



Don't play by Kinnock's rules

Blockade Murdoch!

Defend the print unions!

Rearm the NUM!



Workers Hammer

Workers Hammer

Women strikers, supporters on picket line at Wapping (left), miners march through London 2 March one year after their strike ended. Mass contingents of miners and other trade unionists should be called out to blockade Murdoch. Rearing the NUM, smashing Murdoch union-busting requires struggle for revolutionary leadership of the labour movement.

One year after the miners were forced back to work, the Labour and trade union bureaucrats are doing all in their power to bury the lessons of that heroic strike. Even as cops on horseback bury their truncheons into the skulls of pickets at Wapping, NGA and SOGAT leaders Tony Dubbins and Brenda Dean bemoan 'violence' by strike pickets. 'Left' and right, the union officialdom is trying to keep things cool for Kinnock; they place a higher premium on get-

ting Neil Kinnock into Number Ten come next election than on defending the jobs and union rights of their members today. *You can't win by Labour's rules!* Screw the Tory anti-union laws and TUC guidelines! Blockade Murdoch through organised, militant mass pickets! The fight against Murdoch's union-busting is not only a battle for print workers. Against this craft-unionist conception, militants must fight to mobilise their unions in class struggle now.

London Transport workers, facing massive redundancies and speedup, dockworkers, coalminers must march on Wapping. SOGAT and TGWU drivers ought to park their lorries outside the front gates. Black all distribution of Murdoch's rags! Victory to the News International strike!

From the first day of the print strike, two things have been clear: the union leadership have been looking for a way out, and the union *continued on page 10*

Reactionary Loyalist strike

Bombs exploded and smoke billowed across Northern Ireland on 3 March, as hundreds of masked Loyalist gangs ran berserk shooting, hurling rocks and bricks, littering the streets with broken glass and nails and setting cars, shops and factories ablaze. It was an ominous display of reactionary force aimed against the NATO-engineered Anglo-Irish accord, which for the first time allows the southern Republic a formal say in Northern Irish affairs -- though primarily over the question of suppressing the IRA! But to the benighted Loyalist bigots, this was seen as the first step on the road to reconciliation with 'Rome rule'.

As the rampaging mobs terrorised Catholics, and especially women, the cops of the RUC either joined in or turned a blind eye -- confirming their status as an extension of the Orange reactionary reserves -- though a handful of over-zealous Loyalist thugs attacked even them. Dangerously this right-wing mobilisation succeeded in capturing the

support of much of Northern Ireland's Protestant working class, while the Catholic workers were simply intimidated.

By the end of this day of 'protest' action, even sections of the Orange bourgeoisie -- like 'moderate' James Molyneux's Official Unionist Party -- emerged slightly unsettled by the vehemence with which their communalist dogs of war had taken their common programme to the streets. Nonetheless Unionist MPs were seen accompanying their paramilitary cronies waving Union Jacks and placards declaring 'Ulster says no'. Bigot Ian Paisley pointedly threatened: 'We are starting to turn the screw and it will continue to turn -- tomorrow, next week and next month' (*Guardian*, 4 March). This is first and foremost a call for escalating communalist terror against the brutally oppressed Irish Catholic minority. In Lurgan 200 Catholic women workers were besieged and forced out of their factory by Loyal- *continued on page 5*



Guardian

West Belfast, 3 March: Orange reactionaries picket Harland and Wolff shipyard.

Exchange on Ireland

Proletarian revolution v Green nationalism

Dunscroft, S Yorks
[Received 20 January 1986]

Dear Comrades,

... Incidentally the situation in the North of Ireland is *not* centuries old at all -- the North both Protestant and Catholic was fairly solidly Republican right through the 1700's and early 1800's. The so called 'Protestant Loyalist North' is a sheer creation of the British state and wasn't christened as the final card until 1921. Republicanism does not translate as Catholicism although you persist in trying to spell it that way.

Why should *anyone* let alone the Irish accept or demand a federation -- socialist or otherwise of the so called 'British Isles'? Why should the old geographical boundaries of

Quote of the month



On the awakening of women workers

Trotsky and Lenin

Addressing the Communist University for Toilers of the East in 1924, Trotsky spoke of the enormous impact of the October revolution on the role and consciousness of women, and in particular of the enormous revolutionary potential of proletarian women, the 'slaves of slaves', when aroused to class struggle. Today, in celebrating the proletarian holiday of International Women's Day, it is only the Trotskyist programme of unconditional defence of the gains of October that offers such a perspective of struggle to women militants, from heroic Afghan women fighting benighted Islamic reaction, to the militant British miners' wives who fought Thatcher and her bloodthirsty gang.

Even today we can still observe in the East the rule of Islam, of the old prejudices, beliefs and customs but these will more and more turn to dust and ashes.... And this, moreover means that the Eastern woman who is the most paralysed in life, in her habits and in creativity, the slave of slaves, that she, having at the demand of the new economic relations taken off her cloak will at once feel herself lacking any sort of religious buttress; she will have a passionate thirst to gain new ideas, a new consciousness which will permit her to appreciate her new position in society. And there will be no better communist in the East, no better fighter for the ideas of the revolution and for the ideas of communism than the awakened woman worker.

-- Speech on the Third Anniversary of the Communist University for Toilers of the East, 21 April 1924

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domination by our non-indigenous ruling class be the same geographical area of any future socialist alliance or federation of nations within these and neighbouring islands?

If the Celtic nations decide to go their respective ways or form a Celtic Alliance of nations, there is nothing more nor less socialist about this, than a revamped 'red' version of the U.K. which you advocate. If the Geordie people decide to reconstruct their Northumbrian nation -- or team up with their Norse-Celt brothers and sisters on Orkney or rebuild the ancient connection with Norway, there is nothing of itself anti-socialist about that. If Yorkshire decided to disengage itself from 'the South' or reconstruct its Danish connection why is that a more or less socialist measure than urging us to go kicking and screaming into another 200 or 300 years of 'Great Britain' albeit with a red flag on the mast head?

The way I see it, when the capitalist British state is smashed, oppressed nations and peoples long since buried and suppressed by the INVENTION of Britain, will be free to

continued on page 4

On Max Bosch

Tooting Bec
1 January 1986

Dear Comrades,

We should be most obliged if you could give us a few column inches to announce the sad news to your readers of the death of Comrade Max Bosch in the first week of December.

Comrade Bosch first joined the Trotskyist movement in South Africa in the early thirties, and was the first of them, along with Ted Grant, to come across to Britain and help to set the movement here on its feet. He arrived by ship with Ted in France in the last weeks of 1934, and they made their way to Paris to make contact with Trotsky's son, Lev Sedov, and the International Secretariat.

At that time the Trotskyist movement was in the middle of the discussion about the 'French Turn' -- the turn to entry work, and Max was attracted by the views of Bauer (Ackerknecht), the International Secretary, who was opposed to it. However, when they came to Britain they had been put in contact with those comrades in the Marxist Group who were active in the Holborn and Finsbury branch of the I.L.P. There they began helping the educational work in the I.L.P. and in particular made it a point to warn about the dangers of Fascism and War that a 'Popular Front' would help to bring nearer. At the same time Max did his best to obtain illegally a South African passport for Comrade Bauer, who as a refugee from Nazi Germany was liable to deportation at any time, though for one reason or another this did not come off. Max continued to be opposed to entry work in the Labour Party after Ted had joined D. D. Harber's *Militant Group*, and wrote instead for *Workers Fight*, the open journal of C.L.R. James, under the pseudonym of Sid Frost. He ceased to be active in the Trotskyist movement during wartime, though he continued to support its work. He was among the last to see Ralph Lee in South Africa before his tragic death just after the war.

Max Bosch was an internationalist to the core, a courteous and gentle comrade who was a great help to the writers of this letter when they were trying to piece together the history of the movement in his time. We are sure that others will join with us to regret his passing and acknowledge his contribution.

Fraternally,
Sam Bornstein
Al Richardson

A correction

Sheffield
22 February 1986

Dear Comrades,

In the article 'Workers Power and Pabloism' in *Workers Hammer* no 76 (February 1986) there is a factual correction which needs to be made around their supporter in BL. It is not true, as the article says, that he took voluntary redundancy halfway through the miners strike. It is true to say he left BL halfway through that strike, the biggest class battle seen in this country for a long time -- and after the Spartacist League had begun campaigning around the issue of scab coal in BL. Indeed when I raised the question of stopping scab coal going into Longbridge at miners strike support meetings in Birmingham, I was told by the WP supporter, Pete Leyden, that it was so small an issue it really didn't matter.

It's true it didn't matter to Workers Power, but it mattered quite a lot not only to us but to many other trade unionists, including miners from Birch Coppice and TGWU lorry drivers who picketed the plant after we brought this scab operation to their attention. It is no wonder their supporter quit in the middle of the miners strike. With politics like that, he's better off outside the plant. The working class needs class-struggle leadership, not those who turn away from struggle. The Spartacist League fought in every way we could to stop scab coal going into BL, as part of our perspective of spreading the miners strike, and as a matter of elementary trade-union solidarity. The heartwarming support for my defence from miners, transport workers and car workers after BL sacked me speaks to the significance with which militants viewed the scab operation in BL. We did not run away.

Comradely,
Patrick Sliney

Lesbian & Gay Youth

Lesbian & Gay Youth Movement
24 January

Dear Comrades,

Thanks for your letter (19th Jan.) Yes, we'd very much welcome the idea of an exchange subscription between 'Women & Revolution' and 'Lesbian & Gay Youth Magazine'. We'll add you to our UK mailing list -- please continue to send us 'W & R' as it appears -- thanks!

We thought 'AIDS and the "Mortal Sin" Scam' was a particularly good article, and deserved reprinting (even if in a necessarily shortened form -- we think we picked the best bits!!). And 'Workers Hammer' remains one of the few papers on the left willing to defend attacks on ped's & young people's sexuality. From reading papers of certain other groups, you wouldn't think they had any sexual politics!

Keep up the good work,
Yours in revolution,
David
(For LGYM Working Group)

Just Out!

Women and Revolution

On Black Women in South Africa

Smash Apartheid!
For Workers Revolution!

See Page 12

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French elections: Mitterrand paves way for rightist reaction

PARIS -- The campaign for the upcoming 16 March legislative elections has focussed almost exclusively on what happens after a right-wing victory at the polls. After five years of pro-capitalist austerity and 'modernisation' policies under 'socialist' president Francois Mitterrand, the Socialist (SP) and Communist (CP) parties are expected to obtain a minority of the votes, possibly provoking a major political and constitutional crisis. Despite a consensus between the SP and bourgeois rightists in support of capitalist austerity, anti-immigrant repression, a neo-colonialist and anti-Soviet foreign policy, and modernisation of the military and the nuclear arsenal, it is not certain that Mitterrand will be able to coexist with a right-wing parliamentary majority.

