



ACTU sabotage kills national "strike"

Remember Clarrie O'Shea!

The arrest of Tramways Union official Clarrie O'Shea in May 1969 for the union's refusal to pay Arbitration Court fines triggered a wave of spontaneous strikes and demonstrations which convulsed the country, cascading into a near general strike in the four days before O'Shea's fine was paid by a "well-wisher". The size and militancy of this response -- despite the criminal absence of leadership and organisation by the ACTU bureaucracy -- turned the nefarious penal powers into a dead letter for years. Fraser still has been unable to revive them. If O'Shea himself was a run-of-the-mill Stalinist bureaucrat whose Maoist politics have led him to become an exponent of Peking's Cold War anti-Sovietism, it is not that for which he is remembered. The name Clarrie O'Shea and the impact of that struggle have been etched into the collective memory of the Australian working class as a synonym for militant opposition to government attacks on trade-union rights -- the kind of response that was stabbed in the back this time around.

The arrest of Communist Party (CPA) members Laurie Carmichael and Jack Marks -- and eight other union officials -- by WA police on 11 June was so undisguised and undemocratic an assault on those rights that even the union-bashing bourgeois press decried it as "stupid" and "provocative". Their "crime" consisted in violating Section

54B of the WA Police Act -- which bars any public meeting of more than three people without official police permission -- by addressing a meeting of striking Hammersley Iron workers in the Pilbara town of Karratha.

As news of the arrests spread, 30,000 workers in WA spontaneously walked off the job, followed by over 5000 members of Carmichael and Marks' Amalgamated Metal Workers and Shipwrights Union (AMWSU) in South Australia. "If Court wants to fight", threatened Marks, assistant WA secretary of the giant AMWSU, "He'll get the biggest struggle he's ever had" (*Australian*, 13 June). A nationwide, mass working-class response was in the air immediately. With a class-struggle leadership at the head of the labour movement, every WA worker would have been called out immediately in a state-wide general strike -- and stayed out until all the charges had been dropped, the dictatorial Section 54B smashed and the Hammersley strikers victorious in their struggle for a new log of claims. And if necessary, every job site in the country would have been shut down as well.

Instead the "militant" AMWSU itself postponed any official action for over a week -- until the 21 June court hearing -- conveniently timing it to coincide with an already planned 48-hour

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AMWSU official Jack Marks addresses WA unionists after arrests. Bureaucrats' response to Court's provocations -- all talk, no action.



Sandinistas mourn dead comrade. Brutal dictator Somoza's days may be near an end.

Military victory to anti-Somoza rebels

Nicaragua civil war

After weeks of heavy fighting between the guerrilla army of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) and the praetorian National Guard of Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza, rebel leaders in late June were predicting the victory of their "final offensive" in "a matter of days". The five members of the US imperialist-backed Andean Pact -- Venezuela, Peru, Colombia, Ecuador and Bolivia -- indicated their tilt toward the Sandinistas as "legitimate combatants". And with the cold-blooded murder of an American newsman in Managua in late June, even the US made it clear that Somoza had had it, as Secretary of State Cyrus Vance called for a "transitional government of national reconciliation" to put a stop to the "mounting human tragedy".

The current offensive has shaken the country as deeply as last September's general strike/ uprising. Since 8 June urban life has been brought to a standstill by a total work stoppage called by the Sandinistas. Though the rebels' military fortunes have seasawed, they claim control of 25 towns and villages -- including Nicaragua's second city, Leon -- and even attempted an unsuccessful air raid on Somoza's concrete bunker, which is about as far as the dictator's writ runs unchallenged. Determined to

hold out to the last, Somoza has relied on the superior numbers and firepower of his National Guard who, with characteristic brutality, have pounded Sandinista strongholds in Managua's slum districts day and night -- trucks stacked with dead civilians are a common sight! But the working masses, though overwhelmingly sympathetic to the anti-Somoza forces, have remained largely passive.

The Sandinistas remain confident that "the morale of the infantry has been broken". On 17 June they named a junta of five to head a provisional government of "national reconstruction". The composition of the group clearly demonstrates the FSLN's commitment to preserving capitalist rule after the fall of the dictatorship. It is headed by the widow of assassinated newspaper publisher Joaquin Pedro Chamorro, a leading business opposition leader; includes industrialist Alfonso Robelo, a well-known friend of Washington, Moises Hassan Morales, a leader of the National Patriotic Front (FPN) popular front, a pro-Sandinista university professor and Daniel Ortega Saavedra, the leader of the right wing of the FSLN. The minimum program of the government is limited to expropriation of Somoza family

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Clarrie O'Shea . . .

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national metal trades stoppage around the long-standing (and long-forgotten) log of claims. As one union after another announced nationwide 24-hour stoppages for 21 June -- seamen, miners, building workers -- and the TLCs in WA, Queensland, Victoria and South Australia declared statewide strikes, ACTU secretary Peter Nolan vowed it was "certain" the ACTU would call a national stoppage. But even this feeble response was not to be. "We are heading for the strike with determination", swore WA TLC head Peter Cook, "but if the Government was to make the right approach it would be the easiest thing in the world to defer the stoppage" (*West Australian*, 18 June)!

"Day of protest" -- invitation to scabbing

By the time the ACTU Executive had met -- complete with a phone hook-up to Hawke's Geneva hotel at the ILO conference -- on 19 June, the "certain" general strike had become a selective ongoing blockade of WA exports and a "national day of protest". John Ducker, right-wing NSW Labor Council secretary and ACTU junior vice-president, explained that this "non-compulsory" appeal was "the way of getting the widest response" (*Australian*, 20 June). In fact, it was the way of ensuring the widest scabbing -- in particular, the NSW TLC's *criminal* "one-outing" from the strike. And after ten hours of talks with Fraser, on the eve of the "general strike", even the blockade was gone -- as Nolan announced a "compromise" calling for an *adjournment* of the charges and a joint Commonwealth-WA "review" of Section 54B.

And for all the bureaucrats' blather about "victory", the neanderthal WA government was far less amenable to "compromise" than the capitulatory labour fakery. The charges were adjourned only until 21 July, not indefinitely. No sooner had Carmichael left the courtroom than he was promising his waiting supporters yet another impotent 24- or 48-hour protest stoppage. *Enough games!* The trade-union movement must not evidence the least sign of vacillation or weakness -- the issue has now become one of national scope. If the WA government now makes any attempt to press ahead with the charges or continue to enforce the Police Act clauses, the ACTU must immediately respond with an *indefinite, nationwide general strike*. Massive militant demonstrations of workers in the streets would have to be organised as a display of force and a demonstration of the workers' determination to roll back all the anti-union attacks. *Remember Clarrie O'Shea!*

But no confidence can be placed in the proven *misleaders* who run the ACTU. As we pointed out in a Spartacist League (SL) leaflet passed out at factories and campuses before the one-day stoppage:

"A successful general strike can only be assured if it is prepared and co-ordinated by rank-and-file elected committees on every job site, and in every factory. Mass pickets must be organised to make sure that every factory, every office, every school is shut down and stays shut down until the strike is won." Painfully aware that the bosses could expect

CPA: Packer in, SL out!

At the opening night of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA) 26th National Congress in Sydney 15 June our ASP salesmen faced an indifferent and hostile reception. But the atmosphere quickly changed when the cameras of media barons Packer and Fairfax, respectively Channels 9 and 7, appeared -- to be ushered directly into the conference hall itself for a telecast of outgoing CPA President Laurie Carmichael's address! In contrast to this enthusiastic invitation to the reactionary bourgeois media, an ASP reporter had earlier been explicitly refused entry by then-joint national secretary Joe Palmada, who said all the left press would be allowed in -- except the Spartacist League. A disgusting but vivid verification of the "dialectics" of reformism -- bourgeoisie in, revolutionists out.

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them back at work in 24 hours no matter what, and even that impotent "protest" cynically undermined by the ACTU's manoeuvring, it is little wonder that many workers saw the action as a "waste of time". By the time 21 June had come and gone only WA, Victoria and Queensland had been even half-effectively shut down. But it was in the strategically central state of NSW that the bureaucracy's sabotage was most evident. At Redfern Mail Exchange, a bastion of industrial militancy in NSW, the ostensibly militant NSW leadership of the APTU offered the workers a "choice" between scabbing and solidarity. In the subsequent confusion all four floors at Redfern held separate meetings, only one deciding to back the strike. In many unions there was no guarantee strikers would be defended against victimisation. But the desire for action was there. At the giant Fairfax press complex in Sydney, our leaflet calling for an indefinite general strike was enthusiastically received and a worker prominently pinned it up inside with the word "indefinite" underscored.

Victory to Telecom, transport workers!

As we go to press maintenance and repair bans by Telecom workers fighting for a 20 percent wage increase are threatening to completely black out communications. And on 28 June train, tram and bus workers in Victoria, SA and Tasmania began an indefinite stoppage to gain wage parity with NSW public transport workers, themselves again threatening strike action to boost their bare subsistence pay of \$110 a week take-home.

