

Workers Must Rule Iran!

Down With All the Ayatollahs!

APRIL 23—The false sense of national unity following the victory of the Shi'ite clergy over huter shah Pahlavi has quickly dissipated. As the first decrees of the new theocratic regime issued from the lips of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, they were met with protests by tens of thousands of women and bloodily suppressed revolts by the Kurdish and Turkoman minorities. The fanatic Muslim strongman had hoped to impose "harmony" with a 98 percent vote for an "Islamic Republic" at the end of March. But last week his rule faced a new challenge as 50,000 students and workers rallied at Teheran University against the puritanical vigilantism and vicious attacks on the left conducted by the komitahs—clerical-run neighborhood committees and their militias which are the backbone of the Khomeini regime.

Four days earlier the komitahs had even arrested the two sons and the daughter-in-law of the popular "liberal" religious leader Ayatollah Taleghani. Taleghani responded to the arrests by withdrawing from Teheran and warning against a return of "dictatorship and despotism." He thus became a rallying point for a number of disparate forces increasingly critical of Khomeini's autocratic rule. But the latest idol of the Iranian left proved just as treacherous as their previous idol. On Friday Taleghani broadcast a contrite submission to Khomeini, endorsing the activities of the komitahs and their Islamic marshals.

So far Khomeini has been unable to decisively crush the left and national minorities. But on April 19 he once again called on his Muslim shock troops to get "the weapons out of the hands of all those groups who create trouble and violence." That this is no idle threat has been repeatedly demonstrated by a number of ominous incidents over the past several weeks. The Bazargan government has arrested 70 leftist Fedayeen guerrillas. On April 6 two thousand armed Muslim fanatics at the University of Teheran demanded their immediate execution. Newspaper salesmen of the pseudo-Trotskyist HKS (Socialist Workers Party—affiliated to the American SWP) have been arrested or beaten in Teheran, Abadan and Jahriz. And on April 21 Muslim gangs stormed the Fedayeen office at Abadan, injuring some 30 people.

The "Red Mullah"—Another Reactionary

The bourgeois politicians of the National Front such as Prime Minister Bazargan and Foreign Minister Sanjabi have been increasingly irked by what they call "the other government inside

the Government," as it has become clear that real power rests with the secret Revolutionary Council of mullahs. During the Khomeini/Taleghani rift Sanjabi tried to pressure Khomeini by resigning his post in protest against the komitahs' actions.

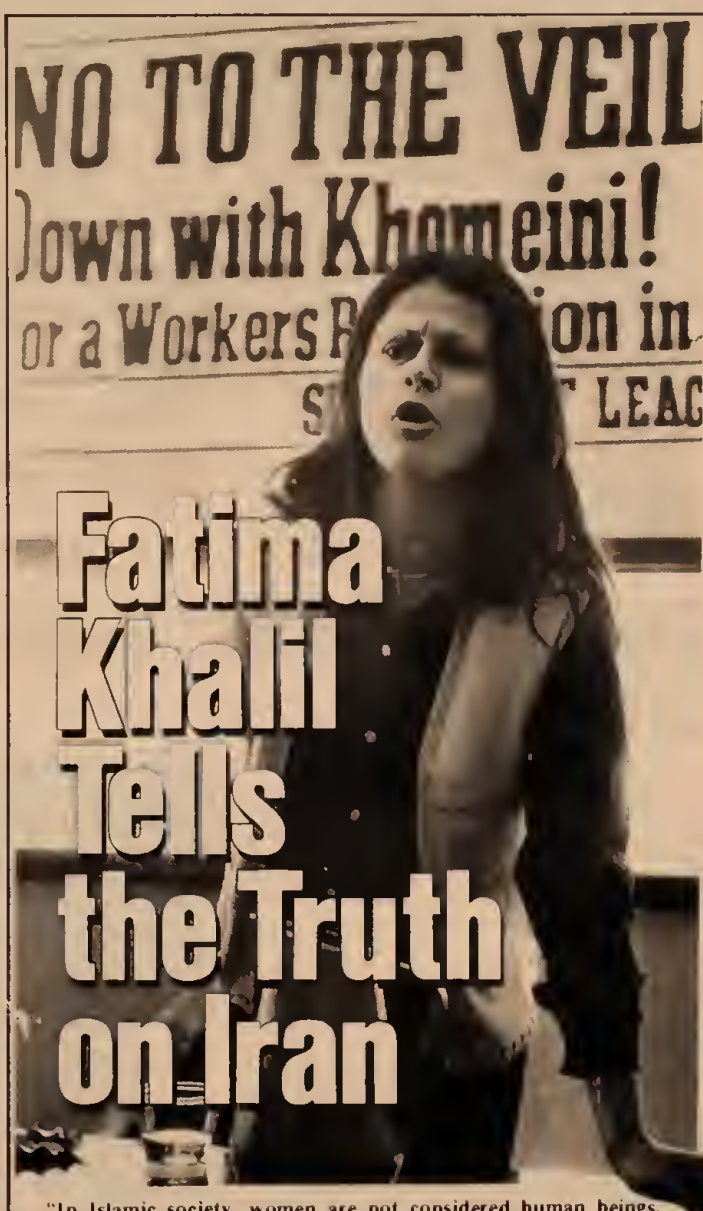
The Mojahdeen guerrillas, whose Muslim populism resembles that of Taleghani, also enthusiastically supported the so-called "Red Mullah." They hailed Taleghani as Iran's *qazi* (chief judge), placed their men under his command and demanded that he be made commander over all komitah militia forces. Together with the National Front they demanded that Khomeini reveal the identities of the members of the Revolutionary Council, seeking a "reformed," more accessible theocratic state.

Taleghani's opposition also intersected the discontent among the unemployed. Before his withdrawal from the capital, a large delegation of the unemployed had appealed to Taleghani over the head of the Minister of Labor. With one out of two factories in Iran shut down there may be as many as four million Iranians out of work. Thousands of jobless occupied the Ministry of Justice in Teheran, narrowly avoiding a clash with the militia, while there were protests in Khorramshahr and Isfahan where at least one demonstrator was killed. The government's "solution" has been the wholesale expulsion of thousands of Pakistani, Indian and Afghani workers.

Although the pro-Taleghani demonstrations had illustrated the growth of anti-Khomeini sentiment, the protesters' hopes were dashed after their hero returned from a meeting with Khomeini in the holy city of Qom. Taleghani agreed to reopen his Teheran office and appeared on television to shamefacedly announce, "the leadership of Ayatollah Khomeini is not only accepted by me but the world has accepted it."

In reality there was nothing leftist about this "Red Mullah," who is in full agreement with Khomeini's Koranic fundamentalism. For example, Taleghani declared that even if a democratically elected parliament voted to allow women the right to abortion, "it will be overruled by Islamic tenets." Despite his much-touted "tolerance" of the left, Taleghani has no desire to become the spearhead for any kind of democratic, secular opposition to his cherished Islamic Republic. As Khomeini haughtily observed, "These people who raise the issue with noise and shouts, was it really for Mr. Taleghani? The one who does not believe in God—hah!—he

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"In Islamic society, women are not considered human beings. I remember when I was a young girl and went to class to study the Kuran. I was told that if I did not cover my head, I would go to hell and every strand of my hair would turn into long snakes.... It is no accident that when Khomeini took power he immediately outlawed abortion and imposed the *chador*. What he is trying to do is control the masses under the 'Islamic spirit.' The veil is a symbol of women's oppression under Islam and an instrument of that control."

Fatima Khalil, a Near Eastern communist woman of Muslim origin, is currently in the U.S. to sound a cry of alarm over the threat to the Iranian masses under Ayatollah Khomeini's new Islamic order. In a coast-to-coast tour sponsored by the Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth League, she is speaking in ten cities in a little over three weeks.

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Healyites: Kill a Commie for Qaddafi

In May of last year, 21 members of the Iraqi Communist Party (CP) were executed on charges of forming cells within the army. This juridical murder was part of a major crackdown on the mass party of the Iraqi proletariat by the bourgeois-nationalist Ba'athist regime. According to Iraqi CP leaders, some 15,000 party members are now sitting in jail. Though the pro-Moscow Stalinists still seek friendly relations with the Baghdad butchers, they are obliged to go through the motions of protesting the persecution of their Iraqi comrades. So the British CP press, the *Morning Star*, has run a few articles exposing anti-communist terror in Iraq.

In response the following recently appeared in a certain British paper:

"At the obvious instigation of the Kremlin, the Communist Party of Great Britain has become the centre of an immense slander offensive against the nation of the Arab Revolution—the Republic of Iraq and its revolutionary vanguard, the Arab Ba'athist Socialist Party....
"It is true that 21 CP members were executed early last year for illegally forming cells in the armed forces. The purpose of these cells was to fight against the government. There are no prizes for the answer to what would happen to Ba'athists who set up cells in the Soviet army. They would be ruthlessly purged!"

Is this perhaps a letter from the Iraqi press attaché to the London *Times* or *Guardian*? No, incredibly, this shameless defense of white terror comes from an article entitled "A Conspiracy Exposed" in the *News Line* (2 February), organ of the fake-Trotskyist Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) of Gerry Healy and Michael Banda. The Healyite syphilis within the ostensible Trotskyist movement has now become so putrescent that it can openly support the murder of working-class militants by a capitalist government.

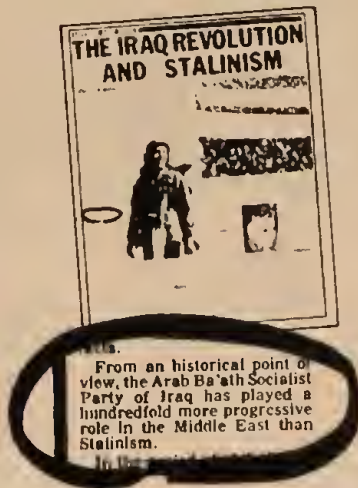
The Healy/Banda tendency has long had an extremely unsavory flavor. It combines idiot organizational sectarianism with the wildest gyrations of gross political opportunism to create an aura of extreme instability. Its penchant for elaborate conspiracy theories and its well-known readiness to employ physical gangsterism against left-wing opponents denote more than a trace of paranoia. But in the past couple of years the Healyites have added another element to their political banditry: they have become

the British press agents for Colonel Muammar Qaddafi, the fanatical dictator of Libya. It is evidently in that capacity that they have now become shameless apologists for white terror in Iraq.

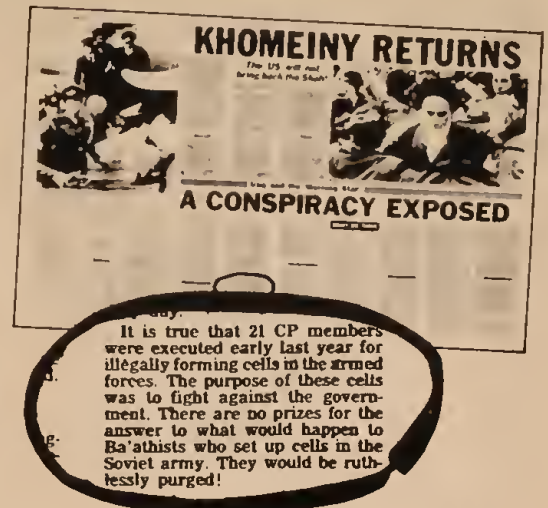
This atrocity has produced visible revulsion within the WRP periphery. The 8 March *News Line* prints a protest letter by one J.A., who identifies himself as a trade unionist, along with the editors' lengthy reply. J.A. writes in a tone of shocked disbelief:

"Are readers of the *News Line* to conclude that you actually support the murder of members of the Communist Party of Iraq?"

"I thought that it was a principle among Trotskyists that they should defend workers against all attacks from the state in a capitalist country. How is the British working class to have any confidence in your organization when you show such indifference to the murder of workers abroad at the hands of their state."



News Line, 8 March



News Line, 2 February

Australian SWP Bans Trotskyism

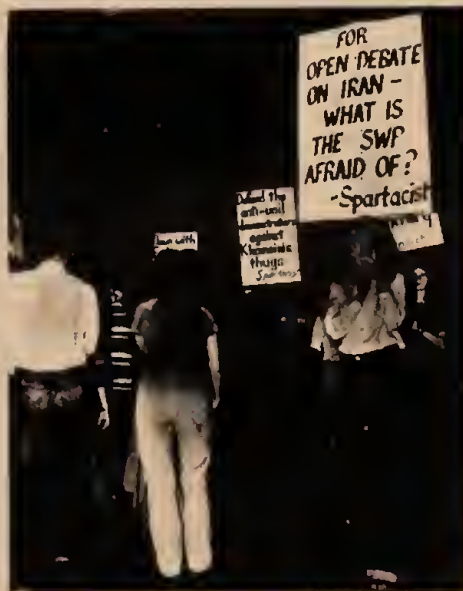
For almost six months the Australian Socialist Workers Party (SWP) maintained an unacknowledged ban on members of the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand (SL/ANZ) attending its so-called "public" events. So prior to a series of SWP forums last month on Iran, the SL/ANZ made a public written demand for an explicit statement of the SWP's policy.

