



Fake left paved the way for Khomeini

Islamic terror rules Iran



The 'Islamic Revolution': Kurdish partisans being executed by Khomeini's 'Revolutionary Guards'

Down with the mullahs! For workers revolution!

Over the past two months, the attacks mounted by the Khomeini regime on its left-wing opponents and the national minorities in Iran have escalated sharply. Demonstrators are no longer being beaten up only by unofficial civilian thugs of the 'Imam's committees', but now face the heavy weapons of the 'Islamic Revolutionary Guards' (Pasdars) and the ex-shah's regular armed forces. And the beleaguered Kurdish people have been subjected both to wholesale executions before Khomeini's firing squads and to indiscriminate bombing and strafing by Phantom F-4 fighter jets and helicopter gunships.

On August 19 Khomeini delivered his 'last warning' to the parties of the Iranian left, threatening to sweep them into the 'dustbin of death'. One week earlier 50,000 people had flooded the streets of Tehran in opposition to the ayatollah's new press law which mandates prison sentences for 'insulting' Khomeini, his clergy or the Islamic Republic. The anti-government demonstrators were attacked by a screaming mob of 5000 Islamic thugs armed with clubs, pipes and chains. The next day 200,000 fanatics turned out in a government-staged show of support for the mullahs. Well-organised bands stormed the offices of left-wing parties and by late evening leftists were making plans to go underground again.

In a fire and brimstone speech before a rally of the faithful in Qom Khomeini expressed anger only that the left hadn't been driven to the

wall last February:

'Had we acted in a revolutionary manner, had we broken all the pens, had we shut down all those corrupt parties, had we set the scaffolds in the main square of each city, we would not have so much trouble today.'

The next day Khomeini called for the banning of all political parties except the one 'party of god'. 'We want to make it like the Rastakhiz', he said, referring to the only legal party set up under (and by) the shah. Three days later 22 publications were banned, including the Maoist *Toufan* and papers of the Tudeh Party, the National Democratic Front (NDF) and the fake-Trotskyist Hezb-e Kargarane Sosialist (HKS). A week later 12 imprisoned members of the HKS were sentenced to death by the 'Imam's committee' in Ahwaz.

The verdict of history is often merciless and swift. Only months ago, virtually the entire left, in Iran and internationally, was hailing Khomeini's overthrow of the butcher shah. 'Iran: A New Power is Born' screamed the headline of *Socialist Challenge*, paper of the HKS' British co-thinkers in the United Secretariat (USec), the International Marxist Group (IMG). The American Socialist Workers Party (SWP) hailed the 'Victory in Iran' which allegedly 'show[ed] the way forward for workers around the world'. And all the other fake-Trotskyists chimed in to support the 'Iranian Revolution'.

What revolution, comrades? What 'new power'? What 'victory'? Now that Khomeini has stepped up his butchery so that it can no longer be covered up or dismissed, the cynical pseudo-socialists are searching hard for excuses and trying to cover up their past positions. According to the French USec section, the ayatollah has carried out a 'coup' -- against his own regime! But the

murderous attacks on the Kurds, Arabs, Turkmenis, women, homosexuals, workers and the left did not begin yesterday: they started on the very morrow of the ayatollahs' ascension to power. If Khomeini did not set up the scaffolds in February, he made his intentions clear from the very start. New authoritarian state structures are not created overnight, even by 'imams'. However only the worst political scoundrels could pass off a period of consolidating right-wing terror as 'democracy' with a 'revolutionary dynamic' -- which is precisely what the IMG, SWP et al tried to do.

The biggest mobilisation of Khomeini's reactionary repression has been directed against the Kurdish national minority. Balkanised among several different Near Eastern states in the imperialist dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire after World War I, the Kurds have every right to form a state of their own. But the mullahs have spared no effort to maintain Iran as a prison house of oppressed nations: under the dictatorship of the Shi'ite clergy the persecution of the Kurds has been even more savage than under the Shah.

To crush the Kurdish struggle for autonomy from the Persian-chauvinist regime in Tehran, Khomeini ordered his Pasdars and the ex-shah's regular army and air force to launch a full-scale reign of terror in Iranian Kurdistan... Last March over 400 Kurds were slaughtered in Sanandaj, the provincial capital, and at least

continued on page 3

**NICARAGUA:
Another Cuba?...6**

Who warned the Iranian masses?

Khomeini's 'left' press agents...

Workers Action

'The role played by Muslim clerics in the opposition movement does not mean that it is reactionary. Many progressive movements have had priests playing a prominent role: the civil rights movement in the USA, the nationalist movement in Ireland, or even the first stages of the Russian Revolution of 1905. It means no more than that the mosques have been the only possible meeting places for the opposition....

'There is no trace of religious bigotry or backwardness in any of the main demands of the opposition.... Even the call for an "Islamic Government" does not (for the demonstrators who raise it) mean religious bigotry....

'Ayatollah Khomeiny, the chief leader of the Muslim opposition, has declared many times that he does not want the barbarities of "Islamic law" as practised in Pakistan or Saudi Arabia, where thieves are supposed to be punished by having their hands cut off; nor does he oppose equality for women.'

--Workers Action, 11-18 November 1978

'Even if the Ayatollah Khomeiny wanted to turn the clock back 1300 years -- and all the evidence, on the contrary, is that he favours a moderate bourgeois-democratic and nationalist programme -- the cries of the Shah's apologists about "Islamic reaction" would not be justified.'

--Workers Action, 9-16 December 1978

Socialist Workers Party

'It is almost as though the masses have seized on a tradition that is embodied in their history -- the tradition of religious opposition -- the one thing they know is common to all, understood by all, and hammered this religion of theirs into a mighty weapon, that has nothing to do with godliness, or holiness and everything to do with mass power.

'Propagandists for the Shah ... justify their support by evoking what they imagine to be the alternative. Images of Islamic rule, of a cruel and backward society, of hands being chopped off for theft, and women stoned to death for adultery, are added to colour the picture.

'To believe that the people of Iran are fighting and dying in their hundreds and thousands purely to replace one reactionary ruler with another is absurd.'

--Joanna Rollo, 'Iran: Beginning of a Revolution', SWP pamphlet

Workers Socialist League

'The development of the struggles in Iran has made it absolutely clear that the masses have not been engaged in some reactionary "religious" movement.

'The religious leaders within the country became discredited with their "followers" weeks ago, when they attempted to calm down the earlier violence of the opposition.

'Now only Ayatollah Khomeini retains his prestige, by virtue of the consistently anti-government propaganda he has broadcast from exile.'

--Socialist Press, 8 November 1978

'The question is -- what sort of society will be built? And the answer is by no means clear. The position at the moment is that a religious lunatic acts as one nominal head of the country whilst a dyed in the wool defender of bourgeois (that is, capitalist) normality acts as the other nominal head. Somewhere below them and as far as we can

tell on a patchy and uneven basis, committees of soldiers, workers and peasants actually run the country. An uneasy relationship exists between the three....

'Nevertheless the workers and peasants of Iran are easy prey to the ayatollah's left wing rhetoric.'

--Marxist Student, Student Bulletin of the WSL, April 1979

'Khomeini has outlived his progressive role in opposing the Shah.'

--Socialist Press, 21 March 1979

International Marxist Group

'In the political developments of the past year and a half the most striking feature has been the growing influence of the Shiite hierarchy within the mass movement.... In the mobilisations of early September, the millions who were calling for the overthrow of the Shah were also demanding the return of Khomeini and the establishment of an "Islamic government".'

'...We have already explained what really lies behind this mass movement and how nonsensical it is to characterise it as a religious movement. Regardless of whatever force that may be at its head and despite whatever demands through which it may express itself, the mass movement has absolutely nothing to do with religion of any kind, let alone a reactionary one.... To call this a "right-wing religious movement" is the height of hypocrisy and stupidity to which only the most decadent imperialists can rise.'

--Saber Nickbin, 'Iran, The Unfolding Revolution', IMG pamphlet [December 1978]

'...a gradual rift has developed within the religious hierarchy in which one wing has been forced to lean more on the masses and has moved increasingly to the left in its opposition to the Shah. Khomeini is now the leader of this section of the religious hierarchy.'

--ibid

'In Iran today, there is every prospect for the continuing development of the struggle of the masses not only against every remaining vestige of the barbaric regime of the Shah but also for a democratically organised society whose maintenance depends on the independent organisation of the toiling Iranian masses. Of course, the capitalist press would have us believe otherwise. However, no matter how hard it tries to lump the situation in Iran with other Moslem states like Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, there is no disguising that what we have seen in Iran is a national, democratic revolution....

'The picture painted by the press is that the Shah tried to modernise and westernise Iran, but he went too rapidly. Today, we are told, there is an almighty backlash against his efforts with reactionary Moslem leaders capturing the sentiment of the masses to institute a rigid religious code of life. But nothing could be further from the truth!'

'Of course religion plays a role in Iranian events. And there are even some Moslems who would like to see a society as it exists in Saudi Arabia or Pakistan where those who drink can be subject to lashes of the whip; or women who commit adultery, stoned; or thieves can have their hands cut off. But if anyone tried to substitute this code for the democratic and social demands of the masses in Iran today, they would soon get short shrift.

-- Brian Grogan, 'Insurrection in Teheran', [February 1979] emphasis in original

... or the Spartacist League?

'But what is the political basis of the current opposition to the Shah? It is not proletarian socialism. It is not even the bourgeois liberalism of Mossadegh, although liberals and leftists can be found in the movement -- and even apologising for the Muslim preachers. No, fundamentally, the current mass mobilisations against the Pahlavi family are under the ideological sway of Muslim fundamentalists whose idea of a golden age is the expansion of Islam by fire and sword in the sixth century.

'The hold of the mullahs over the Iranian masses is on the basis of a petty-bourgeois populist ideology, represented in its most radical form by Khomeini, who calls for the confiscation of the "immorally" gained wealth of the rich. The lavish ostentation of the decadent, corrupt, jet-setting Imperial Court renders this Islamic puritanism all the more appealing to the Iranian masses. This reactionary "anti-imperialism" virulently hates all aspects of Western culture which erode traditional Islamic society. The core of the mullahs' social support is thus the traditional middle classes -- merchants and artisans, the small stratum of wealthy peasants and certain backward sections of the proletariat such as casual construction labourers.

'The victory of a reactionary movement of Muslim traditionalism would represent a far-reaching historical defeat for communists, who seek a revolutionary emancipation from semi-feudal backwardness. The religious opposition stands on the heritage of the Middle Ages, opposed even to the paltry social advances for women in past decades....

'The hundreds of thousands who are now marching behind the mullahs are by no means all Muslim fundamentalists. Many are primarily motivated by hostility to the real crimes of the Shah. Many leftist workers have probably joined what they view as a potentially successful opposition to the hated regime. But the masses, particularly the workers, who are now supporting the Khomeinis and Shariatmadaris can and must be won away from the present Islamic reactionary offensive in favour of a social revolutionary opposition to the Shah....

'An authentic Trotskyist vanguard in Iran would struggle for full legal equality for women, for the right of self-determination for the national minorities, and in particular for land to the tiller to draw the peasantry to the side of the proletariat. It would raise the demands: "Smash SAVAK", "Down with the Shah", and would call for a constituent assembly based on universal suffrage, while simultaneously fighting for organs of proletarian rule (soviets) whose victory alone can guarantee the tasks of the democratic revolution.

'Only by sweeping away the social bases of the Pahlavi autocracy and of the ulema's religious obscurantism, can the proletariat win the oppressed masses to its side and emerge victorious. Smash the Pahlavis' reign of terror! For an Iranian Trotskyist Party, section of the reformed Fourth International! For a workers and peasants government!'

--'Down with the Shah! Down with the mullahs! -- Iran in Turmoil', Spartacist Britain no 5, October 1978, emphasis in original

Islamic terror...

Continued from page 1

600 more were massacred in the recent fighting. Khomeini sent Ayatollah Khalkali, popularly known as 'Judge Blood', to Kurdistan to ensure the mullahs' law and order. To date more than 100 Kurdish militants have been ordered before firing squads on charges of insurrection.

The fake left cheered loudly in February when Khomeini cancelled military contracts with the US: for them this proved his 'anti-imperialist' credentials. But Khomeini's 'anti-imperialism' was always reserved for such symbols of Western 'decadence' as alcohol, films, music and mixed bathing. Under the Islamic Republic Iranian transport planes have regularly been flying into New York's Kennedy Airport to pick up military hardware purchased by the shah.

