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TWENTY CENTS

Fraser's war on unions

When 26,000 Australian Telecommunications Employees Association (ATEA) technicians imposed limited work bans on Telecom to back up a 20 percent wage claim on 22 June, their leadership did not bargain for a full-scale nationwide confrontation. Yet that was just what they got. Under government pressure, Telecom took a hard-line stance, refusing to negotiate, imposing stand-downs, even sending its cops on midnight raids (6 July) to serve charges against four ATEA members for refusing to repair vital equipment as directed. But it was the Liberal prime minister, Malcolm Fraser, who really turned up the heat in this one, with his 13 July proclamation of a particularly savage anti-strike law -- the Commonwealth Employees (Employment Provisions) Act (CEEP).

Fraser's move came straight on the heels of the ACTU's 21 June "national day of protest" against the WA Court government's outrageous arrest of ten unionists for holding an "illegal" strike meeting. The bureaucracy's cowardly refusal to launch a struggle -- even on highly favourable terrain, that of the basic democratic right of assembly -- gave the green light to Fraser's long-awaited anti-union offensive. The potential for a solid display of working-class power -- a *general strike* -- was there. But bureaucratic sabotage transformed that potential into a demoralising, half-hearted fiasco. "If the bourgeoisie was taking pains to distance itself from Court's openly provocative tactics", we warned, "they will be only too quick to follow suit if he succeeds". Court did succeed, and CEEP is now the spearhead of a *rapidly escalating*, aggressive drive toward an all-out confrontation with the unions.

Originally passed in Parliament in August 1977, CEEP empowers the government to suspend, stand down and ultimately sack its employees engaged in industrial action -- and even to stand down those laid idle by such action elsewhere -- without recourse to the cumbersome machinery of Arbitration. "An immediate and unambiguous response" (ASp no 46, September 1977) would have smashed it before it ever got on the statute books. But instead of organising the needed general strike, the ACTU/CAGEO tops issued hollow promises of "industrial action on a national scale" when the legislation was "employed". Now it has been employed -- against the ATEA -- threatened against Redfern postal workers, and threatened again against Administrative and Clerical Officers Association (ACOA) and Australian Public Service Association (APSA) members fighting yet another anti-union law, the Commonwealth Employment (Redeployment and Retirement) Act (CERR). And with every unchallenged assault, Fraser's confidence that he can ride roughshod over the unions is bolstered.

In a red-baiting speech whose ominous implications were to become clear with rumours of the sack for some 160 Redfern militants a week later, Fraser ranted on nationwide television Sunday evening, 22 July:

"Do they want confrontation? Do some union leaders want to destroy our industries? Do they want to destroy this nation? It is perhaps timely to recall that some union leaders are ideologically committed to destroying the Australia we know."



Sydney, 23 July: CAGEO mass meeting votes to maintain bans, later lifted. Government workers need strike action to win.

Using language that the timid bureaucrats would never dare, he made it clear several days earlier that he was prepared to shut Redfern down, and by implication to *shut the whole country down*, "until this matter comes to some sense" (*Australian*, 21 July). The whole country *should* be shut down -- through an immediate, indefinite, nationwide *general strike* organised by the ACTU and CAGEO to smash the CEEP, CERR and Australia Post's Mail Network Plan, to force the dropping of all charges against unionists arrested in WA and the repeal of Court's notorious Section 54B of the Police Act! And this time any attempt at bureaucratic sabotage must be frustrated through the creation of rank-and-file-elected strike committees to chart every tactic and oversee every phase of the negotiations. *If Fraser wants a fight, give it to him -- on the workers terms!*

Hawke: "If this is a victory, I'd hate to see a defeat"

The bourgeois offensive has been accompanied by a deafening barrage of anti-union propaganda in much of the media. But the crescendo of diatribes about national "self-destruction" (*Australian*, 5 July) had more to do with the bourgeoisie's belligerence than with the degree of disruption. Only days after lauding Fraser's proclamation of CEEP, Murdoch's *Australian* generously admitted -- once the ATEA bans had been lifted -- that Fraser's action had been unnecessary after all.

The ATEA, Redfern and ACOA/APSA work actions were part of a wave of limited, losing protest strikes. In contrast a solid nationwide watersiders' strike in early July quickly succeeded in winning the reinstatement of 81 wharfies stood down or sacked in WA, though a subsequent, substantially *less solid* strike (exempting much shipping) against a renewed attempt to sack the same workers had dragged on for several days into August. And the ten-week-long strike by Pilbara iron-ore miners at Hamersley Iron was a solid, militant struggle which stopped all production and received considerable support from all over the country, even though the workers accepted less than the original 40 percent wage claim.

But that *was* the exception. When the ATEA bans on selected repair work finally started to bite -- shutting down most interstate and international telephone service -- Hawke pushed through, against considerable opposition, a settlement which scarcely brought the union back to square one: an end to the stand-downs and a "work value" hearing. Even Hawke admitted in a more candid moment *after* the bans had been lifted: "If this is a victory, I'd hate to see a defeat" (*National Times*, 21 July)!

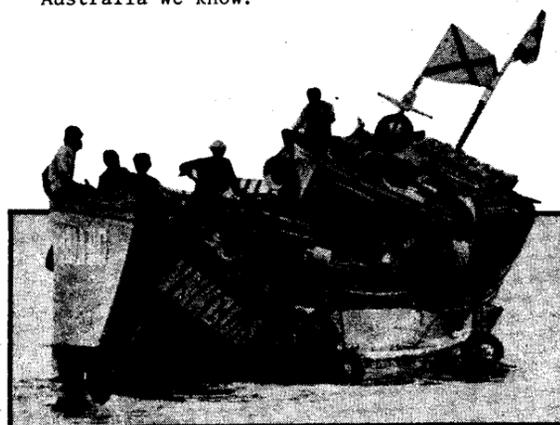
All he had to do was look. After weeks of bans, "work-ins", "passive resistance" and wooing "public opinion", both the public service and postal workers returned with *less* than they had started. Australia Post has sharply *escalated* its plans to dismantle Redfern, the government has now refused to continue collecting ACOA/APSA union dues, and the CERR remains -- ready to clean out "radicals" and clear the way for Fraser's job-slashing "austerity" program through forcible "retirement" of "redundant" workers in the public service.

One attack after another

And the end is not in sight. On 22 July Fraser advised a WA Liberal state conference that all unions in the Pilbara iron-ore industry be de-registered and replaced by a single "industry" (read: company) union. The same day Court threatened to outlaw compulsory unionism; Bjelke-Petersen is talking of laws empowering the government to fine strikers and use scabs and troops to run "essential services"; and Victoria's Hamer is promising to institute that old favourite, secret ballots for strike votes. In 1977, in calling for a general strike to smash the IRB Bill, we forecast that:

"Should this legislation be allowed to pass as a result of the treacherous passivity of the labour bureaucracy it will give Fraser the advantage in choosing the time and setting for a 'legal' offensive to smash the unions -- to pave the way for an unchallenged assault on

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Outrage at US union convention

Carter's cops gag militant

On 16 July, shortly before US president Jimmy Carter's "Human Rights" speech was scheduled to speak before the forty-first annual convention of the Communications Workers of America (CWA), US Secret Service agents grabbed union official Jane Margolis in front of hundreds of stunned delegates, handcuffed her and dragged her protesting off the convention floor. This is the first known time that the Secret Service has invaded a union convention and seized a union officer. Margolis has announced that she intends to seek maximum legal redress for this outrage.

The incident attracted coast-to-coast news coverage -- with features in the *New York Times*, the *Detroit News* and the major San Francisco dailies, the *Chronicle* and the *Examiner* -- and was picked up on by bourgeois commentators to highlight Carter's political fragility and his need for stage-managed audiences as he "goes to the people" to deliver his sermon on rekindling the "spirit of America". As one Detroit television news broadcast reported that evening, "One person that wanted to ask the president some hard questions was earlier taken from Cobo Hall in handcuffs..." White House officials at first denied that anyone had been detained, but changed the story after a CBS television newsman reported accidentally finding Jane Margolis in a back room to which she had been abducted by the agents.

Agents had surrounded Margolis, 32, an elected delegate and a member of the executive board of CWA Local 9410 (San Francisco), as she was standing with her delegation. Without warning they rushed her from the hall and locked her in an adjoining room. Out of sight of the convention delegates federal agents handled Jane, threatening to hold her incommunicado for days -- on the basis of "reports" from unidentified "sources" -- for suspicion of threatening the life of the president. While she was being subject to interrogation and refused access to a lawyer, Detroit police told Margolis she was under arrest on unspecified charges. Thirty-five minutes later she was released, without explanation, but subjected to continued intensive surveillance by the Secret Service even after returning to the convention floor.

In an interview with *Workers Vanguard* (fortnightly paper of the Spartacist League/US [SL/US]) which was subsequently aired on New York's WBAI radio station, Margolis detailed the reaction of union delegates to her seizure: "There were a number of delegates from the West Coast and from my own delegation that were planning on having a walkout from the convention in protest. First several of them tried to get the microphone on the convention floor and protest to the International [union] officers that I had been dragged off the convention floor. The microphone was turned off, they were not recognised. They were not allowed to speak to the convention. Watts [CWA International president] had told people to ignore the disruption in the back of the hall."