For the fake-Trotskyist SWP the choice was clear: either publicly debate their despicable support for Khomeini's clerical reaction in the face of revolutionary criticism from the SL/ANZ, or else openly establish a policy of political censorship. The reply came when our comrades arrived at the SWP's Sydney headquarters to attend the March 16 forum and found the entrance barred by SWPers distributing a mimeographed statement slandering the SL/ANZ as "disruptors." In Melbourne, they even called the cops to remove our comrades who were leafleting in front of their forum.

So what is the evidence used to justify such serious violations of workers democracy—excluding the SL/ANZ from supposedly public meetings and calling the cops on another tendency in the workers movement? Harking back to a 1977 forum jointly sponsored by the SWP and its former rival, the Communist League, the SWP complains that the SL/ANZ spoke not about the ostensible forum topic, "the People's Economic Program,"

"but about the impending fusion of the Socialist Workers Party and the Communist League. We don't think you have the right to try to disrupt the meeting in this way.... This is the method of Spartacist disruption."

As a matter of fact this forum, at which our comrades were so ill-mannered as to talk about the SWP/CL fusion, happened to be the kick-off for joint public



Sidney, Australia: Spartacist League pickets SWP exclusionism.

work between the two groups as part of their "fusion process." But for the SWP the future of their organization is an unmentionable topic.

However, at least the SWP frankly admits what it

really means with its slanderous charge of "disruption." The SL, it announces, will be excluded from "public" SWP events because it doesn't maintain "an elementary respect for the topic of the meeting." They even try to pass off this blatant political censorship as a defense of some fictitious principle of "sticking to the topic" as an extension of freedom of the press!

"We insist on our right to organize meetings and to determine the agenda, speakers and attendance at them.... [our emphasis]"

"...we no more grant you the right to attend meetings that we organize to disseminate our views than we grant you automatic right to put forward your views in our paper *Direct Action*."

So the principle of workers democracy is dismissed with a simple sophistry. But the SL is not clamoring for the right to contribute to *Direct Action*, only insisting that its comrades have the same rights as everyone else to express their views in the discussion periods of these supposedly public forums. As the comrades of the SL/ANZ responded in a widely distributed "Open Letter to the Socialist Workers Party":

"It is vital for working class militants to be able to debate the issues facing the working class in an atmosphere free from intimidation and bureaucratic repression. All proletarian political organizations have a responsibility to conduct meetings in an orderly and democratic fashion, so as to promote political debate—not to suppress it."

"...Public meetings of socialist organizations are just what they claim—public, open to the workers movement at large."

Comrades of the SWP, you cannot hide your support for Khomeini and the mullahs behind a veil of cynical lies and bureaucratic censorship. The SL is there to expose you as the spineless reformists you are. ■

Racist Hysteria Targets "Turn 'Em Loose Bruce"

The wolves are out again after NYC criminal court judge Bruce Wright. They began howling for blood when the liberal black judge released without bail a black college student accused of slashing the throat of a white decoy cop. The Patrolmen's Benevolent Association (PBA) immediately went on the warpath, clamoring anew for the dismissal from the bench of the man they call "Turn 'Em Loose Bruce." Predictably, Murdoch's *New York Post* blew up a grisly photo of the cop with his 8-inch running scar on its 13 April front page. And seeing a new opportunity to let loose a salvo of "law and order" rhetoric to boost his poll ratings, Mayor Ed Koch attacked Wright's decision as "bizarre" and "disturbing."

As it turned out, the yahoos picked a real loser of a case to nail Wright on. Despite all the racist hysteria, the evidence was clearly on the judge's side. The D.A. had failed to hand down an indictment within the 72-hour time limit because he couldn't get a straight story out of the cops. Wright then released the suspect, Jerome Singleton, on his own recognizance, as was his prerogative. Moreover, Singleton is married with two children, an honorably discharged vet with no prior arrest record, and a student at Manhattan Community College—hardly the type to take a powder. Wright was vindicated the very next day when the suspect showed up voluntarily after an arrest warrant had been issued. On the "evidence," the cops first said the decoy was slashed with a

broken bottle, while Singleton had been hooked for using a knife. Then lab tests showed no blood on either his knife or his clothes. The real "evidence" is that Singleton is a black man who was picked up near the scene of the crime and beaten bloody by the cops—now they have to get something on him, or else.

Even while the *New York Times* and the liberal judicial establishment admitted that Koch and the PBA were running amok, they clucked their tongues over Wright's remarks at an April 12 Princeton University civil liberties lecture. "There is murder among New York's finest," the judge said, and police "have a license to hunt down blacks and kill them with impunity." Crusading for his favorite cause, Wright said he released the suspect because the Eighth Amendment prohibits punitive bail, and that "the firmest underpinning of our judicial system is the presumption of innocence." It is refreshing to have a judge who believes this, but under capitalist justice the whole bail system necessarily discriminates against the poor.

The racist hysteria over Wright's ruling produced a wave of anger in black neighborhoods of Brooklyn and Harlem, where tempers are still inflamed over last summer's vicious murder of popular black Democratic Party local leader Arthur Miller by a gang of kill-crazed cops in Crown Heights. And it further strained relations between black Democratic Party politicians and the



Bruce Wright at rally outside Tombs, 17 April. To his right Crown Heights minister Herbert Daughtry.

mayor, who was elected on a racist death penalty campaign and since then has not missed a chance to hammer the coffin nails into the remnants of the Percy Sutton machine in Harlem.

Every black politician immediately tried to latch onto the issue and ride it for all it was worth. Crown Heights

demagogue Rev. Herbert Daughtry had Wright out to his Lord Pentecostal Church to deliver the Easter Sunday sermon, a smart move that brought out thousands of worshippers and the entire press corps as well. Two days later he mobilized some 700 people to demonstrate in support of Judge Wright in front of the Tombs. One picket sign asked significantly, "Why Didn't Koch Find the Torsney Decision 'Disturbing'?" (This referred to the white cop who was acquitted for gunning down unarmed black teenager Randy Evans on Thanksgiving Day, 1976.) On the weekend former Harlem civil rights activist Jesse Gray tried to make a comeback after 15 years in the doldrums by rallying the old Sutton machine in Harlem.

All the assorted support demos served up the same warmed-over liberal fare. At the Tombs Daughtry called for a federal investigation "of everything, the whole judicial system." The call for more black cops ran through the entire affair, from the presence of a black ex-cop who had been knocked off the force after being shot by one of his white counterparts, to a statement of support for Wright by the Guardians Association (of NYC's black transit and city cops). All demanded the reappointment of Wright when his term expires at the end of the year.

Bruce Wright is a liberal who has had the courage to stand up against the onslaught of trigger-happy cops, scare-

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Koch's Cossacks

Mayor Ed Koch has declared war on NYC labor, and he wants everyone to know it. Striking tugboat workers, school bus drivers and Teamster milk deliverers have all been met with a combination of anti-labor propaganda and out-and-out strikebreaking by the union-buster in City Hall. After refusing to negotiate with the bus drivers and smearing them in the press as heartless child-haters Koch even ordered city officials to ferry handicapped kids to school in their own cars. When tugboat crews went out on strike Koch got a "health emergency" declared and a court injunction invoked against the

strike. And on April 11 the labor-hating mayor turned the cossacks of the city's mounted police against picketers at the Sunnyside Farms dairy in Brooklyn. WV was there.

The 500 Teamster strikers outside the Brooklyn plant knew that on that day the bosses' negotiator had promised to run a load of scab milk into the dairy "with or without union workers." They didn't know that the scabs would be escorted by more than 200 riot-equipped cops and a squad of mounted police. At first the cops tried to trick the picketers into leaving the plant doors. But when the men refused to budge the orders came down for a frontal assault.

The strikers stood their ground when the cops charged with nightsticks swinging. But then the mounted cops put the spurs to their horses' sides and charged. Again and again the horses smashed into the defenseless workers, who were trapped against the building wall. The picketers were forced to give way but even after the line had been broken the mounted thugs ran down strikers who stood cursing the cops. Twenty-five were injured, including 11 cops.

The union bureaucrats had no stomach for the fight. First they tried to help the cops persuade the picketers to move, but the rank and file was having none of that. Even after the cop riot had cleared the way for the scab truck, local president Willie Whelan was still whining. "Don't let [Sunnyside boss] Eisenberg turn the cops against us and us against the cops." The next day the bureaucrats saved the cops the trouble of breaking the picket line by sending

workers to a plant where no deliveries were expected and allowing the scabs to ride into the Elmhurst Milk and Cream Co. unopposed.

Koch's criminal assault on the striking Teamsters and the brutal cop attack were designed to terrorize and intimidate the city's unionists. It was a bloody confirmation of the elementary Marxist truth that the capitalist government and its cops are not neutral. The blue-shirted thugs who rode down the Sunnyside picketers were 100 percent on the side of the bosses. "New York's finest" strikebreakers attacked the white, American flag-waving workers with the same ferocity they have always

used against ghetto youth and leftist demonstrators. The bruised and bloodied Teamsters who got to their feet shouting "Sieg Heil!" and cursing the cops as "fucking Nazis" should not forget this lesson in bourgeois justice.

The vicious cop riot at Sunnyside, the police escorts for scab buses and the injunctions directed at tugboatmen should have been answered immediately with protests from every union in the city. Mass picketing should be reinstituted, with the NY unions mobilized to beef up the lines. A mass demonstration of all NYC labor should be organized to demand, "Hands Off the Unions! No to Koch's Strikebreaking!" ■



Mounted cops cordon off Sunnyside Farms dairy in Brooklyn, 11 April. Scab driver got \$1,500 for the delivery.

WORKERS VANGUARD

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WV MOVIE REVIEW
THE DEER HUNTER
DIRECTED BY M. CIMINO

BY PAT KINCAID

SCENE: A movie theater.

On screen, Robert De Niro as an American soldier held captive by Vietnamese guerrillas. He is being brutally tortured. He manages to grab a machine gun from his captors. Spraying bullets into the Vietnamese sadists, he escapes, saving his two home-town buddies. Applause. Cheers: "All Right!" "Go Get 'Em!" Whistles.

The Deer Hunter has done what *The Green Berets* could not do more than a decade ago: it has moved audiences to actively root for the American military fighting the Vietnam war. When *The Green Berets* was shown to draftees in Vietnam in 1968 it drew not cheers but bitter ironic laughter. At home it drew picket lines of antiwar activists who saw the film for what it was: a crude Pentagon-inspired propaganda bomb aimed at the hearts and minds of an increasingly disaffected American public.

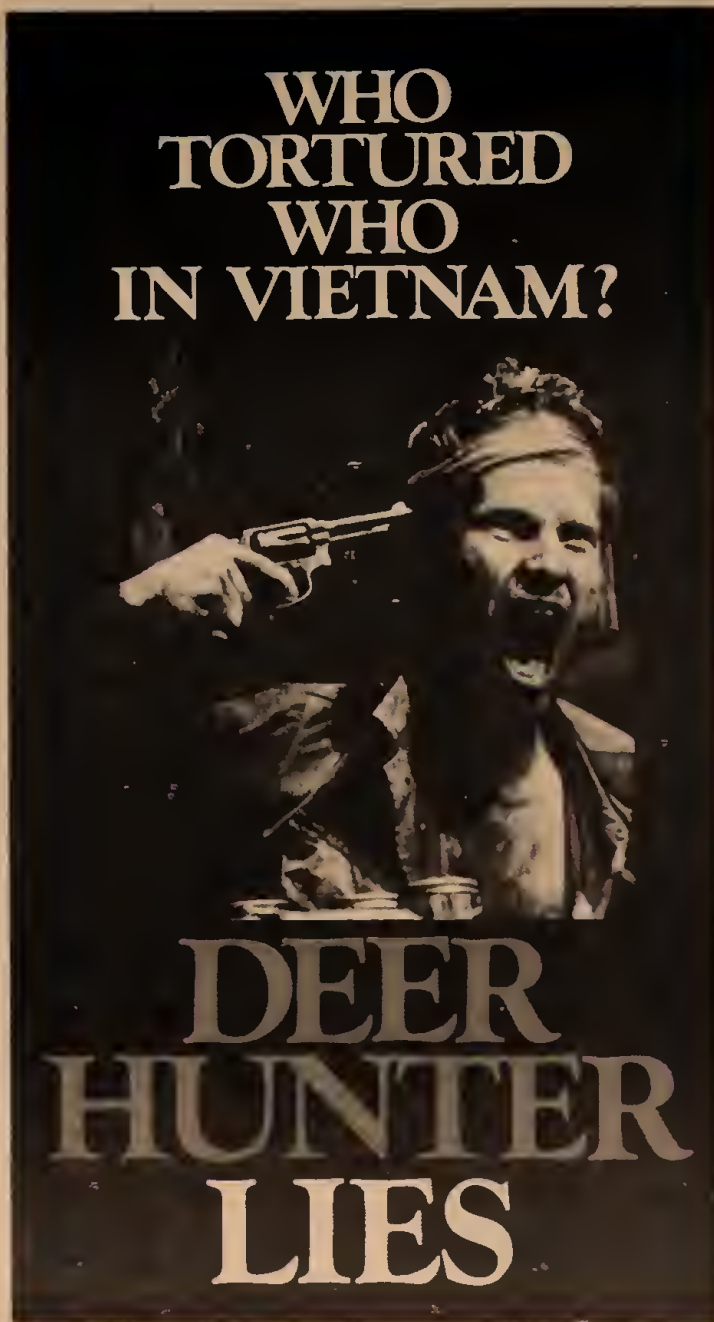
The Green Berets missed its mark because the conventional propaganda weapons and cinematic clichés of the World War II heroic genre were overwhelmed by political reality: the "fragging" of officers, the terror-burning of villages, the official lies exploding on nightly TV newscasts. College campuses were ablaze with protest; winter patriots were arming against a sea of "hippie commies" and "nervous Nellies"; even a defeatist wing of the U.S. bourgeoisie was unhappily debating in the Senate, "Why are we in Vietnam?" In that polarized climate the "good guy/bad guy" images of Hollywood simply felt flat.

