



## Labour Party: Thatcher's lackeys

# Hard class struggle can smash third term reaction!

The insane drive of the US imperialists and their partners to destroy the Soviet Union has now bankrupted the American economy and triggered an international financial crisis on the scale of the crash of 1929. The crash of 1987 buried what little authority was left of the Reagan presidency. And there has been no stauncher ally of the Reagan administration than Maggie Thatcher's vicious Tory regime. From the terror bombing of Libya to imperialist provocations in the Gulf, Thatcher has been Reagan's partner in the anti-Soviet war drive.

A few weeks ago, during the party conference season, the bourgeois media proclaimed the near victory of Margaret Thatcher's so-called "irreversible revolution". Thatcherite policies were credited with restoring the "health" of British capitalism and "taming" the trade unions. The champagne flowed freely in the City. At the Tory conference, the stage was being set for a third term completion of Thatcher's agenda of social reaction. The bourgeoisie would continue to rake in profits from "privatisation", the Home Counties professional middle class would share in some of this prosperity and everyone else could eat it.

Neil Kinnock's Labour Party did little more at its own conference than concede Thatcher her "triumph" – putting nearly all of its own policies up for "review". As the *Economist* (24 October) observed:

"At the best of times, a party with a 101-seat majority in the House of Commons is virtually unassailable. When its main opponent can offer no alternative policies because they are all up for review, it is even more impregnable."

After trouncing the call for black sections, Kinnock turned his windbagery to winning the yuppie vote while Bryan Gould carried his enthusiasm for share ownership from the conference floor into a Thursday night fringe meeting – unprecedentedly organised by the Stock Exchange. "Profit sharing" schemes which bind the workers to their bosses have been a hallmark of Kinnock & Co's unending devotion to class collaboration, so this was just the absurd logical conclusion. While even the *Financial Times* (29 October) suggested that "In the wake of the crash... This is hardly the best time for Labour to adopt the Tories' intellectual framework", Labour's commitment to capitalism is too entrenched to cash in on capitalism's crisis.

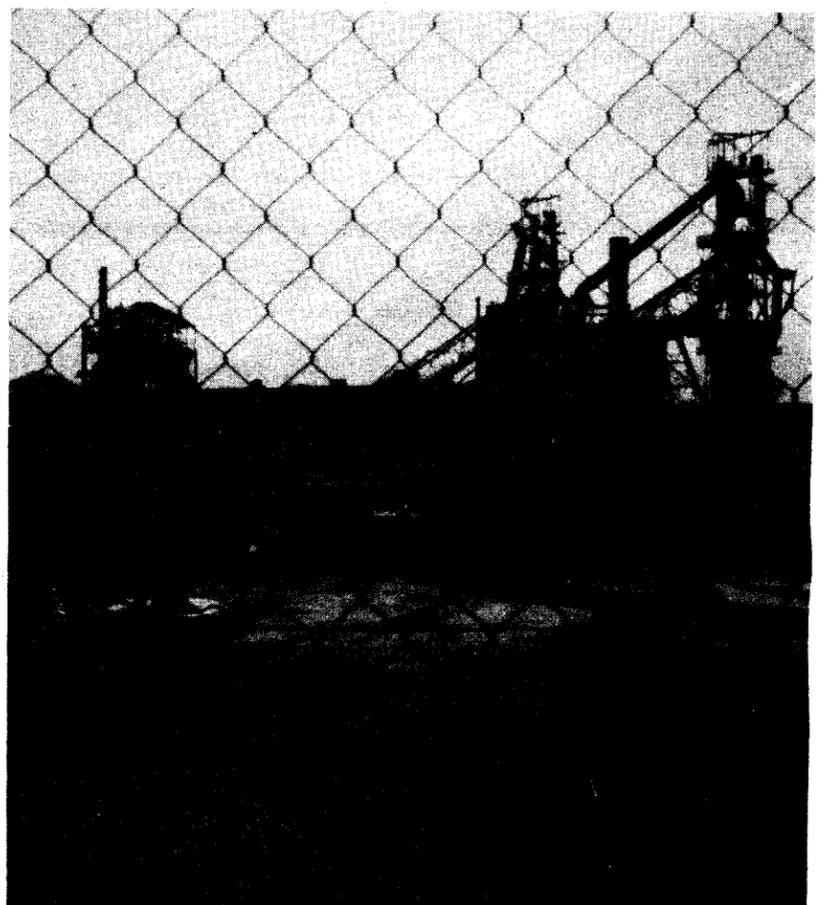
When the crash threatened Thatcher's BP share offer Kinnock wanted the sale stopped "so that this successful company can continue to benefit



Sheila Gray/Format



Independent



Workers Hammer

**"Iron Lady" Thatcher makes workers pay for anti-Soviet war drive. Industry closes down, workers are thrown on the scrap heap. Crash of 1987 (above left) should be met with hard class struggle.**

all the British people, instead of the corporate and foreign interests which will increasingly secure control" (*Guardian*, 29 October). Kinnock's Labour tops are mouthing off that it might end up with the "wrong" people – foreign capitalists. But from the standpoint of the world's proletariat, British Petroleum is not just any company – it's a bloodsucking tool of imperialist rule which did its bit in the 1953 CIA-engineered overthrow of Mossadeq in Iran after his oil nationalisations.

As for the Labour "lefts" who supported Kinnock fulsomely in the election, Ken Livingstone's "little England" reaction to the crash was typical. Nationalist protectionist schemes – particularly import controls – are the "lefts'" version of keeping Britain safe for capitalism. In Livingstone's view: "Events of the last week on the stock market are the most important political event since the Second World War" and his conclusion, summarised by the *Independent* (26 October): "The inevitable economic crisis would allow Britain to sever links with the United States...." This isn't just protectionist garbage, it's absurd. Over 2200 years ago an Egyptian named Eratosthenes produced the calculations to demon-

strate the world is indeed round. And on Black Monday, stock markets crashed in Japan, Hong Kong, The City and Wall Street. Capitalism is an international system – and the only way to avoid the crises which are endemic to it is to smash it through proletarian revolution.

Thatcher doesn't have the kind of problems Bonzo's got in Washington. But she's not in brilliant shape, either. Britain, "the sick man of Europe", was a basket case economically before the crash. That situation was not exclusively a Tory creation: Labour's postwar nationalisations paid huge compensation to the parasitic owners, nationalisations financed by low wages and high taxes imposed on the working class. Now that Thatcher chops industry and sells off what's left at cut rate prices in order to finance the anti-Soviet war drive, Labour Party tops adapt to the "new realism" and push their profit-sharing schemes. Marxists oppose Tory privatisation schemes, but unlike Labourite reformists our programme is to defeat, disarm and expropriate the bourgeoisie.

The *Financial Times* (28 October) admits that "Capacity utilisation, which measures the effectiveness of the stock of fixed capital, is back to 1979 levels

in the UK" – ie, it took eight years of Thatcher's policies to get manufacturing output back to 1979 levels. Industry has not been modernised, only pared back. Meanwhile over three million workers have been thrown on the scrap heap and the standard of living of the working class in Britain is below that of Italy, let alone France, Germany and Japan. Britain is a third world country without the benefits of a third world climate. Whatever the effects of the crash in the short term, you can be certain that Thatcher will try to make the workers, the poor, the sick, the elderly and the young pay – and in her nasty, vindictive fashion. It doesn't have to go that way

Only two and a half years ago, the heroic mineworkers strike showed the potential power of the organised labour movement in hard class struggle. The strike sharply polarised the country: the working class, minorities, women, youth, gays, Irish people rallied to the miners, recognising that the strike could bring the Tory bitch down. Knifed by Kinnock's Labour Party and TUC tops, the miners were defeated after a year of bitter class warfare. And now, as Thatcher gears up to really put the knife in – hard

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# Welsh miners denied parole

# Free Shankland and Hancock!

This November Dean Hancock and Russell Shankland will have served three years in prison. Their bid for parole was turned down in August. These young Welsh miners, like several other NUM militants who were jailed and hundreds of sacked miners, are no criminals. They have been victimised by the bosses and the capitalist courts because they showed courage and determination in defending their union during the heroic 1984-85 miners strike. The cause of these class-war prisoners must not be forgotten by the labour movement - free Dean Hancock and Russell Shankland!

Recently comrades of the Spartacist League visited with the families of Dean and Russell. Dean's immediate family consists of his mother Mary, father John, sister Lisa, grandmother Nell, and his three-year-old daughter Hannah. John himself is a miner who went through the year-long strike and was later forced to accept redun-



Mary and John Hancock, parents of jailed miner Dean Hancock with visiting SL comrade. Right: class war in the coal fields, 1984.

dancy. We also spoke with Russell's mother Yvonne Pugh. The families spoke movingly of their efforts to support the imprisoned miners. The

Hancocks told us that in the first days they got friends to drive them daily to the Cardiff prison to bring the lads food and boost morale. The prison officials were trying to break the miners' spirit: Dean and Russell were held in tiny cells in isolation for six weeks with only one hour of exercise per day.

Hancock and Shankland were initially charged with the murder of David Wilkie, a taxi driver who was ferrying scabs to work. Wilkie was no innocent victim: he died in a class war in which he had voluntarily enlisted on the side of union-busting and police/government violence. In November 1984, eight months into the strike, the bosses attempted a concerted drive to break the miners' will. Thatcher's bootboys in blue arrived in force in the south Wales minefields, one of the most solid union areas where heretofore there were only a handful of blacklegs. The miners fought back. The day before Wilkie's death eleven strikers were arrested in picket line battles outside the Merthyr Vale pit in Aberfarn, where two scabs had crawled back to work. Another 250 strikers unable even to reach the colliery blocked the main Merthyr-to-Cardiff road.

Throughout the bitter strike the bourgeois press, taking its cue from the government, whipped up a frenzy about the alleged "violence" of the strikers. Their target was the militant, mass picket lines of the NUM. The courageous mineworkers, for their part, clearly understood that without effective picket lines you cannot win a strike and your union is therefore powerless. It is testimony to the grim determination of the miners themselves, and no thanks whatsoever to the Labour Party/TUC tops, that they saved the integrity of their union even in defeat. The Kinnocks and the Willises, who sang to the bosses' tune of violence-baiting the NUM, worked overtime to ensure that millions of other trade unionists

did not strike alongside the miners. Yet even while being stabbed in the back Scargill preached confidence in the Labour Party.

It is a time-tested tactic of the bourgeoisie to persecute as "violent" and "criminal" those who stand up to their system of exploitation. The real architect and organiser of systematic terror is the capitalist state itself. Tens of thousands of miners and their supporters experienced firsthand the brutal charges of baton-wielding cops at Orgreave and elsewhere, as well as the occupations of scores of pit villages by the armed police strike-breakers. Dean Hancock and Russell Shankland are victims of such class "justice". On the other hand, no one has ever been or will be charged for the murders of union martyrs David Jones and Joe Green, because Thatcher wanted to see strikers' blood. Likewise, the cop who crippled Cherry Groce for life in Brixton walked free while Winston Silcott, the victim of a frame up arising from the racist police invasion of Broadwater Farm, rots in jail.

