

SOCIALISM NOT STALINISM IN AFGHANISTAN!

The Soviet Union has invaded Afghanistan, Carter and Fraser, the United States State Department and its satellites, are stirring up war hysteria. The question is put to Marxists, very excitedly, like a pistol at the temple 'Are you for or against the invasion of Afghanistan?' Revolutionaries first inquire:

"Who asks this question and from what standpoint?" The Communist Left deals with such questions from the standpoint of proletarian revolution independent both of imperialism and Stalinism. We do not get our answers mixed up with those of class enemies and pacifist muddleheads.

The USSR bureaucracy's involvement in gangsterism in Kabul compares with the New South Wales Richardson Keating ALP bureaucracy's involvement with gangsterism in Balmain and Rozelle. Both bureaucracies are rotten to the core. The thuggery these bureaucracies employ whether at the presidential palace in Kabul or at the Balmain Town Hall, are appropriate symbols of the rot that lies behind their political rant. Just as we do not join with John Mason on the N.S.W. Liberal front benches when he attacks Casey, we do not join with Carter and his fellow imperialist hyenas when they attack the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. We want Casey thrown out, not so that the State Liberal Party may gain a new parliamentary seat, but so that workers' democracy can once again revive in the Balmain-Rozelle area and a thinking worker can vote for a party based on workers' democracy without shame.

In the same way we oppose the use of the Soviet Red Army to settle factional disputes in the Afghani Peoples Democratic Party by unselective assassination. We oppose the USSR's action, not because we want to turn Afghanistan into an American rather than a Russian satellite, but in order to build a party based on workers' democracy which can lead the Afghani revolution. We are not against "violence" in the abstract. We are against violence which holds back the workers' movement.

Communists do not support the general course of the Stalinist bureaucracy now entrenched in Moscow. The crime of that bureaucracy is not one incident here or there but its whole policy. The Stalinist bureaucracy demoralises the workers' movement and discredits the U.S.S.R. That is what we are against. The present regime in the U.S.S.R. betrays the revolution by its whole course. That is what we are against. Every incident for us fits into that framework,

We do not support the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan only because the Soviet Union does not enter Afghanistan for revolutionary purposes. The army does not come at the call of the Afghani workers. It has forfeited the confidence of those workers. "Borders" have nothing to do with it. Stalinism is counter revolutionary root and branch. It has long since proved incapable of extending world revolution. The Stalinist army of the U.S.S.R. uses its armed might to defend what the Australian ruling classes Office of National Assessment describes in traditional imperialist terms as the "Russian sphere of influence". The Soviet bureaucracy, incapable of building a party of Afghani toilers which would fight Islamic reaction with a revolutionary program substitutes for the party it cannot build, military invasion. The Stalinist armed takeover of Afghanistan represents no more and no less than Stalinism's definitive confession of political bankruptcy in the face of intensified class conflict in the Middle East. The workers in Pakistan and Iran, trying to chart their way forward to combat both right and "left" Islamic tendencies, now find that the political decisions of a Stalinist party are made not through political debate and the conflict of factions but by Red Army machine guns. The Russian invasion of Afghanistan will push these workers not only away from Stalinism but, temporarily, away

from the revolutionary path. It is a stab in the back for the masses of the Middle East. Because the invasion of Afghanistan is a blow against the workers and peasants, it is the workers and peasants who must overthrow the Karmal government and the Red Army officer caste. Imperialism and its paid Islamic guerillas cannot act on behalf of the Afghani masses! Carter and his mountain bandits will substitute one counter-revolutionary regime for another, one "Islamic revolution" for another. Until the Soviet Union has liquidated the revolutionary gains of 1917 and abolished nationalised property relations, the world working class will defend the Soviet Union, and any country it occupies for defensive purposes, against world capitalism. The Afghani workers and peasants will not delegate to their class enemies, the duty of overthrowing the rotten Stalinist regime which has been imposed on them! They will defend Brezhnev's puppet Karmal against imperialism and reaction in the same way as the Bolsheviks in 1917 defended Kerensky against Kornilov — using Karmal as a gun-rest against Carter and Zia in order the better to settle accounts with Karmal afterward. In the face of imperialist war hysteria, revolutionaries will defend the U.S.S.R. on the basis of the transitional programme of the Fourth International. The Marxist defence of Afghanistan against Stalinist invasion is to defend and extend the gains of the world socialist revolution which began in October 1917. The opportunist method of defending Afghanistan is to call on the Soviet Union, in the name of "peaceful co-existence" and "respect for national sovereignty" to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan at a time when the forces of reaction in Afghanistan are far stronger than the forces of socialism. This programme of opportunism whether emanating from the Eurostalinist parties of Italy, Spain and Australia or the fake Trotskyist parties of the Mandel faction of the "United Secretariat" is the line of capitulation to imperialism. The workers of the Soviet Union, Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan will split the Red Army between its revolutionary and counter revolutionary element and liquidate the Soviet invasion through new rise of world revolution! There is no other revolutionary for the world working class.

