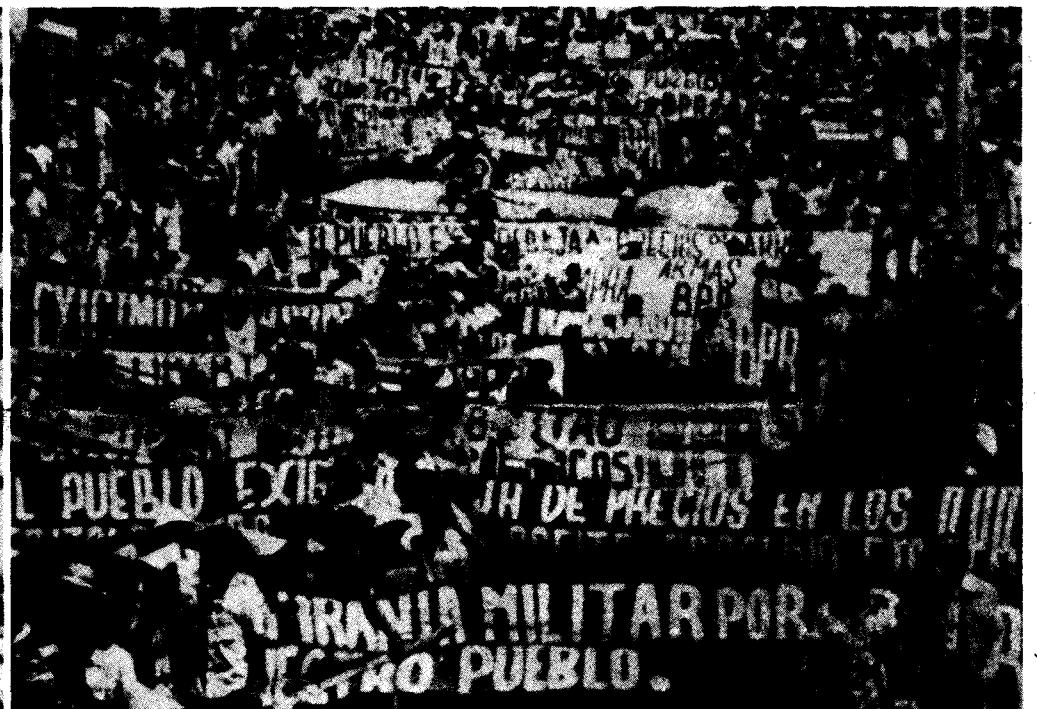


## Military victory to left-wing insurgents

# For workers revolution in El Salvador!



National Guard 'takes prisoners'; Salvadoran masses protest against junta terror before offensive. Bloody oligarchs must be swept away by proletarian revolution throughout Central America.

### Popular frontism disarms the masses

On 9 January El Salvador's leftist guerrillas launched their long-expected 'general offensive' against the Central American country's blood-soaked military dictatorship. The labour movement, the left and all opponents of junta terror must greet the insurrection against one of the most barbarous US puppet regimes in the Americas. At month's end, the insurrectionary offensive had receded, but the alternative remains posed: overthrow of the junta or mass bloodbath. Military victory to the left-wing insurgents! Break the dangerous popular front with 'democratic' bourgeois politicians and military officers! For workers revolution in El Salvador!

Taking over three radio stations in the capital city of San Salvador on 10 January, the Salvadoran guerrilla coalition, the Farabundo Marti Front for National Liberation (FMLN), announced: 'This is the moment. Free homeland or death! People of El Salvador, we have now started the national liberation.' Simultaneously, 80 Salvadoran soldiers led by a lieutenant-colonel shot their commanding officer and burned down army barracks in Santa Ana, the country's second largest city. In Morazan department another ranking officer, also a follower of ousted junta 'moderate' Colonel Adolfo Majano, called on officers and soldiers to follow the example of Santa Ana and join the insurgent forces. And detachments of hundreds of guerrillas marched into a number of provincial towns.

To coincide with the military offensive, the

Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR), the popular-front opposition bloc which includes the FMLN guerrillas, their worker-peasant-student organisations and reformist bourgeois forces, called a general strike beginning 12 January, supported by at least 20,000 government workers in the capital.

On the eve of Reagan's presidency the Salvadoran rebels clearly aimed to present the Republican hardliner with the accomplished fact of a 'government in arms' on national territory. The guerrillas speak of the 'countryside surrounding the city' a la Mao Tse-tung, but in tiny, crowded El Salvador (the most densely populated country of Latin America) conditions are not favourable for prolonged guerrilla struggle. Instead the rebels can only count on a mass uprising and/or recognition of the FDR's 'Revolutionary Democratic Government' as a 'belligerent party' by such favourably inclined Latin American states as Mexico, the Dominican Republic and Panama. But such international 'recognition' would only be a prelude to attempts at 'mediation', under the aegis of the United Nations or the Organization of American States (OAS), aimed at controlling a revolution viewed as inevitable.

However, the entrenched Salvadoran capitalist/landowning ruling class and its mercenary military have made it clear that they are not going to retire peacefully to Miami because of international disapproval. If they go down, they will go down fighting. Moreover, in Washington Jimmy Carter was not, and Ronald Reagan will certainly not be, willing to tolerate any settlement which would open the door to 'another Nicaragua' in Central America. Only the overthrow of the murderous dictatorship by an insurrection requiring the utmost in heroism and self-sacrifice can save the Salvadoran masses from an historic and tragic defeat.

The battle cannot be limited to little El Salvador, however -- the 'pulgarcito (Tom Thumb)

of the Americas'. To stop the torturing, murdering Salvadoran *gorilas* and their Yankee god-fathers, the whole Central American isthmus must be set aflame with proletarian revolution. This will force the petty-bourgeois bonapartist Sandinista regime in Managua to confront head-on the dilemma it has sought to escape: either breaking sharply with the bourgeoisie and arming Salvadoran leftists, or capitulating to the imperialist pressures and likely sealing its own doom. It also means linking up, just as the imperialists fear, with the potentially powerful Mexican proletariat. And it requires militant acts of labour solidarity from the workers movement throughout the hemisphere, especially in the US. A West Coast dockers union ban on military cargo to El Salvador announced on 22 December -- though so far only on paper -- points in the right direction.

'El Salvador is more sharply divided than Nicaragua between left and right', editorialised the *New York Times* (24 December 1980). And they were right. Here the battle was not against a single tyrant opposed even by important sectors of the bourgeoisie, but a much clearer struggle pitting the exploited masses against their capitalist exploiters. Yet repeatedly the Salvadoran left has tried to paper over the abyss between the opposing class forces by proclaiming a 'national' and 'patriotic' fight for 'democracy', not socialism, and tying the workers to 'progressive' bourgeois forces. Already this treacherous policy of popular frontism has blocked mass struggles against the generals' terror, and as the showdown approaches it stands in the way of the key task: splitting the army, not between 'democratic' and 'fascist' officers, but between the proletarian/peasant ranks and an officer corps committed (even its most liberal elements) to the preservation of capitalist rule. Here the programme of agrarian revolution -- expropriate the latifundistas and coffee

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# Repudiate Duffy/Evans sellout

# Reinstate Longbridge 8!

On 5 January a mass meeting of workers from British Leyland's giant Longbridge complex voted to end the strike which had brought production of the much vaunted Mini Metro to a halt for three weeks. The eight workers whose sacking a month earlier had triggered the strike remained sacked, to await the outcome of a sham inquiry. The pretext on which the eight men were fired -- and three others suspended -- was a blatant frame-up, charged with being 'ringleaders' of a 21 November protest strike/demonstration inside the plant. Yet only two of the eight were recommended for reinstatement when the inquiry finally reported back on 30 January.

Management did not even bother with the usual red-baiting smears aimed at singling out 'militants' and 'radicals' (though one of the eight is a known supporter of the tepid 'Trotskyist' *Socialist Organiser* within the Labour Party). The point was clear: this is the treatment BL chairman Michael Edwardes intends for any workers -- especially shop stewards -- who stand up to his 'recovery plan' of massive wage cuts, redundancies and speed-up. In the year since former Longbridge convenor Derek Robinson's victimisation, the trade-union bureaucrats have allowed Edwardes to inflict one outrage after another upon the BL workforce in his drive to emasculate any semblance of effective shop-floor organisation.

Edwardes' unprecedented threat to carry out open mass blacklegging if the strikers were not back by 5 January was met with 'sweet reason' by TGWU head Moss Evans: 'I do not want to play their game of meeting threats with counter-

threats.' Terry Duffy had been ordering his members to scab all along. BL workers must now make up for time and momentum squandered by Terry Duffy and Moss Evans' antics, throw back the inquiry results and demand an immediate national strike. Reinstate all the Eight!

Longbridge is one of the few plants left in bankrupt BL where a strike can hurt -- the Metro, after all, is what is intended to save the 'honour' of the British car industry against the Japanese imports 'invasion'. The bourgeois press last month pulled out all the stops in an attempt to convince the strikers that BL workers must keep taking it in the neck for Queen, Country and Fellow Worker. Confronted with the possibility that the bourgeoisie might cut off BL's life-support system, the bureaucrats throw up their hands in surrender and plead for protectionist import controls.

And the would-be 'left' provides no alternative. It was Robinson's successor and fellow Communist Party member Jack Adams who carried the sellout through the mass meeting. Nor could militant workers find a lead from the 'Leyland Action Committee' (LAC) -- a bloc of International Marxist Group (IMG), Workers Socialist League (WSL) and *Socialist Organiser* supporters whose main point of agreement is a defence of scabbing. Despite its call for strike action to reinstate the victimised workers, the LAC couldn't even get it together to effectively leaflet plants like Rover Solihull and Cowley where it has supporters. *Socialist Organiser* blustered about 'how frightened Edwardes' is but hinged much of its defence against the 'ring-

leader' frame-up on pleading that 'all the stewards played a moderating role' (*Socialist Organiser* Broadsheet, 'The Longbridge Sackings', undated). And they all demand 'workers control' and a 'workers plan' for this bankrupt white elephant.

There was a strategy put forward in BL which could take on Edwardes and reverse the victimisations. Following a call by the stewards committee at Rover Solihull SDI for a plant occupation in the event of threatened compulsory redundancies, the TGWU 5/357 branch at Rover went on record for an all-out strike throughout BL combined with plant occupations as necessary, linking the redundancies fight to the Longbridge victimisations. It also pointed to the crucial perspective of winning other sections of the trade-union movement to join a BL strike in a powerful unified struggle against the entire Tory/employer offensive.

Edwardes is frontrunner for the employers (like the BSC's Ian MacGregor, who has just successfully imposed his own 'recovery plan' on steelworkers) because BL represents the future of the rest of British capitalism. In BL there is not even any room for 'militant' reformist poseurs like Arthur Scargill, for there are no crumbs to be thrown from the capitalists' barren table. But determined class struggle which seeks to transcend economically unviable BL can provide a lead for all workers. A *Spartacist Britain* supplement (3 January) distributed to workers at Longbridge and other BL plants in the Birmingham area summed up what is needed:

'A militant national strike at BL linked to a wave of plant occupations to reverse the victimisations, smash Edwardes' slave charter, stop the redundancies and reopen the wage settlement could be a clarion call to the millions of other workers who know that what is happening at BL will happen to them too.... That is the only road forward and it requires a revolutionary leadership to see it through to a victorious conclusion and put Edwardes and his ilk in their place for good.' ■

## El Salvador...

(Continued from page 1)

barons -- is key to winning the peasant youth conscripted into the army.

The Salvadoran left drew inspiration from July 1979 overthrow of Nicaragua's bloody patriarch, Anastasio Somoza, by the radical petty-bourgeois Sandinista guerrillas. They have even modelled their joint military command on the Nicaraguan FSLN baptising it the 'Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front' after a Salvadoran militant who served with Augusto Sandino in Nicaragua in the 1920s and later was the martyred Communist leader of a 1932 uprising in El Salvador. But unlike the Sandinistas, the Salvadoran workers and peasants do not face the tottering power of a hated strongman who alienated the traditional bourgeoisie and transformed the National Guard into his personal bodyguard. In El Salvador the ruling class is centred on a landed oligarchy, the so-called '14 Families', which for at least half a century has solidly supported naked military rule to prop up their economic domination.

In January 1932, the newly formed Salvadoran Communist Party (PCS) planned an insurrection after a putsch by General Maximiliano Hernandez Martinez. Although the PCS leadership was rounded up (and later executed), coffee estate

workers in western El Salvador rose and were brutally repressed. In the following weeks Hernandez drove home this bloody 'lesson' to the working masses, teaching them to 'stay in their place' by slaughtering 30,000 people, roughly 3-4 per cent of the country's entire population.

This was *la matanza*, the Salvadoran bourgeoisie's response to the first Communist-led uprising in the Americas. No one on either side of the class barricades has forgotten it, and today 1932 is still the watchword of hardliners in the ruling class and army. When the FDP leaders were assassinated, the crime was attributed to a 'Maximiliano Hernandez Martinez Brigade'. And a spokesman of the growers association recently remarked, 'Coffee growers should not anguish over the situation today; there was a similar one in 1932, and if it was solved then, it can be solved now' (*NACLA Report*, March-April 1980). Only this time the 'solution' they are talking about is 100,000 dead.

