

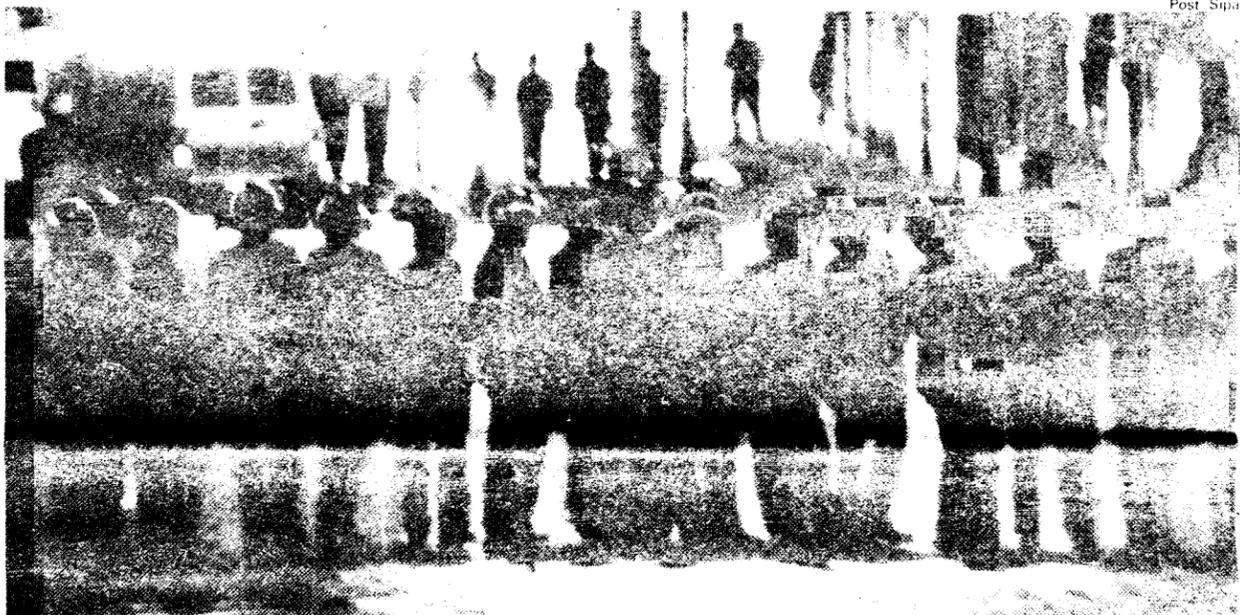
## Racist cops riot in Handsworth, Brixton

# Thatcher is out for blood!

29 September -- Less than three weeks after a massive police invasion of Birmingham's predominantly black and Asian Handsworth ghetto, Thatcher's racist cops have struck again. When a gang of seven killer cops broke into the Brixton home of Mrs Cherry Groce and shot her down at point-blank range, they were out to foment a bloodbath of Brixton's West Indian community. Orchestrated police terror against Britain's black and Asian population is now clearly government policy. *The Iron Bitch is out for blood!*

No sooner had word got around Brixton about the brutal shooting of Mrs Groce than angry crowds gathered outside her home, chanting 'fascists, murderers' at the police. Within hours, a large crowd had amassed outside the Brixton police station. A handful of black youth managed to break in through the back with petrol bombs before cops clad in riot gear swarmed out and into the crowds. Burning barricades of overturned cars began appearing, as outraged black youth, many wearing balaclava masks, some shouting about South Africa and demanding 'justice', continued to converge on the police station. Marauding cops began their now-characteristic racist 'Zulu' drumming of batons against shields. By nightfall Brixton was sealed off tight under police occupation with a pall of smoke hanging over whole sections.

What happened in Handsworth and Brixton was a racist police reign of terror. But it is a warning to all of us: racial minorities, unemployed youth, militant trade unionists, communists. To the bloodlusting bitch in Downing Street who ordered 300 young sailors aboard the *Belgrano* to a watery grave, who targetted tens of thousands of striking miners and their families as the 'enemy within', all of the



Thatcher and cops said let Handsworth burn, as they try to set Asian against black. Defend the victims of racist cop dragnet/occupation!

vast millions of the population chafing under the yoke of racism, unemployment and cop terror are 'moaning Minnies'. And if you're dark-skinned or Irish, or you 'moan' too loudly, you may end up with a bullet in your back.

When Brixton first exploded in outrage against racist cop terror more than four years ago we wrote, 'The cops no doubt lust for the same sort of firepower employed by their American counterparts' (*Spartacist Britain* no 32, May 1981). Now they're getting it. This is not 1981: there will be no Scarman reports, no tut-tutting over 'deprived youth'. Thatcher

has just finished waging a year-long civil war against the most militant sector of the organised working class, and largely white at that. She's certainly not going to hesitate to slap down 'uppity' unemployed minority youth. When Enoch Powell regurgitated his racist 'rivers of blood' speech and demanded 'repatriation' after Handsworth, Thatcher gave him a polite imprimatur, while formally disclaiming his Hitlerite conclusion. The ruling class line today is: Shoot to kill! Let the ghettos burn!

In the aftermath of the miners strike, *continued on page 10*

### Attempted murder:

## Jail Brixton killer cops!

A bang, a door kicked in, shots ring out -- and 37-year-old black housewife and mother of seven Mrs Cherry Groce lies critically injured on her living room floor. Bullet fragments lodged in her spinal cord, Mrs Groce may never walk again, paralysed from the waist down. *This was an attempt to kill!* Douglas Lovelock and the six other racist cops, armed with .38 Smith and Wessons, who burst through the door of Mrs Groce's Brixton flat thirsting for black blood, should be locked away for good -- and the keys thrown in the Thames!

The police claim it was a 'tragic accident'. Bullshit! This was a pure and simple racist provocation. Even police spokesmen admit there were 'perhaps two seconds' between the break-in and the shooting. As Mrs Groce's stricken mother said, 'The police came to my

house and said my daughter had had an accident. But how can you shoot someone and say it's an accident?' (*Sunday People*, 29 September). The cops wanted this to be a dead-people-tell-no-foibles 'tragic incident' -- like the 'suicides' in Soweto police station. Beverley Grant, a friend and neighbour of the victim, told *Workers Hammer* that the cops held a gun to Mrs Groce's neck as she lay on the floor shot through the back and waited two hours before calling an ambulance. Meanwhile her husband and young children were imprisoned in their own home at gunpoint. Now, in what's become standard operating procedure, it's the cops they're showering the sympathy on -- poor bloke's been put on the sick list for being in a 'state of shock'. Well, he ain't paralysed for life (more's the pity).

Thatcher has given her racist thugs-in-blue a licence to kill. The cops are armed -- the citizenry must have the right to bear arms. How would these brave constables feel if they were facing the barrel of a Smith and Wesson? The just outrage of black youth in Brixton must be given direction. The labour movement must act! London is filled with tens of thousands of black and Asian workers in strategic industrial concentrations. Break through the Labourite bureaucrats' stranglehold and mobilise the unions in defence of Brixton. Or you or your kid could be next.

The cops claimed they were looking for Mrs Groce's son Michael. How about if a few thousand Brixton residents and black, Asian and white trade unionists knocked on Mrs Thatcher's door at 6.30 in the morning to enquire about her son Mark? It's time we made it clear to the racist rulers that the decent, honest people of this country will not put up with being living targets for trigger-crazy cops. People's tribunals under a revolutionary workers government will mete out swift and sure justice to the racist killers-in-blue and their ruling-class paymasters. Down with racist cop terror! Jail the Brixton killer cops!

## Warsop miners award plaques of allegiance

# An evening of honour

On Saturday, 22 September, invited representatives of the Spartacist League of Britain and the Ligue Trotskyste de France (French section of the international Spartacist tendency) joined friends and families of the Warsop Main branch of the NUM in a very moving occasion. The social evening was to honour those who had remained loyal to the strike throughout in this North Derbyshire pit right on the Notts border. Each of the over 140 Warsop miners who stayed out to the end were presented with 'One Year Allegiance Award' plaques, as were seven other organisations and union branches which were of particular assistance to Warsop Main NUM. The Warsop women's group were enthusiastically applauded when they took their award, showing the deep appreciation felt by miners for the part played by the coalfield women in sustaining the year-long struggle.

The SL and LTF were proud and deeply honoured to be among the recipients of these commemorative plaques. We worked closely with the Warsop Main branch, as with a number of other pits, throughout the strike. In Sheffield we were instrumental in getting the polytechnic support group to adopt Warsop Main pit for fund-raising. Our comrades assisted Warsop militants on fund-raising trips, in-

roducing them both to other trade-union branches and to black and Asian districts where particularly generous support could be counted on. On one occasion, we went to the Catherine pub in Sheffield, patronised mainly by West Indians. The landlord announced that striking miners were present; everyone stopped what they were doing to donate money. Looking over the collection, one of the miners commented that here they had got paper money rather than the coins they were more used to.

In December 1984 the LTF hosted two Warsop miners, Paul Brewin and Troy Nattriss, in a highly successful fund-raising drive. In ten days a total of more than 17,700 francs (£1500) was raised. From Rouen dockworkers to Paris bank employees, French workers dug deep for their brothers and sisters in Britain.

In the course of the strike and since, we have had many valuable political discussions with Warsop militants. Our call to spread the strike, our uncompromising stance against the scabherders of the TUC and Labour Party and our slogan, 'Bollocks to the ballot' gained a good hearing amongst Warsop strikers and wives. We argued for a strategy that went beyond the Labourite framework of the NUM leadership, that recognised the need for a sharp break with the Labour misleaders if the



Spartacist League representative Charlie Shell receiving plaque from Dennis Skinner.

strike was to be spread to other key unions and true class-struggle unity forged with the oppressed.

The miners strike gave rise to valuable links between the labour movement and the oppressed. From the women who became the backbone of the strike to the black and Asian communities whose support was crucial, millions of people understood that the miners' fight was their fight. To consolidate and extend

*continued on page 9*

## Quote of the month



Trotsky and Lenin

The communist newspaper

The Third World Congress of the Communist International in 1921 adopted a document on the organisation of the revolutionary party, generalising from the experience of the Bolsheviks, which underlined the importance of the communist press as a party organiser:

The communist newspaper must above all look after the interests of the oppressed struggling workers. It should be our best propagandist and agitator, the leading propagandist of the proletarian revolution.

Our paper has the task of collecting the valuable lessons from the work of party members as a whole and of pointing them out to the party comrades as a guide for the continued review and improvement of communist methods of work... Thus the party press, as every individual newspaper, will be the best organiser of our revolutionary work.

-- 'Guidelines on the Organisational Structure of Communist Parties, on the Methods and Content of Their Work', adopted at the 24th Session of the Third World Congress (July 1921)

## WORKERS HAMMER

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## Notts scab breakaway

# Look who's paying the bill

At the start of the bitter year-long miners strike we wrote of the campaign for a scab ballot:

'The conduct of the ballot mongers is just the sort of splitting and wrecking policy that the CIA teaches its labour friends. And hand-in-hand with that goes corruption -- we wonder how many papal funds Thatcher has got diverted from Poland to swing this ballot.' (Spartacist Britain supplement, 23 March 1984)

We surely hit the nail right on the head. Recent revelations in the American *Boston Globe*, repeated in the 23 September *Guardian*, show just how much the Notts-based scab split from the miners union is being funded through sinister bourgeois forces. The *Guardian* reports: 'Mr John Paul Getty junior has given £150,000 to help finance the breakaway miners movement at the suggestion of Mr Ian MacGregor ...' and adds that the 'gift' was 'agreed earlier this summer after Mr MacGregor

told Mr Getty that the National Union of Mineworkers had received more than £8 million from the Soviet Union'. The article also reports a meeting Thatcher and Lord Gowrie held with Getty, supposedly to 'thank him for contributions to British cultural institutions'. Oh yes, nudge nudge, wink wink.

