



For a general strike!

**Call an emergency TUC congress—
Elect a national strike committee!**

After three years of vicious wage control, the Labour government's Phase Four looks like it is getting the death it deserves -- burial by landslide. Sector after sector of the trade union movement has slapped down wage claims that dwarf the paltry 5 per cent limit which the government has tried to stuff down workers' throats. And during the past few weeks, hundreds of thousands of workers have demonstrated their willingness to back up their claims with powerful strike actions which have brought Britain to the brink of a major social crisis.

First Ford workers broke the 5 per cent limit last November; next came British Oxygen employees; and in early January tanker drivers won a 15 per cent pay claim after only a week on strike. Since then all hell has broken loose. Forty thousand private haulage lorry drivers walked out, tying up road transport throughout the country and cutting off supplies to hundreds of industries through militant picketing. Train drivers have been shutting down British Rail twice a week in support of their demand for negotiations over a productivity bonus; water workers' strikes have affected supplies in the North West; and a one-day strike by 1½ million low-paid local government manual workers on January 22 threatened to spill over into an all-out national strike for a £60 weekly minimum wage. Moreover, several million other workers from various sectors, including notably the miners, are threatening strike action in the near future.

Thatcher's union-bashing Tories and the Fleet Street papers have been screaming blue murder, demanding that Callaghan declare a state of emergency and call out the army to maintain 'essential services'. And indeed, while the Cabinet has as yet declined to impose full-scale army strike-breaking, troops have been called out on two occasions: once against tanker drivers in Northern Ireland who refused to return to work at the same time as their British comrades; and again against ambulance drivers in London and Cardiff who refused to provide emergency cover during the January 22 one-day strike.

But overall the Labour Cabinet has been taken by surprise and is undecided about how to act. Callaghan has been trying to ride out the surge of industrial militancy with a mixture of tough talk and vague promises. Already the possibility of a complete wage freeze has been mooted by a Cabinet minister, and the Labour government is looking desperately to its allies in the trade union bureaucracy for help in defusing the situation. Both the Cabinet and the Trades Union Congress want a new Social Contract, renamed the 'Concordat'. However the union leaders are running as scared as the government.

Right now, the possibility exists not just of laying to rest the 5 per cent limit, but of de-



Public sector workers march in London demonstration against low pay, January 22

Spartacist Britain

Bury Phase Four! Kill the Concordat! Oust Callaghan/Benn, Murray/Evans!

cisively preventing the reimposition of wage controls, winning the pay claims workers need and destroying any hope of a bourgeois counter-offensive. What is needed to turn this into reality is a working-class leadership ready to wage a no-holds-barred fight against the Labour government: by generalising and centralising the existing strike wave and bringing the entire union movement out on a general strike.

Pay explosion: lorry drivers ...

Although every major recent strike -- from the Ford workers to the tanker and lorry drivers -- began as a massive unofficial walkout, the bureaucrats have rapidly made the strikes official in an explicit attempt to dampen militancy. In the lorry drivers strike in particular they have been hard at work trying to take control out of the hands of the mushrooming strike committees in order to hand it over to trusted regional and national officials.

Using flying pickets and secondary picketing to powerful effect, the drivers managed to tie up goods and supplies throughout the country, with the result that many key industries started counting the days until production would have to stop. And although secondary picketing is allowed under the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act (1974), Moss Evans, Transport & General Workers Union (T&GWU) general secretary, issued on January 18 a special 'Code of Picketing' openly aimed at curtailing the pickets.

This blacklegs' charter, written at the express wish of the Confederation of British Industry and the Callaghan government, instructed drivers not only to allow so-called 'essential

services' through picket lines, but also the lorries of owner-operators, companies that had settled, companies operating on 'own account' and the National Freight Corporation. The response of all workers to this open encouragement to scabbing must be to say: nothing is moved until the claim is met in full.

Indeed, Alex Kitson, T&GWU official responsible for the strike, had to admit that the scabbing code met with only limited success, and that in certain areas picketing had intensified. 'This is our strike, not Moss Evans's', said one striker, adding that, 'If we don't do what we have to do, we will be here for months.'

Picket lines mean one thing: don't cross. Instead of taking them down and letting goods through them, drivers must strengthen and extend them. Strike committees should despatch flying pickets to weaker areas in need of reinforcement with the aim of halting all goods on the roads and of tying up the docks. The victory of this strike depends on the effectiveness of the picketing.

But the enormous pressure being brought down on the militant but leaderless pickets has told in some places. At the huge

Tilbury Docks near London, a convoy of thirty lorries, protected by a vanload of police, was allowed to pass through the lines on the morning of January 27. Union officials' excuse for this strikebreaking act was that these drivers had already won their claim of £65 for a 40-hour week in a separate settlement.

The response of the men still out was justifiably bitter. Complaining that such scabbing was undermining the strike, a picket at the docks told *Spartacist Britain*: 'They shouldn't have started work until we all got it [the full claim]. They're all in the same region. When we all get it, we all go back to work. If one firm gets it, they still stay out. That is it in a nutshell.'

Local government workers ...

The leaders of the local government manual workers unions too have tried to dampen militancy, seeking to fob their members off with ineffective work-to-rules, rotating strikes and the token one-day national strike on January 22. But the anger of these low-paid workers -- including hospital workers, ambulance drivers, dustmen, cleaners and many more, a large number of whom earn less than £40 a week -- exploded at the January 22 march and rally in London.

A million and a half men and women went out on the biggest single work stoppage since the 1926 general strike, and 80,000 of them marched in freezing cold weather through the streets of central London. At the end of the march, thousands of angry workers piled into Central Hall, Westminster, where their union leaders, includ-

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General strike ...

(Continued from page 1)

ing David Basnett of the General & Municipal Workers and left-talking Alan Fisher of the National Union of Public Employees, tried to address them.

Every single bureaucrat's speech was drowned out by catcalls and chants of 'All-out strike!' The crowd reacted with particular venom when one of the platform speakers attempted to claim that the years of declining real wages were solely the fault of the Labour government. His speech was interrupted by an angry striker who received wild applause when he shouted: 'Who has kept us down? This fucking lot up here!' In the end, the bureaucrats abandoned the platform, taking the microphones with them.

Following the march, many of the more militant sectors, especially ambulance drivers and other health workers, stayed off work for another few days, and localised stoppages are continuing in several areas of the country. Yet still Fisher, Basnett and their fellows are playing for time, refusing to call an all-out strike in the hope that the militancy will burn itself out.

... and the miners?

The lorry drivers and local government workers are by no means the only workers currently posing a head-on challenge to the Labour government. The list of sectors with pay claims in the pipeline far above the 5 per cent ceiling is impressive: from 1½ million building workers to 200,000 postal workers, half a million teachers, 600,000 white collar civil servants and 280,000 railwaymen. And then there are the strategically important and militant miners: 230,000 of them, demanding a 40 per cent rise in the face of a 3½ per cent offer from the Coal Board.

But where are they? Miners' leader Joe Gormley cites as his excuse for inaction the government's 12-month rule, saying that his union is legally prevented from striking until March. His 'militant' opponent on the executive,



Moss Evans

Spartacist Britain

Arthur Scargill, put up some token opposition to this a few months ago, only to fall predictably into line. Indeed, on January 25 he told the press that he hoped there would not be a strike and did not see the necessity for one.

The trade union leaders are staggering the pay struggles of each section of workers, happy to see one group after another face the government and bourgeois public opinion in isolation. Hence the limited protest tactics like the one-day rail strikes (now abandoned) and the government workers' Day of Action. These are diversionary and ultimately futile gestures which, if they continue, can only whittle away at the combativity of the workers involved and allow the bureaucrats to dodge the all-out and unified strike action necessary to bury Phase Four once and for all. This would pave the way for the new Social 'Concordat', for which a team of Labour traitors including ostensible 'lefts' Eric Heffer and Tony Benn are now canvassing.

Why should each union or section of workers fight alone when the battleground is the same? Every union member today has a common overriding interest in the destruction of wage control and the recouping of lost living standards. The union leaders deny that common interest, muddying the waters with arguments about pro-

ductivity, profitability and 'special cases'.

One common interest means one common action. There are more than 11 million union members in Britain. The TUC must call each and every one of them out in a general strike to win all the claims, crush the government's austerity policies, and thwart the strikebreaking, union-bashing attempts of the capitalist class. Give the government a 'state of emergency' -- on the workers' terms.

At the time of the Heath offensive against the miners' strike in early 1974 the Spartacist tendency called for a general strike which would 'would have the *limited, defensive* aim of reversing the policies of the Tory government and bringing it down' (*Workers Vanguard* no 36, 18 January 1974). But a general strike in today's conditions -- Phase Four already in tatters, the Labour government in retreat on pay policy and deep and massive disillusionment among the working class with Callaghan and his gang of parliamentary social democrats -- could not *simply* be a defensive action to roll back a bourgeois assault on union organisation and activity. However, as in 1974, a general strike today must also be limited in its aims, given the solidly-entrenched reformist leadership atop the unions and the lack of a credible revolutionary alternative.

The various divided struggles now going on must be welded together to deliver a united blow. Every union which has not settled must put its pay claim in and come out now. Those unions which have already settled for less than 5 per cent, or only part of their claim, should come out again to win the full amount. And other workers must not wait for the lockouts: seize the factories whenever the bosses move to implement layoffs.

The TUC is the only body authoritative enough to actually launch a general strike today, but the Len Murrays and Moss Evans have absolutely no intention of doing so. Every union should immediately hold new elections for TUC delegates at union mass meetings and mandate them to vote for a general strike in a specially-convened emergency TUC congress. National and local strike committees responsible to and recallable by regular mass meetings throughout the country, should be elected to co-ordinate the running of the strike.

The strike should present national demands: not just straight claims to recoup the effects of ~~four years of wage control and raised living standards~~, but a sliding scale of wages to compensate for every percentage point fall in real wages caused by rising prices. Fight the mass unemployment policies of the government by winning work sharing at full pay. Restore all the government's cuts in public services. And demand no restrictions on picketing and no use of troops.

A general strike, even if consciously limited to winning certain specific demands, raises sharply the question of government, the question of who rules. For years every strike which threatened government pay policy has been met with a barrage of warnings about the dire consequences of bringing the government down and the dangers of a Tory election victory.

But the task of the working class is not to save this strikebreaking, anti-working-class Labour government, which rules from the capitalist 'Mother of Parliaments' with the help of the army and police in order to jack up the profits of its capitalist paymasters. Far better that this traitors' government fall as the result of workers surging forward than a triumphant Tory offensive riding to victory over the backs of a demoralised, defeated working class.

In the current situation, Marxists must seek to address the workers with demands which point, even if only propagandistically, to the need for a workers government to expropriate the capitalist class. Such a government cannot be constructed within the framework of the bourgeois parliament, but must necessarily be based on mass working-class organisations. A workers government would be directly counterposed to the capitalist government of Callaghan and Benn.

The Labour government

Historically, the Labour Party and trade union bureaucrats have maintained their iron grip on the British working class through a division of tasks. The union leaders claim to deal with the 'economic' needs of their membership, while 'political' matters are to be left to the gentlemen at Westminster who claim to represent the interests of the 'whole nation'. Moss Evans on the one hand, and 'left' MPs like Eric Heffer and Tony Benn on the other, always honour this agreement: no matter what happens, preserve the



Angry roadside pickets

sanctity of parliament, and keep or put a Labour government in power.

