

No-Nuke Syndrome

As the potentially most dangerous accident in the history of U.S. commercial nuclear power cooled off last week on Three Mile Island, Pennsylvania, the fallout of public reaction was still pretty hot. But, fortunately for area residents, the damage done was measured in the disruption of lives and pocketbooks and not in sickness and death as so many had assumed. By midweek Harrisburg had relaxed enough to make some jokes about the accident, including a T-shirt that read "I'm from Harrisburg and I glow in the dark."

For the anti-industrial eco-faddists, however, this accident was *it*. As far away as Germany they chanted "We all live in Pennsylvania!" And while more than 100,000 people prudently fled the area, the no-nuke demonstrators rushed in where nuclear engineers feared to tread. The press went wild, with New York City's "Killer Bees" *Post* leading the way with headlines like "NUKE CLOUD SPREADING" and "NUKE LEAK AT INDIAN POINT" (a reactor outside NYC that spilled a few cups of radioactive water, at below-reportable levels).

The reformist *Militant* produced its first extra edition in years, with a headline about "Carter's Timebomb" and calling for closing down every nuclear facility. And the very unradical, punk journal of Manhattan's loftdwellers, the *Soho News*, summed up the spirit in an article entitled "Why Not Panic?"

Elsewhere in the country Democratic presidential hopefuls sought to ride the wave of anti-nuke opinion. In California Governor Jerry Brown called for closing down the Rancho Seco reactor near Sacramento, then took off for Africa with singer Linda Ronstadt. On Capitol Hill Teddy Kennedy countered by holding hearings with "searching" questions to nuclear power experts.

The accident at Three Mile Island occupied headlines, fearful nightmares and Hollywood doomsday fantasies. The popular film *The China Syndrome* certainly can make claim to life-imitating-disaster entertainment. On the night of the hydrogen-bubble scare, a tense audience in a packed NYC movie theater shouted "wooo eeee" when an on-screen nuclear engineer explains that a meltdown could destroy an "area about the size of, say... Pennsylvania." But it was not all fantasy. Something did go seriously wrong at unit number two



Pierce/Time

Three Mile Island: accident sets off anti-nuclear panic.

of Metropolitan Edison's pressurized-water fission reactor.

The accident they said couldn't happen almost happened. Three out of four fail-safe procedures failed, and one can only wonder why the fourth and *last* fail-safe procedure worked. "It works, it works," said the utility companies, seeming to mimic the nuclear engineer in *The China Syndrome*. But there was little solace to be drawn from these assurances. For too long the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) and its heir, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC), along with the utility bigwigs, had promised the American public that all chance of accident had been "designed out" of the reactors. A public told many times that they had "nothing to worry about" had plenty to be angry about. And the anti-nuclear power lobby grabbed the opportunity to call up doomsday visions based on the false

notion that commercial reactors are bombs.

The hot debate on nuclear power is irrational on both sides. Proponents claim that there can be no accidents while the no-nuke alliances of clams, abalones, shads and other organizations similarly located on the evolutionary scale argue that nuclear power is intrinsically more unsafe than other methods of producing energy under capitalism. Of course nuclear energy is far from completely safe and is fraught with unsolved problems. Who besides the AEC/NRC and the atomic industry publicists say otherwise? Not only the problems of waste disposal and accidents, but even the medical effects of long-term exposure to small doses of ionizing radiation are in dispute among doctors and research scientists.

But the alternatives under capitalism are just as, if not more, unsafe. Coal-

burning power plants emit as much background radiation as nuclear reactors (coal contains radium and uranium). The possibility of dam accidents or liquefied natural gas explosions, for instance, can pose even greater potential destruction than the meltdown that could result from the worst possible reactor accident. But who wants to pick his poison from capitalism's deadly shelf? Is it better to build a dam or a nuclear reactor over the San Andreas Fault? We will not choose. Marxist revolutionaries are not in the business of technological reformism.

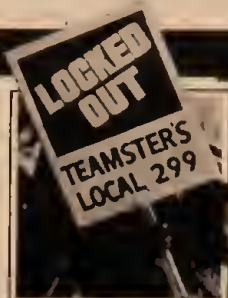
The Three Mile Island plant should be shut down. We demand it, just as we would demand that a particularly hazardous coal mine be closed. If the nuclear accident proves to be a design error of the Babcock & Wilcox reactor, then we will demand all of these reactors

continued on page 8

PAGE 2



No Vote for
Strikebreaking
British Labour
Government



PAGE 3

Victory
to
the
Teamsters!



PAGE 4

Why They
Supported
Islamic
Reaction

Smash Thatcher's "Austerity" on the Picket Lines

No Votes For Strikebreaking Labour Government!

LONDON, April 7—The five-year reign of James Callaghan's Labour government is over, ended by a one-vote margin of defeat in a parliamentary motion of no-confidence on March 28. This is the first time that a British government has been driven out of office by losing a vote in the House of Commons since Ramsay MacDonald's Labour cabinet fell in 1924. And, judging by recent opinion polls which show Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Party in a strong lead, Labour's chances of returning to the government benches at Westminster after the May 3 election seem slim indeed.

And no wonder! After five years of wage control, skyrocketing unemployment and deteriorating social services, the British working class is decidedly less than enthusiastic at the idea of returning to power a government which is openly committed to driving down living standards even further. In order to enforce its anti-working-class wage controls, the administration of Callaghan and Benn resorted to open *strikebreaking*, mobilising the capitalist army to scab on strikes by ambulance drivers, firemen, Northern Ireland petrol drivers and Glasgow garbage-men. If many workers seem likely to cast votes for Labour anyway, this is simply because they see no other alternative to the right-wing, union-bashing Tories.

The immediate impetus for the government's downfall was a dispute over devolution, Labour's fraudulent and essentially inconsequential proposal for regional assemblies in Scotland and Wales. But what really lay behind Thatcher's decision to go for Labour's jugular in the Commons was the bourgeoisie's desire for an election to put a new, fresh administration into office. The Labour government was clearly a spent force, its energies used up by years of serving its capitalist paymasters. The *Financial Times* (28 March), leading mouthpiece for financial interests in the City of London, moaned that Prime Minister Callaghan's squalid horsetrading with various minor parties to keep a parliamentary majority was "no way to run a country."

But for years the bourgeoisie was happy with the way Labour ran the country—by slashing wages and busting strikes. Its "special relationship" with the trade-union bureaucracy led to a series of Social Contract pacts for wage control, which kept pay rises low while



Jim "I cross picket lines" Callaghan

inflation soared. Whenever workers tried to beat the Cabinet/bureaucrat/hoss alliance, as did the firemen in the winter of 1977-78, the government unleashed its troops and cops to smash their strikes.

Labour served British imperialism loyally in other areas as well. It stepped up the British armed presence in Northern Ireland; dispatching the notoriously brutal Special Air Service undercover squad to South Armagh in 1976, sanctioning the use of torture on suspected IRA prisoners in Castlereagh Barracks and withdrawing political status from Republican prisoners in the hellholes of Long Kesh concentration camp. It invoked (and annually renews) the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act. It has been responsible for tightened racist immigration quotas and increased harassment of non-white residents.

Winter Pay Explosion

However during the past few months Labour's chief argument for bourgeois support—its ability to keep the unions in line—has been sounding more and more hollow. A major winter strike wave spearheaded by the lorry [truck] drivers and public sector workers buried Phase Four of wage controls and

threatened to bring the whole country to a grinding halt. With other key sectors, like the miners, having submitted their own large pay claims, the situation was ripe for a general strike to smash the capitalist government's austerity schemes, recoup living standards for the entire working class, and protect them against inflation and unemployment through a sliding scale of wages and hours.

In the end, the cabinet managed to pull together one last agreement with the union bureaucrats—the "Concordat," signed on Valentine's Day—and ride out the wave of industrial militancy with a minimum of concessions. Now the Labour and union leaders are using the election campaign to quell any lingering militancy, under the watchword of "unity against the Tories."

The day after the election was announced, the Trades Union Congress chiefs wheeled out their election machine, "Trade Unionists for a Labour Victory." Leaders of the post office union, which had been staging industrial action for a 24 percent wage increase, announced they were accepting an offer worth only half as much on the explicit basis that continued strikes would damage Labour's electoral prospects. Leaders of the striking public sector workers manoeuvred their ranks into accepting a 9 percent rise using exactly the same argument. And the day after the government fell the National Union of Mineworkers bureaucrats gleefully announced that they too had succeeded in ramming a 9 percent deal down their members' throats.

Overall, the winter pay explosion has ended in a stand-off between the unions and the government. But even now not all industrial action has been brought to a halt, much to the chagrin of Labour and union bureaucrats alike. Four hundred thousand civil servants are still staging sporadic strike action, the teachers are threatening to do the same and skilled toolmakers at British Leyland are poised for an all-out strike which would shut down the company's car plants early next week.

In an important and encouraging development, sections of the union movement are also beginning to question openly and even reject the bureau-



Margaret "I bust unions" Thatcher.

crats' calls to stand behind Labour in the coming election. Shop stewards for several thousand workers at the Dunlop tyre factory near Liverpool which is threatened with closure came out for abstention in a recent local by-election unless the Labour government intervened to save their jobs. And several militant regions of the National Union of Public Employees (NUPE) have tabled motions for their next union conference which demand an end to support for Labour unless it stops its attacks on the working class.

The Dunlop and NUPE workers are right: there is no basis for supporting Labour, however critically, if its fundamental policies are *openly* the same as the Tories'. Critical electoral support to Labour can be a useful tactic for Marxists in the fight to build a revolutionary vanguard party. In the February and October 1974 elections, for example, the Spartacist tendency gave critical support to Labour both in order to draw a rudimentary class line between the workers movement and the direct representatives of capital, and as a means toward splitting the Labour Party between the pro-capitalist leaders and the workers who wish to pursue the class struggle. At that time, a vote for Labour was a means toward destroying illusions in the social democrats by putting them in power, where they could only betray.

Five years later, things are very different. A vote for a Labour government which is openly campaigning on its wage-cutting, strikebreaking record in office is neither a deformed expression of class opposition to the bourgeoisie nor a way of exposing the Labour leaders before the masses. Calling on the British workers to once again place the discredited Labour Party tops in office can only help create new illusions among a working class which today scarcely looks to the likes of James Callaghan to defend its interests. In the current elections, Marxists must say: No vote to the Labour traitors, no more than to the bourgeois parties!

Callaghan's "Left" Apologists

Yet almost to a man, Britain's pseudo-Trotskyist left is gearing up

continued on page 10



Callaghan mobilized troops as scabs to break ambulance drivers' strike.

Stop the Scabbing—No to the Interim Agreements!

Victory to the Teamsters!

APRIL 10—On Sunday, April 1 International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) president Frank Fitzsimmons announced a "nationwide" freight strike—the first major test of the Carter administration's faltering wage "guidelines." Yet the Teamster bureaucracy has done everything in its power to avoid a showdown with the bosses and their government.

Instead of a solid nationwide shutdown, Fitzsimmons ordered a "selective strike" of only 73 companies, out of the nearly 11,000 which are parties to the Master Freight Agreement (MFA). Although the targets included a number of the largest over-the-road freight carriers, Fitzsimmons made it plain that the selective strikes were designed "quite frankly to avoid a Taft-Hartley injunction by the federal government." The IBT chief added that he "will follow the government orders" if a strikebreaking injunction is issued. The work stoppage, in fact, attained its present scope only when the bosses—through their major bargaining arm, Trucking Management Inc. (TMI)—answered the limited strike with a lockout of their member companies.

Even before the strike was called, the bosses—with the okay of the government—had presented a contract offer clearly in excess of Carter's 7 percent annual wage limit. But with inflation now rampaging at almost 15 percent, this was hardly a victory for Teamsters. Both the package offered by TMI and the measly 25 extra cents that Fitzsimmons is asking for are far below what would just keep Teamsters even with the rise in cost of living—and are substantially inferior to the 1976 settlement. While Fitzsimmons and Carter continue their cynical masquerade of dickering over what is "consist-

ent" with the "modified" guidelines, it is clear that none of the real demands essential to IBT drivers and warehousemen—a big wage boost, full cost-of-living protection to combat double-digit inflation, a shorter work-week at no cut in pay, and an end to forced overtime and other vicious company speedup "productivity" deals—can be won without a militant confrontation with the bosses and the Carter government. And that is what Fitzsimmons seeks to avoid.

Instead, his disgusting attempts to curry favor with Carter have only served to sow confusion and demoralization in the Teamster ranks. Some key transport centers, such as Chicago, were not struck at all—and the only trucking currently halted there is due to the lockout! Fitzsimmons himself boasts that the movement of food, heating oil, gasoline, automobiles, chemical and medical supplies, as well as package delivery, are unaffected by the walkout. Asked what freight would be affected by the strike, the IBT leader replied cynically: "Straw hats, glasses, shoes, auto parts, alligator coats" (*Long Beach Independent*, 3 April). Only the automobile industry, which is dependent upon daily shipment of parts, is seriously threatened.

