

## Defend USSR against NATO imperialism!

# Cruise, Pershing: Triggers for WW III

When US vice president George Bush departed from Heathrow for Washington last month, the *Times* (12 February) pronounced his seven-nation tour 'a success':

'It provided some necessary stiffening of European resolve to preserve the deterrent of nuclear balance. And it provided some necessary reassurance that the United States is not reckoning on fighting a nuclear war in the European theatre....'

Bush's trip provided nothing of the kind. The American ruling class is preparing to blow up the Soviet Union in a nuclear first strike. Pentagon guidelines openly state that 'plans for the first use and possible follow on uses of theater nuclear forces should be developed'. While garnering broad support from the fervent Cold Warriors of the Thatcher government in Britain, these plans have naturally produced an intense and widespread fear of nuclear war throughout Europe. So to placate West European public opinion, Ronald Reagan came up with his cynical 'disarmament' proposal, the so-called 'zero-zero option' which calls for *unilateral* dismantling of *all* Soviet medium-range missiles, in exchange for *no* dismantling of *any* NATO missiles. Not surprisingly, the Soviets responded: 'Nuclear surrender, no thanks!'

The front line of the nuclear offensive is the NATO plan to deploy new so-called theatre nuclear weapons in West Europe this year. These include Cruise missiles in Britain, Italy and elsewhere and, particularly, the 108 Pershing IIs in West Germany -- a scant six minutes flying time from the major cities in the Soviet Union. This would force the Soviets to go to a hair-trigger 'launch-on-warning' strategy to protect their retaliatory power. The introduction of Pershings and Cruise missiles will bring the world a large step closer to nuclear holocaust.

### Pacifist/nationalist reaction: Britain to West Germany

The well-founded fear that the Pentagon is about to turn their countries into a launching pad for World War III has produced a

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Greenham Common protesters outside Newbury Crown Court; Little England pacifism will not stop nuclear threat.

## Workers need a revolutionary party!

# Labour's Bermondsey blues

'... people want an alternative to a government that has created mass unemployment, destroyed the social services and undermined living standards of working people. But we have not yet convinced them that the Labour Party is in a position to provide that alternative.'

So spoke David Basnett, chairman of Trade Unions for a Labour Victory, after the Labour Party's massive defeat in the Bermondsey by-election. Recriminations are flying over the loss of one of Labour's safest English seats to the Liberal-SDP Alliance: the right blames 'left-wing' candidate Peter Tatchell, the 'left' blames right-wing sabotage, everyone blames a vicious Fleet Street smear campaign and the doddering Michael Foot. And the beneficiaries are the right wing of the Labour Party who would be more than happy in coalition with the Alliance.

But at root Bermondsey was a sweeping rejection of the present-day Labour Party and its

policies, right and left, by an overwhelmingly working-class electorate. While Tatchell got less than half the vote of the Alliance victor, John O'Grady, unofficial 'Real Bermondsey Labour' candidate and representative of the old guard right wing, got a humiliating 7 per cent and lost his deposit. Long time Labour supporters repeatedly stated they wouldn't vote for either candidate because the party was in such a mess. So the Liberals gathered anti-Labour protest votes and romped to victory.

Her Majesty's Loyal Imperialist Labour Party is in trouble. Good! Capitalist Britain today is ripping apart at the seams in a world being driven towards thermonuclear war by NATO imperialism. The Tory government has a 'resolute approach' for *its* class; it wants to 'solve' the capitalist crisis and pay for Britain's share of the anti-Soviet War drive by ravaging the living standards of the oppressed and working masses. In order to stop them, it is desperately necess-

ary to fight. Massive social struggle of the oppressed, centred on powerful strike action by the trade union movement, is needed to *break the will* of the capitalists. The seething mass of unemployed and workers who have been ground down by defeat and betrayal can only be galvanised to struggle by the promise of a better future: a fight to bring down this vicious government, overthrow the capitalist system it defends and begin the socialist reconstruction of society in a Soviet Britain.

Instead, the Labour Party offers the same old capitalist crap. And workers aren't buying it. They remember all too well the grotesquely anti-working-class record of the 1974-79 Wilson and Callaghan governments. Today in the deeply-divided Labour Party of Foot/Healey/Benn, with its programme of tinkering with capitalism through reflation, chauvinist import controls and devaluation, they correctly see no credible alternative.

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## Washington November 27 video tour

# Anti-Klan victory shows the way

On 27 November 1982, 5000 overwhelmingly black trade unionists and youth organised by the Labor/Black Mobilization and the Spartacist League/US successfully kept the fascist Ku Klux Klan from staging a Reagan-approved racist provocation in the streets of heavily black Washington DC. Instead, the anti-Klan demonstrators took to the streets, following the Klan's planned route. This was an important victory for blacks and working people in the US, pointing the way forward for the struggle against fascist terror everywhere. Most of the people of the world see the United States as one sodden reactionary mass; but this demonstration broke through that limited vision and sparked an impressive outpouring of financial solidarity. To date, over \$20,000 has been raised towards the demonstration's expenses, over \$5000 of which was raised by the German, British, French and Canadian sections of the international Spartacist tendency from supporters of minority rights and labour/minority solidarity. But thousands of dollars more are needed to pay the costs of this successful mobilisation against racist terror.

To get out the programme which made this victory possible to the widest possible audience of minority and leftist militants, the Spartacist

Reprinted below are excerpts from the presentation by comrade Alison Pearce at the showing in Brixton. As comrade Pearce said: Join with us -- in building the multiracial Trotskyist party which can eradicate the racist legacy of this decaying imperialism!

What I want to do is put what you've just seen into context. Washington was a victory. The fascist KKK were stopped from their disgusting race provocation. Why were they stopped? Who stopped them? 'Labor/Black Mobilization' is what you read on the banners; labour and blacks is what you heard in the chants. And that's important. What made the cops back off that day, what made the authorities back off, what stopped the Klan, was the power of organised labour.

Right now the conditions are especially ripe for the fascists. Capitalism is in a bad way -- you don't need me to tell you that -- the decay in our cities, unemployment, low wages, appalling living conditions. The capitalist system is a cruel one and when times get tough it's the oppressed who get it worst.

We can see the Cold War having the same effects here as in America. You heard the speaker saying that in Reagan's war drive, his drive to

can't look to a party that intends to maintain capitalism. We need to split the Labour Party, to split its working-class base away from the misleaders of the Labour Party and the trade union bureaucracy. We need a revolutionary party, with a revolutionary strategy, standing in the traditions of the Bolsheviks. That's what the Spartacist League seeks to build.

Let's just look at the record of other leftists and what they offer in the fight against racism and fascism. Remember the Anti Nazi League. They said they were against the fascists but remember the Carnival in 1978: the ANL danced in the sunshine, and in Brick Lane the fascists marched. The ANL scabbed on that day, they stopped people at that demo from going to Brick Lane to drive the fascist scum off the streets. And these things are no accident. The ANL was a popular front, an alliance with bourgeois forces -- remember the bishops and lords. These people don't want to overthrow the system that breeds racism; they're in power right now -- the bourgeoisie -- so whenever you go into an alliance with them, it's on their terms. And which left groups were in the ANL? The SWP, the IMG -- groups that march alongside fascist Polish reactionaries in support of counterrevolutionary Solidarnosc.

You saw groups in the film who were into adventurist/substitutionist tactics -- 'kamikaze' raids as my comrade called them. There's groups like that here, too -- at least they talk like that -- such as the Revolutionary Communist Party with their front group Workers Against Racism. It doesn't have a revolutionary strategy for mobilising the working class (unlike our call for union/minority defence guards), and it assumes that the cops are going to let you have isolated one-off bash-ups with the fascists; it assumes the cops are neutral.

Well, we know that they aren't. Look at what's happened in Stoke Newington recently, around Colin Roach, a lot of guys there know the cops aren't neutral. And it's not just minorities they're not neutral towards. Who smashes up workers on picket lines? And there's a reason for all this -- they're part of this racist state, they are its armed fist. You can't reform the police. All this talk about making them 'accountable' -- community control, which the Labour Party talks about and the other left groups push -- all that their rhetoric boils down to is elect another Labour government, make it more left-wing. Reform the state -- keep capitalism, but make it 'nicer'.

We know that the only way forward is to build a multiracial vanguard party that mobilises the social power of the working class -- to act as a tribune of the oppressed -- to liberate blacks, Asians, all the minorities and oppressed, women, gays, by overthrowing this rotten system once and for all.

So you've seen our programme in action now -- in the Labor/Black Mobilization in Washington. Join with us. It is desperately necessary to build this party, because the Spartacist League is the only one which has the way forward. ■

Money is still needed to help defray the expenses of the Washington anti-Klan victory. Send your cheque payable to: Spartacist League (earmarked: Labor/Black Mobilization), PO Box 185, London WC1H 8JE; or international money order to Labor/Black Mobilization, 210 7th Street SE, Suite E12, Washington DC 20003, USA.

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## SPARTACIST BRITAIN

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Washington November 27 anti-Klan victory (left) showed the way to stop National Front fascists here through labour/minority mobilisation.

League/Britain organised nearly a dozen showings of the video of the anti-Klan mobilisation in five cities last month. The video tour capped off a successful push on sales of Spartacist literature focussed on factories, communities, campuses with significant minority presence, taking the revolutionary Trotskyist politics of the Spartacist League to a new layer of militant workers and youth. Supplementing the video's vivid depiction of the social power of the working class mobilised behind a revolutionary strategy were presentations by SL comrades at each meeting pointing the way forward for an all-sided struggle against racial oppression and capitalist exploitation in Thatcher's Britain.

roll back the gains made for the international proletariat in the workers states by the Bolshevik Revolution which overthrew capitalism in 1917 -- which despite tremendous degeneration under the Stalinist bureaucracy must be defended against imperialist attack -- that in this war drive, Reagan is starving workers of essentials in order to pay for his war machine. Well, it's true of Thatcher, too. It's the oppressed here -- workers, minorities -- who have to pay for the imperialist war drive.

To fuel this, the capitalists need patriotism, nationalism, everyone rallied behind the Union Jack. What does that mean? If you're not 'true-blue British' -- if you're black, Asian, Irish, all the minorities here on the front line -- then you've got big trouble. So the fascists breed in this atmosphere, in this racist capitalist system.

Remember the Falklands war? All the patriotism and nationalism that was whipped up over it? Well, Thatcher used that -- a war in which the working class had no interest, no side -- to increase this atmosphere of race-hatred. So it fuelled what the imperialists need for the Cold War -- 'all the true-blue Brits together'. And that means race checks in the DHSS and the NHS, and rampant racism from the cops.

There's a way out of all this, but it's not the Labour Party. What's their alternative? What have they done for minorities in this country? Drafted the current Nationality Act for one thing. Introduced virginity tests for Asian women. Their last government was one of Social Contract strikebreaking, betraying the working class. Currently the Labour Party and its so-called lefts have a programme of import controls (and so do the Communist Party). Import controls lead to trade wars, and to imperialist wars. They are racist, they emphasise chauvinism, nationalism -- an atmosphere in which the fascists can march on slogans like 'British jobs for British workers'.

So you can't look to the Labour Party. You

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# Smash the butcher army - For workers revolution!

# Forward to San Salvador!

## US: Hands off Central America!

Guerrilla fighters of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) scored a dramatic victory early last month by taking Berlin, the second largest city in Usulután province in southeastern El Salvador. With a quarter of the entire government army pinned down in heavy fighting to the north in Morazan, the left-wing rebels struck swiftly, taking four towns in Usulután and blowing up two key bridges along the coastal highway in little over a week. The FMLN had made a significant gain in bringing the war from the eroded scrublands of Morazan and Chalatenango to the fertile cotton, coffee and sugar plantations of the coastal plain. Military officials have said that the three-year-old civil war will be 'won or lost' in this rich agricultural region. The taking of Berlin made it clear to all that the leftist insurgents could win the war. The Spartacist League says: 'Forward to San Salvador!'

Also last month, 1600 US troops joined with 4000 Honduran soldiers in war 'games' near the border with Nicaragua. The operation, codenamed 'Ahuas Tara' ('Big Pine' in the Miskito Indian language of the region), is the largest yet in a series of military exercises in the Caribbean basin. Held only ten miles from the frontier, these manoeuvres were a clear threat and provocation directed at the petty-bourgeois radical government of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) in Nicaragua. Along with an earlier operation last July, these manoeuvres have established the forward bases and logistical support network for an invasion by counterrevolutionary mercenaries (*contras*) backed by Honduras and the US. In the face of this 'most overt covert operation in US history', the Spartacist League demands: 'US out of Central America!'

