

South Africa: Class struggle is the key Smash apartheid!

The oppressed masses and black labour movement of South Africa are today locked in explosive conflict with apartheid capitalism and its brutally racist state. The sacking of more than 17,000 black gold miners by the Anglo-American corporation of supposed 'liberal' mining tycoon Harry Oppenheimer shows yet again the true face of Botha's 'enlightened' apartheid regime. And the murders in police custody of 29-year-old black trade union leader Andries Raditsela and student leader Sipho Mutsi add two more martyrs to the cause of South Africa's workers and oppressed. Black unions have called a two-hour strike on 14 May in protest at these latest police murders.

In the seething black townships, from the Cape to the Rand, police repression, raids, arrests of militants continue unabated. Now in the 'coloured' (mixed race) areas of the Cape, previously relatively quiescent, further rebellion has erupted. In the townships of Michausdal and Outshoorn, police have attacked crowds of militant youth, firing tear gas and rubber bullets.

Last month's miners strike, like the Transvaal general strike in November, demonstrates that South Africa's migratory system of indentured servitude no longer cows black labour. When 14,400 miners struck against the blatant victimisation of 92 shaft stewards at the Vaal Reefs mine in the western Transvaal, management declared the strike illegal and sacked the lot. Soon after, at the nearby Hartebeesfontein mine owned by Anglo-Vaal (an Anglo-American subsidiary), 3000 more striking miners got the boot. These courageous miners knew that under Pretoria's slave-labour laws they faced mass sackings and deportation to the desperately impoverished bantustans and neighbouring black states like Mozambique. Strikers barricaded themselves into their hostels and were brutally attacked by police who used tear gas and rubber bullets to flush them out, killing at least two miners.

Meanwhile in the black townships collaborators with the apartheid regime are being doused with petrol and burned or hacked to death, and repeated confrontations with heavily armed South African police are met with new Sharpeville massacres. Sixteen leaders of the largest anti-apartheid formation, the United Democratic Front (UDF) have been indicted for treason, and the last two leaders at liberty have now been seized. The UDF 16 will stand trial for their lives for the 'crime' of leading peaceful protests for basic human dignity and rights like being able to live with your family. Drop the charges against the UDF 16! Free all anti-apartheid fighters!



South African mineworkers, March 1983 — their power is key to smashing apartheid butchers.

In South Africa today, funerals and religious services are the *only* public meetings blacks are permitted to organise and attend. And as they bury their dead, with tens of thousands singing religious hymns and liberation anthems, bloody police repression is daily producing new martyrs. The *New York Times* (28 April) reported repeated chants of 'this is a bad place' punctuated by cries of 'Bazooka!' from militant youth yearning to replace stones with guns in their running battle with the police.

South Africa heading for civil war

South Africa is heading for civil war. But should it slide simply into a black-v-white race-national military conflict, the poorly armed blacks in the cordoned-off townships will be massacred without any chance that their sacrifice will bring down the white-supremacist regime. Incidents such as the severe burning two weeks ago of a white youth who stopped in a black township to buy spirits

could be used as the pretext to unleash the bloody holocaust. A senior cop declared, 'If there are any further attacks on whites... there will be a serious risk of white vigilante action... We are only a step away from it' (*Newsweek*, 29 April).

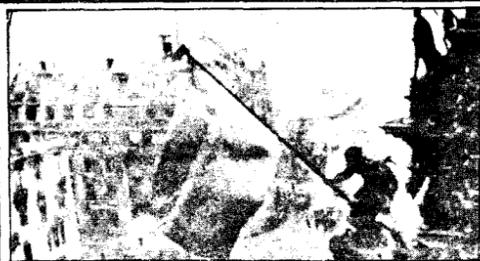
It is urgently necessary to bring the power of the black proletariat into struggle for its own class rule. The increasing organisation and consciousness of this working class is the Achilles heel of apartheid capitalism. With a revolutionary proletarian leadership the black union movement could give direction and purpose to the rebellion of the youth in the townships, all of whom are wage earners or families of workers. The determined Afrikaner rulers can isolate and napalm black townships, but they cannot replace or obliterate the black working class, which produces the wealth of South Africa.

International solidarity is crucial to aid the embattled black labour movement of South Africa. The blatant use of police-state terror has led to a new growth of militant anti-apartheid protest internationally, notably in the United States. But to effectively fight apartheid, militants must reject the impotent and counter-productive strategy of demanding the capitalist bosses 'disinvest' their South Africa holdings. This call for British and American imperialists to launch an international strike of capital must be rejected in favour of a strategy of working-class action against apartheid. British miners, who received inspiring solidarity from

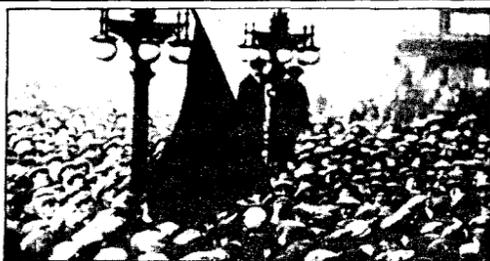
the South African National Union of Mineworkers during their strike, have particular reason to fight for such solidarity. We print on page 11 a telegram sent by several British NUM members from a *Workers Hammer* May Day rally to the embattled South African miners union, a modest pointer to the sort of class solidarity needed. The labour movement internationally must back all military hardware to the apartheid regime, and fight for solidarity strikes with their class brothers in South Africa.

Above all, a proletarian-revolutionary strategy is needed in South Africa itself. Militants supporting organisations like the UDF and African National Congress have heroically laid down their lives for the cause. But their struggle is thwarted by a class-collaborationist strategy which looks to a supposed 'liberal' wing of the South African capitalist class -- a wing exemplified by the Progressive Federal Party of none other than the Oppenheims, the very people responsible for the mass sackings and butchery of black

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Hail Lankan women workers struggle!

A special meeting of the women garment workers of Magnum Garments Limited was organised in February to see our comrades of the Spartacist League/Lanka hand over to their union, the All Ceylon Commercial & Industrial Workers Union, funds collected in Australia in support of their strike last year. The text of a speech given to the meeting by a representative of the international Spartacist tendency is reprinted below.

It is a very great honour for me to speak to you today. I would like to explain why this is so, and why the international Spartacist tendency thinks your struggles are very important.

I'm sorry that we could not bring to you this money we have collected when you were still on strike, when you most needed it. I'm sure, however, you will find a good use for it. I have been told that the Magnum management is refusing to pay you bonuses. Perhaps this money can be used to help in these new fights. The Apparel Garment workers are on strike, perhaps it could be used to support their struggle.

The money was collected by our Australian comrades. According to the standards of living in Australia this 13,000 rupees is not a large amount, but it is a gesture of how important they think your struggles are. The capitalists in Australia try to encourage white racist attitudes. But Australia is part of Asia. Our comrades in Australia know that they must build links with the workers of Asia if they wish to get rid of Australian imperialism.

As internationalists we believe that we must support all the true struggles of the workers and oppressed everywhere in the world. We do not say that because a strike is not in our country we will not support it. We do not



About 100 mainly women workers at Magnum Garments in Sri Lanka met to accept strike support funds collected by the Spartacist League of Australia and New Zealand.

say that because a strike is not led by our party we will ignore it. Today our American, German and French comrades have been working very hard to support the British miners strike.

The miners have been on strike for ten months. Now it is one of the coldest winters for thirty years. President JR's friend Mrs Thatcher is using police violence, scabs, the law courts and starvation to try and beat the miners. The trade union bureaucrats and the top leaders of the Labour Party have tried to sabotage the strike and have refused to bring out the other powerful forces of the working class on strike with the miners to defend jobs and get rid of Mrs Thatcher.

Our American comrades have collected thousands of dollars for the miners. The money the miners receive goes into a special bank account to run the strike and support the miners families. It does not go to the union's general funds for normal administration costs and officials' wages. But the miners do not just need financial support, they also need a programme to win. That is what our British comrades fight for when they demand 'All out with the miners'.

Yes, we believe in international working class solidarity. It was British imperialism that was the great master of 'divide and rule', of turning one community against another in its empire. Now the Sri Lankan and other capitalist ruling classes use the same tactics. But communalism and racism divide the working class against each other and diverts it from the real enemy, capitalism. It is the same capitalists and UNP government that attacks you which also attacks the Tamil people, denying them their rights. JR's friend, Ronald Reagan, the man who wants to get his imperialist hands on Trincomalee harbour as part of his preparations for nuclear war with the

Soviet Union, uses racism to divide white workers against black workers in the United States. JR and the capitalists are trying the same trick here. I ask you not to be fooled.

The great Russian revolutionary leader, Leon Trotsky, once said that when they are aroused there will be no better fighters for communism than the women of Asia. I hear people say that

women in Sri Lanka are not interested in politics, that they are backward. Yes it is true that women have special problems and burdens. But I cannot accept these excuses. I know that women workers can and must be in the vanguard of the struggle.

British imperialism made super profits from the tea plantations. Now the Sri Lankan capitalists share these profits. But still the plantation workers live and work in terrible conditions. Now the capitalists also want to make fat profits from the workers of the Free Trade Zone and textile industry. They make you a slave until you are a human wreck and then they throw you on the rubbish dump. It is the Tamil women of the plantations and the young women in factories like Magnum who are the real heart of the working class in Sri Lanka. There can be no bright socialist future in Sri Lanka unless you take your place in the forefront of the struggle. Don't listen to those men who tell you that you can and must only follow behind. I know you can be the best fighters and leaders just like Trotsky said.

As I said we will support your struggles. We have big differences with the comrades of the LSSP. I read yesterday that an LSSP leader said capitalism is to blame for all the troubles in society. This is true, but how can you fight capitalism when you join in governments with capitalist parties which oppress workers and even become minister of finance and taxation.

No, if we want to free ourselves from exploitation and oppression, if we want to build a society that is fit for ourselves and our children to live in we cannot do it in alliance with the capitalists. We must sweep capitalism into the rubbish dump. We must build working class unity -- in Sri Lanka, in Asia, in the world.

Thank you very much for letting me speak to you. Workers of the world unite! ■



The Trotskyists on World War II

Trotsky and Lenin

In December 1941 American Trotskyist leader James P Cannon, along with 17 other defendants, was sentenced under the Smith Act to prison for revolutionary agitation against the imperialist war. Regarding World War II, he declared:

We considered the war upon the part of all the capitalist powers involved -- Germany and France, Italy and Great Britain -- as an imperialist war....

This characterization of the war does not apply to the war of the Soviet Union against German imperialism. We make a fundamental distinction between the Soviet Union and its 'democratic' allies. We defend the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union is a workers' state, although degenerated under the totalitarian-political rule of the Kremlin bureaucracy. Only traitors can deny support to the Soviet workers' state in its war against fascist Germany. To defend the Soviet Union, in spite of Stalin and against Stalin, is to defend the nationalized property established by the October Revolution. That is a progressive war.

-- James P Cannon, 'A statement on the US Entry into World War II' (22 December 1941)

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WORKERS HAMMER

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Defend the Newham 7!

On 27 April, 1500 demonstrators marched through London's East End, chanting: 'Self defence is no offence!' and 'Newham 7 -- dem are warriors! Racist police -- dem are murderers!' This mainly black and Asian demonstration displayed a deeply felt anger and disgust at the brutally systematic violence directed daily by the cops against minorities. As the march organisers stated in their call: 'our community is under threat from racist attacks and from the people who are meant to be protecting us, the police'.

The demonstration was called in defence of the Newham 7, Asian youth arrested for defending themselves and their community from a rampage by racist thugs in April 1984, and to demand 'Justice for the Pryces'. Gerald Pryce, a black youth, was arrested last November by racist plainclothes cops and charged with 'affray' after his 16-year-old brother, Eustace, was brutally stabbed and murdered by a white racist thug. The killer was released on bail, while Gerald is banned to this day even from visiting his family home in Newham.

For the black and Asian community the co-ordinated conspiracy between the cops and courts is a life-and-death situation. When the marchers stopped outside the Forest Gate Police Station they were viciously attacked by the cops, though not without fierce resistance. The cops tried to divide the

marchers and ganged up on the most militant with their usual savagery.

For many of these people such a provocation was an amplified version of daily life. Their basic right to self defence and to live without fear of cop violence and racist murder were clearly the reasons which mobilised them on the streets. They know all too well that when a black or Asian is attacked by a group of racist punks it is themselves who are likely to be arrested. One racist murder after another is dismissed by the cops and courts as 'death by misadventure'. Only last month the vicious racist murderer who killed a Mauritian BR ticket collector by driving a metal spike through his eye last year was let off by the capitalist court with a token sentence for manslaughter.

The largely black and Asian and highly integrated London Transport and British Rail workforce can be key in forming mass trade union/minority defence guards to smash cop/fascist violence. Calls for police accountability, community control, endless no-win inquiries etc will not stop racist attacks. Defend the arrested April demonstrators! Drop the charges against the Newham 7 and Gerald Pryce! For the right of self-defence! For union/minority mobilisation to smash cop/fascist race terror! ■

Break with the Communist Party— Take Lenin's road to revolution!