### Bullets replace ballots

The roots of the current political crisis can be traced most directly to the heavy-handed vote fraud which stole two elections, in 1972 and 1977, from Christian Democratic (PDC) winners and continued the succession of repressive army governments under military hardliner General Carlos Romero. With liberal reform efforts consistently stymied, a radical left opposition grew rapidly both in the cities and countryside.

Three different guerrilla 'armies' arose, each with its own mass-based coalition. The first, the FPL, was founded by Salvador Cayetano, a former leader of the Communist Party who split from the PCS over its supine support for El Salvador in the 1969 'football war' with Honduras. The FPL is linked to the People's Revolutionary Block (BPR), the largest and originally most radical of the coalitions, which grouped most of the organised rural labourers and the teachers union. The second guerrilla outfit is the ERP, originally a Guevarist group which had roots in the left wing of the Christian Democrats. Its 'popular organisation' is the February 28th People's Leagues (LP-28), strong among high school students and market vendors. The third group, the FARN, is a front for the United People's Action Front (FAPU), which controls the largest union federation, including the combative electrical workers.

The incredible number of fronts, armies, parties, coalitions, etc makes El Salvador left politics extremely difficult to unravel. However, several points can be made. First, the main left groups are based on mass organisations of workers, peasants and the urban poor,

counting tens of thousands of supporters. This contrasts with Nicaragua where the strategy of the bonapartist Sandinista armed forces was to conquer the main urban centres from without. This mass mobilisation is one reason why the imperialists are more worried about the Salvadoran left taking power than they were at the prospect of a Sandinista victory in 1979. Second, the political differences are at most tactical and even then murky. Furthermore they are extremely fluid, so that groups pass easily from one coalition to another, and yesterday's left wing today stands on the right. And while today 'unity' is the watchword, Salvadoran factional politics can be deadly: when the ERP's most prominent member, well-known leftist poet Roque Dalton, opposed its 'militarist' line in 1975 he was executed by his 'comrades'. Above all, even before their general rightward turn since 1979, none of the 'guerrilla left' groups had a programme and strategy for proletarian revolution in Central America; all were based on an eclectic mishmash of radical nationalism and various brands of Stalinist 'revolution by stages' reformism.

Falling coffee prices and a bad harvest in 1978 led to unrest in the countryside, while strikes increased in San Salvador. The right wing replied with bloody terror. But the demonstrations continued. Obviously, General Romero's white terror was not working to stem the tide of worker and peasant unrest. Shortly after Somoza fell, Carter sent State Department Latin America expert William Bowdler to El Salvador, asking Romero to step down. When the general refused, he was overthrown on 15 October 1979 in a coup which was obviously 'made in USA'. The composition of the new junta was clearly brokered by Washington: it included 'moderates' like Majano, leader of the 'Military Youth' officers faction, together with right-wingers like Colonel Jaime Gutierrez, reputedly the Pentagon's man. They were joined by the 'social-democratic' MNR leader, a leading industrialist and the head of the Catholic university.

The left was initially disoriented by the US manoeuvre. But almost as soon as they were sworn in, the 'human rights junta' was presiding over an unprecedented wave of rightist terror. The army, national police and paramilitary thugs went wild in the slums and villages murdering peasants and leftists at a rate unheard of under Romero. In response the 'guerrilla left' and their above-ground 'popular organisations' began drawing together with the Communist Party, leading to the formation of the Revolutionary Coordinating Committee of the Masses (CRM) in early

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## SPARTACIST BRITAIN

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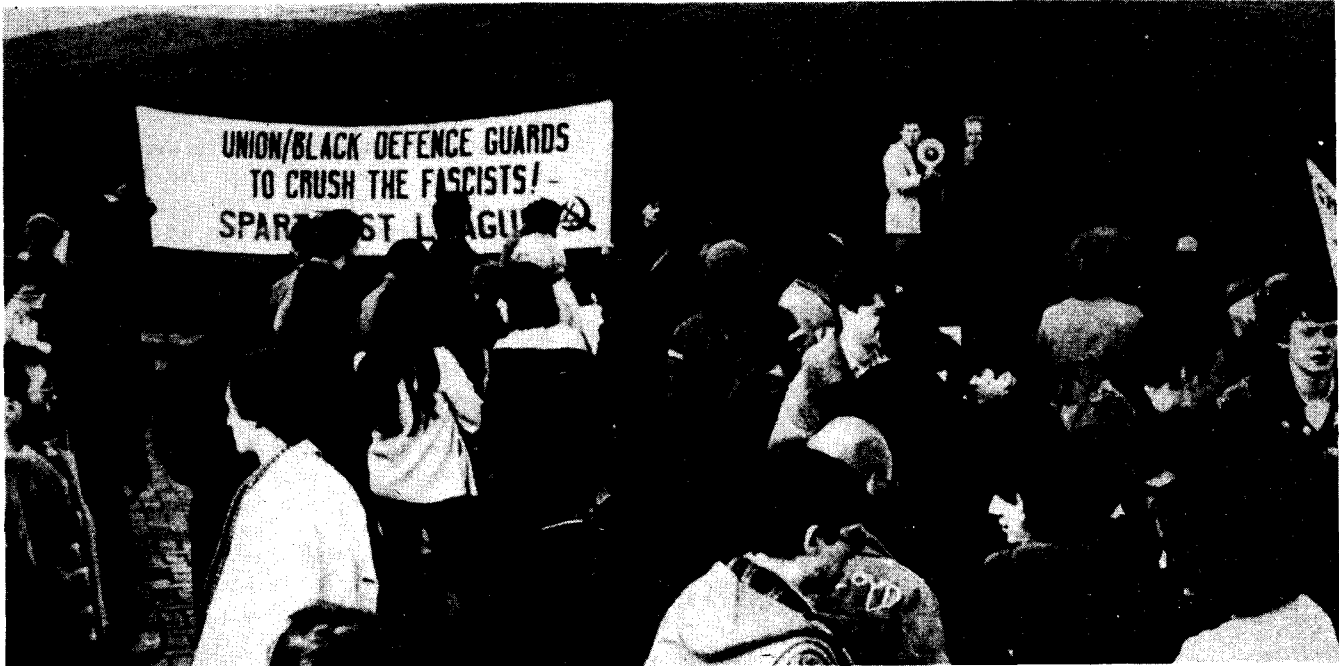
# Sheffield protest: Drive BM Nazis off campus!

For several months the Hitlerite British Movement (BM) has been making its repugnant presence felt in Sheffield. Saturday after Saturday a few of these fascist vermin would creep into the city centre's 'Hole in the Road' precinct -- there to be confronted by a handful of leftists, primarily supporters of the Anti Nazi League (ANL), who would divest them of their leaflets but leave them free to return the following week. On Saturday afternoons the BM occasionally ventured onto the Sheffield University campus while it was relatively deserted. But *this* Saturday, 31 January, in the words of a Radio Hallam newscaster, 'The fascists were nowhere to be seen' at either of these haunts. And that was because 120 students, leftists and union militants demonstrated on the campus to make it clear that in Sheffield there would be 'No platform for fascists!'

The protest was organised by an ad-hoc Drive the BM Nazis Off Campus Committee. It included a contingent of some twenty members and supporters of the Spartacist League (SL) and the campus Spartacist Society. There was a contingent of roughly equal size from Workers Power (WP) and the Workers Power Supporters Group. The united-front committee was initiated by the Spartacist Society, which set out to build an effective and serious mobilisation. The basis of the common action was two demands which should make sense to any overseas student, black, Jew, woman, gay, trade unionist or socialist -- the potential victims of the scum who strut around with Union Jacks and swastikas: No platform for fascists! Drive the BM Nazis off campus!

In addition to the Spartacist Society and Workers Power Supporters Group, the endorsers included the Communist Society, the left-wing Independent Bookshop, the Workers Socialist League and a number of campus trade unionists. It was also backed by several militants from the BSC steelworks. In the week before, the demonstration won the backing of Sheffield Trades Council and a 400-strong student union meeting -- one of the largest for years -- on a recommendation from the executive.

Sheffield is a solid union town: a centre of militancy during the steel strike with the home of the 'Rotherham Red Army' next door. It's not the kind of place a fascist should feel safe. Unlike areas such as East London and increasingly the West Midlands, Sheffield has yet to feel the full ravages of British capitalism's decline, which pushes lumpenised youth into the arms of the National Front (NF) and the BM. And in the 'Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire' even the city council is on record as encouraging the use of public facilities for all political activities except fascist ones. But the 31 January demonstration was not relying on the local council. It sought to give expression to the



Sheffield anti-fascist demonstration, 31 January.

deep hatred felt by thousands of students and unionists for filth like the BM. And the handful of fascists who had enough of a sense of self-preservation not to rear their heads in the city centre did so because they knew it was just ten minutes' march from the campus.

The BM's growth as a 'militant' alternative to the NF involves explicit identification with Nazism and an emphasis on anti-communism. Thus BM stickers posted at the university read: 'British Movement: 12 Years Fight for Race and Nation Against Communism!' An early sign of an upsurge in BM activity in Sheffield was a threat to attack an SL public meeting on the defence of the Soviet Union last October -- the SL mobilised an effective defence squad and the BM did not appear. On 17 January ten BM thugs were seen heading for the Overseas Student Bureau (OSB) on campus but were chased off. They were clearly after retribution for the 'welcome' one of their number received several days earlier when spotted on campus by a group of leftist students.

The fascists' attempt to harass and attack foreign students was a racist provocation and the Spartacist Society responded accordingly. It contacted other campus societies and turned its 21 January public class into a planning meeting for a united-front action. Forty people showed up, representing nearly every left-wing and ethnic minority group on campus, plus off-campus leftist organisations. The proposed basis of the protest was accepted and the job of building a powerful show of strength began. This task was, however, to be impeded by the sectarian passivity and even outright sabotage of some self-styled 'revolutionaries' and 'anti-fascists'.

Student response was enthusiastic. When the committee set out to get 500 signatures to force a student union emergency general meeting four Spartacist supporters collected 220 in less than two hours in the union bar. The final total was 650. The word spread outside the campus too. Students from at least three other colleges asked for leaflets and a widespread sentiment was summed up by a black student from Sheffield Poly who said: 'We're with you all the way.' But the Maoist leadership of the OSB tragically refused to endorse the demonstration, and counterposed an 'ideological' struggle against racism to the concrete fight against the fascists. It also put forward the strategy of black self-defence as the answer to the BM and their ilk. A Spartacist Society leaflet pointed out that while communists support the right of black self-defence 'blacks alone do not have the social power and cohesion to ultimately defeat the fascists'. And the notion of 'exposing' the Nazis through 'countering their propaganda' was eloquently addressed by a Jewish student at the emergency union meeting, where the question at the centre of the debate became whether violence against fascists was justified except in 'self-defence':

'I had two grandfathers, both of whom were Jewish. One of them lived in England and he

fought the fascists on the streets with bricks ... the other grandfather was in Germany and he's dead; he died in a gas camp... The only means to meet fascism in the thirties was with a brick. We've got to stop these people. Throwing bricks at fascists doesn't make them feel big; it makes them feel scared.'

The response of much of the rest of the left was little better than that of the OSB. The Militant tendency claimed to support the demonstration, but opposed throughout the Labour Group supporting the Committee that was building it -- these 'Trotskyists' used the argument that only the mass power of the labour movement can stop fascism as an excuse to do nothing. The response of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and the International Marxist Group (IMG) was summed up by an IMG'er who said, 'We're suspicious of any united front that you people proposed.' The sterling 'anti-fascists' of the ANL pop front attempted to sabotage the demonstration. ANLer Simon Ogden first responded by putting that *they* took care of the anti-fascist work in Sheffield and then slamming the phone down. An example of *their* 'anti-fascist work' was the 'Charter 80' meeting whose SWP organisers would blithely have allowed obvious fascists to remain in the audience but for persistent protests by an SL member, backed by WP supporters.

When it was clear that the protest would go ahead with or without the ANL there was a change of tactics. An ANL leaflet called 'on everyone attending the demonstration ... to move on to the hole in the road for 1pm provided the BM don't turn up at the Union'. This attempt to split the protest behind the backs of the ad-hoc committee was also an effective invitation to the fascists to show up on campus after 1pm. At the demonstration the committee spokesman and member of the Spartacist Society, Alastair Green, kept the rally fully informed of the situation in the city centre and appealed against 'any attempts to split or weaken the forces we have gathered here':

'We want to be sure this campus is defended against the BM, and we want to be sure that this demo acts in a unified and disciplined way if it does seek to go into town to actually help in the job of implementing no platform for fascists.'

In the end some dozen ANL supporters, after unsuccessfully attempting to split the demo, slipped away to join some 20 others in town to 'confront' the fascists who were nowhere to be seen.

