

Forge a Bolshevik party in South Africa!

Black miners defy apartheid bosses

They work deep underground in black pits where the temperature reaches 110 degrees Fahrenheit. Every year hundreds are killed and thousands are maimed. They live in male-only, prison-like barracks forcibly separated from their wives and children eleven months of the year. The gold they dig out of the ground supports the most hideously racist state on earth.

But for almost three weeks the gold stopped flowing from the Witwatersrand to the banks of Wall Street, London and Frankfurt. The apartheid state was hit with the biggest, costliest strike in South African history as over 300,000 black gold and coal miners walked out. Every day the Randlords lost some £5 million. This was not just a strike, it was a war. A raw, savage class war in the racist hell of South Africa.

In the aftermath of this hard-fought strike, the bloodsucking apartheid capitalists were in such a hurry to start up gold production that they plunged 89 miners into a fiery death as an explosion rocked the No 10 shaft at St Helena, about 160 miles south of Johannesburg. The mine is owned by the General Mining Corp (Gencor) who also owns the Kinross mine where last September 177 black miners died in the world's worst gold mining disaster.

The strike ended in a standoff. The union accepted the same terms it had rejected before the strike began including a 15-to-23 per cent wage increase (the union had demanded 30 per cent). While there is no guarantee that the 44,000 union militants fired during the course of the strike would be reinstated, the overwhelming majority probably will be. Most importantly, the miners union was not broken, its forces remain intact.

Although the immediate demands of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) did not go beyond wages, benefits and conditions, this great labour struggle has had an enormous political impact. As the *Philadelphia Inquirer* (21 August) observed:

"The strike is more than a wage dispute. It is a direct challenge to a government that has snuffed out all other forms of black protest.

"By disrupting a system in which black laborers help produce enormous wealth for South Africa at



Eric Miller, Afrapix

South African black unions are key to smashing apartheid; gold and coal miners prepare for strike battle against bosses and Botha's butchers.

minuscule wages, the miners are at the forefront of the anti-apartheid struggle."

Gold in South Africa is mined and processed from very low-grade ore. The billions in profits extracted by the mine magnates every year represent the brutal *superexploitation* of black labour subjected to a vicious form of indentured servitude. But the recent strike, in its massive size, duration and discipline demonstrated the growing power and sophistication of the miners union. The last black miners strike in South Africa on this scale - in 1946 - was crushed after four days and the union was destroyed. Before the rise of organised black labour in the 1970s, whites in the mining industry earned 11 times the wages of black workers. Now that ratio has been reduced to five-to-one, and most whites are foremen or supervisors. Moreover, on the second day of the strike the NUM won the elimination of the "reserve" clause which previously barred blacks from getting blasting certificates, the ticket to higher-paying jobs in the industry.

state regimentation black miners and their families back on the bantustans are subjected to. Black miners produce the wealth of South Africa and they are becoming increasingly conscious of the disparity between the vicious exploitation they endure and their real social power.

So the miners waged a hard strike for the wealth that is theirs. The economic power and combativity of the miners will surely inspire the oppressed black African, coloured (mixed-race) and Indian toilers of South Africa. But the mine struggle underscores the urgent need for a communist political leadership to lead the anti-apartheid struggle for workers power.

SHOWDOWN ON THE WITWATERSRAND

The racist apartheid regime has tried through naked terror to crush the three-year-old nationwide revolt against apartheid rule. Anti-apartheid organisations have been banned and their activists in the thousands have been jailed under "Emergency Regulations" or murdered by right-wing death squads. But in defiance of this savage police state, black unions have only grown stronger and more militant, as demonstrated by the phenomenal growth of the NUM. And the three-week-long strike showed the power of proletarian class solidarity to transcend in struggle historic tribal antagonisms and the social backwardness of the less urbanised "migrant" workers; these divisions have been exploited for decades by the mine magnates to keep these toilers enslaved.

The six-million-strong black proletariat of South Africa, with black miners at its core, can smash apartheid and be the powerhouse for the liberation of all southern Africa. The mine strike posed the question

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Where is Gorbachev's Russia going?

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South Africa...

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of power: which class will rule South Africa? When Anglo American began mass firing of the mine strikers, the giant COSATU federation intimated that plans for a general strike were under way. But the NUM leadership drew back, unprepared to lead the revolutionary struggle which was posed. The insurgent black labour movement in South Africa desperately needs a multi-racial Bolshevik party, which must be, as Lenin said, the tribune of the people, uniting the townships, the migrant workers, the women, the Indian and coloured masses, the anti-apartheid whites in a struggle for workers revolution to topple the racist slavemasters.

The union leadership urged miners to go home for the duration, signalling the determination to wage a long strike if necessary. At the same time, having union militants leave the minefields tended to weaken the strike in the face of the bosses' massive scabberding by security guards and police. Nine strikers were killed and hundreds wounded, and according to union sources over 400 have been arrested. But black miners have not been passive victims of apartheid terror. They fought back with stones, knives and petrol bombs.

The mine bosses' main weapon in trying to break the strike was the

wholesale firings of union members - over 44,000 dismissed. Anglo American has been the main target of the strike and the most ruthless of the mining houses trying to break it. The company's chief negotiator, Bobby Godsell, threatened:

"There is a continuing romanticism in the minds of people inside and outside South Africa which thinks that the trade union movement is the short cut to revolution. They are wrong.

"If the trade union movement devotes its resources to a head-on confrontation with the South African state through a national strike, the government will smash the trade union movement." (New York Times, 25 August).

Most of the strikers killed were killed by Anglo American security guards and most of those fired were fired by Anglo American. Even the moderate Ramaphosa leadership of the NUM accused Anglo American of seeking "to break the strike with the aid of the South African police".

This giant mining and manufacturing conglomerate constitutes the core of English-speaking capitalists in South Africa and is the key link to Wall Street and the City of London. The corporation is well named since half its owners are Americans and Englishmen. No less important than Anglo American's economic dominance has been its crucial political role in contemporary South Africa. Harry Oppenheimer, the

corporation's founder, and its current head Gavin Relly have been viewed as the mainstays of the so-called "liberal" or "progressive" wing of the white ruling class. Thus the petty-bourgeois nationalist African National Congress (ANC) has long looked to Oppenheimer, Relly & Co as its hoped-for partner in dismantling apartheid and constructing a "democratic, nonracial" South Africa.

Relly and his political underlings meet with ANC spokesmen in various black African capitals and declare their desire for a "peaceful, negotiated solution" to South Africa's crisis. But Anglo American security guards terrorise black workers daily, and faced with any serious level of class struggle, Relly & Co turn to the police and army - the core of the apartheid state. For the fundamental basis of the apartheid system is capitalist superexploitation of the black majority. There can be no liberation from apartheid slavery without the revolutionary expropriation of capitalist wealth.

The main source of capitalist wealth in South Africa lies in the mines. Gold exports alone account for 60 per cent of the country's foreign-exchange earnings. Coal, which was also struck, is also crucial for the South African economy as its main domestically produced energy source.

The more farsighted Randlords, like Oppenheimer and Relly, realised that their total subjugation of the black miners could not last. In the late '70s Anglo American and the other mining houses were hit by a series of bloody wildcat strikes. Recognising that black unionisation of some sort was inevitable, Oppenheimer and Relly wanted to insure that the leadership of such unions was moderate and reformist.

Into this explosive situation stepped the young black African lawyer Cyril Ramaphosa. In the mid '70s, as a student activist in Steve Biko's Black Consciousness Movement, he was held for 18 months in police detention. This was typical for young black intellectuals of his generation. However, in the late '70s Ramaphosa served on the board of directors of the Urban Foundation, a fund launched by the Oppenheimer empire to promote a black middle class.

When the Anglo American bosses decided to allow the growth of "responsible" unions with which it could bargain, Ramaphosa launched the National Union of Mineworkers in 1982. Doubtless Oppenheimer and Relly hoped and expected that the NUM under Ramaphosa would restrain the seething anger of the black miners. But the nostrum of class-collaborationist unionism could not be sold in the infernal pits and prison-like barracks. Black miners have never bought Anglo American's much-touted "liberal" image. And this strike has exposed Gavin Relly as just as vicious an enemy of the black oppressed as P W Botha.

SMASH APARTHEID! FOR WORKERS REVOLUTION!

Communism is a positive word among South Africa's black masses, symbolising opposition to the hated system of apartheid capitalism. At funerals for the victims of police-state terror, defiant protesters carry red flags with the hammer and sickle. Sympathy for Communism is further reinforced by the war in Angola, where Soviet-backed Cuban troops are defending a black African state against the South

African army. But South Africa's black proletariat can be politically tied to the Randlords through the medium of petty-bourgeois nationalism, principally the African National Congress. The ANC and its long-imprisoned leader, Nelson Mandela, possess great moral authority among the black African masses, including unionised workers.

For decades the ANC's strategy has been to pressure "progressive" white capitalists like Oppenheimer and Relly against the Afrikaner nationalist regime. In the fall of 1985 Gavin Relly himself led a delegation of white businessmen which met with Tambo in Lusaka, Zambia. Significantly, only a month before this meeting the NUM reached a last-minute settlement with Anglo American which averted an expected nationwide gold strike. Doubtless Ramaphosa did not want to embarrass Relly on the eve of his "historic" meeting with the ANC. As a result, the NUM struck only one of the six major mining houses. Isolated, the 1985 gold strike was quickly crushed.

The revolutionary temper of the black masses conflicts with the ANC's strategy of collaboration. At the recent COSATU congress, for instance, the campaign for divestment and sanctions was up for debate. Long a key demand of the ANC and liberal/reformist anti-apartheid activists, divestment has turned out to be what we have said from the outset: an empty moralistic gesture which if implemented would victimise black workers, not international capital.

In the past it was cheap to advocate divestment since there wasn't any. But the bitter fruits of divestment were strikingly demonstrated in the case of General Motors - one of many multinationals to pull out of South Africa because divestment is good business these days. Last fall GM announced it was selling its plants in Port Elizabeth to a consortium of its white managers. The black unions demanded that the divestment deal include guarantees of job security and union rights. When GM refused, union militants occupied the plants. Management then called in the apartheid state's police. Some 500 militants were fired and GM announced it would hire scabs and continue production "with or without the unions". GM continues to profit from the Port Elizabeth operation; its subsidiaries in West Germany and Japan sell parts to the new South African firm, which meanwhile now sells its products directly to the South African armed forces - which the former GM management regarded as too politically embarrassing to do. Especially after the GM disaster, South African black unionists are disillusioned, to say the least, with the divestment strategy. The COSATU congress endorsed divestment while at the same time declaring that "the wealth created by workers must remain in South Africa and be controlled by workers". But the bloodsucking multinationals are not about to let the unions of South Africa control their assets.

The miners strike and especially Anglo American's role in it exposes not only the ANC's dangerous illusion in class collaboration but also its narrow nationalism. Over 40 per cent of the miners on the Witwatersrand come from outside the borders of South Africa, from glorified bantustans like Lesotho or neocolonies like Mozambique. Yet neither the ANC nor the remnants of the Black Consciousness Movement raise the basic democratic demand of full citizenship rights

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TROTSKY

For Permanent Revolution!

