

## Full citizenship rights for all immigrants!

# Labour rules for racist British imperialism

### Forge a multiracial revolutionary workers party

We print below in edited form excerpts from a presentation given by comrade Eibhlin McDonald at a Spartacist League forum in London on 10 October 1998.

The Stephen Lawrence inquiry is intended as a whitewash of the cops — in the Stephen Lawrence case in particular, and in society in general. The first phase showed how deeply racist the cops are and how they protected the racist scum that murdered the black teenager in 1993. The fascists have been gloating over this murder ever since. The murderers were released twice by the courts and they were guaranteed freedom a third time by Labour home secretary Jack Straw as a precondition of this inquiry. This was never intended to bring the killers to justice.

As it has proceeded, more racist brutality by the police has come to light; for example, a black man called Simon Ndekwe was savagely beaten by the cops in January of last year. He was imprisoned overnight, battered unconscious, committed to a mental hospital and charged with assault of the police. Defendants' rights in courts are steadily being eroded. The vic-

tims of racist attacks are generally lucky if they don't end up in jail as a result of charges being brought by the police.

There are a number of liberal schemes for what to do about the police which presume that the police ought to be part of the solution to racism in society. In fact, the police in Britain today are the main source of racist terror and racist murder. They will not and can not be part of the solution to racism. In the past year, the number of black and Asian people killed in police custody has gone up to 53. Michael Menson, a black man, was murdered by racists; Ricky Reel, an Asian man, was murdered by racists. In both cases they were blamed by the police for their own deaths.

The submission from the Lawrence family legal team to the inquiry says that "the scale of shortcomings in this case is so shocking that clear and radical recommendations, followed by swift action are imperative". It goes on to recommend that: "Dissembling the machinery of wrong-doing, and reconstructing a safer system, is a long and painful process, but, everyone has a responsibility to ensure that the ultimate goal of a police 'service', independent, accountable, and responsive to need is established and maintained."

But the idea of an independent and accountable police force is a liberal illusion. The question is, independent of what and accountable to whom? For Marxists, the cops and the courts, which are part of



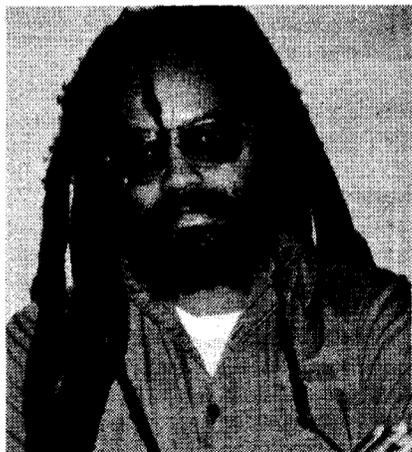
Evening Standard

Ricky Reel's parents demonstrate outside Scotland Yard. They have battled a wall of cop racism to bring the facts of Ricky's racist murder to light.

the capitalist state, are accountable to the capitalist class system which they serve. It's a system based on exploitation of labour, and racism is inherent in it. The state is a machine for maintaining the rule of one class over the other. That's why it cannot be independent, impartial or accountable to both classes. And so for us

the answer to what to do about the capitalist state, and about the question of the racist cops, is to mobilise the power of the multiracial proletariat to smash the state, to establish a new state power, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and to extend that internationally.

continued on page 2



Workers Vanguard

We reprint below a press release issued on 30 October 1998 by the Partisan Defense Committee in the US, a class struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defence organisation which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League.

Mumia Abu-Jamal is now under immediate threat of death by the state's executioners. Mumia Abu-Jamal is an innocent man, an eloquent and outspoken opponent

of racism and injustice who has been hounded by the Philadelphia police and FBI since the time he was a teenage spokesman

for the Black Panther Party in the late 1960s. Jamal remained in the cross hairs of the cops as he went on to become a renowned journalist and supporter of the MOVE organization in the late 1970s. Continuing the decades-long vendetta against Jamal, this morning the Pennsylvania Supreme Court issued a 71-page ruling endorsing each and every aspect of his racist frame-up and false conviction for the 1981 killing of Philadelphia policeman Daniel Faulkner.

This judicial ruling has been prepared by a sinister campaign by the Philadelphia

# Mumia Abu-Jamal in grave danger

**Freedom for Mumia now!  
Abolish the racist death penalty!**

Fraternal Order of Police and its supporters. To grease the skids to the execution chamber, these forces recently took out a full-page advertisement in the *New York Times* (14 June) and other major newspapers around the country. Only days before the ruling, the *New York Post* (25 October) ran a rabid editorial raving against Jamal as a "cop killer" who should be put to death. The purpose of this racist crusade is to manufacture a climate of "public opinion" for the legal lynching of Jamal. We cannot let this happen!

Pennsylvania governor Tom Ridge has

long vowed to sign a new death warrant as soon as the state Supreme Court ruling was announced. In 1995, it took a massive campaign of international protest, including by trade unions representing millions of workers from Italy to South Africa, to stay the hands of the executioners when Ridge had signed an earlier warrant for Jamal's death that summer. While Jamal's attorneys fight to wield every legal weapon they can in his defense, what is urgently needed right now are mass mobilizations particularly drawing on the power of the multiracial working class to demand: *Freedom now for Mumia Abu-Jamal! Abolish the racist death penalty!*

continued on page 10

# Racism...

(Continued from page 1)

Since Labour was elected there hasn't been a major anti-racist demonstration. And in this political vacuum Mike Mansfield, the barrister for the Lawrence family, is calling for a mass civil rights movement like in the US in the 1960s, and like what he calls "the campaign for trade union freedoms in Poland" in the 1980s. The civil rights movement in the United States did achieve gains for blacks in the 1960s: its activists fought heroic battles against racist segregation, the Jim Crow system; battled against the cops, the Ku Klux Klan and often the federal troops. But ultimately the main beneficiary of the civil rights movement in the US was the black middle class, what's called the "talented tenth", and one of the notable products of it is a number of black politicians, mainly in the Democratic Party. I think it's reasonable to say that

what Mike Mansfield has in mind is not the militant struggle of the civil rights activists but the "black faces in high places" in the Democratic Party. Our organisation was born in the 1960s partly out of a struggle to intervene in the US civil rights movement with a programme for black liberation through socialist revolution.

Mike Mansfield's point on Polish Solidarność is absurd. Solidarność was a nationalist, clericalist movement for counterrevolution in Poland and its triumph has led to a rise of clerical fascist outfits, which are deeply anti-Semitic. Roma and Sinti (Gypsies) are forced to flee for their lives and to become refugees. Counterrevolution in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe has directly contributed to the rise of fascism, noticeably in Germany but also in the former Soviet Union. The map of unemployment in Germany, which is also where the fascists are strongest, is the map of the former East Germany. It tells everything about the impact of



TROTSKY

## The international campaign for Sacco and Vanzetti

Mumia Abu-Jamal is now under immediate threat of death by the capitalist state. In the fight for his freedom, the Partisan Defence Committee emphasises the need for mass, labour-centred protest around the world. In this, the PDC follows in the class-struggle tradition of the early Communist International's International Red Aid and its US affiliate, the International Labor Defense led by James P Cannon. In



LENIN

the 1920s, as Cannon relates in this excerpt, the ILD and its fraternal organisations in other countries mobilised hundreds of thousands of workers in protest against the frame-up of immigrant radical workers Nicola Sacco and Bartolemeo Vanzetti in Massachusetts. The blood-drenched capitalist executioners ultimately murdered Sacco and Vanzetti. Today, we redouble our efforts to ensure they will not take the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Rarely has the vital importance of international solidarity of the working class been so decisively shown as in the world campaign for Sacco and Vanzetti. Had there not from the very beginning been demonstrated that unbreakable determination of the workers everywhere to make the fight of the two Italian agitators their fight; had there not been that splendid series of labor demonstrations in the capitals of the world; the incessant flow of resolutions and protests against this hideous conspiracy to murder two innocent workers — then the judicial vultures of Massachusetts might long ago have seized and demolished their prey....

Those who have observed even superficially the development of the case from that time on, know that it was this new campaign of protest and demonstration of solidarity that halted the hand of the executioner. The workers of this country, and of Latin America and Europe, by their tireless solidarity, placed an unbroken wall between Sacco and Vanzetti and the death chair that is being held vacant for them and gained for them a new respite....

Mass meetings were held in every large city. In New York City alone some 18,000 workers came to Madison Square Garden to protest against the proposed legal assassination....

Since the May decision of the court, demonstrations were held in front of the American embassies at Paris, Sofia, Lisbon, Buenos Aires, Berlin, Montevideo and Mexico. Everywhere the demand of the workers was for the immediate cessation of this hounding of two innocent labor fighters....

It was this campaign for international solidarity that has so far saved Sacco and Vanzetti from the death chair, and not the reliance solely upon the good intentions and judicial honesty of the Massachusetts courts. So long as Sacco and Vanzetti remain in the shadow of danger the workers of the world will stand guard. They will continue to make the cause of the two Italian radicals their cause, until their liberation has brought a successful end to the Sacco-Vanzetti case.

— James P Cannon, "The International Campaign for Sacco and Vanzetti" (Labor Defender, February 1927)

## WORKERS HAMMER



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

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Workers on the Empire Windrush arrive in England in 1948. They were met with racist backlash under Attlee Labour government.

Popperfoto



counterrevolution.

The pseudo-socialist left, loyal to the social-imperialist Labour Party, reproduce bourgeois-liberal criticisms of the cops. The Socialist Workers Party [SWP] is not only pro-Labour — they think that the police can become part of the workers movement, under certain conditions, such as if they "rebel collectively" [Socialist Worker, 8 February 1997]. In late June, at the height of the anger over the cops' role in the Lawrence case, they published an article favourably quoting a black cop "speaking out" at an "anti-racist" conference. This week's issue of their newspaper illustrates exactly what the SWP is — an organisation with a bourgeois-liberal programme dressed up with some socialist phraseology. They say: "The police are not neutral. They are part of the capitalist state. The main job of the police is to protect our rulers and their property." That's true, but that's the socialist verbiage; now you come to the liberal conclusion: "if [Metropolitan Police Chief] Condon is sacked it will be a victory for everyone, black and white" [Socialist Worker, 10 October]. Most people understand that even if Paul Condon goes, racism and racist murder by the police will remain. But there is a purpose behind this reformist drivel. It is to keep young people who want to fight racism ignorant of the Leninist understanding of the state and keep them firmly within the fold of Labour Party politics.

A few weeks ago the "Movement for Justice" were on television protesting outside the inquiry. They are a front group for the Revolutionary Internationalist League (RIL). In [April] 1997, they put out a rarely seen issue of their newspaper to call for a vote for Labour. I don't think they've been seen acting in their own name since. The RIL is ostensibly Trotskyist. Yet the Movement for Justice's propaganda makes no reference to the proletariat, no reference to the need for socialism. They confine themselves to demands for "justice" and "civil rights" in a totally classless way. I think they're a perfect illustration of an organisation that believes the bourgeois myth that "communism is dead" and working-class struggle is a thing of the past. At the Lawrence inquiry Phase II, they put forward a submission saying, "It is the purpose of this submission to request that those who have been the victims of racial assaults, their friends and their families, along with those who have been in the frontline of the struggle against racial violence, are called to testify to the inquiry. Part 2 will get to the truth by listening to the testimony of those people, not simply race relations or legal 'experts'." This is a chemically pure example of promoting illusions in bourgeois "justice", that the inquiry will actually change something.

Workers Power is another organisation that is Labourite to the marrow of their bones. The solution they advance is, "New Labour should prosecute and sack all

racist officers. But we can't rely on Labour to do that, it is loyal to the racist police force. To really protect each other we should build self defence against police and racist attacks in black and working class communities" [Workers Power, October 1998]. They're right about one thing: New Labour won't do that. We favour the right of self-defence, but with racist attacks by the police, you're not dealing with a gang of fascists, you're dealing with state power. And that's what Workers Power consistently ignores. The question is, how does one build self-defence, against police who conduct massive occupations of minority areas such as Brixton? And the answer is, you have to mobilise the social power of the proletariat and go for state power.

## "Socialist" governments enforce racist "Fortress Europe"

Minority workers are a living link to the international proletariat, in the struggle to overthrow capitalism both in the former colonies and in the imperialist heartlands themselves. The proletariat in every western country today is multiracial. Since the Second World War, foreign workers have been recruited, such as Turks and Kurds in Germany, North Africans and black Africans in France, and workers from the Indian subcontinent, the Caribbean and Africa in Britain. There was a severe labour shortage in Britain immediately after the Second World War, but when economic recession set in, immigration to Britain was halted. Mass expulsions of immigrant and minority workers from Western Europe today would not necessarily require a fascist party in government or a mass fascist movement, and in fact the driving force behind racist terror throughout Europe are the "socialist" governments of France, Italy, now Germany, and Blair's Labour government in Britain.

We in the ICL can say that we did not vote for a single one of these governments. It's a damning indictment of the reformist left and even the centrists that generally they supported every one of them. We consider that the strategic task in the fight against racism in Europe today is to break workers from the grip of these vile social-chauvinist parties.

