

Imperialist terrorists poised to attack Defend Nicaragua!

In trouble over hijacking in the Near East, afraid of looking 'weak' like Jimmy Carter over the Tehran embassy seizure, Ronald Reagan has announced he will strike back ... in Central America. As the TWA aircraft seized by Lebanese Shi'ites went on its carousel trip between Athens, Algiers and Beirut, the US president threatened: 'Our limits have been reached.' Asked to explain, White House spokesman Larry Speakes said, 'It means that we are now drawing the line, we are laying out a specific plan of action, first in Central America.' Reagan was even more specific, saying he expected the US Congress to back steps he intended to take 'to end the external support the Salvadoran terrorists receive from Nicaragua and the Communist bloc' (*New York Times*, 21 June).

Meanwhile the Thatcher government backs Washington to the hilt. Secret papers leaked to Labour MP George Foulkes and the *Observer* revealed the government's policy of aiding US attempts to bankrupt Nicaragua by blocking aid. Echoes of Clive Ponting and the *Belgrano* cover-up abounded as Tory minister Malcolm Rifkind lied to Parliament about the policy

**Defend, complete,
extend the revolution!
Nicaragua
eyewitness ... p6**

while the civil servant who leaked the documents was suspended without pay as a prelude to dismissal. And meanwhile British mercenaries have joined the CIA-backed Nicaraguan 'contras' (counterrevolutionaries) fighting to overthrow the Sandinista regime.

The Beirut hostages have been released, but right now the American government is at its most dangerous. Determined to show it's not a paper tiger, it acts like a wounded tiger. Somewhere on the globe, Reagan will lash out against the Soviet Union or those he calls its



Owen Franken/Sygma

'Big Pine' exercise, Honduras, 1983. The world's biggest terrorists are planning invasion of Central America. Nicaragua needs Soviet MIGs!

'surrogates'. A military blockade of Lebanon, air strikes against the Bekaa, fostering a 'pro-NATO' coup in Greece, sending the Marines and the 82nd Airborne into Central America to establish a *cordon sanitaire* around Nicaragua and even an invasion -- it's all possible. From Moscow, *Pravda* warned late last month that Washington circles 'wish to use to the maximum the incident with the US plane in Beirut and the murder of six Americans in the Salvadoran capital to substantiate fresh dangerous militaristic actions'.

Such behaviour has already become a pattern. When Reagan took a beating in US opinion polls over his attempt at reconciliation with Nazi SS stormtroopers at Bitburg, we wrote:

'The last time he was in trouble was over Lebanon, and he responded with the invasion of Grenada. What will it be this time?' (*Workers Vanguard* no 378, 3 May). The answer was trade sanctions against Sandinista Nicaragua, a deliberate act of war. This time around it looks like he's planning to send in the troops and planes to stop the 'Communist/terrorist menace' in Central America. We say: *Watch out for Reagan's terrorism! Defend the Nicaraguan Revolution!*

Imperialist provocation and hysteria

The imperialist machinery of provocations and military hysteria has been put in motion.

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Tories bay for Irish blood Leon Brittan's phantom bombers

Recent weeks have seen a frenzied campaign by the bourgeois press and government in Britain to create their own 'anti-terrorist' backlash, aimed in the first instance at fomenting anti-Irish hysteria. On 23 June the police claimed to have found a bomb with a long-term microminiaturised timer in the Rubens Hotel in London, just down the road from Buckingham Palace. The bomb, said the cops, was similar to that which blew up at the Tory conference hotel in Brighton last year. Then they claimed to have found an IRA 'hit list' of seaside resorts throughout the country to be bombed this summer.

Leon Brittan announced that former Royal Ulster Constabulary top cop Sir Kenneth Newman

had been placed in charge of an 'emergency' national 'anti-terrorist' operation. From Brighton to Great Yarmouth, from Bournemouth to Blackpool, armed police with sirens and sniffer dogs descended, cordoned off streets and houses, 'warned' holidaymakers and above all the media. Suitably sonorous statements hailing the police and decrying 'IRA murderers' were sought from all parties. The Queen Mother was wheeled out to parade at a 'bomb scare' in Piccadilly. Of course the cops found no bombs whatsoever in this whole operation. Nor did they expect to; as one statement admitted: 'Police have very good reason to believe that the public is not in immediate danger from this disrupted IRA action.'

As intended, the result was day after day of concentrated front-page publicity in all the bourgeois press, from the ultra-right *Sun* to the 'liberal' *Guardian*. Meanwhile dozens of Irish 'suspects' were rounded up and imprisoned under the Prevention of Terrorism Act, in particular in Glasgow. Seven people have now been charged in connection with this operation, including one man, Patrick Magee, charged with bombing the Brighton Grand Hotel and five murder charges arising from that, and others variously charged with 'conspiracy to cause explosions' and 'concealing acts of terrorism'.

What is really going on here? An article by *continued on page 9*

LRT workers demand:

Newham Seven must go free!

As we go to press the crucial Newham Seven trial is nearing its conclusion. Seven militant Asian youth face a string of frame-up charges -- affray, conspiracy, possession of offensive weapons, criminal damage -- simply for having defended themselves and the local Asian community against murderous racist attacks. The verdict of the largely white jury is expected on Monday, 8 July. If even one of these heroic youth is locked away, the entire London-area labour movement should explode in outrage and protest.

Outside the courtroom a militant and concerted defence has been organised by the Newham Seven Defence Campaign, with sizeable pickets every week, including supporters of the Spartacist League and other left organisations. On several occasions the racist cops have brutally waded into these pickets, arresting dozens. On one occasion the cops turned a blind eye as knife-wielding racists attacked the protesters, three of whom required hospital treatment for their wounds.

Scarcely a day goes by in London in which black and Asian workers and their families are not subjected to firebombings, stabbings and vicious assaults. This is notoriously the case for the predominantly minority workforce in London Transport. Yet criminally the labour

officialdom, including in the strategic London Transport unions (NUR, ASLEF, TGWU), refuses to lift a finger, aided and abetted by various self-styled 'revolutionaries'.

Spartacist supporters in London Transport NUR and ASLEF have fought to bring the unions' muscle to bear in defence of the Newham Seven, including a commitment to campaign for protest strikes in the event of a conviction. We reprint here a resolution submitted to several NUR branches. Scandalously a supporter of *Socialist Action* was instrumental in gutting this resolution in Finsbury Park NUR on 28 June, using his casting vote as branch chairman to push through an amendment to delete all mention of strike action. When a similar motion was submitted to Camden 3 NUR branch the following week, a Socialist Workers Party supporter eagerly seized upon outright opposition by white right-wing elements to 'suggest' a similar amendment.

These fake lefts use defeatist excuses based on London Transport NUR bureaucrats' stillborn strike call earlier this year to cover for the bureaucracy's refusal to defend their black and Asian members against endemic racist terror. In fact a struggle against racist attacks would do a damn sight more to galvanise and inspire union members than the economic projects on offer.

The disgusting refusal of the Labourite reformists and their allies to defend minorities against racist/cop terror fuels separatist sentiments among black and Asian militants that community self-defence is 'the only way'. To cover their own arses, the fake-revolutionaries then cheer on this isolationist, ultimately defeatist perspective that the labour movement cannot be won to active defence of minority rights. But the miners strike provided vivid evidence of how sharp class struggle can unite workers and oppressed across racial and national divisions. The Spartacist League fights for mass labour/minority mobilisations to smash racist terror as part of our perspective of building a multi-racial vanguard party. We say: Defend the right to self-defence! Smash racist attacks! Hands off the Newham Seven, heroic anti-racist fighters!

We urge our readers to send financial contributions to: Newham 7 Defence Campaign, PO Box 273, Forest Gate, London E7. ■

Defend Gay's the Word!

In April 1984 Her Majesty's Customs and Excise raided and seized imported stock from Gay's The Word bookshop in London. Thatcher's Customs cops subsequently brought a hundred individual criminal charges against eight bookshop directors and one shop employee, as well as against Gay's The Word as a limited company. The 142 titles seized range from medical texts like *The Aids Epidemic* and historical works like *The Nazi Extermination of Homosexuals* to novels by Jean Genet and Oscar Wilde to *The Joy of Lesbian Sex* and New York's main gay newspaper, *New York Native*. They're out for a rerun of the *Lady Chatterley's Lover* trial and the Oscar Wilde trial wrapped in one!

Until last year's raid, no one had ever before challenged Customs and Excise's sweeping powers. But this attack has turned into a major gay rights and civil liberties case, with substantial support coming from literary figures, publishing companies, the NCCL, trade unions and MPs for the Defend Gay's The Word Campaign. And with good reason! If Thatcher wins this one, it will be a major blow to gay rights and (coupled with the sinister 'video nasties' legislation) bolster the Tory thought-police who want to tell us what we can and can't read and watch in the privacy of our own homes! This case is of vital interest to the labour movement and all oppressed. Remember how gays rallied to the year-long coal strike. And remember that one of the first acts of Hitler's reign of terror was to burn books by Jewish, communist and gay writers.

The Customs cops have charged the vast bulk of Gay's The Word imported stock with being 'obscene' or 'indecent'. It is this case which is an obscene, indecent mockery of justice. The charges are based on an 1876 'Customs Consolidation Act', which unlike the later Obscene Publications Act governing literature published in the UK, does not even allow for a

Resolution for LRT NUR and ASLEF branches

This branch notes:

- 1) The current trial of 7 Asian youth from Newham, East London, on various charges of 'affray, possession of offensive weapons, conspiracy and criminal damage'. These serious charges were laid after local Asians defended themselves and their community against marauding fascist/racist thugs.
- 2) The overtly racist character of the trial -- in particular the vicious beating received by defendant Parvais Khan at the hands of prison officers during the trial itself. Also the attacks on and arrests of those demonstrating in support of the 7 outside the Old Bailey.
- 3) That LRT and BR employees themselves are frequently the victims of racist attacks. Most notably the case of Mauritian-born BR ticket collector Peter Burns, speared through the eye with a metal spike, his killer then let off with the lesser charge of manslaughter.

This branch believes:

- 1) That the Newham 7 trial is a racist show trial aimed at criminalising the elementary right of self-defence for minority communities, and legitimising racist attacks and even murder of minorities.
- 2) That the labour movement has a particular duty and interest to stand for defence of oppressed minorities both against racist thugs such as rampaged in Newham, and against the equally racist thuggery and intimidation practised by the capitalist state, its cops and courts -- our enemies, as graphically shown during the miners strike.

This branch resolves:

- 1) To demand the immediate dropping of all charges against the Newham 7.
- 2) To use this resolution to mobilise among our workforce for the organised protest pickets at the Old Bailey, every Monday from 12-2. And in the event of a conviction of the Asian youth to seek to mobilise for industrial strike action on LRT with the perspective of mobilising the labour movement London-wide in their defence and in outrage at their deliberate victimisation.
- 3) To send copies of this resolution in full to Sir Michael Havers and to Leon Brittan; to the NUR and ASLEF NECs, to the London District Council NUR and to all London NUR and ASLEF branches, and to the Newham 7 Defence Campaign.



Nicaragua and the lessons of Spain

Trotsky and Lenin

Writing about the Spanish Civil War, Trotsky set forth the following conditions for the victory of the masses against the armed forces of their exploiters, conditions which retain their urgent relevance in Nicaragua today:

The conditions for victory of the masses in a civil war against the army of exploiters are very simple in their essence.

1. The fighters of a revolutionary army must be clearly aware of the fact that they are fighting for their full social liberation and not for the reestablishment of the old ('democratic') forms of exploitation.

2. The workers and peasants in the rear of the revolutionary army as well as in the rear of the enemy must know and understand the same thing.

3. The propaganda on their own front as well as on the enemy front and in both rears must be completely permeated with the spirit of social revolution. The slogan 'First victory, then reforms', is the slogan of all oppressors and exploiters from the Biblical kings down to Stalin.

4. Politics are determined by those classes and strata that participate in the struggle. The revolutionary masses must have a state apparatus that directly and immediately expresses their will. Only the soviets of workers', soldiers', and peasants' deputies can act as such an apparatus.

-- Leon Trotsky, 'The Lessons of Spain: The Last Warning' (December 1937)

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literary or artistic defence. The judge presiding over the committal hearings is notorious throughout the legal profession for his reactionary Catholic views. Customs and Excise officers admitted they thought homosexuality per se to be 'abnormal'. One said under oath that he associated the word 'gay' in Gay's The Word with homosexuality (brilliant deduction) and homosexuality with obscenity. The defendants are charged with conspiracy because they had imported books sent to them at private addresses after they noticed that publications bearing the words 'gay' or 'lesbian' were being opened, damaged and withheld without reason.