In countries of belated bourgeois development, genuine national liberation and democratic rights can be achieved only through socialist revolution. In South Africa, black toilers rightly identify the hated apartheid system with capitalist superexploitation, while the nationalist ANC and Stalinists preach "democratic revolution". Trotsky fought against the Menshevik-Stalinist dogma of "two-stage revolution" which subordinates the proletariat to bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalism.



LENIN

7. The Comintern's endeavour to foist upon the Eastern countries the slogan of the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, finally and long ago exhausted by history, can have only a reactionary effect. Insofar as this slogan is counterposed to the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat, it contributes politically to the dissolution of the proletariat in the petty-bourgeois masses and thus creates the most favourable conditions for the hegemony of the national bourgeoisie and consequently for the collapse of the democratic revolution. The introduction of this slogan into the programme of the Comintern is a direct betrayal of Marxism and of the October tradition of Bolshevism.

8. The dictatorship of the proletariat which has risen to power as the leader of the democratic revolution is inevitably and very quickly confronted with tasks, the fulfilment of which is bound up with deep inroads into the rights of bourgeois property. The democratic revolution grows over directly into the socialist revolution and thereby becomes a permanent revolution.

- Leon Trotsky, *The Permanent Revolution* (1930)

WORKERS HAMMER

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Would you buy a new party from this man?

As if to prove that an old dog can indeed learn new tricks, the internationally infamous Gerry Healy made a rare public appearance in London on Sunday, 23 August. Healy's expulsion in 1985 from his Workers Revolutionary Party amid charges of sexual abuse and physical violence against party members, CIA-baiting David North (his then-US Workers League quisling) and squalid financial deals with Arab regimes sparked a spectacular fracturing of the British WRP and its international satellites. Healy is a political bandit with a flair for self-preservation. Now, having "broken" with the WRP minority who stuck with him in 1985, Healy and his followers Vanessa and Corin Redgrave announced the formation of "The Marxist Party" at the Riverside Studio theatre in London. Some 200 were in attendance. Aside from the aspiring starlets and veteran Healy Healyites, there were at least a dozen opponent observers. A bottle of Perrier water and several volumes of Lenin's *Collected Works* adorned the table.



Workers Press

G Healy: political bandit

ist American Socialist Workers Party as GPU and FBI agents - C Redgrave and Healy both bragged about their scandalous lies. Centring on the ludicrous charge that SWP leader Joseph Hansen was an "accomplice" in Stalin's murder of Trotsky, Healy's "Security" gambit revived the old Stalinist lie that Trotsky was murdered by one of his "own". While the Slaughter WRP has renounced this Healyite "excess", both Healy's Healyites and his former toady D North's Northites uphold "Security" religiously.

What was "new" was that Healy has discovered the political revolution - indeed the "highest political expression of the upsurge in the world socialist revolution" - in Gorbachev's Soviet Union. After decades of virulently anti-Soviet positions - and without renouncing a single one - Healy and the Redgraves now present themselves as true friends of the USSR. Hold on to your wallets and spare chervonets. (And for a Marxist analysis of where Gorbachev's Russia is going, see article this issue).

The bourgeois press had fun with Healy/Vanessa's "conversion" to "pro-Sovietism". Healy's ex-comrades, steeped in the Stalinophobic "method" of his WRP, thrilled with horror, denouncing him as an "apologist for Stalinism". The ostensibly pro-Moscow *Morning Star* Communists (one of many CP splits) noted the event with a short article titled "WRP splits 3 ways to mark Trotsky's end" - referring to the date of the Healy and other meetings commemorating the 47th anniversary of Trotsky's assassination by GPU agents. Sean Matgamna's *Socialist Organiser* didn't bother with Healy's line on *glasnost*: it correctly called the "new" Healy organisation "a silly little personality cult around an old scoundrel" and then proceeded to announce that since Trotsky's assassination "almost everything weird and wonderful in politics and on its fringes" has had something to do with self-proclaimed Trotskyists but that "The mere name [Trotskyism] has ceased to have any precise meaning - except as a historic reference point" (SO,

27 August). We have something substantially different to say, but seeing Healy in his latest incarnation on the stage of Riverside Studios is hardly the occasion for sweeping statements about world Trotskyism. (We wonder why Matgamna chose such a trivial event to make this pronouncement; why he made it at all is a subject for another article.)

For those readers who have not kept their Healy scoreboards up to date, we supply the following brief recapitulation of the WRP implosion and subsequent fracturing: in October 1985 Healy was expelled and it was revealed that Healy's WRP's grotesque hailing of the execution of 21 Iraqi Communists by the Ba'athist regime was but the tip of the iceberg of a confessed "unprincipled financial and political dependence on the Iraqi bourgeoisie" (Banda/Slaughter *News Line*, 20 November 1985). Including *News Line* photographers dispatched to a demonstration of Iraqi CPers in front of the Iraqi Embassy. The expelled Healy took a rump of the WRP CC, including Sheila Torrance, Alex Mitchell and the Redgraves. Healy's former lieutenant M Banda soon ditched the WRP majority led by Cliff Slaughter, eventually denouncing Trotskyism altogether and pimping for the odd Stalinist sect. D North moved against Slaughter, taking a sizable minority in Britain and most of the Australian section. Then Torrance and Healy had a falling out, and yet another grouping split with the Torrance WRP to boot.

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Archie Rice and the Marxist Party

Workers Hammer prints below part of a report sent to us by a reader, interested party and observer at Healy's Riverside Studio debut:

It was with some excitement that I went to the first public meeting of the Marxist Party as this was the first time that a political commentator like myself had been asked to do a theatrical review. Here playing, to what would hopefully be a packed audience, would be Gerry Healy, recently brought back to life by the two resurrectionists, Corin and Vanessa Redgrave, themselves acting in a role last played triumphantly by Messrs Burke & Hare....

Corin, with the scarcely concealed awe of one who had rolled away the stone and found the tomb empty, announced that Gerry Healy was to speak. I have to report that sadly the person who claimed to be Healy was clearly an understudy and not a particularly good one though brilliantly made up backstage to look like him. I was irresistibly reminded of Archie Rice, the epitome of a tired old trouser who was past his best. When one remembers the Gerry Healy of yore and his riveting performances, performances which, all the critics agree, the great Olivier himself

lacked the histrionic talents to duplicate in the play *The Party*, for they lacked the full sparkle, venom, fury and terrifying delivery of the original, then one can indeed say that this was a sad come-down. The delivery was stumbling, the stand-in lost his way, sometimes forgot his lines and his argument was muddled and obscure. The topic was something to do with Russia I think. When Gerry, or the pseudo-Gerry as I believe, stated that the Trotskyists were leading the struggle against Stalinism in the USSR I gave a heavily choked back bray of ill-mannered laughter. I must confess I was unable to obey Coleridge's injunction for the appreciation of literature and accept a 'willing suspension of disbelief'. This lack of respect for the performance was perceived and the pseudo-Gerry addressed at least three quarters of his subsequent denunciation of police agents in the ranks of the 4th International in my direction. Thus he noted when one of the unsmiling minions of North sitting near to me attempted to take a photograph of him. Then for a moment I could have believed that we had the old Healy in front of us. He dramatically pointed at the photographer and some of the heavies

moved in. There were not very many of them and at least three or four of them were clearly from the Greek section, flown over for the occasion, and if aggressive were rather small. Corin it seems did not want to provoke a fight as the balance of forces was not greatly in his favour. If I may make a suggestion to Corin it would be to police his performances in future by hiring a reputable firm like Securicor. In the Workers' Movement such a move might be taken amiss but not surely at an Alternative Royal Court.

In order to cool matters and stop them from becoming too serious I called out "Bring on the Thespians!" I could see that this annoyed both Vanessa and Corin who like all good theatre performers liked to live their parts and thus believed that they were revolutionaries playing at actors rather than actors playing at revolutionaries. My remark was, I am glad to say, noted by the correspondent of the *Financial Times* next morning and, as he says, the chair duly obliged by introducing Vanessa Redgrave. The Northites then left though there was an attempt to destroy the offending camera when the stewards had them round the corner but they did not twig the

tape recorder guarded by two remaining Northites. At this point I felt that I too should leave. I had already heard the organ-grinder, if Gerry or his stand-in will forgive the words organ and grinder, and I saw no reason to listen to the monkey however many clever tricks she had been taught by her master. In addition I suddenly felt sick thinking of certain tortured and dead Iraqi communists though I cannot imagine why this should be so.

This show will certainly **not** pack them in at Weston-super-Mare and I cannot recommend the purchase of a ticket even if membership of the Marxist Party is thrown in at the rather low price. ■

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BIRMINGHAM

Anti-Tamil Lankan regime bows to Rajiv

Sri Lanka: India takes charge

The following article first appeared in Workers Vanguard no 434, 7 August 1987. On 18 August an unidentified assailant tossed two grenades into a Parliament room. Jayewardene escaped injury, one junior minister was killed, Prime Minister Premadasa and others were injured. The attack testifies to the deep-seated Sinhala chauvinist reaction to the JR-Gandhi accords.

On Wednesday, 29 July Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi and president JR Jayewardene of Sri Lanka (Ceylon) signed an agreement "to establish peace and normality in Sri Lanka". The next day the agreement's provision that an Indian peacekeeping force "may be invited" was translated into reality as thousands of Indian troops began disembarking in the Tamil-populated Jaffna Peninsula. At the same time, Indian aircraft began transporting Sri Lankan army units out of Jaffna to quell rioting by Sinhalese opponents of the treaty in the south.

What is posed is nothing less than overt Indian overlordship of the island. The presence of Indian troops in the north, removing the Lankan armed forces from the area, seals the de facto partition between north and south established by the anti-Tamil pogroms of July 1983, which aimed at destroying the Tamil business layers in the south and forced hundreds of thousands of terrified Tamils to flee to Jaffna (and to India). The new pact, while a long way from granting the Tamil state of "Eelam" which the separatist rebels have been fighting for, establishes a federated administrative unit combining the Northern



Independent

Gandhi (above) and Jayewardene announce accord in Colombo, 29 July. Indian troops display weapons surrendered by Tamil rebels.



Baldev-Syama

orchestrated the anti-Tamil military campaign in the north, both dramatically boycotted the ceremonies with Gandhi. These sections of the ruling United National Party (UNP) could serve as a lightning rod to unite ultra-racist forces including the ex-New Left Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), the Buddhist clergy and the bourgeois Opposition SLFP (Sri Lanka Freedom Party) in a bid for power.

A big question is to what extent the Lankan government can count on the armed forces, especially the embittered veterans of the anti-Tamil slaughter. As Gandhi was leaving Lanka one sailor from the naval guard of honour clubbed him with his rifle butt. (Gandhi ought to be thankful that there are no Sikhs

government ministers abandoned the planned coup against Jayewardene when India dispatched troops to the Jaffna peninsula and ships to the port of Colombo."

Finance Minister Ronnie de Mel, a staunch backer of the pact, called for the removal of Athulathmudali but remarked that the cabinet is united on the main issue of the accord especially now that it is a fait accompli. Moreover an evidently well-informed article in *India Abroad* (7 August) states that SLFP leader Mrs Bandaranaike, who has publicly denounced the agreement, has privately assured the Indian government "she will honor the accord if she returns to power.... The Indian High Commission sought to keep Bandaranaike posted on the

the bloody conflict between the Sinhala-chauvinist Jayewardene regime and the oppressed Tamil minority but it will only work on the basis of continuing bloodshed and suffering.

