



## US, British oil pirates out of the Persian Gulf!

# Break the blockade of Iraq!

From within "the belly of the beast": the following article was first published by *Workers Vanguard* no 509, 7 September. *Workers Vanguard* is the paper of the Spartacist League/US, American section of the International Communist League.

What's going on in the Middle East right now is a bald attempt by the United States to seize control of the world's oil supplies. Having lost its economic predominance, Washington is now trying to reassert its role as imperialist global policeman through brute military force. That's what George Bush means when he talks about a "new world order", echoing Adolf Hitler in the 1930s. But in fact, the American invasion is setting the stage for a new world war.

The consequences of Bush's war moves are incalculable. Perhaps a *quarter of a million* US troops are in or heading for the Persian Gulf region right now. Ships are being taken out of mothballs, and tens of thousands of reservists are being called up from civilian life. It's a *war mobilisation* on a scale not seen since the height of the Vietnam War. Now they're talking of launching an air war in a matter of weeks, and Bush is to meet Soviet leader Gorbachev in a hastily called summit in Helsinki next weekend.

The bipartisan US crusade against former US ally Saddam Hussein is hardly about resisting aggression or "making the



Independent



Dennis Brack

Thatcher orders troops (left) to Gulf in support of Bush's war mobilisation. Is this the face of World War III?

world safe for democracy". Certainly not coming from the people who recently slaughtered thousands of civilians to install a puppet regime in Panama. Bush says it's about defending "our way of life". What he means is a war to make the world safe for the feudalism of the oil sheiks and the profiteering of Big Oil.

After proclaiming victory in the Cold War, US imperialism is now seeking to dictate terms to its imperialist rivals. Meanwhile as Gorbachev prates about "collective security", Bush has used the

fig leaf of UN sanctions as a green light for a massive US military operation less than 700 miles from the Soviet border. A deadly noose is tightening around the USSR. We call on the Soviet Union to rescind its arms embargo against Iraq.

The trip wires for World War III are pulling taut in the volatile Near East. French president Mitterrand declares, "We have entered into the logic of war." The deranged Zionist rulers in Jerusalem are itching for a pre-emptive strike against Baghdad with "non-conventional

weapons". And the concentration of American firepower could blow the whole region sky high. The workers of the world have a big stake in defending Iraq against this imperialist onslaught. Break the Yankee blockade!

War, as Lenin said, is the mother of revolution. The imperialist invasion will set the Middle East aflame as the Arab masses surge into the streets in angry protests that could topple the kings, sheiks and colonels throughout the re-

*continued on page 8*

## Labour in lockstep with Thatcher's war moves

As the American imperialists mobilise for war in order to seize control of the world's oil supplies, Margaret Thatcher's government has moved to join forces with the US invaders in the Gulf. The two-day parliamentary debate in the House of Commons was a display of bi-partisan unity: when and if the US decides to launch an attack against Iraq, the stage is set for deployment of British forces far beyond the several thousand already sent to the region.

Workers in Britain and around the world have a big stake in defending Iraq against the imperialist onslaught. Sanctions and embargoes are the prelude to war: break the blockade! There would be particular justice in the British workers aiding the defeat of their "own" bourgeoisie in the Gulf. It was the British imperialists who carved up the Middle East and imposed the present artificial boundaries, whose "divide and conquer" schemes are responsible for the last 40 years of bloodletting in the region.

The Labour traitors, right and "left", have rallied to the call for war.

Neil Kinnock, Denis Healey et al supported Thatcher outright. Kinnock demanded nothing less than the destruction of Iraq's chemical weapons and chemical weapons manufacturing capacity. Labour "left" Tony Benn supports UN sanctions against Iraq and appealed for "Britain to take no action outside the UN Security Council's resolutions", a minor tactical difference over how best to mobilise public opinion for imperialist aggression.

Remember it was a Labour government which sent troops to Korea to join the US in the "UN's" counter-revolutionary war against the Korean workers and peasants. As our US comrades wrote in the article printed above: "Bush has used the figleaf of UN sanctions as a green light for a massive US military operation less than 700 miles from the Soviet border. A deadly noose is tightening around the USSR. We call on the Soviet Union to rescind its arms embargo against Iraq."

When Reagan terror-bombed Libya, Thatcher participated as fully as Britain's standing as a second-rate imperialist power would allow. During the

Falklands/Malvinas war, Thatcher sent several hundred young sailors aboard the Argentine cruiser *Belgrano* to an icy grave out of sheer bloodlust. Now the war drums are beating in the Gulf and Thatcher, with the social patriotic Labour Party in tow, is itching to join Bush in the attack on Baghdad. Some hard class struggle can stop the butcher of the *Belgrano* in her tracks!

Thatcher's government is hated by broad sections of the population "at home". Sending thousands of working-class youth off to fight a war so that the US can grab Middle East oil could add fuel to seething discontent. Already, strategically placed North Sea oil workers are engaged in struggle against the oil bosses who extract their profit with bloody disregard for human life. But the last thing the Labour misleaders and trade union bureaucrats want is social struggle against the capitalists at home or their dirty wars abroad. Just as anti-poll tax protesters in the hundreds of thousands have been denounced by Kinnock & Co as "violent", anti-war mobilisations and political strike action by the trade unions would be up against

the Labour officialdom as well as the Tory government.

From the mass carnage of the First World War through to the sending of British troops into Northern Ireland, Labour has loyally served the imperialist warmakers. The Labour traitors have manned the front lines of Thatcher's union-busting: from knifing the heroic miners strike in 1984-85 to its commitment to enforce the entire gamut of anti-strike, anti-worker legislation. In order to unleash the social power of the organised workers movement it is necessary to *break with the Labour traitors* and forge a revolutionary internationalist party.

Despite the warmongering of the bosses and their press and the social-patriotic treachery of the Labour misleaders, there is little enthusiasm among the working people of these isles for Thatcher's ambitions in the impending war. Even the returned British nationals and family members of hostages in Iraq have suggested that she should "shut up". Many may be aware of the fact, too, that Britain

*continued on page 8*

# US, Britain out of the Gulf!

# Oil workers – shut down production now!

We print below the Spartacist leaflet of 11 August, thousands of which were distributed in Aberdeen, Glasgow and Dundee to striking oil workers.

In the biggest wave of class struggle in the 25-year history of the North Sea oil industry, workers are challenging the union-bating, profit-bloated bosses. Despite the attempts of the companies to intimidate strikers by sacking over 1000 workers, industrial action has spread to on-shore installations, while several hundred continue to occupy the rigs and accommodation "floats". Oil revenues are vital to the British capitalists, and workers must exercise their tremendous social power by **shutting down all production now!**

The North Sea is a vast deathtrap for workers, exemplifying the essence of

capitalist exploitation where the lives of workers are sacrificed for private profit—on the order of £2m per hour. Industrial murder has been the order of the day, from Piper Alpha to the 1986 crash of a Chinook helicopter. Over 500 people have been killed in rig disasters, while 27 helicopters have hit the waters of the North Sea since 1968, resulting in 116 deaths. The week before the first 24-hour strike, seven people were killed, six in a crash of a Sikorsky helicopter (like the Chinook, owned by Robert Maxwell, friend of Kinnock and witchhunter of Scargill). These disasters can be avoided, but safety and maintenance cost money, and the bloodsucking bosses will let nothing get in the way of their profits.

Now US president Bush, backed by Thatcher, deploys forces for a military

blockade of Iraq, threatening war. When Bush, Thatcher, BP and Shell talk about "opposing aggression", who do they think they're kidding? The only "freedom" they're interested in is the freedom to exploit working people for profit, which they carry on with a bloody disregard for human life, whether in the North Sea or the Persian Gulf. But Iraq is not Panama or Grenada, and the imperialists could be heading for a fiasco like Lebanon or Suez. And as Bush/Thatcher's oil grab threatens recession conditions, the oil magnates feather their own nests by jacking up prices. And then the capitalist politicians appeal to oil workers to stay on the job and keep oil flowing, to bail them out of their crisis. Don't buy these lies! The world working class has no interest in Washington's crusade. Hands off the Persian Gulf! US and British troops, bases and fleets, get out and stay out! We Trotskyists, who stand in defence of the Soviet workers state against world imperialism, demand that the Soviet Union rescind its arms embargo of Iraq and send their former allies in Baghdad the weapons they need to deter Washington's oil grab.

With the capitalists going off half-cocked and creating their own oil shortages, strikers could have them over a barrel. But the leaders of the unions and OILC have sought to pressure the companies into negotiations, rather than shutting down production. A union leadership worth its salt would be burning scabby no-strike letters, not telling its members to sign them and not sending strikers back to work! It's time the workers took some effective sanctions against the bosses! An effective mass occupation of the rigs would strike a real blow at their system of capitalist private property. A hard strike would lay the basis for forging one solid union of all onshore and offshore oil workers. Production workers, as well as maintenance and catering workers, must be mobilised in struggle: a Piper Alpha-type inferno does not distinguish between contract workers and others. The "protection" offered by the government's Health and Safety Executive hasn't saved the lives of Channel Tunnel, building, BR and transport workers.

What's needed are union safety committees with the power to stop production on the spot. Smash racial discrimination against Filipino and other immigrant workers: equal pay for equal work, full citizenship rights for foreign workers!

The OILC leaders designed their logo after that of Polish Solidarność, Margaret Thatcher's favourite "union". In their efforts to restore capitalism, today the Solidarność government imposes 30% cuts in living standards and mass layoffs and attacks abortion rights. When Arthur Scargill in 1983 said that Solidarność was anti-socialist, he was viciously red-baited by the TUC tops. During the miners strike all the Solidarność-lovers—the Kinnocks, Willises and Chapples—were at the forefront of scabberding and sabotaging that heroic struggle. The witchhunt today against Scargill and the NUM, with the press whipping up hysteria about "Russian gold", reflects the fear of the bosses and their Labour lackeys of a revival of class militancy. Those in the unions who peddle anti-communism and anti-Sovietism inevitably betray struggles at home.

The union leaders, including Scargill, campaign to put Kinnock into No 10. "Ramsay MacKinnock", as he was known in pit villages for his acts of betrayal to the miners, has already made clear that he will retain much of Tory anti-union legislation, including restrictions on the closed shop, secondary picketing and mandatory ballots. Labour councils are enforcing the hated poll tax, while the Labour Party tops try to out-Thatcher Thatcher in supporting imperialist military intervention in the Middle East. What's necessary is a new class struggle leadership in the unions, linked to a revolutionary workers party, forged by splitting the ranks of the Labour Party from the pro-capitalist tops.

Thatcher has particularly targeted the working people of Scotland, with her devastation of the Upper Clyde, the coalfields and now Ravenscraig. Those who are lucky have got jobs doing hard, demanding and dangerous work offshore. And whether Labour or Tories administer capitalism, the companies will extract extortionate profits from the sweat, blood and corpses of oil workers. That wealth should benefit not a handful of bankers, capitalists, colonels and sheikhs but the working people of the world, who will lay claim to it through proletarian revolution and the establishment of an international socialist order.

For a federation of workers republics in the British Isles!  
For a Socialist United States of Europe!



TROTSKY

## To the memory of Leon Trotsky

Fifty years ago, on 20 August 1940, Leon Trotsky was struck down by the blows of an assassin acting on Stalin's orders. Co-leader with VI Lenin of the Russian Revolution, intransigent fighter against the Stalinist bureaucracy's betrayal of that revolution, Trotsky founded the Fourth International in 1938. His legacy lives on in the internationalist political programme he fought for, while the heirs of Stalin collapse under



LENIN

the weight of their own bankruptcy. Today we fight to reforge the Fourth International, destroyed by liquidationist forces in 1951-53, as the indispensable prerequisite for the victory of world socialism. Below we reprint remarks by American Trotskyist leader James P Cannon at the memorial meeting in New York on 28 August 1940.

Comrade Trotsky's entire conscious life, from the time he entered the workers' movement in the provincial Russian town of Nikolaiev at the age of 18, up till the moment of his death in Mexico City 42 years later, was completely dedicated to work and struggle for one central idea. He stood for the emancipation of the workers and all the oppressed people of the world, and the transformation of society from capitalism to socialism by means of a social revolution. In his conception this liberating social revolution requires for success the leadership of a revolutionary political party of the workers' vanguard....

He once wrote: "It is not the party that makes the program (the idea); it is the program that makes the party".... Trotsky, a disciple of Marx, believed with Marx, that "an idea, when it permeates the mass, becomes a material force." Believing that, Comrade Trotsky never doubted that his work would live after him. Believing that, he could proclaim on his death bed his confidence in the future victory of the Fourth International which embodies his ideas....

The betrayers of the revolution knew that the revolution lived in him, the tradition, the hope. All the resources of a powerful state, set in motion by the hatred and revenge of Stalin, were directed to the assassination of a single man, without resources and with only a handful of close followers....