This country could sorely do with a communist party several thousands strong, the sort of party that led the Russian workers to power. If today's CPGB were anything close to what Lenin built, the heroism with which the miners fought for a year could well have paid off with a big, resounding victory over Thatcher and her whole class. But it isn't, and the miners lost. And now the Communist Party is about to have another one of its congresses at which we'll see plenty of backbiting, behind the scenes manoeuvring, probably a bunch of bureaucratic expulsions -- but no communist politics, on any side.

For years now decent militants in the CP have been champing at the bit, waiting for the much-repeated promises of a split once and for all with the Russia-hating SDP-lovers around Gordon McLennan and *Marxism Today* to be realised. So why is it that this mob who love Lech Walesa and think a trade unionist's best friend is his local vicar are still calling the shots and expelling people all over the place? Because everything that claims to offer an alternative, from *Straight Left* to *Morning Star* to the not-very-Leninist, only offers different roads to liquidation, sometimes signposted with rhetoric about 'class politics' or 'supporting socialist countries'. Let's face facts: can anyone really tell the difference between *Straight Left* and *Labour Weekly*? And if *Marxism Today/Focus* is (at best) the voice of Neil Kinnock, isn't *Morning Star* the voice of Tony Benn? With alternatives like that on offer, it's no wonder they're all mouthing off so much about unity.

Thatcher's drive to smash the NUM was a direct corollary to NATO's anti-Soviet war drive. They want to smash the gains of the Russian Revolution and that means smashing the gains of the working class in every capitalist country. And she went after the NUM with a particular vengeance because its leader dared take a stand against the war drive of 'Ronald Ray-gun and the Plutonium Blonde' and their beloved scab 'union' Solidarnosc.

The problem with Arthur Scargill is he's not a communist; to this day he continues to preach unity with Judas Kinnock inside Labour's 'broad church'. But there are thousands of militant workers who in the course of this strike were rudely awakened to the backstabbing reality of Labourite reformism and would welcome the opportunity to become part of a mass revolutionary party. All they get from the Eurocommunist CP leadership is a slap in the face. Says Pete Carter in the March issue of *Kautskysm Today*: 'there should have been an early condemnation of violence from whichever quarter.... Support from the bishops should have been worked for and welcomed.' Maybe we ought to dangle a noose in front of Mr Carter as well.

And what about Chater/Costello's *Morning Star*? It's no accident that Tony Benn says the *Morning Star* is his favourite paper -- and it's sure as hell not for telling the scathing, revolutionary truth about the Labour mis-

★ Morning Star

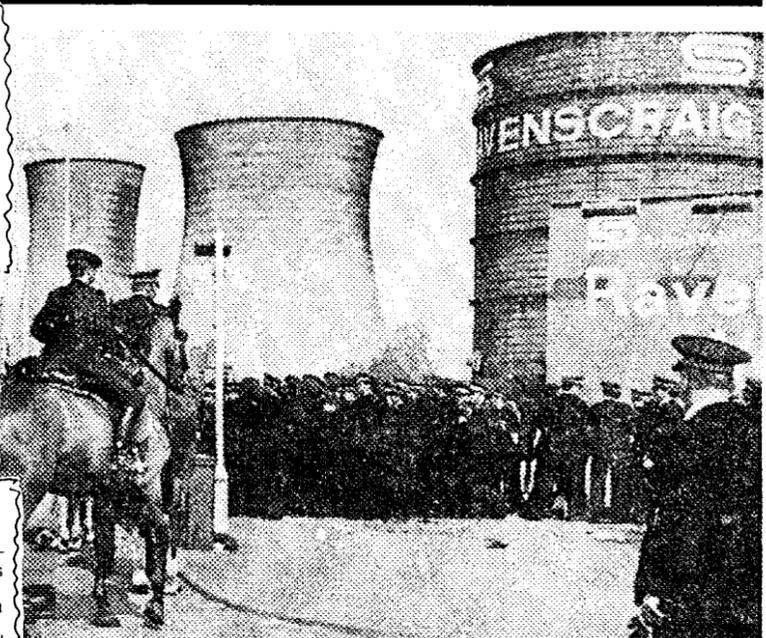
Media bid to build up union split fails **War on by**
Miners' steelworks deal forges unity

★ Morning Star

Thatcher gave 'no alternative' to action at pits
Kinnock gives complete backing to miners' fight

★ Morning Star

'Coal picket lines must not be broken' **Dockers leader: halt sca coal to end strii**
TUC leaders unite with the miners



Morning Star covered for Judas Kinnock and TUC traitors, including (top) hailing Mick McGahey's scabby deal with Bill Sirs' ISTC over Ravenscraig.

leaders the way Lenin did in his day. After a year of the most vile scabherding by Kinnock, Benn still refuses to openly challenge, or even criticise, Kinnock. So, in turn, *Morning Star* won't criticise Benn. Mick Costello sheepishly admits that he was 'misled' into thinking Thatcher/MacGregor wanted a 'negotiated settlement with the NUM' (*Morning Star*, 26 March). Is this the best Communist workers can expect from their leaders? Either Costello is very gullible, or very dishonest.

But let's look at *Morning Star's* track record. When Lord Murray's TUC was stabbing the NGA in the back, *Morning Star* (22 November 1983) said: 'TUC throws weight behind printworkers'. When Neil Kinnock was mouthing off for a scab ballot, *Morning Star* (19 April 1984) said: 'Kinnock gives complete backing to miners' fight'. Mick McGahey's deal to keep scab coal pouring into Ravenscraig was headlined 'Miners' steelworks deal forges unity' (7 April 1984). And just before Welsh miners gave Norm Willis the noose, *Morning Star* (1 September 1984) told us: 'TUC leaders unite with the miners'. From hailing the dockers' sellout as a victory to covering up the scab coal scandal at BL Longbridge (orchestrated by plant convenor and CP executive member Jack Adams), *Morning Star* was incapable of putting the TUC 'lefts' on the spot and demanding they fight for genuine solidarity *strike action* -- because it is the mouthpiece of these very 'lefts'.

Why? Why does *Straight Left* argue for burying yourself inside the Labour Party and against splitting from McLennan/Jacques? Why does *Leninist*, for all its long, turgid 'critiques' of Stalinist betrayal right back to

the 1920s (most of which they plagiarise, and render toothless, from Trotsky and *Workers Hammer*) still argue against splitting from the CP and play footsie with the Solidarnosc-loving *Workers Power* group?

Because none of them has an independent revolutionary perspective. Each main tendency in its own way is committed to the old Stalinist shibboleth of 'peaceful coexistence' -- peaceful coexistence with the reformist class traitors at home, peaceful coexistence with the imperialist warmongers abroad. For them 'pro-Sovietism' means whitewashing the nationalist betrayals of the Stalinist rulers -- like the Polish regime's scandalous export of coal to Britain for the duration of the miners strike. Or (in the case of the *Leninist*) they mumble about the erring ways of the 'comrades' overseas.

Reagan and Thatcher are the living arguments against 'peaceful coexistence'. They want war -- war against the Soviet Union, war against the workers and oppressed at home. For us, Trotskyists, defence of the Soviet Union is not a matter of pacifist daydreams or reprinting rosy articles from *Soviet Life* but of fighting to revive the revolutionary traditions and programme of Lenin and Trotsky's Communist International, traditions exemplified in the Hands Off Russia Campaign of 1919. We fight for unconditional military defence of the Soviet bloc against the war drive as part of a perspective of workers revolution against capitalism and of political revolution to throw out the Stalinist misleaders and restore the programme of Lenin to the Kremlin.

In the final analysis, the various pro-Moscow oppositions within the CP are incapable of fighting the Eurocommunist leadership because they share the same roots and the same perspective -- from the Popular Front of the 1930s to the 'broad democratic alliance' of today. It's called class collaboration. While the CPs of the imperialist countries like Britain were boosting the war preparations of their respective bourgeoisies in the late 1930s, Leon Trotsky postulated the later, full flowering of Eurocommunist anti-Sovietism:

'Stalin has reconciled the Communist parties of imperialist democracies with the national bourgeoisies. This stage has now been past.... Henceforth the Communist chauvinists will have to worry about their own hides, whose interests by no means always coincide with the "defence of the USSR".' ('A Fresh Lesson', 1938)

Let's go forward to victories and not defeats. If you joined the CP to be a communist, why settle for tailing Kinnock. It was the Spartacist League which said 'Stop Solidarity's counterrevolution!' It was we who nailed the Korean Air Lines Flight 007 as an anti-Soviet provocation right from the start. And it was we who campaigned to turn the miners strike into a general strike through a fighting Triple Alliance of miners, railworkers and transport workers. Join us in building a genuinely revolutionary party and a genuinely revolutionary international! ■

CPGB 'Leninists': rhetoric v reality

By their deeds shall ye judge them. On a whole series of questions, the *Leninist* seems to stand apart from the morass of different tendencies, factions and cliques inside the Communist Party. They are prepared to level scathing attacks on the Labour/TUC misleaders, oppose counterrevolutionary Solidarnosc while criticising the Polish regime's scabbery, and claim to stand against class collaboration. But rhetoric must meet reality. What practical/political conclusions do they draw from all this?

For several months now they have been the best of political friends with a group of Solidarnosc-lovers called *Workers Power*. The latter outfit argues that the creation of workers states in Eastern Europe, Cuba and Vietnam represented 'counterrevolutionary social overturns', and complains that the Red Army intervention in Afghanistan is 'reactionary'. Yet *Leninist* and they have been organising joint meetings (as at a 9 February miners support conference in Sheffield) and assiduously avoid public criticism of one another's positions. So much for any connection between

'defence of the Soviet Union' and the domestic class struggle. Strange bedfellows for 'Leninists'?

The *Leninist* does agree with its *Workers Power* chums on some positions ... rotten ones. For example, both think the NUM should have capitulated to the scab ballot furore. Thus the May *Leninist* says, 'the fact that a ballot was not employed at the beginning of the miners' strike caused many problems'. And both pegged their central strategy in the strike on appealing to the TUC to launch a general strike.

The TUC Cold Warriors demonstrated their hostility to the NUM with their vicious anti-Communist witchhunt of Arthur Scargill (at Blackpool 1983) over his opposition to Solidarnosc. To the *Leninist* this meant nothing. We drew the conclusion from the TUC's role there and over the NGA and GCHQ that a general strike could only be organised *over the heads* of these open class traitors, and called for a fighting Triple Alliance of miners, railworkers and transport workers to launch co-

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Anti-Soviet warmongers salute Nazis

V-E Day in Germany



May Day, 1945: Red Army liberates Berlin

While Moscow witnessed a huge march celebrating the fortieth anniversary of victory over Hitlerite fascism, the anti-Soviet imperialist warmongers celebrated by paying homage to the Nazi SS murderers buried in Bitburg cemetery. Standing amid the SS graves at Bitburg, Ronald Reagan went out of his way to make common cause with them, proclaiming: 'I am an Afghan, and I am a prisoner of the Gulag... I, too, am a potential victim of totalitarianism.' Reagan wants to 'forget' the World War II alliances in order to shore up his axis for anti-Soviet World War III. Nicaragua, facing new US economic sanctions, is the first target for imperialist 'rollback'. But for the many millions around the world who hate the Nazis, this obscene imperialist spectacle was met with revulsion and outrage. Crowds of Jewish and leftist protesters, including tearful Holocaust survivors, faced down brutal attacks from West German police to greet Reagan as he visited Bitburg and Belsen concentration camp. They knew where Reagan belonged. As one placard outside Belsen read, 'Ronnie, we'll reserve a grave at Bitburg for you.'

The following article, written before Reagan's visit to Germany, is adapted from Spartakist no 54, May 1985, published by our comrades of the *Trotzkistische Liga Deutschlands*.

May Day in Berlin, 1945: Soldiers of the Red Army raise the red flag over the Reichstag. On May 8th German Field Marshal Keitel signs the capitulation. The Nazi regime is finally smashed and the horrors of the 'brown plague' brought to an end. The Soviet soldiers who opened the gates of the Auschwitz and Sachsenhausen concentration camps put a stop to the horrendous extermination programme which had murdered six million Jews and five million of other minorities and nationalities in the death camps.

The triumph of the fascist ideology of the German 'master race' and *Lebensraum* ('living space') had led to genocide, carried out with German thoroughness as far as the dominion of German imperialism reached. The German working class suffered for more than a decade under the fascist yoke; their organisations were crushed, their leaders, if they didn't escape into exile, were murdered, imprisoned in the concentration camps or killed in the war. With the military defeat of German imperialism a war ended, at least for Europe, in which the imperialists' competition for world domination cost more than 50 million lives.