INDIAN OVERLORDSHIP

Since independence from Britain in 1948, Sinhalese politics has seen the bourgeois parties vie with each other in communalist hysteria directed against the Tamils and also other minorities like the mixed-race Burghers. The July 1983 anti-Tamil pogroms, instigated and orchestrated from within Jayewardene's UNP, were a watershed, marking the de facto partition of the island. Since then the government has escalated a bloody war of suppression against the Tamil population of the north and east, associated with increasing communal atrocities on both sides.

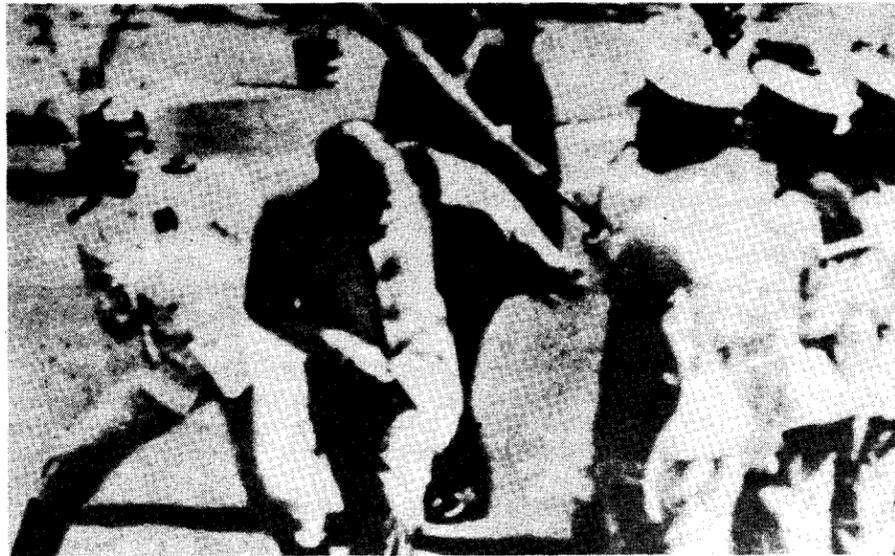
In late May the Sri Lankan army undertook a brutal offensive in the Jaffna Peninsula which had effectively been under the control of the main Tamil guerrilla group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). This offensive was decisively stymied when the Indian air force flew in relief supplies to besieged Jaffna. As we wrote at the time: "With its act, the Indian government asserted suzerainty, posing possible annexation of northern Sri Lanka. New Delhi is determined that henceforth the bloody Sinhala-chauvinist regime of president JR Jayewardene will heed India's dictates regarding the Tamil areas or face more decisive military measures" ("Indian jets over Jaffna", *Workers Hammer* no 89, June 1987).

The presence of Indian ships and planes bringing relief supplies concretised the Indian threat against any further Sri Lankan offensive operations in the north. Jayewardene says that the agreement was all due to "the stars and planets", but it is more the case that he at least appears to have realised the geo-political realities of the region. India, with its 700 million people, including 50 million Tamils in the south, would not forever acquiesce to the con-



Independent

Sri Lanka prime minister Premadasa shows leg wound after 18 August grenade attack in Parliament by right-wing Sinhalese chauvinists (left). Gandhi is clubbed with rifle butt by Lankan honour guard during Colombo ceremony. He's lucky there are no Sikhs in the Lankan navy (right).



Reuters

and Eastern provinces. For the Sinhalese chauvinists, this link-up between the north and east is a "sell-out" to "Tamil terrorism", and powerful forces within and outside the government are threatening to blow the whole thing sky high.

The Colombo regime is deeply divided over the pact. Prime Minister Premadasa, whose base is among the Sinhalese urban and rural poor, and the more patrician "national security" minister Athulathmudali, who

in the Sri Lankan navy.) Having made the deal with India, the regime's last hope of survival may now be the looming presence of the Indian army and navy. There have been at least two military coup attempts since independence and the current situation appears ripe for another. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* (2 August) wrote of an attempted coup reported in the *New Delhi Statesman*:

"The Statesman said the dissident

developments at every stage of the negotiations".

In preparation for Gandhi's arrival in Colombo to sign the agreement, a curfew had been slapped on the whole island and police were given orders to shoot any violators on sight. In the two preceding days police killed at least 38 people during anti-government protests led by Buddhist monks and Sinhalese communalists. This agreement between capitalist rulers is intended to end

tinued mass slaughter of Lanka's Tamils, which has already claimed an officially estimated 6000 lives.

The *New York Times* (31 July) reported that the influential Indian high commissioner in Colombo, Jyotindra Nath Dixit, said on 30 July that "the peacekeeping contingent, which brought its own equipment and transport, would answer only to him and to the Indian Government, independent of the Sri Lankan military". The next day, as UNP politicians cringed at the clear acknowledgement of Sri Lanka's status as an Indian protectorate, Dixit downplayed the controversy surrounding his statement and said the Indian troops were "at the disposal" of Jayewardene. But the relationship of forces between the island and its giant neighbour is clear. Now Palali air base, formerly the hub of the Sri Lankan military operation in the north, is an Indian air base, with the Sri Lankan armed forces a diminishing presence. The original Indian force of 3000 men in the north has already been doubled and their field of operations extended into the Eastern Province, occupying Trincomalee harbour. And two Indian frigates loom off Colombo.

SETBACK TO IMPERIALIST APPETITES

India, a diplomatic ally of the Soviet Union, fears a US-brokered encirclement including Pakistan, China and Sri Lanka. Part of the current arrangement, wrapped in diplomatic niceties, is that Sri Lanka's advisers - Israeli, British SAS mercenary and especially Pakistani - will have to go. As well Sri Lanka has pledged to reconsider the installation of the powerful Voice of America transmitter at Chilaw intended to beam counter-revolutionary propaganda to the Indian subcontinent and Soviet Central Asia.

But the crucial question is the strategic harbour of Trincomalee, which the US imperialists have had high hopes of getting their hands on under the auspices of the rightist, pro-US Jayewardene. India has forced Sri Lanka to agree not to let any foreign power use the port for military purposes "prejudicial to India's interests". An Indian presence is underlined by an agreement to jointly restore Trinco's oil storage facilities. Earlier the United States tried to get a foothold by volunteering to undertake exactly the same project. Another provision entrusts India with providing all future training facilities and military supplies for the Lankan armed forces. These developments are to some extent

a setback for the imperialist designs on Trincomalee as part of the Americans' war plans against the Soviet Union. While the US has said it supports the pact and has offered military assistance to Jayewardene, the terms can hardly be to America's liking.

As we go to press, the situation is still unfolding and many interesting questions remain unanswered. Among them: How did Rajiv Gandhi get JR to go along? And how was the Indian occupation kept secret until the ships and troops were already in

back of the Indian invasion of East Pakistan in 1971. The guerrilla groups too, along with their armed struggle strategy, have equally appealed to India. The Tigers' increasing recourse to indefensible terror against Sinhalese civilians has been aimed precisely at provoking bloody retaliation by the JR regime, to force India to intervene in response. Now they are getting what they wanted...and they won't like it.

Before Gandhi and Jayewardene signed their agreement, Tiger leader Prabhakaran was fetched out of

ised to crack down on the militants' bases in south India.

The Indian army is ready to do to the Tigers what it did (with the assistance of the Pakistani army) to the Mukti Bahini in Bangladesh - wipe them out. One reporter drily commented that at Palali base it is difficult to tell the Sri Lankan and Indian officers apart since "Their British-style uniforms are almost identical" (*Guardian*, 1 August). If the Tamil Tigers refuse to come to terms, they are likely to find the Indian army a far more formidable proposition than the Sri Lankan forces.

But it is not just the Tigers' blood that will run. The Eastern Province is heavily interpenetrated, more or less evenly among Tamils, Sinhalese and Muslims. A referendum is proposed to be held later next year on whether the Eastern Province should remain linked to the Tamil Northern Province. This arrangement is a recipe for massive communal bloodletting and forced population transfers as the different communities fight to control the province. And, while the agreement will repatriate 130,000 Tamil refugees who have fled to India, some sources report that 100,000 Tamils from the plantation areas of the central highlands will be sent to India. These low-caste, horribly exploited "stateless" workers of the tea plantations, who have historically produced most of the wealth of the island, have always been ignored by both the reformist, Sinhala-chauvinist "left" and the petty-bourgeois nationalists of the Tamil liberation groups. In any case, the Sinhalese communalists, impotent before the power of India, are likely to turn their frenzy against the plantation workers and against Tamils in Colombo and the south.

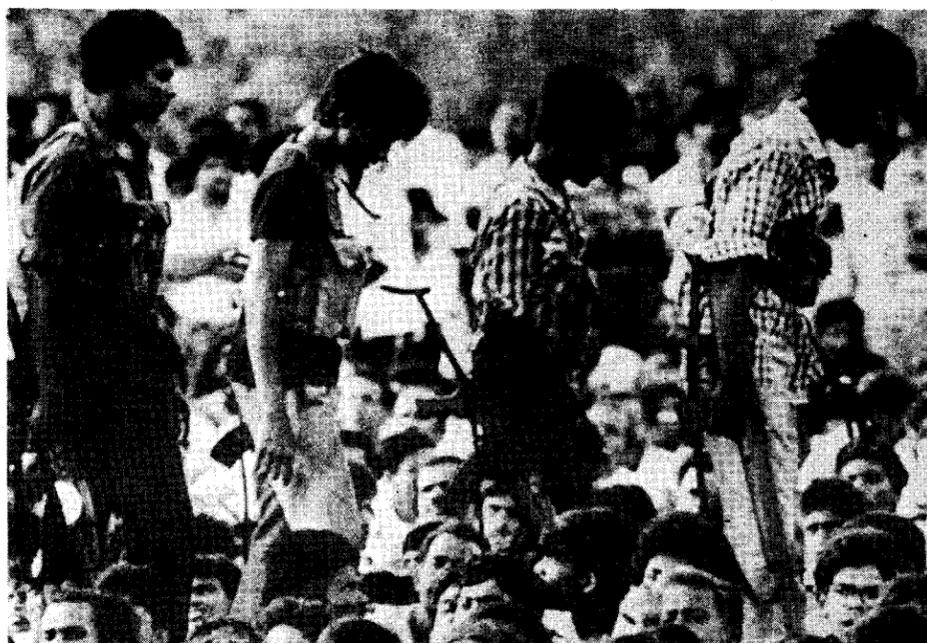
The Sinhalese communalist forces which the UNP government has fomented for so long are enraged at the settlement, seeking to tap racist xenophobia and Sinhalese fears of being engulfed by the greater masses of Tamil and other Indian Hindus across the Palk Strait. Buddhist monks have been in the forefront of the protests. On 29 July, with central Colombo deserted, police and troops battled enraged Sinhalese communalist mobs in the suburbs. In Ratnapura, one government MP has been assassinated. The *Washington Post* (3 August) reported:

"Hundreds of buses, government vehicles and buildings have been burned in mob violence that has left parts of Colombo looking like battle zones. The government's hold in the southern part of the country seems tenuous."