This assault on gays and civil liberties in general is the cutting edge of Thatcher's drive for 'Victorian values', aimed at regimentering the population in the face of an all-sided attack on working-class and minority rights. From the Gillick decision effectively banning contraception to under-16s to the killing of young miners' children searching through coal tips last year, the Tories are out to restore the 'lower classes' to the days of unmitigated exploitation. And the labour misleaders, rather than fighting this vicious onslaught, fuel the attacks with their appeals to backward prejudices and their do-nothing policies. In this deeply homophobic and anti-woman society lesbian women and gay men are always under attack. It will take a workers government under a revolutionary workers party to sweep all the bigoted crap away for good! Down with the anti-gay Inquisition! Drop the charges against Gay's The Word! Return the stolen books, records and personal belongings! Full democratic rights for gays!

We urge our readers to send contributions to Defend Gay's The Word, Send cheques payable to DGTW to: DGTW, 66 Marchmont Street, London WC1. ■

From the coalfields

Miner speaks on the strike

'Next time we need a revolutionary party'

We reprint below a speech by comrade Wally Roberts, a strike militant from Lea Hall NUM in Staffordshire (speaking in a personal capacity), to a recent weekend educational conference in Paris sponsored by our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyste de France. A collection for sacked miners was taken up among the more than seventy participants at the educational weekend, raising 1020.60 francs (just under £100), and a statement of internationalist greetings from the Lea Hall NUM was read to the conference. Comrade Wally came to the conclusion at the end of the strike that the central lesson to be drawn was the need for a revolutionary party and is now an active supporter of the Spartacist League.

Originally the NUM's strike was a strike for jobs and communities, especially in the North East and Wales and Scotland where the only source of employment was predominantly the pits. Once you take that industry away, it's more than just the mining industry -- it carries on into other industries spread through the whole of society. So if these pits did close you end up with a deindustrialisation not just of towns or villages, but of whole communities. Under capitalism, people and communities don't count -- it's just a matter of profit or no profit. They come out with the fallacy that the workers can move if the jobs in one community close down -- make them into industrial gypsies -- but in a way that's impossible. You just can't move whole communities. People have bought their houses. Who's going to buy a house off somebody where there's no industry? They're nailed to the spot.

The trouble was that the majority of the miners saw this strike as for jobs and communities, but as the strike progressed they came to realise that it was a political, orchestrated move towards the destruction of the NUM. And the government were out to destroy the NUM because they were out to destroy trade unionism as a whole. They had planned since 1978 to get the NUM; it is the key union in the country, the union that brought down the last Tory government with the 1974 national strike.

Myself, I work in the Midlands and like Nottinghamshire it is a profitable and productive area. The people in this area, their feeling was that they're secure -- yeah, the principles are right -- but to cover their jobs and security, they were crying about the ballot situation. First of all the Yorkshire area, which is the biggest area in the union with more than 50,000 members, which was the first to be threatened with the closure of the Cortonwood pit, they did have a ballot, and they voted for strike and called on the National Executive to make it official. Then

all it was a question of, was going to the areas to get solidarity for the principle of what they'd voted on, irrespective of the area ballots on the question of striking. And over 80 per cent of the union did come out on strike: from Yorkshire and South Wales flying pickets went out.

Picket lines are sacrosanct

At our pit, I turned up for work after having the plaster removed from my arm from an



Workers Hammer
Workers Hammer
Backbone of the strike: women and black and Asian minorities saw in the miners' strike an opportunity to join forces against their oppressors

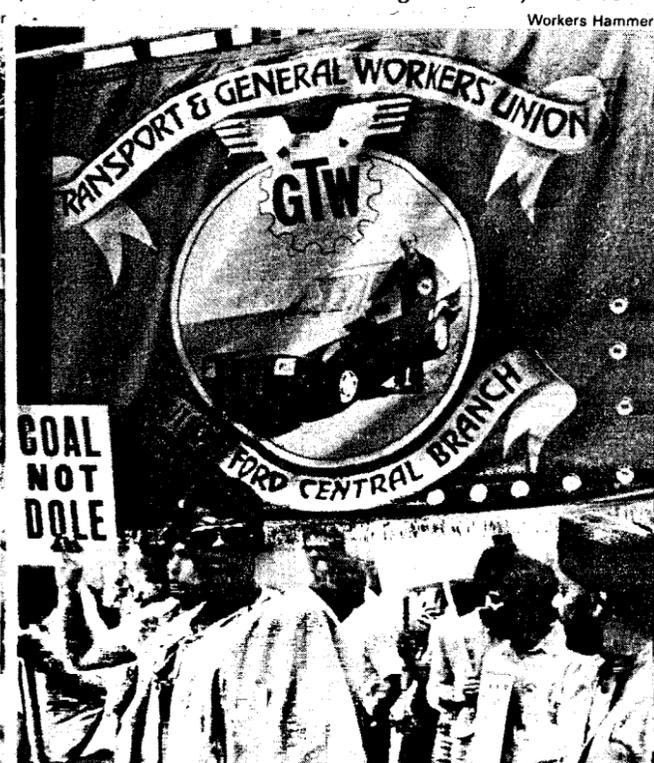
accident down the pit, and found a picket line was set up at the pit. And there was a lot of confusion over whether the strike was official or not, and men did cross the picket line because of that. For myself, the picket line is sacrosanct, for the solidarity of the workers, and must not be crossed and must be defended at all costs. So I joined the picket line and was there for the next twelve months in defence of it. It was respect for the principle and the tradition that nobody crosses a picket line that made the strike happen in the first place.

Unlike what I've heard about France, where the picket line is predominantly informational and in my mind that's no picket line at all, because a picket line means: *don't cross!* Irrespective of what union or organisation you belong to, or religion or anything else: you do not cross picket lines! The pickets are the

vanguard of the strike: you can't have a strike without picket lines. It has been said that to cross picket lines is bad for your health. So we didn't just have picket lines, the union organised mass pickets that nobody would be able to cross.

'Scabs and private gunmen in factory plants are the basic nuclei of the fascist army. Strike pickets are the basic nuclei of the proletarian army.' ('The Transitional Programme')

I'd like to describe how the strike progressed from just picketting to an organised and disciplined strike. Because at one point the strikers at my pit converged and took over the pit canteen to try and persuade those that were working that the strike was official. At one point the area official was sent for with the hopes that he would explain to those that were working that, yes, it was an official strike. But all that we could get out of him was that it was 'recommended' that you come out on strike. At this point I was so incensed by his reluctance to use the word 'official' that I jumped on the table in the canteen and demanded that he close the gates and if he didn't we would. And that he should instruct them, those that are working that is, not to



cross the picket line. At this point all he could quote was the laws laid down by the Trades Union Congress, about not having secondary picketting -- that's playing the game according to the bourgeoisie and under their rules. You can't win a fight by playing to other people's rules, laid down by them. So what it amounted to was that the strikers themselves irrespective of the hierarchy of our particular union had to carry the fight under their own steam.

Women, minorities were the backbone

So they were coming under the organisation of the strike committees. The communication lines between different pits and areas, the formation of teams for collecting money, going to factories and meetings throughout the country, collection of food, the organisation of the women's support groups.

Unlike previous strikes in '72 and '74, this strike brought in the women and the families. Because Thatcher not only threatened the jobs of the men but she aimed to starve the women and their children as well, with the aim of demoralising the men to such an extent that they returned to work for the sole purpose of saving their families hardship, starvation and the suffering that goes along with it. But in fact it had an opposite effect -- the women, that is wives, mothers and sweethearts organised themselves in support of their menfolk and culminated into the women's support groups. I say support groups, but in actual fact as the strike progressed they became the backbone of and inspiration of the strike. Not only in distributing the food but standing shoulder to shoulder along with the men on the picket line.

By being on the picket lines with their men they took the full force alongside of the men of the state: the state being the cops and the

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Letter: 'WRP's cynical publicity stunt'

Dear comrades,

Having read the article in the last issue of *Workers Hammer* on the Workers Revolutionary Party I would like to bring to your attention a motion I tried to put to my union branch at Lea Hall on the 9th of June. The WRP had already printed in their newspaper *News Line* that Lea Hall had already sponsored their march for the sacked and jailed miners. They did this before they even approached the branch. Typical. In 1983 at the TUC conference the WRP helped the right wingers to witchhunt Arthur Scargill over Polish Solidarnosc. After doing that, these Healyites had the audacity to come and ask miners to walk behind their banner.

Unfortunately because of the seriousness of the question of the change of rules, the meeting was unable to take my resolution. I

felt so incensed by the whole thing I thought it was only appropriate that this resolution should be printed:

'This branch is for freeing the jailed strikers and reinstating all our sacked comrades, and believes that the national union should be boldly campaigning on their behalf. This campaign should never have been allowed to be used as a publicity stunt by the WRP and its YS.

'Therefore the branch will write to the National President of the union asking for his advice about sponsoring this march, and noting that we suggest that the WRP write a letter of apology to Arthur Scargill and all our members in England, Scotland and Wales, for its attack on us at the 1983 TUC Congress.'

Comradely, Wally Roberts

Women, church and state in Ireland

The 'Kerry babies' witchhunt

1984 was the year of the heroic miners strike, when coalfield women and Irish, blacks and Asians throughout Britain rallied to support the miners against Thatcher. And in Ireland too, trade unions North and South, Protestant and Catholic gave support to the NUM. This very same year Irish society was polarised by a case that sharply illustrates the backwardness and venality of social attitudes in the 'Free State' and the situation of women in particular.

Joanne Hayes was picked up by the Gardai in May last year at the farm in Co Kerry where she lives with her family. She was charged with the murder of her new-born child. Two weeks earlier the body of a baby had been found, horrifically stabbed with 28 wounds, on a beach near Cahirciveen 40 miles away. The identity of the baby remains unknown to this day. The cops began searching for a recently pregnant unmarried woman with no baby to show for it and opted for Joanne Hayes as the prime suspect. She was known to have had a recently concluded affair with a married man at the Tralee sports complex where both worked, and to already have had a daughter by him. And lately she had been pregnant again.

From the outset it was clear that the 'crime' being investigated was not infanticide, but sex outside marriage. While women are terrorised by church and state alike for seeking abortions, infanticide is regarded lightly by the state and the entire 'pro-life' clericalist cabal. The institutionalised stigma attached to 'illegitimacy', the absence of abortion rights and near-absence of contraception combine to ensure that infanticide is common. In an extensive expose of the ordeal of Joanne Hayes and her family, the Irish fortnightly newsmagazine *Magill* (30 May) points out:

'Infanticide is the killing of a baby of less than twelve months old by its mother -- the law taking the view that such killings usually result from mental turmoil occasioned by giving birth. A conviction usually draws a short suspended sentence.'

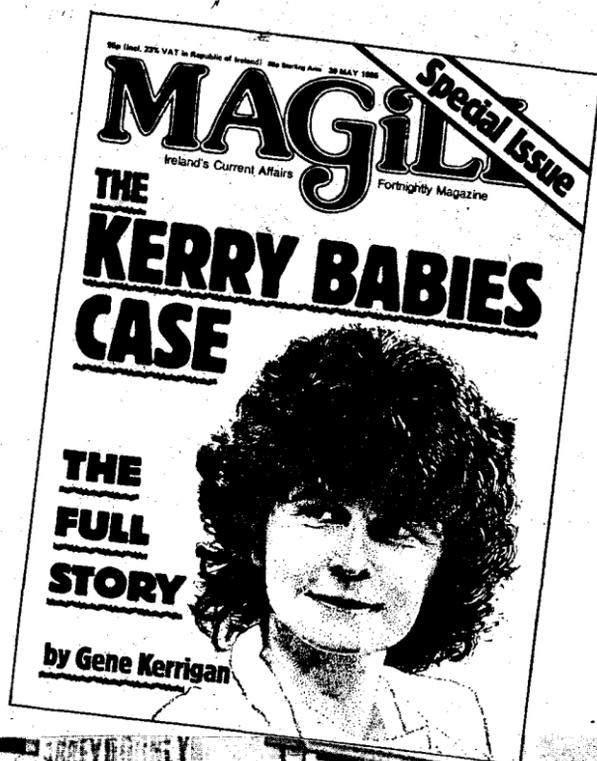
In this case it was never established that Joanne Hayes killed any baby, and some of the truth may never be known. What is absolutely clear, however, is that the murdered baby found on the beach was not hers.

Joanne and her family were taken to the Garda station and brutally interrogated by detectives who extracted 'confessions' to the effect that the baby had been born inside the home, that Joanne in a frenzy had beaten it with a bath brush and then repeatedly stabbed it with a carving knife. After this her two brothers were supposed to have taken the body to Sleah Head and dumped it in the sea. The 'statements' by the family were mutually

Derek Speirs (Report)



Clerical state condones infanticide, while crucifying women who seek abortion.



