

## Miners must not stand alone!

# Unchain the unions!

### Labour/TUC traitors prop up Tories

### Britain needs workers rule!

The heroic and courageous miners have become the champions of millions on this island who have every reason to want to bring down the hated Thatcher government. Little more than a year after its sweeping electoral victory, the arrogant, complacent Thatcher clique is today widely despised and deeply isolated, its rally-round-the Union Jack 'Falklands factor' in shreds. This bloodthirsty government, which has presided over the deaths of Irish hunger strikers, brutalised black and Asian youth from Brixton to Birmingham, wantonly butchered hundreds of Argentine sailors on the *Belgrano*, systematically pauperised millions of its own people through mass unemployment, unleashed brutal cop terror against the miners and their communities, is today in deep trouble. *It can be beaten.*

What the IRA blast in Brighton illuminated in its wake was the sharp social realignment wrought by seven months of hard and bitter class struggle. In contrast to the wave of anti-Irish hysteria which greeted several past IRA mainland bombing campaigns (like the periodic, indefensible pre-Christmas High Street bombs or the vicious Birmingham pub bombings of ten years ago), reaction among wide layers of the population to this IRA attack against the Tory cabinet ranged from a shrug of the shoulders to adulation to hilarity. Even 'respectable' bourgeois papers focussed on the security balls-up, not on the fact that the Iron Lady and her minions were almost blown to kingdom come. And a couple of weeks later, Thatcher's attempt to equate the striking miners with crazy Qadaffi flopped even more miserably.

But the treacherous Kinnock, Willis & Co are doing everything in their power to kill the strike and save the Iron Lady. They engineered the eleventh-hour Nacods sellout, and wish they could do the same to the NUM. They



Brighton's Grand Hotel after IRA 'big bang'; reaction reveals how isolated and despised Thatcher clique is.



Police charge pickets at Brodsworth pit, Doncaster, 12 October. General strike to back the miners can break the strikebreakers!

have ensured that the miners are still alone on the picket lines, giving a green light to the government's sequestration moves and strikebreaking intransigence. There is today in Britain a profound crisis of leadership of the labour movement. While literally millions want to back the miners and beat the union-bashers, the reformist Labour/TUC leaders fear and hate the prospect of a serious class-wide confrontation with the capitalist state which poses the question: *which class shall rule?* Thus they are ready not only to let Thatcher off the hook but to isolate and sabotage the miners' struggle. Stop this treachery! The miners must not stand alone! Strike with the miners to win!

### Margaret Thatcher: enemy of the people

It wasn't the 'big bang' of industrial action needed to push the miners strike forward to victory, but it certainly shook up the Tory government. The bomb blast that ripped through the Grand Hotel in Brighton in the early hours of 12 October, the last day of the Conservative Party conference, came closer to obliterating the government of the day than anything since Guy Fawkes tried it 380 years ago. Within hours the Provisional IRA had phoned in a statement claiming responsibility for targeting the 'British cabinet and Tory warmongers'. The IRA message openly taunted the Tories: 'Today we were unlucky, but remember we only have to be lucky once. You will have to be lucky always.'

Luck was about the only thing Margaret Thatcher & Co had going for them that morning. As Whitehall belatedly instituted a top secret internal security investigation (which someone will no doubt shortly leak), recriminations flew about the abject level of security in Brighton. The editor of the *Times* claimed that 11 hours before the blast he had been allowed to promenade through the hotel lobby and several public rooms without once being checked for identification. It turned out an FBI tip-off only two weeks earlier had warned of a major IRA attack. And while Fleet Street gutter rags 'revealed' with shock-horror that the IRA now had access to 'microminiaturised' timing devices (roughly the sort to be found in a video recorder), an anonymous senior minister complained that the massive police deployment in Brighton had spent most of its time looking for striking miners armed with

tomatoes.

Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock predictably extended his sympathy to the hated Thatcher, even congratulating her on her determination to 'carry on'. The Communist Party's *Morning Star* (13 October) 'condemned without reservation' the attack and ardently professed its patriotism, while *Militant* (19 October) pretended that the bombing 'will have incensed workers in both Britain and Ireland'. These Westminster 'socialists' notwithstanding, in the factories and coalfields the response was worlds apart. One large Birmingham-area car plant erupted in spontaneous applause upon hearing that Thatcher's hated bully-boy trade and industry secretary Norman Tebbit was among those injured. One worker quipped that the cops would have a hard time making arrests -- there were 50 million suspects! A joke circulated in mining communities that whoever carried out the attack should be shot ... for missing their target. Even some local Labour councillors refused to condemn the IRA. Said one in Camden, North London, 'I do not regard the target of the bombing -- Margaret Thatcher -- as being in any sense an innocent target' (*Standard*, 18 October).

### Tories in trouble...

The miners strike has brought on a social and political crisis of British capitalism which has sharpened and augmented the chronic economic crisis. When Nacods looked like it might go out on its first strike in history, the Stock Exchange dropped 30 points, the largest fall in history. On 1 October the Bank of England was forced to organise a massive emergency bailout operation involving more than £300 million when Johnson Matthey Bankers' bankruptcy threatened to throw the City financial centre into chaos. (Clearly, 'uneconomic' pits are one thing, 'uneconomic' banks another.) The hardline Tory *Economist*, which for months has urged the government to inflict a crushing defeat on the miners, now expresses open pessimism about an outright victory for the government and concern about the state of 'Thatcher after Scargill'. Even the Church of England ('the Tory party at prayer') has openly attacked the government's handling of the strike.

Key sections of the ruling class are today

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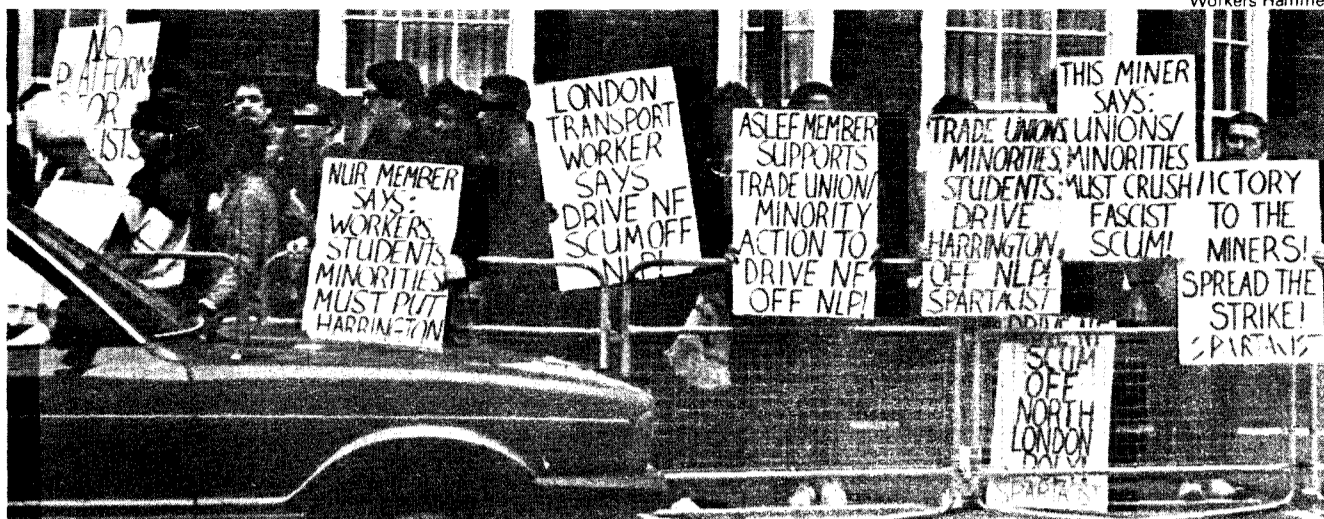
**Workers, minorities, students:**

# Stop NF at North London Poly!

On Friday, 2 November London cops waded into student anti-fascist demonstrators outside North London Poly, arresting five. The angry students, who had turned out to protest the police-enforced presence of National Front race-terrorist Patrick Harrington at their college, marched on the police station to demand the release of their arrested comrades. Friday after Friday hundreds of NLP students and supporters have shown their desire to drive this fascist swine off campus -- facing down a massive police presence and a poly administration which openly collaborates with the NF in fingering student protestors. Arrested students now face possible imprisonment by the High Court.

On 12 October protestors succeeded in stopping Harrington from entering the poly's Kentish Town site. A week later more than 600 demonstrators were assaulted by cops, who arrested five, three of whose names were handed over to Harrington's NF solicitor by the courts. And NLP director McDowell, who has the creepy habit of physically accompanying Harrington onto campus, demands that a lecturer active in the anti-Harrington campaign turn over the names of more student demonstrators. We say: No jailings! No victimisations! Drop all charges against anti-fascist activists! Drive Harrington off NLP!

The Student Union Executive, which has been refusing even to implement decisions taken at emergency general meetings, has become so discredited among the heavily minority NLP students that all but three were forced to resign en masse at a 25 October AGM. Significantly the straw that broke these petty bureaucrats' backs was a student motion (deemed 'illegal') to contribute £1000 to the miners. Outrageously two of these now-resigned flunkys for the administration have



Spartacist students at NLP mobilise militant trade unionists for anti-Harrington protest, 5 October.

since frozen all student union funds.

From the start the NLP Spartacist Society has emphasised the necessity to harness the students' demonstrated determination behind an effective strategy mobilising the social power of the labour movement and London's large minority population. In exemplary actions our comrades have mobilised contingents of striking miners and London Transport workers to the pickets as well as sponsoring a meeting at the college featuring NUM and NUR speakers. In contrast the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), the main force behind the Harrington Out Campaign, has consistently sought to limit this struggle to students, even despite the possibility of prison sentences and the physical danger to students whose names have been added to the NF hit list. Indeed, SWP supporters voted against a Spartacist motion at an EGM calling for an appeal to 'all trade unions, student organis-

ations, minority organisations and socialist organisations' in the London area to mobilise to crush the NF at NLP.

As for the bizarre (and badly misnamed) Revolutionary Communist Party, it has actively opposed the entire anti-Harrington campaign, echoing the right-wing line that militant action 'served only to revive the flagging fortunes of the National Front' (the next step, October 1984). While several Militant tendency supporters have been attracted by our call to mobilise workers and minorities, Militant proposes the need to 'rally and lobby' ILEA! As we wrote in a well-received leaflet at NLP, 'If the fascists aren't stopped now, there will be more deadly attacks; more of the racist firebombings that have plagued Asian families in East London....' The call for trade union/minority/student mobilisation to drive fascist scum off NLP is now more urgent than ever! ■

**State out of the bedroom!**

# Smash attacks on gays!

In late September Tory-controlled Rugby council put itself in the vanguard of the current spate of state attacks on gays. On the motion of independent councillor Keith Judge, the council voted to delete the words 'sexual orientation' from a policy statement opposing discrimination on the grounds of race, sex or marital status. Argued Judge, 'to include these words is to give positive discrimination in favour of homosexuals and other strange people.... We shall give the people of Rugby the idea that the council positively welcomes all queers and perverts.' The Tory council leader later endorsed Judge's bigotry, openly stating that gays need not bother to apply for council jobs. This outrage must be protested by the entire labour movement and all defenders of democratic rights!

