



A deadly disease in a deadly society

AIDS tragedy in Thatcher's Britain

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) has taken the lives of untold thousands on the planet. The killer AIDS virus presently has no known cure – it would be a human tragedy of massive proportions under the best of circumstances. Under capitalism, it is a profound insoluble social catastrophe. The World Health Organisation has declared that there is a raging epidemic, estimating that *five to ten million* people are now HIV positive. The spread of HIV – the virus which can lead to developing AIDS – takes a particularly heavy toll among the poor. From the poverty-stricken areas of much of sub-Saharan Africa to Brazil's *favelas* to the ghettos of New York City, HIV is spreading at alarming rates.

The AIDS epidemic hit Britain later than many other countries (in the early 1980s). This autumn the official death toll in the UK passed the sombre milestone of 1000. As of the end of November 1988, 1926 people have contracted AIDS of whom 1035 have died. Homosexual/bisexual men

constitute over 1600 of the total number of AIDS victims in Britain, by far the vast majority. Nearly 10,000 people have been confirmed as HIV antibody "positive". By the end of September 1988, 1545 of these cases were recorded in Scotland alone. In Edinburgh approximately one in 100 men between the ages of 15 and 44 carry the virus. The current confirmed number is well below the real figure – estimates of the real figure of people who are HIV positive throughout the UK range from 20,000 to over 50,000. In addition to what's known of Edinburgh, HIV spread may well be simmering below the surface in other centres of poverty throughout Britain.

Transmitted via sexual contact and through the blood, the virus has hit with particular virulence the most vulnerable sections of society: homosexuals, drug addicts, the poor. For the lunatic ultra-right it is literally a god-send. The ravings of Sir Alfred Sherman, one-time Thatcher adviser and champion of French fas-



Guardian

cist Le Pen, exemplify this: AIDS, he writes, "is indeed associated mainly with undesirable minorities.... i.e., mainly sodomites and drug-abusers, together with numbers of women who voluntarily associate with this sexual underworld" (*Times*, 14 December

1988). Anti-homosexual hysteria whipped up around AIDS helped pave the way for the draconian Section 28 legislation, prohibiting the "promoting" of homosexuality. It also led to an escalation of fascist and racist attacks
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Let Satanic Verses be read!

On 14 January, 1500 Muslim fanatics gathered in front of the town hall in Bradford, West Yorkshire and burnt copies of Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*. It grotesquely recalled the medieval Christian inquisition and book-burning orgies of Hitler's stormtroopers. Confirming the controversial novel's characterisation of the fundamentalist motto "Burn the books and trust the Book", the protesters accused Rushdie's latest book of blasphemy. Leading them all was an unholy alliance of Bradford's Council of Mosques and prominent Labour Party councillors, including ex-mayor Mohammed Ajeeb. One book-burner vowed, "Our next move will be to ensure the book is banned in the whole world. If he [Rushdie] comes here, I tell you he will be dead" (*Independent*, 21 January). Another demonstration in London two weeks later brought out large numbers of Muslims – reportedly overwhelmingly male – to protest the book. This frenzy of



Asadour Guzelian

Bradford, 14 January: Muslim fundamentalists torch Salman Rushdie's book.

Book burners play with fire

Islamic fundamentalism could provoke a wider racist backlash engulfing fundamentalist and secular minorities alike. Down with religious obscurantism! Let *Satanic Verses* be read!

Published last September, *Satanic Verses* is largely a novel about the Asian immigrant's experience in "Mrs Torture's" Britain. It strongly indicts all forms of bigotry – racial, sexual, religious – across the world. When it was first published the British tabloid press fulminated against Rushdie's attack on racism in Britain. Rushdie's unsparing attacks on religious fanaticism and fundamentalism targets the Islamic variety – particularly the harsh religious and social sanctions for the oppression of women under the Sharia (laws). Born into an Indian Muslim family, Rushdie made a special study of Islamic history while at Cambridge University in the sixties. He won the 1981 Booker Prize with his widely acclaimed
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Leninist: re-thinking Pamyat?

— "What the formation of the so-called Democratic Union, the nationalist outbursts in Armenia and the emergence of sinister groups like *Pamyat* demands is not a clamping down, a return to a supposed monolithic golden age. We are in favour of the fullest democracy under socialism. We are for the plurality of parties." (*Leninist*, 23 May 1988)

— "The last three years have seen the growth of fascist, neo-nazi and reactionary mystical groups. *Pamyat*— which got a favourable write up in a recent edition of the *New Worker*— claims a membership of over 20,000 in Moscow alone and branches in 30 cities. More overtly fascist organisations have been staging night rallies in Soviet cities and some even beating up medal-wearing war veterans. These modern day Black Hundreds are a stark warning to Soviet workers. Bureaucratic rule in the USSR has fostered the existence of these scum: the working class must organise independently to crush them before they become a real threat." (*Leninist*, 23 December 1988)

It should be ABC for Marxists that fascist scum like Russian *Pamyat* ought to be smashed wherever they

raise their ugly heads. Thus, when *Leninist* wrote an editorial statement last May defending the "right" of *Pamyat* to organise, we said this was a watershed position for that group. But it didn't stop there, as *Leninist* went from horrible to worse. Subsequently, leading *Leninist* spokesman Jack Conrad argued:

"It is necessary to take away the social base that *Pamyat* enjoys. This would not be done through finding out the addresses of *Pamyat* members and kicking their heads in. Terror has its place but in the main we would seek out *Pamyat* members in order to argue with them. Many people who voted for the National Front in Britain did not understand its true nature, they were fooled. The same will be true of those who have joined *Pamyat*." (*Leninist*, 3 September 1988)

Thus, *Leninist* was pushing the craven and chauvinist social democratic lines of "ignore the fascists", "debate the fascists", etc. This not only drew the attention of the Spartacist League, but apparently provoked some consternation among the supporters of *Leninist*. A hot debate over this issue ensued in the letters column of their



Der Spiegel
Fascist scum *Pamyat* on the march in Moscow, May 1987. Soviet workers must crush *Pamyat*!

newspaper. Now we have *Leninist's* most recent statement on *Pamyat*. This time there's no mention of *Pamyat* being "small fry" nor appeals to debate these scum; they're characterised as a growing menace—"the working class must organise independently to crush them".

Presented rather disingenuously as a polemic against the New Communist Party (NCP), the thrust of this recent statement, if taken at face value, is self-evidently at variance with *Leninist's* earlier positions. But if *Leninist*, or some of its members, want to reconsider their disastrous line of conciliating *Pamyat*, that raises an obvious question: where did this grotesque travesty of Marxism come from? As we have noted in the past, the positions of *Leninist* and its TKP/*Iscin*in *Sesi* ally contain a number of dangerous elements, including the demand for institution of "multi-party democracy", without regard to the Marxist criterion that such parties must stand for and defend the proletarian dictatorship. Thus, some months ago we posed the questions: "Should anti-socialist right-wing groups be allowed to partake freely

of 'socialist democracy'? Are the TKP/*Iscin*in *Sesi* and the *Leninist* suggesting that the fascist anti-Semites of *Pamyat* be allowed to grow into Russian 'Grey Wolves'?" (*Workers Hammer* no 97, April 1988)

Comrade Lenin, sharply distinguishing between workers democracy and bourgeois democracy, long ago demolished the arguments of social democrats like Karl Kautsky who, aping the imperialists, demanded the right of bourgeois groupings to maintain political parties in the Soviet Union. Take the Kautskyan premise to its logical conclusion and you end up in bed with the Russian Nazis. But *Leninist* also looks in other, equally dead-end directions. Having, it seems, had second thoughts about social-democratic niceties regarding *Pamyat*, serious militants in and around *Leninist* ought to consider how they got into making revolting excuses for this fascist outfit. Instead, trapped in the method they learned from the Stalinist bureaucrats, the *Leninist* proposes to teeter back down the road from where it came, back to...

"Uncle Joe". Thus, in a recent speech
continued on page 5



TROTSKY

For women's liberation through socialist revolution!

Today when the customary subjugation and degradation of Muslim women has been on the rise in many places, it is useful to recall the profound impact of the Russian Revolution in Central Asia. In contrast especially to the horrors of Khomeini's Iran and the bloody fundamentalist prison house planned for women by the Afghani mullahs, the 1917 revolution mobilised women as

powerful fighters behind the banner of revolutionary liberation. Trotsky's remarks of 1924 are indeed an apt message for 8 March, International Women's Day.

When I read about the success of one of your female fellow students in Kazan among the illiterate Tartar women, I was reminded of my recent short visit to Baku...where I heard for the first time a Turkoman Communist woman, and had an opportunity to observe in the hall the enthusiasm of hundreds of such women who, having heard our message of liberation, had awakened to a new life. I realized then for the first time that women will play a more important role in the liberation movement of the East than in Europe and here in Russia.... Although the East is still under the influence of Islam and of old creeds, prejudices, and customs, there are signs that this influence is waning rapidly.... Thus we have in the East old creeds which seem to be deeply rooted, but which are in reality only a shadow of the past. For instance, the Caliphate was abolished in Turkey and nothing happened to those who made this bold attempt on an agelong institution.... Eastern women, who under present conditions are enslaved and thwarted in all their desires and ambitions, will, with the removal of the veil, see themselves deprived of all spiritual support because of the newly arisen economic conditions. They will thirst for new ideas and a new consciousness capable of allotting them their proper place in society. Believe me, there will be no better comrade in the East and no better champion of the ideas of revolution and Communism than the awakened working women.

— Leon Trotsky, "Prospects and Tasks in the Far East" (1924)



LENIN

WORKERS HAMMER



Monthly newspaper of the Spartacist League, British section of the international Spartacist tendency.

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DEBATE

The
Spartacist
League

The
Leninist

"The USSR today and the tasks of revolutionaries"

Discussion time will be available for contributions from individuals and other organisations.