Murdoch's Australian bemoans with consummate cynicism "the savagery in human nature that comes through in these disputes: the callous disregard for human suffering" -- ie for their profits. Despite yet another cut in real wages with the 3.2 percent indexation decision the employers are clamouring for no increases at all and Arbitration Commission President Moore claims that indexation is "on the brink". Then let it be the workers that topple it! Smash the wage freeze -- for major wage increases across the board! Public transport workers cannot limit themselves to parity with poverty; nor should Telecom workers accept only the pressure tactic of bans. Everybody out -- all Telecom and transport workers nationwide! Shut it right down! Victory to the Telecom and public transport workers!

The NSW bureaucracy's scabbery on 21 June was particularly criminal given that the state was already in the grip of an isolated industrial dispute at the Caltex Kurnell oil refinery which was the focus of even more union-bashing press hysteria than the national protest itself. This long-simmering dispute between the breakaway NSW branch of the AWU under aging anti-communist Labor warlord Charlie Oliver on the one hand and Caltex in league with the federal AWU on the other blew up yet again on 18 June following an Arbitration Commission ruling effectively imposing the federal award on the 450 Kurnell workers (presently under state award).

Amid hysterical press outcries against the worsening petrol shortage -- which is being grossly manipulated on the world market by big oil -- "our man Wran" proved that he is only quantitatively more sophisticated a strikebreaker than the hated Court, ranting that "The public is fed up to the back teeth with strikes that can be avoided, and frankly, so am I" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 June). Had the strikers not accepted the "compromise" offer of a three-month "cooling-off" period and an "independent mediator" a week after going out, Wran threatened to *order* them back on the basis of hastily enacted emergency powers.

Despite the disgusting personal power feud between Oliver and the federal AWU leadership there was more at stake here than simply a "demarcation dispute", as newly elected CPA president Judy Munday termed it in order to disavow the unpopular strike. The workers certainly have nothing to gain from jockeying between different awards within the *institutionalised* class-collaborationist framework of Arbitration and Oliver's parochial breakaway unionism is clearly *counterposed* to the necessity for a powerful national industrial union, but in this case the attempt to impose the federal award meant a *cut* in wages and working conditions. The Kurnell strike should have been supported! But rather than fighting simply to maintain their own better conditions, the Kurnell strikers should have demanded the *extension* of their conditions to all workers in the industry, thereby undercutting the corrosive clique feud at the top and laying the basis for a genuine national merger at the *highest* level of pay and conditions.

Only too quick to overlook ALP strikebreaking, the reformist bureaucracy singles out particularly odious reactionaries like "madman" Court in order to evade the class-struggle conclusion that the bosses' state protects the bosses' interests no matter which party or policy is guiding it at any particular moment. "Communist" Carmichael went to the limit by making even "family barbecues" Court's target. (*Tribune*, 20 June). The workerist International Socialists (IS) echoed this social-democratic daydream in a leaflet entitled "Spread the strike": "Neither Wran, Hamer or Corcoran would do anything so extreme as jail unionists for addressing meetings". *Nothing* so "extreme"? Only twelve months ago

Wran's cops brutally rounded up hundreds of gay rights activists for daring to march through Sydney.

Taking up the considerable slack at the bureaucracy's left flank, the IS organised its own rallies on 21 June in Sydney and Melbourne (in which SL contingents participated) and demanded in its leaflet that the strike "be continued nationally", only to call in the next breath for a "permanent blockade" on WA "until the charges are dropped and the legislation repealed", only then to note that a "week long blockade will place Court in serious trouble"! In the upshot the IS ends up with the bureaucracy's line. Certainly in the event of a general strike in WA, trade unionists should have blacked all goods to and from WA. But to *call* for a blockade was a diversion from the needed *strike* action and *counterposed* to a "continuing national strike".

If the bourgeoisie was taking pains to distance itself from Court's openly provocative tactics, they will be only too quick to follow suit if he succeeds. Fraser's Industrial Relations Bureau (IRB) -- despite the bureaucracy's empty fulminations against this "industrial police force" -- remains on the books. As does his Commonwealth Employees Act, which empowers the government to suspend or sack any employee taking part in "unauthorised" industrial action. As does Court's 1977 legislation outlawing the closed shop; and Bjelke-Petersen's edict against marches and pickets; and Hamer's Essential Services Act; and Wran's Road Obstructions Act aimed against truckies and transport workers; and a host of other outrageous laws aimed not at "family barbecues" but at the throat of the labour movement. And they will be used -- as some have been already -- unless the trade-union movement moves to wipe them out with firm resolve and industrial might, not with the sort of impotent "protest" stoppage which marks the grave of Medibank, not with capitulatory "compromises", not with electioneering for Labor strikebreakers. The SL, as in April 1977 when we called for a nationwide general strike to smash the IRB, consistently called for an immediate response to these attacks.

For a revolutionary workers leadership!

If the Australian workers were not uniformly in the grip of general strike fever following Court's provocation last month, it is only because they had little to look forward to but a one-day unpaid holiday masquerading as militant action; and little to look back on in recent years except a string of cynical betrayals. The dismantling of Medibank, the "horror budget", the recent mini-budget, the arsenal of anti-union laws -- all have been brought in without serious challenge from the union tops. The LaTrobe Valley power workers, with exceptional militancy and valour, nearly broke the bonds of the "indexation" wage freeze and crippled Arbitration two years ago, but they were betrayed by their leaders and their defeat is now perversely offered up as an argument for inaction. Shortly before his death, Trotsky noted:

"The trade unions of our time can either serve as secondary instruments of imperialist capitalism for the subordination and disciplining of workers and for obstructing the revolution, or, on the contrary, the trade unions can become the instruments of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat." ("Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay", 1940)

There is one inescapable conclusion: the trade-union bureaucracy, deriving its privileges from and wedded to a defence of capitalist interests, must go -- to be replaced by a revolutionary workers' leadership. Consistent defence of the workers' unions against the capitalists' attacks can only be carried through on the basis of a program of intransigent class struggle. A clear-cut victory over Court's attempt to trample on the gains of the "O'Shea strike" can and must go beyond the necessary defence of the arrested unionists. As the SL leaflet concluded:

"A general strike that succeeds in rolling back these latest attacks by the Court government will provide a powerful impetus to reverse the cuts in wages and living standards, the double-digit inflation, the half-million unemployed. Carmichael and Halfpenny must not be allowed to use Thursday's strike to 'forget' the AMWSU's own log of claims. Instead the AMWSU must use it as a springboard for a nationwide strike to win that log -- and more. Postal workers, rail workers, building workers -- all equally suffering the ravages of inflation and unemployment -- must follow suit. *Break the indexation wage freeze -- for major across-the-board rises now, with full monthly cost-of-living adjustments on all wages! For immediate implementation of a 30-hour week with no loss in pay! Smash the IRB and all anti-union laws! Down with all penal powers! No reliance on the pro-capitalist labour fakery -- the Hawkes, Duckers and Carmichaels -- for a revolutionary leadership of the workers movement! For a revolutionary workers party! For a workers government based on workers organisations to expropriate the capitalist class!*"

National Alliance stands in Grayndler poll

No platform for fascists!

Though it attracted both Malcolm Fraser and Bill Hayden to the hustings in the first electoral test of Fraser's popularity (he flunked!) since the introduction of the mini-budget, the 23 June by-election in the NSW federal seat of Grayndler was definitely a dreary affair. Predictably, there was a significant (7 percent) swing to Labor -- even though it put up a colourless right-wing machine candidate, Leo McLeay -- in this heavily working-class and migrant district. Predictably, the "left" alternatives to the ALP, pro-Moscow Socialist Party (SPA) candidate Frank Vouros and fake-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) candidate Nita Keig, were scarcely to the left and decidedly lacking as an alternative (as reflected in their meagre votes of 637 and 561, respectively -- little more than one percent each).

But there was something different about this election -- and the difference was ominous. It was the first time that the fascist Australian National Alliance (NA) had openly vied for public support, standing NA fuehrer Frank Salter as their candidate. For two years, these slime have been defacing Sydney with Eureka flag stickers vowing to "Smash Marxism" and "An Asian Australia? Never". In that time they have graduated from a tatty, roneed handout called "National Resistance" to a slick professionally produced periodical titled *Audacity*, (bankrolled, according to the 5 June *Newswit*, the NSW Institute of Technology student paper, by small businessman Max Davis, who along with Salter is part of the NA's three-man "directorate") and from a virtually clandestine existence centred at the University of NSW to a network of supporters in Brisbane, Adelaide and Melbourne and a recent feature interview in the 5 June *Australian*.

The NA's open contempt for the parliamentarist right wing in and around the Liberal and National Parties and its demagogic appeals for a "mass nationalist movement ... a movement of youth" (*Audacity* no 7) have all the hallmarks of an extra-parliamentary action group -- a fascist group. Its manifesto promises "the politics of action, not talk" and is suffused with an almost mystical glorification of the "national will" strongly reminiscent of the Nazis:

"The nation's future depends on a collective will which transcends class, sectional interests and lobbying, religious denomination, age, ego, etcetera, so that even the soil of the nation shall breathe and shout beneath our feet: 'Advance Australian [sic] Fair.'"

