiant in blue jeans, smoking cigarettes -- shouted words never before heard in the streets of Iran: "Down with Khomeini!" And for the first time since the reactionary mullahs swept into power, a mass demonstration was answered with bullets. As the Islamic marshals opened fire to disperse the demonstration, women hit the ground and took cover behind parked cars and buildings.

The rude awakening has begun. And we welcome its first stirrings, the first open crack in the fatal illusions in a "democratic Islam". To the women who chanted, "In the dawn of freedom, there is an absence of freedom", we say: you have not yet seen the dawn. But it is a source of hope that some Iranians have begun to perceive the nightmare which the mullahs are already making reality for the masses.

Sections of the population most immediately hit by the Islamic reaction are shocked, confused, angry. With terrible and perhaps tragic irony, many of the women who today gathered in protest at the office of Prime Minister Bazargan chanting, "Bazargan, do not forget we not want the *chador*", had yesterday donned the veil claiming it was a "symbol of resistance" to the shah. In that costume, they helped bring the entire country under the leadership of the mosque and turban. One organiser of the women's demonstrations remarked bitterly: "We fought for freedom with the men. None of us knew freedom would come with chains" (*New York Times*, 9 March). Why didn't they know? Who told them that, having put on the *chador* for the Islamic revolution, it would be easy to take it off when the mullahs came to power? It was the opportunist left which said political fashions could change so easily; it was certainly not the mullahs.

### Hail the protests for women's rights!

Khomeini's "Islamic Revolution" necessarily makes women one of its special targets. Even the miserable token liberalising under the shah was more than these fundamentalists could stand. They have always been determined to make the veil -- and the subjugation and seclusion of women for which it stands -- the law of the land. The consolidation of their rule depends on it.

The first of the women's protests began in response to



others knifed and beaten.

On 12 March the demonstrations took place under the protection of the leftist Fedayeen guerrillas, who ringed the protesters, machine guns in hand. UPI estimated that 20,000 women jammed Freedom Square, defended by the Fedayeen from the continuing knife and stone attacks of Khomeini supporters.

But despite the increasing militancy of the demonstrators and their courageous defence by the Fedayeen, the protests remained isolated. Khomeini can call millions into the streets. It is a relatively small stratum of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois women, feminists and the left who made up the bulk of the protesters. The young militant textile workers who took on the shah's troops and SAVAK in their heroic strike battles have not yet been seen.

Bourgeois feminists are claiming the embattled women of Iran as their own. "Iran right now is the heart of our struggle", said American feminist Kate Millett in Teheran (*Newsday*, 8 March), before she was expelled from the country by the government on 19 March. But those who anticipate a reformist feminist ascension in Iran are not living in this world. There is no room on the Iranian social spectrum

## Down with the Islamic republic! For workers revolution!

Khomeini's pronouncement: "Sin may not be committed in Islamic ministries". The "sin" was the refusal to wear the stifling head-to-foot *chador* without which they are "naked": "Women should not be naked at work in these ministries ... they must be clothed according to religious standards", said the ayatollah (*New York Times*, 9 March). True to his promises to bring the state in line with the Koran, Khomeini had the Family Protection Act of 1975 revoked. Thus the women in the streets were protesting against the re-institution of the old Muslim laws which allow polygamy and by which women are deprived of the right of divorce while a man can get a divorce simply by filing for one with any notary public. Coeducation has been abolished while the aged reactionary rages that Iran's colleges have become "centres of prostitution". Abortion has been banned. At least 300 women are threatened with expulsion from Iran for the "crime" of marriage to non-Muslims. And public floggings for adultery have begun.

Immediately threatened by the Islamic reactionaries, the women's rights protests continued on a daily basis following 8 March. On 10 March they escalated as nurses, high school teachers and employees of some government ministries walked off their jobs. Nearly 15,000 women staged a three-hour sit-in at Teheran's major mosque. Widespread rallies in Teheran were again assaulted by Khomeini's official and unofficial thugs. Fanatic Muslim women dressed in the *chador* reviled the "infidels", while faithful men jeered "whores" and brandished knives at the demonstrators. But this time more than insults were hurled; three women were shot and

for a "classless" feminist mass movement; the petty bourgeoisie, backbone of "classless" movements, is solidly, even fanatically, in Khomeini's camp. The women protesters of Iran must find common cause with a powerful proletarian movement or their militancy will be dissipated or crushed under the heel of clerical reaction. Only the proletariat can lead a victorious struggle for democratic rights in Iran.

### Defend the left, the women, the workers

The women's protests focused on legislative reforms under the shah, whose imperialist ambitions even led him to foster a bourgeois feminist movement as proof positive of his "modernisation" of Iran, importing Whitlam's former "Women's Affairs" advisor, Liz Reid. This has been used by the Islamic "revolutionaries" who intend to put down such "Western decadence". They are quick to point to the women in the demonstrations who wear furs or imported dresses, and even quicker to brand the demonstrators as "SAVAK", "American agents" and, more creatively, "Pahlavi Dolls".

While the token reforms (even the shah's) must be defended against Khomeini, they offer no real hope to the masses of Iranian women. The shah's "White Revolution" brought about only the most minimal, legalistic reforms amid the most brutal monarchist terror and oppression.

Millions of Iranian women remain imprisoned by home and family, hidden and debased behind the veil, imbued with backward religious piety. Their liberation will not become possible until

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# Iran...

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the proletariat takes centre stage in the fight against Islamic reaction.

## "You are weak, mister"

Consolidating an "Islamic Republic" means more than driving Westernised women back to the veil. A strong Islamic state needs a reliable army, cops and courts to enforce Allah's will on earth. The political basis for the Muslim theocracy is making itself brutally clear in the work of the mullah-organised "neighborhood committees" headed by Khomeini's secretive, sinister national "Islamic Revolutionary Committee" (Komiteh).

To begin to forge a reliable Muslim state apparatus, the mullahs must revamp the old armed forces and make them their own. Likewise, they must enforce the medieval Koranic code in the daily life of the people. Thus the Komiteh has executed many of the Shah's most notorious military and police butchers (and now they have begun executing his propagandists as well). Were the mullah-led revolution simply the "anti-Shah" movement advertised by the reformist left, that might be all we could expect from the Komiteh. But the main task of the Komiteh is to make the weight of the Islamic reaction felt among all "sinners".

So far 14 homosexuals have been executed for alleged "rapes". One of the alleged victims of these "rapes" was given 100 lashes with a leather whip. In a central Iranian city a man convicted of bank robbery was executed and another sentenced to amputation of his right hand. "Revolutionary" courts have flogged a man and woman charged with "promiscuity". Another court handed out lashes to seven men accused of gambling. And in the village of Astara a youth convicted of rape was sentenced to be stoned to death.

As the Islamic Republic becomes a reality, more and more non-Muslim and Westernised Iranians are looking to the prime minister of the provisional government, Mehdi Bazargan, to moderate Khomeini's repression. Faced with mass demonstrations and without a reliable army to crush the protesters, Khomeini still finds it necessary to maintain his ties with the bourgeois liberals and with his appointee Bazargan.

A "progressive" Muslim politician whose Islamic Liberation Movement comes out of the National Front coalition, Bazargan has accused Khomeini of excesses and undermining the authority of his government. At one point the prime minister went so far as to threaten to resign. But after a weekend retreat to the ayatollah's stronghold in the holy city of Qum, during which he was told by Khomeini that the "best interests of Allah" would not be served by his resignation, Bazargan knuckled under. "You are weak, mister" was Khomeini's message to the representative of Iranian bourgeois democracy. And the ayatollah spoke the truth. The sclerotic septuagenarians holding down cabinet portfolios in Teheran today are no more than figureheads.

The women demonstrators and Westernised petty-bourgeois democrats who appealed to Bazargan last month were encouraged when Khomeini apparently backed off, saying that the injunction to wear the *chador* was merely a religious "duty" and not a government order. But in the present context, when Khomeini is seeking to establish a theocratic regime in which Allah's word (as interpreted by Khomeini) is law, the distinction becomes ever more subtle. Whether one is stoned to death for dereliction of religious duty or for

defiance of governmental order makes little difference to the victim.

## SWP: they wanted Khomeini, they got him

Each new unfolding event, from Khomeini's campaign against leftist "Satanic traitors" to the marches for women's rights, proves the validity of our program and the utter bankruptcy of those who cheered Khomeini all the way to power, most vociferously the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). Unable to deal with events, the SWP has tried to simply ignore them. The 15 March *Direct Action* buried the massive International Women's Day anti-veil protests as a *five-sentence* "World News Note" in the back pages which did not even mention Khomeini. The following issue (23 March) sported the incredible banner headline: "Iranian revolution deepens"! Inside, a short report of the women's actions was relegated to the page-18 "Women in Revolt" column. Indeed, now that they are revolting against Khomeini, it is no longer possible for the SWP to avoid attacking him altogether.

However Cindy Jaquith, the US SWP's reporter in Teheran, opened a speaking tour on her return to the US by going out of her way to argue that Khomeini played a "progressive" role. While the ayatollah was thundering vows to crush the left and pro-Khomeini Islamic marshals were busting up meetings of the SWP's Iranian comrades, Jaquith gushed in New York on 4 March that "What you really have ... is the most classical example of a revolution that we have seen since the Russian Revolution".

Most outrageous of all, Jaquith defended the veil, the age-old symbol of feudal oppression, as a "symbol of resistance":

"The Shah used this women's liberation campaign in part to attack the religious hierarchy which was opposed to him.... But instead of saying 'women should not have to wear the veil -- this is a matter of free choice', he sent his cops in and tore the veil off women....

"Well, it's no wonder then that when the demonstrations [against the Shah] began, one way the women showed what they thought of his women's liberation program, his human rights program in general, was to put the veil back on. It became a symbol of protest."

So for the SWP wearing the veil is "a women's right to choose"! What would they have said about Kemal Ataturk, who really did do away with the veil in Turkey's bourgeois revolution: he violated the "democratic right" to be oppressed? Jaquith's remark speaks volumes about the SWP's "democratic" program for women's liberation. Consistent feminism means, "Put on the veil!"

At the same meeting the US SWP national secretary, Barry Sheppard, devoted much of his speaking time to an attack on the Spartacist tendency, in the process outlining an almost textbook version of the reformist two-stage theory of revolution:

"Revolutionists were with Khomeini and this revolution, were with the masses in the streets against the monarchy. Only counter-revolutionaries would stand aside from that fight.... You have to also know how to stand with whatever anti-imperialist measures Khomeini takes."

Straining to make a doubly false analogy to the Russian Revolution, Sheppard declared repeatedly that Khomeini was the Iranian Kerensky. Just as it was necessary to fight with Kerensky against the tsarist general Kornilov, he said, socialists must support Khomeini against the monarchy and back his "progressive steps". But Kerensky at least claimed to defend "democracy"; Khomeini denounces it as "Western", incompatible with his "Islamic republic"! He is not progressive relative to the Shah; and in any case, the Bolsheviks never made a political bloc with Kerensky as the SWP does with Khomeini.

To paint Khomeini's movement as "progressive", Sheppard denied that it was led by the mullahs ("That was a myth, they weren't leading it, they were part of it") and even tried to pretend that to "many workers -- when you say Islamic Republic, then you say you're for a workers and farmers republic"! And in response to a Spartacist League/US (SL/US) speaker from the floor, he explicitly defended Khomeini *in power*:

"To say that the new regime now is just as reactionary as the Shah -- I don't know what world you live in. That's counterrevolutionary. We would have been shooting at each other in Iran.

"... It broke the power of the capitalist state [!].... That can be rebuilt, of course. That's the next fight and the next stage of the revolution." (emphasis added)

Who is responsible for the fact that the Iranian masses see little distinction between Islam and Communism? Certainly not Khomeini, who has always taken great pains to draw the distinction; it was the left, none of which did anything to prepare the masses to fight against him. At no time prior to the fall of the Shah

did the SWP come out against Khomeini and today it continues to support his regime, "criticising" his "shortcomings" while defending his every "progressive step". If the terminology sounds uncannily Stalinist, so does the SWP's slander that either one supports the mullah-led Islamic movement or is objectively a "counterrevolutionary" agent of the Shah.