The Deer Hunter, while no obvious John Wayne flagwaver, has purposes no less conscious and reactionary. But unlike *The Green Berets*, it has realized those purposes, despite its flaws and melodramatic pretensions (they are deep and grandiloquent), despite its lies (they are big and outrageous) and despite its clearly reactionary content.

Deer Hunter is the most artistically serious popular film yet produced on the subject of America and the Vietnam war. With its recent Academy Awards victory, it has become the signal occasion for a campaign of national redemption for the "sin" of Vietnam, a popular focus for U.S. imperialism's moral rearmament after its stunning defeat. Now, says *Time* magazine (23 April), "the psychological time-lock on Vietnam seems to have expired." And in a six-page spread entitled "Vietnam Comes Home," *Time* explains why *The Deer Hunter* is the key to the "time-lock": "The *Deer Hunter* presents a version of the American experience in Vietnam that is utterly at variance with the view" of "a nation of William Calleys."

As the U.S. government builds up militarily and toots about "human rights," with "hawks" and former "doves" unified on the need for a mighty imperialist arsenal, the Vietnam war must be "put into perspective" amid the "complexities" of the U.S./China alliance and the new wars in Southeast Asia. Toward this end a barrage of new books, plays and films offer a "revisionist" right-wing retrospective apology for U.S. imperialism in Vietnam. *The Deer Hunter* is the stunning example among them.

But people do not always learn the "lessons" imperialist propagandists want to teach. So while *The Deer Hunter* raises a number of interesting questions at the intersection of technique and propaganda, the most vitally interesting is: why do they cheer? Why—after the Vietnam war tore up the political guts of a generation, after an experience so traumatic that it broke down the jingo-reflex born of American imperialism's world-war victories, after



millions of Americans learned their government was a collection of lying mad bombers—why now do they cheer?

Not Political?

It is not wrong but partial to reply that they cheer because it has been a long time since the Vietnam war was a "hot" political issue. *The Deer Hunter* does not simply reflect the depoliticization of the "me" decade; it is an active advocate of that process and perhaps an important artifact of the period. It is the quintessential 1970s film: slick, colorful, stylized, romantic, superficial and deeply reactionary politically in the name of being anti-political, beyond "mere" politics.

From a certain point of view *The Deer Hunter* is not complex enough to be a good political film; it is an adolescent good guys/bad guys movie filled with what liberal film critic Pauline Kael called "boys book values." It surely insists on those values with its mythic tests of bravery and strength, its emphasis on male bonding and the hunt as preparation for war. In fact, the film is an epic wonder of nearly all known reactionary social attitudes, from a glorification of the provincial xenophobic "purity" of the closed ethnic community to the most vicious anti-Asian racism, neanderthal male chauvinism and sentimental jingoism. But it is too easy to dismiss *The Deer Hunter* as merely a "buddies" film.

The Deer Hunter is an intensely political film, full of political controversy. When it was shown at the Berlin Film Festival this spring the Soviet delega-

tion led its bloc in a protest walkout. And no wonder! *The Deer Hunter* is a political outrage. Yet the first controversy encountered—and perhaps the high ground for the film's loyal political defenders—is the claim that it is not fundamentally a political film. It is telling that such a defense should be mounted for a movie about American working-class "good guys" going off to fight the NLF. How could this *not* be political? Yet that is what the popular media claims in its abundant praise of *The Deer Hunter*. At long last, says *Time* (18 December 1978): "This is the first movie about Vietnam to free itself from all political cant. It contains no antiwar characters at all; its prowar characters are apolitical foot soldiers, not fire-breathing gook-killers."

It is true that the characters in this film do not talk about politics. The three main characters join up to fight in Vietnam and say nothing about it, nor does anyone else question their decision. Nor does anyone talk about racism. The hits of behaviorist dialogue provided are supposed to suggest only feelings; no overt "thinking" is allowed to get in the way, and certainly no argument. Michael Cimino, the American director of this British-financed film, told *Le Monde* (29 March) that *The Deer Hunter* is "not about ideas, it's a film about people." This is a nice counterposition from the most talented graduate of the *Dirty Harry* school of moviemaking. But Cimino has an idea all right: "A film that takes too obvious a position may force you to think and argue, but it prevents you from feeling anything."

Indeed the primacy of feeling is what Cimino's reactionary romantic aesthetic is all about. And the denigration of reason and glorification of unverbilized "pure" emotion is itself characteristic of a fascist political coloration.

Cimino the filmmaker is in the business of manipulating feelings and not ideas. But this manipulation is put in the service of a complete set of reactionary ideas. As mass-culture craftsman, Cimino offers us characters whose personal consciousness is aggressively non-political—incredibly non-political for people who are supposed to exist in a period of burning political polarization. This serves his purposes. He cleverly goes to the heart of the 1970s antipathy to politics to perpetrate some of the most vicious right-wing propaganda on film since the McCarthy era. And he succeeds in drawing his audience in—to the point of cheers—through an acute sense of mass psychology, technically effective film editing and a calculated and profoundly cynical disregard for historic truth. Since the film appears to probe deeper than "just" politics to concern itself with the "real" psychological-mythic roots of war, the viewer is not supposed to concern himself with mundane conjunctural questions of who tortured who in Vietnam.

The Truth Matters

The successful impact of *The Deer Hunter* may be due to the boldness with which director Cimino frontally assaults the truth. There are in fiction what can be called distortions, subtle fabrications, imaginative constructs—and there are lies. *The Deer Hunter* lies. And so it must be or it could not portray the Americans as the good guys in Vietnam.

The scene of the highest lie receives the biggest cheer. But before Cimino subjects the "buddies" to some of the most melodramatic scenes of torture on film—scenes expertly calculated to make the audience squirm with fear and loathing—he lets us get to "know" the heroes in their home town. The first part of the film concentrates with care upon daily life in Clairton, Pennsylvania, a fictional small steel town of a working-class Ukrainian-American ethnic community (these scenes were actually shot in a real Ukrainian-American community in the industrial "flats" of Cleveland's near West Side). Cimino's camera allows us to observe his "good buddies" and their family and friends. He attends carefully to the ritual business of life and death, the recognizable symbols and choreography of social gesture: sex and marriage, death and funeral, friendship and male bonding, the hunt. He picks up the smallest details of working-class life and throws them up against the largest mythic landscapes.

Of course Cimino presents his heroes as "regular guys" just trying to survive, uprooted and plunged into a horrible situation which they do not understand and for which they are not responsible. The "non-political" conceit, which makes audience identification with the heroes easier, helps to universalize their experience in Vietnam as a struggle with the ultimates of life and death. The mythic landscapes serve to suggest the primal imagery of human survival, and to deflect attention from the historical/political concreteness of the situation. In *The Deer Hunter*, Everyman goes to everywar.

From the mountains, Cimino cuts roughly and suddenly to Vietnam (actually shot in Thailand), where we are confronted by an American Legion political fantasy. We see massacres of Vietnamese villagers—but it is the North Vietnamese who are the mass murderers, and the Americans who are defending the helpless, just like McNamara and Westmoreland said. We are stunned by a familiar image: a Vietnamese holds a pistol to the head of a crouching prisoner, about to blow off his head. Is it Nguyen Ngoc Loan, Saigon police chief caught by a UPI

photographer in the act of executing a "suspected Vietcong"? No, it is the other way around—a Vietcong about to blow the head off a helpless South Vietnamese. Cimino has taken the very images that galvanized American antiwar sentiment and turned them inside out. More than a lie, Cimino perhaps has developed an aesthetic perversion.

His technique is more insidious than the old-fashioned technique of telling the big lie and telling it often. Leni Reifenstahl (*Triumph of the Will*) could pick up some modern-day pointers from Cimino & Co. One can only wonder if he learned his stuff in one of the army intelligence psy-war "brainwashing" schools. Familiar images are presented with exactly the opposite content of what they are known for—result, disorientation. Identification with the heroes, fear for survival, shock—and rational historical judgment is overwhelmed by feeling. Jarred out of rational perception, black becomes white, the victims become the persecutors, the tortured become the torturers.

The Vietnamese guerrilla torturers in *The Deer Hunter* conform to the most vicious, racist, "yellow horde" stereotypes. They precisely fit the description presented in indoctrination lectures by intelligence officers who told inductees that "the VC" were the most sadistic creatures on earth, who would "nail your dogtags to your foreheads and send it home to Mother." Not only are Cimino's guerrillas wild and sadistic, but they torture for sport. The Americans are kept in small, rat-infested bamboo cages in a river, from which they are dragged and forced to play Russian roulette with live ammunition. The "VC" have a splendid time betting on the outcome of this game.

Now first of all, this Russian roulette torture has no basis in fact, and even Cimino admits it is purely a romantic invention. But by the scale of *The Deer Hunter* this amounts to a small untruth. The prison cages, for instance, are clearly meant to recall the infamous "tiger cages." But the tiger cages were the device of the ARVN! (And how did three home town buddies wind up in the same "tiger cage" anyway? This too is but a small lie by the standards of Cimino's art.) The big lie that dominates and conditions all the others is the portrayal of the NLF as the torturers and the U.S. military as the tortured.

The torture scene is of central importance in *The Deer Hunter*, as it is in the lives of its three main characters. Each is personally tested by this hideous experience which pushes them beyond the bounds of human endurance. Only Michael (De Niro)—the Hemingway-style one-shot deer hunter—comes through intact. The groom, Steven (John Savage), is mutilated; Nick (Chris Walken) is driven to madness, heroin and eventually—as he endlessly reenacts the Russian roulette torture-as-sport—to degraded self-inflicted death.

Cimino knows what he's doing when he goes directly to the center of the liberal moral revulsion with Vietnam for his inverted images. He is after more

than "war is hell" pacifism or *Catch 22*/M*A*S*H absurdism. He knows the truth and knows it matters, even as he tries to convince his audience that his film is an apolitical metaphor of survival. His ideological position demands he run the process of truthful discovery backwards.

Who Tortured Who

The truth is that it was the U.S. forces and their Saigon allies who did the torturing in Vietnam, and not the NLF. This statement is categorical. It is not a question of the random brutality associated with individual soldiers in the field of war—acts that tend to be the result of pressure and personality—but of torture as a policy in Vietnam. As such it was avoided necessarily by the NLF/DRV, which relied heavily upon its base of support in the peasantry and its effective political infrastructure. The policy of torture for the American government and the ARVN, however, was the strategic center of its "ground war." Torture was the method of "political education" for a population which supported the other side. And it was practiced with demonic ferocity.

It was the CIA which organized the most widespread and systematic campaign of civilian terror based on torture since Nazi Germany. Project "Counter-Terror" (CT) in the mid-1960s funded and set up "Provincial Interrogation Centers" in each of the 44 provinces of South Vietnam:

"An agency [CIA] operator or contact employee directed each center's operations, much of which consisted of torture tactics against suspected Vietcong, such torture usually carried out by Vietnamese nationals."

—Victor Marchetti and John Marx, *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence*

A foreign service officer described the CT teams as "a unilateral American program... whose function was assassination, abuses, kidnappings and intimidation."

The CIA's torture machinery went into high gear with the Phoenix program begun in 1967. Phoenix set up an official torture terror center in every district where it wreaked a barbaric fate upon hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese "suspects." It was a method that was intended to brutalize the population as a whole, its authors aware that the NLF cadres were in fact among the best concealed and protected in each village:

"In 1969 the United States set a goal for the Phoenix program to 'neutralize' twenty thousand NLF agents during the year, and at the end of the year GVN authorities reported 19,534 agents 'neutralized.' The figure was unsettling in that there had been no corresponding decline in American estimates of NLF agents at large. Who then were the 19,534 people, and what had become of them?"

—Frances Fitzgerald, *Fire in the Lake*

Even CIA head Colby testified before Congress in 1971 that Phoenix had killed more than 20,000 "suspected Vietcong" in its first two and a half years.

Most Americans were to learn of the



A "Vietcong suspect" is dragged to death after "interrogation." Torture was a policy for U.S. imperialism in Vietnam.

government's torture policy slowly and with initial disbelief. Starting in the late 1960s the government "truth teams" tried to counter the atrocity stories coming out of Vietnam with vague charges of mistreatment of American soldiers. But they could never make the charges stick. Mark Lane published a book of interviews with GIs recounting the most brutal torture by the Americans. The State Department denied it. In these times of post-Watergate liberal cynicism, it is worth remembering that it was the government's Vietnam lies which excavated the "credibility gap."