But when the courts initially sentenced Hancock and Shankland to life imprisonment on murder charges, they hadn't reckoned with the militancy and solidarity of the miners. As the news spread, several hundred NUM members at the Oakdale and Merthyr Vale collieries walked off shift on strike. Two days later, on 19 May 1985, more than 1000 angry protesters with home-made placards marched through Shankland and Hancock's home village of Rhymney. And the following Saturday 2000 demonstrators, including contingents of miners and steelworkers from as far as Yorkshire, marched to the Cardiff prison, where Dean and Russell were being held. We have no doubt that it was the fear of such militant protest, and not humanitarian considerations, that motivated the judges to eventu-

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TROTSKY

## Long live the October Revolution!

Petrograd, 7 November 1917: After declaring "Long live the world socialist revolution!" Bolshevik leader Lenin presented the following resolution, which became the proclamation of the first victorious proletarian revolution in history.



LENIN

The Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies hails the victorious revolution of the proletariat and the garrison of Petrograd. The Soviet particularly emphasises the solidarity, organisation, discipline and complete unanimity displayed by the masses in this unusually bloodless and unusually successful uprising.

It is the unshakable conviction of the Soviet that the workers' and peasants' government which will be created by the revolution, as a Soviet government, and which will ensure the urban proletariat the support of the whole mass of the poor peasantry, will firmly advance toward socialism, the only means of saving the country from the untold miseries and horrors of war.

The new workers' and peasants' government will immediately propose a just and democratic peace to all belligerent nations.

It will immediately abolish landed proprietorship and hand over the land to the peasants. It will institute workers' control over the production and distribution of goods and establish national control over the banks, at the same time transforming them into a single state enterprise.

The Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies calls on all workers and all peasants to support the workers' and peasants' revolution devotedly and with all their energy. The Soviet expresses the conviction that the urban workers, in alliance with the poor peasants, will display strict, comradely discipline and establish the strictest revolutionary order, which is essential for the victory of socialism.

The Soviet is convinced that the proletariat of the West-European countries will help us to achieve a complete and lasting victory for the cause of socialism.

- V I Lenin, Resolution of the Petrograd Soviet (7 November 1917)

## WORKERS HAMMER

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## Correction

The article "Imperialist war moves in the Persian Gulf" which appeared in *Workers Hammer* no 92 (October 1987) contained a mistaken

reference to the "Iran/Soviet war". It should have read "Iran/Iraq war". In the same article, we referred to the "Red Ensign". This was an error. The British navy flag is the White Ensign - the Red Ensign is the flag of the merchant marine.

# WRP, Morenoites: anti-Soviet lash-up

Leave it to the political heirs of Gerry Healy and Nahuel Moreno to use the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the October Revolution to reaffirm their deep hostility to defence of that revolution. For months, Cliff Slaughter's Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) and the Morenoite International Workers League (IWL) have been trumpeting a call "For an International Conference in 1987 for the Re-organisation of the Fourth International". Whatever the outcome of this unity conference in early November, these two outfits (and their partner, the dubious Michel Varga) are already united in being among the most virulent practitioners of Stalinophobia to be found under any rock. It is hardly a political accident that "state-capitalist" grouplets like the American League for a Revolutionary Party (LRP), which explicitly oppose defence of the Soviet Union (as well as other Stalinophobes, like Workers Power) have been banging on the doors of this conference, insisting they have a rightful place within.

The Fourth International founded in 1938 saw itself as the continuity of the Bolshevik Party which had led the October Revolution. Key to the FI's programme for international socialist revolution was the unconditional military defence of the Soviet degenerated workers state - whose social system issued out of that revolution - against imperialism and counter-revolution. To be sure, both the WRP and the IWL claim to be "Trotskyist", and thus to stand by the Trotskyist programme of defence of the gains of October. But, for all the vague generalisations in the conference call, key to the Slaughter/Morenoite lash-up is denying any relevance to that programme in the real world.

Thus the call insists that the Stalinist bureaucracy "has no 'dual nature'" and is "counterrevolutionary through and through", adding that "defence of the gains of October coincides directly with the world socialist revolution". So until that glorious day the WRP and IWL join with all the forces opposing

the "counterrevolutionary" Stalinists - imperialist-supported Islamic reactionaries, capitalist restorationist Polish reactionaries, even Maggie Thatcher. The Morenoites have for years dredged up Lambert's "third camp" equation of the imperialists and the Soviet Union as part of a "Holy Alliance of Washington, the Kremlin, the Vatican, the Second International, the ruling bourgeoisie throughout the world" (*Working Class Opposition*, May 1985). After Reagan bombed a Soviet-manned missile installation in Libya to punish Qaddafi for being a "Soviet surrogate", the WRP's *Workers Press* (5 April 1986) likewise claimed that this was "part of Reagan's efforts to push Gorbachev and Co into a deal in which the Soviet role would be to muzzle the forces of revolution in Africa, Asia and South America".

Stalinophobia is common currency among the fake-Trotskyist left. But the Morenoites and Slaughter/Healyites stand out even in this crowd. They like to be somebody's instruments. These outfits have a common heritage of egging on the most reactionary CIA-backed forces bordering the Soviet Union. All the fake Trotskyists joined Carter's America in ranting against Soviet "imperialism" and how it "violated" Afghanistan's "self-determination" when the Red Army finally moved in to suppress a CIA-financed Islamic insurgency against the pro-Soviet PDPA reform regime. Social progress has come to Afghanistan on the bayonets of the Red Army. For the first time women do not have to be imprisoned in thirty pounds of muslin and young girls have the right to learn to read and write.

Six years after the fact, the Morenoites still denounced the Soviet intervention as a "counterrevolutionary operation in the service of democratic stability and imperialism". Every imperialist government in the world - oblivious to this "service" - has condemned the Afghan invasion, using essentially the arguments and language the Morenoites borrow. By this time nobody could deny that the anti-Soviet



WRP & Co's "anti-Stalinist united front" partners: (left) CIA-backed Afghan cutthroats with contra chief Reagan; Vatican's Russia-hating Lech Walesa.

forces in Afghanistan were directly armed by US imperialism, so the Morenoites added a characteristically bizarre call on the Red Army to organise a social revolution in Afghanistan before they got their arses out! That's an exercise in "dialectics" that would do Gerry Healy proud.

The Morenoites not only opposed the Soviet intervention. They supported the CIA's "freedom fighters" and even demanded that the Khomeinist counterrevolution be exported to the Soviet Union. The Italian Morenoite Lega Socialista Rivoluzionaria (LSR) rhapsodised about "The possibility of extending the Iranian revolution within the borders of the USSR.... The Soviet border populations, tied to those in Iran and Afghanistan by religious, cultural and racial ties, can be infected by the radicalisation of the area, can become protagonists in an anti-bureaucratic mobilisation within the workers state, laying the basis for a political revolution" (*Avanzata Proletaria*, 12 January 1980). These people can't tell revolution and counterrevolution apart. For them, Khomeinist enslaving of women,

stoning of homosexuals and suppression of religious/national minorities is "revolution"; defending the Soviet borders and bringing the twentieth century to feudal Afghanistan is "counterrevolution". Is their Turkish section intending to bring back the fez and the veil and the fascistic goon squads that go with them?

When the Reaganites looked to counterrevolutionary Polish Solidarnosc as their best chance since World War II to "roll back Communism", the Stalinophobic fake left joined in hailing this "free trade union" opposed to "Stalinist totalitarianism". But Healy/Slaughter's WRP went farther than that. They used Reagan/Thatcher's favourite "union" as a battering ram for Thatcher in Britain. On the eve of the heroic miners strike, the WRP seized on Arthur Scargill's opposition to Solidarnosc to instigate a witchhunt against him by the Tory press and right-wing "new realists" within the Labour/TUC bureaucracy. The WRP was rightly despised by militant miners - many readers of *News-Line* tore up their subscriptions - the

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## Spartacist League National Dayschool



Defend the Soviet Union  
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# Sri Lanka:

# Indian troops out of Eelam!

## Workers to power!

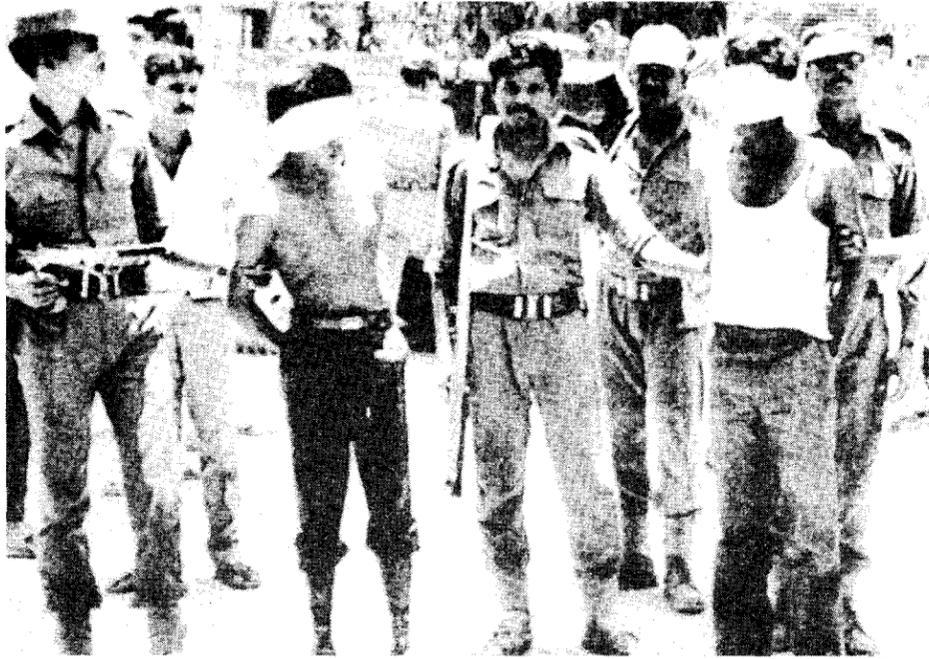
OCTOBER 27 - Less than three months after Sri Lankan president JR Jayewardene and Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi signed their much-vaunted "peace accord", the blood-soaked Jaffna Peninsula in northern Sri Lanka (Ceylon) has again become a scene of untold horror. After years of being ravaged and terrorised by Jayewardene's Sinhalese-chauvinist, officially Buddhist regime, the oppressed and long-suffering Tamil people (who are mainly Hindu) are now getting it from those whom they looked to as their saviours. For two weeks upwards of 20,000 Indian troops backed by heavy battle tanks, artillery and helicopter gunships have battled the nationalist guerrillas of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). An estimated 700 civilians were slaughtered, in addition to Tiger guerrillas; up to a half million of the peninsula's 700,000 people are now refugees in their own land.

After the JR/Gandhi accord was signed, we wrote:

"...we have repeatedly warned that the Tamils' illusions in the Indian bourgeoisie are deadly dangerous.... Now they are getting what they wanted...and they won't like it....

"If the Tamil Tigers refuse to come to terms, they are likely to find the Indian army a far more formidable proposition than the Sri Lankan forces.

"But it is not just the Tigers' blood that will run. The Eastern Province is heavily interpenetrated, more or less evenly among Tamils, Sinhalese and Muslims.... This arrangement is a recipe for massive communal bloodletting and forced population transfers as the different



Indian "peacekeepers" hold guns to Tamil youth in Eastern Province.

communities fight to control the province."

- WH no 91, September 1987

The "Indian Peacekeeping Force" is now waging war on the entire people of the Northern Province, while in the Eastern Province the accord triggered a spree of indiscriminate communalist atrocities by the Tigers against Sinhalese civilians.

