



## Imperialists welcome China's sabre-rattling Carter's holy crusade against Russia

In the backwash of the fighting in the Shaba (formerly Katanga) province of Zaire, the already threadbare fabric of "detente" is ripping apart as leading spokesmen for American imperialism hurl a rapid-fire series of bellicose threats at the Kremlin. As US president Jimmy Carter ranted about the "Red threat" in Africa, NATO chiefs met to approve an \$80 billion plan to bolster their war forces. In Paris, the leading Western powers plotted the establishment of a bought and paid for "All-Africa" mercenary army to guarantee their African property holdings. In New York, US negotiators spurned a strategic arms limitations (SALT) proposal advanced by the Soviet Union in favour of the unimpeded pursuit of nuclear first strike capacity.

In a typical speech Carter railed, "The Soviet Union attempts to export a totalitarian and repressive form of government", comparing it with "our democratic way of life [which] warrants the admiration and emulation by other people throughout the world" (as in Vietnam!) before laying down imperialism's terms: "The Soviet Union must choose either confrontation or cooperation" (*New York Times*, 8 June). This is what Carter's vaunted "human rights" campaign is all about: "democratic" US imperialism, responsible for the genocidal rape of Indochina and implicated in virtually every reactionary coup since World War II, threatens "totalitarian" Russia with military annihilation. While much of the left has simply appealed to the imperialist butchers for a more "even-handed" approach -- an occasional slap on the wrist of particularly despotic allies like the Shah of Iran -- the Spartacist tendency has unflinchingly exposed and opposed this supremely vulgar attempt to refurbish the tarnished image of the American bourgeois state with the ultimate aim of preparing a military assault on the socialist foundations of the Soviet deformed workers state.

The pretext for Carter's denunciations of Soviet "aggression" was his accusation that the Russians and Cubans in Angola had trained and

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Demonstration against USSR, Cuba in Zairean capital Kinshasa (left); Carter's cold warrior Brzezinski in China.

## Peking raises outcry as Vietnam expropriates Chinese capitalists

Relations between the People's Republic of China and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, already strained by a territorial dispute over the oil-rich Paracel and Spratley Islands coupled with Peking's open support for Hanoi's Cambodian adversary in the incessant border fratricide and recent reports of isolated bloody incidents on the Sino-Vietnam border itself, have reached a new low in the last three months. Claiming that some 130,000 ethnic Chinese have fled across the rugged, mountainous and ill-defined border with Vietnam, Peking has violently assailed Hanoi, charging it with racial chauvinism and a long-standing policy of "unwarrantedly ostracizing and persecuting Chinese residents in Vietnam, and expelling many of them back to China" (*Peking Review*, 2 June). In response, Hanoi has denounced anonymous "rumour mongers" who are conducting a "whispering campaign" among the 1.5 million Chinese residents in Vietnam about a coming "big war between China and Vietnam because of China's support for Cambodia" (*Asiaweek*, 19 May).

As the two nations exchanged bristling diplomatic charge and countercharge, Peking froze its already niggardly aid program, beefed up its military forces on the border, threw out three Vietnamese consulates in China's southern provinces (where there is a significant Vietnamese minority) and despatched two "rescue ships" to evacuate the "victimised Chinese". Originally denouncing Peking's "rescue mission" as "gunboat diplomacy" Hanoi reluctantly agreed to the sea evacuation albeit with "strict" conditions.

Vietnam insists that the latest wave of refugees is the result of its crackdown on private businesses in the South. An editorial in the Vietnamese Communist Party newspaper *Nhan Dan* (29 May) queried: "One might ask whether nationalization was supposed to stop in socialist Vietnam before the wealth of a number of capitalists of Chinese origin?"

Following an extremely liberal policy for three years, during which private industry and trade (some 65 percent of the total market) in the South continued and was even encouraged by the bureaucracy, the Vietnamese Stalinist regime struck hard in two successive waves in March and April. Tens of thousands of party members and youth were mobilised to occupy, search and inventory all private businesses on the night of 27 March, following an abrupt announcement that day that "all trade and business operations of bourgeois tradesmen are to be abolished". This was followed up by a clean-up of Ho Chi Minh City's notorious open-air black markets and the introduction on 3 May of a single new currency for all Vietnam.

Singled out for heavy control was Cholon, the large Chinese quarter of the former Saigon, which was surrounded by police and soldiers just before the 27 March announcement. Cholon historically has been the centre of the Chinese merchant and financial class which has dominated private trade in southern Vietnam. In particular, Cholon traders have long controlled the rice trade in

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## Look who noticed the US coal strike

In its 26 May issue *Workers Vanguard* (WV), paper of the Spartacist League/US (SL/US), announced that it would drop from weekly to fortnightly frequency. A statement by the Editorial Board explained what it frankly called a "limited and orderly retreat":

"We do not lightly shift WV back to biweekly frequency.... The problem is not some absolute overextension of our capacities, but rather one relative to the quiescent period through which we are passing.... The inner capacity of the weekly to do its job has been well shown by its work in the recently ended miners' strike. However, our appetites as revolutionary Marxists have run too far ahead of recent objective possibilities and for too long."

Indeed, for four months during the great coal miners' strike of 1977-78, week after week WV provided both on-the-spot coverage and in-depth analysis from the miners' side of the barricades - denouncing Carter's strikebreaking attacks, exposing the bankruptcy of miners' "leader" Arnold Miller, outlining a program for victory and aiding the determined efforts of SL/US supporters in the unions to initiate solidarity strike action and spread the conflict to related key industries such as steel and auto.

So it was amusing to read in *Direct Action* (22 June), paper of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), this comment on the WV statement's reference to the "quiescent period": "Apparently the Spartacists must have missed the recent, record 110-day US coal strike! Mind you, it's not surprising when you consider that the Spartacists' Australian co-thinkers describe the mass opposition to uranium mining and export in this country as a 'diversion from the class struggle!' How ridiculous and insulting to compare the coal miners with the assorted greens and pacifists who inhabit the 'ban uranium' swamp. But for the SWP to attack us for 'ignoring' the strike - what shameful gall!

It was the SL which initiated and organised the only Australian demonstrations in solidarity with the miners and against the shipment of scab coal to the US. And what did the SWP do? Nothing - refusing even to endorse, let alone take part in, these actions. Their US co-thinkers were among the most rabid opponents of solidarity strike action in the entire US labour movement, even denouncing the call of the West Coast watersiders' union for a one-day protest strike as "ultra-left" (see *ASp* no 52, April 1978)! Thus, the US SWP played its modest part in preventing the exemplary militancy of the miners from leading to a generalised class offensive and from there blowing the lid off the explosive class tensions long contained by the labour bureaucracy.

The WV Editorial Board statement concluded by affirming,

"We will come back to a weekly *Workers Vanguard* when either continuing sharp class struggle demands it or simple bulk growth of the SL/US readily permits it. But beyond that stands our perspective, involving communist daily papers, in this country too; of a revolutionary workers party, section of the reformed Fourth International."

While the US SWP is busy running errands for "democratic" sellout artists and out-bureaucrats of Miller's ilk, the SL/US is forging the precious revolutionary cadres who will lead the American proletariat to victory.

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## Revolutionary literature

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## Carter . . .

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promoted the former Katangan gendarmes who attacked and briefly held the Shaba copper centre of Kolwezi in May. The US financed and transported the mercenary scum of the French Foreign Legion who, backed up by riotous Zairean troops, murdered and looted to protect imperialist mine holdings and prop up the grossly corrupt and despotic Mobutu. But Carter's wild charges, strongly denied by the Kremlin and Fidel Castro (and not even believed by the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee), have not stirred up much enthusiasm in the US populace for a real showdown with the Soviets. Moreover, the sharp rise of inter-imperialist economic competition has undermined the ability of the US to simply dictate orders to its imperialist allies, as growing trade protectionism pits the major industrial nations at each other's throats. Except where their interests are directly concerned (eg France's African neo-colonies) the US's NATO allies prefer to avoid confrontation with the Soviets.

### Carter's "China Card"

But the African uproar did tighten up the US-China alliance against the Soviet Union. Visiting China, US "national security" adviser, cold warrior Zbigniew Brzezinski, poured vitriol on the Soviets and Cubans only to be outdone by Chinese foreign minister Huang Hua. Huang jetted off to Zaire to tour the "battlefield" with Mobutu, praising him for leading "a just struggle ... against ... Soviet Socialist Imperialism", denounced the death of a few white colonialists (many were killed by Mobutu's troops anyway) and promised the dictator Chinese military aid. On his way to Zaire, Huang stopped off in New York where he met with US officials and hailed the imperialist intervention in Africa, telling the UN that the Soviet Union "is the most dangerous source of a new world war and is sure to be its chief instigator". No wonder the reactionary Murdoch's *Australian* (5 June) headlined its editorial "The welcome rattle of Chinese sabres".

