

# SPARTACIST



No 60

August 1984

20p/10p to strikers

BRITAIN

## Reverse the docks sellout! Rail, transport: strike now!

# Break the bosses' siege!



Miners defend Welsh NUM office against Tory government's sequestration order.

The barbed wire outside South Wales NUM headquarters in Pontypridd sums up the state of siege in the five-month-old war between the miners and the government. After last month's waltzing around by NUM leaders with the NCB in futile negotiations, both sides have now dug in once again for a long war. While Thatcher rails against 'the enemy within', seeking to evoke her infamous 'Falklands factor' against the miners, the NUM is set to convene another delegate conference on 10 August to 'expand and intensify' the strike.

With the docks strike over, the bosses are again baying loudly for miners' blood. The court decision to sequester South Wales NUM assets is yet another indication of the ruling class' resolve to stop at nothing short of breaking this powerful union -- and making an example of it to the rest of the trade union movement. Not coincidentally, it came at the same time as the courts fined the NGA a £125,000 award to union-buster Eddie Shah. But the NUM is not lying down and playing dead. To a crowd of 2000 miners from all parts of the country who surrounded the NUM offices in Pontypridd in a demonstration of solidarity on 1 August, area president Emlyn Williams proclaimed: 'There is not a crack in the ranks of the miners. The South Wales miners will stand. Our colleagues in other coalfields will stand with us. There is no going back. There is no surrender. We fight, we win or we die in the attempt.'

*The miners must not stand alone!* The only way to win is by bringing other unions out on strike and pushing forward to the general strike this country needs to reverse years of union-bashing, falling living standards, across-the-board attacks on black and Asian minorities, the NHS, the Labour councils, you name it. But the labour misleaders refuse to act -- in the face of the greatest opportunity in years and the greatest threat in many decades. We say: Spread the strike -- Break the strikebreakers! Hands off union funds! NGA: Not a penny to Shah -- Shut down Fleet Street! Rail, transport: Reverse the docks sellout -- Strike with the miners now!

For ten days last month, the possibility hung in the air of bringing a rapid end to the Tory rampage against the miners ... and to the Tory government itself. It was a powerful vindication of the Spartacist League's insistence on the necessity to spread the strike. The national dockers' strike, the first in a dozen years, was bringing the whole country to a standstill. The seamen were blacking cross-Channel cargo. Railway blacking was finally starting to bite. Thatcher was invoking a threat of troops and a state of emergency. But the Iron Lady, and the ruling class behind her, were deeply rattled by the entry of the strategic dockers in a 'second front'. The day the dockers went out, Thatcher got slapped in the face by the High Court ruling against the ban on trade unions at GCHO Cheltenham and then came the galling compromise with the Militant-led Liverpool Labour council. A general strike was on the cards -- not only to defend organised labour against the Tories' threat of strikebreaking by the army, but a

Spartacist Britain



Docks' union leaders wrapping up their treacherous sellout.

golden opportunity to get this hated government when it was down.

It was not a matter of putting a vote to Len Murray's General Council, but of immediate strike calls by those unions who claim to support the miners and oppose Murray's strike-breaking Cold War 'new realism', bringing out rail and all transport, laying a powerful basis to shut down steel through mass pickets and appeals over the head of the vile 'Sir' Sirs. A special *Spartacist Britain* supplement (16 July) distributed by the thousands throughout the coalfields, to dockers, steelworkers and railwaymen, was headlined, 'Shut down the country!' And we offered a road forward:

'A revived, fighting version of the Triple Alliance is the way to organise a general strike now, around the following concrete demands:

- Victory to the miners! Smash the Tory anti-union rampage! Smash the attack on the dockers' union!
- No more redundancies! Not one job lost in coal, rail, steel and the docks!
- No more denationalisations!
- For a 10 per cent wage rise across the board linked to full cost-of-living indexing!

Instead the dockers went back with nothing more in hand than paper assurances from the port employers' association to slap the scabherders on the wrist. When a *Spartacist Britain* reporter asked an impassive John Connolly, TGWU dockers' head, at the press conference about leaving the miners on their own again, he whined, 'We've got every feeling for the miners in their dispute', adding, 'There was no coordinated action between ourselves and the miners'.

Too true! From beginning to end, the TGWU leaders insisted that the dockers' defence against the port employers' scabherding attack on the National Dock Labour Scheme had nothing to do with the miners strike. The TUC 'lefts' did nothing -- frightened to death of the class explosion they might unleash by taking the simple steps within their grasp necessary to defeat the

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# Yes, Solidarnosc is anti-socialist!

That's what we said after last year's Blackpool TUC conference in defence of Arthur Scargill against the witchhunt by the Russia-hating, strikebreaking 'new realist' mob of Len Murray, Kate Losinska and Co. The anti-Communist witchhunt of Scargill, triggered by the Qaddafi-loving so-called Workers Revolutionary Party, foreshadowed the Tory onslaught against the NUM a few months later. And if any further evidence were needed of what this Polish company union for the CIA and the imperialist bankers stands for, it comes in a 29 July interview with Lech Walesa in the *Sunday Mirror*, entitled 'Why Scargill is wrong -- by Lech'.

Sitting under a portrait of Reagan's favourite pope, John Paul Wojtyla, 'Lech' explains to *Sunday Mirror* reporter Robert Eringer how 'much respect' he has for the Iron Lady -- the feeling is no doubt mutual. 'With such a wise and brave woman, Britain will find a solution to the strike.' And as though the script had been written by one of Thatcher's speechwriters, Walesa launched into the now customary diatribe about the miners' 'violence': 'I disagree with any violence. The workers should demand the maximum but not at the risk of bankrupting the employer.'

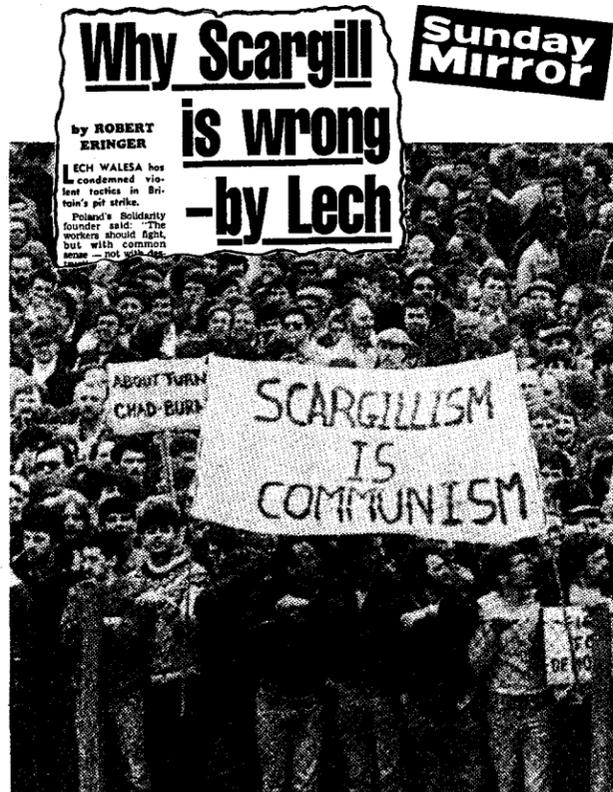
At the beginning of the strike we observed that Scargill, unlike most of the Labour/TUC leaders or for that matter the so-called revolutionaries, could at least spot a scab in Poland as well as in Notts. And indeed anyone who wants a close-up view of what Solidarnosc might look like need look no further than the army of scabs centred in Notts. The imperialists have already given Walesa the Nobel 'peace' prize for his services; maybe now Thatcher ought to send him the 'Silver Birch' award.

In response to the vile scabbing by the Polish Stalinist bureaucracy, the Solidarnosc-loving fake revolutionaries -- from the Socialist Workers Party to Socialist Action, Socialist Organiser, Militant and Workers Power -- all began whimpering how things would have been 'different' if Solidarnosc were in power in Poland. In the 7 July *Socialist Worker*, Paul Foot (who

divides his copy between *Socialist Worker* and the Fleet Street's *Mirror*, with no difference in political content) even had a column claiming Solidarnosc was backing the British miners all the way. Well, Paul certainly stuck his foot in his mouth this time. Unlike the Cold War 'socialists', we Trotskyists unconditionally defend the degenerated/deformed workers states against imperialism and counterrevolution, recognising that what is needed to oust the scabherding Stalinist bureaucracies is proletarian political revolution.

Not that you needed Walesa's latest state-

ment to know that Solidarnosc was in the camp of Reagan and Thatcher (that's what the SWP calls their 'third camp'). During the strike of American air traffic controllers a few years ago, almost every major trade union federation in the world solidarised with the strikers -- except Polish Solidarity. It's no accident that the trade union bureaucrats who most openly stab the miners in the back, like Bill Sirs, Len Murray and Frank Chapple, are also the greatest Russia-haters and lovers of Solidarnosc. You can't defend the unions if you don't defend the Soviet Union! ■



Brothers under the skin: anti-communist scabs in Notts, anti-communist Solidarnosc in Poland.



## Workers Power hits the pits

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The following is an edited version of a report submitted by two comrades on a Workers Power (WP) public meeting held in Sheffield 11 July, the first day of the NUM delegate conference. Thanks only to workers democracy being guaranteed by the striking miners present, this was the first time in two years of bureaucratic exclusionism that WP did not bar our supporters from one of its 'public' meetings. The reason for this exclusionism is clear from this report -- WP's fear of Trotskyist exposure of its rotten centrist politics. For all its phrasemongering about a general strike to be called by open strikebreaker Len Murray, with the dockers out alongside the miners actually threatening to shut down the country, WP's general strike rhetoric faded into oblivion.

When we tried to go upstairs from the pub to WP's meeting room, a WP supporter blocked the staircase and said, 'You can't come up.' We explained to a group of miners from Durham and Notts gathered in the pub that this was because we would let the cat out of the bag about WP's line on the ballot and its faith in Murray. Another WP supporter came down to invite the miners, who asked, 'What's this about not letting these two lasses in?' He replied that we 'break up meetings'. The miners looked at us, then at one another, smiled and said, 'We'll vouch for them.' So up we went, two of us and ten miners.

WP had conveniently displayed their papers in the room, so we bought the issues with the ballot line, underlined the relevant passages and passed them around. WP leader Keith Hassell did his best to give a presentation. Every minute or two some miner would interrupt with an addition, a correction, or would start to argue with him. Hassell outlined two main points: the change to rule 51 (to expel scabs) and the negotiations. He was pathetic. He argued for expelling the Notts scabs -- Notts strikers interjected, 'scabs from every area'. He talked of 20 buses being laid on in Durham to drive scabs to work -- Durham miners yelled '200 buses'. And so it went. Hassell argued that, if not expelled, 'working miners, or scabs as they are called [sic!] ... will be able to exercise their constitutional right [!] to influence the course of the strike'. Having sounded very wimpy, he tried

to get up a head of steam over MacGregor's letter -- 'make MacGregor shove that bit of paper down his throat'. A miner shouted, 'Up his arse, don't mind down his throat.' Hassell drew a breath and soldiered on, amidst belching, heckling and laughing.

Then he said he was going to be 'controversial' and started talking about Scargill: 'As a speaker he is magic, and there can be absolutely no doubt about his sincerity.' But Scargill is unable to control the right wing and keep them from selling out -- what was needed was a 'rank and file sort of organisation'. He made several petty and absurd attacks on Scargill, completely devoid of political substance, which further enraged the audience. There was no mention of the general strike (even their leaflet for the NUM conference hardly mentioned it) -- after all, with the dockers out it was now a real question. He called for joint pickets of miners and dockers. And nothing on the ballot question.

By the end of the presentation about four guys had their hands up ready to speak. These guys had picked up how right wing WP was in practice, and boy did they hate the abstract blah-blah. The first one to speak said, 'You're trying to say we're not fighting hard enough.' The next speaker, from Notts, said: 'I want to talk about this ballot job.' He waved their paper in the air, then chucked it on the floor in anger. He made a powerful and emotive speech against the ballot -- 'We don't mind voting on wages and things like that, but we have no right to vote on jobs because that's our future and our children's future.' He got applause. WP supporter Andy Smith got up to give the 'left' version of their ballot line -- against a bosses' ballot -- but did not mention what they are for. It just didn't wash.

After him the miners told them to take me (I'd had my hand up from the start). I said the Spartacist League disagreed with two things WP stood for in the strike. Smith had been dishonest in pretending they weren't for a ballot; I read the extract from their paper. I pointed out that it had nothing to do with 'democracy', but with strikebreaking. Then I argued against their reliance on Murray to call a general strike, asking 'Is there anyone in the room who believes that Murray will come to the aid of the

miners after the NGA and GCHQ?' (Interjection: 'Yeah, and ASLEF!') Then I laid out our strategy -- spreading the strike and how we fight for that. I made a particular point about the scab coal in BL Longbridge where WP has an active supporter who'd done nothing about it. And then on Scargill I simply said that our disagreement with him was one of political strategy; that to guarantee decent wages and living standards and jobs for now and for the next generation was counterposed to making British coal competitive under capitalism; that what was necessary was expropriation without compensation -- something which the Labour Party could not bring but which required workers mobilising for their own state power under their own revolutionary party. The most interesting thing was that most of these miners clearly did not agree with this, but they listened and applauded. Then another Durham miner got up and attacked them further on the ballot.

