

## For Workers Revolution to Defeat Islamic Reaction!

# No to the Veil!

"We will fight the veil," chanted thousands of women as they marched for hours in a driving snowstorm in Teheran on March 8. They had come from International Women's Day meetings at Teheran University and from government offices where they were turned away from their jobs because they wore Western-style clothes. They were joined by women and men until tens of thousands of demonstrators—defiant in blue jeans, smoking cigarettes—shouted words never before heard in the streets of Iran: "Down with Khomeini!" And for the first time since the reactionary mullahs swept into power, a mass demonstration was answered with bullets. As the Islamic marshals opened fire to disperse the demonstration, women hit the ground and took cover behind parked cars and buildings. The first open battle between Khomeini and opponents of Islamic fundamentalism had been launched and, not surprisingly, it was over women's rights.

The rude awakening has begun. And we welcome its first stirrings, the first open crack in the fatal illusions in a "democratic Islam." To the women who chanted, "In the dawn of freedom, there is an absence of freedom," we say: You have not yet seen the dawn. But it is a source of hope that some Iranians have begun to perceive the nightmare which the mullahs are already making reality for the masses. Sections of the population most immediately hit by Khomeini's Islamic reaction—like the "Westernized" women—are shocked, confused, angry.

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



International Women's Day, Teheran, 8 March 1979. Thousands march against Khomeini's reimposition of the veil.

certainly not the mullahs.

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

### Hail the Protests for Women's Rights!

The first of the women's protests began in response to Khomeini's pronouncement: "Sin may not be committed in Islamic ministries." The "sin" was the refusal to wear the stifling head-to-foot *chador* without which they are "naked": "Women should not be naked at work in these ministries... they must be clothed according to religious standards," said the ayatollah (*New York Times*, 9 March). True to his promises to bring the state in line with the Koran, Khomeini had the Family Protection Act of 1975 revoked. Thus the women in

the streets are protesting the reinstitution of the old Muslim laws which allow polygamy and by which women are deprived of the right of divorce while a man can get a divorce simply by filing for one with any notary public. Coeducation has been abolished while the aged reactionary rages that Iran's colleges have become "centers of prostitution." Abortion has been banned. At least 300 women are threatened with expulsion from Iran for the "crime" of marriage to non-Muslims. And public floggings for adultery have begun.

Immediately threatened by the Islamic reactionaries, the women's rights protests have kept up on a daily basis since March 8, growing in militancy and numbering in the tens of thousands. Significantly, the demonstrators have been joined by Fedayeen guerrillas.

On March 9 the protest marchers were stoned by Muslim zealots and driven away from Bazargan's office by guards. The next day the protests escalated as nurses, high school teachers and employees of some government ministries walked off their jobs. Nearly

15,000 women staged a three-hour sit-in at Teheran's major mosque. Wide-spread rallies in Teheran were again assaulted by Khomeini's official and unofficial thugs. Fanatic Muslim women dressed in the *chador* reviled the "infidels," while faithful men jeered "whores" and brandished knives at the demonstrators. But this time more than insults were hurled. The machine guns and knives were not for intimidation only; three women were shot and others knifed and beaten.

On March 12 the demonstrations took place under the protection of Fedayeen guerrillas, who ringed the protesters, machine guns in hand. UPI estimated that 20,000 women jammed Freedom Square, defended by the Fedayeen from the continuing knife and stone attacks of Khomeini supporters. The minister of propaganda—hated for his puritanical censorship of TV and the Iranian news blackout of present events—was stopped and had his car turned over.

But despite the increasing militancy of the demonstrators and their courage

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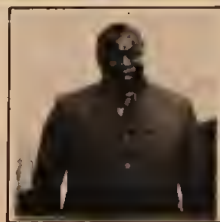
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Newport News:  
Organize  
the South!



Fight the  
Racist Weber  
Court Suit



Idi Amin's  
State  
of Blood



## Bosses' Court Shafts Shipyard Strike

# Newport News: Key Battle to Organize the South

NEWPORT NEWS, Virginia—Four thousand striking shipyard workers and their supporters rallied here March 2 in defense of the six-week-old strike at the Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company. On Friday a crowd of 3,000 gathered at the nearby Hampton Coliseum to hear solidarity greetings from a host of labor leaders, while 1,000 more marched on the picket lines outside the massive shipyard. Unionists from as far away as Texas and Maine, including 200 steelworkers who made a 19-hour bus ride from Chicago, came to help bolster the strikers on the front lines of what is being heralded as the battle to win labor's "gateway to the South."

It was the second major show of support in a week for embattled Local 8888 of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA), on strike for recognition and a union contract. On February 24 the Newport News Central Labor Council sponsored a march of 3,000, equally divided between striking shipyard workers and unionists from over 20 different locals throughout Virginia. Stretching down 15 city blocks in front of the plant, many strike supporters sported buttons demanding "Stop Union Busting in the South."

But union busting is just what the giant Tenneco conglomerate, which owns the shipyard, is up to, and on March 2 the bosses got an important shot in the arm. Steelworker officials interrupted the rally in Hampton Coliseum to announce that a U.S.

Appeals Court had just thrown out the certification the union had won in an election a year ago. The court directed the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to hold further hearings on the company's charges of vote fraud during the election.

This decision was just what Tenneco was hoping for, giving it the prospect of months and months of additional litigation and court appeals. Tenneco is also seizing on the court ruling to whip up a new back-to-work movement, claiming that under existing labor law it is now free to fire the "uncertified" strikers and hire outside scab replacements.

The court's decision underscores once more that this crucial strike *will be won or lost on the picket lines*. Tenneco knows full well that—like the notorious J.P. Stevens textile giant, which has stalled bargaining with the Amalgamated Clothing Workers for 15 years through endless court wrangles—it can tie the union up in court almost indefinitely while it tries to break the back of the strike through scabherding protected by riot-equipped state and local police.

Yet the leadership of the USWA continues to undermine the strike by instructing pickets to obey Virginia's "right to scab" law. Union spokesmen claim that only 25 to 30 percent of the shipyard workforce are reporting to work, while the company says over 50 percent are on the job. Whatever the exact figure, it is clear that there is a



WV Photo

"88! Close the Gate!": Newport News strike will be won or lost on the picket line.

good deal of scabbing going on at Newport News. And that number seems destined to increase unless there is a decision to shut the shipyard down tight. Local 8888 officers told *WV* that many workers, barely surviving on the union's paltry \$30 to \$40 a week strike

benefits, were holding out pending the court's decision, which they had been encouraged to believe would be favorable.

In another ominous sign, USWA president Lloyd McBride has begun to

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# ILWU Warehouse Militants Fight Contract Sellout

OAKLAND, March 10—At the just-concluded 34th Annual Constitutional and Contract Convention of Local 6 of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU), the union's officers made it clear that they are already on their knees as the local's June 1 master contract expiration date

approaches. Terrified of waging a strike against Jimmy Carter's 7 percent wage guidelines, and intimidated by the recent crushing defeat of a four-month Teamster grocery workers strike in the Bay Area, the ILWU bureaucrats pushed through a bargaining program calculated to signal surrender in advance to the warehouse bosses. "We hope to avoid a strike" was the leadership's theme.

Having recently signed a series of roughly 7 percent packages in warehouses whose contracts have already expired, Local 6 president Keith Eickman argued that asking for more would cause more runaway shops to non-union states in an already unemployment-ridden local. He proposed a three-year wage package of 75 cents, 65 cents and 55 cents—i.e., within Carter's guidelines—and vehemently opposed even such minimal demands from the delegates as more vacation time and extended funeral leave. Eickman & Co. paved the way for delegate acceptance of the meager demands by acquiescing over the past several months to a host of employer attacks: new absence-control policies, back-breaking speedups, assaults on the union's jurisdiction and the move of one of the local's major warehouses,

Thrifty's, to low-wage, "right to work" Nevada.

But the voices of bureaucratic defeatism did not go unchallenged. Delegates Pete Woolston, a Local 6 steward, and Bob Mandel, recently re-elected to a third term on the local's General Executive Board (GEB), were given an attentive hearing by delegates looking for an alternative to simple capitulation. Members of the Militant Caucus, increasingly recognized as the only consistent opposition to the sell-out ILWU tops, Woolston and Mandel argued that a hard-fought strike will be necessary in 1979 to beat back the mounting anti-union offensive. Such a strike can be won, they said, by mobilizing the full strength of the union together with the Teamsters (who represent a majority of Northern California warehousemen and bargain jointly with the ILWU) to stop scabbing and police attacks.

Demoralized by a leadership that clearly does not want to fight, mindful of the recent Teamster defeat and remembering the mauling the local took in a bureaucratically bungled and unorganized strike three years ago, most delegates were not yet ready to back such a class-struggle perspective. Though they slapped down several

leadership proposals, including one that would have sharply limited the policy-setting power of the convention and another to give employers the power to force overtime on lower seniority workers, the delegates adopted most of the bureaucrats' bargaining points. But with two-and-a-half months to go until the contract is up and the pace-setting Teamsters Master Freight Agreement still to be negotiated, this conservative mood could radically change.

The bureaucracy's hold on the disgruntled Local 6 membership is fragile and they know it. This year's convention was notably lacking in long harangues and physical threats against Militant Caucus spokesmen which have marred previous ones. The officers have been rebuffed repeatedly in recent months by an increasingly distrustful membership, particularly in the East Bay where the Militant Caucus has its strongest support, and they are treading more cautiously as a result.

Just last December, angry ILWU members forced the local's officers to back down from an attempt to purge Mandel from the GEB through a trumped-up recount of the election results. Then, at the February 15 East Bay membership meeting, the ranks

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## WORKERS VANGUARD

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## Snowball Fight in Daley Machine

CHICAGO—Liberals here did everything but sing, "Ding, Dong, the Witch is Dead" during the first unseasonably balmy days of March as they celebrated what they claimed was the defeat of the city's legendary political machine in a February 27 Democratic Party primary. Their heroine is dissident party insider Jane Byrne, who successfully campaigned against "a cahal of evil men" in City Hall who couldn't even pick up the snow after this year's record-breaking storms.

Flinging around words like "populism," Chicago liberals pushed the illusion that the election of the 44-year-old Irish Democrat whose previous political life had been spent entirely within Mayor Daley's inner circle meant no less than, in the words of her campaign manager, "the end of traditional machine politics...and a city administration dedicated to the interests of all the people." But as the ticker tape settled it was clear even to many hodgepodge pundits and practical politicians that it was not the machine that went down in flames on election day. Byrne is doing her best to overhaul the machine with ward heelers, party bosses and their henchmen—the industrial/finance captains of Chicago.

That Byrne wants to be another machine "boss" should have surprised no one. Her campaign, for all its anti-machine rhetoric, was really based on the premise that she and not Michael Bilandic is the rightful successor to the Daley throne. Her TV campaign advertisements featured "Boss" Daley praising her, as Byrne gloried in the "Daley makes Chicago work" heritage. And while the snow piled up on the streets, Chicago voters wanted at least the snowplows to "work."

The Byrne upset was due in part to a protest vote that came particularly from Chicago blacks. But nothing will change for the poor and working people of Chicago with the switch in the Democratic Party titleholder. To underscore this Byrne has made a post-election

pledge for worried business leaders and some shuddering Democratic regulars, assuring them that her tenure will be good for business. At a private breakfast meeting with top Chicago business leaders, no less than the First National Bank's A. Robert Ahhoud remarked that "there's no reason to suspect that the kind of harmonious coalition between business and the city administration we've had in the past won't continue." And the party regulars are coming around as well, with West Side alderman Roman Pucinski commenting that "if she smoked cigars, she would not be a great deal different from the Committeemen."

It is obvious that business and the old Democratic hacks have nothing to worry about with Jane Byrne. She has been "Daley's daughter" since the 1960's. As machine organizer for North Shore women, Byrne crusaded to stop the spread of "independent" reform Democrats. She was above all a Daley insider, rewarding his friends and lashing out at his enemies. Daley invented a post for his favorite in 1975 when he made her co-chairman of the Cook County Democratic Central Committee—a delectable honor by machine standards, to serve so close to the Chairman. But Byrne deserved it: she was no less than an intimate personal protégé of the late mayor, trained in his methods, loyal to his patronage system and faithful as he was to the rule of big business in Chicago.