At the 23 January planning meeting WP supporters argued against a 'final decision' on the demonstration till they had a chance to count heads at a WP rally the next day. When 50 people showed they decided the 'masses' wanted some action and went along with the proposal. But in turning what had been billed as a rally to 'Drive the fascists out of the union!' into an exclusive WP platform they only managed to drive

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**NO PLATFORM FOR FASCISTS**  
**DRIVE THE B.M. NAZIS OFF CAMPUS**  
STUDENTS : CAMPUS WORKERS  
STAFF : LABOUR MOVEMENT  
**ALL OUT TO DEFEAT THE FASCISTS!**  
Assemble on Union Concourse at 12 noon SATURDAY, 31st JAN.



# What is the Workers Party?

In the summer of 1979 a new, albeit barely visible, satellite was added to the British fake-Trotskyist constellation. The 'Workers Party' was spawned from Gerry Healy's Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP). Its leaders, Royston Bull and Stephen Johns, had for long years been journalists on *Workers Press* and then *News Line*. They had peddled and defended political banditry, lies, slanders and gangsterism up to the point where the WRP's fealty to Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi took it out of the workers movement altogether. And their new group, setting out to conquer the masses from the metropolitan centre of Stockport, Cheshire, looked like what it was -- a tiny, near politically inchoate decomposition product of degenerate Healyism.

In December of this year the Workers Party split apart. After five months of acrimonious public feuding in the *Workers Party Bulletin*, replete with tales of bureaucratism, sabotage and physical violence, a substantial minority was thrown out. The 'Workers Party branches in Lambeth, Battersea and South Yorkshire' now have their own *Workers News*. And all this would be of minimal interest were it not for the political questions raised. The *Workers News* group's main grievance was the position which differentiates the Workers Party from other fake-Trotskyist groups in Britain -- its 'decision to withhold support from the Polish workers movement'.

Indeed the Workers Party did not fall in line and uncritically cheer on Lech Walesa and the Solidarity union federation in Poland. It warned of the influence of the Catholic Church in last summer's Gdansk-centred mass strike/protest movement. And before this the Workers Party had stood out among other fake-left groups by refusing to condemn the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Not surprisingly some Workers Party members now believe they have upheld -- along with the Spartacist tendency -- Trotskyist defence of the degenerated/deformed workers states amid anti-communist Cold War pressure. But they're dead wrong. *Workers News* shares the Stalinophobia endemic to the Labour-loyal 'far left'. But as the faction fight developed the majority increasingly exhibited a crude variety of *Stalinophilia*. In a statement explaining the expulsions the *Workers Party Bulletin* spoke of the 'anti-communist trap set by imperialism with its counter-revolutionary stunts in Hungary 1956, Czechoslovakia 1968 and Poland 1980' and went on to claim:

'The question of the overthrow of Stalinist ideas and the restoration of a Leninist revolutionary internationalist leadership in the Kremlin and throughout East Europe and the rest of the Soviet bloc is NOT the issue in Poland.' (emphasis in original)

## Sam Marcy's poor relations?

Not the issue? The Workers Party's portrayal of the Polish events as a mere imperialist 'trap' is not only a stupid dismissal of the workers' just and real grievances against the Stalinist bureaucrats. Writing workers political revolution (or even Bull/Johns' studiously vague 'overthrow of Stalinist ideas') off the agenda would be the best way to aid the victory of anti-communist reaction. The bureaucracy's pandering to the Catholic hierarchy and the landholding peasantry, and its economic mismanagement leading to massive indebtedness to imperialist bankers, have brought Poland to the brink of collapse. The Spartacist tendency says 'A Workers Poland, Yes! The Pope's Poland, No!' because the need for a revolutionary workers government based on Soviet power must be made the issue. That is the only historic alternative against the threat of capitalist restoration.

In Hungary and Czechoslovakia the Workers Party would have been on the wrong side of the barricades. In the Budapest uprising the workers councils suppressed reactionary agitation and defended collectivised property. When Soviet troops marched into Czechoslovakia against the 'Prague spring' the people who opposed them in the streets were not counterrevolutionaries but Communist workers and left-wing students seeking to fight bureaucratic abuses. And if the Workers Party hasn't been able to provide a 'theoretical' rationale for its sudden discovery that these were imperialist 'traps', others did so long ago. Inside the then-revolutionary American Socialist Workers Party, Sam Marcy (before he quit in the late 1950s) argued that the absence of a Leninist party in-

evitably made the Hungarian insurgents the tools of imperialism. The Workers Party shares with Marcyism the most rotten form of pessimism. It doesn't believe that the proletariat can be won in struggle to a communist programme.

Of course the Workers Party's origins are Healyite, not Marcyite. Nevertheless Bull & Co consciously discard that which was revolutionary in the history of Healy's movement. In the 1950s Healy's organisation was able to win an important layer of Communist Party members repelled by Kremlin suppression of the Hungarian revolution. The Workers Party rejects all that, cavalierly dismissing the history of postwar Trotskyism as 'historical rummaging'. But the link with Healyism remains strong. Although later Healyism was marked by rampant Stalinophobia, terminal programmatic degeneration in the Healy movement in 1967 was notably signalled by gross capitulation to Stalinism -- centrally Mao Tse-tung's 'Red Guards' and North Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh leadership. If the Workers Party leadership now wants to defend Stalinist slaughter of the Hungarian workers it doesn't require such a great leap. They long ago laid the basis when they did the hack work for Healy in hailing the Stalinist murderers of the Vietnamese Trotskyists as revolutionary heroes.

In *Workers Press* (12 May 1975) Bull lauded the 'consistent revolutionary line pursued by the NLF since they first took up arms in 1941'. Johns followed up with a major series on the



Hungary 1956. Workers Party denounces political revolution as 'counterrevolutionary'.

same theme. And they've stuck to it:

'... the workers and peasants of Vietnam were organised and inspired to an outstanding level of revolutionary achievement by a leadership which played a fully conscious role in inflicting one of the greatest defeats imperialism has ever suffered.' (*Workers Party Bulletin*, 27 July 1979)

Sure, Ho Chi Minh was 'fully conscious' from 1941. He was a conscious Stalinist and he negotiated treacherous deal after deal with British, French and US imperialism -- including the 1945 betrayal. Ta Thu Thau and the revolutionary communists who fought for socialist revolution were wiped out by his assassins and the Saigon cops. But Johns and Bull never understood (and have never tried) that Stalinism is a petty-bourgeois caste with a *dual character*. Based on socialised property relations it can even partially extend them within its overall framework of 'socialism in one country' and opposition to the independent revolutionary mobilisation of the proletariat. That's how US imperialism was finally expelled from Vietnam. That's how Ta Thu Thau was murdered. And not understanding anything about it is how the Workers Party makes his killers 'fully conscious' revolutionaries.

## 'Revolutionaries' everywhere

Once you start discovering revolutionaries where they're not they soon turn up everywhere. Like the WRP the Workers Party sees social revolution sweeping forward under all kinds of 'third world' movements and regimes (with some exceptions like Iran, Iraq and Libya which Healy bagged first):

'... the revolutionary class struggle goes on gathering momentum and capitalism is toppled in one country after another.

'The background to this is the growing Marxist understanding of the need for the revol-

utionary struggle arms in hand (China, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Cuba, Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Yemen, Nicaragua, Grenada, Salvador, Afghanistan, etc)...'

(*Workers Party Bulletin*, 18 December 1980)

Elsewhere we read of 'social revolutions' in Southern Africa. Where? Mozambique? Zimbabwe? *Spartacist Britain* aims for pretty high quality Marxist propaganda and it's painful to explain that to have capitalism 'toppling' and 'social revolution' happening state power has to pass from one class to another class. In the epoch of permanent revolution that means from the bourgeoisie to the proletariat. If Mengistu's military dictatorship or Samora Machel or Robert Mugabe are products of 'Marxist understanding' why not just say it straight -- there's no need for revolutionary proletarian parties to combat petty-bourgeois nationalism, popular-frontist class collaboration and 'radical' tinpot dictators.

To give Royston Bull his due, he just about does:

'... a successful revolutionary party must first be built in Britain before British Trotskyists can help much towards transforming the world revolutionary struggle.'

(*Workers Party Bulletin*, 27 July 1979)

That sums it up. It's a long way from Saigon to Stockport and the Workers Party is nothing if not parochial. Coverage of international events largely serves to keep the members' spirits up

with tales of ever-sweeping advances 'in one country after another'. (The concomitant line that workers in Britain are 'about to, and must consciously prepare to, take power' would look even sillier otherwise.)

Communists are internationalists. The Spartacist tendency began as a nationally isolated organisation in the US. But we set out to construct a programmatically homogeneous international tendency -- and the presence of sections in several countries today is testimony to our modest success in that task. For

communists international democratic centralism is the only guard against national-opportunist degeneration. As Trotsky wrote against the Independent Labour Party (ILP):

'For the ILP, the question of a national party and the question of the *International* rest on two different planes... Opportunism reveals itself in nothing else more clearly and incontestably than in this principled counterposing of a national party to the *International*.' (*Writings 1935-36*)

The ILP was pretty big and politically serious as centrist organisations go. It had some real roots and an apparatus -- though it still died a slow death. The Workers Party is confronted with problems of a different magnitude -- like how to make it from one month to the next. While combining bread and dripping economism with perpetual calls for the immediate overthrow of the Tory government in Britain, it carries Healyite 'mass party' posturing to new depths. With the WRP it was grotesque, with the Workers Party plain ridiculous. This tiny 'party' even has an outright menshevik position against Leninist democratic centralism, allowing opposing political viewpoints in the organisation full exposure in the public *Workers Party Bulletin*. And the absurd amateurism of this whole boys' club venture is reflected in the technically slovenly, sub-literate miniature weekly *Bulletin*.

If the question of the *International* was truly predicated on the Workers Party's capacity to build a 'successful revolutionary party' then it would be no question at all. Fortunately it isn't. But if in this organisation there really are comrades who want to fight against anti-Sovietism and anti-communism, for social revolution, and who have a vision of the world which extends beyond Stockport, Leicester and Battersea, we really have only one thing to say. You're making a big mistake. ■

## Reply to Workers Power

# Poland and the golden mean

Centrists by nature are happiest when they can pose as the golden mean between reformists and revolutionaries (labelled 'sectarians'). The Workers Power (WP) group provides classical illustration of this law. It attacked Khomeini's Islamic reaction -- and tailed the 'Iranian Revolution' to the point where it now backs Iran against Iraq. With the Afghanistan invasion WP adopted the formally Trotskyist designation of the USSR as a degenerated workers state -- then refused to call for the victory of the Red Army against CIA-backed insurgents. And when Poland erupted last summer WP flinched again. After sharp polemical exchanges with the Spartacist League in public meetings of both organisations, *Workers Power* (November 1980) ran a major polemic characteristically entitled 'Maximum and Minimum Programmes Useless for Political Revolution'.

WP takes the US Socialist Workers Party (SWP) as its foil on the right (no difficult task this), and then goes after the international Spartacist tendency (iSt) for its 'maximalism'. The SWP is in fact treated perfunctorily -- the target's the iSt. Even so WP manages to botch its polemic against the SWP's undisguised and unashamed tailism. Declaring the SWP has 'no revolutionary programme for Poland,' they conclude: 'If you have only a programme of democratic reforms then reformists (Catholics, nationalists, social democrats) will do quite nicely' (emphasis in original). We must remind the 'Trotskyist' Workers Power that among Leninists the term 'reformist' refers to currents within the workers movement. The Polish Catholic church and nationalists such as Leszek Moczulski are *not* reformist. They are bourgeois counterrevolutionary forces. WP's labelling the Catholic Church 'reformist' is not mere terminological sloppiness. It expresses their basic political position (which they share with the SWP), that there is no danger of capitalist counterrevolution in Poland today. The only problem they see is one or another variety of 'reformism'.

### Polemical dishonesty?

Before dealing with these substantive differences with WP, it is necessary to expose their blatant falsification of our position. The basic precondition for an effective polemic is that it accurately presents the views of one's opponent. For that reason polemics in the iSt press, like those of Lenin and Trotsky, always contain full and often lengthy quotations from our opponents. By contrast and suspiciously, WP chooses to explain the supposed Spartacist position on Poland in their own words, occasionally throwing in snatches from our original sentences.

*Workers Power* would have its readers believe that we call on the Stalinists to combat the clerical-nationalist forces and to defend democratic and socialist principles:

'For the Spartacists, on the other hand, the task is to denounce the clerics -- fine; call for the separation of church and state -- fine...; and set out to destroy the material base of Catholicism through the call for the collectivisation of agriculture. And who is to carry out this programme? On this the Spartacists are silent but in the present context it can mean no more than a call on the Polish Stalinists to rediscover the vigour of their Stalinist predecessors and drive the peasants back into collective farms.'

Anyone who has read Polish Workers Move (*Spartacist Britain* no 25, September 1980) will see that this is a gross falsification. The demand for the separation of church and state was presented explicitly as part of the programme raised by a Trotskyist vanguard in fighting for the leadership of the new union movement:

'A central task for a Trotskyist organisation in Poland would be to raise in these unions a series of demands that will split the clerical-nationalist forces from among the workers and separate them out. These unions must defend the socialised means of production and proletarian state power against Western imperialism. In Poland today the

elementary democratic demand of the separation of church and state is a dividing line between the struggle for workers democracy and the deadly threat of capitalist restorationism.'