While the leftists subsequently gave up Berlin, the insurgents' military offensive has continued. On February 22, they seized the northern town of Tejutla in Chalatenango province. Large areas of Chalatenango, as well as Morazan and Usulután provinces, are now under rebel control, while the junta's army is facing growing demoralisation and desertions. The anxiety of the junta regime is reflected in the increasing talk of 'peace' and 'amnesty' for the guerrilla fighters. And reports are even circulating in Washington that the Salvadoran army could run out of ammunition in the next few weeks.

But the Reagan administration has responded to the dramatic battlefield successes of the leftist insurgents with threats of massive direct military escalation. Amid rampant rumours in Washington of stepped-up American military aid and 'advisors' along the lines of US imperialism's invasion of Vietnam, Reagan warns ominously that the fall of El Salvador would pose 'a threat to the entire Western hemisphere', invoking the hoary 'domino theory' and the sanctity of America's 'vital interests' in the Panama Canal. And Reagan's secretary of state, George Shultz, denounced any talk of negotiations as licence to the guerrillas to 'shoot their way into the government'. More than ever, US imperialism underlines the choice facing the Central American masses: Revolution or death!

Meanwhile Reagan's Cold War pope Wojtyla toured the Central American isthmus in early March to make clear the Vatican's open support for counterrevolutionary forces in the region. In El Salvador the pope appealed for an end to the fighting -- by the leftists. But in a 'pastoral' visit to Sandinista Nicaragua several days earlier, he issued a virtually open incitement to the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie and the death squads of former dictator Somoza to launch civil war against the leftist regime. Radio Vatican followed up with black propaganda focussing on heckling of the pope's open-air mass in Managua to underscore the Vatican's hostility to the Sandinista 'Antichrists'. The Vatican is mobilising for bloody counterrevolution in Nicaragua.



FMLN leader addresses crowd after defeating government army.

Against the imperialist war drive to 'stop the spread of communism' in this hemisphere, the petty-bourgeois nationalist leaders of the FSLN and the Salvadoran opposition Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) plead with the liberal 'doves' to pressure Reagan for a 'political solution' to the conflict in Central America. In Washington, House Democrat Michael Barnes remarked, 'It should be clear to anyone who reads the newspapers that our side is not winning this war', and called for a negotiated settlement (*Washington Post*, 5 February). Our side is that of the worker and peasant masses fighting for their



FMLN troops form up in Berlin's central plaza.

liberation from capitalist oppression, and we warn that gains won at tremendous cost on the battlefield must not be used to promote a sell-out deal at the bargaining table. A military defeat of the genocidal army is necessary to open the way to workers and peasants governments throughout Central America and the socialist reconstruction of the devastated isthmus.

### El Salvador: army on the run

In spite of their traitorous political leadership, leftist insurgents in El Salvador have made tremendous gains since the beginning of the year. In taking Berlin, a city of 40,000 in the coffee-rich uplands of Usulután, the rebels brought the war home to some of Salvador's landed elite, members of the so-called '14 families'. By cutting off the coastal highway and bombing bridges over the Lempa River (only one is left), the guerrillas have practically cut the country in half. In particular they have tightened their stranglehold on the transport of cotton and sugar, which together with coffee constitute the economic base of El Salvador.

Unable to bolster government troops in Berlin, the military dispatched A-37 'Dragonfly' jet bombers in a desperate attempt to stem the rebel

advance. Dropping 500-lb bombs and launching air-to-ground rockets, the air raids' only 'success' was in killing or wounding hundreds of civilians and levelling several blocks of the city centre. Replying to FMLN charges of indiscriminate bombing by these US-supplied war-planes, an American embassy spokesman cynically remarked, 'The responsibility for the conduct of the war is the Salvadorans'. I can't deny there might be some indiscriminate bombing ... but Salvadorans are good pilots.'

In northeastern Morazan, government officials were forced to acknowledge the failure of their 20-day offensive against the rebel strongholds. The 6000-man force, supported by jets and UH1-H 'Huey' helicopter gunships, encountered stiff resistance. In the battle for Meanguera, the elite Atonal Battalion (trained in Fort Bragg, North Carolina) was forced to retreat under heavy fire. And on January 20, Radio Venceremos announced the formation of the 'Rafael Arce Zablah' Brigade armed with heavy mortars and 90mm cannons recently captured from the army. This enabled the guerrillas to slug it out in pitched battles with government forces. While the latter were able to retake some towns along the paved road north from the provincial capital, the FMLN maintains control of the surrounding highlands.

Meanwhile, in a spectacular raid on January 26, guerrilla forces attacked the San Carlos garrison in San Salvador, the country's largest, holding it under siege through the night. In addition they staged actions in five working-class suburbs of the capital. The attack on San Carlos was only repelled when helicopter gunships machine-gunned the surrounding residential neighbourhood just one mile from the US embassy! A few days later, as rebels rolled through Usulután, rattled defence minister Jose Garcia declared, 'We are preparing precisely what is pertinent to satisfactorily resolve the situation....' An imperialist 'expert' in San Salvador commented, 'If things don't change, within four months the government is going to lose this war.'

### Sandinista Nicaragua under siege

In the month preceding the US-Honduran joint military exercises, the Nicaraguan *contras* (mostly former National Guardsmen of the Somoza tyranny) escalated their attacks on the FSLN regime. This resulted in the deaths of 38 civilians and Sandinista military personnel during January. Then using the military manoeuvres as cover, the Somozaist mercenaries invaded Nicaragua in force, attempting to establish a beachhead at the border town of Bismona. In the ensuing battles with the Sandinista army, 73 *contras* were killed and the attacking force fled back to their sanctuaries in the Honduran province of Gracias a Dios (Thanks Be to God).

The war 'games' themselves were on an unprecedented scale for the area, involving some 20 Hercules C-130 transports, Chinook and Huey helicopters, the USS *Spiegel* landing ship, the USS *Boulder* supply ship, and other smaller backup aircraft and naval vessels. The operation was

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# Labour Party...

(Continued from page 1)

These agents of the bourgeoisie in the workers movement truly have nothing to offer workers save continued emiseration, especially in today's time of deep capitalist crisis. The Labour Party is the mass working-class party in this country, with organic links to the trade unions. But from the outset it has been a party of liberal capitalism, seeking not the overthrow of the exploiters but 'representation', in their Parliament, there to win a few crumbs for working people through administering imperialism on Her Majesty's behalf. For its part, the reformist trade-union bureaucracy ties the mass of workers to these pro-imperialist social democrats.

The working class needs, not another Labour government in the bosses' parliament, but a revolutionary workers government based on the

gardens in Bermondsey. As part of an obvious deal with the Labour leadership it featured not a word about anything controversial within the party, such as Cruise missiles and 'disarmament'. Most tellingly, with the expulsion of five *Militant* editorial board members scheduled for by-election eve, Tatchell quietly went along with the purge and refused to speak out in their defence.

The upshot was that the Labour candidate came across as nothing more than a weak, pathetic hypocrite. The Greater London Council 'troops out of Ireland' furore was indicative. After Fleet Street kicked up a storm over the GLC's (rapidly abandoned) consideration of a grant to the Troops Out Movement, one reporter grilled supposed left-winger Tatchell for an opinion. The candidate responded by staring speechless into space. The question was repeated: more uncomfortable silence. After a third attempt, Tatchell stammered incoherently about saying something 'tomorrow' (he didn't).

not only did the 'anti-racist' RCP not even mention this question in its campaign literature, but election night saw RCP candidate Fran Eden sharing a platform with these fascist thugs, smiling all the while to the television cameras!

## One Foot out the door?

After the Bermondsey debacle there is much talk of 'knives being sharpened in the dark' for the pathetic Michael Foot. Foot's heir presumptive, Denis Healey, lurks in the shadows awaiting his call, with 'soft left' Neil Kinnock touted as prospective deputy. In response Tony Benn, hero of the fake revolutionaries, has come out for a loyalty oath to the geriatric Foot, calling on Labour to 'rally round our existing leadership, our existing policies and our existing membership'. And the fake revolutionaries who have leapt on Benn's wagon now join the 'stop Healey' (read: defend Foot) clamour.

With their present rapid rightward motion many supporters of *Socialist Challenge*, *Socialist Organiser* and the like are today in the process of not just tailing but becoming organically incorporated into the Labour Party. The old posters of Che Guevara have been taken down, and pictures of Tony Benn (who gave yeoman service to imperialism in his eleven years in Labour Cabinets) put up in their place. Right now these pseudo-lefts are providing a new layer of cadres and activists for the labour lieutenants of capitalism. *Socialist Organiser* supporters on Islington Council in London, for example, are busy determining rates and bossing council employees. Perhaps some of them will even manage to emulate ex-'Trotskyists' like Eric Heffer and Syd Bidwell who now grace Her Majesty's Westminster benches as Labour MPs. And at best they promise to replicate the treacherous role played over the years by the *Militant* tendency.

Of course it is an ironic and supreme injustice for Ted Grant and his fellow *Militant* editorial board members to have been tossed so unceremoniously out of the Labour Party after the stalwart work they have done giving a (barely) left cover to social-democratic betrayal for so many years. But the Labour leadership, needing sacrificial lambs to try and convince the bourgeoisie that their house is in order for the next election, found the 'Trotskyist' *Militant* the easiest target. Grant & Co, having long ago become simple Labourites themselves, naturally decided to bring the bourgeoisie's courts into the labour movement in an attempt to reverse the expulsions. They well fear that outside Labour they would be as fish out of water.

The war drive and the Russian question are the key issues dragging today's round of rightward-moving phoney revolutionaries towards straight social democracy. Poland in particular, where counterrevolutionary Solidarnosc made an attempt to seize power and create a virulently pro-Western, anti-Communist capitalist state on the borders of the Soviet Union, provides a focus for mainstream Labourites and the jaded 'far left' to unite around virulent anti-Sovietism. The forthcoming *Socialist Action*, Labour-entrust replacement for *Socialist Challenge*, is indicative, with its masthead explicitly imitating the Solidarnosc logo!

The anti-Soviet 'united front' extends not just to the open Labour tailists, but to groups



Leyland workers protest Labour's Social Contract betrayals, March 1977

overthrow of the bourgeois parliamentary system and its replacement by soviet democracy. For that, a new leadership is required: a Leninist vanguard party to lead the struggle for socialist revolution. The Labour Party cannot be transformed into an instrument for the working class -- it must be split, its working class base won to communism through a hard fight against the labour misleaders for a revolutionary programme and strategy, above all in the trade unions. British workers have repeatedly shown their willingness to fight in recent months -- ASLEF drivers, NHS workers, water workers, South Wales miners. Invariably the Labour/trade union chiefs have tried to damp down and sabotage these struggles; in the case of the NHS demonstrations last year, they turned them into election rallies for the Labour parliamentarians. By intervening with a fighting revolutionary strategy including mass strike action to smash the government and its attacks and a programme for working-class power, Leninists seek to use Labour's present crisis to break the working class from the deadening grip of social democracy. This is the perspective of the Spartacist League.

In contrast, most would-be revolutionaries have responded to Labour's crisis with schemes to defend and refurbish the party, to give it a 'socialist' soul the better to dupe the workers. *Socialist Challenge* (21 February), now abandoned vehicle of the Socialist League (ex-International Marxist Group), sums up their strategy: 'Labour needs to go to the elections on the basis of a mass campaign for the socialist policies decided at conferences of the past few years.' Not even a fig-leaf for left cover here. These pseudo-revolutionaries have simply adopted as their own Labour's pro-capitalist proclaimed 'socialist policies' -- from utopian/reactionary petty-bourgeois 'disarmament' schemes, to 'community control of the racist cops, and especially virulent anti-Sovietism from Afghanistan to Poland. Viewing the world through grimy Labourite spectacles, they present a strategy flatly counterposed to the revolutionary class-struggle perspectives of Trotskyism.

## Bermondsey and the left

There was no basis to give any support to Labour's Peter Tatchell in Bermondsey. His campaign was little more than a parish-pump community-politics crusade for more houses with

Yet the fake lefts of *Socialist Challenge*, *Socialist Organiser* et al didn't just support this pro-imperialist Labourite, they did so virtually uncritically. On the eve of the campaign *Socialist Challenge* claimed that 'This election will be a direct, open contest between the policies of the most advanced section of the British working class and Thatcher.' So now open, unashamed reformism has become 'the most advanced section of the British working class!' For its part, *Socialist Organiser* (17 February) praised the 'transformation of Bermondsey CLP into a campaigning party fighting strongly on local issues in defence of working class interests', claiming this had 'clearly enthused Labour supporters who had lost interest in the Party'. One week later these 'enthused' Labour supporters voted en masse for the Liberals.

Both *Socialist Organiser* and *Socialist Challenge* denounced in terms worthy of Tatchell himself ('playing the Tories' game') the two other labour movement organisations who also stood in the by-election, the Communist Party (CP) and Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP). In this they underlined how they have become mere pressure groups on social democracy. A willingness to stand candidates against Labour is essential for a revolutionary organisation; the reason why the CP and RCP campaigns deserved no support was not that they threatened to siphon votes away from the beloved Tatchell but that they did not themselves on any decisive question represent a qualitative break with Labour's reformism.

