

Make it a winter of victory!

**Enough treachery,
enough talk –
Blockade the stockpiles!
Strike now with
the miners!**

Neil Kinnock must have reckoned Russia was the best place to prove what a lapdog of Maggie Thatcher's he was. No sooner had they arrived in Moscow than Kinnock jumped to attack Soviet press coverage of police violence and Thatcher's attempts to starve the strikers while CND-loving wife Glenys popped off to a meeting of the Soviet Peace Committee to denounce the Soviet SS-20 line of defence against Reagan/Thatcher's war drive. When Soviet trade union leaders expressed concern that a defeat for the miners would have 'a terrible domino effect on the bargaining strength of other groups of British workers', Kinnock looked down his nose at them and pronounced the strike as good as dead.

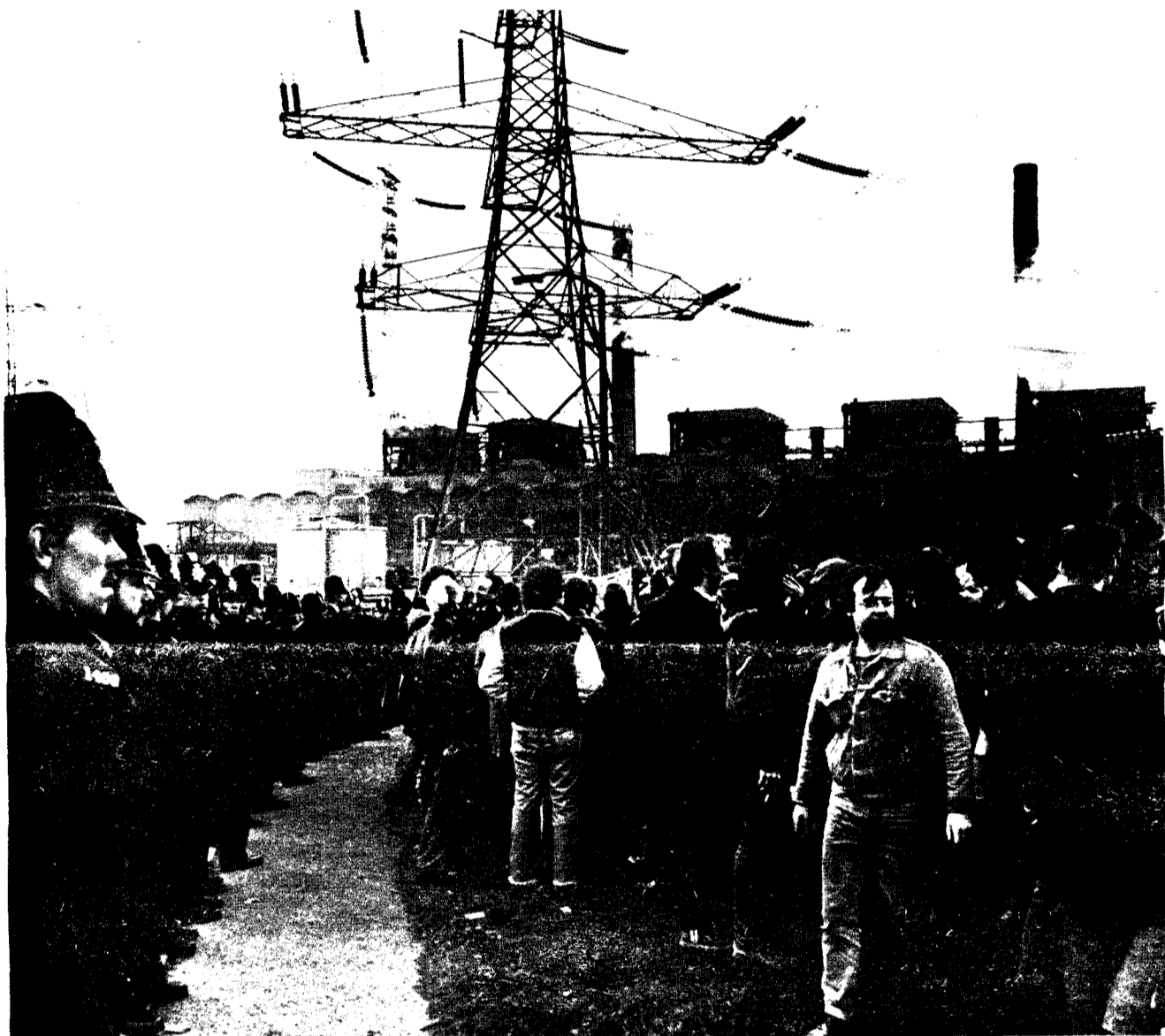
He and his TUC alter-ego Norm Willis have certainly tried hard enough to kill it. But the denunciations of 'Ramsay McKinnock' and the noose dangled in front of 'Numb' Willis are testimony to the fact that 140,000 strikers and millions of other class-conscious workers in this country feel different. From cuts in student grants to thefts of union funds to her ruthless scheming to freeze and starve miners' families, Thatcher's mean, vindictive, savage attacks have earned her the hatred of every layer of the oppressed in this country; and all have to come to look to the miners as their champions. If the rest of the labour movement joined the miners in struggle, this vicious government could be brought down; instead every new act of treachery and acquiescence by the labour misleaders only encourages the Iron Lady to cut deeper and deeper. These traitors are the proven prop of Thatcher reaction.

While every stripe of fake left cheered over the TUC and Labour Party conferences at the start of autumn, we warned: 'All signs point to a hard, cold and bitter winter.... Yet for all the cheap words of praise and empty promises of support, all that has been decided at Brighton and Blackpool is that the NUM membership is left to fight alone through the winter. *Enough treachery! The miners must not stand alone! Strike now with the miners!*'

Make Tory laws scraps of paper

The past month witnessed a virtual conspiracy aimed at crushing the miners' resistance by Christmas. The reactionary 'back to work movement' was directly supervised by key Tory aides like David Hart as part of a 'well-oiled team' (as one scab put it) with the Coal Board. In perfect harmony with the NCB, Kinnock/Hattersley chose the moment for another attempt to foist a strikebreaking ballot on the NUM, while David Basnett's G&M cut off its £1000 per day contribution to the miners.

But for all its crowing over the head count of 'new faces', the Coal Board's promised pre-Christmas 'collapse of the strike' is so much



1000 Kent miners and other trade unionists picket West Thurrock power station, 16 November.

wishful thinking. Even at its peak, 'NCB officials acknowledge[d] privately' that their figures on the number scabbing were a lie (*Financial Times*, 21 November). By month's end the NUM appeared to have withstood the big back-to-work push and *beaten it back*. For several weeks, the strikers strained every muscle, erecting flaming barricades, engaging in massive running battles with cops and scabs, defending their picket lines and strike



Miners rally, Aberavon, 13 November: the hangman's noose is lowered for TUC secretary Willis.

headquarters against vicious police/scab assaults.

But the scab offensive was a sharp danger signal to the rest of the labour movement: no matter how self-sacrificing and courageous, the miners cannot continue to stand alone against the full power of the bosses' state forever. It is only a matter of time before the Tories try to implement their plans for moving coal from the pitheads to the power stations and to bring the military out to crush the strike. Thousands of strikers have been framed up on charges which could lead to life imprisonment, some forced into exile hundreds of miles from home. In viciously depriving strikers' families of their normal winter coal concession, the NCB has already killed at least four people, three of them young lads, who died searching for bits of scrap coal. The labour fakers who wring their hands over the chance death of a scab-transporting minicab driver in the middle of this raging class war meanwhile encourage the scabberding themselves. American miners have a saying: 'Scabbing is dangerous to your health!' Drop the charges against the young miners framed up for murder.

While the tabloids scream 'Savages!' every time some scab happens to trip over a picket line, bloodthirsty scabs have carried out vicious slashing assaults on strikers' wives and inflicted murderous beatings on isolated strikers in pubs wherever they have gained the upper hand. Leon Trotsky, organiser of the Russian revolutionary Red Army, noted decades ago that scabs were the nuclei of the fascist army and strike pickets the nuclei of the workers militia. *Disciplined trade union de-*

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American fund drive for miners' families

The following urgent appeal for striking British miners' families has been issued in America by the Partisan Defense Committee (PDC). It is reprinted for the information of our readers from Workers Vanguard, paper of the Spartacist League/US, no 367, 23 November.

* * * * *

The PDC is launching a \$25,000 fund drive among American trade unions to aid the families of the heroic British miners, on strike for nine hard months against Reagan's bloody sister Margaret Thatcher. From the Arizona copper miners to black Detroit auto workers, from the West Virginia coal fields to Chicago's transit barns, the US working class has an enormous stake in seeing Thatcher routed through a miners' victory.

Through their reign of terror against the National Union of Mineworkers, the guardians of moth-eaten British capitalism hope to wipe out this bastion of the working class. When Reagan went all out to smash PATCO, hundreds of thousands of unionists knew it would take labor solidarity *in action* to beat the government. And international working-class solidarity can help defeat 'Iron Lady' Thatcher's war on the miners.

With 8000 miners arrested since the strike began, with union funds impounded by the capitalists' hired judges, and now miners' children killed scavenging for coal to heat their homes, the British miners have stood rock hard. They and their families must be defended! That's what union dues are for -- a labor war chest! Thousands of dollars must come from union locals across this country. When it was announced that Soviet trade unions

had sent over \$1,000,000 in food and donations to the miners' Hardship Fund, Thatcher tried her usual 'reds under the beds' scare. The miners applauded the Russians' act of solidarity. Thatcher 'quarantined' a shipload of food donated by Russian workers, but just let her try and steal miners' money in a Soviet bank!

In the tradition of the early International Labor Defense, which defended and assisted strikers and class-war prisoners, and their families, the PDC -- a class-struggle, anti-sectarian legal defense organization in accordance with the political views of the



Goldthorpe, S Yorks: Funeral for two boys killed digging for coal to heat family homes.

Spartacist League -- appeals to *WV* readers to support this fund drive. We invite socialist and defense organizations in the US to organize efforts parallel to our own on behalf of the British miners. Given the enormous political differences between us and other groups, an attempt at a united-front campaign would create more problems than benefits for the miners, but we stand ready to coordinate with others to achieve the largest mobilization of trade-union support for the miners' side of the class war in Britain. If the Socialist Workers Party and the Workers League can distract themselves long enough from Poland and Solidarnosc, if the staid old Communist Party is interested, if the Democratic Socialists of America have time on their hands since the Mondale campaign is over, we will make available our plans and access to union locals where we have friends.

The miners' strike has struck a deep chord in Britain, and has galvanized all those who have felt Thatcher's lash: Irish, blacks, Asians, women. The miners have staked everything on this strike. American unionists and minorities have a duty, and an opportunity, to strike a blow against reaction by coming to the aid of our class brothers and sisters. We appeal to unionists who want to mobilize their organizations in defense of the British miners to join us.

Make checks payable to: Aid to Striking British Miners' Families; mail to: Partisan Defense Committee, Box 99, Canal St. Station, New York, NY 10013. Contributors will receive numbered receipts; financial records of this fund drive are open to inspection by any bona fide workers organization.

—letters—

On SWP scabbing

Dunscroft, Doncaster

Comrades,

As one of the guest speakers at November's History Workshop, held in Leicester, we addressed the question of the current action by the NUM.

In usual fashion the state cap contingent turned up with an armful of papers and a throat full of 'good advice'. One female SWPer B Finch of Loughborough University instructed us, that the miners fight was a fight for the whole of the labour movement and everyone should be involved.

In response I made the point that such pious sentiments might be a bit more constructive if the SWP would instruct its members to stop crossing our picket lines.

This of course drew the most ardent protests. 'It is an abject lie to say SWP members cross picket lines!' said Ms Finch.

When I quoted the place, and the fact that Mr Cliff himself virtually instructed his followers to defile our picket lines, this was again designated a slander and a fabrication. Ms Finch informed us 'Any member of the SWP who crossed picket lines would be expelled.'

In response I informed Ms Finch that she was clearly unaware of current SWP instructions to their members. 'The policy' I was told 'is that SWP members cross picket lines to talk to other workers in the plant, but if they won't take solidarity action, then the SWP members have to come out and join the picket line.'

Could *Workers Hammer* restate the salient facts of the Sept edition 'Scabbing With Pleasure' after which I publicly would like B Finch or any other SWP member to respond to this disgraceful situation through the pages of *Workers Hammer* or any other socialist or trade union paper.

In the meantime can I specifically draw the attention of all other SWP students at Loughborough to the actual scab nature of their organisation in case like B Finch they are unaware of it.

Revolutionary Greetings
David Douglass
Hatfield Main Branch NUM Delegate

Workers Hammer replies: The simplest way to restate the facts is to quote Socialist Workers Party leader Tony Cliff himself. Speaking at a London SWP meeting in Conway

Hall, 23 August, Cliff boasted:

'On the question of our steelworkers crossing picket lines. 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.'