Under the Fifth Republic constitution fashioned by and for General De Gaulle, the 'strong' presidency is armed with semi-bonapartist powers to override parliamentary majorities. So instead of the continual cabinet reshuffling of the postwar Fourth Republic, the stage is set for a sharp clash of powers when president and parliament are opposed. At present, two of the three principal leaders of the right (the neo-Gaullist Chirac and former president Giscard D'Estaing) have declared their willingness to 'cohabit' with the pro-NATO 'socialist' in the Elysee Palace -- but on their terms, not his. Mitterrand, in turn, has said he would rather resign as president than not exercise his power as head of state. But if he tries to exercise that power against a right-wing parliamentary majority, the bourgeoisie will likely move to bring Mitterrand down.

are ravaging France. The parliamentary fuse-box may well short-circuit as a result of the tensions which have accumulated during Mitterrand's reign. There is a danger of a rightist mobilisation in which the fascists would act as shock troops. The Ligue Trotskyiste de France (LTF), section of the international Spartacist tendency, says to class-conscious workers: No vote to the SP/CP parties of the popular front which has paved the way for



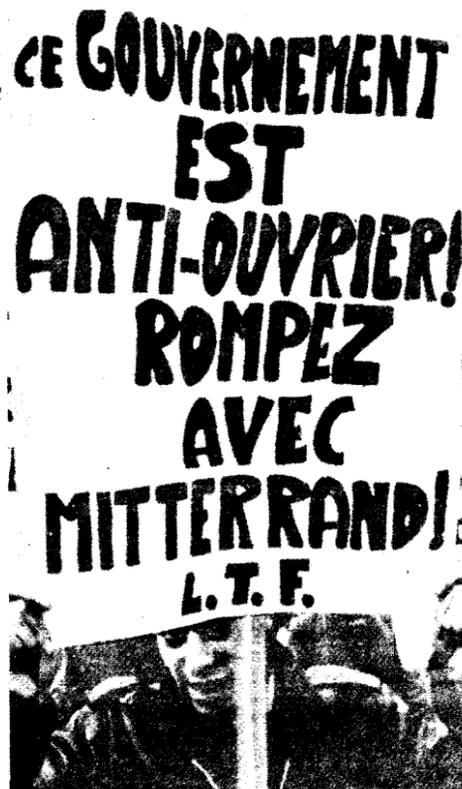
Anti-Soviet Mitterrand with then-popular front partner, PCF leader Georges Marchais.

rightist reaction on the march! The workers movement must be prepared to smash the fascist threat in the factories and in the streets.

The regime which took power in 1981 was a class-collaborationist coalition between the reformist SP and CP and elements of the bourgeoisie. Mitterrand had already obtained the neutrality of Chirac's Gaullist party on the basis of virulent anti-Sovietism and a more

LTF placard reads: 'This government is anti-working class! Break with Mitterrand! France needs a workers government.'

Sygnia photos



nationalistic economic policy. Once in office, he tried to assuage his bourgeois bloc partners, appointing a cabinet of technocrats with a programme of 'modernising' the French economy. And after the failure of its attempts to institute 'Keynesianism in one country', this 'left government' carried out an anti-working class austerity policy (*rigueur*) even more ferocious than those of its rightist predecessors. Asked about the 500,000 jobs slashed, Prime Minister Fabius remarked, 'it fell to us to do the "dirty work".'

Mitterrand swore fealty to the officer corps, unleashing the army in a neo-colonial war in Chad. He spent millions to 'upgrade' the French *force de frappe* nuclear weapons while his gung-ho war minister gave the thugs of the DGSE the green light for state terror against the Greenpeace pacifists. And while politely differing with Ronald Reagan over distant subjects like Nicaragua, Mitterrand was point man for the anti-Soviet war drive in Europe. At home he bowed before Catholic reaction over the issue of private schools. And this 'socialist' government unleashed the wave of chauvinism against immigrants, ordering the deportation of 'illegal aliens' and trying to force unemployed North Africans to 'return' to countries they hardly knew after decades doing the hardest jobs in France.

The time has come to draw the lessons of five years of this 'dirty work', and the principal lesson is that it was the 'left government' itself that has prepared the way for the rise of the right. One doesn't have to look to the Spanish Civil War or Allende's Unidad Popular in Chile in 1973, to see that the popular front has meant workers' blood. In France during the 1930s, Leon Blum didn't hesitate to send his cops to shoot down workers at Clichy, and the downfall of that People's Front led straight to Petain's 'New Order'. After the war, 'Communist' and 'Socialist' ministers in the Gaullist regime approved the breaking of strikes and drowning independence revolts in blood in Vietnam and Algeria.

In 1981, the LTF was unique in refusing to vote for this cold war 'socialist'. While Alain Krivine's fake-Trotskyist LCR called to 'Vote Mitterrand to chase out Giscard' and Pierre Lambert's Stalinophobic OCI/PCI pro-

claimed 'April 26: Vote Mitterrand', the LTF headlined: 'No to the NATO Popular Front!' (*Le Bolchevik* no 26, June 1981). When CP ministers crawled into the cabinet, shamefully capitulating before Mitterrand's anti-Sovietism, the LTF published a special supplement, 'We Trotskyists Defend the USSR!' Like his popular-front predecessors, we said, Mitterrand's election was *no victory for the working class*, as it soon showed in office.

In the last half-decade, dozens of militant strikes -- from Talbot and Renault in auto to the steel industry and the shipyards -- have been crushed by Mitterrand's riot police or derailed by the trade-union bureaucracy, in particular the CP-controlled CGT federation, into the dead-end of 'pressuring' the government. We are now seeing racist terror on a scale unequalled since the Algerian war. The sole beneficiary is the sinister Le Pen, whose army of fascist thugs has swelled in proportion to the despair of all layers of the population, while Mitterrand has made racial exclusion and savage anti-Communism 'respectable'.

But although disoriented and weakened by five years of betrayal and the gutting of whole sections of industry, the proletariat, including its combative immigrant layers, is far from defeated. Throughout the country, in factory after factory, and sometimes shop by shop, defensive strikes have broken out -- often brief unofficial walkouts, but frequently with 100 percent participation, transcending trade-union divisions. Recent strikes of powerworkers, railwaymen and Paris underground workers have shown that the working class is ready to use its power to stop production in order to beat back the bosses' offensive. But with more than 3 million unemployed and millions more youth trapped in 'make-work' schemes, routine trade-union struggle and apolitical protests can go nowhere.

Militancy is not enough -- to answer the political crisis, the workers' struggles must have a political perspective: the struggle for a workers government, the expropriation of the bourgeois class by the dictatorship of the proletariat and the socialist reconstruction of society, not under the French tricolour but under the red flag of a socialist united

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Exchange...

(Continued from page 2)

emerge and re-emerge and form what social and ethnic structures they find the most beneficial or desirable.

Without any anti-Americanism in me, I suspect this whole 'British state perspective' originates on the other side of the Atlantic where people frequently believe 'Britain' to be 'A Nation' which of course it isn't. 'Britain' and 'The U.K.' is a state, but not a nation, it is comprised of the ruling classes of the old nations united under the new title 'Britain'. The Irish, English, Scottish and Welsh nations are not dissolved because the ruling class formed a new alliance, and there is no reason why we, the people should take up the standard of that ruling class state, after the ruling class has fallen.

I must admit that I've never seen any appeal by Sinn Fein to the SDLP for a 'united front'. You will know that their respective political outlooks and social compositions are deadly opposed one to each other.

On the face of it -- the Loyalist reaction



John Voos

Unionist demonstration against Hillsborough Accord. Protestant workers must be broken from Orange reaction.

is hard to understand when talking of their outrage to the Hillsborough accord, since it seems to guarantee them the continuation of their dictatorial 'veto'. It gets the 26 counties to alter its own constitution and concede six Northern counties (out of 9) to the Loyalists. It grants and agrees with oppression of Republican forces in the South -- and ultimately concedes the same right of veto to the Loyalists as 'Britain' gives them. So it is surprising they are screaming like pigs with their throats cut -- when it is their Northern Republican foe who have in fact had the dirty deed done to them.

Your editorial once more raises the disreputable and despised 'two nation' theory previously only advocated by Maoists from the nutty 'Irish Communist Organisation' or the very pinnacle of 26 county bourgeois opinion, Dr Conor Cruise O'Brien.

Neither the Protestants nor the Catholics constitute 'a nation', but the Irish of both religions do, that is the nation of Ireland. The division is one between those who favour British imperialist domination of Ireland, and those who favour the right of that nation, North and South, Catholic and Protestant to govern itself.

The struggle for a socialist 32 county republic is an aspect of the class war in Ireland. That war is being conducted under the flags of Sinn Fein, though it is not inconceivable the workers at one stage may choose the plain red flag in a struggle for direct power. In neither case does the Loyalist glorification of the butcher's apron and kissing the boot of the British crown constitute some noble struggle for 'rights' or embattled interests of their own class. The question of partition is the acid test for all political organisations and self declared 'leaders' of the Irish working class. Nobody who stands for its continuation has the slightest credibility as a socialist. Sinn Fein's programme can already be called socialist since it stands for the destruction of capitalism and imperialism in Ireland, for a workers government, for the separation of church and state, for non-entry into N.A.T.O., for withdrawal from the E.E.C. and for the protection of the civil

and religious rights of the Northern Protestants (who are also Celtic people and not 'English' as you imply).

For the defeat of British imperialism everywhere in the world.

For the destruction of capitalist Britain.

For the end to the United Kingdom and the state of 'Great Britain'.

For workers power world wide.

Faithfully,

David Douglass,

Yorks Area E.C. NUM in a personal capacity.

Workers Hammer replies What Dave Douglass rejects in our article 'No to NATO's Ireland deal' (*Workers Hammer* no 75, January 1986) is our proletarian internationalist perspective. Douglass counterposes to our Leninist perspective on the national question a conception which implicitly divides the world into 'good' and 'bad' peoples. He particularly objects to the call for a 'socialist federation of the British Isles'. Instead he seeks a solution within the 32 counties of Ireland, under the leadership of Sinn Fein, which is not socialist but nationalist, and for whom the re-unification of Ireland is the alpha and omega.

In Ireland as elsewhere we intransigently oppose every manifestation of national oppression. In Northern Ireland this means opposing every aspect of the all-sided oppression of the Catholic population. We fought intransigently for the release of the Republican hunger strikers murdered by Thatcher, and continued to fight for 'Troops Out Now' at the time when Sinn Fein (and its fake-left supporters) deemed it unpopular. But we oppose the call for 'self-determination of the Irish people' since this denies the existence of a distinct Protestant community. Douglass is willing to present a host of groupings -- Geordies and Yorkshiremen -- as though they were or might become contemporary nations. Of course not the Protestants of Northern Ireland. But whether he likes it or not, they are a force to be reckoned with. We reject his implicit assumption that there are 'good' and 'bad' nations and peoples, and see no reason to believe Sinn Fein's 'United Ireland' would be any more magnanimous to a Protestant minority than the Orange statelet is toward the Catholic population.

Contrary to Douglass, the roots of the present crisis do go back to the centuries of domination and exploitation of the island by the British ruling class. It is Douglass not the SL who conflates modern Green nationalism with the Republican sentiments which inspired the 1798 United Irishmen uprising. Protestants such as Theobald Wolfe Tone were inspired by the French and American Revolutions. The rising posed the opportunity for a unitary capitalist state undivided by sectarian strife; its defeat put an end to an effective opportunity for a progressive bourgeois solution to the national question in Ireland.

An important opportunity for united working class action came with the rise of the trade union movement in Ireland. For example, James Larkin in 1907 was able to unite Catholic and Protestant workers in Belfast only to be betrayed by the British trade union bureaucracy, as was the Dublin lockout of 1913-1914. There followed the defeat of the Easter Rising in 1916 and the murder of Connolly, an authoritative working class leader. And in 1919, Catholic and Protestant workers united in the great Belfast engineering strikes. The sellout by the union bureaucracy with the connivance of the Catholic nationalist leadership led to 12,000 Catholics and 3000 Protestant militants losing their jobs. In the absence of a revolutionary leadership the defeat of the engineering workers and subsequent pogroms paved the way for partition by the British. As a result of the 1920 War of Independence and the civil war which followed 11,000 Catholics lost their jobs and 23,000 were driven from their homes: Ulster was thus partitioned to ensure the dominance of the Protestants and the communal divide was consolidated. Prior to the reactionary partition, as communists we would have fought against it. But it has now been a fact for over 60 years.

It is hardly surprising that Douglass finds Loyalist reaction to the Anglo/Irish Accord hard to understand, since he does not see them as a distinct community, but simply as a backward section of the Irish Catholic nation. Northern Ireland today is a net drain on the British economy. But Thatcher/Reagan have military strategic designs on the whole island, as an anti-Soviet missile base. So in fact the possibility of a reactionary reunification of Ireland is posed, albeit distantly. And the Protestants are up in arms.