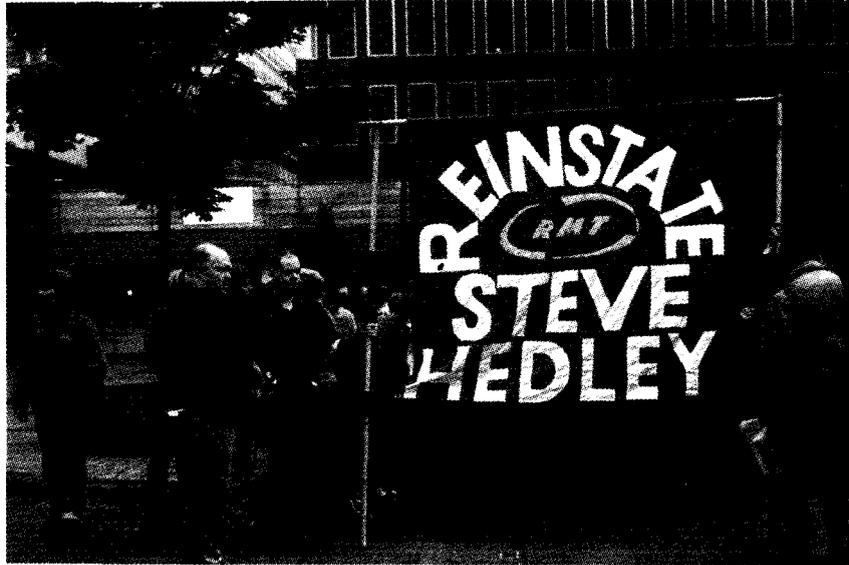
When we talk about the struggle to build a multiracial revolutionary workers party, our demands are fairly straightforward. We fight for trade union/minority mobilisations to stop the fascists, and seek to mobilise the social power of the proletariat in the fight to overthrow capitalism, to make it conscious of its historic mission. We don't view racial minorities as defenceless victims of racist terror. We recognise that, in the struggle to overthrow the rotten capitalist system, racial minorities will play a role disproportionate to their numbers in the proletariat. They have the least illusions in racist capitalism, the

continued on page 9

# Defend Steve Hedley! Drop the charges!

Steve Hedley, chair of the Rail Maritime and Transport union (RMT) Harlesden Engineering Branch and a union steward at Euston in London, is the victim of a vicious frame-up by privatised rail company GEC-Tarmac Railway Maintenance (GTRM). On 2 July, during a national strike by rail maintenance workers, a contractor's van was driven at the Euston picket line. The following day Hedley, one of the strike organisers, was arrested. He was subsequently sacked by GTRM bosses on 29 July, and faces charges of criminal damage and "intimidation" along with accusations of "violence" on the picket line. The accusations are based on a contractor's "description" of Hedley, which photographic evidence shows to be a blatant lie. But this frame-up has nothing to do with fact, and everything to do with Hedley being a known union activist. It is designed to intimidate all union members who dare to fight the vicious attacks on workers being dished out by the Labour government and the bosses.

Hedley's victimisation is the outcome



Workers Hammer

Steve Hedley (holding banner on left), victim of anti-union frame-up.

of the sabotage of the national strike this summer of 10,000 rail infrastructure workers, the first major strike against the impact of rail privatisation. This strike

was sabotaged by the RMT bureaucracy. In August, after 17 days of strikes involving only maintenance workers and limited to three to four days at a time, the RMT

bureaucrats put a halt to even these token strikes. One of the main demands of the strike was for standardised pay and conditions for workers who, since privatisation, work for separate contractors with different conditions, negotiated separately. The demands had not been met, and the bureaucracy's actions left groups of workers, like in GTRM, isolated and open to attack by management, who victimised militants such as Steve Hedley and Barry McDonald from York.

Steve Hedley's sacking was followed by a walk-out of 150 maintenance workers at Euston who set up picket lines and within hours had brought out maintenance workers in north west London and Watford. When GTRM bosses threatened to sack all striking workers, RMT general secretary Jimmy Knapp put the knife in, sending letters to all GTRM RMT members which disowned the strikers, repudiating the strike as "unofficial"! He followed this with a letter to RMT branches denouncing the support group set up in Steve Hedley's defence and warning against sending donations. RMT members working for GTRM at Euston continue to wage strikes in defence of Hedley but, thanks to the union bureaucracy's treachery, this group of 17 workers are left to fight on their own.

## The SLP's "old" Labour treachery in the unions

However, it was not just Jimmy Knapp who shafted Steve Hedley. Bob Crow, RMT assistant general secretary and a leader of Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party (SLP), postures as a defender of Hedley, promising that the GTRM

*continued on page 8*

# Union bureaucracy complicit in Labour's attacks on workers

As fears of a recession grow, closures and job losses are devastating the north of England and much of Scotland and Wales. Bank of England governor Eddie George spoke to the reality of declining British capitalism when he basically said the devastated industrial areas could go to hell, what matters is the City of London. This "economic doctrine" was the hallmark of the Thatcher years; City profiteers made millions, including through privatisations, while the government waged war on unions and racial minorities. But this is not simply a matter of government policy, it is the brutal dictates of the international capitalist system. To compete in the world market, British capitalism demands another round of Thatcherite attacks on the working class, which are now being carried out by Labour.

The Labour government is in the process of privatising everything the Tories didn't sell off. Aspects of public services, already run down and depleted, such as health care, social welfare and even education, are up for sale to various "Private Finance Initiatives". Likewise with air traffic control, the Post Office and London Underground. Privatisation means further cuts in services and intensified attacks on unions. Contracting out of services splits workers among several different firms, resulting in an end to nationally negotiated wages and working conditions, thus weakening the position of all workers.

Yet the privatisations are being implemented with no effective opposition by the union bureaucracy. The bureaucracy promotes defeatism about what workers can

achieve, because they are joined at the hip to Labour and therefore to the declining capitalist system, which offers no future to the vast majority of the population — the workers and oppressed. To defeat the capitalist attacks such as privatisations and factory closures, and to save the working class from further depredation and ruin, requires mobilising its social power in a struggle to overthrow the rotten capitalist class, their system of exploitation and their state. What is starkly posed is the need for a new revolutionary leadership of the working class, which must be built through a political struggle against Labourism, both Blair's New Labour and the "old" Labour reformism of Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party (SLP).

Labour's privatisation of the Underground amounts to a frontal assault on the unions and therefore on the racially integrated working class in London. During a series of strikes in the Underground this summer over the effects of impending privatisation, we wrote: "To defeat the attack on the unions in London Underground requires solid strike action, which would shut down the entire network. Solid picket lines would paralyse transportation and hit the City fatcats' profits" (*Workers Hammer* no 162, May/June 1998). Transport workers in London — on trains, the Underground and the buses — are strategically placed and have the social power to bring the City to a grinding halt. The decimation of manufacturing industry drastically weakened union power in whole areas of the country, with the result that the unions in transport in London, the

centre of finance and banking, have greater strategic weight within the proletariat as a whole. But mobilising that power requires a political struggle against the bureaucracy.

Before the general election RMT leader Jimmy Knapp stated his support for a Labour government. Not surprisingly he did not and will not mount a struggle to defeat Labour's privatisation schemes. However, the RMT leadership also consists of Bob Crow and several other members of the SLP, which stood candidates against New Labour in the election and did not call for a Labour government. During the Tube strikes the SLP was indistinguishable from Jimmy Knapp. The strategy of these "lefts" was to restrict the strikes to token one and two-day actions and to certain sections of one union, the RMT. The strikes achieved nothing and were called off in August by the RMT leadership in favour of discussions with John Prescott, Mr Privatisation himself! Today two separate groups of workers in the Underground are being balloted separately for separate strikes over conditions. The bureaucracy's division and atomisation of the workforce only emboldens the Labour government to forge ahead with privatisation, which will further divide the working class in preparation for takeover by the private companies.

In the railways and the Underground, workers have been historically divided along craft lines into three main unions — the RMT, ASLEF and the TSSA white collar workers union. These divisions are a weapon in the hands of the

bureaucracy, who use them to sanction *scabbing* by unions (and sections of unions) on each other's strikes. Since privatisation of British Rail, which the bureaucracy also went along with, workers are being picked off in small isolated groups, which facilitates victimisation of militants such as Steve Hedley (see above). London bus workers, a once-militant and crucial component of transport workers organised by the TGWU, have also been subjected to the ravages of privatisation and now work horrendous conditions for low pay. In opposition to the bureaucracy, we fight for one industrial union across all of transport — rail, Underground and buses — which must be

*continued on page 10*

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# Workers revolution will avenge reign of terror

## Pinochet: mass murderer of Chilean workers, leftists

NOVEMBER 1 — The “arrest” of General Augusto Pinochet in London two weeks ago was celebrated by mass outpourings of the victims of the former Chilean military dictator. On 25 October, some 35,000 protesters gathered in the Chilean capital of Santiago to demand that the butcher finally receive some measure of justice. Among them were relatives of the many thousands tortured and “disappeared” under the reign of terror ushered in by the September 1973 military coup. But the misplaced hope that Labour prime minister Tony Blair or US president Bill Clinton — spokesmen for the imperialist bourgeoisies which served as Pinochet’s patrons — could bring this mass murderer to justice were shattered only three days later.

On 16 October, a British court had ordered that Pinochet be placed under “arrest” — ie, that a police guard be stationed outside the posh London medical clinic where he had gone for treatment. The court’s action came in response to a request from a Spanish judge that Pinochet be extradited to stand trial there for the murder of Spanish nationals during his reign of terror. On 28 October, Britain’s High Court overturned the lower court, ruling that the mass murderer could not be brought to trial for crimes committed as a “sovereign” head of state. Pinochet was immediately granted bail and will likely soon be jetting back to Santiago.

The whole exercise has been rife with cynicism and hypocrisy on the part of all the capitalist governments involved. The notion that the Madrid regime, heirs of the fascist Franco dictatorship, could bring a right-wing dictator to justice is bizarre. The Blair government, despite hyping an “ethical foreign policy” which has fooled no one so much as Labour’s fake-left camp followers, squirmed from the moment Pinochet was detained. Indeed, the Chilean strongman has repeatedly visited Britain for cosy chats with former Conservative prime minister Margaret Thatcher without facing even a hint of government censure, much less arrest. Pinochet’s successor, the government of Christian Democratic prime minister Eduardo Frei — which granted immunity to Pinochet, even anointing him a “senator for life” — predictably opposed the detention. This tool of the International Monetary Fund, Wall Street and Washington howled about an affront to its “national sovereignty”.

More ominously, spokesmen for “human rights” imperialism proclaimed this “An arrest that serves as a warning to other tyrants” — as a *London Independent* (19 October) editorial was titled — invoking “super-sovereignty” to justify the seizure of any foreign ruler deemed out of step with Washington or London. The *Independent* argued that “the long arm of international law” should now also reach out to abduct Serbia’s Slobodan Milosevic. In the US, Congressional Republicans screamed for the arrest of Cuban leader Fidel Castro the next time he visits New York for a United Nations gathering. This is no idle threat, as US imperialism showed when it invaded Panama eight



Gamma



Morning Star

Protesters, including relatives of victims of mass murderer Pinochet (left) demand justice in London.

years ago to seize and imprison out-of-favour strongman Manuel Noriega, a former CIA “asset”, on “drug charges”.

Such cynical justifications for imperialist “law and order” were echoed by self-described “revolutionaries” who have made their peace with the capitalist order. The French section of the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat (USec), the Ligue communiste révolutionnaire (LCR), bemoaned the failure of the government of Socialist prime minister Lionel Jospin to “proceed with the arrest itself” and lamented how other “state criminals” like Milosevic are treated with “impunity” (*Rouge*, 22 October). This grotesque appeal to the criminal imperialist bourgeoisie which perpetrated mass slaughter from Indochina to Algeria is not surpris-



Der Spiegel

During 1982 Falklands/Malvinas war, war criminal Margaret Thatcher perpetrated mass murder with sinking of Argentine ship *Belgrano* (left). Blair’s capitalist Labour government will not bring Pinochet to justice.

ing given the LCR’s longstanding support to Jospin’s Socialists in and out of power.

Pinochet and his many henchmen and patrons will receive the swift justice they deserve only when they are brought before a workers tribunal which includes surviving victims and comrades of those tortured and slaughtered by the Chilean bourgeoisie. That requires forging a Chilean Bolshevik party — steered against the class-collaborationist popular-front betrayal which paved the way for Pinochet’s reign of terror — to lead the proletariat, rallying behind it all the oppressed, to power. Only workers revolution, extending from Chile

throughout the Americas — including in the belly of the imperialist beast — can avenge the horrendous crimes perpetrated on workers and leftists by the US-backed Pinochet dictatorship.

