



Mounted police charge anti-fascists, West Bromwich, April 28

Spartacist Britain



NF scum give Hitlerite salute during East End anti-fascist march, April 29

Spartacist Britain

Cops riot to defend fascists Build workers defence guards!

The bloody cop riot and batoning to death of Blair Peach outside Southall Town Hall on April 23 have once again posed point blank the question of how to smash the fascist National Front. In the wake of this savage police rampage many anti-fascist militants are asking: where do we go from here? The twin strategies advanced in the past -- on the one hand, calls for state bans and peaceful carnivalling by the Anti Nazi League (ANL); on the other, inconclusive street brawls with armed thugs in uniform who are determined to protect the fascists -- have manifestly failed. The current impasse dramatically underlines the necessity of a struggle within the organisations of the working class for disciplined mass mobilisations capable of decisively routing the Front.

The election period saw the reawakening of a militant, albeit directionless, opposition to the National Front -- one which is heartening after months of pacifistic do-nothingism from the ANL, its architects in the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and supporters in the International Marxist Group. Angered at the provocative decision of the NF to field 300 candidates in the election, thousands of demonstrators came onto the streets in an attempt to stop the anti-black, anti-union fascist thugs from drumming up support for their intensely chauvinist programme.

But for the most part this anger found outlet in indecisive confrontations with the thousands of riot police called up to defend NF meetings. In Leicester, the police frustrated several disorganised substitutionist attempts to combat the Front, put more than a hundred anti-NF militants behind bars and hospitalised dozens more. In Newham, Bristol and Bradford similar scenes were

re-enacted on a smaller scale.

In Southall, thousands of local Asian residents shut their shops or walked out of the factories in the early afternoon in response to the fascists' declared intention to hold a meeting in the heart of the area that evening. Five thousand -- mainly Asian workers, joined by ANL supporters and others -- gathered for a protest demonstration, only to be met by an equal number of truncheon-wielding cops who wasted no time setting about their bloody work. Deploying the full their arsenal of 'crowd control' riot gear -- their horses, dogs, helicopters and plastic shields -- these 'guardians of law and order' waded into the milling crowds, arresting and beating indiscriminately. By the time they had finished, more than 300 anti-fascists were in jail, countless more in hospital and one, Blair Peach, lay dying on the pavement. During the riot, a few dozen fascists sneaked into their Town Hall meeting place and held their race-hate rally.

Only in Plymouth, where leftists managed to force the fascists to cancel their meeting by occupying the hall beforehand, and in West Bromwich, where an ANL deal with the police allowed 150 anti-fascists into the meeting place to disrupt the NF rally, did anti-Front militants get any satisfaction. Overall, the anti-NF mobilisations were not able to take on the fascists, but descended instead into disorderly skirmishes with riot-trained policemen who have shown once again that they are quite prepared to kill in order to guarantee 'free speech' for the Tyndalls and the Websters.

The round of pre-election demonstrations has put the ANL and SWP in a rather militant-seeming light in contrast to the peaceful, legalistic

image they have so assiduously cultivated in the past. But in fact the new-found 'leftism' is a sham: the ANL/SWP still call for state bans, they continue to trade on patriotic 'anti-Nazi' sentiment, and above all they refuse to fight within the working-class organisations for mass mobilisations to crush the fascists in the streets.

At the start of the election campaign the ANL was proposing to halt the NF by doling out wads of liberal, social-patriotic propaganda on the horrors of the 'new Nazis' and by pleading with local councils to refuse meeting rooms to the Front. Instead of fighting for the Union of Postal Workers to black all NF election literature, leading ANL spokesmen like Peter Hain were threatening to take out court injunctions to prevent the Post Office delivering 'illegal' NF election addresses.

Such moves do not simply feed illusions in the 'neutral' goodwill of the bourgeois state. They politically disarm the working class by encouraging reliance on the bosses' courts and cops to safeguard the gains of the workers movement. And they establish dangerous precedents for future state attacks on the bourgeoisie's class enemies -- the left and labour movement -- under the guise of keeping the democratic order.

These legalist manoeuvres are the core of the ANL's strategy: at root, it is trying to convince the 'responsible' bourgeoisie to oppose the Front. This is the same ANL which has consistently refused to call for mass mobilisations to confront the NF -- going so far last September as to lead tens of thousands of anti-fascists away from an NF march through the East End of London.

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Labour traitors paved her way

The 'Iron Lady' in power

Five years of Labour betrayals paved the way for Thatcher's victory. Now her Tory government promises to be the most right-wing since at least World War II. Thatcher's 'radical' programme includes tightened immigration laws, deep cuts in education and social security expenditure, sharply increased spending on defence and 'law and order', and -- most important of all -- a violent onslaught against the trade unions. Following hard in Callaghan's footsteps, she wants to revive the sick capitalist economy at the expense of the working class, as part of a drive to restore some of Britain's lost imperial grandeur.

Wilson and Callaghan first tried to keep wages low and push profits up by making deals with the TUC bureaucrats for 'moderation'. Then with the Concordat Callaghan started tinkering with open attacks on union organisation, stating bluntly two days before the election that a new Labour government would introduce restrictive anti-union legislation if its deals with the TUC ran aground. Now Thatcher threatens to take on the unions through open confrontation.

But can she succeed where Labour failed? Callaghan's inability to stem the massive strike wave which destroyed Phase Four last winter convinced the bourgeoisie that Labour was a spent force, no longer able to keep the unions in line for its capitalist paymasters. Thus after having supported the government for years, business interests rallied solidly behind Thatcher in the months leading up to the election.

However they were still worried. After all, the last Tory attempt to tame the unions was Heath's confrontation with the miners in 1973-74 -- and that was a catastrophic failure. Moreover the stridently right-wing Thatcher makes the Heath of 1972-74 seem a reasonable moderate by comparison. The authoritative bourgeois *Economist* came out for a Tory vote, but only after stating that Callaghan stood on a fine line between 'middle-ground conservatism' while Thatcher was too dangerously radical and confrontationalist. Now she is in power, surrounded



Thatcher: 'now for the unions'

by lords and knights from Eton and Oxbridge, and ready to attack.

From Labour to the Tories

Life under the Tories does not promise to be pleasant for the working class. But then neither was life under Labour. Every one of Thatcher's anti-working class proposals is but an extension of the policies enacted by the wage-slashing, strikebreaking Callaghan government. Labour's entire election campaign was centred on proud defence of its record in office and promises of more of the same. Yet as election day drew closer the union bureaucrats, right and 'left' alike, declaimed ever louder on the alleged qualitative superiority of Callaghan's programme to Thatcher's. And, equally predictably, they were joined by virtually every pseudo-revolutionary organisation in the country.

The Socialist Workers Party, which had been screaming for years about the betrayals of the Labour government, made its usual discovery that Callaghan was a 'lesser evil' and clamoured for his return to Westminster. The International Marxist Group (IMG) and sundry smaller fake-Trotskyist grouplets joined in the 'vote Labour' chorus, each with its own pet gimmicks and excuses. In contrast the Spartacist League emphatically insisted that the workers had no interest in returning the Labour strikebreakers for another five years of anti-working class attacks.

In the 1974 elections, we called for critical support to Labour candidates in order to draw the class line against the open parties of the bourgeoisie and expose the social democrats before the masses by putting them in power. But to call for votes to Labour at a time when it had thoroughly demonstrated its treachery and was running on its openly anti-working class record and programme would have been to junk Leninist tactics designed to win militant workers away from social democracy, in favour of unvarying and *de facto* unconditional support for the reformist betrayers.

In opposition to the pro-Callaghan electoral machines, both official and pseudo-revolutionary, we said in our leaflets and interventions throughout the election campaign: 'No vote to the Labour traitors, any more than to the bourgeois parties'. When sections of militant unionists, like the Dunlop workers at Speke and some regions of the National Union of Public Employees began talking about withdrawing support from Labour because of the government's unmitigated treachery, we said that they were right, and raised the call for trade union candidates to be run *against* Labour on a full class-struggle programme.