We do not describe the Protestant community

as a nation (though we recognise that they could become one in the midst of a major social upheaval). We can readily understand why the Ulster Protestants would not want to be part of the clericalist state to the South. What is so disgusting about the British and Irish Communist Organisation is not their 'two nations' theory, which is wrong, but their pro-British imperialist conclusions. They attempted to braintrust the reactionary Orange strike of 1977. As Douglass well knows, we stand in total opposition to the B&ICO's reactionary position of support to the imperialist occupation of the North which means implicit support to the oppression of the Catholics; we say: British troops out now! Smash the RUC and UDR!

In fact, Douglass' own tailing of Green nationalism leads him to describe Sinn Fein as 'socialist'. Like most nationalists today, Sinn Fein is capable of spouting 'socialist' rhetoric to gain sympathy in the working class. But not only do they oppose abortion in practice (and the woman question is an acid test for communists), they also commit criminal civilian killings, as well as opposing the overthrow of the Southern regime by force of arms. Only two years ago *An Phoblacht* came out with the statement: 'Britain can be beaten when the Free State premier, the SDLP leader and the Catholic hierarchy are forced to apply their muscle instead of playing at it' (cited in *Spartacist Britain* no 54, February 1984). How more an explicit statement of bourgeois nationalism can you get! We stand for separation of Church and State! For free abortion on demand! So it comes as no surprise to us that consistent with its nationalist perspective, Sinn Fein did indeed pose an election block with the SDLP in the recent Ulster bye-elections. It was the SDLP who said no.

A capitalist programme like that of Sinn Fein necessarily seeks to redress the discrimination against Catholics within a dog-eat-dog fight for the existing houses and jobs. Revolutionaries struggle for good quality housing and jobs for all; for worksharing on full pay, for a sliding scale of wages and hours -- as part of the struggle for a revolutionary mobilisation.

A socialist federation of the British Isles is hardly the old English dominated UK with a red flag! In fact Douglass was present at an SL meeting in 1983 where the speaker described it as a federation under which 'the Protestants of Northern Ireland will get a decent deal just the same as everyone else -- the Scots, the Irish, the Welsh, and even the English'. Proletarian internationalism undercuts nationalism. Douglass falsely implies



No credit

James Larkin, Irish working class leader, fought to unite Catholic and Protestant workers in struggle against common class enemy.

that we deny the right of self-determination to the Celtic nations. We would point him to our article 'Sassenach Temperance League' (*Spartacist Britain* no 28, December/January 1981) where we posed hypothetically the prospect of a 'Scottish workers republic as part of the USSR', noting that if the Scottish workers sought separation in the course of class struggle they could do worse than make an alliance with the Soviet Union. Not surprisingly 'Little England' centrists like Alan Thornett went crazy. No doubt the Sassenach Workers Power group would agree with Thornett on this one.

There have been many important opportunities for united class struggle since the partition. What was lacking was a communist leadership. Lenin and the Bolsheviks succeeded in welding a mosaic of nationalities together on the basis of a revolutionary programme. That is the programme Ireland needs. ■

Some notes on life in the South

Editor's note: We reprint below some observations, in edited form, by an Irish comrade who recently spent several weeks in Dublin.

The Irish are supposed to be a happy-go-lucky lot. Well, if that were ever true it is indeed wearing very thin nowadays. A trip down any one of the main streets of Dublin and you are bound to come across many a child going shoe-less or a mother with baby at her breast begging for a few coppers. In most cases they are Irish 'travellers' (gypsies) cast out by the rest of Irish society because they don't conform to 'society's ways'.

It is a country, at the moment, with the worst unemployment in Europe, and for those working, some of the lowest incomes in Europe. On top of this Ireland has the fastest growing youth population in Europe, who are the most affected by the present situation. In a recent poll Ireland came out on top as the most religious nation in Europe, with the most confidence in god. Of those polled, it turned out at least a third among the under-25 group did not look to church or god for help in dealing with everyday life. This is interesting given that these are the people most affected by unemployment.

In 1974 the unemployment rate in Ireland numbered 60,000 people; in 1984 it had increased up to 230,000, which means that one in six of the labour force is without a job, and that is leaving aside the people who are not registered -- like women, for instance. On top of all this the government is up to its eyes in debt: the combined foreign and domestic totals a grand IR£16,750 million, which has increased since this government came to power. It has based itself on a similar programme to Thatcher's except in this case it included the Irish Labour Party in coalition with Fine Gael.

The old ways for the capitalist class of getting rid of their unemployed is very much closed to them. The emigration ship is not so full these days. The US and Australia are not open unless you are highly skilled. As for England, well, they can come but most know it offers very little, even if they manage to find a job. Ireland's best export has always been its own people. Well, not now. In fact unemployment in Britain is sending many Irish emigrants back to live in rural Ireland. Out of this situation which the Free State government has not faced before could grow a general social crisis.

In this present climate the political parties in the South are all over the map, and among the working class and the youth there is a thirst for something new. Under the present government the working class have suffered massive increases in taxation, up to 40 per cent of a skilled man's wages can go in tax in a week. The Labour Party which is part of this government has become totally discredited in the eyes of most workers and indeed its organisation is now falling apart in most parts of the country, in the cities in particular. The organisation which looks to have gained from this is the Workers Party (Officials), but

since they got two of their leading members elected to the Dail (Parliament) they are not looking so rosy. Poor old Connolly would turn in his quicklime grave!

The other party on offer is Fianna Fail, who offers up the same old Republican crap to the workers but of course has no answers to the mass unemployment and is itself divided on how to deal with this deepening crisis for Irish capitalism. There have been divisions in this party over the Anglo-Irish agreement



Derek Speirs (Report)

Clerical reactionaries in the South demonstrate against women's rights.

which have led to splits and at least one expulsion of a leading figure, who has now set up his own party called the Progressive Democrats. There has also been talk of Fianna Fail and Fine Gael forming a joint party, given the ruling class has to face more pressing problems than which side each party took in the civil war. Nothing has come of this as yet. But the signing of the Anglo-Irish agreement, which is a real break from the past in its recognition of Northern Ireland, now allows the South to play its role in NATO behind the cover of discussing the North, and in doing so get a little help with some funds from yours truly in Washington.

The other growing political force in the South is the Provos (Sinn Fein), which a year or two ago were in real terms quite small. A year ago, you could pick up a copy of *An Phoblacht* (Republican News) in O'Connell

Street, Dublin's main street, only from their own paper sellers. Now you can buy it from the ordinary paper sellers who line O'Connell Street, where it is very well-displayed. Also there are now more military-style funerals in the South, mainly in working-class suburbs where the Provos are now very active. They are recruiting in the South not on the question of the North, as that will not put bread and butter on the table, but more on 'local issues'. To give an example of their idea of 'local issues', they recently organised vigilante squads in Dublin slums to fight 'drug trafficking'.

They talk about 'socialism' albeit Republican. At their last Ard Fheis (conference) they had a big turnout, mainly of young people with a large proportion of them being women. At this same conference their membership overturned a motion from the leadership against abortion in favour of the right of a woman to choose; and on another motion from the leadership the conference voted against crossing picket lines recognised by a union. This compared to their Ard Fheis during the miners strike, which said it was alright to cross picket lines, shows that Gerry Adams is smart in trying to recruit workers in the South. The one hornet's nest they do not want to contend with is the church. That is why the question of abortion and women's rights are not touched upon in their campaigns. It was the women of the old IRA as well who were the most left-wing of their time. So they are growing, with mostly youth attracted to them, but with increasing support in the working class. Indeed in a recent issue of their *Finglas News* newsletter, the main article is headed 'Republican Socialism' and ends with a quote from Jim Larkin: 'The great only appear great because we are on our knees, let us arise.' It reminds me of the Workers Party when they started out on the rocky road to the Dail.

If the political situation is undergoing a bit of rejigging at the moment the one organisation which remains stable is the all-engulfing church. It has been able to go on the offensive against contraceptives, against abortion rights -- even though Irish women are some of the best customers for the clinics in England -- and of course the pulpits are still used against strikes. At the end of last year there was a massive outpouring of people to various parts of Ireland to view 'moving' statues of 'the most sacred blessed Virgin'. In the present climate the church offers a reactionary port in a storm in this poor country. There were jokes going around about this, like: 'Why are the lights turned on in the churches at night? So the statues won't bump into each other.' Joking aside, people really believe this stuff.

The other side of the coin is the number of strikes which took place last year against the government, though well-controlled and channelled by the Irish TUC. There were at least two national one-day or two-day strikes. Where this will lead of course is very much a question of building a revolutionary party. ■

Loyalist...

(Continued from page 1)

ist mobs, who then set the factory on fire. Defend Catholic communities! Defend the IRA against the RUC/British army! Smash Orange terror!

And the Orange gangs are proceeding with their plans to escalate their terror. On Easter Monday, the Ulster Protestant Apprentice Boys threaten to goose-step through the large Catholic-minority areas of Portadown. Their chief is one John Reid, a member of the sinister 40-strong Ulster Workers Committee based on all those sectors in heavy industry from which Catholics were systematically purged in the early decades of this century. 'Portadown will make or break for the Loyalists', he threatens, 'when the drums beat and the flutes play, the blood rises'.

In the immediate aftermath of Thatcher/FitzGerald's Hillsborough accord, we warned that this NATO deal, ultimately aimed at enhancing the anti-Soviet war drive, means more imperialist terror and communalist fratricide for Northern Ireland:

'The key to breaking the cycle of imperialist terror and communalist fratricide in Northern Ireland is united class struggle of the Catholic and Protestant workers against all their exploiters and oppressors -- British imperialism as well as the Orange and Green bourgeoisies.' (*Workers Hammer* no 75, January 1986)

The miners strike gave a taste of that desperately needed class unity in struggle against the common capitalist enemy. At a miners support demonstration in Ayr, Scotland, in 1984, for example, Protestant members of the Irish TGWU from Belfast (some even sporting 'William of Orange' tattoos) carried a banner bearing a portrait of James Connolly!

Triggered and led by the Orange bourgeoisie, the 3 March reactionary political strike nevertheless demonstrated the social power of the proletariat -- as did the 1974 Ulster Workers Council strike against the Sunningdale agreement. Today these Protestant workers, from Larne's docks to East Belfast's shopfloors, provide cannon fodder for Paisleyite reaction, which exploits their genuine fear of the prospect of life under Republican clericalism to foment anti-Catholic bigotry. Protestant workers can and must be broken from the political stranglehold of the

Orange bourgeoisie, cemented by their pathetic privileges', over the doubly oppressed and exploited Catholic workers.

There can be only one progressive solution to the conflicting communal claims of the Ulster Protestant community and the Irish Catholic national minority -- socialist revolution against British imperialism and the Orange and Green bourgeoisies. This is the programme of the Spartacist League, which seeks to galvanise the working class on both sides of the communal divide in common struggle for an Irish workers republic within a socialist federation of the British Isles. British troops out now! Defend Catholic areas against Orange terror! For programmatically based anti-sectarian workers militias to fight imperialist rampage and Orange and Green terror! No to forcible reunification! No to the Hillsborough accord, NATO's deal for Ireland! Not Orange against Green but class against class! ■

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Anti-Soviet lash-up in the works?

WRP at the crossroads

The implosion of Healyism was one of the most dramatic reflections of the political impact of the miners strike on the bankrupt perspectives of the British fake left, becoming a lightning rod for the political turmoil in the ostensibly Trotskyist groups. The Banda/Slaughter-led Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) -- one of three currently extant -- has since the split with Healy been courted by a host of centrist and reformist suitors: Sean Matgamna's Socialist Organiser, Alan Thornett's Socialist Viewpoint, Workers Power, the Socialist Labour Group of Pierre Lambert's OCI/PCI in France. Speaking at the last of a series of classes on Marx's *Capital* in London on 7 March, WRP cadre Cyril Smith said, 'There is a regroupment taking place.'