Hassell came back to give the right-wing version of their ballot line. He talked about democracy until there were clouds of 'discussion' and 'debate' at the front of the room. 'Unless we have democracy we won't be able to push the strike forward.' Hassell was equating scabs with miners who voted Tory in the election, arguing for discussing with them. Things got really out of hand. Interjections: '80 per cent of miners have already voted with their feet', and then, 'What's all this talk about democracy? You weren't even going to let these two lasses up the stairs.' Three or four miners who came late left in disgust. When we interjected that the picket line was an instrument for enforcing workers democracy in the strike, they replied it was 'a tactic'. On discussing with scabs, I yelled 'break their legs'. A miner's hand shot up at the front and he said, 'I agree with the comrade -- break their bloody legs'. When they touted their wonderful work in support of the miners we said 'What about the coal in BL?', to which Hassell answered 'Shut your bloody mouth'.

Our 'defence guard' left as Hassell was trying to take his summary. One of the Notts miners explained to us that their last branch meeting where scabs were present had broken up in disarray after 1½ minutes! And to WP they said, 'Your way has failed.' ■

# Victory to Phelps Dodge strikers!

# Class war in Arizona copper mines

CLIFTON, ARIZONA -- There's a war being fought in the copper fields of Arizona. A war between the owners of the mines and their 'wage' slaves, a war between capital and labor. At times, when the sky over Clifton/Morenci fills with helicopters ferrying in National Guard (army reserves) troops against the Phelps-Dodge copper miners, it even looks like Vietnam. On 30 June, in a vicious, premeditated and organized assault, the Arizona 'Department of Public Safety' (DPS -- state police) brutally attacked copper strikers and their supporters, including women and children, who were peacefully gathering after a labor solidarity rally that day.

The 30 June protest marked the one-year anniversary of the bitter copper strike against the Phelps Dodge Corporation's attempt to ram through a sweeping 'giveback' contract and bust the 13 copper unions at its mines and smelters in Morenci, Ajo and Douglas in Arizona and El Paso, Texas. Repeatedly besieged by the state police, with the town of Clifton (near the Morenci mine) twice occupied by the National Guard, the strikers face mass evictions and union decertification elections (a ballot stripping the union of its recognition in the workplace -- in which the company wants only scabs to have the right to vote). The 1000-plus predominantly Mexican and Indian strikers holding out in the middle of the Arizona desert have increasingly become the focus of attention of class-conscious workers throughout the country. As we wrote in *Workers Vanguard* no 357 (22 June): 'It's up to the workers movement throughout the country to bust the Phelps Dodge union-busters. We say: Labor -- don't handle scab copper! Union supporters must flood into the area to build and defend mass picket lines that nobody crosses. The Phelps Dodge strikers must not stand alone!'

When the unions walked out last 1 July, production essentially stopped. Phelps Dodge (PD) tried to keep their mine running by using supervisory and office personnel and a handful of scabs, but this proved fruitless. So in late July last year, PD announced they would open their employment office to take applications from scabs. An injunction had been obtained limiting pickets to five per gate, but the miners openly defied it. Strikers told us they were getting close to 1000 pickets on the line every day. And on the day the company tried to hire scabs, estimates are that between 1000 and 2000 pickets turned out.

This labor mobilization was so powerful that

The 30 June protest started with two separate rallies. The USWA called an official rally at Copper Verde Park up a two-mile road in the Clifton hills. This drew approximately 1200 to 1500 participants. A number of local strikers and their families went up the hill in the morning for a potluck lunch, then went down to join the second event, a march from the Clifton Social Club to the People's Clinic on Highway 666.

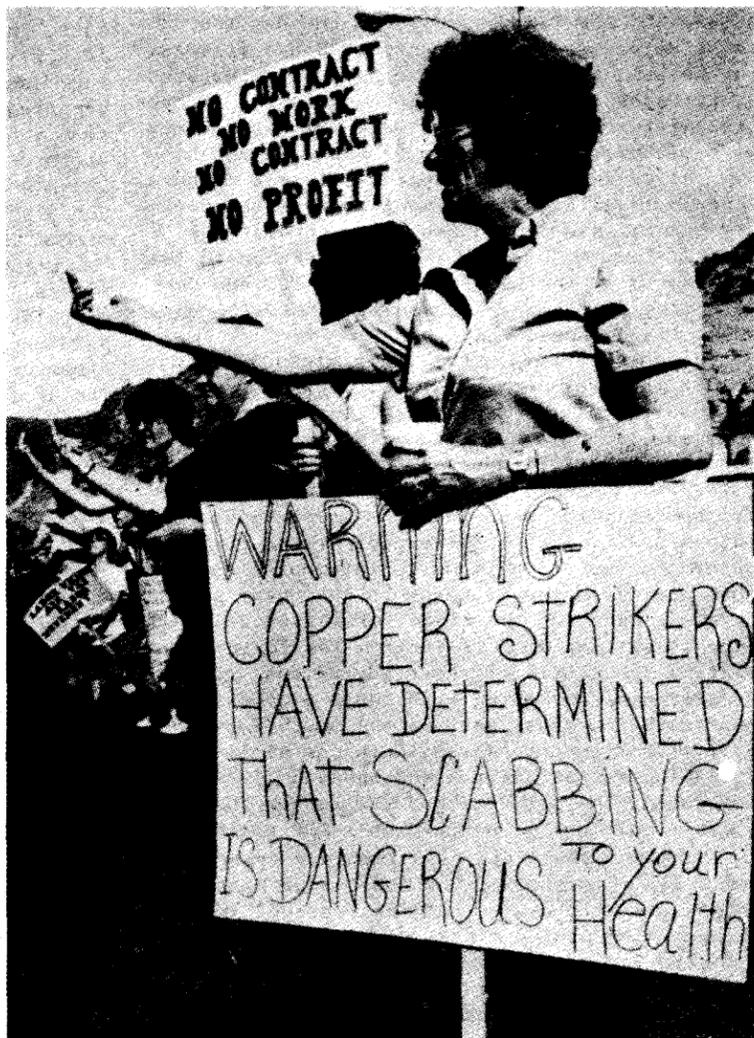
## 'Scabs must go!'

Earlier the DPS announced that the highway would be closed for two hours between 3 and 5 pm for the march, fearing that otherwise the march to the clinic might attempt to stop the scabs who must pass through Clifton on their way to the PD mine and smelter up the road in Morenci. Before the march, the crowd was addressed by People's Clinic head Dr Jorge O'Leary who had come forward as a spokesman for the strike militants through the default of the official union leadership. Arriving at the clinic, the 1000 marchers chanted 'Union, union!' and 'Scabs must go!' After an abbreviated rally, a large portion returned to the social club while about 100 strikers and supporters remained at the clinic parking area. The strikers had put together a band to provide entertainment and food was being served at a fish barbeque.

Suddenly, the cops who had been kept out of sight marched down Highway 666 in tight military formation, accompanied by a DPS bus to haul arrested strikers away. They announced the assembly was 'unlawful' and must disperse, an announcement few strikers heard since the police were over 100 yards away, and could not be heard above the music. In less than two minutes, without giving the crowd time to move, the cops donned gas masks and laid down a tear gas barrage.

Strikers were clubbed, choke-held and dragged away. Twenty were arrested. Police sharpshooters were stationed on a hill overlooking the highway. When the area was cleared, the DPS cops burned the strikers' effigy of a scab. The cops' tear gas attacks came in three waves. There was pandemonium everywhere. The workers pulled back down the road and those up front fled into nearby houses. Strikers were evacuating grandmothers from adjacent houses blitzed by the attack. Children were wandering the streets covering their eyes and looking for their parents. A two-year-old child was gassed so badly she momentarily stopped breathing and had burn marks on her face. Mothers covered their faces and braved the tear gas to get the kids to safety. It was a battlefield -- there were rocks, broken glass, debris strewn all over the highway. There was vomit on the road. But after retreating, people began to regroup.

The cops finally pulled back around dusk, covering their retreat with a cloud of noxious pepper gas. The outraged miners, having watched their children brutalized, stood off the cops by just taking it, over and over, essentially outlasting the repeated attacks. After each cop charge, the strikers came back, demarking their front line with crude barricades across the highway, using everything they could find. As dusk fell, five loads of tires were pulled in. And as soon as the barricades were built, they were lit. In addition to three workers' barricades on 666, the DPS set up a police blockade further down the road so that miners from out of town couldn't get into Clifton. By nightfall the town was sealed off as tight as a steel drum. Up at the mine, the handful of pickets allowed by a court injunction were driven off by Phelps



A slogan from the Kentucky coalfields is taken up in Phelps Dodge strike. Women's Auxiliary has emerged as a militant core of the strike.

Dodge management, emboldened by the DPS' naked terror. Ominously, one picket shack was burned, and another was bulldozed over the side of the cliff with company equipment.

The Morenci miners are caught between a rock and a hard place. In a desperate situation illusions in the supposed 'neutrality' of the bourgeois state can grievously harm the strike. Last August there was the ten-day 'cooling off' period decreed by Democratic governor Bruce Babbitt -- which only served to undercut the mass picketing and allow the government time to call up the National Guard to protect the scabs. Now the local USWA calls on Governor Babbitt to initiate an investigation into the cop riot. But the state is not neutral -- it's the armed fist of the bosses. Supposed 'friend of labor' Governor 'Scabbitt' gave the miners Highway 666 for two hours and then launched a vicious DPS attack to take it back. The miners can only rely on their strength and that of the rest of the workers movement through mass mobilization of labor power. An injury to one is an injury to all! All labor must demand: drop the charges against Morenci strikers!

Two days earlier, more than 50 militant trade unionists from a dozen unions (including seamen, transport workers and machinists) demonstrated in solidarity in front of Phelps Dodge Corporation's New York headquarters. Messages of solidarity with the copper strikers were read from striking British coal miners, locked-out oil workers in St Croix, Virgin Islands, two

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New York City, 28 June: militant trade unionists demonstrate in solidarity with Phelps Dodge strikers.

the state police didn't even attempt to break it up and set up a roadblock a few miles away to hold scabs back because they couldn't 'guarantee their safety'. To the union bureaucracy's tired and cowardly refrain that you can't 'violate the law', the Morenci miners replied by turning the bosses' injunction into a worthless scrap of paper. Yet the International leadership of the United Steelworkers (USWA), largest in a coalition of 13 striking unions including the Machinists, has hardly lifted a finger to aid the copper strikers, looking instead to Fritz Mondale (Democratic Party presidential candidate) to pressure PD back to the bargaining table. Fat chance. Phony 'friend of labor' Democrats as well as the big business Republicans represent the twin parties of capital. It is Democratic Arizona governor Bruce Babbitt who has repeatedly brought in the National Guard as scabherders for Phelps Dodge. We need a workers party!

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# SPARTACIST BRITAIN

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# Break the bosses' siege!

(Continued from page 1)

Tories. Nor did the NUM leaders do anything to forge the unified command centres needed to make these strikes *one solid fist*. Scargill was locked away in talks with the NCB when he should have been out addressing mass meetings of NUR, ASLEF, NUS and TGWU members. On the day the docks delegates met at Transport House to vote on the sellout, there should have been thousands of outraged miners and dockers demanding no separate return to work. But there was not a miner to be found. The reformism of Scargill and his ilk, however militant, expresses itself no more sharply than in their refusal to rock the boat of 'established procedures' and stand at the head of the *whole class* -- in opposition to the misleaders of the Labour Party and TUC and despite the gentlemen's agreement that each union minds its own business.

The dockers settlement was a vicious sellout, but it is hardly irreversible. The miners remain solid, all the talk of a 'back-to-work' movement led by a mysterious 'Silver Birch' (who, as miners' leaders quipped, appears to have Dutch Elm disease) is so much bullshit. It is indisputably the case that the strikers are now determined to last out the coal stocks. Thus a major confrontation looms: government plans to move coal from the pitheads to the power station stations have set the stage for what could be the biggest battles of this strike. The Tories are testing the mettle of the trade unions' response to army strikebreaking with their provocative sequestration order against the South Wales NUM. It must not go unanswered! Join the strike now!

Having sat on their hands when the iron was hot during the dock strike, 'the Labour/TUC 'lefts' now look to next month's TUC conference. But backroom deals and parliamentary wrangling won't win this strike. The TUC/Labour Party chiefs are well aware that their disgusting backstabbing of the miners does not go over well with the ranks. So they may well be prepared to make token gestures of financial support and paper resolutions to back the NUM -- in order to be better able to strangle the strike. No militant worth his salt would place his fate in the hands of the TUC traitors. What's necessary is to extend the strike now by bringing out rail and transport. Then there will be something to talk about at Brighton.

But that's exactly what the TUC 'lefts' are most afraid of. Significantly the NUR/ASLEF are calling for a one-day rail strike -- a month from now! Yet thousands of railworkers in London Transport and British Rail are facing redundancies. And the Thatcher gang is going ahead with privatising Sealink, British Airways, the buses. What's necessary is concerted strike action alongside the miners by rail and transport workers and seamen. Bring the dockers back out and reverse the sellout!

Meanwhile the entire fake left -- not least the Communist Party and the Socialist Workers Party -- are planning lobbies of Brighton. But they're opposed to the one kind of 'lobby' that Thatcher and her stooges like Murray/Chapple/Sirs would take note of: a couple of million determined strikers grinding the country to a halt. In fact most of the fake left is so gutless it hailed the wretched dock sellout. 'Victory' said the CP's *Morning Star*, as it chirpily reported 'progress' in the NUM/NCB talks that were broken off a day later. 'The dockers won a victory' echoed the fake-Trotskyist *Socialist Organiser* (26 July): 'half a victory' quibbled *Socialist Action* (27 July). Lies! Even from the narrow trade-unionist standpoint of simply defending the National Dock Labour Scheme, if the miners lose the port employers' promises will be worthless scraps of paper. The sense of disappointment felt on the streets of working-class districts expressed the realisation that the labour leaders had let slip a brilliant opportunity to get the hated Iron Lady. And the angry dockers, primarily from Merseyside, waiting outside Transport House knew what it meant when the



Labourite Militant tendency want to see racist, strikebreaking cops inside labour movement. Here seen trying to sell their paper to cops at 25 June Tamil protest in London.

