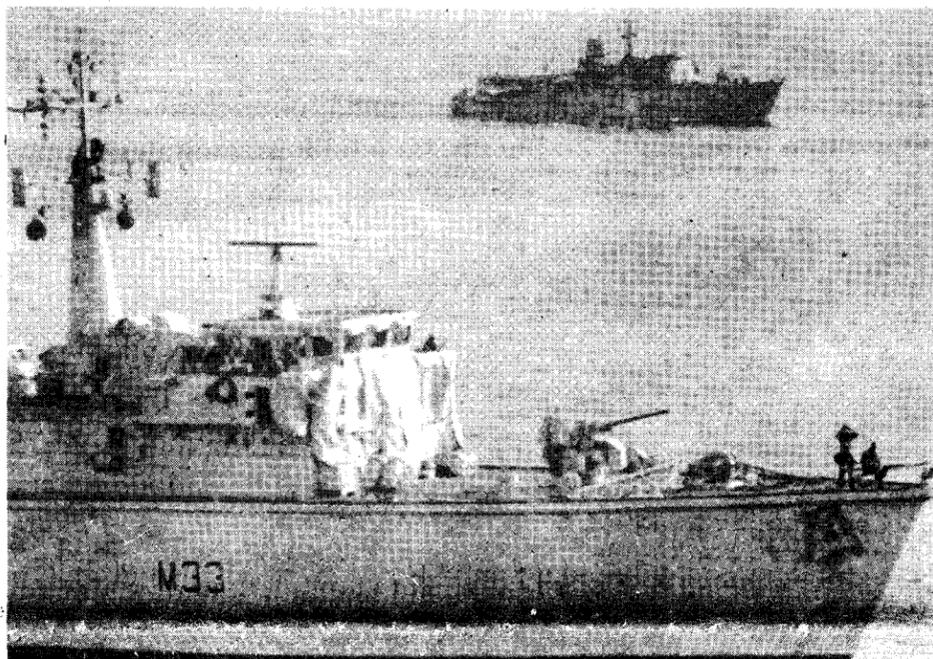


# Imperialist war moves in the Persian Gulf

Careening from Contragate revelations of having secretly sold arms to Teheran, the Reagan administration seems hell bent on provoking war with Iran. Last week, in a brazen act of war, the US attacked and seized an Iranian ship in the Persian Gulf without warning. To further taunt Khomeini, the Navy scuttled the ship by blowing it up. And US war secretary Weinberger is demanding "a totally different kind of government in Iran". The Reaganauts have delusions they're back in the days of Teddy Roosevelt and his "big stick", that by sailing gunboats up the Gulf they can install another shah. Washington has sucked virtually every European NATO power into its shoot-'em-up adventure on the Cold War grounds of "keeping the Soviets out" of the Gulf. And there she is, "Rambo's daughter" Maggie Thatcher herself, leading the charge along with Reagan. There are at least four British destroyers, frigates and support tankers in the Gulf as well as another four minehunters, a maintenance and mine countermeasures support ship. Nationalist frenzy was whipped up when the British-registered oil tanker *Gentle Breeze* was hit by Iranian rockets and the Foreign Secretary Geoffrey Howe added his own two feet to the walk out of the United Nations by the US delegation on 22 September during the Iranians' speech.

By getting mired in the muck of the Iran/Soviet war, Rambo Reagan has shot himself in the groin. Now this pyromaniac could light the fuse for World War III. First the US sent in a Navy flotilla, daring Khomeini to respond, but Teheran didn't bite. So the US used two helicopter gunships from a secret high-tech Army unit (Task Force 160) to disable the Iranian ship, killing at least three seamen and capturing 26. Pentagon chief Caspar Weinberger showed up in person on the decks of the command ship *LaSalle* to crow. He called the Iranian craft "a blazing gun", a "mine-laying ship" caught "red-handed" in waters used by American ships as an anchorage. The Americans solemnly declare they're not going to allow such "criminal acts" in the Persian Gulf. According to the Pentagon the Iranian craft was the *Iran Ajr*, but Lloyd's Register lists this as a cargo ship. Reporters who boarded her say it was the *Raksh*. Who will ever know, since the Pentagon dynamited the evidence.

The US is clearly gearing up to at least drop some bombs on Iran. And if Reagan gets his Gulf war, it's going to be a messy business. Scores of tankers crowd the shipping lanes through this shallow basin nearly closed by the Straits of



Independent

British minesweepers join NATO provocations in troubled Gulf waters. Sink anti-Soviet warmonger Thatcher!

## Smash NATO! Defend the Soviet Union!

Hormuz. There's now a NATO war fleet of more than 60 ships, a small Soviet naval group of minesweepers and escort ships, a couple of Iranian warships and submarines, mines everywhere and scads of Iranian speedboats for "martyrdom" attacks. The destruction of the Iranian ship provided Reagan with the desired momentary spike of popularity in the polls. But things will change swiftly if those "American boys" start getting shot down by Hawk missiles sold to Iran by the Reagan/North gang in the first place.

### REAGAN'S REAL TARGET IS RUSSIA

The Iran/Iraq war, which now enters its eighth year and has cost over one million dead, is a dirty war between two repulsive dictatorial regimes. The working class must oppose both sides in this squalid bloodbath. We have called since the beginning for Iranian and Iraqi workers to turn the guns the other way and bring down Khomeini and Hussein. If Reagan now carries out his war threats, as Democrat Carter tried and failed to do, revolutionaries must defend Iran against imperialist attack. But Reagan's real target is Russia. Behind the

ites' high-tech 600-ship Navy looked like a helpless giant when it was revealed that they had no modern minesweepers. A vice admiral sheepishly admitted that a cheap "fish finder" sonar used by fishermen could have spotted the mine that hit the *Bridgeton* (*Navy Times*, 28 September). Yet the White House has since persuaded the Netherlands, Italy, Britain and Belgium to send their navies into the crazy adventure. The Japanese and West Germans have come on board; and France, whose Teheran embassy is now under siege, already has its own war fleet in place.

The sudden escalation of anti-Iran craziness is reminiscent of the anti-Libya "terrorism" frenzy of last year, which Admiral Poin-dexter later admitted during the Iran/Contra hearings was part of a US disinformation campaign to justify a military assault on Libya. Remember that Thatcher was the hard-line supporter of Reagan's terror-bombing of Libya; the British rulers are obviously prepared to re-play that role today in the Gulf. The Labour "statesmen" were also lined up behind the imperialists' attack on Libya in much the same fashion as they cheered the Falklands/Malvinas war. Kinnock counterposed to Reagan/Thatcher's bloodthirsty provocations the policy of isolating Libya until "the pressure of commercial, economic, financial, diplomatic and political sanctions squeezed the life out of the Gaddafi regime" (*Times*, 17 April 1986). Shadow home secretary Gerald Kaufman at the time railed against Thatcher for being too slow in booting Libyans out of the country. Now the same Kaufman (Labour's shadow foreign secretary this year) has denounced the "dastardly attack" on the British flag ship.

Of course, the terrorist headquarters was on the Potomac during the Libya provocations, as the Reagan gang launched a bombing run on Tripoli in April 1986 intended to assassinate Qaddafi - they succeeded

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## Spycatcher: Review of an underground bestseller

SEE PAGE 4

# For international class-struggle defence!

# Free Moses Mayekiso

Charged with high treason, subversion and sedition, Moses Mayekiso, general secretary of the newly formed National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) is scheduled to go to trial 19 October. Four others are up on the same charges stemming from their political activism in the black township of Alexandra north of Johannesburg: Mayekiso's younger brother Mzwanele Mayekiso, Paul Tshabalala, Richard Mdakane and Obed Kopeng Bapela. If convicted, these courageous fighters against apartheid face execution by Botha's murderous regime. Several dozen additional militants are already on death row in South Africa!

Moses Mayekiso is also a member of the central executive committee of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). Like countless others before him from the impoverished rural areas, as a young man Mayekiso left his "homeland" in the Transkei and became a migrant worker in the mines. He later went to work at Toyota where in 1978 he joined the fledgling Metal and Allied Workers Union (MAWU). Targetted for his trade union activities, he was sacked

in 1979. In 1980, as Transvaal secretary of MAWU he played a key role in building the metal workers union into one of the most powerful black trade unions in South Africa.

Mayekiso's effectiveness as a trade union leader and his standing in his township has made him a prime target of the vicious apartheid police state at whose hands he has suffered both imprisonment and torture. He was detained in 1984 following the mass strike by miners in Witwatersrand and released a month later after action by South African trade unionists. He was arrested and released twice more in 1985. In early 1986, the cops raided and ransacked his home, dragging him off to the notorious John Vorster Square detention centre once again. MAWU members went on strike to obtain his release and then elected him general secretary of the union.

The vindictive repression of the Pretoria butchers in fact extended to Britain; when Mayekiso visited here in 1986, he was detained at Heathrow for six hours during which he was *stripsearched*. Mayekiso was arrested in South Africa in June 1986

upon his return from a trip to Europe where he had been building international support for MAWU members engaged in a bitter dispute at the Sarmcol plant of the British Tyre & Rubber Co. When Mayekiso finally appeared in court in January of this year, 200 trade unionists including COSATU general secretary Jay Naidoo and NUM leader Cyril Ramaphosa picketed outside. But it was not until April that he was charged with treason for his political activities in Alexandra where he had been elected chairman of the Alexandra Action Committee. The Committee had taken over running the township itself when the residents rose up and expelled police and government officials. Moses Mayekiso, his brother Mzwanele and the three others charged were all officials of the Action Committee. The charges laid against them by the apartheid police state are overtly political, including that Mayekiso and his comrades hold the view:

"that the working class, including the unemployed, the youth and other members of the community, should be mobilised, organised and united against the capitalist system and the state." (*Workers Press*, 26 September)

Mayekiso, whose origins lie in the more "workerist" FOSATU union federation, has strongly held political convictions at times at variance with



Friends of Moses Mayekiso

**Moses Mayekiso, heroic anti-apartheid union leader.**

those of the ANC. At its recent merger conference Mayekiso's union NUMSA took a contradictory position: restating that it is committed to building socialism while adopting the ANC's Freedom Charter which envisions a "democratic" capitalist South Africa as the "first stage" of liberation of the South African masses.

Now, with the heroic black proletariat on centre stage in the battle against apartheid slavery, the death sentence hanging over Mayekiso is a frontal assault by Botha & Co against the whole of the black trade union movement. It is the elementary and urgent duty of every enemy of the vicious apartheid regime to rally in defence of Mayekiso, regardless of political, programmatic differences on the course of the anti-apartheid struggle. The stakes in this case are very high.



TROTSKY

**International labour defence:  
The policy of the class struggle**

The following is excerpted from an article entitled "Who Can Save Sacco and Vanzetti?" which appeared in the *Labor Defender* (January 1927), publication of the *International Labor Defense*. The *ILD* undertook a massive international campaign on behalf of two Italian-American anarchist workers framed up for murder and executed in Massachusetts in 1927. At the head of the campaign was the

*ILD* National Secretary James P Cannon. A founder of the American Communist Party, Cannon was expelled for Trotskyism in 1928 and went on to found the American Trotskyist movement. The statement below on the principles and policy of class-struggle defence retains its full force today.

The Saccò-Vanzetti case is no private monopoly, but an issue of the class struggle in which the decisive word will be spoken by the masses who have made this fight their own. It is, therefore, necessary to discuss openly the conflicting policies which are bound up with different objectives.

One policy is the policy of the class struggle. It puts the center of gravity in the protest movement of the workers of America and the world. It puts all faith in the power of the masses and no faith whatever in the justice of the courts. While favoring all possible legal proceedings, it calls for agitation, publicity, demonstrations - organized protest on a national and international scale. It calls for unity and solidarity of all workers on this burning issue, regardless of conflicting views on other questions. This is what has prevented the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti so far. Its goal is nothing less than their triumphant vindication and liberation.