The CP's campaign was openly based on Labour conference policies. For decades these people have been mere running dogs of Labourism, using their influence in the unions in particular to tie the workers ever closer to the social democrats. Indeed today one of the chief things distinguishing the CP from the mainstream Labour left is the brazen call issued by its Eurocommunist wing in *Marxism Today* for Labour to form a coalition with the Liberals, SDP and even 'Tory wets'. And the RCP's 'alternative' to Labour is empty bombast and name-calling covering a not-very-left-content. Absurdly declaring itself to be 'finishing with Labour' today, this small group in fact campaigned on the same parochial local issues and within the same social-democratic cretinist framework. This was most graphic on the question of fascism. The National Front won nearly 1200 votes in Bermondsey in 1979, a poor year for them, and at least three fascist candidates were running this time. Yet



Foot, Heffer, Healey: pathetic Labourites without solutions.

Spartacist Britain

like the RCP and Socialist Workers Party (SWP) as well. The 'anti-Labour' RCP has Labour's line on Poland and Afghanistan. The SWP today postures as a left alternative to Labour. But on the Russian question these 'third campists' are as ardent Cold Warriors as most Labour bureaucrats, and indeed Margaret Thatcher. Domestically too the SWP sees the class struggle through the same Labourite fog as the rest, moaning about an 'industrial downturn' and 'counterposing' the most minimal shop-floor economism to Labour's parliamentary cretinism. When the heat came on, they even refused to call for a general strike during the 1980 national steel strike. And anyway when it comes to elections, whether in Bermondsey or generally, the SWP always openly champions Labour as a 'lesser evil'.

### Labour's crisis — the crisis of reformism

For Leninists, the tactic of critical support to Labour in elections has nothing to do with 'lesser evils'. It is designed to destroy illusions in parliamentarism, in reformism; this politically-bankrupt party in power, administering the capitalist state, necessarily proves it-



Labour reformists have no answer to capitalist crisis.

self the *open enemy* of the working class. Lenin explained:

'If I come out as a Communist and call upon [the workers] to vote for [Labour leader] Henderson and against Lloyd George, they will certainly give me a hearing. And I shall be able to explain in a popular manner, not only why the Soviets are better than a parliament and why the dictatorship of the proletariat is better than the dictatorship of Churchill (disguised with the signboard of bourgeois "democracy"), but also that, with my vote, I want to support Henderson in the same way that the rope supports a hanged man -- that the impending establishment of a government of the Hendersons will prove that I am right, will bring the masses over to my side, and will hasten the political death of the Hendersons and the Snowdens just as was the case with their kindred spirits in Russia and Germany.' (*Left-wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder*, 1920)

In the coming general elections critical support to Labour -- 'as the rope supports a hanged man' -- may well be a valid tactic, depending on the concrete circumstances in the elections and in the class struggle, if it runs in its own name and not in coalition. Today Michael Foot & Co have a lightning rod in Margaret Thatcher who so openly and virulently hates the working class. She makes it easier for even these gentlemen to pose as the workers' friends. In government office the Foots, Healeys and Benns could no longer do this, but would be shown up to be pathetic pro-capitalist swine.

But if Labour were to campaign as part of an open or corridor coalition with the Alliance or another bourgeois party (as the Eurocommunists openly demand and many others quietly moot) there could be no question of critical support. Such cross-class coalitions provide a built-in excuse for the reformists to justify their betrayals once in office by pointing to their bourgeois bloc partners who, they claim, 'only let us go so far'.

In 1974, when workers looked to the Labour Party for a pro-working-class alternative after the miners had taken on and beaten the Heath government, we called for critical support to Labour in the elections, while warning that the party in government would only carry out the bosses' interests. This the Wilson and then Callaghan/Healey governments did -- with a vengeance.

Throughout the years of strikebreaking, wage control, coalition and countless other attacks

on workers and the oppressed, we consistently fought these betrayals, including opposition to votes to Labour in by-elections when these could only be seen as endorsement of the hated Social Contract government. When Callaghan made his sordid deal with David Steel, we demanded 'Break the Lib-Lab pact!', and when it came to 1979 we uniquely refused to endorse another round of Social Contract/coalition treachery. Fake lefts of every stripe sought to return the utterly discredited government to the Treasury benches, even denouncing as 'ultraleft' militant workers in unions like NUPE who threatened to withhold support from Labour because of the depth of its betrayals. But with Callaghan promising only more of the same we said, 'No vote to the traitors! Not Callaghan/Benn but a workers government!'

A year of so after Labour lost, and significantly after the defeat of the steel strike, the Bennites stepped up their offensive to revivify a more left-posturing party. We said that the Labour lefts were leading workers to a dangerous dead end. We called for critical support to Benn's 1981 deputy leadership bid against Healey in order to deepen the split begun by the SDP, drive out the *open* agents of imperialism, the hard NATO/CIA-loving right wing, and demonstrate how Labour can make its own betrayals without the CIA connection. We counterposed a fighting revolutionary programme to the Little England reformism of the Labour 'left'.

### The fight for workers revolution

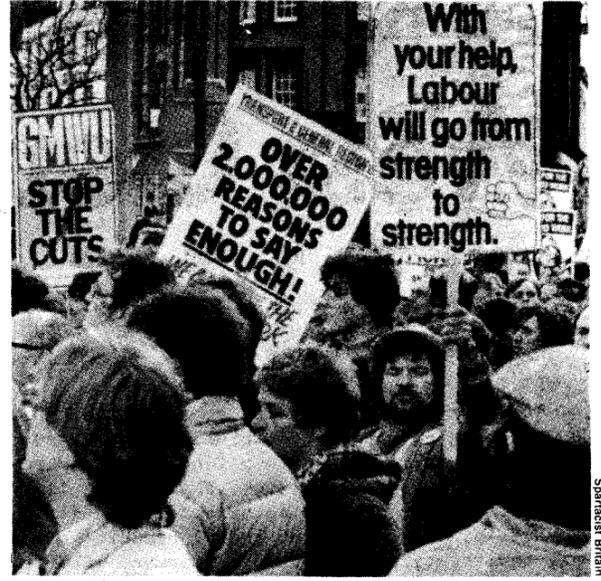
The founding document of the Fourth International, written by Leon Trotsky in the period of international capitalist crisis and impending war, declared:

'The central task of the Fourth International consists in freeing the proletariat from the old leadership, whose conservatism is in complete contradiction to the catastrophic eruption of disintegrating capitalism and represents the chief obstacle to historical progress.' (*The Transitional Programme*, 1938)

This remains our central task today. The counterposition of a revolutionary programme in struggle, above all in the trade unions, is the key to shattering the chains which bind the working class to its pro-capitalist misleaders.

Against Benn's 'non-nuclear defence strategy' for British imperialism, the Spartacist League says 'Not a penny, not a man for the capitalist army', and calls for unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union against the NATO war drive. Against Labour's support for continued imperialist occupation of Northern Ireland, including Benn's schemes for UN troops to replace the British army, we demand 'Troops out now!' and put forward a proletarian perspective for social struggle in Ireland. Against Labour's racist immigration policies, we say: Down with all bourgeois immigration laws! Full citizenship rights for all workers in Britain! Against racist and fascist attacks we call not for more 'democratically accountable' racist police but mass trade union/minority mobilisations to sweep the race terrorists off the streets.

Against the Alternative Economic Strategy of



Or so they claimed...

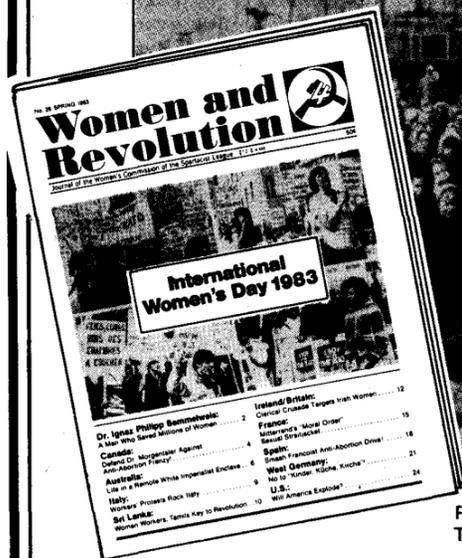
reflation and nationalist protectionism, we counterpose a fight for jobs for all under a socialist planned economy in Britain and internationally -- a fight requiring working-class socialist revolution. And against Labour and the TUC bureaucrats' consistent sabotage and diversion of working-class struggle into the trap of parliamentarism, we call for mass strike action to smash the attacks of the Tory government and bring it down. We fight for the ousting of the trade union and Labourite bureaucrats and the building of a revolutionary leadership in the trade unions as part of forging a Leninist party.

Only through such a revolutionary strategy can Labour's deadening stranglehold over the working class be broken. British capitalism today is in a deep, intractable mess. Labourism and the treachery of the trade union bureaucracy are manifestly unable to solve the crisis, thus paving the way for Thatcher to continue her attacks today, while the capitalists will ultimately try to turn to the fascists to unleash black reaction against workers and minorities. In 1920 Lenin and Trotsky's Communist International summarised the revolutionary perspective necessary for the British working class:

'The dictatorship of the proletariat is the more applicable in England in that the proletariat forms the greater part of the population, that it is on a high level of technical and general education, and that it is organised in strong trade unions. It only requires a firm revolutionary will and the establishment of a resolute revolutionary party, which will be able to express and effect and to spread this will amongst the millions of the working masses.' ('The Communist International answers the ILP', excerpted in *Spartacist Britain* no 44, August/September 1982)

Forward to a Leninist/Trotskyist vanguard party to lead the fight for a Soviet Britain, part of the Socialist United States of Europe! ■

## Celebrating International Women's Day 1983



Russian women demonstrate (1917). The banner says: 'City guardians increase pay to soldiers' families!'

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# German Trotskyists oppose resurgent nationalism

# West German elections Cold War turning point?

The West German elections scheduled for March 6 are being presented, especially by spokesmen for NATO imperialism, as a potential watershed in postwar European politics. While the ruling Christian Democrats are being held up as NATO loyalists, the opposition Social Democrats (who are equivocating on planned deployment later this year of American middle-range nuclear missiles in West Germany) are increasingly labelled 'neutralist', a gross exaggeration. Running on the slogan, 'In German Interests', the Social Democrats have, however, become a vehicle for resurgent German nationalism expressed in anti-American as well as anti-Soviet terms. Underlying the new German nationalism of the left (and also, of course, of the right) are the revanchist ambitions of German imperialism, the strongest power in capitalist Europe, towards the Soviet-bloc degenerated/deformed workers states.

While the foreign press has naturally focussed on the international aspects of the German elections (dubbed 'the missile elections'), this parliamentary contest is also taking place amid the worst economic conditions -- two-and-a-half million unemployed -- since the immediate post-World War II period. When the Christian Democrats manoeuvred Helmut Schmidt's Social Democrats out of office last fall, the new, more austerity-minded Kohl/Strauss/Lambsdorff government was greeted by the largest, most militant and most political trade-union demonstrations in decades. The Trotzistische Liga Deutschlands (TLD), German section of the international Spartacist tendency, intervened in these important working-class actions around the slogans, 'You can't fight Strauss with Social Democrats!' and 'Bring down the Kohl government through mass strikes -- Break with the Social Democrats!'

The following article is adapted from two articles in the TLD's *Spartakist* addressing the significance of the change in government and the subsequent mass trade-union protests against the Christian Democrats.

Adapted from *Spartakist* No 45, October 1982 and a December 1982 *Spartakist* Supplement

In the context of an anti-Soviet war threat and the international crisis of capitalism, the coalition between the bourgeois liberals of the Free Democratic Party (FDP) and the Social Democratic Party (SPD) collapsed on 1 October 1982. After 13 years of the SPD's class-collaborationist coalitionism, Helmut Schmidt's 'Model Germany' came apart at the seams, and now the Christian Democrats (CDU) are in power. The Social Democrats are divided by disputes over NATO's 'two-track' decision (on the stationing of Pershing and Cruise missiles). Meanwhile, wage cuts and mass unemployment increasingly destroyed the illusions in the SPD of large sections of the working class. When the FDP departed from the coalition, fleeing into the arms of Helmut Kohl's new 'transitional government', West Germans could only observe the change in governments from the sidelines. And anyone looking at the 200-pound nonentity Kohl sees Franz Josef Strauss looming behind him just waiting for his chance.

