

For union/minority action to smash racist reaction!

Inner cities: Flashpoint for revolt



Andrew Wiard (Report)



Workers Hammer

March to Marylebone police station (left) protests against the deaths of Mohammed Parkit and Nenneh Jelloh after being in police custody. Ford Dagenham contingent (right) in London demo to support miners, June 1984. Miners strike showed power of working-class struggle for all oppressed.

Barely two weeks after the election, Chapeltown in Leeds exploded in the first inner-city revolt of Thatcher's third term. Police touched off the rebellion with the arrest of 17-year-old black youth Marcus Skellington. After they beat him with a truncheon and punched him in the face and head, Chapeltown youths had had enough. For two nights they fought, black and white together, against the racist cops whose brutality is a fact of life for masses of unemployed youth.

"It is a depressing start for both the inner-cities and the Prime Minister's ambitions for them", worried the *Guardian* (25 June). Thatcher's "ambitions" entail all-out class war

from her side. On the hit list: union rights, the NHS, education – you name it. Her poll tax explicitly aims to take from the poor and give to the rich. As the *Caribbean Times* (3 July) wrote, her policies "lead inexorably and willfully to the creation of a strong, authoritarian state and a sharply increased polarisation of society". And in this climate of aggressive reaction blacks and Asians in the inner cities are front-line targets for cop terror, fascist attack and economic and social degradation.

With the union bureaucrats preaching defeatism and the execrable Neil Kinnock saying "wait until 1992", the labour movement misleaders tell the oppressed to lie back and take it

through five more years of Thatcherism. But conditions in this country make social struggle of some kind inevitable. The great 1984-85 miners strike showed how *sharp class struggle* can mobilise the oppressed behind the power of the organised working class. The Tories' racist, union-busting rampage can and must be smashed. Today more than ever, it is clear that this requires *breaking* the deadening Labourite stranglehold over the working class and forging a new, revolutionary leadership of the workers and oppressed.

Increasingly the government relies on occupying police forces to keep things under "control" in the inner cities. The memory of integrated rebellions in 1981 and again in 1985 are fresh. To give a message of fear and intimidation, the courts keep meting out racist injustice: from the exoneration of Lovelock who shot Cherry Groce in Brixton two years ago, maiming her for life, to the frame-up convictions of three youths for the death of the cop Blakelock who expired during the Broadwater Farm police riots. Recently, nine cops involved in the Cherry Groce shooting have been let off after the predictable deliberations of the Police Complaints Authority. Seven were deemed totally blameless; two received slap-on-the-wrist reprimands.

The anti-immigrant crackdown too is escalating. A new immigration bill announced in the queen's speech "will severely affect the chances of many hundreds of Asian, mainly Bangladeshi, men resident in Britain since before 1973 of reuniting their families" (*Guardian*, 26 June). Already, according to Home Office figures, about "80 per cent of the fall in acceptances between the two latest 12-month periods was among wives and children" (*Times*, 11 June). Those who do manage to get in might expect the same fate as the some 70 "detainees" seeking political asylum stowed on board the prison hulk *Earl William* in Harwich. Or the tragic fate of Ahmed Katangole. A 24-year-old refugee from Uganda seeking political asylum, Katangole hanged himself while in detention at Pentonville Prison. The verdict of the inquest jury: "Official indifference and lack of care" (*African Times*, 10 July). The prison population of this wretched society is a telling statistic: over 50,000, ie nearly *one in every 1000*, behind bars. Overcrowding has reached such proportions that more prison hulks and army camps are to handle the overflow.

Thatcher pushed her anti-immigration policies to the fore in the late seventies in a conscious attempt to

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Soviet play explodes Stalin's Moscow Trials

**Spectre of Trotsky
haunts Gorbachev's Russia**

SEE PAGE SIX

For the right of armed self-defence!

Bath
29th April

Dear Comrades,

There were, I think, two omissions from your defence of the gaoled "Broadwater three" in WH no 87.

Integrated, union based defence guards are the answer to racist reaction - minorities cannot fight and win alone. This was made clear. But the absolute right to armed self-defence (down with "gun control" laws!) against racist terror - B.M. skinheads or criminal Lovelocks - was not there at all. (It is raised in other issues of WH, but the urgency grows if anything.) Those who battled the cops on Broadwater Farm should be honoured!

However, one of the three, Winston Silcott, is serving a life sentence for the murder of a black boxer who was knifed to death. The Old Bailey, we know, is not about Justice, and the greater number of "HM Prisoners" ought to be free men and women. But in calling for Silcott's release, this is not a thing that can be simply ignored or waived. As it happens W. Silcott's own community insist he is innocent of the boxer's death, and the police harassment of Silcott is on record, going back over years. So, even by the standards of bourgeois "Justice" he was falsely tried - framed, not

once, but twice. (Then lynched by the press.) You cannot defend Winston Silcott with the facility of a blind eye.

Yours fraternally,
RS

Workers Hammer replies: We agree with RS that the question of the right to armed self-defence is a critical one. This is particularly true now when racist, strikebreaking cops are unleashed in increasingly brutal fashion against the inner-city minority populations, against workers' strikes and demonstrations. The bourgeois state's monopoly of arms is openly flaunted in this country, where no formal encoding of the citizenry's right to bear arms exists - unlike the United States, for example, where the second amendment to the Constitution ostensibly guarantees this. However, this supposed right is acknowledged in the breach in those states like New York where gun control laws make it virtually impossible for most honest working people to own and/or carry firearms.

Historically, an example of the arming of the population took place in the 1640s with Cromwell's New Model Army, a necessary measure for the revolutionary bourgeoisie. But this was a shortlived experiment, eventually replaced by the hated

standing army and press-gang "conscripted". The erection of barracks near the industrial towns caused much discontent in the late eighteenth century and "the right of individuals to bear arms in their own defence was claimed by reformers" (EP Thompson, *The Making of the*



Workers Vanguard

Detroit, 1979: SL/US-initiated mobilisation against Ku Klux Klan.

English Working Class). Among the repressive Six Acts passed in the aftermath of the Peterloo Massacre of 1819 was the authorisation of justices to enter and search houses without warrants on suspicion of there being arms. This was of a piece with acts prohibiting drilling and "military" training and heavy restrictions on the right of assembly as well as of press freedom. At that time, the British ruling class was also very mindful of the impact of the French Revolution. The Chartists used revolutionary proletarian methods including strikes and armed insurrection in the years 1837-48 and for that reason were met with draconian state repression.

Today the restrictions on possession and use of firearms in this country are severe. Labourite moralists serve up the rubbish that this makes "little England" a civilised society, unlike the pistol-packing barbarians of America. Of course what it makes - just as the gun control laws in the US do - is an unarmed population at the mercy of the cops, fascists and criminals. Meanwhile, the police are indeed becoming "Americanised" in their methods - or more to the point, the methods employed in Northern Ireland are being brought "home". As we wrote of the very British Healyite Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) in 1975:

"The Healyites may believe, as reformists explicitly posit, that the British legal structure ('bobbies' without guns, for instance) is god-given and eternal, or that the armed fist of the class enemy is reserved for faraway places like Palestine or India (or, most distant of all for the Healyites, Ireland). But we would remind the WRP of Lenin's adamant view that the proletariat who does not know the use of arms is a self-willed slave." (*Workers Vanguard* no 81, 17 October 1975)

How many have since been martyred or maimed by trigger-happy "bobbies": Cynthia Jarrett, Cherry Groce, Clinton McCurbin - to name but a few.

We necessarily stressed, as RS notes, the mobilisation of the integrated organised workers movement

in alliance with the oppressed in our *Workers Hammer* no 87 front-page article. That political struggle is key. There are black nationalist organisations which advocate "community self-defence" as an explicitly separatist demand and one hostile to integrated proletarian struggle. (Some pro-Labour "leftists" use the same slogan to avoid doing anything about the fight against racist terror themselves.) Such a programme is suicidal - with or without arms. The militant nationalists of the Black Panther Party in the US were courageous in their defence of the ghetto against police terror - but isolated from the factories and unions (which contained many militant black workers) the Panthers' "pick up the gun" rhetoric could not defend against the murderous police campaign aimed at their physical extermination. There are no "absolute" rights in capitalist society.

One other point should be made here. We revolutionary communists claim the best of the revolutionary bourgeois tradition, including the right of the people to bear arms. We also live in the hideously racist, repressive society of capitalism in its death agony. It would be criminal lightmindedness to agitate for armed resistance to a police occupation of an isolated black or Asian community in the absence of a working-class mobilisation on behalf of the besieged residents. Such a call would betray a touching faith in the "democracy" of the capitalist state apparatus, an underestimation of the brutality of the rulers. As we noted in WH no 87: "Some of the most rabid Tories would no doubt like nothing better than a chance to try out the TSG [special police units, the Territorial Support Groups] against the next 'uprising' provoked by cop terror. But it wouldn't be so easy against union defence guards drawn from the integrated workforce of London Transport or car workers from the West Midlands or Ford Dagenham."

RS's information on the background to Winston Silcott's frame up in the Broadwater Farm trial is appreciated. Whatever the details of Silcott's previous conviction, he was clearly the victim of a gross racist frame up. There is every indication that the police had a particular axe to grind against him. Our defence of the three sentenced to life imprisonment for PC Blakelock's killing - convicted on no evidence by a ruling class intent on revenge - is not conditional upon the alleged truth or falsehood of past convictions. The whole show trial smacked of "democracy" South Africa-style and the victims of that frame up should be free - full stop. They were sent down because the government wanted to extract its pound of flesh for the 1985 police riot in Tottenham where the cops, for a change, came up one short.

Racist capitalism does not play by the rules - the police bombing of the black Philadelphia MOVE commune in 1985 was carried out without even the figleaf of "legality". British imperialism's murderous campaign against Irish Republicans is similarly conducted. Up against such monsters, the social power of the working class is the only answer. Armed with a revolutionary programme for the overthrow of the decaying, barbaric capitalist system, the proletariat will liberate all of humanity. ■



TROTSKY

The Moscow Trials

The "Transitional Programme", adopted at the founding conference of the Fourth International in 1938, noted that Soviet workers identified Trotskyism with authentic Bolshevism and opposition to the Stalinist bureaucracy. This tradition can be a potent force for reforging the Fourth International and defending the gains of the October Revolution.