Popular Irish magazine exposes frame-up of Joanne Hayes, while Joanne's fellow townspeople demonstrate in her defence.

Derek Speirs (Report)

contradictory and self-evidently false. They are testimony only to cop brutality and perhaps to the fact that in clericalist Ireland, better to go to jail for murder than to suffer the shame of an extra-marital affair and/or interrogation by the 'Free State' cops.

The interrogations were conducted by the 'Investigation Section', otherwise known as the 'Murder Squad' and the 'Heavy Gang'. Their speciality is extracting 'confessions', which are then admitted as evidence in court, from suspects for crimes they did not commit. The 'Heavy Gang' threatened to take Joanne's daughter away, imprison her mother and sell the farm. On the other hand, they promised to 'let her off with infanticide' ... if only she confessed. The only evidence they had was that she had sinned. One member of the family reported being ordered by the cops to go down on her knees and pray for herself during interrogation. These thugs' treatment of 'sinners' has much in common with how the RUC in the North deals with Republican prisoners.

Scientific evidence subsequently showed that the murdered baby was blood group A and therefore could not have been born to Joanne and her partner, both group O. The body of Joanne's missing baby was only discovered after the family forced the cops to come and look at it. She had tried to tell them that she had given birth alone and unassisted in a field and that the baby died shortly afterwards. She had left the body in a well, and sure enough, when the cops were taken back to the place, the body of a baby was found which was blood group O.

This didn't stop the cops. They simply changed tack, arguing that since the two bodies could not have been twins 'therefore' Joanne must have had a *second* love affair, had two babies the same night by different fathers, and murdered both babies! On this basis she was remanded in custody in Limerick jail (from where she was admitted to a psychiatric hospital) to await trial. But then the case was blown open.

The outrageous conduct of the cops was exposed in an article in the *Dublin Sunday Independent* in October 1984. A huge public outcry ensued, not least because of the involve-

ment of the notorious 'Heavy Gang'. Charges against Joanne were dropped and a public tribunal of enquiry into the conduct of the cops was ordered by the government. Yet the enquiry itself, begun in January 1985, became not a trial of the cops but a sensationalised, 77-day public inquisition and humiliation of Joanne Hayes and her family. As the *New Statesman* put it: 'she has been subjected to an intensity of questioning which would seem extreme in a rape case....'

Early on in the hearing, large numbers of people demonstrated their support for Joanne with flowers, pickets etc. Feminist groups were there too. But such is their genuflection before church and state that when an aged, very sick relative of Joanne testified from a wheelchair that a baby was born in the family home and later died, the protests stopped and Joanne was on her own.

Irrespective of the final conclusion of this show trial, the combined forces of church and state have achieved their aim. The lives of the 'accused' have been ruined. A grisly warning has been issued to the increasing number of Irish women on the 'abortion run' to England. And the whole ordeal has served to rally every reactionary force in the country against the reforms of the laws on contraception presently being mooted in Irish government circles. Barely two years ago, a similarly vicious 'pro-life' campaign enshrined Ireland's reactionary anti-abortion laws in the constitution. At the time we wrote:

'this anti-abortion crusade must be defeated because it will strengthen the chains of oppression on Irish women and reinforce the most backward clericalist reaction throughout society. Our goal must be the repeal of all abortion laws, free abortion on demand, along with free, readily-available contraception and quality socialised medical care, maternity/paternity leave on full pay and free 24-hour child-care. We must stand for the elementary democratic demand of separation of church and state and universal secular education. But such demands cannot be secured in any lasting way in backward capitalist Ireland. The key to a successful struggle is the mobilisation of the Irish proletariat, North and South, Catholic and Protestant, men and women against capitalist rule -- necessitating a sharp break with nationalism and accompanying clericalism.'

(*'Clerical crusade targets Irish women'*, *Spartacist Britain* no 46, December 1982/January 1983)

The 'Kerry babies' witchhunt takes place against the background of the cosmetic 'liberalisation' measures of the pro-Thatcher Fine Gael government of lackey Garret FitzGerald, as it tries to 'secularise' the appearance of the clerical state of Eire in order to appeal to Ulster Protestant opinion. The Irish ruling class would like to do a deal with British imperialism over Ulster, with the payoff of Ireland dropping its nominal 'neutrality' and officially joining up in NATO's anti-Soviet crusade. But the government's token 'liberal' measures, such as the recent contraception reform (making condoms and spermicides available without prescription to those over 18!) and the possibility of a referendum to legalise divorce, have stirred up opposition from the clergy. The sighting of a supposed 'miracle' at a church in Co Kerry -- moving statues of Jesus and the Virgin Mary -- is yet another device of clerical reaction to rally 'the faithful' behind god's 'displeasure' at FitzGerald's reforms and the sympathetic media treatment of Joanne Hayes.

All wings of Irish capitalism, from Fine Gael to the more traditionally nationalist Fianna Fail, are deeply anti-Communist and pro-imperialist, the charade of 'neutrality' notwithstanding. As for the nationalist strategy best exemplified by Provisional Sinn Fein, it not only opposes the national/communal rights of the Protestant people, but manifestly offers nothing to women. They refuse to campaign for abortion rights and, for all their supposed opposition to cop brutality, managed to virtually ignore not just the 'Kerry babies' outrage but also the

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CP 'lefts' in bed with anti-Soviet Euros

Whither the 'Leninists'?

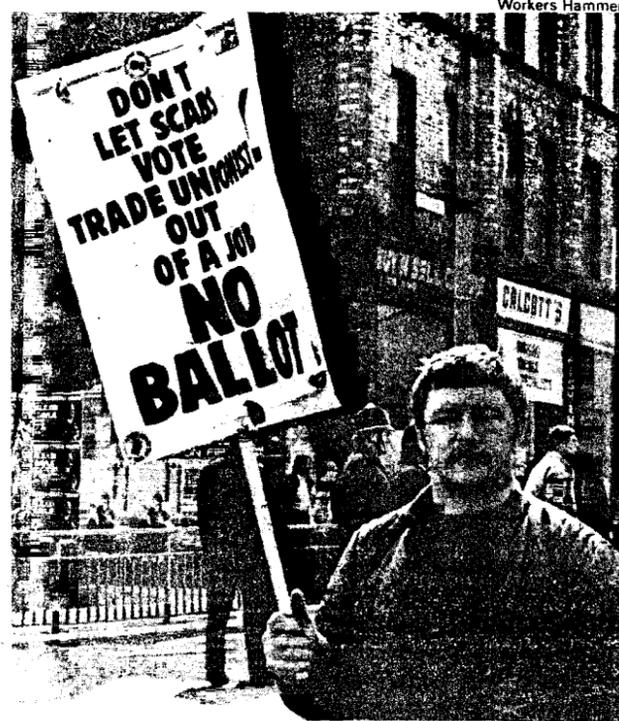
The split in the Communist Party deepened still further at the early June annual general meetings of the Peoples Press Publishing Society (PPPS), legal owner of the newspaper Morning Star. The pro-Moscow minority in the CP centred around Morning Star editor Tony Chater, himself expelled from the CP early this year, retained control of the paper against a takeover bid by the Eurocommunist-dominated party Executive Committee. At the last moment, the self-styled 'Leninist' opposition in the CP called for a vote to the Eurocommunist candidates in the PPPS elections. The following Spartacist League leaflet was distributed to a Leninist educational weekend last month. (The National Bulletin is the Leninist's news sheet within the CP.)

5 June National Bulletin: 'There is no way that we can vote for the Euros' slate.'

6 June Leninist leaflet: 'The Leninists of the Communist Party of Great Britain have decided after serious deliberation to call upon all shareholders of the PPPS to vote for the candidates of the Executive Committee of the Party.'

After years of proclaiming itself a 'Leninist' alternative to Eurocommunism and seeking a bloc of all the 'left' forces inside the Communist Party against the Euros, the Leninist has come down on the side of the Euros in a decisive vote. The 6 June leaflet explains, 'It is quite clear that whatever differences we have with the Party leadership, it is at the moment standing for the idea of the party while the pro-Morning Star grouping stands against it.' Need it be said that McLennan/Jaques/Johnstone's idea of a party has far more in common with Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley than with VI Lenin?

The CPGB has for more than fifty years been a thoroughly reformist party, more than earning the epithet, 'Her Majesty's Loyal Communist Party'. What's going on in the CPGB is not a split between pro-party and anti-party (liquidator) elements but a split defined along the political axis of the Russian ques-



Every militant understood ballot was the bosses' game.

tion and Cold War politics -- broadly speaking, between allegiance to pro-Moscow Stalinism and social-democratic anti-Soviet Eurocommunism. From its first appearance four years ago, the Leninist has sought to carve out a niche as the 'left' wing of the anti-Euro opposition, critical of such Stalinist policies as 'peaceful coexistence'. In an early polemical attempt to intersect this apparent leftist divergence from CP reformism, we wrote to the Leninist:

'What we have described is more than enough to show that the CPs pursued reformist (ie counterrevolutionary) policies long before the British Road to Socialism, long before Eurocommunism, long before the Leninist came into being. At the heart of this is the strategy of the popular front, the building of class collaborationist al-

liances. This is the vehicle of integration into bourgeois politics. The logical outcome is Eurocommunism and the abandonment of any pretence to defend the Soviet Union. If you remain trapped in this treacherous framework you too will ineluctably tread the same road of betrayal.' (Spartacist Britain no 49, May 1983)

'Lefts' rushing right

Make no mistake: what's going on now is the Leninist is making political choices. The PPPS elections come on the heels of a sweeping victory by the Euros at the CP Congress, signalling the consolidation of Eurocommunism in the party. That in turn comes in the aftermath of the miners' defeat. Just as Kinnock is capitalising on the miners' defeat to consolidate his grip over the Labour Party, so it is with McLennan/Jaques and Co in the CP.



CP head Gordon McLennan (left), expelled Morning Star editor Tony Chater (right): CP is deeply split between anti-Soviet Euros and pro-Moscow Stalinists.

If ever the urgency of a break with the CP were posed with crystal clarity, this is it. The miners strike posed a historic test for the left. The CP failed it miserably, standing far to the right of the NUM leadership. While the Euros simply echoed every attack on the strike by Neil Kinnock et al, the Chaterites and Co deliberately subverted every possibility of mobilising industrial action alongside the miners. Yet the Leninist says 'saving the CPGB from disintegration is at the centre of our political strategy'. The Leninist's support for the Euros in the PPPS elections is not an isolated position, or a mistake. Let's look at their record during the strike.

Like Focus/Marxism Today the Leninist is fervent that there should have been a ballot early in the strike. Their 5 March National Bulletin ran an extensive polemical response to a February 1985 Workers Hammer article (can you imagine Lenin writing a polemic which his opponents were not meant to see?). The 'Leninists' insist that they're not 'ballot mongers'; they just 'say that the fact that there was not a national ballot had its costs, most notably in Notts'. The Bulletin polemic charges the Spartacist League with being 'classically abstract'. Yet the ballot question which tore the coalfields apart appears to be of no more than mild academic, abstract, interest to these 'Leninists'.

Tut, tut, says the Bulletin 'it did not lead us to put it at the centre of our campaigning from the beginning of the strike'. Which is it comrades, sheer cynicism or sheer opportunism? If not having a ballot was costly, then you should have campaigned for it.

The truth of the matter is that the ballot (not in principle, not at all times, but in this concrete circumstance) was a strike-breaking tactic. The majority of miners had already voted with their feet. We said, 'Bollocks to the ballot'. Had the NUM leadership called a ballot, it would have signalled a deep-going, demoralising, possibly decisive capitulation to the Tory/NCB/Labour leadership cabal. That a ballot was not called has a lot to do with the fact that the leadership's backbone was stiffened by the thousands of angry militants who demonstrated outside the delegate conference where the vote on the ballot was held. That the Leninist now clammers aboard the ballotwagon has a lot to do with the rightward-moving unity-mongering based on politically refurbishing the Labour/TUC traitors in the aftermath of

the strike.

