



Smash Hitler's heirs! For mass workers action—Not popular frontism!

# Fascist terror explodes in Europe

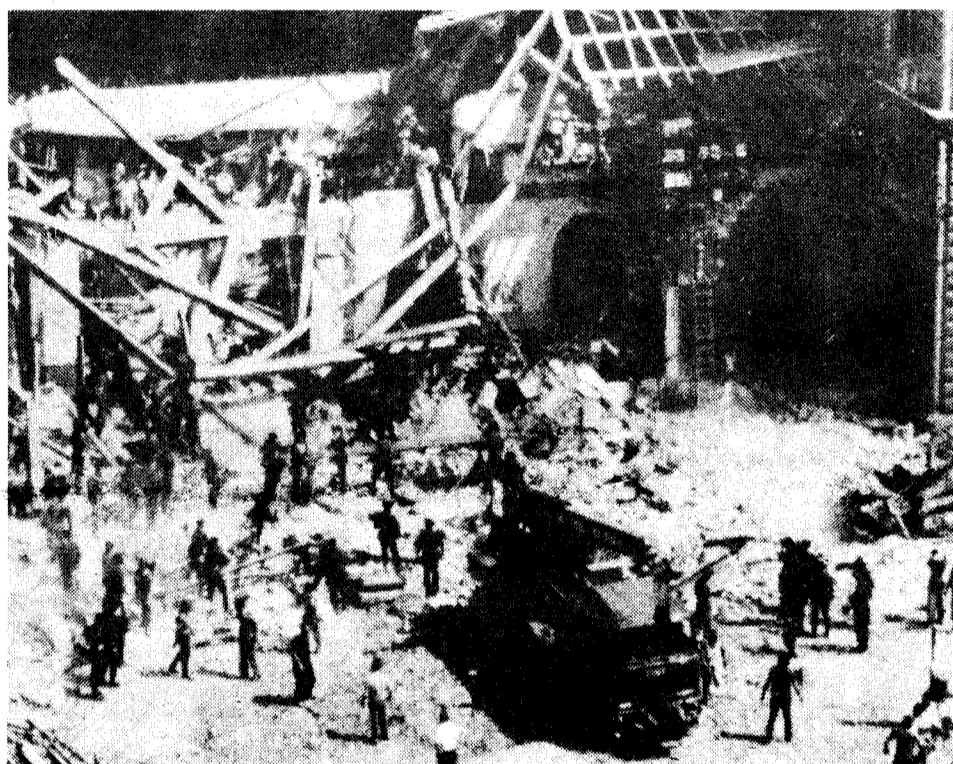
PARIS — *Bologna, 2 August:* Eighty-four people are killed and nearly 200 wounded when a bomb explodes in the 2nd-class waiting room of the central railroad station, overflowing with tourists and working-class vacationers. *Munich, 26 September:* The annual Oktoberfest is rocked by an explosion from a bomb placed in a trashcan near the entrance to the fairgrounds — 13 people are killed and a dozen more injured. *Paris, 3 October:* Hundreds are observing the last day of Succoth in a synagogue not far from the Arc de Triomphe when a bomb on a parked car across the street is detonated. Four passers-by are killed and a dozen more injured; the force of the explosion hurls worshippers inside from their seats, overturns four parked cars and shatters windows in buildings blocks away.

Paris reverberated in horror at the temple bombing, the most dramatic attack on Jews in Europe since World War II. "Monstrous" and "Assassins" ran furious banner headlines in the bourgeois papers, and the outraged population of France poured out into the streets in protest. The blast immediately riveted attention back to those nightmare years of Vichy France when 75,000 French Jews were exterminated — indeed, the Nazis had blown up the

same synagogue, the "Israelite Union", in 1944. But even as they were leading the protest demonstrations, the reformist misleaders of the French workers movement were once again seeking to answer the fascist threat, not with mass mobilizations to smash the fascists, but with a big show of "national unity". The demonstrators' popular slogan, "From Marchais to Rothschild", expressed this yearning for popular-front alliance with the bourgeoisie — that strategy which for the past 50 years has immobilized the workers' power to smash the fascists and led to the present situation.

The crescendo of fascist violence in Europe today comes in the midst of an economic depression and rapidly increasing mass unemployment. Egged on by the strident anti-Sovietism of the NATO governments, neo-fascists and far-right groupings have been escalating their violent attacks against foreign workers, blacks, Jews and the working class. And the imperialist governments are in the thick of it, whether it is Thatcher's racist immigration policies in Britain, government refusal to go after the neo-Nazis in West Germany or the well-known links between the fascists and secret services in Italy.

The Paris synagogue bombing came on the heels of some thirty attacks against



Bologna railway station: fascist bomb killed 84.

Jewish schools, places of worship, cemeteries, organizations and individuals over the last several months. The weekend before this bombing, there were five early-morning machine gun attacks in Paris against Jewish schools, synagogues and day-care centers. No one has been arrested for any of these acts of terror. French government policy consisted of warning against "exaggerating" their seriousness. Meanwhile the fascist scum

quietly prepare to kill, secure in the knowledge obtained from their members and sympathizers in the police that they would get off scot-free.

According to witnesses, two men on a motorcycle placed a 22-pound charge of dynamite on a car in front of the synagogue, moved the charge around until they were satisfied and then drove off. The two policemen stationed outside the

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## Iran/Iraq: dirty war, strange bedfellows

2 NOVEMBER — The sordid, reactionary war in the Persian Gulf grinds fitfully on. Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's planned blitzkrieg of Iran's Khuzistan province has degenerated into an unspectacular military slog. The Ba'athist colonels' would-be "quick knock-out blow", intended both to recover border territory given up to the ex-shah in 1975 and to shatter the Khomeini regime in favour of something more stable, has not even got them the border cities of Khorramshahr and Abadan. Orgies of patriotic national unity accompany the war mobilisations on both sides. In Iran the mullahs are heating it white-hot in order to distract the masses from the country's acute social contradictions and to reforge the instruments of capitalist repression crippled in the course of the anti-shah up-

surge. "Fists against tanks have brought victory, and always will", ranted the Imam's fanatics in the occupied US embassy.

Khomeini inherited not only the shah's army but also its dependence on his US suppliers. With Iran chronically short of military equipment and facing a foreign exchange crunch, the mullahs are worried that "fists against tanks" it may well be. Under this pressure the prospect of detente between the mullahs and the US "Great Satan" — which they tell the Iranian masses stands behind Iraq — is looming again. Speculation was at a fever pitch as Carter and Reagan ran neck and neck in the US presidential elections, and the Majlis, the mullahs' "parliament", began debating the fate of the US embassy hostages in late October.

One zealous gang of mullahs stood outside the Majlis door on 30 October angrily shouting slogans and refused to enter, in a bid to stop the debate and scuttle the deal. But the idea of the hostage trade came from the Imam himself. As we go to press the fate of the hostage deal is not yet clear, but certain fundamental political facts are.

• While the mullahs are using the Iranian masses' virulent and richly justified hatred of US imperialism to whip up war fever and loyalty to Khomeini, the hostage manoeuvres (whatever their outcome) show plainly that there is no fundamental conflict of class interest between the Iranian regime and Washington. Carter has been making pointed remarks that Iran is a "victim of aggression" and supporting its territorial integrity and

independence. In response the Islamic fundamentalist Iranian prime minister Rajai proclaimed the US had met Iran's conditions for the release of the hostages "in practice", and Khomeini's notorious "Judge Blood", the mass executioner of Kurdish rebels Ayatollah Khalkali, told the Majlis that "it would be in Iran's interest to free the hostages in return for military spare parts needed in the war with Iraq" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 October).

Washington's opposition to the "dis-memberment" of Iran is more than a frantic election ploy by a desperate Jimmy Carter. Though they have found Khomeini infuriatingly perverse, the strategy of the US imperialists since the fall of the shah has envisaged accomo-

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# Iran/Iraq...

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dition with the mullahs in order to maintain Iran as an anti-Soviet bulwark in a strategically vital region.

● The war remains a dirty nationalist bash-up between rival, fundamentally similar regimes. For Marxists, the class character of the contending states and not surface differences is decisive. It is no struggle for national liberation on either side, but a bloody squabble over small pieces of land and regional power dominance. The left in Iran has committed a historic betrayal by lining up with its "own" mullah-led ruling class.

● It's too bad for the mullahs that imams aren't immortal. When Khomeini finally dies the resulting fracas over who will be the next imam in this theocratic "republic" could be bloody. Already in the Majlis, contending clerical cliques manipulate the masses' just hatred of their imperialist exploiters for their own ends. Tailists to the core, the opportunist left will no doubt choose up sides behind the differing mullah-led factions.

● The US, with its ambitions to regain its lost position as dominant imperialist power in the world and its anti-Soviet war drive, remains the deadly enemy of the peoples of the entire region. The labour movement must demand the US and its allied forces (Australia included) get out of the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. If the US should intervene militarily, it would be the duty of Marxists to support the military victory of whatever forces — Iraqi, Iranian or others — opposed them. If Washington were to go in, the Soviet degenerated workers state could well be drawn into the conflict, and revolutionists would stand unflinchingly for unconditional military support to the Soviet

forces in defence of the USSR's socialised property forms. But in the fighting actually going on, the main enemy of the oil workers, national minorities and other oppressed and working people on both sides is clear: it is their "own" rulers. Turn the guns the other way!

The opportunist left in Iran and internationally treacherously built up the "anti-imperialist" credentials of Khomeini over the US embassy seizure a year ago. In contrast, the international Spartacist tendency warned from the beginning that the hostage drama was a calculated diversion motivated by the Ayatollah's need to consolidate his theocratic state in the face of rising popular anger and minority national revolt against his Islamic, Great Persian tyranny. The war gave the mullahs a much more potent source of Persian chauvinism to build on.

The self-styled "Trotskyists" of the United Secretariat were in the van of the opportunist rush to join in, denouncing Hussein as a proxy/tool of Washington. In fact the prospect of US/Iran detente has been causing nightmares in Baghdad, with Iraqi foreign minister Dr Hammadi denouncing the US for "abandoning neutrality" and "giving moral and material support to Iran" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 October). Whose sleeve is the hand of the Great Satan coming out of now?

The war has spawned a tangle of unlikely and rapidly shifting regional alliances. The Sunni royal families of the Gulf sheikdoms, as fundamentalist in Islamic bigotry as Khomeini, feel their fragile and corrupt regimes threatened by the Ayatollah's Shi'ite "Islamic Revolution"; they have covertly sided with Iraq despite the Baghdad colonels' expansionist ambitions and verbal anti-monarchism. Jordan's King Hussein overlooks the killing of his Hashemite

royal cousins by the Iraqi military's 1958 coup and allows war goods to be shipped to Baghdad through the Jordanian port of Aqaba. Meanwhile Libya's Colonel Qaddafi has just signed a "unity" treaty with Assad of Syria, who backs Khomeini as the enemy of his sworn Iraqi Ba'athist enemies. Qaddafi thus left in the lurch his old ally Saddam Hussein, and is helping to arm Khomeini's *jihad*.

Try to pick the "anti-imperialists" from among the corrupt intrigues of these colonels, sheiks and mullahs. Yet the United Secretariat (USec) clings to Khomeini in a war so sordid that even some inveterate Khomeini tailists can't stand the stench. Thus the British USec International Marxist Group (IMG) has been inundated with denunciatory letters. Veteran IMG member Charlie Van Gelderen sarcastically writes that:

"True, in Iraq Hussein has not yet forced women back behind the chador; nor is there any evidence of adulterers being stoned or thieves having their hands chopped off. But I am sure that Brian [Grogan, IMG leader] would not claim these as 'gains of the Iranian revolution'."

— *Socialist Challenge*, 9 October

Fellow IMGer Dave Bailey chimes in that Khomeini is not fighting to "liberate" the Arabs and Kurds he oppresses. But both were leading members of the IMG when Grogan was chanting "allah akhbar" with the Khomeinists. Where were their indignant protests then?

Being publicity agents for Qaddafi can have its awkward moments, as the Healyite Socialist Labour League (SLL) found out. The 27 September *Workers News* proclaimed: "a basis for settlement is provided" by Hussein's terms. Ten days later they denounced the "Iraqi invasion of Iran" as "serv[ing] the interests of the imperialist predators and the Iraqi

bourgeoisie" — no less! — in a statement ("Stop Iran-Iraq war") by Gerry Healy's Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP). Within the NSW ALP, the new twist in Qaddafi's diplomacy was also followed by Bob Gould's Socialist Leadership Group. In *Keep Left* (October 1980), former SLL supporter Gordon Pritchard wrote an echo of the SLL line ("Iraq-Iran must stop war"), right down to the anti-Marxist, anti-Trotskyist assertion that "the Soviet bureaucracy in Moscow is as much an enemy of the Arab masses as the US". Qaddafi, after all, has no interest in defending the gains of the Bolshevik Revolution!

Even the Khomeini-loving Socialist Workers Party (SWP) doesn't appear to like being in the same camp as those who simply sell their services to oil-rich dictators. In *Direct Action* (29 October) SWP leader Jim McIlroy accused the Healyites of being "false friends" of Khomeini, less servile than the SWP, and simply ignored the WRP statement. Elsewhere in the issue the SWP gushed that next to the pro-feudal Khomeini's "living revolution", "superficial similarities between the policies pursued by the Iranian and Iraqi regimes pale into insignificance". Like such petty details as the genocide of Kurds and continued capitalist rule, for instance?