Comrade Trotsky not only struggled for a new social order based on human solidarity as a future goal; he lived every day of his life according to its higher and nobler standards. They wouldn't let him be a citizen of any country. But, in truth, he was much more than that. He was already, in his mind and in his conduct, a citizen of the Communist future of humanity.

—James P Cannon, "To the Memory of the Old Man" (28 August 1940)

## WORKERS HAMMER



For a federation of workers republics in the British Isles!  
For a Socialist United States of Europe!

Monthly newspaper of the Spartacist League, British section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

EDITORIAL BOARD: Bonnie Bradley (Editor), Jon Branche, Alec Gilchrist, Eibhlin McDonald, Alan Mason, Len Michelson, Ellen Rawlings, Michael Riaz, David Strachan  
PRODUCTION MANAGER: Michael Riaz

CIRCULATION MANAGER: Suzan Groves

Published by Spartacist Publications, PO Box 1041, London NW5 3EU  
Subscriptions: £2.00 for 1 year, overseas airmail £5.00.

Opinions expressed in signed articles or letters do not necessarily express the editorial viewpoint.

Printed by Slough Newspapers Ltd(TU). ISSN 0267-8721

## JUST OUT!

*Prometheus Research Series 3* is a memorial to Richard S Fraser (1913-1988), who pioneered the Trotskyist understanding of black oppression in the United States. After joining the Trotskyist movement in 1934, Fraser was an organiser and union activist for close to 30 years and a member of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee for 25 years. During internal debates in the SWP in the 1950s he developed and fought for the programmatic perspective of Revolutionary Integration, while the majority, with George Breitman as its spokesman, tailed the liberal pacifist/Democratic Party leadership of the civil rights movement and soon capitulated to black nationalism. The bulletin contains material reflecting the entire span of Fraser's political life, including his seminal 1953 lectures, "The Negro Struggle and the Proletarian Revolution".

Order from/make cheques payable to:  
Spartacist Publications, PO Box 1041, London NW5 3EU  
£3.50 + 75p postage

PROMETHEUS RESEARCH SERIES 3

In Memoriam  
Richard S. Fraser

An Appreciation and Selection  
of His Work



PROMETHEUS RESEARCH LIBRARY

# Commandos of St John Street on Eastern Europe Fight counterrevolution? Leninist says leave that to the Spartacists

*The Leninist* (3 August) contains a polemic on the British left and Eastern Europe devoted in part to the Spartacist League. Virtually all of our reformist and centrist opponents are fond of painting us as "pro-Stalinist" because of our unwavering defence of the gains of the October Revolution against imperialist attack and internal counterrevolution. The eclectic Stalinoids of *Leninist* take a different, although no less dishonest, line of argument.

*Leninist* resorts to a false amalgam between our own programme and that of Stalinophobic, Solidarność-loving outfits such as the Slaughterite WRP and Workers Power. After quoting the latter in various stages of capitulation to capitalist restorationist forces in Eastern Europe, *Leninist* launches its salvo against our work in East Germany: "It does not like to admit it now, but the Spartacist League was, a while back, prattling on about the political revolution. They got just as hot and sweaty as the rest." *Leninist* introduces its polemical material with a denunciation of those fake-leftists who supported Solidarność. It "neglects" to note that we stood on the opposite side of the barricades from the social democrats and fake-Trotskyists over Poland. We also staunchly refuted *Leninist's* TKP allies' pipedream of "reforming" a wing of the Polish Stalinist bureaucracy (ie, the Katowice Group) whose gross betrayals, bureaucratic mismanagement and anti-Semitism had pushed much of the Polish proletariat into the arms of Walesa & Co. We supported the military suppression of Solidarność' counterrevolutionary bid for power while underlining: "In Poland it is the Stalinists themselves, through decades of capitulation to capitalist forces, who have produced the counterrevolutionary crisis."

*Leninist* implies that Poland in 1981 and East Germany in late 1989 were equivalent situations and moreover that "uniquely" the *Leninist* resisted the flood-tide of fake-left tailing of counterrevolutionary forces. *Leninist* goes after our determined intervention in the DDR: "The developments in the DDR pose point blank proletarian political revolution", they told us (*Workers Hammer*,



Spartacist

"Disappeared" by *Leninist*: Treptow Park, East Berlin, 3 January: Spartacist-initiated 250,000-strong united-front protest against fascist desecration of Soviet war memorial.

November/December 1989), and promptly booked their plane flights over there." (*Leninist* presumably was poring over its gameplan for the storming of the CPGB's London offices and its six-hour "occupation" of same.)

The stakes for the world working class were high in the historic German events and by no means predetermined. We noted: "a little bit of political revolution is a chancy thing. At bottom, either the workers take political power or capitalist counterrevolution takes the ascendancy" (*WH* no 111, November/December 1989). The International Communist League mobilised to intervene in East Germany with the Trotskyist programme: for defence of the DDR, against capitalist reunification, for a red Germany of workers councils.

In early November, massive demonstrations of pro-socialist workers and

youth in the DDR raised slogans such as "Russia was the spark—Germany will be the flame" (taken from the KPD in the '20s) and dissident SED members in the tens of thousands called for "No sellout of the DDR", for "real plans" and "return to Lenin". If *Leninist* wants to idiotically maintain that what was going on here was "counterrevolution" then it should have called for the crushing by the then-DDR regime of the earliest demonstrations. But *Leninist* did not raise such a call at any point—including in October when Honnecker unsuccessfully proposed that the army open fire on demonstrators in Leipzig.

On 3 January, a quarter of a million people rallied in Treptow Park in East Berlin against the fascist desecration of the Soviet war memorial and in defence of the DDR. That massive mobilisation was initiated by the Spartacists; the SED,

after hesitating, threw its weight behind the demonstration. The Treptow action was rabidly denounced by the West German bourgeoisie and its social democratic lackeys who saw in the anti-Nazi protesters a hard core who could resist *Anschluss*. The SED-PDS completely collapsed in the ensuing campaign of vilification and stepped-up attempts to stampede the DDR into West Germany.

Even *Leninist* would be hard put to denounce the Treptow anti-Nazi protest as part and parcel of "counterrevolution", so it simply doesn't mention it. This minuscule and nationally isolated sect does, however, absurdly resort to "small-baiting" the ICL. It denounces us for putting our "meagre personpower and financial resources into East Germany". The Spartacist Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands (SpAD) was the only party to stand in the DDR's March elections unequivocally opposed to reunification under capitalism. *Leninist* can only sneer that our candidates got "somewhat less than the East German equivalent of the Monster Raving Loony Party".

One real problem for *Leninist* is that it was the Trotskyists of the ICL who fought down the line to defend the DDR while the former Stalinist ruling party abjectly (and suicidally) surrendered. The electoral victory for unification and subsequent currency union which marked the destruction of the DDR workers state represent a major defeat for the international proletariat. It is one that can be laid squarely at the door of Stalin—the father of "socialism in one country" which meant popular frontism everywhere else, ie, politically subordinating the workers movement to social democracy and the bourgeoisie. Stalin's heir Gorbachev gave the green light for unification as part of his virtually limitless appeasement of imperialism.

At bottom, the *Leninist* polemic is another version of the old Stalinist lie that Trotskyism "scabs" on the October Revolution. But with Gorbachev, the SED-PDS et al manifestly playing the role of the gravediggers of revolution, it is hardly surprising that militants from the Stalinist milieu are seriously investigating

*continued on page 11*

## Workers Hammer subscription drive

### Quotas (in points)

Dublin 75

Glasgow 75

London 190

Total 340



Workers Hammer

1-year subscription to *Workers Hammer* for £2  
(Overseas subscriptions: Airmail £5.00)

1-year subscription to *Workers Hammer* PLUS 24 issues of *Workers Vanguard*, Marxist fortnightly of the Spartacist League/US for £7.00  
All above subscriptions include *Spartacist*, organ of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist)

3 issues of *Women & Revolution* for £1.50

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Make cheques payable/post to: Spartacist Publications, PO Box 1041, London NW5 3EU

# Labour traitors front for ruling class conspiracy

# Defeat sinister frame-up of Scargill

The article printed below first appeared in *Workers Vanguard* no 508, 10 August. As we go to press, the vile witch-hunt against Arthur Scargill and Peter Heathfield has taken a new turn. On 7 September charges against Scargill, Heathfield and the NUM were brought by the government's "Trade Union Certification Officer". Alleging failure to keep and submit proper accounts, the charges stem from the measures taken to defend the NUM against sequestration and receivership during the 1984-85 miners strike. The unending series of slanders, court actions and Labour/TUC attacks on Scargill and the NUM are an attempt to bury the militant legacy of that strike. This union-busting attack must be defeated!

Throughout the coalfields the miners have opposed the witchhunt and demanded an end to the NUM executive's own dragging of Scargill and Heathfield into the bosses' courts. Scargill has issued a detailed response to the Lightman Inquiry regarding, among other things, monies received from the USSR, the IMO accounts, the spurious Cook Report and *Daily Mirror* accounts about Libyan money. In a recent interview published in the *Guardian* (31 August) Scargill dealt with Lightman's real charge: "He says that we should not have collected money unless we were prepared to hand it over to the receiver and that we're guilty of defying the law. We're guilty and proud of it."

The British bourgeoisie, Labour right wing and the unsavoury cabal serving them have not thus far succeeded in crucifying Scargill on a cross of "Russian gold". But the latest legal action against the NUM shows they have not given up. Smash the witchhunt! Hands off the NUM!

LONDON—National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) president Arthur Scargill is the target of a massive smear campaign by the British bourgeoisie. From the time of the bitter, hard-fought 1984-85 miners strike, Tory prime minister Margaret Thatcher has been waging a vengeful, vindictive campaign to bring down this militant union and its president. In this she has been ably assisted by her "loyal opposition" in Neil Kinnock's Labour Party. The witchhunt also aims at

tightening the legal straitjacket Thatcher has sought to impose on the trade unions since she came to office a decade ago.

The forces arrayed in the latest attack on the NUM include egophile Robert Maxwell and his pro-Labour *Daily Mirror* rag, the scab Union of Democratic Miners (UDM), certain Labour Members of Parliament, Trades Union Congress (TUC) leader Norman Willis, a Russian fascist outfit with links to Western intelligence operations in the Soviet Union and a host of other scum. Multi-millionaire Maxwell kicked off the campaign with utterly false allegations that Scargill and NUM executive member

The charges of financial irregularity are a smokescreen for what the bourgeoisie and its minions really have against this Stalinoid left-social-democratic trade-union leader. They cannot forgive or forget his trade-union militancy. Maxwell's story conveniently broke as the press was denouncing anti-poll tax protesters as "lawbreakers" and "violent"—the same slanders hurled at striking miners five years ago. Widely despised for enforcing Thatcher's tax, Kinnock and his Labour cronies are remembered by militant miners for their vicious strikebreaking role as "Thatcher's poodles".

Maxwell fumes that Scargill "tried to



NUM president Arthur Scargill arrested after "Battle of Orgreave" during 1984-85 miners strike. Ruling class and their Labour/TUC lapdogs cannot forgive Scargill for trade-union militancy.

Peter Heathfield pocketed monies meant for the aid of striking miners received from Libya and the Soviet Union.

When the lies of personal corruption collapsed, a new line of attack was dredged up with charges that Scargill had secretly manipulated Soviet donations that ended up in the accounts of the Paris-based International Miners Organisation (IMO), of which he is also president. And when they were unable to substantiate that, the *Sunday Times* (5 August) rehashed the "Libyan connection" with the bogus headline, "Gadaffi: How I handed over the Libyan cash to Arthur Scargill".

bring down an elected constitutional government of the country"—in other words, he led the most serious class conflict Britain had seen in decades. As class war raged in the coalfields, Thatcher ordered out thousands of cops, turning entire sections of the country into virtual occupied territories. When naked terror failed, the government sent out an army of "sequestrators" to steal every penny of NUM funds, every piece of union property they could lay their hands on. Assets were seized and frozen; the union was put into receivership. The government was out to starve the miners into submission.



John Sturrock/Network

International support helped militant miners to survive during bitter year-long strike. US Partisan Defense Committee raised \$24,000 to aid embattled miners' families.

**WORKERS VANGUARD**  
19 April 1985

**PDC British Miners' Aid Campaign Revives Traditions of Labor Solidarity**

**Workers Hands Across the Sea**

**Pc Partisan Defense Committee**  
Financial Report No. 1 June 1986

**AID TO STRIKING BRITISH MINERS' FAMILIES**  
November 1984 - July 1986

In 1984 Britain's National Union of Mineworkers met an onerous challenge against Margaret Thatcher's union-busting. In the course of this bitter year-long class battle, other militants as well as all the oppressed workingmen in Britain saw the miners' fight as their own, and workers around the world sought to lend their hands to their class brothers. The Partisan Defense Committee responded with the Aid to Striking British Miners' Families fund drive (November 1984 - July 1986). We organized the international support of labor heads and individual militants to raise over \$24,000 for the embattled British miners and their families.

