

## Racist state terror kills

# Smash the PTA and Asylum Bill!

On 16 March, Ibrahim Sey became the seventh black man to die at the hands of the police in the last six months. Sey, a 29-year-old West African, was arrested on a minor offence at his home in Ilford, Essex. After the cops sprayed him with CS gas, he was pronounced dead in King George's Hospital.

Ibrahim Sey is one of over 70 people, mainly black, to die in police custody over the past decade. Signalling an all-clear for the cops to continue their racist atrocities, on 3 April the Crown Prosecution Service announced that the police who beat Brian Douglas to death with their new American-style long batons last year would face no charges.

From the cops and courts to the halls of Westminster, the capitalist rulers keep

pumping up their apparatus of racist state repression. After the Criminal Justice Act, the Public Order Act and the murderous Immigration and Asylum Bill currently before parliament, now the government has rushed through a chilling amendment to the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA). The *Guardian* (3 April) listed some of the provisions of this police-state legislation: "The bill gives police powers to stop and search pedestrians without reasonable suspicion...to search classes of non-residential property, such as lock-up garages... to search all individuals and property in a cordoned-off area..." This amounts to a revival—and dramatic extension—of the hated Sus laws formerly used to harass and round up black youth.

Hardly anyone believes a single word

from Major & Co on any subject; but when it comes to state repression, *what this government promises, it delivers*. Draconian "anti-terrorist" measures have been used for decades in Northern Ireland, where they reinforce British imperialism's armed occupation. Now such laws are increasingly wielded at home as well, particularly against black and Asian minorities.

Referring to the vaunted police "ring of steel" around the City of London, ostensibly set up in response to IRA bombings, a letter in the *Guardian* (3 April) noted caustically, "it seems

strange that many of those pulled over appear to be black motorists. I know of no convicted black IRA bombers." Alongside the vicious repression of Irish

*continued on page 11*



Andy Hall

PTA: ominous increase in police powers.

# Mad cows and capitalist pigs

After insisting for months that the human animal *cannot* get "mad cow disease", the government finally admitted what most people had long suspected. Tory Health Secretary Stephen Dorrell announced on 20 March that ten patients, with an average age of 27, had been identified as suffering from a new, aggressive form of the lethal Creutzfeld-Jakob Disease (CJD), and that the most likely explanation was consumption of meat products from cattle infected by Bovine Spongiform Encephalitis (BSE).

Yet still the government expected the population to believe that beef was safe and to carry on eating it. When sales plummeted in the supermarkets, Dorrell fumed "it isn't the cows that are mad, it's the people".

The biggest concern for the Tory government, apart from its own imminent demise, was the panic among City fatcats and in the multi-million pound agribusiness, whose vast profits were vanishing overnight. One billion pounds was wiped off the value of shares in the food and agriculture business, while the meat trade went through the floor. McDonald's, followed by other fast food outlets, stopped selling burgers until they could import the meat. The European Union

slapped a blanket ban on British beef to protect its markets, incensing much of the tabloid press and the xenophobic "Euro-sceptics" who howled that poor Britain was being "humiliated" by Europe.

The government's role in the BSE scandal amounts to sheer criminal neglect of public health, in the interest of naked capitalist greed. Even the staid *British Medical Journal* referred to the government's policy as "playing Russian roulette with no information on the odds". The whole sordid affair perfectly symbolises rotting capitalism, and not just British, witness the HIV-tainted blood transfusion scandals internationally.

Enfeebled economically, the bourgeoisie is reckless, vindictive and often downright crazy. The ethos is "take the money and run"; therefore much of the basic infrastructure is being destroyed or sold off and the social fabric of society vandalised. Medical science has always been bound and constrained by class society, but it is being increasingly perverted by a system in an advanced stage of decay.

The City of London, based on bloated profits from utterly parasitic financial dealing, has been fattened, as the "golden goose"

of the very rich. The rest of the population can go to hell...and if that means being poisoned by infected food, so be it. Meanwhile Tony Blair's Labour Party insists that they can serve the City just as well as the Tories.

We recall the Chartist slogan "Perish the privileged orders!" It will take a socialist revolution, which sweeps away the rotting edifice of capitalism, to lay the basis for a society in which everyone can have a job, come home to decent housing, eat food which has not been wilfully contaminated, and get good medical treatment when they are ill.

### BSE and public "health"

The existence of BSE has been known for ten years, yet the government allowed it

to flourish in cattle with only minimal efforts to eradicate it. Very little is known (and much is disputed) about the connection between BSE in cattle and CJD in humans, but there is a consistency in the pathology of both diseases, which are thought to be caused by an altered protein or "prion". Unlike diseases caused by bacteria and viruses, which trigger a response by the victim's immune system, spongiform encephalopathies remain undetected by the immune system. The end result of CJD is insanity and certain, horrible death. The disease has a long incubation period and until recently no test was available which could diagnose it while the patient was alive. *Even the most basic public health hygiene measures*

*continued on page 10*

On Ken Loach's *Land and Freedom*  
Revolution and counter-  
revolution in Spain (see page 6)

## From death row, This is Mumia Abu-Jamal

### Police: Part of, or Enemies of, Labor?

"Authority is never without hate."

—Euripides

In the large nation-state of Brazil, the lion's share of South America, the question of the function of the police is at the heart of the labor struggle for the power to better the life of working people.

In Volta Redonda, an industrial center near Rio de Janeiro, that question has emerged as a central one in the middle of an internal power struggle among leading municipal workers.

On March 13, 1996, a meeting of the Municipal Workers Union was invaded by the globally infamous and murderous Military Police, who, heavily armed, attempted to "settle" a workers dispute with shotguns. People at the scene reported their surprise response came only moments after a premeditated physical assault on MWU president Geraldo Ribeiro, a militant trade unionist, by MWU secretary Arthur Bonizetti Fernandes' key operative, known as "Motorzinho."

What is dangerous and unprecedented here, is the calling in of the cops: Who did it?; and, why?

What is clear, from all reports, is union president Ribeiro didn't call them, and upon their arrival, informed them that everything was under control. Later, some workers heard plainclothes police say Arthur (union secretary) owed them 10 reais (\$11 U.S.) apiece, but feared they might not be paid, as they

were "late" (late for what, one wonders?).

At any rate, the invitation of police, and more ominously, *this* police force, into the heart of an internal union dispute, is a truly dire development. *This* force, the Military Police, is known as a death squad, who have practiced their murderous expertise on the black, brown and poor slum children of the *favelas* and streets of Rio. They (like the Philadelphia police) are experts in babykilling.

Central to the Luta Metalúrgica (LM—Metalworkers Struggle) and Municipal Workers Union conflict is a question that now has global implications—what is the role of the police? Are they simply workers, like glass blowers, garbage collectors, or clerks? Or are they agents of the wealthy and propertied classes—those who rule?

It is tempting to go with the former question, for do they not work, like others, for pay?

Only when one looks at the nature of that work, from the standpoint of history and current events, does the latter point score.

Throughout history, police have protected the *status quo*, even when that "status" has been evil and repressive. During the civil rights era, it was the police who beat, bloodied and arrested those who fought—peacefully—for civil rights. Federal police followed, phone-tapped, sabotaged and, in the words of the FBI, "neu-

tralized" those who today are honored veterans of that struggle, like Reverend Martin Luther King (Jr. & Sr.), nationalist Malcolm X, and Black Panther founder Dr. Huey P. Newton. Police aided white supremacists in many of their racist campaigns.

Similarly, police in Brazil have been engineers of repression, from the crushing of popular and labor unions in the past, to the ruthless, shopkeeper-contracted slaughter of Brazilian street children. If the *status quo* is unjust, inequitable and repressive, how can anyone protect it?

It is in this context that one must truly "see" the introduction of the nefarious Military Police into the affairs of a union for the bad omen that it is, and once seeing this, condemn and protest it forcefully.

Presidente Ribeiro and his Luta Metalúrgica (Liga Quarta-Internacionalista do Brasil) ally, Alexandre Honorato "Cerezo," are calling for protests against police presence and provocations in union affairs....

The central principle: police hands off the unions!

31 March 1996

© 1996 by Mumia Abu-Jamal

Join the international campaign to free Mumia Abu-Jamal, the black journalist and political prisoner on death row in Pennsylvania. To silence his powerful voice speaking out for the oppressed, Jamal was framed up for the 1981 murder of a Philadelphia policeman. His case has become the rallying point for opposition to the racist death penalty, from Brazil to Britain to South Africa. The international protest campaign has brought hundreds of thousands onto the streets, and won Mumia a stay of execution last August, but the fight to save his life and free him continues! For more information, contact the Partisan Defence Committee, BCM Box 4986, London WC1N 3XX. Tel: 0171-485 1396.



TROTSKY

#### Trotskyists in trade union struggle

Minneapolis USA, 20 July 1934—a police ambush murdered two Teamster union (lorry drivers) strike pickets and wounded another 50, shot, mostly in the back, on that Bloody Friday. The great Minneapolis strike movement was led to historic victory over the "open shop" bosses, who were determined to keep the union out and the workers trodden down, by the authentic class-struggle, Trotskyist

leadership of Teamsters Local 574. Farrell Dobbs was a youthful leader of the Minneapolis strikes who (after the February strike in the coal yards) joined the American Trotskyists (the Communist League of America). Dobbs' account of the police riot on Bloody Friday, excerpted below, is one stark warning to workers everywhere that the capitalist police are neither "neutral" nor fellow "workers", as reformist politicians like to claim, but deadly enemies of the working class.

Chief Michael J. Johannes [had] issued special orders at a police lineup... "We're going to start moving goods... You have shotguns and you know how to use them..."

Suddenly, without any warning whatever, the cops opened fire on the picket truck, and they shot to kill. In a matter of seconds two of the pickets lay motionless on the floor of the bullet-riddled truck... From all quarters strikers rushed towards the truck to help them, advancing into the gunfire with the courage of lions. Many were felled by police as they stopped to pick up their injured comrades... They were shooting in all directions, hitting most of their victims in the back... often clubbing the wounded after they fell...

As part of their propaganda in preparing for Bloody Friday, the bosses had run paid ads in the daily papers, asking: "How do you like having our Minneapolis streets in the control of communists?" After the police riot *The Organizer* countered with... "How do you like having our Minneapolis streets in the control of murderers?"...

Under capitalism the main police function is to break strikes and to repress other forms of protest against the policies of the ruling class... Personal inclinations of individual cops do not alter this basic role of the police. All must comply with ruling-class dictates.

—Farrell Dobbs, *Teamster Rebellion* (1972)



LENIN

### Defend anti-racist protesters!

We print below a Partisan Defence Committee letter to the Crown Prosecution Service denouncing the vindictive prosecution of members of the Movement for Justice.

Outrageously, for their paint-throwing protest, Student Union president Nick De Marco was expelled, and SU officers Karen Doyle and Naveed Malick suspended, by London's Kingsway College authorities. De Marco is appealing his expulsion, and Doyle and Malick await "disciplinary hearings" on their status. Protest actions have mobilised widespread student support for the victimised Student Union officers.

The Labour-controlled Local Education Authority (LEA) in Tower Hamlets and school governors at Langdon Park School have convicted teacher Anthony Gard of "gross misconduct" for his involvement in the incident and declared they will issue him a final written warning.

