



## Workers, minorities – organise the anger!



Sunday Times



John Harris (IFL)

Blacks in Tottenham (left), striking miners in Kellingley (right). A revolutionary party must be forged to tap combativity of workers and minorities in struggle against racist cop terror and Thatcher reaction.

# Bury Thatcher!

## Forge a revolutionary workers party!

In the space of one month, Margaret Thatcher and her racist cops have set off explosions of ghetto anger in several major cities. In early September there was the massive police invasion of Birmingham's predominantly black and Asian district of Handsworth. Less than three weeks later came London's Brixton, where the 1981 'riots' first burst into flames. When cops shot a West Indian mother in the back, angry crowds surrounded the police station; burning barricades of overturned cars soon appeared. Then it was the turn of Liverpool's Toxteth. And on 7 October, in North London, the cops got more than they bargained for. This time not only bricks and bottles, but shotgun fire greeted police invaders who charged into a housing estate in Tottenham. The cops came up one short.

Last March, after 12 bitter months on the picket lines, the militant miners were forced back to the pits. They had been dealt a defeat, fighting essentially alone against the whole state apparatus of British capitalism, but they were not broken. They proudly marched back to work with union banners flying, with drums and bagpipes playing. Maggie Thatcher vowed to be 'vindictive in victory', and she certainly carried through on that threat. But a mere six months later the Iron Lady was in big trouble. Her popularity sank to new lows, and as her cops rampaged through the ghettos of Birmingham, Liverpool and London, the impoverished residents -- black, Asian and white -- fought back with justice on their side. The haughty Tories in Whitehall are well aware that Handsworth, Toxteth and Brixton could spark a new wave of militant social struggle.

Nero fiddled as Rome burned; Thatcher lit the torch and stoked the fires that set Bri-

tain's cities aflame. Meanwhile the Labour Party offers nothing but soft-core Thatcherism. From the year-long miners strike, the most important struggle in this country in decades, to the recent ghetto revolts, Neil Kinnock has done nothing but stab the struggles of Britain's poor and working people in the back. Judas got the proverbial 30 pieces of silver for his treachery, but Judas Kinnock is working overtime to earn his peerage. The country is falling apart and it will take socialist revolution to rebuild Britain.

As almost nowhere else in the industrialised capitalist world, the stark choice in Britain is socialism or rampant decay and devastation -- and the devastation is there for everyone to see. After half a decade of Thatcher's monetarism, unemployment is officially 13.5 per cent, and double that in the industrial areas of the North of England, Scotland and South Wales. In ghettos like Handsworth and Brixton it approaches 60 per cent. The reformists' welfare state schemes have already

continued on page 10

## WRP explodes

'Thomas Gerard Healy, former Central Committee member of the Workers Revolutionary Party, was expelled from the party by a unanimous vote of the Central Committee meeting on Saturday October 19, 1985.' Thus did the 23 October *News Line*, the WRP's vaunted daily newspaper, announce the news to the world.

The following days have seen a welter of charges, countercharges and recriminations -- about 'corrupt sexual practices', financial malfeasance and, occasionally, obscure political differences -- as two rival WRPs publishing two competing *News Lines* square off. Fleet Street has been inundating the British Isles with tons of paper covered with lurid innuendos about sex. But the expulsion and split are bound to blow the lid off the political Pandora's box which has been the WRP.

One wing, claiming a majority and controlling the party offices and printing press, is led by WRP General Secretary Michael Banda (for decades most closely associated with Healy and the politics of the WRP in the public eye) and Cliff Slaughter, secretary of the so-called

'International Committee of the Fourth International'. Leading the other wing (also claiming a majority) are Healy himself, founding father and long-time Supreme Leader of the WRP and its predecessor organisations, along with the actors Vanessa and Corin Redgrave. With all the charges and countercharges, lies and counter-lies flying back and forth, one can only enjoy both sides doing to each other what they have done to countless opponents for years.

For many years now the Healy/Banda-led WRP has been synonymous on the left with lies, thuggery and the most sinister and insidious of operations (to which numerous ex-members can attest). For years the WRP has been notorious for its political subordination to a gamut of Arab/Islamic nationalists, from the petty-bourgeois nationalist PLQ to the clerical-reactionary Ayatollah Khomeini. In the mid-1970s this turned into material subordination to a host of oil-rich Middle Eastern dictators, principally Libya's megalomaniacal Muammar Qaddafi, which has meant that the WRP is not currently an authentic working-class tendency.

continued on page 5

# Racist Tory dogs at Birmingham University

We reprint here a letter to Birmingham University's student newspaper, Redbrick, from the university Spartacist Society. Redbrick's editor refused to print the letter on the ridiculous grounds that saying the cops are racist could be libellous!

Dear Editor,

At the Freshers' Fair on September 29 Guild employees, directed by Guild President Chris Hughes, ripped up a placard reading 'Defend Handsworth! Racist Cops out Now!', on the Spartacist Society literature table. In the process Spartacist Society member Jo Woodward had her finger broken, requiring hospital treatment.

This outrageous assault was instigated by ultra-right-wing elements in the Birmingham University Conservative Association, utilising the odious 'Press Council' censorship procedures. It failed in its attempt to stifle the Marxist Spartacist Society protesting against government orchestrated racist cop rampage in Handsworth and Brixton. As soon as the placard was destroyed by these Tory tools we replaced it with another. The President of the Asian

Society not only joined other outraged students in immediately signing a petition against this violent act of political censorship, but joined us at our table to help deter further attacks. We will not be silenced!

Despite its liberal pretensions the Wendy House 'Star Chamber' of the Press Council operates to keep student political activity in line with Thatcher's anti-working class, racist Cold War Britain. The Spartacist League stands 100% in defence of the embattled black and Asian communities. Since the night the cops let Lozells burn we have called for racist cops out of Handsworth now, for all charges against the victims of the police dragnet to be dropped and for integrated community defence guards centred on the trade unions. We demand that the murderous cop gunmen involved in the shooting of Mrs Cherry Groce in Brixton should be jailed and the keys thrown away!

BUCA and its allies showed at the Freshers' Fair their support for the government policy of terrorising the abused, oppressed, impoverished, and unemployed sections of society, and their love of the murderous, strikebreaking racist police who put it into practice. It is

student Tories who say 'Hang Nelson Mandela' and back kill-crazy Nicaraguan contras, and it is BUCA's Mark Gorman who parades in the badge of the Loyalist para-military murderers of the Ulster Volunteer Force. But the Thatcher Youth who strut around this red-brick tower should remember the deep and abiding hatred of millions of working people and oppressed for the Iron Bitch in Downing Street.

Whilst the censorship attack was taking place the self-styled socialists of the Socialist Workers Party, Communist Party and Labour Club, none of whom even make the basic demand for cops out of Handsworth, did nothing to protest against or prevent the Tory-inspired assault. If you want to fight on the side of the oppressed from Handsworth to Belfast, from Central America to South Africa -- if you want to see this rotten racist capitalist system destroyed and replaced by a workers government and a socialist planned economy then join our fight to build an international, multi-racial revolutionary workers party.

Yours,  
The Spartacist Society

## Quote of the month



Trotsky and Lenin

Defend the gains of the Bolshevik Revolution!

November 7 marks the anniversary of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, the greatest victory in history for the workers of the world. With the anti-Communist fanatics in the White House and Downing Street aiming straight for nuclear war with the USSR, defence of the gains of the Russian Revolution against imperialism is posed pointblank. Trotsky's call on the world proletariat at the start of WWII has perhaps even greater urgency today.

The class conscious worker knows that a successful struggle for complete emancipation is unthinkable without the defence of conquests already gained, however modest these may be. All the more obligatory therefore is the defence of so colossal a conquest as planned economy against the restoration of capitalist relations. Those who cannot defend old positions will never conquer new ones.

The Fourth International can defend the USSR only by the methods of revolutionary class struggle. To teach the workers correctly to understand the class character of the state -- imperialist, colonial, workers' -- and the reciprocal relations between them, as well as the inner contradictions in each of them, enables the workers to draw correct practical conclusions in every given situation. While waging a tireless struggle against the Moscow oligarchy, the Fourth International decisively rejects any policy that would aid imperialism against the USSR.

The defence of the USSR coincides in principle with the preparation of the world proletarian revolution. We flatly reject the theory of socialism in one country, that brain child of ignorant and reactionary Stalinism. Only the world revolution can save the USSR for socialism. But the world revolution carries with it the inescapable blotting out of the Kremlin oligarchy.

-- Leon Trotsky, 'Manifesto of the Fourth International on the Imperialist War and the World Proletarian Revolution' (May 1940)

## WORKERS HAMMER

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## LT workers: Defend Brixton!

We print below a resolution, initiated by Spartacist supporters on London Transport, calling for the National Union of Railwaymen to take industrial action in defence of the minority community of Brixton, besieged by racist police terror. The resolution was scandalously ruled out of order in Camden 3 branch at a 9 October meeting. Worse yet, when it was presented at a Finsbury Park branch meeting two days later, self-styled 'revolutionaries', supporters of *Socialist Action* and *Socialist Worker*, helped ensure its defeat by voting against it, whining that the union 'can't do anything' about such questions. These cowardly fakers don't want to do anything; this heavily black and Asian union can and must join forces with all the many thousands of workers and youth who have shown their readiness to fight racist cop terror in Brixton, Tottenham and elsewhere and provide an organised working-class lead.

1. This NUR branch expresses outrage at the racist police rampage in Brixton and Handsworth. The cold-blooded shooting and attempted murder of Mrs Cherry Groce was no 'accident' as the government and the lying, anti-union, racist capitalist media would

have us believe. It was a deliberate, murderous provocation aimed at precipitating a confrontation with the local West Indian community, as a pretext for a racist, military-style police occupation and mass arrests and brutality.

2. It is the duty of the trade unions, which have faced similar police-state repression such as in the miners strike, to defend racial minorities against Thatcher's cops, as a matter of vital self-interest. As a majority black and Asian workforce we have a particular responsibility to defend our own members -- and to combat and denounce the government's 'black versus Asian' divide and rule lies.

3. This branch resolves to use the union's organised strength and industrial muscle to defend Brixton; we resolve that our union call a one-day strike and rally outside the Home Office protesting this murderous cop rampage, to demand

- 1) Immediate withdrawal of police army of occupation;
- 2) That the racist thug who shot Cherry Groce be jailed;
- 3) That the charges against those arrested be dropped. ■

## Militant: Do you condone racist assault?

We reprint below a letter to the Militant tendency demanding their statement on the scandalous racist assault outlined below. We have yet to receive a reply. What is Militant hiding?

15 October 1985

Editorial Board, Militant  
Attn: Ted Grant

Dear Comrade Grant,

An outrageous incident occurred on 31 August 1985 which demands your attention. On that evening, a black friend of the Spartacist League was subjected to a racist and physical attack by one Eddie McSherry of Clipstone NUM, at the Oak Tree Lane Social Club, Mansfield.

McSherry grabbed our friend's arm, and demanded to know what he was doing in the company of 'the CIA'. Our friend threw off McSherry's hand, and said he would do what he wanted. At that point McSherry called him 'a black bastard'. As our friend moved to give McSherry the decking he deserved, several miners escorted the racist away. At the end of the evening McSherry repeated his vile abuse, again calling our friend a 'black bastard'.

McSherry's actions and language are the actions and language of the National Front. He deserves the same treatment as should be meted out to them and to the scabs of the year-long miners strike.

What makes McSherry's NF-type attack germane to you is that he claims to be a supporter of the Militant tendency. Furthermore, on the evening of the attack, he was seen consorting with Andy Fisher, a well-known local supporter of Militant. In fact a woman friend of Fisher's joined McSherry in his grotesque and slanderous CIA-baiting of the Spartacist

League, which could only have been aimed at provoking a physical disruption in this miners' social evening.

What is your attitude toward this? What do you intend to do to your professed supporters who participated in this racist assault? The workers movement awaits your reply.

Yours fraternally,  
Eibhlin McDonald  
for the Spartacist League

**Marxist Bulletin 5**

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# Spartacist statement to 1966 IC conference

The Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) today is best known to working-class militants for instigating a vicious anti-Communist witchhunt at the 1983 Blackpool TUC of Arthur Scargill over his opposition to counterrevolutionary Polish Solidarnosc, and for its years of slavish subservience to Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi. But the recent expulsion of Gerry Healy from the Banda/Slaughter version of the WRP caused us to cast our minds back to 1966 and the following important statement, presented to the London conference of the International Committee (IC) by comrade James Robertson on behalf of the Spartacist delegation.