In addition we warned that regardless of who won the election, the working class had to prepare for the inevitable attacks which would face it. Thatcher will now buckle down to her primary task of restoring capitalist profit-

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Fatima Khalil tells the truth about Iran

Last autumn and winter all the fake-left opportunists howled with outrage when we warned that the triumph of the ayatollahs over the blood-drenched shah would not be a victory for the Iranian working people. It seemed everyone from Iranian Muslim fanatics to fake-Trotskyists was frothing rabidly at our slogan 'Down with the shah! Down with the mullahs!' Yet today events in Iran are providing an all-too-clear confirmation of our unique position, and many leftist workers and students are asking 'What went wrong?'

In America the Spartacist League/Spartacus Youth League have seized this opportunity to press home our programme and win recruits to authentic Trotskyism, sponsoring a nationwide speaking tour by Near Eastern communist woman militant Fatima Khalil. The tour has been an unqualified success: Khalil spoke before a total of more than 1000 people in 9 cities and was warmly received. She appeared on radio and television and was interviewed widely, garnering full-page coverage in San Francisco's major daily newspaper, the *Chronicle*, as well as a number of shorter articles in other papers. Comrade Khalil was also given the opportunity to make a presentation at a meeting addressed by feminist Kate Millett in New York, and put forward the proletarian viewpoint on Iran against the helplessness of the petty-bourgeois feminists.

Fatima Khalil drew on her Muslim upbringing to provide a vivid description of the centuries-old oppression which the reactionary theocracy seeks to advance in Iran today:

'In Islamic society, women are not considered human beings. I remember when I was a young girl and went to class to study the Koran, I was told that if I did not cover my head, I would go to hell and every strand of my hair

would turn into long snakes.... The Koran says that if you show your finger to a strange man, you have to cut it off. Because it doesn't belong to your husband any more, therefore it doesn't belong to you.'

And as a communist Khalil was able to put forward the programme for victory, arguing powerfully for the need to smash the 'Islamic Republic' through socialist revolution:

'The slogan of the workers and farmers government is the main slogan in Iran. It is necessary to break the masses from the ayatollahs, raising demands which will contradict with the mullahs' interests, which will show the masses the road forward. Demands like: expropriating the land, including the mullahs' own land! For a constituent assembly and self-determination! For full democratic rights!'

The most vehement reaction to Comrade Khalil's tour came from Khomeini's Iranian supporters in the US. In Los Angeles, they issued cowardly telephone death threats; in San Francisco, they called on the university authorities and city police in an attempt to shut down a meeting; elsewhere, they tried to silence our speakers through organised disruption and frenzied chants that Trotskyists were 'CIA' and 'SAVAK agents', and that the speaker was a 'slut'. But to no avail. Over 100 workers from 25 different trade unions turned out to provide defence for the meetings and teach the mullah-lovers a much-needed lesson in workers democracy.

Additionally, a number of trade unionists who had come initially simply to defend her right to speak against the threats and attacks of Muslim and Maoist thugs found themselves drawn closer politically to the Spartacist League as a result.

Of the numbers of Iranian students who attended Khalil's meetings, by no means all

sided with the Islamic fanatics and Stalinists who had disrupted earlier Spartacist meetings on Iran. Those who spoke up in favour of our positions were mainly women and members of oppressed nationalities. At Ann Arbor, Michigan, a Baluchi spoke against the Koran-waving toughs who had attempted to stop earlier forums:

'I am here from East Lansing, sent to apologise from these people. I was one of those Iranians who participated with those who disturbed that Young Spartacus meeting [at Michigan State University]. I know how the followers of Khomeini and sections of the Iranian students and leftists have been trying to strangle any voice which does not conform to their political goal.... And I wonder if the so-called Iranian revolutionaries do not allow people to express their opinion in this country, what is the condition in Iran?'

And in Chicago a woman remarked during the discussion period: 'As an Iranian woman, I would like to thank the Spartacist League for being the only organisation to see the class analysis of Iran, saying that Khomeini was never a progressive and what an Islamic state would mean for the workers and women in particular.'

Comrade Khalil's intensive (and exhausting) three-week tour has been an important part of the international Spartacist tendency's campaign to bring home the lessons of the bloody Iranian events as we struggle to crystallise a revolutionary cadre which can lead the Iranian masses to victory through socialist revolution. Those so-called revolutionaries who hailed the ayatollahs cannot even attempt to put forward a coherent account today. In contrast to their utter political bankruptcy, Fatima Khalil was able to present a hard, sharp and clear analysis -- and the programme for victory in Iran. No to the veil! For workers revolution to defeat Islamic reaction!

Save the Fedayeen!

Iranian left under the gun

'Death to the communists!' 'Death to the enemies of Islam!' These are the ominous battle-cries echoing through the streets of Teheran. The clerical reactionaries who now rule Iran are orchestrating a redoubled offensive against the left with a series of massive demonstrations that howl for the blood of those branded 'traitors to Islam'. Simultaneously the Khomeini regime has granted virtually unrestricted powers to the Muslim paramilitary units taking shape which will spearhead the coming onslaught on the Iranian left and working class.

A major confrontation between the left and Islamic theocracy has been delayed only by the chaotic conditions produced by the rapid and complete disintegration of the shah's imperial state apparatus. The attempt to consolidate Khomeini's rule has also meant the execution of some of the most hated butchers of the shah's Savak and army -- the one act of this dangerous regime which is worthy of applause. While the imperialists cry bitterly for their good friends who face the firing squads, proletarian revolutionaries are glad to see some of these sadistic torturers go. We know that it is the torture of mullahs and not the torture of leftists and working people that has been made a capital offence. We know well whose hands hold the rifles after the Islamic courts pronounce sentence, but we know too that nearly all of these butchers deserve to die. We would gladly extradite the shah himself to Teheran to face his victims -- end the 'vacation' of this mass murderer!

The creation of Khomeini's Islamic state requires this deep-going blood purge. For every general who falls at the wall an ex-imperial colonel takes his place. But it has taken time to discipline the irregular Muslim militiamen cadres from the wreckage of the shah's army and police forces.

It is not simply brutal military suppression which puts the Iranian left in peril but, as in Indonesia in 1965, the possibility of a combined assault by the regular army and a viciously anti-communist Muslim mass movement. Using the spectacular assassinations of government figures by the shadowy, self-proclaimed Islamic populists of the Forghan Fighters group, the Khomeini regime is succeeding in whipping up just such a rabid popular mobilisation among its petty-bourgeois followers.

In the wake of savage fighting between pro-government forces and Kurdish and Turkoman rebels the mullahs had singled out the Guevarist Fedayeen guerrillas for suppression because of their military aid to these embattled national minorities. After the arrest of 70 Fedayeen supporters in early April the next blow came when on April 20 a mob of 2000 militiamen stormed the Fedayeen offices in the southwestern city of Abadan, centre of the Iranian oil industry. The Muslim raiders confiscated a supply of arms and ammunition and arrested 41 Fedayeen.

Although Fedayeen spokesmen in Teheran attempted to deny that the mullah-run Abadan



Fedayeen rally at Teheran University, February 1979

komiteh had instigated the attack, Deputy Prime Minister Abbas Amin Entezam announced that the 41 were being held on suspicion of smuggling arms to the Turkomans. Some 500 members and supporters of the Fedayeen staged a three-day sit-in at the Ministry of Justice in Teheran. As the Fedayeen ended their protest on April 27, the Khomeinists gathered to chant, 'Down with the leftists! Death to the communists!'

But when on April 23 the Forghan Fighters assassinated General Vali Ullah Qarani in his own home, Qarani's funeral became not only a rallying point for the officer corps, but a right-wing mobilisation directed against the entire left -- not only the Fedayeen but the pro-Moscow Stalinist Tudeh party as well, which has given Khomeini servile support every step of the way. The hundreds of thousands of demonstrators supplemented their cries of 'Death to the enemies of Islam!' with the more specific 'Tudeh, Fedayeen: assassins!'

The Islamic demagogues next attempted to upstage leftist-organised May Day celebrations by calling a rival rally at Teheran's Imam Hussein square. There Ayatollah Shariatmadari's Islamic Republican Party drew a crowd of 100,000 primarily composed of artisans and shopkeepers -- the mullahs' traditional plebeian base. Once again the theme of the rally was 'get the left'. But this time the banners added the incredible slander that 'Marxists are the agents of the shah!'