For years Tamil militants have desperately beseeched "Mother India", with 60 million Tamils just across the Palk Strait, to save their people from Sinhalese-chauvinist terror and aid their struggle for an independent state of Tamil Eelam. Now Tiger leader Velupillai Prabhakaran laments that the Tamils are "the victims of India's geopolitical interests". When capitalist India finally moved, it was only to be expected that it would assert its own interests. Capitalist India, that prison house of peoples, can play no progressive role in the region. We demand: Indian Army Out of Eelam!

The government-instigated anti-Tamil pogroms of July 1983

created a *de facto* partition of the island. But what Eelam constitutes may well be determined - tragically, as so often in the past in cases of interpenetrated populations - through a massive communalist bloodletting. The peoples of Lanka may well relive the horrors of the 1947 partition of India. The Tamil nationalists have come to mirror the bloodiest aspects of Sinhala chauvinism with their own murderous logic of racialism. Even in the best of circumstances, an isolated, impoverished Eelam offers a bleak prospect for the Tamil masses, while leaving untouched the hideous oppression of the Tamil plantation workers of the hill country tea estates. The super-exploitation of these low-caste Tamil labourers, many of whom are women, is the material basis on which the island's economy rests. Only workers rule can end the communalist hell on the island and bring the emancipation of all toilers of South Asia. Down with murderous nationalism! For the right to Tamil Eelam! For federated workers republics of Eelam and Lanka - For a socialist feder-

ation of South Asia!

### THE "ACCORD" UNRAVELS

Mindful of anger among Tamils in India at the Sri Lankan slaughter and fearing a United States-brokered encirclement as Pakistan and other US allies aided Jayewardene's UNP regime, India staged a relief airlift operation in the face of a major Sri Lankan offensive against the Tamils in June, signalling Jayewardene that it would not remain passive much longer. The 29 July accord between Gandhi and Jayewardene represented nothing less than overt Indian overlordship of the island. The US has long had particular designs on the Eastern Province, site of the strategic Trincomalee harbour, and this agreement was thus a setback for American anti-Soviet interests in the region.

Gandhi also promised to disarm the Tamil guerrillas in exchange for Jayewardene's grudging agreement to establish a federated administrative unit in the North and East, effectively under Indian suzerainty. The day after the accord was signed Indian troops disembarked in the north while Indian air force transports ferried Sri Lankan soldiers south. The Tigers and other Tamil groups went along with the accord very reluctantly, turning in a small fraction of their arms. The Sri Lankan government procrastinated on releasing Tamil detainees (by mid-September only about one-quarter of the 5,700 had been released) and on disarming its Sinhala-communalist Home Guard rabble. At the end of September, Tiger militia leader Thileepan died after a hunger strike to demand the expulsion of Sinhalese colonists and Lankan army and police installations from the occupied areas.

Wide sections of the Tamil population at first welcomed the false promise of peace that came with the arrival of Indian troops. With the lifting of the siege on Jaffna it could be seen that the damage



Observer

Tamil refugees flee Indian shelling in Jaffna peninsula (left). 1984: Indian army terrorised Sikh minority.

Raghu Rai/Magnum



and destruction wrought by the Sri Lankan army was much more extensive than previously revealed. As one visitor to Jaffna observed, the Tamils liked the peace but not the peace accord. For the first time in years the Colombo/Jaffna train was running again, allowing Tamils in the south to visit their families. Fish and onions from Jaffna soon started turning up in the Colombo market as Tamil and Sinhala merchants re-established trade.

Meanwhile, other Tamil militant groups, who are mostly more favourable to the Indians than the Tigers, tried to re-establish themselves. But in mid-September Tigers carried out attacks in 20 different villages near Batticaloa, killing more than a hundred supporters of rival groups, including people just recently released from the Sri Lankan concentration camps. Then Prabhakaran started quibbling over exactly how much "power" LTTE leaders would get, demanding domination of the new interim administration. The Indians granted them seven out of twelve seats on the ruling body of this paper "Eelam", which in any case was to be an impoverished capitalist puppet regime totally subordinate to India. But the nationalist militants remained unreconciled, and continued to bury their weapons.

On 5 October, the lid completely blew off this uneasy truce. Seventeen Tigers intercepted in the Palk Strait swallowed cyanide suicide capsules after JR's National Security minister Lalith Athulathmudali, a hardliner unhappy with the accord, ordered that they be shipped to Colombo for interrogation. Most of them died immediately. The next day the Tigers shot dead eight Sri Lankan soldiers whom they had been holding prisoner for months, dumping their bodies at Jaffna central bus station.

That night Tamil nationalists went on a rampage of indiscriminate slaughter, murdering more than 200 Sinhalese, mostly civilians – men, women and children – in the Eastern Province. The Colombo/Batticaloa train was stopped, Sinhalese and Muslims were separated out and 40 shot. In the southeast 20 bus passengers were massacred and near Trincomalee 27 others killed in two fishing villages. In one fishing village an old Sinhalese woman described how laughing Tamils blew her husband's head off with machine guns. These widespread and calculated acts of indefensible terrorism sent thousands of Sinhalese fleeing their homes in the heavily interpenetrated Eastern and North Central Provinces. At this point, Indian High Commissioner J N Dixit announced that India would turn its guns on the Tamils; shoot-to-kill orders were issued and Tiger strongholds would be wiped out. The drive on Jaffna began.

But if the Indians thought they would get a quick victory they were mistaken. The Tigers have waged a fierce and fanatical resistance, at times halting the Indian advance completely. The original schedule to take control of Jaffna in five days was revised to ten, and fresh troops and weapons have been rushed in to bolster the Indian forces. At Jaffna University, the Tigers caught an elite helicopter force in the open and machine-gunned 30 soldiers.

India insists that it will stop at nothing short of unconditional surrender by the Tigers. But the

Tigers are a guerrilla army. There are now reports of attacks on the advancing Indian troops from behind, and the fighting may well continue "behind the lines" long after the Indians capture the area. On 13 October, an American State Department spokesman commended this "firm and effective action against these militant groups" (*India Abroad*, 23 October). On 26 October, Jaffna was taken.

Echoing Reagan's State Department, the president of the Eelam Tamil Association of America whitewashed the Indian campaign as "a disciplinary action" justifiably aimed at bringing the Tamil militants "into line in getting the peace accord going" (*India Abroad*, 23 October). It is notable that as soon as Rajiv Gandhi moved against them, the Tigers lost much of their traditional support among

Eelam!" The slogan was to address the likelihood of a bloodbath by the Indian army and to reassert the right of Tamil Eelam, for which the Spartacist League/Lanka (sympathising section of the iSt) has fought, against the vicious backlash of Sinhalese racism.

From July 1983 and before, in our press and in demonstrations and marches around the globe we put forward slogans advising against illusions in the Gandhis. We warned, "Remember the fate of the Mukti Bahini" – the Bangladeshi liberation fighters who were put down by Mrs Gandhi – and pointed to the Golden Temple massacre of Sikhs in Amritsar in 1984. Our warnings were met with hostility by the various Tamil petty-bourgeois nationalists, whose "armed struggle strategy" was fundamentally aimed at provoking

Lanka. Yet an alliance with the strategic Indian Tamil estate workers could have been a critical component in uniting all sectors of the oppressed in Lanka as well as the toilers of India in a struggle for social emancipation.

While the Tamil guerrillas in the early '80s rigorously limited their attacks to Lankan state targets, their nationalist strategy inevitably led to indiscriminate terror against Sinhalese civilians. The massacre of 150 unarmed Sinhalese civilians at the holy city of Anuradhapura in May 1985 marked a watershed. Today, the Tigers adopt Zionist methods in the Eastern Province, driving out the Sinhalese and Muslims to ensure a Tamil majority. The government has for years colonized the province with Sinhalese to successfully overturn the pre-existing Tamil majority. The Tigers in turn demand that all Sinhalese colonized since 1982 be expelled, and their gunmen make no distinction.

Not surprisingly, given their perspective to become the new rulers of their own statelet, the various nationalist groups have also engaged in bloody internecine warfare aimed at securing a monopoly of political power, with the Tigers gaining the upper hand over the years. In 1985 they murdered two former MPs from the moderate bourgeois parliamentarist TULF. In 1986 they wiped out more than 150 militants of the TELO group, and delivered bloody body blows to the rival EPRLF and PLOTE groups.

Now, in the Sinhala-dominated south of Lanka, the UNP government is under assault from the same communalist forces that it itself fomented. Even as Gandhi arrived in Colombo to sign the accord, a member of JR's honour guard attacked the Indian prime minister with a rifle butt. In the subsequent anti-accord riots, state property, nationalized services and cooperatives were the particular targets of the enraged communalist mobs. In the forefront of this opposition is the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) of Mrs Bandaranaike, who smashed the 1971 New Left JVP insurrection. Today that same JVP, now rabidly communalist, is allied with Mrs B and the Buddhist monks are once again the shock troops of Sinhalese-communalist reaction.

In addition there is a shadowy and sinister terrorist organisation, the People's Patriotic Movement. The "PPM" claimed responsibility for the 18 August grenade attack on a government caucus meeting which killed two and left both Prime Minister Premadasa and Athulathmudali wounded. Yet the assailant has not been caught. Last week a PPM bomb placed in the offices of the JSS, the government's strikebreaking "trade union", killed three. A former Communist Party MP in the southern town of Matara was shot and seriously wounded. And the newspaper offices of both the CP and the social-democratic LSSP have been attacked with grenades and dynamite.

At the heart of the decline of the once-strong workers organisations of Lanka was their capitulation to Sinhalese chauvinism in the form of popular-front alliances with bourgeois forces they falsely promoted as "anti-imperialist", like the SLFP, architects of the "Sinhala Only" language policy. To this day the CP and LSSP (and its offspring, the NSSP) refuse to fight

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Workers Hammer

**International Spartacist tendency has repeatedly warned against reliance on bloody Indian bourgeoisie.**

bourgeois politicians of south India's Tamil Nadu state. In fact one of the largest contingents of the Indian force in Jaffna is drawn from the Madras regiment from Tamil Nadu.

The Indian onslaught has wreaked unparalleled destruction and devastation in the Jaffna area. A doctor at the Jaffna Teachers Hospital reported that "the situation in Jaffna town is worse than anyone can imagine". Seventy-six bodies had been brought to the hospital just in the first four days of the fighting and he was certain of at least another 100 civilian dead. The desperation of Jaffna Tamils in the face of this is expressed in an appeal by 14 Jaffna civil servants, pointing to "indescribable bombing and shelling and aerial strafing" in which "almost 700 innocent civilians have died" and pathetically pleading that the butcher Jayewardene intervene with India on behalf of the Tamils (*New York Times*, 20 October)!

#### **FOR WORKERS INTERNATIONALISM!**

The international Spartacist tendency discussed the looming crisis in Lanka last month at a meeting of the International Secretariat held in conjunction with the Spartacist League/US National Conference. The discussion was prompted by a thoughtful written contribution submitted by an SL/US comrade to our pre-conference discussion and resulted in a decision to propose to our tendency the slogan "Indian troops out of

a bloody response by the Lankan regime in order to force India to act. Even after the Indian army had been slaughtering Tamils for a week, a Tiger-dominated demonstration in London on 18 October still appealed to Gandhi's India! A leaflet for the demonstration denounced India's "hasty genocidal military action" which "even surpasses Sinhalese state atrocities" – only to conclude with the pathetic plea: "India, land of Gandhian pacifism and leader among world's democracies, come to your senses, stop the slaughter."