LENIN

Petty-bourgeois democrats of the West, having but yesterday assayed the Moscow Trials as unalloyed gold, today repeat insistently that there is "neither Trotskyism nor Trotskyists within the USSR". They fail to explain, however, why all the purges are conducted under the banner of a struggle with precisely this danger. If we are to examine "Trotskyism" as a finished programme, and, even more to the point, as an organization, then unquestionably "Trotskyism" is extremely weak in the USSR. However, its indestructible force stems from the fact that it expresses not only revolutionary tradition but also today's actual opposition of the Russian working class. The social hatred stored up by the workers against the bureaucracy - this is precisely what from the viewpoint of the Kremlin clique constitutes "Trotskyism". It fears with a deathly and thoroughly well-grounded fear the bond between the deep but inarticulate indignation of the workers and the organization of the Fourth International.

- Leon Trotsky, "The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International" (September 1938)

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"Marxism '87": Kinnockite sheep in "socialist" clothing

Some questions to the SWP

We reprint below a Spartacist League leaflet distributed to the SWP's misnamed "Marxism 87". Fresh from its efforts to put Kinnock into Number Ten, the SWP implemented Kinnock's line on the left: SL members were excluded from all meetings. One leftist seen talking with us had his bag searched and was excluded because ... he was carrying SL literature! At the opening meeting SWP leader Tony Cliff proclaimed proudly that, on the elections, "this time we were clear, we were unequivocal—vote Labour!" Boggled down in the "downturn", keening for Kinnock, the Cliffites' week of hot air boasts of 270 "debates"—not one of which is on the miners strike.

"Which way for the left?" asks the SWP at its annual summer gathering. This question is put to militants by an organisation whose own answers have already been given in the form of grovelling Labourite reformism and electoralism covered with a thin veneer of phoney-left talk. But it is what you do—not just what you say—that counts in politics. What the SWP has done is provide the most fervent support for Labour in the recent elections, along with most of the fake-revolutionary left. It went all out to put the strikebreaking, anti-Communist, racist, anti-homo-

left in this country and the SWP came up pale pink. Wide sections of the working class and oppressed minorities were, for very good reason, disgusted with Kinnock's Labour Party. The elections provided an opportunity to counterpose a revolutionary working-class perspective, including standing candidates against Kinnock and his henchmen. Instead, as ever, the SWP insisted: "On election day, in the polling booth itself, there is no alternative to voting Labour", and turned itself into an electoral machine for the wretched scab Kinnock. This was no "Leninist tactic", but a loyalty oath to an openly right-wing Labour Party out to prove its credentials to the City and Cold War imperialists. Kinnock's main claim to fame was his open scabbering against the heroic 1984-85 miners strike, the most significant class battle in this country for decades. As we shall see, that was no bar to the SWP's fulsome support for Labour.

2. Why did the SWP scab on the 1984-85 miners strike?

The picket lines were the key battleground of the strike, as thousands of miners fought to defend their strike and spread it to other sections of the working class—



Christopher Davis (Report)

1984, Tony Cliff gloated: "We have steelworkers in Redcar who cross picket lines. We have three steelworkers in Scunthorpe, they cross picket lines. We have a steelworker in Ravenscraig who crosses picket lines. We have a steelworker in Llanwern who crosses picket lines...." Ob-scene, but true (and we have the tape). So when you listen to Cliff pontificating about "revolutionary politics" at his speechifying best it is worth remembering that had he dared defend such scabbing in the mining villages of South Wales, Yorkshire, Kent or Scotland, his health would have been at grave risk.

3. Why does the SWP refuse to mobilise against racist and fascist provocations?

In December last year when anti-racist students at Bristol University mobilised to stop Enoch "rivers of blood" Powell from making a race-hate speech, the SWP joined hands with the Labour Club to protect him. As far back as 1979 the much-ballyhooed, misnamed SWP-led Anti Nazi League was used to divert tens of thousands of anti-racist protesters to a Carnival in Brixton whilst thousands of National Front thugs marched with impunity through the heavily-Bangladeshi East End of London. Indeed, the SWP's stated policy is most clearly put in its own internal document: "We are saying at present, organise specifically against the nazis, and we'll build their organisation.... If the nazis start paper sales we should not pay them any special attention. If they attack a SW sale, make a tactical retreat and start again the following week" (*Discussion Bulletin*, August 1984).

Even the mainstream liberal Runnymede Trust noted that Labour and Tory alike played the racist card in the run-up to the election. The June issue of the anti-fascist monthly *Searchlight* underlined the real fascist menace in Britain and chronicled "the astonishing and unrelenting increase in racial attacks which now afflict minority communities all over the country". Locked into its defeatist Labourite framework, the SWP adopts the



Tony Cliff, Russia-hating social democrat, mouths off: "We were unequivocal—Vote Labour!"

posture of the ostrich. What is needed is union/minority mobilisations to smash the fascists and a Bolshevik party to act, in Lenin's words, as a "tribune of the oppressed". This is not compatible, to say the least, with the racism of Mr Judas Kinnock and Co who witch-hunt even those Labour black section spokesmen like Sharon Atkin who dare to say the simple truth: the Labour Party is a racist party.

4. Why does the SWP consistently side with British and US imperialism against the Soviet Union, homeland of the 1917 October Revolution?

Thatcher and Kinnock's anti-working class, anti-minority, anti-youth, anti-elderly, anti-immigrant policies are the logical result of their shared commitment to keeping Britain "safe" for NATO and the anti-Soviet war drive. "Neither Washington nor Moscow" adorns each and every issue of *Socialist Worker*. This so-called "third camp" stance means support for pro-imperialist agencies against the homeland of the October Revolution. Take Afghanistan, today's Cold War hot spot. Thatcher and the CIA are supplying Blowpipes and other anti-aircraft missiles to a gang of feudal cutthroats who literally buy and sell women like cattle and shoot school teachers for teaching young girls to read and write. Their battlecry is "Soviet troops out of Afghanistan!" And the SWP's slogan is exactly the same.

Seven years ago Paul Foot even used his *Daily Mirror* column to try and out-Thatcher Thatcher by whining that inexpensive EEC meat ("our beef") exported to the Soviet Union was finding its way to the Red Army in Afghanistan. But when it comes to *British imperialism's* troops, sent into Northern Ireland by Labour in 1969, the SWP supported this invasion for months. In Poland, counterrevolutionary Solidarnosc is the only "union" anywhere in the world supported by Thatcher and Reagan (not to mention the pope). Lech Walesa even openly backed the Tory government against

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Independent

PAUL FOOT  reporting

ARE WE PUTTING BEEF INTO RUSSIA'S INVASION?

THE Russian army in Afghanistan may be feeding on British beef. That's my suspicion after speaking to Mr John Lawrence, a long-distance lorry driver from North West Gloucestershire. A couple of months ago, he says, he was cooking beef by the road in the Channel, for not taking to some other... from a firm in... military vehicles and accorded to... about 30 miles inside the... meat was upland on to... British troops. They were sold, for... Mr. Lawrence made the... he told me: "While Mr... Thatcher is trying to stop... to the Chinese... in... it seems to me... to... A Communist spokesman in..."

SWP's Paul Foot tries to out-Thatcher Thatcher over Afghanistan. Against Islamic reactionaries (above), Spartacists say: "Hail Red Army!"

sexual bigot and big-time loser Neil Kinnock into Number Ten. So here are some questions for the SWP.

1. Why did the SWP campaign for Neil Kinnock's Labour Party?

Six weeks ago SWP wallposters plastered around the country proclaimed "VOTE LABOUR" in big, bold letters. ("But build a fighting socialist alternative", whimpered the small-print addition.) The June elections were an acid test for the

against the backstabbing of the Labour/TUC leadership. The SWP treacherously pronounced the strike "an extreme example of what we in the Socialist Workers Party have called the 'downturn' in the movement" (*Socialist Review*, April 1984). Then it publicly bragged about crossing miners' picket lines!

Speaking at a major SWP public meeting in London on 23 August

United-front action in Rouen

French Trotskyists lead fight against racist ban

The following article and accompanying box have been adapted from *Le Bolchevik* (no 75, July-August 1987), monthly newspaper of the Ligue Trotskyiste de France.

For two weeks, from 25 May to 3 June, every evening at 7.00pm, 100 people picketed in front of the Flunch restaurant in the centre of Rouen. They were responding to the call by the Ligue Trotskyiste de France (LTF) for a boycott protesting against the restaurant's racist policy of systematically barring admittance to North Africans and blacks. As fascist attacks on immigrant neighbourhoods continue to mount and the government maintains its racist "nationalities" bill (threatening to deport "trainloads" of "foreigners"), the urgency of this anti-racist boycott is dramatically heightened.

In mid-April, after receiving numerous complaints, a local radio station asked a notary public to be an official witness accompanying five young North Africans as they attempted to enter the restaurant. The notary reported that the security guard at the door barred their way, explaining: "Management has given orders and I am not allowed to let in anyone who looks like an Arab or who is black." Youth from Rouen's working-class/immigrant suburbs have long been victims of such racist practices in the provincial city's "chic" nightspots. Now the blatant segregation by the restaurant's manager Robinet has become a symbol and must be stopped!

The Ligue Trotskyiste, section of the international Spartacist tendency, is known in the region for having initiated a united-front mobilisation of more than 400 people in December 1981 to stop the fascists. An LTF leaflet distributed on 23 May at markets in the working-class suburbs of Rouen called for protest demonstrations at the Flunch: "In the context of the rise of Le Pen, whose meetings are regularly followed by pogroms (as at Marseille and Lyon), we must act now against this scandalous racial discrimination. What's needed to definitively crush the fascist scum is a massive mobilisation by the working class organised by the trade unions and immigrant organisations."

While Rouen's daily newspaper remained silent, several radio stations and the local TV news publicised this call. For two weeks, some 100 persons representing numerous political organisations, immigrant associations and trade unions participated in a militant picket chanting, "Boycott the Flunch!", "Down with racist segregation!" and "Full citizenship rights for immigrants!" Demonstrators applauded as a sizable number of the restaurant's clientele walked out after reading the leaflet condemning the racist ban.

The mobilisations broadened during the second week. A number of *beurs* (second generation North African



Protesters picket Flunch restaurant for refusing to serve blacks and North Africans.

youth) arrived from the immigrant ghettos. Speakers at the pickets included two trade unionists from the Renault-Cleon car factory. And on 27 May the branch of the CGT union federation at the plant sent a telegram to the Flunch's Paris head office:

"In the name of the 7000 employees of the enterprise: the Renault-Cleon CGT trade union energetically protests against racist measures and violation of human rights by Flunch management against workers and immigrant employees. Demand immediate halt to all racist measures barring access to eating facilities. Will take necessary steps to inform employees and population if this revolting decision stands."

Certainly a thousand Renault workers in front of the Flunch would convince local restaurant owners that racist segregation is bad for business.