**Popular front: not a tactic but the greatest crime**

Pinochet’s arrest came barely a month after the 25th anniversary of the 11 September 1973 coup which overthrew the “Popular Unity” (UP) government of Socialist Party (SP) president Salvador Allende and killed Allende along with thousands of militant workers and leftists. The two events have occasioned a spate of articles, books and films which by and large idolise Allende and glorify his perspective of a nationalist and parliamentary

“It is necessary to drive home to socialist militants and the working masses that the death and destruction wreaked by the September coup were the product of the Stalinists’ and social democrats’ counter-revolutionary policies of ‘peaceful transition to socialism’ and ‘popular front’ with sectors of the bourgeoisie.”

These lessons had already been purchased in the blood of the proletariat on more than one occasion, most notably in the Spanish Civil War of the 1930s, when a “people’s front” government very similar to the Chilean UP likewise served to demobilise and suppress revolutionary struggle by the masses, who were pressing for expropriation of industry and land to the peasants. Writing on the eve of the Spanish Civil War, Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky stressed:

“The question of questions at present is the People’s Front. The left centrists seek to present this question as a tactical or even as a technical maneuver, so as to be able to peddle their wares in the shadow of the People’s Front. In reality, the People’s Front is the *main question of proletarian class strategy* for this epoch. It also offers the best criterion for the difference between Bolshevism and Menshevism.”

— Leon Trotsky, “The Dutch Section and the International” (July 1936)

The experience of the Chilean UP, which was supported by much of the left internationally, amply confirmed Trotsky’s statement. And that experience is no less relevant today, as far more right-wing social-democratic and bourgeois “popular front” formations have been installed to administer capitalist governments through much of Western Europe — again with the avid support of a gamut of fake-revolutionary groups — to enforce anti-worker austerity and anti-immigrant racism.

Allende’s UP was elected in 1970 on a platform promising widespread nationalisations against the backdrop of an immense upsurge in class struggle. Landless peasants were increasingly occupying the vast landed estates while the number of workers strikes — particularly by the powerful copper miners, steel workers and railway employees — skyrocketed. Violent

“Chilean road to socialism”.

The Allende regime and the 1973 coup were defining political events for a generation of leftists around the world. The UP was a “popular front”, a *bourgeois* coalition of Allende’s SP, the Stalinist Communist Party (CP), the bourgeois Radicals and several minor petty-bourgeois parties. The historic, crushing defeat of the Chilean working class at the hands of Pinochet’s butchers was a tragic example of how the popular front disarms the proletariat and sets it up for bloody defeat. In “Chile After the Coup” (*Workers Vanguard* no 42, 12 April 1974), we wrote:

repression by the cops and military failed to check the explosion of class struggle. The most notorious of the massacres was the March 1966 killing of eight copper miners by troops under then-Colonel Augusto Pinochet.

In order to take office, Allende struck an agreement with the Christian Democrats, the dominant bourgeois party. In a "Statute of Constitutional Guarantees", Allende vowed not to touch the military officer corps and to outlaw workers militias. Socialist and Communist Party leaders constantly preached confidence in the supposed "neutrality" of the "democratic" military. But Marxists understand that the capitalist state at its core is a repressive apparatus — cops, military, and the prison system — which serves to defend private property and the class rule of the bourgeoisie. The Chilean armed forces, far from defending the "constitutional regime", spearheaded the counterrevolutionary drive that brought Pinochet to power.

As the social tensions in Chile sharpened, the country was increasingly polarised between the working class and the capitalists. The UP government suppressed peasant land seizures and sent riot cops to suppress workers demonstrations and strikes, but its inability to resolve the deepening social crisis only further infuriated the bourgeoisie. As the gulf between the two fundamental classes widened, Allende's policies of "moderation" drove the desperate petty bourgeoisie to seek a "radical" solution in the camp of reaction. This laid the basis for the rapid growth of fascist groups like Patria y Libertad, mass right-wing demonstrations, and the political atmosphere for the military coup. The reactionary mobilisations were actively aided and stoked by a massive CIA "destabilisation" campaign.

In the face of the right-wing offensive, the UP government tried vainly to appease the capitalists while stepping up repression against the workers. After a 1972 "bosses' strike" by truck owners and shopkeepers, Allende brought military leaders into the government and promulgated a law which permitted raids by the military in search of arms. This law was used against the unions, occupied factories, and workers parties, while the fascists built up their arms stockpiles. The country was in a prerevolutionary situation, as *cordones industriales* (workers committees) — embryonic dual-power formations — emerged in the industrial centres. As the putschists actively plotted against him, Allende named General Pinochet, one of the foremost "constitutionalist" officers, as head of the army and brought him into the government. Both politically and literally, the Socialists and Stalinists disarmed the proletariat and set it up for the "White terror" to come.

Scant weeks later, Pinochet led the reactionary coup, unleashing one of the bloodiest waves of terror in the history of Latin America. To accomplish their goal, the annihilation of the organised workers movement, the generals carried out a reign of terror that left thousands dead. Untold thousands more were thrown into concentration camps where many were horribly tortured, and up to 100,000 were forced into exile, where they continued to be hounded and assassinated by Pinochet's thugs and imperialist secret police agencies. In order to increase the profits of domestic and foreign capitalists, Pinochet's reactionary regime moved to reduce the working class to a near-starvation level of existence, imposing brutal austerity policies designed by "neo-liberal" University of Chicago economist Milton Friedman and his "Chicago Boys".

**For a Trotskyist party — For workers revolution!**

Virtually alone on the left, the Spartacist League argued from the outset

against support to Allende's class-collaborationist coalition. Immediately after the 1970 elections, we warned (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] no 19, November-December 1970):

"It is the most elementary duty for revolutionary Marxists to irreconcilably oppose the Popular Front in the election and to place absolutely no confidence in it in power. Any 'critical support' to the Allende coalition is class treason, paving the way for a bloody defeat for the Chilean working people when domestic reaction, abetted by international imperialism, is ready."

Cuban Stalinist leader Fidel Castro, idol of Jack Barnes' ex-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) in the US, actively promoted Allende and his "parliamentary road", admonishing Chilean copper miners to work harder since their mines had been nationalised and even hobnobbing with Pinochet in Santiago before the coup. Today, Barnes' *Militant* (2 November) vituperates against the "flagrant abuse of the national sovereignty of Chile" posed by the arrest of Pinochet.

The centrist USec, with which the reformist SWP was then linked, acted as a left tail on the popular front. In the mid-1960s, the Chilean USec joined with a number of Stalinist and social-democratic groups in forming the Castroite Left Revolutionary Movement (MIR), which hailed Allende's election as "a step forward for the masses" (*Punto Final* [Chile], 13 October 1970; see "Chilean Leftists on Allende", *WV* no 29, 28 September 1973). In the early 1970s, a new USec group emerged in Chile which, while calling for the formation of workers militias and consolidation of the *cordones industriales*, likewise fostered illusions in the Allende regime, appealing to it to extend the nationalisations. Until just before the 1973 coup, the USec refused to characterise the UP as a popular front, instead labelling it "a reformist government of a multiclass character" in which the reformist workers parties supposedly had "hegemony" (*Revolución Permanente* [Chile], 15-31 August 1973).

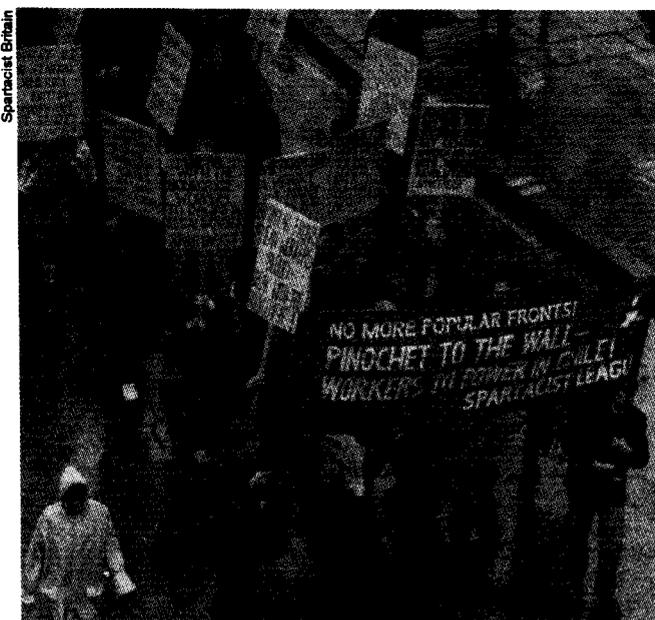
Behind this verbal sleight-of-hand lay a programme of capitulation to the popular front. As Trotsky insisted in the case of the Spanish popular front in the 1930s — in which the Stalinists and social democrats were likewise "hegemonic" — even the presence of the "shadow" of the bourgeoisie in such a class-collaborationist formation is sufficient to ensure its bourgeois character. When reformist parties enter such coalitions, the contradiction between their proletarian base and pro-capitalist programme is suppressed, and any electoral support for them, however critical, is flatly counterposed to Marxist principles. In any case, a government composed even exclusively of reformist parties — like Blair's Labour government in Britain — is a *capitalist government*.

More recently, the social-democratic International Socialist Organization (ISO) — linked to Tony Cliff's SWP in Britain — has retrospectively promoted the "left" credentials of the Allende popular front. A flyer for an 8 October ISO forum in New York City crowed, "After electing Allende, a Socialist, as President, the

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<b>Total</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>358</b>

**SL/B contingent in 1983. Popular front paved the way for bloody defeat of Chilean proletariat.**



Chilean people began to take control of the land and the factories." The leaflet amnesties the reformist misleaders by placing all the blame for the defeat of the "revolution in Chile" on Pinochet and the CIA. An article in the ISO's *Socialist Worker* (25 September) cynically criticises leftists in Allende's Chile for having "put their hope in convincing the government to be more radical". But that is precisely what the Cliffites themselves do, from support to Blair's Labour government in Britain to their recent liquidation into Rifondazione Comunista in Italy, a key prop of the popular-front government there until a couple of months ago.

The impact of the catastrophic defeat inflicted in 1973 remains evident in Chile today. Despite the transition to a "parliamentary democracy" in 1990, Pinochet retired as head of the armed forces only this year and workers strikes and protests continue to be met with brutal repression. Two months ago, police assaulted a demonstration in Santiago marking the anniversary of the coup, killing two people. When 800 coal miners held a protest in the capital against mass lay-offs last year, they too were attacked by riot cops with tear gas and water cannon. National unions are illegal — the average union has only 62 members — and collective bargaining is limited to individual workplaces. Nonetheless, copper and coal miners have defied the police-state repression to wage desperate struggles in defence of their livelihoods in recent years.

The Chilean "economic miracle" touted by imperialist ideologues has meant crushing poverty for the working class and the oppressed. While a handful of the semi-colonial elite cruises around in Mercedes limousines, 45 per cent of workers lived below the official poverty line in 1994,

and real wages have continued to drop. Women are subjected to particularly savage oppression: abortion is outlawed under all circumstances, even to save a woman's life. Pinochet's dismantling of social security in favour of a privatised pension scheme in 1981 — touted as a model by opponents of Social Security in the US — meant a massive transfer of wealth from the working class to the domestic bourgeoisie and the imperialists. US insurance giant Aetna, for example, controls over half of the country's second-largest pension fund. Meanwhile, over one-third of Chilean workers don't qualify for any retirement benefits at all.

With the growing global financial crisis threatening to engulf South America and the horrors of Pinochet's reign of terror again under the spotlight, Chile could turn into a powder keg of social struggle. Notably, the utterly reformist CP has recently registered significant electoral gains.

The Chilean proletariat has already paid in blood for the reformist politics preached by the CP and the social democrats. It is necessary to forge an authentically Bolshevik vanguard party of the proletariat — steeled in opposition to bourgeois nationalism and all manner of class collaborationism — committed to the Trotskyist programme of permanent revolution. To avenge the crimes of the Pinochet dictatorship, to sweep away the arrogant Chilean oligarchy and its blood-thirsty military protectors, to overthrow the yoke of imperialist domination requires a thorough-going socialist revolution which places the proletariat — standing at the head of all the oppressed — in power as part of the fight for proletarian revolution throughout the Americas. Reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* no 700, 6 November 1998.