The taking of Berlin in May 1945 was indisputably an act of liberation. Yet none of the Soviet Union's erstwhile imperialist allies, much less the West German successor state to the 'Third Reich', want to celebrate this 40th anniversary of victory. The defeated German imperialism of 1945 has long since raised its head with renewed self-confidence. Federal chancellor Helmut Kohl expressed the

newly strengthened nationalism in the parliamentary 'State of the Nation' debate: 'Our fatherland, the centre of Europe, was divided. For the Germans of the DDR [German Democratic Republic -- East Germany] and for our Eastern European neighbours, May 8th became for an indeterminate time the day of the replacement of one dictatorship with another' (*Das Parlament*, 16 March).

The German bourgeoisie sees itself as bearing a new/old mission, 'to liberate the East from Communism'. And the West German army has chosen, of all dates, May 8th to demonstrate their striking power as the strongest NATO army in Europe with a 'dynamic show of arms'. The German proletariat must rip power away from the capitalist class before German tanks (this time 'Leopards' instead of 'Tigers') once again roll towards Moscow.

The hypocrisy of the imperialist victors and of defeated German imperialism over May 8th gives the lie to their occasional pose as 'champions of human rights'. Certainly 'Star Wars' President Reagan doesn't want to hear about US responsibility in helping Nazi beasts like the Gestapo murderers Barbie and Mengele escape after 1945. He's not in the least interested in the fate of the victims of fascism. What interests him is strengthening the anti-Soviet NATO war alliance, in which West Germany is his most important partner. US imperialism seeks to reconquer unchallenged world hegemony, which it gained after 1945 and whose loss was marked by the collapse of the Bretton Woods dollar-based monetary system in 1971. And that means above all a fight against the 1945 ally, the Soviet Union, which Reagan today calls the 'Evil Empire'.

On 5 May, Reagan will visit the Bitburg military cemetery, where fallen soldiers of the German Ardennes offensive are buried along with members of the SS murder gangs. Reagan wants to challenge that section of the American public which does not share his enthusiasm for war and who still painfully remember the millions of victims murdered by the Nazis. Reagan even tries to prettify the SS thugs buried in Bitburg as 'victims of National Socialism'. At the last minute, Reagan and Kohl are now trying to smooth the waves with a visit to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. Yet Bitburg, amid the graves with the SS symbols, is certainly an appropriate place for Kohl and Reagan to confirm their counterrevolutionary anti-Soviet alliance.

Friend or foe?

It's obvious. The flagging victory mood of the Western allies comes from the feeling that they were on the wrong side in World War II. Perhaps, the US imperialists think today, they should have grasped the extended hand of Admiral Karl Doenitz in April 1945. In his 1 May 'Order of the Day' to the German army, immediately after Hitler's suicide and

Doenitz' appointment as *Reich* president by Goebbels, he stated: 'We must fight on against the English and the Americans so long as they prevent me from carrying on the war against Bolshevism.' In a note on the same day to the British commander, Field Marshal Montgomery, Doenitz offered to become an anti-Soviet ally and turn the fronts around. At that time American imperialism rejected the offer. But Doenitz' intention was not without its own realistic calculations.

The military advance of the Soviet Union in repulsing the German Wehrmacht (army) frightened the Western Allies. Concerned that a German power vacuum would be filled by the Soviets, the British prime minister, Winston Churchill, already in 1942 called on the Western powers to 'after the war put up a barrier against Communist barbarism'. The policies of the Western Allies were to bleed the Soviet Union white. Despite continuous Soviet pressure, the US and Britain delayed the Second Front, promised to Stalin in 1942, until mid-1944. Britain was considering an invasion of the Balkans -- that is, the areas which were already being occupied by the Red Army -- instead of Normandy. The Western Allies' advance on Schleswig-Holstein in April 1945 was justified explicitly with the intention of stopping the Red Army.

For the capitalist countries involved, the Second World War was without exception an imperialist war. For the proletariat of these countries, in the words of Karl Liebknecht on the First World War, 'the main enemy is at home'. The workers of all countries had one country to defend in this war: the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union carried the main burden of the war. Its victory after nearly four years of fascist invasion in Russia cost 20 million dead! Three million people died in the first three months alone.

The Stalinist policies contributed to these devastating losses. Stalin trusted his pact with Hitler and rejected warnings, both from the Red Orchestra spy network under Leopold Trepper in West Europe and from Soviet spy Richard Sorge in Japan, that a German attack was imminent. The Red Army had been robbed of its most capable and experienced officers by the Stalinist purges. Thousands were murdered, among them Marshal Tukhachevsky, in order to smother all remaining opposition to bureaucratic rule. Even the most important strategist of World War II, Zhukov, had been purged, only to be reinstated due to the lack of capable officers.

And yet, despite Stalin's policies, the Russian workers threw back 'Operation Barbarossa'. Leningrad endured 900 days of siege: more than 800,000 people froze, starved or died in defence of the city, but the Nazis could not take it. It was the determined will of the Soviet people in defending the homeland of the October Revolution which made such obstinate and courageous struggle possible. In one of the bloodiest battles, fighting house-to-house and factory-to-factory in Stalingrad, the Soviets finally took the offensive and forced the surrender of German General Paulus in February 1943. After the victory at Kursk in July 1943, the Red Army stormed further westward. By the end of October 1944, nearly all of Eastern Europe had been liberated by the Red Army.

The Western Allies were deeply disturbed: the influence of the Soviet Union had to be driven back. So they finally established the Western Front, and the race to Berlin began. On 6 June 1944, US troops landed in Normandy. Up to that time the Germans had been able to concentrate 95 per cent of their divisions in the East, and the Red Army never faced less than 65 per cent of the Wehrmacht strength. In the last analysis, 'Operation Thunderclap', the April 1945 British-American firebombing of Dresden, filled with refugees from the East, which took 35,000 lives, and even more so the atomic mass murder in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, were intended to intimidate the Soviet Union.

In the Soviet occupation zone, which later became the DDR, resurgent Nazism was deprived of any social base through the destruction of capitalism, and more than 350 Nazi mass murderers were sentenced to death or life imprisonment. In contrast, the Nuremberg Trials of 1945-46 and other Allied war crimes trials only served as an alibi. Prominent Nazis like the banker Hermann Josef Abs were soon pulling the strings again. Abs, an influential board member of the Deutsche Bank under Hitler who was sentenced *in absentia* to 15 years hard labour by Yugoslavia, became the chairman of the board and headed the Reconstruction Credit Agency! Hitler's war industry chief, Friedrich Flick, who had made gigantic profits from the slave labour of 40,000 foreign forced-

labourers and concentration camp victims, was released from jail in 1950 and soon became known as Bonn's 'uncrowned finance minister'.

American imperialism had nothing against the reinstatement of 'former' Nazis in key positions in politics and the economy. Only a strong German capitalism could be of use against the Soviet Union. In the United States itself, the CIA falsified 800 files and gave Nazi specialists 'laundered' documents in order to make use of them for their own purposes. The file of 'V-2' rocket builder Wernher von Braun was among the dossiers of 14 scientists who in 1947 were considered 'security risks' by the US but were later 'denazified' at the stroke of a pen. The 'Foreign Armies East' secret service under Wehrmacht general Gehlen was absorbed by the CIA to continue its spying and sabotage against the Soviet Union. The Gehlen organisation was taken over in 1955 as West Germany's secret police.

The constitution for which the men in trenchcoats do their spying and persecution asserts the claim of the Federal Republic [West Germany] to be the successor state to Hitler's Third Reich, within the German borders of 1937 (thus including much of present-day Poland and parts of the USSR). In June Chancellor Kohl is to speak at a revanchist Silesian 'exiles' convention under the slogan: 'Silesia remains our future in a Europe of free peoples'. Leaders of Polish Solidarnosc, who look to the Frankfurt bankers for their salvation, seem to forget that the German imperialists are not exactly generous with their *Lebensraum*.

SPD nationalism: rollback in 'peace' costume

Forty years after the end of the war, US imperialism is only first among equals. Inter-imperialist competition is escalating into bitter trade wars, and differences between the NATO brothers-in-arms have increased -- differences centring on the question of how the Soviet Union should be destroyed. The basis for 'Europacifism' is the fear of Europe being turned into an atomic battlefield. In West Germany, the Social Democrats (SPD), once a kept party of the CIA, have switched masters back to German imperialism. The SPD's road isn't that of open revanchism, whose pro-war course would only lead West Germany to defeat and atomic catastrophe. Social Democracy wants to win back German imperialist dominance over Eastern Europe, to destroy the East German and Polish workers states, by undermining them economically through internal counterrevolution, like the Lutheran church-dominated 'peace' movement in East Germany or the (now prostrate) yellow 'union' Solidarnosc in



Heinous outrage: Reagan and Kohl go to Bitburg to bury Red Army victory over Hitler and honour Nazi butchers of 20 million Russians, 11 million Holocaust victims.

Poland.

The 'left' nationalism of the SPD is a trap for the German working class. SPD chairman Willy Brandt presents himself, a one-time anti-fascist fighter, as the most effective figure to reconcile the German workers with their 'own' bourgeoisie. Oskar Lafontaine, successful SPD 'peace' candidate in the Saar, expresses this clearly: more autonomy inside NATO, no MX missiles, and a powerful arsenal for the Bundeswehr. The SPD boasts that it is the real party of *Ostpolitik* ('Eastern policies') for German imperialism. Quite right. Its tradition as a reformist workers party gives it the chance to act in the East German workers state as a pro-imperialist alternative to Stalinism, disguised as a true, national 'force for peace'.

West Germany's left trails in the wake of Social Democracy. The Greens make their contribution to whitewashing German imperialism by demanding that Kohl visit Auschwitz [in Poland] on May 8th. On 4 May, 'Greens',

'Autonomists', Maoists and pseudo-Trotskyists will demonstrate against the Reagan visit and the imperialist world economic summit in Bonn -- an anti-American and anti-Soviet demonstration of the new German nationalism. An effective protest against the imperialist robbers would have to be based on defence of the DDR, Poland, the Soviet Union and other workers states, with the perspective of class war against one's 'own' bourgeoisie.

Among the belligerent powers of World War II only the Soviet Union today sees a reason to celebrate the destruction of the criminal Hitler regime on May 8th. Reagan and Kohl would like everyone to forget the horrors of the Nazi regime, because the imperialist enemies of old are now NATO allies carrying out the programme of Admiral Doenitz. DDR leader Erich Honecker recently remarked:

'We will not forget the victims of Hitler's barbarism and the victims of the Dresden bombing terror.... All in all, you can't say that the right conclusions have been drawn from World War II. Not even the Star Wars architects or their planners would survive a war unleashed with atomic weapons.'

The 'right conclusions', say the Stalinists, are to resuscitate the old wartime alliance. But even if there were a chance for a Gorbachev-Reagan pact, it would no more protect the Soviet Union against imperialist attack than did Stalin's pact with Hitler. A proletarian political revolution is needed to oust the sellout bureaucracy in the degenerated/deformed workers states. Not detente illusions but international socialist revolution will defend the remaining gains of the October Revolution.

Germany was divided as the result of the defeat of German imperialism in the last world war. Talk of reunification without overthrowing resurgent German capitalism in the West is a call for counterrevolution in the East and a new world war -- this time a nuclear holocaust for all humanity. To achieve a progressive solution to the German question, a revolutionary-internationalist, authentically communist party must be built which energetically opposes the 'left' nationalism of the 'peace' movement as well as open right-wing revanchism. The Trotskistische Liga Deutschlands seeks to build such a party, fighting for revolutionary reunification of Germany as part of a Socialist United States of Europe. The red flag which was unfurled over the Brandenburg Gate on 1 May 1945 must fly over all of Europe, as a signal for world revolution, for a socialist future in which genocide and war are banished forever. That is our goal.■

Abolish the monarchy! Fascist skeletons in the royal cupboard

While Ronald Reagan honoured Nazi SS killers at Bitburg, ruling-class Britain engaged in obscene celebrations of 'its' victory over Hitlerite fascism, as though waving the Union Jack would obliterate the fact that Hitler's defeat came at the hands of the Soviet Union. And for the royal family gathered in Westminster Abbey, it was designed to obscure the monarchy's own sordid connections with the Nazis.

The revelation by Robert Maxwell's *Daily Mirror* last month that Baron Gunther von Reibnitz, late father of Princess Michael of Kent, was an officer in Hitler's SS provided but the latest evidence of the royal affinity for fascism. This German aristocrat joined the Nazi party in 1930, three years before Hitler's rise to power, and joined the SS in 1934, achieving the rank of *Sturmbannführer* (major). He must have been quite a favourite of Hitler and his cronies as in those days the SS was an elite even within the Nazi party. Indeed Reibnitz was selected as a prize stud in the Nazis' 'Lebensborn' programme intended to breed 'pure Aryan' babies. The cover-up stories circulated by the royalty and 'respectable' Fleet Street that Reibnitz was just an 'honorary' member of the SS are, as famed Nazi-hunter Simon Wiesenthal put it, 'absolutely unbelievable'.

