

Labour/TUC chiefs kneel to Thatcher

Workers say: Enough!



Denzil McNeelance



Dario Mitidieri

Ford workers stand firm on Dagenham picket line as strike begins (left). Police go after striking nurses and other protesters at Whitehall on 3 February (right). Labour/TUC tops want to strangle working-class struggle - break with the Labour traitors!

Forge a Bolshevik party!

Thatcher & Co have been waging a one-sided class war on the trade unions, the poor and unemployed, anybody who works in or uses public transportation, the National Health Service, the schools. Now the vindictive Iron Lady and her Labour quislings are getting a taste of working class struggle. For the first time, nurses from London to the Midlands to Scotland went out in a series of one-day strikes - an action overwhelmingly supported by the population. But the ever-servile Labour tops openly opposed strike action: "Think Again, Labour Tells Nurses" headlined the *Evening Standard* (21 January) while shadow health minister Robin Cook prattled on about "public relations" and opposed the strike.

All of Ford's 32,500 workers are out and its 22 plants shut down tight in a national strike pushed through by the union ranks against the bureaucrats who tried to ram through a wretched three-year contract. As one striker from the Enfield plant put it: "I don't mean to be nasty, but the bloke who leads the T and G would get strung up if he came round here. They had better not sell us out - or else there will be trouble" (*Independent*, 10 February). The Nacods pit deputies have closed down production in the coalfields twice in two weeks over wages and overtime. The National Union of Seamen (NUS) members have been fighting for their jobs and their

union in the face of government injunctions and back-stabbing union tops. But striking seamen were left in the lurch when Sam McCluskie, the union's general secretary capitulated to a court order, much to the joy of the government. The judge declared it was "extremely fortunate" that McCluskie headed the NUS. Angry seamen did not consider themselves fortunate as they wildcatted for several days.

Ford car workers as well as the hard-pressed seamen took strike action in defiance of the union tops. It's a crack in the all-sided suppression of any social struggle imposed by Labour and the TUC tops since the miners' struggle, as the level of strike activity hit a 50-year low. The Ford strike has shaken not only the Tory cabinet and the City, but you can rest assured that Kinnock and his cohorts are burning the midnight oil plotting how to get the assembly lines running again. And if they're too discredited to impose Labour discipline on the workforce right now, watch out for the Labour "lefts" with their "little England" appeals to national chauvinism and protectionist poison.

Thatcher wants to finance her contribution to the imperialist anti-Soviet war drive through bleeding the poor, elderly and sick and ruining the trade unions. The City fat cats meanwhile do a brisk business in share shuffling. For the workers and oppressed, the question is posed starkly: fight or starve. The class peace

imposed by the Labour traitors is suicidal. Wages down, speed up intensified, plant and pit closures throwing thousands on the scrap heap, 3 million "officially" unemployed, an all-out assault on social services exemplified by Tory privatisation schemes for the health service, racist, anti-homosexual, anti-immigrant reaction: these are the bitter fruits of class collaboration. Past Labour governments slashed services and instituted the first medical charges. And it was against Callaghan's "phase four" wage controls that the 1978-79 "Winter of Discontent" strikes brought out hundreds of thousands of workers. Every major strike began as massive unofficial walkouts.

In 1984-85, the twelve-month miners strike deeply polarised society as all sections of the workers and oppressed saw in that bitter fight the possibility of bringing Thatcher down. What was needed was a fighting Triple Alliance of miners, railwaymen and transport workers - in effect a general strike which would have posed the fundamental question of *which class shall rule*. Twice the dockers came out in support and twice they were sent back. The likes of Willis and Kinnock were savaged throughout the coalfields as the arch-scabs they

were. (Willis for one will be long remembered in the chorus of the strike song: "Hang, hang, hang the bastard".) But it wasn't just Kinnock and the TUC tops that left the miners to fight alone. As we wrote in *Workers Hammer* no 88 (May 1987): "In the final analysis, it was the treachery of the 'lefts' in refusing to spread the strike that defeated the NUM. They did not want to shut down Thatcher's Britain because they are unwilling to *fight for power*. When push came to shove, Jimmy Knapp, Ron Todd and Scargill himself chose unity with the scabherding Labour/TUC traitors, and the miners strike was defeated."

But while the strike was defeated, the unions were not crushed. The workers are fighting again, while increasingly broader layers of the populace see that the union-busting attacks are linked to the devastation of public transport and health services. Literally hundreds have been butchered for the sake of capitalist greed. The P&O ferry bosses operating with defective ship designs and squeezing out maximum profits by leaving harbour without securing loading doors, murdered nearly 200 people aboard the *Herald of Free Enterprise* at Zeebrugge. Now they're demanding that seamen extend already gruelling

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Soviet withdrawal would mean horrible bloodbath
Russia must win Afghan war!
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NUM elections

Fake left rat pack scurry after Scargill

In our article on the NUM elections last issue, *Workers Hammer* noted that the miners strike had exposed the vile rottenness of the Labour Party and posed the burning need for a genuinely revolutionary party. As we wrote, "Anyone who claims the mantle of a working class leader must be judged according to this criterion" (*WH* no 94, January 1988). Arthur Scargill, however, preached confidence in Labourism and brought out the NUM vote for arch scab Neil Kinnock. For this reason we did not advocate a vote for Scargill in his campaign against the worthless open class traitor John Walsh.

In accommodating itself more closely to Kinnock, the Scargillite leadership necessarily shifted the axis of the union's programme further to the right. The fake left, however, with-

out exception supported Scargill; indeed, they positively enthused over the "left" Labourite miners leader. This reflected their own social democratic prejudices, as well as gutless genuflection in the direction of what is popular. The absence of any political criticism of Scargill has apparently upset some members of the Slaughterite WRP. In a letter to *Workers Press* (23 January) Norah Wilde notes that Scargill supports binding arbitration, chauvinist protectionist measures to ban coal imports, and fosters illusions in parliamentary socialism. Wilde asserts that Scargill "uses miners militancy...in order to push forward a fundamentally counterrevolutionary class-collaborationist strategic fight for Parliamentary socialism". Indeed, one wonders therefore why she concludes

it is necessary to campaign for Scargill!

The reply by Dave Temple, WRP chairman and active in the NUM for many years, is downright embarrassing. He advocates waiting until after the elections before expressing their ostensible differences with Scargill,



Workers Hammer

Scargill presents award to Labour spokesman at NUM conference, July 1987.

asserting that the question of "when and how we raise differences with trade union leaders, especially those who command the loyalty of the best and most advanced fighters, is a tactical question" (*Workers Press*, 30 January). In short, you lie to the working class! In support of this craven position, Temple refers to the embarrassing consequences of the WRP's attack on Scargill at the time of the 1983 TUC conference.

At that time Gerry Healy's *Newsline* triggered an orgy of red-baiting by the Fleet Street press and the trade union tops when it witchhunted Scargill for his minimally correct statement that Polish Solidarnosc – the only "union" in the world supported by Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan – is anti-socialist. In response, many outraged miners ripped up their subscriptions to *Newsline*, a fact which continues to haunt the various Healyite splinters. Of course, the Healyites have never repudiated their anti-Sovietism. Temple upholds the WRP's support to counter-revolutionary Solidarnosc, while complaining that the attack on Scargill was a tactical blunder. "It divided us from thousands of miners at a most vital time." Popularity is the decisive criterion here; anti-communism is apparently just fine as long as you do it at the "right" time and place.

Another equally rabid anti-Soviet Healyite fragment, the International Communist Party (which follows American Healyite honcho David North), while somewhat more critical of Scargill, ends up by lauding his reelection as a "class vote" (*International Worker*, January 30). The Healyites have a problem in dealing with the NUM leader. Scargill is capable of selling out simultaneously to the Russian Stalinist bureaucracy and the Labour Party. The fake-Trotskyists consistently capitulate to reformist social democracy. So depending on what hat Scargill is apparently wearing, the anti-Soviet pro-Labour fake leftists gyrate from crazed red-baiting to fawning enthusing.

One would search in vain in the pages of *Workers Power* or *Socialist*

Worker to find any programmatic criticism of Scargill. Indeed, their prescription is not political struggle against Labourism, but simply more trade union militancy, as embodied in creating a "permanent national rank and file organisation". British miners who struck for 12 months do not need to be lectured on trade union militancy especially from the likes of the SWP's Tony Cliff, who boasted of how his members crossed picket lines in 1984-85, or by *Workers Power*, which pimped for Thatcher's scab ballot. Rank-and-fileism is premised on asserting that a movement is progressive simply by virtue of the participation of large numbers of workers. Inevitably such workerism leads to pandering to backward prejudices in the working class.

Workers Power cites as a triumph of rank-and-file initiative the establishment of "unofficial" Scargill for President campaigns. Indeed! And during the general elections miners no doubt also set up campaign networks to get out the vote for Neil Kinnock's Labour Party! But such "rank and file" initiatives in no way imply a break with reformism. The miners, despite their great militancy, remain tied to the bourgeois order through the pro-capitalist trade union and Labour Party bureaucrats, the "lefts" as well as rights. The task of communists is to educate the workers – to lead them in their struggles, not to trail behind them and cater to their illusions in Scargill and Benn.

We Spartacists are Leninists – we're for building a revolutionary vanguard party that organises the minority of workers who under capitalism are capable of freeing themselves from bourgeois influences and understanding the historical position of the proletariat. What characterises such a vanguard is not trade union consciousness per se: a revolutionary in the coalfields is not merely someone who knows how to set up a picket line, but also importantly is a fighter against racist, anti-Gypsy bans. Only through the conscious intervention of such a vanguard party can the mass of workers be regrouped from the domination of the capitalists and their agents in the labour movement.