The trial of the Movement for Justice Five is scheduled for April 15-16 at Bow Street Court, 192 Bow Street, WC2. A protest outside the court has been called for 9.30am on the 15th. All out to defend the Five! Send letters of protest to the Crown Prosecution Service at Portland House, Stag Place, London SW1. Contribute to their defence campaign, making cheques payable to the "Movement for Justice". For information about where to send donations, phone 0956 365 393.

The occasion was the announcement of the government's blatantly racist Immigration and Asylum Bill. The defendants acted to draw attention to the government's barbaric "immigration control" policies targeting the most vulnerable asylum seekers: those who face political repression, including imprisonment and torture, if sent back to their countries of origin, quite possibly to their deaths.

Ade Onibiyo, whose father Abdul was deported to Nigeria and has "disappeared", has been held in Campfield Detention Centre for one year. Ade and his family face continuing persecution from the state, and threatened deportation. The groundswell of protest over the treatment of the Onibiyo family reflects widespread revulsion towards the government's vicious plans and practices. Release Ade Onibiyo! Hands off the Onibiyo family!

By prosecuting the five Movement for Justice protesters under the Public Order Act, the British state vindictively attempts to intimidate the many thousands who actively oppose the Immigration and Asylum Bill.

Drop all charges against the Movement for Justice protesters!

Yours faithfully,

Ellen Munday  
for the PDC

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29 March 1996

Dear Mr Atkins,

The Partisan Defence Committee protests the outrage of your intended prosecution of those members of the Movement for Justice—Nick De Marco, Karen Doyle, Naveed Malick, Amanda Egbe and Anthony Gard—who participated in the paint splattering of the Tory Party Chairman, Brian Mawhinney, on 15 November last year, the day of the state opening of Parliament.

## WORKERS HAMMER



For a federation of workers republics in the British Isles!  
For a Socialist United States of Europe!

Newspaper of the Spartacist League, British section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

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# "Socialist" scabs squirm

We reprint below a letter (abridged for space) and reply from Workers Vanguard (paper of the Spartacist League of the US) no 641, 15 March 1996.

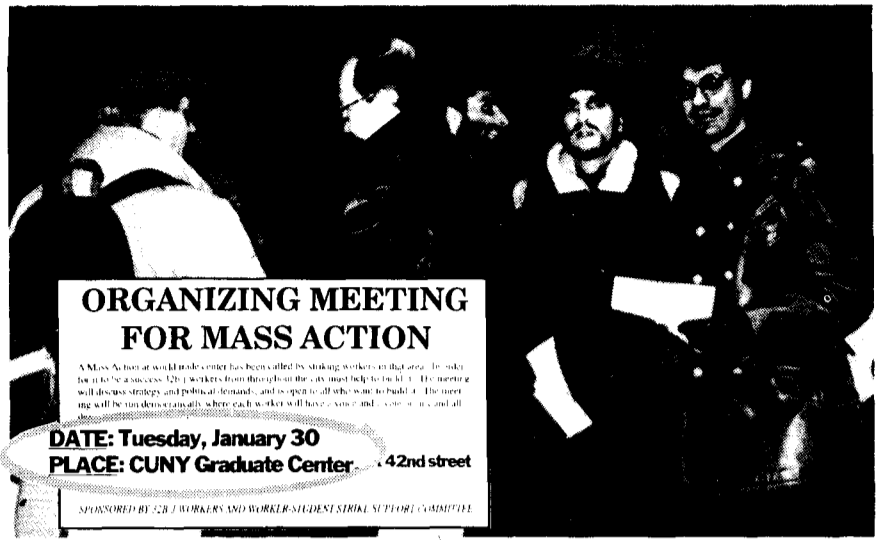
New York  
21 February 1996

To the Editor of Workers Vanguard:

I am obviously the supporter of the International Bolshevik Tendency you accuse of scabbing on the recent Service Employees International Union (SEIU) strike in New York City ("Picket Lines Mean Don't Cross!" *Workers Vanguard*, 2 February). Your next issue carries a piece entitled "Scab 'Socialists' Caught Out at CUNY" (16 February), in which you label as "scabs" the twenty or so leftists who showed up for a strike-support meeting at City University of New York Graduate Center on the evening of January 30. I write in order to answer these shameful libels—as well as your idiotic reports of "skulking," "scurrying" and "sputtering"—with a statement of the facts about both the SEIU strike at the *Village Voice*, where I have been a union

affected buildings had stayed off the job in solidarity. But such an action would in most cases have been a sympathy strike—i.e., a strike against employers other than those of the aggrieved union—and would have required a high degree of class consciousness. This is not likely to be brought about by isolated leftists in the workplace offering themselves up as human sacrifices to the boss. It may sometimes be the duty of Marxists to risk their livelihoods—or their lives—to influence the outcome of collective struggle. But, in this situation, to take a "principled" stand and be victimized without the remotest chance of altering the behavior of a single other worker is the action of someone more interested in saving his or her soul than helping to win a strike. It is self-martyrdom, not Marxism.

Instead of making an empty moral gesture, I, as part of a shop stewards' committee, met with the *Voice's* publisher to demand that the cleaners sent by the management company to do the strikers' work—the only real scabs at the *Voice*—be expelled from the paper's offices, and that the *Voice* not pay the company for their services for the duration



Young Spartacus

Caught in the act: fake leftists planned to hold "strike support" meeting behind the picket lines in struck CUNY Grad Center.

dispensations for people to enter struck facilities for special purposes. But, since the SL's ranting did manage to confuse a few of the strikers, the organizers decided to hold their meeting on the sidewalk outside; not a single person in attendance that night entered CUNY Grad, and, contrary to your reportage, several SEIU militants participated actively in the meeting. While we were planning a strike rally for the following day, SL members spent their time approaching participants individually to inform them that I was a "scab."

The SL is hardly qualified for the role of the left's moral policeman. During the crucial PATCO strike of 1981, air traffic controllers, unlike the SEIU, appealed to other workers and to the public at large to boycott the airlines, and also set up picket lines to try to shut down the airports. Yet taking a train instead of a plane was apparently too much of an inconvenience for the jet-set socialists of the SL leadership, who flew routinely throughout the strike. When several SL members (who were later among the founders of the External Tendency, precursor of the BT) objected to this flouting of the union's call for a boycott of scab services, the Robertsonite leadership even made flying during the strike a point of honor, castigating those who objected as "moralists" and "trade-union fetishists." The SL's injunction that all leftists should have pointlessly risked their jobs during the SEIU strike may sound a lot like moralism. But a genuine moralist must at least believe in the moral-

ity s/he preaches. You, on other hand, give hypocrisy a bad name.

Jim C.

*WV* replies: No self-respecting trade unionist, no supporter of the workers movement, and certainly no communist, crosses picket lines, ever.

Whining apologies for scabbing by self-styled "revolutionaries" seem to be quite a thriving cottage industry these days. In addition to the "Bolshevik" Tendency (BT) missive—which is nearly twice as long in the original—we have received an even lengthier diatribe along the same lines from an even tinier grouplet with the grandiose title of Communist Workers Organizing Committee (CWOC). During the four-week strike by the SEIU Local 32B-32J building workers, the BT didn't put out a single statement on this major union struggle. The CWOC did manage to upload a strike support statement on the Internet...on 1 March. Hello? The strike ended on 4 February. Echoing the BT, their strategy for "victory" called for "mass picketing" outside and "strike support committees" inside the struck buildings—of those who crossed the picket lines!

The cynicism of Jim C's contemptuous alibis for scabbing does not detract from the seriousness of the question. Solid picket lines that *nobody* and *nothing* crosses are not only central to winning union battles, they go to the core of the question of workers revolution—the need to unite the working class in struggle around its common class interests. As

continued on page 4

## An Appeal to the Members of All Unions From the Striking Members of Local 32B-32J

PLEASE DON'T CROSS OUR PICKET LINES

35,000 of us have been striking office and building workers in New York City since January 1996. This is your strike too. It is critical to the survival of organized labor. We are all part of the same labor movement and all of us must put the good of the labor movement first. The outcome of this strike will affect you and your family.

If the multi-millionaire barons of real estate can crush our union it is simply a matter of time before your employer decides to crush you.

A day late, a dollar short: on 4 February, the last day of the strike, Local 32B-32J tops finally called on all workers to honour their picket lines.

steward for ten years, and the meeting at CUNY Grad.

First, it should be noted that the six cleaning and maintenance workers at the *Village Voice* were not on strike against the *Voice* or the owner of the building that houses it. Their employer is the Building Maintenance Services Corporation, a management firm that contracts with the *Voice* and other companies. The picketers outside made it clear from the start that they were not appealing to *Voice* employees to stay away, but were there to prevent anyone else from entering the building to do their jobs. Neither I nor any of my fellow union members did the work normally performed by strikers—the defining activity of a scab in the eyes of any trade unionist, or, for that matter, anyone else outside the Spartacist League.

The situation at the *Voice* building (which contains one other firm as well as some residential tenants) could be compared to that of an industrial park, where there is a single entrance for a variety of different companies. According to the SL's definition of a scab—apparently anyone who, for whatever reason, enters a worksite at which pickets are present—all workers in such a park allowed by the picketers to go to their jobs in the non-striking firms would be "scabs." So too was every typesetter, secretary, dishwasher or desk clerk who went to work in the more than 1,000 commercial buildings affected by the SEIU strike.

The SEIU would indeed have won the strike in a matter of days if all workers in the

of the strike. The publisher agreed. We also donated \$1500 from our own strike fund to the six SEIU strikers in our building, and collected \$1500 more for them among union members in the shop. Each worker thus received a total of \$500 in strike-support contributions.

We were not among the initiators of the strike-support meeting at CUNY. But in our judgment there would, in fact, have been nothing wrong with holding this meeting at CUNY Grad with the permission of the picketers; strikers often make



Workers Vanguard photos

Picket lines are the battle lines of the class struggle: 1984 Phelps Dodge copper miners (left) and 1977 Stearns, Kentucky coal miners (right) send warning to scabs.



# Look who's joining the SLP...

"NEVER CROSS A PICKET LINE". So reads the cover of a pamphlet issued by the 500 Liverpool dockers sacked for upholding this elementary class stance on the Merseyside docks last autumn. A spokesman for the sacked dockers spoke powerfully about their struggle at a London "Socialist Alliance" public meeting on 21 February, saying their refusal to cross picket lines is a "basic human principle". Members of the so-called International Bolshevik Tendency were at the meeting, where they waxed eloquent about "solidarity" with the dockers. But Spartacist League supporters spoke out to expose this as a total, cynical fraud by an outfit whose latest "principle" is to enumerate multiple excuses for scabbing. (See "Socialist' scabs squirm", page 3.)

A few weeks later, an IBT supporter informed us that "the IBT no longer exists" in Britain. Had they been hired by Drake International, the agency which supplies scabs to the Merseyside docks? Or were they taking up staff positions with the "Union of Democratic Miners" (UDM), the scab outfit formed against the heroic 1984-85 miners strike? No, we were informed, the erstwhile IBTers were all joining the Socialist Labour Party. Perhaps they now intend to preach the "tactical" merits of crossing picket lines to Arthur Scargill, who led the NUM during the great coal strike and has now broken from Tony Blair's Labour Party to found the SLP.

We wrote last issue: "Although the programme of Scargill's SLP is simply that of 'old' Labour as against the 'New' Labour Party of Tony Blair, this split within the Labour Party offers the possibility for a fundamental realignment of the political configuration in this country out of which a genuine working-class party can be constituted" (*WH* no 149, February/March 1996).