The PDC maintained scrupulous financial responsibility: balanced budgets, contributions to each contributor to his donation was sent to the British Miners' Every penny collected went to the miners; the PDC received the full costs of the campaign, from administrative costs to publicity. The financial records of the campaign have been open to any bona fide workers organization.

The Aid to Striking British Miners' Families campaign was an important step toward the Partisan Defense Committee. It represented both the need and promise of fighting an international class-struggle legal and moral defense organization—an organization which champions order and justice in the interest of the whole of the working people.

We reprint here the article on the campaign which appeared in *Workers Vanguard* No. 277, 19 April 1985, and a final financial statement of the Aid to Striking British Miners' Families fund.

For his refusal to sacrifice the miners and their families on the altar of the bosses' laws, Scargill has earned the undying enmity of the capitalist rulers and the cringing Kinnock Labourites who knifed the strike. At the recent NUM conference, Scargill received a standing ovation when he spoke, declaring: "I apologise to no one for the role I played during the period which has been tantamount to a state of war against everything that this union stands for".

What particularly burns the NUM's enemies is that the miners not only remained defiant to the end—even in defeat—but that their stand inspired an outpouring of international working-class solidarity. The present campaign against Scargill centres on the fact that he took measures to keep funds sent to the miners during the strike out of Thatcher's dirty hands. Of course the accounts were kept secret; Thatcher had her snoops running all over Europe trying to uncover and seize NUM funds. Many of them were also kept secret from the union executive; it "leaked like a colander", recalled Scargill.

NUM members remember well that it was massive financial support from workers and minorities in Britain, and from supporters around the world, that kept their families alive for a year. Soviet trade unionists mobilised massively for this union which refused to go along with Reagan/Thatcher's anti-Soviet war drive—they sent shipments of food and organised free holidays for strikers' children in the Soviet Union. The pro-Communist French CGT union federation regularly delivered food parcels to the miners. From South Africa, impoverished black mineworkers sent whatever they could to help their class brothers and sisters in Britain.

In the United States, the rabidly anti-Communist AFL-CIO tops refused to send a penny to support the British miners. In the face of the "AFL-CIA" official line of hostile unconcern for an embattled union led by a "red", the Partisan Defense Committee, a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defence organisation associated with the Spartacist League/US, collected \$24,000 including donations and collections from over 70 local unions for the families of striking miners. As a 12 July statement by the Partisan Defence Committee in Britain said:

"The threatened police investigation into the NUM is a continuation of the savage vendetta of the Thatcher government to destroy the jobs, livelihoods and trade-union rights of the miners. During the heroic year-long struggle of the miners in 1984-85, workers around the world rallied to their cause with acts of strike solidarity and donations of material assistance. The NUM rightly took measures to keep these funds out of the clutches of the union-busting government. Hands off the National Union of Mineworkers!"

## Crucifying Scargill on a cross of "Russian gold"

Having failed to destroy the NUM, the bourgeoisie want to crucify it on a cross of "Russian gold". The same bourgeois press which supported Thatcher's every move to starve the miners now wax eloquent on the "hardship" endured by the strikers while denouncing Scargill's "autocratic" methods. Soviet assistance, gratefully accepted, helped the strikers

continued on page 11

# Workers Power caught with Russian fascists, Thatcher's scabs

The Union of Democratic Miners (UDM) is a scab "union" created to destroy the National Union of Mine-workers (NUM). The National Toilers Alliance (NTS) is a Russian fascist outfit with links to one or another imperialist agency going back to Hitler's Nazis in the 1930s. Workers Power is a self-styled Trotskyist group in Britain. What's the connection? Plenty sordid. Workers Power has been caught out lending their services to a sordid cabal of the UDM, NTS and other sinister forces aimed at breaking the NUM and its president Arthur Scargill.

Along with Socialist Organiser, its estranged bloc partners in the Campaign for Solidarity with Workers in the Eastern Bloc (CSWEB), Workers Power organised the tour in Britain of one Yuri Butchenko, "executive member of the Siberian-based Kuzbass Union of Workers". For "nine very successful days", as WP puts it, these "leftists" provided Butchenko with an entrée into numerous workers movement meetings, knowing full well that he was at the very least intimately connected with the fascist NTS, through its British representative George Miller.

Then on 5 July, Butchenko appeared at a press conference in London alongside UDM honcho Roy Lynk to lend his voice to outlandish claims that Scargill had salted away up to £10 million of donations made by Soviet miners to the 1984-85 British miners strike. This was just what union-hating prime minister Thatcher and her lieutenants in the Labour right wing needed: a Russian worker, legitimised by speaking before trade-union audiences, taking their side against the most militant union in Britain. Butchenko's claims were picked up and broadcast far and wide by the bosses' media.

Butchenko's surfacing as one of the key players in the anti-Scargill witchhunt forced Workers Power to issue a string of denials, non-denials and conflicting disclaimers, which in sum only confirmed their criminal complicity in this affair. WP tried to pass itself off as a pathetically naive group simply out to make "solidarity" with the "independent workers' movement of the USSR and Eastern Europe" and tragically finding itself implicated in the smear campaign against Scargill. The fact is that these Stalinophobic, rightward-moving centrists have blatantly and directly aided the bourgeoisie, its UDM tool and the Labour/TUC right wing in their attempt to crucify Scargill and break the miners union.

### Confessions of an anti-communist "dupe"?

In an attempt to squirm out of its responsibility for setting up Scargill, Workers Power issued three separate statements dated 11 July, directed at its various constituencies. None of these have been published in its paper, and we can see why.

Addressing the Kuzbass union, WP called on them to "renounce all links with the UDM" while attacking the NUM leadership for its ties to the official Sovi-



Socialist Organiser

Fascist-connected "Russian worker" Yuri Butchenko, sponsored by Workers Power.

et unions. It even lent credence to the witchhunters' charges by appealing to them: "should you wish to pursue the matter of the money sent by Soviet miners to the NUM during their strike, do so exclusively via the NUM itself."

Addressing the British unions, which the Solidarity Campaign had inveigled into meeting with Butchenko, Workers Power had not a hint of criticism of Scargill, pleading: "Yuri Butchenko has betrayed your solidarity and goodwill. We apologise unreservedly for being the unwitting agency for this person to trade on your internationalism (and ours too)."

WP was confronted with an unforeseen conflict between competing opportunist interests—on the one hand their Stalinophobic appetites, on the other their tail-

ing after the Labour/TUC left of which Scargill is part. So they split from CSWEB following Butchenko's bombshell appearance on behalf of the anti-Scargill rat pack. Workers Power condemned a Socialist Organiser/CSWEB statement for "suggesting that he [Butchenko] is somehow an unwitting dupe of Lynk and the media" (presumably WP had cornered the "unwitting dupe" market that week). WP loftily declared, "We cannot be party, in any way, to its decision to excuse Butchenko's treachery."

This canting hypocrisy came after Workers Power itself had devoted considerable efforts to coddling Butchenko. Only when he publicly joined the anti-Scargill witchhunt and hit the headlines with his press conference did WP decide

"a class line has to be drawn between the labour movement and Yuri Butchenko." Two weeks earlier, when Butchenko had insisted that CSWEB condone his meeting with the UDM and take on the NTS as co-organiser of the tour, WP's editorial board issued a lame statement (dated 27 June) deploring his decision "to end his commitments to our tour" after CSWEB rejected "the conditions laid down for collaboration by Yuri". Even then, "Yuri" was invited "to reply to our criticisms in the next issue of this paper", while Scargill's "allegiance to the 'official' stooge unions" in the USSR was blamed for "opening the door to Lynk" and the scab UDM.

Not only does it have trouble keeping its constituencies apart, WP can't even keep its "facts" straight. A piece in the August issue of *Workers Power*, quaintly titled "Problems of solidarity", claims that "it was not until Butchenko arrived in Britain that we were told he had been formally invited here by Miller." But WP's 11 July "Statement on Yuri Butchenko and CSWEB" reports that it was through a telephone conversation with Butchenko in May, well before his arrival, that "we learnt that Miller had been the person to sign the official invitation papers for Butchenko to come."

It all reads like one of those "I was a Commie dupe" confessions from the McCarthy era, and with about as much sincerity. So how unwitting an agency was Workers Power? Butchenko told them enough, as WP makes clear with breath-taking cynicism in the same statement:

continued on page 10

completely independently of the NTS. Indeed, it was not until Butchenko arrived in Britain that we were told he had been formally invited here by Miller. Up to that point we thought he had been sent by the union—which we ourselves had invited—and paid for by it. Subsequently we learnt, from an interview *City Limits* did with Butchenko, that Miller had paid for his flight over.

Only after Butchenko's arrival

Shutting the stable door after the horse has bolted. August 1990 *Workers Power* newspaper (left) denies what *Workers Power* statement (right) had already confessed on 11 July 1990.

# For the right of Tamil Eelam!

## Sri Lanka: state terror, communalist bloodbath

On 11 June the fragile truce between the Tamil Tigers and the Sri Lankan government disintegrated. In concerted attacks the Tigers overran more than 20 police stations and laid siege to a series of army bases. Backed by heavy artillery and aerial bombardment, the Sri Lankan armed forces have renewed their attempts to drown the struggles of the oppressed Tamil minority in blood. "Eelam War II" accelerates the disintegration and fragmentation of the island's society, engulfing large areas in communal slaughter.

The unitary state system of Sri Lanka is a direct result of British colonial rule. Since independence the pressure towards one unitary national entity, one language, one religion, has been remorseless and bloody. Capitalist politicians have vied with one another in their communalist appeals. The government language policy of "Sinhala only" targeted Tamils and the English-speaking Burghers. In July 1983 government-instigated anti-Tamil pogroms surpassed previous communal outbursts and marked the de facto partition of the island. The United National Party (UNP) government's attempts to suppress the national liberation struggle for Tamil Eelam was checked by the Indian intervention in 1987. Three months after the so-called Peace Accord of July 1987, the "Indian Peace-Keeping Force" (IPKF) was engaged in a war to destroy the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

Mutual opposition to the presence of the IPKF induced a truce of convenience between the LTTE and the new government of R Premadasa (who replaced JR Jayawardene as president after the 19 December 1988 elections). The IPKF withdrew its last detachments in March, leaving a situation that inexorably headed towards the renewed bloodbath. The once fertile possibilities of internationalist revolutionary mobilisations, cutting across communal and national divisions, have been suppressed as the working masses are battered and terrorised along communal lines and within the different communities.

Tamils constitute about 20 per cent of the population of Sri Lanka. The Tamils of the north and east have a right of national self-determination and we defend their right to establish an independent state of Tamil Eelam. We demand the withdrawal of the Sri Lankan army and police from the Tamil areas. But in the eastern regions of the island the Tamils are heavily interpenetrated with the majority Sinhalese and mainly Tamil-speaking Muslims. Under capitalism what territory would constitute Eelam is bound to be decided through communal bloodletting. More so since the main Tamil group, the LTTE have come to mirror the worst aspects of Sinhala communalism, butchering Sinhala and Muslim villagers.

During the short-lived truce, the Tigers proclaimed that the Sri Lankan government had recognised them "as the sole and authentic representatives of the Tamil speaking people" and touted Premadasa as a democrat who had "assured the LTTE leaders that the government has totally given up the militaristic ap-

proach and that the ethnic issue would be resolved through peaceful dialogue" (*Voice of Tigers*, March 1990).

Negotiations dragged on. Instead of turning over police functions in the North-Eastern Province to the LTTE as the Tiger leadership wanted, the government began reinforcing its security forces. Sinhala colonisation of contested areas continued. In May the government began talking again with the Tigers' deadly rivals of the EPRLF. Deputy Defence Minister and hardliner Ranjan Wijeratne, together with SLFP opposition leader Anura Bandaranaike, stated that the Tigers must lay down their arms as a precondition for holding new elections in the North-Eastern Province.

The Tigers survived two years against 50,000 IPKF forces, and are now bigger and better equipped. So are the Sri Lankan forces. But the claims made that the Sri Lankan security forces have liberated the Eastern Province and "broken the might of the Liberation Tigers" (*The Sunday Observer*, Colombo, 24 June) are hollow. LTTE patrols can be encountered only a few miles from Trincomalee and other towns. Even during the Indian intervention the Tigers' supply lines to south India were never closed off. Around 250 soldiers and police are holed up in the old Dutch fort in Jaffna town. Much prestige hangs on relieving this siege, but the government offensive to break the siege has been stymied by the Tigers.

Vows Deputy Defence Minister Ranjan Wijeratne: "We will not capture the LTTE, but destroy them. We will show no mercy" (*Sunday Times*, Colombo, 12 August). The UNP government and capitalist press have tried to portray the current fighting as against the Tigers but not the Tamil people, as different from the "shameful communal violence directed against the Tamil community in 1983" (*The Island*, 8 July). But government hardliners have had no compunction about rousing "Save the motherland" hysteria.