However these supplies have been rapidly depleted by Khomeini's bloody campaigns against national minorities, striking workers and the left. So while Phantom jets were strafing Kurdish villages in August, Deputy Prime Minister Ibrahim Yazdi went to Washington to reopen some of the \$5000 million in cancelled military contracts. And the US is only too willing to rearm the 'Iranian Revolution'. Already 100 of Khomeini's officers are attending US military academies.

While the shah purchased billions of dollars worth of sophisticated weaponry which his troops were unable to master and maintain, Khomeini is interested in buying more practical items. Fancy fighter bombers may be flashy, but machine guns are much more effective when crushing strikes and demonstrations. Khomeini has also funnelled these weapons into Afghanistan where he has linked arms with the CIA and local Islamic reactionaries in an attempt to overthrow the pro-Moscow nationalist regime in Kabul.

So much for the ayatollah's 'anti-imperialism'. Today his regime's true face is starkly revealed as it relies increasingly on the shah's army and the Pasdars. It was the same forces which today make up the Pasdars who were mobilised with CIA money in 1953 by Ayatollah Kasnak to take to the streets and bring down the bourgeois nationalist Mossadeq. On that occasion the mullahs sided with imperialism to reinstate Shah Reza Pahlavi. Now, Khomeini has become a 'new shah' -- with the complicity of the fake lefts who cheered him on.

The USec's sorry record

In time-honoured reformist fashion the IMG, SWP and the rest of the fake-Trotskyist USec are

trying to cover their tracks by playing up the threat of execution hanging over twelve arrested HKS supporters. The Stalinists used the same ploy in the period after the 1973 Pinochet coup in Chile, trying to focus protests on freeing imprisoned Communist Party leader Corvalan. The Spartacist tendency also defended Corvalan -- but we pointed out that the Chilean CP's call for confidence in the 'constitutional' officer corps and support to the Allende popular front paved the way for bloody counter-revolution.

Again today we point the finger of guilt. *The HKS members are not just martyrs -- they are sacrificial victims of the USec's support for Khomeini.* USec, IMG, HKS: you have committed a crime for which you will be held responsible. You must live with it because your comrades may die for it.

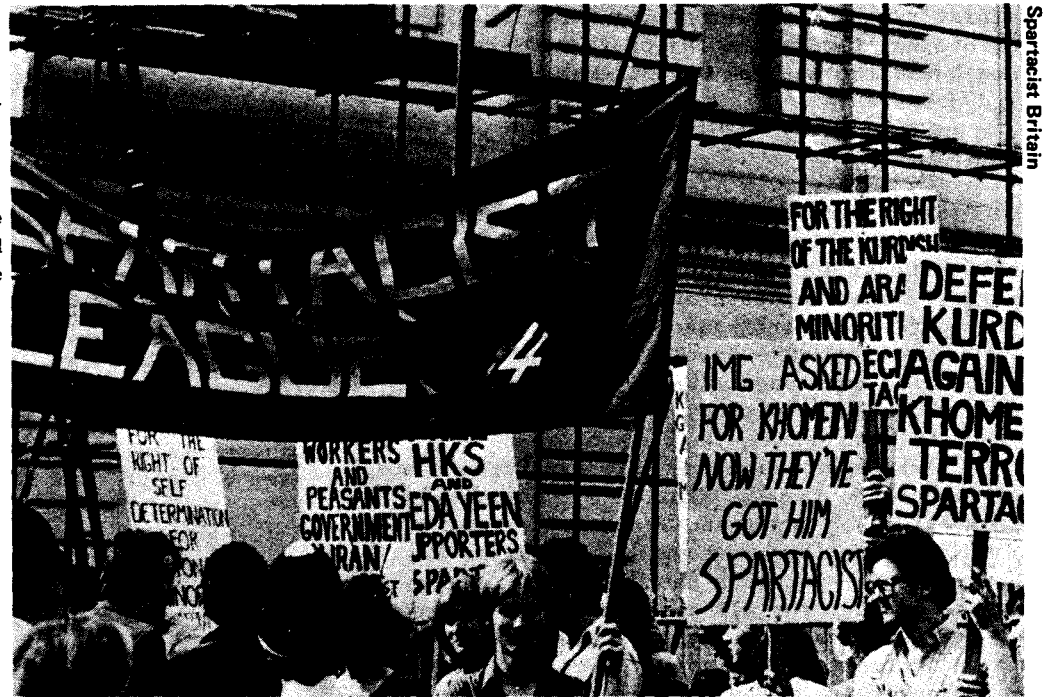
At every step the USec chieftains who masquerade as 'Trotskyist leaders' covered for unbridled Islamic reaction. While Iranian women were being forced into the suffocating and oppressive *chador* on pain of mob terror, US SWPer Cindy Jacquith was defending this symbol of women's enslavement under Islam as a 'symbol of protest' against the shah. The Islamic Republic which stood for the suppression

of the left and workers was dismissed by fellow SWP leader Barry Sheppard as 'synonymous' with a workers and peasants republic. The chants of 'Allah Akhbar' ('god is great') in the streets of Tehran were explained away by IMG leader Brian Grogan as challenges to imperialism. (Grogan proudly related how he too chanted 'god is great'.) Even photographs of Khomeinite anti-shah mobilisations were falsified by the USec's emigre Iranian press to make the masses mobilised behind the slogan 'Long live the Islamic Republic' look like they were demonstrating for a workers and peasants government! These were not 'errors in line' -- they were lies and betrayals.

Last autumn, as the mullah-led opposition gained force, the Spartacist League (SL) uniquely warned that the Islamic clerics were as reactionary as the butcher shah. When we said 'Down with the shah! Down with the mullahs!' the

IMG and their fake-Trotskyist satellites screamed that *we* were reactionary and locked arms with Islamic fanatics and the bourgeois cops to drive us off anti-shah demonstrations. A leaflet by the IMG-led Committee Against Repression in Iran (CARI) attempted to justify such police-enforced exclusion in Birmingham last December:

'... the slogan "Down with the Shah, Down with the Mullahs", which has been raised by the Spartacist League, is incompatible with partici-



London, 8 September: Spartacist contingent in Iran defence demonstration

pation in this demonstration.

'We feel that those who support this slogan should *not* participate in this demonstration because: a) This slogan contradicts our aim to solidarise with all those fighting the Shah's regime b) This slogan equates the leaders of the religious opposition, many of whom have suffered brutal repression at the hands of the regime, with the Shah himself.

'It is therefore the opinion of Birmingham CARI that the slogan "Down with the mullahs" is a *reactionary* slogan which should not be permitted on this demonstration, and from which CARI completely dissociates itself.' (emphasis in original)

And when the mullahs came to power, CARI exulted that there was no longer any need to 'campaign against repression' in Iran, and met in conference to change its name:

'For years CARI fought ... to give a voice to those fighting against the Shah's empire of repression... Now, happily, the tasks of the solidarity movement are different.' (*Socialist Challenge*, 29 March)

Was it any wonder, then, that when the mullahs' vicious repression finally caught up with the IMG's own Iranian comrades in July IMG-initiated defence demonstrations were as pitifully small and ineffective as they were (with a *maximum* of fifteen IMG supporters at the weekly pickets of Iran Air, far fewer than the numbers mobilised by the London Spartacist League)? So rooted was the IMG in its support to the mullahs that even with their comrades in jail and the Kurds being massacred, they maintained their criminal insistence that all was pretty much all right in Iran. In a 23 July letter written to us on behalf of the IMG Political Bureau, Steve Potter tried to justify IMG inaction by insisting:

'... we do not share your view that Iran is in the grip of Islamic reaction. We consider that

continued on page 4

Subscribe now!

Monthly newspaper of the Spartacist League

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Phone _____

Spartacist Britain: £1.50 for 10 issues

Joint subscription: £5 for 24 issues Workers Vanguard (fortnightly Marxist paper of SL/US) plus Spartacist Britain for duration of subscription plus Spartacist (iSt theoretical journal)

Make payable/post to: Spartacist Publications, PO Box 185, London WC1H 8JE

SPARTACIST BRITAIN

A monthly newspaper for the rebirth of the Fourth International, published for the Central Committee of the Spartacist League, British section of the international Spartacist tendency, by Spartacist Publications.

EDITORIAL BOARD: John Masters (editor), Sheila Hayward (production) Alastair Green, Alan Holford, Jim Saunders, David Strachan

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Kinsey Freese

Published monthly, except in January and in the summer, at 26 Harrison Street, London WC1. Printed by trade union labour. Subscriptions 10 issues for £1.50. International air mail rates: Europe £2.10, outside Europe £3.00. Address all letters and subscription requests to: Spartacist Publications, PO Box 185, London WC1H 8JE. To contact the Spartacist League, telephone (01) 278 2232 (London) or (021) 472 7726 (Birmingham).

Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.

Islamic terror ...

Continued from page 3

the working class and the national minorities are making big advances....'

Advances, indeed! Potter's vaunted 'Iranian Revolution' was to advance in ruthless lockstep over the following month -- with the anti-communist rampage in Tehran, the slaughter in Kurdistan, the sentencing of the HKSers to death and the banning of all opposition parties and press.

The cover-up

Finally struck in the face by the reality of the events in Iran, the IMG is now trying to shift its line -- and hoping that nobody will notice. When the death sentences against the HKS prisoners were first announced the 30 August *Socialist Challenge* proclaimed in bold letters across its back page, 'White Terror in Iran', and announced -- without explanation -- that 'Khomeini has become the Shah of Iran'.

A week later, with the HKSers granted a stay of execution, the IMG explicitly denied that Khomeini was a new shah. The 6 September *Socialist Challenge* screamed 'Defend the Iranian Revolution' -- above a photograph of Kurds being massacred! But for all their flips and flops even these inveterate tailists have been forced to recognise that the game is over for Khomeini as 'progressive'. The ayatollah's thoroughly reactionary character can no longer be denied, dismissed or ignored -- now the IMG must placate its supporters with *ex post facto* excuses, no matter how wretched and far-fetched.

Thus at an IMG rally in London on 21 September an HKS Central Committee member speaking from the platform decried Khomeini's 'barbaric reactionary regime' -- and then hypocritically tried to pin the blame on the Stalinists' support to the Islamic Republic! Speaking during the 'Marxist Symposium' later that weekend, IMG leader John Ross willingly admitted in response to a Spartacist intervention that 'Khomeini is as reactionary in his intentions as the shah', but 'not nearly as powerful ... it was a step forward'. And the 6 September *Socialist Challenge* article rehashes the hackneyed claim that the 'movement was not Khomeini'.

It won't wash, comrades! The HKS was scarcely less ardent in its support for Khomeini and his Islamic Republic than the Stalinists, focussing all its energies on amending Khomeini's theocratic 'constitution'. And, largely because of the failure of the fake-lefts to provide an alternative, the movement truly was Khomeini, mobilised behind his reactionary 'intentions' in cries for the blood of 'satanic communists' and unveiled women. The possibility of an independent proletarian-led opposition to the shah, centred among the militant oil workers whose initial strikes did not call for an Islamic Republic, never materialised precisely because there was no revolutionary pole in Iran which drew a sharp distinction between the reactionary mullah-led mass mobilisations and the democratic aspirations of the workers and oppressed.

As for John Ross's idiot caricature of Stalinist 'two-stage' dogma (first a 'weak' reactionary regime, later ... the concentration camps), this is simply grotesque. Following its necessary period of consolidation, Khomeini's regime -- based as it is on a mass reactionary mobilisation and enjoying mass-based support -- is proving to be a more powerful bastion of reaction than the brittle and despised Pahlavi dynasty.