Jealous of her, the less-favored machine pols dumped her from her post when Daley died. She then began to snipe at the new insiders. But Byrne is no "outsider." She isn't even a Dennis Kucinich type whose populist posturing sticks in the craw at Cleveland City Hall.

Byrne is a machine loyalist who was temporarily on the outs, and now back in. She may succeed in axing a few of her more odious personal enemies at City Hall, but Chicago will go on as before—with racist administration of woefully inadequate city services, and government by the ward boss system on behalf of the financiers and industrialists. The party's infrastructure is weaker, but still fleshed out with the usual patronage and graft. In other words, it's a case of "the machine is dead—long live the machine."

### The Great Chicago Snow Job

It was the snow that made Byrne's victory possible as it buried Bilandic and revealed the deep fissures in the once monolithic Daley machine. A popular Chicago joke had one old-timer commenting to another after the record snowstorms. "If Mayor Daley was alive, this would never have happened," to which the other replied, "If Mayor Bilandic was alive, it wouldn't have happened either."

Voters may have elected "independent" Democrats in as many as eleven wards, but there is no sign of a newly forged liberal coalition. It has gone nearly unnoticed by the media, for instance, that one of the "independents" elected February 27 was Aloysius A. Majerczyk, the Chicago cop who in August tried to mobilize the cops to contract the "blue flu"—a "sickness" meant to be the high sign for racist terror against black schoolchildren hused into white neighborhoods. This certified racist demagogue will now sit on Chicago's City Council. And in the white racist laager of Marquette Park, Nazi Party leader Frank Collin also ran as an "independent" and received 10 percent of the vote.



Cusack/Chicago Tribune

Winner Byrne: "Daley's daughter"

"Independent" Byrne owes her victory not only to the snow, but to the seething black electorate caught in a storm of racist "benign neglect" by City Hall. She carried 14 of the 16 predominantly black wards. These voters, and the thousands of whites who voted for Byrne were fed up particularly with the mayor's arteriosclerotic reaction to the mountains of snow dumped on Chicago since January 1. All Bilandic did was to give an old crony \$90,000 to come up with a snow removal plan which was not even to be completed until February. He went on TV to claim arrogantly that everything was under control as the snow piled up to the knees and then to waist level. Streets were not plowed, buses ran only occasionally, and half the badly designed motors on the "El" trains were destroyed by ice and salt.

Then the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) decided to "solve" its equipment shortage by "altering service." What this meant was cutting service to Chicago's blacks. They ran the "El" from the downtown loop to the white middle class areas at the end of the line, skipping all the stops for blacks in between! Those were the wards where black office workers depended completely upon the CTA to get to the Loop. For the average worker expected to reach a job and get home, day after day, life became a relentless frozen hell.

### Reformists Shovel for the Democrats

Now black "progressives" like Reverend Jesse Jackson of Operation PUSH are calling Byrne's victory a "message to City Hall." But Byrne isn't accepting "messages." She has promised Chicago blacks and working people nothing but more of the same government in the style of Richard Daley. It was under Daley that Chicago became America's most segregated city, and the present system of racist political patronage came of age. It was under Daley that cops were given shoot-to-kill orders during the 1968 ghetto outbursts following the murder of Martin Luther King, Jr. Today, Byrne talks about a better racial composition for the school board, while she joins the chorus chanting that desegregation of the schools won't work in Chicago. "We're past that," she said in a recent interview. "That's an old issue." It is old, but explosive. Blacks

can expect from Byrne what they got from Daley and Bilandic: rotting ghettos, segregated schools and continued high unemployment.

Chicago labor can also expect business as usual from City Hall. Byrne has accepted the notion that city workers can negotiate written contracts, because she can't pull the strongman stuff in the style of "Boss" Daley. However, like her LaSalle Street investment banker opponent in the Republican Party, she has made the key provision of the contract a "no-strike" pledge.

With a sharpening racial polarization in the city and the unionization of city labor posed, with the Democratic Party weakening with the loss of its "boss," the mayoral election could provide a useful platform for an independent working-class candidacy. Instead the residents of Chicago have been subjected to the insipid electoralism of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). The SWP's Andrew Pulley was the sole "third party" candidate to qualify for the April 3 election. Pulley has campaigned on a program of namby-pamby reformism starring a "Snow Removal Plan" which calls for "the best, most modern snow removal equipment" in every neighborhood and direction by "committees of area residents." SWP campaign propaganda is puffily with pride over "this direct, efficient plan for snow removal."

Unfortunately for the SWP, they have now been quite outdone by Jane Byrne, who has also called for "decentralization" of snow removal and so combines precisely the same program—good government and pick up that snow—with the necessary blessing of Chicago's rulers. Voters won't see much difference between a capitalist who vows to shovel snow and a "socialist" who vows to shovel snow, all their hahle about "the community" notwithstanding. The SWP's version of ethnic politics as "community control" is nothing new to Chicago voters.

Without revolutionary leadership available to the working and black masses of Chicago, the Democratic Party will retain its reactionary grip no matter how faction-ridden it appears today. In the class struggle, Chicago's powerhouse proletariat must break with the Democrats—not only to shovel snow but to sweep away the Daleys, the Byrnes and their capitalist masters. ■



Daley's dead. Now it's Bye-bye Bilandic.



# SWP Up Against the Spartacist League

## They Wanted Khomeini, They Got Him

The explosive events in Iran—the fall of the shah, the mass demonstrations in the streets, Khomeini's triumphal return and his efforts to consolidate an "Islamic Republic"—have dominated not only the headlines in recent months, but also the political life of the American left. Thus, as tens of thousands of Iranian women marched through the streets of Teheran in defiance of the mullahs' orders to don the veil, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the Spartacist League (SL) were locking horns over the question: Is the Islamic Republic a victory for the working masses?

The two sharply counterposed lines were crystalized in the respective SWP and SL headlines which appeared in the week following the fall of the shah's handpicked prime minister, Bakhtiar. Thus the 23 February *Militant* proclaimed: "Victory in Iran," with a subhead "Iranian Masses Show the Way for Workers Around the World." In contrast, the 16 February *Workers Vanguard* front page headline declared, "Mullahs Win." The article warned:

"This is not a victory for the working masses. Today Iran belongs to middle-class Islamic reaction in a bloody alliance with a section of the same officer corps which has dealt out decades of death and oppression on behalf of the Pahlavis. They are prepared to do the same now."

Each new unfolding event, from Khomeini's campaign against "Satanic traitors" to the marches for women's rights, proves the validity of our program and the utter bankruptcy of the SWP's tailism.

The polemical battle has now extended from newspaper pages to meeting rooms as *Militant* writer Cindy Jaquith has been touring the U.S. to report on her recent trip to Teheran. And while the SWP has continued its periodic practice of anti-communist

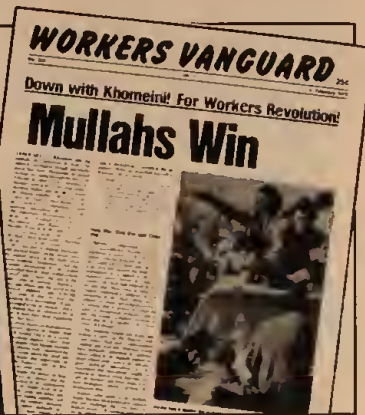
exclusion against the SL (notably in Detroit), as occurred over the question of Portugal in 1975, Barnes/Sheppard & Co. are trying to harden up their ranks on Iran by making a point of attacking the Spartacist League from the floor and calling on SL speakers whom they would normally try to ignore.

In New York on March 4 Jaquith reported on events in Iran in the form of a radical travelogue. Politically she went out of her way to argue that Khomeini played a "progressive" role. Thus while the ayatollah was thundering vows to crush the left, and Khomeini-loyal Islamic marshals were busting up meetings of the SWP's Iranian comrades; while his regime was executing homosexuals, from Cindy Jaquith we hear that, "What you really have... is the most classical example of a revolution that we have seen since the Russian Revolution."

Particularly outrageous was her defense of the veil (*chador* in Persian), that age-old symbol of feudal oppression. According to Jaquith, it seems that on this question the shah was an ultra-leftist (!), denying Iranian women their "democratic right", to wear a veil!! Today, you see, the veil is a "symbol of resistance".

"The shah used this women's liberation campaign in part to attack the religious hierarchy which was opposed to him.... But instead of saying 'women should not have to wear the veil—this is a matter of free choice,' he sent his cops in and tore the veil off women.... Well, it's no wonder then that when the demonstrations began, one way the women showed what they thought of his women's liberation program, his human rights program in general, was to put the veil back on. It became a symbol of protest."

So for the SWP wearing the veil is "a woman's right to choose"! What would they have said about Atatürk, who



really did do away with the veil: he violated the "democratic right" to be oppressed? Jaquith's remark speaks volumes about the SWP's "democratic" program for women's liberation. Consistent feminism means, "Put on the Veil!!"

After delivering her "dateline Teheran" account, Jaquith turned the platform over to SWP national secretary Barry Sheppard. He briefly criticized the Communist Party and the New Left *Guardian*, then directed the brunt of his attack against the Spartacist League. Waving our "Mullahs Win" headline around the stage, he demagogically declared, "It was wrong to say 'Down with the Shah. Down with the Mullahs,'" and denounced all who attacked Khomeini as "counterrevolutionaries" in an objective bloc with the shah. He went on to outline an almost textbook version of the reformist two-stage theory of revolution:

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

Sheppard strained to make a doubly false analogy to the Russian Revolution, repeatedly declaring that Khomeini was the Iranian Kerensky. Just as it was necessary to fight with Kerensky against the tsarist general Kornilov, he said, socialists must support Khomeini against the monarchy and back his "progressive steps." But Khomeini is not progressive relative to the shah and in any case the Bolsheviks never made a political bloc with Kerensky, which is what the SWP does with Khomeini. Like Jaquith, Sheppard denied that the movement was led by the mullahs ("That was a myth, they weren't leading it, they were part of it.") And he tried to pretend that to "many workers—when you say Islamic Republic, then you say you're for a workers and farmers republic...."

"One reporter asked somebody in the street, 'What's the difference between Islam and Communism?' And the guy says, 'Well, the communists don't believe in God. Other than that I can't see any difference.'"

In the subsequent discussion period the first SL speaker pointed to the need for a united front in defense of the left against Khomeini's gangsters. "The Spartacist League," he said, "will be defending your own comrades in Iran when they face the bloodbath that the 'Islamic Republic' will institute against them." A second SL speaker noted that the SWP repeatedly covered up for the ominous course of events in Iran—Khomeini's army's preparations to

move on the Kurds, its mounting campaign against the left, etc.

Pointing to the *Militant*'s pollyannaish "eyewitness reports" she remarked: "Cindy Jaquith's articles could be accurately described as 'Gidget Goes to Teheran'." "Yes, we raised 'Down with the Shah, Down with the Mullahs,'" she went on, "because we do not think the Islamic reaction is half-way to the class struggle. It's a return to the eighth century." In his response Sheppard declared:

"To say that the new regime now is just as reactionary as the shah—I don't know what world you live in. That's counterrevolutionary. We would have been shooting at each other in Iran. ... It broke the power of the capitalist state.... That can be rebuilt, of course. That's the next fight and the next stage of the revolution." [our emphasis]

After Sheppard's remarks, the final SL speaker took the floor and asked: "Who is responsible for the fact that the Iranian masses see no distinction between Islam and Communism? Certainly not Khomeini who takes great pains to draw the distinction. It was the left, none of which did anything to prepare the masses."

At no time prior to the fall of the shah did the SWP come out against Khomeini, he pointed out, and today it continues to support the Khomeini regime, "criticizing" his "shortcomings" while defending its every "progressive step." He concluded: "If this sounds familiar, so does the SWP's Stalinist charge that the SL has a 'counterrevolutionary' line—i.e., that either one supports the mullah-led mass movement or is objectively an agent of the shah."

A week later, on March 10, when Jaquith took her forum to Chicago, she repeated the SWP's arguments for political support to Khomeini. But in the meantime tens of thousands of women had marched through the streets of Teheran chanting, "In the dawn of freedom, there is the absence of freedom." So this time around Jaquith had not one word to say about the veil as a "symbol of resistance." An SL speaker challenged Jaquith about her defense of the *chador* the previous weekend in New York:

"The *chador* is a reactionary symbol of the degradation of women under Islam...."