The LTF initiative received a broad response because of concern over the rise in racist terror and the activity of fascist gangs. Protest telegrams and letters began arriving from, among others, the CGT postal workers branch at Tours, a CGT and a CFTD branch at two Paris post offices, and other unions; a branch of the Communist Party in Lyon and one of the main anti-racist organisations in the same city, CIMADE; and various professors including Marxist philosopher Etienne Balibar. On 5 June a united-front demonstration at a Paris branch of the Flunch was called by the LTF in conjunction with two groups of members and ex-members of the Communist Party, Tribune Communiste and the Union Communiste de France. Some 70 people participated in a spirited picket line. These pickets were exemplary actions showing the road to more massive working-class mobilisation.



Le Bolchevik photos

On 4 June, after ten days of militant picketing organised by the LTF, one of France's main anti-racist organisations, the MRAP, called a demonstration in Rouen. The Communist Party threw its weight behind this demonstration, which brought out some 1000 demonstrators including a number of trade-union contingents. The Ligue Trotskyiste joined the call for the protest and organised a 100-strong contingent, including many *beurs* who had come out during the week. A supporter of the LTF at Renault-Cleon addressed the protesters, and as the demonstration broke up another LTF spokesman addressed the crowd. Many CPers listened attentively as she stressed how the Mitterrand popular front's racist re-

pression paved the way for the reactionaries.

With the 4 June demonstration, a new stage opened up. The visible and threatening presence of fascist thugs protecting the Flunch along with the cops raised the stakes. And even if he later had to pull back (see box), the Flunch manager sought an injunction against the LTF in the courts in order to prove the determination of the local reactionaries. It is more than ever up to the leadership of the labour movement – and particularly to the Communist Party and the CGT – to take up the challenge. This is the only way to win a victory.

But this requires a break with all illusions that the bourgeois state has the desire, or the ability, to defend

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Racist court suit dropped

A victory for the LTF

Not satisfied with preventing blacks and North Africans from entering his restaurant, the manager of Flunch in Rouen, M Robinet, also tried to prevent the protest demonstrations against this racist segregation.

On 12 June the LTF received an injunction to appear in the Rouen high court. The manager wanted "to put a stop to the disturbance created by the demonstrations" which took place in front of his restaurant for a fortnight at our comrades' initiative. (Robinet complained of having lost customers during the mobilisations, and left open the possibility of demanding reparations

from the LTF. If one is to believe his own figures, about half the potential customers avoided entering the restaurant.) But the only manifest disturbance is that provoked by the Flunch management with its segregationist policy! It is this racist outrage which must stop!

Robinet wanted to be able to segregate in silence and to intimidate decent people who dare to defend their rights: the right not to be segregated and the right to demonstrate. These are among the rights recognised by the Declaration of the Rights of Man of 1789, claimed even by the introduction to the preface to the Constitution of the French

Fifth Republic! But this attempt at intimidation didn't last long. The LTF replied immediately with a campaign calling on working-class and democratic organisations to send protest telegrams to the president of the court. The broad response to this campaign showed clearly how defence of these rights was at stake. An injury to one is an injury to all! Faced with the success of the telegram campaign, Robinet asked his lawyer to withdraw the court action "purely and simply". This is a victory for all those who demonstrated to boycott Flunch and for all who demanded a halt to persecution against *Le Bolchevik*.

Trying to mask his defeat and desperate to save face, Robinet argued that there were no longer demonstrations in front of his restaurant. A specious argument, as the request for an injunction was sent nine days after the last protest picket. In fact, he knew he was going to lose. Now that a judicial action

has been opened against him because of complaints against his discrimination (*Paris-Normandie*, 5 June), an unfavourable sentence wouldn't have been of much help for the trial - if it ever came to a trial!

This first victory must strengthen the determination of all those who struggle against racist terror and discrimination.

Among organisations sending telegrams or letters of protest to the president of the Rouen high court were: CGT union branches in Renault-Cleon, the commune of Canteleu and the PTT (post office and telegraph) in Tours north-west, the Rouen Anti-racist Collective, Union of Tunisian Immigrant Workers in Paris, Tribune Communiste and the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (Rouen section). Among telegrams from individuals, we are particularly pleased to mention one sent by a British miner from Lea Hall pit in the Midlands.

victims of racial oppression. Workers and immigrants can rely only on their own force, their own organisation and their own mobilisations. Before the demonstration, the MRAP and the CP (in its paper *l'Avenir de la Seine-Maritime*, 3-9 June) had asserted their intention to demonstrate in front of the Flunch. The ominous presence of cops and fascists, who had made the area around the Flunch a veritable ambush, made this impossible. But this was because the thousand demonstrators (who constituted a real force) were not prepared to deal with this provocation in the appropriate manner. Concretely, this would have meant a solid defence guard, well prepared and determined, formed of dockers and car workers, with the whole weight of their unions behind them.

The MRAP-led demonstration did not have such a character; thus it limited itself to a demand that the court open an inquiry and apply the 1972 anti-racist law. We have nothing against taking this racist manager to court. But one thing must be understood: bourgeois "justice" acts only when hundreds of workers are in the streets! No illusions in a "justice" that lets go the murderers of Malik, the North African youth killed by cops during last December's student revolt! Reforms and legal victories are simply by-products of the class struggle.

As the demonstration rallied in front of Rouen cathedral, the forces of "law and order" showed their sympathies once again: three fascists came up from behind police lines to launch their provocations. And when one of these provocateurs received a well-deserved lesson the cops charged. Many CGT and CP militants feel this in their guts: throughout the demonstration, chants like "Cops, fascists, murderers!" and "Mitterrand, Pasqua [government interior minister] are responsible!" kept flaring up. But only the Ligue Trotskyste contingent gave the programmatic response with its slogans: "Jail the torturer/ murderer-cops!", "No confidence in the bourgeois state to crush the fascists!", "Full citizenship rights for immigrants!" and "Worker/immigrant self-defence squads based on the trade unions!"

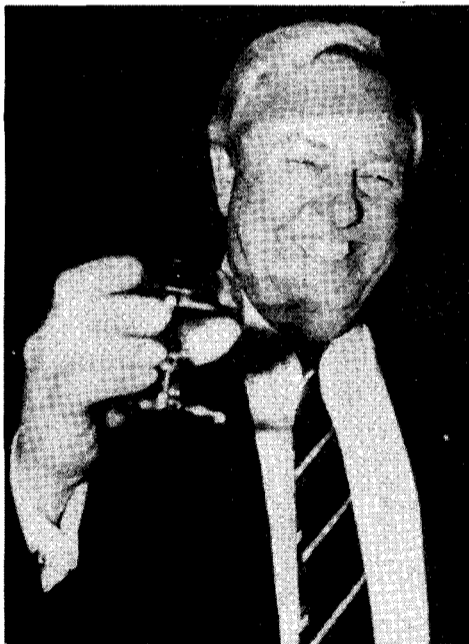
Many CP and CGT militants understand that the passivity of their leaders in the face of Le Pen's growth is suicidal. The fascists have the entire workers' movement in their crosshairs. (The popularity on the

demonstration of our slogan "Le Pen wants to crush the unions, but he loves Solidarnosc" is explained in part by this sentiment.) But they must understand that their leadership is against the revolutionary programme capable of ending racial oppression; it is even against the elementary notion that everyone who toils in France and is exploited by the bosses must enjoy full citizenship rights for himself and his family. And if it is true that Mitterrand's popular front is responsible for unleashing the

more, the LCR and the Collective disgracefully split the 4 June demonstration, seeking to substitute the Palace of Justice for the police headquarters as the focal point of the march - as if there was the slightest political difference! If after weeks of almost complete inactivity they found themselves tailing along behind the MRAP and CP demo ("reinforced in numbers by the LTF", in the words of *Rouge*, 11-17 June), it is in fact, as the LCR weekly continues, "because the collective has been para-

Democracy", the trade union LO leads at Renault-CKD, in the Rouen docks?

The escalating confrontation around the racist segregation in Rouen is a crystallisation of the political situation in France today. During the trial of the SS "Butcher of Lyon" Klaus Barbie with its grisly testimony, Le Pen's National Front openly paraded defending the Nazi-collaborationist Vichy dictatorship. While Le Pen pursues his rabid attempts to whip up anti-AIDS hysteria, the reactionary ruling coalition of Jacques



Gerard Rancnan-Sygm

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



Pascal Parrot-Sygm

wave of racist terror which, together with anti-Sovietism, has paved the road to Le Pen, where is the alternative? Certainly not in the "new popular majority" pushed by the CP - a new (hypothetical) repeat of this very same popular front! We Trotskyists say to these militants that a new leadership is needed, armed with the Leninist programme.

As for the social democrats and pseudo-revolutionaries around the Rouen Anti-racist Collective, the 4 June demonstration proved their miserable bankruptcy. The Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (French section of the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat) and its allies did all they could to keep the LTF out of their meetings for the "crime" ... of having launched an anti-racist action and being the initiators of the Flunch boycott. This Collective then proceeded to boycott the boycott of the Flunch - a line happily not shared by some 100 *beurs*, young blacks, political and trade union militants. Further-

lysed in the recent period, involved in debates and going in circles instead of calling quickly for a mass response". An admonition, in mild language, from the LCR national leadership against its Rouen section! Happily, the LCR managed subsequently to overcome its sectarianism and did protest against the legal attack on *Le Bolchevik*.

Lutte Ouvriere showed up at pickets in front of the Flunch, albeit "in a personal capacity". But their behaviour at the end of the 4 June demonstration was completely irresponsible. They tried to pull the demonstrators, without any preparation, into the fascist/police ambush near the Flunch. And when they arrived at the Palace of Justice (a short distance from the Flunch) they simply withdrew together with the LCR and its allies in the Anti-racist Collective! And anyway what did LO do to build this demonstration among the working class, with its famous "factory papers"? Or where was "Workers

Chirac has openly declared that it needs the support of these fascist gangsters to stay in power and win the presidential elections of 1988.

The reformist misleaders and their "far left" hangers-on are attempting to channel popular revulsion to Chirac into a new Mitterrand popular front. (During the last presidential campaign, the CP even joined in the chauvinist backlash when the Communist mayor of Vitry, a Paris suburb, bulldozed an immigrant workers' hostel.)