Throughout the strike the scab leaders held regular 'consultations' and/or received heavy financial 'donations' from the likes of axeman MacGregor, the Freedom Association and Number Ten adviser David Watt. Meanwhile, following a precedent set with the Spencerite scab split of the late 1920s, the Coal Board keeps making regular financial contributions to the Notts area union pension fund.

The Tories desperately want to split the NUM, and their tools Lynk and Prendergast need all the money they can get, since their putative scab 'union' seems to be having a hard time getting the support at the base they

*continued on page 9*

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## Cold War scab-lovers call the shots

# Kinnock gunning for NUM

The Labour Party's bloodhounds sniff the scent of electoral victory in 1988. And if Neil Kinnock has his way, he'll walk through the door of 10 Downing Street over the dead body of the National Union of Mineworkers. From the TUC in Blackpool last month to Labour's conference in Bournemouth this, the the labour misleaders who did everything they could to knife that heroic strike now desperately want to bury the miners and everything their struggle stood for.

The capitalist businessmen and bankers sense that, short of another Falklands, Thatcher is just about washed up. With every passing day she is more hated and isolated at home. Her vicious attacks on racial minorities, her hardline defence of apartheid, her contempt for the unemployed, her overt union-bashing make her repulsive to virtually every layer of the population. Last month she tried to score some points on the Cold War front by attempting to stare down Mikhail Gorbachev in an hysterical campaign against 'Russian spies'. But instead of whipping up patriotic, anti-Communist popular fervour she made herself a laughing stock, as the Soviet leader calmly outstared her. All-in-all, the ruling class is looking around for an alternative.

The Alliance is once again getting the media play and leading the polls. The *Economist* (14 September) now muses about the prospect of a Labour-Alliance coalition -- if Labour can shed its 'far left'. 'The prospect of power makes eager bedfellows', it comments snidely. For Neil Kinnock to convince the bosses that Labour could form or be part of a 'responsible' capitalist government, he must demonstrate three things. First, that he is a forthright opponent of militant social struggle by workers and the oppressed. Second, that he's ready to toe the line for the Cold War. And third, that he'll do whatever is necessary to neutralise and destroy anyone in the labour movement who seriously opposes him on these issues.

### Kinnock to victimised miners: rot in jail!

For a solid year, the miners' magnificent strike made the 'new realist' crawlers of Labour and the TUC eat dirt. The noose swung for Norm Willis, catcalls resounded for Ramsay MacKinnock. The strike inspired millions of workers and minorities, and steeled tens of thousands of class fighters in battle. The NUM's continuing authority at the base of the labour movement was clear even at Blackpool. Arthur Scargill's resolution calling for a future Labour government to reinstate sacked men, review the cases of jailed miners and reimburse the NUM for fines and sequestrations incurred during the strike won a narrow majority, in the teeth of rabid opposition from Kinnock and Willis. But the Labour leader merely sneered at the vote, vowing to ignore it, and immediately moved into high gear to have it overturned at Bournemouth. Kinnock and Thatcher have the same line to the heroic class-war prisoners of the strike: rot in jail! We say: Reinstate all sacked miners! Free all the jailed strikers! Return every penny looted from the NUM, NGA and other unions!

The rest of the TUC conference was politically shaped by the hard Cold War right wing led by Eric Hammond of the Electricians and Gavin Laird of the Engineers. In the words of the *Times* (6 September), 'Hammond has emerged from this year's Congress as dominant a figure as Arthur Scargill was at last year's.' Hammond and Laird threatened to split from the TUC if they were censured for taking Tory ballot money in violation of TUC guidelines. A lash-up already exists between them and Roy Lynk's Spencerite outfit, ready and willing to form a new right-wing anti-Communist union federation, akin to Force Ouvriere in France. Hammond warned: 'We will do what is necessary to survive ... you ain't seen nothing yet.' The echo of Ronald Reagan was conscious and understood by all. These are the openly pro-CIA 'Labour Committee for Trans-Atlantic Understanding' types who are the most direct bosses' agents in the British labour movement. And they were also the most unashamed scabherders against the NUM during the pit strike.

Kinnock needs the hardline Cold Warriors in the unions as much as he needs Denis Healey, the old reliable 'member for NATO', in his Cabinet. Both are weapons against militant class struggle and guarantees of stability to the imperialist bosses and their partners across the Atlantic. So naturally the TUC leadership, with prompting from Kinnock, made a deal to avert a split. The political differences separating these CIA-inspired splitters and wreckers from the official Kinnock/Willis leadership are in any case over *how*, not *whether*, to shackle the unions to the bosses' state. The TUC itself already gets over a million quid a year from the government for so-called 'educational' purposes. Kinnock himself has now come out in favour of taking the Tories' blood money. *The absolute precondition for militant struggle is complete and unconditional independence of the trade unions from the capitalist state!*

The Cold War right wing are prepared to split the labour movement right down the middle at the behest of their friends in Whitehall and Washington in order to get their way. That's what the SDF split was about, and subsequently the Spencerite breakaway. But the reformist 'lefts' will not and cannot counten-

Workers Hammer



To pave Labour's way into Downing Street, Norm Willis and Co are out to bury the NUM and the class struggle unity inspired by the miners strike.

ance a political break with the Labour Party scabherders, so they are pulled along in the right wing's wake. Erstwhile local government darlings Ken Livingstone and David Blunkett have openly gone over to Kinnock. Union leaders like the NUR's Jimmy Knapp act as policemen for Tory ballot law. Tony Benn and Dennis Skinner won't even criticise Kinnock by name, let alone oppose him for party leader. And from *Morning Star* through *Militant* down to *Socialist Action*, *Socialist Organiser* and more, the chief aim of the fake revolutionaries is to steer Labour into office once again. *That necessarily means kneeling to Kinnock and betraying effective struggle today.*

Kinnock/Hattersley (and *Militant*) are so openly committed to the racist status quo that they oppose even as ineffectual a demand as the right to organise black sections within the Labour Party. Yet the fake lefts who support black sections run for cover in the face of unbridled racist cop terror against predominantly black and Asian Handsworth, so tied are they to unity with pro-capitalist racists like Kinnock/Hattersley. And in response to Thatcher's rate-capping attack on already impoverished heavily minority inner city areas like in Liverpool, the best the 'lefts' could offer was bluster and wait-and-see. After months of so-called 'resistance' Liverpool's *Militant*-dominated Labour Council is now reduced to issuing redundancy notices to 30,000 council employees. What has this to do with 'socialism' or defence of workers' rights?! *Militant* in Liverpool is right now acting as

enforcers of Thatcherite austerity against city employees. Municipal 'socialism' is a self-evident dead-end; what's needed is a classwide fight against the Tory offensive!

### Needed: a revolutionary workers party

Arthur Scargill is seen by hundreds of thousands of workers and oppressed minorities as the embodiment of militant class resistance in the British labour movement. Scargill's role in setting up a new international mine-workers federation with unions like the Soviet miners and the French CGT shows his continuing defiance of the anti-Soviet war drive. But Scargill too wants Kinnock in Number Ten. His refusal to break sharply with the Labour/TUC traitors during the strike, relying instead on backroom manoeuvres, contributed heavily to the eventual defeat.

The Labour Party with its millions of members is impotent to defeat Thatcher's attacks because the Kinnocks and Willises who run it *don't want to fight capitalism*. And the Benns, Skinners and Scargills can't provide an alternative because they link hands with these scabherders. Simply to hold the line against the ruling-class onslaught requires a fight for a new revolutionary workers party, forged

John Sturrock Network



through splitting away Labour's working-class base from the scabherding misleaders and their 'left' allies. The unions must be turned into weapons of struggle against the bosses and their governments, whether Tory or Labour. The power of organised labour must be linked to the struggles of the oppressed, from Handsworth to Belfast to Soweto! Defend the Soviet Union against the bosses' war drive! Enough of dead-end lobbying and resolution-mongering for Kinnock's Labour Party! Build a revolutionary party to fight for state power for the workers! That is the only road forward for Britain's workers and oppressed. ■

## Support victimised miners

More than 500 NUM militants face a lifetime of misery on the dole, vindictively sacked by the Coal Board for being loyal to the strike. More than fifty others are still in jail. We urge readers to contribute generously to the fund established for sacked and jailed miners and their families to: Miners Solidarity Fund, St James' House, Vicar Lane, Sheffield.

CONTACT THE SPARTACIST LEAGUE:  
BIRMINGHAM .....(021) 236 9774  
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# Emergency protest meeting Defend Handsworth! Racist cops out now!

Handsworth, 9-10 September: Police launch a racist rampage against minority youth in this predominantly black and Asian Birmingham ghetto. Community residents, black, Asian and white, defend their community against the cop terror, street-by-street. Police and media, politicians Tory and Labour alike unleash a racist barrage, maligning residents as murderers, criminals and barbarians. Under the shadow of massive police presence, anger and frustration simmer just beneath the surface in the week that follows. The streets are quiet but tense -- no one is about to be fooled into stupid confrontations the occupying cops are trying to provoke in order to bust more heads. But there is a felt need for some avenue for protest and organised action.

Handsworth, 18 September: sixty people turn out for an Emergency Protest Meeting organised by the Spartacist League, a chance to speak out, to vent the anger and bitterness, to denounce the lies and crimes of the racist rulers and their trained dogs of war. Black, Asian and white residents, unemployed youth and older trade union activists, miners strike militants, communists rally to 'Defend Handsworth! Racist Cops Out Now!'

More than 3000 copies of the Spartacist League leaflet advertising the Emergency Protest Meeting were distributed in Handsworth and nearby industrial concentrations -- door-to-door, at community centres and housing estates, key BL factories with large black and Asian concentrations like Rover Solihull and Longbridge, at the Post Office and British Rail and bus depots. The leaflet struck a chord in the community. It cut through the lies and went right to the core of what happened: this was a racist cop riot, augmented by a vicious conspiracy to foment inter-ethnic and interracial violence. We know the cops didn't like it: they arrested three of our leafletters and even ripped leaflets out of the hands of passers-by.

We wanted this meeting to be a springboard for organising further action, for mobilising the social power of the working class in defence of Handsworth. So we not only invited spokesmen for community organisations to speak, but placed special emphasis on union officials and militants. A wide cross-section of the community was present and represented. Apologies and messages of solidarity were read out from a black British Rail worker, Mrs Edwards, recently subjected to a racist sacking and reinstated after her co-workers walked out in solidarity, as well as from miners Wally Roberts (Lea Hall, Staffordshire), Paul Brewin (Warsop Main, North Derbyshire) and Dave Douglass (Hatfield Main, Yorkshire).

One black resident of the area spoke powerfully from his own experience at the protest meeting: 'What the police was trying to do was to try to get the government to put Handsworth down.... Now what they are doing, they're just terrorising the young people. And all I think

they are, they are cowards. Because all they do when they cop a young lad, five or six of them will get on him and brutalise him.... The prime minister give the police the power and they've got too much power. So I sorely agree with these people that came to our aid and I appreciate it very much, because this is a matter of killing.'

Particularly powerful was the mutual authority and respect between the miners present and black and Asian Handsworth residents. People learned a thing or two during the miners strike -- and they're not about to forget -- about the social power of the working class when unchained in struggle, about the need to close ranks against racist and cop terror, about international solidarity. Any reference to the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa elicited spontaneous applause from the audience. Three miners came all the way down from South Yorks and Notts when they heard about the protest meeting, prepared to drive back in time for a 5am shift the next morning. In sharp contrast, a meeting the following night in the same place, called by the Qaddafi-loving Workers Revolutionary Party and focused on YTS, was dismally attended and attracted virtually no black and Asian residents.