And what of the party that boasts it was "with Khomeini" even while his followers chanted "Death or the veil"? An SL/US speaker challenged Jaquith when she took her forum to Chicago on 10 March:

"Which SWP women will go to Iran and put on the *chador*? Let's see which SWP women will go to Iran and say that those women who say 'Down with Khomeini' are counterrevolutionary. What SWP woman will go to Iran and cheer while Khomeini's Islamic marshals execute male homosexuals? Where does the SWP stand?"

There was no answer.

## Defend the left, the women, the workers

The bourgeois-democratic heirs of Mossadeq in Khomeini's cabinet and even more moderate mullahs such as Ayatollah Taleghani of Teheran are embarrassed at the referendum scheduled for 30 March. On that date the Khomeini Komiteh is planning to hold a sham election in which the voters will be asked to cast either a red ballot signifying support for the deposed Shah's monarchy or a green ballot for Khomeini's "Islamic Republic". Not only is no choice allowed for any secular regime, each voter's name and address will be recorded on the ballot! It takes no great imagination to presume that such a rigged plebiscite held under the machine guns of the Muslim militia will register nearly unanimous "approval" of the mullahs' regime.

Illusions in the democratic character of the Khomeini-appointed provisional government extend even to the leftist Fedayeen guerrillas. While the Fedayeen still demand that they be allowed a voice in the councils of the Islamic revolution, they are also looking to the "progressive anti-imperialist" forces led by Bazargan to play their assigned role in the Fedayeen's Stalinist scheme of revolution by stages. The Fedayeen have warned Khomeini that an "unwanted civil war" might result if Bazargan's authority is not strengthened. But there will be no bourgeois-democratic stage of the Iranian revolution.

Khomeini has not yet been able to consolidate the power necessary to crush the non-Islamic opposition. From the Fedayeen to the women in the streets, every non-Islamic sector of society is under the gun of the Muslim fanatics. The Fedayeen's protection of the women's protests in Teheran is an encouraging sign that the basis for a united-front defence of the left, proletarian and secular democratic forces exists.

Revolutionaries in Iran would agitate for the formation of workers militias based on factory committees and trade-union organisations as the backbone of such a united front against the mullahs' rule. But while marching shoulder to shoulder with the Iranian left against Khomeini's terror, Trotskyists would seek to break the Fedayeen members and other potential revolutionary militants from their support to Khomeini.

## Why didn't they tell you so?

It is a special kind of hell for revolutionaries to be condemned -- even for the historical instant -- to witness great events without being able to influence them. We saw it coming in Iran ... and we said it straight. But our class in Iran was sealed off from even the simple political truth by the decades of class collaboration of the mass reformist parties and the continuing bottomless opportunism of the left.

What we did was fundamental for any organisation claiming a program that can lead the working class: we warned against Islamic reaction in power. We said what it would mean. The left in and out of Iran also said what it would mean: a step forward, they said, the democratic overthrow of the Shah, etc. In short they supported Khomeini -- some critically, most with veils.

Some of our opponents on the left were horrified that we spoke so harshly of the mullahs while it seemed everyone but US imperialism was following them into the mosque. Consider the

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Saturday: 12 noon to 5 pm

## Revolutionary literature

# Stop the witchhunt against 3CR!

In the middle of last year the front page of the *Bulletin* featured the figure of a hooded radio announcer clothed in commando-style battle jacket speaking into a microphone labelled "3CR". The headline read: "Melbourne's 3CR -- The voice of terrorism". Behind the manufactured photograph was an article by Sam Lipski, a leading Zionist. Introduced by the claim that 3CR "spews forth anti-Jewish propaganda and supports revolutionary causes", the article argued for "taking 3CR off the air or modifying the powers of its controllers".

Seven months later the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal announced an inquiry into charges by the Victorian Jewish Board of Deputies (VJBD) that 3CR has refused to allow Zionists the right of reply to the programs "Palestine Speaks", "Palestine Voice" and "Arab Liberation News". Paths to Peace (a left-Zionist organisation composed mainly of left-wing ALPers and Communist Party supporters also complained that it was refused membership in 3CR. Scheduled to begin hearings on 23 April, the inquiry's terms of reference are so broad that they make a mockery of freedom of the press: the station's broadcasting licence can be revoked, suspended or modified if 3CR is found to be "offensive" to the "Jewish community" of Victoria.

The real purpose of this inquiry has nothing to do with anti-Semitism. Nor is the Broadcasting Tribunal -- filled with former executives (or executives-in-training) of the media monopolies -- seriously interested in fighting racism on the airwaves. So flagrantly stacked is this "inquiry" that the tribunal chairman, Bruce Gyngell (himself a former television executive of the Packer syndicate, which owns the *Bulletin*), was forced to step down from the inquiry when it came out that he avowed last year he would "not be a party to licencing another 3CR" (*Financial Review*, 2 February). While "Community Radio" 3CR is based upon a federated membership of trade unions, ethnic groups, music groups etc, it is controlled by supporters of the pro-Peking Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) (CPA[ML]) through a multiplicity of "patriotic" front groups and "liberation" movements. What the VJBD finds "offensive" is the "extreme political orientation of 3CR" and the support to "international terrorism" by a "small band of Maoist fanatics".

This attempt to purge leftist and anti-Zionist views from the airwaves goes hand-in-hand with the recent shut-down of 3ZZ (a government-financed migrant "community access" station), the ending of ABC-radio comment shows "Broadband" and "Lateline" and the purge of social-democratic elements in the ABC. This anti-communist witch-hunt must be opposed as a dangerous attack on democratic rights and freedom of the press. *Down with the inquiry! Abolish the Broadcasting Tribunal! Stop the anti-communist witchhunt against 3CR!*

## "Community" radio 3CR: the voice of Peking

The red-baiting vendetta against the Maoist forces within 3CR has been facilitated by their own political hypocrisy. To evade the anti-communist discrimination of the government's licensing agency without a fight, they secured their broadcasting licence from the Whitlam government on the basis that they were only setting up an innocuous "community" radio station, albeit supposedly anti-racist, anti-sexist and pro-working-class. But while political parties are banned from affiliation it is an open secret that CPA[ML] supporters were in control. Thus the 3CR leadership somehow concluded that the Australia-China Society was sufficiently "community"-oriented to be a member, but the Australia-USSR Friendship Society was not! Broadcasts are liberally laced with derogatory references to the "two superpowers", with special venom naturally reserved for the Soviet Union, and news segments invariably announce some new incursion by "Soviet social-imperialism" into Australian life, complete with quotes from "the Australian weekly paper, *Vanguard*".

Not surprisingly, droning renditions of the latest communiqués of the Communist Parties of Malaya or Kampuchea do not rate very highly on the scale of what constitutes "good radio" among the bulk of 3CR's supporters. The station's main appeal has always been its petty-bourgeois cultural nationalism:

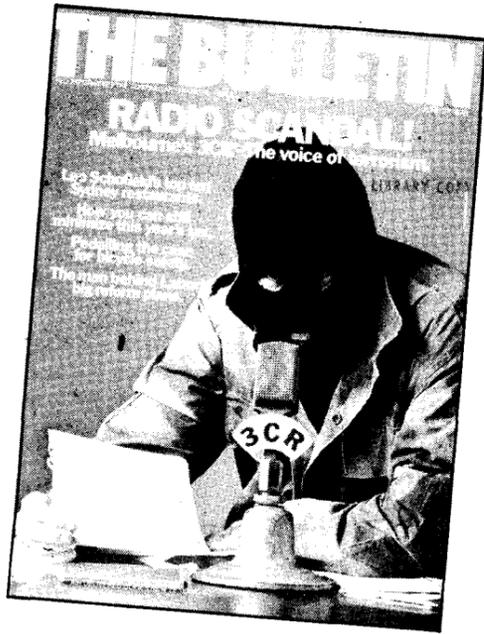
"[Australian children's] heads are full of yankee gangsters and Mickey Mouse. The es-

tablishment and growth of 3CR reflects the Australian people's growing determination to resist this cultural penetration and to create our own national identity." (3CR pamphlet, undated)

And so, taking up arms against MacDonalds' hamburgers, "yankee" music and Mickey Mouse, 3CR and the trendy petty-bourgeoisie of Melbourne's inner suburbs have waged a relentless battle for ... Henry Lawson poetry, Australian bush ballads and Blinky Bill. Such national-chauvinist drivel is typical of the "patriotic" CPA[ML]; but for them it is all subordinate to backing the twists and turns of the bureaucratic gang entrenched in Peking.

## Fighting forward and back: the balalaika war

The anti-communist witchhunt has brought to the surface an opposition within the station which threatens to relieve the Maoists of what has become their main political stronghold in Victoria aside from a handful of ageing union bureaucrats. In late January, an oppositional document appeared, entitled "Fight forward -- not back" (a jibe at last year's "Fightback campaign" by 3CR), signed by a large number of station workers and "listener-sponsors", including several leading members of the "gang of four"-Maoist Movement for Independence and Socialism. The document wanted "to ensure that no one group dominates the political life and



Packer's Bulletin leads off witchhunt against 3CR.

programming at 3CR", arguing that it "must be more than just a preaching machine". Station secretary Bevan Ramsden hit back with a circular attacking the "secretly concocted documents" of a clique within 3CR, linking them with the anti-3CR articles in the *Australian*.

On the following (11 February) Sunday night's "Palestine Speaks" program, announcers bitterly denounced "infiltrators" and "Zionist agents" within 3CR. But when the speaker announced that Ramsden's circular would be read over the air, the air waves were suddenly filled with the melodic strains of what sounded suspiciously like balalaikas. A coup by "Soviet social-imperialism", we thought.

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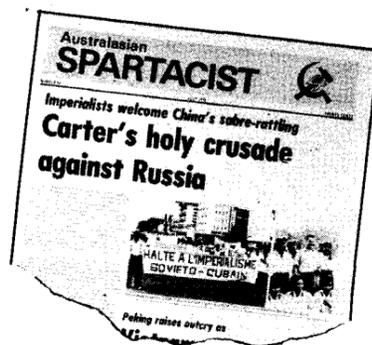


Following the success of last year's public subscription drive for Australasian Spartacist, the Spartacist League will be holding another this year from 17 April to 18 May.

Australasian Spartacist was begun five years ago to fight for the political ideas and principles of Trotskyism -- the contemporary expression of revolutionary Marxism, embodied uniquely in the international Spartacist tendency. This we have done consistently and intransigently.

As our regular readers already know, we are above all a militant, communist propaganda paper, applying the Marxist theoretical method and the historical experience of the class struggle to the major political questions facing the international workers movement today -- giving clear, truthful, programmatic answers. Australasian Spartacist is polemical, struggling as the Marxist movement has always done against those who seek to confuse and mislead the working class.

We warned that the Iranian mullahs were reactionary; we saw the sinister anti-Soviet designs of US imperialism behind the conflict in Indochina; we know what a picket line means -- unlike most of the left. Australasian Spartacist is well-known for its disrespect for both bourgeois public opinion and the sacred cows of the fake-left -- ecology, feminism, the ALP etc.



**Australasian Spartacist sub drive quotas**  
Sydney: 150      Melbourne: 50



**Workers Vanguard sales drive quotas**  
Sydney: 100      Melbourne: 60

As a reflection of our commitment to genuine revolutionary internationalism, we will also be conducting a sales drive this year for Workers Vanguard, fortnightly paper of the Spartacist League/US and the main political organ of our tendency internationally. In addition to on-the-spot coverage of major US events and reports of the activities of class-struggle militants in the US labour movement, Workers Vanguard offers in-depth international reportage and analysis. As well it features trenchant polemics on international pretenders to Trotskyism like the United Secretariat and theoretical articles on such topics as the history of Leninism and the rise of Eurocommunism.

While we will continue, as we have in the past, to present through Australasian Spartacist selected articles from Workers Vanguard, we are of course strictly limited by considerations of space. We urge our readers to read -- and subscribe to -- Workers Vanguard.

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# SWP excludes Trotskyists...

## Spartacist League banned from "public" forums

For almost six months the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) has attempted to seal off its ranks from exposure to the genuine Trotskyism of the Spartacist League (SL) by systematically excluding members and supporters of the SL from its "public" events on one pretext or another. For most of that time, the SWP refused to acknowledge the de facto ban openly or respond to protests.