HKS: His Holiness' Loyal Opposition

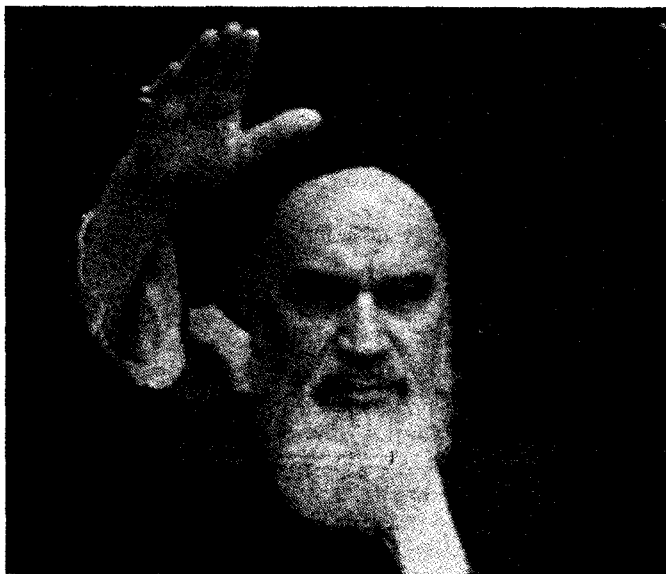
The HKS has, if anything, bowed even more disgracefully before the ayatollahs than the IMG. From their hailing of Khomeini's victory to their friendly television debate with one of the mullahs' mouthpieces to their parliamentary cretinist 'Bill of Rights for Workers and Toilers', the HKS has steadfastly refused to take a direct stand against Khomeini and his Islamic Republic. The constant refrain of these social democrats has been 'No, no, no, we're not like some other groups -- we're ever so peaceful. We're no threat to you.' And indeed they're not.

When the Arabs and Kurds picked up weapons to enter battle and the going got hot, the HKS unceremoniously ditched the demand for the right of self-determination for these oppressed

nationalities. When members of the guerrillaist Fedayeen were arrested for their protection of women's demonstrations against the veil and their active military assistance to the Kurds, the HKS didn't demand an international campaign in their defence. And when the shadowy Forghan Fighters assassinated Ayatollah Motahari in late April and the streets were filled with 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 circle.

Even after the arrest of their own comrades by one of Khomeini's komitehs the HKS ran in the early August 'election' for the 'Assembly of Experts'. The 10 September *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor* quotes long passages from the last issue of *Kargar* (8 August) before its suppression enthusing over the HKS participation in the elections. But *ICP/Inprecor* suppressed the existence of an article in the same issue of *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 of the Assembly of Experts.' Apparently, participating in the elections for the rubber-stamp 'assembly' of the Islamic Republic was so unsavoury that even a significant section of the mullah-tailing HKS balked. The *Kargar* article reports: 'As is well known, three of our 18 candidates boycotted the elections.'

The Assembly of Experts was no more a constituent assembly than is the college of cardinals. Nor was it any more democratically 'elected' than that appendage of the papacy. Given the predetermined outcome of a Shi'ite



The face of Islamic reaction

clerical dictatorship, many political parties of secular groups and minorities, including all the Arab parties and even the main liberal bourgeois party, the NDF, boycotted the election. In Iranian Kurdistan, less than ten per cent of the eligible voters cast ballots. Thus the HKS presented the ludicrous spectacle of self-proclaimed 'Trotskyists' running for a seat in the Assembly of Experts next to mullahs who were arguing over whether this or that clause of Khomeini's draft constitution was consistent with the Koran.

... and still they grovel

Many left parties and individuals, even some of the most cravenly reformist, have courageously stood their ground and fought back in the face of savage repression and imminent death. Surrounded by Franco's forces in 1937 the Spanish Communist Party -- which murdered its left-wing opponents and strangled the Spanish revolution -- went into battle rather than flee or capitulate without a fight. Following the victory of clerical-fascism in the early 1930s the Austrian social democrats organised an effective underground resistance. But the conduct of the HKS today is not even on a par with these betrayers of proletarian revolution.

After the abortive 1905 revolution in Russia had been crushed, Leon Trotsky, president of the St Petersburg Soviet, stood trial with 51 others on charges that they were 'preparing an armed uprising' against the existing 'form of government'. Facing almost certain imprisonment and possible execution, Trotsky concluded his defence:

'The power that accuses us invites you, gentlemen of the court, to recognize that the Soviet of Workers' Deputies armed the workers for the direct struggle against the existing "form of government". If I were categorically asked -- Is that true? I would answer -- Yes! Yes, I agree to accept this charge, but on one

condition....

'[I]f I am told that the pogroms, the murders, the incendiary fires, rapes -- if I am told that everything which took place in Tver, Rostov, Kursk, Sedlez -- if I am told that Kishinev, Odessa, Bialystok, constitute the form of the Russian empire, then I will acknowledge together with the prosecution that during October and November we armed immediately and directly against the form of government of the Russian empire.' (*Leon Trotsky Speaks*)

Is this the attitude of the HKS when under attack? Not a chance -- they have been too well trained in the US SWP school of pacifist social-democratic reformism.

The 17 September *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor* reprints an open letter from two HKSers currently sentenced to life imprisonment. To the charge of 'anti-Islamic activities' the HKSers whine: 'Socialists do not fight against religion. We don't think the fight in Iran is between the Marxists and the Muslims....' Accused of 'encouraging armed struggle against the central government' the HKS spits on the murdered Kurdish fighters with their answer: 'Socialists struggle peacefully through educational activities around a revolutionary program of action.'

Let there be no mistake. The HKS proudly and unabashedly states to the world that they will not fight against Khomeini. The same *ICP/Inprecor* reprints approvingly an article published on 6 September in the Iranian bourgeois daily *Ettela'at*:

'The HKS is not an armed organisation and never has been, nor are its members armed. Moreover, they are completely opposed to violence....' ... the HKS points out that its members in Ahwaz 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: 'We didn't sabotage the oil pipelines, maybe the Arab workers did. We don't engage in "anti-Islamic activities" like some other groups. We don't encourage "armed struggle against the central government" like the Kurds. Maybe they're guilty ... but we're not.' That is the disgusting cry of the HKS' innocence.

Learn the lessons of Iran!

Today the USec is trying to cover for its shameful record on Iran by evoking liberal pity over the threat of execution hanging over the HKSers. They bowed to Khomeini, and while they were kneeling the executioner came along and prepared to cut off their heads. So now they want sympathy for their plight.

All those concerned for democratic rights must demand freedom for the 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. The political scoundrels who painted the ayatollah as a 'progressive' alternative to the shah are covered with the blood of his victims.

Following the betrayals of the Comintern in China, several key cadres -- even top leaders -- of the Chinese CP broke from Stalinist treachery, assimilating the key lessons of the Chinese events and solidarising with the Trotskyist Left Opposition. Today, the balance sheet must be drawn on Iran -- on the basis of a scrupulously critical appraisal and repudiation of the liquidationist methodology of Pabloism.

But the USec's sudden discovery that Khomeini is not so progressive after all outdoes Stalin himself in hypocrisy. Even Stalin criticised Chiang Kai-shek after he slaughtered the Communists in the 1927 massacre. But Chiang claimed to be a revolutionary nationalist and friend of the Russian Revolution when he was courting Stalin's support. 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 criminal opportunism of the USec over Iran cannot be buried beneath its present (still half-hearted) criticisms and cries for international solidarity with its Iranian 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 the lessons of Iran -- and of the betrayals of the United Secretariat -- into the collective memory of the Marxist movement.

adapted from *Young Spartacus* no 75, September 1979

The burial of Mountbatten

The long military career of Earl Mountbatten of Burma -- a man who had a hand in virtually every major British imperialist crime from World War II onward -- ended dramatically and with a certain appropriateness on August 27. Mountbatten was killed at the age of 79 when a Provisional IRA bomb blew his expensive pleasure craft out of the water off the coast of County Sligo in the Republic of Ireland. Two of his relatives and a young boatman also died in the blast. It was the most spectacular assassination of a prominent ruling-class figure at least since Franco's handpicked successor, Spanish premier Carrero Blanco, was sent five stories into the air by a Basque ETA bomb in Madrid in 1973.

Six hours later the IRA struck again, killing 18 soldiers from the British army's Second Parachute Regiment in a double ambush at Warrenpoint in Northern Ireland. This is the same army regiment which murdered 13 unarmed Irish Catholic civilians in the 1972 Bloody Sunday massacre in Derry. The land-mine attack, whose victims included the Commanding Officer of the Queen's Own Highlanders, was the biggest single military coup for the IRA since 1920 when they got 18 of the infamous hoodlum British 'auxiliaries', the Black and Tans.

Bourgeois press hysteria focussed on the death of Mountbatten -- for this man was one of their own. 'Murdering Bastards!' screeched anti-IRA headlines in the popular gutter press. More sophisticated bourgeois journals served up purple-prose paeans to the life and works of this 'noble with a common touch'. 'The light that was so brutally snuffed out by the work of squalid trolls [...] was one of a radiance beyond their ken', read a typical eulogy in the Tory *Spectator*. 'There can never be another, for the mould into which fate poured the rare metal, of which Mountbatten was made, is broken now.'

Page after page of such obnoxious drivel accompanied reports of Margaret Thatcher's symbolic flying visit to the IRA 'capital' of Crossmaglen in Northern Ireland and emergency consultations on cross-border security with Irish prime minister Jack Lynch. On September 5 Mountbatten was given a ceremonial funeral procession through the streets of London which was matched in pomp and grandeur only by the funerals of Winston Churchill and past British monarchs.

Louis Mountbatten was the last Viceroy and first Governor-General of India; a member of the House of Lords; that offensive holdover from feudalism; former Admiral of the Fleet, First Sea Lord and Chairman of the United Kingdom Defense Staff, as the press ceaselessly noted. He was also a great grandson of Queen Victoria and beloved of the present queen herself ('Uncle Dickie' she called him). Indeed, due to the inbreeding of the crowned heads of Europe, Mountbatten -- whose family line went back to Charlemagne -- was also related to Tsar Nicolas II, Kaiser Wilhelm II, Alfonso XIII of Spain, Ferdinand of Romania and the monarchs of Sweden, Greece, Norway and Yugoslavia. As a child he was particularly close to the children of the last Tsar of all the Russias.

But Mountbatten was no aristocratic clown or chinless wonder. He was an effective and char-

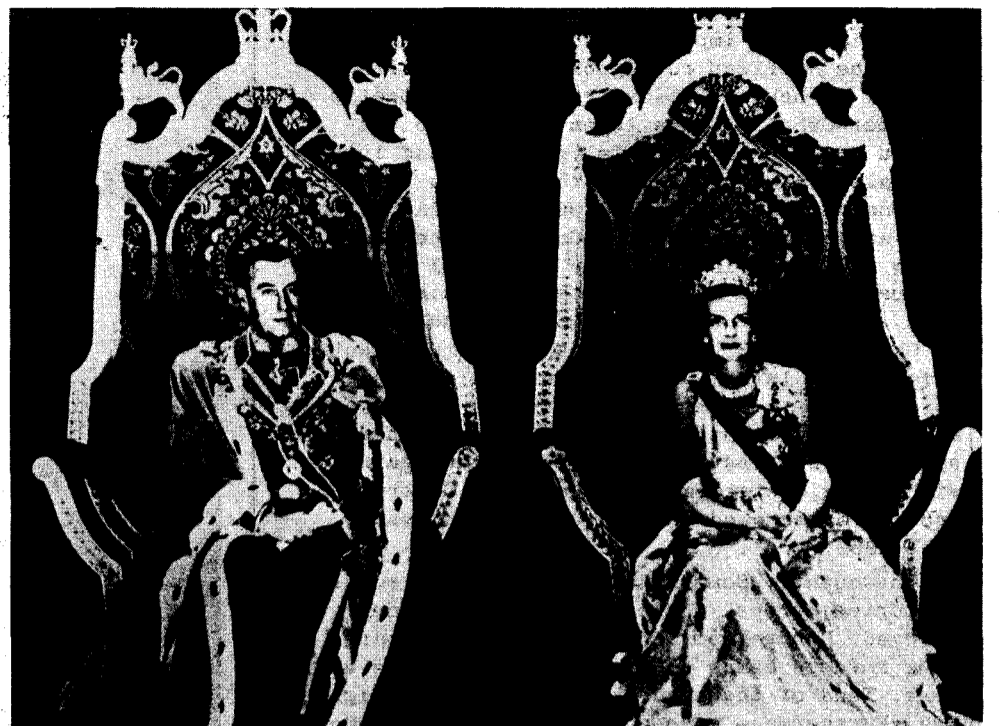
ismatic commander for counterrevolutionary British imperialism. He made his mark both as a military man and especially as an administrator for the declining British Empire who was shrewd enough to angle for neo-colonial solutions after World War II. During the Second World War Mountbatten sometimes displayed more ruling-class arrogance than military talent. (He reportedly told Churchill in 1943, 'I suffer from the congenital weakness of believing I can do anything.') As Chief of Combined Operations he engineered the disastrous allied imperialist adventure at Dieppe. On the other hand, he boasted that his finest wartime act had been to talk Roosevelt into postponing the opening of the second front in Europe.

