



Introducing Workers Hammer

The eighth national conference of the Spartacist League/Britain, meeting in London in mid-August, voted to change the name of our monthly newspaper *Spartacist Britain*. Following a meeting of our newly-elected Central Committee and subsequent consultation it was resolved to rename the paper *Workers Hammer*.

Through more than six years of publication and sixty numbers, *Spartacist Britain* has ad-

ressed the key issues of domestic and international politics from the standpoint of Marxism. From no 1 announcing 'The rebirth of British Trotskyism' up to the recent extensive coverage of the miners' heroic battle, it has been an increasingly effective collective organiser and tool of intervention for our organisation. And in recent months it has

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Miners, T&G, rail: Forge a fighting Triple Alliance! General strike now!

Bullshit in Brighton, class war on the picket lines

'In Monday afternoon's debate at the Trades Union Congress in Brighton there were three honest speakers. Arthur Scargill explained why he wanted the power workers to support the miners, and Eric Hammond and John Lyons explained why they wouldn't. All the rest was bullshit.' (Peter Kellner, *New Statesman*, 7 September)

While the 'parliament of the labour movement' lived up to its namesake in hot air, class war continued to rage on the picket lines. To follow the TUC deliberations, you would not know that dockers were out on national strike alongside the miners, threatening a stranglehold on this island economy. Flying pickets of Liverpool dockers spread out to shut down two small scab ports while thousands of miners from Tilmanstone in Kent to Bilston Glen in Scotland fought to defend their picket lines against an army of scabherding cops. For the second time in two months the country hangs on the verge of a general strike. Now is the time to make it happen!

Yet the NUM leadership has now not only acquiesced to TUC intervention but as we go to press it is closetted in renewed negotiations with the Coal Board. If ever there were a time not to be locked in a hotel room with Mac the Knife, this is it. To hell with the Labour/TUC Judases! Dump the negotiations! Don't let the moment slip! With the dockers out now is the time for the NUM to demand the TGWU and rail unions join it in all-out strike action. *Shut down the country!*

For a fighting Triple Alliance!

The British labour movement stands at a decisive crossroads. A month after returning to work with nothing but worthless promises, the dockers were again provoked into strike action on 24 August by British Steel's use of scab labour to unload a blacked coal-carrying ship at Hunterston. The miners' hard and tenacious battle, which has inspired huge sections of the labour movement and the oppressed, has again won them a powerful ally on the picket lines. The power to defeat Thatcher is palpably there, even if weakened by failure to carry the fight through to victory the first time. The combined dock and

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Thousands of militant coalfield women marching through London, 11 August: 'No surrender'.



Spartacist banner in Brighton, 3 September. Miners, railmen, TGWU members must demand a fighting Triple Alliance to shut down the country through all-out strike action.

New member quits Cliffites in disgust

SWP: Scabbing With Pleasure

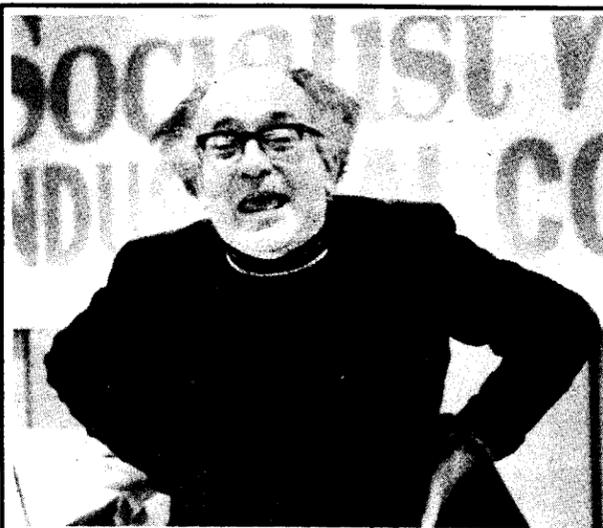
From Derbyshire to the London docks of Tilbury, the picket line has been the weapon by which this strike has been built and spread. 'Picket lines mean don't cross' is the slogan of decent trade unionists everywhere who want to see the miners victorious and Thatcher's union-bashing smashed. So widespread is this recognition among trade unionists that NUR head Jimmy Knapp said at the Brighton TUC: 'Even if a cow crossed the road with NUM picket painted on its side, we wouldn't cross.'

So what do you make of a self-professed 'revolutionary' organisation, claiming 4000 members, that publicly boasts of how many of its members have been crossing the picket lines of miners? That's the despicable role of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). And there are some SWPers who have had it with this scab policy. We print below Gordon Mitchell's letter of resignation from the SWP. Comrade Gordon tipped us off to SWP-sanctioned scabbing at the Lackenby Steelworks in the Middlesbrough area. And when confronted with this by an NUR militant and Spartacist supporter at a public meeting at London's Conway Hall on 23 August, SWP guru Tony Cliff reeled off the names of several more steel plants where SWP members are crossing picket lines (see box). It would have made Bill

Sirs blush! Comrades who attended this meeting felt like they had accidentally wandered into a meeting of Notts scabs. Cliff tried to justify the scabbing by pleading how 'isolated' the miners are. And this happened to be the very day that Scottish dockers walked out and the second national dock strike was about to be called. But what can you expect from an outfit like the SWP which believes that 'the miners' strike is an extreme example of ... the "downturn" in the movement' (*Socialist Review*, April 1984)? Cliff's peculiar 'downturn' theory, which he's been flaunting since the beginning of Cold War claims that the trade unions have already been decisively defeated -- in the throes of economic recession it is impossible to win major class battles, so why bother to try. The scab-herding SWP has been doing its damndest to turn this 'theory' into reality!

And those who are soft on scabs will not surprisingly be soft on the strikebreaking cops as well. The 31 August *Socialist Worker* favourably contrasts the 'solidarity' demonstration by the West German police federation in the recent metalworkers strike with the role of their British 'brothers'! Nor is scabherding new to these 'rank and file' fakers. During the 1980 steel strike, SWP members at Ford Dagenham waltzed across steelworkers' picket lines while Cliff joined Len Murray in explicitly opposing the call for a general strike.

Today the SWP's 'downturn' theory neatly



Tony 'We cross picket lines' Cliff.

'The miners' strike is an extreme example of what we in the Socialist Workers Party have called the "downturn" in the movement.' (Tony Cliff, *Socialist Review*, April 1984)

'On the question of our steelworkers crossing picket lines. We have steelworkers in Redcar who cross picket lines. We have three steelworkers in Scunthorpe, they cross picket lines. We have a steelworker in Ravenscraig who crosses picket lines. We have a steelworker in Llanwern who crosses picket lines...' (Tony Cliff, London SWP public meeting, 23 August 1984)

dovetails with the 'new realism' of the labour bureaucracy. Throughout the strike we have stressed the integral link between defence of the Soviet Union and defence of the unions at home. It was at Blackpool a year ago that the TUC right wing hammered home the treacherous 'new realism' by witchhunting Scargill for correctly calling the CIA-backed Solidarnosc 'anti-socialist'. And it's been the most violently anti-Soviet trade union leaders like Bill Sirs and Frank Chapple who have been most vociferous in scabbing on the miners.

Of the British left, the SWP is among the most virulent Soviet-haters. This position dates back to the first Cold War, when Cliff and his *Socialist Review* group broke with Trotskyism in refusing to defend the North Korean deformed workers state against imperialism -- thus making their peace with their own bourgeoisie in the early 1950s. After Russian troops intervened in Afghanistan to fight the CIA-backed mullahs in 1979, SWP leader Paul Foot launched a social-patriotic, anti-Soviet campaign through his column in the *Daily Mirror*, with articles like 'Are We Putting Beef Into Russia's Invasion'. The article was picked up by the *Sun* newspaper, Tory MP's and assorted other reactionaries who used it to fuel their anti-Soviet crusade. Today the SWP joins the likes of Chapple in championing Polish Solidarnosc, whose leader Lech Walesa terms Maggie Thatcher 'a wise and brave woman'.

As the American Trotskyist leader James P Cannon once said, 'Who touches the Russian Question, touches a revolution.' Stripped of its veneer, the anti-Soviet SWP's economist 'rank-and-file' is indistinguishable from the politics of British social democracy -- and not necessarily its most left versions. Despite the Cliffites' anti-Labourite posturing, come election time they advocate support to Labour hell or high water on principle, regardless of the circumstances. Thus with Callaghan in 1979, and again with Foot in 1983, they backed Labour when it stood on platforms of Social Contract strikebreaking and anti-Soviet war drive. And for all the assorted criticisms of trade union bureaucrats you find in *Socialist Worker*, the reality is something else: an organisation that sanctions its members crossing picket lines, that when push comes to shove believes in pressuring the most right-wing misleaders. Thus the SWP along with the rest of the fake left was busy calling for a lobby of the TUC early this month.

We've already had reports of rumblings in the SWP ranks over Cliff's scab line. And the leadership is apparently under pressure to prove how SWP steelworkers are backing the miners. So in the September 8 issue of *Socialist Worker* there's a weird exchange of letters between two Ravenscraig steelworkers, one entitled 'Why

we're working' and the reply (presumably by an SWP supporter) called 'Why we should stop'. But the real question, which of course is never posed in this fraudulent 'debate', is why the SWP has been crossing picket lines at Ravenscraig and elsewhere.

There are no doubt other militants like Gordon Mitchell who mistakenly joined the SWP because they thought it was a militant, fighting organisation. For those who can't stomach a group that scabs on the miners at home and on the Russian Revolution, there is an alternative. Through his discussions with our comrades, Gordon Mitchell has since joined the Spartacist League.

Letter of resignation from SWP

Comrades,

When I joined the SWP (June 1984), I had as many of you are aware serious reservations as to the revolutionary credibility of a party that systematically refused to recognise the gains of the October Revolution -- nationalised property, the monopoly on foreign trade, and a planned economy -- and the fundamental necessity to defend those gains against imperialism and internal -- imperialist backed -- counterrevolutionary movements.

While being perfectly aware that the Cliff theory of 'state capitalism' was a cynical and opportunist revision of Marxist theory, I assumed that at least on the domestic question the SWP appeared to adhere to orthodox Marxism -- 'the revolutionary road to socialism' and that on that basis I should join and work within the organisation, and particularly with the miners strike on.

Any illusions concerning a perceived contradiction between the SWP's class position on the Soviet Union and other degenerated/deformed workers states and the class struggle at home were at last week's (9th August) Middlesbrough public meeting of the SWP, completely dispelled.

Following a talk by Tony Cliff on 'The Revolutionary Ideas of Karl Marx', an SWP member (a steelworker at Lackenby Steelworks, BSC) asked Cliff for a statement of the Party position on SWP members crossing picket lines. (This SWP member had himself been crossing miners' picket lines at British Steel for some time.) What follows is an account of Cliff's reply, and various comments made throughout the course of the meeting.

Cliff's reply to the scab was that he didn't want him to feel guilty, and that there were comrades up and down the country who were crossing picket lines and going into work where they could be more effective. He mentioned Ravenscraig. Cliff said, he didn't want to see people like him (the scab) victimised unnecessarily. He said you have got to be realistic about this and know when and when not to cross picket lines. If you are an individual or an insignificant group of people and most workers are going into work, it's not worthwhile putting your job on the line.

Cliff then abandoned this topic and proceeded to answer other people's questions. When the opportunity arose I said to Cliff that 'what you effectively said was that if the majority scab, it's quite legitimate for the minority to scab also. My question to you is (it was officially the period set for questions) what's to prevent the minority of Notts miners who are on strike adopting this line of reasoning and joining the majority who are working, and were they to do so would you endorse that as well?'