Two weeks before the SWP's 16 March public forums on Iran, we demanded an explicit statement of their policy on SL attendance at such public events. We received no reply until SL members arriving at the SWP's Sydney headquarters to attend the forum found their entrance barred by an SWP goon squad, distributing a roneoed statement by SWP national secretary Jim Percy justifying a policy of excluding the SL. Our reply to that statement, in the form of an open letter, is reprinted below in abridged form.

SL supporters immediately threw up an energetic 20-strong protest picket on the footpath outside, raising such chants as "Down with political exclusions -- for workers democracy" and "SWP, reformist betrayers -- we are the party of Cannon and Trotsky". Several days later SL supporters and other supporters of workers democracy began distributing a statement within the left and labour movement protesting against the SWP's violation of workers democracy. This statement gathered 88 signatures in little over a week (a partial list is reprinted below).

In addition to the points answered by our open letter, Percy's statement slandered the SL's views as "rightwing and reactionary". Incredibly, he cited as an example our opposition to the Islamic reactionary Khomeini movement in Iran, and went on to assert sarcastically that reactionary views alone are not a bar to attending SWP events. This last part is an understatement: the US SWP has even allowed recognised fascists into its forums (see *Workers Vanguard* no 203, 28 April 1978). The SWP prefers to exclude its *communist* critics!

Even more scandalously, the Melbourne SWP leadership has brazenly admitted their collusion with the cops who removed SL supporters leafletting outside the 16 March forum there. When accused by an SLer the following week of putting the cops on to our supporters, Melbourne regional organiser Doug Lorimer angrily retorted, "Yes we did it and we'll do it again if you do it again". Asked, "Do what again?", Lorimer replied, "jeopardise our forums". How we "jeopardised" the forum by seeking to come in like everyone else -- or by handing out a leaflet in the hall outside when excluded -- remains a dark secret.

Unable to exclude SL supporters from their on-campus Indochina forums in NSW the following week, the SWP was forced to switch tactics: limiting discussion to 10 minutes and filling that time with Dorothy Dix questions from SWP members. This struck a shameful nadir when Anthony Forward, the national secretary of the SWP's youth group, took the floor only to ask the SWP speaker in Wollongong to explain once again the different motives of the Chinese bureaucrats and the US imperialists toward the invasion of Vietnam!

The "principle" and practice of political censorship and exclusionism within the workers movement, which the SWP shares with the Stalinists and the Healyite Socialist Labour League, flagrantly violate a long tradition in the

### Protest against political exclusionism

We, the undersigned, while not necessarily agreeing with the political views of the Spartacist League protest against the exclusion of its members and supporters from public forums sponsored by the Socialist Workers Party as a violation of workers democracy. To the extent that such exclusions are carried out against other left organisations we protest against those actions also.

Partial list of endorsers (affiliations given for identification only)

Ian Adler	General Secretary, ACT Teachers Federation
Graham Ashton	
Philip Bain	co-editor, Rabelais; Communist Party of Australia
Garry Bennett	Sydney Uni SRC; ASWU
Jean Curthoys	Sydney Uni Dept. of General Philosophy
Jennie George	NSW Teachers Federation
Paul Harris	ex-member, Socialist Youth Alliance
Heather Hird	member, ACT Teachers Federation council
M Hollingdale	
B Houns low	
Jeff McCarthy	Australian Railways Union
L Muir	Women's Abortion Action Coalition
Ted Murphy	LaTrobe Uni Libertarian Socialists
Carmel Shute	Communist Party of Australia
Dominica Whelan	
Paul White	ex-member, Socialist Workers Party
George Wragg	AMWSU, convenor of shop stewards for central workshop area, Yallourn SEC power station

Endorsements of this protest can be sent to: GPO Box 3473, Sydney, NSW, 2001.

Australian labour movement of open political debate. We urge all supporters of workers democracy to sign the statement and register their protest with the SWP.

### Open letter to the Socialist Workers Party

On 16 March, your organisation excluded members of our organisation and supporters of our views from your supposedly public forums in Melbourne and Sydney entitled, "Revolution in Iran". Attempting to justify this renewed exclusion of all Spartacist members and supporters from "some" of your public events, you distributed at the door a roneoed reply to our 7 March letter to you in which we demanded clarification of your policy on the attendance of SL supporters, as well as other tendencies in the workers movement at your Iran forums. These exclusions are a particularly crude violation of elementary workers democracy.

In Melbourne, you took this violation to its logical conclusion when the police were called to remove two of our comrades who were leafletting your meeting. While it is unclear whether the SWP or the administration at the YMCA site actually rang the cops, the SWP leadership -- including Dave Deutschmann, Doug Lorimer and Michael Hansen -- had no hesitation in leading them up to the first floor where the meeting was being held

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ASP photo



SL protests exclusion from SWP forum on China, Melbourne, 24 March.

# ...and drives out "oppositionists"

## Wave of quits and expulsions hits SWP

A little more than two years ago, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) touted its "successful" "fusion" with eleven former members (including founding leader John McCarthy) of the Mandeliste Communist League (CL), the SWP's centrist competitor for the Australian franchise of the United Secretariat (USec). Within months most of the CL side of that "successful fusion" was gone from the political landscape; yet it was allegedly a breakthrough for the SWP. A year later the CL as a whole disappeared, forced into a new "fusion" with the SWP by its own political godfather, Ernest Mandel.

Crowing that there was now *one* party of Australian "Trotskyism" in which all manner of political differences could coexist through "democratic discussion", the SWP flung its gates open -- and proudly ticked off the recruitment "successes": disillusioned members of the Communist Party (CPA) who preferred to switch their label to "Trotskyist", homeless hangers-on of the ex-CL, even septuagenarian "socialists". It seemed like the "Year of the SWP". "There's a place for you and a need for your help in the Socialist Workers Party", runs the Madison Avenue-style blurb in *Direct Action*. It doesn't matter whether you're a feminist, a gay-lifestyle radical, a student vanguardist -- "You too can be part of building the fight back against the attacks of the bosses and the Fraser government".

And those forlorn Mandelites who found the SWP's blatant reformism too much to stomach reassured each other: just wait until the next conference, we'll have the majority. Ha! Here's what we told them at the time:

"CLers who cling to the quixotic hope that they can win over the ranks of the SWP are deluding themselves. The SWP has the advantage of a hardened cynical cadre who will ruthlessly suppress any opposition that makes itself troublesome...." (ASP no 49, December 1977)

Even before the post-fusion amnesty on dissenters had worn off, the unresolved conflict between centrist and reformist opportunist appetites which had been papered over by the unprincipled fusion came crashing through the surface. Within two months of the January fusion, two ex-CL members in Brisbane were expelled for refusing to toe the SWP's pacifist/legalist line of outright

abstention on the confrontationist civil-liberties marches.

Now that "next" conference has come and gone; and what there was of an "opposition", the Proletarian Democracy Tendency (PDT), could not even win the majority to allowing them some "democratic discussion". And while *Direct Action* was filled with pages of panegyrics heralding the conference decision to "turn to industry", the conference had another message for the membership: there is no place for "troublemakers" in *this* party!

Not that the PDT's supporters had any serious political differences to advance. The SWP's grotesque adaptation to the reactionary mullahs in Iran prompted no comment from them. Neither did the veering and tacking of the SWP over events in Indochina, nor its confusionist, "third-camp" line on Cambodia. These world-historic events and the central issues they raised, which have exposed the SWP's fundamental hostility to the program of Trotskyism, did not concern them. Instead they concentrated exclusively on the organisational excesses of the internal regime. But even this politically loyal "opposition" could not be brooked by Jim Percy and company.

Within weeks of the conference, former CL National Committee member Gwynn E, a leading member of the PDT and of the ill-fated "opposition" to last year's fusion, was expelled -- brutally, without even a figleaf of fidelity to Leninist norms, charged only with "suspicion of disloyalty" (see "Letter of resignation from SYA", facing page). Her expulsion climaxed a year-long wholesale purge in the SWP. A total of six members (four of them ex-CLers) have been expelled from the SWP or its youth front group, the Socialist Youth Alliance (SYA). The ex-CL's former stronghold of Brisbane has been virtually cleaned out. The gay fractions in Melbourne and Sydney are all but extinct. In all, some *two dozen* members recruited largely through or around the fusion have been driven out (not including the normal apolitical fallout from the SWP's category of "provisional" membership -- "members" who pay dues, but do not have the right even to speak, much less vote, at branch meetings).

Individual members who did come to the SWP conference with some sort of difference (but no

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When Lenin, shortly after his return to St Petersburg in 1917, first proclaimed his April Theses which set the Bolshevik Party on the road to the seizure of power, the only leading Bolshevik present to raise her voice in agreement was Alexandra Kollontai. A member of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP) since its founding, "that Lenin woman", as she came to be called in the St Petersburg press that stormy summer, had already achieved international prominence as a socialist and an outspoken advocate of sexual equality. She was a committed proletarian internationalist, won to the Bolsheviks through their struggle against the imperialist conflagration of World War I and the social-chauvinists and compromisers of the Second International who stoked its fires.

## Against feminist mythology

### REVIEW

## Alexandra Kollontai, Selected Writings

edited by Alix Holt

(Part I)

Probably more than any other Bolshevik, Alexandra Mikhailovna Kollontai was identified in the public mind of the time with the Bolsheviks' commitment to women's emancipation. She was the only woman on Lenin's Central Committee on the eve of October, the only woman in the first workers and peasants government (as Commissar of Social Welfare) -- and the first woman member of government in modern history. Several years later, she likewise became the first woman ambassador.

She was also the only full member of Lenin's Central Committee, save Stalin himself, to survive the bloody purges of the Stalin era. For the last twenty-five years of her life she loyally, if unenthusiastically, did the bidding of the counterrevolutionary Stalin bureaucracy to die a year before the brutal tyrant in Stalin's Moscow in 1952, her death unmarked and unmourned.

Why did Kollontai die a forgotten figure? Why is it that a generation after her death she is acclaimed by those who are antagonistic not only to Stalinism but to Leninism as well, by anarchists and feminists, who in her own time she mercilessly combated and politically despised? On what basis have feminists sought to transform the Bolshevik Kollontai into the feminist conscience of the anti-feminist Bolshevik Party, without whose single-minded efforts women supposedly would have been forgotten by the only workers revolution in history?

#### A "herstory" of the Russian revolution

Many of the answers can be found in *Alexandra Kollontai, Selected Writings* (Alison and Busby, London, 1977), edited and translated by Alix Holt, which offers both an extensive translation of Kollontai's works and a systematic presentation of a "Marxist-feminist" view of Kollontai. Holt, a British pseudo-Trotskyist (currently reputed to be around the Pabloist International Marxist Group), is responsible for a large number of the Kollontai articles translated during the feminist revival of the last decade. Reflecting Holt's own predilection, these selections naturally centre predominantly on the woman question. Thus Holt includes none of Kollontai's extensive writings on the Finnish workers movement, though it was for her expertise in this area that Lenin early on sought to recruit Kollontai to the Bolshevik faction of the RSDLP. (In fact, Kollontai wrote nothing on the woman question at all until 1905.) The high point of Kollontai's career as a revolutionist came in the struggle for a new International during the imperialist war. Yet Holt does not even include Kollontai's pamphlet, "Who Profits from the War?", written upon Lenin's suggestion and read by millions of workers and soldiers in several languages.

Nevertheless, the selections which are included (often in highly excerpted form) offer ample evidence that Kollontai was a brilliant agitator and popular propagandist and an uncompromising opponent of feminism. But she did not, as did for example Rosa Luxemburg, leave her mark as a fully rounded Communist leader. She played

no active role in the factional disputes in the RSDLP. While a Menshevik she denigrated the Bolsheviks (as she recalls in her previously published *Autobiography of a Sexually Emancipated Communist Woman*) for "not attach[ing] sufficient importance to the development of the working-class movement". Yet she kept deliberately "aloof from the controlling center" of the Mensheviks because of unresolved political differences. The weaknesses which she brought with her into the Bolshevik Party -- a disproportionate emphasis on the woman question and the spontaneity of the masses; a failure to fully understand the central importance of the party and the struggle for program within it -- would become crucial only in the aftermath of the proletarian revolution for which she fought so indefatigably.