What is equally obscene is the alacrity with which the Labour lackeys, from Kneel Kinnoch through to 'left' Eric Heffer, leapt to defend the integrity of the English monarchy. Heffer felt compelled to protest in Parliament that 'we are not against people because their parents might have been Nazis'. As though that were the point! Yet Heffer's

line was echoed even by the supposedly Trotskyist, but thoroughly Labourite *Socialist Organiser* (17 April), whose headline read 'Hands off Princess Michael!'

It is appearances that the *Mirror* et al are concerned with: the association of 'Our Gracious Queen' and the monarchy with fascism does not augur well for convincing Britain's long-suffering working-class and oppressed population of the benefits of British 'democracy' over 'totalitarian communism'. In fact, from the 1930s to the present day, the British monarchy, as part of ruling-class Britain in general, has always been pleased to make common cause with the fascist and other ultra-right forces when it has suited them.

The association of King Edward VIII with Hitler and Mussolini during -- and after -- the 1930s, when the ruling class attempted to convince the Axis powers to attack the USSR and leave the British Empire alone, is well-known. More recently, the queen mother was involved in lobbying support for apartheid and the former racist Rhodesian regime of Ian Smith. As the most prominent symbol of Britain's colonial past, the monarchy exemplifies the most vicious, anti-working-class sentiments within the bourgeoisie. To justify their support to this institution which was already reactionary even in the time of Oliver Cromwell three centuries ago, certain Labour lackeys would have us believe that the monarchy is only a harmless relic, a tourist attraction. This is dangerous rubbish.

In normal times, the monarchy provides a 'popular' focus for national chauvinism, for a belief in class harmony and the flamboyant assertion of 'legitimate' social privileges.

Thus even the militant coalfield women's support march last August sought to petition the queen. But, as Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky pointed out, when capitalist class rule is threatened, 'the bourgeoisie can make use of the royal authority with great success, as the concentration point for all the extra-parliamentary, that is to say, the real forces directed against the working class'.

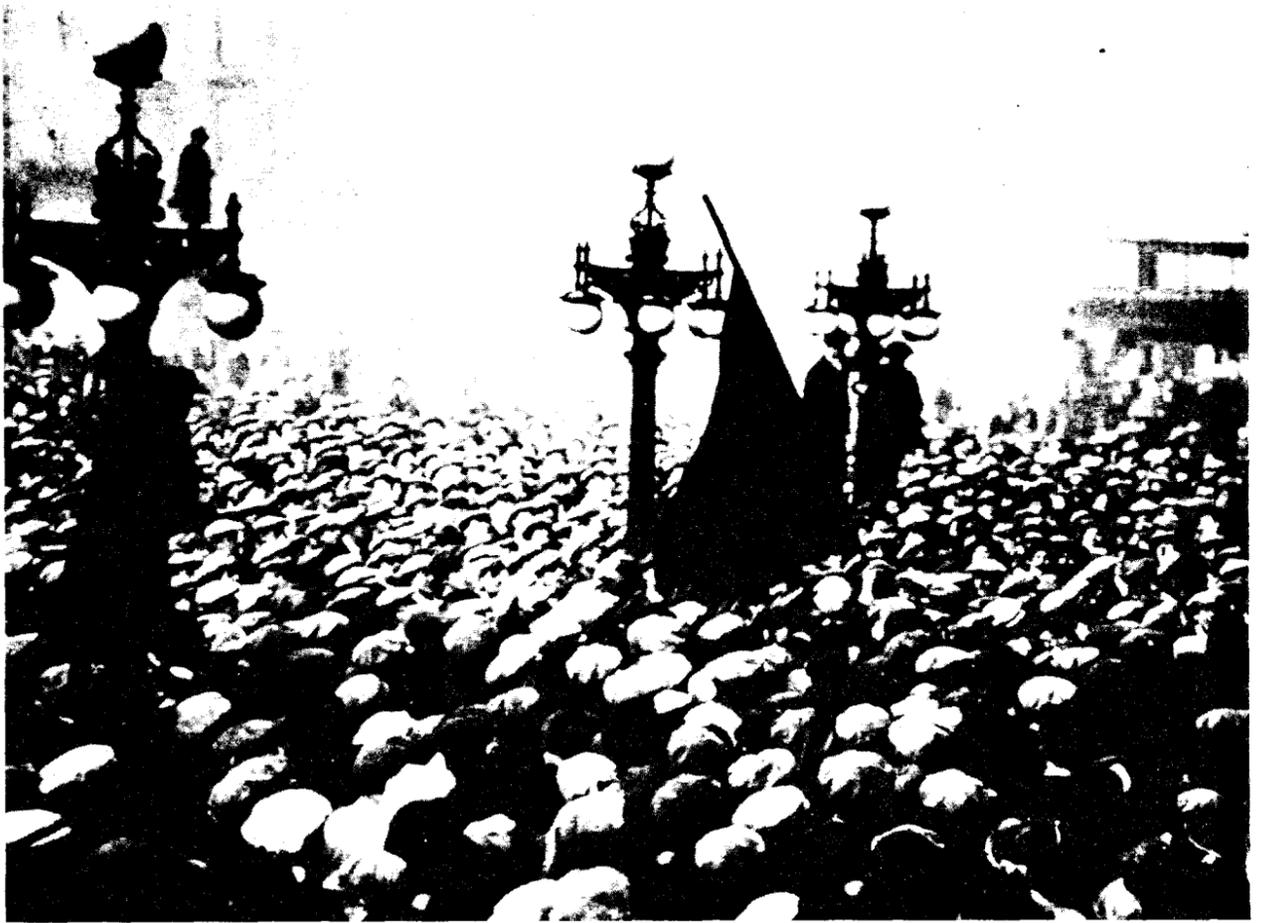
Remember that the British officer corps is in good part drawn from the petty aristocracy. The queen is head of the armed forces, and the officer corps is very clear that its loyalty is to her, not to Parliament. In a crisis situation it is quite conceivable that a right-wing bonapartist coup aimed at restoring the capitalist order would seek out the monarchy as a buttress to reactionary mobilisation and as a sign of 'legitimacy' against a weak Parliament. Indeed in 1975, after the fall of the Heath government, the queen's uncle and last viceroy of India, the late un-mourned Lord Louis Mountbatten, himself participated in 'discussions' among various top military commanders about a coup attempt.

As Marxists, we recall with pleasure the beheading of Charles I in 1649 by Cromwell's revolutionary army. As part of our struggle to destroy this venal capitalist system which allows such anachronisms to survive while breeding fascist barbarism, we raise the democratic demands that were sadly reversed after the English revolution of the seventeenth century: Abolish the monarchy! Abolish the House of Lords! Abolish the Established Church!■

We print below the edited transcript of a presentation given by Spartacist League comrade Charlie Shell at a 4 May Workers Hammer dayschool in London.

Through the experience of the miners strike, many of the best militants have come to see the Labour Party for what it is -- a party committed to capitalism, to strangling working-class struggle. Despite this, or probably in many respects because of this, many people throughout the labour movement are now attempting to prettify the Labour Party as a whole, to prettify its left wing, or to say that in the future perhaps the Labour Party can be improved.

There is a particular article which I think is indicative, produced recently by the Militant organisation who, as comrades probably know, are very deeply embedded in the Labour Party. The article is entitled 'Marxism: the Labour Party's red thread' [*Militant*, 29 March]. It is one of the most deeply dishonest and cynical articles that I have ever read. It tries to tell us that Ramsey MacDonald and Arthur Henderson supported the Russian Revolution and defended it against the Wars of Intervention. It conveniently skips over the fact that the Labour leadership supported its own bourgeoisie in the imperialist slaughter of World War I. And it tries to tell us that the formation of the Communist Party in Britain was a peripheral issue of no real significance, and that once formed all the Communist Party tried to do was become part of the Labour Party. In this context, I think it's



Red Clydeside: mass strikers' demonstration in Glasgow's George Square, 31 January 1919.

British labour and the Russian Revolution

very important to look back at real labour history, at the real history of the Labour Party and of the struggle to build the Communist Party in this country.

I want to begin with a couple of stories to illustrate what was happening inside the British working class as the war developed. In July 1915 the Asquith/Lloyd George government passed the Munitions of War Act. Effectively that act removed all trade union rights, most significantly banning the right to strike. They passed that act in full agreement with the trade union leadership of the time, who were collaborating hand and foot. Shortly after, they went around South Wales putting up a royal proclamation, stating that a strike in the mines would now be a punishable offence. Two days later 200,000 South Wales miners came out on strike for higher wages. Lloyd George, who was then minister for munitions, jumped on the train as fast as he could and went down to Cardiff to try to talk some sense into these 'hot-headed' men. He had to concede all their demands and came away empty-handed.

On Clydeside, things were beginning to boil. Two workers were sacked. The bosses were threatened with a general strike. Those two men got their jobs back. At the same time they attempted through the area to impose rent increases which the workers could not possibly afford, given that during the course of the war, wages were being driven down. A movement developed against the rent increases, primarily led by women but also supported by the trade union movement. A test case arrived: 18 munitions workers were taken to court for non-payment of rent. One thousand engineers downed tools and marched on the court. The men were released. The rent increases were dropped.

This pattern of resistance to attacks carried on through the war. A series of unofficial leaderships developed within the trade union movement. By 1917 they'd formed a national organisation called the Shop Stewards and Workers Committee Movement. Leading that were many fine working-class militants, their future deeds notwithstanding in some cases, people like John Maclean, Willie Gallagher, JT Murphy, Harry Pollitt. In fact, after the Russian Revolution, John Maclean was made first Bolshevik consul for Scotland.

This unofficial movement was in large part a response to the failure of the Labour Party to deliver the goods -- a failure of the Labour Party, in fact, to do anything. Because through the war the leader of the Labour Party, Arthur Henderson, sat in the War Cab-

net. Supporting the war effort to the hilt and backing all the attacks made on the working class, the Labour Party and the trade union leadership acted as recruiting sergeants for the bosses. And that included even the so-called left at that time, Ramsay MacDonald. Ramsay MacDonald has got a rather enhanced reputation because he refused to join the War Cabinet and he was supposed to be some sort of pacifist in World War I. In fact, he simply had a tactical disagreement. He felt he would be more useful and influential if, rather than being compromised with Lloyd George's policies directly, he supported the war outside of the Cabinet.

Now the mounting discontent and opposition in Britain was matched by discontent in all the major powers involved in the war -- and in Russia more so than anywhere else. In February 1917 the tsar fell. But whilst the tsar fell and the workers developed their own workers councils, soviets, the Bolshevik party under Lenin remained in a minority. The Mensheviks, the Russian equivalents of Arthur Henderson, held the majority in those workers councils, and they extended a helping hand to

'Supporting the war effort to the hilt and backing all the attacks made on the working class, the Labour Party and the trade union leadership acted as recruiting sergeants for the bosses. And that included even the so-called left at that time, Ramsay MacDonald.'

the Russian capitalists and ensured that Russia remained in the war.

The February revolution was greeted enthusiastically in Britain by practically all sections of the ruling class as well as of the labour movement. The Labour leaders sought to embrace it as their own -- after all capitalism still existed in Russia. As the working-class struggle gathered pace through that period, the Labour leaders characteristically took a step to the left in order to try to keep at the head of that movement.

In June 1917 there was quite a remarkable labour movement meeting. It's gone down in history as the Leeds Convention, and it was attended by a cross section of the labour movement, everybody from Ramsay MacDonald through to the leaders of the unofficial movement. It was remarkable because Ramsay MacDonald was heard to call for workers councils, to utter revolutionary phrases. But to make

clear that these fine gentlemen were not to be taken at their word, Robert Smillie, the leader of the miners union and a leading left in the TUC, spoke to the conference. He said, 'We have not come here to talk treason, we have come here to talk reason.' Which is a very British way of approaching the problem.

The rhetoric was soon to be tested out, because in October 1917 the Bolsheviks came to power and established a workers state in Russia, the dictatorship of the proletariat based on the soviets. Initially the Labour leaders fell silent. Soviets were okay as long as they were filled with Mensheviks, their friends. Once they were run by Bolsheviks it was a different matter. But they were fairly wily characters and they understood the effect that the October Revolution would have on the British working class.

When the Labour Party was formed initially around 1900 it had deliberately disavowed any specific socialist aims. It was formed explicitly on the basis of liberal politics, as the voice of trade unions in Parliament. But that would no longer do, as the masses didn't want liberal politics, they wanted socialism -- and they'd been shown how to get it. So Arthur Henderson came up with a very good idea. It's gone down in history as Clause Four of the Labour Party constitution: you know, to secure for the workers by hand or by brain the fruits of their industry, etc, etc, blah, blah. And he got Sydney Webb, another arch right-wing theoretician, to write Clause Four for him.