The Kabul governments of Teraki and Amin were incapable of launching even a limited democratic revolution against Afghanistan's mediaeval society. They tried, in the tradition of Kerensky, the Russian Premier overthrown by the Bolsheviks, to carry out land reform from above by legislation, not mass mobilisation. They tried to abolish the oppression of women by law without attacking the worse than feudal conditions of servitude which were the material basis of women's oppression. The bourgeois democratic revolution failed under Teraki and Amin as all previous attempts to make such a revolution had failed which did not link revolution in Afghanistan to world socialist revolution.

With the aid of the proletariat of advanced countries, backward countries can go over to the soviet system and through certain states of development to communism without having to pass through the capitalist stage. Specific forms must be found for the alliance of the foremost proletarians in the world with the labouring and exploited masses of the world whose conditions are in many cases mediaeval.

The army of the U.S.S.R. has not entered Afghanistan to complete the bourgeois-democratic revolution, still less to combine that revolution with an advance toward socialism. It has entered Afghanistan to reverse the bourgeois-democratic revolution, to convert an ineffective program of liberal reform into an "Islamic revolution" proclaimed by Babrak Karmal, the new President. The first step in this "revolution" — for which read counter-revolution — is to open negotiations with C.I.A.-funded "Islamic guerillas" in Pakistan. Throughout Afghani history, it has always been Islamic governments which replaced reform governments and barred further progress. The pace of Afghani

history has now been accelerated. The task that the semi-bandit Islamic guerillas of the mountains could not achieve — keeping Afghanistan lodged firmly in the seventeenth century is now achieved by the modern and “progressive” Red Army. The film of permanent revolution is unwinding in reverse.

Communists support the armed overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union — by the Russian working class. We therefore support also the armed overthrow of the Karmal government Stalinism has installed in Kabul by the Afghani toiling masses. The international allies of the Afghani workers and peasants do not include the Stalinist standing army of the Soviet Union as it now exists. The international allies of the Afghani people are the workers fighting for socialist revolution to overthrow Khomeini in Iran and Zia in Pakistan, and the workers fighting for political revolution against Stalinism in the U.S.S.R..

The invasion of Afghanistan will give an immense impetus to the revolutionary transformation of the Soviet Union’s army and to the pressure for the overthrow of its officer caste.

The Communist Left raises three main demands in the face of imperialist war hysteria: workers and peasants government in Afghanistan; defence of the Soviet Union; forward to a socialist united states of the Middle East. No other tendency on the left has taken up these demands because no other tendency can. They represent the authentic program of Trotskyism in our time. The counter-revolutionary character of the demand for support for the Stalinist Red Army is shown by the fact that no tendency which raises this demand calls for a workers and peasants government in Afghanistan. All the tendencies with which one or other “left” reservation, capitulate to Stalinism, fail to call for further advance to socialism in Afghanistan defending instead, the ineffective Kerenskyite reforms of the Teraki government which Karmal is now liquidating. Equally, the tendencies calling for “withdrawal” of Soviet forces — to give imperialism a blank cheque for intervention — equally fail to call for a workers and peasants government in Afghanistan. The Communist Left alone stands firm in the struggle for socialism in Afghanistan while all other tendencies debate over what kind of counter-revolutionary government they will support in Kabul. The pitiful lowest-common-denominator politics of the played out Stalinist peace movement, which is now reduced to claiming that a campaign against the imperialist war drive does not require agreement on characterisation of U.S.S.R. action in Afghanistan, spells out that the old shotgun marriage between Stalinism and pacifism, legitimised as “co-existence”, is on the edge of final divorce. The death agony of the old peace movement is dragging down with it not only the old Stalinist hacks like Bill Gollan but new trendy sellouts to Stalinism like Bob Gould and Gary Nicholls. It is impossible to defend Afghanistan against Carter unless one understands, unless one knows how one is defending and what one is defending. History will soon make this clear with great speed and ruthlessness.

DEFEND THE SOVIET UNION

WORKERS’ AND PEASANTS’ GOVERNMENT IN AFGHANISTAN!

FOR A SOCIALIST UNITED STATES OF THE MIDDLE EAST

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