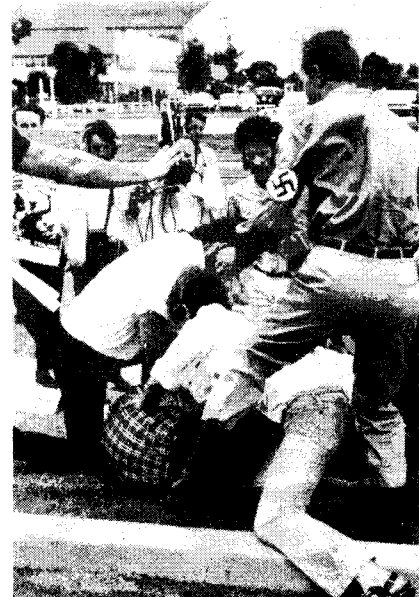
If these scum have taken pains to distance themselves from imported strains of fascism, it is not out of distaste for their genocidal aims, but out of a recognition that a mass, native

Australian fascist movement will not be built by crackpots openly identifying with Hitler's Third Reich, the British National Front or the American Ku Klux Klan. Their pitch is to the traditional "yellow peril" xenophobia endemic among racists in this outpost of "white civilisation" off the shores of populous Asia.

Salter's election propaganda contained all the classically fascist appeals: racism, populism, virulent chauvinism, glorification of militarist patriotism. Harking back to the "prouder pasts when real [!] men like Jack Lang ... protected us both from coloured labour and the conflicts of multi-racialism", it urged a "Protest against non-white immigration. Vote for the White Australia policy". To unemployed youth, it offered the prospect of "building the nation". And with the plaint, "Did our ANZACs die for nothing?", it demanded an arms build up to ward off the "yellow hordes".

Trotsky: "Acquaint them with the pavement!"

Salter's election campaign was an affront to the workers of Grayndler, many of them Greek, Italian and Arab migrants, undoubtedly among them survivors of the fascist jackboot in Southern Europe. Yet not one of the candidates purporting



Australian Hitlerites in action (Mascot, 1970). National Alliance's "program" no different.

to represent the working class in this by-election made the slightest attempt to mobilise the just outrage of the workers of Grayndler to drive these vermin out of their district and into the sewers, to (as Trotsky put it), "acquaint them with the pavement a few times". If McLeay grudgingly warranted the workers' vote in this election in opposition to the openly bourgeois

parties simply because the ALP is at least the *mass* party of the Australian working class, the unworthiness of a vote to the self-styled Marxists of the SPA and SWP could not have been made more graphically clear than by their blithe indifference to the congenital enemies of the working class and ethnic minorities which the fascists are.

Late in the campaign, the SPA came up with a rehash of the treacherous "anti-fascist people's fronts" of the 1930s, the "Movement Against Fascism and Racism" (MAFAR -- supported also by the "independent" reformists of the Communist Party), which could only bring itself to suggest that racist views "be 'unconditionally banned' on Ethnic TV" (*Socialist*, 20 June). Only two months after the Vietnamese rightists' stabbing of a trade unionist outside an SPA function brought the fascist danger dramatically home to the left -- and the SPA in particular -- all these "anti-fascists" can offer is a call on the bourgeois state to "ban" racist views. When such appeals to the bourgeois state meet with any success at all -- which they seldom do -- they only provide a dangerous precedent for use against the fascists' intended victims: the organised workers movement and oppressed minorities. (Isn't, after all, the Zionist-orchestrated anti-communist, anti-PLO witchhunt against Melbourne's SCR pretexted on banning "racist views"?) As we pointed out in April, what was and remains urgently necessary is the formation of united-front workers defence guards based on the trade unions to defend the left and workers movement and to crush the emerging fascist groups in the egg.

SWP: Defend their "free speech"

The SWP, whose association with Trotskyism begins and ends with the selection in its bookshop, did not even *mention* the NA in its many pages of insipid election propaganda. In fact to our knowledge Keig only dealt with the question publicly once -- in a radio interview on 2JJ -- where she deplored the NA's "very extreme right wing or fascist policies", such as "using the unemployed to build our [!] defence industry". But one might have found more *program* to fight fascism in *Women's Weekly*, for Keig offered not a word! Ever adept at tailoring their reformist politics to appeal to the tepid left wing of the ALP, these parliamentary cretinists will never counsel anything so unrespectable as "acquainting the fascists with the pavement".

On the contrary for years the SWP's American mentors have earned justified notoriety among black and working-class militants for championing the fascists' "right to free speech", at one point (in 1975) even attempting to prevent outraged black students from shouting down a Klan leader speaking on a Houston campus. And last year they allowed an avowed and known Nazi to speak in an SWP forum in Chicago. The fascists' only "policy" is genocide; their "free speech" an incitement to murder workers, communists and racial minorities. For communists, there is nothing to debate with these scum. *No platform for fascists!*

Five years of economic recession with record unemployment and inflation grinding away at the livelihoods of the workers and the petty-bourgeoisie -- and a reformist-led labour movement trapped within the framework of decaying capitalism -- have begun to create the social conditions in which fascist demagoguery can channel the anger of unemployed youth and particularly hard-hit sections of the middle class against a racial scapegoat and against the proletariat. Free to propagate their race-hate filth and chauvinist poison in an atmosphere of "respectable" debate, the National Alliance can now claim a victory their first time out -- topping both the SPA and SWP with 822 votes, 1.7 percent!

Today, the National Alliance and its fascist competitors are admittedly too small to pose a direct threat to the workers and ethnic minorities they would someday like to exterminate. But so was the British National Front ten years ago. Today the Front garners ten percent of the vote in by-elections and roams through the streets of London's Asian districts terrorising migrants and leftists. And so was the seemingly comical movement led by Adolf Hitler in 1923. When it was already too late for the Jews, leftists and workers of Germany, Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels himself explained what the Nazis' future victims should have done when the time was right:

"If the enemy had known how weak we were, it would probably have reduced us to jelly.... It would have crushed in the blood the very beginning of our work."■

Campus papers run Spartacist review



Michael Cimino's film, *The Deer Hunter*, which attempts to justify the US imperialist rape of Vietnam, has created quite a deal of political controversy. Our review, "Deer Hunter Lies", published in *Workers Vanguard* (27 April 1979), fortnightly paper of the Spartacist League/US, has done likewise, particularly on the campuses. So far three campus papers have reprinted an abridged version: *Rabelais* (LaTrobe University), *Honi Soit* (Sydney University) and *The Naked Wasp* (Caulfield Institute of Technology, Victoria). The unabridged version is available from the SL/ANZ for 25 cents.

Students were among the first to be galvanised into action in the 1960s by this war of torture and terror bombing, and a minority even generalised this into supporting the victory of the other side, the NLF/DRV. The campuses

have since become more conservative and apolitical, but all the same we noticed that our article struck a highly responsive chord among students. This reflects not only the consistently high journalistic quality of our press but the fact that only our communist worldview offers a clear programmatic alternative to the continuous, many-sided and insidious bourgeois ideological assault on historical and political truth. Those like the Socialist Workers Party who opposed the Vietnam war from a social-patriotic standpoint ("bring our boys home"), are politically disarmed in the face of *The Deer Hunter's* lies. We told the truth -- then and now -- that this was an imperialist war against the Vietnamese workers and peasants and its dirty, counterrevolutionary nature was no "mistake" but perfectly fitted the imperialist ruling class which waged it.

Communists debate mullah lovers Spartacist tour hits Islamic reaction

When the first of a series of Spartacist League (SL) public talks on Iran was met by a picket of two placard-bearing mullah lovers at University of NSW proclaiming, "Islamic Revolution, we greet you", we knew we had struck a raw nerve. For months, our press had presented the unique truth about the "Iranian revolution" to our readers, contrasting sharply with the mawkish tales of horror in the bourgeois press about the well-deserved executions of a handful of the shah's murderous lot and the equally grotesque fantasies in the fake-left press depicting this barbaric theocracy as a "victory for the masses".

Now, to drive home the lessons of our proletarian opposition both to the shah and the mullahs and to sound the alarm on the impending showdown in Iran -- urgently highlighted by the imprisonment of nine HKS militants -- SL Central Committee member Marie Hotschilt toured three cities (including three campuses), speaking to nearly 140 people on the topic, "No to the veil! For workers revolution to defeat Islamic reaction!" Many more heard radio interviews with Spartacist spokesmen on Sydney's 2JJ and Melbourne's 3RRR carried out in conjunction with the speaking tour.

Our "left" reformist opponents, however, stayed away in droves, incapable of justifying the enthusiastic support they had extended to this movement of clerical reaction in the name of the oppressed masses of Iran. Their Islamic bloc partners had no such compunction -- they openly welcomed the installation of a Koranic theocracy. Thus a score of supporters of the "Islamic republic" turned out to the first forum at University of NSW on 15 June to denounce Marxism and defend religious obscurantism elevated to state power. And by the time of our last forum at Sydney University on 28 June, they had escalated their war on the Marxist truth to the point of producing a two-page foolscap leaflet (from Victoria!) denouncing an unnamed "bunch of amateur revolutionaries" or tools of international imperialism [who] have started a rotten campaign against the Grand Revolution (Inkelabe Aali -- in Persian) of Iran".