The bourgeois defeatist "doves" got into the act. When in 1970 two Congressmen went to Vietnam they found not NLF torture but American torture on an incredible scale. It was true: there were "tiger cages" on a "Devil's Island" of Con Son 60 miles from Saigon, where tens of thousands of prisoners were kept without trial in five-by-five hellholes. Rep. Harkin told a press conference:

"There were as many as five people in an airless pit... Many are forced to drink their own urine. Most of the men could not stand up, their legs having been paralyzed by beatings and by being shackled to a bar about one or two feet off the floor... There are buckets of lime dust above the cages, and the guards throw this down on the prisoners when they beg for food and water."

—Washington Star, 7 July 1970

So the American public learned from the media of the unspeakable horror. They learned it was systematic and sophisticated. They learned that the American military was training the ARVN in the most advanced techniques of electro-torture. They learned that the tiger cages did exist and that, when the old bamboo wore out, a California concrete company was contracted to rebuild them to the exact specifications of the time-worn dimensions of agony. Now Cimino wants his audiences to unlearn the truth.

Catharsis and Bourgeois Hypocrisy

For the left wing of the antiwar movement, the exposure of the U.S. policy of torture confirmed what they already knew; that there was a class war

in Vietnam. The workers and peasants were on one side and U.S. imperialism—holding up the enfeebled Vietnamese capitalist class—was on the other. The Phoenix program was the model for "Vietnamization"; the counter-revolutionary war was necessarily "dirty."

But for the liberal "doves" the torture was a dirty policy—as if that war could have been fought on a better, "human rights" basis. American liberals felt guilty. They wanted to get out of that dirty place where "our boys" were becoming corrupted by drugs, by the Saigon brothels, by the torture.

It is this guilty moralism which the new Vietnam films seek to address and purge. Both *The Deer Hunter* and the liberal *Coming Home* start from a strictly American perspective—"what has the war done to Americans?" And like the old arguments of "hawks" and "doves," they chart different courses to come to terms with the demoralization following the defeat of U.S. imperialism. The sentimental nostalgia of Jane Fonda's cinematic and real-life liberalism identifies with the mutilation, embraces it. Thus in *Coming Home* she is miraculously cured of her non-organic state. To the imperialist "doves," what mattered about the war was the "moral" question of how you felt; the purpose of the Fonda film is to help you feel better.

The Deer Hunter, of course, couldn't care less about women's orgasms—or about women. Its concern is men as hunter-warriors. As its filming of the last days of Saigon shows, Cimino's film is concerned with the Vietnam defeat as a demonstration of weakness. If *Coming Home* identifies with weakness and sympathizes with the suffering, *The Deer Hunter* celebrates heroic strength.

And if *Coming Home* is an echo of the 1960s exhortation to "make love not war," *The Deer Hunter* tries it the other way around. In the closed ethnic community of Clairton, elaborate social ritual is the mechanism for benignly working out repressed sexuality (*The Deer Hunter* presents the longest

continued on page 9



General Loan executes "suspected Vietcong" prisoner on the streets of Saigon in 1968; this is the searing image of political truth *The Deer Hunter* attempts to invert.

Fatima Khalil

(continued from page 1)

Her message to the American left: the working class must lead the women, national minorities and peasants in revolutionary struggle against the Muslim clerical reactionaries now in power in Iran. The alternative, becoming clearer day by day, is theocratic barbarism.

Already well before the overthrow of the bloody U.S.-backed shah, the international Spartacist tendency warned that replacement of the hated dictator by the Khomeini-led opposition would be no gain for the working masses; that the ayatollah's forces are anti-working-class Persian chauvinists seeking to return to the Koranic law of the 7th century. Now that the mullahs have won, our warning has been dramatically confirmed as women take to the streets of Teheran protesting imposition of the veil and ethnic-religious minorities rise in revolt around the country. Based on her own experience as a student activist and trade-union organizer in the region, Fatima Khalil draws the urgent revolutionary lessons of the Iranian crisis.

For the SL/SYL the decision to bring Comrade Khalil to speak in this country was based on our understanding that the dramatic situation in Iran today poses a major test for the entire working-class movement, just as did the

beginning exactly what he wanted. "There are people who claim that what is going on in Teheran today is the Iranian February Revolution," she said. "But it has been clear to us from the beginning that Khomeini was in no sense progressive." He said he wanted an "Islamic Republic" based on the Koran; in his plebiscite the people were given only two choices, either the shah or the Muslim clergy. He tried to win the support of the shah's army and decreed that only "Islamic soldiers" could be armed.

"Today in Iran there are Islamic courts. We have no tears for the generals and SAVAK torturers who were executed by the mullahs. But why is it that only the mullahs have the right to speak in these courts? Organizations like the Fedayeen were tortured by the shah, yet these people are not allowed to speak because they are not part of the 'Iranian nation' according to Khomeini."

Centering her talk on the oppression of women under Islam historically, under the shah and now under Khomeini, Khalil pointed out that according to Muslim law women do not have rights as human beings:

"When they are young they are dependent on their fathers; when they get married they belong to their husbands. On a legal basis two women are considered equal to one male witness. And in the villages young women—children, really—are often exchanged for animals....

"The Koran says if you show your finger to a strange man, you have to cut it off.

will at once feel herself lacking any sort of religious buttress. She will have a passionate thirst to gain new ideas and new consciousness which will permit her to appreciate her new position in society. And there will be no better communist in the East, no better fighter for the ideas of the Revolution and for the ideas of Communism, than the awakened woman worker."

—"Perspectives and Tasks in the East," April 1924

Comrade Khalil also polemicized against the opportunists on the left, who in their inveterate penchant for tailing anything that is popular have incredibly ended up singing the praises of Islamic reaction:

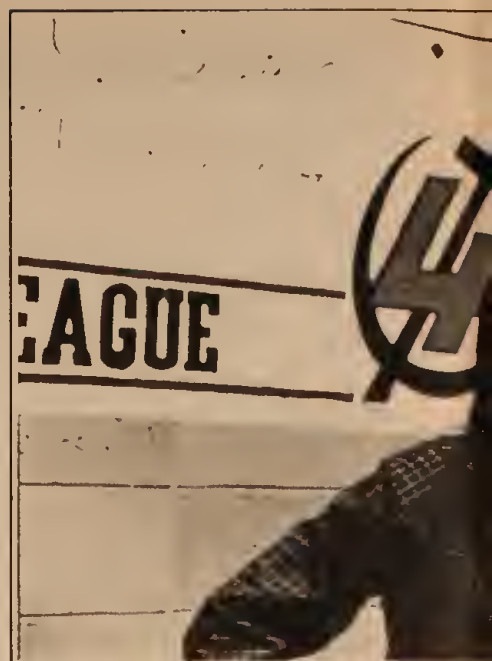
"The leader of the British International Marxist Group said that when he was in Iran he chanted the slogan, *allah akbar*, which means 'god is great.' He said this slogan is revolutionary because it is the slogan of the Iranian masses. But for us it is clear that this slogan belongs to Islam. Today in Iran, when the Islamic soldiers kill Kurdish fighters, they chant '*allah akbar*.' In 1974 when the Turkish army invaded Cyprus, when they were massacring the Greek people, they were chanting '*allah akbar*.' This slogan means one thing—Islamic reaction. That slogan belongs to them, not to us."

"Your Place Is with Khomeini, Ours Is with the Iranian Workers"

Fatima Khalil's forums have been uniformly well-attended—85 in Boston, 100 in Chicago, 75 in Detroit and 100 in Ann Arbor—attracting a number of Iranian students in the audiences. By no means all the Iranians present sided with the Islamic fanatics and Stalinists who had disrupted earlier SL/SYL forums, however. Significantly, those who spoke up in favor of Spartacist positions were mainly women and members of oppressed nationalities. Thus one woman in Chicago remarked during the discussion period: "As an Iranian woman, I would like to thank the Spartacist League for being the only organization to see the class analysis of Iran, saying that Khomeini was never a progressive and what an Islamic state would mean for the workers and women in particular."

At Ann Arbor a Baluchi spoke against the pro-mullah thugs who had attempted to stop earlier Spartacist League forums:

"I am here from East Lansing, sent to apologize from these people. I was one of those Iranians who participated with those who disturbed that Young Spartacist meeting [at Michigan State University]. I know how the followers of Khomeini and sections of the Iranian students and leftists have been trying to strangle any voice which does not



Fatima Khalil to mullah supporters: "We are proud with Khomeini! Your place is with Khomeini, ours is with the Iranian workers."

conform to their political goal. I know how Khomeini's followers disturbed the meetings so I am a witness. And I wonder if the so-called Iranian revolutionaries do not allow people to express their opinion in this country, what is the condition in Iran?"

In several of the meetings there were polemical exchanges with mullah supporters. At Wayne State University in Detroit the same Maoist who two weeks earlier had announced that if Khomeini wanted to cut off his head, "I would be the one to take the sword and do it," was back on the scene. Repeating his slanderous litany that all Trotskyists were "CIA" and "SAVAK agents," he hailed the speaker for being on tour in the U.S. and not in Iran. To this Comrade Khalil responded:

"I ask what are you doing here? Why aren't you in Iran? You don't say where you stand, just repeat slanders. But you are one of the people who last time called the bourgeois police on us. That shows your position. We are proud to be with the women who said, 'Down with Khomeini! Your place is with Khomeini, ours is with the Iranian proletariat.'"

At the same meeting a Muslim woman denounced the speaker for daring to criticize the ayatollah, who had studied religion "for 40 years." The



Chilean popular front in the early seventies. At that time the Spartacist League stood alone in refusing to give political support to Allende's class-collaborationist government that paved the way for the bloody Pinochet coup. Now once again the SL has acted as a beacon on the left by uniquely opposing the rise of Islamic reaction with our now-famous slogan, "Down with the Shah, Down with the Mullahs!" Aggressive propagandistic exploitation of the correctness of our Marxist program in this crucial test can lay the basis for a new wave of recruitment for the international Spartacist tendency.

Across the U.S. hundreds have already turned out to greet Fatima Khalil's stand against turning back the clock of history in Iran to the time of Muhammad. Her speeches have also drawn threats of physical attacks and disruption attempts from Iranian Muslims and Maoists. Defense squads composed of dozens of American trade unionists have ensured Khalil's right to speak to the public: Her tour has also received attention in the media. The Near Eastern Trotskyist militant was interviewed on WGIC and WVON in Chicago, as well as WWJ radio and Channel 2 TV in Detroit. In addition she was featured in a 20 April *Detroit News* article (see elsewhere on this page). This week Khalil is addressing audiences in Los Angeles (April 28) and the Bay Area (April 29-May 2) and will be returning to New York for a final talk on May 5.

No to the Veil For Workers Revolution!

In her forums Comrade Khalil stressed that Khomeini has not betrayed—he said very clearly from the

Because it doesn't belong to your husband any more, therefore it doesn't belong to you."

The bourgeois revolution meant a great deal for women, she stressed—namely, they were considered to be human beings. The basic Islamic laws existed under the shah's regime as well. If he gave Iranian women the right to work as part of the token reforms of his "white revolution" in 1963, it was to provide cheap labor. But the mullahs want to go backwards to the Middle Ages:

"After Khomeini took power he said that about 300 women who are married to non-Muslims will be deported from the country, and foreign workers from Afghanistan and Arab countries, too. Today in Iran if you use alcohol the punishment is whipping. Khomeini also abolished the 1975 Family Protection Act."

As the only real example of the emancipation of women from the medieval oppression of the Koran, Khalil pointed to the early Bolshevik work among women of the Soviet East. Laws against forced marriage, early marriage and polygamy were actually effective, in contrast to the showcase reforms of bourgeois nationalists like Atatürk. And communist women organizers were murdered for their fight against the veil. "In those mass meetings which many Islamic women took part in, they burned their veils. They were the first supporters of the Bolsheviks in Central Asia," Trotsky, on the basis of this experience, pointed to the tremendous revolutionary potential of Muslim women, in a quote cited by the speaker:

"And this, moreover, means that the Eastern woman, who is the most paralyzed in life, in her habits and in creativity, the slave of slaves, that she, having at the demand of the new economic relations taken off her cloak,

WVON Interview

WVON. Fatima, would you tell us first of all why you are here in this country?

FATIMA KHALIL: I was invited by the Spartacus Youth League to give a forum on Iran, to tell the truth about what's happening in Iran.

WVON. What is going on in Iran?

FATIMA KHALIL: Today Khomeini is in power. People had said he would bring democracy in Iran and that he was fighting for the people's interests. That's not true, factually. If you read the press you can see that the Iranian masses are oppressed by Khomeini. Kurdish people who are fighting for their national independence have been killed by Khomeini's Islamic soldiers. Women came into the streets and said, "Down with Khomeini, we don't want the veil." Khomeini is trying to crush that movement. It is not correct to say that Khomeini is progressive. The Spartacus Youth League said that the shah is a dictator and he is against the Iranian people and working class. They fought to overthrow the shah's regime in Iran, but of course they

don't want to replace that regime with Islamic reactionaries.

WVON: If Khomeini is overthrown, what kind of government do you want in Iran?