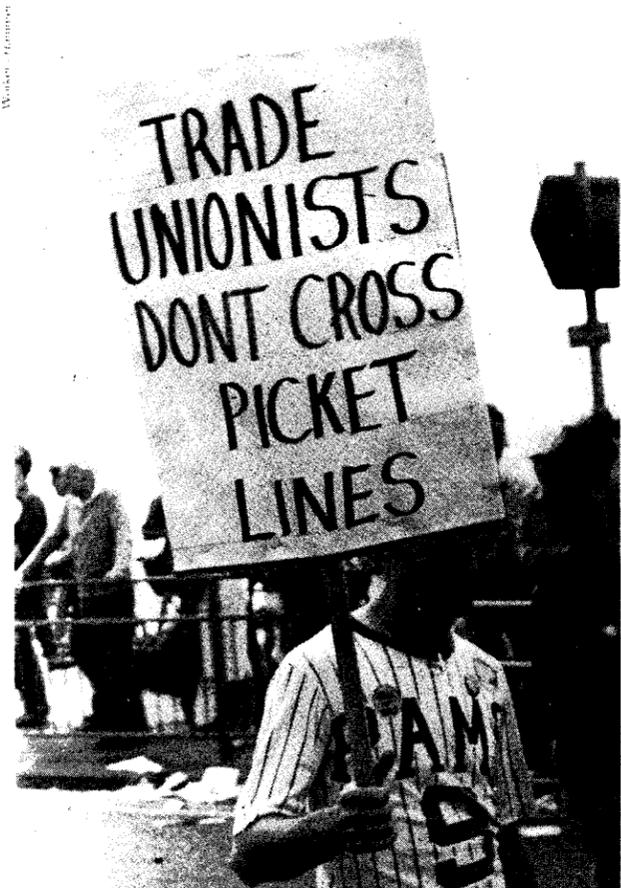
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WORKERS HAMMER

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Militant trade unionist at Brighton TUC knows better than Cliff and his gang.

Troops out of Ireland now!

Belfast's Bloody Sunday

'The RUC started rolling the jeeps into the crowd and some people were hit by them. Everybody got up to run and they started firing plastic bullets.... A man beside me was shot on the head. His blood was on my jacket and all over my trousers.... It was an incredible scene, it was hard to believe, I've seen nothing like it before and I hope never to see it again....' (An Phoblacht, 16 August)

So Jean Martin, a young New Yorker in Northern Ireland as part of a delegation from the Irish Republican fund-raising organisation Noraid, described the horrific scenes in Belfast on Sunday, August 12. That afternoon in front of reporters and cameramen from around the world, the Royal Ulster Constabulary murderously assaulted a protest rally on the 13th anniversary of the introduction of internment without trial. Firing plastic bullets indiscriminately into an unarmed

crowd including small children, the RUC butchers injured dozens and left 22-year-old Sean Downes lying dead on the pavement, victim of a bullet fired at pointblank range into the heart. It was Bloody Sunday all over again.

Two thousand demonstrators had marched up the Falls Road to Andersonstown, shadowed by hundreds of British soldiers and RUC men in armoured Land Rovers. At the head was a British 'Troops Out' contingent including, in a powerful display of international workers solidarity, a delegation of striking coal miners. The first speaker at the rally outside Sinn Fein headquarters was a member of Nottingham trades council, who compared 'what is happening in your country and what is happening in what are supposed to be our coalfields. The use of repression by the police against the striking miners ... is directly culled from the repression that has been systematically used against the nationalist people for the past 15 years.'

Then Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams asked the crowd to sit down in preparation for featured speaker Martin Galvin, the publicity director of Noraid who had slipped into Northern Ireland in defiance of a government exclusion order. Turning to the assembled police and soldiers, Adams warned, 'If you want to kill men, women and children, this is your opportunity, because we are not moving.' When Galvin appeared, police immediately moved forward in their armoured vehicles and began to shoot. RUC and British government spokesmen later claimed their aim was to capture Galvin for deportation. But the Noraid publicity director was able to slip away while the bloodthirsty sectarian cops unloaded round after round of bullets into the fleeing crowd. Even reporters from the Tory British press had to admit the attack was entirely unprovoked. Such brutal wanton state murder is a near-everyday occurrence in Northern Ireland -- but this time TV cameras flashed the pictures around the world to the deep embarrassment of the Thatcher government.

The next day 10,000 outraged Republican supporters retraced the route of the march carrying black flags of mourning and protest. Two thousand more marched in Derry on Tuesday, while similar protests were held in Dublin and other towns in the Irish Republic. In London 200 protesters, including a contingent from the Spartacist League, picketed Downing Street on the evening of 15 August. While the picket organisers restricted themselves to a call to 'ban plastic bullets', appealing to the imperialists to 'disband the RUC' and politely applauded a speaker from the strikebreaking capitalist Liberal Party, our comrades chanted, 'Down with Liberal imperialism! Avenge Sean Downes! Troops out now!' Three days later 3000 people marched through the city to demonstrate for withdrawal of troops from Ireland.

Sean Downes was the 15th person killed by



RUC murders Sean Downes (far right) as they open fire on Irish Republican rally, Belfast, 12 August.

RUC plastic bullets since their introduction in the mid-70s -- joining hundreds of other overwhelmingly Catholic victims of state-sanctioned terror through the past 15 years. 'Shoot to kill' is the RUC/army policy towards suspected Republican militants. When three RUC officers were put on trial earlier this year for killing three unarmed Irish Republican Army volunteers (they sprayed more than 100 live bullets into their victims' car) the judge not only found them innocent but suggested they deserved medals!

The Thatcher government has continued the hardline policies of state terror in Northern Ireland inherited from past Labour regimes which despatched the troops in the first place. The British army, RUC and Northern Ireland courts

and prisons serve to shore up Protestant ascendancy over the specially oppressed Catholic minority in the sectarian Six County statelet. Northern Ireland serves the British bourgeoisie as a training ground for police/army repressive techniques later employed at home, from the inner city ghettos to the coalfields. Keeping the troops terrorising Catholics in Derry and Belfast evidently suits the blood lust of Mrs Thatcher, who so gloated despatching hundreds of Argentine sailors to the bottom of the South Atlantic aboard the *Belgrano*.

The Labour Party leadership despicably agrees with the Iron Lady that troops should remain in Northern Ireland. Spokesman Clive Soley could only moan after the 12 August events that the RUC was 'put in an impossible situation' by the exclusion order against Galvin. But the pro-Labour *Daily Mirror*, reflecting war-weariness in parts of the ruling class, promotes

withdrawal of the troops and 'Irish unity', as does a section of the Labour 'left' around Tony Benn. Benn, who was a member of the Wilson Cabinet which despatched the troops in 1969, recently published a draft parliamentary bill calling for British withdrawal. But his 'alternative' is to despatch United Nations troops in their place! His model is the 1948 ~~British withdrawal from Palestine, which was~~ followed by Zionist terror against the Palestinian Arabs whose lands were then divided between the new 'Jewish state' and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Benn's programme for 'Irish unity', also championed by sundry fake revolutionaries, amounts to a call for forcible reunification of

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A striking miner reports Eyewitness to RUC terror

A striking miner from Yorkshire, in Belfast with other NUM members as part of the 'Troops Out' delegation, spoke to us about his experiences.

We woke up about 8 o'clock in the morning and I counted about four or five RUC trucks within the space of half an hour, coming down the road we were on, checkpointing. All they do is just coast up and down harassing people. We saw a lot of harassment, where they're travelling along with their doors open! They drive slow enough so you think, are they gonna stop and harass me, or what? It tends to frighten you. I mean, people in Ireland will be used to it now but we were frightened, because the guy there with a gun pointing out the door is ready to open the door and jump out and search any time.

Q: Whose homes were you staying at?

Just Catholic people. Anybody that'd put us up. Some lads there lived with a woman and her husband who was still in -- he'd done about ten years for explosives and he was still in there.

Q: The place where you stayed, what was your impression of it?

A ghetto in fact, that's how it came across to me. I've been to Brixton and it were a poor man's Brixton as far as I'm concerned. I mean I thought Brixton were bad, but these people have doors in the back garden, ready for when the army comes and kicks in the door, so that they can put another door on. And they've houses all burnt out. A lot of the tenants when they move out, if they don't leave furniture the kids come and petrol bomb houses and burn them out so no sniper can live in it or owt like that, or the army. I suppose it's good in a way, but it's frightening.

Q: What did people do when they heard that you were miners, English miners? Were there just English or were there Scots miners or Welsh miners?

There were some Welsh miners down there but we were mostly from England; I don't think there were any Scots there. There were plenty of Scots on the Saturday for the internment march.

We didn't really get much chance to say what job we were in. We talked to a lot of people about their repression, things like that. On the march there were banners and people shouting about the miners and a really big banner, 'Victory to the miners'.

Q: Who put that up?

I couldn't tell you who put that up. But it were draped over a big building. It makes you really chuffed inside, to feel that these people have got their own repression and they're fighting and wishing us all the best on ours. As soon as they found out we were miners, everyone were cheering and clapping and everything, they were really nice towards us.

Q: Could you tell us what actually happened on the demo?

To start off we met and marched up a road towards Andersonstown. Over there on a demo you use both sides of the roads and you only have three people, one in the middle and one at each side, just in case there's a riot, sniper firing or anything, so people are not bumping into each other, which I thought was quite good. We were near the front of the procession. I noticed all the way on every street end there were RUC men and army. And what I noticed about the RUC men, their plastic bullet guns were all cocked, they were ready for firing, whereas the army had

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General strike...

(Continued from page 1)

miners strikes have already plunged the pound to a new low, threatened strategic NATO exercises in Germany and forced Thatcher to cancel a war-mongering visit to the likes of Sri Lanka's anti-Tamil butcher Jayewardene in South Asia. And the rail unions have issued instructions to honour dockers' pickets and seamen to black cross-Channel shipping.

This time there had better not be any retreat. Either it's fought through into a hard political challenge threatening this government or it's capitulation to Thatcher and the crippling of the trade unions. The Labour and TUC misleaders have made clear at Brighton and before that they do not want a miners' victory, only an end to the strike. Even amid their meaningless Brighton blather Murray, Basnett, Duffy & Co promised the NUM nothing at all -- instead they would dearly love to strongarm Arthur Scargill into a sellout. But as the bosses' *Economist* put it, many trade union leaders understandably think that for Thatcher 'the only good trade union is a dead one'. Today a series of strategic unions are either striking alongside the miners or taking some sort of official action in their support. Militants must call on the leaders of these unions to launch all-out coordinated strike action now, and in particular NUR and ASLEF militants must fight to reverse the perfidious decision by their leaders to cancel a work-to-rule and 24-hour stoppage and demand instead an immediate national strike in BR and London Transport. As we wrote eight weeks ago:

'The NUS, NUR, ASLEF and TGWU must call all their members out in immediate strike action. If rail, transport, mines and maritime are shut down, that will be a general strike. It will lay a powerful basis for pulling out other key sections of workers, especially in steel and power, over the heads of their scabherding misleaders.... A revived, fighting version of the Triple Alliance is the way to organise a general strike now....' (Spartacist Britain supplement, 16 July)

Such a general strike, organised over the head of the craven TUC, must raise a series of concrete demands: Victory to the miners -- Smash the attack on the dockers union! No more redundancies -- No more denationalisations! For a 10 per cent wage rise across the board linked to full cost-of-living indexing! Drop all charges against victimised strikers! These modest demands won't be granted by this hardbitten Tory government. But a determined fight for them can weld together decisive sections of the labour movement in a struggle that topples warmonger Thatcher. The key is a leadership prepared to go all-out in a battle against the capitalist state, a battle which necessarily poses the question of power: which class rules?

The TUC and Labour Party leadership fear and hate the prospect of such class struggle above all else -- and are doing everything in their power to sabotage it. Brighton reaffirmed the Cold War line-up established a year ago in



Miners march through Dalkeith, Scotland, 25 August.