## WORKERS HAMMER

Marxist newspaper of the Spartacist League

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# Memorial meeting honours hero of 1984-85 miners strike

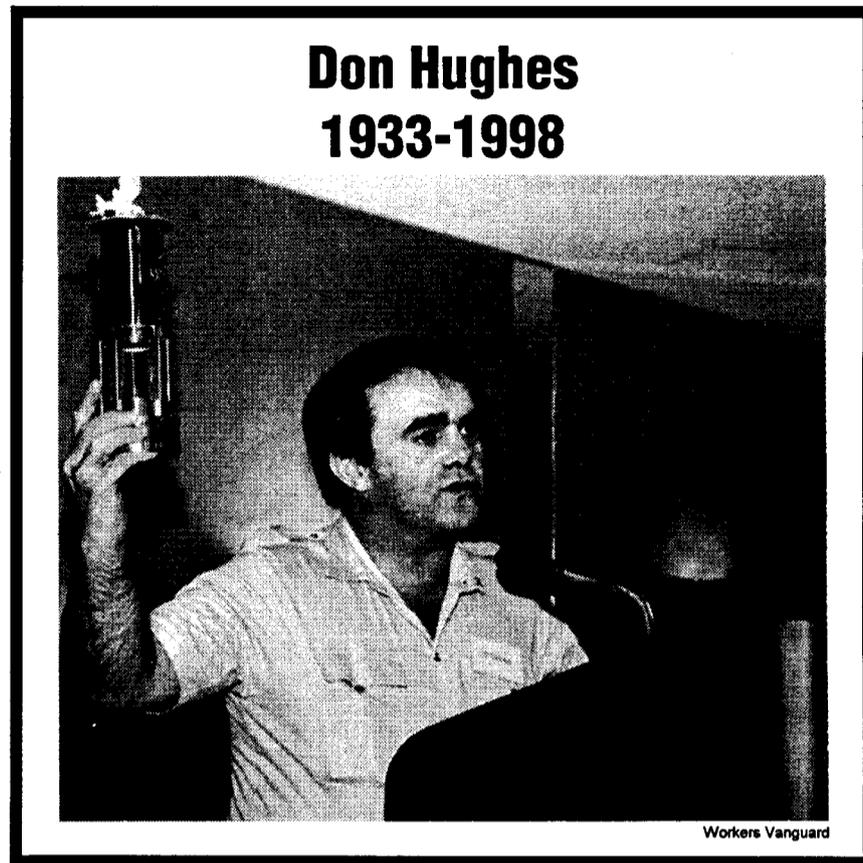
On 26 September in London, the Spartacist League held a memorial meeting to honour Don Hughes, a former coal miner from South Wales and a longtime friend of our organisation, who died in August. Don was a militant of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), and a leader in the 1984-85 miners strike. He was a socialist, with a deep hatred for the capitalist system and all the bigotry and oppression it breeds. Comrades and friends who spoke at the memorial, and messages sent to the meeting from afar, highlighted aspects of Don's life of struggle, his extraordinary generosity, intelligence and humour and the camaraderie — and arguments — we shared with Don during the strike and in the years after. We print below short excerpts from the speeches.

**Debbie Hingle (Spartacist League):** Don was born in Cwmcarn, South Wales, on 3 June 1933. He grew up with his uncle Tom James and his "dear auntie Martha", as he would say. Through the political education of his Uncle Tom, Don got much of his proletarian internationalism and his hostility towards capitalism.

Don is survived by his mother May and his sister Moira. Our hearts go out to them as well as to Don's close and dear friends, two of them who are here — Howard and Martyn Hopkins — and their wives, Alison and Helen; and Dilwyn Hopkins.

His father, his grandfather and his Uncle Tom worked in the mines. Don started in the pits at the age of 15 in 1948 in the Celynen South, the same pit he brought out in 1984. His Uncle Tom was one of six activists in Gwent during the 1926 General Strike. Tom stood in the tradition of revolutionary syndicalism — workers who were subjectively revolutionary, who detested the monarchy, who detested the capitalist system, and who fought in the only way they knew for a socialist future. After the defeat of the '26 strike, Tom and five other activists from Gwent were blacklisted for 14 years.

Our biggest differences with Don centred on the question of a revolutionary party. Don and Tom believed that socialist revolution would be led by the trade union movement. They didn't have the benefit of the lessons of the October Revolution, that



what's needed to lead to victory the battles of the workers of any country is a party that understands the need to take power — to expropriate the bourgeoisie — and that this does not come from the trade union movement but comes from the outside, from a Leninist party that steels itself in the lessons of historical class struggle.

This led to a lot of problems with Don. For example, after the defeat of the strike, Don was quite demoralised about the backward consciousness of the working class, particularly in his area where workers are filled with patriotism and defeatism. He didn't understand that this backward consciousness is driven into the working class, not only from everything around them, education in the schools and from the church, but also through what Lenin called the "labour lieutenants of capital", the trade union misleaders. So this put him at a political disadvantage, to understand

what this backward consciousness comes from.

I wanted to talk a little about the miners strike, because it's no accident that we became friends with Don, and Howard and Martyn, and other militants like them. We understood from the beginning that the whole apparatus of the capitalist state was against this union, and that the only way for the miners to win would be to spread this strike to other key sections of the working class. Key to this was these strategic industries that also had to deal with coal.

We fought for a fighting Triple Alliance. The dockers went out twice in their battles with the bosses and they were called back twice by the trade union misleaders and the Labour Party, and the rail workers were constantly being victimised for their refusal to touch scab coal. Martyn is an example. When he was in the NUR [National Union of Railwaymen] he

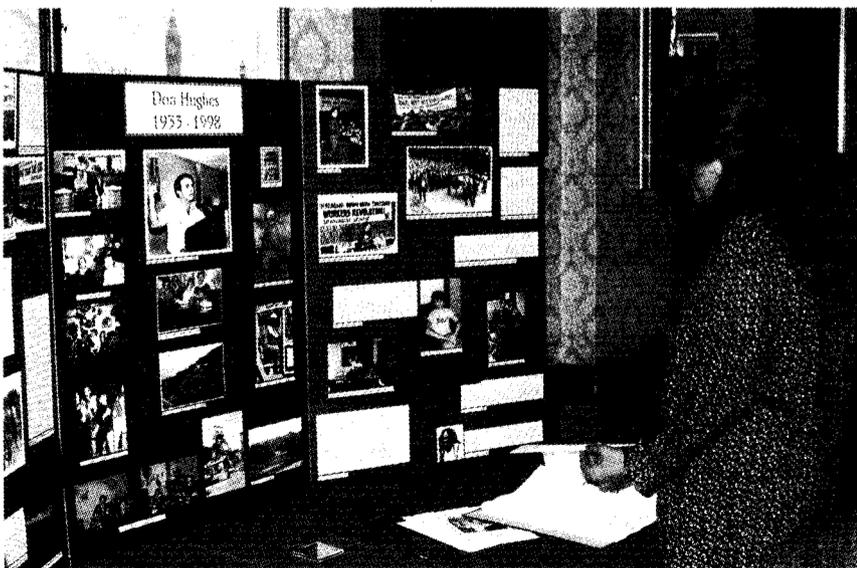
fought for his union to go out on strike. So there was nothing but possibility for this battle to be waged as a full working-class battle, posing the question of which class is going to run the country again. We fought for this revolutionary perspective in the strike. That's what appealed to people like Don, and certainly our opposition to the traitorous Labour Party.

The capitalist class in this country was in very big trouble because the division of the working people that capitalism maintains, through racism, through the oppression of women, through national chauvinism, was under attack on a daily basis. People's belief that the cops and the courts are on the side of democracy, good against bad, all of this bourgeois ideology was being broken down. Every day people would see cops battling women, battling miners who were fighting for food for their families. You had situations where Catholic workers were welcoming British miners at demonstrations in Ireland; where on the streets every day blacks and Asians were protecting miners from cops attacking them.

In a letter he wrote to Jon in 1985 Don says, "My talk to the Militant Tendency at Swansea last weekend was well received generally, but they did not take too kindly Jon when I slammed any organisation who mistakenly thought that by admitting the Police Federation to the T.U.C. would make any difference to their scabberding activities in future industrial disputes."

Howard Hopkins (former NUM, led Celynen South pit out on strike with Don in 1984): He had worked all his life. He had gone through life struggling. Debbie explained earlier about his poor health. How he'd struggled through. How he had not allowed anybody to do anything for him. He despised anybody who dared pity him. Don was a man who was a fighter. Don knew his background and understood what his class was, and is. Even to the day he died on 15 August, he stood there and he fought.

I remember in the strike, we were at a meeting where there was Ann Scargill and there was Sam McCluskey, leader of the seamen's union, and the Beast of Bolsover, Dennis Skinner. What a bloody character. We were invited to speak at the



Memorial meeting in London on 26 September in honour of Don Hughes. Displays documented Don's life. Former NUM member, Howard Hopkins (right) speaking at the memorial.

top table and explain what the strike was all about, explain how the Department of Social Security were taking money from [miners'] bank accounts.

Dennis Skinner had to rush back to the houses of parliament. They introduced Dennis Skinner. He immediately stood up and ripped into me and Don, without mentioning our names of course, about how areas of the mining community had tied up London "for their own ends". What he was talking about was he deemed us greedy miners, talking about how they had tied up London. Don reassured me, "Don't worry, son. Leave this to me." I thought, "Thank god for that. What's going to happen here now?"

Skinner sat back down. Don was introduced. Don stood up, and then he tore a strip off Dennis Skinner. And as he said it, he said, "Watch him move now, son. You'll never see a beast move so fast." Talk about getting back to the houses of parliament so quickly. Soon as Don had sat down he was up with his *Financial Times*, and he was gone through the door. I said, "I think you upset him, Don." He said, "We'll hear a little bit more about that."

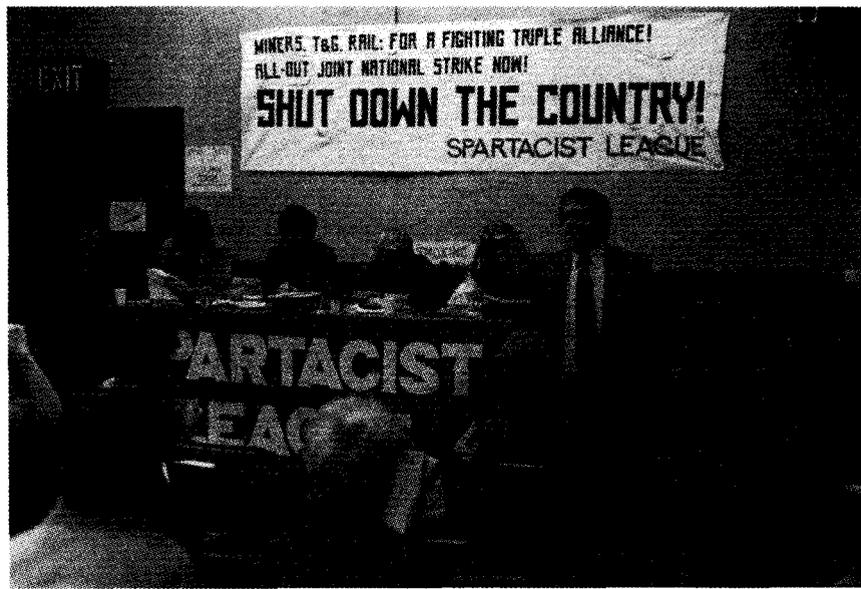
Nine o'clock in the morning, and the phone rang. Who was it? Neil Kinnock's personal secretary. "Would you like to come for lunch at the House of Commons?" Don said, "Tell him to stick that sandwich up his arse." I said, "I can't tell him that, Don." He said, "Son, tell him to stick the sandwich." I said, "Excuse me, we won't be lunching today, love" [puts the phone down].

For me, we went through some hellish times. We fought, went on marches, and despite his poor health, he never ever complained. In those darkest days when he was in hospital you never heard him complain. In fact he said to me, "Son, you want to take it easy, you do, 'cause you're looking unwell." Don's got a mask on like Darth Vader [breathes painfully]. That's how he was. There are two types of people in this world Don said, regarding how you conduct yourself. There is a giver and a receiver. Don had pleasure in giving, not in receiving.

**Martyn Hopkins** (former NUR militant): I could say some things about Orgreave — I was not at Orgreave — but on one occasion, at the end of the battle between the miners and the police force at the time, the army, the air force, everybody else who was up there — Don, who was stood by one of the miners who were there, this chap actually recognised his son-in-law, I think he was in the Welsh Guards or something. And there was, in fact, a hell of a lot of soldiers there.

I always remember Don telling me one of the tales. As soon as the bus pulled up at Orgreave, all the men got off with their banners, and marched up the hill. Scargill's on top of the hill now. There was tens of thousands of miners, and tens of thousands of cops.

All of a sudden the cops attacked the miners. Most of the miners had left at that time. Most of the miners thought that the show was over. The trucks weren't coming in, so they went. So the cops picked their time — they attacked the miners in force. The miners, all they had was T-shirts, shorts. They had no body armour. The police had body armour, visors, shields, long shields, short shields, horses, armoured horses. And they charged, full force at the miners. And I'll tell you what: if you think you are going to lose your life by a one-ton animal charging down on you, you will rip up telegraph poles, concrete telegraph poles. And those men were ripping up telegraph poles and making barricades to stop these charging horses. Like the Battle of Agincourt, it was. Blood and guts everywhere. The thing



Workers Hammer

Don Hughes addressing Spartacist League day school in November 1984.

[Howard] didn't tell you about Don, he was urinating blood for a fortnight after that [from being beaten by the cops], he had damaged his kidneys.

Don had the greatest admiration for young people. He'd go out of his way to talk to young people, on Cwmcarn Corner, and Cardiff.

I deeply miss him. And it's very hard for me now to accept it. I wish he was here now, but he's gone.