78-8 vote was announced. 'Sellout', they muttered, 'we'll be out again!'

## Thatcher plays the Falklands card

The closer things came to a real general strike last month, the further into the distance receded the phoney general strike calls of the fake revolutionaries who plead on their knees before Murray and Co. In the midst of the dockers strike, the centrist Workers Power (WP) distributed a leaflet to the NUM delegate conference which -- literally -- reserved the question of a general strike to a footnote. After months of demanding Murray call a general strike 'now', the 18 July *Workers Power* put it

off to 'as soon as the Government declares its State of Emergency or as soon as the Courts attempt to sequester union funds or arrest a single union leader' ... or, to put it plainly, 'as soon as' they can convince Len Murray to take the lead.

Even a defensive general strike around clearly demarcated, limited demands -- as the Spartacist League has been fighting for -- poses the question of power: Who rules? And it is this, above all else, which leaves the pro-capitalist misleaders and their fake-revolutionary tag-alongs paralysed and quaking with fear. The nationalist politics of the Labour and CP misleaders -- from their support to protectionist import controls in times of trade war to their rallying around the Union Jack in times of shooting war -- leave them disarmed in the face of the ruling class. Thatcher is playing the Falklands card in the hope that she can again excite a wave of nationalist frenzy in order to smother class struggle, as she did two years ago against the Argentines. And how did labour's leaders respond then? The Labour/TUC rights openly cheered on the patriotic slaughter over a handful of rocks and penguins in the South Atlantic in the service of Coalite. Dennis Skinner screamed for economic sanctions as a better way for Britain's rulers to 'beat the Argies', while other 'lefts' like Tony Benn and Arthur Scargill joined him in demanding 'withdraw the fleet' -- to cut the losses for British imperialism. And from the CP to WP the fake Marxists went along with this social-pacifist campaign which stood counterposed to class struggle. The notable exception was Labour's Militant tendency, which actually gave backhanded support to Thatcher's 'workers in uniform', as today they call for unionising Thatcher's murderous strikebreakers-in-blue. Indeed when the fleet was 'withdrawn' -- victorious -- the first thing the soldiers did was threaten to break the ASLEF strike!

Likewise the fake revolutionaries and Labourites (with the commendable exception of Scargill) all bow to the ruling class in a much more serious war threat, the Reagan-led war drive against the Soviet Union -- cheering on Solidarnosc.

Is it any wonder Thatcher is wiping the floor of parliament with Kinnock and the Labour leaders? How can Kinnock reply to Thatcher's hypocritical attacks on 'picket line violence' and the lack of a ballot -- he agrees with her. (And when it comes to strikebreaking violence, none of them condemned the lorry drivers who threatened to pillage and burn Dover, women and children included!) Bully-boy Denis Healey hasn't been heard from in months. And Thatcher got even 'left' Tony Benn to shut up when she quoted him as Labour's energy minister on the need to phase out subsidies in coal. The Labour Party is not just limp, it is rottenly *pro-capitalist* -- one South Yorkshire Labour councillor was even suspended from the Labour group for 'backing violence on the miners' picket lines' (Sheffield

**SPARTACIST**  
BRITAIN

Break the strikebreakers!  
Spread the strike!



**WORKERS VANGUARD**

Toledo, Las Vegas, St. Croix, Arizona Mines -  
Class Battles Flare in Reagan's America

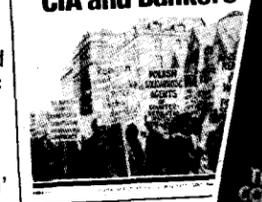
Make the Unions  
One Big Fist!

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Polish  
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Make payable/post to: Spartacist Publications, PO Box 185, London WC1H 8JE

In the crucial eleven days while the dockers were on strike alongside the miners the general strike this country so desperately needs was posed as a real possibility. This vicious Tory government could have been brought down. The Spartacist League seized upon this opportunity for the working class, producing a special supplement headlined 'Shut down the country!' (16 July) which outlined the perspective for galvanising a general strike through the key rail and transport unions.

We found a powerful resonance among militant trade unionists -- aware of the need for a general strike but with no illusions in the Murray gang. In the critical few days before the docks sellout, we distributed over 7000 copies, largely through sympathetic miners and other trade union militants. Four strike centres in Wales took 200 each; another 600 went to strike centres and subscribers in Scotland. In strategic Yorkshire, several hundred were grabbed up at strike centres and factory gates, 400 alone outside steel and engineering plants. Two NUM militants in Warsop Main, Derbyshire, scene of some vicious picket line battles, report that 100 were rapidly picked up.

**SPARTACIST**  
BRITAIN

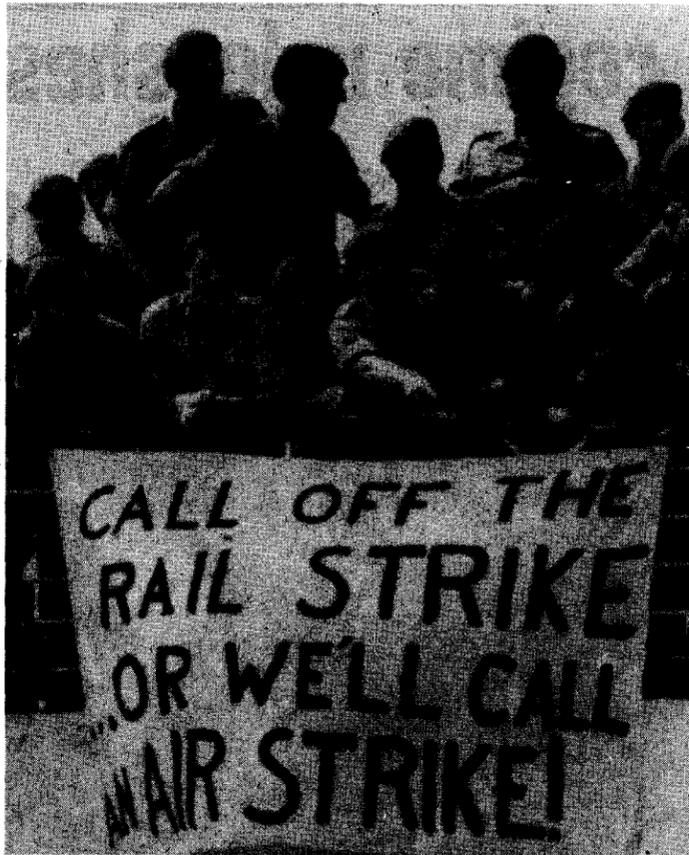
Strike  
supplement

Strikes paralyse Britain-Thatcher threatens troops

**Shut down  
the country!**

We found particular receptivity among black and Asian militants -- at Ford Dagenham, in London Transport, in Birmingham NUR and ASLEF -- who took bundles to their workplaces. A miner in the Midlands took 200 to distribute door-to-door in his street. When our sales team accompanied Rover Solihull militant Pat Sliney to a Lea Hall strike committee meeting, they found the supplements already being distributed by a Lea Hall miner (much to the chagrin of the *Militant* sellers present). Many militants in the Midlands particularly appreciated the back-page article on scab coal in BL.

The potential posed by the dockers' strike was sold out by their reformist misleaders, but the response we got was a gratifying indication of the desire for a real fight among wide layers of the working class, and the urgency of building a mass party of socialist revolution.



Thatcher revives the 'Falklands factor' against the miners. Returning Falklands troops threatened to break ASLEF strike. Spartacist League said 'Let the war be Thatcher's downfall!'

Morning Telegraph, 11 July). The 'Militants' of Liverpool council, headed into a confrontation with the Tory government while the dockers were out which could have rallied minorities and workers in all cities, instead begged off by pushing through a massive rate rise as part of their touted '95 per cent victory'. What's needed is a *revolutionary* party, forged through winning Labour's working-class base away from pro-capitalist reformism, to fight for a genuine workers government to expropriate the whole capitalist class.

#### For revolutionary leadership!

In the course of this bitter five-month-old strike the consciousness of thousands of militants has surged forward in leaps and bounds. Regional divisions based on English chauvinism against Welsh and Scots (and Irish) have broken down -- everybody knows it's no accident Wales got singled out for the strikebreaking sequestration order. Deeply ingrained racist and sexist prejudices are being cast aside, the nature of the police as the mailed fist of the bosses' state is being dramatically, murderously brought home. (One story making the rounds in South Wales is of a gang fight, including miners, in a pub. When arrested by the police and taken to the cop shop, they joined forces against the cops and released all the other prisoners!) It is not by accident or chance that women and minorities have come to the forefront in defence of the miners' cause: from the Nationality Act and racist terror to Thatcher's return to 'Victorian values', the specially oppressed are in the frontline domestically of the anti-Soviet war drive which means Tory war against the workers at home.

What keeps this struggle from going forward to victory, smashing the Tory government and paving the way to a final reckoning with the capitalist class is the absence of a revolutionary leadership at the head of the labour movement capable of crystallising that growing class consciousness in a fighting strategy against

capitalism. That is what the Spartacist League is fighting to build. At the time of the Falklands war, we said: 'Workers have no side! The main enemy is at home! Let the war be Thatcher's downfall!' And with a class-struggle leadership at the head of the hard-fighting miners, now is the time to give Thatcher her Falklands factor in reverse. It doesn't have to -- and must not -- wait until next winter. Now is the time to mobilise the ranks of labour in strike action alongside the miners. The dockers strike proved it can be done. We say: *The miners must not stand alone!* ■

## Arizona...

(Continued from page 3)

Australian unions, French car workers and the Partisan Defense Committee. A greeting to the New York rally was also read from Dr O'Leary. Demonstrators carried signs reading, 'Victory to the Phelps Dodge workers -- on the front line for all labor!' 'There are no neutrals in the copper fields!' 'The Wobblies played hardball! For mass pickets! Send the National Guard packing!' and 'Down with Reagan and the Democrats! For a workers party!'

#### 'Labor's gotta play hardball to win!'

Prior to the organization of the Phelps Dodge mines by the Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, successor to the old Western Federation of Miners, Morenci was rigidly segregated between Anglos and Mexicans. Indians lived in tents. White merchants in Clifton, mainly Mormons, had signs on their establishments saying, 'No Mexicans allowed'. These racial divisions are already reappearing. The scabs are mostly white and a high percentage Mormon. As *Workers Vanguard* learned in an interview with Clifton mayor Tom Aguilar who joined Mine, Mill and Smelter in 1947, the struggle to break the color line in Morenci was the union's fight for a bidding sys-

tem -- that is, seniority. Prior to this union gain, Mexicans and Indians were relegated to a life in the labor gangs. If the union is broken -- and the plant full of Anglos led by Mormons -- these conditions will return.

The PD strikers of today stand in the tradition of generations of Western copper miners who had to continually fight for a decent life. Phelps Dodge amassed its initial capital by extracting barbarous profits from the nineteenth century slave trade. The early attempts to organize unions were ruthlessly smashed by the blood-soaked copper magnates. The Bisbee 1917 mass eviction was directed against the old 'Wobbly' militants of the IWW who dared to strike imperialism's copper mines prior to the entry of the US into World War I. Today the giant copper corporations maintain overseas operations with the blessings of racist and labor-hating governments like South Africa, Chile and El Salvador. Meanwhile everyone from the copper bosses to Democrat Walter Mondale, the union tops and even steel 'dissident' Ron Wiesen calls for protectionist trade barriers, setting worker against worker and laying the basis for imperialist war.

After eleven months of hard class battle, the strikers at Phelps Dodge welcomed the *Workers Vanguard* reporting/sales team which went there in May with our supplement, 'Labor's Gotta Play Hardball to Win'. We said what had to be done -- labor has to build mass picket lines, plant occupations, to mobilize the tremendous power which grows out of its numbers, militancy, organization and discipline, its ability to shut down the wheels of production of this racist, capitalist system.

To get out of the present no-win situation, the burning necessity of the hour is to call out an *industrywide strike* to shut down all Phelps Dodge operations and all copper production. This is not charity on the part of the USWA, Machinists and the rest of the affected unions. The other copper bosses are already demanding their contracts be reopened so the companies can force more takeaways down their workers' throats. If the Morenci miners lose, everyone loses. Transport unions must refuse to handle all PD goods. Railroad workers, truckers: *hot cargo* [black] *PD copper!* And to insure an on-the-spot leadership that will fight, in order to mobilize the energies of all the strikers, and unite the members of the various unions affected, including co-ordinating with Ajo, Douglas and El Paso, the Phelps Dodge mine workers must form *elected strike committees* to hold the leaders responsible to the base.

The union leaders have left the Phelps Dodge miners out there turning in the wind, and now many are angry and desperate. It's not the first time -- PATCO and Greyhound strikers were abandoned, too, though any labor movement worth its salt could have won those battles by pulling out their big battalions (shut down the airports, national transport strike). The task facing the PD strikers, and the task facing their supporters in the labor movement throughout this country, is to take this from an isolated and valiant struggle in the wilds of Arizona copper country and turn it into a focal point for a national mobilization of union power and determination to resist strikebreaking and government-backed union-busting ordered by the top levels of corporate America and their servants from the White House to the State House. This requires a political mobilization against the twin parties of capital, to break with the Democrats and fight for a workers party to bring Reagan down through mass strike action. Victory to the Phelps Dodge strikers! Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 358, 6 July 1984

# BL militant addresses Lea Hall strikers

When militant unionists spotted a placard reading 'Stop scab coal in BL!' carried by Spartacist League (SL) supporter and BL Rover Solihull TGWU member Patrick Sliney at the 7 July Saltley Gates rally, it blew the lid sky-high on the scab coal cover-up at BL. Longbridge convenor Jack Adams (a Communist Party supporter), who supervised this blacklegging operation at Longbridge, did not even take his place as scheduled speaker at the rally. And two days later, TGWU lorry drivers and miners from Birch Coppice set up a picket line outside Longbridge, covered in a story in the Birmingham *Evening Mail* (see *Spartacist Britain* supplement, 16 July). The appreciation felt by many of these militants for our exposure was expressed not least when Tom Shiel, the TGWU branch official responsible for organising the picket, asked for photocopies of our first article (*Spartacist Britain* no 58, June 1984) in order to publicise the issue among fellow unionists; he subsequently requested a bundle of our supplement.