Fake-left organisations that pander to illusions in "rank and fileism" deny the centrality of revolutionary leadership. At bottom these people are political cowards: lacking the backbone to counterpose a Marxist leadership to popular left reformists like Scargill, they blame defeats on the absence of "rank and file" organisation. As James P Cannon, pioneer American Communist and founder of American Trotskyism, said of the political misleaders of his day who engaged in such charlatany:

"This principle of leadership by the most conscious and resolute elements applies to strikes and other daily struggles as well as to the class struggle as a whole. The agitation for 'the leadership of the rank and file' negates this principle and sows confusion. By this it only makes the leadership of the reactionary agents of the capitalists more secure. This harmful and anti-Marxist slogan should be cast aside. Instead of it, the Communist workers in the unions, as in every other field of the class struggle, should frankly contrast their policy and their leadership to the policy and the leadership of the labor lieutenants of capital. This is the only way to teach the workers and help them in their struggle. There is no roundabout way." – *The Communist League of America 1932-34* ■



TROTSKY

Trade unions in the epoch of imperialist decay

Trotsky drafted the article from which the following passage is excerpted in 1940; he underlined that in the epoch of imperialist decay there is no scope for reformism. In Britain today there is a crying need for revolutionary programme and leadership in the trade unions, to lead the workers to overthrow this rotten system of capitalist exploitation.



LENIN

It is necessary to adapt ourselves to the concrete conditions existing in the trade unions of every given country in order to mobilize the masses, not only against the bourgeoisie, but also against the totalitarian regime within the trade unions themselves and against the leaders enforcing this regime. The primary slogan for this struggle is: *complete and unconditional independence of the trade unions in relation to the capitalist state*. This means a struggle to turn the trade unions into the organs of the broad exploited masses and not the organs of a labor aristocracy.

The second slogan is: *trade union democracy*. This second slogan flows directly from the first and presupposes for its realization the complete freedom of the trade unions from the imperialist or colonial state.

In other words, the trade unions in the present epoch cannot simply be the organs of democracy as they were in the epoch of free capitalism and they cannot any longer remain politically neutral, that is, limit themselves to serving the daily needs of the working class. They cannot any longer be anarchistic, i.e., ignore the decisive influence of the state on the life of people and classes. They can no longer be reformist, because the objective conditions leave no room for any serious and lasting reforms. The trade unions of our time can either serve as secondary instruments of imperialist capitalism for the subordination and disciplining of workers and for obstructing the revolution, or, on the contrary, the trade unions can become the instruments of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat.

– Leon Trotsky, "Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay"

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Workers Power on Afghanistan:

Do they know which side they're on?

A recent issue of *Workers Power* (December 1987) carried an article entitled "Afghanistan eight years on". We were intrigued; the issue is urgent given Gorbachev's recent "offer" to begin troop withdrawals and Afghanistan has caused constant "headaches" for the Workers Power group over the years. Their article, however, reads like an anti-Trotskyist parody, something that could have been written by the likes of British *Solidarity*. Or maybe it was something they ate. Yet the matter is serious.

The withdrawal of the Soviet Red Army from Afghanistan would constitute a bloody betrayal of the Afghan peoples on the altar of "peaceful co-existence" with imperialism (see article this issue). Only total Soviet victory in the civil war against the mullah counterrevolutionaries can bring peace and the prospect of national and social liberation. That's why ever since the Soviet Union went into

of the bureaucratically degenerated Soviet workers state. This was followed by "Theses on Afghanistan" in which Workers Power announced it would "suspend the demand for the withdrawal of Soviet troops".

Since then, the rightward-moving Workers Power has increasingly resembled the bulk of the Labourite left swamp. Its support to Judas Kinnock in the 1987 general election was an index - during the height of its campaigning for the Labour traitor even nominal mention of defence of the USSR once again vanished from the pages of its press. The *Workers Power* article on Afghanistan takes pains to declare the "absurdity of the claims by those, like the Spartacists and sections of the Stalinist movement, that the Soviet army were invading as defenders of the 'Afghan revolution' and should be hailed". Is Workers Power prepared to name those "sections of the Stalinist movement" that



The Trotskyist slogan WP loves to hate

the stupidity of the Kremlin and the bureaucratism of the PDPA the forces of progress on their own could not, and still yet cannot, defeat the reactionary rebels. For this reason, and notwithstanding our opposition to the invasion, we have consistently argued against the call for an immediate and total withdrawal of the SAF....

"The USSR's invasion of Afghanistan served to physically defend the progressive forces in Afghan society, grouped around the PDPA, from destruction at the hands of reaction. However, the military and security apparatus of the USSR and its most loyal Afghan agents were also deployed to destroy any independent initiative by any section of those progressive forces on behalf of their own democratic reform programme."

Is that clear? The "reactionary" invasion served to physically defend the "progressive" forces. One might assume then that WP's "logical" conclusion is: oppose the intervention - oppose the withdrawal. But not quite. WP goes on: "But for those behind the Soviet lines the danger signals are all too clear to see. They may well prove the ultimate victims of the Soviet Union's reactionary policies. At present we still think it would be historic suicide for them to turn their guns on the SAF in their own drive to force a Soviet troop withdrawal" (emphasis ours).

In the cosy atmosphere of a South London sitting room WP can idly debate whether it would be suicide for those whom the Red Army is defending against CIA-backed Islamic reactionaries - the women seeking liber-

ation from the bride price and the veil, school teachers who dare to instruct women, indeed any section of society seeking to drag Afghanistan in the direction of the twentieth century - to "turn their guns" against the Red Army! But this scenario doesn't play in the real world. Now that Gorbachev has threatened to "force a Soviet troop withdrawal" with his considerably better ability to do so than the unspecified "those behind the Soviet lines", will Workers Power do some "hailing" of its own? Who knows - with this "line" and their schizophrenic but marked Stalinophobic proclivities, WP might denounce the Soviets for pulling out, after denouncing them for going in. At least one thing is obvious: considerations of the military defence of the Soviet workers state against rapacious imperialism do not enter Workers Power's "analysis". Indeed, they write that given massive US aid the mullahs are able to cause "continued military headaches" for the Soviet Red Army. The bloody civil war - with one side backed to the hilt by the war-crazed nuts in the White House and the other backed by the Soviet Red Army fighting for human progress - is more than a "military headache".

Eight years on, Workers Power is still in a centrist muddle on the Russian question. Their "composite line" on this most critical of political questions will find its resolution one way or the other. Those who don't relish the prospect of heading back into the fold with Tony Cliff (or worse...) know where the other road leads. ■



Workers Hammer



WP goes all the way with Judas Kinnock and Solidarnosc' counterrevolution

Afghanistan in December 1979 the international Spartacist tendency has hailed the Red Army in its manifestly just mission to wipe out the CIA-backed mullahs.

In contrast, a number of self-proclaimed Leninists and Trotskyists marched to the drums of imperialist Cold War II, joining social democrats and Eurocommunists in denouncing the Soviet Union's intervention and demanding the withdrawal of the Red Army. The centrist Workers Power grouping, however, was contradictory. A bitter factional struggle erupted with one side arguing the time-worn Stalinophobic, anti-Marxist position that Stalinism is "counterrevolutionary through and through", and the other putting forth a toothless pseudo-Trotskyism ("We defend the Soviet Union, however...."). The result was the adoption of a "composite" line, ie crystallised confusion.

On the one hand, Workers Power joined the Russia-hating chorus and opposed the Soviet intervention as "overwhelmingly reactionary". On the other, the anti-Soviet hysteria over Afghanistan compelled WP to adopt a formal line change on the character of the Soviet Union, breaking from Soviet defeatism to an ostensibly orthodox Trotskyist position of defence

have hailed the Red Army intervention? They certainly would be hard put to find a reference to the "Afghan revolution" in the publications of the international Spartacist tendency other than in our polemics against any such notion. But, factual quibbles aside, the point is clear: our forthright support to the Soviet forces sends shudders down what passes for the spines of these centrists.

We note that WP has seen fit to print the "S-word" in this context. Frequently, they try to avoid any mention of our programme, our analysis, our slogans, our very existence. Why did they break their taboo this time? We don't claim to know, as we are not privy to the workings of the WP editorial board. But something strange is going on here. For the benefit of our readers we reproduce below a section of the WP article:

"The Soviet bureaucracy invaded Afghanistan for its own reactionary purposes. For this reason it was necessary for revolutionaries to make clear their opposition to that invasion. However, once the USSR was inside Afghanistan the question was, would the withdrawal of the SAF [Soviet Armed Forces] aid or hinder the struggle for victory over reaction in the civil war? Thanks to

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Muslim holy site invaded, army starves Gaza camps

Israeli stormtroopers terrorise Palestinians

The following article is reprinted from Workers Vanguard no 445, 29 January.

As ten thousand people stood in prayer on 15 January the Al Aksa mosque in the Old City of Jerusalem was enveloped in clouds of tear gas, the steps were stained with blood, elderly worshippers slammed against walls, women clubbed over the head with riot sticks, young kids shot at with rubber bullets. For two million Palestinian Arabs, the "Holy Land" has become a hell on earth. The Gaza Strip has been turned into a huge ghetto, sealed off, subjected to a deliberate starvation policy. Soldiers systematically go from house to house, camp to camp, village to village, beating children in front of their parents, beating fathers in front of their wives and children. Young women are shot dead as they hang laundry outside their houses. Men are dragged away from their homes and families in order to be deported to places they've never seen before, in Lebanon. Scores have been killed, thousands more arrested.

