

# WORKERS HAMMER



No 68

April 1985

20p/10p to NUM strike veterans

Monthly paper of the Spartacist League

# Margaret Thatcher: Enemy of the people!

## Hail the miners!

## Remember the traitors!

The miners strike changed the face of British politics. For years Britain's workers and minorities have suffered under the heel of Thatcherite reaction. In the struggle of the NUM, they saw a road forward against the Iron Bitch that no amount of Labour Party parliamentary play-acting could provide. Had the miners won, Thatcher would be eating dirt, and the prospects of revolutionary struggle sharply reinforced. She reckoned the treachery and cowardice of the labour movement mis-leaders would see her through, and was proved right in the end. But the heroism and combativity with which the miners fought against overwhelming odds will not lightly be forgotten.

The miners lost, but Britain remains a timebomb ticking towards further class explosion. How to win, the next time? The deep class hatred left in the wake of this strike must not be dissipated and defused back into the Labour Party of Neil Kinnock, but channelled instead into a revolutionary tide which can crash over the entire rotten capitalist system. *This is the lesson which must be learnt to go forward.*

### A vicious Tory bitch

Thatcher was right at home on her imperial tour of Southeast Asian dictatorships, boasting to her gang of fellow cutthroats how she'd 'seen off' the miners strike. Strikers are being provoked by scabs and slapped with punitive mortgage rises and massive pay 'deductions'. Agreements on working conditions and job classifications are torn up by the NCB. The number blacklisted has topped 900; 150 are locked behind prison doors. Entire communities are sentenced to death through pit closures. The wide-ranging victimisations and provocations must be resisted through collective and intelligent tactics. But the ending of the overtime ban, the defeat of the 50p levy for sacked strikers and, finally, the signed agreement with the Coal Board on wages and closure 'review' procedure all speak far louder than the NUM leadership's rhetoric about the strike not ending in defeat.

Millions understood, 'If the miners lose, we all lose.' The payoff for Bill Sirs' scabbery is the closure announcement of BSC's Tinsley Park works. London Transport faces 6000 redundancies. The 'left' rail union leaders sabotaged their members' desire for strike action with the NUM. Now they're stuck with a wage settlement below the rate of inflation, while the TGWU faces threat of direct government intervention. Postal workers

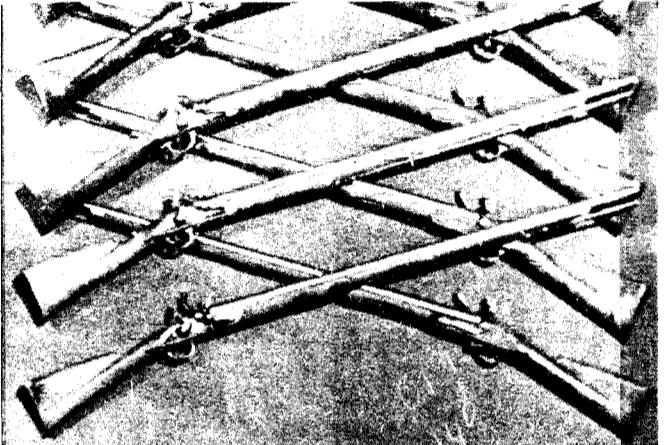


John Harris (IFL)

The Iron Lady: vicious, vindictive, but vulnerable. The hatred for Thatcher demonstrated through twelve months of class war must be channelled into forging a new revolutionary party. To hell with Judas Kinnock and his gang of traitors — build a leadership that can sink Thatcher and her class!

are threatened with privatisation, Scottish teachers with open blacklegging if they dare defend their union rights. An industrial tribunal rules a racist foreman right in calling BL worker Zedekiah Mills a 'black bastard' and then getting him sacked. Thatcher's drive to further slash services and effectively disenfranchise the largely minority and working-class inner cities through dismantling local government is only a taste of what this would-be despot would like to do.

The labour movement and oppressed must of course defend themselves against the flood of attacks. But serious militants must be sober about the prospects of immediate mass struggle, especially under the cynical gang of 'leaders' who sat on their arses for the past year. From civil servants to school-teachers, the bureaucrats pop up their heads for a day of strike speechifying and pop them down as soon as the government says 'boo'. Even NACODS' scabby Peter McNestry began talking strike when the Coal Board's hit list came



into operation (any strike called by these gaffers' boys today could only be to objectively aid the NCB in victimising principled NUM militants who would refuse to cross their picket lines). Where the hell were they all when it counted?

Defiant in defeat, the NUM's fighting force remains intact with tens of thousands of militants steeled in battle. A new leadership of the labour movement must be regrouped out of those class fighters, in and outside the union, who fought hard for a miners' victory and are now prepared to examine seriously what went wrong. Precisely because it was fought as hard as it was and went as far as it did, the strike demonstrated conclusively the limitations of trade union reformism, no matter how militant. The new leadership the British working class needs must be much more than this. It must act as a *tribune of the oppressed*. It must be *internationalist*. And it must be *revolutionary*.

*continued on page 9*



War criminals fall out  
Vietnam  
was a victory!

...p3



Workers Hammer dayschool  
Lessons  
of the strike

...p6

## The PIE witchhunt and democratic rights

Sleaford, Lincs  
8-1-85

Dear Comrades,

I would like to protest against your attitudes towards paedophilia, as expressed in W.H. no 64. To say that the jailing of Joy and Bremner is a 'moral majority' frame-up is false. Paedophilia is a very cruel and perverse activity, through which sexual perverts oppress young children, who are usually too frightened to protect themselves.

I agree with your attitudes towards the suffering of gays and miners children in society, and I feel I must protest. I do not feel I can support you any longer, and I would like to cancel my subscription.

Yours,  
Ian Peacock

*Workers Hammer* replies: Ian Peacock claims agreement with our 'attitudes towards the suffering of gays and miners children' but draws the line at our defence of what he labels, in the language of bigotry, 'sexual perverts'. When a gay group showed up at the 24 February miners support march in London with placards saying 'Perverts support the pits', they were invited onto the demonstration with smiles and

cheers. The miners understood that in the eyes of the state, everyone there was a 'pervert'. We don't know what Ian Peacock's particular 'perversion' is, but if the capitalist state ever wants to frame him up, they'll find one. Democratic rights are indivisible. As communists we understand that an attack on one oppressed group, no matter how isolated, represents an attack on all workers and oppressed.

Paedophile Information Exchange activists Joy and Bremner were not imprisoned for 'cruelly oppressing' young children but for advocating the right of sexual activity between adults and youth. In our article we emphasise mutual consent as the guiding principle for all sexual relations and recognise that with young children there can be grey areas, that each case must be examined individually. So Peacock's concern for 'frightened children' is a red herring. So-called age-of-consent laws not only deny biological reality (children do have sexual appetites and engage in sexual activity) but serve mainly to keep the working class dutifully reproducing itself within the confines of the oppressive nuclear family in order to ensure an amenable workforce that buckles under to an authoritative regime. As we point out, most really abusive sexual attacks on children take place within the family.

At base Peacock accepts the hypocritical bourgeois morality which dictates what is 'normal' sexual behaviour (for everybody except the bourgeoisie). There is no barrier between banning the PIE and banning the works of Oscar Wilde, Kate Millett and Gore Vidal (who, incidentally, donated £1000 to the miners), which Thatcher's customs and excise cops seized when they raided the 'Gays the Word' bookshop. According to Victoria Gillick (and the government), not only should young children be prohibited from engaging in sex, but so should unmarried young women. The Gillick decision denying birth control to young women without their parents' permission consigns them to dangerous home-grown methods of birth control or backstreet abortions while reinforcing the authoritarianism of the nuclear family -- the main social institution for the oppression of women, gays and children under

capitalism.

The real function of 'obscenity' laws, the Gillick decision, the attempt to ban embryo testing spearheaded by such reactionary types as Enoch Powell, the increased attempts to 'entrap' gays, the AIDS hysteria and so on is to enhance the reactionary climate for Thatcher's anti-union austerity drive against the working class while preparing for global nuclear war against the Soviet Union. Thatcher's 'Victorian values' hark back to an age where women and children were denied any sexual expression even as they were driven to work in sweatshops by day and forced to engage in prostitution by night in order to keep themselves and their families alive.