It is their shared hostility to the Soviet Union, though based on fundamentally different causes, that lays the basis for the US-China alliance which has been shaping up since Nixon visited Mao in 1972 while American B-52s carpet-bombed North Vietnam. Though both the Chinese and Russian regimes are based on the abolition of private property, the narrow nationalist outlook of "building socialism" in "their own country" leads the Stalinists to repeatedly stab each other in the back. The vastly weaker position of the Chinese has led them directly into the arms of the US.

Brzezinski's trip was a significant step towards sealing this alliance. Carter's Dr Strangelove told the *New York Times* (28 May) that "The basic significance of the trip was to underline the long-term strategic nature of the ... relationship". Stressing their "parallel interests", Brzezinski exchanged presentations with the Chinese on the world situation, briefed them on the SALT talks and explained in detail US security directives that are still secret from the US public. The US has decided to sell the Chinese highly sophisticated airborne scanning equipment which can be adapted for anti-submarine warfare, material denied to the Soviet Union on security grounds.

Though China's "anti-imperialist" credentials are tarnished by its courting of a host of right-wing governments, including Iran, Chile and Zaire, it is still useful to Washington to have Chinese diplomats running around deriding the Soviet Union, apologising for US imperialism and promoting more NATO spending. Significantly, in contrast to its crocodile tears over Soviet dissidents the US bourgeoisie does not choose to make an issue out of the repressive policies of the Peking bureaucracy, which are if anything, harsher than the Kremlin's. Given Peking's unambiguous bloc with the Pentagon and NATO, the best way for loyal Australian Maoists to prove their undying fealty today would be to volunteer to join the professional torturers of the French Foreign Legion.

### Soviet Stalinists cling to detente

While Carter has been on a Cold War rampage the Soviets have tried to avoid drawing any conclusions about his aims, hoping that he will turn out to be a "sensible bourgeois" like Nixon, whom they could work with. Soviet spokesmen have instead focused their attack on Brzezinski. The attempt to coddle Carter while blasting Brzezinski is a classic example of the Stalinists' historically futile policy of seeking to find the "progressive" wing of the bourgeoisie with whom to practise "peaceful co-existence". But Brzezinski is not some bizarre right-wing nut who sneaked into the White House. Carter picked the man precisely for his consistent anti-Soviet policies!

Contrary to Carter's fear of Soviet-sponsored "Red uprisings" in Africa, the Kremlin bureau-

crats have no interest in spreading genuine social revolutions which might provoke the West and weaken their own bureaucratic stranglehold on the Soviet masses. The Kremlin seeks influence abroad by backing petty-bourgeois nationalists or currying favour with capitalist regimes on the outer with the West. When these "allies" of the moment kick sand in Russia's face and turn back to the imperialists -- as has happened in Ghana, Guinea, Somalia and Egypt -- the Soviets simply try to latch onto a new set of "friends", like the bloody Ethiopian Derg and the Angolan regime.

Far from safeguarding the defence of Soviet Russia, these policies constantly undermine it. The West is able to exploit these dramatic reversals suffered by the Kremlin, just as it exploits the very real domestic crimes of the bureaucracy. The inevitable war threats of US imperialism will not be stopped by diplomatic deals or arms control treaties, but by proletarian revolutions which disarm the rapacious capitalist class once and for all. Trotskyists defend the Soviet degenerated workers state from imperialism because of the gains of the Russian Revolution that have been preserved in spite of the bureaucracy's policies. But we also call for political revolutions to dump the Stalinist parasites of Moscow, Peking and Havana who imperil that defence and make a mockery of socialism. The re-forging of the Fourth International, the world party of socialist revolution, is the necessary answer to Carter's Cold War threats and the spectre of nuclear holocaust. ■

(adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 209, 16 June 1978)

## Vietnam . . .

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the South, a key position, as agricultural production has not yet been collectivised since the incorporation of the southern half of the country into the Vietnamese deformed workers state.

### Chinese refugees - victims of "Soviet hegemonism"?

Ethnic Chinese have always made up a disproportionate percentage of the so-called "boat people" -- the post-1975 seaborne exodus of Vietnamese refugees to Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong and Australia. With the expropriation of Cholon's merchants and traders this steady flow has become a flood and for the first time large numbers are returning to the "motherland". Seizing on the chance to whip up anti-Vietnamese sentiment among the Chinese masses Peking's propaganda machine has been distributing daily heart-rending accounts of beaten and wounded refugees limping over the border. Contrast this with Peking's total, cynical silence on the treatment meted out to a half million ethnic Chinese (over 20,000 of whom have joined 150,000 Cambodians in seeking refuge in Vietnam) by its ally, "Democratic Kampuchea", during the brutal 1975 evacuation of Phnom Penh and the total razing of the urban economy.

As with everything Peking does these days, its concern with the "overseas Chinese" is tailored to fit snugly into its anti-Soviet foreign policy. Hanoi is now denounced as an instrument of "Soviet hegemonism" in Southeast Asia, one of the "satellites" with which Russia is seeking to "encircle" China. Even *Peking Review* admits that the first mass entry of refugees into China came in April, after the crackdown on private business. Yet a recent lengthy article in *Peking Review* (26 May) on the "History of Overseas Chinese and Their Glorious Tradition" denounces "Soviet revisionism" ("in unison with Lin Biao and the 'gang of four'") for "slandering that Overseas Chinese belong to the 'capitalist

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## Australasian SPARTACIST

a monthly organ of revolutionary Marxism for the re-birth of the Fourth International published by Spartacist Publications for the Central Committee of the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand, section of the international Spartacist tendency

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GPO Box 3473, Sydney, NSW, 2001  
(02) 235-8115

SUBSCRIPTIONS: Three dollars for eleven issues (one year).

AUSTRALASIAN SPARTACIST is registered at the GPO, Sydney for posting as a publication - Category B.

## Spartacist League/Britain founded

# The rebirth of British Trotskyism

Part 1 of this article (ASp no 54, June 1978), reprinted in three parts from Spartacist Britain no 1 (April 1978), traced the prehistory of the fusion of the Trotskyist Faction (TF), a left opposition inside Alan Thornett's Workers Socialist League (WSL), and the London Spartacist Group (LSG). Expelled in 1974 from Gerry Healy's Workers Revolutionary Party, Thornett's reputation as an industrial militant at Leyland's Cowley factory and his seeming Trotskyist orthodoxy (though not actually to the left of Healy) soon attracted leftward-moving formations to the WSL. From its establishment in 1975 the LSG carried out a systematic propaganda perspective toward the centrist WSL, among other ostensibly Trotskyist groupings, the first fruit of which came in late 1976 when the WSL's Liverpool branch proposed, in opposition to the leadership, recognition of the Spartacist tendency's principled line on the Cuban Revolution.

## Part 2 of 3

However, the real catalyst for the amorphous left-wing opposition which was to result in the Trotskyist Faction was the WSL's intervention in the British class struggle. A challenge to the Thornett leadership took shape around objections to the WSL-created Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement (CDLM) and to its failure to place the government question at the centre of WSL trade-union work. This failure was particularly glaring after the formation of the Labour Party's parliamentary coalition with the Liberals in March 1977.

In response to the reappearance of this British version of the popular front for the first time since World War II, the international Spartacist tendency called for "a policy of conditional non-support to Labour in upcoming elections unless and until they repudiate coalitionism" ("Break the Liberal/Labour Coalition in Britain", *Workers Vanguard* no 152, 8 April 1977). But even though Callaghan and company had suppressed even the organisational independence of the Labour Party by openly tying it to the bourgeois Liberals -- with, moreover, the acquiescence of every single "left" MP from Tony Benn and Michael Foot on down -- the Workers Socialist League simply concluded that the "lefts" "should have demanded and themselves set up a new leadership based on socialist policies" (*Socialist Press*, 25 March 1977).

Within the Workers Socialist League there was dissatisfaction with the persistently apolitical character of the WSL's trade-union work. A first document, "The WSL and the Governmental Crisis" ([WSL] *Internal Bulletin* no 19, 25 May 1977), submitted by Green, Kellett and Piercey, attempted to programmatically generalise the objections:

"Although the toolroom strike objectively challenged the Social Contract and posed the removal of the anti-working class Labour Government, the consciousness of the leadership thrown up in the struggle, the subjective factor, did not correspond to those objective tasks.... Although the WSL alone recognised that the toolroom strike precipitated a major governmental crisis, Socialist Press failed to make the question of government a central programmatic issue during the strike."