DATE: Monday, 27 February

TIME: 7:00 pm

VENUE: Conway Hall

(Red Lion Square, WC1

Nearest Tube: Holborn)

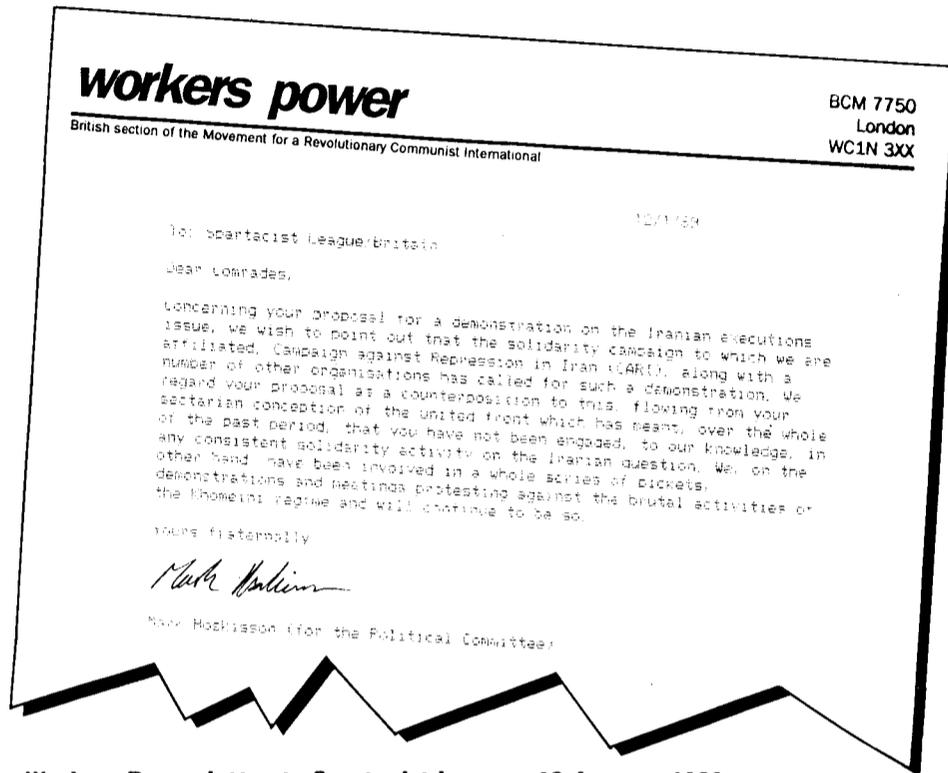
Centrists bow to Russia-haters

Workers Power boycotts united-front defence of Tudeh, Iranian left

In response to the massive executions taking place in Iran, aimed at physically annihilating the left organisations and other dissidents, the international Spartacist tendency sounded the alarm and called united-front protests. In Hamburg, Paris, Lyon, London, Sydney, Melbourne, Washington, DC, New York and Milan pickets and rallies demanded "Stop the Executions in Iran!" In many cases, various Iranian left groups had an opportunity for the first time to jointly protest Khomeini's slaughter, despite bitter fratricidal sectarianism within the milieu. Thus a number of individual Iranian militants from disparate political tendencies participated in the London protest on 14 January (see article, p 12).

Two British left groups felt compelled to respond to our united-front initiative. The *Leninist*, a left-Stalinist grouping, sent a small delegation of comrades to the picket, protesting jointly under their own banner. Workers Power, a centrist group professing to be Trotskyist, sent to us the letter printed here. Its Political Committee rejected our principled united-front call, claiming that any initiative not undertaken by the Committee Against Repression in Iran (CARI) is "sectarian".

The Stalinophobic outfit CARI excludes from its "solidarity" activities the pro-Moscow Tudeh Party, the Fedayeen (Majority) and the pro-Iraq, Muslim populist People's Mujahedeen. In other words, CARI does not defend the overwhelming majority of those being executed in Khomeini's prison hellholes. Precisely because we insisted on defending all the left against Khomeini's massacres – including Tudeh – CARI "disinvited" us from its meetings when we were organising for the 14 January protest, counterposing its own *anti-united front* action two weeks later: a "defence" picket where the victims were excluded.



Workers Power letter to Spartacist League, 12 January 1989.

Workers Power claims in words to oppose CARI's exclusionism. Indeed, their comrades protested to us rather pathetically that they "fight within" CARI against its anti-Tudeh stance. But, when it came to action, Workers Power chose to save face with its Russia-hating bloc partners rather than to march with the Spartacist League and other militants to save the lives of Iranian leftists. In thus throwing principle to the wind, Workers Power well illustrates Trotsky's characterisations of centrists:

"e. A centrist always remains in spiritual dependence on rightist groupings and is inclined to cringe before those who are more moderate, to remain silent on their opportunist sins and to cover up their actions before the workers.

"f. The centrist frequently covers up his dawdling by referring to the danger of 'sectarianism,' by which he understands not abstract propagandistic passivity (of the Bordighist type) but an active concern for purity of principles, clarity of position, political consistency and organisational completeness."

– *Centrism and the Fourth International*, 22 February 1934

CARI was rotten ten years ago when it enthused after the mullahs and it's even more rotten today. The hypocrisy of the former HKS (Socialist Workers Party in Iran) supporters in CARI's leadership rivals their sectarianism. Who are these people to denounce Tudeh's betrayals, with their own hands so filthy with treachery in Iran? The HKS/HKE – rival sections of the USec in Iran – welcomed Khomeini's "Islamic revolution", dropped the demand for self-determination for the Kurdish people when they were under vicious attack by the Islamic regime, stood in the elections for the phony assembly called to rubber-stamp Khomeini's Islamic "constitution", sabotaged defence of their own imprisoned comrades – disbanding picket lines and wrecking efforts at militant, united-front protests lest it offend the regime. The HKE, a split-off from the HKS, even went so far as to hail the Islamic goon attacks on the Fedayeen and other campus leftists in 1980 – putting themselves, as we noted at the time, to the right of Tudeh. Now they use "anti-Stalinism" as the cover for their own crimes.

Our own experience with "solidarity" CARI-style, goes back to 1978, when on two occasions (Birmingham on 2 December and London on 17 December) CARI organisers excluded Spartacist contingents, provoking police intervention. Because

the iSt uniquely warned against illusions in Khomeini at the time, because we said: "Down with the Shah! Down with the Mullahs! For Workers Revolution!" mullah-lovers in CARI – centrally the British USec International Marxist Group (IMG) – could not tolerate our intervention. (One of the IMG's leaders, Brian Grogan, was in fact so swept up in mullah-loving frenzy in Teheran that he became infamous for joining in the chant: "Allah Akbar!" [God is Great])

CARI's WP bloc partners addressed this at the time and *Workers Power* (January 1979) wrote: "This action by the CARI organisers and the IMG must be condemned. We hold no brief for the principle (sic) slogans of the Spartacists. But the CARI/IMG action (supported by the SWP) establishes a precedent of allowing the police to intervene in labour movement and solidarity demonstrations and actions." Parenthetically, this comes from a group which has for years routinely excluded the Spartacist League from its own public functions.

There is a link beyond the obvious political convergence in WP/CARI's shared abasement to the Iranian mullahs' reactionary Islamic movement, ie the Russian question. Tudeh grovelled treacherously for Khomeini – so did virtually every other tendency. Tudeh is also the major and historic pro-Moscow, working-class-based party in Iran, and Khomeini's greatest "Great Satan" is the deformed workers state to the north. Khomeini does not slaughter Tudeh members because of their abject loyalty to his regime. To call a demonstration ostensibly against repression and executions in Iran excluding Tudeh is like having a protest against capital punishment in the US in the early 1950s and excluding the Rosenberg case because Stalin's secret police fingered thousands of leftists to the bourgeoisies of the world.

THE RUSSIAN QUESTION POINT-BLANK

Workers Power's response to us basically reads: "You are sectarians because you opposed the murdering mullahs, therefore we refuse to join with you to defend their victims. Anyway, we are too busy doing 'solidarity' work with the Committee Against Reds in Iran (CARI)." For its part, CARI's line is: "Tudeh is excluded because they supported the mullahs, the Spartacists because they didn't." At least Gerry Healy used to get paid for this kind of "solidarity" work. The bottom line is the Russian question which at this point takes the form in Iran of trying to defend the pro-Kremlin Tudeh Party. The annihilation of a mass workers organisation like Tudeh means something in the real world, and not only for communists. Reformists and even bourgeois

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Workers Hammer

The 14 January united-front protest against executions in Iran. Workers Power stayed away.

As Peking encourages capitalist forces

Racist riots erupt in China

The People's Republic of China, in the tenth year of the Deng regime's attempts to "build socialism with capitalist methods", has produced an explosion of racist mob violence. Deng's programme of decollectivisation and private production in the countryside and an "open door" (tax breaks plus cheap labour, land and raw materials) for foreign capital has fostered a social climate of cut-throat competition, chauvinism and corruption. Thus at the end of December the world witnessed the appalling spectacle of Chinese university students on a racist rampage against black African (and other dark-skinned) students studying at Chinese colleges.

On Saturday, 24 December, at a party given by foreign students at Hehai University in Nanjing, long-simmering racial tensions exploded when a Chinese security guard refused entrance to two Chinese women and their African dates. A heated argument quickly escalated into a near-pogrom. Chinese demonstrators in Nanjing, sometimes numbering several thousand, threw rocks, smashed windows in dormitories where African students live, and shouted "black devils" and other racist slogans in clashes that began Saturday and continued for several days. The black students, who had been joined in solidarity by other foreign students including Americans, were eventually able to take refuge in the Nanjing railway station.

On the following Monday night, police herded the besieged students to a hotel outside the city. This move, supposedly for the students' protection, was actually more a house arrest, where reportedly Chinese police stripped a number of African students and beat them with their batons and tortured them with electric cattle prods. For 44 of the African students it took a two-day hunger strike, and an international storm of publicity highly embarrassing to the Chinese bureaucracy, to eventually get them freed.

The Hehai University explosion quickly triggered other racist incidents in eastern China. At Peking Languages Institute, where African students were carrying out a boycott of classes in protest against racial discrimination there and demanding freedom for the Nanjing students, hundreds of Chinese students demonstrated for hours on 3 January under slogans in Chinese and English declaring, "We Demand a Safe Campus", "Hooligans Go Home", and "No Offend Women's Rights" (*Newsday*, 4 January).