The following week, on 20 July, Sliney was invited by the Lea Hall strike committee to address them on his fight to stop the scabbing at BL. About 200 miners, almost all the Lea Hall strikers, turned out to hear Sliney outline the Spartacist League's strategy for spreading the miners strike into a general strike 'to put Thatcher on the rubbish heap'. He argued for picketing outside BL which would stop not just coal deliveries but production and condemned the 'left' TGWU and rail union leaders for not bringing all their members out in strike action alongside the miners and dockers. He emphasised the necessity for workers to fight the anti-Soviet war drive, reflected in the witchhunt against Scargill for his opposition to Polish Solidarnosc, and pointed out that Scargill's call for another Labour government would put the 'the party of the ballot and import controls' into office. Sliney was vigorously applauded several times.

During the question period a Militant sup-

porter rose to claim that it was Militant that was responsible for fighting the scab coal with a motion they put (for this bit of carping, and lying sectarianism he was justly booed) and then offered up the Militant's line that Len Murray's TUC call a 24-hour 'general strike'. The chairman sharply replied, 'NUM policy is not to call on the TUC for anything!' Of course, Militant not only appeals to Murray but thinks cops should be in the unions. As one miner said in explaining that cops aren't allowed into the football club building: 'If they want a piss they can piss down their legs, but no cops are allowed in here.... Cops are *death* to this strike!' And these Labourites are no better on scabs than on cops. When Militant supporter Ian Schofield, deputy senior steward at Range Rover, spoke at a 26 July Militant public meeting in Birmingham, so concerned was he about the scabbing at BL that he didn't mention the question once, even when it was raised by a Spartacist supporter. That's what we mean by a cover-up! ■

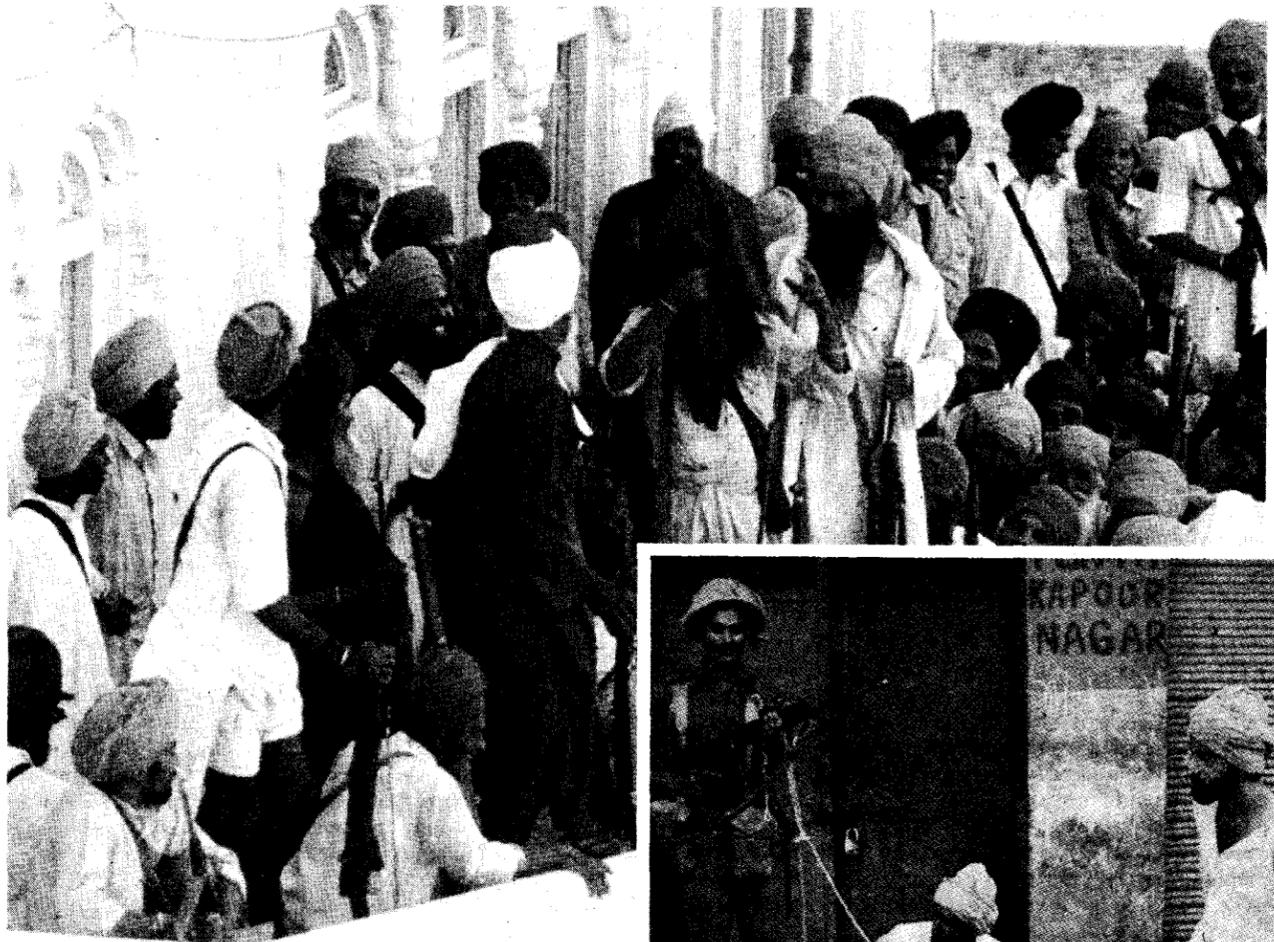
# Hindu-chauvinist regime unleashes terror against Gandhi's India: communalist

**For workers revolution!  
For a socialist federation  
of South Asia!**

The massacre of upwards of 2000 Sikhs in the Punjabi city of Amritsar by the army of Indira Gandhi last June is a sharp reminder that post-Partition India remains a volatile prisonhouse of peoples. When the Indian army (under the command of a Sikh general) stormed the Golden Temple complex on 5-6 June, the fundamentalist Sant ('Saint') Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and his entourage achieved the martyrdom they had been courting. But the vicious crackdown by the Hindu-chauvinist Gandhi regime was an attack on the entire Sikh community and a bloody lesson to all opponents of the regime. And the repercussions are likely to be immense, and even bloodier, as the reactionary legacy of British imperialist rule continues to wreak havoc upon the Indian masses.

In the largest of many protests by overseas Sikhs, more than 30,000 marched through central London on Sunday, 10 June, led by priests bearing ceremonial swords. Placards reading, 'Blood for blood' abounded; and the chant which rang out with deafening uniformity was 'One demand, Khalistan' -- a theocratic Sikh state. Within India, the government's censorship and communications clampdown could not hide the fact of thousands-strong, violent demonstrations and marches, frequently quelled by army and police gunfire. More significantly, the unrest spread immediately to the armed forces, some 10 per cent of which is Sikh, pointing a dagger at this vital bulwark of the unity of the Indian capitalist state. Indeed it was a cashiered major-general, Shubeg Singh, who led the Sikh defence of the Golden Temple, reportedly accompanied by three other retired generals and fourteen retired colonels. The army was subsequently forced to mount major operations in half a dozen states to suppress mutinies. Moreover the Punjab has been a strategic battleground in India's wars with neighbouring Pakistan.

The military operation against the Golden Temple, the temporal and spiritual centre of the Sikh religion, was not simply aimed at clearing out Bhindranwale's terrorist band as the government would have it. Details have emerged of 'take-no-prisoners' orders, dead Sikhs with their hands tied behind their backs, and women and children among the slaughtered. One small harbinger of the attack was the exclusion of Sikhs -- not just Bhindranwale's followers -- from New Delhi during the Asian Games held there earlier in the year. A massive and draconian army operation continues in the Punjab. Thousands of Sikhs have been rounded up, many have 'disappeared'. In the villages every house with a male between the ages of 18 and 30 is searched. Over 500 gurdwaras (Sikh temples) have been occupied by the army, often with bloodshed. Nor is this all. Omnisciently Gandhi, who lorded over the two-year state of emergency, now claims, 'Democracy has encouraged all this' (*Sunday Times*, 10



Golden Temple in Amritsar just before Gandhi's bloody onslaught. Inset: Indian army terrorising Sikhs in the Punjab.

June). We demand an immediate halt to the repressive military/police operation in the Punjab, the withdrawal of all troops and the release of all Sikhs imprisoned in the dragnet.

Isolated from a revolutionary perspective, however, these elementary demands will not end -- and in the short term might well inflame -- the communalist turmoil which today threatens to engulf the Punjab. The only progressive answer lies in the Indian proletariat, which has historically demonstrated militancy and organisation. The solid 300,000-strong port workers strike in March and April united workers across national, ethnic, religious and caste lines. Likewise the long and bitterly fought Bombay textile strike two years ago attracted mass support in wide layers of the working population. Armed with a revolutionary programme to overthrow capitalism, the relatively small but strategically powerful working class is the one social force that, carrying the agrarian masses behind it, can put an end to the communalist horrors and furnish a just solution to the legitimate grievances of India's many oppressed minorities. And this requires the forging of a Trotskyist party.

## Mrs Gandhi -- a calculating Hindu chauvinist

The weak Indian bourgeoisie has been an apt pupil of British imperialism's 'divide and rule' perfidy. Mrs Gandhi is a conscious and calculating Hindu chauvinist. Writing before the Amritsar massacre, *India Today* (30 April) observed, 'the Congress (I) can only retain its political power in Punjab by keeping the Hindus and Sikhs divided ... there is little doubt that the animus between the Sikh and Hindu communities has benefited Congress (I) by consolidating the Hindu vote in its favour'.

Bhindranwale and his theocratic-fundamentalist Dal Khalsa movement are about as unsavoury a lot of nationalists as there is. Bhindranwale consciously likened himself to Iranian clerical butcher Ayatollah Khomeini, and justly so. When challenged on a threat he once made to kill 5000 Hindus, Bhindranwale replied, 'I did not kill anyone, I just held out a

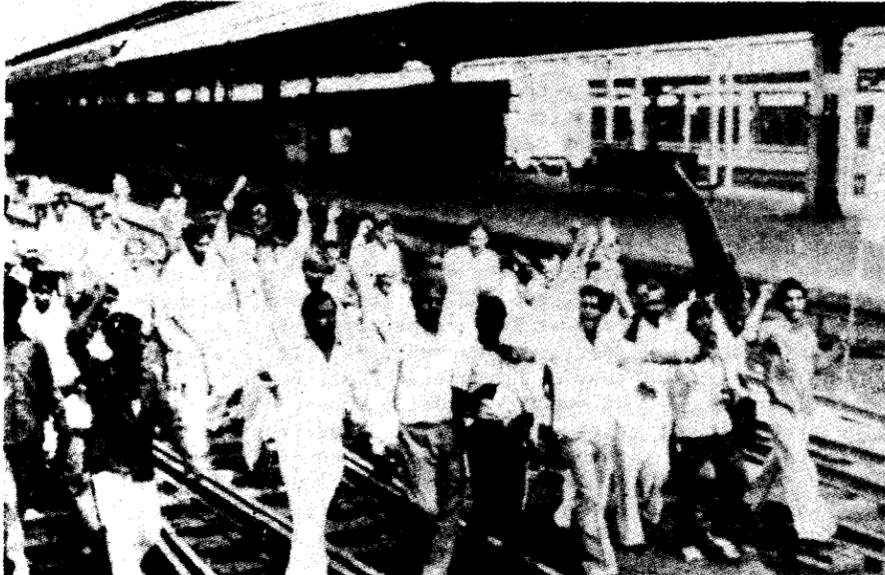


threat' (*India Today*, 31 October 1983). Bhindranwale had an openly circulated hit list of victims, which was available on cassette tapes. And the targets were not just government officials and Hindu politicians but a rival Sikh sect (the Nirankaris), Sikhs who had abandoned the traditional beard and turban, random Hindus hauled off buses or machine-gunned in markets, and any journalist who criticised Bhindranwale. Indicative of what treatment women could expect in the theocracy Bhindranwale sought was his reply when Mrs Gandhi invited him to Delhi for talks: 'It is not fitting for a man to go to talk to a woman, she should come to me.' Even in a land where it is a daily occurrence for women to be murdered for having insufficient dowry, Bhindranwale stands out for his reactionary views.

In its initial stages, Gandhi's Congress (I) Party encouraged and supported the growth of Dal Khalsa, in order to disrupt the more moderate Sikh party, Akali Dal, and to fuel the Hindu backlash. After a coalition led by the Akali Dal took over the Punjab state government in 1977, Congress (I) politicians encouraged the Dal Khalsa to demonstrate against the Akali Dal coalition for secularism.

It is only necessary to compare Gandhi's massacre of Sikhs to her routine connivance in the extreme Hindu-communalist Shiv Sena's inflammatory attacks on Muslims in Maharashtra, in the provocative Hindu Yagna march deliberately routed through Muslim-concentrated areas and in the ominous growth of Hindu fascist organisations in the Punjab. She has adopted a 'hands off' policy regarding numerous other Hindu-communalist attacks, not least against Sikhs in Haryana.