Teamsters at picket sites across the country complained to *WV* that they simply did not know who was on strike, who was locked out, and who was covered by one of Fitzsimmons' many interim agreements. In many instances they had not even been informed before the walkout whether to report to work! One Cleveland worker summed up the disgust of a number of militants: "This ain't no god-damned strike. This is the furthest thing I've seen from a strike."



Locked out in Detroit: Teamsters must smash the guidelines with a solid national strike.

The only substantial resistance to Fitzsimmons' bureaucratic sabotage has occurred in Ohio's Mahoning Valley. In mass meetings of several hundred workers in both Canton and Youngstown, angry Teamsters voted overwhelmingly to shut down trucking operations which IBT tops had exempted from strike action. Warnings by local officials and business agents to end the "illegal" walkout have been ignored, and the ranks further pledged to continue the strike if the companies attempt reprisals. Interestingly, the catalyst for this militant action, affecting several thousand drivers in both steel and general freight operations, has been largely the steel haulers—underscoring the rottenness of such groups as FASH, which seek to split the steel truckers away from the Teamsters.

However, for the most part, resistance to Fitzsimmons' defeatist strategy has been localized and sporadic, due to the absence of an organized opposition within the IBT equipped with a militant program and the guts to fight for it. In particular, the Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU), claiming a membership of several thousand, has totally taken a dive. TDU lined up, in fact, foursquare behind Fitzsimmons' strike strategy, calling in its 28 March *Convoy Contract Bulletin* for "an effective selective strike."

Having no fundamental programmatic differences with Fitzsimmons, in local after local TDU restricted its advice to "keep the pressure on our officials." At a meeting in Detroit on April 1, one TDUer literally begged of Local 299 president Bob Lins: "Can't we strike a whole city, all of it, please Bob?" And at a Majority Contract Coalition meeting in Los Angeles on April 8, TDU national co-chairperson Doug Allen voted against a motion calling for a nationwide strike. "I am on the national steering committee," Allen said. "I do not feel that the national steering committee will take the action you want."

Perhaps what best exemplified TDU's groveling to both the government and the Teamster bureaucracy was its April 3 rally in Detroit. There, TDU unveiled what it intended to do in case of Taft-Hartley. Militant defiance? No way. The answer, according to TDU lawyer Ellis Boal, would be... to file a legal brief in support of the Teamsters! Such gutless-

ness is only the logical outcome of TDU's strategy of reliance on the government, fostered through years of taking IBT officials to court. Not surprisingly, militant Teamsters have only been alienated by such performances, and most TDU meetings have flopped or been cancelled.

The enormous potential social power of the Teamsters has already been evidenced by the government's quick retreat from its initial guidelines even at

continued on page 10

TDU Scabs for "Unity"

As simple business unionists who don't set their sights any higher than getting into office, Teamsters for a Democratic Union has always had a hard time recognizing the existence of a class line in society. Thus for years the TDU has been running to the capitalist state against the Fitzsimmons bureaucracy of the IBT. This despicable backstabbing hit a new low last fall when TDUers actually scabbed on Teamster grocery workers during the bitter northern California Safeway strike that went down to defeat after 18 weeks. The admission came from former TDU national steering committee member Dave Perry, speaking to the Labor Law Committee of the National Lawyers Guild in San Francisco December 7.

When Teamster pickets appeared at Safeway's San Leandro milk plant, local IBT officials instructed the workforce—which included several TDUers—to go to work. "So what else could we do?" whined Perry. Though claiming he was not proud of the act, Perry said that since everyone else was entering the plant, TDU didn't want to "break the unity" of the workers. Anyway, the strikers "just sat around drinking beer" and didn't try to keep anyone out. So according to this perverse "logic," the strikers are responsible for the "united" scabbing!

More recently, Tom Peck of the TDU spoke at the Santa Cruz campus of the University of California concerning the supermarket strike. When a Spartacus Youth League member accused the TDU of strikebreaking, this "militant" justified the scabbing by claiming that the IBT bureaucracy erected the picket lines in order to entrap militants. No TDU members, of course, were snared in the net. Like "brother" Perry, Peck justified the San Leandro picket line crossing in the name of "unity" with the scab workforce.

The February issue of *Grapevine*, "voice of the So. Cal. Teamsters for a Democratic Union," examined the reasons for the defeat of the Safeway strike. In addition to armed guards, goons, a massive anti-union media campaign and official IBT sabotage, *Grapevine* added, "the employers now feel strong enough to run scabs through the picket lines." They ought to know. The article concludes with an exhortation to recover the traditions "which built the unions in the 1930s." Fine. When the American working class recovers (and surpasses) the fighting spirit which created the CIO, scabs like the San Leandro TDUers will end up in the gutter instead of crowing about their exploits in seminars on how to sue the unions.

Whatever Happened to Jimmy Hoffa?

Just as the Teamsters began to shut down U.S. trucking, the *Philadelphia Bulletin* announced that an ex-mob hitman has come forward with a grisly new account of the murder of his one-time cellmate—former IBT president Jimmy Hoffa. A federal informant claimed that Hoffa was bludgeoned to death in Detroit by a six-foot four inch, 240-pound killer known as "Monster Man." Reportedly, the body was transported to New Jersey where it was cut into small pieces and packed into 55-gallon drums before being dumped in a Florida swamp.

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

EDITDR Jan Norden

ASSOCIATE EDITDR Charles Burroughs

PRODUCTION Darlene Kamiura (Manager)

Noah Wilner

CIRCULATION MANAGER Karen Wyatt

EDITORIAL BOARD: Jon Brule, George Foster, Liz Gordon, James Robertson, Joseph Seymour, Marjorie Stenberg

Published biweekly, skipping an issue in August and a week in December, by the Spartacist Publishing Co., 260 West Broadway, New York, NY 10013 Telephone 966-6841 (Editorial), 925-5665 (Business) Address all correspondence to Box 1377, G.P.D., New York, NY 10001 Domestic subscriptions, \$3.00/24 issues Second-class postage paid at New York, NY

Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint

No. 229

13 April 1979

In one sense it is now very easy to polemicize against those leftists, especially ostensible Trotskyists, who supported the Islamic opposition to the shah. We said Khomeini in power would seek to reimpose the veil, restore barbaric punishments (flogging, amputation), suppress the national minorities and crush the left and workers movement as ruthlessly as did the shah. Imperialist propaganda, they shouted, Khomeini is leading a great progressive struggle! Thus one self-proclaimed Trotskyist group in Britain charged.

"The Spartacists make a series of charges against the Mullah-led opposition as a result of which they characterise the movement as one of 'clerical reaction'. A number of these charges amount to uncritical retelling of the chauvinist rubbish which filled the American press throughout the Autumn. The Mullahs they claim wish to restore Iran to the 7th century A.D.... 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...."

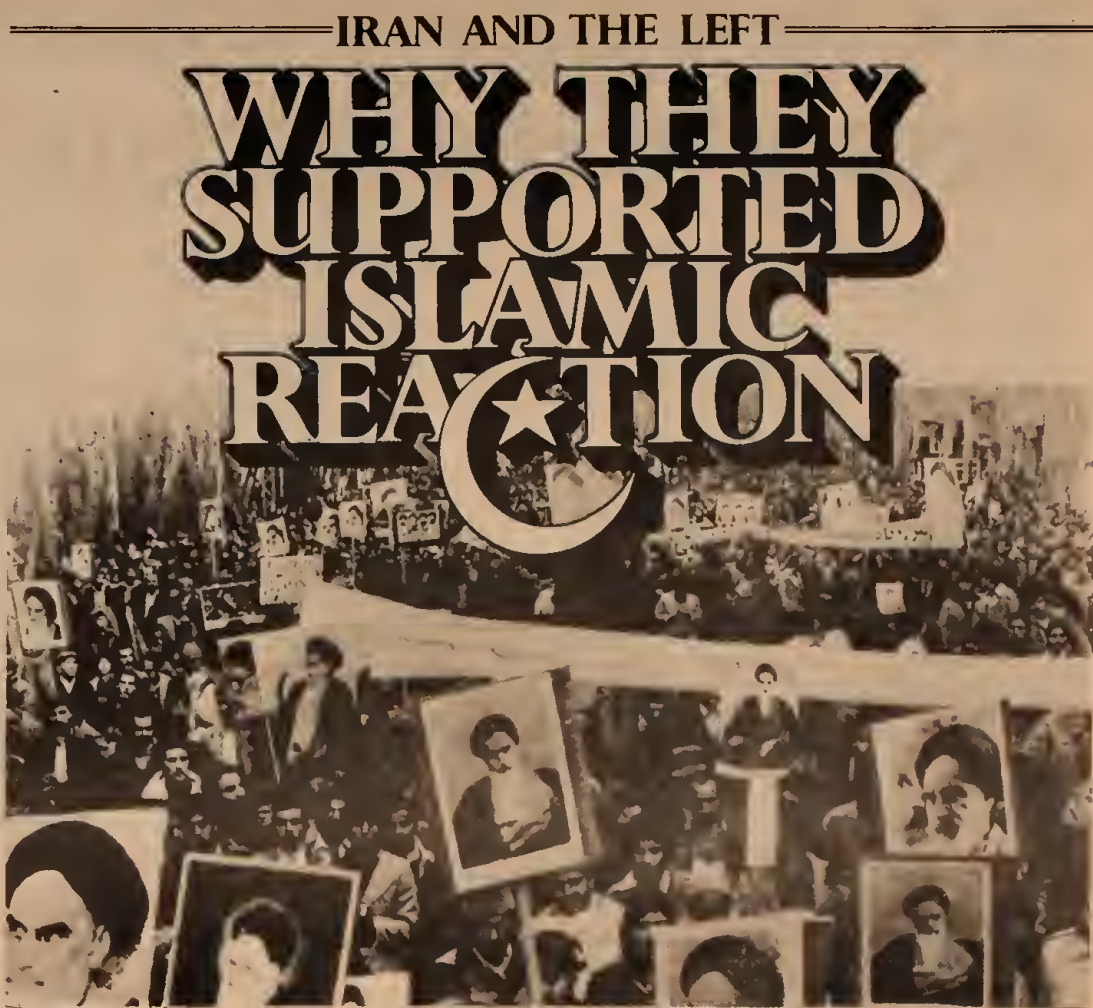
—Workers Power, February 1979

Well?

Now every piece of news out of Iran proves that the international Spartacist tendency (iSt) was obviously, indisputably, 100 percent right. The streets of Teheran are filled with the anguished cries of those, from middle-class liberal women to Guevarist guerrillas, who claim they were taken in by Khomeini's revolution. Tragically, the voice of the revolutionists who warned of the reactionary clericalist aims of the mullahs was drowned in the clamor of opportunists singing the praises of the "anti-imperialist" ayatollah. It is the Iranian masses who will pay the price.

Unfortunately, our main opponents here and in Europe are so cynical and so removed from the immediate consequences of their support to the mullahs' revolution that they will not repudiate their position. They will obfuscate or perhaps deny that they supported Khomeini, or concoct elaborate stagist theories to justify it. However, some subjectively revolutionary elements may just be shocked enough by the sight of Khomeini's marshals shooting down women protesting the veil to reconsider their solidarity with the mullahs' opposition to the shah. But unless such leftists break with the *anti-Marxist methodology* which led them to support Islamic reaction in Iran, they will end up supporting the Khomeinis of Egypt or India or Indonesia tomorrow.

To polemicize against the methodological arguments of the pro-Khomeini left groups is not so easy, for they didn't raise any. That Khomeini led the masses in the streets is presented as the beginning and end of all argument. Confronting Spartacists at a March 4 forum in New York, Socialist Workers



Islamic reaction on the march: the left tails behind.

Party (SWP) leader Barry Sheppard shouted:

"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...."

"If it's popular, chase it" seems to be the motto of these inveterate tailists, whose instincts are closer to lemmings than to Leninism. Such "arguments" do not allow or deserve a serious political reply.

A partial—very partial—exception to the theoretical nullity of the pro-Khomeini "Marxists" is the small British centrist Workers Power group. Its polemics against us on Iran put forth a few arguments which go beyond unabashed tailism of the masses, although in their case as well this is the fundamental motivation. This perhaps bespeaks less of Workers Power's political seriousness than of its unenviable position in the spectrum of British

ostensible Trotskyism. As a small, nationally limited centrist formation, Workers Power finds the British section of the iSt a formidable competitor on its left. Unless it can discredit the Spartacist League/Britain as hopeless ultraleft sectarians, Workers Power cannot expect to attract leftward-moving elements from the Pabloist International Marxist Group, the workerist/reformist Socialist Workers Party of Tony Cliff, etc. Still, the not terribly coherent polemics by Workers Power provide a useful foil in attacking those ostensibly Trotskyist groups who supported the mullahs against the shah.