Deportation, starvation, religious desecration, "collective punishment" – this is the "Iron Fist", Israel's Hitlerite policy for subjugating the Occupied Territories. Yet, after eight weeks, the most widespread revolt of the bitterly oppressed Palestinian Arab masses since the creation of the Zionist state in 1948 continues with full force. Even the Israeli rulers no longer try to pass it off as simply the work of a handful of PLO "terrorists". Defence minister Yitzhak Rabin admitted that the uprising "started without instructions from outside. It came from within the people" (*New York Times*, 21 January). So they declare open war on the whole population.

On 19 January, Rabin announced a "new" policy of "force, might, beatings". For years the border police have routinely broken into homes to beat Palestinians; the Shin Bet secret police routinely hang people by their



Palestinian youth in revolt against Zionist jackboot in the Gaza Strip are brutalised by Israeli stormtroopers. Times

hands and beat male victims in the testicles; but now the entire occupation army is carrying out massive, naked, random terror. The Americans don't like watching young kids shot down on their TV screens, rants Rabin, so we'll beat them by the hundreds in the dead of night. Arresting a youth means he "will be freed in 18 days unless the authorities have enough evidence to charge him", explains a *Jerusalem Post* military correspondent, "but if troops break his hand, he won't be able to throw stones for a month and a half". One 25-year-old Palestinian shopkeeper who was savaged by Israeli soldiers described his ordeal:

"They tied my hands and took me to the main square of Ramallah, where the soldiers gather. They didn't check who I was even though I tried to explain in Hebrew and English that I own a store. "All the way to the square, they

beat me with clubs, sticks and fists and cursed me. They broke sticks on my shoulders and head, and all the time yelled to the people around, "Watch, watch!"

"Then they sat me next to a pile of garbage. I tried to explain I am a businessman, but they weren't willing to hear a word. They asked me to say 'Arafat's a maniac.' I refused. They kicked me in the mouth with their boots. They hit me in the back and spit on me for an hour and a half."

– *New York Times*, 23 January

Holocaust survivors witnessed such scenes when Hitler's SS stormed into the Jewish ghettos of East Europe. Today the Zionist rulers are turning their whole army into SS thugs. And when this latest attempt at "pacification" backfires, as all the other attempts have, it will prepare the way for a much bloodier massacre. When the Israelis first implemented the "Iron Fist", during the occupation of southern Lebanon, it succeeded only in turning a previously friendly Shi'ite population into a solidly hostile mass.

In order to counter a two-week-old commercial strike by shopkeepers in the Occupied Territories, the army has not only attempted to force the shops open at gunpoint; it has sealed off whole districts of the West Bank and virtually all of Gaza, refusing to allow even emergency food shipments by United Nations relief agencies. When Israeli Arabs donated five truckloads of food – bedecked with banners reading, "Food for the Palestinians in the refugee camps under siege and occupation" – for the residents of Gaza, the trucks were turned back.

Israel's American quartermasters bemoan the destabilising effect this random terror is having on the region. The US even voted against Israel, for

the first time in six years, in a United Nations Security Council resolution deploring the deportation of ten Palestinians. When Washington chastised the Zionists over the deportation of moderate Palestinian West Bank mayors several years ago, the mayors were allowed to return to the West Bank, where the "Jewish underground" – the likes of Brooklyn-derived Meir Kahane's fascist thugs – proceeded to blow their legs off with terror bombs. Kahane's goons are implicated in the assassination of Arab American spokesman Alex Odeh in the US, yet the FBI has done nothing to track them down.

On 23 January, 6000 Israeli Arabs demonstrated in Nazareth against the Israeli occupation, while 30,000 "Peace Now" supporters marched in Tel Aviv (by comparison, Peace Now mobilised five times as many against the invasion of Lebanon). The liberal Peace Now protesters chanted "two countries for two peoples" while waving Israeli flags. One kibbutznik carried a sign reading, "The occupation is bad for Zionism". But the occupation is Zionism.



London 1982: Spartacists demand Israel out of Lebanon. Workers Hammer

"Liberal" Zionists wring their hands over the need for a political solution, yet they have none to offer. Arthur Hertzberg wrote recently: "The conflict between Israel and the PLO was once a quarrel between two Western-style nationalisms, both of which considered themselves expressions of secular ideologies. Both Jews and Arabs are increasingly being pushed into the embrace of religious extremists who see themselves as prophets armed" (*New York Review of Books*, 4 February). Would Hertzberg so facetiously equate the Nazi beasts with Jewish anti-Nazi partisans?

For all the social-democratic rhetoric of Ben-Gurion's "Labor" Zionism, it was always based on terrorising and driving out the indigenous Arab population from the Jewish "promised land". It is this that leads the Zionists to sound and act like Nazis. Speaking at a press conference last October, a senior officer of the West Bank military occupation regime explained that they switched from



Palestinian women, under Israeli starvation siege of Gaza camps, dash to buy food. AP

Free abortion on demand!

Smash Alton Bill and anti-gay crusade!

The rights of women and homosexuals are under sustained attack as part of the overall reactionary ruling-class drive to "rollback" the existing gains of the working class and oppressed. Two bills now before parliament respectively threaten legalised abortion and every aspect of democratic rights for homosexuals. Liberal MP David Alton's bill to limit all abortions to an 18-week maximum is the opening shot to relegating women—especially young and working class women—to back street butchers. The wording of the Tory-initiated "Clause 28" of the Local Government Bill constitutes nothing less than state-enforced anti-gay bigotry. It reads in part that: "a local authority shall not promote homosexuality or publish material for the promotion of homosexuality; promote the teaching in any maintained school of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship....give financial or other assistance to any person for either of the purposes referred to" (*Sunday Times*, 31 January). This virulently sexist, anti-homosexual crusade—of which legislation is but the tip of the iceberg—must be smashed!

Kinnock's vile Labour Party has aided and abetted both of these reactionary bills. In late January, the Alton Bill received its second reading in parliament and has now gone on to committee stage. Its progress so far got a helping hand by over 30 Labour MPs who voted for it. 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—Alton's bill sin-

"Eastenders" actor Michael Cashman leads 9 January Downing Street protest against the reactionary Clause 27 (now Clause 28). Thatcher's bootboys rampaged into the crowd, arresting 33 demonstrators.



gles out women from countries where abortion is difficult to impossible. Of the post-18-week abortions performed since the passing of the present law in 1967, almost half were for women from such countries. In Britain itself National Health Service red tape or funding cuts are among the main causes of late abortions. So Alton's bill is part of the overall "get everybody" programme of the Tory regime.

Scandalously, sections of the fake "left" have served as conduits for "right-to-life" anti-abortion propaganda. The most nauseating and unspeakable example is the Commu-

nist Party's "theoretical" journal *Marxism Today*. The cover of its January issue contains a giant photo of a foetus under the headline "Abortion: Whose Choice?". The Labourite *New Statesman* (15 January) followed suit with a cover photo of a toddler sucking its thumb and the headline "Is David Alton Right?" While both publications ostensibly defend abortion rights, their deeply offensive coverage is a gross capitulation to the "right to life" reactionaries. And of course to Kneel "I am a reactionary" Kinnock. For genuine fighters for women's liberation the present restrictions on abortion are intoler-

able. No to the Alton Bill! Smash all limitations on abortion rights! Free abortion on demand!

Kinnock & Co have marched in lock step with the Tories on "Clause 28". They support the central phrase prohibiting the "promotion" of homosexuality. Let's be clear: behind the word "promotion" is the reality of banning anything to do with homosexuality altogether. This gives a green light to violent anti-gay attacks by cops and bigots which has reached hideous proportions, intensified by hysteria whipped up over AIDS. As we noted last spring (*Workers Hammer* no 86, March 1987):

"Just as the propaganda campaign on AIDS was reaching saturation point, Neil Kinnock provided a new angle: his very own Labour witch-hunt against homosexuals....Kinnock has also come out for the spurious defence of 'parents' rights against Labour-controlled authorities that want to promote equality of homosexual and heterosexual relationships' (*Independent*, 6 March). What an understated way of saying 'I'm a reactionary'." Clause 28 "promotes" vicious anti-homosexual reaction on the streets, in the courts and throughout society. It also raises the spectre of censorship: will Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*, Gore Vidal's *Julian and Sappho* be ripped from school and public libraries?

The organised working class has the social power to defeat the assaults on women's rights and homosexuals. To mobilise that power requires the forging of a Bolshevik party acting as the tribune of all the oppressed, uniting those in Thatcher's gun sights under the banner of proletarian revolution. ■

wood to hard rubber riot sticks because "The wood batons have an irritating quality, they get broken.... Their [the Palestinians'] heads become harder" (*Ha'aretz*, 14 October 1987, translated by Israel Shahak). A recent survey revealed that 29 per cent of Israeli Jews support mass expulsions of Palestinians, while one in two believe that Arabs in Israel should remain "second-class citizens".

The bankruptcy of the PLO's petty-bourgeois nationalism in the face of Zionist terror has indeed increasingly driven the youth of the Occupied Territories into the arms of Islamic fundamentalism. The PLO has always preached reliance on the surrounding Arab sheiks, kings and colonels, who have themselves bloodily suppressed the Palestinian people. Today PLO leader Yasir Arafat repudiates the PLO's opposition to UN Resolution 242 acknowledging the integrity of the Zionist state. The Shi'ite Amal militia's "gift" to the embattled people of the Occupied Territories is to lift its grotesque three-year-long siege of Palestinian camps in Lebanon. One Gazan expressed the sense of frustration succinctly: "We're all alone in this fight; Amman, Cairo and the PLO don't do a thing for us" (*Newsweek*, 25 January).

The invasion of Al Aksa and the Temple Mount by the border police was an unprecedented provocation.