At the Zhejiang Agricultural University in Hangzhou, the African students (who are predominantly male and study in China for as long as six years) were subjected to new regulations restricting them to dating no more than one Chinese woman, who must be officially registered with the authorities! Meanwhile, there is a systematic racist campaign labeling African students as AIDS carriers. This profoundly male chauvinist and racist campaign in the name of "protecting our women" from the



Reuters

Chinese student youth terrorise black African students in racist, male chauvinist campaign. Police reportedly beat and tortured Africans while "protecting" them.



Reuters

African students is pure reactionary filth.

ALL THE OLD CRAP IS RISING IN DENG'S CHINA

The Chinese students have "justified" their mass racist attacks and hostility toward the African students as resentment at the Africans' "privileged" position:

"Many Chinese students apparently resent the benefits that African students enjoy as foreigners, such as larger scholarships and better housing. African students have a room to themselves, while Chinese at Hehai University, where the weekend fracas began, are housed eight to a room."

— *New York Times*, 27 December 1988

In Deng's China there certainly is massive privilege and inequality to resent and attack, but what small benefits the foreign students (ie not just African students) enjoy are only marginally better than those of their Chinese counterparts. At the top of

the heap are the Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy, small-scale capitalists, and Western and Japanese businessmen, some of them operating large enterprises. Yet the students are not demonstrating against the truly privileged in People's China.

There is doubtless very deep demoralisation and frustration among youth in China. The millions of workers and peasants who believed they were "building Communism" in the disastrous Great Leap Forward, the student-youth who flocked to the Maoist Red Guards during the "Cultural Revolution", have become disillusioned with politics and absorbed in narrowly personal concerns. Deng and Zhao Ziyang have promised gold at the end of the rainbow (to be achieved through hustling in the market-place and looking out for Number One), but today's students are finding their country still miserably poor and backward. Not seeing a genuine communist alternative, these youth are taking on some of the most repellent aspects of West-

ern bourgeois culture.

Up to the point in 1971 when Mao sealed his alliance with US imperialism (as US B-52s carpet-bombed Vietnam), Chinese Stalinism was widely perceived as the militant ally of the "Third World" against the major imperialist powers. Pictures of Mao with the leaders of the emerging black nations of Africa were commonplace. Black American radicals like Robert F Williams looked (mistakenly) to China as the way forward and in the late '60s travelled there, where they felt they were treated with the respect and dignity denied them in racist America. And certainly, whatever the brutal crimes and stupidities of the Red Guards, they did not engage in race riots.

The young Karl Marx, two years before the *Communist Manifesto*, wrote: "A development of the productive forces is the absolutely necessary practical premise [of communism], because without it want is generalized, and with want the struggle for necessities begins again, and that means that all the old crap must revive." In present-day China — the product of 40 years of rule by a Stalinist bureaucracy attempting to carry out the objectively impossible goal of building "socialism" in one terribly economically backward country — the "old crap" is reviving with a vengeance.

For thousands of years, Imperial China (the Middle Kingdom) was a great and isolated centre of civilisation. The Chinese word for foreigner was "barbarian". What we are seeing today is in part a return to Han Chinese xenophobia and racism. And it comes from the top. The bureaucratic elite ruling the People's Republic, under both Mao and Deng, are deeply nationalistic and dream of restoring a new Middle Kingdom to its rightful place in the world. In 1984 Deng proposed to *quadruple* national output by the year 2000 through rural free markets and an "open door" to the imperialist West. When this is achieved, declared Deng, "China's international influence will also be quite different, and our country's power will become truly strong."

Deng's China looks toward the West and Japan as its allies and economic partners, no longer proclaiming "solidarity" with the impoverished and exploited Third World. Whereas African and Asian heads of state used to be lionised in Peking, now it is Wall Street and Frankfurt bankers and Japanese industrialists who are given the red-carpet treatment when they visit China. No wonder Chinese students display the same racist contempt for black Africans to be found at Harvard or Todai University.

Trotsky once said one of Stalin's greatest crimes was turning countless young revolutionary idealists into political cynics. This is also one of the great crimes of Chinese Stalinism, under both Mao and Deng, played out on the scale of an entire nation. But now it has gone far beyond political cynicism: a whole layer of privileged Chinese student youth, in this bureaucratically deformed workers state with its emphasis on market com-

petition being fostered by the top leadership of the country, is behaving like racist, chauvinist, grasping "socialist" yuppies.

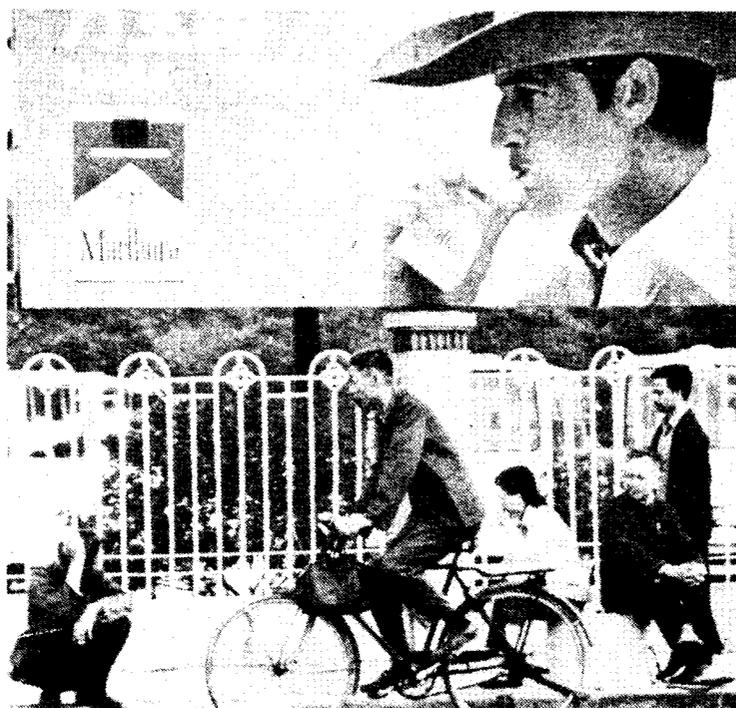
ERODING THE GAINS OF THE REVOLUTION WITH CAPITALIST METHODS

The Chinese working class and any other section of that society which maintains a shred of a sense of internationalism should crush these racist outrages wherever they arise. But it is important to understand at the same time that the present-day children of the Chinese Revolution are having their birthright stolen from them and are victims of a massive fraud. "Building socialism by capitalist methods" has led *not* to the modernisation of the country but rather to an explosion of petty capitalism and massive inequality in both town and country.

Already by 1985 there was an extreme disparity between rich and poor peasants, with the press regularly reporting peasants earning 10,000 yuan a year, *20 to 30 times the national per capita income!* The basic unit of production, accounting and distribution had become the individual peasant household – the Chinese Stalinists turned the calendar back 30 years to the very beginnings of agricultural collectivisation.

At the same time, tens of millions of poor peasants have poured into the cities in a futile search for gold. Rather than prosperity for the masses what one finds in China today is ... all the old crap. In the southern Guangdong Province child labour has been resurrected. In Peking homeless live on handouts and others steal to live. In southern Canton there now exists a small army of beggars by day, many of whom turn to gambling and prostitution by night.

The Chinese economy and Chinese society after 40 years of Stalinist zig-zags and adventurism is in a shambles. Inflation is running close to 50 per cent a year. The foreign debt is \$40 billion. And the government is "considering" retrenchment and redeployment (read layoffs) of 2.5 million workers currently on the state payroll. The prospect of mass layoffs (and unemployment) is the inevitable result of the erosion of centralised planning and an emphasis on competition among the various enterprises and regions. As the *Guardian* (19 October 1988) noted:



Gamma

Deng's programme of "building socialism with capitalist methods" encourages emulation of imperialist West, including advertising hype and the promotion of social inequality.

"To put Chinese factories on a commercial footing would mean sacking up to 30 million workers, or 20 to 30 per cent of the urban industrial workforce. To really allow the market to set prices would inevitably mean real hardship for millions."

Indications are that the Chinese working class is fighting back against rocketing inflation and government attempts to break the lifetime job security (the "iron rice bowl") that has become traditional since the revolution. For example, in November dock workers at Tanggu (a major port about 100 miles southwest of Peking) began a go-slow work action that paralysed the port. This action is part of a sharply rising line of workers struggles that between January and July last year resulted in 49 strikes by official figures (the real figure is doubtless much higher).

FOR PROLETARIAN POLITICAL REVOLUTION!

There have now emerged *openly* pro-capitalist elements within the Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy. Recently, three prominent economists with close ties to the Deng regime have proposed to "transfer ownership of all of China's state-owned companies to shareholders that would in-

clude individuals, universities, institutions and local governments" (*New York Times*, 10 January). However, the restoration of capitalism in China cannot take place simply through bureaucratic fiat, passing new regulations and the like.

The Chinese Revolution which triumphed in 1949 on the bayonets of Mao's Red Army and without the participation of the working class, was, despite its profound bureaucratic deformation, a world-historic event. Hundreds of millions of peasants rose up and seized the land on which their forebears had been cruelly exploited since time immemorial. The rule of the murderous warlords and blood-sucking moneylenders, the rapacious landlords and wretched bourgeoisie, was destroyed. Barbaric practices rooted in the old Confucian order, such as the binding of women's feet, were abolished. A nation which had been ravished and divided by foreign powers for a century was unified and freed from imperialist subjugation. These fundamental gains of the Chinese Revolution will be defended by the workers and poor peasants, and can be overturned only by civil war, a massive social cataclysm.

But what the bureaucracy is doing does *endanger and erode* the gains of the revolution, thus powerfully strengthening capitalist-restoration-

ist forces. Viscerally hostile to the Leninist programme of world socialist revolution, the nationalist Stalinist bureaucracies from Moscow to Peking seek a modus vivendi with the imperialists. The Deng regime has gone further, allying China to American imperialism (for example, in attacking and besieging Vietnam). It has also opened the country to ever greater imperialist economic penetration and pressure, pressure which is especially heavy given China's backwardness.

The alternative to "opening" China to capitalism is not national autarky along the lines of Mao's Great Leap Forward, but genuine international socialist planning. And that requires socialist revolution in the advanced capitalist countries and proletarian political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracies not only in Peking but also in Moscow. A revolutionary workers government in China, based on soviet democracy, would promote balanced economic growth, ensuring a steadily rising standard of living for the population. *But this cannot be done solely on the basis of the resources available in China.* The modernisation of China, the world's largest nation with its rich and ancient culture, is a great task for the international proletarian revolution and global socialist order.