Only a broader social vision of the eventual replacement of the nuclear family as part of the transition to a classless communist society can defuse the fears that social collapse is the only alternative to bourgeois morality. The heroic miners strike pointed the road forward to the revolutionary class struggle which can destroy the oppressive capitalist system. As a Spartacist League comrade observed at our 16 March dayschool:

'I was up in Scotland at Monktonhall pit at the march back to work. One thing which was very striking on that demonstration, particularly in a place as isolated as that, was a banner from one of the local gay groups. And I think it's something that we ought to take note of in this strike -- how it's managed to cut across sexual and racial divisions. One of the points that we make about Maggie Thatcher is that she hates everybody and she's out to get everybody. And there was a real recognition amongst whole layers of society -- through black people, Asian people and gay people -- that their defence lay with supporting the miners. Lenin said that the revolutionary party, the sort of party that we're trying to build, is the tribune of the oppressed. It's a party that takes up the struggles of all layers of society and of all people fighting against their oppression. I think you can begin to see through this strike and through the struggle that the miners carried out how such a party could come to be crystallised.' ■

## British workers and the revolutionary party



Trotsky and Lenin

In 1925, Leon Trotsky, co-leader with Lenin of the Russian Revolution, addressed the question of communist perspectives for the British workers movement. He concluded his classic work *Where is Britain Going?* with the following:

All the cold cruelty that ruling-class Britain displayed towards the Indians, Egyptians and Irish and which has the appearance of racial arrogance, in the event of a civil war will reveal its class nature and prove to be directed against the proletariat.

On the other hand the revolution will inevitably awaken in the British working class the deepest passions which have been so skillfully restrained and suppressed by social conventions, the church and the press, and diverted along artificial channels with the aid of boxing, football, racing and other forms of sport.

The concrete course of the struggle, its duration and its outcome will depend wholly upon the domestic and especially the international conditions of the moment in which it develops. In the decisive struggle against the proletariat the British bourgeoisie will enjoy the most powerful support of the bourgeoisie of the United States while the proletariat will rest for support primarily upon the working class of Europe and the oppressed popular masses of the colonies. The nature of the British Empire will inevitably give this gigantic struggle an international scale. This will be one of the greatest dramas in world history. The destiny of the British proletariat in this struggle will be linked with the destiny of all mankind. The whole world situation and the role of the British proletariat in production and in society will guarantee its victory -- on condition there is a correct and resolute revolutionary leadership. The Communist Party must develop and come to power as the party of proletarian dictatorship. There are no ways round this. Whoever believes there are and propounds them can only deceive British workers. That is the main conclusion of our analysis.

-- L D Trotsky, *Where is Britain Going?*  
(1925)

## On the hammer and sickle

Los Angeles  
28 November 1984

Dear Editor:

I noticed that you have replaced the hammer, sickle and 4 with a hammer and 4. Although this is a good design I think it's a poor decision.

First of all, the old insignia has its roots in the founding of the 4th international, and the SL is the only group that has maintained the political program of Trotsky. Secondly, I can see that a sickle has little relevance in the USA, but does a hammer? The only people who use hammers maybe are carpenters, most industrial workers have other tools these days, so if you're replacing the sickle on that account, why not a computer chip, a splicer, a welding torch or something else with the 4?...

Finally, I think that the Soviet flag looks real nice and have always been proud to have a newspaper with a direct reference to the USSR, the old sign means Trotskyism, defense of the USSR but the knowledge that it's a degenerated workers state.

So I hope to see a better sign soon!

Mickey

*Workers Hammer* replies: Comrade Mickey's letter offers an opportunity to elaborate on the change of name of our paper from *Spartacist Britain* to *Workers Hammer* last September. The hammer and sickle is indeed the symbol of the unity of the proletariat and peasantry in the Russian Revolution, and was adopted as the symbol of the Soviet state and the international Communist movement. On this we stand. But in fact the hammer itself symbolises what the Bolshevik Party under Lenin and Trotsky achieved: the Soviet Union emerged from the October Revolution as a workers state, the dictatorship of the proletariat.

This revolution was made possible only under the programme of permanent revolution -- ie the proletariat through its vanguard party at the head of the peasantry.

Britain is one of the most highly proletarianised countries in the world; like the US it has no large and politically-significant poor peasant population. The point of the hammer is that it expresses our tasks, here, today: to deal the blows necessary to bring down this insane, irrational, brutal capitalist system and replace it with the rule of the workers. Similarly, the '4' represents the need to reforge the international party necessary to lead the working class across the globe.

The hammer is an instrument of change, an instrument of human endeavour and creativity since at least the Iron Age (ca 2000 BC to 1800 AD). So much so that the Hittites who controlled the secret of the iron-working process attempted to suppress it in order to retain hegemony over the other early states. When the secret leaked out, the hammer became the symbol for the creative technological revolution and the labour underlying it to this day. In *Where is Britain Going?* Trotsky uses the symbol of the hammer to evoke Oliver Cromwell and the revolution that brought the young English bourgeoisie to power in the 1600s: 'With a heavy military hammer, on the anvil of civil war, Oliver Cromwell forged the same national character which over two and a half centuries ensured gigantic advantages in the world to the British bourgeoisie.'

The name *Workers Hammer* has found an echo among the militant miners who fought so heroically, as a hard, no-nonsense paper that tells the truth -- in agitating, propagandising, educating. Through this paper we seek to build the scaffolding for the future revolutionary party of British labour, on the model of the early *Iskra* of Lenin's Bolsheviks. ■

# War criminals fall out Vietnam was a victory!

## 2,3, many defeats for imperialism

The verdict on Vietnam was handed in ten years ago, by thousands of triumphant North Vietnamese and National Liberation Front (NLF, 'Viet Cong') troops entering Saigon in the early hours of 30 April 1975. As the last panicked American personnel were being lifted off the embassy roof by helicopter, the Saigon CIA station head tapped out a last bitter message: 'This experience unique in the history of the United States does not signal necessarily the demise of the United States as a world power. The severity of the defeat and the circumstances of it, however, would seem to call for a reassessment of the policies of niggardly half measures.... Those who fail to learn from history are forced to repeat it.... Saigon signing off.'

Having failed to learn from history, a section of the defeated US military establishment recently tried to rewrite it in court -- with equally humiliating results. The Reaganites need to overcome the still lingering 'Vietnam syndrome'. When CBS aired its documentary 'The Uncounted Enemy: A Vietnam Deception', charging General William C Westmoreland and the military with deceiving America about the size of the North Vietnamese/NLF forces and thus opening the way for defeat, they thought they saw their chance. Westmoreland, backed by wealthy right-wing foundations, launched a \$120 million libel suit against CBS.

The suit was intended not only to have a chilling effect on 'dissident' press reporting and establish the government's latest sinister tactic of senior government officials launching multi-million-dollar libel suits in order to harass critics. More broadly it was to pin the blame for 'Who Lost Vietnam?' on the far-right's old 'enemy within', the 'liberal media'. But on 18 February, only days before the case was to go to the jury, Westmoreland was forced to abruptly drop the suit, signing a 'peace accord' with CBS. Westmoreland's withdrawal was widely recognized as another defeat for the general, the commander of US forces in Vietnam from 1964 to 1968, the year the stunning North Vietnamese/NLF Tet Offensive shattered the morale of the US forces, marking the key turning point of the US war.

### The 'Who lost Vietnam?' witchhunt

The thesis of the CBS TV documentary was that there had been 'a conscious effort -- indeed, a conspiracy at the highest levels of American military intelligence -- to suppress and alter critical intelligence on the enemy in the year leading up to the Tet offensive', and that 'we Americans', including Congress and the president, were 'misinformed about the nature and the size of the enemy we were facing'. The documentary's position was first raised by CIA analysts, one of whom was hired as a CBS consultant for the show. The multibillion-dollar media conglomerate has its own thesis on 'Who Lost Vietnam?' -- that it was essentially the military, Westmoreland and their lying cover-up numbers games over 'enemy' strength. They wanted to get Westmoreland for subverting the 'integrity' of the CIA's intelligence, and to uphold the need of the bourgeois establishment, especially its military, for reliable, accurate information. CBS, of course, is only interested in the 'truth' that fits its bourgeois purposes. Those same 'great liberals' declared outright on '60 Minutes' [a popular US current affairs programme] that Lt Col Anthony Herbert was lying when he brought charges of Army massacres of civilians in Vietnam in 1969.