The woman question is key

"So four months ago, what happened in Iran?", asked Comrade Hotschilt in opening her presentations. "According to the fake left ... you'd think it was 1917 in Russia." Outlining the attacks on women, homosexuals, national minorities and the left since then, she stressed that "Khomeini has not betrayed his program". She traced the social origins of the mullah-led movement in the opposition of the ponderous Shi'ite hierarchy to even the token land reforms and women's suffrage rights of the shah's "White Revolution" and of the *bazaaris* who saw in the shah's "modernisation" the "spectre of modern department stores". She described the mullahs' open commitment to theocratic rule and anti-communism and "absolute opposition to women's emancipation ... reflected in the nature of the demonstrations leading up to February, the chants of 'Death or the veil!', 'Long live Khomeini!'"

The speaker focused on the key character of the woman question as a test of any social movement:

"It's not accidental that the first demonstrations after Khomeini came into power were by women and that the first time the slogan

'Down with Khomeini' was heard in the streets of Teheran was raised by the women in those demonstrations saying 'No to the veil'.... What Islam means for women is that they are chattels. What the bourgeois revolution represented in history was ... that women for the first time were treated as human beings."

Right on cue, one Muslim speaker after another -- all men -- got up at New South Wales Uni to defend the reactionary treatment of women under Islam. Addressing the audience "in the name of Allah", the first announced that "the veil does not mean the subjugation of women by any means". Another took umbrage at the speaker's charge that under Koranic law adulteresses are stoned:

"Why don't you reveal the other side of it -- I mean, you need witnesses. In the case of adultery you need four witnesses."

Yet another, to the cheers of his supporters in the audience, went on an anti-communist offensive against the detractors of this "progressive" movement:

"I don't want to defend Islam. I want to say something about the people who attack Islam -- the Communist Party itself -- I want to say

SPARTACIST LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

section of the
international Spartacist League



Comrade Hotschilt speaking at Sydney Trades Hall, 22 June.

something about it. Why do you not defend the people in Hungary when thousands of them were killed under your tanks?... Why [do you not defend] the people in Eritrea -- 99 percent of the people in Eritrea is Muslim?"

An SL speaker from the floor, declaring our

Mullah lover pickets Spartacist forum, NSW Uni: "Islamic Revolution of Iran, we greet you".



Trotskyist opposition to the policies of the Soviet bureaucracy and our stand for the right of self-determination for the Eritrean people being bloodily suppressed by the Castro-assisted Ethiopian Derg, pointed out that "one of the crimes of the so-called Communist Party of Iran, the Tudeh party, is that they support Khomeini". And to those mullah lovers who wanted to quibble on the interpretation of the Koran he demanded:

"Do you support the shooting of people in Iran who are homosexuals? Yes or no? Do you defend the shots fired over the heads of the women protesting? Yes or no? Do you defend the arrests of the leftists, their possible execution? Do you defend the slaughter of the Kurdish national minority, the Turkomanis, Azerbaijanis and right now the slaughter of Arabs in Khuzistan? Yes or no?... The case in Iran today is not simply that people have their religious views but those religious views hold state power.... It's not the Koran we're talking about. It's the guns behind the Koran...."

Responding to the numerous shouts and interjections and attempts to disrupt the democratic discussion by the mullah lovers, he concluded: "Here it is simply shouts from the audience that attempt to suppress the truth. In Teheran today it is bullets from the mullahs that suppress the truth." Nor was it a peculiar feature of *Islam*, as the speaker pointed out in her presentation:

"All religion is reactionary. But for those of us who have been brought up in a secular society it's rather hard to envisage something like this. I'm an ex-Catholic and as this was hap-

pening ... I was imagining a demonstration of 100,000 nuns out there on the streets being organised by priests -- 'Death or the habit!'" Underscoring this point one member of the audience in Melbourne, an ex-Zionist, described

Continued on page seven

Trotskyist view on Iran featured on radio

The following are excerpts from an interview on Melbourne's 3RRR with Spartacist League Central Committee member Phillipa Naughten on 25 June.

3RRR: Were [the women demonstrators in Iran] opposed to the regime or just the stipulation that they had to wear the veil?

Naughten: The reason for their outcry was the imposition of the veil. But you see the veil symbolises an incredible amount of things. And it was the Marxist analysis of the Spartacist League that led us to completely reject the movement of the mullahs while most of the other proclaimed Marxist or socialist organisations were giving grand applause to Khomeini and his followers and belittling the reactionary side, the implications, of their movement. We were saying, look, this movement is for the chador, it's for the veil. That means it's in no way progressive because its attitude toward women reveals its attitude towards society as a whole.

3RRR: There is great hostility within Iran to foreigners, especially Americans....

Naughten: A lot of leftists did think that Khomeini was anti-imperialist because he was against Coca-cola and whisky. They are finding out otherwise now because there is no break with the imperialist order signified in Iran.... There's no doubt the United States was upset. They lost their quite important military installations, because Iran borders on the Soviet Union.... [But] the essential commonality is still there.

Khomeini is anti-Soviet Union, anti-communist to the core, and the obvious and inescapable alternative is world imperialism -- and he'll choose world imperialism.

3RRR: What about [women's] right to education?

Naughten: Seventeen percent of university students were female after the minimal reforms of the shah. Of course those women would be from the upper classes. Khomeini has now decreed that education must be separate of course and not only that but ... that married women and single women should no longer have common classes in schools because women tend to chat you know and it wouldn't be right....

3RRR: With the women's protests in Iran how much of it is a class protest?

Naughten: Well directly it's not. That's the absolutely necessary link that has to be made. A lot of the demonstrators on International Women's Day would have been predominantly well-off women, those who had got to university and in fact a lot of the women supporting Khomeini would be the peasant women who've never had the opportunity, never had the hope. The point that we as revolutionary Marxists make about those kind of societies is that in some ways the women will provide the potential for an incredibly revolutionary force simply because, just like the working class, they have very little to lose, except their chains, or their chador....

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SWP walks out on HKS defence picket

Save jailed Iranian leftists!

In Iran today, the torture chambers of the SAVAK have been replaced by the firing squads of the Islamic Revolutionary Council; the despised Peacock Throne of the Pahlavis by the Koranic law of the mullahs. Iranian leftists are not yet lined up before those firing squads, but they are under the gun.

In the wake of the regime's bloody suppression of the recent struggle for Arab rights in southern Khuzistan, hundreds have been arrested in sweeping raids by the murderous "Imam's Committees". Among the victims are nine members of the Hezb-e Kargarane Socialist (HKS -- Iranian Socialist Workers Party). According to a statement in *Intercontinental Press* (11 June), HKS members Omid Mirhaba and Mohammed Poorkavaz were dragged from their car by Imam's Committee guards in the Khuzistan town of Ahwaz on 30 May, arrested and brutally beaten. When the HKS responded to the arrests with a statement the following day supporting the Arab struggles against Khomeini and demanding the end of martial law in the province, the mullahs' armed goons retaliated by arresting seven more HKS militants in their homes and confiscating their books, newspapers and even their clothes. The whereabouts of seven of the nine remain unknown and an ominous statement by the Council of Revolutionary Courts in Ahwaz has cited the arrest of "CIA collaborators".

Save the Fedayeen! Save the HKS!

These militants must be saved! An Australian SWP leaflet advertising a defence picket in Sydney's Town Hall Square for 11 June stated: "Newspaper reports indicate that the Revolutionary Committees have begun executing people for 'crimes' not associated with the Shah's regime. As a result, the lives of the arrested [HKS] members are in grave danger". The lives of the HKS militants are indeed in grave danger -- but the "Revolutionary" Committees have been executing people for such "crimes" as homosexuality for months. And the HKS arrests were preceded by the arrests of dozens of members of the Guevarist Fedayeen in April, for fighting alongside the oppressed Kurdish people.

Yet for two months -- and even in its defence leaflet -- the SWP said not a word about the imprisoned Fedayeen, refusing to admit even tacitly that the mullah-led political revolution which the SWP/HKS hailed had ushered in a regime equally as repressive and anti-communist as the Shah's, or that the Fedayeen were more immediately under the gun of Islamic reaction because they stood -- albeit empirically -- to the left of the "Trotskyist" HKS. In the absence of a communist pole of attraction to win subjectively revolutionary elements of the Fedayeen over to the Trotskyist program of workers revolution,



SL contingent (above) remains at 11 June Sydney picket to defend HKS after SWP (top), claiming SL placards "provocative" and "reactionary", splits.

these valiant militants politically tailed the reactionary mullahs no less than the HKS did. But it was the Fedayeen who organised defence guards for the women's anti-veil protests, who called for a boycott of Khomeini's absurdly undemocratic referendum, and who, unlike the HKS, defended the rights of the national minorities not simply through leaflets but gun-in-hand.