FATIMA KHALIL: A socialist government—a workers and farmers government that would give democratic rights to the oppressed peoples in Iran, democratic rights for women. Khomeini is not able to do that because he is fighting for power for the Islamic hierarchy. The working class interests are completely different from Khomeini's interests. The Spartacist League said that Khomeini's victory would be a tragedy for the working class, but all the left said that Khomeini was progressive. Now today we can see that that's not the case. That is why the Spartacist League is trying to make clear what is happening in Iran today and what is the program to overthrow the reactionary regime in Iran, and to fight for a workers and peasants government which would represent the interests of the Iranian masses and the proletariat.



oud to be with the women who said, 'Down yours is with the Iranian proletariat.' WV Photo

speaker retorted, "So they have degrees. So does Dr. Kissinger, what about him? All the ayatollahs want to impose the *shiriyat* [Islamic law], did you know that? Of course you do. Yes, Khomeini has published many books. When he was in Iraq he published books against the Jewish people and against the Ba'hai in Iran. What about them? According to Khomeini they are not part of the Iranian people, they should be crushed. Or the Kurds, because they are Sunni." As she left the forum the same Muslim woman revealed the class basis of her views when she retorted, "Women are free in Iran. My mother drives a Mercedes."

The next night in Ann Arbor saw much the same line-up. In response to Khomeini supporters' attempts to justify the vigilante attacks by Islamic marshals to impose puritanical social norms, one SL spokesman shocked the Muslim fanatics by retorting: "I used to be in a homosexual communist grouping that fused with the Spartacist League, and I say that Ayatollah Khomeini is nothing but Anita Bryant with a beard and a turban. You say that the homosexuals [shot by the mullahs]

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SYL Wins—Mullah Lovers Cringe

After their cowardly attempts to disrupt Spartacus Youth League forums in the Midwest failed miserably earlier this month, a score of Iranian Muslim zealots and their Maoist bedfellows crawled back last week to hear Fatima Khalil, the Near Eastern Trotskyist militant who is speaking across the U.S. on the topic, "No to the Veil! For Workers Revolution in Iran!" This time no one tried to rush the meeting hall, call the cops or drown out the speaker; having once experienced workers democracy at the hands of a defense squad of trade unionists, the mullah lovers meekly submitted to our security precautions at meetings in Boston, Chicago, Detroit and Ann Arbor. What is more, an attempt by student government pipsqueaks at the University of Michigan to ban the SYL from campus and prevent Khalil from speaking went down in flames as students and faculty protested this highhanded censorship.

Two weeks ago at Wayne State University in Detroit the Islamic and Stalinist followers of Ayatollah Khomeini had blocked the hallways, chanted, pounded on the doors and called in campus police in order to stop our meeting. But on April 19 they came back cringing. Told by the forum's organizers that three ringleaders of the heckling and obstruction last time would not be admitted, they tried to get in anyway by repeating "we promise not to disrupt." But to no avail. Inside, the Maoists and Organization of Iranian Muslim Students (OIMS) supporters were encouraged by the presence of a 35-man security squad to carefully observe the limits of democratic discussion procedure.

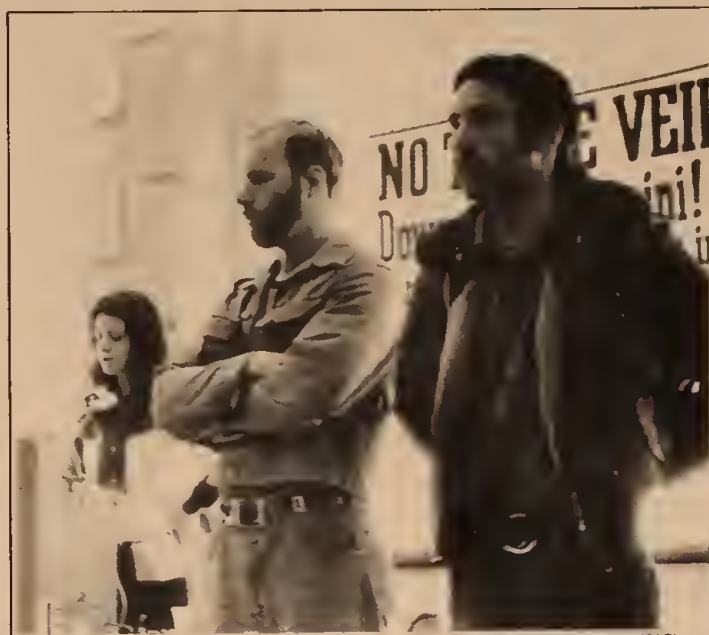
At Ann Arbor the OIMS gangsters had besieged our forum in early April, surrounding the entrances, spitting on SYLers, cursing the speaker as a "slut," and harassing members of the audience out into the parking lot where they finally provoked a confrontation with our marshals which left a dozen of the mullah thugs on the ground (see WV No. 229, 13 April). But this was not enough for the apostles of Khomeini, who were out to silence the Trotskyists. As a result of this attempt to destroy our forum, student government bureaucrats handed the SYL a \$97 bill for broken windows and suspended its organiza-

tional status and right to use university facilities.

Immediately the SYL demanded a hearing and issued a leaflet denouncing this flagrantly undemocratic victimization and declaring: "Now the MSA [Michigan Student Assembly] is bowing to Khomeini's followers...." Inside of 48 hours more than 150 people had signed a petition demanding that the charges be dismissed and the fine dropped, that the SYL's rights be

campus facilities, accusing itself of violation of due process and declaring it would act as advocate for the SYL in the dispute over payment of damages. It was a total vindication for the Spartacus Youth League and a stinging defeat for the Stalinists and clerical reactionaries who seek to strangle the voice of the communists. Fatima Khalil would speak at Ann Arbor.

The next night, April 20, those attending the University of Michigan



Trade unionists defend workers democracy at Ann Arbor forum. WV Photo

restored and Fatima Khalil be allowed to speak. At the hearing almost two dozen people representing a broad range of campus organizations showed up to defend the SYL against the attempted victimization. Meanwhile the university administration was also obviously having second thoughts about heing the only school in the country to ban a Near Eastern woman revolutionary speaking against the veil.

So after squirming in their seats through the testimony, the board recessed and came back ten minutes later with a statement lifting the SYL's suspension, reinstating our right to use

forum were met at the elevator by five hurly trade unionists who assured them of their safety. At the entrance another team searched all participants and escorted them to their seats. Inside the hall the chief marshal announced that the defense squad, made up of members of seven trade unions, would ensure equal time for all to speak, including those defending the viewpoint of the Islamic clergy. However, noting that if such a meeting were held in Teheran Khomeini would have the Marxists shot, he warned: "If they try to disrupt this meeting here, they will get a fist in the face." There were no takers. ■

Detroit News Feature

—20 April 1979

Attack on Iran regime

She calls veil a 'prison'

By MARTHA MINDES
News Staff Writer

To devout Iranian Moslems, a woman without a veil is both immodest and anti-Moslem. But to Moslem-reared Fatima Khalil, the traditional Iranian "chador," or body-swathing veil, is a prison that robs its wearer of her freedom and identity.

The 26-year-old Istanbul native who now lives in England, stopped at Wayne State University yesterday to denounce the revolutionary Moslem government of Iran's new leader, the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

ONE OF KHOMEINI'S first acts, after successfully defeating the shah's forces, was to call for women to wear the veil, the symbol of servitude and second-class citizenship for Moslem women since the seventh century. Even before Khomeini took power in mid-February, many Iranian women had adopted the chador as a symbol of support for the revolution in their country.

Tens of thousands of Iranian women, who became accustomed to modern dress and privileges under the shah's pro-Western government, rebelled violently to the order that they wear the veil permanently. As a result, Khomeini modified the order, calling the veil a religious symbol, not a necessity.

But Ms. Khalil, a Communist whose 12-city United States tour is being sponsored by the

Trotskyist Spartacus Youth League, called the veil the symbol of oppression that has put Iranian women on a par with cattle.

Her speech was opposed by about three dozen Iranian students, including several blue jean-clad women, who denied that women in Iran have lost their civil rights.

SEVERAL IRANIAN students were barred from the meeting by a voluntary 30-member security force of five local labor unions. They searched Iranian students for weapons and lined the meeting room to prevent a recurrence of violence that had interrupted previous women's rights meetings.

On April 4, militant Iranian students broke into a similar meeting at Wayne, shouting obscenities at the women speakers and kicking chairs. Spartacus members said.

In a speech that was as much political as feminist, Ms. Khalil said Iranian women will not be able to fight oppression without a powerful leader. She said they need to align themselves with the working and peasant classes which are as oppressed under Khomeini's Moslem dictatorship as they were under the shah.

She said Iranian women have lost the right to inherit property and to divorce their husbands, through the abolishment of the 1975 Family Protection Law, although men have those rights. Iranian women can still be legally executed by their husbands for committing adultery, which is not an offense for men, she added.



FATIMA KHALIL: Opposes the veil as a symbol of servitude. NEWS PHOTO/STEVE THORPE

Tour Dates

LOS ANGELES

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

BAY AREA

University of California at Berkeley
145 Dwinelle
Sunday, April 29, 6:30 p.m.
For more information call:
(415) 835-1535

San Francisco State

Tuesday, May 1
For more information call:
(415) 863-6963

University of California at Santa Cruz

Wednesday, May 2
For more information call:
(408) 462-4037

NEW YORK

New York University
Meyer Hall of Physics, Room 121
4 Washington Square Place
(Between Mercer and Broadway)
Saturday, May 5, 7:30 p.m.
For more information call:
(212) 925-5665

No Socialist, No Alternative

SWP Runs Scab Pulley for Chicago Mayor

Reporter: "If you were actually elected, what would a socialist mayor be able to do in a city like Chicago?"

Andrew Pulley: "...Busing could be carried out to bring about some equality in educational opportunities without fundamentally changing the economic realities of this city. A real genuine affirmative action program could be conducted...."

Reporter: "In other words, we wouldn't have any alteration of the structure of our political system or our economic way of doing things?"

Andrew Pulley: "Well, yes you would. I would propose my new tax plan before the City Council."

Is this socialism? No, it's the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) candidate for mayor of Chicago, responding to liberal black columnist Vernon Jarrett during a televised "candidate's panel" March 29. Although Jarrett may have been confused by a supposed socialist claiming his program could be carried out "without fundamentally changing the economic realities of this city," it comes as no surprise to those familiar with the SWP's wretched reformist practice.

Andrew Pulley, a long-time SWP party hack, presented himself in this campaign as the voice of the workers and poor, a militant black steel worker. In reality he is nothing but a scab! As a Spartacist League leaflet on the SWP's Chicago mayoralty campaign pointed out:

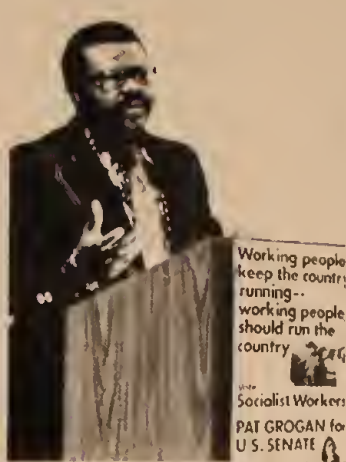
"Pulley personally certified his loyalty to the capitalist status quo when he scabbed on a picket line of the Brotherhood of Railway and Airlines Clerks

(BRAC), thrown up around U.S. Steel Gary works in September, 1978. A picket line is traditionally a sacred battle line for the working class, and in this case BRAC officials asked that the line be respected, while strikers passed out leaflets calling on steelworkers not to cross at Pulley's gate. But Pulley and other SWPers, eager above all to brown-nose a USWA [United Steelworkers] leadership unwilling to call steelworkers out on strike, muttered that 'everyone is doing it' and waltzed right across without even calling on the union to change its policy!... As a 'leader' of the working class, Pulley has set an example of union backstabbing and class treachery—he should be afraid to look honest working people in the eye let alone run for mayor on a 'socialist' ticket."

SWP: For a Five Percent "Alternative"

The SWP gave the Pulley campaign front-page billing in the *Militant*, trumpeting the fact that the Chicago *Defender*, the major black liberal newspaper in the city, had run a full-page poster backing the SWP candidate, and proclaiming its goal as 5 percent of the vote. By crossing this threshold it would realize its cherished dream of permanent ballot status. In the political turmoil following Jane Byrne's upset primary victory, Pulley received far greater media publicity than usual for a left candidate, and the SWP pulled out all stops, believing its goal of becoming the official electoral "alternative" to the Democrats and Republicans was at last in sight.

In the end, Pulley got only 15,000 votes—a little under 2 percent—while Byrne swept the city, carrying every



Scab candidate Pulley

ward and getting 90 percent of the black vote. The SWP actually did worse this year than when they ran Willie Mae Reid for mayor in 1975 (she got 17,000 votes, in a situation where the Daley machine carried only 82 percent of the black wards). Byrne's victory margin, greater than the legendary Daley ever got, clearly shows that blacks and working people are still tied to the Democratic Party and to illusions in Democratic "reformers."

The SWP in its rush to "respectability" offered little to distinguish itself from the capitalist parties. It's pretty hard to sound like a people's crusader when even the Republican candidate, a millionaire investment banker, has the same pro-"affirmative

action" program as the SWP. The SWP's solution to the crushing blizzards which paralyzed Chicago—a major issue in Byrne's primary victory—was essentially "community control" of snow removal, a plan which differed only minimally from Byrne's. Pulley made it very clear that his campaign's slogan, "Human Needs Before Profits," was not a call to abolish the profit system. The supposedly "realistic" centerpiece of Pulley's propaganda was a call to "tax the hanks and big business" to pay for social reforms, but as he insisted on an April 1 television program, "I'm not for taxing them 100 percent. I'm for taxing them to the degree necessary to provide the funding for social services."