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The case of Moses Mayekiso and the fight for his freedom has struck a deep chord here particularly among trade unionists. Thus the advertisement placed by the Friends of Moses Mayekiso in the *Guardian* (18 September) calling for Mayekiso's "immediate and unconditional release" includes NUM leader Arthur Scargill and NUM general secretary Peter Heathfield, NUR general secretary Jimmy Knapp, TGWU secretary Ron Todd and John Carroll, the president of the Irish TGWU. Hundreds of branches from over 30 trade unions have endorsed the petition as well as a number of shop stewards committees. Potentially, a genuine international defence effort could be launched backed up by the muscle of organised labour. What's necessary is to mobilise the express support for Mayekiso and the other anti-apartheid fighters in a militant campaign centred in the factories and the streets.

But the Mayekiso case has precipitated some bitter wrangling in the British left and workers movement. The government workers union NALGO confirmed to *Workers Hammer* that it distributed to its branches a circular discouraging them from endorsing the Friends of Moses Mayekiso campaign petition on the grounds that the organisers of the petition drive (prominently including the Socialist Workers Party) did not consult with "recognised bodies" such as the ANC,

trade union tops and the fake left all have a different programme: pressuring the racist, imperialist British ruling class into enforcing sanctions against South Africa. This is the theme of this month's national AAM demonstration. At a recent NUM-AAM conference in Sheffield, the Mayekiso case was buried while Scargill spoke under the banner: "Ban South African coal now", which channels anti-racist sentiment into a scheme whose main impact would be to rob black South African miners of their jobs. Such protectionist calls for a blanket trade boycott must be clearly distinguished from authentic examples of industrial solidarity, such as blacking scab coal during a miners strike. The RCG's main criticism of the AAM has been that it doesn't fight for sanctions "more militantly" - by staging confrontations at the South African embassy, etc. With its peculiar brand of third worldist politics, the RCG dismisses the British unions as the "privileged sections" of the working class.

At bottom, those who push for sanctions buy the liberal lie that somehow the British bosses are "better" than their apartheid allies. That necessarily implies class collaboration. You cannot mobilise the British working masses on an independent political basis if you are busy courting their oppressors, the imperialists and their reactionary state. Genuine

"Mass meetings were held in every large city. In New York City alone some 18,000 workers came to Madison Square Garden to protest against the proposed legal assassination. Resolutions poured into the office of Governor Alvan T. Fuller



Workers Hammer

**London 1985: Spartacists demand freedom for Benjamin Moloise, martyred anti-apartheid fighter.**

of Massachusetts. Hundreds of thousands of leaflets...were distributed everywhere. Posters, buttons, articles for the press, the *Labor Defender* - every means of publicity and agitation was utilized in the campaign. The Sacco-Vanzetti Conferences, into which hundreds of thousands of workers were organized, made the names of the two Italian workers the symbol of solidarity and united efforts."

The ILD had to stand up to bloody state terror. Thousands of police - armed with clubs, riot and machine guns, and tear-gas bombs - were brought out in an attempt to suppress meetings for Sacco and Vanzetti. At its height, millions of workers engaged in strike activity. As Cannon noted:

"...the sporadic beginnings made in the use of this great weapon in a political cause, in spite of and against the opposition or indifference of the official labor leaders in most cases, is fraught with profound significance. It demonstrates the irresistible power that lies in the organized working class, spurred on by the spirit of solidarity."

The work of the Partisan Defense Committee, founded in the US as a class-struggle, non-sectarian, legal defence organisation in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League, is modelled on that of the ILD. The PDC, like the ILD, fights

against all forms of sectarianism. It champions causes and defends cases whose victorious outcomes are in the interests of the working people, irrespective of particular political views. The pernicious and divisive equation of *defence* against capitalist state repression with political *support* benefits only the class enemy. Today in South Africa, particularly among the black unionists, there is a plethora of political views and debate is taking place under conditions of extreme repression. Profound differences of strategy with the ANC, for example, do not detract one whit from the need to demand the release of Nelson Mandela. The same applies to defence of AZAPO, Black Consciousness Movement activists, trade unionists, the township militants, socialist groupings - in short the whole spectrum of those facing brutal attacks by the vicious apartheid regime. In the autumn of 1985, when the apartheid state prepared to execute ANC supporter Benjamin Moloise, the Spartacist League in the US and Britain initiated and/or participated in united front mobilisations in an attempt to stop his execution. The PDC sent a telegram to key dockers leaders on the East and the West coasts of the States demanding: "Labor must immediately halt all South African shipping to stop the execution! Save Moloise!"

At the moment, under Botha's "State of Emergency", 19 top leaders of the anti-apartheid United Democratic Front are standing trial on charges of treason and if convicted could be hanged. Another 32 courageous fighters against apartheid already convicted face execution and hundreds of strikers charged during the recent miners strike await trial on various charges. *Free all victims of apartheid repression!*

It is urgent that the international workers movement be mobilised to demand freedom for Mayekiso and his four comrades now. The South African miners have recently demonstrated anew their fighting mettle, while the British miners who fought so heroically two years ago, are again under Thatcher's guns. The solidarity and combativity of the working masses in South Africa, Britain and throughout the world must be linked together through a militant, class-struggle defence campaign to liberate Moses Mayekiso and all anti-apartheid fighters from Botha's hangmen! Messages of support may be sent to: NUMSA (MAWU), AP Hing Bldg, 397 Kempston Road, Port Elizabeth 6001, South Africa. An injury to one is an injury to all! ■



Independent

**Miners demonstrate at the bosses' Chamber of Mines headquarters. South Africa's six-million-strong proletariat will bury apartheid capitalism.**

the pro-ANC SACTU and the national Anti-Apartheid Movement. Nonetheless, a number of NALGO branches have indeed added their names to the petition demanding Mayekiso's immediate and unconditional release. Reportedly, at a meeting in August called by the Hammersmith Trades Council and the local Anti-Apartheid group, there was an attempt to tear down a banner jointly showing Nelson Mandela and Moses Mayekiso; at this meeting the SACTU spokesman publicly denounced the Friends of Moses Mayekiso Committee. For its part, the national AAM has printed brief articles defending Mayekiso in its newsletter, and retorts that its spokesmen have "raised his [Mayekiso's] case" (*Observer*, 20 September) with the Foreign Office.

Whatever squalid infighting and factionalism has gone on around the Mayekiso case - and there are undoubtedly elements of this - it has not inhibited hundreds of trade union officials and branches from demanding Mayekiso's freedom. The touchstone here is the policy of the *class struggle*. What's needed are militant actions on behalf of Mayekiso - including mass mobilisations and strikes. But the AAM, the British

militant actions in defence of apartheid victims, including political strikes *here*, would threaten the cosy relations between the Labourite tops and the British bourgeoisie.

A genuine example of international class struggle defence work was the campaign launched by the International Labor Defense (ILD) to save Sacco and Vanzetti, two Italian-American anarchist workers framed up on murder charges during the red scare in the US after the Russian Revolution. The ILD was initiated following discussions in Moscow in 1925 between James P Cannon, a CP leader and later founder of American Trotskyism, and IWW leader Big Bill Haywood. Although the ILD campaign was ultimately unable to save Sacco and Vanzetti, it mobilised working class action on a worldwide scale, from the US to Europe, the Soviet Union and Latin America (among those active in this campaign was the Salvadoran Farabundo Marti who later headed the first communist-led mass uprising in the Americas). The ILD placed no confidence in capitalist justice and its institutions and relied on mobilising the working masses. As Cannon describes it in his *Notebook of an Agitator*:

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# Spycatcher: Review of an underground bestseller

## Honour Kim Philby!

The memoirs of senior British intelligence officer Peter Wright make good reading as an insider's account of the machinations and techniques of imperialist spy agencies. Wright, now an embittered Cold War spook – but none the less ardent for that – is like many of his fellows obsessed with hunting for yet more Soviet penetration agents within MI5 and MI6. He reiterates allegations against his former boss and MI5 chief Roger Hollis as the candidate for the long-sought "fifth man". He provides some detailed descriptions of counter-espionage against the Soviet bloc, including some spectacular failures. He describes assassination plans against Nasser, experiments with LSD for interrogations, campaigns to "neutralise" troublesome guerrillas in Cyprus. He recounts meetings with the American CIA where table talk over cocktails lingered on the best method to assassinate Fidel Castro (Wright explaining "We're not in it anymore, Bill. We got out a couple of years ago, after Suez" [and we might add Commander Crabbe] but then brightly suggests the French: "Have you tried them? It's more their type of thing, you know, Algiers, and so on"). He mentions a turn towards domestic surveillance in the 1970s and spares a few pages on the well-known plots against Wilson's Labour government.

Wright was one of the "Young Turks" within the secret services, 1950s anti-communist witchhunters traumatised by the Burgess, Maclean, Philby defections and dedicated to hunting furiously for more KGB moles. Because Wright was a highly-placed insider, *Spycatcher* is full of details you can't get from just any spy book. Parts of it have a ring of authenticity precisely because the utterly cynical, venal, cold-blooded attitude of the professional British spy comes through in a way that would be hard to fake. (And the tedious parts filled with petty inter-office intrigue have the same ring: you really had to be inside to care so passionately about the interminable MI5-MI6 wrangling.) Aside from the fact that it comes from an inside source, there is nothing much of substance in *Spycatcher* that hasn't been known, written about, and even in some cases debated in parliament. And we are mindful of what Kim Philby said of another "x" man production, Andrew Boyle's *Climate of Treason*:

"Such a book is dangerous. Give or take a few points it is 25 per cent important truth, 25 per cent unimportant truth, 25 per cent unimportant untruth, 25 per cent important untruth. The trouble is that unless

the reader knows the subject better than the author, he cannot tell which is which." (*Sunday Times*, 15 June 1980)

Nonetheless, Thatcher & Co have infuriated just about everybody in this country and made themselves objects of hilarity throughout the world in their unending court battles to keep the book "banned" in Britain, Hong Kong, New Zealand and Australia. The fact that it's a best seller in the US and an underground best seller behind the Tory curtain doesn't dissuade them at all. As with the Zircon spy satellite debacle, the point is that even after the cat is well out of the bag, the



Der Spiegel

Kim Philby on holiday in Siberia.

government insists on its secrecy and powers of censorship. The slavish bourgeois press is under injunction and future would-be Wrights presumably know what's in store for them if they try to augment their pensions with telling some of Her Majesty's government's tales. The Official Secrets Act may not actually keep as much secret as they would like: but it's a powerful weapon of intimidation and harassment used against people like Clive Ponting who publicised Thatcher's bloodthirsty order to sink the *Belgrano* and used to keep much of the SAS "shoot-to-kill" dirty work in Northern Ireland under wraps.

Sympathy with Wright's own tribulations is hardly appropriate but the banning and injunctions are a nasty, calculated attack on individual and press freedoms. He's getting a taste of the treatment he may have thought reserved for Sarah Tisdall or Duncan Campbell, the *New Statesman* or recently even the BBC. But there's more than "secret society" fetishism involved here, likely connected to some skeletons in the anti-Wilson Labour government closet. Wright names no names regarding the anti-Wilson plots and as Duncan Campbell notes what he does tell is so scant that "It leaves a suspicion that these details may have been added only to the extent sufficient to provide a public interest case to justify getting the history of the campaign against Hollis into print" (*New Statesman*, 31 July). But, Campbell writes:

"It is hardly an inspired guess to suggest that the un-named plotters were all too close to Mrs Thatcher,

then and probably now, in her historic mission to eradicate socialism from the British Isles. "One such name has emerged, although it is not printed in *Spycatcher* – that of Airey Neave, who masterminded Mrs Thatcher's takeover from Edward Heath. You don't get closer than that."

*Private Eye*'s 21 August review of Wright's book ended on similar note, singling out Wright's silence on the possible involvement of the right wing of the Tory Party with the security services at the time of the plotting:

"There is hardly any mention either, of the champion of the

– and her name rhymes with 'Spycatcher'."