The repression awaiting the Iranian left was all too clear from the start of the "revolution". "This is not a victory for the working masses", we said at the time. We warned it was coming, and when it came we mobilised to fight it. The week before the news of the HKS arrests, campus Spartacist Clubs at LaTrobe and Sydney Universities had canvassed students on a successful

initiative for emergency general student meetings to debate a Spartacist motion (see box) affirming "unequivocal opposition to Khomeini's 'Islamic Republic'" and raising the call for a "united front ... for defence against Khomeini's Islamic sword" and for "workers revolution to defeat Islamic reaction". One hundred and eighty-five students at Sydney Uni and 86 at LaTrobe endorsed the initiative in less than two days, a gauge of concern for the urgent events in Iran which the parochial fake lefts have so blithely ignored. Following the news of the HKS arrests, our comrades added a second motion for immediate united-front demonstrations to be organised by the SRCs around the slogan: "Free the endangered militants of the Fedayeen and HKS in Iran!"

SWP: sectarian splits and criminal sabotage

But the SWP, pointedly addressing its appeal to "supporters of the Iranian revolution around the world", refusing to draw a sharp line of opposition to the reactionary mullahs, has criminally weakened defence efforts even for those victims of the "Iranian revolution" who are its own comrades. Despite the SWP's refusal to notify us -- or virtually anyone else outside its immediate periphery -- of its planned picket, the Sydney Spartacist League (SL) publicised and built for the picket (at Sydney Uni, for example, where the campus SWP scarcely mentioned it) to mobilise a contingent of nearly twenty on a day's notice. But when our comrades marched up to the lackadaisical SWP "picket" -- nearly doubling its size -- SWP leader Ron Poulsen incredibly denounced our presence as a "provocation" and threateningly demanded we leave "their" demonstration! Only twenty minutes later, the SWP leadership shepherded off their confused members, leaving behind the independents (including the *only one* who had come with the SWP) who refused to follow them in their criminal split. For almost an hour thereafter homebound workers and shoppers heard spirited chants of "Defend the HKS, save the Fedayeen!" and "Defend the national minorities: Defend the Kurds! Defend the Arabs!" -- but not from the SWP! They also heard what they would never hear from the SWP: "No to the veil! Down with Khomeini!" and "Down with all the ayatollahs -- the workers must rule Iran!"

Nor was this to prove an isolated incident, as the SWP adopted a course of *conscious sabotage* of SL-initiated united-front defence efforts. At the LaTrobe general student meeting two days later, SWPer Jon West cynically labelled our motions "counterrevolutionary" and another SWPer, John Hall, demanded a quorum count. This manoeuvre was so disgustingly transparent that it prompted one SRC member to declare that never in LaTrobe's history had the technical quorum of 150? been achieved and that the SRC would consider the outcome of this (average-size) meeting legitimate student policy. Both motions passed with some 30 votes in favour and only a handful dissenting, but all three SWPers present sat on their hands, refusing to vote even for the motion which called simply and explicitly for defence of the arrested HKS and Fedayeen supporters. Is the call for defence then "counterrevolutionary", too?

Both motions were similarly passed at Sydney Uni -- opposed only by three Muslim students -- and subsequently endorsed by the SRC and moved for national consideration as an AUS "Extraordinary Resolution" (ER). The campus left simply boycotted the meeting: the Communist Group by despicably scheduling a "Friends of AUS" meeting at the same time as the general meeting and the SWPers by refusing to show their faces on campus all day (with the exception of one hapless, new Socialist Youth Alliance member who wasn't clued in that defence of the left was "counterrevolutionary" and thus voted for our motions!).

The LaTrobe SRC carried out its mandate, calling for a demonstration in Melbourne City Square on 23 June, to coincide with an AUS Special Council. SL member and LaTrobe AUS delegate Neil Florrimell moved for a brief adjournment of the council in order that delegates participate in the picket, declaring: "I'm not talking about 'fighting' sexist terminology in

Resolutions on Iran

The following resolutions were passed by the LaTrobe University SRC on 12 June and the following day by a general student meeting. On 20 June they were passed by a general student meeting at Sydney University and ratified a week later by the SRC (amending out the direction for an SRC-organised demonstration). They have now been moved as Extraordinary Resolutions which, if seconded, would be debated on campuses nationally.

This General Meeting states its unequivocal opposition to Khomeini's "Islamic Republic" which has brutally massacred Kurdish civilians, executed homosexuals, attacked women's rights demonstrators, and imprisoned leftists.

The victory of the mullah-led movement against the barbaric Pahlavi regime in no way represents a gain for the workers and oppressed of Iran. From its inception this movement has sought to enforce Islamic law, most graphically expressed by Khomeini's attempts to reimpose the veil, age-old symbol of female degradation.

The current repression in Iran urgently necessitates a united front of all left, working-class, and democratic-secular forces for defence against Khomeini's Islamic sword. Only a mobilisation of the proletariat, organised independently under its own banner, can avoid a catastrophic defeat at the hands of a mass Muslim movement in league with the regular army.

We demand: Down with Khomeini! Down with all the Ayatollahs! No to the veil! Full democratic rights for women! For the right of self-determination for the national minorities! For a secular constituent assembly! For workers militias! For workers revolution to defeat Islamic reaction! For a workers and peasants government!

* * * * *

The arrest of seventy members of the Fedayeen group in April and more recently the arrest of nine members of the Hezb-e Kargarane Socialist (HKS -- Iranian Socialist Workers Party) in Iran means that these left-wing militants face possible execution in front of Khomeini's firing squads.

Therefore this General Meeting of students demands the immediate release of the endangered militants of the Fedayeen and HKS and directs the SRC to initiate a united-front demonstration of student, left and labour organisations in the (city) area around the demand, "Free the endangered militants of the Fedayeen and HKS in Iran!"

Furthermore we call on AUS to initiate a national campaign of demonstrations, in particular calling on the support of the trade-union movement, based on this demand in defence of the endangered militants and all left-wing and democratic-secular forces threatened by the Khomeini regime.

Continued on page six

Nicaragua . . .

Continued from page one

holdings and a purge of the most corrupt National Guard officers.

The United States, which put Somoza's father in power in the early 1930s, above all fears a genuine social revolution in a region where US-supported military dictators are facing mounting popular opposition. US imperialism and its lackeys in Latin America have good reason for nervousness over the fall of Anastasio Somoza. The overthrow of this quintessential banana republic caudillo will have a tremendous psychological impact throughout the area, both directly in neighbouring El Salvador and Guatemala where mass protest has been rising, but also on such major powers as Brazil, Argentina or Chile, whose dictatorial stranglehold has been challenged in recent months.

If Somoza falls, it will be the first successful popular uprising against a Latin American dictator since Batista fled Cuba on 1 January 1959. Proletarian revolutionaries must fight to give the anti-Somoza struggle a working-class leadership, to spark a powerful popular insurrection which would go beyond a mere political revolution and begin to attack the capitalist underpinnings of the dictatorship. Any attempt to establish a regime of "Somozaism without Somoza" through negotiations with the bloodthirsty strongman must be opposed, and all efforts to maintain the mercenary private army intact must be countered with the demand for popular tribunals to try the National Guard criminals. In the US the left and labour movement have a special duty to vigorously demand: US Hands Off Nicaragua!

Who are the Sandinistas?

The Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional takes its name from General Augusto Cesar Sandino, who from 1927 until his assassination in a trap at a dinner held by the American ambassador in 1934 led the Nicaraguan armed resistance to the US Marines who had ruled the country directly for a decade. Sandino's legacy of armed struggle was revived in a series of guerrilla actions begun under the influence of the Cuban revolution, and in 1962 the FSLN was founded as an amorphous petty-bourgeois radical Jacobin nationalist grouping much like Fidel Castro's 26th of July Movement before it took power.

For years the movement led a marginal existence, but in the upsurge of mass opposition to Somoza in the late 1970s the FSLN split three ways. The Prolonged People's War (GPP) tendency retained the rural guerrilla strategy of the early Sandinista movement combined with a "Marxist-Leninist" Stalinist ideology. The Proletarian Tendency of the FSLN remained within the Castroite tradition while organising support in the urban shantytowns and among students, while remaining militarily largely quiescent.

The third force, or *terceristas*, was the most recently formed faction and represents a sharp turn to the right by some of the historic leaders of the FSLN. They are openly bourgeois nationalist in character. The *tercerista* leadership is also closely united by familial ties to the richest anti-Somoza business circles. And where the GPP and Proletarian Tendency advocate the Stalinist dogma of "two-stage" revolution (first bourgeois democracy, "later" for socialism), the *terceristas* call for a "one-stage" political revolution to replace Somoza with a coalition of the different sectors of the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie.

