

THE FASCIST PROVOCATIONS AND THE ASSASSINATION OF A LEFT MILITANT

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*This article was written immediately after the assassination in London (Southall) of school teacher **Blair Peach** by someone who hit him exceptionally hard on the head. On 23.4.1979, the police intervened to disband an anti-racist and anti-fascist demonstration that Blair Peach was attending. Him and his comrades were marching in opposition to street contingents of provoking fascists and neo-Nazis. No police investigation into this death was ever conclusive. A Coroners' Court eventually declared 'death by misadventure' and the matter was closed. (Editorial Board).*

The fascist provocations in Britain are part of a whole activity conducted by the bourgeois class. The latter is behind these fascist mobs of course. The bourgeois class uses them to intimidate and repress the population. It wants the political left intimidated and afraid, but what it wants more than anything else is to stop the organisation of consistent left currents in the Labour Party.

The bourgeoisie wants the Labour left suppressed, but so does James Callaghan, the Labour Prime Minister. There is a convergence of interests between them, at this point. The Labour government could stop the fascists this minute, but what it does is the opposite! It allows the fascists to go on the attack, to scare people, intimidate the left. Here you see Callaghan colluding with the capitalist class.

The fascist demonstrations in the streets of Britain are not accidental. The main actors in them are the bourgeois class and the fascists, but the Labour leadership is involved as well. Mind that we say '*Labour leadership*' and not 'the Labour Party'. They all fear the Labour left. They all want the Labour left cowered.

Their greatest fear is to start seeing a programmatic left developing in the Labour Party.

The left-wing groups put up a fight against the fascists, but they are not very strong. The Communists intervene against the fascists also, but they make superficial analyses of the situation. In the absence of a systematically organised Labour left, the working class is left with no leadership. This leaves little in the way of the bourgeois class to stop it provoking, intimidating, assassinating.

The way the masses react to the fascists shows the desire of the working class to confront and condemn the fascists. What is holding back the working class is the Labour leadership. The latter says nothing and does nothing. It lets the fascist onslaught happen, making it dangerous to fight back.

Britain is in the middle of an electoral campaign. The elections are only days away, but there is no activity in the Labour Party. The Labour leaders fear that too great an electoral activity will be used by the workers' and Labour base to add to their demands. The latter already pose the 35h week, nationalisations and the democratic right to speak against the bosses' class. To keep such talk to a minimum, the leaders prefer to do nothing¹.

May Day this year (1979) coincided with the elections, but the Labour Party showed no interest, and did nothing. The fascists were in the streets, but the Party was doing nothing! Had the Labour Party appealed for anti-fascist mobilisations, there would have been no fascists around, and no police repression. Why doesn't the Labour government condemn the police for having decided to attack the anti-fascists – an attack that killed Blair Peach – instead of attacking the fascists? Why aren't the Labour

¹ This election brought Thatcher to government. As the author says elsewhere, the Tory Party and Thatcher did not win. It was Labour that did not fight. Editorial.

leaders throwing Peach's killers in prison? They must! They do not do this because they collude with capitalism. The situation boils down to a division of labour between the Labour government, the police and the bourgeois class.

We condemn the murder of Blair Peach. He was killed this April by the SPG (the police Special Patrol Group) that attacked the left groups. These came together and stood their ground, blocking the road to the fascists. Our comrades must call on everyone to protest this. There must be meetings and discussions about what happened. There must be assemblies and movements of Labour comrades, the general left, the trade unions, the employees from all around. We must make of this *First of May* a day of struggle for democratic rights. A day of demonstrations to denounce this murder.

This assassination was made possible by provocations stimulated by the bourgeois class and against the people's democratic right to fight the fascists. The bourgeoisie uses police and fascists, and in doing nothing, the Labour government goes along with it. We demand that measures are taken against the police because it has protected the fascists, and it has committed murder.

There has to be a programme for more pay and less working hours. A programme of nationalisations, and production to be planned. A plan of production to answer to the needs of the exploited population. Measures to finish with the right of the fascists to exist. An appeal for a United Front of all the forces of the left and of the working class to call on people to vote Labour and insist on this programme.

See how the ruling class lets fascism raise its head again, after having been smashed in the war. It is in the hope of taming the working class that it lets loose these fascist groups. We want it proclaimed that those in the left groups who turned up to fight

the fascists are allies and members of the working class. Although often empirically, their movements represent the will of the British masses to see progress coming to Britain. We denounce that behind this murder, and behind the repression of the police, the ruling class has worked to intimidate the working class. It has wanted to keep the working class from making consistent anti-capitalist tendencies and Labour currents.

Less working hours without loss of pay :

Capitalism no longer has the strength or the ability to resolve its problems. In Britain in particular, it no longer has the economic foundations upon which it would have tried to resolve them in the past. Every aspect of the present crisis can be solved by means of nationalisations, statisations² and workers control. There must be less working hours for the workers, and without loss of pay. It is not true that the economy will be the poorer for it. It will stimulate the economy instead!

At this point in time, the fascists have no great weight or political importance anywhere in the world. They exist in small pockets of counter-revolutionary shock troops. They are assassins tied up with big business that capitalism keeps up its sleeve to create fear and obstacles. Today's fascists have ties with what survived of Franco in Spain, Mussolini in Italy, Mosley in Britain, etc. Their only strength in today's Britain lies in the Labour government making no call to the masses, to the trade unions and to the left to have them smashed.

Just as we call for the smashing of the fascists, we call for the 35h week without loss of pay, a national programme of production, production for human need, respect for and extension of the masses' democratic rights, the immediate

² The author uses the phrase 'to statise' instead of 'to nationalise' to indicate that public ownership must be for the planning of production for human need, and not to simply transfer property from the private sector to the State, to rescue capitalism. Editorial.

statisation of all the enterprises that cannot function. This programme is not just for Britain. It is needed in all the capitalist countries.

in Britain and in every country, we call for mass mobilisations to demand that all property be statised. The economy must be planned for people and what is produced must be what people need. This requires a plan of production, workers control to bring it about, hence the formation of workplace councils (workers' committees). These latter must intervene directly in the leadership of society, to plan the economy and to administer it themselves, directly. The development of Britain and of anywhere depends on those things being achieved.

The Labour Party as it stands (1979) conceals or distorts the depth of significance which lies in what the fascists are doing. Many Labour leaders understate the significance of Blair Peach's murder for instance. They do not want anger and indignation to spread in the ranks. This reflects the determination of the *apparatus* of the Party to continue in its role of capitalist defender. This Labour *apparatus* cannot think beyond that role. It is true that, among the Labour leaders who operate there, some accept that the fascists must be fought, whilst others use this admission to adapt, to keep the apparatus going. This sort of thing has its limits however. As the need to confront capitalism grows, the left develops and the apparatus is forced leftwards. This makes it possible to propose, for example, that the Party will win votes if it stands up to the fascists. However, and with all this considered, the Party's apparatus will still prefer to lose votes rather than mobilise the Labour Left. The Trade Union and Labour vanguard lives through this every day. It is constantly looking for the means to have its voice heard.

We must propose public discussions, in the workplaces, the Labour Party, the schools and the universities. We must develop

an economic programme of production, with the incorporation of science and technology, to serve the development of life in the country. Full democracy is wanted to discuss this. Full democracy means no democratic rights for the fascists and other reactionary currents. Democratic rights must be granted to all those who fight for social progress, for economic progress, for Socialism. All this has to be discussed.

We must help organise factory councils, workers' areas committees, school councils, teachers' councils, pupils' councils, parents' councils. And not just for them to meet, but to operate as factors of leadership in their corresponding spheres of activity.

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