Nor is the Punjab an isolated example. The thin veneer of Indian nationalism (which in fact reflects the overwhelming preponderance, 80 per cent, of the Hindu majority), despite its occasional secular pretensions, could easily shatter into a myriad of competing national, ethnic and language groups. Early last year, thousands were killed and many more left homeless in communal



Railworkers in New Delhi striking against Indira Gandhi regime, 1974. India's proletariat holds the key to liberation in this prisonhouse of peoples.

# hs powderkeg

violence in Assam when native Assamese carried out a campaign against the 5 million Bengalis from Bangladesh living there. In the past both Bengalis and Assamese have pushed tribal groupings from their traditional lands. Gandhi ordered 75,000 paramilitary troops into Assam to force new elections and clean out her opponents in an attempt to erase the memory of her electoral defeat in the former Congress (I) strongholds of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. As *Asia-week* (4 March 1983) reported:

'The tribals are killing the Bangladeshi Muslims and local Assamese, the Muslims are killing the Assamese, including Assamese Muslims, and all of them are killing the tea plantation workers, who are mostly Biharis.' More recently, in May and June, hundreds died, some burnt alive, in Hindu communal attacks on Muslims in Bhiwandi, an industrial town near Bombay, in Maharashtra state, with Congress (I) again directly implicated. And in July, Gandhi overthrew the Kashmir and Jammu state government, popularly based on the Muslim majority, and has been whipping up anti-Muslim sentiment in the state.

Facing a general election within the next six months, at a time when Congress (I) has been losing control in a number of state assemblies, Gandhi now seeks to pose as defender of India's integrity and to whip up anti-Pakistan war fever over the Punjab. Gandhi may get her 'Amritsar factor', akin to Thatcher's 'Falklands factor', but all India's minorities will pay the price for this reactionary mobilisation.

## The Sikhs and self-determination

Of the total population of some 20 million Sikhs worldwide, 12 million are concentrated in the Punjab where they constitute a bare majority, with significant communities in the rest of India, particularly in the states adjoining the Punjab. As a religion Sikhism arose in the fifteenth century out of the impact of monotheistic Islam on polytheistic Hinduism in the turbulent frontier battlegrounds of the Punjab plains. Originally anti-caste, it developed its own hereditary 'professions' over the years. Two centuries later it was transformed into a militant fighting faith by its 'tenth guru' Gobind Singh, adopting the distinctive beard, long hair, steel bangle and knife.

The Sikhs are not just a religious grouping, however, but form a distinct community inhabiting a particular territory with a common language (Punjabi) and customs. And while the Sikhs may not yet be a nation, the present dynamic points to their further national consolidation. Nations are not born fully-fledged but are consolidated in struggle (generally by expelling or destroying other peoples). Undoubtedly, and more emphatically since the bloodbath at Amritsar, many Sikhs see themselves as a nation. But whether they achieve the fundamentalist dream of Khalistan ('state of the pure') or some other form of self-determination, or they are genocidally repressed by the Hindu majority, under capitalism the outcome can only be reactionary.

The population of the Punjab is deeply inter-

ONE BHINDRA WALE  
DIES  
THOUSANDS ARISE



London, 10 June: 30,000 Sikhs protest against Golden Temple massacre, demanding Khalistan and 'Blood for blood' — an invitation to renewed communalist horrors.

penetrated. Business and industry in the cities tends to be in the hands of Hindus; Amritsar itself is estimated to be 75 per cent Hindu. In the rural areas, the Hindus are often shopkeepers and the hated moneylenders, while 70 per cent of the farmers are Sikhs. These relatively prosperous kulaks are the social base of the Akali Dal and the principal beneficiaries of the so-called 'green revolution'. Their sons, unemployed, educated youth, are the militants of Dal Khalsa. This is a social and economic powderkeg, in a situation where the Sikhs number little more than 50 per cent of the state's population. To establish their own state, the Sikhs must necessarily remove, one way or another, millions who share the land of Punjab with them. This is reflected in the strong communal/religious character of the separatist agitation.

Central to the Sikh agitation has been a religious fundamentalism directed against fears of 'Hinduisation'. They demand sole control over Chandigarh, now common capital of both Punjab and predominantly Hindu Haryana. The Sikhs resent the government's refusal to give Amritsar the 'holy' status several Hindu cities have and that Article 25 of the Indian constitution treats Sikhs as part of the Hindu community whereas Muslims are accorded the right to be governed by Muslim personal law. Demands for a greater share of the water, irrigation and power resources of the rivers of the Punjab reflect the social base among the Sikh farmers.

The government responded to these demands with mounting repression, in turn provoking a heightened terrorist campaign by Bhindranwale's fundamentalists. On 19 March, the government banned the All Sikh Students' Federation, a centre of unrest. The same month it issued 'shoot to kill' orders in Haryana, brutally crushing any manifestation of opposition among the significant Sikh minority. With right-wing opposition and Hindu communalist politicians baying for a crackdown, Gandhi stepped up the repression while seeking a deal with the Akali Dal. When Gandhi pledged to alter the constitution on 31 March, the Akali Dal called off a proposed week of intensified agitation. Three days later a prominent Hindu politician was as-

sassinated, Punjab was declared a 'dangerously disturbed area' under the Special Powers Act and large contingents of the Central Reserve Police Force were drafted in to conduct a vicious campaign of arrests, round-ups and 'disappearances'. Police gunned down fifty at the politician's funeral, where 15,000 Hindus demonstrated.

In mid-May the farmers threatened to withhold the wheat harvest, which provides 60 per cent of India's grain, if government regulated prices were not raised. The central government is the worst perpetrator of *daily, organised* famine, but in this threat they found a scapegoat, feeding into real and well-founded fears. The inability of the Akali Dal to deliver encouraged the growth of separatist tendencies, including a significant split to Bhindranwale in early May. Under pressure, on 23 May the Akali Dal announced a non-cooperation movement slated to begin on 3 June which would stop the shipment of all food grains and obstruct the flow of canal waters and power transmission to other states. The stage was set for Gandhi's murderous onslaught.

The storming of the Golden Temple has fuelled religious fervour and dramatically increased the base of support for the undisguisedly Zionist-style call for Khalistan. To quote a London leaflet: 'the coexistence with the treacherous Hindus of the Punjab has become an impossibility'. This would no doubt precipitate heightened Hindu backlash against the large Sikh communities outside the Punjab. Such is the reactionary logic of nationalism. The demands for Khalistan and 'blood for blood' are an invitation for the 1947 Partition over again.

For Trotskyists, the defence of the oppressed Sikh minority against the Hindu chauvinist Gandhi regime is in no way conditional on the character of the currently reactionary, clericalist leadership. But the bizarre, ex-Trotskyist American Socialist Workers Party actually lauds the most reactionary aspects of Bhindranwale's religious fundamentalism: 'As in the Iranian revolution, where anti-imperialism was often expressed in Islamic terms during protests against the shah, Bhindranwale's Sikh revivalism

continued on page 8

# Udham Singh, anti-imperialist martyr

## Amritsar 1919

Mrs Gandhi's bloody onslaught against the Golden Temple has evoked widespread memories of General Dyer's 1919 Amritsar massacre. It is also appropriate to recall the memory of Udham Singh, a heroic Indian fighter who was executed 44 years ago, on 31 July, for assassinating the imperialist butcher who as lieutenant governor of the Punjab was directly responsible for the massacre, Sir Michael O'Dwyer. A Punjabi Sikh by birth, when he was arrested Udham Singh gave his name as Mohamed Singh Azad, an alias symbolising Muslim-Sikh-Hindu unity.

Amritsar 1919 was a centre of anti-imperialist agitation. The example of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution had fired the imagination of the Indian masses; high taxation, war 'loans'

and press-gang recruitment to provide British imperialism with cannon fodder had fuelled discontent in the Punjab. What especially drove the English overlords into a frenzy was the cross-communal unity, a direct challenge to their brutal policy of 'divide and rule'. The mass agitation of 1919 -- focussed against the draconian Rowlatt 'anti-sedition' acts, forerunner of Mrs Gandhi's emergency powers -- was led jointly by a Hindu and a Muslim. Days before the massacre, crowds of Hindus and Muslims outraged by police and army provocations drove the English off the streets, killing a number, with chants of 'Hindu-Mussalman ki jai [long live]'. O'Dwyer, a diehard reactionary, told Dyer to crack down.

On 13 April, Baisakhi day (an important religious festival), tens of thousands gathered in the Jalianwala Bagh -- many for a planned protest meeting but many others, including

children, simply pilgrims encamping there and ignorant of Dyer's proclamation against meetings. Dyer marched his troops into the open square and, without warning, calmly directed them to fire 1650 rounds into the densest parts of the trapped crowds. Between 500-1000 were slaughtered and Dyer later testified he would have used machine guns had his armoured cars been able to get through a narrow alley. The imperialists followed up the massacre with a reign of terror in the Punjab.

When Dyer died in 1927 he was buried with full military honours. Fearful of the repercussions, the government had retired him, but many in the English ruling class hailed this mass murderer as the 'Saviour of India'. O'Dwyer himself remained an intransigent colonialist and unrepentant about the massacre he had engineered until the night of 13 March

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# Sikhs...

(Continued from page 7)

also had an anti-imperialist aspect to it' (*Intercontinental Press*, 9 July). Not surprisingly, they remain cravenly faithful to Khomeini's murderous Islamic 'republic'.

The centrist Workers Power (WP), on the other hand, having determined that the demand for Khalistan is reactionary, deny the legitimate rights of the Sikhs as a people, arguing they are not 'a nationality at all but a religious community'. Sikh 'relations with the Hindus are close and completely [sic] intermixed', they explain, adding that Khalistan 'would be a religious not a national [!] state.... Iran, under Khomeini, demonstrates just how reactionary that would be' (*Workers Power*, 20 June). The theocratic character of the Khomeini leadership -- which represented not an oppressed minority but Great Persian chauvinism -- did not stop them from slavishly tailing that movement, nor have they hesitated to back the clerical-nationalist, capitalist-restorationist Solidarnosc in Poland.

Creation of a separate Sikh state, whether secular or theocratic, could only take place at the expense of the Hindu and Muslim communities in the Punjab. But in the case of another 'intermixed' situation, Northern Ireland, WP give a blank cheque to the nationalist leadership of the oppressed Irish Catholic minority and deny the legitimate rights of the distinct Ulster Protestant community. The real consideration for these 'little England' opportunists is that here they have found nothing to tail after, so they dismiss the Sikhs as nothing but a religious sect with an arrogance much in the tradition of the British ruling class who look down their noses at the heathen masses slaughtering each other. Trotskyists do not subscribe to the thesis, much beloved by nationalists and Stalinists, that the right of a people to exist is morally earned by being 'progressive'.

## Colonialist pigs and communalist horrors

Of all people the Sikhs should know the meaning of communalism; they were the prime victims of the British-engineered Partition, which proposed to split the Punjab -- and the Sikh population within it -- in two. Lahore, only 48 miles from Amritsar, had 500,000 Hindus and 100,000 Sikhs at the beginning of 1947. At year's end, there were 1000 Sikhs and Hindus left. As well over 5 million people fled in both directions across the partition lines, the refugee routes became vast open graveyards. While trains pulled into Amritsar full of Hindu and Sikh corpses, the Muslims of Amritsar were hunted down and butchered, the women raped and then paraded to the Golden Temple to have their throats cut.

This communal bloodletting was one of the greatest tragedies of the century and a crime that the international proletariat will hold the British ruling class accountable for. Through it all, while the masses vented their frustration, anger and despair on each other, the English colonial pigs sat in their hotels sipping cocktails, left largely undisturbed as they waited to leave. Indeed a goodly number of the army units which did not simply disintegrate into the communal slaughter were occupied escorting retired army colonels and their memsahibs out of the hill stations. And the Sikhs, held by their British overlords to be a 'martial race', made up some 30 per cent of the British Indian army before World War II; 83,000 died fighting for British imperialism in the war. With typically English racism, Sikhs who were good enough to drive tanks with beard and



Sordid imperialist history: British troops mow down anti-imperialist demonstrators in India.

turban were deemed unfit to drive buses in post-war England.

Today, the Sikh separatist agitation could easily become a pawn in the designs of the imperialists against the Soviet Union. Gandhi's India is a diplomatic and potential military ally of the Soviet Union in the context of an imperialist war drive. There is no need to accept the endless CIA-mongering of Indian bourgeois and Stalinist politicians to know that the CIA will be active, not least through its Pakistani ally the butcher General Zia, in fomenting rightist subversion against Gandhi. The *Economist* (9 June), mouthpiece for the City financiers, crowed over the Amritsar massacre: 'having let it go far, Mrs Gandhi at last recognised that anarchy in a strategic border state like Punjab could set off an unraveling round the Indian map'. But elsewhere in the same issue it warned that, 'Indira Gandhi's government has reached the end of its tether, and the end of its credibility.' While the imperialists will fear the cataclysmic instability an 'unraveling' India would provoke throughout South Asia, the weakening -- and if necessary even balkanisation -- of Gandhi's India would fit in with the exigencies of the anti-Soviet war drive.

For their part, the Sikh fundamentalists proclaim, 'In terms of their long term strategy, it seems that the Sikhs do not fit in well with Russian designs. Naturally Sikhs with strong religious commitments and ideology will not tolerate the imposition of atheism' (*Khalistan News*, April 1984). This is an open bid to join the nearby Afghan Islamic fanatics as anti-Communist terrorists in the service of Reagan and Thatcher. Class-conscious Sikh workers must stand for the unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union, Vietnam and the other deformed workers states. Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! Imperialists out of the Indian Ocean! This does not mean blindly tailing the Kremlin's diplomatic manoeuvres and crawling before the despot Gandhi but rather presupposes intransigent class struggle against all wings of the Indian capitalist class and rival nationalist/communist demagogues.