At this time Green-Kellett-Piercey had not decisively broken from the WSL's accommodation to Labourism, and were searching to render the perennial Thornett slogan, "Make the Lefts Fight", revolutionary. They called on the WSL to "place demands on the lefts to support the [toolroom] strike against the Social Contract and remove the right wing [of the parliamentary Labour Party]".

The Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement, founded in 1976, was an uninspired imi-

tation of the WRP/SLL's All Trades Union Alliance. In practice it turned out to be nothing but a forum for tedious recounting of shop-floor struggles. As it became clear that the rank and file would not flock to the CDLM simply because it put "democracy" in its name, it soon turned into an arena for mutual accommodation between the WSL and other left groups (specifically the IMG [International Marxist Group] and I-CL [International-Communist League]). Most importantly, the platform of this pan-union propaganda bloc -- like Alan Thornett's campaign for president of the Transport and General Workers Union -- did not seek to break the mass of British workers from their Labourite traditions and consciousness.

The CDLM programme comes down to opposition to wage controls and spending cuts and calls for more democracy in the unions. It even limits the call for nationalisation to those firms threatened with bankruptcy or large-scale redundancies. It does not contain any demand for the expropriation of all capitalist industry, thus placing the CDLM to the right of the maximum programme of the Labour Party on this question. There is no mention of opposition to the presence of the British imperialist army in Northern Ireland or to the Labour "lefts" chauvinist call for import controls, much less of the need for a revolutionary workers government.

Describing the reformist CDLM, an LSG leaflet noted that it embodied the central weakness of the British left: "... glorification of spontaneous 'rank and file' trade union militancy and ... political capitulation to British social democracy" ("CDLM: WSL's 'Short Cut' to Nowhere", 27 March 1977). A parallel criticism was raised in the Green-Kellett-Piercey document:

"Our failure to make the question of programme and government central was not confined to the pages of Socialist Press. It was evident at the CDLM recall conference....

"Although a special resolution was passed by the conference on the Lib-Lab coalition, the vital political question facing the conference on government was relegated almost to a side issue, discussed separately from the wages struggle and the fight for leadership in the trade unions...."

The LSG leaflet also attacked the WSL's justification for its adaptation to shop-floor militancy: "For a small grouping, like the WSL, to decide to 'shake off propagandism' in order to proceed directly to 'conquering the masses' is profoundly anti-Leninist. A revolutionary organisation only acquires the ability to lead whole sections of the proletariat as it assembles a cadre trained through hard principled struggle for communist politics" ("CDLM: WSL's 'Short Cut' to Nowhere").

The Green-Kellett-Piercey document touched on the WSL's policy of shunning polemical combat with centrist groups, although the criticism was largely empirical and put in the mildest terms: "We also showed political weakness in not taking up the IMG adequately at the conference ... their argument that the CDLM shouldn't (politically) counterpose itself to the Stalinists' 'diversionary' initiatives was part of their left cover for Stalinism. The difference between us and the Pabloites was not that they had differences of where and how to fight for programme ... but they are not prepared to fight at all for programme". Neither, it turned out, was the Thornett leadership, which responded:

"We are told by the comrades that we did not take up the IMG adequately at the conference. That we should have made a clear statement on their role as a left cover for the Stalinists. Such a course of action would have been a disaster. It would have been certain to drive the IMG out of the CDLM." ("Reply to 'The WSL and the Governmental Crisis'", by Alan Thornett, [WSL] *Internal Bulletin* no 21)



Founding conference of Spartacist League/Britain.

The French municipal elections and Irish general elections, which both took place in the [northern] spring of 1977, renewed the debate inside the WSL on the question of popular frontism, in particular on the question of votes to the workers parties of a popular front. At the WSL's summer school in July this issue was debated both at the session on Ireland and at the National Committee [NC] meeting. It was indicative of the scant importance given to such "abstract" subjects prior to this time that even *Socialist Press* editor John Lister, backed by Alan Thornett, could consider it a rightist notion that any self-proclaimed revolutionary would even



Labour prime minister Callaghan (left), Liberal leader Steel: partners in parliamentary coalition.

consider voting for the workers parties of a popular front.

At the NC meeting spokesmen for the opposing positions -- Steve Murray for voting for workers parties in a popular front and Mark Hyde and Jim Short against -- were directed to submit documents defending their respective positions. Without waiting for the resolution of the debate, however, *Socialist Press* went into print on 17 August declaring that it would continue to call for votes to Labour until such time as there were actually joint Lib-Lab slates. And as the faction fight developed, for the first time drawing hard lines on programmatic questions in the WSL, Thornett, Lister and company became far more cautious in toying around with positions which had been branded "Spartacist".

### Workers government and "Make the lefts fight"

In the course of the discussions over the question of voting for candidates of a popular front, some individuals switched positions and the battle lines began to be drawn. A document, "The Coalition, 'Make the Lefts Fight' and the

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## Stop deportation of Asian workers!

On 21 June Commonwealth cops swooped on Patons Brake Replacement factory in Melbourne, arrested twenty Malaysian workers and threw them in the city watch-house. A week earlier a similar raid netted eighteen Asian workers in the Albury-Wodonga area. Accused of being "illegal" migrants, they face imminent deportation. This crackdown by the Fraser government is calculated to make Australia's 60-70,000 "illegal" migrants the scapegoat for unemployment. Joining Fraser in whipping up anti-Asian racism are the "left" officials of the Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights Union (which covers most of the Patons workers) who, in keeping with their chauvinist protectionism, have criminally refused to defend these workers! The Spartacist League joined in forming an Ad Hoc Committee Against the Deportation of Asian Workers which held a protest demonstration at the Immigration Department offices in Melbourne on 27 June. The demands of the demonstration must become the demands of the entire trade-union movement: No deportations or victimisation of Asian workers! Full citizenship rights for all migrant workers, legal or "illegal"!

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One July night last year four men from Sydney University's elite St Paul's College gang-banged a woman from the Women's College. Three months later, one of them, her boyfriend, won the St Paul's "Animal Act of the Year Award" by describing for his mates, in lurid detail, his ocker prowess. The woman, deeply if not doubly humiliated, then accused them of gang-rape; they claimed she had consented.

This scandal, reported in an article in the *National Times* (21-26 November 1977) co-authored by noted bourgeois feminist Anne Summers, discomfited the university administration and enraged campus feminists. For the Anglican warden of the college, it was a disgusting act, rape or not: "A woman to be shared by four men in two hours?... It's monstrous conduct. But it's not rape." For the feminists and their advocates, like the fake-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party, it was rape pure-and-simple, consent or not.

Whether the St Paul's incident was a case of rape could only be determined by resolving the murky clash of allegations between the accused and the accuser. Unlike the offended college warden, Marxists do not see group sex, or any other form of consenting sexual behaviour, as "monstrous"; unlike the feminists, we do not label any heterosexual encounter as "rape".

Although invariably influenced by neuroses and sexist attitudes and in the context of very real and powerful social and economic pressures fully consensual sex *does* exist. Rape however transforms what is ordinarily a mutually pleasurable and consensual act of sexual gratification into a nightmare of terror, degradation and humiliation for the victim. And the dividing line is precisely *effective* consent.

The *National Times* article compared the St Paul's incident to the case of the small rural Queensland town of Ingham, where revelations had come out a year earlier of brutal and systematic gang-bangs and apparently explicitly forcible gang-rapes. Certainly the two cases demonstrate in common the particularly repugnant and pervasive male chauvinism of Australian society, expressed in the image of the ocker male and the ethos of mateship. The degradation to which women are subjected here and the way in which male chauvinism is expressed within the particular national culture is attested to by Australia's high incidence of gang-rape. In a recent incident a gang of Sydney bikies, including the wife of one of the gang leaders, invaded the household of a woman who had purportedly been a bike-gang "onion" in the past, to brutalise and pack-rape a number of women. Incredibly the gang leader was convicted only of assault, claiming he felt that this former "onion" was consenting -- as she was being bashed into submission by his wife.