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Wallis/JP Pictures

Leninist...

(Continued from page 2)

commemorating the October Revolution, Jack Conrad asserts that "Compared to Stalin, Gorbachev is a pygmy" (*Leninist*, 28 November 1988). The speech falsely credits Stalin for the determination to modernise the Soviet economy, the defeat of the Nazis, the establishment of "socialist states" in Eastern Europe, etc.

These points, raised previously by the TKP, we have answered fully in an earlier polemic entitled "As 'Leninist' conciliates Russian Nazis, TKP 'rehabilitates' Stalin" (*Workers Hammer* no 101, October 1988). But one particular point stands out here: how in the world can you seriously oppose the Great Russian chauvinist Pamyat organisation, while simultaneously glorifying the Great Russian chauvinist Joseph Stalin! Lenin's last fight was directed against the bureaucratic repression of the Georgian communist leaders at the hands of Stalin and his henchmen. The Stalin-



Der Spiegel

Stalin left USSR unprepared for Nazi invasion, 1941.

ist Thermidor represented the triumph of Great Russian chauvinism and Russian nationalist traditions over the Bolshevik programme of international revolution. Stalin freely used anti-Semitism as a weapon against Left Oppositionists, including Trotsky, embraced the pogromist Russian Orthodox church during WWII, and then orthodoxy during a large-scale purge of Jews from party, government and academic posts.

Indeed, it is in the worst traditions of Stalin's policy of "socialism in one country" that Gorbachev today betrays revolutionary internationalism, as with the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. And Gorbachev has made it crystal clear that he politically supported Stalin against the Trotskyist Left Opposition.

Pamyat enjoys protection from a number of elements of the Soviet bureaucracy, not least from among

those who recall Stalin with affection. You can't combat the chauvinist filth and deadly nationalist antagonisms that have spewed out in Gorbachev's Russia with Joe Stalin Thought. But trapped within the confines of its left-Stalinist ideological framework, the *Leninist* oscillates between seeking a wing of the bureaucracy to support and a neo-Kautskyite conception of classless democracy. Both of these roads lead in unsavoury directions. The sharpening polarisation of Soviet society, the emergence of not only fascist scum like Pamyat but also those who want to return to the traditions of genuine Leninism, poses the opportunity of constructing a Bolshevik party. But what is necessary is revolutionary Marxism, ie Trotskyism, and an understanding of its programmatic underpinnings. For unconditional military defence against imperialism and internal counter-revolution! For proletarian political revolution to sweep out the bureaucrats, to achieve soviet democracy and restore revolutionary internationalism! Reforge the Fourth International! ■

AIDS...

(Continued from page 1)

and assaults on gays by violent bigots.

In the all-sided reaction of Thatcher's Britain, the intersection of the devastation of the health services, grinding poverty and AIDS is deadly. A spokesman for the Terrence Higgins Trust points out that "The UK is the only country in the West where the reality of heterosexual transmission is still disavowed on a massive scale." The *Independent* (31 January) recently editorialised that there has been a "failure to come to terms with two groups of victims: intravenous drug users, especially in Edinburgh, and male prisoners". Recommendations from the Prison Reform Trust, World Health Organisation and even the National Association of Probation Officers that condoms and sterilised needles should be made available to combat the spread of infection has been rejected by the Home Office minister, the appropriately named Douglas Hogg. "Because both drug-taking and homosexual activity are illegal in prison...neither activity need be taken seriously."

As the first grouping to be hit by AIDS in any significant number, homosexuals have borne the brunt of the government's "blame the victim" reactionary anti-AIDS hysteria (see "Smash Section 28: 'Family values' hysteria targets gays", *Workers Hammer* no 101, October 1988). Now the latest figures from the Scottish Office reveal that of the 1545 confirmed cases of HIV positive for Scotland from September 1988, 54 per cent of these are IV drug users primarily from the poorer neighbourhoods of Edinburgh and that figure is rising. The victims of drug addiction, vulnerable to infection due to insidious government neglect, have been moved up on the government's hit list.

Thomson Prentice captures the current state of affairs both social and medical in Britain: "...instead of becoming the explosion of lethal infection that was predicted two years ago, the epidemic today looks more like a long, slowburning fuse on a bomb of indeterminate power" (*Times*, 1 December 1988).

SCOTLAND: A TIMEBOMB TICKING AWAY

Scotland has the highest HIV infection rate in the UK, with only ten per cent of the total UK population. "Tragically", in the words of Scottish Health Minister Michael Forsyth, "Scotland accounts for nearly 20% of all those in the UK who choose to be tested and are found to be HIV positive" (*Glasgow Herald*, 1 December 1988). Scottish figures show that at least 27 per cent overall of those infected are women. At an AIDS symposium organised by the British Medical Association (BMA) in Edinburgh late last November, participants demanded "more money before the 'inevitable' Scottish Aids epidemic began in earnest" (*Independent*, 1 December 1988).

The urban centres of Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee are the hardest hit areas. The rate in the Lothian region, centring on Edinburgh, is almost twice as high as that for any other UK health region. Dr Roy Robertson recently addressed Scotland's first national conference on AIDS: "He believes Scotland stands at the threshold of a two-headed epidemic: through the conversion into full Aids of those already infected, and a surge in transmission of the disease

to healthy people by those who may not yet show symptoms" (*Independent*, 30 January). As the spread of HIV increased among his patients in Edinburgh, Dr Robertson set an example of decency and courage. He went on TV to say that he was giving free needles to his IV drug-using patients.



Glasgow University's Bill Jarrett at work with his daughter Ruth on leukaemia viruses. The government has slated his department for the axe.

Leith hospital has set up an official needle exchange scheme, but it is open for only two hours a week. One community worker, Jackie Kerr, who set up perhaps the only truly anonymous exchange programme in Britain, has learned that a promised grant from the National AIDS Trust for maintenance and expansion of this highly successful scheme has now been refused. According to the *Scotsman* (15 December 1988), Kerr has been informed that the offer had been withdrawn because "the trust fears the project may be breaking the law".

The government would rather administer public health with the cops than with the scientists. The illegality of drugs and drug use has exacerbated horribly the spread of HIV. The police crackdown on needles and syringes in 1983/4, coinciding with the initial spread of HIV, led to widespread needle-sharing in Edinburgh in the first place. It resulted in an acute shortage of injection equipment in part perpetuated by doctors and pharmacists who, according to the *Independent* (31 January) "feared prosecution under Scottish common law for 'reckless conduct' if they supplied new ones".

Microcosms for the life of poor and working class youth in post-industrial Britain, Edinburgh and Glasgow breed the conditions in which drug addiction can become the literal opiate of the masses. The existing unemployment levels - "officially" 10.9 per cent for Scotland, nearly 19 per cent in Glasgow and in areas almost 25 per cent for males - tell part of the story. There are also the slave-labour YTS schemes, which under the latest law, tie non-student, unemployed youth utterly to this new queue. If you are unable to get a place or lose a place in YTS, you are on the street. If you do manage to get benefit, that means £32 a week for food, fuel, clothing and the part of rent that the state benefit doesn't cover. In London alone, 50,000 homeless teenagers sleep on the street. There are an estimated 31,000 homeless people in Scotland.

Desperate poverty and hopelessness lead to desperate measures to escape, even for a few moments, the daily hell of life. Drug use is the

classic "crime without a victim" - the addict himself is the victim. Amid the compound horror of AIDS and the poison of drug addiction, it is urgently necessary to *decriminalise drugs*, remove the stigma and get these people help fast. As part of its war on the working class and op-

pressed, the ruling class wages "war" on drugs. It is none of the state's business what people do in private - and that includes indulging in tobacco, alcohol or other substances, if they choose. Meanwhile, the government opposes even such an elementary act as handing out free, clean needles to IV drug users to check the spread of AIDS. It will take a socialist revolution, the establishment of a workers government and several ambitious five-year plans to eradicate the hell-holes that breed despair.

CRIMINAL GOVERNMENT NEGLECT AND MALEVOLENT VICTIMISATION

Half of the population of Scotland's grossly over-crowded prisons is in



Edinburgh's successful, free needle exchange - "no questions asked" - is threatened with the chop.

for non-payment of fines and many for minor drug offences. The prisons are another large concentration for the spread of HIV, cheerfully left that way by the criminal British bourgeoisie. In some English jails, HIV positive prisoners are segregated off in isolated wards reminiscent of leper

colonies. One prisoner had begun talking to himself just to hear the sound of another human voice. Like Hogg, Scottish Health Minister Michael Forsyth rejects out of hand the distribution of free needles in prison or even giving free condoms to prisoners. Meanwhile, Britain has one of the highest prison populations in Europe - with approximately one in every 1000 behind bars.

Now, Dundee, Edinburgh and London have been selected by the government for a special "HIV testing" programme. Pregnant women are to be pressured into a "voluntary" programme of testing ostensibly to check the wider spread of HIV through the heterosexual population in "high risk" areas. Many women are opposed to taking part in the scheme, and not only because of the risk of being denied insurance and the general witchhunt atmosphere surrounding AIDS. This government inspires widespread and justified distrust as it targets press freedoms, civil liberties and elementary democratic rights. As we wrote in *Women and Revolution* ("The Agony of AIDS", Summer 1988):

"...testing the populations at high risk would at least help researchers to track the epidemiology of AIDS. For pregnant women who have a high chance of giving birth to an infected baby, testing is crucial. *Voluntary, anonymous* testing would simultaneously provide the CDC [Center for Disease Control] with important information and help to assuage justified fear. "Like everything else in this capitalist society, 'public health' is infused with class, race and sex bias."

There is so little real *anonymous* testing in Britain that people travel from Scotland and other parts of the island to London just to achieve the illusion of a greater degree of anonymity available in a large metropolis.

Now in Scotland one Dr Ian McKee has advocated cop-enforced five-minute "roadside HIV tests" for prostitutes. In fact, he is for widespread compulsory testing. McKee takes his cue from Margaret Thatcher's recent utterances on the banning of Sinn Fein and denial of the right to silence: in the words of the prime minister, "To beat off your enemy in a war you have to suspend some of your civil liberties for a time" (*Guardian*, 23 January). Who in their right mind would trust the rulers of this country to *not* use in every vicious, draconian fashion information from such tests?