The question is: what sort of regroupment? A revolutionary regroupment forging the nucleus of a Trotskyist party is very much on the order in this country today. But what the aforementioned lot have in mind is an anti-Soviet lash-up which could only serve as an obstacle to building a Trotskyist party. For all their quibbling 'tactical' and cliquish differences, what unites Thornett, Matgamna and Co is a strident Stalinophobia which on key issues of the international Cold War finds them lined up behind their own bourgeoisie and its Labour lieutenants. Not coincidentally, they are all either buried in or orbiting about the Labour Party and hate the Bolshevik Spartacist League with a vengeance.

Since October 1917, social democracy and all who tail it have been defined by their fundamental hostility to the first workers revolution. As James P Cannon, Trotsky's central collaborator in the decisive 1939-40 struggle to defend the principles of the Fourth International against the Soviet-defeatist Burnham/Shachtman faction, said:

'The question of the Russian revolution -- and the Soviet state which is its creation -- has drawn a sharp dividing line through the labor movement of all countries for 22 years. The attitude taken toward the Soviet Union throughout all these years has been the decisive criterion separating the genuine revolutionary tendency from all shades and degrees of waverers, backsliders and capitulators to the pressure of the bourgeois world -- the Mensheviks, Social Democrats, Anarchists and Syndicalists, Centrists, Stalinists....
'... That, I repeat, is because it is nothing less than the question of the revolution at various stages of its progressive development or degeneration. We are, in fact, the party of the Russian revolution.' ('Speech on the Russian Question', *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party*).

At the altar of Cold War Labourism

Today the international Spartacist tendency can likewise proclaim: We are the party of the Russian Revolution! Throughout our twenty-plus years as an independent tendency, we have fought to build a democratic-centralist international committed to the re-forging of the Fourth International on its original programmatic foundations. Our perspective of revolutionary regroupment through a process of splits and fusions has been vindicated on varying national terrains -- with left-moving elements from Pabloism, Stalinism, feminism, black nationalism and other formations.

Indeed with typical centrist hypocrisy, Workers Power in its dense, eight-page 'Open Letter' to the WRP offers up a bastardised version of the regroupment perspective we have argued for over the years, minus 'merely' the programmatic content. Where we have emphasised the wide programmatic gulf which exists -- particularly on the Russian question -- in our discussions with WRP comrades, Workers Power jumps in with a proposal for fusion (on a



Scargill, the WRP and Solidarity

Scargill's letter
Dear Mr Banda,
I am in receipt of your letter dated 17 July 1983 and have already read the open letter I signed in the News Line. There is no ambiguity about my position in solidarity with Poland, at the same time as I am opposed to Solidarity because I believe it is an anti-socialist organisation which serves the interests of a socialist state.
I do not and never have supported practices which are against human rights either in Poland or the Soviet Union.



Michael Banda replies
(General Secretary of the Workers Revolutionary Party)

Dear Mr Scargill,
I have read your letter and am glad to hear that you are in receipt of the open letter I signed in the News Line. There is no ambiguity about my position in solidarity with Poland, at the same time as I am opposed to Solidarity because I believe it is an anti-socialist organisation which serves the interests of a socialist state.
I do not and never have supported practices which are against human rights either in Poland or the Soviet Union.

Every time I read your letter, I am reminded of the fact that you are a member of the Workers Revolutionary Party. I am sure that you are aware of the fact that the Workers Revolutionary Party is a party of the working class and that it is committed to the struggle for socialism. I am sure that you are aware of the fact that the Workers Revolutionary Party is a party of the working class and that it is committed to the struggle for socialism.



Healy's *News Line* set up Arthur Scargill for witchhunting barrage in Tory press. Where do Banda/Slaughter stand on 'Scargill, the WRP and Solidarity' now?

two-month timetable, no less). And this comes from an outfit which sneers at everything positive in the Healyites' history, like the International Committee's struggle against Pabloite revisionism in the 1950s or the 1961 'World Prospect for Socialism' document.
Our opportunist opponents despise us for our 'sectarian' insistence on the primacy of programme; and they deem it downright 'unnatural' that our principled approach actually works! Going through the nuances between various Labour-cretinist groups in voluminous detail, WP tries to dismiss the Spartacist League in a couple of sentences, claiming:

'We will waste few words here on this degenerate and sectarian grouping... Suffice to say that this organisation broke with any semblance of Trotskyism when in 1981 it called for the crushing of Solidarnosc by Soviet tanks. It is a stalinophile cult.'
They forget to add that we also eat first-born Christian babies for breakfast! Nonetheless it slips out that Thornett's WSL lost 'two splits to the Spartacists' and that we engage in 'provocative manoeuvres' with opportunist groups -- ie establishing principled relations with oppositions where there is programmatic agreement (doubtless a reference to a founding WP cadre won to the Spartacist League). Of course WP hate our stand in defence of the Polish deformed workers state against a movement even WP acknowledged to be capitalist-restorationist. (Lately Solidarnosc has even come out for the creation of a stock market!) Notably the 'Open Letter's' one grudging concession to the Trotskyist obligation to 'unconditionally defend all the workers' states against attacks from imperialism' stops short of any reference to *internal* counterrevolution. The Trotskyist perspective of proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracies is necessarily premised on being the best, most consistent fighters against any counterrevolutionary danger.

Over the years these outfits have engaged in a series of incestuous opportunist marriages, each more rightist than the last. In 1975 WP fused with Matgamna -- when the former was still openly state-capitalist and the latter nominally Soviet-defencist, a difference they dismissed as a 'tenth-rate question' -- to break apart a year later. In the 'Open Letter' WP whines that Thornett rejected its entreaties in 1979 only to carry through 'an unprincipled fusion with the rapidly rightwards moving Matgamna' (they should know!). At the time of the Thornett/Matgamna alliance -- which lasted all of two years -- we dubbed it 'a fusion fixed on the terrain of the Cold War and formalised at the altar of the social-democratic "broad church"'. As they continue



April 1966 London International Committee conference: Mike Banda and Cliff Slaughter standing, Gerry Healy seated second from left.

their game of musical chairs, these groups succeed only in plunging deeper into the cesspit of Cold War Labourism.

Alan Thornett: a wretched scab

And that is now the trajectory of the Banda/Slaughter WRP. As the saying goes, 'Tell me who your friends are, and I'll tell you who you are.' Having finally drawn some conclusions about Healy and Healyism parallel to ones we argued twenty years ago, Banda/Slaughter now try to treat us like unwelcome ghosts. Instead they solidarise with the likes of Thornett. When a Spartacist supporter denounced Thornett as a scab at a 5 March WRP meeting in Leeds, Cliff Slaughter labelled it a 'lie' and denied Thornett had scabbed.

As Trotsky observed, centrists abhor calling things by their right name. Yes, working during a national strike is scabbing (see *Spartacist Britain* no 15, October 1979). Faced with a right-wing backlash at his BL Cowley factory in response to the AUEW's national one- and two-day strike calls in 1979, Thornett caved in rather than put his union position at risk in an election. He then went around campaigning among other union officials at Cowley, including senior steward Bob Fryer, to talk them out of setting up a picket line and to join the scab elements instead. As Thornett's *Socialist Press* (5 September 1979) put it ever so politely, at the time, 'The decision to pull back [from striking and picketing] once the action was lost and not hand over to the right wing was a difficult one'. Even as wretched a Stalinist labour traitor as Derek Robinson at BL Longbridge put to shame this self-styled 'Trotskyist workers' leader', when he faced down a similar scab backlash and organised a picket line which stopped the scabs. Within the WSL, Thornett's scabbing was opposed by leading cadre, who subsequently formed the Leninist Faction.

Thornett's evolution should be a sober warning to WRP members today. He too broke from Healy's lunacies. Our initial appraisal of the Thornett split was that it was to the right, based on Thornett's opposition to the WRP standing candidates in the 1974 election against the Labour Party. (In fact we extended critical support to the WRP candidates.) Thornett's rightist trajectory was soon confirmed. In its early period the WSL attracted numerous leftward-moving elements. But Thornett shunned the struggle for programme, moving progressively deeper into the embrace of Labourism. In two waves, first with the Trotskyist Faction and then the Leninist Faction, those within the WSL seeking Trotskyist politics were won to regroupment with the Spartacist League, leaving Thornett and the WSL traumatised shells. Meanwhile Thornett's fake 'mass' Campaign for Democracy in the Labour Movement, itself a second-rate version of Healy's All Trades Unions Alliance (ATUA), became increasingly apolitical and economist, necessarily adapting to the Labour 'left'. Finally through the vehicle of his fusion with Matgama, Thornett and his rump of a group took the dive holus-bolus into the Labour Party.

Spartacist spokesman. After the meeting ATUA spokesman Peter Gibson boasted to our comrades how his TGWU branch had 'congratulated' Ron Todd on his stand on the print strike! And when the WRP does take up the Labour traitors in *Workers Press*, it is always careful to restrict its attacks to the right wing, amnestying and at times applauding the 'lefts'. The 29 February (sic) *Workers Press* hails Scargill for 'principled leadership', 'a leadership that would not compromise'. This 'make the lefts fight' line is the classic recipe for Labour liquidationism: it is the 'lefts', particularly now with the memory of Kinnock's scabberding on the miners still

alist furore over the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan was the trigger for Cold War II, escalating anti-Soviet war preparations. As such it was an acid test for the left. And without exception every fake-Trotskyist group landed on the side of pro-imperialist anti-Sovietism. Thornett's *Socialist Press* (5 March 1980) hailed 'Mass resistance to Soviet invaders', even as it confessed that the 'mass resistance' was 'animated by profoundly reactionary Islamic ideas'. Matgama was so virulently anti-Soviet that he even attacked Thatcher from the right, for refusing to implement Reagan's anti-Soviet oil pipeline boycott in 1982. The SLG's French brain-



Reagan with Afghan 'freedom fighter' (left), Afghan woman soldier (right). We say: Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!

vidid, that are the transmission belt for restoring credibility in Labour among the masses. For all their innumerable 'tactical' differences, none of the fake Trotskyists accepts the need to *split* the Labour Party, breaking its working-class base away from the pro-capitalist reformists of 'left' and right persuasions. They prostitute the Leninist tactic of critical electoral support aimed at exposing the Labour misleaders into a perspective of strategic support 'against the Tories' at all times, prolonging rather than destroying the illusions of the workers in Labour. Thus, all of them, the WRP included, called for a vote to Callaghan in 1979 when he stood on the record of the Lib-Lab pact and the Social Contract.

Afghanistan: an acid test

When the WRP does attack 'lefts' like Scargill it is from the right. At the same Leeds meeting where Slaughter defended Thornett's scabbing, he studiously avoided any reply to our attack on the WRP's own scabby role in setting up Arthur Scargill for a right-wing witchhunt at the 1983 Blackpool TUC. With its carefully timed 'expose' of Scargill's correct opposition to Polish Solidarnosc as 'anti-socialist', the WRP provided grist for the

trustees not only support the feudalist Islamic rebels but have gone so far in the direction of 'CIA socialism' that they are on the CIA tit via their functionaries in the Cold War Force Ouvriere union federation (see *Workers Hammer* no 75, January 1986). Workers Power chose the occasion of Afghanistan to adopt a formally defencist stance towards the Soviet Union, but nonetheless stood with the mob in condemning the Soviet intervention.

