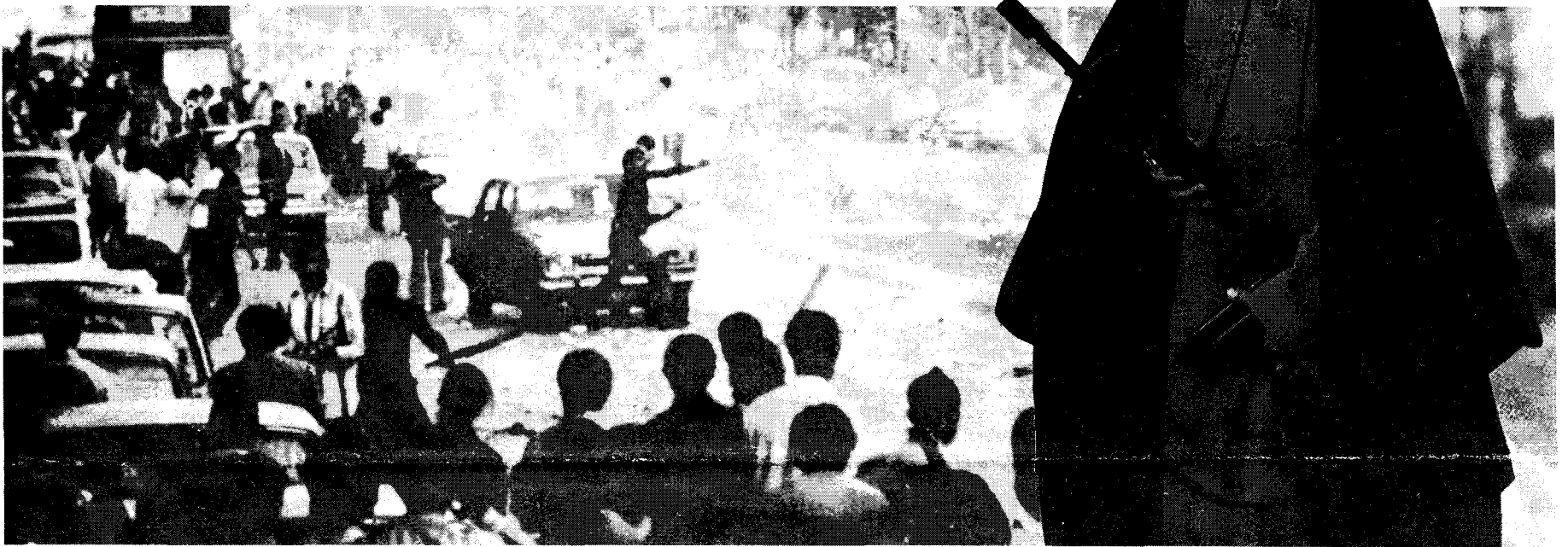




Mullahs' terror

Khomeini's left apostles paved the way



Rock-throwing Islamic reactionaries attack leftists in growing mullah terror in Teheran streets in August. In February fake-lefts cheered this movement to victory.

In Iran today the white terror of the Shi'ite mullahs aims to liquidate all opposition to the new autocracy of the turban.

In February the Ayatollah Khomeini rose to power over the wreckage of the shah's bloody Peacock Throne. Ever since events have confirmed that these are the fruits of the mullahs' victory: savage repression of minorities, executions of strikers, homosexuals, adulterers and others accused of "crimes against god"; the stoning of unveiled women, the suppression of all opposition parties and the press. In the last

month hundreds of Kurds were slaughtered in northwestern Iran; the toll of suppressed papers rose to 45; the left was universally driven underground, their offices wrecked by the mobs of Khomeini's "mass movement" and their members facing his firing squads. Now militiamen of the "Islamic revolution" shoot down unemployed workers in the streets of Teheran, while Khomeini prepares to bring his wrath against the strategic oil workers, the backbone of Iran's proletariat.

Only last February, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and its international co-thinkers

greeted Khomeini's triumph with an emblazoned slogan which will be immortalised in the annals of class treachery: "VICTORY IN IRAN!" *So whose victory now, SWP?*

The international Spartacist tendency (iSt) was unique on the left in telling the truth which each day in Khomeini's "Islamic Republic" reconfirms: the mullahs' victory means a regime just as reactionary as the shah's. In contrast, the SWP, its co-thinkers in the Iranian HKS (Socialist Workers Party) and the rest of the "United Secretariat of
Continued on page two

SWP knifes "comrades" in back

What road for Nicaragua?

It took 18 months of bitter struggle, including two insurrections totaling eleven weeks of the bloodiest fighting, before they drove out the hyena of Managua. Almost 50,000 died out of a population of 2.3 million, and today the cities are in ruins, the surviving population on the brink of starvation, three quarters of the workforce unemployed. Those who have sacrificed so much are burning to root out every trace of the hated dynasty which bled the country dry. Laying claim to what is rightfully theirs, the Nicaraguan masses are already infringing on the property of the belatedly oppositional bourgeoisie, which for decades extracted fat profits from the sweat of the working people in Somozaland.

"National reconstruction" is now the watchword of the victorious Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). But on what foundations? With their program for a "government of unity of all anti-Somoza forces" the Sandinista leaders hope to limit the revolution to the replacement of a rapacious family dictatorship by a reformed, "popular-democratic" capitalist regime. As proof

of the "generosity of the Nicaraguan Revolution", they have refused to execute any of the National Guard criminals who tortured at random and rained high-explosive bombs on their own cities. While expropriating the property of the tyrant and his underlings, the new rulers have vowed to protect the holdings of other capitalists.

From the beginning it has been clear to all that the "government" in Managua is highly unstable. The guns are clearly in the hands of the petty-bourgeois radical-nationalist Sandinistas, but a united FSLN was established only at the last minute by papering over a three-way split. While the "anti-Somoza bourgeoisie" are presently pliant, and their influence declined as the fighting intensified, they are not passive nor are they discredited by the stigma of collaboration with the dictator as the Cuban capitalists were with Batista. On the other hand, the working masses are a far more active factor than in the Cuban Revolution, having armed themselves and fought key battles in the streets of the capital and other cities. The common enemy vanquished, it

is impossible to stop the class struggle simply by telling the combatants to return home.

The array of forces in post-Somoza Nicaragua has the potential for an explosive confrontation -- within the uneasy ruling coalition, between it and the impatient working masses or between a sector of the radical-Jacobin FSLN and reactionary sectors of the domestic bourgeoisie. This highly charged situation poses an acid test for revolutionists. For while the overwhelming majority of the left to one degree or another is tailing after the popular Sandinistas, the task of Trotskyists, who fight on the program of permanent revolution, is to remain the party of intransigent working-class opposition. Those who proclaim that proletarian-socialist revolution can come about peacefully in Nicaragua by nudging the present bonapartist regime gradually to the left could well be the first victims of their own illusions.

The FSLN leaders may themselves believe that their program of "popular-democratic revolution"
Continued on page four

editorial notes

More from the man who loved The Deer Hunter

For more than a year, the international Spartacist tendency has warned that the left in Iran was on a suicide course. While the inveterate opportunists of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and its co-thinkers in the misnamed United Secretariat of the Fourth International (USec) proclaimed the Ayatollah Khomeini's drive for power "progressive" and anti-imperialist, Spartacist supporters *alone* declared that these lies were only helping chain the masses of workers, leftists, women and national minorities to their future executioners. Even as the list of precisely these victims of Khomeini's regime rose alarmingly, the HKS (Iranian SWP) remained blind, making only perfunctory "protests" at the brutal repression of leftist Fedayeen and national minorities. Then in late August 12 arrested HKS members were sentenced to death in Arab Khuzistan, and suddenly the SWP declared "world outcry" against "death sentences on Iranian socialists".

But then something funny happened. Unlike Kurds, Arabs, gays and others condemned to die, all of whom felt the bullets as fast as Khomeini's Persian firing squads could reload, the HKS prisoners got a stay of execution from Persian authorities in Ahwaz. At the suggestion from a Spartacist supporter that the grovelling, venal, class-collaborationist and Persian chauvinist politics of the HKS might have had something to do with how this last-minute reprieve was obtained, the SWP, already thrashing about trying to reconcile its mythical "Iran in Revolution" with the obvious *counterrevolutionary* events going on there, knew it had to perform yet another fulsome distortion of reality. The perfect choice for this disgusting task was long-time SWPer Renfrey Clarke, whom those who managed to stay awake reading the SWP's soporific reformist weekly *Direct Action* (DA) may remember as the man who loved "The Deer Hunter" (26 April). With boundless enthusiasm, this unflappable opportunist found in this reactionary apology for US imperialism's rape of Vietnam a theme of "powerful, if politically undeveloped, working-class solidarity" (see *ASP* no 64, June 1979)!