Yes, that is precisely what they mean. The above-quoted article (reprinted from *Intercontinental Press*) concludes that "similarities between the capitalist government in Iraq and the capitalist government in Iran" don't matter two hoots: "Nine o'clock is nine o'clock, but the difference can be between night and day". That, at any rate, is the difference between the SWP and Leon Trotsky, who wrote in 1940:

"Since the character of the war is determined precisely by the class character of

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# Protest anti-labour repression in Sri Lanka

## Spartacist demos in NY, London

Last July over 100,000 workers in Sri Lanka joined in a general strike that was the greatest challenge to the Tory regime of President J R Jaywardena since his United National Party (UNP) took office three years ago. The strike was precipitated by the government's systematic efforts to drive down workers' living conditions.

Faced with the general strike movement, Jaywardena declared a state of emergency on 16 July, mobilising the military, imposing press censorship and banning all strikes affecting "essential services". Union offices located in workplaces were closed down, striking workers in the government sector sacked and several leading political figures arrested, among them Vasudeva Nanayakkara, leader of the Nava Sama Samaja Party, and Tulsiri Andradi, president of the Central Bank Employees Union and a leader of the centrist Revolutionary Workers Party of Edmund Samarakkody.

Last August the international Spartacist tendency called coordinated demonstrations to protest the UNP's repression. On 29 August approximately 75 supporters of the Spartacist League/US demonstrated outside the Sri Lankan mission to the United Nations in New York chanting, "Hands off the unions — For the right to strike!" and "Stop reprisals against striking workers!" The next day in London 25 people responded to the call of the Spartacist League/Britain for a demonstration outside the Ceylon Tea Centre.

On 1 September the leading independent bourgeois newspaper of Sri Lanka — *The Sun* and its Sinhala-language edition *Davasa* — carried articles on the demonstrations. "Sinhala slogans in New York" headlined *Davasa*, in reference to the picket signs in Sinhala that were carried in the 29 August protest. The signs read "No political or electoral support to popular fronts" and "Forward to a workers and peasants government" in Sinhalese. A week later the *Weekend* (7 September) also mentioned the New York SL protest as the

only "international solidarity with the working class" in Sri Lanka so far reported on the island. Then, both *The Sun* and *Davasa* carried front-page stories of the protest in their 16 September editions. Notorious for their muckraking yellow journalism, *The Sun/Davasa* claimed the protest was organised by unnamed "ultra-Leftist Lankans" in the US and Britain and was attended by paid "instant Protestors". "What has surprised most Lankans", the papers added, was that "the slogans were directed against the present administration as well as against the former government" of Mrs Bandaranaike. If this is "surprising", it's only because the entire left in Sri Lanka to one degree or another is promoting a new popular-front coalition as the alternative to the present UNP regime. For our part we are only too happy to be known as the tendency that stands opposed to both the UNP and any new popular-front combination. Stop the repression! Free all victims of UNP terror! ■

## Australasian SPARTACIST

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# Breaker Morant - The Lt Calley of the Boer war

Without doubt it has been the most talked about film in Australia this year. Awarded prizes at Cannes and at the Asian Film Festival, Bruce Beresford's *Breaker Morant* tells the story of Harry Morant, horse breaker, bush poet, and "poor little Australian" war-criminal-cum-folk-hero, who was court-martialled and executed by the British forces during the Boer War for murdering some Boer prisoners and a German preacher. And judging by the sheer variety of comment which the film has provoked — from the left press which hailed its "anti-war message" to the accolades of the bourgeois film world — it is clear that somewhere between the rampant Australian nationalism and the allusions to the Vietnam War, the film has an uneasy relevance today.

## Film Review by Patricia Peters

The International Socialists' Mick Armstrong admits there is an "underlying Australian nationalism" but also declares that "there is definitely an anti-war message", regretting wistfully that "I don't think the anti-imperialist message will get through" (*Battler*, 9 August). The Socialist Workers Party's *Direct Action* (24 September) assures us that "the political message is not nationalism", and solidarises with the film's portrayal of "the role of the common soldier — pawns for the expansion of imperialism". If *Direct Action* missed the nationalism, the British film critics certainly picked up on it, and made wry references to "the old Australian sport of Pommie-baiting". The anti-British edge was probably the reason the staid *Financial Times* was not amused ("it glides on rails of didactic predestination").

The film's impact was captured by actor Jack Thompson who features as Morant's lawyer, Major Thomas. In a *National Times* interview (12 July) Thompson notes that "It is just beginning to come through how much the public is responding to the tale of injustice, the national appeal of it". "Injustice" and "national appeal" — these are the key elements of the film. Its appeal is to the popular mythology of repeated Pommie ingratitude for the "heroic" contributions the diggers have made in one British war after another — Gallipoli, Greece, Singapore, and South Africa. The image of the Australian soldiers as brave, tough ANZACs is there too, caught especially in the scene where the three prisoners on trial — Morant, Hancock and Witton — are let out of their cells and given guns to successfully repel a Boer attack on the garrison they're being held in. (One was reminded of the grandiose claim made at the time of conscription in World War I: "100,000 more Australian soldiers could turn the tide".) But again the British show callous thanklessness: Major Thomas' appeal for the court to set aside the charges on the grounds of bravery while imprisoned (a precedent sanctioned by the Duke of Wellington himself) is tossed aside by the military tribunal.

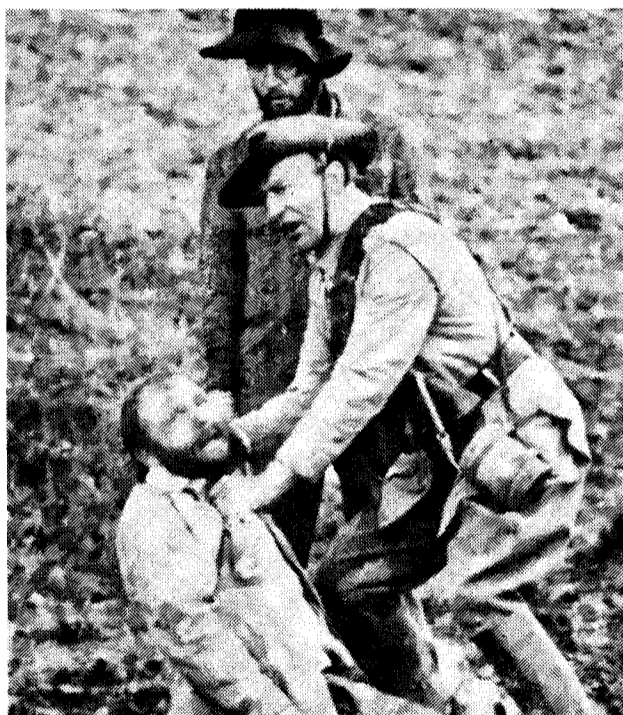
In the figure of the larrikin Hancock, the Australian self-image is likewise systematically played to. Necessarily, since there is a certain irony about trying to make a fair dinkum Aussie hero out of Morant, a British-born aristocrat who came to Australia, having disgraced the family name by falling into debt, and then volunteered for the Boer War as a means of redeeming his name at home. But Hancock — he's something different. Here he is, a kind of Bazza Mackenzie on the high veldt putting those stiff-collared Pommie officers in their place with his laconic, droll humour. Morant may quote Byron, but not Hancock; he prefers the dunny-door limerick. As for the charge that he murdered the German preacher, he has an alibi — he was out "visiting" two Boer women whose husbands were off at war ("A cut off a sliced loaf is never missed", he replies in answer to the British presiding officer's strait-laced incredulity).

The purpose is to appeal to the Australian cultural inferiority complex, to effect an identification between audience and character and so engender sympathy for the film's intended message: Morant and his fellow-prisoners were, as the title of survivor Witton's book put it, "Scapegoats of the Empire". Or as Morant himself

put it in the last piece of doggerel he wrote before his execution, "Butchered to make a Dutchman's Holiday".

But does it make it? The film's core is Major Thomas' courtroom pleas. Thomas too is a raw colonial, an inexperienced bush solicitor who has handled only land disputes before. His defence is that his three compatriots were merely acting under orders when they shot prisoners, orders which the then commanding officer in South Africa, Lord Kitchener, had himself verbally issued. "We got them and shot them under rule 303", explodes Morant when asked if the court in which he "tried" the Boers was "like this one". The scene culminates in a long take of over five minutes, in which Thomas pleads the heart of his defence: "We are not capable of judging ... the brutalities of war [that] are committed by normal men in abnormal circumstances".

The "defence" is no defence at all, though, and the film's director seems to know it. For it is the stock defence of all war criminals — from the Nuremberg trials and before to Lieutenant Calley, butcher of My Lai. The image of the soldier being cynically shafted by his superiors may strike a chord with an Australian audience for whom Morant is the underdog, but after Vietnam there is not much scope for sympathy. Like Calley, Morant may have just been "carrying out orders" — but carry them out they did, and with gusto. 400 slaughtered for US imperialism at My Lai; defenceless prisoners shot in cold blood for British imperialist expansionism in the northern Transvaal — these are crimes,



Morant (Edward Woodward) attacking Boer prisoner. Bush Veldt Carbineers the Green Berets of Boer War.

against the working class and all the oppressed.

The Vietnamese and Boer Wars are of course dissimilar in one key respect; in Vietnam there was also a class civil war of workers and peasants against the landlords, capitalists and US imperialism, whereas in South Africa it was a conflict between the British Empire and an oppressed settler-colonial people. It was a war fought by the British for diamonds at Kimberley and gold on the Rand. At the time the Marxist-led Second International opposed Britain's expansionist role, though Fabian socialists like George Bernard Shaw and the Webbs sided with Britain on the grounds that it was a "civilising influence" in South Africa, pointing to the barbaric way the Boers treated the black masses.

Certainly the Boers, who feature only as a backdrop in the film, were none too progressive. Their leader in the Transvaal, "Oom" Paul Kruger died in the conviction that the world was flat. Many of them had moved inland across the Orange and Vaal Rivers in the Great Trek of 1835-37 because Britain had abolished slavery in the Cape Colony in 1834. The *voortrekkers* (pioneers) were often bitterly divided but they agreed on one thing: Africans and Coloured people of mixed race should have no political rights. Indeed, at one stage during the siege of Mafeking, the Boer general Cronje even called on the British commander Baden-Powell to "disarm your blacks and thereby act the part of a white man in a white man's war"! Not that the Boer War ever was an exclusively "white man's war" as the striking absence of blacks from the film would suggest. At Mafeking alone more



Harry "Breaker" Morant: bush poet turned bush killer.

than 2000 of the African garrison under Baden-Powell were either shot by Boers or left by Baden-Powell to die of starvation.

But just as Marxists stood with the feudal reactionary Haile Selassie against Mussolini in 1936, or with the fanatical Khomeini against any military intervention by US imperialism, so we would have militarily sided with the Boers against the British in 1898-1901.

Today the Boers' descendants, backed by "liberal" English-speaking whites, run the racist apartheid system in what is now the powerhouse of capitalist reaction in the region. *Direct Action* refers glowingly to "the resistance of the tiny Boer people" in its review, but when the international Spartacist tendency said that the whites of South Africa have the right to exist, the SWP fulminated against our "touching concern for the survival of the Boers" (*Intercontinental Press*, 20 November 1978). We stand for the smashing of apartheid and capitalist class rule in South Africa; but we recognise that all peoples have the right to exist. The SWP's program is to cheer on one nationalist group against another, yet nationalism carried through to its logical conclusion can only mean the genocide of one people by another. For South Africa, their program is driving the descendants of "the tiny Boer people" into the sea — or at least trying to. In addition, one of the SWP's planks for change in South Africa has been moralistic consumer boycotts and company disinvestment schemes. In this they merely echo those Fabians who thought imperialism — one way or the other — could be a "civilising influence" in the area.

While waxing lyrical about "tiny Boers", *Direct Action* also manages to sympathise with Morant, Hancock and Witton whom it would have us believe were conscript "common soldiers" or "pawns". But these three were mercenary volunteers in what was then the British army's equivalent of the SAS or Green Berets, the Bush Veldt Carbineers. The film itself hints at the parallel, but never admits it. Yet Morant's references to this being "the first war in which the enemy is not in uniform" make plain the type of war the British fought in response — a brutal war of farmhouse burnings, concentration camps (first introduced in this war) and shooting Boer prisoners on the spot. Nor was this an abnormal deviation, justified by abnormal circumstances, from the high ideals of British civilisation, as Major Thomas pleads. On the contrary, as one biographer of Morant put it, "but for men of his ruthless character, the British Empire would not now be the envy of all her neighbours" (Jarvis, *Half a Life* [1943]). Indeed, the very personification of these "ruthless characters" who built the empire was probably Kitchener himself who, after conquering the Sudan, gained considerable notoriety by publicly toying with the skull of the defeated Mahdi, deliberating whether to make it into an inkpot or a drinking vessel.

In the end Kitchener scapegoated Morant & Co. In his recent exhaustive study *The Boer War* (1979), Thomas Pakenham disputes the allegation that they were tried in an attempt to stave off a rumoured German intervention into the war, arguing instead that it was done for disciplinary considerations. It is of secondary importance, except perhaps for nationalist myth-makers. We only regret that Morant and Hancock met their end under Kitchener's "Rule 303", though we appreciate the irony given that this was the "rule" under which they themselves shot Boer prisoners. Better that the Boers had got them instead. And Witton too.