And the WRP? An article entitled 'The Kremlin's counter-revolution in Afghanistan' in the June 1985 *Labour Review* denounced the Soviet intervention in the bloodcurdling language of Murdoch's *Sun*: 'the Kremlin generals have committed the Soviet forces to the perpetration of horrific brutalities disguised with the fiction of "international socialism"'. Even as it describes a feudalist atrocity against Soviet and Afghan troops near Peshawar in Pakistan (a primary feudalist base) the article condemns 'the Kremlin for 'an act of aggression on foreign territory'. Not surprisingly there is only one passing reference in this entire anti-Communist tirade to the horrendously oppressed status of women in Afghanistan -- and none to the changes wrought by the Red Army intervention!

If Banda/Slaughter were seriously concerned about Healy's abominable attitude towards the woman question they would spend less time on endless bourgeois-moralist articles on 'revolutionary morality' and 'reexamine' their reactionary position on Afghanistan. But there has been not one word to date criticising the line in this article. For Trotskyists support to the Soviet army in Afghanistan should be an elementary political reflex. Trotsky/Cannon's struggle against the Burnham/Shachtman 'third camp' opposition was provoked by the imperialist campaign against the Soviet invasion of 'little, democratic Finland'. Drawing the hardest line against social-democratic anti-communism, Trotsky declared: 'The safeguarding of the socialist revolution comes before formal, democratic principles.'

And the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan has a far more progressive social content than Stalin's action in Finland in 1940, where the Kremlin simply wanted a slice of territory for defensive military purposes, moreover, in the context of an alliance with Nazi Germany. A victory for the Islamic-feudalist insurgency in Afghanistan would not only mean a hostile, imperialist-allied state on the USSR's southern border, but the reimposition of feudal barbarism -- directed centrally against women -- the veil, the bride price. The Soviet military occupation raises the possibility of a social revolution in this wretchedly backward country -- where mullahs outnumber industrial workers by almost ten-to-one -- a possibility which did not exist before.

continued on page 8



Alan Thornett at 1979 CDLM conference. Thornett's rightist trajectory took him to scabbing, Cold War Labourism.

Slaughter is no babe in the woods. He refuses to criticise Thornett because he is pushing the WRP in the same direction. Many WRP members protest that they have no desire to liquidate into the Labour Party. Well and good. But it is programme that counts. At a recent ATUA meeting in London WRP speakers assiduously avoided any reference to the Labour traitors until it was raised by a

mill of Fleet Street and vicious anti-Communists like Lord Chapple. Yet in all the many pages of recent 'reexamination' there has been not a word on this grotesque incident by Banda/Slaughter. This is because the WRP to this day sticks by its anti-Trotskyist support to counterrevolutionary Solidarnosc.

Likewise the WRP refuses to touch Healy's anti-Soviet stand on Afghanistan. The imperi-

WRP...

(Continued from page 7)

Instead, in the language of the imperialists, the WRP (and the rest of the fake-Trotskyist left) bemoans the infringement of the right of self-determination of Afghanistan and rails against Soviet 'foreign aggression'. Even over Finland and Poland, Trotsky insisted that the right of self-determination was subordinate to the defence of the Soviet Union; but the Afghan peoples do not even constitute a nation in any real sense of the term but a pre-bourgeois collection of tribal groupings. As for the Soviet army crossing 'foreign borders', this too is an old question. In his 'Speech on the Russian Question' Cannon argued against Burnham/Shachtman:

'The contention that we should change our analysis of the social character of the Soviet state and our attitude toward its defense because the Red Army violated the Polish border is even more absurd than to base such changes on the Hitler pact. The Polish invasion is only an incident in a war, and in wars borders are always violated.... The inviolability of borders -- all of which were established by war -- is interesting to democratic pacifists and to nobody else.'

In the Russo-Polish war of 1920, the question of a Soviet military conquest to aid and initiate a Polish workers revolution was purely a question of tactics and the relationship of forces, and nothing else. To be sure, there is a river of blood between the Red Army of Trotsky and the Red Army of Stalin/Gorbachev, but particularly in dealing with the question of the peoples of the East Trotsky noted:

'It is true that in the sphere of national policy, as in the sphere of economy, the Soviet bureaucracy still continues to carry out a certain part of the progressive work, although with immoderate overhead expenses. This is especially true of the backward nationalities of the Union, which must of necessity pass through a more or less prolonged period of borrowing, imitation and assimilation of what exists. The bureaucracy is laying down a bridge for them to the elementary benefits of bourgeois, and in part even pre-bourgeois, culture.' (*The Revolution Betrayed*)

In those sections of Afghanistan liberated by the Red Army, the women have had the opportunity to traverse not decades, but centuries -- afforded the right to literacy, to discard the veil, even to join the army where they are among the most ferocious fighters against the CIA's mercenary barbarians. And only a few short miles across the border is Soviet Central Asia, which offers a beacon to the oppressed women of the entire region. Only those completely blinded by imperialist anti-Sovietism could refuse to hail the Red Army intervention in Afghanistan from the standpoint of human progress and social justice. Yet that is the stand of the WRP and the rest of the fake Trotskyists.

What the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan emphasises, as the quote from Trotsky above makes clear, is the *contradictory* character of the Stalinist bureaucracy -- which the WRP claims to acknowledge but in practice repudiates. Both in its support to the reactionary forces against the Red Army in Afghanistan and in its support to Polish Solidarnosc the WRP and its fake-Trotskyist allies choose the side of outright bourgeois reaction against Stalinism -- and against the workers states. We say: Hail Red Army against Afghan reaction! Extend the social gains of October to the Afghan peoples!

Return to the road of Trotskyism

Had the Banda/Slaughter WRP undertaken a thorough repudiation of Healy's material subordination to a host of Middle Eastern sheiks and colonels, it should have led them to reconsider their reactionary line of support to the Afghan anti-Soviet rebels as well. Likewise it would have meant a repudiation of their stab in the back to Arthur Scargill on behalf of Thatcher/MacGregor and a questioning of their support to Solidarnosc which politically paved the way to it. None of this is taking place. Instead the WRP is backtracking across the board. In reply to a challenge by Sean Matgamna for the WRP to explicitly repudiate its prostitution to Libyan finance, the 'Comment' column in the 8 March *Workers Press* says, 'If any Libyan money did indeed reach the Workers Revolutionary Party or its press in the past, then I for one would have welcomed it.' If? Even the IC's Control Commission reports alleged receipt of well over a

million pounds from various Arab governments. The article goes on to virulently slander Matgamna for 'organising an anti-socialist campaign against the WRP'. This is crap! It was Matgamna who was taken to court by the WRP's Vanessa Redgrave for telling the simple truth. We offered him financial and other support at the time (which this unprincipled centrist refused).

The WRP has taken one step forward, only to proceed two steps backward. It has broken with Healyism, but not with Healy's sinister embrace of virtually every reactionary regime and movement on the borders of the Soviet Union. Now it is moving rapidly in the direction of mainstream Labour-loyal fake Trotskyism. It is virtually indistinguishable from the rest in its uncritical adulation of the Green nationalist IRA, even selling *An Phoblacht* on its literature tables. 'Reexamination' is not a neutral process, but an active struggle for programme. Comrades of the WRP, you stand at a political crossroads: one road leads to anti-Soviet social democracy, the other to the Trotskyism you professed more than twenty years ago. You must choose. ■

Mitterrand...

(Continued from page 3)

states of Europe. This requires the leadership of an authentically Bolshevik, Leninist-Trotskyist communist party which must be built on a programme of intransigent opposition to popular frontism in all its forms, struggle against racist terror and racial segregation, full citizenship rights for all foreign workers, unconditional military defence of the USSR and the deformed workers states against imperialism, immediate and unconditional independence for French colonies. This is the task that the LTF has set itself.

For class-conscious workers who have had enough of Mitterrand's now very unpopular front, there can be no question of voting for the candidates of the reformist parties who have organised this disaster -- including the CP. Georges Marchais' party now seeks to cover its tracks with a campaign presenting itself as the defender of the working class against reaction and the government's policies, while in fact preparing yet another class-collaborationist operation. Marchais continues to defend CP ministers' complicity in three years of Mitterrand's anti-working-class, anti-Soviet policies, and declares the CP 'is ready at any moment to participate with other forces' (*L'Humanite*, 13 January). The Stalinists' goal on 16 March is to get a large enough vote to create conditions for eventual participation in another government with the SP and bourgeois 'progressives', or even to support it from the outside -- a popular-front

corridor coalition.

As for the 'far left', the LCR is also trying to cover up its decade of pro-Mitterrand 'unity'-mongering. Krivine's outfit has so immersed itself in anti-Soviet social democracy that it marched together with fascists in defence of Polish Solidarnosc, Reagan and Thatcher's favourite 'union'. And when General Jaruzelski visited Paris last December, the LCR denounced Mitterrand *from the right* for receiving the Polish leader. In the March election, they are calling for a vote to the SP and CP in those departments where it is not presenting candidates or participating in a social-democratic anti-Soviet lash-up of ex-New Leftists, ecologists, etc which calls for a 'non-aligned' French imperialism. For its part Lambert's PCI/MPTT, which has fused with the CIA-financed Force Ouvriere union bureaucracy, is standing candidates in every district on a programme defending 'the popular mandate of 1981' -- that is, Mitterrand's original programme!

For the LTF, opposition to the popular front is a question of principle: we have always refused to vote for candidates of class-collaborationist coalitions, fighting instead for working-class independence from all sectors of the bourgeoisie. So following the breakup of the SP/CF/Left Radical 'Union of the Left', when Marchais announced in 1980 that 'three times is enough' -- referring to the popular fronts of 1936, 1944 and 1972 -- and the CP talked of standing under its own colours, the LTF considered critical support to its candidates. However, this tactic was rendered impossible by the Stalinists' disgusting assault on immigrant workers at Vitry, designed to demonstrate the CP's chauvinist loyalty to 'its' bourgeoisie as a preliminary to participation in the Mitterrand government.

In the 16 March legislative elections, the LTF is calling for a vote to candidates of *Lutte Ouvriere*. LO is running in opposition to the government, and unlike 1981 when it called for a vote for Mitterrand in the second round -- 'without illusions' but also 'without reservations' (!) -- this time it is explicitly refusing to vote for the SP and CP. While now claiming to be sadder but wiser, LO presents an economist programme simply tailing behind the widespread working-class discontent with the Mitterrand regime. Nevertheless, by running independently of and against the mass reformist parties, the LO campaign allows revolutionary Trotskyists to politically combat the popular front by offering their sharply critical support.

The Ligue Trotskyste de France, the only communist organisation that refused to capitulate before rose-coloured illusions in Mitterrand five years ago, insists that working-class independence is the key to victory in the coming class battles. ■

Workers Power:

My popular front, right or wrong

The March issue of *Workers Power* carries an article by the French Pouvoir Ouvrier group on the upcoming parliamentary elections, which is a condensed textbook example of Little England centrism exported to France: '... in a situation in which the vast majority of workers are not convinced by our propaganda, we need to take a step in common with these workers and call for a vote for the PS or the PCF in the elections. Every vote for the PCF can be [sic] used to test their "anti-capitalist class struggle" rhetoric. Every vote for the PS will be a test of their "socialist" pretensions.'

Now, in and of itself, this is a typical argument for justifying a centrist capitulation to the popular front, and it contains nothing new. Trotsky polemicised endlessly throughout the 1930s against all sorts of groups and individuals who wanted to 'peddle their wares in the shadow of the People's Front'.

What's remarkable about WP/PO's position is that they are calling on the workers to support a popular front and elect a class

collaborationist government *after five years* of this viciously racist, anti-Soviet, anti-working-class Mitterrand government. Mitterrand is widely despised and discredited among the working masses (many of whom, even though WP may not know this, are indeed not even entitled to vote, being immigrant workers). This truth is so obvious that not only the crudely economist *Lutte Ouvriere* has taken a formally correct stance of *opposition* to the SP/CP -- which allows our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyste de France to extend their critical support -- but even the Pabloites of the LCR pretend to be some kind of tepid opposition to Mitterrand.