This paid off handsomely for American imperialism, as Russia bore the brunt of the German attack and the US Army came only at the end to pick up the pieces.

In the final years of the war Mountbatten was Supreme Commander for Southeast Asia. Under his command allied forces butchered 100,000 Japanese soldiers in Burma alone. The old soldier continued his war against Japan to the end of his days, leaving explicit instructions that the Japanese government was *not* to be invited to send representatives to his funeral. But by far the most gruesome consequence of his Asian Command -- something which goes virtually unmentioned in imperialist histories of the war -- was the death by starvation of literally hundreds of thousands of Bengalis as a direct outcome of British military policy.

Mountbatten was often considered a liberal by the British establishment because of his role as an architect of neo-colonialism in India. Yet throughout his career in the service of the dying Empire he was simply smarter than most, no less ruthless or dedicated. More than any of his contemporaries he upheld the model of lofty arrogance aspired to by ambitious members of the English aristocracy. This ruthless architect of mass murder almost never dirtied his *own* hands with the blood of his victims.

Thus, he returned Vietnam to the French for further suppression following World War II. As Viceroy of India he oversaw the independence of the country and the creation of Pakistan through partition in the late 1940s. Decades of imperialist 'divide-and-rule' terror laid the basis for the massive communal bloodletting and population transfers which accompanied the partition of India. But the ever-suave Mountbatten could claim that this was none of *his* doing. (Indeed, the first post-independence Indian government chose him as Governor-General and its present-day successor declared an official week of



Mountbatten as last Viceroy of British colonialism in India, enthroned along with his wife

mourning for his death.) In 1956 it was put about that he only 'reluctantly' supplied British ships for the disastrous attack on Suez to oppose Nasser's nationalisation of the canal.

Members of the post-war Labour cabinet are said to have had high hopes of recruiting Mountbatten on his return from India -- something which speaks volumes for the obscene genuflections of British social democracy before royalty. Current Labour leader James Callaghan naturally joined the chorus of condemnation of the assassination.

Revolutionaries, however, have not the slightest regret over the violent death of this ardent defender of imperialism's bloody rule. The crimes which Mountbatten committed for his class will only be avenged by proletarian revolution -- and his assassination by the IRA does nothing to bring nearer that day. Nor does it in any way aid the working people of Northern Ireland, victimised by imperialist repression and sectarian-communal terror. Nevertheless, it is simple justice that this butcher did not die peacefully of old age in his bed.

Following the killing, the Provisional IRA stated that 'Mountbatten's execution was a discriminate act in that it was against a leading figure' (*Irish Times*, 1 September). This is true -- and while criticising such individual terrorism as a misguided, ineffective act of despair, we defend against state repression those who were responsible for the death of the Earl. Likewise with those who ambushed the paratroopers at Warrenpoint. Yet these actions stand in sharp contrast to the criminal *indiscriminate* terror which the IRA has also willingly engaged in over the past decade, including attacks on innocent Irish Protestant workers and British civilians.

Even when the IRA confines its military tar-

continued on page 10

Spartacist League Public Meetings

NICARAGUA

Nicaragua: Another Cuba?

-- What strategy for revolution in Latin America?

speaker: Len Michaelson

London

Wednesday 10 October
1.00pm
Room S175, St Clements Building
London School of Economics
(Sponsored by LSE Spartacist Society)

for more information ring (01) 278 2232

IRAN

For workers revolution in Iran!

-- Khomeini slaughters Kurds with the shah's army.
For the Kurds' right to secede!

-- The mullahs' left-wing apostles paved the way for Khomeini's reaction

speaker: Doug Hunter

London

Tuesday 16 October
7.30pm
Conway Hall
Red Lion Square
(Holborn Tube)

for more information ring (01) 278 2232 (London) or (021) 472 7726 (Birmingham)

Birmingham

Wednesday 17 October
1.00pm
Ctte Room 2
Birmingham University
Student Union

Friday 19 October
7.30pm
Rm 25, Central Hall
Corporation St
Birmingham B4

When 100,000 jammed Managua's newly-named Plaza of the Revolution in July to cheer the Sandinista-led overthrow of the blood-drenched Somoza dynasty installed by the US Marines 45 years ago, revolutionaries all over the world cheered with them. For two decades, since the imperialist defeat at the Bay of Pigs, the American ruling class and its local *gorillas* -- haunted obsessively by the spectre of 'another Cuba' -- have taken a terrible vengeance against the workers, peasants and intellectuals of Latin America: the Marines invading the Dominican Republic in 1965, the CIA hunting down and assassinating Che Guevara, the overthrow of bourgeois democracy in Brazil and Uruguay followed by savage terror against the left, the murder of 30,000 workers and leftists in Chile in 1973, of thousands more in Argentina a few years later. But when butcher 'Tacho' Somoza fled to Miami along with the entire command of his National Guard, it had happened again -- the first popular revolution against a right-wing dictatorship since Fidel Castro's Rebel Army marched into Havana on New Year's Day, 1959.

The country Somoza left behind is in ruins -- factories, crops, whole towns have been destroyed. Hundreds of thousands are returning from refugee camps to find neither housing nor work. Tens of thousands have died in the fighting. Furthermore, the destruction of the Somoza regime has severely damaged the Nicaraguan bourgeois order. Somoza had more reason than Louis XIV to have said, 'L'etat, c'est moi'. Not only was the Somoza family a major component of the ruling class, owning a substantial chunk of key sectors of the economy, the state power had become reduced to Somoza's personal praetorian guard. The civil war shattered it.

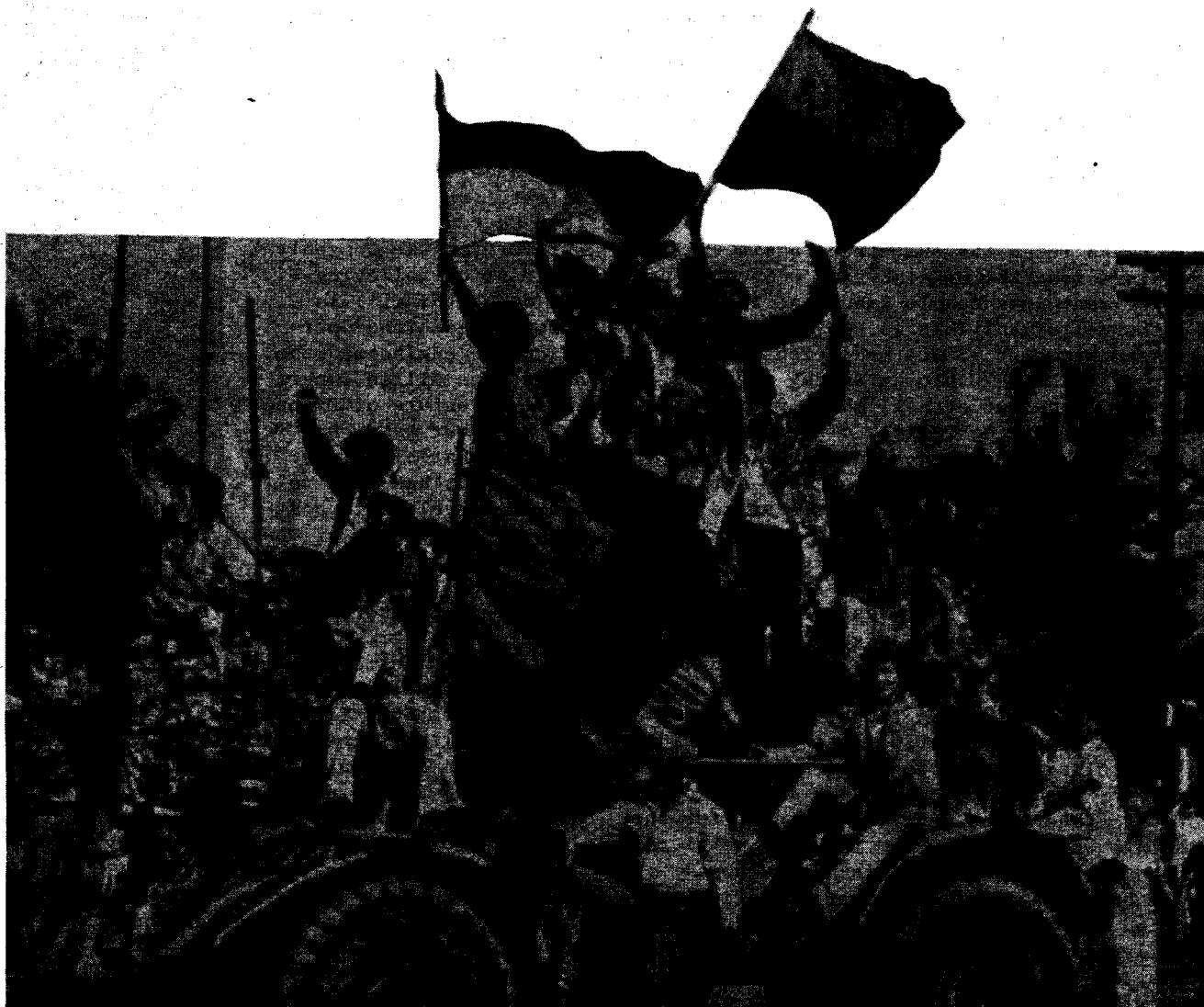
Sandinista assurances to the US State Department that 'honest and patriotic' Guard officers would be integrated into a new national army, with no reprisals against any of them, hardly reassured the murderous *Somocistas* quaking in fear of the blood fury of their victims. The popular cry for vengeance was expressed by one young woman who saw Somoza's troops machine-gun her elderly father and mother: 'They should kill every one of them. They shouldn't let one of them live, but they shouldn't kill them with just one shot, they should kill them so they suffer' (*New York Times*, 3 August). So when their chief fled, the Guard crumbled into a mass of panicked refugees. The sight of Somoza's troops abandoning their guns, stripping off their uniforms and piling into helicopters to escape recalls similar scenes during the fall of Saigon. The initial release of 269 former National Guards on 13 August with promises to release another 5000 represents a cruel betrayal of the Nicaraguan people. Hopefully at least some of the *Somocista* butchers will be tried for their atrocious crimes.

Another Cuba?

Would Nicaragua become another Cuba? No wonder this was the question everyone was asking -- not only in the headlines of the bourgeois press and in the Pentagon's war rooms, but among militants throughout Latin America. Now luxuriating in a mansion in military dictator Alfredo Stroessner's Paraguay, Somoza not surprisingly wailed that 'Nicaragua is openly under the influence of Communist leaders' (*International Herald Tribune*, 23 August). Far from being openly communist, four of the five leading members of the ruling junta are openly bourgeois; only one is a Sandinista. Nor are the Sandinistas themselves communists.

The Frente Sandinista de Liberacion Nacional (FSLN) was founded in 1962 as an amorphous petty-bourgeois radical Jacobin nationalist grouping much like Fidel Castro's 26th of July Movement before it took power. 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, but was militarily largely quiescent. The third -- and predominant -- force, the *terceristas*, have an openly bourgeois nationalist programme, with a leadership closely united by familial ties to the richest anti-Somoza business circles. Where the GPP and Proletarian Tendency advocate the Stalinist dogma

NICARAGUA: Another Cuba?



Victorious Sandinista guerrillas entering Managua

For a workers and peasants government - not Sandinista/bourgeois junta!

of 'two-stage' revolution, at least positing the struggle for socialism at some future (indefinite!) time, the *terceristas* opted for a 'one-stage' political revolution to replace Somoza with a coalition of the different sectors of the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie.