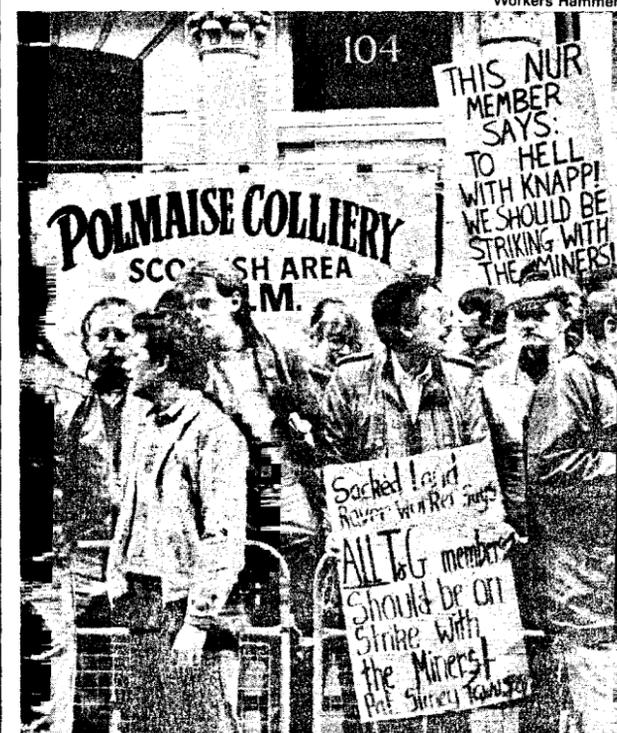
With or without TUC?

And why is this? Because throughout the strike the Leninist's strategy was centred on pressurising these traitors to take up the cudgels on the miners' behalf. From the start, we argued, 'What's needed to turn back the bosses' offensive against workers' jobs, unions and livelihoods is a general strike' (15 March 1984 leaflet). The question was how to get one. Murray/Willis and the TUC rights openly expressed their hostility to the miners strike, and had made this clear even before, through the anti-Communist witchhunt of Scargill at Blackpool 1983 over his opposition to Solidarnosc and subsequently in their knifing of the NGA. The Cold War wing of the labour bureaucracy was explicitly committed to scabherding. Meanwhile the 'left' reformists who claimed to support the NUM feared like the plague an all-out confrontation with the state which would be posed in a general strike.

The way to spread the strike beyond the NUM was precisely by putting the 'left' union leaders on the spot, fighting at the base of these unions for strike action. These were precisely the unions which had the industrial muscle to effect a general strike. The 'Leninists' dismiss our call for all-out strike action by a fighting Triple Alliance of rail, transport and miners as meaning that the 'left' leaders are different from the Willis and Hammonds'. Perhaps the Leninist did not notice that whereas Willis and Hammond openly opposed solidarity actions, the NUS, NUR, ASLEF and TGWU supported blacking of coal and thousands of seamen and rail and transport workers around the country actually implemented what for their leaders were simply pious statements. It was the TGWU dockers whose action almost turned the country upside down and concretely posed a general strike. Our headline during the dockers strike was 'Shut down the country!' And that's what joint strike action by rail, transport and miners would have meant.

For the 'Leninists', this was not good enough, just a 'mini-general strike' perspective. They sneer at our call for a fighting Triple Alliance, which offered a concrete strategy for effecting a general strike over the heads of the TUC. What the Leninist and assorted other leftists did was to let the TUC 'lefts' off the hook, allowing them to talk militant while passing the buck to Willis and Co. The Leninist denounces us as 'lying bamboozlers' for saying that they had a position of demanding the TUC call a general strike. No, says the 5 March Bulletin, the slogan was 'General strike -- with or without the TUC'. First let's see what 'a comrade from The Leninist's Editorial Board' says in the May issue: 'We in The Leninist, up to the TUC

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Spartacist supporters in TGWU, NUR fought for strike action against treachery of 'left' leaders like Longbridge TGWU convenor Jack Adams, a CP Executive member.

Defend, complete, extend the revolution!

Nicaragua eyewitness

Sandinista leaders have proclaimed 1985 'the year to finish off the contras', and the war effort can be felt throughout the country. Comrades of the international Spartacist tendency who visited Nicaragua both before and after Ronald Reagan imposed a trade embargo 1 May report that Managua itself is quiet: aside from the numerous youths in fatigues (many of them on leave), the most noticeable evidence of the fighting is the large number of war casualties in wheelchairs and on crutches. At the headquarters of the CST (Sandinista Labour Federation) our comrades heard two soldiers discussing the recent fighting. They had been particularly impressed at the bravery of an all-women unit of an infantry reserve brigade which had taken an enemy position alone, in fighting near the Honduran border.

In Matagalpa and Jinotega, in the heart of the mountainous coffee country, everyone from 15 to 50 seems to be carrying a Soviet-made AK-47 assault rifle. Last December there were grisly contra atrocities against coffee pickers in the region. But overall the harvest was a success with 80 per cent of the crop picked, much of it by volunteer labour from youth and government employees as well as at least 500 North American *brigadistas*. While one of our comrades was with a tour at a resettlement camp north of Jinotega, there were reports of a firefight with contras nearby. Along the road as the bus returned to town, local militias came out prepared to fight; they cheered with relief when they saw no one was harmed.

The fate of the militias is an index of the development of the revolution. Immediately after the triumph of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) in July 1979, all non-FSLN militias were dissolved and guns collected from the population. At first, the Sandinista militias were organised both in workplaces and communities, though frequently the militia men and women trained without arms. The factory militias were largely dissolved, however, following militant union struggles in 1980-81 which led to the arrest of leftist labour and political leaders. In 1983 came a turn: the slogan of the fourth anniversary of the Sandinista triumph was 'All Arms to the People'. And following the US invasion of Grenada that autumn, guns were widely distributed to the locally based Sandinista People's Militias (MPS). This past 26 February a national gathering of the MPS was held in Managua with some 70,000 armed participants.

'War communism without the communism'

In Chile, Nixon prepared the road to the bloody 1973 Pinochet coup with a programme of disruption to 'make the economy scream'. Certainly in Nicaragua, the US imperialists have been doing their best to 'destabilise' the economy. The sugar quota was cancelled and



El Viejo, Nicaragua, 24 May: Sandinista army unit at demonstration honouring German Pomares, martyr of anti-Somoza insurrection.

sales of American wheat were cut off several years ago. Nicaraguan requests for loans from 'multinational' development banks are routinely sidetracked or voted down in deference to Washington. And contra sabotage actions have cost the country an estimated \$1.1 billion — more than twice Nicaragua's annual export earnings. Up to 1983, the economy progressed steadily, even while the rest of the continent went into a downward spiral under the impact of the imperialist banks' credit cutoff. But eventually the combination of pressures from Wall Street and the White House took their toll, and in the last couple of years there has been a definite deterioration in the Nicaraguan masses' meagre standard of living.

On 8 February, Daniel Ortega announced a series of emergency measures described in the *Washington Post* (31 March) as 'Sandinista Reagonomics'. In order to combat the mushrooming black market, subsidies for 22 basic products were eliminated. The cost of beans, rice, milk, eggs, chickens, beef, sugar and cooking oil doubled overnight. Then in early April fuel prices were trebled, leading to a similar increase in the cost of all forms of transport. This austerity programme has had a sharp impact on the living standards of the poor and working people. Although the minimum wage was increased 76 per cent in March, the increase doesn't nearly match the inflation. In April, with the daily minimum wage at about 150 cordobas (roughly \$2), we found that a Pepsi cost 25 cordobas and a watery bean soup at a *comedor popular* (people's dining hall) was 60. This 'IMF' austerity without the IMF necessarily discourages the Nicaraguan masses, who now talk of their children having a better life.

After 1979, for the first time the poor in Nicaragua could occasionally (once or twice a month) afford to eat meat. No more — our comrades reported nowhere seeing cuts of beef on sale for household consumption in the 'popular' barrios. Life in the poor neighbourhoods will also feel the government's freeze on all new investment for social service projects (lighting, housing, sewage). Meanwhile, the Sandinistas have angered the middle class by introducing three new taxes: a capital gains tax, a stiff 15 per cent value added (sales) tax and a 'presumed earnings' (!) tax for the self-employed. And the scarcity of imported goods affects all classes, so the poor can't buy powdered milk and medicine and the middle class can't get toilet paper or designer jeans. The country is already in a war economy: 40 per cent of the national budget goes for defence needs, and more than a third of

the gross national product is taken up by the military according to *Envio* (March 1985), published by the Central American Historical Institute.

The impact of the austerity policies on the Nicaraguan masses was brought home by a visit to a working-class district of Leon, the country's second city. A popular insurrection took Leon a month before Somoza fell, and the town was ruled under communal '*poder popular*' (people's power) until Sandinista forces showed up and took control. Two young mothers proudly recalled how they took the National Guard bastion, how the people had danced in the streets with tambourines the night the *Fórtin* fell. All in all, things are better today: they can walk all over town without fear, something they could never do under the arbitrary terror of the *Guardia*; they have real homes (one-room cinder-block houses constructed after a hurricane destroyed the barrio); and their children are going to school, learning to read and write. The poverty was still overwhelming, however: supper consisted of a few bits of fresh cheese and *pieces* of tortillas. They spoke of the shortages in government-sponsored stores, the difficulty in obtaining medicine, the general high cost of living. But they weren't complaining.

The response of the Sandinista leadership to the US trade embargo has been to call for more 'sacrifices and unity'. Even a revolutionary workers and peasants government in Nicaragua would face economic retrenchment in the face of the Yankee economic and military aggression. But in order to maintain the FSLN's 'mixed economy' scheme, the poor get sacrifices while the capitalists get subsidies. Part of the programme of drastic consumer price increases was to increase the prices paid to the producer. And to 'stimulate exports' the government is paying cattle ranchers and cotton growers for part of their production in *dollars*, supposedly to be used for buying spare parts, pesticides and the like. A whole system of 'Certificates of Deposit in Dollars' has been set up for the private sector. Moreover, just days before Reagan decreed the American trade embargo, Nicaragua paid \$5.4 million to the International Monetary Fund, making it one of the few Third World countries to finish paying off the imperialist bankers' bloodsucking cartel.

Another view of the austerity was gained by Spartacist comrades who visited the FANATEX factory on the outskirts of Managua, which with 1500 workers is the largest textile plant in Nicaragua. In its May Day message, the FSLN leadership announced the suppression of 'pay-

Workers Vanguard photos



Empty shelves in Managua supermarket, as US embargo seeks to seal off Nicaragua. Imperialists cannot be appeased — expropriate the bourgeoisie, defend, complete, extend the revolution!

ment in kind' to various sectors of the Nicaraguan working class. At FANATEX, employees were sold 15 yards of cloth a month at the cost of production, which could then be resold at far higher market prices bringing in an additional \$150 a month -- an amount equal to their money wages. According to the FSLN organ *Barricada* (17 May), 'Payment in kind, which at one point was a just demand of the workers, ended up stimulating speculation and hoarding, lowered the level of production and was deforming the consciousness of the workers.' Doubtless, this practice feeds into the black market, but it is a substantial part of the workers' earnings and a primitive protection against inflation which must be defended until it is replaced by a sliding scale of wages and hours.

In mid-May the FANATEX workers stopped work for two days in defence of their wages paid in kind. The government responded with a barrage of propaganda about 'privileged' textile workers, calling the leftist CAUS (Trade Union Action and Unity Federation) union, affiliated with the Communist Party (PCN), 'provocateurs' for inciting the workers to 'disrupt production'. In 1980-81, the workers at this key factory struck several times, leading the Sandinistas to arrest over 100 CAUS/PCN activists and shut the plant for 'reorganisation' (see 'FABRITEX: Strikebreaking Sandinista-Style', *Workers Vanguard* no 331, 3 June 1983). Even though the government management did its best to weed out 'troublemakers' in reopening the plant months later, it continued to be the most advanced contingent of the Nicaraguan proletariat. In 1983 out of a total of 700 workers then working at the factory, 100 had been mobilised in army reserve battalions to fight the contras. Over a third of the workers are women, who receive equal pay for equal work -- a concrete gain of the revolution.

Visiting the plant both before and a couple of days after the strike, our comrades found plenty of evidence of socialist consciousness among the workers. Pictures of Lenin and Che Guevara were prominently placed among the scores of automatic looms. In the union hall writings of Lenin were plentiful, notably his 'April Theses' in which the Bolshevik leader of the 1917 Russian October Revolution called for the working class to take power. We also found that despite the mobilisation of FSLN cadres (CST general secretary, leaders of the Sandinista youth and women's organisations) to explain to the workers the 'error' of their ways, even pro-government CST union officials supported the workers' demands. This time the government backed off, maintaining payment in kind until July and setting up a commission to study the question.

