

## **ALERT!** Mass executions of leftists

# BLOODY HORROR IN KHOMEINI'S IRAN

Reprinted from Workers Vanguard no 468, 6 January.

Reports coming out of Iran point to a mammoth new wave of executions of leftist political prisoners now taking place in Khomeini's jails. Already, an estimated 1000 to 5000 have been hanged or lined up before the firing squads of the Islamic dictatorship and dumped in mass graves. In some provincial cities, the entire prison population has reportedly been massacred. Virtually every imprisoned leader of Iran's pro-Moscow Tudeh Party has been executed, and supporters of the People's Mujahedin, the Revolutionary Workers Organisation of Iran (Rahe Kargar), Iranian People's Fedayeen (Majority) and the Fedayeen Minority are said to have been killed in the thousands. It is now feared that the wholesale physical annihilation of political prisoners is planned by next month's tenth anniversary of the mullahs' February 1979 seizure of power.

Following the cease-fire in the Iran-Iraq war last August, the ayatollahs' regime in Teheran has turned the jails into killing fields for all those it sees as political opponents. Meanwhile, the ruling generals in Baghdad launched a "scorched earth" drive against Iraqi Kurdistan, razing three-quarters of the Kurdish villages and sending tens of thousands of Kurds fleeing over the border into Turkey, where the army has been waging a brutal war against Kurdish guerrillas. In Iran, Khomeini inaugurated his Islamic "revolution" by killing more than 10,000 Kurds, and

in August unleashed a massacre of thousands of Iraq-allied Mujahedin troops inside Iranian Kurdistan. As we wrote in October:

"The so-called 'cease-fire' negotiated by the United Nations may not have ended the savage and senseless war between Iraq and Iran. But it has given these two self-proclaimed 'revolutionary' regimes the respite to concentrate their forces on what they do best: massacring their own peoples."

— Workers Vanguard no 462,  
7 October 1988



Reza/Sipa  
**Condemned to die: Teheran regime has thousands scheduled for execution.**

**The international workers movement must raise an urgent cry of outrage against these unspeakable crimes being committed against opponents of the mullahs' dictatorship! The bloodbath in Iran is part and parcel of Teheran's efforts to "mend bridges" with Western imperialists, who are perfectly willing to see Iranian leftists slaughtered. Thousands of militants have already been killed and thousands more are marked for execution. They are already being held incommunicado; all family visits have been cut off. The left, labour movement and all supporters of democratic rights must mobilise internationally to bring worldwide attention to the mass slaughter now going on, demanding an immediate halt to the executions and freedom for the victims of Khomeini's terror in Iran!**

### FIRING SQUADS MOW DOWN LEFTISTS

While the killings have reportedly been going on in secret since August, the magnitude and chilling horror of the massacre is now evident from the repeated accounts coming from every left group in Iran. The *Independent* reported on 6 December 1988 that "The British-based Committee for the Defence of the Iranian People's Rights said at the weekend that there were indications that more than 1,000 people had been executed since Iran signed a cease-fire

with Iraq in August." This report follows a "claim by the opposition Mujahedin organisation that the death toll may be as high as 5,000".

An Amnesty International news release on 13 December stated that it "has now received more than 300 names of prisoners executed in recent weeks and months, and fears that the real total could amount to thousands. Many of the victims were members of, or sympathizers with, the PMOI [Mujahedin]; many others were members of secular leftist groups such as the Rahe Kargar, factions of the Organization of People's Fedaiyan, and the Tudeh Party.... A large number of those executed had been imprisoned for several years, and had been tortured, some having suffered similar treatment during the rule of the Shah." Those killed include some who were held for years without trial and others who had been sentenced for distributing leaflets and "disturbing the peace" at political rallies in 1980-81.

The newspaper of the Communist Party of Britain, the *Morning Star* (1 December 1988), blazoned across its front page "Iran Executes Communist Leadership". The paper reported: "At least 40 members of the Tudeh Party of Iran are known to have been shot in the past three weeks, as have leading members of

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**DEMONSTRATE!**  
**Stop the Executions in Iran!**  
**Free All Victims of Khomeini's**  
**Terror!**

**Venue: Iranian Embassy**      **Time: 12 Noon**  
**27 Princes Gate**            **Date: Saturday,**  
**London SW7**                    **14 January**

**Nearest tube: South Kensington**

# Free the Broadwater Farm Three!

On 11 December, some 250 demonstrators gathered in front of Wormwood Scrubs prison in London to protest the imprisonment of the framed-up Broadwater Farm Three. Winston Silcott, Engin Raghup and Mark Braithwaite were sent down for life on no evidence whatsoever after the October 1985 police riot in Tottenham in which PC Blakelock expired. The cops came up one short and the state responded with a vindictive frenzy – rounding up hundreds, extracting "confessions" through terror and intimidation, finally getting its vengeance in the convictions of the three.

Spartacist comrades participated in the protest picket, raising slogans including: "Avenge Cherry Groce, Cynthia Jarrett, Clinton McCurbin – Jail the Killer Cops!" "Free the Tottenham Three!" "For Trade Union/Minority Mobilisations Against Racist/Cop Terror!" Called by the Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign, the picket coincided with the ending of the Gifford Enquiry and the

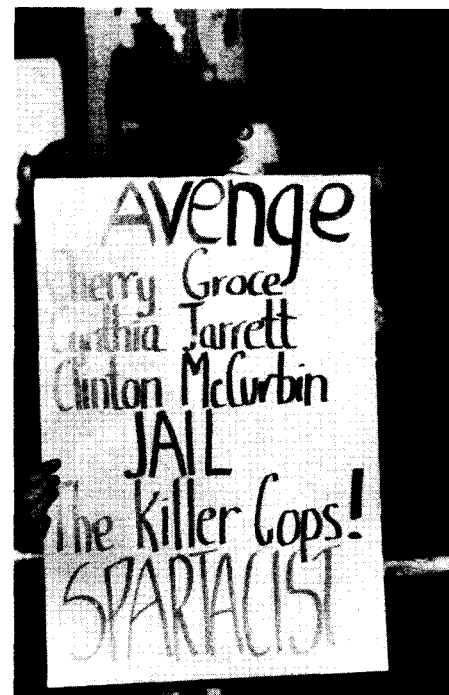
attempt by solicitors to have leave for the three to appeal. The appeal was denied a few days later. But Lord Gifford – barrister and Labour peer – concluded that the convictions were an "exceptionally grave miscarriage of justice" and a "blot upon the reputation of British justice". A gross frame-up it was – but what could possibly put a "blot" on British "justice"? The Broadwater convictions are so patently trumped-up that both Amnesty International and the World Council of Churches have concluded that the government has no case. From the Birmingham Six case to the government's cover-up over the "shoot-to-kill" policy – British "justice" is a sick, sick joke.

Silcott was an outspoken opponent of the police and thus on the cops' "wanted list". Engin Raghup, who is of Turkish origin, has a mental age of ten years according to his solicitor. No forensic, photographic or witness "evidence" was ever produced against any of them. The Broadwater Farm Three were certain-

ly framed up, but no crime was committed from the standpoint of the working class in any case. The Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign (BWFDC) features the slogan: "Winston Silcott, Engin Raghup, Mark Braithwaite – innocent." True enough, but as far as we are concerned no one is "guilty" except the rioting police who invaded Tottenham after their murder of Cynthia Jarrett. These racist killers in uniform get away with literal murder while their intended victims are jailed. The capitalist state is not neutral.

The Labour Party politicians, including the "lefts" who like to pose as "friends of the people", have a touching faith in capitalist justice and push impotent schemes for "police accountability". At a public meeting a week before the picket, Ken Livingstone offered a parliamentary cretinist "bill of rights" as an answer. Bernie Grant, who backed off from his perfectly correct statement that the cops got "a bloody good hiding" in Tottenham so he would maintain unity with the despicable Neil Kinnock, admitted that the Labour Party wouldn't lift a finger for the Broadwater Farm Three. He then went on to advocate a "broad alliance" of blacks, Irish and women. Thanks for nothing. What we need is not a semi-Labourite version of Jesse Jackson's "Rainbow Coalition" but *integrated class struggle* which unites the oppressed with the social power of the organised working class!

Such a proletarian perspective is not only anathema to the Labour traitors, but also to nationalist groupings like Black Unity and Freedom Party/Black Voice who while criticising BWFDC for its state funding, nonetheless remain crippled by the separatist/sectoralist framework which fits so neatly with Labourite reformism. In contrast, we fight for the independent mobilisation of the working class and its allies against racist and fascist terror. An example is the



Workers Hammer  
11 December 1988: Picket at Wormwood Scrubs to free Broadwater Farm Three.

successful November 5 Labor/Black Mobilization against the Ku Klux Klan and skinhead filth in Philadelphia (see WH no 102). This was not "community self-defence" in the narrow, liberal, Labourite sense: it was a defence of many communities led by the *integrated trade union movement*.

To fight for the freedom of the Broadwater Farm Three – and to struggle against the system that has condemned these three young men to languish behind bars for a non-crime that they did not commit – a revolutionary proletarian perspective is urgently needed. An integrated Leninist party is the indispensable ingredient for implementing that perspective, a party built in irreconcilable struggle against all forms of Labourite and nationalist reformism. Free the Broadwater Farm Three Now!

## Long live the memory of Luxemburg and Liebknecht!

Seventy years ago, on 15 January 1919, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht were murdered by counterrevolutionary troops sent to suppress the Spartacus uprising of January 1919 in Berlin. In commemorating these heroic revolutionary leaders of



LENIN

TROTSKY

the German proletariat with this statement by the International Labor Defense, founded by the Communist Party (US) in the 1920s, we rededicate ourselves to the cause for which they fought and died – the international socialist revolution.

The name and tradition of *Spartacus* is dear to the heart of every working class rebel in the world, and particularly to those of Germany. *Spartacus* is for them the standard of revolutionary courage against the perfidy, cowardice and betrayal of the bureaucratic leaders during the imperialist war, the banner borne by Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg and their comrades. *Spartacus* is for them the flag of struggle which led them in the January uprising in 1919 to a heroic attempt at the final victory of the oppressed. *Spartacus* is for them the ineradicable memory of those two peerless leaders who were foully murdered on January 15, 1919 by the drunken agents of reaction who worked with the connivance of Social-democratic Scheidemanns and Noskes.

The portentous signs of new struggles and new victories of the working class, and the gathering of the clouds of another world imperialist war sharpen for all of us the immortal memories of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. They bring to mind a scene of Berlin's *Spartacus* days:

"All found with arms are shot dead. With hands raised the revolutionaries, beaten and spat upon by the soldiers, march to the barracks. Here they are placed against a wall and threatened for hours with death. A sixteen year old young corporal is ordered to shout. 'Long live Scheidemann.' With pale face he turns to his tormentors and calls, 'Long live Liebknecht!' A rifle shot, and he falls dead to the ground."

But above the crack of the rifle shots that wound and kill the fighters in the army of liberation rises the deathless cry: *Spartacus still lives!*

– "Spartacus", *Labor Defender* (February 1928)

## WORKERS HAMMER



Monthly newspaper of the Spartacist League, British section of the international Spartacist tendency.