**Dick Hall** (former NUM, Derbyshire): It's very strange coming to something like this. It's very difficult, I can understand the comrades and how they feel. Because though I knew Don for a relatively short time, he made a lasting impression.

There were lots of people, particularly in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, who had looked at certain areas, particularly South Wales, with great envy, where nobody had gone back to work, thinking it were dead easy. The one lasting memory I can remember of Don, and I think it's as poignant today as when he actually told me, he said, "People can sell their principles. They may sell them for 25p. They may queue to give them up. But real men — and not in a sexist way — real men actually stand up for their principles; would die for their principles. If you cannot do that you cannot be a man. Now go back to Derbyshire and tell them daft buggers that's going back to work that is how it should be."

**Eibhlin McColgan** (Spartacist League): Don really represented and embodied something vital for us as a revolutionary party. It's an honour for us to be able to hold a meeting in Don's memory today and to have claimed him as a friend. He taught us about what that type of working-class consciousness was like. And about how revolutionary syndicalists thought — their strengths and their weaknesses.

The reason the closure of the pits was so painful for him, it's not because he glorified coal mining, but because it came out of a bitter defeat at the end of the strike. It was a bitter pill, having fought so heroically, not to have won.

He used to talk about the Coal Board's book of compensation for miners that were injured working in the pits — how much you would get paid if you lost a finger. It was so many pounds and shillings up to the first knuckle, so many for the whole finger, so much for the whole hand, so much for a leg. His point was, if you were a coal miner, for the Coal Board what you represented was money, profit, and your every limb was measured.

Howard mentioned how turned off the Labour Party he was. That goes back to the Labour government after the Second World War, of Major Clement Attlee. By 1950, when Don was still less than 20, at

the end of that Labour government, he had made up his mind he wouldn't vote for them because they had introduced charges on the National Health Service, for glasses and prescriptions, which in fact they introduced to finance the Korean War. Now this Labour government is the one that's upheld by the left today, including Arthur Scargill's SLP, as something halfway to socialism. That was the Labour government that turned Don off voting Labour for the rest of his life.

The 1974 strike was a really important period in Britain because there was huge turmoil in the country. Ted Heath was the Conservative prime minister. There was a huge miners strike. He decided to go to the country and call a general election and he said the issue is who runs the country, the government or the miners — the miners didn't win, Labour was elected. It's hard to imagine now — it was even hard to imagine in 1984 — but Labour was posturing at that time as being with the miners.

Labour's job, of course, in government, as always, was to restabilise the country for capitalism, which they did, but not without some difficulty. This was the Labour government that brought in the International Monetary Fund; the racist Labour government that brought in virginity tests for Asian women at Heathrow Airport. It was extremely anti-working class, so that by the end of its period in government you had bitter strikes of the public sector workers called the "Winter of Discontent".

1979, along comes Margaret Thatcher. She's going to sort out this question of the miners, take revenge for 1974, put the unions back in their place, destroy the NUM, make it a lesson to the whole working class and the country. And that vindictiveness remained, long after that strike was defeated. That's how the stage was set for the 1984 strike. So when Don engaged in that, he really understood that the 1984 strike was Round Two. He and Howard and Paul Williams fought a battle and led their own pit out, against a majority of the pit who didn't want to come out in the Celynen South. So they were leaders. They knew how to do it, and Don was constantly telling other people how to do it, how to fight with them, like Dick just described. So yes, it was a bit easier in South Wales, but it was a battle as well.

Our programme was to spread the strike to other unions. We had a supporter, Patrick Sliney, in British Leyland. We discovered that British Leyland was burning scab coal. Steel plants were using scab coal and so were a lot of other places in the country but this was the one where we could really fight to do something. Patrick got sacked and blacklisted. He did get quite a lot of support from miners in the Midlands, but also from South Wales. I was looking over some of Don's letters at the time, and he would describe the letters he'd written to an NUM lodge in South Wales: "I wrote them a blistering letter, so I hope they do something."

He couldn't understand why the trade union leaders in the Transport and General Workers Union, which was Patrick Sliney's union, didn't support Patrick. Well he could, and he couldn't. Because of course if they were going to stick behind Patrick Sliney, Patrick was fighting to stop scab coal in BL, that meant shut down the British Leyland plant, that was extending the strike and that wasn't their politics. Their politics were Labour Party, and Communist Party, and of course they shafted Patrick.

The miners strike itself was extraordinary. It was not an ordinary strike. It was so hard and so bitter, and the government and the police were so vicious, that the miners learned a really powerful lesson. The Labour Party under Neil Kinnock knifed the strike in the back. Kinnock went on television a lot, but he never missed an opportunity to denounce the miners for violence on picket lines, and made it known during and after the strike

*continued on page 8*

## Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!



Workers Vanguard

I found, reading some of his thoughts, that Don Hughes was more, far more, than the self-described "socialist of the old school." He was an internationalist, who felt a part of the world entire, and who worked in various struggles across national boundaries to battle injustice and opposed the diabolical interests of the rulers. There is something deeply disturbing to the ruling class about people struggling across vast boundaries. May his example sow the seeds of resistance so that many more boundaries are breached.

Mumia Abu-Jamal  
Statement to memorial meeting  
September 21, 1998

Don Hughes was actively involved for many years in the fight to free death row prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. Despite his meagre income, only a few months before he died Don proudly made a substantial contribution to the campaign to free Mumia.

## Memorial...

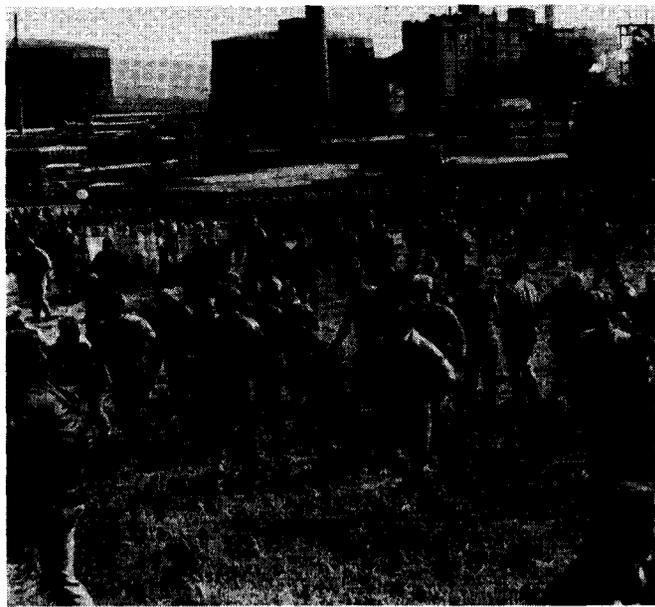
(Continued from page 7)

that his side was with the cops. "Lefts" of the Labour Party of course supported the miners and spoke on their platforms. But their policy was "stick behind Labour". Scargill himself by the next general election was calling for voting for Labour, voting for Kinnock.

What existed in support of the miners is also potentially the core of a Leninist vanguard party. That's our lesson, and the job of that Leninist vanguard party is to organise revolutionary leadership in the trade unions. That's how you deal with the sellout artists and the people that Don couldn't stand. That's our conclusion, but that wasn't Don's conclusion because, as I said, he had this problem about political parties in general.

I have to talk about the arguments we had with Don because they were legend. At the end of 1985, the strike was over. Don lived in Neil Kinnock's constituency, a mining constituency in South Wales. We proposed to Don to stand as a candidate against Neil Kinnock. Even though the miners strike was defeated, there was still one hell of a lot of turmoil in Britain. Everybody including Arthur Scargill at this stage was pushing unity behind Labour and behind Kinnock. So we wanted to cut against that, and we had the ideal way to cut a swathe against these Labour "lefts" and against Kinnock: to run a miners candidate against Kinnock in his own constituency.

In every respect we had the ideal candidate except that he was the stubborn Don Hughes. So we tried to argue this with him. Well, honestly, to say he was stubborn stretches the word too much. He was intransigent. He hated Kinnock, and he had to admit that. Don distributed hundreds [of our supplement denouncing Kinnock] around the houses in Kinnock's constituency himself. He liked what was in the supplement. He even would admit that yes, it was a very good idea for somebody to stand against Kinnock, it just wouldn't be him. Why? Because what



Workers Hammer

Riot police charge miners' pickets at Ogreave in May 1984.

Don firmly believed was that if you stood for parliament, you're bound to become a Labourite swine, bowing and scraping to the Queen.

Now there was another famous argument. This was over protectionism. Don was against foreign coal imports and he told me that so was his uncle Tom. Now, we're against import controls because we think it sets the workers in one country against the workers of another. It's anti-internationalist. We're not talking here about scab coal shipped in during the strike — we were against that.

So we came to another big row. The Yorkshire miners led by Dave Douglass in 1987 organised a demonstration near Hull against the import of South African coal. The strike was over, so there was no issue about it being scab coal. It was protectionist. We wrote an article denouncing that protectionist poison. 1987 was the year of the general election so everybody was getting geared up to vote Kinnock in the election, and nerves were a bit fraught. South Yorkshire NUM was for Kinnock, Dave Douglass banned our newspaper and our comrades from his Hatfield Main coalfield, and we protested this. Dick wrote a letter of protest. Wally Roberts

[former miner from Lea Hall pit in Staffordshire] wrote a letter of protest which is a really fine statement — it was published in *Workers Hammer* [no 88, May 1987] at the time.

But Don was having none of it. He wasn't going to protest. Neither was chip off the old block here, Howard, on the grounds that they didn't believe in bringing politics into the union struggle. Except that they knew that politics was already in the union because everybody was campaigning for Kinnock and the Labour government. So Don always knew that he was on a sticky wicket with that one. But of course — being Don — being on a sticky wicket never made him change his mind.

Don was proud of the tradition of the Chartists. If you visited there for the first time he'd take you to Newport and show you the memorial to the Chartist uprising [and] the Westgate Hotel where you can still see the holes in the walls where the fighting was done. Don wasn't just an admirer of the Chartists, he agreed with the Chartist slogan of the right of the citizens to bear arms.

*Left-wing communism* was written by Lenin exactly for people like Don, so after I knew him and read the book, I could

really understand why the Communist International made such a point of trying to get people like Don. People with Don's outlook were a mass phenomenon at that time, including in Britain, particularly in South Wales.

The South Wales Miners Federation applied to join the Communist International. Lenin wrote them back a letter in English (and he apologised for his English). He was obviously delighted that such an application had come in. He patiently explained to them how to form a party. He said, we have an organisation resolution, you should study that, you should put out a newspaper, collect contributions, and so on. Every time I read it now I laugh, because whoever had this idea, this was Don Hughes before his time. Because he could have it both ways, take the union into the CI, never worry about parties.

Arguments are very different if you're having them in the course of a common struggle where it's very clear that everybody's on the same side. Certain arguments you would never have to have with Don, about whether you need to fight racism or any kind of injustice, or about the class character of the Soviet Union — was it capitalist — or anything like that.

Thinking about the Communist International, when they were dealing with the revolutionary syndicalists, that was a period after a huge victory for the working class, the Russian Revolution. And my real regret with Don is that he never lived to see a real victory for the working class. He saw plenty of defeats. After the 1984-85 strike the Soviet Union went down, and Eastern Europe, and he thought the world really looked pretty bleak. That's the thing I regret most about him, because he'd fought so hard, he really deserved to stick around to see a victory. But what it means is that the lessons of the miners strike were precious lessons because they were learned in such a bitter struggle. It's our job to incorporate those lessons into future struggles of the working class. And we really owe it to him. So, when our turn comes, as it surely will, Don's name will be there. ■

## Hedley...

(Continued from page 3)

dispute will not be settled until Steve Hedley has his job back. But the truth is that Crow is as guilty as Knapp of backstabbing Steve Hedley and thus selling out rail workers across the board.

Bob Crow's role as an accomplice of Knapp became crystal clear at a 25 September London public meeting organised by Steve Hedley's RMT branch and joined by Euston infrastructure workers who had just begun a four-day strike in his defence. Crow tried to claim that the RMT was "leading" the "fight" against the anti-union laws but when challenged from the floor he repeatedly refused to endorse any strike action to defend Hedley. Crow was asked about Underground workers on the Bakerloo line. In response, the questioner was fobbed off, told that if they wanted to get Bakerloo workers out, they should go and do it. Asked twice whether he, like Jimmy Knapp, had repudiated the RMT strikes in Hedley's defence Crow pointedly refused to deny it. Before beating a hasty retreat he assured the meeting that he would be taking up Hedley's case... with Labour deputy prime minister John Prescott — who is currently forcing through privatisation of the London Underground network!

It was a Spartacist League (SL) speaker in the meeting who told the obvious truth.

He spoke of the importance of defending Hedley and defeating the anti-union privatisation plans with solid national strike action to shut down the entire network through picket lines, pointing out that any effective struggle requires politically taking on the trade union bureaucrats and "their" capitalist Labour government. He also nailed Bob Crow's refusal to call any effective action while absolving himself of any responsibility and charging workers to go off and organise it themselves. Our speaker argued for the necessity of a revolutionary leadership of the working class.