### WRIGHT AND THE MOLEHUNT OBSESSION

If not very enlightening on the who, where, how of the anti-Wilson plots, Wright's book is graphic about the effects on British intelligence in the wake of the successful Soviet spy ring's defections. Many in intelligence, like Wright, began to live in a house of mirrors: who next would (or should) be exposed? The explanation for every failed operation: the KGB at work inside. This house of mirrors mind-set coincided with the post-World War II "de-colonisation" of Britain's former empire, with the emergence of James Jesus Angleton's American CIA as senior partners in the "special relationship", and with CIA-run anti-Communist operations throughout the Western European labour and student movements. There were tensions; Wright relates an evening spent drinking with Angleton and another CIA heavy, Bill Harvey. "Angleton lectured me darkly on the need to respect American superiority in the alliance if we wanted access to their sources. 'Just remember,' roared Harvey, 'you're a fuckin' beggar in this town!'"

Wright is representative of a national obsession with finding the "fifth, sixth, seventh" Russian agent – an obsession that goes beyond his personal hostility to Roger Hollis. It's a version of the "stab in the back" explanation for losing wars – or in this case empires: the argument goes that Britain's status in the world is a direct result of the infiltration of its spy agencies by class traitors. (The Americans' version of how Vietnam

Young Turks in the Tory Party and in the security services at that time: the new Hopeful who was running for the Tory leadership and who planned to wrest it forever from the grip of crypto-commies and queers and restore it to the Grand Old Values in which Wright so fervently believes

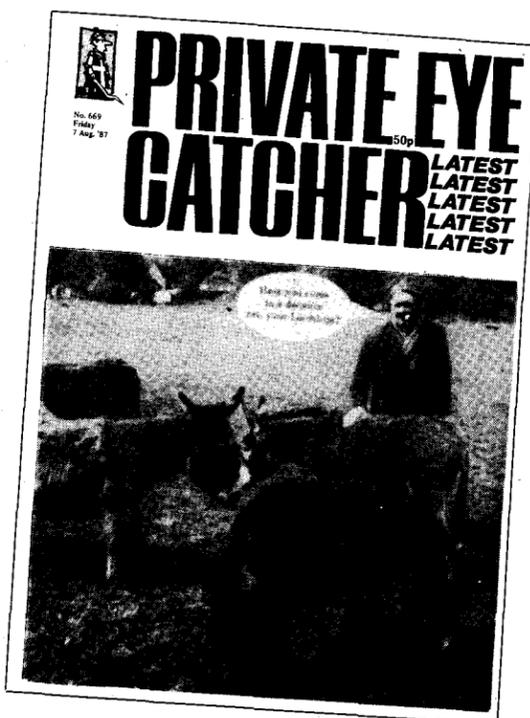
"Mrs Thatcher was already beginning to lose popularity, but it was the Law Lords who, acting on Moscow's direct orders, administered the coup de grace.

They had confirmed and extended a ridiculous injunction, cleverly splitting 3-2, to give added plausibility.

It was brilliant. Suddenly Mrs Thatcher, who had seemed impregnable, was the laughing stock of the entire world.

Now, in the last phase of the plan, it was the turn of newspaper proprietor, codename 'Fat Humbug', to defy the government and become a martyr in the cause of press freedom, thus triggering a popular uprising and the overthrow of the capitalist state."

– *Private Eye*, 7 August 1987



A sample of British public opinion: citizen asks "Have you come to a decision yet, your Lordships?"

was "lost" on the campuses and in the press rooms of the *New York Times* is an analogous mythology.) Wright himself thinks that "The present state of Britain is in part due to the penetration of the Establishment by the Russians" (*Guardian*, 9 December). Hardly – but it wouldn't hurt if a little "glasnost" penetrated into Thatcher's Britain and we didn't have to smuggle in our copies of *Spycatcher* from the United States. What we can thank the Russians for is the spectacular job they did on Britain's nasty imperialist secret services. It is an enduring accomplishment of Kim Philby that to this day British intelligence has not recovered from the blows he dealt.

As for Wright's particular theories (or those of his one-time collaborator Chapman Pincher) on the now-deceased Hollis: who knows? Certain-

their destabilisation campaigns, their partitions and terror remain throughout the colonial world today. The old boys network looks antiquated now – as it is – but over brandies in the clubs, they were masters of subjugation and oppression in their time.

Former CIA agent Philip Agee, who turned against the Company and published his exposures in the famous *Inside the Company*, captured some of this in his introduction to a well-researched book, *British Intelligence and Covert Action* (Bloch and Fitzgerald):

"I was amused not because the Soviets had been able constantly to obtain Britain's most closely guarded secrets – and by extension many of America's as well. Rather, I felt satisfied that justice, how-

ever poetic, was being done. The British security establishment was getting its fair reward for all the years of cruel, nasty and downright dirty operations to protect its perceived interests, most often economic in nature, as the fabled Empire coughed, sputtered and tumbled into the grave....

"No thoughtful reader, though, should expect satisfaction or amusement from this book. It is a tale of terror, murder, bribery, cheating, lying and torture, which have been practised in varying combinations from Malaya in the early 1950s to Ireland in the 1980s. In between, as colony after colony became independent, the British security services were there trying to install local regimes that would protect the interests of British companies, often in tandem with the CIA under the banner of the 'crusade against communism'."

Soviet molehills did not bring about the destruction of the British empire. But certainly Philby did a job on British intelligence. For thirty years out of political conviction Philby served on active duty as a Soviet Intelligence Officer, facilitating the defence of the Soviet Union, the world's first workers state. At Cambridge, the first men to win him to the principles of socialism were ex-miners like Harry Dawes and Jim Lees. The pathetic failure of the MacDonald Labour government, the economic slump, mass unemployment and the threat of fascism powerfully struck Philby and many of his contemporaries in the 1930s. Writing from Moscow in 1968, Philby said: "I left the university with a degree and with the conviction that my life must be devoted to Com-

munism. I have long since lost my degree (indeed, I think it is the possession of MI5). But I have retained the conviction." (*My Silent War*) Within MI6, Philby rose to an important position: the head of British operations against the Soviet Union. He also was sent to Washington to liaison with the CIA and FBI. Philby's hard and courageous work for the Soviets within the heart of British intelligence deserves to be hailed by partisans of the international working class. He continues to be reviled by the scions of the bourgeoisie – and not just the Wright reactionaries. Every possible explanation is offered for his loyalties: a difficult relationship with his father, a stammer, a fondness for drink, *ad nauseam*. Of course the answer is that he despised the ruling class duplicity and stiff upper lip venality – and used it against them. He despised their imperialist aims. He was, simply, on the other side as were Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean. Espionage is one of the necessary defensive measures carried out by the encircled Soviet workers state. But information is only as good as the use to which it is put; and certainly Stalin was singularly criminal in his squandering of critical information provided by such heroic Soviet spies as Leopold Trepper (head of the Red Orchestra network in Nazi-occupied Europe) and Richard Sorge (in Japan), ignoring for example the constant warnings of Hitler's impending attack against Soviet Russia. Many of the best Communists sought to evade the consequences of Stalin's political counterrevolution through international espionage work. Years later, Trepper was to pay tribute to the granite hardness of the Trotskyist Left Opposition in the face of Stalinist treachery. To the question "Who did protest at that time?" he wrote:

"The Trotskyites can lay claim to this honor. Following the example of their leader, who was rewarded for his obstinacy with the end of an ice-axe, they fought Stalinism to the death, and they were the only ones who did. By the time of the great purges, they could only shout their rebellion in the freezing wastelands where they had been dragged in order to be exterminated. In the camps, their conduct was admirable. But their voices were lost in the tundra.

"Today, the Trotskyites have a right to accuse those who once howled along with the wolves. Let them not forget, however, that they had the enormous advantage over us of having a coherent political system capable of replacing

Stalinism. They had something to cling to in the midst of their profound distress at seeing the revolution betrayed. They did not 'confess', for they knew that their confession would serve neither the party nor socialism." (*The Great Game*)

Stalin and his henchmen sacrificed untold lives of Soviet citizens and militant workers and Communists worldwide on the altar of "peaceful coexistence with imperialism" – not least of all some of the courageous Soviet spies. But another point must be made: the bureaucracy of the degenerated Soviet workers state is highly contradictory – resting atop the gains of the Revolution and compelled for the sake of its own existence to take certain measures of defence. After the German invasion ended illusions in the pact with Hitler, Soviet generals made very good use of Soviet agents' material. Today, Philby lives comfortably, a decorated Soviet citizen and trusted adviser, in Moscow. He, like Burgess and Maclean, were "sprung" in time. In their cases, and many others, the Soviets took care of their own. Maclean too was awarded the Order of the Red Banner and the Order of the Red Banner of Labour; he died a member of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and distinguished Soviet academician. According to Roy Medvedev, Maclean had hung in his Moscow apartment a sign reading: "Opportunists, Dishonest People, and Anti-Semites leave this apartment!" Stalinist perfidy could not extinguish the spark of ideological commitment or human decency in those who sought to aid the struggle against imperialism and fascism behind enemy lines.

#### LABOUR AND THE ANTI-LABOUR PLOT

From the infamous Zinoviev letter forgery which was used to help defeat Labour in 1924, pernicious Red-scare plots have been standard fare for the British bourgeoisie in domestic "destabilisation". According to the *Times* (7 August), a published admission by former head of MI5, Martin Furnival-Jones, indicated there had been a secret service investigation into a 1968 plot by "civil servants and military" to overthrow the Wilson government. The *Times* further recounts the remarks of Wilson's political secretary Lady Falkender that once the word was finally out:

"It was horrible – like a Michael Caine movie. Harold was worried when troops did an anti-terrorist exercise at Heathrow – and pointed out how easily those troops could be turned against the govern-

*continued on page 10*



Gestapo Archives



John Philby

Heroic Soviet spies: (left) Leopold Trepper of Red Orchestra fame; (right) Kim Philby, Cambridge graduate 1933.

ly nothing is proven. It's been pointed out by various spy-watchers, including *Private Eye* that at least as likely a candidate would be Lord Victor Rothschild. According to an article in the *Eye's* 4 September issue, Rothschild "arranged for Wright to collaborate with Chapman Pincher on his book *Their Trade is Treachery* and gave Wright the confidence to publish his own memoirs for a huge profit. One effect of the Pincher book was to focus attention on Hollis and away from Rothschild as a possible Russian agent in MI5". A close friend of Guy Burgess and Anthony Blunt, Rothschild was left wing in his youth, while in MI5 he fought for handing over information to the Russians, etc. The article concludes Rothschild was not a Russian spy despite a profile made to order. The debate rages: Philby must have had a good laugh in Moscow watching his former "colleagues" chase each other's tails. Maybe they've been on the wrong track all along: perhaps the "old boys" should be looking for the "fifth woman". With these chaps not Mata Hari but Connie Sachs.

To those of us who urgently seek the destruction of British imperialism, there is understandable enjoyment provided in the internal warfare and occasional bungling of MI5 and MI6. But Wright's book also reeks of the genuinely murderous work of these agencies. It should be remembered that the forerunner of the CIA learned its tradecraft at the feet of the British secret agencies. The stuffy, clubby, ingrown group of British upper-class gentlemen staffing the military and intelligence outfits of the Empire ruled the world in their time. The legacy of their divide and rule schemes,

ever poetic, was being done. The British security establishment was getting its fair reward for all the years of cruel, nasty and downright dirty operations to protect its perceived interests, most often economic in nature, as the fabled Empire coughed, sputtered and tumbled into the grave....

"No thoughtful reader, though, should expect satisfaction or amusement from this book. It is a tale of terror, murder, bribery, cheating, lying and torture, which have been practised in varying combinations from Malaya in the early 1950s to Ireland in the 1980s. In between, as colony after colony became independent, the British security services were there trying to install local regimes that would protect the interests of British companies, often in tandem with the CIA under the banner of the 'crusade against communism'."



no credit



Der Spiegel

Margaret Thatcher ordered the sinking of the *Belgrano*, a murderous crime.

# Founding declaration of the Fourth International

# The USSR and the Transitional Epoch

"The USSR and Problems of the Transitional Epoch" is taken from "The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International", the Transitional Programme drafted by Leon Trotsky in 1938 and adopted as the founding programme of the Fourth International.