In the current situation even the rudiments of working-class solidarity run flat up against this social-democratic con-trick. The TUC conference voted against the 5 per cent ceiling. The Labour Party conference did the same. Yet every Labour MP, 'left' and right, always falls into line behind Callaghan to vote for it -- and the union bureaucrats sanctimoniously claim that they can do nothing about the situation.

Many unions sponsor Labour MPs; the T&GWU, for example, sponsors 26. But what does Moss Evans do? He scurries up to Westminster to 'outline' the union's view, but insists that 'there was no question of instructing MPs as to how to vote' (*Morning Star*, 16 January). Any self-respecting union official would have demanded that they support the union claim and refuse to vote for the government's union-bashing austerity drive. And if such a thing existed as a Labour MP with even a glimmer of class instinct he would not even have to wait for such a union call, but would already be defying the party whip and opposing Callaghan's anti-working class measures. Today's situation highlights the fact that the discipline of the Parliamentary Labour Party has never been anything but a united front against the working class.

Each of the Tribunate fakers, preferring a warm seat behind the Treasury bench to a fight for the interests of the workers, has clung to the prime minister's coat-tails. Oust Callaghan and his 'left' apologists! Not the Labour government of Callaghan, Healey, Benn and Heffer, but a workers government to expropriate the capitalist class!

The left and the crisis

Paralleling the division between trade union economism and social-democratic parliamentarism, the British left has generally responded to the current crisis with either an apolitical, business-as-usual syndicalism or a wretched parliamentary cretinism -- or, in some cases, a blend of both.

The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) is the prime example of the former. The 27 January *Socialist Worker* carries a front page article by

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WSL: 'Workers control' of scabbing

an ambulanceman entitled 'All Out Strike' and a back page article by a driver's wife headed 'Drivers say we can win the lot'. Both articles are full of advice on how to better organise the respective strikes, but the SWP has absolutely no lead to give on the political questions that confront the working class.

It does not call for a general strike, simply speaking vaguely about the need for lorry drivers to 'support' the 'low paid public sector manual workers'. It fails to raise transitional demands which can take the working class beyond simple pay struggles, and with its crude Labour-equals-Tories line the Cliff organisation ignores the need to counter the bureaucrats' arguments for the preservation of Callaghan's government, come what may.

Typically, *Socialist Worker* says that the way forward is through building rank-and-file committees -- ie by-passing the bureaucratic leadership of the unions by simply being better organisers of each union's struggles, and thus leaving the union traitors free to carry on with their betrayals unchallenged. And when the SWP does enter onto the 'political' terrain, its militant economism evaporates into calls to vote Labour once again, should there be an election.

The Spartacist League has insisted that during the period of the Labour government's Social Contract attacks on the working class and its coalition with the bourgeois Liberals, there has been no basis for a vote to Labour in elections. Our policy of conditional non-support to Labour has separated us sharply from all the fake-lefts, who have insisted on advocating a vote for their beloved Labour Party, irrespective of its massive, deeply resented attacks on the working class or of the now-terminated class-collaborationist alliance with the Liberals.

If the cretinous Militant group is still sweating in its Sisyphean task of rolling the government uphill 'in the direction of socialist policies', this only confirms the obvious -- that this group is an organic and loyal faction of social democracy. But perhaps a centrist or two might have woken up to the Labour Party government's role in the present struggles? Not so.

Incredibly, the main concern of the International Marxist Group (IMG) as the massive strike wave continues is ... preparing for 'the coming general election'. Don't be caught napping: 'make sure your area is represented' exhorts the lead editorial in the 25 January *Socialist Challenge*, referring to the Socialist Unity conference planned for February 3. For here plans are going to be discussed and resolutions passed to 'ensure that the banner of the socialist alternative is raised during the election'.

And where the IMG goes, there goes also the International-Communist League (I-CL) and its pet, the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory (SCLV). After a short winter hibernation (to recover from its disappointment at Callaghan's refusal to call an election late last year), this ferocious threat to social democracy is now 'ready to spring into action' behind Callaghan if he should oblige with an election.

Every centrist has his special project. The IMG wants a happy-family-of-the-left 'socialist alternative' for the next election. The I-CL, along with its Chartist bedfellows, is grooming the wretched SCLV for the starter's gun. And the 'honest militants' of the Workers Socialist League (WSL), when not busy trying to justify scabbing (see adjacent article), are messing their pants at the prospect that Labour might be defeated in the next election if Callaghan is not turfed out first.

The WSL's open argument is that Labour is a 'lesser evil' than the Tories and therefore must always be voted into office so long as no revolutionary party big enough to replace it exists. The WSL pleads with the 'left' MPs to take up the fight against Callaghan. The fact that these 'lefts' have demonstrably and repeatedly refused to take up this fight seems not to trouble the WSL: for them, love must truly be blind.

Revolutionaries seek to split the mass base of the Labour Party from the reformist misleaders. This can only be accomplished through hard programmatic opposition, not by servile loyalty to Labour or by boosting the credentials of the 'left' MPs. To be worrying about how to keep Labour in power in the next elections at a time when there is a mass strike wave against a wage-slashing, viciously anti-union Labour government is not merely stupid but positively obscene.

What is needed now is not a general election but a general strike. Unlike the SWP, IMG, WSL et al, the Healyite Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) is calling for a general strike, but principally to bring down the Labour government and force new elections. Aside from the fact that the WRP raises the general strike slogan all the

During the current strike wave the fury of Fleet Street has been focussed chiefly on the swift and efficient flying pickets of the lorry drivers and the strikes of hospital employees. The press is full of tales of the plight of dying cancer patients and incidents of cannibalism among starving pigs in Somerset. Jim Callaghan made his 'I would cross a picket line' speech and TUC chief Len Murray rushed to nod his head in vigorous approval.

This bourgeois propaganda offensive has undoubtedly helped Evans' and Callaghan's moves to hobble the lorry drivers' flying pickets, while the public service union leaders sought to maintain what they call 'essential' hospital services during the January 22 one-day work stoppage. But it hasn't only been the bureaucrats in NUPE, the GMWU and TGWU who have wilted under the pressure of published opinion. The super-proletarians of the Workers Socialist League (WSL) have emerged as the socialist champions of 'emergency hospital services' and 'essential

'But the power of the strike is shown by the fact that these committees are under instructions first of all to approach the local strike committees to allow supplies through.'

'In nearly every instance urgent supplies, including animal feed and medical supplies, are already being allowed through picket lines.'

'The element of control by the strikers is an essential development, through which workers can begin to recognise their power as a class and their ability to control society.'

— Socialist Press, January 17

supplies' strikebreaking.

The strength and impact of the lorry drivers' strike has resulted from one thing: the ability to shut down commercial road transport. To maximise the effect of the strike, picketing has to be aimed first of all at major, strategic users of transport, which if closed down will hit the whole economy hardest. For the WSL, however, the decision of some strike committees to allow the distribution of 'urgent supplies' like chicken feed and the ingredients of aspirin was an 'essential development, through which workers can begin to recognise their power as a class' (*Socialist Press*, 17 January).

At the height of the anti-picket hysteria, *Socialist Press* appeared with its front page blaring: 'STRIKE COMMITTEES MUST CONTROL SUPPLIES'. That's right, control supplies, not stop them. A week later *Socialist Press* launched an attack on London ambulance drivers' convenors for their 'ultra-left call for a complete stoppage of all services on January 22'. Again,

'Moss Evans and everyone else in the union knows that there is only one way to win. I think we were mugs to even allow the feedstuffs through -- it would have been over 10 days ago if we'd stood firm on that. But we've really got the exporters worried now, so there can be no let up until the big haulage companies cave in.'

— Striking lorry driver, quoted in *Guardian*, January 24

there should have been 'emergency cover provided under the control of strike committees'.

This incredible line was further elaborated at a January 26 WSL public meeting in London. An

time, thus completely undercutting its effectiveness when a general strike is really necessary, the Healyites' slogan is a call to channel the current industrial upsurge into electoralism. If Callaghan were to call an election, this would be aimed at defusing the industrial militancy and convincing workers to channel their energy into re-electing the Labour government. Moreover, the WRP is all set to vote Labour in the next elections anyway!

The present situation is not the same as 1974 when the Tory government was engaged in a union-bashing confrontation with the trade unions and a general election was posed in which revolutionaries would call for a Labour Party victory. But even then, to make the call for new elections and a Labour victory the focus of propaganda for a general strike would have been a gross capitulation to Labourite parliamentarism. A general strike is needed today to drive

ambulanceman supporter of the WSL proudly affirmed that the organisation was 'not afraid to go up against the militancy of the working class' -- as if these were the July Days in Petrograd! He went on to add, that in hospitals all services are emergency services. Therefore to be consistent the WSL should oppose all hospital strikes! And what about last winter's firemen's strike, in which the workers correctly refused to fall for the 'emergency cover' argu-

'I would not hesitate myself to cross a picket line if I believed it right to do so ... I assert very clearly that everyone has the right to work and that everyone has the right to cross a picket line.'

— James Callaghan, 23 January

ment? Presumably that was all one big 'ultra-left' mistake too!

At the same meeting, WSL national committee member Mark Hyde tried to add a 'theoretical' rationale for scabbing: 'The picket line develops the seeds of workers control; workers say who goes in and out of the factory.' But workers control is workers control of production. It is dual power in the factories, generally occurring in a revolutionary or pre-revolutionary situation.

Strikes mean no production. A picket line means no-one and nothing goes 'in and out of the factory'.

Revolutionaries can make no concessions to the scab-herding arguments of the bourgeois press: if members of the public suffer temporary hardship as a result of a strike then only the bosses are to blame for refusing to meet the workers' demands. The starting point of any strike must be to close down every affected enterprise and building. With that goal achieved, a militant strike leadership might decide to allow some exemptions (but only those that the strikers themselves and not the bureaucrats verify as necessary) in order to prevent hardship for workers, their families and other members of

'Scabs and private gunmen in factory plants are the basic nuclei of the fascist army. Strike pickets are the basic nuclei of the proletarian army.'

— Leon Trotsky, *Transitional Programme*

the public and win support for the strike.

But this is simply not the situation today in either the hospital workers' or the lorry drivers' battles. The former have yet to even come out on more than a one-day strike, while in the drivers' strike the basic task of shutting down all road transport remains unaccomplished.

The efforts of the bureaucrats to undermine the strike began and have continued with attacks on picketing. Indeed Evans' scabbing code has had two angles of attack: first, it attempts to outlaw secondary picketing. Second, like the WSL, it proposes to punch holes in the picket lines, by allowing 'essentials' like Bournville chocolate and Lem-Sip to be driven through. This latter half of the TUC/government inspired attack on the lorry drivers is condoned by the spineless Workers Socialist League, which has already buckled under the impact of the virulent anti-union caterwauling always associated with periods of intensified class struggle.■

back the attacks of the Callaghan government and open the road to new victories for the proletariat. But don't expect scab-herders like Evans and Murray to lead the offensive. It is quite possible that the top bureaucrats aided by the strike saboteurs Kitson, Fisher and Scargill will succeed in beheading today's wave of strikes. If so, Callaghan's tame 'left' hand-raisers Benn and Heffer will raise no opposition. The British working class needs a new revolutionary leadership to lead it to victory.