The film *Breaker Morant*'s message is not "anti-war"; it is an apology for Morant's actions, with an implicit nationalist moral at the end: don't hitch your wagon too closely to any other imperialist power, Australia, otherwise you too may get sacrificed like "The Breaker". Yet greater "independence" is not the road forward for the Australian masses; world socialist revolution to abolish capitalism, its wars, its mercenary units and its My Lais is. ■

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IS provides platform for Green nationalists

# Protest reactionary bigot Paisley!

The ultra-rightist Northern Ireland Orange bigot, Ian Paisley, is coming to Sydney between 18 and 23 November on a speaking tour organised by the obscure Protestant fundamentalist "People's Church" of pastor Brian Wenham. Paisley, the leader of the Democratic Unionist Party, will be promoting his reactionary fire-and-brimstone brand of Protestant communal chauvinism as the most fervent defender of Orange ascendancy in the sectarian Northern Irish statelet. He deserves to be greeted by militant protests denouncing him and what he stands for. His visit could serve as a focus for revolutionary socialist opposition to the sectarian state, to the British imperialist army of occupation which props it up and to the whole dynamic of inter-communal conflict which sets Irish Catholic and Protestant workers against each other rather than against their common class enemies on both sides of the border. British troops out now!

Instead the International Socialists (IS), Australian co-thinkers of the British Socialist Workers Party (SWP), have set up "Stop Paisley Committees" in Sydney and Brisbane to try and prevent him from speaking and to build support for the Provisional IRA's petty-bourgeois green nationalism. For sure, it is another cheap gimmick: even the bourgeois press has been wondering aloud why Paisley got an entry visa. But the IS' real purpose is very explicit: "The greatest encouragement we could give to the republican movement in Ireland is to show that here in Australia there is enough support for their cause to stop Paisley speaking" ("No Platform for Paisley", Stop Paisley Committee leaflet). Coming from a group which initially defended the sending of British troops to Ireland (see box), this touching "concern" for Ireland is frankly revolting. But in any case the Irish masses have no need of a "committee" which encourages the IRA to keep up its strategy of indefensible nationalist pub-

bombing terror against Protestant and British workers. What they need is a Trotskyist party capable of breaking the seemingly interminable cycle of imperialist repression and sectarian violence which has ground them down for so long. Such a party, while militarily defending the IRA in conflicts with British military forces, would combat the IRA's random, sectarian, and indiscriminate civilian attacks.

The IS argue in defence of their "No Platform" line that Paisley is a fascist. At a Stop Paisley Committee meeting at Sydney's Trade Union Club on 22 October, IS National Committee member Gary McLennan even claimed that "Paisley's Ulster would be an Ulster just like the Third Reich". The day after, at Sydney University, he went further and added that like the reactionary academics Hans

Eysenck and Arthur Jensen, Paisley was a fascist and "fascists have only one right, and that's the right to die". McLennan's dubbing of these three as "fascists" is simply New Left moralism. As we pointed out in defending IS members victimised by the Sydney Uni administration for disrupting Eysenck's lectures there in September 1977, Jensen and Eysenck are not fascists to be physically prevented from speaking but

"racist ideologues [who] are simply peddling a cruder version of what all bourgeois 'social science' amounts to. The scientific pretensions of ideological flunkies of the bourgeoisie can and must be torn to shreds through trenchant materialist refutation, just as Marx discredited the reactionary economist Malthus."

— *Australasian Spartacist* no 50, February 1980

As for Paisley he is certainly a diehard reactionary and enemy of the oppressed who wants to preserve loyalist rule in Northern Ireland, but he is no Adolf Hitler and the IS know it. They insist on the characterisation for a purpose: if Paisley is a fascist, then his followers are presumably fascists too. By extension they must be crushed. Yet in Northern Ireland, Paisley's supporters are not just lumpens and petty-bourgeois layers, but sectors of the Protestant working class. Their aim is not the annihilation of the organisations of the labour movement but the preservation of the existing Northern Ireland state. Paisley systematically plays on Protestant fears of a united Ireland in order to maintain his ideological stranglehold over them; what he represents is the right wing of Orange communalism, not fascism.

Marxists seek to destroy this influence by polarising the Protestant community along class lines. Our program is embodied in the slogan, "Not Orange against Green, but class against class!" The IS, however, help cement the bond between Paisley and his working class base by cheering on the Provos' nationalist struggle to drive or bomb out anyone — including Protestant workers, petty-bourgeois, etc — who opposes their goal of a united capitalist Ireland, an Ireland "Gaelic, Catholic and free" in which the viciously reactionary Irish church would rule the roost as it does today in the Southern "Free State".

A real fascist movement places the very existence of the organised workers movement in peril and Marxists aim to build workers defence guards to mobilise the working class to disperse it — militarily. Confronted with genuine fascists, the IS instead either leads small groups of leftists in adventurist confrontations which inevitably end up in futile brawls with the cops; or they spread the illusion that the bourgeois state can act



Police storm Bogside, 12 August 1969. IS say British army defended Catholics.

## Who lies? IS on troops to Ireland

Like all opportunists, the International Socialists (IS) cannot bear having their sordid political history exposed. The IS is currently one of the loudest voices in the Provisional IRA's fake-left cheer squad in Australia. But eleven years ago its comrades of the British Socialist Workers Party (known then as the IS also) openly defended the deployment of British troops in Northern Ireland against those calling for their withdrawal. When confronted by Spartacist League supporters at Sydney University with this fact, an ISer replied that it was all "Healyite slanders". But this is what the 11 September 1969 issue of *Socialist Worker*, the British IS paper, had to say then:

"The breathing space provided by the presence of the British troops is short but vital. Those who call for the immediate withdrawal of the troops before the men behind the barricades can defend themselves are inviting a pogrom which will hit first and hardest at socialists." "Breathing space"?! The bloody role of the army since 1969 shows that the only space they want is space to kill, torture and oppress. In the following issue, 18 September, the IS pressed the attack home:

"To demand 'disarm the B-specials! Withdraw British troops!' is to equate the two and to say that the presence or absence of British troops in the existing situation makes no difference to the struggle....

"But those who would raise the demand for their [the army] withdrawal now must explain in what way they would implement the demand if they were behind the barricades in Belfast or Derry. Would they fire on the troops now, and encourage others to do the same? If so they would merely add their bullets to those of the Paisleyites and provoke an immediate clash in a situation which would lead to a massacre....

"To combine a demand for withdrawal with a demand for the arming of the Catholic workers is to solve the problem only at the level of the mouthing of slogans. In real life the two demands are in contradiction if both raised at the present time, for the arming of the Catholics is dependent on the preservation of the precarious breathing space the presence of the troops provides."

So the demand for "Troops Out!" was an invitation card to a Paisleyite pogrom! This despicable line is just an echo of the imperialist lie that the army were in Ireland to "protect" the Catholics. But even IS leader Chris Harman, in the same issue of *Socialist Worker*, admitted that Catholic workers defended their barricades against British troops trying to take them down. That didn't stop the IS from dropping — without explanation — their previous position that the "labour movement must demand the immediate recall of British troops from abroad as the first step towards ending colonial exploi-

tation" ("Where We Stand", 11 September). In the 18 September issue this had become, "Opposition to imperialism and support for all movements of national liberation". Far from the SL being "Healyite slanders", it is the IS which lies about its rotten record. As for the Healyites, they at least had the merit of opposing the imperialist intervention.

The IS/SWP's subsequent record on Ireland is in keeping with its earlier outright capitulation. On the tenth anniversary of August 1969, they even went so far as to sign a joint declaration with the bourgeois Young Liberals calling on Thatcher's government to "commit itself to a policy of withdrawal from Northern Ireland", i.e. phased withdrawal!

Defenders of the reactionary imperialist intervention into Ireland, opponents of the progressive Soviet intervention into Afghanistan — such craven opportunists Trotsky delivered the final judgement on long ago:

"... the British Socialist who fails to support by all possible means the uprisings in Ireland, Egypt and India against the London plutocracy — such a Socialist deserves to be branded with infamy, if not with a bullet, but in no case merits either a mandate or the confidence of the proletariat."

— *The First Five Years of the Communist International*

## Socialist Worker N. Ireland:

The contradictory role of British troops gives Catholic workers time to arm against further Orange attacks

RECENT EVENTS in Northern Ireland have seen a strange reversal of traditional attitudes. Irish nationalists and republicans behind the barricades who have been brought up on the history of Britain's bloody record in Ireland, expressed relief when the arrival of British troops gave them a breathing space from the threatened pogroms of Paisleyite armed mobs. And fanatically loyalist and Union Jack waving Orange bigots massing last Sunday for new pogroms and the slogan "Troops Out!"

But what are these events? It is precisely because there are conflicts among supporters of those who believe that the troops are today between the barricade and the Orange gangs, those conflicts are whether to maintain British interests in the old way or a new way. The old way was established in 1921, when 26 counties were all their "independence" and some middle-class leaders while Britain kept the North-Eastern counties, their industries, created British markets. There a still ruled directly by div lines and arming the

Socialist Workers, 18 September 1969

against fascism. Before their recent electoral defeat, the "Civic Reform" Sydney City Council administration banned Paisley from the Town Hall on the grounds of "security" — a dangerous precedent which will be used against the left. Their ALP successors upheld the ban — and the IS approves! *Keep Left*, the Gouldite paper in the ALP, also thinks that "sleeping dogs" ought to be left to lie (October, 1980).

After being red-baited for its adventurist street antics in Britain, the IS' brothers in the SWP turned to legalism and succeeded in building a popular-frontist alliance of liberals, union bureaucrats and Labour Party tops called the Anti Nazi League (ANL). The ANL's main achievement was to lead thousands of anti-fascists off to a carnival in south London while the National Front (NF) marched through the heavily immigrant East End of the city. That day, the NF demonstration was opposed only by a few hundred leftists, among them our comrades of the Spartacist League/Britain (see "ANL Carnival Scabs", *Spartacist Britain* no 5, October 1978). This is how the IS/SWP "fights" fascism.

### Who are the Protestants?

The IS know that they can't get away with simply dismissing Protestant workers as "fascists", so they dredge up an assortment of other spurious arguments to buttress their belief that the Protestants are incorrigibly reactionary. The Stop Paisley Committee leaflet describes Paisley as "the most forceful servant of British imperialism in Ireland". McLennan at his meetings claimed that the Protestants were a labour aristocracy, significantly better off than their Catholic counterparts. Both claims are plain wrong.

Paisley stands for army repression of Republicans but he has a record of opposing British imperialist plans for Ireland when they conflict with his own, as in the 1974 and 1977 Loyalist strikes. The real servants of British imperialism in Ireland are the officers of the army and the SAS. As for the marginal economic privileges that the Protestants enjoy, these are not so marked that the two communities have significantly different living standards. These "theories" are part-and-parcel of the IS' program of vicarious Irish nationalism: they are meant to "prove" that the Protestants are either a colonial administration ("forceful servants") like the British were in India, or a massively privileged settler-colonial caste like the whites in Smith's Rhodesia. But the Protestants in Northern Ireland cannot simply get out as is implied by these faulty "analogies". In the final analysis, the IS' program really amounts to a call for the genocide of the Protestants as the way forward in Ireland — a simple capitulation to the Green nationalist "revolutionary" terror-bombers.

The Protestants of Ulster today define themselves largely negatively as against the Irish Catholics. They feel legitimately threatened by the proposal for a united bourgeois Irish Republic, ie their forced absorption into an enlarged version of the backward, clericalist South. Such a "solution" would only reverse the existing terms of oppression, making the Protestants the underdog and the Catholics their oppressor. That is what the Provos and their IS camp followers want, but for Marxists it is a "solution" which must be opposed.

There is another road forward in Ireland, the road of proletarian revolution. Only when the workers — Protestant and Catholic — hold power can there be an equitable, democratic solution to their conflicting national/communal claims. On occasions in the past, most notably in the "Outdoor Relief" unemployed struggles of 1932, Catholics and Protestants have come together in united class struggle against their common enemy. But such actions have to date been necessarily episodic, because there has been no revolutionary party to consolidate the gains made.

We stand for the building of such a party, to fight for the independent interests of the proletariat — for the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of the British troops and for anti-imperialist,

# Elections 1980: Reformists' hopes dashed

The stock exchange shot up and the Tory gutter press crowed with delight as the Liberal/National Country Party coalition won the 18 October federal election with a 23 seat majority. "A substantial victory", boasted a clearly relieved Malcolm Fraser. Even ALP leader Bill Hayden seemed pleased; he never imagined that Labor might actually win, despite the opinion polls which had put the ALP in front until a few days before the voting day. As it was he got a five percent swing, enough to keep Bob Hawke from making any bid just yet to overthrow him as party leader.

The fake left, who'd been all set to hail a "workers victory" if Labor did scrape in, were badly demoralised. Not even the vote for their own candidates gave them much to talk about; "disappointing", said the Communist Party's *Tribune*. For our part we too had wanted Labor to win — as part of the struggle to destroy this strategic obstacle to proletarian revolution in Australia. Now we'll have to endure three more years of "anti-Fraser mobilisations" where reformists of every colour will be telling Fraser's victims that the only answer is to make sure to do the right thing and vote ALP ... in 1983!

Fraser's victory is an indictment of Labor's miserably right-wing campaign. The Nareen squatter is probably the most widely hated bourgeois politician since federation, an arrogant union-bashing, anti-Soviet warmonger who offers the working masses only increased economic austerity. And still Hayden failed to beat him! In part, of course, because of an electoral gerrymander which saw Labor win 49.7 percent of the vote but only 40 percent of the seats. But its defeat was more due to the fact that it offers no real alternative to Fraser's policies. The ALP may verbally oppose conscription, but it fully supports Fraser's military build-up and is wedded to the anti-Soviet ANZUS alliance. Indeed, one of its central slogans was an attack on Fraser *the right*, the nauseating "Malcolm's wool keeps the Russians warm" slogan. And with inflation still in double digit figures and unemployment permanently blighting the lives of hundreds of thousands of working-class youth, Labor's sole alternative was to fund job-training schemes for a fifth of the half a million unemployed — only if the economy could stand it.