This perspective stands in sharp contrast to that of the various fake-left groups who are now in the gravitational pull of the SLP. Far from providing a revolutionary alternative to the SLP's reformist programme, they have stood to the *right* of the Scargill leadership on key issues of the class struggle, most notably when he led the NUM in the historic miners strike.

The small group which theatrically styles itself the "Communist Party of Great Britain" recently announced that "all partisans of the working class should join the SLP" (*Weekly Worker*, 29 February). Back in 1984 this grouping, then known as the "Leninist", denounced Scargill's refusal to call for a ballot in the early days of the strike, when this was the favoured ploy of Neil Kinnock, the Fleet Street hounds and the UDM scabs to knife the militant miners' battle.

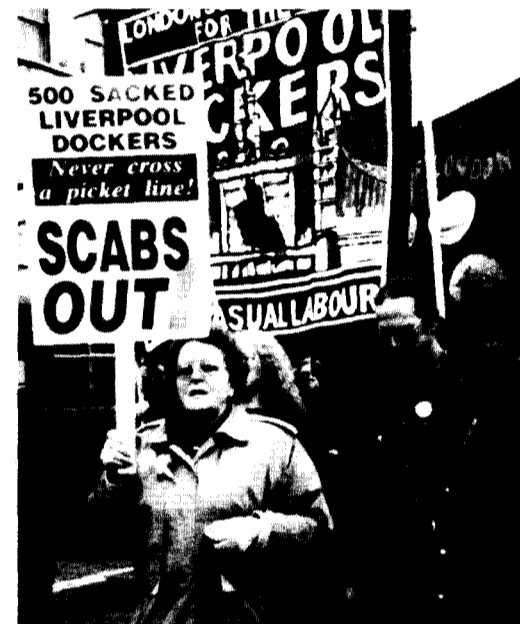
A "Fourth International Supporters Caucus", British leftovers from the disintegrating United Secretariat, have also surfaced in the SLP. During the miners strike, the USec paper *Socialist Action* ran a sympathetic interview with a scab in the coalfields. (As for the Workers Power group, they too joined the outcry for a ballot back then; more recently, they en-

ist Labour Party, where among other things they echoed the anti-communism of the Labour leadership. In 1983, on the eve of the miners strike, the Labour and TUC bureaucrats raised a furore against Scargill's correct denunciation of Polish Solidarność as an "anti-socialist" organisation. The anti-communist hue and cry against Scargill was aimed at further isolating and undermining the miners union in the build-up to the strike. Yet Militant was one of a host of "left" outfits which supported Solidarność, which has since presided over the devastating capitalist counterrevolution that destroyed the bureaucratically deformed workers state in Poland.

Apologists for scabbing and capitalist counterrevolution, these outfits will cut and run when the heat is on. For their part, the IBT's record of crossing picket lines,

really spoke to some of the felt needs of British working people, and we especially welcomed the fact that she was prepared to stand up and say, no, you don't have to 'Vote Labour to keep the Tories out', which is a nice break from the eleventh commandment of the British left—Militant, the SWP and the Communist Party....

"We believe that to get socialism and reindustrialise this country, put people back to work and elevate the living standards, you must overthrow the capitalist state and replace it with a state run by the working class, a federation of workers republics. I agree with the woman who said that if you want to build any kind of socialist party in Britain you must be for the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of the British Army from Northern Ireland. That's related to the question of the capitalist state....



Ogreave, May 1984 (left): picket line battles during heroic miners strike. Rally in support of Liverpool dockers, 23 March 1996 (right). Class struggle militants know that picket lines mean don't cross.

dorsed the Blairite candidate in the Hemsworth by-election against the SLP's Brenda Nixon.)

Then there's Militant, which enthused over the SLP's founding while complaining that they have been blocked from joining it. For decades, Militant was buried inside the consummately pro-imperial-

together with their visceral rejection of concrete defence of the Soviet Union in the Cold War climate of the 1980s, underlines their treacherous quality. Like other, more run-of-the-mill opportunists, they could easily swing back towards mainstream Labourism for trifling advantage, most likely when the SLP comes under heavy fire from the right.

The Spartacist League gave critical support and campaigned for SLP candidate Brenda Nixon in the Hemsworth by-election. We noted that the issues on which she ran—renationalisation of the main privatised industries, repeal of the anti-union laws, for full employment and rebuilding the public services—together with the fact that she stood in opposition to the Labour Party, provided a welcome opportunity for communists to intervene with a programme for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism. At the same time, we made clear that this did not translate into a blank cheque for critical support in the future. For example, the SLP could seek to advance its electoral opportunities through some kind of popular-frontist bloc akin to the Militant-dominated Scottish Socialist Alliance, which calls to "maximise the anti-Tory vote" ie vote for Blair, and perhaps even the bourgeois Scottish National Party.

Speaking from the floor at a North London SLP public meeting on 21 March, Spartacist League spokesman Eibhlin McDonald said:

"We supported Brenda Nixon's candidacy in Hemsworth because her demands

"The Liverpool dockers representative spoke about the anti-union laws. What you need for workers in struggle is other unions to strike at the same time—all the things that are outlawed by the anti-union laws. Now if you want to do any of those things—to fight racism, to get rid of the anti-union laws—you're going to come up against the question of the capitalist state. There's no way round it. This is not a matter of 'parliamentary struggle or extra-parliamentary struggle', it's a different kind of struggle, to put the working class in state power.

"The SLP are committed to simply a reduction in the arms expenditure of what is an imperialist country.... If you're going to spend any money on armaments without having overthrown the capitalist state, you're going to be putting money into the same prison system, army and police force that will be used against striking workers and against racial minorities.

"At bottom, the politics of the SLP are the politics of 'old' Labourism. The commitment to 'common ownership' is very similar to the politics of the post-war Labour government of Clement Attlee... [which] presided over a racist immigration policy and the bloody partition of India. The model that we uphold, and that has to be looked to, is the Russian Revolution and the policies of the party of Lenin and Trotsky that overthrew capitalism and replaced it with a system of workers councils. Anything short of that and you'll end up with all the legacy of 'old' Labourism before Tony Blair." ■

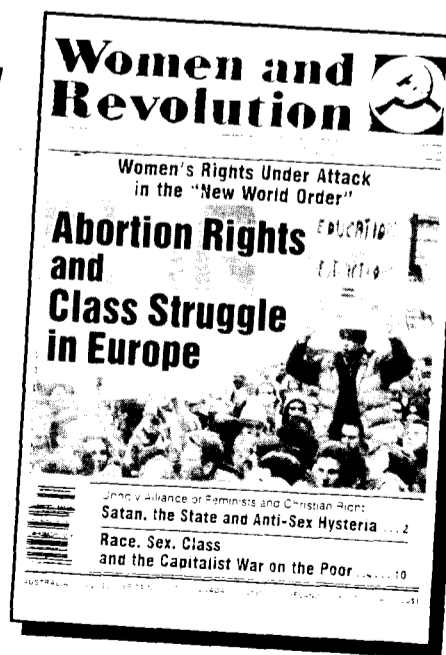
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# Revolution and counterrevolution in Spain

## Popular front strangled the Spanish revolution

The film *Land and Freedom*, directed by Ken Loach, has sparked widespread interest and debate about the dramatic historical events that led to the defeat of the working-class forces in the Spanish Revolution of the 1930s. Loach's film centres on the experience of a young Communist Party member from Liverpool who volunteers to fight in Spain. He ends up in a militia organised by the POUM (Workers Party of Marxist Unification), and gradually becomes aware that the Stalinists are betraying the revolutionary struggle in order to cement a diplomatic alliance with the capitalist rulers of "democratic" France and Britain.

Loach and the film's screenwriter, Jim Allen, clearly intended *Land and Freedom* as a political message to the youth of today. The story is told through flashbacks, as the hero's granddaughter reads his letters from Spain along with newspaper clippings of the time. It ends at his graveside in London, where the granddaughter joins old comrades to read from William Morris and raise fists in the air. No doubt for many young people *Land and Freedom* does provide a breath of fresh air. Here is a popular film which openly and proudly takes the side of revolutionary-minded fighters against capitalism, a welcome change from the daily diet of lies about the "death of communism".

Loach's powerful indictment of the Stalinists' treachery in the Civil War has sparked the ire of latter-day spokesmen for the Communist parties, particularly in Spain and Italy. But *Land and Freedom* falls far short of telling the full story of the betrayal in Spain. Instead the film glorifies the centrist POUM and also the large and influential Spanish anarchists of the CNT (National Confederation of Labour). Yet at every decisive juncture, the POUM and anarchist leaders fell in behind the Stalinists and the Socialist Party and played a key role in delivering the working class to disaster. They did this by supporting, and eventually joining, a class-collaborationist coalition with capitalist forces: the *popular front*.

The Spanish Civil War resonates to this day because it posed with razor sharpness the question of which class shall rule: the bourgeoisie or the proletariat. Victory in Spain would have greatly undermined the regimes of Hitler and Mussolini and opened the path to workers revolution throughout Europe. Instead the triumph of Franco's reactionary forces spurred Hitler's drive for imperial conquest and marked the onset of World War II. By 1941, Nazi Germany had invaded the Soviet Union. For four decades, Spain was to remain under the iron grip of Francoist military-bonapartist rule.

In the words of Leon Trotsky, the founder of the Fourth International, the defeat of the Spanish workers at the hands of bloody reaction was "one of the most tragic chapters of modern history". But this was far from inevitable. Throughout the course of the revolution and counterrevolution, Trotsky waged an unrelenting struggle against the programme of class

### On Ken Loach's *Land and Freedom*



Scene from *Land and Freedom*. Loach's film exposes Stalinist treachery during the Spanish Civil War but allbises POUM and anarchist betrayal.

collaboration pushed by the chief working-class organisations. His letters and polemics on Spain (collected in the book *The Spanish Revolution [1931-39]*) expressed his determination to forge a proletarian vanguard party based on the programme of Bolshevism and the lessons of the 1917 Russian Revolution.

In the tragic aftermath of defeat, Trotsky posed the question: how was it that the Francoist forces, who lacked a staunch army and popular support, could emerge victorious, drowning the workers and oppressed in blood? The answer was that Franco had more than cannibalistic ferocity, he had help from the other side of the battlefield. By tying the workers to their class enemy, the popular front acted as the decisive roadblock to revolution and paved the way for bloody disaster.

Trotsky understood that the Stalinists were the "fighting vanguard of the bourgeois-republican counterrevolution". But what of the major forces to their left, notably the anarchists and the POUM? *Land and Freedom* to the contrary, and despite the heroism of many individual militants, the decisive political role of these forces was to give a "left" face to the popular front. As Trotsky wrote, the anarchist leaders wound up acting as a "fifth wheel in the cart of bourgeois democracy", while "the POUM proved to be...the chief obstacle on the road to the creation of a revolutionary party" ("The Lessons of Spain: The Last Warning", December 1937).

#### Spain—which class shall rule?

The collapse of the Spanish monarchy in 1931 led to the establishment of a bourgeois republic resting on a coalition of liberal bourgeois parties and the Socialists. Its policies were hardly more liberal than those of the 1920s military dictatorship of General Primo de Rivera, which

had also been supported by the Socialists.