-- For a special TUC congress to launch a general strike! Bury Phase Four! Kill the Concordat!

-- Oust the bureaucrats, 'left' and right! For a revolutionary leadership of the workers movement!

-- Not Callaghan and Benn in Westminster, but a workers government to expropriate the capitalist class!

Alan Thornett gets a lesson in workers democracy

SAN FRANCISCO -- Alan Thornett, big-shot leader of the Workers Socialist League (WSL) of Britain recently received a valuable lesson in workers democracy from the Spartacist League and its supporters here. Whether he learned it is another question altogether.

Late last month Thornett was the featured speaker at a forum sponsored by the WSL's American ally, an outfit of a half-dozen members

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calling itself the Socialist League Democratic-Centralist (SL-DC). It was a tough night for Thornett and the SL-DC. At first their TV cameras didn't work. Why TV cameras? Because the delusions of grandeur nursed by the WSL/SL-DC include the desire to establish 'the first international Trotskyist videotape network on a monthly basis' (SL-DC *Internal Bulletin*, June 1978). But these technical difficulties in their media mania were only the beginning of what was beyond their control that evening.

The real problem for Thornett and his cronies was that at least two thirds of the audience of about 75 were supporters of the Spartacist League, including numerous trade unionists and a good number of union executive board members and shop stewards. They were not about to be buffaloed by Thornett's self-aggrandizing account of the world as seen from the Cowley auto plant of British Leyland.

For an hour Alan Thornett talked about Alan Thornett and his world at Cowley. Recounting his odyssey as a militant trade unionist, he barely mentioned his move from the Communist Party to the Healyite SLL/WRP to the WSL, of which he is the major spokesman. Although the audience had come to hear him speak on 'A Strategy for the Working Class in Britain', Thornett spent altogether perhaps five minutes on the subject of strategy.

John Sturrock/Report



Thornett: taught

Even then his only 'strategy' turned out to be pressuring the reformist parliamentary labor lieutenants of the British capitalists to fight their bourgeois paymasters. According to Thornett, 'the only way to fight social democracy is to put them in office'. And since the WSL's policy is to vote Labour under any and all circumstances, he should have added a rider: 'and keep them there'. Like in Germany in 1918?? The counterrevolutionary implications of this idiot position are obvious.

Before the discussion period began, the meeting's chairman, SL-DC leader Steve Bryant, looked out over the array of experienced class-struggle unionists eager to expose Thornett's myopic opportunism. Sizing up the audience he announced that anyone who wished to speak would get three minutes. Which meant that 'certain' speakers would get the promised three minutes,

while any SL supporters would have to fight to get even half that much before Bryant cut them off.

So when Jane Margolis, a member of the executive board of Communications Workers of America Local 9410 (San Francisco) took Thornett to task for his failure to struggle for the Transitional Program in his trade-union work, Bryant cut her off after a minute and a half. He did the same to a steward from International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU) Local 6.

However, when Howard Keylor, an executive board member of ILWU Local 10 took the floor, an incensed audience was having none of Bryant's sneaky 'half-time for revolutionaries' tactics. When the chair tried to muzzle him as well, the crowd backed Keylor up. He completed his remarks, denouncing Thornett for failing to address the question of state power and a workers government.

Unable to get away with shaving the speakers' time allotments, Bryant turned over the clock to one of his comrades, who to his credit did an honest job. SL speakers and labor militants continued to score Thornett for turning electoral support for Labour into a principle, for his capitulation to Irish nationalism and his general parochial workerism. The WSL leader tried to counterattack, at first with the oft-repeated slander that the SL 'abstains from the class struggle'. With about two dozen active trade-unionist supporters of the SL in the audience, this line of defense was not much use.

So Thornett retreated to a bigger lie, attacking the Spartacist League as 'racist' and claiming that the SL supports immigration controls by misquoting an article from *Workers Vanguard*. To that he added the slander that the SL blamed the 1958 Notting Hill riot in London on West Indian immigration and blamed unemployment in the US Southwest on Mexican immigration! When he ended with a challenge to the

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'Reclaim the Night'

Whitehouse feminists crusade against porn

Claiming that pornography is an incitement to rape, some one thousand feminists marched through the Soho area of London on the evening of January 20 in support of a 'Reclaim the Night' demonstration which called for 'safer streets' to combat 'male violence'. Echoing the self-righteous moralising of rags like *News of the World* or the *Sun*, which dub Soho London's 'Square Mile of Sin', the campaign's supporters -- including the Women Against Rape group, the National Union of Students, the International Marxist Group (IMG) and the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) -- chose to march through this part of the West End because 'areas like Soho promote pornography' (*Women's Voice* leaflet). The torch-lit procession of women hissing at offending massage parlours, strip joints and cinema clubs showing 'Triple X Continental Blue Films' must have gladdened the heart of Mary Whitehouse and the 'Clean up Soho' brigade who have been campaigning against pornography and its supposedly pernicious effects for years.

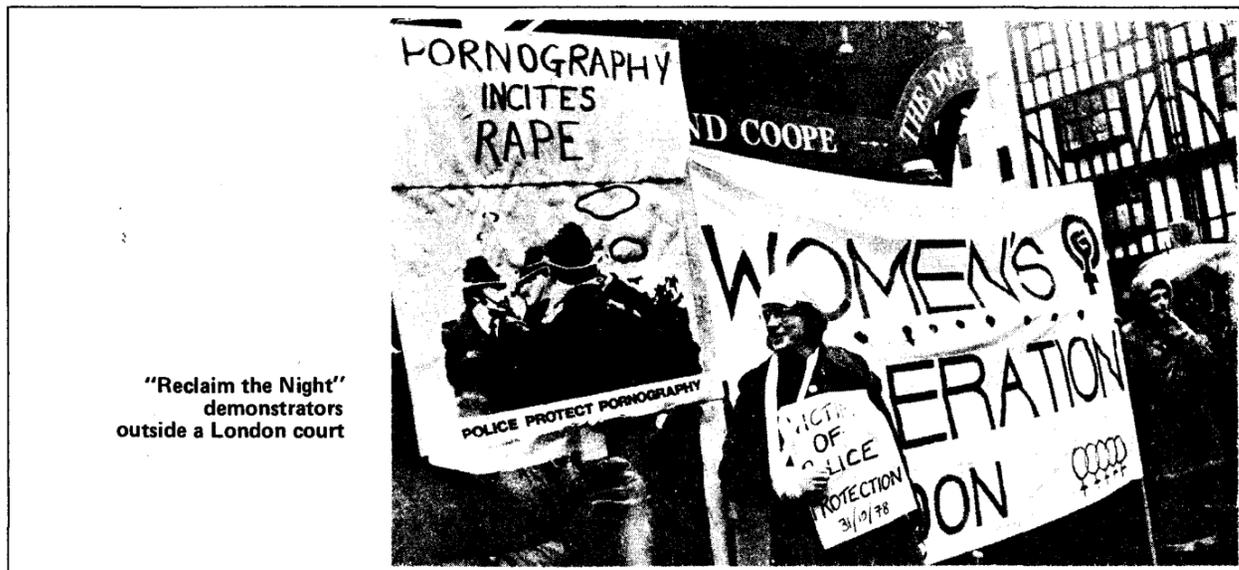
The 'Reclaim the Night' campaign came to prominence last Hallowe'en with a day of nationally co-ordinated demonstrations against rape and in support of the demand that 'all women should be free to walk down any street night or day without fear'. This concern with the issue of rape obviously derives in part from the very real fear women have of criminal

sexual assault and from the show-trial manner in which capitalist courts and the press often deal with rape cases. (Sometimes it is not only, or even primarily, the woman victim who is subjected to degrading humiliation. In the United States, for example, rape cases are frequently occasions for anti-black lynch sentiment,

especially if the woman involved happens to be white.)

But what is significant about the 'Reclaim the Night' crusade is that these fears are harnessed in the service of a right-wing feminism which has more and more supplanted

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'Reclaim the Night' demonstrators outside a London court

No tears for SAS hit man, H-Block torturer, but -

IRA civilian bombings indefensible

With an effectiveness which surprised both the British Army and the police, the Provisional IRA shortly before Christmas launched a bombing offensive in Northern Ireland and Britain. The Provos' 'winter offensive', aimed at furthering their campaign for prisoner-of-war status for the 330 Republican prisoners now 'on the blanket' in the disease-ridden H-Block of Long Kesh concentration camp, clearly showed that they still retain the capacity to bomb chosen targets in both Britain and the Six Counties. The bombings were a sharp riposte to the smug crowings of Labour's Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Roy Mason, who had been broadcasting the message that the IRA is 'finished'.

But the fact that many of the Provisionals' targets were in no way connected with the British imperialist state -- for example, major shopping areas in several large English cities and the centres of many Irish towns, blown up in the name of 'economic warfare' -- also clearly underlined the complete bankruptcy of the IRA's nationalist strategy and programme. Bombings of this type are not simply futile as a means of combatting the imperialist armed occupation. They are wholly indefensible acts of random terror directed at innocent Irish and British workers.

Mason in the US

The springboard for the current Provo campaign was a mid-November trip by Mason to the United States aimed at coaxing US industrialists into investing in Northern Ireland and at halting Irish-American funds going to the Republican movement. Mason's theme was that 'Ulster is now normal'; but the words had hardly tripped off his tongue when bombs exploded in eight Northern Ireland towns to disprove his thesis.

Less than a fortnight later Albert Miles, the Deputy Governor of Long Kesh and the man responsible for running H-Block, was shot dead by an IRA unit in Belfast. Five days later a wave of bombs rocked fourteen towns in the North, followed shortly after by a series of letter bombs sent to some of the less senior torturers in Northern Ireland's prison officer hierarchy.

Then on December 17-18 bombs exploded in six English cities, including London, which the Metropolitan Police thought had been sealed off from further IRA attacks. Meanwhile back in the Six Counties several hotels were blown sky-high, and a day later three soldiers were shot dead in Crossmaglen -- underscoring yet again the near-absolute vulnerability of the army to IRA attacks in the South Armagh area. Most recently, the Provisionals claimed responsibility for the mid-January explosions at Canvey Island oil depot and the Greenwich gasworks, indicating that the offensive is not yet at an end.

However, as was the case during previous bombing campaigns in England, none of the Provos' demands have been met, or look like being met, by the government. Instead, the Labour Cabinet, backed to the hilt by the Tories and the bourgeois press, have predictably hard-lined it, using the bombings as a pretext for stepping up state repression and further fostering of anti-Irish sentiment among the British populace.

Two thousand police were called up for 'Operation Santa' after the first bombs in the West End of London; joint police/army manoeuvres were mounted at Heathrow; and harassment of travellers from Ireland was stepped up. In the wake of the Canvey Island explosion, the Tory MP for South East Essex, Sir Bernard Braine, was able to whip up more anti-IRA fervour and lead a



Armagh City's Scotch Street after recent IRA bombing

4000-strong demonstration in favour of tougher security measures against the threat of terrorist attack.

The Nairac story

On January 2, Mason launched another major propaganda attack on the IRA, calling them a 'small, fanatic, discredited terrorist organisation' (*Irish Times*, 3 January). The following night, BBC TV kept up the offensive, featuring a programme on Captain Robert Nairac, that 'epitome of a successful English public schoolboy' who was unmasked as an undercover army agent and shot by the IRA near Crossmaglen in May 1977. Hailing this trained SAS killer as the Lawrence of Arabia of South Armagh, the BBC documentary sought to refurbish the badly tarnished credentials of the army in Ireland and simultaneously to blacken the IRA as a gang of sadistic apolitical torturers.