#### Bolsheviks on sexuality

The rampant male chauvinism which can find a most brutal and abhorrent expression in rape is an inherent aspect of class society, and is, along with bourgeois morality, an ideological by-product of the oppression of women through the institution of the nuclear family. In its wake it drags a whole host of other sexual atrocities: the hideous frustration and sexual tension built up within the family, with the attendant brutalisation of children and wife-bashing; the loading of fear, guilt and repression on the very young for even having sexual thoughts; the degrading practice of prostitution, eternal companion of enforced monogamy.

In the period of its emergence capitalism generated powerful pressures towards the destruction of traditional family life and sexual prejudices, as well as a "libertarian" ideological current strongly committed to the emancipation of women. But a society based on capitalist private property required, like its predecessors, a family unit as a foundation for property relations. For the wealthy the nuclear family provided the appropriate *capitalist* forms necessary for inheritance; in the proletariat it became the basis for the reproduction of labour power through the continued domestic slavery of the housewife, as well making women a convenient

labour reserve force. Thus while destroying the Church's temporal power the triumphant bourgeoisies enlisted religion as a moral policeman and insisted on the morality of monogamy, conformity to stereotyped sex roles and the brutal repression of so-called "deviant" forms of sexuality, backed up by the state's filthy machine of physical terror: courts, cops and prisons.

Only with the destruction of capitalism will this sordid reality of official hypocrisy and repression be swept away. The Bolshevik Revolution, in abolishing private property as the

struggle against personal "sexist ideology" ("the personal is political") could at one time take on a radical appearance, the failure of the feminist movement to mobilise any significant number of women in struggle, to achieve any significant reforms or to hold on to those paltry reforms that were granted by the Whitlam government before recession set in, have led to a retreat from the field even of reformist social struggle.

The focus of feminist activity on rape, centring first around wreath-laying ceremonies in memory of women raped in war and the Rape Crisis

# Rape and sexual op

principle of social organisation and with it the basis for class division, mandated not only the full formal equality of women (reversed only gradually following the political counter-revolution led by Stalin) but began to lay the foundations for their full social equality as well. To the limit of its meagre resources it socialised household duties and made the care of children a social responsibility, freeing women to enter fully as equals into the productive life of society. For the first time the individual was freed from the restrictions of state and society on sexual expression:

"[The new Soviet legislation] declares the absolute non-interference of the state and society into sexual matters, so long as nobody is injured and no one's interests are encroached upon.

"... Concerning homosexuality, sodomy, and various other forms of sexual gratification, which are set down in European legislation as offenses against public morality -- Soviet legislation treats these exactly the same as so-called 'natural' intercourse. All forms of intercourse are private matters." (Grigori Batkis, *The Sexual Revolution in Russia*, quoted in Lamitsen and Thorstad, *The Early Homosexual Rights Movement*)

The proletariat has no interest in legislating norms of sexual behaviour. In seeking to prop up the ideological superstructure of the nuclear family the bourgeoisie must in practice deny the bourgeois-democratic right of consent ... for youth, for homosexuals, for any of the numerous forms of "kinky" human sexual expression considered "unnatural". We oppose this. But neither is sexuality a central political concern for proletarian revolutionaries. We recognise that only with the genuine liberation of humanity from material want will sexuality be freed from the warping influences of a society based on scarcity. As the great French revolutionary Auguste Blanqui wrote,

"One of our most grotesque presumptions is that we barbarians, we ignoramuses, pose as legislators for future generations. Those generations, for which we take the trouble to feel concern and prepare the foundations, will render us a hundred times more pity than the caveman inspires in us, and their compassion will be a great deal more reasonable than ours."

#### Feminist morality and the politics of despair

For feminists, sexuality is a central concern. Denying the centrality of the class struggle and the possibility of unifying the proletariat -- male and female -- around its common interests, despairing of a socialist transformation of society, they can only seek to redress the injustices inflicted upon women by bourgeois society within the reformist framework of accepting the existing social order. Like all petty-bourgeois radicals including the late-sixties New Left, they attempt to alter oppressive social/personal relations directly, denying that the material basis -- the productive relations of society -- must first be transformed. As a consequence they reject to one degree or another the nuclear family as the central institution for the oppression of women. Rape, which is a most degrading and brutal excrement of that oppression (though not simply that), is then defined to be the very *instrument* through which the oppression operates.

Feminists have long seen rape as a "political crime", designed to secure the subjugation of women. But while the false feminist conceptions of the primacy of sexual oppression and the

centres which could do little more than provide social counselling for traumatised rape victims, has led increasingly to an open bloc with reactionary advocates of state censorship and more legal repression.

Feminists of different political stripes -- from the bourgeois-feminist Anne Summers to the "Marxist-feminists" -- have elaborated different reasons for putting rape at the centre of women's oppression, but they all share a common basic



Psychological impact of wartime gang-rape on a mother and daughter was portrayed in Vittorio de Sica's film "Two Women".

thesis. Susan Brownmiller, whose *Against Our Will* has achieved the status of a feminist classic, sees rape not as a criminal aberration but as "a conscious process of intimidation by which *all men keep all women* in a state of fear". Brownmiller gives her own biologically deterministic bent to this shared premise:

"... in terms of human anatomy the possibility of forcible intercourse incontrovertibly exists. This simple fact may have been sufficient to have caused the creation of a male ideology of rape. When men discovered they could rape, they proceeded to do so."

And, as Brownmiller all but states in her conclusion, when women discovered that men had balls, they proceeded to fight back.

Anne Summers, in her book *Damned Whores and God's Police*, applies the same hypothesis to the Australian context, in particular Australia's development as a penal colony, to define rape as a mainstay of the "colonization of women" by men, a denial of their "self-determination", completing this analogy to a subjugated colonial people by defining women's bodies as their "territory". If rape is the "political means of terrorizing" and "conquering" women -- the primary weapon of men in the war of the sexes -- it is a short stop to rendering the qualitative distinction between rape and other heterosexual intercourse irrelevant. Summers defines such categories as "petty rape", involving male pressure, and "rape by fraud", which includes just about any form of seduction. "Marxist-feminist" Rosalind Innes, formerly of Australian Women Against Rape (AWAR), is categorical: "Rape is normal heterosexual intercourse stripped of its ideological veneers of 'love' and 'equality'" ("What She Needs is a Good Fuck": Rape and Femininity", *Hecate*, July 1976). For all their real or apparent differences (Innes, for example, is fond of Althusserian language so obscure that merely attempting to read her material conveys the deep sense of confusion she must suffer in attempting to reconcile irreconcilables), the spectrum of feminist positions on rape reduces in essence to the following logic: all rape is a

**Women and Revolution**

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DEATH

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means of suppressing women; all heterosexual activity is rape; all men are potential rapists.

But what about the recent California case of a 9-year-old girl who was sexually assaulted with a coke bottle by four other girls aged 13 to 15? Or homosexual rape in prison, used by both men and women as a means of establishing power and privilege in a brutal environment where their bodies are literally used as weapons? These cases no less manifest the essential features of rape: the victim -- sexually abused and dehumanised; the sex act -- divorced from the goal of

phy is violence against women and that is beyond the pale of censorship" (*Woman-speak*, March-April 1978; emphasis in original). Innes recently proposed a feminist march against pornography through the sleazy Kings Cross area of Sydney.

And is the "anti-woman" *Penthouse*, for instance, "beyond the pale of censorship"? It was the same Toronto "Morality Squad" that seized 85,000 copies of *Penthouse* last year which, months later, raided and shut down the Canadian gay paper *Body Politic*.

However blatant pornographic versions of the submissive female sex object may be, their suppression does not bring women a single step nearer liberation. And where do you draw the line? Would Innes support the Queensland government's reactionary ban on Aubrey Beardsley's play illustrations for *Lysistrata* less than a decade ago?

Equally reactionary in its consequences is the campaign for reform of rape laws to secure more convictions -- even though it is aimed as well at alleviating the gruelling and humiliating interrogation to which rape complainants are frequently subjected -- by limiting corroboration requirements and limitations on the admissibility of evidence regarding past sexual history. In addition to both the latter, the "progressive" South Australian reforms do make a limited but genuine step towards eliminating the legal status of women as sexual chattel in the nuclear family by recognising rape in marriage. But the "reforms" leave intact such outrageous provisions as banning incest; "statutory rape", barring sexual intercourse with young people (under 17) no matter how fully consensual; a similar ban on sexual relations between teachers and students under 18 (feeding the prejudices which have denied Queensland gay-rights activist Greg Weir a teaching job); and prescribing *whipping* as an optional penalty for various sexual "crimes", real or not!