The entire CBS/Westmoreland fight was carried out in the context of a frustrated and humiliated bourgeoisie still seeking desperately the elusive 'enemy within' that supposedly was responsible for its great defeat. We Marxists did follow the CBS/Westmoreland trial with interest: the spectacle of US war criminals squabbling in court, trying to stab each other in the back, had its own grisly humor, while revealing the ruling class's continuing failure to overcome America's longest, dirt-

est, and above all losing war.

For both sides, of course, the squabble over and fascination with the numbers, with juggling the estimates and subdividing the categories of the 'enemy', only serve to obscure the truth neither side can admit: that Vietnam was a popular war there, waged by an entire people steeled in over 30 years of battle to defeat imperialism, and that they would not stop until they had won their national freedom and social revolution. As Ho Chi Minh warned the French a generation before the Americans went in, 'You can kill ten of my men for every one I kill of yours, but even at those odds, you will lose and I will win.' Vietnam was an increasingly unpopular war in America, including among a sizable section of the ruling class, and increasingly in the armed forces themselves, composed of largely working-class and black draftees who didn't see why they should be sent to some far-off jungle to kill and die, or for what. So everybody in the administrations, both Democratic and Republican, that ran that dirty war lied, necessarily.

One of the central charges the CBS side made against Westmoreland was that he had the NLF's 'home guard' supporters in South Vietnam itself dropped from the monthly 'Order of



Heroic Vietnamese struggle was a victory for the world's working people.

Battle'. 'Just old men and women in black pajamas', Westmoreland's supporters insisted, 'not a military threat'. So then why did Robert (Blowtorch) Komer's 'Operation Phoenix' CIA program assassinate over 100,000 of them? The debate about the importance of the 'home guard' revealed the excruciating dilemma of the Americans in Vietnam: that the whole Vietnamese nation was mobilized to drive them out. A secret 1967 memo by Major General Walter Kerwin that came out at the trial estimated that perhaps as many as one third of US casualties to that point were the result of boobytraps, mines and other devices hidden in the jungles and rice paddies; the 'grunts' on the ground sure knew they were stepping into hostile territory every day, too. It was a 'people's war', and so the bloody US butchers' final solution, even as they knew they were losing, was -- as in 'Operation Phoenix' -- to simply kill as many of the people as they could.

### Lies, lies, lies

The bourgeoisie couldn't win, and they couldn't tell the truth. So of course they all lied to the American people all of the time and to each other some of the time; they kept looking for that 'light at the end of the tunnel', they chopped and suppressed facts and figures that didn't show the US was winning.

How 'we' got into Vietnam even started with a lie -- the 'Gulf of Tonkin' incident in August 1965. President Johnson, Robert McNamara, Walt Rostow were all in on it -- they'd had plans ready since 1964 to bomb North Vietnam, they had a resolution all set to let the president unleash American forces, and all they needed was an 'incident'. So they made one up, claiming the US destroyer Maddox, which had been running provocative cruises near the North Vietnamese coast, had been

fired on by North Vietnamese torpedoes. The ship's captain didn't think it was true; one of the fighter-bomber pilots searching the waters around the Maddox for supposed enemy boats said there weren't any -- but Johnson insisted on his 'incident' and so the resolution sailed through Congress and the first major US escalation of the war was on.

And as the war escalated, so did the lying. By mid-1967 LBJ was so worried about the economic strains on the US that he procrastinated, juggling and faking and concealing the statistics in a desperate attempt to avoid increasing taxes', noted Stanley Karnow in Vietnam: A History, the companion book to the PBS TV series. Karnow recalls many of the standard, repeated lies everybody exposed at the time, like LBJ's claim the bombing raids over the North were aimed only at 'military targets'.

After Westmoreland left Vietnam in 1968, the war dragged on for seven more years, until in 1975 the North Vietnamese army finally triumphantly swept south to Saigon, chasing the last remnants of the South Vietnamese US puppet troops who retreated in dust clouds of panic all the way. It wasn't Westmoreland's lying about 'progress', nor LBJ's, nor the Pentagon's, that 'lost Vietnam' -- the US lost on the battlefield, when the gigantic Pentagon war machine could not stop the heroic Vietnamese workers and peasants.

That was the meaning of the Tet Offensive of 1968, and why it was such a traumatizing, stunning shock to the US bourgeoisie. They faced in Tet something they couldn't believe could happen: that in the heart of South Vietnam, a massive, all-out drive, encompassing over 100 cities and towns, overrunning the 'fortified villages', shelling the massive US base at Cam Ranh Bay, penetrating right into the American embassy in Saigon itself, could explode with such ferocity just as they were assuring everyone the 'war of attrition' was being won. Tet brought down LBJ.

Vietnam was a victory for the world's working people. For us the 'trauma' of Vietnam was that it took so many years and deaths for social revolution to triumph. Yet ultimately, despite

hesitations in Hanoi, despite Moscow and Peking's repeated attempts to enforce sellout deals with US imperialism, the Vietnamese people won, striking a vital blow to America's ambitions for world imperialist domination. The bourgeoisie is still bleeding from that wound, as the Westmoreland trial revealed -- and that is a very good thing for the oppressed and exploited peoples of the world. It has so far stayed the hand of even the Reagan administration from launching 'another Vietnam' in Central America -- though time is running out and the Reaganites with their 'America uber Alles' compulsions are becoming increasingly desperate and war-crazed. But the Vietnamese Revolution showed that US imperialism could be defeated. We need 'two, three, many defeats for US imperialism!' and above all international proletarian revolution to finally sweep the vicious, lying, deadly American imperialist state into the dustbin of history.

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## WORKERS HAMMER

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# How to take on Thatcher/NCB provocations

## An exchange on tactics

We print below: (1) a statement to the 16 March Workers Hammer dayschool by David Douglass, NUM branch delegate at Hatfield Main colliery (Dunscroft, S Yorks); (2) a letter from Eibhlin McDonald of the Spartacist League Central Committee; and (3) comrade Douglass' reply. The first two have been slightly abridged for publication.

Firstly I would like to sincerely greet this conference and salute the Spartacist Tendency for their initiative in calling it.

Secondly I apologise for my non-attendance which is solely due to the pressure of trying to piece things together and reorganise our fight as well as some of the humdrum trade union work which has built up during the battle.

Of course piecing things together will be one of the major tasks of your meeting, reorganising and reorientating our forces is a central task. It is vital to realise that the Board will not allow us a breathing space and will be seeking to press home their advance.

Doncaster is already the scene of a concerted attack by the Board.

1) The Safety Committee is 'suspended', safety visits will not take place, neither NACODS nor NUM can carry out this year's schedule of inspections.

2) All Consultative Committees have been abolished.

3) Trade Union representation restricted and all officials and branch committee banned from the usual daily representation. At some pits members of the committee and branch officials are not allowed on NCB premises (even in their own time) unless they are going to work.

4) Coal preparation plant workers are to have their hours increased from 7½ hours to 8 without extra pay.

5) All workers are to be paid the grade of the job ... previously most workers through hard work or skills were paid over the grade.

6) Development workers and salvage workers will go onto a four shift cycle ... thus bringing in two extra anti-social weeks ... one starting at 6 p.m. and the other at 12 midnight.

7) Men who have not got their lamps out by 10 minutes before the start of the shift will be sent home, two offences constitute official warnings, the third occasion will mean the sack.

8) Men found in the pit bottom early at the end of the shift will likewise be treated and sacked.

9) All colliery agreements, from water notes for working in excessive water to conditions for carrying stretchers, are now abolished.

10) Craftsmen will fill in reports without the

payment of their report money, craftsmen refusing to do so will be sacked.

11) The position of chock fitter is abolished.

12) Chock fitters will be transferred to other work with no guarantee of no loss of income.

13) Fitters will carry out chock fitters' work.

This is the first volley of an employers offensive which will seek to smash to the ground the hard won rights of the miners and the authority of our union.

To meet the challenge, we must ensure that a few things are not lost sight of.

Yes we are winded, we will need to ride out a few rounds perhaps but we are far from defeated or out for the count. The reason for the advance against the Doncaster miners is that they gave the least to the employers and government during the strike. We ended the most solid in Britain with only 2% back at work.

The dispute continues even if the strike is over.

The battle goes on this is no time to relax.

Things are not going to go back to normal.

The overtime ban, no matter what pressure we come under in the coming weeks stays firmly in place, before the strike it was costing the Board over 900,000 tonnes per week in lost production.

We must respond to the gaffers' offensive with wildcat action, co-ordinated wildcat action.