The patently petty-bourgeois character of the FSLN has not prevented the fake-Trotskyists of the United Secretariat (Usec) from enthusing over a seemingly inevitable victory for socialism in Nicaragua with almost as much certainty as the deposed dictator decries one. They hail the FSLN as the 'vanguard ... of the Nicaraguan people' in a 20 June Usec statement and later (in a 15 August statement) solidarise with Castro's 'Cuban road' as 'the way for the Nicaraguan toilers to consolidate their victory'. While the dissident Usec 'Bolshevik Faction' of Nahuel Moreno has attempted to play the role of a loyal opposition to the FSLN, the rest of the Usec has so completely and cravenly capitulated to the Sandinistas that they even solidarised with the regime's deportation of non-Nicaraguan members of the Moreniste Bolivar Brigade for allegedly refusing to submit to FSLN military discipline (see article next page)!

Is Nicaragua on the 'Cuban road'? And, more importantly, is this the road proletarian revolutionists should be advocating? The answer to the first question is as yet unclear; to the second, a definitive no.

Unlike Iran, where the clearly reactionary religious character of the Khomeinist opposition to the shah allowed revolutionaries to predict beforehand the nature of the new regime, Nicaragua's future political and economic course is, at least from afar, not categorically predetermined. The destruction of Somoza's National Guard, just like the destruction of Batista's Cuban army 20 years before, opened up a period

in which the class nature of the emerging state is not yet fundamentally determined. The power vacuum arising both from the gravely disrupted condition of the bourgeois order and the weakness of the working class, lacking consciousness and organisation, has given the petty-bourgeois layers and their radical Sandinista representatives exceptional social weight and autonomy from the two counterposed class camps of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

The Sandinista commanders pledge to respect private property -- but so did the initial government of the Cuban Revolution. Nor is the preponderance of bourgeois representation in the new government decisive. The ministry is not where the real power lies. Castro, too, was not a member of the first post-Batista government; he just happened to be commander of the Rebel Army. If the Sandinista leaders have been generous in allowing their bourgeois allies ministerial portfolios, they have not allowed them to take command of the guns.

The shadow of Cuba

The Cuban Revolution therefore definitely casts its long shadow over Nicaragua. As we wrote three years ago:

'... what existed in Havana following the overthrow of Batista was an inherently transitory and unstable phenomenon -- a *petty-bourgeois government* which was not committed to the defense of either bourgeois private property or the collectivist property forms of proletarian class rule ... such a regime was temporarily autonomous from the bourgeois order -- that is, a capitalist state, namely armed bodies of men dedicated to defending a particular property form, did not exist in the Marxist sense....' ('Guerrillas in Power', *Workers Vanguard* no 102, 26 March 1976)

On first coming to power the 26th of July Movement guerrillas established a coalition government with old-time bourgeois politicians who in fact held the top posts: Manuel Urrutia as president, Jose Miro Cardona as prime minister and Roberto Agramonte as foreign minister. But Castro's initial reforms, especially the agrarian reform of June 1959, provoked a violent reaction from US imperialism, which launched an economic boycott and encouraged domestic counterrevolutionaries. Castro in turn reacted with increasingly radical measures, which drove away all bourgeois support. Sensing the wrath of Yankee power, the Cuban bourgeoisie in large part fled to the US, expecting to return with the Marines.

To defend itself against US imperialism and the Cuban bourgeoisie's economic sabotage, in the late summer of 1960 the Castro regime expropriated capitalist property, marking a break with the capitalist-imperialist order. In carrying out this social transformation, the petty-bourgeois radicals of the 26th of July Movement also transformed themselves into a Stalinist bureaucracy of a deformed workers state, politically expropriating and oppressing the Cuban workers and peasants. As we pointed out:

'... the Russian Stalinist bureaucracy is in one of its central aspects -- ie the transmission belt for the pressure of the world bourgeois order on a workers state -- a petty-bourgeois formation. The decisive section of the Castroites could make the transition to the leadership of a deformed workers state because in the absence of the egalitarianism and proletarian democracy of a state directly won by the working people, they never had to transcend or fundamentally alter their own petty-bourgeois radical social appetites, but only to transform or redirect them.' (Preface to *Marxist Bulletin* no 8, 'Cuba and Marxist Theory' [1973])

This analysis, first developed in 1962 by the precursor of the international Spartacist tendency, the later-expelled Revolutionary Tendency of the US SWP, has withstood the test of two decades. Any impartial observer (and even Castro himself) today accepts the fundamental identity between Castro's Cuba and the other deformed workers states, graphically exemplified by Castro's loyal subservience to the Kremlin. The complete absence of workers democracy, the suppression of homosexuals, the advocacy of 'peaceful coexistence' with imperialism and the 'peaceful road to socialism', Castro's assistance to the reactionary Ethiopian Derg in its genocidal onslaught against the Eritrean people -- these are the treacherous hallmarks of Stalinism. At best, the victory of a petty-bourgeois nationalist guerrilla movement can lead only to the creation of a narrowly nationalist, bureaucratically deformed workers state; more likely, it leads to the creation of new bourgeois bonapartist regimes integrated into the imperialist system, as in the case of Ben Bella's Algeria, Neto's Angola etc.

Yet even now the USec refuses to call for political revolution and the formation of a Trotskyist party in Cuba. The SWP, whose liquidationist response to the Cuban Revolution marked its degeneration from Trotskyism to Pabloism, has in recent years gone all out on a lavish and adulatory press relations campaign for Fidel, uncritically reprinting speeches in favour of 'peaceful coexistence' and white-washing all of his betrayals, even to the point of lauding the 'deepseated revolution' of the blood-soaked clique of Ethiopian colonels (see Ernest Harsch, *The Ethiopian Revolution*).

Meanwhile the erstwhile cafe guerrillas of the Mandeliste majority in the USec have discreetly sought to distance themselves from Castro, bemoaning his 'errors' or harking back to the so-called 'heroic years' before Che's death and Castro's support to the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. But as early as 1961 the vaunted Che himself promoted 'peaceful coexistence' with the offer of a 'guarantee that no arms will be transported from Cuba to be used for fighting in any Latin American country' (quoted in John Gerassi, *The Great Fear in Latin America*, 1965). Trotskyists are steadfast in our defence of the gains of the Cuban Revolution, but the 'Cuban road' is the road to Stalinist betrayal.

... and its lessons for imperialism

The chief actors in the overthrow of Somoza have, each in their own way, drawn some lessons
continued on page 8

USec knifes 'comrades' in the back

Sandinistas expel Bolivar Brigade

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 programme 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 to the left could well be the first victims of their own illusions.

The FSLN leaders may themselves believe that their programme of 'popular-democratic revolution' 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 don'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 recent land reform.



Members of the Bolivar Brigade

While its scope is sweeping, affecting as much as 60 per cent 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 labour group organising 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).

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. The incident was described by *Time* magazine (3 September) at the end of an article praising the 'merciful revolution' that was 'steering a middle course':

'Surprisingly, the first serious threat came from the extreme left. Dissatisfied with the government's plans for building a mixed economy melding public and private enterprise, 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 revolutionary government reacted by ordering its armed forces to put the Trotskyites on a plane to Panama.'

According to the *Washington Post* (21 August), banners at the 15 August 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'.

USec joins anti-communist witchhunt

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 vast majority of the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat (USec) thought of it. The most despicable response came from the USec's US affiliate, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). The SWP did not protest at all. In fact, it issued four different 'explanations' of the Sandinista repression against the ostensibly Trotskyist leaders of the Simon Bolivar Brigade, one of which consisted of quoting without comment a statement by the Nicaraguan ministry of the interior. Moreover, the SWP's explanations 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 entitled 'New US Propaganda Drive Against Nicaragua' states:

'The Simon Bolivar Brigade was organized by the Colombian PST (Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores -- Socialist Workers Party), under the direction of an international grouping known as the "Bolshevik Faction", led by Nahuel Moreno....

'In the case of the Simon Bolivar Brigade, the Bolshevik Faction never consulted the Fourth International about this project or about the policies the Brigade followed. These policies ran counter to the policies decided by the leadership bodies of the Fourth International.

'Through the Simon Bolivar Brigade the Bolshevik Faction led young militants from several Latin American countries -- people who wanted to help the fight against Somoza -- into a sectarian adventure. 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.

'This grotesque idea -- that people from the outside can maneuver to capture the leadership of the revolution from those who have emerged in the course of the struggle -- has nothing whatever to do with Trotskyism, revolutionary socialism.' (*Militant*, 31 August)

The SWP's response to the expulsion of the Bolivar Brigaders was the most naked stab in

continued on page 8

Bolivar Brigade...

Continued from page 7

the back by a section of the USec since its supporters in Portugal found themselves on opposite sides of the barricades in the summer of 1975. 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. But at most they clucked their tongues at the FSLN-ordered repression. Thus the newspaper of the French Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (LCR), *Rouge* (24-30 August) felt compelled 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 favourably on his revolutionary credentials.

As to the expulsions themselves, the LCR

statement said only that 'It is rather unlikely, whatever may be the political differences, that 60 foreigners could pose a real problem for a revolutionary leadership enjoying immense popular support.' Supposedly, then, if leftists did pose a real threat to the Sandinista regime, the LCR would begin foaming at the mouth like the rabid SWP! By the next issue, *Rouge* (31 August-6 September) could only bring itself to complain that 'the terms in which the Nicaraguan government decreed the expulsion of "foreign" militants constitute a disturbing precedent'. Finally, a resolution by the LCR Central Committee (published in the 7-13 September *Rouge*) screwed up its courage to utter the mildest of formal protests, declaring that the expulsions themselves 'constitute an unacceptable precedent'. Anyone counting on 'militant solidarity' against anti-communist repression had better forget about the LCR. And about the British International Marxist Group as well, which simply issued a slightly modified version of the first LCR statement.

But while *Rouge* was gradually escalating its adjectives from 'disturbing' to 'unacceptable', its man in Managua was taking a sharply different tack. According to the USec's *Interconti-*

mental Press/Inprecor (24 September), a USec delegation including LCR Latin American 'expert' Jean-Pierre Beauvais (as well as Hugo Blanco, Barry Sheppard, Charles-Andre Udry 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:

'In a political and economic situation that required the greatest possible unity in struggle, the FSLN was right to demand that the non-Nicaraguan members of this group -- which defined itself above all as a military organization -- leave the country.'

It is not reported whether Blanco/Sheppard/Udry/Beauvais et al received thirty pieces of silver, although they clearly hope to cash in on their perfidy by becoming the authorised cheerleaders for the FSLN. But the roots of such treachery are political and go back more

Nicaragua...

Continued from page 7

in seeking to avoid another Cuba. About two years ago, the *terceristas* decided that voicing support to socialism a la Cuba was a fundamental barrier to a broad alliance against Somoza. The anti-Somoza bourgeoisie, a large majority of the Nicaraguan capitalist class, responded favourably and has since tried to domesticate the Sandinista guerrillas. Likewise, in many Washington circles it is now recognised that the US' blind hostility to Castro in 1959 helped drive him toward the very expropriations it sought to forestall. In contrast, today the American rulers seem to have opted for the carrot instead of the stick.

At first, fear of Castroite guerrillas coming to power caused the US to support Somoza long after it was clear that his National Guard was fighting literally the entire Nicaraguan people. But when it became obvious that only direct military intervention could save Somoza, the Carter administration changed its tack and has since taken a conciliatory line toward the revolutionary junta. When veteran Sandinista and minister of the interior Tomas Borge states he's never said he is a Marxist, Washington is now willing to let him prove it.

Not that the American rulers are about to give the Sandinistas a blank cheque. Washington's delay in agreeing to a request for weapons aid prompted the famous guerrilla chief and new deputy interior minister 'Commander Zero' (Eden Pastora) to threaten that the junta would go to the 'socialist bloc' for arms, although this statement was later repudiated by Borge.