Thatcher's 1984 has seen a sharp rise of state-organised anti-homosexual attacks. A Police Training Manual of 1980 bluntly explained their intention: 'to suppress this insidious form of evil whenever and wherever it may occur'. Last March 50 cops, including the Instant Response Unit riot police, raided the Movements Disco at the Bell in Kings Cross, London. Plainclothes police have increasingly taken to hanging around gay venues in order to entrap gay men by inviting them to 'commit a crime' by accepting the offer of sex. The much-publicised cases of two MPs are only the tip of an iceberg. Dr Roger Thomas, Labour MP for Carmarthen, is still being hounded by his local Labour Party to resign after his conviction for an 'act of gross indecency' (read: making or accepting a sexual advance). And Dr Keith Hampson, Tory MP for Leeds North West, was arrested in Soho's Gay Theatre by an undercover cop in a crude entrapment provocation. (Hampson was acquitted after a hung jury.)

Bookshops and newspapers have also been hit as Customs and Excise seize 'indecent' books, videos and what-have-you. *Gay's the Word*, Britain's largest gay bookshop, has been hit twice this year. First in April, after 18 months' surveillance, the shop was raided and 800 imported titles seized. About a third of

these were readily available elsewhere, and the subscription list to the bookshop's newsletter was confiscated, along with personal possessions of the shop staff (including videotapes of Coronation Street!) Again in October the cops raided, seizing more than 2000 items including books by Oscar Wilde, Jean-Paul Sartre and Gore Vidal. These raids take place not simply to seize 'offending' material, but to intimidate and bankrupt. The cost of contesting the seizures will run to about £30,000 and such costs have already driven one gay bookshop out of business. Return *Gay's the Word's* stolen property along with adequate financial compensation and interest! Stop the harassment!

This government, which has declared civil war against the embattled miners and seeks to marshal public opinion behind a drive towards thermonuclear world war against the Soviet Union, is a sworn enemy of all the oppressed and of basic democratic rights. Thus the 'Victorian values' attacks on women's rights, the increasing censorship (such as the so-called 'video nasties' bill) and vindictive 'national security' prosecutions like the Sarah Tisdall and Clive Ponting cases. Once again homosexuals, among the most vulnerable sections of society, are among the first targets for attack. Homosexuality is seen as a direct challenge to the repressive nuclear family -- the chief institution for women's oppression under capitalism and one that must be bolstered in order to instil submission to authority and obedience to the ruling class.

The Spartacist League has consistently championed full democratic rights for gays. But we argue against the dangerously utopian belief that in this violent, class-divided society 'only gays can liberate themselves'. On the contrary, the fate of gays, like that of any other oppressed group, is determined by the course of the class struggle. Our perspective is to link the fight against the oppression of gays to the social power of the working class. In Chicago, June 1982, the fascists attempted to mobilise against a Gay Pride parade, undoubtedly feeling they would meet little opposition from broader layers of

society. Instead 3000 trade unionists, blacks, Jews, gays and socialists mobilised by a Spartacist-led united front demonstration stopped the fascists from carrying out their provocation.

As part of a struggle against Thatcher's all-sided attacks the labour movement must demand: Full democratic rights for homosexuals! No job discrimination or legal harassment! Abolish all censorship and the age-of-consent laws! Police/government out of the bedrooms, bars and clubs! Our aim is not a sectoralist 'gay movement' but a revolutionary party based on the working class to act as a tribune of all the oppressed. Only socialist revolution can lay the basis for finally uprooting sick prejudices against 'sexual deviance', through providing social alternatives to the stifling monogamous family.

We urge our readers to contribute to the *Gay's the Word* legal defence fund. Write to: 'Defend Gay's the Word', c/o 38 Mt Pleasant, London WC1X 0AP; make payable to 'Defend GTW'. ■

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In choosing *Workers Hammer*, we wanted a name that conveyed an active, and necessary, tool of the workers in their struggle. We note in Nigel Tranter's excellent historical novel, the *Robert the Bruce* trilogy, the speech he imputes to Robert, King of Scots, on the eve of the battle of Bannockburn in 1314, where the Scots inflicted a decisive defeat against their English oppressors under King Edward I, the notorious 'Hammer of the Scots':

'Today is fate hammered out on the anvil, hammered into shape. But mark you, today we are the hammer, not the iron! And the land, our land, is the arrogant, invading English host, which once more desecrates our land. But this time, friends, is the last. This time, we shall hammer and bend and mould that great unwieldy host....'

The heroic miners strike is an impressive example of how class struggle can break down national and racial divisions within the working class and forge unity in struggle against the common class enemy. We seek to provide the hammer -- a revolutionary programme and party -- with which the powerful multi-national and multi-racial proletariat of these islands can finally break and destroy this arrogant, oppressive and exploitative ruling class.

## WORKERS HAMMER

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# 'The women are more behind this strike now than the men'

We print below, in abridged form, remarks by Nancy Cooper, wife of a Lea Hall NUM striker, at an 11 October Birmingham Spartacist League public meeting.

Well, I'm Nancy Cooper and I'm Chairman of the Ladies Committee. Three or four weeks into the strike, I was one of the ones who had been at home for 24 years and I was naive enough to believe everything I seen on telly and what I read in the press. But a few weeks into the strike, I sat there and I thought, this isn't it. I actually knew what they were talking about. They were talking about the pits. So I asked my husband, I said, 'Will you ask if the women can get involved?' Well, as you know, typical males, male chauvinists -- they said, 'Oh, you don't want women.' Anyway, I said persevere and we got in.

Our main objective is food for the kids. We wanted to have soup kitchens, but of course, we're in Staffordshire. They're working. We couldn't get any place to have a soup kitchen. So, we do food parcels. Our food parcels have been really good but, as you know, 29 weeks into a strike now, things get harder. Even a tin of -- when you talk about 400 tins of beans, it's damn hard to get 400 tins of beans every week. So, I mean, we're really struggling for the food. Another problem that we didn't see, when we started on the strike, was how many new babies we'd have. We've had quite a few new babies in the last few months. So, I mean, baby clothes and things like that are a dire need now. Then, of course, the biggest problem is facing us now. By the telly today, we've only got 74 days till Christmas. Well, you know what kids are like at Christmas time. So we're trying to appeal for toys now as well as food. How do you tell four and five year olds -- they believe in Father Christmas -- that he ain't coming this year cos your dad's on strike.



Militant women march through London, 11 August to support miners strike.

I mean, we've had a lot. I mean we women, we feel privileged now, that we've got the chance to stand on the picket lines with the men and our young lads. I mean, I've got a son at 21 who has had nothing for seven months except a wage packet waved in his face. So, I mean, they are heroes, but now I find that the kids, Arthur Scargill doesn't realise how much in support he's got in the kids.

A young gentleman in Wolverhampton, I think he was a Sikh gentleman in fact, he gave us a bus to take the kids to Drayton Manor. So we took the 4 to 10 year olds. This

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if was a couple of weeks ago. As we drew up at the traffic lights, of all things that drew up beside us was a police van. Well, I can tell you, them kids, they might have been 4 to 10 year olds, but they were giving these policemen more hell than some pickets on the picket line. I never wished a light to change in my life as quick as then. Ah, honestly, they were singing songs, they were banging the windows at them, so I can assure if Arthur Scargill's here, he's got a good support in the 4 to 10 year olds. I dread to think what kind of songs they sing at the school when they go, cos they do follow the Banners' song sheet to the line and some of the words are pretty hectic. I keep telling them to

change the last one that starts with a 'b' to make it 'boulder' but when they get carried away when they're sitting there with a song sheet, I'm afraid it slips out a few times.

But we're struggling on. Each week we have a bit of an argument with the men. They think we shouldn't do this and we shouldn't do that. But I think we're winning them around as well, and I can assure you that the women are more behind this strike now than the men. I think that it will be the women that will keep the men out for the next few weeks.

## BL: Strike with the miners to win!

On Monday, 5 November 28,000 workers in BL's Austin Rover Group are due to join 8000 Jaguar workers already on strike. By margins of more than 2 to 1 mass meetings at BL's giant Longbridge and Cowley factories voted to reject the bosses' derisory 4.7 per cent pay offer (spread over two years) in favour of the full 22 per cent claim. BL management has already threatened a court injunction under the recent anti-union legislation stipulating secret ballots for strike votes. This strike can be the springboard for spreading the hard-fought miners strike throughout the strategic engineering industry. There must be no backing down in the face of management/government threats. *Strike with the miners to win!*

For years, BL workers have paid for the company getting back into the black with low wages, grinding speedup and massive job losses. In seven years, the workforce has been halved with no cut in production. The shop stewards system has been gutted, starting with the sacking of Derek Robinson five years ago through to the removal of Longbridge AUEW senior steward Colin Willets' credentials last month.

This strike is long overdue and sorely needed. BL workers have been itching to settle old scores and avenge the union-bashing redundancies programme implemented by Michael (Apartheid) Edwardes and current NCB boss Ian MacGregor. Last summer Longbridge workers struck for three weeks against the racist victimisation of black worker Zedekiah Mills, sacked for defending himself against racist abuse by a foreman, only to be sold down the river by their national union leaders and Longbridge convenor (and Communist Party supporter) Jack Adams. This came on the heels of repeated unofficial walkouts over the past year at Longbridge and Cowley.

Likewise workers at Ford's giant Dagenham complex struck two months ago against the

racist sacking of black steward Nat Akinbayo. Now Ford workers are in the fourth round of their pay negotiations and Rover has a pay claim coming up at the beginning of 1985. The moment is ripe for a strike throughout the car industry, striking a powerful blow in solidarity with the miners. For an end to plant bargaining in BL! Bring forward all the claims!

The miners' heroic struggle over the past eight months has inspired wide sections of the labour movement and oppressed minorities who see this as their chance to get the hated Iron Lady. Longbridge workers have enviously told miners picketing their plant, 'We'd like to be out here with you.' Now they have the chance. And it must be seized. The trade union officialdom, fearful of a classwide confrontation with the Tory government, will do everything within their power to make this a token strike and settle it rapidly, just as they prevaricated over a BL strike during the 1980 steel strike.

But BL management's court threats underscore the employers' commitment to ride roughshod over the entire trade union movement. The Tories are already trying to manipulate a handful of disgruntled elements in Longbridge and Cowley into a scab secret ballot/'back-to-work' movement, exploiting the deep Cold War divisions within the labour movement. Right-winger Eric Hammond's EETPU has shamefully capitulated to the Tories' 'secret ballot' furore. EETPU members must demand an end to this backstabbing and, together with the other unions, fight to spread this strike. Remember Saltley Gates, 1972, when tens of thousands of Birmingham engineering and car workers downed tools and helped assure the miners' victory.

Longbridge and other major car factories should have been shut down tight months ago -- if the trade union misleaders were serious

about the basic principles of trade union solidarity: Black scab coal! Picket lines mean don't cross! The Spartacist League and its trade union supporters have been instrumental in exposing before the whole labour movement the massive blacklegging operation carried out at Longbridge with the connivance of convenor Jack Adams. With coal-laden lorries rolling into Longbridge and Rover Solihull for months, Adams has finally agreed (under pressure) to 'allow' South Wales NUM to set up token pickets at two of the factory's more than twenty gates -- where they would be well out of sight of the workforce -- intended only to stop the lorries, if that! Angry miners report that Adams has threatened to stop even those pickets if anything but coal lorries are turned around, and the huge stockpiles already in the plants continue to be handled. Meanwhile the various fake revolutionaries with supporters in BL, notably the Socialist Workers Party and Militant, have made their motto: 'Hear no scab coal, see no scab coal, handle scab coal!' SWPers daily work behind the picket lines at Longbridge, while Militant can't even bring itself to call outright for a strike in its recent (undated) 'Longbridge Supplement', restricting itself instead to vague unity appeals.