This is a perspective for immediate guerrilla response, at the same time we must prepare the consciousness of our mates for the coming rail battle, as an immediate step get ready to repulse the scab coal lorries which even now must be getting ready to break the railmen.

I'll leave it for now, except to thank the Sparts for their coverage of the strike which was fair unlike the bulk of disruptive and counter-productive trash turned out by other elements allegedly on the left and to thank you for your extensive efforts in raising funds on the other side of the water and for raising the issues of the miners strike with our American fellow workers.

Forward to the next phase of the struggle ...

Victory to the Miners ...

Long Live the mineworkers union and the international struggle of the workers ...

Revolutionary Greetings,  
David Douglass  
Hatfield Main Branch NUM Delegate  
Doncaster.

27 March 1985

Dear David,

Thank you very much for your statement to the Workers Hammer dayschool. We too are sorry that you could not attend and we recognise the heavy workload and difficult task facing you and many more in the union at this point. Your statement was read to the dayschool and your vivid description of what we describe in our propaganda as vindictiveness in victory on the part of Thatcher and the Coal Board was very powerful....

One thing which would have been interesting to discuss is the course of action you outline at the end of your statement, which you describe as 'immediate guerrilla response'. While we are not in a position to give direction on particular day-to-day activities our stance is much more cautious and conservative than what you outline. What guides that is the overriding need to preserve the struggling capacity of the union and most immediately to avoid further victimisations. We look forward to much more discussion with you on this subject.

Much of the discussion in the dayschool was centred around the need for a genuinely revolutionary party to lead the struggles ahead.... We are of the opinion that there is a particular necessity and also an opportunity now for us to consolidate the links we have in the coalfields and to recruit there. To that end we hope to establish Workers Hammer readers groups....

Comradely greetings,  
Eibhlin McDonald

[received 9 April 1985]

Dear Eibhlin,

By all means use the statement in publication, but some of it -- possible reference to the overtime ban, may be dated now. Use your judgement.

I think the tactical considerations outlined in the 2nd para[graph] of your letter in relation to preservation of struggle capacity, and the need to avoid further victimisation, shows a political and historical maturity. Quite a refreshing change from some elements -- such as R.C.P. and W.P. who wish to fight to the last drop of our blood.

Yes I will of course assist where possible the promotion of a Workers Hammer readers group -- in the spirit of solidarity and comradeship though principled disagreement -- which has allowed our mutual co-operation in the past.

Revolutionary Greetings,  
Dave

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**Miners defiant in defeat**

**WORKERS HAMMER**  
**WICKED MINERS: HUNTED!**

# 'Strike martyrs did not die in vain!'

We reprint below the speech by Patrick Sliney to a 16 March rally of Nottinghamshire miners called on the anniversary of the death of David Jones, a striking miner murdered on the picket lines by Thatcher's scabs and cops. Patrick, a militant T&G car worker and well-known supporter of the Spartacist League, was sacked for advocating that the T&G strike alongside the miners. In the forefront of those who defended Patrick were the striking miners themselves. Sliney was introduced by Mick McGinty, treasurer of the Nottinghamshire central strike committee.

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Mick McGinty: During our 12-month long struggle, we have lost 600 miners that's been sacked from our industry. But we never heard this on the media when there has been 400 lorry drivers also sacked for refusing to move coal. A lot of these lads here, Patrick Sliney that works at British Rover plant in Birmingham, that went around his factory with leaflets and asking his comrades to support the miners financially and otherwise, was sacked from his job. He has no job today because of his involvement in the miners strike. Now I will ask you to welcome Patrick [applause].

Patrick Sliney: Well, first of all I want to say how proud I am to be able to speak here today. And I am sure I speak for millions of other trade unionists in this country who wanted to stand behind this union in its struggle against this Thatcher government.

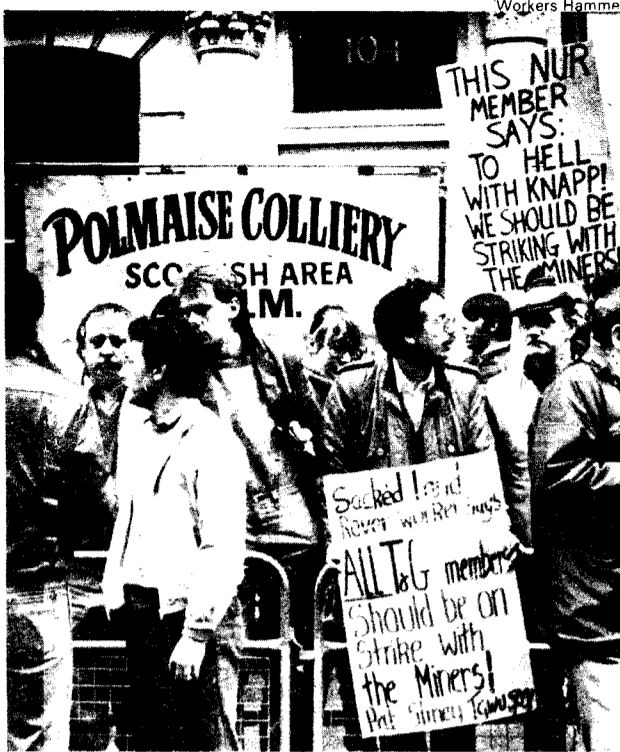
Now, with this savage Tory government that's in power today, which sought to destroy the NUM, nay, to smash the NUM, this union has emerged with a defeat -- it must be recognised -- but in a position to fight another day. And that's very unusual after the attacks that this union has suffered over 12 months, attacks by the full force of the state against this union. It's a remarkable achievement. One year, comrades. And when we talk about this government, we're talking about that vicious bitch in Downing Street [applause] who is fighting not only for her own decrepit, corrupt, decaying capitalist class but also for American imperialism as well.

But what brings us here today, comrades, is to commemorate Davy Jones, Joe Green. When we marched up there today, I nearly got emotional at that spot where Davy Jones fell. He and Joe Green did not die in vain -- *did not die in vain*. Their death will be repaid, mark my words. This strike has been hard, it has also been a bitter strike, and this government and its police force so vicious that the miners in this strike and other workers have learned lessons and those lessons better not be forgotten. They came hard, those lessons. They came with blood.

Other sections of working people in this country who are also exploited and oppressed have been kept apart many times when there've been struggles. Nay, not this time. It broke down many barriers. It has involved black people, Asians, it has involved the Irish, who want those troops out of Ireland once and for all, want the English off their island [applause]. It's involved working-class women, who are doubly oppressed. All of these people have found inspiration in this strike. Again, these are precious lessons. They've been learned through struggle, through blood, through death. And these lessons we have to incorporate into our future struggles, so that we can smash this rotten and corrupt capitalist system once and for all.

Hundreds of miners have been sacked. It's important for the miners to carry on agitation around these men. Let's not forget also there's been lots of international support, and I know from the people that I know in particular in America that support has come from an organisation called the Partisan Defence Committee, which is an arm of the Spartacist League of America, which collected money from trade unionists' branches throughout the country, from militants in America, from socialists, and collected over \$20,000 to send to the miners throughout this strike.

It's pretty clear that this strike would never have been defeated, never, if there had been solidarity on the picket lines (and not sweet speeches from platforms around the



Patrick Sliney, other SL supporters and miners outside Congress House at end of strike, 3 March.

country) from other sections of the working class. Now you all know what the swinish Lord

Murray and the Lord Chapple and the future to-be-Lord Willis were going to do in this strike. They witchhunted Arthur Scargill in 1983 at the TUC conference because he called that Spencerite 'union' in Poland anti-socialist. There could have been and should have been strike action by railmen, seamen and by my own union, the T&G. This is what I have tried to fight for alongside others inside the plant I worked in, in Leyland. I fought to enforce blacking of scab coal, from the beginning of this strike. I fought to spread the miners' strike around our recent pay claim, for which I was sacked. Now as Mick has said, I'm not the only one; 400 T&G men have been sacked, Coalville men, NUR men have been victimised up and down the country.

What I said, I mean. We have got to learn the lessons of this dispute. We cannot just let them fade into the past. And to learn those lessons we need a party, which is going to change things in this country once and for all. Now I am going off after this and I hope some people will come with me to a *Workers Hammer* dayschool to actually draw out some of these lessons. We must go forward, but we must go forward in a way that the next time around we are actually able to win and be victorious, and by being victorious we can get rid of this capitalist system with our own leadership and our own party. Thank you very much for your support. ■

## Letters of support for Patrick Sliney

We reprint below some further statements of support recently received by Patrick Sliney.