Blackpool and drawn in the blood of the NGA last December. Vicious scabherders like Eric Hammond of the EPTU spoke for the Tory front bench; Labour chief Neil Kinnock was the violence-baiting voice of Fleet Street. What was most notable was what was not said: nobody addressed the dock strike, by far the most significant act of solidarity with the miners.

Scargill's eleventh-hour deal with Murray aimed at restoring the worm-eaten facade of TUC 'unity' came at the expense of the miners' struggle. Not only did the final resolution drop the call for a mandatory levy, it replaced a specific call not to cross miners' picket lines with a vague appeal not to move coke or coal contingent upon the appeal of other unions -- and the unions that count are Chapple/Hammond's EPTU, Sirs' ISTC and Lyons' power engineers! 'Moderate' David Basnett summed up the dilemma of the TUC tops: we oppose 'violence' (read: class struggle) but we don't want to see the NUM destroyed. But this is not the era of beer and sandwiches at Number Ten; what Thatcher wants is another Belgrano. Posed with the choice, the Labour/TUC misleaders would rather see the NUM destroyed than unleash the general strike which could torpedo the Iron Lady. Scargill's 'unity' with these bastards is an obstacle to victory.

While the TUC rights openly scabherd, Kinnock has been working frantically to forestall the threatened 'big bang' of union struggle in the autumn. 'I don't think that the trade union leadership would go for it because it would be such a monumental gamble and because it is not the way British trade unionism works', said the despicable Kinnock of the prospect of a hot autumn of political strikes (*Guardian*, 14 August). In Brighton he echoed Thatcher/MacGregor yet again with his unspeakable rubbish about miners' 'violence' being the 'pretext' for stepped-up police repression. Several miners in the gallery walked out in disgust as this so-called 'labour leader' spat on their struggle.

The same kind of backstabbing defeatism is displayed grotesquely by the anti-Soviet Socialist Workers Party (SWP) of Tony Cliff. Cliff's 'downturn' theory, whereby the unions are supposed to have been decisively defeated around the same time Cold War II began, simply mirrors Murray's 'new realism'. Thus it is not surprising that Cliff boasts of SWP members crossing miners' picket lines all over the country (see 'SWP: Scabbing With Pleasure', p2). With this disgusting scabbing, Cliff & Co are doing their best to make defeat and downturn a reality.

The defeatists and backstabbers inside the labour movement are linked by a common attitude towards the anti-Soviet war drive. This was established at Blackpool last year, when Arthur Scargill was roundly witchhunted for his correct condemnation of CIA-backed Polish Solidarnosc, the favourite 'union' of Thatcher and Reagan. Murray and his cohorts used this attack to push through their lie-down-and-play-dead 'new realism' policy -- and that was the go-ahead for Thatcher to attack the miners. A year later the most hardened pro-CIA Cold Warriors like Sirs and Chapple have been the most vociferous in urging workers to cross miners' picket lines. Similarly, Cliff's SWP is at least consistent in supporting a scab union in Poland and scabbing at home. Power and steel workers must reverse the scabherding policies of their misleaders: if the miners lose, we all lose!

Build picket lines, don't cross them!

The British workers movement today sees a sharp polarisation between those who want to fight and those who believe that the trade unions are beaten or fear to mobilise their power. The Cold War defeatists are prepared to see the unions crippled rather than fight. But

Class war in Yorkshire coalfields

Workers Hammer correspondents report from one of their trips through the Yorkshire coalfield, on the morning of August 22:

We arrived at Hatfield Miners Welfare just after 3.30am. It was open but there was no one around, so we drove down to the picket line. There were about 10 young lads, they came over to us in the car, we told them who we were, gave them supplements. They said they were expecting more pickets from the Miners Welfare at 4.30am. We drove down the road to find somewhere safe to park. About 6 of these guys stopped on their way home and talked to us for a while. They said the cops had gone on the rampage down this road yesterday, laying into women, children, an old guy going into his house; women and children cowering at the bus stops, screaming. It sounded just like Northern Ireland. They said the cops were 'foreigners', not the local ones, who keep well out of it.

When we got back to the picket line there were about 40 people. Most people were going in vans to Bentley pit, about 8 miles away. They'd heard that a scab was going to try to get through, and that there were about 500 cops there. Apparently the guy who had scabbed at Hatfield was not going in again and had apologised for the trouble he had caused.

We took a couple of lads from the picket line to Bentley with us; they were unemployed, had been on various training schemes, etc. They supported the miners, said they were fighting for all of us. Apparently there are a lot of unemployed who support the picket lines. At the entrance to the pit was a barricade of a coach, a wrecked car and a crane. There were two other barriers at 20 yard intervals behind it ... and a strong smell of petrol. Someone told us that about 40 miners had got hold of a crane and worked on it dur-

ing the night. They were really proud of themselves. The back entrance was also well barricaded. They tried to fell a tree here, but I don't think they managed it. Apparently it would have been possible for a scab to get in across the fields, but, as one miner said, they don't want to do that, they want to make a big show of going through the main gates. One miner announced 'They shall not pass' as he examined the barricades.

A lot of miners asked who we were, as I had a camera with me, but once we said Spartacist, and gave them our supplement, they were ok. We walked into the village, and saw a load of cop vans parked at the other side of the village. Nothing much seemed to be happening, all the Hatfield pickets had gone; so we decided to go to Armthorpe, as the pickets at Hatfield said there were big pickets there. Just as we were leaving we saw police vans moving into the slip road leading to Bentley. From what we heard later, it seemed that no scab ventured to get in. Whoever it was must have got wind that it wouldn't be easy. Everyone seemed to know about it; as we were walking into the village, two women standing at the bus stop shouted at some pickets 'Have they tried to get through yet?'

When we arrived at Markham Main, Armthorpe, there were several hundred pickets, more later. The fact that they have so far been left to stand alone, plus the cop attacks on the community seem to have led to a siege mentality, with one guy speaking favourably of Che Guevara. The entrance to Markham was blocked by tractors, a crane and, for a time, a steam roller. Then the crane was set on fire and exploded. A picket told me it was 12.00 by the time the cops brought the scabs in the day before, so we had to leave before anything happened. By the time we left people were ready with bricks in their hands....



Militant miners blockade colliery with crane and bulldozer.

millions of workers want to smash the scab-herding.

At stake in this fight is the existence of real picket lines and other weapons of labour solidarity without which effective unions are impossible. The bosses have focussed their hatred on the militant, mass flying pickets of the miners -- and with good reason. The miners have fought with unrivalled tenacity against state assaults, provocations, thousands of arrests, two picket line murders. Thousands-strong picket lines have seen barricades of flaming tyres and burnt-out Coal Board lorries, spreading the strike and stymieing the bosses' back-to-work schemes. It is the deep traditions of trade union solidarity on which Tony Cliff et al spit that have engendered such broad support for the miners and threatened to topple the Thatcher government.

Thus when the TGWU's John Connolly announced the second national dock strike, he cited the accumulated rage of his members, who day after day had to rub shoulders with scab lorry drivers earning £140 a day for transporting coal: 'Quite frankly, our people at Hunterston got sick of it.' Racial, national and other divisions too have been transcended by a common hatred for a common enemy. Striking miners have marched shoulder to shoulder with Republican militants in Northern Ireland. Black youths in Brixton have formed defence guards to drive off cops who sought to break up collections by strikers. Unemployed white youth who might otherwise be attracted to the racist poison of 'British jobs for British workers' have instead been recruited to the miners' picket lines. Tens of thousands of working-class women have been drawn into active political life for the first time, as demonstrated when 20,000 women from the coalfields and their supporters marched through the streets of London on 11 August in a magnificent display of militancy. From the black West Indian community of Notting Hill in London to the streets of Irish Catholic Dublin, collection buckets are filled to the brim with contributions for the miners and their families. The miners' heroic struggle has precipitated a fundamental social realignment in this society. A general strike would tap massive sentiments throughout society to smash the Tory onslaught against jobs, living standards and social services.

Any TUC moves for a say in the strike must be sternly resisted; it would be the kiss of death. Already there is talk of going to ACAS and of the TUC 'monitoring' negotiations with the Coal Board. And while the Labour/TUC leaders try to break the strike from within, the Fleet Street propaganda mills churn out one 'back-to-work movement' after another, all with little support and lots of money, in an attempt to prove how 'isolated' the strike is. As we said in response to the strikebreaking 'national ballot' furore in the early days of the strike, 'we wonder how many papal funds Thatcher has got diverted from Poland to swing this ballot.'

A key task today is to consolidate the dock strike. What is needed is not just token pickets like the seven sent to Felixstowe on 3 September, but mass flying pickets of miners and dockers to ensure all ports are shut tight and spread the strike further. Joint elected strike committees, drawing in representatives of other unions taking action alongside miners and dockers, as well as the coalfield women's groups, the unemployed and oppressed minorities, can provide organisation at the base, prevent bureaucratic sabotage, and lay the basis for alternative organs of power to the strikebreaking capitalist state. Disciplined union defence squads are needed to defeat the cop/scab terror on the picket lines and elsewhere. Striking lorry drivers in their juggernauts could provide a firm antidote to the scab cowboy owner-operators who threatened to burn down the port of Dover in an effort to break the strike last time. Call the TGWU lorry drivers out on strike now! Union security provisions of the National Dock Labour Scheme must be extended to the non-registered ports like Dover and Felixstowe. And no settlement for the dockers which leaves the miners out alone!

Forge a revolutionary leadership!

The Labour/TUC 'lefts', while today compelled by the depth of Thatcher's attacks to put up some resistance, also fear the prospect of all-out conflict with the capitalist state. The dockers' retreat on the last strike came at a time when Thatcher was threatening to call out the troops. The rail union leaders made their own separate pay settlement earlier to avoid striking alongside the miners, and have now called off their threatened work-to-rule and one-day strike in protest at British Rail redundancies. Tony Benn withdrew his brief call for industrial action alongside the miners when the party executive slapped him on the wrist.

Look who's in bed with the Iron Lady

Walesa loves Thatcher

Lech Walesa really does love Maggie Thatcher. Here we present the evidence, straight from the horse's mouth. Last month we quoted from an interview with the leader of Solidarnosc, Poland's counterrevolutionary company union for the CIA, which appeared in the *Sunday Mirror* (see 'Yes, Solidarnosc is anti-socialist', *Spartacist Britain* no 60, August 1984). Here we reprint a fuller version of the interview which appeared in the Toronto *Sunday Star* of 29 July. While the heroic miners have suffered thousands of injuries and arrests at the hands of Thatcher's cops Walesa takes the opportunity to express his admiration for the 'wise' and 'brave' bloodlusting, union-bashing Iron Lady. Then he has the gall to denounce 'violence' ... from the miners.

Walesa's stance is hardly surprising. After all, he's a big fan of Reagan too. When the PATCO air controllers union was smashed, Solidarnosc said not a word in protest. Walesa however hailed Reagan's 1980 election as 'a very good sign for the world and for Poland'. Echoing tsar-lover Solzhenitsyn, this 'union' leader complained that workers have 'too much affluence and laziness in the West'. As for Scargill seeing himself as 'Britain's Lech Walesa', this is surely absurd. Silver Birch is a much more likely candidate for this distinction. It was for his simple statement that Solidarnosc is 'anti-socialist' that Scargill was witchhunted at last year's TUC conference. Not surprisingly, the biggest supporters of Solidarnosc, Frank Chapple, Terry Duffy et al, are the biggest advocates of crossing miners picket lines today.

Meanwhile, coal shipped by the Polish government is still arriving in Britain. A revolutionary opposition to the Stalinist bureaucracy would demand, as the NUM rightfully has, that these scab shipments stop. Instead of scab coal General Jaruzelski should ship scab 'Lech' over, so he can get a good taste of what life in impoverished Britain is really like under the Iron Lady's heel.

Q: What is your opinion of the miners' strike going on in Britain?