Clearly, a strike on the bureaucrats' terms isn't going to lead to victory. What is needed is to make this strike solid, spreading it throughout BL and the rest of the car industry. Solid bonds must be forged with the embattled miners, through the organisation of joint elected strike committees and through joint mass pickets. BL workers have a long history of militant struggle. Make this a spark that spreads the miners strike towards the general strike so desperately needed to bring down this vicious Tory government. Victory to the BL strike! The miners must not stand alone! Strike with the miners to win! ■

# Invasion elections

# US prepares for war on Central America

**Military victory to Salvadoran leftist rebels!**

**Defend, complete, extend the Nicaraguan revolution!**

The following article has been abridged from Workers Vanguard (no 365, 26 October), paper of the Spartacist League/US.

In the United States there's an election. But in Central America revolutions are at stake. Revolutions that have been half a century in the making, against bloody tyrannies installed and protected by their American masters. Time and time again these tiny countries have been the landing ground for US troops, who left behind their scavenging guard dogs, the Somozas and their ilk, to pick over the booty. And today the Yankee imperialists are threatening to invade once more. As Nicaraguan leader Daniel Ortega said at the UN this month, 'The winds now blowing over Central America foretell of a holocaust for our peoples.' But Hurricane Reagan could also unleash revolutionary storms, from the coasts of Central America to the heartland of North America.

CIA mercenaries in Nicaragua, CIA assassination handbooks for 'contras', now CIA spy planes shot down by Salvadoran guerrillas -- the US is running a real Murder Inc down there. And that's only the beginning. They're supporting mercenary armies of more than 12,000 men against Sandinista Nicaragua, with American fleets cruising off both the Pacific and Caribbean coasts, a dozen new air bases and landing fields constructed in Honduras, and almost constant military maneuvers. Nicaragua's harbors are mined, the economy strangled, oil depots blown up, teachers killed. Why? It's revolution vs counterrevolution in Central America. And the Yankee imperialists, Reagan and Mondale, Republicans and Democrats, are all *contras*.

Meanwhile the imperialist politicians politely debate the future they have in store for war-ravaged Central America. The Republicans openly state their intention to overthrow the radical Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) government: 'Nicaragua cannot be allowed to remain a Communist sanctuary', says their platform, while the CIA directs and finances counterrevolutionary terrorists besieging the country from north and south. Democrat Mondale announces that if the Sandinistas don't play by Washington's rules then the US should 'quarantine Nicaragua'. If Managua gets the MIG jet fighters it needs to defend against American air strikes that would be 'intolerable', says Mondale, and the US should 'take steps' to get them out. And, of course, they all love Duarte.

It's not just that the Central American policies of the twin capitalist parties look increasingly alike. They share a common framework: the anti-Soviet war drive. At San Francisco Mondale beat down every attempt to put the party on record against sending US troops to Central America. The Democratic platform like the Republican asserts that 'the Soviet Union, Cuba and Nicaragua have all encouraged instability and supported revolution in the region'. Where they have differed is over tactics: the Reaganites dream of another Grenada, the Democrats have nightmares of another Vietnam. But in the face of Reagan's determination to wipe out the Sandinistas, Mondale has now made it clear that he will go along and accept a 'fait accompli'. Providing, of course, that it *is* an accomplished fact. Which is another matter altogether.

From the time Sandino rose up against the



Vietnam? No, El Salvador. US helicopters ferry Pentagon chief Weinberger into embattled San Vicente province.

Marines in 1927 until the Sandinistas drove 'the last Marine', dictator 'Tacho' Somoza, out of Managua, the heroic people of Nicaragua lost more than 100,000 of their sons and daughters. Somoza's murderous National Guard was routed by a popular insurrection. The radical nationalist FSLN sought a middle way: 'mixed economy', political 'pluralism', 'non-alignment'. But Ronald Reagan isn't interested -- to him all revolutions are communist. And the Yankee invasion is already planned: first stop Managua.

The present regime in El Salvador is the product of 50 years of military rule, beginning with the 1932 massacre of 30,000 Communist-led peasants and workers. The killing has never stopped -- only the form changes. Under CIA 'democrat' Duarte executions are down, indiscriminate bombing is up. Yet the leftist guerrillas of the FMLN (Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front) and the liberal politicians of the FDR (Democratic Revolutionary Front) are seeking a 'negotiated solution' with this death squad 'democracy'. This is a dangerous trap. If the rebels lay down their arms it will mean more massacres. The real choice for the Salvadoran masses is revolution or death.

Reagan's 'two-track' policy consists of a tiny carrot and a very Big Stick. And the 'alternative' pushed by various reformists and the 'solidarity movement' is 'Vote Mondale/Ferraro'. Ultimately all the schemes for a 'negotiated/political solution' in Central America come down to pressuring the Democrats, the imperialist party of Vietnam, Santo Domingo and the Bay of Pigs. We say: 'Military Victory to Salvadoran leftist insurgents! Defend Nicaragua -- Complete, extend the revolution!' And while the rad-libs campaign for Walter 'Quarantine Nicaragua' Mondale, we look to the American working class -- for militant labor action against US intervention in Central America! What's needed to bring Reagan down is another Vietnam Tet offensive of class struggle, from San Salvador to Detroit.

The rad-libs tail behind the Democrats with their slogan 'No more Vietnams in Central America'. The Trotskyists of the Spartacist League say, 'Defense of Cuba, USSR begins in El Salvador!' And recalling a once-famous slogan of Che Guevara, we add, 'Vietnam was a victory -- Two, three, many defeats for US imperialism!' As Leninists, we understand that you cannot eliminate imperialist war by 'reforming' capitalism into changing its policies. The whole system must be swept away through revolutionary class struggle interna-

tionally, *in particular* in the imperialist heartland.

What's needed is militant labor/black action to bring Reagan down. Revolutions, not elections, are key in deciding the questions of war and peace. And socialist revolution requires the leadership of a Trotskyist party, a class-struggle workers party built in struggle against all the pseudo-socialists who would tie the exploited and oppressed to their exploiters and oppressors.

**Nicaragua needs MIGs, now!**

If today Salvadoran president Duarte is talking 'dialogue', it's because the Yankees' invasion plans are focusing on Nicaragua. The invasion plans have already been worked out in detail, with units assigned, trial runs completed, estimates of casualties and cost run through the Pentagon and CIA computers.

At the UN Ortega recounted how Nicaragua has made innumerable offers for negotiations, both bilaterally with the United States and through the regional 'Contadora process'. The Contadora group of 'moderate' bourgeois regimes fears the spread of the revolutionary contagion in the region and seeks to head it off by mutual

agreement. In early September they finally completed their draft 'peace' treaty which would require Nicaragua to: grant amnesty to the *contras*, hold elections under international supervision, cut off any aid to Salvadoran rebels, send home Cuban and Soviet military advisers and let an 'independent commission' decide how much military power it could have for defense! This would be a real setback for revolution in the isthmus. But on September 22 the Sandinistas announced they had accepted the Contadora treaty in its entirety, since once it was signed the US would supposedly be obligated (morally?) to halt its aggression against Nicaragua. For months, the US has been trying to hamstring the FSLN regime with Contadora negotiations, but as soon as Managua accepted the treaty, Washington rejected it. No matter how much they offer to sell out, Reagan just isn't interested.

At the UN, Daniel Ortega vowed courageously: '... we want the world to know that the Nicaraguan people -- barefoot, ragged, and with empty stomachs -- are going to fight to the end, until we achieve peace, by either defeating the invaders or immolating ourselves if imperialist aggressiveness leaves us no other choice.... We are certain that our sacrifice would not be in vain and that all three million Nicaraguans could be annihilated, but our example would triumph and multiply among the peoples of the world and among the people of the United States as well. This is our contribution to peace.'

Forcing the Nicaraguan people to fight barefoot and without adequate weapons is what the whole 'Contadora process' is supposed to achieve. The survival of a revolution must not be sacrificed through diplomatic wheeling-and-dealing with the junior partners of Yankee imperialism! Nicaragua urgently needs sophisticated weaponry, from SAM anti-aircraft defenses to MIG aircraft. For several years, the Spartacist League has raised in demonstrations over Central America the demand, 'Smash Reagan's Bay of Pigs -- Nicaragua needs MIGs!' This never fails to cause conniptions among various rad-libs who look to the Democratic Party and Contadora for 'solidarity'. We say, Nicaragua has the right to get whatever weapons it wants, wherever it wants -- and the Soviet Union has the internationalist duty to supply them.

The country is facing economic devastation as shortages spread, yet more than half of industry, commerce and agriculture is still in the hands of private capitalists. The land

reform is still limited to lands taken over from Somoza, and workers are suffering under a wage freeze in place since 1979.

The FSLN's commitment to a 'mixed economy', like its 'nonaligned' foreign policy and political 'pluralism' for the bourgeois parties, increasingly become weapons in the hands of the counterrevolution. To defend the revolution which ousted Nicaragua's bloodsucking Somoza dynasty, it is urgently necessary to complete it, by expropriating the bourgeoisie as a class. And that requires a Leninist-Trotskyist communist party, not the vacillating petty-bourgeois nationalist Sandinistas, whose program of conciliating the class enemy has repeatedly ended in failure.

### The perils of La Palma

The 'peace' talks between the government and the leftist insurgents held last week in the Salvadoran town of La Palma are a trap of the rebels' own making. Duarte bombastically claimed it was his own idea, though everyone understood that he could never have made the offer without the toleration of the military, and they would never have gone along unless the orders came straight from Washington. Reagan needed to pose as a 'peacemaker' in the last lap of the US elections; he needed something to one-up Mondale over Central America and to upstage the Sandinistas' Contadora publicity. So he got his bought-and-paid-for puppet, Jose Napoleon Duarte, to stage a media event in the village of La Palma. They talked about nothing, set up a commission to talk again, and two days later the Salvadoran army used its new UH-1H Huey helicopters to launch an offensive to encircle guerrilla forces in Morazan.

What was achieved by the talks? Duarte continues to insist that there's nothing to negotiate beyond participation in phony army-supervised 'elections'. The FDR/FMLN wants a 'provisional government of broad participation' to organize elections, in other words 'power-sharing'. Neither side, however, laid any demands on the table. The only place the military will 'recognize' the leftist insurgents is in the morgue -- which is where they could end up unless they smash this murder machine which has assassinated more than 50,000 Salvadoran workers, peasants, leftists, women and youth in the last five years.

What, then, is to be negotiated? Are the guerrillas on the verge of victory, so that they're talking about the terms for a government surrender? Obviously not. Are the insurgents being defeated, as Washington claims, with their backs to the wall seeking to stave

off collapse by suing for peace? Hardly. Government troops have not won a single notable victory in four years of civil war, and since the end of 1983 the FMLN has scored several heavy blows: destruction of an elite army brigade headquarters in El Paraiso, blowing up the Cuscatlan bridge, occupation of the Cerron Grande dam. What has happened is that there was a lull in the fighting by the rebels through the March-May Salvadoran elections, because they didn't want to alienate US public opinion. And this has been followed by a second 'election truce' intended to make things easy for Mondale in the American voting.

In a recent interview, FDR spokesman Ruben Zamora observed that '...Duarte is the best man for a US invasion of El Salvador because he is the one who will give more cover -- political cover' (*Frontline*, 20 August). D'Aubuisson is a notorious fascist assassin, and the American public already had their fill of the Marshal Kys in Vietnam. A Yankee invasion, as in Grenada, will be carried out in

as much as Reagan and the Democrats do.

Shortly after the La Palma 'peace' talks, a reporter talked with market women in San Salvador to get their reaction. Asked whether they would support amnesty for the death squads, they said no. Speaking for all of them, one replied: 'Here everyone wants peace, but no one wants reconciliation' (*Washington Post*, 18 October). The fight must be decided on the field of battle.