Even when Margolis was allowed back into the convention hall the gagging continued. "The procedure that they used for [Carter's] question-and-answer period was that the first 20 people in line at the different microphones would be the people that would be able to ask questions ... and I was number 15 to get there. I was then read off as one of the 20 people that would be asking questions of the president ... [but at] delegate number 12 they cut off the discussion."

In New York, James Robertson, national chair-

man of the SL/US, immediately issued a vehement protest upon learning of the seizure of Margolis, an SL supporter and long-time personal friend. "What the Secret Service did to Jane is an outrage against organised labour", he said. "We don't have kings here. According to the laws, every citizen is supposed to have equal rights. But Jimmy Carter's personal goons simply march into a union convention and mug a woman who is an elected union official! Furthermore, Jane Margolis was in that meeting by right -- Jimmy Carter was an invited guest. We demand that Jane Margolis be released immediately.... And we demand that this Jimmy Carter apologise in his speech ... for his unprecedented attack on the union. Jane Margolis never shut down any gas pumps!"

Jane Margolis is a spokesman for the Militant Action Caucus (MAC), an opposition grouping politically supported by the SL/US with a seven-year history in the union. "We want to fight to form a class-struggle leadership inside the CWA", Margolis told *Workers Vanguard*. "We want to stop company collaboration on the part of our union leadership."

The MAC has repeatedly protested against government interference in the labour movement, particularly by the CIA in Latin America. Earlier in the day Margolis was prevented by the chair from presenting a motion that the union convention not allow itself to be used as a platform for the anti-labour strike-breaking policies of the Democrats. In a leaflet to the convention the following day the MAC demanded, "Where does Jimmy Carter think he is -- Iran or Chile?", and pointed out that "if this year they can handcuff and detain the only delegate who spoke against Carter at last year's convention, then it's clear what kind of attacks Carter has in store for the whole union in our 1980 contract fight!"

For the capitalist class which this peanut baron represents, the rights of working people and the integrity of their labour organisations can be violated at their whim. Carter himself, on the other hand, is protected by a host of *lese*

The following telegram was sent to US president Jimmy Carter on 3 August 1979 by Merv Nixon, secretary of the South Coast Labor Council in Wollongong.

The South Coast Labor Council in its 53 years representing 165,000 workers on the South Coast of NSW express their extreme concern and total dissatisfaction over the arrest of Jane Margolis, delegate at the CWA convention. Such actions are an outrage against organised labour. Await your reply.

majeste laws which give his armed thugs the right, among other things, to grab all "suspicious" persons for preventive detention.

Jane Margolis was suspected of planning to do something which was absolutely intolerable to Carter -- exercise her democratic right to speak out on the floor of the convention of her trade union and expose his little energy confidence game for the cheap hustle that it is. So, she was subjected to "preventive" gagging. But the only "weapon" that this trade-union militant had pointed at the heart of the president was the simple truth that the energy crisis is not a crisis of confidence or faith or prayer or the rest of Carter's empty "born again" hokum, but a crisis of *capitalism*.

Carter had said, "I'm listening to the voices of Americans", but, in the words of the *San Francisco Examiner* (18 July) headline, Jane Margolis was "One critic Carter didn't hear". Carter is so manifestly unpopular, his support so shallow and his program such an obvious con game that he can't risk the slightest encounter with the truth. What if this trade unionist had punctured Carter's hot air balloon?

Here are excerpts from the statement Margolis had intended to make to the convention if she hadn't been stopped by Carter's thugs:

"Jimmy Carter came here today to get approval from the working people for his energy program -- the program that blames us for the energy crisis because of our 'greed', our 'gas guzzling' and our 'self-indulgence'. While they hop around the country in their Lear jets and limousines, the capitalists would like to convince us that it is our duty to make sacrifices for the good of the country, to settle for the 7 percent guideline while the cost of



Secret Service seizes union delegate Jane Margolis.

living soars at 14 percent.... "The CWA convention must not be turned into a platform for the racist anti-labor Democratic Party of Jimmy Carter. I want to remind the delegates how in 1978 when the heroic miners shut down the coalfields for the right to strike and for adequate health and safety protection Carter invoked the slave-labor Taft-Hartley injunction to break their strike. Let's remember how in the face of soaring black unemployment and desperate ghetto poverty, Carter's callous response was simply that 'life is unfair'....

"I came to this convention on the platform -- 'Not a dime, not a vote for the strikebreaking Democrats and Republicans!' This is the program I ran on. This is the program on which I was elected to my local Executive Board and on which I have twice in a row been elected a delegate to this convention. In Carter's speech last night he told us to 'stop cursing and start praying'. We say it's time to start fighting! And our fight must be to break labor's ties to the bosses' parties and to form a powerful workers party to lead us as we struggle for a workers government."

(adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 236, 20 July 1979)

Cops rampage in Q'ld, SA

On 27 July Queensland police arrested yet another 95 people for attempting to march in the streets of Brisbane including ALP parliamentarians George Georges, Arthur Gietzelt, Tom Uren and other leading ALP and trade-union figures. But anyone who deludes themselves that such things only happen in the reactionary "deep north" should take a close look at that ALP-governed Sweden-in-the-southern-hemisphere, South Australia. A recent leaflet issued by the Adelaide-based Maoist Worker-Student Alliance for Australian Independence (WSAAI) describes a vicious attack on a 21 July "Australian Cultural Association" dance by a sinister "anti-terrorist" outfit called "Star Force", a detachment of ALP premier Des Corcoran's state police. Five of these scum forced their way into the dance, provocatively singled out and attacked known leftists and, with the arrival of 30 more cops, arrested 15 people, including 7 blacks and some WSAAI supporters -- on charges of "loitering" and "resisting arrest". One arrested man was viciously bashed about the head and the chief "Star Force" thug held a loaded pistol at the head of another threatening to "blow your fucking head up!"

Whether under Bjelke-Petersen or Corcoran capitalism's cops are the class enemy of the workers and oppressed, murderous enforcers of the racist status quo. These vicious cop attacks must be met not with Georges/Uren's civil-libertarian pacifism or futile confrontations but massive, organised trade-union action. Smash Petersen's ban on marches! Drop the charges in Q'ld and SA! Abolish the "Star Force"!

Australasian

SPARTACIST



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When Labor "left" Tom Uren asserted at last month's ALP conference that ASIO had been tapping his phone for the past sixteen years, party leader Bill Hayden cynically dismissed it as "a lot of obsessional concern". "Do they want ASIO to operate from a department store?", he demanded of its critics. Reminding the delegates that current ASIO top cop, Justice Woodward, was "our appointee", Hayden denied any unjustifiable infringements of civil liberties by this sinister secret police outfit -- despite a voluminous and well-documented history of ASIO spying and "dirty tricks". Even the whitewashing Hope Commission admitted two years ago that "at times [!] ASIO operated outside its statute, the law and established standards of propriety".

Hayden's defence of ASIO was hardly exceptional; it has been ALP policy since the strike-breaking Chifley government first set it up in 1949. But to extend a *carte blanche* endorsement to ASIO spying against leading members of his own party was scandalous even for a social democrat. For this ex-cop turned prime ministerial aspirant concern with ASIO may seem like an "obsession". But thousands of the rest of us in the labour movement have good cause to be "obsessed" with ASIO, particularly with the foreshadowing of far-reaching new powers in Parliament. It is an open secret that ASIO taps phones, opens mail and maintains files on hundreds of thousands of Australians -- ranging from trade unionists and ALP members to migrants, communists and even religious nut groups like the Ananda Marga and the Church of Scientology.

And those files get used -- to purge and harass anyone deemed "undesirable" in the eyes of the Australian bourgeoisie: socialists, trade-union militants, Irish nationalists, Palestinian nationalists, and not least, the one billion Asians whom "White Australia" fears with racist contempt. Right now some 160 militants at the Redfern Mail Exchange are threatened with the sack, victims of an ongoing campaign of surveillance and harassment, including the rifling of personal lockers. Last month IRA activist Phillip McCullough was forced to leave under deportation threats in the middle of a speaking tour, ostensibly for failing to report to immigration authorities a term in British imperialism's concentration camps for allegedly blowing up a phone box.

He is not the first. Italian left-wing migrant organiser Ignazio Salemi was abducted from a Melbourne street in broad daylight and whisked aboard a plane without even being permitted a farewell to his wife and children. Malaysian student activist Hishamuddin Rais was forced into hiding to escape the torture chamber which likely awaited him upon deportation to that dictatorship. In 1974, Commonwealth cops and Immigration officers carried out a brutal pre-dawn raid on 14 Fijian "illegal" migrants in Brisbane as part of a generalised crackdown on migrants from that Australian neo-colony, bashing them, throwing them into prison and shipping them out that same morning. The real reasons for these "unjustifiable infringements on civil liberties" -- and countless others -- had nothing to do with the "terrorism" and "falsification" conveniently pinned on McCullough. As Phillip Lynch, then minister for immigration, explained when black American antiwar activist Dick Gregory was denied an entry permit in 1970:

"This government is not prepared to allow the entry to Australia of persons whose activities are stated to be contrary to the national interest ... a one-sided, distorted anti-war moratorium campaign." (*Australian*, 3 September 1970)

In the service of butcher Pinochet

In its defence of the "national interest", ASIO maintains direct "service-to-service" links with some of the most notorious assassination squads in the world -- the Indonesian BAKIN, the South African BOSS, the Greek ESA (under the junta's rule), the Israeli MOSAD, the Chilean DINA, the British MI5, and not least of all, the CIA. So extensive is the ASIO "Foreign Service" that, as documented in Richard Hall's *The Secret*

Bonapartist spy law gets ALP's OK

ASIO: Hitmen for imperialism



ASp photo

ASIO "surveillance" means Pinochet's torture mill (left) for Chilean migrants. Sydney anti-deportation protest, 1977.