In a critical commentary on Bukharin's writings, Antonio Gramsci insisted that Marxist polemicists must refute the strongest and not the weakest arguments of their opponents. In trying to carry out Gramsci's injunction, we are forced to give our reformist and centrist opponents' positions on Iran a theoretical coherence which they do not in reality possess.

THE ISLAMIC OPPOSITION: A REACTIONARY MASS MOVEMENT

In the last weeks before the fall of the shah's bloody regime, all the forces of opposition to the monarchy in Iranian society, including the organized proletariat and the left, had rallied behind Khomeini. But the core of Khomeini's movement was the mullahs (the 180,000-strong Shi'ite Muslim clergy) and the *bazaaris*, the traditional merchant class being ground down by the modernization of the country. This traditional social class is doomed by economic progress, and so is naturally prone to reactionary ideology and its political expressions.

For opportunists it is unthinkable that there could be a reactionary mass mobilization against a reactionary regime. Yet history does offer examples of reactionary mass movements. Adolf Hitler organized an indubitably mass

movement which toppled the Weimar Republic. In the U.S. in the 1920s the Ku Klux Klan was a dynamic growing organization capable of mobilizing tens of thousands of activists in the streets.

The experience of German fascism has had too shattering an impact on the memory of the left for our reformist/centrist opponents to deny the possibility of reactionary mass movements based on the petty bourgeoisie. But not, they argue, in backward, semi-colonial countries like Iran. Workers Power polemizes against us:

"Iran is in Lenin's terms a *semi-colony*. The masses, despite all their illusions, are struggling against this Imperialism. If the USFI [the revisionist United Secretariat of the Fourth International] draw from this conclusion that [the] working class can simply tail the mullahs. If they refuse to pose the central need for working class independence and leadership then the Spartacists turn this on its head. The mullahs are simply reactionary—identical to reactionary petit bourgeois movements in Imperialist countries like the Poujadists in France." [emphasis in original]

—Opportunists and Sectarians on Iran," *Workers Power*, February 1979

According to our reformist/centrist opponents, imperialist domination sanctifies the petty-bourgeois masses of the oppressed, backward countries making them immune to reactionary mobilizations. The petty merchants and lumpenproletarians of Germany or France may sometimes do bad things, but not so their Iranian or Indian counterparts. We grant that Weimar Germany was a very different kind of society from the shah's Iran. But early twentieth-century tsarist Russia was not. As an extreme instance of combined and uneven development, no country in the contemporary world so resembles the Russia which produced the Bolshevik Revolution as does Iran.

One of the central doctrinal elements of Bolshevism was that the proletarian was the *only* consistently democratic



British centrists alibi the mullahs.

class in tsarist Russia. The petty-bourgeois masses, including the peasantry, could potentially be drawn to anti-democratic, anti-working class movements. This was one of the important differences within the Iskra group of 1900-03, a difference which foreshadowed the later Bolshevik-Menshevik split. Lenin strongly objected to Plekhanov's assertion in the draft party program that the proletariat was in actual political life the petty bourgeoisie's "foremost representative." He insisted:

"The struggle is growing sharper among the small producers too, of course. But their 'struggle' is very often directed against the proletariat, for in many respects the very position of the small producers sharply contraposes their interests to those of the proletariat. Generally speaking, the proletariat is not at all the petty bourgeoisie's 'foremost representative'.... It happens very often...that the anti-Semite and the big landowner, the nationalist and the Narodnik, the social-reformer and the 'critic of Marxism' are the foremost representatives of the present-day small producer who has not yet deserted his own standpoint." [emphasis in original]

—Notes on Plekhanov's Second Draft Programme" (February-March 1902)

Lenin's insistence that the Russian petty-bourgeois masses could be rallied to reactionary as well as revolutionary democratic movements was no mere theoretical speculation, but found living expression in the Black Hundreds. Addressing a meeting of the Communist International in 1923, Zinoviev likened the Black Hundreds to German Nazism:

"There was in our country once a strong, utterly reactionary movement which we called the Black Hundred. It was really Russian fascism which used social demagoguery very cleverly. The 'Black Hundred' movement arose from among the monarchists and supported the monarchy. It had a chapter in almost every village, every city. All the little people, the watchmen, servants, etc., went with them. This movement also used religious conflicts for its purposes. In a way, it was a popular movement, for it knew how to secure allegiance of broad social strata, which it gathered under its cloak of demagogic pursuit of Jews. It was a big movement which attracted not only the large landowners, not only the aristocracy, but also thousands of petty bourgeois, and was much more a mass party than the Milyukov [liberal monarchist Cadet] party." [our emphasis]

—reproduced in Helmut Gruber, *International Communism in the Era of Lenin: A Documentary History* (1967)

It is true that the Black Hundreds supported the autocracy to the end, while the German and Italian fascists fought to take state power into their hands. However, it was historically possible for the Black Hundred movement to have broken with the tsar and fought for power in its own name, using nationalist-populist demagoguery. Had such a development occurred in pre-

1917 Russia, no doubt at least a section of the Mensheviks would have sought unity with Black Hundreds (as their contemporary counterparts have done with Khomeini) in the "struggle against the autocracy."

One doesn't have to look as far back as the Black Hundred movement of tsarist Russia to find a reactionary mass movement, analogous to Khomeini's, in a backward, semi-colonial country. Look at Indonesia in 1965. The political reaction which overthrew the bourgeois-nationalist Sukarno and annihilated the Communist Party (then the largest in the world not holding state power) was not simply a military coup. The murder of half a million Communists and leftist workers and peasants (as well as many Hindus) was mainly carried out by petty-bourgeois Islamic fanatics led by the mullahs.

AN "ANTI-IMPERIALIST" BOURGEOIS REVOLUTION?

Since it is not so easy to portray Khomeini as a bourgeois democrat (he would be considered a reactionary by Henry VIII or Peter the Great), the favored leftist adjective is "anti-imperialist." This all-embracing term is the code word for class collaborationism in Asia, Africa and Latin America. We are presented with the view that the entire people of the colonial and semi-colonial countries, except for a handful of traitors and foreign agents (like the shah), have been revolutionized by imperialist domination. In this view the petty-bourgeois masses are always progressive while a section of the bourgeoisie is also progressive (i.e., "anti-imperialist"). Verily imperialist domination ennobles all social classes in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The idea of all-class unity against imperialism finds its expression, for example, in the fictitious notion of "the Arab Revolution." Here we have a "revolution" embracing an entire people, extending over decades and countries, a "revolution" which is directed not at overturning the existing Arab governments and ruling classes, but externally against the U.S. and Israel.

As Leninists, we fully recognize that the advanced capitalist countries, centrally the U.S., dominate, oppress and exploit backward countries like Iran. This fundamental historic fact imposes a particular program, strategy and tactics on proletarian revolutionaries in the colonial world. In these countries the struggle for democratic rights and against feudal reaction is inextricably bound up with the struggle against foreign domination. Popular movements against domestic reaction and imperialist domination are often led by bourgeois nationalists.

The particular problems of proletarian revolutionary strategy and

tactics in backward countries were first posed at the Second Congress of the Communist International in July-August 1920. Here it was recognized that the communist vanguard should at times support and seek alliances with "revolutionary bourgeois-nationalist movements." But the condition laid down for such support was a very strong one. In his report on the Commission on the National and Colonial Questions, Lenin insists:

"There has been a certain rapprochement between the bourgeoisie of the exploiting countries and that of the colonies, so that very often—perhaps even in most cases—the bourgeoisie of the oppressed countries, while it does support the national movement, is in full accord with the imperialist bourgeoisie, i.e., joins forces with it against all revolutionary movements and revolutionary classes. This was irrefutably

Comintern's position on bourgeois national liberation movements? To begin with the Khomeinist opposition was not a revolutionary bourgeois-nationalist movement. As a matter of fact, in 1920 the Comintern did deal with the kind of movement which has just conquered power in Iran, but not exactly in the spirit of possible support and cooperation with it. Here is what Lenin had to say about movements like Khomeini's:

"With regard to the more backward states and nations, in which feudal or patriarchal and patriarchal-peasant relations predominate, it is particularly important to bear in mind:...

"third, the need to combat Pan-Islamism and similar trends, which strive to combine the liberation movement against European and American imperialism with an attempt to strengthen the position of the khans,



Fedayeen spokesman at Teheran University rally asked for role in Bazargan government.

proved in the commission, and we decided that the only correct attitude was to take this distinction into account and, in nearly all cases, substitute the term 'national-revolutionary' for the term 'bourgeois-democratic'. The significance of this change is that we, as Communists, should and will support bourgeois-liberation movements in the colonies only when they are genuinely revolutionary, and when their exponents do not hinder our work of educating and organizing in a revolutionary spirit the peasantry and the masses of the exploited. If these conditions do not exist, the Communists in these countries must combat the reformist bourgeoisie...." [our emphasis]

Can support to Khomeini against the shah be justified with reference to the

landowners, mullahs, etc...." [our emphasis]

—Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions" (June 1920)

Furthermore, Khomeini never even pretended that he would "not hinder" communists from organizing and educating the exploited. If Iranian leftists believed they would enjoy democratic freedoms under an "Islamic Republic," they duped themselves. Khomeini was always clear that he hated communism even more than he hated the shah. In a widely publicized interview in *Le Monde* (6 May 1978), the ayatollah stated:

"We will not collaborate with Marxists, even in order to overthrow the shah. I have given specific instructions to my followers not to do this. We are opposed to their ideology and we know that they always stab us in the back. If they came to power, they would establish a dictatorial regime contrary to the spirit of Islam."

A glance at the basic Comintern documents on the colonial question is enough to convict as opportunists those self-styled "Leninists" who supported the Islamic opposition—and those in Iran as suicidal opportunists. But this does not resolve the general question of support to bourgeois-nationalist movements in the colonial world. In 1920 proletarian revolutionary (communist) parties in backward countries were new on the scene. Mass bourgeois-nationalist movements were also a relatively recent development. It is therefore understandable and in a sense correct that Lenin's Comintern posed the relationship between the communist vanguard and the bourgeois-nationalist movement in an algebraic manner.

continued on page 6



Guerrillas at Teheran University.

Keler/Sygma

Islamic Reaction....

(continued from page 5)

Particularly the Chinese revolution of 1925-27, when the bourgeois-nationalist Kuomintang butchered their Communist would-be allies, and all subsequent experience show that the colonial bourgeoisie will never "not hinder" revolutionaries from organizing and educating the exploited masses. It was the Chinese revolution which caused Trotsky to generalize the theory of the permanent revolution from tsarist Russia to all backward countries in the imperialist epoch. Trotsky recognized that the Stalin-Bukharin China policy was simply the old Menshevik two-stage revolution transposed to the colonies. As he wrote in his 1927 polemic, "The Chinese Revolution and the Theses of Comrade Stalin":

"The old Menshevik tactic of 1905 to 1917... is now transferred to China by the Martinov [ideologue for Stalin/Bukharin] school.... The arguments are the same, letter for letter, as they were twenty years ago. Only, where formerly the *autocrator* stood, the word *imperialism* has been substituted for it in the text.... The struggle against foreign imperialism is as much a class struggle as the struggle against autocracy. That it cannot be exercised by the idea of the national united front, is far too eloquently proved by the bloody April events [Chiang Kai-shek's Shanghai massacre], a direct consequence of the policy of the bloc of four classes." [emphasis in original]

—Problems of the Chinese Revolution

Imperialism is in its very essence the subordination of the weak propertied classes in the backward countries to the powerful bourgeoisie of the metropolitan centers. As Trotsky put it:

"Imperialism is a highly powerful force in the internal relationships of China. The main source of this force is not the warships in the waters of the Yangtse Kiang—they are only auxiliaries—but the economic and political bond between foreign capital and the native bourgeoisie."

—Ibid.

There is no anti-imperialist bourgeoisie and therefore can be no anti-imperialist bourgeois-democratic revolution as such. In the imperialist epoch the historic tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, including national liberation, can be realized only through proletarian socialist revolution.