Jihads ("holy wars") have been waged over far less. The Zionist authorities denied they had actually entered the mosque itself, a cover-up dutifully parroted by the *New York Times* (16 January), which reported the incident as a "clash" between Israeli police and "stone-throwing Palestinians". But an Italian reporter who was inside the mosque described how he "saw soldiers enter and take more than 30 people, one by one, and beat them with batons", including an old man who was slammed against a wall and slapped around. A Canadian TV crewman saw police "force open the door and enter the women's mosque" (*Washington Post*, 16 January). With all the arrogance of their "master race" outlook, the Zionists think they can treat the third most holy shrine for 550 million Muslims around the world as though it were a police station dungeon.

At the time of the massacre of the Sabra and Chatila refugee camps in Lebanon, we said in "Zionist Holocaust" (*WV* no 314, 1 October 1982):

"Today the Palestinians face the Zionist holocaust. But there are only three million Jews in a sea of 150 million Arabs. Israel's military expansionism and mass terror against the Arabs ultimately lead to the self-destruction of the Hebrew-speaking people. Some day

the IDF [Israeli Army] will be cracked, and then the Begins, Sharons and Peres will be tempted to launch their nuclear bombs at Baghdad, Damascus and Cairo, even if this means provoking the ultimate holocaust."

As Israeli nuclear technician Mordechai Vanunu courageously revealed—for which he is now on trial for "treason"—the Zionist state has hundreds of nuclear weapons, enough to launch even against the Soviet Union. This only reinforces our urgent warn-

ing from 1982:

"If the Jewish people in the Near East are to be anything other than a catalyst for a nuclear World War III, the Zionist state must be smashed."

And that requires above all the construction of a proletarian internationalist vanguard party that fights for the right to self-determination for both the Palestinian and Hebrew nations through a socialist federation of the Near East. ■



Sabra/Chatila massacre: Zionism's "final solution".

no credit

Soviet withdrawal would mean horrible bloodbath



Afghanistan Today



Independent

Mullah terrorists shoot down passenger plane in Khost Province, Afghanistan with US-supplied Stinger missiles, killing 52 aboard (left). British imperialism aids mullahs by supplying its blow pipe missiles.

Russia must win Afghan war!

When the Soviet Red Army went into Afghanistan on 27 December 1979, we Trotskyists of the international Spartacist tendency declared "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" and called to "Extend Social Gains of the October Revolution to Afghan Peoples!" Propping up a shaky national-reformist regime on the USSR's vital southern flank against CIA-backed Islamic reactionaries, Moscow's intervention both defended the Soviet Union and posed the possibility of a revolutionary transformation of this hideously backward country. The Soviet troops brought with them literacy, doctors, and the first taste of liberation for Afghan women from the enslavement and seclusion symbolised by the *chadori*, the smothering veil covering them in yards of heavy cloth from head to toe.

Now, in the hopes of striking a "peace" deal with Ronald Reagan, the Kremlin Stalinists are opening the door to a bloody Islamic *jihād* (holy war) against every form of social progress in Afghanistan. In Kabul Soviet foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze announced to the Afghan press last month: "We would like the year 1988 to be the last year of the presence of Soviet troops in your country." That would mean leaving in the lurch the Afghan women, teachers, leftists, workers and soldiers who have fought for the last ten years to drag their country into the 20th century! The price for this obscene bid to placate US imperialism is to hand over hundreds of thousands of Afghans to be tortured, flayed alive, beheaded and dismembered as infidels by the mullahs, tribal khans and feudal landlords. This is treachery!

The imperialist press is rubbing its eyes in disbelief. "Light in the Khyber Pass?" asked the *New York Times* (9 January). "Could it really be true? A Soviet-free Afghanistan" editorialised the *Philadelphia Inquirer* (10 January), saying that "If Mr. Gorbachev has truly made up his mind that the burdens of occupa-



Afghanistan Today

Liberated Afghan women demonstrate on fourth anniversary of 1978 "April Revolution". They will pay in blood if Red Army pulls out.

tion outweigh the costs of defeat" there should be no problem. For that is what they're after: not a deal but *defeat*, to install an anti-Soviet regime in Kabul and complete the encirclement of the USSR by hostile regimes all along its southern border. As we wrote in "Afghanistan and the Left: The Russian Question Point Blank" (*Spartacist* No 29, Summer 1980):

"Afghanistan is a flash of lightning which illuminates the real contours of the world political landscape. It has exploded the last illusions of detente to reveal the implacable hostility of US imperialism to the Soviet degenerated workers state."

We warned then:

"It is possible the Kremlin could do a deal with the imperialists to withdraw, for example, in return for NATO's reversing its decision to deploy hundreds of new nuclear missiles in West Europe. That would be a real counterrevolutionary crime against the Afghan peoples."

A Soviet withdrawal now will embolden the deeply discredited Reagan

regime, encouraging it to step up its murderous contra wars against Nicaragua, Angola and Kampuchea as well. Not withdrawal but victory! Red Army - finish the job!

AFGHANISTAN: TARGET OF COLD WAR II

To mark the eighth anniversary of the Soviet intervention, thousands of Afghan counterrevolutionaries in Pakistan rallied around burning effigies of Gorbachev, chanting "Death to Russia! Death to Communism!" That same day TASS reported that Afghan thugs invaded the Soviet mission in the Iranian city of Isfahan. Imperialism's Afghan "freedom fighters" have vowed to kill all Communist collaborators. They mean it. Already, they have assassinated more than 2,000 schoolteachers for trying to bring literacy to a country where, before, 90 per cent of the population was illiterate. The *mujaheedin* have also justified shooting down an airliner taking Afghan children to study in the USSR, claiming

they were being "brainwashed" by Satan. These feudalist reactionaries want to return to a 7th century society based on the cruellest social parasitism, criminality and slavery.

Emancipated women in particular are threatened by the Islamic reactionaries. The vice president of the All-Afghanistan Women's Council went to university in Kabul with Gulbaddin Hekmatyar, now one of the top Afghan contras. "In 1971, when women came out in public with no veil, Gulbaddin's supporters sprayed acid in their faces," she said. "When women wore stockings, they shot at their legs" (*Guardian*, 5 January). As one Islamic fanatic declared at the anti-Communist orgy in Pakistan, "We are Afghans and we do not allow women to come out. Women have no opinion in determining the future of Afghanistan" (*New York Times*, 28 December 1987). Today a majority of students at Kabul University are women, and 15,000 women serve as soldiers and commanders in the Afghan army. The withdrawal of Soviet troops would mean they face the prospect of hideous slaughter.

Not only Afghans will die. For Washington, Afghanistan was the opening shot of the second Cold War, a global drive to "roll back" supposed "Soviet expansionism". Democrat Carter's "national security" czar Zbigniew Brzezinski stood at the Khyber Pass in a US Army jacket and pointed an automatic rifle at Afghanistan. Republican Reagan took aim at Sandinista Nicaragua and soon was bankrolling contra mercenaries from Central America to Southeast Asia. In his second term this became the "Reagan doctrine" of attacking the Soviet "evil empire" on its fringes. Journalist Bob Woodward reports of his conversations with CIA chief William Casey:

"He was interested in taking one back from the Soviets - a visible, clean victory.

"Where can we get a rollback?" Haig had asked.

"I want to win one," the president had said."

— *Washington Post Magazine*,
27 September 1987

Even after the Iran/Contra gate fiasco the Reaganauts are hoping to "win one" in Afghanistan. But they can't unless the Kremlin hands it to them.

Reaganites and Democrats alike have insisted on the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan as the key test of sincerity for Gorbachev's "peace" drive. Nowhere is the futility and danger of trying to appease the war-crazed US rulers clearer. While the Soviets were talking of pulling out, Reagan was in the Oval Office promising his Afghan contras that US aid will increase. In the aftermath of the Washington summit, the White House decided to turn up the heat:

"Administration officials...have concluded that a tough stand by the United States can probably force further compromises from the Soviet Union on the timing and manner of its proposed troop withdrawal."

— *New York Times*,
15 December 1987

Now that the Soviets have promised to be out by the end of the year, Secretary of State George Shultz is demanding that they also cut off all aid to their erstwhile Afghan allies, while insisting that US arms and aid to the Afghan rebels will continue until the Soviets are gone.

INTENSIFY THE WAR— MOP UP THE MULLAHS!

On the US ABC News' "This Week with David Brinkley", Soviet foreign ministry spokesman Gennadi Gerasimov proclaimed: "We are going to withdraw, and the process of national reconciliation will take place, and you will have a nonaligned Afghanistan; nonsocialist, also" (*Washington Post*, 14 December 1987). The idea of "Finlandising" Afghanistan is pure illusion. The most minimal bourgeois-democratic measures, such as a modest land reform, provoked a savage feudalist backlash. Even bringing back the king, deposed in 1973, as the Soviets are seeking, won't restore a stable, pliant buffer regime. As for the programme of "national reconciliation" with the *mujahedin*, it would have been easier for Lenin's Bolsheviks to form a coalition government with the tsarist Black Hundreds, who look downright liberal compared to the Afghan cutthroats!

The possibility of bringing this land of feuding tribes, opium smuggling, bride price and religious obscurantism out of the Middle Ages is directly tied to the achievements of Soviet Central Asia. Many of the initial Soviet troops were in fact Tadzhik, Turkmen, Kirghiz, Uzbek and Kazakh soldiers from just across the border. The *Toronto Globe and Mail* (5 February 1987) noted, following some nationalist riots in Kazakhstan, that the threat of Islamic fundamentalism in the USSR "is limited by relative economic comfort in the central Asian republics. While religious commitment and population trends ring ominously, the memory of what life without the Soviets was like is on their side". But as the Kremlin has restricted social reforms in Afghanistan, US-armed *mujahedin* (holy warriors) have even begun to strike across the border into Tadzhikistan.