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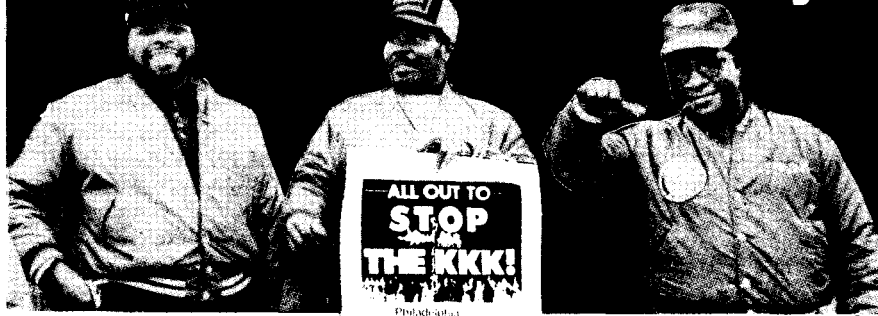
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## "The Klan Won't Ride in Philly!"



The Ku Klux Klan lynchers and skinhead terrorists threatened to march in Philadelphia on 5 November, 1988. Instead over 1000 trade unionists, students, gays – black and white, Hispanic and Asian – came out in response to the call by the Partisan Defense Committee to stop the racist terrorists.

This Spartacist video tells the story of the mass, labour-centred mobilisation which made sure "The Klan Won't Ride in Philly!" Contains footage of the 1979 Greensboro Massacre (where five anti-fascist protesters were killed by a KKK/Nazi hit squad),

the bombing of Philly MOVE, and of the trade union/black mobilisations in Detroit, San Francisco and Washington, DC, which kept the fascists off the streets.

This documentary vividly shows the Spartacist League's Marxist approach of bringing out the power of labour and minorities to fight fascist terror and contains important lessons for militants internationally.

Date: Thursday, 26 January

Time: 7:30 pm

Venue: Conway Hall

(Red Lion Square, WC2)

Nearest Tube: Holborn

London

# Youth: the new "enemy within"?

## Cops riot against student protesters

Brutal mounted police charges on protesters have become part of the landscape of Thatcher's Britain. On 24 November 1988, student youth protesting against the introduction of loans were trampled and beaten by rioting cops. The photos splashed in the next day's newspapers recalled the battlefield of Orgreave, the police rampage at Wapping, the full-scale cop riots in Brixton, Tottenham and Handsworth. Twenty-five thousand students came from all over Britain to demonstrate against the government's policies – they were considered fair game for the Iron Bitch and her deadly boys in blue.

The main charge happened at Westminster Bridge where 3000 of the more militant and determined students had gone to try and lobby parliament directly. Police had the bridge completely blocked so they couldn't cross. Eyewitnesses said that on command, without warning, the cop vans raced to the side of the road, the police cordon suddenly split, and through the emerging gap 42 mounted police in spear formation charged at full speed straight into the fleeing demonstrators.

One and a half hours before the first charge nearby hospitals had been put on "yellow alert" to expect abnormal numbers of casualties or severe injuries. This was a vicious premeditated attack. Two "smaller" police charges happened around the same time at Embankment. In all, twenty-seven people were admitted to hospital, 69 arrested, of those 45 were charged, one obscenely with cruelty to animals. The most seriously injured, Maria Franklin, told the *Morning Star* (2 December 1988) what happened to her:

"We fell and I was lying on my stomach. I thought people were running over me to escape – it turned out I was being trampled by a police horse.' Maria was picked up and carried away from the panicking crowds and it was only then that she realised how badly hurt she was. 'I looked at my leg and could see the bone and my flesh was torn right away,' she said. In fact Maria lost three pints of blood before she got to hospital and a week later she is left with a 12 inch scar below her left knee which is a perfect horseshoe shape. 'It was the same thing during the miners strike, the same thing at Wapping,' she said. 'Now the students. Are they going to stampede nurses on the picket line next? Where is it going to end?'"

Other victims described the scene at the bridge:

● "As I turned, I could see mounted police charging straight through the middle of the crowd. I saw a boy fall to the ground and smash his head as he was trying to run. My friend was hit in the face by a policeman, and others were pulled off buildings where they had climbed to escape the charging horses." (Laura Andrews, *Independent*, 28 November 1988)

● "One friend was knocked unconscious when the mounted police charged, leaving his companion, who is blind, helpless in the middle of the fray. When the latter was

rescued, his rescuer was hit by a policeman for pointing out his disability." (Samantha Kellow, *Independent*, 28 November 1988)

● "Foot police started mopping up. I saw a group of them beating up a student. They threw him into a group of students, 20 deep, forced against a wall. The horses forced many students down a side street, which we thought was a dead end. I couldn't see what happened to them. Someone with blood-spattered jeans was ferried past me towards hospital." (Nicholas Moore, *Guardian*, 6 December 1988) What brought this new "enemy

fragette protests for the enfranchisement of women, marching on Westminster has been declared "illegal" by successive Labour and Tory governments alike. These hallowed halls of "democracy" are *verboten* to the people. Furthermore, Thatcher increasingly treats any hint of opposition in a spirit similar to that of SAS dealings with IRA suspects: *police action*, albeit on a different scale. The week before the march to Westminster Bridge, North London Poly students taunted Norman Tebbit with chants of "Remember Brighton!" That alone was probably enough to mark them for vindictive beatings

aftermath of the cop riot on 24 November.

This dangerous red-baiting by those who would amnesty the violence of the state must be unequivocally denounced! It not only tries to cover for the cops, but sets up the SWP in particular for the unkindly attentions of the state. The bourgeois press was happy to play up the "red disruption" angle, as was the Labourite leadership of the National Union of Students (NUS) who bayed with the rest of the wolves that the SWP was guilty of "organising the trouble". Thus the *Times* (26 November 1988) could report that "the NUS view was suppo-



Thatcher's  
cossacks  
charge  
students  
marching on  
Westminster.

within" onto the streets and toward the Palace of Westminster is the most recent attempt to make education a money-making concern, even less affordable for all but the rich. Much government aid for higher education will be halted, grants will be frozen; all social security benefits, income support, unemployment and housing benefits are to be stopped, forcing students to take out loans to pay for their education and repaying once they start work. As it is, many students live in tenuous to squalid conditions and 64 per cent of them are in debt by the end of the first term of their first year. Meanwhile the Treasury eventually expects this new Thatcherite scheme to rake in a cool £200 million per annum. Obviously, the worse off you are, the harder this will hit. Black and Asian youth, women, the working class and poor will find it nearly impossible to get a share of the already hideously class-biased education system: Oxbridge for the wealthy, the run-down polytechnics for the "lucky" others. But now even the lousy *status quo* is being attacked in the direction of returning higher education to a privilege of the monied.

The students who tried to get to Westminster while Parliament was in session were the main target of the police. Since the days of the Suf-

and arrests and the government must also recall that only two years ago hundreds of thousands of French students, supported by workers threatening strike action, successfully halted the introduction of the Devaquet law which would have sharply increased class privilege in education there.

### LABOUR PARTY TREACHERY

The unspeakable Neil Kinnock rushed to blame the *students* themselves for the police violence, singling out the reformist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) as "seeking a confrontation". Kinnock slithers naturally into this slavish, violence-baiting role; it's a continuation of what he did during the miners strike. As the heroic miners faced the full onslaught of bourgeois state repression, Kinnock railed against the strikers' "violence", ie the defence of their strike and their families against the virtual state of siege declared by Thatcher in the coalfields. The Labour and TUC "lefts" like Tony Benn and Ron Todd also played their role in ensuring the NUM would fight alone, quashing potential joint strike action by the transport and dockers unions. Labour's pro-cop, anti-struggle scenario was played again against the printworkers and the inner-city minorities. A smaller-scale version of this treachery was operating in the

rted by Chief Supt Allen Evershed, the officer in charge of the police operation on Westminster Bridge". The craven NUS even went on to claim that police numbers were inadequate (!) and that they intended to launch an inquiry as to "who was responsible for leading marchers off the official route, agreed beforehand with police" (*Independent*, 26 November 1988). Do the NUS bureaucrats want *more* beaten and arrested students? Student anger forced some softening at the recent NUS conference, where the Labourite bureaucrats agreed to back Maria Franklin's case against the cops. We can assume that outrage by well-connected parents over the beating of their kids also led to a bit of "rethink". But the NUS is a training ground for the real thing – Labourite parliamentarians and wind-bags – so the Kinnockite knee-jerk reaction is no aberration.

### STUDENTS, YOUTH: IN THATCHER'S CROSS-HAIRS

The 24 November cop riot against protesting students took place in the context of an all-sided government attack on students' rights and education in general. Eight students were suspended after the demonstration against Tebbit, and a High Court injunction has banned student union

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# Labour government ran Nazi "rat line"

## Britain harbours Hitler's war criminals

A list of 3000 Nazi war criminals said to have been drawn up by British authorities in 1948, acquired from the United Nations, was published last January by MPs from the Parliamentary War Crimes Group. The Soviet Union's leading legal expert on war crimes visited a month later to press for action. In October 1986, the Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Center, internationally renowned for its work in tracking down Nazi war criminals, supplied the British Home Office with a preliminary list of 17 East European Nazi killers known to have found a safe haven in Britain in the aftermath of World War II. Supplementing the already substantial Soviet and East European records, the Wiesenthal Center produced further names, drawn from the archives of the United Nations War Crimes Commission.

For more than 40 years these UN files remained classified information, hidden from those who would see the perpetrators of the unspeakable Nazi Holocaust brought to justice. While uncovering the Nazi past of Austrian Chancellor and former UN General Secretary Kurt Waldheim, the World Jewish Congress discovered "in American records the complete list of 40,000 names of Nazis wanted by the United Nations War Crimes Commission. These files had remained secret for 40 years after the commission was wound up in 1948. Even now, the congress has only the bald index of names." (*Independent*, 26 February 1987)

The Home Office has so far refused to take any action against these butchers. The British authorities have good reason to protect their Nazis. Any attempt to bring the SS scum to trial would risk lifting the lid on the squalid history of Britain's own post-war "rat line", re-



Labour government of Clement Attlee (above) and Ernest Bevin provided safe haven for Nazi killers sought by the USSR: Paul Reinhardt (top right) and Antanas Gecas.

vealing how the British intelligence services combed the "displaced persons" refugee camps in Europe, seeking to enlist certified Nazi war criminals as "freedom fighters" in the service of the imperialist bourgeoisie's anti-Soviet war crusade. It is common knowledge that numerous leading Nazis, including Hitler's chief exterminator Adolf Eichmann and the infamous Auschwitz butcher, Doctor Josef Mengele, escaped to Latin America and Spain, but the British have always tried to conceal their role in smuggling literally thousands of war criminals into this country.

It was the Labour government of Attlee/Bevin which provided haven for these mass murderers, a policy

shared by the American imperialists whose "rat line" rescued thousands of Nazi war criminals, including the infamous Klaus Barbie, the "Butcher of Lyon". Running Britain's version of the "rat line" is one of Labour's major "contributions" in the international field—a fitting dirty job for these lackies of British imperialism.

### BRITAIN'S NAZIS

Living in Britain today is Antanas Gecas (Gecevicus), personally responsible for the murder and torture of thousands of Jews and anti-fascist partisans following Hitler's invasion of the USSR. Gecas was a member of the Lithuanian auxiliary police battalion serving alongside the SS in the systematic extermination of East European Jewry. The Soviet Justice Department suspects Gecas was involved in the execution of 15,000 in Lithuania. Witnesses recall his participation in the hanging of Soviet partisans in Minsk and the wholesale butchery of Jews in Minsk, Slutsk, Kaidanov and other places. Members of Gecas' own battalion have testified to his role in the slaughter. The anti-fascist monthly *Searchlight* (December 1986), quoted Lithuanian volunteer Yuosas Knimiras:

"In the autumn of 1941, I took part in the hanging of Soviet partisans... a group of people were taken out of the (Minsk) prison, several women amongst them. One of the prisoners had a board on the chest with writing in German and Russian. The victims' hands were tied behind their backs. Gecevicus appointed some men to act as hangmen. As far as I remember, four men and a woman were hanged in the city park... Before that, myself and other people had received a drink of vodka from Gecevicus.