With the arrival of the Indian troops and the communalist frenzy in the south, the reactionary logic of nationalism/communalism has taken its predictable course. The whole Indian subcontinent is a seething prison house of its various nations, exploited classes, oppressed castes, minority religions. It is a bitter irony that many of the Indian troops in Lanka are Sikhs, a minority community which faces harsh repression from the Indian government. Gandhi badly needs a foreign policy "triumph" to divert attention from his troubles at home: corruption scandals, recent electoral setbacks and the multifaceted horror of life in capitalist India.

A *New York Times* report from Jaffna quoted a Tamil school principal who welcomed the arrival of Indian troops: "Many of the Indian soldiers who have arrived here are from southern India, where Tamil is

continued on page 10



Independent

Tamil fighters at 4 August Jaffna rally, where first surrender of arms to Indian overlords took place.

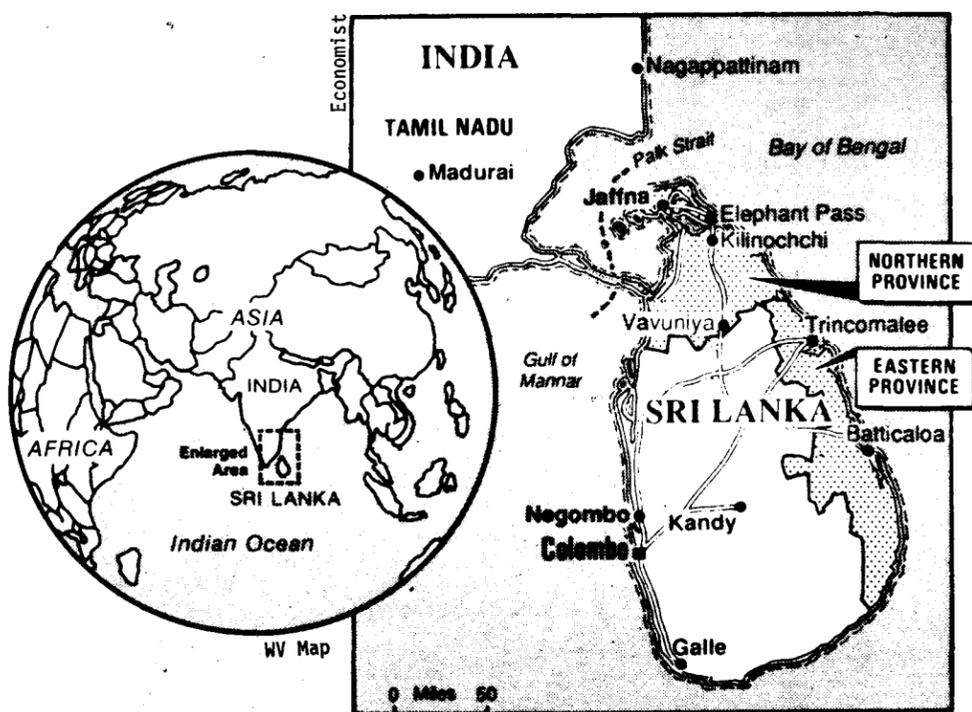
place? India could have annexed Ceylon at any time, but the normal expectation would have been that the US would go to war rather than see Lanka go this route. But somehow, Gandhi has pulled off a real diplomatic coup and has slithered past the Americans to assert India's interests while the attentions of US imperialism were overcommitted elsewhere. Champagne must be flowing in Delhi, and in Moscow too.

At the same time we have repeatedly warned that the Tamils' illusions in the Indian bourgeoisie are deadly dangerous. It is clear that wide sections of the Tamil community welcome the arrival of Indian troops as ending the bloody onslaught of the Lankan armed forces. The bourgeois parliamentary TULF has always centred its hopes on Indian intervention and they will try to use the Indian presence to reassert leadership of the Tamil population. TULF leader Amirthalingam has in the past explicitly identified with the Bangladeshi leader, Sheik Mujibur Rahman, who rode to power on the

Jaffna "for talks" by an Indian helicopter. He was held under virtual house arrest in a Delhi hotel, surrounded by members of the "Black Cats", an elite Indian security unit. Prabhakaran talked initially of "an act of betrayal" and said that "It appears now that we have walked into a trap" (*Times*, 28 July). But following the arrival of the Indian military force in Lanka, the Tigers issued a statement that "We are satisfied that Mr Gandhi understands our fears and is fully sympathetic to our Tamil aspirations". And by 3 August, reportedly in exchange for the promise of a top position in the newly created Tamil province, Prabhakaran had fallen into line and returned to his men in Jaffna to promote the accord and urge the surrender of weapons. British television reported that Prabhakaran, addressing a rally of 100,000 people in Jaffna today, did indeed tell his "boys" to turn over their arms. He still cherishes the dream of an independent Eelam, he said, but "the war is over".

THE TIGERS' DILEMMA

In Jaffna the Tiger militants had adamantly refused to turn in their arms until the return of their leader. A crowd surrounded and rocked the jeep of the commander of the Indian forces Maj Gen Harkirat Singh in a village near Jaffna when he met with Tamil leaders there on 31 July. If the Tigers and other groups do not hand in their arms, Singh said, "my charter is, yes, to go and look for them" (*New York Times*, 1 August). And to underline the point, big Indian air force Soviet-made jets have been landing armoured personnel carriers and tanks equipped with anti-mine flails at Palali. It was agreed that a general amnesty will be granted to all prisoners held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and other "emergency" laws. However, joint patrols were immediately instituted in the Palk Strait to interdict Tamil guerrilla supply lines and India has prom-



Where is Gorbachev's Russia going?

Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev calls it a "Radical Reorganisation of Economic Management". His programme, approved last week by the Central Committee of the Communist Party, would dismantle centralised planning. Under the pressure of imperialist militarism and fearing a resumption of economic slowdown, the Kremlin tops have responded with market-oriented reforms internally while seeking accommodation with Western capitalism. But Russia's current economic troubles are not due to the system of centralised planning and management, the motor force of the Soviet Union's transformation from a backward, overwhelmingly peasant country into a great industrial/military power. Rather, the underlying cause is bureaucratic rule by the parasitic and nationalistic Stalinist betrayers of the Bolshevik Revolution.

According to Gorbachev's programme, by the end of 1990 individual enterprises (except in the military sector) will determine what they produce and in what quantities. The centralised setting of prices along with most subsidies are to be gradually done away with. Enterprise managers will be given the right to cut wages and bonuses and to lay off "redundant" workers. Enterprises whose revenues still do not cover costs will have to close.

Summing up these measures, a *New York Times* editorial (1 July) concludes: "Yet another Communist giant, the Communist giant now sets out to undo the Revolution of 1917 with the Revolution of 1987". This is wishful thinking. It would take more than a new Central Committee directive on the economy to undo the first victorious workers revolution in history – the October Revolution of 1917. It would take a bloody counterrevolution against the determined resistance of Soviet workers and peasants.

However, dismantling central planning, operating enterprises on the basis of market profitability and spawning a new class of petty



TASS from Sovfoto

Kremlin leader Mikhail Gorbachev exhorts Soviet oil workers to work harder. Only workers' overthrow of bureaucratic caste can revitalise Soviet economy.

capitalist entrepreneurs – inevitably producing unemployment and inflation – will strengthen the internal forces of capitalist restoration in the USSR. To arrest and counter such developments, Soviet workers must struggle in the name of an authentically socialist programme against Gorbachev's "radical reorganisation" of the economy. A real socialist renewal in the USSR demands a proletarian political revolution to oust the Kremlin oligarchy, restoring soviet democracy and recasting the economic plan in the interests of the workers and peasants.

We are publishing below a section, "The Russian Question and Gorbachev", from the Spartacist League/US's draft national conference document, "Toward Revolutionary Conjunction", adopted by the SL/US Political Bureau on 16 June. The document, while noting that the actual economic changes introduced were not yet significant, observed, "the direction of these economic

changes is toward greater dependence upon market competition". Nine days later Gorbachev announced the most far-reaching "market-oriented reforms" in Soviet history.

The document also pointed out that under the slogan of *glasnost* (openness) Gorbachev has stated: "There should be no forgotten names or blanks either in history or in literature." This is an explosive question since the *real history* of the Soviet Union has long been hidden by lies and silence. Trotsky, Zinoviev, Bukharin and other Bolshevik leaders murdered by Stalin have for decades been treated as non-persons in the USSR. The late Isaac Deutscher stated that as Trotsky's biographer he had to dig the co-leader of the Bolshevik Revolution and founder of the Red Army out "from under a mountain of dead dogs, a huge load of calumny and oblivion" (preface to *The Prophet Unarmed* [1954]). But now the Soviet intelligentsia is digging at that mountain of dead dogs.

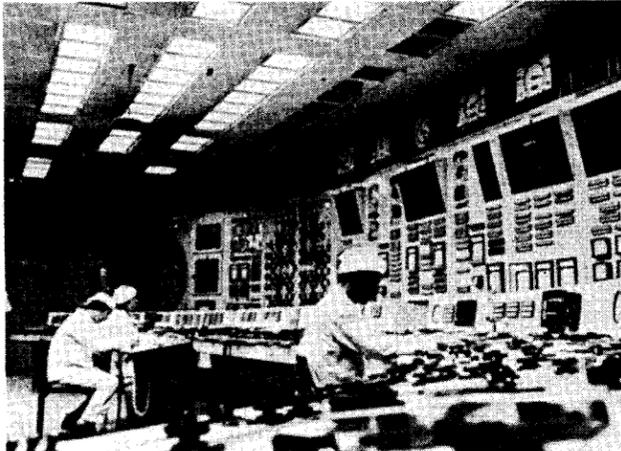
The spectre of Trotsky haunts Gorbachev's Russia not only because his historic role in founding the Soviet state has been hidden. It is the programme of the Trotskyist Left Opposition which offers the *revolutionary proletarian* answer to the corruption, social pathology (eg, widespread alcoholism) and political and economic malaise which Stalin's heirs in the Kremlin now confront and cannot overcome.

In the absence of workers democracy, the now-dominant section of the Soviet bureaucracy sees the discipline of the market as the only answer to the country's serious economic problems. Thus Kremlin spokesman Genadi Gerasimov remarked on the CBS News special "The Soviet Union: Seven Days in May" (24 June): "I would like for our workers to learn to work as hard as your workers do."

Even before the recent measures, Soviet workers were increasingly disgruntled over Gorbachev's economic policies. In particular, the prospect of layoffs and unemployment is social dynamite in the USSR. Soviet citizens naturally regard job security as their birthright (accounts of widespread unemployment under capitalism are often dismissed as just Kremlin propaganda!). Gorbachev promises that the "release of workers in conditions of the Socialist economy will not bring about unemployment". But if enterprises are free to hire and fire on the basis of market profitability, if government subsidies are largely eliminated, this will bring about unemployment in the Soviet Union. Just look at the effects of "market socialism" and self-managed enterprises in Yugoslavia, where the unemployment rate is 14 per cent and prices have been doubling every year.



TASS from Sovfoto



TASS

Kamaz truck factory near Moscow (left): last December workers protested against cuts in their bonuses due to their managers' production incompetence. Control room of the V.I. Lenin nuclear power station near Leningrad.