Thousands of years of religious and cultural memory, and the Sinhalese majority's fear of being a minority in the context of 60 million Tamils in south India, have been evoked to whip up communal xenophobia. The *Sunday Island's* columnist Kautilya describes the situation: "First, it is more massacre and bloodbath than fierce battles between armed combatants. Second, the civilian death toll is mounting.... not, kindly observe, 'caught in the crossfire' but the deliberate targets of war" (*The Island*, 19 August). The government forces' operations have been accompanied by indiscriminate bombing and strafing, death-squad "disappearances" of Tamil youth and men and the unleashing of murderous Sinhalese home guard mobs.

The government admits that half a million people have been uprooted from their homes, the Tamils fleeing northwards and the Sinhalese south and west. Many people face starvation. There is a vicious cycle of revenge and reprisal. In August the massacres at two Muslim mosques near Batticaloa attributed to the



Shyam Tekwani photos

Police roadblock, Colombo 1989 (left); UNP President R Premadasa (above); Tamil murdered by army, 1981 (below).



no credit

Tigers marked a further descent into all-sided communal bloodletting.

### Eastern Province: communalist cauldron

In 1938 the Sinhalese population of the Eastern Province was about five per cent. Following independence, concerted colonisation of Sinhalese has raised it to about 25 per cent (with 42 per cent Tamil and most of the rest Muslim). The colonisation schemes have concentrated on the Vali Oya and the Colombo-Habarana-Trincomalee road, wedges to split up the Tamil regions. The strategic naval harbour of Trincomalee lies at the heart of the area:

"If the region retains the great tactical value to the seas that wash it, it can be said that he who controls Trincomalee can control the Indian Ocean. Then certainly, by the same logic, it can be asserted that he who controls Trincomalee controls Sri Lanka as well—in strategic terms at least" (*Daily News*, 20 June 1988).

The communalist bloodbath that will at least drive the Tamils from large areas of the eastern region is integral to the gov-

ernment's campaign.

The government also wants to reconquer the overwhelmingly Tamil Jaffna peninsula. Proposals have been raised to erect huge refugee/concentration camps near Vavuniya and on the island of Mannar to which "all innocent Tamil people" should move while the government tries to bomb and starve Jaffna into submission. Meanwhile the sizable Tamil population of Colombo lives in fear of a repeat of the 1983 pogroms. Hundreds of Tamil youth have been detained with scores reportedly killed and tortured.

Increasingly the Tamil-speaking Muslims have asserted their special interests and separate identity, under the impact of government "divide and rule" policies and the Hindu chauvinism of Tamil nationalism. One Muslim described the situation before the arrival of the Indian army:

"The situation is such here in the east that whatever you say you'll offend the security forces or you'll offend the boys. We're caught in the middle. We've always lived with the Tamils, we're Tamil-speaking, but in the past most Muslims were fervent supporters of the government. Now, with the eastern

province hanging in the balance and the Muslims tottering on the brink, we're being courted, then terrorized equally by the Tamils and the Sinhalese. Look at Nilaveli [a village north of Trincomalee]. It's a stronghold of the Tigers, but it has a large Muslim population. The young Muslim men come to Trincomalee for provisions, chillies, and rice. They usually come by bicycle, and are stopped over and over at Army checkpoints. The Army accuses them of taking food for the Tamil Tigers. Then, when they finally reach Nilaveli, having been humiliated by the Army at every checkpoint on the road, the boys find them and say, 'You've gone to town. Have you gone to give the security forces information on us?' (New Yorker, 21 March 1988)

No doubt Sinhalese communalists will move against the Muslims (there is a significant layer of Muslim traders and small businessmen outside the interpenetrated districts of the east) in their turn. The anti-Muslim riots of 1915 were the first major outbreak of communal riots, a harbinger of the successive destructive outbursts—against the Malayalis in the thirties and then the Sinhalese communalist "salami tactics" against minorities in the post-independence period.

Presently, however, the immediate government/Muslim alliance sharply intersects the international situation. Sri Lanka's economy is heavily linked to the Middle East: tea sales (Iraq takes 20 per cent of all tea exported); foreign exchange earnings from migrant workers (90,000 in Kuwait alone); and petroleum. Aside from those received from China, the government has had trouble acquiring arms and has tried to forge closer links to the Middle Eastern states. Iran, Iraq, Libya, Saudi Arabia and the PLO have all reportedly offered assistance.

But Sri Lanka lives in the shadow of India. The Indian intervention of 1987 was an assertion of overlordship. The National Front coalition of VP Singh withdrew the troops and has pulled back from certain of the more assertive "regional superpower" postures of the Gandhis. As well the government is unstable and beset with internal divisions and its own preoccupation with secessionist movements in the Punjab and Kashmir and the related tension with Pakistan. Still the Indian government has been signalling its "deep concern" over civilian casualties and pointedly refused to assist the Sri Lankan navy trying to stop Tiger supply boats from, and the flow of refugees into, Tamil Nadu. The issue of Eelam is bound up in the seething byzantine mess of intrigue and manipulation of Indian bourgeois politics and the relations of a weak central government with its ally the state DMK government in Madras. The DMK government must play to Tamil communalism to stay in power and has turned a blind eye to Tiger activity in and from Tamil Nadu. Heavy civilian casualties in the Jaffna peninsula, communal violence in Colombo and the refugee influx (tens of thousands have already made the dangerous trip across the Palk Straits) and Sri Lanka's efforts to get allies and supplies from Muslim countries, especially if a Pakistan link is seen, could all bring the Indians back in.

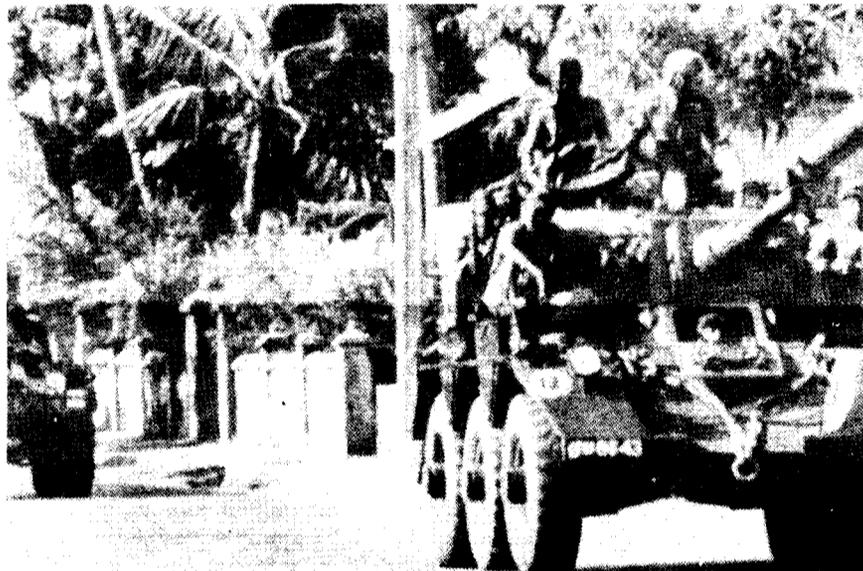
A key element of the LTTE's nationalist strategy is to win Indian bourgeois approval. The IPKF's role demonstrated the accuracy of our warnings against having faith in the Indian capitalists. Tiger leader Kittu now refers to the war with the IPKF as "a bad dream that is over" (Tamil Times, 15 July). And another Tiger spokesman, Balasingham asserts that the LTTE would "not get involved in secessionist struggles in India" and that "We don't want to solicit support from any forces that [are] hostile to India," explicitly repudiating the legitimate national struggles of the Sikhs in Punjab and the Kashmiris (The Hindu International Edition, 9 June).

Meanwhile, the Tigers have ruthlessly

destroyed any opposition in the Tamil areas, and struck against rivals in Colombo and Madras. Most of these groups like the EPRLF, TELO, ENDLF and PLOTE are tainted by their quisling role during the IPKF days. The EPRLF North East provincial government and its Citizen Volunteer Force/Tamil National Army disintegrated completely when the Indians left, but not before the EPRLF assisted the Indians in hunting and killing Tiger supporters. Lately supporters of these groups have been helping the Sri Lankan army identify and "disappear" Tiger sympathisers.

#### Death-squad rule in south

The president Premadasa and defence boss Ranjan Wijeratne have vowed that they will eliminate the LTTE as they did the JVP. The JVP originated as a left-oriented group of radicalised Sinhala youth in the sixties. In 1971 it was brutally suppressed by the SLFP popular front government, with more than 20,000 killed. In the 1980s it emphatically consolidated around Sinhala communalism. After the December 1987 Indo-Lankan Accord the JVP rode a semi-insurrectionary movement, demanding "Drive out the violent army of apes". In the words of the Lanka Guardian (15 November 1988), "A creeping 'insurgency' with hardly a shot fired had Colombo encircled, reducing the administration to an all-too visible condition of helplessness." Terroristic assas-



Sri Lankan army patrol Jaffna town, 1981: now Tigers lay siege to Jaffna Fort garrison.

sination killed hundreds, including well-guarded cabinet ministers. As well the JVP targeted the SLFP and supporters of left and working-class organisations. Hundreds of transport workers were killed to enforce JVP hartals (shut down of all economic, communication and educational activity).

Then following a failed ultimatum to soldiers to desert or have their families killed, pro-government death squads and the security forces were unleashed against the JVP. Thirty thousand, quite possibly a lot more, were killed. The death squads also went after other opponents of the government. The killings—with the now familiar sight of "necklaced", disfigured burnt bodies at the roadsides—continue. And the conditions of grinding poverty, unemployment and oppression which bred the JVP remain. The cost of living has spiralled, and now the Middle East crisis and an expanded defence budget threaten more misery. If this state can do what it has done to Sinhala youth, then the Tamils can expect and now face worse.

#### "Left" betrayals paved way

The "left" and working class parties provide no answer to the desperate masses, Sinhala and Tamil. The Communist Party and the once Trotskyist LSSP search endlessly for a new class-collaborationist alliance with the bourgeois chauvinist SLFP, while backing the gov-

vernment's suppression of the Tamil liberation struggle. Slightly to their left, the NSSP, led by Vasudeva Nanayakkara, wallows in this popular front milieu, sharing platforms with the SLFP and dealing with the discredited EPRLF and TELO. Vasudeva has raised protests about killings of Tamil civilians and about those in the south. But Vasudeva states:

"What I recommend is that people of the South should unite to demand government's resignation. All the people in the North and East should close ranks and oust the LTTE.... The Tamils could liberate only if the LTTE is destroyed. No Tamil should lend a hand to the LTTE. In fact, they should fight against it" (Sunday Times, Colombo, 24 June).

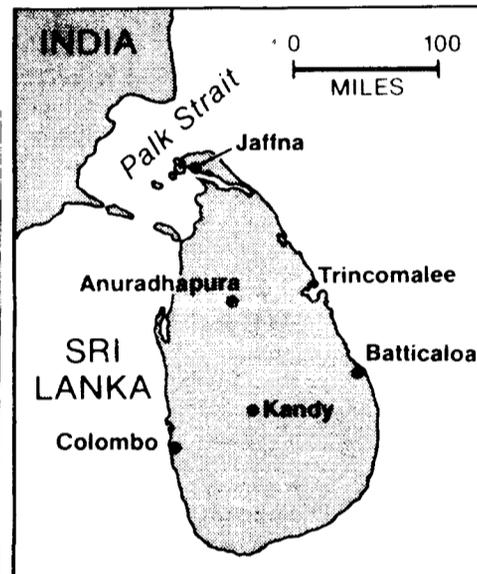
This is nothing but a back-handed way of supporting the Sri Lankan armed forces' bloody attempt to suppress the Tamil struggle.

The present communal horror of Sri Lanka is very much a product of the betrayals of the reformist and Stalinist leaderships of the working class. By contrast our international tendency, together with its supporters on the island, laid down as hallmarks of a revolutionary internationalist stance opposition to Sinhala chauvinist popular frontism and defence of the rights and struggles of the oppressed Tamil minority.

Historically a revolutionary working-class strategy on the island of Ceylon ought to have centred on the mainly low-

protest hartal in the north and east, they have no answer to the plight of the plantation workers. The best they can say is that "If the Tamils working on tea and rubber estates in Sri Lanka want to settle in the North-East Province, our organisation is ready to help them" (Tamil International, 9 June). Under capitalism the establishment of Eelam and the partition of the island would evoke the same slaughter as occurred with the division of India in 1947. And the plantation workers would be among the foremost victims of such a communalist bloodletting.