It is with a similar "appreciation" of reality that Clarke's "letter" (DA, 20 September) attempts to shift the blame for the impending possible execution of the HKSers away from the criminally guilty USec, which wretchedly tailed Khomeini and the mullahs both before and after they seized

power, and onto ... the Spartacist League! The HKSers escaped execution, you see, through a wise and timely appeal to "a number of high officials of the Khomeini regime". The Spartacist League -- which everyone knows is distinguished from the SWP by its principled opposition to class collaborationism -- would, according to Clarke, avoid such appeals and let the HKSers die. Such a vicious slander is not surprising coming from those who *walked off* their own "defence" picket for the arrested HKSers in June, saying that the Spartacist League's call for "Down with the mullahs!" and "a workers revolution in Iran" had made the picket "reactionary". Like the Stalinists before them, the SWP/USec is trapped in its own logic of betrayal: they told the masses to join the movement whose leaders now shoot them down in cold blood, so they must slander and vilify those who warned against this disaster in order to cover up *their* crime. In the same way the Stalinists said Trotsky was a "fascist" for opposing the class-collaborationist popular fronts of Spain and France in the 1930s; and said those who attacked the Chilean popular front of Allende were selling out militants to Pinochet's *junta*. But lies like these will not wash away the blood on your hands, comrade Clarke!

The "high officials" of the Khomeini regime include none other than Admiral Mahdani, the governor of Khuzistan, who Clarke admits "directed the bloody suppression" of the Arabs some months ago. What he doesn't mention is that Mahdani declared that "the fist of Iran ... will smash the heads of all those who try to separate any part of Iran". So why this reprieve from the bloody hands of the murderers of Arab workers? The HKS around this time *abandoned* its former call for the right of self-determination for the Arabs -- a right which can *only* mean determining for themselves whether or not to *separate* from Iran. To withdraw this call in the middle of civil war conditions in which the Persian army is suppressing this very right is to *grovel before the Persian chauvinism* of Mahdani and the regime. This crime Clarke tries to wash away with prattle about "what the Arabs want" (!), which Clarke says is "autonomy". In reality, this is tailing not the Arabs, but the Arab *mullahs*, who demand "reforms" such as "a role for the Arabs in the national army and the training of Arab officers in the military academies" (*Intercontinental Press*, 11 June 1979). Even Bakhtiar, the Shah's last prime minister, favours such "autonomy"!

It was the unbridled, criminal tailism of the HKS, learned well from its equally criminal teachers in the USec, that got it where it is now: the paper banned, the party outlawed, and its members facing execution. Nevertheless, principled revolutionists of course demand the members' release and the party's legalisation. But it was only the international Spartacist tendency

that said, "Down with the shah! Down with the mullahs!"; and only the iSt has the Trotskyist program capable of politically destroying these reformist traitors, who have put the heads of leftists on the chopping block in Iran today. ■

Wran's ballot-paper scab

The scab Georgopoulos, who drove ballot papers for last year's NSW State election under police escort through the strike pickets of Government Printing Office workers, has been reinstated by the State Industrial Commission after a year's *paid* leave for the "incident" to be "forgotten". The Full Bench said the "Crown was much in his debt", for if this unrepentant worm had not had the "courage" (!) to do what he "must have known would be a hazardous enterprise ... the State election would have had to be postponed" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 September). And so it should have been! GPO workers should enforce their ban against this strikebreaker's return.

We wished this despicable act had been more "hazardous" at the time; and we were the only group on the left to say that "elementary labour solidarity demands that workers refuse to vote in an election held with scab ballots" ("Black Ban Scab Ballot Papers", Spartacist leaflet, 5 October 1978). If printing workers' leaders had mounted *mass* pickets, and if the Transport Workers Union had joined the 550 strikers instead of scabbing on them until *after* the ballots were moved, then Wran's strikebreaking might have been stopped. And if his government's re-election had been "postponed" as well, so what? Labor strikebreakers in office are no better than Liberals, as Wran has well demonstrated.

The scabs had an ally in the reformist Socialist Workers Party (SWP), however, which was too busy trying to convince Wran to adopt "socialist policies" to worry about "details" such as strikes. "Bizarre" said the SWP's *Direct Action* (30 November 1978) about our call for a boycott of the ballot papers; this could have meant "the election of the Liberals". If the SWP could see beyond the end of its hopelessly parliamentarist nose, it might have thought of another alternative: mobilising workers with a *class-struggle* program, to take power by establishing their own revolutionary workers government.

Leading workers across picket lines to vote for labour fakers has nothing in common with the class struggle, of course, but then neither do scabs or the SWP. ■

Mullahs' terror ...

Continued from page one

the Fourth International" (USec) they both claim "fraternal" allegiance to, disguised and obscured at every stage the reactionary character of the Islamic fundamentalist regime. Today the HKS is experiencing the consequences of the "victory" it cheered six months ago as it, along with other left and secular groups, has its offices sacked and closed, its press banned, its members beaten, jailed and threatened with execution. At least 14 of its own supporters in the HKS now face life imprisonment or sit on death row.

Even Khomeini's attack on their HKS comrades brought forth a desultory response from the SWP. The one thing it did energetically was to exclude

Spartacists from defence of the threatened Iranian socialists. Only now that it has finally dawned on these inveterate tailists, blinded by their opportunism, that they may actually have to pay for their treachery has the USec belatedly sprung to life and begun screaming from the pages of their newspapers, "Stop Execution of Socialists in Iran!"

In time-honoured reformist fashion they are trying to cover their tracks by playing up the threat hanging over the arrested HKSers. The Stalinists used the same ploy following the 1973 Pinochet coup, hoping to distract attention from their role by focusing protest on freeing imprisoned Communist leader Corvalan. The iSt, which defended Corvalan, also pointed out that the Chilean CP's call for confidence in the "constitutionalist" officer corps paved the way for bloody counterrevolution. Again today we point the finger of guilt. The HKS' present plight was prepared by their own criminal policy. *The real story is: their comrades are not just martyrs -- they are sacrificial victims of the USec's support for Khomeini.*

USec, SWP, HKS -- Ernest Mandel, Jack Barnes and the rest: you have committed a crime, for which you will be held responsible before the court of history. You must live with it because your comrades may die for it.

The trail of treachery

Now the USec would like us to forget what it said yesterday and is trying to shift its line without anyone noticing. *Socialist Challenge* (30 August), newspaper of the British International Marxist Group (IMG), proclaimed in bold letters across its back page, "White Terror in Iran", and announced "Khomeini has become the new Shah of Iran" (though next issue they chickened out and revoked the characterisation!). The IMG neglects to inform us how this reactionary regime came to replace the rule of the "progressive" ayatollah who earlier this year moved IMG leader Brian Grogan to chant "allah akhbar" ("God is Great")

and carry a "Khomeini card". *Rouge* (24-30 August), published by the French Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire, goes so far as to speak of Khomeini's "coup de force". Against himself?

Even the SWP is moving (albeit more slowly) to dissociate itself from the bloody theocrat. Thus, they now write of Khomeini's "counterrevolutionary war" against the Kurds -- directly under the now wildly incongruous heading, "Iran in revolution" (*Direct Action*, 20 September). Now they say:

"Khomeini's moves against the Iranian working people -- aimed to protect the ill-gotten gains of the landlords and capitalists -- lead him toward subordination to U.S. imperialism, in spite of the anti-imperialist posture he has tried to adopt up to now." (*Militant* [US SWP], 7 September)

But who was the most enthusiastic promoter on the left of Khomeini's "anti-imperialist posture"? *The SWP*, whose mentors wrote in this same *Militant* less than a year ago (17 November 1978):

"Although Khomeini subscribes to a religious ideology, the basis of his appeal is not religious reaction. On the contrary, he has won broad support among the Iranian masses because his firm opposition to the Shah and the Shah's 'modernization' is progressive."

It is Khomeini, however, who has been consistent and true to his word. The SWP is so ensconced in its cocoon of bourgeois-democratic illusions that it does not recognise the burning importance of the separation of church and state for backward countries. Khomeini's religious ideology is his political program: ie, an Islamic fundamentalist theocracy based on Great Persian chauvinism and the moral codes of desert bedouins.

The lies and rationalisations which the revisionists have resorted to over the course of months spent disguising the reactionary character

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Hawke: Bump me into parliament "Left" wins? Workers lose at ACTU Congress

Bob Hawke revealed something when "the great uranium debate" was re-run at this year's ACTU Congress in September. Well known to militants as the "fixer" who descends on disputes to arrange sell-out compromises with the bosses, Hawke this time told it "like it is" to fake "lefts" who wanted to retain the ACTU's impotent bans on the mining and export of uranium. The chances of the bans stopping mining were that of a "snowflake in Hell" said Hawke, and their flouting by the bosses -- as at the infamous Newport power station, where scabbing succeeded -- "makes you look bloody stupid". The "lefts" knew that Hawke was right, since their motion called for nothing more than a "propaganda campaign" to convince the comparatively well-paid uranium industry workers that they shouldn't do it!

Hawke lost, but it was no defeat for a class-struggle answer to eco-freak futility. Hawke's plans have no provision for a proletarian government to expropriate the uranium as well as all other industry to remove capitalist abuses, since he has his mind firmly set on being the bosses' Prime Minister, beginning as the member for Wills. In this he is merely treading the well-worn path of innumerable middle-class social-democratic politicians before him, who have latched onto the labour movement as a vehicle for vain personal ambition through reformist betrayals. The Wobblies long ago "immortalised" types like Hawke in the song, "Bump me into parliament", which portrays the opportunist bureaucrat with his mind set on getting a little closer to the capitalist seat of power in parliament "on next election day".