But last winter's student strikes, mass protests against racist cop murder, and the powerful railworkers strike are still fresh in the memory. The power of the working class must be brought to bear to stop the fascists in their tracks with massive united-front demonstrations and political strikes. The workers movement and the oppressed must mobilise their forces now to defeat this dangerous offensive of rightist reaction. ■

Soviet play explodes Stalin's Moscow Trials

Spectre of Trotsky haunts Gorbachev's Russia

They were accused of being saboteurs and terrorists, agents of Nazi Germany and imperial Japan. "I demand that dogs gone mad should be shot, every one of them!" screeched prosecutor Andrei Vyshinsky at the Moscow Trials of the mid-1930s. And every last one of them was shot.

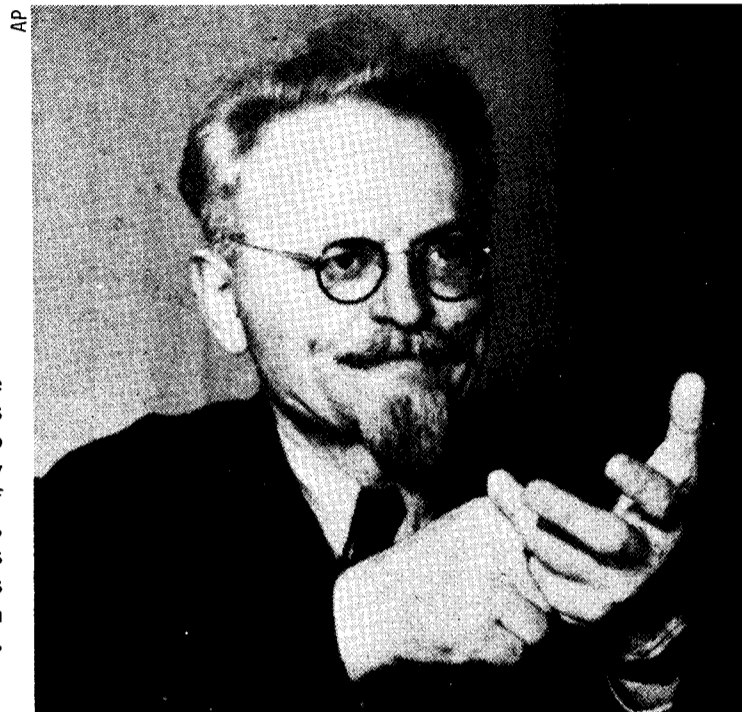
They were the Bolshevik Central Committee of 1917, Lenin's closest comrades-in-arms, the men and women who guided the fledgling Soviet state through the civil war and imperialist military intervention, the commanders of the Red Army and founders of the Communist International. In the monstrous frame-ups known as the Moscow Trials, Stalin exterminated the founding generation of the modern Communist movement. And in 1940 a Stalinist assassin drove a mountaineer's axe into the skull of the man who above all symbolised the revolutionary spirit of Bolshevism: Leon Trotsky.

But now a play, Mikhail Shatrov's "The Peace Treaty of Brest-Litovsk" (originally written in 1962), is reportedly scheduled to open in Moscow on the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution. The text of the play was recently published in the literary monthly *Novy Mir*. According to the *New York Times* (30 April), this work "portrays Trotsky and Bukharin as devoted associates of Lenin, though misguided by excessive revolutionary zeal". It may be difficult for a Western audience to appreciate the shock effect for Russians of a Soviet play which presents

Trotsky and Bukharin as authentic leaders of the Bolshevik Revolution.

The Bolshevik Old Guard murdered by Stalin have been treated as *non-persons* in the present-day Soviet Union, and earlier were branded as "traitors to the socialist motherland". Well within living memory, anyone who defended the victims of the Moscow Trials was sent to a Siberian labour camp. Only yesterday to write favourably of Bukharin or especially Trotsky was enough to get one expelled from the Communist Party, sacked from one's job and victimised in all kinds of ways. Why this taboo that has lasted half a century? Because the Kremlin bureaucracy, under both Stalin and his heirs, had at all costs to suppress the authentic Leninist programme, represented by the Trotskyist Left Opposition.

Now the Moscow Trials are being exploded in this Moscow play. So long as the figures are more or less historically accurate, it means the rehabilitation of every shot Old Bolshevik. Once the Kremlin bureaucrats do this, they can no longer be silent about the role of and what happened to any of the leaders of the October Revolution. Whatever the intentions of Shatrov or the Gorbachev regime, the play indicts the Stalinist gravediggers of the revolution. There remains in the Soviet Union an abiding identification of Trotsky with the ideals of the Bolshevik Revolution, which are alive in the consciousness of the people. If the Bolshevik Old Guard are restored to



AP
After machine gun attack on his home in Mexico in 1940, Trotsky accuses Stalin of seeking his death. A few months later he was assassinated by a Stalinist agent.

their rightful places, Trotsky's fight for Leninist internationalism against Stalin's conservative nationalism can no longer be buried.

IT IS THE KREMLIN BUREAUCRACY WHICH STANDS ACCUSED

For some time, various fake-Trotskyist outfits have appealed to Stalin's heirs in the Kremlin to rehabilitate Trotsky, Bukharin, Zinoviev and the other Old Bolsheviks. Gorbachev's *glasnost* (openness) has revived these grotesque appeals. There is now a campaign in Britain, also involving a number of left Labour MPs, to "Clear the Names of the Accused in the Moscow Trials". It calls "on the Soviet government to re-examine the cases against all these victims of the perversion of Soviet justice".

Trotsky and the other Old Bolsheviks don't need to be rehabilitated! The Dewey Commission of 1937 exposed the Moscow Trials as a monstrous frame-up. History has just been a little slow to catch up with this verdict. For many years workers and intellectuals entrapped in the Stalinist movement actually believed that Trotsky was a Nazi agent. Seeking to counter this incredible slander, in 1946 his widow, Natalya Sedova, even made a pathetic and misguided request that the Nuremberg tribunal on Nazi war crimes take up the case of Trotsky in order to show he had nothing to do with the Gestapo. But especially after Khrushchev's 1956 "secret speech" denouncing the crimes of Stalin, no one in the world believed the charges of the Moscow Trials any longer.

Trotsky in particular is regarded as a noble and heroic figure even by

people far from sympathetic to the Trotskyist cause of international proletarian revolution. The eminent British left-liberal historian AJP Taylor concluded an essay on Trotsky: "Colonel Robins, the American Red Cross representative at Petrograd, pronounced history's verdict: 'A four-kind son-of-a-bitch, but the greatest Jew since Jesus Christ.'" French New Wave director Alain Resnais used the figure of Trotsky in exile in his film *Stavisky* as personifying opposition to the decadent, corruption-ridden Third Republic of the 1930s. The French bourgeoisie thought so, too. In 1939 the French ambassador to Germany, Robert Coulondre, warned Hitler, if war breaks out "there would be only one real victor - Mr. Trotsky". Such examples can be multiplied a hundredfold. In the political consciousness of the contemporary world Trotsky stands as a paragon of revolutionary integrity and militancy.

Thus the old Stalinist slanders against Trotsky and the other Bolshevik leaders and their treatment as non-persons in present-day Russia discredit the Soviet bureaucracy - crimes justified by lies and followed by cover-up. So now the Kremlin misleaders are trying to rehabilitate themselves. The Gorbachev regime, which takes pride in its suave handling of public opinion, has shifted the official Soviet treatment of Trotsky. He is now presented as a revolutionary romantic, an ultraleftist whose political line would embroil the Soviet state in disastrous wars with the Western imperialist powers.

This distortion is not a new invention; it is also taken right from the ideological arsenal of Stalinism. Before Stalin accused Trotsky of being



Penguin
Lenin and Trotsky with Red Army soldiers who defeated the 1921 Kronstadt uprising.

Defend the Soviet Union through world revolution!

a Nazi agent he accused him of advocating military adventurism against the West. For example, S Rabinovich's Stalinist-revisionist *History of the Civil War* (1935) condemns Trotsky for allegedly wanting to "bring the revolution to Europe on the bayonets of the Red Army". The extermination of the Bolshevik Old Guard and the special vilification of the Left Opposition in the Moscow Trials of the mid-1930s was designed to further Stalin's programme of "socialism in one country", in particular through the "popular front" with the "democratic" imperialist powers (Britain and France) against Nazi Germany. Simultaneously, Stalin strangled the Spanish Revolution.

Shatrov's play about Brest-Litovsk serves the Stalinist programme of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism although it was not written by one of Gorbachev's glib propagandists. Written in 1962, it is a product of the ferment which gripped the Soviet intelligentsia following Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin. In the late 1950s, the Stalinist victims of the Moscow Trials and military men like Marshal Tukhachevsky were officially rehabilitated. But as the late Isaac Deutscher wrote at the time, it was grotesque and indecent that little-known Stalinist apparatchiks like Eikhe and Postyshev were rehabilitated with much fanfare while nothing was said of Trotsky, Bukharin or Zinoviev.

Surviving veterans of the revolution and civil war, families of the Moscow Trials victims and young Communist intellectuals like Roy Medvedev demanded historical justice for the Bolshevik Old Guard. In 1962 Khrushchev promised Bukharin's widow and son to consider restoring the man Lenin once called "the favourite of the whole Party" to party honour. But by then the Khrushchevite "thaw" was already freezing over, and after Khrushchev was ousted in 1964 a lid was clamped on those intellectuals concerned with the fate of the Bolshevik Old Guard. Roy Medvedev, for example, was expelled from the Communist Party in 1968 after writing a letter to *Pravda* criticising an article which had defended Stalin.

But the ghosts of the Bolshevik Old Guard refused to lie buried. Now, since Gorbachev has stated "there must be no forgotten names, no blank spaces, either in history or in literature", there has been a spate of new and long-suppressed works dealing with the crimes of Stalin and the "hidden history" of Soviet Russia. They're again attacking Stalin's sabotage of the Soviet Union's defence against the Nazi German invasion of 1941. And a new edition of the Soviet encyclopedia *The Great October Socialist Revolution* to be published this autumn will include for the first time such figures as Trotsky, Kamenev and Radek.

Lenin's General Staff of 1917

STALIN, THE EXECUTIONER, ALONE REMAINS



The Central Committee of The Bolshevik Party in 1917

American Trotskyists' *Socialist Appeal* (1938) documented Stalin's extermination of the Bolshevik leadership of the October Revolution. Socialist Appeal

Lenin's Testament

Lenin's "Testament", written in December 1922-January 1923 for the 12th Congress of the Communist Party, was totally suppressed in the Soviet Union for almost 40 years. While published in the 1961 edition of Lenin's Collected Works, it was only recently widely publicised in the English, French and Russian-language Moscow News. It has naturally become a hot item of discussion and debate in Soviet political and intellectual circles.

"...Comrade Stalin, having become Secretary-General, has unlimited authority concentrated in his hands, and I am not sure whether he will always be capable of using that authority with sufficient caution.