"I want to see what kind of party are you. Which SWP women will go to Iran and put on the *chador*? Let's see which SWP women will go to Iran and say that those women who say 'Down with Khomeini' are counterrevolutionary. What SWP woman will go to Iran and cheer while Khomeini's Islamic marshals execute male homosexuals? Where does the SWP stand? I want to hear from each SWP woman where they stand on the *chador*."

There was no answer. ■



WV Photo

### Mullah Lovers Exclude Communists

In Detroit the Spartacist League was excluded from a March 4 Socialist Workers Party forum on Iran as the cheerleaders for Khomeini sought to seal off their ranks from exposure to authentic Trotskyism. At a previous SWP forum in February a film on Malcolm X was shown quoting him stressing the need to involve women more in struggle. In the subsequent discussion a black SL comrade pointed out that while Malcolm had begun to see the important role of women, the SWP in Iran was tailing Muslim reactionaries who wanted to relegate them to a subservient position. When she condemned the SWP for not opposing the mullahs' attempts to reimpose the veil our comrade was shouted down.

When the Spartacist League appeared at the March 4 event we were told that only two comrades could enter, and that all who had been present at the February forum were absolutely barred. This effectively excluded our black comrades from the event—which is exactly what the SWP wanted, since their favorite tactic is to race-bait the SL and they are utterly incapable of politically answering black Trotskyists. Thereupon the SL threw up a picket line to protest this cowardly violation of workers democracy, with signs reading: "Khomeini Lovers Oust Communists," "Khomeini's Revolution: No Victory for Women," and "SWP's 'Consistent Feminism' = The Veil for Women in Iran."



## "Affirmative Action" No Answer for Black Workers

# Fight the Racist Weber Court Suit

Last December 11 the Supreme Court agreed to review what could be its most racially explosive case in years—Weber vs. Kaiser Aluminum and United Steelworkers of America (USWA). Brian Weber, a white lab analyst at Kaiser's Gramercy, Louisiana plant, claims he is a victim of "reverse discrimination" as a result of a 1974 company-union "affirmative action" agreement.

Weber's suit has been upheld by two lower federal courts. The Supreme Court's willingness to hear this case marks a watershed with affirmative action. For a decade, the principle of government intervention in the labor movement ostensibly to provide more and better jobs for blacks and women has been accepted not only by the liberal section of the bourgeoisie, but by most conservatives as well. Weber represents the first serious challenge to this policy.

For years the Spartacist League has denounced such government affirmative action programs as tokenistic frauds, bourgeois "divide and rule" schemes and a betrayal of the principle of trade-union independence from the capitalist state. However, the Weber case has nothing to do with class-struggle opposition to state intervention in the unions. And the lower courts which have upheld Weber did so not to favor a program for full equality in hiring and upgrading, but in support of the racist *status quo ante* whereby blacks were virtually excluded from the skilled trades.

Following on the heels of the Bakke decision, which overturned "affirmative action" in higher education, the Weber suit is part of the same racist backlash. The lesson here is not that government affirmative action is "progressive," but quite the contrary. The reactionary mobilization of the courts and bourgeois politicians behind Weber underlines the cardinal lesson that the capitalist state, however much it may delude some people (including many who masquerade as socialists), is the enemy of blacks and working people.

### Down with the Racist Weber Court Suit!

In 1974 Kaiser signed an agreement with the USWA whereby openings for on-the-job skills training programs would be filled alternately from two separate seniority lists, one for whites and one for minorities. Although the government was not formally a party to

this deal, the Kaiser pact was signed right on the heels of the notorious consent decree of April 1974 involving nine basic steel companies, the Steelworkers union, and the U.S. government. With a long history of racist and discriminatory practices, and with a number of court suits filed by black employees still outstanding, Kaiser's implementation of the skilled trades quota program, modeled after a similar provision in the consent decree, was designed by the company and the union bureaucracy essentially to take the heat off their backs from the government.

When it opened in 1958, Kaiser's Gramercy plant hired blacks only as janitors and maintained segregated eating and showering facilities—even separate drinking fountains for blacks and whites. By 1969 still only 10 percent of the workforce was black, and in the skilled trades it was even worse. Before the 1974 agreement, the company maintained a "prior experience" requirement to screen applicants for the skilled trades. Especially in the Deep South small town context, "prior experience" naturally meant "whites only." In 1973 there were five blacks among the 273 skilled workers in Gramercy Kaiser, although blacks make up 46 percent of the town's population and 39 percent of its labor force.

Weber contends that his rights under the 1964 Civil Rights Act were violated because two blacks with less seniority than he were admitted to the skilled-trades training program while he was not. The federal district and circuit court upheld Weber on the incredible grounds that no prior discrimination had been shown to have existed at the plant; therefore, there was no basis for such an "affirmative action remedy." Less than 2 percent of Kaiser's skilled-trades department is black in a town that is almost half black, yet the courts maintain that the company didn't have racist hiring practices! It seems the courts have reverted to the spirit of the pre-Civil War Dred Scott decision, when Judge Taney made his famous pronouncement: "Blacks have no rights that a white man is bound to respect."

Weber now demands that the skilled-trades jobs be filled on the basis of plantwide seniority and seeks at least in part to pose as a good union man out to defend the seniority principle. This is pure bunk. Weber's utilization of the bourgeois courts to overturn a union contract exposes any pretenses he has to being a defender of the trade unions.



Brian Weber

Moreover, Weber's commitment to plantwide seniority is a sham. He worked in Kaiser for five years before the 1974 agreement and did nothing to protest the "prior experience" requirement which vitiated the seniority rights of all production workers, including whites. And were he genuinely concerned with plantwide seniority, he would do something about the vicious departmental seniority system in steel, under which blacks have been historically concentrated in the dirtiest and lowest-paying jobs.

No, Weber's sudden interest in strict plantwide seniority is simply a cover for his desire to eliminate blacks from the skilled trades. Weber's appeals have always been pitched in racist tones. Thus his lawyers make the ludicrous claim that under the thoroughly tokenist affirmative action programs "a substantial number of white workers today are suffering employment discrimination," and that the Weber case is "important to the employment hopes of millions of nonminority workers" (*Los Angeles Times*, 2 December 1978). In fact, contrary to the absurd claims of massive "reverse discrimination," the affirmative action programs have had a virtually negligible impact on discrimination. Thus at Kaiser Gramercy under the 1974 agreement the proportion of blacks in crafts rose from 1.8 to 4.4 percent, from five workers to a grand total of 13 of 300!

And Weber has made clear his own racist proclivities, publicly endorsing segregation: "They [the government] started telling grocery stores and restaurants—you people have to serve everybody. I never did agree with that. If it's your private place, it's your business who you serve and don't serve" (*Washington Post*, 12 January).

Unlike many other "affirmative action" programs, the 1974 Kaiser-Steelworkers agreement did not involve direct government intervention in the union, nor did it overturn a fundamental union gain like seniority. While we do not advocate dual or preferential seniority systems, the contractual provisions Weber is suing against are certainly more democratic than the "prior experience" system which effectively excluded blacks. Thus class-struggle militants could have given critical support to this plan against defenders of the racist status quo, while pointing out that like "affirmative action" in general, the Kaiser plan is tokenistic.

Today, above and beyond the specifics of the Kaiser-USWA agreement, the Weber case has become a rallying point for racist reaction. A victory for Weber, coming on the heels of Bakke, would encourage racist mobilizations against non-

discriminatory hiring, open housing school integration and all-sided attacks on the rights and interests of black people. The workers movement must take a hard stand against the racist backlash spearheaded by Weber. Smash Weber—For full equality in hiring and advancement!

### No to Union-Busting Affirmative Action

Although the bourgeois press generally treats the Bakke and Weber cases as having the same basic content, because both involve racial quotas, there is in fact a substantial difference. It is one thing when the government mandates admissions quotas for bourgeois educational institutions, as occurred with Bakke. Socialists, of course, would fight for an open admissions policy to the universities for *all* students, with no tuition and state stipends for living expenses. But in the absence of this, quota policies that break down racial and class barriers to higher education can be given critical support. Government-imposed affirmative action for employment is quite another matter. Most of these cases involve a class counterposition between the bourgeois state and the organized labor movement—the trade unions.

The 1960's was a decade of seething discontent and rebellion in the ghettos, at least partially reflected in the trade unions by the wildcat strikes led by black workers organized in such groups as the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. For the bourgeoisie, affirmative action was designed to channel militant black struggle from the streets and the factories back into the courtroom. Its basic program, stripped to essentials, was to pit blacks against the unions. Thus under the 1965 Title VII Amendment to the Civil Rights Act, for the first time employers and unions were made equally liable for job-related discrimination.

It is important to note that affirmative action was not merely embraced by a small section of liberals but, to the contrary, it has been supported by the ruling class as a whole for the entire past decade. In fact, the first real implementation of affirmative action was Nixon's 1969 Philadelphia Plan for the construction trades. Nixon, of course, was hardly noted for his defense of the rights of blacks.

With the decline of the ghetto upheavals and black nationalist movement, liberal groups like the NAACP once again came to the fore within the black movement. Affirmative action, in fact, was simply NAACPism

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Ken Light

Workers in steel foundry: blacks are locked in dirtiest, most hazardous jobs by discriminatory departmental seniority.



MARCH 12—Idi Amin Dada may soon be swinging at the end of his rope. The most notorious tyrant of black Africa, personally responsible for murdering literally hundreds of thousands of his countrymen, he is being pushed to the wall by a Tanzanian invasion force (accompanied by Ugandan exiles) and mutiny in his own army. Already an elite Suicide Regiment has rebelled while another unit reportedly refused to fight as the Tanzanian column closed in on Uganda's largest city, Kampala. The end seems near for this bloodthirsty "Big Daddy" whose eight-year reign of terror consisted of throwing the bodies of thousands of suspected dissidents among the country's elite to Nile River crocodiles while bludgeoning the masses with selective tribal genocide. Indeed, Amin may have been more prophetic than he intended in naming himself President-for-Life.

While a lightly armed group of the "Save Uganda Movement" briefly held a town on the Kenyan border, it is the Tanzanian army that represents the real threat to Amin. This is President Nyerere's answer to the Ugandan dictator's invasion of northwestern Tanzania last autumn. A 250-pound former heavyweight boxing champion of Uganda, Amin mocked the slight Nyerere by challenging him to settle their differences in the ring, then proposed "mediation" by Amin's sole remaining ally, Libyan strongman Qaddafi. After two weeks of laying

the collapse of the economy into universal starvation-level subsistence, the solidarity of mercenaries has broken down. Adirsi was badly injured in a suspicious auto accident last September and is convalescing in a Cairo hospital. The former head of the State Research Bureau, Major Farouq, who denounced Adirsi's plotting, was attacked by unknown assailants and is now recovering in Tripoli (*New African*, December 1978). Amin's bloody rule hangs on the thread of an estimated 600-800 Libyan troops, while 80 members of his family have already flown to safety under Qaddafi's wing.

Doubtless the demise of Idi Amin will be accompanied by an orgy of racist journalism in the imperialist press about "The Wild Man of Africa" (*Time* cover story, 7 March 1977), presented as retroactive apology for colonialism. But this should not cause communists to retreat into embarrassed silence or even to stoop to cover up the horrendous barbarism of this terror regime. Marxists unconditionally champion independence for the colonial peoples not because the acts of a megalomaniacal murderer like Amin are more humane than the "civilized" butchery ordered by genteel British governors-general sipping sundowners on the verandas of their porticoed mansions. We do so in order to remove the national question from the agenda, so that the working masses of Africa and elsewhere can see the necessity of working-class

road to genuine economic and social freedom for the oppressed masses.

#### Imperialism's "Bad Boy"

The Ugandan dictator is a favorite villain of the imperialist media. He is always "good copy" with his outrageous statements and blustering threats. He can set up a "Save the British Fund," collecting food from impoverished Ugandans to offer to his former colonial masters. He will admonish Queen Elizabeth to "pull her socks up" and offer himself as king of the Scots. (One of his favorite army units parades in tartan kilts.) At a meeting of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) he arrived in a sedan chair borne by local British businessmen as a symbol of "the new white man's burden." To the U.S. he sent a message wishing Nixon a rapid recovery from Watergate, and when Jimmy Carter criticized "human rights" violations in Uganda, he advised the American president not to be used as "exhaust pipes of the Zionist lories."