In Central America today, a civil war is raging against the brutal military/landowner regimes put in place half a century ago by the US Marines and through bloody massacres of the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran people. The killing has never stopped, but today there is a real chance of revolutionary victory provided the struggle is not confined by the straitjacket of narrow nationalism, or sold out in treacherous negotiations aimed at appeasing the class enemy. As Lenin wrote at the onset of the Russian Civil War:

'Either conquer the Kaledins and Ryabushinskys [White Guardists] or give up the



As Reagan prepares 'Star Wars' against Soviet Union, fake lefts embrace 'lesser evil' Mondale, certified Cold War hawk.



the name of 'democracy' -- for which they have their Christian Democratic front man.

So why does the FDR/FMLN bother negotiating with the CIA's stooge? Zamora goes on: 'At the same time, if the need for dialogue and negotiation arises, Napoleon Duarte is also the best man', since D'Aubuisson will never negotiate. Mr Invasion and Mr Negotiation? Yes, because these are two sides of the same US policy in El Salvador. And since the rebels' political program centers on achieving a so-called 'political solution', they need Duarte

revolution. Either victory over the exploiters in the civil war or the collapse of the revolution. Such has been the issue in all revolutions, in the English revolution in the seventeenth century, in the French in the eighteenth century and in the German in the nineteenth century. How could it be thought that the Russian revolution in the twentieth century would not face that issue? How can wolves become lambs?' (V I Lenin, 'People from Another World', January 1918, *Collected Works*, vol 26) ■

# THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION OF 1917



Russian soldiers march under banner of Communism, 1917.

■ The October revolution put socialism on the order of the day throughout the world. It revived and shaped and developed the revolutionary labour movement of the world out of the bloody chaos of the war. The Russian revolution showed in practice, by example, how the workers' revolution is to be made. It revealed in life the role of the party. It showed in life what kind of a party the workers must have. By its victory, and its reorganization of the social system, the Russian revolution has proved for all time the superiority of nationalized property and planned economy over capitalist private property, and planless competition and anarchy in production. ■

— from a 1939 speech on the Russian Revolution by James P Cannon, founder of American Trotskyism

## Spartacist League public meeting CELEBRATE THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

Speakers: Eibhlin McDonald, Spartacist League Central Committee  
Howard Hopkins, South Wales NUM (speaking in a personal capacity on his recent visit to the Soviet Union)  
7.30pm Wednesday 7 November, Duke of York pub, York Way, King's Cross, London N1

## Dayschool FORGING A REVOLUTIONARY LEADERSHIP

Main sessions on:

### ● SOUTH AFRICA

Speaker: Cheryl Myall, Spartacist League Central Committee

### ● THE MINERS STRIKE

Speakers: David Strachan, Spartacist League, plus a striking NUM member (in a personal capacity)

Plus:

### ● REPORT FROM FRANCE

Speaker: Dominique Arnaud, Ligue Trotskyste de France Central Committee

### ● HOW TO STOP THE FASCISTS

Speaker from the NLP Spartacist Society

10.30-6.00 Saturday 10 November, North Library, Islington, Manor Gardens (off Holloway Road), London N7 (Holloway Road tube)

For more information contact the Spartacist League, PO Box 185, London WC1H 8JE, Birmingham (021) 236 9774; London (01) 278 2232; Sheffield (0742) 737067.  
Registration £1.00 (free to strikers) at the door from 10.00am.

## Reagan/Thatcher/Botha axis: 'free world' racism

# Smash apartheid slavery!

## Black workers must take the lead!

We reprint below the edited transcript of a presentation by comrade Reuben Samuels of the Spartacist League/US Central Committee to a meeting of the New York City branch of the SL/US and Spartacus Youth League. The text is taken from the October 1984 issue of the SYL paper Young Spartacus.

As South Africa has once again become a focus of our public work a number of fundamental questions have arisen. Does the permanent revolution apply in South Africa? Is there a national question in South Africa? Is there a land question? One problem in addressing these questions is that while South Africa is unique, one of the things that makes it unique is that it is a *mirror* of colonial oppression in which every form of colonial oppression is magnified, institutionalized, made more acute and drawn to its logical conclusion. One reason that the struggles in South Africa have had such a profound effect on oppressed peoples in the rest of the world, especially American blacks, is that they see there the mirror of their *own* oppression. American blacks ask: What is Reagan trying to do, introduce apartheid? What are we going to have next, a pass system? Analogies are always made with South Africa as the *standard* for oppression and degradation.

Now, what is permanent revolution? It is based on the experience of the three Russian Revolutions (1905, February and October 1917) and the extension of that experience to the rest of the colonial and semi-colonial world. Permanent revolution is the recognition that in the countries of *belated* capitalist development -- whose development has been held down and suppressed first by the West European imperialist powers and then by the United States and Japan -- the solution of the social and national questions requires the mobilization of the agrarian masses. But the agrarian masses are themselves too diffuse, too differentiated, too atomized to be a contender for power. Therefore it is only the bourgeoisie or the proletariat -- the two principal urban classes -- which can place themselves at the head of the oppressed nation, of the agrarian masses. Only the proletariat leading the oppressed nation can overcome imperialist domination, the legacy of feudalism, the suppression of democratic rights, the bondage of women. To deny that the proletariat must lead the oppressed nation is really a variant of economism, which also has ultraleft expressions. It is popular frontist by default, because it hands over to the bourgeoisie a responsibility which it cannot fulfill: to be the liberator of the oppressed nation, of the peasant masses, of the women held in bondage.

Now, how does the permanent revolution apply to the specific conditions of South

Africa? After the 1976 Soweto uprising we had a discussion of the slogan, 'Smash Apartheid Through Workers Revolution!' What was wrong with this slogan? It implicitly assumed that the workers could come to power within the framework of apartheid, that on the road to the dictatorship of the proletariat the apartheid system would not have to be shattered. Instead we put forward the slogan, 'Workers Revolution Through Smashing Apartheid!', that is, smashing apartheid would open the road to workers revolution. Someone might argue, doesn't this imply a two-stage revolution? First we complete the democratic revolution by destroying apartheid, then we fight for proletarian power? No, that is formalistic. On the road to power the proletariat must lead the oppressed black masses in the struggle against apartheid; it must address *all* of the social questions associated with apartheid.

Let us take the question of the disenfranchisement of the black people, who account for almost 75 per cent of South Africa's population. Some years ago we had a discussion of the slogan, 'Not Majority Rule, But Workers Revolution!' Now, we do *not* counterpose majority rule to proletarian rule. To be sure, most of the people who were calling for 'majority rule' were full of all kinds of reformist and liberal utopian schemes, including schemes which *denied* majority rule such as the so-called federal approach. In South Africa the federal approach means that each race is represented equally in the government set-up and has veto power over every other race. Such an approach is common among South African liberals and is incorporated in the African National Congress' Freedom Charter of 1955. Instead, a genuinely bourgeois-democratic program would call for universal suffrage based on one man, one vote.

We don't simply put a minus wherever the liberals, reformists and nationalists put a plus. Behind the demand for majority rule in South Africa is a powerful felt urge, the enfranchisement of a people who have lost their birthright. Consider by analogy the slogan of 'black power', which was raised by American black militants in the 1960s. When this slogan was first raised we wrote a basically negative article, counterposing black power to workers power. This was leftist formalism. The question in real life was to link up the demand of 'black power', which expressed the felt urge of blacks for independent political action, to the class question, that is, to workers power. To *link* the demands. Likewise, in South Africa we want to link the demand for majority rule to workers rule. Hence our demand for a revolutionary constituent assembly based on one man, one vote as a step toward a black-centered workers and



Apartheid terror and its Achilles heel: (Top) Black mineworkers in Welkom, S.A. during a speech by Teboho Noka, organiser for the South African National Union of Mineworkers, March 1983. (Bottom) Meeting of South African black women attacked by apartheid police, Cato Manor, 1959.

peasants government.

Let me call to your attention a very similar kind of discussion Trotsky had with his South African comrades in 'On the South African Theses' (*Writings* [1934-35]). In their theses the South African comrades had equated the demand for a 'black republic' with the demand of 'South Africa for the whites', which was the demand of the so-called Labour Party in South Africa at the time. This was a period when there was a substantial unskilled, poor white proletariat in South Africa. Nevertheless, the race question and the class question were and are intertwined. As Trotsky wrote:

'When the theses say that the slogan of a "black republic" is equally harmful for the revolutionary cause as is the slogan of a "South Africa for the whites", then we cannot agree with the form of the statement. Whereas in the latter there is the case of supporting complete oppression, in the former there is the case of taking the first steps toward liberation.' (emphasis in original)

The demand for a black republic is a demand for supremacy not simply of a race but of the oppressed toilers of the region. Their struggle against their exploiters also takes on a racial and national component.

### The national question in South Africa

Is there a national question in South Africa? Here is a country where blacks have been disenfranchised in a way that is so profound it is perhaps inconceivable. Hence the problems in applying categories developed in more 'normal' societies. In South Africa blacks have been relegated to 13 per cent of the land. These are the bantustans. The 'white homeland' is the other 87 per cent. This 13 per cent is the poorest land; it is really brush and desert. Outside of this 13 per cent, blacks must carry a passport. They are foreigners in their own country. Every day 2000 blacks are arrested for violation of the pass law. Every day! That's what? 700,000 a year! A big industry in South Africa is prison labor. The prisoners are overwhelmingly blacks who have violated the pass laws, who don't have adequate documentation to prove their right to be in the 'white homeland', where all the industry is, where all the cities are, where all the ports are, where all the economically viable land is.

So there is a profound national question. These people have been deprived in the most fundamental sense of their birthright, turned into foreigners not in Europe but in their own country. All the harsh laws of apartheid basically exist to create a migratory, cheap labor force that can be used at will in industries highly subject to trade cycles, mainly mining. Also keep in mind that 28 per cent of the black population are agricultural laborers on white-owned farms. So the black population is closely linked to the land. True, you have a very urbanized black proletariat. But apartheid has driven down their wages by taking the cost of social insurance, of unemployment, the cost of raising the next generation of wage slaves and relegated these costs to the bantustans. When a worker is too old to work, he is thrown back on the land. When there is no work, he is thrown back on the bantustans to scrub out subsistence existence in the brush lands. There his children are raised and there he is buried at no cost to the white employer.

Apartheid creates a twofold national question. It deprives a whole people or peoples of their birthright, of their land. But it creates another one, too, because the nature of the newly emergent imperialist powers or would-be imperialist powers in this epoch is to run the film of the bourgeois revolution backwards. Israel today, governed by the Talmudic law of the Middle Ages, is indicative. Likewise South Africa, where blacks have been forced to retribalize. Not just feudal autarky but tribal autarky has been reimposed on blacks. That is what the 'self-development' schemes of the bantustans are all about.

So the white South African ruling class has a program of 'national self-determination', just as Hitler did. But just because Botha talks about 'national self-determination' (as did Hitler) doesn't mean that we can't use the language. To use the term 'national' with regard to South African blacks is not to capitulate to nationalism, either to black nationalism or to Afrikaner nationalism. We have a responsibility as the vanguard of the proletariat to champion the national rights of oppressed peoples.

In 'On the South African Theses' Trotsky

observed that the situation was so politically backward that, like the most oppressed nations in tsarist Russia, the yoke must be lifted from the black people in order to develop a national future. What their national future is, is really an open question -- whether there will be one black nation, or few, or many nations. What is undeniable is that the yoke of colonial oppression, of white supremacy, will prevent an answer to that question. It took the Bolshevik Revolution to give tongue to the many languages of Russia and to put these languages, in many cases for the first time, in written form. We do not know what the Bolshevik revolution of South Africa will mean specifically in terms of the national destiny of the blacks. It will mean they will have a national destiny.