I had about 300 grammes of it. Gecevicus was in charge of the hanging. The victims were left on the gallows for the next three days."

For his services to Hitler's Third Reich, his leadership of a fascist Jagdcommando (hunting commando), Gecas was awarded the Iron Cross. Today he lives peacefully in Edinburgh, protected by the British government.

Another enjoying this protection is Paul Reinhardt, director of the Latvian "Labour Department" responsible for running the Nazi slave labour schemes. Over 280,000 Jews were deported to Germany by Reinhardt's administration. For years this "captive nations" war criminal has been at the head of the exile Latvian community in Britain, issuing Latvian passports recognised by Britain and the US. Antas Derzinskas is another Lithuanian Nazi living here, responsible for deporting Jewish women and children to the death camps.

In a calculated affront to the millions of Jews, Gypsies, Slavs, Soviet citizens and others who perished in the Holocaust, Home Secretary Douglas Hurd has categorically insisted that none of the Hitlerite mass murderers currently residing in Britain would face deportation to the Soviet Union where their crimes were committed. Like their US counterparts who in 1987 fought desperately (and unsuccessfully) to "save" Estonian Nazi butcher Karl Linna from Soviet justice, Britain has repeatedly denied Soviet extradition requests. They complain that courts in the USSR do not mete out "fair justice". As if the British rulers know the meaning of the word "justice"! In the Soviet Union, where 20 million people died to liberate all of Europe from



Minsk, 1941: Hitlerite death squad executes anti-fascist partisans. Byelorussian Nazis massacred more than 200,000.



the Nazi nightmare, the survivors of Hitler's genocide had the grim satisfaction of avenging their dead. Nazi mass murderers who fell into the hands of the Red Army at the end of the war were hanged. In 40 years not a single prosecution for war crimes has been brought in this country. (Although it's safe to assume that some of the British intelligence agents set up by masterspy Kim Philby in Albania were of this ilk and got theirs.)

### ANTI-SOVIETISM AND FASCIST TERROR

When Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa in June 1941, his objective was the restoration of capitalist wage slavery in the homeland of the October socialist revolution. In the process the Nazis were determined to impose their "final solution" on all those considered *Untermenschen* (subhuman). In the Ukraine, Byelorussia and the Baltic states of Latvia and Lithuania where anti-Semitism was rife and integrally linked to anti-Communism, the German forces were rapidly augmented by thousands of native fascists, enthusiastically enlisting in the police battalions attached to the SS forces and the infamous Einsatzgruppen, mobile death squads whose sole task was the mass murder of Jews and anti-fascist partisans. The Croatian Ustashi carried out their grisly task of genocide with indescribable brutality, repelling even their German Nazi overlords. It was the Ukrainian Einsatzcommandos who forced some 50,000 Jews out of their homes in Kiev and marched them to the mass grave at Babi Yar. The sadism and mass slaughter perpetrated by the German Nazi imperialists and their East European allies is unparalleled in human history. Yet after the war the thwarted nationalist ambitions and fervent anti-communism of these swine became marketable commodities to the British and American imperialists.

The Soviets smashed the Third Reich, planting the hammer and sickle flag over the Reichstag on 1 May 1945. With Germany conquered – the Allied imperialists geared up for the Cold War against the USSR. Even before the Nazi surrender the American Army's Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) and British Intelligence were falling over each other to recruit Nazi scientists and technicians for work on secret military research projects. Chief among the beneficiaries of Britain's own "rat line" were those East European collaborators who managed to keep one step ahead of the Soviet Red Army as it forced the fascist invaders back to Berlin.

At this time the US space agency got the slavemasters Wernher von Braun and Arthur Rudolph. Hitler's anti-communist specialists were also up for grabs; a report in the *Guardian* (11 November 1988) details the attempts of the British and American imperialists to enlist well-known war criminals in the anti-Soviet spy agencies:

"A panel headed by Sir Charles Darwin of the National Physics Laboratory drew up a list of 152 men to be traced and brought to Britain to work on civil industry and secret defence projects. "Fifteen of the scientists had been working for German firms which used concentration camp inmates as slave labour. One man on the list, Dr Walter Reppe, was awaiting trial in Nuremberg. Another, Dr Leo Casagrande, had been a high-ranking SS officer and had used slave labour during the war. "In March 1946, the Lord Chancellor,

Lord Jowitt, said of the several hundred German scientists brought to Britain: 'I am willing to risk their being Nazis – and I think they probably are – so long as they are highly skilled technicians who will teach our people something which they primarily did not know.'"

US General George Patton, upon hearing of complaints from the Soviets about footdragging in disarming the Nazis, snapped: "What do you care what those goddam Bolshies think? We're going to fight them sooner or later. Why not now while our army is intact and we can kick the Red Army back into Russia? We can do it with my Germans.... They hate those Red bastards" (*New Times* [Moscow], March 1983).

In the American and British zones of occupied post-war Germany, measures were taken to protect criminals like Professor Nikolai Poppe, smuggled to the US and subsequently "lost" at the behest of the British authorities. After the war Britain employed SS Major Emil Hoffman to recruit former Gestapo and SS agents. One of its targets at that time was Barbie, but the Americans got there first. Documents relating to Britain's dealings with Barbie have never been declassified on account of their "sensitive nature". The same is true of papers relating to Josef Mengele. Was Britain trying to recruit this grisly mass murderer? One American journalist has already pointed out Mengele's potential appeal to the imperialists:



no credit

**Winston Churchill (left) admired Mussolini's fascists. Lloyd George with Nazi fuhrer Hitler (right).**

"How could NASA *not* be interested in Mengele's meticulous notes on how long it takes a naked human being to freeze to death or burn to death, his research on organ transplants and skin grafts?" (*L.A. Weekly*, 15-21 February, 1985).

Certainly, the British did get one Dr Vladislav Dering – a camp "doctor" at Auschwitz who conducted sadistic "experiments" – including sterilisation without anaesthetic. Dering died in 1964 – after serving in the Colonial Services in Somalia and being awarded an OBE.

Citing information from the autobiography of former MI6 officer Anthony Cavendish, now banned by the Thatcher government, *Searchlight* (March 1988) has also reported that British agents were active in training and equipping Latvian SS members after the war: "Many of these were returned home, at the behest of British Intelligence and with the blessing of Labour's right-wing Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, to run infiltration and sabotage operations against Britain's erstwhile ally." Cavendish is an associate of George Kennedy Young, a Monday Club activist implicated up to his neck in the right-wing plot to bring down the Wilson government in the 1970s.

In addition to espionage the British were also anxious to recruit for



Yevgeni Khaldei

**Victorious Red Army tramples Nazi swastika, Austria, 1945. Twenty million Soviet citizens died to liberate all of Europe from the Nazis.**

labour schemes. In 1947, against the advice of the Home Office and with the blessing of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Attlee authorised the transportation to Britain of virtually the entire membership of the XIV Waffen SS Infantry Division (Galician). Composed of Ukrainian collaborators led by German SS officers, the Galician Division was employed in the bloody suppression of the 1944 Warsaw uprising, and in the massacre of Polish villagers at Huta Pienacka. They surrendered en masse to the British in 1945 following defeat at the hands of the Red Army

VIII, Duke of Windsor and his wife Mrs Simpson for the Nazi fuhrer is well-known. Winston Churchill, a notorious anti-Semite, declared in Rome in January 1927 that:

"Italy has shown that there is a way of fighting the subversive forces which can rally the masses of the people, properly led, to value and wish to defend the honour and stability of civilized society. She has provided the necessary antidote to the Russian poison. Hereafter no great nation will be unprovided with an ultimate means of protection against the cancerous growth of Bolshevism." (quoted in Robert Black, *Stalinism in Britain*)

Jews fleeing the Nazi Holocaust were denied entry to Britain. Many who managed to get here were rounded up and deported on board the tramp steamer *Dunera* bound for a concentration camp in Australia.

As for the Labour Party, it was Attlee, Bevin and the rest who made Britain safe for the perpetrators of the Holocaust in the service of the US-British anti-Soviet war drive. Bevin was also one of the architects and founders of the anti-Soviet NATO alliance. The start of the Korean War in 1950 saw the virtual doubling of military expenditure by the Labour Cabinet. In bringing Nazi war criminals not to justice but to safety, the Labour Party was doing its job as an anti-communist bulwark, a social democratic enemy of the people. The Nazi killers should have been executed decades ago by the workers tribunals of a victorious Europe-wide socialist revolution! *We say: Extradite Gecas, Reinhardts, Derzinskas and all the Nazi war criminals to the scene of their crimes to be tried by their surviving victims!*

At Nuremberg the losing side in the imperialist carnage of World War II was put on trial by the victors. But those who fire-bombed Dresden have no place passing judgment on mass murder. The British, American and French imperialists were guilty of heinous crimes against humanity – from Churchill's murder by starvation of millions of Bengalis during the war to Truman's atom-bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Today, the imperialists prepare for a new anti-Soviet holocaust using the services of the technicians and executioners of the last one. The homegrown fascists and skinhead filth who terrorise blacks, Asians, Jews, homosexuals, Gypsies and leftists are the "final solution" decaying capitalism keeps in reserve. It will take international workers revolution to avenge the victims of all the imperialists and wipe from the face of the globe the fascist filth spawned and protected by this rotting system. ■



Der Spiegel

# For the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of the British Army!

## Derry 1968: how the left failed

The following article is an edited version of the same piece from *Spartacist Britain* no 7, December 1978-January 1979. The article is based on a talk by Paul Lannigan to a *Spartacist League* public meeting in London on 27 October 1978, ten years after the first Civil Rights march in the city of Derry. Lannigan was a participant in the 1968 struggles. The article, drawing upon his first-hand experiences, presents a powerful case for the need and indeed opportunity for a class solution to the situation in Ireland. Its criticism of the left remains sharply relevant today.

At the time of the Hunger Strike campaign in 1981 centrists like *Workers Power* buried the demand for "Troops Out Now!" in deference to the nationalists' efforts to win Labourite and liberal imperialist sympathy. Today a "Time to Go" campaign which fudges around the troops question with talk of a negotiated withdrawal is being cultivated by the likes of the *Socialist Workers Party*. The British ostensible revolutionary groups do not even stand firm on the rudimentary question of the demand for the immediate unconditional withdrawal of the British Army. And whether they favour Labourite reformist schema (like *Socialist Organiser and Militant*) or capitulate to Republican nationalism (like *Workers Power*) to adopt some wretched blend of the two, they fail to provide a revolutionary perspective, to fight for a programme not for Green against Orange, but working class against capitalist class.

Anyone familiar with the left-wing press in Britain and Ireland can hardly have missed the dutiful marking of the end of a decade of upheaval in the Six Counties by almost all of the ostensibly revolutionary groups. Articles entitled "10 years in the North of Ireland" or "Derry: Ten Years After" have proliferated. Some of the authors have tried to rewrite

history; others, notably prominent participants in the Derry events like Eamonn McCann, have sought to apologise for not doing what they know should have been done; while still others have merely gone through the motions, giving perfunctory nods to acknowledge the existence of this troublesome island off the west coast of the Isle of Man.

