



Three-day strike defies Botha

Smash apartheid!

Workers to power!

Despite its vicious repression under the "state of emergency", the South African regime has failed to cow the powerful black unions who hit back with a defiant three-day general strike last month. Three million black workers shut down Johannesburg and Durban, and even the capital Pretoria was hit hard by the walkout from 6 to 8 June. The three-day "stayaway" was the biggest and longest general strike in the history of the South Africa apartheid regime. The car industry ground to a halt, as all seven assembly plants in the country were shut down. Nothing moved in the black township of Soweto; Johannesburg was a ghost town as the buses and trains ran empty of passengers. White managers did the labour normally consigned to blacks, sweeping floors and stocking shelves in the deserted supermarket chains.

The stayaway was seen as a crucial test of strength between the apartheid state and the 900,000-strong black union federation, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), which has taken centre stage in the struggle of the oppressed black masses. The massive show of the muscle of black labour, the social force which has the power to smash apartheid rule, was COSATU's answer to an ominous new labour bill which threatens to wipe out the gains of the past ten years of black labour struggle against white-supremacist South African capitalism.

The strike was the largest protest action since the banning in February of 17 leading anti-apartheid organisations and prohibition of any political actions by COSATU as well. Since the state of emergency was imposed in 1986, according to official statistics 20,000 were detained and 3000 are still in jail. Now a new state of emergency has been declared, just days before the annual 16 June demonstrations over the suppression of the Soweto uprising of 1976.

Banned from making a direct strike call, COSATU and the substantially smaller National Congress of Trade Unions (NACTU) had called for three days of national protest against the pending new labour law, which is a full-scale onslaught against the right to strike and outlaws all sympathy strikes and boycotts. Before the strike, employers were threatening mass firings and many union leaders had gone underground, anticipating round-ups. "Our backs are against the wall," said COSATU secretary general Jay Naidoo. But the three-million-strong stayaway may have made the bosses more cautious about



Sharpeville Six supporters demonstrate their solidarity with victims of apartheid repression.

Save the Sharpeville Six!

ramming through the bill. Another union official said, "Before the strike the debate was about whether COSATU would survive. Now everybody, the Minister of Manpower and the employers, is talking about moderating the labour relations amendment bill."

SMASH NEW SLAVE LABOUR LAW!

The labour bill bans everything any combative union ever thought of doing, and the "battle against the bill" has been the focus of black workers' struggle since it was introduced in February. The bill's clauses include:

- Banning sympathy strikes, product boycotts and the "blacking" of struck goods.
- Jailing of union leaders and shop stewards who defy the bill's provisions, and seizure of union property and treasury.
- Outlawing workers strikes on the "same issue" for a period of 15 months.

- Requiring notification of the government's Manpower Department within 21 days of the start of a dispute for a strike to be legal.

- Provisions for "interdicting" even legal strikes, forcing workers back to work.

- Selective firing of workers after a strike (ie sacking shop stewards and union activists).

- Forming "minority" (eg whites only) unions in shops where unions have won majority votes for recognition.

- Declaring unions "responsible" for all strikes and allowing companies to sue unions for all money lost during strikes.

A COSATU pamphlet detailed the frontal attack on the black unions, saying:

"How many times have we won struggles through solidarity strike action or a solidarity boycott of particular products or through blacking the goods of a company where our comrades are on strike?"

... Solidarity action is the meaning of our slogan, 'An injury to one is an injury to all!'

The union declared "COSATU Says NEVER to the New Bill" and called for mobilisations to fight it. But after the successful stayaway, COSATU leader Naidoo called, not to smash the bill, but for "an independent panel of experts under the chairmanship of a retired judge" to decide whether the bill is anti-labour (WBAI, 8 June).

The bosses' hard line comes in the face of a mounting black labour insurgency. Last year, for instance, *nine million hours* of production were lost through strikes compared to *one million* in 1986! COSATU unions have waged major class battles in the mines, railroads, post office and retail stores, and they were the only ones to win wage increases actually exceeding the rate of inflation. Almost 40 per cent of South Africa's economically active population belongs to trade unions, making the country substantially more unionised than many West European countries and the US (*Work in Progress*, March 1988).

Furthermore, last August COSATU publicly reaffirmed its support to the outlawed African National Congress (ANC) by adopting the reformist Freedom Charter. The unions' growing economic and political assertiveness sparked the regime's crackdown on black labour. The Johannesburg *Weekly Mail* (3 June) reported that one experienced labour consultant came away from an industrial relations conference attended by about 700 top businessmen in Natal and said, "Without being melodramatic, one felt that war had been declared" against the trade-union movement.

The massive gold and coal mine strike last August ended in a stand-off - the union was forced back without winning its wage demands and had 44,000 members fired, but the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) was not broken and many fired miners were later hired back. Although the immediate demands of the NUM did not go beyond wages, benefits and conditions, this great labour struggle had an enormous political impact. In April, the NUM held underground demonstrations at the world's largest gold mine, Vaal Reefs, protesting the anti-labour bill. A total of 18,000 participated in protests against the bill at Anglo American, Gencor, Goldfields and Rand Mines. But while

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Ron Brown on the rack

Stop witchhunt against "mace" MP

It's been said that life can imitate art. If Chris Mullin had decided to write a satirical sequel to his best-selling political thriller, *A Very British Coup*, he could not have done better than the real and very British soap opera of Ron Brown and the mace. Take a Scottish Labour MP who defends Libya against US and British imperialism and who thinks that the Soviet Union was doing something good in Afghanistan, a debate in parliament where the same MP happens to "damage" a mystical and symbolic mace and you've got a full-scale, headline-grabbing witch-hunt. As the Fleet Street hacks and hypocritical parliamentary prudes on both sides of the House rubbed their hands in glee, the case of the mace was soon augmented by some other typically British angles – sex and drink.

It all started last April during the debate over the poll tax. As Kneel Kinnock was engaged in a polite ex-

change with Thatcher over the vicious tax which she is inflicting on the workers and oppressed of Scotland prior to imposing it on the Welsh and English, Ron Brown's sense of outrage led him to grab the mace. Then he compounded his heretical act by failing to grovel in apology, suggesting instead that the government might apologise to the millions of unemployed in Britain. So Ron Brown was suspended from parliament for 20 days. A few days later, Bill Jordan's AEU took some time off from playing footsie with the right-wing Eric Hammond's EPTU in order to withdraw its sponsorship from the MP.

But this was not enough for Kinnock. No sooner had Brown returned than the Labour Party leadership called a full meeting of the Parliamentary Labour Party hitting Brown with a motion to suspend him from the Labour whip for three months. Dutifully, the Labour MPs voted 119

to 36 to deprive Brown of his credentials. Tony Banks resigned his post as a whip in protest; Tony Benn moaned that Brown had been "punished enough". The wrist-slapping was riddled with accusations of who was in the bar drinking how late on the night of the poll tax debate itself. But it didn't stop there. The tabloids exploded with stories about a male MP cavorting in the men's showerroom in the House of Commons with a naked woman. At one point, the gutter press was so desperate for a story that they offered Brown's wife May a substantial sum of money for stories about him under the mistaken assumption that she was a neighbour. The *News of the World* reported on 5 June that "Brown's research assistant who was alleged to have frolicked with him in the showers...is expecting his child". We must compliment Brown on maintaining his sense of humour throughout all this. In a barbed reply to the research assistant story, he told the *Sunday Times* (5 June) "It would be physically impossible for her to be pregnant by me. A doctor can examine me if he wishes. These operations do work, don't they?"

Back to the mace: one John McMillan attempted a private prosecution against Brown for "damaging" the thing. This got as far as a warrant being issued, but was then squashed. The little Kneels in Brown's constituency party managed to pass a motion censuring him "for the manner he conducted himself" in relation to the well publicised Mace incident in the Commons" (*Guardian*, 14 June). (When they tried to carpet him for his voting record, they lost by two votes.)

Clearly, but in fact, the mace must



Ron Brown Evening News

be in place to give legal validity to the actions of the Commons. And this bizarre tradition is taken quite seriously – Labour MP John Beckett eventually lost his seat in the 1930s as a result of a fracas during the attempt to suspend Fenner Brockway. Beckett had picked up the mace shouting "Mr Speaker, these proceedings are a disgrace". Then, according to Beckett, he put the mace over his shoulder and walked out:

"The actual picking up of the trophy gave me my first surprise. The Serjeant at Arms bore it as though it were exceedingly heavy, and I breaced myself to lift a substantial burden. The mace, however, was no heavier than an umbrella. It was as hollow as the proceedings over which it presided" (*Guardian*, 19 May).

Throughout his ordeal Brown has always maintained that "If that bauble or ornament is more important than all the struggle, there is something wrong with this party" (*Independent*, 20 May), evoking the memory of Oliver Cromwell. After calling in the New Model Army, Cromwell dispersed the Long Parliament thus: he "commanded the mace to be taken away, saying 'What shall we do with this bauble? Here, take it away'" (cited in Christopher Hill's *God's Englishman*, 1970).

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Closer to the Proletarians of the "Colored" Races

Writing of a letter from black South African supporters, Trotsky underlined the danger of Stalin's policy of class collaboration which led to the beheading of the 1927 Chinese Revolution by Kuomintang strongman Chiang Kai-shek. Trotsky stressed that for the enslaved toilers the achievement of genuine democracy and national emancipation requires the proletarian conquest of power.



TROTSKY



LENIN

I have received a copy of the letter dated April 26, 1932, sent by an organization of Negro comrades from Johannesburg. This letter, it seems to me, is of great symptomatic significance. The Left Opposition (Bolshevik-Leninists) can and must become the banner for the most oppressed sections of the world proletariat, and, consequently, first and foremost, for the Negro workers....

In their letter, to which 24 signatures are appended (with the notation "and others"), the South African comrades expressed particular interest in the questions of the Chinese revolution. This interest, it ought to be acknowledged, is wholly justified. The working masses of the oppressed peoples who have to carry on the struggle for elementary national rights and for human dignity, are precisely those who incur the greatest risk of suffering the penalties for the muddled teachings of the Stalinist bureaucracy on the subject of the "democratic dictatorship." Under this false banner, the policy *a la* Kuomintang, that is, the vile deception and the unpunished crushing of the toiling masses by their own "national" bourgeoisie, may still do the greatest harm to the liberating cause of the toilers. The program of the permanent revolution based on the incontestable historic experience of a number of countries can and must assume primary significance for the liberation movement of the Negro proletariat.

— Leon Trotsky, "Closer to the Proletarians of the 'Colored' Races!" (1932)

WORKERS HAMMER



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letter

Paris, June 16th, 1988

Dear Comrades,

In your May-June issue you note that the Pouvoir Ouvrier group, French co-thinkers of Workers Power, extended their mentors' "fight the right" method across the channel by calling for a vote to Mitterrand in the second round of the presidential election – and you correctly expose this "shameless capitulation to the anti-Soviet, anti-worker Mitterrand popular front".

After seven years in office, the "socialist" cold warrior in the Elysee Palace had become so unappetizing that most of those opportunists who supported him this time justified their capitulation by explaining lamely that the right-wing candidate Chirac would be even worse.

But it seems Pouvoir Ouvrier makes a point in never getting tired of "exposing" the reformist parties by putting them again and again in office. In their leaflet "How to crush Le Pen", they explained: "Face à la confiance (même maigre) des travailleurs en Mitterrand et le PS. nous appelons à voter Mitterrand le 8 mai, parce qu'il faut mettre encore le PS

(et le PCF) à l'épreuve du pouvoir afin de mieux les démasquer" (emphasis in original).¹

This grotesque "tactic" can expose but one thing: these people cannot face a situation where the majority of the working class *do not have illusions* in the reformist misleaders. They simply cannot believe that such a thing can possibly happen. But it does – and we have even more astonishing news for them: France is a country *without a Labour Party*.

Be it in Britain, in France or elsewhere, Pouvoir Ouvrier/Workers Power's consistent policy of always and everywhere supporting the bourgeoisie's labour lieutenants fits most aptly Trotsky's classical definition of centrism: "A knife without a blade".

Comradely,
HF

1. "Faced with the confidence (even slight) of the workers in Mitterrand and the PS, we call for vote for Mitterrand on 8 May because it is necessary again to put the PS (and the PCF) to the test of power in order to better expose them".