At Moscow's urging, the authentically Afghan People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) regime has tried to conciliate the rebels. Agrarian reform was cut back, all

ceilings on land ownership for the feudal landlords and Islamic clergy were lifted, the mullahs were exempted from taxation. Education for girls was made "voluntary" instead of compulsory. In November PDPA leader Najibullah called a *loya jirgah*, bringing in tribal and religious chiefs. In the name of Allah and "Islamic consciousness", the red star was removed from the Afghan national seal and the country was renamed the Republic of Afghanistan, dropping the "Democratic" because of Communist connotations. As Najibullah was appealing for a "political solution" by holding out the prospect of Soviet withdrawal, the guerrillas responded with rocket blasts that shook the meeting room.

The only "political solution" that will benefit the Afghan masses is for the Soviet army to intensify and finish the war by mopping up the Afghan contras. This sentiment is evidently shared by many in the Soviet Union, notably within the army. According to the *Los Angeles Times* (5 November 1987), recent issues of the Soviet defence ministry



newspaper *Krasnaya Zvezda* (Red Star) have featured articles complaining that the unilateral ceasefire declared by Kabul last year allowed the rebels to regroup and rearm, shooting down civilian airliners "right and left" while Afghan troops returned to their bases and Soviet troops were made to hold their fire.

Over the past year, the US has shipped more than 600 Stinger surface-to-air missiles to its Afghan mercenaries. While some were sold to the Iranians and used against the US in the Persian Gulf, the imperialists claim the Stingers together with British Blowpipes are taking down an average of one Soviet helicopter gunship a day, while making it impossible for Soviet fighter jets to fly close support. Referring to the Soviet MI-24 helicopters which were key in wiping out guerrilla strongholds in Afghanistan, one *mujahedin* leader boasted: "For nine years the dragon ruled the skies over Afghanistan. Now the dragon is dead." The solution is simple, and McDonnell Douglas has it—the "Black Hole Infrared Suppression System". As advertised in the December 1987 issue of *Scientific American*, the Black Hole system makes helicopter exhaust "so cool it is ignored by heat-seeking missiles".

CARRYING OUT THEIR INTERNATIONALIST DUTY

The real barrier to Soviet victory in Afghanistan is not on the military

front. As one senior Reagan official admitted, even armed with Stingers "a possibility of a resistance victory...there never has been". An article in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* (22 December 1987) noted that the Soviet military "knows that the Red Army cannot be defeated by the mujahedin", and "there has been a sharp improvement in the [Afghan] army's performance". This was demonstrated at the end of December in the successful drive by Soviet and Afghan troops to break the

in the Soviet Union, turning a tiny protest in Moscow (eight protesters carrying signs demanding "Withdraw Soviet Troops from Afghanistan") into a major event. But the most common demand reported in demonstrations of Afghan war veterans and letters to the Soviet press is not for withdrawal but *recognition* of the valiant internationalist contribution by Soviet youth.

There have been increasing demands to build a monument in Moscow to commemorate Soviet soldiers



Soviet poster entitled "International Aid" (above). Red Army's fight to smash Islamic reactionaries is internationalist duty. Young soldiers from Central Asia stand guard in Jalalabad bazaar, in Eastern Afghanistan.

guerrilla siege of Khost, just a few miles from the Pakistani border, disrupting a key arms route and killing over 2000 rebels. A US government official carped: "The Soviets are showing they still have the firepower to go anywhere they want." So they do. The obstacle is political.

Gorbachev has called Afghanistan a "bleeding wound". But it has been the Kremlin Stalinists' efforts to strike a deal with the mullahs and their imperialist godfathers which have needlessly prolonged the war, allowing the US to keep the blood of Soviet soldiers flowing. Much is made of opposition to the war with-

fallen in battle against the CIA's Afghan contras. In a letter to *Pravda*, the father of Sergeant Yuri Shevchenko, who died in Afghanistan, asked why his son's heroic sacrifice could not be inscribed on his gravestone: "Why can't it say that he died carrying out his international duty in Afghanistan? What are we ashamed of?" (*Pravda* monthly English edition, October 1987). Beholden to the Stalinist dogma of "socialism in one country", Gorbachev & Co are "ashamed" of anything that smacks of revolutionary internationalism, because it stands in the way of pursuing their reactionary

continued on page 11

Eaton/Los Angeles Times



Moscow grave of soldier killed in Afghanistan. Honour Red Army heroes!

Workers say: Enough!...

(continued from page 1)

workshifts from 12 to 18 hours in order to slash 20 per cent of existing jobs. And it's the Thatcher gang that was responsible for those 31 people burned alive at King's Cross. Now if you're sane you fear for your life when you ride the tube: London Underground workers would have been heroes had they struck against the slashing of maintenance and operating staff and to demand that money be spent on elementary fire prevention measures. So when nurses finally hit the bricks, they won widespread acclaim. Despite the government's anti-strike propaganda, a Gallup Poll showed that 79 per cent of the population supported the nurses' action. Miners at Frickley respected their picket lines, while Vauxhall car workers struck in solidarity.

The potential for linking the unions with the millions of oppressed is obvious. Hard class struggle can bring down Thatcher. But to win you've got to fight. You can't do it with one-day "strikes" where the unions scab on themselves, or lunchtime protests or Saturday marches. This country should be shut down tight. And to get it going



News Line

TUC chief Norm Willis greeted with a noose by militant South Wales miners, 1984.

no strings doesn't begin to address the plight of assembly workers whose £120 a week take home won't pay for the upkeep of the cars they produce. A *Financial Times* editorial (6 February) warned the bosses that the "pressure for greatly improved wages" must be resisted, castigated weak-kneed managements and worried that, "Most disturbing of all, the union

mented to *WH* salesmen that they were outraged by the banner; as one worker put it: "I haven't seen it. If I had it wouldn't be there".

To win this strike, it must be taken out of the control of the sell-out trade union bureaucrats. Double the wages, for a shorter work week with no loss in pay, bury the speed-up, "flexibility" and "productivity" schemes! Local and national strike committees, subject to recall at any time, should be elected to run the strike, take over negotiations, convene regular mass meetings and produce information bulletins. Delegations of Ford workers should be dispatched to Europe to win the support of Ford workers there. As continental plants shut down because of lack of parts, the German metalworkers union has stated it will not increase overtime to boost production and will attempt to prevent the company from replacing UK-produced components with supplies from other sources. Such acts of international solidarity are a welcome antidote to protectionist poison. Dockers and transport workers must black shipments to Ford from anywhere. Ford workers were on the front lines against Callaghan's wage controls and they're out in front today. *A victory for the car workers will be an impetus to fight back throughout the trade union movement - not least to the embattled nurses and health workers. Strike to win!*

NHS ON THE CHOPPING BLOCK

The crisis of the National Health Service shows the brutal irrationality of a society based on profit. The NHS is in miserable condition and the Thatcher government is ghoulishly intent to slash what's left. This is an issue deeply felt as a full 90 per cent of the population is totally dependent on the NHS for health care. When the nurses struck throughout the country on 3 February with picket signs asking drivers to toot if they supported their strike - *everyone* from those in BMW's to Minis did. Things have got so bad that even eminent Tory doctors like the queen's gynaecologist have been writing letters of protest and making personal appeals to Thatcher. For months the newspapers have been filled with one atrocity story after another about patients dying for lack of beds, lack of staff, lack of equipment - in other words *lack of money*. To get a life-saving hole in the heart repair operation for their baby out of the Birmingham hospitals, parents were forced in desperation to plead their case in tears before TV cameras.

Almost weekly more ward and hospital closures are announced. The

Independent's (21 January) headline "Shortage of dialysis units killing diabetics" is all too typical. Six hundred diabetics in Britain suffer from kidney failure, only around 300 receive treatment - the others die. Over the past decade, 20,000 acute beds have faced the axe. Another 30,000 beds have been lost in the area of chronic long-term illness. And of course, the old are put at the bottom of the queue. The infant mortality rate in England and Wales is rising for the first time in 16 years. Shortage of nurses has caused the closure of children's cancer wards. As for operations, the waiting list is now in the hundreds of thousands. And if you are lucky enough to get one, you have to worry about the fact that the surgeon who is operating on you is awake enough to do it properly. As one nurse put it in a television interview: in the case of a straightforward (let alone complicated) appendectomy, twenty years ago, you would have been kept in the hospital for up to twelve days to monitor recovery. Ten years ago, it would have been a week. Today you are lucky to be kept in for more than a few days after the operation.

For nurses and other health service workers, the NHS crisis not only means unspeakable conditions but slave wages. Student nurses who work a fulltime week get less than £60 for their hours of drudgery. Trained nurses after a few years on the job get a salary of £6,500 a year, plus the NHS remains consistently subsidised through unpaid overtime. The NHS has always been subsidised through low wages and high taxes. Now as Thatcher cuts the taxes to line the pockets of her mates, the only solution for her is to cut funding and at the same time privatise the health service piecemeal. Linked to this are Thatcher's plans to destroy the trade unions in the health service. But nurses want to fight: they began to desert from the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) in droves when NUPE and COHSE organised strike action. Were there determined struggle the RCN, a company union, would be shattered and the bulk of nurses unionised.