Comrade Trotsky, on the other hand, as his struggle against the C.C. on the question of the People's Commissariat for Communications has already proved, is distinguished not only by outstanding ability. He is personally perhaps the most capable man in the present C.C., but he has displayed excessive self-assurance and shown excessive preoccupation with the purely administrative side of the work....

Bukharin is not only a most valuable and major theorist of the Party; he is also rightly considered the favourite of the whole Party, but his theoretical views can be classified as fully Marxist only with great reserve, for there is something

scholastic about him (he has never made a study of dialectics, and, I think, never fully understood it)....

December 25, 1922

Stalin is too rude and this defect, although quite tolerable in our midst and in dealings among us Communists, becomes intolerable in a Secretary-General. That is why I suggest that the comrades think about a way of removing Stalin from that post and appointing another man in his stead who in all other respects differs from Comrade Stalin in having only one advantage, namely, that of being more tolerant, more loyal, more polite and more considerate to the comrades, less capricious, etc...."

January 4, 1923

Lenin

THE GORBACHEV LINE AND BREST-LITOVSK

Why has Shatrov's play on the 1918 Brest-Litovsk treaty with Germany, written a quarter of a century ago, now been revived and on such an auspicious occasion as the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution?

Because Gorbachev has utilised and distorted the dispute within the Bolshevik leadership over signing this treaty to justify conciliation of imperialism in general and opposition to revolutionary war in principle. Addressing the 27th Congress of the CPSU early last year, he stated:

"...socialism has never, of its own free will, related its future to any military solution of international problems. This was borne out at the very first big discussion [over the Brest-Litovsk treaty] that took place in our Party after the victory of the Great October Revolution. During that discussion, as we may recall, the views of the 'Left Communists' and the Trotskyites, who championed the theory of 'revolutionary war' which, they claimed, would carry socialism to other countries, were firmly rejected.... Today, too, we are firmly convinced that pushing revolutions from outside, and doubly so by military means, is futile and inadmissible." (*New Times* [Moscow], 10 March 1986)

What Gorbachev is concerned with here is not simply, or mainly, general

principles and historical analysis. Since late 1979 the Soviet army has been fighting and winning a war in Afghanistan against CIA-armed Islamic fanatics who want to re-enslave Afghan women to the veil. In a bureaucratically deformed way Russia is now engaged in a revolutionary war on its southern border. US imperialism has demanded Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan as a key test of Gorbachev's "sincerity" in seeking better relations.

For its part, the Gorbachev regime has indicated a willingness to abandon Afghanistan if a face-saving deal can be made. But "national reconciliation" with the feudal Islamic reactionaries is utterly unreal, and would mean abandoning Afghanistan to imperialist-backed counterrevolutionary war. And in denouncing revolutionary war, Gorbachev may also be going after the Vietnamese, whose liberation of Kampuchea from the genocidal Pol Pot regime has upset US imperialism and its local ASEAN puppets.

Shatrov's play on the Brest-Litovsk treaty falsifies Lenin's position in a continued on page 8



Left Oppositionists in Siberian exile colony (circa 1928) demonstrate on anniversary of Bolshevik Revolution. No credit

Gorbachev...

(continued from page 7)

way that serves the Gorbachev line. While only the concluding scene has to date been translated into English (*New Times*, 30 March), the political thrust of the work is clear. The play ends with Lenin giving this supposed speech:

"We have to build, and hence for us the desire for peace is not a tactical manoeuvre in a moment of weakness, it the sum and substance of the whole of our policy, our whole lives. An hour of peace is worth a thousand times more to socialism than a day of war, even a victorious war."

Lenin never said anything remotely like this during the Brest-Litovsk dispute or any other time. In fact, he said *exactly the opposite* in the very article in which he argued for

powers at Brest-Litovsk, the German high command demanded a peace of surrender, annexing Poland, the Baltic lands, Byelorussia and much of the Ukraine. Voicing the indignation of many Communist militants, Bukharin called for "a holy war against militarism and imperialism". Lenin did not oppose such a war in principle. But he insisted that the fledgling Soviet state did not at that moment have the forces to wage it. Even Shatrov's play has Lenin arguing against Bukharin: "A revolutionary war requires an army—we have no army." The Soviet state soon built the Red Army, led by Trotsky, which drove the forces of 14 imperialist powers out of Russia.

Under the slogan "neither war nor peace", Trotsky sought a middle way between Bukharin's call for a revolutionary war and Lenin's willingness

brought the Red Army to the borders of national Poland. The question was then posed point blank: conclude peace with Pilsudski or go over to the offensive in a revolutionary war against Poland.

Of the top Bolshevik leaders Trotsky most strongly advocated an immediate peace. In his 1930 autobiography, *My Life*, he explained his position:

"Even more perhaps than any one else, I did not want this war, because I realized only too clearly how difficult it would be to prosecute it after three years of continuous civil war...."

"A point of view that the war which began as one of defense should be turned into an offensive and revolutionary war began to grow and acquire strength. In principle, of course, I could not possibly have any objection to such a course. The question was simply one of the correlation of forces."

So much for the Gorbachev line that Trotsky was a compulsive military adventurer!

The hardliner on the Bolshevik Central Committee for a revolutionary war against Pilsudski's Poland was none other than Lenin. In particular, he argued that the road linking Soviet power with Germany, then still in the throes of revolution, lay through Warsaw. Speaking to a congress of leather industry workers in October 1920, shortly after the Red Army was turned back from Warsaw, Lenin stated:

"The Versailles Peace has turned Poland into a buffer state which is to guard against German contact with Soviet communism and is regarded by the Entente as a weapon against the Bolsheviks...."

"Had Poland turned Soviet, had the Warsaw workers received from Soviet Russia help they awaited and welcomed, the Peace of Versailles would have been smashed, and the entire international system set up as a result of the victory over Germany would have collapsed. France would not then have had a buffer protecting Germany against Soviet Russia."

So much for the Gorbachev line that Lenin opposed using the Red Army to promote revolution in capitalist Europe!

And it's worth noting that a major cause of the Russian defeat in Poland was that Stalin, then senior commissar on the southern front, repeatedly defied orders from the Soviet Supreme Command to reinforce Tukhachevsky's main army outside Warsaw. This failure allowed Pilsudski, aided by French military advisers, to successfully attack Tukhachevsky's flank. (For a discussion of the 1920 Russo-Polish war and the disputes generated by it within the Bolshevik leadership, see "The Bolsheviks and the 'Export of Revolution'", *Spartacist* [English edition] no 29, Summer 1980.)

RETURN TO THE PATH OF LENIN AND TROTSKY!

Gorbachev and his intellectual supporters doubtless think they're being very clever in handling the explosive Trotsky question. They are rehabilitating him in a backhanded way without actually condemning Stalin for murdering the co-leader of the October Revolution. They have conceded that Trotsky was subjectively a revolutionary while portraying him as an ultra-leftist and military adventurer. But

The last words of Adolf Joffe

Adolph Joffe was one of Trotsky's oldest and closest political collaborators, joining the Bolshevik Central Committee with him in July 1917. His health failing and persecuted by the Stalinist regime, he committed suicide in 1927. Near his deathbed was found a letter to Trotsky.

"I have never doubted the correctness of the way you have pointed out, and you know that for more than twenty years, ever since the 'Permanent Revolution', I have been with you. But I have always thought that you lacked the inflexibility, the intransigence of Lenin, his resolution to remain at the task alone, if need be, in the road that he had marked out, sure of a future majority, of a future recognition by all of the rightness of that road. You have always been right politically, beginning with 1905, and I have often told you that with my own ears I have heard Lenin admit that in 1905 it was not he, but you, who were right. In the face of death one does not lie, and I repeat this to you now.

But you have often renounced your right position in favour of an agreement, a compromise, whose value you overestimated. That was wrong, I repeat: politically you have always been in the right, and now more than ever you are in the right. Some day the party will understand this, and history be forced to recognize it.

Moreover, don't be afraid today if certain ones desert you."

— from *The Last Words of Adolf Joffe: A Letter to Leon Trotsky*, 16 November 1927

Gorbachev will be no more successful in bending the history of Soviet Russia to his line of "peaceful co-existence" than Stalin was in falsifying the history of the revolution with the executioner's bullet.

Politically thoughtful Soviet workers as well as intellectuals will want to see for themselves what Trotsky had to say. If Gorbachev's talk of *glasnost* and removing the "blank spaces" in Soviet history are to mean anything, the state publishing houses should bring out the writings of Leon Trotsky, co-leader of the October Revolution. There the Soviet reader will find courageous denunciations of Stalin's crimes and betrayals at the time, not half a century late. They will learn of the existence of tens of thousands of Left Oppositionists in the USSR who went to their deaths rather than betray the heritage of October.

They will also find a programme to overcome the corruption, social pathology (eg, widespread alcoholism) and political and economic malaise of Gorbachev's Russia. And they will find a programme to end once and for all the terrible threat of nuclear holocaust which hangs over mankind. That programme is to return to the road of Lenin, to reforge Trotsky's Fourth International, to restore soviet democracy by ousting the Kremlin bureaucracy, and extend the October Revolution to the entire planet.

Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 430, 12 June 1987

ИЗВЕСТИЯ
Неделя
20-26 April 1987



Михаил Шатров

— Михаил Филиппович, сильное впечатление производит на читателей ваша пьеса «Брестский мир», опубликованная в апрельском номере журнала «Новый мир». Текст ее завершается датой: 1962—1987. Вы работали над пьесой четверть века?
— Нет, «Брестский мир» — моя первая пьеса о Ленине, написанная в 1962 году. Она была опубликована в журнале «Новый мир» в 1962 году. Я работал над пьесой четверть века.

TOWARDS THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

THE BREST PEACE

Excerpts from the new play by Mikhail Shatrov

From the Editors:

Seventy years. Is this a long or a short time? The answer to this common rhetorical question is that, on the one hand, it is a long time, but on the other, it is a short time. It is a long time because the revolution was a historic event, and it is a short time because the revolution was a tragic moment of the human condition.

NEW TIMES
30 March 1987

Play on Brest-Litovsk treaty, originally written in 1962 by Mikhail Shatrov (shown above in *Izvestia Weekly*), portrays Trotsky and Bukharin as authentic Bolshevik leaders.

immediately accepting the German terms:

"Unquestionably, even at this juncture we must prepare for a revolutionary war. We are carrying out this promise, as we have, in general, carried out all our promises that could be carried out at once: we annulled the secret treaties, offered all peoples a fair peace, and several times did our best to drag out peace negotiations so as to give other peoples a chance to join us.