Now a lot of people in this country and in particular the left look at Clause Four as being a great gain -- this is when the Labour Party really became socialist. It's important to understand that the adoption of Clause Four was part of the Labour leaders' attempt to head off revolution in this country. What it meant was channelling workers' discontent into Parliament and dissipating it.

They did this at the right time, because the years 1919 and 1920 were probably the most momentous in the history of the British working class. World War I had ended, the Wars of Intervention against the Russian Revolution were well underway, and as usual the British bourgeoisie was up to its neck in blood, workers' blood. Trotsky's Red Army, hastily put together out of the remnants of the old tsarist army, was fighting on a number of fronts against the White armies of Denikin, Kolchak, Yudenich and Wrangel, supported by fourteen imperialist armies, one of them British. But by early 1919

the British had begun to get cold feet. They were beginning to think about pulling out, despite the overwhelming military odds in their favour, because of trouble at home.

On the 13th of January 1919 on the HMS Kilbride at Milford Haven, the sailors hoisted the red flag, and under it was a slogan which said, 'Half the navy are on strike, the other half soon will be.' A whole series of ships had to be sent back from the Baltic because their crews had mutinied. There were refusals to sail to Russia reported at Invergordon, Portsmouth, Devonport, Port Edgar and Rosyth. At Rosyth the ship was actually held for several weeks by the mutineers until they were disarmed by superior numbers.

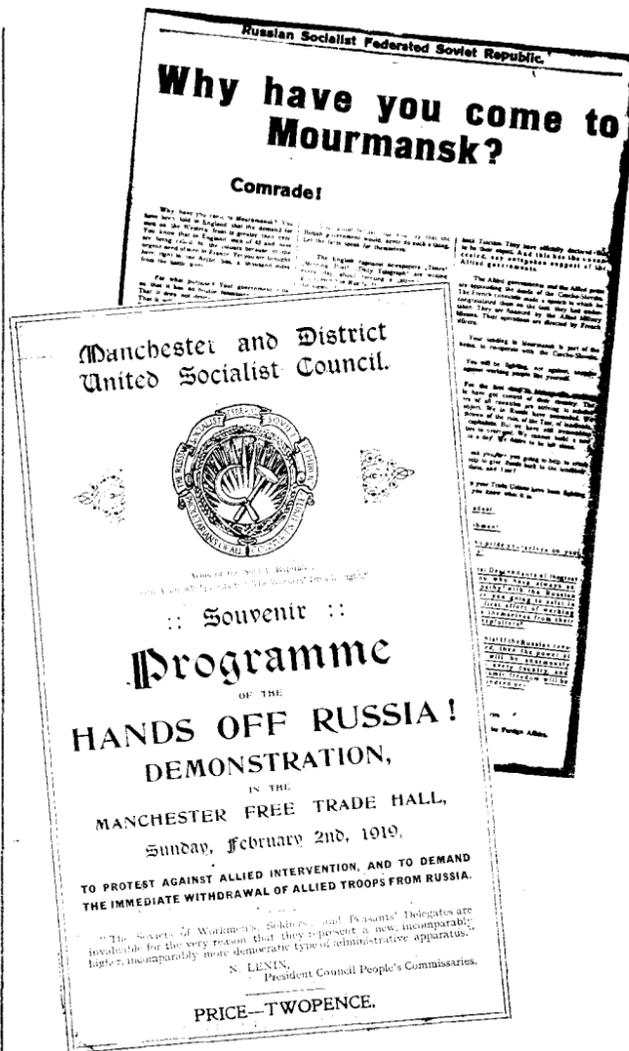
In the army the story was the same. The first week of January, 10,000 troops mutinied at Folkestone; 4000 demonstrated in support at Dover. The same week, 1500 soldiers seized lorries, and drove into London demanding to be demobilised. Before the month was out, 20,000 soldiers had mutinied in Calais. And in early February armed soldiers were found demonstrating in Horse Guards Parade. The War Office issued a questionnaire to all units, basically asking them, could the troops be relied on in the event of an English revolution taking place? And the answer was no.

At the same time Britain stood on the edge of a general strike. As the troops were mutinying in Calais, the Clydeside engineers struck for a forty hour week. As far as the leadership was concerned -- and that included people like Willie Gallagher -- this was just a strike for a forty hour week. But red flags were carried through the streets of Glasgow and the bourgeoisie smelled insurrection and a rising. The next week there was another demonstration. The police moved in and attacked, batoning people to the ground. That crowd fought all day against the police and beat them back. Eventually it was defeated by superior numbers. But the bourgeoisie was very, very scared. After the incident they put tanks on the streets of Glasgow.

Whilst Glasgow was fighting, the million-strong Miners Federation, as it was at the time, balloted for a strike. At the same time the rail and transport unions, linked with the miners in the Triple Alliance, stood on the brink of strike action. But the leadership stepped back, they didn't want to do it. The Triple Alliance leaders were called into Downing Street by Lloyd George, and he basically said: If you go on strike you will defeat us. But you have to recognise then that it's a question of who is going to run the country. Are you ready to take on that responsibility? The trade union leaders weren't ready. With the question of power at stake, they surrendered.

Tory leader Bonar Law said at that time, 'Trade union organisation was the only thing between us and anarchy, and if trade union organisation was against us the position would be hopeless.' With the army coming apart, with the massive increase in industrial militancy, the only thing that stood between the British capitalist class and their overthrow and expropriation was the trade union and Labour leadership.

But the ghost of revolution wasn't an easy one to lay, because overlying that desire to struggle was the determination of the British workers to defend the Russian Revolution. At



Manchester 'Hands Off Russia' call (bottom). Lenin's appeal to soldiers of British army of intervention: 'You have been brought here to overthrow our revolution, and bring back the reign of Tsarism' (top).

the end of 1918 Lenin issued an appeal to British troops, headed 'Are you a trade unionist?' In it Lenin concludes: 'By fighting us you are not fighting for your country, but for the capitalists whom your fellow trade unionists at home are fighting. By fighting us you are fighting your fellow workers. Every blow you strike against us is a blow against yourselves. If you crush us, you will only succeed in strengthening the power of your capitalists to rob and exploit you. Fellow workers, on whose side are you -- the workers' or the masters?'

Lenin got his answer in part through the troop mutinies. They knew which side they were on. And he got another answer as well, because January 1919 also saw the beginning of the Hands Off Russia Campaign. Initially it was quite small; the first meeting had only 350 delegates in London, under the initiative of the London Workers Committee. It was supported by a number of left-wing organisations: the British Socialist Party, the Socialist Labour Party, the Workers Socialist Federation, the South Wales Socialist Federation, organisations which later came to form the nucleus of the Communist Party. The conference decided it would work in the labour movement to fight for a general strike to demand the cessation of military intervention in Russia.

The Hands Off Russia Campaign immediately gained a hearing inside the working class.

Enormous pressure was exerted on the trade union leaderships who were fighting tooth and nail to keep the workers at work. Robert Smillie, the miners leader, took up the demands of the Campaign and was prepared to bandy about the threat of industrial action -- ironically at the same time as preventing the miners strike from taking place. He went to the Labour Party in order to get them to help. The NEC of the Labour Party said, oh yes, we'll call a special conference of the labour movement to decide what action we can take in order to secure troop withdrawal from Russia. But of course they didn't. So Smillie went to the Triple Alliance with the same demands. The Triple Alliance, feeling the same sorts of pressures as Smillie, agreed to take up the Campaign.

In mid-April 1920 hostilities were resumed on the Polish front, hostilities which were probably inspired by the British and French imperialists. Initially the Poles were very successful. They went over the Russian border and took Kiev. The *Times* said this was a great triumph, it was a heavy blow for the Bolsheviks. But the same day in London's East End docks the *Jolly George* was supposed to sail for Poland with arms and munitions for the Polish army. The dockers, under the influence of the Hands Off Russia Campaign, refused to load the ship, refused to let it move.

Following that example, the Campaign gathered momentum. In June there were a whole series of demonstrations outside the Polish embassy demanding the cessation of hostilities. In July the Red Army managed to reverse its fortunes and drove the Polish army out of Russia. They sued for peace, offering the Poles very generous terms. But the Poles didn't want to know. So the Red Army advanced into Poland.

In response to that, on 3 August the British government said it was going to despatch troops to fight a war against Soviet Russia. It was going to act as a spearhead for renewed allied intervention in Russia. The threat of war with Russia put the fear of God into the trade union and Labour Party leaders. They knew what that would mean for the British working class. So some quite remarkable things happened. Virtually overnight, Councils of Action, three hundred and fifty of them, sprang up right through the country. The Labour Party -- its right wing, not simply its left wing -- established a national Council of Action. The Councils of Action issued a demand to the government: either you drop these plans to intervene militarily against the Soviet Union or there will be a general strike. So they got an assurance, and it was an assurance that they could believe.

Why did the Labour leaders do that? They said, in their own accounts, that they were acting in the 'national interest', that is, the interest of British capitalism. And indeed they were. They knew that if ships were despatched to Russia, they wouldn't have got there with their officers. They knew that in the army the same response would happen. And they knew that at home it would provoke an enormous level of industrial action, of revolutionary proportions, and they were terrified of that.

When Lenin looked at the situation in Brit-

continued on page 8



January 1924: First Labour government visits Buckingham Palace. From left: Ramsay MacDonald, JH Thomas, Arthur Henderson.



March 1919: First Congress of Communist International under Russian Bolshevik leader VI Lenin (standing)

British labour...

(Continued from page 7)

ain at that time he said, this is very significant. The British bourgeoisie in their papers wrote that the Council of Action was a soviet -- and yes, Lenin said, it was a soviet. When that Council of Action was established, there was the beginning of a situation of dual power: there was the power of the workers represented through their soviets and the power of the government, which was very, very shaky.

But unlike in Russia when the Mensheviks controlled the soviets, there was no Bolshevik party in Britain to organise, to focus the discontent of the masses into removing those leaders, to demonstrate the falsity of the actions they carried out. So the Labour leaders again managed to put themselves at the head of a very significant movement and to strangle it thereafter. Troops were withdrawn from Poland, but the government never gave any undertaking that it would cease sending munitions to the Polish troops. Shortly thereafter, the Russian civil war did come to an end, and the Red Army was victorious. But the Labour Party had done its job. They had managed to catch the British working class at its high point, to control it and demobilise it. And this laid the basis in 1921 for Black Friday, when the miners were forced to fight alone and the Triple Alliance once again betrayed them.

The overwhelming response of the working class to the Hands Off Russia Campaign showed great potential for a revolutionary party in Britain. Lenin and the newly-founded Communist International had already begun intervening to forge such a party. The unofficial movement, under its left-wing syndicalist leadership, had by that time by and large had its day. It had fought tooth and nail, but in limiting itself to militant trade unionism it had been unable to cope with the political challenge represented by the Labour Party, or with the trade union bureaucrats once they began to shift ground to the left. Thus the Clyde Workers Committee, which had been tremendously powerful and organised tens of thousands of workers right through the war years, had by the early 1920s effectively collapsed.

The Labour Party grew, taking a lot of

'The Councils of Action issued a demand to the government. It said, very plainly: drop these plans to intervene militarily against the Soviet Union or there will be a general strike.'

left-wing activists -- people like Maxton and Kirkwood on the Clyde -- with it. This was very damaging. There had been a lot of lessons learnt through the war and as a consequence of the Russian Revolution and the Hands Off Russia Campaign. And what these people did was give a left cover to the MacDonalds and Hendersons. They said, we have been your militant leaders through all these years, and now you must follow us into the Labour Party. If these people had split in a different direction they could have taken whole chunks of workers with them and the story of post-war Britain may have been very different.

When Ramsay MacDonald went into Parliament he went with the intention of proving that the Labour Party could administer capitalism. In opposition to that course Lenin sought to build a Communist Party, modelled on the Bolshevik party, a party based on the lessons of the Russian Revolution. In the first instance that meant a policy of *unifying* those organisations in Britain who had sided with the Revolution, around a series of programmatic fundamentals known as the '21 Conditions'. Second, it meant forming a disciplined *combat* party, based on industrial and other fractions, not the traditional sort of loose set-up whose members did or said whatever they liked. And third, it meant that, on the basis of its firm programmatic principles, the Communist Party needed flexible *tactics* in order to split workers away from the Labour Party.

Building such a party in Britain was no easy job. Often the various organisations' hearts were in the right place but their heads were not. There was a plethora of egotistical and personal differences, bitterness stemming back years about who said what in what meeting and all that kind of thing. There were also a whole series of political problems with these groups. They tended to veer either towards opportunism or towards sectarianism. The most gross example of that was the British Socialist Party. Up until 1916 it was led by a character named HM Hyndman. Engels always hated him, because he was an open racist, for one thing. He was a man who said that workers in Britain would never read anything written by a German, even if he was Karl Marx. And he supported the war in 1914. Now he got thrown out of the BSP in 1916, but he is an extreme example of some of the problems that were faced.