These scandalous remarks followed an intervention by an NUR militant and Spartacist supporter, who cited SWP-sanctioned scabbing at Lackenby Steelworks on Teesside. A member of the Middlesbrough SWP tipped us off to this scabbing; he subsequently quit the SWP in disgust and has joined the Spartacist League. (We reprinted his resignation letter in our September issue.) To this day SWPers continue to work behind miners' picket lines.

We await Messrs Cliff & Co's response -- but we're not holding our breath.

Cop terror in S Wales

Cwmcarn, Crosskeys, Gwent
15th November 1984

Dear Comrades,

... At present we are battling against scabs at my colliery every day, there are 19 of them at present walking through our picket lines at the pit and there have been many arrests...

I was present on the picket line yesterday afternoon where I saw what I think was the most disgusting thing I have observed so far on picket lines in this dispute. A young lad not more than about 14 to 15 years of age was attacked by four policemen, the smallest of them must have been six foot two in height. They punched him to the ground and then twisted both his arms behind his back, lifted him to his feet, grabbed both legs and slung him into a police van and drove the poor kid away. His crime was that he was only doing what most young lads do in situations like this, looking on through natural curiosity as to what was taking place. Up to now we have been unable to find out who the youngster is, as we would like to visit his family to tell them what and why this happened. It is obvious to us that this was done in the hope that a fight would have taken place between pickets and police, which, as we were heavily outnumbered, would have caused many injuries to our already thinly stretched reserves. Unfortunately common sense prevailed and there was no fight, but it is my resolve that we make it known to the lad's parents and to everyone else in the area what

happened...

I did enjoy your dayschool, in fact I think it would be great if this event could be made into an annual affair. While unquestionably the contribution made by your French comrade Dominique was the most outstanding aspect of the dayschool, I thought that the short debate on racialism that was contributed by your young comrades Simon and Neil ranked most highly in the day's activities. You can indeed be most proud of them for without question with young people of their calibre in your party, you will go forward from strength to strength....

Sincerely Yours,
Don Hughes

Workers Hammer replies: For our part, we found comrade Hughes' contribution to the 10 November Spartacist dayschool one of the day's highlights. These remarks, along with other presentations on the miners strike, are featured in our centrespread (pp 6-7) this issue.

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In choosing *Workers Hammer*, we wanted a name that conveyed an active, and necessary, tool of the workers in their struggle. We note in Nigel Tranter's excellent historical novel, the *Robert the Bruce* trilogy, the speech he imputes to Robert, King of Scots, on the eve of the battle of Bannockburn in 1314, where the Scots inflicted a decisive defeat against their English oppressors under King Edward II, the notorious 'Hammer of the Scots':

'Today is fate hammered out on the anvil, hammered into shape. But mark you, today we are the hammer, not the iron! And the land, our land, is the arrogant, invading English host, which once more desecrates our land. But this time, friends, is the last. This time, we shall hammer and bend and mould that great unwieldy host....'

The heroic miners strike is an impressive example of how class struggle can break down national and racial divisions within the working class and forge unity in struggle against the common class enemy. We seek to provide the hammer -- a revolutionary programme and party -- with which the powerful multi-national and multi-racial proletariat of these islands can finally break and destroy this arrogant, oppressive and exploitative ruling class.

WORKERS HAMMER

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Tony Cliff says 'retreat', but

NLP students battle to stop NF

On Wednesday 28 November two students at North London Polytechnic, John Leatham (a supporter of the Socialist Workers Party) and Steve Tasane, were sent to Pentonville Prison. Their 'crime': courageously refusing to obey a court order which 'illegalises' student protest aimed at driving National Front organiser Patrick Harrington off the heavily minority college. The NLP administration has been working hand-in-glove with the cops and courts to protect this fascist scum from the hundreds of students who have demonstrated weekly and most recently organised occupations against Harrington. Poly director McDowell has even taken to locking all other students out of the Marlborough House building so that the fascist (and he alone!) can enter. We say: Free Leatham and Tasane! Drive Harrington out!

The struggle at NLP highlights the polarisation on colleges and universities throughout the country under the impact of today's sharp class struggle. NLP's student union has donated £1000 to the embattled miners in defiance of Tory law, while dozens more from Scotland to the West Country are sharply split on the same issue. On Birmingham University right-wing Rugby Club students have assaulted members of the Miners Support Group. And 28 November also saw the largest student demo in years as 30,000 marched on Parliament to protest the Tories' latest £25 million cut in grants. These cuts have outraged a section of Thatcher's middle-class base, who face the prospect of paying more for their children's education. But such cuts inevitably hit the worst-off the hardest, reinforcing the class bias of education under capitalism. We demand open admissions with a full mandatory grant and cost-of-living indexing -- and no racist discrimination against foreign students, currently forced to pay massive college fees.

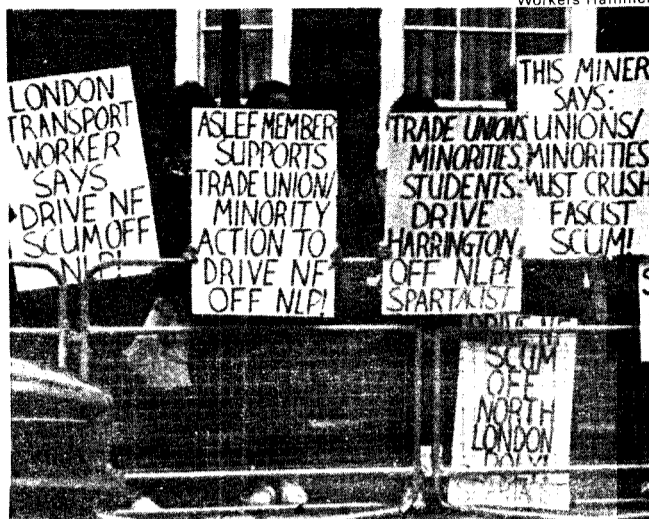
We reprint below a leaflet distributed by the NLP Spartacist Society. As against the SWP's attempt to keep the fight limited to students, with the excuse that workers 'aren't interested', our supporters in London Transport NUR have demanded their union 'mobilise the power of its membership at the picket lines' and called for a 'citywide trade union/minority/student mobilisation'.

How do we stop Harrington for good?

Bring workers, minorities into the fight!

Friday after Friday, hundreds of NLP students have mobilised along with supporters from other colleges and elsewhere to stop fascist National Front organiser Patrick Harrington from entering this heavily minority and working-class poly. These militant actions have prevented Harrington from attending his lectures on a number of occasions. But the vanloads of cops who escort him have ensured that this fascist scum continues to appear and continues to get in, including this week when Harrington provocatively came in to use the library. That this advocate of racist terror has not been driven off after all these months of student action is not for lack of militancy or dedication by the students involved, but for lack of a successful strategy.

What is needed, what the Spartacist League



Spartacist students at NLP mobilise militant trade unionists for anti-Harrington protest, 5 October.

has argued for from the start, is a perspective of mobilising the many thousands of militant trade unionists and minorities in the London area to join the students in driving the fascists off NLP. We have mobilised London Transport workers and striking miners to join the student protests. A number of miners also participated in the occupation this week. The working people and minorities of this city sweat long hours at low pay in order to provide an education for themselves and their children. They know that the presence of fascist Harrington at this poly is a threat to virtually every student here. And if the NF can get away with setting up here, in the heart of North London, they'll feel free to go anywhere. The presence of minority and trade union militants on the anti-Harrington protests demonstrates the reservoir of sentiment waiting to be tapped if the hundreds of NLP students who have fought in such a dedicated way channelled their energies into a winning strategy.

The strategy of students going it alone has resulted in arrests, victimisation and stalemate. But the working class, organised in the trade unions, has not only the social power but the social interest to stop fascist scum like Harrington. Right now the class struggle -- the miners strike -- is tearing this country apart and providing inspiration to the many millions who hate and want to get the Iron Lady. The miners have a direct interest in defeating the racist, strikebreaking fascists. In turn the miners' heroic struggle has polarised colleges and universities, forcing students to take a side in the class struggle. Anti-fascist students and striking miners have a common enemy and a common fight.

The reason such militant workers and minorities aren't appearing at NLP in large numbers is not, as some would have it, because they aren't interested in stopping fascism here, but because the people who claim to be leading this fight don't want them here. The NUS leadership and the majority of the old Student Union executive have openly denounced us for 'breaking the law'. And the so-called 'socialists' and 'revolutionaries' who claim to be providing a lead are in fact holding back the struggle. Supporters of Militant at NLP have been pushing the line of 'lobbying' ILEA and the Labour-dominated GLC. Ken Livingstone's 'anti-racist' rhetoric aside, the GLC and ILEA are parts of the bosses' state which

in fact pull the strings of the racist NLP admin. Yet Militant says we should look to them -- and no wonder given their call for organising the racist, strikebreaking cops into the trade union movement!

Student supporters of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) dominate the Harrington Out Campaign and the interim exec. These students have certainly been active in the campaign, but to what effect? When it came to it, SWP supporters actually opposed a resolution put by the Spartacist Society at an EGM to appeal 'to all trade unions, student organisations, minority organisations' in the London area to mobilise to crush the NF at NLP. Instead, they say, in a leaflet supporting the occupation, 'Students involved in the Harrington Out Campaign have learned over the last nine months that Harrington can only be stopped when students are actually inside and are able to decide who enters and who does not.'

Behind this bullshit is the fact that the SWP actually *opposes* campaigns to stop the fascists. While the SWP leaves its student supporters who want to fight Harrington hanging out on a limb and concoct mealy-mouthed excuses why this 'Socialist Workers' party is incapable of mobilising workers, the real truth is revealed in their own *internal* documents ('Opposing the Nazis', August 1984):

'There is no doubt that responding to nazi provocations would be a mistake, and we must avoid the trap.'

'Does the campaign at North London Poly disprove this argument? Not at all. We did not initiate the campaign against Harrington. We responded to a campaign which had already been started by students on Harrington's course....'

'We are not saying "ignore the nazis, and they will necessarily go away". We are saying, at present, "organise specifically against the nazis, and we'll build their organisation".' (emphasis in original)

If this cynical argument -- that fighting the fascists helps the fascists -- sounds familiar, it's probably because you've heard it a thousand times from the right-wing NUS bureaucrats and the Tory papers. Indeed the SWP goes so far as to refuse to defend its own members against fascist attack. Listen: 'If the nazi 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.'

What's it all about? The SWP has a profoundly *defeatist* perspective, called the 'downturn'. In practice, the SWP not only believe that every major social struggle is bound to lose in this period, but they do their bit to *help it lose*. A number of striking miners have died defending their picket lines against strikebreaking cops and scabs, but SWP leader Tony Cliff (author of the 'downturn theory') openly boasts that SWP members working in steel factories regularly cross miners' picket lines. Fascists like the National Front are the extreme right wing of the imperialist anti-Soviet war drive. It is this reactionary war drive, aimed at overturning the anti-capitalist gains of the Russian Revolution of 1917, which fuels the 'Tories' attacks on the unions and the racist terror of the fascists. The SWP refuses on principle to defend the Soviet Union against the war drive, and so it finds itself incapable of defending the picket lines of striking miners or minority students threatened with fascist terror. The 'downturn' is a fancy way of saying: lie down and take the attacks.

But for those of us whose lives and livelihoods are on the line, we can't lie down and take it. Minorities, anti-fascist students, communists, striking miners and their families are fighting back. What is needed is a strategy that links these struggles, not separates them. What we must do now is mobilise the social muscle of striking miners, of the heavily minority workforces of London Transport and Ford Dagenham and build the sort of mobilisation that even Harrington's blue-suited bodyguards won't dare go through. For mass trade union/minority/student mobilisation to drive Harrington off NLP!

23 November 1984



5000 blacks and workers stopped the fascist KKK in Washington DC, November 1982.

Hands off Tamil refugees in Switzerland!

The Swiss government has announced plans to deny political asylum to thousands of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees. The fate of these Tamils, threatened with imminent deportation to certain imprisonment and possible death in Lanka, now hangs in the balance. *Workers Vanguard*, paper of our American comrades, has received a letter dated 16 October from S Janarthanan, on behalf of the World Tamil Youth Organization in Sri Lanka, requesting publicity and protest.

Following the July 1983 government-orchestrated anti-Tamil pogroms in Lanka, in which many hundreds were hideously massacred, tens of thousands of desperate Tamil refugees fled to India while thousands more managed to make their way to Europe and North America where they rotted for months in squalid detention centres. About 1700 landed in Switzerland, the biggest such influx of dark-skinned political refugees Switzerland had ever experienced. (Remember that the Swiss denied asylum to Jews fleeing Nazi terror.)

In mid-August the Swiss government sent a delegation of two officials to Lanka. Their task, S Janarthanan wrote, was 'to investigate the prevailing ethnic situation here in order to ascertain the possibility whether those asylum seeking Tamil youths ... could be sent back to the island. After an eight-day stay here [spending] only 5 hours in the troubled North ... not even able to keep most of their appointments to hear representations [about] the Tamil youths, hunted, tortured and persecuted by the Sri Lankan security forces', the delegation returned to Switzerland to write its report.