UNITED FRONTS IN THE STRUGGLE AGAINST IMPERIALISM

For Leninists, a united front is a specific, *episodic* agreement for common action: "March separately, strike together" was the way the early Comintern expressed the united front as a slogan. This was sharply distinguished by Trotsky from a political bloc for propaganda. Moreover, united-front tactics cover a broad range and are not all interchangeable. Thus there is a fundamental distinction between military support to bourgeois-nationalist forces (e.g., for the Algerian FLN against the French army and *colon* terrorists) and political (e.g., electoral) support. The tactic of critical electoral support or even entry can sometimes be applied to social-democratic (e.g., British Labour) or Stalinist (e.g., French Communist) parties based on the organized working class. Such a tactic, used to expose the reformist misleaders, can be justified as representing at least a first step toward the political independence of the workers, by drawing a class line against the bourgeois parties. But revolutionaries never give such political support to bourgeois formations, however radical or "socialist" their rhetoric or extensive their popular support. In contrast to reformist labor-based parties, bourgeois-nationalist movements (e.g., Chinese Kuomintang, Algerian FLN, Argentine Peronism) are not just misleaders but class enemies—they can

turn on and *destroy* their working-class support without themselves committing political suicide.

There are, to be sure, specific *partial* struggles against imperialist domination (e.g., for political independence) which are "progressive" and are often led by bourgeois nationalists. Bourgeois-nationalist regimes sometimes carry out measures against foreign capital (e.g., Cárdenas' nationalization of Mexico's oilfields in 1937, Nasser's nationalization of the Suez Canal) which revolutionaries will support and if necessary defend. An Egyptian revolutionary vanguard, for example, would have given Nasser military support against the 1956 Anglo/French/Israeli invasion in retaliation for nationalizing the Suez Canal.

The legitimacy of such united-front tactics depends entirely on the progressive content of what is concretely being fought for and not at all on the "anti-imperialist" posture of the bourgeois forces involved. In fact, in defending *genuine* national rights against imperialist attack, we are willing to make common cause even with extreme reactionaries. Haile Selassie, for example, was a feudal autocrat. Yet revolutionary Marxists gave him military

support in the struggle against imperialist domination. Even at that time it was used to justify capitulation to the bourgeois nationalists. In the debate over the "Theses on the Eastern Question" where the slogan was first raised in the Comintern, a Chinese delegate argued:

"On the assumption that the anti-imperialist united front is necessary to get rid of imperialism in China, our party has decided to form a national front with the national revolutionary party of the Kuomintang.... If we do not enter this party we shall remain isolated, preaching a communism which is, it is true, a great and sublime ideal, but which the masses do not follow."

—quoted in Jane Degras, ed., *The Communist International 1919-1943, Documents, Vol. 1*

Within the Political Bureau of the Russian Communist Party Trotsky had opposed the entry into the Kuomintang from the outset. The tragic Shanghai massacre of April 1927 was the bloody consequence of this entry. And those who call for political support to the Islamic opposition betray the same capitulationist impulses that led to the KMT entry—only worse, for at least the party of Chiang Kai-shek was "progressive"



Stalin had all the arguments rationalizing political subordination to the "anti-imperialist" Chiang Kai-shek. Chinese communists paid the price: Shanghai massacre, 1927.

support in defending Ethiopia against conquest by Mussolini's Italy. Another example: Chiang Kai-shek in the 1930s was a reactionary butcher compared to whom the Iranian Pahlavis come off like saintly humanitarians. Furthermore, Kuomintang China was at least as closely tied to U.S. imperialism as was the shah's Iran. Yet when Japan launched a war of conquest against China in 1937, Trotsky exhorted his Chinese followers to participate actively in the national resistance to imperialist Japan despite Chiang's leadership.

For opportunists, on the other hand, united fronts in the ex-colonial countries are based on the supposed progressive ("anti-imperialist") character of the bourgeois forces they are tailing after. Thus, Khomeini's movement was presented as "anti-imperialist," and conversely the shah was portrayed *not* as a representative of the *Iranian* bourgeoisie but as a direct agent of U.S. imperialism, sort of a high-class CIA operative. Polemicizing against us, *Workers Power* writes: "The Spartacists position would in practice rule out an anti-imperialist united front against the Shah in Iran" ("Rights and Wrongs of the Spartacists," *Workers Power*, January 1979).

Even if Khomeini were a bourgeois nationalist espousing a democratic program (which he decidedly is not), we would reject what *Workers Power* means by an "anti-imperialist united front." This slogan was first raised at the Fourth Congress of the Communist International in 1922, where it was associated with agitation for "tempor-

sive" relative to the warlords. It wanted to unbind the feet, cut off the pigtailed, etc. Not so the mullahs, who want to reimpose the veil.

There can be specific united-front actions of an anti-imperialist character between proletarian revolutionaries and bourgeois nationalists, such as a march on a colonial military base. Naturally communists would join in a pro-independence mass uprising, advocating that it go farther than its bourgeois or petty-bourgeois leaders wish in breaking with imperialism. But what the pseudo-Trotskyist revisionists wish to do with the slogan of an "anti-imperialist united front" is exactly what Stalin-Dimitrov did with the slogan of a "united front against fascism" at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern in 1935: use it as a codeword for a political bloc with a section of the exploiters, actual and aspiring. The essentially Stalinist concept of "the anti-imperialist united front" amounts to supporting those bourgeois groups which stand for (or claim to stand for) a less pro-Western *foreign policy* than their main opponents. In practice "the anti-imperialist united front" means supporting Indira Gandhi against Janata in India, Ethiopia's Colonel Mengistu against everyone, etc.

The reactionary, anti-democratic content of the "anti-imperialist united front" is well illustrated in Peru. On a scale of "anti-imperialism" Peru's General Velasco Alvarado out-distanced Ayatollah Khomeini by light years. The Velasco junta (1968-75) carried out an extensive land reform and nationalized

several of the country's major industries, including the big U.S.-owned copper and oil (Texaco) companies. It reestablished diplomatic relations with Cuba and developed close ties to the Soviet bloc, which is quite unusual for a country located in U.S. imperialism's backyard.

The logic of "the anti-imperialist united front" called for support to Velasco's 1968 coup against the right-center parliamentary government of Belaunde Terry, and support to the junta in power against the pro-Washington bourgeois opposition parties (the CIA-connected, right-wing pseudo-populist APRA and the conservative Popular Christian Party). Naturally the pro-Moscow Stalinists supported the "progressive" generals in just this way. The revisionist "Trotskyist" international bloc of Guillermo Lora and Pierre Lambert—the Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International—also offered its hand to the Velasco junta for an "anti-imperialist united front." Because of its support to the oppressive, though "anti-imperialist," military bonapartist regime, the pro-Moscow Communist Party is today justly discredited among the Peruvian toiling masses. And Khomeini's Islamic Revolutionary Committee promises to make the Peruvian junta look like a bunch of bleeding-heart liberal do-gooders by comparison.

A REVOLUTIONARY POLICY IN IRAN

Our reformist centrist opponents assert that the ISI slogan "Down with the shah! Down with the mullahs!" meant political abstentionism in this period of revolutionary turmoil. This is their bottom-line argument. While the masses were toppling the shah, they illuminate and in part believe that Spartacists advocated that Iranian revolutionaries stay home and perhaps study *Capital*. For opportunists, of course, political activism is always synonymous with tailing the mass movement. Not so for revolutionaries. We have in reality put forward an *active* and *interventionist* political line at every stage in the Iranian crisis, from the mass Islamic demonstrations last summer through the strike wave which paralyzed the economy late this year to the beginnings today of leftist and democratic protests against Khomeini's first steps in erecting his Islamic Republic.

The main action of the Islamic opposition consisted of a series of mass demonstrations under the slogans "God Is Great" and "Long Live Khomeini." The program of these demonstrations, which was utterly transparent, was to *replace* the shah's autocracy with a theocratic state under Khomeini. Participation in these demonstrations could be *nothing other* than support to the rule of the mullahs, that is, support to the kind of regime which now holds power.

Shameless reformists like the American SWP simply resort to "black is white" subterfuges, arguing that the veil is a "symbol of resistance to the shah" (dixit Cindy Jaquith) rather than an expression of *purdah*, the Muslim traditionalist seclusion of women; that to the masses an Islamic Republic meant a workers and peasants republic (according to Barry Sheppard); or that "allah akbar" (god is great) *really* meant the people were stronger than the shah's army (Brian Grogan's contribution). Where the reformists simply lie, centrist tailists like *Workers Power* resort to pseudo-orthodox confusionism:

"Whilst we in no way hide that the positive goals of mullahs are not and cannot be those of the working class we do argue that Trotskyists must participate in the actions against the Shah and the Generals."

"Opportunists and Sectarians on Iran," *Workers Power*, February 1979

Ha! Any left group which attempted to

participate in the "Long Live Khomeini" demonstrations with slogans opposed to an Islamic Republic would have received a swift lesson in Koranic justice.

Workers Power argues that participation in the Khomeinite demonstrations amounted to "a de facto anti-imperialist military united front" (ibid.). But these demonstrations were *not* civil war, in which victory for the shah's army would mean *obliteration* of the popular forces, and thus a policy of revolutionary defense on the side of the mullah-led forces would necessarily be posed. The demonstrations were essentially a pressure tactic for the Islamization of the existing state apparatus. The Khomeini leadership was clearly looking forward to a coup against the shah by a Persian equivalent of Pakistan's "soldier of Islam," General Zia. The demonstrations for an Islamic Republic were just that.

Our principled opposition to participating in the Khomeinite demonstrations was not an option for political quietism. Depending on its resources and the concrete military situation, a Trotskyist organization in Iran would have used the opening created by the eruption of a mass Islamic opposition, and the occasional hesitancy of the shah's repressive apparatus, to agitate for revolutionary-democratic demands and its full class-struggle program. A Trotskyist vanguard would also have sought to break the ranks of the leftist groups, centrally the Fedayeen, from Khomeini by proposing to these organizations a series of united-front actions against the shah independent of the mullahs' movement and politically opposed to it.

The shah was brought down not only by the "Long Live Khomeini" demonstrations, the reformists/centrists will here argue, but also by the workers' strikes, especially in the economically decisive oilfields. True. But whereas our tailist opponents *amalgamated* the reactionary petty-bourgeois protests and the proletarian strike wave into a single classless "anti-shah" movement, we drew a fundamental line between them. The strikes were certainly blows aimed at the monarchy, although initially they had a very considerable economic component. Significantly, the key oil workers' strike did *not* call for an Islamic Republic, even though undoubtedly the workers supported the Khomeinite opposition to some extent.

A revolutionary party in Iran would, of course, have vigorously supported and done everything in its power to strengthen and extend the strikes, while demanding that the workers give *no* support to the Islamic opposition. As we wrote a month before the shah fled:

"The strike battles now being waged by the Iranian workers could be the basis of the independent mobilization of the proletariat as a competitor for power with Khomeini, not as cannon fodder for the mullahs. In the imperialist epoch, the democratic tasks of freeing oppressed nationalities, agrarian revo-

In recent days the Western press has been full of stories about the execution of former Iranian premier Hoveida, for years the right-hand man of the bloody butcher shah Pahlavi. While the media hypocritically prate about "human rights" for this participant in torture, assassination and mass murder, they have passed over in silence the arrest last week by the Bazargan government of 70 members of the militant left-wing People's Fedayeen guerrillas. The Fedayeen had allied themselves with rebellious Turkoman tribesmen in the northeastern frontier region, and were rounded up as the "revolutionary" army succeeded in crushing the revolt at a cost of several hundred dead.

Like the Kurds who rose up a couple of weeks earlier, the Turkomans were demanding regional autonomy and return of lands seized by court favorites during the shah's reign. However, the UPI reported on 4 April that Bazargan had reneged on earlier pledges which led to a ceasefire in Kurdistan, and is now denouncing "autonomy in [the] guise of separatism which threatens national unity." At the same time, according to the Stalinist *Daily World* (6 April), Ayatollah Khomeini's hand-picked prime minister blamed "Trotskyites and Maoists... aided by remnants of the

lution, and breaking down imperialist domination can be carried out only under the leadership of the Iranian proletariat. But these urgent democratic demands require the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship for their success, not the dissolution of the working class into the petty-bourgeois masses."

—"Down with the Shah! Don't Bow to Khomeini!" *WV* No. 221, 15 December 1978

Once the shah fled, popular fury turned against the police and especially the hated SAVAK; they were hunted down and killed by angry mobs. The Islamic leadership opposed these spontaneous reprisals against the shah's torturers because they were seeking a rapprochement with at least a section of the generals and also feared "chaos in the streets." A revolutionary party in Iran would not only have participated in the attacks on SAVAK, but sought to organize them on a united-front basis through popular tribunals. As we wrote in January:

"Thus the mullahs correctly see the popular mobilizations against SAVAK as counterposed to building up their jurisdiction and keeping up good relations with the officer corps. People's tribunals to punish the SAVAK torturers could be the beginning of revolutionary dual power, directed against both the religious hierarchy and officer corps."