State, this part alone extends to sixteen countries and for the year 1973-74 involved a budget of \$300,000 -- hidden in the appropriations for the Immigration Department and operating under its cover.

The intimate, direct links between the CIA and ASIO revealed during the Stallings affair, in which the ostensible "NASA satellite tracking" station at Pine Gap was exposed as an operation run lock, stock and barrel by the CIA was but one example of ASIO's fealty to the CIA. But despite a conscious and somewhat farcical attempt to replicate the American intelligence services, right down to such typical FBI euphemisms and practices as keeping files on "Persons coming under notice" -- ie virtually anyone who may have been spotted for the first time at a demonstration or some other "suspect" activity -- ASIO is very much the junior partner, seen by its big brothers, like the CIA, as hopeless incompetents:

For millions of leftists and labour militants everywhere, CIA is synonymous with assassination -- Che Guevara, Patrice Lumumba, Salvador Allende, the countless Vietnamese freedom fighters who fell victim to the CIA-inspired "strategic hamlets", the tens of thousands of Latin American militants whose last ounce of life was exacted from them through grisly electric shocks and inhuman sexual tortures. ASIO is not big enough to finance and direct dictatorial coups, genocidal massacres and cold-blooded assassinations throughout the world. Australia is after all a very *secondary* imperialist power. But its secret police dabble in international reaction wherever they can.

The most graphic example is Chile. The Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS) had two agents in Santiago in the period leading up to the junta coup. Two years later, in a sinister report on Chilean migrant groups in Australia dated 22 January 1976 (reprinted in *The Secret State*) ASIO determined that "some" of the refugees from junta terror admitted into Australia were "politically suspect". Focusing centrally on the pro-MIR Antorcha group and its links with the now defunct Mandelita Communist League, the report revealed ASIO infiltration -- undoubtedly in collusion with the murderous DINA!

"Politically suspect" was a euphemism for the death sentence! Little more than a year later upwards of 30 migrants had reportedly been issued with deportation orders -- in what was clearly a joint ASIO/DINA crackdown on the Chilean migrant community here -- and at least four others deported, one of whom was never heard from again. *Australia was the only country in the world besides junta-run Argentina which was trafficking in bodies with the blood-drenched Chilean dictatorship!* In united-front defence demonstrations in Sydney and Melbourne at the time, the Spartacist League (SL) demanded full citizenship

rights for the migrants and raised as a watchword for the labour movement: "Not one Chilean militant back to Pinochet's torture chambers!"

ASIO's constant war on all enemies of the Australian bourgeoisie -- perceived, declared or imagined -- makes it a bastion of "reds under the beds" anti-communism and reactionary bonapartist appetites. ASIO's bitter hostility to the Whitlam Labor government and its overriding loyalty to the CIA was manifested in the anti-ALP communiques in 1972 between the CIA and ASIO behind the government's back and led to the "midnight raid" on ASIO headquarters by ALP attorney-general, Lionel Murphy, in response to ASIO's cover-up of the right-wing terrorist Ustasha. The bonapartist mentality of the bourgeoisie's professional thugs was captured in the White report on the SA Special Branch: "Special Branch believed that it owed a greater loyalty to itself and its own concept of security than to the Government" (quoted in the *Australian*, 19 January 1978).

It is this bonapartist appetite inherent in the bosses' political police which the 33-page ASIO Bill before Parliament legitimises. Communists know full well that the bosses' secret police will carry out their nefarious underground war on any opponents of their stench-ridden capitalist system whether or not the ground rules are neatly laid out in the statute books. But what this legislation seeks to do is eliminate even the nominal redress of due process and legal self-defence afforded by bourgeois democracy.

Who are the real terrorists?

The Fraser government's moves to reinforce their secret police come in the context of a general right-wing offensive by bourgeois repressive apparatuses around the world -- and a concomitant attack on trade-union rights -- as a bulwark against any working-class response to the deepening recession. Massive deportations of migrants from Northern Europe; sharpening restrictions on international travel, particularly of leftists; reintroduction of the death penalty in the US -- as well as a reinforcement of the "moral" and legal authority of the police and the state in the wake of Watergate. So brazen is the bourgeoisie that the Carter administration even dared send its cops to muzzle trade-union militant, Jane Margolis, right on the floor of a union convention -- an incident as scandalous as it was unprecedented (see "Carter's cops gag militant", this issue).

In its present form (the government has mooted vague changes in response to criticisms of its more blatantly anti-democratic provisions), the bill threatens anyone who has ever worked for ASIO with up to two years' imprisonment for revealing any information -- even that they were employed by it! Anyone who publicly names any

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SYDNEY CLASS SERIES

Marxism and the struggle for proletarian power, 1870-1917

We are the party of the Russian Revolution	Wednesday, 8 August
The Paris Commune and armed insurrection	Wednesday, 15 August
Russia -- the early period through the split in the Social Democracy	Wednesday, 22 August
The 1905 Revolution	Wednesday, 29 August
WWI and the split in the Second International	Wednesday, 5 September
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For military defence of Vietnam!

Imperialist sabre-rattling over refugees

In one of his regular broadcasts to his electorate last month Malcolm Fraser thundered that the Socialist Republic of Vietnam was "Nazi-like" for supposedly forcing its ethnic Chinese population onto the high seas to perish. Fraser's comparison to the Nazis was one of many in an unholy alliance of anti-communist hypocrisy which extended from US vice-president, Walter Mondale, to such leading German bourgeois papers as *Die Welt* to, of course, the Stalinist bureaucracy in Peking -- accurately reflecting the US/China alliance consummated by China's recent invasion of Vietnam. With nauseating uniformity they denounced the Hanoi rulers as "Nazis" and the refugee outflow as a "holocaust" and Hitlerite "mass slaughter on the high seas". Carter even climbed up the White House fence to greet pro-"boat people" demonstrators. And the alliance was replicated on a small but grotesque scale in one protest against the Vietnamese ambassador to the United Nations in Chicago, which attracted a collection of Maoists, pro-Thieu Vietnamese and jackbooted Nazis in full stormtrooper regalia.

The plight of the tens of thousands of "boat people" leaving Vietnam -- many drowned at sea as their overloaded dinghies and trawlers capsize -- is indeed horrible. But the crescendo of anti-Vietnamese vituperation unleashed by the US and the other imperialist powers and the reactionary ASEAN "front line" states (Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore, Phillipines) is the most revolting hypocrisy. Southeast Asian governments threaten to push the refugees back out to sea, and Malaysia has even threatened to shoot the boat people on sight. The truth is that none of Washington's client states in the region wants anything to do with the boat people, and couldn't care less if they all drowned.

As for the recent two-day UN conference in Geneva for Southeast Asian refugees, it turned out to be an anti-climactic affair. Instead of the grandiose propaganda coup against Vietnam which the imperialists had desired, the meeting concluded with UN secretary-general Waldheim's announcement that Hanoi would do its best to stem "illegal departures" from the country. The recent addition of a five-ship task force of the Seventh Fleet -- including an 80,000-ton aircraft carrier -- to "pick up refugees" (a total of 65 were picked up in one week!) spoke volumes about Carter's "humanitarian" concerns. Hanoi correctly blasted the presence of this minor armada off its shores as creating an "explosive situation" and astutely noted that it was only encouraging even more refugees to climb into their boats (*Australian*, 30 July).

Who are the boat people?

When North Vietnamese and NLF forces took Saigon and smashed capitalist class rule in South Vietnam in April 1975, the professional torturers working for the Pentagon, the ruthless war profiteers, the drug traffickers and remnants of the indigenous capitalist police force and army made a furious scramble to get out of the country. Their suitcases packed with everything from gold bars to heroin, the human refuse of the corrupt Thieu dictatorship frantically piled onto the ships, planes and helicopters of their US imperialist overlords to the safety of the West.