Likewise, agricultural collectivisation is explicitly presented as a programme for a revolutionary workers government established after the overthrow of the Stalinist regime: 'An immediate, key task for a revolutionary workers government in Poland would be to promote the collectivisation of agriculture.'

Our strategy for Poland is for the internal political differentiation among the workers



Victims of clerical-fascist Croatian Ustashi, 1945.

drawn into the new union movement. At no point have we called on the Stalinist bureaucracy to combat clerical-nationalist influences among the masses or otherwise carry out a socialist programme.

What appears to be wilful misrepresentation is sometimes merely deficient political consciousness. In any case, Workers Power offers a good negative example for Lenin's admonition that in a polemical exchange, 'he who takes somebody's word for it is a hopeless idiot, who can be disposed of with a simple gesture of the hand'.

### No danger of capitalist restorationism?

It is unfortunate that WP falsifies our position, since our differences over Poland are real and important. Like all the fake-Trotskyists, including the SWP, WP most strongly objects to our contention that the present crisis in Poland could develop into a capitalist counterrevolution led by the Catholic church. For reformists and centrists, to state such a harsh truth is -- horror of horrors -- sure to alienate oneself from the Polish masses and more importantly from social-democratic public opinion in the West. So they deny it. Here is the key sentence in WP's entire polemic:

'And without imperialist willingness to break (militarily) the fundamental agreements on "spheres" of influence reached in Yalta and Potsdam, neither the Catholic church nor the peasantry will move to overthrow state property in Poland.'

In this one sentence WP denies the possibility for the present and foreseeable future of both imperialist military attack on the Soviet bloc and of a counterrevolutionary upheaval generated by internal social forces and contradictions. Oh, what a lovely world the USSR and East Europe would be if it weren't for the bad, big Stalinists! For Trotskyists, the root social cause of Stalinist bureaucratism is the pressure of world capitalism in all its aspects on a relatively economically backward workers state. WP in effect denies this and presents the bureaucratic caste as the root of all evil in the Soviet sphere. If, as WP contends, in the present period socialised property in the Soviet Union and East Europe cannot be overthrown either from without or from within, then there is no need for the dictatorship of the proletariat at all. This is the (implicit) false logic linking these centrists to the anti-Soviet, social-democratic prejudices which predominate in the British left milieu.

Western imperialism's 'unwillingness to break (militarily)' from the post-war spheres of influence in Europe is based on its healthy respect for Soviet military power. But the imperialist states, especially the US, are determined to overcome Soviet military strength. This involves not only a now massive arms build-up, but also fostering and supporting anti-communist formations within the Soviet sphere. Does WP think that Munich's Radio Free Europe is a rock station? And today in Poland these bourgeois-reactionary formations have mass influence extending into the working class.

The question of a counterrevolution in Poland today is not at all determined by the calculated decisions of Wyszynski's episcopate. The massive social conflict in Poland has its own dynamic, which is breaking down the repressive capacity of the Stalinist state apparatus. Given such a dire challenge as, for example, a nationwide general strike, either called by Solidarity or semi-spontaneously developed the Stalinist regime might call out the army, the regular and security police being totally inadequate for the task. And faced with orders to suppress a mass workers movement, the Polish conscript army, which is serviced by Catholic chaplains, could very possibly mutiny and power would then pass into the hands of various insurgent groups.

If the Russians didn't immediately intervene militarily, what could develop out of such a situation? It is possible that there is sufficient socialist consciousness within the Polish working class, as in Hungary in 1956, to produce a movement of workers councils opposed to some degree to the clerical-nationalist forces. That is one possibility. But it is not the only one.

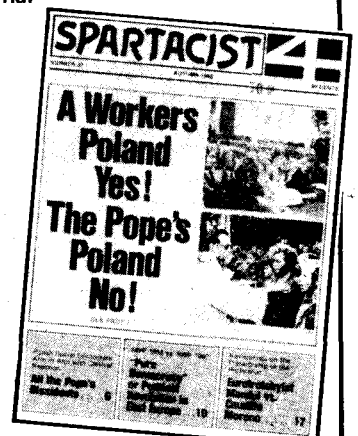
The 'dissident' movement, especially the social-democratic KOR, is for a parliamentary democracy based on free elections, universal suffrage and one man, one vote. What would such a 'pure democracy' mean in practice in Poland today? The Catholic church enjoys a solid social base among the smallholding peasantry, who constitute a third of the total labour force, and at present has considerable support among the proletariat. In these circumstances a clerical-nationalist party (analogous to the Polish Peasant Party in the 1940s) could win 'free' parliamentary elections, even if a large part of the working class voted for the Stalinists or other secular socialist groups.

This would result in a capitalist-restorationist government, although capitalist restoration on the economic level would necessarily proceed gradually. Of course, social counterrevolution cannot be accomplished in a smooth gradual way, and their own experience would soon teach a majority of Polish workers that capitalist rule had been restored by this means. They would turn against the clerical-nationalist regime but our duty as revolutionaries is not to deny this possibility, but to warn the Polish working class against the danger of a clericalist-led 'bourgeois-democratic' counterrevolution.

Trotsky once said that centrism is 'crystalised confusion'. Here again Workers Power is classic. Exactly one paragraph after they assert

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# Exchange on Turkey

# Leninism v Stalinism

The following letter is reprinted with changes of misspelling and typographical errors only.

25 November 1980

Dear Friends

Having read the October edition of your paper I feel that I must take issue with you over the question of Turkey. The article, 'Down with the Turkish dictatorship!' displayed not only a sickening defeatism as to the prospects of the masses in Turkey but also a profound ignorance, which could be interpreted as down-right dishonesty.

You make numerous assertions, which simply go against the truth. Let me first deal with the aftermath of the 1971 coup -- you claim it dealt the working class 'a blow from which it has never recovered'. This is absolute rubbish!

Have you not heard of the massive May Day demonstrations, the one in 1977 had over 500,000 taking part in it, have you not heard of the rapid growth of the revolutionary Trade Union centre DISK, or the numerous cases of economic struggles of the working class being transformed into struggles confronting the state -- assuming revolutionary implications -- like the Izmir events in February 1980. If you have you do not learn the obvious lesson from them.

The truth is that it was from 1973 that the working class movement really 'took off' and started to draw in other oppressed sections in behind it, sections such as the Kurdish people and the student movement, it was after 1973 that the working class movement began to assume a revolutionary character.

But your article goes on from what can only be described as ignorance to statements about the supporters of 'Isçenin Sesi' (the 'Workers Voice' -- paper of the Leninist wing of the Communist Party of Turkey) which I suspect were not made from ignorance, but from pure political dishonesty. I refer to your statements, such as -- 'Isçenin Sesi' believes in 'progressive generals' and 'popular frontism' and that their view that the September coup was a qualitative development in the fascistisation of the state, and therefore a fascist coup, represents a cover for them to unite with 'even possibly Islamic reactionaries' as well as 'the RPP'.

There are numerous publications by 'Isçenin Sesi' many now available in English. Can I ask you to produce evidence to support the assertions you have made. I would contend that you can not. That you are either ignorant or dishonest -- or maybe both.

The ideas you have expressed exist only in your heads, they are most certainly not held by supporters of 'Isçenin Sesi'. The army coup of September 12th did mark a qualitative advance in the process of fascistisation of the state in Turkey -- a process that has been going on now for a number of years, including the time the RPP was in government. To defeat this and to begin the advance to Socialism certainly does not mean uniting with your 'progressive generals' or for that matter the 'Islamic reactionaries' or the RPP. What it means is unity in action with those prepared to fight.

Contrary to what you claim the working class was not dealt a 'blow from which it has never recovered' in 1971. It not only recovered from the 1971 coup but went on to challenge the existing order. For that reason the ruling class has had to increasingly resort to Fascist methods in order to deflect the threat from the working class.

The fact that today, despite the coup, the working class remains undefeated, belies your pessimism about the objective situation in Turkey.

May I assure your readers that the working class and the masses in Turkey are not defeated, they are preparing for the 'final battle'. In the approach to this battle they have called for solidarity from all anti-fascist forces in Britain, not because they are defeated, but because they are determined to emerge as the victors against the forces of Fascism and Reaction.

Yours fraternally,  
Fred Woodworker



Before coup: Turkish workers against fascism. TKP channelled militancy into support for Bulent Ecevit's bourgeois RPP.

*Spartacist Britain* replies: Comrade Woodworker's letter clearly reflects the views of the 'Leninist' wing of the TKP (TKP/L), a recent breakaway from the pro-Moscow Stalinist TKP. Thus his attack on our description of the 1971 coup and its effects parallels the TKP/L's characterisation of the recent period as a 'revolutionary situation', the denial of which they saw as the root cause of the TKP's 'tailist policies' towards the bourgeois Republican People's Party (RPP) of Bulent Ecevit. The TKP/L's avowed refusal to accept such tailism -- even at the expense of expulsion and subsequent isolation from the 'world Communist movement' (ie pro-Moscow CPs) has led them into dangerous waters for a Stalinist grouping.

Though they have not broken with the class-collaborationist underpinning of such Stalinist tenets as the popular front, their eclectic criticisms have forced them willy-nilly to seek historical justification for their estrangement from Moscow, necessarily posing questions about the degeneration of the Communist International. Yet they are contemptuous of the Eurocommunists and Maoists who renounce defence of the Soviet Union. Not surprisingly, the TKP/L's developing criticisms of TKP/CPSU rightism have brought them under sharp attack from mainstream Stalinist organisations for toying with 'Trotskyism'. But the 'Leninists' persistently evade the question of Trotskyism -- the historic struggle between Stalinist 'socialism in one country' and the Leninist-Trotskyist programme of the defence and extension of the gains of October through international proletarian revolution. The road to Leninism demands a sharp, honest confrontation with the counterrevolutionary record and programme of Stalinism.

Woodworker's charges of Spartacist 'defeatism' apparently centre on the following passage in our October article:

'In 1971 the military moved in again to suppress a rising tide of working-class struggle and widespread left-wing unrest in the universities, which were reflected even within the army. The army handed the government back to the political parties in 1973, but only after dealing the workers movement a blow from which it never recovered. The resulting demoralisation within the proletariat was exacerbated by the futile "armed struggle" strategy embraced by many of its best militants -- including Guevarist groups like the defunct Devrimci Gençlik -- who were killed in shootouts with the army or tortured and murdered in its dungeons.'

The 1971 coup was a savage blow to the Turkish working class, resulting, among other acts of savage repression, in the effective destruction of the Turkish Workers Party, a nascent mass working-class organisation. Woodworker tries to dismiss the importance of the coup by pointing to several examples of militant proletarian struggle since that date -- all of which have also been described in *Spartacist Britain*. Of

course the working class did not cease to wage militant, even heroic, struggle, and it certainly could have recovered from the blow received in 1971. Our point is that it did not because of its *misleadership* -- notably the class-collaborationist policies of the TKP, which helped ensure that the growing working-class politicisation following 1973 was mainly channelled into support for Ecevit.

When militant metal workers went into struggle against the government's attempt to reestablish the State Security courts, the DISK trade union leadership (including TKP supporters) sought to divert their strike into a 'mourning action'. Again, when the workers exploded in outrage over the fascist murder of Kemal Turkler, former DISK president, the DISK leadership dutifully channelled the struggle into a half-hearted one-day general strike. It was the RPP's influence over the workers, unchallenged by the TKP, which placed the proletariat in a defensive position and allowed the fascist bands to gather strength.

Yet according to the TKP/L there was a 'revolutionary situation' in Turkey right up to, and indeed after, the coup last September. This is nothing but empty phrasemongering. A revolutionary situation means that the proletariat has sufficient strength and forward momentum to make the seizure of power an *immediate* question. Assertions of a revolutionary situation where it does not exist cannot serve as a talisman against opportunism but indeed can only criminally disorient -- and not least the TKP/L's own cadres. In our October article, *Spartacist Britain* pointed out that a successful proletarian mobilisation (necessitating a break with the RPP) in defence of workers organisations and Kurdish communities against the fascists 'would have laid the basis for a pre-revolutionary situation, posing the prospect of the only real solution to the plight of the Turkish workers and oppressed, not a "democratic" but a proletarian revolution'. In contrast the TKP/L finally noticed in its immediate post-coup statement, 'That the fascist junta was able to seize power, testifies to the relative strength of the counter-revolutionary forces over the organised forces of the revolution.' And two months later (and four days after Woodworker's letter was written), with working-class organisations illegal and workers' leaders in jail, the TKP/L finally announced that the 'revolutionary situation' had been 'suppressed' for the time being (statement of 29 November 1980). Does the TKP/L now display 'sickening defeatism', Comrade Woodworker?

## 'Unity in action' and popular fronts

Comrade Woodworker objects to our statement that the TKP/L supports popular frontist alliances with the class enemy. Yet even in recoiling from the TKP's grovelling before Ecevit the 'Leninists' did not repudiate class collaboration, merely its lack of success. A 1979



pamphlet by leading 'Leninist' theoretician R Yurukoglu entitled 'Turkey: Weak Link of Imperialism', which is a veiled polemic against the TKP leadership, lamented only that the RPP 'is rejecting the Communist Party of Turkey's countless calls for unity'. Later *Turkey Today*, the English-language journal which reflects the TKP/L's views, decried the TKP's support for 'half-hearted and reformist "actions against fascism" which looked to the RPP government or martial law for salvation ... actions which decimated our militant cadres in critical times'. But the 'Leninists' did not repudiate their own support for such actions, which they give 'in every way possible' in the name of 'the principle of unity in action'.