Walesa: I don't know precisely all the details and possibilities, but certainly I'm interested. Nowhere is there such a place that cannot be better. We must strive for a better life, better opportunities. But at the same time, we must learn by the example of many bacteria, which live on a body but never de-

stroy it. We must remember the body on which we're living.

Q: Certainly you have an opinion on Arthur Scargill, the president of the coal miners' union in Britain. It is suspected that he sees himself as Britain's Lech Walesa.

Walesa: I am glad. I am happy. But he must remember that I always take care of the body on which I live and I will always take care. But I know one more thing.

I have much respect for Mrs Thatcher. I think that with such a wise and brave woman Britain will find a solution (to the strikes).

Q: Do you condemn the violent tactics being used?

Walesa: Yes! Yes! Listen, in this day and age nothing should be wrecked or burned down. Things should be re-shaped. The workers should fight, but with common sense, not with destruction. Because whatever is destroyed has to be rebuilt.

Q: Do you disagree with the tactics of Arthur Scargill?

Walesa: I disagree with any violence. The workers should demand the maximum, but not at the risk of bankrupting the employer.

Q: What is your advice to Arthur Scargill?

Walesa: Go into the matter carefully and assess how much one can squeeze, but without destroying. It is forbidden that ambition take precedence over logic. Ambitions must be curbed. Trade union activists should lock away their ambitions.

And Scargill, despite his genuine desire to win the strike and willingness to stand up against the anti-Soviet war drive, was locked away in worthless talks with the Coal Board during the last dock strike, when he should have been out addressing mass meetings of transport, railway and maritime unions. The same is true today. In the lead-up to Brighton and since, Scargill has shown that he does not want to openly defy the established labour bureaucracy. If he had refused to make deals with Len Murray & Co and pander to bankrupt TUC 'unity', but instead gone all-out fighting for strike action alongside the miners in defiance of the TUC, this would have threatened a deep split in the labour movement, necessarily extending to the Labour Party as well. It is only through a break with the Cold War strikebreakers at the head of the labour movement that it is possible to forge genuine unity in struggle among all layers of workers and the oppressed.

Even as Neil Kinnock was being booed by militants at the July Durham NUM gala, Scargill pointed to the election of another Labour government as the outcome of this class battle. But the hard-fought strike struggles of 1972-74 brought only a Labour government of strikebreaking and wage control. What's needed in the course of this historic class fight is for a new revolutionary leadership to begin to come to the fore, one that does not look to pro-capitalist Labourism for solutions but is ready to mobilise for the inevitable head-on confrontation with the capitalist state.

The fake-revolutionary left provides no alternative, either scabherding themselves or sowing illusions in the Labour/TUC misleaders or both. True to form, the Communist Party's *Morning Star* (5 September) hailed Kinnock's diatribe in Brighton, claiming he 'identified himself with the aims of the NUM in the current battle'. From the CP and SWP to *Militant* and



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Socialist Action, they spent their time before Brighton urging intervention by and lobbies of Murray's TUC. And all of them urge militants to place their fate in the hands of the TUC, hailing the congress outcome as a victory for the miners. In contrast to their fawning appeals to the Cold War strikebreakers which can serve only to disorient and derail this decisive struggle, the Spartacist League banner outside the Brighton conference hall stood out with its call: 'Miners, T&G, rail: For a fighting Triple Alliance! All-out joint national strike action now! Shut down the country!'

Nobody doubts the lengths to which the blood-thirsty Thatcher would go to smash this strike -- she's already called for a Falklands-style war against the 'enemy within'. And now wide sections of the population are aware that she had the *Belgrano* crew murdered for the sheer pleasure of it, and was prepared to nuke the Argentines. But the Iron Lady can't run this country without railways, docks, shipping, mines. And there are quite a few lads from working-class backgrounds in the army who would be reluctant to take up arms against hundreds of thousands of workers on strike.

The future of the British working class is at stake. The decisive battle in this months-long struggle is now shaping up. There can be no retreat: it's either a 'big bang' hot autumn of militant class struggle or nuclear winter under Thatcher. What's needed today is a general strike to smash the Tory government's attacks and bring it down. And that would open the road to the rapid construction of a revolutionary vanguard party which, splitting the working-class base of the Labour Party away from the servile pro-capitalist misleaders of the right and 'left', would lead the fight for a genuine workers government to expropriate the capitalists and provide a future with jobs and decent living standards for all. *General strike now!* ■

Mossad and British commandos aid Reagan flunkey Jayewardene Protest mass state terror against Lankan Tamils!

One year after last summer's bloody pogroms against the Tamil national minority in Sri Lanka, when hundreds of Tamils were burned or beaten to death and tens of thousands driven from their homes, government troops and police have launched a new campaign of mass terror against the civilian population of the Northern Province. The right-wing government of J R Jayewardene has enlisted the aid of the Mossad, the Israeli intelligence agency, and British 'mercenaries', killer-elite SAS commandos, in his murderous drive against Tamil separatists. Jayewardene's tactics now begin to resemble those of his tutors, who regularly inflict mass armed terror against defenceless civilian populations in Northern Ireland and in occupied Palestinian territory. And the racist South African apartheid regime, as part of the anti-Soviet US imperialist axis, has delivered arms and ammunition for JR's army to use to murder Tamils. But above all, 'Yankee Dickie' Jayewardene is Reagan's man in South Asia. JR's drive to crush the Tamils is part and parcel of US imperialist ambitions to dock its nuclear submarines, destroyers and carriers at Trincomalee, in the heavily Tamil Eastern Province. Trincomalee harbour is a key to US control of the Indian Ocean, for its arsenal of death aimed at the USSR and its allies.

The many hundreds killed in last year's massacre were memorialised in late July by a 'hartal', a total stoppage by the populace in the Tamil Northern Province. Over the last year, JR has greatly expanded his repressive arsenal -- Mossad agents, SAS commandos, helicopter gunships supplied by the US -- and when they were ready to move, with their massive imperialist materiel in place, they launched a drive, using the small-scale Tamil nationalist guerrilla activities (mainly bank robberies and attacks on the police and Sinhalese army) as an excuse. Armed patrol boats of the Sri Lankan navy bombarded a coastal village in the North, Valvettiturai, on 5 August. Convoys of armoured vehicles attacked the village, shelling schools, shops and kovils (Hindu temples). Naval bombardment killed as many as 100 civilians; hundreds of homes and shops were destroyed; thousands of villagers were forced to flee. Troops rounded up and arrested all the young men over age 12 (some 700 of them) and took them to detention camps 350 miles to the south. In Point Pedro, another coastal village, government forces seized another 300 youths in a house-to-house roundup of suspected 'Tigers' (guerrilla fighters for an independent state of Tamil Eelam).

On 12 August in Mannar, 50 miles south of Jaffna, virtually the entire town was burned to the ground by Sinhalese government troops. Hundreds of shops were destroyed; 5000 were left homeless. 'It is like an army of invasion flattening everything in its path', said Mannar's Catholic bishop (*New York Times*, 14 August). Arrested youths suspected of Tiger sympathies have been found dead, their bodies mutilated by torture. Repeatedly, innocent civilians have been massacred to vent the rage of the police and army at their inability to crush the Tamil rebels, who enjoy widespread support among the Tamil populace. Seeking to whitewash the Sinhala communalists and provide a further pretext for outlawing the Eelamist and leftist parties, Jayewardene absurdly accuses the leftist JVP of infiltrating the army and provoking the bloody pogroms.

A grisly example of JR's method of blaming the victims for their own massacre was the bombing of the Chunnakam police station on 11 August, where some 22 'suspected Tamil terrorists' were bound and gagged, imprisoned in an evacuated police station boobytrapped with explosives set up to detonate when a rescue was attempted. There is also pervasive suspicion about who was responsible for the bombing of innocent bystanders at the Madras airport on 2



Bomb planted by Sri Lankan government forces destroyed Chunnakam police station, killing Tamil prisoners and their rescuers.

August, an act clearly aimed at discrediting support for Tamil rights among Indians and denounced by Tamil separatist groups (*Guardian*, 6 August).

Agitation is widespread among Tamils in India on behalf of the Lankan Tamils. In Madras on 12 August, a thousand protesters stoned the US consulate, denouncing American backing for Jayewardene's bloody pogroms. On 15 August, the day Indians celebrate their independence from the British, some 5000 demonstrators were arrested in Tamil Nadu after a demonstration of solidarity with victims of the repression in Sri Lanka. While protestors denounced the Indian government's 'attitude of indifference' to the plight of the Tamils in Lanka, Indira Gandhi -- with the blood of the Sikhs fresh on her hands -- called for national unity 'against forces of division encouraged by foreign elements or agencies' (*Le Monde*, 17 August). Gandhi, executioner of the radical, nationalist Bangladeshi Mukti Bahini, of Indian religious and ethnic

minorities from Amritsar to Andhra Pradesh, will not liberate the Tamils of Sri Lanka. Under the motto 'divide and rule', bloody communal divisions were fostered through centuries of colonial domination, and today are nurtured by capitalism in its death agony. Only proletarian revolution, on the island and throughout the Indian subcontinent, can end communalist terror and ensure Tamil national rights.

Our international tendency is known on the island and abroad as a forthright and consistent defender of Tamil rights, including the right to Tamil self-determination -- the right to Tamil Eelam. However, our slogan 'No faith in Indira Gandhi, butcher of Sikhs and Mukti Bahini!' has elicited opposition in the Tamil exile community, along with attempts to exclude our tendency. This reflects growing political polarisations within the exile movement, with bourgeois forces seeking respectability and accommodation with the imperialist and Indian bourgeoisies while more militant sectors see themselves fighting for a socialist Eelam, and both wings have deep illusions in Gandhi's regime.

The reformist Sinhalese 'left', cowering in the face of JR's bonapartism, looks toward a new popular-front coalition. They criminally refuse to support the unconditional right of Tamil self-determination. Of course they bemoan the bloodbath and claim to support concessions to the oppressed Tamil people, 'but not if it means splitting the country'. Indeed they are tied intimately to the 'left' wing of Sinhala chauvinism. In the mid-1950s the Ceylonese left abandoned the Tamil people by forming a bloc with the bourgeois Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), in the name of 'fighting the right'. To form its popular-front coalition with the SLFP, the 'United Left Front', the left dumped its longstanding position favouring equal status for both Ceylon's vernacular languages, Sinhalese and Tamil, and came out for the main SLFP slogan of chauvinism, 'Sinhala only'. The political splitting of Ceylonese society along communal lines was reflected within the union movement and in the emergence of the Federal Party as the bourgeois electoral voice of the Jaffna Tamils from 1956 onward. The left parties were rewarded by their bourgeois allies with ministerial portfolios, including an LSSP minister for plantations to oversee the superexploitation of the stateless 'Indian Tamil' tea workers whose sweated labour is central to the island's foreign-currency revenues.

The Lankan left's class treachery in peddling illusions in the SLFP did not keep the capitalist 'United Front' government of Mrs Bandaranaike from eroding its support once in power.

In 1971 an insurrectionary movement of young Sinhalese, the JVP, ignited the countryside and was mercilessly crushed. The drowning of the radical Sinhalese youth in blood was a national catastrophe and bloody 'Mrs B' ruled under state of emergency regulations most of the time thereafter.

In the 1977 elections the SLFP was routed by Jayewardene's United National Party (UNP) so decisively that the main opposition in Parliament became, not the SLFP or the left parties, but the Tamil MPs. Meanwhile, in response to growing sentiment among Tamils in



Spartacist League contingent at London protest against anti-Tamil terror.

continued on page 9

For a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan!

We print below the greetings of the international Spartacist tendency presented to a conference of Kurdish militants held in Central Europe this summer.