We print below, with minor editing, the platform speeches by Spartacist League Central Committee member Cheryl Myall and black miner Dennis Thompson (Brodsworth, Yorkshire, speaking in a personal capacity). We are also printing selected excerpts from floor speakers (again, in a personal capacity) Alan Robe, Hatfield Main NUM and a spokesman for the



Handsworth after cop riot looks like Dresden after World War II British terror-bombing.

SMASH THE POLICE BILL! COPS ARE RACIST STRIKEBREAKERS  
NOT 'POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY' BUT  
UNION/MINORITY MOBILISATION  
TO SMASH COP/FASCIST TERROR!



Platform at 18 September Emergency Protest Meeting: (from left) Dennis Thompson, Eibhlin McDonald (chair), Cheryl Myall.

National Rank and File Miners Movement, and Norris Barrett, a Spartacist League supporter and NUR member. To organise effective defence of Handsworth and racial minorities against racist/cop terror requires mobilising the mass organisations of the working class. But this meeting gave a clear taste of what can be done. What is so desperately needed is to build a mass multiracial revolutionary party.

## Cheryl Myall: 'The bosses are out for black and Asian blood'

Comrades, brothers and sisters, friends. There's a lot of anger, and a lot of outrage at what this racist bosses' system is doing to Handsworth, and places like it up and down the country. These criminals are the ones who are responsible for setting Handsworth ablaze last week. They don't give a damn if Lozells Road, Villa Road, Soho Road get burned to a crisp. Now they're occupying the area, just like it was Soweto. One black guy captured it last week in an interview. He said, we've been seeing these programmes about what's going on in South Africa night after night on the television, and we figured we've had enough. That's what was going on here. South Africa came to Handsworth last week. So what we're here to talk about is how you fight that, how you fight it and defeat these attacks.

A few months ago Ronald Reagan bombed black families in Philadelphia. I don't know if you've read the articles that we've printed in *Workers Vanguard*, but we showed in a photograph that a whole black neighbourhood was razed to the ground, black families were incinerated. Now in Britain, Thatcher and her cop friends did something very similar in Handsworth last week. They were the ones who struck the spark that set Handsworth alight. With their harassment, their attacks, their jailings, their brutalisation of black, Asian and white youth. And then they just stood and they watched it burn.

In the 1970s, I used to live in Toxteth, in Liverpool, and a Labour government was in office. Now, I can't really say that I noticed this made any difference, because the police would still drive around in Land Rovers, they'd still pick black youth off the street for no reason. I had a boyfriend at the time who was Jamaican, and I used to spend on average once a week down at the police station trying to find out where he was. That was daily life for the residents in that area. I also remember it was the year of the firemen's strike, and a Labour government used troops to break that strike. Then there was the 'winter of discontent'. It wasn't just blacks getting it in the neck from this racist, capitalist state, it was militant white trade unionists as well.

In the early 1980s I lived here in Handsworth, and it was quite obvious things were getting even more decrepit. It was the same old stuff, except worse. Now I live in the

East End, in Whitechapel in London, where Asian youth like the Newham Seven get arrested, beaten up, hauled before the courts. Why? Because they're prepared to defend themselves and their community against racist attacks. Where a pregnant Asian woman and her children got roasted alive by fascist firebombers.

### Thatcher to minorities: Burn!

So it's always the same under this bosses' system, Tory or Labour, except it just gets worse. The question is, what is to be done? I think the key is trying to tie the struggles of the oppressed to the social power of the working class. That's what we need to do.

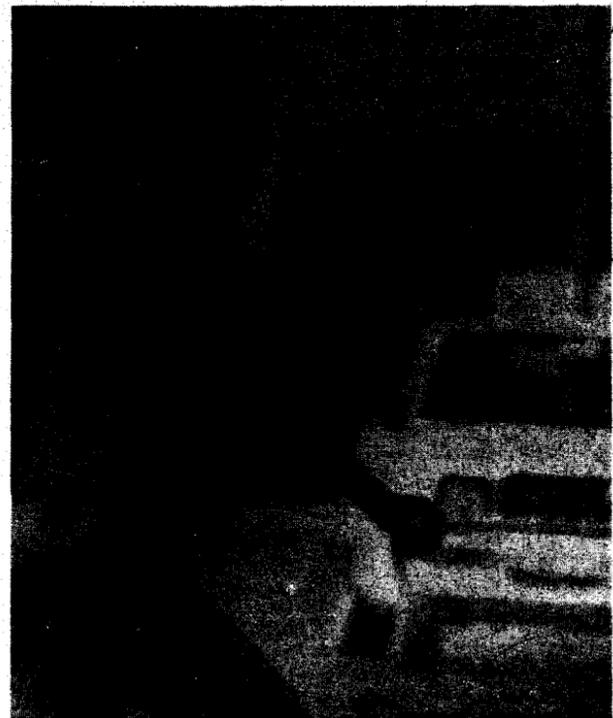
Thatcher and her racist bosses are out for black and Asian blood. They would like to see that blood spilled in the streets of Handsworth, they would like to set black and Asian against each other. Look what's going down here. You've got a cop/army occupation of this area, armoured vans down the street, cops everywhere, helicopters, the works. Well, one year ago there was exactly the same situation, except this time it was in the coalfields and the pit villages, where the cops ran rampage. The bosses and their government were also out for miners' blood. And they got it. Strikers were killed, like Davy Jones. Their children were killed scavenging slagheaps. Two miners got sent down for life. Militants lost their jobs. The same police brutality that went on there is now going on here. And it's been going on here in the minority communities for years.

But there's also a special reason why Thatcher and her bosses' state went after the people in Handsworth. And that's because the miners strike showed the unity of all the oppressed in struggle on the side of the working class. That's what the capitalists are out to destroy. The fact that you saw miners looking for and getting massive support from people in Handsworth, in Brixton, in Southall, in Bradford, I could go on.

Now the capitalists and their racist press try to make people believe that what happened here last week was black against Asian, Asian against black. Lies, lies, and more lies! We know how West Indian youth formed a defence guard in front of Sagoos wine shop which is just around the corner from here and it's run by Asians. We know that's happened and we know that there are countless other examples of that. It's good that Douglas Hurd got run out of this area. That's real good. And he got run out by black, Asian and white youth. We don't want the same kind of divide and rule stuff that the British government have been doing in Northern Ireland for centuries.

Look, I'm Indian. There are people here who are black. There are miners here who are white. This ruling class wants to have us at each other's throats. They'd love that, because there's something there -- even in this room tonight -- that scares them to shit. And that's the working class and the oppressed getting together in common struggle. Whether it's to fight cop terror, fascist firebombers, unemployment, all the crap that the capitalists have in store for everyone.

So how can you fight back, how can we fight back? There's been a lot of talk about an inquiry, making the police accountable to the community, democratic control of the police, police review boards. An inquiry? What for, what's there to enquire about? Nothing. Review boards? What for? We know



Black youth in South Africa fighting apartheid terror. South Africa came to Handsworth last month.

what the cops do, we know why they do it. Accountability? The only people the cops are accountable to are the racist rulers who run this country.

No, we say that the only people that can defend this community against the racist occupation and terror are the people who live here and workers who have the same social interests in defence of this community. In Birmingham, there's a racially integrated workforce -- in the car plants like Longbridge and Rovers, in the buses, the post office, the engineering works, the foundries. Although there's mass unemployment in Handsworth, thanks to the bosses, everybody in this room tonight has friends, uncles, cousins, brothers and sisters in all the industries where black and Asian people play a key role. That's where there's some power. And then there's the miners, a number of whom are here tonight. They learned during their strike what black and Asian people have to live with every day of their lives. We're talking about defence of this community, from Handsworth, to Longbridge, to Lea Hall. But that means waging a fight against the misleaders and the traitors in the labour movement. People like Jeff Rooker, who last week condemned what happened in Handsworth 'as a barbarous and criminal act'. Like Hattersley, who should have been run out of the area just like Douglas Hurd. Or even the Benns and the Skinners -- because what have they said, what have they done? How come they're not here, how come they're not organising defence of this community? You know why, because they're part of the problem, not the solution.

### Tap the social power of the working class

So the fight has to take place for community self-defence, with a hard core of the local unions at the centre of this. I'll give you an example of what needs to be done. The buses in this city are run mostly by black and Asian workers. They can say to the bosses, 'Screw you! We'll stop the buses till the cops get out of Handsworth, until all those victims of the racist dragnet are set free!' What about a big fight in the unions for a mass protest demonstration against what's going on, or even a one-day strike, or organised, integrated, union-centred defence squads, to patrol the streets, to stop cop terror? You can have a dozen people in each squad, integrated, four black, four white, four Asian. These are some of the ways to get the cops out, to make sure those people are released from jail. The bottom line is you have to fight. You have to fight to get rid of this whole rotten racist, capitalist system. You have to fight against the bosses' labour lieutenants in the trade unions. And you have to fight against the pro-capitalist misleaders of the Labour Party.

In the last week, you pick up the racist press, and all you see is this crap, this racist crap, about black bombers, black looting and rioting. And you also see a lot of anti-communist witchhunts and warmongering going on. There's been these stories about Communist spies in Britain being thrown out by Thatcher. Well, Thatcher throws out Russians, but I tell you, she winks her eye when South African intelligence BOSS goes blowing up ANC headquarters in this country. That's because Reagan and Thatcher are Botha's biggest allies here.

Now we believe that only the communist programme links the liberation of all the oppressed to the question of working class rule. So when the racist press talk about 'outside agitators' and they talk about reds influencing what's going on in areas like this, we have to say this. There may not be a lot of reds in Handsworth now, but I tell you, there should be. And there will be.

The fact is that 200 years ago, here in the West Midlands, there was the industrial revolution. In fact the first factory in the whole world was built just off the Soho Road. Now they're shutting down the factories and they're saying 'There's nothing for you.' In the 1950s and 1960s they wanted blacks and Asians here to do the dirty jobs. Now they want to get rid of us.

This ruling class is taking this society backwards! We of the Spartacist League are a fairly small organisation. But we genuinely believe that we can point a way forward, here and elsewhere. In America, three years ago, our comrades organised 5000 largely black trade unionists to drive the fascist Ku Klux Klan off the streets of Washington. And Washington's an 80 per cent black city. It's in the same spirit that we seek to fight here. We have to build a revolutionary party, the same kind that existed in Russia in 1917 and which

united all races, all nationalities, men and women, all the oppressed, in a struggle which overthrew capitalism. Now Russia today certainly has problems, but I'll tell you, there's no unemployment there! And the



Cops laying into NUM picket during strike.

fascists don't go around terrorising people on the streets, because they don't dare show their faces!

For everyone here tonight who really wants to change things, the key lesson to draw is this: Organise the outrage, the anger! Tap the power, the social power of the working class! So we need a revolutionary party. We need one to get rid of capitalist exploitation and racist oppression. Let's get the cops out of Handsworth! Let's make sure those people who've been arrested walk free. Let's organise for community self-defence and power for workers and the oppressed. Thank you comrades.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Dennis Thompson: 'Police are racist strikebreakers'

I want to thank you for inviting me to speak here tonight. I've been on strike for twelve months, and I'm a supporter of *Workers Hammer*. I saw what's been happening in Handsworth and I wanted to be at this meeting to protest what the police and the government are doing. The media say it's a riot of two races, Asian against black. Especially after my experience in the miners strike I know the media bend the truth a lot. In my pit no one believed this, and I essentially don't either.