Woodworker denies that this 'unity in action' means looking for an alliance with the RPP or even more rightist bourgeois elements, and demands 'evidence' to the contrary. Let us examine the evidence. In a statement on the day of the coup the TKP/L-supported Committee for the Defence of Democratic Rights in Turkey declared:

'Today the task of all democratic forces in Turkey is to secure the broadest possible struggle against this reactionary coup.... We call on all democrats in Britain to support this struggle and to condemn the military coup.'

In Britain this includes 'everyone from the Labour Party to the Conservative Party' (*Turkey Today*, Autumn 1980). And in Turkey 'the broadest possible struggle' means a barely-veiled appeal (in the TKP/L's post-coup statement) to 'bourgeois liberal forces' who have 'widened the base of opposition to the fascist junta' and to elements of the 'command structure of the army [which] has been subordinated to the junta intact ... obscuring as it does the conflict of interests and political differentiation within it' (emphasis added). What is this but an attempt to unite with the RPP and even 'progressive generals', particularly given the TKP/L's already-expressed belief in 'progressive police' and 'progressive officers from the lower ranks' (*Turkey Today*, January-February 1980)? And what is to prevent the Islamic National Salvation Party, which has its own 'conflict of interest' with the secularist junta, from joining the 'unity in action'?

In the course of struggle against fascist or other rightist reaction, revolutionaries would of course seek united-front action with other working-class organisations and could even find themselves in temporary military blocs with bourgeois formations like the RPP. But as always the primary question is not one of tactics but of a revolutionary party. And this is a far cry from the TKP/L's policy of seeking 'the broadest



Stalin suppressed Spanish Revolution in name of Pop Front.

possible struggle' of 'all democratic forces' in Turkey today. This kind of Stalinist strategy has led to bloody defeat for the proletariat the world over, from Spain to Chile to Turkey itself.

#### Opportunist theories of 'stages'

The popular front is an application of the menshevik theory of 'two stage' revolution, which posits a democratic stage involving the national bourgeoisie to be followed in theory (but in practice, never) by a socialist one. Despite its proclaimed opposition to 'various opportunist theories of "stages"', the TKP/L's adherence to a strategy of 'advanced people's democratic revolution' is precisely that -- a stage clearly and explicitly distinguished from the proletarian revolution. Thus they accept in principle 'unity' with the bourgeoisie during

the democratic stage:

'The essence of the struggle is its content or stage. It is the concept of *people* which varies with this. For example, some bourgeois sections are included in the people when the essence of the struggle is democratic. These same sections are not included when the essence is socialist.' ('Turkey: Weak Link of Imperialism', emphasis in original)

The TKP/L's vague talk of the democratic stage 'growing over' into socialism through the 'Leninist process of uninterrupted revolution' changes nothing. Just *why* do they refuse to fight for proletarian revolution? There can be no victory for the Turkish workers and peasants unless the proletariat, standing at the head of the oppressed masses, is mobilised on a programme for socialist revolution, not a purely democratic one, against *all* sections of the bourgeoisie.

Moreover there is nothing 'Leninist' about the TKP/L's perspective. Even before 1917 Lenin's formula of the 'revolutionary democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry' was aimed against those like the Mensheviks, who sought an alliance with the 'progressive' Russian bourgeoisie. But in the wake of the February Revolution Lenin came over in practice to Trotsky's perspective of *permanent revolution*: that the tasks of the bourgeois-democratic revolution could be accomplished only under the dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the peasantry. Some Bolshevik leaders, notably Stalin and Kamenev, continued to support the 'democratic dictatorship' slogan, and thus wanted to support the Provisional Government. Lenin argued:

'The person who now speaks only of a "revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry" is behind the times; consequently, he has in effect gone over to the petty bourgeoisie against the proletarian class struggle.' ('Letters on Tactics', April 1917, emphasis in original)

Under Stalin the two-stage revolution schema was revived in the Communist International against the opposition of the Trotskyist Left Opposition. It led to the bloody defeat of the Chinese Revolution in Shanghai in 1927. And in the 1930s Stalin's chief Comintern 'theoretician' Dimitrov applied it to the struggle against fascism, defining the latter as 'the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, chauvinist and imperialist elements of finance-capital' and thus laying the basis for Communist parties to form blocs with 'less' reactionary elements of finance capital. The Comintern wiped workers revolution off the agenda in the imperialist countries, as Dimitrov made explicit in his report to the Seventh World Congress in 1935:

'Now the toiling masses in a number of capitalist countries are faced with the necessity of making a definite choice, and of making it today, not between proletarian dictatorship and bourgeois democracy, but between bourgeois democracy and fascism.'

This strategy delivered the Spanish proletariat to defeat at the hands of Franco. And with ruthless logic, the 'anti-fascist people's front' was ultimately extended to embrace even 'honest' fascist elements under Hitler and Mussolini.

#### What is fascism

If the 'Leninists' are not to follow in the footsteps of the 'opportunist' wing they have opposed, they must reject not only the TKP's class-collaborationism but also that of Stalin/Dimitrov. However this opens up the whole question of Trotsky's struggle against the Stalinist degeneration of the Russian Revolution and the Comintern -- and this is what the TKP/L today seeks to avoid. But they are obviously confused and uncomfortable. Thus the TKP/L claims that the recent coup was 'fascist', and in a recent speech Yurukoglu attacks 'Western Trotskyists' (as well as the 'opportunist' wing) who deny this. But, he admits, the TKP/L doesn't really know what fascism *is*, since Dimitrov's 'classic definition ... does not say much'. He must deny a 'Trotskyist' analysis, and to agree with the 'opportunist' might imply that their strategy is correct. So Yurukoglu is reduced to a feeble identification of fascism with any rightist reaction: 'What's the point separating fascism from any military coup?' Leon Trotsky had an answer, explaining:

'At the moment that the "normal" police and military resources of the bourgeois dictatorship, together with their parliamentary screens, no longer suffice to hold society in a state of equilibrium ... capitalism sets in motion the masses of the crazed petty bourgeoisie, and the bands of declassed and demoralised lumpenproletariat....



Stalin/Laval pact with France, 1934. 'Socialism in one country' meant accommodation to bourgeoisie.

'When a state turns fascist ... it means first of all for the most part that the workers' organisations are annihilated; that the proletariat is reduced to an amorphous state....' ('What Next? Vital Questions for the German Proletariat', 1932)

This is *not* the situation in Turkey today. The dictatorship of the bourgeoisie in Turkey today clearly has a *bonapartist-military* form. General Evren did not come to power on the shoulders of the Grey Wolves but 'against' them, while fascist leader Turkes is not in the cabinet but in jail. The junta is not today unleashing a reactionary mobilisation of the petty-bourgeois masses. It came to power precisely in order to forestall a possible civil war between the forces of the left and right and restore a semblance of capitalist 'order' on the points of bayonets. The Turkish coup has led to massive repression, but unlike the rise of fascism in Germany it has not yet meant the pulverising of the proletariat and the annihilation of its organisations.

#### A fish stinks from its head

But Dimitrov isn't the only Stalinist ideologue to come in for explicit criticism from the TKP. In a recent speech published under the title 'Socialism Will Win', Yurukoglu argues that 'the world communist movement has shifted to the right'; indeed:

'The ideological unity of the world communist movement had disintegrated before the dissolution of the Comintern. The abolition of organisational unity further accelerated this ideological disintegration.'

Having said this, TKP/L supporters must now ask themselves *why* Stalin 'abolished' the Comintern in 1943, and how long before that did the 'ideological disintegration' begin? These questions cannot be avoided -- and it is not only we Trotskyists who are asking them. In a polemic in the 9 January *New Worker*, the hardline pro-Moscow British New Communist Party asks them rhetorically:

'What disintegration is Yurukoglu referring to? Perhaps the defeat of Trotskyism in the Communist International in 1926? Perhaps the rejection of the incorrect line of "social fascism" and the adoption of the United Workers' Popular Front in 1935?'

Yurukoglu's former comrades in the TKP Central Committee chime in in the December 1980 issue of their paper *Atilim*, attacking the splitters for 'anti-Sovietism' and 'sounding like one of the small groups of the Trotskyist Fourth International'. But the TKP/L's response is to try and wish the hard questions away, ignoring the references to Trotskyism and simply arguing that criticism of specific past or present Soviet policies is not necessarily anti-Soviet.

Indeed it isn't. But unable to break from their Stalinist heritage the TKP 'Leninists' have not generalised their leftist impulses into a consistent revolutionary programme. Thus they have what appears to be a formally correct approach to the Kurdish right to self-determination, a crucial question for Turkish revolutionaries. But in Ethiopia, their support for the 'glorious revolution' of the bloodthirsty tyrant Mengistu leads them to deny that right to the Eritrean people. And even on the Kurdish question, they apply their stagist conception to embrace a 'national democratic movement' which can only be counterposed to a struggle for proletarian leadership of the Kurdish masses. They oppose Islamic reaction at home and in Afghanistan but credit the 'Khomeini movement' with 'a positive role' in the struggle against the shah's dictatorship and say nothing about the Iranian pro-Moscow Tudeh Party's uncritical support for an Islamic republic (*Turkey Today* no 48).

The TKP/L attempts to hide its head in the sand and pretend that the root of all evil is the wretched current leadership of the TKP:

'By imposing the task of fulfilling their own

*continued on page 8*

# El Salvador...

(Continued from page 2)

January. On 22 January, anniversary of the 1932 revolt, the CRM held a mammoth inaugural rally of an estimated 200,000 in the capital. As the crowd entered the Plaza Central, rightist snipers on the rooftops of the presidential palace and the Bank of El Salvador began firing automatic weapons into the crowd: over 100 dead, 300 wounded.

At the turn of the year the junta fell apart, with reform-minded civilians opting out. Agriculture minister Alvarez Cordova left to form the Democratic Front, which joined with the CRM to form the Revolutionary Democratic Front, and this 'black sheep' of one of the 14 Families became the titular head of the opposition popular front. They were replaced by more Christian Democrats. But the killing went on.

## Washington targets Central America

As the guerrillas announced their offensive, Napoleon Duarte, the Christian Democrat figurehead of El Salvador's military junta appealed to 'President Reagan' for military aid against the left. Reagan, of course, had not taken office yet, but Duarte didn't get his dates mixed up. He was just snubbing 'Human Rights' Carter and cashing in on the Republican candidate's campaign promises. Reagan had rhetorically asked on the campaign trail:

'Must we let Nicaragua, El Salvador all become additional "Cubas", new outposts for Soviet combat brigades? Will the next push of the Moscow-Havana axis be northward to Guatemala and thence to Mexico, and south to Costa Rica and Panama?'

Now looking for an opportunity to flaunt US military strength, Reagan's advisers view El Salvador as the perfect place to show some muscle without risking immediate confrontation with the Soviet Union.

Just how Washington plans to draw the line against the 'red menace' in El Salvador is not yet clear. Sending in the Marines Santo Domingo-style may be very *macho*, but even for Reagan it is hardly the first option. The use of an 'inter-American' OAS 'peace-keeping' force including Venezuelan, Costa Rican and other elements as a cover for imperialist intervention is possible. Then there are the mercenary brigades in Honduras and Guatemala formed from ex-Somoza troops, killers without a country who have been staging terrorist incursions into Nicaragua for months. Finally, there is the possibility of intervention by the Guatemalan and Honduran military regimes themselves.

It is not only the openly reactionary US imperialists and their client regimes who pose a mortal threat to the Salvadoran revolution. 'Progressive' capitalist politicians within the Revolutionary Democratic Front, their allies in the Mexican and Panamanian governments and European social democrats backing the FDR financially and diplomatically stand ready to stab the insurgent worker and peasant masses in the back and cheat them of victory. A key element of this cabal is the reformist, social-democratic Second International, which at a conference in Madrid last year formed an 'International Committee for Defence of the Nicaraguan Revolution'. Later this group, which includes Willy Brandt of West Germany, Francois Mitterrand of France, Olof Palme of Sweden and Bruno Kreisky of Austria, occupied itself with support, financial and otherwise, to the FDR. The Salvadoran popular front, in turn, is now headed by Guillermo Ungo of the Revolutionary National Movement, a liberal bourgeois formation affiliated with the Second International.

The European social democrats, for the most part present and former managers of imperialist states, are guided by different national interests than Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter. Reagan bitterly opposes the 'outside interference' of Brandt & Co, and their diplomatic manoeuvres on behalf of the Salvadoran leftists. But even if an FDR government is set up in a 'liberated zone' of El Salvador and the social democrats hustle to recognise it as legitimate it will not be to ensure a revolutionary victory but to prevent the anti-capitalist destabilisation of the entire region through international mediation. The beneficiaries of their intervention would not be the working class and peasant masses but the likes of Ungo, who proved his willingness to sell out to the imperialists by taking a seat alongside the military butchers in the first junta which emerged after the military coup of 15 October 1979. Former junta member Majano shares responsibility (no less than the vile Christian

Democratic politicians) for the more than 9000 murdered by rightist repression last year. He is a blood enemy of the Salvadoran working masses. In the opposition, he and his fellow officers would see their primary duty as preventing armed struggle from 'going too far'. They and bourgeois forces in the Democratic Revolutionary Front seek above all to preserve the blood-soaked officer corps and capitalist property from destruction.