According to *Le Monde* the two separate leftist gatherings held elsewhere in the city were roughly the same size as the mullah-run anti-May Day. The Tudeh party's march demonstrated its continuing strength among the industrial working class and the trade unions, but at the same time reaffirmed its complete capitulation to Khomeini, repeatedly emphasising its support to the 'Islamic Republic'. The other leftist demonstration was a motley combination of women activists, the unemployed, the bourgeois nationalist National Democratic Front, various Maoist sects, the fake-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (HKS) and the Fedayeen. The common denominator of this march was a series of radical demands which would be raised by revolutionary Marxists as well: recognition of the right to strike, nationalisation of foreign-controlled firms, the end of censorship in the mass media. But other demands raised at the May Day gathering, for example, that workers should have a say in the editing of the constitution, demonstrate that the perspective of these Stalinists, social democrats, guerrillaists and liberals -- whatever their

subjective intentions -- remains one of *pressuring* the very government that is organising to butcher them.

That night the Forghan Fighters struck again, shooting down Ayatollah Morteza Motahari in a Teheran alley. Whereas they had denounced Qarani for plotting a pro-American coup, the terrorists denounced 'akhoundism' -- rule by the mullahs -- and revealed that Motahari was a leading member of Khomeini's secret Revolutionary Council. The people of Iran, it seems, will learn who their rulers in this 'republic' are only when they are assassinated in the street by equally shadowy underground groupings.

Speculation concerning the Forghan is rife. Motahari's brother was quick to announce, 'The Forghan group are disruptors who want to bring Communism under the cover of Islam.' Hundreds of thousands of people flocked to the funeral of this previously obscure ayatollah in the third mass outpouring of hysterical anti-communism. 'I will kill, kill, kill those who killed my brothers', screamed the marchers, denouncing the left as 'parasites on society'.

Three days after Motahari's funeral Khomeini made it clear how the 'parasites' would be dealt with. Previously the plan had been to amalgamate the various militia units either into the national police force or the elite 'Guardians of the Revolution'. The commander of the national police force, Colonel Nasser Majallili, announced that the police stations, uniforms, equipment and the men were being readied for a complete restoration of the police apparatus. Now it seems the 'Guardians' will be responsible not to the provisional civilian government of Mehdi Bazargan but solely to Khomeini's Council.

Their stated purpose is to 'remove all foreigners and those who support foreigners' -- 'armed combat' against the enemies of the 'Islamic Revolution'. Behind it all is the threat to forcibly disarm the left -- Khomeini's stated objective since he came to power in February -- and leave them defenceless before the slaughter. As one militiaman put it, 'We are awaiting orders from Ayatollah Khomeini. If he gives the order, we will put them in their proper place' (*Newsweek*, 14 May).

Khomeini's government has made many enemies in its few short months of existence: the women whom it has attempted to force back into the veil; the workers suffering from massive unemployment; the peasants whose seizures of the landlords' holdings the government opposes; and the national minorities, who have already been attacked with tanks and helicopter gunships as Khomeini seeks to maintain the 'sacred national boundaries' with an armoured fist. But none of the Iranian leftist organisations presents a clear programme to rally these forces against Khomeini. They refuse to oppose the mullahs on the grounds that they represent an 'anti-imperialist' force. Yet it is Khomeini who will do the CIA's dirty work by massacring them!

Facing the horrible possibility of another Indonesia 1965, the Fedayeen have only added a few more spotlights, sandbags and guards at their Teheran headquarters. One of their leaders told *Newsweek*, 'If necessary, we will go underground as we did before. We do not want civil war. We want more time.' But time is running out and the alternative to class war is their annihilation, unresisting, at the hands of Muslim reaction.

Only a programme of proletarian independence can prevent another catastrophic defeat for the Iranian proletariat: For a united front of all left, working-class and secular-democratic forces for defence against Khomeini's Islamic sword! For workers militias based on factory committees and trade unions! Full democratic rights for women! For the right of self-determination for the national minorities! Land to the tiller! For a secular constituent assembly! For socialist revolution in Iran to establish an Iranian workers and peasants government! For an Iranian Trotskyist party!

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The fight against fascism in the 1930s

The victory at Cable Street

On 4 October 1936, upwards of 250,000 workers waged a day-long battle with several thousand police who were attempting to clear a path for Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists (BUF) to march into the heavily Jewish East End of London. Wave after wave of charging cops failed to break through the workers' barricades. In the end the fascist scum, stopped in their tracks at Cable Street, were forced to retreat under massive police protection.

Today, with the resurgence of fascism as a significant force in Britain, virtually every organisation on the left attempts to appropriate for itself the mantle of the heroic battle of Cable Street. Accounts of the East End anti-fascist struggles of the 1930s have thus received renewed attention, with the focus on that high point of October 1936. But groups like the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), who uncritically champion the popular-frontist Anti Nazi League and eschew the strategy of fighting in the organisations of the working class for mass mobilisations to smash the fascists, show that they have learned none of the lessons of these struggles.

Fighting the Blackshirts

In addition to Cable Street, there were several other mass working-class demonstrations which stopped the Mosleyites during the 1930s. For example, a 9 September 1934 fascist rally in Hyde Park was effectively blocked by a turnout of about 150,000 counterdemonstrators. Victories like these served an essential task of demoralising and isolating the BUF, whose Blackshirt terror gangs at one time had the support of significant capitalist interests (particularly those who favoured an alliance with Hitler's Germany), including the open endorsement of the *Daily Mail*.

Two books in particular provide a vivid picture of the fight against fascism in the East End in this period -- and especially of the treacherous role of the leadership of the Communist Party (CP), whose working-class supporters were often ready and anxious to stop the fascists in the streets. *Our Flag Stays Red* -- an official Stalinist chronicle by Phil Piratin, CP Member of Parliament for Stepney (Mile End) from 1945-50 -- has recently been reissued by Lawrence and Wishart after many years out of print. It can now be usefully contrasted to a new publication, *Out of the Ghetto* by dissident Stalinist Joe Jacobs. Piratin and Jacobs often crossed swords in the Stepney Branch of the CP, of which Jacobs was secretary during 1935-36.

Stalinist mythology claims that the CP led the battle of Cable Street and waged a heroic militant struggle against the fascists throughout the 1930s. Piratin's slick little tract, dictated to his secretary at the start of the Cold War in 1948, attempts to prove this thesis. Jacobs, twice expelled from the CP, died in 1977 before completing his book. It is thus rather rambling and difficult to follow, although it is highly informative and effectively exposes the CP leadership's real record.

Jacobs' opposition to the line of the CP leadership was very partial and confused. He supported the overall popular-frontist policies of the Communist International -- the Spanish Popular Front, pacifist blocs like the League Against Imperialism, attempts to convince the bourgeois state to ban the fascists etc. On the other hand he fought against the CP leaders and their supporters like Piratin for a policy of mobilising the working class to drive the Blackshirts off the streets of East London.

The CP did periodically throw its weight be-

hind organising mass anti-fascist demonstrations like the 1934 Hyde Park rally. But with the turn to popular frontism by the Communist International following Hitler's victory in Germany, the CP's overall strategy increasingly became one of peaceful legalism. It wanted to forge an alliance with Labour Party bureaucrats and 'progressive' capitalists as a prop to bourgeois-democratic rule. Thus the party was often quite content to allow the fascists to march unimpeded in order to further its alliance with the liberals, pacifists and social democrats.

'If Mosley decides to march let him'

The most graphic example of this was the CP's original response to the scheduled fascist march of October 1936. Jacobs reproduces in his book the instructions left for him by the East London CP organiser five days before the march, which included the strictures:

'Keep order: no excuse for Government to say we, like BUF are hooligans. If Mosley decides to march let him. Don't attempt disorder (Time too

crowning spectacle of opportunist subservience to the capitalists by making his way to a telephone box to call the Home Office and ask them, one last time, to ban the fascist march.

The massive turnout at Cable Street brought a horrified reaction from the bourgeoisie. Fearful lest there be any repetition of the events of that day, Parliament passed the Public Order Act a few months later, giving the police widespread powers to ban marches. This particularly reactionary piece of legislation was by no means mainly directed against Mosley's Blackshirt parades. The bourgeoisie had been troubled since the early 1930s by *working-class* protests, especially the unemployed marches and anti-fascist demonstrations, which the Act promised to deal with.