Thus her articles denouncing the pre-war German SPD's "worship of peaceful, legal and uncontroversial methods of struggle", which "muzzled" the "vitality" and "creativity" of the largest and best-organised working class in pre-war Europe, attacked the conservative leadership whose bureaucratic leash held the working masses back in the class struggle. But confronted with the enormous problems facing the fledgling Russian workers state, she retreated empirically to an idealised fetishisation of the masses; her 1920 platform for the semi-syndicalist Workers Opposition attacked the revolutionary regime of Lenin and Trotsky for stifling the "creative abilities" of a proletariat in reality exhausted and decimated by years of civil war. In the one case the defence of mass impulses against the leadership was revolutionary realism; in the other, utopian and destructive idealism.

#### Did Kollontai make the revolution "single-handedly"?

Her vivid eyewitness account of the shocking betrayal of 4 August 1914 -- the SPD's vote for the Kaiser's war credits -- is infused with proletarian internationalism; but internationalism was turned on its head in her willingness to risk the Kaiser's conquest of the Russian workers state by opposing the Brest-Litovsk Treaty with Germany in 1918 in the name of a future Finnish revolution. Her scathing polemics against feminism in defence of proletarian revolution up through the immediate post-war period contrast sharply with her retreat in the 1920s into literary essays on proletarian sexual morality while the fate of that revolution hung in the balance of a bitter factional struggle for power.

But for all her weaknesses, Kollontai was never and in no sense the parochial women's activist which her latter-day admirers seek to portray -- and she was certainly no feminist. Unlike some feminists (like Sheila Rowbotham) Holt does not attempt to explicitly label Kollontai a feminist. But by falsely implying Bolshevik indifference to the struggle for women's liberation, by exaggerating Kollontai's own role, by dismissing the feminism of Kollontai's era as a bygone phenomenon, Holt seeks to make of Kollontai a bridge between the incompatible worldviews of feminism and Marxism. And even though she aggrandises nearly one-fourth of the book for her own "herstory" of the Russian Revolution, she fails.

If, as the French Utopian socialist Charles Fourier observed, "The change in a historical epoch can be determined by the progress of women towards freedom", the Bolshevik Revolution was the epochal event of our century. In a few short

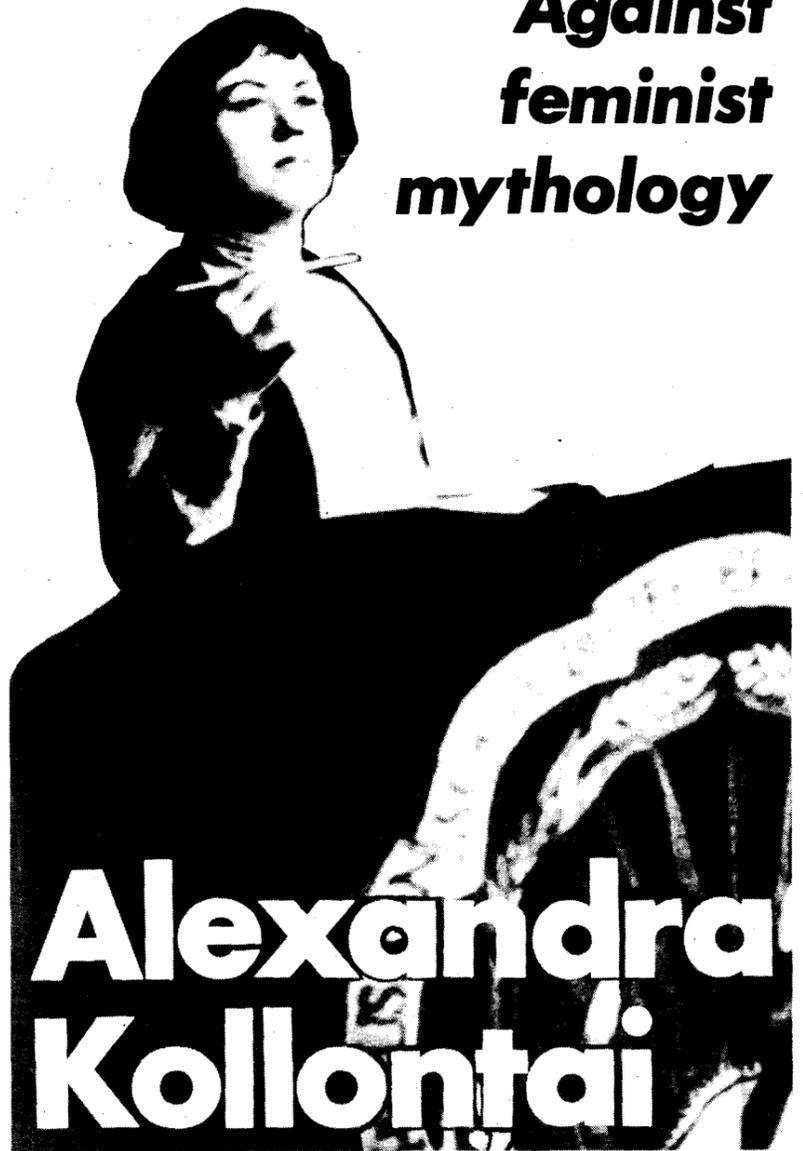
years it catapulted Russian women from the pale of serfdom to a legal and institutional position in advance of the most industrially developed Western "democracies". The early Soviet government decreed full legal and political equality for women, freed them from their legal status as marital chattel, made abortion freely available upon demand, struck down all legislation constricting consensual sexual behaviour, assailed encrusted superstitions and traditions, and opened up hundreds of state dining halls, laundries and nurseries.

The embattled and impoverished workers state took the first steps toward freeing women from the shackles of "church, children and kitchen". It was only a beginning, said Lenin; but it was one which to this day towers over a century of feminist agitation anywhere else. Not even the ensuing Stalinist Thermidor could wholly erase the gains achieved by Russian women as a result of the socialisation of the means of production.

Yet for Holt, Kollontai's "claim that the Russian social democrats were Russian working women's best friends" (in her major 1908 polemic against feminism, *The Social Basis of the Woman Question*) was an attempt to "defend the indefensible". Holt can point to no programmatic differences between Kollontai and the Bolsheviks on the woman question, either before she joined or after, but she insists that:

"On her return from abroad, Kollontai was fighting more or less single-handedly for the acceptance of her ideas; she battled to bring the first workers' state to an understanding of the theoretical and practical aspects of women's liberation, and without her insistence on the priority of emancipation it is doubtful whether Soviet Russia would have been able in its early years to attack the foundations of patriarchal society so vigorously."

Why does Holt fail to mention that it was Lenin who as early as 1899 insisted that the first draft program of the RSDLP contain a clause for the "establishment of complete equality of



# Alexandra Kollontai and the Russian Revolution



"The arrest of that Lenin woman", 1917 Petrograd cartoon.

rights between men and women"? And it was Lenin's wife Krupskaya who one year later authored the first Marxist analysis of the woman question in Russia, and who in 1913 became the first editor of *Rabotnitsa* (*Working Woman*), the Bolshevik women's journal. By comparison, organised feminism first made its appearance only following the tsar's proclamation of universal male suffrage for the first Duma in 1905 and the Duma's refusal to extend it to women.

Kollontai was certainly aggressive in her concern for women's emancipation, and it is true that early party work among women was "met by some members with indifference and by others with distrust", as she notes in her 1920 article, "Towards a History of the Working Women's Movement in Russia". In no small part this was a reflection of the abject backwardness of Russian society at large and of a proletariat only two generations removed from feudalism. But it also reflected a genuine fear of bourgeois ideology working its way into the party. "During 1905 and 1906", writes Kollontai, "the poison of feminism infected not only the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries but even some active Bolsheviks".

It was in that period that Kollontai helped initiate the first socialist women's political club, disguised as the "Society of Working Women's Mutual Aid" to avoid police attention, to compete with the feminists. The club rapidly grew, attracting 300 members -- one-third of whom were men. In 1908 the feminists organised an All-Russian Women's Congress which attracted some 700 women. Recognising the need to stanch the growing feminist influence, Kollontai argued down those comrades who wanted to boycott the event entirely. Her description of the intervention by 45 Social-Democratic women (at this time the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks were temporarily reunited) has a familiar ring to Spartacist League (SL) members who have had to intervene in similar contemporary feminist conferences:

"Immediately the conference opened, the representatives of the workers organisations, accepting a revolutionary class position, formed themselves into a separate group....

"When the various points on the agenda had been dealt with, the conference went on to the main question of the creation of an 'all-women's' organisation which would be supposedly 'above class' but essentially bourgeois. The group of working women delivered a statement of their position and left....

"... a sharp and distinct line had been drawn between bourgeois feminism and the proletarian women's movement. Some of the less politically conscious women had up until the conference harboured illusions about the possibility of unifying all women in the name of the fight for women's rights and interests; after the conference debate, which had shown the hostility of the feminists towards revolutionary socialism, these illusions died a natural death."

#### Mensheviks on the "autonomous women's movement"

Alas, some illusions are all too easily reborn. For the point to Holt's elaborate "commentaries" and to modern "Marxism-feminism" in general, is precisely to obliterate that "sharp and distinct line", to maintain the class-collaborationist conclusions of feminism without openly abdicating the mantle of the Russian Revolution. Thus today, the staunchest supporters of cross-class feminist "sisterhood", expressed in the conception of a male-exclusionist "autonomous women's movement", are such reformist "workers organisations" as the Communist Party (CPA), International Socialists (IS) and Socialist Workers Party (SWP). Holt cynically attempts to saddle Kollontai with responsibility for this

position by adducing her support "for some form of separate organisation of women" and repeatedly referring to the "organised women's movement" Kollontai built.

Kollontai and the Bolsheviks did indeed build an "organised women's movement" -- organised by the Communists; a *communist women's movement*, a non-male-exclusionist women's section of the proletarian party. The creation in 1919 of Zhenotdel, the Department of Working Women and Peasant Women for Communist work among non-party women, embodied the continuation of the Bolshevik principle outlined by Kollontai as follows:

"Our party does not allow a separate women's movement or any independent unions or societies of women workers, but it has never denied the efficacy of a division of labour within the Party and the setting up of such special party machines as would promise to increase the number of its members or deepen its influence among the masses." ("Women Workers Struggle for their Rights", 1918)

It was the Mensheviks who, in pursuit of their strategy of a bloc with the liberal bourgeoisie, had come to endorse the conception of an "autonomous women's movement" "independent" of classes or parties. The Mensheviks, of course, have been



Feminist organisers of 1908 All-Russian Women's Congress. Intervention by Social-Democratic women drew sharp line against bourgeois feminism.

discredited by history. Thus their political heirs must stand as "Leninists" and either dredge up various rationales to "explain" how the feminism they embrace is somehow different from the sort Kollontai condemned, or explain away her opposition.

The CPA-dominated *Scarlet Woman* (August 1978), whose supporters engineered the unsuccessful attempt to exclude the anti-feminist SL from Sydney Women's Liberation two years ago, can logically enough come up with only one conceivable explanation for the "implicitly socialist-feminist" Kollontai's anti-feminism -- *opportunism*:

"To understand the sharpness of Kollontai's attack on these 'bourgeois feminists', who after all included a significant contingent of progressive, left-wing, and socialist women from the intelligentsia, and were not at all 'bourgeois feminists' in the western sense, we need to remember her first line of battle -- her need to 'prove' to party members that her concern with women workers was not the same as this 'sugary feminism'."

This is simply crude -- and not so implicit -- male chauvinism: women communists, much less women communist leaders of Kollontai's stature,

are assumed to be incapable of taking independent, *honest* political positions, destined to be *political prostitutes* to their (male) leaders!

#### A "proper perspective" on feminism

Ignoring early Bolshevik opposition to feminism, the SWP has justified its support for the "autonomous women's movement" policy of the Mensheviks by claiming that the existence of such a feminist movement could have prevented the degeneration of the October Revolution. The SWP's international associates in the United Secretariat (USec), adapting impressionistically to the rise of a feminist movement in Europe in recent years, likewise seek to ingratiate themselves with feminist hostility to Bolshevism. Thus a piece on Kollontai in *New Left Review* (July-August 1978) by Jacqueline Heinen, a leading European USec cadre, seeks "to draw out both the elements of continuity linking us with twenties feminism and those aspects which can and should be surpassed" by launching an *open* attack from the right on Kollontai and the Bolshevik perspective on women's emancipation. A year earlier Heinen, in an article entitled "Sex Struggle or Class Struggle" (*Inprecor*, 29 September 1977), likewise attacked the anti-feminist intervention of the international

Spartacist tendency in a large international women's meeting near Paris. Heinen complains that a series of lectures presented by Kollontai to Bolshevik women in 1921 "falls short of what might have been expected from a feminist militant", "barely touching on the question of women's organization and on what they themselves can do here and now" (Heinen finds unconvincing Kollontai's statement on the need to "break the power" of the bourgeoisie as a prerequisite for grappling with women's oppression); and that it failed to "politically arm" the Bolshevik women because it emphasised *increased production* ("hyper-productivism") instead of "challenging traditional roles".