While these various testing schemes are being cooked up, the resources made available for simple preventive programmes, care and research for a cure are pathetic. Decaying British capitalism will not allocate the resources to combat AIDS, or for that matter, health care at all. One graphic illustration is the fate of Glasgow University professor William Jarrett, one of the leading scientists in Britain searching for an effective AIDS vaccine. The internationally prominent Jarrett - known for his work around cat leukaemia - should have every resource at his disposal in his work to locate a vaccine for the AIDS virus. Instead the government is closing down the veterinary school where he is located.

BACKLASH

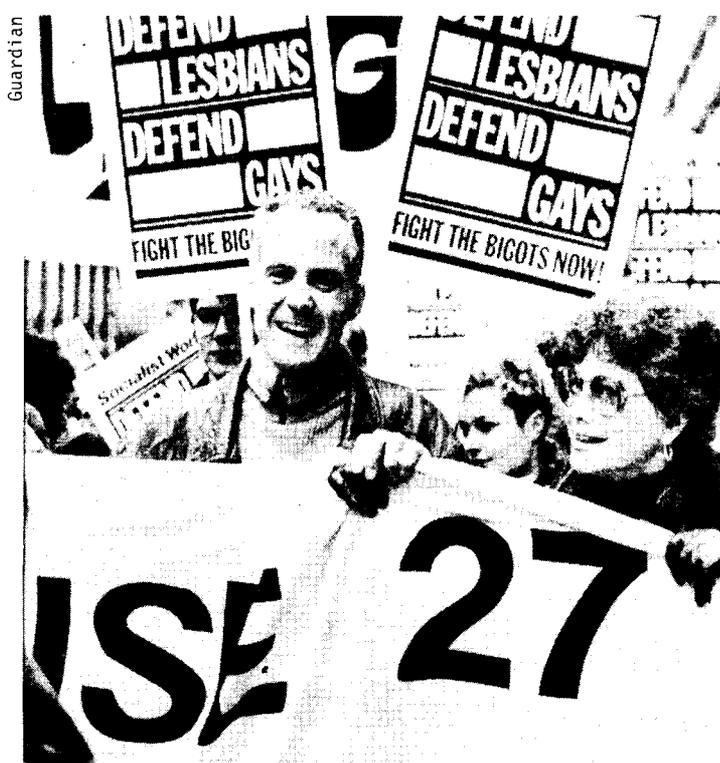
At the Tory party conference last autumn, "A small pastel-green lozenge circulating...bore a cross marked 'Aids RIP'. Below that it read: 'During the Black Death, a red cross was painted on the doors of the vic-

tims. We need only put a cross on identity cards to indicate people with Aids" (*Sunday Times*, 16 October 1988). Grotesquely, a British delegation led by the Lord Mayor of London, Sir Greville Spratt and including the British consul general to Amsterdam "turned their backs on a memorial which commemorates among others, the quarter of a million lesbians and gays who died at the hands of the Nazis" (*Capital Gay*, 4 November 1988). And in the recent debate on AIDS in the House of Commons - the first in two years - only 30 MPs bothered to show up. Intersecting the generalised attack on the living standards of the working class, the reactionary, repressive social climate and the special virulence against homosexuals is the nasty social-democratic indifference and worse to questions of special oppression. Kinnock & Co, in fact, supported the central phrase in Section 28 prohibiting the "promoting" of homosexuality. The Labour tops are often to the right of the bulk of the Tories on such social questions as the licensing laws, Sunday trading and repeal of oppressive restrictions on women's right to work.

Thus, with few exceptions, the so-called socialist left is distant from the substantive issues around AIDS. Notably, the dubious Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), feeding on reactionary prejudices, has been pushing the dangerous and imbecilic line that AIDS is some sort of a "gay plague" about which "ordinary people" need not worry. But it is the immediate concern of communists, as tribunes of the oppressed, when a vulnerable section of the population is menaced by a killer disease! The RCP is grossly indifferent to victims of this disease. Its newspaper, *the next step (tns)* has gone so far as to claim that "Those campaigning for more government funds for Aids are often inclined to exaggerate the risk and thus to increase public anxiety" (22 January 1988). And the "little England" RCP, while admitting a certain number of heterosexual cases of AIDS abroad, assures its readers that "these cases are not relevant to the discussion of the risk of acquiring Aids heterosexually in Britain" (*tns*, 19 August, emphasis in original).

Coming from the RCP - which denies the oppression of Gypsies, Jews and - until opportunist exigencies dictated a shift in line - gay

January 1988 protest against the reactionary, homophobic Clause 27 (now Section 28). Later on, Thatcher's bootboys rampaged into the demonstrators, arresting 33.



women; which prints interviews with racist terrorists; which organised conferences for scabs during the miners strike; which tolerates skinheads in its ranks and recruited a "former" fascist organiser in Sheffield, this line on AIDS is no simple error of backwardness. Those "socialists" who find this question irrelevant to the working-class movement might consider the horrible example of the RCP.

FREE, QUALITY HEALTH CARE FOR ALL

There is little doubt that the witch-hunt atmosphere combined with the criminalisation of drugs is driving AIDS sufferers and those who are HIV positive underground. While anti-homosexual hysteria, full scale assaults on elementary democratic rights, reactionary policies aimed at allowing the spread of HIV to continue unabated among whole sections of the population contribute to the rising death toll, the National Health Service (NHS) appears to be in its death throes. The decrepit NHS could well crack altogether under the strain of routine health care, let alone a major epidemic or emergency.

Cutbacks in spending on the NHS (under the Labour and Tory govern-

ments alike) have chopped billions from programmes, facilities and research necessary to combat the AIDS epidemic and to provide an overall decent, let alone quality system of health care. And with the continuing wilful deterioration of the NHS, the gap between the rich and nearly everyone else on this island is almost nowhere more blatant than in medical care.

Poverty and the cold and wet British winter mean that 10,000 pensioners die a month in wintertime alone - from bronchitis, heart attacks and strokes; between 500 to 1000 die a year directly from "hypothermia" (freezing to death from poverty) as the sole cause. Recent research centring on Sheffield (published in the *Lancet*) links the steady rise in the number of cot deaths over the last eight years to a combination of the cold and high levels of unemployment (*Independent*, 11 November 1988). Put simply, increase in levels of poverty is the direct cause of death in the very young and the very old.

Up to 30 per cent of the seriously injured die needlessly because casualty units in hospitals are understaffed and poorly equipped (*Guardian*, 24 November 1988). Women have been dying because smear tests for cervical cancer are mis-diagnosed or

the results are lost. Severely mentally handicapped patients are being thrown out of the mental hospitals and onto the streets where they join the growing ranks of the homeless. And recently two young doctors staged a protest outside their hospital under the slogan: "Up for 60 hours ...operating on your child now!". It is not unusual for junior doctors to work an 86-hour special shift.

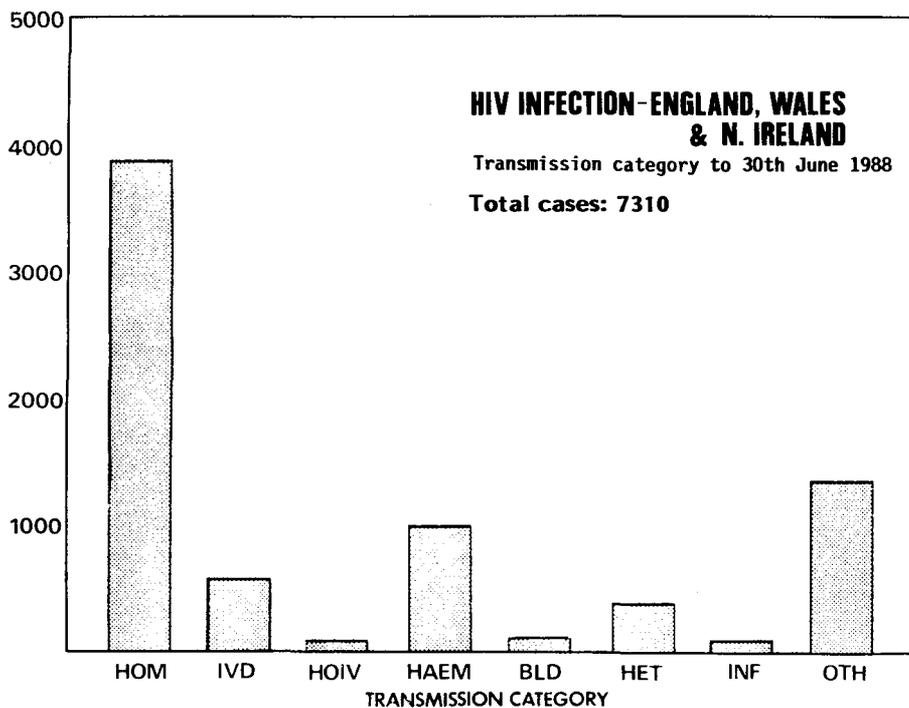
The establishment of the National Health service was one of the few genuine reforms of the postwar Labour government and there is mounting anger among the British working masses at the savage cutbacks in health care. It is an index of social democratic bankruptcy that when nurses went on strike some months ago, joined in solidarity by other workers, Kinnock's Labour Party opposed these actions. Today the Labourites' solution is to funnel Lawson's budget surplus into increased health expenditure. Leaving aside the penny ante sums involved here, the real point is that no amount of Westminster windbagery and dicker-ing over budgets will win anything for the working class. The bourgeois parliamentarians are doing what they are paid to do: maintaining capitalist profits at the expense of the workers and oppressed. Cutbacks in health are part of a broader class war - union-busting, abrogation of any safety conditions, shutting down mines and mills.