Contrary to various fake-Trotskyists who are always prattling on about the need to "update" and "re-elaborate" the programme, that is justify their own opportunism, revisionism and particularly their abandonment in practice of the defence of the Soviet Union, the Transitional Programme retains in all its essentials its power and applicability.

In 1938 the Moscow Trials and purges had a burning and painful immediacy as Stalin carried through his bloody extermination of Bolshevik veterans and the Red Army leadership. Those purges helped to lay the basis for the disasters of summer 1941 when Hitler invaded the Soviet Union, which due to Stalin's policies was criminally unprepared. Twenty million Soviet citizens died defeating this counterrevolutionary attack, showing by their struggle the viability of the collectivised property forms, despite the crimes and betrayals of the Stalinists. Given no choice by the Nazis the bureaucracy for the most part was compelled to fight to defend the Soviet Union. Later events in Hungary 1956 illustrated the potential for the Stalinist bureaucratic caste to fracture, especially when the working class takes the road of political revolution.

Today the Gorbachev regime and "glasnost" represent a highly contradictory development. On the one hand the dangerous willingness to capitulate before rapacious imperialism in the name of "peaceful co-existence" (for example over Afghanistan) and the proposals for market-oriented reforms which will strengthen the internal forces for capitalist restoration. On the other, there is the genuine liberalisation of political and intellectual life, with the promise of critical reexamination of history. The spectre of Trotsky haunts Gorbachev's Russia, not only because of his role in the October Revolution and the foundation of the Soviet state and the Red Army, but also because the programme of the International Left Opposition offers a revolutionary solution to the political and economic malaise which Stalin's heirs cannot confront and overcome.

**by Leon Trotsky**

## THE USSR AND PROBLEMS OF THE TRANSITIONAL EPOCH

The Soviet Union emerged from the October revolution as a workers' state. State ownership of the means of production, a necessary prerequisite to socialist development, opened

up the possibility of rapid growth of the productive forces. But the apparatus of the workers' state underwent a complete degeneration at the same time: it was transformed from a weapon of the working class into a weapon of bureaucratic violence against the working class, and more and more a weapon for the sabotage of the country's economy. The bureaucratisation of a backward and isolated workers' state and the transformation of the bureaucracy into an all-powerful privileged caste constitute the most convincing refutation—not only theoretically but this time practically—of the theory of socialism in one country.

The USSR thus embodies terrific contradictions. But it still remains a *degenerated workers' state*. Such is the social diagnosis. The political prognosis has an alternative character: either the bureaucracy, becoming ever more the organ of the world bourgeoisie in the workers' state, will overthrow the new forms of property and plunge the country back into capitalism; or the working class will crush the bureaucracy and open the way to socialism.

To the sections of the Fourth International, the Moscow trials came not as a surprise and not as a result of the personal madness of the Kremlin dictator, but as the legitimate offspring of the Thermidor. They grew out of the unbearable conflicts within the Soviet bureaucracy itself, which in turn mirror the contradictions between the bureaucracy and the people, as well as the deepening antagonisms among the "people" themselves. The bloody "fantastic" nature of the trials gives the measure of the intensity of the contradictions and, by the same token, predicts the approach of the denouement.

The public utterances of former foreign representatives of the Kremlin who refused to return to Moscow irrefutably confirm in their own way

Trotsky, Commissar of War at Red Army parade in Moscow 1921.



that all shades of political thought are to be found among the bureaucracy: from genuine Bolshevism (Ignace Reiss) to complete fascism (F Butenko). The revolutionary elements within the bureaucracy, only a small minority, reflect, passively it is true, the socialist interests of the proletariat. The fascist, counter-revolutionary elements, growing uninterruptedly, express with ever greater consistency the interests of world imperialism. These candidates for the role of compradors consider, not without reason, that the new ruling layer can insure their positions of privilege only through rejection of nationalisation, collectivisation, and monopoly of foreign trade in the name of the assimilation of "Western civilisation", ie, capitalism. Between these two poles, there are intermediate, diffused Menshevik-SR-liberal tendencies which gravitate towards bourgeois democracy.

Within the very ranks of that so-called "classless" society, there unquestionably exist groupings exactly similar to those in the bureaucracy, only less sharply expressed and in inverse proportions: conscious capital-

ist tendencies distinguish mainly the prosperous part of the collective farms (*kolkhozi*) and are characteristic of only a small minority of the population. But this layer provides itself with a wide base for petty-bourgeois tendencies of accumulating personal wealth at the expense of general poverty, and are consciously encouraged by the bureaucracy.

Atop this system of mounting antagonisms, trespassing ever more on the social equilibrium, the Thermidorian oligarchy, today reduced mainly to Stalin's Bonapartist clique, hangs on by terroristic methods. The latest judicial frameups were aimed as a blow *against the left*. This is true also of the mopping up of the leaders of the Right Opposition, because the right group of the old Bolshevik Party, seen from the viewpoint of the bureaucracy's interests and tendencies, represented a *left* danger. The fact that the Bonapartist clique, likewise in fear of its own right allies of the type of Butenko, is forced in the interests of self-preservation to execute the generation of Old Bolsheviks almost to a man, offers indisputable testimony to the vitality of revolutionary traditions among the masses, as well as to their growing discontent.

Petty-bourgeois democrats of the West, having but yesterday assayed the Moscow trials as unalloyed gold, today repeat insistently that there is "neither Trotskyism nor Trotskyists within the USSR". They fail to explain, however, why all the purges are conducted under the banner of a struggle with precisely this danger. If we are to examine "Trotskyism" as a finished programme, and, even more to the point, as an organisation, then unquestionably "Trotskyism" is extremely weak in the USSR. However, its indestructible force stems from the fact that it expresses not only revolutionary tradition but also today's actual opposition of the Russian working class. The social hatred stored up by the workers against the bureaucracy—this is precisely what, from the view-



Russian women's demonstration in 1917 — their protests were the opening shots in the Revolution.

Bettman Archives Inc

point of the Kremlin clique, constitutes "Trotskyism". It fears with a deathly and thoroughly well-grounded fear the bond between the deep but inarticulate indignation of the workers and the organisation of the Fourth International.

The extermination of the generation of Old Bolsheviks and of the revolutionary representatives of the middle and young generations has acted to disrupt the political equilibrium still more in favour of the right, bourgeois wing of the bureaucracy, and of its allies throughout the land. From them, ie, from the right, we can expect ever more determined attempts in the next period to revise the social regime of the USSR and bring it closer in pattern to "Western civilisation" in its fascist form.

From this perspective, impelling concreteness is imparted to the question of the "defence of the USSR". If tomorrow the bourgeois-fascist grouping, the "faction of Butenko", so to speak, should attempt the conquest of power, the "faction of Reiss" inevitably would align itself on the opposite side of the barricades. Although it would find itself temporarily the ally of Stalin, it would nevertheless defend not the Bonapartist clique but the social base of the USSR, ie, the property wrenched away from the capitalists and transformed into state property. Should the "faction of Butenko" prove to be in alliance with Hitler, then the "faction of Reiss" would

defend the USSR from military intervention, inside the country as well as in the world arena. Any other course would be a betrayal.

Although it is thus impermissible to deny in advance the possibility, in strictly defined instances, of a "united front" with the Thermidorian section of the bureaucracy against open attack by capitalist counter-revolution, the chief political task in the USSR still remains the *overthrow of this same Thermidorian bureaucracy*. Each day added to its domination helps rot the foundations of the socialist elements of the economy and increases the chances for capitalist restoration. It is in precisely this direction that the Comintern moves as the agent and accomplice of the Stalinist clique in strangling the Spanish revolution and demoralising the international proletariat.

As in fascist countries, the chief strength of the bureaucracy lies not in itself but in the disillusionment of the masses, in their lack of a new perspective. As in fascist countries, from which Stalin's *political* apparatus does not differ save in more unbridled savagery, only preparatory propagandistic work is possible today in the USSR. As in fascist countries, the impetus to the Soviet workers' revolutionary upsurge will probably be given by events outside the country. The struggle against the Comintern in the world arena is the most important part today of the struggle against the Stalinist dictatorship.

There are many signs that the Comintern's downfall, because it does not have a *direct* base in the GPU, will precede the downfall of the Bonapartist clique and the Thermidorian bureaucracy as a whole.

A fresh upsurge of the revolution in the USSR will undoubtedly begin under the banner of the struggle against *social inequality* and *political oppression*. Down with the privileges of the bureaucracy! Down with Stakhanovism! Down with the Soviet aristocracy and its ranks and orders! Greater equality of wages for all forms of labour!

The struggle for the freedom of the trade unions and the factory committees, for the right of assembly, and for freedom of the press, will unfold in the struggle for the regeneration and development of *Soviet democracy*.

The bureaucracy replaced the soviets as class organs with the fiction of universal electoral rights - in the style of Hitler-Goebbels. It is necessary to return to the soviets not only their free democratic form but also their class content. As once the bourgeoisie and kulaks were not permitted to enter the soviets, so now *it is necessary to drive the bureaucracy and the new aristocracy out of the soviets*. In the soviets there is room only for representatives of the workers, rank-and-file collective farmers, peasants, and Red Army personnel.

Democratisation of the soviets is impossible without the *legalisation*

of soviet parties. The workers and peasants themselves by their own free vote will indicate, what parties they recognise as soviet parties.

A revision of *planned economy* from top to bottom in the interests of producers and consumers! Factory committees should be returned the right to control production. A democratically organised consumers' cooperative should control the quality and price of products.

Reorganisation of the collective farms in accordance with the will and in the interests of those who work there!

The reactionary *international policy* of the bureaucracy should be replaced by the policy of proletarian internationalism. The complete diplomatic correspondence of the Kremlin should be published. *Down with secret diplomacy!*

All political trials staged by the Thermidorian bureaucracy should be reviewed in the light of complete publicity and controversial openness and integrity. Only the victorious revolutionary uprising of the oppressed masses can revive the Soviet regime and guarantee its further development towards socialism. There is but one party capable of leading the Soviet masses to insurrection - the party of the Fourth International!

Down with the bureaucratic gang of Cain-Stalin!

Long live Soviet democracy!

Long live the international socialist revolution! ■

## London Labourites hound Gypsies

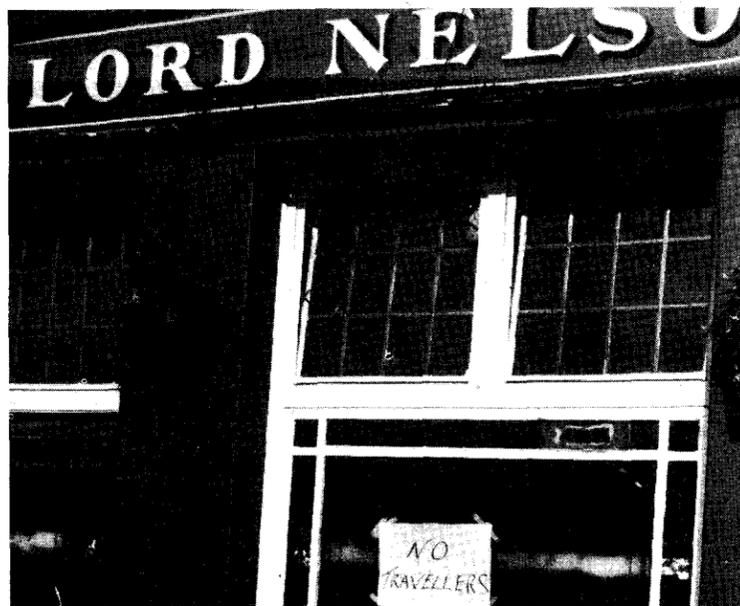
On Tuesday, 25 August, Labour-controlled Islington Council issued yet another "notice" of eviction on the remaining Gypsy families who had parked their caravans on a site originally granted to them by the self-same council. Earlier this month, the families parked at the Isledon Road, Holloway site had won a 28-day reprieve when Islington Council lost its court battle because magistrates had used the "wrong" legislation to evict them. Since then the council has returned to Clerkenwell County Court where on 7 September they expect court officers to back the eviction.