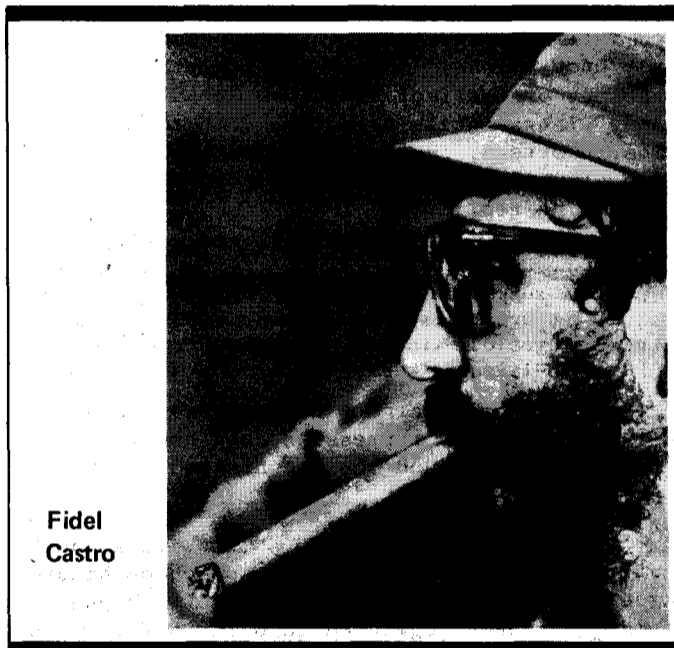
Having learned the lesson of Cuba, US aid is now used as a weapon against social revolution in Nicaragua. As US Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher put it to a Congressional committee, 'With aid the chances will be enhanced it will move in the direction of a democratic regime.... If we walk away we will almost assure what we don't want, a Communist or Cuban regime' (*New York Times*, 12 September). The junta's proclamation of a 'Bill of Rights' in August and the subsequent reappearance of the major bourgeois daily, *La Prensa*, was accepted as a measure of the junta's 'good faith' and concern for 'pluralist democracy' and there followed a wave of loans and grants from the US, the International Monetary Fund and other imperialist financial combines.

The willingness of Yankee imperialism to deal with the Nicaraguan regime will strongly affect its course and may prove to be decisive in bringing about the reconstruction of a state committed to defending capitalist property forms. This only serves to underscore the flagrantly counterrevolutionary role of the SWP/USec, who have made their central slogan in the US the call for 'massive US aid to Nicaragua'. This is 'State Department socialism' at its crassest -- backing the liberal imperialist effort to buy off the Sandinistas!

The future of the Nicaraguan revolution

But however shrewd the policy of Washington,

the fate of the Nicaraguan regime will also depend on the development of the class struggle within Nicaragua. A decisive section of the Sandinista cadre along with their present bourgeois allies may reconstitute a bourgeois state under the sway of Yankee imperialism. But that is not the only possibility. An upsurge of militant social struggle from below (eg peasant land seizures, popular vengeance against Somoza's Guardsmen), especially if it provokes a hostile reaction from the US, can pressure a section of the petty-bourgeois radical Sandinistas to the left, leading to bureaucratically



Fidel Castro

deformed social revolution. Alternatively such an upsurge, particularly in the absence of conscious revolutionary leadership, could well result in a bloody counterrevolution by the local bourgeoisie in alliance with the US imperialists.

There is another road, along which lies the real hope for the victory of the Nicaraguan revolution: the emergence of the working class as an independent, conscious contestant for power. The creation of independent organs of workers power (eg workers militias, factory committees, soviets) would reciprocally lay the basis for the rapid development of a revolutionary proletarian (Leninist) party. The development of proletarian revolutionary forces would threaten the petty-bourgeois bonapartist appetites of *all wings of the Sandinista leadership*; a section of this petty-bourgeois movement would likely go over to the workers and its vanguard, while other elements would retreat into the camp of bourgeois reaction.

The present 'unity' of the anti-Somoza revolution will be shattered, one way or another, by class conflict. The overthrow of Somoza in itself poses the radical redistribution of capitalist property in Nicaragua. This bloodsucking billionaire owned more than 30 per cent of all the arable land in the country, along with a gigantic cattle herd. He had the controlling share of the national airline, owned the country's biggest shipping company, its biggest meatpacking operation, some construction companies and lots more -- all now taken over by the new regime. What is to be done with these

vast holdings will be an area of major conflict between the different social classes now supporting the Sandinista/bourgeois junta.

While the junta in Managua preaches the virtues of reformed capitalism, the picture in the country's second largest city, Leon, has been rather different. This city fell to the Sandinista forces in June, and the more leftist GPP faction predominates. In what the Spanish magazine *Cambio 16* terms 'el Leon comunista', food and other supplies are freely distributed through block committees, money has been taken out of circulation, commercial transactions are forbidden and labour is commandeered.

Given the near-total economic devastation caused by the civil war, rationing and other forms of 'military communism' are not necessarily attacks on the capitalist system. But many of the Sandinista militants, workers and poor look upon 'el Leon comunista' not as a post-war emergency measure, but as a model for socialist reconstruction of the country. The *New York Times* (29 July) quotes one of Leon's leftist leaders who criticises the Managua regime as reformist and states, 'there are a lot of people here who would like this to be a Marxist state'. He is unquestionably speaking the truth.

Workers to power! For a Trotskyist party!

The masses of Nicaragua cannot and do not want to live in the old way. But to produce a socialist revolution, the radicalised masses must be politically led and organised by a revolutionary vanguard party, centrally based on the proletariat, and with an international perspective. Stalinist 'socialism in one banana republic' -- the best possible outcome in the absence of such a Leninist (Trotskyist) party -- can only be an obstacle to the development of socialist revolution in Latin America.

The immediate task facing a revolutionary party in Nicaragua is to oppose the efforts of the Sandinista/bourgeois junta to restore a capitalist state. The Sandinista leaders have already displayed the bonapartist desire to secure a monopoly of military power. One of the first acts of the revolutionary junta was to order all civilians to turn in the guns many acquired when the Guardsmen abandoned their weapons *en masse*; this was followed by the expulsion of the Bolivar Brigade. An urgent demand a revolutionary party in Nicaragua must raise is that the toiling masses keep their arms, and that workers militias be established independently of the Sandinista/bourgeois regime.

A revolutionary party would agitate for *popular tribunals* to try the National Guard criminals hiding in the churches and Red Cross camps. It would demand a radical egalitarian *agrarian revolution*, the expropriation of industry and commerce and the reconstruction of the economy on a socialist basis. Expropriation must not be limited only to Somoza's property. Above all, Trotskyists must agitate for a government excluding the anti-Somoza bourgeoisie and based on the democratic organs of the working class and its peasant allies. Such a revolutionary struggle obviously cannot be confined to Nicaragua alone, but must strive for a Socialist United States of Latin America.
adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 238, 17 August 1979

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 programme that led to the destruction of the Fourth International as the organised 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.

US SWP: Reformist through and through to the core

We will have a good deal to say below about the charlatan-adventurer Nahuel Moreno and his pseudo-leftist Bolshevik Faction. But as regards the US SWP, for anyone who still had doubts, the blow-up 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. Here it is spelled out so that even the most wilfully 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 programme and a call on the imperialists to 'aid', ie strangle, the revolution.

Having embarked this year on a campaign of unbridled adulation of the Castro regime in Havana the SWP is treating Sandinista Nicaragua as if it were already the '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 internationalising the revolution and instituting soviet democracy. 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 mobilise the working masses around demands which go beyond the democratic programme of overthrowing the Somoza dictatorship.

Not only is the SWP opposed to such 'irresponsible' acts of the Simon Bolivar Brigade as mobilising 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 the articles on the Sandinista revolution appearing in the main USec organs, not one so much as mentions the Liga Marxista Revolucionaria ('sympathising section of the Fourth International').

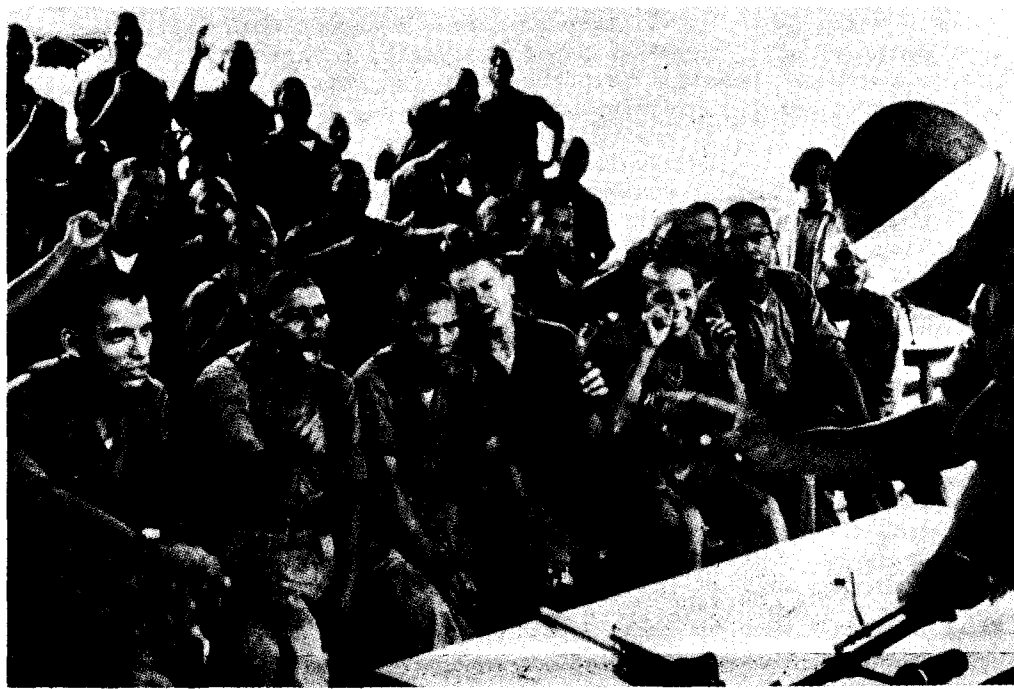
According to the SWP, 'The power that exists today in Nicaragua is a revolutionary power' (*Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, 3 September). And this phrase should not be mistaken as some kind of 'critical support' to the FSLN. The classic formula for such a treacherous policy towards a bourgeois 'revolutionary power' was provided by Stalin in March 1917, before Lenin returned from exile and presented his April Theses calling for 'all power to the soviets'. The Bolsheviks would support the Provisional

Government, wrote *Pravda* under the editorship of Stalin and Kamenev, '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 tailists give a blank cheque: '... 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'.

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':

'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



Butcher Somoza's National Guard, trained and equipped by US imperialism

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).

Then 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).

And the SWP's central political demand -- for 'massive US aid to Nicaragua' -- is flatly counterrevolutionary. 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. These State Department socialists are literally picking up the line of the State Department, which is telling Congress that if the US does not provide aid, Nicaragua may well 'go Communist'.

Behind 'humanitarian' dollars there is always politics. Aid to rebuild what -- a capitalist or collectivised economy? And from whom? What we see here is the SWP's touching faith in the reformability of American imperialism: it is their appeal for federal troops to Boston to 'protect' black school 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 programme of permanent revolution, going beyond the bourgeois-democratic programme of the FSLN to mobilise 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. Nor will they get it from the Mandel wing of the USec, which is only one step behind the SWP in its embracing of the FSLN.

Morenoite charlatans and adventurers

So what about the Simon Bolivar Brigade and its parent, Moreno's Bolshevik Faction. Certainly in comparison with the grovelling betrayals of the SWP and the more shamefaced Mandel majority of the USec, the Morenoite outfit might seem a militant alternative. A look at Moreno's chameleon-like political track record, his notoriety for underhanded financial swindles and his ultra-reformist programme in his home base, Argentina, will shatter this facade. And indeed the USec is busily dredging up some of this material, filling the pages of *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor* with endless scandal stories about the disreputable adventurer Nahuel 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 swindler, both after and during his worst betrayals. They both have dirty hands.

When they are not echoing the Sandinista leaders' slanders that organising workers around anti-capitalist demands is a 'provocation', the SWP/USec charge that Moreno is an imposter travelling under false passports. According to the USec delegation statement, 'to capitalize on the prestige of the FSLN', the Simon Bolivar Brigade 'cloaked itself with the Sandinista banner'. From news accounts of the 15 August Managua demonstration, it does seem that many of the

protesters thought they were supporting a wing of the FSLN (although this does not lessen the significance of several thousand workers demonstrating against the government's pro-capitalist policies). But who do Barnes and Mandel think they're kidding? Their international 'Nicaragua solidarity' campaign is intended precisely to drape the USec in Sandinista red-and-black, just as the SWP's Fair Play for Cuba Committee in the early 1960s tried to capitalise on the popularity of Castroism. They just prefer to do it at a long distance.