Return to the road of Lenin and Trotsky!

Gorbachev, who is an intelligent politician, knows he cannot simply call for the free play of market forces without inciting massive working-class resistance. So along with economic "restructuring" (*perestroika*) there is also a lot of talk about "democratisation" – not the reality but the *semblance* of workers democracy. Here lies a fundamental contradiction. It has been proposed that workers are to elect their own enterprise managers. But what worker is going to vote for a manager who advocates a programme of speedup, reintroducing piece rates, widening wage differences and laying off "redundant" workers? And if workers can elect their managers, they may demand to elect the higher-ups as well.

Thus, the Gorbachev regime is permitting and even encouraging dissent and criticism of the status quo while introducing economic policies detrimental to the workers' material interests and repugnant to their collectivist and socialist consciousness. That creates an explosive combination which can blow away the parasitic Kremlin bureaucracy and restore the Soviet Union as a bastion of workers democracy and vanguard of world socialist revolution.

[Subheads in the following document are by *Workers Vanguard*.]

"THE RUSSIAN QUESTION AND GORBACHEV"

The paralysis of the Reagan regime parallels and to some degree interacts with the emergence of a new, highly competent and reform-minded leadership in the Soviet Union. In the media and American bourgeois political circles the contrast is made between the lazy, ineffectual and dull-witted Reagan and the energetic, able and highly intelligent Gorbachev. More substantively, significant sections of the American bourgeoisie and its allies believe Reagan incompetent to negotiate advantageously with Gorbachev, who appears decidedly more willing than his predecessors in the Kremlin to make major concessions to imperialism for the sake of "peaceful coexistence."

Under the watchwords *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (restructuring), the two-year-old Gorbachev regime has effected dramatic changes in the Soviet Union. From the White House basement to cafeterias in Moscow factories, people are asking: what does it all mean, where is Russia going?

Schematically, the current developments in the Soviet Union can be broken down into three major components, which Gorbachev and his supporters regard as integrally linked. *One*, there is a genuine *liberalization* of political and intellectual life marked by an outpouring of criticism and dissent within both the bureaucracy and intelligentsia; the relaxation of censorship and publication of long-suppressed works; the freeing of some political prisoners (there weren't many); renewed attacks on the historic crimes of Stalin; and a purge of the bureaucracy, including at the highest levels, for corruption and other violations of legality. *Two*, there is a strenuous effort to accelerate economic growth by increasing the rate of investment and by strengthening labor discipline through anti-alcoholism/anti-absenteeism campaigns as well as widening wage and income differentials. *Three*, Gorbachev has expressed a strong desire to improve relations with Western (and Japanese) imperialism, indicating a willingness to make greater concessions than his predecessors in

the Kremlin, especially to secure arms control.

The Gorbachev regime is not an aberrant development in the Soviet Union. Rather it is a response to the mounting *objective* pressures upon the Soviet bureaucracy since the mid-1970s, centrally matching the massive military buildup of U.S. imperialism, during a period of *decelerating* economic growth. Additionally, the Gorbachev regime reflects the recrudescence of a Soviet intelligentsia both overlapping but also to some degree alienated from the bureaucracy.

Gorbachev, like Andropov before him, has sharply condemned the stul-

Drawing workers from the countryside into the industrial workforce only further weakened agriculture, the weak link of the economy.

For the past decade and a half, switching to *intensive* economic growth, through retooling and modernizing the existing industrial plant, has been a standard theme in official Soviet economic pronouncements. However, this confronts a fundamental obstacle in the *micro-economic effects of bureaucratic parasitism*. Managers routinely hoard labor and waste raw materials, sacrifice quality to meet the quantitative plan targets, understate actual capacity and resist innovation

managers and officials and by countering slack work discipline through anti-alcoholism/anti-absenteeism campaigns. Such policies have been credited for the moderate improvement in Soviet economic growth over the last few years, but the economic effects of such campaigns are inherently limited and short-term.

The anti-alcoholism campaign expresses more than simply economic calculation on the part of the Kremlin leadership. There is a genuine concern about the moral debilitation of Soviet society. Within the Communist Party, including its higher ranks, there are ascetic Communists (Andropov and Mikhail Suslov were notable) who willfully do not drink or collect fancy foreign cars like Brezhnev did. Such attitudes are shared and appreciated by a wide spectrum of the intelligentsia.

RESURGENCE OF THE INTELLIGENTSIA

Gorbachev's new course is more than a conjunctural response by the Soviet leadership to increasing pressure from imperialist militarism amid mounting economic difficulties. It also reflects the changing *social environment* in which the bureaucracy itself exists. After the Bolshevik Revolution, Stalin's purges and the Hitlerite invasion, there has re-emerged in Russia a substantial intelligentsia with considerable social weight. The technical intelligentsia wants to modernize the country even if this entails driving the workers harder and making the concessions necessary to secure economic cooperation with Western capitalism. The intelligentsia resents the philistinism of the typical party boss and is repelled by the drabness of official culture. They are embarrassed and also perhaps envious that leading artistic figures (e.g., Brodsky, Baryshnikov, Rostropovich) emigrated to the West. Gorbachev has set out to overcome the alienation by the apparatchiks of the intelligentsia, including among elements of the "dissidents" and emigres.

While there is presently no known tendency within the Soviet intelligentsia which aspires to revolutionary Marxism, the present intellectual ferment and openness could lead elements of the intelligentsia back to authentic Bolshevism. In this respect the most positive aspect of *glasnost* for us is the *critical re-examination* of Soviet history. "There should be no forgotten names or blanks either in history or in literature," Gorbachev stated last February. There has been a spate of new and previously suppressed books and films about the crimes and failures of Stalin. Even more significant is the renewed attention to the old Bolshevik leaders killed by Stalin. A play about the treaty of Brest-Litovsk scheduled to open in Moscow, presenting Trotsky and Bukharin as historical figures – i.e., as leaders of the Communist Party – constitutes clear repudiation of the Moscow Trials' shameful fabrications. Lenin's Testament has been publicized for the first time (although it has long been available in the *Collected Works*). The new edition of the Soviet encyclopedia *The Great October Socialist Revolution* to be published next fall will include for the first time such figures as Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev and Radek.

Gorbachev and his supporters have denounced Trotskyism not as a disguised form of counterrevolution but as ultraleftism. Thus intellectuals

continued on page 8



Viktor Bulla

Bolshevik Revolution gave power to the working class. Putilov factory workers elect delegates to Petrograd Soviet, 1920.

tifying complacency and fatuous self-congratulation as well as the rampant corruption and nepotism of the last Brezhnev years. These attitudes in part reflected the genuine accomplishments of the first decade of the Brezhnev era. Between 1965 and 1975 the Soviet Union simultaneously achieved a rough strategic nuclear parity with the U.S., which was bogged down by the Vietnam War, and increased the living standards of its citizens by around 50 percent. Additionally, the Kremlin was able to massively subsidize East Europe, Cuba and various Third World client states.

BEHIND THE ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN

Beginning in the mid-1970s things began to go badly for the Soviet bureaucracy. U.S. imperialism partly recovered from the effects of the Vietnam War and began a major military buildup aimed at restoring nuclear first-strike capability. At the same time, the Soviet Union was experiencing a sharp decline in economic growth. The period 1977-1982 marked the worst economic performance in the post-World War II history of the USSR.

Historically, the growth of Soviet industrial development has been what Western bourgeois economists call *extensive* growth, constructing new factories and increasing the labor force to match. During the 1970s, 80 percent of Soviet industrial investment went into new construction compared to only 50 percent in the U.S. By the early 1970s the Soviet Union (except for the Central Asian republics) began to experience a serious labor shortage.

and risk-taking. No less a debilitating effect of bureaucratic rule is the workers' slack attitude toward labor discipline, captured in the joke common throughout the Soviet bloc: we pretend to work and they pretend to pay us.

At a time when resources were needed to modernize the aging Soviet industrial plant, the Kremlin leadership sharply cut back the rate of investment to match the rapid U.S. military buildup under Carter and Reagan. The planned growth of investment fell from 7 percent a year in the early '70s to 2 percent a year in the first half of the 1980s. However, the Soviet Union clearly could not continue to maintain its military strength at the cost of economic stagnation.

From the standpoint of the Soviet bureaucracy, there are only three alternatives. One is to sharply cut back living standards to create an additional surplus for both investment and military spending. No element of the bureaucracy has to date advocated or apparently contemplated such a policy. Two is to reduce military spending. There appears to be a consensus within the Soviet leadership that a major reduction depends upon "arms control" agreements with the West. Hence, the Kremlin, especially under Gorbachev, makes this its primary aim in dealing with Washington and the other NATO capitals. The third alternative is to increase labor productivity by one means or another.

Andropov, during his short period of leadership, attempted this not through structural changes in the economy but through purging especially corrupt and incompetent

Gorbachev...

(continued from page 7)

who consider themselves to the left of Gorbachev, especially on international questions, may well be drawn to Trotskyism as they are given to understand it.

POTENTIAL FOR WORKER RESISTANCE

While Gorbachev's course has been generally and warmly welcomed by the Soviet intelligentsia, the working class has been far from enthusiastic if not outright distrustful. And for good reason. Before Gorbachev took power in the Kremlin in 1984, there was much speculation in the West that he would introduce sweeping market-oriented reforms along the line of Kadar's Hungary and Deng's China. Gorbachev himself has spoken of the need for "radical" and even "revolutionary" changes in the economy. However, to date the economic changes have been quite modest, far less significant than those introduced by Brezhnev/Kosygin after they ousted Khrushchev in the mid-'60s. The main economic changes thus far have been making legal and therefore taxable individual and family entrepreneurship (e.g., handymen, taxi drivers); granting the 20 industrial ministries and over 70 industrial associations and large enterprises the right to conduct foreign trade; and most recently widening income differentials between workers and technical intellectuals, and reintroducing piece rates, only now based upon quality.

While modest in scope, the direction of these economic changes is toward greater dependence upon market competition. Within the framework of Stalinism there is an inherent tendency toward economic

Gorbachev reformer and an older, conservative apparatchik. The latter argued that things aren't that bad and then said, in any event, "People would prefer to live equally in poverty, rather than unequally in wealth." Many workers are bound to ask, why can't we have *both* wealth and equality as is promised us by our country's official socialist doctrine?

Gorbachev's *perestroika* not only goes against the immediate material interests of most workers but also affronts their deep reservoir of collective feeling. At the same time, the regime's call for *glasnost* permits a degree of organized dissent against official policies. Thus last December workers at the Kamaz truck plant east of Moscow protested against cuts in production bonuses, arguing that they were being penalized for the faults of management. The present situation in the Soviet Union is probably more favorable for the emergence of an *independent* workers movement than at any time since the 1920s.

PRAGUE SPRING 1968, MOSCOW SPRING 1987

In its internal dynamics the present situation in the Soviet Union bears a resemblance to the 1968 Prague Spring. (Perhaps it is more than a biographical accident that Gorbachev's roommate at Moscow University in the early 1950s was a young Czech Communist, Zdenek Mlynar, who later became one of the leading architects of the Prague Spring.) After a period of economic stagnation, there was a linkage between a section of the Czechoslovak intelligentsia and a modernizing section of the bureaucracy against the old-time Stalinist apparatchiks, secret policemen and trade-union functionaries. There were proposals to close uneconomic plants and to make labor more plastic.