The Spartacist League has a different reason for addressing the events of 1968 in Ireland and their aftermath. We believe that our tendency has a programme which can be applied to unravel the tangled knot of national/communal, social and religious conflict that is the stuff of Irish politics. Our programme, summed up in the slogan "Troops out now - not Orange against Green, but class against class", points to the crucial need for a proletarian struggle against both imperialism and all forms of nationalism as the key to the resolution of the democratic and socialist tasks in Ireland.

Working-class unity in Ireland, considered a grotesque and utopian pipe-dream by the "socialists" of the British left, cannot be regarded as merely desirable for an effective fight to defeat imperialism and establish a workers state in Ireland. Particularly in the twentieth century, the attempt to create any kind of governmental regime in Ireland has necessitated the consent of the Protestant community. The attempt by the British Liberals to impose a neo-colonial "Home Rule" solution on Ireland in 1912 foundered on the rocks of northern Unionist opposition. As recently as 1974, the social power of the subjectively pro-imperialist Loyalist bloc was again demonstrated in the Ulster Workers Council strike, which defeated the Sunningdale proposals for a "power-sharing" executive and a federal Council of Ireland.

Our considerations are thus fundamentally practical. Without the splitting of the Protestant community along class lines, the possibilities for

a successful indigenous proletarian revolution in Ireland are virtually nil.

We are not blind to the difficulties of achieving this goal of working-class unity. However we are not of that school of petty-bourgeois pessimists who see only the problems. The history of the working class in Ireland

small Protestant town of Coleraine, although Derry was a natural choice because of its size and because there had been a University College in the city since 1865.

Measures like this served to increase the resentment of the Catholics in Derry. The nature of the pol-

Sent in by the Wilson Labour government, British troops enter Derry on 14 August 1969.



is not merely one of sectarian divisions. There is also a fine tradition of united working-class struggle established by the 1907 Belfast shipyard strike wave, or the 1919 engineering strike. Even since partition, which significantly hardened the communal divisions, there have been important instances of united working-class action; the most important was the Belfast Outdoor Relief Workers strike in 1932. In this major struggle, Protestant and Catholic workers not only struck together but fought together in riots against the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC). It took an eight-day curfew to quell these street battles.

Derry 1968 was not another Belfast 1932. The Protestant and Catholic workers were not engaging in joint mass struggles. However it is clear that in 1968 it was possible for revolutionaries to penetrate both sections of the working class and, by drawing on and transcending the different traditions of struggle, to create the basis for a party which could provide a way out of the impasse in Ireland.

### ORIGINS OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Firstly it is important to examine the origins of the Civil Rights movement. The sharpness of the upheaval in Derry came out of the deep sense of grievance felt by its majority Catholic population over various acts by the Unionist government during the 1960s. The permanent economic depression which hung over Derry (unemployment was 16 per cent, and for males 25 per cent) was exacerbated by the consciously discriminatory policy of the Unionist government in favour of the predominantly Protestant areas of the Six Counties. An example was the siting of Northern Ireland's second university in the

itical structure added to this resentment: a majority of the electorate voted anti-Unionist and yet a Unionist Corporation was consistently elected. This was accomplished by the gerrymander: an electoral ward of 14,000 voters elected 8 councillors, while two wards containing a total of 8000 voters elected 12 councillors. This effective disenfranchisement of the 70 per cent Catholic population was maintained by the refusal of the Corporation to house Catholics, particularly outside their own ward. Housing was politically very important since non-householders were not allowed to vote in local elections. This housing policy reached a low in 1967, when no houses at all were built in the city.

Housing was in fact the spark which set light to the situation. The first Civil Rights demonstration, in Dungannon in August 1968, came after the allocation to a 19-year-old Protestant girl of a house in which a Catholic family had been squatting. This was quickly followed in October by a demonstration in Derry, organised by left-wing activists in the Derry Housing Action Committee.

Everyone expected that the march would pass off peacefully, like the Dungannon one. But October 5, 1968 was to be the occasion of the most violent shake-up in Ireland since partition and the civil war. The Minister of Home Affairs banned the demonstration. People were thus quite tense; but the atmosphere was more festive than martial as we marched along Duke Street. Even when we came to the RUC tenders which blocked our path to the Craigavon Bridge, most people sat down in the road and sang civil rights songs. Then the sky fell in.

The police baton-charged. A cordon of police along the back of the demonstration blocked the path of fleeing



Clive Limpkin/Associated Newspaper Group

November 1980, London: Spartacist contingent called for class-struggle mobilisations to free H-Block Republican hunger strikers.

demonstrators. This experience changed people's worldview more than 10,000 lectures on the state ever could. From then on street corners, fish shops and bookies' shops were all arenas of the hottest political debate. It was an incredibly fertile period for the development of a socialist organisation.

However as soon as the "lefts" like Eamonn McCann, who had played a key part in organising the October 5 demonstration, realised the extent of the explosive discontent they had inadvertently tapped, they immediately abdicated their position of leadership in favour of a group of "responsible" Catholic businessmen. The latter intervened virtually unopposed to form the Citizens Action Committee (CAC) at a meeting in the City Hall on October 9. These gentlemen immediately proceeded to remove all the latent class content of the movement. The CAC leaders pushed a line of pacifism and respectable anti-Unionist unity, calling off a planned march and substituting a mass sit-down protest in Guildhall Square.

### "ONE MAN, ONE JOB"

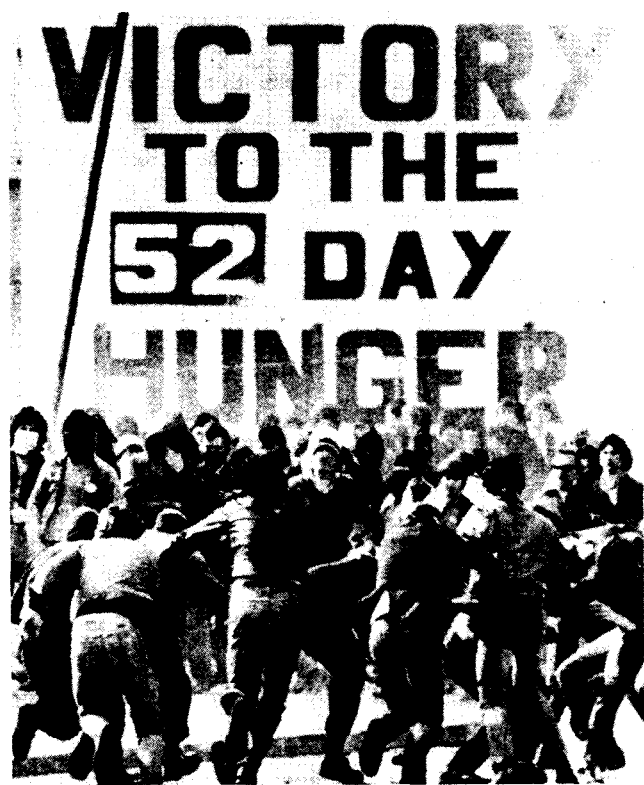
The original demands of the Civil Rights protests were "One man, one job", "One man, one vote" and "One man, one house". These demands clearly had a democratic edge against the anti-Catholic discrimination of the Northern Ireland state. Moreover, in the early stage of the struggle the "jobs" demand was generally understood to mean the need for *more* jobs, not for throwing Protestants out of work and giving their jobs to Catholics. Similarly with housing. The demands, while vague, were thus potential focusses for a class-wide fight for social equality against the capitalists.

There was a widespread recognition among the protesters that many Protestants lived in even worse conditions than some working-class Catholics. For instance, on the Protestant Shankhill Road in Belfast in 1969, 97 per cent of houses had no indoor toilets and almost as many had no hot water.

For those sages who regard the Protestants as a labour aristocracy or as a "white settler caste" it appears that the difference between outside toilets and swimming pools is academic. Their hygiene must be on a par with their political insight. What these people do not understand is that the system of discrimination also involves political patronage.

Thus in order to get good jobs and houses, Protestant workers had to vote Unionist, restrain any militancy over wages, job conditions etc. The disparity in wage levels between Northern Ireland and Britain for the same job in the same firm shows the effect that this system has had on the possibilities for working-class action of any kind. And this has not been completely lost on Protestant trade unionists. A meeting of predominantly Protestant shop stewards in Belfast in 1965 called for an end to discrimination on religious grounds. The various splits in the Unionist monolith over the last few years reflect in a distorted way these class tensions.

However, in 1968 any possibility of intersecting this feeling and organising a united working-class struggle was wasted by the "lefts" in Derry. The formation of the CAC gave the mass movement a liberal democratic pan-Catholic colouration, with demands like "One man, one job" fading rapidly into the background or taking on an anti-Protestant connotation. When one of the two Prot-



Thatcher killed ten Republican hunger strikers in 1981. The British rulers' "shoot to kill" policy has resulted in the murder of many more since. Spartacist League says: Troops out now!

estants on the CAC, Claude Wilton, stood for election in 1969, the popular slogan was "vote for Claude, the Catholic Prod", identifying him with the Catholic side against the Protestants.

### CLASS STRUGGLE OR PAN-CATHOLICISM?

I was then a member of the Socialist Labour League (SLL - later League for a Workers Vanguard) in Derry, and this group, while small, had some possibility of fighting for class unity in this period. The SLL's social base in Derry was mainly Catholic, while in Belfast it consisted mainly of Protestant trade unionists. Our attack on the Civil Rights movement was not, however, centred on its supra-class, anti-Protestant character but on its limitations as a protest movement.

There was one concrete case which opened up particularly good possibilities for raising the class question: a busmen's strike in Derry in 1969, in which we were strategic in leading a largely Protestant workforce out on strike against the introduction of one-man buses. Here was a perfect issue for raising the call to defend and win jobs for *all* workers through an end to discrimination and work-sharing at full pay. Moreover, this was an issue which the CAC would never have touched. However our calls for class unity were so formal and abstract that we did not see the CAC as the key obstacle to it. Thus we did not use this strike action as a way of splitting the pan-Catholic alliance.

The SLL, except in one case when it led a strike of dockers and shirt factory workers against RUC repression in Derry, was generally peripheral and too small to make a strong impact, particularly given its flawed and abstract programme. However, Eamonn McCann and his co-thinkers in People's Democracy (PD - originally a loose student organisation in Queen's University, Belfast) have a much greater responsibility for what happened to the civil rights struggle. In his well-known book about the Derry events, *War and an Irish Town*, McCann himself expresses rather well what he did wrong, albeit with a reformist perspective:

"If any group had fought consistently - from within or without the civil rights movement - or both - for such a programme, the all-class Catholic alliance, which is what the civil rights movement became, could not have held together. And

such a programme, hardly the normal stuff of Northern Irish politics, would not have attracted immediate mass support; but it might have enabled those of us in Derry at least to go on *talking* to Protestants in the Fountain in 1969. At any rate the matter was never put to the test. No such group existed or emerged."

### BURNTOLLET AND THE BOGSIDE

In January 1969 People's Democracy organised a march from Belfast to Derry which maintained the spirit and programme of pan-Catholic pacifism. This march was a complete adventure, organised with a conception of self-martyrdom. PD took a group of students through the most backward Orange country areas of the north, with an explicit policy of non-violence. They went to what McCann proudly called the "lunatic extreme" of allowing the marchers to be beaten to a pulp by Protestant followers of the fanatical reactionary Reverend Ian Paisley, without so much as an attempt at self-defence.