—"Shah Flees," *WV* No. 223, 19 January

During the Bakhtiari interval, espe-

cially after Khomeini returned from exile, it was quite possible that the generals might have attempted to drown the mass opposition in blood. This was the shah's last message to his senior officers. As we wrote just after the mullahs' victory:

"Had such a confrontation erupted into civil war, Marxists would have militarily supported the popular forces rallied by the mullahs against an intact officer caste, even as our intransigent political opposition to the reactionary-led movement sought to polarize the masses along class lines and rally the workers and lower strata of the petty-bourgeois masses around a proletarian pole."

—"Mullahs Win," *WV* No. 225, 16 February

Such a revolutionary-defensist policy would be justified and necessary *not* because Khomeini is more progressive or anti-imperialist than the shah. As in any war the decisive question was the line-up of class forces and the consequences of the victory of one side or another. If the generals won such a civil war, they would have crushed not only the Islamic fanatics but also the advanced elements of the Iranian proletariat and the organized left.

In the period of the Spanish Civil War Trotsky explained to those ultra-leftists who argued that since Marxists would not give political support to the Popular Front of Negrin in the elections, therefore to give it military support

against Franco was "degeneration into the swamp of 'lesser evil' Popular Front politics...".

"Let's take an example: two ships with armaments and munitions...—one for Franco and the other for Negrin. What should be the attitude of the workers?... 'We are not neutral. We will let the ship with the munitions for the Negrin government pass. We have no illusions: from these bullets, only nine of every ten would go against the fascists, at least one against our comrades. But out of those marked for Franco, ten out of every ten would go to our comrades.... Of course, if an armed insurrection began in Spain, we would try to direct the ship with munitions into the hands of the rebellious workers. But when we are not that strong, we choose the lesser evil.

"The civil war between Negrin and Franco does not signify the same thing as the electoral combination competition of Hindenburg and Hitler. If Hindenburg had entered into an open military fight against Hitler, then Hindenburg would have a 'lesser evil'... But Hindenburg was not the 'lesser evil'—he did not go into open warfare against Hitler....

—"Answer to Questions on the Spanish Situation (A Concise Summary)," September 1937

wrath particularly by calling for a boycott of Khomeini's phony plebiscite on an "Islamic Republic," something the would-be Trotskyist HKS lacked the political courage to do. Ironically, only three weeks ago the guerrilla group had called for ending the women's demonstrations on the grounds that they would weaken the Bazargan government (*Le Monde*, 14 March). But the attack was utterly predictable. As we wrote in *WV* No. 223 (19 January):

"Ayatollah Khomeini... has made the policies of his proposed Islamic republic perfectly clear.... The legal enslavement of women would be reinforced. The *chador*... would be mandatory.... The rights of minority religions will also come under attack.... Khomeini's appetite to suppress the left has been made clear time and again."

But this did not stop virtually the entire Iranian "far left" from tailing after clerical reaction.

The basis now exists for a united-front defense of the left in Iran against the attacks of the new theocratic rulers. Free the Fedayeen militants! Full democratic freedoms for all working-class and secular-democratic organizations! Stop the attacks on democratic rights of women! For the right of self-determination for national minorities! ■

against Franco was "degeneration into the swamp of 'lesser evil' Popular Front politics...".

"Let's take an example: two ships with armaments and munitions...—one for Franco and the other for Negrin. What should be the attitude of the workers?... 'We are not neutral. We will let the ship with the munitions for the Negrin government pass. We have no illusions: from these bullets, only nine of every ten would go against the fascists, at least one against our comrades. But out of those marked for Franco, ten out of every ten would go to our comrades.... Of course, if an armed insurrection began in Spain, we would try to direct the ship with munitions into the hands of the rebellious workers. But when we are not that strong, we choose the lesser evil.

"The civil war between Negrin and Franco does not signify the same thing as the electoral combination competition of Hindenburg and Hitler. If Hindenburg had entered into an open military fight against Hitler, then Hindenburg would have a 'lesser evil'... But Hindenburg was not the 'lesser evil'—he did not go into open warfare against Hitler....

—"Answer to Questions on the Spanish Situation (A Concise Summary)," September 1937

Trotsky here repeatedly emphasized the decisive difference between a civil war and the pressure tactics of bourgeois democracy (elections, etc.). By trying to pretend that mullah-led anti-shah demonstrations are equivalent to civil war, Workers Power is simply masking their political support to Khomeini and his Islamic Republic.

AFTER KHOMAINI, US?

It has become commonplace among the pseudo-Trotskyist groups to liken Khomeini's role to that of Alexander Kerensky between the February and October revolutions in Russia. Barry Sheppard of the American SWP said at the previously cited NYC forum, "To say 'Down with the Shah. Down with the Mullahs' is the same thing as saying in Russia in 1914, 'Down with the Tsar. Down with Kerensky.'" Likewise the British partner, the Mandeliste International Marxist Group, states: "If anything he [Khomeini] bears a closer resemblance to Kerensky, though analogies by their nature are never exact" ("Iran's February Revolution," *Socialist Challenge*, 15 February). This parti-

continued on page 10



Islamic marshals strongarm leftists at Teheran University.

Chauvel-Keler/Sygma

No-Nuke Syndrome...

(continued from page 1)

be shut down until the problems are corrected. But to demand that nuclear power must be stopped on the basis of this accident is analogous to demanding that the entire coal industry be shut down because one mine had a near-collapse.

While we strongly support the introduction of new technology, including nuclear technology, we do not take responsibility for the hazardous mess capitalism makes of it. As we said in our earlier article, "Nuclear Power and the Workers Movement":

"There are very real problems of safety connected with nuclear reactors. As throughout industry, we demand union control of working conditions and, where there are specific hazards, actions to shut down dangerous facilities. But beyond this we have no particular interest in determining how the bourgeoisie meets its energy needs. Those who assume that 'wide public discussion' within the framework of capitalist rule will satisfactorily resolve this question are guilty of sowing the worst utopian/reactiary/pacifist illusions."

—WV No. 146, 25 February 1977

The System Works?

The near-disaster at Three Mile Island began about 4 a.m. on March 28 when, as NRC official Edson Case put it, "Somebody was screwing around with some of the equipment in the feedwater system" (*Newsweek*, 9 April). The feedwater pumps used in the cooling system shut down. At this point a series of backup safety systems should have prevented heat and pressure from reaching dangerous levels inside the reactor core. But auxiliary feedwater pumps never turned on because someone had forgotten to close two crucial valves after a test procedure two weeks before. A hundred thousand gallons of radioactive water flooded the basement of the reactor containment building when a relief valve failed to close.

A catastrophic accident was prevented only because boron control rods automatically shut down the chain reaction in the reactor core and an emergency cooling system kicked in. But control-room operators relying on malfunctioning gauges shut down the emergency cooling system! A sump pump in the basement automatically pumped radioactive steam and water into a building not designed to contain radioactivity, where some of it shot up a stack and spread out over the countryside.

Although the crucial failures all took place in less than five minutes, a state of emergency was not declared for more than *three hours*. By that time four workers had received overdoses of gamma radiation, and the threat of a disastrous explosion or meltdown had been raised by the unanticipated formation of a bubble of explosive hydrogen in the reactor vessel. Had technicians been unable to draw off the gas, an explosion or melting of the reactor core could have scattered deadly radiation for miles around. In the worst possible case, if people were not evacuated, thousands could have been killed.

Despite the assorted "maximum credible accident" studies which calculated the possibility as 50,000,000-to-1, a serious accident happened. This should not be surprising. The Catch-22 of the endless "risk analysis" studies is that some simple mistake cannot be accounted for. For instance, even very smart physicists can apparently forget that, under conditions of irradiation and enormous heat, water molecules will break up and produce hydrogen and oxygen gas. Inevitably at the key moment gauges are not going to work and technicians will surely push the wrong button and leave valves in the wrong position.

There is no such thing as a no-risk energy source. Thus the question is not whether accidents will happen, but how to reduce their frequency and limit their consequences. It is not so much a question of a special technology, but the irrationality of the capitalist economy which makes all industry in the U.S., including the nuclear industry, hazardous.

Present technological capacity is simply not fully used to make nuclear or any other industry safer. Why, for instance, are reactors plopped down in the middle of major population centers? They should obviously be built at a distance and downwind from the cities. But that would mean more expense for

operators last month malfunctioned at that time also. Twice within the space of four days last November, valve and pump problems in the feedwater system forced the reactor to shut down automatically—just as they did in the recent accident.

On December 16, two weeks before the plant was licensed to begin commercial operations, one of the main feedwater pumps failed and the reactor was shut down for six days. One day before the December 30 deadline the NRC's own inspector approved the opening of the plant despite his note that certain components of the plant's equipment "could not be ascertained to meet acceptance criteria" (*Wall Street Jour-*

clean up capitalism for the bourgeoisie, to get a better "oversight" of the FBI, or, in the case of nuclear power, a more favorable "regulatory climate."

The anti-nukers have certainly taken advantage of the post-Watergate public disbelief in official authority, which, given the records of the AEC and the NRC, is easy enough. The "no-accident" oversell resulted in what the *New York Times* called a "credibility meltdown." But it didn't just happen. The Carter government was not believed before this, and his "blue ribbon committee" to investigate the accident is not likely to be believed either.

The Watergate experience is defining in this period. Liberals see their job as generating a cycle of exposure and reform. But for working class revolutionaries it comes as no surprise that the utility monopolies have shown a callous disregard for safety, that the various government regulatory agencies act as PR outfits for the utilities and so forth. That is standard practice for capitalism. If anything, the nuclear industry seems better monitored than most, with less cover-ups than other major industries. Yet the liberals in the anti-nuke camp are scandalized by the actions of the utilities and the government, just as they were to discover that their government had engaged in "dirty tricks" at the Watergate—not just its usual "disruption" and victimization of the left, labor, and black militants, but against the respectable members of the Democratic Party.

Similarly with the anti-nuke protests. It is one thing to have the conventionally accepted mutilation and death of the working class in traditionally hazardous jobs, but quite another to talk about the random, sensational possibility of an accident that can hurt "everyone." The no-nuke movement is part of a middle-class ecological concern that the disastrous conditions with which workers have had to live for generations might spread to the suburbs. Their arrogant moralism hypocritically conceals an indifference to the health and safety of the working class. Get rid of nuclear power," they demand. Do they also suppose the U.S. will get rid of electricity?

Since the smoke first covered Manchester, England, the working class has been dying of industrial accidents and poisoning of all kinds. But what does it matter to the anti-nukers that every year thousands die from work in the coal mines? Although there has not yet been even a single death attributable to a commercial nuclear reactor, it is that possible accident which has captured their attention. After all, radioactive winds might blow into their neighborhoods, perhaps even onto a college campus.

The truth is that the mines are murderous for the miners, for the communities which surround the mines and for those who transport the coal. Not only have mine accidents caused the death of some 100,000 people, but lung diseases disable and kill. The silica particles in the coal dust cause silicosis and the coal dust itself causes pneumoconiosis or "black lung." Life will be better for the entire working class when there is as much worry about black lung as there is concern now for meltdown.

To speak of black lung is not to imagine some remote possibility to be subjected to "risk analysis." A full 46 percent of U.S. coal miners contract black lung (*Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine*, 1976). More than 3,000 die from it every year, according to the *Journal of the United Mine Workers*. And the technology exists to make the mines considerably safer with ventilation and adequate equipment. But it is too "expensive" for mine operators. What is the miner "worth" who every day is covered by coal dust? It gets in his hair, clothes and skin. It coats the rims of his eyes and gets between his teeth. It is swallowed. So much dust is sucked up that he spits up coal dust until the day he dies—a death that comes



Reactor core test

Kristol/National Geographic

siting, construction and transmission lines. And why not test an actual meltdown in the desert to see how to protect against it? Perhaps the water table (which blows the hot radioactive material back up to the surface) can be dropped. Or an enormous underground concrete silo could be constructed as part of the containment guarding against the most destructive effects of a meltdown. In any case these and other obvious safety precautions judged from the corporate boardrooms are thrown out the window in the name of "cost effectiveness." To pose rational solutions based on the use of present technological capacity supposes a rational economy.

In fact every corner than can be cut is cut, both for materials and personnel. Who is to blame for "human error" that derives from being overworked and overtired? It is reported that the workers at the Three Mile Island reactor were forced to work for 40 consecutive days, with shifts sometimes stretching to 12 hours! Also, the company instituted a speed-up drive and disciplined workers for following prescribed safety regulations in carrying out repairs and inspections.

Under capitalism, even an operation as technologically sophisticated as a nuclear reactor is run by the hosses the same as a sweat shop. In fact the more that is learned about the Three Mile Island accident, the more it looks like any other capitalist operation. Thus almost exactly one year before the March 28 mishap the very same type of automatic relief valve malfunctioned in the very same way, draining cooling water from the reactor core. Pressure gauges similar to those which misled

nal, 9 April), including the functioning of the pressurizer relief valve. The December 30 opening date saved MetEd thousands of dollars in taxes by allowing it to charge rate increases it would not otherwise be eligible for. Naturally, neither the NRC nor MetEd has any comment to make on pre-accident problems at Three Mile Island.