Only the strains of Edward Elgar were missing in the BBC's lachrymose tale of imperialist 'heroism': here was a man of considerable sporting prowess (hadn't he rowed and boxed at Oxford?) who had gone to Ireland, in his sister's words, as a 'volunteer to contribute to peace'. While there, the BBC claimed, he mixed with the local people, singing Republican songs like the 'Broad Black Brimmer of the IRA' in pubs -- altogether he was a wonderful person, until one day the Provos inexplicably shot him dead. ('A tragic death', the BBC's voice-over man intoned, hinting that the local population were grief-stricken on hearing the news.)

But what the BBC deliberately left out was just how many of these local people had been set up for arrest -- and in some cases killing -- by Nairac and his SAS cronies. Moreover, it failed to mention that a man named Liam Townson was gaoled in the south of Ireland for Nairac's killing exclusively on the basis of a 'confession' he has consistently denied making, and that charges of torture have been levelled against five suspects in the north despite the fact that Nairac's body has never been found. What the people of South Armagh really thought of this paid assassin was conveyed by a slogan on the walls of the Creggan River bridge just outside Crossmaglen: 'CAPTAIN NAIRAC'S SOUL ROTS IN HELL' -- a sentiment with which we heartily concur, whatever disagreements we may have with its theological underpinnings.

But Captain Robert Nairac was an SAS assassin -- not an Oxford Street shopper or a Northern Ireland Protestant worker. While considering the shooting of scum like Nairac and Long Kesh torturer Albert Miles to be thoroughly defensible -- if ultimately ineffectual -- blows against the imperialist oppressor, revolutionary Marxists emphatically do not defend but condemn Provisional attacks on civilian targets which are in no way connected with or even symbolic of imperialist state terror.

Civilian targets and imperialist targets

However this elementary distinction between blows against the state and blows aimed at innocent civilians is a book sealed with seven seals for most of the British left. In an article entitled 'For the IRA: Against the British Army' in the January 1979 issue of its newspaper, the small centrist Workers Power (WP) group attempts to polemicise against the Spartacist League on this issue, claiming that our condemnation of IRA indiscriminate terror is somehow a concession to British chauvinism. But WP produces only a smokescreen of false arguments, behind which it seeks to disguise its own failure to break from Irish nationalism and formulate a proletarian revolutionary strategy for the struggle in Ireland.

What seems to particularly vex Workers Power is an article published in *Workers Vanguard* no 197 (17 March 1978), which analysed the IRA bomb attack on the La Mon House in Northern Ireland early last year. Conceding that this particular bombing was 'justifiably a cause for criticism', presumably on 'tactical' grounds, WP nonetheless castigates us for 'hysterical denunciation' of the IRA, for being 'utterly careless of using identical terminology to that of Roy Mason or Airey Neave'. And why? Because we had the temerity to call things by their proper name, to say that the La Mon House attack was 'criminal sectarian slaughter'.

The bare facts of the La Mon House bombing should perhaps be restated. This was an attack on a privately-owned hotel in the countryside, a civilian target which not even the Provisionals claimed was connected with the military forces in Ireland. On the night of the bombing some 500 people, mainly Protestants, were inside at-

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As massive popular unrest has battered away at the Shah's regime in Iran, neighbouring Turkey has been slipping down the road towards a bloody civil war. Turkey, vital to NATO's 'southern flank' and a key component of the general imperialist military network aimed against the Soviet Union, stands in the north-western corner of what the *Economist* has taken to calling the 'crumbling triangle' lying between Kabul, Ankara and Addis Ababa. Harping on Soviet diplomatic gains in Afghanistan, South Yemen and Ethiopia and the danger of Soviet 'subversion' in Iran in the aftermath of the fall of the Shah, the imperialist leaders have become increasingly nervous about the burgeoning crisis facing the government of Bulent Ecevit in Ankara.

One recent event brought the situation in Turkey into sharp focus. In mid-December, while the Shah was still in Teheran procrastinating about packing his bags, well over a hundred people were massacred in a rightist pogrom in the southern Turkish town of Kahramanmaras (Maras). The government quickly responded by declaring martial law in a large part of the country. Alarmed at the escalating chaos, imperialist chiefs Carter, Callaghan, Giscard and Schmidt hastily decided at their Guadalupe summit to reverse their previous tough austerity policy towards Turkey by providing substantial new credits to the Ecevit government.

The massacre at Maras was on a scale not seen in Turkey since the mutual communal blood-letting between Turks, Greeks, Kurds and Armenians in the 1915-28 period, and represented a significant escalation in the rightist campaign against the left and labour movement and the bourgeois-populist Ecevit government. Kahramanmaras is in an area of mixed Turkish and Kurdish population. Reinforcing the national divisions are religious ones: the Turks are largely members of the Sunni Muslim sect while the Kurds are Alevis (Shi'ite Muslims). Rightist groups, in particular the rapidly-growing fascist Nationalist Action Party (NAP) led by Alparslan Turkes, have played upon these communal divisions to build themselves a considerable base among petty-bourgeois and lumpenised Sunni Turks. Many of the Turks in these areas of mixed population in Eastern Turkey have settled there since World War II, having migrated either from Western Turkey or from places like Bulgaria following the Communist takeover. On the other hand the Alevi Kurds have tended to support Ecevit's Republican People's Party (RPP).

Kahramanmaras massacre

Shortly before the Kahramanmaras massacre, NAP leader Turkes had told an audience in West Germany that the time for attack was near. And the attack was carefully prepared: some fifty fascists were sent into the town from neighbouring provinces to organise the onslaught. A few days before it occurred, a bomb exploded in a cinema, killing two left-wing teachers. Rightists led by NAP supporters attacked the funeral procession, shouting 'Communists and Alevis cannot be allowed to say prayers for the dead' (*Cumhuriyet*, 23 December 1978) and killing three people.

Then came a veritable pogrom against leftists, RPP supporters and the Alevi community in general. While many houses and shops were attacked, those emblazoned with the NAP symbol of three crescents were conspicuously left untouched. Rampaging under the slogan 'Wherever you find Alevis, kill them one by one', the fascist-led mobs murdered well over one hundred people of all ages (one Maoist group claims that the figure is actually over 500). One 20-year-old reported:

'We were surrounded while sitting at home. There were more than one hundred of them with guns in their hands. The landlord helped us to escape. Men had to wear the veil to get out safely. They threatened us and made us kiss the Koran. They forced women to take off their trousers and wear skirts. They burned the houses of many Alevis.' (*Cumhuriyet*, 25 December 1978)

Turkey in crisis



Troops on guard at Istanbul University

Another report speaks of some of the victims being quartered alive. While this massacre was going on, some left-wing elements apparently hit back with machine-gun fire. The army, using tear gas, moved to prevent Alevis from nearby towns reaching the city.

Soon after, on December 26, Ecevit declared martial law in 13 of Turkey's 67 provinces. Most of the martial law areas are provinces with mixed Sunni Turkish and Alevi Kurdish populations (certain provinces with majority Kurdish populations were not included), but also include the two major cities, Istanbul and Ankara. Special military courts have been set up in most cities and in many, all demonstrations, rallies and the activities of all political associations have been banned. In the martial law areas all strikes and lockouts can only take place with the express approval of the martial law authorities.

Ecevit's present measures have been described in the bourgeois press as an attempt at 'martial law with a human face' and the prime minister claims that they have only been taken to 'defend democracy' against terrorism. But while Ecevit doubtless hopes that martial law will stem the activities of the right-wing terrorists who have been responsible for most of the political violence (which has claimed more than 1000 victims

stepped up their campaign of violence in non-martial-law provinces in an attempt to provoke the extension of military rule. In fact the government has already strengthened the troop presence in these areas.

Demirel to Ecevit

Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit came to power in January 1978 promising a 'bright liberal future' and a 'change of order'. Ecevit's RPP was only able to form a government after a number of deputies quit the other main bourgeois party, the Justice Party (JP) led by Suleyman Demirel. Since the ten-year rule of the Democratic Party (precursor of the JP) under Adnan Menderes from 1950 to 1960, Turkey has had thirteen prime ministers, and even more 'governments' if the various coalitions which existed in particular under Demirel's premiership from 1975 to 1978 are included.

In addition, there have been two military coups. The first overthrew the Menderes government in May 1960 after the latter's conservative rule had antagonised wide layers of the ruling class and provoked widespread student demonstrations. The army ruled until a new RPP government was installed after the October 1961 elections. The second coup was in March 1971, this time in the face of large-scale left-wing and student protests and the inability of any of the bourgeois parliamentary parties to govern effectively.

During the period of military rule, which lasted until 1973, the military brutally cracked down on the left-wing opposition. The RPP, which had originally been established by the 'father' of modern Turkey, Kemal Attaturk, in the 1920s as an instrument of his dictatorship, moved leftward in the late 1960s and the 1970s under the leadership of Ecevit and the influence of the Turkish technocratic and intellectual elites associated with the country's modernisation drive. It now postures as a 'progressive' and 'democratic socialist' party.

But all of Ecevit's liberal promises have come to nought. Instead, in return for a miserly IMF grant of \$45 billion over two years and an OECD agreement to reschedule debt repayments of \$1 billion, he has implemented stringent austerity measures. Turkey has something like \$12 billion in foreign debts, the growth rate has dropped from 7 per cent to 3 per cent during the last two years, inflation is running somewhere between 50 and 70 per cent per annum and unemployment has hit over 20 per cent (three million) of the work force. In addition, Turkey maintains the second-largest army in NATO, (swallowing up one-fifth of government expenditure) for purposes of internal repression, as well as to sustain its occupation of Northern Cyprus and back up its nationalist rivalry with Greece -- currently expressed not only over the Cyprus question but also over the Aegean seabed and operational jurisdiction in the NATO command over Aegean sea and air space.

But it is not simply the manifest incom-



Police break up occupation at Istanbul school

during the last year), he also happily presides over army crack-downs on the groups to the left of the RPP.

Left-wing papers have been banned, universities and schools have been shut down in Istanbul and Ankara and hundreds were arrested on left-wing student demonstrations in Istanbul protesting the Maras events. So far the imposition of martial law has slowed the rate of killings by the fascists in the cities, but they have



petence of the previous Demirel coalition governments, nor the impact of the international recession which have brought the Turkish economy to the brink of bankruptcy and provoked the generalised unrest. The industrialisation drive by the Turkish bourgeoisie has also disrupted the traditional social framework and provoked massive discontent.

From 1950 onwards the population of the cities has grown from 3.6 million to 18 million,

The Turkish bourgeoisie hoped that they could channel and contain the massive popular unrest through Ecevit's populist rhetoric and his links with the trade union leaderships. But just as Ecevit cannot deliver on the economic plane, so has he failed to achieve another more immediate aspect of his 'bright liberal future', putting an end to the internal political violence. Instead the violence has escalated rapidly during the past year.