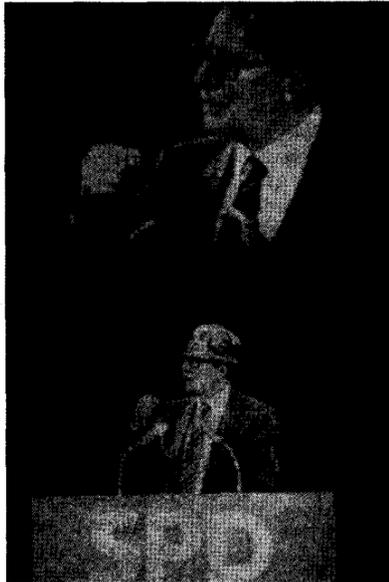
Strauss is feared and hated as a warmonger and enemy of the unions, the embodiment of the 'strongman' who is now attempting to achieve through parliamentary manoeuvring what he couldn't accomplish in the 1980 Bundestag elections. The SPD is making hay of this fear, once again pushing the slogan 'Fear Strauss'. When the [metal workers union] IG-Metall characterised the way in which the change of power in Bonn had been effected as a 'blow against democracy', the CDU ominously labelled this a 'left-fascist attack'. And now the CDU is pushing laws against the Greens [ecology party] and Alternatives [left social democrats] as 'enemies of the constitution'. During the vote of confidence debate, Helmut Schmidt [then SPD chancellor] prattled about the spirit of the constitution. But when Schmidt speaks of the constitution, he

means the office for the Protection of the Constitution [the *Verfassungsschutz*, West Germany's FBI]. The SPD in power was the party of police terror and terrorist manhunts.

If the Kohl government carries out only the first stages of its programme, tens of thousands of workers will lose their unemployment benefits. Every social gain is under attack, right down to sick pay. But the CDU is only taking up where the SPD left off. The Social Democrats,

protectionist measures of American imperialism and the advance of the Japanese competition are heightening the strategically important value of trade with East Europe for the extremely export-dependent West German industry and are strengthening its *Drang nach Osten* [drive to the East].

But construction of the pipeline is above all a symbol of the tactics of German imperialism aimed at being able to plunder its old markets



Clockwise from bottom left: Christian Democrat Helmut Kohl (left) takes over chancellorship from Social Democrat Helmut Schmidt (right); Right-wing demagogue Franz Josef Strauss; Social Democratic hopeful Hans-Jochen Vogel. Europacifist demonstration in Bonn, October 1981: Petty-bourgeois radical fringe of Social Democracy.

who went into the 1980 elections under the slogan 'Enter the '80s securely', left two million unemployed; three to four million are expected next year. The SPD's 'Model Germany' meant the deportation of hundreds of thousands of foreign workers to their countries of origin where mass poverty and, as in Turkey, the brutal terror of NATO generals await them. It meant concentration camps for political refugees seeking asylum from the war and terror in Lebanon, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. Now, in his first major public statement, Kohl threatened the Turkish ['guest'] workers with intensified efforts to get them out of Germany.

The SPD/FDP coalition was useful to the capitalists until they required a more reliable instrument for their offensives against the working class. And the SPD, while administering the capitalist system, is tied to the interests of its 'own' bourgeoisie. Preservation of class peace (in the reformist vocabulary, 'social partnership') was rendered significantly easier for the SPD against the powerful pressure from the trade-union rank and file by pointing to its bourgeois coalition partner. But even without a coalition partner, the SPD cannot even claim to defend the interests of the working class. It will continue its openly anti-proletarian policies, as Schmidt admitted without any pretence: 'The policies of the federal government would not be an iota different if the SPD were ruling alone' (*Die Tageszeitung*, 11 October 1982). The Trotzistische Liga Deutschlands says: you can't fight Strauss with the SPD!

## The politics of detente and the SPD as a 'party of peace'

The change of government in Bonn has set off discussions around the globe as to whether the policy of detente and trade with the Soviet bloc, pushed by Schmidt against Reagan's opposition, will be continued by the CDU/FDP coalition or whether the tensions between Bonn and Washington will be dissipated. However, Krupp, Mannesmann, Thyssen [West German steel giants] and above all AEG [German General Electric, the turbine manufacturer], whose very survival hinges on trade with the East bloc, cannot afford to give up the 'deal of the century', the Soviet pipeline, for the sake of the crazed first-strike fanatic in the White House. The

in East Europe via economic penetration, credits, trade and joint enterprises. The SPD's *Ostpolitik* [eastern policy] is the expression of the path chosen by the German bourgeoisie to reverse the results of the Second World War: the division of Germany and the creation of the East European deformed workers states by social revolution from above, a course forced on the Soviet bureaucracy by the Cold War drive of American imperialism. The fact that the SPD/FDP coalition's detente politics, the necessary diplomatic counterpart to trade with the East bloc, prevailed over the ossified anti-communism of the CDU of the early 1970s was thus not at all a shift to the left. Nor is it a vindication of the Kremlin bureaucracy's criminal policy of 'peaceful coexistence'. Imperialism will never be reconciled to having been driven from a sixth of the planet by the revolutionary Russian workers and peasants.

For the last couple of years the SPD was increasingly torn apart by debates about the NATO 'two-track' decision. Schmidt even risked his chancellorship to push through the decision on stationing intermediate-range missiles in West Germany. But the demonstrations against the missiles, and Schmidt's threats to resign, re-



'Missile elections' highlight resurgent German nationalism in 'left' pacifistic form.

flected differences in emphasis within the SPD. Leading left Social Democrats assisted in launching the campaign against the Pershings. And it was Social Democrats who mobilised 400,000 against Ronald Reagan's visit to Bonn last June 10. Today the nationalist, anti-American and anti-Soviet 'peace' movement is playing the role of a vanguard for the SPD's imperialist *Ostpolitik*. The SPD is attempting to exploit West Germans' justified fear of the warmonger in Washington, whose former secretary of state Haig wanted to explode an atom 'demonstration' bomb over the Baltic, and to steer this fear onto a nationalistic course.

This 'pacifist' face of the SPD, which enabled Helmut Schmidt to win as 'peace chancellor' over Cold Warrior Strauss in the 1980 Bundestag (parliament) elections, reflects the increased strength and independence of West German as opposed to American imperialism. From the closest anti-Soviet NATO ally of Washington in the 1960s, Bonn has become the 'reluctant ally'. Part of the West German ruling class, with the FDP as its spokesman, opted for the Social Democracy and its detente policies as the best expression of its capitalist interests. The SPD still aims at reconquering East Europe for capitalist exploitation, as it did back in Cold War I when its Ostburo was a key instrument for CIA penetration of the Soviet bloc. But it does so today as a bourgeois workers party beholden to the German, not the American bourgeoisie.

The successor state of the 'Third Reich' has never abandoned its counterrevolutionary claims to East Germany and the western regions of Poland. West Berlin, artificially kept alive by massive injections of financial aid as a NATO advance post in the heart of the DDR, is a symbol of these unfulfilled revanchist appetites. But the German bourgeoisie knows that at present it can only lose in a military confrontation with the Soviet Union. So it prepares. Under the direction of the SDP/FDP coalition the imperialist Bundeswehr together with the apartheid regime in South Africa and the Argentine junta, has developed its own atomic bomb. And the Social Democracy, agent of imperialism in the ranks of the workers movement, is attempting to capture the proletariat, under the banner of nationalist pacifism, anti-Americanism and anti-Sovietism, for the interests of the steel barons and banks.

It is above all the so-called leftists in the SPD who are the most vehement proponents of a 'neutral Germany' and of the nationalist 'our Germany is occupied' ideology. The counter-revolutionary echo of 'left' nationalism in the Dresden 'peace' movement is utilised by the Eplers and Lafontaines to advocate the disarmament of the DDR and Soviet Union that much more energetically. In Poland these Social Democratic revanchists were within striking distance of their goal. The ruinous indebtedness of the Polish economy to the Frankfurt bankers drove the country to the brink of counterrevolution. Membership in the International Monetary Fund, that pitiless enforcer of international high finance, was demanded by Walesa's and Wojtyla's Solidarnosc. Victory of this company union in the service of NATO and the German bankers would have meant mass unemployment for Polish workers and opened the road to the capitalist reunification of Germany.

When Soviet soldiers raised the red flag on the Berlin Reichstag in April 1945, this could have sparked proletarian revolution throughout Europe. But the Stalinists sold out the future of the European proletariat in order to defend their own parasitic interests and sealed the division of the German working class. Although they suppress the political power of the proletariat in East Germany, every class-conscious worker must defend the conquests of the workers state against the imperialist revanchism of the German bourgeoisie and their social-democratic lackeys, who, in taming the West German working class after the war, ensured that West Germany would become the anti-Communist bulwark of Europe against the DDR and the Soviet Union. For the unconditional military defence of the workers states against imperialism and internal counterrevolution!

### German workers march against Kohl/Strauss

Demonstrations called by the Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (DGB -- German Trade Union Confederation) in late October and early November brought over 500,000 people onto the streets in West Germany. The heavy battalions of the working class -- steel workers, dock workers, miners and metal workers -- formed the backbone of the largest trade-union protests in over 30 years. Tapping workers' rage at the assaults of the CDU/FDP coalition and their fear of Cold Warrior Strauss, the DGB leadership used the mass protests to once again sell the SPD to the

workers as the 'lesser evil'. But they were playing with fire. In Stuttgart, shop stewards from the metal workers union in Koln carried a sign reading: 'What is to be done? How about a general strike?' DGB head Ernst Breit wrung his hands: 'I fear for the social peace in this country.'

Breit has reason to be worried. The DGB leaders were forced to call the mass protests when the SPD was still in power. They postponed them as late as possible into the autumn in order to avoid the embarrassing situation of a direct confrontation with Schmidt. Lo and behold, when the first demonstration took place, the Christian Democrats were already in power. But the number of workers ready and eager to fight Kohl, Strauss and Lambsdorff [former FDP economics minister] was several times greater than originally expected. In Dortmund and Stuttgart, the most militant workers evoked the worst fears of the reformist trade-union leadership. 'Enough is enough! Social peace is over and done with!' The banner of the TLD stood out with its fighting programme and perspective, 'Bring down the Kohl government through mass strikes! Break with the SPD!'

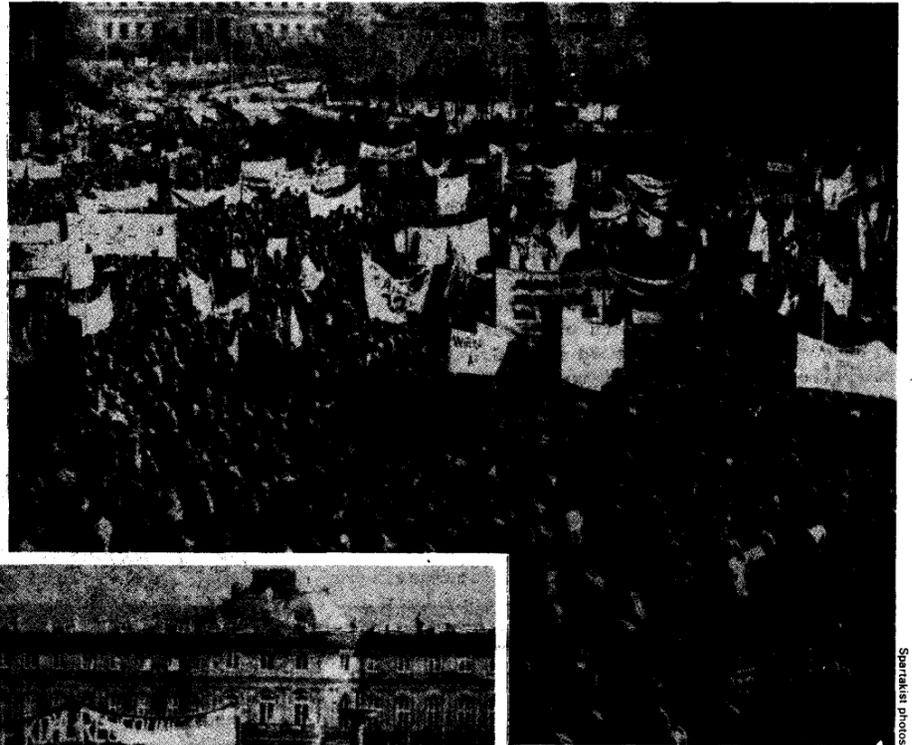
Meanwhile, unmentioned in the capitalist press and isolated by sabotage and the lack of support action from the union leadership, there were daily factory demonstrations, strike actions and even some plant occupations last autumn. On October 14 in Kiel 6000 dock workers marched to the state parliament where the new CDU premier was being sworn in, announcing 'Barschel, we're coming!' In a small town like Volkingen in the Saar more than 20,000 steel workers protested in the streets against threatened layoffs. And in early November workers at a subsidiary of the same firm occupied the

leadership. But they can win through a joint struggle, eg, the steel workers in the Saarland joining with their class brothers in the French and Belgian steel industries, who are equally threatened with mass sackings.