"But the question whether it is possible to carry on a revolutionary war now, immediately, must be decided exclusively from the point of view of whether material conditions permit it, and of the interests of the socialist revolution which has already begun." ("On the History of the Question of the Unfortunate Peace", January 1918, emphasis in original)

What, then, was the dispute over the Brest-Litovsk treaty really about? Three and a half years of imperialist war with Germany broke the old Russian army; soldiers were deserting en masse. As Lenin put it, the peasants in uniform were voting with their feet for peace. When the new Bolshevik government entered peace negotiations with the central

to sign a peace of surrender. His formula: "We interrupt the war and do not sign the peace—we demobilise the army." Basically, this was a manoeuvre to buy time for the German and Austrian working classes to topple Hindenburg/Ludendorff. Again, Lenin did not oppose Trotsky's manoeuvring in principle; he simply didn't believe it would work. Without a peace treaty he feared the German high command would immediately resume the offensive, and the German workers would not rise up in time to save the Soviet republic. Lenin's judgement proved realistic. When Trotsky broke off negotiations in mid-February, the Germans did resume the offensive, threatening Petrograd, and dictated even worse peace terms. And the German revolution did not break out until nine months after the Brest-Litovsk treaty was finally signed.

The Gorbachev line that Lenin opposed revolutionary war in principle is totally fraudulent. This was clearly shown in the 1920 Russo-Polish war when Lenin and Trotsky, as it were, switched roles. In the spring of 1920 Polish strong man Joseph Pilsudski (lately the hero of Solidarnosc) invaded the Soviet Ukraine with the aim of annexing it. A successful counteroffensive

Troops out of Ireland!

"Captain Nairac's soul rots in hell"

Former Greater London Council leader and new Brent East MP Ken Livingstone managed to provoke a reactionary storm with his first parliamentary speech on 7 July. "Outrageous", "a disgrace", "deeply offensive", screamed the Tories. The bourgeois press chimed in with a cacophony of cant, and the wretched Neil Kinnock muttered that Livingstone was being "unfair". His "crime"? Telling just some of the truth about British imperialism's murderous rule in Northern Ireland and about two of its more nefarious "heroes", Captain Robert Nairac and Airey Neave.

Livingstone's allegations and the evidence for them are not new. Nairac, Grenadier Guards and Special Air Services regiment, operated as an undercover agent in Northern Ireland in the 1970s. He led the cross-border assassination of IRA activist John Francis Green. Former army intelligence officer Fred Holroyd states that Nairac showed him photos of the dead Green. Merlyn Rees, former Labour Northern Ireland secretary, says police told him that the same gun used to assassinate Green was used in the murder of the Miami Showband, a rock group popular in both of Ireland's divided communities. The claim that this massacre was orchestrated from within the British security services to provoke sectarian backlash and sabotage ceasefire negotiations between the

Labour government and IRA is utterly plausible and backed by considerable evidence.

When the IRA caught Nairac and executed him, it was good riddance to this counterrevolutionary assassin. As we wrote in early 1979:

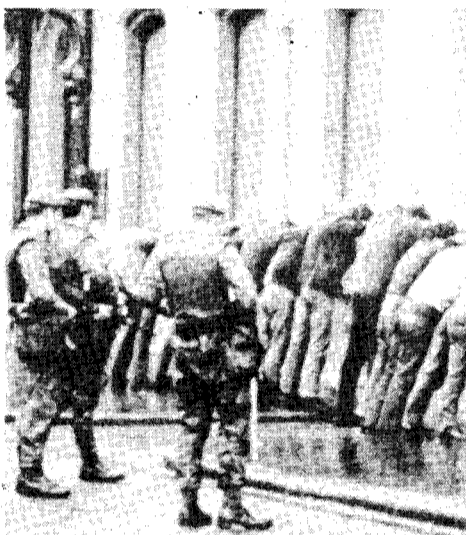
"What the people of South Armagh really thought of this paid assassin was conveyed by a slogan on the walls of the Creggan River Bridge just outside Crossmaglen: 'CAPTAIN NAIRAC'S SOUL ROTS IN HELL'—a sentiment with which we heartily concur, whatever disagreements we may have with its theological underpinnings." (*Spartacist Britain* no 8, February 1979)

Thatcher vehemently opposes even a tame parliamentary inquiry for the same reason the government has tried to suppress the book by disaffected spy Peter Wright: it would provide a glimpse not only of the habitual "dirty tricks" of British imperialism in Northern Ireland but also of the chain of right-wing plotting in the 1970s. This was aimed centrally against the Wilson Labour government but was prompted above all by the wave of major working-class struggle, especially the victorious miners strikes of 1972 and 1974.

And here we come to Airey Neave, close personal friend of Margaret Thatcher and lifelong denizen of the "intelligence community". Not only did Neave organise Thatcher's leadership struggle in the Tory party, but he was a central figure in the net-

work of "destabilisation" and coup-plotting of the seventies. Why shouldn't Neave have kept Thatcher informed about his activities? After all, she enjoys this sort of thing: from dressing up and riding tanks in NATO exercises, to joining in the barracks-room camaraderie of the SAS after their Iranian embassy job, to ordering the bloodthirsty sinking of the *Belgrano*.

Another figure in this very British scene is the heir apparent's favourite uncle, Lord Louis Mountbatten. British "divide and rule" and "dirty tricks" instigated the bloody partition of India in the late 1940s, and Mountbatten was the man who presided over it. Apparently he too was



Gamma

British army terror in Ireland.

playing with ideas of military coups in Britain 25 years later. Thanks to the INLA who blew them both away, the souls of Neave and Mountbatten can join that of Nairac.

According to custom Livingstone's "maiden speech" should have been "uncontroversial", one of the subtle and not-so-subtle devices to ensure due reverence and diffidence before the great "mother of parliaments". Ken may have been a bad boy on this occasion, but that hardly makes amends for all the reverence and respect he showed to Judas Kinnock during the election campaign. Right before the election Labour spokesmen were urging the Tories to strengthen the presence of the SAS in Northern Ireland, and we didn't notice much fuss from Livingstone and the other "lefts" then. Moreover, Livingstone's speech adopts the stance of loyalty to British imperialism: for him the MI5 plotters were "traitorous" towards Her Majesty's capitalist Labour government.

Like many a Labour "left" before him, Livingstone understands that a bit of radical posturing early in one's career can help pave the way to the top in years to come. This man is ambitious enough to want to be invited one day by Buckingham Palace to be Labour prime minister. By the standards of Westminster, Livingstone's speech injected a refreshing whiff of the truth. But ending the murderous rule of British imperialism in Northern Ireland and at home will come not through Labourite parliamentary windbagery, but through building Trotskyist revolutionary parties on both sides of the Irish Sea. Troops out now! Smash the Prevention of Terrorism Act! Not Orange against Green but class against class! For an Irish workers republic as part of a socialist federation of the British Isles! ■

Defend Viraj Mendis!

MANCHESTER, 11 July — Over 1200 demonstrators here marched to defend Viraj Mendis against the Home Office deportation order that, if carried out, means he faces death at the hands of Sri Lanka's murderous JR Jayewardene regime. Mendis, a supporter of the Revolutionary Communist Group, has been in sanctuary for the last seven months in an Anglican church in Hulme, Manchester, facing constant Home Office harassment and fascist attacks. One supporter of the defence campaign even had a swastika carved on her arm by fascists who followed her home and attacked her.

Mendis, who is Sinhalese, has been active in defence of the Tamil people against Jayewardene's bloody rampage. By deporting Mendis the Thatcher government is demonstrating its complicity in JR's reign of terror—a complicity which extends from providing SAS and mercenary "instructors" to train the Lankan army to slamming the doors on those Tamils seeking asylum in Britain. In order to defend his life Mendis has been forced into virtual internal exile, knowing that if he takes one step outside the church, the Home Office will ensure his next step is into a Colombo prison cell. Defend Viraj Mendis! Stop deportations—Full asylum for Tamil people!

Joining with the fascists, the gutter press and the Home Office in

their race-hate campaign against Mendis is Kinnock's Labour Party. After offering Mendis a job as Immigration and Nationality Officer, the Labour-controlled Manchester City Council, led by "left" Graham Stringer, withdrew the offer just three weeks before the general election. Kinnock himself joined the witchhunt by personally opining that Mendis shouldn't get the job.

Despite the large turnout on the demonstration by local Viraj Mendis defence campaign groups and anti-deportation campaigns, it was noticeable that trade union banners—including those of NALGO and the CPSA—were outnumbered by those of the church groups. A strike of Manchester's heavily integrated bus drivers or East Lancashire's predominantly Asian textile workers is the sort of working-class demonstration that could defeat the Home Office.

The deportation of Viraj Mendis would be a blow against all those seeking asylum from state terror and all those seeking to oppose racist British imperialism. In a statement published in the 15 June-15 July issue of the Revolutionary Communist Group's press, Mendis said:

"There's no question of me giving up the struggle until the campaign has won.... We have to go on." The working class must defend Viraj Mendis from the Home Office "passport to death". Stop the deportation!

SWP...

(continued from page 3)

the 1984-85 miners strike! Like good social democrats everywhere, the SWP proudly hails this CIA/bankers' "union".

The SWP (then called *Socialist Review*) was founded in a break from revolutionary Trotskyism under "democratic" imperialist pressure at the time of the 1950-53 Korean War. In a civil war pitting the North Korean and Chinese deformed workers states along with the workers and peasants of the South against US-led imperialist troops and the capitalists and landlords, the SWP's founders refused to support the Northern forces. This was a *direct* capitulation to Labourite anti-Communism. (See our article "Korea and the Cliff group", *Spartacist Britain* no 24, for details.) These anti-communist political positions continue in today's SWP: from the battlefields of Afghanistan to the picket lines and polling booths of Britain.

If you think this track record lacks something as a programme for socialist revolution, you're right. (In fact, the SWP has problems with even the minimal democratic demands—abolish the monarchy, House of Lords, Established Church and licensing hours—put forward by the Spartacist League. Particularly our recent reprint of Marx on the Chartists' opposition to Sunday trading and licensing laws drew shocked denunciations from SWPers, presumably not prepared to take the "radical" line of revolutionists over a century before us!)