This latest act of harassment committed by a Labour-dominated council is a particularly vile example of the state's campaign of harassment against Gypsies. Earlier this summer the site (on derelict land) was granted to the Gypsies and dubbed "official" by council leader Margaret Hodge. She now writes off the site as an "experiment" which "did not work". According to the *Islington Gazette* (14 August) she claimed at a council meeting: "We thought if we set up a temporary site which was controlled it would stop the unauthorised occupation of the other sites."

In the last issue of *Workers Hammer* we quoted Peter Mercer, Secretary of the East Anglian Gypsy Council, who told the *Jewish Socialist* (Spring 1986):

"The Labour Party record regarding Gypsies is abysmal. If the Labour Party is in opposition they will support Gypsies and say what a terrible time the Gypsies are having. When they are in power, they are more eager than the Conservatives to get rid of you."

Should there be any doubt about this, the action of the Islington Council speaks for itself. The council capitulated to complaints from "neigh-



bours" such as the following noted in the *Gazette*: "Ratepayers face a weekly bill of £500 for providing fresh water and portable toilets [for Gypsy sites]." In rebuttal to their critics, acting council leader Chris King moaned: "It is better to spend £500 a week to keep them in one place than to spend far more evicting them from several sites. *This is probably the cheapest option*" (our emphasis). But of course the "cheapest option" for Islington Council, Hackney Council (which is currently serving an eviction order on Gypsies at a Lower Clapton Road site) and other local authorities is to use the cops and courts. And that's what they're doing.

The history of repressive legislation against the Gypsies in Britain dates back to the 1500s. And in the centuries that followed Gypsies have learned that even legislation designed to "help" them is ultimately used by the state to oppress them. The Caravan Sites Act of 1968 was

supposed to impose upon local authorities the obligation to "provide adequate accommodation for gypsies residing in or resorting to their area". No time limit for the establishment of sites was included and indeed the county and London boroughs were asked to provide pitches for no more than fifteen caravans at a time. Section 10 of the Act *strengthened* the ability of the local authorities to evict Gypsy families. If Gypsies pull their caravans over to the side of the road merely to make breakfast, they can be moved on by the police.

Quoting again from Mercer:

"On a piece of ground, at maybe two or three in the morning, the police come down with headlights on, shining torches, demanding documents, asking for television licences. They will say 'we will be back in half an hour and we will want to see your vehicle document'. Anybody who hasn't got

them is obviously going to be gone...."

Mercer compares the situation of Gypsies in Britain to that of the Jews in the early years of Nazi Germany: "I know the Jewish people went through a similar situation in Germany where in the early hours of the morning they had police raids. We've been getting this in this country for generations". In fact the history of repression of Jews and Gypsies in Europe has long been intertwined, culminating in the Holocaust in which six million Jews and half a million Gypsies were murdered by the Nazi scourge. Indeed, Hitler ordered the collection of data on Gypsies in Britain in anticipation of an occupation.

The workers movement must come to the defence of this vulnerable minority by defending the rights of Gypsies against state terror and repression. As we pointed out in our last *WH* article, the workers movement - particularly the miners - can begin by removing the "No Travellers" signs in their community pubs, to smash this bit of apartheid on their doorsteps.

The Gypsies are not just subjected to harassment, violence and discrimination from the state authorities, Tory and Labour. The whole gamut of British "socialism" from the Labour Party bureaucrats to the myriad self-proclaimed Marxist groups either attack the Gypsies or shamefully ignore their oppression. It is precisely this pariah status that makes it doubly necessary that revolutionaries in this country champion the rights of the Gypsies. We Leninists strive to build a revolutionary party which will at all times be the "tribune of the oppressed", at the forefront of all struggles against the iniquities and injustices of an outmoded and inhuman social order.

## 2,3 many defeats for imperialism

# Vietnam was a victory!



Young Spartacus photos

Hanoi war sacrifice memorial (right). Two million Vietnamese fell in struggle against imperialism so their children would have a future.

## Vietnam today: An eyewitness report

The article below is reprinted from the Young Spartacus pages of Workers Vanguard no 435, 4 September. It is an account of a Spartacist League/US comrade's recent trip to Vietnam, based on his travel journal.

My first sight of Vietnam: strange, round, water-filled holes in the ground around the Hanoi airport. These are the bomb craters left by the American B-52s. You see them as soon as you come down through the clouds towards the landing strip. Visiting Vietnam as a Trotskyist partisan of the Vietnamese Revolution, I was deeply impressed by the heroism and sacrifice that went into both the great victory over French imperialism at Dien Bien Phu in 1954 and the liberation of Saigon in 1975 which brought the social revolution to the south of the country. All around you see signs of what these victories for the world's working people cost the Vietnamese. The country has been at war for half a century; every year a new crop of 18-year-olds are called up for military service. Many young Vietnamese soldiers went down the Ho Chi Minh Trail to fight US imperialism in the south. Two million Vietnamese, soldiers and civilians, were killed by America's dirty war. And today, they must defend Vietnam against Washington's Chinese ally to the north as well as defend Cambodia from the US/China-backed contras to the west. *Defend Vietnam against US imperialism!*

In Hanoi you pass Bach Mai hospi-

tal, a prime target of Nixon/Kissinger's 1972 "Christmas bombing", and bridges repeatedly bombed out by the Americans, now rebuilt with Soviet aid. Every town and village has at least one "war sacrifice memorial". In the south you see children born deformed because their mothers were bombed with Agent Orange. One boy walked on all fours in a spider-like position, unable to straighten his spine; his eyes were a strange brown-orange colour, set in a beautiful face. Half-American children are a common sight.

I also saw hypodermic syringes openly on sale among street pedlars' wares in Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon). These are more legacies from the imperialist rape and occupation of Vietnam when drug-running military officers joined pimps and torturers to make South Vietnam a bastion of the "free world". The Vietnamese fighters showed that imperialism can be defeated, but the imperialists are still trying to get their vengeance. Desperately needed medicines, spare parts, trade and credits are being choked off by the Washington-orchestrated blockade.

In Vietnam we heard news of recent shakeups in the leadership of the Vietnamese Communist Party, glasnost-style self-denunciations of bureaucratism and inefficiency, and criticisms of the waste of Soviet aid. But one can't help thinking the Soviets should provide Vietnam with a lot more aid. By defeating US imperialism on the battlefield, the heroic Vietnamese did more to defend the Soviet degenerated workers state than a thousand "summits"

where Stalinists preach the illusory policy of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism.

Plundered and devastated by the French, Japanese and Americans, bombed and "defoliated", Vietnam is a terribly poor country. It is a peasant country. In the north I saw teams of women scooping water out of irrigation ditches with huge wicker baskets hung on bamboo poles. This is considered *light work*. And while I saw lots of new brick houses in peasant villages and a number of brick factories, the tremendous weight of scarcity is ever present. There is little industry: a petrochemical industry, run out of the old American embassy (poetic justice) and aided by Soviet technicians; some textile mills; plants to recycle steel from old US tanks; bicycle factories; handicraft enterprises.

In contrast, the role of small commodity production and exchange is enormous. The streets are packed with individuals selling everything from fruits, vegetables and dried squid to dust mops and books. Hundreds of restaurants and cafes, owned by individuals or groups of people, sell *pho* (beef noodle soup), water snake soup (very tasty), coffee, pastry and beer. These places are packed with customers.

Vietnam's per capita income is even lower than Haiti's. But the *social revolution* that abolished capitalism, socialised the basic infrastructure of the economy, nationalised the land, and built a collectivist framework that makes the hideous oppression of a place like Haiti or any other capitalist country of the

"Third World" unthinkable in Vietnam today. Education and free or very inexpensive medical care are available for all. Walk down the streets of any Latin American capital, and you will see mothers and children begging all over the place. In Hanoi, of the literally thousands of children I saw in the week I was there, only four were begging. The overwhelming majority were obviously well fed and healthy, wore good, colourful clothes, and were remarkably relaxed, cheerful and outgoing. In the city, children wore shoes and almost all carried book bags. They looked a lot better off than many inner-city kids in America.

Another thing that struck me immediately is the very high literacy rate. All over, you see people reading—on park benches, in stores, walking down the street. In addition to the government bookstores, there are a large number of privately owned book stalls on the street. Among the many books I saw on sale were Vietnamese translations of Alex Haley's *Roots* (but unfortunately not *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, which Haley co-authored), *Carmen*, *Oliver Twist*, *Learn to Play Soccer with Pele*, books by Victor Hugo, Agatha Christie and the works of Marx, Lenin, Ho Chi Minh, etc. Quite a contrast to the China of Mao's "Cultural Revolution" with its banning of Plato, Kant, Beethoven and other "foreign devils".

American rock blared from fancy Japanese tape decks in coffee shops, and I saw some of the kind of "close" dancing that I hear is banned in Peking. I also visited an art gallery

and saw a variety of works that were by no means "socialist realist". Women wear jewellery, make-up and fancy scarves, and Western fashion magazines were displayed in the window of a men's tailor shop. The picture presented by a recent *Smithsonian* article on Hanoi as a "drab, gritty" place is far from what I saw.

I walked past a big beer hall in downtown Hanoi with perhaps 200 people inside. I sat down at a table with four young guys who eyed me in a wary but not unfriendly way. After a while I started trying to talk to them, and we gradually got friendlier—a process that was assisted by the large glasses of beer that kept appearing in front of us. All four were soldiers from the countryside, on leave in Hanoi. They were in the middle of a seven-year hitch, and indicated they were worried about finding work when they got out. There is still considerable unemployment and underemployment. I was glad I had the opportunity to drink with members of the fighting force that whipped the American imperialists.

You don't see many signs of the Vietnamese military presence in Cambodia or the sporadic clashes with the army of the slaveowning Thai warlords. There are a few posters about Vietnam-Laos-Kampuchea friendship, and a Vietnam-Laos-Kampuchea sports arena in downtown Hanoi.

#### NORTH AND SOUTH

One of the striking though not surprising things about Vietnam is the enormous difference between north and south. In Hanoi everyone goes around on bicycles. The few municipal buses are old and cars are rare and mainly for official use. Municipal road crews work out of carts pulled by water buffalo plus a truck here and there. In Ho Chi Minh City there are lots of cars and buses, well-paved streets and not a water buffalo to be seen. Buildings in Hanoi are mainly small, many of them shabby, and the electricity goes off almost every day for a few hours. Hotels in the south are air-conditioned affairs with telex machines, elevators, uniformed doormen and aging maitres d'—a world away it seemed. Even the official exchange rates are different: about 80 dong to the dollar in Hanoi, 120 in Ho Chi Minh City.

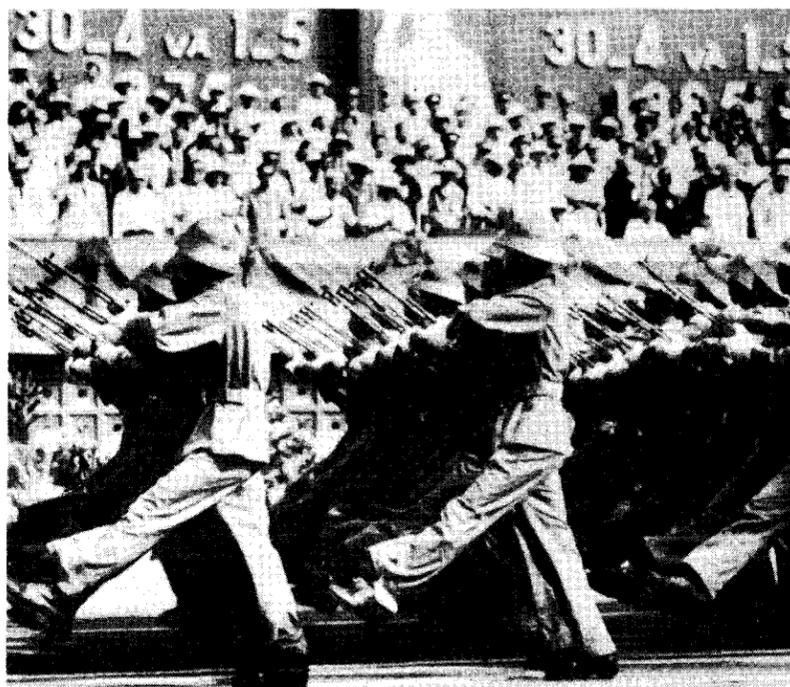
One way to summarise the north/south contrast is this: Hanoi is very poor, but has been liberated for 33 years, and the people look healthy and the kids look great. Ho Chi Minh City has been liberated for only 12 years. It is much richer but there is glaring inequality—beggars, filthy teenagers sleeping in doorways (something you just don't see in Hanoi), kids with infected sores. The imperialists and their puppets left the Vietnamese with a god-awful mess in the south, including people who had known no other life than that of a parasite or prostitute. Much of the enormous work of reintegrating north and south still lies ahead.