The liberal/feminist demand that rape convictions be made easier simply feeds into campaigns for "law and order" by the capitalist state. And the moralistic stereotypes -- like the one which paints any sexually experienced woman as a "slut" who "asked for it" -- will continue to shape the attitudes of judges and jurors regardless of legal reforms. Furthermore, though corroborating testimony and past sexual history are frequently perverted in bourgeois jurisprudence, rape is uniquely an act the circumstances of which determine whether it is a crime or voluntary sexual intercourse.

Following an evening of photography, nude bathing, drugs and sex with a 13-year-old girl, film director Roman Polanski was accused by the girl's mother of having raped her daughter -- a charge later changed to "statutory rape". Certainly serious questions could be raised if a forty-year-old film director claimed to have secured the consent of a 13-year-old prim, naive schoolgirl before screwing her. But here was a sexually experienced and precocious "aspiring actress" who, it came out in court, had been experimenting with drugs for several years. Similarly in the famous 1931 Scottsboro Boys case in which nine black youth in the US Deep South were tried under Southern lynch law for raping two white girls in a railway freight car, it was central to the legal defence organised by the Communist Party that the girls were known to sleep around in hobo camps.

The Scottsboro Boys were clearly seen by liberals as victims of a racist frame-up. But what of Polanski, who was put away in a mental hospital for 42 days and forced to flee the US to escape the sort of "justice" which the feminists wish to see reinforced? Was he any less a victim for being white and wealthy? In fact Polanski was a target of the reactionary witchhunt typified by Anita Bryant's anti-homosexual crusade. He offended *bourgeois morality*, which asserts that young women are incapable of consensual, pleasurable sexual relations, and was crucified in the name of "wholesome family life". His conviction was a blow against women's liberation.

When Sandra Willson, driven insane by persecution of her and her lesbian lover, went out and killed an innocent male taxi driver eighteen years ago, no sense of justice was served. Most feminists would not support Willson's act, but isn't it entirely consistent with what they think: that men are the enemy; all men are potential rapists; rape must be avenged? Only in the worldview of one who has written off any hope of transforming humanity, in which therefore oppression can at best only be shifted from one group to another, can revenge, whether by the state or by vigilantes, offer any satisfaction. Roman Polanski was a genuine victim of a puritanical, vindictive society, yet the feminists condemn him -- he was born with a penis. The man in South Australia recently convicted for committing fellatio with his 11-year-old stepdaughter -- with evidence of effective consent not even admissible -- paid for violating the "sanctity" of the nuclear family and the "inno-

# ppression

sexual gratification and a hell for the victim.

Yet even when feminists take note of the phenomenon of homosexual rape (as does Brownmiller), they are blind to the only possible conclusion: not only women but also men can be victims of rape; not only men but also women can be its perpetrators; individual rape is neither the product of an anti-woman conspiracy nor necessarily a political instrument of women's oppression. And women need no theoretical exposition to know that in general there is a world of difference between forcible rape and consensual sex.

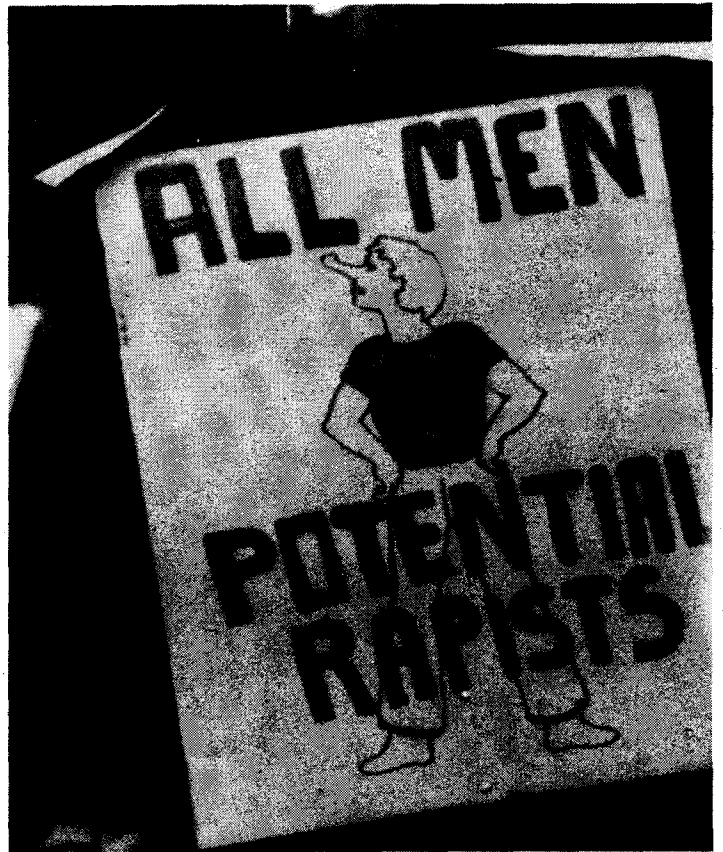
Innes attempts to provide a "Marxist" rationale for the rejection of consent: "To make a qualitative distinction between rape and consensual heterosexuality on the basis of such a profoundly ideological concept [!] as bourgeois equality is not only to indulge in political naivete [!] but to avoid an analysis of sexuality as a whole" (leaflet, "Rape, Ideology and the Maintenance of Women's Oppression", June 1977). This is political *nonsense*. Far from being a mere idea, the formal right to choose one's own sexual partner marked a world-historic advance in the social status of women accomplished by the bourgeois revolution. In backward Somalia, some 90 percent of women are still subject to the horrific practice of infibulation -- clitoral circumcision and the sewing closed of the vagina to ensure virginity when sold into marriage. In semi-feudal Saudi Arabia recently, a Westernised Arab woman and two male European companions were all arrested simply for being seen in public together when the police discovered she was unmarried. Does Innes really believe that Australian women are in a qualitatively similar position?

## Censorship and pornography

In waging a battle against the manifestations of women's oppressed status without attacking its roots in capitalist class society, feminists of both the Innes and Brownmiller varieties end up in the dangerously reactionary position of denying fundamental bourgeois-democratic rights in practice. In bloc with the most reactionary, anti-women's-rights elements, like the Festival of Light and the recently formed Australian version of the fascist National Front, they have raised the demand for censorship of "pornography". Why? According to Brownmiller, "pornogra-



One of the "Lysistrata" illustrations by 19-century artist Aubrey Beardsley banned in Queensland in 1969 as "pornography".



Feminist placard at 1976 International Women's Day.

cence" of youth with *three years hard labour*. But he too must be a villain in the eyes of feminists.

For feminists, nationalists and liberals alike, the world is divided into good and evil people: the oppressed are good, the oppressors evil -- no questions asked. But when the struggle against oppression is reduced to personal terms, the distinction between victim and villain loses any meaning. And what happens when the "good guys" clash? Eldridge Cleaver, who went on to become a black nationalist leader (before degenerating into a publicity agent for the racist imperialism he had once, albeit with a misguided strategy, fought), describes in his *Soul on Ice* how he came to rape white women as a "political" act -- a blow against the white oppressor.

There is a case in which rape is clearly a political crime -- mass rape in war, where the women of the subjugated population are systematically degraded in order to humiliate and trample upon the population as a whole. (For a fuller discussion, see "Rape and Bourgeois Justice", *Young Spartacus* no 29, February 1975.) But while this is the logical consequence of imperialist, nationalist or communist social aims, it is not so with revolutionary civil war. In three years of civil war in which hundreds of thousands were killed, there are no incidents of mass rape which can be ascribed to the Bolshevik Red Army of Trotsky -- they were out to win the masses, not to murder them.

In seeing women always as the victim feminists dovetail neatly with the predominant male-chauvinist view that women are devoid of will. It is this, more than anything, which relegates feminism to the politics of despair. The feminist axiom that "the personal is political" is meaningless as a strategy for fighting oppression: the social and psychological marks of women's oppression cannot be eradicated on a personal level, though they can be transcended. *Oppression is a social question*. For those who lack a program capable of leading humanity from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom, social work, censorship, reform and revenge are the only options available for righting wrongs. For the revolutionary proletariat and its Trotskyist vanguard, rape is but one of the many perverse social crimes fostered by a decadent, repressive system, which will be swept away in the process of constructing a new socialist society free of sexual repression, puritanical morality and sexist degradation. ■

## Speaking tour

### Rape and bourgeois justice

Speaker: Philippa Naughten, SL Central Committee

Melbourne:	LaTrobe University	19 July
	ELT 1	1 pm
	Plumbers Hall	20 July
	52 Victoria St, Carlton	7.30 pm
Adelaide:	Open Leaves Bookshop	21 July
	16 St Kilda Road,	8 pm
	St Kilda Junction	
	Flinders University	26 July
Private Dining Room 1,	1 pm	
Union Building		



# Vietnam . . .

Continued from page two

class" and seeks to evoke international sympathy for "the victimized Chinese refugees" -- who include black market speculators, rice traders, money-hoarders and sweatshop capitalists rushing out of Vietnam.