After the assassination of Pedro Chamorro in early 1978, the bourgeois opposition got together

to form the Broad Opposition Front (FAO) which financed the work stoppages of January and September 1978. The Sandinista forces were represented in the FAO by the "Grupo de los Doce" (Group of Twelve). After Somoza's bloody annihilation of the September 1978 uprising, as the radicalised masses threatened to break from the bourgeois leadership of the opposition, the previously uninfluential pro-Moscow Stalinists stepped into the breach by forming a popular-frontist coalition, the United People's Movement (MPU), which included also the two more radical FSLN factions. And in February the MPU brought together the Patriotic Front, embracing itself, the Twelve (ie the *terceristas*), dissidents from Somoza's Liberal Party and a number of other bourgeois oppositionists.

Will a Sandinista-ruled Nicaragua become a "second Cuba"? In the "reunited" FSLN the *terceristas*, who sparked the uprising in September and whose military commander, Eden Pastora led the dramatic capture of the national "legislature" a month earlier, clearly hold sway. None of the wings call for expropriation of Nicaraguan and foreign capitalists, and all three rely on sympathetic Caribbean bourgeois governments for military backing. Most importantly, no sector of this nationalist movement has called for an insurrection by the Nicaraguan masses; the current general strike is marked by total inactivity. However, this does not seal the fate of the anti-Somoza struggle, consigning it to a mere political revolution such as the overthrow of Venezuelan dictator Perez Jimenez in 1958.

Another possible pattern is that of Santo Domingo in 1965, before the invasion of the US Marines cut short the revolutionary possibilities. In that case a section of the officer corps sympathetic to former president Bosch rose up under the banner of "constitutionalism". While the rebellion was clearly bourgeois-led, we pointed out that the participation of "the working class and students, especially in the proletarian sectors of Santo Domingo ... created a potentially revolutionary situation" (*Spartacist* no 7, September-October 1966). Should revolutionary-minded workers and peasants in Nicaragua today transform the FSLN offensive into a mass insurrection, it could open the perspective for just the social revolution which all wings of the Sandinistas -- not to mention the more "moderate" bourgeois opposition -- have sought to avoid.

For workers revolution in Nicaragua!

As we wrote last year at the height of the attempted uprising launched by the FSLN guerrillas:

"... it is necessary that revolutionaries put forward demands which exacerbate the fundamental class divisions and thus frustrate efforts to 'reform' the dictatorship or impose a bourgeois provisional government. Naturally Marxists would unite in action on the barricades with the populist petty-bourgeois FSLN and even with the bourgeois anti-Somoza opposition against the present bloody dictatorship. But we would at all costs fight for the *political independence* of the working class from all capitalist and pro-capitalist forces." ("Nicaragua in Flames", *ASP* no 58, October 1978)

Our article included democratic demands such as for a revolutionary constituent assembly, for the smashing of the National Guard, for people's tribunals to punish the criminals of the Somoza regime and for a people's militia based on the workers and peasants organisations. In the framework of the Trotskyist program for *permanent revolution* we did not stop at calls for even the most radical bourgeois democracy, but demanded radical agrarian revolution which would put an end to latifundia; expropriation of the properties of the Somoza family and its accomplices; and expropriation of industry and commerce, by a workers and peasants government led by a Trotskyist party. Unlike the narrow nationalists of the FSLN "radicals", whose maximum program is "socialism in one banana republic", we advocated a Central American workers republic in a Socialist United States of Latin America.

In the last few years, along with the rise in anti-Somoza struggle there has been a radicalisation among students and within sectors of the Sandinista movement itself, leading to the emergence of individuals and groups identifying themselves with Trotskyism. The most significant is the Liga Marxista Revolucionaria (LMR -- affiliated with the "United Secretariat" of Ernest Mandel), which grew out of a group expelled from the Revolutionary Student Front (dominated by the FSLN). In the struggles of last year, the LMR's programmatic calls often placed it significantly to the left of all sectors of the Sandinistas -- eg, their demand that the working class take over leadership of the January work stoppage from the bourgeois opposition.

Yet with the bypassing of the conservative bourgeois opposition in the September FSLN-sparked uprising, the Mandelites forgot about their calls for proletarian independence and began calling "For a government of the poor, calling on the Sandinistas to take charge of the government...." The LMR's Mexican comrades were

even more explicit, calling for "a government of the FSLN" (*Combate* [Sweden], January-February 1979). Such a program accepts not only the bourgeois limits of the Sandinista program, but also subordinates the masses to the bureaucratic control of a military formation that has consciously and consistently opposed a popular insurrection.

But even more alien to authentic Trotskyism was a recent article in the American SWP's *Intercontinental Press* (11 June) by Fausto Amador and Sara Santiago, entitled "Where is Nicaragua Going?" Amador is a former member of the FSLN whose brother, Carlos Fonseca, was murdered by Somoza's lackeys. Fausto is a deeply compromised individual who left the Sandinistas out of personal demoralisation in 1969, returned to Nicaragua legally from Cuba through manoeuvres by his father, a personal friend of Somoza, then gave an interview that was used as an anti-Sandinista diatribe by the pro-government press. Later he served as a Nicaraguan cultural attache in Belgium where he was recruited to the USec (*Intercontinental Press*, 27 June 1977). In his latest contribution, Amador denounces the FSLN for its "voluntaristic and precipitate action ... in September [which] could not have succeeded", and denounced Sandinista preparations for a new uprising as "a fatal course".

To present this social-democratic cowardice and demoralisation as having anything to do with Marxism is just about the worst thing the SWP/USec could do to besmirch the name of Trotskyism before the Central American masses. In their desire to maintain a semblance of capitalist "legality" and "order" following the overthrow of Somoza, the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalists of the FSLN have insisted on limiting the armed struggle to their own units and thereby excluding the masses as active agents of the revolution. These are not the methods of proletarian revolution, which relies on the insurrectionary mobilisation of the masses. But the answer is not to yearn for the orderly development of a legal trade-union movement, condemning all attempts to rise up against the bloody tyrant. When the decisive moments arrive, even if the battle is unleashed by opportunists and alien class forces, the advocates of permanent revolution must be at their posts.

Only the Trotskyists desire to take an anti-Somoza revolution through to the end -- uprooting the dictatorship and the capitalist system off which it feeds, not only in Nicaragua but throughout the Americas. ■

(adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 234, 22 June 1979)

Iranian leftists . . .

Continued from page five

education, but women fighting for the right ... not to be publicly stoned for adultery!" But despite numerous endorsements by LaTrobe students and staff, including individual members of the Communist Party and Socialist Party, and a number of trade-union officials (most notably, Jim Roulston, president of the AMWSU), the reformist student parliamentarians who run AUS would have nothing to do with it. This "most important council" as AUS president Chris Hobson put it in opposing the motion, was too busy with constitutional rule changes to actively defend the Iranian left. And so was the SWP -- *the lone SWPer with voting rights voted against participation in the defence picket*. SWPer West later assured an SL sympathiser in Adelaide that "we've got influence in AUS" -- if the Iran motions become "an ER we'll sabotage it and make sure it doesn't get through!"

For a Trotskyist party in Iran!

This trail of sectarian betrayals was justified in a "letter" (signed by one "DL" but obviously a statement of the SWP leadership) in the 14 June *Direct Action* ("Spartacists sabotage Iranian defence") explaining why the SWP "cut short its picket":

"What the Spartacists largely succeeded in doing on June 11 was to turn a picket aimed at defending the Iranian revolution into its opposite -- a demonstration attacking the revolution, that is, a reactionary demonstration."


Rehashing the now bizarre claim that the SL "simply repeat[s] imperialist propaganda [like

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Khomeini's own statements?!] when it proclaims that the masses who overthrew the shah were taking part in 'a sinister movement committed to returning Iran to the time of the seventh century', the SWP "letter" slanderously deduced that the "logic of this is that the shah, a thoroughly 20th century imperialist puppet, was progressive by comparison and should have been supported".

The Menshevik-inspired "logic" of *this* is that Lenin was objectively supporting the tsar by opposing the Kerensky regime. But the SWP doesn't hold a candle to the Mensheviks: Khomeini is more like Rasputin than Kerensky, and the reactionary mobilisations led by the mullahs akin to the pogromist Black Hundreds. The SWP leadership is of course fully aware not only of the "logic" of our opposition both to the shah and the mullahs, but of its actual content -- for the independent mobilisation of the working masses -- admittedly inconceivable perspective for inveterate tailists like the SWP.

SWP in orbit

"If [the motions on Iran] become an ER we'll sabotage it and make sure it doesn't get through ... we've got influence in AUS." (Jon West, Adelaide SYA branch organiser)

* * *

"If it was up to you to defend the Iranian left they'd die and if you turn up to our pickets again you'll die too." (Peter Annear, SWP National Committee)

* * *

"We would support the Muslim masses in so far as they were against the Stalinist practices of the PKI [Indonesian Communist Party] in Indonesia 1965." (signed statement, 27 June 1979, by Andrew Jamieson, SWP candidate, 1978 NSW elections) 500,000 PKI militants, workers and peasants were massacred by the army/Muslim mass movement in Indonesia in 1965.