Again and again since the October coup it has been demonstrated that popular-frontism paralyses and disorients the struggle against the generals' counterrevolutionary terror. When Romero fell the new junta attempted to neutralise and even win over the left. They almost succeeded. The PCS joined the cabinet. The LP-28 briefly gave conditional 'wait-and-see' support. The BPR called on the junta to carry out its promises, helping to spread illusions that it could or would. Later, the August general strike failed (as a strike, anyway) in part because petty-bourgeois components of the FDR kept their shops open and their buses running. After this setback, the FARN broke ranks in order to seek more powerful bourgeois backing. The rest of the left was banking on picking up international diplomatic support through tours by bourgeois scions like FDR head Alvarez Cordova, later murdered by rightist death squads. Both efforts failed.

In the face of likely imperialist intervention, and merely to defeat their 'own' bourgeoisie, forces seeking proletarian revolution anywhere in Central America will face defeat if they limit themselves by artificial national frontiers. The borders of El Salvador or Nicaragua are far less defensible than Cuba's coasts, and even there the US attempted a counterrevolutionary invasion.

The Trotskyist programme of permanent revolution -- not for bogus 'democratic' capitalism, but for a workers and peasants government to expropriate the bourgeoisie -- is the only banner under which Central America will be liberated from the military boot, oligarchic exploitation and imperialist domination. This programme is starkly counterposed to all brands of nationalist populism and Stalinist reformism in the Salvadoran left. Yet the major ostensible Trotskyist grouping in the world, the misnamed 'United Secretariat of the Fourth International', has endorsed the programme of the FDR popular front, which calls for a 'popular, democratic and antioligarchic' (ie, *not socialist*) revolution, which appeals to 'healthy, patriotic and worthy elements that belong to the current army' -- eg, the Colonel Majanos (*Intercontinental Press*, 5 May).

Following suit, the International Marxist Group (IMG), its British section, caps its criminally pollyannish account of the insurgency with the crowning demand: 'Recognise the FDR as the true representative of the people of El Salvador!' (*Socialist Challenge*, 15 January). The 'true representative' of which people -- not the proletariat and poor peasantry. Such enthusiastic support for an unabashedly self-avowed popular-front 'alliance of all the democratic, progressive and revolutionary social sectors' (*Socialist Challenge*, 3 December 1980) is part and parcel of the IMG's embrace of the 'revolutionary road of Nicaragua', imitating its social-democratic cousins of the US Socialist Workers Party (SWP).

Attempting to cash in on its years of uncritically tailing the 'unconscious Trotskyists' in Havana -- who just happen to be firmly aligned with the Kremlin -- the SWP is busy fatuously telling us 'What we can learn from Lenin, Castro, and the FSLN -- Proletarian Leadership in Power'. While the petty-bourgeois nationalist Sandinistas were lifted to power at the head of a radical plebian uprising which smashed the existing state apparatus, they have made no decisive moves toward the expropriation of the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie. On the contrary, the Sandinista government, hailed as a workers and farmers government by the SWP, refuses to nationalise the farms and the factories and remains stubbornly determined to shore up the private sector.

The latest addition to the 'unfolding dynamic' of the 'Caribbean revolution' is tiny Grenada, whose 'proletarian revolution' consisted of the seizure of the army barracks and radio station by 46 armed cadre of the New Jewel Movement two years ago. IMGers who have not completely lost their heads over this absurd infatuation with 'revolutionary Grenada' could learn something from the *Washington Post* (10 August), a US imperialist mouthpiece hardly known for glossing over real or imagined assaults on private property:

'Few of the usual signposts of leftist trans-

formation are in evidence. There has been no expropriation of private business or land by the state.

'As far as the leftist militancy of the government, "there is a definite contradiction" between what Grenada's leaders say to the world and what they do at home, acknowledged Maurice Bishop, 36, the prime minister. "It would be childish to deny."'

This would be sick humour were it not that the masses of Central America are saddled with numbing poverty and brutal repression. The popular front remains the irreconcilable enemy of the proletarian revolution, no less than in Trotsky's time, and a workers and farmers government today as always can only be realised through the dictatorship of the proletariat.

A revolutionary victory can be won in El Salvador -- but not by the strategy of reliance on 'progressive' Latin American regimes, 'socialist' imperialist politicians, 'patriotic' colonels and Catholic bishops. What is needed is relentless class struggle, not only within the borders of tiny El Salvador, but throughout the Central American isthmus. Break with class collaboration -- forward to workers and peasants governments in El Salvador and throughout Central America! For a Trotskyist party! Military victory to the leftist insurgents! US/OAS/Latin American bourgeoisies -- all hands off El Salvador! ■

--adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 272, 16 January 1981

# Turkey...

(Continued from page 7)

reformist wishes on the Soviet Union, and by preventing the revolution in Turkey because of this, the nationalistic mensheviks are in reality helping the bourgeoisie of Turkey and betraying the revolutionary interest of the world revolution and of the Soviet Union.'

(*Turkey Today*, Autumn 1980)

But who is really imposing what on whom? Why did the Soviet Union take the side of the 'nationalistic mensheviks' against the 'Leninists' in Turkey? There is a name for the theory justifying the kind of betrayals of the world revolution and the Soviet Union described by *Turkey Today*. It is 'socialism in one country'. It did not begin yesterday, and it did not begin in Turkey. It began more than fifty-five years ago, and in Moscow. As a Turkish saying has it, 'A fish stinks from its head.'

In breaking with the ultra-opportunist TKP the TKP/L took a half-step in the direction of genuine Leninism -- but only a half-step. While hinting at historic problems with Moscow's leadership of the 'world communist movement', it shies away from confronting the real issues of the Trotsky/Stalin fight and the degeneration of the Soviet Union and the Comintern, and refuses to tie defence of the gains of October 1917 to the need for political revolution to oust the Kremlin bureaucrats and restore revolutionary internationalism and workers democracy to the USSR. Does the TKP/L also continue to defend the kind of sectarian gangsterism pervasive in the Stalinist-dominated Turkish left, which led Trotsky to call Stalinism a 'syphilis in the workers movement'? And rather than turn from Stalinist bureaucratism to Leninist democratic centralism on the party question, it is now toying with pre-Leninist ideas of public 'freedom of criticism' for all members of the organisation.

The TKP 'Leninists' today stand at a political crossroads. They now resemble more and more an organisation of Stalinists without a country -- and cannot last as such. A decisive break with Moscow in the absence of a Trotskyist programme cannot lead to a break with opportunism. Defence of the Soviet Union is a necessary aspect of a revolutionary-internationalist programme -- and a particularly crucial question in such a strategically located NATO bastion as Turkey. But that means a defence of the interests of the international proletariat, not only against imperialist encroachment and internal counterrevolution, but also against the counterrevolutionary policies of a bureaucratic caste which has usurped political power from the Soviet proletariat. Only one political compass can chart the militants of the TKP/L onto the Leninist road: the Trotskyism of the international Spartacist tendency. That is the conclusion that must be drawn if they are to take serious heed of the slogan on which they claim to stand: 'The bourgeoisie cannot be defeated without defeating opportunism.' ■



# Sexism, violence, 'law and order'

## The Yorkshire Ripper case

West Yorkshire is not New York City. But when 21-year-old Jacqueline Hill became the thirteenth victim in five years of a psychopathic sexual murderer (or murderers) it struck a chord of fear and terror. Many women took to leaving work early, and walking home by different routes. Personal torch/alarms became a best-selling item in many university bookshops, with some student unions distributing them free to women students. Ironically, the latest victim of the 'Yorkshire Ripper' had just moved to a more central part of Leeds to assuage parental fears for her safety. The uninspired incompetence of the police -- their special 'Ripper Squad' notwithstanding -- was exemplified by the fact that her bloodstained handbag had been found and handed over to the cops 24 hours before her body was discovered in the same vicinity.

But unlike the first ten Ripper victims, Jacqueline Hill was not a prostitute. She was a Sunday school teacher from a 'respectable' background, and the heat was on for the cops to 'get their man'. When they escorted suspect Peter Sutcliffe, arrested while driving through Sheffield's red-light district with stolen licence plates, into Dewsbury Court some six weeks later, more than a thousand people mobbed the entrance, some of them waving home-made nooses and screaming for a hanging. And it was not just the NF skinheads and the Mary Whitehouse 'law and order' types. The feminists who had stormed through the streets of Leeds the weekend after Jacqueline Hill's murder chanting 'Death to rapists!' as they attacked hapless male patrons of pornography shops and hurled paint bombs at porn cinema screens must have had their numbers in the 'hang 'em high' brigade outside Dewsbury Court.

Law and order are prerequisites for civilised living. But in the hands of the bourgeois state, 'law and order' translates into a justification for wanton cop brutality against immigrants, strikers, communists and other 'social deviants' -- including feminists. Neither lynch law nor legal murder by the capitalist state will stop the random violence and crime spawned and nurtured by a violent and sexually oppressive class society; strengthening that state and its

arrested by the cops in the course of their five-year 'investigation'; or to the black male residents of Chapeltown, Leeds who were stopped and harassed -- even though the one thing that was known about the Ripper is that he was *not* black; or to the gays in Bradford who were arrested (and one driven to commit suicide) after cooperating with a police search for a homosexual killer there several years earlier. Most rapes go unreported because the cop inquisition can be as degrading as the assault itself.

The self-styled Trotskyists, like the International Marxist Group (IMG), Workers

Socialist League (WSL) and Workers Power (WP), make the appropriate genuflection to the Leninist view of the state and the Marxist axiom that women's oppression -- whether manifested in domestic slavery or in the particularly degrading experience of terror and victimisation which is rape -- can only be eradicated through the overthrow of capitalism. But they all flock to 'reclaim the night' and to offer up solutions to sexist violence this side of the revolutionary transformation of this violent, sexist society. Their programmatic scale slides from the utopian/reformist, like 'defence guards' peacefully coexisting with the bosses' cops to patrol the streets, to the sublimely sub-reformist, like better street lighting, and self-defence. But there is self-defence and self-defence. One middle-aged American black woman related the experience of an attack to her fellow students in a karate class: 'I was lying at home on my bed. Someone broke down the front door, then they broke down my bedroom door. They came after me...' What happened? 'Well, I picked up my .45 and blew him away.'

Every citizen must have the right to bear arms -- otherwise it's the cops and the criminals who have a monopoly on violence. For all the anti-crime hysteria about 'safer streets' whipped up by the police publicity mills, one woman was recently arrested for carrying an aerosol tear-gas spray. Pity the woman who gets stopped carrying a gun, much less if she happens to be black or a prostitute. Yet a leading member of Workers Power in Sheffield, despite its calls for 'arming the workers' everywhere and at all times, wasn't even sure if he *opposed* gun control.

### A curfew on men, Workers Power?

That the feminists, with their fake-Trotskyist hangers-on in tow, have turned to combatting sex crimes as their primary political focus reflects the rightward motion of the feminist movement over the years. A decade ago, they centred their outrage on the nuclear family, the material basis for women's oppression under capitalism. Today they approvingly quote *News of the World* complaining about the 'suggestive' shows on television accessible to children. But the transformation of the fight against capitalist 'patriarchy' into the fight for capitalist punishment is quite explicable: where society is sharply riven by a class line, the feminists have always drawn a sex line. Like Zionists who see in every German a potential Hitler, the feminist dictum is: 'All men are potential rapists!' When Yorkshire police called on women to stay off the streets at night, the feminists responded with the demand for a 'curfew on men' And WP demonstrates the consummate capacity of even the most left centrists to echo any 'mass' sentiment:

'Women will be very well aware that the threat is not from one individual "mass



Feminists demonstrate against pornography in Leeds.

murderer", but is a constant threat from large sections of normal men every day.' (*Workers Power Student Bulletin*, 13 January)

What about the 'normal men' in Workers Power? WP is not anti-male; it simply lacks the programmatic spine to prevent such ludicrous capitulations. Rape transforms what is normally a pleasurable intimacy and consensual activity for sexual gratification into an experience of fear, degrading submission, brutality and often injury for the victim and into an overt expression of hostility and aggression for the rapist. And this man is a *sex-murderer*. Normal? Hardly, but from the vantage point of feminism, brutal rape is on a continuum with consensual heterosexual activity. 'Disgusting, that kind of thing' says the woman in one feminist cartoon, hearing about sex with a man ('*Revolutionary and Radical Feminist Newsletter*', Autumn, 1980). Starting from diametrically counterposed attitudes toward the nuclear family, lesbian feminists and 'missionary position' fundamentalists both end up attempting to impose their own puritanical norms on consensual sexual behaviour. The WSL adds to this the same Methodist moralism it brings to such questions as the liquor licensing laws when it juxtaposes 'the reality' of working-class women wheeling prams to 'the media fantasy' of an ad for 'naughty nighties'. Proletarian women are, presumably, above such things as sexual fantasy! One is at a loss to understand how the WSL can go on to quote Leon Trotsky's comment (in *Problems of Everyday Life*) that in a workers state, 'The longing for amusement, distraction, sightseeing and laughter [will be] ... freed from the guardianship of the pedagogue and the tiresome habit of moralising'.