We learned about the cops in the strike too. They fit up roadblocks in Nottinghamshire to make it a no-go area. There was one day I was picketing in Nottinghamshire when a riot car took off at us. They arrested one picket for it, for so-called demonstrating by the cops. I was the only black guy in that group, and guess who they arrested.

Us miners, we got good support from our women's action group, from the black and Asian community. I was in London for nine days and I got good support from the black and Asian workers. Brixton adopted, in all, six South Wales pits. Before the miners strike, I wasn't really political, but the miners strike opened my eyes and a lot more miners' eyes. The Labour Party leaders are in with the police, who are racist strikebreakers. So I'm not surprised that they are siding with the

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## 'Bring the spirit of Saltley Gates to Handsworth'

To the Emergency Protest Meeting, 'Defend Handsworth! Racist cops out now!' at Gerrard St Church Centre.

Greetings from miners at Warsop Main. Sorry that we couldn't be with you tonight but you're in our thoughts. We would like to show physical support instead of verbal in your fight against the racist cops and the racist attitude of the government that are trying to suppress the people of Handsworth in their fight for a decent life. It is time that the labour movement massed together and supported the ethnic groups in Britain. Bring the fighting spirit of Saltley Gates and Orgreave to Handsworth. Paul Brewin, NUM Warsop Main.

# Lessons of a victory



Victorious DRV/NLF troops enter Da Nang, 1975.

AFF/Pictorial Parade

# Vietnam: Forty years of struggle

*This year marks the tenth anniversary of the heroic victory of the Vietnamese people over American imperialism and its puppet regime in South Vietnam. On 30 April 1975 the troops of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) and the South Vietnamese National Liberation Front triumphantly entered Saigon, as the last panicked American personnel were being lifted off the US embassy roof by helicopter. September also marked the fortieth anniversary of the invasion of Vietnam by British imperialist forces and the suppression in blood of the Trotskyist-led Saigon insurrection of workers and peasants. We honour these martyred Vietnamese Trotskyists and the decades of self-sacrifice and struggle by the Vietnamese people. We print below an edited transcript of a speech by Workers Hammer editor Len Michelson at a Workers Hammer Dayschool/May Day Celebration earlier this year in London.*

I want to start by saying what we said days after the army of the North Vietnamese workers state and the National Liberation Front conquered Saigon: 'We hail this stunning defeat of US imperialism, the first in a major war this century, and greet the victory of our class brothers and sisters in Indochina with internationalist proletarian solidarity' (*Workers Vanguard* no 68, 9 May 1975). The Spartacist tendency can say all of those words again today, and we feel it deeply. Because every one of us in this room, every working man and working woman around the world, owes a debt to the Vietnamese people for the thirty years of hardship and struggle with which they fought against imperialism.

It's striking how silent the rest of the left is on Vietnam today. The reason is that there's an imperialist war drive against the Soviet Union, and these 'lefts' are either running for cover or openly siding with the imperialists. In particular today, the United States is poised on going into Central America as part of that war drive, and the imperialist rulers want no more Vietnams, no more defeats. Richard Nixon just wrote a book -- the title was *No More Vietnams*. He ought to know! So

the fake-left lackeys of the imperialists go along with that slogan, 'No more Vietnams!' Our slogan is: Vietnam was a victory -- two, three, many defeats for imperialism! We say: Military victory to the leftist rebels in El Salvador! Defend, complete, extend the Nicaraguan Revolution! Smash NATO's anti-Soviet war drive!

## Stalinism v Trotskyism in Vietnam

Vietnam was a victory rich in lessons. First of all it demonstrated that the defence of the gains of the Russian Revolution of 1917 is very much linked to the defence and support of revolutionary struggles in other countries. It showed very clearly in practice, in life, what is a strategy for revolution particularly in the colonial countries, and demonstrated very clearly in practice the difference between the roles of Stalinism and Trotskyism in such a struggle. And it had lessons for how to mobilise the working class and the population in struggle against an imperialist war.

Before 1954 Vietnam and all of Indochina was a French colony, and there was a long history of nationalist struggle. Ho Chi Minh, who is seen as the founder of modern Vietnam, came from a nationalist background and became converted to Communism, when he was in Paris in 1920-21, under the impact of the Russian Revolution. His history was very much intertwined with the development -- and degeneration -- of the Communist International. So, as it happened, Ho Chi Minh was an agent of Stalin's in China in the mid-1920s when Stalin betrayed the Chinese Revolution. He was apparently fond of saying: my party is my country, my programme is independence. That's not Communism.

For much of the period throughout the 1930s and 1940s the independence movement in Vietnam was not led by openly pro-capitalist nationalists, but was divided between the Stalinists and the Trotskyists. In 1941 Ho's party, which was then called the Indochinese Communist Party, set up the Viet Minh as sort of a broad

umbrella group, a popular front, to lead the independence struggle. Even though its Stalinist leadership claimed to be Communist, all they called on the workers and peasants of Vietnam to fight for was simply a 'democratic republic' leaving in place the native capitalists, the national bourgeoisie.

This is a period where one has to go into the international situation. Stalin and the leadership of the Soviet Union and the Communist International were in an alliance with the so-called Allied imperialists. So the main slogan they advanced for workers in the capitalist countries of the West was to support their own ruling classes in the struggle, supposedly, against fascism. In Vietnam that led to a tricky situation, because France was one of the Allies, yet it was the colonial master of the Vietnamese people. Ho's grouping actually worked with the American OSS, which was the forerunner of the CIA, in the Second World War against the Japanese -- and even attempted to work with the French.

In counterposition to that there was a fairly strong Trotskyist movement. There were actually two organisations which considered themselves Trotskyist, looked to the Fourth International of Trotsky. They had their flaws, but in broad outline they pointed the road forward for national liberation and an end to capitalism. They were rooted in the working class -- and there was a working class in Vietnam. It was rather powerful in the main cities, and particularly in Saigon. And they put forward the basic Trotskyist understanding of permanent revolution, that the only way you could achieve independence from imperialism was by breaking the power of and expropriating the native capitalist class -- not by seeking an alliance with it -- by having the workers and the peasants come to power.

What the Trotskyists advanced was that the land had to be seized by the peasantry from the rich landlords, who were often the same people as the capitalists and were all working in cahoots with the imperialists. There was a great receptivity to that understanding, not surprisingly, among the workers and peasants. In 1945 as events came to a head you saw very clearly the difference between the roles of Stalinism and Trotskyism in advancing the revolutionary struggle. You cannot really understand what happened in Vietnam afterwards and why it took another thirty years without seeing what happened in 1945.

## The Saigon insurrection

During the war Indochina was occupied by Japan. After the atom-bombing by the Americans and the Japanese surrender, the Japanese occupation forces in Indochina fell to pieces and said: look, Vietnam is independent, do whatever you want. By and large the North was controlled by Ho's forces; in the South the situation was somewhat different. The puppet emperor, Bao Dai, simply abdicated and declared himself to be a servant of the democratic republic. The Viet Minh -- led by so-called Communists -- simply took over the old colonial apparatus. On 2 September 1945, the Viet Minh issued this 'declaration of independence' which was very consciously modelled on the American Declaration of Independence of 1776. It even began with the same words, and included in it phrases about how they were sure the Allied powers -- that's Roosevelt and Churchill -- would not go back on their promises of independence for the colonial peoples of the world.

Now, what was going on in places like Saigon where the Trotskyists had influence was something very different. Instead of talk about the promises of the Allied powers, 'People's Committees' sprang up. The People's Committees



Spartacist League/US fought for revolutionary perspective in antiwar movement.

Workers Vanguard

were basically soviets, workers councils. They were armed, they were democratic. Within a matter of several weeks throughout the southern region you had 150 of these People's Committees spring up. Saigon was basically controlled by the People's Committees and -- keep in mind -- it was the main city of the southern region of Vietnam. Factory groups were established, armed, in many cases led by Trotskyists -- disciplined groups that were prepared to take on the returning imperialists. And they called for unconditional independence immediately from the French and for the formation of a workers and peasants government based on these sorts of organs that were set up.

The Viet Minh, committed to the idea of a democratic republic with the capitalists in place, of course opposed these developments. What they did was to carry out a coup behind the scenes. They declared that all arms except those belonging to the Viet Minh were illegal -- in other words that the factory groups and the workers militias which had been established should disband and disarm. Now arms are never an academic question, but in this case it was very concrete because the imperialists were about to come back into the country. So the question of the workers being armed was central to the question of whether Vietnam would achieve its independence. You could make all the declarations you wanted, but if you didn't have arms to meet the invasion it meant nothing.

What the Viet Minh did then was call a massive demonstration -- the streets of Saigon were lined not only with the flags of Vietnam but of America and Britain -- to welcome the British troops that were coming into the country to 'restore order'. Several days later, the main People's Council in Saigon was surrounded by armed Viet Minh. They were all arrested and tragically, including the Trotskyists, simply gave themselves up instead of waging a fight, which in that case would have been a fight against representatives of the capitalist order. As always happens in history, the betrayals of the Stalinists were repaid in the blood of the masses.

### The Labour government's bloody butchery

I remember reading an article last year in *Socialist Action* about the wonderful 'socialist' gains of the Attlee government that was put in power in 1945. You want to know the first action of the Attlee government? A month after it was elected it sent an expeditionary force to Vietnam under General Douglas Gracey, whose whole background after Sandhurst was in suppressing colonial struggles, mostly in the Middle East. So he led a British expeditionary force of mainly Indian and Gurkha troops into Saigon. Its supposed purpose was to restore law and order and to disarm the Japanese army and send them back to Japan. Since law and order was already restored and the Japanese were disarmed, it didn't have much to do. But its real job was to suppress the Vietnamese people in blood.

The first thing they did was they banned every single Vietnamese paper, including the paper of the Viet Minh which had welcomed them in. They imposed martial law immediately and a week after they arrived Gracey armed the French colons and former French colonial troops and instigated them to launch an attack on the Viet Minh's headquarters. And what pro-



Millions of blacks came to hate this racist, imperialist war. Black GI in jungles of Vietnam reading NLF sign: 'US Negro Army men! You are committing the same ignominious crimes in South Vietnam that the KKK clique is perpetrating against your family at home.'

ceeded was just a bloodbath; they killed whomever they could kill.

The struggle did continue. In particular the factory groups led by the Trotskyists fought valiantly and heroically. But they were finally overpowered and between the British and French imperialist troops and the collaboration of the Stalinist Viet Minh, many of the Trotskyist cadres were assassinated.

One of the ironic points about this is that Gracey, the British commander, rearmed the Japanese troops. One observer at the time noted that, 'in the best playing field tradition', the British officers admired the military skill of the Japanese in putting down the Vietnamese. When it came to suppressing a struggle by the colonial masses, the 'anti-fascist' war evaporated.

Sometime after Christmas 1945, Gracey packed his bags and said, 'We've done our best for the French. Now it's up to them to carry on.' It's true, they had done their 'best', because in fact Britain was instrumental in restoring the colonial order in Vietnam and Indochina at a crucial moment. And then the French did 'carry on' -- for another eight years of bloody brutality against the Vietnamese people.

The Labour Party's treachery in Britain was more than equalled by the Socialists and Communists in France. It was Maurice Thorez, head of the French Communist Party, who in his role as vice premier signed the order sending the French expeditionary forces into Vietnam in 1947. So you had the disgusting spectacle of French Stalinists sending in a capitalist army against their own Vietnamese comrades.