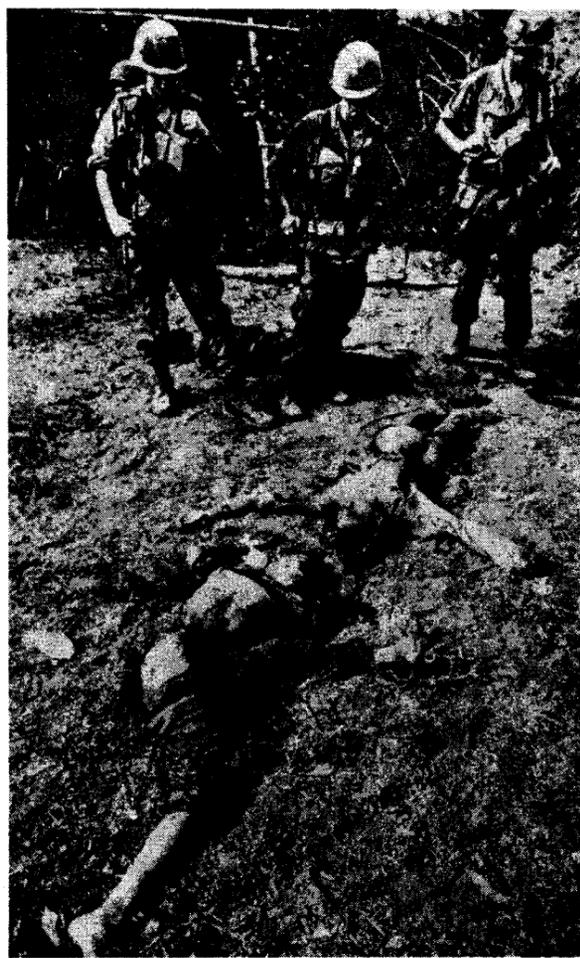
Today the situation has changed somewhat. No doubt among those heading out of the country now there are many particularly odious types who amassed fortunes through wholesale corruption and servicing of American imperialism's personnel during the Vietnam war. But the chief criminals, the Nguyen Cao Kys, Thieus and the rest unfortunately got out early, courtesy of their US masters. Those leaving now are much more marginal and dispensable to imperialism. The very fact that it is they who are left helpless in the South China Sea, not the Marshal Kys, is eloquent testimony to that.

Self-evidently there is a strong ethnic component to the present mass emigration from Vietnam, as the overwhelming majority of those leaving in leaky boats are of Chinese (Hoa) background. But the fundamental source is economic. Many among the "boat people" are former businessmen from southern Vietnam whose shops were expropriated in the nationalisations of last year. There are also many petty bourgeois who have seen their living standards drop sharply since the departure of the US military machine, which had produced a hypertrophy of the urban economy under the Thieu regime. Today their yearning for the society of tape decks and motor bikes is so great that, clinging desperately to nets on the side of broken-down freighters, they will risk a watery grave in order to reach the slums of some "free enterprise" metropolis where they can take their chances at accumulating a pitiful capital. What has happened is that a whole social layer has become superfluous in the aftermath of revolution.

The political/economic source of the "boat people" exodus was unwittingly suggested by a letter writer to the *New York Times* (16 July) who innocently suggested that Russian ships in the area should pick up refugees. Most of them would rather die first. The giant smokestacks bearing hammers and sickles would symbolise everything they are trying to escape. For the same reason, the "boat people" don't set sail for China, their

ethnic "homeland". There was in southern Vietnam a large merchant/trading community, overwhelmingly Chinese in composition, centred on the huge city of Cholon, next door to Saigon. They have uncles and cousins in Hong Kong or Singapore and close ties to the "overseas Chinese", who number more than 100 million and hold pivotal roles in the economy of every Southeast Asian capitalist state. Before and for a time after the fall of the Saigon regime the rice trade in southern Vietnam was almost exclusively in Chinese hands. Now this exploitative role has been abolished with the introduction of a planned, collectivised economy. And given Hanoi's relations with China, obviously they will find little place for their skills in the bureaucracy.

There is also heavy compulsion by the Vietnamese rulers on the ethnic Chinese. In part this



US imperialism's "human rights" in Vietnam, 1967.

too is economic: thousands of families from the southern cities, including many ethnic Vietnamese, are being ordered to resettlement areas, the so-called "New Economic Zones". There they are both isolated and subjected to a regime of heavy labour in unaccustomed agricultural work. Such measures are in fact economically necessary in a country which has seen its peasantry destroyed or driven into the cities by imperialist terror bombing, and as a result now faces an enormous chronic shortfall in domestic food grain production. A large part of the urban petty-bourgeoisie is being forced to become either workers or (predominantly) peasants, at enormous personal costs. But the choice is objectively posed by life. Faced with the prospects of these hardships, the boat people have chosen to flee the country.

There may well be active discrimination by the Hanoi bureaucracy against the Hoas, as well. The Hanoi rulers have at the very least tolerated the flight, though hardly forcibly "expelling" Chinese as claimed by the imperialists. With the

chauvinist, nationalist logic of all Stalinists, Hanoi sees all ethnic Chinese as a potential "fifth column" should Peking decide to renew its invasion. Unofficial Hanoi spokesman Wilfred Burchett has put out this story, and official Vietnamese statements say as much:

"They [the 'Peking reactionaries'] have continued pushing already-trained Hoa back to Vietnam or to other South-East Asian countries to serve as a 'fifth column'...." (Vietnamese Ministry of Foreign Affairs statement, 21 June)

The same Burchett admitted, however, that Vietnamese bureaucracy will safeguard the rights of national/racial minorities, least of all a minority which they regard as a potential enemy. But the outraged protests of the Peking Stalinists about anti-Chinese chauvinism on the part of Hanoi are patently cynical, coming from a regime which has institutionalised Han-chauvinist oppression of national minorities in its own country. Moreover, Peking's invasion of Vietnam earlier this year sharply exacerbated the grave economic problems which have contributed to the magnitude of the present departure.

As Trotskyists we have no confidence that the Vietnamese bureaucracy will safeguard the rights of national/racial minorities, least of all a minority which they regard as a potential enemy. But the outraged protests of the Peking Stalinists about anti-Chinese chauvinism on the part of Hanoi are patently cynical, coming from a regime which has institutionalised Han-chauvinist oppression of national minorities in its own country. Moreover, Peking's invasion of Vietnam earlier this year sharply exacerbated the grave economic problems which have contributed to the magnitude of the present departure.

Trotskyists know that many of those in prison today in Vietnam are vicious enemies of the working people, active counterrevolutionary opponents of proletarian rule in Indochina. But we also point out that the Stalinist bureaucracy has politically expropriated the working class at the same time that it overthrew capitalist rule. The murderers of the Vietnamese Trotskyists in 1945 no doubt have left-wing critics of their regime in jails as well. We defend Vietnam from imperialist attack because its expropriation of the bourgeoisie represents a historic social gain; we call for political revolution to oust the Hanoi misrulers because the Stalinist caste represents a roadblock in the path to socialism.

In 1975, the Spartacist tendency demanded "No Asylum for Indochinese War Criminals" and called for the return of these vicious killers to Vietnam. We said that they should be brought to justice before the napalm victims and starving peasants they exploited and sought to butcher. We also warned that these thugs could become a stridently rightist organising centre for attempts to restore capitalist rule in Indochina, as well as for attacks on the working class of their new country of residence.

This has already begun to happen. Former professional hitmen of the Thieu regime who made it to Australia have been banding together in organisations like the Greater Overseas Alliance for the National Restoration of Vietnam (GOANRV) and the Vietnamese Association of Australia and have begun systematic harassment of the workers movement here. On 20 April, some 200 of these goons staged a vicious attack on a trade-union-organised concert in Sydney to aid Vietnam, injuring several workers (see *ASP* no 63, May 1979). Less visible but equally reactionary is the US-based "Black April" group which has terrorised Vietnamese living in the United States whom it considers too liberal or sympathetic to the new regime.

Like the *gusanos* who fled to Miami from Cuba following the revolution against Batista and who have similarly steeped themselves in the dirtiest, bloodiest, anti-communist skulduggery, counterrevolutionary scum such as "Black April" or the GOANRV are a threat to the workers movement in whatever country they come to rest. Already they have been employed by the now toppled Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua (with



Boat people: pawns in imperialist crusade against Vietnam and the Soviet Union.

no more success than Thieu's ARVN had in Vietnam).

We certainly do not welcome the arrival of well-heeled anti-communists whose specialty is trade in prostitutes, opium or other goods. Identified war criminals among the current wave of fugitives should be sent back immediately to Indochina to stand trial -- as should the butcher Thieu, who today lives comfortably in a London suburb, or mass murderer Lon Nol, now relaxing in a Hawaii mansion, or the GOANRV's Vo Dai Ton. It could only be chauvinist, however, to campaign against admission of the mass of the boat people.

For example, the clamour raised against the boat people when they first started landing in Darwin two years ago was at least as much an outgrowth of the insidiously racist "White Australia" mentality historically rampant here as with any aversion to these refugees from a social revolution. Such chauvinist sentiments have since been given a virtual imprimatur by the recent ALP conference, which resolved that refugees should be placed in segregated "transit camps" until resettlement elsewhere. The same chauvinism was manifested in a more ominous way in a recent by-election in the NSW federal seat of Grayndler, which has a relatively large concentration of Vietnamese refugees, when the fascist and viciously anti-Asian National Alliance attracted over 1000 votes its first time out and openly anti-Asian signs were posted outside the homes of several Vietnamese families.

Counterrevolutionary crusade

While making no concessions to anti-Asian chauvinism directed against the boat people, revolutionaries must intransigently combat the anti-communist furor which the bourgeoisie has whipped up over their plight. The current frenzy comes in the context of Jimmy Carter's anti-Soviet "human rights" crusade, which is also aimed at close allies of the USSR, like Vietnam. Thus the fact that 48,000 illegal emigrants from China entered Hong Kong in May alone has been studiously downplayed by the world press. In fact Indonesia has claimed that mainland Chinese were sneaking in among the Hoa boat people by the hundreds every month in an *organised* exodus. Nor does the bourgeois press often mention the fact that the largest number of Indochinese refugees were settled in Vietnam itself -- close to half a million Cambodians who fled from Pol Pot's particularly tyrannical brand of Stalinism.