Heinen deals rather candidly with an obvious contradiction: *it is impossible to defend feminism either now or then without attacking Kollontai and repudiating Bolshevism*. But Holt approaches the question somewhat more cautiously, hoping only to dull the sharp edge of Kollontai's anti-feminism, by putting it down to a supposed lack of "sociological sophistication". Thus she faults Kollontai for posing a "rigid framework of choice" between feminism and the proletarian movement. Kollontai's anti-feminist polemics must be placed in their "proper perspective", warns Holt. If they "now seem irrelevant", it is because bourgeois feminism is "no longer an influential organised force".

Kollontai's polemics on feminism can only be dismissed as irrelevant by those who reject a "rigid" counterposition between bourgeois feminism and proletarian socialism. As opposed to the suffragettes of Kollontai's era, today's "radical" and certainly "Marxist" feminists readily proclaim that "patriarchal" capitalist society must be torn down. Formal political equality has, despite gaps, largely been won in the advanced capitalist world, so they emphasise the need to smash sexist personal relations, prejudices and attitudes, not to win the vote. But Kollontai points out that even in tsarist Russia there were "'left' feminists ... who were fond of revolutionary phrases and sought the support of the social democratic women". In posing sex and not class as the fundamental division in bourgeois society, "the bourgeois feminist propaganda of 'the one and indivisible women's movement'" of both Kollontai's time and ours is necessarily counterposed to socialism. The underlying common program of all feminism, whatever its rhetorical colouration or immediate social constituency, is bourgeois to the core. It was that understanding which enabled Kollontai and the Bolsheviks to gain the support of the masses of working women in the first victorious socialist revolution. ■

[TO BE CONTINUED]



Demonstration of soldier's wives against the war, 1917.

# SWP exclusion...

Continued from page four

and, in response to the cops' questions, *fingering our supporters* as "the people" in question!...

On what basis does the SWP claim the "right" to ban ourselves or its other opponents on the



Sydney, 16 March: SL protests against exclusion from SWP forum on Iran.

left from supposedly public meetings? Your claim that you do not object to our presence because of our political views "but because of [our] way of presenting them", ie, your spurious charge of "disruption", is a transparent fraud. But before dealing with the "evidence" you present let us make one thing clear. Public meetings of socialist organisations are just what they claim -- public, open to the workers movement at large. Of course it goes without saying that at your meetings you will disseminate your own political viewpoint; but to all who value free political debate in the workers movement, it is axiomatic that fundamental political questions and differences should be openly raised and debated at any such public political gathering.

Certainly you have the "right" under bourgeois democracy to "organise meetings, determine the agenda, speakers and attendance" which we do not contest and indeed would, if necessary, defend against the bourgeois authorities. But this is not the issue. *Workers* democracy stands higher than bourgeois "right". It is vital for working-class militants to be able to debate the issues facing the class in an atmosphere free from intimidation and bureaucratic repression. All proletarian political organisations have a responsibility to conduct meetings in orderly and democratic fashion, so as to promote political debate -- not to suppress it!

And we have made it clear we defend your meetings against *genuine* disruption. When Willie Mae Reid spoke for the SWP in Sydney in 1976, the Healyite Socialist Labour League launched a calculated disruption -- continually shouting, jeering and waving pamphlets throughout the meeting -- which physically prevented discussion from continuing. SLers present protested against it and we declared our solidarity with the SWP against this gangsterism.

But polemical debate is not disruption! It was the Stalinists who pioneered the introduction of the sort of bureaucratism you resort to today into the political life of the working class. The early Trotskyists, who had to contend with

the Stalinists' use of the same bureaucratic exclusion tactics, would have been scandalised if anyone calling themselves Trotskyist resorted to the same methods....

Now you dredge up, with further embroidery, the same caricatures of incidents around which you fabricated the "disruption" case for the original ban on the SL in 1974. You repeat a vague charge of "shouting" and "failing to comply with our chairperson's directions". Only two specific incidents were ever cited in that regard and we have refuted them in detail (see *Australasian Spartacist* no 9, June 1974). What were these terrible "disruptions"? In the first, our tendency was accused of lying in its press and the meeting was peremptorily closed when Spartacist supporters demanded time to refute these charges. In the second, a forum on the Middle East, after we were gagged in the discussion period, and after the meeting had been formally closed, one of our comrades verbally challenged the SWP to a public debate on the question. Jim Percy's on-the-spot reaction to this "disruption" was "put it in writing". We did. The SWP's answer was to exclude us from its public forums.

Your roneoed letter claims the SWP "reversed [its] policy of excluding you for a time to see if you had changed". What gall! You reversed your exclusion policy only because you were then, in October 1976, in a common campaign with us to defend workers democracy, issuing joint statements with us against the Healyite thug attack on both SWP and SL members outside Sydney Trades Hall earlier that month. You suddenly discovered how "good" our behaviour had been lately. But we had not changed. It was you who saw the continuation of your ban on the SL as temporarily politically inexpedient and potentially embarrassing....

According to your leaflet/letter one of the best expressions of "the method of Spartacist disruption" was the joint SWP-CL forum in mid-1977, among the first inaugurating the "fusion process", on the CPA's Peoples Economic Program (PEP). Why? Because ... our supporters in the discussion period "spoke not about the PEP but the impending fusion"!!...

Whether our comments on the fusion at the PEP meeting in question were "irrelevant" is obviously a matter of difference between us. But what we think is relevant is for us to decide. We refuse to allow you or anyone else to vet the content of our remarks at any event. To label this "disruption" is the most explicit admission of the *political* character of the exclusion....

The utter hypocrisy of the on-again, off-again exclusions and the disruption slander was

"Everybody who has attended the lectures in our hall on a Sunday night agrees that for the first time for many years in Sydney a real opportunity is being allowed for questions and discussions. We do not discriminate against anybody or against (any) point of view. We are also arranging for non-party speakers who do not agree with our politics."

- notice in the *Militant*, organ of the Australian Trotskyist Workers Party, 7 May 1937

demonstrated clearly at the Iran forum in Sydney where you admitted a long-time Spartacist supporter and teachers union militant John Hird. Why was he allowed in? Because when he told you at the door he was in solidarity with the SL, and you proposed to exclude him, his companions -- two officials from the NSW Teachers Federation, Stan Heuston and Graham Ashton -- threatened to leave if he was not let in....

Which brings us to the real motive for your exclusion. For you could not tolerate, let alone answer honestly, the question of your support to Khomeini and the mullahs in Iran being raised at a time when their *openly reactionary* nature is being proven, possibly even to the SWP, by their furious attacks on women, national and religious minorities and the Iranian workers. Nor would it do for a Spartacist to point out that the US/China alliance behind the invasion of Vietnam is above all directed at the USSR -- when the SWP is trying desperately to ignore the facts in order to avoid any association with military defence of the Soviet deformed workers state. And your bizarre claims that Pol Pot's Cambodia was capitalist, but Castro's Cuba is a paragon of "revolutionary internationalism" are not only at variance with Trotskyism but also at variance with each other and even with the real world.

The SWP's ban on SL members and supporters and any others when the whim strikes you is a political attack on workers democracy which we in-

tend to expose and vigorously counter wherever possible. And since the SWP is making much of its "turn to the working class" we would remind you of the unpleasant lesson the Healyites received at the hands of militant LaTrobe Valley power workers. To a man those who intended to go to a Healyite forum in Morwell on the 1977 power strike *boycotted* this "public" meeting in solidarity against our exclusion from it. There are militants in the labour movement who understand the importance of workers democracy even if you do not. ■

## Letter...

Continued from page five

The events surrounding the expulsion of Gwynn E on "suspicion of disloyalty" -- in reality for her views alone and not any genuine act of discipline -- are typical of the SWP and the international tendency to which it adheres. The completely alien quality of these measures to Leninism begin with the anti-bolshevik position on youth/party relations adopted by the SWP/US in 1961-3 for the purpose of bureaucratically suppressing oppositional currents in both the party and its youth, the YSA. Despite the fact that the SYA is built on the same program as the SWP, which should mean a full and free internal life within and between both organisations, party members can be expelled for violating party "discipline" by expressing oppositional views in the youth organisation. This is the reality of the SYA's political "independence". (Which is itself an absolute farce when you consider that over 90 percent of the SYA's membership are also members of the party.)

Thus an oppositional tendency or grouping in either the party or youth is bureaucratically prevented from arguing for its position with its comrades in the other body. And at the 1978 SYA conference youth members got a good idea of just how little the SWP cares for the political development of its youth when the SWP Political Committee passed a motion effectively banning any discussion of homosexual oppression. In all the reports given and adopted at this particularly boring conference the question of homosexual youth was conspicuously missing.

In contrast to the despicable manipulation by the SWP of its phony youth organisation, the American SL/SYL allows full factional rights of party/youth members within the youth and vice versa, within the framework of genuine organisational independence of the youth, combined with *public* political subordination to the party. This is the only way young revolutionists can be trained for party membership as genuine communists, and not bureaucratic hacks prepared for a career as hardened reformists.

You could go on for pages relating other incidents where minority SWP/SYAers have found themselves in a similar situation as Gwynn did (cde Paul W, Gavin Q, and Dominica W are more recent examples). The point is that the bureaucratic behavior of the SWP/SYA leadership is not something that will cease after passing a few amendments to the SWP's Organisational Principles document, but is the necessary organisational complement to the *reformism* of the SWP's politics and program.

Over the last month or so we have seen a massive evacuation of the SWP/SYA by minority members, whose future in the SWP was grim anyway given that the leadership was determined to "fix" all oppositionists after the conference. Such a terrible waste of experienced cadre is criminal but none the less typical of the SWP.

For the last few weeks I have been studying the politics of the SWP and SL; I have come to the conclusion that the SWP has fundamentally broken with Trotskyism and that today only the international Spartacist tendency upholds the program of Trotskyism. Unlike most of the comrades who have either been expelled or have resigned I am sure of my political future. My energies will now be spent building a truly revolutionary party, capable of leading the Australian working class to power -- the nucleus of that party is the Spartacist League. To the minority comrades now outside the SWP, and those still remaining in the party, I urge you to give the SL a hearing. I promise you it will be worth your while. I hereby resign from the SYA in solidarity with the SL.

For the rebirth of the Fourth International!

Paul Harris

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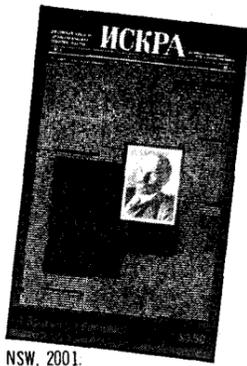
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# Cambodia capitalist? Castro revolutionary? Soviet Union not the target of US/China axis?

## Why SWP can't see straight on Indochina

China's invasion of Vietnam on 17 February marked the first military result of its developing counterrevolutionary alliance with US imperialism against the Soviet Union and its allies. In the face of this reactionary aggression against the Vietnamese people, it was the urgent task of working-class militants throughout the world to demand: China get out of Vietnam now! The international Spartacist tendency fulfilled its duty at once with a spirited demonstration outside the Chinese mission to the UN in New York City and even gained some recognition in the bourgeois media for our slogans, "China: don't be a cat's paw for US imperialism! USSR: honour

predominantly Chinese merchants in Ho Chi Minh City's Cholon district in mid-1978, a "nationalised, planned economy [came] into being" in South Vietnam and, Percy explained, Vietnam came to be seen by US imperialism as an even greater strategic threat than before.