NUPE and COHSE leadership have distributed the nurses strike so that they take place one day or even one-half day at a time and discouraged other union members and other unions from taking strike action in solidarity. When Labour "left" Tony Benn put forward a motion in support of the nurses' strike, it was overwhelmingly defeated by Labour's executive. Meanwhile, the NUPE bureaucrats did what they could to stop the ambulance men from coming out with the nurses and the trade union bureaucracy in general has refused to call out their membership



Workers Hammer

April, 1984: Spartacist League banner at NUM delegate conference. In direct opposition to Labour/TUC traitors, revolutionaries fought to bring out key sectors of the working class alongside miners.

again - to genuinely rebuild industry, provide jobs with decent standards of living and decent social services for all - requires no less than the revolutionary expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the establishment of a genuine workers government. But the working class goes into struggle saddled with Labourite misleaders who compete with Thatcher in suppressing struggle and administering cutbacks. The crisis facing the working masses is a crisis of leadership. What is necessary is the forging of a Leninist-Trotskyist party like the one that led the Russian masses to power in 1917.

SMASH THE UNION BUSTERS— VICTORY TO THE FORD STRIKERS!

Despite Thatcher's draconian anti-union legislation, despite the fact that the Ford workers negotiators - Jimmy Airlie of the Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU) and Mick Murphy of the Transport and General Workers Union (T&GWU) - worked overtime to ram the three-year sell-out contract down the members' throats, Ford workers walked out in a solid nationwide strike.

Not only have Ford workers taken a substantial dive in real earnings since 1979, the workforce has been slashed by 25,000. Ford's British plants require two-and-a-half times more hours than the Japanese to build a comparable vehicle (*Financial Times*, 8 February). So the basis of British Ford's profits is above all low wages. The demand for a 10 per cent wage increase with

leadership is leading from behind, with the pressure coming from their members". This fact has not been lost on the Ford workers; at the London Dagenham plant, strikers carried handmade signs reading "Kick out Murphy, we're the union" when they walked out before the strike was "officially" set to begin.

The union leadership has wasted no time in trying to split and wreck the strike. Only days after car workers walked out, union stewards were working in collusion with the cops to limit the number of pickets at each gate to six. Most ominously, the bosses' anti-Japanese chauvinism, reinforced in the trade union movement by calls for import controls by the likes of NUM leader Arthur Scargill, reared its ugly, racist head when on Monday, 8 February some strikers carried a banner reading: "We're 'Brits' Not 'Nips'". This revolting and racist banner was naturally splashed throughout the bourgeois press. And it's downright stupid as well, since obsolescent, low-tech British capitalism guarantees that workers here are low paid compared to Japanese workers. While no-strike agreements associated with Japanese industry are used by trade union bureaucrats to whip up protectionist sentiment, there's nothing inherently "Japanese" about union-busting. The British and American bosses are past masters at that. The anti-Japanese provocation should have been swiftly dealt with at Dagenham - one of the most integrated plants in all of Britain. In fact, a number of Asian and black workers com-

May, 1984: Riot police charge pickets at Orgreave. Tories were out for miners' blood as TUC sat on its hands.



Workers Hammer

amongst the ancillary workers in the hospitals themselves. A fighting leadership would seek to pull out all hospital workers – from nurses to doctors to ambulance drivers and ancillary workers – and would strike the private hospitals as well.

terprise and building. With that goal achieved, a militant strike leadership might decide to allow some exemptions (but only those that the strikers themselves and not the bureaucrats verify as necessary) in order to prevent hardship for workers,

ism's survival means "rollback" against every partial gain won by the working class and continued immiseration. The NHS crisis is a potential tinder box – almost everybody is targeted. But the only solution is the smashing of the capitalist system responsible for this crisis and the seizure of proletarian state power by victorious workers revolution. On that road, it is necessary to bring the power of the organised workers movement to aid all the vulnerable sections of society – the young, old, sick, the unemployed, the women, black and Asian minorities – in turning back Thatcher's murderous assault.

British capital. The Communist Party, now deeply split between ultra-reformist "Euros" and old-line Stalinists, long ago embraced the "parliamentary road" to oblivion and became a second-rate Labour Party. But for militants engaged in struggle the bankruptcy of Labourism is evident. Today the opportunities for regroupment, through splits and fusions of would-be revolutionary forces, are more favourable than at any time in years.

An all-sided struggle is required, based on an authentic communist programme counterposed to the vile "little England" nationalism, parliamentary cretinism and servility of Labour. In his writings on Britain, the great Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky recounted a visit to VI Lenin by HG Wells. "I thought", Trotsky wrote, "and perhaps not without reason, that Wells's lines on Lenin might unveil to us better than much else the spirit of the leading layer of the British Labour Party: after all, Wells is not the worst of them." Towards the end of this article, Trotsky writes:

"For even the British social revolution will take place according to laws established by Marx.

"Wells once threatened with his peculiar stodgy pudding-like wit to crop Marx's 'doctrinaire' head of hair and beard and anglicize, respectabilize and Fabianize Marx. But this scheme neither has nor will come to anything. Marx will remain Marx just as Lenin remained Lenin after Wells



Dave Evans (IFL)

Winter of Discontent strikes spelled defeat for Wilson/Callaghan Labour government which tried to chain workers to bosses through social contract wage restraints. Labour today tells nurses to drop dead.

There are plenty of potentially powerful allies who could aid the nurses in shutting the hospitals down tight. But first and foremost, the strikes in the health service itself must be real. Picket lines mean don't cross is the starting point for any strike. Fearing the example of the powerful picket lines established during the miners strike, the trade union bureaucracy has attempted to derail militancy. Thus during the Wapping strike picket lines were demobilised in favour of an impotent consumer boycott. Today the Labour/TUC tops and their "left" tails are pushing so-called "emergency cover", which is nothing more than telling nurses they should organise the scabbing on their own strike. In fact, emergency cover in the current strike has meant in some cases more nurses on duty than normal!

As we wrote in *Spartacist Britain* no 8 (February 1979) against the fake-lefts who pushed all manner of emergency cover scabbing schemes:

"Revolutionaries can make no concessions to the scab-herding arguments of the bourgeois press: if members of the public suffer temporary hardship as a result of a strike then only the bosses are to blame for refusing to meet the workers' demands. The starting point of any strike must be to close down every affected en-

their families and other members of the public and win support for the strike."

But this is simply not the case today in the hospital workers' battle, which has seen at best one-day "strike" actions with thousands crossing the picket lines.

And now the Labourite left continue to peddle their recipes for defeat. *Socialist Organiser* (28 January) calls for "emergency cover...under trade union control" while the more slippery *Workers Power* talks about "emergency cover only under workers' control". This in reality is workers' control of scabbing! Reformists and centrists of all stripes showed their slavish loyalty to Labour by supporting Kinnock in the last election – and loyally they'll build (with some "criticisms" to be sure) the TUC's 5 March Day of Action – on a Saturday – calculated as such "days of action" were during the GCHQ strike to give the kiss of death to any real strike.

Far more than defence of the NHS against Thatcher's privatisations (ie, the status quo) is necessary. The billions needed to stop the gruesome butchery in the health service will not and cannot be supplied by the capitalists running this devastated economy. It won't be supplied by their Labour lieutenants running the same economy. As Thatcher knows – British capital-

WORKERS, OPPRESSED NEED A BOLSHEVIK PARTY

The excruciating reality is that those now fighting on the picket lines are up against the bosses, the state, their trade union misleaders without any credible alternative class-struggle leadership. Forging such a leadership – a Leninist combat party – remains an urgent task. The organisations of the so-called revolutionary left are mired in the Labourite swamp. Press agents for Kinnock during the last election, they can now be expected to tail the Bennite "lefts" in their war of words over how anti-socialist Labour's paper programme should be. This is so much hot air coming from those who sat on their hands while the miners were knifed, and fully backed Kinnock when he campaigned as a NATO-loving,



Dobney/Independent

Capitalism kills: King's Cross tube station the day after bosses' cuts murdered 31 commuters in deathtrap fire.

racist scab. Where were they when the printworkers were smashed – and violence-baited by Labour just to add insult to injury? Where they are now: hat in hand before their capitalist masters, tying the working class to its deadly enemies.

A Leninist-Trotskyist party can be forged only through splitting the Labour Party, bringing key sections of the working class under the revolutionary banner while exposing and politically defeating the pro-capitalist misleaders, both "left" and right. But for decades the British left has been straitjacketed by Labourism, subordinating itself to the parliamentarist lieutenants of

had subjected him to the agonizing effect of a blunt razor for an hour. We will venture to predict that in the not so distant future two bronze figures will be erected side by side in London, say in Trafalgar Square, those of Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin. The British proletarian will say to his children: 'What a good thing the little men from the Labour Party did not manage to crop or shave those two giants!'

Forge a revolutionary Bolshevik party to lead the British workers to their ultimate victory over this rotting imperialist ruling class! Forward to a soviet Britain! ■



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

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Worker/immigrant mobilisations to smash the fascists!

Le Pen - enough is enough!

Full citizenship rights for immigrants!

The following is the text of the leaflet by the Ligue Trotskyste de France calling for a contingent at the 27 January demonstrations organised by the Communist Party against the leader of the fascist National Front, Jean-Marie Le Pen.

On Wednesday, 27 January, the anniversary of the date the victorious Red Army liberated the Auschwitz extermination camp, Le Pen, the fascist gang leader for whom the massacre of Jews in the Nazi gas chambers is a "detail",

will appear on "The Hour of Truth" to push his calls for racist murder. At long last, the PCF is calling for protest demonstrations across France, expressing the hope that they will be joined by "others - organisations and individuals - for this demonstration". Yes, Le Pen - enough is enough!