But while the vast majority of "overseas Chinese" are of course not capitalists, nevertheless, like the Jews in medieval Europe and to some extent the Lebanese Arabs in Africa, they have historically formed an educated, petty-bourgeois and merchant caste which has dominated



Refugees arriving in China from Vietnam.

private trade in southeast Asia. Peking knows this full well, having found this community quite useful as a pressure group for the expansion of economic ties with China. In the same way as the Chinese Stalinists use Hong Kong capitalists to transact business and have deliberately maintained this colonial leftover as a vestige of Chinese capitalism, they also seek to use overseas Chinese in southeast Asia as a "fifth column" -- not to spread revolutionary struggle but to serve as anchor points for establishing client relations with various capitalist regimes in the region. China's large-scale propaganda campaign over "victimized Chinese" in Vietnam is no doubt partly aimed at winning the good will of "overseas Chinese" leaders now that the Kuomintang dictatorship in Taiwan seems definitively headed for oblivion.

## National oppression in Vietnam, China

Given the long-standing animosities between the Chinese and Vietnamese peoples (which the Stalinist bureaucracies exacerbate for their own purposes) undoubtedly some genuine atrocities of ethnic persecution are occurring. While *Peking Review* (16 June) claims "tens of thousands of Chinese were transported overland to the border" -- presumably from the Cholon area -- many of those crossing the border are clearly long-term residents of North Vietnam and in no sense capitalists. Among their number are many Nung tribesmen, a Chinese ethnic group, which confirms reports of Hanoi's long-standing difficulties with the minority populations in the border regions. As the vicious border war with Peking's Cambodian ally drags interminably on, these long-term residents have every reason to fear racially directed victimisations of "unreliable elements" and "Han fifth columnists" at the hands of the chauvinistic Vietnamese regime.

The "independently" reformist Communist Party of Australia has come out in support of Hanoi's version of events, notably in an obsequious whitewash job by their Hanoi correspondent Chris Ray (*Tribune*, 7 June). But revolutionaries understand that the policies of the Vietnamese regime will be every bit as oppressive toward

national minorities (which include besides the Chinese, large numbers of Khmers and the possibly racially doomed Montagnard tribesmen, the Aborigines of Indochina) as that of the Han-dominated central Chinese bureaucracy toward the Chinese Moslem, Tibetan and Mongolian populations.

As for the economic policies of the Vietnamese bureaucracy, the nationalisations were certainly inevitable, particularly given the extreme *laissez-faire* approach of the previous three years. However, it is not our task to give advice to these Stalinist bureaucrats. The recent abrupt shift in economic policy recalls the brutal 1956 North Vietnam land collectivisation campaign which led to several isolated peasant revolts and a mass exodus (mostly of Roman Catholic villagers) to Diem's puppet regime in the South. Such bureaucratic methods of carrying out necessary social transformations are characteristic of Stalinist rule and are further proof of the fact that the Stalinists came to power through *military* victory, not through workers' uprisings, in the course of which (as in Russia) many of the native capitalists would undoubtedly already have been expropriated.

It is possible that regardless of the method and pace of expropriations, there would have been a mass exodus of Vietnamese Chinese to the capitalist countries of Southeast Asia as well as China. However, a genuinely communist government in Vietnam would want to retain the relatively well-educated Chinese minority and to use their talents in a collectivised, planned economy. Moreover, the integration of the Chinese minority would counter Vietnamese national narrowness and the centuries-old hostility between the Annamite and Han peoples.

While of course Trotskyists support the expropriation of the capitalists, the precise ways in which a victorious proletarian state carries this through depend upon specific circumstances. In any case, it is the working class itself, through democratically elected soviets and a Leninist vanguard party, which must wield the power and determine the decisions of the central state apparatus regarding economic policy. Only through a workers political revolution establishing such organs of proletarian democracy by overthrowing the parasitic bureaucracies, from Hanoi and Peking to the Kremlin, will it be possible to put an end to the bloody nationalist conflicts which oppress the working people and make a mockery of the Stalinists' claims to be constructing socialism. ■

(adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 209, 16 June 1978)

# BLF . . .

Continued from page eight

fused to scab on the BLF -- as they refused to scab on the Fairfax printers two years ago -- and defied the arrogant court order? To support the BLDC court campaign as these "Trotskyists" did, could only mean opposition to any militant action by postal workers demanding: Defend the BLF against court interference! Government hands off our unions!

## Black to courts: "Get nicked" ... sort of

The Gallagher-imposed NSW leadership is a bureaucratic clique with hardly any base at all. Under Black's stewardship branch membership has continued to plummet from around 10,000 before the recession to a current level of under 3000. Subcontracting is increasingly rampant, a sure sign of organisational disintegration. Until recently, those branch meetings that occurred were practically secret and when Black did hold an open meeting this month his supporters were swamped by BLDC supporters. The Maoist election posters (invariably printed in "patriotic" blue) have pandered to anti-communist and union-parochialist sentiments among more backward workers, denouncing the BLDC as part of a grandiose Kremlin conspiracy to incorporate the BLF into the Building Workers Industrial Union (run by pro-Moscow Socialist Party president Pat Clancy) at the expense of "BLF jobs" and to bring Australia under the thumb of "Soviet social-imperialism".

Yet with its insistence on mobilising the courts and not the ranks the BLDC handed Black the opportunity to pose, cynically, as the union's defender against the encroachments of the bosses' state. Court writs voiding the union ballot addressed to the Maoist officials were initially returned unopened with a friendly "Get nicked" scrawled on them in reply. Class-struggle militants would have mobilised a campaign to ensure Black's ballot was run democratically by demanding rank-and-file-elected committees to oversee all phases of the ballot. Instead Olive supporters burnt their ballot papers and waited for the courts to come in.

In a piece on "Courts, ballots and the BLF" in his column laughably labelled "On the picket line" (*Direct Action*, 15 June), SWPer Jamie Doughney readily concedes "the danger of any court interference in the unions". But, argues

Doughney, union independence from the capitalist state is no principle -- the "principle" is "union democracy". The astute Doughney observes that "bureaucratically-run unions also serve the interests of the bosses", concluding that "any attempt to democratise them" serves the interests of the workers. The "left-wing" AMWSU did not so much as call a single mass meeting during the recent awards "campaign" and one-day stoppage. Couldn't it do with a dose of "democratising" court interference, comrade Doughney? And what about every other union in Australia? Union "democracy" at the cost of class independence is the "principle" only of reformist bureaucrats out of power.

The IS, whose supporter David Shaw is actually in the BLDC, is also clever enough to "Beware the Courts!" (*Battler*, 6 May) and intones that court action is "a legitimate tactic but not the key to victory" (*Battler*, 3 June). "Not the key to victory"? It's the *only* "key" the BLDC has ever tried! And the only door it fits is the one that would lock Clarrie O'Shea back into the prison cell from which he was freed by a massive workers' mobilisation less than a decade ago. In response to a Spartacist League (SL) question (at a 22 June IS-sponsored forum at Sydney University) if the BLDC's court strategy didn't lead to a call for jailing Gallagher (ironically enough, a comrade of O'Shea), speaker Joe Owens vowed that "personally" he wanted to "put the bastard in there". Not a single IS supporter voiced an objection!

## Gallagher -- "70 percent positive, 30 percent negative"

Such open class treason is justified by Gallagher's "left-wing" opponents by portraying him as unique within the trade-union bureaucracy, as a man whose hold on the leadership is due almost entirely to wholesale chicanery and episodic thuggery. Indeed, even Communist Party of Australia (Marxist-Leninist) (CPA[ML]) chairman EF Hill, rumour has it, has on occasion "summed up" his "closest comrade-in-arms" by paraphrasing Mao's famous evaluation of Stalin: 70 percent positive and 30 percent negative. And, significantly, many cadre of the Maoist breakaway Red Eureka Movement have long viewed "big Norm" as just another union bureaucrat.

Yet the bosses, particularly in Victoria, would not have been unhappy to see Gallagher go. Focusing on his post-election threat to revive last year's ineffectual but industrially costly "guerrilla campaign" for a \$30 pay rise, Rupert Murdoch's Sydney gutter rag, the *Daily Mirror* (30 May), ran a blazing editorial the day after Gallagher's re-election, headed "Stop this man now".