While Hayden, Hawke and Wran "cooled it", Fraser systematically baited the "socialistic" ALP. He tried for a khaki election, but as Labor agreed with him on the need for a strong Australian defence force he found it difficult to raise anything there. So in the last days of the campaign, he lied that Hayden was planning to introduce a "capital gains" tax which would hit small home and other property owners. Made nervous by the spectre of a Labor government which would finance its small change reforms merely by increasing taxation, the petty bourgeoisie and white collar voter, particularly in Sydney where property values have rocketed, turned out to vote him in.

anti-sectarian workers defence squads to put an end to the rounds of bloody terror in which the losers are the working masses. A revolutionary Trotskyist party which will break down the communal barriers, tearing Protestant workers away from their reactionary Orange masters just as it breaks Catholic workers away from their rulers and misleaders, north and south, the Green bourgeoisie and the nationalists; which fights for the destruction of both bourgeois states in Ireland as part of the struggle for an Irish workers republic within a socialist federation of the British Isles. From their defence of the troops going in in 1969 to their tailing after the Provos today, the IS have never had any class program for Ireland. The Spartacist League does, and we aim to ensure that this program, not that of the IS, is what triumphs. ■



Spartacist contingent at October 17 anti-Fraser demo in Melbourne.

The working class answered Fraser's program of class war by rallying to what they still see as *their* party. In already safe Labor seats and in working-class enclaves in safe Liberal and Country Party seats, there was a heavy pro-ALP turnout. As a result, Don Chipp's "third force" Democrats were largely ground up. Most significant was the heavy swing in Melbourne and Victorian regional centres, the centre of a wave of strikes in the past period which culminated with the rolling back of the Hamer government's viciously anti-labour amendments to the Workers Compensation Act earlier this year. The Melbourne pre-election anti-Fraser rally, which the Victorian ALP endorsed even as Hayden disowned them, was several times larger than the Sydney rally whose CPA and Labor left organisers virtually scuttled so as not to embarrass the Labor leadership.

The CPA, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the pro-Moscow Socialist Party of Australia all put increased effort into their own campaigns this time around. Those notorious mouthpieces for Qaddafi of Libya, the Socialist Labour League, also ran ten candidates. Typically, they ran only against well-known right-wing Labor figures such as Bob Hawke in Wills. Despite the comical jockeying between the SLL and SWP as to who was the *real* "anti-Zionist candidate", these fakes had about as much impact on the egregiously right-wing Hawke as the proverbial fly does on the elephant.

Frankly, we're glad that workers didn't bother wasting their votes on candidates that in no substantial way broke with Laborite class collaboration. About all the CPA could offer, for example, was a big green poster featuring some trees and the slogan, "Put People First, Vote Communist!" But the "people" put Fraser first, so now the CPA says the people are "conservative", which is just another way of saying that it has no perspectives and nowhere to go. How long will it be before it follows ex-leader and union bureaucrat John Halfpenny and becomes the party that came in from the cold?

As for the SWP, it campaigned on the

stale old ticket of utopian reformism — "Tax the rich! Less guns, more butter". It did call for "socialist policies" but these were so watery pink that even stolid Labor Party supporters didn't recognise them as an alternative, let alone a "fighting" one. Yet this was all the SWP had to show for *twelve months* of electioneering. Even now they have vowed to intensify their future electoral work. Could it be that they're building for 1983 now?

In contrast to the ultra-parochialist SWP and CPA, the SPA at least noticed the imperialist war drive in their electoral material. So they ran as the party of "peace", the defenders of detente. Trouble is, there is no detente — Carter and his lapdog Fraser aim to overthrow the USSR, not "peacefully coexist" with it. That is what the revived Cold War is all about. Yet the SPA keeps telling workers to go on looking for a non-existent "peace-loving" sector of the bourgeoisie, a strategy which can only perpetuate the isolation of the USSR by preventing the extension of the October Revolution which is ultimately its only defence.

In the wake of his election fright bourgeois commentators have been ludicrously counselling Fraser to adopt a more "compassionate" image. But those who run capitalism in decline cannot be "compassionate", and Fraser has no intention of letting up on his anti-working class austerity policies. But during the life of this government there will be class battles aplenty, as the swings to Labor already indicate. But the Haydens, Wrans and Hawkes of the ALP — as well as their "left" critics — will only derail and help defeat such an upsurge in workers militancy. In the course of these confrontations a revolutionary leadership of the labour movement can be formed, however, one which realises that true power in this society is not found in parliament or in the ballot box, but on the picket lines of the class struggle — a leadership which will use that power not to fight for seats on the Treasury benches but for a workers government based on workers organisations. ■

## SPARTACIST FORUM

Protest Paisley! Troops out now!

**N. Ireland: Not Orange against Green,  
but class against class!**

Friday, 21 November 7.30 pm  
Ground Floor Bar  
Trade Union Club  
111 Foveaux Street  
Surry Hills

# Fascist terror explodes in Europe

from page one

front door of the synagogue to "protect" it saw no evil and heard no evil — until the bomb exploded. The blast killed four passers-by — three Frenchmen and an Israeli tourist — and injured a dozen others. Had the bomb gone off a few minutes later when the 300 worshippers would have been streaming out of the Friday night services for Simhat Torah, dozens could easily have been killed. After the bombing, French prime minister Raymond Barre inadvertently revealed his true feelings and those of the French government: "The bombing was aimed at Jews and it struck down innocent Frenchmen".

In the day following the bombing over 100,000 people demonstrated against this fascist atrocity in Paris and almost all major cities in France. On 7 October a giant demonstration in Paris drew nearly 200,000. Strikingly absent from the demonstration were the mass of immigrant workers, understandably, given the stark contrast between the respectable protests over anti-Jewish violence and the total silence which habitually greets racist murders of North Africans and black Africans. Even the government parties, the Giscardians and Gaullists, were forced to send token delegations in an unsuccessful effort to deflect criticism from the government and to present the demonstration as one indicating "the unity of the French people".

The demonstration certainly was an expression of anger. But its organizers, ranging from the Jewish bourgeois establishment, led by Guy de Rothschild, to the reformists of the Communist and Socialist parties, did their best to contain this anger in respectable limits by calling merely for the resignation of the minister of the interior and for "purging" fascists from the police. They all agree on one thing: under no circumstances should the workers organizations be mobilized to crush the fascist terrorists; under no circumstances should Jews and immigrant workers defend themselves against fascist attacks.

In sharp contrast, the Ligue Trotskyste de France (LTF) marched in the demonstration behind a big banner calling for "United Front Self Defense by Workers, Jewish and Immigrant Organizations" and for "Workers Militias" to "Crush the Brown Plague". The fascists will not be scared off by talk of "national unity". They are a terroristic paramilitary action group which must be crushed by the working class.

The "restraint" of the "responsible Jewish leaders" has opened the door to the most right-wing Zionists, ready followers of the butcher of Deir Yassin, the current prime minister of Israel, Menachem Begin. Zionist leaders around the world have blamed the anti-Semitic violence on the French government's pro-PLO/pro-Arab foreign policy. The Zionists want to exploit the wave of popular revulsion against the fascists to pressure the Giscard government to take a more pro-Israeli position. They make the reactionary equation between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism. But the fascists want to liquidate the Jews because they are Jewish, and their genocidal ambitions wouldn't change in the least if Giscard stopped selling military hardware to the Arabs or voted against the PLO in the United Nations.

In France the Jewish Defense Organization (JDO) has come to the fore, especially among young Jews who are fed up with pacifism and "responsibility" when faced with fascists. The JDO openly declares it is out hunting for Nazis. And in Israel, Shmuel Flatto-Sharon — a French Meyer Lansky who emigrated to the "promised land" to escape a jail term for fraud — is trying to organize Zionist mercenaries to go to France to "protect" the Jews. If the Zionist hit squads bag a few fascists, instead of going after Palestinians and North Africans, they will have done something worthwhile for a change. But it's just as likely that the Zionists will overreach and knock off some prominent anti-Zionist in France. This would call forth a hostile reaction



Oktoberfest after the fascists struck.

against them to which we would not be averse.

Memories of Nazism in France are strong and could put the government in serious trouble. The authorities have made a great hue and cry about finding and punishing the guilty, while doing everything possible to put the lid on. It is being charitable to the French government to say that its attitude toward prosecution of the fascists is worthy of the police chief in the movie *Casablanca*: "round up the usual suspects".

The "usual suspects" of course are the left. The attorney general, Gaullist Alain Peyrefitte, has "speculated" that the bombing was not committed by fascists at all, but was a provocation by a leftist group. Likewise, interior minister Christian Bonnet baited a Communist deputy that the direction of the government's inquiries "might surprise you". In this Peyrefitte and Bonnet are in chorus with the fascists, who have suggested that the bombing was masterminded by the KGB or Libyans, with Guy de Rothschild, who maintains the source of all terror is Marxism, and with the Israeli ambassador, who accused the Palestinians. Anybody but the fascists!

Historically the French government, like the governments of Italy and West Germany, has been up to its neck in fascist activity. In the early 1960s there occurred a sharp split in the French right over de Gaulle's neo-colonial solution to the Algerian war of independence. The "Algerie francaise" ultras formed the Secret Army Organization (OAS) which carried out a terror campaign in metropolitan France and led the "generals' revolt" in Algeria in 1961. However, this break was largely overcome in the wake of May 1968, when in order to guarantee the loyalty of the officer corps de Gaulle had to amnesty the OAS generals.

It was public knowledge that in the 1974 presidential campaign the goon squad which protected Giscard was made up of members of the OAS and also Ordre Nouveau, then the main fascist group. According to one account published at the time, Giscard himself, together with future minister of the interior Prince Michel Poniatowski (a descendant of one of Napoleon's marshals), was part of an OAS ring.

It is well known that the authors of fascist attacks are rarely caught. When the Italian fascist Marco Affatigato was arrested by French police after the

Bologna railway station bombing, he openly laughed at the idea that he would ever spend any significant amount of time in jail. His laughter was based on experience.

Both the fascists of the European National Fascists (FNE), which is generally held responsible for the Paris synagogue bombing, and the police "unions" claim that 30 of the FNE's reported 150 members are highly-placed police officers, in particular in the Renseignement General, a sort of combined FBI and Red Squad. In fact, the government was obliged to fire Paul-Louis Durand, an inspector, not because he was a member of the FNE leading body, but because he was reported to have met with Italian fascists shortly before the Bologna railway station bombing in early August. Inspector Durand had an important job in the police — personal bodyguard to the Grand Rabbi of France!

The point however is not to "purify" the police force, to make it more democratic and "republican". The police cannot be "purified" — they are part of the armed might of the capitalist state and must be smashed. Revolutionists demand police out of the union movement.

## Neo-fascists: The tip of the iceberg

In the last five years or so the far right in France and the rest of West Europe

has after a lull emerged from its ratholes and acquired an increasing respectability. The neo-fascists have recently concentrated on immigrant workers and a broader-based racism. But now the fascist groups are reminding the rest of the right-wing racists that anti-Semitism is an integral part of any mass fascist movement. The fascists need the Hitler regalia and crude anti-Semitism to maintain their self-image of fighting against a secret clique which dominates society. And poor North African or Turkish workers (like blacks in the US) won't fit the bill. But a Rothschild will do fine — or a Jewish communist like Leon Trotsky.

In 1978 with much fanfare the French Parti des Forces Nouvelles got together with the Italian MSI and the Spanish Fuerza Nueva to create the "Euroright", supposedly as an answer to "Eurocommunism". These "legalist" parties maintain close links with the state apparatus in their respective countries and serve as a conduit for fascists. While usually keeping their distance from the paramilitary fascist groups (at least in public) they serve to rally racist and reactionary sentiment and function as a recruiting reservoir for the fascist-terrorist groups.

The small paramilitary neo-fascist groups have increased their activity apace. Their not-so-secret conspiracy uses the tactics of murder and arson to encourage tendencies within the bourgeoisie toward a "strong state" until the social disintegration of capitalism and the miserable failure of the reformist leaders of the working class allow them to come to power. In West Germany the Hoffmann group, reported to have done the Oktoberfest bombing in Munich, is simply the best known of over 50(!) neo-Nazi groups with a combined membership, according to West German police, of over 15,000. In addition to the indigenous neo-Nazi groups, fascism in West Germany has been augmented by the murderous Turkish "Grey Wolves". And in England there are a number of similar groups which have split off from the National Front.

In France the right wing has for decades organized private militias and fascist unions with the aim of strike-breaking and union-busting, especially in the auto industry. The rightist union, the Confederation Francaise du Travail (CFT), dominates the Citroen plants in particular, terrorizing immigrant workers and forcibly enrolling them under threat of deportation. The CFT also furnishes squads of "unionized" workers to break strikes, intimidate militants, even going so far as to murder them. In 1977 a CFT commando killed Pierre Maitre, a young worker in the Communist-led CGT walking his first picket line in Reims. And in 1972 it was an ex-member of the CFT who killed a Maoist, Pierre Overney, leafletting outside Renault-Billancourt in Paris.