### German workers, foreign workers: same class, same struggle!

Anti-Sovietism, whether of 'leftist' or rightist colouration, protectionism and skyrocketing unemployment, especially among youth, provide fertile soil for racists and fascists. Fifty years after the Nazis came to power, the brown bands, though still small and fragmented, are carrying out almost daily acts of terror. On November 17 a murderous arson attack was perpetrated on ten Turkish families in Thalfingen near Ulm; only five days later a Turkish woman and her three children were burned alive in Wolfenbittel in Lower Saxony. This bloody terror of the fascist arsonists, along with growing anti-Semitism reminiscent of the 'Kristallnacht' pogrom, must be stopped through trade-union-organised self-defence guards of German and foreign workers to smash the Nazi rabble.

Yet the DGB bureaucracy is not lifting a finger for its foreign trade-union members, instead of limiting itself to moral appeals against



150,000 German trade unionists demonstrate against Christian Democratic austerity measures in Stuttgart, 30 October 1982. German Trotskyists say: 'Bring down the Kohl government through mass strikes! Break with the SPD!'

factory in the face of threats to close it. Workers from the Saar to the Ruhr know that if they don't fight to save their jobs, there is no future for them. And so the labour bureaucracy begins talking hypocritically of 'Resistance now!'

The DGB bureaucrats organised an 'action' following the October demonstrations, but it had absolutely nothing to do with working-class struggle. On November 10 they called for an anti-Communist boycott of Polish products in support of Solidarnosc. Not so the Trotskyists. Standing in front of the Frankfurt post office, the TLD demanded: 'No boycott, no strike for Solidarnosc -- company union in the pay of NATO and the German bankers!' Our slogans fell on receptive ears among postal workers, who remembered only too well that the Solidarnosc-loving DGB tops sold out their 1980 strike. And we saluted the Hamburg harbour workers who put out a fire on a Polish coal freighter on November 10 despite the boycott.

In the worst capitalist crisis in 50 years, gigantic enterprises like International Harvester, Chrysler and AEG-Telefunken stand on the brink of collapse. And as in the 1930s, the cut-throat anarchy of the international capitalist market has come down to a struggle between US imperialism, a Europe dominated by Germany, and a Japan in the process of rearming. From steel to autos to video recorders, we're seeing a trade war. And trade wars lead to shooting wars. The workers can only lose through the protectionist measures against 'economic imperialism from the Far East' called for by the IG-Metall

'hostility to foreigners'. When at last year's May Day demonstration in Frankfurt Turkish workers were attacked by soccer fans mobilised by the fascists, the DGB tops told German participants in the mass meeting not to defend their Turkish colleagues but to let the reactionary scum, who were given a lesson by the foreign workers alone, depart unhindered! The chauvinist trade-union bosses fear common struggle of foreign and German workers.

Foreign workers constitute approximately a sixth of the industrial proletariat and can play a central role for revolution, not just in West Germany but in all of Europe. It was the Turkish workers who in 1973 during the wildcat strikes in the Ruhr fought most militantly for the organisation of work stoppages and picket lines. Foreign workers also know that they can expect nothing of the SPD and its 'social state', which under Schmidt armed Turkey's NATO butcher General Evren and supported the Zionist holocaust in Lebanon through 'development assistance' to Israel. CDU politicians speak of kicking out another 800,000 foreign workers. But it was the SPD that unloaded the worst results of the 1973-74 capitalist crisis onto the foreign workers, mercilessly sending hundreds of thousands back to the poverty and terror of their homelands. Trotskyists demand: Full citizenship rights for foreign workers and their families now!

The demonstrations in the autumn marked the beginning of efforts by the DGB bureaucracy to hoist the SPD back into the government saddle again. And the 'left' is not far behind. During

continued on page 9

# Cruise, Pershing...

(Continued from page 1)

strong reaction -- at once pacifistic and nationalistic -- in West Europe. In Britain this has been manifested in the sweeping rise of CND. More recently the Greenham Common 'peace camps' have helped galvanise popular opposition to Cruise deployment, with opinion polls now showing a majority of the population against the new missiles. The Bennite Labour left has of course strongly identified with the CND 'disarmers', while now even the staunchly pro-NATO right wing of the Labour Party is sufficiently worried that Reagan is losing the propaganda war as to mutter its own words of opposition to Cruise deployment. The Thatcher government however continues to hardline it, denouncing CND as 'appeasers' of Russian 'totalitarianism' (which is explicitly compared to Nazi Germany). The dominant sections of the British bourgeoisie understand that third-rate British imperialism has little option but to back the American cousins, more or less down the line.

But while 'peace' and 'disarmament' movements have grown rapidly in most West European countries, the most far-reaching reaction has been in West Germany. Polls show that a majority of supporters of all West German parties, including the ruling Christian Democrats, oppose the planned deployment of the Pershings. For this reason the West German elections of 6 March have become an international battleground in Cold War II. In January Soviet foreign minister Andrei Gromyko visited West Germany in a scarcely veiled attempt to bolster the oppositional Social Democratic 'peace' forces. The perennial Russian foreign minister told his German audience: 'In the nuclear age the Federal Republic of Germany and the Soviet Union are, figuratively speaking, in one boat.' Even hostile commentators conceded that Gromyko's appeals to the Germans not to tie their fate to the Reaganite warmongers had some effect.

So no sooner did the Soviet diplomat return to Moscow, than French social-democratic president Francois Mitterrand rushed to Bonn as NATO's number one fireman, or, if you like, missileman. He warned the West German parliament against 'the decoupling of the European continent and the American continent'. It must have been the first time in modern history that a French leader denounced the Germans as too pacifistic. And then Bush was sent to West Germany, the first and most important stop of his tour, on a self-described 'exercise in public relations' to sell Reagan's hard line and boost the Christian Democrats. But whatever the outcome of the 6 March elections, the resurgence of German nationalism -- now mainly expressed in 'left' pacifistic form -- will continue to shake global political alignments.

The common joke these days is: 'What is the definition of a tactical nuclear weapon? One that explodes in Germany.' With the scars of two world wars still remembered, millions of Europeans feel a sense of horror that the Pentagon wants to play out a nuclear World War III on European soil. Certainly the Pentagon has plans for such a nuclear *Schlachtfeld Deutschland* (Battlefield Germany). The German people know this and are understandably frightened by the prospect.

It is a species of crackpot rationalism a la Dr Strangelove to think that a war between NATO and the Warsaw Pact could actually be restricted to the European continent. Strangelovian notions about nuclear war are, however, not restricted to Pentagon think tanks. The Europacifist vision of a 'superpower' war fought overhead with ICBMs is, if anything, more fantastic than the scenario of a 'limited' nuclear war in Europe. The idea -- propagated also by the Stalinists and fake-Trotskyists -- that if only Europe could become a 'nuclear-free zone', its peoples could somehow escape World War III, is absurd. A war between US imperialism and the Soviet Union, however and wherever it starts, will quickly escalate into a northern hemispheric holocaust at least. 'Peace camps', 'peace parades', 'peace conferences', cajoling the bourgeoisie to give up its weapons, cannot stop this. Only successful socialist revolution, throughout West Europe and not least in the United States itself, can prevent imperialism from unleashing its awesome technology of death.

## The 'missile elections' and resurgent German nationalism

It is an index of the changed political situation in Germany that the December 1979 NATO decision to introduce new theatre weapons in Europe was first proposed and pushed by Helmut Schmidt, then Social Democratic head of the Bonn government and a pillar of the Western imperialist alliance. To placate pacifistic sen-

timent in Europe, their actual deployment in 1983 was made conditional on lack of significant progress -- whatever that meant -- in the US-Soviet disarmament talks. This proviso was window dressing, not taken seriously in NATO capitals.

However, as Washington's warmongering escalated, first under Carter and then Reagan, popular opposition to the NATO rearmament mounted in Europe. So the disarmament negotiations became an elaborate exercise to influence the hearts and minds of the millions of West Europeans frightened by the growing spectre of World War III. In November 1981 Reagan launched his 'zero option'. The Russians naturally rejected this out of hand and have since made counterproposals of their own, most recently Andropov's offer to limit Soviet medium-range missiles to the number currently deployed by Britain and France. This was categorically rejected by Reagan, Thatcher and Mitterrand.

But the German Social Democrats welcomed it. Schmidt came forward as an advocate of Andro-



'Socialist' Cold War hawk Mitterrand lectures Germans in Bundestag.

pov's proposal as against Reagan's 'zero option':

'Put yourself in the Soviets' place for a minute. Then you would also have to consider that the other atomic powers, Great Britain and France, dismantle their medium-range weapons, which can reach Soviet territory.' (Der Spiegel, 31 January)

And Social Democratic Party (SPD) chairman Willy Brandt is proposing that the scheduled deployment of the Pershings be postponed pending further Washington-Moscow negotiations.

These seasoned and cynical NATO social democrats are not, as American Cold Warriors absurdly contend, being taken in by the Kremlin's 'peace' offensive, nor are they simply competing with the 'anti-nuke' Greens (petty-bourgeois ecological hysterics) for the 'peace' vote. Rather the Social Democrats now believe that the interests of German imperialism, especially its long-term ambitions towards Soviet-dominated East Europe, can be furthered by a greater distance from American imperialism.

The rise of the new nationalism of the 'left' in West Germany (not so long ago America's most loyal European ally) has naturally set off alarm bells in Washington and also Paris and London. For example, the Dr Strangelove of the Carter years, Zbigniew Brzezinski, writes, 'we witness adoption of an essentially neutralist posture by one of West Germany's two major political parties, with its new leader, Hans-Jochen Vogel, going out of his way to treat Washington and Moscow on an equal basis' (New York Times, 30 January).

This is quite an overstatement. The German Social Democrats remain an Atlantic Alliance party (though far less fervently than before). No prominent SPDer has even hinted at withdrawing from NATO at the present time. But the party's direction of motion is towards a German nationalism balancing between the Soviet Union and American imperialism. Right-of-centre SPD leader Hans Apel, a former defence minister, now punctuates his campaign speeches with the slogan: 'We are against displays of subservience towards the West and against displays of force towards the East.'

Schmidt, Brandt, Vogel & Co look towards the

day when they can get back Prussia and Saxony (the German Democratic Republic) from the Soviet bureaucracy. A 'neutralist' Germany means a re-unified capitalist Germany. Stalin himself made such an offer in 1952, but the German bourgeoisie was then too weak vis-a-vis the Americans to take it up. Stalin's heirs are not now about to turn over East Germany to the Frankfurt bankers and Ruhr industrialists, but they are more than willing to encourage the new nationalism of the 'left' in West Germany.

## The 'spirit of Yalta' and counterrevolution in Poland

An editorial in the *New York Times* (4 February) has the nerve to warn the Russians against letting the evil genie of German nationalism out of the bottle:

'No diplomacies have been more disastrous in this century than those that underestimated German nationalism... How can any 20th-century leader dare arouse that dark force for transient purpose?...

'Because unification also remains the East Germans' dream, it is sheer madness for the Russians to be promoting neutralism in West Germany. A neutralist Germany would use every ounce of its strength to subvert the Soviet grip on East Germany.'

It is sheer duplicity for this leading organ of the American ruling class to invoke the spirit of Yalta, that division of Europe (centrally Germany) into US- and Soviet-dominated spheres. American imperialism is not defending (and has never defended) the postwar status quo in Europe and it is now intent on turning West Germany into a nuclear launching pad to incinerate the Soviet Union, killing tens of millions of Russians.

While decrying German nationalism as a threat to the peace of Europe, the liberal *New York Times* in seamless unity with Reagan and social democrats throughout West Europe has done everything in its power to inflame Polish nationalism against the Soviet Union. In the autumn of 1981 Poland stood on the brink of civil war, staved off at the last minute when the Stalinist regime spiked Solidarnosc' bid for power. Had Solidarnosc taken power, Poland would have been transformed into a fanatically anti-Communist ally of Western imperialism bringing the military forces of NATO right up to the Soviet border. And counterrevolution in Poland would in short order pose the reunification of Germany on a capitalist basis.

The German Social Democratic demagogues, the nationalists of the 'left', are laying the basis for a revanchist Fourth Reich by exploiting the national sentiment of the German working masses and their desire for peace. Under a genuinely communist (ie Trotskyist) leadership the German proletariat, West and East, could be the vanguard for socialist revolution in West Europe and political revolution to overthrow the parasitic bureaucracy in the Soviet bloc. West Germany is the dominant economic power in capitalist Europe. The East German workers state by itself is the tenth leading industrial country in the world. A unified German workers state would be the industrial powerhouse of a Socialist United States of Europe. This is the programme of the Troztkistische Liga Deutschlands, German section of the international Spartacist tendency, which combats both the openly reactionary Christian Democrats and the Social Democrats and their Green fringe.