Having consistently met every murderous chant of "Death to the Communists" with pollyanna cries of, "Isn't it wonderful how the debate continues in revolutionary Iran", the SWP now attacks us for proclaiming "as inevitable a bloodbath for the Iranian left, leaving out of account as always the force of the masses". Here is what the special *Campus Spartacist* supplement entitled "Iranian left faces bloodbath" referred to by the SWP *actually* said:

"Time is running short.... The impending anti-communist slaughter demands a united defence of the Iranian left and workers and all secular democratic elements against the tide of Islamic reaction. *It is not yet too late.*" (emphasis added)

And what has the SWP done to mobilise the "force of the masses" against Islamic reaction? It has tailed the reaction! Caught out, the SWP now grows hysterical -- not against the mullahs who imprison their comrades, but against the Trotskyists who seek to defend them. Two days after the 11 June picket SWPer Peter Annear, claiming that if defence was left up to the SL the Iranian left would die, threatened SL members "if you turn up to our pickets again you'll die too". And the *Direct Action* "letter" concluded with a tirade which could have been lifted straight from the Healyite press:

"As capitalism enters into crisis around the world, and as the working masses move into action, isolated, sectarian propaganda group-lets like the Spartacist League will grow more and more frenetic in their attacks on the Fourth International [sic]."

To its lasting ignominy, the SWP has been driven by the logic of *its* position not only to deny the rights of women and the oppressed minorities, not only to forsake the valiant militants of the Fedayeen, but to undermine an effective defence of its own comrades. Uniquely we warned from the outset the consequences of its treacherous tailing of the mullahs. And we warn now again: the victims of this chauvinist, anti-woman, anti-communist revolution cannot be defended "within the framework of defending the Iranian revolution". *Save the endangered militants of the Fedayeen and HKS! For workers revolution to defeat Islamic reaction! For an Iranian Trotskyist party, section of a reborn Fourth International!*

The following telegram was sent to Khomeini's Islamic Revolutionary Council in Teheran:

Arrests of Fedayeen and Hezb-e Kargar-e Socialist militants are attack against all workers, women and national minorities in Iran. These militants are in the same jails used by butcher shah's torturers! We demand: Free these class-war victims of Islamic reaction! For workers revolution in Iran! -- Spartacist League

Spartacist League

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Speaking tour . . .

Continued from page four

how in the Hasidic district of Jerusalem known as Mea Shearim, a "mini-Teheran", there were "numerous signs in three languages warning women to dress modestly or face the consequences".

While the Muslims did not mobilise in the same numbers for the Sydney Uni forum (which nonetheless attracted almost 50 people), the leaflet distributed there in the name of the "Friends of Free Iran" was an articulate combination of CIA-baiting, red-baiting anti-communist slanders and an equally malicious attack on the Iranian women who refused to bow to Khomeini's reaction -- which could have come straight from the Iranian embassy itself (or, for that matter, from the Healyite Socialist Labour League). Denouncing "the 'fight' against the chador" as "counter-revolutionary", it claimed:

"There is no 're-imposition' of the chador, but simply a demand by the masses of the Iranians, including the Women, on the tiny upper-class 'mistresses' to comply with their national culture."

The most eloquent reply to these slanderous apologies for oppression -- targeted not at the feminists, nor at those most consistent "supporters of the Iranian revolution", the fake-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP), but at the Trotskyist Spartacist League -- came in a brief statement by one woman at the Sydney Uni forum:

"I am an Armenian. I come from Iran. It is true. They hate others who are not Muslims ... women are not considered even as animals."

Why, then, did the rest of the left lie and paint the mullah-led opposition to the shah as "progressive" and "anti-imperialist"? Why, for example, as Comrade Hotschilt noted, did the SWP's Iranian co-thinkers falsify the character of this movement to the extent of cropping out the pro-Khomeini banners in a photo in their paper of one of the mass mobilisations and implying that the slogans of the demonstrators were for a "constituent assembly" and a "workers and farmers republic"? (As one SL floor speaker in Melbourne remarked: "Trotsky said that revolutionaries have to tell the truth in big things and little things. The SWP finds it very difficult to tell the truth in any sort of thing!")

Needless to say the SWP was not there to reply. Indeed, according to one SWPer attending the Socialist Youth Alliance (SYA) conference in Melbourne the weekend of the Melbourne forum, SWP/SYA members were *ordered* not to attend; and one Sydney SYAer complained that they had been ordered not to talk to SL supporters at all!

"For a lot of so-called Marxists", Comrade Hotschilt explained, "you have one criterion for support -- the masses are out in the street, you support it; a movement is popular, you support it". So they denied that a "mass movement" could be "objectively" reactionary and borrowed from the Menshevik/Stalinist "stages" doctrine to paint Khomeini as "anti-imperialist". Besides, she quipped, "for most fake lefts, anyone whom [PLO head] Yassir Arafat hugs is anti-imperialist". Another SL member in Melbourne noted that there was recently a "mass movement in the streets" in Poland as well and "given the politics of our opponents on the left and given the Pope's rhetoric about 'human rights' which they also embrace ... I wonder if they'll find anything progressive in the Pope".

"We're not going to be in any movement for the veil!"

Contrary to the outlook congenital to the opportunist left, our intransigent opposition to the mullah-led movement did not mean being swept aside by events but in fact is *predicated* on an *interventionist, proletarian* axis of struggle against the hated tyranny of the shah. Proletarian revolutionists stood in principled opposition to participation in the mullah-led mobilisations. "We're not going to be in any movement for the veil!", explained Comrade Hotschilt in concluding her presentation:

"We would have tried to mobilise an alternative to the religious-led protests including demands like: down with the shah, full equality for women, right of self-determination for national minorities, for a secular constituent assembly -- putting on the agenda revolutionary-democratic demands and linking them to our own program for workers revolution.... Because it's very clear that even democratic demands cannot be fully realised in such a country, like the emancipation of women, without a workers revolution. That is the Trotskyist thesis of the Permanent Revolution....

"If there is a bloodbath in Iran it will mean what it meant to the Indonesian proletariat in 1965 when there was a huge Communist Party. Half a million of them were murdered not just by the army but by fanatical Muslims mobilised to kill. They were butchered. The same forces are there in Iran, the same thing could happen. And a defeat like that would mean the

defeat of another uprising in that area for years, because Iran is the powerhouse of the Middle East. So we see as crucial the creation of a Trotskyist party in Iran, part of the reborn Fourth International, the world party of revolution. And that is what we fight for." ■

Iran . . .

Continued from page eight

Contrary to the HKS's tepid and divisive reformism the democratic aspirations of Iran's Arab minority -- including their right to self-determination -- and of the Kurds, Turkomans and other oppressed nationalities, will never be met while Khomeini rules but only when there is a social revolution by the Iranian proletariat that removes the clericalist, Persian-chauvinist regime of the ayatollahs and which extends throughout the Near East smashing the imperialist-Balkanised chequerboard of oppressor multinational states in this region.

Trouble in the oil fields is perhaps the most serious problem facing the mullahs' "Islamic Republic". From the earliest days of their victory they had two tasks which they loudly proclaimed: destroy the shah's personal torture clique and destroy the left. They have gone ahead on the former with relative ease. Only the "human rights" imperialists have tears for these butchers. And revolutionaries are glad to see them go even if the firing squads are the guns of reaction. But the mullahs have not been able to destroy the left with equal ease. First and foremost the left is armed. Then there have been the bloody battles with national minorities, trouble with the "international image" of Islam and even clique battles among the ayatollahs. This has slowed the consolidation of an effective instrument of mass terror to be used against the left and worker militants.

The miserable left-wing supporters of Khomeini's victory have taken this as a sign that all's right with the ayatollah in Iran. But that consolidation *is* taking place -- over the corpses of the national minorities. And *all* of the ayatollahs agree on the maintenance of a reactionary, theocratic regime -- witness their recent joint meeting to put the finishing touches to the constitution for an "Islamic Republic". The fact is that the Iranian left is in very great danger. Khomeini has established the basis for a sweeping assault on the left by a series of strongarm attacks on non-Islamic critics by his fanatical followers. These tests of strength serve to intimidate the "loyal opposition" while Khomeini prepares a bloodbath.

The fake lefts who yesterday supported Khomeini's revolution have today discovered his reactionary features -- a discovery akin to Stalin's pronouncement in 1927 that he had known all along Chiang Kai-shek would turn against the Chinese Communists and butcher them. Those who have supported and continue to support the "anti-imperialist" ayatollah's revolution will become its victims -- as some HKS and Fedayeen militants already have -- unless they break from this dangerous policy and organise a broad united-front defence based on the social power of the working class. The growing discontent of the oil workers provides the objective basis for this policy. Their months of militant strikes were decisive in bringing down the shah. They fought the shah's torture regime as they now fight the Muslim army of Khomeini for the rights that are still denied them, for equality and economic survival.