Comrades, I bring you greetings from the international Spartacist tendency. As revolutionaries, we insist that the future liberation of the oppressed Kurdish masses lies in their own implacable fight for national and social liberation hand in hand with the struggle of truly internationalist Marxist forces elsewhere and, taken altogether, constituting the true Leninist communist international resolutely committed to smashing all exploitation and oppression on this planet. The international Spartacist tendency is vigilant against every attack on the Kurdish people, against every injustice. From Sydney, in Australia, to London to Germany, the iSt has demonstrated alongside Kurdish militants in defence of their rights. As a contribution to your deliberations, we offer our opinions, based on the lessons of history, particularly the verification in struggle of comrade Lenin, who led the first successful, multinational class struggle.

Emblazoned on our banner we make clear our firm upholding of the Kurdish right to self-determination. Self-determination is a democratic right, but its fulfillment can take many different forms. We have to believe that, based on the character of the four capitalist governments which oppress the Kurds and suppress their rights, there can be no viable solution to Kurdish self-determination under capitalism.

Most of us would probably agree that we seek a socialist solution. But what does this mean? It must be made precise programmatically. Consider the many different African states which achieved independence and now, while calling themselves Marxist and socialist, continue to despotically rule thoroughly capitalist states, abusing their own people and adjacent ones. The achievement of socialism necessarily entails the expropriation of the possessors -- the landlords and capitalists -- and the rule of the workers and peasants.

Comrades, history teaches us that without the social force of the proletariat, and without a Leninist party to organise that power and act as a tribune of the people, the heroic struggles of the past have often been mired in defeat. The Kurdish masses must look to an alliance with the Arab, Persian and Turkish proletariats, who in turn must be made to become determined champions of the Kurdish right of self-determination against the great power chauvinism of their own bourgeoisies. The Bolsheviks led the Russian labouring masses to realise that they could never become free without resolute struggle against Great Russian chauvinism. Such a revolutionary party must be built in each state and become the weapon for leading the proletarian and peasant masses to victory and in consequence to encourage such victory elsewhere.

We know that counted amongst those revolutionary fighters will be the Kurdish woman. Today the slave of slaves, when her consciousness is awakened she will be amongst the best fighters for the ideas of revolution and the ideas of communism.

The Kurdish people seek desperately to break out of the quagmire of national oppression and chauvinism. In the squalid nationalist blood feud between Iran and Iraq, we in the iSt pointed out that the working people of Iran, the working people of Iraq have no interest in the victory of either side. We said: turn this reactionary, nationalist war into a civil war against the mullahs and colonels. To the Kurdish people, savagely attacked by both the Ba'athists and Khomeini's Revolutionary Guards, we pointed out that

the Iran-Iraq war offers them a unique opportunity to carve out a nation-state, the best since the short-lived 'Kurdish Republic' of Mahabad in 1946.

Comrades, we must learn from the struggles of other oppressed nationalities. In the northern tier of the Ottoman Empire, the Balkans -- itself a historic cauldron of national hatreds like the Near East -- a largely Serbian and Montenegrin Communist Party, led by the Croat Tito, managed to cohere the workers state, albeit deformed, of Yugoslavia.

In contrast, Lebanon is the supreme example of the inability of the capitalist and property-owning classes to arrive at anything tending toward the satisfaction of the masses. The Palestinians can expect nothing from the Arab bourgeoisies, who once again revealed their total and craven subordination to the designs of the bloodsucking imperialist powers, especially the US which sought to install itself in the Lebanon as a jumping off point for its anti-Soviet campaign. The present Zionist state must be destroyed and replaced by working class communist power based on the Arab and Hebrew-speaking workers, the latter representing an extremely valuable cultural and technical resource in the context of building the Socialist Federation of the Near East.

The US' ignominious withdrawal from the Lebanon has not diminished the imperialists' anti-Sovietism. Today, US imperialism's policies centre full square upon an anti-Soviet war drive, linking up with its European NATO allies including Kohl's imperialist government, aimed at the gains that remain of the October Revolution -- state ownership of the means of production, monopoly of foreign trade and the planned economy. We are for the unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union against imperialism and internal attempts at capitalist restoration.

Comrades, it was the great historic example of the Russian Revolution which dramatically confirmed that in the epoch of imperialism's decline, democratic rights and principles can be fully realised only by the revolutionary proletariat in power. There are numerous oppressed peoples which lack a strong working class component. While there are many Kurdish workers, most are working outside of the geographical regions with a predominantly Kurdish national identity. That the Kurdish proletariat exists primarily in the diaspora naturally and inevitably complicates your political tasks, but it is a problem that has been faced before. Indeed it was the resolute struggle of the Bolshevik party for the right of self-determination

for even the most underdeveloped of the oppressed nationalities in the Tsar's prison house of nations which facilitated the conquest of power by the proletariat in Russia. Inversely, inspired by the workers taking power in Petrograd and Moscow and aided by the detachments of Trotsky's Red Army, the oppressed nationalities of what is now Soviet Central Asia and Outer Mongolia found the path to their own liberation from the yoke of national and feudal oppression, especially through the instrumentality of the organised women and youth. Even today, many Kurds look to the Soviet Union where their brothers and their sisters exercise their democratic national rights and enjoy the benefits of 20th century science and technology and of education.

The solution to the oppression of the Kurdish



London, 10 February: Protest outside Turkish embassy; Spartacist placards in Arabic, Farsi and Turkish demand right of self-determination for Kurdish people.



Bolshevik Revolution brought liberation to Central Asian women: 16-year-old woman in veil (left) has complained that her husband beats her. Judges include one of the first Tadjik women to discard the veil after the revolution.

masses can only be region-wide, involving the smashing of four reactionary bourgeois regimes. The proletarian revolution is in reality an end product of multiple battles, movements and campaigns. We understand that the struggle for a United Socialist Republic of Kurdistan will be shaped by and in turn shape the future of the revolutionary proletariat of the whole region toward a Socialist Federation of the Near East. Our model is Lenin's Russia of 1917-1924 where the Bolsheviks offered the national minorities the option and the advantages of association with the Soviet Federation. For our part, we are dedicated to the forging of the internationalist party of worldwide proletarian revolution and speak to you in the understanding that the future of humanity depends on its construction.

Thank you, comrades. ■

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Workers Hammer...

(Continued from page 1)

reached significantly broader layers of the working class than ever before.

We have chosen the name *Workers Hammer* in recognition of our tasks in fighting to be the nucleus of a revolutionary workers party. The hammer is an instrument for *change*: for reshaping and constructing through force of human action. The worker's hammer was joined with the peasant's sickle as the symbol of the Russian Revolution of 1917, of the new Soviet state and of Communist parties throughout the world in the early years of the Communist International. The figure 4 in our new masthead insignia symbolises our fight to reforge the Fourth International, founded by Leon Trotsky in 1938 to continue the fight for world revolution in the face of the Comintern's Stalinist degeneration.

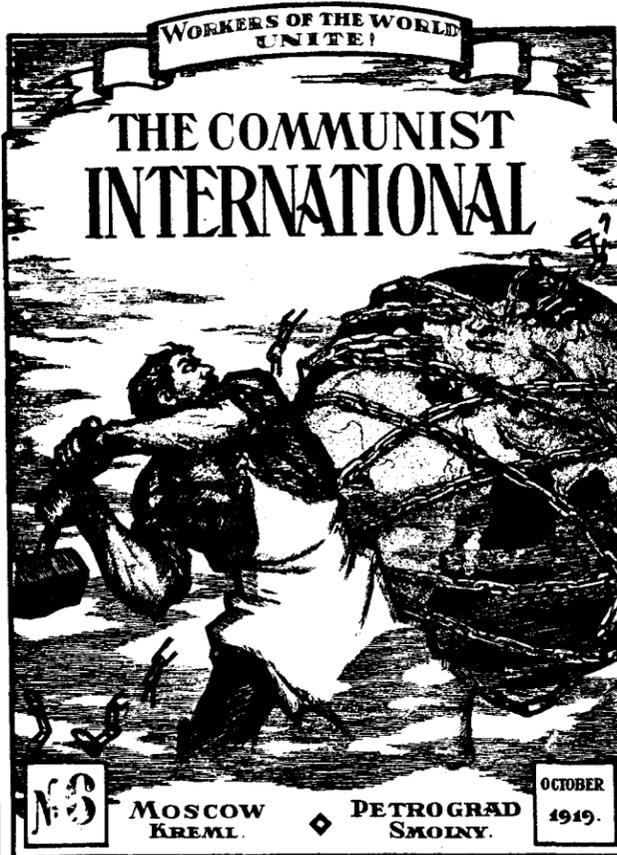
Spartacist Britain, which has identified us for sixty issues as the British section of the international Spartacist tendency, tends to sound like a spin-off press. Further, it does not adequately reflect the fighting history of the British working class or our goal of forging communist leadership for this class.

This country is in a period of deep-going class struggle, and we want our press to be expressly and obviously a champion of the proletariat. We want it to be bold, uncompromisingly Soviet-defencist in the face of the imperialist war drive, forthrightly against the smarmy English establishment centred on the Royal Family and Westminster, and sharply counterposed to the prevailing, narrow, parochial Labourite mush of the British so-called left.

What we did not want in our choice of name was the pedestrian, look-and-sound-alike quality of most British left papers, reflecting their opportunist politics and appetites. We stand in the footsteps of the Russian Bolsheviks, of the early Trotskyists, of the World War I German revolutionary internationalist Sparakusbund (Spartacus League), from whom our organisation proudly takes its name. And we draw inspiration as well from past great revolutionaries on this island, from Cromwell to the Chartists to John Maclean. It was Maclean, leader of the Clydeside

proletariat in its historic revolutionary battles during and following World War I, who summed up the aims which the Spartacist League and our *Workers Hammer* uphold today:

'We witness today what all Marxists expected, the capitalist class of the world and their Governments joined together in a most vigorously active attempt to crush Bolshevism in Russia and Spartacism in Germany. Bolshevism, by the way, is Socialism triumphant, and Spartacism is Socialism in process of achieving triumph. This is the class war on an international basis, a Class War that must and will be fought out to the logical conclusion -- the extinction of capitalism everywhere.' (The Call, 23 January 1919) ■



Black all coal in BL - strike now!

Even as the TUC was talking -- and talking -- about 'total support' to the miners, scab coal was pouring into BL factories in the Midlands in greater quantities than ever. The Spartacist League and its trade union supporters have been instrumental in exposing and fighting to put a stop to the scabbing operation centred on BL Longbridge and condoned by Longbridge convenor and Communist Party supporter Jack Adams. And day after day, lorry after lorry of coal continues to roll into Longbridge. Now two lorryloads a day have started rolling into Rover Solihull and reports indicate that on Monday, 10 September, at least four lorryloads of coal went through the gates. Basic trade union principle means all coal must be blacked. *Stop the scab coal now!*

The TGWU should be calling every single member in the country out on strike now. With the dockers out on strike alongside the miners, this country is ripe for a general strike organised through a fighting Triple Alliance of the miners, rail and TGWU. Everybody knows that if BL workers stopped handling scab coal the production tracks would screech to a halt. And when it comes to that, 'lefts' like Adams and Rover Solihull convenor Joe Harris are no less opposed to a 'big bang' of class struggle than open scabherders like Murray and his gang. On 5 September the Rover Joint Shop Stewards Committee met to discuss the question of scab coal yet again -- and again they took no action to stop the coal. Enough is enough! A number of pay claims are now on the table in BL -- bring forward all the claims and bring everybody out! Black all coal! Shut down BL -- For a national TGWU strike! General strike now!

Rejoining the Spartacist League

Don't sit on the sidelines!

Our recent Spartacist League national conference saw a modest but welcome recruitment of new and returning members including, importantly, comrades from specially-oppressed minority communities. Among the ex-members rejoining us was comrade Charlie Shell, a founding and former Political Committee member of the centrist Workers Power group who broke politically from WP to join the SL in spring 1981, resigning in November 1982. We are reprinting below extracts from the comrade's reapplication letter, chiefly because they illustrate the power of our consistent Leninist programme in this period of enhanced opportunities for revolutionists. (The 'External Tendency' referred to is a ragbag of renegades from the iSt including one Bob Mandel who fled from the dangers posed by this period of Cold War.) As our main conference document, the line of which was endorsed unanimously by the delegates, noted, 'The sharpest domestic class struggle in many decades, coming in the context of escalating anti-Soviet war drive and a burgeoning international economic crisis, poses before the SL/B the opportunity and necessity of making a significant leap forward towards becoming the nucleus of a revolutionary workers party.'