Not so WP/PO: they positively want another five years of Mitterrand; they are opposed to supporting the LO candidates because to do so would foster illusions in centrism. Instead, with the wilful stupidity of people who believe the world was born yesterday together with them (their French group was not operational at the time of the 1981 elections), they crawl like maggots on the rotting corpse of the popular front. We can only wish them: *bon appetit!*

Under a sinister flag RCP apologises for race-terror

You pick up a paper on the bus seat next to you and read a racist pig crowing proudly why his son terrorises blacks and Asians in East London: 'But there's other coloureds who will give you crap and that's what I don't like. If you call them Paki or nigger or whatever you get done.' You're told his vicious punk son Darren has been twice expelled from school for racist assaults and heads up a racist street gang called the 'Vicarage Lane Firm'. Then you read that these 'views' are 'widely shared in ... British society'. Is this the bloody *National Front News*? No, it's the supposedly 'anti-racist' *tns* (7 February) of the so-called Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP).

What sort of communist organisation would run crap like this? No sort! The RCP is a bad-news outfit whose outright aversion to the class line has taken them to ever stranger and more sinister positions in recent years. This latest -- part of a campaign to show that fascism is 'irrelevant' -- is an outrage to any black, any Asian, any decent person. In fact it amounts to an apology for racist terror. "I don't believe in the National Front", says Darren in *tns*, which nods agreeably, 'The firm's members are not racist because of any affection for Hitler, but because they see blacks as the source of their problem.' They're just 'misguided' young killers: 'In their harassment of blacks, Darren and his mates simply put the prejudices of their parents and the rest of society into action.'

Tell that to the husband of Mrs Shamira Kassam, murdered along with three of her children when their East London home was firebombed last summer. Or the Kayani family, who narrowly escaped a similar murder attempt several weeks later. Incidents of racist terror have been on a sharp rise recently, especially against Asians in East London. And the RCP excuses this terror by saying racism is pervasive! It is precisely the commitment to terrorist action that distinguishes fascism from other forms of racist reaction, and it is punks like 'Darren' who make for recruits to the fascist shock troops.

While explaining how these racist thugs are no different than your 'ordinary' member of society, the *tns* article vents its spleen at the Newham Monitoring Project. The Newham Project was responsible for last year's effective defence campaign of the Newham 7 (and before that the Newham 8), heroic Asian youth who organised defence of their community against race-terrorists and were then framed up by the state for their actions. The Newham 7 campaign was correctly centred on the right of minority self-defence, though its organisers display characteristic liberal-reformist illusions about the capitalist state defending black and Asian people. Arguing against such dead-end illusions, the Spartacist League fought hard for a proletarian-centred strategy to defend the courageous Newham youth; Spartacist supporters in London Transport campaigned for that racially integrated workforce to mobilise industrial action in their defence, based on a perspective of trade union/minority mobilisation to smash racist attacks.

But the RCP attacks the Newham group for fighting fascist terror: 'Instead of tackling the mainstream prejudices that are central to the issue of racist attacks, the monitoring project prefers to focus on the marginal issue of the National Front.' For the RCP, which prefers to focus on the 'anti-racist' stunts of its ELWAR front group (like having racist thugs 'apologise' to their victims), maiming and murder of blacks and Asians is a 'marginal issue'. Opposition to anti-fascist mobilisation is a hallmark of the RCP, which as far back as 1978 (when the NF boasted 20,000 members) wrote:

'The radical left emphasises the distinctive features of the NF, its extreme racism and violence, rather than its nationalism and opposition to immigration -- ideas which are widespread in the labour movement. Once the NF's political characteristics are reduced to those of a Nazi organisation, all that remains to be done is to smash it.... This timeless anti-fascist formula has the virtue of simplicity, if not effectiveness.' ('Under a National Flag')



East London Asian shop firebombed by 'misguided' fascists. Under which flag does bizarre RCP march?

So where most of the fake left apologises for Labourite racism, the RCP equates it with fascism and denies any difference -- offering up the line that there's a little bit of it in all of us. The RCP argues against the elementary working-class principle of no platform for fascists with liberal rubbish about the need to fight racist ideas.

With its bizarre rhetoric of classless bravado -- preparing for power, the party of tomorrow etc -- the RCP appeals to the same social base, the same petty-bourgeois despair and lumpen impotence as do the fascists. No wonder they'd rather debate racist 'ideas' with fascistic thugs while dismissing anti-racist militants with reformist illusions. This sort of 'leftism' can easily shift over the class line the RCP so obdurately refuses to acknowledge. Only this bizarre brand of politics could lead it to design a wall poster

that prominently featured Hitler's portrait beneath the cry, 'Preparing for power'; and another that equated Arthur Scargill and Eric Hammond, while one was leading a militant strike and the other acting as a chief strikebreaker. Remember Mussolini, who exemplified the petty-bourgeois and lumpen layers who out of frustration with social democracy flipped over to fascism.

The RCP postures as an opponent of the Labour Party, only to eschew any defence of working-class organisations against bourgeois attack, opposing even such fundamental trade union gains as the closed shop. They not only supported the strikebreaking ballot during the miners strike, but went out to organise meetings among the scabs, whom they condoned as 'scapegoats'. Here is an overwhelmingly white group that wilfully distorted the multiracial character of the ghetto defence against last autumn's police invasion as black-only. This is an outfit which parrots Reagan's diatribes about the imminent collapse of the Soviet Union, stands with reactionary feudalists against women's rights in Afghanistan and with CIA-backed Solidarnosc against the Polish de-



formed workers state -- all the while professing to have no 'line' on the Russian question.

This country is a social and economic hell-hole. If a revolutionary party to lead the workers to power is not built, then the alternative of fascist counterrevolution is a real danger. And it will not be based on Hitler idolatry but on nativist racism mobilising the sort of lumpenised youth the RCP apologises for. These proto-fascist lumpen street gangs have to be confronted and crushed in the egg through mobilising the social power of the racially integrated labour movement.

Leon Trotsky wrote in the Transitional Programme that 'strikebreakers form the nucleus of the fascist army'. The RCP apologises for strikebreakers and for fascists. They are bad news for any working-class or anti-racist militant. ■

The Road from the SWP to Trotskyism ... page 2
The Faces of Economism ... page 24

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Philippines...

(Continued from page 12)

to former US facilities at Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam.

The alarm bells began ringing in Washington late last year, when American policy makers finally noticed that the rampant corruption and terror of the Marcos clique combined with massive capital flight, inflation and unemployment were driving large sections of the Filipino masses into the camp of the NPA guerrilla insurgents, who would obtain parity with the enfeebled army in 'three to five years'. With Marcos in declining health, but still alive enough to rob the country blind, both Republicans and Democrats became concerned about the fate of the US' largest and most strategic military outpost. Washington began planning for an 'orderly succession' to a 'post-Marcos environment', and stepped up pressure on their tyrant for political and military reform.

But the wily despot of Malacanang Palace, encrusted in power and privilege for 20 years, was determined not to be pushed aside so easily. Proving that he was no novice at democratic posturing, Marcos in late November suddenly came up with the gimmick of the 'snap election'. He hoped by this ploy to deflect American pressure, provide a safety valve for popular discontent, and wield the traditional 'three Gs' of Filipino politics -- guns, goons and gold -- to ensure his continued tenure. The US went along with this election tent show conceived in the classic American style.

Ronald Reagan went on TV shortly after the 7 February vote, playing down reports of fraud and declaring the results prove 'there is really a two-party system, obviously good' in the Philippines (*Washington Post*, 11 February). This gaffe made it necessary for State Department advisers and returning emissaries to pull Reagan aside and inform him what everyone already knew who had been watching the nightly news: if there were a two-party system under Marcos, it would be one party in the government and the other party in the grave.

In the Philippines, moreover, Marcos was a usurper -- not old money but a grasping provincial boss, whose apprenticeship was as a black marketeer dealing with the Japanese occupation authorities during World War II. The greed of the Marcos gang was boundless, and eventually alienated not only middle-class professionals and the Catholic hierarchy but even decisive sectors of Manila's Makati financial district. This coincided with the escalating mass discontent as real wages have fallen steadily for years, millions were unemployed and the government's constabulary and private armies of Marcos's regional cronies ruled through capricious terror and systematic 'salvaging' (disappearance) of political opponents.

The elections of 7 February were a contest between rival bourgeois factions, both equally pro-imperialist. But between them lay the corpse of Benigno Aquino, assassinated by Marcos's security police upon his arrival at Manila airport in August 1983. If 'Ninoy' alive was the chief candidate for US replacement puppet, Ninoy dead came to symbolise the tens of thousands who have perished at Marcos's hands during 20 years of iron-fisted rule. Vowing to avenge her husband's death, Cory Aquino threatened to put Marcos on trial for murder. Marcos therefore knew that it was not only his wealth and power but his presidential head that was at stake in the outcome -- and he spared no extreme of fraud and terror to prevent his opponent from winning.

These gangland tactics fuelled popular rage. And while the opposition coalition was put together by the US, although Cory Aquino coordinated her every political move with the CIA, in the eyes of the Filipino masses, the widow of a slain national redeemer was taking on a despised tyrant. It was out of pent-up hatred for this used-up US strongman that millions of Filipinos refused Marcos's bribes, dodged his bullets and guarded ballot boxes with their lives to prevent the dictator's henchmen from stuffing or stealing them. What started as an electoral hoax designed to prepare an 'orderly succession' in the Philippines became the occasion for a volcanic eruption of popular discontent that Marcos could not repress without massive killing, and Washington could not contain without sending Ferdinand and Imelda the way of 'Baby Doc' Duvalier.

Although the elections brought the Filipino masses into the streets, it was firmly

under bourgeois leadership. This posed a dilemma for the Philippine left, which had a hard time deciding what attitude to take toward the Aquino/Laurel 'Laban' candidacy. The 'Bayan' (Nation) coalition, the Communist Party and its National Democratic Front eventually came out for boycott, but they kept their heads down during the campaigning. Moreover, a number of prominent Bayan leaders 'temporarily' resigned from the organisation in order to campaign for the opposition. The reason for this confusion is simple: fighting not for a socialist programme but on a purely 'democratic' platform, the main left groups had difficulty explaining their political differences with Laban. Yet they could not participate, because the whole sham 'democratic' exercise was designed to defeat the Communists. And in fact, the yellow flags of Aquino/Laurel managed to gain ascendancy over the red flags of the left in the streets of Manila and elsewhere.

Since the election, the Philippine left has continued to stand aloof from developments. The *New York Times* (24 February) quoted the secretary general of Bayan, Leandro Alejandro, saying of the rebellion by Enrile and Ramos that 'This is a war of the ruling class.' An Aquino government would be a return to the oligarchic party politics of the pre-Marcos era, said a CP source. Yet Alejandro did go to Camp Crame to negotiate with Enrile, who had arrested the Bayan leader in demonstrations in 1983 after the assassination of Aquino. What neither the CP/NDF nor Bayan did was to take advantage of the division within the bourgeoisie to seize control of proletarian districts and mobilise the masses in their own class interest. Bound by their Stalinist popular-front programme, even though they can't get a coalition with significant bourgeois forces, the Philippine left has been reduced to silence.

With the installation of Aquino/Laurel the US has temporarily managed to ride a wave of popular discontent, replacing what Warsaw's *Trybuna Ludu* accurately termed a 'now uncomfortable and moreover insubordinate dictator' with a new face while maintaining American control unharmed. A fight against imperialist domination and the anti-Soviet war drive which determines the life of the Philippines, described by the *Economist* as an 'archipelagic aircraft carrier', requires class struggle against popular-front illusions and for workers revolution, led by Trotskyist parties, from the Philippines to the US and West Europe. The 'special relationship' of American and Filipino workers must be that of proletarian internationalism, of a common fight for the rebirth of the Fourth International.

Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 398, 28 February 1986

Murdoch...

(Continued from page 1)

ranks know their backs are against the wall. Despite the NGA/SOGAT leaders' refusal to mobilise, and indeed opposition to, mass pickets at Murdoch's barbed wire fortress in East London, the pickets have grown in size and militancy. Particularly beginning with the women's demonstration on the evening of 8 February, sizeable contingents of women strikers and wives and girlfriends of the men have been a regular feature on the Saturday evening mass pickets, inspired by the example of the coalfield women. With all the ferocity they demonstrated at Orgrave and in the pit villages, the cops have waded into the crowds with truncheons, riot shields and horses, arresting dozens on each picket.

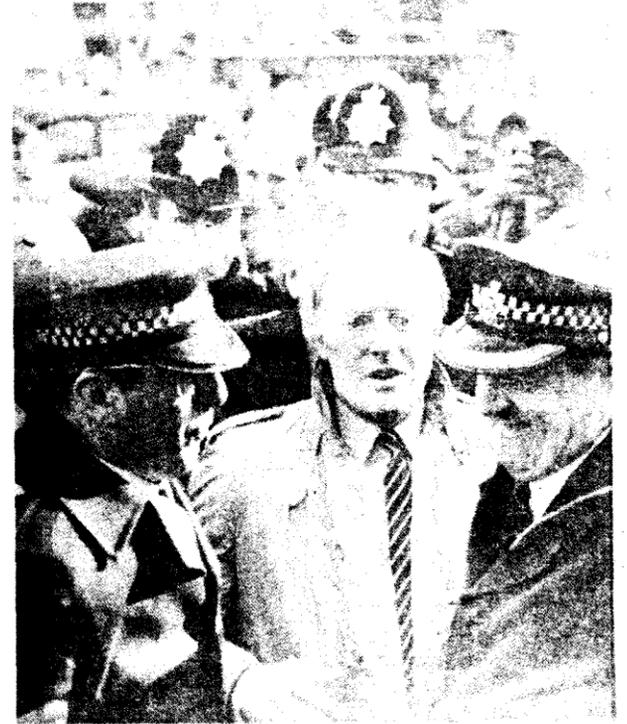
Militants from other unions have been warned off the Wapping pickets as 'outsiders' by the union leaders, but when they arrive they are cheered by the strikers. When the bureaucrats at the 22 February Wapping picket tried to corral strikers off to listen to Dubbins speechify, one angry militant shouted, 'We're not here to listen to Dubbins. We're here to stop the lorries.' Miners, who remember the financial support they received from Fleet Street printers, have been yearning to join the Wapping pickets. The union leadership doesn't want miners on the mass pickets -- they don't want mass pickets at all. Instead they preach reliance on futile consumer boycotts and impotent entreaties to the TUC. For weeks at the start of the strike the TUC 'lefts' and their 'revolutionary' apologists yammered for the TUC to expel Eric Hammond's EETPU for scabberding, as though it would have made any difference. Finally the vile Hammond and his alter-egos like Norm Willis reached a 'gentleman's agreement' which means nothing else than that the scabbing at Wapping continues with

the TUC's blessings, while the TUC 'leads' the print unions into joint 'negotiations' including the EETPU on Murdoch's terms. Beware a TUC-engineered sellout!

Dubbins made it clear right from the start that he was opposed to militant action: 'Clearly the public was not very enamoured by what went on in the miners strike.' For all that, the courts and cops are going after the unions with all the venom they displayed against the NUM. SOGAT has already had its £17 million in assets seized by 'sequestrators' and a £25,000 fine slapped on top of that for blacking distribution of Murdoch titles. Acquiescence to the bosses' law is a dangerous dead-end. Any effective industrial action is 'illegal' under current legislation.

Murdoch and Co's anti-strike propaganda mills seek to malign the printers as lazy fat-cats who live high on the hog without working. SOGAT clericals among the strikers get as low as £65 a week! And as one of the few NGA members who earned £700 a week through overtime said, 'Is there anything wrong with that?' But for all of Fleet Street's lies and the craftist and elitist fissures engendered in the print by the bureaucracy, there is clear and growing evidence of support for the strike from among general trades workers, again faced with sabotage by the leadership. At Labour bigwig 'Captain Bob' Maxwell's *Daily Mirror*, printers were faced with expulsion from their union for simply threatening the minimal action of refusing to print extra copies of the *Mirror*. Meanwhile Maxwell is carrying on his own job-slashing vendetta.

When two out of three chapels voted against blacking work on Murdoch's *Times* supplements the bosses rejoiced. In fact the sentiment on the shopfloor was solidly in favour of blacking action. At Typematters, workers had undertaken blacking within days of the start of the



Times

Scabherder, witchhunter Neil Kinnock with friends, strutting past Militant anti-witchhunt protest, London, 26 February.

strike, but management members of the NGA continued to do the work, with the union turning a blind eye. Furthermore, not only was the ballot open to management participation, but the mass meeting was as well, intimidating members from speaking their minds. Management out of the union! Defend the union hiring list! For a single industry-wide union in the print trade!

'Lefts' rally around Kinnock

While TGWU 'left' Ron Todd mouths off about unions 'drawing the line' against the anti-union laws, he wilfully allows TGWU lorry drivers to continue scabbing on the printers. No strike was ever won by issuing printed 'instructions' -- mobilise the TGWU in class struggle. Todd's gutlessness is of course virtually ignored by most of the fake-revolutionary groups who tail the Labour/TUC 'lefts'. The bureaucrats hide their own refusal to wage militant struggle behind the Tory anti-union laws. But a concerted trade union mobilisation could turn the Tory laws into scraps of paper. This government is brittle, isolated and weak, thanks principally to the miners' valiant twelve-month struggle. Everything Thatcher touches these days turns to shit. When the government and its cops tried to provoke a racist bloodbath in the inner cities last autumn, they were rebuffed by integrated

crowds of ghetto youth -- black, Asian and white. And virtually nobody swallowed the government-concocted lies of black-v-Asian interracial terror. Then came the *Westland* fiasco. And with Thatcher, as the *Economist* put it, in a 'post-Westland panic', along came the attempted government sell-off of BL. Meanwhile Thatcher's reactionary Unionist allies in Northern Ireland are up in arms over the Anglo-Irish accord. And now even Ian MacGregor has taken aim at the Iron Bitch, announcing that she lost her nerve in the midst of the miners strike and confirming the biggest open secret in history, that the Tories planned and provoked the miners strike.

Shortly after the strike ended, the *Financial Times* observed that the NUM's defeat might well be short-lived and the NCB's victory pyrrhic. The resolution to this centres on the question of constructing a revolutionary leadership of the labour movement. It is certainly the case that Thatcher failed in her immediate aim of crushing the NUM. And since then, the Tory-financed scab 'Union of Democratic Miners' has failed in the task as well. The bosses' press are finally admitting that the UDM is going nowhere, with roughly 13 per cent of miners in its ranks, overwhelmingly in Nottinghamshire and already beginning to dwindle. Most recently when Paul Whetton, NUM branch secretary at Bevercotes colliery in Notts, was sacked for putting up a notice for an NUM meeting, not only did the NUM members in the pit walk out in his defence, but over 300 UDM members joined them. Unfortunately NUM officials called off the strike to pursue a 'legal case'. Class struggle is the way to smash the Spencerite split!

The primary campaign waged by the Labour/TUC 'lefts', including NUM president Arthur Scargill, has been centred on securing amnesty for Neil Kinnock and his scabherding gang. The first anniversary miners demonstration in London 2 March drew several thousand marchers, including victorious Forgemasters strikers from Sheffield inspired by the NUM's class struggle. Yet the message hammered home by every one of the 'left' speakers was the need to elect a Labour government. And where was Scargill? He should have been leading several thousand battle-hardened miners and women's action group activists down to Wapping the night before and then leading a massive union mobilisation the next day in honour of the miners' militant struggle. Yet miners from various areas complained bitterly that the national and area leaderships had made little attempt to mobilise for the march or put on buses.

The need for working-class power and a socialist reconstruction of society is posed point-blank in Britain today. This government is deeply despised, the country deeply polarised. Britain has the second-highest (next to Turkey) prison population per head in Europe, and the highest rate of elderly dying from lack of winter heating in the advanced capitalist world. Under the euphemism 'hypothermia', people who have outlived their productivity to the capitalist system are consigned to cold-blooded murder: in a recent instance, an 83-year-old woman in Blackpool was found so frozen that doctors could not even determine her temperature. And even sections of the ruling class are alarmed over Thatcher's designs to auction off to speculators and asset-strippers what little is left of British industry.



Tory mouthpiece, Economist (6 October 1984) looking worried. Key sections of ruling class are sweating over impact of miners strike on social fabric of threadbare capitalist Britain

And what is Labour's response? The 22 February *Economist* notes that 'the plan to sell BL in chunks has ... given the opposition the card most ministers feared -- a chance to appear more patriotic than the government'. In response to the BL disclosure, the Labour/TUC misleaders have engaged in an orgy of chauvinist anti-American protectionism. Labourite

patriotism means racist immigration laws, strikebreaking and anti-Soviet war preparations. Two years before an election, Kinnock has already promised that a Labour government will maintain anti-trade union laws, Tory denationalisations and massive unemployment; as for sacked and jailed miners and surcharged councillors in Liverpool and Lambeth, they have already been put on notice not to expect anything at all. Meanwhile it's hardly a secret that talks are going on about a possible Labour/Alliance coalition. And this is before they've even got into office!

Remember the lessons of the miners strike

For 12 months the heroic miners rocked this country in the most gigantic class battle this century. The miners and coalfield women rallied behind them the masses of workers and oppressed: hundreds of thousands of trade unionists, black and Asian minorities, Republicans in Northern Ireland. Millions of pounds

To remember the hard lessons of the miners strike requires forging a revolutionary Trotskyist party.



John Sturrock

of aid flooded in from workers in France, the Soviet Union and elsewhere; in the US the Partisan Defense Committee, linked to the Spartacist League, ran a successful solidarity campaign raising almost \$25,000 in the face of sabotage by the anti-communist AFL-CIO bureaucrats. The miners did not lose because they lacked courage and militancy -- the responsibility for defeat lies squarely with the Labour and TUC misleaders. The cutting edge of the scabherders was provided by the Cold War rights like Frank Chapple and Eric Hammond, who witchhunted Scargill at the 1983 Blackpool TUC for attacking counterrevolutionary Polish Solidarnosc, 'Ronald Ray-gun and the Plutonium Blonde'. That was the go-ahead for Thatcher to get the miners. The 'lefts' capitulated to the open scabherders of the right. TGWU leaders called off the dock strikes while rail union leaders similarly refused to strike alongside the miners, even while NUR and ASLEF members were being sacked for blacking coal. The miners strike posed the question of power -- which class shall rule -- and the Labourite misleaders demonstrated their cowardly subordination to the bourgeois order.

Today the fake left would like to bury the example of the powerful picket lines of the miners in the service of electing Kinnock. Echoing a 3 February *Morning Star* piece on the print strike, the 29 February (sic) *Workers Press* of the Banda/Slaughter Workers Revolutionary Party claims: 'The mass picketing -- which of course must be supported by every trade unionist -- has proved to be no answer to the deliberate and planned police violence, familiar from the miners' strike.' The fact is that the strikebreaking by scabs and cops can be smashed, but what is needed is a determined class-struggle leadership prepared to mobilise the social power of the unions to shut down Murdoch. Meanwhile the pro-Kremlin *Morning Star*'s Eurocommunist adversaries, including Mick McGahey, go one step further in brain-trusting a Labour/Alliance coalition for Kinnock.