### From Dien Bien Phu to the Gulf of Tonkin

Indochina was simply one of a series of anti-colonial struggles that broke out in this region after World War II -- in Borneo, in the Philippines, in Malaya. In 1950, shortly after the victory of Mao Tse-Tung's forces in China, US Democratic president Truman -- 'friend of labour' and so on --

issued an open declaration which stated that the American government had a direct responsibility in intervening in Indochina as part of the war against Communism and 'Soviet imperialism'. By the time the French were defeated in 1954 America was footing 80 per cent of the bill for that war. And at the time there was considerable sentiment in the American ruling class not only for a land invasion but for the use of nuclear weapons.

At Dien Bien Phu in 1954 the French basically laid down the gauntlet to the Vietnamese and said, we'll take you on in a set-piece battle -- thinking, these Asians, you know, can only fight in the jungle. And the French got creamed. In fact, the artillery commander for the French committed suicide with a hand grenade. As a result of this decisive victory the Viet Minh controlled 80 per cent of the country. Yet at the Geneva 'peace' conference the Soviet and Chinese Stalinists pressured the Vietnamese into surrendering, giving up 20 per cent of the country for the promise of 'free elections'. And again, treachery was repaid in blood.

The 'free elections' never happened, because even the president of the United States, Eisenhower, admitted Ho Chi Minh would have got 80 per cent of the vote. In the North, what happened was a social revolution, the landlords were eliminated, a bureaucratically deformed workers state was created under a nationalist Stalinist regime led by Ho. Yet it illustrated another one of the lessons of the Trotskyist understanding of permanent revolution, that it takes the overthrow of capitalism to achieve genuine independence. But true to the Stalinist understanding of 'socialism in one country', what they proceeded to do was attempt to build 'socialism' in one-half of one country. So they put off the struggle in the South to the indefinite future.

In the South, you had a puppet regime set up under Ngo Dinh Diem, which was simply corrupt. The first thing they started doing was taking all the land that had been seized by the peasants and giving it back to the rich landlords. Within several years of the cease-fire agreement, peasant uprisings started developing in the South. By 1960 North Vietnam had to intervene in order to take control of it and they created the National Liberation Front (NLF). Again the NLF was only for a 'democratic republic' and so on but basically it was leading a struggle which was a civil war. On one side were the workers and peasants and on the other side were the imperialists and their native capitalist puppet regime.

By this time there was again a Democratic government in power in the US, with John F. Kennedy in 1961. One of the first actions of this 'liberal' before he got around to the Cuban missile crisis and the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba was to send in the first battalion of American land troops in Vietnam, which was Green Beret 'special forces'. From that first instalment of several hundred Green Berets, in three or four years time there was a massive American combat presence. At its peak it reached over half a million troops in the course of the war and involved something like three million troops.

In August of 1964 there was the so-called Gulf of Tonkin incident which, even in the terms the American government put it forward, was a direct provocation. What they said was, they sent one of their battleships up into North Vietnamese waters to peacefully shell

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## The faces of imperialist terror



A very, very dirty colonial war: Saigon's anti-communist chief of police executing suspected NLF supporter (left); children fleeing American napalm bombing (right).

# Vietnam...

(Continued from page 7)

the people of North Vietnam and, lo and behold, the North Vietnamese decided to shoot back. So they wanted emergency powers and action in Congress to resist this 'aggression' by the North Vietnamese against their 'peaceful' battleship. As it happened, even this was a lie. There was no North Vietnamese 'provocation' and, furthermore, the emergency resolution which was put to Congress was drafted a full five months before the 'incident' ever happened. They drafted it on May 25 and they put it on August 4. And what proceeded was a very, very dirty, filthy colonial war.

It was a war that was captured in photos. There are two photographs in particular that stand out in my mind. One was a photo of a little girl running away after her village had been napalmed, and the other was a photo of a Saigon chief of police murdering a supposed Viet Cong (NLF) with his pistol. Napalm was designed in such a way that it stuck to the flesh after it landed on you and just burned and burned and burned your body until there was no flesh left. Another weapon was the CBU, or Cluster Bomb Unit, which was a giant drumcan of explosives which was detonated in mid-air so that whatever wasn't burned would be suffocated because it sucked up all the air.

Then there was the Strategic Hamlets programme, which was borrowed from the British in Malaya. A reporter at the time said, if you stand still in the jungle long enough they would 'throw a piece of barbed wire around you and call you a strategic hamlet'. It was a forcible resettlement concentration camp programme. Within a space of about nine months in 1962 apparently they took one-third of the entire rural population of South Vietnam and put it in these concentration camps. And there was the Phoenix programme. Only the CIA could think of a name like this because the phoenix is supposed to be the bird that rises up from death, and this was a death programme. It was an assassination programme -- they'd have these giant hit lists and your job was to kill all the people on the list. Something like a hundred thousand people were killed through the Phoenix programme.

## The antiwar movement

I remember when I first came around the antiwar movement in the US, one of the most popular chants was 'Hey, hey, LBJ, how many kids did you kill today?' Even if it had a certain pacifist tinge to it, it captured how bloodthirsty this war was and was perceived to be in increasing numbers by American youth and workers. Of course here you had the Wilson government, another Labour government, which went lock, stock and barrel with the American war against the Vietnamese people, and it led to the formation of a mass antiwar movement here as well.

Going back to the US, starting in the mid-1960s, not coincidentally combining with the fact that they had started conscription again, especially on the university campuses you got this massive outpouring of demonstrations against the Vietnam war. It didn't just stay on the campuses; in particular it spread to the black population. It was quite striking that Muhammad Ali, who was then the world heavyweight boxing champion, got up when it was his turn to be conscripted and said, 'No Viet Cong ever called me nigger -- I am not going.' They not only sent him to prison, but they took away his heavyweight title. He captured the sentiment of millions of young black Americans: why should I go over there to

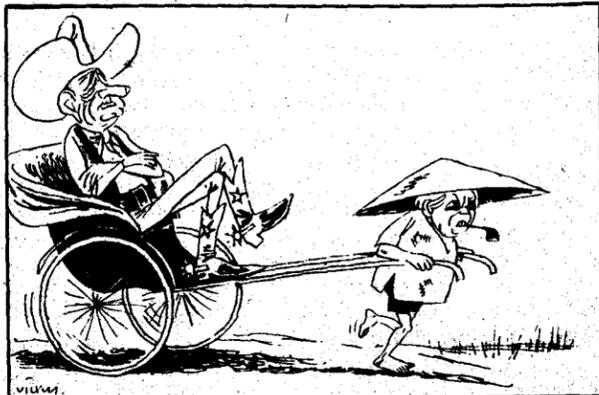


Vietnamese independence fighters jailed and executed by re-invading French colonial troops in late 1945 after British forces bloodily restored colonial order.

fight for a racist war, for a racist government that denies me my own rights here at home? Yet 30 per cent of the army was made up of blacks. So a new word came into the vocabulary: 'fragging'. Apparently the most popular use of the fragmentation grenade was against American officers by American GIs behind the lines.

I remember the first antiwar demonstration I went on was in April 1967. There were a half million people marching through the streets of New York City. You had entire contingents carrying the flag of the NLF, which was the enemy flag as far as the American government was concerned. But you didn't actually see too many black faces on that demonstration. So the question for many of us at the time was, why was this movement against an extremely unpopular war that was fought primarily by black and working class people never very receptive to blacks and workers in the United States? There's a reason for that. The 'official' antiwar movement, led and orchestrated by an organisation that called itself Trotskyist, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), was always committed to being in favour of capitalism. And that meant sucking up to racist, anti-working class Democratic Party politicians.

Vicky, New Statesman



Wilson's Labour government went 'all the way with LBJ' (US president Lyndon B Johnson), fully supporting their US partner's dirty war in Vietnam. Cartoon of the time depicts British involvement.

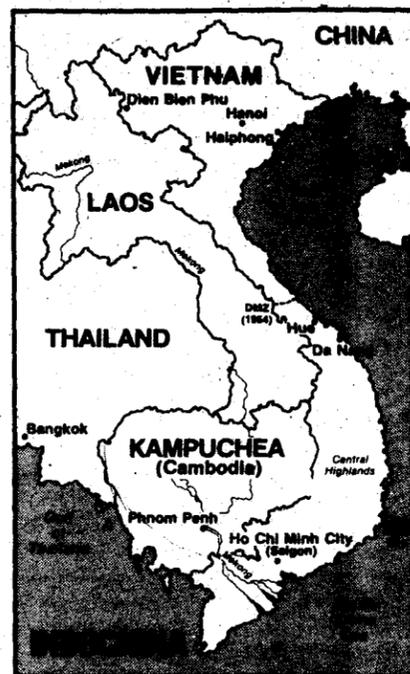
The SWP explained that it was the contradiction of these Democratic Party politicians that they got up on platforms to speak against the war. But the simple truth of it was that a wing of the American ruling class recognised that Vietnam was a losing proposition from the standpoint of capitalism. And there are two events that bracketed that understanding.

In 1965 there was a bloody right-wing coup in Indonesia against the left-nationalist government headed by Sukarno. The Indonesian Communist Party, which was in the government, had a membership of three million and something like 12 million people in this country of 100 million under its leadership. The coup resulted in the slaughter of a half million people; literally the rivers of Indonesia ran with blood for months. As a result of that coup a section of the American ruling class decided that as long as they held on to Indonesia, Vietnam could go and American imperialism would recover from it.

Then in February 1968 there was the Tet Offensive. And it became clear to an even larger section of the American ruling class that not only was the price of an American withdrawal acceptable but defeat was looking very bloody likely. What happened in the Tet Offensive was the North Vietnamese and NLF forces in the space of several weeks basically overran every one of the major strategic American military positions in the South; for 24 hours they even occupied the American embassy in Saigon.

We of the Spartacist League/US waged a hard fight within the antiwar movement then around several key strategic questions, with the aim of transforming it into a mass revolutionary anti-capitalist movement of workers and the oppressed, the sort that the Bolsheviks built in Russia. Early on we said the minimum demand has to be immediate, unconditional withdrawal of the American army from Vietnam because there is a revolution going on there and we take sides with the Vietnamese people. When the imperialists mined the harbour of Haiphong in the North and when the bombs were raining down on Vietnam, we put forward the slogan, 'For Soviet nuclear shield to cover North Vietnam', because we recognised that the one thing that kept the American imperialists at bay was the understanding that the Soviet Union had nuclear weapons and we wanted the Soviet Union to make it clear that an attack on Vietnam was an attack on Russia. Our slogans were: 'Victory to the Vietnamese Revolution! All Indochina must go Communist!' This was directed first against

Stalinist Viet Minh accepted division of country at 17th parallel (DMZ) in 1954, despite smashing French militarily at battle of Dien Bien Phu. Strategy of conciliating imperialism prolonged the war for another two decades.



the antiwar liberals who wanted to say that communism had nothing to do with the war and also against the Stalinists who argued that it was simply a nationalist struggle.

We emphasised the necessity for a working-class orientation in the antiwar movement. For example, we called for 'Labour political strikes against the war!' As the war went on, there was increasing power in these slogans, because increasing sections of the American working population began to feel solidarity with these strategies. And there were, for example, in Australia strikes and blacking actions carried out by dockers in solidarity with the Vietnamese revolution. Finally, we said that this popular front that tied the workers movement to the Democratic capitalist politicians in the antiwar movement had to be broken.

There could have been literally thousands of people, in the United States and elsewhere, won over to the communist cause at the time. Unfortunately, even the many subjectively anti-imperialist youth who supported an NLF victory were eventually drawn back to supporting capitalism because they had come to identify communism with the reformist-nationalist policies of the Stalinists. And in Britain, many of the same radicalised youth who fifteen years ago denounced the Labour Party's support to the Vietnam war are today, like *Socialist Action*, whitewashing the pro-imperialist crimes of the Labour Party, past and present. The problem was that they were not won to an independent, revolutionary political perspective.