Spartacist League Challenges SWP

The Chicago Spartacist League aggressively exposed the timid reformism of Pulley's mealy-mouthed campaign, both at public meetings and in a leaflet counterposing key socialist demands to the SWP's rotten liberalism (excerpts reprinted below):

• **Busing:** "While the SWP supports busing to achieve school desegregation, they also demand the deployment of federal troops to enforce it. This demonstrates a touching faith in the capitalist government, but most Chicago blacks found out about troops when they came to brutalize the black community during the rebellions of 1965 and 1968—do we really need another lesson courtesy of the SWP? The Spartacist League program, a real socialist program, is for labor/black defense of hused schoolchildren—and extension of busing beyond the city limits to the superior schools in the white suburbs."

• **Nazis:** "The SWP also held the position that Nazis like Frank Collin should get a government-protected, 'Constitutionally guaranteed' platform for their filthy views—that is until it became expedient for the SWP to change tunes and tail various groups protesting the planned Nazi march in Skokie last summer. Before this hypocritical switcheroo they attacked the Spartacist League position that vicious fascists should instead be smashed by the working class! And for further proof of the SWP's faith in the capitalist government, just look at how they join the U.S. government's fake 'human rights' campaign and help the butchers of Vietnam and huddies of the shah of Iran attack the Soviet Union in the name of 'American democracy.'"

• **Community Control:** "Last but not least the SWP hits us with the call for 'community control' of services in Chicago neighborhoods. Haven't blacks had enough 'community leaders' like the Rev. Jesse Jackson, who wheel and deal with City Hall on behalf of 'their people' and never deliver for anyone but themselves? And doesn't 'community control' have a sinister meaning in Chicago anyway—it's exactly what the racists in Marquette Park want! In fact, for blacks 'community control' is a utopian myth which, even if it could be attained, would only mean the freedom to 'control' ever-deteriorating ghettos, ever-worsening city services, and permanently segregated schools! Blacks don't need a candidate who thinks this is

continued on page 11

SWP Flees Anti-Weber Demo in Chicago

CHICAGO—Driven into a frenzy by the presence of class-struggle politics, leaders of the United Steelworkers (USWA) District 31 Women's Caucus sabotaged an anti-Weber demonstration which they themselves sponsored outside the Federal Building here on March 31. The Women's Caucus, a pressure group made up of fake-left supporters of the Sadlowski/Balanoff bureaucracy of District 31, had intended to turn the protest into a celebration of union-busting "affirmative action" programs. But faced with a sizeable contingent led by the Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth League (SL/SYL), the sectarian reformists simply walked off to form their own picket line.

The SL denounces the racist court suit by Brian Weber (which alleges that a program for upgrading of minorities at a Louisiana steel plant resulted in "reverse discrimination" against the white lab analyst), while at the same time opposing government-ordered programs which overturn union contracts and seniority systems. At the Loop demonstration SL/SYL signs included: "Defeat Weber! Government Out of the Unions!" "For Union-Run Minority Job Recruitment—Not Government Union-Busting Affirmative Action!" and "For the Union Hiring Hall—First Come First Served on All Jobs!"

These signs already dismayed the Sadlowski/Balanoff apologists, but when the SL began to chant "Dump the Bureaucrats—Build a Workers Party!",



Spartacist League contingent at anti-Weber demonstration in Chicago, March 31.

they recoiled in horror. Pulling their followers away, they suddenly split the picket line in two and formed a rival demonstration with some 30 participants only a few yards away. One supporter of the Maoist Workers Viewpoint Organization became so convulsed over the SL's refusal to tail after the liberal wing of the USWA bureaucracy that he physically threatened a woman steel worker who was marching with the Spartacist League.

Prominent among the saboteurs were leading members of the Socialist Work-

ers Party (SWP), including Pat Grogan (a Women's Caucus member who crossed picket lines of striking railroad clerks last September). Grogan's comrades were distributing "Pulley for Mayor" literature calling for a labor party as they refused to join the SL chant for a workers party and against the class-collaborationist union bureaucracy. Also present was a delegation from the Shachtmanite Revolutionary Socialist League which wandered aimlessly between the two picket lines without joining either. ■

WV Photo

Deer Hunter...

(continued from page 5)

wedding reception in the history of film). Once you get out of Clairton, however, you're in the war zone. Repressed sexuality becomes uncontrollable mass aggression in a crude model of social-Freudian pessimism. (And in Asia as seen by Cimino, the culture seems to have no social rituals at all except forcing people to shoot themselves in the head for fun and profit.)

At the structural center of *The Deer Hunter* is the metaphor of the game/sport: the Russian roulette torture/gambling game in Vietnam and the deer hunt in the U.S. The precise treatment of the ritual organization of sport is part of the film's stress on the need for war preparation. Michael, the hero of the hunt, becomes the hero of Vietnam; tested by the game played in the mountains, he can meet the test of survival in the Southeast Asian jungles. Just as he leads the deer hunt, he leads his friends to survival in Vietnam—the super-leader who draws his strength from the “community” and upon whose shoulders rests collective survival. On this plane *The Deer Hunter* is a simple plea for a strong military ethos to save the “community.”

The repressed sexuality in the film is strongly homosexual (sleeping with Meryl Streep barely counts even as a game). The locker-room and barroom scenes underline the emphasis on male bonding, the highest expression of love and loyalty in a warrior society.

When Michael the macho military hero comes home from the war he ascends the mountain again, in a scene which may well define the contemporary proto-fascist artistic sensibility. Above the mist of the highest peak with some tabernacle choir singing and the camera straining toward mythic grandeur and primal force, the superman stands as a solitary hunter facing the sexually symbolic buck. Of course, now he doesn't shoot. Only the Übermensch can understand the relationship of game to life. Only here can there be sport without blood. And only the individual can be redeemed from the unconscious cycle of sexual repression and ritual social slaughter.

The real answer to the cult of the individual strong man in *The Deer Hunter* is not the celebration of weakness in *Coming Home* but the collective strength of the Vietnamese working people who with bravery, determination and self-sacrifice defeated the mightiest imperialist military machine on this planet. The heroes of the NLF/DRV who impressed the world with their courage, the masses of peasants and workers who fought for national liberation and social revolution, the millions who endured while the torturers plied their trade and the bombs rained down—these people changed the face of Asia. *The Deer Hunter* can lie about the Vietnamese people's struggle for freedom, but it cannot undo their victory.

An Oscar for Uncle Sam

The Deer Hunter ends with the survivors gathered together after the funeral of their friend Nick, who blew his brains out playing Russian roulette for money in Saigon. In their grief they spontaneously break into a mournful version of “God Bless America.”

It would be inconsistent with Cimino's methods to end his film with a big bang of obvious flagwaving. The whimpering ending is meant as bitter-sweet tragedy—to cast post-Vietnam demoralization in universal “human” terms. The friends are sadder (and not a bit wiser), but they have survived; they have their hero, their community and the song that brings them closer together. Thus patriotism is portrayed not as a political ideology but as a necessary mechanism and expression of community survival. And the demoralization

caused by the Vietnam war is stripped of specific political content and becomes merely the image of the tragedy of the human condition.

But what about the real political tragedy of Vietnam? What about the butchery of American working-class youth sent to slaughter the Vietnamese? And what about the Vietnamese? What of their shattering “experience”? Their communities at the receiving end of imperialism's relentless terror bombing—and the communities that lived underground in tunnels for years?

The real source of the Vietnam war's demoralization of Americans was political—the counterrevolutionary war of an imperialist ruling class. That is what depressed and sickened the American soldier, made him weak and unwilling to fight. And Cimino's appeal to the second-rate myth of the macho man and the mountain will not make it otherwise. The GIs in Vietnam did not believe they were fighting in defense of Hometown, USA. They sensed they were dying in the jungles for Imperialism, USA and they wanted out. And patriotism went out the window.

It is that pre-Vietnam innocent patriotism for which Cimino yearns. And *The Deer Hunter* does its best to recover from that image of a weakened and hurt America so that it can respond to new challenges like it did in the “old days,” in the name of the defense of the Clairtons. Ultimately this film is part of a bourgeois ideological offensive to cut through the disillusioned anti-patriotic sentiment produced by Vietnam and gear up for the next imperialist war. It is no wonder *The Deer Hunter* won an Oscar; perhaps it better deserved the Congressional Medal of Honor.

After all Cimino's cinematic tricks are over, after the crafty lying is spent and the cheers have trailed off, reality imposes itself on myth. Workers are not singing “God Bless America,” and patriotism will not be the same at least for a while.

The Deer Hunter lies again. The truth is that not everyone was demoralized by the defeat of U.S. imperialism by the heroic armies of the Vietnamese workers and peasants. The Vietnamese were jubilant—and so was every class-conscious proletarian everywhere in the world. But the cheers that ring out in American movie houses do testify to the partiality and shallowness of the American antiwar sentiment that so impressed the liberals and their fake-left camp followers. Only a small minority of that movement became the conscious partisans of the other side in Vietnam. The antiwar movement in its mass never broke from social patriotism; the graduates of that movement, and the subsequent political generation, thus remain accessible to Cimino as he portrays the “VC” as sadists and murderers.

Of all *The Deer Hunter*'s lies, the most dangerous poses survival through imperialist war—sending the workers into battle to kill their class brothers. But the real survival of humanity demands its liberation through socialist revolution. ■

Ayatollahs...

(continued from page 1)

wants to demonstrate for Mr. Taleghani?” (New York Times, 20 April).

Class Collaboration—The Road to Bloody Defeat

The Iranian fake left tailed the mullahs in the name of “anti-imperialist” unity. But the program of social reaction which the mullahs have always advocated is now being ruthlessly implemented. Bands of religious fanatics have set up roadblocks where they search cars for sinners to flog for the “crimes” of drinking and fornication. Khomeini's “anti-imperialism” turns out to be the curbing of imports of liquor and pork.

So now the opportunist left is backing the “national bourgeoisie” of Bazargan et al. and “progressive” mullahs like Taleghani as the alternative to Khomeini. The bourgeois politicians, however, have sought to ride to power on the coattails of the mullahs and have no organized power base of their own. Their “defense” of democratic secularism consists of pathetic, impotent petitions to the mosque. Furthermore, the appetite of the National Front to crush the left has been made quite clear. Bazargan was quick to attack “Trotskyites and Maoists” as complicit with SAVAK in allegedly instigating the Kurdish and Turkoman revolts. And he has stated, “a powerful army is now more necessary to us than bread” (*Le Monde*, 6 April).

The imperialist press, lamenting the execution of a few of the shah's bloody-handed henchmen—a fate they richly deserve—has equated Khomeini's reign of terror with that of Robespierre. But the “Islamic Revolution” opposes the basic gains of 1789: separation of church and state, legal equality for women, abolition of feudal landholdings, the right of self-determination! Such revolutionary-democratic tasks as bringing land to the poor peasant and national rights for the oppressed nationalities can be guaranteed only by the dictatorship of the proletariat—an Iranian workers and peasants government.

This revolutionary perspective requires a political struggle against the wretched class collaborationism of the pro-Moscow Tudeh party, the Maoists, the Fedayeen guerrillaists and the fake Trotskyists of the HKS—all of whom backed Khomeini. The HKS now crows about its debate with a mullah on Iranian TV. For these dangerously deluded parliamentary cretins this is the ideal model to pressure the ayatollahs. Begging Khomeini to have a better economic policy, the HKS remained silent on the burning need for a united-front defense of the left, the need to organize workers militias and of course the call of “Down with Khomeini.” The international Spartacist tendency stands as the only group on the left to consistently warn of the danger of Islamic reaction and to call today for workers revolution against the mullahs. ■

Fatima Khalil...

(continued from page 7)

firing squads] were nothing but rapists, but you said the ‘victims’ had to be whipped a hundred times.... Why do we hold these forums? Because we are looking for a few Iranians with guts, with the guts to stand up and say they are for the democratic rights of all the people—national minorities, homosexuals, women.”

When another Muslim in the audience asked “what right” the speaker had to criticize Khomeini when 98 percent of the population had voted for an “Islamic Republic” in the recent referendum, an SL supporter replied:

“When Nixon went to Cairo after the bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong, 3 million people lined the streets and cheered. I suppose that was the outpouring of the great love of the Egyptian people for American imperialism, right? When Sadat called a referendum to approve the peace of treason, he got over 90 percent, too. It's very easy to arrange a referendum. Hitler is a great teacher. So Iran is directed by a ‘revolutionary council’—but nobody knows who's on it; they don't even know what the laws are! That's Islamic ‘democracy’!

“You talk about the CIA—today in Afghanistan, the policy of Khomeini is the policy of the CIA. And in 1953, where did the CIA spend its money? They didn't send it to the shah, it filtered the dollars through the mosques and the ayatollahs, whose mass demonstrations were what brought down Mossadeq. So don't tell us about the CIA, because you are a Muslim reactionary.”