At this stage Protestant workers were not generally being mobilised against the Civil Rights protesters; it was mainly rural and lumpen elements who stood behind Paisley. But PD's pacifist antics were completely self-defeating: they were no way to win respect - let alone support - among the Protestant working class.

The rally in Derry at the end of the march dissolved into riots sparked off by the news of Paisley's attacks. The riots were the occasion for the most violent RUC rampage to date. Vigilante squads were set up to defend the Catholic Bogside after this display of Orange state repression, and barricades went up for the first time - soon to be dismantled at the instigation of the CAC. The riots continued up through July, both against provocative Loyalist parades and against the RUC. They peaked with intense battles against the RUC on the occasion of the Loyalist Apprentice Boys march on August 12, which as an "annual parade" was exempt from a ban on marches. These battles led directly to the introduction of British troops.

But with a radically different perspective from the prevailing pan-Catholic liberalism and pacifism, it would have been possible to build an organisation which could cut across the communal divide. One of the first deaths from sectarian violence was that of a Protestant worker named King who was killed in the Protestant

Fountain area of Derry in early 1969. He had a heart attack after a Catholic crowd beat him up at the entrance to the Fountain.

In those circumstances it would have been crucial to say to the people who were defending the Bogside against the RUC: "We're for a working-class defence force, we're for defending every section of the workers against the police and against sectarian attack. We think that those who attack the Fountain are against the working class, that we should defend the Fountain against these kinds of attacks." That approach could have begun very early on to still the communal side of the Catholic protest movement and to keep open the possibility of united class action with the Protestant workers.

### TROOPS AND THE LEFT

But the Irish left had a very different perspective. People's Democracy's pacifism and liberalism very quickly revealed its natural corollary of reliance on the bourgeois state. When the Belfast-to-Derry march finally hobbled, battered and bruised, into Derry's Guildhall Square, PD leader Michael Farrell called for the intervention of a United Nations peacekeeping force to protect the Catholics!

Eight months after Farrell made his call, an imperialist "peacekeeping" force was indeed sent to Ireland: the British army. The Catholic population was intensely relieved when it arrived, as they'd been facing three continuous days of police and B-Special riots. And the gentlemen of the left in Ireland naturally couldn't find it in themselves to call for the immediate withdrawal of British troops - though they were very outspoken against imperialist intervention in Aden.

In Britain the International Socialists, in their usual "principled" fashion, reacted to the proximity of the issue and to the consciousness of the Catholic masses by supporting the sending of imperialism's armed thugs. They said that troops would give a valuable "breathing space" (an unfortunate turn of phrase) to the Catholics. And they cut out the regular slogan in the "Where We Stand" box in *Socialist Worker* which called "For the withdrawal of British troops from abroad", changing it to "Support for all national liberation movements" without explaining the switch at all.

The International Marxist Group refused to call outright for the withdrawal of the troops, simply advising sagely that "The Bogside will learn that the British army will not protect them from the B-Specials." To its credit the SLL, both in Ireland and in Britain, put out a call for the immediate withdrawal of British troops. It has to be understood that imperialist intervention can never create a solution in the interests of the working class or the oppressed, in Northern Ireland or anywhere else. After a brief honeymoon when cups of tea were brewed for the troops the illusions of the Catholic masses were completely smashed, particularly by the Falls Road curfew in July 1970, when people were forced to stay in their houses for three days.

### THE NATIONAL QUESTION AND THE CLASS QUESTION

McCann drew the obvious lesson from the installation of the troops that one major problem with the Civil Rights movement was that it didn't raise the question of the border, of partition. But, lacking a working-class perspective, he simply moved from tailing bourgeois liberalism to

*continued on page 9*



# Canada trade pact elections

The following is adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 467 (16 December 1988) and is a joint editorial statement of *Workers Vanguard* and Spartacist Canada.

The 21 November Canadian elections became a referendum on the "free-trade" agreement negotiated between Canada's ruling Conservative Party and the Reagan White House, which would eliminate all tariffs between the two countries over the next ten years. Despite an outburst of Canadian nationalism from the trade union bureaucracy and the social-democratic New Democratic Party (NDP), cynically played up by the opposition Liberals who accused Tory prime minister Brian Mulroney of "selling out" Canada, the Conservatives won a 38-seat parliamentary majority. Passed by the US Congress in September, the trade pact is set for parliamentary approval in Ottawa by 1 January.

Initiated by the Canadian government in an attempt to get around increasing protectionist measures passed by the Democratic-controlled Congress, for the US imperialists the trade agreement is an attempt to shore up the declining American Empire on its northern flank. Over the past decade the United States has gone from being the world's leading creditor nation to the biggest debtor. Its international competitiveness and solvency have deteriorated, especially vis-a-vis Japan. Now the American bourgeoisie is faced with the European Economic Community's plans to create a unified internal market by 1992, which financially and industrially would be the world's largest economic unit.

The *Washington Post* (21 November) headlined American rulers' "Big Stake" in the outcome of Canada's free-trade elections, noting a "real concern in the United States about a possible Fortress Europe after 1992". In Canada, major business organisations forked out \$1.3 million for pro-free trade advertising in all the major newspapers. The plan is to build "Fortress North America" centred on the world's two largest trading partners, drawing in Mexico (the US' no 3 partner) with something akin to Japan's "East Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere" of the 1930s for their Caribbean and Central American neo-colonies.

As Marxists we are for the increasing economic unity of the world on a democratic and egalitarian socialist basis. This is a very different kettle of fish from a deal aimed at strengthening the power of the US bourgeoisie. With the abolition of all remaining tariffs between Canada and the US a common customs board between the two countries will be established to levy protectionist tariffs against their imperialist rivals, primarily the Japanese and European Common

workers at each other's throats, but by *common class struggle against the US imperialists and their Canadian junior partners.*

## FREE TRADE OR PROTECTIONISM: THE WORKING PEOPLE LOSE

The 49th parallel dividing Canada and the US is an artificial border, created by the British to safeguard their interests and the defeated counterrevolutionary Loyalists who



Canadian prime minister Brian Mulroney (left), junior partner of US imperialism, meets with Reagan.

Market. At the same time such imperialist economic alliances serve to reinforce the underpinnings of the imperialists' anti-Soviet military alliances such as NATO and the North American Air Defense (NORAD).

In opposition to the free-trade pact the labour bureaucrats on both sides of the border pushed for increased protectionism. An AFL-CIO leader argued against the abolition of tariffs "with our largest trading partner and one with which we have so many problems". The Canadian Labour Congress organised flag-waving demonstrations at the border, and the Canadian Auto Workers marched with signs reading "Free Trade Could Cost Us Canada". When the bourgeoisie talks of the benefits of free trade, they mean strengthening their hand against the unions and tearing apart social programmes. Yet the way to fight this is not by protectionist poison, setting Canadian and US

fled the American Revolution. The English-speaking people of Canada and the US share a common language and culture, and the two economies are already overwhelmingly integrated. But the free-trade agreement does not represent a coming together of the peoples of North America. Rather it is a cynical manoeuvre by the capitalists in Canada and the US to maximise their profits, and it is the working people who will pay.

In her "independent review of the free trade agreement", titled *On Guard for Thee*, former Canadian judge Marjorie Bowker points out that the Canadian bosses will use the agreement as a club against Canadian social programmes such as government-subsidised medical care and other universal social security programmes with the argument of competing with two-tier wages and cheap labour in the US. The president of the Canadian Manufacturers Association put it baldly: "It is simply a fact that, as we ask our industries to compete toe to toe with American industries...we in Canada are obviously forced to create the same conditions that exist in the US..."

Only two days after the Conservative election victory the Gillette Company announced it was closing plants in Montreal and Toronto, throwing nearly 600 workers on the streets. This could be the first of many such closures, as American-owned companies, many of which were established in Canada to get behind the tariff wall, opt to supply the Canadian market from plants in the US that have lower overall labour costs and taxes. And it's not just Canadian workers that will suffer. The erosion of living standards north of the border will reverberate in increased union-busting attacks in the United States. But the campaign by

anti-free traders like federal NDP leader Ed Broadbent to "save" Canadian industry from US "domination" is as ludicrous as it is reactionary.

As far as "takeovers" go, given the fewer restrictions on investment in the United States over the past few years, capital export has tended to work in the opposite direction. In 1987, while American investment in Canada amounted to \$75 billion, Canada with one-tenth the US population had \$45 billion invested south of the border, making it the fourth largest investor in the United States. Most recently, Canada's Robert Campeau bought out Federated Department Stores, Inc. (owner of Macy's) for \$8.8 billion. It was the largest foreign takeover of a non-energy corporation in US history and more than 1000 workers were axed by the Canadian entrepreneur.

The Maple Leaf nationalism of the labour tops and social democrats only serves to encourage feelings of national hostility among the working people, poisoning the possibilities for common class struggle while protecting "Canadian" bosses like the International Nickel Company. Inco squandered the millions it made in the brutal exploitation of mine workers in Northern Ontario and then made the miners pay through massive job slashing, which has turned its company town of Sudbury into a mass unemployment centre.

The union bureaucrats and the NDP have tried to sell the lie that "backward" American workers are responsible for the layoffs and givebacks. Four years ago, on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the great Flint sitdown strike that founded the United Auto Workers, Canadian Auto Workers president Robert White split the union. White claimed he was pulling the 120,000 Canadian car workers out of the UAW in opposition to the giveback contracts negotiated by the International leadership. Having isolated Canadian car workers, White is now signing his own giveback contracts. Rather than this reactionary nationalism, what's needed to take back the givebacks is a leadership that could unite car workers from Hermosillo, Mexico to Detroit/Windsor and Ste. Therese, Quebec in joint strike action against the Big Three.

## A GREATER NORTH AMERICAN CO-PROSPERITY SPHERE?

"From the Yukon to the Yucatan" is the battle cry of the Reaganite right wing as they look not simply to shore up the flagging US economy but to "roll back Communism" from Central America to the Soviet Union. This latest version of Manifest Destiny was behind Reagan's Caribbean Basin Initiative (followed up by Ottawa's CARIBCAN scheme, to keep the islands profitable for Canadian banks). Now they're putting the screws on Mexico. But even the screws on Mexico, which has tightened the belts of Mexican workers to the point of starving them in carrying out Washington and Wall Street's austerity policies, recognises that "free trade" with the US would mean a wholesale Yankee takeover of Mexico's economy.

In contrast, Canadian capital overwhelmingly opted for a strengthened economic bloc with Wall Street in



Auto workers at Toronto demonstration. Opposition to "free trade" pact is channelled into "maple leaf" nationalism and protectionism.

Pacific Tribune



# Ireland...

(Continued from page 7)

tailoring the petty-bourgeois nationalism of the Provisional IRA. That's a development which typifies much of the guilt-ridden British/Irish left.

For us, neither the southern state nor the northern Orange statelet can in any sense be seen as an ally of the working class. Both states deny a whole series of democratic rights: one guided by pro-imperialist Protestant communalism, the other by Catholic bigotry. Vorster in South Africa once said "I would give up all my legislation for one article of the Special Powers Act in Northern Ireland." But the southern state has an equally vicious Offences Against the State Act.