## Anti-immigrant hysteria

The present growth of the far right cannot be understood in terms of a plot by this or that intelligence service to "destabilize" their government, but only in terms of the economic and social



Paris, 7 October: 200,000 march in outrage over fascist atrocity.

background which allows such plots, where they exist, to have even a slim chance of success. Following the 1974-75 economic crisis, West European governments turned to anti-working class austerity programs, the leading edge of which is anti-immigrant policies. They thus give semi-official sanction to racist attacks on immigrants, which have become commonplace and regularly go unpunished by the police. West Germany has avoided drastic rises in domestic unemployment by sending Turkish and Yugoslav workers back home. Thatcher's Britain not only sharply limits immigration, but government harassment of immigrants includes the scandalous racist practice of subjecting Pakistani and Indian women to vaginal searches.

In France a series of decrees aimed at getting rid of some 40,000 North African and black African workers a year. Last December the right-wing National Front poster France with the slogan "1,500,000 unemployed is 1,500,000 immigrants too many. France and Frenchmen first". The notoriously chauvinist French Communist Party (PCF) contributed with its own calls for total national economic protectionism ("Produce French").

### Stalinists still look to the bourgeoisie

If the Stalinists contribute to chauvinist sentiment, the CP-dominated unions in France and Italy also have done nothing against fascist attacks on immigrants or even their own members. Instead they call on the bourgeois state to cleanse itself. The CGT sits back and allows the fascist CFT to dominate Citroen, resorting from time to time to law suits and calling for new laws against the fascists and "heavy sentences" for bosses who infringe on union rights. The PCF/CGT response to the killing of Pierre Maitre in 1977 was to call for a five minute "general strike"!

And their response today is no different. The PCF/CGT has refused to act. It would have taken the 200,000 workers who demonstrated in Paris just a few minutes to deal with the fascist scum. But the Stalinists want to avoid just that because it would pose a risk to their bureaucratic domination of the workers movement and their aspirations for a new "popular front" with a section of the bourgeoisie. The fact that the office of the neo-fascists is located only 200 yards from the PCF national headquarters on the Place Colonel Fabien should be felt as a provocation by every Communist worker. Yet the local Communist Party cell merely distributes leaflets in neighborhood mailboxes calling on all the "democratic-minded" to protest to the government.

### Fascism or Communism

Through calls on the state to ban the fascists, through schemes to resurrect the

popular-front "Union of the Left", the reformist workers misleaders chain the powerful labor movement to its bourgeois rulers. Those who would seek a new popular front, those who sentimentalize "The Resistance" and the "glorious tradition" of World War II — "The Great Patriotic War to End Fascism" — must now answer a burning question posed by history: Why are the fascists back again?

During the 1930s, Stalin's party in France prepared the masses to accept their own bourgeoisie in a popular front "against fascism". The French working class was "re-educated" to learn that the main enemy was no longer at home but across the Rhine. And when the war was over the popular front remained, and the Stalinists organized ignominious defeat for the proletariat. It was the Stalinists who forced workers to turn over their weapons so that the "democratic, anti-

parliamentary illusions, by paralyzing their will to struggle, the People's Front creates favorable conditions for the victory of fascism. The policy of coalition with the bourgeoisie must be paid for by the proletariat with years of new torments and sacrifice, if not by decades of fascist terror."

— "The New Revolutionary Upsurge and the Tasks of the Fourth International" (July 1936), in *Writings of Leon Trotsky (1935-1936)*.

Unlike the 1920s and the early 1930s, fascism is now no longer a new phenomenon. The experience of the holocaust remains within the living memory of the European working class, and there is little chance that the fascists can pretend to be what they are not. The demand to crush the fascists wherever they raise their heads will find enormous receptivity, for it taps into the workers' deep, almost instinctive hatred for Hitlerite scum.

crusade against Soviet Communism. "We need more and more weapons to kill Russians", cry the leaders of West Europe and the US. The only thing that rivals the anti-Communism of the speeches of bourgeois politicians today is their chauvinism and racism. Franz-Josef Strauss campaigns to drive foreign workers out of West Germany. The Giscardians and Gaullists, partly to be on the right side of Arab oil, indulge in scarcely-veiled attacks on the Jews. "Ethnic purity" Carter slashes social welfare for blacks, while KKK leaders state that the Republican electoral platform could have written by them. If Strauss, Giscard, Carter and Reagan all have to dissociate themselves from the fascist terrorists, it is precisely because their ideological affinity with them is so obvious.

Of course, the situation today in the Western bourgeois democracies is not



Munich: Oktoberfest bombing.



Paris: Synagogue bombing.

fascist" capitalists could maintain their rule. Instead of a Socialist United States of Europe the imperialists were handed the reins of state power. Thus continued the cycle from popular frontism to bourgeois reaction. As Trotsky put it:

"Incapable of solving a single one of the tasks posed by the revolution — since all these tasks boil down to one, namely the crushing of the bourgeoisie — the People's Front renders the existence of the bourgeois regime impossible and thereby provokes the fascist coup d'etat. By lulling the workers and peasants with

When the main Nazi criminals were placed in the dock at Nuremberg 35 years ago, their deeds horrifying the entire world, social demonecrats, Stalinists and liberals believed that never again would fascism reappear on the Western political stage. Yet from Greensboro to Paris, from Bologna to Munich, fascist terror is on the rise. The fascists are growing, perhaps not so much in sheer numbers but in boldness, in the belief that things are going their way.

They are encouraged above all by the NATO chiefs' strident calls for a new

Germany in the early 1930s. To think so is to lose all sense of scale. Yet the basic thrust of imperialist-capitalist society — toward war with Soviet Russia, toward wage-slashing and austerity, toward racist scapegoating and violence — all find their realization in fascism. United working-class action against the fascist terrorists, *urgently needed right now*, cannot ultimately succeed without overthrowing this rotting capitalist system throughout the world.

— Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* no 266, 17 October 1980.

## Klan kills—SWP debates

As the fascist bomb wave was ripping through Europe, Ku Klux Klan terror was once again riding across the United States. On 14 September, hooded KKKers invaded the state of Connecticut to hold a race-hating, cross-burning ceremony. On 5 September, the US TV show "Speak Up America" featured as its star the KKK Grand Dragon Tom Metzger, the Democratic Party candidate for a Southern California congressional district. His "program" was shown clearly enough — film clips showed KKKers armed with clubs and dogs savagely assaulting anti-Klan protesters.

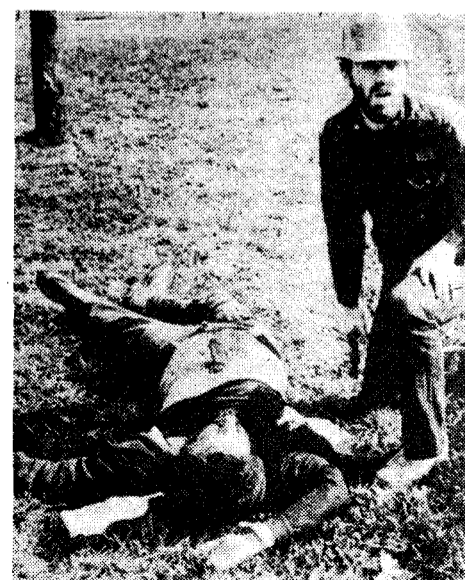
This pitch for the Klan should have nauseated any leftist. But scandalously, Mark Friedman, candidate of the US Socialist Workers Party (SWP), sat placidly in the audience watching these terrorist atrocities. He rose only to politely rebut his "Democratic Party opponent", and state that the SWP calls for

"unions, civil rights, and women's rights groups to unite to defeat the Klan". Friedman had nothing to say about the Klan's real atrocities because the SWP does *nothing* but sit on the sidelines while they rampage and murder!

Worse was to follow. The 10 October SWP *Militant* boasted of an "extensive" and highly-publicised debate between Friedman and Klansman Metzger. To read the *Militant*, you'd hardly know that Metzger led armed KKK patrols against "illegal aliens" at the Mexican border! Instead it attacked the Republican candidate who objected to participating in a debate which would "give Metzger a forum for his ideas". In eagerly debating the assassins of Greensboro and Chattanooga the SWP helps the KKK to mask its racist terror as a parliamentary alternative. While calling for "free speech for fascists", for years the SWP

has routinely excluded SL supporters from its public forums. Its slogan is "Bourgeois democracy, yes! Workers democracy, no!" But though the SWP pretends the struggle against fascism is won or lost at the ballot box, the Klan and Nazis know different. So do Trotskyists.

In 1938, when the SWP was a revolutionary organisation, the Trotskyist-led Teamsters Union Local 544 in Minneapolis sent their flying squad to disperse an announced meeting of the fascist Silver Shirts. These militants knew that fascists understand one thing and it is not the language of debate. Today, this tradition, spat upon by the SWP, is proudly upheld by the Spartacist League, which has mobilised labor and the left to confront and *stop* the Klan, in Detroit, and the Nazis, in San Francisco. On those days the SWP stayed home. Obviously they prefer "debating" the Klan to fighting it. ■



After Greensboro: Anti-Klan protester and fallen comrade.

# Keep Left backs Qaddafi, Khomeini—Why not the pope too?

## Gould lies for clerical reaction

Readers of *Australasian Spartacist* will recall that recently we exposed some of the more rotten aspects of Bob Gould's Socialist Leadership Group (SLG) in the NSW ALP, particularly its evident political affinity for the Qaddafi-loyal Socialist Labour League (SLL) of Jim Mulgrew, the local hand raiser for Gerry Healy/Mike Banda's "International Committee" ("Healyism, Laborism, Stalinophobia — What is the Gould Group?", *ASP* no 77, September 1980). The Healyites' self-appointed role as press agents for the Libyan dictator has taken them out of the workers movement entirely, leading them to enthusiastically applaud the butchering in 1978 of 21 Communist Party militants by Qaddafi's erstwhile allies, the capitalist Ba'athist regime in Iraq. Gould himself gave a backhanded defence of these murders; he didn't care if "a bunch of Stalinists got killed". So we demanded: "Where does the 'Socialist Leadership Group' stand vis-a-vis the SLL pimps for Qaddafi?"

It looks like we struck a raw nerve, judging by the latest *Keep Left* (no 4, October 1980), in which Gould's long-winded, rambling article on the Polish strikes devotes three-quarters of its comment on the left to bucketing the Spartacist League (SL) with lying denunciations — claiming all along, of course, that we are an irrelevant, "propagandist, middle class 'revolutionary sect'", working in tandem with the left-reformist *Challenge* tendency in the ALP! But the one thing Gould does not so much as mention is the question we posed. Confronted with the same question at the 17 October anti-Fraser "celebration" in Sydney, however, SLGer Linda Heslop openly declared that "we agree with the IC [International Committee], you know that". Asked point blank if this meant they also backed Qaddafi, she replied: "yes".

So why the coyness in the pages of *Keep Left*? Maybe Gould realises that Qaddafi's repressive regime is despised by class-conscious workers. Or that the SLL's notorious political banditry and organisational gimmickry have earned them the justified hatred of leftists. Or maybe it's also the fact that being an organic faction of the Labor Party and being an apologist for Qaddafi are really ultimately divergent roads of betrayal. But one thing is clear: any supporters of his group who take seriously his rhetoric about "labour principles" had better

demand an accounting of the Healyites' disgusting subservience to murderous, anti-communist capitalist regimes.

### What about Poland?

To divert attention away from our earlier polemic, Gould resorts to crude smear tactics in his "reply", on the old principle for opportunists that if you throw enough muck some of it will surely stick. Uncomfortable facts which get in the way are simply ignored. Thus it

against the Stalinist bureaucracy on the [grounds] that the persistence of religious and nationalist sentiments amongst the Polish masses inevitably gives the Polish movement an essentially capitalist restorationist character."

And for good measure he throws in a few total inventions, such as our "lavish[ing] praise" on a Poland article by Peter Baldwin in the Steering Committee paper *Challenge*. That's a laugh. The fact is that it is *Gould* who has the same fundamental position on Poland as Baldwin!

In his "polemic", Gould draws an analogy to the mullahs in Iran to illustrate his approach to the Polish events. Of course, the Polish workers' strike movement was not dominated and run by priests as the clerical-Islamic anti-shah mobilisations of 1978 were. But Gould is correct, for once, in linking his own positions in the two cases. After all, if you support the Koranic fanatic Qaddafi and the holy men of Qom who want to turn the clock back to the seventh century, why not the Polish pope too?



Catholic church renders not unto Stalinism but unto Carter/NATO.

doesn't matter how many times we repeat our evaluation of the Polish strikes:

"Insofar as the settlement enhances the Polish workers' power to struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy, revolutionaries can support the strike and its outcome. But only a blind man could fail to see the gross influence of the Catholic church and also pro-Western sentiments among the striking workers. If the settlement strengthens the working class organisationally, it also strengthens the forces of reaction. Poland stands today on a razor's edge."

— *Australasian Spartacist* no 77, September 1980

Gould, who is no blind man but a fully conscious opportunist liar, will always render it like this:

"They [the SL] bitterly oppose support for the mass movement of the proletariat

Only Gould won't even admit the church is pro-capitalist!

The SLG line on Poland is, indeed, scarcely unique. Aside from Baldwin, his bedfellows range from the International Socialists, who refuse to defend any deformed workers state, to the Socialist Workers Party, to the Melbourne "Trotskyist" discussion club honcho Paul White, right over to the social-democratic Communist Party which Gould ludicrously insists on calling "Stalinist". In the midst of Washington's anti-Soviet war fever, they are all dead-set on denying any threat of counterrevolution in the Soviet bloc because they are all scrambling to repudiate the elementary proletarian duty of unconditional military defence of the deformed workers states against the imperialists and capitalist restorationists.