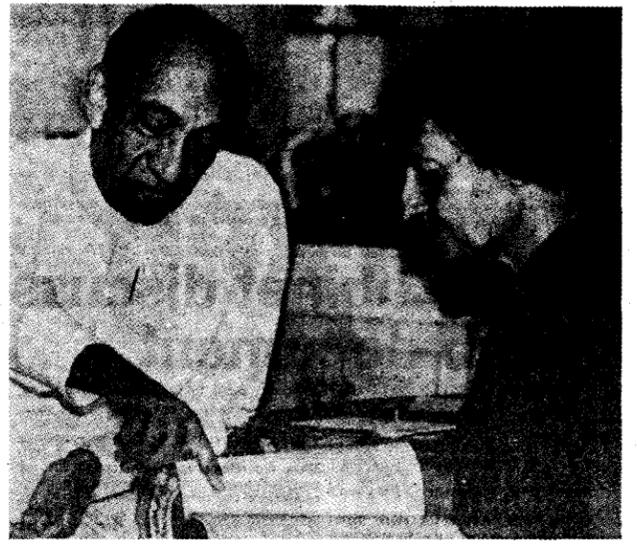
## For permanent revolution throughout South Asia!

The Moscow-loyal Communist Party of India, servile creature of the Gandhi regime, lauds the Amritsar massacre with scarcely a figleaf. CPI general secretary Rao announced: 'We have always been for effective steps to put down extremist violence. These should, however, be combined with efforts for a political solution, which will go a long way in isolating the extremists' (*Overseas Hindustan Times*, 23 June). The proto-'Eurocommunist' CPI (Marxist)'s leader, Harkishan Singh Surjeet, actually offered himself as mediator on behalf of Gandhi and subsequently issued a statement essentially identical to the CPI's, bemoaning only the government's failure to take the loyal parliamentary opposition into its confidence and praising the army for its 'tremendous precautions to protect the Golden Temple' (*Hindu*, International Edition, 23 June). And the Maoist-Stalinists (virulent enemies of the Soviet Union) also rally to the cause of Great Hindu chauvinism. The May issue of *Lalkar*, journal of the Maoist variant of the Indian Workers Association here, urged: 'It is time that the Government took action and crushed these fascist murder gangs'. Not surprisingly, the IWA faces the possibility of the departure of many of its Sikh members.

It is not only the Stalinists, but the fake-Trotskyist *Indian Left Review*, co-thinkers of the Labourite Militant tendency, who push illusions in the 'progressive' character of the Indian bourgeoisie. Thus, while distancing themselves from Mrs Gandhi, they claim that the Congress Party 'in the past did at least have some claim to an anti-casteist and anti-communal tradition and to a policy of defence of the minorities' (*Militant*, 20 July). Notwithstanding its occasional pretensions to secularism, from the time of Mahatma Gandhi and before Congress has always been the party of the Hindu-chauvinist Indian bourgeoisie. In the May 1940 'Manifesto of the Fourth International' on the imperialist war, Trotsky wrote:

'Gandhi's "moral" revulsion from violence merely reflects the fear of the Indian bourgeoisie before their own masses.... The only thing that can weld India together is the agrarian revolution under the banner of national independence. A revolution led by the proletariat will be directed not only against British rule but also against the Indian princes, foreign concessions, the top layer of the national bourgeoisie, and the leaders of the National Congress, as well as against the leaders of the Moslem League. It is the pressing task of the Fourth International to create a stable and powerful section in India.' (*Writings*, 1939-40)

The bourgeoisies of the colonial and semi-



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

colonial countries are tied by a thousand and one strings to imperialism. To this day the president of India opens parliament by making a 'speech from the throne'. And the Indian army self-consciously prides itself on its imperialist past: officers of one regiment still salute a portrait of founding commander Sir Charles Napier when they enter their mess! Under the rule of the Indian bourgeoisie the acute problems of land, poverty, caste and national oppression are incessantly recreated. And every new outburst of communalist violence retards the only class on the Indian subcontinent which can lead the oppressed masses on a consistently progressive course. Communalism not only destroys working-class unity in general, but in India it is often particularly the working class that is the main target of communal terror, since it is frequently drawn from local and migrant minorities.

Meanwhile in neighbouring Pakistan women, students and the Baluchi, Paktoon and Sindhi nations face the wrath of Zia's Islamic dictatorship. Bangladesh is a hellhole in which one bloody military coup follows another. In Sri Lanka bonapartist J R Jayewardene imposes savage austerity on the working class and bloody repression against the minority Tamils. Any Tamil militant who has illusions in relying on Mrs Gandhi for help against the Sinhala-chauvinist Lankan regime would do well to consider her draconian measures against the Sikhs. Lankan foreign minister, Shahul Hameed, recently proclaimed cynically: 'How dare Mr Rao [Indian External Affairs Minister] tell us to reduce our military strength in Jaffna, have we asked him to reduce the military in Punjab' (*Hindu*, 2 June). These venal ruling classes will use their populaces as cannon fodder in internecine wars while uniting to crush popular uprisings, as they did to smash the JVP and the Bangladeshi Mukti Bahini in 1971.

If India is not to be wracked by another convulsion of communalist slaughter in the interests of imperialism, what is needed is a mass proletarian party rallying behind the banner of Permanent Revolution the myriad minorities, the agrarian masses and the multitudinous victims of caste and sex oppression. It was Sikhs and other Punjabis who together with Bengalis provided a disproportionate share of the militants who formed revolutionary nationalist parties like the Ghadr Party in opposition to the bourgeois Congress and who under the impact of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution rallied to the early Communist Party.

The problems of South Asia are interrelated and will not be solved separately. Only the working class can guarantee the right of self-determination to the oppressed nations from the Baluchis in Pakistan to the Tamils in Lanka, the liberation of women from bondage and backwardness, and land to the tiller. Sikh militants and all class-conscious Indian workers who seek a progressive solution to their peoples' plight should look to the example of the Spartacist League/Lanka which bases itself on the best, revolutionary traditions of the Ceylonese Trotskyist militants who, forced into exile in the face of imperialist repression in World War II, built the Bolshevik-Leninist Party of India. As we said in the declaration of fusion which founded the Spartacist League/Lanka:

'The revolutionary intentions of Sri Lankan militants will be proven by their practice on the Tamil question. Across the narrow Palk Straits live many millions more Tamils. The struggle to win Tamil comrades expresses the commitment to helping build a revolutionary party in India, for such comrades can play a vital role in the struggle for a socialist federation throughout the Indian subcontinent, including Sri Lanka.' (*Spartacist* no 31-32, Summer 1981)

## 1000 march in London:

# Smash anti-Tamil terror in Sri Lanka!

Some 1000 people, primarily Tamil, marched through London on 28 July on the first anniversary of the murderous pogrom in which thousands of Tamils were slaughtered in Sri Lanka instigated by Sinhala-chauvinist UNP president J R Jayewardene. A Spartacist League (SL) contingent of some thirty, including a significant number of Tamil militants who joined our contingent and carried our placards, marched behind a banner reading: 'Smash JR! For the right of Tamil Eelam! For a federated socialist republic of Eelam and Lanka!' In the Tamil province of Jaffna in Lanka, the anniversary was marked by a solid general strike which directly, if temporarily, challenged the repressive military occupation.

When JR visited Britain and the US in late June, he was greeted by militant protests of Eelamists and Spartacist supporters, including a 150-strong picket of the Sri Lanka High Commission in London on 25 June. In the US, JR held secret discussions over the surrender of Trincomalee harbour in the predominantly Tamil Eastern Province to the US for an anti-Soviet naval base. And in both countries he tried to enlist the support of his imperialist patrons in clamping down on embarrassing political activity by Tamil militants in exile. With their common concern over 'international terrorism' -- ie anyone who stands in the way of their anti-Soviet war drive -- Reagan and Thatcher doubtless were more than willing to assist JR. Indeed the 24 June *Sunday Times* reported: 'The [Lankan] president has already made an agreement with the Israeli intelligence organisation, Mossad, and has hired a group of British mercenaries, vet-



London, 28 July: 1000 march on first anniversary of anti-Tamil pogrom in Sri Lanka.

erans of the SAS, to set up an intelligence organisation and a paramilitary force to combat the guerrilla threat.' As SL placards on the demonstration said, 'US/British imperialists, Zionists arm JR's bloody hands!', 'Cops/troops out of Jaffna! Hands off the left! No gag on Eelamists!'

The UNP government's collaboration with the Zionists and the opening of an Israeli Affairs office in the US Embassy in Colombo has caused widespread outrage in Lanka, particularly among radical students, the sizeable Muslim community and even within sections of the Sinhala bourgeoisie, who rely on the export of tea and migrant labour to the Arab East as the second largest source of hard currency. This has helped cement the formation of a new popular-front opposition to JR, including the Sinhala-chauvinist bourgeois SLMP, split away from the SLFP of Mrs Bandaranaike, as well as the ex-Trotskyist LSSP and pro-Moscow CP. Coalitionism is the deadly enemy of the Tamil people and the Sinhala work-masses, responsible for the 'Sinhala only' policy and the bloody massacre of the JVP youth in 1971.

It is the betrayal of the left parties, notably, the LSSP and CP, through previous Sinhala-chauvinist coalition governments which has fuelled the growth of Tamil nationalism, particularly strong in the wake of the last summer's murderous pogrom. But the strategy of nationalism dooms the Tamil masses to another cycle of betrayal and massacre. In 1965 the Tamil nationalist Federal Party entered an earlier UNP government. Today all wings of Tamil nationalism seek reliance on the Hindu-communalist Indian

bourgeois regime of Indira Gandhi. 'No faith in Indira Gandhi, butcher of Sikhs and the [radical-nationalist Bangladeshi] Mukti Bahini', chanted our comrades on the 28 July protest.

Because of our outspoken opposition to suicidal reliance on the Hindu-communalist Gandhi regime, our comrades were excluded by Tamil nationalists from an anti-JR protest in the US in June. Our contingent in the London anti-JR protest were told not to chant any slogans directed against Gandhi -- or Thatcher or the anti-Soviet war drive! Indeed it was for this reason that our request for a speaker at the 28 July rally was refused by the Eelam Solidarity Campaign organisers, who went on instead to invite speakers not only for the pro-imperialist Labour Party (including Militant MP Dave Nellist, whose NSSP co-thinkers in Lanka are the left tail of the Sinhala-chauvinist popular front) but from an open party of British imperialism, the Liberals. When Spartacist supporters raised a chant in protest at Liberal MP Simon Hughes -- 'Down with capitalist politicians! Liberal Party hates the miners!' -- the nationalist organisers went into a frenzy. But widespread recognition among Tamil militants of the Spartacist tendency's consistent defence of Tamil rights was reflected in the sharp, and heated, division within the ESC over granting us a speaker. One ESC member in a 20 July meeting admitted that the SL, as the only socialist organisation in Britain to stand by the Tamil people, certainly had the right to a speaker.

The liberation of the Tamil masses in Lanka does not lie through appeals to the bloody bour-

continued on page 11



Protest against JR's visit to London, 25 June

# Victory to heroic women strikers!

In Sri Lanka 1300 members of the Industrial Transport & General Workers Union are entering their fifth month on strike against Polytex. Polytex is the largest garment factory operating in the area of Colombo's Free Trade Zone (FTZ) with a workforce that is 95 per cent Sinhalese women. The union has issued an urgent international appeal for financial aid and support to this important struggle.

Workers at Polytex first went on strike in December 1982, and after a month-long struggle won increased wages and the union membership grew rapidly after the strike. On 17 February this year the company, which had been breaking down the terms of this agreement provocatively sacked seven militants, including members of the union committee, and the women walked off the job again. They demanded reinstatement of the seven, and advanced a full log of claims covering payment of six months production bonuses owed them, increased pay, more annual leave, provision by the company of one meal a day, provision of transport and medical help in cases of illness on the job (a frequent occurrence) and the release of one worker for full-time union business!

Young Sinhala women make up the bulk of the workforce in the FTZ set up in 1978 by the JR Jayewardene regime to entice foreign investment to the island in hopes of an 'economic miracle' to transform Lanka into another Singapore. Strict government control of access to the area has served to keep the workers unorganised and fearful, unable to resist speed-up, long hours

and enforced overtime, poor working conditions, lack of medical or transport facilities and wages far below levels achieved in the rest of industry.

Support for the Polytex strike is of vital importance in preventing the struggling unions of the FTZ from being destroyed. It is necessary to defend and extend unionisation in the FTZ where concentration camp conditions now exist. It is especially important in light of the recent outburst of bloody Sinhala chauvinism against the Tamil minority, and points the way toward united class struggle of Tamil and Sinhala workers.

The JR government carries out terror against Tamils and has stepped up repression of Sinhala workers and leftists. Last month JR's police and army went on a bloody rampage -- invading the campuses and attacking demonstrators -- which resulted in the closure of six universities in the south and at least two students reported killed. Prior to this ruthless crackdown the Lankan Spartacists and other leftists at Colombo University built support for the Polytex workers amongst the students.

The international Spartacist tendency calls for international working-class solidarity with these brave women wage slaves against the imperialist exploiters and racist-capitalist UNP government of 'Yankee Dickie' Jayewardene. British workers, particularly maritime, should support this strike with industrial muscle as well as words and money. Defence of striking workers, of Tamils, of leftists facing murderous

state terror -- all are critical to fighting JR's aim of making Sri Lanka safe for international capitalist investment and as an anti-Soviet base for US imperialism.