In an effort to stimulate production, the government has encouraged private enterprise in recent years. No doubt this is in some part necessary as a stopgap measure, but I was also struck by the dangers. Government employees, including skilled technicians, are encouraged to moonlight to make ends meet. A government architect told me he makes 4000 dong a month, not including the money he makes moonlighting on private jobs. Factory workers make 300 dong a month, plus a "premium" of 700 which they can multiply by working overtime. But the bigger money seems to be in the private sector. A private guitar seller told

me he sells a couple of his best guitars a week for 4000 dong each—the architect's monthly salary. In addition to this promotion of the private sector, the black market is prevalent and alarming. On the street in Ho Chi Minh City I was offered 600 dong to the dollar by an ex-ARVN (South Vietnam's former puppet army) type black marketeer.

As a point of reference, a pack of cheap cigarettes is 30 dong; medicines are inexpensive at a couple of dong; a bottle of Vietnamese lemon vodka is 140 dong. Most people get a meat ration ticket for one kilo of meat per family member per month at the government set price of a few dong. Workers get a larger ration, determined by the kind and intensity of work they do. After your ration you can buy more meat at "free market" prices, and I saw lots of meat, mainly beef, on sale.

The quality and supply of goods in state stores varies widely. Cooking utensils and bicycle parts were plentiful, cheap, and of good quality, while clothes and children's toys were much better in private shops than in government department stores. In one department store I saw a long line of people waiting to buy sugar at the subsidised price, using ration coupons. Nearby stood a policeman (unarmed), one of the few policemen I saw in Vietnam other than those directing traffic. It made me think of a passage from Trotsky's *The Revolution Betrayed*:



Eddie Adams

Liberation parade in Ho Chi Minh City (left). Defeated US imperialists flee Saigon April 1975 (right).

"The basis of bureaucratic rule is the poverty of society in objects of consumption, with the resulting struggle of each against all. When there is enough goods in a store, the purchasers can come whenever they want to. When there is little goods, the purchasers are compelled to stand in line. When the lines are very long, it is necessary to appoint a policeman to keep order. Such is the starting point of the power of the Soviet bureaucracy. It 'knows' who is to get something and who has to wait."

The Vietnamese workers state was born bureaucratically deformed; in Russia, the workers state established by the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution degenerated when political power was usurped by the conservative Stalinist bureaucracy. But despite the difference in historical origin, the scene in the Hanoi department store could have come straight out of Trotsky's book. The revolution has made tremendous gains for the working people. But there is no way to abolish scarcity and reach socialism within the Stalinist framework of "socialism in one

country". Only the international extension of the revolution to the advanced countries can show a way out. This was the perspective of Lenin and Trotsky. Today, it means also the fight for workers political revolution in the deformed workers states—above all the USSR, upon whose industrial and military power countries like Vietnam and Cuba are dependent as they confront the unremitting pressure of vengeful US imperialism.

#### OUR DEBT TO VIETNAM

There are portraits of Ho Chi Minh in many offices and shops. I saw no pictures of the current leaders on display. A government bookstore had a big picture of Gorbachev, advertising a Vietnamese translation of his speech to the recent Soviet party congress. Gorbachev seems to enjoy substantial popularity among some young people. However, there does not seem to be much political discussion going on—organised or otherwise—and all political conversations I got into were at my initiative. I was told that for a period of time, "under Chinese influence", people had to sit through boring harangues at work, until a stop was put to this caricature of political discussion. I got the impression that in addition to being burned by this experience, many young people are deeply frustrated by the absence of soviet democracy and the inefficiency of the bureaucracy which monopolises political

bloody plans for more dirty wars.

In a display of "revolutionary pamphlets from 1936-1939" there was *Trotsky va Phan Cach-Mang* ("Trotsky and Counterrevolution"). This was not just a standard addition to the Stalinist library. The Vietnamese Trotskyists had a mass base in Saigon, the country's proletarian centre, and they led an insurrection against the return of the French imperialists following World War II. For this they were murdered by the Stalinists, who helped to defeat the insurrection and welcome back the "democratic" French army.

The Ho Chi Minh Museum is housed in an elegant building once used by the French colonial administration. In contrast to the solely Vietnamese focus of the Revolution Museum, this museum features Ho Chi Minh's membership cards and delegate credentials from French Socialist Party and Communist Party conferences and from congresses of the Communist International. One exhibit begins with materials explaining the Russian Revolution and proceeds through the Vietnamese revolutionary movement in exile to the founding of the Indochinese Communist Party in 1930.

The area outside the museum is a popular spot for outings; a young soldier was playing volleyball with a bunch of civilians. Young couples and families, including a father and his son, a young man with artificial



UPI

power, compounding the severe problems of underdevelopment and the imperialist blockade.

At the Revolution Museum in Ho Chi Minh City I ran into a class of 12-to-15-year-old schoolchildren. The boys goofed off, but many of the girls intently studied the displays on the Tet Offensive and the growth of the resistance in South Vietnam: old underground printing presses and mimeo machines, Viet Minh posters, proclamations of the Japanese occupation army during World War II, red battle flags with a star or hammer and sickle. On the museum's grounds are trophy US planes, a helicopter and artillery pieces. There were no photos or other signs of the massive international protests against the French or US aggression. Yet the people of Vietnam should draw pride and hope from the worldwide radicalisation of a generation of youth who witnessed the impotence of the US against the resistance of a determined people fighting for national liberation and social revolution. The political damage done to the US war machine at home is still a fetter on imperialism's

legs, were promenading or watching the boats in the bustling harbour area around the museum.

As we taxied down the runway in Ho Chi Minh City I got my last sight of Vietnam: row upon row of old US DC-3 warplanes which used to rain death on this country. Sitting disused and rusting by the side of the airstrip, they symbolise both the US war and the US defeat. They remind me again of the great revolutionary debt that the world's workers owe to *heroic Vietnam*. This must be repaid by spreading the revolution—the only solution to the many problems I've witnessed. The perspective of the Russian Bolsheviks was to link their poor country to the prospect of world revolution in industrial Germany. Vietnamese revolutionists today must look to extending the revolution to Japan, the industrial powerhouse of Asia. And the duty of revolutionaries in the "belly of the beast", the USA, is to put some of the same kind of courage and determination shown by the Vietnamese into the fight for socialist revolution here in America. ■

# Spycatcher...

(continued from page 5)

ment.... She was quoted as adding 'Mountbatten had a map on the wall of his office, showing how it could be done. Harold and I used to stand in Number 10 and work out where they would put the guns.' Lady Falkender has since insisted that this last remark was meant as a joke."

More of the same comes from a lengthy *Observer* article (3 May), which predicted major revelations from the Wright book that were not to be. Its own research on the plotting showed that the right wing of the Labour Party used MI5 against those it disliked after 1961. The 1968 machinations involving Lord Mountbatten are recounted. In 1973 "various groups sprang up after the 1973 miners' strike to help the Conservatives hold on to power. A small knot of powerful men with direct links to the Conservative Party and the City secretly approached Peter Wright" to leak files on Wilson and Labour. Then Wright was approached again in 1974 after Wilson's reelection; they wanted documents in order to "leak damaging material to the media, 'sympathetic trade unionists' and Conservative politicians. The purpose of their plot was to discredit the Labour Government and return the Conservatives to power. There is some evidence that the Conservative MP Airey Neave, who kept up intelligence contacts, was involved, and a number of dissident senior military officers. Neave was later killed by an IRA car bomb at the House of Commons." The swinish Lord Mountbatten also departed this earth courtesy of the Irish republicans.

According to this account, Wright was dissuaded by Rothschild from joining in the plot. Then Rothschild and the defeated Conservative Heath became targets: a Belfast intelligence officer Colin Wallace wrote in 1974 that: "It can be shown that both Wilson and Heath are under Soviet control, through Dick Vaygauskas and Lord Rothschild. It can also be shown that Wilson has received approx. £60,000 from East German sources for campaign funds, and that he has a friend in the Soviet government." The article concludes by noting that Heath was ousted from the Tory leadership in 1975 "after a right-wing campaign in which Airey Neave was prominent. Wilson resigned suddenly in 1976, with a burning sense of grievance against MI5. As events turned out, the immediate beneficiary of these events was James Callaghan. The ultimate beneficiary was Margaret Thatcher."

Whatever the self-serving, red-baiting stories, concocted by Tory plotters, it is an index of how cravenly *pro-imperialist* the Labour statesmen are that Wilson ran to the CIA when he was worried about plotting against his government. None other than George Bush (former CIA head and now Reagan's vice-president) flew to London to reassure him that the CIA "knew nothing about the anti-Wilson group in British Intelligence" (*Sunday Times*, 23 November 1986). A story which, as they say, lacks plausibility. Right-wing Labour leaders had themselves a "special relationship" with the CIA and US military, as scabbing counterrevolutionary scum marching to the beat of the Cold War drums.

In the post-World War II period, Attlee's Labour government sent 12000 troops to Korea and the Foreign Office established a Cold War propaganda instrument, the Information Research Department

which undertook disinformation campaigns from the Mid East to the Indian Ocean to Africa. In 1969 Wilson sent troops into Northern Ireland, in 1975 he publicly announced the sending of SAS troops (which in fact had been there since 1969). From 1964, Labour was clearly seen as a solid and reliable pro-NATO "party of government" and this situation more or less obtained throughout the two Wilson governments, the Heath Tory interlude and the 1974-79 Wilson/Callaghan regimes, with Labour governments consistently backing US imperialism's genocidal war in Vietnam.

Denis Healey is perhaps the best example of "CIA socialism" within the Labour Party. As head of the party's international department, he helped build under American tutelage the Second International along strict Cold War lines. He set up a special colonial section at Transport House in order "to help combat the menace of Communist propaganda among African and other overseas territories". The *New Statesman* (25 September 1981) quotes a 1948 memorandum by a Colonial Office official recording a discussion with Healey about Malaya, in which Britain was then waging a bloody colonial war. After stating his worries about opposition to the war by elements in the British labour movement, the official went on: "Mr Healey indicated that he would welcome collaboration with us to meet this kind of thing.... He said that he would be very glad if I could let him have (a) a complete list of the TU branches, Trades Councils etc who had written to us.... (b) a list of any communist or 'fellow traveller' publications concerned with the Colonies issued in this country.... I am sure that we can rely on Mr Healey to help us in tackling any flare-up of this kind which may happen in future." Indeed, a plethora of pro-NATO, often CIA-supported publications and organisations continued to "rely" on Mr Healey. Needless to say, Healey was a major force in Judas Kinnock's solidly pro-NATO stance in the recent elections. Earlier this year when Thatcher's Special Branch was raiding the BBC and the *New Statesman* over the Zircon leaks, Kinnock even attacked Thatcher for allowing the leaks! We say "Honour Kim Philby - Hate Neil Kinnock!"