The NAP

Ecevit claims that of the 1800 under arrest for terrorist activities over half are rightists, nearly all of whom belong to the NAP. Most of the victims of NAP terror have been leftists and trade union militants, but they also include national minority leaders and academics, and state prosecutors investigating the fascist movement. Prior to the Kahramanmaraş massacre one of the most notorious incidents was the October 9 murder of seven student supporters of the Turkish Workers Party (TIP), a small social-democratic party, in Ankara. Before he died one of the victims identified the gunmen as members of the NAP. The Maras slaughter was preceded by the murder by letter bomb of the Kurdish mayor of Malatya, and in September nine died in clashes between Alevis and Sunnis in Sivas.

NAP leader Turkes is a former army colonel who took part in the 1960 coup, but was subsequently purged for 'dictatorial aspirations'. He joined the Republican Peasants National Party, which later became the NAP and is now the fourth largest party, having gained a million votes in the last election. For a time Turkes served as deputy premier in one of the Demirel coalition governments.

At first the NAP sought to gain a foothold in the universities in the more developed west of the country and fought a long series of bloody battles with leftist students. Subsequently it switched its attention to central and eastern Anatolia where traditional elements threatened

the imposition of martial law and for new elections to be held under military supervision (or, more lately, under an 'independent', non-Ecevit, government), in the belief that this will advance the NAP's cause while suppressing the left.

He frequently repeats the bare-faced lie that all violence is the fault of the 'communists' and that the NAP has no connection with the killings. But he adds, 'If anybody calls me a fascist or a murderer I will tear his mouth apart' (*Financial Times*, 13 November 1978). In many areas shopkeepers must comply with a Mafia-type protection racket, and walls near the site of the murder of the seven TIP supporters are ominously inscribed with the words of a popular song: 'One night suddenly I might come -- NAP'.

While the fascists continue to grow, most of the Turkish bourgeoisie is not yet ready to throw its lot in with them, and for the most part continues to back the Ecevit government for the want of a credible alternative. Demirel's JP is still discredited from its corruption and incompetence while in power, and has not only been losing its supporters to the NAP but is heavily infiltrated by the fascists as well. Demirel has moved rightward in the face of this threat to his base, refusing to blame anyone but the left for the violence, co-operating with the NAP and, like Turkes, demanding that martial law be extended and that Ecevit leave the army entirely free to deal with the internal situation.

As well, there have been rumours of possible impending army coups -- but the army, as well as the police and the security service (MIT), contains rival rightist and pro-Ecevit groupings, and even in many bourgeois circles its credibility has been affected by the brutality of the last period of martial rule. While the armed forces and police are united in their willingness to go after left-wing extremists and repress the left and workers movement -- witness the 1977 May Day massacre of at least 36 demonstrators -- they are split over how hard to pursue the rightist terror groups.

Within the RPP government itself, some more leftist elements (including former TIP members) have objected to Ecevit's 'anti-terrorist' plans, and one deputy voted against the martial-law proclamation. With the £10 million worth of weapons which have been seized by the Turkish authorities over the last year representing only a small portion of the arms caches in the country, it is no wonder that Ecevit openly talks about the spectre of civil war.

Iran and Turkey

This is the context in which the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat (USec), its already faulty vision undoubtedly further impaired by the veil it has chosen to wear in order to champion the reactionary Iranian mullahs, offers the following soothing opinion:

'However, the rightist offensive in Turkey comes in a different context. The Argentine coup followed the establishment of brutal dictatorships in the neighboring countries. The rightist onslaught in Turkey comes in conjunction with the most powerful and sustained mass struggles yet seen in neighboring Iran. In fact this must have added to the desperation of the Turkish rightists.' (*Intercontinental Press*, 15 January)

In other words, the supposed 'revolutionary dynamic' of the mullah-led mass mobilisations in Iran not only promises a rosy future for all the oppressed in that country, but also relegates the dangerous and growing rightist offensive in Turkey to an act of 'desperation'. Unfortunately, things are not quite as the USec imagines, in either country.

Embellishing its anti-Leninist line that some nationalism is revolutionary, the USec now paints a picture of some Islamic sects as 'progressive'. The *ICP* article, written by American Socialist Workers Party (SWP) journalist Gerry Foley, describes the 'orthodox Sunni sect' as always the pillar of 'established authorities in Turkey' and 'closely associated with the Ottoman state', while the Alevis are blessed with a history of rebellions which have 'tended to be marked by social radicalism'. Foley neglects to mention that the majority of Turks are Sunnis, and that it was they (particularly the peasants of Anatolia) who were the core of popular support to the movement which overthrew the Ottoman empire and to Kemal Attaturk, the secularising leader of this movement.

Nor does he mention that the leadership of

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Down with martial law ! For workers militias to crush fascists !

with half the urban population subsisting in shanty towns on the fringes of the cities. Successive governments have failed to implement promised land reforms, the average urban income is four times that in the rural areas and the eastern regions lag far behind the west. Moreover, emigration no longer provides a safety valve. Between 1961 and 1974 an average of 58,000 workers left each year for West European factories. From 1975 to 1977 this average was down to 11,000.

by the capitalist economic changes have proved fertile recruiting grounds, especially in areas of mixed Turkish-Kurdish population. Northern Cyprus, where the NAP has strong links in the army and business community is another stronghold. During the 1974 invasion by the Turkish army, the NAP campaigned for it to seize the whole island. One reason for the Ecevit government's recent ruling preventing more than one visit to Cyprus every year is to limit the area's use as a staging and training area for NAP terror squads.

The NAP calls for a 'third way', emphasising 'Turkishness', and Turkes rails against 'sadistic Slavic Marxism' and denounces Ecevit as a KGB agent. While the NAP generally claims to stand in the tradition of secularism promoted by Attaturk and has internal differences over its relation to Islam, it has not hesitated to align itself with Islamic reaction, and by appealing to Sunni communalism it encourages religious obscurantism. Thus NAP sloganeering mixes 'Victory belongs to Islam' and 'Into the fight for Allah' with 'Let us unite against the Red Terror'. The NAP's relation to Islam parallels that of the Spanish fascists to Catholicism in the 1930s.

The other key element of the NAP's strategy involves the military. During the time that Turkes served as deputy premier in a Demirel coalition, the NAP was able to extend its influence in the government bureaucracy, the police, security services and army, as well as provide para-military training for its youth group, Ulku Ocaklari (Idealists Heart), better known as the Grey Wolves. Turkes has consistently called for



Fascist NAP speaks the language of Islamic reaction. Wall slogan painted during Maras massacre reads: 'Into the fight for Allah'

Turkey...

(Continued from page 7)

the Kurdish national revolt of 1925 (a supportable struggle for national self-determination) also fought for the restoration of the Caliphate in alliance with non-Kurdish reactionaries -- a position that Attaturk was able to play upon as he crushed the uprising. But then the USec has long since learned that in order to be the best çamp follower, you had better not even hint that the 'revolutionary' credentials of those whom you tail might be tarnished.

Certainly, the collapse of the Shah's regime can have repercussions throughout the region -- but they are not likely to be those of Gerry Foley's dreamworld. Undoubtedly there are conservative forces in Turkey who are alarmed by the fall of the Shah, and the success of the mullah-led movement in Iran might stimulate protest and unrest against the Turkish regime -- but not necessarily from the *left*. The events in Iran, especially if they lead to Khomeini's 'Islamic Republic' or a Koran-waving military dictatorship, are just as likely to encourage the rightists and Islamic fundamentalists. After all, it is they who have appealed to Islam, not the leftists, workers and Alevi Kurds, who have tended to back the secularist RPP. The mullahs' example could conceivably be a spur to Shi'ite fundamentalism, but among the Kurds there will be other influences, including deep tribal and political divisions and the fact that they are an oppressed national minority in both Turkey and Iran -- ie targets for both Turkish and Persian great-nation chauvinism.

Yet *ICP* babbles on about 'the example of the Iranian masses' and the 'processes they have set in motion' which 'may' cause the Turkish rightists' offensive to 'blow up in their face'. Far from presenting a strategy to crush the fascist threat, *ICP* benignly confines itself to a call for the 'international workers movement and democratic public opinion' to defend the 'lives and liberties of all progressives, socialists, trade unionists and members of oppressed nationalities'. And the January 22 issue quotes favourably from a statement by Behice Boran, a leader of the TIP:

'Terrorist actions must be suppressed. But the free exercise of democratic rights and freedoms must not be obstructed... The government must realise that you cannot defend democracy by banning democratic rights and freedoms.'

This is simply a plea for a more 'human face' to be put on Ecevit's martial law, and even *ICP* has to acknowledge that the TIP has not 'yet called for a campaign against martial law as such'. No wonder, for it is the same TIP which sought unsuccessfully to get an electoral bloc with the bourgeois RPP in the last elections. Yet this is what *ICP* calls having 'relatively [!] few illusions about the meaning of the martial law declaration'. It only remains to politely enquire why Gerry Foley and the SWP have declined to put forward that other sterling weapon from their reformist arsenal: a call for the Turkish army to be used to protect the Alevi Kurds. After all, if it is good enough for Boston, surely it is good enough for Maras.

The left tails the RPP

It is not just *ICP*'s fondly quoted TIP which fails to give the Turkish working class a clear lead. Virtually without exception, the organisations of the Turkish left and workers movement capitulate to the RPP. In the last election campaign, almost every left-wing organisation backed Ecevit. But the RPP is a thoroughly bourgeois party, and its leader Ecevit is the 'progressive' who sent the Turkish army into Cyprus, who reinstated the American NATO bases, and whose proposed 'anti-terrorist' legislation included increased police powers, tighter laws against demonstrations and a ban on politically-oriented student associations.

Not surprisingly, most Turkish left organisations have responded to the fascist offensive with calls for an 'anti-fascist' popular front with the 'progressive' (and even not so progressive) bourgeoisie. The plethora of Maoist groups spend most of their energy railing against 'Soviet social-imperialism' and denouncing Ecevit as its stooge -- to such an extent that the NAP has sought to appeal to the shared anti-Soviet patriotism by calling on what they term the 'Maoist Grey Wolves' to join them. The largest, officially-recognised pro-Peking group, the Turkish Workers and Peasants Party (TIKP) calls on the RPP, JP and National Salvation

Party (an Islamic clericalist party) to unite against the NAP.

The Guevarist Revolutionary Youth organisation calls for 'people's revolution' and for all 'anti-fascist people' to form defence committees. This organisation sees itself as a latter-day kindred spirit of the Chilean MIR, and indeed its political gyrations have been similar to those of the MIR during the period of the Allende government. Like the MIR, it has advocated 'armed struggle' à la Guevara. Just as the MIR supported Allende's popular front, Revolutionary Youth backed Ecevit in the last elections. Just as the MIR sought to organise neighbourhood committees while refusing to politically confront the popular front government, Revolutionary Youth sees the way forward not by fighting for a clear revolutionary programme within the trade unions and other working-class organisations but by building anti-fascist committees composed of all 'anti-fascist people'.

Tailing after Revolutionary Youth is the much smaller Turkish USec group, the KOZ. While it uses the current USec verbiage about 'socialist unity', like Revolutionary Youth the KOZ sings the praises of the Chilean MIR, and appears not to have caught up with the recent 'self-criticism' on Latin America (indeed late last year it was still printing excerpts from the now-abandoned Tenth World Congress documents on armed struggle). It says: 'We are going to mobilise the class in defence groups, and call on the workers to mobilise along the lines of these examples' (*Surekli Devrim*, October 1978). But as is the case with Revolutionary Youth, the adventurist component of the KOZ's call for anti-fascist

defence committees which are not based on mass working-class organisations masks a gross capitulation to the RPP and the reformist leadership of the Turkish workers movement.