Socialist Organiser victory in Healy libel suit

Workers Hammer prints below the remarks by comrade Alastair Green for the Spartacist League at a public meeting on 20 June celebrating *Socialist Organiser's* victory in a libel suit brought against it by Vanessa Redgrave in 1981. As comrade Green explains, this was a particularly gross example of the use by Gerry Healy, former and now-deposed "founder-leader" of the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP), of the bourgeois courts to intimidate and silence leftist opponents. *Socialist Organiser* (SO) printed in January 1980 an article headlined "Gaddafi's Foreign Legion to Knight's Rescue". Healy's cohort Redgrave sued; significantly Redgrave did not contest SO's comment in the article that: "It [the WRP] is very widely believed to be in receipt of subsidies from one or more Arab governments, from Gaddafi's Libya at least.... Its relationship to Gaddafi was and is that of a mercenary Hollywood publicity-agent to his client.... It also supports and shamelessly justifies the widespread murder of Com-

Socialist Organiser contacted the SL/B, along with a number of other left and labour organisations, to speak from the platform at the victory meeting. None of the other organisations showed up to speak, sell or participate in any fashion. In the case of the WRP fragments, this might be attributed to a guilty cowardice. For the rest, it was a continuation of their earlier policy of silence when Healy & Co were issuing High Court writs left and right. As the SO press release noted: "Fear of the libel courts stopped free press comment about the WRP for many years during which it was common knowledge on the left that the WRP was a violent and corrupt organisation linked by golden strings to various Arab bourgeois governments."

After remarks by SO spokesman John Bloxam, Alastair Green from the SL/B and Sean Matgamna of SO, a lively floor discussion ensued between supporters of both organisations. Spartacist supporters took SO to task particularly for its capitulation to the anti-Soviet war drive, its bloc with the British imperialists against the USSR over Poland and Afghanistan and its abasement before the Labour Party.

Remarks by Alastair Green:

The international Spartacist tendency has in fact from the beginning defended *Socialist Organiser* against this pernicious libel suit of Gerry Healy's glitterata stand-in Vanessa Redgrave. And we're pleased that this typical Healyite attack on the workers movement via the capitalist courts has failed.

I think many comrades will be familiar with the coverage that we gave to the *Socialist Organiser* defence campaign in the English-language edition of our international journal *Spartacist*, which has a wide circulation in many countries. And given the particular configuration existing in *Socialist Organiser's* organisation in 1981 our offer of a significant donation to the defence fund was turned down. Despite that, and despite the many sharp political differences between our tendency and *Socialist Organiser*, we continued to support the defence politically, given our interest in exposing and combatting such offences against the workers movement.

Of course this libel suit was not the first nor the last of Gerry Healy's crimes. And as a tendency we have publicised the banditry and gangsterism of the SLL and later the WRP over the last twenty years or more. So when Healy's thugs attacked a USec paper seller, Ernie Tate, outside Caxton Hall in 1966 we called on supporters of the International Committee to oust Healy and his collaborators. And we made the point that the contradiction between the thug tactics of the SLL leadership and its formal espousal of Trotskyism at the time could only be explained through the understanding that:

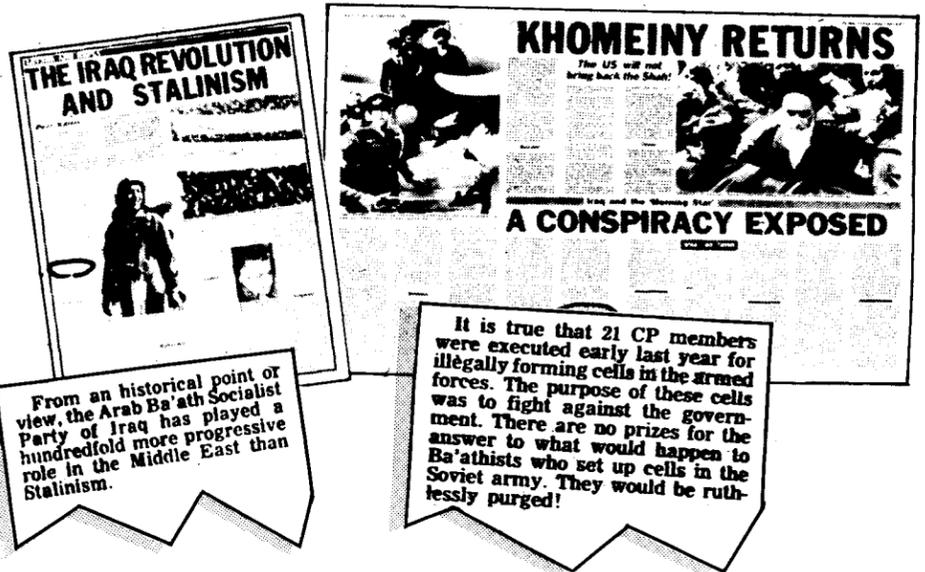
"Healy is an aggressive and greedy adventurer whose particular politics have changed frequently. At

the present he is claiming to adhere to the revolutionary Marxist program of Trotskyism. Tomorrow his politics will be something else, just as they were only a few years ago when Healy was indistinguishable from the Bevanites in the Labour Party." ["Oust Healy!", *Spartacist* no 9, January-February 1967]

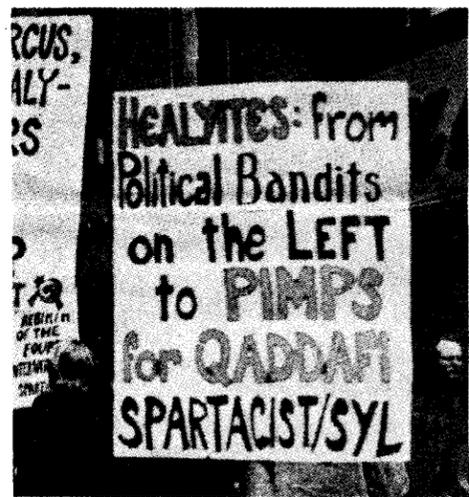
entourage have been tripping round Moscow in a new-found enthusiasm for the Gorbachev breed of liberal Stalinism. But we have not forgotten what the main political calling card of Healy and his WRP in the current period of heightened anti-Soviet war preparations has been: his unremitting support for all movements and leaders anti-Soviet, especially on the borders of the USSR itself.

So you have a situation where the WRP whored for Thatcher at the 1983 TUC Congress, when it red-baited Arthur Scargill for quite correctly saying that Solidarnosc was anti-socialist. And this carefully prepared trigger for a press witch-hunt strengthened the hand of the Cold Warriors in the TUC and served to help isolate the NUM in the run up to the great strike of 1984-85.

So in that provocation we see Healy's adoration of the clerical-



Healyite *News Line*, 8 March 1979 (left) and *News Line*, 2 February 1979 (right) support execution of Iraqi Communists by Ba'athist regime.



Workers Vanguard

Spartacist demonstration exposed criminal Healyites.

munist Party members by the Hussein dictatorship in Iraq" (quoted in *Socialist Organiser* press release, June 1988).

The international Spartacist tendency defended SO from the outset, noting that "Every working-class militant should look forward to the day when the Healy/Banda gang is politically removed as a menace to the left and labor movement. A victory by SO against this attack would constitute a step toward that goal and we are therefore compelled by basic class principle to offer such resources as we can to assist in the defense of this case, including fund-raising and publicity, not least internationally" ("Healyite Libel Suit: An Attack on Workers Movement", *Spartacist* no 31-32, Summer 1981). Matgamna, after soliciting our assistance to fight the Healy/Redgrave suit, then returned our cheque under pressure from the soft left milieu like Alan Thornett.

On 14 April of this year, Redgrave conceded defeat in the High Court and "accepted a claim from [SO leader Sean] Matgamna and Bloxam that the cases be dismissed for lack of prosecution, and a judge granted the dismissal with costs against Ms Redgrave" (SO press release).

Gerry Healy tried and succeeded, unfortunately, in extracting retractions and legal costs from two left papers over that case in 1967 - again with the instruments of Britain's particularly class-biased and obnoxious libel laws - and it's gratifying to know that this time the costs have flowed in the opposite direction.

In the 1970s Healy and Slaughter and the rest of them started the lying campaign against the reformists of the American Socialist Workers Party which acquired the sobriquet "Security and the Fourth International". They alleged that the SWP leadership are FBI and/or GPU agents. Well, we defended Joe Hansen as being an honest revisionist, and we note that Healy still persists, along with his Northite epigones, in this calumny.

The 1985 implosion of the WRP of course put paid to the pretence that the accusations of comrade Matgamna were anything other than truthful. And Gerry Healy couldn't win a libel case today to save his life. But by its own admission, in fact, after that implosion, the WRP was an overweening, voracious, cynical and violent cult operating under the twin signs of "security" and "dialectics" which consumed hundreds of militants, wrecked their commitment, their fibre as would-be revolutionists. Repetitively crossing the class line, it was financed by a breathtaking array of oil-rich potentates, selling intelligence on opponents of Saddam Hussein to the Iraqi regime, and foully enthusing over the execution of 21 Iraqi Communists. (And that was a crime which we highlighted in an article "Kill a Commie for Qaddafi", and for which the entire WRP leadership of the time must bear responsibility.)

Now, latterly Gerry Healy and his

reactionary capitalist restorationists of Solidarnosc. If you add to the list Khomeini's Iran, and the CIA-financed cutthroats of the Afghan feudalist *mujahedin* fighting against the Red Army - then it's very clear that no anti-communist is too loathsome for Gerry's attentions. So the Soviets would be well advised to keep one hand on their wallet and the other on a pistol when they're receiving the attentions of this particular suitor.

At bottom the defence of workers democracy and resistance to the intervention of the bourgeois state into the affairs of the workers movement depends on a revolutionary programme: this is, political independence from the bourgeoisie. The Labour Party which is much venerated and tailed by pseudo-Trotskyism in this country - besides being a graveyard for subjective revolutionaries - routinely prosecutes vicious red-baiting witchhunts against leftist dissidents in consonance with its role as the chief guardian of the class interests of the capitalist class within the workers movement. The Stalinists adopted violence, exclusionism and alliance with alien class forces as methods of struggle with a particular vigour that befits gravediggers of revolution. The Healyites aped these methods in the service of opportunist and organisational appetites that ultimately put them on the payroll of bourgeois regimes. There is a lesson in that for all those who wish to fight for the victory of communism: the defence of workers democracy (which includes resisting the exclusion of inconvenient leftist opponents from public meetings as practiced, for example, by the Socialist Workers Party or Workers Power) is a necessary part of the struggle for the Leninist programme and party. ■

Kim Philby: in memoriam

For many of us, the death of Kim Philby evoked our admiration for the achievements of this remarkable Soviet master spy who penetrated to the heart of British and American intelligence and counterespionage operations during and after World War II. Philby died 11 May at age 76, and was buried in Moscow with the military honours accorded a general of the KGB. The Soviet news agency TASS called him "heroic" and "a man of lofty internationalist duty", adding laconically:

"For a long time Kim Philby was engaged in an exceptionally delicate work, or, better said, a struggle directly within the special services of the capitalist countries whose thrust was spearheaded against the Soviet Union and the world's progressive movement."

As opponents of imperialism, we drew no small satisfaction from Philby's exploits, and savoured the humiliation which NATO secret services suffered as a result. At the same time, as fighters for the genuine proletarian internationalism of Lenin and Trotsky, our overall appreciation of Philby and his role must necessarily be more equivocal.

The outstanding work of Philby – called by one-time CIA chief Allen Dulles "the best spy the Russians ever had" – certainly had a devastating impact on the intelligence establishment of British imperialism, as rabid Fleet Street headlines about the "traitor Philby" bear witness still. When he finally escaped to the Soviet Union from Beirut in 1963, he left behind a legacy that goes far beyond the generation of spy novels he inspired, notably those of le Carre. British intelligence never really recovered; to this day they pore over each phrase of Philby, looking for clues to the elusive identity of a supposed "Fifth Man". Even the TASS eulogy for Philby set them vibrating again: "It was couched in the kind of prose that will raise eyebrows in London – and get M15 going back over the Philby files, to see exactly what it was that made the KGB so grateful" (*Guardian*, 13 May).

Before Philby, the British secret services were viewed as older and wiser, if a bit impoverished, by their US counterparts. Although Allen Dulles and James Jesus Angleton were taken in by him too (despite their claims in hindsight to have suspected all along), the "special relationship" between US and British spy agencies did not survive the Philby episode. Philby became the symbol for the demoralisation and self-doubt of the British ruling class as the last remnants of their empire crumbled and the Americans took over as world gendarme. No longer could they implicitly trust the most privileged and gifted scions of their elite institutions. More than anything, the British establishment could never forgive Philby for being a traitor to his class.

As a young leftist at Cambridge in the early 1930s, HAR Philby was attracted to Communism: "I had a good look around me and I reached a simple conclusion – the rich had had it too damn good for too long and the poor had had it too damn bad and it was time that it was all changed." For the next 30 years he served as a Soviet agent, moving into key positions in the SIS (Secret Intelligence Service, also known as MI6). He ran



Kim Philby, December 1967.