The background, in brief, to this statement is as follows. After the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, the Healy group recruited an impressive layer of Marxist intellectuals and trade union militants in and around the crisis-wracked Stalinist Communist Party. In 1961 the Healy-led Socialist Labour League produced an international resolution entitled 'The World Prospect for Socialism'. This document was a defining reaffirmation of revolutionary Marxism in counterposition to a morass of revisionist tendencies, most notably the impressionistic liquidationism, authored by Michel Pablo and subsequently pursued by his chief lieutenant Ernest Mandel, which had destroyed the Fourth International founded by Leon Trotsky. It was centrally on the basis of this document that a core of revolutionary cadres cohered within the once-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party of the United States, the party most closely tutored by Trotsky in the methods of Bolshevism. The Revolutionary Tendency (RT) thus founded fought against the SWP's spiralling centrist degeneration (which soon turned to outright reformism), in particular opposing its liquidationist appetites towards Castroite Stalinism and its abstentionist tailing of liberal/nationalist black leadership in the American civil rights movement. The RT was the forerunner of the Spartacist tendency, which has carried on this struggle for authentic, orthodox, anti-revisionist Trotskyism.

Through the agency of one Tim Wohlforth, who became Healy's sycophantic hatchetman in the RT, the RT was subjected to an unprincipled split in 1962 and the prospects for building a significant left wing within the historic SWP cadre shattered. Wohlforth went on to set us up for expulsion by running to the SWP leadership with lies about 'indiscipline'. Four years of unity discussions to overcome this disastrous and unprincipled split came to a head at the 1966 IC conference. Comrade Robertson delivered the remarks reprinted below on 6 April 1966 during the discussion of Cliff Slaughter's Political Report. The response of Healy & Co was to bureaucratically expel us from the conference, because we refused to bury our political differences in internal discussion and to toady to Healy by 'confessing' to slanderous charges of 'petty-bourgeois American chauvinism'. (For the full story, see *Spartacist* no 6, June-July 1966.)

Within less than a year, decisive programmatic departures corollary to these anti-Leninist organisational methods emerged in the Healy organisation. These included siding with the Red Guards and Mao's wing of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the bureaucratic infighting of the Chinese 'Cultural Revolution', enthusiastically embracing the anti-working class Arab nationalist regimes of Nasser's Egypt and Syria in the name of a mythical 'Arab revolution', and advancing the strategy of 'Make the lefts fight', a demand that the left Labourites oust Wilson & Co and lead the Labour Party on so-called 'socialist policies'.

The text of these remarks is taken from *Marxist Bulletin* no 9, published by the Spartacist League/US. Members of both 'WRPs' as well as anybody who wishes to investigate further the programmatic and political questions should pay the utmost attention to the issues raised in this Spartacist statement to the 1966 conference.

From its inception the Spartacist tendency has fought for Marxist clarity. To WRPs of

either wing we ask: What is your attitude to the reformist Labour Party and the perspective of splitting away its working-class base? To counterrevolutionary Polish Solidarnosc? To the historically progressive Soviet intervention in Afghanistan? To bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalists hostile to the class interests of the proletariat? These are the sort of questions which must be confronted and answered while ever more lurid scandals dominate the front pages of the respective *News Lines*.

\* \* \* \* \*

In behalf of the Spartacist group, I greet this Conference called by the International Committee. This is the first international participation by our tendency; we are deeply appreciative of the opportunity to hear and exchange views with comrades of the world movement.

Therefore, we feel we have the responsibility to present to you our specific views where they are both relevant and distinctive,



Castro with Khrushchev at 1964 reception in Moscow

without adapting or modifying them for the sake of a false unanimity which would do us all a disservice, since we have, in our opinion, some valuable insights to offer.

We are present at this Conference on the basis of our fundamental agreement with the International Resolution of the IC; moreover, the report of Comrade Slaughter was for us solidly communist, unified throughout by revolutionary determination.

## 1. What Pabloism is

The central point of the Conference is 'The Reconstruction of the Fourth International, destroyed by Pabloism'. Therefore the issue, 'What is Pabloism?' has properly been heavily discussed. We disagree that Pabloism is but the expression of organic currents of reform-

ism and Stalinism, having no roots within our movement. We also disagree with Voix Ouvriere's view that Pabloism can be explained simply by reference to the petty-bourgeois social composition of the FI, any more than one could explain the specific nature of a disease by reference solely to the weakened body in which particular microbes had settled.

Pabloism is a revisionist answer to new problems posed by the post-1943 Stalinist expansions. And Pabloism has been opposed within the movement by a bad 'orthodoxy' represented until the last few years by the example of Cannon. We must answer new challenges in a truly orthodox fashion: as Gramsci put it, we must develop Marxist doctrine through its own extension, not by seeking eclectic absorption of new alien elements, as Pabloism has done.

The pressure which produced Pabloism began in 1943, following the failure of Leon Trotsky's perspective of the break-up of the Soviet bureaucracy and of new October revolutions in the aftermath of the war: this failure resulted from the inability to forge revolutionary parties. After 1950, Pabloism dominated the FI; only when the fruits of Pabloism were clear did a section of the FI pull back. In our opinion, the 'orthodox' movement has still to face up to the new theoretical problems which rendered it susceptible to Pabloism in 1943-50 and gave rise to a ragged, partial split in 1952-54.

The fight against Pabloism is the specific historic form of a necessarily continual struggle against revisionism, which cannot be 'finally' resolved within the framework of capitalism. Bernstein, Bukharin, and Pablo, for example, have been our antagonists in particular phases of this struggle, which is both necessary and inevitable, and cannot be 'solved'.

These are some of our views about Pabloism; they are not exhaustive, for they are shaped by the particular aspects of Pabloism which have loomed large in our own struggle against it.

We take issue with the notion that the present crisis of capitalism is so sharp and deep that Trotskyist revisionism is needed to tame the workers, in a way comparable to the degeneration of the Second and Third Internationals. Such an erroneous estimation would have as its point of departure an enormous overestimation of our present significance, and would accordingly be disorienting.

We had better concentrate upon what Lenin said concerning the various, ubiquitous crises which beset imperialism (a system essentially in crisis since before 1914); Lenin pointed out that *there is no impossible situation for the bourgeoisie, it is necessary to throw them out*. Otherwise, 'crises' are all in a day's work for the mechanisms and agencies of imperialism in muddling through from one year to the next. Just now, in fact, their task is easier, after the terrible shattering of the Indonesian workers' movement; add to

continued on page 4

## THE WORLD PROSPECT FOR SOCIALISM

Resolution on the International Situation, adopted by the British Socialist Labour League at its 1961 Annual Conference, and subsequently amended.

### I The Necessity for the Socialist Revolution

1. Capitalism long ago reached the end of its progressive contribution to the history of mankind. Already at the beginning of the 20th century it had been driven into a final stage of imperialism—an epoch of wars and revolutions. Having divided up the globe between themselves the rival capitalist states came into violent collision with each other in years of terrible destruction. At the same time, the ruling classes of these states faced a permanent challenge in their domination both from the working class at home and from the movement for national independence in their colonies. As a result of these conditions bourgeois society was unable to assure the conditions for stable and peaceful development of the world. In the face of its liberal ideology, it mapped out for itself an imperialist path of a permanent tendency towards domination and violence, even in relatively peaceful periods. (Trotsky: *Capitalism and Socialism in America*, p. 100.)

2. When faced to the needs of capitalist production, the bourgeoisie has always been the means for making scientific advances because the means for greater accumulation of capital and consequent of economic power, as well as for the building up of massive destructive potential to defend or extend them. The manifestation of the new epoch in the history of capitalism, even in the most 'democratic' countries, was the growing power of finance-capital and monopoly, the synchronization of social and economic life through the medium of the state machine, as an instrument of the ruling class, and the increasing importance of industry and military contracts. While at particular times or in particular countries such developments may have served to overcome some of the inherent problems of capitalism temporarily, they provided a basis for opportunities to intensify social and economic class struggle and to deepen the danger to mankind of the continued existence of capitalism.

3. The October Revolution in Russia, and the later defeat of imperialism in Eastern Europe and China, have widely limited the possibility of further bourgeois expansion. Capitalism cannot now recover its former position of world domination. The need for the realization of the national liberation movement in the colonies, because of the greatest importance for the ruling classes of the capitalist countries to arrive at an understanding with the petty-bourgeois leaderships of these movements so that capital export can continue, or alternatively to retain colonies by force where such a compromise does not seem to be possible, in appearance the methods of capitalism today, both through the

increased increase... the kind of

## Get your copy- 'The World Prospect for Socialism'

'The World Prospect for Socialism', Resolution on the International Situation, adopted by the British Socialist Labour League at its 1961 conference. Reproduced from *Labour Review*, winter 1961, and available now from: Spartacist Publications, PO Box 185, London WC1H 8JE, Price 75p.

Also available: Spartacist literature pack on the SLL/WRP. Articles from 1966 to 1985; 50p from above address.

# 1966 statement...

(Continued from page 3)

this the other reversals which expose the revisionists' dependence on petty-bourgeois and bureaucratic strata, like the softening of the USSR, the isolation of China, India brought to heel, Africa neatly stabilized, and Castro a captive of Russia and the US. The central lesson of these episodes is the necessity to build revolutionary working-class parties, ie, our ability to intervene in struggle.

## 2. Anti-Pabloist tactics

A French comrade put it well: 'there is no family of Trotskyism'. There is only the correct program of revolutionary Marxism, which is not an umbrella. Nevertheless, there are now four organized international currents all claiming to be Trotskyist, and spoken of as 'Trotskyist' in some conventional sense. This state of affairs must be resolved through splits and fusions. The reason for the present appearance of a 'family' is that each of the four tendencies -- 'United Secretariat', Pablo's personal 'Revolutionary Marxist Tendency', Posadas' 'Fourth International', and the International Committee -- is in some countries the sole organized group claiming the banner of Trotskyism. Hence, they draw in all would-be Trotskyists in their areas and suppress polarization; there is no struggle and differentiation, winning over some and driving others to vacate their pretense as revolutionists and Trotskyists. Thus, when several Spartacist comrades visited Cuba, we found that the Trotskyist group there, part of the Posadas international, were in the main excellent comrades struggling with valor under difficult conditions. The speeches here of the Danish and Ceylonese comrades, representing left-wing sections of the United Secretariat, reflect such problems.

The partial break-up and gross exposure of the United Secretariat forces -- the expulsion of Pablo, the Ceylonese betrayal, the SWP's class-collaborationist line on the Vietnamese war, Mandel's crawling before the Belgian Social-Democratic heritage -- prove that the time has passed when the struggle against Pabloism could be waged on an international plane within a common organizational framework. And the particular experience of our groups in the United States, which were expelled merely for the views they held, with no right of appeal, demonstrates that the United Secretariat lies when it claims Trotskyist all-inclusiveness.

Up to now, we have not done very well, in our opinion, in smashing the Pabloites; the impact of events alone, no matter how favorable objectively or devastating to revisionist doctrines, will not do the job. In the US, the break-up of the SWP left wing over its five-year history has been a great gift to the revisionist leadership of the SWP.

At present, our struggle with the Pabloites must be preponderantly from outside their organizations; nevertheless, in many countries a period of united fronts and organizational penetration into revisionist groupings remains necessary in order to consummate the struggle for the actual reconstruction of the FI, culminating in a world congress to re-found it.

## 3. Theoretical clarification

The experiences of the Algerian and Cuban struggles, each from its own side, are very important for the light they shed on the decisive distinction between the winning of national independence on a bourgeois basis, and revolutions of the Chinese sort, which lead to a real break from capitalism, yet confined within the limits of a bureaucratic ruling stratum.

Two decisive elements have been common to the whole series of upheavals under Stalinist-type leaderships, as in Yugoslavia, China, Cuba, Vietnam: 1) a civil war of the peasant-guerrilla variety, which first wrenches the peasant movement from the immediate control of imperialism and substitutes a petty-bourgeois leadership; and then, if victorious, seizes the urban centers and on its own momentum smashes capitalist property relations, nationalizing industry under the newly consolidating Bonapartist leadership; 2) the absence of the working class as a contender for social power, in particular, the absence of its revolutionary vanguard: this permits an exceptionally independent role for the petty-bourgeois sections of society which are thus denied the polarization which occurred in the October Revolution, in which the most militant petty-bourgeois sections were drawn into the wake of the revolutionary working class.