In Turkey today, the task is not to try to go around the existing organisations of the working class by building independent 'defence groups' but to create such bodies within the trade unions. This necessitates a political struggle against the present misleaders of the working class. In particular, to break the workers from the bourgeois RPP, revolutionists must raise the demand for a workers party, based on the trade unions and committed to a programme of revolutionary class struggle.

Surekli Devrim, however, attacks the call for trade union militias to combat the fascists on the grounds that it is 'utopian' to expect the proletariat to organise such defence groups. But the Turkish working class has shown its willingness to confront the fascists, even if for the most part their misleaders have succeeded in directing their combativity into harmless channels. Last year 30,000 construction workers quit the fascist-controlled YSE-Is en masse to join another union. And on January 5, the liberal bourgeois daily *Cumhuriyet* reported, one million workers defied the martial law to take part in a token five-minute work stoppage to protest the rightist terror. The protest was called by DISK, the largest and most left-wing of the trade union federations.



Bulent Ecevit addressing election rally in Izmir, June 1977

Certainly, oppressed minorities and the left should take all necessary and possible measures for self-defence against the fascists. But unless this is coupled with a strategy to mobilise the working class -- as embodied in the call for trade-union militias -- the fascists will never be crushed, and at best Revolutionary Youth and the KOZ's 'defence groups' will be short-lived exercises in adventurist substitutionism.

At the same time *Surekli Devrim* rejects the call for a workers party based on the unions, claiming that such a party would necessarily be reformist. Lacking a conception of political struggle to win leadership of the working class, when confronted with an entrenched bureaucracy the KOZ can only run off in a futile search for a way around the problem of breaking the working class from the RPP. The only way, the KOZ insists, to build a revolutionary party is through the united front. But the united front is a tactic for common action, not a strategy for cobbling together a 'revolutionary' party out of the most disparate opportunist elements.

With its position, the KOZ -- along with the tiny band of Turkish supporters of the British Workers Socialist League, who share an identical position -- condemns itself to be forever a left



Istanbul demonstrators protest Maras massacre

ginger group for the working-class misleaders. Moreover, its call for a 'united front' against fascism is not a call for broad-based *action* against the fascists which while based on the working class could involve elements of the RPP who are willing to struggle. Rather it is a barely-disguised offer of a class-collaborationist 'anti-fascist' alliance including this bourgeois party. Indeed, in the last elections KOZ supporters initially verbally advocated a vote for the RPP (only to fall into a studied silence thereafter).

The Turkish crisis and the way forward

Turkey has one of the largest and best-organised working classes in the Near East, one which has not been atomised and beheaded like the Iranian proletariat was under the hammer blows of the Shah's army and Savak. The massive unrest in Turkey will not breed the same amorphous opposition as in Iran, with openings for reactionary clerics to take the lead in a bid for an 'Islamic Republic' -- even if fake-leftists will prattle on about the virtues of the mullahs.

Two million workers are organised into trade unions in Turkey, and there are four million more outside the agricultural sector. Last winter, the metalworkers union, Maden Is, fought the longest strike in recent Turkish history. A series of union wage negotiations is impending, and the bourgeoisie fears a major strike wave. But the combative proletariat lacks a leadership which can lead it forward, fight for its livelihood, and provide a perspective for crushing the fascist danger and struggling for power.

A revolutionary party must be forged around a programme which includes the following key demands:

- Down with martial law! For workers militias to smash the fascist threat!
- No popular-front alliances with the RPP or any other bourgeois party! For a workers party based on the trade unions!
- For the right of self-determination for the Kurdish people!
- Turkish and all foreign troops out of Cyprus! Turkey out of NATO and CENTO! Defend the USSR and the deformed workers states!
- For a workers and peasants government to expropriate the capitalist class!
- Build a Turkish Trotskyist party, section of the reformed Fourth International!

'Reclaim the night' ...

(Continued from page 4)

'socialist-feminist' concerns with the working class (as with the now-moribund Working Women's Charter Campaign) in favour of an aggressive 'all-men-are-the-enemy' stance.

A shoddy theoretical cover for this position is provided by American feminist Susan Brownmiller. In her book *Against Our Will*, Brownmiller argues that rape 'is nothing more or less than a conscious process of intimidation by which all men keep women in a state of fear'. Here the feminists have a fake-materialist basis for their analysis of society as riven by sexual divisions which cut across and take priority over class antagonisms.

The programmatic conclusion which follows is obvious: don't overthrow this oppressive capitalist society, just give women an equal 'say' in its running. Or as Brownmiller puts it: 'full integration of our cities' police department and by full I mean fifty-fifty, no less, is a revolutionary goal of the utmost importance to women's rights' (ibid).

Operating in a more labourite milieu than Brownmiller, feminists in Britain are coy about embracing her full-blown efforts to increase the number of female cops and her open demands for the outlawing of pornography. Thus *Women's Voice*, the SWP's women's publication, in its leaflet for the January 20 march says 'We do not call for more repression, censorship and longer prison sentences', (suggesting, perhaps, that they are quite content with existing censorship laws). And a leaflet written by a group of independent feminists for the London Revolutionary Feminist Conference in February 1978 says: 'We do not seek to change the law towards increased censorship.'

But in instance after instance these disclaimers are shown to be mere hollow phrases. Thus, the independent feminist leaflet quoted above argues for driving porn 'underground' with arguments more appropriate to Queen Victoria than to self-styled revolutionaries: 'When porn was "under the counter", men might have reason to feel guilty over their rape fantasies which were apparently socially disapproved, and guilt can be inhibiting!'

As for the SWP, it merely prints without criticism a demand by NUS executive member Helen Lonsdale that 'security men on campus [should] have their briefs extended' to 'protect people as well as property' (*Socialist Worker*, 6 January 1979). How nice! Perhaps the army and police should also be asked to 'protect people as well as property'. Or perhaps the state should just grant the IMG's plea for 'forms of protection and deterrent deemed necessary by women' (*Socialist Challenge*, 1 September 1977). This suitably blanket demand could mean anything from Brownmiller's call for more women cops to cries from Mary Whitehouse to clamp down harder on 'sexual offenders'.

The Reclaim the Night marches are thus far from being an innocuous reformist campaign aimed only at securing better street-lighting and public transportation in order to cut down the incidence of rape. During the Hallowe'en march through Soho a number of feminists physically attacked shops selling pornography -- an unsupported act with an explicitly reactionary thrust which merely opens the gateway through which the bourgeois state and Mary Whitehouse would readily drive their censorious coach-and-four. We do not defend the 'right' of women or anyone else to set themselves up as self-proclaimed moral arbiters and censors.

Marxists oppose all bourgeois censorship as well as all interference by the capitalist state in sexual activities between consenting individuals. State censorship will not free women from their social oppression: the example of the priest-ridden Republic of Ireland where *Spare Rib*, let alone a copy of the *Journal of Sex*, is banned is a clear case in point. For there the government's attitude to 'girlie magazines' is of a piece with its attitude to divorce, homosexuality, contraception and abortion: all are anathema to these devout souls.

And what do reclaimers of the night propose to do with D H Lawrence's *Lady Chatterly's Lover*, which does portray women as sex objects and which was banned for thirty years in this country? Is this pornography? Should it be proscribed once again, along with *Ulysses*, *Tropic of Cancer* etc?

The simple fact is that any morality legislation of the bourgeois state such as the banning of pornography, gambling or prostitution, only provides the state with a licence for

harassment, and the perpetration of its own norms of permissible sexual behaviour. The first targets of such legislation would clearly be the already downtrodden: homosexuals, transvestites and anyone else whom the state cares to describe as 'sexual deviants'.

Women's liberation and an end to rape will certainly not be achieved by plastering the windows of Ann Summers sex shops with stickers saying 'This degrades women'. Indeed, actions like the Soho attack only boost puritanical attitudes which are used, first of all, to reinforce the oppression of women.

The liberation of women requires the smashing of the capitalist system so that the nuclear family, which chains many women to a daily grind of stultifying domestic labour and is the material basis of women's oppression, can be replaced through the socialisation of household work. The only force capable of accomplishing this task, though, is the working class led by its revolutionary party; the only programme adequate to the task is that of socialist revolution. Feminists of every hue have rejected that programme, but in rejecting it they also reject the only road to women's complete emancipation. ■

IRA...

(Continued from page 5)

tending club dinners. The fire-bombing killed 12 and injured 23 of them.

This we consider to be a *crime*, not because the Fifth Commandment says 'Thou shalt not kill', nor because it is deemed illegal by the British Parliament, but because the attack resulted in the gratuitous killing of a dozen Protestants simply because they were Protestants. Far from being a blow against imperialism, the bombing played directly into the hands of the British authorities in the North, bonding the Protestant workers even more firmly to their reactionary leaders. The blowing up of innocent civilians can only fuel sectarian animosity, and sabotages the fight for united class action against imperialism and the Irish bourgeoisie -- it is a crime against the working class. But for the Provos a sharpened polarisation between Catholic and Protestant communities furthers their aim of welding together Catholics of all classes in opposition to the Protestant 'common enemy', and allows them to come forward once more as defenders of the beleaguered Catholics.

Workers Power may not like the blunt language, but what we said in *Workers Vanguard* was true: the La Mon bombing was part of a policy of 'fomenting sectarian violence in the service of nationalism, whose ultimate poisonous logic is genocide'. Unless, of course, WP believes that the Provos are not real bourgeois nationalists, but benevolent creatures who make the occasional 'tactical' slip.

Workers Power additionally tries to deride our programme of struggling for anti-imperialist proletarian unity in Ireland -- in particular, our call for integrated workers militias to combat imperialist and sectarian terror. They do this through constructing two shoddy amalgams.

First, they try to yoke our position together with the sterile economist 'all workers must unite' effluvia of the Socialist Workers Party and the dull, wretched reformism of the Militant group -- although they are forced to acknowledge that, unlike the Grant group, we call for the immediate withdrawal of the army and unconditionally defend the IRA against imperialist state attacks. Second, they insinuate that our opposition to nationalist terror against a civilian population somehow parallels the positions of imperialist spokesmen like Mason and Neave.

The technique is an old and not very sophisticated one: when Trotsky spoke of the crimes of Stalin (utterly careless, of course, of using 'identical terminology' to the likes of Winston Churchill and the Mikado), he was denounced for catering to anti-Soviet sentiment, for being a Hitlerite agent. Just as this howling did not deter him from continuing to call things by their proper names, neither will the howlers of today prevent us from telling the truth. And if that means calling a sectarian crime a sectarian crime, then so be it. That is not 'chauvinism' but proletarian internationalism.

Given its belief that Protestant workers are fundamentally an unwinnable monolith of Orange pogromists, Workers Power necessarily sees Provo actions which strengthen communal antagonisms as mere excesses, *subsidiary* imperfections in the activity of anti-imperialist nationalism -- and

thus simply tactically mistaken. The truth is that indefensible nationalist and sectarian terror is an inevitable and central part of the programme of nationalism.