John Philby

Britain's anti-Soviet counterespionage operations from 1944 to 1947; he foiled imperialist-sponsored expeditions to promote counterrevolution in the Ukraine and Albania; he was the chief British liaison with the FBI and CIA in Washington during the period he described as "the full evil blast of McCarthyism"; he was even in line to become head of MI6, when the 1951 flight to the USSR of Donald Maclean and Guy Burgess, who had also been young leftists at Cambridge recruited to Soviet espionage, placed Philby under a cloud of suspicion.

With proverbial nerves of steel, Philby brazened it out. He was officially cleared by Prime Minister Macmillan in parliament and continued working for SIS in Beirut. Then, as the TASS communique said with suggestive understatement, "In 1963, having successfully accomplished a regular assignment, Kim Philby got to Moscow...." When asked in a recent interview if he would do it all again, he responded instantly: "Absolutely." Philby wanted to respond to the persistent planted rumours that he was disillusioned, in alcoholic depression etc. He pointed to his comfortable Moscow home and his happy marriage to his Russian wife Rufa. "Although life here has its difficulties...it's my country and I've served it for more than 50 years. I want to be buried here. I want my

bones to rest where my work has been."

Part of our admiration for Philby stems from hatred of those he opposed in the British intelligence services who thought they were fighting the wrong war (against Hitler) and wanted instead to be fighting the USSR. During WWII Philby evidently contributed to preventing the British from reaching a separate peace with Nazi Germany to combine forces against the Soviet Union; while in charge of the SIS Iberian operations he deflected overtures from Admiral Canaris and other of Hitler's disaffected officers. In his memoirs, *My Silent War* (1968), Philby wrote: "...it is a sobering thought that, but for the power of the Soviet Union and the Communist idea, the Old World, if not the whole world, would now be ruled by Hitler and Hirohito. It is a matter of great pride to me that I was invited, at so early an age, to play my infinitesimal part in building up that power."

There is no question but that Philby and his colleagues from Cambridge undertook their work in the sincere conviction they were serving the cause of a communist future for mankind. Donald Maclean, one of Philby's comrades, evidently remained true to his socialist convictions until his last days in Moscow (he died in 1983). Roy Medvedev, who knew him personally, wrote in a eulogy

that Maclean was disgusted by Stalin's crimes and had in his home a sign which read, "Opportunists, Dishonest People and Anti-Semites leave this apartment!"

But a life of service as a spy for the Soviet state under Stalin and his heirs does not necessarily equal a life of service to the working class. While Philby's circumstances placed him in a position to battle against powerful imperialist agencies, many of his contemporaries in Soviet intelligence had far dirtier assignments, sabotaging revolutions and murdering leftists. While he was gleaning valuable information from the Francoists, on the other side of the lines in the Spanish Civil War his GPU colleagues were assassinating leftists like Andres Nin and strangling the revolution. Philby's intelligence work reflects only one side of the contradictory Soviet regime which issued from the political degeneration of the first victorious workers revolution, a regime that sacrificed the hopes for world revolution on the altar of "socialism in one country".

That Philby shared this programme is evident in a recent interview in the *Sunday Times* (20 March, 27 March, 3 April and 10 April). In his first published interview with a Western journalist in 20 years, Philby met this spring with Phillip Knightley on several occasions, discussing his views at length. Asked about Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, he said that if his advice had been sought, "I would have advised against it on purely historical grounds. I would have said, look what happened to the British there. So keep out.... We decided to go in and hold the country down for a bit until we could restore order.... But now we are anxious to pull out as soon as we can do so without a massacre of our friends there."

We Trotskyists, who unconditionally defend the Soviet Union against imperialism and internal counterrevolution, proclaimed, "Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!" Faced with unenviable options on their Afghanistan border, the Brezhnev regime chose what it saw as the lesser evil: intervention against CIA-backed feudalist reactionaries. This pushed the Soviet military into defending social progress and women's rights, while cutting against the pursuit of "detente". If ever there was an occasion to implement the policy of "exporting revolution" by force of arms – a line often attributed to the Trotskyists, but actually proposed by Red Army Marshal Tukhachevsky (as well as the youthful Bukharin) – it would be in Afghanistan. Far from being a historically cohered nation-state, Afghanistan has been and is a cauldron

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Vladimir Kibalchich

Ignace Reiss (left), veteran of Soviet intelligence service, murdered in 1937 by Stalin's NKVD after embracing Trotsky's Fourth International. Trotsky (right) was himself assassinated by Stalinist agent in August 1940.



AP

Leninist defends "rights" of Russian Pamyat fascists

In previous issues of our press, we have carried articles dealing with the TKP/*Iscin Sesi* group and their British allies, the *Leninist*. Increasingly distancing themselves from the Soviet bureaucracy, these left Stalinists have even occasionally called for a political revolution, a term associated with Trotskyism. But as we have noted, their line contains a number of dangerous elements, including the demand for institution of "multiparty democracy", without regard to the Marxist criterion that such parties must stand for and defend the proletarian dictatorship. Thus we posed the questions: "Should anti-socialist right-wing groups be allowed to partake freely of 'socialist democracy'?" Are the TKP/*Iscin Sesi* and the *Leninist* suggesting that the fascist anti-Semites of Pamyat be allowed to grow into Russian 'Grey Wolves'?" (*Workers Hammer* no 97, April 1988)

Without naming us, the *Leninist's* response is given in an editorial in their 23 May issue. The core of their position is contained in the following: "What the formation of the so-called Democratic Union, the nationalist outbursts in Armenia

right of bourgeois groupings to maintain political parties since the Bolsheviks led the working masses to power. Lenin himself demolished these arguments from a communist standpoint in *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, where he sharply distinguished between workers democracy and bourgeois democracy. At best the *Leninist* position is warmed-over Kautskyism, although even Kautsky would not have had the stomach for the likes of Pamyat. In an attempt to justify their anti-Soviet line, *Leninist* belittles the dangers emanating from such filth. This "ignore the fascists" line, transplanted to the Soviet Union, is as dangerous as when it is put forward as a strategy here by the social-democratic Socialist Workers Party or the dubious Revolutionary Communist Party.

Leninist argues that Gorbachev's "market socialism" "carries with it a far greater danger of capitalist restorationism than dross like Pamyat". What does that mean? Marxists understand that the Stalinist bureaucracy plays a dual role. A parasitic caste, it seeks to defend the collectivised property relations on which



Der Spiegel

Fascistic Pamyat demonstration in Moscow, 1987; background banner reads "Legalise Pamyat".

Leninist group has so lost its political moorings that it cannot tell the difference between a Mikhail Gorbachev and an out-and-out fascist counter-revolutionary!

PAMYAT: LATTER DAY BLACK HUNDREDS

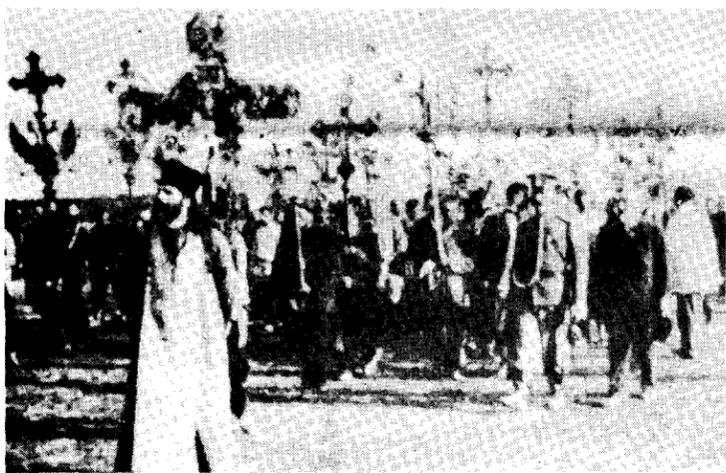
With the advent of Gorbachev's *glasnost*, everything from leftist currents to sinister ultranationalists and fascists are coming out of the closet. Pamyat ("Memory"), thinly disguised as a "patriotic" outfit concerned with the preservation of old monuments and churches, is in fact an organisation for rabid anti-Semitic Great Russian chauvinism – about as chemically pure an outfit for counterrevolution as you can find in the Soviet Union. Its leader, Dmitri Vassiliev (whose office is adorned with icons and pictures of the last tsar, Nicholas II), rails against "cosmopolitanism", the "insidiousness of the Jews" and calls for a return of "national self-consciousness". Pamyat's ravings about the "monster of world Masonry and Zionism" are explicitly lifted from the infamous bible of anti-Semitism, the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion". This tsarist police fabrication blaming all historical progress on a Jewish anarcho-communistic conspiracy was first publicised in Russia in December 1905 in an attempt to whip up Black

Hundred mobs against the Jews. This failed because the Russian revolutionary workers organised militias to defend the ghettos. Later Hitler used the "Protocols" as a prime source for his *Mein Kampf*.

The increased outbreak of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union is certainly no joke. The celebrations of the Christian millenium, which were given considerable material support and publicity by the Soviet bureaucracy, was the occasion for a renewed upsurge of fascist filth. In Moscow a pamphlet anonymously signed by the "Death to the Jews Organization" railed on about the "dirty ones [who] have made our wonderful country into a Jewish mob" and calls for "Russia to the Russians". In Kiev, militia officers asked the heads of state enterprises to warn their Jewish employees to stay off the streets during the early part of June (*Times*, 9 June).

Most ominous of all is that groups like Pamyat enjoy protection from wide sections of the bureaucracy. In May 1987, Pamyat held a demonstration of 400 people at the Kremlin Wall. Among their central slogans – *Leninist* take note – was the demand "Legalise Pamyat". Afterwards, they were given a two-hour audience with liberal "reformer" and then Moscow party boss Boris Yeltsin. Yeltsin

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International Publishers

Russian Orthodox priests march at head of Black Hundreds pogromists, 1907.

and the emergence of sinister groups like *Pamyat* demands is not a clamping down, a return to a supposed monolithic golden age. We are in favour of the fullest democracy under socialism. We are for the plurality of parties...."

One might note the equation of Armenian protestors with the Great Russian-chauvinist fascists of Pamyat – an amalgam worthy only of an unintelligent Stalinist bureaucrat. But what is truly scandalous is *Leninist's* advocacy of democratic political rights for outright fascists. Fascism is death to the working people of the world. Its ideology in every country is vulgar chauvinism and racism. Where fascism seeks to raise its ugly head, it's ABC that communists seek to mobilise the working masses to destroy it. What in the world does extending the right to organise to fascist scum like Pamyat have to do with re-establishing soviet democracy? Indeed, the October Revolution achieved workers rule through smashing the state machine of the capitalists, landlords and the tsarist Black Hundreds, the forerunners of Pamyat.

The imperialist bourgeoisie and its labour lackeys, whose programme for the Soviet Union is restoration of capitalism, have demanded the

its social privileges rest – but with methods that ultimately undermine the proletarian dictatorship. Thus, *perestroika* is dangerous not least of all because the economic fallout it generates provides a fertile recruiting soil for groups like Pamyat. Or to cite another example: Stalin's massacre of the Red Army officer corps opened the gates of the Soviet Union to Hitler.

Capitalist restoration requires a real counterrevolution, led by real counterrevolutionaries – a Pamyat or a Hitler. The Stalinist bureaucracy is a danger to the Soviet working class not because it will "restore capitalism", but because its class-collaborationist policies play into the hands of bourgeois forces that seek that end. Furthermore, as Trotsky noted, "all shades of political thought are to be found among the bureaucracy: from genuine Bolshevism (Ignace Reiss) to complete fascism (F. Butenko)....Between these two poles, there are intermediate, diffused Menshevik-SR-liberal tendencies which gravitate toward bourgeois democracy" (*Transitional Program*, 1938). Those who oppose Stalinism from a proletarian standpoint necessarily defend the Soviet degenerated workers state from its mortal class enemies. But the

JUST OUT!

"Where is Gorbachev's Russia Going?" translated into Turkish from *Spartacist* no 41-42 (Winter 1987-88).

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GORBAÇOV'UN SOVYETLER BİRLİĞİ NEREYE GİDİYOR?



Lenin ve Troçki'nin yoluna geri dön!



Enternasyonal Spartakist Fedens yayınıdır

South Africa...

(Continued from page 1)

in the 6-8 June strike coal and diamond miners went out, the gold miners stayed on the job.

FORGE A BOLSHEVIK PARTY!