Cambodia, on the other hand, despite the military wiping out of Lon Nol's bourgeois/comprador regime and the across-the-board collectivisations carried out by Pol Pot/Ieng Sary in 1975, somehow remained "capitalist"! Percy tried to make out that the xenophobic Pol Pot, a client of Peking, had become a puppet of US imperialism by late

against the counterrevolutionary attack." (ASP no 61, March 1979)

While the implicitly third-campist SWP cringed, we had no reason to fear being "confused" with the SPA. Unlike the Stalinists, we spread no pacifist illusions in "detente". Trotskyists have always been the most resolute, uncompromising defenders of the gains of the Russian Revolution. But the SWP is *not* Trotskyist -- that's what its contortions were designed to obscure. The SWP was prepared to stand on the sidelines explaining how Chinese troops are imperialism's tool when they are fighting the Vietnamese, but not when they are fighting Soviet troops.

### Who are US imperialists' missiles aimed at?

Sounding just like the pacifist Stalinists and social democrats, Percy denounced our call on the Soviet Union to honour its treaty with Vietnam -- demagogically equating it with the call for a "full-scale invasion" or a "second front" -- and endorsed the liberal daydream that "detente" with the USSR is "far more important" to US imperialism than "the conflict in the East". No! Precisely because the Kremlin takes "detente" far more seriously than Washington, it was necessary to demand that the Soviet Union honour its treaty. We did not place any confidence in the Kremlin to pursue this or that military option, demanding only that it live up to its treaty obligations to Vietnam -- rather than knuckling under to US imperialism in pursuit of detente as it did in Cuba in 1962.

Percy even admitted that the Pentagon is striving for a first-strike nuclear capacity. *Against whom* -- Vietnam, which has no nuclear weaponry? China, the Pentagon's current ally? The US nuclear armoury is aimed squarely at the Soviet Union. And not without reason, for it is Soviet military and industrial might, despite all the counterrevolutionary crimes of the Kremlin, which stands as the principal objective obstacle to imperialism's drive to overthrow the conquests of the anti-capitalist revolutions. If the US were indeed serious right now about implementing its desire to restore capitalism in Vietnam as the SWP implies, it could do so only by militarily confronting the USSR.

### Cuba, Cambodia, Vietnam

In contrast to the Kremlin's counterrevolutionary policies of peaceful coexistence, the SWP holds up Brezhnev's Cuban ally Fidel Castro as a model of "revolutionary internationalism". Thus the SWP now proclaims that three *qualitatively identical* regimes, which virtually the entire intelligent world outside the SWP recognises as essentially similar societies -- Cuba, Vietnam and Cambodia -- are, respectively, a healthy revolutionary workers state, a deformed workers state, and a capitalist state! The apparent contradiction is due to the fact that twenty years of mounting opportunist baggage is catching up with the SWP. Two decades ago, the US SWP, weakened by the severe pressures of the McCarthy

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Militant SL contingent protests against the Chinese invasion of Vietnam at demonstration against Chen Muhua, Chinese envoy, in Sydney on 9 March.

your treaty with Vietnam!" When a senior Chinese Politburo member, Chen Muhua, paid an official visit during the invasion to the pro-China "tilted" Fraser government in the midst of the war, militant Spartacist League (SL) contingents dominated the protests that greeted her in Sydney and Melbourne.

The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) boycotted those protests -- to avoid, as one SWPer in Melbourne explained, being confused with the pro-Moscow Stalinist Socialist Party (SPA). Only on 15 and 16 March did the SWP get around to staging its own little lame duck rallies, in response to nothing in particular, outside the US consulates in Melbourne and Sydney -- near the end of the Chinese troops' withdrawal. When an uninvited SL contingent at the Sydney rally chanted "Down with the China/US anti-Soviet alliance!" and "Smash US imperialism through workers revolution!", the SWP tried to *drown out* those chants with counter-chants of "US out of Indochina now" and "Restore aid now!"

### Hear no evil, see no evil, speak nonsense

The SWP's response to the protests reflected its response to the events: it covered its eyes, sat on its hands and spouted confusion. When the world's media was dominated by speculation over whether the USSR would enter the conflict, the SWP said not a word about what its attitude would be to such an eventuality.

So to explain the SWP's line to the membership and public -- well after the war had ended -- the SWP leadership went on a very limp "speaking" tour. SWP national secretary Jim Percy recited a dry 50-minute talk three times in Sydney, and Political Committee member Ron Poulsen dutifully read out the same talk nearly word for word in Wollongong. Percy/Poulsen mainly rehashed a major article by the US SWP's Gus Horowitz (reprinted in *Direct Action*, 23 March), which stated flatly that the war was not "a reflection of Sino-Soviet or Sino-Vietnamese disputes". According to Percy/Poulsen, the Vietnamese victory against US imperialism in 1975 represented "a shift in the world balance of forces against imperialism". With the expropriations of the

1978! Thus, invading Chinese troops in Vietnam were "doing the dirty work" of US imperialism, according to the SWP, by seeking to prevent the extension of the Vietnamese *social* (ie, anti-capitalist) revolution into neighbouring Cambodia.

### SWP "analysis" means third campism

No wonder the SWP only allowed ten minutes floor discussion after Percy's presentations! But behind the idiot "logic" of the SWP's surrealistic line lies a real aim: to denounce the invasion as reactionary while avoiding any suggestion of being on the same side as the USSR. The core of the SWP's tortured position is that the war in no way threatened the Soviet Union -- US "warnings" to the USSR notwithstanding. China is "harder" to defend than the USSR, proclaimed Percy. And asked point-blank by an SLer in Wollongong where the SWP would have stood had the USSR entered the war against China, Poulsen declared that the SWP would have treated it like any war between rival bureaucracies of two deformed workers states -- implicitly admitting that *the SWP would not have defended the Soviet Union* against Chinese troops which it says are "doing the dirty work" of US imperialism already!

The SWP notwithstanding, the Peking bureaucrats did (of course!) indeed have their own motives for attacking Vietnam -- to subordinate it and the rest of Indochina to Peking's hegemony. Revolutionists oppose these regional big-power ambitions, while recognising that the Hanoi bureaucracy is qualitatively similar. But we also recognised that China's collusion with the West would have made the anti-Soviet US/China axis decisive had the war escalated beyond a regional framework. As we said at the time:

"Should the Soviet Union be drawn into the fighting in a direct way it would pit the Russian degenerated workers state against the Western imperialists, principally the US through the intermediary of their Chinese ally. This would pose pointblank the urgent task of militarily defending the USSR and the gains of the October Revolution. In this conflict the Trotskyists know where they stand: shoulder to shoulder with the Soviet workers

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## Iran...

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remarks made against us by a small centrist group in Britain, *Workers Power* (February 1979):

"The Spartacists make a series of charges against the Mullah led opposition as a result of which they characterise the movement as one of 'clerical reaction'. A number of these charges amount to uncritical retailing of the chauvinist rubbish which filled the American press throughout the Autumn. The Mullahs they claim wish to restore Iran to the 7th century AD.... They wish to introduce savage Islamic law punishments; stoning, public hanging and whipping etc. They wish to enforce the wearing of the veil and the removal of the rights given to women by the Shah...."

Programmatic clarity helps you to see straight. Chile. Portugal. Iran. For or against the popular front. For or against the Armed Forces Movement. For or against the mullahs. The future party of world revolution will be composed of workers who have learned the key programmatic lessons of these historic class battles.■

(adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 227, 16 March 1979)

## SWP "oppositionists" ...

Continued from page four

organised opposition) on something programmatic important was not expelled (at least not yet), but scarcely had any better chance of democratic internal debate. The SWP's increasingly untenable characterisation of Castro's Cuba as a healthy workers state has prompted internal opposition, including documents, both here and in the US SWP. Yet visiting US SWPer Mary-Alice Waters' presentation of the majority line on Cuba at the conference was deliberately opened to non-members to preclude differences being raised. In reply to a question about Castro's treatment of homosexuals at a subsequent "orientation" session for non-members in attendance, SYAer Paul Harris burst out that they "slap them into concentration camps and prisons". He was promptly "invited" not to come along to any more orientation sessions! Presumably, the truth is too "disorienting" for the SWP's contacts.

The expulsions have been accompanied by a host of other bureaucratic atrocities. Discussion on the gay question, for example, was suppressed by ordering all party members within the youth (90 percent of the SYA membership) to refuse to discuss differences on the gay question in the SYA, and even to argue against holding any discussion. In response to cries of "censorship" the SWP quoted its anti-Leninist norms of youth-party relations: under the guise of "political independence" from the SWP, the SYA is a docile instrument of the SWP, controlled organisationally through SWP members in the youth.

That the SWP would wantonly allow a sizeable chunk of its gay fraction nationally to split in revulsion over such organisational atrocities, reflects the ballyhooed "turn to industry" which is being carried out in lockstep imitation of its American mentor. The gay/student/feminist milieus have dried up in the recent past. So whereas last year "coming out" was hypocritically advanced as a "liberating" act, now the SWP's gay members are apt to be told to get a haircut, get a job, stop acting like a "Queen" and not to talk about homosexual oppression even in general on the jobsite if it proves "isolating". And Waters lyricised to the conference: "We can now move into our natural place, our natural milieu, our class, and build a party among those who really have the power to change the world" (*Direct Action*, 1 March). Hardly heartening news to the feminists and gay-lifestylists in the SWP, who thought they were in their "natural milieus" and had found "those who really have the power to change the world". Not that the SWP is about to stop tailing sectoralist movements -- it's just that the "main chance" has shifted to the trade-union bureaucracy. Thus in the US, SWP members in the steel industry have become the main work-horses for "progressive" pro-capitalist union bureaucrat Ed Sadlowski.

### PDT: more democracy, less centralism, no politics

The PDT itself was sparked by a wave of three expulsions which hit Melbourne in dizzying succession around August. Gavin Q -- said to have been organising an influx of punk rockers into the SYA in order to insurrect against the "conservative leadership" -- was expelled from the SYA for attempting to organise a "Rock against racism" on the model of the British Mandelite IMG (and similar to one organised by the heavily Mandelite Adelaide branch). Ex-CLer (and erstwhile Healyite) Paul W got the boot for allegedly slugging a woman comrade (though the only eyewitness to the incident later embarrassingly turned out to have been a Healyite agent inside the SWP!). And Dominica W was expelled for violating party directives by attending a

meeting of the SWP-run Women's Abortion Action Coalition. Behind the formal charges, the leadership made it clear all three were guilty of fomenting an "anti-party clique".

Four people in Melbourne quit in disgust over the expulsions and it was only with the opening of pre-conference discussion (in the "democratic" SWP, faction and tendency rights are banned nine months out of the year) that a call was issued for a "tendency around proletarian democracy" by three Melbourne members (including a trade unionist recently recruited from the CPA). "The practices of the organisation internally could be interpreted as at the best confused, or at the worst blatantly undemocratic", they charged. A second document, signed by an ex-CLer and another ex-CPAer, pointed to a "dangerous situation":

"Non-members ... will start to wonder about the party's internal regime. The effects will be particularly damaging in the women's and gay liberation movements where a number of these ex-members were and are active."

The disparate "opposition" ran the gamut from pro-protectionism trade unionists to lesbian feminists. What bothered them about the Percy regime's brazen bureaucratism was not that it precluded a programmatic struggle against the SWP's reformism but that it was hampering their pursuit of the SWP's opportunist politics in their particular sectoral milieus. They were not arguing for a revolutionary program which could intersect every sectoral struggle, but for the "right" to dissociate themselves from those aspects of the SWP's politics they might find distasteful. After all, how does a "consistent feminist" explain the SWP's support to the anti-woman "Islamic revolution"? Thus the PDT centred its fight against the bureaucratism of the party leadership on an "Alternative Organisational Principles Document" (signed by eight members) which advanced the classically menshevik thesis that:

"Unity in action ... does not mean that all differences must be hidden from all non-members in all situations. Discussion or debate over controversial questions can be stimulated [!] in the pages of the party press."

### SWP leeches off the Spartacist League

The SWP leadership easily discredited this blatant revisionism with a formally correct defence of the Leninist norms of organisational discipline -- too formally correct, we noticed, in the case of one long historical document by Doug L ("In Defence of Leninism: Against the Alternative Organisational Principles Document", *SWP Discussion Bulletin*, vol 7, no 18, January 1979). Upon closer examination and comparison, we found that no less than half of "Doug L's" document was lifted, with minor word changes here and there only, from the Spartacist League/US pamphlet *Lenin and the Vanguard Party* -- with never a mention of its source! The cynical reformists who run the SWP know where to turn for genuine "orthodox" Trotskyism when it comes in handy as a club against menshevik internal critics -- the "irrelevant" SL!