So when in August 1969 southern troops were moved to the border we would have opposed their intervention, just as we vehemently opposed Britain's intervention. We reject the programme of a united capitalist Ireland, either as a "progressive step" or as a satisfactory goal, because that could offer nothing to the Protestant workers but a reversal of the terms of oppression - at best making them second-class citizens in a united Republic. To advance such a programme in 1969 and 1970, just like today, was to guarantee that Protestant workers would be pushed away

from any possibility of unity with the Catholic masses and back into the arms of their "own" bourgeoisie.

But without confronting the national question and defending the right of both communities to exist, calls for class unity can only be abstract and empty incantation. This was precisely the problem with the SLL at that time. The national question was a distant part of the maximum programme which was not allowed to interfere with the daily economic questions; and when the SLL finally addressed it they came down on the side of Green nationalism.

The lack of an organisation fighting for an anti-nationalist working-class programme has been dearly paid for since 1968. Thus, rather than being split along class lines, the Civil Rights movement eventually fragmented along predictable, but not predetermined, lines.

So the streetfighters of 1969 became Republicans, exchanging the stone and petrol bomb for the gun. The Catholic working-class youth of the North, potential cadres of a proletarian vanguard party, saw no alternative in their struggle against imperialism than the petty-bourgeois nationalist Provisional IRA.

When you look at the number of personally courageous militants who have died in the service of this historically defunct cause, you realise that there has been a tremendous

waste. Republicanism contains a backward-looking romanticism - the idea that each generation must give up some of its sons "to die for their country". And this warped, deformed tradition leads the working masses nowhere.

In Ireland, even more than most semi-colonial countries, the struggle for a bourgeois nationalist solution to the national question is an entirely futile one. The partial and deformed completion of the national revolution in 1921 undercut the social base that a nationalist organisation would need to defeat imperialism in the North, and partition hardened the division between the Catholics and a million-strong, heavily-armed Protestant majority in the North which had no desire for unity with the new Free State.

The underlying truth that there can be no democratic solution to the Irish question without the consent of the Protestants helps explain the craven approach of the Provisionals, who fight not so much to defeat imperialism as to bring it to the negotiating table. Hence they refuse to call for the immediate withdrawal of the troops, preferring to ask for a "declaration of intent" to withdraw by Britain. In addition, the Provos continually seek negotiations with reactionary Unionist leaders, seeing them and not the Protestant workers as potential allies.

Against the bankrupt "tradition of

the dead generations" which is Republicanism, we have a different tradition. Our programme is based on the need for the kind of united class struggles against the bourgeoisie that occurred in Belfast in 1932. That means a fight for a conscious leadership which can address the question of sectarian violence alongside the fight to get the British troops out, by building anti-imperialist, anti-sectarian workers defence squads.

That means a leadership which will fight for a socialist solution to unemployment, bad housing and the poverty-level standard of living in Northern Ireland, through raising transitional demands like a sliding scale of wages and hours, an end to all discrimination in housing and employment and a programme of socially-useful public works. A leadership which will break down the communal barriers, tearing Protestant workers from their reactionary Orange masters just as it breaks Catholic workers away from their rulers and misleaders, north and south, the Green bourgeoisie and the nationalists.

The struggle to build an organisation fighting for such a programme will not be easy. However, unlike the Republicans and their acolytes, our politics will enable us to take advantage of future Derry 1968s in the fight for an Irish workers republic as part of a socialist federation of the British Isles. ■

defence of their own imperialist interests. Nonetheless, as 19th century German "Iron Chancellor" Otto von Bismarck noted, in any alliance there is a horse and there is a rider. Bismarck should know: after the defeat of the 1848-49 German Revolution he unified Germany on the basis of Prussian dominance, centred on a customs union (the Zollverein) excluding Austria, which was given teeth by Prussia's military victory in three wars. In the US-Canada trade alliance, the American imperialists are clearly the rider over their much smaller and weaker junior partners in Ottawa.

Unlike English-speaking Canada, the French-speaking nation of Quebec is a separate nation which was forcibly incorporated into Canada. While the Canadian labour tops and the NDP social democrats raised the spectre of "Yankee" domination, the only domination the Quebecois feel is that of English Canada, which brought down the jackboot in 1970 when Pierre Trudeau's federal Liberal government ordered the military occupation of Quebec.

Quebec was the only province other than Alberta where the Tories won a majority of the popular vote. Moreover, both the ruling Quebec Liberals and the bourgeois nationalist Parti Quebecois (PQ) supported the free-trade pact, claiming it would aid Quebec business by opening up new markets in the US. PQ leader Jacques Parizeau, who had split from the party a few years ago complaining that it had abandoned the cause of Quebec separatism, now crows that with open access to US markets Quebec independence can be won without the compromise of an "economic association" with English Canada. But the trade deal and sharply increased integration with the US could prove to be fool's gold for the Quebec nationalists.

Already an oppressed minority nation within the Canadian confederation, on a continental scale Quebec would be far more isolated and up against a greater English-speaking mass. The 8 November American

elections saw the passage of reactionary "English Only" laws in several states. In the context of this backlash of bigotry against growing numbers of Spanish speakers, the much smaller Quebecois population can hardly hope that French will be recognised as an "official" language. As Gerard Docquier, Canadian director of the United Steelworkers of America asked: "Under the free-trade deal, will we still be able to demand that the labeling of products be done in French, if the product is produced in Texas?" (*Globe and Mail*, 30 November 1987).

## FOR PROLETARIAN INTERNATIONALISM!

Meanwhile, the nationalist crusade against so-called American "cultural imperialism" is purely reactionary. The attempts to legally enforce "Canadian content" by blacking out the two principal centres of English-language culture - New York and London - only enforce ignorance, backwardness and isolation. Cultural and economic protectionism feeds bigoted xenophobia and racism. In the US 23-year-old Vincent Chin was beaten to death with a baseball bat by a foreman who mistook Chin for Japanese and blamed him for the car layoffs. In Canada, desperate refugees fleeing terror from Sri Lanka to El Salvador have been the target of the most vicious racism, from the halls of Parliament to fascist demonstrations in the streets.

Racism, union-busting and anti-Sovietism go hand in hand. The Cold War social democrats' campaign to preserve Canada's "sovereignty" from "Yankee" domination does not extend to the anti-Soviet military alliances between Canada and the US. During the election campaign federal NDP leader Broadbent disappeared any mention of the NDP's paper demand for "Canada out of NATO". Rather he promised to continue "cooperating" with the US on defence matters.

The Canadian imperialists have

long served as the loyal junior partners of US imperialism in anti-Communist military adventures from Korea and Vietnam to the Near East. Where the "Yankees" aren't welcome, Canadian "peacekeeping" troops are sent in as the policemen for the American rulers. Most recently the Canadian government has offered to send troops to Central America to hold the line against revolutionary struggle in a region where Canadian bankers and industrialists have vested interests to protect.

To shore up the power of their decaying system the imperialists are making a bid to establish one North American imperialist common market through the increasing exploitation of the working class and the oppressed. What is desperately needed is a revolutionary, internationalist leadership of the working class that can unite the proletariat of this continent in class struggle.

The working class must champion the rights of all the oppressed: Full citizenship rights for all foreign-born workers! Defend Quebec's right

to self-determination! Against the imperialists' attempts to drive down the living standards of all workers through the superexploitation of undocumented workers and the establishment of "free trade" zones in Mexico and the Caribbean, organised labour must launch a real fight to organise the unorganised. And as the imperialists take aim at the remaining gains of the Russian Revolution, which abolished capitalist rule on one-sixth of the planet, we demand: Down with NATO! Down with NORAD!

The pro-capitalist labour bureaucrats call for more tariffs to protect "our" industries, "our" mines, "our" country. The factories, the mills, the resources of North America do belong to the working people. But to make them "ours" we have to break the power of the bosses through socialist revolution. When we workers have the wealth in our hands, then we can begin to work toward the genuine economic integration and fraternity of the world's people through building a planned socialist economy on an international scale. ■

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**SPARTACIST**  
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### Toronto Police Kill Disabled Black Man

## Stop Racist Cop Terror!

**LESTER DONALDSON**

Toronto, August 13: Trotskyist League joined hundreds of demonstrators protesting racist cop murder.

Chanting "I, A, S, B, Canada, A Racist State" August 13, outraged at the cop's racial murder of 47-year-old Lester Donaldson in a corner store along the march an elderly Italian shopkeeper as the black people - and it's been happening all across North America. Anthony Griffin blown away in Montreal less than a year ago. Five-year-old Patrick Mason, killed by Los Angeles cops in 1983. Eleanor Bumpers, gunned down in New York in 1984 for to death by cops in East Texas last Christmas. Most names of all, however, women and babies - members of the MOVE commune in Philadelphia - murdered by Fredomb in 1985, a whole black neighborhood burned down. The massacre given the highest levels of power.

Healthcare Minister John Joseph Harper, Toronto black men Albert Johnson and Buddy Evans,

"Murder, Murder" the demonstrators chanted on August 13, and that's exactly what it was. The cop was a black man who had managed to acquire some modest properties, including four houses, a small recording company, and a professional "crime," it is "medieval" Canada.

In August 1983 the cops first came after Lester, standing in his home, leaving him with a serious shoulder injury, then fracturing his leg for months.

Continued on page 12

## Iran...

(Continued from page 1)

the Iranian People's Fedaiyan (Majority)." The article added that "in Evin, the main prison, there are rumours of mass killings, even the dynamiting of those jailed". Among those killed were four Tudeh political bureau members including party deputy leader Farajollah Mitani, Manoucher Behzadi, editor of the party's organ *Nameh Mardom*, Hossain Jodat and Ismail Zolqadr, as well as six central committee members and some 30 leading members of the party's clandestine organisation.

Earlier, the *Tudeh News* (26 October and 23 November 1988) reported that political prisoners had been executed, especially Tudeh members as well as Fedayeen and Mujahedin supporters, after "having endured years of barbaric torture". According to their families, the battered bodies of prisoners were buried in mass graves, some "so shallow that stray dogs can reach the bodies and tear them apart". A 25 November "Statement of the Central Committee of the Tudeh Party of Iran" began, "We are reaching out for your help", and listed names of those executed, including Hassan Jalali, member of the executive board of the Association of Trade and Labor Unions of Tehran and Vicinity, and more than a dozen others.

A 30 November report of the representative in Europe of the Fedayeen Majority denounces the "extensive massacre, resembling only those seen in Nazi death camps". "The massacre of political prisoners has taken place in the prisons of Tehran, Isfahan, Kerman, Khoram Abad, Gilan, Mazandaran, Hamendan, Gachsaran, Oromieh, Tabriz" and other cities. "Three hundred political prisoners have been buried in two mass graves in Khaavaraan cemetery (in East Tehran).... In addition to daily execution of groups of political prisoners in Evin, a large number of them were murdered in a deliberate explosion and destruction of an auditorium where they had been assembled."

And a 21 September 1988 statement of the Kurdistan Organisation of the Communist Party of Iran (Komal) said of the criminal mass executions of the "Islamic Republic": "These turbaned dictators are looking for victory in the city streets and in prison cells to make up for their defeat in the war fronts of Iran and Iraq. They are trying desperately to extend their onerous life through terror and intimidation by setting up execution squads."

From Moscow, *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (21 December 1988) reported on the "Massacre in Iran", interviewing Iranian exile Bizhan Ekrami, who told of "an actual genocide" that was killing "the best sons of Iran".