However it is apparent that supplemental political revolution is necessary to open the road to socialist development, or, in the earlier stages, as in Vietnam today, the active intervention of the working class to take hegemony of the national-social struggle. Only those such as the Pabloists who believe that (at least some) Stalinist bureaucracies (eg, Yugoslavia or China or Cuba) can be a revolutionary socialist leadership need see in this understanding a denial of the proletarian basis for social revolution.

On the contrary, precisely, the petty-bourgeois peasantry under the most favorable historic circumstances conceivable could achieve no third road, neither capitalist, nor working class. Instead all that has come out of China and Cuba was a state of the same order as that issuing out of the political



Detroit anti-Klan protesters support the right of self-defence, in wake of KKK/Nazi murder of five militants in Greensboro, North Carolina, 1979.

counter-revolution of Stalin in the Soviet Union, the degeneration of the October. That is why we are led to define states such as these as *deformed workers states*. And the experience since the Second World War, properly understood, offers not a basis for revisionist turning away from the perspective and necessity of revolutionary working-class power, but rather it is a great vindication of Marxian theory and conclusions under new and not previously expected circumstances.

Many statements and positions of the IC show theoretical weakness or confusion on this question. Thus, the IC Statement on the fall of Ben Bella declared:

'Where the state takes a bonapartist form on behalf of a weak bourgeoisie, as in Algeria or Cuba, then the type of "revolt" occurring on June 19-20 in Algiers is on the agenda.' (Newsletter, 26 June 1965)

While the nationalization in Algeria now amounts to some 15 per cent of the economy, the Cuban economy is, in essence, entirely nationalized; China probably has more vestiges of its bourgeoisie. If the Cuban bourgeoisie is indeed 'weak', as the IC affirms, one can only observe that it must be tired from its long swim to Miami, Florida.

The current IC resolution, 'Rebuilding the Fourth International', however, puts the matter very well:

'In the same way, the International and its parties are the key to the problem of the class struggle in the colonial countries. The petty-bourgeois nationalist leaders and their Stalinist collaborators restrict the struggle to the level of national liberation, or, at best, to a version of "socialism in one country", sustained by subordination to the co-existence policies of the Soviet bureaucracy. In this way, all the gains of the struggle of the workers and peasants, not only in the Arab world, India, South East Asia, etc, but also in China and Cuba [our emphasis: Spartacist], are confined within the limits of imperialist domination, or exposed to counter-revolution (the line-up against China, the Cuban missiles crisis, the Vietnam war, etc).'

Here Cuba is plainly equated with China, not with Algeria.

The document offered by the French section of the IC several years ago on the Cuban revolution suffers, in our view, from one central weakness. It sees the Cuban revolution as analogous to the Spanish experience of the 1930's. This analogy is not merely defective: it emphasizes precisely what is not common to the struggles in Spain and in Cuba, that is, the bona fide workers' revolution in Spain which was smashed by the Stalinists.

The Pabloites have been strengthened against

us, in our opinion, by this simplistic reflex of the IC, which must deny the possibility of a social transformation led by the petty-bourgeoisie, in order to defend the validity and necessity of the revolutionary Marxist movement. This is a bad method: at bottom, it equates the deformed workers' state with the road to socialism; it is the Pabloite error turned inside out and a profound denial of the Trotskyist understanding that the bureaucratic ruling caste is an *obstacle* which must be overthrown by the workers if they are to move forward.

The theoretical analysis of Spartacist concerning the backward portions of the world strengthens, in our estimation, the programmatic positions which we hold in common with the comrades of the IC internationally.

## 4. Building US section

The principal aspect of our task which may be obscure to foreign comrades is the unique and critically and immediately important Negro question. Without a correct approach to the Negro young militants and workers we will be unable to translate into American conditions the rooting of our section among the masses.

We have fought hard to acquire a theoretical insight in the course of our struggle in the SWP against Black Nationalist schemes which disintegrate a revolutionary perspective -- defending the position that the Negroes in the US are an oppressed color-caste concentrated in the main in the working class as a super-exploited layer. And we have acquired a considerable experience for our small numbers and despite a composition which is still only about 10 per cent black. We have a nucleus in Harlem, New York City. We intervened in several ways in the Black Ghetto outbursts over the summers of 1964 and '65, acquiring valuable experience.

[The balance of the remarks was not written out before delivery; it is given as reconstructed from the rough notes. The issue of propaganda and agitation was not significantly gone into in the report, but is in the Spartacist draft document on tasks assembled the night before the oral report was given, hence the relevant section of that draft is also quoted below.]

Our draft resolution before you states regarding our Southern work that, 'Perhaps our most impressive achievement to date has been the building of several SL organizing committees in the deep South, including New Orleans. This is a modest enough step in absolute terms and gives us no more than a springboard for systematic work. What is impressive is that no other organization claiming to be revolutionary has any base at all in the deep South today.'

The race question in the US is different from that in England. In fact it is part way between the situation in England and that in South Africa. Thus some 2 per cent of the British population is coloured; in South Africa over 2/3rds of the people are black. In the US if some 20 per cent of the population is Negro and Spanish-speaking, then within the working class, given the overwhelming concentration of whites in the upper classes, the others comprise something like 25 or 30 per cent. What this means is that in England the intensity of exploitation is spread unevenly, but rather smoothly throughout an essentially homogenous working class. At the other extreme in South Africa, the white workers with ten times the income of the black, live in good part themselves off the blacks, thus imposing an almost insuperable barrier to common class actions (witness the European and Moslem workers' relations in Algeria). In the US the qualitatively heavier burden within the class is borne by the black workers. In quiescent times they tend to be divided from the white workers as in the lower levels of class struggle such as are now prevalent. Therefore the black youth in America are the only counterparts today to the sort of militant white working class youth found in the British Young Socialists.

However, we are well aware that at a certain point in the class struggle the main detachments of the workers, as such, ie, black and white in common class organizations such as trade unions, become heavily involved. Every strike shows this. In preparation for the massive class struggles ahead we have begun to build fractions in certain accessible key sections of the working class. But today the winning over of young black militants is the short cut to acquiring proletarian cadres as well; virtually all such militants are part of the working class.

Finally, we know that under the specific conditions in the US to build a genuinely rev-

# WRP explodes...

(Continued from page 1)

Now the organisation's historic leader has been expelled, charged among other things with 'developing unprincipled relations with bourgeois nationalist leaders and with trade union and Labour Party reformists in Britain'.

We reprint below some material recently published by each wing of the WRP. Particularly given the role of the WRP and its forerunner the Socialist Labour League in the 1960s (see page 3), the deep split of this organisation could be of great political significance. However, we follow Lenin's admonition: 'It is necessary that every member of the Party should study closely and with the greatest objectiveness, first the substance of the differences of opinion, and then the development of the struggles within the Party. Neither the one nor the other can be done unless the documents of both sides are published. He who takes somebody's word for it is a hopeless idiot, who can be dispensed of with a simple gesture of the hand.'

For all the accusations and scandal-mongering, the facts and the politics of this split remain at present unclear, especially as the public documentation on both sides remains partial. Thus we simply have no basis as yet to make a judgement about the truth of any of the current charges or about the political lines of division. But with the evident turmoil among WRP ranks of today, it is high time to examine the genuine programme of Trotskyism, upheld by the Spartacist tendency.

## 'International backing for expulsion'

(Reprinted from News Line [Banda/Slaughter version], 26 October 1985.)

The International Committee of the Fourth International carried the following resolution at its meeting of October 25, 1985.

The International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) expels G. Healy from its ranks and endorses the decision of the Workers Revolutionary Party Central Committee to expel him from the British Section.

Healy grossly abused his political authority over a protracted period, using the cadre of the ICFI and the WRP for his personal purposes and violating their rights.

In so doing he abused the political trust and confidence placed in him by all sections of the ICFI.

The practices which he carried out constituted an attack on a historically selected cadre of the Trotskyist movement.

The ICFI has in its possession overwhelming evidence establishing the ground for Healy's expulsion.

The ICFI is by no means unmindful of or indifferent to the political contribution made by G. Healy, but these abuses are so great that it is the duty and responsibility of the ICFI to take this course of action.

There is no toleration of corruption within the ICFI. All leaders are accountable for their actions and cannot act outside the constitution of the Party.

Healy has at no time made any attempt to contact the ICFI in order to try to refute the charges or to argue against his expulsion.

On the contrary; in the recent period he conducted an unprincipled factional campaign within the ICFI exploiting personal contacts to portray himself as a victim of political conspiracy and to engage in a scurrilous slander campaign against leading members of the ICFI.

In expelling Healy the ICFI has no intention of denying the political contributions which he made in the past, particularly in the struggle against Pabloite revisionism in the

revolutionary party will require the involvement in its ranks and leadership of a large proportion, perhaps a majority, of the most exploited and oppressed, the black workers.

The Spartacist draft theses state: 'The tactical aim of the SL in the next period is to build a sufficiently large propaganda group capable of agitational intervention in every social struggle in the U.S. as a necessary step in the building of the revolutionary party. For this intervention we seek an increase in our forces to at least tenfold. From our small force of around 100 we move toward our goal in three parallel lines of activity: splits and fusions with other groups, direct involvement in mass struggle, and the strengthening and education of our organization.'

1950s and the 1960s.

In fact, this expulsion is the end product of his rejection of the Trotskyist principles upon which these past struggles were based and his descent into the most vulgar forms of opportunism.

The political and personal degeneration of Healy can be clearly traced to his ever more explicit separation of the practical and organisational gains of the Trotskyist movement in Britain from the historically and internationally grounded struggles against Stalinism and revisionism from which these achievements arose.

The increasing subordination of questions of principle to immediate practical needs centred on securing the growth of the Party apparatus, degenerating into political opportunism which steadily eroded his own political and moral defences against the pressures of imperialism in the oldest capitalist country in the world.

Under these conditions his serious subjective weaknesses played an increasingly dangerous political role.

Acting ever more arbitrarily within both the WRP and the ICFI, Healy increasingly attributed the advances of the World Party not to the Marxist principles of the Fourth International and to the collective struggle of its cadre, but rather to his own personal abilities.

His self-glorification of his intuitive judgements led inevitably to a gross vulgarisation of materialist dialectics, and Healy's transformation into a thoroughgoing subjective idealist and pragmatist.

In place of his past interest in the complex problems of developing the cadre of the international Trotskyist movement, Healy's practice became almost entirely preoccupied with developing unprincipled relations with bourgeois nationalist leaders and with trade union and Labour Party reformists in Britain.

His personal life-style underwent a corresponding degeneration.

Those like Healy who abandon the principles on which they once fought and who refuse to subordinate themselves to the ICFI in the building of its national sections must inevitably degenerate under the pressure of the class enemy.

There can be no exception to this historical law.

The ICFI affirms that no leader stands above the historic interests of the working class.

## 'Banda clique expelled from WRP'

(Reprinted from News Line [Healy/Redgrave version], 2 November 1985.)

The Workers Revolutionary Party, British section of the International Committee of the Fourth International, has passed through the biggest political crisis in its history.

But it has emerged with its revolutionary principles unimpaired, its fighting traditions upheld and its cadres politically and theoretically strengthened.

A necessary and long overdue split with the revisionist, anti-Trotskyist Banda clique has been carried out successfully.

Banda and Bradford University lecturer Cliff Slaughter have been left with a rump of politically deranged malcontents plus those individuals who are desperately seeking a way out of the intensifying class struggle.

The Workers Revolutionary Party will continue to fight on the platform of the perspectives unanimously decided at the Seventh Congress in December 1984, the Party constitution which embodies the Leninist principle of democratic centralism and the struggle for dialectical materialist theory and practice in the Party and the working class.

At a special congress on October 26, 1985, the Workers [sic] Revolutionary Party decisively split from [sic] the Banda-Slaughter clique which had attempted to hijack the Party, the daily News Line and the Young Socialist. (See Special Congress resolution printed on this page).

This impelled the Banda group a further stage in its anti-Party frenzy and its rabid political degeneration.

They lined up with the forces of the capitalist state to bring down an unparalleled [sic] witchhunt on Trotskyism and its most outstanding post-war leader, Comrade Gerry Healy.

Lying charges against Comrade Healy were published in Banda's organ, delighting the Tory press, the Stalinists, revisionists and Trotskyist-haters everywhere.