The Nicaraguan proletariat today does not have the consciousness of a revolutionary vanguard, and indeed, that is not the role assigned to it by the Sandinista leadership. In fact, the FSLN *comandantes* frequently refer to industrial workers as the 'rear guard' of the struggle, whose job is to just keep on working. A *Barricada* editor told us that the various mass organisations had asked the Sandinistas to call demonstrations against the trade embargo, but the party said no. The one organised protest was a mobilisation in the barrios on 16 May by the Sandinista Defence Committees (CDS). In Managua's Zone 8, representing the eastern working-class districts, we observed about 1000 people marching with drums, masks and chants of 'How do we defend the revolution? By constructing socialism! How do we construct socialism? By defending the revolution!'. A sign carried by a delegation of 'Mothers of Heroes and Martyrs' declared:

'Many have left, others will go. We remain who have to stay here, those of us who will never sell out or give up. If there is an invasion we will die with dignity like the General of Free Men, Augusto Cesar Sandino. Free Fatherland or Death.'

The workers and poor of Nicaragua have given ample proof of their will to fight, notably in the three national insurrections during 1978-79 which finally brought down the Somoza dictatorship. But they need to expropriate the capitalists and undertake a socialist reorganisation of society. This can be seen concretely in the economic crisis which is today sweeping Nicaragua.

In his 'Transitional Programme' written in 1938 as the founding document of the Fourth International, Leon Trotsky, basing himself on the experience of the October Revolution, raised a series of demands to mobilise the working class for socialist revolution. Among these demands were calls for the formation of factory committees and workers militias, for workers control and the expropriation of the capitalists. Such demands come straight out of Lenin's revolutionary struggle in 1917. On the eve of October, as famine and devastation due

Workers Vanguard photos



Poster of Lenin at the combative FANATEX textile factory in Managua.

to the imperialist war threatened the Russian people, Lenin wrote his pamphlet 'The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It'. Its message is fully applicable to Nicaragua today:

'In point of fact, the whole question of control boils down to who controls whom, ie which class is in control and which is being controlled. In our country, in republican Russia, with the help of the "authorised bodies" of supposedly revolutionary democracy, it is the landowners and capitalists who are still recognised to be, and still are, the controllers. The inevitable result is the capitalist robbery that arouses universal indignation among the people, and the economic chaos that is being artificially kept up by the capitalists. We must resolutely and irrevocably, not fearing to break with the old, not fearing boldly to build the new, pass to control over the landowners and capitalists by the workers and peasants. And this is what our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks fear worse than the plague.'

Today in Nicaragua, the Sandinistas also fear any measures which infringe on capitalist property. Yet Reagan's onslaught may force their hand. The internal situation in Nicaragua is objectively closer to that of Soviet Russia in mid-1918, after the proletariat had seized state power and was facing a civil war launched by the defeated bourgeoisie and its tsarist White Guards. These 'contras' of their day also were backed by the imperialists, who soon invaded in hopes of overthrowing the Soviet regime, and by the remaining capitalists. Thus the Bolsheviks as a measure of self-defence had to go beyond workers control and expropriate the bourgeoisie. This gave rise to 'war communism' in which everything was indeed subordinated to the task of winning the civil war, and the workers willingly made enormous sacrifices to defend their revolution.

But as we approach Year Six of the Nicaraguan Revolution, 60 per cent of the economy is still in the capitalists' hands and the workers are called upon to give up their miserable 15 yards of cloth in order to fill the bosses' bank accounts with Certificates of Deposits in Dollars. Under the blows of US im-

Workers Vanguard

perialism the Sandinistas' emergency measures amount to trying to erect 'war communism' without the communism. The petty-bourgeois FSLN *comandantes* are still trying to walk the tightrope precariously balancing between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, internationally and at home. But by imposing a US trade embargo, Ronald Reagan has cut the rope, forcing the Sandinistas to complete the social revolution or fall victim to bloody counter-revolution; as the contradictions of the Nicaraguan Revolution are brought to the flash point.

At one location in Nicaragua a Spartacist comrade ran into a soldier-construction worker and asked him about the US trade embargo and changes since the revolution. The soldier replied: 'Sandinismo is only a word. The bourgeoisie enriches itself while the proletariat gets poorer. We have made a revolution, but we have yet to make the revolution. Have you heard of the expression "class struggle"?' Such militants represent the promise of a socialist future for the desperately impoverished and magnificently combative Nicaraguan masses.

For revolutionary war throughout Central America!

At the 26 February national mobilisation of the Sandinista People's Militias the favourite slogan was 'Fascists, thieves, hitch up your pants -- here comes the working class with all its battalions!' This slogan must be turned into reality, and that means recognising that the heavy battalions of the proletariat are not in Nicaragua. The front line of defence of Nicaragua runs through San Salvador, where a combative workers movement is re-emerging after several years of clandestine existence; through Mexico, where a powerful, five-million-strong proletariat is groaning under IMF-dictated austerity; it includes the capitals and industrial centres of Latin America, where a Yankee invasion would be met with explosions of popular anger; and especially the class struggle of the American workers.

It is not just the self-determination of a Central American people that is at stake; it is the fate of a revolution that could spark a conflagration throughout the continent, a revolution that tops US imperialism's anti-Soviet hit list. The next target on Reagan's counterrevolutionary itinerary is Havana, and then it's on to Moscow. That is why we have insisted, 'Defence of Cuba/USSR begins in Central America'. It is the duty of the Soviet leadership, and above all of the American working class, to defend the Nicaraguan Revolution to the hilt as a matter of proletarian internationalism and direct defence of the conquests of October.

Perhaps Daniel Ortega was trying to say something of the sort to Gorbachev during his recent trip to Moscow. He reportedly got a guarantee of continued oil deliveries, crucial because Nicaragua has been cut off even by its Contadora 'friend' Mexico under the pressure of US blackmail. But the Kremlin communique pointedly limited Soviet assistance to 'economic development, and also political and diplomatic support' -- that is, not military support -- for Nicaragua's 'efforts to uphold its

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Managua, 16 May: Contingent of mothers of fallen Nicaraguan soldiers at Sandinista demonstration vow to fight to the end against imperialist aggression.

Eyewitness...

(Continued from page 7)

sovereignty'. Likewise, at the time of Reagan's Grenada invasion, Fidel Castro claimed in his 26 October 1983 press conference that Cuba 'lack[s] the air and naval means to send direct assistance' to his Sandinista *companeros* in the event of a US invasion of Nicaragua. Such statements at bottom reflect the narrow nationalist consciousness of Stalinist bureaucrats who seek above all else 'peaceful coexistence' with imperialism. They do not see that failure to come to the aid of a revolution in Uncle Sam's 'backyard' only *emboldens* the Yankee beast.

Ortega can't have been surprised by Moscow's reaction, for the Sandinistas wear the same nationalist blinders (though it's their revolution that's at risk). Most importantly, they have given the Salvadoran leftist insurgents the cold shoulder for several years now, ever since Washington began screaming about the Sandinistas 'exporting revolution', and started its 'contra' mercenary army and its threatening military exercises next door in Honduras. Peruvian liberal author Mario Vargas Llosa in a recent article in the *New York Times Magazine* (28 April) quotes Daniel Ortega saying to him in an interview that:

'We're willing to stop the movement of military aid, or any other kind of aid, through Nicaragua to El Salvador, and we're willing to accept international verification. In return, we're asking for only one thing: that they don't attack us....'

And last month Nicaraguan defence minister Humberto Ortega remarked: 'The United States can coexist perfectly well with a revolution like ours' (*New York Times*, 7 June).

In talking with Sandinista officials our comrades regularly brought up the question of El Salvador and the need for a joint struggle against the common enemy -- US imperialism and its local puppets. And just as regularly they were given the standard FSLN response, as we heard from an editor at *Barricada*: 'The best way for Nicaragua to help Salvadoran leftists is to defend Nicaragua from the Yankees. Anything else would be "exporting revolution" and we can't do that.' Says who? Says Ronald Reagan. In the past, FSLN spokesmen have occasionally talked about waging revolutionary war throughout Central America, linking up directly with the Salvadoran rebels and Guatemalan guerrillas, after a US invasion. But that's too late. In fact, the refusal of the Sandinistas to extend the struggle throughout the isthmus is directly responsible for the present situation where the US generals can hope to seal off Nicaragua 'tighter than a drum'.

There would be no string of contra camps and US bases in the narrow corridor separating Nicaragua from the insurgent zones of El Salvador if in 1979-83 the Sandinistas had kept on going and established a *single front* with the Salvadorans. The FSLN's failure to do so is an expression of their policy of 'nonalignment', of coexistence with Yankee imperialism. And this self-defeating nationalism is reciprocated by the Salvadoran Revolutionary Democratic Front/Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FDR/FMLN). The FMLN even required that one of its components, the Central American Workers Party, break its ties with its Honduran comrades as a condition for entering the Front! And FDR leader Guillermo Ungo accepts the US 'supposed right to stop the spread of communism' in Central America (*Baltimore Sun*, 3 May 1983).

More than almost anywhere else on the globe, the need for proletarian *internationalist* revolution would seem self-evident in this region of mini-states, once part of a single Central American Union, which by themselves are condemned to the fate of banana, coffee or sugar republics subject to the dictates and depredations of the imperialist giant to the north. But in talking with leftist opposition groups in Nicaragua, our comrades found none who fundamentally break with the petty-bourgeois nationalism of the Sandinistas.

In the Central American 'solidarity' movement in the United States, the 'Russian question' is the scourge of the popular-front reformists who are one and all seeking to pressure the Democratic Party. Whatever their internal squabbling, they can all unite in anti-communist violence and even calling on the capitalist police to keep Spartacist signs calling for defence of the USSR and Cuba out of 'their' demonstrations. They, like Reagan, believe that if Central America has anything to do with the Soviet Union, that would justify US intervention. They cannot admit Central

American fund drive

'Donate dollars! Crush the contras!'

We print below an abridged version of an appeal issued in June by our comrades of the Spartacus Youth League, youth section of the Spartacist League/US. To date the SYL's fund drive to defend Nicaragua has already raised more than \$20,000. We encourage readers of *Workers Hammer* to contribute to this campaign at the address below.

From 'Fort Honduras' to the US Army's Southcom HQ in Panama, American military forces are poised for an invasion of Nicaragua. The US trade embargo is an act of war, and the next step, now openly discussed by the Reagan administration, is to send in the troops. The Spartacus Youth League has undertaken a fund drive to raise urgently needed dollars for Nicaragua's defense....

This is no charity drive. The Nicaraguan masses have been courageously fighting the escalating campaign of US-sponsored

terror ever since the 1979 revolution which overthrew the murderous tyrant Somoza. They vow to fight to the last man, woman and child against a Yankee invasion. We here 'in the belly of the beast' must do our part. At this critical juncture it is imperative to take a stand in defense of the Nicaraguan Revolution. A contribution to the Student Committee to Defend Nicaragua is part of the necessary class battle against Reagan reaction at home, against the criminals who salute Hitler's SS at Ritburg and firebomb black babies in Philadelphia....

The SYL is assuming all administrative costs for the campaign. Every dollar you give will go to Nicaragua. Make your 'anti-contra' contribution now! Make checks payable to the Student Committee to Defend Nicaragua. Mail to: SYL, Box 3118, Church St Station, New York, NY 10008.

America is the front line of the anti-Soviet war drive -- to do so would reveal the bankruptcy of their appeals to the imperialist 'doves', who when it comes to Russia have only tactical differences with Reagan.

The 'Russian question' is inescapable in Nicaragua. For example, Washington threatened to go to war last autumn if Soviet MIGs were delivered to the Sandinistas. The Spartacists unconditionally defend the Soviet workers state (despite bureaucratic degeneration under Stalinist rule); for the last several years we have demanded, 'Smash Reagan's Bay of Pigs -- Nicaragua Needs MIGs!' As for those who consider our Soviet-defencist slogans a 'provocation', what can they say about Daniel Ortega's trip to Moscow -- which has been used by Democrats and Republicans alike as the pretext for trade sanctions and invasion preparations? In Nicaragua, it is the *bourgeois* opposition who attack the Sandinistas for appealing to the Soviet Union.

While the Spartacist comrades were in Nicaragua last month, there was a running polemic between the FSLN's *Barricada* and the pro-Sandinista *Nuevo Diario* on the one hand and the capitalist mouthpiece *La Prensa* over who defeated Nazi fascism in World War II, the Soviet Union or the 'democratic' imperialist Allies. On the wall of the FANATEX union hall and the CST union headquarters in Managua we saw giant blowups of the famous photo of a Red Army soldier raising the Soviet flag with hammer and sickle over the Reichstag in Berlin (published in *Workers Hammer* no 69, May 1985). This was obviously much more than a historical controversy. The future of Nicaragua was being fought out symbolically over V-E Day. The Soviet Union remains an inspiration for workers revolution, not because of the Stalinist leadership -- which dreams only of 'detente' even with a crazed counterrevolutionary like Reagan, who proclaims the contras his brothers and salutes Nazi graves -- but because of the legacy of the October Revolution.