Ekrami had a typed list of 147 names of activists, members of the intelligentsia and cultural figures, only a small fraction of those killed. "Iran is in mourning", he said. There have also been protests in Iran in the midst of this reign of terror. *Die Wahrheit* (30 December 1988), the organ of the Socialist Unity Party of West Berlin, reports that, according to information from the Mujahedin, "a large number of relatives of executed oppositionists held a sitdown strike in front of the Ministry of Justice in Teheran on Tuesday to protest mass executions in Iran."

And in New York, the "Committee

in Solidarity with the People of Iran" (CISPI) published gruesome pictures of bodies thrown into the "Graveyard of the Damned" in Teheran. "There are also reports that all political prisoners in the city of Hamadan have been executed by firing squads." "The true dimensions of the crimes that are being committed behind the prison walls of the Islamic Republic are still unknown.... These reports indicate that as many as 10,000 political prisoners have been executed within this past month alone." In mid-December, representatives of the Spartacist League and the Partisan Defense Committee



Workers Hammer

1980: Spartacists protest Khomeini's murderous Islamic reaction.

## Students...

(Continued from page 3)

leaders at Newcastle Polytechnic from taking part in sit-ins, pickets and marches with nine executive members forbidden to enter any polytechnic administrative building without permission. At the same time they are trying to roll back the rights and conditions of university teachers with pay cuts and increased hours. The Association of University Teachers is planning industrial action aimed at preventing work on next year's degree examinations. We say: Drop the charges! Free university education for all! For universities under student/teacher/worker control! For open admissions and free tuition, with a state-paid grant to cover living expenses, in order to make universal access to education a reality!

There's more education at the end of a police truncheon than in three years of college, an old saying goes. Students wondering what happened to them on 24 November and why must look at the broader picture. In this decaying capitalist society, youth are an expendable commodity. 50,000 homeless teenagers sleep on the

streets in London alone. On one hand, the YTS slave-labour scheme is rammed through with a vengeance and on the other, higher education is being made less and less accessible. With industry devastated, millions unemployed and an economy centred on coupon-clippers in the City, Thatcher's Britain simply has no use for a whole section of the youth – and has marked them for the scrap heap. The imperialists do have a "future" in mind for youth – as cannon fodder for their crazed anti-Soviet war drive. As the *New Statesman* (23/30 December 1988) put it: "There has not been such a bad time to be young since the second world war."

Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition is dedicated to the maintenance of this rotten system. With nauseating regularity, the Labour tops call up the icons of bourgeois legality – a cross to the vampire of social struggle. Every struggle – from workers strikes to student protests – confronts the armed fist of the capitalist state, upholding the inviolability of Parliament and the bosses "law". In this case, students trod on the "sanctity" of Parliament by marching on Westminster Bridge, bringing down not only the cops' truncheons but further

abuse by Kneel Kinnock and his NUS cohorts.

Through the Labour Party – especially its "left" wing – a syphilitic chain also binds the fake-left to all the old reformist garbage. Even while under attack from the NUS, the SWP flinches from going on the offensive against the Labourites. In the face of vicious red-baiting, the SWP wrote: "And if it was all the Socialist Workers Party's fault, why were only a handful of the 69 people arrested Socialist Workers Party members?" (*SW*, 3 December 1988). It issued a statement the day after the march "denying its members were to blame for taking over the official protest, and leading the marchers off the agreed route to Westminster Bridge" (*Guardian*, 26 November 1988). But the only question of "fault" and "blame" here is that of the cops who rioted and the NUS splitters whose marshals tried to cordon students off from the bridge.

Despite its frequent verbal leftism, the SWP is tied to Labourism. During the miners strike they certainly had no truck with extra-parliamentary activities like defending the principle that picket lines mean don't cross. In fact, their members crossed picket lines – a scabbing betrayal their *lider maximo* Tony Cliff didn't mind bragging about. So it's not lemming-like suicidal urges that lead the SWP to duck its own defence – but its reformist political programme.

The centrist Workers Power group, also caught in the gravitational pull of Labourism, arrived at the NUS conference with its new "Student Societies Bulletin", *Spark*. A quintessential piece of sectoralist, economist gibberish, *Spark's* punchline is summarised in the statement: "We already have a national union but in a situation where it refuses to take mass militant action we must start organising from below to either force it to move or take action for ourselves", ie make the wretched NUS fight. Workers Power calls for "in every college an occupation, in every town a demonstration" on the road to true socialist education. It is thoroughly cretinist to talk about "so-

cialist education" in the middle of capitalism. The fight against loans and the whole panoply of government attacks on education certainly requires militant tactics. But, the crisis in education – just as in health care, public transport, civil liberties and press freedom – will not be solved within the framework of capitalist rule on these isles. No amount of campus parochial demands can address the fundamental question: as long as power is in the hands of the capitalist rulers, inequality and oppression will continue.

Workers Power doesn't address this fundamental truth in either *Spark* or its recent article "Occupy to beat Baker!" While condemning the NUS for cowering before "Tory legality" and minimally denouncing the red-baiting, WP advocates militancy within the existing framework: a "concerted fightback" which "means overcoming the apathy of the student unions and their executives and building fighting local unions" (*WP*, December 1988). Like the SWP, Workers Power joined the swamp and advocated a vote to Kinnock in the general election. Furthermore, it joined the hue and cry for a scab ballot during the miners strike – an utter abasement before "Tory legality". Students looking for a revolutionary programme will not find it in the pages of *Workers Power*.

Maria Franklin asks: "Where is it going to end?" Halfway measures just won't cut it. What is necessary is to link the struggles of the oppressed – including youth and students – to the social power of the organised working class, in a fight for socialist revolution. That requires the building of an authentic Bolshevik Party, breaking the working masses from the shackles of Labourism and parliamentary legalism. This sick society offers no hope for the youth of today. We in the Spartacist League seek to win youth to the red banner of communism and look forward to the day when the victorious proletariat crosses that forbidden mile to sweep the rulers and their Labour lackies out of their parliament forever. ■

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joined protests at the United Nations and in Washington against the Iranian slaughter. It is urgent that worldwide protest be mounted now!

## WAR AND REVOLUTION

In sheer number of victims, the bloodbath in Iran ranks on a par with the mass murder following the counter-revolutionary 1973 Pinochet coup in Chile. In Iran today we are witnessing a calculated programme of extermination to head off a social explosion in the wake of a protracted, reactionary war. According to the *Independent*, Rahe Kargar has information that "the executions were part of a concerted policy to annihilate the left so that it would not be able in future to exploit the popular dissent.... It said there was a two-stage plan to review the cases of all political prisoners by the 10th anniversary of the revolution next February. In the first phase, 1000 prisoners who had yet to be sentenced were summarily tried and sentenced to death. In the second phase political prisoners sentenced to jail terms were retried and executed if they failed to recant."

From the beginning of the mullahs' theocratic rule, torture and execution have been standard fare. Soon after Evin prison disgorged thousands of political prisoners from the torture chambers of the shah's secret police, the SAVAK, it began filling again with the victims of the Islamic dictatorship. Kurds and Baluchis fighting for self-determination, followers of the Bahai religion, women who refused to wear the veil, homosexuals, leftists, were stoned to death, hanged, or shot by firing squads. A report on the condition of political prisoners in Iran by CISPI stated: "As the execution of virgin women is not allowed by Islam, young girls are systematically raped in prison before their execution...."

It is doubly tragic that many of those who are today being executed had joined the mullah-led upsurge against the bloody shah in 1978-79. The Tudeh, the historic leadership of Iran's working class, delivered its base into Khomeini's service. It betrayed promising proletarian actions, including strikes by the predominantly Arab (non-Farsi-speaking) oil workers of the south, leading them into the arms of Islamic reaction. At the time the international Spartacist tendency stood alone in proclaiming, "Down with the Shah, Down with the Mullahs! For Workers Revolution in Iran!" A year later the bulk of the Iranian left, having hailed Khomeini as an "anti-imperialist" liberator, supported their "own" ruling class in the Iran-Iraq war. Even as the ayatollah's thugs threw leftists back into the same prisons where they had languished under the shah, as the regime persecuted women, homosexuals, ethnic minorities and workers, Tudeh and the Fedayeen Majority (along with the pseudo-Trotskyist HKE and HKS) rallied to the cry of defence of the fatherland.

The squalid slaughter of the reactionary Iran-Iraq war - in which the working masses of neither country had any stake in the victory of their "own" rulers - dragged on for eight years and took over one million lives. It recalled the horrible imperialist carnage of World War I. From the very outset of the war, the international Spartacist tendency took the Leninist position of *revolutionary defeatism* on both sides, demanding, "Down with the colonels! Down with the ayatollahs! Turn the guns the other way!"

"But war is also the mother of revolution. And the Iraqi-Iranian conflict lays bare their real 'border problem': the oppressed nationalities that are divided by the artificial border separating Iran and Iraq, especially the Kurds and the ethnic Arabs who compose a majority of Khuzistan.... This war and the position of revolutionary defeatism will be an acid test for a revolutionary regroupment."

- "Iran/Iraq Blood Feud", *Workers Vanguard* no 265, 3 October 1980

A defeat for either side would have opened revolutionary possibilities for the proletariat. War weariness was growing, and at one point, the American Communist Party's *People's Daily World* (27 June 1987) reported that a group of factory workers in Iran was circulating an appeal "to expose the 'war-mongering and anti-worker nature' of the Khomeini regime, and to struggle against the war by preventing recruitment, financial and material aid to the fronts, and refusing to work in arms factories."

But in keeping with their subordination to Khomeini at the crucial time when the hated shah's rule was decomposing, none of the major left tendencies in Iran adopted a perspective of struggling to transform the reactionary nationalist war into civil war against the Ba'athist colonels and the Persian Shi'ite ruling caste. At best, as the war dragged on some took a "pro-peace" neutralist posture. Now as the guns fall silent on the Basra-Abadan front, in Teheran they are belching fire against "infidels", creating a "peace" of the graveyards. In postwar Iran, with the questions of Khomeini's successor and the financial reconstruction of the war-ravaged country posed, the executioner's axe is falling on leftists, Kurds and even dissident mullahs.

The imperialist powers for the most part took a low profile in the Iran-Iraq war, playing off both sides against each other. In the interest of anti-Soviet warmongering, Reagan alternately armed the Iranians with US missiles, then (after that blew up in the Iran/Contragate scandal) engaged in repeated bloody confrontations, including the wanton massacre of 290 passengers aboard an Iranian Airbus last July. Iran's rulers have made repeated initiatives to normalise relations with Washington, the former "great Satan". Now these fanatical anti-Communists believe they can murder every leftist in the country and gain favour with the White House. And they're right. The *New York Times* (2 January) reported: "American officials and Western diplomats said the executions would not hinder a move toward better relations."

With the Iranian working masses bled and exhausted by the war, outbreaks of popular protest are a genuine threat to the bloodsoaked rulers. But in the absence of an authentic Leninist party, this opportunity to organise the masses has so far been squandered. A horrible price in human life is instead being exacted against the left in Khomeini's prison hellholes. Only when the toiling masses of Iran and Iraq have communist vanguard parties forged in irreconcilable hostility to their "own" reactionary rulers can the massacres and repression be ended. It will take workers revolution to open the prison doors, to free the victims of Islamic reaction, liberate oppressed nationalities and stop the vicious cycle of bloodletting once and for all.