The Tigers et al were not ignorant of the fate of the Sikhs and the Bangladeshis at the hands of the Indian bourgeoisie. The truth is, as with all nationalists, they didn't give a damn as long as "their nation" was not on the receiving end. One disillusioned Tamil nationalist interviewed in the *Lanka Guardian* (1 October) observed:

"...we were pawns in a larger chess game, though we thought we were going to liberate Tamil Eelam.... We thought we were the most intelligent, hard-working, educated group of people in the whole country. And we couldn't see something that should have been obvious to a little child."

With their perspective of carving out Eelam, they were profoundly unconcerned with the plight of the island's "Indian Tamils" (so called because they were imported from India by the British over the last century and more to work the tea estates) in the highlands of Sri

# Coup threats and starvation "democracy"

## Argentina: Morenoites' popular-front shell game

Easter Week, 1987: Argentine officers rose up demanding amnesty for the torture, kidnapping and mass murder they committed during six years of their dirty war against the left and workers movement. Thousands of angry Argentines surrounded the Campo de Mayo base outside Buenos Aires calling for the firing squad for the *milicos*. Half a million streamed into the Plaza de Mayo in front of the presidential palace, the Casa Rosada (Pink House), in a monster rally to "defend democracy" against the military putsch. Would there be a coup or an insurrection? President Raul Alfonsin was able to squeak out of a tight spot, getting the officers to stand down and the masses to go home, by deftly combining chest-thumping demagoguery and capitulation to the mutineers' demands.

September 1987: Six months later Alfonsin's Radical Party was routed at the polls, losing control of Congress and 20 out of 22 provincial governorships. The big winners were the opposition Peronists as the Argentine masses "punished" the government for its starvation austerity policies, its submission to the dictates of the IMF bankers and its conciliation of the erstwhile military dictators. And now? The workers continue to groan under the burden of triple-digit inflation together with a staggering £36 billion imperialist debt whose interest payments alone leech the economy dry. And you can already hear the sound of jackboots marching. Right-wing terror squads are at work again, and two more military mutinies followed hard on the heels of the mid-term elections.

The situation in crisis-wracked Argentina cries out for a revolutionary leadership to mobilise the combative workers movement to sweep away the perennially coup-plotting military and their capitalist masters once and for all. Yet what passes for a left opposition is a grossly legalist and chauvinist version of social democracy. The Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) dubs itself "the largest Trotskyist party in the world". In the recent elections the MAS doubled its vote in the capital region. But this creature of the political chameleon Nahuel Moreno, who died earlier this year, is marked by endless zigzagging in and out of political blocs with the Peronists and other bourgeois forces. What's urgently needed in Argentina is a genuinely Trotskyist party, forged in struggle against popular-frontist class collaboration, to lead the proletariat to power.

For seven years following the Videla coup of 1976, Argentina was in the grip of a bloody military dictatorship that slaughtered up to



Buenos Aires, April 1987: Argentine working masses turn out in force to demonstrate against right-wing military revolts.

30,000 "disappeared" militants. In the aftermath of the army's humiliating defeat in the reactionary 1982 Falklands/Malvinas war between the junta butchers and "Iron Lady" Thatcher's Britain, the generals decided it was time to cut their losses and ceded power. To this day, the Morenoites join Reagan in hailing this as a "democratic revolution" (*Correo Internacional*, May 1987). In fact the military's retreat to the barracks, in Argentina and elsewhere throughout South America, was aimed at "burning" civilian politicians by saddling them with responsibility for the catastrophic impact of the debt crisis. Now the generals wait and watch, threatening the civilian politicians and occasionally testing the waters.

### AVENGE VICTIMS OF JUNTA TERROR!

Last December Alfonsin sought to put an end to the turmoil in the military by decreeing a "*punto final*" (full stop) to new prosecutions of "dirty war" criminals after a deadline. The law had the opposite effect, as hundreds of cases were brought against notorious butchers in uniform. In the April near-coup, officers demanded a complete amnesty and the resignation of the armed forces chief of staff, considered too soft on the civilian "enemy". When the masses took to the streets to confront the mutineers, the "constitutionalist" head of the armed forces warned of the danger of a "*pueblada*" (popular uprising) that would lead to the "dissolution of the army". Alfonsin rushed by helicopter to talk with the mutineers at the Campo de Mayo, returning to the balcony of

the Casa Rosada to announce: "Compatriots, Happy Easter! It's all over, go home now."

The seditious officers, whom Alfonsin called "heroes of the Malvinas war", had "desisted" because the president gave in to their demands. The prosecutions stopped as Congress passed a "due obedience" law amnestying all military

formal declaration that their dirty war was "positive".

The "due obedience" law was the direct result of the so-called Act of Democratic Compromise, signed in the midst of the military rebellion, in which Alfonsin secured the support of the Peronist opposition, big business' Argentine Industrial Union, the landlords' Rural Society, the CGT labour federation...and the pro-Moscow Communist Party. This pact pledged its signatories to "support the normal development of the institutions of the state" and above all to turn a blind eye to military atrocities with the formula "due recognition of the levels of responsibility" for "acts of the past". The courageous Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, who have demonstrated for years against the assassins who killed their sons and daughters, denounced the "pact of infamy".

Far from "stopping" coup attempts, Alfonsin's April "triumph" only whetted the appetite of the officers for more concessions. Following the Easter Week mutiny, there were smaller barracks uprisings in provincial cities and a wave of bombings throughout the country. In June a leader of the Communist Party was found dead in a Buenos Aires suburb, a bullet through his head. Two weeks after the 6 September elections, a base near Buenos Aires revolted over

Britain: Spartacist League calls for revolutionary defeatism in Falklands/Malvinas conflict.



men who claimed to be "following orders", ie, virtually everybody. Thus the infamous torturer of the Naval Mechanics School, Captain Alfredo Astiz, who threw a nun out of a plane over the Atlantic Ocean, was freed. (Meanwhile Mario Firmenich, leader of the left-Peronist Montonero guerrillas, was recently condemned to life, and other leftists jailed under the junta continue to languish in prison.) Now the military brass are demanding an even more explicit amnesty and a

the early transfer of an officer who had refused orders to mobilise his troops against the Campo de Mayo rebellion. This was followed by a provocative unscheduled "military exercise" at an arsenal in the capital. Currently a video titled "Operation Dignity" glorifying the Easter mutiny is openly circulating in the garrisons.

Undoubtedly, much of the Morenoite MAS' support in the recent elections - in the capital and Buenos Aires province they beat out

a CP-led popular-front slate by 200,000 votes (about 3 per cent) to 160,000 – came from their refusal to endorse the Act of Democratic Compromise (as did the smaller Partido Obrero). At the huge demonstration in front of the presidential palace during the April crisis, the MAS joined the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo in a dramatic mass walkout when Alfonsín announced he was going to negotiate with the military plotters. (The Communist Party also walked out, but walked back in when Alfonsín returned to announce his treacherous "victory".) Yet up to that moment the MAS was in a class-collaborationist front with the CP which signed the "act of surrender".

### MORENOITES: "IN THE CAMP OF THE DICTATORSHIP"

In the 1985 elections the Morenoites formed a "People's Front" (Frente del Pueblo – FREPU) together with the Stalinists and various left-bourgeois splinters from the Peronist movement. While the Peronists dominate the labour bureaucracy, their movement is bourgeois to the core, following the orders and later the tradition of military strong man General Peron. As its name implies, this is a classical popular front of class betrayal such as Trotsky denounced in Spain, where by tying the workers' organisations to the bourgeoisie it led to bloody defeat in the Civil War. FREPU's empty reformist programme was designed to dovetail with the policy of the bourgeois opposition – calling not for repudiation of the imperialist debt, but for a "moratorium", and only for "purging and democratisation of the Armed Forces".

The Morenoites' admirers abroad pretend that the MAS has resolutely broken with the CP capitulators. Thus Cliff Slaughter's WRP (Workers Revolutionary Party) reported that at a May Day rally in Buenos Aires, MAS spokesman Luis "Zamora's" harshest criticism was of the Communist Party" for signing the "act of capitulation" (*Workers Press*, 16 May). Yet at that moment the MAS was calling on the CP "to unite with us in a left electoral front", while declaring that the Stalinists had suddenly become opponents of the "due obedience" law (*Solidaridad Socialista*, 19 May). And three days after the mid-term election Zamora was pleading with his former bloc partners to reconstitute a left front "based on the programme of the dissolved FREPU" (*Clarín* [Buenos Aires], 10 September).

And the Morenoites' own policy during Easter Week was hardly revolutionary. At the height of the mutiny, MAS leader Zamora repeated the call to "democratise the Armed Forces" (*Clarín*, 18 April). In a subsequent article on "Four Days That Moved Argentina" (*Correo Internacional*, August 1987), they explained this as "a policy of purging the Armed Forces and to prevent new coups d'état or uprisings...." What a fraud! In "The Lesson of Spain" (July 1936), Trotsky denounced the pernicious reformist myth that purging the officer corps can clean up the bourgeois army:

"The danger lies not in the military braggarts and demagogues who openly appear as fascists; incomparably more menacing is the fact that at the approach of

the proletarian revolution the officers' corps becomes the executioner of the proletariat. To eliminate four or five hundred reactionary agitators from the army means to leave everything basically as it was before."

And Trotsky was speaking about the Spanish Republican army then fighting Franco. When it comes to the Argentine army, one of Alfonsín's aides conceded that "the distinction is not between hawks and doves, but between hawks and buzzards" (*San Francisco Examiner*, 28 April)!

But these are trifling matters to the MAS. These reformists have a sordid history of not-so-backhanded support to military and bonapartist regimes. Following the 1976 Videla coup, the Morenoites claimed that the dictatorship was "not inclined toward a policy of 'blood and fire' favoured by the most hardline regimes on the continent" (*Cambio*, 1-15 May 1976), whitewashed the junta as "the most democratic dictatorship of the Southern Cone" (*La Yesca*, May 1976), and insisted the coup was "not a historic defeat for the Argentine proletariat"



Falklands/Malvinas war, 1982: Morenoite article titled "In the military camp of the Argentine dictatorship".

(*Combate Socialista*, 15 October 1976). Two years later, Moreno & Co denounced a campaign "organised outside the country by the ultraleft" (to boycott the World Cup soccer tournament in Buenos Aires) and its "exaggerations and imprecisions about the repressive reality which we endure" (see "Morenoites Front for Bloody Junta", *WV* no 316, 29 October 1982).

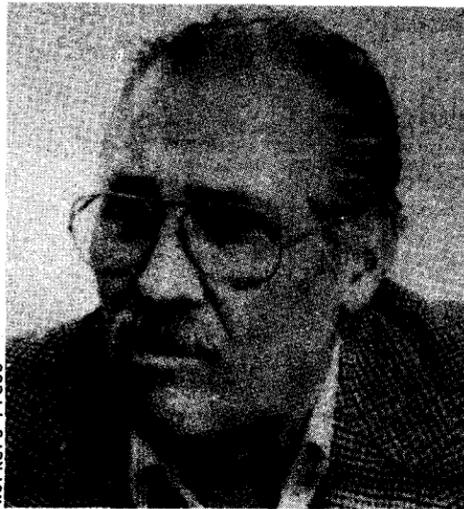
When the Argentine generals launched their military adventure in the desolate Falkland/Malvinas Islands, Moreno's Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST – Socialist Workers Party), the MAS' predecessor, went beyond the nationalist prostration of the rest of the left before the Galtieri junta. *Correo Internacional* (April 1982) carried an enormous headline brazenly proclaiming themselves "In the Military Camp of the Argentine Dictatorship". No wonder a PST leader was invited to a private audience by a high-ranking government official. After hailing that sordid war, called to head off burgeoning workers' protests, Moreno declared that the time had come "to drop as an immediate slogan that of: Down with the dictatorship!" (PST "draft national document", 15 September 1982).