1700 Tamil refugees in Switzerland face deportation into hands of bloody Sri Lankan regime.

Even before arriving in Colombo, the Swiss Director of the Federal Office for Police Affairs had claimed that 'the Swiss authorities had no evidence that the Colombo government was responsible for Tamil repression!' The subsequent 'report' reads like a press handout prepared by the rightist terror regime in Sri Lanka. Its claims are flatly contradicted by the daily testimony of journalists, which are available for all the world to read, in papers as diverse as the *Guardian* and the courageous Jaffna-based *Saturday Review*. Claiming that the situation has calmed down 'except for the most recent confrontations in the past few weeks in the North' (!), the report continues:

'The government seems concerned to contribute to stabilising the situation by taking various measures -- not allowing for the granting of certain of the Tamils' political demands. One cannot say there is a

general discrimination aimed against the Tamils.

'The present regime may have behaved clumsily for some time and overreacted with respect to the separatist tendencies among the Tamils. But today it seems to be making an honest effort to resolve the conflict peacefully.' (*Wochen Zeitung* [Zurich] no 42, 19 October)

Meanwhile the draconian 'Prevention of Terrorism' regulations and the censorship remain in force while in the Tamil north and east of the island the population reels under the attacks of a rapacious army of occupation.

As a result of the Swiss government's grotesque whitewash, thousands of Tamils face deportation back to communalist terror and government bonapartism. Other European governments, West Berlin for example, are now also threatening Tamil refugees with deportation on the basis of the Swiss 'report'. Since the refugees lack identification papers, their imprisonment in Lanka is virtually assured. The jailers of the brutal Jayewardene government in Colombo must not get their hands on these refugees! Remember last year's massacre at Welikada prison where 53 Tamil prisoners were bludgeoned to death. These deportations must be immediately and vigorously protested! Send telegrams to: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Chemin Tulipiers no 7, 1208 Geneva, Switzerland; Bundeskanzlei, Bundeshaus West, 3003 Berne, Switzerland.

Stop the Deportations! Political Asylum for Tamil Refugees!

Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 367, 23 November 1984

Swiss USec expels Trotskyists

This summer, four comrades of the Swiss Socialist Workers Party (SAP), section of the 'United Secretariat of the Fourth International' (USec), were expelled, in an explicit political expulsion, for fighting inside the organisation for positions paralleling the international Spartacist tendency. A justification of the expulsion was published in the SAP paper, *Die Bresche* (3 September).

The comrades of the Trotskyist Faction centred their fight in the SAP on the Russian question and emphasised the questions of special oppression of women and minorities. We reprint below the open letter which they produced protesting their expulsion.

The CC [Central Committee] of the SAP has felt obliged to publish a public statement on the expulsion of four comrades (*Bresche*, no 252). The CC claims that we hold incompatible political positions. The question is: incompatible with what? Certainly not with the Trotskyist programme.

In the face of Reagan's massive war preparations against the Soviet Union we do not shrink from our position: For unconditional defence of the Soviet Union. As Trotsky taught us in *In Defense of Marxism*:

'What does "unconditional" defense of the USSR mean? It means that we do not lay any conditions upon the bureaucracy. It means that independently of the motive and causes of the war we defend the social basis of the USSR, if it is menaced by danger on the part of imperialism.'

Instead the SAP calls for disarmament West and East and spreads pacifist illusions (as do preachers and social democrats). In its statement it even demands the withdrawal of Warsaw Pact troops from East Germany, which means nothing other than serving up a deformed workers state for dinner to the capitalists!

Trotskyists say: For defence of the workers states against imperialism! Only the armed workers will disarm the bourgeoisie! Victory to the Red Army in Afghanistan! (Declaration of Faction, p3).

In Poland as well, the SAP has abandoned the Trotskyist programme of defence of the gains of October and of the proletarian political revolution led by a Trotskyist vanguard party: a sellout to Solidarnosc which is considered an anti-bureaucratic movement by the SAP (even Reagan is opposed to the bureaucracy ...). There is no doubt that Solidarnosc has a programme for capitalist restoration in Poland: decentralised self-management to restore market capitalism; trade unions, independent of the bureaucracy ... but not independent of the AFL-CIO (better known as AFL-CIA on the South American left); establishment

of the Catholic church as the state church and so on.

We support the preventive coup by the Polish government, which halted Solidarnosc' counterrevolutionary grip on 13 December 1981. That is why the SAP tried to brand us as fans of Jaruzelski. Trotskyists can only be thankful that the bureaucracy, which constantly endangers the gains of October, has, at least for the time being, prevented without a blood-bath certain capitalist restoration.

This does not mean that we give political support to the bureaucracy. On the contrary: we sharply criticise it, because it economically undermines the country, favours the church and small peasants against the workers and thus is to blame for the workers being driven into the arms of Walesa, Wojtyla and Reagan.

Therefore, in Poland it is necessary to build a Trotskyist party. We need the Trotskyist programme to cut the ground from under the feet of counterrevolution once and for all. We need a return to the authentic communism of Lenin and Luxemburg! Down with clericalism! For the strict separation of church and state! For collectivisation of the land! For trade unions independent of bureaucratic control and based on defence of socialised property! Cancel the imperialist debt! For international socialist economic planning! For soviet democracy, not bourgeois parliamentarism! For proletarian political revolution! Defend the USSR against imperialism! For revolutionary unity of Polish and Soviet workers!

Defence of the Soviet Union is also on the agenda in Central America. Masked behind the attacks against the revolutionary process in Nicaragua and El Salvador are Reagan's roll-back plans: Nicaragua, Cuba, Warsaw, Leningrad and Moscow are supposed to fall. The international Spartacist tendency (iSt) is the only organisation which stands for military victory of the left-wing insurgents in El Salvador! The SAP supports the FSLN and FMLN in such an uncritical manner that it is opposed to building its own organisations in Central America. The SAP stands with those who look for a political solution. This means nothing other than bargaining over the price of the revolutionary fighters' blood! We are not simply spectators, as the CC of the SAP wants to pretend. We took a clear position in our document of May 20: 'Support of the Sandinistas' struggle and of the Salvadoran guerrilla fighters against US imperialism and its local butchers is a necessity of revolutionary policy. It is necessary to defend the Nicaraguan revolution and to complete it by the proletarian conquest of power, and to assure that it does not remain limited to Nicaragua.' This is the only road to victory.

The Sandinistas' policy of maintaining blocs with the patriotic bourgeoisie and of making deals with the imperialists aims at a third solution between capitalism and socialist revolution and at preventing the completion of the revolution. To really win, the masses need a Trotskyist party.

Defend the Nicaraguan revolution! Expropriate the bourgeoisie! Complete the revolution!

Why we were expelled

In its statement the SAP has kept quiet as the grave about the iSt, although they labelled us iSt U-boats from the moment we started our fight, and expelled us for it.

Upon being confronted with Trotskyist positions, the SAP was so fearful that it tried to avoid political discussions by means of bureaucratic manoeuvres. That's why they suspended us and threatened to expel us. Then they looked for a pretext to justify this measure which contradicted the organisational rules -- and they found it when we sent our first document to members of the SAP. But, as even the Control Commission itself had to state, in no way does this violate the party's rules. This is why the CC in its statement omits where exactly we supposedly violated the rules. However, the reason for our suspension and expulsion had nothing to do with the rules. Maybe the SAP has reason to fear the iSt... It is true that in several countries USec members, truly looking for Trotskyism, have been drawn to the iSt. In the US, the formation which was expelled from the SWP in 1963, now called the Spartacist League/US, has today become the recognised Trotskyist party of the American left.

We were young, loyal comrades who wanted to discuss some Trotskyist positions which were also held by the iSt. The leadership's witch-hunt drove us into the arms of the iSt. For this we can only be grateful. Thus we found our way from the national narrowness of Switzerland to proletarian internationalism. When 5000 black workers, led by the SL/US, drove away the Ku Klux Klan in Washington, then this is our victory as well! When our comrades of the Spartacist League/Lanka fight against anti-Tamil pogroms this is also our fight against anti-Tamil terror in Switzerland!

We call on all those who really want to build a Trotskyist party in Switzerland, part of a real Trotskyist international. The SAP cannot escape concrete class conflict by means of bureaucratic expulsions. We will pursue our struggle and therefore are publishing all the documents of our faction fight in the SAP.

Trotskyist Faction of the SAP (expelled)

Now members of the iSt

20 September 1984

Defectors defect

Thatcher's anti-Soviet ploys flop

First Russian journalist Oleg Bitov, then Stalin's daughter Svetlana Peters and then on 11 November, the two young Soviet soldiers, Igor Rykhov and Oleg Khlan, boarded a plane bound for the Soviet Union. Maggie Thatcher's vaunted Cold War defectors are all defecting back home to the Soviet Union. The CIA must be fuming. Not only does MI5 continue to regularly uncover Soviet 'spies' at every echelon of its apparatus, but Thatcher's Britain can't even hold on to the odd 'refugee' from 'Soviet totalitarianism' it manages to snare.

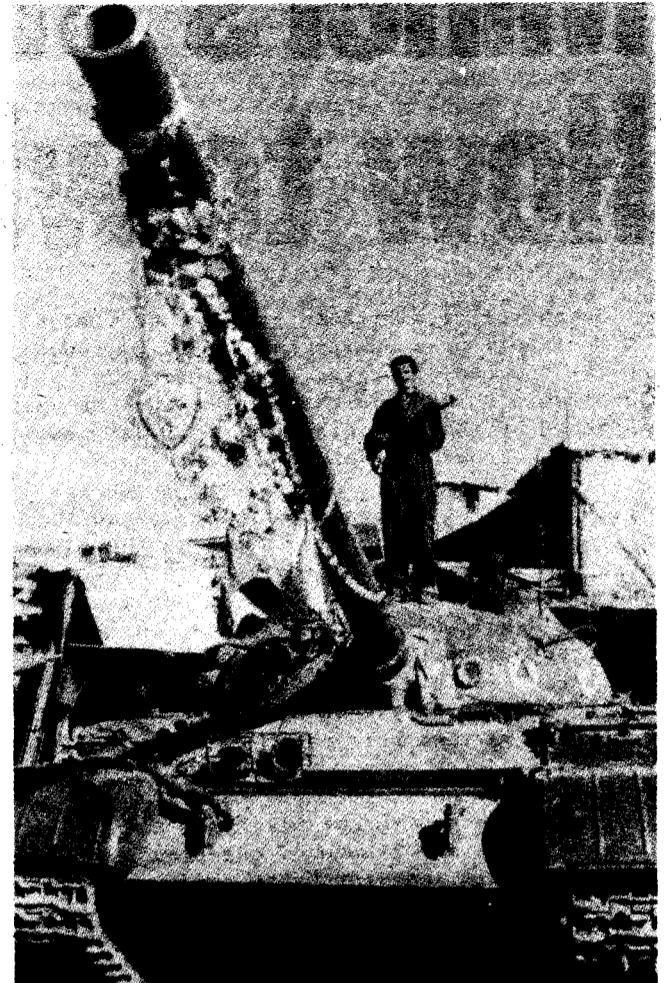
When Tory Euro MP Lord Bethel brought the two Red Army men back from Afghanistan last summer, amid a fanfare of publicity, he bragged of how they would expose the 'atrocities' of the Red Army there. Atrocities there were indeed, but not carried out by the Red Army! Apparently the two men had been captured by Afghan rebel tribesmen after deserting their unit, after which they were tortured into submission through enforced heroin addiction. Bethel blithely dismissed the torture to which the men had been subjected: 'The men have been in the hands of the Afghan resistance for about a year and during that period they were given considerable

quantities of opium ... it is the traditional way of dealing with prisoners in Afghanistan where there are no proper prison facilities to keep them docile' (*Sunday Times*, 17 June). When the two soldiers chose to return home, this pig then accused the Soviets of 'blackmailing' them ... by sending the soldiers a letter and photographs from their families! Blackmail?! When Bethel picked these two up, he and they knew that the alternative facing them, as every Soviet soldier captured by the Afghan rebels, was cold-blooded murder.

What the intervention of the Red Army into Afghanistan five years ago meant is the prospect of doing away with these barbaric 'traditions', like the bride-price, child slavery and the head-to-toe 'veil'. Of course for all its claptrap about 'Victorian virtues', the British ruling class is well-practised in the use of opium poisoning to subjugate oppressed peoples -- witness the suppression of China a century ago. Today they and their fellow imperialists are funnelling \$35 million per month to the anti-Communist Islamic reactionaries -- to be spent, among other things, on terror bombings of Kabul which particularly target cinemas and schools which educate young girls. This is the sort of 'freedom' the imperialists seek to preserve in their drive to destroy the Soviet Union.

Upon her return to the Soviet Union, Svetlana Peters quite credibly explained: 'I became a plaything of the CIA, who even told me what I should write.... To continue idealising America today would be quite impossible. Having found myself in the so-called free world, I was not free for one single day.' Trying to square this with their obnoxiously anti-Soviet 'third campism', Socialist Workers Party (SWP) leader Paul Foot comments on Peters' return: 'The choice became one between evils -- greed and venality in the West; bureaucracy and tyranny in the East' (*Socialist Worker*, 24 November).