This was the spirit in which our conference discussions were held. Discussion centred on two questions: first, vital programmatic questions in Asia, in particular towards the Kurds and the Indian subcontinent; and second, our work and perspectives towards the miners strike. As well as resolving to change the name of our paper, conference voted to launch a subscription drive, targetting especially miners and other militant workers whom we have intersected in the course of the strike. A substantially increased regular readership for *Workers Hammer* as well as other Spartacist tendency publications is key to winning more militants to our revolutionary programme and party.

* * *

12 August 1984
Comrades,

I am reapplying for membership of the SL/B. The protracted and bloody battle being fought by the miners has brought matters to a head. I no longer wish to sit on the sidelines. I want to contribute what I can to the only organisation fighting for a revolutionary programme.

Nearly two years ago I quit -- wanting out of politics completely. Burnt out after years of frenzied activity, unable to cope with the SL/B's fight to recast itself by drawing minorities and women into the leadership I went out blaming the SL for a situation of my own making. In my resignation letter I wrote-off Marxism and the working class and by implication at least, characterised the SL leadership as rotten to the core....

Later I began casting around for a 'new' political niche. If Trotsky was wrong then what was needed was some 'original' political thinking. But it's a funny thing about 'original' thought -- you always seem to end up with old ideas. To cut a long story short I veered towards 'critical' Stalinism. Whilst my political past played a part in this trajectory I think it's also a sign of the times. There is a clear pro-Soviet streak running through the ranks of the Labour Party. At bottom this is 'little England' anti-Americanism. Perhaps Konstantin Chernenko can save us all from Ronald Reagan. In the absence of a revolutionary perspective the Moscow bureaucracy looks a better bet than CND.

Of course during this period the 'External Tendency' (ET) quivered into life. I did talk to the ET and did agree with much of what they said though I never had any real links with them. It wasn't until last February/March after a couple of discussions with SL comrades that I understood what the ET were all about. As my own hostility to the SL subsided the venomous subjectivism of the ET lashup was thrown into sharp relief. Bob Mandel's slanderous and dangerous claim to have been physically assaulted by SL

members on the Greyhound picket line really brought it home. Even at a distance of several thousand miles it was obvious Mandel was lying. After that a lot of things began to fall into place.

Over the last several months I have worked, albeit sporadically, with the SL and given a great deal of thought to my political views. I have been very impressed by the line on the miners strike. And the centrality of the Russian question to that position is now very clear to me. Six or seven years ago that dedicated anti-Soviet Sy Landy told me that the position you adopted on Russia was of overwhelming significance because it informed your stance on every major political question. I didn't understand that at the time. Now I do. And the Russian question is coming home with a vengeance. Whilst the anti-Soviet left has looked to the Labour Party or TUC to save their skins and offered succour to the scabs only the Soviet-defencist SL has put forward a clear strategy for winning the strike in the framework of a fight for a workers state. Meanwhile the Shachtmanite ET have poured scorn on the SL/US's orientation to the strategically important black working class.

The work carried out by the SL/US over the last period has been very influential in pulling me back to Trotskyism. The victories over the KKK, the defence of Ray and Lauren and the tearing down of the Confederate flag in San Francisco all demonstrate great vitality and a capacity and a will to win....

In conclusion I'd just say that I've thought long and hard about rejoining.... Well, I've made up my mind and it feels pretty good. Better to live on your feet than die on your knees.

Finally I'd like to thank all those comrades who have been so helpful in assisting me to arrive at this decision.

Comradely
Charlie Shell

SWP...

(Continued from page 2)

I got a response from a young Cliffite: Are you seriously suggesting that a good militant should throw his job away on a useless gesture, when he could be inside the plant putting forward a political argument? I replied to him: 'For any political argument you need a basis of legitimacy, what's yours? You don't even recognise basic trade unionism, that is, that you don't cross picket lines. Who inside the works would listen to you on that basis? And why should they?'

Cliff when he finally replied to my point merely waffled to the effect that the striking Notts miners were not a minority, but part of the overall majority. He then changed the subject and never returned to it. After the meeting, Cliff remained over the other side of the room with the bulk of the branch members and guests, while the picket line issue continued with myself and various comrades.

I asked one guy if he accepted Trotsky's assertion that 'the picket line is the nucleus of the proletarian army'. He replied in the affirmative. I said that doesn't the SWP consider itself the Vanguard of the class and that didn't he think that members of a Vanguard party should lead by example? He called me -- amongst other things -- a left wing loony, a utopian, maintaining once more that it wasn't worth risking your job for a feeling of revolutionary purity when you can be of more use inside the works, and that besides the miners were not there to stop people crossing. I asked why comrades thought the miners were picketing the steelworks? (I answered my own question) They want the steelworkers to black coal; they want to stop steel production; they want the steelworkers out with them to help ultimately to win the strike. Anyone who crosses this picket line is not only helping to produce steel, but also helping the bourgeoisie defeat the miners strike. That the picket line is a class line on which you either stand with the working class or you support the capitalist class against the working class.

At this point the guy who was scabbing joined the discussion and proceeded to defend himself with the now standard line of legitimisation that he was organising within the works and making contacts. I asked him how many contacts he's made during the course of the strike, to which he replied, none. So I said ok accepting for the minute that it is a definite strategy, it's proven to have failed. It's no longer an argument for crossing picket lines. He replied, you don't know anything about it, you don't know what it's like in the steelworks, there's a 'downturn', everyone's demoralised since the steel strike defeat. He kept returning to the same justification for scabbing. I kept reminding him that it wasn't working. Finally he got really angry and said, you must be out of your mind if you think I'm putting my job on the line, my wife and kids come first. I said, that's exactly how the scabs in Notts justify what they do.

So you see comrades there is a connection between defending the Soviet Union and fighting for victory in the miners strike. I expect it's well known to you that I have been in contact with the Spartacist League with whom I feel at present some affinity. On Afghanistan, Poland, and the miners strike they stand on the right side of the class line.

Fraternally,
G Mitchell

August 16th 1984

Tamils...

(Continued from page 6)

the North for a separate Tamil state of 'Eelam', the Tamil parliamentarians had now become the 'Tamil United Liberation Front' which adopted on paper the platform of seeking Eelam. Last year the UNP, as part of JR's bonapartist moves against parliamentary democracy, made the demand for Tamil separation a crime and proscribed Eelam advocates from Parliament. Thereby they disposed of the main parliamentary opposition as well as in effect disenfranchising the Tamil people of the North, moving them a step in the direction of the statelessness of the 'Indian Tamil' plantation workers in the uplands. Yet the UNP regime of would-be bonaparte Jayewardene is extremely unstable, with a chauvinist extreme right wing on the rise and outright mutinies in the army.

'Splitting the country'? It is JR's UNP and the mutinous pogromists of the army who are

forcibly separating the island's peoples. It is the genocidal terror as official state policy which has driven tens of thousands of Tamils from the south into the economically barren north, while many of the Tamil militants have fled to India. Previously there was economic interpenetration of the population, with the Tamil bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie extremely important in Colombo, for instance.

For the right to Tamil Eelam!

While the rest of the left opposed Tamil self-determination, we were for that *right* but argued against exercising it, pointing out that economically and in other ways it would be a catastrophe. Now this catastrophe has happened, national separation is a reality. Thus today we demand: 'For the Right to Tamil Eelam! For a Socialist Federation of Eelam and Lanka!'

The chauvinist class collaboration of the reformist left has led many Tamil militants to conclude that common class struggle with Sinhala workers is no longer a possibility. But the enemy of the Lankan Tamils is also the enemy of women textile workers at Polytex (who recently

successfully struck against attempts to victimise workers); the enemy of students facing armed cop terror on the university campuses. The Sinhalese workers and peasants are not South African whites -- an elite which profits directly from the superexploitation of South African black labour -- but are themselves pauperised and oppressed by the greedy capitalist rulers and the rapacious imperialist IMF. The defeatist strategy of guerrillaism only isolates revolutionaries from the real source of social and economic power that can bring down this racist capitalist system. The recent strike of Tamil plantation workers, who held out against great provocations to win their demands, points the road to liberation for Lanka's working people and national minorities, the road of class struggle. An authentic Bolshevik vanguard party, section of a reborn Fourth International, must link the struggles of Lanka's working people with the cause of Tamil self-determination through the fight to end capitalist exploitation and national oppression, the legacy of imperialist domination, in Lanka and throughout the subcontinent.

Reprinted from Workers Vanguard no 361, 31 August 1984

The paper that fights for the working people

In the course of the crucial class battles now taking place, many striking miners and other working-class militants have started reading our press for the first time. Unlike our competitors, we do not offer apologies for the betrayals of the Labour/TUC tops, nor the defeatist ballot-mongering of the *next step* and *Workers Power*, nor the outright scabbery of *Socialist Worker*. Instead, a revolutionary strategy for victory -- hard analysis of the tasks and dangers facing the working class in this period of Cold War, and merciless exposure of those who betray the struggles of the workers.

When the dockers struck in July, we issued our second special strike supplement calling for a revived Triple Alliance to shut down the country. Our press and supporters have played a crucial role in exposing the scandal of scab coal in British Leyland to the miners and the wider labour movement. Early on we exposed Thatcher's war crimes in the Belgrano butchery, and pointed to the spy role of Reagan's KAL 007 provocation right from the start. Internationally, we have provided exemplary coverage of the Arizona copper miners strike, exposure of and agitation against the brutal massacre of Tamils in Sri Lanka, and

the only communist analysis of the situation facing the Sikhs and other national minorities under Indira Gandhi's terror in India.

Now, in order to expand our readership in the coalfields and among a wider working-class audience, we have embarked on a subscription drive for the new *Workers Hammer* (formerly *Spartacist Britain*), as well as for the fortnightly *Workers Vanguard* and *Women & Revolution*. On two miners' demonstrations in Scotland on the weekend of 25-26 August, at Dalkeith and Cumnock, our comrades sold a total of 258 papers and 9 subscriptions. In Wales, at Maerdy on 25 August, 160 papers were sold, and 10 subscriptions. And on the first day of the TUC at Brighton, we sold 128 papers and 15 subs to the 5000 miners and trade unionists assembled there. At the 11 August women's support march in London, before we began our subscription drive, we sold nearly 240 pieces of literature, including a significant number of copies of *Women & Revolution*, the only communist women's journal. Become regular readers of the revolutionary press! Subscribe to *Workers Hammer*, Britain's only Marxist newspaper! Subscribe to *Workers Vanguard* and *Women & Revolution*! Read the press that fights for the working people!

Workers Hammer subscription drive

24 August — 5 October

QUOTAS

Birmingham	80
London	175
Sheffield	80
Total	335



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- 10 issues of Workers Hammer for £2
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- 4 issues of Women & Revolution for £1.50.

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Bloody Sunday...

(Continued from page 3)

the Six Counties with the clerical southern Republic. This schema dovetails with the favourite long-term 'solution' of sections of the British and American capitalist classes, who would like to see a reunified Ireland under the NATO umbrella (the present Republic is constitutionally 'neutral'). But there can be no just capitalist solution to the intertwined national and social grievances and oppression in Ireland. Revolutionaries demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the British army and combat all forms of Catholic special oppression, tying this to a programme for Catholic/Protestant working-class unity against capitalism.