The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) claims to support militant pickets; in practice, however, it limits itself to periodically mobilising its own supporters outside Wapping, while refusing to struggle within the unions against the backstabbing policies of the bureaucracy. Similarly, during the miners strike SWP guru Tony Cliff cynically blamed defeat on the miners for refusing to build large enough pickets, while openly defending SWP steelworkers who crossed the NUM's picket lines.

Despite their anti-Labourite posturing, the Cliffites have been courting the Militant

Tendency for the past year. In fact, the SWP's trade union economism is simply the flip side of Militant's gross parliamentarism. (Come election time, the SWP really advocates a vote for Labour *in principle*.) Revolutionaries of course defend Militant from Kinnock's witch-hunt. However, unlike Militant and numerous other fake-Trotskyist groups, we are not 'unity-mongers' who pretend that Labour can be transformed into a revolutionary party. Thus, Militant went crazy at an October 1982 Liverpool LPYS rally when we called for 'Drive the CIA-loving right wing out of the Labour Party!' In a similar period the centrist Workers Power demanded that Labour MPs sign a loyalty oath pledging not to split from the party, while today offering up their version of the bankrupt 'make the lefts fight' line with appeals for 'unity against Kinnock'. A genuine communist party will be constructed only through splitting the Labour Party, winning the working class base from the pro-capitalist tops, 'left' as well as right.

But while fake revolutionaries rally behind the cry for a Labour government, among thousands of the best militants in the coalfields, trade unions and black and Asian communities, the prospect of getting Kinnock into government is hardly something to cheer for. Recent television programmes like *Scab!* and an earlier documentary series on Frickley showed vividly the contempt of the militant men and women of the coalfield for scabs and the bosses' state -- with its cops, courts and kept media. Not surprisingly, the fake-left groups whose only perspective is to tail Kinnock's scabherding Labour Party -- the Communist Party, the WRP, Socialist Action -- are in disarray. The visible disaffection with Labour among working class militants, along with the ferment and crisis in the British left, poses the task of regroupment into a Leninist/Trotskyist vanguard party.

Above all, the miners strike showed the urgent need to forge such a revolutionary party. The Labour Party did not fight Thatcher because its leadership hates social revolution. The 'lefts' proved unwilling or impotent to alter anything in the course of this mighty struggle. Even Scargill's trade unionism, however more militant than the rest, is qualitatively inadequate. To defend the unions, crush repression/fascist terror, and smash imperialist preparations for war against the Soviet Union -- a decisive Leninist vanguard is essential. Only such a party can lead the masses forward to workers' rule. Enough Kinnockite scabherding! Victory to the News International strike!■

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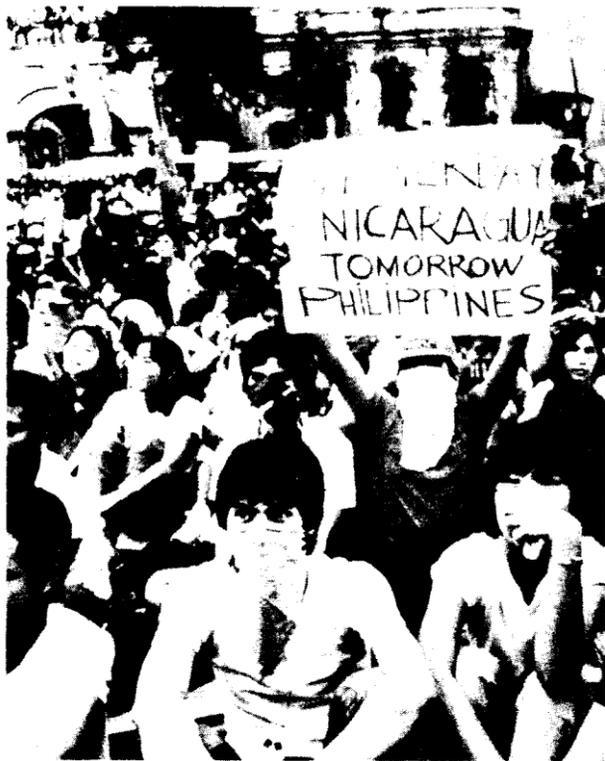
For a Philippines Trotskyist party!

Reagan dumps Marcos

Now that deposed Philippines dictator Ferdinand Marcos has been shipped off to Guam on a stretcher, and Corazon Aquino is sworn in as head of a provisional government, Ronald Reagan is trumpeting a triumph for 'free world democracy' ... and breathing a sigh of relief for the strategic US naval and air force bases in the Pacific island nation of 50 million. Maggie Thatcher, other West European imperialists and liberal US Democrats are joining in the chorus, proclaiming yesterday's military butchers today's 'democratic saviours'. But for the Filipino people, the replacement of the corrupt, brutal Marcos dictatorship with the 'clean team' of Aquino and Salvador Laurel will mean the substitution of one set of American lackeys for another. Marxists say: beware of coups 'Made in USA'.

Beginning now, attempts by the Filipino masses to fight against IMF starvation policies imposed by international bankers and their handmaidens in Manila will be suppressed in the name of 'democracy'. More ominously, the Reagan administration is on a winning streak, having extracted itself from potential disasters in Haiti and the Philippines. But a more 'democratic' oligarchic regime can't even begin to deal with the bankruptcy of Philippine capitalism, which has fuelled widespread worker and peasant unrest and a deep-rooted popular insurgency. And the new regime's attempts at 'reconciliation' to preserve the bloody repressive apparatus will run head-on into the burning desire to avenge the brutal crimes of the Marcos regime.

On 22 February, two top Philippine military officials declared themselves in rebellion against the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos, swinging their support to his rivals Aquino and Laurel, who were denied victory in fraud- and violence-ridden elections on 7 February.

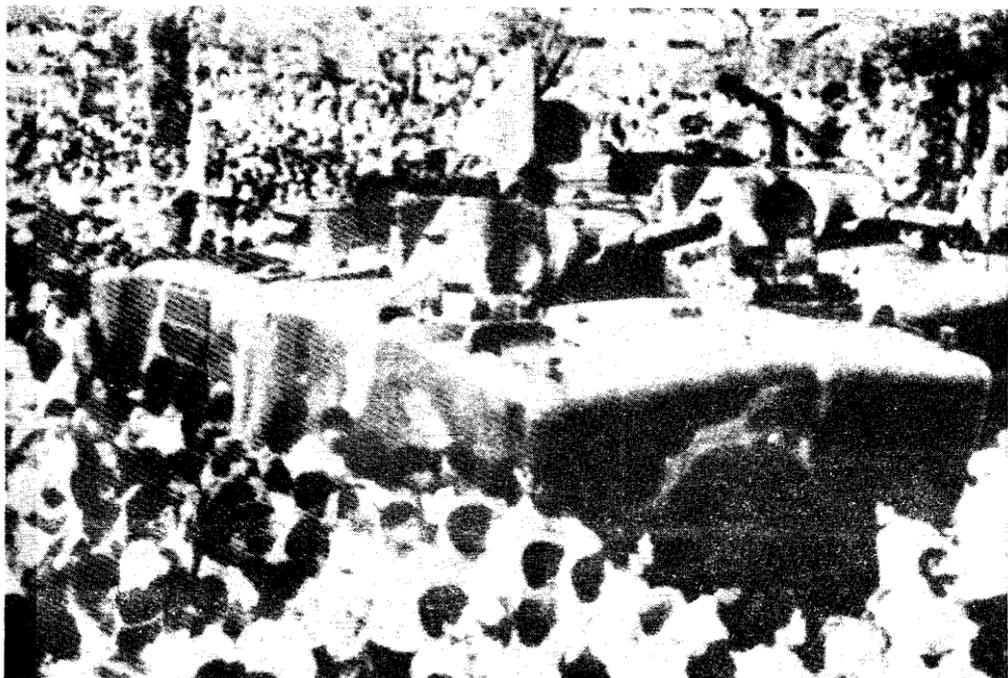


Carl Mydans

Philippine toilers need revolutionary party forged in opposition to all wings of bourgeoisie.

Defence Minister Ponce Enrile and Deputy Chief of Staff Fidel Ramos switched their allegiance after informing the American ambassador and within one hour of the departure of Ronald

Before the fall: Philippine masses block pro-Marcos forces in streets of Manila.



No credit

Reagan's plenipotentiary envoy Philip Habib, on a 'fact-finding' mission to Manila. The Filipino masses, sick of two decades of corrupt and brutal tyranny, poured into the streets to form a human wall protecting the rebel headquarters from tank assault by Marcos-loyal troops.

The scene was elaborately choreographed by the bourgeois opposition and their supporters in the Catholic church hierarchy headed by Jaime Cardinal Sin. The Catholic radio Veritas functioned as a command centre, calling the masses to come out in support of the military rebellion. While nuns paraded in front of pro-Marcos troops with crucifixes, priests handed out communion wafers. (Cory Aquino appeared briefly outside the Defence Ministry to sing 'Ave Maria'.) Demonstrators put daisies in the gun barrels and McDonald's hamburgers in the soldiers' hands. Marcos knew he was finished when the 'people's inauguration' of Aquino was broadcast over the former government TV channel, while his own 'official' inauguration was blacked out. The 'nonviolence' of the whole affair was an expression of the degree to which the mass outpouring has been kept safely within the bounds of bourgeois rule.

As they gathered with their supporters in the Defence Ministry on the capital's outskirts, Ramos and Enrile declared that their act was no coup d'etat but a 'people's revolution', an example of 'people's power'. The presence of hundreds of thousands of Manila residents surrounding Camp Crame testifies to the popularity of the military revolt. But these 'democratic' military men were Marcos henchmen only a few days before. Enrile declared that he personally ordered the falsification of 350,000 votes for the president in the sham elections. Ramos, a cousin of Marcos, has since the mid-1970s been the head of the notoriously brutal Philippine Constabulary, which last September shot up dozens of protesting sugar workers on the island of Negros.

Every major figure in the new regime is intimately connected to the US. Ramos graduated from West Point military academy and Enrile is a product of Harvard Law School. Cory Aquino's slain husband Benigno spent virtually his entire political life in the service of the CIA, first participating in the suppression of the Communist-led Hukbalahap rebellion, then act-

ing as control for a US-sponsored insurgency in outlying Indonesian islands. Corazon Cojuangco Aquino is herself one of the wealthiest landowners in her home province of Tarlac; her cousin Eduardo Cojuangco is a leading Marcos cronie and head of the Philippine government's coconut monopoly. Her Yale-educated running mate (and rival), 'Doy' Laurel, is a typical Filipino wheeler-dealer politico who only split from Marcos in the last three years.

The United States intervened in every aspect of the recent elections. Marcos called the election exercise in the first place to satisfy White House pressure for a 'credible' mandate, so that the military could get on with counterinsurgency against the Communist Party's New People's Army (NPA). To ensure that this vote would go down well in the US Congress, Washington insisted on official status for poll watchers from NAMFREL, an organisation funded by the US 'Endowment for Democracy'. In addition, there were observation teams from the Democrats, the Republicans and the White House. And then, when the balloting was over, everyone looked to Washington for the verdict. When the administration finally issued a statement on 24 February declaring that 'attempts to prolong the life of the present regime by violence are futile', a Filipino opposition politician declared, 'That's it -- the election's over.' Reagan had cast the decisive vote.

Ballots and bullets

The US' main concern in the Philippines is still to prevent the growth of 'Communism', particularly given the strategic importance of the Clark Air Force Base and the US Navy base at Subic Bay. These are the largest American military installations outside the United States, employing tens of thousands, and the lynchpin to US strategy in Asia. At a press conference on 11 February, Reagan declared these bases vital to 'the Western world' in order to ensure imperialist control of 16 'chokepoints' controlling vital sea lanes. It is by dominating these passages that the Americans hope to keep the Soviet navy bottled up in the event of nuclear war. And they are particularly concerned by the Soviets' access

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