The tragic truth is that in the U.S. the social values and the irrationality of capitalism are "engineered" into even the most sophisticated technology. The "Gus Grissom theorem" retains its full force in matters of public health and safety. The astronaut, who later died in a rocket accident, observed that he was frightened every time he went up and reflected that all the machinery upon which his life depended was built by the lowest bidder. A corollary of this theorem is that capitalism never makes it as good, or runs it as well, as technology would allow.

Nuclear Hypocrisy and Watergate Moralism

It is post-Watergate liberal cynicism that gives the present panic over nuclear power its special flavor of bourgeois hypocrisy. It is not a sober concern for safety, but rather an irrational moralism that moves the clamshells and their friends. Thus the underlying theme of the anti-nuclear power film, *The China Syndrome*, is not much different from that of the Watergate movie, *All the President's Men*. In both cases the crusading liberal press is responsible for reforming a wronged America through public exposure. Behind the campaign to expose the lies and cover-ups (some real, some cooked-up) is the effort to

painfully after years of increasing shortness of breath and then suffocation. Why should this be preferred to radiation?

Cover-ups are not peculiar to the nuclear industry. For years it was argued that black lung was not harmful, and the medical profession even lent its services to the claim that it was beneficial! Asbestos damage was also covered up in a 40-year corporate/government conspiracy to suppress the findings on the effects of working with asbestos. It wasn't until 1974 that a lawsuit successfully pried the findings loose from the companies. According to the United Auto Workers journal, *Solidarity*, "a very conservative estimate is that 11 million workers have been exposed to asbestos since the start of World War II—nearly half in the shipyards. Of the four million workers who have been heavily exposed, more than a third are expected to die of cancer. The death toll among U.S. workers exposed to asbestos will probably average 67,000 a year."

Of course this creeping death is not sensational enough for the anti-nukes to hither with. But for us the life of a middle-class housewife in a Harrisburg suburb is not worth more than the life of a coal miner, a textile worker with brown lung from cotton dust, an auto worker stricken with asbestosis. Such irrational moralism is the stuff of the eco-faddists.

Hiroshima Was No Accident

The no-nuke moralists conceal more than their class bias with their reactionary-utopian demands for a non-nuclear capitalist America. Even in pacifist guise they apologize for the U.S. imperialist war machine.

Although the anti-nukes trade on the deeply felt fears of Hiroshima devastation, the battleground of the war over nuclear power is the commercial plant; and the main enemy is the accident. The military uses of nuclear power are rarely raised by either side. Yet more than 90 percent of all nuclear wastes derive from military uses. The anti-nukes know well that the U.S. is not going to dump its nuclear arsenal; nor do the main components of this political current have any appetite for the U.S. to do so. After all they would not want "their country" to be "defenseless."

The greatest danger is not posed by accidental nuclear emissions, but by the arsenal of nuclear weapons in the hands of the imperialists, especially the U.S. general staff. The only ruling class that ever used nuclear weapons against a civilian population is now in control of weapons that make the bomb that leveled Hiroshima seem tame. And Hiroshima was no accident. Would they destroy Kyoto or Hiroshima? The "doves" won out. They decided to atom bomb "only" the city of Hiroshima, just as they had decided to bring a devastating firestorm to Dresden and years later would terror bomb Vietnam with "conventional" weapons. Even a maximal nuclear accident involving a commercial reactor is qualitatively far less destructive than H-bombs exploding over major cities.

The clamor over nuclear energy as a technology is part of a bourgeois ideology which leads attention away from the main danger: imperialist militarism. Thus since the end of the war, popular culture has been deluged with "fail-safe" stories in which the world is accidentally thrown into nuclear holocaust. The idea that the imperialists would consciously decide to use the weapons they avidly produce is off limits.

Thus French existential philosopher Jacques Maritain offered sophisticated contributions to the theme of a new "atomic age," in which the fact of potential human annihilation provided a new ethical basis for "the future of mankind." In contemplating social

death, civilization was confronted with the existential condition for a new humanism. In the U.S. it was the image of *Dr. Strangelove*, in which a mechanical malfunction and mad scientist combine to produce human annihilation. And the accidental instrument is the simple, patriotic common man—Slim Pickens—who rides the runaway



Anti-nuke hysteria, right and left.

H-bomb to the nuclear holocaust in total innocence.

For the Stalinists this mystification of nuclear technology has been an excuse for détente illusions. As Khrushchev "Remembers" it, nuclear weapons and the "unthinkable" prospect of nuclear war make "détente" necessary—that is, a new argument for the old practice of global accommodation with imperialism. It is on the ground of nuclear mythology that liberal pacifism and Stalinist class collaboration peacefully co-exist.

Remembering that the USSR has a rather large commitment to nuclear energy, the U.S. Communist Party (CP) has taken a pro-nuclear stand, along with the Meanyite labor bureaucracy. Taking responsibility for the bourgeoisie's hazardous use of nuclear power, the CP gives its argument a pacifist-détente twist. In a letter to *People's World* (13 March 1979), Victor Perlo correctly notes how the middle-class anti-nuke sentiment diverts attention from the military threat, pointing out that the Rockefeller oil interests are comfortable funding various anti-nuke groups. But he suggests that if only the movement were for SALT and "disarmament," everything would be okay.

When it comes to the dangerous pacifist notion of disarmament, the reformist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) will not be outdone by the CP. In fact the SWP is so anxious to be in the liberal anti-nuke movement that it is happy to dunp the defense of the Soviet Union to do it. It is nuclear weapons which make general disarmament necessary says the SWP. The Soviet Union should "take the initiative." And why? Because with nuclear weapons the world can be blown up many times over. This is the refrain of bourgeois liberal pacifism and has nothing in common with Trotskyism. How welcome would

these "best builders" of the anti-nuke movement be among the clamshells and other ecological mollusks if they had anything resembling a Trotskyist position on the Russian question as it applies to nuclear weaponry? Here is what the Spartacist League has to say on the subject:

"...we resolutely defend the necessity of nuclear weapons technology (including whatever attendant testing programs may be necessary) for the Soviet Union, China, Vietnam and the other deformed workers states. The answer to the dangers of nuclear war is not to be found in imperialist/social pacifist 'non-proliferation' treaties or test bans, but in the destruction of capitalism by the revolutionary action of the international proletariat."

—"Nuclear Power and the Workers Movement," *W/No*, 146, 25 February 1977

So, life is complex. It is not so easy to do strict cost-accounting on human lives—adding up the risks and subtracting from the benefits—outside the framework of the real political world. For instance, it is reported that there was more radioactivity dropped on Pennsylvania by the latest Chinese nuclear bomb test than escaped from the Three Mile reactor accident. As Trotskyists we support such tests and we ask: what could be more dangerous for the international working class, for the future of the whole world, than to allow the U.S. to have a monopoly on nuclear weapons? The mad bombers of Hiroshima, Dresden and Vietnam would extract oceans of blood in nuclear blackmail, and then who knows what else they would do if they thought they could profitably "nuke" their way to worldwide U.S. imperialist domination.

A Nuke in Your Future?

The accident at Three Mile Island is generally described as a disaster for the nuclear power industry. Moreover, with soaring costs and legal and legislative obstacles, most forecasts were gloomy even before the cooling system failed on MetEd's reactor. But all it would take to turn this around is another substantial price hike by the oil producers' cartel, OPEC. Despite the current public perception of the nuclear industry and government regulators as a gang of profiteers and liars, no one should jump to the conclusion that the future of atomic power is in question. The U.S. now relies on commercial reactors for 12.5 percent of its energy, and Carter recently reaffirmed federal commitments: "We can't abandon it now." And the U.S. actually has some alternatives, with domestically produced fossil fuels. What other industrial countries like France or Japan—who lack the abundant natural resources of the U.S.—are supposed to do is of blithe unconcern to the "no-nukes" protesters. Perhaps they would prefer these countries to instead launch a new imperialist war for a "fair share" of the world's fossil fuels.

What the anti-nuclear panic has done for Jimmy Carter is to provide another argument for raising oil prices ("decontrol") on domestic production. This policy of increased economic autarky (increase in coal-produced energy, decreasing dependence on foreign petroleum) is part and parcel of his program for rearming U.S. imperialism to throw its weight around in a post-Vietnam world. Carter's "energy crisis" message last week spelled out his idea of conservation: make it more expensive. In the patriotic cause of "energy independence" from Arabian oil sheiks, American working people are told they must "sacrifice" in order that the oil trusts can reap billions of dollars in additional profits. The austerity program is announced in haughty tones of imperialist disdain: "Try walking," suggested Rosalyn Carter at an ecology conference she traveled to on a White House jet.

The energy trusts and the capitalist government want to make the working class pay for the "energy crisis." First they phony the figures (world oil

production is not down), then redirect the supply to create artificial shortages and extort legislation to make it more profitable to produce in the U.S. MetEd even wants to pass the costs of the shutdown of Three Mile Island on to the general population by substantial rate increases! We demand that the corporations pay the damages and that the greedy energy trusts be expropriated without compensation!

Carter's austerity program meshes with the conservationist fetishes of the ecology faddists. But those who claim to stand for protection of the environment should give some thought to the human costs of increased reliance on fossil fuel. How many miners will die in accidents and from lung diseases to appease these energy preferences? How many urban lungs clogged with the soot from burning coal and oil; what long-term environmental effects of pouring ever more massive amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere? The petty bourgeoisie is appalled by the social deterioration around them, the reckless pollution of the planet, the mendacity of the government. But they are unable to distinguish between capitalism and technology as the culprit.

The anti-nuclear movements encompass individuals alienated from bourgeois society who mistakenly see themselves as radicals, along with eco-faddists who view "health foods" or natural childbirth as a political statement, dreaming utopian and ultimately reactionary dreams of a world without electricity. The zero-growth Malthusians and eco-conservatives generally say instead of nuclear power, less power, and they long for a pre-industrial society. But the energy problems of the U.S. cannot be solved under capitalism—there is no horse-and-buggy solution. Meanwhile the impressive technology of nuclear energy is in the hands of the rapacious rulers of an irrational social system capable of turning abruptly from "peacetime" pursuit of capitalist profitability (at the expense of elementary considerations of safety) to the armageddon of World War III.

Marxists stand on the side of technological progress. While refusing to take responsibility for the capitalists' energy choices, we are decidedly against those who would arrest the development of the productive forces essential to the future of mankind. The anti-nuke protesters who seek the "greening of America" display a profoundly racist disregard for the populations of the economically backward countries, which can emerge from poverty only through a tremendous increase in industrial production. And all the while they close their eyes to the very real dangers of imperialist war, the stark choice between socialism and barbarism. Under the symbols of "flower power," the no-nukes crowd opts for barbarism. ■

Women and Revolution

Iranian Women Face Islamic Reaction

No to the War!
Workers Revolution!

Communist Organizing in Textile in the 1920's / 6
Spartacist Candidate Discusses '78 Campaign / 12
"Norma Rae": A Review / 24

50¢

Make checks payable/mail to:
Spartacist Publishing Co.
Box 1377 GPO
New York, N.Y. 10001

Teamsters...

(continued from page 3)

the threat of a strike. Numerous sections of the American working class look to the powerful Teamsters to spearhead the battle to smash the government/employer alliance. The Machinists striking United Airlines timed their walkout for higher pay to the Teamster strike, and even the weak-kneed Jerry Wurf is talking of reopening the AFSCME contract with New York State negotiated within Carter's tattered "guidelines." But a definitive victory over the anti-labor wage controls can be achieved only by a genuinely class-struggle leadership, which unlike such fakers as the TDU stands for militant policies and for uncompromising opposition to the trade-union bureaucracy's alliance with the strikebreaking Democratic Party and the government. ■

Iran...

(continued from page 7)

cular analogy is not merely not exact, but is so off-the-wall it is hard to deal with in a politically meaningful way. Analogies between the Russian February revolution and what has happened in Iran would be valid only if the tsar had been overthrown by a movement led by Metropolitan Ilihon of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Kerensky was an accidental figure thrown up by the revolution. He was insignificant before February 1917. It was precisely Kerensky's lack of political definition and strong party ties which made him an acceptable "leader" in the bourgeois liberal Cadets, the petty-bourgeois populist Social Revolutionaries and labor-reformist Mensheviks. Khomeini was anything but an accidental figure in the overthrow of the shah. He was the established leader of the dominant religious sect. He went into opposition to the shah precisely over the monarchy's superficial attempt at Westernization (the 1963 "White Revolution"), especially over the land reform, which damaged the economic interests of the mosque, and legal rights for women.