The best elements in the labour and trade union movement are furious with Banda's cowardly attack on Comrade Healy. They have been outraged by the ferocity of Banda's onslaught



Spot the difference... on the left, News Line, published by the WRP (Banda/Slaughter version). On the right, News Line, published by the WRP (Healy/Redgrave version).

on the Party that he once led as general secretary.

The source of this sudden and virulent attack from within the WRP itself is the immense revolutionary changes in the objective world situation.

The political and economic crisis is deepening all over the world. The Reagan administration has officially adopted pre-emptive terrorism as a weapon of its foreign policy in the Middle East and Latin America; the Israeli regime is lashing out to behead the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO); the Botha dictatorship in South Africa is conducting a systematic slaughter of black militants; and the Thatcher regime is waging a policy of violent class war at home while carrying out murderous military intrigues in Ireland and against its adversaries in the former colonies.

Because of the emergence of Bonapartism in Britain, the capitalist state and its forces of mass repression are now in the forefront of every struggle facing the working class, the youth and the trade unions.

This has imposed new revolutionary tasks and political responsibilities on the Marxist leadership of the working-class movement, the Workers Revolutionary Party.

This is what lies behind Banda's renegacy and the strange coalition of ex-members, quitters and do-nothings that he now heads.

They have adopted the 'new realism' promoted by the Euro-Stalinists. It amounts to defeatism followed by capitulation to the Labour and trade union bureaucracies and to Stalinism.

Their right-wing politics is the real content of their frenzied attack on Comrade Healy and the Party.

To get to their new right-wing political postures, they objectively had to try to smash the WRP, its daily News Line and all the great achievements of the Party since its formation in November 1973.

But this political conspiracy failed. They were decisively rebuffed because the cadres of the Party had been trained under Comrade Healy's leadership in the dialectical materialist method and the principles fought for by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky.

Fifteen members of the old Central Committee resolutely refused to be stampeded by the hysteria whipped up by Banda, Slaughter and Workes [sic] League national secretary David North.

North, who heads an organisation of no more than 74 members, now presents himself as the 'leader' of the rump ICFI. If he has the same success reregistering Banda's faction as he has in the US, then the Banda clique will have a dwindling and shortlived existence!

We place on record our revolutionary greetings to the Greek and Spanish sections of the ICFI which unanimously rejected the Banda-Slaughter-North political coup and stood firm with the ICFI and Comrade Healy in the world movement.

We call on all those who stand by the revolutionary traditions, principles and history of the Party to rally immediately and to repel this orchestrated attack on Trotskyism, which serves only the state and the ruling class.

We are confident that this struggle is going to strengthen the working class in Britain and internationally and open the way for the building of the ICFI as the world party of socialist revolution. October 30, 1985.

# As NATO war machine targets Russia

# Gorbachev and the Soviet economy

Within Russia and without, the ascension of Mikhail Sergeevich Gorbachev has been seen as 'galvanising' the Soviet Union. The new first secretary of the CPSU has sharply criticised the sloth, the corruption, the stultifying complacency of the Brezhnev years, and has called for 'profound transformations in the economy and in the entire system of social relations' of the USSR by the year 2000. And indeed a new generation of officials have been elevated to top posts in the Kremlin hierarchy. Visiting factories, holding impromptu street meetings, lecturing conferences on science and technology, Mikhail Gorbachev is preaching the need for dynamism and discipline.

The new style of the Kremlin leadership is captured in a joke making the rounds of Moscow wits. Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev and Gorbachev are all on the Trans-Siberian Express, crossing the vast taiga. The train breaks down. Stalin orders, 'Shoot the engine driver.' The train fails to move. Khrushchev says, 'Rehabilitate the engine driver.' Still no movement. Brezhnev closes the curtains, settles back in his seat and says, 'Let's pretend the train is moving.' Gorbachev jumps up and orders everybody off the train. 'Everybody push', he says, 'and I'll give you a pay raise later'. But Gorbachev's message is not simply work harder. At his speech to the Central Committee following the death of Chernenko, he called on Russia to join the high-tech age:

'We are to achieve a decisive turn in transferring the national economy to the tracks of intensive development. We should, we are bound to attain within the briefest period the most advanced scientific and technical positions, the highest world level in the productivity of social labour.' (*New York Times*, 12 March)

Can Gorbachev's programme work? Certainly, in an economy governed by the aphorism, 'we pretend to work and they pretend to pay us', cracking down on slothful work habits, absenteeism, drunkenness, etc can, and to some degree already has improved labour productivity. There is plenty of room for eliminating the worst instances of managerial corruption and inefficiency without basically altering the system. But the roots of the Soviet Union's present economic malaise go deeper. Bourgeois economists point to the parasitism and conservatism of the ruling bureaucracy, and ascribe this to Leninism and a planned economy.

On the contrary, bureaucracy is the enemy of rational economic planning. Already in the late 1920s, Leon Trotsky, co-founder together with Lenin of the Soviet state, pinpointed the source of the problems: there can be no fundamental revitalisation of the Soviet economy without the restoration of workers democracy.

Gorbachev has been pursuing his programme of galvanising the bureaucracy like a man in a hurry. Already as hatchet man under Andropov, he fired one-third of all district party secretaries, a quarter of the 90 ministers and nine of the 23 CC department heads (*Der Spiegel*, 18 March). As head of the Communist Party he has ousted the ministers of agro-industry, petroleum and construction. This sense of urgency, especially over the flagging rate of Soviet economic growth, reflects at bottom the increasing pressure of imperialist militarism. The current gang in Washington is gearing up for war: Reagan's salute to the Nazi war dead at Bitburg only underscores the danger of a nuclear Operation Barbarossa. At the same time, the American right wing has long believed it can bankrupt the Soviet economy through an all-out arms race. Now in power, they're hell-bent on destroying the 'evil empire'.

'The U.S.A. must double its spending on armaments. We must get an effective military satellite into orbit and the Russkies had better know we'll use it ... We must double our expenditure right away.

'... we spend ten percent of our gross national product at present. We could double that without suffering; but the USSR already spends twenty percent of her gross national product. If she doubles that, boy she will crack. Get me -- she'll crack.' (Len Deighton, *The Billion Dollar Brain*)

Such was the worldly wisdom of 'General Midwinter', Texas oil tycoon and fuhrer of a privately owned anti-Communist espionage outfit, Crusade for Freedom. When Deighton wrote this spy novel in the mid-1960s, General Midwinter was presented and regarded as a certifiable nut case. Today he would be considered a middle-of-the-roader in the Reagan administration.

A typical view of the world according to General Midwinter is Richard Pipes' new book, *Survival Is Not Enough* (1984). This anti-Communist tract has received little attention except from the Reagan gang. The book jacket is filled with endorsements by Kirkpatrick,



Soviet leader Gorbachev visits steel mill, June 1985, part of widely publicised campaign for intensified work.

Weinberger, Nitze & Co. The Pentagon chief asserts, 'I strongly agree with Pipes' main point.' Pipes' main point is to restore capitalism in the Soviet Union through a combination of nuclear brinkmanship, an unrestrained arms race, total economic warfare and internal subversion.

Richard Pipes, a charter member of the Reagan gang, as director of East European and Soviet Affairs for the National Security Council in 1981-82 caused a small flap when he declared that 'there was no alternative to war with the Soviet Union if the Russians did not abandon Communism' (*New York Times*, 27 March 1981). In his latest book he spells out his pipedreams of 'peaceful' counterrevolution:

'The other [alternative] is wider scope for private enterprise.... This probably calls for the decentralization of industrial decision making, the dismantling of collective farms, the adoption in industry and agriculture of the contractual principle as the rule rather than the exception, and the turning over of a good part of the consumer and service sectors to private enterprise. The consequence of such reforms would be a mixed economy....'

It is not only the General Midwinters now running amok in Washington who think that the Soviet Union has reached such a sorry impasse that to survive its leaders must move toward capitalism. The associate director of Harvard's Russian Research Center, Marshall Goldman, entitled his latest book, *U.S.S.R. in Crisis: The Failure of an Economic System* (1983). The liberal *Washington Post* (23 September 1984) wrote: 'The existing economic structure does not offer the prospect of turning the backward Soviet Union into a modern industrial power, and it now faces unprecedented internal strains as it struggles merely to maintain forward momentum.' 'Any serious attempt to rescue the Soviet economy', declares the conservative London *Economist* (16 March), must involve 'the freeing of part of the industrial sector, and most of the service industries, from all but the most general instructions of the central planning bureaucrats'.

In short, Western bourgeois opinion has convinced itself a) that the Soviet Union has entered a period of deepening economic crisis, which cannot be resolved through traditional methods or piecemeal tinkering; and b) that the only feasible way out is the abandonment.



Soviet missiles on display in R d.Square. Need for massive Soviet defence in face of imperialist war threat is a drain on Soviet economy.

of centralised economic planning in favour of market-oriented 'reforms' -- competition between enterprises, giving managers the power to determine output and prices, the liquidation of collectivised agriculture for peasant smallholding, and allowing private entrepreneurs to take over much of the service sector, such as retail trade.

### A Soviet economic crisis?

Reading Western discussions of the present state of the Soviet economy, one is reminded of Mark Twain's line: 'the reports of my death are greatly exaggerated'. The propaganda campaign about a Soviet economic 'crisis' began in the early 1980s, at a time when the advanced capitalist world itself was suffering the worst depression since the 1930s. Thirty million workers were unemployed in North America, West Europe and Japan, while the Soviet Union has experienced over-full employment, that is, there are more jobs available than workers to fill them. In 1981-82 industrial production in North America fell by 6 per cent and in West Europe by 4 per cent. In these two years industrial production in the USSR increased by 6 per cent. While every major capitalist government -- Reagan, Thatcher, Mitterrand, Kohl -- has imposed savage austerity measures and slashed social services and welfare, consumption levels in the Soviet Union have improved in recent years, albeit at a very slow pace.

What then is the basis for all the talk of an economic 'crisis' in the USSR? It is the fact that the rate of growth has slowed markedly over the past decade. To put this slowdown in perspective one has to appreciate the rapid economic development in the previous decades. From 1950 to 1980 per capita consumption in the USSR nearly tripled. There were striking advances in practically every area of material life.

Take food, for example. The American public is told that the Soviet Union cannot feed its own people but must rely on massive imports of grain from the West. The reality is very different. Gross agricultural output more than doubled between 1960 and 1980. There has been a dramatic, qualitative improvement in the diet of the average Soviet citizen. Per capita meat consumption more than doubled, from 57 to 125 pounds a year, between 1950 and 1982. Similarly, in this period per capita consumption of fish rose from 15 to 40 pounds, and vegetables from 112 to 222 pounds (David Lane, *Soviet Economy and Society* [1985]). At the same time, consumption of traditional Russian staples, such as potatoes and bread, have fallen as people upgraded their diet. Today the average Soviet citizen eats at least as much beef as a worker in Thatcher's Britain and far more pork and fish. The Soviet Union's large imports of grain, in some years amounting to a quarter of total consumption, are used for cattle fodder, not bread.

Insofar as one can speak of an economic crisis in the Soviet Union, it is a crisis of expectations both on the part of the working masses and the ruling bureaucratic elite. The Soviet people have gotten a taste, so to speak, of a Western standard of living and naturally want more. But in recent years there is little more to be had. Meat consumption -- a key index of a Western diet -- has been frozen for a decade. Apart from certain consumer durables (televisions, refrigerators), there has been no major improvement in Soviet living standards since the mid-1970s. Yesterday's promises have not been fulfilled. Gone are the heady days of the 1950s when the shoe-thumping Nikita Khrushchev boasted that the Soviet Union would overtake the United States and achieve full communism by the year 1980.

### USSR under Reagan's missiles

In 1980 the head of the central planning agency (Gosplan), Nikolai Baybakov, wrote, 'we have been unable to achieve an abrupt change in direction in raising the efficiency of social production ... without a radical improvement of affairs in the field of scientific-technical progress, it will not be possible to perform these large tasks which the party and government are setting' (quoted in US Congress, Joint Economic Committee, *Soviet Economy in the 1980's: Problems and Prospects* [1983]). In Anthony Olcott's Soviet crime thriller *May Day in Magadan*, the fictional KGB general Polkovnikov voices the same worries in more down-to-earth language:

'What the devil, you don't need figures to know that Gosplan has jumped the rails, that we're in a bad way. Everybody says that things are bad, and could get worse. What if we have to start buying more oil, what if there's another war or the Poles or

God knows, there's a million worries....'