Gallagher and Black are no better nor worse than the BLDC. The BLDC's claim to militancy rests with the Qantas job's record of industrial action over job issues. Indeed, when a BLDC candidate at Qantas, Duncan Williams, was sacked in mid-June in a blatant political victimisation, the workers walked off demanding his reinstatement. But this proves only that the BLDC's defeatist excuse for relying on the penal powers -- that the ranks cannot be mobilised for fear of the sack in this recession-ravaged industry -- is completely fake. The BLDC in office would behave no differently than "democratic", "militant" Communist Party members, John Halfpenny and Sam Armstrong, who thrust one of the grossest sell-outs in years down the throats of the LaTrobe Valley power workers.

The ranks *can* be mobilised against rotten bureaucrats, bosses' attacks and unemployment -- but the program of the BLDC is a program for *demobilising* the ranks. Instead of fighting for a 30-hour week at no loss in pay and a full, automatic cost-of-living escalator to replace the indexation swindle, the BLDC tells them that Gallagher's "\$30 and 35 hours" campaign costs them money while Black warns that industrial "disruption" like that at Qantas will lose them jobs. Reformists inevitably stand *opposed* to both consistent union democracy and class inde-

## Stop Maoist gangsterism!

On Thursday night 29 June two Australasian Spartacist sellers were viciously attacked and bashed by Builders Labourers Federation (BLF) organiser and Maoist thug Sean Cody during a regular sale at the Trades Hall Hotel, Sydney. Cody, who was drinking with other BLF officials including Steve Black, bloodied one comrade's nose and punched the other in the head several times. The previous Monday night, Builders Labourers for Democratic Control candidate Duncan Williams and two others were bashed by several of Black's supporters. The entire left and workers movement must stop this Stalinist gangsterism and defend workers democracy! We will not be intimidated!

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pendence precisely because they have no desire to mobilise workers in struggle against the capitalist system. The only leadership which can provide consistent militant direction to builders labourers in their pressing struggles against the bosses is one committed to a program *linking* those struggles to the fight for workers power. ■

## British Trotskyism . . .

Continued from page three

Workers' Government Slogan" ([WSL] *Pre-Conference Discussion Bulletin* no 2, January 1978), was written during late [northern] autumn by Green, Holford, Kellett, Murray, Quigley and Short which called for a position of "no vote for the candidates of workers' parties (like the Labour Party) which are in a Popular Front combination" (Thesis 2 of the conclusion). On the question of the slogan of a workers government the document took the position of Trotsky, who spelt this out in discussions with leaders of the then-revolutionary American SWP [Socialist Workers Party]: "... the dictatorship of the proletariat, that is the only possible form of a workers' and farmers' government". Thus point 7 of the conclusion states:

"The WSL advances the slogan of 'a workers' government' as a pseudonym for the dictatorship of the proletariat. Its essential content -- a government that rules in the interests of the working class and bases itself, not on the bourgeois state, but on the independent organisations of the working class -- remains, whether or not it is advocated as a propaganda or an agitational slogan."

Concerning the question of voting for popular front candidates the document states forcefully that this is no tactical or technical matter. This question is today the dividing line between those who give "critical" support to the popular front, seeking to place it in power, and the Bolshevik policy of proletarian opposition to coalitionism. But this is far from a passive or abstentionist position. The authors of the document wrote:

"... We call for the unions nationally to withdraw union sponsorship from all MPs who support the coalition..."

"We must develop a fight in local Labour Party constituencies for the removal of sitting MPs and the selection of candidates who stand on a revolutionary programme opposed to the coalition.... In bye-elections at present we can give no support to LP candidates who defend the coalition and will have to consider critically supporting in some cases centrist or revisionist candidates if they make opposition to the coalition and wage control central to their platform." ("The Coalition, 'Make the Lefts Fight' and the Workers' Government Slogan")

Whereas in the past the WSL had not taken a clear position on the question of voting for popular front candidates, its capitulation to social democracy was clearly expressed in the standing demand to "make the lefts fight", the alpha and omega of Thornett's policy toward the Labour Party. This policy came under sharp attack in the oppositionists' document:

"The present unity of Heffer, Benn, Foot, Healey, and Callaghan in jointly defending the coalition reveals the *essential programmatic* agreement between the 'left' and right....

"... we should in no way create a false distinction between them and their right-wing bed fellows when the 'lefts' are in no way distinguishing themselves from the right wing by their actions.... To place demands exclusively on the 'lefts' when they are unified with the right wing in opposing the struggles in the working class developing on the two decisive issues of wage control and the coalition, means that the WSL argues that the 'lefts' do fundamentally differ from the right-wing. When the 'lefts' have made no break from the right, not even verbally allied themselves with the wages struggles, the demand that they 'kick out' Healey, Callaghan et al acts in practice to strengthen illusions both in the 'lefts' as an alternative leadership and in reformism.

"This present orientation of the movement, summed up in the slogan 'Make the Lefts Fight', elevates the *tactic* of the united front and critical support into a strategic orientation.

"The League places these demands on the lefts because it makes its starting point a preconceived desire to secure unity with the left against the right, and from an ahistorical perspective that the task is to take the working class through a fresh stage of reformist betrayal." (Ibid; emphasis in original)

Around the time of the WSL 1977 summer school, some of the emerging oppositionists began to realise that fidelity to Trotskyism required a full-scale programmatic combat against Thornett's

workerism. In a letter dated 13 July 1977, Green wrote to Holford:

"I have been re-reading some of the Spartacist's material over the last couple of days, including some of their basic documents (declaration of principles, intervention at the 66 IC conference), their letter to the OCI and their letter to the [Spanish] LCE, and the founding document of their French section, the Ligue Trotskyste de France. What has struck me is the absolute consistency with which they have fought for their positions since the early 1960's, and through the period subsequent to their foundation they have been able to build in a real way both in America and *internationally* on the basis of democratic centralism.

"Politically they seem to me to represent the only revolutionary current in existence. They have understood the revisions of Pabloism and the complementary errors of the IC in a very complete way, have analysed and fought all the petty bourgeois radicalism that has been prevalent since the late 60's (feminism, New Leftism, guerrillaism) and in a complementary fashion have stood out against the capitulation of the so-called Trotskyists of the USFI (both wings) to Popular Frontism and to the widespread economism that has afflicted the left since the working class began to break out into struggle in a big way over the last decade. This political independence and consistency has been reflected in a very precise and conscious understanding of the tasks that face small groups of revolutionaries in the present conditions, summed up in their formulation of the fighting propaganda group. The value of their positions has been apparent again and again in facing the problems that actually confront the WSL (syndicalist approach, obscuring of the need for a new revolutionary party opposed to the Labour Party, misuse of resources, neglect of the left groups and the lack of a consistent political line which is clearly before the membership as it carries out its work, question of inner party democracy and leadership). I have come to the conclusion that their approach to the Labour Party has the virtue of at least according with the real situation in the working class, and the fact that the Labour Party is losing support very rapidly -- they see work directed at the LP as having the purpose of splitting and winning advanced workers through grappling with the turns in the objective situation and the manoeuvres of the reformists, while maintaining clearly the necessity for a Trotskyist party *in front of the working class*. On the trade unions their idea of the trade union caucus seems to provide the possibility of a *genuine* growth and the serious training of a new leadership without liquidation or opportunism, which the CDLM to me represents. Again on Ireland they have seriously confronted the problems presented by the particular form which the national question takes (not a new position incidentally, and indicative of their ability to confront major theoretical questions concretely and in relation to the *world* political situation). "I saw ... at Grunwicks on Monday. They asked me if I had any questions on their politics or things I couldn't understand. I was in the uncomfortable position of having to say that I could quite see the logic of their positions.... This was the only formulation that I could come up with to actually forestall a discussion over points which I agreed with anyway. That made me realise that I have a responsibility to face up to their existence and my essential agreement with them. From now on I intend to fight for their politics inside the WSL." ■

[TO BE CONTINUED]

## Wran's cops . . .

Continued from page eight

Over the next four days committee supporters, working mainly at Sydney University, raised over \$140 in donations toward the legal defence and gathered more than 150 signature endorsements of the defence committee and its two demands.