These questions are intimately linked to the woman question, which we have addressed in *Women and Revolution* no 16, Winter 1977-78 ['On Black Women in South Africa -- Smash Apartheid Terror!']. What do we mean by running the film of the bourgeois revolution backwards? In the bantustans every black woman is subject to Bantu Laws created by whites and administered by white judges and officials. For example, the bride price has been reimposed, either in cattle or cash, on the black women of South Africa. If there's a dispute about the bride price, you go to a Bantu court administered by whites to tell you what your tribal law is! Your local tribal witch doctor happens to have a white face. Take tenancy. Women have no right to housing anywhere in South Africa, including the bantustans. They have no secure tenancy. If they are able to move in with their husbands (which is rare) and the husband dies, they're evicted from the house. And, of course, women have no rights of contract, no rights to control their wages. Wages for women are much below that of black men, even that of prison labor.

Women are a real reservoir -- a terribly underestimated reservoir -- of opposition to the apartheid regime. This was demonstrated in the 1950s by the mass mobilization of courageous black women against the pass laws. In the great demonstration of August 9, 1956 in Pretoria, 20,000 women from all over the country sang the famous freedom song, 'Now you have touched the women, you have struck a rock, you have dislodged a boulder, you will be crushed.'

So if you take these questions together -- the woman question, the national question, the agrarian question, the question of enfranchisement -- you have a profound reflection and encapsulation of the colonial and semi-colonial condition of the oppressed peoples throughout the world, whether it be Kurdistan or El Salvador. South Africa is a mirror, an intense magnification, of social oppression and degradation.

### The anti-apartheid struggle and international solidarity

Much of our debate externally around South Africa takes place with liberals or reformists who push divestment, with supporters of the Black Consciousness movement on the campuses, and so on. The divestment crowd basically believes that the imperialist powers of the world and the imperialists within South Africa can be pressured to reform apartheid. Divestment is an appeal for progressive portfolio management on the part of various capitalist institutions in America. Ultimately it's protectionist chauvinism paving the road for trade war and imperialist war. It is the same language as the trade-union bureaucrat who denounces sweat-shops in Taiwan and South Korea when he negotiates a contract in the garment district for five dollars and change an hour. He throws up his hands and rails against the

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## Protest to save the Durban Six 'Trade unions take a side - Stop all shipping, smash apartheid!'



Trade unionists join Spartacist-initiated picket outside Foreign Office, 27 October. International labour boycotts key to solidarity with black anti-apartheid revolts.

Chanting 'Save the Durban Six -- Full asylum now!' and 'Trade unions take a side -- Stop all shipping, smash apartheid!', 65 protesters picketed the Foreign Office in the early evening of 27 October. The protest was called in solidarity with the revolt in South Africa and focussed on the plight of the six anti-apartheid activists who sought refuge in the British Consulate in Durban only to be threatened with expulsion by the Thatcher government. With three of these militants already in the hands of the apartheid murderers, Thatcher's Foreign Office openly expresses its desire to force out the remaining three. Among the placards were demands to 'Free the imprisoned three!' and 'Free all victims of apartheid terror!'

Initiated by the Spartacist League, the protest call was endorsed by, among others, Ken Livingstone on behalf of the GLC Labour Group, councillor Paul Boateng, the Lea Hall NUM Strike Committee, Indian Workers Association (GB), Hackney Black Peoples Association and Newham Seven Defence Campaign. Among those joining the picket were trade union militants from the NUR, TGWU and the NUM -- one especially popular chant was 'South African gold miners, British coal miners: Same struggle,

same fight, workers of the world unite!'

Throughout the past crucial weeks the Spartacist tendency has been fighting for concrete international solidarity with the anti-apartheid revolt -- especially trade-union action to black all shipping and air traffic to and from South Africa. Our comrades in the United States have organised and participated in demonstrations from coast to coast calling for, 'Black workers take the lead: Bury apartheid!' Class-struggle militants in the American dockers' and seamen's unions have fought for labour boycotts of South Africa. Late last month the dockers union in San Francisco voted to black work on South African cargo on a ship due to arrive shortly, following an initiative by a Spartacist supporter. Dockers in Australia have already blacked several South African ships. And in this country too, we have sought out sympathetic trade unionists in the T&G, National Union of Seamen and elsewhere for similar action.

Addressing the rally, Spartacist League spokesman Cheryl Myall pointed out:

'Now the South African regime has close friends in the White House and Downing Street. Thatcher gets very misty-eyed about

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# Smash apartheid...

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export of jobs. There's very little difference in all this divestment claptrap.

The main point we want to make is that the wealth of South Africa belongs to the producers of that wealth, the black toilers. And the only real divestment is when they divest the white imperialists in South Africa and the multinational concerns. Our whole strategy is linked to that. International labor solidarity -- labor boycotts of military goods, and at particular moments of crisis boycotts of South African goods *in toto*. This is what we are calling for during the present revolt in the townships and the strikes, especially in the gold mines. We want to see labor boycotts, not imperialist boycotts. And also strikes and struggles against the multinationals to force them to recognize black unions and to grant equal rights to black labor in South Africa.

On the Black Consciousness movement, some years ago we wrote a major article, 'Behind South Africa's Black Consciousness Movement' [*Young Spartacus* no 74, Summer 1979]. This movement originated as a split from the liberal National Union of South African Students, the big student movement of the late 1960s. It was predominantly English-speaking and white, but it had a black component. They would hold a conference in a room much like this, and everybody would rub shoulders together and say, 'Aren't we all one and equal?' Then they would go home, the whites to their plush hotel rooms,



Defiant black South Africans burn the hated pass books, symbol of enslavement in their own land.

the blacks bused miles and miles back to the townships where they would try to find room in the barracks. And pervasively this was accepted within the white liberal-dominated student movement. So when Steve Biko and the other Black Consciousness people railed against the hypocrisy of guilt-ridden liberals with their white skin privilege, there is a reality there. You should read Biko.

Their whole strategy, insofar as they had a strategy, was a denial of class struggle. It was based on a new liberation theology, because the Black Consciousness people mainly came out of religious schools, in many cases the only schooling available to them. Their background made them very much like the younger Martin Luther Kings of South Africa. They project a strategy which essentially appeals to the conscience of the imperialist master. Of late the Black Consciousness movement has tried to incorporate the reality of the extremely significant union movement of the black proletariat, so they talk about 'black consciousness' and 'politicizing' the black workers as their principal task. But this is all part and parcel of pressure tactics to make the imperialists do the right thing.

In considering South Africa today the Russian question is of major importance. The basis for the Washington/Pretoria axis is not simply economic in the narrow sense (eg, the importance of gold production) but a question of class survival in the larger sense. This means above all, the imperialist drive to overturn the gains of the Russian October Revolution of 1917. That is why Angola has become such an important battleground internationally and an acid test for the left in this country. Thus the question of freedom

from apartheid-imperialist domination turns on your position on the Russian Question, that is, military defense of the Soviet Union against the forces of world capitalism.

We are struggling through our propaganda to build a Trotskyist party in South Africa. The founding cadres for that party may well be recruited in exile, for example among South African student militants in England or perhaps even the United States. However, the importance of black struggle in South Africa extends beyond the boundaries of that country and the surrounding region. South Africa is seen universally and especially among American blacks as a mirror of colonial and racist oppression. It is therefore important that we strive for clarity in understanding the permanent revolution in South Africa.

Today the *New York Times* reported a meeting in a black church in Sharpeville to commemorate the dead killed by police in the recent revolt. The black mourners cried, *Amandla*, which means power, followed by *Awetu* -- 'It shall be ours.' The *Times* reporter commented: 'The police trucks outside the church, and the air force helicopter hovering above, seemed to suggest a different prophecy from their adversaries.' The black proletariat of South Africa will make the demand for power their own. But they must have a party to link their isolated struggles with the struggle in the townships, among the students, the unemployed, the so-called 'illegals', with the struggles in the bantustans, among the women and the peasants. And if such a party is built, it shall be ours.

*Summary:* South Africa is a police state but a police state that is in profound crisis. Some comrades referred to the impending gold strike and to the fact that we're seeing a new rising across the country which this regime cannot handle. Throughout the entire 1976 Soweto uprising, which spread to other townships and embraced literally millions of black people in struggle, not once did South Africa's apartheid regime call upon their army. Local police were used to suppress those uprisings.

The recent situation began with unarmed demonstrations against a rent increase. Given that the entire black population lives on the margin of subsistence, a rent increase translates into starvation. But these demonstrations were peaceful and unarmed, necessarily unarmed because blacks in South Africa have little access to arms. Immediately the police were brought in, the army was brought in. There was massive repression -- of what? Of unarmed, peaceful demonstrations. It was a panic reaction by the regime. Then you got the revolts. Then you got the burnings and lootings and so on. The panic reaction is integral to the nature of this weak colonial bourgeois regime. You must see the weakness as well as the strengths of the apartheid regime, the crisis as well as the fact that it is armed to the teeth.

Here is the basic contradiction for South Africa. Backward countries like Brazil or Indonesia grow crops and dig things out of their soil and pump out their resources for their imperialist masters to turn into manufactured goods. To go from that situation to being an industrial power, with the capacity to process into finished manufactured goods your own raw materials, requires a revolution. It requires the development not only of technology but of a stable, skilled workforce. But to develop from among the black workers of South Africa a stable, skilled workforce, *the whole apartheid system will begin to crumble*. The migratory labor system crumbles. You cannot have workers in continual flux, commuting thousands of miles many months out of the year, if you are to develop a modern petrochemical industry. You cannot have a grievance procedure where the workers' only resort is sabotage, if you are going to have a modern petrochemical industry. You will not have it for very long.

There can be no further economic development within the apartheid system. There's an aspiration on the part of South Africa's rulers to be a mighty imperialist power, to process their own raw materials, but they're up against the constraints of the system which has brought them to power. In addition there has been a severe drought throughout all of sub-Saharan Africa. The South African economy is in profound crisis now, it is stagnating, it is going nowhere. And this is compounded by the deep social crisis.

So the apartheid regime has tried to make little reforms. We'll have a little bit of a legal black trade-union movement. But then they turn around and try to crush these black unions, because you see the system of control begins to unravel. Likewise, in the case of the franchise. We'll have these advisory

bodies of the 'coloureds' [people of mixed race] and the Indians. No blacks, please, they can find 'self-determination' on the bantustans. But this constitutional 'reform' was seen by the entire population as simply reinforcing apartheid and the color bar. Thus the new constitution provided an opportunity for the mass mobilization not only of blacks but of other sections of South African society in solidarity with the disenfranchised blacks. The coloureds and the Indians have not always acted in solidarity with the mass of black African toilers. And there is still enormous tension between these groups. Nonetheless, the coloureds and Indians engaged in a massive boycott of the new apartheid constitution.

You must understand that the apartheid regime, which zig-zags between making a concession here and massive repression there, is a regime in crisis. The police-state measures are a reflection of its weaknesses not of its strengths. It is here that we say, on the road to proletarian revolution apartheid must be shattered. Already you can see more than fissures. This is not to say that the regime is not still dangerous, still capable of massive police repression. But you must see the other side. The police repression, like in tsarist Russia, is not a sign of the strength of the ruling class but of the fact that its twilight has come.

On the land question, take any Third World colonial or semi-colonial country. Take Mexico, for example. Forty per cent of the population that is unemployed or underemployed lives in shantytowns around the cities, but their links to the countryside have not disappeared. If you say that the urban population is 60 or 70 per cent, this gives a false picture of social reality. The reality is that these people are one or two generations removed from the land and in periods of acute economic crisis are thrown back on the land. In many cases their families and extended families stay on the land while the male providers seek work in the cities. If they make it in the cities they then send for their families. But every time there's a downturn in the economy it's back to the land, first for the families, then for the providers. In South Africa this pattern of migratory labor, typical of the entire colonial world, has been *institutionalized*. That's what we mean when we say that South Africa is a mirror of colonial oppression.