It is nearly four years since Crossroads "squatters" in Cape Town and black youth in the townships of the Transvaal erupted in fury, lighting the flames of protracted revolt which spread throughout South Africa. While many nationalists and leftists acted as if "the end of apartheid is near", and the ANC leadership talked optimistically of "escalation of our attack" to the point that in short order "it will be possible for us to overthrow the apartheid regime", we warned:

"South Africa appears to be rumbling down the tracks to a bloody confrontation. The system of apartheid—a bogus partition in which the whites give up nothing—is coming apart. Blacks have made it clear that they are not taking this oppressive situation anymore. And the white population is armed to the teeth, determined to defend what they've got.... So long as the national principle predominates, in a military confrontation, now and for the next period the whites will win hands down. The danger is of a...one-sided bloodbath in which the vast majority of the victims will be from the oppressed black, Indian and coloured majority. "Yet the class principle can prevail."

— "South Africa: Razor's Edge",
Workers Vanguard no 376,
5 April 1985

As the black revolt continued to mount over the next year, demonstrating the masses' unwillingness to live in the old way, we noted that the government's actions were losing coherence, trying for piecemeal reform of apartheid while ordering brutal repression (as open fascists

outcome is a racially integrated Bolshevik party fighting for a society based on the principle that he who labors must rule."

— "Black Workers Must Bury Apartheid!" *Workers Vanguard* no 409, 1 August 1986

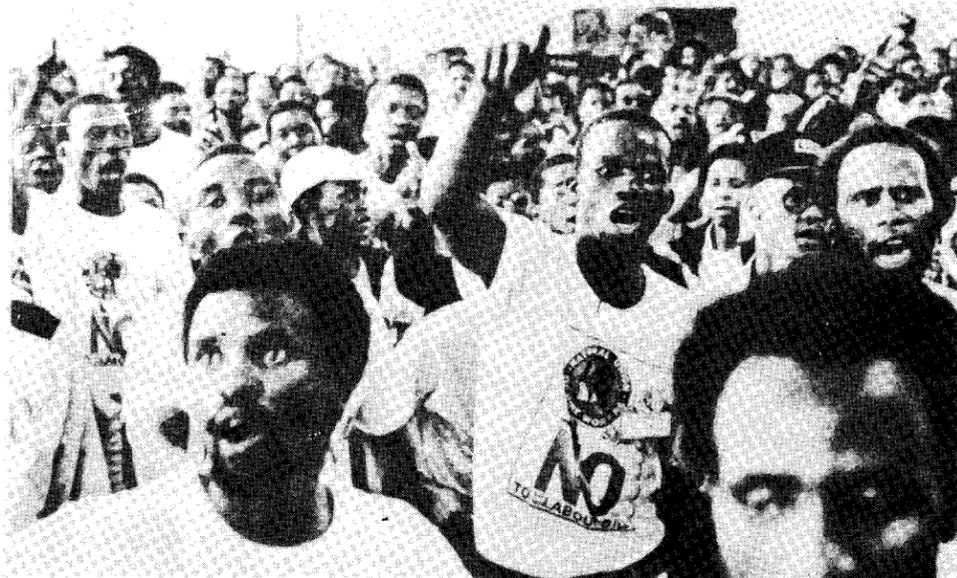
The response of the Botha regime was to institute a "state of emergency" to put a halt to the revolt. Over the next two years, the Pretoria regime played this repression out, killing well over a thousand, jailing tens of thousands, censoring the media and closing down the "alternate" press, banning anti-apartheid organisations, forcing their leaderships into hiding. Faced with "hippo" armoured vehicles and mass arrests, the township revolts have been ground down. But the bedrock question the apartheid state cannot get around is insurgent black labour.

In the face of the crackdown, the popular-frontists and nationalists who yesterday claimed revolution was just a step away are now talking about making a "political settlement" with the apartheid butchers. Affiliates of the ANC's satellite United Democratic Front (UDF) talk of creating "broad alliances" with mainstream white politicians like the Progressive Federal Party and "enlightened" capitalist slave drivers like Anglo American's Gavin Relly. After the ANC met in Europe with South African white liberals, there has been a flood of rumours that anti-apartheid groups are "debating" reversing their longstanding boycott position to participate in municipal "elections" in October. UDF spokesman Titus Mafolo confirmed the UDF's boycott of the elections, but added that "white democrats should use the elections to strengthen the alliances forged in the white community" (*Weekly Mail*, 10-16 June).

The nationalist and reformist strategies of "making the townships ungovernable", linked to seeking alliances with "democratic" imperialists abroad and "progressive" capitalists in South Africa has proven to be a dead end. The debate at the

sions in the good will of the American and British rulers. Trade union bureaucrats pushing protectionist poison find it cheap enough to demand a ban on, for example, South African coal. But when 300,000 black miners struck the gold barons last summer, the pro-sanctions union leaders in this country did nothing

region, its military muscle key to "stability". For over a decade Angola has been a front line of the Cold War. Since the Cuban troops turned back the South African invasion in 1975, the apartheid butchers and CIA-backed UNITA mercenaries have ravaged the country. At the same time, South Africa's war against



Mofokeng/Afrapix—Impact Visuals

Mine worker delegates at black trade union COSATU congress in May.

ing in concrete solidarity with their brothers in South Africa. Likewise the Democrats in the US, in an election year where the black vote is key, are pushing a sweeping new sanctions bill that calls on America's racist rulers to set their Pretoria partners straight. But ask the terrorised population of the black ghettos or the unemployed autoworkers of Detroit what kind of "friend of the oppressed" US imperialism is.

The allies of the combative black workers of South Africa will not be found in Whitehall or the White House, in Barclays Bank or General Motors. They can be found in the international labour movement and mobilised for effective class-struggle acts of solidarity: strike action to demand union recognition of black South African workers, time-limited union boycotts of South African car-

Angola and Namibia has been a major factor destabilising the apartheid state internally. For South Africa's blacks, the sight of the white-supremacist army retreating before the Cubans and black Angolan nationalists was inspiring. Only six months after the South African invasion of Angola was defeated, the Soweto rebellion erupted in the summer of 1976, opening up a new period of black militancy and struggle in South Africa. And for white youth facing conscription, the war is increasingly seen as a bloody debacle. The *Independent* (29 June) speculated that "it was precisely because the escalating Angolan conflict was threatening ever-higher South African casualties that the SADF (South African Defence Force) agreed to support peace negotiations in the first place". Draft-age youth not yearning to die for apartheid have in fact become a thorn in the side of the SADF.

But, now the possibility of a negotiated withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola is posed by the Gorbachev leadership in the Soviet Union, which is pushing for Afghanistan-style "national reconciliation" deals in Mozambique and Angola. During the Reagan-Gorbachev summit in Moscow, according to press reports, a 29 September target date was set for a settlement in Angola. Soviet deputy foreign minister in charge of African affairs Anatoly Adamishin offered the USSR's services as a "co-guarantor" of a "peace" pact with UNITA (*New York Times*, 6 June). What does that mean for the Cuban expeditionary force in Angola, reportedly numbering some 40,000 soldiers who have been racking up impressive battle victories right up to the border with South African-occupied Namibia?

Furthermore, Gorbachev & Co have evidently sharply shifted the USSR's military/political support for the ANC guerilla struggle to now call insistently for negotiations with the apartheid butchers. A *Los Angeles Times* (5 February) article from Lusaka reported on Soviet efforts pressuring the ANC to seek "negotiations" with Pretoria:

"The Soviet experts have also suggested that the ANC put off the whole question of socialism until majority rule is well established in South Africa and that it forget its long-cherished ideas about a



English-UP/I/Reuters

Armed fist of the apartheid police state.

grew in strength). In short: "Today in South Africa all of the elements of a prerevolutionary situation are there, and yet there is one absolutely vital element missing: a Leninist vanguard party. Without revolutionary proletarian leadership the rebellious black masses can be played off against one another (eg, along tribal lines), isolated in the segregated townships and crushed in a bloodbath of historic dimensions. What is desperately needed to prevent this

COSATU congress last summer over the effectiveness of disinvestment and sanctions reflected discontent with the ANC's longstanding campaign to "isolate" apartheid through (token) trade embargoes and the re-shuffling of investment portfolios. And years of "divestiture" schemes have not brought the anti-apartheid struggle one whit closer to smashing racist rule. In addition to lining the pockets of some smart capitalists, the main effect of the campaign for "sanctions" has been to breed illu-

go with specific aims such as withdrawing the troops from the townships or freeing victims of apartheid repression. But fundamentally, apartheid capitalism must be smashed from within by the six-million-strong black proletariat organised under the red banner of socialist revolution.

CUBAN TROOPS DEFEND BLACK ANGOLA

For US imperialism, South Africa is the "free world" gendarme in the

state takeover of the country's giant mining houses and industrial conglomerates.

"One leading Soviet academic, Gleb Starushenko, deputy director of the Africa Institute in Moscow, went as far as to suggest a federal system made up of 'autonomous components' and a bicameral parliament that would give the white minority an effective veto within a majority-rule government."

Pursuing the pipe-dream of "peaceful coexistence", the Soviets are giving dangerous encouragement to US imperialism and its South African ally. In doing so, they undermine defence of the Soviet workers state as well as opening the door to apartheid military victory in black Angola.

SMASH APARTHEID — FOR WORKERS REVOLUTION!

Black labour is the Achilles' heel of apartheid capitalism. With hundreds of thousands of black workers organised in a strategic position at the point of production, South Africa's combative industrial unions have increasingly come to the fore in the black struggle. Particularly with the banning of anti-apartheid organisations like the UDF and AZAPO, and given the impotence of the ANC's military operations against the militarily fearsome apartheid state, COSATU has emerged as the voice of broader sections of the oppressed masses. Yet while clothed in a more "workerist" language, its programme is not substantially different from the open popular-frontism of the ANC and its satellite organisations. As set out in the Freedom Charter, this means envisioning a non-racial "democratic" society with a "mixed" (ie, capitalist) economy.

As is frequently the case under repressive dictatorships, South Africa's black unions have become spokesmen for a broader opposition movement. But as insurgent black labour has rattled the chains of apartheid capitalism, the bosses are of two minds as to how to deal with the challenge. Following the explos-

ive 1976-77 wildcat strikes, the Wiehann Commission allowed the registration of black trade unions, the better to control them. But they could not keep the flood tide of unionisation within bounds, and faced with escalating wage demands, repeated strike struggles and an increasingly politicised labour movement, not just the Afrikaner Nationalists but the entire South African bourgeoisie has grown increasingly nervous.

They have struck back at the black workers movement by threatening the existence of their trade unions. These are elementary forms of working-class organisation. But they are inadequate as the leadership of a *revolutionary* struggle. The key to organising the power of the proletariat for socialist revolution is a *Bolshevik vanguard party*.

In the last year, COSATU has engaged in a debate over a "workers charter" to be added to the Freedom Charter (see "South Africa: For Workers Power!" *Workers Vanguard* no 434, 7 August 1987). While many black union militants want to build a socialist South Africa on the ruins of apartheid South Africa, they have not yet broken from, much less do they oppose, petty-bourgeois nationalism. The socialist aspirations of the black proletariat can only be

Free the Alexandra Five! Save the Sharpeville Six!

The battle over the South African apartheid slave labour bill coincides with the urgent legal defence of two major groups of anti-apartheid fighters. Moses Mayekiso, general secretary of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), and four others are on trial for treason, subversion and sedition, accused of forming the Alexandra Action Committee which led the revolt in the black township in February 1986. The essential charge in the case is that the five usurped the authority of the apartheid state by establishing "organs of people's power" organising Alexandra residents into yard, block and street committees, and forming "people's courts".

Time is running out in the case of the Sharpeville Six, who still face the apartheid hangman. Worldwide protest won a stay of execution in March. But on 13 June a South African Supreme

Court judge cleared the way for a July hanging, rejecting their application for a new trial. The Six were convicted, by the state's use of a Nazi-like theory of "collective guilt", for being in an area where an enraged crowd of black rent strikers stoned to death a hated collaborator of the white supremacist regime in September 1984. On 20 June the Partisan Defence Committee (a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal defence organisation in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League) sent a letter demanding their immediate release, stating, "The Sharpeville Six have been condemned to die for one reason — they 'shared a common purpose' with the millions of black South Africans, and hundreds of millions around the world, who detest your racist apartheid regime." An international outcry of protest must immediately be raised to save them from the apartheid hangman's noose!

London, 1985:
Spartacist
contingent
protests
state murder
of ANC
militant
Benjamin
Molose.



realised through forging a revolutionary workers party in opposition to the ANC and all forms of nationalism and two-stage reformism.

A Leninist-Trotskyist party raising the banner of permanent revolution can lead the South African black workers in a direct struggle for power, uniting behind it the oppressed coloured and Indian populations, the youth, the unemployed, the women, the Bantustan and peasant populations, and, not least, those whites who do not want to live in and serve a racist police state. There will be no liberation from apartheid slavery without the revolutionary expropriation of capitalism.

Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 455, 17 June 1988.

Labour traitors knife jailed miners

Free Hancock and Shankland!

Addressing the National Union of Mineworkers on 27 June, Arthur Scargill broke the deafening silence of the labour movement on jailed miners Russell Shankland and Dean Hancock. Victimised by the bosses and the capitalist courts because they showed courage and determination in defending their union during the 1984-85 miners strike, Shankland and Hancock are today class-war prisoners who deserve the full support of the workers movement in demanding their freedom. Scargill paid tribute to the "spirit and courage" of the two young miners insisting that "we must not forget them" but stopped short of calling for their immediate release, asking instead for "a degree of sympathy for the plight they find themselves in" (*Guardian*, 28 June).

The bosses' press foamed at the mouth over Scargill's statement, with headlines like "Scargill tribute to men who killed" and "Tribute to killers stuns NUM". Joining this chorus of hysterical union-busting

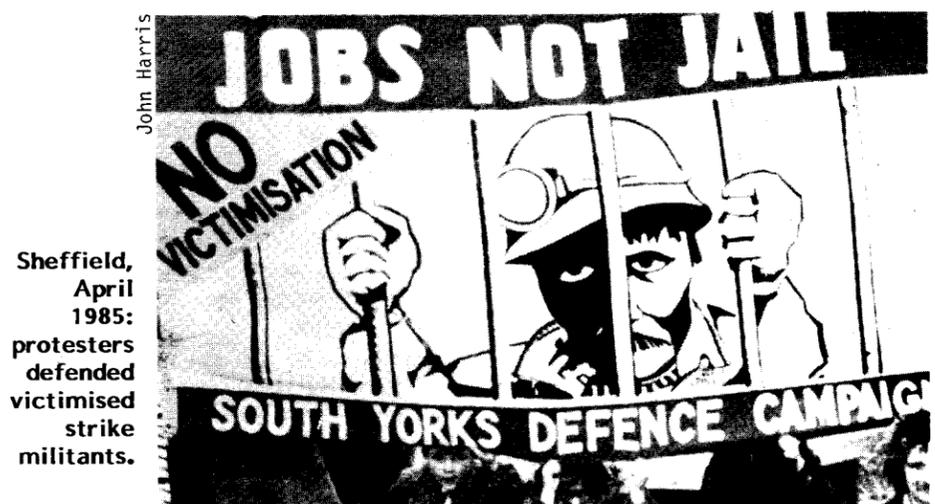
invective was Neil Kinnock, "disgusted" by Scargill's defence of the NUM militants and Norman Willis who found Scargill's remarks "insensitive and crass" (*Independent*, 29 June). Thus ran the vitriol from the chief betrayers of the miners strike — Judas Kinnock and the scab-herding TUC chief. They would naturally revile with special venom the jailed miners, living symbols of the class war in the coalfields.

Dean Hancock and Russell Shankland have been vilified by the same obscene bloc of the capitalist press and Labour/TUC tops since they were charged with the murder of strike-breaking taxi driver David Wilkie in 1984. Wilkie took the bosses' side in a historic class battle, ferrying scabs to work in the militant South Wales coalfield. For trade unionists the world over, picket lines mean don't cross. And defending the picket line was Russell and Dean's only "crime". UDM head and super-scab Roy Lynk said that "There is no place in industrial disputes for mutilation,

violence and death" (*Times*, 28 June). Tell that to the families of Joe Green and David Jones, murdered by the scabs and cops during the strike; tell it to the countless miners and their wives whose skulls were cracked by the swinging batons of Thatcher's boot boys mobilised to crush the miners.

For over three and a half years, Dean and Russell have been locked behind bars. The authorities tried hard to break their morale, initially holding them in tiny cells in isolation for six weeks with only one hour of exercise per day and more recently denying them parole (see *Workers Hammer* no 93, November 1987 for a fuller account). Militant protests were launched when Dean and Russell were first sentenced to life imprisonment. Several hundred NUM members at the Oakdale and Merthyr Vale collieries walked off shift on strike when they first heard the news. Two days later more than 1000 protesters marched through Dean and Russell's

continued on page 9



Sheffield,
April
1985:
protesters
defended
victimised
strike
militants.

Workers movement: drive out fascist Skeggs!

Thousands of Civil and Public Services Association (CPSA) members throughout London staged a one-day strike and hundreds rallied on 26 May to protest that Malcolm Skeggs – a well-known fascist activist – is still employed by the DHSS. Skeggs is a leading figure in the British fascist movement. He has stood as a National Front (NF) candidate in local and parliamentary elections and was a member of the NF's National Directorate in the late 1970s. He followed former NF leader John Tyndall in the formation of the British National Party (BNP) in 1981. He is believed to be a high-ranking member in the BNP today. Skeggs is mentioned in *The Other Face of Terror*, the expose of fascism written by Ray Hill – an informant within the British fascist movement for the anti-fascist monthly *Searchlight*. And according to Hill, "Skeggs was a convinced, die-hard Nazi" (*South London Press*, 27 May).

by Labour-run Lewisham Council as a librarian. As a result of pressure from the National and Local Government Officers' Association, he was sacked by the council for using its facilities to duplicate BNP propa-

ganda. Scandalously, Skeggs was defended at the time by the public employees NUPE union, many of whose members are black and Asian. Skeggs sought and won an unfair dismissal claim, receiving £14,000 in compensation.

Union members at Hither Green DHSS, where up until recently Skeggs was working, struck on 5 April – refusing to work alongside the fascist. But DHSS management put up a fight to keep him on, allowing him rotating work times to avoid the pickets and offering police protection. We wonder what friends in high places this Hitler-loving scum has. A DHSS spokesman, defending Skeggs, told the *South London Press*: "It would be most unfair to ask candidates about their political beliefs. They should not be a bar on them being employed in the Civil Service." As a result of their anti-fascist action, strikers have been threatened by management, intimidated by carloads of fascists and received hate mail through the post.

After the one-day strike which closed many DHSS offices in London, however, any further strike action has been put "on ice" by the union

leadership, following Skeggs' transfer to a DHSS office in Hinchley Wood, Surrey. There, "part of his new



South London Press

Fascist Malcolm Skeggs

job will be to make training videos including one on racial equality" (*Searchlight*, July 1988). That this race-hating pig has not been driven out – fearing that showing up to work would be bad for his health – is an outrage! Militant actions by union

members point to the widespread anger over this fascist's provocative presence. A successful union action to rid the DHSS of Skeggs once and for all would be a well-aimed blow against the fascist filth who have workers, minorities and homosexuals in their sights today. Particularly in London, where the workforce is heavily integrated, the social power of the organised workers movement can and must be brought to bear against the fascists. Skeggs must go!

Reformist outfits like the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) of Tony Cliff make it a point of "principle" to ignore the fascists, idiotically arguing that mobilisations to smash them only provide them with "publicity". What fuels the growth of these race-hate outfits – whose arsenal includes the petrol bomb, the knife, clubs and guns – is allowing them to openly organise and spew their racist poison. The organised workers movement has the power not only to run Skeggs out of the DHSS, but to put a stop to the NF and BNP gangs terrorising the black and Asian working people of this country. Drive Malcolm Skeggs out! For union/minority mobilisations to smash the fascists! ■

North Sea...

(Continued from page 12)

and report was suppressed by the company and government! Protesting the company's refusal to take safety matters seriously, the union pulled its representatives off the "safety" committee at Piper Alpha. One survivor of the earlier gas explosion put it bluntly: "Every time I went on that rig I had a feeling that something was going to happen. It was a time-bomb just waiting to go off" (*Daily Mirror*, 8 July).

Of course, there are safety measures that can be taken: adequate separation of the living area from production facilities or even better, quartering the crew on an entirely separate platform ("flotels"). In the Norwegian sector of the North Sea oilfields, they are introducing flame-proof evacuation chutes and escape capsules as a back-up to the lifeboats. But safety costs money, and as long as the oilfields are subject to capitalist exploitation, the industrial murder will continue. Already 500 people have died directly in North Sea oil disasters, while another 100 have perished on the hazardous helicopter transport system. Not much has changed since 1977, when the Texas oil troubleshooter "Red" Adair warned that "... there'll be a disaster in the North Sea, sooner or later. There are no proper facilities for coping with it" (*New Yorker*, 27 January 1986).

If you are highly skilled and land a permanent job, you can make relatively good money on an offshore oil rig. In exchange for that, oil workers labour on platforms battered by 100 mph winds and 60 foot waves on 12-hour shifts, two weeks at a stretch – doing a job nine times more dangerous than even coal mining. Then there's the prisonlike regime – no alcohol and no women. But the majority, employed by contractors, don't even get the pay and benefits and have to pay for essentials like emergency evacuation training out of their own pockets.

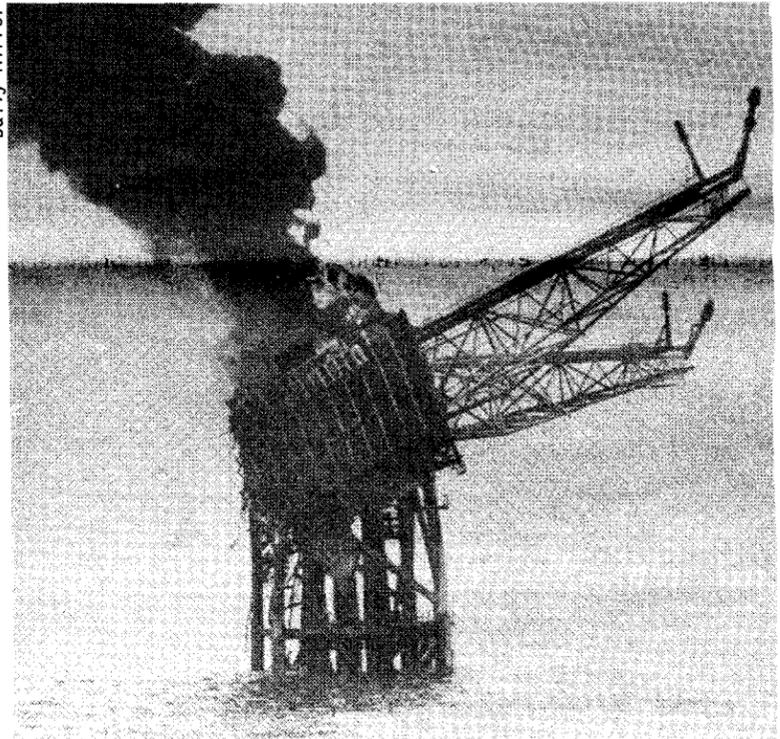
Angry workers, interviewed on BBC television, bitterly displayed pay stubs showing earnings of under £4 an hour. And now, as the bosses cut costs to compensate for lower oil prices, wage cuts of up to £5000 a year and elimination of holiday pay is commonplace. On top of that, safety has been one of the first things thrown out the window. Is there anyone foolish enough to believe that it's a coincidence that the rate of serious accidents on oil rigs has shot up 80 per cent over the last three years!

As we wrote, when 45 oil workers were killed in November 1986 aboard a defective Chinook helicopter operated by Robert Maxwell, newspaper tycoon and big-time Kinnock supporter: "For the capitalist blood-suckers, the bottom line – literally – is their profit statement at the end of the fiscal year; and to that end, human life is expendable. In particular, the English-centred bourgeoisie has routinely treated Scottish working people as expendable, be it as cannon fodder in the Scottish regiments or as workers on North Sea oil rigs" (*Workers Hammer* no 84, December 1986/January 1987).

Some 115 oil workers, employed at three British Petroleum gas platforms in Humberstone, angrily walked off their jobs a day after the Piper Alpha disaster, demanding better health and safety conditions. The entire industry ought to be shut down tight! Workers must demand that effective independent union safety committees be established with the power to shut down unsafe operations on the spot! Hit the bosses where it counts – in their pocket-books! North Sea oil adds something like £2 million per hour to the coffers of the oil magnates – every penny leached out of the blood of the workforce.

Thatcher has predictably called for another whitewash public inquiry. This is a sick joke: the same government just gave Piper Alpha a clean bill of health ten days before it blew up! The capitalist state's assault on safety standards goes hand in hand

Daily Mirror



The Piper Alpha the day after: oil bosses' greed means death for workers.

with union-busting. After the powerful miners strike was defeated, the bosses unleashed a wholesale assault on jobs, working conditions and social spending. In short order there has been mass slaughter at Zeebrugge, King's Cross and the North Sea, not to mention the effects of starving the NHS of funds. Thatcher's cronies like P&O scabherder Sir Jeffrey Sterling are routinely permitted to operate ferries modelled on the *Titanic* – designed to sink immediately after they take any water. Public transport in London operates without any fire prevention system. And now, after months and months of phoney "investigations" of King's

Cross, what is the result? The bosses are slated to chop the jobs of another 2000 workers, when everyone knows they don't have the manpower to do even the most elementary maintenance!