To top it off, Moreno proceeded to dissolve the PST into the social-democratic MAS, insisting that: "It's a matter of building a non-revolutionary, reformist party or front." Meanwhile he was hailing the "great socialist victory" of

Mitterrand in France (*Opción*, May 1981), and "paying homage" to the "heroic" (pro-NATO) party of "compañero Felipe Gonzalez" in Spain (MAS, 15 September and 18 October 1982). Following Alfonsín's 1983 election, the MAS wrote that Argentina was going through a "process of democratic revolution". And when in October 1985 the "starvation democrat" declared a state of siege against the threat of an army coup, MAS shamelessly applauded: "the state of siege is a measure which MAS and all the organisations that defend human rights have been calling for for some time" (quoted in *Prensa Obrera*, 28 October 1985).

### FOR ARGENTINE TROTSKYISM!

The Morenoites and their International Workers League parade their "Trotskyist" pretensions strictly for international consumption. In their home base the MAS looks, talks and acts like social democrats, barely less brazen in their reformism than the craven Argentine Stalinists, cheerleaders for the junta and now for Alfonsín.



Workers Press

The inveterate manoeuvrer Moreno evolved a patented method for reformist takeovers. His lash-up with small-time social democrat Ruben Visconti in 1982, offering a cadre of activists in exchange for the MAS' electoral slot, was a repeat of his 1971 fusion with Juan Carlos Coral's wing of the old Argentine Socialist Party. Back then Moreno claimed the party's programme was "95 per cent Trotskyist"; this time around they didn't bother with a programme, openly admitting the MAS was "reformist".

In April, the Morenoites didn't sign the "Democratic Compromise", but they signed virtually every similar pact for the last 20 years. In 1974, Moreno/Coral's PST, then

allied with Joseph Hansen's reformist American SWP, caused a major scandal in the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat when it signed the infamous "Declaration of the 8" supporting President Peron and the "institutional process" by which Peron sought to strengthen the bonapartist powers of the bourgeois state. Soon thereafter they declared they would "fight for the continuity of this government", even as the Peronists were beginning the "dirty war" with the establishment of the death squads of the Argentine Anticommunist Alliance. A decade later, Moreno & Co laid the basis for their People's Front with the CP by signing a "Multi-party" declaration to "defend and 'deepen' democracy" (*Solidaridad Socialista*, 3 May 1985).

For the Morenoites, politics is like a shell game: out of one popular front, into another; denounce one bourgeois regime, support a second; discard one reformist organisation to prepare a subsequent reincarnation. As we have documented in our *Moreno Truth Kit* (published in 1980), Moreno's zigzag course was in reality constant tailism. When Peronism was in vogue in the 1950s and early '60s, he put out *Palabra Obrera* (Workers Word) as an "organ of revolutionary workers Peronism", published "under the discipline of General Peron and the Peronist High Council". After a Guevarist fling, he drew back from actual guerrilla struggle and went into social democracy. Taking on a left face in exile, in 1979, Moreno posed as a super-Sandinista in Nicaragua until the FSLN booted out his Simon Bolívar Brigade. Now it's social democracy again, but without "Democratic Compromises" for fear of denunciation by the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo.

Breaking from capitalist politics is literally a matter of life and death for Argentine workers. So long as the capitalist system survives, the bourgeois officer corps will continue to breed bloody military repression. Today key sections of the combative proletariat of Argentina – one of the continent's most industrialized countries – are fed up with Peronism, a bourgeois agency stifling the working class with the aid of nationalist demagoguery and a venal union bureaucracy backed up by brass-knuckled goon squads. While the Morenoite betrayers continue to do their best to make "Trotskyism" a dirty word in Argentina, the urgent need is for a genuine Trotskyist party to lead a socialist revolution, the only way to end the bloody cycle of "starvation democracy" and military coups. ■

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# SWP: anti-anti-fascist league

Colour them yellow. Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party (SWP) has taken its "ignore the fascists" line to its obscene conclusion in Sheffield. The SWP has not restricted itself to actively attempting to discourage other leftists, members of workers and minority organisations, students and youth from mobilising against the NF scum menacing the city centre. This anti-Soviet Labourite reformist outfit has been literally running away from the Exchange Street site where the fascists gather every Saturday. And they are not just running from the fascists. They are running from the Spartacist League and those militants who have joined us in a united defence effort against the fascist threat.

For a year, SWP salesmen suffered attacks by fascist skinhead punks in the Sheffield city centre - and the SWP said and did nothing. Saturday after Saturday, SWPers endured whatever was meted out to them by the fascist punks, more in the spirit of religious pacifists than ostensible revolutionists. They were hit, they had things thrown at them. Nonetheless, they faithfully stuck to the instructions contained in the SWP internal discussion bulletin on how to react to fascists: "If they attack a SW sale, make a tactical retreat and start again the following week" (*Discussion Bulletin*, August 1984). When some months ago we in the Spartacist League showed up to sell at Exchange Street and discovered the fascist menace we approached the SWP as well as other left organisations for a united defence at the site. Nothing doing, said the SWP.

Anyone who asked them has been told by the SWP that there aren't any fascists in the first place and in the second place they are no threat. The whole thing was a Spartacist fabrication, whined the SWP while its salesmen pushed their reformist rag under the protection of the defence teams we organised. "Discussions" with SWP-ers took on a bizarre quality: "we were never attacked and it wasn't three months ago, it was four".

When forced to "defend" their wretched scabbing role in Sheffield, SWPers will hark back to the days of the Anti Nazi League (ANL) when, the SWP mobilised thousands "in the streets". The problem being that the ANL mobilised them in the wrong streets - consciously diverting anti-fascist militants into inane carnivals far away from the NF provocations. A particularly infamous case was in the autumn of 1978 when the ANL carnival took place at the opposite end of London from where the fascists marched - 60,000 to 100,000 people "rocked against racism" while the NF goose-stepped through Brick Lane. The Spartacist League was among those who mobilised at Brick Lane - but the anti-fascist forces were far too weak to stop the NF. As we wrote at the time:

"The SWP consciously used its authority to keep as many people as possible out of the East End, safely listening to music and 'anti-Nazi' speeches on the other side of London. Moreover, it did

this by lying. At midday, when no more than 500 anti-fascist militants were in the Brick Lane area, SWP leader and ANL secretary Paul Holborow assured the crowd in Hyde Park that everything was under control in the East End: 'Several thousand anti-fascists are already there, shoulder to shoulder with the Bengali community...' Exactly as was intended, virtually nobody came from Hyde Park to Brick Lane." (*Spartacist Britain*, October 1978)

At that time, the SWP figured the liberals and Labour politicians like one ANL leading light Neil Kinnock would not support its ANL if they actually mobilised to smash the fascists. True enough. Today, the SWP has even dropped the pretence it had in the ANL days. Now its policy is militant do-nothingism. And again this requires conscious lying - not least to its members. The SWP policy is criminal and translates, simply put, into protection of the fascist punks from those who would deal with them.

Fortunately, the SWP has not succeeded. Despite an increasingly hysterical SWP disinformation campaign, our pounding away at the issue got a response. Particularly after a fascist attack on a Labour Committee on Ireland meeting held on the Sheffield University campus, a number of groups and individuals were in no mood to ignore the fascists to death and joined us at Exchange Street (see article, this issue). On Saturday, 24 October the following spectacle said it all about the SWP: the moment the Spartacist sales and defence team showed up at Exchange Street, the SWP fell over its feet packing up and running away. Students from the Sheffield University campus, members of the Black Workers Group of NALGO, members of the Sheffield Defence Campaign, members of the Workers Power group, individual unionists from post office and the NUM turned out as part of the united defence effort. The fascists stayed away. As for the SWP only the dust kicked up by their hasty departure left a clue that they had been there. The SWP knew there might be reinforcements for the anti-fascist defence. A few days before, a number of NALGO workers were, while drinking in a local pub, confronted by SWPers heatedly trying

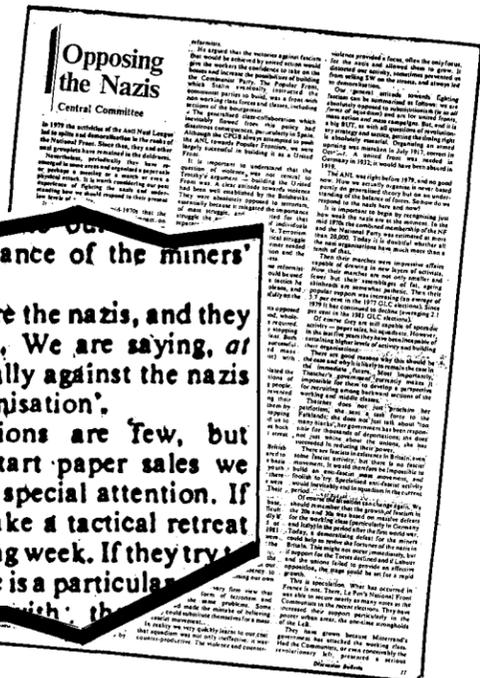
to discourage them from participating.

The fascist attack at Sheffield University hospitalised one student; but the SWP argued at the meeting called around this outrage that the fascists were no problem, when they do well at the polls they might be a problem, but bashing up meetings doesn't rate as a "threat" for the SWP. Taken on face value, this argument is the worst sort of parliamentary cretinism: the fas-

fronted him about the SWP's shameful record in Sheffield.) Its anti-Soviet Labourite politics and theoretical justification for gross reformism (the "downturn") dictate such scabbing. That's why the SWP held hands with the Labour Club to prevent militant students from chasing Enoch Powell off the stage at Bristol University last year. For the same reason, it campaigned for the racist, NATO-loving scab Kinnock in the recent election. Kinnock

**SWP Discussion Bulletin (August 1984): Tony Cliff's "downturn" means SWPers turn the other cheek to fascist attacks.**

**the central importance of the miners' strike.**  
**We are not saying 'ignore the nazis, and they will necessarily go away'. We are saying, at present, 'organise specifically against the nazis and we'll build their organisation'.**  
**The practical conclusions are few, but important. If the nazis start paper sales we should not pay them any special attention. If they attack a SW sale, make a tactical retreat and start again the following week. If they try to organise a march or if there is a particular matter with the**



cist arsenal does not consist of electoral campaigns. The fascists organise and recruit on the basis of action - the firebombing of Asian homes and shops, the beating of black people, physical assaults on sales and meetings of leftists. They're not a political debating society: they're genocidal terrorists whose programme is bloody race-terror, the physical extermination of all on their hit list. To combat fascist bands requires mobilisations of the organised workers movement and oppressed - no reliance on the capitalist state! In 1979, SWPer Blair Peach was killed by the cops while opposing the NF swine.

Tony Cliff, Duncan Hallas and the rest of the SWP leadership are not pushing their anti-anti-fascist line out of political ignorance. (SWPers might ask Duncan Hallas about his recent tour of the United States, where our comrades con-

knifed the heroic 1984-85 miners strike; the SWP did its small bit along the same lines as SWPers crossed miners picket lines and bragged about it. At the Benn meeting of Labour "lefts" in Chesterfield on 25 October SWPers put their reactionary "neither Washington nor Moscow" line into practice by swinishly heckling the Soviet delegation there. That just about sums up the SWP: a "socialist alternative" that votes Kinnock, engages in polite chummy windbaggy with the Labour "left" and singles out the Russian delegates for shrill anti-Communist accolades to Solidarnosc - the CIA and Vatican's favourite "union". A "best builder" of every liberal, Labourite sanctions demonstration, the Russia-hating SWP's line would logically lead them to demand not only the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, as they do, but in southern Africa to demand the withdrawal of Cuban troops defending black Angola from the apartheid invaders.