In 'On the South African Theses' Trotsky spoke of 'the influence that a soviet South Africa will exercise over the whole of the black continent'. This contains a profound truth. All you have to do is look at Mozambique where there was a heroic struggle for national independence, which also helped lead to the downfall of the fascistic regime in Portugal. But this independence struggle was limited to a poor, backward piece of land on a very poor continent. Given the overwhelming economic and military weight of South Africa, independence meant that Mozambican blacks instead of the Portuguese would be labor contractors for apartheid. The major source of foreign exchange and surplus for Mozambique continues to be selling its sons to the gold mines of South Africa.

When you're talking about permanent revolution in South Africa, you're dealing with not just revolution in that one country but the genuine independence of the entire African continent. The strength of South Africa enables it to strangle countries like Mozambique and only the presence of Cuban troops has forced the apartheid state to keep its hand off Angola temporarily. Thus the final reckoning for apartheid is intimately linked to the whole question of the national destiny and independence of black Africa. ■

## Durban Six...

(Continued from page 7)

the Walesas and Sakharovs of this world, but she doesn't shed any tears for Mandela and murdered anti-apartheid fighters. The Washington/London/Pretoria axis is both racist and anti-Soviet. The South African regime has increasingly played a key role in the imperialists' anti-Soviet war drive by trying to roll back the spectre of communism in its own back yard.'

Another speaker, Ron Wake of Harlow Trades Council and AUEW-TASS and veteran member of the Communist Party, congratulated the Spartacist League for organising this action and added, 'It's a shame that other organisations haven't joined in.' Demonstrators finished off the protest with the chant, 'Smash apartheid, this is the hour -- Black workers have got the power!'

The CP-supported Anti-Apartheid Movement



## Class struggle can topple rightist strongman Jayewardene

# Victory to women textile strikers in Sri Lanka!

For the past three months, workers in the industrial town of Ratmalana near Colombo, Sri Lanka, have waged a solid and determined strike against Magnum Garments Ltd. The strikers are young Sinhalese women. We have received an urgent appeal from the Magnum strikers, members of the All Ceylon Commercial and Industrial Workers' Union, signed by the union's general secretary, S Siriwardene. 'The strike now enters the 60th day', wrote Siriwardene on 12 September. 'Our members are determined to break the intransigence of the Management. We need your support to sustain this struggle.... We make this appeal in the spirit of international solidarity with the struggling workers of the world.' The strikers are demanding payment of a 100 rupee wage increase (£3 a month) won after a strike last February, which the arrogant bosses are now refusing to pay. Currently the Magnum workers earn a maximum of 23.5 rupees a day, the equivalent of 80 pence!

This summer, a militant six-month strike at Polytex Garments Ltd came to an end with an agreement between management and the workers, who belong to the Industrial Transport and General Workers Union. Among the provisions was a substantial wage increase and the reinstatement of seven women dismissed for union organising. The Polytex victory was particularly important because the plant is one of the Jayewardene government's pet projects, the Greater Colombo Economic Commission Area, established for the benefit of foreign capitalists. Here, as in the so-called Free Trade Zones, sweatshop conditions prevail while union organising is made all but illegal. The Polytex victory was a victory for all the thousands of young Sinhalese women, like those at Magnum Garments, brought in from the rural areas, living in barracks conditions far from their families, to be worked practically to death and then discarded, their health ruined, after an average of five years work.

At the request of the union leadership at Polytex, the Spartacist League of Lanka had initiated an international solidarity campaign. Telegrams were sent from unions and other organisations in England, France and Canada. Among telegrams from this country were ones from the National Union of Seamen and the Lea Hall Strike Committee, NUM. In Australia, Spartacist comrades collected the equivalent of more than 8700 rupees for the strikers. About two dozen Polytex strikers attended a support demonstration built by Spartacist comrades at Colombo University; most of the students who turned out for it were women undergraduates, many of whom donated funds for

the strikers.

These outbursts of courageous class struggle by oppressed Sinhalese women workers at Polytex and Magnum occur against the backdrop of deepening poverty of the masses and draconian repression by JR Jayewardene's rightist government. Strongman Jayewardene is trying to sell the country to the imperialists for unrestrained economic exploitation and military convenience. His most brutal blows have fallen



Young Sinhalese women at Magnum Garments have been on strike since July.

on the Tamil population, who are mainly Hindus, a national minority of about 3 million in a country of 12 million mainly Buddhist Sinhalese. Army terror in the Tamil north and government-orchestrated mass pogroms against the Tamil minority in the south and on the upland plantations -- aimed in part at securing strategic Trincomalee harbour on the historically Tamil east coast for US imperialist military aims in the Indian Ocean -- have resulted in exodus of Tamils into the north, where a low-level insurgency resists the Sinhalese military occupation. In August in the northern region around Jaffna, the government launched another military campaign of terror: hundreds were killed or rounded up as 'suspected terrorists' while thousands were left homeless as villages were razed to the ground.

The Tamil youth of the north, facing the full fury of JR's bonapartism, aim by their militant resistance to the army occupation to break the north and east away and establish a Tamil nation of 'Eelam'. Marxists defend the right of oppressed nations to self-determination. And recognising that the pogroms have forcibly separated the island's peoples, we support the right to Tamil Eelam. We understand why the Tamil youth bitterly look upon the Sinhalese population -- abandoned to chauvinist 'leadership' when the

class-collaborationist 'left' (with very honourable exceptions) capitulated to Sinhalese communalism in the late 1950s -- as one seamless reactionary mass. But the Sinhalese masses are not South African whites living in luxury by participating in racist superexploitation, but impoverished workers and peasants mercilessly ground down by their strikebreaking government and starved by the capitalists and the imperialist plunderers of the IMF. They are scarcely different from their Tamil cousins.

The Sinhalese women striking the textile sweatshops show the potential for class struggle throughout the island against JR, as did the strike last spring of the hideously oppressed but economically strategic plantation workers. Several hundred thousand workers on the tea 'estates' -- mainly women and overwhelmingly Tamils who are 'stateless' in their own country -- held out against vicious intimidation and won their demands. The Jaffna militants struggling for their national liberation must look towards a fighting unity of all the class enemies of JR's capitalist tyranny, or their 'Eelam' will be an enclave of impoverished refugees in the barren north, totally dependent on capitalist India -- itself a prisonhouse for national minorities -- for support against bloody Sinhalese reaction holding sway over the rest of the island. Sections of the Tamil nationalists and their bourgeois leaders hope eagerly for a massive Indian intervention to reverse the terms of communalist oppression on the island, as has happened more than once in Cyprus. This is what the Sinhalese fear, and what drives many into the arms of the racist rulers.

Only the perspective of internationalist class struggle in defence of the Tamils and all the exploited and oppressed offers a way forward. Today the courageous women at Magnum Garments need international support. Victorious proletarian struggle can crush Jayewardene's plans to make the island a haven for the US military in the escalating war drive against the Soviet Union. It can bring down Jayewardene and his regime of genocide. It can open the door to the revolutionary organisation of the oppressed masses of Lanka, as a staging area for socialist revolution throughout the Indian subcontinent.

We urge our readers to send contributions and telegrams of support for the Ratmalana strikers to: All Ceylon Commercial and Industrial Workers' Union, 457, Union Place, Colombo 2, Sri Lanka. Victory to the Magnum Garments strikers!

Adapted from Workers Vanguard no 364, 12 October 1984

(AAM), the chief organisation in Britain claiming to organise opposition to the racist South African regime, seems to have devoted most of its energies in this urgent hour to suppressing weekly pickets outside South Africa House by its own City of London group (which in turn organised an opposition based on greater militancy going into the 28 October AAM AGM). AAM spokesman Mike Terry reacted to the predictable flight of the apartheid regime's gun-runners by pleading, 'I do not see how the South African ambassador can stay here any longer' (*Guardian*, 22 October), while the November *Anti-Apartheid News* bemoans 'Mrs Thatcher's refusal to intervene in support of those fighting apartheid'. In short, the AAM looks to the racist, imperialist British government of strikebreaker, cold-blooded butcher and anti-Soviet warmonger Margaret Thatcher to take effective action against apartheid.

This is part and parcel of the sort of 'peaceful coexistence' politics practised for decades by the Communist Party. The City of London group, in which supporters of *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* (FRFI) are prominent, is certainly more militant and active -- but it shares the same kind of politics, with its weekly campaigns calling on the British government to 'shut down the embassy'.

This isn't just ineffectual: it implicitly prettifies British imperialism, and it is counterposed to a strategy to mobilise labour and the oppressed in concrete action against the apartheid butchers and Thatcher's collaboration with them. Such a strategy is, indeed, impossible for a popular frontist organisation like the AAM. What else can you expect from an outfit which has 'liberal' imperialist

politician David Steel as vice-president and which, in the words of an anonymous official quoted in the 26 October *Times*, has 'Tories and even some businessmen as members'?

The AAM reflects, albeit in a particularly rightist fashion, the political strategy of the African National Congress (ANC), the main organisation of black resistance to apartheid, and of its longtime bloc partner the South African CP. The ANC retains great moral authority among the toiling masses, many of its militants have heroically laid down their lives and its imprisoned leader Nelson Mandela is unquestionably the most revered black man in South Africa. But their struggle is thwarted and subverted by the ANC's strategy of seeking to court 'liberal' elements in the



Picket outside South Africa House. Popular-frontist Anti-Apartheid Movement appeals to racist Thatcher government to 'isolate' her pal Botha.

white ruling class such as gold and diamond magnate Harry Oppenheimer, as well as seeking to pressure 'democratic' imperialists like Thatcher and Reagan into forcing the South African government to abandon apartheid. The apartheid regime cannot be 'reformed', it must be smashed. The Oppenheims, who recently unleashed the brutal, strikebreaking army on the gold miners, are the enemy of the workers and oppressed non-white masses.

For its part, FRFI joined the AAM in refusing to endorse the Foreign Office picket -- and even prevented Spartacist spokesmen from announcing the picket at their own South Africa House protest earlier the same day. Despite this nearly a quarter of the South Africa House protesters joined the Foreign Office picket. One FRFI supporter cited the SL's political criticisms of the ANC as an excuse for their own treacherous refusal to join our action. But one day later, at the AAM's AGM, ANC representatives intervened to denounce the activities ... of the City group and FRFI! Militants in the City group and elsewhere who seek an alternative to the abject liberalism of the AAM leadership must also reject the 'third world' reformism of FRFI, which effectively writes off the working class of the imperialist countries as hopelessly racist and chauvinist (one of their leaders boasted of not having much to do with the miners strike because miners aren't 'oppressed' enough), while espousing a suicidal Stalinist 'two-stage' theory of revolution in South Africa. For us, the struggle against apartheid abroad and our own ruling class at home are inextricably linked. For trade union boycotts of South Africa! Smash apartheid -- For workers revolution! ■

# Unchain the unions!...

(Continued from page 1)

concerned not simply about the likelihood of defeating the miners but about the prospect of irreparable damage to the social fabric of British society with its centuries-old institutions designed to attenuate revolutionary explosions. The police, the courts and the elected government are viewed with disrespect and even contempt among millions. With some five million chronically unemployed, even many delegates to the Tory party conference found Thatcher's 'Let them eat cake' arrogance a bit too much. This government can be defeated and the capitalist system which stands behind it blown apart. It is not through hurling a few bombs that the British ruling class and its apparatus of repression will be dislodged but through the bursting of British capitalism from within through revolutionary class struggle. The social crisis posed so starkly in this country today can only be resolved in favour of the working class through a socialist revolution which the workers' misleaders seek might and main to stifle.