\* \* \*

### National Union of Seamen, Tilbury

1st March 1985

Dear Brother Sliney,

It has been brought to our attention that because of your valiant support of the miners that British Leyland management have found it necessary, in acting as a government agent, to dismiss you from your place of work and that after two hearings you are now appealing to the Industrial Tribunal.

We sincerely hope you are reinstated and to let you know that you have our full support in your fight.

As you are aware we are now feeling the iron fist of the Thatcherite government for our support of the miners. We have had 26 colliers laid up and refusing to sail with coal since March 1984. We are firmly of the belief that should the miners go down, that other trade unions will then become a target of this government.

On behalf of all members may I wish you every success in your fight.

Yours fraternally,  
Dai Davies  
Branch Secretary

### Penrhawceiber NUM

12th March 1985

Dear Bro. Sliney,

We at Penrhawceiber Lodge NUM applaud your principles and actions in being a true trade unionist. It is with sincere regret and revulsion we hear of your dismissal at Land Rover in Solihull. However applause is no substitute for employment.

You will recall the problems at Leyland Motors in the late '70s and the final triumph of Michael Edwardes when he succeeded in isolating and discrediting 'Red Robbo'. Because the Leyland men were intimidated, they did not seek to get Robinson reinstated when he was sacked, simply for being a TU activist. The 'Sun' newspaper ran a smear campaign and Robinson left the motor industry, no backing came from his friends or work-mates, fellow TU men. Let not history repeat itself. I sincerely hope the TGWU with the backing of all your supporters succeed in getting you reinstated. Do not hesitate to ask if I can be of further assistance.

Yours sincerely,  
Jim Evans, Lodge secretary

### Coventry Colliery Strike Committee

Dear Pat,

I have written to Sam Robinson telling him that Coventry Colliery Strike Committee are 100% behind you in getting you reinstated. I hope now that the T&G do something about it.

Yours,

B. Hendson

Acting chairman, Coventry Colliery Strike Committee.

### Tony Benn MP

1 March 1985

Dear Patrick,

Sheila Hamm told me about your situation and I have written to Ron Todd asking for help.

Thanks for keeping me informed.

Yours sincerely,

Tony

**WORKERS HAMMER**

**PUBLIC MEETING**

**After the miners strike:**

**WHICH WAY FORWARD**

**Speakers:**

PATRICK SLINEY, TGWU Rover Solihull, victimised by management for fighting to support the miners

LEN MICHELSON,  
*Workers Hammer* editor

NOTTS NUM STRIKE MILITANT

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Miners Welfare  
New Ollerton, Notts  
10.30am Sunday, 28th April  
For more information  
contact the Spartacist League:  
PO Box 185, London WC1H 8JE  
or phone Sheffield (0742) 582432



Workers Hammer dayschool, 16 March: the central lesson of this strike is the need to forge a revolutionary workers party.

## Lessons of the strike: Build a revolutionary party!

# 'Let's go forward to victories!'

On 16 March in Sheffield a highly successful Workers Hammer dayschool attracted more than 80 participants, including miners from Yorkshire, the Midlands, Derbyshire and South Wales as well as other trade union militants. The opening session, marking International Women's Day, featured a presentation by comrade Birgit Wojak, a member of the German section of the international Spartacist tendency. Comrade Wojak was a leader of the women's group whose militancy helped spark the 1983 Hamburg HDW shipyard occupation; her experience in this struggle led her to see the urgent need for a revolutionary vanguard party. Comrade Jean Stephenson of the Spartacist League added remarks on the vital role of coalfield women throughout the miners strike, and the lessons of the Russian Bolsheviks' struggle to organise working-class women around a communist programme.

The second session opened with a moving report from the demonstration that morning at Ollerton, Notts, to commemorate the anniversary of the picket-line murder of Yorkshire strike militant David Jones. The meeting rose for a minute's silence in honour of David and those others -- men, women and children -- who gave their lives in the struggle against Thatcher and MacGregor. Then Len Michelson, editor of Workers Hammer, and sacked TGWU militant Patrick Sliney opened an extensive discussion on the lessons of the miners strike. We print below an edited transcript of comrade Michelson's presentation, followed by extracts from contributions to the discussion by comrade Sliney and others.

\* \* \*

This dayschool takes place at an important time for the British working class and in fact for the international working class. I believe it's not an exaggeration to say that the whole working class of the world is looking to the British miners right now and has been for a year and will continue to.

I want to start my remarks with a tale of two cities. It's not the Charles Dickens one,

you know, 'civilised' aristocrats in London and the 'mob' with 'violence' in Paris who are making a revolution to get rid of the aristocrats. The words never change -- you look at Fleet Street now and you look at that a hundred years ago.

Now my two cities are Petrograd in Russia, 1917 and Berlin in Germany in 1918. Russia in 1917 was a country that was overwhelmingly peasants, small farmers. In Petrograd, you had the largest centre of industry, the cream of the Russian working class but very small. You also had the Bolshevik Party which was very, very small when the revolution broke out in February of 1917, as the comrade said earlier today, led by the women. In the space of several months that very small Bolshevik Party grew to be very large, so large that it posed a threat to the capitalist government of the day, and they forced it underground in the summer of 1917. Lenin, the leader, had to go into hiding; Trotsky was thrown into jail; hundreds of others were too. In the factories the Bolshevik workers were slandered, they were accused of taking German money. Four months later they led the Russian working class to power. They overthrew the capitalists once and for good. They expropriated the land of the rich landlords.

A year later in Berlin, which had a much larger working class -- Berlin was a city of two million people, overwhelmingly working class and of those workers overwhelmingly revolutionary -- in every district you had red flags flying. The same thing was true in every major city of Germany. This was in November and December of 1918. When the generals sent the troops back from the front to suppress the workers, literally the army evaporated into the workers' demonstrations and they handed their rifles over to the workers. And the soldiers put up the red banners. In one city, Kiel, a port, 40,000 sailors under arms mutinied against the emperor.

They were so scared that they forced the Kaiser to abdicate and they handed the government over to the Socialist Party. Three

blokes: Ebert, Scheidemann, Noske, Kinnock, Chapple, Willis! They knew that if anybody could behead the workers' struggle, it would only be people who could speak to the workers in the workers' language. Even so, by late December of 1918, the entire loyal army garrison in Berlin consisted of 150 soldiers -- the rest had all gone over to the working class. And yet there was no revolution.

And the difference is very simple. In Russia, over the course of fifteen years Lenin and others had worked to build a party which would act as the general staff of the working class when it went into battle. They did it throughout repression. What they read of Marxism they read in the prisons. Lenin many times over lost his best comrades, his loyal friends, because he would not conciliate, give in on his principles, even at the expense of friendships of a lifetime. In one circumstance alone, in 1908, he lost every one of his chief lieutenants, over a political difference. But he went on and those with him went on. And they continued and they fought and they studied and they persevered and finally they built a party which created something which even Reagan and Thatcher can still not take away to this day.

Now in this strike we have seen plenty of repression. We have seen plenty of imprisonment. We have even seen miners forced into exile from their homes and their families. We have seen enough lessons in hardship to last a lifetime. And we have seen something else. In the past 12 months, in this strike, over this strike -- and I'm sure there's many a painful story that can be told just in this room alone today -- we have seen brother split from brother, father from son, son from father, wife from husband, over the question of scabbing. What we have not seen is Tony Benn split from Neil Kinnock over it! We have not seen Dennis Skinner split from Neil Kinnock over it, and even for that matter, Arthur Scargill. And that is a painful truth. Because if ever there were a scabherder, Neil Kinnock is one.

And I'll tell you, if they had done it, if they had said enough with these strikebreakers who call themselves workers' leaders, then today we might well have in this country 100,000, 200,000 of the best class fighters organised in a party. It would not be a revolutionary party on our programme. But it would be a party that didn't have open scabherders in it, it would be a party without strikebreakers, it would be a party that did not welcome Lord Chapple and Lord Murray to take on the ermine robes, it would be a party without ballotmongers and violence-baiters.

But there's a problem for people like Tony Benn. I believe for one that Tony Benn sincerely wanted to see the miners win -- but to him that question runs second to what is the first question, which is how to get Neil Kinnock into Number 10. And that's the problem. Because if they had broken away and built such a party -- and I'm sure all it took was to call for it because when that noose came down in front of Norm Willis, you knew how workers felt -- what would they do with that party once they had it? That would have been a party for fight, not for vote. And that's what was needed: a party for fighting.