### Khomeini "revolutionary"? Why not John Paul II?

According to Gould, the Catholic church's influence in Poland is simply an expression of Poland's "defiantly independent national sentiments, particularly in relation to Russia", which is "similar to the Irish identification with Catholicism in relation to British Imperialism". Really? The Soviet degenerated workers state stands in the same relation to Poland as the British Empire to colonial or neo-colonial Ireland? This renegade's lie obliterates the class difference between the USSR and British imperialism. Since 1917, anti-Russian Polish nationalism has been explicitly *anti-Soviet*. It was the "defiantly independent" nationalist Marshal Pilsudski who defeated the Red Army of Lenin and Trotsky in 1920 — an event commemorated during the recent strike wave by Cardinal Wyszynski when he addressed a pilgrim's rally of 120,000. This is the true character of the church's nationalism.

The occasion wasn't lost on some of the strikers either. Anna Walentinowicz, in an interview with British television on 4 September, called the election of the Polish cardinal Wojtyla as pope "a second miracle on the Vistula", the first "miracle" being Pilsudski's 1920 victory. But this is irrelevant to Gould, who claims that all anti-bureaucratic struggles in Poland have been "intertwined" with reactionary Catholicism. This too is a flat lie. There were no mass shipyard prayers in 1970 or even 1976. And what about the long tradition of anti-clerical, anti-nationalist communism in Poland as represented by such authentic Marxists as Rosa Luxemburg, Leo Jogiches, Julian Marchlewski and Felix Dzerzhinsky?

Confronted with the overwhelming evidence of dangerous Catholic influence

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## Gould's housing policy: Sewer Socialism

It used to be called "sewer socialism". Now Bob Gould's Socialist Leadership Group (SLG), joined by Hall Greenland of the Annandale branch of the ALP and featuring none other than the Lord Mayor of Sydney, Doug Sutherland, is launching a "campaign" on the "Housing Crisis" at a public meeting on 5 November in Sydney. The SLG's "Socialist Housing Policy" calls for "absolutely ruthless" measures by Wran and local ALP town councillors. Measures like ... "rapid development of a large government real estate agency, run on the same lines as the Government's Insurance Office". Wran going into real estate — that's *ruthless!* Wran would be ruthless all right — to the tenants.

The chronic housing crises and shortages engendered by the anarchic capitalist system has been a preoccupation of petty-bourgeois liberal reformers since the Industrial Revolution. Friedrich Engels, the co-founder of scientific socialism, even wrote a book about it (*The Housing Question*), when

middle-class reformists started to muddle the issue within the German Social Democracy. This is what Engels had to say:

"To want to solve the housing question while at the same time desiring to maintain the modern big cities is an absurdity. The modern big cities, however, will be abolished only by the abolition of the capitalist mode of production, and when this is once set going there will be quite other issues than supplying each worker with a little house of his own."

But for the SLG, which likes to blow hard about the need for "scientific socialism", all this is presumably old hat. *Keep Left's* "solution" to the housing shortage is to call for a "dramatic increase in public housing stock" and to laud "the practice of owning one's own home [which] has an enormous grip on the masses in Australia", a practice it proclaims as a "natural one", "a legitimate right that should be protected". Engels had their number on this too:

"Herr Sax [read Gould] seems to assume that man is essentially a peasant, other-

wise he would not falsely impute to the workers of our big cities a longing to own land."

"It is perfectly clear that the state as it exists today is neither able nor willing to do anything to remedy the housing calamity. The state is nothing but the organised collective power of the possessing classes, the landowners and the capitalists, as against the exploited classes, the peasants and workers...." ".... all real 'housing shortage' [can be solved], provided [existing dwellings] are used judiciously. This can naturally only occur through the expropriation of the present owners and by quartering in their houses homeless workers or workers overcrowded in their present homes. As soon as the proletariat has won political power, such a measure prompted by concern for the common good will be just as easy to carry out as are other expropriations and billetings...."

Far from fighting for *this* program, the petty-bourgeois City shopkeeper Gould is raising a stink about "middle class gentrification" of Sydney's inner suburbs, the largely completed exodus

of the workers and the influx of trendy petty-bourgeois types of whom the *Challenge* tendency is socially and politically a reflection. "The problem from the socialist and labour movement point of view", says *Keep Left*, is "the tendency of the interests of the home-owning, speculative, middle class gentrifiers to predominate in the formation of housing policy"! On the contrary, "the problem from a socialist point of view" is precisely this sub-reformist tinkering which helps divert the working class' attention away from the necessity of a struggle against the capitalist system itself. Our last comment we leave once again to Engels, who aptly characterised the "housing policy formulators" of his day as follows:

"It is just with such sufferings as these, which the working class endures in common with other classes, and particularly the petty bourgeoisie, that petty-bourgeois socialism ... prefers to occupy itself."

So too with Bob Gould and the SLG.



On 7 November 1917, the Bolshevik Party under Lenin and Trotsky led the Russian workers to power. Though distorted by bureaucratic rule, the Soviet Union today still embodies the socialist property forms which were key gains of this great victory. To commemorate the 63rd anniversary of this historic event, we reprint below excerpts from a speech by James P Cannon, founder of American Trotskyism and leader of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), in November 1945.

The SWP has long since sunk into grovelling reformism and betrayal. But in 1945, it was still a revolutionary organization, the strongest section of Trotsky's Fourth International (FI). Together with Cannon, Trotsky fought his last major factional struggle in the SWP, against the petty-bourgeois opposition of Burnham/Shachtman, which reneged on defence of the USSR over Stalin's invasions of Poland and Finland in 1939-40. In 1945, against the Stalinophobes who multiplied amidst the opening shots of the Cold War, Cannon again saw the need to vigorously reassert the Trotskyist program on the "Russian Question".

Cannon's powerful statement is imbued with revolutionary optimism and proletarian internationalism. Its weakness — a failure to note the concomitant international character of the vanguard party — is minor by comparison. In this period too, the FI became disoriented by the Red Army's occupation of Eastern Europe, denying in advance the possibility of the anti-capitalist overturns which occurred there. Although still revolutionary, the FI's sterile orthodoxy and Stalinophobia helped pave the way to its organisational destruction in 1951-53, when Michel Pablo gave consistent expression to an impulse to betray based on the substitution of non-revolutionary, non-proletarian forces for the intervention of a Trotskyist vanguard party.

Today, anti-Soviet hysteria is once more being whipped up in the wake of the mad war drive of US imperialism, and the Russian Question is again decisive. Revisionists of all hues are still joining the "democratic" howling over Afghanistan, and recruits for an "anti-Stalinist" alliance with Pope Wojtyla's counterrevolutionary church in Poland are legion. Those who deny the possibility of Soviet forces carrying out a (deformed) social overturn in Afghanistan — or of a church-led social counterrevolution in Poland — are no revolutionaries but renegades who have ditched the elementary proletarian duty to defend the gains of October. The Fourth International will be reforged only through systematic political struggle against these latter-day Soviet defeatists, and for the Trotskyist program of military defence of the Soviet Union against imperialism and workers political revolution to overthrow the Stalinist bureaucratic usurpers.

(The text is from the compilation of Cannon's writings, *The Struggle for Socialism in the "American Century"*, where it is slightly abridged from the version originally published in the *Militant*, paper of the American SWP.)

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The development of socialism from a utopian conception to a scientific doctrine



James P Cannon.

November 1980

# We are the party of the Russian Revolution!



Defence of USSR — not an abstraction then . . . or now.

was accomplished with the publication of the *Communist Manifesto* in 1848 — ninety-seven years ago. The development of socialism from science into action was accomplished sixty-nine years later by the Russian Bolshevik revolution of November 7, 1917. On the fusion of these two great historic achievements — the formulation of the principles of scientific socialism and their verification in action in 1917, the union of theory and practice — we stand today, as we have stood in the past, and once again assemble to celebrate the anniversary of the great revolution. . . .

The revolutionary changes in property forms, which enabled mankind to increase its productive powers, have been the fundamental basis of human progress. These have been the achievements of the great revolutions. The abolition of capitalist private property in the means of production, and the nationalization of industry and the institution of a planned economy made possible by this abolition of private property — that is the great conquest of the Russian revolution which has not yet been overthrown. That is what we see yet in Russia. That is what we see through all the monstrous betrayals of the Stalinist bureaucracy. And that is what we defend. Not Stalinism, not the treacherous and corroding bureaucracy, but the economic conquests of the great revolution which still remain. That is what we defend against the imperialists and against the Stalinist bureaucracy too. . . .

We have had nothing but defeats, and setbacks, and catastrophes for twenty-two years. Our movement has had to make its way in the face of defeats ever since 1923, the defeat of the German revolution. That is why our movement remained comparatively small in numbers and isolated. But the important thing is not that the Marxist movement, in the face of the defeats and catastrophes, was small and isolated. The important thing is that, in spite of all, we made our way and are still fighting.

We Marxists-Trotskyists can still fight and we are still fighting, not because we cherish illusions; not because we wish to deceive ourselves and others; but because we see the whole reality in the world and not just a part of it. We recog-

nize the defeats, but we do not recognize the total defeat of humanity. The war was a terrible defeat for mankind. Fascism was a terrible defeat. The degeneration of the Soviet Union under the Stalinists is a defeat. The failure of the first stage of the war to produce victorious revolutions in Europe is, in a sense, a defeat. These are facts, big and important facts, and we recognize them. But the death agony of capitalism is a bigger and more important fact, and we see that side of the picture too. We see that capitalism, in this period of its decay and death agony, is utterly and completely incapable of organizing the economy of the world to provide, not abundance, but even a living for the masses of the people.

We see not only the weaknesses on the side of the workers, but we also see the fatal diseased weakness of the capitalist world order. We do not close our eyes to defeats. But in each case Trotskyism seeks to establish precisely, in every situation, what has been lost, what has been saved. Trotskyism searches in every defeat or setback, and the altered situation created by it, to find a vantage point for a new development of the struggle. And Trotskyism alone proceeds this way. That is why Trotskyism is the only revolutionary political current in the whole world today. . . .

The accusation has been made against us — and not for the first time — that our theory is a religion with which we console ourselves; that our analysis of the Soviet Union, of what has been lost and what has been saved and what is still worth defending, is a religion. Those who made that accusation in the past — and there have been many of them — nearly always ended by placing their own faith in "democratic" imperialism. We want nothing to do with that kind of religion in any case.

Marxism and the Russian revolution represent the union of theory and practice; the union of the word and the deed. Every tendency toward capitulation to the class enemy which we have known in the past — and we have known many — every one began with a revision of the theory and ended in repudiation of the deed. After the first flush of victory in 1917, each and every setback of the

struggling revolution, every difficulty, every defeat, brought new waves of disillusionment, and with them new experiments and new revisions of theory; and, finally, new capitulations in principle to the class enemy. The case of Professor Burnham is only the latest example.

The case of Professor Burnham is recent enough to be remembered. He began with a revision of the Marxist theory of the state and the Marxist analysis of the Russian revolution, and ended in the camp of American imperialism. That is the most disgraceful and shameful capitulation that one can make. It represents a real betrayal of humanity because American imperialism is the enemy of humanity. One who goes over into that camp has a "religion" which no self-respecting worker ought ever to become infected with.

Stalinism itself began as a revision of Marxist theory and ended in class betrayal. Trotsky began his struggle against Stalin in the realm of a theoretical dispute over the revisionist theory of "socialism in one country" and the renunciation of the international character of the Russian revolution. The Trotskyists understood the nature of Stalinism better, and explained it earlier, and fought it longer and harder than any others. Therefore nobody needs to incite us against Stalinism. But vulgar "anti-Stalinism" is no more revolutionary, and no more attractive to us. We know where this "anti-Stalinism" leads. Up to now it has always led to the camp of "democratic" imperialism.

We can have no quarrel whatsoever with those who denounce Stalinism for its bloody crimes against the workers — and they are legion. But excessive zeal in criticizing and denouncing the Soviet Union and those who still defend it — that part of it which is worthy of defense — against imperialism is subject to suspicion. The unbridled antagonism bordering on Russophobia — which one can notice in the atmosphere these days — is a very dangerous sentiment, especially at the present time. Because it is perfectly clear to everybody that before any peace is concluded, the mobilization for the next stage of the war, a war against the Soviet Union, is already

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# Scratch a left moralist...

"During an epoch of triumphant reaction, Messrs Democrats, Social Democrats, Anarchists, and other representatives of the 'left' camp begin to exude double their usual amount of moral effluvia, similar to persons who perspire doubly in fear. Paraphrasing the Ten Commandments or the Sermon on the Mount, these moralists address themselves not so much to triumphant reaction as to those revolutionists suffering under its persecution, who with their 'excesses' and 'amoral' principles 'provoke' reaction and give it moral justification."

— Trotsky, *Their Morals and Ours*

For the working class, reaction is hardly triumphant, but for the petty-bourgeois moralists of the LaTrobe University Socialist Left whose control of the Students Representative Council collapsed this year, it must seem like the sky has fallen in. Their response? An outpouring of "moral effluvia" directed mainly at the campus Spartacist Club. The final issue this year of the student paper, *Rabelais*, edited by libertarian guru Ted Murphy and his sidekick, contains a proliferation of venomous jibes and poor undergraduate "humour" whose subject is the Spartacist Club. It is these perennially campus-bound politicians' way of reflecting the impact we have had on them this year.