At the centre of these million worries is the enormous and deforming pressure of Western imperialist militarism. Despite significant economic development over the decades, per capita national income in the Soviet Union is still only 60 per cent that of the United States. Thus, keeping up with the Pentagon arsenal is a terrible drain on the Soviet economy. Hence the extreme importance the Stalinist bureaucracy attaches to arms control agreements with the NATO powers. Hence also the perennial right-wing notion, a la General Midwinter, that the US can break the Soviet Union economically through an all-out arms race.

According to the CIA and other professional Kremlin and Gosplan watchers, the Soviet Union has continued to increase real military spending by 4.5 per cent annually over the past decade even though overall economic growth has fallen below this rate. As a result the share of the military sector has increased from an estimated 12 per cent in the 1970s to 14 per cent of gross national product currently (compared to 7 per cent in the United States). Moreover, this figure understates the actual burden of defence on the Soviet economy. The military sector absorbs a far greater proportion of the most advanced scientific and technological resources (scientists, engineers, sophisticated machinery, computer time). It takes up the cream of research and development expenditure. As American economist Stanley Cohn explained, 'the intensive R and D effort required to support production of strategic weaponry has further deprived civilian production sectors of the most important growth ingredients' (US Congress, Joint Economic Committee, *Soviet Military Economic Relations* [1983]).

Despite the increasing burden of military defence and the slowdown in economic growth, consumption levels have not been cut back and

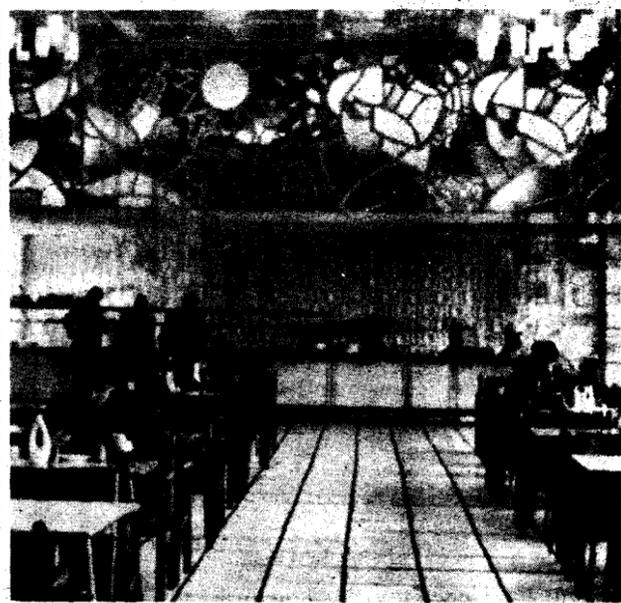


Workers' meeting of Putilov factory for re-election of Petrograd Soviet, 1920. Only return to workers democracy can release full potential of nationalised economy.

in certain areas have improved: more guns (or missiles) and no less butter (or meat). How has this been possible? The Kremlin bureaucrats have mortgaged long-term economic growth by slashing to the bone new investment in plant and equipment. In the 1976-80 Five Year Plan investment growth was cut in half, from 7 to 3.5 per cent a year. In the current (1981-85) plan it has been almost halved again, to 2 per cent a year, by far the lowest rate since the early 1920s! 'The Soviet Policy Favoring Arms Over Investment Since 1975' is the title of a presentation to Congress by a 'scholar in residence' for the CIA (now, there's a job title for you). Richard Pipes writes with glee, 'the choice before the Soviet leadership is not one between guns and butter ... but between guns and factories'. Now that is true. The Soviet Union cannot meet the massive Pentagon arms buildup without cutting into living standards unless it reverses, and sharply, the deceleration of economic growth in recent years.

What the General Midwinters do not and cannot understand is that the Soviet people, who keenly remember the 20 million killed when Nazi Germany invaded their country, are determined that this will never happen to them again. They are willing to make the sacrifices to ensure military preparedness against the madmen in Washington. An American academic specialist in the Soviet economy, Daniel Bond, tried to explain this fact of Russian life to the United States Congress:

'The Soviet people do feel defense is a very positive thing; contrary to the American public, which does not really value... defense spending positively or think about it in a positive sense. The Soviet popu-



Workers' canteen in Soviet colliery. Imperialists lie that Soviet people are starving; in fact they eat much better than British workers!

lation, in part, because of their experience in World War II, views it positively.' (*Soviet Military Economic Relations*)

### Bureaucratic parasitism and the Soviet economy

In the 20-year period from the mid-1950s to the mid-1970s the Soviet economy grew sufficiently rapidly to catch up with the US in the arms race and achieve rough strategic nuclear parity, to more than double its citizens' living standards and even subsidise East Europe on a massive scale. Why is this no longer possible? What is the basic cause of the current Soviet economic malaise?

Soviet industrial development in the past has been based on what economists term extensive growth, that is, the construction of new

factories drawing upon seemingly unlimited labour power from the countryside. Thus, the structure of Soviet industrial investment has historically been very different from that of the advanced capitalist world. For some decades about 50 per cent of investment in the US has gone to replace obsolete machinery (retooling). By contrast, in the 1970s almost 80 per cent of Soviet industrial investment was expended on new construction projects. Furthermore, this construction takes forever to complete because the different bureaucracies in charge (often competing for resources) invariably overestimate productivity and underestimate costs. Thus, Soviet industrial plant is increasingly aged, falling further behind the most advanced Western and Japanese techniques.

By the early 1970s it was clear the Soviet Union was fast exhausting the basic resource for extensive growth, namely, surplus labour. Since then the problem has gotten progressively worse. Whereas during the 1976-80 Five Year Plan eleven million new workers entered the labour force, only three million additional workers have become available in the current five year plan. Of these, 2.5 million are Turkic-speaking people from Soviet Central Asia, who are unlikely to migrate to the regions of severe labour shortage in European Russia, the Ukraine and Siberia. Thus, economic growth depends critically upon raising the productivity of the existing labour force working in existing factories. This is called intensive growth. For more than a decade the need to shift from extensive to intensive growth has been a standard theme, almost a

continued on page 8

# Gorbachev...

(Continued from page 7)

cliche, in official economic pronouncements.

However, this much proclaimed and promised transition has encountered a fundamental obstacle: pervasive bureaucratic parasitism at the base of the economy. Managers and administrators routinely understate actual capacity in order to be given a plan easy to fulfil. They hoard labour and use raw materials wastefully. They achieve the plan target but with poor-quality goods or goods in odd sizes and assortments. For example, if the plan is measured in tons, unusually heavy items are produced. There's a famous cartoon from the 1950s of a nail factory which meets its annual quota by producing a single mammoth nail. Managers and administrators resist innovation and risk-taking for fear they will not meet the plan target on schedule.

As long as growth was mainly a matter of building new factories and other facilities, the Soviet Union could and did achieve high rates despite the heavy drag of bureaucratic parasitism and microeconomic inefficiency. But these factors are now dragging down the Soviet economy. Discussing the mounting economic problems, Gorbachev stated:

'The main emphasis should be laid on the technical re-equipment of plants, saving of resources and ensuring of a marked improvement in the quality of products.

'It is crucial to give up, without hesitation, the determining economic management stereotype of the past, under which new construction was considered the main way of expanding production, and many operating plants were not technically modernized for many years....

'Hence the main task of this work today is to bring about, by all means possible, a change in the minds and moods of personnel from top to bottom, by concentrating their attention on the most important thing -- scientific and technical progress.

'... optimism does not free anybody of the need to work. We will have to work a lot.' (Pravda, 12 June [translation adapted from Moscow News, June 1985])

In one sense there is really nothing new in what Gorbachev is saying. For decades the top Kremlin leaders -- Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev -- have exhorted the managers and administrators below them to be more dynamic, more innovative and, at the same time, more cost-conscious. Yet decades of exhortation -- in Stalin's day backed by the gulag and executioner's bullet -- have not, in Gorbachev's phrase, changed the psychology of economic activity. Bureaucratic commandism on top cannot purge bureaucratic parasitism at the base. And as the Soviet economy becomes more developed, bureaucratic mismanagement becomes an ever greater obstacle to further progress.

Bourgeois spokesmen and propagandists in the West, of course, blame the current Soviet economic malaise on the very existence of collectivised property and centralised planning. A common argument runs: central planning may have worked more or less when the Soviet economy was relatively primitive, but it cannot meet the needs of a more complex and technologically advanced society. In his U.S.S.R. in Crisis: The Failure of an Economic System,

Marshall Goldman asserts:

'It turns out that Marxism is ill-suited for the kinds of needs the Soviet Union presently has....

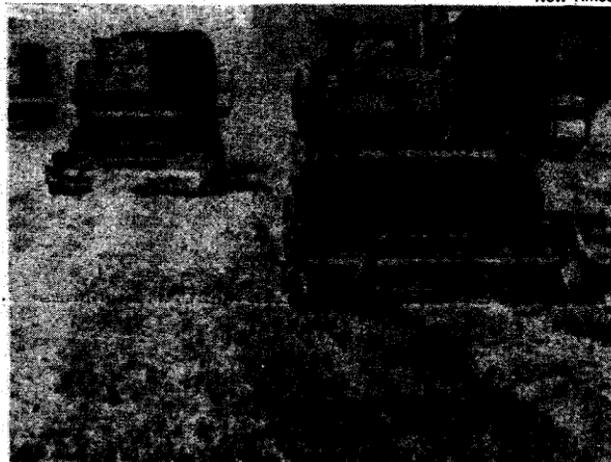
'Ironically, the industrialized countries of the noncommunist world seem to handle ongoing and evolutionary change better than the so-called revolutionary communist world.'

Anti-communist ideologues like Goldman identify Marxism with Stalinism, a point of view they share with the Stalinists.

## Not market-oriented 'reforms' but political revolution!

In reality it is not Marxism but Stalinist bureaucratic mismanagement which lies at the root of the Soviet economic slowdown. Half a century ago the great Russian Marxist Leon Trotsky, leader of the Left Opposition against Stalin, predicted the present economic impasse of the Soviet Union and its fundamental cause. In his classic account of the Stalinist political counterrevolution, *The Revolution Betrayed*, Trotsky wrote:

'The progressive role of the Soviet bureaucracy coincides with the period devoted to introducing into the Soviet Union the most important elements of capitalist technique. The rough work of borrowing, imitating, transplanting and grafting, was accomplished on the bases laid down by the revolution. There was, thus far, no question of any new word in the sphere of technique, science or art. It is possible to build gigantic factories according to a ready-made Western pattern by bureaucratic command -- although, to be sure, at triple the normal cost. But the farther you go, the more the economy runs into the problem of quality, which slips out of the hands of the bureaucracy



Improved farm equipment is key to increasing grain production. Here, threshers are tested.

like a shadow. The Soviet products are as though branded with the gray label of indifference. Under a nationalized economy, quality demands a democracy of producers and consumers, freedom of criticism and initiative -- conditions incompatible with a totalitarian regime of fear, lies and flattery.'

The terrible destruction of World War II postponed the day when the Soviet economy would have to make the transition from raw quantity to quality, from extensive to intensive growth. But that day has now arrived with a vengeance.



Cartoon from Soviet humour magazine *Krokodil*, 1981, ridicules management of forestry collective. Caption reads: 'They didn't supply the freight carriages again...?'

Mikhail Gorbachev reportedly told the central committee of the ruling Communist Party that he intends to seek 'revolutionary' changes in the economy (*Wall Street Journal*, 23 March). To date there have been no significant, much less radical, changes. The anti-corruption and labour discipline campaigns inaugurated a few years ago by the late Yuri Andropov can, at best, have a limited impact and then only for a limited period. Doubtless Andropov himself and his protegee Gorbachev regarded these campaigns as no more than partial, stopgap measures to eliminate the worst abuses. If the Kremlin leadership seems uncertain how to overcome the current Soviet economic malaise, no such uncertainty exists in the imperialist West. There is a consensus, ranging from anti-Communist fanatics like Richard Pipes to self-described liberal socialists like Alec Nove, that what the USSR desperately needs is, in Reagan's words, the 'magic of the market'. There is also widespread expectation or, at any rate, speculation that Gorbachev will act the role of magician. Shortly before he took over the reins of government, the *Washington Post* (23 September 1984) wrote: 'According to some reports, Gorbachev has overseen drafting a new variant of NEP that he would like to implement now, making room for much more private enterprise in the service sector and in agriculture'.