A final story: in our conversations at *Barricada*, the FSLN *responsable* (organiser) at one point asked us about the American Socialist Workers Party. We replied that we had been expelled from the SWP 20 years ago for our Trotskyist politics. To which he responded, 'Oh yes, you're the group that sent us money to buy arms.' Word of the 'Red Avengers of the Spartacus Youth League' has evidently reached Managua. We apologised for the small amount, noting that it was a symbol of the SYL's commitment, fighting 'in the belly of the beast', to defend Nicaragua against Yankee imperialism. Having extensively discussed the political differences which separate us, he was able to appreciate this gesture of active solidarity with those who are courageously fighting 'our' bloodthirsty imperialist rulers.

FSLN *comandante* Carrion noted last November as US SR-71 spy planes flew overhead that 'the threat, the danger of imperialist aggression will always be present, until the United

States ceases to be imperialist'. It is the special task of North American revolutionaries to resolve that problem.

Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 381, 14 June 1985

Defend Nicaragua...

(Continued from page 1)

To justify it, Reagan lumps together three sharply different situations: Beirut, San Salvador, Frankfurt. The Beirut hijacking was an ambiguous situation. Taking random travelers hostage is a repulsive action, in particular the brutal beating and then murder of a Navy diver. Yet those 700-plus Shi'ites being held hostage in some Israeli concentration camp didn't exactly get due process either! And sadly one nationalist atrocity invites another. In contrast, in El Salvador, where over 50,000 have died at the hands of US-armed death squads or from US-supplied bombs, four Marines were killed by an urban guerrilla commando -- a legitimate act of war. And then there is the Frankfurt airport bombing which killed two Australian babies and wounded scores of people -- some kind of weird attempt at mass murder for no known purpose, by an unknown group.

According to imperialist standards, when Cuba aids black Angola in fighting off an invasion by white supremacist South Africa, that's 'terrorism'. But the no less than eight separate attempts by the CIA to assassinate Castro, the bombing of a Cubana airlines plane, the assassination of Chilean diplomat Orlando Letelier -- that's all legitimate defence of the 'free world' against 'godless communism'. Reagan sends a civilian airliner with over 200 innocent hostages aboard on a spy mission to provoke Soviet air defences, then when the plane is downed he screams about Soviet 'barbarism'. Thatcher has her cops shoot down unarmed Catholics in the streets of Belfast, then launches an 'anti-terrorist' dragnet against Irish in Britain. And, as there isn't enough 'terrorism' around to feed the 'anti-terrorist' war crusade, on 8 March a hit squad contracted by the CIA organised a car bomb attack on a pro-Iranian Shi'ite clerical leader, killing 75 people in Beirut.

Last month's Beirut 'terrorist crisis' was all too predictable. The Shi'ite seizure of the TWA airliner was indefensible, but they had plenty of reason to do it. The Israelis had literally kidnapped 1100 men and boys as they were retreating from Lebanon this spring, dragging them off to prison camps in Israel. But the 'moderate' Shi'ite group Amal, headed by Nabih Berri, has shown it is willing to do business with Israel and the United States. When the Israelis launched their 1982 *Blitzkrieg* invasion of Lebanon to 'purify' it of Palestinians, the Shi'ites were more than willing to cooperate. They recently launched a murderous onslaught against Palestinian

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refugee camps in Beirut and southern Lebanon in an attempt to disarm the PLO. Israel, which engineered the massacre of hundreds of Palestinians at Sabra and Shatila by the Christian Phalange, says it was planning to release the Shi'ite prisoners anyway, to unleash them against the Palestinians. The Zionists said they were 'impressed with the way Amal had been fighting the Palestinian guerrillas in Beirut and wanted to add to Amal's strength by sending back some of its most able fighters' (*New York Times*, 19 June). And now with the American hostages released Israel has predictably begun to free its prisoners while Big Brother in the White House looks halfway around the world to Central America for his target for revenge.

Fight imperialist war with class war!

On 12 June the US Congress lifted a four-year-old ban on American military action to overthrow the government of Sandinista Nicaragua. In the guise of voting for 'humanitarian' aid to a gang of counterrevolutionary murderers, US Republicans and Democrats alike have already given the green light for invasion. The Pentagon's preparations are 'largely complete', according to a two-part article in the *New York Times* (4-5 June). Taking out the Sandinistas would be as easy as 'falling off a log'; 'two weeks', in and out, to install a 'contra' government with its own army -- these were some of the self-deluding estimates by top US military men of what's involved.

Two retired military officers of the Center for Defense Information, Rear Admiral Gene La Rocque and Lieutenant Colonel John Buchanan, take a much different view in an article in the *New York Village Voice* (25 June) entitled 'Blueprint for Disaster'. In evaluating a hypothetical 'Operation Founding Fathers' they calculate that a US invasion of Nicaragua would cost 9000 American casualties in the first two weeks, and another 5000 in the next three months. Estimated Sandinista losses would be far higher -- 44,000 and 24,000 in the same time periods. And there would be continued guerrilla warfare for years.

With an army of 40,000, another 70,000 in the militias and active reserves, and tens of thousands of armed civilians who are prepared to fight to defend their revolution, Nicaragua will be no Grenada. Their defence plans in the face of a US invasion are simply to prolong the battle as long as possible and produce the maximum number of American casualties. 'We are not just going to abandon the cities', Sandinista Army commander Hugo Torres told the *Village Voice*. 'We're going to fight in the capital, in the cities, on the highways and in the mountains.' Defence Ministry spokesman Guillermo Gonzalez emphasised the moral factor in such a war of resistance: 'We're going to bury our people as heroes, but they'll bury their people as victims of a policy.'

The Democratic Party-supported vote authorising military intervention in Central America took the Sandinistas by surprise. They figured that class conciliation paid off last April when the House of Representatives voted against contra aid. But their nationalist politics have blinded them to the anti-Soviet consensus shared by both US capitalist parties. Democrats fearful of being labelled 'soft on Communism' caved in when Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega went to the Kremlin asking for aid. A Managua official reportedly said, 'Our shock was very strong. We totally misread the reaction to the Moscow visit' (*Philadelphia Inquirer*, 14 June).

The US cannot be appeased with concessions to domestic capitalists and negotiations in the 'Contadora process'. It is necessary to defend, complete and extend the Nicaraguan Revolution if it is to survive. But there are hard facts that must be faced. As US officers La Rocque and Buchanan point out, 'Nicaragua has no equivalent of Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh Trail, which can be used to deliver significant amounts of arms and ammunition to the Sandinistas.' The country can be isolated and taken by overwhelming military force. Thus the defence of the Nicaraguan Revolution will take place crucially not only in the slums of Managua and the hills of Matagalpa, but also in the capitals and industrial centres of Latin America, and in the streets, ports and factories of the United States.

Coming from a regime which directed the bombing of a black neighbourhood in Philadelphia, which killed two million peasants and workers with its carpetbombing in Indochina, the US government's cynical attempt to whip up an anti-Soviet holy war against 'international terrorism' is the height of hypocrisy. But it is real. From the beginning of the Reagan administration, our comrades of the Spartacist



Spartacist League/US demonstrates against CIA-backed invasion of Nicaragua, March 1983.

League/US have insisted: 'Defence of Cuba/USSR begins in Central America!' It was there that the warmongers in the White House were 'drawing the line' in their insane drive for a global nuclear showdown with Russia. On demonstrations from Washington to London, we have raised the call to 'Smash Reagan's Bay of Pigs -- Nicaragua needs Soviet MIGs!'

Blacking military goods bound for US puppets and mercenaries in Central America, labour political strikes against an escalation of US intervention in the region, material aid to Nicaragua in the face of imperialist economic and military aggression, militant mass mobilisation against the bipartisan anti-Soviet war drive -- these are urgent tasks for the international working class, above all in America. The imperialists who want to bring back 'moderately authoritarian' dictators like Somoza must be fought by organising Leninist-Trotskyist parties to establish workers rule from Managua to Manhattan. If you take the side of social liberation from Central America to the US and West Europe, join us in this fight for world socialist revolution!

Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 382, 28 June 1985

Phantom bombers...

(Continued from page 1)

Paul Johnson entitled 'Doubts on bomb campaign theory' slipped through the minefield of misinformation to appear on a *Guardian* (26 June) inside page. It noted that 'the alleged IRA scheme to hit seaside targets on the mainland at the height of the summer season would be out of step with the paramilitary organisation's recent thinking and actions'. The IRA are certainly capable of committing acts of indiscriminate terrorism, as shown graphically in the 1978 La Mon restaurant bombing of Protestant civilians or the Christmas 1983 Harrods bombing (though the IRA army council dissociated itself from the latter action, claiming an individual cell had acted without authorisation). But in recent years its military activity has been overwhelmingly directed against the British government and its state: the bombings at mainland army barracks, the Newry attack that killed nine RUC officers and, most spectacularly, Brighton 1984 when the Iron Bitch came within a whisker of meeting her maker. Meanwhile Sinn Fein has concentrated, with increasing success, on electoral politics within the Six Counties and local elections in the Irish Republic. Thus the idea that the IRA was about to launch an indiscriminate and indefensible bombing campaign aimed at killing random British holidaymakers is, to say the very least, dubious.

What is certainly going on is an attempt by the bourgeoisie to go after opponents of British imperialist oppression in Northern Ireland: first, to discredit the IRA/Sinn Fein, and second, to terrorise politically active Irish people in Britain. But the current 'terrorism' scare is aimed further as well. This whole dirty business takes place in the aftermath of the miners strike, a struggle that shook British society to its foundations. While the nationalist politics of the IRA and its recourse to indiscriminate terror makes it easier for the imperialists to whip up anti-Irish chauvinism, the miners' class struggle broke down national and racial divisions to an unprecedented degree. As many a striking miner came to recognise, the police terror and

harassment that has for many years been the lot of the Irish Catholic people in the Six Counties was being brought home and used against British workers as well.

The enormous 'overkill' militarised police operations currently going on -- from Stonehenge to Strathclyde -- are aimed at establishing a norm for British society in years to come. As Thatcher has made clear, in her eyes striking miners and other militant trade unionists, blacks and Asians defending themselves against racist assault, Irish Republican activists, are all really 'terrorists' and will be dealt with with the utmost ruthlessness. Thatcher is Ronald Reagan's ideological soulmate: she must have got just as much of a kick out of Reagan's firebombing of a black neighbourhood in Philadelphia (eleven people died, including babies, the whole neighbourhood burned to a cinder, when police 'cleared out' a black commune) as she did when she sank the *Belgrano*.

This further escalation of militarised police terror is a deadly threat to the labour movement itself. It takes place in the context of Tory plans to 'legally' increase police powers even more, and should be met by massive protest from the entire labour movement, to protest the 'anti-terrorist' round-up and demand freedom for the victims. Yet the despicable Kinnock, Maggie Thatcher's poodle, instead warmly welcomes the police actions, praising their 'marvelous detective work and success' against the IRA! Remember: it was Labour who instituted the PTA in the first place, in the wake of similar hysteria whipped up over the 1974 Birmingham pub bombings, alleged (but never proved) by the government to be the work of the IRA. It was the same Labour government which first introduced SAS death squads into Northern Ireland in the late 1970s. Labour in power again would mean only more of the same: vicious attacks and police terror against workers and all the oppressed.

The Cold War right wing of the Labour Party and trade union leadership, for whom Kinnock is the barely translucent frontman, march in lockstep with Thatcher in seeking to paint any militant opposition to the capitalist government as 'terrorism'. To Leon Brittan, even Tony Benn's bill for amnesty for jailed miners shows 'the morality of the terrorist'. Right-wing Electricians' leader Eric Hammond chimes in, denouncing union leaders like Arthur Scargill who have 'a most military style of speech ... fight, smash, defeat, destroy', and immediately adds, 'We are not terrorists.' The implications are only too clear.

'Anti-terrorist' witchhunting, whether in the US or Britain, has the aim of 'setting up' radical opponents of the capitalist government -- ultimately, so they can be murdered in cold blood. It was the vicious slander campaign against the 'violence' of the Black Panther Party in the late 1960s that prepared the political climate in which Panther leaders could be murdered in their beds by the American government.

Post-miners strike Britain is a powderkeg waiting to go off at some time in the future -- and the Tories know it. They are preparing the most severe and barbaric countermeasures. The labour movement had better know it too, and throw out its pro-capitalist lapdog 'Labour leaders' and forge a revolutionary party that will defend Irish people, black and Asian people and all of the working class through a programme aimed at the smashing of capitalism.

- Smash the PTA! Troops out of Ireland now!
- Free all victims of the anti-Irish dragnet! ■

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Kerry babies ...

(Continued from page 4)

British miners strike!