Those looking for a *real* revolutionary alternative to Labourism, talk to the Spartacist League Workers Hammer salesmen at this conference. Buy our special literature pack on the SWP, come to our meeting "Spectre of Trotsky haunts Gorbachev's Russia/Defend the Soviet Union through world revolution!" on Friday evening next. Find out why we say: Down with class traitor, race-hater, anti-Soviet strikebreaker Judas Kinnock! Build a Bolshevik party! To lead the workers and oppressed to victory, to the seizure of state power, it is necessary to break them from the pernicious stranglehold of Labour, to split the Labour Party and to tenaciously defend the gains of October—the first workers revolution on the face of the planet. Along the road to the construction of such a party, obstacles like the SWP must be removed through political struggle on the battlefield of class war. ■

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SHEFFIELD

Smash racist anti-Gypsy bans!

On 29 June, Westminster County Court judge Percy Harris ruled that the vile, apartheid-style signs "Sorry No Travellers" found in many pubs throughout London's East End and elsewhere in England were legal. Having received over 150 complaints in London alone, the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE) brought the complaint against the landlord of the Cat and Mutton in Hackney to court as a test case under the Race Relations Act for his having failed to comply with their request to "withdraw the notice and give a written assurance that it would not be repeated". In his ruling, judge Harris said that "travellers did not mean Gypsies and that Gypsies were not a race or ethnic group". In the increasingly vicious racist climate of Thatcher's Britain, the ruling is particularly ominous.

There are over 50,000 Gypsies living in Britain as of 1981. The Department of Environment and Welsh Office report nearly 10,000 Gypsy caravans. Numerous complaints have been received about pubs in Manchester, Leeds and East Anglia attempting to enforce anti-Gypsy bans in their local areas. In the Sheffield area several small shops contain "No traveller" signs - as do many of the pubs throughout the mining and farming communities of Yorkshire. Police are using the new Public Order Act to harass Gypsies (and other

travellers, ie "tinkers" and hippies) whose cultural traditions and style of life conflict with bourgeois property norms. In the recent general election the SDP in at least Islington and Thamesmead boasted of their candidates' efforts to keep the areas "gypsy-free zones".

For over four hundred years in Britain, Gypsies have suffered severe repression at the hands of the state. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Gypsies were deported in large numbers either to mainland Europe or transported to Australia or America for "crimes" against property. In World War II, Gypsies were herded into permanent "compounds" in parts of Britain (cited in *Gypsies in Britain*, Brian Vesey-Fitzgerald, 1973). In the postwar period, laws such as the Scrap Metal Dealers Act of 1964, the 1967 Civil Amenities Act and the Caravan Sites Act of 1968 have been used to target Gypsies. In particular, under the Scrap Metal Dealers Act, dealers can only trade in the local authority in which they are registered and under the Caravans Sites Act, Gypsies and other travellers are allowed to camp only in authorised sites - "unlawful" encampments may be removed by the police. Local authorities ostensibly have a "duty" to set up the sites, but many of these are in isolated areas and/or have no water or sanitation, and

their number is in any case woefully inadequate. The *Sheffield Star* (14 April) reported that "rats, flooding and the danger of disease are commonplace on Sheffield's gipsy sites".

The thrust of the postwar law was to force the Gypsy population to give up their way of life and settle down permanently. However, as the President of the National Gypsy Council wrote recently in *Romano Drom*, the Council's newspaper, there is a Catch 22 involved: "I think that some Councils' eagerness and liberalism, when it comes to assimilating the Gypsy into a house-dwelling existence, is based on the 'anywhere but next to us' principle." Certainly, the Labour Party in most places has just as bad a record as the Tories. Peter Mercer, Secretary of the East Anglican Gypsy Council noted in the *Jewish Socialist* (Spring 1986): "The Labour Party record regarding Gypsies is abysmal. If the Labour Party is in opposition they will support Gypsies and say what a terrible time the Gypsies are having. When they are in power, they are more eager than the Conservatives to get rid of you."

During World War II, the Gypsies were deported, sterilised, used in medical "experiments" and massacred. Upwards of half a million Gypsies were annihilated by the

Nazi scourge - wiping out nearly the entire Gypsy population in many countries, including Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Estonia, Germany, Holland, Lithuania and Poland. A vulnerable minority population, Gypsies are in this country as well a target of fascistic and racist attack - and their current ostracism is condoned by the state, as the recent ruling against the CRE makes crystal clear. The CRE is very likely to appeal the outrageous decision of the Westminster County Court and the entire workers movement, left and all defenders of civil liberties must support this elementary fight against the anti-Gypsy bans. However, the whole history of the state's repression of and murderous attacks on blacks, Asians, Gypsies and other minorities demonstrates the futility of relying on the capitalist state and its courts for "justice".

During the heroic 1984-85 miners strike blacks, Asians, women, gays mobilised for the victory of the strike, understanding the miners' struggle against the hated Tory regime to be their struggle as well. The labour movement must put its muscle behind the fight against all racist blights such as anti-Gypsy bans. As *Workers Hammer* has pointed out before, it is now long overdue for miners to remove the "No travellers" signs in their own community pubs, to smash this bit of apartheid on their doorsteps. Smash the racist anti-Gypsy bans! Down with the reactionary Scrap Metal Dealers Act, the Caravans Act and the Public Order Act!

Inner cities...

(continued from page 1)

win over National Front supporters. In the recent election the fascists didn't bother to stand candidates, no doubt feeling their programme was well represented by the Tories. But on the streets their ominous terror attacks are markedly on the rise. In south Leeds alone, the anti-fascist monthly *Searchlight* (June 1987) reported 305 separate racial incidents over an 18-month period, including stonings and assaults. *Searchlight* also chronicled an alarming increase of anti-Semitic attacks, including the recent vandalising of the Holocaust memorial in Hyde Park: "While many of these attacks have been on property, as in the 1960s when organised nazis set fire to or damaged 34 synagogues, a disturbing feature of recent anti-Jewish activities has been an apparent willingness to attack Jewish people either on their way to attend religious services or when leaving them." The fascist scum must be smashed through mass, militant mobilisations of the trade union movement in alliance with the minority communities.

KINNOCK'S BLACK AND ASIAN FRONT MEN

Particularly after Kinnock's witch-hunt of those black section spokesmen who didn't utterly gag themselves during the election, the futility of looking to Labour to lead anti-racist struggle should be obvious. Not that this has stopped the multifarious pseudo-revolutionary fake lefts who today populate the constituency Labour parties from trying to do just that. Much of the fake-left press ha-

ailed the election of four black and Asian Labour MPs. But these quislings of Kinnock were happy to side with the Labour leadership against Sharon Atkin, purged for her elementary statement that Labour is a racist party. It's worth quoting again from Bernie Grant et al's pledge of loyalty: "As parliamentary candidates our overriding interest is in getting Labour into government. Nothing else can be allowed to stand in the way of this" (*Guardian*, 14 April).

Paul Boateng, one of the newly-elected four, spoke of how black and Asian people had waited four hundred years for the "privilege" of getting into parliament. But a few black and Asian faces in Westminster isn't going to change anything for the masses of the oppressed in this country - especially these faces. And what's all this about 400 years? There was an Asian Labour MP in 1922. Shapurji Saklatvala was no Bernie Grant. He was a committed Communist, a genuine fighter for the workers and oppressed.

Saklatvala won his election in predominantly working-class and heavily Irish Battersea before Labour had outlawed Communists from membership. In 1924, he stood against Labour as a Communist and won again. A year later, when he was to be among a delegation of MPs visiting the USA, three MPs withdrew in protest at the prospect of sharing the platform with Saklatvala, who had earned the title "enemy of the Union Jack". The American government obligingly rescinded his visa.

During the 1926 general strike, Saklatvala was arrested for giving a speech in Hyde Park on May Day in which he urged the army to refuse to fire on the workers. He fought tirelessly against British imperialism's crimes in India and throughout the

colonial empire. Contrast this with the miserable record of support to British imperialism by Labour politicians right and "left". Indeed with the merest whiff of Westminster, Bernie Grant couldn't even stick by his original statement that the cops at Broadwater Farm got "a bloody good hiding", and proudly peddled a letter of commendation from the local police chief superintendent.

FOR A PROLETARIAN-REVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVE

Understandably, a number of black and Asian groups have become overwhelmed with Labour in the recent period. The Black Peoples Campaign for Justice, Broadwater Farm Defence Campaign and the Wolverhampton campaign group formed after the strangulation to death of Clinton McCurbin by police in February, have helped form a committee to establish a national civil rights campaign, which intends sending visitors to the

United States to learn the lessons of the American civil rights movement. Spokesman Stafford Scott says that that "movement created a black bourgeoisie in the United States. We do not want to do this here" (*The Voice*, 23 June). Another spokesman, Unmesh Desai, "said that the election result made a civil rights movement a still more urgent necessity, with the possibility of authoritarian government policies and the likelihood that the Labour Party would move further towards the centre. Mr Desai and Mrs Kiffin said they were determined ...that the proposed campaign should not become dominated by activists from leftwing organisations" (*Guardian*, 16 June).

One of the chief lessons of the American civil rights movement is the need for revolutionary proletarian leadership. The failure of the socialist left to intervene in the early civil rights movement and struggle for a Marxist programme was criminal. When young American civil rights

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activists began to break from the liberal, pro-Democratic Party leadership, many went towards black nationalism in the absence of a road to the integrated American working class in which blacks occupy a strategic position in key industries. Against both the liberal pacifism of Martin Luther King and the growing tendencies towards nationalist separatism, the Spartacist tendency fought for *revolutionary integrationism*—the fight for assimilation of black people into an egalitarian socialist society.

At the time our newly-formed organisation lacked the organisational weight to change the course, however. A generation of dedicated, young black fighters was lost; the Black Panthers in particular received the full brunt of the unprecedented state campaign of extermination against radical black leaders. Former Panther leader Geronimo Pratt still languishes in prison, the victim of a government frame up which put him behind bars 17 years ago. America's foremost class-war prisoner, Pratt's

black, Asian and white. From Brixton to Handsworth to Chapelton, the inner-city upsurges have been integrated. And it is no accident that the miners strike left such a powerful impression not only on miners themselves, but also on black and Asian activists who saw a predominantly white union in bitter battle against the racist capitalist state. When the heroic miners faced phalanxes of Maggie Thatcher's strike-breaking bootboys, it was clear that their enemy was identical to that faced every day in the inner cities. Those advocates of some variant of nationalism among the oppressed get a hearing as a result of the defeat of that major class battle and the refusal of the Labour/TUC traitors to mobilise the unions in struggle of any sort.

British capitalism, built through the slave trade and the hideous oppression of dark-skinned colonial people, now pursues its murderous racism at home. Police techniques formerly reserved for Northern Ireland are used against striking work-



Suresh Karadia



Communist Party Picture Library

Communist MP Shapurji Saklatvala (left): uncompromising fighter for workers, oppressed against British imperialism. Bernie Grant (right): front man for Judas Kinnock.

struggle for his freedom continues. That struggle should become the cause of the international working class.