## Thatcher's Britain: Reagan's staunch ally

In Britain, reaction to Reagan's first-strike anti-Soviet bellicosity and the growing European-American tensions is deeply affected by the postwar economic collapse. Unlike West Germany today, clapped-out British imperialism has little or no room for independent manoeuvre in global politics. Thus Labour governments since the war and Tory regimes at least since Suez have understood that Britain's days as a great power were over and accordingly acted as loyal servants of the overwhelmingly dominant American imperialist power. But today American imperialism too finds itself in a vastly weakened position economically and politically. Last year it couldn't even stop two of its most important allies, Britain and Argentina, from shooting each other's fleets apart in a war over a handful of South Atlantic rocks. So today important sectors of British bourgeois and Labourite opinion are worried that Reagan-style provocation is counterposed to NATO's long-term interests, while some adapt to the burgeoning European nationalism.

'Iron Lady' Margaret Thatcher herself, of course, backs Reagan pretty much to the hilt and vows to stop the supposed 'Communists, neutralists, defeatists' of CND. Her government is the only one in the world to consistently vote with the US against 'disarmament' proposals in the

United Nations. Today, worried about the increased influence of movements like CND and the Greenham Common protesters, she has assigned golden-boy Michael Heseltine to lead a propaganda counteroffensive (though a mooted government proposal for a £1 million publicly-funded advertising campaign for Cruise and Trident was shelved after adverse reaction).

But there is a great deal of uncomfortable-ness about Reaganite warmongering among pro-imperialist Labour politicians and the Social Democrats. Four-and-a-half years ago the Callaghan/Healey Labour government, like Schmidt's SPD, agreed in principle to the deployment of Cruise. With Labour in opposition, however, first the Bennite left came out against Cruise, mixing Little Englandism with 'anti-American' European nationalism. And now the ardent Atlanticists of the Healeyite right, again ascendant in the party since the Blackpool conference, have also had to renounce (only in words, to be sure) the installation of Cruise and Pershing -- while of course avowing that US bases and Britain's 'independent' nuclear arsenal must remain. Healey told the *Observer* (20 February):

'It is perfectly possible to oppose cruise deployment and still remain a loyal member and supporter of NATO, as former Field Marshal Lord Carver reminded the House of Lords a few days ago.'

Not just Healey but also his one-time allies in the SDP and even to some extent Thatcher have had to adjust their rhetoric to deal with the rise of pacifistic and nationalistic sentiments in Europe -- especially with elections impending. The SDP in particular has chosen to campaign for Britain to have joint control with the US over the use of Cruise through a 'dual key' system. As the *Times* (21 February) complained:

'It is not just the Left now, in Europe, which seeks therefore to subvert confidence in the American guarantee, since the right, with its insistence on dual key arrangements, would seem to believe that American decisions might also need greater restraint.'

All of these fervent Cold Warriors now parade as advocates of 'genuine multilateral disarmament'. As German Communist poet Bertolt Brecht once wrote, when the bourgeoisie starts to talk of peace, it's time to prepare for war.

### Not detente but international proletarian revolution

It is not only the Europacifists and opponents of Reagan who preach the virtues of detente with the Soviet Union. Leading European advocates of NATO rearmament, such as Mitterrand and West German Christian Democratic leader Helmut Kohl, also speak in favour of 'detente', especially in terms of economic relations with the East. Isn't this a contradiction? No. For the European imperialists, detente is an alternative strategy, one corresponding to their specific strengths, to roll back Soviet power in East Europe. The German bourgeoisie knows it cannot win a war against the Soviet Union now, but it certainly possesses the capacity to economically undermine and politically subvert the Soviet bloc.

The detente road to counterrevolution came very close to success in Poland. The massive loans Frankfurt bankers made to Warsaw in the 1970s produced an orgy of corruption among the bureaucratic elite, while allowing for increases in the consumption levels of Polish workers and peasants which could not possibly be sustained. How detente contributed to the anti-Communist explosion in 1980-81 is explained in a vulgar, exaggerated way by an American Cold War academic:

'Detente does not liberalize ruling Leninist parties, it corrupts them -- organizationally, ideologically, and personally. In Poland, the absolute commitment of former Party First Secretary Edward Gierek to the international politics of detente corrupted Polish Communist authorities absolutely.' (Richard Spielman, 'Crisis in Poland', *Foreign Policy*, Winter 1982-83)

For European imperialism, promoting internal counterrevolutionary forces in the Soviet bloc seems less risky than attempting a nuclear first strike -- but the two are by no means mutually exclusive.

Since the Stalinist bureaucracy instinctively fears proletarian revolution internationally, the Kremlin leaders must maintain illusions in 'peaceful coexistence' even with Reagan's America. Thus Andropov recently renewed the offer of a 'non-aggression pact' between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. A 'non-aggression pact' with Reagan is worth about as much as the Stalin-Hitler pact of 1939 in protecting the Soviet Union.

And all of the bourgeois, petty-bourgeois and reformist forces which the Kremlin looks to for-

'peace' are to one degree or another part of the Reagan-led anti-Soviet war drive. In the US the ideological leaders of the 'nuclear freeze' movement and 'no first use' advocates are certified Vietnam War criminals Robert McNamara and McGeorge Bundy. The Democratic Party Cold and hot Warriors simply want a more rational mix of nuclear and conventional forces to confront the Soviet Union.

The 'disarmament' policies of the right-wing Labour leadership and the SDP in Britain are of a piece with those of McNamara/Bundy. The Labour left's Little England reformist fantasies do not extend to opposing the NATO alliance, and they too denounce Soviet 'totalitarianism'. Movements like CND both adapt to European bourgeois nationalism and promote the 'liberal' imperialism of the likes of Lord Carver. As for the European Nuclear Disarmament movement, its leader E P Thompson actually welcomed Reagan's 'zero option' as a 'remarkable change of tone', suggesting that all it needed was a 'freeze' tacked on to become fully supportable. Thompson/END are among the most fervent of 'left' Cold Warriors, backing Solidarnosc and pro-Western East European dissidents to the hilt and writing, 'it is as easy to sit down in front of the Soviet Embassy as Greenham Common' (*Guardian*, 21 February). Historian Michael Howard, writing in the *Sunday Times*, (20 February), recently captured what Thompson et al are about when he remarked on

'the bizarre combination of the right-wing extremists who would call into question the whole Yalta settlement, and the radicals of the campaign for European [Nuclear] Disarmament who would expel the Russian from Eastern Europe by peaceful persuasion and reconstitute a European bloc from the Atlantic to the Pripet marshes.'

As for the European Stalinists, the supposedly pro-Moscow French Communists are loyally serving in the government of ardent warmonger Mitterrand, and even hailed his anti-Soviet Bundestag speech. The Italian Communists have decided not to agitate against the deployment of Cruise missiles in Italy so as not to disturb their hopes for a 'historic compromise' with the Vatican. And the pathetic CPGB seeks to implement the *British Road to Socialism's* strategy of breaking British imperialism from the US bourgeoisie, including by uniting with 'serious multilateralists'. The Eurocommunist wing of the party today goes so far as to openly campaign for an 'anti-Thatcher' coalition including Labour, the SDP, Liberals and 'Tory wets'. With friends of peace like these....

For proletarian revolutionists in every imperialist country, the main enemy is at home -- our 'own' ruling class. The Soviet Union, land of the October Revolution is in danger. It is confronted not just with nuclear war threats but with nuclear war plans. The search for a popular front with some 'peace-loving' wing of the imperialist bourgeoisie is more than an illusion, it is a direct danger to Soviet defence. And hand-holding for 'peace' outside US bases will never stop the imperialists and their preparations for war. Only the revival of revolutionary proletarian internationalism can defend the Soviet Union by destroying world capitalism. This requires a world Trotskyist party -- to lead socialist revolution in the capitalist world and to oust the counterrevolutionary Stalinist bureaucracy through proletarian political revolution. The fate of mankind is in the balance.

Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 323, 11 February 1983

## German elections...

(Continued from page 7)

the coalition years, a considerable left-social-democratic layer arose which sought to pressure the SPD from the outside. Now they too are busily seeking to put together new editions of an SPD-dominated coalition. Support for Schmidt's coalition politics as a 'lesser evil' has always served to strengthen illusions in the Social Democracy. Revolutionaries can employ the tactic of critical electoral support to a bourgeois workers party in order to destroy such illusions. But such a tactic is automatically excluded when the SPD comes out openly for a coalition with bourgeois parties such as the FDP.

### No to the phoney 'lesser evil'!

The appetites of the successors to the Extra-Parliamentary Opposition [West German New Left] -- more and more occupied with pasting up election posters for the Greens -- are expressed openly by the pseudo-Trotskyist Gruppe Internationale Marxisten (GIM, West German section of Ernest Mandel's United Secretariat). The GIM is waging a campaign for a 'new left majority' com-

posed of 'Greens, Rainbows, socialists' organised in a single electoral slate to 'put pressure on an SPD government and tolerate it as opposed to a CDU/CSU-led government' (*Was Tun*, 30 September 1982). The GIM's programme today simply means calling for a new popular front, in which Count Otto von Lambsdorff and his austerity programme will be exchanged for little Lambsdorffs in lavender overalls offering austerity ... with trees. The Greens, deeply anti-proletarian prophets of zero growth, who have a genuinely bourgeois component, would probably have won the sympathy of Morgenthau [postwar US Secretary of the Treasury] with his plans to turn Germany into a gigantic potato field after World War II.

The Kommunistischer Bund (KB, Communist League) goes even further in suggesting a 'reform bloc' which 'can only come into existence when there are massive breaks and splits in the SPD and FDP' (*Arbeiterkampf*, 20 September 1982). A split of the FDP? Since when do communists have a tactic of splitting bourgeois parties? Does the KB really have the perspective of splitting the bankers and businessmen that finance the FDP from their 'treacherous' leadership?

In contrast to the various open appendages of the Social Democracy, the Marxistische Gruppe (MG, Marxist Group) was able to create a leftist image with its anti-NATO demonstrations during Brezhnev's and Reagan's visits to Bonn. Their answer to the change in government is 'No sympathy for the SPD!' but the contradictory character of the SPD as a bourgeois workers party remains impenetrable to the MG's idealist worldview. Lacking a strategic orientation to winning leadership of the working class, the anti-Marxist Group regarded the October 23 trade-union demonstration as nothing but an electoral mobilisation for the SPD. While capitulating to the class collaboration and nationalism of the SPD along with the rest of the 'peace' movement, on the other hand it refuses to have anything to do with the Social Democratic workers. With its petty-bourgeois disdain for the conquests of the working class ('Thirty years of the DGB are enough' -- a slogan that would meet with approval from Strauss) the MG has set sail on a dangerously anti-proletarian course.

### For a Trotskyist party!

No variant of the policy of pressuring the SPD will stop the reactionary Strauss. The ostensible leftists, the 'peace' movement and the Social Democrats who are now looking around for a new home can bring forth only a nationalist, anti-proletarian and anti-Soviet popular front that will strengthen the hegemony of the SPD over the German proletariat. And this in a world in which the alternatives of revolutionary communism or unbelievable barbarism are being posed ever more sharply.

As workers at giant monopolies such as AEG face mass layoffs and factory shutdowns they must directly challenge capitalist property and the bosses' supposed 'right' to throw thousands onto the street. A workers' occupation of a major factory could signal factory takeovers throughout West Germany, igniting mass strikes that would unleash the mighty power of the trade unions in a counter-offensive of the entire working class. To counter the treacherous DGB leadership's fake call for a 35-hour week (in the indefinite future) communist fractions in the trade unions would demand strikes now to fight for 30 hours work for 40 hours pay. For a sliding scale of wages and hours, to divide the available work among all available hands! A fight for this demand would foil the attempts to drive a wedge between workers, German and foreign, male and female, employed and unemployed. Equal pay for equal work! It's the same class, the same struggle, work for all! A programme for socially useful public works under trade-union control at union wages must be won. For

continued on page 10

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Reagens  
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Flasko... 8

# German elections...

(Continued from page 9)

full index-linked pay and big pay rises!

Realisation of these demands is possible only in the framework of a comprehensive economic plan resting on the expropriation without compensation of the banks, commerce and industry. That requires a workers government -- not the SPD in Bonn but a revolutionary workers government resting on the organised might of the proletariat expressed in organs of workers democracy. In West Germany the fight for a workers government -- the dictatorship of the proletariat -- is inseparable from the task of the revolutionary reunification of Germany. The West German proletariat should look to the East German workers as allies in the struggle for socialist revolution in the West and political revolution to overthrow the bureaucracy in the East.

Militant class struggle is necessary -- not

subordination to reformist traitors and bourgeois parliamentarians. Only Trotskyism has a programme and a perspective that opens a future for the German proletariat. Only the Trotskyists tell the truth about the SPD and refuse support to any form of bourgeois coalition politics. The powerful German working class -- with its strategic component of foreign workers -- must fight for and win its class independence. It must draw the lessons from the results of the SPD's coalition politics: it must take up the struggle for a Trotskyist workers party capable of splitting the SPD and breaking its stranglehold on the organised workers.