Appeals to the conscience of the bourgeoisie about dying grandmothers and malnourished children is not going to change this. And while revolutionaries certainly oppose Thatcher's schemes to privatise health care, the slogan of "save the NHS" put forward by the Labourites and their "left" apologists misses the point. The advanced state of decay of this entire society renders meaningless patchwork reforms. Only hard class struggle under revolutionary leadership with the aim of expropriating the wealth stolen from those who produced it will provide a solution. Demands for adequate research into and treatment of AIDS, along with free, quality health care for all are realisable only under a workers government. As our comrades in the SL/US wrote:

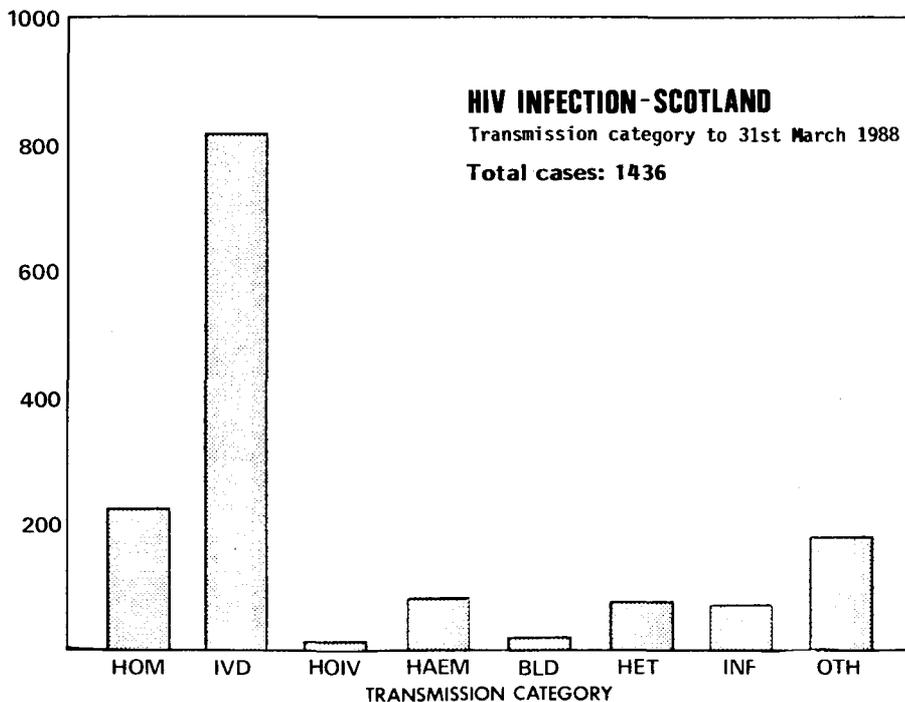
"Quality health care for all is objectively within the reach of material possibility, but not within the framework of this capitalist

continued on page 10

NO. INFECTED



NO. INFECTED



Worker Hammer Graphs

Key to graph: HOM = Homosexual/bisexual men, IVD = intravenous drug user, HOIV = Homosexual/IV drug user, HAEM = Haemophiliac, BLD = Recipient of blood transfusion or products, HET = Heterosexual contact, INF = Infant/Child - not haemophiliac, OTH = Other. (Source of figures, Lothian Health Board's report, "AIDS in Lothian: Everyone's Concern", 1988.)

Satanic Verses...

(Continued from page 1)

Midnight's Children and the 1988 Whitbread Fiction Prize with *Satanic Verses*. The latter novel was also nominated for the 1988 Booker Prize and was the eleven-to-eight favourite to win the £20,000 overall Whitbread Literary Prize for 1989 until a last-minute swing by the judges (who numbered among them Home Secretary Douglas Hurd) ensured the "public peace" and voted for someone less controversial.

Rushdie and his publishers Penguin/Viking have been deluged with threatening letters and phone calls. Several well-known "left" Labour MPs noted for their "constituency demagoguery" – including Tottenham's Bernie Grant and Bradford's Max Madden – are stoking this dangerous fire; piling in behind Lancashire Tory Ken Hargreave's early day motion deploring the publication of *Satanic Verses*, these Labourite censors are calling for the extension of the Victorian blasphemy laws to all religions. These laws were last resurrected in 1977 when the notorious Mary Whitehouse prosecuted *Gay News* for publishing James Kirkup's poem about Christ, "The Love that Dares to Speak Its Name". Meanwhile, the Koran-thumping crusaders talk of prosecuting Rushdie under the Public Order and Race Relations Acts. As the disgusted Rushdie bitterly observed, "Any old Act will do".

The anti-civilisation *jihād* by these Khomeinists of the second mobilisation has already managed to cow quite a few nominally secularist establishments. Following threats of violence, Britain's largest bookstore chain W H Smith dived for cover, sweeping *Satanic Verses* off their *Bradford shelves* and in the process hinting at a "similar" purification of their other 400-odd outlets. However, the divine power of mammon prevailed and the devilish offender will stay on the shelves. British sales of the hardback alone, currently being reprinted, already exceed 42,000 copies; 50,000 are due to hit the US market – despite bomb and assassination threats; and the paperback will not be out until later this year.

Rushdie's book is already banned in Pakistan, Malaysia, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Gulf States, India and South Africa. The Islamic fanatics have vowed to get all Penguin books banned from Muslim countries if *Satanic Verses* is not withdrawn. When the Indian government banned the book in October Rushdie noted "This is about votes, not literature" (*India Today*, 31 October 1988). Indeed the Congress government of Rajiv Gandhi, threatened by even more communalist rivals, hopes to pick up the Muslim vote. At the same time the Congress vies with its communalist rivals by fomenting anti-Muslim and anti-Sikh Hindu communalism. The Gandhi family and Congress took the opportunity to get back at Rushdie for his irreverent and scathing allegorical reference to the Gandhi dynasty in his book, the 1981 Booker Prize winner, *Midnight's Children*. Similarly in Pakistan Islamic fundamentalists denounced his book, *Shame*, which

dished out unkindly treatment to General Zia and the Bhuttos. The Congress of South African Writers was forced to withdraw its invitation to Rushdie to speak against apartheid, with sections of the Muslim population suicidally lining up with the butcher Botha to threaten Rushdie. The title of Rushdie's aborted lecture echoed the 19th-century German Jewish radical poet Heinrich Heine's apt warning, now poignantly displayed at the memorial to the victims of Hitler's Dachau concentration camp: "Once they burn books, they will end up burning people."

Rushdie admirably remains defiant: "They are not going to stop in a hurry, and so the struggle against them has to be continued. I am girding my loins for the fray" (*Sunday Times*, 22 January). The fundament-



Salman Rushdie

Sally Soames

alists charge that Rushdie's book is pornographic and racist and insults their holy book, the Koran, as well as their prophet/founder Mohammed. The frequently Rabelaisian *Satanic Verses* derives its title from two verses said to have been originally accepted by Mohammed as god-given truth and later excised from the Koran by him, on the grounds that they were in fact inspired by the devil masquerading as the archangel Gabriel. To the mullahs' charges, Rushdie responds: "Intellectual dissent is neither pornographic nor racist. I have tried to give a secular, humanist vision of the birth of a great world religion."

We Marxist secular humanists welcome such visions. It is neither supposed pornography nor racism that really got the zealots' goats. As Rushdie pointed out:

"Nowadays... a powerful tribe of clerics has taken over Islam. These are the contemporary Thought Police.... One may not discuss the growth of Islam as a historical phenomenon, as an ideology born out of its time. These are the taboos against which 'The Satanic Verses' has transgressed (these and one other; I also tried to write about the place of women in Islamic society, and in the Koran)." (*Observer*, 22 January)

Epitomised by the horrible conditions under Khomeini's Islamic regime in Iran and those which the CIA-backed Afghan "freedom fighters" wish to impose, Islamic fundamentalism reserves special horrors for women. From the stifling and de-humanising *chador* (veil) to the pervasive and humiliating segregation in society (*purdah*) advocated by Islamic fundamentalists, a key question dividing communists and the elders of the mosques is the liberation of women from such barbaric subjugation.

Ominously the white racists and

anti-immigrant fascists in Britain might well see a chance to peddle genocidal poison against all Asians in the aftermath of the Muslim fanatics' drive. In a letter to the *Guardian* (22 January) one Dipak Nandy writes:

"The reaction of the Muslim community to *Satanic Verses* is a profound strategic error. Britain in 1989 is an intolerant, illiberal society anyway. By joining forces with those who have made it so, Muslims in Britain seem to be, with unbelievable naivety, forging the conditions in which their own right to exist and practise their faith will be extinguished.

"I write as one who grew up as a boy amidst the communal mass-acres which accompanied the partition of India and for whom the ugly, unacceptable face of religion – and particularly of religious fundamentalism – is etched in memories of dead, disfigured bodies littering the streets – and of screams in the night."

The bourgeois mouthpieces have already waxed mealy-mouthed about the glorious "British traditions" of "tolerance" and "democracy", trying to bury the long history of state censorship. Oscar Wilde was jailed for openly defying official bourgeois sexual hypocrisy, D H Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was banned for decades. Recently the frenzied attempts to ban *Spycatcher* have been joined by the blanket ban on Sinn Fein and even the musical group Pogues' song about the demonstrably innocent Birmingham Six. Fortunately, the reactionary Christian clericals in this country couldn't deprive people of the right to see the movie, *The Last Temptation of Christ*. But fascists linked with Catholic fundamentalism were able to terrorise theatres throughout France from screening the movie in various areas outside Paris. The ruling class in this country has a long tradition of class-biased hypocrisy backed up with state sanctions. Imitating the worst characteristics of the bourgeois rulers are the weepy liberals and "leftists" who think that Paul Simon's *Graceland* album ought to be banned and his concerts picketed because he worked with South African black musicians or that Jim Allen's anti-Zionist *Perdition* should not be allowed to play.

Less sanctimonious are the right-wing forces busying themselves on the ground, preparing the way for a racist backlash. Anthony Murphy, chairman of Bradford South Conservative Club, is distributing leaflets calling for an end to all immigration: "I don't think you could impose sterilisation, but we must educate them. The indigenous population see the take-over as a recipe for disaster" (*Independent*, 21 January).

The sheer disproportion in the re-

lationship of forces between the white Christian majority and the Muslims would suggest that Islamic fundamentalist frenzy is contrary to the objective interests of the Muslim communities as well as other minorities. The fundamentalists are centred in the mosques of the most deprived inner-city areas such as Bradford and East London. In this vile racist society the mosque offers some pie-in-the-sky solace to the community's most oppressed. Faced with unemployment or toiling in the sweatshops run by the petty capitalists who are the mullahs' closest supporters – some of the oppressed Asian Muslims are driven back into the arms of the most reactionary elements of their traditional society.