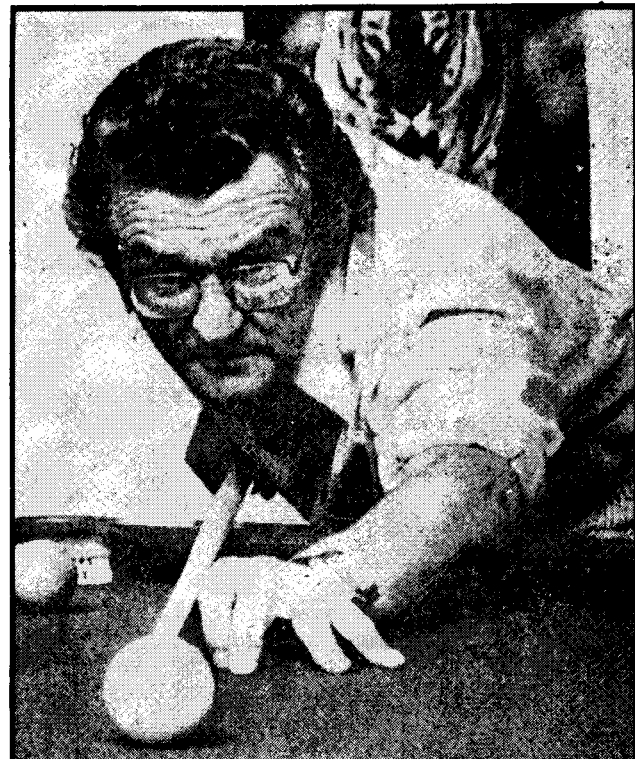
But was Hawke's first-time-ever drubbing at an ACTU Congress a "victory for the left"? To hear

the rabid Murdoch press tell it, the Congress was practically the final triumph of Red Revolution: "Hawke thrashed" screamed *The Australian*, which editorially moaned about the "open slather wages and uranium confrontation policies". The other barons of the bourgeois press waxed along about the ACTU's "swing to the left" with less purple prose. While Murdoch tried to whip up a red scare for Fraser's next federal election, the left press agreed with their assessment as to who won, it seemed: "Uranium Victory" hailed the social-democratic *Direct Action* (20 September) of the Socialist Workers Party in huge type. "Support ACTU policies" said *Tribune* (19 September) of the equally reformist Communist Party (CPA); as the adolescent workerists of the International Socialists prattled, "We've Rolled Yellowcake Bob" (*Battler*, 29 September).

On close examination, however, a real victory for the working class was not there to be found. The "militant" wages policy the left talked about came down to going to Arbitration for a national "productivity" claim and only stronger rhetoric against wage guidelines. As *Financial Review* analyst Larry Kornhauser noted (12 September), "most delegates agreed it was only words." As to reputed gains for the "left" on the Executive, they were largely based on anti-Hawke manoeuvring among cliques. Hawke supporters Charlie Fitzgibbon (Watersiders) and Simon Crean (Storemen and Packers) both *lost*, to a rightist and a "moderate" (backed by both "left" and right) respectively; while Socialist Left power broker Jim Roulston got on the Executive through back-handed support from rightists. Maoist bureaucrat Norm Gallagher (Builders Laborers) got on as a replacement for the retiring pro-Moscow Pat Clancy of the BWIU.

The alleged uranium "victory" showed something of what ACTU "lefts" are really made of, since only those with nothing to lose opposed Hawke. Long-time "leftist" Ray Gietzelt backed Hawke to the hilt, since the Miscellaneous Workers Union which he heads covers workers involved in mining. He later joined representatives of 11,000 uranium miners in Darwin who said they had no intention of complying with the ACTU decision.

CPA supporter John Halfpenny of the Amalgamated Metal Workers (AMWSU) was one of those demanding opposition to uranium as a matter of "principle". But whenever he *does* have something to lose, Halfpenny's "principles" do a disappearing act. Militant LaTrobe Valley power workers who booed Halfpenny in mass meetings during their 11-week strike in 1977 know this well. As they confronted Fraser's indexation guidelines and Hamer's "state of emergency", Halfpenny's only "principle" was to head off what might have been a class-struggle showdown



Hawke calculates his future:

*Some very wealthy friends of mine
Declare I am most clever,
While some can talk for an hour or so,
Why I can talk for ever.*

*Bump me into parliament,
Bounce me any way at all.
Bang me into parliament,
On next election day!*

with the government by getting the strikers back to work under Arbitration as fast as possible.

Currently, the AMWSU is ballyhooing a sit-in strike for a 35-hour week at Union Carbide, a small chemical plant in Altona, Victoria. These workers are being made sacrificial lambs for a struggle which has been the official policy of the AMWSU and ACTU for close to a decade. For Halfpenny and his ilk, "militancy" consists of cynical "guerrilla" tactics which make small, isolated gains at best, usually only in boom periods. If they were serious about fighting for a shorter work week at no loss in pay, they would conduct industry-wide strikes and sit-downs; but that would have the effect of posing the need for a struggle against the capitalist system itself, and for that reason they will never do it.

With hot air on uranium and real seats on the Executive, the "lefts" may have gained "three parts of five eighths of you-know-what" for themselves, as Hawke put it; but workers gained nothing. The working class has no stake in opposing the development of nuclear technology. Of course nuclear power plants have their deadly flaws and dangers, but then so do coal mines, steel plants, and just about any other industry under capitalism. After July's Appin mine disaster, which killed 14 workers, Halfpenny, the SWP & Co. should be calling for the abolition of coal mining "on principle". It is not uranium that causes "Three Mile Islands", mysterious disappearances of plutonium and nuclear holocausts, but the capitalist system and its ruling class. The working class must fight for its own state power to overthrow these outmoded hangovers from the past, so that nuclear power, and technological advances generally, can be used properly, for the benefit of mankind.

But why single out uranium? The *real* capitalist attacks on the working class -- erosion of wages, mounting unemployment, Qld march bans, WA

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Who defended Iranian left?

When over a dozen members of the (Iranian SWP) Hezb-e Kargarane Socialist (HKS) were jailed by the Khomeini regime, the mullah-lovers of the local SWP "defended" them by walking off their one token picket in Sydney, 11 June, rather than risk association with the call "Down with Khomeini -- for a workers revolution" raised by the Spartacist League (SL) contingent. In sharp contrast to this despicable sectarianism, SL campus supporters initiated two motions on Iran which became Extraordinary Resolutions (ERs) after winning support at a LaTrobe University student general meeting and from the Sydney University SRC. ER 23 affirmed "unequivocal opposition to Khomeini's 'Islamic Republic'" and raised the call "for workers revolution to defeat Islamic reaction". ER 24 called on AUS and the SRCs to organise "immediate united-front demonstrations" to "Free the endangered militants of the Fedayeen and HKS in Iran!", and "in defence" of "all left-wing and democratic-secular forces threatened by the Khomeini regime" (for full text see Australasian Spartacist no 65, July, 1979). Incredibly, the SWP/SYA labelled both motions "counterrevolutionary" and refused to vote at the LaTrobe meeting. SYA leader Jan West vowed to "sabotage" the ERs. "We've got influence in AUS", he bragged.

Despite the SWP's sabotage threat, the ERs received considerable support in the voting completed on 14 September. Although AUS officers claim that both motions failed to meet the statutory quotas to become AUS policy, ER 23 was passed at Goulburn CAE and Caulfield Institute of Technology, while at Adelaide University the vote was split. ER 24 was passed at a majority of the twelve campuses that voted including Adelaide University, Alexander Mackie, Caulfield, Goulburn CAE and of course LaTrobe and Sydney Universities. Moreover, in a period of general disillusionment with AUS major campuses' votes were held "in abeyance" due to non-payment of fees -- whether these campuses voted and which way is not known.

"Influence in AUS" or not, the criminal tailism of SWP/SYA has made defence of the Iranian left, national minorities and women increasingly difficult. However, they were unable to prevent debate of this issue on Australian campuses. That they should try is testimony to the foulest political corruption.

Exclusive interview with Iranian militant

"Islam is being called by some people the 'socialist religion' -- this is one of the funniest things I have ever heard.... Islam is the religion of the time when slavery was being transformed into feudalism...".

"In Islam women are treated as inferior.... I know that in some cities in the south women who didn't want to wear the veil were beaten up."

"(People) ask me if Khomeini is good and I say he is terrible. They say, 'Do you like the shah?' and I say, 'No, it's the problem of bad and worse. I don't like any of them.'"

"I was furious just seeing all these so-called leftist groups following Khomeini and the mullahs.... 'Down with the Shah! Down with the Mullahs!' It was the first true militant slogan I had heard. So this is why I got in contact with the SL and have been following their line." -- Fareed, ex-Mojahedeen guerrilla.

In the latest *Young Spartacus* no 75, September 1979.
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youth section of the Spartacist League/US.