There is another lesson from the American civil rights movement: the ability of the capitalist system to coopt and channel militant struggle back into the maintenance of the racist *status quo*. The black front men for Reagan reaction—like Philadelphia mayor, Wilson Goode, butcher of the radical black MOVE commune—who today govern many large American cities are the horrible examples. But there are also former black radicals pushing "anti-drug" hysteria in the ghettos or administering an ever-shrinking number of state-financed "community projects". Here too sundry black and Asian militants have been coopted by local agencies of the state—for example militants involved in the Newham Eight Defence Campaign were pulled into the Newham Monitoring Project with funding from the local Labour council. But he who pays the piper calls the tune. For complete, unconditional independence from the capitalist state!

The United States stands somewhere between South Africa and Britain in terms of the race question. Here, blacks and Asians constitute a far smaller minority of the population. The struggle for racial equality is integrally bound up with the struggle for the emancipation of the entire working class. It is a good thing that here there is a history, including a very recent history, of joint struggle among the oppressed—

ers and inner-city youth. Those militants who see no answers from the Kinnocks, Abbotts or Grants should examine the programme of the Spartacist League. Our tendency internationally has fought against the rise of racist reaction, notably in the November 1982 demonstration of 5000 largely black workers which stopped the fascist Ku Klux Klan from marching through Washington DC, USA. That labour/black mobilisation was initiated by the SL/US and endorsed by a number of key unions, notably predominantly black dockers locals. In this country we fight to forge a *Bolshevik party* through splitting the mass of workers and oppressed from the pro-capitalist Labour misleaders, right and "left".

The Iron Bitch in Number Ten is geared up for more attacks. But the social struggle will not be one-sided. The working class of England, Scotland and Wales has every reason to fight against the hated Tory regime, despite the miserable Labourite misleaders' sermons on class peace. Linking the potential social power of the working class, above all in the trade unions, to the struggle for the rights of the oppressed is urgently necessary. For union/minority mobilisations against racist terror! Full citizenship rights for foreign-born workers and their families! Break the Labour/TUC traitors' stranglehold—for class struggle against Thatcher's third term reaction! Forward to an integrated communist party to lead the fight for workers revolution! ■

Miners...

(continued from page 12)

would have challenged the capitalist order itself. Instead, Scargill closeted himself in manoeuvres with the TUC and Labour Party chiefs, extracting worthless paper promises of support; the "left" trade union leaders left the miners in the lurch. The burning lesson of the strike was the need to construct an authoritative revolutionary workers leadership—one that would fight for state power not through the "parliamentary road" but by mobilising the masses in the factories and streets. As we pointed out at the time, the maverick left Labourite Scargill's one abiding fault is that he is not a revolutionary.

In the aftermath of the strike the union misleaders worked hand in glove with Judas Kinnock to dismantle social struggle to prove their trustworthiness to the bourgeois "order". The NUM leadership went all out for Labour in the recent election, gagging themselves in the bargain. At the conference, Labour bigwigs were trotted out to speak. NUM leaders presented hard-won gains as though they were gifts from Labour governments. In fact, only a few months after the five-day week was "established" in 1947, the Labour government demanded that "voluntary" Saturday work be resumed! And miners well remember that the incentive scheme was implemented by the last Labour government whose energy minister was Tony Benn.

Labour as well as the Tories have run the coal industry in the interest of capitalist profit. The postwar nationalisations were carried out through massive compensations to the owners—workers got low wages, basic industries went down the tubes, the parasites who had bled them dry got rich. Trade unionists were fed the lie that they were equal "partners" in the economy. The deduction of union subs at source was institutionalised and for the first time the state, not the union, collected union subs. And this has been used as a weapon by the Coal Board; bargaining rights were awarded in Notts to the UDM and miners who want to join the NUM must individually sign withdrawal cards from this scab union—setting them up for vindictive discrimination by the Coal Board. Keep



John Harris (IFL)

NUM militants demonstrate during 1984-85 miners strike.

the bosses' state out of the unions! Abolish the check-off of union subs!

British workers are not being driven out of jobs fundamentally because of "new technology" and low-wage foreign competition, as the Labourites claim. Indeed, Britain is a third world country. Its wages are the lowest in Western Europe outside the Iberian peninsula, with whole sections of basic industry devastated. And manufacturing output is still lower than it was in 1979!

Trade union reformism, even its most militant variety, is utterly bankrupt. Chauvinist protectionist schemes to keep out imports, slightly higher subsidies to nationalised industries financed by higher taxes and income policies—the essence of Labourism when in power—won't save British industry. What's necessary is the smashing of capitalist property relations through revolutionary struggle. Only such a perspective offers a programme which can unite—not pit against each other—the sections of the oppressed and working class. To forge this unity requires a Bolshevik party, built by splitting the working class from the Labour misleaders right and "left". ■

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Report from NUM conference

Miners defiant under the gun

At their annual conference in July, National Union of Mineworkers delegates voted by a 49-22 majority to reject Coal Board demands that the miners accept a six-day working week and nine-hour shifts.

The government circumvented the national union and approached officials from areas most devastated by unemployment like Scotland and Wales for drastic concessions in exchange for "promises" of limited local investment like the Margam mine in South Wales. The Board further threatens to use the scab UDM, the Electricians or even the T&G to recruit a workforce for Margam if the NUM refuses to crawl. Although a section of the officials want to throw in the towel, the bulk of miners are resolved to fight. Several dozen mainly younger militants travelled to the delegate conference held on the Scottish Isle of Bute to demand no capitulation. The grim determination of miners to defend their union against the bosses' offensive stands out again as a beacon to the entire workers movement.

The latest attacks by the bosses target working and safety conditions, as well as the very existence of a national agreement, and would further

another 40,000 jobs thereby spelling virtual suicide for the union. Indeed, Thatcherite think tanks like the Centre for Policy Studies are already talking about privatising whatever remains of the industry and selling it off to a handful of multinationals.

The British bosses are scrapping the country's industrial base, with the burden falling heaviest on the North and the Celtic areas. 'And if you accept the capitalist principle of production for profit, in this country of archaic and obsolescent factories and mills, not much will be left. The horrible example is British Steel, the Thatcherite "success story", where 144,000 out of 200,000 jobs have been chopped (*Guardian*, 8 July) and much of the work is done by outside contractors paying their employees under half the standard wage rate for 60-hour and longer shifts! Meanwhile, British Rail is hiving off its catering operations, the lifetime employment guarantee of registered dockers is threatened, a whole host of industries are up for privatisation, including the water and electric authorities, and British Airports Authority and chunks of Rolls Royce.

As Leon Trotsky wrote in the "Transitional Programme" (1938):



NUM conference: Scargill gives award to Stan Orme, spokesman of backstabbing Labour Party, as Mick McGahey beams approvingly.

intensify the government's programme of speed-up, job cuts and pit closures. Since the year-long strike of 1984-85, output per manshift has been jacked up over 30 per cent, while some 70,000 jobs - 40 per cent of the workforce - have been eliminated. The Coal Board's so-called "flexible working" would mean chopping

"Under the menace of its own disintegration, the proletariat cannot permit the transformation of an increasing section of the workers into chronically unemployed paupers, living off the slops of a crumbling society. The right to employment is the only serious right left to the worker in a society based upon exploitation."



Workers Hammer

Militant miners outside NUM conference demand no capitulation to Coal Board.

What's necessary is hard class struggle - strikes and plant occupations - that will link up the struggles of the miners with millions of trade unionists, the unemployed and oppressed who are in the same boat. But that requires transcending militant go-it-alone trade unionism, whose premise of squeezing out "more" is meaningless when the entire economic system is bankrupt.

In the face of massive devastation of jobs, the miners have waged bitter resistance. Over the past year all but a small handful of lodges have engaged in industrial action. Recently the Coal Board agreed to reinstate somewhat over 100 miners sacked during the strike. A sacked miner from Nottinghamshire attending the conference stressed to *WH*: "I think it was a result of industrial action being taken primarily in Durham and Yorkshire, and the Coal Board chairman tried to take the steam out of the situation by promising a review." The Board's review was entirely arbitrary and involved no consultation with the union. In Kent miners were offered their jobs back... on the condition that other miners be sacked! The reinstatement of the remaining 350 sacked miners and the freeing of class war prisoners Dean Hancock and Russell Shankland remain urgent tasks for the miners and the whole of the workers movement.

The NUM has been targetted in particular by the vindictive Thatcher regime because it will not grovel and because its powerful strike inspired millions of trade unionists and oppressed. This example the rulers would like to eradicate. Thus they have attempted to demoralise the union through all-sided attacks: sackings of militants, arrogant refusal to negotiate with the NUM and imposition of an onerous new disciplinary procedure under which miners are to be victimised for alleged offences committed miles away from the collieries!

The conference voted to refer the decision against six-day working to the membership and to take separate ballots to consider "industrial action"

over wages, the disciplinary code and reinstatement of sacked miners. But conference resolutions and a plethora of ballots aimed at forcing the Board to negotiate will not deter the bosses. At best this is a programme for desperate rearguard actions, while pits and jobs continue to be slashed.

The open defeatists in the union, headed by retiring vice president (and leading Communist Party member) Mick McGahey, claimed a fight to maintain a five-day week - let alone win a shorter working week - was unrealistic under the "cold, cruel world of Thatcherism". This is the same grovelling "new realism" preached by the TUC misleaders. But the Scargill leadership could only counterpose a perspective of simple trade union militancy, increasingly narrowed by the erosion of jobs.

The miners are resolved to fight, but they do not want a repeat of '84-85, where they were left stranded by the Labour/TUC bureaucracy. Yet, no perspective was laid out for linking up in struggle with the millions of other trade unionists under Thatcher's guns. On the contrary, Scargill continually emphasised the NUM's "close ties and bonds" with the Labour Party, whose leaders did everything to sabotage class unity in the heroic strike.

Hating Scargill for his refusal to march in lockstep with Reagan/Thatcher's Cold War drive, the right-wing, anti-communist TUC traitors and their henchmen ordered their members to cross miners' picket lines. The miners' mass flying pickets, their courageous defiance of Thatcher's legions of strikebreaking cops nonetheless inspired wide solidarity at home and abroad. Twice the dockers struck alongside the miners, while railworkers and seamen declared boycotts of scab coal. We in the Socialist League called for a fighting Triple Alliance of miners, transport and rail unions to strike jointly against pay cuts, redundancies and privatisations - effectively a general strike that would undercut the TUC strikebreakers.

But such a fighting programme

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