In conclusion a black woman

comrade of the Spartacist League answered the Khomeini lovers: “As Marxists, we recognize the right of the national minorities in Iran to self-determination. You have no program for the minorities. You don't even speak on the reality of women's oppression there. You have nothing to say to the working class. The international Spartacist tendency told the truth before Khomeini stepped into power, before the blood was laid on the ground, before the corpses rolled in the streets. We were baited for opposing the ‘progressive’ forces. Only it turned out they weren't so progressive after all. We seek to intervene in the struggle in Iran because we are internationalists—we defend our class brothers who only stand to lose under Islamic reaction. That's why we say, ‘Down with Khomeini, For Workers Revolution in Iran!’” ■

Racist Hysteria...

(continued from page 3)

mongering media and the “law-and-order” city government. After repeated clashes with the cops over his low-or-no-bail rulings, pressure from the PBA led to Wright's temporary removal from the Criminal Court in 1975. Two years later he was restored to the post. Known for his sharp tongue, the 60-year-old part-time poet scandalized his liberal colleagues when, in the midst of the furor, he was asked his opinion of PBA chief Sam DeMilia and replied that there was an old West Indian saying, “Never get into a pee-peeing contest with a skunk.”

But it's not a question of the good judge versus the bad cops. Bruce Wright is an agent of the capitalist state, appointed by union-buster John Lindsay. His political views, in fact, are very mainstream Democratic Party—the old pork-barrel system of capitalist politics. He just wants to get something for his constituency—as for example his attempts to pressure for more black professionals, or his criticism of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund that it is headed by a white attorney. Thus his politics are compatible with black capitalist demagogues such as Daughtry who are willing to play with pogromist threats against small Jewish sects in order to further their careers.

Marxists denounce the racist furor whipped up over Wright's no-bail ruling. We oppose the bonapartist attempts by the cops to oust the judge from the bench, just as we defended black Democrat Adam Clayton Powell when he was driven from his congressional seat on the crest of a racist crusade. But oppressed groups cannot defend themselves by pressuring for the reappointment of liberal judges. Only fighting to replace the whole racist system of bourgeois “justice” with working-class rule can do away with the lumpen crime and cop brutality endemic to American capitalism. ■

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French Trotskyists Denounce LCR on Iran

"For the Ayatollah You Sacrifice Women!"

We reprint below the remarks by a spokesman of the Ligue Trotskyiste de France (LTF), sympathizing section of the international Spartacist tendency, at a forum on Iran sponsored by the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (LCR) at the Mutualité meeting hall in Paris on March 2. The meeting was addressed by Michel Rovère, a journalist for the LCR's weekly newspaper Rouge, who had been part of a team of reporters from sections of the United Secretariat (USec) that visited Teheran in mid-February. In recent weeks these pseudo-Trotskyist "eye witnesses" have been on tour spreading the gospel according to Khomeini. In the U.S. SWP'er Cindy Jacquith justified wearing of the veil as an "act of resistance" to the shah, rather than a return to medieval practices of female seclusion. In England IMG'er Brian Grogan proudly announced that he had chanted allah akbar (god is great) and carried a portrait of the Islamic fundamentalist ayatollah (a "Khomeini card") in his wallet.

The LCR's Rovère was no less effusive in his praise for the "Islamic Revolution," seeing the neighborhood committees (the komitehs) led by Shi'ite religious leaders (mullahs) as possible precursors to soviets. Of course, there are some problems, he reported, such as the fact that women do not have the right to speak in the komitehs! During his speech, Rovère noted:

"The neighborhood committees were formed essentially from the end of December on, often at the initiative of local religious authorities, in order to assure minimal supplies of bottled gas during the oil workers strike.... Later

these neighborhood committees were the framework for organizing what was called in the press the Islamic marshals.

"The most serious [limit] is without doubt segregation by sex. In a meeting of a neighborhood committee... women do not have the right to intervene. There is a curtain separating the women from the men.... At the most they pass small notes under the curtain....

"So the future of these neighborhood committees, that is to say... whether they advance toward the organization of soviet-type structures, depends on several factors...."

These factors included dealing with questions of sewage, lighting, day care and similar problems of the slum neighborhoods, according to the LCR speaker. But of the need to break with the mullahs, to oppose the theocratic Islamic Republic of Khomeini, there was not a word. Our comrade replied:

Some months ago when you held your first meeting on Iran, we intervened to say that Khomeini was against agrarian reform, against communists, against the liberation of women; that he was reactionary and that it was necessary to mobilize the working class and the masses against both the shah and Khomeini. You answered—as usual—that we were, sectarians and that Khomeini was "ambiguous" and even represented the "democratic movement."

At that time, and in the absence of a real proletarian leadership, it was the mullahs who profited from the masses' hatred for the shah. And if groups like the Fedayeen today are armed militari-

ly, politically they are disarmed. It's difficult to effectively struggle against Khomeini after you've been supporting him. Today, tragically, they are impotent before Islamic fanaticism.

And now the supreme cretinism: the fake-Trotskyist organization in Iran [SWP] limits itself to pressuring the ayatollahs in power for demands which they never promised to fulfill. Quite the contrary. Khomeini never promised anything but repression of women and a return to the Middle Ages. Against the shah's barbarism, he promised only a more retrograde barbarism! Every time I read the articles on Iran in Rouge, I remember when I used to intervene in the LCR's feminist meetings to fight for the class line instead of the sex line, and I was booed by the feminists of the LCR. But for the ayatollah they are ready to sacrifice the women!

Who the hell is the USec trying to fool? Sections of the USec took part in this defense group called CARL, which included pro-mullah forces. The sections of the international Spartacist tendency in the U.S., in Britain, in Germany, in France, in our struggle against the shah have always insisted that the ayatollahs were no alternative, that the powerful Iranian proletariat must regroup the masses behind it and against the ayatollahs. Of course, the pro-mullah forces don't like this much, but when they wanted to kick us out of their demonstration in England and called the cops, the IMG [British USec section] shut up and stood back—which

says a great deal about the United Secretariat.

So you think the ayatollah is "ambiguous"?! The problem isn't that the LCR had illusions, it's that they closed their eyes. Because what passes for revolutionary strategy in the USec is tailism, tailing anything that moves. That's why the LCR always ends up siding with those who co-opt the revolution, those who are sidetracking the proletariat from victory. This time, it's even more gross. Sometimes there's at least a vaguely "progressive" facade on what the LCR is supporting, but here it's blatantly medieval barbarism, the "anti-imperialist" holy war that this "democratic movement" stands for.

We Spartacists think the principal task in Iran was and still is to build an independent proletarian revolutionary party which alone can satisfy the democratic aspirations of the masses, the peasants, the women, the nationalities, as was shown by the Russian Revolution. And for this there must be an independent mobilization of the masses to form their own organs of workers power—soviets—organized by the workers, led by the Trotskyist party, not by the mullahs like the neighborhood committees, where women don't have the right to speak. To think you can fight for democracy without having fought against Khomeini, without fighting today against Khomeini, is social-democratic cretinism. The question of revolution is a question of state power, and it's Khomeini who's been winning—in part thanks to the political disarming of the proletariat. ■

Healyites...

(continued from page 2)

betrayals. To put it in perspective, we will use an historical analogy. The Chinese Revolution of 1925-27 was decisive both in the development of Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution and in the historic division between Stalinism and Trotskyism. Trotsky opposed the Chinese Communist Party's liquidation into the bourgeois-nationalist Kuomintang as suicidal opportunism. But after his worst predictions had been borne out, he fully solidarized with the Communists against Chiang's terror. (Even Stalin, who advocated the entry into the Kuomintang, defended the Communists when the bourgeois nationalists turned on them.) The Healy/Banda position in Iraq is equivalent to supporting Chiang's 1927 massacre of the Communists on the grounds that they had "betrayed the Chinese Revolution!"

And this is more than an analogy. The Communist Party of Iraq is not merely a Kremlin publicity agency. It is the mass party of the proletariat, centered on the strategic oil workers. And its mass base has a history of resisting Moscow's "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism and alliance with bourgeois nationalism—namely in the 1958 revolution.

In July 1958 the Hashemite monarchy of King Faisal was swept away by a popular uprising led by the CP in bloc with a nationalist grouping in the officer corps under General Kassem. Under pressure from the revolutionary masses the CP went into opposition to Kassem and sections of the party were pushing to overthrow him and take power directly. So as not to disturb the "spirit of Camp David," the Kremlin openly supported Kassem, denounced the Iraqi

CP for "ultraleftism" and demanded a purge of its left wing. As Isaac Deutscher wrote at the time:

"Since the far-off days of the middle 1920s, when Stalin ordered the Chinese communists to serve as the 'Kuomintang's coolies,' no Communist Party has been exposed to quite so abject a humiliation."

—"Russia and the International Communist Movement," in *Russia, China and the West: A Contemporary Chronicle 1953-1966* (1970)

Encouraged by Moscow's support and the demoralization of the Communist ranks, Kassem moved against the CP. In 1960 he outlawed all parties affiliated to international organizations. Using this reactionary law he purged CPers from the trade unions and drove the party underground. The 1963 Ba'athist coup intensified the repression which Kassem had begun. Presumably the Healyites retrospectively support the Kassem/Ba'athist terror against the Communist Party because of the latter's "international affiliations!"

With practiced cynicism the *News Line* tells J.A.:

"It is a principle with Trotskyists that we defend workers, whether they are Stalinists, revisionists or social democrats, from the attacks of the capitalist state.

"But, as the facts show, that has nothing to do with the incidents in Iraq."

Do the Healyites then maintain that Ba'athist Iraq is not a capitalist state? Or perhaps they mean that they defend the workers' movement against capitalist state repression only for groups which don't do anything illegal, like organize within the army. In case the WRP leaders' parroting of Qaddafi's oratory has entirely rotted their brains, we will remind them that one of the famous "21 conditions" for membership in the Communist International states:

"The obligation to spread communist ideas includes the special obligation to

carry on systematic and energetic propaganda in the army. Where such agitation is prevented by emergency laws, it must be carried on illegally. Refusal to undertake such work would be tantamount to a dereliction of revolutionary duty and is incompatible with membership of the Communist International."

—Jane Degras, ed., *The Communist International 1919-1943*, Volume 1, 1919-1922 (1956)

We have long maintained that beneath the hully-boy bluster of Healy, Banda & Co. is the cowardly legalism endemic to the British Labourite bureaucracy. The Stalinist cadres in the Iraqi army, despite their class-collaborationist politics, are a hundredfold more courageous than Qaddafi's yellow journalists in Clapham High Street.

The WRP's fake-Trotskyist opponents are naturally scandalizing it for its support to counterrevolutionary terror in Iraq, thrilled by the chance to oppose the WRP from the left. But the myriad British centrists groups are by no means champions of proletarian class independence in the Near East (or elsewhere). They too support bourgeois nationalism in backward countries, though now less flamboyantly than the Healyites. They too uphold the notion of the "Arab Revolution"—that most curious "revolution" which is directed

not against the Arab governments and ruling classes, but externally against Zionist Israel. Like Healy/Banda, they supported Khomeini as "progressive," "democratic" or "anti-imperialist." But now it is Healy/Banda who have taken the "Arab Revolution" line to its logical conclusion—opposition to any expression, however partial or deformed, of proletarian class independence which disturbs the Arab rulers, up to and including support to its bloody repression.

We warn the WRP and its supporters in the rump "International Committee" that its cynical embrace of the Libyan and Iraqi military dictators has consequences. Whereas Stalinists similarly apologize for repression against their left-wing opponents by bourgeois nationalists (e.g., Indira Gandhi, Mengistu, Velasco) as prescribed by the bureaucrats of the deformed workers states, the Healyites have gone them one better in mimicking this class treason on behalf of bourgeois regimes directly. For a small propaganda group without a significant mass base, moreover, program is decisive in determining a group's class character. In the case of the Healy/Banda organization, the contradiction between its "Trotskyist" pretensions and the dictates of its Libyan patrons has repetitively come down in favor of the latter. ■

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Newport News...

(continued from page 12)

The police riot was the cops' response to the re-establishment of militant, mass picketing at the shipyard gates. On April 13 the union membership had successfully beaten back a proposal for unconditional surrender to the company, which had been endorsed by the majority of the Local 8888 executive board under pressure from the International. The several hundred pickets who showed up on April 16, obviously buoyed up by Friday's victory, were determined to ditch the faint-hearted strike tactics of the bureaucracy, under which scabs were generally free to enter the plant. The 500 to 600 pickets, only a fraction of the local's membership, proved unequal to the legions of armed cops. However, the failure lies not with the courageous militants but with a leadership that failed to throw the whole weight of the union behind the picketing.

The USWA International had waited one full year after the union won a National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) election against the scab company union, the Peninsula Shipbuilders Association, before striking. And even then, the Steelworkers leadership looked more to the courts than to the picket line for victory. When on April 9 the federal courts ruled in favor of a company appeal that the representation election be re-examined by the NLRB, the McBride gang decided to call off the strike. Claiming that the union was prepared to resume its strike after the NLRB investigation, International staff representatives bulldozed Local 8888's executive board and negotiating committee into voting to end the strike. The return-to-work proposal included a humiliating demand that each striker sign a statement pledging "I make an unconditional agreement to return to work"—leaving job reassignments, etc., totally up to the company.