The capitalists' protestations of humanitarian concern are staggering in their hypocrisy. For 30 years, first the French, then the Americans and Australians butchered Vietnamese and ethnic Chinese alike in their attempts to crush all opposition to imperialist rule in Indochina. The B-52 bombing raids, the napalm and tiger cages left a million workers and peasants dead. Agri-

cultural land and forests throughout the country are now unusable, thanks to the US government's sophisticated chemical defoliants, while the crucial irrigation system is likewise in ruins. Nationally, staple food rations in Vietnam were deficient by 30 percent overall last year.

Moreover, when it came to refugees from the undisputed terror of a right-wing capitalist dictatorship -- Pinochet's Chile -- the US imperialists and Chinese Stalinists simply didn't want to hear about it. While Peking's embassy closed its doors to leftists seeking to flee the murderous Santiago junta, the US for several years refused to accept any refugees from Chile. Australia even shipped some back to the butcher Pinochet! The Southeast Asian reactionaries of ASEAN have followed the lead of their imperialist patrons. For example, Malaysia (whose Muslim rulers fear a powerful Chinese minority) recently unhesitatingly accepted 70,000 Muslim refugees from the Philippines, while threatening to shoot any boat people approaching its shores. And Indonesia has been guilty of massive attacks on its own ethnic Chinese minority: thousands of the half million slaughtered in the anti-communist coup of 1965 were Chinese and there were new pogroms in 1967-68 and 1974.

But it is more than hypocrisy. The imperialists are itching to take punitive action against Vietnam. They can hardly take any more non-military measures since economic and political sanctions are already in full force. And the crushing US defeat in Indochina makes direct military intervention in the near future unlikely. However there remains a danger that the imperialists will egg China into trying to teach Vietnam another "bloody lesson". The sabre-rattling presence of the Seventh Fleet has been underscored by unsettling threats of war from some of Hanoi's tinpot totalitarian neighbours, in particular Thailand and Singapore; nor can skirmishes with Vietnamese vessels and an extension of military/financial backing for Thai-based anti-communist guerrillas be ruled out.

Immigration/emigration and the deformed workers states

But Vietnam is not the only target of the imperialist "human rights" crusade, which is ultimately directed against Hanoi's Soviet patron. This was made strikingly clear by a recent article in that mouthpiece of British imperialism, the *Economist* (21 July):

"Vietnam first has to be shown that the world means business.... It may be necessary for Vietnam to learn on the battlefield that it cannot conquer Cambodia. And the Soviet Union, Vietnam's ally and protector, will have to be made to realise that it too will pay a price for its vicarious role in one of the horrors of the century."

As it did during the China-Vietnam war, the fake-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP), has consistently denied the dagger pointed at the Soviet Union by the imperialists' outcry over Vietnam. Consciously harking back to the good old days of the pacifist antiwar moratorium, it calls instead for a "massive outcry that places the blame for the war threat squarely where it belongs" (*Direct Action*, 12 July) and even castigates the imperialists for refusing to "arrange for the orderly departure of the refugees" as the Hanoi Stalinists requested (*Direct Action*, 19 July). But the SWP's French comrades, the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire, make explicit this plea for imperialist intervention, demanding that "Carter must organise an airlift!" (*Rouge*, 5 July), and whinge that the imperialists are "exploiting a totally justified (!) popular sentiment". For these "Third Campists" in Trotskyist garb the Berlin airlift of 1949 is probably viewed as an even more effective "exploitation" of "justified sentiment"! Whatever measures the imperialists take, genuine Trotskyists will rally

to the unconditional military defence of Vietnam, the Soviet Union and all the deformed workers states against imperialism and counterrevolution.

Ironically, the imperialists are now raising a storm over the fact that people are being allowed to emigrate from one of the deformed workers states and are doing so in large numbers. More often their refrain is that the USSR and its allies forcibly *prevent* citizens from emigrating. The imperialist furor over the Berlin Wall and the Zionist-inspired campaign to "Free Soviet Jewry" are cases in point.

As Leninists we uphold individual democratic rights, including the right of individuals to immigrate/emigrate, for citizens of the degenerated/deformed workers states, except where exercise of such rights would represent a direct danger to the dictatorship of the proletariat. Circumstances like acute economic difficulties or military mobilisation, for example, could warrant a total or partial ban on emigration. We also uphold the right of the workers states to prevent the frittering away through emigration of valuable resources expended on the education and training of skilled professionals -- although we would demand that emigration restrictions in such cases not be subject to bureaucratic favouritism or national/ethnic discrimination.

In the case of Vietnam today, the Hanoi bureaucracy has apparently not attempted to stop the skilled and educated among the boat people from leaving the country, but is actually expediting their departure. Many of those leaving are taking with them stocks of gold which they have been hoarding, or have already salted away wealth in neighbouring countries. So Vietnamese government officials have allegedly been levying an "expatriate departure tax" on each boatload of refugees. The imperialist media howl that Hanoi is raking in vast profits by means of this tax, and no doubt there are many instances of bureaucratic abuse. But the government's policy is apparently motivated primarily by a desire to get



Anti-communist Vietnamese arrive at Sydney airport, 1977.

a cut of the funds which wealthy refugees are trying to remove from the country -- ie it is a measure of economic defence, however bureaucratically implemented. And it is not simply Vietnamese "extortion" which leaves the refugees penniless upon arrival, but constant raids of the refugee boats by Thai pirates.

Indochina today is still poor, war-torn and wracked by ethnic hatreds, its central vital rural regions devastated by imperialism's decades-long war against Vietnam. The bleeding away of thousands of the most talented and skilled layers of Indochinese society, the ethnic Chinese, necessarily damages the economic foundations of the deformed workers states. In part, the exodus is due to the powerful disintegrating pressure of the world capitalist market on this economically relatively backward region. As Castro once pointed out when baited on the number of Cubans heading for Miami, if given the chance, what poverty-stricken Brazilian peasant *wouldn't* want to emigrate to the US?

But the Stalinist bureaucracies are unable to counteract imperialist pressure by *extending* the revolution, and with their narrow nationalistic policies they help create the conditions for such a mass outflow. While Trotskyist revolutionaries defend the deformed workers states against imperialism and domestic counterrevolution, we point out that only victorious socialist revolution throughout the capitalist world -- and political revolution to oust the bureaucracies, from Peking to Moscow and Hanoi -- can open the road for a genuine socialist federation of Indochina. ■

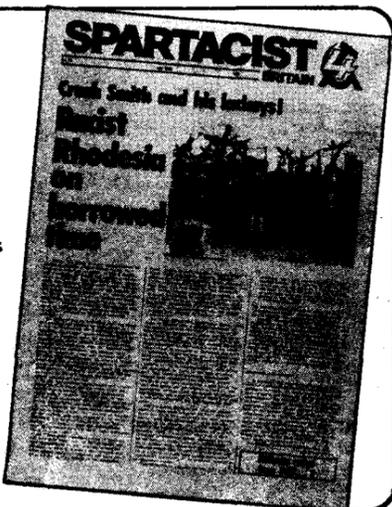
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Your comrades may die, but you defend Khomeini!

USec splits Iranian HKS defence

The peril of nine arrested supporters of the Iranian Hezb-e Kargar-e Sosialist (HKS -- Socialist Workers Party), already facing the threat of execution by rabidly anti-communist mullahs, increased sharply on 23 June with the seizure of seven more party members who were circulating petitions calling for their comrades' release. Yet in this crucial hour, when freeing the jailed Iranian leftists depends on making this the cause of the international workers movement, the HKS' own comrades of the United Secretariat (USec) continue to grovel before Khomeini, preferring to split the defence rather than risk the slightest taint of association with any who refuse to bow before the "Islamic Revolution" which threatens their own comrades' lives!

In Iran, the working class has shown the way with a strike by some 200 oil workers who sat in at oil company offices in Ahwaz (the scene of the HKS arrests) demanding the release of two of their leaders who were jailed along with 20 steelworker militants and the HKS supporters. And in Paris on 25 June, some 5000 people overflowed the Mutualite meeting hall for a rally -- jointly sponsored by the USec's Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (LCR), the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste and Lutte Ouvriere -- demanding the release of the HKS militants. In a solidarity statement read to the meeting, the Ligue Trotskyiste de France (LTF -- sympathising section of the international Spartacist tendency [iSt]) declared:

"When Khomeini has the executioners of the shah's regime executed, our only regret is that they didn't fall into the hands of proletarian justice. But when reaction is attacking the left and the workers movement, the most elementary duty of communists is the fight to defend the militants in danger." Previously, on 14 June, a contingent from the LTF had participated without incident in a picket line called by the LCR outside the Iranian embassy.

But in Britain, it took the International Marxist Group (IMG) more than a month to get around even to calling its first defence activity, a 7 July picket of the Iran Air offices in London. And when a Spartacist League (SL/B) contingent of some 20 comrades arrived at the designated time, not a single other individual was present. In the next 30 minutes, some seven or eight IMGers finally ambled up (out of a membership on paper of about 300 in London alone!), joined in the end by five supporters of the Workers Socialist League.