Initially, the Czech workers, through their bureaucratized trade unions, opposed the Dubcekite reformers since they did not want labor to be plasticized. They were satisfied drawing down a not very good wage

Compared to Czechoslovakia in 1968 the divisions within the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy today are far less sharp and the popular response far more passive. Thus the present liberalization could well gradually give way to a conservative restoration, as happened with Khrushchev's "thaw" in the mid-1950s. But there is also in the dynamic of the situation the potential for a Soviet version of the Prague Spring. The Soviet army has been reliable in suppressing working-class unrest (Hungary 1956, Czechoslovakia 1968). However, in the face of an incipient proletarian political revolution within Russia, the army might well split, with some units (both ranks and officers) going over to the soviets,

However, the nationalistic and parasitic bureaucracy translates the justified fear of war into a detentist outlook that is groveling, absurd and self-defeating.

Gorbachev has indicated he is prepared to go further to secure "peaceful coexistence" than his predecessors in the Kremlin. Addressing the international celebrities who assembled for the Moscow "no nuke" conference last February, he declared:

"Before my people, before you and before the whole world, I state with full responsibility that our international policy is more than ever determined by domestic policy, by our interest in concentrating on constructive endeavors



Yevgeni Khaldei

Soviet red flag flies in Berlin, May 1945. Red Army crushed Nazi scourge in Europe.

other units supporting the existing Kremlin regime. It would look perhaps more like a civil war, with the armed forces already in place, than a revolution. (A variant of this was sketched in Craig Thomas' novel *The Snow Falcon*.)

FOR SOVIET VICTORY IN AFGHANISTAN!

The fundamental difference between what is now happening in Russia and the Prague Spring is that the Soviet Union is not Czechoslovakia. Gorbachev's policies are very much directed at improving relations with Western imperialism. For the Kremlin tops are genuinely frightened of nuclear war and in this they reflect the mass sentiment of the Soviet people: a deep-seated, desperate desire for peace.

to improve our country."

Georgi Shakhnazarov, a senior official in the CPSU's Socialist Countries Department, has stated that "political ends do not exist which would justify the use of means liable to lead to nuclear war." The implication of this position is that the Soviet Union should not seriously confront or challenge U.S. imperialism anywhere on any issue.

While Shakhnazarov's is an extreme expression of the Gorbachev line, the perception among the imperialist bourgeoisie, including sections of its far right wing, is that the current Kremlin regime is softer, more capitulatory on international questions than its predecessors. Thus Arthur Hartman, who recently completed a five-year stint as Reagan's ambassador to Moscow,



Observer

Soviet forces land at Kabul airport, December 1979. International Spartacist tendency hailed Soviet intervention against Islamic counterrevolutionaries.

decentralization as an *alternative* to workers democracy. Since managers and workers are not subject to the discipline of soviet democracy, 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.

A leading Soviet manpower expert, Vladimir Kostakov, maintains that layoffs of redundant workers are necessary to improve labor productivity. The Gorbachev regime itself identifies more rapid economic growth with increasing inequality. A recent television program presented an imagined debate between a young

while doing nothing. But then the issue of soviet democracy came into play, and sections of the workers began to realize that the parasites who were sitting on top of their "trade unions" could be dumped, that maybe they could get something fundamentally better than the status quo. There was a historical moment - not very long - in which the censorship, secret police and the rest of the Stalinist ruling apparatus was embarrassed and paralyzed. It was fear of an incipient proletarian political revolution which caused the Soviet-bloc armies to invade Czechoslovakia and put a stop to the Prague Spring.

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well as an aggressive policy of military provocation aimed at the Soviet Union.

During this period the SL/U.S. has indeed faced the Russian question "pointblank." Our principled unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union against imperialism, from Afghanistan to Central America to opposition to the capitalist-restorationist Polish Solidarnosc, has given us a very high profile indeed in this period of disgraceful capitulation by the fake-left to the bourgeoisie's rampant anti-Sovietism. After Reagan & Co. sent over 200 helpless airline passengers to their deaths aboard the Korean Air Lines 007 U.S. spy provocation, the SL/U.S. and international Spartacist tendency waged a virtual campaign of propaganda documenting the U.S. government's lies and incidentally underlining the flinch of the CPUSA. Our forthright Soviet-defensist propaganda on Afghanistan, Poland, Vietnam, KAL 007, "detente," etc. has brought our small French section to the attention of a layer of advanced workers as "the Trotskyists who defend the Soviet Union."

American imperialism's military program aims to break the will of the USSR, extracting counterrevolutionary concessions from the Soviet bureaucracy. However, this program has now brought the U.S. and indeed imperialism internationally to the brink of a major crisis. The present

believes:

"The Soviet leadership is preoccupied with their domestic situation. Our relationship is colored highly by the Soviet reactions to what they really have to do internally. And I think basically what they would like to have now is a period of calm. And therefore, there could well be opportunities for serious negotiations in a variety of fields."

- New York Times, 29 March 1987

Above all, Washington aims to pressure the Kremlin to capitulate in those armed conflicts it considers proxy wars with Russia: Afghanistan, Vietnam/Cambodia, Angola and Nicaragua. For U.S. imperialism, the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, on the southern border of the USSR, is a key test of Gorbachev's "sincerity."

For his part, Gorbachev has called Afghanistan "a bleeding wound" and stated: "We should like, in the nearest future, to withdraw the Soviet troops...." In this same speech, given at the 27th Congress of the CPSU in February 1986, he denounced "revolutionary war" as "Trotskyite" and "Left Communist" heresy. These remarks were presumably directed at those elements in the Soviet bureaucracy less ready to abandon Afghanistan and perhaps also more supportive of the Vietnamese in Cambodia and the Cuban forces in Angola.

The main obstacle to the Gorbachev regime extricating itself from Afghanistan is finding an acceptable, face-saving compromise. The nature of Afghan society and the savage civil war it generated precludes establishing a stable, "nonaligned" regime in Kabul which would honor agreements with Moscow. It is impossible to envision the Finlandiza-

tion or Austrianization of Afghanistan.

From the standpoint of the protection of the Soviet Union, Afghanistan must be won. It is an organic component of the already assimilated Soviet Central Asia. This is why the bureaucracy has found itself, against its will, so deeply involved and so unable to extricate. We must demand, in consonance with all Soviet peoples, that this nettle be firmly grasped. To promise war here for a generation is to conclude that war in a few years. To temporize is to protract it and leave endless opportunities for imperialist provocation. It is also important, as Soviet victory is seen as inevitable, that effective means be used to facilitate the return and integration of the millions of the pathetic, murderous, backward emigration in Pakistan. Victory in Afghanistan!

DEFEND THE USSR THROUGH WORLD REVOLUTION!

More generally, Gorbachev's apparently greater willingness to make concessions to imperialism has not yet been tested, for the imperialist bourgeoisie has yet to offer anything of value to the Kremlin in return. However, we must warn of the possibility of new deals, even if their concrete nature cannot now be predicted, between Washington and Moscow at the expense of revolutionary and national liberation struggles around the world.

From our standpoint, the Gorbachev regime in the Soviet Union represents a highly contradictory development. Internally, the combination of *glasnost* and *perestroika* produces a more favorable condition for the emergence of left-wing currents among the intelligentsia and of an independent workers movement. Ex-

ternally, there seems a greater likelihood for abandoning support to revolutionary and national liberation struggles in the Third World and reducing economic aid to Vietnam, Cuba and Nicaragua, thereby strengthening and emboldening imperialism and weakening the defense of the USSR. One should however keep in mind that the Kremlin tops could pursue an aggressive detente line, as Brezhnev did in the early 1970s, without an internal liberalization which can open the road to proletarian political revolution.



Larry Downing - Newsweek

Soviet leader with rabid warmonger Reagan. Gorbachev's pipedream: peace with imperialism.

The future of the Gorbachev regime is organically linked to developments in the imperialist West, centrally the United States. The Reagan administrations, as well as that of Carter, were and are a response of the American bourgeoisie to its loss of imperialist hegemony growing out of the defeat in Vietnam. Central to this response has been a massive arms buildup designed above all to give U.S. imperialism capacity for an effective thermonuclear first strike against the USSR. This has been accompanied by a virulent anti-Soviet propaganda campaign, as

conciliatory tack of Gorbachev and Co. is thus doubly stupid and dangerous—both the best evidence that Gorbachev represents simply another variation of Stalinism, historically anti-revolutionary and committed above all to "socialism in one country," and also an imperative argument for a Soviet section of a re-forged Fourth International to lead a proletarian political revolution to defend the gains of October and pursue a course of revolutionary proletarian internationalism.

Adapted from Workers Vanguard no 432, 10 July 1987

moscow NEWS
24 May 1987

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A BOOK

ON THE HARM DONE BY BLANK WALLS

I USED to give lectures fairly often at the Vladimir Ilyich Plant in Moscow. One day, I was going down the stairs together with my listeners after a lecture and answering their questions. One was about my impressions of the postwar congress of the Communist Party of Germany, which I attended, and about German



No "blank walls" in Soviet history? Moscow News (24 May 1987) still removed Trotsky (next to Lenin, saluting) and other Bolshevik leaders from historic photo (right) taken on second anniversary of October Revolution.



Hail Mordechai Vanunu!

As we go to press, reports of the opening of Mordechai Vanunu's trial show that he is attempting to communicate with journalists despite the extraordinary measures taken to keep him silent. On Monday, 31 August Vanunu struggled to remove the helmet he is forced to wear; police sirens sounded to prevent his being heard. Vanunu's guards tussled with him when he tried to shout out.

Mordechai Vanunu, the heroic Israeli nuclear technician who last year revealed to the world the extent of the Zionist nuclear arsenal, is now on trial in Jerusalem. In an elaborate operation involving at least tacit complicity by British and Australian intelligence agencies, Vanunu was lured from London to Rome, kidnapped by the Israeli secret police, Mossad, forcibly injected with a "powerful anaesthetic", bound in chains and taken to Israel on a cargo ship. There he was incarcerated in solitary confinement at the top security prison in Ashkelon near Tel Aviv. He now faces charges of treason - which carries the death penalty, espionage - which carries a 20-year prison term, and a third charge of giving information to unauthorised persons. It is urgently necessary to mobilise in defence of Vanunu against the Zionist state's threat of execution or life imprisonment.

Under Israel's draconian "security" regulations this travesty of a "trial" will be held in camera. Two weeks ago a Supreme Court judge ruled that Vanunu will be forbidden to defend himself by testimony in court on the key facts surrounding his case, including some aspects of his abduction, his work at Dimona and his motivation for the decision to publicise the massive nuclear capability Israel has built. Even the Nazi butcher Eichmann - the last man to be legally executed in Israel - was allowed to testify on his own behalf at his trial in Jerusalem. Now, after appeal, these

subjects are severely restricted, though not totally forbidden. In order to visit Mordechai in prison, family members had to sign statements that they would not reveal anything they might hear on any of these subjects. Violation of this carries great risk.