Trotskyists have no illusions about the character of the Stalinist bureaucracy, which will be replaced through proletarian political revolution by a regime of genuine soviet democracy. But the SWP talks Thatcher's language: they support the counterrevolutionary Afghan 'freedom fighters' and call on the Polish masses to follow woman-hating, anti-



Soviet tank in Kabul. Spartacists say, 'Hail Red Army in Afghanistan!'

Semitic, clericalist Solidarnosc. Four years ago, the same Paul Foot achieved some measure of prominence by campaigning for Thatcher to impose an embargo on meat exports to the Soviet Union in order to assist the Afghan 'rebels'.

In contrast the international Spartacist tendency said: 'Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! Extend the social gains of October to the Afghan peoples!' Thanks to the presence of the Red Army, today young girls in that country are learning to read and write. And, we can say with pleasure, the Red Army is mopping up the 'resistance' so beloved by Thatcher and Foot. ■

Rykhov and Khlan at Heathrow airport, preparing to return to Russia.

Smash Thatcher's 'Victorian values' witchhunt! Free the jailed PIE members!

On 14 November Paedophile Information Exchange (PIE) members David Joy and Peter Bremner were sentenced to 18 and 6 months in prison, respectively. Their 'crime' -- advocating the proposition that youth under the 'age of consent' should be allowed to screw. In declaring Joy 'guilty' of publishing an 'obscene' article, and the two of sending an 'obscene' article through the post, the Old Bailey judge made clear that these two men were being thrown in jail purely and simply for giving 'an intellectual respectability to acts which society as a whole regards as loathsome'. Now Joy and Bremner's lives are in the hands of reactionary warders and prisoners; already they have been subjected to prison bashings and death threats. This 'Moral Majority' frame-up is truly obscene and loathsome. We demand the immediate release and dropping of charges against Joy and Bremner! Smash the witchhunt against PIE!

This case is the culmination of years of vicious witchhunting directed against the PIE. In 1981 Tom O'Carroll, then chairman of PIE, was jailed for two years for conspiracy to corrupt public morals. Witchhunting reactionaries like headmaster Charles Oxley infiltrated PIE in order to finger them to the police. This creep who postures as a defender of children is among those named in a 'Catalogue of Cruelty' issued by the Society of Teachers Opposed to Physical Punishment (STOPP) which noted 'that some beatings are just crude sexual assault by sadistic teachers'. Thatcher's reactionary 'Victorian values' crusade and the anti-Soviet war drive

have encouraged these vindictive moralisers. They shed no tears for the miners' kids killed scratching for bits of coal to keep their families warm this winter. But god forbid youth should be allowed a bit of sexual pleasure in this grim society.

The outrageous attack on the tiny (now defunct) and relatively unpopular PIE is the sharp end of the wedge targeting all those whose sexual behaviour differs in any way from missionary position heterosexuality. The genuine bestiality and beastliness of public school life is deemed a necessary 'test of manhood' for public schoolboys being groomed for the Tory establishment. But the masses of working-class and minority youth condemned to rotten schools and dole queues are meant to accept their fate as lower forms of human life without even a bit of sex to keep them warm. A current case, instigated by one Victoria Gillick (formerly a member of the ultrarightist organisation Powelllight) and backed by a menace ranging from Cardinal Hume to Thatcher, is trying to effectively deny contraceptives and abortion to any girl under the age of 16 by demanding clear parental consent. Gays are particularly under the gun: in recent months there has been an ominous and escalating series of attacks on gay rights, including Gestapo-style raids on gay bookshops which conjure up the scenes of book-burning in Hitler's Germany.

As Marxists we do not presume to advocate any particular mode of consensual sexual behaviour. As we wrote when noted film director

Roman Polanski was being persecuted for an affair with a 13-year-old girl in 1977: 'As communists we oppose attempts to fit human sexuality into legislated or decreed "norms". The guiding principle for sexual relations should be that of mutual consent -- that is, nothing more than mutual agreement and understanding as opposed to coercion ... the state has no business interfering' (*Workers Vanguard* no 192, 10 February 1978). This ought to be the guiding principle not just for Marxists but for any democrat on such social questions. Determining what is effective consent is always tricky, and particularly with youth there is a grey area. But such a judgement must be case by case, not categorical as it is with the age-of-consent laws. The act of sex in itself is not *prima facie* evidence of abuse or coercion.

The fact is that age-of-consent laws (which have their roots in the 'bride-price' guarantee of virginity of women in arranged marriages) do not protect children. They are designed to repress the sexuality of youth with the power of the state. They enforce the reactionary morality of the bourgeois nuclear family, an institution at the core of the oppression of women, gays and children. It is within the nuclear family that most brutality and rape against children occur. It is precisely because groups like the PIE have so little social clout that defence of them against this witchhunt is the test of political decency. Defend the PIE! Free Joy and Bremner! Stop the attacks on gays!

Spartacist dayschool: Building a party to fight for workers rule

Miners strike: How to win the class war

Seventy-five militants gathered in London 10 November for a Spartacist League dayschool on the theme of 'Forging a revolutionary leadership'. The wide-ranging discussions were enriched by the participation of NUM strike militants from Derbyshire, South Wales, Staffordshire and Yorkshire. Comrade Cheryl Myall of the SL Central Committee opened the day's events with a presentation on the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. The discussion on anti-racist struggle was further developed in the next session, which featured a report by two comrades from the Spartacist Society at North London Polytechnic on the current battle to drive National Front organiser Patrick Harrington off their college.

Following the lunch break came what was for many participants the highlight of the day: Comrade Dominique Arnaud of our French sister section, the Ligue Trotskyiste, addressed the present situation in France, where workers and oppressed minorities confront the racist, anti-Soviet government of 'Socialist' austerity-monger Mitterrand. Reprinted below are extracts from the final session, on the miners strike and the crisis in Britain, excerpted from presentations by Spartacist spokesman David Strachan and miners from North Derbyshire and South Wales (both speaking in a personal capacity). A very successful day of Marxist education and discussion ended with a collection of nearly £100 for strikers at Warsop Main colliery and a spirited rendition of the 'Internationale'.

Dick Hall, Warsop Main strike committee, North Derbyshire NUM: Given that we've been in dispute 9 months and been on an overtime ban for 3½ months, we ought to just briefly look at the reasons why we have a situation today where we have 145,000 NUM members still on strike, irrespective of what the media says, still on strike and still solid. If we look back in the beginning, one would have to look at the appointment of Mr MacGregor as the first attack on the NUM. Because his appointment was not coincidental, given what he'd done in America, given how he'd decimated the steel industry. He certainly had a mandate, and the mandate were to destroy the coalfields as we know them, to destroy the communities as we know them and to destroy the most militant areas, ie Scotland, South Wales and Kent, as they'd done in Durham and Northumberland in the years before.

The situation in Derbyshire at the present time -- I know a lot of you've been watching the news this week, I'm sick of it. I mean you have it all day, 12 hours a day, then you come home and all of a sudden the two most famous pits, well three now, have been Shirebrook, Warsop Main and Cortonwood. The situation is



Barricades blaze to stop scabs at Cortonwood, 9 November. Other unions must strike with the miners to bring the Iron Lady to her knees!

serious. We felt isolated this week because we live on the Notts border, in fact our pit is in Nottinghamshire, and we've had an increase of approximately 150 men going to work, bringing it to a total of 233 underground on Thursday, which is very different from the first 11 weeks when we had nobody.

Some people'll call them scabs -- I mean I will, anybody who crosses a picket line whether they did it on day one or on day 243 or in a year is a scab, no two ways about it. Having said that we've got to look at why they do it. We've got the Coal Board in Derbyshire sending us a personal letter every single week, churning out copies of the *Coal News* which nobody buys when we're working, and they plead. In fact they told us there's that many coming back to work, at our pit Friday day shift we thought that there were 3400 men working,

which is great cos we've only got 500 at our pit.

I think a more serious part of it has been that there's been no winning post to show the majority of people in the NUM, given the lack of support throughout the strike. We were able briefly to look at the dockers and anticipate their solidarity, to look at Nacods (though we never really thought they were coming), to look at other sections of the trade union movement, and one by one they've left us alone and isolated.

We've got a TUC which has openly collaborated with the bosses. They hate having struggle, make no mistake about it. They come out with empty promises, this that and the other -- and it don't matter whether it's Lord Feather, Vic Feather, Lord Murray, the names change but the faces and the policies carry on. That is why we suddenly find out that today every single time we have a strike there's a back-to-work movement before the strike's even called. It's been an attack on the trade union movement, and the bureaucrats have never tried to fight back because the bureaucrats, and in particular the Communist Party from after the Second World War, were more interested in winning positions of power for themselves, not mobilising the mass of the rank and file. They've got these great positions, then they get all the fringe benefits, will not move on it, and we've been left to suffer.

But having said that there's still a strategy to win, cos if there wasn't we might as well have gone back tomorrow. The strategy to win is -- [points to Spartacist banner, 'Miners, T&G, rail: For a fighting Triple Alliance! All out joint national strike now! Shut down the country!'] Well, it's not quite, you ought to have a little bit added on, but there's so much you can put on a poster [laughter]. All right, the car workers look as though they're going to go back. But this kind of action has got to be -- because the strategy is not good enough for the NUM after nine months to say, 'Head down, keep going, we will win eventually.' If we don't get the support of other trade unions, then we will be left in isolation. It will become bitter...

-- So that's the way it is at the moment: we're at the crossroads and we want a strategy. I want to be a bit negative in a particular sense, because what we don't want is the key question. Unfortunately, I'm chairman of Mans-



BL Longbridge workers at strike vote. Misleaders sold them out; now Tory courts want to loot TGWU treasury. Strike with the miners to smash the bosses' onslaught!

field Woodhouse Labour Party -- not very proud of it, to be quite honest, but that nevertheless is how it stands today. And when I read about Neil Kinnock saying that I don't want another Gallipoli, when the leader of the Labour Party can get up and make such statements as that, then I do get worried. When, strangely, he cannot go to a series of five rallies this week because he's here, there and everywhere, god knows what; when he won't come out and give full support to the miners -- and it is the party, supposedly, of the working class -- then I do get very, very worried. I mean, you can get marvellous individuals within the Labour Party. But in my Labour Party where I come from I get scabs, who sit on the front row. And look at me, I've been picketing 'em all week, they come to the Labour Party, a socialist party, and see absolutely nothing wrong in being a member of it.

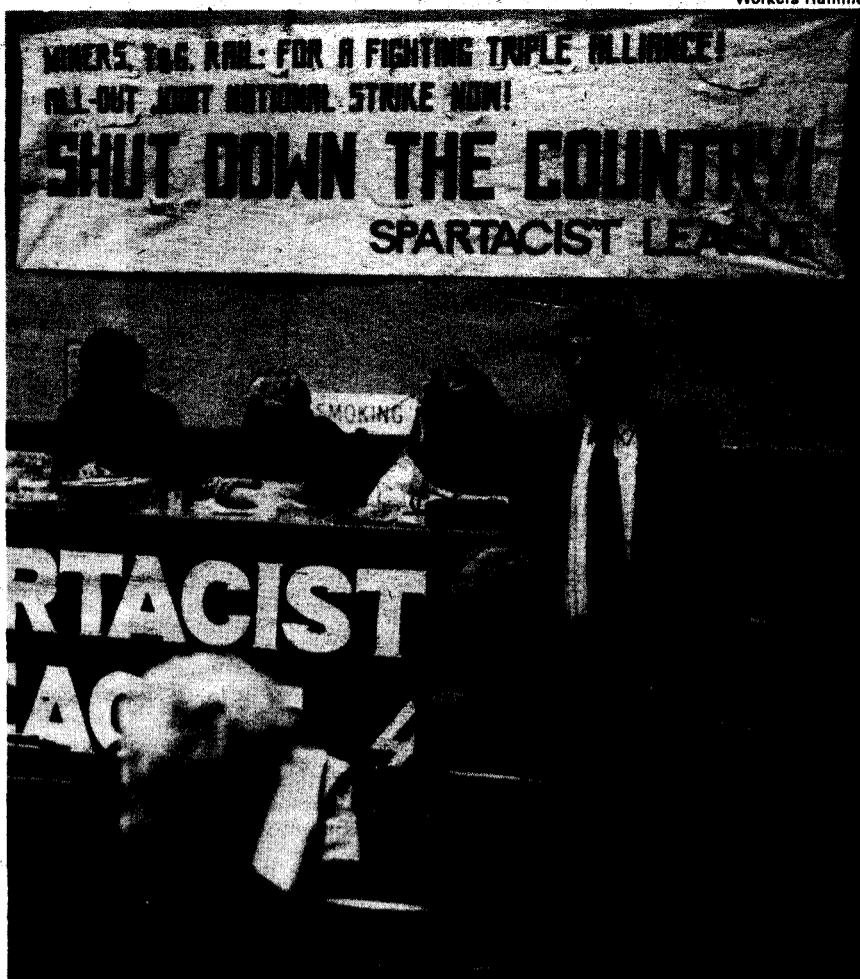
We have a Labour MP who's infamous, I think. He was the spokesman on Northern Ireland and his only claim to fame was that he went to Bobby Sands' deathbed on his 98th day on hunger strike and said, 'I hope you die, kid.' And then he came back and said, 'Yeah, solid we are.' That is the kind of man -- whose son, who has been out on strike for nine months, will not speak to him. That is the kind of party that we've got and it makes me wonder why I am a member, to be quite honest, increasingly so, and I think that at the end of the day everyone within the Labour Party has to examine their consciences to see whether we can change society. Because if we're in the Labour Party to change it through parliamentary means, well at the moment we're not doing very well.