The same absolute pessimism about the Protestant workers is displayed when Workers Power tackles the Spartacist slogan of integrated anti-imperialist, anti-sectarian workers militias. They say 'the slogan assumes as a prerequisite what it is aimed at achieving (ie the non-Orangism of Protestant workers)'. If you assume that all Protestant workers are at all times uniformly, universally and unbreakably Loyalist, and that their class interests never contradict those of British imperialism and the Unionist bourgeoisie, then this accusation of tautology might have some validity. But this hopelessly erroneous conception of the Protestant working class is graphically refuted by the army strikebreaking during the recent strike of tanker drivers in Northern Ireland. Almost to a man, these same workers supported the reactionary Ulster Workers Council stoppage of 1974.

Without a conception of fighting to transform the consciousness of sections of Protestant workers through programmatic struggle, WP can have no strategy of splitting workers away from the Paisleys and the Craigs. Instead, its line for Ireland is 'the armed front of workers, socialists and republicans' (*Class Struggle* no 3, journal of the Irish Workers Group, WP's fraternal group in Ireland), which in Workers Power's more guarded formulation, 'will *positively* attract Protestant workers into a common front' (emphasis in original) by being secular and by fighting the Southern bourgeoisie.

But what of the negative features? Decoded, WP's armed front is nothing but a 'political', 'proletarianised' version of the traditional Republican view that the Protestants will be bullied into submission through a combination of physical force and the sheer weight of the all-Ireland Catholic majority.

The road to proletarian power in Ireland

Robert Nairac and Albert Miles may be dead (and rotting in hell), but others like them continue to run amok in Northern Ireland, whether in uniform or in the plainclothes of the army's murderous hit squads. While we most assuredly do not mourn the deaths of these imperialist hitmen, we point out that one-at-a-time executions are no strategy for defeating the imperialists. Yet the Provos -- even when their terror is not indiscriminate but aimed against agents of imperialism -- have no other strategy. We in the Spartacist League do.

We call for the immediate release of all those imprisoned for resisting Britain's armed thugs and their RUC allies -- from the men rotting in H-Block to Liam Townson in Portlaoise Gaol -- and for the immediate withdrawal of all British troops from Northern Ireland. However, complete victory over imperialism will only come through the united mobilisation of Ireland's proletariat -- necessitating the breaking down of communal barriers between Catholic and Protestant workers.

We do not claim that this will be an easy task, not least because of the criminal sectarianism of the leadership of both communities in Northern Ireland -- the Orange pogromists and the Green Republicans. The gunning down of randomly chosen individuals because they are of a different religion or nationality is thoroughly inimical to the interests of the working class. Troops out now -- for integrated workers defence squads to combat imperialist and sectarian terror! Not Orange against Green, but class against class -- for an Irish workers republic within a socialist federation of the British Isles! ■

PUBLIC MEETING

No to Islamic reaction WORKERS MUST RULE IRAN

Friday 16 February
7.30 pm
Australia Bar
Hurst & Bromsgrove Streets
Birmingham
For more information ring (021) 472 7726

Iran...

(Continued from page 12)

loyal to the throne will follow Bakhtiar's orders. Three hard-line generals all resigned the day before Bakhtiar assumed office; one openly stated that when the Shah went the army would not obey his successor. The possibility of a military revolt against the government was further heightened when Bakhtiar's nominee for war minister, General Feredioun Djam, refused to join a government he saw was obviously doomed.

For their part Khomeini and National Front leader Karim Sanjabi have redoubled their efforts to woo the military hierarchy. Sanjabi made his pitch to the officers by vowing, 'We in



30 feet of Khomeini: Teheran after the Shah

the National Front want to maintain the Army, we need a strong Army, and we don't want to do anything to discourage the Army... We have never called for desertions or tried to create indiscipline' (*Guardian*, 13 December).

At a press conference in Iran, Khomeini-loyal mullahs revealed that accredited supporters of the ayatollah were negotiating with senior army officers 'because the army belongs to the people and must not be separated from the religious movement' (*Le Monde*, 27 January). Khomeini himself stressed in an interview shown on American television on January 14 that:

'It is not to say that in the army everyone is for the Shah, supporting the Shah. A great part of the army also has relation to the nation and will act accordingly. At the moment it is the foreign hand within the army which forces the army to act like that, otherwise they would also be acting according to our national interest... I don't think the army will be loyal to the Shah or wish to follow some traitor.'

The example of Pakistan, where a mullah-led Islamic opposition brought down the dictatorship of Ali Bhutto, only to bring to power the equally reactionary Muslim fanatic General Zia, shows the danger for Iran of a bloc between Muslim reaction and military strongman. In Pakistan today none of the democratic aspirations of the masses have been satisfied -- instead the army enforces the barbaric Islamic judicial code and suppresses the trade unions and student protests.

People's justice, not the 'Just Rule of Islam'

The Iranian masses have forcefully demonstrated their bitter hatred for the Shah's terrorist rule by targeting its most feared instrument -- Savak. The names, addresses and phone numbers of its agents are being posted on city walls and the houses of Savak officers have been burned and bombed. Savak agents have been lynched in Meshed, and in Shiraz the secret police headquarters were sacked and burned to the ground and four Savak men beaten to death by a crowd. Suspected Savak agents are now placing adverts in the Teheran newspapers protesting their innocence.

However, populist outrage against imperialist



Religious leaders demonstrate in Teheran

backing for the Shah and the Iranian ruling class' luxurious corruption has been interlaced with attacks based on religious and communal prejudice. Not only Savak buildings have been burned, but also 'immoral' cinemas, bars and restaurants serving alcohol, and banks which charge interest on loans in violation of Islamic law. There have been numerous attacks on houses and businesses owned by members of the Bahai sect, with demonstrators charging that all Bahais support the Shah (in reality Bahais have long been targeted for their heretical deviation from Shi'ite Islam). In Qarchak near Teheran two Afghani workers accused of theft were hanged from lamp posts by zealous Muslims who exceeded the Koranic penalty of amputating a thief's hand!

If Khomeini has his way, in an Islamic Republic the law of the Koran -- in all its mediaeval barbarity -- would become the official law of the land. Theft would be punished by amputation, adultery by stoning. The legal enslavement of women would be reinforced. The wearing of the *chador* -- Persian version of the veil, the Islamic symbol of women's subservience and oppression -- would be required.

The rights of minority religions and nationalities would also come under attack in Khomeini's Islamic state. Although the ayatollah protests that tolerance will be greater than under the Shah, his published lectures are filled with attacks on Jews, as well as calls for banning women from the workforce and for absolute religious rule. Moreover, the religious

Thornett ...

(Continued from page 4)

SL to answer his accusations, the audience was fuming at the deliberate falsifications.

The SL supporters were prepared to meet this challenge, including to set right the distorted quote from *WV*. But Chairman Steve Bryant wouldn't have it, and called on five speakers before he was finally forced to recognize the SL spokesman who asked to answer Thornett. Infuriated by the outrageously discriminatory chairing of the meeting, a typical Bryant performance, the speaker pointed straight at the chairman and said angrily, 'You just couldn't resist, could you, you little cockroach?'

At this, the SL-DC and Thornett went berserk, rushing the speaker and screaming, 'You're out!' But this frenzied attempt to compound their bureaucratic procedures with an exclusion was thwarted by about a dozen trade unionists who immediately went to the defense of the SL speaker. Stopped in their tracks, the Thornett clique retreated to the podium where they im-

tently howled and cried for the exclusion of the SL speaker. (The WSL had pulled a similar stunt -- trying to escape political debate through labeling a harsh political characterization a 'personal attack' -- at a forum in Oxford last year.)

But this didn't work either. While the chairman and featured speaker were disrupting their own forum, the SL spokesman called to Thornett above the din, 'If you'll shut up comrade, I'll explain why he is a cockroach.' And after the badly outnumbered would-be goons of the SL-DC decided they had no choice but to give the speaker his time, he explained, identifying Bryant's political species and moral genus: a disgusting, dishonest political coward who attempts the most brazen censorship of anyone supporting the SL viewpoint.

The Spartacist spokesman noted the vicious red-baiting of militant trade unionists in the SL-DC's newspaper. He pointed out that Bryant gets his full time, and often more, to reply at SL forums. And he noted that in spite of the SL-DC's pitiful attempts to imitate the labor bureaucracy in suppressing workers democracy, on at least one occasion the SL defended Bryant's minuscule sect from Stalinist gangsterism of the Maoist Revolutionary Communist Party.

When the speaker turned to read the quotations from *WV* on immigration which Thornett had shamelessly distorted, Bryant again interrupted to try and shut him up. But the audience demanded that the speaker had the right to set the record straight. After forcing and handily winning a vote, the speaker was finally able to finish without further interruptions, pointing out that the Spartacist League supports the right of self-determination for all nations and opposes all capitalist immigration laws. Thornett's baits were revealed as unmitigated slander.

All in all, it seemed a pretty good and instructive event for the 'first international Trotskyist videotape network'. It showed how slander and bureaucratic suppression grow out of political opportunism. And it shows that under the proper circumstances workers democracy can be victorious. But we don't think the WSL or the SL-DC are very likely to play the tapes. ■

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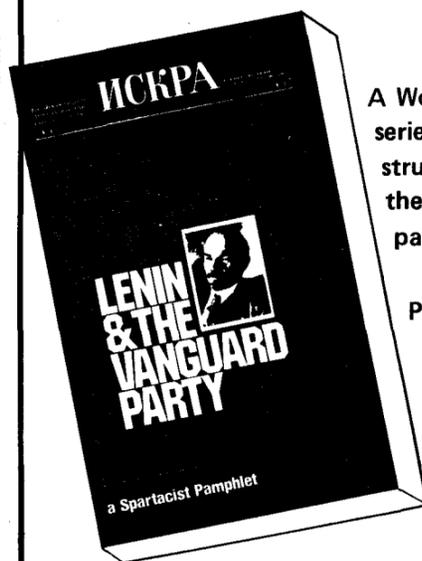
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opposition, like the Shah, defends the 'integrity' of the Iranian state, denying the right of self-determination to the oppressed minority nations who comprise over half the population.

Khomeini's appetite to suppress the left has been made clear time and again. He has promised that 'After the Shah leaves, the press will be free except for those articles which would be harmful to the nation' (*New York Times*, 11 January). The ayatollah told the *Neue Züricher Zeitung* (24 November) that the Stalinist Tudeh party would be outlawed for having 'betrayed' the Iranian nation. Other leftist organisations can, for all their fawning before the holyman, expect no better treatment.

For proletarian revolution in Iran!

The plebeian masses' concern for swift and sure justice against the Shah's henchmen provides a wedge which a communist vanguard could use to split the workers and peasants from the reactionary religious leaders. The mullahs and the National Front have denounced the attacks on Savak agents and offices. Ayatollah Taleghani, linked to the Front, proposed taking the trial of suspected Savak agents out of the hands of the people by bringing them before 'Islamic tribunals'. Khomeini himself issued a message condemning the masses' actions and warned against 'trying to create a panic which might justify a military coup' (*Washington Post*, 12 January).

The mullahs correctly see the popular mobilisations against Savak as counterposed to building up their jurisdiction and keeping up good relations with the officer corps. People's tribunals to punish the Savak torturers could be the beginning of revolutionary dual power, directed against both the religious hierarchy and the officer corps. No interference by the mullahs or soldiers in popular vengeance against Savak criminals! And bring the Shah and his entourage back from their 'brief vacation' to face people's tribunals -- the Iranian working masses should see that they receive proletarian justice for their decades of murderous rule!