While rail workers were furious at Crow, the wrath of sundry self-styled "revolutionaries" in the meeting — which included the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), the Alliance for Workers Liberty (AWL) and Workers Power (WP) — was directed against the Spartacist League. They jeered and heckled our speaker; their idea of a "victory" for the working class was the election of Blair's anti-worker and racist Labour government, and their role is to cover the tracks of "left" bureaucrats such as Crow. We had hit the nail on the head by stating what was necessary and exposing the refusal of the SLP bureaucrats to mobilise the union membership in class struggle to defend Steve Hedley. Subsequent to the meeting individuals in the Steve Hedley support group, who do not agree with our political perspective, acknowledged to our comrades that the Spartacists were right about the role of

Bob Crow & Co.

A class-struggle fight to reinstate Steve Hedley requires a political battle against the bureaucracy and against the Labour government's privatisation schemes. The bureaucracy uses craft divisions within the workforce, which in rail is split between three main unions — RMT, ASLEF and TSSA — to weaken and divide the workers. We fight for one industrial union for all transport workers in rail, underground and buses! The role of Jimmy Knapp and Bob Crow illustrates a fundamental truth, that the Labourite union bureaucracy, "left" as well as right, cannot be pressurised into fighting in the interests of the working class. The politics of the bureaucracy, whether they support Blair's New Labour or Arthur Scargill's "old" Labour SLP, are for parliamentary Labour governments. New Labour in government today, like "old" Labour governments in the past are capitalist governments. Capitalism is a social system of class rule, not merely a set of government policies. Fundamental change in the interest of the proletariat cannot be achieved through parliament while leaving the capitalist state machinery intact. The capitalist state must be shattered and replaced by one based on organs of working-class rule — the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Labourite bureaucracy is an obstacle to this task and must be removed in a political struggle for a new, revolutionary leadership of the working class, which

must be organised in a Leninist vanguard party. To defend workers, oppressed minorities and the poor against attacks from the capitalist system it is necessary to mobilise the social power of the working class rendered conscious of its role as the motor force for the overthrow of the racist capitalist system.

Steve Hedley, an Irish union activist in a union which is heavily black and Asian, has an honourable record as a defender of the oppressed. In 1995 he was among the speakers at a London united-front rally to save the life of Mumia Abu-Jamal initiated by the Partisan Defence Committee (see article on Jamal on page 1). Hedley pledged the support of his union branch to campaign for Jamal's freedom and noted that the stitch-up and attempted murder of Mumia Abu-Jamal in the US has parallels here, stating: "British justice: it doesn't exist for black people, for Irish people, for working-class people" adding that: "The ruling class, they only concede anything when the workers start to push forward" (Reported in *WH* no 145, April/May 1995). Today, as this union militant faces a vindictive frame-up by the GTRM bosses and the capitalist courts we call for mobilising the union membership for class-struggle defence of Steve Hedley. Drop the charges now!

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Send donations to: Rail Strike Support Group, 145 Imperial Avenue, Victorian Road, London N16 8HL. ■

# Racism...

(Continued from page 2)

most to gain from its overthrow, and the least illusions in the social chauvinism of parties such as the Labour Party. What we have to offer is working-class rule, which is the essential prerequisite to lay the basis for full integration of minorities into an egalitarian socialist society.

We raise the demand for full citizenship rights for all immigrants, regardless of how they got here, whether they came as legal or "illegal" immigrants. People who got here should have the right to work and the right to stay. But under capitalism, even when this democratic right exists, it is very easily reversible. There's a very important lesson in the history of British immigration which shows this. When the citizens of Britain's former colonies tried to come to Britain [after World War II], they were entitled to hold British passports. Those who managed to obtain a passport (which was not so easy) and who managed to get here (which was also not easy) were granted citizenship in 1948 — the right to work and the right to remain.

However, in the 1950s, there were widespread racist attacks against immigrants in Notting Hill and Nottingham. The [Tory] government used the racist terror in the streets as a pretext for racist legislation, the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act. This Act was really a landmark. At a stroke it removed the citizenship rights of every citizen from the former colonies, and formally instituted a legal category of *second-class citizenship*. If your passport was issued in India or Pakistan or the West Indies, you were subject to entry controls and ever since the right to remain, or to bring in your family, was severely curtailed.

## Trade union bureaucracy: the labour lieutenants of imperialism

Labour was elected in 1964 at the height of a huge wave of racist hysteria and they continued to tighten the screws on immigration. They were in government in 1968 when Enoch Powell made his infamous bloodcurdling racist speech about "rivers of blood". This incited racist mobs onto the streets as it was intended to, including London dockers demanding an end to immigration, and there was widespread racist terror up and down the country. 1968 was also the year Labour introduced a special immigration law to exclude Kenyan Asians, who were being persecuted by a black nationalist regime in Kenya, and who held British passports. By 1971 another immigration act basically put an end to primary immigration into Britain. From then on, even though non-white immigration had halted, the racist furor never stopped. It immediately shifted to attacks on people trying to bring their family members into the country. And the 1974-79 Labour government played its role in this — they introduced racist virginity tests for Asian women at Heathrow Airport. Today the same racist hysteria is directed against refugees and asylum seekers, who are actually only a very small number.

It wasn't just the Labour government that was anti-immigrant. The Labourite trade union bureaucracy also played a sordid role in excluding immigrant workers from the workforce and from the unions. After the Second World War the miners union and the agricultural workers union opposed schemes to recruit foreign workers; the TGWU organised a number of strikes in the West Midlands to exclude Asians from working on the buses. Most notorious of all among the trade union bureaucracy was the NUS [National Union of Seamen]. There were a large number of seamen from what's now Bangladesh and



John Sturrock (Report)

**Southall, 1979: Asian workers honour anti-fascist fighter Blair Peach and victim of racist murder Gurdid Singh Chaggar. Peach was murdered by cops administered by Callaghan capitalist Labour government.**

from India. At the end of the Second World War the leadership of the NUS actively intervened to keep black and Asian seamen off British ships. This fuelled racist riots, which were particularly directed against seamen in Liverpool. This was a direct product of the kind of campaign that the NUS bureaucracy was up to their necks in. What was desperately needed was a revolutionary leadership to intervene and fight for these minority workers to be incorporated into the unions. It would have been a perfect opportunity to kick out the Labourite trade union bureaucracy, in fact there were anti-racist demonstrations and anti-racist struggles also at that time. But the politics of Labourism was for exclusion of minorities from the unions, and from the country.

## Break with Labourism — "old" and "New"!

New Labour doesn't even make a pretence of opposing racism. Since they took office there has been a deafening silence from MPs on the Stephen Lawrence case and on the question of racism. There has been one dishonourable exception. One "left" Labour MP did make his mark on the question of racism, but not over the Stephen Lawrence case. That's Tony Benn, who made his voice heard in honouring Enoch Powell and denying that he was a racist — Enoch Powell, who was probably the most influential racist leader in this country since the war!

The "old Labour" tradition which was to formally oppose racism, has been taken over by Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party [SLP], of which Imran Khan, the Lawrence family lawyer, is a member. One aspect of this is the idea of having "black" sections in the party, which did exist within the Labour Party for a very brief time. The SLP's conference last December broke up into acrimonious dispute partly over the question of "black" sections within the party. The party leadership was able to win the votes in every case because one member was able to cast 3000 votes on behalf of a trade union which had affiliated en bloc to the party. This episode reveals that in keeping with the SLP's Labourite programme, its party structure indicates that it cannot be a revolutionary party.

We refuse to accept the term "black" as an all-encompassing term for non-white people. Minorities in Britain come from widely different cultural and even linguistic backgrounds, so to lump together Asians from Bangladesh, Pakistan or India — who may be of Muslim, Hindu or Sikh background — with blacks from the Caribbean or Africa is just absurd. Having a *shared experience* of racism in Britain does not make them one ethnic group. The point about "black" sections, apart from their name, is that the felt need for separate sections, *exclusively for the non-white members* of a party, basically accepts that

there will be some degree of racism within the party. And that's not difficult to explain if you think about the man with the 3000 votes. Those union members, who are voting members of the party, are not required to have a socialist consciousness, only trade union consciousness. Labour-type parties presume that the "whole class", backward workers and advanced workers, should be included in one party. "Black" sections, so-called, and bloc affiliation of unions — all of it is antithetical to what a Leninist vanguard party would consist of. Because, in a Leninist vanguard party, it's a prerequisite that members must have revolutionary consciousness, and *all* members of the party fight against racist oppression, male chauvinism and homophobia. This is not relegated to special "black" sections or "women's" sections.

The SLP upholds the "old" Labour tradition of the Clement Attlee Labour government that was in power immediately after the Second World War. It's a social-imperialist tradition, based on the interests of skilled workers, what Lenin called the labour aristocracy. Those are the people who directly benefited from the Empire and super exploitation of the colonies. That government was in office when the ship the *Empire Windrush* arrived in 1948. And it's generally credited with having an "open" immigration policy but this is actually not true. Workers on the *Empire Windrush* and others who arrived at the time were met by a backlash of scare stories about an "influx" of refugees whipped up by the government who issued a "Warning to Intending Migrants from Jamaica to the U.K.". A year earlier this Labour government repatriated Caribbean technicians who were recruited during the war as skilled workers in the factories of north-west England. They were British

citizens, repatriated in 1947-48 because they were now "surplus to requirements".

We made a point when we gave critical electoral support to the SLP that their "policy" statements opposing racism are empty words in view of the fact that they refuse to mobilise the racially integrated and powerful workforce of London Underground, in which they have a base. They won't mobilise workers to fight effectively against privatisation, much less to fight against racist attacks. But in fact the SLP, like the rest of the left, accept the bourgeois myth that "communism is dead", by which you're supposed to believe that working-class struggle is a thing of the past. It's very important to understand not only that this is a myth but that it's completely self-serving for Labourite bureaucrats.

For future struggles of the working class and minorities of this country, of which there will be many, we point to the lessons of the miners strike of 1984-85. In the course of a very long, hard, bitter struggle, miners came to understand the need to fight against racism and got a huge amount of support from black and Asian minorities. They also got support from among women of the coalfields. And it was a perfect illustration of what it means to say *the cause of the working class and minorities must either advance together or fall back separately*. While that strike was taking place, solidarity between the most militant workers in struggle and racial minorities was striking, and everybody could see it. And they could see a common enemy in the Thatcher government and in the cops.

But the strike was defeated and the entire working class was set back. You could see in embryo what the core of a multiracial revolutionary workers party would look like. But the political lesson is that revolutionary consciousness means more than just understanding the need to be anti-racist, to fight against male chauvinism and so on, although that's very important: it means being committed to the struggle for power, and understanding the need to break with Labourism. Because what defeated the miners strike, was that Arthur Scargill, although he led the strike in a very militant and heroic way, was tied to Labourism and therefore to capitalism.

It is possible and necessary to break out of the Labourite framework, and that is the lesson the revolutionary party, our organisation today, must instil into the consciousness of the young generation. To remember that lesson, to teach it, and to combat the myth that "communism is dead", requires a political programme and a perspective to overthrow the racist capitalist system. That's what we have to offer, and that's the task of a multiracial revolutionary workers party. ■

## Spartacus Youth Group class series

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Classes held at 7.30 pm Wednesdays — 25 November and 9 December  
Ha' Penny Bridge Inn, 42 Wellington Quay, Dublin 2  
For more information contact SYGD, 855 8409

# Labour...

(Continued from page 3)

achieved in the course of class struggle.

Any effective struggle by the working class poses the question of how to defeat the anti-union laws, which the bureaucracy hides behind. The anti-union laws are enforced by the power of the state — cops protect scabs on picket lines, unions are hit with court injunctions and strikers are thrown in prison. The capitalist state is an instrument for suppression of the working class; it must be smashed and replaced by a new, proletarian, state power. The Labourite bureaucracy is tied to the capitalist system and cannot be pressurised to defeat the anti-union laws. We fight to remove the Labourite union bureaucracy and replace it with a revolutionary leadership, which must be an integral part of the Leninist vanguard party we seek to forge.

The Socialist Workers Party (SWP) rejoiced at Blair's victory at the polls and now seeks to pressure the bureaucracy to pressure the government to repeal the anti-union laws, a recipe for certain defeat. The SWP are the leadership of Unison health workers at University College London Hospital, where they led a high-profile campaign for a strike against impending privatisation. When one court ruled against it the SWP bragged that "Leaders of UNISON are challenging the decision at the court of appeal" and urged "if they are told that legal action is not possible, then UNISON, the biggest union in the country, must confront the law" (*Socialist Worker*, 26 September). But when the High Court also banned the strike, the SWP backed down totally, dropped all talk of strike action in favour of "a campaign calling on UNISON leaders to demand the government repeals the [anti-union] laws and to give the union's full backing to those taking unofficial action" (*Socialist Worker*, 31 October). The SWP is covering up for the Unison bureaucracy, who played a treacherous role against Asian women workers at Hillingdon hospital, sacked in 1995 as a result of privatisation. For nearly two years the bureaucracy instructed their members to

cross the picket lines, before kicking the Hillingdon workers out of the union in 1997. By peddling ludicrous illusions in Labour and the union bureaucracy, the SWP's militant rhetoric is a cover for telling workers to knuckle under to the state and the anti-union laws.