Their nationalist perspective is shared by the bulk of the fake left in Ireland. One of the smallest and most 'left', the Irish Workers Group (fraternal grouping of Workers, Power in Britain) recently gave a presentation on Ireland at a left gathering (the LO Fete) near Paris, which didn't mention Joanne Hayes and indeed made no reference to the woman question. Instead they devoted nearly an hour to explaining that the 'strategic question' facing Irish workers is the Irish Labour Party, which even Matt Merrigan (president of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions) describes as being 'in almost total decay'.

Irish revolutionary socialist James Connolly wrote in 'The Reconquest of Ireland':

'Whatever class rules industrially will rule politically, and impose upon the community in general the beliefs, customs and ideas most suitable to the perpetuation of its rule. These beliefs, customs, ideas become then the highest expression of morality and so remain until the ascent to power of another ruling industrial class establishes a new morality. In Ireland since the conquest, the landlord-capitalist class has ruled; the beliefs, customs and ideas of Ireland are the embodiment of the slave morality we inherited from those who accepted that rule in one or other of its forms; the subjection of women was an integral part of that rule.'

The strategy for liberation of women and for an end to national oppression lies in the fight for an Irish workers republic in a socialist federation of the British Isles. This is the perspective of permanent revolution, as outlined by Leon Trotsky, co-leader with Lenin of the Russian Revolution. With a steeled Bolshevik Party at its head, the Russian proletariat led the peasantry and all the oppressed to the overthrow of capitalism, breaking the hold of the Orthodox and Islamic clergy on the peasantry and laying the basis for the massive advance of Soviet women since.

A glimpse of what is possible was provided by the miners strike. While the Irish bourgeoisie helped Thatcher to steal the NUM's assets and the Provos sent not a penny, Protestant and Catholic workers alike rallied to the miners. The heroic coalfield women demonstrated how the chains that bind women to hearth and home can be broken through sharp social struggle. This can and will be repeated, on a much larger scale, in Britain and in Ireland, under the leadership of a revolutionary Trotskyist party. ■

'Leninists' ...

(Continued from page 5)

Congress or reaborts, had raised the slogan: "Down with the TUC Call a General Strike". And then afterwards, 'with the TUC' meant with the TUC, 'without the TUC' meant the miners support groups. Either way meant: don't challenge the TUC 'lefts', who were sitting on a powderkeg of pressure for action from their members.

The 'Leninists' prefer to base their 'perspectives on concrete reality' ... the miners support groups as 'potential soviets'. They billow forth with cubic metres of smokescreen about 'councils of action' and 'opportunist-dominated soviets' as somehow having something to do with their orientation to the miners support groups.

Of course organs of dual power often emerge dominated by reformists and opportunists, but they consist of representatives of masses of workers engaged in struggle against the ruling class. When Lenin spoke of the Labour-dominated councils of action in 1920 as embryonic soviets, the concrete reality is that they were the organisational reflection of a massive outburst throughout the base of the labour movement centred on industrial action to protest imperialist intervention against the Soviet republic. Is that what was taking place in the miners support groups? It is laudable that the Camden miners support group, as the *Leninist* points out, spent £600 a week to picket the power stations. But what does this have to do with mobilising the organised strength of the working class in the trade unions.

The miners support groups played a useful role in organising financial support for the strike. But they had no social weight. Joint strike committees, emerging out of joint strike action and drawing in representatives

of the women's groups and minority communities, could rapidly have become organs of dual power. That's what we fought for. But the key was the fight for a new, revolutionary leadership of the labour movement prepared to take on the capitalist state in struggle. For the phoney revolutionaries, however, the miners support groups were ideally suited as a haven to spout off with fancy rhetoric while refusing to challenge the bureaucratic misleaders of the 'left' persuasion who were instrumental in keeping the strike isolated.

From the standpoint of a 'Leninist' opposition within the CP, this was a doubly burning question, since many of these self-same trade union 'lefts' happen to reside in



Long before Eurocommunism: Stalin selling out European revolutions to Roosevelt and Churchill at Yalta, 1945.

or on the outskirts of that party. Where is the evidence of a sharp factional struggle against Mick McGahey's scab deal with the ISTC at Ravenscraig? Where was the drive to demand CP shop stewards and convenors honour blacking of coal and fight for strike action in their unions? It is not accidental that the SL and our supporters in the trade unions were unique in campaigning in the Midlands labour movement against the scab coal at Longbridge, where it meant exposing the scabherding of the 'lefts' -- and in this case, a CP Executive member, Jack Adams of the TGWU. From the 'Leninists of the CP' one might have expected a campaign to demand the expulsion of this scandalous strikebreaker from their party. But in twelve months of strike coverage, there is hardly a passing mention of any of this. Far easier to mouth off about 'dual power' in the Camden miners support group or 'analyse' the various interecine shenanigans inside the CP.

Polish coal and 'socialism in one country'

Indeed, where does the 'real', 'concrete' *Leninist* put forward clear, resolute answers on any question? The November 1984 issue ran the headline 'Polish Coal -- Why Does Jaruzelski Scab?' But nowhere in the article is the question answered. We are offered a brief description of Poland's deplorable economic situation (Bill Sirs explained his scabbing by the state of the steel industry) and an appeal 'for Polish communists [ie Jaruzelski and Co] to end this dirty trade'. But, they insist, 'we have never suggested of course that our Polish comrades' actions were motivated by anything other than a genuine desire to defend and consolidate socialism in Poland against black counterrevolution'. If scabbing can reflect a genuine desire to defend socialism, then no doubt a strikebreaking ballot can be the means to achieve strike unity. But not from the perspective of proletarian revolution, and not in the real world.

The Polish bureaucracy's scabbing was a damning expression of its nationalist programme, justified under the rubric of building 'socialism in one country'. When Solidarnosc consolidated around an open programme of capitalist restoration in September 1981, we said uniquely 'Stop Solidarity's counterrevolution!' and expressed support for its suppression by any means necessary. But we emphasised that the Stalinist regime which had paved the way for this counterrevolutionary threat could not resolve the Polish crisis. A defence of the internationalist interests of the Polish working class can only come through a programme for the extension of the revolution internationally, requiring a workers political revolution to remove the nationalist, class-collaborationist obstacle of the Stalinist bureaucracy. This applies to all the so-called socialist countries, which are not socialist but deformed/degenerated workers states.

In its May issue the *Leninist* admits that 'the idea that the USSR could build full socialism by its own efforts in isolation from the world revolution was Stalin's invention;

it is not a Leninist concept'. True; but what programmatic conclusions does the *Leninist* draw from this, or from its various denunciations of the Popular Front promulgated by Dimitrov as far back as 1935, its nominal opposition to the CPs' support to the imperialist Allies in World War II, its vague disclaimers against stagism, etc etc? (When it comes to Ireland, the *Leninist* not only supports the nationalist Republican project of a united Ireland but considers it damning that we are 'concerned at the bombing of Protestant civilians by the IRA and INLA' [*National Bulletin*, 22 April]. Does the *Leninist* also think their Turkish comrades deserve to be blown away by Armenian 'freedom fighters'?)

'Socialism in one country' was the 'theoretical' cornerstone of the political counterrevolution led by Stalin against the Bolshevik regime of Lenin and Trotsky. By 1933 this policy had played itself out to the decisive collapse of the Third International into reformism with the unchallenged destruction of the German proletariat under the fascist heel. Yet the *Leninist* opposes a political revolution to restore the USSR to the road of Bolshevik internationalism. On the contrary, it dares not even castigate the 'socialist' motivations of a Jaruzelski in shipping scab coal over to Britain in the midst of a heroic battle against one of the most vociferous imperialist enemies of the Polish and Soviet workers.

For the *Leninist* defence of the Soviet Union has no operational import in the class struggle. Its softness on the Polish Stalinists does not stand in the way of upholding the integrity of a party controlled by pro-Solidarnosc Eurocommunists as a 'central political strategy'. And if they're prepared to coexist indefinitely, and indeed support, the Euros it is not at all inconsistent that they would promote a political bloc and public non-aggression pact with the pro-Solidarnosc fake Trotskyists of Workers Power.

Shortly after the appearance of the *Leninist* we noted that its contradiction was expressed in being 'sometimes sharply critical of the Kremlin bureaucracy and the CPs aligned with it, whilst remaining loyal to and seeking to reform the pro-Moscow "world communist movement"'. But the widening gap between rhetoric and reality must soon find its resolution. And for those *Leninist* supporters who do not come to terms with the real continuity of Leninism, the *Leninist-Trotskyist* politics of the Spartacist League, it can just as easily go in the direction of social-democratic anti-Sovietism as orthodox fealty to Stalinism.

In the past 'Leninist' cadre have been fond of referring to Lenin's remaining in a single party with the Mensheviks up to 1912 to justify their own opportunist perspective inside the CPGB. This is pure-and-simple cynicism. Even before theorising the need for an organisational split between revolutionaries and opportunists within the international labour movement following 1914, Lenin always fought for the primacy of the revolutionary programme and for organisational independence of the revolutionary vanguard constituted in the Bolshevik faction/party. This in itself is evidence enough that the politics of the *Leninist* has nothing in common with Leninism.

The prospects for building a revolutionary-internationalist party in Britain are better than they have been in years. Thousands of militants steeled in combat are looking for an alternative to reformism. What is needed is a programme, not for an economist 'rank and file movement', not for manoeuvring within the CP and among other reformists, but for building a Leninist combat party that acts as tribune of all the oppressed. We call for troops out of Ireland as part of a perspective for an Irish workers republic in a workers federation of the British Isles. We fight for unconditional military defence of the deformed/degenerated workers states against the imperialist war drive/internal counterrevolution and for workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucrats. We seek to build a multiracial vanguard party, forged through splitting the Labour Party, as part of a democratic-centralist reformed Fourth International. Consider your choices with deliberation and honesty, comrades. Monty Johnstone didn't start life as a hopelessly cynical anti-Communist either. ■

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Defend the NUM...

(Continued from page 12)

stands far higher than defending valiant working-class fighters. Yet it is not only the Notts scabs, but the Scargill leadership who endorse Kinnock as party leader. The NUM leadership's unfailing commitment to the Labour traitors is a dangerous obstacle to fighting the scab threat! For all their talk of support for the miners in the Commons, the Benn/Skinner 'lefts' refuse to take any serious action. Because that would mean breaking their ties with Kinnock and Co -- and that's exactly what they refuse to do. You can't fight scabs in a bloc with scabherders. As a minimum act of sanitation it is necessary to demand that all who go with the Spencerite split -- including Labour MPs -- be expelled from the Labour Party!

The Tories and their Labour lackeys who had hoped the delegate conference would show evidence of a significant 'anti-Scargill' (ie anti-strike) backlash were thoroughly disappointed. The Notts amendment condemning the strike failed even to get a seconder, and the proposed rules changes were approved overwhelmingly. Insofar as the new rules strengthen the NUM as a national, industrial union, including the facility to call national strike action, this is all to the good. Militants must fight for the unlimited right to

strike -- with full national backing -- at every level of the union, from pit to area to national. That is what the principle of the picket line is all about. In sharp contrast to the likes of NUR 'left' Jimmy Knapp, who worked overtime to win his delegates to capitulating before the Tory ballot legislation, the NUM conference rebuffed the Tory attempt to impose a rebalot on the NUM presidency by removing the president's casting vote. But a militant union requires full and complete workers democracy: every official, from branch secretary to president, must be subject to frequent elections with the right of recall.

Scandalously the one rules change which was rejected was the call for associate membership of the union for the women's support groups. Jean McCrindle, treasurer of Women Against Pit Closures, said of the opposition to this measure: 'The women's movement is extremely angry and shocked at this rebuff' (*Guardian*, 29 June). So should every decent strike militant be! If this strike demonstrated anything it was the central stalwart role of the women and minorities in backing, and indeed pushing forward, the struggle.

What all of this points to is that the burning task facing NUM militants today is the need to forge a new, revolutionary leadership of the labour movement. Scargill was forthright in defending mass pickets and opposition to the strikebreaking ballot against 'critics, cynics and even some colleagues' (ie the Eurocommunist-inspired elements in the

Scottish and South Wales areas like Mick McGahey). But he welcomed Kinnock's eergy spokesman Stan Orme to the platform and acquiesced to a resolution on amnesty being significantly watered down so as not to cause embarrassment to the Labour Party. It is the Labour/TUC misleaders, more so than any particular piece of Tory legislation, who act to shackle the trade unions to the bosses' state. And this applies to the 'lefts' no less than the rights.