Whether or not Gorbachev lives up to his advance billing as a market-oriented reformer, Western bourgeois opinion that the Soviet Union will move in this direction is not simply ideological prejudice or wishful thinking. Within the framework of Stalinism there is an inherent tendency toward economic decentralisation as an alternative to workers democracy. Since managers and workers are not subject to the discipline of soviet democracy -- and a return to the totalitarian terror of Stalin's day is not now feasible -- a section of the bureaucracy sees subjecting the economic actors to the discipline of the market as the only answer to the Soviet Union's serious economic problems. However, this cure is worse than the disease.

The pioneer country of 'market socialism' is Yugoslavia. Shortly after its break with Stalin's Russia in 1948, the Tito regime introduced autonomous and competing enterprises based on workers' self-management. During the 1950s liberal Stalinists and many left social democrats lauded 'the Yugoslav road to socialism' as a healthy alternative to Soviet-style centralisation. Today, after almost three decades of 'self-management', Yugoslavia has managed to achieve both the highest unemployment and inflation rate in Europe, East or West! Unemployment would be far greater still save for the fact that the country exports labour on a massive scale to the capitalist Common Market of West Europe. Today no one now holds up the 'Yugoslav road to socialism', especially not in Yugoslavia.

So the advocates of market-oriented 'reform' now point to Hungary as their preferred model. For example, Marshall Goldman projects 'a far-sighted Soviet leader might therefore begin to experiment with reform on the Hungarian model'. Hungary under Janos Kadar's New Economic Mechanism has not to date turned into the total economic disaster area that is Yugoslavia, primarily because the system is far less decentralised. All workers are guaranteed a basic wage, to be paid, if necessary, out of the central government budget. Bankruptcies

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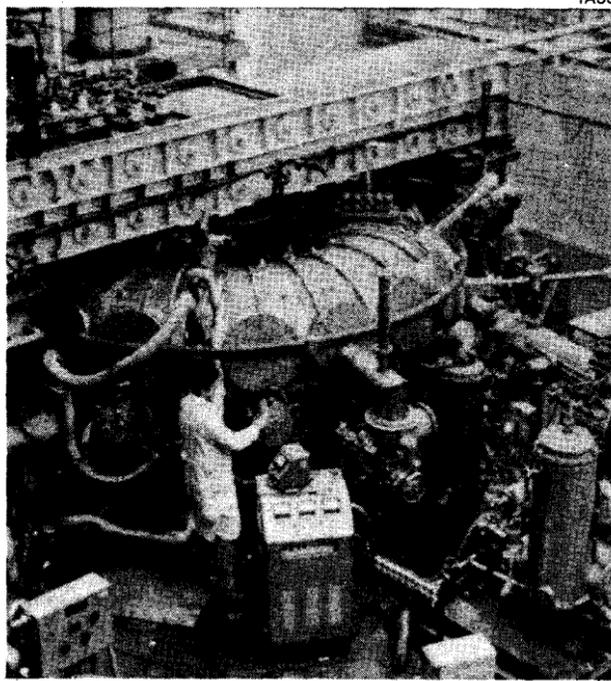
Nonetheless, 'market socialism' in Hungary has generated gross inequality in all sectors of society. This is nicely captured by a joke retailed in the country's factories. Party leader Kadar visits a factory and asks the manager: 'Have you had a bonus under the economic reform, and what have you done with it?' Reply: 'I bought a country cottage, and the rest of the money I put in the savings bank.' He asks the chief engineer the same question. Reply: 'I bought a car, and the rest of the money I put in the savings bank.' Finally Kadar asks a worker. He replies: 'I bought a pair of shoes.' Kadar: 'And the rest of the money?' Worker: 'The rest of the money I had to borrow from my mother-in-law.'

However, the most anti-socialist and truly dangerous feature of Hungarian-style 'market socialism' is the emergence of a large number of private entrepreneurs, each employing and exploiting half a dozen or so workers, in retail trade and other services, housing construction and the like. Many of these people are, by Hungarian standards, millionaires. The liberal British historian AJP Taylor, whose wife is Hungarian, observed after an extended visit there, 'conditions are much like those in England. There are plenty of well-to-do people, though maybe living a little more modestly' (*An Old Man's Diary* [1984]). Hungary's much-vaunted (in the West) economic 'reform' has produced a new class of petty capitalists -- numbering in the tens of thousands -- who form a concentrated social base for counterrevolution.

If in Hungary we can see a developing social base for capitalist restoration, it is in Poland where the counterrevolutionary danger has been and remains most acute. Poland was the one country in Stalinist East Europe which did not collectivise agriculture. The mass of peasant smallholders not only blocked agricultural modernisation but also provided a potent social base for the reactionary Catholic church. In the wake of the 1970 workers uprising, sparked by food price increases, the new 'reform' regime of Edward Gierk promised an 'economic miracle' to be achieved through massive loans from Western banks. When export markets didn't materialise and the loans to the Frankfurt bankers fell due, the result was a catastrophic economic collapse in the late 1970s, giving rise to the clerical-nationalist Solidarnosc of Lech Walesa. In the fall of 1981 the country stood on the verge of civil war, as Walesa & Co launched their counterrevolutionary bid for power using Richard Pipes' watchword of 'decentralisation' (ie, abolition of the planned economy). The Polish bureaucracy spiked Solidarnosc's power grab at the last minute. However, decades of Stalinist conciliation of reactionary forces -- socially, economically and politically -- have driven Poland into bankruptcy and much of its population to look for salvation from Reagan's America, the Common Market and Pope Wojtyla's Vatican.

While Soviet workers are probably not that familiar with the Yugoslav, Hungarian and Polish experiences, they are instinctively suspicious, if not downright resistant, to all this talk about economic 'reform'. The right-wing London *Economist* (25 May) is hardheaded enough to recognise: 'The idea of economic reform is not as popular with the average Soviet electrician or machine-minder as is sometimes assumed in the west. At the very least, reform will mean a widening of pay differentials.' Soviet workers, with their strong sense of egalitarianism, do not want to earn 10 or 20 per cent less for doing the same job as in a neighbouring, but more profitable, factory. They do not want to be laid off because they are unfortunately working in an enterprise that is losing money through no fault of theirs (for example, because it has old and obsolete equipment). Any move toward market-oriented 'reform' will cause the Kremlin bureaucracy considerable trouble with the Soviet proletariat.

This is not to say that Soviet workers are or should be satisfied with the economic status quo. Bureaucratic centralism generates enormous waste, especially in the consumer goods sector. Unwanted items pile up in warehouses or can be sold at only a fraction of the cost of production, while other commodities are chronically in short supply. Soviet shoppers spend hours waiting on line or looking for goods they want and need. Even that personification of bureaucratic complacency, the late Konstantin Chernenko, complained of poor quality and shortages of consumer goods, pointing out, for example, that children's shoes are hard to find.



Fusion reactor in Moscow: the more technologically developed the society, the more bureaucracy becomes an obstacle.

However, the answer to these problems is not atomised competition between enterprises while turning much of retail trade and the rest of the consumer sector over to private entrepreneurs. As far back as the 1920s the Trotskyist Left Opposition denounced bureaucratic arbitrariness in economic administration and indifference to consumer well-being. The 1927 Platform of the Joint Opposition called for 'the lowering of prices [which] primarily applies to consumer goods needed by the mass of the workers and peasants'. It further specifies a 'price-lowering policy, more adapted to the conditions of the market, and more individualised -- that is, taking into consideration the market position of each kind of goods'.

In the 1930s the Polish socialist economist Oskar Lange developed a theoretical model for combining a centralised market for consumer goods and services with long-term planning for basic economic construction. Clearly it makes no sense to apply long-term targets to the number of shoes delivered to specific department stores or wrenches supplied to various garages. The central economic administration should continually adjust the output of different goods to satisfy market demand. The objects of the long-term plan are the construction of new factories, mines, railroads, airports, etc, major retooling operations, urban renewal and the like. And to harmonise final consumption with planned production of primary and intermediate goods, planners can use the 'input/output' model developed by Russian emigre economist Wassily Leontief, growing out of his study of Soviet planning problems in the 1920s.

Combining Lange and Leontief, so to speak, and with the modern computer technology capable of millions of computations a second, a planned Soviet economy can adjust supply and demand and promote economic development far more efficiently than the chaos of the most theoretically 'perfect' market. But as with any information system, the key is the accuracy and relevance of the inputs. With the systematic distortion of data engendered by bureaucratic rule (hoarding, wasteful use of resources, etc), no wonder the result is endless bottlenecks and shoddy products. In the

lingo of computer programmers: garbage in, garbage out (GIGO). To solve this problem, you need not only modern technology but soviet democracy.

The main economic problem facing the USSR today is not the elimination of waste in the consumer sector, important and desirable as that is. It is the renewal of an increasingly aged industrial plant, applying and going beyond the most advanced techniques of Western and Japanese capitalism. In short, the Soviet economy must, in Trotsky's words, make the transition from quantity to quality. It is precisely here that bureaucratic parasitism and commandism stands in the way of further progress. What Trotsky wrote during Stalin's first Five Year Plan possesses, if anything, even greater force today:

'The participation of workers themselves in the leadership of the nation, of its politics and economy; and actual control over the bureaucracy; and the growth in the feeling of responsibility of those in charge to those under them -- all these would doubtless react favorably on production itself: the friction within would be reduced, the costly economic zigzags would likewise be reduced to a minimum, a healthier distribution of forces and equipment would be assured, and ultimately the coefficients of growth would be raised. Soviet democracy is first of all the vital need of national economy itself.' (*What Next? Vital Questions for the German Proletariat*, 1932)

There can be no fundamental and sustained revival of Soviet economic growth without the restoration of workers (soviet) democracy. And there can be no restoration of soviet democracy without a proletarian political revolution which ousts the Stalinist usurpers of the Bolshevik Revolution. A democratically elected soviet government will revise the economic plan from top to bottom in the interests of the producers and consumers. Thus, workers and peasants will have a direct stake in maximising labour productivity for they will no longer see the product of their labour often wasted on ill-conceived projects or spent to build dachas (villas) for the Kremlin oligarchs and their hangers-on. Factory committees will elect the managers and oversee the plan's most efficient implementation. This is the only answer to bureaucratic parasitism at the base. Consumer cooperatives will oversee the price and quality of products.

To be sure, proletarian political revolution is not a cure-all for the problems of the Soviet economy. The Soviet Union would still confront the terrible pressure of a hostile and economically more advanced capitalist world. It is precisely this pressure which was the prime cause of the Stalinist degeneration of the Bolshevik Revolution. Workers revolution in the advanced capitalist countries would in short order sweep away the Kremlin bureaucracy. At the same time, there is no historical law that the Soviet workers and peasants, who in 1917 shook the world, must now await revolutionary impetus from the West. A revolutionary workers government at the head of the Soviet state would, like the early Soviet government of Lenin and Trotsky, possess the most powerful weapon of all against imperialist militarism: the programme, perspective and moral authority to lead the world socialist revolution.

Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* no 386, 6 September 1985

## Defend the Titus family!

Late in the evening of 29 August the family of a black couple, Bob and Maisie Titus of the Foxhill estate in Sheffield, was subjected to a terrifying, murderous attack by seven white racist thugs. Sinisterly dressed all in white and armed with wooden staves, bricks and milk bottles, these scum smashed every window in the flat, narrowly missing a little girl of six with a brick which landed on her bed. They then tried to smash down the front door shouting 'we're going to kill you black bastards'. Bob and Maisie told *Workers Hammer* that, in a desperate attempt to defend their family and keep the racist killers at bay, they wedged themselves against the front door. They were saved by a white neighbour who courageously went at these cowardly scum with a hammer, driving them away.

Bob Titus called the police three times in the course of the evening. He was first

met with abuse and when the police finally did appear, fifteen minutes after the attack, they refused to arrest the racist thugs who were still hanging around near the flat. Under pressure of a campaign mounted by the family, the police finally arrested six of the racists. On two occasions these thugs have appeared in court, and both times not only was the case adjourned without charges being brought, but the would-be racist murderers were given unconditional bail so they could try again. One of the racists, a British Army soldier recently returned from terrorising Catholics in Northern Ireland, was told he need not appear at the next hearing due to his 'commitments'.

The Sheffield labour movement must mobilise in defence of the Titus family and to smash racist attacks. Jail the racist thugs!