Today a lot of these people who were instrumental in keeping the antiwar movement safe for capitalism want to make believe that what got the United States out of Vietnam was the fact that every year in the springtime a half million kids would march around in the streets. That's a lie. What got the United States out of Vietnam was that it was defeated in battle by the Vietnamese people.

The imperialists want to forget that defeat so they can go out and try it again. But there's the so-called 'Vietnam syndrome'. The American people still remember that bloody war and don't want to get into another. Furthermore, every time the Pentagon generals sit around with Reagan and start talking about new plans for where to invade, I bet they have nightmares about that last American helicopter taking off from the embassy in Saigon in 1975.

Even to this day, the imperialists have not given up trying to overturn that victory by the Vietnamese people. There's been a blockade of Vietnam. There's been incessant border provocations by the Chinese Stalinist allies of the imperialists, including in 1979 when the Chinese invaded Vietnam, as we said at the time, as a catspaw for US imperialism. And Thatcher's Britain is the most steadfast ally of the US in these imperialist adventures, ultimately aimed at overturning the great victory of the Russian Revolution.

It's appropriate that ten years after the victory in Vietnam we dedicate ourselves to the construction of the sort of parties that are grounded in the understanding that you cannot conciliate imperialism -- as the Stalinists and nationalists seek to do -- parties based on the Trotskyist programme which can carry these victories forward. And, especially with the example of China's reactionary role in front of us, that means including through political revolutions to get rid of the Stalinist bureaucracies whose nationalist blinkers keep the struggle back, and going forward to international socialist revolution. ■

# South Africa...

(Continued from page 12)

'business climate' when they see one. In late July, Chase Manhattan Bank secretly notified its business borrowers in South Africa that the bank's loans would not be routinely renewed or 'rolled over'. When word leaked out, every international financier wanted out.

'The banks have accomplished in two weeks what politicians haven't done in years', was the ironic comment of the managing director of Barclays National Bank in South Africa. In terms of impact the bankers' actions totally dwarfed the tokenistic sanctions bill promoted by the Democrats in the US Congress and Reagan's slightly weaker administrative sanctions designed to head off Congressional action. Reagan's sanctions 'will have a negligible impact on the economy of South Africa', noted the *New York Times* (10 September), partly because they 'only validate changes already in effect', such as the drying up of American credit.

The ban on the sale of Krugerrands is essentially symbolic, since South African gold will find its way into the world market in other forms, and the sale of nuclear power equipment was already ostensibly halted by Carter. The Democratic bill's provision for further sanctions within 12 months depends on the president's judgement whether or not South Africa has made 'significant progress'. There's little doubt Reagan will discover 'progress' in South Africa, since to him, as for Thatcher, that means a pile of dead black 'terrorists'. The slap-on-the-wrist effect of capitalist sanctions can be seen by the results of the long-standing arms embargo against South Africa:

'The arms embargo, initiated by the UN security council in 1963 and since imposed by all western states, has had a highly specific effect. South Africa's arms self-sufficiency has risen from 40% to roughly 85% under the embargo. Its public-sector arms manufacturer, Armscor, is now the third biggest corporation in South Africa and its emphasis on tactical weapons has turned the country into a substantial net arms exporter.' (*Economist*, 30 March)

In short, so long as the South African bourgeoisie remains in power with access to the world market -- ie, so long as capitalism survives there -- the apartheid rulers will find ways around any sanctions. Even the vastly more upsetting actions of international financiers, which forced South African central bank governor Gerhard de Kock to make a hat-in-hand trip to Washington and London, can eventually be ironed out. 'If and when the South African Reserve Bank manages to re-schedule its debts, Swiss and West German banks will pick up the positions of the American banks', a London stockbroker told the *Wall Street Journal* (5 September).

## The Cold War and apartheid

The primary demands of the reformist anti-apartheid movement -- disinvestment of South African holdings and sanctions against South Africa -- are being fulfilled, as much as they ever will be, yet the apartheid system remains unbroken and unyielding. Nor would Thatcher adding a few cosmetic sanctions of her own make an iota of difference. This was underscored by Botha's infamous hardline speech of 15 August. Only a fool or a Thatcherite could peddle the latest 'concessions' announcements by Botha & Co as anything other than cosmetics for foreign consumption.

The proposal to give blacks South African 'citizenship' is just hot air, since blacks will still be barred even from voting and the separate black 'homelands' will be maintained. A government panel's proposal to abolish the pass laws is largely a recognition of reality, namely that hundreds of thousands of blacks have illegally flocked to the urban areas anyway. The panel's 'reform' would replace the passbooks with a national 'identity document' for everybody, including whites, thereby expanding police surveillance powers. One thing is certain: there will be no dismantling of apartheid so long as the present rulers remain in power, and they will not go peacefully.

The assumption of the disinvestment/sanctions movement really is that South African capitalism can be fundamentally reformed through the pressure of other capitalist powers, in particular Britain and the US. In this sense, the ANC, which advocates 'people's war' and supports the United Democratic Front (UDF), which advocates nonviolent pressure, shares with capitalists like Harry

Oppenheimer and David Rockefeller a desire for a 'negotiated solution'.

Botha went out of his way to publicly denounce as 'treason' the visit of business leaders like Gavin Relly, chairman of Oppenheimer's Anglo-American conglomerate, with the ANC. Despite recent statements by the ANC



Black South African miners victimised for striking in early September.

that there is nothing to talk about except the immediate handing over of power, they have long tried to woo liberal capitalists like Oppenheimer with promises of capitalist opportunity. 'We have no intention of nationalizing everything', ANC second-in-command Tambo vowed recently. 'We will have private property, private businesses and so on... There will even be foreign investment' (*New York Times*, 7 September).

While the ANC mouths phrases about the working class being the 'backbone' and 'leading force' of the struggle, Tambo angles for a deal with the deadly enemies of the prolet-

ariat. Not accidentally, Anglo-American was exempted from the gold mine strike of early September. The meeting with Anglo-American chairman Relly took place 13 September in Zambia, and Tambo called the talks 'a very important contribution'.

The idea that British imperialism -- whose crimes against the people of Ireland, of South Asia and of Africa itself are of incalculable scope -- can be pressured into pressurising their South African allies to dismantle apartheid is obscene. So too the American imperialists, who carpetbombed Indochina, A-bombed Hiroshima and Nagasaki and prop up every tinpot despot on the face of the planet. The hypocrisy of the British and American ruling classes in lecturing the Afrikaners on 'democracy' and 'morality' is colossal. Moreover, Downing Street and the White House are firmly united with the racist butchers of Pretoria in their Cold War axis against the Soviet Union.

The disinvestment/sanctions lobby has always denounced Thatcher and Reagan's 'constructive engagement' with Pretoria and looks to the 'liberal' imperialist politicians of the Labour Party and the Alliance (in America, the Democratic Party) to lead the fight for sanctions. But when in power the Labourites too have been quite happy to support reactionary racist regimes from Pretoria to Rhodesia. Just remember the Wilson government's blatant sanctions-ousting in order to prop up Ian Smith's white-supremacist government. You can't look to the class enemy or its labour lackeys at home to fight oppression abroad!

Smashing the US/Britain/South Africa alliance which means racist terror from Harlem to Handsworth to Soweto is integrally linked to the defence of the social gains of October -- the expropriation of the capitalist class and the creation of a planned economy. It's necessary to extend proletarian revolution worldwide. The black workers of South Africa are not only the powerhouse for social revolution in their own country, but throughout the desperately oppressed and impoverished continent.

Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 387, 20 September

## Warsop miners...

(Continued from page 2)

those links requires the forging of a revolutionary party in counterposition to the Labour traitors.

The miners strike was a struggle on behalf of all workers and oppressed. We did what we could internationally to try and ensure a victory. Our comrades in North America collected over £25,000 through the Partisan Defence Committee for the Miners Solidarity Fund. Wherever we had supporters we sought to initiate and fight for solidarity action -- strikes, blacking of coal and substitute fuel. But we were only doing our duty, and wish we could have done more. Our comrades got as much as they gave, and then some, in valuable experience of direct class struggle from the heroic men and women of the strike. For working-class solidarity represents the road to future victory, the abolition of the capitalist system and the assurance that so many worker militants have not fought -- and sometimes died -- in vain. ■

## Notts scabs...

(Continued from page 2)

originally hoped for. While COSA (white-collar staff) has rejected the overtures from Lynk & Co, both Leicestershire and South Derbyshire look distinctly doubtful. Even in Notts itself miners are deeply split over the scab union.

Thatcher/MacGregor's soliciting of massive bribes to pay for the scab split underlines the fact that the 'Union of Democratic Mineworkers' is no union at all (nor is it even faintly 'democratic'). It is purely and simply a tool of the bosses. MacGregor now threatens another 50 pit closures and 50,000 redundancies. Having failed in their primary objective of smashing the NUM in the strike, he and Iron Bitch Thatcher now seek to wreak vengeance by promoting the scab split in order to cripple the union's fighting strength. And as in Poland, with Reagan/Thatcher's scab 'union' Solidarnosc, the appeal is to anti-communism. This anti-union breakaway can and must be crushed. Smash the Spencerites! ■

## Spartacist League Public Meetings

**From Handsworth to Soweto:**

# SMASH RACIST TERROR!

- Smash apartheid -- for workers revolution!
- Defend Handsworth -- racist cops out now!

### London

Wed 2 October, 12.30pm  
TV Room, Kentish Town site,  
Polytechnic of North London,  
Prince of Wales Rd NW5

Fri 11 October, 7.30pm  
Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq WC1  
(Holborn tube)

### Birmingham

Thurs 3 October, 7.30pm  
University of Birmingham Spartacist  
Society meeting  
Private Dining Rm, Guild of Students,  
University of Birmingham, Edgbaston

Guest speaker: Wally Roberts, Lea  
Hall NUM (in a personal capacity)

### Sheffield

Tues 8 October, 7.00pm  
Sheffield University Spartacist Society  
meeting  
Octagon Centre, Sheffield University,  
Western Bank

Guest speaker: Dennis Thompson,  
Brodsworth NUM (in a personal capacity)

For more information, ring London (01) 278 2232, Birmingham (021) 236 9774, or Sheffield (0742) 587282.



Brixton: Racist cops wade into black youth.



## Cops riot...

(Continued from page 1)

Thatcher is intent on teaching a bloody lesson to the black and Asian population who so fulsomely supported the miners. And that means escalating racist attacks. Racist deportations of Tamil refugees fleeing from bloody pogroms in Sri Lanka. Vindictive arrests of Asian youth who dare defend their communities against racist mobs. Fascist murders and firebombings to which the cops turn a blind eye. On every front, the racist rulers wage war on workers and the oppressed minorities at home as they gear up for nuclear war against the Soviet Union. Handsworth made it crystal clear.

From start to finish it had the smell of government conspiracy and provocation all around it. The first building to burn, the Villa Cross bingo hall, had been publicly marked for an arson attack at a police-sponsored white vigilante group meeting a week earlier. As cops busted into crowds of youth, the blaze was allowed to spread down Lozells Road for three hours. Within days the number of arrests -- overwhelmingly black but Asian and white as well -- climbed to more than 300. The police and media immediately launched a high-powered 'Big Lie' campaign aimed at transforming the police riot into an interracial bloodbath between blacks and Asians, spreading blatant lies that it was all the work of (non-existent) big-time black 'drug pushers'.