The Socialist Left has certainly felt the blows hard. Its seemingly impregnable SRC majority collapsed as members defected to the Australian Democrats; long-time member Tony Caruso added insult to injury by rejecting their campus-playpen reformism for the Spartacist Club's Trotskyist politics, and the 105 votes for Spartacist SRC candidate Sandy Meredith confirmed that the Spartacists are the only left alternative on campus.

With the fortunes of the Socialist Left and libertarians so low, it's not surprising that Murphy reserved eight pages of his last (mercifully!) dreadful issue of *Rabelais* for the plight of another near-extinct species, Leadbeater's possum and its Gippsland forest habitat!

The current editors promised there would be no sexism or racism in *Rabelais* once elected. But what are election promises for, if not for breaking, so their contemptuous parting shot, a page of "quotable quotes" includes one from Latin American Socialist Leter Ana da Silva: "Why should we support the Italian Society? They're only wogs. Besides which, they're not even South Americans!" Scratch a New Left moralist and watch all the racist, sexist anti-working class backwardness ooze out.

The *Rabelais* gave a disgusting demonstration that "libertarian socialism" really means liberal anti-communism. The Spartacist Club had shown videotapes of US labour rallies against Klan/Nazi terror, including that of the Detroit rally protesting the Ku Klux Klan massacre of five leftist anti-Klan demonstrators at Greensboro, North Carolina, last November. *Rabelais* chose to reprint — minus the hostile editorial antidote usually affixed to Spartacist articles — a revolting piece of liberal anti-communist journalism from *Harpers* magazine. Its message was that the adventurist Maoist group (now called the Communist Workers Party — CWP) which staged the Greensboro rally deliberately planned their own martyrdom as a cynical publicity stunt! A sample: "Full of hatred because of their failures, the [CWP] members reduced their lives to cliches, and five of them died in an event rigged for self-destruction. But for a brief time they suckered the gullible media, which

were confused by their own fables about the South." The method here is that of the vicious bourgeois morality which holds that a seductively-dressed woman who is raped when out alone at night has "got what she deserved". After this Murphy has the nerve to oppose our call for jailing the killers out of concern for their "right to trial by jury".

The fascists cold-bloodedly, without provocation, murder five communists in broad daylight and filmed by TV cameras. The bourgeois press lies that it was a gang shootout and the communists are to blame. The racist, capitalist Southern cops and courts let the killers out on bail and arraign their victims. So this despicable rat Murphy, searching for any club to beat the Spartacists with, latches onto this vile bourgeois press lie and adds for good measure a "democratic" song and dance against our simple demand that the killers be locked up!

The enemy of the "libertarian socialists" is not capitalism but "Leninist sects" (read: the Spartacist League) who, Murphy suggests, stand for a "workers' police state". His concern for the "democratic rights" of the fascist murderers and his hostility to "authoritarian" Leninism are nothing but petty-bourgeois fear of proletarian revolution. The October revolution led by the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky was the greatest liberating event in human history. It raised to their feet tens of millions of workers and forged a mighty instrument for their self-emancipation, the Communist International. It gave hundreds of millions of oppressed toilers in the colonial world their first-ever hopes of liberation. Yet the "libertarian socialists" cry over the violation of the "democratic rights" of reactionaries and denounce the Bolsheviks as equivalent to

Stalin for kicking the Ted Murphys of their day out of the revolution's way.

The libertarians find revolutionary leadership abhorrent but anti-authoritarianism only goes so far. When Bob Hawke and John Halfpenny came to LaTrobe, editor Murphy displayed his talent at what is commonly known as arse-licking: "LaTrobe was indeed privileged to have both Bob Hawke and John Halfpenny, key figures in the labour movement, speak here in the same week". Key figures in helping along a future bureaucratic career, too, perhaps? The Spartacist Club denounced the betrayals of both bureaucrats, including Halfpenny's role in selling out the militant LaTrobe Valley power strike in 1977. Socialist Lefters asked a few innocuous questions and Murphy held his anti-bureaucratic fire for his *Rabelais* attacks on "Leninist sects" (guess who) who "present 'correct leadership' as a panacea", always "blame [the loss of a strike] on the officials", and put forward "the vulgar marxist idea that Hawke is an agent of the capitalist class inside the labour movement". Hawke a defender of capitalism? Perish the thought! And Halfpenny still swears by "militant socialist politics" — why, he said so himself! We wonder what our readers in LaTrobe Valley think of that one!

By unleashing all their pent-up frustrations against us in their swansong issue of *Rabelais*, the Socialist Left merely underscore their complete inability to defeat us politically all year. Murphy in particular can't seem to get us out of his head, resulting in his anti-Spartacist cartoons and lines like "Trotsky dismembered will never be remembered". However there is a ray of hope; the Socialist Left crowd seem to be reconciled to the political fate which hopefully awaits them. Murphy writes, in reply to a letter from a Christian, that "the prospect of becoming a decaying, stinking corpse doesn't really worry us". In that case, we can only add, "God speed!" ■

## Arson attack on SWP office

On Saturday night, 25 October, the national headquarters of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in Sydney was seriously damaged by fire. According to *Direct Action* (29 October), firemen arriving at the scene found that a steel roller-door had been forced open, clearly indicating the fire was deliberately lit. The official fire report states the possible cause as arson or suspicious circumstances, yet the police report maintains that it was an accident.

Although the identity of the perpetrators of this outrage is still unknown, the strong possibility exists that extreme right wingers, fascists or even ASIO are responsible. SWP election candidate Jamie Doughney said, "It is likely the work of the extreme right-wing. However, as always, we cannot rule out the active or covert support of the forces of the state ..." (quoted in *Direct Action*, 29 October). If this is the case, we protest this outrageous arson attack on the SWP offices as an attack on the entire left and labour movement!

The Fraser government's anti-Soviet war drive and its attacks on the working class have created the political climate which fosters such attacks and encourages the growth of fascist terrorist organisations. This year ASIO's budget was boosted and it was granted sweeping new powers extending its legal scope for spying on and harassing the left and outlawing the exposure of such activities by its victims. The left and working class movement must be prepared to defend itself against further attacks from fascist groups and the secret police.

But the SWP's response to the fire has been to call for a "public inquiry", which could well mean an investigation by the bourgeois state into an act which may have been carried out by one of its own agencies! Wran will never permit ASIO's dirty work against leftists and the working class to be brought out into the open:



SWP headquarters after fire.

Direct Action

such a "public inquiry" would at best whitewash these thugs and give the state the opportunity to investigate not the perpetrators of the attack but the workers movement itself. However, all the material on the case in police possession must be released now. No cover up!

The SWP's call is of a piece with its consistent reformist illusions in the state. In 1977 it refused to expel Lisa Walter, an ASIO agent who penetrated the organisation then confessed and announced her "conversion" to socialism; Ian Gordon, a self-confessed paid ASIO informer was allowed to resign that same year. The SWP also scandalously defends the "right" of fascists to free speech — a "right" they use precisely to burn down

left-wing bookshops and terrorise the working class. In contrast the Spartacist League has fought for mass labour action to crush the fascists. And when ASIO planted the agent Janet Langridge in our ranks, we immediately expelled this informer when she admitted her police ties.

Reformist legalism will not protect the SWP: on the contrary, it only emboldens fascists, ultra-rightists and bourgeois cops in their dirty work. And the arsonists are still on the loose right now. It may turn out that this attack was not politically motivated. But if it was, any other workers organisation could be next. Protest the fire attack now! ■

## Iran/Iraq...

Continued from page 2

society and the state, Lenin recommended that in determining our policy in regard to imperialist war we abstract ourselves from such 'concrete' circumstances as democracy and monarchy, as aggression and national defense."

— "From a Scratch to a Danger of Gangrene"

Yet McIlroy actually denounces the Healyites for a "disgusting history of crawling before such petty-bourgeois, nationalist regimes [as Saddam Hussein's] and covering for their crimes". Now *that's* cynicism!

The construction of revolutionary Trotskyist parties steeled in struggle against all manner of chauvinism and religious bigotry, dedicated to the program of permanent revolution — that is what is urgently needed for the workers to sweep away all the riffraff of colonels, sheiks and mullahs along with the capitalists and landlords and lay the basis for socialist development. That is the only way out of the vicious cycle of nationalist slaughter. ■

### Revolutionary Literature

**Spartacist League  
Sydney  
public office**

Thursday: 5.30 pm to 9.30 pm

Saturday: 12 noon to 5 pm

2nd floor,  
112 Goulburn St  
Sydney

Australasian Spartacist

## Gould...

Continued from page 8

among the strikers, Gould clutches at straws. The number of demands, "21, not 20 or 22", don't you see, is a cryptic reference to the "21 conditions" for affiliation to the Communist International, by which strike leader Lech Walesa with his crucifixes and pictures of the Virgin Mary "invoked the whole history of the socialist movement in Poland and Eastern Europe"! Never mind that the rather different 21 conditions for admission to Lenin's Comintern included the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, support for the dictatorship of the proletariat and unconditional defence of the Soviet Union against counterrevolution!

Gould singles out for special defence among the strikers' demands, many of which were supportable, one which was clearly reactionary — the demand that the church be given access to the state-run mass media. Not for Gould the elementary bourgeois-democratic demand for the separation of church and state, even in a deformed workers state. That it seems is confined to the "secular" Spartacist League. Well, we do confess to being secularists, but then we thought communists were meant to be against religious superstition too. The next step for the SLG is to launch a campaign for a new-found "Labor principle" of state aid to parochial schools here as well.

Is Poland another 1956 Hungarian Revolution, as Gould claims? In November 1956 Gerry Healy, then basing himself on the Trotskyist program, could truthfully write against the Stalinists that clerical influence in the workers councils was very small:

"... if the capitalist elements have such a mass base, why did the Cardinal [Mindzenty] have to take refuge in the American Embassy? Capitalist agents there are, to be sure, but the movement right from the start was predominantly revolutionary, and it is this fact which must guide the Labour Movement."

— *Revolution and Counterrevolution in Hungary*

But unlike Gould over Poland, Healy didn't deny that the church was capitalist restorationist. Neither did the American Socialist Workers Party, whose youth group in 1959 distributed a pamphlet by Shane Mage (later a founder of the SWP's Revolutionary Tendency, precursor of the Spartacist tendency) entitled

*The Hungarian Revolution*. In a polemic against the Shachtmanites, Mage explicitly points out that the Catholic church's role in world politics is that of "an important ally of U.S. imperialism and capitalist reaction in all countries". Yet in Hungary, the church's influence was nowhere near what it is in Poland today.

### Anti-Soviet Laborism

The SLG has another ally on the Polish events in British Labour Party leader Tony Benn, a former cabinet minister in the Wilson/Callaghan governments. *Keep Left* is in raptures over the reformist "lefts" gains in the BLP and can't wait to transplant them to Australian soil. But Benn has a *social-patriotic* line on the Polish strikes:

"... if I were asked what was the best defence strategy for Britain, by comparing the siting of Cruise missiles here, targeted on Warsaw, with the development of the democratic movement and trade unions in Poland, there is no doubt the latter would be a better defence strategy."

— interview in *Socialist Challenge*, 25 September

His idea of "free trade unions" is clearly more in line with the "smart CIA" approach. But that's hardly surprising, coming from a man who boasts in this same interview of having helped draft the infamous Social Contract.

The convergence over Poland of fake lefts of every stripe is striking proof of their fundamental kinship. So what if the SLG denounces *Challenge* for calling for bourgeois state intervention into the ALP after the Baldwin bashing? They themselves backed the opposing right-wing faction's attempt to gag any exposure of the rampant corruption — a faction which runs not just the NSW ALP but, through Wran & Co, the NSW capitalist state itself. On other issues too the SLG and *Challenge* have the same program — from "no-nukes" faddism and classless "resident action" to Iran (see *Challenge's* recent sympathetic interview with Fatima "I wear a veil" Fallahi) and now Poland. The SLG mutters about Asians stealing Aussie jobs. Opposition to racist, nationalist protectionism is a key element of the revolutionary struggle against Labor reformism; and this issue too finds Gould, *Challenge*, Wran and the right wing united on the other side.

For SLG supporters who genuinely wish to see a revolution, however, the

road out of this morass of class treachery cannot begin without a repudiation of the Healyites' sinister alliance. The SLG can offer only cynical betrayal: if they can defend Qaddafi in Libya, what alien class forces could they not support here in Australia? Trotskyism alone offers a road forward for the working masses, in this country as in Poland. And today the program of Trotskyism is defended only by the international Spartacist tendency. ■

## Revolution...

Continued from page 9

taking place, and proceeding at a feverish pace. Why, the preparations are going forward openly on all fronts.

Who can be so blind as not to see them and understand them? On the diplomatic front American imperialism is mobilizing its forces and lining up allies. On the economic front American imperialism is granting or withholding loans and credits to serve its diplomatic aims. On the propaganda front, why, the American people are being bombarded by a calculated campaign of prejudice to prepare them for another war of "democracy" — God help us! — against the Soviet Union. And even on the military front we read the brazen announcements in the papers every day now that the armies of Chiang Kai-shek engaged in the civil war in Northern China are armed, equipped, and even partly trained by American militarists.