Arthur Scargill told his delegates that 'the only way to save the industry and to save jobs and pits is to fight yet again with the same determination, courage and pride'. Aye, but not to lose yet again. The fight to smash the Spencerites, the fight to free the jailed miners, the fight to reinstate the sacked men, the fight to prepare this union for the next battle ahead, all can be summed up in the fight for a new, revolutionary leadership of the labour movement and all the oppressed. A party must be forged through breaking the masses of workers from the stranglehold of Labourite reformism, a party which is prepared to take the capitalist state head-on, which places women and minorities at the forefront of the struggle and fights for the rights of all the oppressed. The only way to save the mines and all British industry is by tearing it out of the hands of the bloodsucking capitalists. And that means sweeping away their lackeys inside the labour movement. Smash Spencerism! Dump the traitors! Defend the NUM! ■

Next time...

(Continued from page 3)

courts, who along with the capitalist media guarded, defended and praised those cowards, the spineless scabs who crossed the picket line and tried to break the strike.

At my pit strikers were beaten up and dragged before the courts, but in the North East, in Yorkshire and particularly in Nottingham my comrades were just beaten, they were maimed and murdered by the scabs, cops and the system they supported. They also brought in martial law, terrorised women and children when they were doing their shopping, or when the children were just going to school. They were stopped and questioned and frightened by the cops and asked whether their father was a striker or a 'worker'.

Going on from this you had the back to work committees with bits of slime like our union secretary, Tony Morris and Co, who were organising themselves into anti-social and anti-working class back to work committees, backed by the bourgeoisie -- funded by Tory lawyers and big business. This canker spread because of the isolation of the NUM, because of the misleadership of other unions and of the TUC.

At this point I'm talking about the first six months of the strike, when the strike was solid and the morale was high. Money and food was coming in, but we still needed to go out and ask for support. I myself was asked to go on a food collection in Wolverhampton, a nearby city, and at this point it was the first time I'd ever communicated with any minority group. And in walking the streets of Wolverhampton and going from door to door collecting it struck me just how much the ordinary man in the street was behind the strike, especially the blacks and the Asian population in the area. It struck me in a surprising way that after knocking on the door, if a black face appeared donations came straight away, but if a white face came to the door you'd have to argue the point as to the justice of your case and still often walk away empty-handed. I've still got the ticket, which I shall always keep, as a reminder of the generosity of the Asian community in Wolverhampton. It made me realise that the suffering and oppression we were under at the time, that these people have it every day of their lives from the cops and the state, and because of this they themselves realise that it was an opportunity to align themselves and identify with a fighting force for the overthrow of Thatcher and the capitalist system.

It made me and some of my comrades realise that the union has not just got to fight for its own interests but also for the interests of all minority groups, like the Kewal Brothers strikers, mainly Asian women who were fighting for union recognition at a sweatshop clothing factory in Birmingham, whose picket line I and other strikers manned during the course of our strike. They were exploited by the sweatshop system that's very widespread for the Asian workers. In the same way the trade unions must come to the defence of anti-

racist fighters like the seven Asian youth in Northeast London, who fought back against murderous fascists, and are now on trial threatened with imprisonment by the state which defends these thugs.

Although we had tremendous response from ordinary union members with donations of money and food we were still left with the refusal of the union leaderships to spread the strike. For example, in the two docks strikes in the summer of last year, when there was a golden opportunity for the working class as a whole to be mobilised in strike action alongside the NUM. As our paper, *Workers Hammer*, laid out again and again, the need was for a fight for national strike action particularly in the main industries connected to the coal industry -- rail, steel, the docks, shipping and road transport and especially in unions like the NUR and the Transport and General Workers Union, where the bureaucrats talked loud and long about support to the miners, but always refused to put their money where their mouth was. That's the kind of fight that Comrade Patrick [Slincy], who'll be speaking next, put up in his industry. What was needed was a general strike, but where do the workers look? Not to the Labour Party and that traitor Kinnock, who attacked the pickets who were fighting the state's violence in defence of the union. The fact is that Kinnock was condemning violence of the pickets and by doing so was supporting the violence of the state. Only a bloody fool and a scoundrel could believe that a battle between the working class and the capitalists could be solved over tea and biscuits.

As for the TUC, that nursery for the House of Lords, their slogan is 'don't rock the boat'. In fact, that's only half of it: it was obvious right from the beginning that the TUC would only sell out the strike, just as they did with the General Strike in 1926.

Because in 1983, at the TUC Congress in Blackpool it became obvious as to where the TUC stood; as regards to any challenge by the unions to the Tory government. Arthur Scargill, the national president of the NUM, was attacked for his stance on Polish Solidarity. When the bandits of Gerry Healy's WRP waited seven weeks before printing Scargill's true statement that Solidarity was an 'anti-socialist organisation' they gave the rabid anti-communists of the TUC right-wing the opportunity to isolate the NUM, as part of the anti-Soviet hullabaloo over the Korean spy plane. The TUC's policy at the Congress was so-called 'new realism' -- which was a promise to the Tory government not to stand in the way of its anti-union legislation and above all its coming attack on the NUM.

The Solidarity scab union that the TUC support, along with Thatcher and Reagan, is led by Lech Walesa who said during our strike that Thatcher was a 'wise and brave woman' and who welcomed Nottingham scabs to Poland. How can you put your trust in these kind of people to fight for the rights of the working class?

The point that the people who hate the Soviet Union are the people who hate the trade union movement and love the scabs, was brought home to us with the experience of the print-

ers' strike and the banning of unions at the government spy-centre in Cheltenham. The TUC turned their backs on the printers union, the NGA, when the courts declared their strike illegal, and called a weak-kneed one day of inaction over the Cheltenham unions being banned.

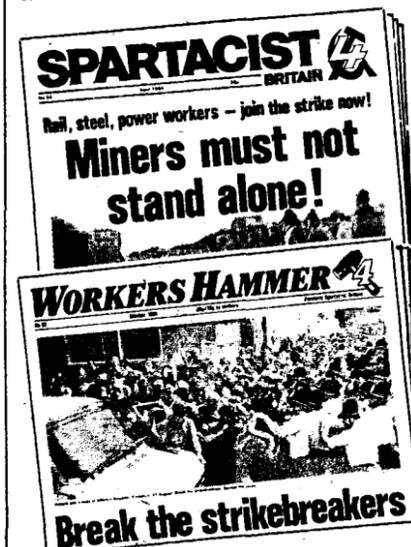
This gave Thatcher the green light for an all-out attack on the NUM. And the NUM stood alone against state pressure for 12 months. So we came to the conclusion that no one union could stand alone against such pressure as we experienced. And why did we have to stand this? Why, because of the misleadership of the bureaucracy within the union movement. These reformists, who at the present time are now feeling the boot that tried to stamp us out. Yes, Thatcher won the strike, but she didn't smash our union. What the strike has done is left a nucleus of strong union men, alongside of which we have the women's support groups and organisations that were built up during the strike. But the next time that a class war breaks out the workers must have a party -- a party that will not tolerate scabs or reformists but a revolutionary party that will fight for a real workers government as the Bolsheviks did in 1917, a workers government that is based on the workers own organisations, not Parliament. We need a workers government that expropriates the capitalists and builds a socialist society that provides a decent life for all.

I will just quote from *Workers Hammer* here. This is when Arthur Scargill at the end of the strike, he said:

'Speaking to last month's conference of the draughtsmen's union TASS, Scargill claimed a prime "achievement" of the strike was that the Labour Party is "in the lead in the opinion polls because of what has taken place in the last 12 months".'

I could tell Arthur Scargill now, I didn't go through this to boost the opinion polls of the Labour Party. ■

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Kinnock lashes out, Spencerites split out

Defend the NUM!



NUM must campaign around jailed, sacked miners. Appeals to scabherder Kinnock's Labour Party are a dead-end.

No sooner had the NUM delegate conference ended, with its loud clear statement that the union remains defiant and unbowed, than the Spencer scabs announced their long-awaited split. In the language of the anti-Communist Polish scab 'union' Solidarnosc, Notts scab organiser Roy Lynk announced that the breakaway was committed to a 'democratic union'. The scab split has been long-expected. Apparently their Tory paymasters, seeing the solidity of the delegate conference and the isolation of the scab sections, decided now was the time to cut their losses and run.

Frustrated in their hell-bent drive to crush the NUM through twelve months of bitter class war, the Iron Bitch and her gang are out to wreak vengeance on the heroic miners in every way they can. More than 600 men remain locked out of their jobs, including every striker victimised in the Kent and Scottish coalfields. Fourteen were recently sentenced to six months, suspended for two years, for occupying a coal crane during the strike in Port Talbot. And the trial of fifteen men charged with 'rioting' at Orgreave goes into its third month. That these 'trials' are a grotesque frame-up is implicitly admitted to even by the Tories' own judges: at Orgreave it turned out that one of the police witness statements was a forgery and one of the strikers was acquitted on the judge's direction. The labour movement cannot rest until every one of these heroic class fighters is released from prison and/or reinstated to their rightful jobs with full back pay! Amnesty for all sacked miners! Free

the class-war prisoners, including Rhymney lads Russell Shankland and Dean Hancock! Defend the NUM!

The scab split is starting out relatively weaker than either its organisers or their sponsors would have hoped. By NUM estimates, they are likely to get no more than 10,000 of the estimated 22,000 members in the Notts area, with the support of other predominantly scab areas like Leicestershire and South Derbyshire and the white-collar COSA section looking less probable than hoped for. Through a concerted campaign by the NUM, which already appears underway only a day after the announcement of the split, this anti-union breakaway can be nipped in the bud. But that requires not only an organising drive but a political counter-offensive by NUM militants. For if the Tories are the paymasters of this scab split, the Labour Party leadership under Kneel Kinnock is their political godfather.

'Kneel' Kinnock, Thatcher's poodle

When NUM president Arthur Scargill, in his opening address to the delegate conference, demanded that a future Labour government commit itself to full amnesty for victimised strikers and restitution to the union for theft of its assets by the Tory government, Kinnock exploded in rage. Reiterating the bipartisan Tory/Labour line that amnesty will only be considered for those strikers not convicted of 'violent crimes', the Labour leader railed that 'the only security for their industry will come from a Labour govern-

ment elected through the ballot box.... That is the only way we want to do it. All other courses are fantasy' (Times, 3 July, emphasis ours). It was one of the key scab leaders, Notts area vice-president George Liddle, who parroted Kinnock's line inside the conference hall while motivating an amendment condemning the executive for the strike: 'There is only one lot of people going to stop pit closures and that is a Labour government. That is what you should work for and not put people off the Labour Party' (Times, 2 July).

In a statement on the breakaway, Scargill said: 'Today's decision by the Nottinghamshire area to form a break-away organisation that cannot possibly be recognised by either the TUC or the Labour Party raises a ghost of Spencerism which, in the late 1920s, led Nottingham miners into disastrous isolation.' It would be scandalous if either the Labour Party or the TUC recognised this Tory-engineered anti-union split! But remember: George Spencer was a Labour MP! And already Notts area Labour MPs Joe Ashton and Don Concannon have given their blessings to the scab 'union' and hope it will remain loyal to the Labour Party.

Can anyone doubt where Kinnock/Hattersley's sympathies lie after their vicious denunciation of the 'Benn/Scargill factor' in Labour's defeat at Brecon and Kinnock's vile attack on Benn's bill to demand elementary justice for imprisoned/victimised strikers? For these open traitors winning a by-election

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Miners march against apartheid

Some 60 militants marched with the Spartacist League at the 16 June anti-apartheid demonstration in London, including miners strike militants from four coalfields marching with the Workers Hammer Readers and Supporters Groups banner. The SL banners, placards and chants emphasised the leading role of black workers in smashing the apartheid regime and linked racist terror against minorities here with the brutal oppression in South Africa: 'From Southall to Soweto, smash racist attacks! Same enemy, same fight, workers of the world unite!'

It is regrettable that despite the resolutions of support for the anti-apartheid struggle passed at the NUM delegate conference two weeks later, not one NUM banner was to be found on this march. Black miners in South Africa, themselves suffering massive hardship and repression, had seen fit to offer thousands of pounds to the NUM strike fund. And the contingents of the fake-left groups, tailing the liberal Anti-Apartheid Movement demonstration organisers, for the most part pushed the bankrupt perspective of embarrassing racist butchers Thatcher and Reagan into imposing imperialist sanctions against the apartheid state. For them, 'proletarian internationalism' is just fine words. For us Trotskyists it is a programme of action. As our lead banner read: Black workers are revolutionary powerhouse! Smash apartheid! For workers revolution! Smash Reagan/Thatcher/Botha racist anti-Soviet war axis!



London, 16 June: miners march behind Workers Hammer banner in solidarity with black masses' struggle against apartheid. While fake lefts appeal to ruling class for sanctions, we say road to smashing apartheid is through revolutionary workers struggle.