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represents an intermediate stage between capitalism and proletarian dictatorship. But experience will soon demonstrate that only a show of force can halt the tendency of the working masses to turn the victory over Somoza into full-scale social revolution. And if they didn't know already, they are quickly becoming conscious of the fact. When the Cuban news agency Prensa Latina asked top FSLN commander Humberto Ortega, "How will you deal with the class struggle that will develop in this stage?" he replied:

"In order to keep this struggle from becoming more acute, it is necessary to implement the program supported by the Front and the anti-Somoza bourgeoisie. Then we must struggle against various kinds of deviations." (*Granma* [English-language weekly edition], 2 September)

That struggle against "deviations" means anti-working-class repression soon became clear, notably around the land reform. While its scope is sweeping, affecting as much as 60 percent of the arable land of Nicaragua, it is limited to estates belonging to Somoza and his henchmen. This was justified by Agrarian Reform Minister Jaime Wheelock with the argument, "We must keep solidarity with those members of the private sector who supported the ouster of Somoza" (*New York Times*, 5 August). A few days later FSLN officials clashed with a Maoist labor group organizing land seizures near the city of Leon. According to Wheelock, "the few disorderly occupations" were atypical, the haciendas were "reinstated to their original owners" and the peasants given Somoza lands instead (*Granma* [English-language weekly edition], 12 August).

Expulsion of the Simon Bolivar Brigade

The suppression of "disorderly" land seizures is not the only instance of measures to keep the class struggle from "becoming more acute". The most notable was the expulsion of several dozen foreign leftists, most of them self-proclaimed Trotskyists, associated with the "Simon Bolivar Brigade" which had rushed to Nicaragua in the last stages of the battle against Somoza. As *Time* magazine (3 September) after praising the "merciful revolution", had it, when the "60 Latin-American Trotskyites, calling themselves the Simon Bolivar Brigade, incited a demonstration by 3,000 Managua factory workers demanding compensation for wages lost during the revolution", the regime ordered "its armed forces to put the Trotskyites on a plane to Panama".

According to the *Washington Post* (21 August), banners at the August 15 Managua demonstration carried the slogans, "The Revolution is in the hands of the bourgeoisie" and "Power to the proletariat". The expelled Bolivar Brigaders, however, were charged with being "counterrevolutionaries" and "foreign provocateurs".

This expulsion was clearly a blow struck against any independent leftist agitation among Nicaraguan workers and must be roundly condemned by all would-be socialists. But this is not what the American Socialist Workers Party (SWP) thought of it. The SWP did not protest at all. In fact, it issued four different "explanations" which not only shamelessly support the FSLN government against their own "comrades", but they join in the witchhunt themselves. An August 21 SWP Political Committee declaration says that the Brigade "was organized by the Colombian PST (Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores -- Socialist Workers Party), under

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What road for Nicaragua?

Where to now for Nicaragua — the capitalist road, the "Cuban road" or the road of proletarian revolution?

Victorious Sandinista guerrillas enter Managua atop a captured mini-tank.



the direction of an international grouping known as the 'Bolshevik Faction,' led by Nahuel Moreno" and states the Brigade's "policies ran counter to the policies decided by the leadership bodies of the Fourth International". It goes on:

"Masquerading as a section of the Sandinista Front (FSLN), the Simon Bolivar Brigade entered Nicaragua from the outside to engage in its own organizing efforts along the lines of 'outflanking' the Sandinistas on the left. Their tactic was to up the ante in what the Sandinistas were saying, trying in this way to build a counterforce to them." (*Militant*, 31 August)

In another article in the same issue of the *Militant*, on "The Facts About the Simon Bolivar Brigade", the SWP labels the Managua workers demonstration a "provocative clash" and accuses the leaders of the Brigade of having "acted irresponsibly". Again, the "fact"-sheet charges that the Brigade's attempts to "outflank [the FSLN] from the left" had "absolutely nothing in common with the position of the Fourth International". And it ostentatiously washes its hands of any association: "The Fourth International is in no way responsible for the activities of the Brigade". Quite a mouthful coming from people who are formally part of the same "International".

The SWP's response to the expulsion of the Bolivar Brigaders was the most naked stab in the back by a section of the fake-Trotskyist "United" Secretariat (USec) since its supporters in Portugal found themselves on opposite sides of the barricades in the summer of 1977. But what about the other wings of this pseudo-Fourth International, long accustomed to the dirtiest of factional tricks? Those sections associated with the former International Majority Tendency of Ernest Mandel were less virulent than the SWP in their attacks on the Morenoite-led Brigade, at most clucking their tongues at the FSLN-ordered repression. Thus the newspaper of the French LCR, *Rouge* (24-30 August), felt constrained to condemn the remarks of agrarian reform minister Wheelock, who in announcing the deportations launched a diatribe against "Trotskyism and all those who want to accelerate the evolution of the regime in Nicaragua". Of course, on the next page the editors published a friendly interview with the same Wheelock, remarking favorably on his revolutionary credentials.

As to the expulsions themselves, the best the LCR could manage in the way of protest was an escalation of adjectives describing this "precedent" from "disturbing" (31 August-6 September) to "unacceptable" (7-13 September). But meanwhile the LCR's man in Managua was taking a sharply different tack. According to the SWP's *Intercontinental Press* (24 September), a USec delegation including LCR Latin American "expert" Jean-Pierre Beauvais (as well as Hugo Blanco, Peter Camejo and Barry Sheppard from the US SWP and others) handed a statement to the

Sandinistas hailing "the revolutionary leadership of the FSLN" and declaring: "All activities which create divisions between the mobilized masses and the FSLN are contrary to the interests of the revolution". Dotting the i's and crossing the t's, it added: "This was the case specifically with the activities of the 'Simon Bolivar Brigade'", which it termed "sectarian". And to top it off the USec delegation explicitly endorsed the expulsion.

It is not reported whether Blanco/Camejo/Sheppard/Beauvais et al received thirty pieces of silver, although they clearly hope to cash in on their perfidy by becoming the authorized cheerleaders for the FSLN. But the roots of such treachery are political and go back more than a quarter of a century, to the refusal of Michel Pablo, then secretary of the Fourth International, to defend the Chinese Trotskyists jailed by Mao. He called them "refugees from a revolution" for refusing to bow to the new bureaucratic rulers in Peking. For Pablo it was part of his liquidationist program that led to the destruction of the Fourth International as the organized world revolutionary vanguard. In the case of his epigones it is the consequence of their Pabloist policies, which lead all wings of the USec to chase after non-proletarian, anti-Marxist leaderships -- from the Chinese Stalinists to Portuguese army officers and now the Sandinista nationalists.

Morenoite charlatans and adventurers

So what about the Simon Bolivar Brigade and its parent, Nahuel Moreno's Bolshevik Faction? Certainly in comparison with the grovelling betrayals of the SWP and the more shamefaced Mandelite majority of the USec, the Moreno outfit might seem a militant alternative. This facade can easily be shattered by considering Moreno's chameleon-like political track record, his notoriety for underhanded financial swindles and his ultra-reformist program in his home base, Argentina. And, indeed, the SWP is busily dredging up some of this material, filling the pages of *Intercontinental Press* with endless scandal stories about the disreputable adventurer Moreno. No doubt Barnes and Mandel are getting ready to expel the troublemaker. But they are in no position to complain. For years they have coexisted in the same International (and in the case of the SWP, in the same faction) with this notorious snake-oil salesman, both after and during his worst betrayals. They have dirty hands.

The USec charges that the Morenoite Simon Bolivar Brigade was simply an adventure. It does appear that for the most part Moreno's Brigade, despite its bombastic propaganda and gun-in-hand heroic airs, sat out the fighting in Costa Rica. In fact, its US-based supporters, the Sandinistas for Socialism in Nicaragua, did not even leave for Managua until the day after Somoza's fall!

It is not true, however, that the Simon Bolivar Brigade was unprepared to "accept the

discipline of the FSLN". Moreno's idea of "discipline" is probably not to the liking of the Sandinistas (or the USec leaders), but the Brigade was definitely built on the basis of subordination to the FSLN. That makes its present situation all the more ironic.

Politically, the Morenoites called for "a Sandinista government" -- although for form's sake they tacked on that it should arise from supposed "organs of people's power" and be based on a program of "breaking with the bourgeoisie and imperialism" (*El Socialista*, 22 June). Such pious wishes aside, they got their Sandinista government and -- guess what -- they get expelled from the country! That's what often happens when you tail after bonapartists. So the Simon Bolivar Brigade managed to acquire a militant image in spite of itself.

Nahuel Moreno's record is that of a huckster who has put on the garb of virtually every popular trend in the Latin American left -- Peronism, Castroism, Maoism, and now Sandinism. His "left" positions on international topics bear no relation whatever to his rightist positions at home. The only reason he appears militant over Nicaragua today is that he was caught out in the middle of a maneuver with the FSLN -- and that while he is up to his old tricks, the rest of the USec has moved distinctly to the right. Until the FSLN took power in Managua the Morenoites' call for a Sandinista government was formally to the right of the other tendencies of the USec, which raised various criticisms of the FSLN ties to the opposition bourgeoisie. But as soon as Mandel and Barnes smelled a chance to hook up to a popular cause, they leapt right over Moreno and left him holding the bag in the unaccustomed role of the far left wing. The difference between Morenoites and Mandelites is the difference between adventurers and cheerleaders, between con men and PR men.