### United front with Mary Whitehouse

In the absence of a communist/materialist perspective, the struggle against sexual oppression is necessarily and falsely reduced to

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Mob outside Dewsbury Courthouse.

agencies of armed repression serves only to maintain that system. And police powers are being reinforced today.

'Yes', admitted one feminist from the South London 'Women Against Violence Against Women' (WAVAW) after explaining that 'some people in the group would be in favour of hanging' (*Socialist Challenge*, 15 January). 'But the problem is what else can you do ... in the here and now?' Indeed, in accepting the capitalist 'here and now' as a starting point, what else can you do?

The Communist Party of West Yorkshire issued a leaflet calling on the 'public to cooperate with the police' and advising the cops to be 'less defensive of constructive criticism'. Calling a cop to stop a mugging is one thing -- but a Communist policy of making the cops more 'effective' and 'respected' through 'cooperation'? Tell it to the countless prostitutes

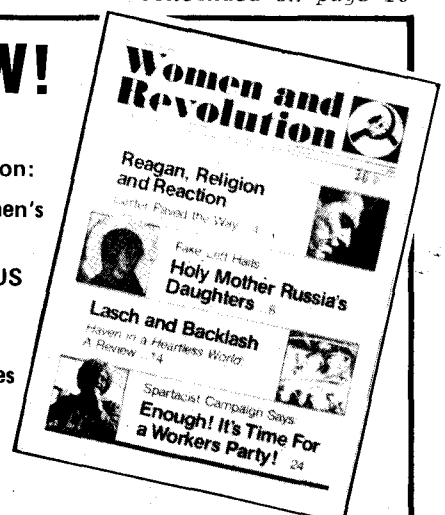
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# Poland...

(Continued from page 5)

classic. Exactly one paragraph after they assert that 'neither the Catholic church nor the peasantry will move to overthrow socialised property in Poland', they concede:

'We do not deny that the legitimate struggles of the workers for their rights to speak and to organise can be utilised by elements who wish to use the forms of bourgeois democracy to restore capitalism... Likewise no-one can deny the potential carnival of reaction that could be unleashed by a Polish nationalist movement in the hands of the priests and reactionaries.'

What is one to make of this? Either elements in Poland can utilise 'the legitimate struggles of the workers' to open the way for capitalist restoration or they can't. Either a clerical-nationalist movement in Poland could unleash 'a carnival of reaction' or it couldn't. Workers Power, what is your real position? While the article in question is signed by *Workers Power* editor Dave Hughes, it reads as if it were written by two people with two different lines.

## Anti-Stalinism or anti-communism?

So in a confused way WP recognises the reactionary influences among the combative Polish workers. But the whole sense of its position is that insofar as the Stalinists have caused the workers to look toward clerical-nationalism, the bureaucracy is only getting its just deserts. In this view the Polish Catholic church becomes nemesis for the crimes of Russian Stalinism:

'... the imposition of the Stalinist bureaucratic regime on Poland and its maintenance in power by the Soviet bureaucracy means that Stalinists themselves are responsible ultimately for fuelling and stoking the flames of nationalism and that it is their responsibility that millions of Polish workers feel that the bureaucratic regime is the result of national oppression. It is precisely that sense of national oppression that explains the ability of the Catholic Church to channel and even speak in the name of an aroused and militant working class.' (emphasis in original)

No doubt it doesn't occur to WP that this kind of thinking has a far broader applicability than Poland. The crimes of Russian Stalinism, including the national oppression of the East European peoples, are also a major factor generating and sustaining anti-communist ideology among the workers of the imperialist centres. As James P Cannon wrote of American working people's attitude toward Stalinism with the onset of the Cold War in 1947:

'Leaving out of consideration altogether the capitalist demagogues who exploit the fraudulent slogan "democracy versus totalitarianism" for their own imperialistic purposes, there are a great number of people who sincerely hate Stalinism for its violence and terror, its bloody and awful tyranny, its utter disregard for human life and human dignity.' ('American Stalinism and Anti-Stalinism', *The Struggle for Socialism in the "American Century"*)

During the Korean War and early stages of the Vietnam War millions of American youths fought in part for what they believed to be democratic freedoms and even basic human decency. They were not motivated solely by blind chauvinism or fear of military authority. This did not make the US army in Korea and Vietnam one whit less counter-revolutionary.

For revolutionary Marxists (Trotskyists), what is decisive is not the subjective roots of

popular hostility to Stalinism, but how this hostility is directed in the real world. In East Europe (as in a different way in West Europe and the United States) revulsion against the crimes of Stalinism can be given a socialist expression, that of proletarian political revolution against the bureaucracy, or it can be directed toward an imperialist-backed counter-revolutionary mobilisation. In Poland today these alternatives are posed in the sharpest way. Workers Power: which side are you on? ■

# Ripper...

(Continued from page 9)

a war of ideas against sexist ideology complemented with campaigns for partial reforms (abortion, child care, equal pay etc). But on the ideological terrain, there can be a dangerous and reactionary intersection between sex-defined feminism and sex-centred bourgeois morality. The anti-pornography campaign current among feminists goes beyond being a misguided attack on sexism to become a reactionary attack on fundamental democratic rights. And who decides what constitutes 'pornography'? Is it a pin-up in *Playboy*? A homosexual ode to Jesus? Or James Joyce's *Ulysses*? For the bourgeoisie, nothing is so obscene as the *Communist Manifesto*. Yet for the IMG, 'protest at sexist films [and] the Reclaim the Night demos ... show the way forward' (*Socialist Challenge*, 8 January). And the WSL, which considers virtually any demand revolutionary so long as '... under workers control' can be tacked onto it, joins in this campaign against sexist 'obscenity' by demanding that it be carried out through 'the fight for workers and consumers control of the media' (*Socialist Press*, 3 December 1980). No wonder this supposedly 'Trotskyist' organisation feels it necessary to explicitly deny it is 'siding with Mary Whitehouse'! At least one WSL cadre, no Trotskyist herself, felt sufficiently outraged to attack this thoroughly reactionary stand in a letter to *Socialist Press*. But this is where pandering to the present-day consciousness of the working class -- dominated by bourgeois ideology -- leads.

Mary Whitehouse does indeed support their anti-pornography campaign. Remonstrated one WAVAW feminist: 'She can't really support us. She doesn't support women's liberation' (*Socialist Challenge*, 15 January). No, she doesn't support women's liberation. Yet she can really support their campaign -- and that should make them wonder if it has anything to do with women's liberation. It doesn't. The upshot of the feminists' and bible-bashers' united front against pornography is that the lesbians will be among the first victims to be burned at the stake as witches -- after they've helped lynch Hugh Hefner.

And that's the real point about feminism: it is counterposed to the struggle for the emancipation of women, which demands the mobilisation of the proletariat unified by its common class

interests in revolutionary struggle against its class exploiters. Torchlight processions and book-burning conjure up barbaric historical memories. The marches of virtually white-only feminists chanting 'Death to rapists' and demanding 'safer streets' in black neighbourhoods which happen to be red-light districts fuel the political climate for marches of white-only fascists around the same demands through the same neighbourhoods. And for the fascists it is more than the rhetoric of impotent fury and outrage. They have a programme to deal with 'sex offenders', and for women they offer 'Kinder, Kirche, Kuche'. It is under a communist future that the barbarity of sexual oppression will become a thing of the past. Forward to a communist women's movement, section of a proletarian Trotskyist party! ■

# Sheffield...

(Continued from page 3)

off potential supporters of the broadest possible united action. WP only became committed when assured it was indeed 'popular', and for all its talk of Spartacist 'sectarianism', evidenced a failure to understand the question of the united front in the fight against fascism. With its emphasis on the need for small, trained elite squads to take on fascists WP could not understand what had happened. Because this was a widely-publicised mobilisation, with some official union backing, it could do the job that weekly 'confrontations' had failed to do. And the most cross form of that blindness was expressed by local WP leading member Keith Hassell who justified WP's relative inaction in seeking union support with the argument that it was really only a 'student' action.

A perspective for mobilising the proletariat against fascism in the struggle for socialist revolution is the only serious road forward -- and talk of defence guards will remain hot air if not based on that perspective. A BL trade unionist and supporter of the SL pointed at the 31 January rally to two successful mobilisations of blacks and unionists in Detroit and San Francisco initiated by the Spartacist League/US and concluded:

'We seek to build what our comrades in America have done. And that is to mobilise the trade union movement along with black and other minority sections ... to smash the fascists wherever they rear their heads.'

The Sheffield campus united-front protest pointed the road forward to the kind of mobilisations necessary to crush the fascists. Despite its limitations in terms of size -- limitations reinforced by sectarian and opportunist antics -- it was a serious and successful action. Students as a whole do not have stable class interests, nor the social power to smash fascism. In Germany in 1933 the mass of students marched behind the swastika. And that can be repeated if students are not won to the side of the working class in its struggle to liquidate capitalism. ■

# Feminists debate Trotskyists

Over sixty people packed a room at North London Polytechnic (NLP) on 27 January for a debate between the NLP Women's Group and the Spartacist Society. The theme was: 'Which way forward for women's liberation? Autonomous women's movement versus communist women's movement'. Not surprisingly the axis turned out to be: reform or revolution? And members of the International Marxist Group (IMG) and Socialist Workers Party (SWP) came down on the side of the former.

The Spartacist Society's invited speaker, Di Parkin (Spartacist League Central Committee), began by stressing that only socialist revolution, undermining the economic basis of the oppressive nuclear family, could bring genuine women's liberation. She pointed to the changes brought by the Bolsheviks in revolutionary Russia. Ending sexual oppression meant the fight for a communist women's movement, linked to a revolutionary party, which would mobilise women for proletarian revolution. Comrade Parkin observed that the rightward drift of the feminist movement had led it away even from critiques of the family and to 'an emphasis on rape and violence against women'.

In her brief remarks, Jan Parker for the Women's Group bore out Comrade Parkin's observation that 'it's the view that something can and must be done now that obsesses the feminists'. Parker snapped in return 'I'm buggered if

I'm going to wait for the socialist revolution before my life changes.' She went on: 'I'm not the sort of feminist who's into that sort of jargon like the seizure of power'. In the floor discussion IMG and SWP speakers echoed that sentiment. An SWPer attacked the Spartacists because 'what they do is come along to everything and say what you need is the socialist revolution'. But as other floor speakers pointed out, it is not a question of waiting for revolution, but fighting for it -- even in the necessary struggle for reforms. And that discomfits opportunists whose goal is 'popularity' -- wherever that leads. So both the IMG and SWP supported the anti-porn frenzy of the 'Reclaim the Night' movement, which dovetails nicely with Mary Whitehouse and other pro-family, anti-gay bigots. Khomeini's Islamic reaction, which they backed, led to the veil and stoning of 'adulteresses' and prostitutes.

Some feminists may have been a little abashed when Jan Parker claimed that 'all women are raped', and saw the use of words like 'organ' and 'strong pole of attraction' in the Spartacist journal *Women and Revolution* as evidence of phallocracy. But that's what you 'get into' when you give up on the fundamental transformation of society. The Spartacist League will continue to be a hard pole of attraction for those who want to fight for women's liberation with a programme that can really change the world. ■

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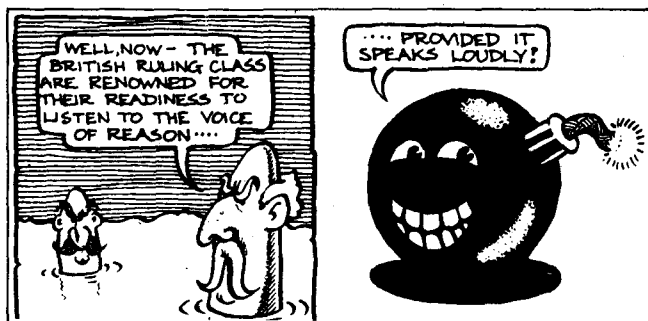
# H Block...

(Continued from page 12)

of their bankruptcy. And knowing that the professional terrorists of the British army must go is only the very beginning of wisdom. The British left generally likes to decry as 'the blood-bath theory' the view that anything other than sweetness and light will reign once the army is out. For this they are understandably not taken very seriously by many workers who genuinely wish to fight oppression. Fairy stories won't help -- a revolutionary programme is needed to unite Northern Ireland's bitterly divided working class. And such a programme has nothing to do with the milque-toast reformist unity-mongering of 'Sinn Fein -- the Workers Party' (formerly the Official IRA). The unspeakably dull *Workers Life* praised MP Gerry Fitt for his 'courage' in speaking out against the hunger strike. And 'sticky' leader Tomas MacGiolla did his bit on Dublin Corporation by opposing the blanket men's demands.