It rapidly became clear to all but the most obtuse that the Act's principal target was the workers movement: in June 1937, Nottinghamshire miners on strike were given jail sentences of four months to two years for allegedly using 'insulting behaviour'. That same year an 'Arms for Spain' demonstration was broken up and 51

people arrested. Again during the late 1930s and consistently ever since, the Act has been invoked to outlaw labour movement and anti-fascist activities. Such were the fruits of the CP and ILP's 'victory' of state bans against the fascists.

Bolshevik-Leninists: 'For workers defence corps!'

In sharp contrast to the policies of the Stalinists and centrists stood the clear-sighted approach of the British Trotskyists. Organised at that time in the Bolshevik-Leninist (Militant) Group, they issued a leaflet on the Cable Street demonstration calling for workers defence corps as the only way to organise effectively and consistently to smash the fascist thugs. For this they were vilified by the Stalinists!

Daily Worker as 'provocative and disruptive'.

The Trotskyists' attack on the CP's attempts to 'win' state bans on the fascists is as relevant and valid today as then:

'To ask a capitalist government to ban the activities of the Fascists, the agents of capitalism, but to leave unhampered the activities of the working class, the enemies of capitalism, must appear ridiculous on the face of it to anyone who recognises the existence of the class war instead of talking airily about "democracy".' (*The Militant*, October 1937)

And they produced the following trenchant critique of the Stalinists' patriotic and class-collaborationist anti-fascism -- one which could just as easily be directed against the Anti Nazi League today:

'The only final way of defeating fascism is the overthrow of capitalism, but this is not to say that the workers should ignore the fascist bands at the present time. On the contrary, the smashing of every manifestation of fascism is an essential part of the class struggle. Every blow delivered at the open fascist formations is a blow against capitalism itself. To do this one does not appeal to the patriotic sentiments of the middle class but to the organised strength of the workers who alone are capable of overthrowing capitalism. Through their organisations the workers must form their own defence corps which can organise the mass hostility against fascism and drive the blackshirts off the streets.... Not by competing with the fascists in patriotic demagoguery will we attract the lower ranks of the middle class to our cause but by the pursuing of a vigorous working class policy.' (*The Militant*, August 1937)



Cable Street: police thugs try to clear way for Mosley's Blackshirts

short to get a "They shall not pass" policy across. It would only be a harmful stunt).

The CP leadership was ready and willing to desert its own members in the East End, most of whom wanted to build a massive demonstration to stop the BUF. Along with the centrist Independent Labour Party (ILP), the CP had spent the previous months appealing to the Tory-dominated National Government to ban the planned fascist march.

Both were pushing a 150,000-signature petition containing this demand, as were sundry rightist Jewish leaders and Labour Party hacks. Meanwhile, the ILP had called for an anti-Mosley counterdemonstration to rally at Aldgate, hoping to use this as part of a last-ditch effort to pressure the government into stopping the Blackshirt march.

The CP was however determined until almost the last minute to press ahead with a planned diversion on the other side of London -- a rally in Trafalgar Square to raise funds for the Popular Front in Spain, which was then frantically disarming and crushing the independent workers militias. Three days before the Blackshirt march, the party finally bowed to pressure from its own ranks and from the working class in the East End, and cancelled its Rally for Spain in order to call on its supporters to help stop Mosley.

Thanks to the hundreds of thousands of determined workers who turned out, the Blackshirts were stopped -- despite the politically bankrupt strategy of the CP and ILP leadership. Even in the midst of the battle for control of the streets, ILP MP Fenner Brockway provided the

Underpinning the Trotskyists' call for workers defence corps was the recognition that the working class, in its unions, possesses both the social organisation and weight necessary to physically crush fascist movements. But unorganised and unprepared masses in the streets can still be routed by well-equipped and disciplined fascist squads working under armed police protection. What is needed is a leadership capable of organising masses of workers into effective fighting units. Without these organised combat detachments, as Trotsky puts it, 'the most heroic masses will be smashed bit by bit by the fascist gangs' (*Whither France?*).

What emerges from Piratin's and Jacobs' books is a sense that Cable Street in part succeeded because the forces organising the mobilisation were known locally and had won over the years a certain authority in the eyes of the workers in the area -- in the case of the Stalinists, mainly through their work in unemployed and tenants' organisations. The local CP's grass-roots community orientation may have helped ensure a considerable turnout against the fascists; but the official CP popular-frontist orientation to liberals and union bureaucrats ensured that they mounted no systematic fight within the trade unions for mass anti-fascist action, and that what action did occur was diverted as much as possible into safe class-collaborationist channels.

However the CP cadres' years of working together meant that they were able to bring a certain level of organisation and discipline to the crowds that turned out that day. This gave them a rudimentary military competence sufficient to thwart police efforts to open up a route for the fascists.

Cable Street was thus no simple spontaneous mass action. In the past the International Socialists, forerunners of the SWP, have claimed that reproduction of CP-style local work of the 1930s was the road to anti-fascist success (see *International Socialism*, August 1973). But had official CP policy been carried through, the Stalinists would never have even made it over to the East End, leaving those workers who did turn out largely devoid of even the elementary organisation they did get. The only sure road to victory over the fascists is the fight within the organisations of the working class for workers defence groups and mass mobilisations to decisively rout the Mosleys and Tyndalls, as part of a struggle for revolutionary leadership of the labour movement.

End of the Blackshirts

After 1936, the fascists naturally continued to receive the protection of the bourgeois state. As late as July 1939 the BUF was able to

continued on page 7

Workers defence...

(Continued from page 1)

By its very nature as a popular-frontist alliance with bourgeois 'personalities' and labour bureaucrats, the ANL cannot be a long-term organising focus for street fighting -- let alone an organisation which can actually turn out tens of thousands of disciplined workers to crush the Front. To bolster its anti-fascist reputation,



Spartacist contingent in April 28 Southall march to protest cop killing of Blair Peach

the reformist SWP is however capable of switching its main emphasis from boot-licking legalism to the adventurist punch-ups with police which were the currency of anti-fascist demonstrations a few years ago. But even if it does make such a 'militant' turn, the SWP's pacifist 'democratic' side will lurk just below the surface, ready to emerge when the heat comes on and the friendship of the respectable and famous becomes a snug option. Neither perspective offers a way forward.

A defeat at the polls?

Judging by the SWP's post-election outpourings, however, one might think that the NF had already been vanquished. 'A humiliating defeat', *Socialist Worker* called the decline in the fascists' average electoral support. We certainly welcome all signs of a drop in fascist influence, including the overall 40 per cent drop in votes per constituency they experienced compared to the October 1974 election.

Some of their electoral base may have been filched by a right-wing Tory campaign which echoed key NF themes: tougher prison sentences to encourage respect for the 'rule of law'; tighter immigration laws, a register for new immigrants and a stiff 'Nationality Bill'; a

crackdown on the IRA with possible hanging for 'terrorists'. But the fact that the total NF vote was still nearly 200,000, and remained strong in a few key areas like the East End, shows that significant pockets of sympathy for the fascists continue to exist.

More important, reducing the NF vote is at best peripheral to stopping them. A fascist group is not some particularly odious bourgeois parliamentary party, but a militant *action* organisation devoted not to ballot slips but to the mobilisation of white lumpens and petty bourgeois for racist pogroms and anti-union and anti-communist attacks. In the weeks before the elections, NFers had systematically carried out 'paki-bashing' raids in the Southall area, physically attacking immigrants night after night as the local police whistled, tapped their feet and looked the other way. This was the real core of their election campaign, not the presentation of doddering ex-soldiers (who proudly boasted of *their* 'fight against the Nazis') in party political broadcasts.

The economic rot of British capitalism in decline has created the conditions for the emergence of fascism as a serious, although still marginal, force in British politics. The growing feeling that the traditional recipes of both Labour and the Tories are unable to guarantee social stability and progress has produced a certain sense of despair which the NF, with its 'solution' of deporting West Indian and Asian immigrants in order to 'create jobs' for native-born white Englishmen, has been able to tap.