The island of Sri Lanka is a microcosm of the whole Indian subcontinent, the agonies of its working masses thrown into greater relief by the fact of its separate existence as a state. Most graphically Ceylon has seen the failure of working class parties which commanded strong support to lead the working class and its allies, the poor peasants and national minorities away from the communalist horrors that capitalism breeds. Now relations between the island's communities have been deeply poisoned. To unlock a situation such as that in Sri Lanka requires a broader international perspective. There was a time when Sri Lanka, with its strong working class movement and with the possibility of the Tamils playing a bridging role to India, might well have been the catalyst for proletarian revolutionary struggle throughout the region. The Ceylonese Bolshevik-Lenin-



caste Tamil tea plantation workers. Like the Free Trade Zone textile workers and the migrants in the Middle East many are women. In the service of Sinhala chauvinist parliamentary class collaboration the reformist parties have ignored them. Likewise from the standpoint of petty-bourgeois Eelam nationalism, their plight and power have been ignored. In a provocative speech at a May Day rally of plantation workers Wijeratne declared that 100,000 "Indian passport holders" and their offspring would be deported as soon as the Talaimannar ferry was running again. The plantation workers struck in protest and over the arrest of two of their leaders.

While the LTTE organised a successful

ists in exile in India during World War II played a role beyond their size in bringing a Trotskyist revolutionary perspective to the struggles that convulsed India in that period. What is required is the construction of Bolshevik workers parties, true tribunes of the people, forged in struggle against chauvinist class collaboration, fighting for the rights of national minorities, for the liberation of women and against pernicious caste oppression. Such parties will be committed to internationalist struggle for proletarian revolution throughout the Indian subcontinent. We demand the right of Tamil Eelam! For federated workers republics of Eelam and Lanka, part of the socialist federation of South Asia. ■

LONDON SPARTACIST LEAGUE PUBLIC MEETING

Benn's UN sanctions: figleaf for imperialist aggression

### Labour in lockstep with Thatcher's war moves

7.30pm, Wednesday, 19 September 1990

Yorkshire Grey, corner of Theobalds Road and Grays Inn Road

Nearest tubes: Holborn, Chancery Lane

For more information: phone 071-485 1396

# Iraq...

(Continued from page 1)

gion. And in the US, we have a big opportunity to stick it to this vicious, dangerous ruling class which first and foremost exploits the American working people and minorities.

Bush has jumped into a quagmire with both feet. The Arabian sands could well be quicksand for US rulers. Remember what happened to Carter's Delta Force in Iran and the Marines in Beirut. In the name of the American young men and women who will come back in coffins, in the name of millions of Arabs facing the imperialist war machine, we call for sharp class struggle to bring down the bloody-minded American capitalists.

## A war for Big Oil

It all started when Iraq's Hussein sent his army into the emirate of Kuwait on 2 August in a grab for the oil fields and to fulfil Iraq's historic claim to a port on the Gulf. Previously the US had supported Iraq in the squalid eight-year Iran-Iraq war, supplying satellite intelligence and tanker escorts, even overlooking the Iraqis' Exocet missile attack on the USS *Stark*. But now suddenly the Iraqi strongman was sitting on 20 per cent of the world's oil reserves. Overnight Saddam Hussein was transformed into a new "Hitler" by the servile US media. War propaganda against "insane Hussein" escalated violent anti-Arab racism at home.

Bush vowed the seizure of Kuwait "will not stand", and after strong-arming the feudalistic Saudi monarchy, US troops started pouring into that desert country. Kuwait's considerable assets abroad were frozen, a trade embargo was placed on Iraq, and four US aircraft carrier battle groups were mobilised to enforce a blockade (labelled "interdiction" to disguise the fact that this is a blatant act of war). The stated goal was to defend the house of Saud and restore Sheik Jabbar al Ahmad al Sabah to the Kuwaiti throne.

Bush & Co just cut the ground out from under naive liberals and pacifists who thought they would collect a "peace dividend" in the "post-Cold War" world. Instead of cuts in the "defence" budget, supplemental appropriations are being rushed through and virtually every military boondoggle that was under the budget axe has been resuscitated. The entire massive mobilisation is being accomplished without even a pro forma Congressional debate, much less lip service to the War Powers Act as the Democrats snap to attention whenever Bush waves the flag.

To justify the American invasion, State

Department ignoramus Margaret Tutweiler harps on "Iraqi aggression". Yeah, like when Saddam Hussein went into Grenada? Iraq's takeover of Kuwait is no historical aberration: all states are built on acts of aggression. What about William the Conqueror? And Iraq's Hussein had more justification than most when he pointed out in a 10 August speech that "the colonialists, to ensure their petroleum interests...set up those disfigured petroleum states".

The statelet of Kuwait was an imperialist legacy created by drawing artificial "Lines in the Sand", as Glenn Frankel wrote in the *Washington Post* (31 August). The former Ottoman Empire was carved up between the English and French in the secret Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916. Part of Basra province until London recognised it as a protectorate in 1899, Kuwait was separated off after World War I in order to deny Iraq access to the sea, which was War Office policy to "limit its influence in the gulf and keep it dependent on Britain".

"We, the British, cobbled Iraq together," admitted British diplomat Sir Anthony Parsons. The boundary with Kuwait contested by Saddam Hussein was dictated in 1922 by British high commissioner Sir Percy Cox. And indeed, the British drew the frontiers and designated rulers throughout the region, installing loyal tribal leaders as monarchs as TE Lawrence did with Ibn Saud. And the French carved up their Syrian mandate territory to create the artificial state of Lebanon as a pro-Western Christian-dominated enclave in the Levant. The last 40 years of bloodletting in the Middle East go back to this cynical imperialist carve-up.

Another Washington battle cry is Saddam Hussein's refusal to let Westerners leave Iraq, turning them into hostages. Why, he even sent some to Iraqi military bases and dams which would be obvious targets of US air strikes. What savagery! War is indeed a savage business in which enemy aliens are often subjected to repression. And the citizens of any country participating in the blockade of Iraq certainly qualify as enemy aliens. As Hussein pointed out, in World War II, in an act of racism utterly without military justification, the US threw hundreds of thousands of Japanese Americans, many of them US citizens, into concentration camps.

And then there is the matter of Iraq's poison gas, "the poor man's atom bomb". Having for years turned a blind eye to Hussein's vicious use of nerve gas and mustard gas against Iranian troops and thousands of Kurds inside Iraq, now Washington objects. Forget that the US has a vast chemical warfare arsenal, and that Bush has fought Congress to continue production of

"binary" nerve gas. American warships in the region surely carry atomic weapons, and we are morally certain the Pentagon is already updating operational plans to *nuke Baghdad*.

## "New World Order"

When Hitler took power in 1933 proclaiming a "New Order", he proclaimed it would last a thousand years. In taking up the same rhetoric, Bush is desperately trying to revive the "American Century" which, as we have put it, was buried in the jungles of Vietnam. Hitler's "New Order" lasted 12 years; Bush's could blow up in his face in a matter of weeks.

This is no longer 1945, when America was undisputed master of the capitalist world. German imperialism is forming a



Saigon 1975: end of the "American Century".

Fourth Reich by taking over East Germany and establishing the domination of the D-mark in Eastern Europe on the road to economic hegemony throughout Europe. Japan is forming a new "co-prosperity sphere" in East Asia having already become the US' main creditor. The "dollar zone" is being challenged by the yen and D-mark.

Today the American imperialists talk of protecting the oil "life line". In the 1800s, British interest in Mesopotamia (present-day Iraq) was based on defending the "life line" to India. This was also the rationale for grabbing Suez, and once they had Egypt and the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, that paved the way for the Cecil Rhodes "Cape to Cairo" types. While Britannia ruled the waves and grabbed the lion's share of Africa, the Germans dreamed of a Berlin-to-Baghdad railroad. When these two imperial ambitions clashed, the result was World War I.

US rulers want to regain the position of imperialist top cop by seizing the oil, which they can then dole out to their economically more dynamic rivals. Significantly, Washington's Japanese and German "allies" have hung back from military commitments in the Persian Gulf adventure, no doubt hoping to maintain friendly connections in the Arab world. As the world's chief bursars, they would like to have the US act as mercenaries to guard "their" oil supplies.

But if the junk-bond-bloated Yankee rulers are short on productive capacity these days, they're trying to make up for it with brute military force. In the first place, the US mobilisation is far more than necessary to "defend" Saudi Arabia: the Pentagon has moved in "ground and helicopter forces expressly geared to offensive operations", just the mix that computer wargame analysis indicates for an air/land attack on Iraq, notes the authoritative *Aviation Week* (27 August).

But a war with Iraq's battle-hardened army of nearly a million men with over 5000 tanks will not be a walkover like Panama or Grenada. No war has ever

been won through a blockade, as was tried against the Southern Confederacy and Germany. And as Hussein himself pointed out, no war has ever been won through air power. So they're gearing up for "the big one". Right now they're in a phase of "phoney war", letting UN secretary general Pérez de Cuéllar show that shuttle diplomacy is worthless. It will take another few weeks for the US to get the full complement of forces in place. And then inexorable pressure will mount to "use it or lose it".

The current "crisis" was not entirely unplanned: the Army Corps of Engineers has spent \$17 billion over the years for military infrastructure in Saudi Arabia, including "hardened airfields where fueling, maintenance and ordnance loading



are done well underground" and runways were specifically designed for large US transport planes (*Navy Times*, 27 August). And "Operation Desert Shield" could be implemented so quickly because the Joint Chiefs of Staff simply presented Bush with a modified version of "Plan 90-1002" for a massive air- and sealift of US forces to the Gulf.

It's clear that US forces are being moved into the Persian Gulf to stay. Heretofore, the Saudis have been reluctant to grant the Pentagon base rights. But in the last weeks, American combat aircraft have been stationed in all the Gulf states of the Arabian peninsula. Defense Secretary Cheney makes no bones about it: the US military commitment is "long term", and "we do not know how long we will have to stay". *With this invasion the US has taken a big step towards a strategic objective: a military stranglehold on the Middle East. But now they may have to pay the price in blood.*

While the Democrats march in lockstep with Bush, however, elements in the Republican right wing (such as Patrick Buchanan) have doubts about the US' military capacity to bring this off. These "Fortress America" types want to concentrate on dismantling the ex-Soviet bloc. Attacking Bush, Buchanan asks: "If we walked out of tiny Lebanon after 250 dead, are Americans ready to bear the burden of pacifying Iraq and Iran, with 70 million people?"

To keep their profits flowing, they're prepared to spill the blood of millions of impoverished Arabs and thousands of black and working-class American youth in uniform. The Vietnam War brought down two American presidents. Bush & Co will soon enough find out that the Vietnam syndrome is still alive.

## Middle East cauldron

If during the Vietnam War, protesters sang "One, two, three, what are we fighting for?" that question will be repeated more loudly today when this war can't be justified as part of the crusade against

# Labour lockstep...

(Continued from page 1)

turned a blind eye to Saddam Hussein's use of chemical weapons against the Kurdish people in Iraq. When the Iraqi regime was slaughtering Communist Party members and engaged in the squalid border war with Iran, Hussein was the recipient of Western arms eagerly supplied.

Now, under the transparent pretext of avenging "poor little Kuwait" and "defending" Saudi Arabia, the US is set to grab the oil supplies and establish a military stranglehold in the Middle East. Washington's British junior partners along with their Labour lackeys howl that Hussein is a "new Hitler". What murderous hypocrisy! The British and US imperialists have in their turn invaded, annexed, colonised, brutally suppressed

and waged war on the peoples of the world.

Exemplifying the syphilitic chain which binds the left to Labour, Benn's camp followers in the *Morning Star* have gone so low as to denounce the call for US withdrawal, blathering that "UN control is key demand". The *Socialist Organiser* Labour entrists and *Leninist Stalinoids* demand the withdrawal of Iraq from Kuwait, echoing the imperialist propaganda. The centrists of Workers Power—while calling for Iraq's victory against imperialism—shed crocodile tears for Kuwait's violated "self-determination".

We in the Spartacist League, British section of the International Communist League, say: US, Britain out of the Gulf! Break the blockade! For hard class struggle against the warmakers and strike-breakers! Down with the Labour traitors—right and "left"! Build a Bolshevik party! The enemy is at home—for proletarian revolution to smash British imperialism from within! ■

Communism. Who wants to die so that the Kuwaiti Emir can live a life of luxury in a state where only 70,000 men out of a population of over 2 million have the right to vote for a "parliament" which is dissolved as soon as it meets? Or for the feudal house of Saud which lords it over its one-family state where women are denied the right to drive, much less vote, and even princesses are beheaded for adultery. Saudi Arabia is the largest remaining state where chattel slavery still exists.

Already there have been incidents of "culture shock" as US troops come up against the social straitjacket of Saudi mediaevalism. In one case, Saudi soldiers went crazy when a woman member of an F-15 ground crew took her shirt off to work in her T-shirt in the 120 degree heat. And take note that the Saudi dynasty was catapulted into power with the aid of the Wahabi sect. In Afghanistan, where they have been acting as mercenary *mujahedin* (holy warriors), these Islamic fanatics are notorious for raping every "infidel" woman they come across.

Those are the US' glorious "allies" in Bush's war for "freedom" and "our way of life". Iraq's Saddam Hussein, on the other hand, has won popular support throughout the area, justifying his takeover of Kuwait as an effort to take back the oil wealth from the lavish-living sheiks. He is also now seen by the Palestinians as a champion of their cause against the Zionists who have deprived them of a homeland. Hussein is simultaneously trying to take on the mantle of Nasser as the unifier of the Arab nation against feudalism and imperialism, while putting himself forward as the new scion of Muhammad in calling for a *jihād* to defend the Islamic holy sites from the Western infidels and their lackeys.