In this clapped out capitalist society, there's no margin for spending on safety and health, or providing decent jobs for all. It will literally take a proletarian revolution and a couple of ambitious five-year plans to turn things around. Britain desperately needs workers revolution: not Labourite "nationalisations", but the revolutionary expropriation of the parasitic capitalist class. ■

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Jailed miners...

(Continued from page 7)

home village of Rhymney. The following Saturday 2000 demonstrators, including contingents of miners and steel workers from as far as Yorkshire, marched to the Cardiff prison where Dean and Russell were being held. Judges eventually reduced the conviction to manslaughter and the miners' sentences to eight years. But Dean and Russell should be free now! It will take concerted, militant union action to accomplish this just and urgent task.

The Partisan Defense Committee (PDC), a class-struggle, non-sectarian, legal defence organisation in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League/US, has taken up the case of Dean Hancock and Russell Shankland, sending them monthly stipends and publicising their case in the *Class Struggle Defense Notes*. During the miners strike the PDC initiated a campaign which collected \$24,000 from trade unionists and others to aid the striking British miners and their families. And in the aftermath of the strike, it is important that the victimised miners not be forgotten by the international working-class movement.

Kinnock's hatred of the miners, his violence-baiting of their strike, has extended to practically every picket line thrown up. He honoured the cop Blakelock, who expired during the racist police invasion of Broadwater Farm, and openly solidarised with the cop riot against Wapping demonstrators in January of last year. Grotesquely, the all-purpose "enemy of the people" Kinnock received Scargill's support in the last general election. But Scargill's loyalty to the Labour Party has not won him even the right, in their eyes, to defend his jailed members. And despite Scargill's own endorsement of Labour "left" Benn in the present leadership contest, the union has come out again for Kinnock. Support for Benn, meanwhile, represents no break with Labourite treachery whatsoever. The "lefts" sabotaged any possibility of joint strike action with the miners, made a few empty speeches about "solidarity" and sent their members back to work. Even the most elementary trade union solidarity requires a sharp break with the Labour traitors—both right and "left".

Free Hancock and Shankland! An injury to one is an injury to all!■

Ron Brown...

(Continued from page 2)

As Leon Trotsky wrote, the proletarian revolution in Britain will achieve its goals "the better it masters the lessons of Cromwell's era". But the Labour Party, right and "left", not only is sworn to uphold parliamentarianism against revolutionary struggle, it is firmly wedded to the crown. Not even Tony Benn in his current campaign platform calls for the abolition of the monarchy, whose existence is a constant anti-democratic outrage and potential military focus for reaction. It will require a revolutionary proletarian party leading the workers of these isles in a victorious struggle for state power to do away with decaying capitalism and its entire rotten retinue of feudal remnants. We look forward not only to throwing the mace into the Thames, but to abolishing the licensing hours, House of Lords, monarchy and established church—for a start.■

Pamyat...

(Continued from page 5)

praised their "patriotism for our motherland". (For a fuller discussion of Pamyat, see *Workers Vanguard* no 434, 7 August 1987, "Pamyat: Russian Fascists Raise Their Heads".)

Contrary to what *Leninist* may believe, there is no Chinese wall separating groups like Pamyat from the Stalinist bureaucracy. In the conditions of backward Russia and the isolation of the revolution surrounded by hostile imperialist states, the Stalinist Thermidor represented the triumph of Great Russian chauvinism and Russian nationalist traditions over the Bolshevik programme of international revolution. Stalin freely utilised anti-Semitism as a weapon against the Left Opposition, whose leaders included communists of Jewish origin like Leon Trotsky. During World War II Stalin embraced the pogromist Russian Orthodox church, while his postwar crackdown on "cosmopolitanism" and the intelligentsia involved a large-scale purge of Jews from the party, government and academic posts.

Now, 70 years after the Bolshevik Revolution and over 40 years since Hitler and his Russian collaborators like General Vlasov were smashed by the Red Army, at the cost of 20 million Soviet dead, Russian fascists feel emboldened to demonstrate in Red Square. This in itself is a telling indictment of Stalinism, which undermines the foundations of the planned economy by strangling workers revolution internationally, conciliating the imperialists, and continually spawning reactionary currents like Pamyat. Thus, it would be foolish to call upon this same bureaucracy to carry out the suppression of these native fascists. The Soviet masses will mete out proletarian justice to these scum as part of the struggle for political revolution in the Soviet Union.

DEFEND THE USSR! FOR POLITICAL REVOLUTION!

The Trotskyist programme for the deformed workers states has two inseparable components: (1) unconditional military defence against imperialism and internal counterrevolution; (2) proletarian political revolution to sweep out the bureaucrats to achieve soviet democracy and restore revolutionary internationalism. Confronted with an open bid for power by capitalist restorationists, revolutionaries would form a military bloc with sections of the bureaucracy who sought to smash such a counterrevolutionary uprising. This is precisely what happened in Poland in 1981. There the criminal policies of the Polish Stalinists had propelled a large section of the working masses into the arms of the pro-CIA/Vatican Solidarnosc. Necessarily we supported General Jaruzelski's coup. At the time, the TKP and *Leninist* also rallied to the defence of the proletarian order. As we noted then, however, the TKP/*Iscinin Sesi* looked to a section within the Polish Stalinist party, the Katowice group of the PUWP, for reform. The central figures associated with the Katowice group came from those hardline officials most opposed to any concessions to the rank and file, sullied or unsullied; those most eager for a crackdown and closest to the Kremlin hardliners; those most identified with the virulent nationalism (and anti-Semitism) that certain PUWP organs resorted to.

Gorbachev's Russia, of course, is not Poland. Thus, alongside the emer-

gence of groups like Pamyat, there exists a layer of Soviet youth who carry books with quotations from Lenin and Trotsky. Trotsky himself is no longer a non-person. Significant sections of the intelligentsia argue that his works should be made available to the public. The organised Soviet left, albeit heterogenous in character, has at least one thing in common—hostility to Pamyat. But, lacking the perspective of proletarian political revolution, *Leninist* has zig-zagged between illusions in "self-reform" of sections of the Stalinist bureaucracy and outright defence of fascistic, counterrevolutionary groupings in a paroxysm of worship at the altar of classless "democracy".

The slogan of "free and open elections" to the soviets, advanced by TKP and *Leninist*, obviously blurs



Yevgeni Khaldei

Soviet red flag flies in Berlin, May 1985. Red Army crushed Nazi scourge.

over class lines. Given *Leninist's* position in favour of unrestricted multiparty democracy, what would prevent counterrevolutionaries from running candidates in soviet elections? If "soviets" were established on such a basis, they could well be transformed into organs for counterrevolution against the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Soviet democracy should encompass those parties, chosen by the workers and their petty-bourgeois allies, which stand for and defend the socialist order. As a norm, all groupings which do not actively work to overthrow the socialist revolution should have *freedom of expression*, which is not the same as the right to form soviet parties. After the victorious Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, the Council of People's Commissars carefully limited restrictions on the press to "what is absolutely necessary", only those publications which called "for open resistance or insubordination" to the government, which "sowed sedition through demonstrably slanderous distortion of facts" or "instigated actions of an obviously criminal, ie, criminally punishable, nature" were to be suppressed. But as Stalin consolidated his bureaucratic regime, he silenced every critical voice. As we wrote in *Workers Vanguard* (no 438, 16 October 1987): "It would have been better if (after the end of the Civil War) the Mensheviks were able to publish their *Sotsialistichski Vestnik* in Moscow instead of Berlin—helping the Bolsheviks sharpen their arguments and subjecting the yellow socialists to the criticism of the revolutionary workers."

At the same time, we do not appeal to the bureaucracy to legitimise workers democracy. If such a perspective were possible, then political revolution itself would be unnecessary. Genuine soviets were suppressed as part of the Thermidorean political counterrevolution. As Trotsky emphasised: "At present the soviets are a decorative appendage to the bureaucracy. Only the driving out of the bureau-

cracy, which is unthinkable without a revolutionary uprising, can regenerate the struggle of various tendencies and parties within the soviets" ("It is Necessary to Drive the Bureaucracy and the New Aristocracy out of the Soviets", 4 July 1938). Thus, what constitutes legitimate soviet parties is not fundamentally a juridical or constitutional question, but will be determined by the course of revolutionary struggle.

It is instructive to examine the Hungarian Revolution to see the actual mechanics of a political revolution. Although marred by deficiencies, embodied in the absence of a Bolshevik party, this revolution was a powerful workers rebellion against the Stalinist bureaucracy, carried forward on a socialist programme. In the course of this struggle, the bureaucracy itself shattered; the ma-

majority of Communist Party members went over to the camp of revolution. A fundamental index of the class character of the Hungarian Revolution is provided by the attitude of the insurgent masses to the counterrevolutionaries who sought to raise their heads. The central workers council in Budapest demanded "free elections in which only those parties may participate that recognize and have always recognized the Socialist order, based on the principle that means of production belong to society." [quoted in *Free Europe Committee, Revolt in Hungary—A Documentary Chronology of Events* (1956)] Fascists and reactionaries had their meetings suppressed. Cardinal Mindszenty was forced to hide in the American embassy. One of the best known leaders of the uprising was Colonel Pal Maleter, who had fought during the war as a Soviet partisan and proudly carried a red star on his kepi. When a journalist asked him about counterrevolutionary elements, Maleter reached for his pistol.

As part of its Stalinist political heritage, *Leninist* formally supports the smashing of the Hungarian Revolution by Russian tanks. Now, under the impact of the Gorbachev years, it preaches political conciliation with vile anti-Soviet elements like Pamyat. That an organisation can simultaneously hold two such equally wrong—and mutually contradictory positions—testifies to a high degree of political confusion. Eclectic left Stalinism, however critical, is bankrupt as a basis for building a revolutionary party.

Leninist's defence of the "right" of fascists to organise in the Soviet Union is a watershed position for the organisation—one that should repel serious revolutionaries. This ought to be a sharp warning signal to the comrades of both *Leninist* and the TKP/*Iscinin Sesi*, which face the same questions. There is an alternative path. That is to seriously confront revolutionary Trotskyism. All other roads lead to political oblivion.■

Disarmament...

(Continued from page 12)

Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament - CND) can hardly contain his excitement over the willingness of the Gorbachev leadership to give up to the US - for free - what American proxy armies were unable to win on the battlefield, as in Afghanistan. Thompson's think piece in the *Guardian* (29 June) enthused about the end of the bad old days when "our direct appeals to the Soviet Union to halt and to reduce their build-up of SS-20s met with hostile replies or with silence" and cheers the "Soviet repudiation of the dogmas of balance [which have] led to significant concessions in the INF negotiations. A good deal of pride must have been swallowed when Soviet negotiators accepted the 'zero option'." Thompson counsels the peace movement in the West "during this period of transition in the East" to tell NATO politicians "to shut up and keep out of the way". Fat bloody chance.

Between the openly pro-NATO Kinnock, CNDers like Thompson or "unilateralists" like Tony Benn there are differences of tactics. But all offer (one more, one less "realistic") alternative bourgeois strategies for

hands by the Russian workers revolution of 1917. The conflict which has existed since 1917 will not disappear until one or the other system triumphs."

- "Nuclear Nut Hits Moscow", *Workers Vanguard* no 454, 3 June

Reagan went to Moscow not in the pursuit of peace but in pursuit of concessions. Gorbachev told the *Washington Post* (22 May), "Who would have thought in the early '80s, both in the Soviet Union and the U.S.A., that it would be President Reagan who would sign with us the first nuclear arms reduction treaty in history?" Well, who would have thought in the early 1930s that Adolf Hitler would sign a "nonaggression" pact with the Soviet Union?