The National Front are clearly not going to disappear because they suffered at the polls. But the notorious historic predilection of NF leaders for Hitlerite *German* fascism is an impediment to their aspirations to lead a mass fascist movement in this country. In Britain where there is widespread anti-German chauvinism, fuelled by the memories of two world wars, a successful fascist outfit will have to cast off all associations with the swastika and present itself as the most British of all British parties before it can play its murderous and union-smashing role to the full. This the NF tries to do, with its Union Jack parades and its 'Britain first' rhetoric. It has thankfully not yet succeeded in gaining a stable mass base. But it has spawned a cadre with some experience and a certain discipline which will be put to use when severe social dislocation presents the opportunity.

Before that time arrives, the working class must -- to use the apt expression of Nazi leader Goebbels -- crush 'in blood the very beginning' of NF work. But instead of this determined strategy the ostensibly revolutionary left merely offers a range of political dead-ends which, if not superceded in time, can only give the fascists *their* opportunity to crush 'in blood' the left, the immigrant communities and the working class.

One gimmick after another has been tried and found wanting: suicidal attempts to battle the cops to get at the fascists; popular-frontist alliances and calls on the state (the killers of Blair Peach) to outlaw the fascists; candy floss, toffee apples and the music of Tom Robinson; the wads of paper, the cheap tin badges, the throw-away placards churned out in place of the thousands of workers who need to be brought out to confront the fascists in the streets. All these -- and nothing substantial or lasting to show for it.

No, the way to throttle the Front is through drawing on the mass strength of the working class. Workers defence guards drawn from the car factories, the steel works and the coal mines, experienced in common struggle and backed by thousands of organised workers, are the force that can pulverise the National Front into the ground. Such defence guards will only be established by waging a sharp struggle inside the unions, against the bureaucrats who do nothing but thump the social-democratic pulpit and sermonise on the evils of racialism. They must be ousted from the leadership of the labour movement and a revolutionary party forged to carry forward the struggle for a new social order -- workers government and a planned socialist economy. This is the only road to ending for good the anarchy of capitalism which, in its death throes, inevitably spawns and nourishes the fascist scum.

* * *

Two defence funds have been set up to cover the legal expenses and fines of those arrested on the Southall and Leicester anti-fascist demonstrations. Send donations to: Southall Youth Movement, 12 Featherstone Road, Southall, Middlesex; and April 21 Defence Fund, Co-op Bank, Hotel St, Leicester. ■

IMG urges debate with fascists

Perhaps the best indicator of the International Marxist Group's rapid rightward course over the past few years has been its plunge towards belly-crawling respectability in the fight against fascism. Should trade unionists 'pull the plugs' on NF television broadcasts? No, says the IMG:

'The best policy would be to demand a counter-broadcast by the anti-fascist movement to answer the NF's lies....

'The mass media has presented itself as the defender of democratic rights by insisting on the NF's right to broadcast.... The demand for a right of reply would allow the labour movement to explain that it is the defender of democratic rights of the oppressed.'

(*Socialist Challenge*, 12 April)

And what if such a reply is refused air time? Well, 'pulling the plugs would then be much more widely understood....

Is this the same group which battled the cops who were protecting an NF meeting in Red Lion Square five years ago? What has happened to the old IMG's correct insistence that 'the only way to defend ourselves against fascists is to drive them off the campuses and off the streets' ('Fascists and Racists: Free Speech Will Not Stop Them', IMG student pamphlet, [1974])? Today IMG anti-racist organiser Rich Palser has this to say with relation to the ANL/police orchestrated fiasco which allowed the NF to march in Winchester last March:

'Confronting the fascists would only confuse the political point we wanted to make, by giving the impression that we were the ones

out to deny people's rights.' (*Socialist Challenge*, 22 March, emphasis in original)

Now for the IMG a struggle to deny the fascists a platform is too 'confusing' and undemocratic; after all Tyndall and Webster must have their 'people's rights' as well.

The IMG of the past, partial to substitutionist punch-ups, and the new legalistic model have this in common: neither would dream of seriously carrying the battle to smash the fascists into the mass organisations of the working class. But the old macho group would have been outraged at any suggestion that they would soon be borrowing outrageous civil-libertarian clap-trap from their American brethren in the United Secretariat, the Socialist Workers Party (US), to justify *allowing* the fascists a platform.

The new clothes that the IMG is trying on -- the calls for peaceful, legal 'counter-mobilisations', the growing concern that militants will look anti-democratic (!) if they impose on the 'rights' of the Tyndalls and Websters to foment race-hatred -- are merely hand-me-downs from the reformist SWP (US). They were first donned to march in the pacifist Anti Nazi League parades, and particularly to justify abandoning the defence of Brick Lane against the fascists in order to fly balloons with Carnival 2 on September 24 last year. They have been kept on ever since, making the IMG look more and more like a gang of crass, legalistic 'democratic' reformists -- bringing them, by that token, closer to their once-despised brothers across the Atlantic.

Healyites: Kill a commie for Qaddafi

In May of last year, 21 members of the Iraqi Communist Party (CP) were executed on charges of forming cells within the army. This juridical murder was part of a major crackdown on the mass party of the Iraqi proletariat by the bourgeois-nationalist Ba'athist regime. According to Iraqi CP leaders, some 15,000 party members are now sitting in jail. Though the pro-Moscow Stalinists still seek friendly relations with the Baghdad butchers, they are obliged to go through the motions of protesting the persecution of their Iraqi comrades. So the British CP press, the *Morning Star*, has run a few articles exposing anti-communist terror in Iraq.

In response the following recently appeared in a certain British paper:

'At the obvious instigation of the Kremlin, the Communist Party of Great Britain has become the centre of an immense slander offensive against the bastion of the Arab Revolution -- the Republic of Iraq and its revolutionary vanguard, the Arab Ba'athist Socialist Party....

'It is true that 21 CP members were executed early last year for illegally forming cells in the armed forces. The purpose of these cells was to fight against the government. There are no prizes for the answer to what would happen to Ba'athists who set up cells in the Soviet army. They would be ruthlessly purged!'

Is this perhaps a letter from the Iraqi press attaché to the *Times* or *Guardian*? No, incredibly, this shameless defence of white terror comes from an article entitled 'A Conspiracy Exposed' in the *News Line* (2 February), organ of the fake-Trotskyist Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) of Gerry Healy and Michael Banda. The Healyite syphilis within the ostensible Trotskyist movement has now become so putrescent that it can openly support the murder of working-class militants by a capitalist government.

The Healy/Banda tendency has long had an extremely unsavoury flavour. It combines idiot organisational sectarianism with the wildest gyrations of gross political opportunism to create an aura of extreme instability. Its penchant for elaborate conspiracy theories and its well-known readiness to employ physical gangsterism against left-wing opponents denote more than a trace of paranoia. But in the past couple of years the Healyites have added another element to their political banditry: they have become the British press agents for Colonel Muammar Qaddafi, the fanatical dictator of Libya. It is evidently in that capacity that they have now become shameless apologists for white terror in Iraq.

This atrocity has produced visible revulsion within the WRP periphery. The 8 March *News Line* prints a protest letter by one J.A., who identifies himself as a trade unionist, along with the editors' lengthy reply. J.A. writes in a tone of shocked disbelief:

'Are readers of the *News Line* to conclude that you actually support the murder of members of the Communist Party of Iraq?

'I thought that it was a principle among Trot-

skyists that they should defend workers against all attacks from the state in a capitalist country. How is the British working class to have any confidence in your organisation when you show such indifference to the murder of workers abroad at the hands of their state.'

And here is the Healyites' 'theoretical' justification:

'From an historical point of view, the Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party of Iraq has played a hundredfold more progressive role in the Middle East than Stalinism.'

The *News Line* goes on to list the supposed crimes of Stalinism against Arab nationalism, among them having 'led President Nasser around by the nose'.

So according to the Healyites, *bourgeois* nationalism in the Near East (and why only there?) is historically more progressive than the nationalism of the Soviet bureaucracy, a government based on a degenerated form of *proletarian* class rule. This kind of 'anti-Stalinism' places them in the company of Adolf Hitler, Chiang Kai-shek and Iraq's Kassem, who likewise condemned the Kremlin supporters as enemies of the 'national revolution'. For Trotskyists, Stalinist foreign policy is counterrevolutionary precisely in its support to bourgeois-nationalist regimes for the sake of Russian diplomatic manoeuvring. But the Healyites now condemn the Stalinists for 'betraying bourgeois nationalism through their support to the Soviet bureaucracy!'