There is an established church in this country and ominous moves to further erode secular education threaten everyone. The Tories' Education Reform attacks the educational rights of all working people and is a particular affront to minorities. The government is insisting that religious education in schools be implemented and that it be essentially Christian. This has fuelled the Islamic fundamentalists' drive to establish single-sex schools for girls and force young women into *purdah*. The growing pressure for separate (and single-sex) schools coming from a small but loud bunch of Muslim fanatics only plays into the hands of white segregationist outfits like the Parental Alliance for Choice in Education in Dewsbury. These people do not seem to know what country they, and their followers, live in. We demand free secular education for all, including the teaching of minority languages such as Bengali and Urdu. Keep the mullahs, nuns, priests and above all the reverends of the established Anglican church out of the schools!

Of the party that presided over the British-engineered partition blood-bath in India, the racist Labour Party that brought you virginity tests for Asian women seeking immigration to Britain, Rushdie notes "the true conservatives of Britain are now the Labour party" and that "It is very sad to see this alliance of the left and the mullahs, for heaven's sake" (*Sunday Times*, 22 January). Indeed, Labour's "party of the people" talk is a pro-capitalist fraud – from its long-standing bloc with the Catholic church in places like Glasgow based on protecting religious schools, to the Gypsy bans in Islington to Bernie Grant's appeal to the Victorian values of the blasphemy laws. Britain needs a revolutionary Bolshevik party, a true tribune of the oppressed, built by splitting the Labour Party in the struggle for socialist revolution. Having thus gotten rid of all the old crap, we can then enjoy *Satanic Verses* in peace. ■

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Viraj Mendis deportation: racist outrage

After spending two years in "sanctuary" at the Church of Ascension in Hulme, Manchester, Viraj Mendis – a Sinhalese leftist political activist – was dragged from bed on 18 January in a dawn raid by over 100 cops and immigration officials. The arrest was planned with military precision: telephone wires and burglar alarms were cut, then the sledgehammers were brought in to break down the doors. Mendis was dragged out of the church clad in pyjamas and bundled into a police van which took him to Pentonville prison to await his deportation to Sri Lanka.

Almost immediately, several thousand protesters took to the streets of Manchester to demonstrate against his arrest and deportation and smaller protests were held in London at Downing Street and Pentonville prison. Attempts to get Mendis into a third country failed due to the haste of the government's deportation; he arrived in Sri Lanka within 48 hours of his arrest. A supporter of the Revolutionary Communist Group (RCG), Viraj Mendis was known for his defence of the Tamil people in Sri Lanka, his opposition to the Indian-Lankan Accord and his outspoken denunciation of the blatant racism of this country. From Sri Lanka, Mendis continued to denounce the British government as "racist, the worst in the world in treating refugees" (*Times*, 23 January). His own deportation to the bloody communalism wracking Sri Lanka makes Mendis a target for anti-leftist and Sinhalese chauvinist forces.

Throughout the campaign to save Mendis from deportation, the government has orchestrated a counter-campaign of vilification against him. They denied that he was in any danger if he returned to Sri Lanka ("safe" for Mendis, but not for the British cricket team which cancelled its visit last year). They painted him as a queue-jumper and a failed ex-student who only became politically active in

order to spearhead his own defence (as if spending years in a Manchester church was his life's ambition). This racist venom became particularly pronounced at the time of the arrest. After his arrival in Sri Lanka, the unrelenting press claimed that Mendis had retracted his former statements about what might await him there. But in a telephone call to supporters in Britain, Mendis said that the media had "cynically twisted" his statements, adding that "The situation in Sri Lanka is even worse than I believed when I was in Britain" (*Independent*, 28 January). Earlier, the government's campaign against Viraj Mendis emboldened fascist bands who several times attacked Mendis' supporters, in at least one case carving a swastika on the hand of one of the women who formed his defence guard at the church.

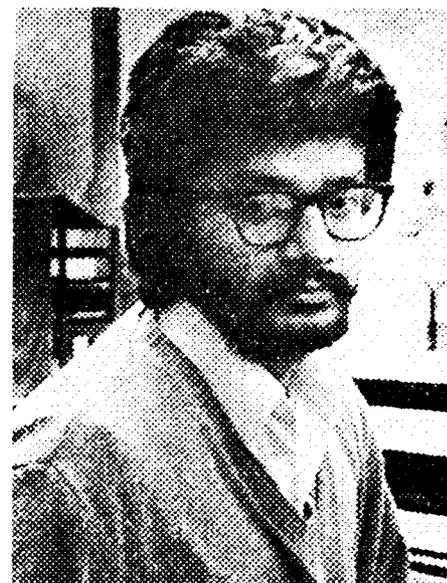
This deportation is a green light for many more: Tamils, Turks, Kurds, Iranians, South African exiles and others seeking asylum from reactionary terror have been served notice by the Mendis case. The fact that he was an open red only gave the bourgeoisie more relish in prosecuting this "test case". The liberal *Guardian* (19 January) decried the procedures as a "disgrace" while lecturing that Mendis is "no ideal focal point for such wider outrage". But Labour's deputy leader Roy Hattersley outdid even the bulk of the bourgeois press in his "Endpiece" column (*Guardian*, 21 January). Until the morning of Viraj Mendis' arrest, Hattersley "thought that Mr Mendis was doing more harm than good". His supporters "chanted offensive slogans about racism in Britain" and sold "bizarre political magazines"; they made "nuisances of themselves outside Labour Party meetings". But Hattersley did believe that Mendis' two years in the church "absolve him of the charge which is heard most frequently when Asian immigration is discussed. He certainly did not spend the last two

years drawing social security..."

Joined in their determination to tighten the existing racist and reactionary immigration/asylum laws, the Tories, Liberals and Labour also perpetuate the myth that Britain has historically been a "haven" for those fleeing persecution. The *Independent* (23 January) wrote in a disgusting editorial: "In the aftermath of Empire, this country received several million 'immigrants' and is still in the delicate process of absorbing them and their offspring.... He [Mendis] attempted to exploit the goodwill which exists within any decent society. In doing so, he has made things more difficult for those who merit compassion, and who should be defended against arbitrary power."

In fact, the precedents for racist immigration laws were established long ago, in the hey day of British imperialism, and much of the recent legislation bears an uncanny similarity to laws previously applied this century to refugees from anti-Semitic pogroms and later to those fleeing the Nazi holocaust. The Aliens Act of 1905 led to the exclusion of thousands of Jews fleeing Eastern Europe. From 1933 to the beginning of World War II, only 50,000 Jews were admitted to Britain, and that on an assurance that no refugee would be "a charge on public funds" (Steve Cohen, *From the Jews to the Tamils*). Those who did make it to Britain faced internment at places like the infamous Warth Mill concentration camp where 2000 people shared one bathtub.

The Labour Party was in this all the way. More recently, it was a Labour government which presided over "virginity" tests for Asian women after legislating away the rights of East African Asians, and Labour which prepared the Nationality Act enacted under the Tories in 1983. In the last three years alone, there has been the 1986 legislation on restricting entry, explicitly de-



Viraj Mendis.

Guardian

signed to prevent Tamils from getting here; the 1987 Carriers Act followed by the 1988 Immigration Act. In particular, visa restrictions today parallel the 1938 measures against German and Austrian nationals attempting to flee to Britain.

Laws relating to immigration and asylum have become increasingly interchangeable. So stringent are British laws in this sphere that they have become the envy of Western Europe and other countries are seeking to emulate them in the run-up to 1992. The struggle against racist immigration laws, for full citizenship rights for all foreign born workers and their families, must be taken up by the organised workers movement under the leadership of a Bolshevik party. Real sanctuary for those fleeing persecution, torture and death abroad and the British authorities' repression here will only be won by the overthrow of this deeply racist, capitalist system. *Asylum for victims of reactionary terror! Full citizenship rights for foreign born workers! Smash the racist immigration laws!* ■

AIDS...

(Continued from page 7)

system, which cannot provide the necessities of life to its citizens even though the productive capacities and technology exist to feed the hungry across the whole planet. And while "throwing money" at AIDS won't guarantee a cure or vaccine early on, it would at a minimum ease suffering for the dying and, as treatments improve, prolong life expectancy. But it will take a socialist revolution to rip the profit motive out of the health system."

– "AIDS Devastates Gays, Ghettos", *Workers Vanguard* no 462, 7 October 1988

We communists struggle to build a revolutionary party that will serve not only as the general staff of the socialist revolution, but also as a genuine *tribune of the people*. The medical catastrophe of AIDS has been compounded by vicious bigotry and oppression, bred of social reaction, against the victims of this deadly disease. In Thatcher's Britain, it is starkly clear that the fight against AIDS cries out for a socialist revolution which will lay the basis for a society ending all forms of social oppression. ■

Atlanta: 3500 Turn Out Against KKK



Special *Workers Vanguard* supplement

Includes:

- "As Army of Cops, Troops Shields 7 Klansmen – Atlanta: 3,500 Turn Out Against KKK"
- "Cops Rampage Against Anti-Klan Protesters"

This special supplement on the 21 January labour/black mobilisation against the Ku Klux Klan and skinhead thugs in Atlanta is available in the current issue of *Workers Vanguard* (3 February 1989), the Marxist working-class fortnightly of the Spartacist League/US. Initiated by the Partisan Defense Committee, the class-struggle legal defence organisation associated with the Spartacist League, the labour/black mobilisation, bringing out over 3000 trade unionists, students, gays and socialists, was a sight not seen in the open-shop, Klan-infested Deep South for decades.

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Iran executions...

(Continued from page 12)

WASHINGTON, DC AND NEW YORK, UNITED STATES

On 13 January, some 20 protesters demonstrated outside the Iranian Interests Section located in the Algerian embassy on the outskirts of Washington. In addition to denouncing the executions in Iran, they chanted "US hands off Libya! Down with US war moves!" A speaker for the Spartacist League/US declared: "As American revolutionaries, it's incumbent upon us to fight our own bourgeoisie. And we say: US out of the Persian Gulf! Remember Iran Air Flight 655 - the 290 people who were killed, victims of US war moves."