As our pamphlet makes clear, in a Leninist combat party there can be no differentiation between "unity in action" and a common front to the public on political propaganda, verbal or written: propaganda translates into marching orders for the party and its supporters! Lenin's call for "freedom of criticism, unity in action" cited as historical precedent in the PDT document came when he was a revolutionary social democrat evolving to Leninism, and was applied in a period when the Bolshevik faction-party was in formal organisational unity with the Mensheviks. Lenin never accepted this norm within the Bolshevik organisation itself; and the evolved Leninist conception of democratic centralism was codified in the first four congresses of the Communist International and reaffirmed in the founding statutes of the Fourth International. Only under exceptional circumstances has the Trotskyist movement allowed public expression of programmatic differences as, for example, in an attempt to ward off the Shachtman split in 1940.

Without a coherent programmatic alternative to the Percy regime's cynical bureaucratism, the "opposition" crumbled. When Peta Stewart conspicuously ignored the expulsions in her organisation report (they figured prominently in the version of the report published in the bulletins) to deflect discussion of them, not one of the tendency members raised it from the floor -- despite the fact that the tendency was specifically started over the expulsions. And when the agenda point on the organisational principles discussion came on (where the expulsions finally were mentioned) the leadership effectively, and easily, squashed discussion. A total of precisely thirty minutes was allowed for discussion of the main dispute at the conference -- a total of six speakers for both sides, when the minority alone had seven delegates!

The SWP's anti-Leninist norms of internal party democracy and youth-party relations are a

meticulous replica of the US SWP's, where they represent the organisational complement to that party's definitive degeneration from Trotskyism to centrism on the (short) road to outright reformism. There was a qualitative step involved in that degeneration: the expulsion of the Revolutionary Tendency (RT -- precursor to the SL/US), whose leading cadre (including James Robertson) were the founding leaders of the SWP's Young Socialist Alliance (YSA), solely on the basis of its political views. Shortly thereafter the SWP purged the YSA of RT supporters and soon went on to codify these bureaucratic actions in its organisational principles.

### The Trotskyist alternative to the SWP

But the RT fight was a programmatic struggle against the US SWP's deepening revisionism -- its uncritical adaptation to Castroism and black nationalism which prepared reunification with the Pabloite International Secretariat. In contrast, the PDT like last year's anti-fusion opposition was an unprincipled bloc which deliberately abjured the struggle for program in order to avoid a fight to the finish against SWP/USec revisionism, a fight which would have necessitated coming to grips with the spectre of Spartacism, revolutionary Trotskyism.

Politics is primary. The SWP's systematic bureaucratism is a necessary organisational complement to the glaring contradiction between its stated aim (the dictatorship of the proletariat) and its shamelessly reformist program and practice. Those oppositional elements in the SWP for whom the bureaucratism of the Percy machine was simply a constraint on dabbling with their own brands of revisionism will sooner or later find a home in the ALP. Those who seek to make a workers revolution have nowhere to go but to the international Spartacist tendency.■

## 3CR...

Continued from page three

for the "interruption", Ramsden's statement was introduced again. This time what came out was the lilting tune of "Santa Lucia" on mandolins. By the time our *Australasian Spartacist* reporter arrived at the station, he found it packed with loyal CPA(ML) "heavies". In the meantime, the entire program was aired again -- this time with Ramsden's statement.

Since then, CPA(ML) supporters have been heavily defeated in elections for listener-sponsor representatives. The annual general meeting scheduled for early March, where the governing body which actually controls the station would have been elected, was subsequently cancelled on the premise that improprieties had occurred in the listener-sponsor elections. Obviously support to either side in this clique battle would have about as much political content as supporting balalaikas as against banjos. Even so it has not prevented the habitual opportunists of the fake-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) from lining up with the anti-Maoist bloc -- which is as much averse to the Maoists' hard sectarian image as to their politics -- and enthusing in particular over a group of "Jews Against Zionism and Anti-Semitism" (*Direct Action*, 1 March).

### All nationalism leads to racism

Both the SWP and the Healyite Socialist Labour League (SLL) have premised their defence of 3CR on tailing Palestinian-nationalist support for 3CR's supposed anti-Zionism -- which 3CR justifies on the basis that the United Nations, that putrid den of imperialist thieves, Stalinist bureaucrats and "third-world" dictators, passed a resolution in 1975 condemning Zionism as "a form of racism". In fact the station has even issued an appeal to the "anti-racist" United Nations to back it in the inquiry.

For all its rabid raving, the VJBD has been unable to come up with any example of explicit anti-Semitism aired over 3CR, relying instead on the typical Zionist rubbish that anti-Zionism is "objectively" anti-Semitic. The VJBD is particularly incensed over 3CR references to Zionist collaboration with the Nazi "Third Reich" during the war as "offensive" to Jews who survived Hitler's extermination camps. It is indeed offensive ... and true! It is a documented fact that leading Zionists worked closely with the Nazis before and during World War II to save a few thousand Jews with ransom money and the right connections while fully aware that millions more were being sent to the gas chambers. Furthermore, Zionist organisations such as the Jewish Agency deliberately refused to lobby for the opening of Western countries' borders to Jewish emigration before or after the war. They wanted to save "their" Jews for the colonisation of Palestine.

However, 3CR's continual blather about the "international Zionist movement" and "Zionist money" controlling the media skirts uncomfortably close to anti-Semitic rubbish about an "international Jewish conspiracy". Palestinian-

nationalist conspiracy theories notwithstanding, while there may be an influential Zionist lobby in Australia, it is hardly in a position to dominate the predominantly Anglo-Saxon Protestant (and traditionally anti-Semitic) bourgeoisie.

The government's use of anti-Zionism as a vehicle to witchhunt 3CR is not hard to understand. Australia's role as a junior partner of US imperialism commits it to supporting Israel against the Palestinian nationalists. And the strong association of the Palestinian-nationalist movement with the revisionist left which adapts to it can be used to whip up a hysteria about "terrorism" coming to Australia, directed ultimately against radicals here -- in this case the Maoists.

Zionism is indeed a form of racism; but the logic of all nationalism is racist and genocidal. Today the Palestinian people are denied their national existence through brutal repression carried out by the Zionist state. But the nationalism underlying the murderous bombing of Palestinian refugee camps by Israeli Phantom fighters is in essence no different than that justifying the indiscriminate killing of Israeli civilians by AK-47-wielding Palestinian terrorists. Only through the struggle for a bi-national workers state recognising the right to self-determination of both the Palestinian and Hebrew-speaking peoples can the genocidal nationalism of the Middle East be transcended in favour of a truly democratic solution.

#### Idiot civil libertarianism and anti-Semitism

The very real spectre of anti-Semitism was raised in the 3CR dispute when John Bennett, a prominent defender of 3CR and leading member of the Victorian Council for Civil Liberties, circulated a memo calling for an "objective evaluation" of American "professor" AR Butz's book, *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*, which simply denies that a Nazi genocide ever took place. For the last two months the letters column of the *Age* has been filled with an obscene debate over the number of Jews gassed in Hitler's extermination camps, the size of the gas chambers, the type of gas used etc, a debate in which Bennett has taken his idiot brand of civil libertarian concern with Zionist suppression and "historical objectivity" precipitously close to open apologetics for Nazi genocide.

Bennett is keeping dangerous ideological company. The Spartacus Youth League (youth section of the Spartacist League/US), which was actively involved in the struggle against Butz at his Northwestern University campus in Chicago, had this to say:

"When the Butz case was first publicized, the Spartacus Youth League pointed out that, while Butz's organizational affiliations were unclear, his book was most definitively a fascist tract.... Butz was simply a willful defender of Hitlerism and deserved to feel the wrath of outraged students, workers and survivors of the infamous Nazi death camps. Butz has now been exposed as a skulking, shame-faced fascist, linked to an actual neo-Nazi organization [the German Deutsche Volksumigung].... "... strip Butz of his academic cover and drive him from the Northwestern campus. No platform for fascists!" (*Young Spartacus* no 58, October 1977)

While one of 3CR's programs reportedly broadcast the whole of Bennett's memo, 3CR has since wisely sought to ward off charges of anti-Semitism by airing a statement by the above-mentioned "Jews Against Zionism ..." against Bennett's continuing defence of Butz.

#### Nationalise the media under a workers government

Our defence of 3CR against the Zionist-spearheaded government witchhunt has nothing in common with reformist illusions about its "progressive" politics or the supposed value of "community" radio. "Community" radio is essentially a fraud, advanced -- as the ABC is -- by social democrats as an alternative to commercial radio. But the government which runs the ABC and "regulates" 3CR is no less bourgeois than the Packer, Fairfax and Murdoch empires -- it is in fact the political representative of them and their ilk and will remain so until the capitalist class is overthrown and its state smashed.

The only answer to the lies, slanders and political censorship of the bourgeois media is to build the working-class press. We call for a daily mass paper and radio and television stations sponsored by the trade-union movement and open to all tendencies in the workers movement in proportion to their following. Of course the radio stations (like Sydney's 2KY and Melbourne's 3KZ) currently controlled by the trade unions could only serve that purpose if they were broken from the grip of the pro-capitalist labour bureaucrats, who have no interest in providing a working-class alternative to bourgeois ideology.

We place no confidence in the bourgeois state to regulate the airwaves and we oppose any attempt at government interference in determining the content of broadcast material -- even when it

is reactionary. Unlike much of the Australian left we oppose the call for nationalisation of the media as a way of dealing with the anti-working-class lies of the press monopolists. Australia already has one of the most monopolised mass media of all the imperialist nations: all the television and radio stations (except the ABC), the mass-circulation dailies and even local neighbourhood papers controlled by a handful of media barons. Nationalisation by a bourgeois government -- Labor or Liberal -- would serve only to deepen that monopoly and intensify the likelihood of censorship. The working class will be assured full freedom of expression only when it smashes the bourgeois state and takes power into its own hands. Only under a workers government will the nationalisation of the media free the airwaves from bourgeois control and realise the full potential, in Trotsky's words, of "the most democratic medium of broadcasting information and knowledge".■

## ASIO...

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to serve up their own members for persecution and surveillance.

The Maoist Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist), acting out its role as spokesman for the sinister, anti-Soviet US-China alliance, actually *applauded* this reinforcement of the paid assassins-in-waiting of working-class militants. Under the headline, "ASIO strengthened as counter to increased penetration of Australia by Soviet imperialism", the 15 March *Vanguard* declares:

"Hence insofar as it genuinely combats Soviet subversion, we support it; insofar as it persecutes, victimises, eavesdrops, telephone taps etc. genuine Communists and other patriots, we oppose it." (emphasis added)

"Insofar"! Insofar as ASIO persecutes, victimises and harasses anyone in the workers movement but this dwindling, increasingly discredited and isolated band of "patriots" and its right-wing anti-Soviet allies, then the Maoists will lend a hand. The logical next step is for members of the CPA(ML) to enlist as *police pimps* on the left! And why stop at ASIO? Doesn't the CIA also "genuinely combat Soviet subversion"?

As revolutionary Marxists, we have no illusions that legal restrictions will prevent the bosses' secret police from pursuing their primary targets -- working-class militants. We have no doubt that *our* democratic rights will be violated by ASIO whatever its charter, and that "responsible" government ministers and bourgeois editorialists alike will wink and look aside. We know full well that the bosses' secret police will not be abolished until the class dictatorship it serves is abolished -- smashed up, root and branch -- to be replaced by the class dictatorship of the proletariat. But neither do we scorn the modicum of protection afforded opponents of the capitalist system by bourgeois democracy. While only codifying past practice, the new ASIO legislation by generalising and sanctifying that nefarious practice has chilling implications for the future. It must be opposed by all supporters of democratic rights and the entire left and labour movement. *Smash the new legislation! Abolish ASIO and all the bosses' political police!*■

## Indochina...

Continued from page nine

witchhunt, sought to break out of its isolation by uncritically tailing after the episodically popular (with the American New Left) Castro regime, thereby abandoning the task of constructing revolutionary Trotskyist parties in the colonial world. What was once the chosen party of Leon Trotsky thus departed from its revolutionary heritage. Moving rapidly to the right, the SWP a few years later was openly courting a bloc with the defeatist wing of the US capitalist class, flatly denying that a social revolution was at stake in the Indochina war in order to avoid offending its liberal antiwar allies. "I'm personally for bringing the troops home", said the SWP's Fred Halstead, "but as for victory to the NLF, I don't know: I'm not Vietnamese!"