Besides, Moreno has a long history of impersonating other tendencies. He got his start in Argentina by pretending to be a left Peronist. In the late 1950s his review *Palabra Socialista* described itself as an 'organ of revolutionary working-class Peronism' and carried on its masthead the slogan 'under the discipline of General Peron and of the Peronist Supreme Council' (see 'Argentina: The Struggle Against Peronism', *Workers Vanguard* no 24, 6 July 1973). When Peronism was no longer the rage, Moreno fused with a Castroite group and ran endless pictures of Che Guevara on the front pages of his papers. After a brief fling as a Maoist (hailing the Red Guards), he settled down to a more mundane existence as a social democrat -- and to this end fused with a wing of the historic Argentine Socialist Party in order to capture its ballot slot.

In a polemic against the Simon Bolivar Brigade, the Colombian Mandel PSR charges that the Morenoite undertaking was simply an adventure: 'The brigade as such never entered combat. It could not have done so without adequate training and without being prepared to accept the discipline of the FSLN' (*Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, 17 September). It does appear that for the most part Moreno's brigade, despite its bombastic propaganda, sat out the fighting in Costa Rica.

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

continued on page 10

Bolivar Brigade...

Continued from page 9

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. The 'Open Letter' by the Morenoite Colombian PST to form the Brigade called for volunteers to go to Nicaragua to fight 'under the military leadership' of the Sandinista Front; and it flaunted letters from FSLN leaders Eden Pastora and Plutarco Hernandez Sanchez saying its members were 'acting under the leadership of the General Staff'.

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 programme 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.

The Colombian Mandelite polemic ended by touching on 'the most sensitive point of all, the finances of the Simon Bolivar Brigade'. Many people 'have begun to have doubts about where the funds gathered by the PST are going', they report. And money is always the most sensitive point with Moreno. For those who know his past, the involuntary response upon learning that Colombian Morenoites were organising an 'international brigade' for Nicaragua was to say: 'Nicaraguans, Colombians -- keep your hands on your wallets!' But it hardly behoves the USec to raise this charge now.

Moreno's financial skulduggery is legendary in the Latin American left. The most sensational case concerns allegations that he failed to deliver promised funds to Hugo Blanco's guerrilla operation in Peru in 1962, and his role in the disappearance of several thousands of dollars taken in a bank expropriation by the Tupac Amaru group and destined for Blanco (for a detailed account of this affair, see Richard Gott, *Guerrilla Movements in Latin America* [1972]). In a review of Robert Alexander's grotesquely inaccurate book *Trotskyism in Latin America*, Joseph Hansen noted in 1977 that Moreno had never answered these charges. But in view of the scandalous nature of the charges, it is notable that Hansen evidently never bothered to get an explanation from Moreno during the six years that they were co-leaders of the USec minority.

Moreno stands before the workers movement convicted many times over of political charlatanism and breaches of proletarian morality. Yet his operation is such that he frequently puts on a cover of programmatic militancy for purely factional purposes. On several occasions this has led the Morenoites to adopt positions imi-

tating (or borrowed from?) the authentic Trotskyism of the Spartacist tendency (iSt).

In particular, in founding the Bolshevik Tendency after his break with the SWP in late 1975-early 1976, Moreno adopted positions on Portugal and Angola strikingly similar to those of the iSt. On Portugal he denounced the SWP's tailing after the CIA-funded Socialist Party of Mario Soares as well as the Mandelite majority's political support to the Stalinist/Armed Forces Movement (MFA) bloc. On Angola he called for military support to the MPLA against the South African/CIA invasion while formally opposing political support to any of the three competing nationalist groups. The principal characteristic of these formally orthodox positions is that they are far from home and they are utterly arbitrary, not derived from a coherent programmatic worldview.

Thus while Moreno condemns the SWP's shameless support for the Portuguese SP, in Argentina he fused with Juan Carlos Coral's rump social democrats in 1971. While criticising Mandel's capitulation to the Eurocommunists, his Venezuelan supporters are now deeply embedded in the 'Eurocommunist' MAS. While criticising the Mandelites' support for the demagogic Carvalho and the Portuguese MFA, Moreno's Colombian PST called for 'support to the nationalist policies of Torrijos' in Panama, calling this demagogic military officer (friend of both Castro and Chase Manhattan Bank) 'progressive'.

Feigning orthodoxy when it is 'cheap -- in distant climes and when it suits his unprincipled manoeuvres -- close to home where it counts, Moreno's opportunism exceeds that of any other wing of the USec. Trenchantly criticising Bolivian POR leader Guillermo Lora for joining an 'anti-imperialist front' with General Torres in Bolivia in 1971 (*International Socialist Review*, February 1973), two years later Moreno himself joined a popular-front Group of 8 together with the Argentine CP and the leading bourgeois parties in pledging support to the bonapartist government of Juan Peron (see 'PST Caught Redhanded', *Workers Vanguard* no 49, 19 July 1974). Today when the Sandinistas are international celebrities, Moreno is a gun-ho guerrillaist; but when the Castroite PRT/ERP (then affiliated to the USec) was stirring things up in Argentina with its kidnappings and attacks on the army, Moreno's PST equated 'the guerrillas and their mirror image -- the terrorists of the AAA and other organizations of the ultraright' (*Intercontinental Press*, 28 October 1974).

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, 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 manoeuvre 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.

Finally, it should be noted that in choosing the name Simon Bolivar Brigade Moreno chose a singularly appropriate sobriquet. Perhaps it was intended to imitate the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in the Spanish Civil War -- although Bolivar, himself from a slaveholding landowner family, could be more appropriately compared to George Washington. But militarily the great hero of the wars of independence was a disaster in every way: he lost virtually every battle he fought, literally dozens of them, repeatedly abandoning his troops in moments of adversity. His speciality, wrote Karl Marx in an article on Bolivar, was 'triumphal entrances, manifestos and the proclamation of constitutions'. He was, said Marx in a letter to Engels, 'the most cowardly, brutal and miserable scum'. So too Nahuel Moreno.

adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 240, 28 September 1979

Mountbatten...

Continued from page 5

gets to prominent symbols and representatives of imperialism like Mountbatten and the British army, revolutionaries still forthrightly oppose the strategy of individual terror which both leaves the working masses standing aside as passive spectators and provides the bourgeois state with excuses to shore up its repressive arsenal. Already in the days since August 27 Northern Ireland security forces and the Irish Garda (police) have rounded up hundreds of suspected IRA sympathisers in a repressive dragnet. Margaret Thatcher has announced that the sectarian thugs of the Royal Ulster Constabulary are to be reinforced by 1000 new recruits. Meanwhile, fanatic Protestant paramilitary groups like the 'Ulster Freedom Fighters' have launched a new round of communal terror, viciously murdering three innocent Catholic civilians and promising more such atrocities.

The foundations of the Provos' false strategy and tactics is their petty-bourgeois nationalist programme: for a united capitalist Ireland, ie the incorporation of the North into the southern Catholic republic, forcibly against the will of the Protestant majority if necessary. In contrast to this recipe for communal-sectarian war Trotskyists fight for a programme of anti-imperialist proletarian revolution.

Get the British troops and torturers out of Northern Ireland now! Not Orange against Green, but Class against Class! For an Irish workers republic in a socialist federation of the British Isles! The sun has already set on the decaying Empire Lord Louis Mountbatten stood for. But it will take the dawn of a new proletarian order to bring about the final reckoning with the parasitic class he so haughtily represented.

reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* no 239, 14 September 1979

August 12 demo:

'Down with Liberal imperialism!'

Spartacist League contingent shouts 'Down with Liberal imperialism! Troops out now!' as a Liberal Party parliamentary candidate addresses the August 12 Ireland demonstration in Waterloo, South London. More than 5000 marched to mark the tenth anniversary of the despatch of British troops to Northern Ireland. But the main 'far left' participants, the Socialist Workers Party and International Marxist Group, capitulated utterly to the soft-core imperialist programme of the Young Liberals, the initiators of the demonstration.

The IMG and SWP both signed the Liberals' demonstration call which, far from even demanding the immediate withdrawal of the army, bemoaned the cost to the British taxpayer of the troop presence in Ireland and vaguely muttered that the Thatcher government should 'commit itself to a policy of withdrawal from Northern Ireland'. On the demonstration itself the IMG



and SWP, along with every other participating organisation except the SL, conspicuously refused to raise slogans directly aimed against the junior party of British imperialism.

In contrast the 50-strong Spartacist contingent chanted 'Don't support the Liberals, Mobilise the workers! Unions must black military

goods to Ireland!' The SL intervention on the demonstration aroused the ire of Liberals and reformists alike -- as the libertarian 'socialist' magazine the *Leveller* remarked: 'The young Liberals represented a new, mainstream factor in the public stance, even if their presence was not appreciated by the Spartacist League.'

Tories' axe...

Continued from page 12

militant action could in fact go far beyond the current demands and win a sliding scale of wages to protect living standards from inflation and work sharing at full pay to significantly reduce the working week and fight the desperate unemployment savaging the entire industry.

Militancy and Bennery

British capitalism is in an advanced state of putrefaction. Industrial plant is grossly outmoded and failing. Cities crumble while social services are slashed. The living standards of working people are falling drastically amid the spectre of permanent mass unemployment. *Optimistic* estimates project that two-thirds of Merseyside school leavers will find no work whatsoever this year.

The death agony of British capitalism cries out for a rational, planned reconstruction of the economy -- but that task requires forging a revolutionary party to lead the working class in socialist revolution. Today workers are offered only narrow, economic struggle on the one hand, combined with the dismal circus of Labourite parliamentary cretinism on the other.

The union bureaucrats and Labour fakers share the gentlemanly understanding that 'politics' are for MPs and 'economic' concerns for unions. Thus the union leaders try to limit workers' struggles to narrow industry-by-industry limits and sectional demands (when they are unsuccessful in snuffing such struggles out altogether), and present voting Labour every 4-5 years as the solution to broader problems of society. Meanwhile the parliamentary party plays 'politics'; Callaghan and Healey openly attack the working class, while chief 'left' charlatan Tony Benn is a bit more subtle.

And the fake-Trotskyist left happily plays along with the charade. The Socialist Workers Party pushes its usual militant economism while providing no political solutions save votes to Labour. The International Marxist Group shouts 'Unity against the Tories' -- all decent socialists together against the Thatcherite ogres -- a slogan which serves only to cover up the gross betrayals of the Labour Party while in power. The IMG also wants to clean up Labour's image by ditching the reactionary and hated current leadership: 'They Lost Labour the Election: Time for Them to Go', cries the 27 September *Socialist Challenge* above pictures of Callaghan and Healey. And as usual the Workers Socialist League tails along -- 'Clear out the Callaghan Gang' blares the 26 September *Socialist Press*. It's all the familiar, stale poison: Labour loyalism and pimping for 'left' fakers like Benn, with a bit of industrial militancy on the side.

At the start of the year Labour was mobilising troops to break the strikes of the tanker drivers and ambulance men; it was fighting (and losing) a desperate rearguard battle to preserve a universally despised five per cent wage control policy; it was announcing the closure of scores of hospitals and schools; it was presiding over ever-increasing unemployment. And right there, accepting full Cabinet responsibility along with Callaghan and Healey, was none other than Tony Benn.

Benn's current left-posturing 'democratic accountability' ploy is a manifestly cynical manoeuvre in his campaign for party leadership. Those fake-Trotskyists who go along with him are cynical manoeuvrers on their own little terrain: to help sow renewed illusions in a man -- and a party -- which have so recently and so overtly betrayed the working class is simply criminal.

The first six months of the Tory government have seen Labour's popular standing rise sharply, as reflected in the opinion polls and the Manchester Central by-election result. As Thatcher's attacks bit deeper, renewed illusions that Labour is a positive alternative to the Tories will undoubtedly take hold among the working masses -- particularly if Benn's anti-Callaghan crusade is victorious. At some future date Benn and the other fakers may even decide to replicate their virtuoso performances of 1972-74 -- marching at the head of massive union demonstrations against redundancies, declaiming on the 'right to work' in support of the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders workers etc -- in order to strengthen their hold over the class.

Under such circumstances, the terrain for combatting workers' illusions in Labourism would shift, and there could well be a situation in

which Trotskyists would give Labour critical support in elections in order to expose them and thus shatter their renewed authority. But today memories of Labour's betrayals are still vivid, and Tony Benn has not even mentioned the engineering strike, let alone marched at the head of thousands of workers in the Midlands. Far from screaming for 'unity', Trotskyists must emphasise the utter bankruptcy of all wings of the Labour Party today.