A tiny back-page report on the picket in the next issue of *Socialist Challenge* complained that the turnout had been "disappointing" and urged "all *Socialist Challenge* supporters" to appear the next Saturday. The SL/B immediately contacted the IMG and other left-wing organisations to urge a coordinated united-front defence around the slogans: "Free the imprisoned HKS and Fedayeen supporters!" and "Stop Khomeini's government attacks on the national minorities of Iran!" The IMG flatly refused. Thus, 14 July saw a repeat performance of the week before. Among the dozen or so IMG members and sympathisers who joined the 30 SL supporters this time were a group of Iranians. The IMG's Iranian supporters, who must feel acutely the repressive reality of Khomeini's regime that the IMG wilfully obscures, took up such SL slogans as "Down with the mullahs, down with the generals -- Workers must rule Iran!"

"Women in veils, workers in jails"

The IMG's refusal to work for a mass working-class-centred united-front defence of the HKS -- or even bring out a small fraction of its own membership for the demonstrations -- reveals more than its notorious ineptitude and dilettantism. How, for example, can IMG national secretary Brian Grogan mobilise his membership to oppose Khomeini's repression? After all, a few short months ago he was touring Britain to recount his joy in chanting "Allah Akbar" ("god is great") on the streets of Teheran! Having preached political confidence in Khomeini's "Islamic Revolution", the fake-Trotskyist USec must now oppose the urgently needed united-front defence of Khomeini's victims.

Nowhere has this been clearer than in the United States and Australia, where the SWP has in repeated instances engaged in the most outrageous



22 June defence picket in New York.

splitting of a united defence: refusing to vote for the release of the HKS and Fedayeen militants (at LaTrobe University and AUS Council), excluding SL supporters from public forums, shoving and kicking SLers off its "private" picket lines and even (in Sydney on 11 June) abandoning its own demonstration rather than be associated with genuine Trotskyists. To top it off, and to harden up their own members who may have gotten cold feet at such backstabbing treachery, they have mounted a vicious slander campaign in the pages of *Direct Action*, the US *Militant* and *Intercontinental Press*, accusing the iSt of "disruption" and "provocative action" for demanding "Down with Khomeini, for workers revolution in Iran!"

Vote Yes to ERs 23/24 on Iran

The motions on Iran passed by general student meetings and SRCs of LaTrobe and Sydney Universities (reprinted in last month's *ASP*) -- for workers revolution against Khomeini's "Islamic Republic", and for united-front defence of the Iranian Fedayeen and HKS -- have now become AUS Extraordinary Resolutions nos 23 and 24. The deadline for campus debate on these motions is 22 August. We strongly urge students to support these motions and call on their SRCs to organise student general meetings to discuss them.

We have already documented the Australian SWP's brazen and openly avowed attempts to sabotage a united-front defence campaign (see "Save jailed Iranian leftists!", *ASP* no 65, July 1979). In San Francisco the SWP simply refused to participate in an SL-initiated united-front demonstration on 22 June, which nevertheless attracted some 40 people -- including supporters of the Militant Action Caucus of the Communications Workers of America and the Militant Caucus of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union. But when our comrades walked up to an SWP-called picket in New York that same day, not only were they not welcomed but they were immediately shoved away by an obviously pre-arranged 50-strong goon squad. Rather than let the SWP's criminal action turn into a free-for-all, with the cops standing by ready to intervene, the Spartacist contingent of 50 people set up another picket line across the street, vigorously chanting: "Don't split defence of Iranian left!" and "Women in veils, workers in jails, stop Khomeini's attacks!"

A subsequent 6 July *Militant* article tried to alibi this exclusion with the slanderous lie that the SL had attempted to "assault" and "disrupt" the pickets. In fact the physical exclusion came only after the failure of the SWP's other sectarian manoeuvres -- like absolutely no written publicity, then changing the site from Iran's UN mission to the consulate at the last minute -- to make this a "private picket line" (ie without the SL), as one SWPer described it. This desperate desire to avoid being tainted at all with opposition to the Khomeini regime was reflected in the SWP's placards and chants. They did not mention the imprisoned Fedayeen guerrillas, or the attacks on women and national minorities, or the call for workers rule, soviets or even a constituent assembly, usually the be-all and end-all of the SWP program. On the other hand, virtually every SWP slogan had tacked on "Defend the Iranian Revolution" -- thereby trying to reassure Khomeini that they are fans of his Islamic regime, not "infidels" who demand "Down with the shah! Down with Khomeini!"

To underline its covering for clerical reaction the SWP held a forum in New York that same evening entitled "Iran: The Revolution Continues", ostensibly open to "everyone interested in the situation in Iran". Everyone but Trotskyists! Upon finding the entrance blocked by SWP goons who refused to allow more than two Spartacists inside to present the Trotskyist point of view, the SL threw up a picket line and chanted, "Your comrades may die, but you defend Khomeini" and "You defend the mullahs, we defend the left!"

Khomeini: The only good Marxist is a dead one

It is only four months since the *Militant* (23 February) triumphantly proclaimed "Victory in Iran!" and hailed Khomeini's "anti-imperialist" intransigence. Today the SWP's Iranian comrades lie in jail, facing frame-up accusations of being "shah's agents" or "CIA spies". Only deeply ingrained, wilful opportunism could have blinded the SWP to the Iranian regime's attacks on anyone who did not submit to Khomeini's autocratic rule. But the "democratic" cretins of the SWP mistake their own pollyannaish view of the world for reality. For Khomeini a Marxist is an enemy of god; the only good one is a dead one. Yet the SWP wants to reassure the maniacal ayatollah of its loyalty, unshaken even by the arrests of its own comrades. If Khomeini's a "bourgeois democrat" why doesn't the SWP try suing him in an Iranian "socialist watersuit"?

Faced with the ayatollah's sinister threats to "cut off the hands" of the left, the SWP responded with the cringing of reformists everywhere: Don't rock the boat, don't anger Khomeini. This was the line of the reformists in Chile, who relied on the "democratic" army and saw danger only in the CIA and not in domestic reaction, just as today the SWP and HKS defend the "Imam's Committees" and only denounce the presence of ex-SAVAK agents within them. This was the line of Stalin in China, who responded to Chiang Kai-shek's attacks on the CP by reaffirming support for the "anti-imperialist" Kuomintang, leading to the tragic Shanghai massacre of thousands of Communists in 1927. It was the line of Mao in Indonesia, who preached confidence in Sukarno right up to the eve of the reactionary holocaust that slaughtered half a million leftists, workers and peasants.

In order to continue to cuddle up to the supposedly "progressive" ayatollah, the SWP smears the Trotskyists of the SL as "provocative" and even pro-shah -- lying that "the SL openly states that Iran was better off under the butcher Shah" (*Intercontinental Press*, 2 July) -- just as the Healyite provocateurs smear the SWP itself! Thus the 11 June *News Line* of Gerry Healy's Workers Revolutionary Party in Britain peddles the frame-up charges of Khomeini's tribunals that the HKS members "have been accused of having contacts with a network of United States agents operating in Iran". The Healyites argue that anyone attacked by Khomeini must be a CIA agent; using the same "logic", the SWP claims that anyone who doesn't support the ayatollah is "counterrevolutionary". Both bow to Khomeini -- the only difference is, the SWP does it for free!

According to the *Militant* (6 July), to call for "Down with Islamic reaction" and to demand massive united-front protests against the arrests of the HKS militants is a "counterrevolutionary line [which] would seriously jeopardize their defense, providing ammunition for the frame-up against them". And the IMG in its 7 July defence leaflet goes out of its way to deny that the HKS supporters are in any way "subversive". USec members should recall how in Chile before the bloody 1973 coup, Allende's UP government, not wanting to "provoke" the generals, refused to defend leftist soldiers arrested by the military. The Chilean workers paid dearly for this cowardly policy. Don't repeat the treachery of the Stalinists and social democrats who led the way to this bloodbath!

In the late 1960s when Hugo Blanco was arrested in Peru, hundreds of thousands marched in the streets throughout the world to denounce the reactionary repression and demand his release. Why isn't that happening today -- right now? Because the SWP prefers its miserable "private picket lines" and support telegrams from notables, which will hardly impress the anti-communist zealot Khomeini. Don't fool yourselves -- Iran today is no bourgeois democracy. Your comrades' lives hang in the balance! What is needed is an urgent mobilisation of the international left and working class, of all those who stand for democratic rights, in a powerful united-front defence campaign. Free the HKS and the Fedayeen! ■

(adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 235, 6 July 1979)

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Fraser's war ...

Continued from page one

living standards and working conditions." (ASP no 49, March 1977)

The legislation was passed; Fraser has chosen his time and setting; and now when an effective mobilisation is more urgent than ever, next to nothing is happening. Those who capitulated then have only made a fight even harder now!

Break the chains of Arbitration!