The enormity of the Healy/Banda tendency's crime over Iraq goes far beyond typical opportunist betrayals. To put it in perspective, we will use an historical analogy. The Chinese Revolution of 1925-27 was decisive both in the development of Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution and in the historic division between Stalinism and Trotskyism. Trotsky opposed the Chinese Communist Party's liquidation into the bourgeois-nationalist Kuomintang as suicidal opportunism. But after his worst predictions had been borne out, he fully solidarised with the Communists against Chiang's terror. (Even Stalin, who advocated

~~the entry into the Kuomintang, defended the Communists when the bourgeois nationalists turned on them.)~~ The Healy/Banda position on Iraq is equivalent to supporting Chiang's 1927 massacre of the Communists on the grounds that they had 'betrayed the Chinese Revolution!'

And this is more than an analogy. The Communist Party of Iraq is not merely a Kremlin publicity agency. It is *the* mass party of the proletariat, centred on the strategic oil workers. And its mass base has a history of resisting Moscow's 'peaceful coexistence' with imperialism and alliance with bourgeois nationalism -- namely in the 1958 revolution.

In July 1958 the Hashemite monarchy of King Faisal was swept away by a popular uprising led by the CP in a bloc with a nationalist grouping in the officer corps under General Kassem. Under pressure from the revolutionary masses the CP went into opposition to Kassem and sections of the party were pushing to overthrow him and take power directly. So as not to disturb the 'spirit of Camp David', the Kremlin openly supported Kassem, denounced the Iraqi CP for 'ultraleftism' and demanded a purge of its left wing. As Isaac Deutscher wrote at the time:

'Since the far-off days of the middle 1920s, when Stalin ordered the Chinese communists to serve as the "Kuomintang's coolies", no Communist Party has been exposed to quite so abject a humiliation.' ('Russia and the International Communist Movement', in *Russia, China and the West: A Contemporary Chronicle 1953-1966* [1970])

Encouraged by Moscow's support and the demoralisation of the Communist ranks, Kassem moved against the CP. In 1960 he outlawed all parties affiliated to international organisations. Using this reactionary law he purged CPers from the trade unions and drove the party underground. The 1963 Ba'athist coup intensified the repression which Kassem had begun. Presumably the Healyites retrospectively support the Kassem/Ba'athist terror against the Communist Party because of the latter's 'international affiliations!'

With practised cynicism the *News Line* tells J.A.:

'It is a principle with Trotskyists that we

defend workers, whether they are Stalinists, revisionists or social democrats, from the attacks of the capitalist state.

'But, as the facts show, that has nothing to do with the incidents in Iraq.'

Do the Healyites then maintain that Ba'athist Iraq is *not* a capitalist state? Or perhaps the mean that they defend the workers movement against capitalist state repression only for groups which don't do anything illegal, like organise within the army. In case the WRP leaders' parroting of Qaddafi's oratory has entirely rotted their brains, we will remind them that one of the famous '21 conditions' for membership in the Communist International states:

'The obligation to spread communist ideas includes the special obligation to carry on systematic and energetic propaganda in the army. Where such agitation is prevented by emergency laws, it must be carried on illegally. Refusal to undertake such work would be tantamount to a dereliction of revolutionary duty and is incompatible with membership of the Communist International.' (Jane Degras, ed, *The Communist International 1919-1943*, Volume I, 1919-1922 [1956])

We have long maintained that beneath the bully bluster of Healy, Banda & Co is the cowardly legalism endemic to the British Labourite bureaucracy. The Stalinist cadres in the Iraq army, despite their class-collaborationist politics, are a hundredfold more courageous than Qaddafi's yellow journalists in Clapham High Street.

The WRP's fake-Trotskyist opponents are naturally scandalising it for its support to counterrevolutionary terror in Iraq, thrilled with the chance to oppose the WRP from the le But the myriad British centrist groups are by means champions of proletarian class independence in the Near East (or elsewhere). They support bourgeois nationalism in backward countries, though now less flamboyantly than Healyites. They too uphold the notion of the 'Arab Revolution' -- that most curious 'revolution' which is directed not against the Arab governments and ruling classes, but external against Zionist Israel. Like Healy/Banda, the

cratic' or 'anti-imperialist'. But now it is Healy/Banda who have taken the 'Arab Revolution' to its logical conclusion -- opposition any expression, however partial or deformed, proletarian class independence which disturbs the Arab rulers, up to and including support its bloody repression.

We warn the WRP and its supporters in the rump 'International Committee' that its cynical embrace of the Libyan and Iraqi military dictators has consequences. Whereas Stalinists similarly apologise for repression against left-wing opponents by bourgeois nationalist (eg Indira Gandhi, Mengistu, Velasco) as prescribed by the bureaucrats of the deformed workers states, the Healyites have gone them better in mimicking this class treason on behalf of bourgeois regimes directly. For a small propaganda group without a significant mass base, moreover, programme is decisive in determining a group's class character. In the case the Healy/Banda organisation, the contradiction between its 'Trotskyist' pretensions and the dictates of its Libyan patrons has repeatedly come down in favour of the latter.

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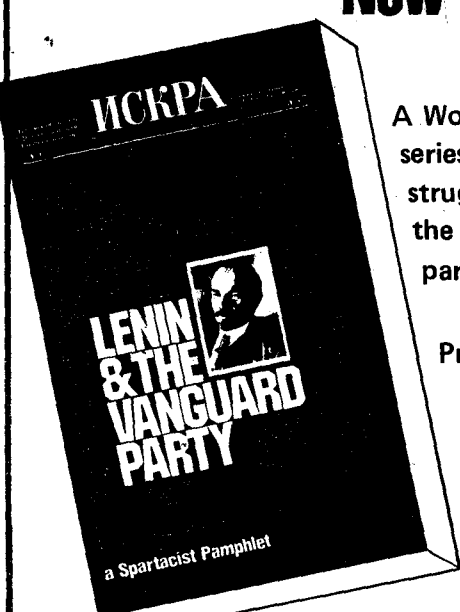
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Common Market ...

(Continued from page 8)

'For a Socialist United States of Europe!' To raise this slogan in running for the Strasbourg parliament implies that the Common Market is in some way historically progressive, ie provides an objective basis for the socialist unification of Europe. But the Common Market is no more a progressive step toward the socialist unification of Europe than was Nazi Germany's conquest of most of Europe in 1939-44. The USec electoral platform never clearly states that the EEC *cannot* be transformed into a Socialist Europe but must be destroyed.

A Socialist United States of Europe requires smashing the EEC, which is a capitalist alliance not only directed at proletarian revolution in West Europe but also at the bureaucratically deformed expressions of proletarian state power in East Europe. While the USec platform covers itself with one sentence, 'for defense of the nationalized property systems against imperialism', it does *not* relate opposition to the EEC to military defence of the Soviet bloc.

Proof of the unseriousness of the 'orthodox' elements in the USec's platform was the alacrity with which the French Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (LCR) dropped any reference to defending the deformed and degenerated workers states against imperialism, its demand for withdrawal from NATO and its opposition to the extension of the EEC in order to form a joint slate with the economists of Lutte Ouvriere (LO). The LCR also accepted LO's demand that the joint slate bear no reference to the 'Fourth International'. Like LO, the Mandelites focus solely on the Common Market's internal capitalist economic principles, an opposition similar to that of many left social democrats.

While the USec's EEC election platform contains one sentence on Soviet defencism, its main rival, the French-centred Organising Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International (OCRFI) led by Pierre Lambert, does not even have this figleaf of Trotskyist orthodoxy. Although the Lambertist Organising Committee is boycotting the EEC elections, its motivation for doing so places it *to the right* of the Mandelites on the question.

The OCRFI opposes the Common Market mainly because it perpetuates the post-1945 'division of Europe' (centrally of Germany) -- ie does not extend into the Soviet bloc. In fact, the imperialist bourgeoisies of the EEC very much want to overcome the Cold War division of Europe by overthrowing the proletarian state power and collectivised property of the Soviet bloc. The OCRFI equates the West European imperialist ruling classes with the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy as *joint* violators of national self-determination for the peoples of Europe. It explicitly equates as enemies of the European working classes NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Such an equation is blatant abandonment of the Trotskyist principle of defence of the USSR against imperialism.