There is, however, an ulterior political logic in the fake-Trotskyists' fixation with the nonsensical Khomeini-Kerensky analogy. Everyone knows Kerensky was but a transitory figure, easily overthrown by the Bolsheviks after a few months in power. In making the Khomeini-Kerensky analogy our revisionist "Trotskyist" opponents are expressing their belief—or at any rate hope—that (soon) "After Khomeini, us." Here we come perhaps to the underlying reason why leftists supported a manifestly reactionary religious movement in Iran. It was a cynical maneuver to support the mullahs against the shah, on the assumption that the "inevitable radicalization" ("the objective dynamic") of the revolution would bring the left to power. Much of the left's effort to prettify this backward-looking religious fanatic as some kind of radical democrat was undoubtedly a hypocritical gesture to ingratiate themselves with Khomeini's Iranian followers.

Perhaps the most sophisticated defense for supporting the mullahs against the shah is an amalgam of cynicism and objectivism. It runs something like this: granted Khomeini is a religious reactionary; if he comes to power and consolidates his rule, this might even be

more reactionary than the shah, at least in its domestic policies. But a reactionary Islamic Republic in Iran today is very unlikely. In order to overthrow the shah, Khomeini had to unleash popular forces which he cannot control and which will prevent him from carrying out his program. In the political chaos which must follow the shah's fall, the left will gain over Khomeini. Although leftist support to Khomeini is an opportunist policy, there is a certain methodological similarity here to the ultra-left Third Period Stalinist position expressed as, "After Hitler, us."

The German Stalinists had all the arguments worked out: Hitler stood at the head of an unstable coalition of big capital and ruined petty bourgeois, which would soon explode; he could never deliver on his demagogic social program. But with the combined strength of a fanatical mass following and the armed forces Hitler built his Third Reich over the broken bones of the organized workers movement. The cynical policy of supporting Khomeini against the shah, figuring he can then be overthrown on the morrow of his victory, is like playing Russian roulette with live bullets in the chamber. Khomeini now has in his hands, though not yet securely, the resources of state power. He will certainly command the loyalty of the still-intact officer caste in any showdown with the left or workers movement. Furthermore, Khomeini enjoys enormous popular authority, especially among the backward, rural masses, not only as the imam of the faithful but as the conqueror of the hated shah.

As revolutionaries, we are never fatalistic about the victory of counter-revolution. When Hitler was appointed chancellor in early 1933, Trotsky called on the German working class to insurrect against him. Likewise in Iran today we call for a united-front defense of the workers movement, the left and secular democratic forces against the imminent terror of Islamic reaction:

"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!"

—"No to the Veil!" *WW* No. 227, 16 March

But we recognize that the political and military advantages now lie with the Islamic Revolutionary Committee and not with the suicidal opportunists of the Iranian left and the tragically misled working class. Khomeini is not engaging in empty bombast when he threatens:

"If the united leadership is not accepted by all groups I shall regard this as an uprising against the Islamic revolution, and I warn these bandits and unlawful elements that we were able to destroy the shah and his evil regime, and we are strong enough to deal with them."

—*New York Times*, 20 February

And how did Khomeini acquire the strength to destroy the shah? It was provided not only by the mosque's traditional petty-bourgeois base, the *bazaars* and similar social strata. It was also the support of the Iranian left (the pro-Moscow Stalinist Tudeh Party and eclectic Stalinoid Fedayeen) which gave Khomeini the weapons he will now turn

against them. And the foreign leftist cheerleaders for the mullahs in the streets—the Jack Barneses, Ernest Mandels and Gerry Healys—they too bear responsibility for the gathering reactionary terror in Iran. Every unveiled woman who is beaten, every petty malefactor who is flogged, every worker militant who is tortured by an Islamic SAVAK will be right to curse all of those who helped bring to power their new tormentor. ■

Britain...

(continued from page 2)

once again to turn out the vote for Callaghan and his henchmen. The fake-left's basic unanimity on this question was summed up by the lead headlines of two different left-wing newspapers which came out just after the Commons defeat. The 31 March *Socialist Worker*, paper of Tony Cliff's workerist-economist Socialist Workers Party, warned "Defend our Unions—Keep the Tories Out!"; while the April *Socialist Organiser*, sponsored by the Workers Action and Chartist groups, had "Defend the Unions—Keep the Tories Out!" Behind these near-identical banners lies a giant con-game: that somehow, in contrast to the Tories, Labour has been "defending the unions" these past five years.

Faced with a situation where even small but militant sections of the union movement are coming out against votes to Labour, the opportunists are beginning to feel somewhat uncomfortable. But they still can't bring themselves to say "no" to Callaghan. Thus the International Marxist Group (IMG), British section of the United Secretariat, recently felt compelled to print a front-page polemic against the Dunlop and NUPE workers for their threats to withdraw support from Labour:

"To call for an abstention on Labour will only aid the party of big business—the Tories. When workers cast their votes for the Labour Party, they are voting for a party of their class—whatever its policies."

—*Socialist Challenge*, 5 April

Always vote Labour, "whatever its policies"? How about when it is prosecuting an imperialist war in alliance with the capitalist parties, or suppressing a proletarian revolution in blood? No! There are times when Marxists must say to the workers that Labour has shown in action that it provides no alternative to the Tories, that it is *against* the working class. Today is such a time. But in their haste to avoid isolation, the opportunists of the IMG have found themselves upholding a position to the *right* of thousands of militant workers.

Revolutionaries would tell workers who are fed up with Labour's betrayals that they are right to refuse to vote for Labour. But the alternative to social-democratic betrayal is not apolitical syndicalism. Revolutionaries would argue to workers like those at Dunlop and in NUPE that the union movement should run candidates *against* Labour,

on a full class-struggle programme. And any working-class candidate seeking electoral support from the union movement should be forced to demonstrate that he has supported the struggles of the class in *action* before workers consider giving him even the most critical support.

Three ostensibly revolutionary organisations are standing candidates in these elections, but none meet even these minimal criteria for critical support. The Communist Party's campaign is simply part of its attempt to cement an alliance with the Labour "lefts"—and why should revolutionaries counsel the workers to vote for a second-rate reformism when they can have the real thing? The Healyite Workers Revolutionary Party is also running candidates. But unlike in 1974, when we urged critical support to their candidates on the basis that they represented a flawed left opposition to Labourism, today a vote for the WRP would simply be a vote for Colonel Qaddafi and Healy's despicable slander campaign against American SWP leaders Hansen and Novack.

Finally the Socialist Unity campaign, a vehicle of the International Marxist Group and its appetite for a Menshevik unity of the "far left," has put up some candidates, though they insist only in "safe" Labour seats. This, together with their attack on the Dunlop workers for proposing to abstain, their vague and inadequate election programme, and the fact that they, like the Communist Party and the WRP, insist on a vote for Labour indicates that they in no way offer an alternative to the Labour Party meriting critical support.

The task of revolutionaries is to split the mass base of the Labour Party from its treacherous tops, not pander to their present social-democratic illusions. Alone on the British left, the Spartacist tendency has upheld a position of conditional opposition to Labour ever since the vicious Social Contract attacks began to evoke strong resentment and opposition in the working class in late 1976. The Spartacist League/Britain is continuing to fight for this position in the current election campaign, saying to British workers: Remember Labour's betrayals, both on May 3 and thereafter. For whoever wins, Thatcher or Callaghan, the British capitalist class will demand more and deeper attacks on the rights and living standards of workers and the oppressed in its drive to restore lost profits.

Labour has conclusively demonstrated that it provides no way out of the decay of British capitalism; the working class acutely needs a new leadership to defend its past gains and take its struggles forward to socialist revolution. The capitalist rot which is eating away at British society will only be stopped when the working class, led by a Trotskyist vanguard party, rises up to construct a workers government that will turn the stuffy parliamentary chambers of Westminster Palace into a historical monument. ■

WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League

24 issues—\$3. Introductory offer (6 issues): \$1. International rates: 24 issues—\$12 airmail/\$3 seairmail

—Includes *Spartacist*

Name

Address

City

State Zip

Make checks payable/mail to:
Spartacist Publishing Co., Box 1377 GPO, New York, N.Y. 10001

229

Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth League Public Offices

—MARXIST LITERATURE—

Bay Area

Friday: 3:00-6:00p.m.
Saturday: 3:00-6:00p.m.
1634 Telegraph
3rd Floor
(near 17th Street)
Oakland, California
Phone: (415) 835-1535

Chicago

Tuesday: 5:30-9:00p.m.
Saturday: 2:00-5:30p.m.
523 S. Plymouth Court
3rd Floor
Chicago, Illinois
Phone: (312) 427-0003

New York

Monday through
Friday: 6:30-9:00p.m.
Saturday: 1:00-4:00p.m.
260 West Broadway
Room 522
New York, New York
Phone: (212) 925-5665

Mullah Thugs...

(continued from page 12)

bourgeois revolutions meant something.

"When the Bolsheviks worked among women of the Soviet East and talked about 'martyrs fallen on the women's liberation front,' they weren't talking about a woman whose male-chauvinist husband wouldn't do the dishes. That's a different kind of problem. They were talking about women whose husbands slit their throats because they took off the veil.

"The bourgeois revolution meant that the cleaning woman in Hitler's bunker had more rights than a woman in Iran today—because she was viewed as a human being! So when Khomeini says 'No' to the West, he is also saying 'No' to the basic achievements of the French Revolution. He is saying 'No' to equality before the law; 'No' to the separation of church and state; 'No' to the whole progressive shift from a feudal social order to a bourgeois-democratic state.

"I can't tell you how peculiar it feels to stand up here defending the gains of the Revolution of 1789. But that is the position we are now in regarding almost the entire left."

Reissner pointed out something else that Kate Millett doesn't understand: that in the modern epoch neither Khomeini, "who is politically to the right of Peter the Great," nor the autocratic shah nor even bourgeois liberals in the backward countries are capable of granting equal rights to women or any other oppressed sector of society. She explained:

"The woman question in countries like Iran continues to demonstrate the truth of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution. Equal rights for women is a basic democratic right, but the oppression of women is grounded in the property system itself. All the so-called revolutions in the 'Third World' countries which have stopped short of overturning capitalism have been unable to provide even elementary democratic rights for women.

"A good example of this is Algeria. The manifesto of the Algerian revolution promised equality for women, and women played an active role in the FLN and the struggle for independence.... Now, 16 years after the FLN victory, the inferior status of women is codified in Algerian law. The veil is still worn in Algeria, a symbol of the continuing oppression of women.... The mere participation of women in a movement is not decisive for their liberation. Program is decisive. The Spartacist League has the program of the Bolshevik party, which was the only party to have led a successful working-class revolution."

Wayne State: "If Khomeini Is Going to Cut My Head..."

Six months ago, as anti-shah protests were rocking Iran, the Spartacus Youth League held a Midwest forum series around our slogan "Down with the Shah, Down with the Mullahs!" This enraged assorted Maoist and pro-Albanian Stalinist wings of the disintegrated Iranian Student Association (ISA), who joined the Khomeinist Organization of Iranian Muslim Students (OIMS) in trying to block our meetings in Ann Arbor and East Lansing, Michigan. At Michigan State the disruption in the hallway drew in the East Lansing police, and the SL chose to disband the forum rather than giving the cops an excuse to arrest the Iranian students, who risked deportation to the shah's torture chambers.

As a result of the previous experience of provocation, the participants in the April 4-5 SL forums at Wayne State University (Detroit) and University of Michigan (Ann Arbor) were protected by an effective defense squad of trade unionists. All those entering the meeting room were frisked for weapons. At Wayne State the forum drew some 80 Iranians, including some Maoists from the *Resistance* newspaper supported by the Revolutionary Communist Party of Bob Avakian, but mainly young Muslims from the OIMS. The diverse Khomeini supporters objected to the elementary security precautions and

clamored in the hallway throughout the presentation period, blocking the entrances to the room, chanting to drown out the speaker, pounding on the doors and calling on the building manager to demand that the SL stop its "security check."

In the ensuing discussion period the SL invited the crowd gathered menacingly outside the door to come in and participate, provided they abided by democratic procedures. For the next hour, despite periodic outbursts from the Khomeinists, the Iranian students were part of the most democratic political debate they have seen in the U.S., and certainly far freer than in Tcheran where Islamic marshals roam about silencing anyone deemed to have blasphemed the ayatollah. The mullah apologists could not come up with serious political arguments, however, and spent their time regurgitating a litany of lies and slanders, screaming "CIA" and "SAVAK agent" at the SL.