Finally, it should be noted that in choosing the name Simon Bolivar Brigade Moreno chose a singularly appropriate sobriquet. The great hero of the wars of independence, himself from a slaveholding landowner family, was a military disaster, losing nearly all his battles (literally dozens) and repeatedly abandoning his troops in moments of adversity. He was, said Marx in a letter to Engels, "the most cowardly, brutal and miserable scum". So too Nahuel Moreno.

SWP: Reformist through and through and to the core

As regards the SWP, for anyone who still had doubts, the blowup over the Simon Bolivar Brigade and the SWP's unconditional, almost hysterical political support to the FSLN are proof positive that it is *reformist* from head to toe. For more than a decade the Spartacist tendency has been unique in insisting that the long-since *ex-Trotskyist* SWP was committed to supporting the bourgeois order. This has been contested by those who are afraid to break definitively with the USec "family", and therefore argue that profession of formal Trotskyism indicates subjectively revolutionary will. (What about the Brezhnevite, Maoist and Castroite Stalinists who profess to be Leninists?) Here it is spelled out so that even the willfully blind can't miss it: support to a government of capitalists against left-wing opponents, explicit popular frontism, warnings against frightening the bourgeoisie, a parliamentarist program and a call on the imperialists to "aid", ie strangle, the revolution.

Having embarked this year on a campaign of unbridled adulation of the Castroite regime in Havana -- SWP leader Jack Barnes, in a speech on the 20th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution, termed Castro and company "superior to the Bolshevik leadership, once you leave aside Lenin, Trotsky, Sverdlov, and people like that!" -- the Socialist Workers Party is treating Sandinista Nicaragua as if it were already the



Pseudo-Trotskyist charlatan, Nahuel Moreno.

"second Cuba" so feared by Washington. And following out their own Cuban precedent in justifying this backstabbing attack on the Morenoites, Barnes is clearly harking back to the SWP's refusal to defend the Cuban Trotskyists jailed by Castro. (The Spartacist tendency denounced this Stalinist repression and brought the case to the attention of the socialist public. See "For Workers Political Revolution in Cuba", *Workers Vanguard* nos 223 and 224, 19 January and 2 February 1979, and "In Defense of the Cuban Trotskyists", *Workers Vanguard* no 225, 16 February, for a recounting of the SWP's betrayal and the Trotskyist analysis of the development of the Cuban Revolution.)

However, by the time that the SWP became lawyers for Castro's repression of the Cuban Trotskyists, a social revolution had taken place on the island. Joseph Hansen was defending a Stalinist leadership of a bureaucratically deformed workers state against would-be communists who called for opening the road to socialism by internationalizing the revolution and instituting soviet democracy. In the present case, Hansen's apprentices are covering the left flank of a government including a number of capitalist ministers and committed to protecting the properties of the "anti-Somoza bourgeoisie". And the SWP defends this regime against all those "trying to outflank it to the left" -- ie anyone who even pretends to mobilize the working masses around demands which go beyond the democratic program of overthrowing the Somoza dictatorship.

Not only is the SWP opposed to such "irresponsible" acts of the Simon Bolivar Brigade as



Roslyn Carter shaking hands with Sandinista leader Eden Pastora, "Commandante Zero". Sandinista concessions dovetail with US "soft approach" to prevent socialist revolution in Latin America.

mobilizing Managua workers to raise demands on the Sandinista regime, but to the existence of any left group outside the FSLN, including the official USec section in Nicaragua. In all of the articles on the Sandinista revolution appearing in the main USec organs, not one so much as mentions the Liga Marxista Revolucionaria ("sympathizing section of the Fourth International").

The SWP's attachment to the FSLN should not, however, be mistaken for the treacherous policy of "critical support" toward a bourgeois "revolutionary power". The classic formula for the latter was provided by Stalin in March 1917, before Lenin returned from exile and presented his April Theses calling for "all power to the soviets". Under his and Kamenev's editorship, *Pravda* declared that the Bolsheviks would support the Provisional Government "insofar as it struggles against reaction or counterrevolution". But today's SWP is worse than the 1917 Stalin, for these raving all-the-way-with-the-FSLN hundred-percenters give a blank check: "... the only way for revolutionary socialists around the world to help advance the Nicaraguan revolution is to recognize the revolutionary capacities of this leadership, to identify with it, and to join forces with it in the struggle to defend and extend the revolution" (*Intercontinental Press*, 3 September 1979).

Stalin's support for the Provisional Government in 1917 anticipated his reformist degeneration in the 1930s, tying the workers to their class enemy through the policy of the People's Front. And it is a hallmark of the SWP's fully flowering reformism that it today openly defends popular frontism against left critics. Its articles on Nicaragua virtually call for the Stalinist-Menshevik "two-stage revolution". Camejo and his friends recognize that "The capitalists and those determined to defend their interests still remain a factor in the government". But this is nowhere criticized, merely presented as a "concession" -- and moreover a correct one:

"In the struggle against Somoza the Sandinistas consciously tried to create the broadest possible front, including bourgeois forces who were opponents of Somoza. That was obviously the correct, intelligent, and revolutionary policy." (our emphasis)

No clearer endorsement of the treacherous policy of the popular front could be asked for. As Leon Trotsky wrote after the tragic experience of Spain and France in the 1930s: "There can be no greater crime than coalition with the bourgeoisie in a period of socialist revolution" ("Trotskyism" and the PSOP", July 1939).

Not only is the policy the same as Stalin's, even the language and the excuses are identical. Thus in polemicizing against the danger presented by the "provocative" actions of the Simon Bolivar Brigade, the SWP writes that the FSLN leadership "must make inroads into the bourgeois order, without giving the imperialists easy pretexts to whip up propaganda in favor of intervention" (*Militant*, 31 August). Haven't we seen this somewhere before? Yes, we have. It was the famous letter of Stalin, Molotov and Voroshilov to Spanish prime minister Largo Caballero explaining the need not to frighten the bourgeoisie: "This is necessary to prevent the enemies of Spain considering her a communist republic and thus to avert their open intervention which is the greatest danger for republican Spain" (21 December 1936).

And of course there is the constant equation of FSLN-ruled Nicaragua with Castro's Cuba. Thus the SWP hailed Fidel Castro's July 26 speech on Nicaragua, reprinting it in every one of its publications. But they neglected to point out that the core of the speech was Castro's reassurance to those (eg, the US) who "expressed fears to the effect that Nicaragua would become a new Cuba". According to the Cuban leader, the reply of "the Nicaraguans" is: "No, Nicaragua

will become a new Nicaragua. And this is something quite different" (*Granma* [English-language weekly edition], 5 August).

If the SWP joined Castro in propagating illusions about the possibility of hemispheric "peaceful coexistence" with the predatory imperialist colossus to the north, its central political demand -- for "massive US aid to Nicaragua" -- is far more sinister. In appearance a utopian call on the imperialist leopard to change its spots, in reality it is an appeal for a bloc with the liberal American bourgeoisie to prevent socialist revolution in Central America. This demand encapsulates the SWP's whole reformist -- ie, counterrevolutionary -- perspective on Nicaragua. As we pointed out in a box in our last issue ("Reformists Who Can't Spell", *Workers Vanguard*, no 239, 14 September), these State Department socialists are literally picking up the line of the State Department, which tells Congress that if the US does not provide aid, Nicaragua may well "go Communist".

The latest *Militants* read like CARE appeals for philanthropic aid to the starving Nicaraguans. But behind "humanitarian" dollars there is always politics. Aid to rebuild what -- a capitalist or collectivized economy? And from whom? What we see here is the SWP's touching faith in the reformability of American imperialism, the butchers of My Lai and authors of the Bay of Pigs invasion. It is their appeal for federal troops to Boston to "protect" black children writ large. Would revolutionary Marxists have called for "massive allied aid to the Russian Revolution" after the February 1917 revolution overthrowing the tsar? Of course not, because such aid -- strings or no strings -- would necessarily have been aimed at preventing the Bolsheviks from taking power and at keeping Russia in the war.

The principal "aid" which the Nicaraguan working people urgently need is the leadership of a communist vanguard with a program of permanent revolution, going beyond the bourgeois-democratic program of the FSLN to mobilize the forces for proletarian revolution. And they won't get it from the reformist SWP, which supports the Sandinistas against the left and calls on the liberal imperialists to hold back the revolution. ■

(Abridged from *Workers Vanguard* no 240, 28 September 1979)

New betrayals for old?

SWP's Nicaraguan travelling medicine show

With the sinister Khomeini regime making its deeply reactionary nature more starkly obvious everyday, the paeans of praise to "Iran in Revolution" *still* being sung by the revisionist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) sound positively obscene. As its own comrades languish in SAVAK prisons awaiting the mullahs' firing squads -- there because their own criminal tailism disarmed them before the growing capitalist terror -- the SWP would dearly love to forget its betrayals of past months in Iran and find a new, more hopeful-sounding hobby horse ... and paeans of praise to the Sandinista victors who toppled Somoza in Nicaragua sound a great deal better just now.