Spain was an overwhelmingly backward country, with nearly 70 per cent of the economy based on agriculture and most of the land owned by a tiny cabal of landowners. But the outstanding bourgeois-democratic tasks of the Spanish revolution—redistributing land to the peasants, separation of church and state, the rights of national minorities, even granting women the most elementary freedoms—could not be resolved within the bounds of capitalism. Trotsky drew on the theory of *permanent revolution*, confirmed by the experience of the Russian Revolution, to assert that only the conquest of state power by the working class could resolve these basic tasks, placing the socialist tasks and international extension of the revolution on the order of the day.

The Trotskyist Left Opposition fought to uphold an internationalist and revolutionary perspective against the betrayals of the Stalinist bureaucracy, which had usurped political power in the Soviet Union by 1924. Adopting the dogma of "socialism in one country", Stalin revived the theory of "two-stage" revolution (taken from the Mensheviks who had opposed the Russian Revolution). This anti-Marxist line was to have tragic consequences in China in 1925-27 when Stalin ordered the Communist Party's capitulation to the bourgeois-nationalist Guomindang (Kuomintang) of Chiang Kai-shek. Chiang repaid this faith with a massacre of tens of thousands of Communists and militant workers.

In 1933, Hitler came to power in Germany without so much as a shot being fired. This was due to the treacherous "Third Period" policies of Stalin and the German Communist Party, who having abandoned the programme for workers revolution, criminally turned their backs on the fight for united working-class ac-

tion to crush the fascists. This left the proletariat politically disarmed. Not long after Hitler's triumph, the parties of the Stalinised Communist International (CI) were instructed to turn towards constructing the popular front. This about-face coincided with the panic-stricken Soviet bureaucracy's attempts to ingratiate itself with the bourgeoisies of the "democratic" imperialist countries, which meant containing and opposing revolutionary struggles. In 1935, the Seventh CI Congress codified the new policy, declaring that the fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat and socialism was off the agenda.

In Spain, the CP was initially the weakest of the major working-class parties, lacking roots in the proletariat and discredited by its previous "Third Period" policies. The anarchist CNT trade union had the largest working-class base, split between left and right wings as was the Socialist Party (PSOE).

The forces grouped around the Trotskyist Left Opposition in Spain were initially strongly placed. Their numbers included prominent working-class leaders like Andreu Nin, former secretary of the CI's Red International of Labour Unions, and Juan Andrade, a former PSOE youth leader. By the end of 1932, they constituted one of the larger sections of the International Left Opposition. But this enormous potential was squandered. Under Nin's leadership, the Spanish Left Oppositionists avoided sharp political struggle, leading them to ignore the opportunities presented by growing ferment amongst the Socialist and anarchist workers and youth. Against Trotsky's persistent arguments, they resisted the tactic of entry into the Socialist youth organisation and missed the crucial opportunity to address and win over militants searching for a programme that could lead to the seizure of working-class power.

Instead Nin politically accommodated and braintrustered the "Workers and Peasants Bloc" of Joaquín Maurín, which grew out of a right split from the Communist Party in Catalonia. Maurín's organisation stood on a programme of "democratic revolution", characterised by Trotsky as "pure 'Kuomintangism' transported to Spanish soil". Yet Nin went on to engineer an unprincipled fusion with this group, leading to the formation of the POUM.

October 1934 saw massive workers struggles, with general strikes in Madrid and Barcelona and then a workers' insurrection in the Asturias mining region. The government responded with massive repression, killing thousands. This heroic uprising signalled the awakening of the Spanish proletariat, leading to the widespread formation of united-front workers committees (*alianzas obreras*). Seeking to contain the rising tide of struggle, in early 1936 the leaders of the major workers parties moved to set up a popular-front alliance. This class-collaborationist pact included the bourgeois Republicans, the Communist Party, PSOE (both wings)...and the POUM. The popular-front agreement explicitly renounced the

nationalisation of the land, pledged loyalty to the bourgeoisie, and agreed to work "for the general interests of the economy and national production".

The elections led to a popular-front government under the bourgeois Republican Manuel Azaña, and included representatives of the Socialist and Communist parties as well as the social-democratic UGT trade union federation. From the outset, Azaña's government sought to quell worker unrest by imposing censorship on working-class newspapers and arresting strike leaders.

Then in July 1936, General Franco and other leading military officers went into rebellion, proclaiming the need for an authoritarian Catholic state. Fearing the workers' response, the bourgeois popular-front government tried to suppress news of the uprising, then attempted to negotiate with Franco, all the while refusing to arm the masses. What they didn't reckon on was the workers taking matters into their own hands. Within days, the Francoist military revolt had been thrown back in two-thirds of the country, as the working class seized arms and began to fight.

Republican Spain had entered into a revolutionary situation. As with Russia between February and October 1917, this was a period of dual power, with two antagonistic poles: the bourgeois government and the armed workers militias. The working class patrolled the streets, organised the war effort and managed the factories. In Catalonia, transport and industry were in the hands of the CNT workers committees, while in much of the region the peasant associations and agricultural workers unions had seized the land. Committees representing all anti-fascist parties and unions replaced the old municipal governments. The most important of these was the Central Committee of Anti-Fascist Militias of Catalonia.

Yet on top of this stood the popular-front government, the sole repository of bourgeois class rule in Republican Spain. Most of the capitalists and large landholders had deserted the Republic in favour of Franco. Trotsky described the few petty-bourgeois lawyers who remained as the "bourgeoisie's shadow". Their importance, however, was very real: through them the reformist workers parties in the popular front guaranteed to uphold capitalist property relations. Grotesquely, the popular-front parties even defended Spain's colonial holdings, refusing to call for the independence of Morocco lest this alienate potential bourgeois "allies", notably in London and Paris.

During the period of dual power in Russia, Lenin, Trotsky and the Bolsheviks demanded, "Down with the ten capitalist ministers! All power to the soviets!" But in Spain the POUM and the anarchist CNT-FAI (Iberian Anarchist Federation) supported and finally joined the regional bourgeois Catalan government, the Generalitat, in September 1936. Generalitat leader Companys then moved to reinforce the repressive apparatus of the bourgeois state, disbanding the Central Committee of the Anti-Fascist Militias and ordering the armed workers to join the bourgeois "Popular Army". Soon after, the POUM was expelled from the government, its services no longer required. The government meanwhile put together a force out of its 20,000 Carabineros (customs police) to act as shock troops.

*Land and Freedom* glosses over, obscures and alibis the POUM's political support to and eventual participation in the popular-front government. In one scene, Blanca, a POUM militia member, attempts to convince the film's hero David Carr to break with the treacherous Stalinists and stay with the POUM. She describes how POUM members were being



POUM militia leaving Lenin Barracks, Barcelona for the Aragon front in January 1937.

hunted down, their papers banned, and their members thrown out of the government. Trotsky and his Spanish supporters were unequivocal in their defence of the POUM against state terror. But what was the POUM, ostensibly a revolutionary organisation, doing inside a bourgeois government in the first place? Time and again, POUM leaders capitulated to the Republican government in the interests of "anti-fascist unity". They sanctioned the dissolution of the revolutionary committees. Together with the CNT, they published without comment the decree disarming the workers.

#### May Days in Barcelona

The turning point in the revolution came with the 1937 May Days in Barcelona. The strength of the proletariat there was exemplified by the armed occupation of the telephone exchange, the most prominent building in central Barcelona, largely by workers from the anarchist CNT. This allowed the insurgent workers to monitor the activities of the bourgeois governments in Catalonia and Valencia.

On 3 May, Stalinist forces staged a provocation by attacking the exchange. Within hours, workers throughout Barcelona had thrown up barricades, taking control of virtually the entire city. Felix Morrow's book *Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Spain* vividly describes the situation:

"...the workers were pouring into the local centers of the CNT-FAI and POUM, arming and building barricades.... There was almost no firing the first night, for the workers were overwhelmingly stronger than the government forces. In the workers' suburbs, many of the government police, with no stomach for the struggle, peacefully surrendered their arms."

Barcelona was in the hands of the armed proletariat. The bourgeois forces were demoralised, as the popular front confronted the working masses across the barricades. Once again, the working class was in a position to fight for power. But the anarchist and POUM leaders capitulated to the popular-front government and abandoned the barricades in exchange for an empty "promise" to "negotiate".

This defeat broke the back of the struggle against Franco. The Republican government sent 6000 Assault Guards (equipped with Soviet arms) and killed hundreds and jailed tens of thousands of workers. The POUM was outlawed. Andreu Nin, the Trotskyist Erwin Wolf, left anarchist leader Camillo Berneri and numerous other proletarian militants were murdered by the Stalinists. In January 1939 Franco's troops marched into Barcelona; the resistance had long before been crushed.

The Stalinists may have been the triggermen for the crushing of the May Days, but in a political sense it was the

anarchist leaders, tailed by the POUM at the key junctures, who played the decisive counterrevolutionary role in the events. Morrow recounts the workers' outrage on being instructed by their leaders to vacate the barricades, describing how "anarchist workers tore up [the CNT paper] *Solidaridad Obrera* and shook their fists and guns at the radios". The CNT leaders lied to the workers about what was happening in the city, told them not to block the entry of the Assault Guards, and tried to alibi their refusal to take power on the grounds that it would invite French and British intervention. They even set their own militants up for repression, distributing to the press a denunciation of the left-anarchist Friends of Durruti (FoD) as "*agents provocateurs*".

As for the POUM—which by Morrow's estimate had the support of some 30,000 workers in Catalonia alone—at the decisive hour it ignominiously betrayed. Even as bitter anarchist workers tore up their copies of CNT newspapers, the POUM joined the chorus telling them to leave the barricades. Their policy was exactly counterposed to that of the Bolsheviks, whose revolutionary intransigence enabled them to grow from a small minority into a majority of the politically active proletariat in Russia by October 1917.

In an unfinished 1940 article titled "The Class, the Party and the Leadership—Why Was the Spanish Proletariat Defeated? (Questions of Marxist Theory)", Trotsky underscored the importance of the "subjective factor" in politics—the need for a revolutionary party prepared to lead the struggle for power. He noted that in Spain: "The workers' line of march at all times cut a certain angle to the line of the leadership. And at the most critical moments this angle became 180 degrees. The leadership then helped directly or indirectly to subdue the workers by armed force." This was precisely the treacherous role played by the anarchist

and POUM misleaders during the Barcelona May Days.

The Spanish Trotskyists (Sección Bolchevique-Leninista de España) and the left-wing anarchists of the Friends of Durruti (named after a popular anarchist leader who died defending Madrid against Franco) were the only organisations to call for defence of the barricades, and to raise a programme for the seizure of power. They fought on the side of the workers to the very end. Despite their small size, the Trotskyists produced and widely distributed the following leaflet on the barricades on 4 May:

"LONG LIVE THE REVOLUTIONARY OFFENSIVE

"No compromise. Disarmament of the National Republican Guard and the reactionary Assault Guards. This is the decisive moment. Next time it will be too late. General strike in all the industries excepting those connected with the prosecution of the war, until the resignation of the reactionary government. Only proletarian power can assure military victory.

"Complete arming of the working class. "Long live unity of action of CNT-FAI-POUM.

"Long live the revolutionary front of the proletariat.

"Committees of revolutionary defense in the shops, factories, districts."

Loach and Allen are compelled to include the 1937 May Days in their film. But the scenes depicting this key event are historically inaccurate, distorted, even trivialised. In *Homage to Catalonia*, George Orwell describes Barcelona at the time as a "town where the working class was in the saddle". Yet Loach and Allen reduce the May events to a sniping match across the balconies in a scene interspersed with an angry woman shopper whose shopping bag has spilt because of the shooting! The film provides no hint of the massive organised presence and power of the working class.