While many Protestant workers today follow sectarian bigots like Ian Paisley, they are hardly one reactionary mass. Witness only the Protestant trade unionists from Belfast who travelled to Ayrshire, Scotland for a miners support rally on 26 August, where they marched under their TGWU banner bearing a portrait of the revolutionary socialist (and Catholic) union leader James Connolly. The present sharp class war in Britain is throwing together in common struggle against the common enemy, elements not only from the British working class but also from both normally bitterly divided communities in Ireland. What is needed is revolutionary leadership -- Trotskyist vanguard parties in both Britain and Ireland -- to organise and direct such common class struggle to victory.

Commitment to common class struggle necessarily involves opposition to anti-Irish hysteria and draconian legislation like the Prevention of Terrorism Act, directed against Irish and the left in Britain. Last January the fascist National Front, emboldened by Labour Council leader David Blunkett's ban on a Bloody Sunday commemoration march, tried to stage an anti-Irish provocation in Sheffield. The Spartacist League sought to initiate a united-front action for a mass mobilisation of unions and minorities to stop them in their tracks. But the fake-revolutionary left and Sinn Fein nationalists preferred to abandon their march rather than unite with communists in building a mass anti-fascist demonstration in defiance of Labour 'left' rising stars.

The Green nationalism of Sinn Fein, which leads to sectarian terror against Protestants like the 1982 Droppin Well massacre is abhorrent in itself and serves only to drive Protestant workers into the arms of their worst enemies, the Paisleys and the British imperialists. A Trotskyist party would fight for the smashing of the sectarian terrorist RUC, for integrated workers militias to combat imperialist rampage and sectarian terror from both communities, and counterpose to the Green nationalist call for forced reunification of Ireland the fight for an Irish workers republic in a socialist federation of the British Isles. It is through directing historic class battles like that of the miners today in the direction of proletarian state power that final vengeance will be won for Sean Downes, Bobby Sands and all the victims of imperialist and sectarian terror. Troops out now! ■

RUC terror...

(Continued from page 3)

theirs uncocked, I'll give them that due. I've never seen so many soldiers, there were thousands. Everywhere there were troops.

They parked three army Land Rovers in the road so it split the procession and people had to go through these. They were parked in the middle of the road, so people were a bit staggered. Anyway we got up the road and a bottle came over our heads from the rooftops and hit an RUC man on the head. And instead of looking up and shouting, he just lifted the plastic bullet gun up and fired. It came through us; we were there, actually about five foot away.

Q: He was five feet from you?

I were on the far side, maybe about ten foot, maybe twelve foot, away from it. But the guy I went with was on the other side and the plastic bullet came through us and belted a young Scottish lass on the leg. It smashed her leg.

In the commotion I was scared stiff so I ran up this alley. I followed people and I thought it were coming to a dead end and people were crying or panicking because they thought the troops were coming up after them. We eventually found a back garden we could get into and we waited in that garden to reassemble when it was OK. These RUC men were looking rather pleased with themselves. I did notice when we were coming back down from the garden, a lot of kiddies, women with young babies in prams -- and it really horrified me to think that them big

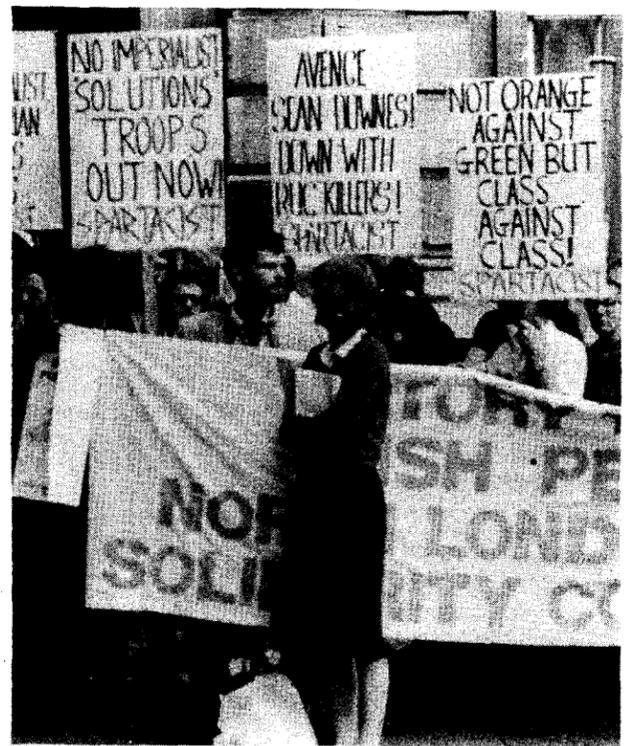
plastic bullets might hit a young'un. That had happened, we knew, in the past.

Anyway the march carried on and we got to Andersonstown, to the Busy Bee, where we were supposed to stop in the market place. There were a lot of RUC troops stood in the square, and they were determined they weren't going to let us go there. So everybody stood outside the Sinn Fein headquarters and Sinn Fein told us that we'd have to go round the corner to be ready for leaving early, because with Martin Galvin appearing they expected some trouble.

We went round the corner, and youths were chucking bottles off the Busy Bee shop and they were firing plastic bullets up there. We were only 40 feet away from where they were chucking bottles from rooftops and plastic bullets were just flying and bouncing off roofs, billboards and everything. It was really frightening. This was just before Sean Downes got killed.

Then the RUC men decided to kick these lads off the other side, because they were on both sides of the road and the RUC in the middle. They climbed on the roofs and were chucking them all over the place; they were only young lads. They chucked them off and then they were facing opposite this roof, and some more bottles and things got chucked and the plastic bullets they were just letting fly anywhere. Then some troops parked in the square itself. We went round to collect our baggage. We were walking down the street and all of a sudden somebody shouted, the troops are firing again. It must've been when Sean Downes got shot. There were people running on the street and what amazed me was, people were opening their doors and saying, quick come in here and lay down, in case plastic bullets go through windows or anything.

I went into somebody's house, because there were quite a few incidents like this. We were walking back through the route we came for the bus home, and we heard that there'd been a lot of shooting and the RUC were firing again and



Protest outside Downing Street, 15 August. Workers Hammer

people were diving into gardens and they were coming up on the pavement in their Land Rovers. And a young lad come by -- he told me, somebody's been shot.

We all reassembled again and got about twenty yards up the road and the same thing happened again. Before we got back to where we had started out, it happened about five or six times that the RUC would mount on the kerbs and fire plastic bullets, so we eventually got out of the road. The RUC were coming in convoys down roundabouts, and they were flagging us off the road, when we got back on the bus. Then when we got to the ferry we heard Sean Downes had been murdered. ■

US SWP: An obituary

We reprint below the Introduction to 'The Socialist Workers Party: An Obituary', a pamphlet recently produced by our comrades of the Spartacist League/US. Those of our readers with an interest in developments within the United Secretariat, with which the now openly anti-Trotskyist US SWP is associated, should particularly find this pamphlet necessary reading.

In recent years the reformist [American] Socialist Workers Party (SWP) of Jack Barnes has bureaucratically purged and driven out some hundreds of its members, particularly and disproportionately those whose allegiance to the SWP goes back to the 'old days' before Barnes. This final destruction of the human links to the old party of Leon Trotsky and James P Cannon takes place some 20 years after the decisive shift of the SWP off a revolutionary axis, a shift which had as its necessary organizational handmaiden the political expulsion from the party of the Revolutionary Tendency. The RT fought inside the SWP against the abandonment of the Trotskyist program and after its expulsion in 1963 founded the Spartacist League to carry forward the programmatic integrity and democratic-centralist traditions of Trotskyism in this country.

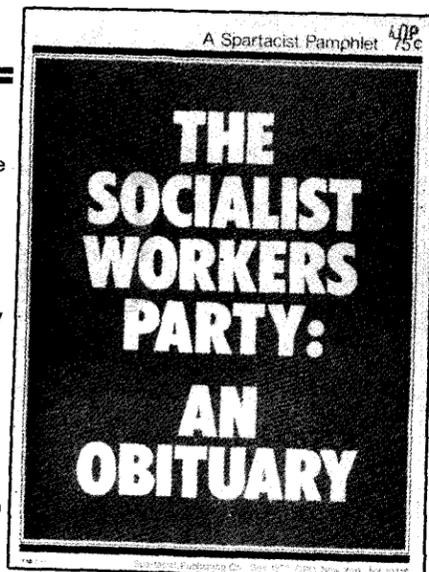
The main article reprinted here, 'Barnes Axes Last Veterans of the Old SWP', recounts the inside story of the recent mass purge whereby Barnes and his coterie rid themselves of virtually everyone who remembered the old party and still maintained a sentimental attachment to the old Trotskyism, 20 years after the SWP's pretensions to Trotskyism had been emptied of real programmatic content. The article places the recent expulsions in the context of the decisive destruction of SWP party democracy by the Farrell Dobbs regime in the 1960s, centrally in the expulsion of the Revolutionary Tendency solely for its expressed political views and in the formalization of that expulsion in the 1965 organizational resolution, 'The Organizational Character of the Socialist Workers Party', which introduced the self-serving elastic standard of 'disloyalty' and effectively banned real factional rights in the party. Without a grasp of this crucial juncture of SWP history, those seeking belatedly to understand the new purge are groping in the dark.

We are reprinting here as well, with heavy excerpting, the article which we published immediately following Barnes' public speech in December 1982, in which Barnes came out of the closet as an anti-Trotskyist to vilify and belittle Trotsky's revolutionary role and particularly his theory of 'permanent revolution'. This

speech was the last straw for many of the party veterans. Our article brings together some of the key quotations from Lenin and Trotsky which can serve as a guide for further study of the theory of permanent revolution as a central theoretical acquisition of the experience of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and the development of the Left Opposition in the fight against the counterrevolutionary ideology of Stalinist degeneration.

As appendices to this pamphlet, we are reprinting two appeals of expulsion from the SWP. The first, the 1963 Revolutionary Tendency statement 'Rescind the Suspensions!', reproduced from the first issue of *Spartacist* [February-March 1964], documents the SWP's destruction of the democratic-centralist norms upheld for 35 years by the American Trotskyist movement, precisely in order to muzzle revolutionary opposition to the SWP's search for substitutes for a revolutionary working-class perspective. The second appendix is the 1984 'Appeal of Expulsion' by George Breitman, one of Barnes' new expellees and a veteran of many decades in the SWP. Comrade Breitman is not associated with the Spartacist tendency and stands at a considerable distance from us programmatically. Nonetheless we think our readers will find his document of interest in showing the intimate link between Barnes' explicitly anti-Trotskyist public speech in December 1982 and his organizational 'final solution' for the party veterans who recoiled from spitting on the watchwords of their revolutionary youth. ■

Once the Trotskyist party in the United States, today the SWP (US) is an openly anti-Trotskyist and increasingly irrelevant shell. Read the SWP's political obituary -- and our revolutionary alternative -- in this new Spartacist pamphlet, 55p inc p&p from Spartacist Publications, PO Box 185, London WC1H 8JE.



Thatcher: war criminal Belgrano butcher!

Revive the 'Falklands spirit' screams Thatcher as she spews out her tirades against the miners. In July and again in August Thatcher threatened a state of emergency and the use of troops. And for Thatcher evoking the threat of the troops is not just necessity of class rule, she really gets off on the military, from celebrating with SAS killers after the Libyan embassy siege to riding tanks on NATO exercises in Germany.

Now recent revelations have documented the Thatcher government's cold-blooded criminal execution of the Argentine sailors aboard the *Belgrano*. But last spring, when the entire establishment was trying to cover up Labour MP Tam Dalyell's investigation into these certified war crimes, our press hit the mark. Our *Workers Vanguard* article of April 27, entitled 'Hang Margaret Thatcher', began:

'Margaret Thatcher, the nastiest thing to hit England since Winston Churchill, appears to be an outright war criminal. During the Falkland/Malvinas war, that bizarre conflict between two crazed reactionary regimes, Thatcher's British Tories and the Argentine military dictatorship, the one unambiguous atrocity was the gratuitous sinking of the ancient cruiser *General Belgrano* (formerly USS *Phoenix*). The British submarine *Conqueror* located the *Belgrano* about 35 miles outside the 200-mile "war zone" declared by London. Disregarding this fact, the British launched two long-range torpedoes. Within hours the second largest ship in the Argentine navy went down. Over 300 sailors were killed. The British naval officers, who carefully cultivate a reputation for honor and "fair play", made no effort at all to rescue the survivors



War criminal Thatcher jubilant after carrying out cold-blooded mass murder.

huddled together in life boats trying to avoid freezing to death.'