Lambert & Co come out against the division of Germany with the following slogans: 'Unconditional unity of Germany!', 'Withdrawal of all occupation troops, East and West!', 'Down with the Berlin Wall!', 'Freedom of expression, communication, assembly, for organisations in all of Germany!' In concrete realities these slogans amount to a *call for social counter-revolution in East Germany*, for its conquest by the West German imperialist state! Such slogans could well have been raised by Konrad Adenauer in the 1950s and are today raised by a wing of the ruling Social Democrats.

**Defend the gains of October!
For a Socialist United States of Europe!**

The outbreak of imperialist world war in 1914 signalled that the forces of production had outgrown capitalist property relations and the nation-state system, and so required the international socialist reconstruction of society as the only alternative to a barbaric orgy of destruction. The 1917 Bolshevik Revolution was the first great step toward the Socialist United States of Europe. However, the delay of socialist revolutions in West Europe laid the basis for the bureaucratic degeneration of Soviet Russia (Stalinism). Committed to conciliating imperialism in the name of 'socialism in one country', the Russian Stalinist bureaucracy is an enemy of proletarian revolution in the West. And now the Mandelites tail the Stalinist reformists while the Lambertists chase after their social-democratic cousins.

The international Spartacist tendency (iSt) is dedicated to the struggle to reforge the Fourth International against the revisionist opportunism of the Mandels and Lamberts. Today the iSt is unique in upholding the Trotskyist principle of unconditional military defence of the degenerated/deformed workers states against imperialism, as part of a programme for anti-capitalist socialist revolution in West Europe and proletarian political revolution against Stalinism in East Europe. Genuine unity of Europe will not come through chimerical 'reform' of the bosses' Common Market or the pipedreams of 'detente' with imperialism, but only through revolutionary action of the workers, East and West!

* * *

The above statement on the EEC elections has also been circulated by our comrades in the other European sections of the iSt, the Ligue Trotskyiste de France and Trotzkistische Liga Deutschlands, as part of an international campaign against the imperialists' Common Market.

Cable Street ...

(Continued from page 5)

hold a 'peace' rally of 20,000 at Earl's Court. The fascist movement was only broken up during World War II, when its leaders, tainted by their associations with Germany and Italy, were thrown in jail and the organisation suspended. According to bourgeois academic Robert Benewick, in July 1940 'the Mosleyites issued a final circular telling their members that Britain was now threatened by invasion and they should do everything that they could do to help the nation' (*The Fascist Movement in Britain*). Having united the nation behind the patriotic war effort, Britain's capitalists no longer required the services of the fascist gangs.

Many bourgeois historians and social democrats cite the disintegration of the BUF at the onset of the war in an attempt to belittle the militant anti-fascist mobilisations of the working class in the mid-1930s. They claim that fascism in Britain would have died of natural causes if left to itself.

Mosley's Blackshirts did not get very far in part because the British bourgeoisie did not have the same compelling need to resort to a fascist solution as did the German capitalist class. Having inflicted a major defeat on the working class in 1926, compounded by the disarray in the labour movement engendered by MacDonald's defection to the coalition National Government in 1931, the position of the bourgeoisie in Britain was not as precarious as that of their counterparts elsewhere in Europe. Had it been, though, there is no doubt that many more of the Fleet Street barons, 'captains of industry' and City bankers would have financed and armed the Blackshirts just as Krupp and the magnates of German industry financed and armed Hitler's Brownshirts.

Piratin's book, and especially the material in Jacobs' account, make clear however that the British fascists did have real possibilities of gaining a mass base among the unemployed, the petty bourgeoisie and backward workers due to the catastrophic economic depression of the 1930s. But after the experience of Mussolini and Hitler, and with events in Austria in 1934 and Spain in 1936 on their minds, many thousands of militant workers in Britain were anxious to nip Mosley's movement in the bud. While the mobilisations of Cable Street and elsewhere seldom managed to actually physically trounce the Blackshirts, and while the British labour movement was never as decisively tested as the German workers movement was, it is nonetheless clear that the mass anti-BUF mobilisations were the key to depriving Mosley of his potential base of support.

From Cable Street to Brick Lane

The struggles of the 1930s are rich in lessons, of which we have drawn but a few here. But correct conclusions can only be utilised by those who fight to carry forward the Trotskyist programme. Cynics like the SWP can commemorate Cable Street, even though their own excuses for leading the Anti Nazi League Carnival 2 in September away from the National Front are identical to those used by the CP before Cable Street -- except that the Stalinists eventually changed their position while the SWP couldn't manage even that.

Colin Sparks actually writes in a review of

the Piratin and Jacobs books in *Socialist Review*:

'In my opinion, the reason why the leadership of the CP was determined to press on with a jamboree in Central London while the fascists marched into an immigrant area of East London had nothing to do with their claim that it would be difficult to "organise" opposition.' (January 1979)

This, incredibly, was written by an SWP leader only a few months after his own organisation pressed on 'with a jamboree in Central London while the fascists marched into an immigrant area of East London' -- and then claimed that 'organisational' difficulties led to the betrayal! In the mouths of opportunists, 'Cable Street' is a meaningless historical incantation. But for Trotskyists it is both an inspiration and a guide to revolutionary action. ■

'Iron Lady' ...

(Continued from page 2)

ability on the backs of the working class, whilst pursuing an aggressively reactionary foreign policy chiefly characterised by fervent anti-Sovietism.

The Queen's Speech which opened Parliament on May 15 was only a slightly toned-down rewrite of the Tory election manifesto, with its manifold anti-working class proposals. Already the government's paid thugs and strikebreakers in the police and army have been given a hefty pay rise, blood-money for the strikes of the future. The new prime minister's first targets may well be those public sector workers -- teachers, postmen and the strategically-crucial power workers -- who still have large pay claims pending. Both the postmen and power workers gave the new government warning by overwhelmingly rejecting the sellout pay and productivity deals recommended to them by their union leaders.

Major union/government confrontations along the lines of the miners strike five winters ago are a near certainty at some point in the life of this Tory government. Conscious of Heath's spectacular failure then, the new Conservative regime is determined not to botch it again. And when the Tory attacks do come, the bureaucrats are likely to behave as they did in 1970-74: first look for ways out and when that fails display a bit of economic muscle while leaving the 'political' work to the Labour top brass.

Turning left?

The parliamentary 'lefts' have already begun their predictable 'militant' turn. Tony Benn, who was quite content to sit in the Wilson and Callaghan Cabinets and raise his hand again and again to cut workers' living standards, has declined to sit in the Shadow Cabinet in order to return to the back benches. There he will supposedly fight to revitalise the party, and doubtless prepare his challenge for the party leadership.

The last five years demonstrated the real nature of left-wing Labourism, and the truly perfect elasticity of Tribune backbones. However, without the onerous responsibility of directly managing the bourgeoisie's offensive the Labour Party, and its 'left' MPs in particular, will on occasion be able to posture effectively as the defenders of workers' interests.

Whenever they attempt to do this revolutionaries must drive home the lessons of Labour's betrayals, continuing to expose and challenge the reformist bureaucrats as they attempt to hold back effective struggle against the employers and the government. The vicious cycle of Tory government attacks, left-sounding Labour opposition fostering new illusions in the working class, followed by Labour government attacks, must be broken.