In New York around 85 people rallied outside the Iranian Mission to the United Nations on 19 January. Supporters of Iranian leftist groups attending the rally included the Communist Party of Iran (Komala), the Tudeh Party, the Democratic Organization of Iranian Women, the Association of Iranian Left in New York and Left Platform. A statement was read from the Iranian Student Association in the US, supporters of the Fedayeen (Minority). A speaker from the Freedom Socialist Party also addressed the rally. A spokesman for the Partisan Defense Committee noted: "Last week, Bush promised that human rights would be a focus of his foreign policy - just like Jimmy Carter's 'human rights' in which he armed the Shah, trained the SAVAK. Just a few days before Bush's pronouncement, a government spokesman said that the executions in Iran would not hinder a move toward better relations between the two countries."

LONDON, ENGLAND

On 14 January, over 60 demonstrators picketed outside the Iranian embassy in London in response to the call for protest by the Spartacist League/Britain (SL/B). Speakers included an Iranian activist and a London-Islington branch official of the National Union of Public Employees, as well as spokesmen for the British "Leninist" organisation, Iranian Political Prisoners Action Committee (IPPAC) and the SL/B. Also participating were supporters of the CPI/Komala, Fedayeen Majority, Fedayeen Minority, Committee for the Defence of the Iranian People's Rights and Committee Against Political Executions in Iran. Fred Halliday had also endorsed the demonstration.

The police prevented a number of Iranian militants from joining the protest by threatening to arrest them if they refused to remove headwear covering their faces and thus expose themselves to the agents of Khomeini's murderous regime. A Spartacist representative denounced this provocation as "an outrageous example of collaboration between the British state and the Iranian state."

The spokesman from IPPAC quoted a letter he had received from Iran: "Everyone you know, anyone whose name you know, has been executed." The SL/B speaker drew attention to the bloodbath which looms following the Red Army's withdrawal from Afghanistan: "Iran shows clearly what is planned by the *jihād* [Islamic holy war] in Afghanistan against leftists and against women." The protest concluded with the singing of the *Internationale* and a final defiant chant: "Down with Khomeini! Workers to power!"



Campaign initiated by the international Spartacist tendency: Paris (top); Hamburg (bottom left); Washington, DC (bottom right). Sign in Farsi says, "Stop the Executions in Iran!"

TORONTO, CANADA

A protest called by the Trotskyist League of Canada (TLC) in Toronto the same day attracted 60 people to Speakers Corner at City Hall. Co-sponsors included supporters of Tudeh and the Fedayeen (Majority) in Canada and the Toronto South Asian Women's Group. Also participating were supporters of the Fedayeen Majority, CPI/Komala and the Democratic Organization of Iranian Women. The Tudeh supporters pulled out early on, objecting to groups carrying any slogans other than the call to stop the executions. However, a Tudeh representative did speak, as did Janet Yip, a member of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers. Afterwards, the demonstrators marched to a nearby Tudeh hunger-strike protest where a TLC spokesman addressed the protesters.

MELBOURNE AND SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

Sixty protesters joined the rally at Melbourne's Town Hall Plaza on 18 January. Representatives of the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand (SL/ANZ) which initiated the demonstration, Rahe Kargar and the Freedom Socialist Party addressed the rally. The action was endorsed by a large number of organisations, including the Iranian Refugee Association and a number of Turkish political and cultural organisations. Supporters of the Iranian Refugee Association, the Union of Australian Turkish Workers, the Community Centre for People of Turkey in Victoria, Devrimci Yol and the Chilean Socialist Party were in attendance.

The next day 80 people gathered at Town Hall Square in Sydney. Nearly half the demonstration comprised Iranian, Turkish and Kurdish militants. Representatives of the Com-

mittee in Solidarity with Political Prisoners in Iran, the Sydney Turkish Workers Association and the Spartacist League addressed the meeting.

Our comrades of the Lega Trotskista d'Italia (LTd'I) also initiated a demonstration in Milan. These protests were a statement of proletarian internationalism. In response to the hideous massacre in Iran, the international Spartacist tendency has simply carried out the duty of communists to champion the oppressed as part of the struggle for world socialist revolution. As the TLD speaker in Hamburg concluded: "Iran is very similar to the Russian empire under the tsar - a huge prison house of peoples. Equality for women, liberation for the Kurds, Baluchis, for the other peoples, an end to the oppression of the religious minorities like the Bahais - the bourgeoisie can

bring none of this. But in Russia there was one thing that does not exist in Iran and which did not exist ten years ago, when the question of revolution was posed. This was a revolutionary party of the working class.

"Comrades, proletarian revolution is what is necessary to open the doors of the prisons, for freedom for the Kurdish people, for the other peoples, for the peoples living in Afghanistan. This generation of Iranian leftists must be saved. What is necessary is a powerful outcry from the whole left, from the workers organisations, above all from the trade unions, and from all organisations who defend democratic rights. We must stand together to demand an end to the executions in Iran. Stop the executions in Iran!"

Adapted and updated from Workers Vanguard no 469, 20 January 1989.

Spartacist League Public Meeting

**10 years of Islamic Reaction:
Stop the Executions!**

For Workers Revolution in Iran!

<p>LONDON</p> <p>Time: 7:30 pm Date: Tuesday, 14 February Venue: Conway Hall (Red Lion Square) WC1. Nearest Tube: Holborn</p>	<p>GLASGOW</p> <p>Time: 3:00 pm Date: Saturday, 11 February Venue: Committee Room 1, Queen Margaret Union, University Gardens, Glasgow University</p>
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For more information phone: London (01) 487 1396; Glasgow (041) 339 0993

International protests demand:



London, January 14—Iranian leftist groups joined with Spartacist League/Britain in united-front demonstration outside Iranian embassy.

Workers Hammer

Stop executions in Iran!

In cities across the world in January, chants of "Stop the Executions!" resounded outside offices of representatives of the Iranian mullah regime. In the United States, Canada, England, France, West Germany, Italy and Australia, protesters sounded the alarm over the massive wave of killings of leftist political prisoners and other dissidents in Khomeini's jails. They were responding to a call by the international Spartacist tendency and the Partisan Defense Committee for an emergency mobilisation to "raise a worldwide cry of outrage against these unspeakable crimes being committed against opponents of the mullahs' dictatorship!"

Sections of the iSt in seven countries issued an appeal, published in English, French, German, Italian and Farsi (the dominant language of Iran). The protests drew participation from a range of Iranian left organisations. The urgency of this campaign is underlined by reports that the Islamic dictatorship is intent on executing every imprisoned leftist in the country by 12 February, the tenth anniversary of Khomeini's seizure of power.

The wave of executions began last August as the mullahs' regime sought to behead a potential social explosion in the aftermath of the stalemated Iran-Iraq war, which took more than a million lives. A recent article in the *Guardian* (13 January) headlined, "Political Executions Break All Bounds", underscored the need for even broader and more powerful protest actions. Reporting that thousands had already been executed, the *Guardian* added that:

"... it is difficult to escape the impression that the Ayatollahs, through these executions and the war of attrition just ended against Iraq, have embarked on the decimation of an entire generation, apparently determined to kill off what could have been — had it survived — the cream of tomorrow's

intelligentsia."

The victims include supporters of the Islamic populist Mujahedeen, the pro-Moscow Tudeh party, Fedayeen (Majority), Fedayecn (Minority), Revolutionary Workers Organisation (Rahe Kargar) and militants among the oppressed Kurdish minority. As the *Guardian* noted: "Most of those who have died have been leftwing political activists and sympathisers." Women and religious minorities are also being executed, and even "disloyal" mullahs.

In calling for an international campaign against the mass slaughter underway in Iran, the iSt and PDC sought a united protest by diverse groups. In such a united front, each group can present its own political views while making common cause around the central demand of "Stop the Executions in Iran!" And in the event, various exile organisations of the Iranian left, bitterly rent by fratricidal sectarianism, found in the Spartacist-initiated protests their first opportunity to cooperate in a joint action protesting the bloodbath unleashed by the Ayatollah's regime.

HAMBURG, WEST GERMANY

Some 100 people, including scores of Iranian exiles, turned out in Hamburg on 11 January outside the General Consulate of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Joining with the Trotskyistische Liga Deutschlands (TLD) were the Communist Party of Iran (CPI)/Komala, Rahe Kargar, the Fedayeen Central Committee of Minority Cells and sympathisers of the former Peykar organisation. Demands at the rally included: "Stop [Interior Minister] Zimmermann's Deportation Programme!" "Political Asylum for Refugees from Reactionary Terror" and "Deportation is Murder!" A CPI/Komala speaker linked the wave of executions to the Islamic regime's pursuit of better relations with the Western imperialist powers

and specifically to West German foreign minister Genscher's visit to Iran in late November: "Herr Genscher travels to Teheran to boost the hangmen."

The TLD speaker stressed the urgent need for *united-front defence* to stop the executioner's axe, pointing out that today Khomeini "is attacking everybody, including those who ten years ago had open illusions in the mullahs and also served Khomeini. It is easy today to be against Islamic reaction. But in 1978 and '79, it wasn't so easy. Then, the international Spartacist tendency stood alone. We told the truth: 'Down with the Shah! Down with the Mullahs! For Workers Revolution in Iran!'" The demonstration concluded with the singing of the *Internationale* in German, Farsi and Serbo-Croatian.

PARIS AND LYON, FRANCE

Also on 11 January, 140 demon-

strators gathered outside the offices of Iran Air on the Champs Elysees in Paris. The Ligue Trotskyiste de France (LTF), initiators of the protest, had distributed 10,000 leaflets at various universities in three days, and numerous Iranian groups responded to the call. Speakers at the protest included a representative of the Committee Against Political Executions in Iran and sympathisers of the CPI/Komala and the Fedayeen Majority, supporters of the Iranian journal *Recommencement* and the Muslim group, Ershad. Three supporters of Tudeh also joined the demonstration.

The next day, 12 January, some 45 people demonstrated in Lyon, including a number of Iranian women and members of the Kurdish and Azeri national minorities. The Iranian women enthusiastically joined in LTF chants of "Down with the veil! Down with Islamic reaction!"

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Reza/Sipa

Khomeini's bloody regime has executed thousands of leftist opponents.