The inter-imperialist conflict over the pipeline deal is a powerful confirmation of the perspective already pointed to by Leon Trotsky during World War I: the fight for the United Socialist States of Europe. The obvious need for the gas pipeline, even in the face of capitalist irrationality and the mismanagement of the Kremlin bureaucracy, is a foretaste of the possibilities a planned economy would open up: employing all

the labour power, technical and natural resources from the Siberian tundra to the Iberian peninsula. But this perspective requires an implacable fight to break the proletariat from the social-imperialist, anti-Soviet nationalism of the SPD.

Twenty million Soviet workers and peasants died in the Second World War beating back the onslaught of German imperialism. The German proletariat has the power to see that they didn't die in vain and ensure that the peoples of East Europe do not have to again fear this rapacious monster. We fight for the revolutionary reunification of Germany, proletarian revolution to overthrow the bourgeoisie in the West and political revolution against the Stalinist bureaucracy in the East. A workers Germany, establishing the rule of soviets in the industrial powerhouse of Europe, would be the spark for a revolutionary uprising of the proletariat on the entire continent, opening the possibility of a rational planned economy in a socialist United States of Europe. ■

# San Salvador...

(Continued from page 3)

supposed to be a defence against an attack by a 'Red Army' regiment from the mythical country of 'Corinth', whose real identity was a mystery to no one. The manoeuvres included a parachute drop of 600 Honduran troops to lift a siege at Mocoron, which just happens to be a major *contra* base of operations. Also included was a mock amphibious assault on the Honduran port of Puerto Lempira (whose physical layout is remarkably similar to the Nicaraguan Atlantic town of Puerto Cabezas, just 60 miles down the coast).

These joint operations are part of a general step-up of US military activity in the region. The American destroyer USS *William Pratt* put in a 'goodwill call' to show the flag at Puerto Limon in Costa Rica. And in Panama a major military exercise codenamed 'Kindle Liberty' began on February 10, allegedly to defend the canal. In response the Sandinista Defence Committees (CDS) organised some 30,000 people to march to the US embassy in Managua to protest the provocative US/Honduran military show of force. But a far larger crowd (100,000) was turned out to greet the ministerial conference of the Non-Aligned Movement on January 12. The great accomplishment of this allegedly 'anti-imperialist' body was to pass a resolution watered down to exclude any direct criticism of the US for its campaign of destabilisation and aggression against Nicaragua!

The battle for Nicaragua has not been decided. The armed forces of the Somoza dictatorship led by the Sandinistas entered Managua. But the petty-bourgeois FSLN is not committed to the defence of either proletarian or capitalist property forms. The Reagan administration seems determined to push Nicaragua down the Cuban road, despite the Sandinistas' avowal of a 'middle road'. Former Sandinista leader Eden Pastora ('Comandante Zero') and Nicaragua's 'democratic' capitalist Alfonso Robelo (a member of the post-Somoza ruling junta and good friend of Washington) are conspiring in San Jose, Costa Rica. And with 60 per cent of the Nicaraguan economy in the hands of private businessmen, and the governing apparatus shot through with bourgeois elements, there is a powerful pro-capitalist 'fifth column' at work. An effective defence against the all-sided counterrevolutionary onslaught requires the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, and a drive to spread socialist revolution throughout Central America.

## Break with the popular front -- For workers revolution!

In the midst of the spectacular battlefield gains in El Salvador, FDR spokesman Ruben Zamora held a press conference in Washington on January 19 to call for 'unconditional negotiations'. He made clear that the Salvadoran opposition coalition does not seek to win the war but to end it. According to a report in the *US Guardian* (5 February):

'... Zamora cautioned that the FMLN is not trying to achieve a military victory in El Salvador, because the country's problems must be "solved through dialog, through negotiation, and not ... a military solution". To win only in a military sense, could mean "to lose in the end". One purpose of military pressure is to insure that the U.S. administration eventually will accept a negotiated solution that gives the rebel forces a share of the power.'

There have been numerous other statements by FDR/FMLN leaders confirming that their programme is indeed one of 'military pressure'. Most recently, in the town of Corinto (Morazan), currently controlled by the rebels, Comandante

Miguel of the Resistencia Nacional group reportedly told a rally, 'At any moment we are prepared to lay down our arms and end this war' (*Washington Post*, 25 January).

For the Salvadoran working masses and the guerrilla fighters who have already shed so much blood fighting to liberate their people from the rule of a rapacious oligarchy and their jack-booted killers, this would mean disaster. But for the liberal bourgeois and petty-bourgeois politicians of the FDR/FMLN the purpose of the struggle is to achieve some cabinet seats for themselves, so they can forestall the brewing social revolution by legislating reforms. Military victory -- the destruction of the butcher army, the core of the capitalist state apparatus -- is necessary in order to open the way to the overthrow of bourgeois rule. Where would Nicaragua be today, for instance, if the attempted last minute 'negotiated settlement' had taken hold and the National Guard were intact (purged of a few of the more notorious mass murderers)? Pro-imperialist elements like Robelo and Pastora would be sitting in power in Managua instead of cooling their heels in Costa Rica.

The Robelos and Pastoras of El Salvador are at the very top of the FDR/FMLN. These are the shadows of the Salvadoran bourgeoisie, whose role in the popular-front coalition is to act as guarantors of capitalist rule. (Dr Guillermo Ungo's predecessor as head of the FDR, Enrique Alvarez Cordova, was a scion of one of the '14 families', the coffee barons who have ruled the country for the last century). And the opposition has repeatedly held out the offer of an alliance with Napoleon Duarte's Christian Democrats. (Butcher Duarte was the head of the murderous junta for the first two years of the present civil war!) But the answer is not simply to dump the Ungos and Zamoras. The entire FDR/FMLN popular front is pledged to the programme of reforming (and saving) Salvadoran capitalism. The real force for revolution throughout Central America is the working class. And it is notable that throughout the last offensive, from October 1982 to the present, the leftist rebels have not attempted any kind of actions by the workers in San Salvador or elsewhere. Moreover, both of the significant setbacks suffered by the FMLN (the failed general/'final' offensive of January 1981, and the regime's phony elections of March 1982) were

due to the fact that no systematic effort was made to rouse the urban masses. Yet the Salvadoran proletariat has not been passive and apolitical. On the contrary, it was a series of general strikes and mass demonstrations during 1978-80 that laid the basis for the present struggle. These were met with bloody repression. But rather than being defeated, the militancy of the Salvadoran masses was dissipated in an endless series of actions lacking any strategy for a revolutionary working-class seizure of power.

Already some of the imperialist press is predicting a government defeat in El Salvador. The *Baltimore Sun* (1 February) quotes a 'Western source' saying that by midyear, 'The army will be intact in the barracks, but the guerrillas will control the countryside.' Nevertheless, the battle of San Salvador is key, and in this the combative Salvadoran workers are decisive. Even in spite of the present bourgeois popular-front leadership of the left, an urban insurrection could develop into a revolutionary crisis. As workers seized the factories and besieged the barracks, a revolutionary communist leadership would be the fundamental element for victory. A Leninist-Trotskyist party, built on the programme of permanent revolution, would seek to mobilise the masses for the formation of soviets, as the organisational basis for a proletarian revolution and a workers and peasants government.

The Trotskyists are intransigent opponents of a negotiated sellout, and of the reformist capitalist programme which leads to it. Where the FDR/FMLN calls for maintaining 'free enterprise', we call for expropriation of the bourgeoisie (not just the aristocratic oligarchy). Where the FDR/FMLN calls for implementing the land reform decreed by the Christian Democratic-military junta, communists call for agrarian revolution -- seize the haciendas! And unlike the petty-bourgeois nationalists, who dream of a 'Free El Salvador' in cooperation with an 'enlightened' US imperialism, a Trotskyist party would seek to spread socialist revolution to all corners of the region. This could transform Central America from Uncle Sam's back yard into the vital link uniting socialist revolution throughout the Americas.

Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 323, 11 February 1983



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# Miners...

(Continued from page 12)

National Executive meeting. If McGahey and the CP spent half as much energy working for effective all-out strike action as they did getting the TUC bureaucrats to endorse their diversionary and class-collaborationist People's March it would be a considerable advance.

Scargill and McGahey are vocal proponents of import controls and government subsidies to 'protect' the jobs of British miners. Artificially propping up decayed and uncompetitive British industry through import controls won't save any jobs in the not-very-long run, including in the mines. But more important, import controls help tie the workers to the interests of their 'own' capitalists -- they feed the kind of reactionary nationalism being used to attack oppressed minorities and build the anti-Soviet war drive today, and set British workers against workers abroad. Right now French miners are striking to save their jobs and livelihoods. What is needed is international solidarity and a strike alongside them, not a battle against them over capitalist markets. And spending time discussing (like the CP's *Morning Star*) whether it costs more to subsidise a Welsh miner or someone on the dole or how West Germany provides a larger subsidy to its coal industry than Britain is a futile and servile pro-capitalist exercise. The point is to get rid of this anarchic, crisis-wracked capitalist system, not waste time trying to figure out how to make it work better.

## We need workers rule in Britain!

In this century British miners have fought two great struggles. In 1926 they led the way in the General Strike only to see it betrayed by the TUC leadership. This struggle could have sparked social revolution in Britain; instead its betrayal helped pave the way for the misery and unemployment of the thirties.

Again in 1972-74 the miners were in the forefront, this time inflicting a massive defeat on the Tories and the plans of the capitalist class to foist its crisis onto the backs of the workers. But the struggle was diverted and channelled into putting the Wilson/Callaghan Labour government into the bosses' parliament. And what did Labour do once lifted into office? Attack the workers: unemployment still grew, workers' unions were still attacked and miners' jobs still disappeared, including when Tony Benn was Energy Minister. Miners know that Labour's 'nationalisation equals socialism' is a cruel joke. When it comes down to it, the reformist Labour Party will always bow to the bankers and bosses. Just changing the government at Westminster will never remove the threat that miners and other workers face.

British capitalism today is in deep crisis. Thatcher and the Tories are turning whole regions of the country (like South Wales) into industrial deserts and making living conditions ever worse even for those in work. And they want to emasculate the unions and avenge their defeats of 1972-74. The first major opportunity to stop them came with the national steel strike of 1980. A large share of responsibility for the isolation of the steelmen rests on the leadership of the NUM, who sat on a threatened South Wales strike for months to avoid joint action. In Yorkshire, Arthur Scargill refused to fight for his men to come out in joint strike action alongside the steelworkers and indeed sanctioned the movement of steel in mining areas, thus directly undermining the strike.

Today the miners have the chance to spearhead a struggle to turn it all around. If they don't fight or are beaten it will be a green light for the capitalists to continue and deepen their attacks. But if the miners and their allies respond with a solid counteroffensive, the Thatcher government and the ruling class can be stopped in their tracks and thrown back. Such a fight could lead to the general strike that some militant miners are already talking about. Beside this prospect, and the deep and

felt needs of the British working masses, the Labourite preoccupation with parliamentary by-elections in Bermondsey and Darlington and the coming general election is trivial and abject. Pathetic talk about another pro-capitalist Labour government solves nothing: Miners and other workers need not a different bourgeois government in parliament but the overthrow of the entire capitalist system through socialist revolution.

A successful miners strike today could open up new possibilities for the working class. But success in the class struggle requires a fight to break the stranglehold of the Labour/trade union bureaucracy. The misleaders of the working class, including the 'left' leaders of the NUM, must be ousted and replaced with a new revolutionary, class-struggle leadership. With the construction of a Leninist vanguard party, rooted firmly in the trade unions and among the oppressed and based on a programme of proletarian socialist revolution, the road will be opened to the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a workers government, a Soviet Britain in a Socialist United States of Europe.

- For a national miners strike now!
- Shut it down hard and spread the strike! Remember Saltley Gates -- For mass pickets to shut the power stations and blockade the stockpiles! Bring out steel, rail, power workers!
- No sackings! No to import controls! Fight for jobs for all through work sharing on full pay -- Thirty hours work for forty hours pay and a sliding scale of wages to meet inflation!
- Smash the Tebbit bills and all Tory anti-union attacks!
- Break the Labour/TUC stranglehold! Oust the bureaucrats, 'left' and right! Make this a struggle like 1972-74 -- but not to end with another Labour government of betrayal in Westminster! For a workers government to expropriate the bourgeoisie!
- Forward to a revolutionary leadership in the trade unions and a Leninist vanguard party to lead the socialist revolution!