A wide cross-section of the Handsworth community closed ranks against this murderous campaign. Black and Asian community leaders came together to lay wreaths in memory of the two Asian men burned to death and publicly called for a boycott of a government 'inquiry'. The Labour leadership, in contrast, gave down-the-line support to Thatcher's racist cops. From right-winger Roy Hattersley to Birmingham 'left' Labour MP Jeff Rooker, they joined in the racist diatribes against 'criminals' and 'barbarians'. And right behind them were the fake revolutionaries. One and all they amnestied the cop terror, either openly or through their abject refusal to demand an end to the racist cop occupation.

*Militant* (13 September) echoed the cops with its disgusting tirade against 'the plague of drug addiction' in Handsworth. *Socialist Action* (13 September) addressed its appeal, 'Labour must defend black youth', to the racist 'Labour politicians'. *Workers Power* called for 'a really open enquiry into the causes of the riot' (undated leaflet), echoing the Birmingham Labour Council. The only one of these outfits even to call for 'Cops off the streets' was the bizarre Revolutionary Communist Party, whose scab-loving, anti-union politics lead it naturally to reject any conception of mobilising the heavily minority Birmingham labour movement against the racist cop terror. Effective action, no: for the RCP it's enough to 'stand up for the right of black youth to take on the agents of oppression on the street' (next step, 20 September).

In this deeply racist country, Handsworth/Brixton is a litmus test of revolutionary intentions. Lost without Labour, committed to Kinnock in '88, the fake revolutionaries are running scared. And this time they've run straight into the arms of open apologists for cop terror against black and Asian youth. These so-called 'revolutionaries' try to be ever so reasonable -- an inquiry here or there, a bit of tinkering with YTS, a few pleas to Kinnock/Hattersley. Any kid in Handsworth or Brixton can tell these learned 'Marxists' one fundamental axiom of Marxism:

this system has got to be torn down, not tinkered with.

When Douglas Hurd was driven out of Handsworth on 10 September, one person remarked: 'You see that? He's scared. But he's got to be because those kids aren't afraid of prison. They've got nothing to be afraid of because they've got nothing worth living for' (*Caribbean Times*, 20 September). But the desperate black and Asian youth of this country can have something worth living for. One black youth in Brixton said, 'The police had this coming to them. They've got to learn they can't get away with doing this to black people any longer' (*Sunday Mirror*, 29 September). Another in Handsworth explained, 'Every night on the TV you see how the black youth is fighting back in South Africa against apartheid. The same thing is going on here, man. So we must fight back' (*New Statesman*, 13 September).

Fight back, yes! But how? What is needed is a revolutionary strategy to channel the anger and outrage, to mobilise the social power of the proletariat. And don't get too complacent if you're white or middle-class: five-year-old John Shorthouse in Birmingham was white as well, and even elderly white grandmothers like 78-year-old Hilda Murrell who have done nothing more than support CND have had fatal visits from the police. The miners strike showed the road towards reversing this murderous crap: militant class struggle can inspire and unite behind it the millions of this country's oppressed.

The Spartacist League has fought to tap the sense of unity between minorities and trade union militants kindled in the miners strike, as part of our perspective of building the multiracial revolutionary workers party which will be a tribune of all the oppressed. We have fought to mobilise the integrated Birmingham labour movement for defence of the Handsworth community against the cop terror. The same is needed in Brixton and elsewhere. Protest strike action by London's heavily black and Asian tube and bus workers, for example, could make the racist bosses put a halt to their reign of terror in Brixton. But that takes a political struggle against the racist, pro-capitalist labour misleaders. We reprint here a leaflet distributed in the thousands throughout Handsworth and at major industrial concentrations in Birmingham, pointing the road forward to a unified working-class fight against racist cop terror and the capitalist system that stands behind it.

## Lea Hall miner: 'I felt duty bound to come'

We print below excerpts of a solidarity message by miner Wally Roberts to a defence campaign meeting organised by the Afro-Caribbean Self-Help Organisation, 12 September in Handsworth:

I want to thank you for inviting me to speak. I'm from Lea Hall, it's in Rugeley. I was on strike for twelve months and I'm a supporter of the *Workers Hammer* and the Spartacist League. After our experience of the strike, everyone knows police were used to break the strike and are racists, how they oppress and harass daily minorities in this country. We will never forget the bond that was forged between us and the minorities who supported us so generously.

On my way here I saw a sight I haven't seen since the strike, a line of cop vans waiting all along the Pershore Road. The police occupation of Handsworth has to end. The dragnet arrests must be stopped. Trade unionists and black, Asian, Irish communities have the same enemy and must fight to-

## Spartacist League leaflet

Thatcher and her cops are out for black and Asian blood! The line of the police and the powers-that-be Monday night in Handsworth was: Let it burn! And that meant two Asian men burnt alive. Then the police subjected this heavily black and Asian community to a vicious dragnet and occupation, arresting more than 90 people. Racist rags like the *Sun* scream for the blood of 'black bombers', including a man whose only 'crime' is that he hates the cops for almost blowing his young daughter away just like little John Shorthouse got it a few weeks ago.

For months the cops have been turning the screws tighter and tighter on the Handsworth community, looking to provoke an excuse for a massive police invasion. Last Monday they did it. Four days later Lozells Road looks like Dresden after the WWII terror-bombing. The police occupation is like something out of a military coup: armoured cop vans parked on every side street, two cops every ten yards on Soho Road, militarised convoys of upwards of twenty vanloads of police rolling in and out of the area. On Tuesday night, cops in riot gear baton-charged a crowd of youth on Soho Road.

First and foremost it is necessary to mobilise to get the police out of Handsworth now! The overriding need is for organised defence of the community against the racist police reign of terror. However valiantly they resist, bottles and bricks from angry young kids is no match for the organised armed force of the police. For our part the Spartacist League commits itself to mobilising whatever resources possible in organising mass protest against the police occupation. In the face of open threats from Chief Constable Geoffrey Dear to start using rubber bullets, it is particularly urgent to resurrect the old Chartist demand for the right of all citizens to bear arms. Most importantly, effective defence of Handsworth against racist/cop terror means linking up with and mobilising the social muscle of the labour movement. Miners from South Wales and the Midlands whom the people of Handsworth generously supported during the strike must be called into battle. And alongside them, car workers from Longbridge, many of whom live in the area, and heavily minority bus and post office workers. **DEFEND HANDSWORTH! DOWN WITH THE POLICE OCCUPATION/DRAGNET! DROP ALL THE CHARGES AGAINST**

gether. I felt duty-bound to come. I'm not speaking in an official capacity for the NUM, but I know a number of miners who have already said they want to stand with you in any action called in defence of the community and those jailed, arrested and beaten up by cops....

I have no illusions about the leadership of the unions but the fight must be taken up by the unions. Unions have power in this country that the bosses and the government can't ignore. I would like to see integrated defence -- black, Asian and white -- calling on the strength of the unions, in the same way as happened during our strike when black, Asian and white workers struck against racism defending Zed Mills.

The police occupation and persecution of Handsworth should not go unprotested. If the community here organises protest action, which I believe would be a very good thing, I know the *Workers Hammer* will make every effort to assist you and alert trade unionists as we've already tried to do.

THE VICTIMS OF THE COPS' DRAGNET! COPS OUT OF HANDSWORTH NOW! BUILD INTEGRATED TRADE UNION-CENTRED COMMUNITY DEFENCE GUARDS TO PATROL THE STREETS AND FIGHT COP TERROR!

Even as they watched Handsworth burn, the Tories, their cops and their kept media tried to instigate interracial violence with deliberate lies seeking to pit West Indians against Asians. There is a government conspiracy to provoke communal violence among the oppressed. Hard on the heels of its vicious onslaught against the miners, the government wishes to see the abused, oppressed, impoverished and unemployed sections of the society set at each other's throats. But when young black West Indians formed defence guards around Asian shops, everybody in the community knew who the real enemy was. When Home Secretary Douglas Hurd, fresh from putting down Irish Catholics in Belfast, dared to show his face on Tuesday he was driven out in less than five minutes by a hail of bricks and bottles from black, Asian and white youth.

Racist cop terror, the Nationality Act, deportations -- this is the order of the day in Thatcher's Britain. When the government dragged the Newham Seven through the courts for defending their East London Asian community against fascist terror, it was a clear



Home secretary Douglas Hurd in Handsworth, 10 September, moments before being driven out by outraged black, Asian and white youth.

signal to the racist killers in and out of uniform to proceed with impunity. Days after four of these heroic Asian youth were convicted, an eight-months pregnant Asian woman and her three children were firebombed, murdered, in the same area. Now, according to a 10 September statement by the African/Caribbean Community of Handsworth, 'A white vigilante group at a recent residents association meeting declared its intention to burn down the old Villa Cross bingo hall' -- the first building to burn Monday night. Meanwhile the fascists of the British National Party are threatening to stage a race-hate provocation this weekend in Birmingham. These scum must be smashed by massive trade union/minority mobilisations! Down with the bosses' racist immigration laws!

Labour Party deputy leader Roy Hattersley ventured into Handsworth only to echo Thatcher's racism with his attacks on 'acts of criminality'. He should have been run out of the community too. And Hattersley's more 'left'-talking Labour Party friends just want to sweep all the outrage and anger under the carpet with bullshit about 'democratic control' and 'accountability' of the racist killer cops. What can you expect from a party that imposed 'virginity tests' on Asian women?

This city and this country are too far gone for band-aid 'solutions' that do nothing for the oppressed. We say: organise the outrage! Fight for working-class power! The miners strike gave a taste of the vitally needed unity in struggle of all oppressed behind the power of the working class. It is the absence of a revolutionary working class leadership which allows the pent-up anger and frustration over massive unemployment, squalid housing and racist/cop terror to be squandered in undirected dead-end outbursts of rage. From Reagan's firebombing of black Philadelphia to the streets of Handsworth today, the capitalist oppressors are waging war on racial minorities and workers. It's no accident that Thatcher and Reagan are the biggest boosters of the apartheid butchers in South Africa. The labour movement must be mobilised to defeat the racist rulers: to win jobs for all, to resist and smash racist terror. The brutally oppressed West Indian and Asian communities have a key role to play in building a communist vanguard party which can smash this whole, rotten, racist capitalist system. Mobilise to defend Handsworth against racist cop terror! ■

## Protest meeting...

(Continued from page 5)

police in Handsworth. On the other hand, I know the *Workers Hammer* will make every effort to assist you and have done so already.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Alan Robe: 'Never let the bastards grind you down'

Evening comrades, brothers. And I call you brothers because without your help we would never have had the opportunity of taking the government on. The miners strike would have collapsed a hell of a long time ago.

I've only been to Birmingham once before and, I'll be honest with you, I didn't even know where the hell it was. You know, I've travelled all over the world, but Birmingham, I've watched it on the TV -- you know, 'Crossroads', that type of thing. But I'm glad to be here tonight and the reason I'm glad to be here is I've been watching the media and the propaganda that they've put out. And the 'Panorama' programme, by the way, I thought it was a load of shit, I really did, I didn't enjoy one minute of it. I couldn't. I would watch it and people wanted to get a word in. Now, I don't know whether that was done live or whether they actually cut the tape and showed what they wanted to show. But the impression I got was they showed what they wanted to show, and they showed disunity among the blacks and the Asians and the whites. And there was one woman there, she was shouting out: 'Don't blame the blacks and Asians, blame the unemployment!' And that's the biggest problem you've got.