'Who our friends and enemies are'

I'll tell you something else. I'm not a sectarian, I have been a member of lots of other parties. But I think that at the end of the day the proof is always in the eating. And if we look at one or two of these so-called groups then I think we have a very good idea who our friends and who our enemies are. If you take the SWP, I had a violent argument in Barnsley the other week with one of their leading members, who tried to explain to me why their members should cross miners' picket lines to go in Ravenscraig -- as a 'tactic'. So I said, 'Well, what's all this lot?' 'Well,' [he said], 'he's on his own there and he'd be coming out on strike and it would be ... ultraleftism.' So I had to think about it a bit, and I said, 'If there's 30 lads in Congleton on strike and 900 going to work, their tactic must be to cross the picket line, their own picket line -- in fact disband it -- go in to work in Notts, persuade the other 870 to come out.' I thought, it seems a bit strange to me, that [laughter]. If we have a group that calls for the crossing of picket lines, then to be quite honest they've no right to claim to be part and parcel of our dispute. I think it's absolutely disgraceful.

And if you look at the WRP [Workers Revolutionary Party] and their role, not only have we had this attack on the trade unions from the right, we have had an attack on the trade unions actually from the so-called left. Because at the height of the Cold War we had a massive attack on Scargill over his denunciation of Solidarnosc. He sent *News Line* a letter, and they forgot it for eight weeks. And on the eve of the TUC congress they thought they'd sell a few copies of the paper and make a political point -- and showed where their allies are. They printed this attack at the same time as the *Daily Star* and the *Daily Telegraph* and the other garbage. And now they try and tell me, coming around our picket lines, well, you know, we are for the miners. It seems to me that if they want to attack our leadership at a crucial time, for their own opportunist reasons, then they will do it again today.

It's the same with the group in the Labour Party, the Militant. What they've been telling me for years is that what we should do is get the Police Federation to join the TUC. Now some would argue that it would actually turn the TUC leftwards [laughter]. Now I'm being serious



Discussing the miners strike at Spartacist dayschool.

comrades. If we can honestly think that that's a strategy for winning working class people towards socialism -- to win these fellows who are knocking our lads in the morning and perhaps voting to support a picket line in the afternoon -- I honestly don't think that we are going to get into that kind of situation. That is absolutely ridiculous.

The next group -- this sounds like an obituary, this -- must be the Revolutionary Communist Party, whose first strategy was that what we should be having is a dialogue with the scabs in Nottingham, in Leicester, in South Derbyshire. That the problem is that if we talked to them properly, we could win them all out on strike. It's quite evident in the light of what's happened that that strategy didn't work, and they've now left the Notts coalfield -- I don't know where they have gone to, they're perhaps on about summat else now, I've no idea. And the IMG in their paper [*Socialist Action*], at the height of the strike, the biggest political struggle that we've ever had, they went off the presses for six weeks! Wouldn't even print. The last paper they printed, it's quite true, half their members wouldn't sell that issue because they thought it was novel to have an interview with a scab. Absolutely novel. I mean even the *Daily Mirror* hasn't gone that far. But these are groups who are supposedly on the side of the British working class and of the miners.

So it's quite obvious from what's been said that we are in a political fight, and to eventually defeat it requires a political party. That's an equation that there's no problem with whatsoever. There were celebrations last Wednesday or Thursday of the October Revolution. History has shown us that 67 years ago there were a party which could actually take the working class forward and we had a marvellous victory. Our problem is that we have had every Western country and every hack attacking the Soviet Union ever since. I can tell them that they've certainly failed because the Soviet Union is still there and still fighting and there is a political battle to be won.

Finally I'll come up to the Spartacist League. I'm not a member, but what I've said is that you can judge people by what they have done, what they have done in this strike. As far as I'm concerned, in our strike committee we have had marvellous assistance from the tendency on picket lines, on putting our lads up, on collecting money, in fact anything we have asked for has been there for the asking. They've educated lots of our members in certain ways, which has been very good, and it's been an education for me as well. That is the reason why I stand on this platform today, and quite proud of it.

I just hope that we carry on in this vein, that we will stick it out. There will be men going back, but the real men will still be out on strike, whether it takes another month, a three month or six months. We have got to win. Not only for us, because I think that the-

Workers Hammer

comrade was absolutely right this morning when he talked about the minorities. We have had this attack on the trade unions, and we have had attacks and attacks and attacks, of all kinds. This is what Thatcherism is all about, really, just attacking. Isolate and attack. Our strategy is to unite and fight back. It can be done, it will be done. Our problem is to make it sooner rather than later. [applause]

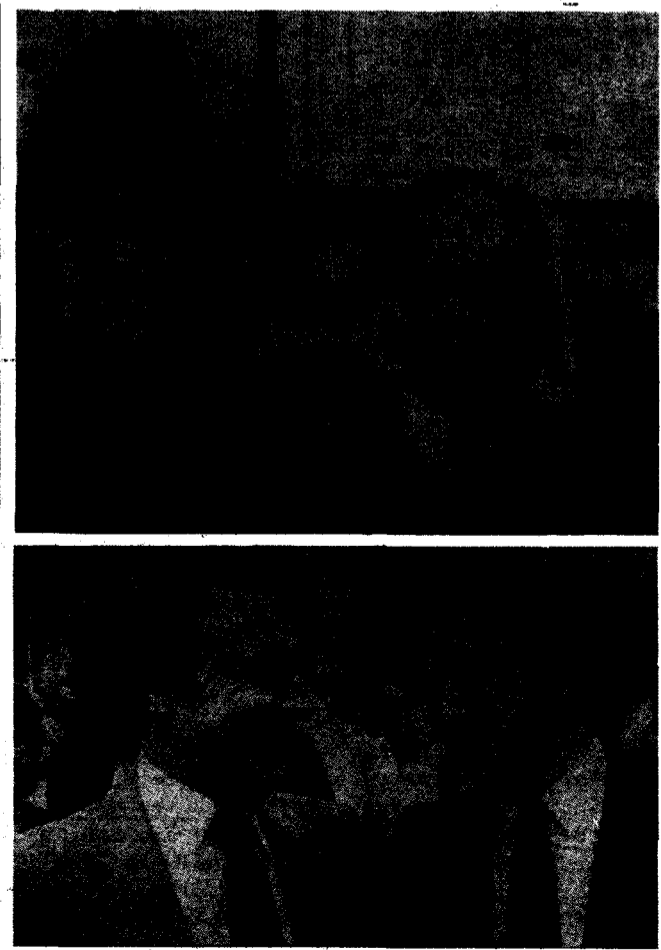
David Strachan, Spartacist League: I'd like to begin by coming off something that comrade Dick said about education, and to make the point that for the Spartacist League the miners strike has also been a process of education. We have learned a lot from the militant miners.

I want to talk a little bit about history. When they set about their industrial revolution, one of the things the British capitalists did was to bring down on the working people of Britain a wave of utter destruction, of utter cultural depravity, of utter destitution. And the British working class fought back and sought to pull itself out of the gutters, literally, in the 19th century, by establishing its trade unions and then establishing a political party. But the fact that British imperialism was very rich and powerful allowed it to funnel off superprofits from its empire for buying off sections of the working class, the labour aristocracy. It allowed the illusion in this country that the social-democratic way of going forward, that is of getting into parliament and making reforms, was somehow viable, that eventually things would work out, we'd get socialism through parliament.

Now in fact, the best gains the British working class ever got were not won in parliament but through struggle outside parliament. And, although this was masked by the situation of British capitalism, it's quite clear in this century, in the epoch of imperialism, that the only solution to the needs of the masses is socialist revolution. British capitalism fought two world wars, it started going down the drain and after the Second World War it basically managed to survive for a while on the basis of liquidation. There are accountancy firms around that live by just liquidating companies, they make their money just by liquidating things. British capitalism became somewhat like that -- except it hasn't got much left to liquidate. The empire has gone. They've destroyed what was once the foremost industrial base in the world. So now you have left in Britain a rotten and hollow edifice of capitalist rule. And this may be slightly scatalogical, but I read in the paper the other day that in Britain the amount spent on space research, astronomy and rocketry is one tenth of what is spent on toilet paper.

At the same time, the perception of what's happening in this country and the reality is muted by all the old institutions that still

continued on page 8



Top: CIA-lover Healey and Judas Kinnock arrive in Moscow. Bottom: Arthur Scargill and Kinnock at Durham miners gala. What's the NUM president doing with a strikebreaking creep like this?

Class war...

(Continued from page 7)

exist: parliament, the ongoing systems that have been established around the trade union movement, the longstanding period of fairly linear development of bourgeois democracy. But we should not make the mistake to think that this outward appearance is what's really happening, because beneath this outward appearance this country is being torn asunder. And if it was another country -- I could name a series of other European countries, France, Spain, Italy -- if you had a miners strike of this type going on for 8 months, you would be approaching a situation that would most likely be prerevolutionary. Leon Trotsky made the point that when things break out in this country it's going to unleash centuries of hatred.

Cold War realignments

Comrade Dominique made my task a little easier because she talked about the Cold War drive, in particular reference to France, but many of the points she made were general ones. The major imperialist powers led by Ronald Reagan are preparing for war against the Soviet Union. But domestically in this country and in other countries you see a realignment. The other day Eric Hammond was up at the Confederation of British Industry's conference and he talked about no-strike pledges and joint agreements and I thought, hang on a minute, I remember some other fellow who was going to conferences with capitalists, the top businessmen. It's that fellow Walesa from Poland who met in France with the top American businessmen, not to mention his friendship with the pope. And in the Soviet Union you see the Soviet workers wanting to help the miners' struggle, collecting money and evoking the memory of their own civil war, because they see the miners' struggle as being on that historic scale.

If you look at the Irish struggle, there is a new receptivity about what the Irish Republicans may be fighting about. The IRA in the past has carried out bombing attacks which have stimulated a gross chauvinist reaction in this country. This time around, there was a fair amount of elation in seeing what the IRA attempted to do. I suppose if the IRA were really smart they would carry out a couple of bank expropriations to get hold of the sequestered miners' funds and see that all the miners' families had a good Christmas. Unfortunately they are petty-bourgeois nationalists and they often carry out indefensible acts of terrorism. And as petty-bourgeois nationalists they are fundamentally fearful of the mobilised power of the working class.

There are two other new forces that I want particularly to mention. One is the role of women in this strike, particularly miners' wives, their girlfriends and daughters. Now women in this country have at other times played a crucial role in the class struggle. I would particularly point to the role of the women munitions workers in Red Clydeside during World War One. But working women, given the way capitalism developed in this country, have suffered very, very deeply. So the way in which the struggle of the miners has brought forward their wives and the women from that community is very, very important for the future of the revolution in this country.

And there is another force that we seek to draw in as much as possible to this struggle. It's not just a matter of talking about their oppression in a predominantly white society. Because since the Second World War, with the partial exception of the miners who to this day have dangerous, difficult and demanding work, many of the dirtiest, most demeaning, most poorly paid jobs in this country are performed by Asians and blacks. They form a crucial part of the working class. Miners will recall that in their own struggles many of them were immigrants originally. Highlanders thrown off their land, Irishmen brought over from Ireland, the Kent miners were all brought in from other areas. So there is a common experience as well.

The Labour Party has also been divided by the deep antagonistic forces in society, they are ripping the Labour Party apart. We don't want the Labour Party to be ripped apart by a counterrevolutionary ploy, particularly. But we do have to say that there is unity and there is unity. There's unity behind the capitalists and their Labour lackeys and unity in struggle behind the miners. You've got a choice. And the left wing of the Labour Party continues to prefer the choice of unity with the CIA lovers, the violence-baiters like Neil



Strikers' families enjoy a holiday on the Black Sea at the invitation of Soviet trade unionists.

Kinnock.

Now on Mr Neil Kinnock. Perhaps we should spell Neil k-n-e-e-l. He said that he didn't want a Gallipoli. Now I suppose that Neil Kinnock is trying to be witty a little bit by pointing out, because Mrs Thatcher has Churchillian aspirations, that this was a military disaster which Churchill was one of the architects of. But one of the first things I learnt about Gallipoli was that while the boys were dying in the trenches and being slaughtered by the machine guns, the English officers were sitting around and drinking cups of tea. And doesn't that sound like Neil Kinnock?