A revolutionary proletarian vanguard must be forged to act as a tribune for all the oppressed, fighting for such democratic goals as the right of self-determination for Iran's national minorities, land to the tiller, full legal equality for women and the complete separation of mosque and state. But the fight for these demands, and for such measures as the abolition of Savak, the ending of martial law and the establishment of a sovereign, secular constituent assembly, must be part of a strategy for workers revolution -- against both the remnants of the Shah's savage dictatorship and the right-wing religious opposition of the Islamic clergy.

Yet even today the main so-called 'communist' tendencies -- the pro-Moscow Tudeh (which has endorsed Khomeini's Council of the Islamic Revolution), the Maoists and Pabloite fake-Trotskyists -- continue to tail the Islamic opposition. This is the road to suicide and defeat for the toiling masses of Iran. No to Khomeini's Islamic reaction! For a workers and peasants government in Iran! For an Iranian Trotskyist party, section of a reformed Fourth International!

- adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 223, 19 January 1979

PUBLIC MEETING

Oust the Stalinist Bureaucracy

DEFEND THE GAINS OF OCTOBER

Friday 9 February 7.30 pm
Central Library
68 Holloway Road
London N7
(Tube: Highbury & Islington or Holloway Road)
For more information ring (01) 278 2232

IMG polices the left on Iran demo

In deference to its pro-Khomeini allies in the Committee Against Repression in Iran (CARI), the International Marxist Group (IMG) has continued its practice of excluding the Spartacist League (SL) from CARI demonstrations. The most recent occasion was the anti-Shah CARI march held in London on December 17.

As the demonstration left Hyde Park, IMG stewards formed a cordon in front of the Spartacist contingent to prevent us from joining the main body of the march. The police milling around then moved into the gap that had been created, and despite vigorous attempts to move

from the march if any one organisation was politically excluded. This is not accidental. The weak-kneed failure of these organisations to put teeth into their professed commitment to workers democracy has a political basis -- their fear, in the face of the almost universal capitulation of the left to Khomeini, of being accused of Spartacism by the mullah-lovers.

One small group, the Revolutionary Communist Tendency (RCT -- a decomposition product of the now-cultist Revolutionary Communist Group) had no qualms about supporting the SL's exclusion. Describing the SL's position on Iran as 'reac-



Police lend a hand to CARI/IMG exclusionists on December 17 demonstration

the IMG goons forward, the combined IMG/police barrier eventually forced the SL contingent to pull out in Oxford Street. The exclusion was accompanied by threats of arrest from senior police officers.

Mindful of its complicity in a previous CARI-organised, cop-executed exclusion of the SL from a Birmingham demonstration on December 2 (see *Spartacist Britain* no 7), the IMG manoeuvred carefully on the day to diffuse opposition to their disgusting exclusionist policies. As the demonstrators assembled, 1000 copies of a statement condemning political exclusionism and police interference in the labour movement were distributed. The leaflet, reproduced below, was signed by the International-Communist League (I-CL), Workers Power (WP), the Workers Socialist League (WSL) and the SL. (Several days later, the Birmingham branch of the Socialist Workers Party added its signature to the leaflet.)

As the leaflet was being handed out, the march's chief steward, Steve Potter of the IMG, was assuring the stewards' meeting that 'there will be no exclusions on this demonstration'. He quickly added, though, that 'those organisations whose slogans might cause hostility from other parts of the demonstration will be protected by a substantial contingent of CARI stewards'. Representatives of Workers Power and the I-CL were soon told by CARI organisers that this was intended to exclude the SL. And so it proved.

The pre-demonstration rally was addressed by representatives of the IMG, *Workers Action*, the South London Co-operative Society and the Communist Party. A speaker from CARI was chosen to wind up the speeches. Demagogically stirring up the waiting crowd with the slanderous charge that the SL's opposition to the mullahs was identical to that of the Shah (as if the Shah ever called for his own overthrow or for a workers and peasants government in Iran!), the speaker then called on the crowd to shout 'Yes' or 'No' to the SL being allowed to carry its slogans on the march.

An overwhelming 'No' vote satisfactorily taken and the spirit of an anti-Spartacist *jihad* sufficiently evoked, about a hundred CARI supporters then moved towards the SL contingent chanting 'Spartacists Out'. As the SL, Workers Power and the I-CL stood their ground, the double-thinking Big Brothers of the IMG began chanting, 'No bans in the labour movement' (!) and moved their goon squad into position ahead of the SL.

Although the I-CL, WSL and WP took a principled stand in signing and distributing the statement, these organisations refused to form a defence bloc with the SL committed to splitting

tionary' despite the fact that they have neither analysis nor programme for Iran, these pioneers of academic 'Marxism in our time' brazenly refused to sign the anti-exclusion leaflet.

The Spartacist League sharply opposes the pro-mullah thrust of the recent Iran demon-

Stop CARI exclusions!

Given the exclusion of the Spartacist League from a CARI demonstration in Birmingham on December 2 and from the Iran demonstration in London of December 9, on both occasions involving the use of the bourgeois state's police who were called against the Spartacist League by the organisers of the marches, the undersigned organisations affirm their

- * opposition to political exclusionism within the labour movement and their support for democracy within the workers movement, and their
- * opposition to *any* interference by the capitalist state's police in any labour movement activities.

The undersigned organisations demand that CARI allows all workers movement organisations to participate in today's demonstration carrying their own banners and placards and free to propagandise their distinct programmes for the victory of the struggles of the Iranian workers and peasants.

International-Communist League
Spartacist League
Workers Power
Workers Socialist League

17 December 1978

[Endorsed by Birmingham branch, Socialist Workers Party, 28 December.]

strations in Britain -- but we claim the right to counterpose our programme for Iran on anti-Shah demonstrations to the gutless adaptation to Khomeini widespread on the self-styled revolutionary left. Neither CARI, the IMG nor any other organisation has a monopoly of political propaganda directed at Iranian militants. And all workers organisations have the duty to break such attempts to impose such a monopoly, whether or not they are imposed by fraudulent votes, 'leftist' goon squads or the police.

Stop the exclusions! No police interference in the labour movement! ■

SPARTACIST BRITAIN

Shah flees, turmoil continues

Don't bow to Khomeini! Workers must rule Iran!

Within minutes of the announcement that the Shah of Iran had slipped out of the country on January 16, tens of thousands of jubilant Iranians poured into the streets of Teheran. As the thousands swelled into millions a carnival atmosphere swept the city. Demonstrators placed red carnations in the barrels of soldiers' guns, hoping to win the men over to the side of the anti-Shah forces through fraternisation.

But ten days later the army was gunning down protesters in the streets of Teheran once again. On January 26, the weak puppet government of the Shah's appointee Shapour Bakhtiar unleashed crack troops of the Imperial Guard on demonstrators demanding that the exiled Islamic religious leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, be allowed to return to Iran. Dozens were killed and many more wounded. The dramatic confrontations which have been sweeping the country for the past year are clearly far from over.

The Shah has fled!

By the end of his 38 years of regal dictatorship, the regime of Mohammed Reza Pahlavi was felt to be an unbearably oppressive burden by the vast majority of the population. The 'white revolution' facade had crumbled, exposing a corrupt and rapacious court looting the country to salt away fortunes in Swiss banks and Los Angeles real estate.

No more could a technocratic middle class dream of becoming a world power by the turn of the century; instead it saw the oil billions being used to equip an overbearing Prussian-style military caste which grew more insolent by the year. Now the victims of torture were not limited to the Communists but were to be found at every level of society as the brutal Savak relished its American equipment, Israeli instructors and Nazi techniques.

And in the last year the Shah's savage repressive machine declared open season on the populace, on several occasions murdering more than 500-1000 protesters in a single demonstration. This was a regime that had clearly entered its death agony, flailing out in every direction, sustained only by its bayonets, its British Chieftain tanks and the support of Jimmy 'Human Rights' Carter and the other imperialist chiefs.

Now the Shah has gone -- but is it really for good? In 1953, he fled only to return in a week thanks to the CIA. Today he sits, waiting, in Morocco. Will the US and hard-line generals organise a coup?

Most important, the artificial unity of the anti-Shah opposition must now come apart. The seething opposition runs from 'Marxist-Leninist' guerrillas to ultra-reactionary Muslim preachers. A time of reckoning is now approaching.

Up until now the Shi'ite Islamic religious hierarchy -- the ayatollahs and mullahs -- has been the dominant political leadership. All sectors of the opposition have bowed to Khomeini, the chief Shi'ite Muslim patriarch. Thus the way



Off your knees, for workers revolution. Anti-Shah demonstrators pray during mullah-led demonstration in Teheran

has been paved for the imposition of Khomeini's 'Islamic Republic', whose rigidly feudalistic social and political programme will give a rude shock to the democratic aspirations of the Iranian masses.

Despite Khomeini's present popularity, an Islamic Republic, quite possibly under the control of a military 'soldier of Islam', would be no less reactionary than the rule of the Shah. In fact, the religious opposition's attitude toward many key social questions -- in particular the oppression of women, an especially important question in the Islamic world -- is *more* reactionary than the Shah's superficially modernising regime. The ayatollahs are also hostile to the Shah's limited land reform -- not because it was largely a sham, doing nothing to give land to the impoverished peasants, but because most of the lands seized were formerly held by the Muslim clergy. Moreover, the Islamic leaders have repeatedly made clear that they will not co-operate in any way with communists, and they are virulently hostile to the democratic rights of national and religious minorities.

While the legions of opportunists calling themselves Marxists have enthused over the Muslim masses taking to the streets bearing portraits of Khomeini, the international Spartacist tendency has been unique on the left in giving no support to the religious opposition. Instead we raised the slogan 'Down with the Shah! Down with the mullahs! For workers revolution in Iran!'

With the Shah having fled the country, the fight for an independent proletarian axis counterposed to both the monarchy and the religious opposition has taken on even more urgency. The economically strategic oil workers were the force which played the decisive role in bringing down the Shah -- but in the absence of

a revolutionary vanguard party a viciously anti-communist and anti-working-class dictatorship threatens to ride to power on the backs of the working class.

One thing is clear: the new Bakhtiar government, which is desperately trying to put a lid on the continued turmoil, has little hope of retaining the reins of power. The first two days of the new government were greeted with a general strike and mass demonstrations called by Khomeini and his current allies, the bourgeois National Front. The ayatollah branded Bakhtiar a 'tool of Satan' and called for the masses to overthrow his 'illegal' government.

A letter from Bakhtiar offering elections for a constituent assembly and his own resignation in return for Khomeini's co-operation was rejected unopened by the ayatollah. The head of Bakhtiar's Regency Council was declined an audience by Khomeini, and subsequently resigned his position. And when Bakhtiar himself set off to visit Khomeini on January 28 the top cleric simply refused to talk to him.

Despite continued murderous repression, the government has been unable to stem the almost-daily demonstrations chanting 'Bakhtiar bi-ekhtiar' (Bakhtiar is a puppet). In the northeastern city of Meshed where, according to opposition sources, 2000 protesters have been killed by the Shah's troops, the army has been effectively driven out of the city and confined to its garrison post by a mass uprising of the city's population. This traditional religious centre and its public services are under the control of the Islamic religious hierarchy.

Clearly the new prime minister had no chance of appeasing the anti-Shah forces as long as the Shah remained in the country. But with the Shah gone it is not at all clear that the generals

continued on page 10