Unlike those on the left who bowed to Khomeini, the international Spartacist tendency has warned from the outset that Khomeini's Islamic reaction can only mean suppression of the national minorities, barbaric segregation and oppression of women, and savage suppression of the left and working-class movement. We alone drew the necessary conclusion: the urgent need for independent mobilisation of the Iranian proletariat and its allies against the mullahs. For workers revolution against Islamic theocracy! ■

(adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 233, 8 June 1979)

Sydney class series

For Workers Revolution in Iran
and the Near East

Women and Revolution Wednesday, 4 July 1979

The National Question
and the struggle for
self-determination Thursday, 12 July 1979

The theory of Permanent
Revolution in backward
countries Thursday, 19 July 1979

Classes commence at 7.30 pm on dates advertised. Readings available from the Spartacist League. For more information phone 235-8195.



Trouble in the oil fields

Persian army attacks Arab minority

First it was the women in the streets of Teheran resisting the imposition of the veil. Then it was pitched battles with national minorities -- the Kurds and Turkomans -- resisting Persian chauvinism. And in late May the regime of Ayatollah Khomeini and his mullahs faced the most potentially explosive situation of its first hundred days of chaotic and bloody reactionary rule: the Arab minority in the southern province of Khuzistan took up the gun. Arab workers in the South are one of the most oppressed sectors of the proletariat, but their strategic position in the refineries and oil fields places them right at the jugular of the Iranian economy.

Dock workers had already shut down one of the country's major ports, Khorramshahr. Arab nationalists demanding the right to elect their own governor and a larger share of the oil revenues in the city had occupied civic buildings. But Khomeini, as much as the shah before him, is prepared to exert the capitalist state's bloody repression to maintain labour discipline and control of the vital southern oil. On 30 May the elite "Guardians of the Revolution" stormed the occupied buildings, and fighting raged for three days in Khorramshahr. As the battle spread through the city (clashes were also reported in neighbouring Abadan), Khomeini's "Guardians" were reinforced by paratroopers and militiamen brought in from outside the province. Reports on the number dead vary from the "official" toll of 37 dead, 191 wounded to the Arabs' claim that at least 200 have been killed. While the fighting has temporarily subsided hundreds were rounded up in the aftermath and imprisoned, including 9 members of the Iranian Socialist Workers Party (HKS; see "Save jailed Iranian leftists!", this issue) along with oil and steelworkers' leaders.

Same soldiers as shah

The province was placed under military occupation, and ominously, the prosecutor-general threatened that "counterrevolutionaries" involved in the fighting would be treated like the shah's officials -- that is, they would be executed. Admiral Ahmad Mahdani, military governor of Khuzistan, whose hardline mission is to bend the Arabs to the will of the "Imam", crowed that he had defeated "masked leftists in the service of international imperialism". But the Arab workers knew better. They had been there before and noted bitterly that they had been defeated by "the same soldiers who fought for the shah" (*New York Times*, 31 May).

The revolt by Iran's Arab population may cause some problems for those who believe in the myth

of a monolithic "Arab Revolution". Mahdani accused Iraq and Kuwait of "provoking Iran's Arabs to rebel against the revolutionary government". He further blamed the Iraqi consulate in Khorramshahr for stirring up trouble, and even accused nationalist George Habash, leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, of engaging in "suspicious activities" during the fighting (UPI, 4 June).

Only days later tensions sharply escalated as Iraqi planes hunting Kurdish rebels fighting the Iraqi chauvinist regime crossed the border into the northern Iranian province of Kurdistan, bombing and strafing villages. While the Iraqi government subsequently apologised, the air attacks took place amid reports of troop buildups on the Iraqi side of the border and alleged light weapons supply from Iraq to the Khuzistan Arabs.

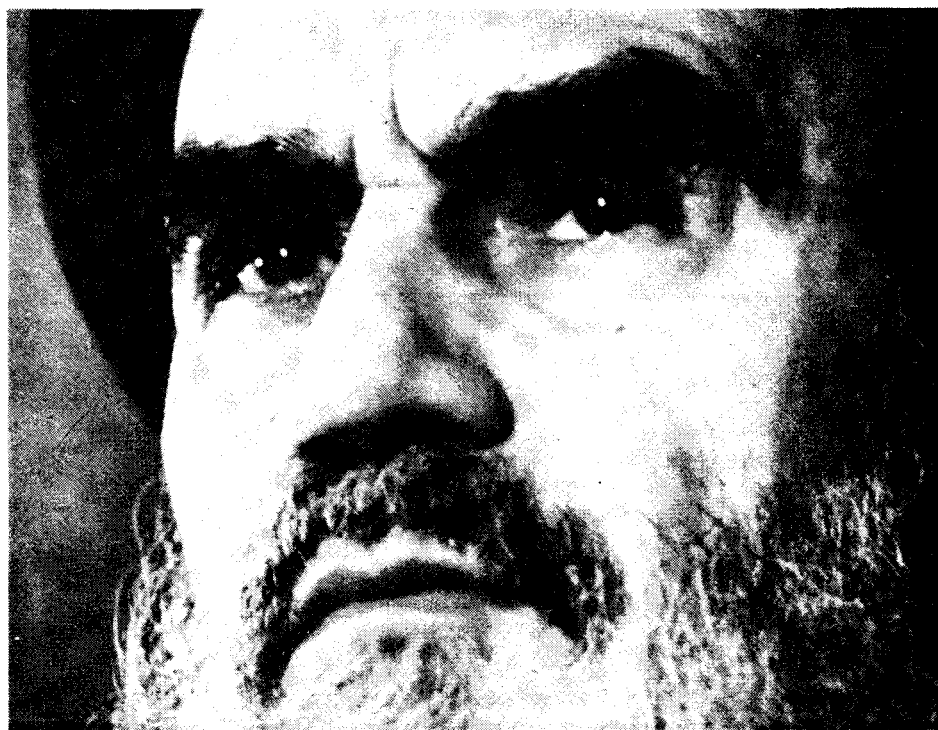
Khomeini has been able to deliver a major blow against the Arab nationalists, who were less well armed than the Kurds. But they have flatly stated that they will not lay down their arms. In any event their most powerful weapon is their ability to choke off Iran's oil production. That is why Khomeini is cutting the teeth of his regular army against these rebels. Even the local ayatollah, Al Shubair Khagani, has threatened a strike of the Arab oil workers.

Arab oil workers are key

The oil refinery workers of Abadan have called for a strike if they do not get a 50-100 percent wage increase. Dock workers at Khorramshahr remained on strike even as tens of thousands of unemployed engaged in bloody clashes with Khomeini's militia. What the reactionary Muslim rulers fear most of all in this volatile situation is a proletarian uprising *that is not in the hands of Ayatollah Khagani or any other ayatollah* -- one that strikes out in the interests of the workers

against clerical reaction, a struggle led by the working class which defends the national and cultural rights of the Arabs and the non-Persian population, amounting to three fifths of all Iranians. They fear that the sit-ins will not be at the mosque -- as one was -- but at the refineries.

As scared as the ayatollahs are of independent proletarian action in the oil fields, and as voraciously as they attack the left and worker militants in this area, the Stalinist Tudeh Party, which has strength among the oil workers, remains most loyal to Khomeini. In the US the pro-Moscow Communist Party echoes this grotesque policy by



The face of Islamic reaction.

publishing on the front page of the *Daily World* (1 June) a photograph of the mullahs' occupation army in the oil fields with the slanderous caption: "Revolutionary guards in camouflage outfits and in plain-clothes patrol a street in Khorramshahr on Wednesday after shooting incidents involving CIA/SAVAK gunmen."

The HKS backed the Arabs' struggle, but in a manner combining the most craven capitulation to the Persian chauvinist regime of the mullahs with a bourgeois-nationalist program of "cultural autonomy" for the Arab masses. When Mahdani threatened that "our fist will smash the heads of all those who try to separate any part of Iran" the HKS immediately protested that "separatism" was a red herring, uncritically quoting an "Arab representative" who defined self-determination (which for Marxists means singularly the right of a nation to form its own *separate* state) as merely "having power in the region" (*Inter-continental Press*, 11 June).

In the same article it uncritically supported a series of nationalist demands put forward by Arab leaders, all of which are explicitly limited to a capitalist, theocratic Iran: "Arab representatives in the constituent assembly", "establishment of Arab administrative bodies for solving problems on the basis of Islamic law [!]", "a fair share [!] of the oil revenues for the people of Khuzestan", and incredibly, "a role for Arabs in the national army and the training of Arab officers in the military academies", ie "a role" in the officer caste of the same bourgeois, Persian-chauvinist army that is presently slaughtering them!

Similarly the HKS gives its full support to Arab nationalist "affirmative action" schemes such as "official recognition of Arabic as the first [not simply equal] language of the Arab people" and "preferential hiring of Arabs in both the state and private sectors". The predominantly Arab oilworkers are strategic to a united proletarian struggle against the Persian bourgeois state, but such demands can only cut across the possibility of a fighting *unity* with Persian workers. It is the Arab workers who raised demands and established committees in the mass strike waves that preceded the shah's downfall which were initially *independent* of the pro-Khomeini movement, unlike the "Imam's committees", established by the mullahs, and now part of the Islamic regime itself.



Unemployed Iranian oil workers in Abadan demand jobs.