From refusing to defend the Soviet workers state against imperialism to refusing to defend its own members against fascists, the SWP's posture as an "alternative" to Labourite treachery is utterly artificial. Sharing with the Labour politicians and their "left" apologists a fundamental political identity on all the key questions, the SWP's sometime "militant" veneer has been stripped away in Sheffield to reveal the rotten social democratic core. These yellow socialists must be politically buried in the struggle to forge a Bolshevik party in Britain, a party capable of and dedicated to leading the workers and oppressed in battle against the fascist filth spawned by decaying, racist capitalism. ■



SWPer Blair Peach was killed by cops at anti-fascist protest in 1979. Today's SWP says "ignore the fascists" and spits on his memory.

# Thatcher...

(continued from page 1)

class struggle is urgently necessary. And it won't be led by Judas Kinnock & Co, Thatcher's doormats, and sworn enemies of militant workers struggles.

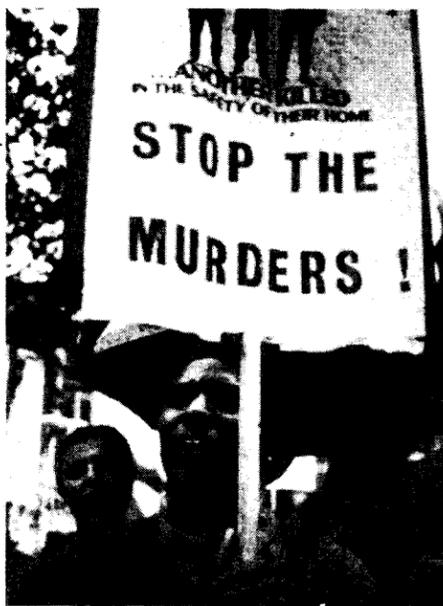
## SMASH TORY THIRD TERM REACTION!

When social services secretary John Moore announced in Blackpool that all "sacred cows" would be swept away - he meant it with a vengeance. Moore has proclaimed that child benefit would remain frozen at £7.25 a week and that its future as a universal benefit was now in doubt. In fact, the £120 million it would cost to keep the benefit in line with inflation is peanuts, even for the British economy. Thatcher's overall aim is the wholesale introduction of "means testing" in order to humiliate and cheat the most vulnerable - particularly single mothers with young children. As the *Observer* (1 November) editorialised: "Next April the whole range of social service benefits is to be altered and the needy will not know what hit them. Amid the confusion, the Government hopes that the most inarticulate section of society will not be able to draw attention to their plight."

Abortion rights are on the chopping block as well. Liberal David Alton has introduced a bill to slash the existing 28-week time limit on abortions to 18 weeks. The Alton bill is the opening shot in the abolition of abortion altogether. It is backed by the so-called Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC) - the same people who fronted for the Catholic Church's successful drive for the constitutional banning of abortion in the Republic of Ireland. It singles out women from outside England - especially from

Catholic countries - as well as teenagers, pregnant women carrying malformed fetuses. And like all anti-abortion legislation it attacks the working class and poor: the rich will be able to get an abortion without visiting the backstreet butchers.

Since the passing in 1967 of the present law, over two and a half million abortions have been performed in Britain. Almost half of the post-18-week abortions were performed on



City Limits  
South London protest against racist cop killings.

women from other countries, particularly Spain. At least 2000 women travel from Northern Ireland (where the present law does not apply) and who knows how many from the south of Ireland.

In Britain itself National Health Service (NHS) red tape or funding cuts are some of the main causes of late abortions. A 1984 medical survey discovered that "20 per cent of abortions performed after 20 weeks were for

women who sought help before the twelfth week of pregnancy" (*Independent*, 25 September). Fifty per cent of very late abortions are performed on teenagers. It is often young women who are afraid to admit or simply do not understand until very late that they are pregnant - or women who are suddenly abandoned and cannot cope with a child in their situation - who seek late abortions. If the Alton bill becomes law, these women will become prime victims in the resurgence of the butchery of backstreet abortions.

Alton's bill also cruelly targets women who discover they are carrying malformed fetuses. Tests for disabilities such as amniocentesis cannot be done until the sixteenth week of pregnancy and the results take at least three weeks since the cells need to be cultured. Under the 18-week limit, amniocentesis would cease to be of use in the diagnosis of chromosome disorders. The same problem applies to the ultra-sound scan method of detecting many anatomical abnormalities in the foetus.

Meanwhile, the NHS continues to crumble, slashed by Labour and Tory governments alike. Birmingham lab assistants have to bring their own microscopes to work because the equipment is so out of date. Kidney patients are being murdered for lack of dialysis machines. Two thousand women die each year from cervical cancer - one of the highest rates in Europe. Capitalism kills the sick and the weak, especially here.

The condition of women is an index of the social progress of society - and by that criterion Thatcher's Britain is retrogressing at a rapid pace. We defend the existing law against attack - but what is needed is *free abortion on demand!* Free, quality health care for all!

The "right to life" reactionaries are most probably to be found among those howling for a return of the gallows. While the capital punishment debate is not likely to lead to its institution yet, the threat is there. Meanwhile, their cops carry out "executions" on the streets of the inner cities routinely. Even Lord Gifford, the barrister who chaired the Broadwater Farm Inquiry, asked: "What is this great propensity that black people have to die, when they come in contact with the police?" (*City Limits*, 22 October). The prisons are overflowing - over 55,000 fill the prisons in Great Britain. London prisoners on remand are being kept in police cells as far away as Cornwall because the jails are so crowded. Disproportionately, the inmates are blacks, Irish and Scottish. In Scotland, where barbaric conditions have sparked desperate prison riots: "Nearly 50 per cent of...prisoners are inside for non-payment of fines; 20 per cent are on remand awaiting trial; a further 20 per cent are in prison for drink related crimes" (*Guardian*, 6 October).

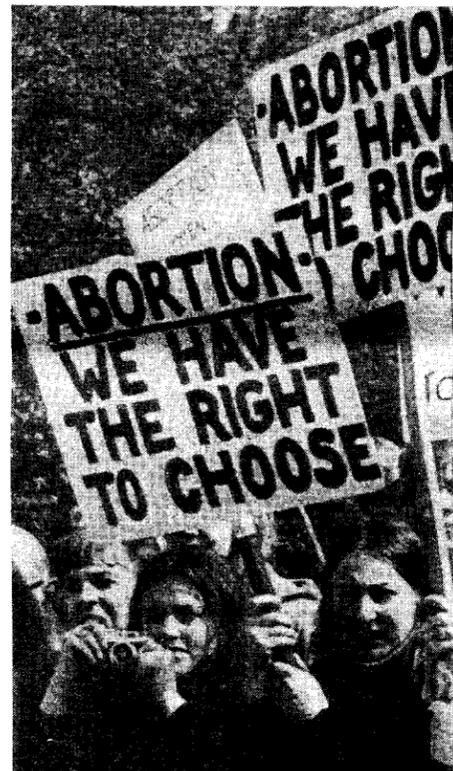
In the wake of Hungerford, Home Secretary Douglas Hurd has further tightened gun control laws and is now cracking down on street weapons. If you're carrying so much as a Swiss army knife, you have to justify its utility for your work - and the cops can stop and search you at any time. This is a version of the notorious SUS laws for whom ghetto youth and the unemployed will be the main target. Hurd even tried to get rid of the "right to silence" - but had to back down on that one. All these measures - including the ever-widening government censorship of the media - are aimed at increasing the powers of the state and its monopoly on armed force in order to intimidate and regiment the population into submission.

It's not just pregnant women, pensioners, young people and the sick in

the cross hairs: they're going after the unions, too. The proposed new law on unions, amongst other obscenities, would outlaw the closed shop and throw even strike ballots out the window by "outlawing" the unions' right to discipline their members. "Rollback" of the "welfare state" is just for starters - Thatcher & Co have big union-busting plans. British capitalism's Labour lackeys have paved the way for a massive assault on the organised working class by their endless preaching to lie down and die and wait for the next general election.

## COMMUNISM: BRITAIN'S LAST, BEST HOPE

Thatcher's reactionary third term agenda is the domestic reflection of the drive towards war against the Soviet Union. There is every reason to expect social struggle in this country as the screws tighten on the population. But the lesson of the miners strike was that without a revolutionary leadership dedicated to the seizure of proletarian state power, the workers will not win. Decent health care, jobs for all, elementary rights: all these require the destruction of capitalism. To make reformism work you need a socialist revolution. An old socialist noted some years back, on behalf of the working people, that everything the bourgeoisie doesn't have nailed down we are going to steal, and what

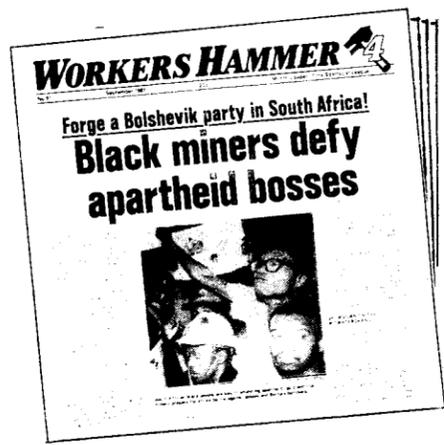


Sunday Times  
Demonstrators defend abortion rights. SL says: Free abortion on demand!

is nailed down we are going to nationalise. By nationalise we do not mean Labourite bailouts of the parasites who have run Britain to ruin - but expropriation without a penny in compensation. The workers built and produced everything: it belongs to us.

Kinnock is an unspeakable racist scab, fully in line with the NATO imperialists' anti-Soviet war drive. A syphilitic chain extends from Kinnock through the Labour "lefts" to the fake "socialist" groupings - most of whom are virulently anti-Soviet reformists or pathetic whipped-dog Stalinist reformists. What is needed is the forging of an authentic Bolshevik party, capable of splitting the workers from their Labour misleaders and regrouping the oppressed and disenfranchised under the red banner of proletarian revolution. Such a party would fight for the unconditional defence of the Soviet workers state against NATO imperialism and for international socialist revolution throughout the capitalist world. Britain is overripe for proletarian revolution - the only solution to capitalist barbarism. ■

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## WRP...

(continued from page 3)

length and breadth of Britain for this anti-union, anti-Communist act. This is one Healyite atrocity that Slaughter's WRP has never denounced.

The Spartacist tendency has consistently fought for unconditional military defence of the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. Against the imperialist outcry over Afghanistan, we proclaimed, "Hail Red Army! Extend the Social Gains of October to the Afghan Peoples!" When Solidarnosc threatened an overturn of the collectivised property forms in Poland, we said: "Smash Solidarnosc counter-revolution!" We uniquely defended Scargill for his statement that Solidarnosc was "anti-socialist" against Fleet Street's vendetta. We have argued, not least in numerous direct confrontations with the Slaughter WRP, on the dual nature of the Soviet bureaucracy.