A 1974 documentary film, *General Idi Amin Dada*, was billed as "a comic masterpiece." Despite graphic accounts of the sinister dictator's cruelty, he is presented as a figure "whose monstrosity is inseparable from a degree of charm, of pathos, and of authenticity" (*New York Times*, 5 September 1976). Amin's Uganda seems nothing but bullooney and parody of British imperial rule. To be sure, occasionally he "goes too far," like a "servant who doesn't know his place." The British bourgeoisie was genuinely shocked when then Foreign Minister Callaghan had to go to Uganda to beg for the life of a hapless English author, Denis Hills, who had written of Amin's atrocities. But even when he is seen as a "bad boy," this is viewed paternalistically as "proof" that African blacks are not fit to rule.

In his wild zigzags Amin has managed to step on quite a few imperialist toes, particularly resulting from his alliance with the Arab states and the fanatical Muslim dictator Qaddafi. Shortly after coming to power the Ugandan strongman wrote to UN secretary-general Waldheim praising Hitler for murdering six million Jews. The most dramatic incident came as a result of the 1976 hijacking of an Air France passenger plane by a commando of the Palestinian PFLP, who diverted the craft to Uganda's capital of Entebbe. The 106 Israeli hostages were rescued in a daring raid by Israeli paratroopers, who killed 20 Ugandan soldiers and seven PFLP guerrillas as the Western press cheered.

Amin's attitude toward the imperialists and their clients is classically schizophrenic. At first angrily blustering about "Zionist aggression," a few weeks later Amin returned his presidential jet (on loan from its Israeli manufacturer) with the note, "I am sending this plane back just to show you that I believe in peace" (*New York Times*, 7 September 1976). Similarly, after Carter's March 1977 censure Amin loathed all Americans to leave Uganda and summoned them to the capital. But when the U.S. ordered a warship to stand by for action off the Kenyan coast, he quickly changed his tune and declared he only wanted to thank the Americans for their service. This pathological combination of alternately bullying and cringing is the hallmark of an imperialist toady run amok.

Thus the relationship of Idi Amin to Western imperialism is by no means simply one of mutual hostility. Following the 1975-76 South African invasion of Angola, the Ugandan leader praised the Cubans who "have come so many thousand miles from the other end of the earth in order to aid their African brothers with their blood" (*Spiegel*, 21 February 1977). Yet at the height of the invasion Amin joined the pro-imperialist American black nationalist group CORE in offering to raise a force of black mercenaries to hack the CIA-hankrolled FNLA, then fighting together with the South Africans against the



Amin's soldiers prepare another victim for the firing squad. Note sign.

waste to the countryside and hurling insults over Kampala Radio (a few years earlier Amin had offered to "marry" the Tanzanian leader), the Ugandan troops pulled back to their border.

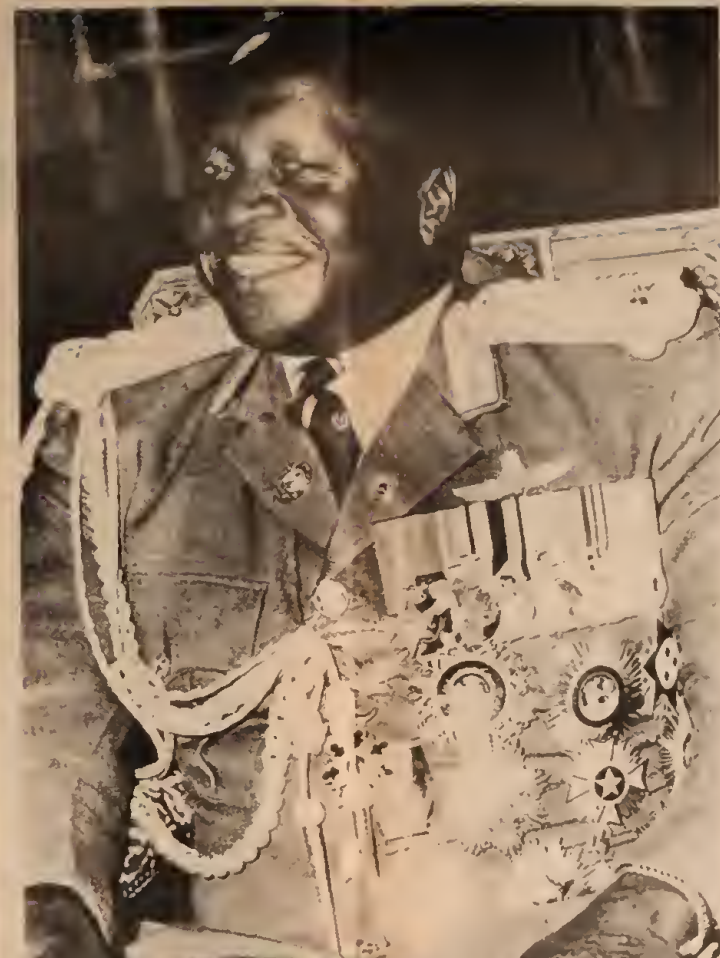
That adventure was an attempt by Amin to divert some of the top Ugandan army officers from plotting against him by tying them down in a phony war. It is reported that in late October the combined western and southern commands drew up a 12-point petition demanding an end to the "Nubian superiority complex" within the army; a check on the most vicious of the three secret police agencies, the State Research Bureau; and reinstatement of three top officers, including Vice President Mustafa Adirsi (*New York Times*, 10 November). Behind this lies a rift among the Muslim ("Nubian") officers who have provided the backbone for Amin's army. Headed by Adirsi, native Ugandans, who fear reprisals when the despot falls, are pitted against those recruited from related tribes in the southern Sudan, who figure they can high-tail it back to their homelands when things get too hot.

Until recently this gang was united by complicity in mass murder and in the parcelling out of luxury goods seized from local businessmen or flown in from London on Air Uganda's nightly "whiskey run." But with the fall in the price of coffee, the country's only export, and

revolution—confronting the savage oppression of their "own" oppressors.

Idi Amin cannot be written off as a madman, clown or "savage"—he is a grotesque product of imperialism. If his sadistic thugs are more thorough in their exterminating, his rule does not differ qualitatively from that of a dozen other neocolonial dictators on the continent (e.g., Zaire). The gunpoint looting by Amin's killers is merely done in a more respectable manner in the few African states mimicking the forms of bourgeois democracy—such as those next door in Kenya where the Kenyatta clan has monopolized both legal trade and contraband. Even the various "African socialist" or phony "Marxist-Leninist" regimes have been unable to overcome the bloody tribalism and desperate impoverishment which are the end result of decades of Europe's "civilizing mission."

For the peasant masses and the nascent working class of sub-Saharan Africa, formal political independence under tyrants like Idi Amin, pseudo-democratic patriarchy like Jomo Kenyatta or "socialist" demagogues à la Julius Nyerere does not offer liberation from the ravages of colonialism or the racist rule of white settler regimes. Only proletarian revolution, strategically based on the 5-million-strong black working class of South Africa, can break the chains of imperialism, sweep away its loathsome satraps and open the

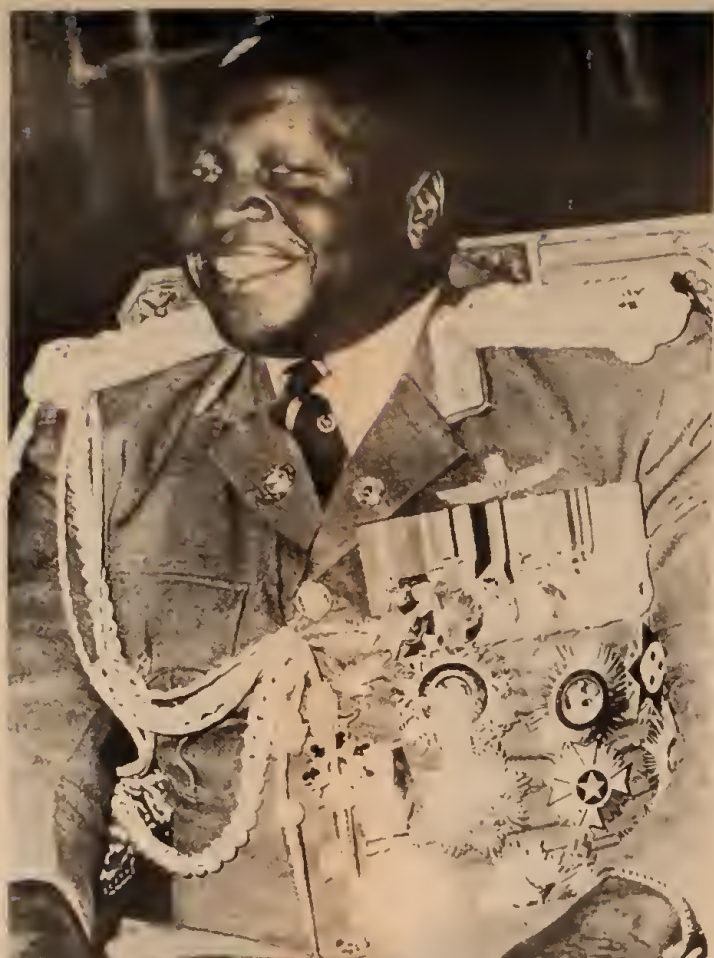


# IDI AMIN'S STATE OF BLOOD



Victims of "Big Daddy's" terror are loaded for "disposal."





Nouges/Sigma

# IDI AMIN'S STATE OF BLOOD



Victims of "Big Daddy's" terror are loaded for "disposal."

Camerapix-Keystone

Russian- and Cuban-aided MPLA! More recently Uganda has been training a private army for Rhodesian Bishop Muzorewa, who is acting as a black front man for Ian Smith's racist minority-rule government.

Nor is the aid limited to occasional gestures by the unpredictable Amin. There is, of course, the fact that the U.S. and Britain buy over half of Uganda's coffee exports (\$350 million in the first nine months of 1977). What is not so well known is Amin's "Israel connection," which in spite of Entebbe, in spite of his often violent anti-Semitic outbursts, even in spite of his ties to Qaddafi, remains intact. There are by now several reports from reliable sources attesting to the fact that the vital "whiskey run" of Uganda Airlines, Amin's lifeline to obtain supplies for his army and goodies to keep his mercenaries satisfied, is a cover operation run by Mossad, the Israeli espionage agency. In addition, there have been repeated questions raised about his British Jewish right-hand man, "Mr. Bob" Astles.

## "Big Daddy's" Reign of Terror

One of the earliest exposés of hideous massacres in Uganda was an article, "Inside Amin's Prisons" (London *Observer*, 15 August 1976) by David Martin, who quoted a former minister of education. He described one of the favorite methods of killing "dissidents" (i.e., anyone who had fallen out of favor with the dictator or happened to run afoul of his secret police):

"These involved making prisoners line up and ordering the first to smash the second man's head with a hammer. This process was repeated down the line until the last man was shot. Another method was to cut the flesh from a victim and force him to eat it until he died."

Evidence before the United Nations regarding conditions at Naguru Prison contains the following description:

"The most revolting form of torture described by the businessman, and every former Naguru detainee, occurred after the guards shot an inmate. One or two prisoners would be called from their cell after the shooting and would be ordered to beat the dead person's head into an unrecognizable pulp with a car axle. Then the prisoner would be ordered to lie down in the blood and gore of the dead person."

Prisoners are kept in forest concentration camps without food and expected to cannibalize the flesh of other prisoners. A young Ugandan school-teacher told of being held in such a place, where he was forced to kill badly mutilated prisoners while:

"...the soldiers laughed, abused us and looked us up with the corpses. "We were hungry, angry and ashamed," the teacher said in his statement, "but because of the guns we had to do it. One soldier announced the food was ready and we ate shamefully." Those who vomited were kicked and beaten with rifle butts. The remains of the corpses were thrown into a trench. On the following day eight more prisoners were selected, beheaded, butchered, and eaten."