Forge a revolutionary workers party!

So we want a split in the Labour Party. But in this sense: not just a destruction of the Labour Party, we are not just trying to wreck the Labour Party. We want to replace it with a **revolutionary party, that will not try to administer capitalism, will not get into government in the capitalist state and then do everything the Tories do.**

In a sense the miners' struggle is breaking out of these old frameworks and that's a good thing, but it also has to be given some coherence and direction and it has to go beyond simply trade union militancy. What we have argued for is bringing other forces in the working class out in action -- which was posed concretely with the dockers strike, with the BL strikes -- to bring that together in joint strike committees which are rich in possibilities. These strike committees would allow the unemployed and the women's committees to take part. They would provide an organisational basis which could coordinate workers defence guards to stop the police rampage. They would provide a check on the leadership,



London Spartacist comrades celebrated the 67th anniversary of the Russian Revolution, 7 November. Featured guest speaker Howard Hopkins of the South Wales NUM discussed his experiences on an extensive visit to the Soviet Union with other British miners a year ago.

on what it does and doesn't do, and they would provide a place for a new leadership to be forged. They would be embryonically the basis of a future state power even, soviets.

Under capitalism in Britain precious human material resources are being frittered away. If there was a larger revolutionary organisation today I think it would be recruiting thousands of miners, women, blacks, Asians, they would be flooding to it. We have to use this strike to go forward and that means going forward to a workers government that will expropriate the capitalist class, a Soviet Britain if you like, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

There's a lot of things that can be done in this country. We will redress the crimes against the Celtic fringe. We will take a city like Birmingham which was once in the vanguard of human progress -- there was a society called the Lunar Society in which industrialists and scientists joined together to make many of the most crucial breakthroughs of mankind in terms of technology, with James Watt and people like that. Now Birmingham is some sort of burnt-out wreck. We'd resuscitate the traditions of something like a Lunar Society in Birmingham, give it life again. We would stop the devastation of the Welsh val-

leys and the Clydeside. We would certainly have civilised licensing laws. And we wouldn't have a monarch.

We would have a planned economy which would use the precious human material resources that are still left on this island for the betterment of the whole society. And we'd link up with the socialist federation of Soviet Europe.

I guess I want to end with a few sober points. Under capitalism most of the struggles workers and the oppressed undertake, they win some but they lose an awful lot. And then when we make a socialist revolution we win big. The Russian workers had a stupendous uprising in 1905 and they lost. But there was a party present which sought to draw the revolutionary lessons and so the defeat of 1905 laid the basis for the victory of 1917. The miners strike by now is a very long way from defeat. But if there was a defeat that's not the end of the struggle -- but it needs a party that understands the proper lessons to draw in order that next time round it'll be different.

Arthur Scargill is, within his framework, a pretty good trade union leader. He did a pretty good job of hiding the money away. But it's narrow, and it's not sufficient as an answer to the crisis in Britain. He still accepts this unity with the Labour Party leadership which will be a disaster. What we need is to bring those forces together in a revolutionary party that will have the programme that's been enunciated throughout the day -- a revolutionary party which will go forward to a communist future for these islands and for the international proletariat. [applause]

Don Hughes, Celynen South colliery, South Wales NUM: First of all, I live in the same house I was born in. That was 53 years ago almost. It is with great tribulation and shame that I must tell you all that my house is in Neil Kinnock's constituency. Mind you, it is also with great pride that I must tell you comrades: I didn't vote for the bugger [applause].

Comrades, I have never voted for a politician in my life. In my younger days -- of course we weren't so educated then -- you couldn't vote till you were 21. And when I was round about 20 years of age I observed a crack in the Attlee government. Prescription charges started to come trickling into the Health Service. The people of this nation were getting a little bit too much for nothing. And then the rot started to set in and I thought to myself, well, this is a Labour government. My dear uncle who brought me up from a baby was victimised for 14 years from 1926 until 1940 because of his activities in the General Strike. That was under a Conservative government. So I thought to myself, what the hell, there's no difference.

Now Neil Kinnock is an MP of a constituency which has 7 pits. All 7 pits are looking particularly dodgy. In fact the whole of South Wales is looking particularly dodgy, because in 1983 we had the princely sum of £37 million to invest around 28 pits. On a recent trip to Nottingham, back in March 83, me and a few of my colleagues who were on strike at that time lobbied members of Bentley colliery in Nottingham. And we were informed that they opened a new district in that colliery which consists

of three coal faces, and it cost in the region of £47 million. So one district, comrades, in one pit in the Nottingham coalfield had £10 million more invested than the whole of the South Wales area. And that is the reason that we have not got any 'economic' pits.

Now, at the start of the strike Neil Kinnock spoke to a Labour Party rally somewhere up country -- I can't remember where it was -- and he told the people at that rally that Margaret Thatcher a few days earlier had screamed across at him in the House of Commons and said, 'You're a friend of the miners! You're supporting the miners!' And he turned around, comrades, and he told the rally, 'Well, my father and my grandfather were miners. What could she expect me to do?' The question is, comrades: we expect him to do it and why the hell isn't he doing it? So far what have his contributions been to our strike? 'If the miners would've had a ballot they would have the wholehearted support of the British people and their own members.... If the miners wouldn't throw stones on picket lines they would get more bloody support.... If the miners would only go into negotiations with compromises, you know, they would get a fair outcome.... If they would only act with less intransigence, this strike would have been over months and months ago....' Comrades, if my auntie had testicles she'd be my uncle [laughter].

The reason for this strike is the simplest reason any strike could be called for. You all know what it is. We request the National Coal Board to withdraw their pit closure programme and to sit down with the NUM and other unions involved in the coal industry and discuss how we can make these uneconomic pits economic. But no. The NCB, oh no, they want to retain the head of the octopus. My colleague Dick was quite right. They want to cut off Scotland.

They want to cut the Scottish pits out. Northumberland, Durham, all out. Lancashire, North Wales -- yes, they are the tentacles. South Wales, Kent -- yes, let's centralise. Let's get all the collieries right in the middle of the British Isles. Let's run them down to around about 70 or 80 high-producing pits. And then let's turn them over to private owners because they can run them better.

A scab is a scab

Dick also mentioned too about the recent trickle back to work by some mineworkers who have decided that they do not want any more to do with the fight. And as Dick quite rightly said, if a man goes back to work the day the strike starts or the day before the strike finishes, he is a scab. Now in South Wales up until Monday we were the only area left in the whole entire British coalfield that had 100 per cent on strike. Now we have a few stones that have turned and out they popped and they went to work.

A scab in South Wales is a very brave man. We have a tradition in South Wales that's been passed down from father to son over many, many generations. The South Wales coalfield has always been involved in struggle against coal owners and against victimisation. A scab in them days is no different than a scab today, because when a man scabs in South Wales he knows, comrades, that he imprisons his soul for the rest of his life. You don't have to be shut behind bars to be a villain because I know of a man who died in a village not far from me when he was 84 years of age and he scabbed on the 1926 strike. That man died with no one at his funeral, and he was a man of 84. We remember in South Wales over a very long period.

When I came off the picket line on Wednesday morning and I went home to get ready to

come up here, I saw our area vice-president on television being questioned over the decision to deny these scabs union membership. And Terry Thomas, our area vice-president, said, yes, their contributions mean nothing to the South Wales area. If they will not help their comrades then we do not want them. There are some things which cannot be bought. And then this interviewer said to Terry Thomas, 'But what if they decide to send to the High Court for a writ?' And Terry Thomas told him, 'That's one more piece of paper with which we can paper the office wall.' Because they've had more writs in Pontypridd, comrades, than I've had hot dinners since the strike began.

I was very pleased over a comment that David made about the costs of rocketry, aerospace and what-have-you being 10 per cent of what we spend on toilet paper. Well, I've had one meal a day now for quite a few months, and I feel that if I go any further those figures may be reversed. In my home, a roll of toilet paper now lasts three weeks longer than it did previously.

So that's it, comrades. To my comrades from other areas, greetings, it's always nice to see you here. And I'll say this to you and I've said it to all comrades. Take heart. Because make no mistake about this, we are going to win this struggle. And I'll say this to you, comrade chairman. If I get invited back up here time after time, and my toes are out of my shoes and the arse out of my trousers, as long as I've got a thumb to go out to the side of the main road I'll be here. I will be here and I will speak to you once again, I will speak to you any time. Because at the present time the clothes you see me dressed in are the only ones I possess, my other ones are gone. But I will survive, we'll all survive, and when we survive we will win. [Loud applause]■

Winter of victory...

(Continued from page 1)

fence guards are urgently needed to stop cop/scab terror in the coalfields!

The Tories and their lackeys have good reason to want to see this strike brought to heel as quickly as possible. Already several power stations have been pulled out of the national grid. Llanwern steelworks were forced to shut down for several hours at one point for lack of power. CEBG plans to begin shifting 150 lorryloads of coal a day into Didcot power station had to be postponed when workers stuck by their policy of blacking fuel replacements. When the CEBG finally tried to bring in ten lorries, workers responded by occupying the canteen. Railwaymen in the key Coalville depot have been fighting against management victimisation of workers blacking coal for months, several times demanding strike action. But the national NUR and ASLEF leaderships do nothing more than authorise £11 per day 'strike pay' to those victimised while refusing to call a strike. Felixstowe seamen last month struck in defence of a branch official arrested on a North Derbyshire miners' picket line, but national NUS leader Jim Slater meekly accepts a court order outlawing a mandatory 50p levy to the miners and scuttles a strike threat by accepting a measly 8.2 per cent wage offer.

Last month's national strike by 28,000 workers at BL's Austin Rover Group could have been a real shot in the arm to the miners. But as soon as the strike began, the miners' picket lines which had been set up to stop scab coal at a number of BL plants simply disappeared. Hammond's EETPU and Duffy's AUEW immediately ordered their members to scab under cover of a strikebreaking court injunction demanding a secret ballot. For a week angry electricians and engineers at Cowley and Longbridge defied their leaders and stayed out. But they were offered no lead at any level.

Only nine days after the court order had begun to take its toll in encouraging massive scabbing did the TGWU even endorse the strike. It remained the *only* union to do so at national level. Pro-Moscow Communist Ken Gill of AUEW-TASS maintained an ignominious silence throughout and then copped a plea in court to avoid a fine. But the ruling class has gone hard against the TGWU, slapping it with a £200,000 fine. Instead of pondering whether to hide its funds or pay the bloodsucking courts, the TGWU should pull out all the stops -- road haulage, the docks, car factories, everything. A national TGWU strike alongside the miners can bring the country to a stop -- and that's what is needed. Turn the Tory anti-union laws into scraps of paper! Stop the looting of union treasuries! Mobilise the millions of un-



Labour Party in power attacks workers. Here, car workers protest against Social Contract wage slashing, 1977.

employed behind the power of organised labour through a fight for jobs for all through work-sharing on full pay! All unions which claim to stand with the miners must strike alongside the miners! Steel, power workers: defy your scabherding misleaders! Victory to the miners! Bring the Iron Lady to her knees!

The 'Russian connection'...

The miners strike has eroded sexual and racial barriers fostered by capitalism and become a beacon to workers and oppressed around the world, posing a vivid alternative to protectionist import controls and other forms of reactionary 'defend our country' nationalism. Most recently French miners of the pro-Communist CGT union federation in Calais tipped over 120 carriages of coal bound for Britain. And the bourgeoisie's attempts to whip up 'patriotic' anti-strike fervour have proved dismal failures.

When the *Sunday Times* attempted to better its 'Libyan connection' fiasco with a sequel on the 'Russian connection', it ended up providing the best publicity in years for the Soviet Union among Britain's workers and oppressed. Who among them could be anything but grateful that Soviet trade unions have contributed £1 million to the miners? Of course the Russia-hating fake lefts think that screaming about 'Soviet totalitarianism' is a ticket to instant popularity. From Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party on down they have maintained an uncomfortable silence on the Soviet aid. But to the millions of working people who see miners' families enjoying holidays on the Black Sea paid for by Soviet trade unions, it must be pretty clear that the Soviet 'evil empire' looks a hell of a lot

better than Thatcher's Britain.

We have repeatedly made the point that in Britain those labour bureaucrats who are the worst Russia-haters are also the most insistent scabherders. Likewise internationally the CIA-lovers have been the most vociferous opponents of this strike. Contrary to the Solidarnosc-lovers in the British left, the vile scabbing by the Polish Stalinist regime is made easier by the influence of anti-Communism over large sections of the Polish working class. The Tory 'working miners' who went over to Poland to get Walesa's blessings felt right at home with Solidarnosc miners who spat at the mention of Scargill's name.

The genuine enthusiasm excited among Soviet workers for the British miners strike reflects not simply instinctive class solidarity but an understanding that Scargill stuck his neck out for the Soviet Union against his own ruling class when it counted. (*Pravda* recently accorded him the rare accolade of a personal profile.) While the fake revolutionaries squirmed or joined in an anti-Communist witch-hunt, we said Scargill was dead right when he denounced Reagan and Thatcher as anti-Soviet warmongers and attacked Polish Solidarnosc as 'anti-socialist'.