The Stalinist perspective of "socialism in one country" subordinates the struggle for international extension of the revolution to the narrow nationalist interests of the bureaucracy, expressed most clearly in the endless futile attempts at "peaceful coexistence" with rapacious imperialists like Reagan. But, precisely because it does rest parasitically on the property forms issuing out of October, the bureaucracy is at times and through its own means compelled to defend those social gains. In "The Class Nature of the Soviet State" (1 October 1933), Trotsky explained:

"Nine-tenths of the strength of the Stalinist apparatus lies not in itself but in the social changes wrought by the victorious revolution. Still, this consideration alone does not decide the question, but it does bear a great methodological significance.

and return the homeland of October to the internationalist traditions of Lenin's Bolsheviks. As the Bolsheviks well knew, only the extension of the socialist revolution internationally can ultimately defend the gains of the revolution. And only those who defend the existing gains can fight for their extension.



no credit  
**Soviet soldiers fight Islamic feudal reactionaries. Spartacists say: Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!**

The founding principles of the Fourth International are utterly irrelevant to the Slaughterites/Morenoites, of course. Their motivations are considerably more mundane. Out in the cold since the spectacular departure of erstwhile "founder-leader" G Healy two years ago and David North's subsequent repossession of their so-called "International Committee", Slaughter & Co are doubtless looking for some comforting international. For their part, the Morenoites see a chance to establish more than a toehold in the English-speaking world. The Morenoites have a fair bit of experience in "reorganisations" of this sort – includ-

## Moreno, Varga: anti-Semites

The prospective bloc partners of the Slaughterite WRP – the Morenoites and Michel Varga – are anything but sterling examples of revolutionary principles and morals. After years in Gerry Healy's outfit, this probably doesn't bother WRPers much. But some of the "tested" cadre of the WRP might blush at the overt anti-Semitic statements of the dubious Varga and Nahuel Moreno, the deceased founder-leader of the IWL.

Varga consciously solicited funds from sources functioning as agents of US imperialism between 1957 and 1960-61. During this time, he also penned some revolting anti-Semitic diatribes in correspondence with co-thinkers; below are two examples:

"About my characterization to Zinner, I'm not an anti-semite either, but let's look things in the face: the Jewish question exists. I don't hate them, but I'm fed up with their trying to act in our name...."

– Nagy/Varga to Sztaray Zoltan, 4 June 1958

"In our reply we should give the impression that he is a provocateur... In short, it is time to exclude this dirty yid from the cultural milieu."

– Nagy/Varga to Joska Molnar, 4 March 1959

A full account of the findings of the Commission of Inquiry into the Varga Affair is contained in *Spartacist* no 24, Autumn 1977.

Moreno's shameful anti-Semitism is also a matter of record. He condemned the entire Hebrew-speaking people of Israel for the crimes of their

rulers. Writing in *Correo Internacional* (September 1982), Moreno responded to some of his Chilean comrades who had called for a "constituent assembly in Palestine on the basis of the destruction of the Zionist state". His line:

"If you want to insinuate that this constituent assembly would be made with non-Zionist Jewish residents, we have already answered this implicitly. Such imaginary inhabitants do not exist."

Simply put, for Moreno, all Israeli Jews are Zionists and have no right to exist. This is the same genocidal logic the Zionists themselves employ in their campaign of terror against the Palestinian people. As he put it explicitly "today Arab racism against Israel is progressive". In Argentina, Moreno & Co apologised for the junta of General Videla whose thugs desecrated numerous synagogues, arrested and tortured many Jews. Moreno & Co's line shows that their adaptation to the "true national characteristics" of their own bourgeoisie knows no limits. Indeed, the very same general Peron so beloved by the Morenoites, a fervent admirer of the Italian duce Mussolini, offered gainful employment after WWII to hordes of Nazi war criminals to "reorganise" the Argentine army and political police.

After years of political subordination to squalid Near Eastern despots, the WRP leadership may be inured to the documented anti-Semitic garbage spewed by their fusion partners. Readers of *Workers Press* should not expect to learn much about the real politics and histories of the WRP's bedfellows. One of the rules of these revolving door "fusions" is that "the word is made of silver, but silence is made of gold".



Workers Vanguard  
**New York, September 1981: SL anti-Solidarnosc demo. Genuine Trotskyists defend the USSR against Reagan/Thatcher's Cold War drive.**

It shows us how and why the Stalinist apparatus could completely squander its meaning as the international revolutionary factor and yet preserve a part of its progressive meaning as the gatekeeper of the social conquests of the proletarian revolution. This dual position – we may add – represents in itself one of the manifestations of the unevenness of historical development."

For Trotskyists, this understanding of the contradictory nature of the bureaucratically degenerated Soviet workers state is expressed programmatically by our unconditional military defence of the USSR against imperialism and internal counterrevolution, by our call for proletarian political revolution to oust the bureaucrats

ing their fusion with Lambert, supposedly the most historic event since the October Revolution, which lasted a year – so the "four professors" who run the WRP shouldn't expect much to look forward to in retirement.

In his powerful "Speech on the Russian Question" during the 1939-40 fight against the Burnham/Shachtman Soviet-defeatist opposition, American Trotskyist leader James P Cannon said: "The question of the Russian Revolution – and the Soviet state which is its creation – has drawn a sharp dividing line through the labor movement of all countries for 22 years." Whatever these Healyite has-beens and Morenoite confidence men pull off, it's going to be on the wrong side of that divide. ■

## Chesterfield...

(continued from page 12)

Radio Free Europe would love.

Not to be undone, *Socialist Organiser* (SO) has published an open letter to miners leader Arthur Scargill, taking him to task for applauding the Soviet delegates at Chesterfield. In particular, the letter from SO (which recently jettisoned its formal position in defence of the USSR) attacks Scargill for refusing to support Polish Solidarnosc. This is hardly the first time we have heard this. At the TUC conference held on the eve of the miners strike, the Fleet Street press – aided and abetted by Gerry Healy's *NewsLine* – savagely red-baited Scargill for his correct assertion that Solidarnosc is anti-socialist. The trade union tops eagerly joined in the anti-Scargill chorus, sending an unmistakable message to Thatcher that the miners would be betrayed by the British labour tops. This was soon borne out in the course of the strike.

As for Solidarnosc, it openly proclaimed its enthusiasm for Thatcher. "A wise and brave woman", declared Lech Walesa in the heat of the strike.

At the beginning of the decade, with the onset of renewed Cold War, the routine workings of the Labour Party threatened to become unhinged. That section of the old guard led by David Owen walked out and a cleavage opened up between the "little England" socialists of the Labour left and the pro-CIA right wing. This culminated in a bitter contest for

deputy leader between Tony Benn and Denis Healey. While counterposing our line of unconditional defence of the Soviet Union to Benn's pacifist unilateral disarmament schemes, and warning that a Labour Party without the CIA/NATO connection would still betray, we wanted to see the Bennites forced to take over leadership of the Labour Party. We sought to expose the Labour "lefts" in order to facilitate a regrouping under Bolshevik banners of militants then influenced by these "lefts". Our slogan of "drive the CIA fifth column out of the Labour Party" infuriated the "lefts", who were attempting to maintain a precarious party unity. The Chesterfield by-election in early 1984, in which Healey and the party tops ran Benn's campaign, signalled reconciliation. (Benn pointedly rejected our offer to campaign for him.) The onset of the miners strike and bitter class struggle precluded further posturing for the "lefts." As Tony Benn makes abundantly clear, he is today not remotely interested in fighting the right-wing party leaders.

Nor should anyone be fooled by the myriad of fake lefts, like the SWP, SO, Workers Power and Cliff Slaughter's WRP, who make occasional verbal criticisms of Benn's politics. They – no less than Tony Benn – lined up in boosting Ramsay MacKinnock in the elections. We said: "Class traitor, race-hater, anti-Soviet scab – Down with Judas Kinnock!" Then as now, what draws these characters like a magnet to the Labourite swamp is their political identification with Neil Kinnock's anti-Sovietism. ■

## Sri Lanka...

(continued from page 5)

for the right of Tamil self-determination.

And the "left" tail of these popular-frontist parties is veteran leftist Edmund Samarakkody's "Revolutionary Marxists", who issued a statement demanding "Indian Troops Out of Sri Lanka" at a time when this was the rallying cry of frenzied Sinhalese reaction. Significantly, it did not even mention the Tamil people's right to self-determination! Samarakkody wants to fight to the last Tamil, urging "Tamil Militants Resist the Indian Troops with All Your Might!" Meanwhile, his statement made no appeal to the Sinhala workers to come to the aid of the embattled Tamils. Instead it prettified the Sinhalese-communalist opposition to JR, claiming that "the Sinhala bourgeois and petty-bourgeois opposition forces... are using the genuine class hatred of the working class and toilers among the Sinhala people, against the oppressive Jayewardene regime to strengthen their Sinhala chauvinist forces".

With this sleight of hand, Samarakkody obscenely seeks to reach out to the same rabble that - in the name of combatting terrorism -

hacked Tamils to death in the 1983 pogroms. What about the miserable, unemployed workers in Weimar Germany in the 1930s who, in desperation, turned to the Nazi barbarians? They had genuine class hatred too - and became shock troops in genocide. And there were the mullah-led anti-shah forces in Iran in the late 1970s, which under the guise of "anti-imperialism" brought us the feudal fanaticism of the Khomeini regime. Samarakkody, like many other leftists, supported them too. This populist tailism of the masses' most reactionary impulses amounts to nothing but gross betrayal.

### LEGACY OF IMPERIALIST DIVIDE AND RULE

Historically it is rather accidental that Ceylon did not become part of India. The boundaries that the imperialists drew, throughout Africa, Asia, etc, more often than not divided tribe, people and nation. It is the tinpot nationalists who are the most fervent defenders of these "sacred" borders. India is indeed a prison house of nations, religious minorities, oppressed castes and hundreds of millions of horribly exploited working people. At the same time, like Indian capitalism itself, Indian nationalism is attenuated and atrophied,

trapped somewhere on the road to national consolidation, reflecting the combined and uneven development of a giant backward country deformed by imperialist exploitation.

What is being played out in Sri Lanka today is the tragic reactionary logic of nationalism and communalism, the continuing horror of British imperialism's divide-and-rule strategy, which exploited traditional communal divisions to set entire peoples against each other in bloody slaughter, reaching its nadir in the 1947 partition of India. Well over five million people fled in both directions across the partition lines as refugee routes became vast open graveyards and trains arrived filled with corpses. Today the Indian capitalist butchers of the Sikhs and Mukti Bahini are butchering Tamils, while in Tamil Nadu thousands have been arrested for protesting. At the time of the anti-Tamil pogroms in 1983 we wrote:

"While Marxists unconditionally defend the Tamils' right to form a separate state, we are less than enthusiastic about the prospects for an independent capitalist state in Jaffna. It would inevitably slide under the suzerainty of the oppressive Indian regime."

- Spartacist no 35,  
Autumn 1983

Had they broken from their narrow nationalist perspective, the Tamil militants who are today either dead or embittered racialists could have provided an important element for an internationalist proletarian party in Lanka, turning the struggle against the oppression of the Tamil people into a springboard for revolution throughout the subcontinent. The Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky led the workers and peasants of the old tsarist empire - a vast prison house of peoples - to power through a programme which transcended national particularities and forged unity against the common class enemy.

Today Bolshevik parties are needed in Lanka and India which can unite the rail workers of Calcutta, the Tamil estate workers, the Sinhalese women workers of the "free trade zones", in a struggle to bring down this vile system of racist horror and grinding exploitation. This is the task to which our comrades of the Spartacist League/Lanka are dedicated. Indian army out of Eelam! For the right of Tamil Eelam! For the federated workers republics of Eelam and Lanka, part of a socialist federation of South Asia! Workers must rule!