Meanwhile the fake-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP), adept at tailing the "gay movement", could not make up its mind whether to support the principled defence effort or not. While some SWPers worked with the committee, others, like Sydney University students Liam Gash and Jon West, actually *retracted their signatures from the committee endorsement sheet!* But the Sydney University neophytes of the reformist CPA, the Communist Group (CG), sought to actively sabotage the defence campaign. They had not bothered to mobilise so much as one signature for the campaign, much less trade-union support through CPA union bureaucrats like John Halfpenny, yet they were quite capable of "mobilising" to swamp a defence meeting in order to *wreck* the united-front campaign. At a meeting of the defence committee on 30 June they managed

to push through a motion subordinating the committee to the Gay Solidarity Group (GSG), effectively excluding any (and directed in particular against the SL of course) from the committee who refused to endorse the GSG's reformist/sectoralist "gay charter".

This serious attack on gay rights in NSW comes in the midst of a reactionary campaign internationally, spearheaded by such types as Anita Bryant, Mary Whitehouse and the Festival of Light. In the face of this onslaught the reformists of the CPA and SWP spurn the mobilisation of a broad campaign centred on the labour movement in favour of even further isolating gays from access to the social power of the working class. Full rights for gays can only be secured by smashing the capitalist system, a task requiring the construction of a Trotskyist vanguard party. ■

## Healyites are lousy liars

"Revisionism reaches new heights", blared the headline of the latest (22 June) *Workers News* effort at what passes in its pages for "polemic". Describing a rather straightforward three-way debate between the Communist Party (CPA), the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the Spartacist League (SL) before a political study group in the Blue Mountains on 26 May as part of a "desperate campaign of opposition to Trotskyism", author Nick Beams surmised, "The fact that the discussion took place shows that there are hardly any differences at all" among the three organisations! *Workers News*, published by the Healyite Socialist Labour League (SLL), used to stridently demand that the SWP join it in a "parity commission" to "investigate" the SLL's absurd "charges" that US SWP leader Joe Hansen is a GPU/FBI agent. Had the Healyites got their wish, this could only "prove" that there are "hardly any differences at all" between the SLL and the "GPU accomplices"!

The occasions when *Workers News* even claims to address the politics of the SL are infrequent. This time, as before, it is the product of a political embarrassment. The SLL was unable to prevent our protest pickets from exposing the Healyites' political exclusion of all SL supporters and other leftists from their "public" showings of the film, *The Palestinian*. As a result, at one such showing at Sydney University a number of people turned away disgusted by the exclusions, and a letter of protest signed by a number of outraged non-Spartacists appeared in the student paper, *Honi Soit*.

Why the exclusions? The SLL cannot tolerate Trotskyist criticism of its total political obeisance to the petty-bourgeois Palestinian nationalists of Al Fatah. But to justify their exclusionist thuggery, they must make it out that the SL is some sort of Zionist, pro-imperialist outfit of "provocateurs". The particular fabrications are as absurd, of course, as they are vile: we have "the same position as the South African Prime Minister Vorster" on "the armed struggle by the African people"; we support the terrorist actions of the Red Brigades because we call for their defence -- as the SLL criminally refuses to do -- against the bourgeois state; because we "attack the PLO in the Middle East" we "oppose" "the struggle of the oppressed people of Africa and the Middle East ... directed against imperialism", etc.

Yet, directly above this last lie is printed a photograph of an SL picket at one of the film showings -- an excellent photo, prominently featuring three placards one of which reads clearly: "UN/Israel out of Lebanon! Defend PLO against Zionist terror! -- Spartacist". It is some peculiar sort of "Zionists" who defend the PLO against Zionists! What can one say of liars who produce unimpeachable evidence flatly refuting their own lies? Only that the Healyites are not even competent slanderers.

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## Defend the 60!

# Jail Wran's sadistic cops!



26 June protest at Sydney Central Court hearing for 53 arrested two days earlier; brutal attack by Wran's cops led to 7 more arrests.

ASP photos

## Mass arrests at Sydney gay-rights demos

On Saturday night, 24 June, Labor premier Neville Wran's cops launched a brutal and premeditated assault on homosexuals and supporters of gay rights at a "Mardi Gras" festival march culminating Sydney's "International Homosexual Solidarity Day". Having consistently harassed the marchers, the uniformed swine surrounded the marchers as they entered the Kings Cross area and, with their identifying badge numbers removed, proceeded to indiscriminately bash and arrest. Fifty-four people, of whom all but one were charged, were dragged off to the notorious Darlinghurst police station, where the twenty-four women were thrown into one two-man cell, the thirty men into another. Peter Murphy, a well-known leftist and supporter of the Communist Party (CPA), was singled out for a backroom

working-over so vicious that his screams could be clearly heard.

When more than a hundred people turned out two days later for a protest outside the hearings of the 53, they were met by some 150 cops who repeated the brutal performance of the Saturday night, throwing several demonstrators over railings and arresting seven more, including an ASP photographer.

This sadistic cop rampage must be condemned by the entire labour movement and all defenders of democratic rights. The full power of the trade-union movement must be mobilised to demand that all the charges against the 60 be dropped immediately. Any class-conscious militant can feel nothing but contempt for labour traitor Wran who, currying favour with the country vote for a projected end-of-year election, went out of his way to shower abuse on the cops' victims. A deputation of gay activists who had spoken to Wran claimed he thought they had a "good cause" and "it may be true" that there had been a premedi-

tated police attack (he should know, as minister of police!). Wran angrily denounced them as liars (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 June), demonstrating in the process the futility of the reformist illusions of such gay "leaders". There could be no clearer evidence that whether a Labor or Liberal administration is in office, the government is still a bosses' government and the police the professional enforcers of the bourgeois social order.

From the start the Spartacist League (SL) attempted to mobilise a broad-based united-front defence effort with the power to repulse these attacks. The SL was the *only* left-wing organisation to distribute a leaflet, entitled "Jail Wran's sadistic cops!", at the Monday protest. At a defence meeting that evening an SL proposal to establish a united-front "Defend the Sixty Committee" based on the demands, "Drop the charges! Full democratic rights for lesbians and male homosexuals!", was carried overwhelmingly.

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## NSW BLF elections — no choice for ranks

# "BLs for Democracy" push penal powers against Gallagher

With the cynical candor of an entrenched bureaucrat, Maoist Norm Gallagher attributed his re-election as federal secretary of the Builders Labourers Federation (BLF) in late May to the ranks' preference for "the villain they know to the villain they don't". Gallagher had outpolled opponent Brian Rix, a job delegate at the Sydney Qantas site and candidate of the Builders Labourers for Democratic Control (BLDC), by a vote of 4218 to 2430.

But the vote for Rix, not a nationally known figure and handicapped by the marginal existence of the BLDC outside NSW, reflects strong discontent with the Gallagher regime. The problem facing Gallagher now, as the NSW branch approaches a similarly BLDC-engineered, court-supervised state election pitting Gallagher's NSW gauleiter, Steve Black, against Noel Olive, also from Qantas, is that his villainy is only too well known and remembered in NSW. But, as in the federal contest, BLs concerned with defence of their union and their livelihoods have

no candidate -- one villain is no better than the other!

Every bureaucratic atrocity of the Gallagher/Black leadership the BLDC has met not with a mobilisation of the ranks but with a trip to the bosses' Arbitration courts, only too willing to deliver the fate of this union into the hands of the class enemy. When Gallagher took over the NSW branch in 1975, he expelled its democratically elected officials; Joe Owens, Jack Munday and Bob Pringle, an outrage against the democratic rights of the ranks which must be opposed. But Owens et al "fought" it by getting the Federal Court to overturn the expulsions; and when Black defied the decision, they went straight back to the court and demanded that it *force* the BLF to give them their union tickets. Having got the court to order the state branch election, the BLDC then went to Justice JB Sweeney of the Federal Court to have it taken out of the union's hands entirely, claiming (doubtless with considerable justification) wholesale

manipulation by Black of the branch electoral roll. And when Black, rather than defying the court outright, put on a union ballot in addition to the court's, they appealed to Sweeney to stop it. And so he did -- by ordering Australia Post to *seize* BLF postal ballots.

This attack was *welcomed* by the cynical office-seekers of the BLDC and their "revolutionary" hangers-on. They could not care less that allowing the bosses' courts to dictate who is in the union makes a mockery of the union movement's ability to discipline genuine scabs and strike-breakers, like the bosses' "martyr" of Broken Hill, Noel Latham; that calling on the bosses' courts to order and supervise the elections legitimises Fraser's anti-union legislation empowering the courts to do just that -- in order to root out "militant minorities". What would the International Socialists (IS), Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and Socialist Labour League have had to say if Redfern postal workers had re-

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