We urge our readers to support the crucial Polytex strike in any way they can, including generous financial contributions. Union Secretary Marcus requests that letters and cables be sent in support of the strike, making special mention to demand that the strike not be referred to compulsory arbitration. He asks that these be addressed to:-

1. The President of the Socialist Democratic Republic of Sri Lanka, Janadhipathi Mandeeraya, Colombo 01.
2. The Minister of Labour, Labour Secretariat, Colombo 05.
3. Mr Sohly Captain, Managing Director, Polytex Garments Ltd, Hemas Building, 3rd Floor, Colombo 01.
4. The Director General, Greater Colombo Economic Commission, 14 Sir Baron Jayatilleke Mawatha, Colombo 01.

Urgently needed financial assistance should be sent to: 'Industrial Transport & General Workers Union', A/c no 894 T, Bank of Ceylon (Lake House Branch).

All correspondence should also be sent to the Industrial Transport & General Workers Union, 53 Rajamalwatte Road, Colombo 15, Sri Lanka.

Reprinted from Australasian Spartacist no 107, July August 1984

# Singh...

(Continued from page 7)

1940 -- when Udham Singh shot him down inside Caxton Hall in London. In contrast to the state funeral for the imperialist butcher Dyer, Udham Singh was buried in an unmarked grave in Pentonville prison after a secret execution.

The British authorities sought to portray Udham Singh as a demented and deranged individual. In India Mahatma Gandhi chimed in to condemn the killing unreservedly, calling it a fit of insanity. But Udham Singh was a valiant fighter against British imperialism. The government ruthlessly suppressed his courtroom speech denouncing British imperialism. Through his act he fulfilled a vow of vengeance made as a twenty-year-old youth when he was wounded at Amritsar, his life spared only because he was sheltered beneath a pile of dead and wounded. He became involved in radical circles, first with the revolutionary-nationalist Ghadr Party and then with Bhagat Singh's Hindustan Socialist Republican Association. Imprisoned for five years, he made his way to Britain upon his release in 1932. Six years later, together with Akbar Ali Khan and Ujjagar Singh and the British Trotskyists, he founded the first Indian Workers Association in Coventry, in opposition to the middle-class Indian League. At the time he was an active member of the electricians union and a delegate to the local trades council.

The means Udham Singh chose to exact vengeance for the imperialist butchery at Amritsar were not those of a communist. In the words of Leon Trotsky:

'We Marxists consider the tactic of individual terror inexpedient in the tasks of the liberating struggle of the proletariat as well as oppressed nationalities. A single isolated hero cannot replace the masses. But we understand only too clearly the inevitability of such convulsive acts of despair and vengeance. All our emotions, all our sympathies are with the self-sacrificing avengers even though they have been unable to discover the correct road.' ('For

Grynszpan', February 1939)

Today, with India teetering on the brink of a recrudescence of communal slaughter bequeathed by this vile imperialist ruling class and Britain's minorities subjected to rising racist terror, we commemorate Udham Singh. Vengeance will come, but, again in Trotsky's words: 'Not a lone avenger but only a great revolutionary mass movement can free the oppressed, a movement that will leave no remnant of the entire structure of class exploitation, national oppression, and racial persecution.' ■

# Women...

(Continued from page 12)

were no longer the same. Now the drive to get women out of the industry was influenced by increasing mechanisation and high unemployment as capitalism was entering its long period of decline. There is no evidence that working conditions for the pit brow lasses were any worse than traditional factory jobs that other women had. Thus, Arthur Munby found that of 39 girls in west Lancashire who left the mills to work at the mines -- which was largely out-of-doors work -- nearly 40 per cent gave impaired health as their reason! Simple safety measures could have sharply cut the accident rate. But the women were left to fend for themselves: not until well into the twentieth century would the mining unions even consider organising them.

## No return to Thatcher's 'Victorian values'

What Angela John does not talk about in her book is the role of the socialist movement. Yet during this very period a similar debate over protective legislation was taking place throughout the developing capitalist countries. In his 'Critique of the Gotha Programme' (1875), Marx advocated protective legislation for women precisely in order to prevent their exclusion from industry. Marxists understand that technological advances under capitalism have rendered the physiological differences between the sexes less and less significant for productive capacity (eg trackwork in a car factory). In cases where protective legislation is not designed simply to exclude women from certain areas of work, we

fight not only to defend it but to extend it to cover all workers.

The revolutionary Chartist movement of the 1840s in which many women were in the forefront initially raised the demand, among others, for universal rather than manhood suffrage. The pro-capitalist reformist labour aristocrats who came in the wake of their defeat sought to channel the workers' nightmarish experience of the brutal degradation wrought by rising capitalism away from class struggle and into such things as the 'uplifting' morality of Methodism. Rather than being uncompromising representatives of the class interests of all workers -- men and women

-- the British trade union leaders represented an emergent labour aristocracy who were the policemen for the bourgeoisie and its corrupt 'moral' values within the workers movement. Instead of leading a fight for jobs for all and equal pay for equal work, the trade union leaders wanted to exclude women in order to give the work to men.

Angela John gives a revealing portrait of this type in miners leader William Pickard, a major spokesman against women working in the pits:

'A temperance advocate and Wesleyan Methodist lay preacher ... he even had £365 invested in shares in the Wigan Coal and Iron Company and was a director of a North Wales colliery... A witness before every House of Commons committee of coalmining from 1860 until his death in 1887, Pickard became the official spokesman for the Wigan miners. Yet his caution and increasingly conciliatory behaviour in strikes made many miners disenchanted with their agent.'

Pickard's association with the miners was ended after he attempted to get the men to agree to the owner's demands in an 1881 strike. As has always been the case, the misleaders who blame women -- or 'foreigners' -- for unemployment are covering up for their own cowardly refusal to fight the bosses.

These misleaders adopted as their own the stinking 'morality' of the ruling class to use as a bludgeon to keep women restricted to a life of household slavery. At root their thinking was little different from the likes of one Richard Ayton, who in 1813 conjured up scenes of 'most

# Spartacist leaflet to USec youth conference How to draw the class line

Reprinted below is a leaflet distributed by the international Spartacist tendency in German, French and English at a conference of United Secretariat (USec) youth in Germany in July. The USec is again wracked by internal turmoil, expressed in a deep schism within its British affiliate, the 'Socialist League' -- an organisation which exists in little more than name given that virtually all its supporters are buried in Neil Kinnock's Labour Party. Indeed so cretinous is the British USec that it waits for the Labour/TUC traitors to call not a general strike, but simply an impotent 'national day of action' and to 'force a general election'!

Today proletarian Europe confronts NATO Europe in the midst of imperialism's anti-Soviet Cold War and Reagan's not-so-cold war against Nicaragua and Salvadorean leftist rebels. Youth who have no illusions in the gilded cage of the bourgeois university and reject 'no future' despair, who want to put an end to rotting capitalism and its threat of nuclear holocaust must choose the path of revolutionary struggle on the side of the working class.

But to even begin the fight against capitalism, you need to see the class line! The United Secretariat (USec) has turned its back on the Trotskyist programme, the only basis for forging Leninist vanguard parties capable of resolving the world crisis of proletarian leadership and leading its class to power. Its militants find themselves marching shoulder to shoulder with every sort of reactionary promoting the Afghan mullahs and Reagan and Thatcher's favourite 'union' Solidarnosc. The USec's American comrades of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) call for 'free speech for fascists' and actually debate these murderous scum, while spitting on Trotskyism and its strategy of permanent revolution. The Australian SWP goes so far as to back what it calls the 'Croatian Solidarnosc' the Ustasha, the partisans of Second World War Croatian 'national socialism' whose atrocities sickened even the SS! These are but the strange fruits of the USec's utter despair in revolutionary solutions. Not so long ago visiting USec

tourists were chanting 'Allah akhbar' for Khomeini's 'Iranian Revolution'. Today, capitulation to the Cold War, the 'anti-stalinist united front' with the social-democratic administrators of imperialism leads to tailing Wojtyla, Walesa and even the Ustasha!

And since the social democrats are for plant occupations and general strikes -- in Gdansk, not Hamburg or Milan -- we find the USec waiting for Labour and the TUC to call the general strike against Thatcher, the SPD to lead the strikes for the 35 hours to victory, for Mitterrand's bourgeois parliament to decree the 'rupture' with capitalism and propose defending the scala mobile ... by referendum.

The defence of the USSR is posed today by imperialist provocations and the installation of the Pershings in Europe. So Mandel in an exchange with us (Frankfurt, December) pretends: 'There is no immediate war with the Soviet Union on the agenda. A war in ten years perhaps, in 15 years perhaps, but not today or tomorrow.' Mandel, who simply equates imperialism and the Stalinist bureaucracy (a parasitic caste which nonetheless rests on the foundation of a workers state) as equally reactionary, who hails Islamic reaction in Afghanistan and clerical nationalism in Poland today won't defend the conquests of October the day after tomorrow! The notion that the defence of the USSR equals the defence of the bureaucrats is not only bourgeois anti-communism, it is also the view of the Stalinists themselves. Our programme for the destruction of Stalinism by proletarian political revolution derives its force from our intransigent defence of the deformed workers states against imperialism.

The USec even gives a new twist to Stalinist 'peaceful coexistence' by demanding the workers states disarm on the promise of success by bourgeois nationalist pacifism in the imperialist West. (Will holding hands stop World War III?) Are all missiles the same? If the Catholic Church's support to draft-dodging in Nicaragua is evidently counterrevolutionary, Lutheran pacifism in East Germany undermines the defence of a state where the bourgeoisie has

been expropriated. (But Mandel thinks German nationalism -- and thus the capitalist reunification of Germany -- is objectively revolutionary.) Mandel knows very well that without the USSR, Vietnam and Cuba would today be radioactive craters, though he counterposes defence of the 'colonial revolution' to defence of the USSR. We say, 'Defence of Cuba and the USSR begins in El Salvador!'

And how does the USec 'defend' the 'colonial revolution'? By supporting the 'political solution' of Mitterrand and the Mexican bourgeoisie for Central America: disarming leftist rebels while leaving the murderous junta intact. This isn't a naive call for the Salvadorean rebels to commit suicide, but an appeasement of American imperialism.

As for the permanent revolution, ie the need for proletarian hegemony of the anti-imperialist struggle, the USec shares the SWP's infatuation with Castroite 'socialism in one country' and the 'revolution by stages' of the petty-bourgeois Sandinista regime. The American SWP has simply gone all the way and formally renounced Trotskyism to curry favour with these 'new revolutionaries'. That is why the SWP remains part of the USec rotten bloc.

As part of his sellout to Stalinism, SWP leader Barnes purged every cadre with even the dimmest memory of Trotskyism, setting up a thought police to make sure his membership all thinks alike. As for the rest of the USec, torn between conflicting opportunist appetites (Castro or Solidarnosc?) its much-vaunted 'democracy' reflected not democratic centralism -- external discipline and internal democracy permitting an open confrontation of political differences -- but a rotten bloc seething with clique warfare. How much longer before the 'Mandelite' sections try Barnes' 'final solution'? In the international Spartacist tendency, comrades are judged according to objective organisational criteria. You do your work and fight out your differences in the organisation.

So we say the emperor has no clothes. The USec is not the Fourth International. If you want to fight for soviet democracy and not capitalist restoration in Poland, for permanent revolution and not Sandinism and the 'political solution' in Central America, for workers mobilisations to crush fascism, for class struggle against capitalist austerity and militarism, not parliamentary cretinism and pacifism, your place is in the iSt! Reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution!

# Defend the Newham 7!

Once again fascist thugs and their racist protectors-in-blue are running rampage against minorities in East London. On Saturday, 7 April and during the week following, seven Asian youth between the ages of 17 to 22 were picked up by police in Newham for defending themselves and their community against violent racist attacks. *All labour and minority organisations must rally to the defence of the Newham 7! Drop the charges now!*

The arrests followed a series of vicious racist assaults in the area that day. In one incident, a 16-year-old partially disabled Asian youth was dragged into a car by a gang of racists, taken to some nearby flats and violently beaten with a hammer. A family shopping in Green Street nearby was also assaulted. More attacks followed, orchestrated by racists in the Duke of Edinburgh pub. When outraged Asian youth fought back against a gang of 15-20 thugs who came charging out of the pub throwing billiard balls, the police arrived and promptly arrested one of the Asians! During the week, six more Asian youth were picked up. The charges include 'affray' and 'conspiracy to cause criminal damage', which carry potentially heavy sentences and are a blatant attempt to criminalise the right of minority self-defence against racist terror.

This outrage comes on the heels of the trials of the Bradford 12 in 1982 and the Newham 8 last year, where conspiracy charges were also raised and were dropped only after sustained and well-publicised defence campaigns. As it was, four of these heroic youth last year were sentenced to fifty hours of 'community service', a vile racist insult. It was for the service of organising to defend their community that they were arrested in the first place! Utopian calls for 'democratic accountability' of the racist, anti-

union cops are provenly worse than useless in stopping the murderous racist attacks. We demand: Smash the racist frame-up! For the right of minority self-defence!

The failure to demonstratively stop fascist race-hate provocations -- in Sheffield last winter, at NLP in the spring, last month at Maidstone -- in this climate of Cold War anti-Communism emboldens them to escalate their racist terror. Recently a Mauritian British Rail ticket collector was murdered when racist swine rammed a metal railing spike into his eye, penetrating his brain. In Newham in May, a 58-year-old man was attacked by racists in a wine bar and beaten so badly he may never be able to work again. The same month in Woolwich an Asian man had his eyes gouged out in a vicious racist attack. And the racist killers continue to walk the streets.

What is necessary, what we have fought for, is to mobilise the social power of organised labour, in this instance particularly the heavily minority workforces at Ford Dagenham and London Transport, through mass trade union/minority mobilisations to sweep the fascists off the streets. Successful mass demonstrations initiated by the Spartacist League/US to stop fascist incursions in major northern cities in the US, as exemplified by the 5000-strong labour/black mobilisation that stopped the KKK from marching in Washington DC in November 1982, point to the strategy that can win.