The miners have taken more than 8000 arrests, seen two of their comrades murdered on picket lines and thousands more injured. Three more from miners' families are dead -- the latest a striker's 14-year-old son killed while scavenging a spoil tip for coal to heat the family home. The scabs tried to mock the family of slain striker David Jones by sending them a £250 'donation', but the parents with considerable dignity told the strikebreakers to keep their 'blood money'. The miners are in no mood to surrender. All but the government's own kept analysts acknowledge that by December coal stockpiles at the power stations will be dangerously depleted. Selective power cuts have already been reported in Doncaster and the northeast of England, vindictively targeting schools, hospitals and old-age homes. The long-awaited confrontation over the movement of coal from the pitheads now looms on the horizon, and Thatcher will not hesitate to use the troops. And as the miners dig in for a hard, cold and bitter winter, the government is openly trying to starve out the union with massive court fines and sequestrations.

## ... Labour/TUC misleaders crawl

Meanwhile, the ruling class hopes that the official labour bureaucracy can pressure the miners into surrender. Nobody can say that Norman Willis and 'Judas' Kinnock haven't tried! They haven't lifted a finger to help the miners, they've refused even to approve a minimal financial levy for the strike -- but they were oh-so-quick to echo Thatcher in condemning the NUM for approaching the Libyans for strike relief. But the made-on-Fleet Street furore over the 'Qaddafi connection' just didn't wash. Even NUM 'moderate' Sid Vincent was compelled to say, 'If somebody sent me £100,000 for the lads on strike in Lancashire, I couldn't care less where it came from as long as it was used to ease hardship. We have people starving in Lancashire' (*Times*, 29 October).

Of course, the truly sinister 'connection' in the labour movement is the well-documented CIA connection of the Labour/TUC rights, who have repeatedly stabbed the miners in the back. Throughout this strike the Spartacist League has insisted that the NATO/CIA-lovers who are tools of the anti-Soviet war drive won't defend the unions against capitalist attack. While Bill Sirs and Eric Hammond tell their members to cross NUM picket lines, these right-wing union leaders execute no-strike agreements, clamour for Thatcher's union-busting strike ballot (as in the current BL dispute) and collude with the Tories in organising scab 'back to work' movements aimed at openly splitting the trade unions. Meanwhile the TUC holds its own secret talks with the NCB behind the back of the NUM while chairman Jack Eccles openly denounces the miners for not surrendering to Thatcher.

Internationally as well as domestically, the Cold Warriors show themselves to be open enemies of militant class struggle. The German social-democratic trade union bureaucracy, which laundered CIA money to destabilise the Portuguese revolution in 1974 and heavily financed Polish Solidarnosc, has given almost nothing to the strikers. In France, the Force Ouvriere union federation, product of a post-war CIA splitting operation, has donated a meagre £450. This contrasts sharply with the massive food shipments organised by the CGT union federation, associated with the French Communist Party; that was recently welcomed by Kent miners in Dover.

Likewise miners in Russia and the Ukraine have undertaken significant food and financial



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

collections for the British miners (which the Thatcher government in a fit of rage halted several weeks ago with the absurd claim that the food parcels 'did't comply with hygiene regulations'). And on 30 October Alexander Bielousov, the head of the Soviet coal miners union, reportedly announced on Soviet television a ban on all coal and oil shipments to Britain for the remainder of the strike. If true, this is a highly welcome, if belated, act of solidarity. Imagine a major capitalist power even contemplating such a pledge!

The self-styled left, with Gerry Healy's Qaddafi-loving *News Line* leading the pack, sided with Walesa's Solidarnosc and its imperialist patrons when Scargill spoke the truth about this CIA scab 'union' a year ago. Today the Solidarnosc-lovers echo Thatcher in screaming about the ties between British unions and Russia. Thus, *Socialist Organiser* (1 November), among others, equates Qaddafi's Libya with 'the official unions in Stalinist states like the USSR and Eastern Europe, with which the TUC shamefully maintains "fraternal" links'. But contrary to the hate-Russia mob, Scargill's credentials as a forthright opponent of the anti-Soviet war drive exercise attraction for significant sections of the international proletariat. Yet the CP's *Morning Star* remained silent when Scargill was being witchhunted; furthermore, the British Stalinists have done nothing to stop Polish scab coal, a move which would be a real shot in the arm for the strike and help win the miners to see their direct interest in defending the Soviet-bloc deformed workers states.

## Shut down the country!

Twice already, with the two national dock strikes, the country was brought to the verge of a general strike -- a general strike which could have been realised had the 'left' leaders of the rail and transport unions not capitulated to the TUC Cold Warriors. What is needed is to reverse the sellouts and for all unions which claim to support the NUM to strike with the miners. Again this possibility is being posed sharply. Car workers at Jaguar are out and those at Austin Rover are preparing to strike. At Coalville, because of the courageous solidarity of 60 railworkers who have blacked coal shipments for several months in the heart of scab-ridden Leicestershire, British Rail has sacked three workers and is threatening to close the whole depot. Now is the time for nationwide strike action against the sackings and redundancies! This is the road to the general strike needed to bring this hated Tory government to its knees.

The miners must appeal to other unions to strike alongside them against all redundancies, as well as raising demands for no denationalisations and for a substantial wage rise with full cost-of-living indexing. Such a fight for jobs would not only win the allegiance of millions of unemployed, but could act to undermine the strikebreaking capacity of the troops, many of them working-class lads forced into the army as an alternative to the dole queue. *Trade union defence squads* must be organised to repulse strikebreaking cop/scab terror. Militants from other striking unions, the women's support groups, the unemployed and minority organisations must be drawn in to form *joint elected strike committees*, which could lay the basis for alternative organs of power to the strikebreaking capitalist state.

Paralleling the depth of Britain's social crisis is the absolute bankruptcy of the workers' reformist misleaders. In the interests of maintaining 'unity' with the strikebreakers, finks and open CIA-lovers on the Labour right, the reformist 'lefts' are prepared to betray the millions of workers and oppressed who want to fight alongside the

miners now. They do not want a full-scale confrontation with Thatcher any more than Kinnock & Co. Tony Benn baldly defended his refusal to attack Kinnock: 'Nothing would give greater pleasure to the government if they thought we were falling out among ourselves....' To the contrary: the current crisis has demonstrated the burning necessity to split the Labour Party, to break the working class base from its pro-capitalist misleaders, in order to forge an authoritative revolutionary workers party.

Even Scargill, who has emerged head and shoulders above the rest of the trade union and Labour 'lefts', is incapable of providing a programme to unite the working class in struggle against Thatcher. Limiting the fight to the confines of a narrow industrial dispute, all he can offer is a reformist scheme to bolster British industry through protectionist import controls and a reworded version of Wilson/Callaghan's 'Plan for Coal' to be implemented under a future Labour government. Instead of placing himself at the head of massive social struggle by Britain's workers and oppressed and appealing for industrial action in open defiance of the Kinnocks, the Willises and the spineless TUC 'lefts', he keeps on speaking of their 'fantastic support'.

Even the most militant left-wing reformists cannot provide a way forward in a society which screams for revolutionary solutions. As moth-eaten British capitalism seeks to revitalise itself on the blood of its workers, it impels the workers into struggle despite the constraints of their reformist leaders and organisations. As Leon Trotsky, organiser of the Russian workers revolution of 1917, wrote two months before the 1926 General Strike:

'The economic blind alley of the country which is most sharply expressed in the coal industry thrusts the working class on to the path of seeking a solution, that is on to the path of an even sharper struggle.'



CGT ferry bearing French workers' contributions to British miners. Miners strike has inspired workers and oppressed around the world.

Its very first stage will as a result reveal the inadequacy of the "usual" methods of struggle. The whole of the present-day "superstructure" of the British working class -- in all its shades and groupings without exception -- represents a braking mechanism on the revolution. This portends over a prolonged period the heavy pressure of a spontaneous and semi-spontaneous movement against the framework of the old organisations and the formation of new revolutionary organisations on the basis of this pressure.'

There is only one solution for Britain's workers and oppressed: the struggle for a workers government to expropriate the profiteers and warmongers and establish a planned economy capable of making this country a decent place to live in. The key to victory in the battles which lie ahead is the struggle to forge an authoritative Trotskyist party capable of politically shattering the social-democratic hold on the proletariat and leading the working masses and oppressed boldly and openly in a struggle against the capitalist order. And a victory for the miners will not only bring the vindictive Iron Lady to her knees but open the road to doing away with the class system whose horror and savagery she so well embodies. The miners must not stand alone! Strike now with the miners! Bring the Iron Lady to her knees! ■

John Surrock/Network

# Fake lefts love Walesa ...

## Walesa loves the scabs

Miners know who their friends are: militant workers, oppressed minorities, those who have reason to hate and fear the Iron Lady. Scabs know who their friends are too. The so-called 'National Working Miners Committee' was to be found hobnobbing with Thatcher at the Tory party conference in Brighton. Several days before that they sent a delegation to the home of Thatcher's favourite 'union', counterrevolutionary Polish Solidarnosc. 'Labour and the TUC were not helping us', explained one in a 9 October *Daily Mail* interview, 'we wanted the support of a great fighter for democracy.'

And Solidarnosc leader Lech Walesa, who's already told the world how 'wise and brave' he considers the Iron Lady (see *Workers Hammer* no 61, September 1984), did not disappoint them. Too ill to greet them personally, Walesa conveyed a message of scab 'solidarity' through his personal spokesman (and personal priest), Father Jankowski: 'I am very sympathetic to your movement. My greetings to the British miners who are fighting for democracy in their union.' The good father added a warning 'of the domination of the majority of Polish workers by a small minority of Communists and said there was perhaps a parallel with the NUM. "For God's sake, don't let it happen to you."' The scabs also reported how pro-Solidarnosc miners 'spat when we mentioned Scargill's name'. Little wonder: Scargill hit the nail on the head when he labelled Solidarnosc 'anti-socialist' last year.

With the exception of open pro-CIA types like Frank Chapple, Solidarnosc-lovers in the British labour movement today wouldn't dare spit on Scargill and the miners. So they lie instead. Virtually every fake-Trotskyist paper -- from Gerry Healy's *News Line*, whose carefully timed 'expose' of Scargill's remark a year ago triggered a vicious witchhunt of the miners leader, to the centrist *Workers Power* -- have taken up the absurd claim that Solidarnosc wouldn't be scabbing on the miners as the Polish Stalinist regime is. In many cases they reprint the same handful of paper support statements for the miners from various Solidarnosc branches as 'evidence'. This line is so transparent that it doesn't even wash with mainstream Labour 'lefts' like Tony Benn. In response to a pro-Solidarnosc appeal from the fake-Trotskyist *Socialist Organiser* (4 October), Benn replied, 'What about Walesa's interview attacking Arthur Scargill and praising Mrs Thatcher?'