The myriad fake-Trotskyist groups have, however, already issued their new watchword: 'Unity against the Tories' -- ie unity behind the Labour fakers. The IMG concretises this in its new slogan 'Kick out the Tories! For a Labour government!', and adds:

'Tony Benn says he wants to build an opposition to the Tories. That's good. But it has to be based outside Parliament as well as inside.' (*Socialist Challenge*, 17 May)

But a struggle to put Tony Benn on the government benches in place of Margaret Thatcher will not stop the attacks of decaying capitalism -- however much 'extra-parliamentary' support the fake-Trotskyists are to provide him. A new revolutionary leadership of the labour movement is acutely needed to lead the fight for the workers themselves to rule in Britain. ■

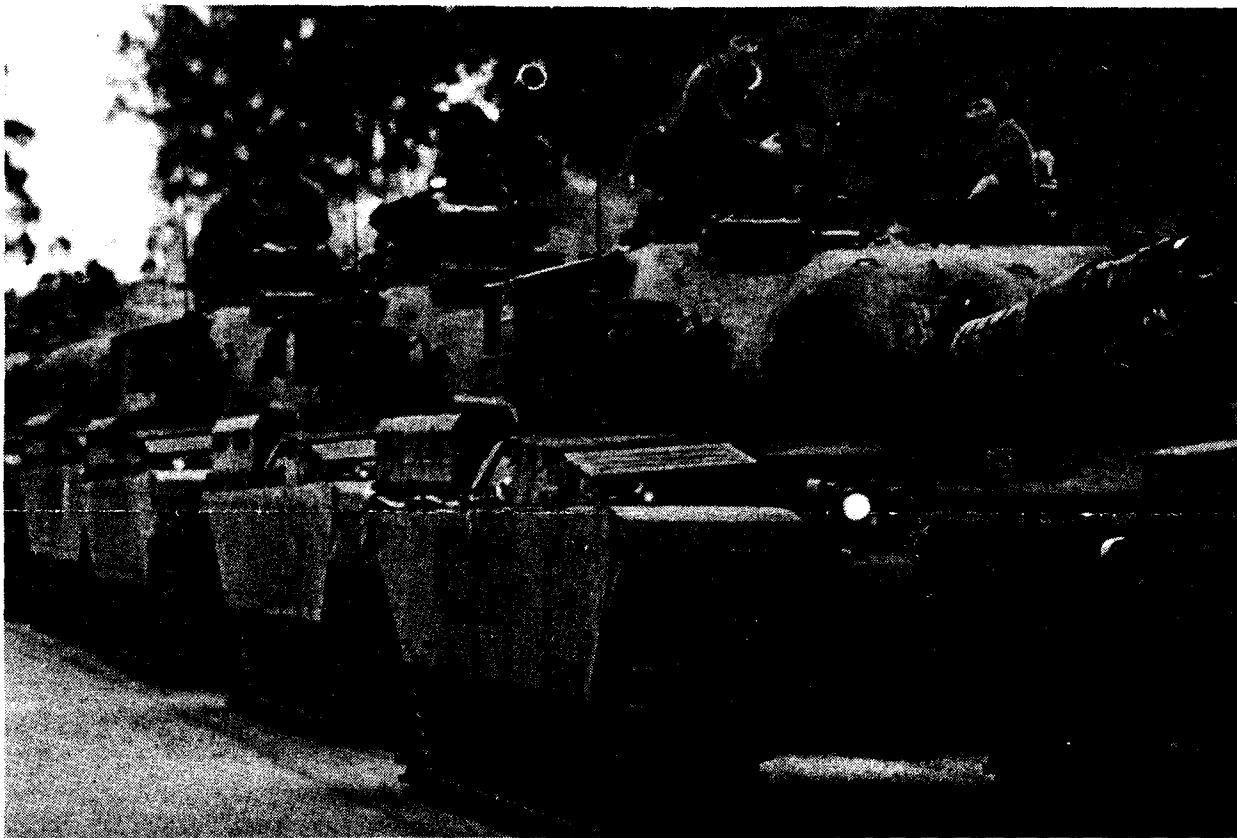
SPARTACIST BRITAIN

Boycott EEC elections!

Down with the Common Market of NATO Europe!

Since its creation more than 20 years ago, the European Economic Community (EEC) or Common Market has been an imperialist alliance ultimately aimed at the bureaucratically degenerated Soviet workers state, the industrial and military powerhouse of the one-third of the world where capitalist rule has been overthrown. The first direct elections to the European 'parliament' at Strasbourg this June pose the question of the EEC before the working classes of capitalist Europe.

No one is surprised that the parliamentary cretins of the British Labour and French Communist parties are running in the elections even though they are formally opposed to the institutionally capitalist Common Market. But one might think that a self-styled 'revolutionary Marxist' international tendency which states that 'working people have nothing to hope for and nothing to defend in



British NATO tank force in Germany

this capitalist Common Market or its parliament', would not participate in this Euro-imperialist charade. Yet the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat (USec) of Ernest Mandel is not only standing candidates for the economic adjunct of NATO, but is making this its big campaign of the season.

The EEC was originally set up in the mid-1950s as part of the American-directed reorganisation of West Europe against the Soviet bloc. Washington policymakers were concerned that French opposition to German dominance of Europe could lead to a revival of Paris' traditional alliance with Moscow, as in the 1935 Stalin-Laval pact. The Common Market was and remains an economic compromise essentially between the French and German ruling classes in the context of their political/military alliance against the USSR.

Ernest Mandel's claim that the Common Market is the embryo of a capitalist United States of Europe, 'an intermediate stage between a simple loose confederation of states and a supra-national state' (*Rouge*, 27 April 1979) is utopian-reformist. Rather the EEC is the means whereby West German imperialism helps finance the unity of the 'free world'. Direct elections to this utterly impotent body attempt to give a pseudo-democratic facade to an alliance of imperialist nation-states.

Reformist objections to the Common Market

The West German-imposed free market regime in the EEC restricts certain favoured reformist policies, such as subsidising nationalised

industries. Therefore, there has been national-reformist opposition to the Common Market, especially strong in Britain which is also hard hit by its agricultural protectionism. Our principled opposition to the EEC and to its expansion has nothing in common with the social-chauvinism of the British left Labourites or French Stalinists. We do not oppose the EEC primarily because the Brussels bureaucracy can on paper override the decisions of the national parliaments. Nor are we overly concerned that Common Market regulations restrict this or that form of state intervention in the economy. We are implacably opposed to the EEC above all because it provides economic glue for holding together the Western imperialist alliance against the Soviet Union.

Recognising that the arrogantly capitalistic Common Market is unpopular among class-conscious workers in France and Britain, the German Social Democrats (SPD) are presenting a left face in these elections. With Willy Brandt heading the SPD list they are running their trade-union officials and a couple of ex-New Leftists, types they would never think of standing for the Bundestag. Furthermore, the SPD is campaigning for a European-wide 35 hour working week, seeking to present the EEC as a potential agency for labour reformism. The German Social Democrats do not raise the shorter working week in the Bundestag, much less fight for it on the picket line, but talk about it only in the Strasbourg parliament which has absolutely no power to do anything. By some odd coincidence, the USec is also making the 35 hour working week one of their main demands in the

EEC elections. Perhaps the Mandelites will claim that Helmut Schmidt's party is tailing them!

Against Stalinist nationalism and anti-German chauvinism

The EEC elections have found the Eurocommunists at each other's throats. The French CP, for example, is opposing Spain's entry into the EEC because it will increase competition for France's farmers. Carillo's Spanish CP, which out of support to its own bourgeois national-chauvinism favours entry, in turn denounces Marchais' party for 'parish-pump patriotism' and 'cheap electioneering'.

More ominously, the French Stalinists along with the Gaullists are turning the EEC elections into a focus for anti-German chauvinism. The Stalinists and Gaullists have sought to channel popular hostility to Giscard's 'free market' remedy of unemployment

by whipping up hysteria against a 'boche' (kraut) menace. The French CP's vile slogans feature 'No to a German Europe' and 'Paris Will Not Become a Suburb of Bonn'.

The old German social democrat August Bebel called anti-semitism 'the socialism of fools'. In France today anti-bocheism has become the socialism of fools and opportunists. In reality, German industrial strength is one of the main objective bases for a Socialist United States of Europe. A re-united German workers state will be a most powerful force for the reconstruction of Europe, for overcoming poverty and backwardness in Brittany, the Mezzogiorno, Ireland, Greece etc.

How USec legitimises an imperialist alliance

National parliaments represent an historic gain of the bourgeois-democratic revolutions and remain more progressive than alternative forms of bourgeois rule -- fascist or military bonapartism. But the European parliament has no progressive content at all; it merely serves to mask the real nature of the EEC as an imperialist alliance. The USec's campaign around the EEC elections is parliamentary cretinism in the service of a public relations gimmick. What if NATO's North Atlantic Council were constituted by direct elections, or the colonialist British Commonwealth set up a pseudo-parliamentary body: would the USec seek representation in these imperialist alliances? We can only assume that they would!

The USec's main slogan in the elections is

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