The SWP's reformist position on the state is based on a lie: that the police can be allies of the workers in struggle. A few years ago they wrote that "when coppers strike, they stop behaving like police and rejoin their class" (*Socialist Worker*, 7 August 1993) and today they call on Labour to "sack Paul Condon" (London police chief) as the "solution" to racism in the cops. This is poison to the working class. The cops are racist murderers and protectors of the fascists, including the scum who killed Stephen Lawrence. The police are the core of the capitalist state, which cannot be reformed but must be smashed in the struggle for working-class rule. We call for the mobilisation of the social power of the multiracial workforce of London, such as transport workers, to sweep the fascists off the streets and to protest racist terror by the cops. Labourite organisations such as the SWP and the SLP are obstacles to mobilising the proletariat independently of the capitalist state.

We said "No vote to Labour" in the general election, warning that Labour in power would stop at nothing in the service of the capitalist masters. Labour has dramatically increased the repressive powers of the racist capitalist state, which target the working class, racial minorities and women. We gave critical support to the SLP, which split from Labour and stood in opposition to New Labour. At the same time we insisted on the need for an authentically revolutionary party and stated that the interests of the working class and oppressed cannot be met by the SLP's "old" Labour reformism. This has been borne out by the role of the SLP in the trade union bureaucracy. The SLP has been a critical factor in selling out working-class struggles in rail, London Underground and also the Liverpool docks. Stabbed in the back by Bill Morris and the TGWU tops, the dockers were forced to accept bitter defeat, not least

because their shop stewards' leader, Jimmy Nolan of the SLP, dismissed the possibility of other workers on Merseyside striking with the dockers, such as at Ford Halewood, where workers were facing redundancies at the time. Today all workers in the remaining car industry face the threat of redundancy.

The role of SLPers in the union bureaucracy today is identical to that played by "left" bureaucrats such as Jimmy Knapp in the miners strike of 1984-85, which contributed heavily to the defeat of this pivotal class battle. The miners strike was defeated by the Thatcher government, the cops and courts, aided by the open hostility of Neil Kinnock's Labour Party and the TUC. But the "left" union bureaucrats controlled key unions — Jimmy Knapp and Ray Buckton in rail, and Ron Todd in the TGWU, which organised the dockers — who together with the miners had it in their power to shut down the country. But while these bureaucrats made speeches about "solidarity", they opposed joint strikes and left the miners to fight alone.

We fought for a *fighting triple alliance* of railworkers and dockers, striking alongside the miners. This would have raised the question of which class shall rule, the workers or the capitalists. It posed a way forward in the strike and was linked to our perspective to overthrow the capitalist system and the "Mother of Parliaments" by placing the working class in power. The question of *power* was what Scargill could not touch. For all his militancy in leading the strike, his political programme did not go beyond a parliamentary Labour government. The essential lesson of the miners strike is the need to break with Labour, "left" as well as right, and for a new revolutionary leadership of the working class, which must be organised in a Leninist vanguard party.

Today Scargill's SLP sponsors a "United Campaign for the Repeal of the Anti-Union Laws", which appeals to the TUC, backstabbers of the miners, and includes the Alliance for Workers Liberty (AWL). In 1990 the AWL participated in a vendetta against Arthur Scargill and the NUM orchestrated by the British secret

services. The AWL (then *Socialist Organiser*) along with Workers Power (WP) sponsored a British tour by one Yuri Butchenko, who was connected to Russian fascists, and who joined the scab UDM in falsely accusing Scargill of misappropriating funds from Soviet workers to British miners. The anti-communist witch hunters of the AWL and WP also supported counterrevolutionary Solidarność in Poland. Scargill's correct denunciation of Solidarność as "anti-socialist" was the pretext for a state which hunt against the NUM in 1983 on the eve of the miners strike.

Since capitalist counterrevolution destroyed the Soviet degenerated workers state, Labourite organisations such as the SLP are buying (and selling) the bourgeois lie that "communism is dead", which is the defeatist outlook of reformists whose programme is for accommodation with the capitalist order. It is necessary to defeat the anti-union laws but Labourites play by the bosses' rules and sow demoralisation in the working class. During the Tube strikes, in opposition to the bureaucracy, we outlined a programme to win, calling for real picket lines to shut down the system, to hit the City and the fatcats' profits. We pointed out that: "Mobilising the social power of this multiracial workforce could also turn the tables against the racist Labour government, which oozes contempt for workers and racial minorities" (*Workers Hammer* no 162, May/June 1998).

We seek to break workers from Labourism in the process of building an internationalist revolutionary party, committed to fight for new October Revolutions. Our model is the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky, which led the workers of Russia to power in October 1917 and created the first workers state in history. Our task is to mobilise the proletariat, which is multinational — English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish — as well as multiracial, to overthrow the City of London, the ruling class and their profit system. Working-class rule will establish a federation of workers republics in the British Isles, part of a socialist Europe, and institute a planned economy on an international scale. ■

# Mumia...

(Continued from page 1)

It is no accident that the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruling was released only days before the upcoming elections — as Ridge campaigns for another term as governor — amid a heinous, murderous campaign of bigotry against homosexual rights and the right to abortion, and as both the Democratic and Republican parties promote the speedup on death rows around the country. The "right-to-life" terrorists who assassinated Dr. Barnett Slepian last week are the same forces who howl for racist legal lynching. Only this week, a 29-year-old black man, Jeffrey Blake, was released from prison in New York after his 1991 murder conviction was shown to be based entirely on fabricated testimony. If New York State had had the death penalty at the time of Blake's frame-up, this innocent man would likely not have lived to see his exoneration.

The crusade to kill another innocent man — the most prominent death row prisoner in America today, Mumia Abu-Jamal — is precisely designed to sanctify the state's machinery of death. Jamal's case throws a spotlight on what the barbaric, racist death penalty in the U.S. is all about.

In a demonstration of flagrant bias, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruling dismisses as "incredible" every piece of testimony by witnesses testifying on Jamal's behalf and every piece of evidence sub-

mitted by Jamal's defense team. At the same time, they find totally "credible" every action and piece of testimony by the Philadelphia cops. The Philadelphia Police Department is so notorious for its racist frame-up system that even the U.S. Attorney General filed a civil rights lawsuit in 1979 charging "widespread, arbitrary, and unreasonable physical abuse" of witnesses and suspects. In the last three years alone, hundreds of convictions in Philadelphia have been thrown out on such grounds.

The Court ruling also upholds every action by notorious hanging judge Albert Sabo, who presided over the original farce of a trial and the Post-Conviction Relief (PCRA) hearings beginning in 1995, with the absurd statement that "our judges are honorable, fair and competent." Sabo's pro-prosecution bias was so blatant that even the *Philadelphia Daily News* (2 October 1996), which generally serves as a mouthpiece for the Philadelphia Police Department, complained that Sabo's "heavy-handed tactics can only confirm suspicions that the court is incapable of giving Abu-Jamal a fair hearing."

Despite the rigged trial and hearings conducted by Sabo, a mountain of evidence has come out demonstrating Jamal's innocence and the tactics of lies, coercion and terror wielded by the Philadelphia District Attorney's office and the cops to secure Jamal's conviction. At least *five witnesses* from *five different vantage points* told police that another man — not

Jamal, who was found slumped on the street after being shot in the chest by Faulkner — had run from the scene of the shooting. The prosecution's claim that Jamal's legally registered pistol was the murder weapon is refuted by the simple fact that there is no evidence at all that Jamal's gun was even fired that night, much less by Jamal. Another central pillar of the prosecution's case — that Jamal had "confessed" to the shooting while in the hospital that night — has likewise been fully exposed as a lie. Indeed, there was no report of said "confession" until *more than two months* after the shooting.

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court spits on the whole of this mass of evidence of Jamal's innocence. It also sneers at the clear evidence that black people were systematically excluded from the jury in Jamal's 1982 trial. Yet this was simply another instance of the racist jury-rigging which was shown to be widespread and common when a ten-year-old "training" videotape by the Philadelphia D.A.'s office was made public in 1997.

The frame-up of Mumia Abu-Jamal, rubber-stamped by today's ruling, demonstrates that there is no justice in the racist capitalist courts. As we stressed in building labor-centered protests during the summer of 1995 on the eve of Mumia's threatened execution, the social power to free Jamal and abolish the racist death penalty lies in the hands of the multiracial working class. After decades of defeat, the labor movement has demonstrated re-

newed combativity, from last year's UPS strike to the walkout which shut down the GM empire this summer. In taking up the fight for Jamal's freedom, the working class will be striking a blow against an entire system predicated on the brutal exploitation of labor and rooted in the racist repression of the black population. The fight for black freedom is central to the emancipation of labor itself.

All who are committed to the fight for Mumia's freedom must mobilize in the unions, on the campuses, in communities across the country and around the world.

*Freedom now for Mumia Abu-Jamal!  
Abolish the racist death penalty!*

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To get involved in the campaign to free Mumia Abu-Jamal, contact the Partisan Defence Committee, BCM Box 4986, London WC1N 3XX; Tel:0171-485 1396. *Organise protest!* Get your trade union or student organisation to make a contribution and join protests for Jamal. Publicise his case in your union or organisation newsletter. *Funds are urgently needed for legal defence!* In Britain and Ireland, send/make payable to Partisan Defence Committee and write "Jamal legal defence" on the back of the cheque. Contributions to the PDC for Jamal are forwarded in their entirety to the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal in New York. To write to Jamal, send letters to: Mumia Abu-Jamal, AM8335, SCI Greene, 1040 E. Roy Furman Hwy., Waynesburg, PA 15370, USA. ■

# Ireland...

(Continued from page 12)

International Communist League statement (reprinted in *Workers Hammer*, no 157, July/August 1997) we "oppose the European Union as an imperialist economic bloc which is a vehicle for capitalist cooperation against the working masses of Europe". It is also a vehicle for racist exclusion of immigrants. Ireland's racist laws have been augmented by the European Union's Dublin Convention of 1997, which stipulates that asylum-seekers must apply in the first EU country in which they arrive. Anyone refused asylum in one EU country is automatically deported, and has no right to apply in any other EU country! Taking their cue from Tony Blair's racist Labour government in Britain, the Irish government will deny asylum-seekers social welfare payments.

The escalation of racist terror throughout Europe is a direct result of capitalist counterrevolution which destroyed the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states of Eastern Europe in the period from 1989-1992. This led to increased competition between rival imperialist powers. The purpose of the EU is to strengthen German imperialism against its main competitors in the world market, the US and Japan. The European bourgeoisies have launched an offensive, using racist anti-immigrant measures as the cutting edge of attacks on the whole working class.

Counterrevolution in Eastern Europe and the ex-Soviet Union has led to, and was driven by, an upsurge of murderous nationalism, which is virulently anti-Semitic and has also led to violent pogroms against Roma and Sinti. Millions have been turned into stateless refugees and scapegoated for the conditions of mass unemployment and poverty which resulted from capitalist restoration. Even bourgeois commentators acknowledge that "Gypsies, persecuted since medieval times, enjoyed some security under communism" (*Observer*, 26 October 1997). This was true even in Romania which, prior to counterrevolution was a grotesquely deformed workers state. Roma were discriminated against, but did have jobs, mainly working on collective farms. Capitalist restoration returned the land to private owners and the Roma were hounded off the land and subjected to pogroms by cops and fascists.

The "New World Order" also ushered

in a renewed "scramble for Africa" among imperialist powers, fuelling fratricidal nationalism leading to wars, mass poverty and famine. To assert its "right" to ride roughshod over the peoples of Africa, US imperialism invaded Somalia in 1992 and terror-bombed Sudan in August this year. In the Congo, Rwanda and throughout central Africa, US, British and French imperialism have fomented ethnic and tribal slaughter, from which millions are fleeing, many seeking entry into Europe. For proletarian internationalists, defence of the rights of refugees and immigrants in Europe is linked to the struggle for proletarian revolution worldwide.

## Pro-Labour "socialists": obstacle to fight against racism

In the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, we fought for the Trotskyist programme of unconditional military defence of these degenerated and deformed workers states against imperialism and capitalist counterrevolution, and for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracies. Reformist groups like the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and Socialist Party supported counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and therefore bear their share of responsibility for the racist terror this has ushered in. In the fight against racism today they advocate support to Labour and other social-democratic parties. These parties, in capitalist governments in Britain, France, Germany, Italy and until last year in Ireland, have been the main enforcers of racist state terror against immigrants.