## FOR A SOVIET BRITAIN!

The dirty work of imperialist spy agencies will be ended only when the bourgeois states they serve as an integral prop are smashed through victorious socialist revolution. Schemes to "rationalise", streamline, make accountable and otherwise reform the likes of MI5 and MI6 are both doomed and reactionary. What emerges from Wright's shadowy world is the picture of a moribund class society desperately, viciously (and sometimes incompetently) clinging to its rule amidst a crumbling colonial empire and vast disaffection among its "own" such as Philby. As the oldest imperialist power, Britain's decay is the most advanced. No mole-hunting hysteria will ameliorate that fact of history. We revolutionists in this former bastion of imperialism must confront not only the viciousness of present Tory rule, but the treacherous policies of Labour - the main obstacle to workers revolution in Britain. We look forward to the day when the files and archives of the British secret service are brought into the open and their deeds avenged by the countless victims of British imperialism throughout the world. It is the task of the revolutionary proletariat led by a Bolshevik vanguard

party to sweep imperialist filth into the dustbin of history! And after the victorious workers revolution, Kim Philby and the fifth, sixth, seventh, nth man will be accorded every honour they so richly deserve. ■

# Gulf...

(continued from page 1)

only in killing his adopted daughter along with other Libyan civilians. US commando attacks on Libya continued throughout 1986, and now the Pentagon is supplying gas masks to Chad, currently engaged in a border war with Libya. Is Washington planning a poison gas attack on Libya?

What links the imperialists' aggression and military adventures against Libya and Iran is the global war drive against the Soviet Union. The hysteria over Qaddafi was based on the fiction that he was the main proxy terrorist for the Kremlin. Now they're pushing the Big Lie that Russia is out to take over the Persian Gulf and cut off the "free world's" oil supply. The Americans want to "reflag" the Gulf as "Lake Michigan" in the name of "freedom of navigation", even though the only ones it's vital to as commercial waterway are Iran and the local sultanates. But Reagan's nutty military adventurism is far more dangerous in the strategic Persian Gulf, a nodal point of world tensions, just a few hundred miles from the Soviet Union, than in North Africa.

## GORBACHEV'S PIPEDREAM: PEACEKEEPING WITH US IMPERIALISM

The Soviet Union can chortle over Reagan's foundering in the Gulf. Responding to American calls for an arms embargo against Iran, Soviet foreign ministry spokesman Gennadi Gerasimov jibed, "We are not selling arms to Iran. Some other countries were selling arms to Iran and telling others not to do so" (*New York Times*, 25 September). Moreover, Moscow recently agreed with Iran to build a railroad and pipeline linking the USSR with fabled "warm water ports", which must drive Washington wild. But the Soviets are anxious to end the Gulf war in order to strengthen ties with both Khomeini's Teheran and Saddam Hussein's Baghdad. Fat chance!

Gorbachev & Co have been trying to push a negotiated settlement to the war via the UN Resolution 598, which calls for a ceasefire and withdrawal of forces. In fact the Soviets last year started paying money into the funds for United Nations "peacekeeping" operations, such as the UNIFIL forces in Lebanon which are nothing more than border guards for Israel. Soviet foreign minister Eduard Shevernadze is now pushing for a UN force to go into the gulf. The Soviet's proposal would only have the effect of lending legitimacy to imperialist intervention by giving it a UN flag - as when the US invaded Korea in the '50s, or raped the Congo and killed African nationalist leader Patrice Lumumba in 1961.

Lenin called the UN's predecessor, the League of Nations, an imperialist "den of thieves". The United Nations is an imperialist cabal along with their neocolonial victims in the Third World and bureaucratically deformed workers states like the Soviet Union. Gorbachev still pines for the old Stalinist dream of 1945, when it appeared that the "Big Five"

(US, Britain, USSR, France and China) would rule the world through the UN. But almost immediately Truman and Churchill launched the Cold War to "roll back" Communism and eventually overthrow the Soviet government in the name of "free world" capitalism. Whether there's a war-crazed madman like Reagan in the White House or Democratic Cold Warriors like Truman and Kennedy, defence of the Soviet Union against the imperialist warmongers requires world socialist revolution.

From Central America to the Persian Gulf, the gang in power in Washington have been looking for an easy "win" against the Soviets. Reagan & Co were "walking tall" after stomping the tiny black Caribbean island of Grenada (hoping everyone would forget their Beirut fiasco). But their Grenada high didn't last. They've gone after Nicaragua with a vengeance, vowing (as CIA director Casey put it) to take back at least one country from Communism. But the Nicaraguan masses have fought tenaciously to defend their revolution. Even Qaddafi's house refused to fall down no matter how hard Reagan puffed. The Reagan gang are now desperate.

No major power in its right mind would go to war over the Persian Gulf - but who ever thought the Reagan regime was sane? And in Britain all the hype about the "tupperware" fleet and incantations about reviving the "Falklands spirit" can't hide the fact that the Royal Navy no longer rules the waves. But Thatcher is the war criminal who ordered the sinking of the *Belgrano* and she wants to see that the Red Ensign lives up to its reputation as the bloody butchers apron. The British military contribution to the massive imperialist buildup in the Gulf is of course a side-show, but it is nonetheless part of the latest ominous anti-Soviet provocation threatening to drag the planet towards nuclear World War III. The threat of anti-Soviet thermo-nuclear holocaust will only be ended when victorious proletarian revolution smashes capitalism worldwide. ■

# Sheffield...

(continued from page 12)

devastated manufacturing cities like Sheffield and Rotherham are likely targets for fascist recruitment.

The urgent necessity to mobilise the organised workers movement and minorities in action to stop fascist provocations will continue to be a cutting edge in this country. The Tories' courting of Le Pen (see article, this issue) is but one example of the tendency of capitalism in its decline to look towards their fascist gangs in reserve. And it was the Sheffield Labour council which in 1984 gave the green light to fascist attacks against the Irish community when it banned the annual Bloody Sunday commemoration march; today the Labour Party presides over the outrageous anti-Gypsy "no traveller" bans in that city. No reliance on the capitalist state! Only the independent mobilisation of the working class and its allies can stop the fascists in their tracks. Certainly at this stage the fascists do not command overwhelming forces - we would like to keep it that way. Despite the sabotage efforts of those who want to pretend that they will not themselves be the victims of these race-hating, union-busting, red-bashing filth, we will continue to fight for what is necessary. Join us in the fight to drive the fascists from Sheffield city centre! ■

# Le Pen...

(continued from page 12)

wide speech on immigration.

Sherman is well-connected to No 10 Downing Street and it is highly unlikely that his invitation was extended without any knowledge by the prime minister. In any event, Sherman's invitation is no gaffe of an "eccentric" Tory but an open declaration of approval for the fascist, race-hating terror which Le Pen personifies, by the extreme right wing of the ruling party of this country. Ronald Reagan's May 1985 visit to Bitburg was the green light.

Writing in 1935, Leon Trotsky exposed the myth that there is some fundamental barrier between the capitalists' parliamentary rule and their resort to fascism in times of crisis. The fascist gangs are kept in reserve for that time when the bourgeoisie is no longer able to rule by other, more "democratic" means. In his introduction to the second edition of *Terrorism and Communism*, Trotsky pointed out:

"Unless these two barriers are swept away, that is to say, unless the means of production are concentrated in the hands of the community, and unless there is an organised planned economy which can gradually enfold the whole world, the economic and cultural collapse of mankind is foredoomed. Further short-circuitings by reactionary dictatorships would in any case inevitably spread to Great Britain also; the successes won by Fascism are seen to be no more than the political expression of the decay of the capitalist system. In other words: even in Britain a political state of things is not impossible wherein some coxcomb such as [fascist leader Oswald] Mosley, will be able to play an historical part like that played by his teachers Mussolini and Hitler." (*Trotsky's Writings on Britain*)

The Tories are a bourgeois parliamentary party (shot through with fascists and fascist sympathisers) and some of them recall that Hitler was their imperialist foe in the last World War; some of them are Jewish. At the same time, the Tories unleash their home-grown fascistic dogs of war against the immigrant and minority community, against synagogues and Jewish people, against workers and leftists. It might currently be bad press to embrace a French fascist who trumpets his support to the German Hitlerites at the Tory conference. The overture to Le Pen probably did not warm the cockles of French right-wing prime minister Chirac's heart at this particular time. So Sherman lost this one. As for Sherman, who is Jewish, we are reminded of those German bourgeois Jews who welcomed the fascists' assaults on the workers movement and who deluded themselves that they were exempt from Hitler's anti-Semitism. His adulation of Le Pen is an intolerable outrage. He paints Le Pen as a victim of what he labels "communists and other political gangsters", "fascists of the left" (letter to *Independent*, 24 August). Sherman is a racist swine to boot, who admires Le Pen because "He stands for many of the things I believe in - democracy, freedom from state intervention and from being swamped by alien cultures" - echoing Thatcher herself (*Daily Telegraph*, 17 September). Le Pen and his NF gangs and their fellows in this country must be crushed through mass, militant mobilisations of the working class and oppressed.

If the threat of mass protest and the concern of Thatcher's Tories not to appear before the world as too closely associated with Le Pen had not stopped his visit, anti-fascist militants organised for effective action at Blackpool should have. And such an action would be critical not only in defence of the working class and oppressed of this country but as an act of solidarity with the victims of Le Pen's fascist gangs across the Channel, part of the struggle to crush Le Pen and NF vermin for good.

Sherman and his ilk overreached this time. But there is more than a little method to their timing. The climate in this country is breeding fascist race-terrorists at an ominous rate. With over 3 million "officially" unemployed, conditions in the inner-cities and industrial wastelands are desperate. The Commission for Racial Equality has just released a report aptly titled *Living in Terror* on the condition of Asians faced with unrelenting racist attack. Gangs of skinheads armed with sticks, knives and broken bottles attack isolated groups of Asians and blacks on streets and trains. Bangladeshi children have been stripped, bound and dumped in rubbish bins. In Liverpool, Asian shopkeepers have been victimised by racist graffiti, by dead rats and excreta shoved through their letter boxes. The spirit of Heysel is not restricted to football "hooligans" on their murderous rampage against Italian fans. The spirit of Heysel stalks the streets of these isles every day as well.

Fascist scum take their cue from the government, its racist courts and cops. From the police killings of Cynthia Jarrett, Clinton McCurbin, the maiming of Cherry Groce to the racist internment of Tamil refugees in the prison hulk *Earl William*, state-sanctioned race terror is the cutting edge of the capitalists' attacks on the working people of this country. Recently, the cops savagely beat Mohammed Hajiazim, an Iranian man who had parked briefly outside a bank in order to post a letter. When arrested, Hajiazim was asked if he were Iranian and after he replied that he was, "they started hitting me, punching me on my side and back. Then the driver kicked me between the legs. I said I needed a doctor. I was in terrible pain" (*Asian Times*, 25 September). Two days after his beating, Mohammed Hajiazim was rushed to hospital; his left testicle was removed under surgery.

Courting Le Pen is a sign of how far the ruling class is prepared to go in the current climate of aggressive reaction. And the British ruling class has a long, documented history of infatuation with fascism and a very dirty history as protectors of Nazi war criminals - used throughout the "free world" in the global anti-Soviet effort. The American CIA called it the "Rat Line". In the current Tory split over Le Pen's visit, there might well be a concern over recent exposures of the decades-long protection racket run here for "ex-Nazis".

Last year the Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Center as well as Soviet prosecuting authorities separately handed Home Secretary Douglas Hurd lists collectively identifying 51 bonafide Nazi war criminals living in Britain. Hurd won't hear of extraditing these war criminals to the Soviet Union, where most of the atrocities were committed. Even Reagan's administration was forced to accede in the case of Karl Linna. But in over 40 years, Britain has not extradited one Nazi war criminal. During that 40 years, Labour was often

in power, doing its bit to keep Britain a safe haven for particularly the East European Nazi collaborators who fled in the wake of the victorious Soviet Red Army's final victory.