To make noise about the new government in Nicaragua in a hurry, SWP leader Ron Poulsen has been giving an "eye-witness" series of talks, complete with slide show. Poulsen's message -- "the socialist revolution has begun in Nicaragua" -- reeks with the same uncritical hymns formerly lavished on Khomeini's drive for power, although *this* time at least the recipients of the boundless praise are genuine radical petty-bourgeois democrats rather than the armed enforcers of 7th Century Arabian moral codes.

Poulsen's performances resembled nothing so much as the travelling medicine show of the American old West, in which professional quacks and con-men peddled diluted whiskey to the gullible as a cure-all. Like these "snake-oil" salesmen, Poulsen and the SWP have to "clean up" fast and move on, in order to avoid a serious inspection of their wares. And so the audience-victims have been "protected" from embarrassing questions and political debate by the usual exclusion of Spartacist supporters. At Sydney's Trade Union Club on 26 September, a trade unionist objected to the exclusion as similar to the right-wing bureaucratism in her union, only to find herself, and another woman who rose in solidarity, hustled out the door by goons. On campuses, where exclusion proved to be impossible, discussion was prevented by careful timing of the speech and slide show.

At LaTrobe University, however, the departing audience halted in the doorways as a Spartacist supporter demanded to know why the SWP supported the expulsion from the country of the Simon Bolivar Brigade (SBB), an adventurist but pro-Sandinista-government group affiliated to the SWP's own "United Secretariat of the Fourth International" (USec). Poulsen replied by denouncing the SBB for refusing to subordinate itself to the Sandinista military command, thereby handing the same political confidence to a bonapartist coalition government that Stalin gave to the nationalist Kuomintang (KMT) of China with tragic results for the working class in the 1920s. A student then shouted out, "why are bourgeois politicians in the ruling junta?" to which Poulsen gave the double-think reply, "because they're on the Cuban road"! Anyway "the junta has no real power", said Poulsen, and that's why "we, the SWP, do not say it is a workers government". There was no time to ask, "then how is it that Nicaragua is 'socialist'", as the chairman hurried to end the meeting.

The slickest plans of the fanciest bureaucrats sometimes go astray, however, and at the University of NSW the only political debate of the tour took place when the teacher of the incoming class volunteered to take it elsewhere so that discussion could be had. With every slide in the show used up, the chair was forced to recognise an SL supporter, who pointed out that "every action the Sandinistas take towards accommodation with imperialism is applauded by the SWP", citing the bourgeois politicians in the junta, the traitorous refusal to bring Somoza's National Guard murderers to justice in peoples' tribunals, and the proclaimed general disarming of the population as examples. The Sandinista/SWP call for "massive US aid to Nicaragua" dovetailed with the imperialists' effort to "avoid another Cuba" by "using economic aid as a weapon", said the SL speaker, anticipating by only a few days President Carter's call for "more aid to the region"

as one ploy, along with increased military presence, to counter Soviet troops in Cuba.

Admitting that the Sandinistas' constitution "reads bourgeois", Poulsen replied, "you have to read between the lines to realise that the Sandinistas mean what they say"! He then remarked that US offers of aid were "a sign of weakness", only to add a few moments later that Sandinista "concessions" (which the SWP supports) have been "extorted" by US imperialism. On the Simon Bolivar Brigade Poulsen fumed, "how dare they -- these 100 idiots -- trying to tell the Sandinista revolutionaries what to do!... The Sandinistas have done what we would have done". Sound familiar? Of course: Poulsen could have lifted his diatribe straight from the pages of *The Socialist* (12 September), paper of the Moscow-line Stalinist Socialist Party (SPA), which hailed the deportation of "Trotskyites" from Nicaragua because "this 'ultra-left' group" accused the Sandinistas "of selling out to the bourgeoisie"! It is little wonder that the many Stalinists in the audience at UNSW had only applause for the not-so "Trotskyist" Poulsen.

Indeed, the SWP undoubtedly aspires to an official franchise from the counterrevolutionary Castroite bureaucracy, much like the one the Kremlin grants the SPA whose reason for being is to pimp for the Brezhnev clique. So, it's understandable that the SWP's lauding of the FSLN government is based on the hope that Nicaragua is "on the Cuban road". Despite the Sandinistas' own protestations that they are building not "another Cuba" but "a new Nicaragua", Poulsen compared them to Castro's ruling party in Cuba, assuming that these petty-bourgeois democrats will make the same historically exceptional transformation (into the bureaucratic rulers of a deformed workers state) that the Fidelistas did. It is for this reason that the SWP nowhere takes up the need for a Leninist vanguard party in Nicaragua, even to the extent of not mentioning their own insignificant Nicaraguan "section".

When Fidel Castro's victorious rebel army entered Havana in January 1959, it was by no means inevitable that it would take what is now called "the Cuban road". As in Nicaragua today following the destruction of the National Guard, the *capitalist state* -- an armed body of men committed to the defence of capitalist property forms -- had ceased to exist in Cuba. This left an inherently transitory and unstable phenomenon:

Redfern ...

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national postal strike to stop the MNP before it is too late. They had nothing to say about the loss of jobs and declining real wages, requiring a struggle for a 30-hour week with no loss in weekly pay and full, automatic, monthly cost-of-living indexing to preserve living standards against inflation. And despite all the talk of "communists", of course not one of the candidates or their supporters dared to raise the call for a workers government committed to get rid of not just Fraser but the capitalist class and system he represents.

Indeed, the various fake-lefts at Redfern are egregious political bankrupts who have continued to chase after the various bureaucrats even after the latter had been exposed and discredited. To maintain there is a "left-right" difference between Hawkins and Kanan is so obviously a lie, that Socialist Workers Party (SWP) supporter Lynda Boland, in *Direct Action* (27 September), dispensed with the usual fake-left figleaf of "exposing" some bureaucrat through "critical support" and called for a vote to the Hawkins/Battese ticket simply because they are at odds with Slater and "more likely" to be "influenced by pressure from the rank and file". No surprise, since Boland herself was an enthusiastic backer of their defeatist "passive resistance" line and shares with them the ignominy of supporting the 23 July sellout.

Kanan was happy to include on his ticket two self-proclaimed leftists, Socialist Labour League (SLL) supporter Nick Rose and Ted Sharkey, who supports the pro-Moscow Socialist Party. Sharkey has apparently been sufficiently embarrassed by identification with Kanan that he is trying to claim his name was put on the slate without his knowledge. Not even this can be said of Rose, who

a *petty-bourgeois government* temporarily independent of the bourgeoisie. As in Nicaragua now, Castro at first coexisted with bourgeois politicians in the government.

Usually such regimes become new bourgeois states, dependent on imperialism (Algeria, Angola); but in Cuba, Castro's initial reforms, such as the agrarian reform in June, 1959, provoked a violently hostile reaction from the US, which pushed the Castro government into a break with its bourgeois partners (including a split in the July 26 movement) and expropriation of capitalist properties, including those of Cuban capitalists, as a defensive measure. Culminating in 1960, and under the protection of the Soviet Union, this process transformed the petty-bourgeois government into a new state, but one now committed to the defence not of capitalist, but of the *collectivised* property forms of a *workers state*. In the absence of the working class as an active contender for power under its own banner, however, the formerly bourgeois-democratic Fidelistas became a new Stalinist bureaucracy, politically expropriating the working class and creating a *bureaucratically deformed* workers state. While the SWP still hails this regime as "better than the Bolsheviks", genuine Trotskyists realise that Cuba is no better than Stalin's Russia, and call for a working-class *political revolution* led by a Leninist vanguard party to remove the Castroite bureaucracy.

The US offers of aid to Nicaragua show what imperialism has learned from the Cuban experience: the carrot rather than the stick may ensure the Sandinistas' consolidation as a new bourgeois state. Thus the SWP's support for Sandinista concessions to the anti-Somoza bourgeoisie betrays whatever chances there are even for an historical exception such as "another Cuba", in Nicaragua. But for Trotskyists, the task is to build a party, independent of petty-bourgeois nationalist coalitions such as the Sandinistas, which can lead the working class to power in its *own* name. As one SL speaker at the UNSW forum said, "Revolutionaries around the world applauded the overthrow of Somoza. But ... what we want is a *socialist* revolution that can act as a beacon for all of Latin America, and that will be led by the Nicaraguan working class under the leadership of a Trotskyist party. And that's not the Cuban road, but the road of Lenin and Trotsky." For a Socialist United States of Latin America! ■

must have felt at home in the company of anti-communists since the Healyite SLL supports the shooting of Communist Party members -- Sharkey's co-thinkers -- in Iraq. Sharkey at least is attached politically to a deformed workers state; Rose's "glorious fatherland" is the fanatic Islamic dictatorship of Libya's Qaddafi. Once these opportunists had served their purpose by lending Kanan's ticket a little "militant" veneer, they got their just deserts by failing to get elected.