There is a political reason why *Land and Freedom* so massively distorts the Barcelona May Days. To depict these events in anything resembling their real importance and intensity would have posed too sharply the question of the POUM's and anarchists' responsibility for betraying the revolution before the Stalinist-backed government assault.

#### Anarchism and the Spanish betrayal

Many leftist youth today sympathise with anarchism, believing it to be uncompromisingly opposed to capitalism but unaware of its role in the defeat of the Spanish working class. The Spanish events were to be the great testing-ground for this current, in a country where it had enjoyed a strong hold dating back to the

*continued on page 8*



General Franco (middle left) led military rebellion in 1936, proclaiming the need for an authoritarian Catholic state.

Jesus Lozana, Madrid

# Spain...

(Continued from page 7)

last century.

The CNT-FAI entry into the Catalan and Madrid governments in 1936 exposed the fundamental opportunism and class collaborationism of the anarchists. The May Days in Barcelona forced them to choose between their working-class base and the bourgeoisie. They chose the bourgeoisie. As the Stalinist bureaucrats understood full well, maintaining capitalist property relations in the context of the Civil War in Spain necessarily required counterrevolutionary methods—and the anarchist misleaders, too, played their part in this very dirty game. In the Barcelona May Days, the “anti-state” CNT leaders ended up actively helping to keep power in the hands of the bourgeoisie *against* the insurgent workers.

Trotsky compared anarchist doctrine to a raincoat full of holes: useless when it rained. The essence of every revolution consists in putting a new class into power, which is precisely what anarchism could not and would not do. The one “principle” the Spanish anarchists kept intact was their opposition to the dictatorship of the proletariat—the workers state. While the CNT leaders sat in the bourgeois government, they tried to divert attention from their crimes by raising a hue and cry about the Kronstadt counterrevolutionary uprising crushed by the Red Army in 1921, and their hero, Nestor Makhno, whose peasant bands in the Ukraine were defeated and dispersed after they turned against the new Soviet workers state. As Trotsky wrote:

“By hiding behind Kronstadt and Makhno, the attorneys of anarchism will deceive nobody. In the Kronstadt episode and in the struggle with Makhno, we defended the proletarian revolution from the peasant counterrevolution. The Spanish Anarchists defended and continue to defend bourgeois counterrevolution from the proletarian revolution. No sophistry will delete from the annals of history the fact that anarchism and Stalinism in the Spanish revolution were on one side of the barricades while the working masses with the revolutionary Marxists were on the other. Such is the truth which will forever remain in the consciousness of the proletariat!”

— “The Lessons of Spain: The Last Warning”

Anarchists today who want to distance themselves from the CNT-FAI leaders’ treachery look to the Friends of Durruti as some sort of saving grace. But this left-wing split represented an explicit *break* with the “non-political” anti-statism of anarchism. They called for a revolutionary “National Defence Council” based on union organisations to take power, posing this explicitly as a “variation” from the anarchist tradition. They wrote that, “The vanguard i.e. the revolutionary militants and Friends of Durruti, POUM and the Youth must regroup to elaborate a programme of proletarian revolutionaries.” This represented a crucial opportunity to regroup revolutionary forces into a vanguard party which could lead the proletariat to power. But this task was tragically cut short by the counterrevolutionary terror.

## Debate over *Land and Freedom*

Leftover Stalinists, like those grouped around *Morning Star*, are incensed at Loach’s film, accusing it of “Trotskyite dogma” and “scurrilous rewriting of history”. *Morning Star* writer Jeff Sawtell (4 August 1995) even evokes the memory of vicious Stalinist hatchetwoman Dolores Ibárruri (“La Pasionaria”), who spared no occasion to slander and denounce those who proclaimed the need for revolution to win the Civil War. Ibárruri is commonly remembered for her fiery cry of “No pasarán” (“They shall not pass”). But the



Centelles, Barcelona

Anarchist militia 1937. Spanish Revolution was betrayed by popular front, which tied workers to their class enemy.

Francoist forces did pass, and the Spanish workers were drowned in blood—while the Stalinists held open the door.

Sawtell also cites the International Brigades, which rallied militants from around the world determined to fight fascism in Spain. But they were cynically used by the Stalinists in the service of popular-front betrayal, and even in the repression of left-wing militants. In late 1938 the International Brigades were withdrawn. This grew out of Stalin’s desire to come to an accommodation with Hitler’s Germany, fearing isolation after the French and British governments’ Munich Pact with Hitler.

But whilst tired Stalinist hacks regurgitate slanders and lies about Spain, most British left groups have been effusive in their praise of *Land and Freedom*. In their respective reviews of the film, *Socialist Review* (journal of the Socialist Workers Party) and *Socialist Outlook* (produced by supporters of the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat), failed even to mention, let alone oppose, the popular front. *Socialist Worker* salesmen outside cinema showings of Loach’s film even took to shouting “Join the POUM of today, join the SWP!”

Former SWPer Andy Durgan served as one of the historical advisors to the film. Several years back, this self-appointed lawyer for the POUM claimed that it “had little choice but to support the pact against the right”, while arguing that it would have been smarter to do this “independently from outside” (*Revolutionary History* vol 4, nos 1/2, winter 1991-92). Indeed, what the SWP, USec & Co find appealing about *Land and Freedom* is that it is a sophisticated apology for the popular frontism of the POUM and anarchists. This in turn gives a sort of “left” credence to their own modern-day popular-frontist reformism.

Trotsky’s attack on the POUM and its apologists 60 years ago applies with full force to the fake-left of today:

“The question of questions at present is the Popular Front. The left centrists seek to present this question as a tactical or even as a technical maneuver, so as to be able to peddle their wares in the shadow of the Popular Front. In reality, the Popular Front is the *main question of proletarian class strategy* for this epoch. It also offers the best criterion for the difference between Bolshevism and Menshevism.”

— “The POUM and the Popular Front”, July 1936

Following Trotsky, we of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) have fought consistently for proletarian opposition to the popular front. This was posed point-blank in Chile in the early 1970s, when our tendency was unique in refusing to give any electoral support, however “critical”, to Allende’s

Unidad Popular. This was a popular-front alliance which tied the combative proletariat to the institutions of the capitalist state and prepared the bloody outcome of Pinochet’s military coup.

More recently, we have fought for proletarian class opposition to the ANC’s nationalist popular front in South Africa. In Brazil, together with our fraternal comrades of the Luta Metalúrgica/Liga Quarta-internacionalista do Brasil, we stand in hard class opposition to Lula’s social-democratic Workers Party and its Frente Brasil Popular, which demobilises and attacks the workers and oppressed on behalf of the capitalists.

Our adherence to elementary class principle stands in sharp contrast to the various centrist and reformist outfits who have no qualms about supporting the popular front... or trying to build one of their own. In South Africa, a host of pseudo-revolutionary groups including the SWP and USec called for votes to the bourgeois-nationalist ANC in the elections two years ago. The ANC government has attacked trade union struggles and pursued vicious anti-working-class austerity measures, proving themselves to be the new black front men for South African capitalism. Closer to home, popular-frontist outfits like the SWP’s Anti Nazi League are modelled on precisely the same programme that led to defeat in Spain—strategic unity with so-called “anti-fascist” bourgeois elements.

Centrists like the Workers Power (WP) group occasionally posture as opponents of class collaboration, but they too have never hesitated to leap on the popular-front bandwagon at the first opportunity. During the last French elections, WP advocated votes to Mitterrand’s Socialist Party, which after a decade at the centre of a racist, pro-NATO, Cold War popular front government administering capitalist austerity was hated by most militant sections of the working class.

More broadly, in the spirit of the POUM, WP espouses an “anti-imperialist united front” for underdeveloped countries, a formula which means political capitulation to a supposedly “anti-imperialist” wing of the capitalists. WP even used this slogan to justify supporting Khomeini’s reactionary mass movement against the shah of Iran in 1978-79, as they ludicrously painted Islamic reaction as an “anti-imperialist” struggle. Upholding Trotsky’s perspective of permanent revolution, the ICL (then international Spartacist tendency) said: “Down with the Shah, Down with the Mullahs—For workers revolution in Iran!”

Ken Loach has produced a number of powerful films, and he is widely seen as a partisan of the working class. But at bot-

tom his politics are left Labourite. Motivating the contemporary significance of *Land and Freedom*, Loach proclaimed: “It is time we remembered our European history. After all, there is now a similar war going on in former Yugoslavia to defend what remains of a multi-ethnic society in Bosnia” (*Workers Press*, 10 June 1995).

What a grotesque insult to the heroic Spanish working class who fought for social liberation against brutal military reaction! The all-sided communalist bloodletting between Serbs, Croats and Bosnian Muslims in the Balkans is a product of imperialist-backed capitalist counterrevolution in the former Yugoslav deformed workers state. Unlike Loach and fake-left outfits like the USec, WP and the Workers Revolutionary Party—who have all rallied behind Labour Party pro-imperialist support for Bosnia—the ICL has consistently called for all imperialist troops to get out of the Balkans. When, as last summer, the Bosnian Serbs have been under direct attack by NATO imperialism, we stood for their military defence, even as we called for workers revolution to overthrow all the bloody nationalist regimes.

## The fight for the Fourth International

Stalin’s role in Spain confirmed his role as the gravedigger of revolutions. The Trotskyists fought tooth and nail against his treacherous politics of class collaborationism. Whilst standing for unconditional defence of the Soviet Union against imperialism and internal counterrevolution, they also fought for political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy. The popular-front betrayal in Spain, together with the impending threat of imperialist war, underlined the urgent need for a new revolutionary International.

But the fight for the Fourth International also required—and requires—sharp political combat with centrism, of which the Spanish POUM was a prime example. Referring to the “Treachery of the POUM”, in his last major work on the Spanish Revolution, “The Class, the Party and the Leadership”, Trotsky wrote:

“To the left of all the other parties in Spain stood the POUM... But it was precisely this party that played a fatal role in the development of the Spanish revolution... It participated in the ‘Popular’ election bloc; entered the government that liquidated workers’ committees; engaged in a struggle to reconstitute this governmental coalition; capitulated time and again to the Anarchist leadership; conducted, in connection with this, a false trade union policy; and took a vacillating and nonrevolutionary attitude toward the May 1937 uprising... [A] centrist party invariably acts as a brake upon the revolution, must each time smash its own head, and may bring about the collapse of the revolution.”

At bottom, *Land and Freedom* fobs off sole responsibility for the defeat in Spain onto the Stalinists, thereby alibiing the POUM and anarchists. In this sense, the “lessons of Spain” which Loach (and most of the pseudo-left) aim to impart are very, very wrong. Proletarian opposition to the popular front isn’t a question of “tactics”, nor is it of mere historical interest. It is an urgent question for working-class struggle against capitalism *today*.

We of the ICL fight to forge revolutionary vanguard parties of a type that Trotsky would recognise as his own—parties which do not cover for popular-front betrayal but draw a sharp class line in order to rally the workers in revolutionary struggle against capital. Reforging the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution, is the key to achieving what so many heroic workers in Spain fought for and died for: an end to capitalist exploitation and a socialist future. ■



# Cliffites hail "strikes" by prison guards, security guards Cops out of the unions!

We reprint below a slightly adapted article from Workers Vanguard, no 642 29 March 1996, fortnightly paper of the Spartacist League of the US.