Smash capitalist austerity policies!

Labourites of every hue and ostensible Trotskyists alike today try to gloss over the fact that Thatcher's anti-union austerity policies are merely reactionary extensions of the policies of the Labour government. 'Codes on picketing' were first introduced by Moss Evans and Callaghan during the lorry drivers strike. The cuts the Tories are administering with drooling enthusiasm began under Labour. So too the mammoth dole queues and falling living standards.

The bourgeoisie did not merely tolerate Labour in office; they actively welcomed Wilson and Callaghan since their 'special relationship' with the unions meant that they had a better chance of controlling the unions than Heath had in 1973-74. Only when Callaghan & Co had outlived their usefulness did the ruling class opt for Thatcher, so that she could pick up Labour's

Thornett...

Continued from page 12

anti-strike mobilisation. So much so that the WSL consciously decided against stopping the scabs by putting up picket lines in a bid to shut the plant down, but decided instead to join the Cowley blacklegs and help break the strike. *Socialist Press* candidly spells out the line: 'If the plant was closed on Monday and Tuesday by the action of a minority of stewards and attitudes hardened they [the right wing] would call for a further unofficial mass meeting on Wednesday, this time calling for fresh elections for convenor.' In other words Fryer, and eventually Thornett, might have lost their positions. Instead they chose to scab; in the words of *Socialist Press*, 'The decision to pull back once the action was lost and not hand over to the right wing was a difficult decision to take but it was a correct one.'

This wretched argument is an old stand-by for the Stalinists, who have used it to justify strikebreaking since the twenties. However on this occasion the WSL has even managed to place itself to the right of the Communist Party. Drawing support from the Cowley events, a parallel right-wing backlash occurred at BL Longbridge, where Stalinist convenor Derek Robinson's office was attacked and a rally held against the proposed two-day strike. But Robinson, who has one of the most sordid records of bureaucratic sellouts and betrayals in the entire motor industry, decided this time to take a hardline stance. He accordingly issued a statement which read: 'As the elected convenor I intend to ensure that the union's instructions are implemented and there will be a strong picket line at Longbridge on Monday and Tuesday' (*Birmingham Post*, 1 September). Sure enough, when the Monday came there were picket lines at Longbridge to deter the tiny handful of scabs who dared to turn out. The result was that the strikebreaking moves at Longbridge fizzled out.

The *Socialist Press* article predictably doesn't mention this response to an orchestrated scabbing campaign, but instead dredges up all the stock arguments of centrists and reformists to justify its own scab policy. The workers at Cowley get blamed since they were 'not prepared to support the intensified action' (statement of Bob Fryer, quoted approvingly in *Socialist Press*); it was a question of tactics not principle; it was important not to 'hand over to the right wing' (as if giving in to the right wing was not the same as 'handing over'); it was necessary to 'maintain the unity [!] of our organisation in order to face other problems' (Fryer statement); it was all the fault of the press and the right wing... in fact everybody gets implicated except Alan Thornett and the WSL. Amazingly, the article manages to avoid even mentioning Thornett so much as once, despite the fact that he holds a leading position in the Assembly Plant, is a

shop steward of many years standing and is a close collaborator of Fryer and thus undoubtedly played a major role in the decision to scab.

It is hardly surprising that the half-hearted one- and two-day strikes called by the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions bureaucracy have led to uncertainty and a degree of demoralisation in many factories. But in such situations it is the duty of revolutionaries to point the way forward for the working masses, not to tail behind and accommodate to reactionary sentiments and prejudices. AND CERTAINLY NOT TO SCAB!! By the WSL's logic, Lenin and the Bolsheviks should have joined in the patriotic fervour which broke out among Russian workers at the start of World War I, should not have fought against the stream but should instead have plunged headlong into it -- or risk 'handing over' to the social-patriots. After all, the Bolsheviks were far more isolated and had much more to lose than a mere trade union election.

Since its foundation, the WSL has proudly displayed its proletarian credentials, using its base at 'The Factory' (as the WSL lovingly refers to Cowley) as the alluring gem to attract and entice suitors from all over the fake-Trotskyist 'world movement'. The chameleonic Nahuel Moreno of the Argentine PST; the loathsome ex-Healy henchman, Tim Wohlforth, now labouring disconsolately in the SWP (US); the OCI of Pierre Lambert and now the Pabloites of 'Allah Akhbar' Grogan's International Marxist Group (IMG) have all made their courting calls. In fact, so keen are the IMG that they even unceremoniously endorsed Thornett's blacklegging (*Socialist Challenge*, 20 September).

But the Thornett group's line of being always 'with the masses' now provably means strike-breaking and scabbing. Certainly this will not deter the Morenos or Grogans of this world from pursuing their amorous advances, but it should repel any serious militant committed to fighting for the interests of the working class. Thornett's cowardly parochial willingness to put his local trade union post above workers' struggles, his readiness to scab rather than fight will not be forgotten. And when it comes to the matter closest to his heart -- the next elections for the position of deputy convenor at the Cowley Assembly Plant, Oxford -- workers should recall his record, his criminal betrayal and draw the correct conclusions about this scab, this Reg Birch of little-England 'Trotskyism'.

shop steward of many years standing and is a close collaborator of Fryer and thus undoubtedly played a major role in the decision to scab.

It is hardly surprising that the half-hearted one- and two-day strikes called by the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions bureaucracy have led to uncertainty and a degree of demoralisation in many factories. But in such situations it is the duty of revolutionaries to point the way forward for the working masses, not to tail behind and accommodate to reactionary sentiments and prejudices. AND CERTAINLY NOT TO SCAB!! By the WSL's logic, Lenin and the Bolsheviks should have joined in the patriotic fervour which broke out among Russian workers at the start of World War I, should not have fought against the stream but should instead have plunged headlong into it -- or risk 'handing over' to the social-patriots. After all, the Bolsheviks were far more isolated and had much more to lose than a mere trade union election.

Since its foundation, the WSL has proudly displayed its proletarian credentials, using its base at 'The Factory' (as the WSL lovingly refers to Cowley) as the alluring gem to attract and entice suitors from all over the fake-Trotskyist 'world movement'. The chameleonic Nahuel Moreno of the Argentine PST; the loathsome ex-Healy henchman, Tim Wohlforth, now labouring disconsolately in the SWP (US); the OCI of Pierre Lambert and now the Pabloites of 'Allah Akhbar' Grogan's International Marxist Group (IMG) have all made their courting calls. In fact, so keen are the IMG that they even unceremoniously endorsed Thornett's blacklegging (*Socialist Challenge*, 20 September).

But the Thornett group's line of being always 'with the masses' now provably means strike-breaking and scabbing. Certainly this will not deter the Morenos or Grogans of this world from pursuing their amorous advances, but it should repel any serious militant committed to fighting for the interests of the working class. Thornett's cowardly parochial willingness to put his local trade union post above workers' struggles, his readiness to scab rather than fight will not be forgotten. And when it comes to the matter closest to his heart -- the next elections for the position of deputy convenor at the Cowley Assembly Plant, Oxford -- workers should recall his record, his criminal betrayal and draw the correct conclusions about this scab, this Reg Birch of little-England 'Trotskyism'.

Kommunistische Korrespondenz

Das Zentralorgan der deutschen
Trotzkistische Fraktion aus dem
Spartacusbund ausgeschlossen!

Einzel der monatlichen Wirtschaftskritik.....12
Pseudonymisches Familienbriefchen.....12

Subscribe!

Journal of the
Trotzkistische Liga
Deutschlands

Write to:
Postfach 1 67 47
6000 Frankfurt/Main 1
West Germany

SPARTACIST BRITAIN

Labour used the knife, now –

Tories wield the axe

'Ministers are not actually out shopping for candles yet... But the engineers' strike, the miners' claim for 65 per cent, the blacking out of TV screens, and the wages battle throughout the car industry are scarcely a sign that militancy is dead.'

Thus wrote Sir James Goldsmith's new right-wing magazine *Now!*, summing up the state of industrial struggle on the eve of a new winter pay round. *Now!*'s message was clear and predictable: if British capitalism is to get off its sick bed and back onto its feet, trade union militancy must be broken through inflicting a major defeat on the working class. Halting the chronic decline of British capitalism requires a massive increase in productivity, the shutting down of unprofitable 'lame ducks', and the cutting of workers' living standards in order to jack up the rate of exploitation. And in the Thatcher government, the Goldsmiths of this world hope they have the force to carry out such a programme.

In the six months since they came to power, the Tories have lost no time in starting to implement their viciously reactionary policies. Huge cuts in the already deteriorating social services have been announced, and more are planned. Indirect taxation has been nearly doubled, driving down even further the living standards of a working class which suffered four years of savage wage control and cuts under the Wilson/Callaghan Labour governments. Wholesale closures and 'rationalisations' of unprofitable state-run plants like BL have also been proclaimed -- despite the fact that these threaten to turn once-prosperous cities like Coventry into ghost towns.

But can the Tories get away with it? As the current engineering strike shows, abolishing 57 quangos is going to be a lot easier than snapping the spine of the trade union movement. Right now both Thatcher and the union bureaucracy are moving with caution around the key issue of 'legislative reform' of the unions, but the inevitable clashes cannot be postponed forever. Whether they be this winter or next, the stage is set for major class battles which

could well surpass those of 1972-74 in scope and intensity.

Victory to the engineers!

The government's first real taste of industrial confrontation has come with the engineering strike. The AUEW-dominated Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions (Confed) bureaucracy has reluctantly been calling 2 million engineers out on one- and two-day strikes since mid-August. Given the pitifully inadequate union claim and the blatant sabotage by the leadership, the fighting spirit of the Confed ranks has been remarkable. When Rolls Royce responded to the two-day-a-week strikes by shutting their plants and locking out the workers, the workforce wanted to reply with

an occupation -- only to have the move quashed by an alarmed bureaucracy. With few exceptions (see article on Alan Thornett below) the 'back-to-work' scum heralded by the gutter press have failed to mobilise reactionary sentiment within the plants and have been pushed back by militant picketing.

The engineers' claim centres on the demands for a 39 hour week and an £80 skilled basic. Many skilled workers already earn more than this pittance -- a Rover toolmaker might stand to gain about 20 pence on the basis of a consolidated *overtime* rate. And the bureaucrats' policy of two-day strikes is consciously designed to wear away militancy while inflicting a mere flesh wound on the companies. Indeed, the protracted half-steam dispute *is* demoralising



20 August Engineers' solidarity march in Birmingham

sections of the membership, particularly in nationalised engineering industries like British Leyland, where workers have no confidence in the ability of the union tops either to win the minimal claim or to fight the jobs bloodbath they are now threatened with.

What is needed is an all-out strike -- now! While the union traitors dither about how much of the paltry claim to sell out, hardline members of the Engineering Employers Federation are following Rolls Royce's example and locking out the workforce. Workers must not wait for the lockouts -- an all-out strike to shut down the entire engineering industry, combined with occupations where layoffs or lockouts are threatened, is the way to win the strike. Such

continued on page 11

Spartacist Britain



Alan Thornett: Scab!

The two-day-a-week national engineering strike, supported by two million workers and punctuated by management lockouts and mass picketing of struck plants, has been the sharpest challenge to date to the Thatcher government's declared policy of shackling the unions. But since the beginning of September working-class militants have witnessed the disgusting spectacle of one self-proclaimed Trotskyist organisation, the Workers Socialist League (WSL), standing on the other side of the class line in the dispute, *actively scabbing on the strike* in order to safeguard the trade union positions of its leading members and trade union allies. The site of this wretched betrayal has been the WSL's prized trade union base at BL Cowley, and the chief WSL scab none other than their much vaunted 'proletarian

leader', Alan Thornett, who is a deputy convenor at the Cowley Assembly Plant.

In an article in the 5 September *Socialist Press*, the WSL serves up an 'explanation' of the events which led to what they themselves admit to be scabbing at Cowley. It recites a story of a right-wing anti-strike backlash in the plant which took place at the end of August. From beginning to end the article glosses over the issues of principle at stake and dissolves the fundamental question -- do you or do you not honour a national strike call -- into a chronological recitation of the where, when and how of what happened.

But what does emerge is that Thornett and his ally, Cowley Assembly Plant convenor Bob Fryer, capitulated utterly to the reactionary

continued on page 11