Redfern must fight before it's too late

No wonder Redfern workers are ill-disposed to fight a serious battle under the direction of this crew of squabbling cliques and their hangers-on, who have already proved that they will sabotage the struggle. But defeat is *not* inevitable. To save Redfern and the union, a solid and united national postal strike must be launched, drawing in every mail officer, postman, mail driver, linesman and the whole union. Slater will never call one, of course; but Redfern workers could shut the mail exchange down tight; organise flying picket squads like the American coal miners to shut down the other mail centres and block scab mail shipments; and call on all other unions to black ban scab mail, electing a strike committee of shopfloor delegates to conduct the strike.

The most important condition for the success of such a fight, however, is the *ousting* of the class traitors from the leadership, and their replacement by a leadership committed to struggle for a full transitional program of demands linking the cause of the postal workers to the struggle for workers' state power, a program capable of uniting all the proletariat behind the postal workers against the capitalists and their state. Such a leadership could only be an arm within the unions of a Trotskyist party -- which is ultimately the sole alternative to all versions of reformist betrayal. ■

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ACTU Congress ...

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arrests of unionists for holding meetings, Fraser's numerous union-busting laws, and the legalisation of ASIO crimes -- have all been going effectively wopped by the leaders of the labour movement, whether trade-union or parliamentarian, right or "left". Ending these attacks must begin with the building of a class-struggle opposition in the unions based on the Trotskyist Transitional Program; but of this, ACTU "lefts" would know nothing. And as for Halfpenny in particular, we won't be surprised if we someday hear from him the same refrain now coming from Hawke, "Some very wealthy friends of mine, declare I am most clever; while some can talk for an hour or so, why I can talk for ever..."

Mullahs' terror...

Continued from page two

of mullah-rule look pretty sorry now. (Remember how the mosque-controlled "neighbourhood committees" were supposed to be some sort of Soviets?) They said the mullah-led February insurgency was "revolutionary" because it brought down the shah and destroyed his army. We said:

"Iran's mullahs need the iron fist of a military trained and equipped by imperialism to enforce 'justice' according to the Koran. The police stations burned down during the street fighting will be rebuilt. The shah's gendarmerie ... will reoccupy them and a regenerated and renamed SAVAK will again be unleashed against those dubbed 'traitors' by the new regime." (*Workers Vanguard* no 225, 16 February)

They said that February would open up the road to recognition of the national rights of Iran's minorities. We said: "The Persian chauvinism and blind anti-foreign sentiments whipped up by the mullahs promise a grim future for Iran's national/communal minorities" (*Workers Vanguard* no 222, 5 January 1979).

Now the military force composed of the shah's army and Khomeini's Islamic militia have taken Mahabad, the principal Kurdish centre in Iran, forcing 100,000 to flee and the able and courageous Kurdish partisans into guerilla warfare. US-supplied Phantom jets, helicopter gunships and heavy artillery pounded Kurdish villages into rubble in a murderous assault massacring at least 600 Kurds.

The fake-left went wild in February when Khomeini cancelled military contracts with the US: it was supposed to prove his "anti-imperialist" credentials. In reality Khomeini's "anti-imperialism" was always reserved for such symbols of Western "decadence" as alcohol, movies, music and mixed swimming. Under the Islamic Republic Iranian transport planes have been regularly flying into New York's Kennedy airport to pick up military hardware -- purchased by the shah. While the jets strafed Kurdish villages, deputy prime minister Ibrahim Yazdi went to Washington to reopen some of the \$5 billion in cancelled military contracts.

The US is only too willing to rearm the "Iranian Revolution". Already 100 of Khomeini's officers are attending US military academies. Khomeini is moreover funneling some of the arms to the Muslim insurgents in Afghanistan, where the CIA is trying to overthrow the pro-Moscow, nationalist regime. What passes in the Pentagon for defenders of "Western democracy" these days are the scruffy 9th-century barbarians of the Afghani countryside who torture and mutilate Soviet civilians before killing them by skinning them alive! They are Khomeini's political kith and kin.

When the attacks of the mullahs in power against women began and the veil re-imposed on pain of beating, stoning, or worse, the SWP didn't blink an eye: the veil was a "symbol of resistance", they lied, not a symbol of medieval enslavement. The death of several hundred Kurds in fighting last March could not move them to oppose Khomeini's regime, and they let pass in near silence the witchhunt directed first against the guevarist Fedayeen. When their own comrades became the target of the mullahs, they still clung to Khomeini's robes and pleaded their loyalty to the mullahs' revolution. The iSt slogan, "Down with Khomeini -- for workers

revolution in Iran", they denounced as ... "counterrevolutionary".

In July Professor Mandel of the USec still defended the US SWP's February "Victory in Iran" headline by stating, in his seminar in Boston:

"So some of our comrades are in jail -- but our organization is legal. Our paper is legal; it is sold in tens of thousands of copies like all other leftwing papers in Iran. Were they legal under the Shah?... So what you have is a step from a reactionary dictatorship, which was bourgeois, towards what you could call partial bourgeois democracy.... We said that it is the beginning of the process of permanent revolution..." (quoted in *Workers Vanguard* no 237, 3 August)

One month later the HKS, along with all other left and secular organisations, was illegal, its press banned, its leaders in jail. Is that what you call the next stage in the "process of permanent revolution", Professor Mandel?

The HKS is paying for its betrayals

Only the worst political scoundrels will pass off a period of consolidating right-wing terror as "democracy". And in this case it is the HKS members may well be paying with their lives for Mandel's professorial advice on "partial bourgeois democracy". But the HKS has also dug its own grave. When the Kurds picked up their weapons and the going got hot, the HKS unceremoniously ditched the demand for the Kurdish right of self-

"The victory of the Khomeiniled forces would substitute a theocratic bonapartist regime for that of the shah and offers nothing to the exploited masses ... it is even doubtful that the barbaric jails would improve ... for those who escape the executioners."

**-Workers Vanguard,
15 December 1978**

determination. When Fedayeen members were being arrested for their protection of women's anti-veil demonstrations and their active military assistance to the Kurds, the HKS didn't demand an international campaign in their defence. And when the assassination of Ayatollah Motahari last April was followed by massive anti-communist demonstrations, the HKS rushed into print to "deplore the assassination ... and express our sorrow" at the death of this leading member of Khomeini's inner circle.

At every critical juncture the HKS has tried to present its credentials as a loyal-social-democratic opposition to the dictatorship of the mullahs, in gambits ranging from a friendly TV debate with one of the mullahs' mouthpieces to a parliamentary-cretinist "Bill of Rights for Workers and Toilers". Steadfastly refusing to take a stand directly against Khomeini and his Islamic Republic, their constant refrain has been "We're not like some others; we're peaceful, we're no threat to you".

Hit with arrests by one of the local *komitehs*, the HKS nevertheless doggedly ran in an "election" for an "Assembly of Experts" bound by Khomeini's phony referendum for an Islamic Republic in April. Many political parties of secular groups and minorities, including all the Arab parties, boycotted this farce; but there were the "Trotskyists" of the HKS, campaigning for a seat in the Assembly of Experts alongside mullahs debating the Koranic validity of this or that clause of Khomeini's draft constitution.

Intercontinental Press (10 September) quotes long passages from the last issue of the HKS paper, *Kargar* (*Worker*), enthusing over this ludicrous spectacle. But the SWP suppresses the existence of another article in the last *Kargar* entitled "Last Minute Before Publication" which states that: "There is a very important discussion in the party whether to boycott or participate in the elections..." Apparently, campaigning for the rubber-stamp "assembly" of the Islamic Republic was so unsavoury that even an important section of the HKS balked. The same article reports: "As is well known, three of our 18 candidates boycotted the elections".

However, the official response of the HKS to their persecution has been shameful, even for reformists. In reply to the charge of "anti-Islamic activities", an open letter from two HKSers currently sentenced to life imprisonment whines (*Intercontinental Press*, 17 September): "Socialists do not fight against religion". Accused of "encouraging armed struggle against the central government", they spit on the mur-

dered Kurdish and Arab militants: "Socialists struggle peacefully through educational activities around a revolutionary program of action"! Lest there be any mistake, the same *Intercontinental Press* reprints without comment an article from the 6 September Iranian bourgeois daily, *Ettala'at* which declares that the HKS "are completely opposed to violence" and adds:

"The HKS points out that its members in Ahwaz [in Arab Khuzistan, where hundreds of Arabs have been killed in fighting with Khomeini's militia] did nothing more than sell the party's weekly newspaper, *Kargar*, and explain their political views, which had to do with suggestions for the Constitution. Moreover, the Imam's Committee officials were always informed of their activities."

Translation: Maybe the Kurds, Arab workers and other leftists are guilty but we're not. *We in the HKS tell you murderers of workers and minorities everything we do.* How grotesque! What an infamy!