The most ludicrous moment came when one of the "Marxist-Leninist" acolytes of the ayatollah proclaimed:

"If Khomeini is going to cut my head, he may think it is right to do it. That's for the sake of the revolution. He would never order that unless I was a CIA agent, or maybe a Trotskyist or belong to some other reactionary group.... If he orders that, I will be the one to take the sword and do it!"

After six Iranian speakers and six supporters of the Spartacist League, the partisans of the "Islamic Revolution" had had enough of workers democracy. As an auto worker from Detroit's River Rouge factory was pointing out that Mao had supported the butcher shah, the Maoist ISA group began to chant "Long Live Khomeini!" in order to drown out the speaker. As they then stomped out of the room the chant changed to "Down with Trotskyism!" And upon leaving, one Muslim fanatic said ominously that this was the last time they were going to sit through this forum or let the SL speak.

Ann Arbor: "You Can't Say Khomeini Isn't Democratic. We'll Stop Your Meeting!"

The April 6 forum at the Student Union of the University of Michigan saw an escalation of the Khomeini thugs' disruption—and an effective defense of our meeting by the united-front defense squad. This time 60 to 70 OIMS students showed up, and none of the ISAs were in evidence. Immediately upon arrival they began to block the hallway, refusing to let others in. They refused to submit to searching, threatened to push their way into the hall and demanded that campus security and the Ann Arbor police be called in. For people who have lived in fear of SAVAK torturers, one would expect the Iranian students to think twice about calling in the cops, who could easily end up arresting them. But so intent were they on disruption that they did not hesitate at this criminally irresponsible provocation. When the cops came, the Muslims demanded that the SLers be arrested. The police frisked several of the marshals, but eventually left the meeting room.

For the rest of the forum order was maintained by the defense guard of several dozen trade unionists and SL supporters, as well as several members of the small Bolshevik-Leninist Group of Ann Arbor. The same Koran-waving fanatic who had spoken at Wayne State at first sat in the front row and immediately began to heckle the speaker. When the marshals removed this disrupter bodily from the room, 30 or so of his cohorts rushed toward the speakers podium. However, they too were quickly subdued and thrown out of the hall. The remaining 40 Muslim students were easily persuaded that it was wiser to sit back down in their seats. A short time later another disrupter began to taunt the speaker with repeated outbursts of "CIA agent, SAVAK agent," and then "prostitute" and "slut."

He was carried out by his arms and legs despite frenzied cries of "I will not go!"

During the discussion period the Khomeinists again spent their time hurling slanders at the Spartacist League, denouncing the SL as FBI agents, exonerating us for taking facts from the bourgeois press, etc. Although every Iranian who raised his hand to speak was called on, a dozen in all, the Muslim students incredibly charged that the defense squad had interfered with their "democratic rights" (to disrupt?). Reissner responded: "The Spartacist League has been around for a long time...and even our most bitter opponents know that they can come to our forums and speak openly. We are proud of that record. You have no credibility. None."

Of the 20 or so Iranian women in the audience, all wearing scarves, several chose to speak, denouncing Western communists for daring to criticize "Third World" leaders. One woman raged: "Who gave you the right to talk about the Iranian people.... You told me that the demonstrations of women against the veil were true Marxism. Do you know who was behind them? The CIA! I have documents.... A lady in the demonstrations was wearing a shirt from Playboy—you call that true Marxism?" Another steamed: "You have bodyguards, you are like the SAVAK.... You are like hungry wolves around us. You want to kill our freedom, our victory." Throughout the discussions the Muslim students outside in the corridor kept chanting "Long Live Khomeini!" frequently drowning out their own speakers.

A black auto worker sought to make himself heard over the din: "Yes, we're not Iranians," he admitted. "But we are communists and internationalists, and we fight for the right of self-determination for the national minorities in Iran. You people [the Khomeini supporters] are the ones who want to ignore the question of national rights in Iran.... You are the chauvinists!" A second auto worker took the floor to talk about democracy:

"The supporters of Khomeini come here and say 'you can't say Khomeini is not democratic.' We're going to stop your meeting to show you that Khomeini is democratic! [laughter]....

"You say no one can take the freedom away from the women, but who are the women in Teheran demonstrating against? Khomeini! You sisters in the audience—in Khomeini's words you're naked because you are not wearing the *chador*. In the city of Qom you could be stoned to death on the street! You probably could not sit in such a meeting without threats from fanatical Muslim students, many of whom are just like your brothers out there wrecking these meetings."

Finally a steel worker rose to answer the question of "what right" had he to talk about the situation of the Iranian masses:

"You talk about democratic rights. If I got up in such a meeting in Iran, they'd shoot me, because I would be there to organize trade unions among steel workers and oil workers.... The oil workers and steel workers of Iran are

my class brothers and sisters, and I have every right to get up here and defend them, and no one is going to stop me from defending them.

"Not one of you has gotten up here and said, 'We are for the right of the Iranian working class to organize in trade unions,' the most elementary democratic right which American workers paid in blood to win.... I haven't heard one word about the rights of the Kurds. 'We have the right to fight for the program of workers power in Iran. It's the only solution, because we are fighting against the potential decimation of the Iranian working class, which Khomeini will carry out.'

A Lesson in Workers Democracy

At the end of the discussion period, the Iranian Muslim students again marched out chanting. But rather than let the meeting disperse in orderly fashion, they remained in the hallway hounding and screaming at members of the audience who emerged. When a group of SYLers went to collect their belongings from lockers on another floor they were accosted, spit on and trapped in an elevator. Finally the rest of the audience marched out in military formation. Even then the Khomeini goons followed them into the parking lot, hoping to waylay some of the participants as they got into their cars.

As the clerical reactionaries came screaming into the lot, the defense team which had been at the end of the column suddenly turned on the attackers and charged. Several of the cowardly Khomeinist hoodlums immediately hit the pavement; others ran into parked cars, while some tripped over their own brothers trying to flee. The goons were quickly routed. But even after the thugs were dispersed, cars leaving the parking lot were struck by rocks and bricks thrown by the Khomeini lovers.

The following day the campus newspaper *Michigan Daily* printed an article accusing the SYL of striking an Iranian student. In response the Spartacus Youth League wrote a letter protesting the attack on its forum by the Muslim fanatics of the OIMS and so-called leftists of the ISA. The letter stated:

"The Khomeini lovers of the OIMS/ISA in attempting to disrupt our forum gave a taste of the kind of 'democracy' being set up in Khomeini's 'Islamic Republic'....

"There has been a pattern to these disruptions of SYL-sponsored forums on Iran. Five times in the past six months there have been attempts by the same little band of OIMS/ISA fanatics to prevent such forums. And who are these people, these self-appointed defenders of Islam and Khomeini? They are in no sense leftists or progressives or even bourgeois liberals. They are the sons and daughters of the Iranian upper-crust who stand to gain from Khomeini's rule."

It is doubtful that these supporters of Islamic reaction will be swayed by letters to the editor, however necessary to set the record straight. But there is no doubt that by the end of the evening of April 5, one thing was made clear in Ann Arbor: if you are a Stalinist goon or Muslim clericalist intent on disruption, don't fool with the Spartacist League. ■

SPARTACIST LEAGUE LOCAL DIRECTORY

National Office

Box 1377, GPO
New York, N.Y. 10001
(212) 925-2426

Ann Arbor

c/o SYL, Room 4102
Michigan Union
University of Mich.
Ann Arbor, Mich. 48109
(313) 663-9012

Berkeley/Oakland

Box 23372
Oakland, Ca. 94623
(415) 835-1535

Boston

Box 188
MIT Station
Cambridge, Mass. 02139
(617) 492-3928

Toronto

Box 7198, Station A
Toronto Ont.
(416) 593-4138

Chicago

Box 6441, Main P.O.
Chicago, Ill. 60680
(312) 427-0003

Cleveland

Box 6765
Cleveland, Ohio 44101
(216) 621-3138

Detroit

Box 563A, General P.O.
Detroit, Mich. 48232
(313) 868-9095

Houston

Box 26474
Houston, Texas 77207

Los Angeles

Box 26282, Edendale Station
Los Angeles, Ca. 90026
(213) 662-1564

New York

Box 444, Canal Street Station
New York, N.Y. 10013
(212) 925-5665

San Diego

P.O. Box 142
Chula Vista, Ca. 92010

San Francisco

Box 5712
San Francisco, Ca. 94101
(415) 863-6963

Santa Cruz

c/o SYL
Box 2842
Santa Cruz, Ca. 95063

TROTSKYIST LEAGUE OF CANADA

Vancouver

Box 26, Station A
Vancouver B.C.
(604) 733-8848

Winnipeg

Box 3952, Station B
Winnipeg Man.
(204) 589-7214

WORKERS VANGUARD

SL Routs Mullah Thugs

As Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini seeks to refashion Iranian society along the precepts of the Koran, the question of democratic rights for women suddenly looms as a major battlefield between champions of social progress and disciples of a theocratic state whose face is turned toward the seventh century. As Islamic marshals fire upon women marching in the streets of Tehran in defiance of the ayatollah's orders to wear the veil; as Muslim fanatics heave rocks at the demonstrators, cursing them as "SAVAK agents" and "Pahlavi dolls," many liberals and leftists who at first cheered the mullah-led religious opposition to the bloody shah are shocked to see the reactionary content of the "Islamic Republic" starkly revealed. Now the issue is posed directly in the U.S. as Muslim and Maoist thugs launch violent attacks on communist meetings to the chant "Long Live Khomeini!"

Having predicted that the mullahs in power would be no victory for women, the Spartacist League seized on the controversy over women's rights in Iran with a tour by D.L. Reissner, editor of *Women and Revolution*, speaking on the topic "No to the Veil!" At two of her Midwest meetings, in Detroit on April 4 and in Ann Arbor the following night, Muslim zealots and Maoist dupes of the Shi'ite "imam" did everything they could to break up the SL forums. Despite their best efforts, they were unable to prevent the meetings from taking place. Instead the SL allowed the Khomeini lovers to amply present their views while defending its own right to hold meetings and dealing a sharp lesson in workers democracy to the Islamic and Stalinist thugs.

The Spartacist League will continue in the future to defend its meetings against such goon attacks. As in the



Trade unionists defend workers democracy at Spartacist forum, Ann Arbor, April 5.

WV Photo

past, our political opponents who abide by democratic procedure are welcome to attend our public meetings and speak during the discussion period. But we caution the Khomeini thugs that if they try to disrupt our meetings they will be met with an implacable defense of democratic rights by American trade unionists who have fought scabs and cops to build their unions and are not about to let a sorry collection of Stalinists and clerical reactionaries stand in their way.

What Kate Millett Doesn't Understand

The demonstrations of Iranian women protesting the veil were front-page

news in the U.S., in part because American feminist Kate Millett had gone to Teheran at the request of the organizers of the protests. Millett denounced Khomeini as a "male chauvinist" and told reporters, "I was afraid." She certainly had good reason to fear, for after a series of threats Millett was seized by armed militiamen of the Islamic Revolutionary Committee and summarily expelled from the country. In New York a solidarity demonstration was called by a number of her "sisters" in the feminist establishment, including former CIA paid informer Gloria Steinem, former Jimmy Carter aide Bella Abzug and Betty Friedan, who used to hobnob with

Princess Ashraf, the drug-dealing sister of the shah.

At the March 24 SL forum in New York, Reissner stressed that only proletarian communists, not the bourgeois feminists, have the social power and class interest to defend the rights of the oppressed. While defending Millett's right to be in Iran against the gunpoint censorship of the mullahs, Reissner pointed to the patent absurdity of the feminists' program in a country which has not even had a bourgeois revolution:

"In the view of the feminists, men oppress women, they always have and always will; there is no sense of history. There is no appreciation that the

continued on page 11



SPARTACIST LEAGUE FORUM

NO TO THE VEIL!

For Workers Revolution to Defeat Islamic Reaction!

FATIMA KHALIL,

A Near Eastern communist woman militant of Muslim origin, will draw on her own experience as a student activist and trade-unionist organizer and chart the revolutionary strategy which will lead the Iranian masses to the liberation of the communist future.

BOSTON
U Mass Boston
Thursday, April 12
For more information call (617) 492-3928
Harvard
Thursday, April 12
For more information call (617) 492-3928

CHICAGO
Tuesday, April 17
For more information call (312) 427-0003

DETROIT
Wayne State University
Thursday, April 19
For more information call (313) 868-9095

University of Michigan
at Ann Arbor
Friday, April 20
For more information call (313) 663-9012

BAY AREA
San Francisco State University
Tuesday, May 1
For more information call (415) 863-6963

University of California at Berkeley
Friday, April 27
For more information call (415) 835-1535

University of California at Santa Cruz
Wednesday, May 2
For more information call (408) 462-4037

LOS ANGELES
Saturday, April 28
For more information call (213) 662-1564

NEW YORK
Saturday, May 5
For more information call (212) 925-5665