Like hundreds of thousands of Communist militants, the Ligue Trotskyste is pleased to see mass working-class mobilisations against the fascists. After the victory of the Antilles' anti-fascists in December, it is high time the Le Penite scum was given a taste of the social power of the organised working class. The LTF, together with the Tribune Communiste group, calls

on workers, youth, immigrants, Jews, homosexuals, all those targeted by the National Front stormtroopers, all anti-fascists to participate in the 27 January demonstrations and to join our contingents in Paris and Rouen. Le Pen, enough is enough! Mass working-class demonstrations are needed to crush the fascists before they crush us!

The fascists' first target is immigrant workers and their families. Worker/immigrant defence groups based on the unions must defend the factories and immigrant neighbourhoods against the fascist goons! But you can't mobilise immigrant workers for that kind of action behind the slogan "Produce

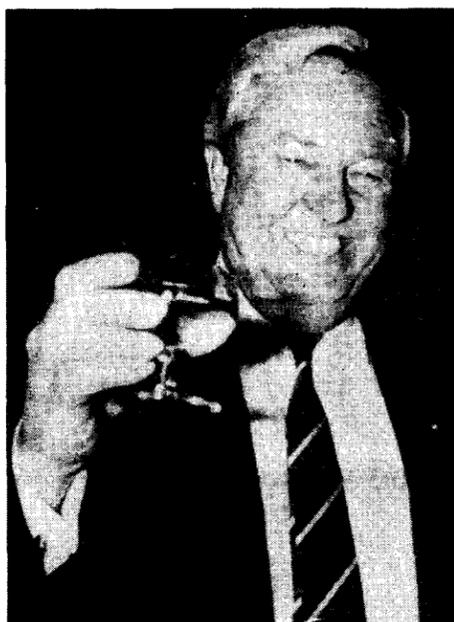
French". We must demand full citizenship rights for immigrant workers and their families, and wage a relentless struggle against all forms of racist segregation and discrimination.

Ever since 1981, Mitterrand's anti-Soviet, anti-working class and anti-immigrant popular front has paved the way for reaction and the fascists. Four times, that's enough! We must break the infernal cycle of popular front/reaction, build a revolutionary party which fights for a real workers government to expropriate the bourgeoisie, to undertake the socialist reconstruction of France in the framework of the Socialist United States of Europe and to inflict the fate of the Russian pogromist Black Hundreds on Le Pen's gangs.

EVERYONE OUT FOR THE DEMONSTRATION 27 JANUARY!

Join the contingent of the Ligue Trotskyste!

PARIS: Republique 6.30 pm
ROUEN: Place St Sever 5.00 pm



Gerard Rancnan-Sygm



Pascal Parrot-Sygm

Fascist National Front leader Le Pen (left). NF thugs attack demonstrators in Marseille.

French protest ...

(continued from page 12)

anti-immigrant action, bulldozing the housing for African workers in the Paris suburb of Vitry, to prove its loyalty to the bourgeois order.

The PCF leadership crawled into the Mitterrand government, the recruiting sergeant of the imperialist war campaign against the Soviet Union in Europe. Today, the PCF leadership is still intent on getting its members to swallow a vote for the anti-working class Mitterrand on the second round of the presidential election. This perspective is so unappetizing for many militants that at the last PCF congress, the leadership didn't dare put to a vote a motion calling explicitly for a vote to Mitterrand on the second round.

Le Pen owes his "respectability" to the anti-immigrant policy of police terror and the anti-Soviet campaign waged since 1981 by governments of the "left" which put wind in his sails. Supporting a new popular front means not stopping Le Pen, but opening the road to him. Our contingent underlined the bankruptcy of the popular front and the need for socialist revolution when we chanted, "Mitterrand, anti-worker! Mitterrand, anti-immigrant! Mitterrand, anti-Soviet! Workers government!" Opposing the anti-Soviet war drive and

the French nuclear arsenal, the LTF contingent also chanted: "Down with NATO! Down with the 'force de frappe'! Defend the Soviet Union!"

FIGHT AGAINST FASCISM IS INTERNATIONALIST DUTY

The need to mobilise the workers movement against the fascist thugs is certainly not restricted to France. In Britain, where race-terrorists have targeted blacks, Asians, Jews, Irish, gays, Gypsies and socialists, trade union-centered anti-fascist actions are urgently called for. Explaining the importance internationally of the united-front protest against Le Pen, we in the Spartacist League/Britain (SL/B) contacted a number of trade union officials to urge their participation in the French demonstration. We concentrated particularly on the combative National Union of Mine-workers (NUM), and spoke to local officials and militants in Yorkshire, Kent and South Wales. The NUM national leadership was contacted as well (including by some of the local leaders) and Arthur Scargill received both the PCF's announcement of the demonstration and the LTF's call for our contingent. Officials of engineering and transport unions as well as the South African Confederation of Trade Unionists (SACTU) in London were also informed by the SL/B of the anti-Le Pen action.

While unfortunately no delegation

of senior trade unionists crossed the channel for the demonstration, the example of workers taking to the streets against Le Pen should inspire similar actions in Britain today. Against the Labour traitors who are the sworn enemies of working-class struggle, revolutionaries must fight for union/minority mobilisations to crush the fascists in the egg. In Britain, the fascists do not yet command the sort of forces that Le Pen's NF does - the point is to stop them before they do. Such mobilisations can turn the tide of racist, anti-worker reaction, bringing the power of the organised working class to the defence of all the oppressed.

Among those contacted in Britain about the PCF-called protest against Le Pen was the newspaper of the pro-Moscow CP grouping, *Morning Star*. A bit defensive about its failure to publicise the demonstration, *Morning Star* managed to print a small article the day following our discussion with them and later covered the demo. That the CP did virtually nothing in Britain around the anti-Le Pen demonstration is another example of the national narrowness of Stalinist reformism.

THE "FAR LEFT" TO THE RIGHT OF THE PCF

At this decisive moment, when the Communist Party finally did call for everyone to demonstrate against the

fascists, where were the fake-Trotskyists? The bourgeoisie and its social-democratic lieutenants opposed this mobilisation and the "far left" followed suit.

The apostles of impotence of Lutte Ouvriere (LO) deliberately chose to desert the anti-fascist workers mobilisation of 27 January. For LO, Le Pen is only an "unscrupulous demagogue" and his racist, anti-communist terrorists are only "poor people fooled by a millionaire". This disgusting economist pabulum which LO continues to serve up, after the fascist raids against immigrant communities in Marseilles and Lyon, after the murder of Philippe Brocard by National Front thugs in March 1986, after the dozens of attacks against immigrants and working-class militants - including its own militants - is becoming more and more disturbing.

As a result of working the mine-field of the "little man" and the backward fringes of the proletariat, LO has ended up hypocritically refusing to see the daily reality of racial segregation and racist terror by not wanting to recognise a fascist danger. The 27 January demonstration was not - as the social democrats also say - a "diversion" by the PCF. On this day, LO chose the camp of the anti-communist social democracy. The anti-social-democratic pretenses of LO are, like the rest of its politics, "revolutionary" hot air.

The Mandeliste LCR (Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire), on the other hand, was present. The bourgeois press even made a big deal of them. Why? Because of their impressive mobilisation, their strength, their militant slogans? To the contrary, the LCR did not carry any banners. The LCR's contingent would hardly have been identifiable without the well-known face of its honcho Alain Krivine, strolling with the anti-Soviet Juquin, leader of the "Renovators" group who split from the PCF in the direction of social democracy.

Indeed, they were mixed into the "Renovators" contingent - about 700 demonstrators in Paris - behind an anonymous banner held by Juquin and his faithful Krivine, calling for "Unity Against Racism and Fascism." But the LCR did nothing to build the demonstration with contingents, for example, from the CFDT unions in which it has a certain influence. No, its anonymous banner was em-



Le Bolchevik photos

Spartacists say "Bury Le Pen at Bitburg!" — demand vengeance for victims of racist terror

blematic of its criticism of the PCF from the right, which is that any mobilisation must include "the left" — i.e., a new class-collaborationist Union of the Left. For the LCR, there's no redemption outside of the popular front. *Rouge* (21 January) explains: "And, while having our sympathy, the thousands of demonstrators assembled on that day by the PCF won't be equivalent to the gigantic demonstrations which will inevitably respond to the call of the left and democratic associations."

But the left which *Rouge* is talking about is liberal SOS-Racisme leader Harlem Desir, who still prefers "debating" with racist terrorists, and Socialist leader Jospin, who declares that Le Pen should have been protected from the just outrage of the masses of Martinique and Guadeloupe. (Last fall the National Front leader and his fascist cohorts were run off these Caribbean islands as thousands of blacks surrounded their plane.) The reformist misleaders tremble at the thought of thousands of the most militant workers of Paris marching to the Bastille with Le Pen as their target. The social democrats didn't want to be there. On the 27th the LCR came as agents for Juquin and Mitterrand, whose popular front opened the gates to reaction; for this "contribution" these anonymous salon "Trotskyists" were hailed by the bourgeois press.

Trotsky remarked of the pre-1933 German social democracy that political corpses were of no use in a fight, but serve to prevent the living from fighting. Today that characterisation applies to Krivine & Co. There was only one Trotskyist organisation which unfurled its banners in this demonstration, underlining that there is indeed only one Trotskyist organisation in this country. The Lique Trotskyste de France has fought for years, with our modest forces, for actions to stop the fascists. When fascist thugs attacked far left newspaper sellers, the LTF initiated a 400-strong demonstration (called by a dozen trade unions and organisations) in Rouen on 11 December 1981. This demonstration drove the fascist rats back into their holes, albeit temporarily.

More recently, the LTF mobilised (together with Tribune Communiste in Paris, with trade unionists, North African youth and the MRAP at Rouen) against racial discrimination at the Flunch restaurant in Rouen last spring. When the fascists came to the rescue of the racist manager, we wrote, "It is now more than ever up to the leadership of the workers

movement — and above all the CGT and PCF — to take up the challenge" (*Le Bolchevik* no 75, July-August 1987).