A couple of weeks after the leadership of Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 32B-32J called off a bitter month-long strike by New York City commercial building workers in early February, 32B-32J pickets reappeared outside Manhattan's World Trade Center. But these were not striking workers. Rather, they were security guards who only a month earlier had acted as strike-breakers for the real estate bosses against the building workers. Having done their dirty work, some of these guards were then laid off by management. The security guards' "picket" is not an action class-conscious workers should support in any way. The Local 32B-32J tops have enrolled nearly 3000 security guards in order to fatten their dues coffers. But these rent-a-cop auxiliaries to the racist thugs in blue have no place in the union movement.

It's hardly surprising that a right-wing "business union" type like SEIU local president Gus Bevona would embrace security guards. But tailing right behind Bevona is the so-called International Socialist Organization (ISO). During the building workers' strike, the ISO was one



Bregg/Maclean's

## Socialist Worker

Paper of the International Socialists

### Crisis in Ontario Jails

BY PHYLIS WAUGH, OPSEU LOCAL 520

In the lead-up to the OPSEU strike, of capitalists — like the deaths at the union spent 18 months negotiating. Westray mine — go unpunished, while agreements to maintain essential services during a strike. OPSEU promised to maintain the colour of their uniforms are in the best interests of the corrections workers.

Socialists have gotten a hearing for these ideas on picket lines recently, at the Don Jail and elsewhere.

We live in a society where the crime

Canadian *Socialist Worker* (6 March) brags that they "have gotten a hearing" from prison guard "unionists" at Toronto's Don Jail (left). Guards "job action" included subjecting inmates to lockdown and rushing from picket lines to put down prisoners' protest.

particular against striking workers. One of the fastest growing industries in the US today is private goon squads, like the notorious Vance Security ninjas, who serve almost exclusively as professional armed strikebreakers. In many cases, security guards are themselves "moonlighting" or retired cops who are simply wearing a different uniform. Whether paid directly by the bosses or by the bosses' state, at bottom security guards and cops have the same function: to act as the armed fist of repression against the working class.

The ISO's support to the World Trade Center security guards is no aberration. Its Canadian sister group, International Socialists (IS), is currently enthusing over a "strike" by prison guards! The "screws" are members of the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU), which has been waging a strike of government workers against the austerity onslaught of the rabidly anti-labour Conservative provincial government. In an article headlined "Crisis in Ontario Jails", written by Phyllis Waugh, a prominent IS supporter in OPSEU, the Canadian *Socialist Worker* (6 March) hails the "militant reputation" of "correctional workers". In fact, they portray these professional torturers and killers as the vanguard of the class struggle! The picket signs carried by these "militant workers" include direct appeals to their racist masters' "law and order" crusade, warning against "Young Offenders on the Loose" and proclaiming, "OPSEU Corrections Officers: Protecting Ontarians Against Rapists, Murderers".

The Canadian IS crows that it has "gotten a hearing" for its ideas among the prison guards "on picket lines recently, at the Don Jail and elsewhere"—no wonder, as the IS denounces "government cut-backs" in prison funding! As part of their "work action", guards at Toronto's Don Jail subjected inmates to a lockdown, denying them the right to watch television or use the showers and phones. When prisoners staged a protest against the lockdown, the guards rushed into the jail from their picket lines to suppress it (*Toronto Star*, 8 March). Likewise in Barrie on 28 February, "striking" guards dropped their picket signs to put down a protest by inmates who had been locked down.

On 18 March, a riot squad from the prison guards' colleagues in the Provincial Police viciously attacked a rally of 5000 unionists outside the legislature building

in downtown Toronto. A picture in a local paper the next day shows IS supporter Waugh in the row of OPSEU marshals holding back workers from the cops who had just busted some heads. As always, the IS reformists take their cue directly from the pro-capitalist union tops, in this case OPSEU president Leah Casselman, who is a former detention centre guard herself.

The IS/ISO's support to cops is a long-standing position. A few years back, their parent organisation in Britain, Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party, also boasted that it "had a number of prison officers who were in sympathy with our objectives" (*Socialist Worker*, 26 June 1993). More recently they ran a sympathetic report (23 March) about notoriously racist immigration centre guards, from such places as Campfield and Heathrow, complaining about their pay and working conditions and threatening to take strike action.

After years of boycotting the fight to free black death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, the ISO has now launched a "campaign to end the death penalty" based on liberal appeals to capitalist politicians. When the Spartacist League distributed a leaflet at an ISO event in Chicago last June, pointing to the glaring contradiction between their newly professed support to Mumia and their embrace of the cops, they responded with a physical attack. The previous autumn in Boston, the ISO launched a vicious assault against Spartacus Youth Club com-

rades who were distributing petitions for Jamal (see *WV* no 625, 30 June 1995).

At bottom, the Cliffites are social democrats who share the political outlook of their big brothers in the British Labour Party and Canada's New Democratic Party. These agents of capitalist class rule and their "left" tails foster illusions that the capitalist state can be "reformed" to serve the interests of workers and the oppressed. In the early 1930s, the German Social Democrats disarmed the proletariat by preaching reliance on the Prussian police, who had largely been recruited from among socialist workers, to stop Hitler's Nazis. But as revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky warned, "The worker who becomes a policeman in the service of the capitalist state, is a bourgeois cop, not a worker" (*What Next?*, January 1932).

Today, with government funding for cops and prison construction burgeoning, unions from AFSCME [government workers] to the Teamsters are feverishly competing to recruit cops, prison guards and security guards. They are looking to fatten their dues base, and to gain some political "clout" with the capitalist rulers. To what purpose? In California, the prison guards "union" is "using its muscle and generous campaign contributions to push...for ever more prisons and tougher sentencing laws" (*New York Times*, 7 November 1995). Over the last five years, California prison guards have killed three times as many inmates as were killed in all other state and federal prisons combined!

Police "militancy" and cop strikes over pay and "conditions" inevitably have a bonapartist thrust, reinforcing the cops' view that they are a "law unto themselves". In an earlier polemic against the Cliffites and the reformists of Militant Labour, who also argue that the cops are "workers in uniform", we wrote: "Better 'working conditions' for cops means fewer restrictions on their ability to brutalise minorities, attack picket lines and carry out provocations against leftists" (*Spartacist Pamphlet, Militant Labour's touching faith in the capitalist state* [1994]).

The interests of the working class cannot be defended by those who invite its enemies to infiltrate labour's ranks. We fight to build a revolutionary vanguard party which, like the Bolsheviks of Lenin and Trotsky, understands that the capitalist apparatus of repression and terror cannot be reformed but must be swept away through workers revolution. ■

New York City security guards

by DAVID ELFANT

The Port Authority hired a new

NEW YORK — Just days before the end of last month, New York City's landlords are going after security guards at buildings across the city. The publicly-funded authority of New York and New Jersey, managers of the World Trade Center, is leading the assault.

On February 20, security guards at the World Trade Center received letters when their contract expires. The landlords want to use a little-known section of the Taft-Hartley National Labor Relations Act of 1947 to smash Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 32B-32J, which represents about 2,600 security guards in the New York City area.

The law stipulates that security guards are only protected by the law if they belong to a union that exclusively represents security guards. SEIU Local 32B-32J represents other building workers as well as security guards.

**Socialist Worker**  
Paper of the International Socialist Organization, I.S.O.

American *Socialist Worker* (1 March) wrings hands over laid-off World Trade Center security guards. ISO laments that US law distinguishes guards, police from workers. Cops are the armed fist of the bourgeoisie!

of several pseudo-socialist outfits that blithely waltzed across the picket lines, even holding meetings inside struck buildings (see "Picket Lines Mean Don't Cross!" *Workers Vanguard* [WV] no 638, 2 February). But the ISO is ever so sympathetic to the plight of the laid-off security guards, lauding the protests of these "rank-and-file workers" and complaining that the [US] Taft-Hartley anti-labour law "stipulates that security guards are only protected by the law if they belong to a union that exclusively represents security guards" (*Socialist Worker*, 1 March). Where the bourgeoisie, through its laws, implicitly recognises that the rent-a-cops are counterposed to workers, the ISO denies this basic truth.

The job of security guards is to work in tandem with the official police to protect capitalist private property, including in

## Spartacist League public events

Meeting: Wednesday, 8 May 1996

Scargill's SLP challenges Blair's "New Labour"  
Break with Labourism, "old" and "new"—for a  
revolutionary workers party!

7.30pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1  
Nearest tube: Holborn

Concluding classes in the series: "Programme and history of the ICL"  
(Ring Spartacist League office on tel no below for venue details)

Thursday 18 April: Cold War II: Poland, Afghanistan and the  
Russian Question point blank

Thursday 2 May: The Collapse of Stalinism and "New World  
Disorder": For Marxist clarity and a forward perspective

For readings and information on future classes: Tel: 0171-485 1396

# Mad cows . . .

(Continued from page 1)

would require massive funding for research and, at least, a serious attempt to stop feeding BSE-infected meat to the population!

A recent World Health Organisation conference on BSE concluded that "there is 'minimal' risk of 'mad cow disease' being passed to humans—as long as strict abattoir procedures are followed" (*Independent*, 4 April). This is small consolation since abattoirs in Britain are a *known* source of infection, a direct result of Thatcherite "free market" policies. BSE is thought to have originated from sheep infected by scrapie, whose carcasses were made into meal and fed to cows. Despite warnings dating back to 1980, the government permitted cost-cutting changes where carcasses are processed at scandalously low temperatures, 100 degrees Celsius, which is insufficient even to kill common bacteria. Enforcement of hygiene regulations is negligible; government instructions (issued in 1988) to remove brains and spinal cords from carcasses are hardly enforced at all and the Meat Hygiene Service has been decimated by redundancies.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (which has rightly been dubbed the "MAFFia") has routinely ignored EU rules aimed at preventing the spread of BSE and other animal diseases to the rest of Europe. Scientific researchers who warned of the dangers of BSE were trashed and discredited by government officials. Richard Lacey, a prominent microbiologist who has warned for years that BSE represents a danger to humans, was vilified by MAFF as "politically suspect". Harash Narang, an internationally renowned expert on encephalopathies, was denied research funding by MAFF while working on a same day test for BSE in live cattle (current MAFF tests take several weeks, by which time the meat has entered the food supply).

Narang conducted random tests late last year and found that nearly one in three cattle going into the human food supply was infected with BSE. MAFF denied him further funding and he was subjected to a terror campaign. According to a *Guardian* (23 March) report, "His car tyres were slashed five times, his brakes tampered with and his Newcastle flat broken into and research papers messed up."

## Capitalism, disease and class privilege

The BSE scandal goes to the rapacious heart of historical and current British capitalism. The limited and uneven character of the British bourgeois democratic revolution left intact the monarchy, House of Lords and established churches. This flowed in large part from the close ties between the merchants and bankers of the City and the landed gentry who were integrated into the rising British bourgeoisie. Today more than 50 per cent of Britain's land is owned by one per cent of the population. The top ten individual landowners include the Prince of Wales and seven hereditary members of the House of Lords. Six of these, each with over 100,000 acres, are Scottish aristocrats, the beneficiaries of the brutal Highland Clearances in the early nineteenth century.