Adapted from Workers Vanguard no 439, 30 October 1987

## Shankland and Hancock...

(continued from page 2)

ally reduce the sentences to eight years on manslaughter charges.

This achievement was naturally welcomed with great relief by the families of the prisoners and all their supporters. But the workers movement must not rest until Dean Hancock and Russell Shankland are freed. The then South Wales NUM president Emlyn Williams told the Cardiff protesters that he had written to the prime minister, beseeching her "for the sake of human decency and reconciliation...to take cognisance of the context within which the crime occurred" (*Guardian*, 27 May 1985). But it's not Dean and Russell, but rather the occupants of Downing Street, who are the criminals! The thrust of union policy has been to demobilise militant protest. Indeed, subsequently there have been no organised actions or even any concerted attempt to publicise the fate of the jailed miners. The recent denial of parole only underscores the futility of expecting mercy from the vindictive Thatcher regime. "Freedom for Hancock and Shankland" must become a rallying cry for the NUM and the broader labour movement. The best way of achieving that goal is to renew the militancy and solidarity the miners displayed so powerfully earlier on.

James P Cannon, secretary of the International Labor Defense (ILD) in its earliest years and later the founder of American Trotskyism, correctly noted: "No cause is a great one which has not produced fighters in its ranks who have dared to face arrest and trial and imprisonment. The fear of a ruling class, and the effectiveness of those who struggle against them, can always be measured by the number upon whom they wreak revenge in this way" (*Notebook of an Agitator*, p 38). One of the ILD's main tasks was to break down the isolation of prison walls that separated the class-war

prisoners, victimised because they stood out conspicuously as leaders and fighters, and the broader trade union and workers movement. The ILD campaigns ranged from collecting money for the prisoners to mobilising the workers and oppressed in demonstrations and strikes for their freedom. This was undertaken, not as an act of charity, but to advance the solidarity necessary for the workers movement to triumph.

The Partisan Defense Committee (PDC), a class-struggle, non-sectarian, legal defence organisation in accordance with the political views of the SL/US, models itself on the early work of the ILD. During the great coal strike here, the PDC initiated a campaign which collected over \$24,000 from trade unionists and others to aid the families of striking miners. Among its activities, the PDC sends regular monthly stipends to class-war prisoners, including jailed British mineworkers. A recent letter from John and Mary Hancock noted: "We visited Dean and Russell Sunday. They were in good spirits and the first thing they told us was that they had each received 25 dollars from America via you people. They were very pleased with the money and would like to thank everybody who donated to it."

Shankland and Hancock, as well as the hundreds of sacked miners still denied their jobs, must not be neglected and forgotten. It is the duty of the NUM and the organised trade union movement to use their power to free these class-war prisoners! ■

## Sheffield...

(continued from page 12)

protest. When they came for me, there was no one left to protest." Sheffield is a city with a strong union tradition, with integrated workforces on the buses and in the steel plants and a sizable minority population, a city surrounded by the militant coalfields of South Yorkshire. The fascists do not command overwhelming numbers. The

power to sweep them off the streets exists - it must be wielded.

For the past months, in the absence of the united-front mobilisation we had fought for and indeed won on 24 October, we did not vacate the Exchange Street site. Our modest forces, augmented by friends and supporters, were able to neutralize and deter the fascists from further attacks on left newspaper sellers. On 26 September, along with members of the Sheffield Defence Campaign, we sent the NF scum packing with their tails between their legs. Ridding the city centre of these scum in the last weeks has been accomplished despite the best efforts of the SWP - the victims of assaults at Exchange Street. In a display of criminal passivity and sectarianism, the SWP has opposed our efforts down the line, actively trying to dissuade other groups and individuals from taking any action. But the SWP did not succeed in this - as shown by the refusal of the NALGO members, for instance, to follow the SWP's entreaties to stay away. Their "ignore the fascists" line has been proven to be the rubbish it is; some determined action has sent the NF scurrying back into the sewers from which they came. (For a fuller account of the SWP's anti-anti-fascist work in Sheffield, see article this issue.)

As for the rest of the left in Sheffield, only the centrist Workers Power group has finally been persuaded to commit some forces to the Saturday defence efforts. It took them nearly three months to respond to our call, but better late than never. Despite the vast programmatic differences separating our revolutionary Trotskyist organisation from these "left" tails of the Labourite swamp, we welcome WP's participation and the

opportunity to demonstrate in practice what a genuine united front is. The Communist Party (CP)-dominated Sheffield Campaign Against Racism (SCAR) has stayed away from Exchange Street, although several individuals have shown up to observe from time to time. SCAR and the CP have the ability to mobilise significant numbers - and efforts in that direction would be a contribution to the fight against racism, unlike their impotent petitions to the courts and calls for community control of the police. Workers and the oppressed must rely on their own power in the fight to smash racist and fascist attacks. An example of how futile and dangerous it is to rely on the state was the 1984 Bloody Sunday demonstration in Sheffield. Led by Labour "left" David Blunkett, the council banned the Irish groups, giving a green light to the NF.

A victory in Sheffield will have significance throughout the country, striking a blow against the increasingly visible fascist groups who have been emboldened in the present climate of aggressive reaction. Thatcher's vicious attacks on minorities and immigrants and Labour's despicable attempts to out-Thatcher Thatcher have put the wind in their sails. Union/minority mobilisations can turn that around. As the Spartacist call for united front action issued in July put it: "To ignore the deadly threat posed by fascist groups is a programme for suicide, it will only embolden these scum. There were many that joked about Hitler when the Nazis were small, but they didn't die laughing." All of those on the fascist hit list - blacks, Asians, Irish, gays, Jews, Gypsies, trade unionists, socialists - have a stake in the fight to drive the NF/BNP race-hate terrorists out of Sheffield. Join us! ■

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## Sheffield city centre:

# Unionists, students, leftists send fascists packing

SHEFFIELD - Over 30 trade unionists, anti-racists, socialists and student militants turned out on Saturday, 24 October in the city centre here against National Front fascist scum. These fascist skinhead punks have been gathering at the Castle Market at Exchange Street every Saturday. But they didn't crawl out of their sewers to occupy their usual spot on 24 October. One swine who did try his luck was run off. It was a solid anti-fascist victory.

Since late July, the Spartacist League has been fighting for just such a united-front defence effort - approaching left groups, unionists and minority organisations. Against those like the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) who argue that the fascists should be ignored, we insisted that they had to be dealt with by the workers, minorities and socialists in their cross hairs. On 24 October, an Asian woman NALGO shop steward and other supporters of the Black Workers Group in Sheffield NALGO, members of the Sheffield Defence Campaign (an anti-racist organisation), students from nearby Sheffield University, individual members of the NUM and post office workers as well as members of the Workers Power Group showed up at Exchange Street to ensure that the fascists did not dare show their faces. This sort of mobilisation must be continued and extended until a decisive blow can be dealt to the race-hating scum. And on 31 October, for the second week running, there was no sign of them.

It is high time these fascist punks



Workers Hammer

**24 October: Workers, minorities, students join SL-initiated united front defence team at Exchange Street, Sheffield. The fascist scum stayed in their holes.**

sporting NF insignia and carrying NF stickers were stopped from menacing the Exchange Street area - a traditional selling place for the left and a shopping area heavily used by Sheffield's minority population. Meanwhile, goons from the British National Party (BNP) have tried to move in on the Sheffield University campus. On Saturday, 17 October several fascist thugs attacked a meeting of the Labour Committee on Ireland on campus. Storming into the meeting, throwing furniture, they hospitalised one person before they were pushed from the room. The *Sheffield Star*

reported that the BNP has threatened to do the same again if "IRA politicians are given a voice at future University meetings" (*Star*, 21 October). It has been established that a first-year student is a member of this murderous outfit, although his identity has thus far been kept under wraps; while student union officials "investigate".

Especially following the attack on the campus meeting, students and leftists responded to our insistence that the fascists cannot be ignored - they must be stopped. At a Spartacist public meeting held on campus five

days after the attack, an SL supporter and T&G member explained the necessity for union/minority mobilisations to smash fascist terror. A video tape of the November 27 1982 Spartacist-initiated Labor/Black Mobilization which stopped the Ku Klux Klan from marching in Washington, DC was played following the presentation. Recalling that in 1981 a united front protest of 120 drove British Movement Nazis off campus, Spartacist spokesmen linked the necessity to stop the fascist menace in Exchange Street to driving the BNP from the campus today. In the course of building for this meeting, a thousand leaflets demanding "Drive NF Fascists from Sheffield City Centre!" were distributed on campus. Students who attended this meeting and several concerned members of the student union showed up at Exchange Street the following Saturday to see if any of the thugs were the same as those who smashed up the Ireland meeting.

One of the unionists who turned out, a post office worker, told us that he decided the fascists in the city centre had to be stopped after recalling the famous 1945 statement by Martin Niemöller, a German Lutheran churchman and WWI U-boat commander sent to a concentration camp by Hitler: "First they came for the communists, but since I was not a communist I did not protest. Then they came for the Jews, but since I was not a Jew I did not protest. Then they came for the Catholics, but since I was not a Catholic I did not

*continued on page 11*

## Chesterfield:

# Fake Trotskyists' anti-Soviet tantrum

In the normal course of things, the volubility of the Labour "lefts" is roughly inversely proportional to the perceived stakes at hand. In the run-up to the general election they were well nigh invisible: the "lefts" did not want to embarrass the openly pro-NATO, scab Kinnock leadership. The toadying to bourgeois respectability took more virulent forms as well: the "progressive" leaders of the print unions dismantled picket lines at Wapping in favour of a toothless consumer boycott. Bernie Grant retracted his statement that the cops got what they deserved at Broadwater Farm. The Militant tendency-led Labour council in Liverpool distributed 30,000 redundancy notices to munici-

pal workers, while the ambitious Ken Livingstone and numerous other council leaders took to rubber-stamping Tory cuts.

With the election now some months in the past and with Kinnock having lost big, the "lefts" are crawling out of the woodwork. This is the context of the recent "socialist" conference in Chesterfield, convened at the behest of Tony Benn's Campaign group of MPs and assorted academic socialists. The rules of the game were simple: you could talk about anything you wanted, from ecology to even proletarian revolution, as long as you didn't say anything nasty about Neil Kinnock & Co. On one occasion the name of long deceased, arch class

traitor Ramsay MacDonald was mentioned, drawing boos and hisses. This drew the *Observer* (25 October) to quip: "Even in the days of new socialist realism, it seems, there is at least one Labour leader it is permissible to denounce."

Apparently dazzled by the invitation to rub shoulders with Labour MPs, hundreds of members of groups mistakenly called Trotskyist swarmed to Chesterfield. But while the Bennites comfortably accommodate to the Kinnock gang, the anti-Soviet antics of these fake-left groups go even further. The only real "action" at the conference occurred when three members of the Soviet Peace Committee, who flew in from Moscow for

the occasion, attempted to give official greetings. Revolutionaries would not agree with their line that it is possible for the Soviet Union to achieve lasting detente with the rapacious imperialists, but that is not what fuelled the subsequent outburst. The Soviet delegate was immediately interrupted by members of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), who led a hysterical demonstration against their right to speak. In particular, the Downing St socialists of the SWP repeatedly chanted "Solidarity", referring to the pro-Vatican, pro-CIA outfit in Poland, the only "trade union" in the world supported by Maggie Thatcher and Ronald Reagan. It was an "intervention"

*continued on page 10*