Many of the better elements, those most influenced by syndicalism, hung onto a lot of their syndicalist prejudices in opposition to Lenin. By and large they wanted to ignore the Labour Party politically and get on with the trade union struggle. And Lenin said, no, that's wrong. He wrote a very valuable book called '"Left-wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder'. You must take the Labour Party head-on politically, he said, you must learn the lessons, like the lessons of what happened to the Clyde Workers Committee and the unofficial shop stewards movement. He offered a perspective and tactics which *transcended* and *broke down* the seemingly impassable divide between militant trade-union struggle and intervention in parliamentary politics, which had so bedevilled the British left. Some of the tactics Lenin put forward at that time are very badly misused by the reformists today, who gut them of their revolutionary content in order to adapt to the Labour Party and adulate Tony Benn. But they were appropriate and necessary, and we can learn a lot from them.

He said the Communist Party should seek to affiliate to the Labour Party. Remember that the party still had a relatively federal structure without anti-red clauses. He said if it were possible for the Communist Party, on the basis of complete freedom of propaganda and agitation, to take its programme right into the heart of the beast and fight it out in there, then that would be a very good thing. Many British leftists said, come on, if you do that Arthur Henderson's going to throw us out. Lenin replied, we don't mind that. In

fact it would be a very good thing for us, because the workers know what we stand for and what the Russian Revolution stood for, and the Labour Party by throwing us out would demonstrate that there is no place inside it for politics that defend the interests of the working class. In that process we would be able to win workers away from Labour to us.

He also put forward the idea that perhaps the Communist Party ought to vote for the Labour Party in elections, to give them what he called critical support. He didn't mean that every time the Labour Party stood we would vote for them; but in those conditions, where Labour had never held parliamentary office, it was important that the party be tested out before the masses. So Lenin said, we'll put them in power and we'll see what happens -- and then the workers will see that they defend capitalism and that we are right. In that way it's possible for the Communist Party to increase its influence.

As I say, this approach was resisted by many people. Some were won over, like Willie Gallagher, but many were not. There were some very, very good people, like John Maclean and Sylvia Pankhurst, who did not become part of the new Communist Party, or did so only briefly. It's a real tragedy that that was the

'When Ramsay MacDonald went into Parliament he went with the intention of proving that the Labour Party could administer capitalism. In opposition to that course Lenin sought to build a Communist party, modelled on the Bolshevik party, a party based on the lessons of the Russian Revolution.'

case, because they had such a depth of experience. And they took a lot of other forces with them at the time, and considerably weakened the party at the time of its formation.

A CP with a few thousand members was put together. It wasn't as good politically as it could have been, and it was struggling to consolidate itself at the same time as working class struggle receded from 1921 to about 1925. So conditions weren't the best to do that. But worse than that, within a few years the Russian Revolution itself under pressure of isolation began to degenerate, as Stalin and his supporters came to the head of the Communist International. Thus, rather than strengthening the weak British CP, they helped lead it further astray. It's one of the great tragedies of the British working class that when that organisation faced its first serious test in 1926 it had become, under the impact of Stalinism, more of an adjunct of the left wing of the trade union bureaucracy than a genuine Communist party.

That's a tragedy that we in the Spartacist League hope never to see repeated. We aim to build a party in this country and internationally based on the programme of Lenin and the experience of the Russian Revolution. And we aim to do that so that in the future, when the working class faces decisive tests and decisive class battles, it will start with a revolutionary party at its head and not a Labour Party on its back. ■

'Hands Off Russia' was the call

We print below extracts from remarks by Don Hughes, South Wales NUM member, at the 4 May Workers Hammer dayschool.

There is a story of struggle, of course, in the mining industry, and in the twenties, as comrade Charlie quite rightly pointed out, it was a strong part of workers' struggles in this country. Now my uncle was born in 1902 and he started work at the Prince of Wales colliery, Abercarn, in 1915 at the age of 13. Now he told me -- he could just remember, young he was at the time -- about the Hands Off Russia Campaign, and how the mineworkers of Great Britain all got together and demanded that we take troops out of the Soviet Union. 'Hands Off Russia' was the call. That, incidentally, comrades, is still remembered to this day in the Soviet Union.

When they got it going then, it was only echoing the start made by the dockers who, he told me, refused to handle goods sent to the port of Murmansk for the British expeditionary force. They thought that they were armaments and they refused to load the goods onto the ships because they were to be used against the Russian people and their

Red Army.

I remember him saying that around about 1919, word came through that the tsar and his family were brutally slaughtered by these mad Bolsheviks. I wonder, he said, when that bugger and the other one we've got will get the same thing. He was of course referring to King George V and Queen Mary. And I remember he said he went to the local cinema around 1920 and saw the silent flicks on the newsreels, and they were having some memorial service, I think in some cathedral, maybe St Paul's in London. King George V and Queen Mary were there with heads bowed. Well, I suppose, as the saying goes, they all piss in the same pot....

During the First World War -- as in the last war, the Second World War -- when this nation needed all the coal they could get, they couldn't get enough coal, so they encouraged mineworkers by paying high wages. And he said his father, who was on contract on what was then very new hydraulic supports in the Prince of Wales, was paid a fantastic sum. He'd come home on a Friday and tip a bagful of gold sovereigns on the table. That

was the case then. But in 1921, of course, when the coal was no longer wanted, then, comrades, the crunch came. They didn't want the miners; or they wanted the miners but they didn't want to pay them the wages. And when the mineworkers objected they were simply locked out of the pits.

Of course, there was the bitter strike again in 1926. They were rough, they were hard, they were tough people. But, comrades, unlike our last strike they were men of principle and any scab in 1926 was dealt with more or less just like the bloody tsar in Russia in 1919.

And you see, I begin to realise it now, that from 1926 until 1984 the working people in this country haven't learned such a lot. They're still following bent trade union leaders. They still can't realise that these people are obviously in the pay of whatever government is in power. Your point of view, comrade chairman, and your followers', and that man there's [points to Lenin's portrait] -- how you're going to do it I wouldn't know, but you've got to do it. You've got to get about this country, you've got to get to everywhere and you've got to tell people in this country that they are being exploited the same as the Russian people were prior to 1917. ■

TGWU...

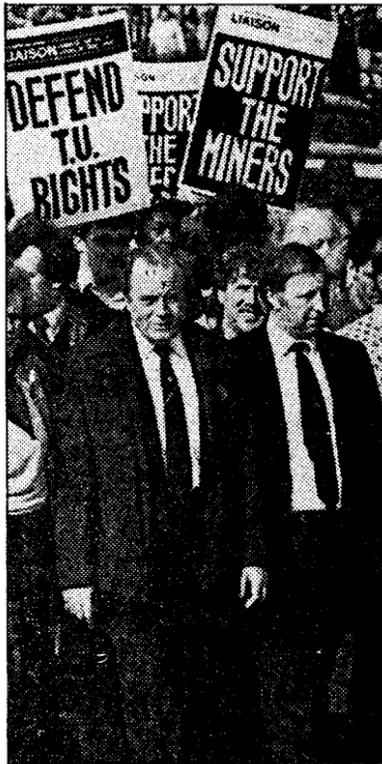
(Continued from page 12)

in-the-wool support to the Labour misleaders. But the vote is not an irrelevancy. The trade unions should maintain their political funds. In the aftermath of Labour's stab in the back to the miners, many militants justifiably feel disgusted at having to hand their money over to Walworth Road. If only there were a genuine, mass revolutionary alternative to get the money instead! But in the absence of a revolutionary party, for individual militants today to opt out of the political levy or vote for their unions to stop paying it could only feed into the right-wing attacks on the entire labour movement. Defend the levy against Tory attack!

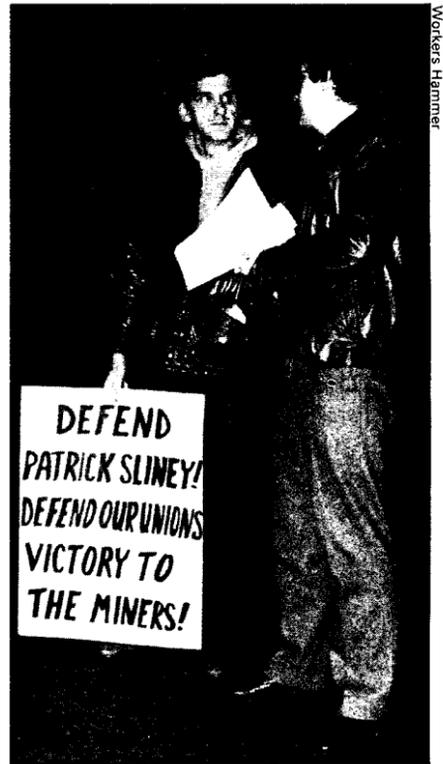
Marxists stand for the fullest democracy within the labour movement. Without giving one inch to the bosses' anti-union witchhunting, we have no illusions about the fact that the bureaucratic misleaders will and do engage in anti-democratic shenanigans to maintain their grip and stifle militant action. The labour movement must clean up its own house! In particular, militants must fight for all decisions on strike action to be taken out in the open at mass meetings and for all union

officials to be subject to recall. But the precondition for trade union democracy is full and complete independence of the labour movement from the capitalist state. And that in turn requires a struggle for a new, revolutionary leadership of the labour movement, not one tied to Labourite parliamentary tinkering. As Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky wrote shortly before his death in 1940, 'The trade unions of our time can either serve as secondary instruments of imperialist capitalism for the subordination and disciplining of the workers and for obstructing the revolution, or, on the contrary, the trade unions can become the instruments of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat.'

We say: Defend the political levy! Down with the witchhunt against the TGWU! No vote to Wright or Todd! Build a new revolutionary leadership to organise for victory! ■



Ron Todd with Arthur Scargill.



Lea Hall miner with Patrick Sliney.

Pat Sliney to Ron Todd: 'I know where you stood on the miners strike'

We print below a letter sent by Ron Todd to Labour MP Tony Benn regarding Patrick Sliney, the BL Land Rover militant sacked for fighting for strike action with the miners. This is followed by Brother Sliney's reply to Todd.



3rd April, 1985
Mr. A. Benn, MP,
House of Commons,
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Dear Tony,

Further to my letter of 1st March, 1985, I have now received a report from the Region concerned on the matters involving Brother P. Sliney, who was employed at Rover, Solihull.

I understand that Brother Sliney was dismissed from his employment for distributing literature within the plant. His dismissal was based on Rule 21 of the company's rules which stipulate that no literature will be distributed within the plant unless authorisation is first received from the Management.

When the Convenor and Shop Steward found that Brother Sliney was distributing the leaflet, they drew his attention to the difficulties that he might create for himself in the process. I am advised that Brother Sliney, nevertheless, persisted and when the matter came to the attention of Management, he was dismissed. The membership at the factory were unwilling to support a strike, to achieve his reinstatement and locally the Union took the issue through the procedural machinery. We were unsuccessful in persuading the company to change their minds.

Currently, the Region is exploring the question of taking the case to an industrial tribunal, although against the background of the evidence and the fact that Brother Sliney was previously warned for distributing leaflets it is not felt that there is a great chance of succeeding.

Nevertheless, Brother Sliney's application will be supported and he will be represented by the Union at the tribunal hearing.

At this moment in time that is all the information that I can provide you with.

Yours sincerely,

Ron Todd

GENERAL SECRETARY ELECT

9 May 1985

Dear Brother Todd,

Tony Benn kindly sent me a copy of the letter you wrote him about my case. To say

the least I was shocked when I read it. It sounds more like something Land Rover Management might have written.

Nowhere do you mention the miners strike. It was for this I was sacked, not rubbish about Rule 21. When challenged by Brother Joe Harris, my convenor, at the appeal, management admitted that on any given day dozens of different pieces of 'unauthorised literature' circulated through the factory. Mine was singled out, as Brother Harris pointed out then, because of its political content; it called for strike action in support of the miners (and our own pay claim at the time). In any case, it was not addressed to management and had nothing to do with them. It was an appeal to my union brothers and sisters which I would have made at a mass meeting had I been allowed the opportunity to speak.

You say the membership were unwilling to support a strike. It was never put to the membership. Stan Hill, my senior steward, backtracked even on calling the shopfloor meeting he had promised. When he was finally forced by some of my co-workers to at least explain the situation, he expressly refused to support their appeals for strike action. Even despite his and Joe Harris' opposition, when it came to the Joint Shop Stewards Committee, there were six votes in favour of strike action with ten opposed. In fact hundreds of brothers and sisters inside the

factory told me they were in favour of strike action to win my reinstatement. In effect such a strike would have been the first in the Midlands in solidarity with the miners.