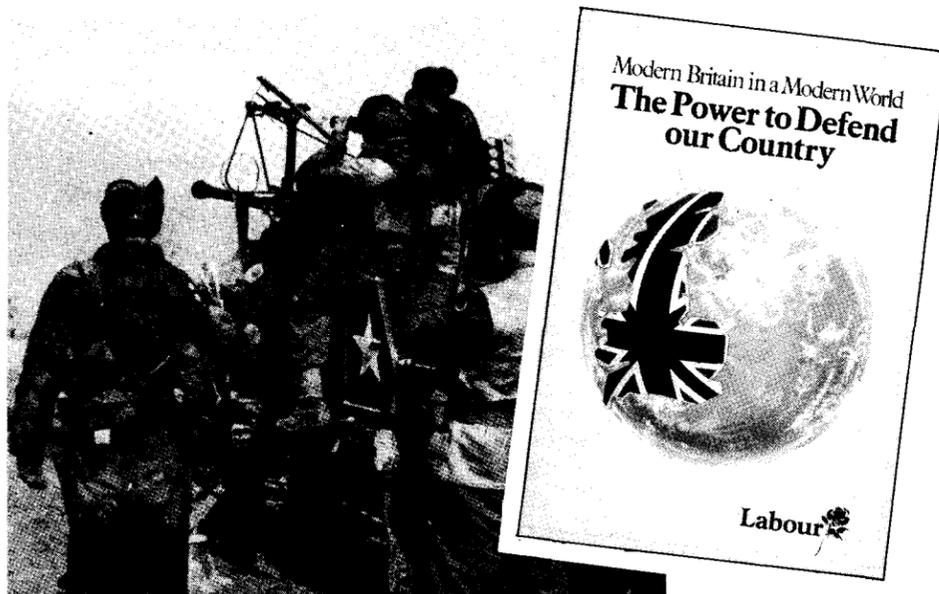
British imperialism, long declining as any sort of world power, has debated whether to have nuclear weapons, and if so, how many and what kind, for 25 years. Even more "far-sighted" members of the British ruling class have toyed with the thought that their scant resources might be better spent on beefing up conventional forces rather than maintaining "great power" appearances. But the fact is that Labour, in power, has opted for the "special relationship" with Washington, complete with nukes: Wilson kept Polaris and deployed the super-secret WE-177

its CIA connection to betray.

At the base, the support for unilateralism reflects the fact that many British workers do not fancy being incinerated in the service of gung-ho imperialism. For that matter, plenty of workers see defence

of US and world imperialism poses a deadly danger not only to the USSR but to world humanity.

In this century imperialist rivalries have already led the world into two catastrophic inter-imperialist wars. Toward the close of World War II (in



no credit

British troops at the side of US imperialism in Korea (left). For Labour, "defence" means anti-Soviet war drive.

of the Soviet Union as a wholly legitimate cause, but wrongly believe that the unilateralist nonsense of Tony Benn et al would serve that cause.

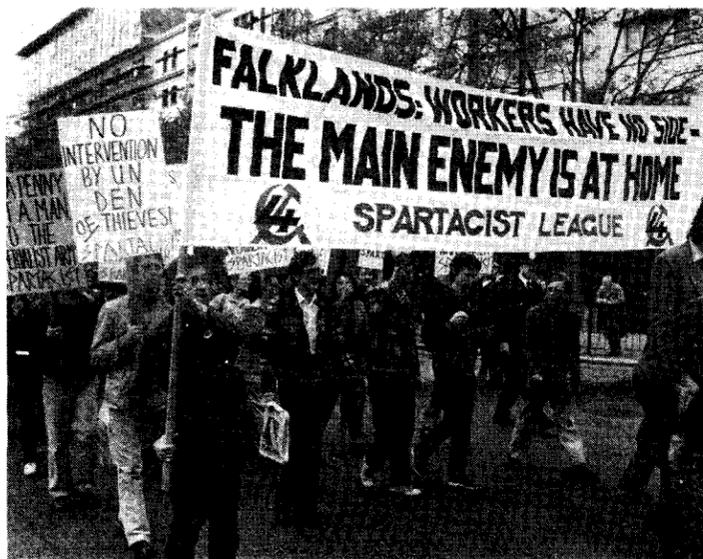
UTOPIAN "LITTLE ENGLAND" PACIFISM

The idea that if Britain disarms, the island will be spared thermonuclear holocaust, is more than absurd on the face of it. The concept of "neutrality" by this moribund capitalist power is equally laughable. The more earth-bound argument put forward by unilateralists is that Britain can set a moral example (!) which will then lead all the nuclear powers on the globe to disarm and thus rid the planet of the threat of annihilation altogether. The multilateralists hope to negotiate away Britain's nuclear arsenal for comparable reductions in Soviet nuclear weapons. The net result is the same dangerous call upon the Soviet degenerated workers state to disarm in the face of voracious, bellicose imperialism. Indeed, Benn calls for the mutual dissolution of NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

Soviet disarmament is a recipe for World War III sooner rather than later. It was only the Soviets' nuclear arsenal that stayed the hand of the US imperialists from turning Havana and Hanoi into radioactive rubble. Gorbachev's "detente offensive" notwithstanding, Soviet disarmament in the face of the massive rearmament

which 20 million Soviet citizens lost their lives in the fight to defeat Hitler) the imperialists of the Western Alliance toyed with the idea of joining forces with the disintegrating Third Reich to wage a counter-revolutionary war against the Soviet Union. Then the Cold War's genocidal opening shot - the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, after the Japanese had clearly indicated their intention to surrender - was delivered as a warning to the Soviet Union. Since that time the US imperialists have contemplated the use of nuclear weapons against Korea and China. Weapons are produced in order to wage war and not the other way around. Moreover, the brutal suppression of the Republicans and Catholics in Northern Ireland and the Falklands/Malvinas war required no nuclear weapons. Need we add that in both instances, the Labour traitors lined up squarely behind and, in Ireland, have been the main executors of British imperialism's dirty wars? We say: not a penny, not a man for the bourgeois army!

In our last issue we explained that there is no choice for the British working class between Tony Benn and Neil Kinnock. The defence policy debate underlines the dead-end of Labourite reformism for the British working masses. When it comes to the crunch, Labour, both its right and "left" wings, come down on the side of the existing capitalist order, including its hostility to the Soviet



Workers Hammer

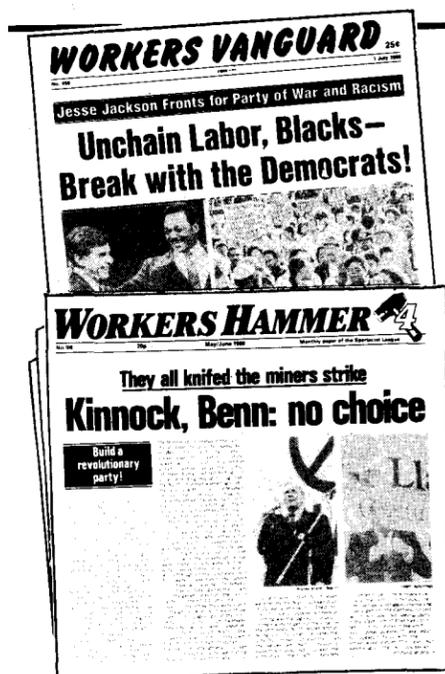
Spring 1982: While Labour "congratulated" Thatcher, the Spartacist League called for revolutionary defeatism in the bloody Falklands/Malvinas war.

the "defence" of British imperialism and the disarming of the Soviet workers state.

DEFEND THE SOVIET UNION! SMASH NATO!

Since the Bolshevik Revolution in October 1917, the imperialists have sought to smash the world's first workers state. Nuclear first strike is a central policy of NATO and the US-led Atlantic Alliance. Today the insane anti-Soviet war drive is centred on preparing for a "winnable" nuclear war and the US, with British collaboration, has poured billions of dollars into the first-strike Star Wars programme. As we explained in *Workers Vanguard*, newspaper of the Spartacist League/US:

nuclear bombs, Gaitskell "fought, fought and fought again" against the unilateralists in 1961. Kinnock's grovelling before the US alliance is his way of proving that he can run a reliable "party of governance". Chris Mullin's *A Very British Coup* - recently dramatised in a television series - provides a fictionalised glimpse as to what fate might befall a Labour government which took "unilateral" disarmament seriously without the blessing of its bourgeois masters in Whitehall and Washington. But the Labour Party does not need



"The illusions of Stalinists and Western liberals notwithstanding, 'detente' and Cold War are not alternative policies but different phases of an ongoing conflict between Western imperialism and the Soviet degenerated workers state which represent fundamentally counterposed social systems. What brought about the short-lived 'detente' of the 1970s was the heroic struggle of the Vietnamese people who, at the cost of two million lives, defeated the American colossus, allowing the Soviets to achieve rough nuclear parity. The imperialists are still bent on reconquering that vast chunk of the globe ripped out of the capitalists'

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Union. To be sure, not everyone goes to the Berlin Wall to issue vile anti-Soviet proclamations like Neil Kinnock. Kinnock is overt. But Benn, a cabinet member of the 1974-79 Labour government, however sincere in his utopian disarmament illusions, has also served – and would again – as an administrator of British capitalism. His running mate Eric Heffer is an anti-Soviet swine who couldn't get enough of the counterrevolutionary Solidarnosc movement for capitalist restoration (under cover of "free trade unionism"). In Afghanistan, where the Red Army intervened on the side of social progress and in defence of the Soviet Union, Benn is no less enthusiastic about the withdrawal than his Kinnockite opponents. The fact is that the "lefts" are, like the Labour right, hostile to the defence and extension of the gains of the October Revolution.

Sections of the Labour "left", concerned that the party's credibility is lacking in certain disgruntled quarters, have set out to refurbish Labour's credentials as a party of the working class and oppressed. After going along with the NATO-loving Kinnock/Healey wing while they knifed the miners and paved the way for Thatcher's victory, Benn has decided it's time to dust off the Sunday socialist speechifying for peace, a "fair society", and above all, a "prospect of defeating this government and replacing it with a Labour government". From 1984, Benn has served as the "socialist" front man for the Cold War "realists". But this simple fact has not dissuaded most

Der Spiegel



May Day parade in Red Square displays Soviet arms might (left). NLF/DRV forces roll on to victory against US imperialism (right). Soviet nuclear arsenal stayed the imperialist warmongers from irradiating Hanoi.



G Virgili/Paris Match

of the fake-left organisations in Britain from hopping on the Benn/Heffer bandwagon.

The working class must be split from the Labour Party and won to the perspective of the revolutionary seizure of state power. This requires that the "lefts" be exposed for the traitors to the working class that they are. A key programmatic plank for the revolutionary party that can pose an alternative to Labourite treachery is the unconditional defence of the Soviet Union against imperialism and internal counter-revolution.

For left-talking centrists like Workers Power the appetite to tail illusions in Benn's challenge coincides neatly with its Stalinophobic

positions on both Afghanistan and Poland. We note that Workers Power's "intervention" into the Bennite Chesterfield conference in June – a leaflet entitled "A Crisis Of Leadership" – manages to not mention the Soviet Union, let alone defence of the Soviet degenerated workers state once! Its talk about building a "revolutionary alternative" is just empty phrasemongering in the absence of confronting this left-Labourite gathering with the key question of Soviet defencism. The confused "critical" Stalinists of *Leninist* haven't managed in three issues of their paper to present a clear line on the Benn campaign, even though they've been all too clear about supporting the so-called "right" of the fascistic Pamyat to organise within

the Soviet Union (see article, this issue). The uncritical pro-Gorbachev *Morning Star* simply cheerleads for Benn, for unilateral disarmament, for the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. They are the sort of "friends of the Soviet Union" the Soviet masses can well do without.

We are committed to the building of an authentic Bolshevik party in Britain, which will fight to disarm the rulers through victorious workers revolution and will fight for military defence of the Soviet Union and all the deformed workers states against rapacious imperialism. That means taking on the Benns – and his fake-revolutionary camp followers – in a struggle to reforge the party of world revolution, the Fourth International. ■

Kim Philby...

(Continued from page 4)

of feuding tribes and fragmented peoples, for whom effective assimilation into the USSR through an Afghan workers state would constitute enormous social progress. Conditions of life in Soviet Central Asia testify to the vast gains this would bring for the Afghan peoples.

Unfortunately the Gorbachev leadership, in deciding to withdraw the Soviet army from Afghanistan, is leaving open the field for the bloody chieftains and mullahs who would unleash a bloodbath against leftists, against unveiled women, against atheists, against any who have assisted the Soviets. And the market-oriented economic policies of the new Kremlin chiefs threaten to strengthen the hand of capitalist restorationist forces internally, as well as fostering social inequality, undermining centralised planning and exacerbating antagonisms among nationalities of the USSR.

To political impressionists, the zigzags of the Soviet bureaucracy appear incomprehensible; the fundamental underpinnings of the state are confused with vagaries of policy. Thus when Stalin's terror held sway, and particularly during the Hitler-Stalin pact, it became fashionable to deny altogether the class character of the USSR as a workers state; even today Stalinism is made out by some to be "counterrevolutionary through and through". Conversely, with Gorbachev's current popularity in the West, one hears the fake-left chorus hailing the return of workers democracy to Soviet Russia. But a vast gulf separates *glasnost* and *perestroika* from measures of genuine soviet democracy: only the revolutionary mobilisation of the Russian workers behind an internationalist, Bolshevik

leadership can dismantle the legacy of Stalinism and restore the traditions of Lenin and Trotsky, the traditions of the October Revolution. We look forward to a new generation of Bolshevik-Leninists in the USSR, part of a reborn Fourth International committed to finally dispatching moribund capitalism through world socialist revolution.