Vanunu's courageous act is a service to humanity. Indeed, the fact that Israel has nuclear weapons is so well known that it even features in adventure novels such as Gerald Seymour's *Glory Boys*. The recent testing of Israel's Jericho missile, with a reported potential range of 900 miles, underscores that the Zionist madmen have more than Arab capitals in their sights. They have a much bigger target in mind: the Soviet Union. As Mordechai's brother Meir Vanunu pointed out at a meeting in London sponsored by the Jewish Socialist Group, the Zionists' obsession with the "security" of their nuclear-armed fortress was touched by Mordechai's revelations. They have vindictively set out to see him either dead or forever locked in the dungeons of the Israeli garrison state.

In a letter Vanunu wrote from his cell to Israeli journalist Yael Lotan, he said:

"An act like mine teaches citizens that their own reasoning is no less important than that of their leaders. Don't follow them blindly on crucial issues like nuclear weapons. If there is a case which calls for civil disobedience, it is this. Such an act undermines general confidence in the leaders. We saw that in the Lebanon war. Most people supported the war and today this has been reversed. The majority know now that it was not a war but simply bloodshed caused by a few leaders who wanted to 'impose order' in a neighbouring country by the use of force. I knew the truth from the first day of that war. I wouldn't buy the announce-

ments of the Israeli Government and I developed a general criticism, including what is being done in the nuclear field in this country. I had to overcome many personal barriers to do what I did. The chief barrier was the sacrifice of my private life to exposure and slander, and of my future plans, on this altar."

- *Guardian*, 24 August

The Israeli blitzkrieg into Lebanon did become, as Vanunu so eloquently describes, an unpopular war. Israel's invasion of Lebanon was hideously marked by the genocidal massacres at the Palestinian camps Sabra and Shatila. Revulsion at this Nazi-like mass murder fuelled opposition to the Lebanon war and it is no accident that Mordechai Vanunu himself has long been a defender of the rights of the Palestinian people against Zionist policies of extermination. Internal dissent is anathema to the Zionists' incessant war-footing and internal regimentation. Opposition from within was considerable; Meir Vanunu related the following story at the London meeting:

"There is Eli Geva who was a high commander in the Lebanon war.

One day he said the state is wrong and I am going out of this war, I'm refusing to obey the order of Israel.

A commander. And he left the field in the middle and did what he did." Contrasting these acts of conscience against the genocidal policies of the Zionist state, Meir Vanunu referred to the case of Jonathan Pollard, a convicted Israeli spy and American:

"Jonathan Pollard received a lot of money; my brother didn't receive anything but in Israel they said he sold his country. Why Jonathan Pollard is good because he helped Israel and he betrayed his country?"

The Pollard example is very much to the point. As we wrote in a recent *Spartacist* article defending American novelist Gore Vidal against a Zionist smear campaign: "Loyalty to a state power is a quite different matter from

cultural tradition and religious sentiment. Yet the Zionists, quite dangerously, want to equate them. Today, the theocratic state of Israel demands supranational loyalty from Jews throughout the world, just as the Nazi Reich demanded the allegiance of all ethnic Germans." But there are those, like Mordechai Vanunu, within Zionist Israel who refuse to accept that the only good Israeli is an obedient tool of the bloodthirsty state.

For his efforts on behalf of his brother, for his forthright denunciation of the machinations of the Mossad within Britain and Italy, Meir Vanunu himself is now faced with a warrant for arrest in Israel - on charges amounting to espionage. Meir Vanunu's defence has now become an integral part of the urgently necessary task of defending his brother. This is certainly the obligation of the workers movement, socialist left and all defenders of elementary human rights: Mossad operated in Britain and elsewhere under some cover from the imperialists who today march in lockstep with the US' anti-Soviet war drive. According to the *Sunday Times*, the Australian ASIO notified MI6 of Vanunu's impending arrival in Britain last September. When he landed at Heathrow two Special Branch officers were watching and "It is believed that a Mossad team then put Vanunu under surveillance in London" (*Sunday Times*, 9 August).

Workers Hammer urges our readers to raise this case in their unions, civil liberties organisations, campus groups. The Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle, anti-sectarian legal defence organisation in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League, has launched a campaign to publicise this case and has also begun to send monthly stipends to Mordechai Vanunu in jail. As the trial begins, we make an urgent appeal: make Mordechai Vanunu's fight your fight! Donations are desperately needed; send to: Mordechai Vanunu Legal Defense Fund, PO Box 4005, Sommerville, Massachusetts 02145, USA.

Sri Lanka...

(continued from page 5)

spoken, and Mr Balasingam said they might have better relations with residents than the Lankan army (*New York Times*, 1 August). The Sinhalese are reaping the bitter fruit of "Sinhala Only", the chauvinist campaign spearheaded in the mid-1950s by the SLFP (and criminally tailed by the class-collaborationist "left" which claimed to find in the SLFP a "progressive" or "lesser evil" section of the ruling class).

The Tamils' superiority in English, a legacy of British "divide and rule", had placed the majority Sinhalese at a disadvantage in the professions, universities, government bureaucracy, etc. Under the cover of "anti-imperialist" rhetoric, the Sinhalese dethroned English and got preferential access to masses of jobs, from humble clerks on up. The 1972 Constitution, which officially mandates the protection of the Buddhist religion, even changed the name of the country to a Sinhala word, complete with an honorific with religious connotations. The provision of the new Indo-Lankan agreement restoring Tamil and English as official languages alongside Sinhalese is an elementary democratic measure.

Severing their children's links with English through the Sinhala education system, the Sinhalese made themselves an enclave cut off from India and the rest of the world, and split the island's populations apart, for English is the lingua franca between national/religious communities throughout the Indian subcontinent. In the sequel, the Sinhalese troops who went north to combat the separatist insurgency had no shot at "winning the hearts and minds" of the Tamil civilians; they could be only an army of alien occupation.

Revolutionary Marxists, unlike nationalists and their "left" apologists, take no pleasure in the reversal of terms of oppression. Ceylon has been "Ulsterised". Within the nationalist frame of reference, which confers on whole peoples a supposedly "reactionary" or "progressive" status, the Tamils, especially those in Jaffna, are now the favoured "reactionary people" and the racist Sinhalese the new oppressed, in roughly the unenviable position of Cypriot Greeks after the arrival of the Turkish army. "President Jayewardene is now being protected by the empire of beggars", one Sinhalese man remarked bitterly (*Independent*, 1 August).

The working masses of India and

Ceylon need Bolshevik parties to lead the workers and peasant masses in the struggle to overthrow capitalism through socialist revolution. No confidence in the blood-soaked Indian rulers! Defeat imperialism's sinister plans for Trincomalee! Down with the Prevention of Terrorism Act! Free all victims of JR's terror! For the federated workers republics of Eelam and Lanka, part of the socialist federation of South Asia! ■

Sheffield SWP...

(continued from page 12)

November 1982 our comrades of the SL/US initiated a demonstration of 5000 mainly black workers that prevented the Ku Klux Klan from marching through Washington DC. And in Rouen in 1982 comrades of the Ligue Trotskyiste de France initiated a united front demonstration of 400 to drive off the fascist vermin who were assaulting left-wing paper salesmen.

Essential to a class-struggle fight against fascism is the independent mobilisation of the workers movement. No reliance on the racist cops and bourgeois state! It was Sheffield's Labour council, for example, which in 1984 gave the green light to fascist attacks against the Irish

community when it banned the annual Bloody Sunday commemoration march. And the Labour Party in that town presides over the outrageous racist Gypsy bans in pubs.

At this stage the fascists do not command overwhelming forces. But the mass murderers of Auschwitz also began their sinister careers by minor acts of intimidation. These reactionary scum must be stopped before they grow and gain confidence. We are determined that the sales of left papers will continue at the marketplace and have mobilised to defend our comrades as well as the SWP, in spite of the latter's suicidal sectarianism. All those who believe that the fascists must be stopped should join together in effective, coordinated action. For a united front mobilisation of the labour movement to stop the fascists! ■

Contact the SL/B

London	Sheffield
PO Box 1041	PO Box 183
London NW5 3EU	Sheffield S1 1SU
(01) 485 1396	(0742) 552198

Birmingham
(021) 440 3283

Dave Douglass: "Talks left, walks right"

This past spring the Hatfield Main NUM and particularly its branch delegate Dave Douglass instructed Duncroft miners that it was "against union policy" to buy *Workers Hammer*. This pathetic red-baiting binge occurred in the run-up to the general elections, when union bureaucrats of all stripes were hustling to ram their pro-Kinnock line down the throats of the workers. At the time we noted, "Anti-Sovietism and anti-communism inevitably undermine union struggles" (see *WH* no 87, April 1987). It did not take long for this warning to be confirmed.

Six weeks ago striking British miners shut down coal pits throughout the south Yorkshire area in a defiant struggle against the Thatcher government's latest union-busting attack. At its peak on 18 July some 14,000 miners were picketed out; it was the largest confrontation between the NUM and the bosses since the heroic 12-month strike that ended a little over two years ago. The battle began when five miners at the Frickley pit were suspended under provisions of the Coal Board's new disciplinary code, dubbed by militants the "tyrant's charter". Flying pickets were dispatched throughout south Yorkshire and to a few neighbouring pits. The Coal Board

went into a frenzy, sending out thousands of letters threatening miners with sacking if they didn't return to work. But within three days some 16 pits had been shut down. The NUM panel in north Yorkshire, where a union official has been sacked under the same disciplinary code, had voted to call out their 16,000 miners to join the strike.

But as NUM national president Arthur Scargill maintained a studious silence, the Yorkshire NUM executive, headed by Jack Taylor, demanded an end to the strike, in favour of a national union ballot to consider a vague proposal for "various forms of industrial action" (overtime bans) against the code. "A complete waste of time", the Frickley lodge secretary countered. Indeed, the subsequent "success" of the ballot and the "negotiations" with the Board have not restored the jobs of sacked unionists; and to the extent that British Coal does make any concessions to the union it will be as a consequence of the demonstrated willingness of the mineworkers to take strike action. Only decisive class struggle, in concert with other sections of the working class, can smash the government's union-busting, job-slashing attacks.

Despite the decision to quash the

strike by the Yorkshire NUM leadership, the Frickley miners continued the battle for two days. When they again dispatched pickets on July 20, they met with a powerful response, as 8000 miners stayed off work. At the Hatfield Main pit, however, the Frickley miners took down their picket lines when the local NUM executive threatened to lead workers across them. "Talks left, walks right", commented one disgusted Frickley striker about Hatfield NUM honcho Dave Douglass. And more recently, on 26 August, when a joint meeting of the unofficial Yorkshire NUM panels was ending, miners conspicuously chanted, "Dave Douglass is right wing". Douglass had been unsuccessfully trying to break up a Spartacist sale. But it appears that Douglass' reputation is plenty tarnished among local union activists right now.

The pretext for the intended anti-communist boycott of *Workers Hammer* was our criticism of Hatfield NUM's support for protectionist sanctions against South African coal. To be sure, as we pointed out, "workers sanctions" are sometimes appropriate, depending on the context. For example, an international labour boycott of South African gold and coal, while black miners are on strike, would be an effective act of

solidarity. But an open-ended call for trade sanctions and capitalist "disinvestment" would simply rob black South African workers of their jobs. At "home" sanctions advocates push illusions in the democratic pretences of British imperialism and its protectionist Labour Party lackeys. It is worth noting that many South African unionists are having second thoughts about the wisdom of appealing to the racist imperialists to "disinvest", as reflected in the debate at the recent COSATU conference (see article this issue). The kind of "disinvestment" we're in favour of is when the workers "disinvest" the bosses, General Motors and Anglo American alike.