The Corn Laws of 1815, which imposed high bread prices, were intended to protect the landlord classes. They were only repealed in 1846 when the industrialists' desire for cheaper food and lower wages was supplemented by ruling class fear of the revolutionary working class Chartist movement. The Irish potato famine of the late 1840s was not a "natural disaster" but the direct result of British rule, which ensured that profitable food exports (like grain)

continued even while hundreds of thousands died of starvation and disease and millions were forced to emigrate. Writing on the famine, Irish revolutionary James Connolly recalled the popular saying "Providence sent the potato blight; but England made the famine", adding: "England made the famine by a rigid application of the economic principles that lie at the base of capitalist society" (*Labour in Irish History*, 1910).

In *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, published in 1845, Engels observed that "The workers get what is too bad for the property-holding class." Meat which workers could afford to buy was "taken from old, often diseased, cattle, or such as have died a natural death" and "very often past using". He added: "Dealers and manufacturers adulterate all kinds of provisions in an atrocious manner, and without the slightest regard to the health of the consumers." This aptly describes the conditions which, 150 years on, led to the BSE scandal; another illustration of the real meaning of the Tories' "Victorian values".

The handling of the beef scandal reeks of the same blatant class prejudice. It was thought for some time that the more expensive cuts—steak and the "Roast Beef of Old England"—were safe, but that low-grade meat was not. BSE is more prevalent in older cattle, especially dairy herds which, when they are too old to produce milk, are sold off for production of mince, sausages and "processed meat". Beef herds were considered safer, providing better quality meat because they are mainly grass-fed and are killed younger.

But the populace was kept in the dark. The *Economist* (30 March) belatedly admitted what many had thought all along: "Consumers are worried whether beef is safe to eat. Steak almost certainly is.... The danger lies in eating pies, burgers and sausages which might have bits of infectious brain or spinal cord in them." The mother of 29-year-old Anna Pearson, who died from CJD, said: "Anna lived in halls of residence as a student in London and you can imagine the sort of food students eat—burgers from cheap places, from the rubbish end of the food market" (*Guardian*, 30 March). When the French masses demanded bread, Marie Antoinette infamously suggested, "let them eat cake". The attitude of the British government today is not so much "let them eat beef" but "let them eat offal!"

## A mad system in a mad world order

The politics of the "free market", now openly embraced by Labour, mean savage cuts and the grinding down of social services, pensions, health care and education. But "laissez-faire" does not apply to wealthy farmers, who will get to keep their Range Rovers, while farm labourers and meat processing workers lose their jobs.

As in other advanced capitalist countries, agribusiness is coddled and protected, with the rich landowners valued as a conservative bulwark and electoral vote bank. Often farmers are paid not to produce food, while hundreds of millions go hungry and starve to death in Africa, parts of Asia and Latin America. The government guarantees a minimum price for beef and the whole European Union is protected by tariffs and quotas to keep out cheaper agricultural goods like New Zealand butter, Argentine beef and Algerian wine. Imperialist tea marketing houses make super-profits while tea pluckers in Sri Lanka, India and Kenya toil in horrendous conditions on the plantations.

The "New World Order" was proclaimed by US imperialism as a direct result of the triumph of capitalist counterrevolution in Eastern Europe and the former USSR—a colossal defeat for the world proletariat. In

Britain, as elsewhere, the capitalist rulers are on the offensive and no longer feel it necessary to fend off the "threat of Communism" by means of reforms, health services and welfare provision, which were designed to buy off working-class resistance. Savage attacks on the unions and social programmes, pioneered by Thatcher, have ripped through the living conditions and basic rights of the working class.

With the end of the second Cold War, the post-World War II anti-Soviet alliance has come unglued, laying bare the permanent rivalry between the major imperialist powers—the US, Germany and Japan. Britain is very much a second-rate power and the bourgeoisie is deeply divided, chafing against German domination in Europe while anxious to maintain the "special relationship" between the City of London and Wall Street. In order to compete in the "New World Order", the rate of exploitation for British workers has been jacked up to the point where they now work the longest hours in Europe. When the European Court ruled that Britain must enforce a 48-hour week limit, the bosses were furious about continental "interference". Anyone in this country lucky enough to have a job is expected to work around 60 hours, then go home to a dinner of infected meat!

A few years ago the British government was in the forefront of opposing EU compensation to German farmers hit by swine fever among pigs. Now Major and agriculture minister Douglas Hogg go hat-in-hand to the EU, whom they earlier blamed for causing panic over BSE, to beg for the cash to kill off some cattle (which the government still insists are safe!). Their real aim is to get the export ban lifted and thus to restore "confidence" (read profitability) in British beef.

to redress the social crimes of the Tories and is committed to slashing public spending and keeping the trade unions in shackles. At the beginning of the beef scandal, Blair showed his loyalty to British beef (ie beef market) by fatuously declaring "I will not stop eating beef." It would be absurd to think that a Labour government would attempt to reinstitute the kind of services and regulations on health, safety and hygiene which capitalist governments once provided.

Today diseases like tuberculosis—truly a disease of poverty—which were once presumed to be a disease of the past in Britain and elsewhere, are back with a vengeance, and are being allowed to reach epidemic proportions among the world's poor. The explosive spread of preventable diseases such as TB in the "New World Disorder" only underlines the need for socialist revolution, which will lay the basis for a society where all the necessary resources can be allocated to conquering diseases, old and new.

Medical science is far from having all the answers, to BSE or AIDS for example, but it has made it possible to control many diseases which were scourges in the past. Quality health care for all is within the bounds of material possibility, but not under capitalism. At the level of ideas, the need of the system's apologists to justify the exploitation and brutal oppression of the masses leaves increasingly little room for a rational approach to anything, including science and medicine. In conditions of social decay, bigotry, superstition and fear are allowed to flourish. Research on AIDS has been deliberately underfunded, in line with the prejudices of reactionary capitalist governments that it's a "disease of gays, blacks, drug pushers, etc".



BSE scandal: criminal government neglect of public health; blatant class prejudice; racist protectionism and xenophobia.

While it is necessary to isolate the BSE-infected meat, and understandable that consumers—German, French and British alike—are not overly anxious to eat it, all capitalist governments operate in the pursuit of profit. Protectionist calls to "buy British" (or French or German) will be used in the service of trade wars. Rather than getting caught up in inter-imperialist rivalries through supporting reactionary protectionist demands, the working class must fight against their own capitalist rulers as part of the struggle for a Socialist United States of Europe.

The wreckage of the NHS is just one measure of the decrepit state of British capitalism. Blair's Labour Party will do nothing

The ruling class which suppressed all evidence about BSE is interested in the discoveries of science only from the standpoint of capitalist profit. In the long-gone days of capitalism's progressive era scientific advancements were the crowning achievement of an Enlightenment fighting against religious superstition. It will take worldwide planning based on scientific knowledge to establish *free, quality healthcare for all*, in a society where the wealth of resources on the planet are harnessed in the service of the people, not profit. When workers rule the world, nobody will starve, the only limits on human health will be scientific, and these will be constantly enlarged by thoughtful, energetic research. ■

## Brazil...

(Continued from page 12)

This attack comes at a time when the federal government and Congress are preparing a constitutional change to eliminate public employees' gains, rights and civil service job protection, preparing the way for massive layoffs. It is part of an effort to destroy the Municipal Workers Union, which has ceaselessly fought against firings by the Volta Redonda city administration. The SFPMVR has carried out seven strikes in recent years, successfully preventing 2800 threatened layoffs. Union president Geraldo played a leading role in those strikes. The timing of the police assault is particularly ominous, given that in recent weeks Geraldo has been working to separate the municipal police from the union, because the police are not part of the workers movement. The job of the police is to break strikes and carry out the racist attacks which are the everyday reality of capitalist "law and order" in Brazil.

Geraldo was elected president of the SFPMVR on the MEL slate, with an overwhelming 62 per cent majority against the slate backed by the company union federation Força Sindical, the Popular Front government of the municipality of Volta Redonda, and Lima Netto, a federal deputy for the PFL [a right-wing party], who earlier carried out 10,000 layoffs in the National Steel Company (CSN) plant, as well as being the author of the *parceria* scheme ["partnership" — joint union-management committees] and is campaigning to eliminate job security for government workers. The local bourgeois press, such as *Diário do Vale*, was particularly dismayed by the ties of the MEL slate to Luta Metalúrgica, well known in Brazil for its principled struggle for the class independence of the workers and its political opposition to the class-collaborationist Popular Front headed by the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT—Workers Party) of Lula.

Behind Arthur Fernandes and his cohorts are powerful forces. Already during the election campaign last year, the MEL was the object of government attacks. The local bourgeois press virulently attacked Ribeiro, Alexandre Honorato "Cerezo" and Luta Metalúrgica as "radicals". Cerezo, a sacked steel worker, had run for president of the union of metal workers of the Sul Fluminense region (which includes the now-privatised CSN plant) a few

months earlier, also in opposition to Força Sindical and a popular-front slate, and is now an adviser to the SFPMVR. Geraldo is secretary of the regional CUT union federation, and Cerezo is vice president of the regional CUT; they were elected to these posts in November 1993.

### A pattern of provocation

In an orchestrated campaign involving physical provocations, secret meetings and smear articles in the bosses' press, Arthur Fernandes and his camarilla have sought to usurp control of the union from president Geraldo Ribeiro. An initial leaflet demanding his removal was issued by the plotters just two days before scheduled wage negotiations with the mayor. The result: the mayor postponed the negotiating session with the spurious argument that there was an internal dispute in the union. Next came another leaflet from the plotters accusing Geraldo of "treason" for mobilising the workers and rejecting secret meetings with the mayor.

The 13 March meeting was intended to be the crowning piece of the attempted coup to remove the union president. In a scandal-sheet leaflet, after reproducing the section of the programme of the MEL slate—which Arthur was part of!—explaining that all levels of the police and armed forces, including municipal police, are "the armed fist of the bourgeoisie", the would-be usurpers then called provocatively to come to the meeting to "defend the police". This was a clear attempt to provoke a physical confrontation with the police at the meeting. However, the workers at the meeting overwhelmingly supported Geraldo and reaffirmed him as president. Seeing that their plans had backfired, the plotters resorted to physical provocation.

Who called the Military Police? Arthur himself admitted the following morning, 14 March, on the "Diário de Paula" radio programme on FM-88 that he had done so. He claimed that union president Geraldo supposedly attacked Motorzinho, the exact opposite of the facts. In reality, after Motorzinho's attacks, Arthur had told him to apologise. This shows that Arthur is lying. Also on this radio programme, Arthur accused Luta Metalúrgica of threatening him with death, using this as his excuse for calling the Military Police and contracting municipal police as "security". This is another, deadly lie! In fact, it is Arthur who is setting up the leaders of the MEL and LM for violence from the state, as he tried to

dozen Labour dissidents voted against.) It was a Labour government which enacted the vicious anti-Irish PTA in the first place, five years after Labour sent the troops to Northern Ireland in 1969. Now Blair and his gang vie with the Tories over who can most capably administer capitalist "law and order".

Shadow housing spokesman Nick Raynsford recently proposed a law whereby accusations of being a "noisy neighbour" could be passed on anonymously to the police and lead to a *seven year* jail sentence—with the accused even denied the right to cross-examine the accuser in court! In an article titled "Another step to the prison state", Nick Cohen of the *Independent on Sunday* (31 March) commented, "It was not Labour's left wing who opposed the measure, but David Curry, the Tory housing minister." Cohen noted that even basic tenets of bourgeois justice, like the presumption of innocence until proven guilty, "hold no appeal for new Labour".