The Soviet bureaucracy is equivocating over a mooted embargo of coal and oil to Britain. The miners strike demonstrates in embryo how militant class struggle in the West linked to defence of the Soviet Union could inspire the workers of Eastern Europe to fight for revolutionary internationalism against the narrow nationalist policies of the Stalinist bureaucracies. What is needed to carry this perspective through consistently -- to socialist revolution in the West and political revolution in the East -- is the building of Trotskyist parties internationally.

... and the Labour Party connection

Kinnock's jaunt to Moscow typified the long tradition of phoney Labour Party 'socialism'

continued on page 10

Correction

In our article 'Unchain the unions' (*Workers Hammer* no 63, November 1984) we referred to the 'vicious Birmingham pub bombings of ten years ago' as an example of 'past IRA mainland bombing campaigns'. While such attacks are completely within the IRA's political framework, as its periodic indefensible pre-Christmas High Street bombings show, it never claimed nor was shown to be responsible for the Birmingham attacks. From time to time it has been suggested that these bombings were the acts of provocateurs, and certainly the Irishmen jailed in relation to them are victims of a transparent frame-up.

Winter of victory...

(Continued from page 9)

which was defined in its hatred for the Russian workers revolution of 1917 and continues to be defined in its hatred for any struggle which challenges capitalist class rule. Kinnock's disgusting boycott of all five NUM rallies last month was the last straw for many workers. At last month's NGA conference in Blackpool, loud cheers and rapturous applause greeted one delegate who demanded that Kinnock's invitation to their conference be rescinded. Kinnock's own Ealing Southall branch voted that he be removed as leader and expelled.

In the crucible of class struggle, this party which is based on the working class but tied to the ruling class through its leaders and policies, threatens to be torn apart by deeply antagonistic forces. In the past month several NUM branch secretaries in Staffs have resigned from the party in disgust. The miners strike confirms in living reality the Leninist understanding that this pro-capitalist Labour Party can -- and must -- be split on the anvil of sharp social struggle in order to forge a revolutionary alternative. Even a relatively small revolutionary party rooted in the working class would today have a historic opportunity to break a sizeable chunk of Labour's working class base away from the reformist misleaders, right and 'left'.

When 'left' Labour MPs staged a protest in the House of Commons against Thatcher's vindictive £1 cut in strikers' Social Security benefits, the *Guardian* (23 November) described the 'sense' of 'two Labour parties, unstably united and pulling in different directions: one the well-scrubbed constitutionalist party that Mr Kinnock and Mr Hattersley hope to sell to the voters; the other the angry, restless, radical party of the constituencies....'

But there is still only one Labour Party. When they had Kinnock by the short and curlies at Blackpool the 'lefts' unanimously reelected him party leader -- and they continue to stand by him. During the Chesterfield by-election on the eve of the strike, Tony Benn refused a Spartacist League offer of critical support with the explicit reason that we were for driving his right-wing opponents out of the party. When push comes to shove, he and his cohorts prefer unity with the scabberding rights to hard class struggle against Thatcher. For all his refusal to knuckle under to the Iron Lady, Scargill too continues to bow to the cause of 'unity' with her lapdog Kinnock. Thus he pleads: 'I am not going to include myself in any slanging match between sections of the trade union and labour movement. What I want to do is unify the movement.' When he appeared alongside Kinnock in Stoke-on-Trent, the NUM president conspicuously avoided his usual talk of industrial action by other unions and defence of strikers against denunciations of 'violence'.

And the fake revolutionaries also want to maintain the integrity of this strikebreaking party under the social-democratic rubric that it is 'the party of the whole class'. *Socialist Organiser* (28 November) runs a piece condemning strikers for having 'wrongly' quit the Labour Party over Kinnock's strikebreaking. The 9 November *Socialist Action* finally -- eight months into the strike -- denounces Kinnock as a 'Scab!' and two weeks later rightly compares him with Ramsay MacDonald's strikebreaking role in 1926, only to oppose the Ealing branch motion to expel him. As for

Victory to Ford women strikers!

On 15 November 270 women workers at Ford Motor Company's Dagenham and Halewood factories struck demanding equal pay with other skilled workers. Their militant action has brought production grinding to a halt, with thousands of other workers laid off. The women have been maintaining a twenty-four hour picket to ensure that the company does not try to subvert their strike by importing material from elsewhere in Europe.

The women work as sewing machinists making car seat covers, a job that requires upwards of six months training. In 1968 in the 'Pet-ticoat Strike' women workers triggered off a wave of militancy in Ford factories. At that time they won equality with B-grade production workers, but the women are demanding equal pay with male skilled workers. Male upholstery cutters are classified as C-grade for example. And of course women are excluded from many other areas of work under the guise of so-called 'protective' legislation. For a woman's right to work -- open up all job categories! Genuine health and safety restrictions applied to women workers should be extended to all workers and enforced by the union. Equal pay for equal work!

The women's determination disrupted the cosy deal that Ford had worked out with the T&G bureaucrats. In return for a miserly seven per cent basic wage increase and two

days extra holiday, T&G general secretary-elect Ron Todd negotiated an agreement that guarantees over the next year there will be 'no future economic claims', a virtual no-strike pledge. And while Todd claims he will not abandon the machinists, the truth remains that he was ready enough to forget their legitimate claim. Sixteen years the women have been trying to win their just demand, raising it under Ford's grievance procedure in 1970, 1974 and every year since 1981. Now their strike action can win their demands. Their picket lines which are being honoured by T&G drivers are a lot more effective than the grievance procedure!

Ford has been trying, unsuccessfully, to appeal to the predominantly male workforce on the basis of backward male prejudices. Ford's filthy discrimination against the women machinists is an attack on all its workers, especially the large black and Asian component which daily faces racist discrimination. 'Divide and rule' is the bosses' slogan. Ours is 'an injury to one is an injury to all'. The Ford women workers should seek to link their struggle with that of the miners, enlisting the aid of the NUM strikers and the women's support groups. Ford workers: throw the company's insulting offer back in its face! Strike alongside the women for their just demands, for an overall improvement in wages and conditions, and with the miners for jobs for all!

the Communist Party (CP), which has sufficient weight in the trade unions to have a tangible effect on the strike, when cries of 'Where's Kinnock?' erupted at the Scotland NUM rally last month it was none other than leading CPer Mick McGahey who came to the Labour leader's defence. McGahey is aligned with the Eurocommunist CP majority, but the pro-Moscow *Morning Star* is no better. It hides the jeering of Willis in South Wales, buries news of Soviet financial aid as though it were something to be ashamed of, and shouts with joy when Scargill agreed to appear alongside Kinnock at the Labour Party's Stoke rally: 'It is a very welcome move for unity, just at a time when it is most needed.'

Bring the Iron Lady to heel

While the fake revolutionaries spend all their energies appealing to Kinnock to 'get off the fence', the Spartacist League was unique in nailing this class traitor right from the start. While they flock to the polls for Labour one election after another, we follow Lenin's advice that critical support to Labour in elections should be in the manner of a rope supporting a hanged man, to expose the misleaders in office. Thus when Labour stood on Callaghan's Social Contract in 1979 there was no basis for a vote. In recent years, we have raised the call, 'Drive out the SDP fifth column!' -- the open CIA-loving scabherders like Hattersley and Healey -- which would break the right-wing stranglehold and put the 'lefts' in a position of power in order to effectively expose their 'socialist' pretensions before their followers. But that is exactly what the 'left' fakers don't want.

In their overriding fear of confronting the question of power -- which class rules? -- the Kinnocks, the Willises and their 'left' allies are prepared to see this militant struggle defeated and the working class reduced to utter misery. The miners strike, and indeed the fate of the whole trade union movement, stands at

a crossroads this winter. Strike action alongside the miners leading to a general strike is a burning necessity. Not only can it bring their struggle victory, but in doing so it can bring the whole working class a big step closer to the realisation of a society in which the Thatchers of this world will be a thing of the past. But the fight for such a strategy is integrally tied to the fight to construct a revolutionary workers party, a Trotskyist party, which can unite all sectors of the oppressed against the capitalists and their scabberding lackeys. *Victory to the miners! Strike with the miners now! Down with the Labour/TUC traitors -- For a revolutionary workers party!* ■

Nicaragua...

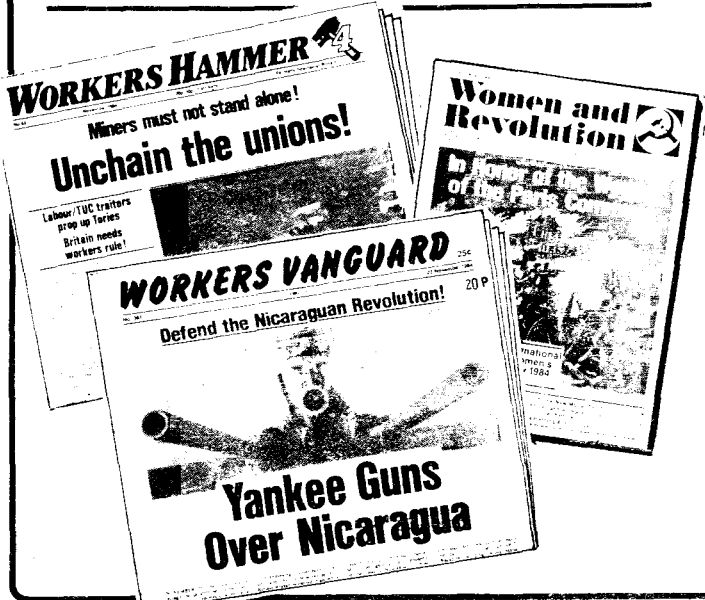
(Continued from page 12)

The US is trying to wear down the Nicaraguans by provoking a constant mobilisation. But ultimately it comes down to a question of timing. The Americans have already exhausted their other alternatives. In three years of gruesome terror the 'contras' have not been able to take a single town. Nothing suggests that if Congress turns on the dollar spigot again things will be any different. A 'surgical air strike'? But there's nothing for the air force to take out. A naval blockade would only make somewhat worse the already desperate economic crisis: a 'quarantine' only makes sense as the first step of an invasion.

The Nicaraguans vow to fight for every inch of their territory, and it's clear they have the will to do so. But they need the means. MIGs might not last more than 15 minutes against the US, but they would counter the Honduran, Salvadoran and Guatemalan air forces, which have almost 100 jets while Nicaragua has virtually no air force at all. Above all they need hand-held SAM-7 anti-aircraft rockets, and sophisticated mobile SAM-8s to knock down an airborne US invasion force. It is the internationalist obligation of the Soviet Union to supply and resupply these weapons to Nicaragua, which it has been reluctant to do. But even without such equipment, the Nicaraguan army numbers more than 50,000, with an equal number of members of standing militias, and the Sandinistas say they will have hundreds of thousands of armed Nicaraguans waiting to shoot down those paratroopers.

At the Sandinistas' closing election rally, junta coordinator (now president) Daniel Ortega cried out to the enthusiastic crowd estimated at 300,000: 'We must be ready to fight in the streets of Managua against the Americans, with guns, with rocks, with machetes.' The crowd responded with the battle cry of the Spanish Civil War: 'No pasaran!' They shall not pass! But in Spain the Francoists did get through, because the Stalinists blocked the proletarian revolution at every step, politically tying the workers to the bourgeois republic. The massive vote for the

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Sandinistas and the clear evidence of popular support for the revolution won't stop the contra terrorists. What's needed is mobilisation of the workers and peasants to defend Nicaragua the only way possible -- completing and extending the revolution.

Nicaraguan elections and Yankee blackmail

From the moment they were announced last February, the Nicaraguan elections have been subordinated to the confrontation between the radical-nationalist Sandinistas and Reagan's America. Initially they were aimed at gaining 'legitimacy' in the eyes of the Democratic-controlled US Congress and in Europe. As pressure from Washington mounted to put off the vote, the fact that it was held at all became an act of defiance against US imperialism. But in the end this brought no 'breathing space' for the Nicaraguan revolution. Instead the elections provided a forum for the internal counterrevolution and created a bourgeois



Spartacist League/US demonstrates against CIA-backed invasion of Nicaragua, March 1983.

parliamentary institution that will be an obstacle to further revolutionary advances. If this were not enough, on the eve of the voting the FSLN hosted a 'national dialogue' including the CIA-backed Coordinadora boycotters.

The Sandinistas campaigned on a 'Plan of Struggle' centred on defending Nicaragua's sovereignty and 'institutionalising' the revolution. This programme vainly attempts to bridge the fundamental alternatives: social revolution or bloody counterrevolution. While talking of 'people's power', they have just elected a parliamentary assembly in which right-wing reaction is well represented. The FSLN platform commits itself to 'deepen the social and economic revolution that has already been launched', and in the next breath talks of 'consolidating our model of independent economic development'. Yet only by expropriating the bourgeoisie, replacing the 'mixed' capitalist economy with socialised production, can the power of the capitalist fifth column be broken.