But while these issues are debated within the South African workers movement, here Douglass resorts to a blanket attempt to suppress opposing viewpoints. Fortunately he's been unable to carry it off. The point of these anti-communist tactics can only be to demonstrate to the Labourite bureaucracy that, his "leftist" connections notwithstanding, he can be relied on to toe the line, as he did during the Frickley strike. Miners, including militants at Hatfield Main NUM, would do well to draw a balance sheet on the disastrous consequences of red-baiting. ■

Healy...

(continued from page 3)

At present count there are now, excluding Banda, five groupings which have issued from the post-implosion Healyite mess: the Slaughter WRP (*Workers Press*), the Torrance WRP (*News Line*), the ex-Torranceite Workers International League (*Workers News*), the Northite International Communist Party (*International Worker*) and now the Healy Healyite "Marxist Party" (newspaper inevitably to be coming soon).

Corrupt but never stupid, Healy may be aware that Gorbachev is a rather more attractive figure than the late Nahuel Moreno or the dubious Michel Varga - ie, those groupings who are on a fusion course today with the Slaughter WRP. And with the nasty inconsistency that is a Healy hallmark, Alex Mitchell - once the golden boy of "Security and the Fourth International" along with D North and Healy himself - has fallen into ill-repute. Complaining over the handling of Mitchell's apparent departure to the greener pastures of bourgeois "journalism" in Australia by his factional opponents in the Torrance WRP, Healy (who wanted Mitchell's expulsion) wrote: "Now it is announced in the 'Old Town's' so-called *Workers Press* that the 'Healyite' Mitchell is working under his own byline for the 'Sun Herald' in Sydney, Australia, and under an assumed name for the daily 'Morning Herald'. Meanwhile a leaflet is circulating for the 17th Anniversary of the [then Healy-Torrance] *News Line* rally under Mitchell's signature appealing for would-be applicants for Party membership....Should they send their applications to Alex Mitchell, Editor, *News Line* with the usual BCM address, or why not give Mitchell's address as c/o 'Sun Herald' (Fairfax press) Sydney, Australia?" (*The Marxist*, June 1987) Of Mitchell, we can only say: what goes around, comes around. Who knows

where D North might eventually turn up. To a creature, they're products of Healy; if he's paranoid about them, he would know best why he should be.

All this obviously doesn't mean that anything Healy says about events in the Soviet Union bears any resemblance to genuine Trotskyism - but of course neither does anything his Stalinophobic ex-comrades have to say. Healy and Vanessa have taken the road like travelling snake-oil salesmen in new outfits. This time they have dressed up as "dialectical" interpreters of *glasnost* and *perestroika*.

In 1985, when the WRP blew apart, we noted that we had a profound difference with the WRP, over politics. From the virulently anti-Soviet Cultural Revolution in Mao's China, to the Iraqis to the ayatollah Khomeini, from Polish Solidarnosc to the mullahs in Afghanistan, the WRP backed all the enemies of the Soviet Union on the perimeter of the Soviet Union (see "Healyism Implodes", *Spartacist* no 36-37). Now the man who modestly refers to himself as simply "the outstanding leader of the world Trotskyist movement in the post-war period" has supposedly pro-Soviet revealed truth to sell. Don't bet on it, and don't hold your breath for any explanation of any line changes on Poland, etc - if there are any. On stage in London, Healy assured his audience that the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution would be a decisive turning point in the Soviet Union, that Trotsky's works are widely circulating, adding "we have seen to that". That's the egomaniac we remember well.

Many questions remain unanswered: will, as it has been rumoured, the split from the Torrance group seek unity with Hyland/North? What really happened with A Mitchell? Will we all have to read yet another Healyite "daily" to keep track?

We do know that the guiding prin-

ciple for the political bandit G Healy is "anything goes". His recent performance, well-supported by Vanessa, would be amusing if it weren't for the buckets of blood that were spilled when he was a running dog for oil-rich Near East despots. He's always been someone's running dog, but as we wrote in *Spartacist*: "between working for Cannon and working for the Libyan government there is a class gulf. But in Healy's mind there probably wasn't much difference between seeking to ride the coattails of left-Labour politician Aneurin Bevan and becoming a political whore for Colonel Qaddafi." *Caveat emptor*.

South Africa...

(continued from page 2)

for all workers in South Africa.

More fundamentally, the ANC in no way opposes neocolonial rule in black Africa. On the contrary, it looks towards the black regimes from Senegal to Zambia - savagely oppressive of their people and subservient to Wall Street and Wash-

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Sheffield SWP "turns the other cheek"

Stop fascists - don't ignore them!

SHEFFIELD - For several months a group of fascistic punks carrying National Front stickers and sporting NF insignia have been habitually gathering at the city's Castle Market in Exchange Street to harass left-wing newspaper sellers. These fascist vermin have engaged in physical assaults on members of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), punching one woman in the face and hurling a rubbish bin at the SWP sales team. These or similar creeps have also provocatively targetted the leftist "Independent" bookshop, particularly to leaf through the anti-fascist journal *Searchlight*. The National Front has also been trying to muscle in on the year-old Keetons dispute where 39 engineering workers have been locked out for refusing to accept the company's slave charter "working practices".

It is outrageous as well as ominous that racist, fascist thugs are attempting to establish their "turf" in a traditional selling place for the left and labour movement, a market moreover heavily used by Sheffield's black and Asian minority populations. An organised fascist presence is inevitably accompanied by escalating attacks on minorities, leftists and the workers movement generally. In response to the deadly threat posed by these scum, the Spartacist League has issued a call to the left and minority organisations in Sheffield to establish a coordinated presence at Castle Market on Saturdays in order to ensure the defence of workers organisations. Such a united front would lay the basis for deterring the fascists from showing their faces. This filth must be *smashed* by a determined mobilisation of their intended victims - blacks, Asians, Jews, Gypsies, gays, Irish, women, socialists. Key to such a mobilisation is the muscle of the organised working class. The decent people of Sheffield can and must nip the fascist scourge in the bud.

The response by the Sheffield "left" - especially the SWP - has to date been to preach criminal passivity, to ignore the fascist scum, to even publicly deny the incidents of harassment against SWPers. But ignoring these punks will only embolden them more. Furthermore, in Britain one would have to be blind to pretend that racist and fascist terror is not a threat. In south Leeds alone no less than 305 racial incidents were reported over an 18-month period, including stonings and assaults, and the fascists are taking their cue from the Thatcher government. From the racist cop murders of Cynthia Jarrett, Clinton McCurbin

and scores of others to the scandal of the racist prison hulk *Earl William*, state sanctioned race terror is the cutting edge of the capitalists' attacks on working people in this country.

Union-busting and racist violence against minorities are the domestic reflection of the imperialist war preparations against the USSR. The NATO imperialists hope to prevail where Hitler failed - in restoring capitalist slavery to the first

infused with the militancy of the miners. The powerful strike of 1984-5, albeit stabbed in the back by labour traitor Kinnock and the TUC tops, established at the time some real unity between the advanced detachment of the British proletariat and oppressed minorities in this country. Blacks, Asians, gays, Irish and women rallied to the cause of the miners. The ranks of the miners, engineering and bus workers must be mobilised to smash race

easily outnumber those of the fascists, has discouraged other organisations from mobilising against the National Front. This is a conscious policy by the Sheffield SWP leadership, and a deadly dangerous one. At one time young militants joined the SWP precisely because of its reputation for fighting the fascists in the streets. SWP'er Blair Peach was murdered by the cops at an anti-fascist protest in Southall in 1979. Although the SWP often engaged in adventurist tactics in the early to mid-1970s, at least it took the fascist threat seriously. An SWP pamphlet issued in the 1970s, *Organise against the National Front*, is virtually a polemic against the SWP today. "Don't Ignore Them [fascists]" it then declared, while pouring scorn on "Liberals and the Labour Party leadership [who] argue that silent contempt is the best answer" and ridiculing those who opposed "physical force being used to stop the fascists in their tracks".

A watershed for the SWP was its role in founding the pop frontist Anti Nazi League (ANL), which channelled anti-fascist sentiment into impotent liberal "anti-racist" rallies designed to *avoid* confrontations with the NF. (A leading light of the ANL was one Neil Kinnock, who bluntly stated that he was proud to be an officer of the organisation since it was "an alternative to streetfighting".) A case in point was the ANL's notorious carnival in the fall of 1978: while the fascists marched virtually unimpeded through the heavily immigrant East End of London, some 100,000 people were diverted to a festival held at the opposite end of town. Today the SWP's stated policy is most clearly put in its own internal document: "We are saying at present, organise specifically against the nazis, and we'll build their organisation....If the nazis start paper sales we should not pay them any special attention. If they attack a SW sale, make a tactical retreat and start again the following week" (*Discussion Bulletin*, August 1984). And last year, when anti-racist students at Bristol University mobilised to stop Enoch Powell from making a race-hate speech, the SWP joined hands with the Labour Club to *protect* him.

The international Spartacist tendency has a proud record of mobilising to crush racist and fascist attacks. In Sheffield itself in 1981 the SL initiated a successful united front committee (in which Workers Power also participated) to drive the British Movement off campus. In



Spartacists link the fight against anti-immigrant laws with the need to smash rising fascist/racist terror in 1979 demo.

workers state. While communist militants like Viraj Mendis are threatened with deportation to death in JR's Sri Lanka, fascist war criminals like Lithuanian Nazi Antanas Gecas find a safe haven in racist Britain. Gecas' SD police battalion, which served with the Nazi SS, carried out mass murders of Jews and partisans in Minsk and Lithuania. But successive British governments, Tory and Labour alike, have refused to cooperate with Soviet prosecutors in extraditing such filth, thereby outdoing even Ronald Reagan. And now French fascist leader Le Pen has been invited by Sir Alfred Sherman, formerly a prominent adviser at Number 10, to address Tories at Blackpool.

Fascism is endemic to capitalism in its death agony - its breeding ground is the fear of economic ruin, particularly intensified competition for jobs. The advanced state of decay of British capitalism has meant that devastated manufacturing cities like Sheffield and Rotherham are likely targets for fascist groups. But the working class in this area is also

terrorists like the National Front.

The Spartacist League's appeal for an anti-fascist united front mobilisation noted the successful defense of the "Ramp" in Birmingham in 1978, where various organisations, including the SL, the Socialist Workers Party, the International Marxist Group and Sean Matgamna's International-Communist League maintained a large enough sales presence to deter the British Movement and the National Front from showing their faces. In Sheffield, not only the SWP but also Workers Power, Socialist Organiser, and various wings of the CP, have deliberately ignored the fascist threat. Well, there were many that joked about Hitler when his Nazis were small, but they didn't die laughing. These fascist vermin must be crushed in the egg. As Nazi leader Joseph Goebbels later admitted: "If the enemy had known how weak we were, it would probably have reduced us to jelly....It would have crushed in blood the very beginning of our work."

But the SWP, whose own forces

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