# Thatcher...

(Continued from page 1)

been tried and proven bankrupt. The standard of living has fallen below Italy and Spain. And it's not just Thatcher: the Wilson/Callaghan Labour government broke strikes, sent troops to Northern Ireland and instituted the notorious virginity tests for Asian women seeking entry into Britain.

For decades, the British left has been straitjacketed by Labourism, subordinating itself politically to the parliamentarist lieutenants of British capital. The Communist Party, now deeply split between ultrareformist 'Euros' and old-line Stalinists, long ago embraced the 'parliamentary road' to oblivion and became a second-rate Labour Party. The Spartacist League fights to split the Labour Party, winning the working-class base from the pro-capitalist leaders. Right now is a unique opportunity to unite minorities and the poor with the heavy battalions of organised labour. And it is a key moment to forge a genuinely Bolshevik party of workers revolution.

The last time Thatcher's popular ratings were so low she managed to get out of the hole with her dirty little Falklands/Malvinas war, drowning hundreds of Argentine sailors aboard the *Belgrano* out of sheer bloodlust. This time Thatcher tried to whip up a massive provocation against what she perceived to be the most vulnerable section of the British populace. She wanted the cities to burn -- and then blame it on the blacks, Asians and reds. But hardly anyone is buying this one. Hostility to the government and especially the police permeates wide layers of the population. Whole sections of the industrial proletariat have been made permanently jobless, and the memory of brutal police charges against the overwhelmingly white miners is fresh in everyone's mind. The government's attempt to scapegoat the minorities as 'work-shy welfare bums' fell flat. It was white as well as black and Asian youth who drove Home Secretary Douglas Hurd out of Handsworth and battled the cops in Tottenham.

Even the influential *Economist* (5 October), expressing widespread unease within the ruling class, told Thatcher to call a halt the week after Brixton with its headline, 'Disarm Britain's Police'. These snobbish Tories are not concerned with the lives of blacks and Asians; they're worried about the shattering of the political fabric of capitalist Britain: 'British policemen are losing their traditional respect.' And when the Tories convened in Blackpool for their annual conference, it took an army of cops to guard it. No one has forgotten that only a year ago Thatcher and her entire cabinet were almost blown to kingdom come by the IRA, to the expressed indifference or outright jubilation of the vast majority of her subjects. An *Economist* (12 October) photo of Thatcher in Blackpool was aptly captioned, 'From the bunker'.

## Thatcher: a view from the bunker

Thatcher deliberately sought to foment a racist bloodbath, either through naked police terror or through an attempt to incite interracial violence. One week before Handsworth blew, the police sponsored a white vigilante meeting that targetted a popular bingo hall for arson attack. That was the first building to burn. Then they tried to pit Asians against blacks: the Fleet Street press deliberately spread lies that two Asian men were seen being beaten up and thrown into a burning building by 'black mobs'. Every sector of the Hands-

worth community repudiated the police/media provocation; 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'.

On 28 September, seven armed police kicked down the door of a council house in Normandy Road, Brixton at 6.30 in the morning and shot black housewife Cherry Groce in cold blood, paralysing her from the waist down. What followed was a police riot, as cops first rampaged on the streets and then systematically terrorised residents of black housing estates. As a pall of smoke hung over whole sections, Brixton was sealed off under police occupation.

A week later, London police stopped black man Floyd Jarrett, ostensibly searching for stolen goods. The cops knew Jarrett: he worked in a community youth organisation preparing free meals for pensioners. No stolen goods -- but they arrested him anyway and took his keys. Then they burst into his home in Tottenham and pushed his mother, who suffered from heart trouble, to the floor. They refused to call an ambulance while she lay dying. After a protest over the racist murder, hundreds of cops swarmed the Broadwater Farm Estate. But in an ensuing ten-hour battle, the cops got what they had coming: 230 were injured, several wounded by shotgun fire, one dead.

In the wake of Tottenham, the Thatcherites and the cops pulled out all the stops. The metropolitan police commissioner put London's residents 'on notice' that in the future the cops would use tear gas and plastic bullets -- standard tools of the trade for the British occupation forces in Northern Ireland. Four kids as young as 13 and a local shopkeeper were hastily framed up for 'murder' of a cop. But more farsighted sections of the imperialists are worried. The editors of the *New York Times* (10 October) had this advice: '... unskilled young Britons in the inner city see themselves as left out of the Government's plans for eventual economic revival. As long as they do, these outbursts of violence are likely to be repeated.'

The day before, the same paper published a perceptive article by RW Apple, who recently completed an eight-and-a-half-year stint as their bureau chief in London. Apple related the following story:

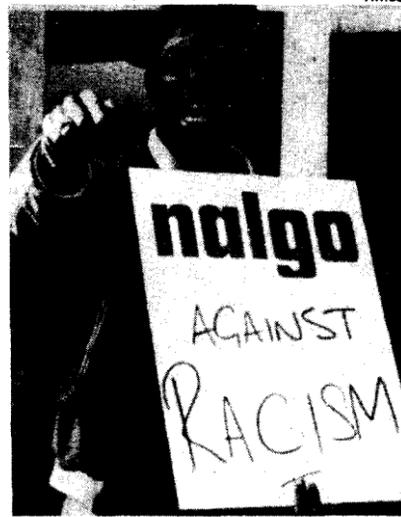
'A West German industrialist who negotiates labor contracts spent a few days recently talking to some English counterparts and looking at their figures. When he saw the average wage of an unskilled factory worker, he asked how such a man could ever afford to take his family to a good restaurant. Told that he could not, the German remarked that neither he nor his employees would ever tolerate such a situation.'

Thatcher has deliberately deindustrialised Britain, shutting down large chunks of steel and coal production. In fact, Britain is the only industrial nation with an absolute decline in manufacturing output in the last decade. An all-party House of Lords committee warned of the impending collapse of British industry as North Sea oil runs dry, and of 'a major political and economic crisis in the foreseeable future'. For blacks and Asians, brought over in large numbers in the '50s and '60s to do the dirtiest, lowest paying jobs, there's nowhere to go. Yet the Nationality Act, which was prepared by a Labour government, denies citizenship to many children of West Indian, Asian and other Commonwealth citizens who lived and worked in Britain most

Paul Herrmann



Tories barricade themselves in at Blackpool. Does anyone like Maggie Thatcher?



Haringey council worker in 12 October demonstration defending Bernie Grant against racist mobilisation.

of their lives.

The need for working-class power and socialist reconstruction of society is posed pointblank in Britain today. The Thatcher government is exposed, exhausted, brittle and discredited. The most militant section of the proletariat -- the miners -- was defeated but hardly crushed. And Labourite parliamentarist illusions have been shaken. Certainly after a year of hard class struggle the reformist pipe dream of a peaceful transformation of British society is a bad joke for militants. These conditions sharply pose the possibility for a regroupment of class-struggle militants into a revolutionary vanguard party.

Furthermore, traditional barriers between the proletariat and the oppressed Irish, black and Asian minorities were pierced during the miners strike. Minorities who knew from their own experience the savagery of the cops were the most stalwart supporters of the embattled miners. The Brixton community 'adopted' six South Wales pits; Protestant British miners marching in Belfast to demonstrate support for the Catholic population were greeted with banners saying 'Victory to the Miners!' And sparked by the miners' wives committees, the role of women in the coal strike reverberated through the country. The miners and their allies learned some hard lessons about the capitalist state. What's needed is a Bolshevik party at the head of the working class, acting as a genuine tribune of the people, so that next time around we win.

## The crisis of revolutionary leadership

But the workers movement remains tied to the reformist Labour Party. In decaying Britain, where there is no room for credible reform, social democracy today means increasingly overtly breaking social struggle. Striking miners and other militants disparagingly refer to Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock as 'Ramsay MacKinnock', after despised Labour leader Ramsay MacDonald, who defected to the class enemy in the 1930s. Kinnock supported Thatcher's scab ballot and condemned the miners' defence of their picket lines against the strikebreaking cops and scabs.

Now, as a section of the bourgeoisie has deserted Thatcher, and Kinnock smells the possibility of leading the next government, he is all the more eager to demonstrate his loyalty to the capitalist order. When local black Labour councillor Bernie Grant refused to condemn Tottenham youth for courageously defending themselves against Thatcher's cops and forthrightly asserted that the police got a 'bloody good hiding', Kinnock echoed the savage Tory denunciation of Grant. He and his deputy Roy Hattersley immediately issued a statement dissociating the Labour Party from Grant's eminently decent stance.

If even most militant workers remain tied to the Labour Party, it is not on account of the despised Kinnock but out of illusions in the 'lefts' in the trade unions and Labour Party. Divisions within the workers movement are shaped by the conflict between the groveling pro-CIA, anti-Soviet right wing and a disparate, mushy 'left'. The most prominent 'left' leader, National Union of Mineworkers president Arthur Scargill, earned the widespread enmity of the right for his forthright denunciation of Polish Solidarnosc as counterrevolutionary.

The bosses may cheer for Kinnock, but much of Labour's working-class base looks to Scargill's NUM and the class struggle it symbolises. At the recent Labour Party conference a resolution was put forward by Scargill calling for a future Labour government to reinstate sacked miners, review the cases of jailed miners and reimburse the NUM for its funds seized by Thatcher. This got a majority despite frenzied opposition by Kinnock. And yet Scargill, along with the other lefts, calls for unity within the Labour Party, supporting

the election of a Labour government under strikebreaker Kinnock!

The miners strike was an acid test for evaluating every grouping that would lead the proletariat. The right-wing Labourites who most hate the Russian Revolution proved themselves equally the enemy of the British revolution -- they were the open scabherders. But in the final analysis it was the treachery of the 'lefts' in refusing to spread the strike that defeated the NUM. They did not want to shut down Thatcher's Britain because they are unwilling to fight for power. As for the myriad pseudo-Trotskyists, both inside and outside the Labour Party, they at best tailed the 'lefts', helping the backstabbing social democrats maintain their hold on the proletariat.

The Spartacist League sharply exposed the Labour and union 'lefts', demanding they break in struggle from the open class traitors. The SL called for a Triple Alliance of miners, railwaymen and transport workers to strike jointly against Thatcher. This would have been in effect a general strike, posing the question of workers power. But although two dock strikes were called briefly, union leaders in rail, transport and maritime who proclaimed their 'solidarity' with the NUM would not break with the scabherding leadership of the Trades Union Congress and mobilise their ranks alongside the miners. The miners strike perfectly bore out Leon Trotsky's observation about the British 'lefts':

'...leftism of this kind remains left only so long as it has no practical obligations. But as soon as the question of action arises, the left wingers respectfully cede the leadership to the rights.' ('Problems of the British Labour Movement', 12 January 1926)

### Britain needs workers revolution

A revolutionary vanguard party in Britain can only be forged through breaking the stranglehold of Labourism on the working class. But that will take effective Leninist tactics. Simple sectarian dismissal of the divisions within social democracy no less than opportunist tailing of the Labour and union 'lefts' are equally formulas for sterility. A Leninist-Trotskyist party can be forged only through splitting the Labour Party, bringing key sectors of the working class under the revolutionary banner while exposing and politically defeating the pro-capitalist misleaders, both 'left' and right. Today the opportunities for a regroupment, through splits and fusions of would-be revolutionary forces, are more favourable than at any time in years.

The organisations of the so-called 'far left' for the most part have either liquidated into the Labour Party or blindly tail it. And in the face of massive, turbulent social struggle the Labour chieftains lined up against the miners. Today, not surprisingly,



Spartacists fight for trade union/minority mobilisation against racist/cop terror: (left) black miner addressing Emergency Protest Meeting in Handsworth, 18 September. (right) 5,000 blacks and trade unionists stop Ku Klux Klan in streets of Washington, DC, 27 November 1982.

Kinnock & Co are even more hostile to the black, Asian and white poor in the ghettos exploding in just outrage against the murdering cops. For pseudo-socialists who think that the Labour Party is an instrument for progressive change, that poses a big problem. No wonder that today various fake-left groups in Britain -- from the limp Communist Party to the ex-guerrilla enthusiasts of the ex-IMG (*Socialist Action*) -- have split or are on the verge of splits.

And where is Gerry Healy? The Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) just announced that its founding father and Stalin-style inflexible-type leader has been expelled for bureaucratic abuse of power, self-glorification, personal degeneration, corruption and 'unprincipled relations with bourgeois nationalist leaders and with trade union and Labour Party reformists in Britain'.