PROGRAMME FOR VICTORY

Our contingent offered a political perspective opposed to popular frontism and anti-Sovietism. What's necessary to annihilate Le Pen and his fascist bands is independent workers mobilisation, bringing into play the organised social power of the proletariat, and which can draw behind it the millions of oppressed who are the intended victims of the fascist killers. This requires an all-sided struggle by the proletariat and its revolutionary vanguard against all manifestations of racist terror and oppression.

In fighting racial oppression — the dunghill which generates racism — it is necessary to raise the elementary demand for full citizenship rights for immigrants. This demand, in response to their situation as pariahs, is the only answer to the government's manoeuvres around the "Code of Nationality". This barrier which dramatically isolates immigrants and second-generation immigrant youth from the rest of the working class must be broken. Every racist attack, every crime committed by the racist cops and fascists in immigrant neighbourhoods must be answered: Cops out of immigrant neighbourhoods! For self-defence patrols, based on trade unions, uniting French and immigrant workers and residents of these neighbourhoods to ensure their defence!

There must be an intransigent struggle against the popular frontism which has far too long enchained the French proletariat. The formation of workers militias to protect strike picket lines and sweep the fascists from the streets can only occur in opposition to the bourgeois state, which will oppose any challenge to its monopoly of power. The road of the popular front is the road of bowing to the state power of the exploiters; the road of independent workers mobilisation, the only one capable of crushing the mortal danger for the workers and oppressed represented by Le Pen, is the road to the expropriation of the exploiters.

For class struggle to destroy capitalism, by overthrowing the bourgeois state and installing a workers government, rather than managing moribund capitalism! A real fight against fascist barbarism means the struggle for socialist revolution and a new leadership for the proletariat: the revolutionary party armed with the Leninist-Trotskyist programme.

Afghanistan...

(continued from page 7)

illusion of "detente" with the imperialists. At the 27th Communist Party congress in 1986, Gorbachev denounced any concept of "revolutionary war" as "Trotskyite" heresy.

Meanwhile, the war-crazed psychos in the White House are exporting counterrevolutionary wars around the globe, and the Afghan rebels have received the biggest subsidies. Over the past year they were reportedly bankrolled to the tune of \$660 million — six times what the Nicaraguan contras got — and in 1988 this is scheduled to rise to \$1 billion. The Democrats have out-Reaganned Reagan in boosting the cause of the bloodthirsty Afghan "freedom fighters", for here they see a perfect opportunity to bleed the Russians without the overhead of direct US intervention and the dread spectre of "another Vietnam". Texas Democratic Congressman Charles Wilson has demanded that the administration up the ante by shipping 2000 Stingers to the Afghan guerrillas as well as long-range mortars for use against Soviet airfields and military camps.

ship *Red October* and sent back to Seattle. Now the arch-reactionary US politician Jesse Helms is claiming Wrangell and four other nearby islands as property of the US of A — next thing you know, they'll be claiming Sakhalin island and the Kurils for Japan, and Kamchatka Peninsula and Vladivostok to seal off Russia in the Far East. And where would this stop? Where did it stop in 1918 — nowhere! The Soviet Red Army stopped it.

The imperialists seek to destroy and dismember the Soviet Union not through ludicrous land claims but by economic pressure, destabilization and war, to overturn the revolutionary gains of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution and restore "free market" capitalist exploitation. The USSR is too strong militarily and the loyalty of the Soviet peoples too deep to risk a direct assault right now. So they attack on the periphery of Soviet power. Pledging to pull Soviet troops out of Afghanistan, Gorbachev & Co are not only sacrificing the lives of millions of Afghans on the altar of "detente" but leaving the Soviet Union open to imperialist provocation and attack on this crucial southern flank.



AP

Friends of Afghanistan Society

Islamic reaction enslaves Afghan women (left); Russian intervention has opened road to liberation.

Any hope of peacefully coexisting with this crew of Cold Warriors is ludicrous. A *Wall Street Journal* (8 December 1987) editorial argued that Gorbachev's intentions to pull out of Afghanistan could not be honourable because "he hasn't said much about getting out of Eastern Europe"! Now there is recollection of the claim that Wrangell Island, right off the Soviet Arctic coast, belongs to the US because 14 Americans for the Lomen Reindeer & Trading Co were trappers on the island more than 60 years ago! In 1924 they were removed from the island by the Soviet

Only total Soviet victory over the mullahs can bring peace and the prospect of national and social liberation for the peoples of Afghanistan. To carry out what many in the Soviet Union, homeland of the October Revolution, rightly see as their internationalist duty in Afghanistan requires a proletarian political revolution in the USSR against the Kremlin oligarchy to restore the revolutionary internationalist traditions of Lenin and Trotsky's Bolsheviks.

Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 444, 15 January 1988

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Trotskyists in united-front CP protest

France: thousands march against fascist Le Pen

Adapted from *Le Bolchevik* no 80, February 1988, newspaper of the *Ligue Trotskyiste de France*.

PARIS—On 27 January, throughout France the streets resounded with the slogan, "Le Pen ca suffit!" (Le Pen—enough is enough!) For years one racist murder has followed another as the fascist thugs strut and storm. Finally the Communist Party (PCF) launched a national call to come out onto the streets against this scum. The 14 January call by the Political Bureau of the PCF was addressed to "the workers of Paris and its region, men, women and youth in favour of progressive values, freedom and human rights...". It concluded, "We will be happy if we can join together with others—organisations and individuals—for this demonstration."

This could only mean the united front: march separately and strike together. All those who participate in common action against a common enemy should mobilise under their own political banners. And we answered: Yes, *Le Pen—enough is enough! For worker/immigrant mobilisations to crush the fascists! Full citizenship rights for immigrants!* Together with the Tribune Communiste group, the Ligue Trotskyiste de France mobilised all of our forces to build contingents to participate in the 27 January demonstrations.

In Lyon, Rouen and Paris, the LTF marched with numerous signs and red flags. In Paris, our 130-strong contingent was organised jointly with Tribune Communiste, a group which came out of the "anti-opportunist"



Le Bolchevik

Trotskyist contingent at Paris anti-Le Pen demonstration: red, militant, internationalist

milieu of the PCF. Also marching behind our banner were militants of the Union of Tunisian Immigrant Workers, as well as delegations from different sections of the international Spartacist tendency, notably the Spartacist League/Britain, the Troztkistische Liga Deutschlands, the Lega Troztkista d'Italia and the Spartacist League/US. To emphasise the key importance of the struggle against racial discrimination and racist terror, our mobilising leaflet for 27 January (of which 20,000 were printed) was published not only in French but in Arabic and Turkish.

These demonstrations could be the harbingers of other larger, broader actions, determined to crush the fascists. Or the PCF leadership could seek to divert its ranks' outrage against Le Pen into a popular-frontist and electoralist dead-end. With an eye on the upcoming presidential election and the mooted candidacy of "Socialist" President Francois Mitterrand, the PCF's *L'Humanite* (19 January) headlined, "The Right There's the Enemy." It is necessary to break with the endless cycle of alliances with the bourgeoisie and its lieutenants like Mitterrand!

PCF MILITANTS: WHAT NOW?

For many Communist Party members, their party's call was a long overdue change. They remember the humiliating spectacle of PCF presidential candidate Lajoinie "debating" the pig Le Pen on an earlier television

appearance. Three times, Le Pen was allowed to spew his appeals to racial genocide on television. The fourth time, he chose the anniversary of the Red Army's liberation of Auschwitz, where the full horror of the Hitlerite "final solution" was played out. But this time, the PCF said: four times, enough is enough!

While at the beginning of its campaign for 27 January, the PCF rightfully emphasised in its propaganda the 104 racist murders in the last few years, at the demonstration, it spoke mainly of "liberating" television from Le Pen. But the struggle against the fascists will not be waged nor won in the studios of TV station Antenne 2, any more than in the voting booths or from the seats of the National Assembly. It is the streets and cities which must be liberated from the fascist gangsters! When the LTF denounced the repulsive Lajoinie-Le Pen "debate", we struck a chord among PCF militants. They know that you don't debate fascists, you fight them!

As is only to be expected from an organisation which for decades has invested (or rather squandered) its resources in class collaboration, the PCF's mobilisation, while real, was partial and minimal. Where there should have been hundreds of thousands under the banners of the CGT and the other union federations, and hundreds of thousands of North Africans, blacks, Jews, homosexuals, marching against their common enemy, there were some 12,000 people

at the Bastille. But the country was watching; for every person who demonstrated the 27th of January, there could be dozens the next time.

These demonstrations come in a situation where the policies of the leadership of the USSR (*glasnost* and *perestroika*) are creating turmoil in the various CPs around the world. The PCF is wracked by contradictions. Many of its militants know that there is no alternative to a struggle to the death against the fascists, but the PCF is a party imbued with decades of reformism. For its social-patriotic leaders, Le Pen can be "stopped" by an obscene competition as to who is the greatest "defender" of "national interests"—the logical consequence of the PCF's own chauvinist slogan "Produce French", a slogan which pits French workers against their foreign class brothers.

Eight years ago, PCF leader Georges Marchais said of the popular front, "three times is enough"—referring to the PCF's participation in class-collaborationist coalitions with the Socialists and capitalist parties in 1936, 1946 and 1973. We Trotskyists seized on this fleeting admission of the truth to demand that the PCF follow through on its words, we offered savagely critical support in the presidential elections of 1981 if it stood in its own name against the anti-Soviet Mitterrand and his coalition with the bourgeoisie. But instead, the PCF launched its obscene

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