We noted further that, 'Now it has come out that Thatcher's war cabinet and the British high command apparently knew in advance the *Belgrano* was returning to port ... Iron Lady Thatcher surely knew; apparently she had the Argentine ship sunk for the sheer mass-murdering hell of it.'

The new leaks have confirmed just what we wrote about this bloody ruling class. The 31 August *New Statesman* publicised a report that having authorised the sinking of the *Belgrano* at Chequers, the bloodthirsty Thatcher rushed off to Naval HQ at Northwood to be present in the operations room for the attack. The recent reports also underline just how much Thatcher's Falklands adventure was touch and go. One Exocet in an aircraft carrier would have put paid to this imperial expedition -- then the only 'Falk-



lands factor' Thatcher could have hoped for would have been a sheep farm down south, Argentines permitting. And Her Majesty would have been none too amused at the loss of the buffoon prince in his helicopter. The last time anything resembling that happened, was when the Zulus despatched the French pretender at the time of their victory over the British at Isandhlwana.

It wasn't just that Thatcher and her war cabinet knew that the *Belgrano* was sailing back to port. In a paroxysm of personal and class zeal, the prime minister was pursuing a strategy of all-out war. This included the preparation of nuclear threats and the despatch of a *Polaris* submarine. Its proposed target was the Argentine industrial city of Cordoba, a centre of working class struggle against Argentine capitalism. It is purely fortuitous that the *Belgrano* atrocity was not followed by more.

For months Tam Dalyell waged a lone battle to get at the truth in parliament. Now other MPs are joining the outcry. But they're upset about Thatcher lying to parliament, not that she murdered 300 Argentine sailors. Of course when push comes to shove, the Labour Party leaders no less than the Tories will sanction any bloody act if it serves the interests of British capital, from concentration camps in the Boer war, carnage on the Somme, mass starvation in India, terror bombing of German civilian centres, to army terror in Ireland.

And whereas arch anti-communist Cold War spy-master George Wright can 'leak' whatever he chooses in the name of a crusade for a more ruthless secret police, Clive Ponting, the Defence Ministry official who is accused of leaking the *Belgrano* documents, faces the same draconian punishment meted out to Sarah Tisdall. We demand all charges be dropped against Ponting, who only did the decent thing. As for Thatcher, she stands indicted as a war criminal, like the Nazis condemned at the end of World War II. The *Belgrano* affair is a warning of just how far this reactionary ruling class will go to protect its interests. Only workers revolution will put a stop to such atrocities and their capitalist perpetrators. ■

Sharpeville...

(Continued from page 12)

past several years the ANC has concentrated on daring commando raids against South African military and police installations. In recent months even these actions have been crippled by a deal between the weak nationalist regime in Mozambique, where the ANC had based some of its operations, and South African imperialism.

Externally, the ANC has devoted much of its energy to promoting the diplomatic and economic isolation of South Africa from the Western world (eg pushing university disinvestment schemes). Such appeals to the imperialist ruling class to break its ties with South Africa are especially grotesque today. With Reagan/Thatcher's anti-Soviet war drive, South Africa -- always an ally of US imperialism -- has become an increasingly important part of the 'free world'. Washington and London have backed to the hilt the South African army's ravaging of Angola, whose hard-won independence is being defended by 20,000 Cuban troops backed by Soviet arms. We call for international labour action to support black unions in South Africa. And at this moment we urgently call for blacking all cargo to and from South Africa as an elemental act of solidarity with the black and coloured masses fighting apartheid terror. At a protest against the recent massacre outside South Africa House in London on 7 August, the Spartacist League carried a banner reading, 'Black workers are revolutionary powerhouse! Smash Apartheid! For workers revolution! Smash Reagan/Thatcher/Botha racist anti-Soviet war axis!'

For a black-centred workers and peasants government!

Since the 1973 Durban mass strike, a black trade-union movement has developed in South Africa, especially strong in the Eastern Cape industrial belt. However, this newly formed workers movement lacks overall political direction and has little continuity with the mass anti-apartheid struggles of the 1950s and earlier. The black unions are fragmented, localised and to some degree beset by tribalist divisions. Without the leadership of a revolutionary party, the black labour movement cannot go beyond militant defence of its members' economic interests and support to one or another wing of the nationalist/reformist opposition.

In a number of important respects South Africa today resembles tsarist Russia in the

years leading up to the Revolution of 1905. It was under these conditions that Lenin wrote *What Is To Be Done?*, the classic statement of the need for a centralised proletarian party to direct the spontaneous and many-sided struggles of the oppressed toward a single aim, the overthrow of the autocracy. In describing the state of the Russian opposition Lenin used a metaphor about building a structure with bricks: 'Are we not now passing through precisely such a period in our Party life when we have bricks and bricklayers, but lack the guide line for all to see and follow?' Likewise, in South Africa there exists in ample supply the raw material of universal discontent and constant struggles by the oppressed. What is lacking is a central directing force to overthrow the apartheid system, the basis of South African capitalism.

As in the struggle against Russian tsarism, so in South Africa the struggle against apartheid conforms to Trotsky's programme of permanent revolution: proletarian leadership

over all the oppressed in the struggle for democratic rights, agrarian revolution and national emancipation. The 22 million black toilers, held in bondage as an internal colony, can be liberated only by proletarian revolution. The first step towards racial equality demands a revolutionary constituent assembly based on one man, one vote. A future for the impoverished rural masses means freeing them from the bantustan hellholes and distributing the country's rich farm land to the black tillers. At the same time, a communist vanguard would seek to unite black toilers with the oppressed coloured and Indian minorities, and also win those whites opposed to apartheid to the cause of proletarian revolution. For a black-centred workers and peasants government! History has given to South Africa's black proletariat the power to liberate not only their own deeply oppressed people but all of black Africa whose social and economic development is shackled by imperialist subjugation. ■



Anti-Botha demonstration, London, 2 June

WORKERS HAMMER

Avenge apartheid terror- for workers revolution!

Sharpeville erupts

Black South Africa exploded in anger the first week of September. Sparked by rent increases and the inauguration of a new constitution designed to strengthen the apartheid state, revolt broke out in Sharpeville and quickly spread across the *veldt* to black townships near Johannesburg. When peaceful protests were met by the savage police attacks, the blacks fought back. Government offices, beer halls, petrol stations, even a police barracks were levelled by firebombs. The streets were littered with rocks and makeshift barricades made of rubbish bins and uprooted traffic signs.

The fury of the masses was directed especially at the black traitors appointed by the racist rulers to keep them down. After he fired on the protesters, the deputy mayor of Sharpeville was hacked to death and his body burned in front of his own home. Reportedly five other black township councillors got theirs. Factories, mines and businesses in the heavily industrialised area were closed as a result of the explosion in the black townships.

The white supremacist bosses sense that they are in trouble. In the 1976 Soweto rebellion they relied on the police and paramilitary forces to terrorise student demonstrators; this time they immediately backed them up with army detachments. On the very day bands were playing in Cape Town at PW Botha's inauguration as president under the new constitution, rifles and tear gas shells were blasting in Sharpeville, Seboking and Evaton. Officially, the death toll had climbed to 38 by the week's end. The actual number killed is doubtless far higher.

Yet the black protesters were not cowed by the massive mobilisation of military force. On 6 September, four cabinet members set out to inspect the embattled townships. As their armoured convoy, accompanied by army helicopters, approached Seboking, it was confronted by hundreds of angry blacks. The ministers retreated, 'We were advised to turn back, and we turned back', explained the Minister of Law and Order. It was a black eye for Botha.

At this crucial moment all class-conscious workers and enemies of racist oppression must act in solidarity with South Africa's black toilers. For mass, united-front protests against apartheid terror! For international labour boycotts of all cargo to and from South Africa!

Everyone recalls the mass demonstrations and stayaway strikes which spread nationwide from the huge black township of Soweto in 1976. Could this be the start of a new rising? A full-scale eruption has been expected for more than a generation. The South African ruling class, armed to the teeth and with general support from the 4.5 million privileged whites, has had trouble keeping the lid on for the past ten years. Seething discontent is widespread among all sectors of the oppressed -- newly unionised black workers striking from the gold mines of the Rand to the car plants of the Eastern Cape, Cape Town 'coloureds' (mixed-race) battling the police against eviction, coloured students and Indian traders protesting the new apartheid constitution. Even among whites, particularly

male students facing conscription for the endless, low-intensity war in Namibia/Angola, there has been protest. It is centrally the five-million-strong black proletariat, today more organised than ever before, who are key to toppling the entire apartheid system.

When one thinks of black resistance to apartheid, the names of townships come to mind: Sharpeville, Cato Manor, Langa, Elsies River and, above all, Soweto. During the Soweto revolt 800 to 1000 blacks were killed, many of them school children. The heroism of 1976 inspires all anti-apartheid fighters, but it is widely understood that the powerful apartheid state will not be smashed through plebeian risings in the townships alone. The township revolts have some negative features in common with those in the black American ghettos. These spontaneous outbursts are directed not only against the police or local collaborators but also against shops, clinics and schools. In the present conflagration, for example, the shops of Indian traders (many of whom are opposed to apartheid and shut their shops in solidarity with the election boycott) were burned out.

South Africa's black townships are not only segregated and poor, they have deliberately been placed miles outside the cities where blacks have to work. They are designed to have a minimum of access roads with separate power stations and water systems that can be shut off in an emergency. Sometimes they have ring roads to make it easier to seal them off. Despite all these police-state measures, the 1976 events and the current upheavals show that rebellion can spread rapidly from one township to another.

The burning need is for a centralised leadership with a programme to win, a revolutionary vanguard party rooted in the combative



Militant black workers in Johannesburg protest 1976 Soweto massacre of student youth.



Sharpeville aflame as South African police went on rampage of racist murder. Workers revolution will avenge apartheid terror!

black proletariat which can make into one the many-sided struggle against apartheid, against rent hikes and starvation wages, against jailings, detention and torture, against the pass laws and all racist laws. Under the conditions of South Africa today such a vanguard party must be built as Lenin built the Bolsheviks. That is, it must be based on an underground network and have an important exile component to preserve its cadre, while also utilising every avenue for legal work (eg the trade unions).

Smash apartheid! For workers revolution!

Opposition to the new constitution has been led by a formation called the United Democratic Front (UDF), the largest anti-apartheid grouping in two decades. On paper the UDF boasts a membership of one and a half million and some 600 component organisations, including a number of trade unions. Yet when black township dwellers battled the police and army on the very day the new constitution was inaugurated, what did the UDF do? According to Western press reports, there have been no solidarity protests or stay-away strikes such as occurred after the 1976 Soweto massacre. This cannot be explained simply by the effectiveness of police-state repression. The popular-frontist UDF does not aim to lead militant mass struggle against the apartheid state but rather to pressure the 'moderate' or 'rational' elements in the white ruling class to reform the system.

The main forces behind the UDF are the nationalist African National Congress (ANC) and its longtime bloc partner, the Stalinist South

African Communist Party. Historically the main organisation of black resistance to apartheid, the ANC retains great moral authority among the toiling masses. Its leader Nelson Mandela, who has been imprisoned for 20 years (most of it on the notorious Robben Island), is unquestionably the most revered black man in South Africa. However, the ANC's organisational influence over the rising wave of black struggles in the past decade, especially the burgeoning workers movement, has been limited. For the

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