'In this strike we have seen brother split from brother, father from son, wife from husband, over the question of scabbing. What we have not seen is Tony Benn split from Neil Kinnock over it!'

So we want to build a different sort of party. One that seeks to organise the class struggle, which would have directed all the many thousands of people, not just in the NUM but outside the NUM as well -- people like Patrick, like the Coalville railwaymen, like the dockworkers, like the seamen, like the lorry drivers who got sacked -- who wanted to fight but were given no lead.

Now, back to history for a moment, because one of the things that we pride ourselves on is that our party bases itself on the history of past struggles. And just as we have very much to learn and have learned very much in the past year from the miners whom we have met, of experience of direct struggle and the lessons from that, we believe we also have a bit to teach on the basis of the history of other countries and other fights.

In a very real sense I think it can be said that the way towards the Russian revolutionary

victory of 1917 was prepared by the fight led by Lenin to split the international labour movement at the beginning of World War I. To split away from those Kinnocks of his day who supported their own capitalist governments in time of war. To split away from those who refused to mobilise revolutionary workers' struggle against the war. To split away from those who wanted to fudge on the question. To build an international party and not just a Russian party because it is an international working class and not just a working class of one country. And without that fight there would not have been a Russian revolution for all the best intentions of the Russian workers.

Well, in a much more modest way I believe it's true to say that our work, the work of the Spartacist League and *Workers Hammer* in this strike, our orientation toward it, was prepared by the fight we have waged particularly over the past five years against the war drive of Reagan and Thatcher and their allies around the world to destroy that Russian revolution of 1917, to bring unemployment back to the Soviet Union, to bring back the misery that we experience in this country. Coal is left to lie in stockpiles while old people die of cold in their homes for lack of a bit of coal. Hospitals are closed down, while office buildings rise up and there's nobody to rent out the office space. Because of profit.

We knew that the people who run the Soviet Union today are a pack of sellout artists. That they look at their own interests first and the interests of the Russian workers and international workers second. That does not change the fact that there is no capitalism in that country, that there is no unemployment in that country, that there is decent medical care, that there are more women doctors than there are men doctors. And we can continue the statistics for days -- because of that one revolution that took place more than sixty

'When we said "Stop Solidarity's counterrevolution!", we didn't know that three years later every miner would hate Solidarnosc for welcoming scabs to Poland and our position would be pretty popular. We just knew it was right.'

years ago. And that's what 'Ronald Ray-gun and the Plutonium Blonde', as Scargill put it quite well, want to destroy. That's their sort of 'democracy': the democracy of parasites. So, we took a hard stand on that, on defence of the Soviet Union against the war drive. Not everybody liked it, but then again, you can't always please everybody.

Now several years ago in 1981, when everybody was going around cheering the wonderful Solidarnosc 'union' in Poland -- wasn't it great that finally the pope was a trade unionist and finally Maggie Thatcher found a union she could support, and even Ronnie Reagan -- we said 'Stop Solidarity's counterrevolution!' Some people didn't like us for that. The *Times* saw fit to print an article about this organisation which was so small that they probably didn't even know we existed until then. But that got up their nose. The *Wall Street*



Arthur Scargill and Dennis Skinner sharing a platform with Neil Kinnock at Durham miners gala last summer. To the bitter end, Labour lefts refused to split with open scabherder Kinnock.

*Journal* ran a whole page on our American comrades for picketing against Solidarnosc with some pretty open threats about what happens to people who do that. We didn't know when we did that, that two years later Arthur Scargill would get witchhunted at the 1983 Blackpool Trades Union Congress for saying that Solidarnosc was anti-socialist. We didn't know that a year after that every miner in Britain would hate Solidarnosc for welcoming scabs to Poland and that our position would be pretty popular. We just knew it was right. So we said it.

But from that, we knew that if Len Murray went after Scargill over Solidarnosc, he was going after the NUM over strike action. So he wasn't anybody to go to, to call for a general strike. Now at the start of this strike we got a fair bit of flak for warning that Neil Kinnock would betray. I remember the first week of the strike we went to the Kent coalfields and the people there liked a lot of what we had to say except on the question of Neil Kinnock. I don't think we would have any argument with them today over that question. And we said 'Miners must not stand alone!' That banner was put out the second week, the third week of the strike. Because we knew that it wasn't just a question of the militancy, the fighting capacity, the traditions of battle of this union. It was a question that no single union by itself can take on the full power of the capitalist state, with its police and its army, its propaganda agencies, its courts, its sequestrators and you name it. And, as has come to be a very well-known statement, if the miners lose, we all lose. So we said that.

And in fact those cops and those courts and their sequestrators could have been beaten -- with the kind of power shown by the dockworkers strike. Boy, did the pound take a tumble that week. Because that's where it hurts. This country is an island after all. If the dockers go out, things stop. If the lorry-drivers had gone out as well, and the railwaymen had gone out as well, everything would have stopped. The country would have shut down. Thatcher could have made all the speeches she wanted to but nothing would have moved. That's what we meant by a *fighting*

Triple Alliance. It didn't happen. And what we're here to discuss today is how to see that it *does* happen next time.

Now this is not probably the best example but I remember it very vividly, so I'll just tell you. The day that the first dock strike was announced to be ending and they were having a docks delegate conference in London the following day, we said, 'Oh Jesus, what can we do?' So we decided, well, we can't do much else; so we got on the phone, phoned up every NUM strike centre we could get hold of in the country, phoned up every dockworkers branch we could get hold of, every T&G and railway branch we could get hold of and said, 'Hey why don't you guys go and organise a lobby of a couple of thousand militants outside the docks delegate conference and tell them they'd better vote to stay out on strike?' Now there may even be some people in this room who got those weird phone calls from us.

It didn't happen. But if it had happened, if two or three thousand angry miners had stood outside that conference and said any one of you bastards who votes to go back to work better stay in that conference room and not come out, then things might just have been different that July.

But that's what a party is needed for, to do that not by looking up a bunch of phone numbers but by having militants in those unions who will make sure that it happens. I was at that docks delegates conference as a correspondent for *Workers Hammer*, and I'll tell you there were a lot of bitter faces when they came out. They did not want to go back, but their leaders gave them no choice.

So in this room today and scattered throughout this country there are many thousands of people who have under their belts now, women and men, an experience which very few workers in the world have. An experience of taking on the capitalist state for twelve months, its cops, its courts; of knowing from day-to-day experience what a bunch of filthy lying rags the capitalist press is; of knowing that if you go into a courtroom as a worker,

*continued on page 8*



Petrograd 1917, Berlin 1918, revolutionary workers demonstrations -- an authoritative party steered in struggle against opportunism made the difference between victory and defeat. While Lenin's Bolshevik Party led Russian workers to power, German Spartacist revolutionaries Rosa Luxemburg (inset) and Karl Liebknecht were murdered and the revolutionary uprising suppressed by Social Democratic traitors. Instead of making a clean split with opportunists and building a separate party as Lenin had done, heroic German revolutionaries stayed inside SPD too long, failing to act on Luxemburg's realisation that SPD's support to war in August 1914 rendered it a rotten stinking corpse.

# Dayschool...

(Continued from page 7)

you get thrown into jail but if you go in as a scab you get treated as a hero; of knowing what the capitalist parties stand for; of knowing what you can depend on Parliament to do, which is nothing but talk; and of knowing that you need a different answer. This is something which has not been seen for many years in a big capitalist country like this.

So it's a responsibility on us, and we feel proud to say that we have been helped in that responsibility by being part of an international organisation which has pooled its resources, pooled its experiences from other areas to help us do what we could to see this strike go forward to victory. Now the responsibility on us and on you is to fight together to build the sort of party that is needed -- to make sure that the next time not only do we beat the government but we become the government.

*Don H, South Wales NUM:* Comrades, I was in Cardiff around about the 1st or 2nd of February this year and I had a sudden tap on the shoulder, and the fellow who tapped me was a member of the Cardiff branch of the SWP. And he said to me, hello, brother. I said, hello, long time no see. He said, we was thinking about you the other night in one of our meetings. He said, we are thinking of holding a special miners meeting -- we haven't had one for a long time and I was hoping that you would come down and say a few words to us. Yes, I said, I'd be delighted to. But you see, he said, we don't want any more of your rough, barnstorming speeches, we don't want any more of your militancy, that we've had in the strike. What we want to know of you is what are you going to do now when you go back to work, now you're defeated?