Today the SWP feels free to adulate "revolutionary" Cuba and "defend" Vietnam, but refuses in every concrete circumstance to proclaim its formally-held military defence of the Soviet Union because the USSR is the main enemy of the US ruling class, liberal and conservative wings alike. When it became clear that US liberals were nervous about Carter's virulent anti-Soviet posture on the Chinese invasion the SWP immediately sought to resurrect the old classless antiwar bloc. "Those who are genuinely concerned about aiding the Vietnamese revolution", wrote

Horowitz, "should be marching on the White House". As the hardened reformist aspirant to the role of US social democracy that it is today, the US SWP now gears all its policies to the sole criterion of ingratiating itself with the liberal wing of US imperialism.

#### Is Fidel "revolutionary"?

To distance Fidel Castro from the Brezhnev regime which he openly embraces, the SWP points to a difference in emphasis in Havana's propaganda from Moscow -- particularly Castro's pledge to send troops if Hanoi asked for them. In reality this was only a diplomatic division of labour: it's safe for Castro to verbally assail US imperialism and given his association with Brezhnev useful to Moscow without committing the USSR to anything.

How is Castro a "revolutionary internationalist"? He praises detente; his troops prop up the bloodthirsty dictator Mengistu's regime in Ethiopia while it carries out a genocidal war against the rebellious Eritrean minority; he embraced Allende and told Chilean workers to trust the "democratic" military of Pinochet; and his government persecutes and jails oppositionists and homosexuals. *After twenty years* Cuba still lacks soviets, the historic organs of workers democracy and the foundation of the dictatorship of the proletariat under Lenin and Trotsky in the Soviet Union of 1917-23. If Castro is so great, why isn't the United Secretariat's upcoming World Congress being held in Havana?

When Castro carried out widespread nationalisations in mid-1960, fully expropriating the bourgeoisie and establishing a deformed workers state, the US SWP hailed him as an "unconscious Trotskyist" implementing the program of permanent revolution. In fact it was not at all initially clear whether the bourgeois-democratic July 26 Movement which had succeeded in destroying the established bourgeois state would defend capitalist property relations or overthrow them and establish the basis for a planned economy. During 1959-60 Castro's was a petty-bourgeois government temporarily autonomous from the bourgeois order as a result of the military struggle against Batista. It was only the intense hostility of US imperialism which, given the crucial absence of conscious, independent intervention by the proletariat, drove Castro into Khrushchev's arms and engendered a split of the openly bourgeois elements from the July 26 Movement, leading to the expropriations.

Yet the SWP today characterises Pol Pot's Cambodia, which carried out wholesale collectivisation immediately upon coming to power, as capitalist because of the regime's totalitarian methods. Percy claimed that Pol Pot's disastrous, irrational forced collectivisation of the peasantry "reversed the agrarian revolution" which had given "land to the tiller". In our article, "Is Cambodia capitalist?" (*ASP* no 61, March 1979), we pointed out the absurdly anti-Marxist, "third-campist" character of the SWP's analysis of Cambodia, which Percy takes a step further by hinging the class character of property forms on whether the workers "think they have a stake" in them. And does Percy now think that Stalin's also disastrous forced collectivisation of the peasantry in 1929-32, which resulted in millions more deaths than Pol Pot was responsible for, "reversed the agrarian revolution" of 1917?

#### Reformism is a tissue of lies

Unlike Cuba, in both Cambodia and South Vietnam the victories of the Stalinist-led guerrilla forces resulted in the immediate creation of deformed workers states. Years of protracted civil war had led to a sharp class polarisation in which the bourgeois class as a whole was toppled from power -- and in the main driven from the country -- with the defeat of the imperialist puppet regimes. As there was no possibility that the new state powers could defend capitalist property relations, the exact timing of the nationalisations was secondary.

The SWP's seemingly endless series of dilemmas is an illustration that the truth is revolutionary -- and reformism a tissue of lies. We have no need to stand social reality on its head, for our program, the Trotskyist program, represents the perception of historical *necessity* for the international proletariat. As Peking threatens to launch a second invasion in response to Vietnamese demands that it clear out its remaining occupation forces, a Sino-Soviet war drawing in the US can still not be ruled out. The nascent US/China/Japan axis remains a dagger pointed at the heart of the Soviet degenerated workers state. While the SWP scurries off into its looking-glass world, we stand by our obligation as Trotskyists to preserve and extend the gains of October and the bureaucratically deformed revolutions which have overthrown capitalism elsewhere -- through unconditional military defence against imperialist attack; through workers political revolutions to oust the counterrevolutionary, nationalist bureaucracies from Moscow and Peking to Hanoi and Havana; and through socialist revolution to destroy imperialist capitalism for all time.■



## Hope "reforms" lead to sinister new powers Abolish ASIO!

As evidence of its commitment to the reform of ASIO (the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation), the Whitlam Labor government in 1974 appointed a royal commission of inquiry into the sinister political police agency. Not surprisingly the Hope Commission report released in 1977 found that "at times ASIO operated outside its statute, the law and established standards of propriety". So to avoid any embarrassment, the Fraser government has accepted the "civil libertarian" Justice Hope's recommendation to alter the statute, the law etc, and on 8 March Attorney-General Durack introduced a 33-page bill thoroughly overhauling ASIO's original 1956 charter.

The new charter will bring "terrorism" and "active measures of foreign intervention" under the ambit of "national security" and empower ASIO to carry out surveillance of organisations assisting "violent" political activity abroad -- ie any solidarity with the struggles of workers and the oppressed internationally. Along with three other pieces of legislation introduced simultaneously, it will expand ASIO's powers to break into and search premises, eavesdrop using listening devices, intercept and open mail and tap

the responsible government minister, the attorney-general, any say-so in determining who ASIO "targets", what information it chooses to communicate to the government or how it advises government departments on the basis of its surveillance. It will impose penalties ranging from a \$1000 fine to two years' imprisonment for obstructing an ASIO agent from carrying out his duties, for leaking "confidential" information about ASIO, or even for publicly identifying an agent or employee of ASIO!

The new charter represents a scandalous attack on democratic rights and a dangerous institutionalisation and legitimisation of the bonapartist appetites of the bosses' political police. Its provisions are so far-reaching that even an editorial in the *Financial Review* (21 March) labelled them a product of "the 1950's Petrov mentality" and warned of a "serious erosion of the Westminster concept of ministerial accountability". The *Financial Review* has little concern for the democratic rights of communists and working-class militants, but it is not oblivious to blatant restrictions on its own right to publish. Furthermore the neanderthal anti-communists who staff the political police are well known to carry out surveillance and harassment of thousands of "respectable" citizens -- ranging from ALP politicians who opposed the Vietnam war in the early seventies to liberal muckrakers like the Melbourne-based Committee for the Abolition of Political Police.

Two years ago the Spartacist League (SL) blew the lid off ASIO's sinister campaign of surveillance, infiltration and harassment of the left and labour movement. Our exposure of a self-confessed ASIO agent, Janet Langridge, who had been infiltrated into our organisation, hit the front pages and prime-time news broadcasts of newspapers and radio and television stations across the nation. A year earlier the reformist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) exposed a similar case of ASIO infiltration -- one of three ASIO spies found inside the SWP in three years. Now, not only will ASIO's criminal activities be legally expanded and legitimised, but their victims will be held to ransom. Such exposures will now be illegal. And even any agent or former agent who contemplates "turning" will face the threat of being slapped into jail.

To deflect attention from the flagrantly anti-democratic character of the "reforms", the government introduced the bill amid a hoopla of righteous attacks on drug smugglers and hysteria



The 1954 Petrov affair: ASIO dirty tricks fuelled hysterical anti-red witchhunt.

about "hostile intelligence agencies" posing a "serious threat" to Australia. Of course, most of the "foreign spies" running around Australia are those with whom ASIO works hand-in-hand to persecute and harass left-wing migrants accused of "assisting violent political activity abroad": the CIA, the South African BOSS and Chilean and Southeast Asian political police. As for the KGB, and the Stalinist bureaucracy it works for, it is criminal not because it gathers military intelligence necessary for the defence of the Soviet workers state, but precisely because the bureaucracy is incapable of carrying out that defence effectively.

All it took to win the support of the ALP "Opposition" for the new ASIO powers was to toss a few crumbs their way. Thus the legislation calls for the formation of a "security appeals tribunal" (a plank in the ALP platform and one of the recommendations of the Hope Commission) and entitles those who are adversely reported on by ASIO the right to see a copy of the report -- provided it is not deemed dangerous to "security"! It also stipulates that the prime minister must consult with the leader of the Opposition before appointing a new director-general. To maintain credibility as loyal servants of the bourgeois state, the ALP tops are quite prepared

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June 1977: Spartacist League exposed ASIO infiltration. New law makes such exposures illegal.

telephones and other telecommunications systems. It will allow the director-general of ASIO to authorise break-ins and phone taps in "emergency" situations lasting up to 48 hours without any ministerial approval or knowledge. It will deny

## Shut down Australia Post!

A major confrontation is looming at Australia Post, provoked by the Liberal Fraser government and designed to crush the militancy of the powerful Australian Postal and Telecommunications Union (APTU). Amid obscene howls about "Redfern ratbags" from Liberal MPs in their parliamentary sanctuary, the Fraser government has set out to smash the APTU's challenge to its wage freeze and purge the postal workers' most militant centre, the Redfern Mail Exchange in Sydney.

Toward the end of March nearly every section of the APTU initiated industrial actions to back up a nationwide campaign for a \$25-per-week wage increase designed to catch up on three years' worth of wage losses inflicted by the phoney "indexation" scheme. Telecom linesmen have banned the installation of business phones; Melbourne mail officers and NSW mail drivers have been working to regulation; other postal workers in NSW, Queensland and elsewhere have imposed overtime bans. Egged on by Fraser, the Postal Commission stood down over 200 mail drivers on 30 March in response to a 24-hour stoppage by Redfern mail officers, adding to earlier stand-downs in NSW and Canberra.

Particularly in the face of the Fraser government's provocations, half-hearted industrial actions can accomplish

nothing. Yet no section of the APTU leadership has fought for what's necessary -- a nationwide strike. General-secretary George Slater, who demonstrates where his commitment lies by sitting on the bosses' Postal Commission, has already stated that he would be satisfied with an \$8 increase. And the so-called "militants", NSW state secretary Merv Hawkins and general president Noel Battese, have consistently argued against even the imposition of total overtime bans and belittled suggestions of strike action as being just what Fraser wants to see. Does Fraser want to see every piece of mail in Australia stopped? Not likely! But the officials' trembling before Fraser shows the need for democratically elected shop-floor committees to run the strike.

Militants at a 30 March mass meeting of Redfern mail officers would have come away with a good idea of what the fake-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) will do for them if its touted "turn to industry" gives it the bureaucratic posts the SWP is thirsting for. SWP supporter Lynda Boland not only failed to call for the needed strike, but even joined Hawkins and Battese in voting down a ban on all overtime! Boland's distinctive contribution to the arsenal of the class struggle was to call for setting up a "publicity committee". Even an ALP-type bureaucrat on the outer can do a better job at faking militancy

than this supposed "Trotskyist"

The only way to win the campaign and beat back the Postal Commission's union-bashing attacks is by shutting down Australia Post and Telecom immediately. Pull out all the stops! If Redfern is crushed it will deal a body blow to the APTU nationally. Other Telecom and Australia Post workers cannot stand aside from this battle. Members of the Australian Telecommunications Employees Association (ATEA) in particular must demand that their leadership call them out simultaneously in a fight for a joint log of claims. A successful joint strike could set the stage for a militant democratic merger of the APTU and ATEA uniting all Telecom and Australia Post workers into one powerful industrial union.

Australia Post/Telecom workers can take a lead in cracking Fraser's austerity program wide open. At the same time they can strike a blow against depression-level unemployment. For months Redfern mail drivers have imposed overtime bans to defend their recently-granted 36¼-hour week against the bosses' sabotage. The national campaign must be broadened to demand jobs for all by shortening the work week. For a full, automatic cost-of-living escalator for all wages! For a 30-hour week with no loss in pay! Shut down Telecom/Australia Post! Full support to a nationwide strike!