There is no doubt that Amin himself has inspired much of the forced cannibalism and other grotesque aspects of this horrendous orgy of killing. After fleeing to Britain in 1977 his former private secretary Henry Kyemba wrote: "I am ashamed to admit that on several occasions while I was Minister of Health he told me, quite proudly, that he had eaten either the organs or the flesh of his human victims" (London *Sunday Times*, 12 June 1977). Amin is also widely believed to engage in blood rituals and, according to several reports, claims to commune with the spirits of his victims. Martin relates the case of Brigadier General Suleiman Husein, the army chief of staff who attempted to prevent Amin's 1971 coup d'état, after being hideously mutilated his "severed head was brought to Amin, who put it on the table and spoke to it, then kept it in his refrigerator overnight."

Amin's victims are not random. His first target was tribal rivals in the



John Hillelson Agency Ltd

Amin and Moshe Dayan toast Uganda-Israeli friendship in Tel Aviv, 1971.

military. Historically the British recruited the soldiers of the King's African Rifles from the Nilotic tribes of northern Uganda Protectorate. A number of politicians who played a leading role in the independence movement were also northerners, and after taking office they promoted tribal associates from among the non-coms to be the officer corps of the Ugandan army. Former prime minister Obote was a Langi with links to the Acholi, so when Amin took over he proceeded to massacre soldiers from these two tribes. In one instance, 32 Langi and Acholi officers were herded into a room and blown up with explosives. Kyemba estimates that of some 800 officers arrested as suspected Obote supporters at the time of the coup, some 250-300 were slaughtered in December 1971 at Mutukula Prison.

Subsequently Amin's terror shifted to high officials of his own government, anyone who could pose a danger to him. Of the 23 top officers at the time of the coup, at least 14 are known to have been murdered and several have gone into exile. Nobody was exempt: Chiel Justice Kiwanuka was kidnapped from his chambers and assassinated in September 1972, and in early 1977 Anglican Archbishop Lowum was assassinated shortly after meeting with Amin. Kyemba in his book *State of Blood* (1977) provides a list of 100 individuals—all personally known to him—who were killed by Amin and his henchmen. Typically the victims were snatched in broad daylight by agents of the State Research Bureau dressed in sports shirts and sunglasses, were stuffed into the trunks of Peugeot sedans and were never seen again. The parallels to "Papa Doc" Duvalier's infamous *l'ontons Macoutes* in Haiti are inescapable.

The sheer scope of the killing is staggering. In a country of some 11 million people estimates of the number murdered in Amin's bloodbath go from 80,000 to over 300,000, with the most credible figure being a little under 200,000. At least three dumping sites on the Nile river are known, and workers crossing the Owen Falls Dam report seeing dozens of bodies almost daily. A boatman is employed full-time at this location for the sole purpose of pulling cadavers out of the river, and a new occupation has arisen in the country: "body finders," who for a fee locate slain relatives through their contacts with the secret police. Massacres on this scale have occurred before, but there is something unique about the Ugandan horrors: usually such bloodbaths occur in one great wave, in a pogromist hysteria—under Idi Amin Dada the killing goes on and on.

## The Agony of Uganda

Massive as this butchery is, Idi Amin could not have ruled as securely as he has for eight years on terror alone. To understand the fundamental affinity of

the bloody Ugandan tyrant to dictators throughout the continent it is necessary to look at his origins and the social/economic policies of his regime. It will be seen that this pathological and sordid offspring of imperialism ruled through conscious exploitation of tribal rivalries and manipulating the greedy aspirations of the Ugandan petty bourgeoisie to replace their colonial masters as new exploiters of the masses.

Idi Amin joined the King's African Rifles in 1946. Though he claims to have fought with the British in Burma, his only real experience in fighting was in helping to put down the Mau Mau rebellion in nearby Kenya from 1949 to 1953. His other recorded "battle" experience was in suppressing cattle theft among nomadic Turkana of northern Uganda. In this exploit the British received complaints of a massacre in which several tribesmen were beaten to death while others had been tortured and then hurried alive. There was unmistakable evidence of Amin's guilt, but instead of court-martialing him the colonial authorities did nothing because the case was too politically sensitive (independence was approaching and he was one of only two black officers in the army). He was described by his superiors as affable, though a little slow, and was only semi-literate (he cannot write).

Amin's rise to the position of army commander was the result of tribal political clashes under the government of Milton Obote. Obote was a liberal nationalist lawyer-politician whose Uganda Peoples' Congress (UPC) attempted initially to include representatives of the various tribes and constituencies in the country. However, not long after independence in October 1962 Obote, the prime minister, came into conflict with the king of Buganda (the largest kingdom, which dominates southern Uganda) over a question of territorial rights. In May 1966 Obote abolished the Buganda state administration and attacked the *kabaka's* palace. "King Freddy" fled to London, and the author of the military operation, Idi Amin, became head of the armed forces.

Two other operations marked Amin's ascendancy in this period, again in close cooperation with Obote. One was the covert support by Uganda to pro-Lumumba rebels in the ex-Belgian Congo (now Zaire), headed by Gbenye. Cut off to the west by the CIA-backed Tshombe government and General Mowutu's troops, Gbenye's only source of guns and ammunition was to buy them from Obote in exchange for truckloads of ivory and gold. Amin was the go-between, and conducted the transactions without records through his house in the West Nile border region. The second instance was Israel's use of Uganda as a supply route to aid black southern Sudanese (Anyanya) rebels

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# Idi Amin...

(continued from page 7)

fighting against the Arab government in Khartoum. Again, Amin was the conduit.

So just as he had earlier been a flunky for the British, Idi Amin began as a creature of Obote. But soon events enabled the protégé to dump his patron. Increasingly under pressure from the imperialists abroad and from the economically dominant Baganda at home, in 1969 Obote initiated the policy demagogically known as the "Move to the Left." In foreign policy he shifted from Israel to support for the Arab states and in Uganda he sought majority ownership in a few prominent British firms. This simply increased conservative opposition without significantly strengthening the regime. Meanwhile questions were being asked in parliament about rumored pilfering of millions from the army budget by Amin. So when Obote was attending a Commonwealth prime ministers' conference in Singapore in January 1971, Amin took advantage of his absence to seize power. Obote went into exile in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

What was interesting, particularly in view of what was already known of Amin's unsavory character, was the degree of Western support for the coup. Not only did the army commander use Israeli-supplied tanks and Israeli-trained elite units, in the middle of the operation Amin called Colonel Baruch Bar-Lev, head of the Israeli mission, to inform him. (Amin, who received paratrooper training in Israel, also called Bar-Lev in Tel Aviv repeatedly during the Entebbe crisis.) Britain was the first government to recognize the new regime, and the London press greeted the coup enthusiastically.

Meanwhile, the Baganda population cheered in the streets and many bourgeois politicians smarting from Obote's increasingly heavy-handed rule flocked to the new regime. Although the killings of Langi and Acholi began almost immediately, they were largely limited to the army and hidden from public view. But Amin went even farther in seeking to build public support by fostering a populist policy which had been increasingly attractive to the black petty bourgeoisie: expulsion and seizing the property of the Asian (largely Indian) population. Amin solidified his regime by attacking these "brown Jews of East Africa."

The Asians of Uganda had already been a target of pogromist riots in 1948 and 1949. Altogether Asians numbered 50,000, of whom 20,000 were Ugandan citizens (the remainder holding British passports). Kicking these small businessmen out of commerce had already been suggested by Obote, under the watchword of "Ugandanizing" the economy. And after months of preliminaries (an ethnic census, limitations on bank credits to Asians, threats) on 9 August 1972 Amin gave all Asians exactly 90 days to leave the country.

The measure was sweeping—and what followed was an orgy of looting and seizures. A cabinet commission was set up to distribute abandoned properties, but in practice the troops plundered the shops, ministers moved into the houses and Amin got the white Mercedes and the mansions. Soon the distribution of businesses was in the hands of military

officers who doled them out to subordinates, cronies and family relations. Hundreds of petty bourgeois were scrambling to get a piece of the pie as their dream of instant wealth appeared to be coming true. But the morning after this celebration they woke to find they had no capital or technical/commercial expertise. Moreover they were now facing a predatory military caste that subjected them to a thousand and one exactions and harassments. The result of Amin's expulsion order was a rapid collapse of the economy and a return to generalized subsistence—so much so, in fact, that the only reported oppositional leaflet to come out of Uganda in recent years has the following key demand: "We want sugar, hoes and soap."

The imperialist press naturally made hay out of the chaos, accusing Amin of racialism. They did not mention the stringent racist restrictions on U.S. immigration laws or the fact that Asian holders of British passports in Uganda could not enter Britain without special legislation!

## Idi Amin and Neo-Colonialism

Idi Amin is a horrendous scourge on the people of Uganda. But when Jimmy Carter threatened to bring "human rights" to the ravaged East African country via the U.S. Navy, *WV* proclaimed: "Hands Off Uganda!" We explained:

"Communists must denounce the bloody massacre instigated by Uganda's mad dictator and struggle against his brutal rule. But we do not call on the American Seventh Fleet to topple Amin and install 'democracy' in Uganda. The gendarmes of U.S. imperialism have already wreaked death and destruction on a vast scale which blood-crazed Idi Amin cannot even begin to emulate, bombing and napalming to death more than one million Indochinese during the Vietnam war."

—*WV* No. 147, 4 March 1977

Sadly, Idi Amin is no freak phenomenon. His megalomania is shared by a number of "Third World" despots. The Ugandan despot merely proclaimed he had received a PhD from god and awarded himself the Victoria Cross, the Distinguished Service Order and the military rank of field marshal (in addition to president for life). In the former Ubangi-Shari, the one-time "Life President" Jean Bedel Bokassa in late 1977 proclaimed himself the "world's first socialist emperor." Even more grotesque is the case of Equatorial Guinea, whose leader Francisco Macias has taken the title: "President for Life, General in Chief, Grand Master of Education, Sciences and Culture, President of the United National Workers Party and Unique Miracle of Guinea." His regime is no joke. It is estimated that fully half of the population of 400,000 has fled into exile to escape his bloody rule, while tens of thousands have died on the island. After some 45,000 Nigerian cocoa workers were evacuated, slavery was introduced by presidential decree in 1976.

More important than finding such examples of wanton butchery, however, is to point out that *Amin's bloody practices are an extrapolation to the extreme of his predecessor's policies.* The liberal Obote, too, rested on a cabal of tribal allies in the army and arbitrarily jailed numerous politicians from opponent tribes. (Obote's General Services Unit was the model on which Amin based his State Research Bureau.) Obote's own policies of licensing traders

were already pointing to the racist expulsion of the entire Asian population.

As for the absence of working-class opposition to Amin, much of the explanation lies in the fact that Obote banned and smashed the Uganda Federation of Labour as far back as 1964, and in 1969 he expelled Kenyan workers—the backbone of union militancy—from the country en masse (Mahmood Mamdani, *Politics and Class Formation in Uganda* [1976]). At the time of the 1970 nationalizations Obote declared to a May Day rally that henceforth there was no need for the "archaic principle and practice of strikes."

The same litany could be repeated for "democratic" Kenya or "socialist" Tanzania and any number of other neo-colonial regimes in Asia or Africa. Why? Because imperialism laid the basis for these trihalist pogroms, petty despotisms and mass starvation that are the tragic lot of the former colonial countries today. While an Ivory Coast or Kenya may boast a capital city with gleaming skyscrapers as a false sign of economic "development," its slums will demonstrate the most massive poverty. As long as these states remain subordinated to the world market of capitalism, as long as they are not integrated into a planned economic order based on utilizing the resources of workers states in the industrial centers, it will be impossible to escape the barbaric conditions of genocide and poverty. That is why we do not call on the Nyereres, Kenyattas or Obotes to replace the murderous Idi Amins. Imperialist exploitation and national oppression can be ended only by smashing the entire capitalist-imperialist system, under the leadership of a Trotskyist vanguard of world socialist revolution. ■

# Iran...

(continued from page 1)

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

Bourgeois feminists are claiming the embattled women of Iran as their own. "Iran right now is the heart of our struggle," said American feminist Kate Millett in Teheran (*Newsday*, 8 March). But those who anticipate a reformist feminist ascension in Iran are not living in this world. There is no room on the Iranian social spectrum for a "classless" feminist mass movement; the petty bourgeoisie, backbone of "classless" movements, is solidly, even fanatically, in Khomeini's camp. The women protesters of Iran must find common cause with a powerful proletarian movement or their militancy will be dissipated or crushed under the heel of clerical reaction. Only the proletariat can lead a victorious struggle for democratic rights in Iran.