Whatever disruption they may cause, the bureaucracy's chosen tactics are more than just hopelessly inadequate, they are utterly self-defeating and debilitating to the workers' will to fight. With numbing regularity every fight against the bosses is deflected into pressure on their Arbitration creature, every claim to catch up with the pitiless loss in real wages channelled into miserable "work value" hearings. With criminal indifference, the bureaucrats and their "left" apologists close their eyes and pray the workers won't see: This is not 1974; there will be no "wages explosion"; Arbitration cannot be "pressured"; the "lucky country" is dead even as a myth. The Australian bourgeoisie is caught in the same international recession that envelops the rest of the capitalist world, and even the paltry morsels of "indexation" are now being denied the workers. The only way to break out is by breaking the chains of Arbitration, and it is that fear which drives the bourgeoisie to promulgate and prepare one law after another and leaves the class-collaborationist bureaucracy quaking. *For trade-union independence from the bosses' state!*

The only real power the workers have, especially when faced by this degree of bourgeois intransigence, is the power to shut down production. All necessary means to this end must be thrown into the struggle -- mass picketing; one out, all out; black bans; spreading localised strikes -- as we have stressed during important struggles of the last few years, such as the 1976 Fairfax strike and the 1977 LaTrobe Valley power workers' strike. Not without its own perverse logic does the bureaucracy feel compelled to point to the LaTrobe Valley workers' defeat as an argument to rubbish all strikes, as APTU president Noel Battese did most recently at the 23 July meeting of Redfern workers which lifted the bans. They were out for eleven weeks, said Battese, and they got nowhere. But what Battese chose to ignore was that, as we said at the time, "they had not been broken. They had been betrayed" (ASP no 48, November 1977). Betrayed by Hawke, Battese's "great white hope". Betrayed by Communist Party (CPA) members John Halfpenny and Sam Armstrong (head of the shop stewards committee). *Betrayed when they could have won a victory that would have broken the wage freeze, challenged Arbitration and in all likelihood sparked a massive upsurge to make the present bourgeois offensive unthinkable!* Break with the betrayers -- For a LaTrobe Valley strike that goes all the way!

For a revolutionary workers leadership!

ALP leader Bill Hayden showed whose side he was on by his 15 July threat to withdraw support (what support?) from the ATEA should they reject Hawke's sellout. Seasoned ALP strikebreaker Neville Wran even ghosted Fraser's rhetoric, being the first to declare that the "public" had had a "gutful" of strikes. And their fake-left admirers? The *Battler* (21 July), the International Socialists' syndicalist version of the *Sydney Daily Mirror*, simply (and simplistically) advised workers to "Keep striking back", which in the present context amounted to: "Keep fighting with one hand tied behind your back".

But no one, not even the CPA, could surpass the fake-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in apologetics for defeat. Portraying the 21 June "national strike" farce as a "major victory for union solidarity", the SWP even had the brass to criticise "many trade union leaders" for "going along with the false view that June 21 was unsuccessful" (*Direct Action*, 19 July). Solidarity? When most unions told their members to strike if they felt like it and scab if they didn't? A victory? When Court's cops are still taking names of unionists at protest meetings? "Despite his bluster, Fraser is afraid of a stand-up fight with the organised working class" crowed the SWP, as it shamelessly enthused over the bureaucrats' no-win bans tactics. CEEP is a peculiar way indeed of displaying this "fear". But then again, the same issue quoted SWP supporter Lee Walkington's

assurance to a Telecom mass meeting that CEEP was "irrelevant"!

The futility of the bureaucracy's self-limited tactics is revealed not only in their inability to win the workers' demands or to beat back the anti-union offensive, but even in their failure to achieve the purpose with which the bureaucracy justifies them: winning "public opinion". The disruption caused by the bans is sufficient only to fuel anti-union sentiment among an atomised petty-bourgeoisie ground down by years of inflation and envious of the workers' power and organisation. In the absence of decisive leadership from the working class, these are the "ordinary people" most susceptible to the propaganda mill which the bourgeoisie euphemistically labels "public opinion".

However Fraser's three-and-a-half year war on living standards, highlighted by the recent steep rises in food (particularly meat) prices, medical insurance and petrol prices, and the latest moves to throw thousands off the dole, have made him widely hated among many sectors of society. A general strike now to defeat Fraser's war on the unions could link up with the resentment of the petty-bourgeoisie against the grinding away of their living standards and turn the tables on the arrogant squire and his capitalist backers. But to bring that alternative to fruition demands the formation of a *revolutionary* workers party, based firmly on an organised communist opposition in the trade unions and committed to the fight for a workers government which will toss the bourgeoisie where it long since belongs -- in the rubbish bin of history.■

ASIO ...

Continued from page three

ASIO employee except its director-general is liable to one year in prison. Any attempt to "obstruct or hinder" ASIO from tapping a phone, opening mail or forcible entry, search and seizure -- all of which will now be legal for periods of up to 48 hours on the basis of a "warrant" only from ASIO's director-general -- can lead to a fine of \$1000. Put plainly, it will be a criminal offence to publish virtually anything about ASIO; or to prevent some undercover cop from tearing open your mail, listening in on your phone conversations or breaking into your house in the dead of night -- or even to identify him!

And to justify any of these actions ASIO has only to deem them "relevant to security", which includes a definition of "terrorism" that extends to the "training, planning, preparations or other activities [!] for the purposes of violent subversion in a foreign country". "Subversion" in turn encompasses anything that is "likely ultimately to involve ... the use of force or violence or other unlawful acts (whether by those persons or others) for the purpose of overthrowing or destroying the constitutional government" or that promotes "violence or hatred between different groups of persons in the Australian community so as to endanger the peace, order or good government of the Commonwealth".

With such insidious definitions does ASIO seek to portray the trade-union militants, left-wing migrants and radicals whom it targets for its "surveillance" as crazed terrorists or conspiratorial putschists. ASIO was well aware, for example, when it directed one Janet Langridge to infiltrate our organisation that we engaged in no illegal activities, that we were not "planning" or "preparing" "violent subversion" or the "overthrow" of their "constitutional government". And now even our exposure of Langridge will be illegal. Marxists have no position on violence as an abstract principle other than to recognise that the working class must prepare for its inevitable use by the ruling class.

In fact, the capitalist government is not "overthrown" violently or non-violently. In fact, the historical probability is that in a revolutionary situation there may well be little government to "overthrow", and likely not this government in its present form. A revolutionary conjuncture will be defined by the fact of *dual power*, most probably posing the choice between the democratic soviets of the working class and a tottering bonapartist regime headed by some committed right-wing *ASIO type*. It is simply self-serving nonsense to imply that the SL is "preparing" a secret putsch against the Australian capitalist government. Yet even before ASIO managed to "penetrate" the SL in 1977, its surveillance of our organisation was so extensive that, as "turned" agent Langridge revealed, it already had the names and addresses -- and in at least one case, a photograph -- of most SL supporters.

The real putschists, the real advocates and fomenters of violence are not the working-class militants and revolutionaries who seek to defend their class against the organised class violence and state terror of the bourgeoisie. No, the real terrorists are the stealthy secret police who, when the rotten capitalist system they are pledged to defend appears likely to collapse

under the weight of its own crap, will seek to behead the revolutionary vanguard party which offers the only chance of transforming that collapse into the construction of a new, rational society by leading the workers to state power.

To prop up its decrepit system of "free" enterprise, the bourgeoisie will resort even to the cold-blooded murder of its opponents. It has on its side brute force; we the tide of progress and historical truth. Unless imperialist greed and rivalry first triggers off a nuclear holocaust which will wipe out civilisation as we know it, the future belongs to communism. When ASIO sent Janet Langridge into our organisation to spy on us, to set us up for future repression, the thing they feared the most was that she would "turn". In her confession (after being expelled from the SL) this ex-cop explained why she did just that: "I respect [the SL] and ... what they stand for and I don't respect myself for what I've been doing". The truth of the class struggle broke Langridge; the victorious workers revolution will break the class that corrupted her. *Smash ASIO and all the bosses' secret police through workers revolution!*■

Redfern ...

Continued from page eight

they allowed one centre to be pitted against another, and set up each worker at Redfern to be picked off passively one at a time by the AP stand-downs.

Smash the Mail Network Plan!

The Redfern workers have been betrayed. But they must not allow that to paralyse them in the face of peril. They must not allow the demoralisation and atomisation born of false strategies to blind them to the urgency and necessity of a fight-back. Redfern workers: Now is the time -- *before your base of operations is dismantled; before your jobs are lost! Fight back! Now!*

Decisive, militant action by Redfern workers could galvanise a class-wide response to the Fraser government's wage-slashing, union-bashing drive -- take the lead! Set up mass, militant pickets to make sure nothing goes in or out of Redfern -- For a nationwide postal strike! Any threat of lockout must be met by an immediate occupation! *Smash the Mail Network Plan! For a strong, militant postal workers union! Full back pay for all workers stood down! No victimisations! Defend seniority! Spread the jobs around -- For a 30-hour week at no loss in pay! Smash the indexation wage freeze -- For major across-the-board wage increases with full, automatic, monthly indexing!*

Redfern workers: Remember your betrayers -- from Slater/Hawke to Hawkins/Battese to Boland/Carey! The rank and file must elect strike committees to oversee every phase of the strike and negotiations. But more fundamentally, the APTU ranks must recognise that every brand of labour reformist, no matter how "socialist" or "militant" in name, is fundamentally committed to a program of class collaboration, to a strategy of wooing the bourgeoisie and its "public opinion". The rights and conditions of APTU members as of all workers can only be consistently defended through a program of uncompromising class struggle. A revolutionary leadership must be built in the APTU, based from the beginning on the Trotskyist Transitional Program, committed to mobilising the unique social power of the working class on the road to the expropriation of the capitalist class as a whole.■

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Revolutionary literature



Reverse the sellout — For a national postal strike! Redfern can lead the way!