And this gets to the heart of the matter. I don't know where you got your misinformation about my case, but I do know where you stood on the miners strike. Our union had a brilliant opportunity to make common cause with the miners against Thatcher. I am proud to be in the company of those many thousands of TGWU members who did what we could to support the miners. While myself and my co-workers tried to put a stop to the scandal of scab coal coming into our factory for months, Transport House turned a blind eye and branch officials like Joe Harris and Jack Adams openly connived with management. The TGWU should and could have been brought out on strike alongside the miners from the beginning. That's what I fought for and that's what I was sacked for. And if our union had joined the NUM on strike, helping to assure a miners' victory, it would not now itself be the victim of government/Fleet Street witchhunting. Your level of support for me is consistent with your level of support for the NUM. For their part, the miners have given me overwhelming and unstinting support.

Yours sincerely,

Patrick Sliney

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Miners aid campaign in America

Workers hands across the sea

The following article is adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 377, 19 April, newspaper of the *Spartacist League/US*.

When they marched back after 12 gruelling months of class war, the miners were able to hold their heads up, defiant in defeat, in large part because of the tremendous outpouring of international support which their militant struggle inspired. The miners strike galvanized the world working class on a scale no recent class battle has. French dockworkers dumped lorryloads of scab coal before they reached port. The Soviet trade unions sent £1 million to the miners. Even the savagely oppressed black South African gold miners, battling the bloody apartheid regime, sent contributions and messages of support.

While Maggie Thatcher was doing her best to rip up the NUM, the most conscious American

trade unionists recalled how her fellow labor-hater Ronald Reagan destroyed the PATCO air controllers union. Their dollars sent through the Partisan Defense Committee helped revive traditions of labor solidarity going back to the 1920s, in sharp contrast to the protectionist poison dished out by the AFL-CIO tops (who didn't send a penny to support this crucial class battle). The PDC's Aid to Striking British Miners' Families campaign collected over \$23,000, including official donations and collections from over 70 local unions and contributions from scores of *Workers Vanguard* readers and PDC supporters. Pledged contributions are still being forwarded to the NUM's Miners Solidarity Fund, where they are desperately needed to support the hundreds of sacked miners and those facing criminal charges from the strike.

International response to PDC campaign

The Spartacist tendency mobilized its resources internationally to back the embattled miners against Reagan/Thatcher reaction. In addition to the PDC drive in the US, Canada and Australia, our comrades in France and West Germany raised hundreds of pounds; the French section sponsored a highly successful fund-raising tour of two miners. We were also instrumental in forging links between the British miners and striking Phelps Dodge copper miners in Arizona and black St Croix oil workers locked out by the racist union-buster Leon Hess.

Above all, we fought for a revolutionary political perspective that could defeat Thatcher. The Spartacist League called for class-struggle tactics, including the 'hot-carguing' [blacking] of scab coal, in Britain and internationally, to mobilize labor's power behind the miners.

As a class-struggle, anti-sectarian legal defense organization in accordance with the political views of the SL/US, the Partisan Defense Committee undertook this campaign not simply to provide desperately needed funds for the striking miners and their families, but also to spur a political defense of the miners by the proletariat internationally. Recalling Reagan's assault on PATCO, workers in public employees unions were particularly receptive to the PDC campaign. Black workers, least susceptible to the bureaucracy's Cold War anti-communism, were also prominent in support of the miners. Many of these trade unionists were familiar with and had endorsed the SL's successful anti-fascist mobilizations at home. A comrade of the Spartacist League/Britain and WV reporter Jon Brule, who had spent ten months in Britain during the strike, addressed trade-union executive boards and membership meetings across the US. In the Bay Area after hearing the SL/B comrade's presentation, SEIU Local 250 doubled its usual maximum to donate \$500. An official noted with pleasure that it was an Irish comrade appealing to American workers on behalf of the British miners.

Despite our modest resources, a slow start to the campaign, a virtual year-long blackout of the strike in the US press, and the treach-



Kent miners collecting in London early in strike (at right is Terry French, Betteshanger NUM, subsequently victim of vicious five-year jail sentence). International support helped keep strike alive.

ery of the American labor bureaucracy, the PDC broke new ground with our class-struggle defense work. Under our own colors, and approaching hundreds of union-locals for the first time, the PDC fought for real international solidarity. And we did it in the face of what the NUM frankly termed 'the unsupportive position of the AFL-CIO'. Prostrate before Reagan's union-busting, these servile lieutenants of capital have shackled the American labor movement with racist protectionism, class collaboration and anti-communism.

But the mainspring of hostility from Lane Kirkland & Co to the British miners' strike was their hatred of the Soviet Union and NUM president Arthur Scargill for denouncing pro-CIA company 'union' Solidarnosc in Poland. The TUC and Labour Party tops, assisted by the scurrilous *Newsline* rag of Gerry Healy, witch-hunted Scargill for correctly stating that Solidarnosc is anti-socialist. The AFL-CIO hacks picked up the cue. The notoriously CIA-



PDC's appeal for aid to British miners circulated to American trade unions.

linked bureaucracy of the Communications Workers of America (CWA), for instance, circulated a letter to its locals advising them to steer clear of the PDC. It wasn't just that they objected to a cause undertaken by American 'reds'; from the standpoint of the CWA's 'free trade unionism' (such as exists in Pinochet's Chile), the British miners are themselves led by reds.

Reviving traditions of international labour defence

The PDC's appeal noted: 'We invite socialist and defence organizations in the U.S. to organize efforts parallel to our own on behalf of the British miners. Given the enormous political differences between us and other groups, an attempt at a united-front campaign would create more problems than benefits for the miners, but we stand ready to coordinate with others to achieve the largest mobilization of trade-union support for the

miners' side of the class war in Britain.'

In fact, the PDC ran the only sustained, national campaign in this country to support the strikers and their families. For the most part the reformist fake-left took their cue from the labor fakers and did nothing -- in some cases even opposing donations being sent through the PDC.

Where others had taken the initiative in particular union locals to raise funds for the miners, we supported those efforts, encouraging trade unionists who did not want to give through the PDC to donate directly to the NUM's Miners Solidarity Fund. We also encountered several strikers collecting funds in the US and Canada on behalf of individual collieries or areas, who had run into the brick wall of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy, receiving handshakes, promises and little else. Spartacist supporters in Detroit and

Toronto assisted such miners in approaching union locals where we have friends, resulting in several large donations.

The PDC's work, including the miners aid campaign, is modeled on the International Labor Defense (ILD) and its forerunner (to which it later affiliated), the International Red Aid. The ILD was founded in 1925 at the initiative of the then-revolutionary Communist Party USA because of the need for:

'... a large mass centralized defense organization which could serve as a weapon and a shield of the workers in this period of intense class struggle; an organization that would be able not only to provide the persecuted workers with legal aid and moral and financial support, but one that would be able to fight effectively for these workers and to mobilize the broad masses in their support.' ('What is the International Labor Defense')

While lacking the broader base of the ILD and the authority of the early CP, the Partisan Defense Committee stands in the tradition of the ILD's uncompromising militancy and anti-sectarianism in defending class-war prisoners such as Sacco and Vanzetti. The ILD defended any member of the working-class movement, regardless of his or her views, who suffered persecution by the capitalist state because of activities in the class struggle. Class-war prisoners were sent \$5 a month, and their families received funds raised through an annual Christmas appeal. The ILD fought not only for victimized trade unionists, but waged campaigns against deportation of the foreign-born and against the oppression and lynchings of blacks, and mobilized in defense of the gains of the Russian Revolution. The ILD enrolled individual members who agreed with its aims, and also affiliated unions, minority groups and other organizations on a collective basis.

Throughout the miners' aid campaign the PDC has maintained the scrupulous financial responsibility which was the hallmark of the ILD. With numbered receipts, every penny collected going to the miners (the PDC assumed in excess of \$1700 in administrative expenses for travel, postage, publicity, bank fees), and the financial records of the campaign open to inspection by any bona fide workers organization, the PDC's work stands on the model provided by the ILD.

The PDC's aid campaign demonstrated the need for a fighting defense organization in political accordance with a genuinely communist party. This is the history of the ILD and the International Red Aid, which emerged from the experience of the Russian Civil War, when the Red Cross refused to aid the Soviet victims of famine and imperialist attack. From the defense of black and working people in deeply racist, capitalist America to the need for international working-class solidarity to aid great class battles like the British miners strike, the PDC seeks to enlist the support of all those who are 100 per cent partisan on the side of the exploited working masses and the oppressed. ■

Miners...

(Continued from page 12)

cleanse it of scabbery. Through the use of intelligent tactics, the tide can be turned against the scabs even in those areas where they are currently in the majority. Immediately after the strike ended, an election for branch leadership at Lea Hall in Staffs became a contest between an all-strikers slate and an all-scab slate. This was correctly seen by strike militants at Lea Hall as a referendum on the strike, despite the conciliatory character of the strike slate's election material. In the upshot, even though only some 10 per cent of the branch stayed out to the end of the strike, their slate swept five out of six committee seats being contested as well as the branch secretary position contested by incumbent super-scab Tony Morris, a prominent figure in the Spencerite National Working Miners Committee. An estimated three hundred scabs broke ranks and voted for the strikers' slate. Following the election, two scabs resigned from the branch committee and Morris is more isolated than he has ever been. This is a victory for genuine trade unionism at Lea Hall.

There are lessons to be drawn from incidents such as this, and a similar result at Keresley in Warwickshire. Had the strike won, the question of the scabs could have been dealt with in passing. But it didn't. Now the Tories and the Coal Board would dearly love to see a huge Spencerite splitaway. It is necessary to do everything possible to eliminate or neutralise organising centres for a Spencerite right-wing 'dual union' within the NUM through purging hardline scab organisers. But to argue, as does for example the fake-Trotskyist Workers Power in its *Red Miner* (April 1985) bulletin, that 'The NUM nationally should immediately expel the scab area organisations'

is wrong. This would only assist the Spencerite wrecking operation at the present time.

In the case of Workers Power, this position reflects sheer cynicism, given their cheering for the scab ballot furore from early on in the strike and their countless pleas to 'take the arguments' to the scabs. The guiding tactical approach for militants in scab-dominated areas today must be to remain in the union and fight to regain control of the union, with full, active support from the national union.

To be sure the NUM leadership's pussy-footing over disciplinary action against Lynk and Prendergast, and particularly attempting to regain control of the area through the bosses' courts, is less than useless. In fact, from the failure to pursue an effective campaign for amnesty for the sacked miners to their disgusting condemnation of 'violence' in the Wilkie case to their secretive manoeuvring on the proposed rules changes, the NUM leadership has offered no lead. Above all, it persistently denies that the strike was defeated, and thus that the membership has any lessons to learn, and thus *disarms it in preparing for the next battle*.

On 13 April some 100 miners and miners' wives met in Sheffield at a Rank and File Miners Conference which discussed a sustained campaign in defence of the sacked men. Spartacist supporter and victimised TGWU militant Patrick Sliney was given an opportunity to address the conference. He emphasised the necessity for the union to preserve its fighting capacity and to learn the political lessons of the strike. Centrally that lesson is that reformist trade union militancy is not enough, that a revolutionary alternative is needed to the Labourite reformism of Scargill and Co.

It is this lesson precisely which papers like *Workers Power* and the *Leninist*, who enthuse over any 'rank and file movement', seek to bury. The key question is what programme. What they want is a movement based on minimal

trade union demands and union democracy (which, given their support to the ballot, means scab democracy). Thus the April *Leninist* sums up its programme for the 'rank and file movement' with demands that go no further than 'the fight for industrial unionism' and democracy in election of officials. This presents no programmatic alternative to Scargill, and could be (at best) nothing more than a second-rate version of the present NUM leadership.

What the NUM leadership lacked was a *political alternative* to the scabberding Labour Party; without breaking from the perspective of putting Labour into Number Ten Scargill was incapable of defying the established sell-out Labour/TUC leadership and mobilising the whole of the working class and oppressed behind the miners. Today while Durham strikers express strong sentiment to disinvite scabberder Kinnock to this summer's gala, the Labour Party in Notts stood candidates (including scabs) in local elections with the full support of the Lynk clique.

Those militants seeking an alternative to the limitations of Scargillism must generalise on this understanding about the scabberding character of Labourite reformism. A new leadership must be committed to a revolutionary and internationalist perspective. It must transcend the confines of trade unionism (and one trade union) and act as a tribune of all the oppressed -- fighting racial and sexual oppression, and the imperialist war drive which means war on the unions at home, opposing nationalist protectionism in favour of a struggle for jobs for all. Whether in the case of an effective struggle against the Spencerites, or in the building of an effective campaign to defend the victimised miners, every immediate task facing NUM militants is integrally linked to the necessity to forge an alternative revolutionary leadership. Free the class-war prisoners! Reinstate the sacked miners! Defend the NUM! ■

'Leninists'...

(Continued from page 3)

ordinated strike action. The *Leninist's* comrades in the CP had considerable influence in the 'left' trade union bureaucracy. *Workers Hammer* exposed the scandalous blacklegging scab coal operation at BL Longbridge by CP convenor Jack Adams and agitated for strike action. What did the *Leninist* do?