The women's protests have focused on legislative reforms under the shah, whose imperialist ambitions even led him to foster a bourgeois feminist movement as proof positive of his "modernization" of Iran. The shah even sent his sister, Princess Ashraf Pahlavi, to Mexico City for the feminist UN conference in 1975. This has been used by the Islamic "revolutionaries" who intend to put down such "Western decadence." They are quick to point to the women in the demonstrations who wear furs or imported dresses, and even quicker to brand the demonstrators as "SAVAK," "American agents" and, more creatively, "Pahlavi Dolls."

The protests have appealed to Bazargan against the mullahs. While the

token reforms (even the shah's) must be defended against Khomeini, they offer no real hope to the masses of Iranian women. The shah's "White Revolution" brought about only the most minimal, legalistic reforms amid the most brutal monarchist terror and oppression. Millions of Iranian women remain imprisoned by home and family, hidden and debased behind the veil, imbued with backward religious piety. Their liberation will not become possible until the proletariat takes center stage in the fight against Islamic reaction.

## "You Are Weak, Mister"

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

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

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

Mohammed Riza Mahdavi-Kany, the mullah in charge of all of Khomeini's "revolutionary committees," has made the Islamic clerics' intention to continue the executions crystal clear:

"The mullah was asked whether the executions of people deemed torturers and criminals would continue. 'Yes, they will continue,' he said."

"And the executions for violating the Koran in other aspects of Moslem law, would they continue too? 'And those will continue as well,' he replied. 'We have to purify, we have to renew.'"

—*New York Times*, 7 March

Non-Muslim and Westernized sectors of the population have reacted to Khomeini's increasingly authoritarian pronouncements and orders with varying degrees of fear and apprehension. As the Islamic Republic becomes a reality, more and more Iranians are looking to the prime minister of the provisional government, Mehdi Bazargan, to moderate Khomeini's repression. Faced with mass demonstrations and without a reliable army to crush the protesters, Khomeini still finds it necessary to maintain his ties with the bourgeois liberals and with his appointee Bazargan.

Bazargan, a "progressive" Muslim politician whose Islamic Liberation Movement comes out of the National Front coalition, has accused Khomeini of excesses and undermining the authority of his government. At one point the prime minister went so far as to threaten to resign. But after a weekend retreat to the ayatollah's stronghold in the holy city of Qum, during which he was told by Khomeini that the "best interests of Allah" would not be served by his resignation, Bazargan knuckled under.

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"You are weak, mister" was Khomeini's message to the representative of Iranian bourgeois democracy. And the ayatollah spoke the truth. The sclerotic septuagenarians holding down cabinet portfolios in Teheran today are no more than figureheads.

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

### Defend the Left, the Women, the Workers

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

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

Khomeini threatened the powerless liberals with the message that "Those who in their writing continually talk of democracy are either stupid people who do not understand what they say or traitors" (*New York Times*, 12 March). The National Front politicians no doubt got the message. Bazargan, Karim Sanjabi & Co. know that they have no solid independent base of support and are not about to attempt serious political opposition to the mullahs who placed them in the new government.

But the bankruptcy of the bourgeois

# Like Teamster Chief Fitzsimmons: TDU Refuses to Call for Strike

On April 1 Jimmy Carter may find himself face to face with the biggest industrial union in the U.S. as 300,000 truck drivers and warehouse workers take aim at the administration's wage guidelines. Standing squarely in the path of a Teamster (IBT) victory, however, is the thoroughly corrupt union bureaucracy headed by Frank Fitzsimmons. Amid rumors of Teamster demands for wage and fringe benefit increases totaling 38 percent there are ominous warnings that the IBT tops will settle for far less. One negotiating team member has already hinted at the possibility of a contract extension and chief hargainer Roy Williams didn't even bother to talk tough. "I don't think there will be a work stoppage," he said.

And what of the highly publicized opposition to Fitzsimmons, the Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU)? The last several months of TDU newsletters and special contract bulletins scarcely mention the need for strike action! Even an announcement for a "decent contract" rally in Washington just a week before the deadline avoids calling for a strike.

Some 40 Ohio Teamsters heard the same anemic message last Sunday as TDU national steering committee member Mel Packer addressed a meeting of

the new Canton chapter. Packer had plenty of stories of company and bureaucratic harassment but no strategy or even a call for an industry-wide shutdown on April 1. Recalling the 1976 Detroit Teamster wildcat, which ended with the Teamsters for a Decent Contract (TDU's predecessor) capitulating to Fitzsimmons and the threat of court injunctions, a *WV* reporter asked how TDU would respond to government strikebreaking in 1979. Packer responded, "It's up to the people on strike."

TDU's readiness to collapse before government scabberding will come as no surprise to anyone familiar with its history of lawsuits against the union to achieve everything from local bylaw changes to its current pleading for equal access to the International's monthly magazine. An opposition which endlessly summons the courts into internal union disputes only strengthens the position of the government against the union. Packer admitted in fact that when the courts "give us something, they're going to want something back." That "something" is a license to crush labor militancy.

TDU's program consists of a list of minimal reforms representing in several

cases merely the established norm in other industries—e.g., 30 and out, one year's S.U.B. benefits after layoffs. Their call for "a fair grievance procedure" would allow for firings once a worker is "proven guilty." TDU's overall package simply seeks to match the mine workers' 37 percent settlement—a contract which union president Arnold Miller could force on the UMW ranks only after a 110-day strike. Neither a call for a 40-hour week nor TDU's opposition to deregulation of the trucking industry—a position they share with both Fitzsimmons and the carriers—will halt the employers' job-stealing offensive. A class-struggle program would raise the demand for a 30-hour week, coupled to a substantial pay boost and full cost-of-living protection.

Above all, class-conscious Teamsters must demand absolute independence from the bourgeois state. The upcoming contract showdown pits the Teamsters not only against the carriers but Carter and his wage guidelines. Follow the miners' example: smash government injunctions through strike action! A resounding Teamsters victory can obliterate wage controls and open a path for a real labor offensive in 1979! ■

democrats by no means guarantees the triumph of the reactionary Islamic leader. Khomeini has not yet been able to consolidate the power necessary to crush the non-Islamic opposition. From the Fedayeen to the women in the streets, every non-Islamic sector of society is under the gun of the Muslim fanatics. The Fedayeen's protection of the women's protests in Teheran is an encouraging sign that the basis for a united-front defense of the left, proletarian and secular democratic forces exists.

Revolutionaries in Iran would agitate for the formation of workers militias based on factory committees and trade-union organizations as the backbone of such a united front against the mullahs' rule. But while marching shoulder to shoulder with the Iranian left against Khomeini's terror, Trotskyists would seek to break the Fedayeen members and other potential revolutionary militants from their support to Khomeini. The Fedayeen guerrillas, together with virtually the entire left, both inside and outside Iran, have tailed after the Muslim opposition to the shah and the Islamic government that has replaced him.

### Why Didn't They Tell You So?

It is a special kind of hell for revolutionaries to be condemned—even for the historical instant—to witness

great events without being able to influence them. We saw it coming in Iran...and we said it straight. But our class in Iran was sealed off from even the simple political truth by the decades of class collaboration of the mass reformist parties and the continuing bottomless opportunism of the left.

If we are heartened by the women's protests which indicate the beginnings of recognition of the reactionary content of the mullahs' Islamic Republic, we are sickened by the public execution of homosexuals, the floggings, the sustained and vicious attack on Iranian women, the threatening cries of "death to the transgressor" that fill the air in the highest administrative bodies in Iran.

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

Some of our opponents on the left were horrified that we spoke so harshly of the mullahs while it seemed everyone but U.S. imperialism was following them into the mosque. Consider the remarks made against us by a small centrist group in Britain, *Workers Power* (February 1979):

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

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

## China...

(continued from page 12)

at of the Fourth International," to which the SWP is "fraternally" related, claiming: "It is the conflict between the Soviet and Chinese bureaucracies, for which the Kremlin bears the historic responsibility, that constitutes the framework for the clashes between the Chinese, Vietnamese, and Khmer Rouge leaderships." At least the SWP highlighted the complicity with the U.S.—the USec statement barely mentions the imperialist threat and puts the blame on the Soviet Union! And then it adds: "No Soviet military intervention against China!"

This begins to look curiously like an alibi for Peking, cooked up in the grand style of Livio Maitan, who in earlier years wrote USec statements praising the Red Guards and siding with Peking in the Sino-Soviet conflict. But turn a few pages and we read an even clearer presentation of the "majority" line: a translation of a 23 February editorial from *Rouge*, newspaper of the French LCR, ends with the call: "Just as we have demanded the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops from Cambodia, we demand the immediate withdrawal of Chinese troops from Vietnam." Now that could have come straight from the mouth of Andrew Young, Jimmy Carter's front man at the UN! Curiously, a lead article in the same issue by LCR Vietnamophile Pierre Rousset says not *one word* of criticism of Hanoi's invasion of Cambodia. As Trotsky remarked, centrism is crystallized confusion.

From the beginning of Jimmy Carter's anti-Soviet "human rights" crusade we have stressed the obligation of all Marxists to defend the USSR from imperialist attack. The Chinese invasion of Vietnam threatened to pose this issue directly. While Deng's threat to "punish" Vietnam fell flat, the Peking bureaucracy's sinister collaboration with Washington deepened. As the Stalinists compete for Carter's favor, Trotskyists call for communist unity against imperialism, through social revolution in the capitalist countries and workers political revolution from Moscow to Peking and Hanoi to oust the nationalist parasites. ■

## Sales Blitz Reaches New Readers

Recently we began hearing from supporters in factories across the country that American workers were talking politics with more than usual interest in light of the Chinese invasion of Vietnam and the continuing ferment in Iran. So we undertook a special sales blitz for *WV* No. 226, which presented our unique Marxist analysis and program on these important events. Quotas for single-copy street sales were set at 165 percent of normal. As we go to press with the drive not yet completed, this goal has already been surpassed, with more than twice (210 percent) the usual number of *WVs* having been sold so far.

Local	Blitz Quota	Sales to Date	Percentage
Berkeley/Oakland	450	634	141
Boston	250	265	106
Chicago	500	605	121
Cleveland	275	382	139
Detroit	600	977	163
Los Angeles	400	430	107
New York City	450	404	90
San Francisco	425	554	130
TOTAL	3350	4251	127



# Weber...

(continued from page 5)

applied to the trade unions. For it there is one thing that characterizes the NAACP it is its continual preaching to the black community to rely on the good graces of the capitalist government—whether it be for protection against the racist thugs threatening black schoolchildren in Boston, or to “protect” black workers from the unions. And it was not surprising that a considerable amount of legal haurintrusting that went into the affirmative action cases originated with the NAACP.

Needless to say, the liberals like the NAACP who provided the ideological justification for affirmative action accepted the framework of capitalism and therefore the limited number of jobs generated by the capitalist labor market. As such it necessarily pits different sections of the working class against one another. The NAACP’s labor director, Herbert Hill, summed up this social outlook: “Correspondingly, white male workers as a class have benefited from this systematic discrimination. The notion that these workers are innocent and blameless is a myth, and we categorically reject this notion.” Hill goes on to denounce the AFL-CIO as “against the vital interests of women and minorities” (*New York Times*, 29 July 1977).

“Affirmative action” is based on the view that white, male, unionized workers are among the privileged sections of American society and must make sacrifices to overcome racial and sexual oppression. This anti-working-class thrust becomes outright union-busting when the government intervenes to overturn seniority and rewrite union-negotiated contracts. Seniority is a basic principle of trade unionism protecting all workers. Without an impersonal criterion for layoffs and promotions, management can easily victimize union militants and anyone else viewed as “troublemakers.” Thus whatever gains a few blacks get out of government affirmative action programs are more than offset by the damage to the working class of increased management and capitalist state control over organized labor.

The choice posed to the workers movement by affirmative action was starkly simple: the government or the unions. Most of the left, capitulating to what were undoubtedly the pervasive moods and attitudes among blacks at the time, chose the capitalist government. The Spartacist League stood alone in upholding the independence of the unions and fighting to oust the job-trusting, racist, pro-capitalist bureaucracy in order to transform them into class-struggle institutions that would genuinely defend the interests of all workers.