We will not forget

Last year when we said "Down with the shah, Down with the mullahs!" the USec/SWP replied that this is imperialist propaganda, that we were apologists for the shah. It was so easy to go with the stream, to chant "allah akbar" rather than fight the dominance of the mosque, to sell out the oppressed in exchange for a moment of reflected popularity from a theocratic despot who had brought down a hated tyranny. It is not so easy, is it, to try to rally the masses to defend you against the mullahs you told them to trust, whom you praised as "progressive", even "revolutionary". You bowed to Khomeini, and while you were kneeling the executioner comes along and is about to cut off your heads. So now you want sympathy for your plight.

All those concerned with democratic rights must demand freedom for imprisoned Kurdish partisans, Arab oil workers, HKS members and other leftists, and all victims of Khomeini's reactionary terror. But the working class must never forget those fake-lefts who hoped to ride to popularity or power on the coattails of Islamic reaction. They are covered with blood.

Even Stalin criticised Chiang Kai-shek after the 1927 Shanghai massacre. The USec's sudden discovery that Khomeini is not so progressive after all outdoes Stalin himself in hypocrisy. Chiang Kai-shek claimed to be a revolutionary nationalist and friend of the Russian Revolution when he was courting Stalin's support. But Khomeini stated from the very beginning that he was a reactionary Islamic fundamentalist and Great Persian chauvinist who sought to crush the "satanic communists". The USec's opportunist crimes in Iran cannot be buried beneath its present (still half-hearted) criticisms and cries for international solidarity for its own supporters, who are as much victims of its own wretched line as they are of capitalist terror. The rebirth of the Fourth International depends upon burning this betrayal and its consequences into the collective memory of the Marxist movement.

(adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 239, 14 September 1979)

correction

In the article "Down with the mullahs!" (*Australasian Spartacist* no 67, September 1979) we reported several crude oil production figures in Iran as six billion barrels per day, four billion barrels and one billion respectively. These figures should have been in millions of barrels, not billions as stated.

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Revolutionary literature



Discredited cliques squabble in APTU as Bosses step up attacks at Redfern

The 23 July betrayal of postal workers at Sydney's Redfern Mail Exchange gave the Australia Post (AP) bosses a green light to go ahead with the union-busting Mail Network Plan (MNP), aimed at dismantling Redfern, the most militant centre of the Australian Postal and Telecommunications Union (APTU). When union work bans opposing the implementation of the plan were lifted in exchange for nothing but empty promises, AP, smelling victory, announced it would move rapidly "to relocate as many functions and staff as possible from Redfern".

AP has been as good as its word: now it is trying to re-route 50 percent of the mail formerly sorted at Redfern to various hastily established interim mail centres and zonal post offices. Hoping to force Redfern workers to transfer elsewhere by slashing the workload, AP is half-unloading trucks at Redfern and then sending them up to 30 miles away to unload the rest. But the new centres are unable to handle all the mail they receive, so trucks full of mail go shuttling back and forth between Redfern and Artarmon and elsewhere. Workers at the other sites are being required to do up to 20 hours overtime per week to cope with the hugely increased workload, under worse conditions than Redfern, while often Redfern workers are left with little to do.

In their hurry to press their advantage the bosses have not hesitated to create chaos in the mail system. Even the AP concedes that bypassing Redfern has created "a number of grade of service problems". But this time, of course, there are no howls about "disruption" of "essential services" from the anti-union scribblers who keep the capitalist propaganda mills churning. What's more, the MNP has nothing to do with improving the mail service; in fact it will go backward to an even less efficient system by decentralising it. The real purpose is to destroy a strategic centre of labour militancy. Once the union's strongest point has been smashed, it will be open season on wages, conditions and jobs not only throughout AP, but extending into other public industries as well.

In the July struggle, the Merv Hawkins/Noel Battese leadership of the NSW branch of the APTU was exposed as utterly worthless. This gang of yesterday's "militants" refused to mount the necessary militant strike against the MNP even though the workers understood the crucial nature of this struggle. First it imposed a pathetic, no-win "passive resistance" campaign of bans, and when AP retaliated, it betrayed even this, meekly accepting the massive stand-downs and finally capitulating altogether. All during the fight Hawkins/Battese -- as well as the union's federal secretary George Slater, who sits on the Postal Commission which runs AP! -- possessed full knowledge of the systematic re-routing of mail around Redfern using scab operations at suburban and interstate post offices, and did nothing to stop it.

The criminal passivity at all levels of the APTU leadership since July has allowed the AP bosses to practically eliminate weekday overtime, halve Sunday rosters and violate traditional seniority rights. Though reliance on overtime, a product of the bureaucracy's failure to fight for wages, provides the bosses with a tool used to divide the workforce, its elimination means a drastic slash in living standards for the low-paid postal workers. The bosses also are now transferring workers between floors at will, permitting speedup and harassment; and the "induction shift" of new workers without full union rights can now be assigned to work on all floors.

Against this background, a true "falling out among thieves" took place as the several bureaucratic cliques squared off over a number of union positions in the recent NSW branch elections. The discredited Hawkins/Battese leadership, who are aligned with the ALP-left Steering Committee,

were trounced by a "centre" ticket led by state organiser Joe Kanan and have lost control of the union executive.

Successfully exploiting both the demoralisation and the exposure of the incumbents, the Kanan ticket won big not because it offered any militant alternative to Hawkins but merely because Kanan did nothing much to speak of during the bans campaign and therefore is less tainted by the sellout -- which, however, he supported. But it's not so long ago that he ran on the Hawkins/Battese ticket himself (in October 1977), and his contribution to the MNP struggle was a notorious leaflet proposing to partially sort mail to Canberra and Wollongong, the proposal Hawkins/Battese made the basis of their own "compromise" offer to AP.

Kanan's claim to be opposed to the pro-Slater, right-wing ALP Abbott/Polson ticket, which stood on a program of "Keep out the extreme left and the communists" and "No political strikes", was fake too. In fact he did a deal with them to obtain their support for the key positions, so that the two tickets shared a number of candidates! Shopfloor opinion has it that Polson/Abbott are responsible for the spurious "Australian Communist Party" leaflets claiming Hawkins/Battese were "Communist activists", a disgusting slander of communism. As for Slater, who as a

postal commissioner naturally supports the MNP, let him be a boss if he wants -- but throw him out of the union! Predictably none of the cliques raised this elementary demand.

In fact during the campaign Kanan revealed that Hawkins (whom, incidentally, Australia Post sent on a junket last year) had used union funds for re-election propaganda -- and promptly took him before the same bourgeois courts which side consistently with Fraser against postal workers. The Hawkins/Battese-controlled executive responded by paying Hawkins' court costs out of union funds. No one of course objected to dragging the bourgeois state into the union's affairs, just as there was no objection to the election being conducted by the Commonwealth Electoral Office. These venal cliques have no interest in defending the union's independence from the same state that's trying to smash Redfern and the APTU; they accept it all!

None of these squabbling opportunists deserved a single postal worker's vote because none offered even a pretence of a program for victory in the struggle against the MNP, AP or the vicious, union-busting Fraser government. How could they have? Having sold out already, they could never raise the need for a solid and united

Continued on page six

For unconditional military defence of Cuba!

For weeks now the American media has been saturated with the fallout from the Senate blow-up over Washington's "discovery" of a 2-3,000-strong Soviet "combat brigade" in Cuba, the biggest outburst of manufactured imperialist hysteria since Lyndon Johnson's Gulf of Tonkin red herring greased the skids for full-scale US involvement in the Vietnam War. Initiated by Democrats opposed to Carter's SALT II "arms control" treaty, the "disclosures" (the CIA acidly noted it had known about the troops for a decade) have been accompanied by moves in the Senate to enforce the Monroe Doctrine with a big stick. Others have been calling for a return to the days when Kennedy "stood eyeball to eyeball" with the Russkies in the Cuban missile crisis "and they blinked first". But the 1962 crisis was for real. This is a phoney. So in his 1 October "speech to the nation" Carter implicitly accepted the presence of the Soviet contingent which had only the day before been "unacceptable". This was enough for Senate hard liners and his Republican presidential rivals to claim he "blinked". But in an ominous reminder of the US imperialist threat, he created a new Caribbean military task force and the Pentagon planned large scale provocative landing exercises at Guantanamo Bay.

For who has the genuine military base on Cuban soil? The Americans, of course, at Guantanamo Bay -- just down the Cuban coast from Santiago. How would the Pentagon like having Russian warships anchored at Norfolk, Virginia, just a stone's throw from Washington? Bluster about "Russian aggression", coming from the people who



Russian-made tanks defend Cuba against US imperialism.

launched the Bay of Pigs invasion and spun endless bizarre plots to assassinate Castro, is the height of imperialist arrogance. Irritated by the presence of the Cuban deformed workers state, the sabre-rattling senators want to turn the Caribbean back into an "American lake".

Ultimately, reconquest of all the degenerated/deformed workers states, most crucially the USSR, is the goal of all sections of the American bourgeoisie. In the face of the renewed Cold War bombast coming out of Washington, we insist that Cuba has the right and duty to take all necessary measures -- including Soviet troops, planes, missiles and anything else it can get its hands on -- to defend itself against bloodthirsty US imperialism. US out of Guantanamo! For unconditional military defence of the deformed workers states against imperialism! Down with SALT!■