Of course, with his roots in the Ba'ath "Socialist" party, Saddam Hussein was supposedly secular. In reality, he is the kind of thug and murderer who would normally qualify as a US ally. He might be compared to bloody Pakistani dictator Muhammad Zia ul-Haq, who helped funnel CIA aid to Afghan counterrevolutionary bands (in return for a big rake-off). Hussein actually was a US ally for years. When the Ba'ath party came to power briefly in 1963, it may have been aided by the CIA, which reportedly supplied lists of Communists to be killed. After the Ba'athists took over again in 1968, they jailed and killed thousands of CPers, particularly among Kurdish oil workers in the region of Kirkuk.

This did not stop the Kremlin Stalinists from aiding Saddam, just as they gave support to both Shah Pahlavi and then Ayatollah Khomeini even as the Iranian rulers jailed Iranian Tudeh members. For years, Moscow has been supplying advisers and military hardware to Baghdad as part of its efforts to cultivate "Third World" nationalists. Now under Gorbachev's "new thinking", which evidently consists of giving in to every imperialist demand, and then throwing in some more, the Soviet Union has denounced Saddam Hussein's takeover of Kuwait, endorsed UN trade sanctions, cut off arms shipments and eventually voted for the resolution okaying the US war blockade of Iraq.

Recently it appears that the thick bureaucratic skulls in the Kremlin are awakening to the danger posed by US imperialism's grab for hegemony in the Gulf, barely 700 miles from Soviet borders. "There are no guarantees that the United States will leave Saudi Arabia after the crisis is over," moaned Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Belonogov, while the chief of staff of the Warsaw Pact, General of the Army Vladimir Lobov, complained that the US presence had dramatically altered the strategic balance (*New York Times*, 31 August). Just as Stalin couldn't believe Hitler had violated his "non-aggression" pact by

## Letter to the Kremlin

# Rescind arms embargo of Iraq

9 August 1990

Embassy of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Washington, D.C. and Paris  
USSR Mission to the United Nations

Dear Ambassadors:

The American imperialists have seized upon a local disturbance in the Persian Gulf to vastly extend United States military might. In the face of this escalating imperialist provocation, the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) demands that the Soviet government rescind immediately its arms embargo against Iraq. The U.S. provocation is a tripwire for world war, posing a grave danger to all humanity.

With unbridled hypocrisy and in the name of "freedom," the U.S. is seeking to assure its stranglehold over world supplies of oil. The establishment of American military bases in Saudi Arabia for the first time and a naval embargo

aimed at starving Iraq into submission pose a danger not only to that volatile region but to the Soviet Union itself. The deployment of American might in the region has tightened the encirclement of the Soviet Union by the utterly hostile forces of imperialism.

In pursuit of narrow diplomatic concerns, the Soviet government previously signed a Treaty of Friendship with Saddam Hussein, the butcher of thousands of worker militants, Communist Party members, and members of the Kurdish minority. Yet now when Iraq is genuinely threatened by imperialism the Soviet government has supported United Nations sanctions against Iraq and seems willing to "co-operate" with the White House warmongers. This is a betrayal of the interests of the Soviet state and the Soviet and world working people.

The ICL(FI) believes the workers of the world are opposed to a squalid war between the reactionary sheiks and colonels over the oil fields. We have,

however, great interest in the profits sweated out of oil workers from the Persian Gulf to the North Sea to the Gulf of Mexico: our interest is that this wealth go to the working people of the world. We say: U.S. Out of the Persian Gulf! We Trotskyists, who stand in defense of the Soviet workers state against world imperialism, demand that the Soviet Union rescind its arms embargo of Iraq and send their former allies in Baghdad the weapons they need to deter Washington's oil grab.

The Soviet government fought to the end, successfully, to keep the oil fields of Baku out of the hands of the imperialists. We should make vigorous efforts in the current situation.

Fraternally,  
Helene Brosius  
International Secretary

cc: General of the Army B.V. Snetkov  
Commander in Chief,  
Group of Soviet Forces in Germany  
Zossen-Wünsdorf

invading the USSR in 1941, his heirs today can't understand why the imperialists don't play by the rules.

The fate of humanity could be at stake. Vietnam and Korea were limited wars because of the threat of Russian power. This is what kept the US from invading Cuba. Now the Soviet Union is out of it, so the Americans don't recognise any limits. The International Communist

In fact, the Zionist rulers are about the only ones who have to gain from a shooting war. It has not gone unnoticed in Jerusalem that if the US has permanent bases in the Near East, Washington will not be dependent upon Israel as its regional gendarmes. If the Israelis think the flow of dollars may dry up they could just decide to blow the region away. Israel had been gearing up its population for a

Meanwhile, the US economy, which was already in a recession, is being tipped into depression by the rise in oil prices and the financial chaos of the war threat. While Bush's Big Oil buddies were laughing all the way to the bank as the price of East Texas crude virtually doubled to \$32 a barrel, other businessmen are not so sanguine. "The guns of August suddenly have darkened the economic skies," noted the *Wall Street Journal* (14 August). As stocks plunge and higher oil prices produce inflation, corporations see their profits evaporating, with the savings and loan industry already in crisis and commercial banks in trouble as well. "This could readily be the worst recession since the Depression of the 1930s," one senior securities firm executive told the *Journal*.

American workers and minorities, already ravaged by a decade of economic "growth" in which the rich got a lot richer and everybody else got poorer, now face outright depression and seeing their sons and daughters sent off to die for the greater profits of Exxon and Texaco and George Bush's way of life. While the bourgeoisie gloats about the "death of Communism", and the final triumph of capitalism, this latest imperialist adventure reveals how truly unstable the American capitalist colossus is. Washington is still haunted by its defeat almost two decades ago at the hands of a relatively small nation fighting for a social revolution. But a wounded imperialist beast is more dangerous than ever.

Working people in this country must stand on the side of Iraq against the warmongers and union-busters in Washington. And that means waging the *class struggle* at home. Even before the shooting has begun, millions of American working people know that our enemies are not in the Near East but right here: the greedy and vicious ruling class which is willing to spill the blood of thousands to protect its profits and its "right" to lord it over us and over the impoverished masses throughout the world. The workers of this country have the power to stop the system in its tracks and put an end once and for all to the imperialist war machine. Down with Washington's new war—a defeat for "our" rulers is a victory for us. American workers' militancy against Bush and the "Republicrat" party of property will go a long way to making the world a kinder and gentler place. ■



Workers Hammer

London: Spartacist contingent on 1 September protest march against US and Britain in Gulf.

League (Fourth Internationalist) has denounced this betrayal and in a letter sent to several Soviet embassies demanded "that the Soviet government rescind immediately its arms embargo against Iraq" (see box this page).

### For class struggle against the warmakers

The media have made much of George Bush's "masterful" orchestration of a broad coalition that pits the world against Saddam Hussein. So far the only Western state leader to break ranks is Austria's Waldheim. The policy planners in the White House, State Department and Pentagon act like they're going to get it all on the cheap. But it's not an accident that most doomsday novels start with a war crisis in the Middle East. And among the prime players, who have been keeping their heads down so far in the Persian Gulf crisis, are the Israelis.

war even before the latest crisis. Shamir & Co are itching for a "pre-emptive" strike against Iraq—a repeat of their 1981 bombing raid on Baghdad's unfinished nuclear plant, but this time on an apocalyptic scale with nuclear/chemical weapons to destroy Iraq at one blow and "solve" the "Palestinian problem".

"Israeli political and military leaders are saying that time is not on the side of the United States in the Persian Gulf crisis, and that it should act now," reports the *New York Times* (21 August). But with an arsenal of some 200 nuclear warheads, as well as chemical weapons and delivery systems, Israel might well try it on its own. But while the Zionist rulers with their Masada complex gird for Armageddon, they could touch off revolutionary upsurges throughout the Arab East. And this might even break the extreme chauvinist stranglehold over the Hebrew-speaking workers.

# Workers Power...

(Continued from page 5)

"Only after Butchenko's arrival did he explain to us that he would be meeting Miller. When he did we sent someone along to ensure that Miller did not try to disrupt the plans of the tour organised by CSWEB. At that point Miller expressed no wish to participate in the CSWEB tour and he and Butchenko agreed simply that once the tour was over they would, separately from CSWEB, meet the TUC's international department."

Cozy enough. The "socialists" of CSWEB would introduce Butchenko to the British trade-union movement and then hand him back over to the NTS and Miller for a little jaunt to the TUC "international department"—they might as well have gone directly to the Foreign Office (which Butchenko reportedly later did), or for that matter the US embassy in Grosvenor Square.

And what is the NTS? In its letter to the Kuzbass union, Workers Power oh-so-delicately describes it as "an organisation hostile to the real interests of the labour movement". But shortly before that, in a Solidarity Campaign statement dissociating themselves from two other NTS-connected Soviet workers who addressed the UDM conference in June, Workers Power wrote rather less circumspectly that the NTS "actively collaborated with and fought alongside the Nazis".

Let us tell you a little more about the NTS. This was the "main group used by MI6 for operations inside the Soviet Union until the end of the 1960s", say Bloch and Fitzgerald in *British Intelligence and Covert Action*, adding, "The NTS actively supported the Nazis before and during the 1941 invasion of Russia." John J Stephan in *The Russian Fascists* (1978) notes that of the numerous fascist "solidarist" organisations which proliferated in counterrevolutionary Russian émigré circles in the interwar years, "the Young Russia movement and the National Toilers' Alliance (*Natsionalno Trudovoi Soyuz*—NTS) probably mobilized the widest support."

Stephan explains how "Some solidarists responded favorably to 'radical' Nazis such as Gregor and Otto Strasser"—the leaders of the SA stormtroops. After Hitler purged the SA leaders in the Night of the Long Knives in 1934, life became somewhat harder for the NTS, which was too Russian chauvinist to suit the German Nazis. Nonetheless, "individual NTS members cooperated with Wehrmacht combat units, Rosenberg's Ostministerium, and Kaminsky's Russian Nazi Party during World War II." (The Ostministerium administered the starvation and enslavement of Russia.)

In short, the NTS was a precursor to the contemporary Russian blackshirts of Pamyat. These are the people Workers Power was quite happy to meet and work out "arrangements" with until Butchenko got on the airwaves. How did it feel sitting down for a friendly chat with people who "fought alongside the Nazis"? How did Miller introduce himself to you—with a stiff-arm salute, or did a simple handshake do?

## Tripping over the class line

Workers Power's fronting for Butchenko and his NTS (and UDM) friends recalls the dirty work of Gerry Healy's WRP as the finger-men for the most right-wing agents of British capitalism within the labour movement. The WRP instigated a vicious witchhunt against Scargill and the NUM aimed at isolating the militant union on the eve of its bitter yearlong strike. Then also the weapon of choice was anti-Communism—roasting

Scargill for his remark that Polish Solidarność was anti-socialist. The WRP, having spent years pimping for Libya's Qaddafi, the Iraqi Ba'athist regime and a host of other oil-rich Middle Eastern despots, knew exactly what it was getting into. Workers Power got more than they bargained for or know how to handle—a rip-roaring scandal in the British left and labour movement.

In its rapid rightward motion, WP is beginning to take on ever more overtly the political cynicism associated with Healy. In explaining their break with Sean Matgamna's Socialist Organiser over the Butchenko affair, Workers Power attempts to take the "high ground", criticising the SO-inspired CSWEB statement for seeking "solidarity with the emerging labour movements of Eastern Europe—irrespective of their political ideas and affiliations". They even denounce Socialist Organiser for calling on Solidarność to take power in Poland last year, pointing out how "Solidarity is committed to a vicious austerity package and the introduction of capitalism."

WP's falling-out with Matgamna has not an iota of principle to it. To this day they continue to insist: "Workers Power was correct to try and build the tour, and to try to get Butchenko to speak to as many workers as possible." Indeed, they attack Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party (SWP) for pulling out of the organising committee and keeping Butchenko from "being able to meet a wider number of rank and file miners"—and thus broadcast his counterrevolutionary filth among even wider layers of the British workers movement!

WP's after-the-fact homilies about political principle ring somewhat hollow given that their chosen bloc partners in the Solidarity Campaign, Matgamna and Cliff, are explicitly opposed to defence of the Soviet Union. The whole purpose of this "Eastern Bloc" campaign—the name itself could have been coined by the CIA—was precisely to compete with the right wing on the terrain of anti-Communism. WP says more than it intends when it concedes that after arguing "day in, day out" about "the necessity of fighting the restoration of capitalism": "With Yuri Butchenko we lost those arguments—he was courted and won by the right wing who offered him more money, equipment and publicity than we could." So the big-time anti-Communists could outbid the "left-wingers" in courting a confirmed supporter of capitalism—what a surprise!