In Dublin, the SWP pulled out of organising an anti-racism demonstration in April because speakers from Labour and Democratic Left — who are responsible for the racist Aliens Order — were not invited! *Socialist Worker Review* (Autumn 1998) insists on unity with Labour leaders, arguing: "many workers look to reformist parties like the Labour Party and, to a lesser extent, Democratic Left. Getting the leaders of these parties to support anti-racist demands can bring in larger groups of workers in the fight against racism." They claim this is what Trotsky meant by "the tactic of the United Front" as applied to Germany in the 1930s.

Faced with the rise of Nazism, an immediate mortal danger to the workers movement, Trotsky repeatedly urged the German Communist Party to force the

Social Democratic Party (SPD), which included millions of workers, into a united front. The united front tactic was designed to break workers from the SPD and to win them to communism, it was *and is* an integral part of the programme for proletarian revolution — the overthrow of capitalism is the only way to eradicate the fascists. The SPD acted as "bloodhounds" of the German bourgeoisie in suppressing the 1918-19 Spartakist uprising, presided over the murders of revolutionary leaders Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg and in the 1920s, were the main administrators of the Weimar Republic, paving the way for Hitler.

The SWP's perversion of the "united front" is the opposite of what Trotsky advocated. Their policy of unity-above-all with the leaders of Labour and DL is consistent with their support to the racist, social-imperialist SPD in Germany — in which their sister group Linksruck is embedded as an "entry" group.

The Socialist Party (SP) is one of the main players in the Anti Racism Campaign. Their newspaper apes the Irish bourgeois press by freely printing the most vile racist terms. Reporting the attack on Belmondo Wantete in the *Voice* (June 1998), these "anti-racists" prominently printed every racist slur hurled at this black man by the Gardai, including the word n-----, which has no meaning other than a call for racist murder. Meanwhile they censored the word "fucking". The SP has a long tradition of embracing fascists. In Ireland they are notorious publicity agents for Billy Hutchinson, the fascistic UVF killer of Catholics. In Moscow, a May Day meeting of the SP's Russian affiliate welcomed three members of the Nationalist Bolshevik Party openly flaunting Nazi-style armbands. A comrade of the ICL and others walked out in protest when the organisers refused to expel the NBP scum. (See *WH* no 163, "Little England" Labourites embrace Russian fascists".) We warn: beware of such an organisation posturing as "anti-racist".

## Clericalist state — misery for workers, women and Travellers

Both the SP and SWP are at pains to deny there are any fascists in Ireland. The SP wrote that "reports of racist attacks and verbal abuse are coming in from all over Dublin" but insisted, "So far it looks as though there isn't a well organised racist or fascist group carrying out attacks" (*Voice*, June 1998). The SWP is

more categorical, claiming: "In Ireland at present we do not have organised fascists" (*Socialist Worker Review*, Autumn 1998). This is to absolve themselves of any responsibility for mobilising against the racist-terror gangs who should be swept off the streets now while they are small.

Nationalism inevitably spawns fascism in periods of capitalist crisis, and the nationalism of the Irish bourgeoisie, which is fostered by Labour, gives rise to clerical-fascist organisations. An integral component of clerical nationalism is anti-Semitism. This is rampant in the church and the state, which excluded the Jews of Europe fleeing Nazi terror in the 1930s. It includes extreme bigotry against women, embodied today in the clerical fascists of Youth Defence. These anti-abortion terrorists are the shock troops of Catholic clerical nationalism, with a record of violent assault on defenders of abortion rights, whom they denounce as "Brits". Last year they forced their way into the Marie Stopes women's clinic in Dublin, assaulting staff and patients. The fight to win abortion rights must be part of the struggle to overthrow clericalist capitalist rule and replace it with a workers government based on soviets. *For free abortion on demand! For complete separation of church and state! For women's liberation through socialist revolution!*

Ireland's indigenous Travelling people have been targets of racist attacks for centuries. Forcible evictions by cops and vigilante mobs drive Travellers onto wastelands without sanitation. Last year after weeks of incessant cop harassment and reactionary "local resident" mobilisations, Travellers were violently driven from their temporary halting site in Cabinteely near Dublin by a cop raid. In protest, we issued a leaflet stating: "We in the Dublin Spartacist Group call for urgent mobilisations by the workers movement in defence of Traveller halting sites and to put a stop to racist cop and vigilante attacks on Travellers! Hands off the Travellers!" (reprinted in *Workers Hammer* no 158, September/October 1997).

Racism is a central prop of capitalism. It cannot be eradicated without the working class taking power. Contrary to liberal myths about "modern" Ireland, the clericalist state is hell for workers, women, Travellers and refugees. The DSG fights to build a Leninist vanguard party to lead a socialist revolution which will smash the capitalist state and overthrow the system of exploitation and oppression. ■

# Weekly Worker — spin doctors for racist capitalist state

**Workers Hammer's** articles insist that the Stephen Lawrence inquiry confirms our understanding that the state, an instrument of bourgeois rule, is necessarily racist to the core. This sent the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) into a grotesque tirade arguing that British imperialism no longer uses the poison of anti-racism, anti-Semitism and anti-Catholicism, and that the "greater danger" is the supposed "anti-racism" of the British establishment. These extracts from an article by Don Preston in *Weekly Worker* (22 October) raise the question, what kind of "leftists" write apologetics for the cops and courts who protected the race-hate killers of Stephen Lawrence?

Most comrades on the left have convinced themselves that the bourgeoisie - and its media - are involved in some vast racist conspiracy. Naturally, the boys and girls in blue are all part of this. For an extreme - though internally consistent - version of the conspiracy school see *Workers Hammer*, paper of the other-worldly Spartacist League. Here is a splendid example of *reductio ad absurdum*. The back page headline screams at us: "Lawrence family will not get justice from capitalist state! Labour enforces capitalism's racist rule" (September-October).

## Around the left Saying the unsayable

Over the years the left has accumulated numerous myths. Most comrades on the left have convinced themselves that the bourgeoisie - and its media - are involved in some vast racist conspiracy. Naturally, the boys and girls in blue are all part of this. For an extreme - though internally consistent - version of the conspiracy school see *Workers Hammer*, paper of the other-worldly Spartacist League. Here is a splendid example of *reductio ad absurdum*. The back page headline screams at us: "Lawrence family will not get justice from capitalist state! Labour enforces capitalism's racist rule" (September-October).



As comrade Alan Fox wrote in the *Weekly Worker*, the establishment's anti-racism "is a means to divide workers sectionally yet unite them as rival supplicants before the bourgeois state. Racism, like anti-semitism and anti-catholicism, no longer serves the interests of the state" (October 8). In other words, in these specific conditions, the greater danger comes from institutionalised anti-racism - whether that be in the police force, local government or the national state. The SL - and the left as a whole - needs to grasp this truth as a matter of theoretical and political urgency.

## Ireland: Down with racist crusade against refugees!



Asylum-seekers in Dublin, October: victims of racist anti-immigrant frenzy in "Fortress Ireland", forced to queue outside "Justice" Department. Derek Speirs

Over the last few years a number of refugees seeking entry into "Fortress Europe" have ended up in "Fortress Ireland". Many asylum-seekers are black Africans — from the Congo, Somalia and Nigeria, countries which are ravaged by communal wars and famine. Another group are Roma (Gypsies) fleeing murderous terror by fascists and cops in Romania. In Ireland the media have retailed vile racist diatribes against blacks and whipped up hysteria about an "influx" of foreigners. The government strengthened the already draconian anti-immigrant laws, while Gardai hunt down "illegal" immigrants.

Immigrants fear for their lives in Dublin's city centre, where racist attacks have dramatically escalated. In April, Landu Kulubatulu, a 17-year-old from the Congo, required 17 stitches in his head after being slashed with a bottle; in May, three Nigerians were attacked in O'Connell Street in the afternoon, two were stabbed; on 5 July, Noel Makoko, also from the Congo, was viciously attacked in Dublin's Fairview Park by a gang of eight racist thugs; a pregnant black woman was assaulted in broad daylight. Most racist attacks go unreported for fear of deportation or racist attacks by the cops. In May, Belmondo Wantete, a black African who has Irish residency, was brutally assaulted by Gardai in a night-time raid on his home, dragged off and charged with assaulting the police! Drop the charges against Belmondo Wantete!

Some of the most virulent xenophobia in the press has been directed at Roma refugees. In the summer 47 Romanians, most of them Roma, survived a hellish journey in sealed cargo containers and found themselves in Ireland where they applied for asylum. Their applications have been rejected and they face deportation. The capitalist press howled about "floods" of refugees from Romania coming to Ireland, which is as absurd as it is

racist. As John O'Connell, director of Pavee Point, the Dublin Travellers Centre, pointed out: "I think the Roma will be surprised to find that the circumstances of Irish travellers aren't a million years from the circumstances they have left in terms of social status and basic rights" (*Magill*, October 1998). When the Department of Justice tried to re-register asylum-seekers they "found that many gypsies had already left" (*Irish Times*, 4 August). More than 6000 asylum seekers are awaiting decisions and Minister for "Justice" John O'Donoghue promised that 90 per cent will be deported! We say: *No deportations! Asylum for Roma, Africans and all refugees from right-wing terror!*

The racist furor has spawned racist vigilante gangs such as "Keltic Cross", various "residents associations" and "Reclaim Dublin" who publish xenophobic filth inciting racist murder, including calls on Irish men to fight to "keep Ireland green and white" (*Sunday Tribune*, 12 July). This slogan is not only the rallying cry of fascist gangs, it is the policy of the Fianna Fáil/Progressive Democrat government. The reformist Labour Party and Democratic Left (DL) were in the previous government which seized on a wave of racist hysteria to enact the 1997 "Aliens Order" and slammed the doors to refugees and asylum-seekers.

### Labourite bureaucracy: racist and anti-working class

Labour and DL are up to their necks in the racist policy of keeping Ireland "green and white". The Aliens Order they were instrumental in passing meant that for the first time immigration checks were introduced between Ireland and Britain. Blacks and Asians are now singled out for checks on arrival, including on the train from Belfast. New powers granted to immigration officials mean refugees who seek to enter "legally" are often deported on the

spot, thus denied the right to apply for asylum or to appeal against deportation. There is now virtually no legal way for refugees to enter Ireland. Many risk their lives in transit, paying extortionate sums to stow away in containers, often bound for an unknown destination in racist "Fortress Europe". Once inside the country, asylum seekers are forbidden to work for a living, forced on to welfare, and vilified in the racist press as "scroungers".

We demand *full citizenship rights for all immigrants* — the right to stay, to work, and all other rights of citizens, regardless of how they got here, or whether they are designated "legal" or "illegal" immigrants. What is needed is to mobilise the social power of the proletariat for defence of immigrants and to clean out the fascist gangs. We fight to forge a Leninist vanguard party of the proletariat modelled on the Russian Bolshevik Party which led the October Revolution in 1917. Lenin stressed that the revolutionary party must act as a "tribune of the people", opposing every instance of oppression and tyranny, in order to make the proletariat conscious of its role as the gravedigger of the capitalist system. Workers revolution will overthrow the capitalist order and smash the clericalist capitalist state, which is the only way to put an end to the exploitation of the working class and the hideous oppression of women, Travellers, and immigrants.

This task requires irreconcilable opposition to Labour reformism. Labour and the trade union bureaucracy shackle the working class to their exploiters, and act as a transmission belt for the clerical nationalism of the bourgeoisie into the working class. At every opportunity Labour has participated in coalition governments with openly capitalist parties, administering austerity, denying abortion rights to women, presiding over hideous oppression of Travellers and introducing racist measures against immigrants. For

decades the trade union bureaucracy have enforced class collaborationist schemes such as "Partnership 2000", an explicitly anti-working class alliance with the Irish bourgeoisie to keep down wages and boost profits. We say: Smash "Partnership 2000"! There can be no "partnership" between capital and labour, their interests are irreconcilable! Protectionist schemes to "save Irish jobs" are false promises which fuel nationalism and racism. Last year posters appeared in Dublin's inner city calling for "Irish jobs for Irish workers". This slogan could be the war cry of racist scum attacking foreigners, but it also expresses the nationalist, protectionist outlook of the Labourite bureaucracy.

The racist capitalist press and the government are trying to scapegoat refugees, for the ravages of capitalism, screaming lies about "economic" refugees getting "rich" in Ireland. The reality of the "Celtic Tiger" economy is wealth and affluence for capitalists, yuppies and property speculators, but for the working class and oppressed it means grinding poverty, chronic unemployment, and a scramble for paltry welfare payments among the vast majority of the population for whom the capitalist system offers no future. In areas of the inner cities there are pockets of 70 per cent unemployment. *One third* of the Irish population emigrates — the number of Romanians in Ireland is estimated at 1500, whereas the number of "illegal" Irish immigrants in the US in 1990 was roughly 130,000! The capitalist state has steadily increased its arsenal of repressive legislation, under the guise of combatting "drugs", "crime" and "terrorism", while in reality state repression is designed to regiment the poor and keep them under the heel of church and state.

"Partnership 2000" supports the European Union, which expresses the union bureaucracy's explicit commitment to racist Fortress Europe. As we wrote in an

*continued on page 11*