Those who try to ignore or evade the national question and the Catholic/Protestant divide only leave the field clear for the nationalists who exploit them. The reactionary consequences of a reformist-economist perspective have been most vividly shown by the supposed 'Trotskyists' of the Labour Party's Militant tendency, which fought against support for political status on bodies like Birmingham and Bradford Trades Councils. Tailing the present consciousness of the British proletariat long ago made Militant social-democratic. But doing the same thing in Ireland where the Protestant workers are presently firmly tied to their co-religionist masters is even more nakedly reactionary and deadly. Thus *Militant* (12 December) made the whining excuse: 'A campaign for "political status" would split the trade unions in NI on sectarian lines'.

There is no short-cut to class unity where



Bankrupt Republican strategy—pressuring imperialism.

two warring communities live side by side. In Northern Ireland, even more than most countries, prerevolutionary situations are never abundant. Moments when communal divisions can be broken down will be rare. But they will and do occur, and must be seized by an organised and prepared proletarian Leninist vanguard. In such conditions consciousness can change very rapidly -- and understanding that is a precondition for planting the theory and practice of Bolshevism in the inhospitable Ulster soil.

## Not Orange against Green—class against class!

The Protestant workers are not a labour aristocracy with a vested interest in imperialism. Like the oppressed Catholic minority they have cause to hate the capitalist system -- and along with it their Orange capitalist masters. Unemployment in the North is over 17 per cent. Shipyards are dying. Housing in both the Shankill and the Falls is unfit for human habitation. But mobilising the power of the proletariat against imperialism demands a leadership prepared to pose the revolutionary socialist transformation of society, against the nationalists and reformists who all end up squabbling over whether the Protestants should have more than their fair share of the meagre crumbs. And it takes revolutionary leadership because the question of the border must be confronted in a revolutionary way.

There will always be men like Ronnie Bunting who 'betrayed' their communal origins. But the Protestants have evolved as a distinct community with its own culture and traditions. When they look South and see the nationalists doing their best to keep out Protestant plots like contraception, then they have good reason to oppose the prospect of a Green united Ireland. Such an outcome would mean reversal of the terms of oppression on to the Protestants. That's a barrier to unification -- and one reinforced when the IRA commits sectarian atrocities against Protestant workers.

Whenever Protestants and Catholics fight together and threaten to break down the divisions



British Consulate, New York, 19 January, and London School of Economics, 23 January--Spartacist-initiated protests against the attempted murder of Bernadette McAliskey.

through a struggle for more than the most simple economic demands, the Loyalists exploit the border question to divide them. Last spring workers from both communities struck at Royal Victoria Hospital against its use by troops. The Paisleyite press whipped up an IRA plot scare and the strike crumbled. And even the pro-nationalists on strike had no alternative to the troops patrolling the hospital except the Royal Ulster Constabulary! But Trotskyists do have an answer. Protestant and Catholic workers must be won to the perspective of forming anti-imperialist, anti-sectarian workers militias against both the army's repression and sectarian terror. And the aim of Catholic/Protestant unity must not be a united capitalist Ireland. Should the prospect of the forcible reunification of Ireland under bourgeois rule arise communists would oppose it, and seek to win the entire proletariat to that position. It need only be added that whoever sought to bludgeon the cohesive and well-armed Protestants into such a 'solution' might well lose -- and the Catholic minority would be the victims of the backlash. That's why the slogan of much of the 'far left' -- 'self-determination for the Irish people as a whole' -- is so absurd. An equitable solution to the national question in Ireland will not be resolved except under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Its form cannot be prejudged -- different variants exist and the problem is inseparable from the whole development of the British revolution. The question now is that of revolutionary struggle against the capitalist class -- whether of the *gombeen* or Orange variety.

## Remember 1932!

The 1932 Belfast uprising will still provide important lessons for the Irish communists of the future. Catholic and Protestant outdoor relief workers united in a semi-insurrectionary mood of hunger and rage -- led not by nationalists but the (then centrist) Stalinists of the Revolutionary Workers Groups. Most important, despite the initiation of renewed sectarian violence to split the movement, there emerged a core of subjectively revolutionary Protestant

workers who remained determined to oppose the Orange order. Republican George Gilmore recently wrote an account of this phenomenon in a new preface to a pamphlet he wrote in 1935:

'...at the Bodinstown demonstration in 1934 ...a body of Belfast workers from the Shankill and Ballymacarret areas found themselves confronted by a cordon of I.R.A. men with orders to prevent them marching unless they agreed to keep their banners furled. ...their banners bore the words: "Wolfe Tone Commemoration 1934, Shankill Road Belfast Branch. Break the connection with Capitalism!" and "James Connolly Club, Belfast. United Irishmen of 1934." It was then that I heard a shout that I fear will hardly be heard again at Sallins. It was "Come on, the Shankill!" as they battled their way to lay a wreath on Tone's grave. Many of the I.R.A. lads broke ranks....' (*The Irish Republican Congress*)

The working-class 'Shankill boys' had been an enthusiastic and highly disciplined component of Carson's Ulster Volunteer Force before going off to die in droves on the Somme. Then as now, Shankill was a Loyalist stronghold.

In the South today, prisoners of Mountjoy's D Wing can hear the sound of gallows being built -- quite possibly for Republican prisoners. The thud of practice drops echoes now. Meanwhile the bloody impasse remains. The British imperialists chase a 'solution' that will not leave the Protestants feeling beleaguered and betrayed -- but cheaper and more stable than the army of occupation. Haughey, with his chatter about a 'confederal' Ireland seeks to establish himself as a statesman and undercut Republican opposition at home. And Paisley detects a Papist Plot behind London-Dublin diplomacy. The situation remains intractable. It is a revolutionary working-class perspective that is the only realistic one. 'Come on, the Shankill' had better be heard again -- and not as a Loyalist rallying call, but when an Irish section of the reformed Fourth International leads workers from both communities in the struggle for proletarian power. ■

## SPARTACIST PUBLIC MEETINGS

### London

Where is Central America going?  
7.30pm, 13th February  
Conway Hall, Red Lion Square,  
London

### Birmingham

H Block hell goes on  
7.30pm, 19th February  
Dr Johnson House, Bull Street,  
Birmingham

## SPARTACIST CLASS SERIES

### London

Women's Liberation through  
Socialist Revolution  
on 10th, 17th, 24th  
February  
in North London  
Polytechnic, 6.30pm  
and on  
19th, 26th February  
in London School of  
Economics, 6.30pm

### Sheffield

Basic Trotskyism  
on 4th, 18th February  
4th, 18th March  
in Hospitality Room,  
Sheffield University,  
7pm  
Sponsored by SUSU,  
Spartacist Society

### Birmingham

Basic Trotskyism  
on 5th, 12th February  
in Guild of Students,  
Birmingham University,  
7.30pm  
Sponsored by BUSU  
Spartacist Society

For more information phone:

Birmingham (021) 459 9748; London (01) 278 2232; Sheffield (0742) 686 427



# SPARTACIST BRITAIN

## The losing game of Republicanism

# H Block hell goes on

In the early morning of 16 January Loyalist gunmen broke down the door of Bernadette Devlin McAliskey's isolated cottage near Coalisland, County Tyrone. The former MP for Mid-Ulster was hit by seven bullets as she hid under a bed. She remains 'very seriously ill'. Her husband Michael, badly wounded, survived only by feigning death. The murderous attack briefly received banner headlines in Britain, though there was noticeable silence from the Tory and Labour politicians rendered so articulate by the deaths of imperialist hot-shots like Airey Neave and Lord Louis Mountbatten. The *Economist* (23 January) was even smug, noting that the arrest of the would-be assassins and the helicopter lift of the McAliskys to hospital was carried out by the Third Paratroop Regiment -- the perpetrators of Derry's 1972 Bloody Sunday massacre. The Paras were flown in just the night before the attack, which led others to speculate about an unreported tip-off. But whatever the truth the press spotlight shifted elsewhere.

Above all, no emphasis was given to the fact that, had the thugs succeeded, McAliskey would have been the *fifth* national leader of the H Block protests to die. In June 1980 it was John Turnley and Miriam Daly. Daly was a leader of the small, viciously persecuted, Irish Republican Socialist Party (IRSP). She was found, bound and shot through the head, by her 10-year-old daughter arriving home from school. In October Noel Lyttle and Ronnie Bunting were gunned down. They were also IRSP members and Bunting a particular target because he was not only, like Turnley, a Protestant, but the son of a leading Loyalist. Once top leaders in the Republican and Loyalist camps were mutually considered 'out of bounds' but the paramilitary Ulster Defence Association has openly threatened, including on national television, liquidation of Republican leaders if the H Block campaign continues. And the terror offensive shows that they mean business.

### Hunger strike--whose victory?

For its part the Provisional IRA announced a new bombing campaign to begin 1981. This has yet to fully materialise but a start was made with the attack on a West London RAF base in the night of 8 January. The upsurge in violence has kept Northern Ireland in the headlines since the end of the 53-day-long hunger strike, initiated by seven Republican prisoners in the H Block of Maze prison and joined by others elsewhere. The deal made on 20 December caused considerable confusion since both the Tory government and the Republicans claimed victory. Mary Holland,



Dublin H Block protest.



Bernadette McAliskey (left); paramilitary Loyalists (right). For anti-imperialist, anti-sectarian workers militias!

writing in Dublin's new *Sunday Tribune*, gave a reasonable summary of the real result:

'... the prisoners have won substantial concessions on their demands ... certainly enough to call the outcome an honourable draw. However, the British government have won the political and propaganda victory.' (21 December)

And such a 'propaganda victory' was aided by the politics of the hunger strike itself.

The H Block 'blanket' and 'dirty' protests were started to win back the special political status withdrawn from Republican prisoners by the Labour government in 1976. But the hunger strike campaign didn't even demand that. It demanded only the prisoners' right to wear their own clothes, refrain from prison work, associate freely, organise their own educational/recreational facilities, receive one visit, letter and parcel a week, and get full remission of sentence. By 18 December at least one of the strikers, Sean McKenna, was near death. Secretary of State Humphrey Atkins offered a settlement which, he claimed, only restated what would happen if the 500 prisoners involved in various protests ceased their action. Those on 'dirty' protest would get clean cells. Then usual privileges would be restored and prisoners would be issued with their own clothes and 'civilian-type' uniforms for working hours. In fact the government soon displayed bad faith even on this by insisting on acceptance of the prison clothing *first* -- the offer spurned on the eve of the hunger strike. It was 11 January before the first prisoners moved to clean cells in order to test out Atkins' real intentions. Since then some prisoners have gone back 'on the blanket' and even another hunger strike is a possibility.

Still, the fake-Trotskyist International Marxist Group greeted the 20 December announcement as some kind of real victory -- an example of the theory that if you claim enough victories on paper then you might actually win something. But such a response is hardly surprising. Most fake-lefts made an all-out accommodation to the humanitarian politics of the H Block campaign. The Socialist Workers Party built its 'Charter 80' campaign and produced a pamphlet entitled *To the Bitter Climax of Death if Necessary*. It sought to win liberals by arguing that there really was a big difference between the hunger strikers' demands and the call for political status. The whole H Block campaign was based on a search for 'respectability'. For its leadership the attention of some US congressmen and United Nations officials was a big plus. For the

British left it was the many thousands mobilised on the streets of Northern Ireland -- a new 'mass movement' that could be safely tailed without the slightest need to directly fight for the demand of immediate British troop withdrawal to be taken up in the labour movement. The maximum ambition became pressurising Her Majesty's Government to 'recognise there's a war on'.

Revolutionaries of course support the demand for political status. But improvements in prison conditions and other 'concessions' from bloody imperialism can only be seen as a subordinate part of the struggle to mobilise the proletariat against British troops and for a workers solution in Ireland. Yet during the hunger strike even the minimal necessary demands for serious united-front action -- free the victims of imperialist repression and troops out now -- were eschewed as 'sectarian' by the motley crew of 'troops out' activists on the British left.

The Republican campaign for political status is anyway part of a losing game -- to pressure and cajole imperialism into 'fighting fair'. Mass demonstrations supported the hunger strikers -- but the Provisionals will do nothing with such support to bring a real victory for the working people of Ireland one day closer. If there is a bombing campaign now there will be nothing surprising about humanitarian pleas one week and terrorism the next. For the petty bourgeois nationalists pressure politics and the elitist 'physical force' Republican tradition exist in symbiotic relationship. The 10 January cartoon in *An Phoblacht/Republican News* (see p 11) summed it up: in the nationalist project of pressuring imperialism 'speaking loudly' means the bomb. The much louder sound of tens of thousands of marching feet, or the deafening noise when silence falls on the factories, railways and docks -- these are at most a temporary auxiliary. If the goal is a united capitalist Ireland -- no different in essence to Charlie Haughey's Eire but six counties bigger -- then mobilisation of the proletariat makes little sense. In fact it's a counterposed strategy.

Communists are scarcely displeased when an RAF base gets bombed, but nor do we gloss over the fact that the Republicans are also quite capable of indefensible atrocities. And while in the seemingly endless rounds of violence which rock Northern Ireland the victims are predominantly Catholic, incidents like the 1975 Armagh ambush in which eleven Protestant workers were massacred on a works bus are no less contemptible than the more numerous Loyalist raids.

The Provisionals' terrorism is just one side

*continued on page 11*