They agitated far and wide for a general strike ... within the toothless miners support groups. These they ludicrously dubbed 'soviets in embryo'. The May *Leninist* complains that the Spartacist League 'dismissed' the miners support groups as 'Labourite-dominated' and goes on to explain how the Petrograd soviets of 1905 and February 1917 were also dominated by

reformists. The Russian soviets grew out of mass revolutionary upsurges. Potential organs of dual power (soviets, councils of action) in the miners' battle could have been thrown up -- through spreading the strike to other key unions and organising joint strike committees. That's what we fought for.

The *Leninist's* wordy editorial writers will tell you how 'socialism in one country', proclaimed in 1924, 'was Stalin's invention; it is not a Leninist concept' (May 1985). They will denounce the class collaboration of the Popular Front and support to the Allied imperialists in World War II. They will tell you that the CPGB has a 'reformist programme and a social-democratic approach to membership and organisation' (April 1985). But what does it get you? Their advice to militants inside the CP remains: Don't split!

Do you want to build a party with a reformist programme and social-democratic approach and more than a half century of class treason behind it? Then stick with the *Leninist* inside the CPGB (or join the Labour Party). The CP's reformist programme didn't come from nowhere. What 'socialism in one country' meant was the subordination by Stalin of the Communist parties around the world to the anti-revolutionary interests of pressurising, and ultimately collaborating with, the imperialist bourgeoisies. And Trotskyism represents the struggle to defend the programme of Lenin's Bolshevism against Stalin's treachery. So if you're interested in drawing revolutionary conclusions, if you want to build a party with a revolutionary programme and a Bolshevik approach, then don't settle for a halfway house. Go all the way to Trotskyism, the programme for proletarian power. ■

WORKERS HAMMER Public Meetings

SOUTH AFRICA: RAZOR'S EDGE

● Smash Apartheid ● Class struggle is the key

Speaker: CHERYL MYALL, Spartacist League Central Committee

SHIREBROOK

12.30pm, Sun 2 June
Shirebrook Village Hall,
Park Rd,
Shirebrook, Notts.
Additional speaker: Dick Hall,
Warsop Main NUM
(in a personal capacity).

BIRMINGHAM

8pm, Tue 4 June
Room 46,
Dr Johnson House,
Bull St,
Birmingham.

NEWBRIDGE, GWENT

7pm, Fri 7 June
Celyn Colliery Memorial Institute,
High St,
Newbridge,
Gwent.

DONCASTER

7pm, Sun 2 June
Ingram Arms,
High St,
Hatfield,
nr Doncaster.
Additional speaker: Dave Douglass,
Hatfield Main NUM Branch Delegate
(in a personal capacity).

CANNOCK CHASE

7.30pm, Wed 5 June
Cedar Tree Hotel,
Main Rd,
Brereton,
Rugeley,
Staffs.

LONDON

7.30pm, Fri 14 June
Conway Hall,
Red Lion Sq,
Holborn,
London WC1.

For further details contact the Spartacist League at: PO Box 185, London WC1H 8JE, Birmingham (021) 236 9774, London (01) 278 2232, Sheffield (0742) 587282

Smash apartheid ...

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mineworkers!

To succeed, the liberation struggle against apartheid must throw off the nationalist leadership, which only looks to the workers as a vehicle to power for a petty-bourgeois layer aspiring to exploit 'their own' black toilers, as in Machel's Mozambique and Mugabe's Zimbabwe. Instead, as we said in 'South Africa: Razor's edge' (*Workers Hammer* no 68, April 1985), internationalist communists, black, coloured, Indian and white, must lay the basis for a multi-racial revolutionary workers party, to lead the emancipation and reconstruction of the oppressed nation under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Smash apartheid -- For workers revolution!

Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 378, 3 May 1985

Solidarity with S African miners

The following telegram was sent to the South African National Union of Mineworkers from a 4 May Workers Hammer dayschool.

We members of the British NUM salute your struggle against vicious apartheid bosses. We demand reinstatement of all sacked South African mineworkers. Black workers can lead all oppressed in struggle to smash apartheid capitalism. Workers of the world unite!

Signed:

Dennis Thompson	Yorkshire NUM
Eddie Loseby	"
Paul Brewin	Derbyshire NUM
Dick Hall	"
Don Hughes	South Wales NUM

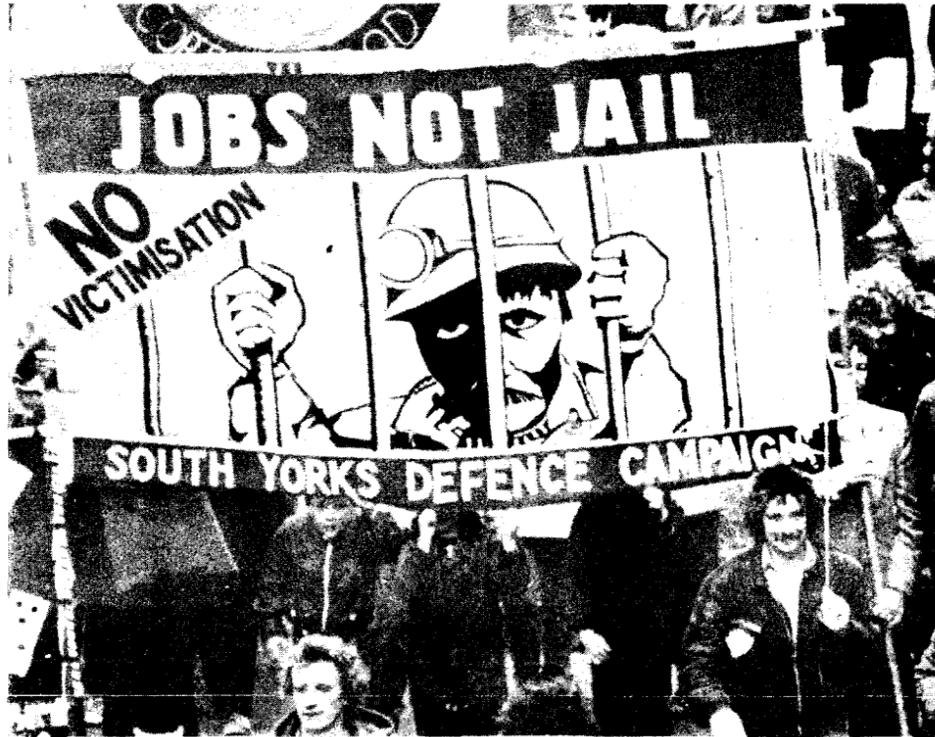
Bloody Thatcher will get hers

Defend the miners!

The Iron Bitch swore to be vindictive in victory, and she's carrying out her vow with a vengeance. Scarcely a week goes by that some young lad isn't locked away for the 'crime' of having fought to defend his job and his union. As we go to press, two major 'trials' are taking place. In Sheffield fifteen miners from all parts of the country are up on charges of riotous assembly at Orgreave, where even the BBC's biased television cameras proved beyond doubt that it was Thatcher's mob of thugs-in-blue that was rioting. In Cardiff, two young miners face murder charges over the death of scab taxi driver David Wilkie last autumn. Seeking to paint Wilkie's death as a simple criminal act, the prosecutor argued, 'It makes no difference that they were striking miners who were trying to stop what they regarded as a strikebreaker' (*Times*, 8 May).

They want strikers' blood! Several tens of thousands of trade unionists downing tools for a day throughout South Wales to surround the court in militant protest might help to remind them what this trial is about. To a man, the hundreds upon hundreds of sacked and imprisoned miners stand in the tradition of countless class war prisoners of the past, subjected to the bloody retribution of the bosses, from the Tolpuddle martyrs to American IWW miners' organiser Joe Hill to the black South African trade unionists butchered in police stations. Free the South Wales 2! Drop the charges against the Orgreave 15! Free all class war prisoners of the miners strike!

Having failed to smash the NUM in the course of that bitter year-long struggle, Thatcher, MacGregor and the ruling class are now trying to sack or imprison as many mili-



tants as they can, while relying on their Spencerite fifth column to weaken and gut the NUM from within. The Lynk/Prendergast clique in Notts claim to be 'leading the fight against Arthur Scargill's attempts to impose dictatorship on the national union' (*Times*, 27 April), evoking the memory of their anti-Communist colleagues of scab Polish Solidarnosc. Meanwhile strikers face provocation upon provocation, including the threat of expulsion

week against the victimisation of four strikers. Shortly after that, at Ireland colliery near Chesterfield, a majority scab pit, the leadership was able to pull off a protest strike against the importation of five scabs from Brodsworth.

The key immediate task facing NUM militants today is to preserve the fighting capacity of the NUM as a national industrial union and

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TGWU under the gun

The Transport and General Workers Union last month was placed in the crosshairs of the Tory drive to smash effective trade unionism with the vicious witchhunt over 'ballot-rigging' in last year's union elections. After weeks of Fleet Street 'exposes' and a non-stop propaganda barrage by the enemies of trade unionism from without (like the Tories and SDP) and within (Neil Kinnock & Co), the TGWU national executive finally agreed to call a re-ballot this month.

The 'democratic' union bashers of Fleet Street and their Tory/SDP masters are of course not concerned with trade union democracy. In fact they're hostile to it. The immediate aim of their campaign is to bring the powerful TGWU into line with Cold War 'new realists' like Duffy and Hammond, open scabherders against the miners and partisans of 'no strike' deals. More broadly, it is designed as a pretext for even more legislative shackles on the trade unions, including a campaign to force through mandatory postal ballots for all elections and strike votes. Outrageously, the fraud squad was brought in to investigate officials in the Bristol and South West region of the TGWU. Keep the cops' filthy fingers out of the union's business! Down with government interference in the trade unions!

No vote to Todd or Wright

In June 1984 Ron Todd beat George Wright by the small margin of 45,000 votes in the workplace ballot for TGWU general secretary to succeed Moss Evans. Eleven months later, and only after the defeat of the miners strike, allegations of electoral malpractice began to surface. For all the hue and cry, an 'independent' inquiry determined that some 3600 votes had gone astray in the election, in a 1½-million-strong union. Contrast this with the sort of gerrymandering routinely practised by

these 'democratic' ruling-class politicians in Northern Ireland in order to discriminate against the Catholic minority. But while the Tory/SDP union haters ranted and raved, ballot-lover Neil Kinnock immediately made clear his support for a re-vote. Wright, a self-proclaimed Kinnockite and head of the Welsh region, demanded a new ballot. Wright is a stalking horse for the 'new realists', an open anti-communist who demands a ban on any Militant supporter holding office in the union.

Two of the five candidates in last year's election have come out in favour of Todd in the re-ballot (while one has declared for Wright), in part as a protest against the ruling-class furore for a new election. Meanwhile virtually all of the fake-left press is campaigning for 'left-winger' Todd. Typical is *Socialist Action* (3 May), whose front page features a larger-than-life photo of Ron Todd with the heading, 'Defend the TGWU!' They argue, 'every stop's got to be pulled out for a victory for Todd and in defence of the TGWU'.

Is a vote for Ron Todd the way to defend the TGWU? We say no. This is not a situation in which direct government intervention into the TGWU (eg through a court-ordered re-ballot) might have made appropriate a vote for Todd, despite his policies, in order to oppose Tory/employer interference in the affairs of the union. As it is, the support for Todd by the likes of *Socialist Action* has nothing to do with defence of the TGWU. For the lot of these phoney revolutionaries it reflects nothing more than their perennial tail-ending of every 'left' in search of a 'lesser evil'.

And Todd isn't much of a 'left', even by their wimpy standards. He too is a Kinnock supporter. While Wright was notorious among South Wales miners for turning a blind eye to TGWU lorry drivers scabbing during their strike, Todd tried to carve out a reputation

as a supporter of the NUM's fight. But through the entire strike he never lifted a finger to mobilise concrete industrial support. On the contrary, he did everything he could to stifle or divert initiatives for strike action from the TGWU membership in the car industry and elsewhere (see letter exchange, page 9) and to divert those actions that did occur, notably the two dockers strikes. How can a leadership which refuses to mobilise its own membership in struggle defend the union against the vile witchhunting of the gutter press and the bosses?

Defend the political levy!

Had the miners won, all the Tories' anti-union laws would now be little more than scraps of paper. As it is the union haters are on the warpath, with one new attack after another. The SDP et al screech that without postal ballots the same 'jiggery pokery' as supposedly occurred in the TGWU will continue in the impending ballots over trade union political funds.

The bosses want to weaken the trade unions' ability to fight and turn them into toothless friendly societies. Their attack on the political levy, just like that in the aftermath of the 1926 General Strike, is aimed at denying the working class the right to organise politically, with its own parties. The open bosses' parties get their 'political levy' in the boardrooms of the City financiers; the Labour Party, as a party built and based on the trade unions, must primarily rely on these union political funds.

When the supposedly Trotskyist *Socialist Organiser* (10 April) writes, 'No challenge now facing the labour movement is as important as winning a yes vote in all the ballots on the political fund', it is proof only of its dyed-

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