The Newham 7 Defence Campaign have called for a mass picket at the court hearing on Friday, 14 September outside West Ham Magistrates Court, West Ham Lane, Stratford E15 at 10am. We urge all our readers to be there. Donations and statements of support to: Newham 7 Defence Campaign, PO Box 273, Forest Gate, London E7 9JN.

bestial debauchery' in the mines, of 'licentious wretches ... yielding themselves up, with shameless audacity to the most detestable sensuality'. Or that of Samuel Smiles, who wrote in 1842:

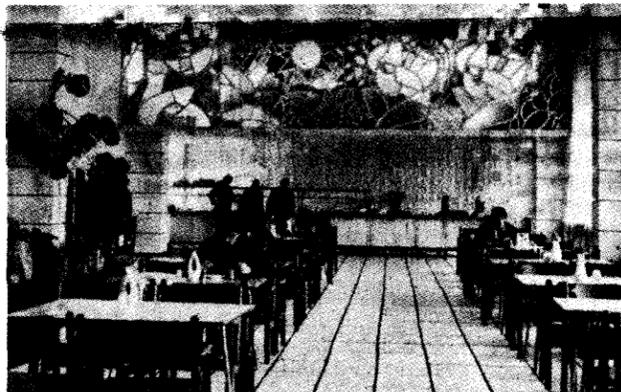
'As surely as you make women day labourers with men, and efface the peculiar modesty and delicacy of the female character so you will produce a ferocious, regardless and desperate population ready for any mischief.'

In 1886 a miners conference in Birmingham resolved that 'all female labour should be entirely prohibited at coal pits' and the National Miners Union, more conservative than the rival Amalgamated Association of Miners, was solidly against women working. Nor was it just a question of the mines. As late as 1943 Britain's huge engineering union did not have a single woman member; by comparison even in 1917 the metalworkers union in Germany, where industrial development came later, was 7 per cent female.

The postwar Attlee Labour government threw women workers on the scrapheap after they had served their purpose running industry for the bosses in wartime. The Callaghan Labour government imposed disgusting virginity tests on Asian women immigrants. And the trade union leaders relegate women to an 'advisory' capacity in the TUC while denying them the right to work in the mines with the argument that they are physically 'unsuited', but look the other way while unorganised Asian women slave in textile mills and garment factories in Bradford or East London at long hours and low pay, where they are exposed to brown lung and other industrial diseases and virtually imprisoned in firetraps in which the bosses regularly lock the fire doors to prevent workers taking breaks. The reformist misleaders are no more capable of defending the interests of women, minorities and the oppressed working masses than of defending trade union rights. This same servility to the established capitalist order is unfortunately reflected in the proposal by the organisers of the 11 August women's march in London to present a petition to the queen. Who wants to tip the forelock to these filthy rich reactionaries?

The exclusion of women from the better paid industrial jobs is accompanied by the institution of reactionary Sunday trading laws, licensing laws, prohibition of night work and other measures designed to discipline the working class and preserve the nuclear family as a bulwark of social stability. The reactionary quality of this social outlook was expressed most viciously by the Nazis, with their slogan 'Kinder, Kirche, Küche' -- children, church, kitchen. And today union-basher Thatcher rants for a return to 'Victorian values' to justify

massive cuts in social welfare and the attempt to drive women out of the labour market in order to pay for an anti-Soviet war drive and increase the profitability of British capitalism. When



Workers' canteen in a Soviet colliery. Britain needs a planned economy.

the ruling class needs to, as when they sent the men off to die in the imperialist slaughter of World Wars I and II, they have no compunction about 'breaking up the family', providing childcare facilities and sending masses of women into industry.

## For women's liberation through socialist revolution

Communists understand that working-class women, doubly oppressed under capitalism, need not be destined to live and die the life of a domestic servant. The nuclear family is the main social institution for the oppression of women under capitalism. Only the creation of a planned, collectivised economy can lay the basis for freeing women from domestic slavery through the collectivisation of household duties and

childcare. Only then will relationships based on mutual care and respect without the straitjacket of economic dependence be possible. Once awakened to this women become the best fighters not only for their rights but for the whole working class and oppressed. The Russian workers revolution was initiated by a demonstration of working women in the streets of St Petersburg in February 1917. The massive rent strikes and anti-militarist agitation in Red Clydeside during World War I were led by heroic women workers, in particular the strategic women munitions workers who countered the 'anti-Hun' war propaganda of the bosses with slogans like, 'We are fighting the Huns at home!'

In the course of this strike women have had to fight their way onto the picket lines against the backward prejudices of union leaders who said it was not 'their place'. And once there they are singled out for the most disgusting male-chauvinist piggery from the strikebreaking cops. Representatives of the women's support groups should be on the strike committees, where they can take their rightful place in leading this struggle and fighting for a strategy to spread it and win it. In many cases the consciousness of the women, freed from the stultifying isolation of home and hearth, has rapidly outstripped that of the strikers.

Capitalism offers the woman worker only further immiseration and dependency. Instead of sending women back into the kitchen the trade unions must fight for equal pay for equal work, special recruitment and training of minorities and women by the unions, free 24-hour childcare facilities and maternity and paternity leave at full pay. Rather than pitting one section of the class against another, we fight for jobs for all through worksharing on full pay.

We of the Spartacist League, socialist revolutionaries, fight for the perspective of a communist women's movement to draw the masses of women in to take their rightful place as class fighters and class leaders, linked to a mass revolutionary workers party. In the words of the programme of Trotsky's Fourth International:

'The decay of capitalism, however, deals its heaviest blows to the woman as a wage-earner and as a housewife. The sections of the Fourth International should seek bases of support among the most exploited layers of the working class; consequently, among the women workers. Here they will find inexhaustible stores of devotion, selflessness and readiness to sacrifice.'

## Tamils...

(Continued from page 9)

geous government of India, much less to British imperialism, but through proletarian revolution on the island and throughout the subcontinent: 'Tamil workers -- key to Lanka/Indian revolution' read one SL placard. Even despite the bitterness and hostility in the wake of last summer's mass murders, opportunities must be sought out to forge class unity against the Lankan bourgeoisie: 'Victory to Polytext workers, class struggle can defeat JR!' we chanted. It is notable that in a parliamentary debate on a wave of campus unrest in Lanka in June, JR's education minister was forced to admit that if it were 'transformed into a police-students struggle ... they would be compelled to bring in the armed forces which were now in the North (Lanka Guardian, 1 July). Our comrades of the Spartacist League/Lanka have established a solid reputation for their intransigent fight for a class-struggle defence of the Tamil people, including the right of Tamil Eelam. Indeed they were instrumental in mobilising a broad campaign for the right of Tamil admissions at the predominantly Sinhala Colombo University. Build the Spartacist League/Lanka! For right of Tamil Eelam! Forward to a federated socialist republic of Eelam and Lanka!'

## Spartacist League Public Meetings

**SPREAD THE STRIKE! BRING DOWN THE IRON LADY!**

**MINERS MUST NOT STAND ALONE!**

**HANDS OFF UNION FUNDS -- SMASH THE TORY ASSAULT!  
FOR A REVOLUTIONARY LEADERSHIP IN THE UNIONS!**

7.00 pm, Tuesday, 7 August  
The Globe,  
Upper Brook Street  
Rugeley  
Birmingham  
Phone 021 554 7711

7.00 pm, Thursday, 9 August  
Celynen Collieries Memorial Institute  
High Street  
Newbridge  
Gwent  
Phone 01 278 2232

1.00 pm, Friday, 10 August  
The Red Deer  
Pitt Street  
Sheffield  
Phone 0742 737067

# SPARTACIST BRITAIN

## Women in the coalfields: Class fighters, class leaders!

**No discrimination against  
women!  
Jobs for all!  
Free 24 hour childcare!**

The role of women in the miners strike has awakened this country to working class women as a political powerhouse. Their militant marches and rallies, their courageous upfronting of scabs and cops on the picket lines, their absolutely essential and efficient organisation of food distribution and daily hot meals for strikers and their families in the face of the Iron Lady's starvation threats, their cast-iron determination to win -- 'We shall eat grass rather than give in to her' -- have played a critical role in this decisive class battle. They have put to shame the feminist myth that the woman struggle and the class struggle can be separate. And, as we pointed out early in the strike, 'These courageous women in the coalfields are demonstrating in action that in the midst of sharp social struggle, the capitalists' design to keep women isolated to home and hearth can be broken down' (*Spartacist Britain* no 56, April 1984).

The determination of these women is a measure of what's at stake in this strike -- the livelihoods of thousands, the existence of entire communities, the union which stands as their sole defence against a vicious capitalist offensive. This strike must spread -- to rail and transport, to steel and power -- to smash the Tory rampage against the NUM. And in victory it can open up a whole new vista of class struggle, an opportunity to push forward towards the destruction of this whole capitalist system which throws workers on the slag heap and offers women nothing but chains.

For thousands of these women, the thought of returning to a life of unbroken household drudgery is sheer anathema. As one miner's wife in the Midlands put it, 'I'd like to be paid for working eight hours a day, instead of doing twenty hours housework.' But they know all too well that the few jobs available to them are usually marginal, non-unionised and low-paid. And when they can find a job there are the seemingly insurmountable problems of childcare and



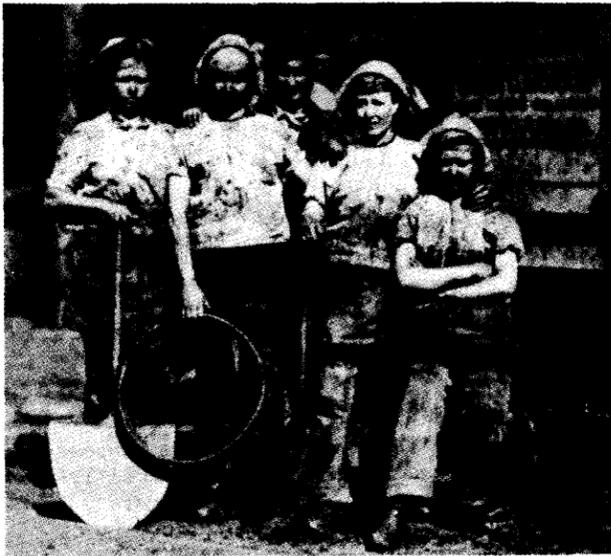
Militant miners' wives have been fighting hard for a strike victory. When the strike is over they must have the right to take their place as comrades-in-arms on the job as well.

so on. Why shouldn't these militant women who have been fighting to defend miners' jobs themselves have the right to a job in the mines when this fight is won? And we can start by getting rid of every last filthy scab and giving those jobs to the women who have been fighting to win this strike.

In the USSR women do a whole range of surface jobs such as fitters and control system operators, and in China women lead coal-cutting teams. In these workers states, however bureaucratically deformed, the planned economy allows for child-care facilities and for production not on the basis of profit and mass unemployment but for social progress. And even in capitalist America, over 3500 women have won the right -- always reversible under capitalism -- to work underground since the mid-1970s, some progressing from unskilled jobs to work at the face. A century ago, Friedrich Engels, one of the founders of communism, summed up the question of women's oppression under capitalism as follows:

'We can already see from this that to emancipate woman and make her the equal of the man is and remains an impossibility so long as the woman is shut out from social productive labour and restricted to private domestic labour. The emancipation of woman will only be possible when woman can take part in production on a large, social scale, and domestic work no longer claims anything but an insignificant amount of her time.' (*The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*)

This is so clear in Britain today, where the quality of life is such that old-age pensioners die from lack of heating and school-leavers face a life of unemployment, that to provide jobs for



Pit-brow lasses in Wigan.

women will take a socialist revolution and the creation of a planned economy.

Angela John's book, *By the Sweat of Their Brow* (1980), recently released as a paperback, provides fascinating evidence that women have been no strangers to the mines in Britain either. Before 1842 women, as well as small children, worked underground. And as late as 1953 there were still 956 women surface workers, 'pit brow lasses' (the last two retired in 1972). John draws on parliamentary debates, interviews with former pit brow lasses and the diaries of Arthur Munby, a sentimental lawyer/photographer/educator who championed their cause.

In 1800 Britain produced 80 per cent of the world's coal, mostly in small pits based on family labour. Women and children generally did not receive an independent wage but were contracted for by their husband or father. Thus the merciless mine owners obtained the labour power of a whole family for the meagre wage of one worker. Women in rags and tatters would carry baskets of 1½ cwt or more up and out of the pit or push boxes or tubs, often in low, cramped and damp places. Little wonder that accidents, stillbirths and deformities were commonplace. An early socialist paper raged that 'women, mothers of families, were employed underground to do the work of brutes -- the thing was too barbarous to be tolerated for a moment longer in this our Christian country'.

Given the social devastation perpetrated upon the working class by such conditions, in which (in Karl Marx's words), nine generations were passed in the space of three, the Mining Act of 1842 excluding women and small children from underground work was certainly beneficial. The British mining industry was a rampant hell-hole of bestial exploitation; rapidly developing industrial capitalism practically led to the wholesale destruction of the fabric of social life and indeed of the working masses as a whole. It took decades of hard class struggle and the forging of effective unions to achieve even the modicum of safety standards that exist today. And it will take a socialist revolution to make the mines -- and all occupations -- truly as safe as possible. But the attempt to justify the exclusion of women from the mining industry today in no way advances the interests of women or the labour movement but reflects job-trusting unionism and the bourgeois moral code that 'a woman's place is in the home'.

By the time of the first, unsuccessful, attempts to exclude women from surface work -- in the 1880s, with a proposed amendment to the Mines Regulation Act (1872), and again in 1911 when the unions insisted that surface jobs be reserved for disabled male miners -- conditions

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