## The Russian question pointblank

The Butchenko affair is no aberration for Workers Power. As American Trotskyist James P Cannon wrote: "Who touches the Russian question, touches a revolution." Those who cannot draw the class line in defence of the most colossal conquest the working class has yet achieved, the collectivised economy established through the 1917 Russian Revolution, will surely not be capable of finding a class line in defence of trade unions. The Cliffite SWP, which crosses the class line in refusing to defend the Soviet Union, crossed the class line in scabbing on the miners strike. Workers Power, for its part, found itself in bed with Thatcher, Kinnock and the scabs who went on to form the UDM in its campaign for a strikebreaking "ballot" at the time. Now the logic of its Stalinophobia has blown up in Workers Power's face.

Workers Power split from the Cliff outfit in the mid-1970s. At the time of the Soviet intervention into Afghanistan, WP took a step to the left, breaking from the Cliffite line that the Soviet Union is "state capitalist". But it never drew the hard programmatic conclusions. WP continued to view the Stalinist bureaucracy as a purely counterrevolutionary force. Rejecting the programme of Trotskyism, it set out to "re-elaborate" Trotsky's Traa-

sitional Programme; renouncing the heritage of the Fourth International, it called for an undefined "Revolutionary Communist International." Above all, Workers Power wanted to have nothing to do with Spartacist "sectarianism". Their bottom line was: if it moves (and it's big enough), tail it—whether it be Khomeini's Iran, Polish Solidarność or (above all) the Labour Party at home.

Thus Workers Power dutifully echoed Cold War social democracy (as well as Reagan and Thatcher) in denouncing the Soviet intervention into Afghanistan (only to turn around and simultaneously denounce the Soviet withdrawal when Gorbachev pulled the troops out). And for years, Workers Power thought that Solidarność was the cat's meow. They had no qualms joining "Solidarity with Solidarity" demonstrations alongside fascist scum like the Polish KPN, all the while admitting that Solidarność' programme aimed for the restoration of capitalism. And they still call for a return to the "early days" of Solidarność, the days when it wasn't quite so difficult to sell this clerical-na-



G Merillon/GAMMA

**Solidarność welcomed anti-Soviet Cold Warrior Margaret Thatcher on her November 1988 visit to Gdansk.**

tionalist outfit because it was not yet implementing pro-capitalist austerity against the Polish workers.

Faced with the collapse of Stalinism in East Europe and imperialist cheering over the supposed "death of Communism", these centrists veered sharply to the right, giving backhanded support to the capitalist reunification of Germany and appealing directly to British imperialism to back counterrevolution in Lithuania. While claiming to be against the restoration of capitalism in East Germany, Workers Power sided with counterrevolution at every crucial stage—demanding the withdrawal of Soviet troops, echoing the Social Democrats' lies that the massive Treptow anti-fascist mobilisation in January was the result of a Stalinist trick, cheering the attacks of skinhead gangs on Stasi headquarters as the "very stuff of revolution".

Then Workers Power gave its "unconditional support" to the pro-capitalist Lithuanian Sajudis movement while conceding it contained "semi-fascist elements". Hell, it's crawling with fascists. WP joined Socialist Organiser in a picket of the Soviet consulate in London demanding, "Hands Off Baltic States." *Workers Power* (May 1990) even demanded that the Thatcher government "recognises Lithuania and supplies goods requested by Lithuania without conditions." And lo and behold, the weekly letter from Denis in *Private Eye* (8 June) has No 10 considering "scrapping the entire Navy and selling it off to the Lithuanians."

And now: the Yuri Butchenko affair. To borrow from WP's hypocritical attack on Socialist Organiser, this "has revealed the practical results of their degeneration." Fifteen years ago, when Matgam-

na was nominally Soviet-defencist and Workers Power not, they entered a short-lived fusion with the cynical argument that defence of the Soviet Union was "a tenth-rate question" (Matgamna). Formally, the tables have turned, with Workers Power now nominally defencist. But WP still retains its deepgoing anti-Sovietism and orientation to NATO social democracy. So they end up "unwittingly" getting into bed with anti-Communist witchhunters and fascist counterrevolutionaries. Only a Third Campist could write, as WP did to the Kuzbass union, that "The UDM, as a bosses' organisation, can be compared with your own state run stooge unions." How is it, then, that one massively aided the miners strike while the other tried to break it? The Soviet trade-union leaders did a damn sight more to aid the strike than the anti-Communist TUC.

Workers Power is not and never was Trotskyist. Trotskyism means the struggle for defence and extension of the gains of the October Revolution of 1917. That's why we Spartacists stood with the Red

Army in Afghanistan when it fought against CIA-financed feudalists. Why we opposed Solidarność from the moment it set out on a course of capitalist restoration in the autumn of 1981. And in East Germany, where Workers Power tailed behind counterrevolutionary Social Democracy, our comrades of the Spartacist Workers Party of Germany fought consistently and uniquely against capitalist reunification and for a Germany of workers councils through proletarian political revolution in the East and socialist revolution in the West.

We have insisted that anti-Sovietism abroad fuels strikebreaking at home. Now Workers Power's repetitive crossing of the class line on the Russian question has played itself out on their home terrain, in a scandal recalling the Healy-inspired witchhunt of the NUM on the eve of the miners strike. Even some of the Labourite centrists of Workers Power may be shaken by the realisation that Stalinophobia has led them to front for the scummiest counterrevolutionary enemies of the workers movement. Those who don't want to end up like the cynical zombies left behind after Healy's WRP imploded had better think hard and long about how their politics got them into this disgrace.

Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* no 508, 10 August 1990.

## Contact the Spartacist League

Glasgow	PO Box 150 Glasgow G3 6DY 041-332 0788
London	PO Box 1041 London NW5 3EU 071-485 1396

# Scargill...

(Continued from page 4)

survive—and the anti-Communists hate that.

The outlandish character of the charges conjured up by Maxwell were captured by the satirical *Private Eye* (16 March) in a spoof *Mirror* "exclusive" by "Max Robwell" headlined "Red Scargill's N-Bomb Arsenal": it "reveals" that at the time of the strike Scargill was "secretly amassing a huge stockpile of nuclear missiles...targeted on 10 Downing Street and primed for immediate use". The spoof quotes "Scargill's chauffeur": "he was ready to destroy all life on earth just in pursuit of a 6.5 per cent wage increase for the lads."

The smear charges of personal corruption were manufactured out of whole cloth; even an inquiry generally hostile to Scargill, by Gavin Lightman QC, spiked accusations that Scargill and Heathfield had their hands in the till. As for the IMO funds, Scargill and International Miners Organisation secretary general Alain Simon have insisted that these funds were received after the strike ended and were meant for international aid to miners and not specifically for the NUM. In fact, as the *Financial Times* (7 July) reports, the IMO recently contributed 200,000 francs to assist striking miners in Morocco.

When Scargill initiated the IMO in September 1985 as an alternative to the miners federation of the pro-imperialist International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, he was subjected to a stream of redbaiting by the bourgeois press. An IMO spokesman, reported the *Financial Times* (7 July), saw the attacks on the IMO as part of an ongoing cam-

aign by right-wing unions "that have always viewed the IMO as a Communist 'submarine' and which hope that the collapse of the Communist regimes in eastern Europe will also lead to the collapse of the I.C.U."

Grotesquely, the NUM national executive committee served High Court writs on Scargill and Heathfield over the IMO funds. An injunction froze IMO accounts in Dublin, Vienna and Sheffield. The NUM executive's action was a spineless capitulation to the witchhunters. Taking the embattled trade-union leaders through the bosses' courts is a violation of the elementary principle that the capitalist state must be kept out of the workers movement, and a stab in the back of the NUM membership.

British miners learned the hard way whose interests the courts serve, as thousands were dragged to jail during the strike. No doubt reflecting revulsion in the membership over the court action, on 26 July the executive backed off and its legal action was put on ice for three months.

Now the police are looking for the "right trigger" to snoop into the NUM's affairs themselves. The same day that the NUM executive's court action was suspended, it was reported that Scotland Yard's Serious Fraud Office had received "two formal complaints". One of these was made by a certain Sergei Massalovitch, one of a string of members of the Russian fascist NTS that the UDM (and who knows which other agencies) have been circulating through Britain. Massalovitch and Vorkuta miner Nikolai Trekhin (who called on AFL-CIO head and notorious Cold Warrior Lane Kirkland for aid) addressed the UDM conference in June.

The NTS and UDM also produced one Yuri Butchenko to aid the witchhunt

against Scargill. The surfacing of these NTS-connected Russians was a central component of the witchhunt against Scargill over accepting "Russian gold", scandalously aided by the Stalinophobic centrists of Workers Power and their Socialist Organiser bloc partners in the "Campaign for Solidarity with Workers in the Eastern Bloc" (see accompanying article on page 5).

Given its keen "attention" to the NUM particularly during the strike (Scargill reportedly still sweeps his office daily for listening bugs) and its well-documented relations with the NTS, one can well wonder how British intelligence fits into this anti-union operation. Maxwell's first round of charges was backed up by former NUM official Roger Windsor, who was paid a handsome fee by Maxwell for his services. Windsor, who was one of the key NUM officials to deal with Libya, resigned his appointed position under suspicion of defrauding the NUM and is the object of police inquiry in South Yorkshire.

## "Ramsay MacKinnock" witchhunt

This is hardly the first time in British history that "Russian gold" and anti-Sovietism have been used to go after the workers movement, nor is it the first time that the slavishly pro-capitalist Labour Party has been complicit. At the time of the 1926 miners strike and the nine-day General Strike, the bourgeoisie raised an outcry over financial support by Soviet workers to the British miners.

Two years earlier there was the infamous "Zinoviev letter" affair. Aiming to embarrass the first Labour government of Ramsay MacDonald and obstruct the signing of a treaty with the Soviet Union, the Tory *Daily Mail* published a letter forged by the Tories. Purporting to be

from Zinoviev, then head of the Communist International, it "instructed" the British Communist Party to carry out work in the army. MacDonald not only gave the forgery credibility but denounced it more vociferously than the Tories, firing off a protest to the Soviet government against "direct interference from outside in British domestic affairs".

Scargill is being targeted for vilification because in the eyes of the British bourgeoisie and their Labour lieutenants he embodies hard class struggle and is seen to be pro-Soviet. As his support to Neil Kinnock in the last general election showed, Scargill's enemies are wrong about his political programme. To be sure, his Stalinoid friendship towards the Soviet bureaucracy makes him stand out from the general crop of virulently anti-Communist Labourites. But Scargill has never broken from Labourism—knuckling under to the pro-capitalist Labour tops in the name of spurious "unity". It was this which kept the NUM leadership from defying the Labour/TUC—right and "left"—and turning widespread support for the miners into *joint strike action*.

Left to go it alone by the Labour/TUC tops, the NUM succumbed to defeat. The Thatcher government vindictively proceeded to shut down a swathe of coal mines in Scotland, England and Wales—reducing many mining villages to impoverished, devastated ghost towns. Today the NUM has plummeted from a pre-strike membership of over 200,000 to just 50,000. A new, revolutionary leadership of the working class must be forged to prepare for the battles that lie ahead. What is needed is an authentic Leninist vanguard party committed to the perspective of workers revolution and forged through splitting Labour's working-class base away from its pro-capitalist misleaders. Hands off Arthur Scargill! Hands off the NUM! ■

# Leninist...

(Continued from page 3)

Trotskyism as an alternative. Those who do will learn that Trotsky waged intransigent struggles against renegades—including those who masqueraded as "Trotskyists"—who abandoned the defence of the Soviet Union against imperialism and counterrevolution.

*Leninist*, who once considered Stalinist regimes like that in the DDR to be part of the "world communist movement", has been confronted by the manifest bankruptcy of these brittle, bureaucratic castes. It has reacted in a contradictory (and increasingly eccentric) fashion. A couple of years back it began borrowing formulations historically associated with Trotskyism. However, it has not fundamentally broken with Stalinist reformism—on the one hand upholding Stalinist crimes such as the crushing of the incipient workers political revolution in Hungary 1956 and on the other upholding, for a period, the so-called "rights" of the Pamyat fascists in the USSR. Over Afghanistan, *Leninist* falsely looked to a wing of the petty-bourgeois nationalist PDPA as the motor force of a non-existent proletarian revolution, while later opposing Gorbachev's cowardly withdrawal of the Red Army. At the same time, its sneering at our offer to organise an international brigade to fight the CIA's *mujahedin* "holy warriors" (and when that offer was declined, our publicity and fund-raising campaign for the civilian victims of Jalalabad) revealed a profoundly anti-internationalist impulse.

Back in February, over events in Eastern Europe, *Leninist* announced "It's counterrevolution" and promised to "come back strengthened tenfold when reaction inevitably gives way to a new period of revolution". *Leninist's* own

position, to the extent one can ascribe to it a position on the DDR, is reminiscent of the defeatism of the Stalinised German Communist Party which allowed Hitler to take power without a shot being fired under the criminal slogan: "After Hitler, U.S!"