A tremendous wave of public sentiment against Russia, reminiscent of the early days of 1917-19, which some of us remember, is being set into motion. The present agitation recalls again the days of the Soviet-Finnish war when every democrat, every liberal, every Russo-phobe, every anti-Stalinist, was waving the flag for war against the Soviet Union in the service of American imperialism. It was a little difficult, and it took some courage and independence of judgement, to stand up against that terrific anti-Russian wave of sentiment and propaganda at the time of the Soviet-Finnish war. We see the same thing developing again today, helped along, as before, by the bestial crimes of Stalin. The crimes of Stalin inside the Soviet Union, in Poland, in Eastern Europe, and now in Korea, deal mortal blows to the prestige of the Soviet Union. In the occupied territories

the Red Army, under Stalinist leadership, behaves in such a way as to tear the hearts out of the workers and disillusion them with the Soviet Union, and weaken their allegiance and friendship for it, and thus open the way for a more effective eventual mobilization of the capitalist world against it. . . .

The Russian revolution appears only as a part, and not even the biggest part by any means, of a colossal worldwide conflict of forces which cannot be reconciled. The Russian revolution of November 1917 showed the workers of the whole world the way to power, to the overthrow of the capitalist property system, to the reorganization of economy on a rational basis. There is no other way to save mankind on an international scale than the Russian way. From that point of view we salute the great revolution tonight, as the initiator and inspirer of greater things to come. Therein lies its greatest significance. . . .

Just as the Russian Bolsheviks gave us the model of a victorious revolution, so also they gave us the model of a party fit to lead and organize the revolution. If we take the Russian Bolshevik party for our model — and there is no other model worth even talking about — this means a party that is orthodox Marxist in its theory, that is firm in principle, and strong in its unity and its discipline. Only such a party is fit to organize and lead a revolution. . . .

Here in the United States is the greatest imperialist power, a monster exploiting and oppressing the whole world. That is true, and we take full account of it. But here also is a still greater power — and that is the militant and undefeated American working class. Great historic responsibility surely rests on our shoulders. The two greatest powers of the world — the power for evil and destruction, and the power for the regeneration and salvation of mankind — are both here.

There is only one way for us to do our duty. That is to foresee the revolution and to prepare for it. And the way to prepare for it is to go to the American workers with the message of the party. Go to this source of power that is greater even than the power of American imperialism and teach them the lesson of the Russian revolution. Organize them and inspire them. And lead them to the socialist victory in America which will insure the socialist victory throughout the entire world. ■

## Protest IS exclusionism!

MELBOURNE, 1 November — Some union militants were definitely not welcome at the publicly advertised but poorly attended "Socialists and Industry" Conference, sponsored by the International Socialists (IS), held here this weekend. Jenny Murray, a militant at Sydney's Redfern Mail Exchange and a former member of the IS-backed Rank and File Group there, was physically excluded — along with all members and supporters of the Spartacist League (SL). Murray demanded an explanation from fellow Redfern worker and IS supporter Steve Drakeley. All he could say was: "for the usual reasons"! Outraged, Murray promised that this bureaucratic act of political cowardice would be "all over Redfern next Monday".

What are the IS' "usual reasons" for trampling on workers democracy? One

ISer claimed "the Spartacist League disrupts" — but couldn't back it up with a single incident. In fact the IS hasn't even bothered to work out a spurious rationale. As an SL leaflet "What is the IS Afraid of?", distributed to the meeting said: "those who have rotten politics must suppress their left-wing opposition one way or the other and exclusion is at bottom not qualitatively different from physical attack". IS leader Tom O'Lincoln chose the cowardly reformist way: calling the building management and then whining that it wasn't his doing if they called the cops!

Murray split with the Redfern "rank and file" group over its opportunist support to "left" bureaucrat Merv Hawkins, whose sellouts have led to the destruction of this once-militant labour centre. This included the IS' penchant for calling on the bosses' courts to institute "democracy" in the unions. No wonder they were afraid to let Murray in. For all their claimed abhorrence of the "totalitarian" Stalinists, the anti-Soviet IS reformists have just as much to fear from revolutionary Trotskyism and are just as willing to try to suppress it. Those who support reactionary Afghan mullahs against the Red Army and do not defend the historic victories of the working class as exist in the bureaucratically deformed workers state do not change their spots in the unions. But this outrageous bureaucratism will not go unchallenged. Against political exclusionism! Protest IS attacks on workers democracy! ■

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Despite Labor's whitewash—

# Wran's screws revolt

**Jail for sadistic criminal warders!  
Cops/prison officers out of the unions!**

SYDNEY, 30 October — Prisoners tear-gassed, herded and shot like animals. Fifteen hospitalised, some with gunshot wounds. The bosses' press called it a "riot". But what happened on the night of 24 October was an organised and premeditated, bloodthirsty assault by armed warders on the defenceless inmates of Parramatta Jail, who were engaged in a peaceful sit-in.

The prisoners were protesting because the Labor government of Neville Wran had announced the previous day that none of the 30 prison officers whose sadistic brutality had been exposed nearly three years ago during the Nagle Commission would ever be charged in a court of law. Instead, only two were even to be brought before the Public Service Board for in-house disciplinary proceedings! The screws at Parramatta and other prisons were walking off the job the night of the "riot" to demand that even this meaningless slap on the wrist be dropped. And they wanted to turn a "secure" jail over to the cops who were to take their place at midnight. This is how screws go on "strike".

What it meant for the prisoners was spelt out in a brief, to-the-point note tossed out of the jail a week later by a prisoner:

"The riot was a peaceful demonstration. No violence. At 10.40 prisoners saw the screws come in to the prison with helmets, shields and gas canisters. After a short confrontation most prisoners were herded down to the oval where from two corner towers screws opened fire on us. "Bob Hurd, Barry King, Geoff Hardy, John and Gerard Walsh were a few of the prisoners hit by fire. Direct no ricochet. All of us who were there are witness."

— Sydney Morning Herald, 29 October

Wran cannot evade responsibility for this vicious crime. This is the business of Labor reformism in power: to run the bosses' state and all that entails. It's the Wran/Labor government's cops that beat gay rights demonstrators and assault



Riot squad leaves Parramatta jail, their night's dirty work done.

workers' picket lines, and it's their screws who gun down prisoners in cold blood. This is the Labor Government that the fake left always wants so badly.

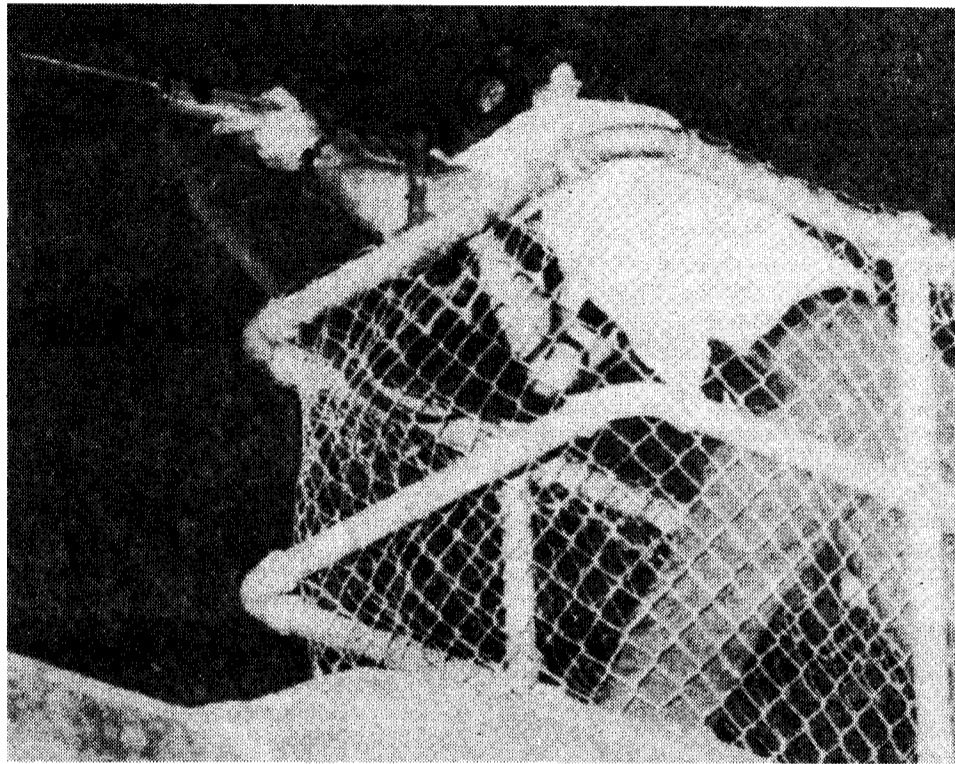
And it was Wran who declared in January 1978, when Parramatta prisoners protested bad conditions: "The prisons are not meant to be holiday camps and they are not meant to be luxury hotels". Perhaps he was thinking of a line of prisoner testimony from the Nagle Commission: "The animal screams and the sound of men crying". He went on to affirm: "The prison officers can expect to have the Government's support and they have got that support". His scandalous refusal to act against the warder criminals sure confirms that. But it, and the Parramatta assault, are also a stark warning of what Wran's cops have in store for any workers' struggle that poses a serious threat to his capitalist bosses. And sharing the guilt will be his sycophants on the left, like the Communist Party, whose *Tribune* (29 October) actually proffered advice to Wran on the smart way to keep the prisons cool.

Some of the brutalities exposed during the Nagle hearings had been covered up for decades. The cover-up for this new atrocity has already begun. Wran's Minister for Corrective Services (bourgeois doublespeak for prisons), Bill Haigh, claimed "There was no alternative to this action" because prisoners "were seen to be arming themselves for a confrontation". Unlike Haigh's screws, of course, who were only training shotguns and rifles from the towers on prisoners huddled under the glare of a police helicopter spotlight! Tony Vinson, the chairman of the Corrective Services Commission, which is supposed to be implementing the recommendations of the Nagle Report, was inside Parramatta prison when the assault happened and claimed that there were no orders to shoot. But as for the decision to unleash the riot-squad-type "emergency unit" to start the assault, Vinson told the *National Times* (26 October) that in a situation like this the prison superintendent's "appraisal of the security needs would have to weigh very very heavily. I understood the decision he made." Some "reforms"!

#### No licence to torture!

The Nagle report itself was a white-wash, geared toward "punishment, retribution, deterrence and the protection of society [ie, capitalism]", recommending stronger security, more guards at higher pay and "riot plans" for all jails. Wran, however, sat for two and a half years on the grisly details it documented of massive, institutionalised crimes by prison officers and their superiors — a reign of terror which prevailed for 33 years and more under Liberal and Labor governments alike, in which prisoners were often beaten into bloody unconsciousness as a matter of course.

According to the *National Times*, Haigh didn't even want the token discipline of



Screw aims from jail wall at prisoners' sit-in.

the two screws (one of whom, Alan John Penning, has been promoted in the meantime to superintendent of Maitland Jail!). Prisoners know full well that Wran's "action" means the go-ahead for still more brutality — provided that the screws keep it discreet.

The screws want nothing less than a blank cheque, however — a licence to beat, degrade, and shoot at whim. This warders' strike is no "industrial action" but a political mobilisation to make these low, sadistic henchmen of the bourgeoisie virtually immune from prosecution. They want to force Wran to sack Vinson and to leave them free of "civilian control". This has a sinister echo amongst their brother thugs, the cops, who muttered about the street-law changes last year which limited slightly their arbitrary powers of arrest. Some of the cops at Parramatta jail were reported to be uneasy about "strike-breaking" — they never feel queasy about busting workers' heads on the picket lines to smash strikes! Yet the screws' organisation — the Prison Officers' Vocational (!) Branch of the Public Service Association (PSA) — is currently admitted to the ranks of a genuine labour union. This is an outrage! These enemies of workers — the strike-breaking cops and the screws alike — should be driven out of the unions! Expel them all from the PSA — expel the Police Association from the Labor Council! Jail every one of the screws complicit in the bashings and shootings!

#### Prison reformism?

What is truly pathetic now that the fruits of the lauded Nagle "reforms" are clear are the illusions of various liberals who want to render "humane" a necessarily brutal system. The Council of Civil Liberties said the issue was whether Vinson kept his job — but after Wran's whitewash of the bashers, god knows what good that is. The Society of Labor Lawyers called the strike "an attempt by prison officers to subvert the rule of law", representing "irresponsible pressure tactics" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 25

October) — mimicking the language Fraser and Wran alike use to condemn genuine workers strikes. The "sanctity of law" is, as screws and prisoners know only too well from opposite sides, a cruel myth. Prisons are part of the repressive machinery needed to protect capitalist property rights. That's what bourgeois law is all about.

The same grotesque illusions are being peddled by the fake left, who uncritically back the social-worker lobbyists of the Prisoner Action Group (PAG) and Women Behind Bars. Their bankrupt perspective is typified by an orientation to reforming ... the screws. Thus current PAG spokesman Tony Green has gone so far as to call on them to expel the "bashers", declaring: "Until [the screws' "union"] purges itself of the bashers we will not recognise them as trade unionists and certainly not as the defenders of 'law and order'" (*Jail News*, 30 September 1978). On 24 October the true nature of such a "union" and such "law and order" was illustrated with shotgun blasts. A program of improved prisons — what a testament to the slavish character of reformism!

Bourgeois prisons are hellholes in which ordinary criminals are "treated like beasts", as Marx put it in 1875. That is the fate capitalist society reserves not only for the hardened anti-social elements whom capitalism has already brutalised into a state of depravity, but anyone who has run afoul of the bosses' "law and order". Revolutionary communists support the just struggles of prisoners to improve their living conditions and rights — such as the right to join unions, union wages for labour, access to information and political literature. But our program for the prisons is not to reform them, but to smash these torture institutions as part of the repressive terror apparatus at the heart of the capitalist state. That will take a revolutionary workers party to lead the struggle for a genuine workers government to sweep the filthy brutality of class society away forever. ■