## Ten Years of Affirmative Action

At the heart of black economic oppression is the question of jobs. In the late 1960’s, when affirmative action was first implemented, the American bourgeoisie was hosed by black ghetto conflagrations in the context of a relatively expansionary economy (the Vietnam War period). Within that context, offering a token increase in jobs for blacks and women was rather cheap. But a decade later the situation is sharply changed. The black militancy is no more and never at least five consecutive years the government’s own understated figures show an average unemployment rate exceeding 6 percent. While black joblessness has doubled over the last ten years, so has unemployment for white workers.

Thus affirmative action has become an increasingly attractive target for racist demagogues like Brian Weber who blame blacks for the ills of capitalist society. And the bourgeois politicians of both the Democratic and Republican parties, as well as the

capitalist judicial system, are increasingly responsive to the Webers. This is not to assert that the courts will necessarily rule in Weber’s favor. Affirmative action in industry remains a bandy union-busting tool, and the government is still supporting such programs while abandoning admissions quotas in education. Thus at the same time it was ruling in favor of Allan Bakke, the Supreme Court upheld an affirmative action consent decree in the telephone industry.

But the real significance of the Weber case should not be lost. Five years ago it would have been virtually unthinkable that the Supreme Court would have reviewed it. The era of affirmative action has already passed its high-water mark. Whatever the particular disposition of this case, the American ruling class has signaled that the few token number of jobs that it has doled out to minorities under these programs will not be extended, but rather curtailed. And for those workers—particularly blacks and women—who have looked to the government rather than the unions to redress their grievances, it is high time to draw a balance sheet.

After a lull decade of affirmative action programs which received the blessing of every major capitalist politician from Nixon to the liberal wing of the Democratic Party, is the social oppression of minorities any less? Do they have better-paying jobs, for instance? In 1967 the income of black families averaged 58 percent that of whites; by 1970 it had risen modestly to 61 percent, but by 1977 it had fallen back to 59 percent. What about unemployment? In 1967 a little more than twice as many blacks were unemployed percentage-wise as whites; ten years later this ratio has not changed. Meanwhile the absolute level of black unemployment has risen to 13.2 percent—the largest number of blacks without jobs since the government began making separate statistics by race (*National Urban League, State of Black America 1978*). So much for the affirmative action myth!

Even in individual plants covered by such programs, the exclusion of minorities from the skilled trades has not been overcome. In the first place, the “goals” for upgrading minorities into crafts are not even enforceable: according to the 1974 consent decree in the steel industry, “No company’s compliance status shall be judged solely by whether or not it reached its goals and met its timetables,” but rather by “reviewing the extent of the company’s good faith efforts.” Even the ostensible intent of this section of the decree is circumvented by hiring skilled workers off the street and systematically harassing minorities out of apprenticeship programs. Thus while the quota program at Kaiser Gramercy enrolled 13 workers (six black and seven white), most of the craft openings in this plant over the past years were filled by outside hiring: 30 skilled tradesmen, 28 of whom were white!

The provisions for “plantwide

seniority” are even more farcical. A minority worker who transfers from one department to another must start at the bottom level of his new department. He may retain his old rate of pay only if he were hired into the plant prior to 1968, and then only for a maximum of two years. Few older black workers are willing to take a pay cut of several thousand dollars a year in order to get into a better department—and not surprisingly departmental segregation is as much a reality today in basic steel as before the consent decree.

## Labor, the Left and Weber/Affirmative Action

George Meany and the AFL-CIO leadership have filed a “friend of the court” brief against Weber. But this is a cheap gesture. The union bureaucracy has not defended busing or open housing, nor has it organized the unorganized. If blacks look to the capitalist state, even under a Nixon or Carter, to secure racial justice it is because the union bureaucracy has been a main support to the racist status quo. From the viewpoint of black women in runway clothing or electrical shops in the Deep South, Chicanos in Los Angeles sweatshops and ghetto youth in fast-food chains in New York or Chicago, the AFL-CIO is seen as a bastion of white economic privilege. The precondition for a class-struggle fight against racism is the unionization of the great majority of black workers.

Moreover, for decades the union movement has had a paper program for a shorter workweek at no cut in pay, which would greatly expand the pool of industrial jobs. Such a demand is of direct interest to millions of unemployed blacks who would be the most benefited. But the bureaucracy has done nothing to fight for a shorter workweek and amidst mass unemployment has actually permitted killing overtime. Thus today, after three and a half years of recovery from the 1974-75 depression, the official unemployment rate for blacks remains at 11 percent, and for black teenagers it is an astronomical 34 percent.

While the labor bureaucracy has simply hung onto the job-trusting practices of the past, to the extent possible, or simply turned a deaf ear to the plight of ghettoized minorities, most of the left has supported the government’s anti-union affirmative action schemes. Thus while predictably denouncing Weber, they sought to turn opposition to the racist backlash represented by his suit into political support for the government programs and court orders which overturn union-negotiated seniority systems. Moreover, while the reformist Communist Party (CP) and Socialist Workers Party (SWP) originally criticized the tokenism of the steel consent decree, today they pose this plan negotiated by Nixon’s Justice Department as the vehicle to fight job discrimination. Thus the CP writes:

“The consent decree established plant-

wide seniority for all workers for the first time, and broke down a seniority system that was often divided by job and therefore by race.”

—*Daily Worker*, 27 December 1978

But certainly the SWP takes the cake when it has the gall to attack Weber for going to court against the union:

“Weber’s case is unmistakably an attack on the United Steelworkers because it seeks to overturn the union contract.”

—*Militant*, 19 January 1979

What nerve—for a group that has backed every phony “reformer” who tries to get elected to union office by mobilizing the U.S. Labor Department. From Arnold Miller to Ed Sadlowski, the SWP supports all sorts of government affirmative action plans, from the steel consent decree on down, which rip up existing union contracts. Like all good social democrats they believe the bourgeois state can be pressured into serving the workers—they only get upset when it openly sides with racists like Weber.

The logical corollary of the view of blacks competing with white workers for a limited number of jobs was the demand for preferential seniority for layoffs. Thus during the 1974-75 depression, the liberal establishment, black organizations and their reformist allies accepted mass layoffs as an unalterable fact of life; concentrating on who should be laid off, “preferential layoffs” became the rallying cry of affirmative action supporters. For example, in November 1975 the SWP brought out a pamphlet entitled *Affirmative Action vs. Seniority* which reprinted without criticism a contribution of the NAACP’s chief anti-union ideologue, Herbert Hill.

A class-struggle response to the mass layoffs was that put forward by the Committee for a Militant United Auto Workers (CMUAW) in the Fremont, California General Motors plant. In this plant supporters of the Maoist October League (now Communist Party Marxist-Leninist) sued the company and union for preferential layoffs for women. The CMUAW initiated a petition against this divisive, anti-union suit, which was signed by more than 600 workers, including large numbers of blacks, Chicanos and women who reenergized the value of the seniority principle. In opposition to the defeatist policy of “preferential layoffs,” the CMUAW agitated for plant occupations and a nationwide auto strike in the face of mass layoffs (see “Militants Fight Layoffs in West Coast Auto,” *WV* No. 60, 17 January 1975).

But while most of the left identifies struggle against racism with support to union-busting affirmative action, the small, crazed Workers League (WL) simply ignored the fight against racial oppression. Thus while correctly denouncing government intervention, the WL absurdly denounced the “furore” being whipped up over the Weber case” as an attempt to “divert the movement of workers against the Carter government into a self-defeating struggle of blacks vs. whites” (*Bulletin*, 26 December 1978). The article conspicuously refuses to condemn Weber and the racist backlash he represents.

## For a Class-Struggle Program to Fight Racism

As opposed to the idiot Workers League, we are not indifferent to the question of racial oppression and under certain circumstances we are prepared to extend critical support to quotas, as long as fundamental Leninist principles such as the independence of the trade unions from the state are not violated. For example, a preferential hiring quota directed at an employer might be supported if it is the only immediate way to overcome a company’s racist hiring practices. Or, as in the Weber case, we take a defensive stance against racists who attempt to repeal quotas for job upgrading in order to drive blacks out of the skilled trades.

Where the liberal reformists choose

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the government over the unions, we call for trade-union independence from the state. Thus, our starting point must be a struggle *within* the unions against the policies of the trade-union bureaucracy for a program that addresses the special questions of black oppression while strengthening the working class as a whole. Instead of the cry for government-run affirmative action programs, we call for union control of hiring and upgrading. Union hiring halls should be established to insure that hiring is implemented on a nondiscriminatory, first-come, first-serve basis. Where hiring halls do exist and operate on a virtually segregationist basis, as in the building trades, class-struggle militants would demand an aggressive union campaign to recruit and organize minority workers.

As opposed to the reformists' willingness to trade off seniority for a token number of jobs, militants defend seniority as a basic principle of trade unionism. Blacks in particular would be victimized by the erosion of the seniority system, as managers and foremen in this country are overwhelmingly white, with a good percentage of right-wingers and racists. Moreover, in large parts of heavy industry, where blacks have been concentrated for years, it is not because of low seniority, but rather because of the absence or deformation of the seniority principle that blacks are segregated in the dirtiest and worst departments. The departmental seniority system, bypassing of apprenticeship programs through hiring journeymen off the street, discriminatory tests for the crafts—all are means by which management keeps blacks out. Key to integrating the skilled trades is union control of upgrading based on a plantwide seniority system.

In counterposition to the reformists' demand for "preferential layoffs," pitting blacks against whites, militants demand jobs for all—no layoffs! And while the labor bureaucracy throws its support to liberal capitalist politicians who promise full employment through such phony gimmicks as Humphrey-Hawkins, labor militants call for strike action to win a shorter workweek at no cut in pay.

Affirmative action has proven a dead-end for the American working class. Not only has it failed to alleviate racial and sexual oppression, but in undercutting the possibility of united class struggle, in its own way it bears responsibility for the Brian Webers. Not the least of the harm wrought by affirmative action has been its demoralizing effect on the most militant sections of the working class. In the 1960's, the wildcat strikes led by DRUM and other groups, however

distorted by black nationalism, were militant class struggles. Black workers, having fewer illusions in American capitalism, time and again stood in the forefront of the struggle against the bosses.

But in the following decade many of these militants, deserted by their leaders and misled by ostensible leftists, either retreated to passivity, entered the trade union bureaucracy or became the spokesmen for affirmative action liberalism. Reliance on the government replaced class struggle. And this retreat by black workers had an enormous impact on the class as a whole. The generally low level of strikes and other struggles by the American working class in the 1970's was in no small way related to the paralysis of one of its most militant sections. And it is the absence of any real social struggle, intersecting mounting unemployment and inflation, that set the stage for racist backlash.

Every upsurge in class activity—the coal, postal and rail strikes—demonstrates the anti-labor, strike-breaking character of the bourgeois state. That the courts and the capitalist politicians are openly rallying to Weber demonstrates the same fundamental point. Key to unlocking the great power of the American working class must be the junking of illusions in the government by the most militant workers. Only on such a basis can a class-struggle leadership be constructed in the unions that will genuinely defend the interests of all workers—black and white, men and women—and lead the struggle to smash the reactionary capitalist system. ■

## ILWU...

(continued from page 2)

overwhelmingly voted down a so-called "unity" resolution aimed at gagging both the Militant Caucus and all opponents of the pro-company leaders. Previously passed by the GEB, the motion declared that:

"...once a consensus of adopting a program has been reached at the Convention and the Membership meetings, then the members of the union are obliged to support the program and each faction or grouping with their own program does not have the moral right to go off and do everything to stymie or hinder the program.... It is not our intention to work with people who put out material of a slanderous character exemplified by the bulletin put out by the Militant Caucus stating as follows: 'The officers are preparing to ram a giveaway contract down our throats.'"

Attempting to pave the way for actions to silence dissent as the contract period approaches, the Local 6 officers were most chagrined when the membership threw their gag motion back at them.

The same meeting also stung the leadership on its quashing of a wildcat to defend union jurisdiction at the Owens-Illinois plant. The members voted that the union would not tolerate the loss of a single job.

The demonstrated ability of the

Militant Caucus to mobilize the membership around specific issues has had an impact not only on the mainline bureaucrats but also on supporters of the Communist Party (CP). With years of experience in the methods of class collaboration, the Stalinists have long been in a firm alliance with the ILWU tops, often occupying influential posts in the union hierarchy. But the growing authority of real class-struggle unionists in the Militant Caucus threatens the Stalinists, exposing them time and again as merely "left" apologists for betrayal of the membership.