Where I come from if I were looking for a job, you're talking about a *village* of unemployed. Now the pit I work in is Hatfield Main. It covers a wide area, probably about 30,000 people in the four villages. I mean, you come from a *big town*. But I looked at it and I thought, ten years ago I wouldn't have bothered, you know. I don't know where it is, I'm not bothered, it's nowt to do with me. But now *you're* going through what we went through. Two o'clock in the morning, there's a kick on my door. The dog would bark. Go out my back door. There's a cop out in my back garden. But he wasn't like Porky [laughter]. *It used to happen*. People do not believe what has happened, you know... The impression I've got is that the government, the police -- and it makes no difference what government's in power -- they'll degrade and they'll put you up against each other, in the same way they tried to do it in our community. One or two shop windows got broken. You know: miners had broken windows. A little old woman came out of the house: 'It was a police riot van what did that, at two o'clock in the morning.' *Miners* got the blame. That particu-

lar shop had donated £1000 for the miners' children's Christmas party. Now, you can imagine the owner, if he thinks miners did it, he won't be very happy. But *police* broke the windows after finding out he had donated £1000.

But moving on from there to your problem. If you let them divide you, they're going to crush you. A friend of mine, he's up to retirement age now, he said, when you go over there, tell 'em, I don't know what it means in Latin, 'Never let the bastards grind you down.' We were beaten, and we were beaten because because of the Labour Party, because of the TUC, because of South Wales which, I'm ashamed to say, let us down. And because of the Communist Party. They got their heads together and they were looking so men could walk back to work with their head up high. But what did we go back to work for? I could've quite happily went on another year. And a lot more could, I know...

In Soweto, I watched the other night, my heart goes out to them young children. Wanting to go to school, wanting to be educated, and what happens? They get the rhino whip across their back. Get over there! And now the funny thing is that the white people who live in South Africa are actually learning, probably for the first time, what is happening there. Money goes to money. They've got it. We want it. We want to share it out. Thank you very much.

\* \* \* \* \*

### Norris Barrett: 'You need a revolutionary organisation'

I work for London Transport underground in the West End, plus I'm an NUR member and a supporter of the Spartacist League. I lived in Handsworth for about twenty years and I know for a fact how it feels to be black and unemployed in Margaret Thatcher's Britain. Well, in my opinion there's all kinds of misinformation about what actually happened up here. I know for a fact it was not a race riot.

The people who were arrested during or after the riots should be released and all the charges dropped. The real criminals can be found at Number Ten Downing Street. These are the people who initiated cop and racist terror in the major inner-city areas of Britain, and also initiate violence outside the Old Bailey where the Newham Seven were protesting over the guys being sent down, and plus outside the House of Apartheid in Trafalgar Square. The squeezers and the bashers of the unions are the same people who want to gear us up for war against the Russians and the other workers states in the world.

Well I believe, working for London Transport, that the way forward is, you need a revolutionary organisation which can link up struggles of all the oppressed layers of this rotten society against the common enemy. ■

## WORKERS HAMMER

### DAYSCHOOL

London: Sunday 3 November

#### Sessions on:

From Marcus Garvey to Malcolm X:  
**LESSONS OF AMERICAN BLACK STRUGGLE**

The Struggle for Trotskyism:  
**UNDER THE BANNER OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION**

For time/location/transport details contact the Spartacist League, PO Box 185, London WC1H 8JE, or ring London (01) 278 2232, Birmingham (021) 236 9774, Sheffield (0742) 587282.

March against apartheid with Spartacist League / Workers Hammer

**SMASH APARTHEID -- FOR WORKERS REVOLUTION!**  
**FOR INTERNATIONAL WORKING-CLASS ACTION, NOT IMPERIALIST SANCTIONS!**

NATIONAL SOUTH AFRICA DEMONSTRATION, TRAFALGAR SQUARE, LONDON  
Saturday 2 November Social in the evening

## Smash apartheid - for workers revolution!

# South African powder keg

On 12 September, eight years to the day that black nationalist leader Steve Biko died, after being tortured and beaten into a coma by apartheid cops, these same racist killers fired into a crowd of about a hundred blacks in the township of Guguletu, near Cape Town. Five blacks were killed, 20 wounded. As apartheid butchers shoot down black people as if they were 'swatting flies', in the words of black bishop Desmond Tutu, the black masses of South Africa are rapidly coming to the conclusion that the kind of 'nonviolent negotiated solution' preached by the Tutus is impossible -- apartheid must be overthrown.

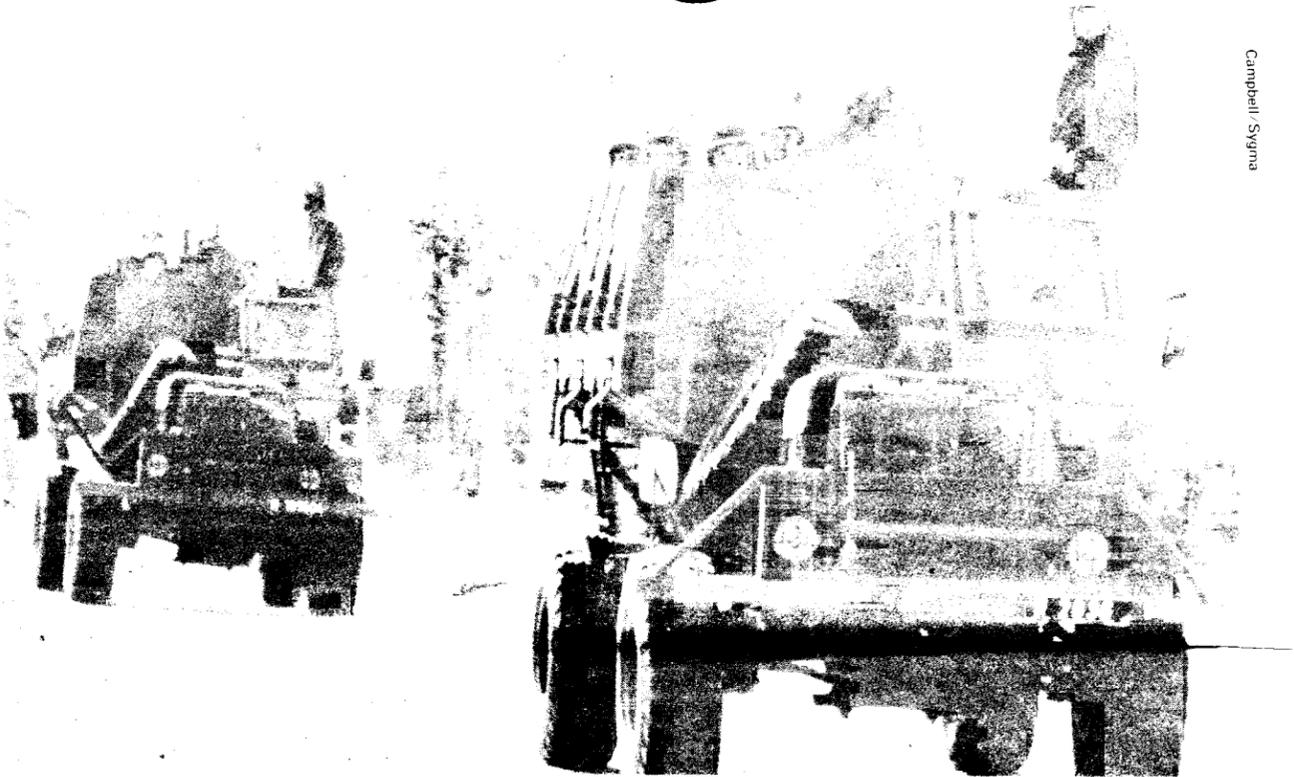
In what seems an endless cycle, defiant black youth armed only with stones and their bare hands confront massively armed cops and soldiers, who create more anti-apartheid martyrs for the funerals which have become the only form for mass black political expression, and which in turn are savagely attacked. 'Tambo We Are Ready, Give Us AKs', read one banner at a recent funeral appealing to Oliver Tambo, president of the underground African National Congress (ANC), to provide them with the Soviet-made assault rifle.

South Africa is heading towards a bloody civil war, without which apartheid cannot be buried. The hated apartheid regime is in big trouble, but it's not about to fall. It has all the guns, and a sufficient number of whites willing to use them. As long as the confrontation is along the present white-v-black *national* lines, it will be the oppressed black, 'coloured' (mixed-race) and Indian masses who are buried in the tens of thousands, not apartheid.

But strategically, in its six-million-strong black proletariat, apartheid has created its gravedigger. 'Capitalism has no future in this country', one young black student fighter told *Newsweek* (16 September). The black proletariat last November in the Transvaal showed its power in the most massive general strike in the history of South Africa. But since then that proletariat has been kept on the sidelines in isolated skirmishes with the racist regime and the capitalist *baas*, as was demonstrated in the aborted mine strike



Defiant blacks bury martyrs, draped with ANC flags.



South Africa heading towards bloody civil war. Apartheid army rumbles through black township of Soweto.

last month.

The massive anti-apartheid upheaval poses pointblank the question of power: *Who shall rule?* 'Tutu's brand of moderate leadership is rapidly losing ground among the street fighters', wrote *Newsweek's* Robert B Cullen and Ray Wilkinson. 'Their revolution awaits its Lenin.' For stating this simple truth the apartheid regime threw Wilkinson out of the country. But precisely what is lacking, and is more urgently required in South Africa than anywhere else in the world right now, is a party of the kind that Lenin built in tsarist Russia: an internationalist and multiracial revolutionary workers party that can mobilise the giant of South Africa's black proletariat for its own *class* dictatorship as the emancipator of all the oppressed.

And never have conditions been more ripe in South Africa for the crystallisation of a Leninist party. By all accounts, there exists a widespread hatred for capitalism as it has been experienced and openness to communism as it is understood. Botha's 'divide and conquer' constitution, which was supposed to divide coloured and Indian from black by offering the former a fake franchise and the latter nothing, served instead to unite the non-white population as coloureds and Indians massively boycotted elections for their 'parliaments'. In Natal province where the Indians, mainly engaged in commerce, are concentrated, 1000 striking black rubber workers were locked out in June. When they called a one-day general solidarity strike in July, Pietermaritzburg, Natal's political capital, was completely paralysed as more than 90 per cent of the black workforce stayed home and *every Indian business closed*. When Botha's Zulu chieftain Gatsha Buthelezi unleashed his Inkatha thugs on Indian communities in Durban and the apartheid armed forces withdrew, a revolutionary workers party would have mobilised Durban's

powerful black and Indian proletariat into multiracial defence guards to defend those communities and teach Inkatha a much-needed lesson.

### Repression and resistance

Botha's state of emergency targetting black townships around Johannesburg in the Transvaal and Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape only caused the anti-apartheid upheaval to spread to the Western Cape around Cape Town. Tens of thousands of new anti-apartheid fighters were recruited from the Cape's coloured proletariat and youth as well as from militant black townships like Guguletu. The Cape coloured, precisely because they are oppressed by apartheid and concentrated in the urban proletariat, and are in many ways culturally Europeans, are that section of the oppressed which can most easily transcend nationalism. It is no accident that in the 1930s and 1940s Trotskyism had a base among coloured teachers in South Africa. They can provide a strategic component for crystallising a multiracial Trotskyist party now.

Nor is it an accident that Cape Town has been the centre of multiracial anti-apartheid protests that have included a white student component, especially around the demand to free ANC leader Nelson Mandela. Sections of the white population do not want to live in a garrison state, a white *laager* dominated by backward, bigoted Afrikaner nationalism. There had better be a place for whites in an anti-racist society, particularly as they constitute an indispensable reserve of technical skill for a socialist reconstruction of the country.

While the South African censors managed to throw out one *Newsweek* reporter, they could not hide reality from the money-grubbing international bankers, who recognise a bad

*continued on page 9*