Stepped-up state repression is a hallmark of the post-Soviet New World Or-

## FBU protest letter

*We reprint below a letter of protest from the Secretary of the Scottish Region of the Fire Brigades Union to the Mayor of Volta Redonda.*

Dear Mayor Baltazar,

On behalf of the Fire Brigades Union in Scotland I am writing to protest at the invasion by armed police of the meeting of the SFPMVR in Volta Redonda.

Such assaults are an affront to working people and pose a threat not only to the members of the Municipal

Workers Union but also all workers and the public in general.

The Fire Brigades Union calls on your city council and the State of Rio de Janeiro to cease this harassment of organised labour and end these vicious armed attacks by the Police and Army.

Civilised societies must learn that working people are allowed to organise and that attempts to deny them such organisation can only result in internal turmoil.

The Fire Brigades Union supports the Municipal Workers Union.

provoke on 13 March.

Never before in the history of the SFPMVR have union members brought the Military Police to intervene in union meetings. In Volta Redonda, workers are tragically familiar with the murderous violence of the military. Under the military dictatorship of 1964-1985, this was a "national security zone", due to the importance of the CSN steel plant, the largest in Latin America. During the 1988 steel strike, three workers—William, Valmir and Barroso—were killed by the army.

The Military Police are notorious for the racist murders of hundreds of street children, most of them black, in the state of Rio de Janeiro, including the infamous massacres of Candelária and Vigário Geral, as well as the murder of two leaders of the black movement in November 1994, the "disappearance" of black trade unionist Rufino, and the murder of various other leftists. In the Volta Redonda area, the newspaper *O Globo* (13 September 1991) reported that from January to August of 1991, at least 113 children were killed by military police, and the municipal *guardas* as well are suspected of involvement in these crimes. The Military Police together with the army are also responsible for the massacre of peasants in the state of Rondônia last August, in which "officially" eleven people were murdered. Recently, they attacked a land occupation by more than 3000 peasant families in the state of Pará.

We call on the workers movement and members of democratic rights organisations around Brazil and internationally to protest this outrageous attack on the municipal workers of Volta Redonda, de-

manding: *stop the dangerous police provocations against union militants in Volta Redonda! Police hands off the unions!*

Thank you for your support. Workers greetings,

Luta Metalúrgica/Liga  
Quarta-internacionalista do Brasil  
20 March 1996

We urge that protest messages be sent to: Marcello Alencar, Governor of the State of Rio de Janeiro, Palácio Guanabara, Rua Pinheiro Machado s/n, Laranjeiras, CEP 22238-900, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil. Fax no (55-21) 553-6090. And to: Paulo César Baltazar, Mayor of the City of Volta Redonda, Prefeitura Municipal, Praça Sávio Gama 53, Aterrado, CEP 27180-000, Volta Redonda, RJ, Brazil. Fax no (55-243) 46-4954.

Messages of solidarity can be mailed to: Geraldo Ribeiro, Rua União no 147, Bairro Santo Agostinho, CEP 27290-000, Volta Redonda, RJ, Brazil. And to: Luta Metalúrgica/Liga Quarta-internacionalista do Brasil, Av. Lucas Evangelista, n/418 sala 306, Aterrado, CEP 27295-320, Volta Redonda, RJ, Brazil.

Copies of solidarity messages can be sent to the Partisan Defence Committee, BCM Box 4986, London WC1N 3XX, fax no 0171-267 3867.

Documentation is available at the Luta Metalúrgica office.

## PTA...

(Continued from page 1)

people in Britain, blacks and Asians were subjected to 60 per cent of all stop and searches last year.

If this was not enough, on 3 April the government issued a White Paper on crime which promises to nearly double the prison population by the turn of the century. Anyone with a previous conviction for "violent crime" (even during adolescence) will automatically get life imprisonment on conviction for a single other offence deemed to be violent. The length of many sentences will be doubled or trebled, with parole simply abolished.

At every step, the Tories have been aided and abetted by her majesty's loyal opposition. Tony Blair assisted the passage of the sweeping stop-and-search amendment (as well as the annual renewal of the PTA itself) by permitting fast-tracking in parliament and getting Labour MPs to abstain on the final vote. (A couple of

der. Sharply heightened inter-imperialist rivalries dictate intensified exploitation and oppression, while the gates are slammed shut on desperate refugees fleeing death and destitution in imperialism's neo-colonies. To reinforce their repressive grip, the capitalists seek to "divide and rule", setting English workers against Irish, white against black and Asian etc. But the bosses' ever stronger apparatus of repression will necessarily be used against the working class as a whole. Just recall the thousands of miners arrested during the heroic 1984-85 NUM strike. Meanwhile, officially sanctioned state terror also gives a green light to the racist terror of the fascists.

The present leaders of the labour movement—both the openly pro-capitalist Labourites and their allies in the trade union bureaucracy—serve to tie the working class to the capitalist system and keep the (class) peace. The best the likes of the TUC can do is to raise a call—echoed by left groups like Militant Labour—for "democratic controls" to make the police "accountable". This is to sow deadly

illusions in the possibility of "reforming" the capitalist state, whose very purpose is to uphold the racist status quo against the workers and oppressed. As for the new Socialist Labour Party, its initial statement glaringly omits all mention of racist anti-immigrant hysteria and state terror.

Mobilising the integrated workers movement to fight against ruling-class repression requires a struggle for revolutionary leadership against the Labour and trade union misleaders—new and "old", right and "left". Only the overthrow of brutal capitalist rule and the establishment of working-class state power can open the road to true justice and equality for all the peoples of this world. In fighting to build a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party which takes up the cause of the oppressed, the Spartacist League calls for full citizenship rights for immigrants and refugees; the immediate release of all detained asylum-seekers; troops out of Northern Ireland now; and mass union/minority mobilisations to stop fascist attacks. Down with the PTA, Criminal Justice Act and the Immigration and Asylum Bill! Stop racist state repression! ■

# WORKERS HAMMER

## Military police invade municipal workers assembly

# Brazil: Police hands off Volta Redonda union!

### Call for international working class solidarity

We print below an urgent appeal from Luta Metalúrgica (LM—Metal Workers Struggle) in the Brazilian industrial centre of Volta Redonda, near Rio de Janeiro. On 13 March, a meeting of the Municipal Workers Union was invaded by the notoriously murderous Military Police. It is vital that the police and the state authorities who give them their orders are sent a message that the labour movement and defenders of democratic rights the world over stand in solidarity against this cop provocation against combative sectors of the Brazilian workers movement.

Luta Metalúrgica, which recently adopted the name of Liga Quarta-internacionalista do Brasil (LQI—Fourth Internationalist League of Brazil), is fraternally linked with the International Communist League, of which the Spartacist League is the British section. Last August, LM organised trade union/black rallies in Brazil against the threatened execution of black American journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal on death row in Pennsylvania. A 10 August protest in Volta Redonda was co-sponsored by the same Municipal Workers Union which is today under attack.

The Partisan Defence Committee urges readers of *WH* to take up the defence of these unionists. The following appeal is being circulated with accompanying supporting documentation available on request from the PDC.

In the city of Volta Redonda, Brazil, there has been a series of escalating provocations against the leadership of the combative Municipal Workers Union of Volta Redonda (SFPMPVR), climaxing in a sinister invasion of a union assembly by the Military Police. On the afternoon of 13 March, while an SFPMPVR membership meeting was underway outside the city council building, a physical attack, apparently premeditated, was staged against union president Geraldo Ribeiro, who had been elected on the slate of "Municípios em Luta" (MEL—Municipal Workers in Struggle) last November. A bare five minutes after this attack, a squad of four Military Police entered the meeting armed with pistols and shotguns. Ominously, the assistant coroner, known as "Pereira" and currently a candidate for city councilman, showed up as well.

Although union president Geraldo managed to calm the police and no one was injured, this was a potentially deadly attack on the SFPMPVR, the CUT trade

union federation with which it is affiliated, and the entire workers movement. The Military Police are notorious for their massacres of street children, blacks, peasants and others the authorities consider "suspect". We urgently appeal to unions and organisations throughout Brazil and internationally to denounce this outrage and demand: police hands off Volta Redonda Municipal Workers Union! An injury to one is an injury to all!

Appeals issued by combative workers in Brazilian steel centre of Volta Redonda protesting Military Police invasion of Municipal Workers union meeting.

The Military Police invasion was orchestrated by one Arthur Bonizetti Fernandes, the secretary of the union, who has carried out a campaign of provocations over the last two

### Police death squads murder street children



Brazilian police are notorious for murdering black street children in the huge *favelas* (slum areas) around the major cities. Above (top): Military Police patrolling the Rio de Janeiro district of Rocinha. Bottom: six street children massacred in the shanty town of Duque de Caixas in November 1991.

Recently, on 15 March, a police death-squad killed three street children outside

the provincial capital of Belo Horizonte. Calling themselves the "Reaction Group", the cold-blooded murderers left a letter complaining of low wages for civilian cops and threatening that "the blood ritual will not stop".

This is the killer cops' grotesque idea of a "job action". We say: *police are the armed fist of the bourgeoisie! Cops out of the unions!* ■

Sindicato dos Funcionários Públicos do Município de Volta Redonda dos poderes executivo, legislativo, administração direta, indireta, autarquias, fundações e empresa de economia mista. (S.F.P.M.V.R.)  
CGC: 31.847.734/0001-34 - Tel. (0243) 43-3350 - Fundado em 28 de dezembro de 1988

Declaração:  
Assumida do dia 13 de março de 1995  
dos Funcionários Públicos Municipais de Volta Redonda (SFPMPVR)

**LUTA METALÚRGICA**  
PELA INDEPENDÊNCIA DE CLASSE DOS TRABALHADORES  
NEM PARCERIA NEM FRENTE POPULAR

Alerta: Polícia Militar invade assembleia sindical!  
Polícia, tire as mãos do Sindicato dos  
Municipais de Volta Redonda!

months, seeking to stage a coup to oust union president Geraldo Ribeiro and his adviser Alexandre Honorato "Cerezo", leader of Luta Metalúrgica (LM). From the very beginning of the 13 March meeting, one of the members of the Arthur faction, Sebastião de Fátima Batista Passos, known as "Motorzinho", began provoking Geraldo, attempting to prevent the president of the SFPMPVR from presiding over the union meeting, which was attended by some 50 people. As the workers present chanted, "Geraldo presidente", Motorzinho kept pushing and finally grabbed Ribeiro's arm, ripping the buttons off his shirt. Geraldo was unharmed only because union members intervened energetically to defend him, while Motorzinho kept hurling foul-mouthed curses against him.

Barely five minutes after this altercation, the four Military Police arrived. There were two sergeants and two privates, the latter armed with shotguns and pistols. Shotguns are generally not used in Brazil in strike situations. Rather, they are used in extremely violent confrontations. These are the preferred weapons of the ROTA, the Military Police of the state of São Paulo, internationally known as one of the most violent police forces in the world.

The Military Police said they came because they were called, and asked if there was a disturbance. Union president Geraldo replied that everything was under control. At this moment, Arthur and Motorzinho rabidly pointed at Cerezo, pointing him out to the Military Police, saying that Cerezo threatened to kill them. Cerezo demonstrated to the police that he was not armed. The Military Police put back their shotguns but came back with riot clubs and positioned themselves strategically around the meeting, placing the assembly under police occupation.

Later, three municipal policemen (*guardas*) arrived, and several plainclothes policemen were also present in the meeting. One of them was overheard saying that they had been contracted by Arthur for 10 Reais (£7) apiece, but expressed concern that because they arrived late according to Arthur, they might not be paid.

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