Foremost on the wanted list is one Antanas Gecas (originally Gecevičius), who has recently gone into hiding. A self-admitted member of the Nazi-run 12th Battalion *Jagkomandai* ("hunter commando") unit of the notorious Lithuanian SD Police - which slaughtered over 200,000 Lithuanian Jews - Gecas is a recipient of Hitler's Iron Cross. He has been living in Britain for 40 years. Gecas was the man who gave orders to put the rope around the necks of the heroic young Byelorussian partisans who were hanged by the Nazis in 1941 in Minsk. Ninety per cent of that city was destroyed by the Nazis, who killed a full quarter of the entire population of Byelorussia. One fellow Lithuanian from Gecas' battalion described an all-day massacre of thousands of Jews in the Minsk ghetto:

"Our detachment leader, Gecevičius [Gecas], was also issuing commands to his soldiers to line up the condemned by the pits and shoot them. Moreover, when the next group of condemned had been shot, Gecevičius, together with the other officers, would go into the pit and finish off those victims still living." (*Guardian*, 21 July)

Antanas Gecas is but one of the unspeakable criminals peacefully living out their lives under British government protection. Others include a notorious police chief of occupied Riga, capital of Latvia, where the USSR's largest Jewish population was exterminated 1941-42; two alleged members of the Ypatinga Buras, which murdered thousands of Jews and others in Poland; Paul Reinhardt, a foreign minister of the Latvian collaborationist government and consulting engineer who works out of the Latvian emigre "embassy" in Bayswater, London. Reinhardt recruited death squads that murdered thousands of Jews, Communists and Gypsies and ran a slave labour department which organised the deportation of 280,000 Jews.

As Tom Bower, author of *The Paperclip Conspiracy* puts it, by 1947 the war-time Anglo-Soviet alliance was replaced by the demands of the Cold War: "Throughout Whitehall, the criterion for judging a man became his anti-Bolshevism and not whether he had fought with the Germans against the Allies...." In 1948 Labour PM Attlee telegrammed the Canadian government instructing them to prevent any prosecution of Nazi war criminals.

Among British ruling class circles there were open admirers of Hitler and Mussolini. Foremost in this is Sir Winston Churchill, whose notorious 1927 speech made in Rome at the time when Mussolini was beginning to assert his bloody rule is worth quoting at some length:

"I could not help being charmed... by Signor Mussolini's gentle and simple bearing and by his calm, detached poise in spite of so many burdens and dangers. Secondly, anyone could see that he thought of nothing but the lasting good of the Italian people.... If I had been an Italian I am sure that I should have been wholeheartedly with you from the start to finish in your triumphant struggle against the bestial appetite and passions of Leninism.... [Italy] has provided the necessary antidote to the Russian poison. Hereafter no great nation will be unprovided with an ultimate means of protection

against the cancerous growth of Bolshevism." (quoted in Robert Black, *Stalinism in Britain* - emphasis ours)

Perhaps the BBC had Churchill's statement in mind when it aired the four-part American-made pro-Mussolini garbage, "Mussolini - The Untold Story" earlier this month. This "family saga" portrayed Hitler and Mussolini with deep, human sympathy - and small wonder, since it was made in closest collaboration with Victor Mussolini, son of Il Duce himself. The Mussolini story...as told by Mussolini. Even the tabloid press gagged: "The incredible TV whitewash of Mussolini" headlined the *Sunday Mirror* (6 September). In 1937 Churchill spelled it out: "I will not pretend that, if I had to choose between Communism and Nazis, I would choose Communism." Only after its diplomatic efforts to make German imperialism turn its aggression exclusively to the east against the Soviet Union failed, and its own vital imperialist interests were threatened, did Churchill and the British ruling class decide to "sup with the devil" - ie ally with Russia. Information about the Holocaust was suppressed. Only in the last month of the war did British and American soldiers learn of the Nazi horror as they overran Buchenwald, Belsen, Dachau. Sickened by what they saw, they afterwards turned a blind eye as the survivors of the concentration camps meted out summary justice to the SS guards and helped despatch some of the scum. When Belsen (near Bitburg) fell to the British army, the War Office first denied that any war crimes had been committed, then claimed that anyway the victims were not British nationals (in fact there were several).

The Cable Street mobilisation was the working class answer to Mosley's fascist movement: in 1936 upwards of 250,000 workers - Irish, Jewish and other minorities among them - waged a day-long battle with thousands of police attempting to clear a path for Mosley's British Union of Fascists. The BUF had attempted to march into the heavily Jewish East End of London. Wave after wave of charging cops failed to break through the workers' barricades. In the end, the fascists were forced to retreat, defeated.

Fascism breeds on the despair that decaying capitalism spawns. The bitterness and fighting spirit of the working class and oppressed must be mobilised to crush racist attacks and the fascist threat. This will not be done through Labourite schemes of waiting for the elections or passivity in the face of the reactionary gangs. And the fascist menace itself will not be eradicated this side of socialist revolution. There may be some unsavoury elements still running around Russia, but the fascists do not ride in Moscow: capitalist state power has been smashed and replaced by proletarian class rule. In every imperialist centre - as Le Pen, the Ku Klux Klan and the British National Front show - the fascists continue to run amok with plenty of ruling class protection.

Our comrades in the Ligue Trotskyste de France have fought against the threat posed by Le Pen and his ilk, notably in a 400-strong united front anti-fascist protest in Rouen, December 1981. In this country, the Spartacist League is fighting for a united-front mobilisation against fascist punks menacing leftist newspaper salesmen in Sheffield (see article this issue). Remember Cable Street - for labour/minority mobilisations to crush racist terror! ■

## Sheffield: For united-front action to smash fascist threat!

The battle continues to rid Sheffield's city centre of fascist punks. These fascists have been seen with National Front stickers and sporting NF insignia as they habitually gather each Saturday at the Castle Market in Exchange Street to harass left-wing newspaper sellers. The fascists' presence at Castle Market is a provocation and a threat: the market is frequented by black and Asian working people and has been for some time a traditional site for the distribution of socialist literature. As we reported in our last issue, the Spartacist League has issued a call to left and minority organisations in Sheffield to establish a coordinated presence at Exchange Street on Saturdays in order to ensure defence against these scum and to discourage them from lurking about at all. Socialist Workers Party (SWP) salesmen have already been assaulted by these fascist vermin: one female SWPer was punched in the face and an SWP sales team had a rubbish bin hurled at them. Since the establishment of the Spartacist-defended sales presence at the market, such incidents have stopped. But the menace of these race-hating swine has not been yet decisively crushed.

A united-front mobilisation is essential in this situation – and can serve as the basis for deterring the fascists from showing their faces. Yet far from organising to stop the fascists, the response of the Sheffield "left" has been one of criminal passivity and idiot sectarianism. In particular the SWP, whose own forces easily outnumber those of the fascists, has been conscientiously pursuing a policy of sabotaging any attempts to mobilise a response to the NF provocations, even publicly denying the incidents of harassment against their own members. Their ludicrous position that stopping the fascists only serves to embolden them has as its corollary "ignoring" the NF scum to death. And, the SWP



Washington Post

Washington, DC, 1982: SL/US-initiated labour/black mobilisation routs Klan

has worked overtime to dissuade others who might respond to the call for a united front. Thus, the Straight Left-dominated Sheffield Campaign Against Racism (SCAR) has been able to use the SWP's disinformation as an excuse to avoid committing their forces, although SCAR did on one occasion send a couple of people to the Exchange Street market to see the situation for themselves.

But the SWP's fear and loathing of any anti-fascist mobilisation has not managed to stop the word from getting around that something pretty damn sinister is crawling around Exchange Street and that somebody has been doing something about it. Over the course of our efforts to mobilise and our determined defence of our own – and the SWP's – sales teams, a number of individual trade unionists have joined in the Saturday defence teams, including miners and post office workers. On 26 September, several members of the Sheffield Five Defence Campaign came by to see for themselves what has been happening. So have individual

members of the Afro-Caribbean organisation SADACCA in the past.

The fascist punks were forced into an attitude of retreat on 26 September: they were prevented by our defence squad from approaching newspaper sellers and were sent packing, tails between their legs. Even as the fascists were sneaking out of the side exit of the market to beat their retreat, the SWP at Exchange Street could only scream that we were "provoking" the Nazi-loving scum! But it is the SWP's suicidal "turn the other cheek" passivity and attempts to de-mobilise the left and minority organisations that embolden the fascist punks. (The SWP's abysmal performance last year at Bristol University where it joined hands with the Labour Club to protect race-hating demagogue Enoch Powell against outraged students is an example of these "respectable" socialists "in action".)

Among the camp followers of the SWP's do-nothing policy in Sheffield is the centrist Workers Power group. Ostensibly, Workers Power is on rec-

ord for "No platform for fascists" and one of their members claimed that recently in Birmingham, after a fascist attack against leftists, there, WP even went on record for a united-front defence against fascist attack. (In 1981, WP did join an anti-fascist united front at Sheffield University initiated by the Spartacist League. On that occasion the British Movement was attempting to establish a presence in Sheffield, including at the campus, until a mobilisation of 120 students and trade unionists booted them out.) But now Workers Power is happy to remain aloof from any action at Exchange Street. While refusing to officially respond to the call for united action sent out by the SL, WP has let it be known that since we seem to have the situation under control, they see no reason to put themselves on the line. Should those who turn out against the fascist punks ever find themselves in danger, however, we are assured by WP that they'll be just a phone call away. Presumably, this means that a few members might be freed up from their responsibilities with the local Labour Party if things get hot. We won't hold our breath.

Nor is it any accident that the anti-anti-fascist league of SWP, WP et al are united by virulent anti-Sovietism; the SWP being formally explicit with its masthead: "Neither Washington Nor Moscow...." and WP in practice when it matters (ie, their hailing of counterrevolutionary Polish Solidarity). Union-busting and racist violence against minorities are the domestic reflection of the imperialist war drive against the Soviet degenerated workers state. The NATO imperialists hope to prevail where Hitler failed – in restoring capitalist slavery to the homeland of the October Revolution. At "home" this means that massive unemployment and immiseration are a breeding ground for fascist filth and

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## Tories court French fascist Le Pen

Jean-Marie Le Pen, fuhrer of the French fascist National Front has announced that he will not after all address a fringe meeting at the Conservative Party conference at Blackpool in October. Thatcher's former aide and speechwriter Alfred Sherman formally invited the race-hating fascist whose latest provocation was the Hitler-worshipping statement that the Nazi Holocaust and genocide of six million Jews were "just a detail in the history of the Second World War" (*Independent*, 16 September). This came on the heels of a pogromist attack by his thugs on the Arab quarter of Chateauroux, where

residents were set upon with iron bars and baseball bats. Sherman defended Le Pen's obscenity by adding his own: Hitler's SS, said this Tory, were "young people who were as much victims of Hitler as we were" (*Guardian*, 22 September).

Le Pen is an overt fascist, a virulent anti-Semite whose NF scum rampaged in support of Klaus Barbie, the SS "Butcher of Lyon" at the time of Barbie's trial in France. While bourgeois commentators try to present a toned-down, "respectable" image of Le Pen, his rantings against Jews and Arabs match the vile filth of Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, as revealed

recently by a journalist who managed to accompany him (*Globe* [Paris], September 1987). Besides humming the SS hymn, Le Pen railed against the "Jewish diktat" and claimed that the Americans built crematoriums at Buchenwald to justify the number of deaths "claimed" by the victims of the Holocaust. Now all parties have pulled back from Le Pen goosestepping into Blackpool – but there will be plenty of likeminded swine represented at the Tory's conference.

In Britain the Tories squirmed over Thatcher's man Sherman's overt endorsement of Le Pen. Conserva-

tive Party chairman Norman Tebbit suggested that Le Pen would be "unwelcome" at Blackpool and Le Pen returned the compliment when he cancelled, saying that he didn't "wish to embarrass those in England who wish to give me a hearing, nor do I wish to embarrass Mrs Margaret Thatcher, whom I admire enormously and many of whose policies I deeply admire" (*Guardian*, 24 September). The feeling is mutual: Margaret Thatcher, after all, raised the spectre that "this country might be swamped by people of a different culture" in her January 1978 nation-

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