Well-known supporters of the *People's World*, the CP's West Coast newspaper, have been taking some lumps for their toadying to the bureaucrats. They backed the attempt to dump Mandel from the GEB and were defeated. They backed the gag motion in February and were trounced again. They took a dive on the strike at Owens-Illinois, enraging the Spanish-speaking bloc around Business Agent Roberto Flotte which had helped elect a number of *PW* supporters to office.

Smarting over these embarrassing setbacks, *PW* supporters such as Joe Figueiredo, Joe Lindsay, Franklin Alexander and Victoria Mercado tried to strike a modestly militant pose on various secondary issues that came up at the convention. But, true to their normal form, on every significant issue they rallied round the bureaucrats' two-hit proposals and opposed those of the Militant Caucus.

Thus Figueiredo was among the first to the microphone to endorse the officers' opening report (which slipped in much of the infamous "unity" resolution), chipping in with his own slanders about left critics being "in the service of the bosses." It was left to Militant Caucus delegate Pete Woolston to point out that the officers would trim even their own modest demands to placate the bosses in eleven-hour negotiations. Woolston argued that only strike action can turn the tide on the rampaging employers and called for the election of strike committees to counter the officers' sabotage.

There was a similar counterposition on the question of jobs, critical in an area where more shops are running away to non-union states and where high unemployment has provided a ready pool of scabs, which helped beat the grocery strike. Figueiredo and his gang teamed up with Eickman again to defeat the Militant Caucus proposal to fight for more jobs through a shorter workweek at no loss in pay: 30 for 40.

CP supporters similarly refused to support the Militant Caucus resolution to junk the contract's no-strike clause and end binding arbitration, though the issue of the *People's World* that came out the very day of the convention opposed binding arbitration! In arguing against the dead-end policy of relying on arbitrators, who almost always rule in the company's favor, and for a return to the right to strike, Mandel noted that

the union's proposed budget allocates three times as much money for paying arbitrators as it does for organizing. He exposed the bureaucrats' hot-air pledges to organize the unorganized by noting that only \$1,200 of the \$20,000 in the union's organizing fund last year was actually spent and that the total this year has been reduced to only \$5,000. Caught with their pants down, the leadership could muster only a faint voice vote for the budget, with most delegates abstaining. Even well-known CP supporter Franklin Alexander had to concede that "Mandel raised one here."

As the contract deadline grows nearer, the union's ranks confront the fact that they will pay dearly this year if they do not fight. The ILWU is a strategic union, which in alliance with the Teamsters has the potential power to shut down critical sections of West Coast commerce. The task for the Militant Caucus and its supporters is to rally those members, stewards and GEB members who want to wield that power, breaking the bureaucratic hold that is paralyzing the union. ■

## Newport News...

(continued from page 2)

downplay the significance of the strike. Although almost all observers throughout the country see the strike at Newport News as a critical test of labor's ability to break into the "open shop" South, McBride told reporters at a February 24 Bal Harbour, Florida press conference that it may have been a "blunder" for labor to boost the strike as "an expansion into the South." "I don't look on this as a crusade against the South," he repeated, in flat contradiction to earlier statements he had made.

McBride may have a hard time if he tries to call off the strike at Newport News. Strikers on the picket lines continue to show their determination to crack Tenneco and win the strike. But the chances of success depend on their ability to shut off the flow of scabs, their willingness to defy their leadership's directives to "respect" the scabberding "right-to-work" laws.

Unlike the pollyannaish reformists of the Communist Party and Socialist Workers Party, who endlessly cheer for the labor bureaucrats' cheap statements of support (backed up by no action), we insist that the battle at Newport News can only be won by the strikers themselves through decisive action to shut the shipyard down! Now more than ever the strikers must understand that it is lethal to rely on help from the bosses' courts! While J. P. Stevens is still unorganized after years of impotent consumer boycotts, Newport News is the first important attempt in decades to crack the "open shop" South through powerful strike action. The entire labor movement and particularly steel workers across the country must back it to the hilt. Victory to the Newport News strike! ■

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**NOTICE**

Beginning with this issue *Workers Vanguard* is going over to the system of transliterating Chinese names officially introduced by the Peking government on January 1 and subsequently adopted by most Western newspapers. Until the new (Pinyin) usage becomes familiar to readers we shall print the old style (Wade-Giles) version after the first mention of a name: e.g., Deng Xiaoping (Teng Hsiao-p'ing). For certain well-known place names and historical personages (such as Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai) we shall continue to use the previous spelling.

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# WORKERS VANGUARD

**For Political Revolution in Moscow, Peking, Hanoi!**

## China's "Bloody Lesson" Fails

China's invasion of Vietnam on 17 February marked the first military result of its developing counterrevolutionary alliance with U.S. imperialism against the Soviet Union and its allies. This shift in the big power lineup was first signaled in 1972 with the Mao/Nixon Shanghai Communiqué. Currently this alliance is being formalized as the parallel Sino-Japanese treaty and the U.S.-China normalization of relations statement both include the same key euphemistic anti-Soviet "hegemonism" clause.

So from Washington to Moscow, when China marched into Vietnam on February 17 its collusion with the U.S. was immediately evident: as a perceptive journalist wrote, Hanoi was being punished for having routed American imperialism from Indochina in 1975. In the face of this reactionary aggression against the Vietnamese people, it was the urgent task of working-class militants throughout the world to demand: "China Get Out of Vietnam Now!" The international Spartacist tendency fulfilled its duty and even achieved a degree of recognition in the bourgeois media with our banner: "China: Don't Be Cat's Paw for U.S. Imperialism! USSR: Honor Your Treaty with Vietnam!"

On March 5 after being bogged down in a narrow band just over the border for 17 days Peking proclaimed "an important victory" and announced it was pulling out of Vietnam. In its withdrawal, however, the Chinese army was systematically shelling villages, burning houses, destroying bridges and railroads—leading to Hanoi's charges that the invaders were still "nibbling and plundering" many areas in Vietnam. And at press time Chinese officials in Bangkok were reportedly announcing Peking's aims to retain some bases inside the Vietnamese border (*New York Times*, 13 March).

This scorched-earth withdrawal was yet further evidence that the threat by Chinese deputy prime minister Deng Xiaoping (Teng Hsiao-p'ing) to "teach Vietnam a bloody lesson" had clearly failed, resulting only in an abortive bloody adventure. Another invasion in the near future cannot be ruled out, which would quickly pose a Sino-Soviet war and could well draw in the U.S. on the side of the militarily far weaker Peking. Thus the nascent U.S./China/Japan axis remains a dagger pointed at the heart of the Soviet degenerated workers state, the principal target of imperialism's drive to overthrow the conquests of the anticapitalist revolutions.

### Military Flop, Diplomatic Stand-Off

In sharp contrast to China's last military action against capitalist India in 1962, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) was halted by the Vietnamese, who inflicted heavy casualties on the invading force. This effective resistance to the Chinese is even more striking in that Hanoi did not throw its full forces into battle. For the first week the PLA was held off solely by Vietnamese



Chinese troops in Cao Bang.

border guards and local militia. And even later Vietnam held in reserve much of its regular army to defend Hanoi and Haiphong. Many commentators also wondered why the Vietnamese did not use their far superior air force. While they reportedly withdrew several main force units from Cambodia in order to bring them north, the Vietnamese avoided being drawn into a Chinese trap and thus frustrated Deng's efforts to administer a stinging military defeat.

Although China was militarily blocked, the invasion was not a total failure for Peking in the political/diplomatic sense. The *New York Times* man in Singapore wrote on March 11 that right-wing Southeast Asian politicians "could find reason for satisfaction in China's punitive action." More significantly, Peking pulled the northern polar bear's tail without getting swiped by its powerful paw. In the first days of the fighting there was widespread speculation and fear that the Russians would retaliate in support of their Vietnamese ally. But the Kremlin's commitment to détente with the U.S. proved far stronger than its "Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation" with Vietnam. The Russian Stalinist bureaucracy, deeply nationalist and conservative, reacted in the same way to the Chinese invasion as it did to U.S. imperialism's massive bombing of Vietnam a decade and a half ago. Namely, it did as little as possible.

Even the American bourgeois press was surprised at how conciliatory to the U.S. was Brezhnev's speech of March 2. An official statement of the central committee of the Vietnamese Communist Party distributed March 4 denounced the Peking rulers for having "shamefully colluded with the imperialists and today's most reactionary forces" in their invasion of Vietnam. But although a February 27 *Pravda* editorial charged that the U.S. had "contributed to Peking's openly taking the warpath,"

in a major speech three days later Brezhnev had nothing but good to say about relations with Washington. The highlight of his speech was a celebration over an imminent SALT II disarmament agreement! Against the Kremlin's cynical claptrap about "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism, the international Spartacist tendency called for "Soviet Union: Honor Your Treaty with Vietnam!" To the Soviet workers and peasants we proclaimed that not détente but only revolutionary internationalism could secure for them a socialist future.

### Collusion with U.S. Imperialism

Peking's unsuccessful attempt to militarily humiliate Vietnam was designed both to assert itself as the dominant power in the region and to strike a blow at the Russians. Referring to Vietnam as the "Cuba of Asia," Deng unleashed a diatribe of vituperation that could have put Lyndon Johnson, Dean Rusk and Henry Kissinger to shame:

"We cannot tolerate the Cubans to go swashbuckling unchecked in Africa, the Middle East and other areas... nor can we tolerate the Cubans of the Orient to go swashbuckling unchecked in Laos, Cambodia or even China's border areas."

—*New York Times*, 28 February

This common purpose was seen not only in rhetoric. On March 4 the *New York Times* reported that the Carter administration finally admitted it had advance knowledge of the Chinese invasion:

"Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher said last week that the United States learned from Mr. Teng during his visit of China's plans to attack Vietnam."

Revolutionaries oppose Peking's regional big power ambitions, which have as their aim the subordination of Vietnam and the rest of Indochina and which date back to the very beginnings of the Chinese Stalinist regime. But what poses the possibility of global military conflict and brings into force the Leninist-Trotskyist movement's

principled position of unconditional defense of the deformed/degenerated workers states against imperialist attack is China's collusion with the West. Despite a formal diplomatic even-handedness, the Carter administration made little attempt to disguise its support to China. Immediately after the invasion, even before the Soviets had said anything about it, Washington warned Moscow not to attack China. At the height of the fighting Secretary of the Treasury Michael Blumenthal went to Peking to officially open the American embassy and also to grant China most-favored-nation tariff preference (which the USSR does not enjoy).

U.S. imperialism is deeply involved in China's anti-Soviet policies, including its Vietnam adventure. Had the Soviets retaliated, this would have taken the war out of the regional framework and made global power relations decisive. We wrote in our article, "China Get Out!" (WV No. 226, 2 March):

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

### Fake Trotskyists Duck Defense of USSR

In contrast, various pseudo-Trotskyist opportunists tripped all over themselves on the China-Vietnam war, with positions ranging from see-no-evil, hear-no-evil denial of reality to a line closely paralleling the U.S. State Department and Deng Xiaoping. The American Socialist Workers Party (SWP) took the know-nothing tack, with the new editor of *Intercontinental Press*, Mary-Alice Waters, claiming in her maiden (19 February) editorial that "The danger is not a Chinese invasion of Vietnam, but the imperialist maneuvers that Peking is helping to cover up" (her emphasis). She repeats the point several times and ends, "Our spotlight must be on the Thailand-Kampuchea border, not the Vietnam-China border." Oh, dear. Where is Joseph Hansen now that they need him?

The core of the SWP's "analysis" of the China-Vietnam war is its denial that the Soviet Union is in any way threatened. In a major line article, "Behind the Lies on Invasion of Vietnam" (*Militant*, 16 March), Gus Horowitz denies that the war is "a reflection of the Sino-Soviet or Sino-Vietnam disputes." Leaving aside the idiot "logic" demonstrating that since the source of the war drive is imperialism (right), therefore one cannot lay blame at the door of the Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy (wrong), we detect his real aim: to denounce the invasion as reactionary while avoiding any suggestion of being on the same side as the USSR.

Meanwhile, back at *Intercontinental Press* (12 March) we read a statement by the "majority" of the "United Secretari-

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