Christ, I said, that's a tall order, comrade. I happen to be one of the very few people in the National Union of Mineworkers who don't think we're going to be defeated. I think, in fact, we're going to win. So I gave him the name and address of a person, namely John Burt. I said, that man can speak to you much better than I can, he's more experienced in that kind of thinking. Oh, he said, will he come and speak to me? Well, I said, if he can

'There was only one party who calls themselves left-wing and indeed is left-wing. And I'm speaking today at their dayschool. I like the Spartacist League's rough approach. I like their straightforward no-nonsense approach as to the difference between capitalism and socialism.'

get off work he probably can. Oh, he said, he's on safety work is he? No, not really, I said. He just crouches down in the bottom of a van every morning, with a police helmet on his head and a visor over his face and a court blanket over him, and he goes through the picket lines. Oh, he said, we don't want a scab in our meetings. Well, I said, you ought to be used to scabs...

There was only one party to my knowledge who calls themselves left-wing and indeed is left-wing. And I'm speaking today at their dayschool. I've had many meetings with the Spartacist League and I've enjoyed every one of them. I like their rough approach ... I like their straightforward, no-nonsense approach as to the difference between capitalism and socialism. You can't get a socialist out of capitalists -- it's absolutely bloody impossible. But I'll tell you this, a week last Tuesday was the bitterest day I think that I have ever experienced in my life. Because, very much against the grain, I was forced back to work by something which I had no control over.

*Paul B, N Derbyshire NUM:* I'm not speaking for me today. I'm speaking for the women on our action group who have been behind us since day one. They wanted to be here today but they had other things on -- they couldn't get here -- they wanted to speak for themselves. The help that they've had from the Spartacist League and the education that they've had through the people what's met them, and done things for them, they're now more politically aware. And they know what's behind -- they didn't just want to be with their husbands, they wanted to be fighting with their husbands. And the women did, and they got arrested, two or three of them.

*Wally R, Staffordshire NUM:* I'd never been to political parties -- you know, I've listened to different political views and that, but I never put myself alongside them. So I thought I was pretty unique, I was dead radical, I was something different. And along comes Patrick. Early in this strike, in '84, he spoke at our lodge meeting. I thought, 'What the bloody hell is this? He's like me.' And that's how I came to meet the Spartacist League. And ever since then, over the last twelve months or so, I've learnt a lot, a great deal.

*Eddie L, Yorkshire NUM:* I went down to Gervais Drive [in Toronto, Canada], that's the steelworkers union, and I looked at this place and I seen this Eibhlin McDonald [leaflet]. It was the Spartacists. So I got in touch with a fellow called -- probably a lot of you guys will know him -- Paul Schneider [a Spartacist supporter]. He showed me all the contacts, where to raise money, go to all these



Irish banner at 9 March Chesterfield International Women's Day demonstration. A revolutionary party must mobilise all the oppressed in struggle against capitalism.

meetings. And he told me about this Dave Patterson [Canadian steelworkers leader]. So anyway I got on to this Dave Patterson. I had a meeting with him and in the time I was over there he raised \$154,000. That was through Paul Schneider. If I'd never met this Paul Schneider, I wouldn't have got nothing, cos I was just collecting money at beer stores, so that was only bits and bobs. And other people who I met, like the auto workers, the education workers, the iron workers, they were a hundred per cent behind us.

*Bob C, South Yorks TGWU:* I work on the Sheffield buses. For quite a while the buses remained very much peripheral to the strike, but as the strike was going on the National Coal Board figured they were on a winning streak. So what they were going to do was to demand of the SYPTC buses that they run scabs into work at Shirebrook colliery.

If you think about it, any of you people from South Yorkshire, you'll know that the County Council is a Labour Council. What that means is if you're a busworker the Labour Party is the gaffer. Now the Labour Party all the way through the course of the strike was making sounds about how it's necessary to support the miners; they gave some money and collected some food parcels! All fair and good. But when the National Coal Board came up and said, right then, you've got to run those buses down through these picket lines, the Labour Council decided, well, we're not so keen on running them across picket lines -- but we'll tell you what we'll do. We'll make sure that our busmen go at these special contract routes run through Rotherham, pick up these scabs and drop them at the pit for you. We won't cross the picket line, but we'll drop them at the pit.

So at that point some of us on the buses thought, right, this is just about enough. I initiated a motion. Basically what this motion went for was: 1) refusing to scab -- there was no way we were going to run buses in; 2) any T&G member who was going to drive a bus like that should be expelled; 3) that there should be a ballot for strike action to come out alongside the miners, and that we should strike not just on the basis of not scabbing but in defence of our own jobs and our futures alongside the miners, just to beat back the anti-union offensive that Thatcher represents. We got over 40 signatures -- the motion was read out at a branch meeting.

The people who really went for this in a

big way were the blacks, Asians and the women who work on the buses. I went to a whole bunch of tables in the canteen, I went over with this petition and I just explained what was in it, and there was about eight Asians at this table. They whipped that thing out of my hand and they were going around and they were telling each other to sign it. Black guys were arguing like crazy for people to support the miners, to come out, because they knew. You talk about miners getting beaten up by police, getting dragged into courts and sent off to jail when they're totally innocent. These people know, they've seen it. For years they've seen it.

Now in contrast to that -- there's not many so-called lefties where I work because everybody's Labour Party, and even the ones that are leftie are really Labour Party like Socialist Action people. Now when I came to them and told them that one of the things that I wanted to see was any busman who picked up scabs should get expelled, 'Oooh', [they said], 'that's getting a little carried away, let's not get too extreme -- I mean we could ask them not to.'

So I just want to finish by underlining one point, that what is needed is the kind of party that doesn't administer councils or administer the country as a whole in the interests of the bosses, but a party that is prepared to stand to organise and cohere working people in defence of their own interests, which ultimately means the necessity of taking power. And that kind of party will have a very high number of black people, and Asians, because these are some of the people in British society that have the least to lose, some of the least illusions that you can reform, you can gradually lessen some of the worst and most vicious aspects of British capitalist society. Throughout the strike people called the women the backbone of the miners strike. Well, in many ways the Asians and the blacks were no less a backbone for the miners.

*Martyn H, South Wales NUM:* What I want to talk about, comrades, is the role of the NUR in this strike. I know for a fact, comrades, that there has been no coal moved by the railway. In South Wales we've been solid. Men have been victimised, been sent home. I know of one man who'd been victimised in a signal box, who had psychiatrists sent to him to get him out of the box.

There's another thing I'd like to talk about as well. Now I was a soldier for six years in the British Army, a part-time soldier in the TA. And the brainwashing that they used to give us against the Soviet Union was a hard thing for me to swallow. We used to go back after the exercise to the bar and have a few beers and talk and that. I was always a communist in the back of my mind, although I was doing a job as a soldier.

Anyway things came around about the Vietnam war, about the Americans in Vietnam and what they were doing slaughtering hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese people. And the people that I was talking to were a bit crazy, gun-happy, you know what I mean. They tolerated me, but if I was in the regular army I'd have been booted out or locked up. But I remember the last thing before I left, I left the TA, was an officer telling me: 'H... I tell you what. When we beat the Russians, we should put a big hammer and sickle in the bar, just for you.' And that was it for me. I walked straight to the door and went.

I was going to decide to come back down again. But I heard a couple of weeks later they were gearing themselves to strikebreak against the miners. They were willing to use Territorial Army soldiers to break the miners strike. I heard that in Yorkshire and in South Wales, in the industrial areas like this, the government was on about that these soldiers would not fight, but would turn against their own troops. And what I want to say is that you've got a lot of people within the army, which you don't know about, who are there, who are willing when the crunch comes to be on our side.

*Fred Zierenberg, TLD (German section of the international Spartacist tendency):* I just want to add a point about the question of an international. Soon after the miners strike started, there was the West German metal-



workers strike. It was a time when there was a rumour of strike action in the whole West European working class. The French steelworkers posed the question of a general strike. There were the Italian steelworkers -- whole cities were out on strike for days. Or examples like in Denmark. I think that's one of the countries which not many people consider as very important, but lots of scab coal went into Britain from Denmark: small ships into non-unionised harbours in Britain. And there were a lot of Danish dockers who fought with the cops in the harbours in Denmark to stop coal going into Britain.