Battered incessantly by the mass media, stood down in their hundreds without pay and saddled with a defeatist leadership, Australian Postal and Telecommunications Union (APTU) members at Redfern's Central Mail Exchange (CME) voted overwhelmingly to lift their four-week-old bans on 23 July. After four weeks of sacrifice they had little to show but empty pay packets and even emptier promises.

The bans began on 25 June when, as part of its "decentralisation" Mail Network Plan (MNP) designed to dismantle the CME, Australia Post (AP) ordered that large letters normally sorted at Redfern be run to Wollongong and Canberra unsorted. Over the weeks mail in NSW came to a virtual standstill -- not as a result of the weak-kneed bans which were strictly limited by the NSW APTU leadership of Merv Hawkins and Noel Battese to "defending present conditions", but through massive management retaliation. Some 2500 APTU members were stood down or placed on "no work as directed, no pay"; work rosters and seniority provocatively abolished; long service leaves cancelled and sick leave taken away. AP not only attempted to prevent workers from holding union meetings at Redfern but at one stage even threatened to have Commonwealth cops remove a stood-down delegate. Fraser ranted Redfern would be shut down entirely by his newly proclaimed Commonwealth Employees (Employment Provisions) Act (CEEP) "until this matter comes to some sense".

Finally Bob Hawke, threatening to leave the NSW APTU on its own if the bans were not lifted, stepped in to negotiate a "truce": a two-month "cooling-off" period would precede any further decentralisation moves and the threatened rosters were placed "under discussion" -- but the new run was now established fact. Battese hailed Hawke as the "best negotiator in Australia". And the fake lefts were right there behind him. Redfern supporters of the Communist Party (CPA), the pro-Moscow Socialist Party and the fake-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) all voted solidly for the sellout -- CPA supporter Brian Carey

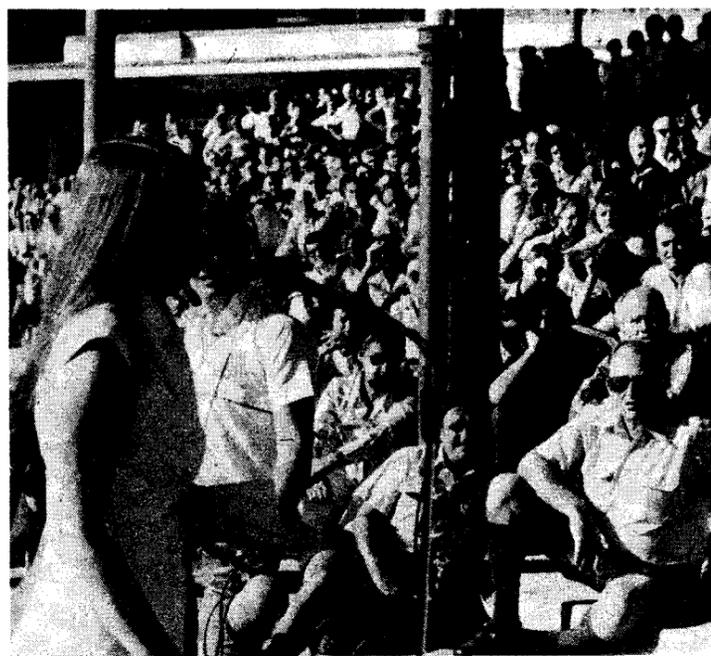
No to AP victimisations!

At the same time as Australia Post (AP) called for the immediate establishing of suburban "interim mail sorting offices" (Australian, 4 August) to ram through a complete bypassing of Redfern in the wake of Hawkins/Battese's abject backdown there are increasing rumours of a management "blacklist" -- preparation for a vicious purge of militants from the Redfern exchange. AP's "industrial relations" -- with its camera surveillance of work areas and periodic raiding of workers' lockers -- are already notorious. And no doubt ASIO operatives are working hand-in-glove with AP management in compiling the militants and leftists to be axed.

These anti-communist victimisations are a blatant attempt to head off the APTU. If they succeed the result will be a "famecat" APTU and another green light for AP to steamroller through the Mail Network Plan. No victimisations! Smash the Mail Network Plan! For a national postal strike!

even boasting of his hand in drawing up the sellout settlement. The SWP supporters ventured only so far as to loyally ask for "guarantees".

They got their "guarantee" only three days later, as AP promised (in a Staff Information Bulletin posted at Redfern) "to move rapidly to relocate as many functions and staff as possible from Redfern". This was the most damning indictment of the bureaucracy's watery "strategy": AP was allowed *gratis* to use the dispute as a trial run for the MNP -- bypassing Redfern to other states such as Queensland and even as close to home as Strathfield. Now the "alternative arrangements" -- the destruction of Redfern -- are being extended and consolidated, evidenced by half-page ads calling for "immediate" premises



Redfern workers: Remember your betrayers!
Bob Hawke (top left), Merv Hawkins (left), SWP supporter Lynda Boland (above): united in selling out Redfern postal workers.

for twelve suburban "interim mail sorting offices as one part of a drive by Australia Post to establish alternative mail handling arrangements outside Redfern" (Australian, 4 August). But by then Hawkins had already publicly agreed that Redfern would have to go. Redfern workers and APTU members nationally must reply: *Redfern will not go!*

Hawkins/SWP: Turn the other cheek

What Hawkins and his fake-left offshoots do so blithely accepted is nothing short of disastrous for postal workers. With the final implementation of this "rationalisation" scheme, new sorting technology and compulsory transfers ("natural wastage") will slash 1200 jobs; the removal of shift penalties and overtime will cut take-home pay by up to 20 percent; shifts weighted 3:1 onto the unpopular afternoon shift; all APTU awards relating to Redfern workers cancelled and renegotiated; and seniority destroyed through the abolition of traditional work rosters defining areas of work, thus laying the basis for even further erosion of working conditions.

Behind the rationalisation and central to it is the dismantling of the Redfern exchange, whose 3000 APTU members account for the processing and sorting of 30 percent of the nation's mail (and 80 percent of incoming international mail) and have traditionally formed the militant backbone of the APTU nationally. The bourgeoisie has never forgiven the NSW APTU their militant solidarity with the 1976 Fairfax strike, when a short-lived Redfern ban drove Fairfax' scab *Sydney Morning Herald* (13 November 1976) to frenzied demands for "a collision of national scope" if necessary. Ever since then AP has been inching in implementation of the MNP -- the Newcastle run in 1977, followed by the introduction of sub-contractors to compete with AP mail drivers on the South Coast/Bombala run in March 1978. Now AP sees its goal on the horizon; and Fairfax shrieks with vengeance "Redfern must go" ... the APTU's "massive power base" must be destroyed (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 July 1979)! The entire Australian working class must rally as one to the defence of this symbol of workers solidarity!

As the bosses rained down blow upon blow in an open attempt to cripple their union, what did Hawkins and company counsel the workers? Turn the other cheek. With SWP supporter Lynda Boland a

longtime Redfern "militant", the SWP sensed their first real chance to gain some influence with the bureaucracy since their much ballyhooed "turn to the class". *Direct Action* vied with Boland's union Publicity Committee as a mouthpiece for the SWP model of a "class-struggle left wing" -- Hawkins/Battese. Writing in the 5 July *Direct Action* Boland burred:

"This passive resistance approach by the union is not what management wanted... Australia Post angled for a complete walkout by the APTU ... prepared to let the whole system close down for a few weeks and starve the workers back under humiliating conditions."

This was a letter-perfect replay of the excuse with which the bureaucrats earlier this year scuttled the union's \$25 wage claim in favour of an \$8 work-value case in Arbitration. It was only too prophetic. *But it was not militant strike action which "starved the workers back under humiliating conditions" -- it was the reformists' cowardly anti-strike passivity!*

Yet even in the aftermath of this blatant sellout, Boland shamelessly boasted (to a 26 July APTU fund-raising rally) how the union had resisted all pressure to strike. Indeed only the day before the bans were lifted, several militants at a meeting of stood-down workers demanded militant strike action -- and Hawkins/Battese/Boland/Carey *all* resisted! And while the 26 July *Direct Action's* uncritical account of the sellout settlement takes a perfunctory pot-shot at the roundly and universally hated George Slater, there is not a single criticism of Hawke. How could there be? To criticise Hawke, the SWP would have to criticise Hawkins/Battese. And to criticise Hawkins/Battese, they would have to criticise ... Boland. Their programs for betrayal were indistinguishable. So instead Boland places the blame for this unacknowledged defeat where misleaders always do -- on the ranks:

"It isn't possible for the Redfern workers to continue taking on Australia Post by themselves. They will need the support of the entire union membership."

And why didn't they have it? Hawkins/Battese/Boland et al know only too well. Instead of calling on the entire membership to strike in unity,

Continued on page seven

General Strike — Smash CEEP!