In its August polemic, *Leninist* writes:

"they [the Spartacists] once polemicised against us and our comrades from Turkey because: 'In *Living Socialism*, Yurukoglu has...stated that 'the administrative stratum can gradually transform itself into a capitalist class'. The idea that the dictatorship of the proletariat...can be reformed back to capitalism without a bloody counterrevolution is a Kautskyst revision of the Marxist theory of the state. It plays in reverse the notion that socialism can occur as an evolutionary, not revolutionary, process.'

"Interesting, therefore, that the July 13 issue of *Workers Vanguard*, paper of the ICL's commanding US section, admits 'the destruction of the East German workers state'. Now, unless we missed it comrades, there was no 'civil war', no 'bloody counterrevolution' involved."

The Stalinist bureaucracy's recourse to economic autarky, bureaucratic commandism, nationalism, appeasement of imperialism and suppression of the independent political life of the working class has opened wide the door to capitalist restorationist forces. In the DDR, these forces prevailed—certainly *not* via the transformation of the PDS door mats into a new bourgeois ruling class! It's questionable whether the PDS still has keys to their own offices. Indeed, the CDU/SPD government is now engaged in a witchhunting campaign aimed at *criminalising* former and present members of the SED and PDS.

The former DDR administrative stratum did not "transform itself" gradually or otherwise into a capitalist class. Nor, as in Hungary 1956, where 80 per cent of the CP went over to the insurgent workers, did proletarian political revolution

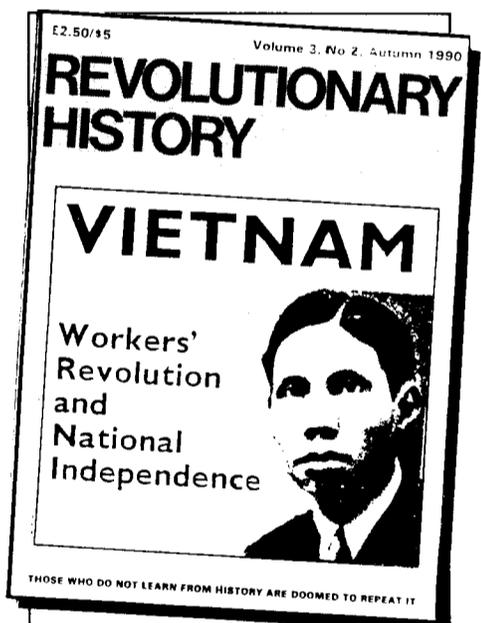
split the ruling bureaucratic caste. Instead, the PDS capitulated to the imperialist campaign for annexation and offered itself up as an essentially social-democratic opposition within the counter-revolutionary Volkskammer.

It is true that in East Germany the social counterrevolution did not require bloody civil war. Demoralised by the capitulation of its historic leadership, imbued with false consciousness and illusions in D-mark "prosperity", the DDR proletariat did not resist the forces of capitalist restoration. Indeed, on 18 March, a majority of the East German people voted for them. It remains to be seen how "peaceful" the process of dismantling the social gains of the DDR, purging the considerable number of "unreliable elements" and putting into place a police/military apparatus to defend capitalist class rule will be. Since the currency union took effect there has been almost continuous strike action by significant sections of the East German workers.

*Leninist* has picked up on the fact that events in East Germany did not correspond to our insistence that bloody counterrevolution would be necessary to return a workers state to capitalism. However, these commandos of 16 St John Street evade the primary question: the task of communists to defeat capitalist counterrevolution, to defend and extend the gains of October. The incontrovertible fact is that the SpAD was the only group in East Germany to forthrightly oppose capitalist restoration, peaceful or otherwise, and offer a programme of struggle.

Members of the CPGB (*The Leninist*) may well experience intimations of irrelevance as they pursue such world-historic tasks as exacting vengeance against the British Euros for selling off the "family silver". For our part, we will continue the fight to reforge the world party of revolution, the Fourth Interna-

tional, based on the precepts and practices of Lenin and Trotsky. That is the task for the ICL in this period of great danger for the homeland of October: the rearmament of world communism. ■



Order from:  
Socialist Platform Ltd,  
BCM 7646, London WC1N 3XX

**Sam Bornstein  
(1920-1990)  
Memorial meeting**  
3pm, Sunday 23 September  
Conway Hall  
Red Lion Square  
London WC1

## London PDC rally demands: Abolish the death penalty!

"Save Mumia Abu-Jamal!" "Abolish the death penalty!" Rallies and picket protests from London to Berlin, Philadelphia to Sydney, Paris to New York brought out hundreds of trade unionists, socialists, students, death penalty abolitionists and civil rights activists to demand that the American black journalist and death row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal must not die. The worldwide campaign to save the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal was initiated by the Partisan Defence Committee in the US—a class-struggle legal and social defence organisation associated with the Spartacist League—and joined by fraternal defence organisations initiated by the sections of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

As part of the international campaign of protest, the Partisan Defence Committee rally held at Lambeth Town Hall in Brixton on 6 July was addressed by trade union officials, black activists and journalists, anti-poll tax activists facing state repression, anti-apartheid activists and others. Over 85 people turned out to express their support for the fight to stop the execution of the former Black Panther, outspoken MOVE supporter and former president of the Philadelphia chapter of the Association of Black Journalists who now sits on death row in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania.

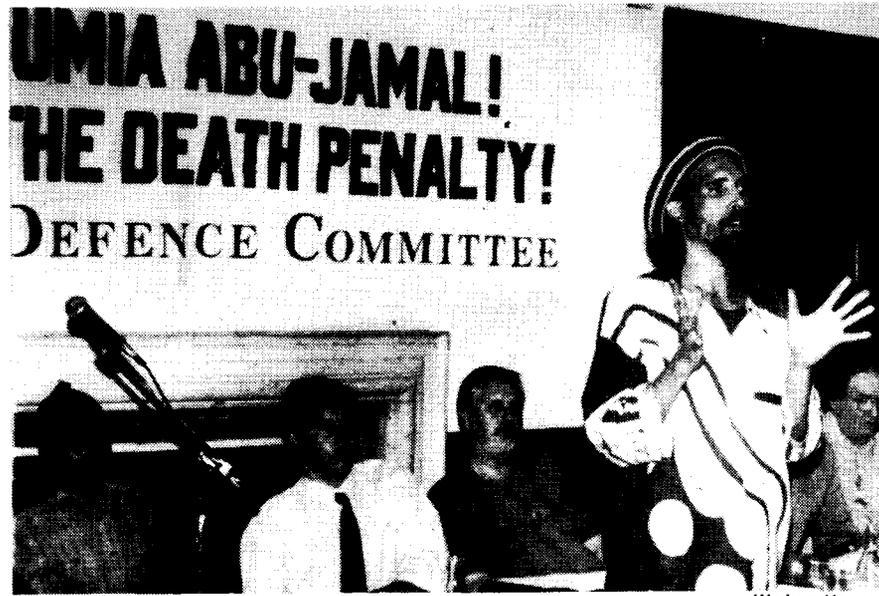
Symbolising the fight against racist state repression, Jamal's case defines the legal politics of the death penalty in the USA of the 1990s. Framed in 1982 on charges of killing a Philadelphia cop, Jamal has been in the cross-hairs of the Philadelphia police for 21 years. They wanted him silenced—preferably dead—and haven't given up yet.

Jamal's case has evoked widespread support from the victims and opponents of capitalist state repression and terror. Greetings were sent to the Brixton PDC rally by Paul Hill—one of the Guildford Four finally released after years of false imprisonment by the racist British state. Paul Hill's statement in support of the campaign to save Jamal's life read in part:

"As an Irish person in Britain I know only too well what racism means. Nearly sixteen years ago I underwent a trial which was more concerned with where I came from than what I had or had not done. As a result I spent the last fifteen years of my life in top security prisons in this country for something that I had nothing to do with.

"I am now free because people had the courage to stand up and scream injustice but I know that there are other innocent people in gaol to this day. I will always scream injustice when this is brought to my attention.

"I cannot forget that the judge at my trial said that he regretted that he could not sentence me to death. If he had then



Desmond Trotter, former death row prisoner and Caribbean political activist, addressing London PDC rally, 6 July.

last October's admission of my innocence by the British Home Secretary would have meant nothing. Nothing could be a greater indictment of the barbaric death penalty."

After addressing the rally Mikey Masive, managing editor of the *Caribbean Times*—a newspaper which has sympathetically publicised the Jamal case—introduced another speaker. It was Desmond Trotter, a former death row political prisoner and Caribbean political activist. Desmond Trotter's execution on a frame-up murder conviction was halted in 1976 by a campaign of international protest. It was particularly gratifying that Desmond Trotter, who spent two years in solitary confinement at the behest of Dominica's Premier and tinpot tyrant Patrick John, added his support to the campaign and vowed: "I will do as much as all I can for the brother."

The participation of local officials of the trade union movement was a key component of the success of the London rally. Underground workers and officials were prominent on the platform. Finsbury Park NUR Chairman Glenroy Watson evoked conditions for workers in South Africa: "We have ourselves within the railway industry many colleagues who are on death row... people whose only crimes were to be within the same union as the union that was on strike". ASLEF District Council No 8 secretary John Robson, speaking in a personal capacity, recalled the history of international labour defence and urged: "Organise and mobilise so no-one has to mourn." NUR National Executive Committee member Dave Hatt, pledged to "do my utmost as an NEC member of the NUR to make sure the fight continues forward".

Speaking in a personal capacity for the

editorial board of *Searchlight South Africa*, Paul Trehwela told the rally that: "As the hanging capital of the world, South Africa sees its own future in the electric chair in Huntingdon State penitentiary in Pennsylvania." Trehwela declared:

"If one were to join the coordinates last week linking Abu-Jamal in the death cells to Mandela in the White House, what is revealed is the social position of black people internationally on the threshold of the 21st century.... In the murder of Jamal, the executioner state seeks to dispose of the living criticism of itself. Yet the presence of Abu-Jamal on death row is the confirmation of that criticism: the victim is the criticism of the executioner. He is the point at which the system publicly declares that it needs to be superseded by another, that it has outlived itself, and that it, as a system, requires sentence of death to be pronounced upon itself so that society might live and develop. The electric chair and the chair in the President's Oval Office are constructed from the same social material."

Speaking for the Partisan Defence Committee, Bob Cole drew applause from the audience when he said: "There are many people in important places who to this day want to extend capital punishment—Margaret Thatcher, Nicholas Ridley and many other powerful people eagerly await the opportunity to bring back the hangman to this country and to use it and you better believe that. We should not wait until they have succeeded in doing that before we start organising against it!"

Mumia Abu-Jamal's own message was played for the rally to a standing ovation. As Jamal wrote from death row: "Your international voice of protest becomes a sweet song of hope for the thousands of

us in the United States sitting on the brink of death. I am honored to join you, in this noble fight." A personal acquaintance of Jamal's, Jessica Huntley representing the *Bogle L'Ouverture* Publications told the rally: "I was so overwhelmed by the fact that here at last we are going to have a campaign to save Mumia's life."

The London rally was also addressed by Dave Doolan, a defendant from the Trafalgar Square Defendants' Campaign facing state repression because of his participation in the massive anti-poll tax protest of 31 March. Spokesmen for the City of London Anti-Apartheid group and for the Ramona Africa Support Group addressed the rally. NUJ Deputy General Secretary Jacob Ecclestone's letter to Pennsylvania governor Robert Casey was read: "On behalf of journalists throughout Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland we beg you not to allow this barbaric sentence to be carried out."

Spartacist League spokesman Cheryl Myall's address concluded the successful Brixton rally:

"It is the social power of the working class that is key to campaigns such as this and it is the working class, acting as the tribune of all oppressed layers of society which has the social power to overthrow the system which puts people like Mumia Abu-Jamal in death row. In America, in Britain, in South Africa—capitalism breeds racism, fascism and war. But to overthrow this system of exploitation, of misery, you need an internationalist party and you need a party which tells the truth."

The working people of the British Isles will not make socialist revolution through the agency of Her Majesty's Loyal Labour opposition. "That's the first truth. Whether led by Kinnock, whether led by Tony Benn, the Labour Party has, is and always will be committed to capitalist rule."

Comrade Myall explained that our programme is to split the working-class base of the Labour Party from its pro-capitalist misleaders. And internationally:

"What is desperately required are genuine communist parties, parties which defend the existing gains and which will lead the working class to play its historic role, to bring about the kind of rule ushered in by the 1917 October Bolshevik Revolution, to build an internationalist party in programme and in composition. This is the only road to sweeping away capitalist injustice forever."

From the cells of Long Kesh to the dungeons of Robben Island, the racist, capitalist machinery of death must and will be defeated by the organised and militant action of the working people and their allies. The demand to save the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal has become the rallying cry for the opponents of the barbaric death penalty and the system which enforces it throughout the world. ■

## Worldwide campaign to save Mumia Abu-Jamal