# Free class-war prisoners in Turkey!

In the thirty months since the NATO junta of General Evren seized power in Turkey, vowing to crush political terrorism and end economic chaos, an intensified reign of terror and brutal torture has been unleashed against workers, the oppressed Kurdish minority and leftist organisations. Torture of political prisoners has been so widespread and savage that even West European bourgeois governments that originally hailed the coup began telling the generals to clean up their act if they wanted to keep getting their loans. Partly in an attempt to establish international credibility, last November Evren stage-managed a referendum to rubber-stamp a new constitution which 'legalises' the repression of workers and national minorities and suppression of virtually all political dissent. In the five months since, eighteen people have been executed by the now 'constitutional' junta butchers. And immediately after the referendum, cheered as a 'step towards democracy' by their NATO patrons, the junta reopened the mass show trial of 72 leaders of the outlawed Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions (DISK), who face execution alongside hundreds of other class-war prisoners.

Begun in December 1981 with 52 defendants, the DISK trial was delayed because the military authorities tried to gather evidence linking DISK with the pro-Moscow Turkish Communist Party (TKP), which itself has been outlawed since 1923. Jailed for over a year with virtually no legal rights before the trial began, the DISK leaders are charged with seeking to 'overthrow the established constitutional order'. In April 1982 the former chief defence lawyer for the DISK defendants was also arrested.

Among the many other trade-union activists and Kurdish leftists currently in the hands of the military butchers are 689 miners charged last April with 'illegally' striking the Yeni Celtik mine five months before the generals' coup. The death sentence has been demanded for 64 of them, including the chairman of Yeralti Maden-Is (Underground Mine Workers Union), the union which organised the occupation/strike of the mine to counter a closure threat in April 1980. On the day of the coup, the army moved in to arrest the strikers, gunning down any who tried to escape. The torture to which the im-

prisoned workers were subjected before their trial was so brutal, in many cases resulting in severe paralysis, that the junta did not even attempt to deny the defendants' courtroom protests that their 'confessions' had been exacted under torture. Instead, all those who had protested in court were taken back to the military barracks and tortured by other means: their families were brought to the prison and beaten before their eyes; their wives, sisters and daughters raped in front of them by prison guards.

In another mass trial, 759 people are being charged with having participated in a left-controlled municipal government in the town of Fatsa, which was smashed by the army even before the coup. The death sentence is being demanded for 261 of them. In addition, 572 members of the Guevarist Dev Yol (Revolutionary Way) are still on trial, 184 of them facing the death penalty. In a trial in Eastern Turkey, 99 of the 578 members of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in the dock also face the threat of execution.

Even outside Turkey -- in Australia, Lebanon and elsewhere -- the murderous junta has spread its tentacles to hunt down left-wing militants. In West Germany, where the two million Turkish workers and other foreign workers face racist victimisation, deportations and all-sided attacks, collaboration with the Turkish regime has been particularly invidious. Despite occasional mutters against the junta's 'excesses', particularly over its treatment of bourgeois luminaries like RPP leader Bulent Ecevit, the West German regime is firmly committed to suppressing any threat to the stability of its massive investments in Turkey. In late January the Kohl government outlawed two left-wing Turkish organisations, Dev Sol and Halk Der, staging dark-of-night police raids against their offices on the same day as a visit by the Turkish foreign minister.

German minister of the interior Friedrich Zimmermann didn't mince words in justifying his terrorist action: 'Activities threatening security' by groups like Dev Sol were 'increasingly' directed 'against aspects of German policy ... against the Federal Republic as NATO-partner of Turkey, against German military and economic aid to Ankara, and against its foreign policy' (*Sud-*

*deutsche Zeitung*, 10 February). Our comrades of the Troztkistische Liga Deutschlands have actively combatted these vile attacks against leftists from Turkey, demanding: 'Down with the ban! Defend Dev Sol/Halk Der through class action! Stop the witchhunt against foreigners! Full citizenship rights for foreign workers and their families! German workers, foreign workers: same class, same struggle!' (see *Spartakist* no 46, March 1983).

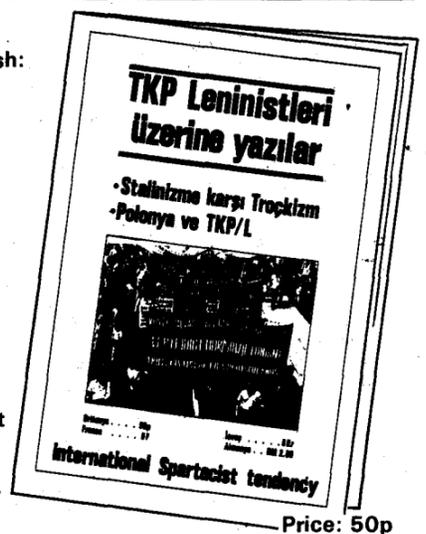
It is only through class struggle in Turkey and international class solidarity abroad that the NATO junta will be defeated. For NATO imperialism, Turkey is strategic as a military bastion on the Baltic flank of the USSR. The left and labour movement internationally must demand immediate release of the DISK leaders and all prisoners opposed to the junta and the ultrarightist gangs. Trade unions must black all military aid to the junta as an act of international solidarity with the workers and peasant peasants of Turkey under the gun. Free all class-war prisoners. -- Unchain DISK! Down with NATO! Down with the NATO junta! For a workers and peasants government in Turkey! ■

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# SPARTACIST

## BRITAIN

## Dump Thatcher!

# Miners: Strike to win!

March 7 -- The South Wales miners strike called over the proposed closure of the Ty Mawr-Lewis Merthyr pit now threatens to spark the first country-wide walkout of the National Union of Mineworkers since 1974. Within days of the South Wales shutdown on February 28, strike action had snowballed. Kent's Betteshanger and mines in Derbyshire came out in support, while Yorkshire, Kent and Scotland voted to strike on March 7. Yet the NUM National Executive, meeting on March 3, decided to postpone once again the possibility of effective action by holding a national ballot on strike action in five days' time.

But a strike is still posed, and is a *burning necessity*. The miners must immediately come out on an all-out national strike. Every delay only aids and abets the National Coal Board and the Tory government. The issues posed are far broader than one mine, one region or one industry. The Tories would like to crush the miners whose militancy and organisation is a key obstacle to their ambitions to drive down even further the living standards of the working class. To evade this struggle today would only embolden them to step up their attacks aimed at still further lengthening the dole queues, shackling the unions and preparing for imperialist war against the Soviet Union. The NUM could lead a fight that would wreck the capitalists' plans and finish the hated Thatcher government.

The NCB of course has a 'hit list'. The ruling class demands that the miners should suffer the same fate as the steelworkers. Thatcher's plan to appoint steel boss Ian MacGregor to the NCB is a declaration of this intent, but remember that MacGregor only got to sack more than 70,000 steelworkers after the 1980 steel strike was isolated and defeated. In any case, the question is not MacGregor but what he represents. The Tories are out to do a job on the workers whoever the government appoints. The workers' task is to stop them.

### Blockade stockpiles, picket the power stations, spread the strike!

A miners strike ought to be brutally effective, fast. The miners should not stop at closing the mines and stopping the movement of coal. The bosses are emitting smug noises about large stockpiles, oil gluts and the like. The in-

fluential *Economist* (5 March) even says that 'the best outcome would be long strikes in pits in the areas of the country which make the biggest losses' with a 'new and possibly competitive industry' starting up in the autumn. But, it adds, 'the worst outcome would be illegal picketing of power stations as in 1972 and 1974'.

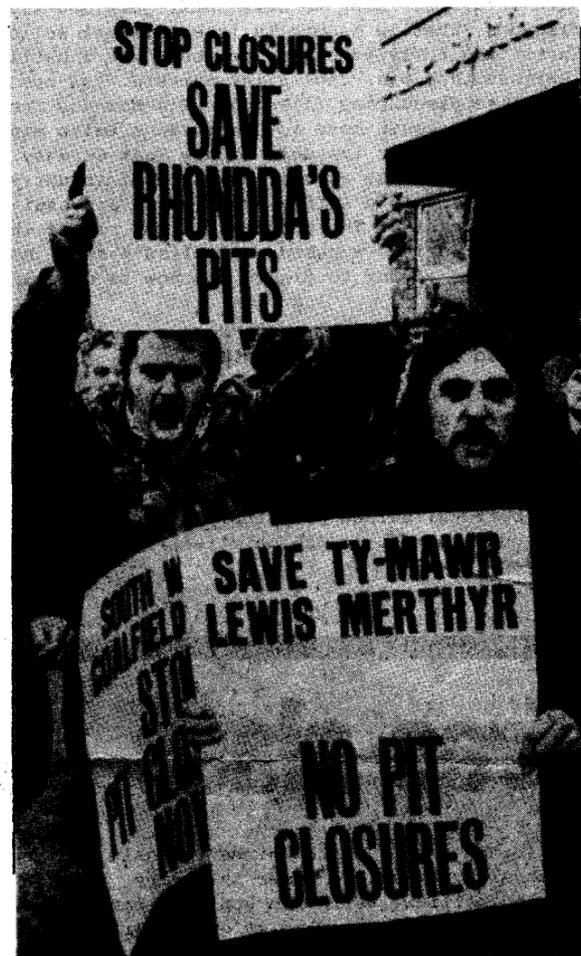
A lot of good these reserves will be if they can't be moved and can't be used. Don't wait for stocks to run down. Hit the stockpiles and the power stations with *mass picketing* like Saltley Gates in 1972. Set up picket lines that nothing and nobody crosses! Given a powerful lead, millions would be ready to join them. For one, the four million unemployed can provide ready and willing auxiliaries to the miners' flying pickets. Unemployed black, Asian and white youth from Brixton, Toxteth and Glasgow and elsewhere and the unemployed veterans of the 1980 steel strike would welcome the perspective of a fightback.

Yes, black coal up and down the country, as the South Wales strikers have already demanded. But the powerworkers and the railwaymen, who face their own job losses, should be brought out alongside the NUM. It is not a matter simply of solidarity action, but an all-out battle to fight the attacks on jobs, wages and working conditions in rail, steel and elsewhere. What is needed is a strike to win -- and win big! The steel industry is a primary user of coal and steelworkers have a score to settle with Thatcher and MacGregor. Get the steelworkers out too! Make this a fight not just to save the present jobs in the mines but a classwide battle for work for all. Spread the strike, and broaden it around the demand for work sharing on full pay to fight unemployment! Thirty hours work for forty hours pay, and a sliding scale of wages to meet inflation!

Thatcher and Tebbit's anti-union legislation says mass picketing and solidarity strikes are illegal. Smarting from even the small gains the waterworkers wrung from their bosses, they now want to bring in more legislation to ban the right to strike in essential and nationalised industries. And the police, hired thugs of the capitalist state, have been primed to stop any pickets they consider 'illegal' (that is, effective). Mass pickets, not just a handful of miners outside coal depots and power stations, can soon turn that into a dead letter. All the parliamentary readings and royal assents in the world will not be worth the paper they're printed on, if the miners do what is necessary to win. They have to take on the Thatcher government. They should give Margaret Thatcher the Edward Heath treatment!

### Victory to the miners! All out now!

The strike in South Wales began because miners in one threatened pit took action themselves. The South Wales Executive had dropped an earlier strike call in January, and tried to procrastinate with a ballot when the Ty Mawr-Lewis Merthyr men occupied their pit. And now with Wales out solid the NUM National Executive is pursuing a course



that threatens to divide and demoralise the membership.

Angry Welsh miners lobbying the March 3 Executive meeting denounced their leaders, including president Arthur Scargill and the South Wales delegates, for caving in to the clamour from Fleet Street and the right wing and voting unanimously to suspend or postpone all strikes outside South Wales until after the ballot. The NUM already has a policy, voted at the 1982 Inverness conference, for strike action against closures. It should have been implemented, on the picket lines, *now!* As one bitter Welsh striker put it, some people want the miners to keep balloting until they get the result *they* want.

Arthur Scargill earned his reputation at Saltley Gates and as a leader of militant Yorkshire miners, and claims he was elected to stop pit closures. Why then was he so quiet when the Welsh miners first went out? Why has he been offering an agreement for a two-month trial working period at Ty Mawr-Lewis Merthyr to the NCB? Instead of just talking about how the strike 'could spread like wildfire', while in practise letting the Welsh miners hang with procrastinating ballots, a fighting national leadership would be travelling up and down the country with combative contingents of strikers to bring all miners out immediately.

It is fear of being left in the lurch to fight in isolation, not an unwillingness to fight, which leads some miners to hesitate. Scottish (and Welsh) miners remember how Scottish NUM president and Communist Party (CP) leader Mick McGahey betrayed the Kinneil miners last December with lame pleadings that it was 'not the time' and 'the men weren't ready'. And this time he wanted to leave the decision to each pit to decide. 'Remember what they did at Kinneil ... they'll sell us out again', growled Welsh strikers at the lobby of the March 3

*continued on page 11*



February 1981: angry Wales and Kent miners lobbying NUM Executive meeting denounce Arthur Scargill as 'scab' for refusing to call his men out alongside them. Placard reads: 'No sellout, stay out!'