A week later a stung *Socialist Organiser* editor John O'Mahoney devotes ten columns to explaining 'Why we should back Solidarnosc'. Walesa 'may well think Margaret Thatcher is wise and brave' explains O'Mahoney, 'because of her strident rhetoric against the USSR'. Indeed at the time of the Siberian pipeline furore, *Socialist Organiser* found Thatcher's 'strident rhetoric' too soft, while it echoed Reagan's boycott line. Today it has gone so far down the road of Cold War politics that it stands to the right of Tony Benn when it comes to Russia and utterly dismisses the Trotskyist principle of unconditional defence of the workers states in order to court Solidarnosc. (Indeed even the recent breakaway around Alan Thornett -- a Solidarnosc-lover himself -- denounces the O'Mahoney crew for 'retailing the



Pope-lover Walesa also embraces Thatcher's 'working miners', here seen getting a handout from the Iron Lady at Tory conference.

most rabid anti-communist statements coming out of the USA'.) Thus O'Mahoney 'speculates': 'Suppose that movement were, in reaction against Stalinism, to advocate restoring capitalism -- though Solidarnosc did nothing of the sort -- even that could not lead working class socialists to side with a Jaruzelski standing for nationalisation and "socialism" against "counterrevolution".' (emphasis added)

This is unadulterated, anti-Communist 'State Department socialism'.

*Socialist Action* (5 October), which still pays some lip service to Trotskyism, simply disappears Walesa's statements and instead moans that 'Fleet Street covers up Solidarnosc's support for the miners'. But its support for the counterrevolutionary Polish 'union' is no less adamant. Exiled Lodz Solidarnosc leader Zbigniew Kowalewski was given a page of *Socialist Action* (14 September) to denounce longtime *Socialist Action* supporter and editor of *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe* Oliver MacDonald as soft on Russia for his milquetoast opposition to NATO's anti-Soviet war drive. In response, MacDonald whimpered what a 'great joy' it was to debate 'my comrade Kowalewski because I think we share so much in common' (*Socialist Action*, 21 September).

Behind a figleaf defence of nationalised property and the planned economy, MacDonald makes clear that his difference with Kowalewski and the 'nuke 'em' crowd is tactical, preferring the German SPD's counterrevolution-through-subversion *Ostpolitik* line that 'the



weakening of NATO's militarism [will] strengthen the opportunities for popular movements against the political regimes in Eastern Europe'. Defence against imperialism? Says MacDonald: Kowalewski 'thinks resisting NATO pressure is the secondary task of the Western Left. I would agree if it was priorities for socialists in Eastern Europe: combat the enemy at home, at hand, weighing on the backs of working people there.' Contrast this with Trotsky's statement on Soviet-occupied Poland in 1939:

'We must not lose sight for a single moment of the fact that the question of overthrowing the Soviet bureaucracy is for us subordinate to the question of preserving state property in the means of production in the USSR; that the question of preserving state property in the means of production in the USSR is subordinate for us to the question of the world proletarian revolution.' (*In Defence of Marxism*)

Just as Solidarnosc' counterrevolutionary bid for power in late 1981 posed a direct threat to the social foundations of the Polish deformed workers state, so the Stalinist regime's vile scabbing poses a direct obstacle to the struggle for world socialist revolution. Uniquely we Trotskyists have consistently said, 'Stop Solidarnosc counterrevolution!' while demanding the Polish government stop its scandalous exports of scab coal to Britain. And a revolutionary opposition to the Stalinist bureaucracy in Poland would do the same. ■

## Gandhi...

(Continued from page 12)

'Under the rule of the Indian bourgeoisie the acute problems of land, poverty, caste and national oppression are incessantly recreated. And every new outburst of communalist violence retards the only class on the Indian subcontinent which can lead the oppressed masses on a consistently progressive course. Communalism not only destroys working-class unity in general, but in India it is often particularly the working class that is the main target of communal terror, since it is frequently drawn from local and migrant minorities.... 'If India is not to be wracked by another convulsion of communalist slaughter in the interests of imperialism, what is needed is a mass proletarian party rallying behind the banner of Permanent Revolution the myriad minorities, the agrarian masses and the multitudinous victims of caste and sex oppression....

'The problems of South Asia are inter-related and will not be solved separately. Only the working class can guarantee the right of self-determination to the oppressed nations from the Baluchis in Pakistan to the Tamils in Lanka, the liberation of women from bondage and backwardness, and land to the tiller.'

Not communalist terror but class struggle! For workers revolution to overthrow the Indian bourgeoisie! For a socialist federation of the Indian subcontinent!

\* \* \* \* \*

For more on the background to the present turmoil in India, a Marxist analysis and programme to transcend communal and other barriers through the struggle for workers revolution, read our article:

'Gandhi's India: Communalist powderkeg', *Spartacist Britain* no 60, August 1984.

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## Live by the sword, die by the sword

# Indira Gandhi gets hers

When Sikh members of her personal bodyguard pumped 22 bullets into her, Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi became yet another victim of the communalist whirlwind she herself had whipped up. From the leftist militants in Bangladesh targetted by Gandhi in 1971 to the survivors and relatives of the Sikhs slaughtered in the Golden Temple massacre last June, the enslaved and impoverished masses of India have no reason to mourn the departed tyrant. The Sikhs are not a people to be messed with; when Indira Gandhi ordered the Golden Temple massacre she committed suicide.

But it is not just the self-styled 'Mother of India' whose body was consumed by the flames of a funeral pyre. As the death toll mounted to thousands in the days after her assassination, a large part of India erupted in the billowing flames of communalist terror, directed first and foremost against the besieged Sikh minority themselves. What we wrote in the wake of the Golden Temple massacre is being tragically confirmed today:

'But the vicious crackdown by the Hindu-chauvinist Gandhi regime was an attack on the entire Sikh community and a bloody lesson to all opponents of the regime. And the repercussions are likely to be immense, and even bloodier, as the reactionary legacy of British imperialist rule continues to wreak havoc upon the Indian masses.... 'The storming of the Golden Temple has fuelled religious fervour and dramatically increased the base of support for the undisguisedly Zionist-style call for Khalistan.... Such is the reactionary logic of nationalism. The demands for Khalistan and "blood for blood" are an invitation for the 1947 Partition over again.' (*Spartacist Britain* no 60, August 1984)

As jubilant Sikhs in London's Southall area sang, danced and set off fireworks to celebrate the death of their hated enemy, the words 'blood for blood' were everywhere to be found scrawled on walls. But 'blood for blood' was also the cry of the pogromist mobs, frequently led by Congress (I) thugs, who took to the streets of northern India in search of Sikhs to butcher. Even before the newly installed heir of the dwindling Hindu Gandhi dynasty could issue his feeble appeal for calm, enormous mobs of Hindu chauvinists -- armed with clubs, chains, iron bars and swords -- had already embarked on their blood-curdling reign of terror. Corpse-laden trains rolling into New Delhi evoked the memory of the 1947 Partition slaughter. Sikhs were grabbed from the streets or dragged off buses and trains, their turbans and clothes torn off, their beards set on fire. They were beaten up, chased, chained, hacked to pieces, burnt alive. The police stood by and watched; sometimes they fired indiscriminately into the crowds, killing and injuring scores. Hundreds of Sikh homes and shops were looted and torched. Sikh temples were besieged by mobs of thousands.

The Sikhs are not about to take it lying down. In one suburb of New Delhi, a retired Sikh army captain opened fire with a sub-machine gun against the invading Hindu mob, killing twenty. Meanwhile Sikh fundamentalists talk of getting their own back in the Punjab, where Sikhs are a slight majority. Today many Sikhs identify with and continue to adulate Sant (saint) Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, the extreme fundamentalist who once threatened to kill 5000 Hindus and who was among those killed in the Golden Temple massacre. But in the country as a whole they form only 2 per cent of the total population of 700 million; they will pay a high price for the vengeance taken against the butcher Gandhi. Still the Sikhs have a substantial measure of social power, considerable military expertise and a border with India's arch-enemy Pakistan, with its already established CIA network for supplying the reactionary Islamic insurgents in Afghanistan.



Indian army terrorising Sikhs in the Punjab.



Indira Gandhi (right) with Lankan president J R Jayewardene, chauvinist anti-working-class butchers together.

Gandhi's funeral attracted an imposing assemblage of world leaders. Under her India has been an acknowledged leader of the so-called 'non-aligned movement' of neo-colonial countries, is a major sub-imperialist power in the region and a diplomatic ally of the Soviet Union. (Of course, as Sadat's Egypt demonstrated, capitalist allies of the Soviet Union are at best fickle.) It is one of the few capitalist countries not to fall into step with the vicious embargo against the Indo-Chinese workers states. It recognised the Heng Samrin government in Cambodia and in September was visited by Vietnamese leader Le Duan on his first visit to a capitalist country.

Arch-terrorists Reagan and Thatcher predictably responded to the assassination with a denunciation of terrorism. But the crowd that gathered outside Gandhi's hospital chanted, 'Down with the CIA!' And the Soviet leadership issued a strongly worded statement implicating the CIA in the assassination. One need not accept Stalinist/nationalist CIA-mongering at face value to recognise that the Sikh fundamentalists' anti-communist agitation leaves them open to being pawns of the CIA and imperialists in their designs to break India from its present diplomatic alliance with the Soviet Union. A Sikh fundamentalist leader in Canada reacted thus to Gandhi's death: 'She was a terrorist. She was a Russian stooge, a KGB agent' (*Toronto Star*, 31 October). The oppressed Sikh masses have nothing to gain from being pawns of the imperialists' anti-Soviet designs. But the Soviet bureaucracy's support to 'progressive' despots like Gandhi is a

treacherous obstacle to the revolutionary mobilisation of the Indian proletariat which can truly act in the defence of the deformed/degenerated workers states.

Gandhi ruled India single-handedly and iron-fistedly for nearly half of its post-independence years. Though she liked to posture as the embodiment of secularist, national integrity, this 'Mother India' was a conscious and calculating Hindu chauvinist. We noted in August: 'The thin veneer of Indian nationalism (which in fact reflects the overwhelming preponderance, 80 per cent, of the Hindu majority), despite its occasional secular pretensions, could easily shatter into a myriad of competing national, ethnic and language groups.'

In an article the day after the assassination, liberal Indian novelist Salman Rushdie asks 'After Indira, what?' and pleads for an enlightened bourgeois leadership to take Gandhi's place:

'It must reject the idea of getting votes by appealing to religious sectarianism; give up using the Congress party machine as an instrument of patronage; stop undermining the authority of the civil service; desist from bribing and corrupting supporters of one's opponents in order to achieve in back rooms what has not been achieved by the ballot box; show that India is not in the grip of any new imperium. And it must restore our faith in the India idea.' (*Times*, 1 November)

Rushdie appeals for a bourgeois India based on the ideals of the bourgeois revolution. But in the epoch of imperialist decay capitalism brings to the neo-colonial world only the chains of imperialist exploitation, the stench of communalist slaughter and the jackboot of dictatorship. The murderous divide-and-rule of the British Raj, whose victims numbered in the millions, is today well-practised by the Indian (ie Hindu) ruling class. Gandhi's vacuous son Rajiv succeeded her instantaneously in the manner of a traditional monarch.

And in the wings waits the million-strong Indian army, which prides itself on maintaining all the trappings imposed by its former colonial masters. Ominously, for the first time since independence the army has been brought into the capital to 'restore order'. Troops have been deployed in most major cities with orders to 'shoot to kill'. A significant section of the army, particularly of the officer caste, remains Sikh. No doubt the army is feeling the temptation to slam a preventative lid on the situation, not least to preserve its own unity. But this armed fist of the murderous Hindu chauvinist state will not protect India's oppressed masses. Down with the martial law measures!

Notwithstanding the myth of this 'most populous democracy', for the multi-millioned masses 'democracy' and 'independence' has meant nothing more than the continued horrors of starvation, exploitation and pervasive state terror, directed particularly against the small but strategic Indian proletariat. The only progressive answer lies in this class, which has historically demonstrated militancy and organisation. In the face of bitter state repression, the solid 300,000-strong port workers strike last March/April united workers across national, ethnic, religious and caste lines. Only the proletariat in power can carry out the belated tasks of the bourgeois revolution, as part of a programme of socialist revolution. As we wrote last August:

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