To date the Sandinista land reform has not gone beyond the 20 per cent of the agricultural land held by Somoza and his chums as well as the few landowners who fled the country. The large landowners, particularly cotton planters, and the kulak producers of coffee and tobacco have not been touched. These layers are simultaneously the main producers of Nicaragua's foreign exchange, and the main support for the contra terrorists in the countryside. In the cities, most industry is still in private hands. As a result of contra terror and imperialist boycott short-

ages are everywhere, and inflation has cut the workers' standard of living drastically. Meanwhile, wages were frozen for the last five years. The result has been discontent, not only among middle-class housewives who can afford to send their maids to pay exorbitant prices on the black market, but also in the working class. This was forced underground by the prohibition of strikes under the state of emergency in force during the last three years.

When the ban was lifted during the election campaign, there was a flurry of walkouts. Sixteen hundred workers at the state-owned Victoria Brewery went back to work only after the minister of labour threatened prosecution. When the METASA engineering plant in Managua was also struck, the Sandinista union federation held a meeting of several hundred union activists to denounce 'economist' attitudes among the workers and to oppose strikes.

The Sandinista platform seeks to defend the anti-Somoza revolution by freezing the present totally contradictory social conditions. *This situation cannot last.* Simply out of an instinct for self-preservation, the Sandinistas may be constrained to go further than they intended under the murderous pressure of US imperialism. Even then, at best the result would be a bonapartist, nationalist regime -- a bureaucratically deformed workers state on the Cuban model. And today every concession to capitalist reaction threatens the very survival of the revolution. For there to be a 'new dawn' for the Nicaraguan masses, an internationalist communist vanguard must be forged, a party built on the programme of the Bolsheviks under Lenin and Trotsky.

While the Sandinistas appeal to patriotism, building a republican army as in the Spanish Civil War, Trotskyists insist that it is necessary to construct a proletarian army to defeat the counterrevolution. Communists and class-conscious worker militants must call for *military training under trade union control*, for the formation of *workers militias* based on the factories, for *soldiers committees* in the army and the *election of officers*.

Communists might fight in the unions, including in the Sandinista-controlled CST, to impose *workers control of production* and to demand the *expropriation of the capitalists*. Instead of a national assembly modelled on West European bourgeois parliaments they must fight for a *soviet regime of workers and peasants councils*. Trotskyists know socialism in one former banana republic is *impossible*. Nicaragua is a small, dirt poor, predominantly peasant economy with a tiny working class. It is indispensable to link up with the big battalions of the proletariat, beginning with Mexico and ultimately, in the belly of the beast, the American working class.

The Yankee imperialists, both Republican and Democrat; European Christian Democrats and social democrats; Latin American bourgeois governments of every hue; Stalinist regimes from Moscow to Peking to Havana; Ronald Reagan and Walter Mondale, Fidel Castro and Denis Healey, Ortega and Duarte, the Sandinistas and the CIA's Coordinadora, nationalists and reformists everywhere -- they all support the Contadora 'peace process'. What this unholy alliance expresses is their *common fear of international revolution*. Such a 'peace' treaty would place a noose around the Central American masses.

The struggle to defend Nicaragua means to complete and extend the revolution: it means a revolutionary war mobilising the hundreds of thousands of hideously oppressed peasants, linking up with leftist insurgencies in El Salvador and Guatemala and getting the US bogged down in an indecisive conflict as the number of American casualties mount. The soft underbelly of Yankee imperialism is the lack of masses of troops ready to fight to the death against 'communism'. In fact, over a quarter of the US Army today is made up of black and Latin minorities, who are not about to die for the greater glory of El Salvador-style death squad 'democracy'.

The task of socialists, trade unionists, black militants in the United States is to take up their place in this fight to stop Reagan before he blows up the world in the insane bipartisan anti-Soviet war drive. This means breaking from both capitalist parties, in order to fight for a workers party. It means blocking all US arms shipments to Central America and political strikes against an American invasion.

Besieged Sandinista Nicaragua recalls Soviet Russia in the early months of 1918, facing imperialist 'quarantine' from without (soon to become direct military intervention) while the country polarises internally. What's different is the absence of a communist leadership. Where the Sandinistas seek to

paper over fundamental class divisions, the Bolsheviks stood at the head of the working class and united Russia on a new basis, spreading soviets throughout the land. It was this political programme that enabled Trotsky to construct a powerful Red Army that won the civil war. In Lenin and Trotsky's Russia, unlike Spain, the 'contras' did not pass. This is the programme of the Trotskyists today: for workers revolution throughout the isthmus and beyond, led by a world party of socialist revolution, a reborn Fourth International.

Adapted from Workers Vanguard no 367, 23 November

Black workers...

(Continued from page 12)

miners, waged a bloody strike over wages and union recognition. And for much of the year hundreds of thousands of black student youth have shut down the schools in protest. The regime responded as usual with batons and tear gas, rubber bullets, machine guns and armoured cars. But even killing over 160 and detaining thousands, the racist rulers cannot keep the lid on.

'Our members wanted to demonstrate their discontent and it was impossible for the union to just stand by any longer', said a spokesman for FOSATU (*Wall Street Journal*, 7 November). In the past FOSATU has had a reputation for being economist, avoiding political issues. Likewise, CUSA, the other



After mass black stay-away strike in early November 6000 workers at strategic Sasol synthetic oil plant were shipped back to bantustan hellholes.

main force in the mass work stay-away, has been a relatively tame union grouping. But the black workers' hatred for apartheid impelled even these moderate unions into battle.

This is a critical moment for the black revolt in South Africa. The Transvaal general strike marks the highest level of struggle to date. The racist regime has responded with escalating repression. Here *international labour action in solidarity with the embattled black toilers can be decisive*. Black all shipping and cargo to and from South Africa! Free the black trade unionists and all victims of apartheid terror!

In South Africa, where 22 million black people are treated like foreigners and chain-gang labour in their own country, every struggle for democratic rights, social equality and national emancipation points toward the destruction of apartheid capitalism. In the past months the black masses have displayed incredible courage and combativity in confronting unarmed the bloody police-state regime. What is needed, above all, is a Leninist vanguard party which can mobilise the enormous power of the black proletariat for all of the many-sided struggles to smash apartheid, and open the road for a black-centered workers and peasants government.

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WORKERS VANGUARD

South African Revolution: Black Unions the Key

Defend, complete, extend the revolution!

Reagan's guns over Nicaragua

The riskiest time is going to be just after the US elections, Fidel Castro reportedly wrote in a document circulated to top Cuban officials last July. That's when Reagan might be tempted into launching a full-scale invasion of Nicaragua, or even Cuba itself.

On the evening of 6 November, just an hour after the TV networks declared Ronald Reagan re-elected, high White House officials were saying that the administration planned to follow a more 'muscle' policy towards the Sandinistas. Also on election night US intelligence officials 'leaked' reports to the press of Soviet MIG-21 jet fighter aircraft supposedly on their way to Nicaragua. There followed a week of ominous US threats, manufactured 'revelations' and crass hypocrisy. Five times in four days the US sent an SR-71 'Blackbird' swooping low over Managua at supersonic speeds in order to panic the Nicaraguan population. 'The MIGs are coming, the MIGs are coming!', they screamed, so that gives them the right to destroy Nicaragua. Seventy-two hours later they admit the MIGs aren't coming and never were, but they're going to obliterate Nicaragua anyway, supposedly because of the Sandinistas' arms buildup. It was a war of words, all right, but don't just watch their mouths -- keep an eye on their aircraft carriers.

'We have not received, we are not receiving, and there's no boat on the way with any MIGs', Nicaraguan foreign minister Miguel D'Escoto said on American TV (7 November). But after this categorical denial, he defiantly added:

'We believe that we have the right to get whatever we need for our defence, and if ever we came to believe that MIGs were needed, we would get them, and we would have no difficulty in telling you that we are getting them.'

(Subsequently Sandinista spokesmen have said that they are negotiating for SAM anti-aircraft missiles.) D'Escoto said the phoney MIGs affair was intended to discredit the Nicaraguan elections, and to 'punish' Nicaragua for agreeing to the Contadora 'peace' proposals.

The Nicaraguans did not limit themselves to verbal denunciations of the Yankee provocations. On 8 November, Sandinista commander



May Day 1984 in Nicaragua: demonstrators declare 'Every worker, a defender of the homeland.'

Jaime Wheelock told 20,000 student volunteers in Managua's Plaza de la Revolucion that they would not be sent north to the mountains to pick coffee but instead would be mobilised to defend the capital. 'A rifle will be given to every young person and all the people of Managua... We would rather let the coffee fall than let the country fall', he declared. The next morning, more than 100 tanks and armoured vehicles took up positions in Managua as the defence ministry issued 'emergency communique no 1' announcing a nationwide alert against the threat of a US attack. Sandinista defence committees stockpiled food, militias redoubled weapons training and soldiers reopened trenches dug after Reagan's invasion of

Grenada last autumn.

The Soviet news agency TASS (9 November) issued a statement saying, 'The aim of this provocative undertaking is obvious -- preparation of ground for armed attacks on and invasion of Nicaraguan territory by US troops' as a 'pretext to destroy the Sandinista revolution'. Pentagon officials accused the Nicaraguans of being 'paranoid'. But anyone might get more than a little paranoid seeing battalions of the 82nd Airborne Division, the 101st Airborne Division and the 24th Army Infantry Division (15,000 men), the battleship *Iowa* with its 16-inch guns cruising with two dozen other US warships off the Caribbean coast, and half a dozen aircraft carriers lying in wait 'somewhere in the Pacific'.

The working class and oppressed of the world -- and above all in the United States itself -- have a direct stake in the victory of the revolutionary upheavals sweeping Central America. If the US invades Nicaragua, there must be a mass mobilisation of organised labour, blacks and Hispanics, students and other sections of American society to deal the imperialist war machine a defeat at home.

Nicaragua needs MIGs, SAMs...

The Reagan administration is mobilising, destabilising and jerking the Nicaraguans around in every known way. What are they up to? Clearly Washington has a hit list: yesterday Grenada, today

Nicaragua, then tomorrow on to the big one, the Soviet Union. (And if the wind is right, maybe the fallout will wipe out America's Chinese allies and there won't have to be a Number 4.) Secretary of State Shultz, currently posturing as the administration's soft cop, says that the flap over the MIGs 'strategically' involves the Soviet Union, and talks of 'punishing' the Russians elsewhere (*New York Times*, 9 November). Meanwhile, 'hard cop' war secretary Weinberger talks of reversing the Kennedy administration's 1962 agreement not to take military action against Cuba. This confirms, as we have repeatedly insisted, that *defence of Cuba, USSR begins in Central*

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Black workers shake South Africa

For international labour action - Free all victims of apartheid terror!

'We have proved to the government that we have the power... We cannot go back any more.' -- Thami Mali, black trade unionist and work stay-away leader

The current wave of anti-apartheid struggles sweeping South Africa has brought into direct conflict the two fundamental antagonists: the increasingly organised and combative black working class and the white masters with their machine of state terror. On 5-6 November, hundreds of thousands of the superexploited black workers in South Africa's industrial heartland, the southern Transvaal, came out together with a 250,000-strong black student strike, in a political general strike demanding

the withdrawal of troops and police from the black townships, release of all political prisoners and detainees, and the reinstatement of fired workers. According to the government's own broadcasting service, two thirds of black industrial workers in the Johannesburg area struck and in some industries the figure reached 95 per cent. 'Widening Black Protests in South Africa Could Pose a Challenge to Rule by Whites', ran the headline in the *Wall Street Journal* (7 November). The white racist rulers in America and Britain see their anti-Soviet 'free world' ally in crisis as the black unions throw their weight into the struggle.

The apartheid regime is attempting to quell the widening black revolt through massive police-state measures. The leadership of the Transvaal Regional Stay-Away Committee, the coalition of black trade unions, political organisations and student groups which called the strike, has been detained. Among the trade unionists arrested are Piroshaw Camay, secretary general of the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA), and Chris Dlamini, president of the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU). The main anti-apartheid political formation, the United Democratic Front (UDF), is in imminent danger of being

banned. Already many UDF leaders are detained and its principal spokesman, the Rev Allan Boesak, could face five years in prison for denouncing police terror.

State terror is being directed not only at the leaders but also the rebellious black masses. After the stay-away at the strategic state-owned synthetic oil plant at Secunda, management fired 6000 strikers and deported them to the poverty-stricken bantustans. Then on 14-15 November police rounded up 2300 black workers in the militant township of Sebokeng south of Johannesburg.

The Transvaal general strike was part of a chain reaction of anti-apartheid struggles set off in August when the 'coloured' (people of mixed race) and Indians protested and boycotted elections to new segregated puppet parliaments designed to line them up against the black majority of 22 million. In early September townships in the southern Transvaal exploded in demonstrations against rent increases which, met with police terror and the unprecedented use of the army for domestic repression, soon turned into attacks on local black government collaborators. Next, South Africa's main value producer, the black gold

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