In an article written more than a decade ago ("Heroic Soviet Spies", *Workers Vanguard* nos 165 and 166, 8 and 15 July 1977) we paid tribute to men like Leopold Trepper, head of the Red Orchestra Soviet spy network in Nazi-occupied Europe; Richard Sorge, who ran a daring operation in WW II Japan; and Ignace Reiss, a Soviet intelligence officer who embraced Trotskyism and was murdered by Stalin in 1937. The crucial warnings by Sorge and Trepper of the impending German invasion of the USSR in 1941 were criminally ignored by Stalin, whose refusal to heed them and prepare militarily cost millions of Soviet lives. *Workers Vanguard* also recounted the venal record of others who did the Kremlin's dirty work, like Mark Zborowski, who infiltrated the Trotskyists and played a key role in the NKVD assassination of Trotsky's son Leon Sedov in 1938 (and probably that of Ignace Reiss as well), or Ramon Mercader, who on Stalin's orders in 1940 drove a mountaineer's axe through the skull of Leon Trotsky.

The same *Workers Vanguard* article described the dual nature of the Soviet state and the men who serve it:

"...how can it be that within one and the same government apparatus, at the very heart of the military and security organs of state power, there can be such mortal enemies: the Zhukovs and Tukhachevskys, the Abakumovs and Treppers, the Zborowskis and Reiss' – the jailers and those who tomorrow will be their prisoners,

the assassins and those who will be their victims, all loyally working in the interests of the Kremlin? The answer is to be found in the fundamentally contradictory character of the Soviet deformed workers state.

"Stalin's capture of political power in the USSR marked the imposition of iron rule by a parasitic stratum that had escaped the control of the working class. This bureaucracy sought above all to defend its own privileges. At times this would force it to resist encroachments or direct attack by one of the imperialist camps, as in World War II.... It was because of this face of the bureaucracy that dedicated Soviet intelligence officers could accomplish the outstanding work that they did against the axis imperialists, although it was constantly sabotaged by their superiors.

"But there is another face of the

Kremlin as well, that of the state prosecutor who demands 'confessions' for imagined 'crimes against the Soviet Union,' and of the prison camp guard who executes jailed oppositionists while they sing the Internationale and vow to defend the USSR against imperialist attack."

We celebrate the triumphs of Kim Philby, Soviet master spy. He performed invaluable services in defence of the homeland of the October Revolution. And, as we wrote ten years ago, "when the Soviet working class rises up to expel the Stalinist bureaucracy, they will remember the vital work done by the heroic Soviet spies, the martyrs of the Red Orchestra and their comrades. Nor will they forget the infamy of the Zborowskis and Mercaders and their masters. To each his due."

Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* no 454, 3 June 1988.

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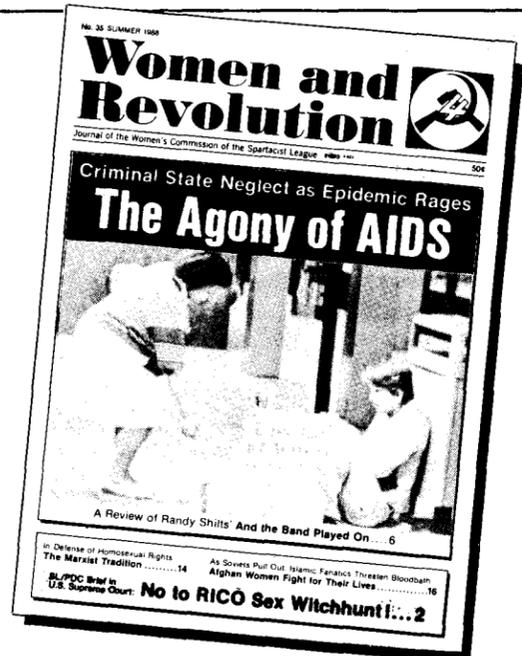
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Soviet Union needs the bomb!

Labour's "disarmament" follies

Margaret Thatcher, like her friend Ronbo in Washington, is a certifiable nuclear nut. With Reagan on his way out, Thatcher seeks to become the "senior statesman" of NATO anti-Soviet war preparations and she wants to make sure that Britain has its own nukes, even if not many, just like the big boys. Like Harold Macmillan said when he returned from Nassau in 1962 with Polaris: "one can play golf without having to own a complete set of clubs". To compensate for the possible removal of US missiles in Britain on the signing of the Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty by Reagan and Gorbachev in May, the government has decided to "modernise" its nuclear arsenal. In particular this means a new missile with a 300-mile range to equip Tornádo bombers so that Britain would have an alternative to Polaris or Trident submarine-launched ballistic missiles: "if its allies could not agree jointly to allow the use of nuclear weapons, at a time when Britain alone faced a nuclear or chemical threat, this country would have an independent option. There is also a possibility that Britain might deploy them outside the Nato area" (*Independent*, 16 May). RAF Marshal Michael Beetham even mentioned how "helpful" a nuclear "capability" might have been in the Falklands war!

While the bloodthirsty Tory bitch in no 10 embraces every atrocity by the war-mongering Reaganites, from the terror-bombing of Tripoli to the massacre of civilians aboard the Iranian airbus, NATO-loving Neil Kinnock decided it was time to renounce Labour's paper position for "unilateral" disarmament. This is

fully in keeping with his record of trying to out-Thatcher Thatcher on all fronts: from defence of national "security" to "taming" the trade unions. But when Kinnock made his "something for nothing" remarks on

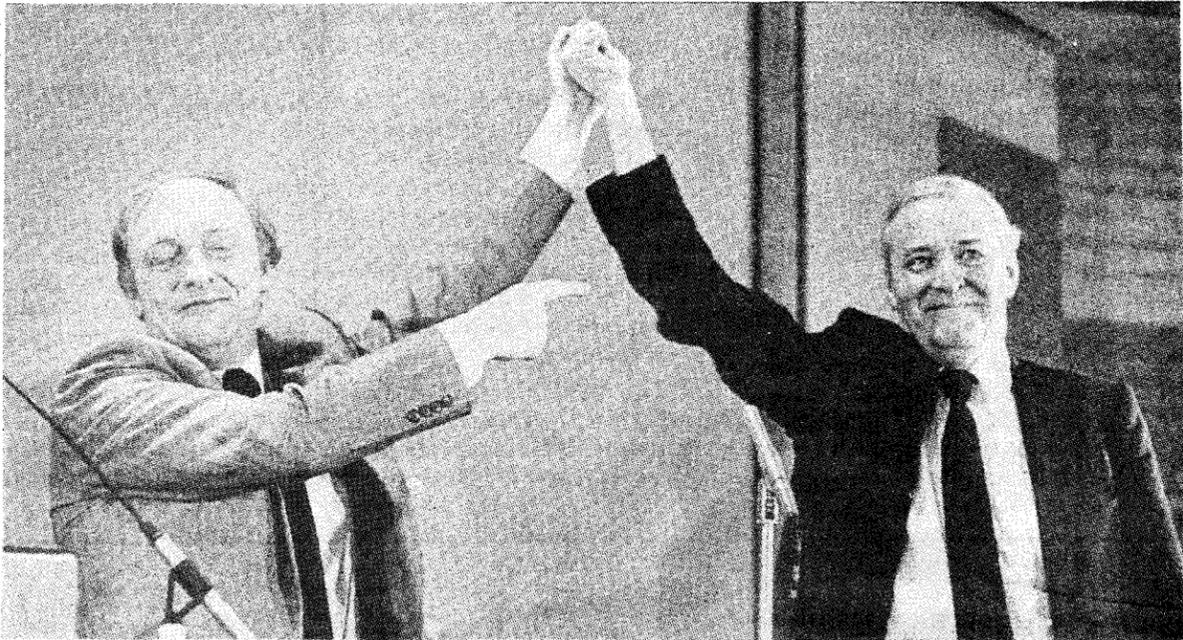
tioned in the bourgeois press. The *Independent* (28 June) carried an article which began: "Senior figures in the labour movement believe that Neil Kinnock has been suffering from a bout of depression which may have

Denis Healey leaping into the breach to "stiffen the Labour leader's resolve" (*Times*, 13 June).

Behind the latest Labour "crisis" over defence policy is Gorbachev's "detente offensive". Kinnock figures

Daily Telegraph

Kinnock and Benn congratulate one another at 1984 Chesterfield by-election. Benn then stood silent as Kinnock knifed the miners strike and supported NATO-lover Kinnock in the general election.



television, he paid for it. The Labour defence spokesman Denzil Davies downed a few and called up the Press Association, "fed up with being humiliated by Neil Kinnock", to announce his resignation; the television broadcast was the "last straw". The Transport and General Workers Union postponed an endorsement in the Labour leadership contest until September.

Sensing he'd made a mess of things, Kinnock then reaffirmed his support for unilateralism in a reverse U-turn. The man's mental stability, let alone his fitness to rule, was openly ques-

caused his seemingly contradictory statements on Labour's defence policy." The *Economist* (18 June) ran an article bluntly titled "Must Kinnock go?" The *Sunday Times* (26 June) headlined that "Four out of 10 Labour MPs want to ditch their leader", quoting one who said "If Kinnock stays, we are going to lose, whatever he does now". Labour "left" Tony Benn said former Tory prime minister Harold Macmillan was "far more left wing than the Labour Party today". Meanwhile, the Labour right wing was dismayed by the reverse of the reverse, Cold Warrior

that Britain can aid NATO in wresting more disarmament concessions from the Soviet Union if it retains some nuclear "bargaining chips". Like Aneurin Bevan, he doesn't want to "go naked into the conference chamber". This is not an entirely stupid policy from the point of view of the aspiring administrator of capitalist Britain: to effect NATO policy Britain "would have more influence as a senior, nuclear member of the Alliance than otherwise". At the same time, EP Thompson (vice-president and founding leader of the

continued on page 10

North Sea workers burned alive

Oil bosses: Murder, Inc

10 JULY - It was the worst disaster in the history of North Sea oil production: some 166 workers were killed when the oil platform Piper Alpha turned into a giant fireball on the night of 6 July. Most of the men, trapped in the crew quarters located directly above the gas compression module where the initial explosion erupted, hardly stood a chance. Others clawed their way up to the helipad, hoping desperately to be rescued by helicopters. But nothing could get close to the Piper Alpha because of the intense searing heat. It was, as one survivor grimly put it, "fry and die or jump and try". So men launched themselves from heights of up to 100 feet into the sea below, desperately attempting to cling to debris until they were rescued. Many

didn't make it - and had this been winter-time, there would have been far fewer survivors. As it is, 21 workers are still in hospital, half of them badly burned and others with spinal fractures.

It was shortly before 10 pm that a horrific high-pitched wail pierced the Piper Alpha. It was the first indication that gas lines had ruptured. The "automatic" gas detection system gave no warning. Thirty seconds later came the first explosion, wiping out the control room and plunging the oil platform into darkness. In a short time came more explosions and the Piper Alpha was consumed with flames and smoke that rose 700 feet in the air, while giant natural gas bubbles exploded as they rose to the surface of the ocean. The platform

was split in two and its oil derrick toppled. The heat was so intense that pilots could feel it from over a mile away. The crew of the *Sandhaven*, a standby oil tug, courageously attempted to launch a rescue dinghy, but this also was consumed by flames as the rig collapsed above it.

Today the capitalist press, assorted royalty and most obscenely of all, Margaret Thatcher, are hypocritically paying tribute to the courage of the oil workers. "The men know the risks, and they're well paid for it", goes their chorus. But Armand Hammer, the chairman of Occidental Oil, admitted that the design of the oil rig was fundamentally deficient. The mass slaughter on the Piper Alpha was not an "accident" - it was industrial murder! What else can you

call it when they pack the crew quarters in right adjacent to large amounts of combustible materials, power generation equipment and process plant. The Piper Alpha was a major gas collection centre, pumping methane from neighbouring Occidental and Texaco installations to the mainland. Enormous pressures of up to 7000 pounds per square inch accumulate in the piping and manifolds, probably making this the most dangerous area in the complex. And if you were an oil worker on Piper Alpha, you slept right above that!

The Piper Alpha, commissioned 12 years ago, had a history of safety problems. Occidental's former loss prevention manager in the North Sea, Jack Donaldson, termed it "the most highly dangerous platform in the North Sea" (*Observer*, 10 July). Veteran divers point out that it was common knowledge that it had been slipping into the seabed for a long time. Six years ago three workers died when a gangway collapsed. Then in March 1984 there was a gas explosion, and the oil platform had to be evacuated. The subsequent inquiry

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