After Tottenham, the Thatcher government attempted unsuccessfully to whip up a red scare blaming the ghetto explosion on 'outside agitators', in particular 'Trotskyites and anarchists'. A few days later the establishment *Times* (10 October) ran a story headlined 'Far left exerts little influence in riot areas', debunking this. The *Times* article noted frankly that it could find only two ostensibly Trotskyist groups that even sided with the embattled ghetto residents against the cops. One was the virulently anti-Soviet Revolutionary Communist Party (which openly courted scabs during the miners strike); the other was the Spartacist League.

'The Spartacists call [for] "mobilising whatever resources possible in organising mass protest against the police occupation"', reports the *Times*. The article added, 'Most of the other multifarious leftist groups, in-



cluding the Workers Revolutionary Party and Militant have explicitly condemned rioting.' The WRP egregiously called for 'neighbourhood defence guards to prevent vandalism, looting and the drugs trade' (*News Line*, 1 October) -- in short, a ghetto auxiliary for Thatcher's racist cops! In contrast, the SL uniquely demanded: Down with the racist cop occupations of Handsworth, Brixton, Tottenham -- Cops out now! Drop the charges against victims of the police dragnets -- Free those framed up for 'murder' in Tottenham! Jail the killer cops and throw away the keys! Build trade union-centred community defence guards to defeat racist attacks and cop terror!

The SL called an emergency meeting in Handsworth when the area was under police occupation. The cops hated it -- they arrested three of our comrades for leafletting. But a well-integrated crowd of several dozen blacks, Asians and whites showed up in defiance of the cops. The miners we organised to come were particularly well received. As one miner put it: 'Ten years ago I wouldn't have bothered ...but now you're going through what we went through.' There are tens of thousands of militant workers who share these sentiments; indeed, at a miners rally in Barnsley on 19 October, several thousand miners cheered Arthur Scargill when he condemned cop violence in Brixton. Condemnations are not enough -- in the face of Thatcher's cops rampaging, the watchword must be: Cops out! Miners to Brixton!

The British proletariat needs a Bolshevik party, modelled on the party of Lenin and Trotsky that led the Russian workers and oppressed, all races, all nationalities, men and women, to victory over capitalism in 1917. ■

## Racist cops, cowardly 'lefts'

The inner-city explosions against racist police terror provided a litmus test for the revolutionary intentions of the British left. Most of the fake revolutionaries simply apologised for or amnestied the cop terror, refusing even to oppose the racist police occupations; the rest despaired of any possibility of mobilising the labour movement against it. Incapable of standing up to the Cold War, running scared particularly since the miners' defeat, these fake lefts see the acme of their expectations in boosting the racist, anti-working-class Labour leadership into Number Ten.

*Socialist Organiser* (26 September) captured it with its front-page appeal, 'Off the fence, Kinnock!' A week later it moaned that 'heavier policing' (ie cop riots) tends 'to criminalise the police themselves' and pushed its solution of 'democratic control'. The recently-split *Socialist Action* adds to this only its emphasis on Labour Party 'black sections'. *Workers Power* (October 1985) in turn pleads that a future Labour government 'subordinates local police forces to the democratically elected local councils' while calling for a 'labour movement enquiry into the "riots"'. The Marxist axiom that the cops are the armed fist of the capitalist state is too outmoded for these creative 'Marxists'.

And what their phoney Marxism looks like in practice is illustrated by Militant's 'socialism in one city'... On Handsworth, Militant

echoed the cops' line with its complaints about 'drug traffic'. When things exploded right on their own doorstep in Liverpool Toxteth, these house-trained 'Trotskyists' tried to hire themselves out to Kinnock and Hattersely with the pitch that they had 'prevented riots from erupting throughout the city before now and not just in black areas' (*Militant*, 4 October). What Militant have managed to achieve after two years of their 'socialist policies' in benighted Liverpool is to antagonise the city's sizeable black population and issue 30,000 redundancy notices to council workers!

Those groups which did not simply fall into step behind the Labourite apologists for cop terror are devoid of any working-class perspective to fight it. *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* (October-November 1985), in their time-worn fashion, mindlessly cheer 'the revolutionary vanguard of black youth' just as they do the ANC, IRA, PLO etc etc. The Revolutionary Communist Party managed to call for 'Cops off the streets' after Handsworth. But it carries mindless cheerleading to its logical conclusion. Seeing the organised labour movement as lily-white, and thus incapable of being mobilised against racist terror, this bizarre, scab-loving outfit even pushes Thatcher's line of 'black riots': 'A small minority of whites joined in the anti-police violence, but this should not obscure the nature of the riot as an explosion of black anger...

against oppression' (next step, 20 September). This is simply false ... and it is grist to the racists' mill.

Rather than driving a wedge between militant workers and combative minority youth, what is needed is to weld them together into a unified fist under the leadership and programme of a multiracial revolutionary vanguard party. Unlike the wretched 'Militants', Marxists unconditionally defend the democratic right to organise so-called 'black sections' (consisting in fact of blacks and Asians) inside the Labour Party. But organising pressure groups along race lines inside the pro-capitalist Labour Party will do nothing to change its racist policies, much less to fight racial oppression. In place of this utter diversion what's needed is to win militant sectors of the working class across race line to an anti-racist, anti-capitalist programme.

While Kinnock's lackeys genuflect before the bourgeois state, we fight to mobilise the social power of the labour movement in struggle against racist attacks across-the-board. Spartacist supporters in London Transport have fought to mobilise this heavily black and Asian workforce in defence of Brixton and Tottenham. The power of trade union/minority mobilisation against racist terror was dramatically demonstrated in 1982 when 5000 blacks and trade unionists, led by the Spartacist League/US, stopped the fascist Ku Klux Klan marching through the streets of Washington DC. This country is ripe for a revolutionary explosion. What's desperately needed is a Trotskyist vanguard party to lead workers and the oppressed to power.

## South Africa: For international workers action! Avenge Moloise, bury apartheid!

At dawn on Friday 18 October the apartheid regime of PW Botha judicially murdered Benjamin Moloise, a young black poet and supporter of the outlawed African National Congress (ANC). Thus did Pretoria declare to the world, in the blood of this courageous young man, that it remains intransigent in its determination to drown in blood the continuing revolt of the non-white masses.

Benjamin Moloise was the 87th victim to be judicially butchered in South Africa this year. He met his death with defiance. Two months earlier, before a temporary stay of execution, he sent a final message through his mother: 'Tell the people I will die with the knowledge that we will still be free.' His killing provoked outrage and protests, both in South Africa and abroad. After a memorial service the day he was hanged, 3000 enraged black mourners in central Johannesburg fought pitched battles with the apartheid cops, who unleashed whips and dogs on the crowd. In the process two white cops were stabbed, while dozens of protesters were arrested and at least one shot in the leg.

Resistance and bloody repression continue to rock South Africa. On 15 October in Athlone, a suburb of Cape Town, police strafed a crowd of unarmed 'coloured' (mixed-race) protesters in a 'Trojan Horse' type ambush, after emerging from boxes in an unmarked lorry. At least two youth were killed in this deadly hail. Three days later the apartheid killers got a little taste of their own medicine when they fired into a Muslim protest outside Athlone mosque and received gunfire back.

Internationally, the Athlone butchery and the Moloise execution produced a wave of outrage. On 19 October in London, 3000 students demonstrated outside South Africa House; more than 300 were arrested as cops waded into a sit-down protest that stopped traffic for two hours. When Thatcher's cops tried it again at the 100,000-strong march in London two weeks later, arresting 144, they were greeted with sticks and bottles as well as shouts of 'fascists' and 'bully-boys'.

But the liberal Anti-Apartheid Movement

types who organise the protests, whether Communist Party-dominated mainstream AAM or the more 'militant' City of London Group, channel anger against apartheid terror into futile appeals to the Thatcher government to impose sanctions. A strategy based on sanctions demobilises struggle. Instead of a wave of protest strikes and mass demonstrations on the eve of Moloise's execution, the AAM managed two tiny, tame pickets whose passivity was broken only by spirited chants of 'Hang Botha! Free Moloise!' from our comrades. In the US while liberal moralists sat on their hands



Mrs Moloise, defiant after apartheid murder of her son.

only the Spartacist League/US mobilised emergency demonstrations around the country in a last-ditch attempt to save Moloise's life.

For more than a year now, intense repression has been unable to suppress the anti-apartheid revolt. 'We are slaves now and we cannot be slaves any longer', a leader of the Crossroads township near Cape Town said recently. So the bourgeoisie from Pretoria to



London's South Africa House, 17 October. Bloody apartheid butchers will pay for their crimes!

London to Washington is asking desperately, in the words of the US *Newsweek*, 'What can be done?' But South African blacks are asking another question, 'What is to be done?' -- echoing the title of Lenin's book that laid the foundations for the Bolshevik Party in Russia -- because they're looking for the road to revolution. The *Newsweek* article went on to say of the young anti-apartheid fighters, 'Their revolution awaits its Lenin'. And in fact, building a revolutionary workers party is the burning question of the South African revolution today.

As Leninists and Trotskyists, one of our cardinal principles is to face reality squarely, to speak the truth to the masses no matter how bitter. If the bourgeoisie is trying to delude itself that it can get by with a couple of reforms, most of the left is trying to delude itself that revolution is just around the corner in South Africa, that the ANC has got Botha on the run. But the bitter truth is that as long as the struggle continues along purely national lines, just white v black, with justice on one side and guns on the other, it is not going to be apartheid that is buried but the oppressed black, Indian and coloured masses. In that society, one man, one vote, a simple democratic principle, means the end of white domination. And the Afrikaners are prepared to fight to the death to defend their privileges. The townships were built so that they can be easily sealed off -- the whole structure of apartheid is designed to perpetrate massacres and they are preparing to carry them out. But without black labour, which created South Africa's golden riches, the apartheid system cannot function. That is the key.

Even if the Boer population cracks and the ANC strikes a deal with 'progressive' capitalists like Anglo American for a 'non-racial capitalism', what would be the result? There is the potential for an all-sided bloodbath -- hexagonal genocide -- between the Boers, the English, the coloureds, the Indians, the Xhosa, the Zulus, just as Mugabe in neighbouring Zimbabwe sets the Shona against Nkomo's Matabeles. In the absence of a working-class-led revolutionary struggle which can unite all the oppressed and disenfranchised -- the Indians, the coloureds, the youth, the women on the bantustans, the land-starved rural toilers -- and also neutralise a section of the white population (ie convince some whites not to fight for apartheid), communalist bloodletting is a horrible and real prospect.

In South Africa today, a civil war is looming -- and it will take nothing less than that to do away with the system of apartheid slavery. But for there to be a progressive outcome, for the hour of liberation of all the oppressed to strike, this must be a class war. It is the black proletariat which has the power to bring the gold mine owners, the bankers, their politicians and their army, the whole apartheid system to its knees. From Brixton to Soweto, we're fighting to build the revolutionary parties to smash the capitalist system. Avenge Benjamin Moloise -- Hang Botha! Smash apartheid! Black workers take the lead -- For workers revolution! ■

## Smash Spencer split!

The Nottinghamshire ballot ratifying the scab 'Union of Democratic Mineworkers' warmed the hearts of the Coal Board, the Tories and their scab-loving Cold Warrior friends in the labour bureaucracy. Finally the British bosses can boast their own wretched little version of anti-Communist Polish Solidarnosc. The Coal Board predictably and immediately gave the Spencerite breakaway exclusive bargaining rights in Notts and put the NUM on notice that it intends to see the union driven out of Notts altogether. There is only one union for miners -- the NUM. The so-called UDM is bought and paid for by the bosses.

Even as the bosses payroll their scab tools Lynk and Prendergast, the government continues to exact vengeance from the NUM for

its defiant stand, holding on to the millions of pounds looted from the union treasury (then pointedly invested in South Africa), keeping hundreds of men imprisoned or locked out of a job for having stood by their union. Meanwhile the Labour/TUC chieftains who worked overtime to betray the strike and gave succour to the scabs now counsel 'conciliation' -- on the Spencerites' terms! Beware TUC 'negotiations'! Smash the scab split! Reinstate all sacked miners! Free all the imprisoned miners! Return every penny, looted from the union with interest! Defend the NUM!

We urge readers to contribute generously to the fund for sacked and jailed miners and their families to: Miners Solidarity Fund, St James' House, Vicar Lane, Sheffield.