**Sound the alarm! International mass protests are urgently needed now to stop the slaughter of Iranian leftists! ■**

## Clapham...

(Continued from page 12)

When this principle was ignored in the United States, it led to disaster. On 4 January 1987 a packed passenger train collided into three freight engines outside of Baltimore, Maryland, killing 16 and injuring another 170 people. Why were the two trains on the same track at the same time? Ten years earlier requirements that freight trains be fitted with automatic braking devices were lifted. Obscenely, the US government has used this case in an effort to whip up an anti-drug witchhunt directed at transportation drivers in America.

The British bosses certainly have one thing in common with the American capitalists: blaming the workers for industrial murder of their own making. British Rail operated a "fail-safe" system that failed to be safe, ignored repeated safety warnings, refused to implement automatic braking mechanisms - so what do they do? They blame their technicians. Under the circumstances the signalmen and track workers ought to be given medals. The very workers dragged up before BR's internal inquiry were sweating 60 hours, seven days a week for several weeks before the disaster. They worked by torchlight at night, in cramped quarters. Particularly in the southeast, preventive maintenance is almost entirely neglected, as overworked employees are rushed from one crisis to another. Experienced London signals technicians earn £143 a week - base pay before taxes! Small wonder that in the southern region last year, *one out of three* rail track workers and almost 15 per cent of skilled signalling staff either quit or transferred to other jobs. On top of this, workers who complain about safety violations are regularly victimised. Thus, a British Rail signalmen, Michael Lisicki, was fired on trumped up charges only a few days after he alleged on television that BR is suffering from numerous signal failures similar to the one that caused the Clapham Junction disaster.

Miners have long understood that the right to strike is literally a life and death question. Under capitalism, the power of the union to shut down unsafe operations and enforce safety standards is the *only* real protection workers have. Indeed, the massive escalation of industrial accidents is closely bound up with Thatcher's union-busting drive, particularly since the defeat of the miners strike. Shortly after the Clapham butchery, BR announced its intention to impose a new pay package on the unions that will destroy national bargaining and introduce 13-hour shifts for track as well as signalling and telecommunications staff. Furthermore, the budget for signalling maintenance will be chopped, while the interval between routine signal inspections will be doubled. The link between attacks on the unions and poor safety could not be clearer.

The unions have largely been eating it. It is high time they got off their knees! Some real strike action from the rail unions linking the issues of pay, working conditions and safety could well galvanise mass support from the public: even some of the yuppies among the commuters, out of the sheer self-interest of saving their own skins, might go for it.

But the very day of the Clapham Junction slaughter, the rail unions, including "left" NUR head Jimmy Knapp, were "protesting" against overcrowding on the trains by parading around dressed as sardines! Instead of defending the unions through class

struggle, the bureaucrats resort to impotent publicity gimmicks. Health and safety are deep-felt issues among the British working class; the union hacks no doubt realise that any outburst of militancy could quickly "get out of hand". Thus, several months ago the backstabbing Labour Party leadership voted openly to condemn strike action by NHS nurses.

The programme of the Labourites is to reject class struggle in favour of increased government regulation of health and safety. Many union bureaucrats are arguing that safety enforcement should be shifted to a little known government agency, the Health and Safety Executive. You have to be a real cretin to believe that *any* department of the Thatcher government would curb capitalist abuse! But it would not make any fundamental difference if it were a Labour government. As long as capitalism remains, the state will defend the interests of the parasitic exploiters.

A look at the recent Fennell report, the "public inquiry" over King's Cross, is revealing. The report is filled with endless platitudes about safety and even contains 157 separate suggestions for improvements. However, on the fundamental issues the report represents the consensus of the capitalist class. This is contained in two conclusions: (a) "there is no evidence that the overall level of subsidy available to LRT was inadequate to finance necessary safety-related spending and maintain safety standards"; and (b) "I find no evidence that the reduction in the number of operating and maintenance staff contributed directly to the disaster at King's Cross" (*Guardian*, 18 November 1988). In short, cosmetic tinkering is okay, but anything that costs money is out of the question! And that's the nub: safety costs money. A fundamental conflict is posed here, between preserving the health of the working masses, on the one hand, and the bosses' profit drive, on the other. *Private Eye* (6 January) reports that the firm which made the signalling equipment for Clapham Junction is doing the same for the Channel Tunnel. Readers, the *Eye* suggests, "can take further comfort from a new appointment as consultant to the Channel Tunnel exercise: Dr. Tony Ridley, recently resigned managing director of London Underground". Some people are never out of work in Thatcher's Britain.

Well over 100 years ago Karl Marx declared that what was necessary was not the conservative motto "a fair day's wage for a fair day's work", but rather the revolutionary watchword, "abolition of the wages system"! The Labourites believe that you can get a fair deal under this system through reformist tinkering. But Zeebrugge, King's Cross, Piper Alpha, Clapham Junction - the horrific products of decaying British capitalism - prove compellingly that this system is way beyond reform. Workers need a Leninist-Trotskyist party to lead a proletarian revolution that will establish an egalitarian social order and bring to justice the grisly capitalist exploiters who have so much blood on their hands. ■

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## Clapham Junction: it was capitalist murder!

It was "sheer bloody hell". Those were the words of an assistant chief officer of the London Fire Brigade, a member of the massive rescue brigade rushed to the scene of a horrendous three train crash in Clapham Junction, southwest London, on 12 December. Some 34 people died, 113 others were hospitalised, when an express train from Bournemouth, given a green go-ahead sign by a defective signal system, barrelled into the rear of a stationary commuter train ahead of it at 50 miles per hour during the morning rush hour. The derailment forced a collision with an oncoming, fortunately empty, train heading in the opposite direction. An alert rail guard managed to scramble onto the tracks and flag down a fourth train, thereby preventing further carnage.

Carriages were crumpled and hurled onto an adjoining embankment, doors were ripped out and passengers thrown as much as 20 feet into the air. One survivor said: "There was furniture and enormous lumps of metal flying everywhere. The whole of the buffet car disintegrated. The roof split open like a ripe tomato and that's how we got out" (*Guardian*, 13 December 1988). Bodies were speared by the flying metal – some were literally cut in half. It took four hours to cut the injured from the wreckage, some of whom had their limbs amputated at the trackside.

Now the bosses are saying the cause of the devastation was a "loose wire", for which they are trying to scapegoat two overworked technicians. Loose wire? That's obscene – Clapham Junction was a death trap waiting to happen. Engaged in cutting in a new signal switching system to replace the existing pre-war model, British Rail systematically ignored every fundamental safety consideration. Drivers were confronted with a confusing dual array of signals, some of which were operational and others not. Complaints of signals technicians were systematically hushed up. According to the rail unions, the signal box at the centre of the disaster had failed *five times* in the week preceding the disaster, including once on Sunday evening just 12 hours before the crash. Even the tabloid press saw through the cover-up: "Signals: 'they were warned', Fault was reported on line 'hours before death crash'" headlined the *Evening Standard* (13 December 1988). British Rail and the government were playing a deadly game of chicken with the lives of passengers and crew members at Clapham Junction, one of the busiest sections of track in Britain where at peak hours one train

passes every two minutes!

And now comes the inevitable cover-up: everyone from ghoulish Thatcher to the archbishop of Canterbury to the queen are hypocritically offering Christmas condolences. But this was no earthquake – who's foolish enough to believe that this was an accident? Zeebrugge, King's Cross, Piper Alpha, now Clapham Junction – it's happening with numbing regularity. Even the eggs you eat are poisonous. In fact, the fate of Edwina Currie is instructive. Her stock in trade was to blame poverty... on poor people. Currie's tirades were more than insulting: her arrogant ultimatum to "knit woollies", while winter heating subsidies were cut back, was literally a death sentence for many pensioners. But Currie only lost her job when her warnings about salmonella poisoning threatened the profits of big-time agribusiness operators.

Things are pretty grotesque here in Britain. What's next – a cholera epidemic? Behind it all is unrestrained capitalist greed. Safety, health, decent work conditions, a genuine rebuilding of the economy so that it serves the interests of the working people – all of this is inimical to the profit drive of the bosses. And to turn things around it's going to take socialist revolution – not piecemeal Labourite nationalisations but the revolutionary expropriation, *without compensation*, of the bourgeoisie.

### KING'S CROSS, PIPER ALPHA... NOW CLAPHAM JUNCTION

Thatcher's government has stripped whole sections of the North, Wales and Scotland of basic industry – mines, steel mills, shipyards shut down, skilled workers thrown on the scrap-heap by the hundreds of thousands. What little capital investment there is is concentrated in London and the home counties, mainly in finance and services. What's going on in the southeast, the "best off" part of Britain is not "prosperity" but polarisation: the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. Working people can barely afford to live in London, while there are burgeoning numbers of homeless poor. Meanwhile, the London commuter belt sprawls ever outward.

Passenger traffic on both the underground and BR's southern network has increased markedly with the population growth. Just to keep pace with this would require massive investment. The bosses recognise the need for rail services, all right, but they want it on the cheap – dirt cheap – to lay the basis for Thatcher's



Capitalist murder at Clapham Junction, December 1988. Decrepit British capitalism is way beyond reform; Britain needs workers revolution.

lunatic privatisation schemes. British Rail is not interested in modernisation, technological upgrading or greater efficiency. BR "cuts costs" by driving the workforce at long hours at low pay, ie jacking up the rate of exploitation, while deferring necessary maintenance and structural improvements. That is the sordid material reality behind the grim butchery of Clapham Junction.

Just to go through the steps of this atrocity reveals the all-sided criminal negligence of the government. When Alex McClymont, the driver of the front commuter train, approached Clapham, he saw a flickering signal, indicating a fault in the system. There was no way he could get in touch with the terminal or, conversely, anyone could contact him because the engineers' cabs are not equipped with two-way radios, an elementary safety device. So McClymont, conscientiously following the rules, stopped his train by the next available trackside phone to report the problem. A few seconds later came the crash.

The "failsafe" mechanism, which is supposed to shut down all traffic in the event of a signal malfunction or short circuit, didn't work at all. The driver behind had no idea there was a train ahead of him on the track. Initially BR tried to claim that such a "wrong side signal failure" was virtually unprecedented. But within a few days of the crash some of the truth began to leak through the press. One year ago, in south London only three miles from Clapham Junction, the same thing almost happened, when a driver leaving Waterloo station realised he had been given a green signal to proceed down an incoming track used by express trains. A letter from British Rail, commend-

ing the driver for his alertness, confirmed that this was a "wrong side signal failure" and "explained" that cables in the Waterloo network were being renewed by BR staff and contractors (*Evening Standard*, 15 December 1988). Almost identical to today's circumstances! In a separate revelation, signalman Stephen Jackson told the BBC *Kilroy* programme that in March he prevented a passenger train hitting the back of a stationary train after a flickering signal failed by running out and waving the driver down. Jackson reported the incident, but was told to shut up and that the last thing that was needed was a big inquiry.

Before every major industrial catastrophe, from the North Sea conflagration to the King's Cross inferno, the bosses have ignored pointed warnings from safety experts. One year ago, Stanley Hall, former chief signalling and safety officer with British Rail, predicted in his book *Bad Signals* that without an entirely new signalling system, further train crashes were inevitable. Among the points stressed by Hall was the need for a mandatory braking system, in which trains that inadvertently crossed a red signal would *automatically* be stopped. After a series of bad train crashes in West Germany in the early 1970s, such a system was introduced there. Magnets are fitted on locomotives and on tracks at signal points, which trigger an emergency braking of the train should the next signal ahead be on "stop". As Hall emphasised, the technology is available to BR but...it "would be expensive" (*Guardian*, 14 December 1988). Sooner or later, the absence of automatic braking on British trains is going to kill a lot more people.

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