A letter over the signature of Local 8888 president Wayne Crosby was sent to the strikers notifying them of the leadership's decision to return to work on April 16. The International reps, who had informed the exec board that they saw no reason why the membership should have a vote on ending the strike, were confident that the matter was disposed of. But by now the local leadership had polarized. There was strong opposition from Local 8888 officials who had been critical of the International's highhanded conduct of the strike and its strategy of permitting scabs to cross picket lines. As word of the sellout spread among the stunned pickets a seething indignation began to grow. The company all along had demanded an "unconditional return to work" and now the union leadership had voted to accept it behind the membership's back!

On Wednesday, April 11, a group of 150 militants gathered at Copeland Industrial Park to plan for the union meeting that Friday and hopefully prevent the bureaucrats from abandoning the struggle. They decided to demand democratic discussion and a membership vote on the strike at the union meeting. Jack Hower, the arrogant International rep in charge of the organizing campaign, showed up and was raked over the coals for his inept strike leadership by the enraged militants, most of whom had been active in the day-to-day running of the strike.

By the time the union meeting took place on Friday, April 13, at the Hampton Coliseum the 6,000 members present were hopping mad and rightly so. Speaker after speaker took the mike to blast the leadership for its behind-the-scenes deals. Criticism focused on the attempt to call off the strike without a membership vote and a secret deal made with local police chief Hinman by

Hower and Wayne Crosby to enforce a ban on mass picketing. Under the terms of this agreement, the union would dishand the flying squads set up spontaneously by militant pickets, which cruised from gate to gate to drive off scabs; in return, the cops would not harass strikers for "petty infractions." Since this accomplished Tenneco's purpose of eliminating barriers to scabbing, it was not surprising that it was eagerly accepted by the cops! The shamefaced bureaucrats couldn't muster enough courage to put their own motion on the floor ordering strikers to return to work the following Monday. Instead a vague resolution was passed, with the substance that there be no return to work unless the shipyard lifted its "conditions."

One week later, and subsequent to the police riot, Steelworkers leaders again ordered the membership back to work, this time successfully. To justify this, the bureaucrats seized on the company's dropping of its demand that strikers sign the humiliating pledge. This "concession" is nine-tenths window dressing. While the USWA bureaucracy played it up as a big victory, this in no sense prohibits the shipyard from refusing to rehire militants and using any number of excuses to implement discriminatory transfers and downgrades. As we go to press, Newport News workers have told *WV* that upon reporting back to work they were sent home, pending company reassignment of jobs.

At times, of course, it is necessary for even the best of trade-union leaders to carry out tactical retreats in order to prepare for a renewed fight under more favorable circumstances. But shipyard workers ought not to be lulled into believing that this is the intention of the McBride leadership. Those who label defeats "victories," who preach reliance on the courts and the NLRB and make deals with the cops to halt mass picketing, merit no confidence from the working class. If matters are left to the present Steelworkers leadership, the most likely outcome is increased victimizations by the company, spreading demoralization and, more likely than not, eventual abandonment of the workers by the USWA. Therefore it is imperative that militants in the yard reassemble their forces and fight for resumption of the strike.

As we emphasized from the inception of the Newport News battle, victory could not be attained without class-struggle methods. And central to that was the issue of the picket line. As we said, "The lessons of labor history are clear: no major strike, particularly against a bitterly anti-union company, has been won by letting scabs in!" (*WV* No. 225, 16 February). And indeed this proved true. On the rare occasions when the union mounted effective mass picket lines, the number of scabs decreased and morale surged. But this was the exception, not the rule, and in the end the leaky picket lines fed demoralization

and gave the bureaucrats an excuse to end the strike.

Yet throughout the strike the fake leftists, the pseudo-socialists who are unwilling to antagonize the Steelworkers bigwigs, refused to warn shipyard workers of the deadly dangers inherent in the bureaucracy's policy of abiding by the "right-to-work" (i.e., right to scab) laws. The reformist Socialist Workers Party capped its press coverage with an article hailing the April 16 meeting (the only membership meeting held during the entire strike!) as "Union Democracy in Action—We'll Go Back to Work on Our Own Terms." The article omits any reference to the secret anti-picketing deal and to the meeting of strike militants called to organize opposition to the sellout deal, while uncritically quoting USWA district director Bruce Thrasher saying that the intention of the leadership was to "continue the strike." Not surprisingly, the same 27 April issue of the SWP's *Militant* noted without comment the intention of local officials to call on federal marshals to protect the pickets from local cops—as if the strikebreaking Carter government would defend the workers!

But all the reformist claptrap notwithstanding, the strikers have experienced firsthand the pitfalls of class-collaborationist leadership. As the last few days of the strike indicate, if shipyard militants were not able to implement effective, mass pickets or defeat the sellout, it is not because they were unwilling or did not try. Rather, they were not sufficiently prepared and organized beforehand to combat the bureaucracy's treachery. The hard reality of the Newport News defeat is that the existing Meany/McBride trade-union leadership, with its defeatist reliance on the government and capitalist politicians, is no more capable of organizing the South than the conservative AFL officials were of organizing auto, rubber or steel four decades ago. Only the Spartacist League has forthrightly proclaimed this elementary truth, calling for building a class-struggle leadership in the unions that can defeat the union-busting monopolies and break the back of the "open shop" South. ■

working-class independence. This isn't surprising coming from Pulley, who has betrayed one of the most elementary principles of working-class solidarity: picket lines mean don't cross! It wasn't just would-be mayor Pulley who blithely crossed the Railway workers picket line at U.S. Steel's Gary plant last fall, but also the SWP's candidate for treasurer, Pat Grogan, who works at U.S. Steel's South Works plant. These scabs excused their class betrayal by claiming that the BRAC bureaucrats hadn't asked the Steelworkers to support them—a blatant lie (see "SWP Scabs on Rail Strike," *WV* No. 216, 6 October 1978).

The way forward for the working people of Chicago does not lie with these lying, scabbing reformists who so casually cross picket lines. There were steel workers who refused to cross the Railway Clerks union picket lines and who fought for the union to honor the lines. One of these workers confronted Pulley at an SWP forum last fall, exposing the SWP's real appetites: "For the SWP, it's being one with the bureaucrats. If the bureaucrats tell the workers to scab, they say, then we'll scab."

The Spartacist League stands with the intransigent working-class solidarity displayed by those USWA members who walked the BRAC picket lines with signs proclaiming "This steel worker doesn't scab." The SWP has proven many times over—and once again in the Pulley campaign—that it is neither socialist nor a real "alternative" to the sellout union bureaucracies who tail after the bosses' parties. As for Pulley, we can only repeat the evaluation by Jack London: "A scab is a two-legged animal with a corkscrew soul, a water logged brain, a combination backbone of jelly and glue. Where others have hearts, he carries a tumor of rotten principles. When a scab comes down the street, men turn their backs and angels weep in heaven, and the devil shuts the gates of hell to keep him out." ■

Steel Haulers Wildcat...

(continued from page 12)

doubtedly, TDU's minimal demands contributed significantly to Fitzsimmons' pledge to sanction the strike, and by April 22 the International announced agreement on reinstitution of the old pay formula with all but one of the major groups representing steel carrying companies.

Even more damning, however, is TDU's parochial strategy, which consciously isolates the steel haulers from the rest of the workers covered by the MFA. "We're Not Freight—Strike to Win in Steel," *Convoy Contract Bulletin* No. 9 proclaimed to the strikers. "The freight settlement has nothing to do with steel haulers and the contract we will have to live with," the bulletin went on to explain. Instead of pointing to the steel haulers' revolt as an example for the rest of the IBT, for TDU the freight division has all but ceased to exist. Though TDU formally calls for a "no" vote on the MFA, its previous emphasis on "no contract, no work" in freight has virtually disappeared.

What has remained the same is TDU's bottom-line strategy of putting pressure on the bureaucracy as the means to winning a "decent" contract. The April 15 *Convoy* bulletin suggests that Teamsters telegram Fitzsimmons "urg[ing] you to immediately call a strike against all companies covered by the [steel] rider. This is the only way the carriers will give us a good contract." This is a lie. A "good" contract, one representing the real needs of the IBT membership, can be won only through united strike action by freight drivers, all the commodity haulers and the related warehouse workers. ■

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WORKERS VANGUARD

Cops Rampage—60 Picketers Arrested

McBride Stabs Newport News Strikers in the Back

On April 22 local and International officials of the Steelworkers union (USWA) ordered 15,000 workers striking the Newport News Shipyard and Dry Dock Company back to the job without a contract. Although union officials are claiming that the bitter three-month strike was ended on "our terms," the dismantling of picket lines unmistakably marks a defeat for the shipyard workers. Moreover, it could well cripple organizing efforts at the huge shipyard over the next few years unless the workers are able to rapidly rally their forces.

That the Newport News battle is a pivotal test of labor's ability to organize the South is indisputable. There has been no comparable unionizing drive in this anti-labor bastion for decades. Despite the enormous odds faced by the strikers—the multi-million dollar Tenneco conglomerate, hordes of state and local cops eager to enforce Virginia's scabherding "right to work" laws—responsibility for this setback, as well as for the continuing inability to organize the South, lies squarely with the American trade-union bureaucracy. To understand the tragedy of this strike it is sufficient to examine closely the last week of the battle, for within these few days the enormous gap between a rank and file eager to fight and the conservative, cowardly McBride leadership of the USWA was excruciatingly evident.

On Monday morning, April 16, as the strike of the shipyard workers was dragging into its eleventh week, Virginia police using Nazi stormtrooper tactics

attacked the strike headquarters building of Steelworkers Local 8888. Strikers were dragged out of the building and beaten bloodily. One worker was thrown through a plate glass window, and then while lying on the ground bleeding he was savagely clubbed. To stop the raid on their strike headquarters on the second floor, union members blocked the stairwell with their bodies. Using anything they could get their hands on—chairs, tables and fire extinguishers—they successfully defended their hall. When it was all over 14 strikers were sent to the hospital, one with a concussion, another with a fractured jaw and yet another with a broken leg.

Just before the unprovoked attack on strike headquarters, local police and state troopers in riot gear with attack dogs had launched a sweep against picketers in front of the shipyard gates. After brief defensive skirmishes the strikers fled along Washington Avenue pursued by the cops. As they ran into restaurants and down side alleys, they were dragged out, handcuffed and beaten, often as police dogs were biting their arms and legs. The bloodthirsty cops, intent on crushing the strike, didn't stop to check for union cards. Anyone in the area, news reporters and bystanders, was given the same treatment. Before "Bloody Monday" was over nearly 50 strikers had been injured and more than 60 arrested, according to Local 8888 vice president John Townsell.

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Newport News cops confront strikers in February.

WV Photo

Steel Haulers Wildcat Over Fitz Sellout

Just a week and a half after it began, the "longest national trucking strike in U.S. history" ended abruptly on April 10 with a tentative agreement between the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) and trucking industry bargainers. Immediately following the announcement of the pact, Teamster president Frank Fitzsimmons ordered the membership back on the job, trampling on the fundamental trade-union principle of "no contract, no work."

The new agreement is fundamentally the same as the wage package offered before the strike, except that the union won its demand for one extra cost-of-living payment in the third year of the contract—with the provision that the money be deferred until after the contract expires! Otherwise, none of the significant issues faced by Teamsters—70-hour workweeks, grueling schedules,

stepped-up disciplinary procedures and mushrooming of non-union outfits—were resolved.

Due to its enormous social power the IBT was able to sidestep Carter's wage guidelines without much difficulty, although with the present skyrocketing inflation rate even Teamsters will be lucky to stay even. Weaker unions, however, not to mention millions of unorganized workers, will not obtain exemptions so readily when their wages and working conditions are on Carter's 7 percent chopping block. With a militant strike, the Teamsters could have obliterated the guidelines on behalf of the entire working class and fought for demands representing the actual needs of the membership, including a big wage increase, full cost-of-living protection and a slashed workweek with no cut in pay. But a militant strike

necessarily entailed a struggle with the capitalist government, and to Fitzsimmons that is unthinkable.

The Midwestern steel haulers covered by the Iron and Steel "rider" to the Master Freight Agreement (MFA) pose the chief threat to Fitzsimmons' intended sellout. In Pittsburgh, Youngstown and Canton the haulers, whose own contract supplement had not been settled, refused to return to work. Their unsanctioned strike rapidly spread throughout much of the Midwestern steel belt and resulted in thousands of layoffs at mills in the region. As the rank-and-file walkout gained strength Fitzsimmons reportedly promised to sanction the strike but refused to accede to the strikers' demand for a separate vote on the Iron and Steel rider. Since the union tops are presently unable to crush the steel haulers, Fitzsimmons'

main concern is to isolate them and thereby prevent their resistance from sparking a generalized rebellion by the rest of the 300,000 workers covered by the MFA.

Unlike the aborted breakaway "strike" led by FASH last fall which was aimed at splitting steel haulers away from the IBT, the current walkout should be supported by trade-union militants. The central demand, however, of the Teamsters for a Democratic Union (TDU), which has played a leading role in the walkout, is merely for a return to the pre-1976 pay formula for steel haulers, namely a flat 75 percent of the revenue from each load for owner-operators or 26 percent for drivers operating company rigs. But this is precisely the demand raised by the IBT Iron and Steel negotiating team. Un-

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