The same question was put in West Germany. There was strong sentiment in the West German working class, coming from the experience in the metalworkers strike, the threatening of layoffs and so on, to do something to help the British miners. The workers made resolutions to demand boycotts [of coal exports to Britain]. But the question was to put these sentiments into action. And that was the question of a party to do it.

I think that example points out that the question of a revolutionary party is not just a question of one country. They are setting up a supposedly 'anti-terrorist' network now in Europe under the leadership of the West German Bundesgestapo, against supposed 'terrorism'. What it means is common action against revolutionary working-class militants. And so it's our task to run against this, what the bourgeoisie is doing, by building a revolutionary leadership of the working class.

\* \* \*

Patrick Sliney, TGWU Rover Solihull: First of all I would like to say that I felt very proud this morning being invited to speak in Nottingham. And I want to make the point that these miners are only a week back in work in a heavily scab area, and they are out on the streets with over a thousand people marching

to commemorate Davy Jones and the other people who died for the NUM in this battle. Believe me, comrades, the headline of *Workers Hammer* couldn't be more true: 'Defiant in defeat'. The NUM does live to fight another day. It has been defeated in this battle, but it lives on.

Now I fought in British Leyland from the very beginning of this strike on a strategy of trying to spread the miners strike, because it was very clear that the miners alone were going to be up against the state. The point is that we had a strategy to win the miners strike. Given the limited resources that we had we put everything into it. And it was really possible for it to win. I heard Mick McGahey in a meeting in Birmingham get up and say, 'If we had fractions, if we had people in all the unions (this is the Communist Party) the strike wouldn't be where it is today.' I felt disgusted sitting in the room, because on the same platform as Mick McGahey his

**'Let's get that anger and that bitterness and turn it into a political programme and let's go forward to victories and not defeats.'**

fellow comrade Jack Adams was sitting there who was scabherding in Longbridge and preventing the kind of actual linking up and spreading of the miners strike.

Anybody who does not believe that the working class in this country wanted to come out alongside the miners must have been living in cloud-cuckoo land. They consciously blocked that action taking place by directing workers' anger against Thatcher into the Labour Party and the Labour lefts, instead of actually posing that what was necessary was to come out alongside the miners.

I will give you another example. At the beginning of the miners strike some of the

lads from the Midlands area went up to Liverpool to collect some money. One of the lads stood on the docks with his bucket asking workers to donate their money for the miners strike. So you know about these dockers, they work in gangs, and they came down to the docks to go to work. And this docker goes up to the miner and says, 'What is this?' And the miner says, 'Oh, I'm collecting for the miners.' The docker said, 'Well, what did you say this was?' 'I'm collecting for the miners, for the miners fund.' The docker said, 'No, you're not. This is a picket line, we're not crossing!'

So that's what was necessary. But why it didn't take place was because there wasn't a party with the deep roots in the trade unions which is necessary to be able to carry that off. Now, as I said, given our limited size we did our best, our best wasn't good enough this time around. But it will be in the future, comrades, because we intend to build these links, those roots.

Finally, Davy Jones didn't die in vain. The last day of the strike outside TUC House, myself and Len and Jean were going back up there to speak to some of the miners. And it was a very sad day. I mean, people had tears in their eyes. I'll always remember one scene there. There was a man -- he was twice the size of my father, my father's a big man -- being dragged away, arms outstretched, in tears. The people that were holding him back were in tears, and it was very, very sad. But the man had fight in him still. And that fight has got to be directed and it's got to be channelled, and that's what we seek to do.

I would not have been able to carry out, in the limited way I did, the fight against scab coal and so on, without the political programme and the party that I support. So I say let's turn that anger into that political programme and let's go forward to victories and not defeats!■

## Enemy...

(Continued from page 1)

Women were the backbone of the strike; black and Asian minorities and the Irish rallied to the miners as their cause. Sections of the population which are normally kept apart were brought together in common struggle.

These lessons learned must not be forgotten. The labour movement must defend the rights of women, gays and all oppressed. *Troops out of Ireland now! Down with the bosses' racist immigration laws! Smash racist and fascist attacks through union/minority mobilisations!*

The miners strike amply demonstrated the international character of the class struggle. The nationalist appeal for import controls, strongly supported by Labour 'lefts' including the NUM leadership, was heard less and less during the strike, as it was seen to be more and more clearly counterposed to internationalist solidarity. The strike illuminated the class character of the Cold War. The Soviet Union sent vast quantities of aid to the strike, while the NATO imperialists and their lackeys like Polish Spencerite 'union' Solidarnosc rallied behind Thatcher. At the same time the Polish government's exports of scab coal highlighted the narrow, stab-in-the-back nationalism of the Stalinist misleaders of the Soviet bloc. *For defence of the Soviet Union and deformed workers states against the imperialist war drive! Oust the Stalinist misleaders -- return to the revolutionary road of Lenin!*

From the start the key question for the NUM was how to take on the full might of the bosses' state arrayed against it. For Kinnock, Willis & Co, defence of the capitalists' 'law and order' stands higher than any principle of working-class solidarity. So of course they scabbed. But all the left reformists who refused to break sharply with them, including even Arthur Scargill, could only end up being dragged down by them. Faced with a confrontation with the capitalist state, the 'lefts' ran for cover. The TGWU and rail union leaders kept their members at work and the miners isolated. The Labour 'left' parliamentarians made speeches for the miners but refused to stand against Kinnock. Welsh miners denounced him as Ramsay MacKinnock but Tony Benn won't even criticise this Judas! The job of Benn and his fellows is precisely to keep militants tied to Kinnock/Willis by looking like an alternative without offering one. The fact is that the Labour Party cannot be reformed into an instrument to liberate the oppressed. A new revolutionary party is needed to lead the fight for socialist revolution

and a workers government which alone can provide decent jobs and living standards for all.

Such a party would have fought to mobilise militants in other unions to smash the Tory rampage through general strike action; to mobilise all the oppressed and unemployed in struggle alongside the unions; to organise solidarity action internationally. All the miners' leaders had was a Labour Party which promoted a strikebreaking ballot, condoned police murder on the picket lines and defended scabs.

### False lessons from fake lefts

The many groupings who offered no way forward during the strike now present false lessons after it. Various 'lefts' like *Tribune* and the McLennan/McGahey wing of the Communist Party openly rally behind Kinnock/Willis, complaining over 'Labour's wasted year' and the NUM's refusal to capitulate to the scab ballot furore and to condemn miners' 'violence'. Others like *Socialist Action* argue the need to build the Bennite 'left'. Others still seek to dodge the question of leadership with talk of building a brand new 'rank and file movement'

caught in the same old rut.

The CP campaigns for 'broad alliances' with bishops, pacifists, disgruntled Tories and SDPers as the alternative to class struggle. Meanwhile *Morning Star* (27 March), voice of the Moscow-loyal supposed 'left' opposition within the CP, asks:

'More to the point when drawing lessons, can it truthfully be said that every step was taken to halt factories, depots and other establishments where coal or its products were being used?

'That question must be levelled first and foremost at our Communist Party.'

Where was 'that question' when the miners were slogging their guts out seeking support? Take BL Longbridge -- Jack Adams, union convenor and CP Executive member, was responsible for keeping scab coal moving into his factory. *Morning Star* never said a word about this, of course. What it did say was that CPer Mick McGahey's deal to allow scab coal into Ravenscraig was all right, that the TGWU leaders' sellout of the dock strike was a 'victory' and that, for the most part, Kinnock and Willis

continued on page 10

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# Enemy...

(Continued from page 9)

were just fine. Now *Morning Star* industrial editor Mick Costello moans 'At no stage during the strike did the government have any intention whatsoever of seeking a negotiated settlement with the NUM ... even if journalists, including myself, were at times misled about that' (*Morning Star*, 26 March, emphasis added)! Truth and treachery don't mix.

The CP's refusal to challenge the Labour/TUC traitors is no accident nor a matter of 'errors' discovered in hindsight. It is conscious policy. The CP's British Road to Socialism, which sees socialism coming to Britain through a left Labour majority in Parliament, makes it little more than a ginger group on Her Majesty's Loyal Labour Party.

Several self-proclaimed 'Trotskyists' have taken a similar role upon themselves, notably *Militant* and *Socialist Action*. Neil Kinnock may try to paint *Militant* as 'Marxist' bogeys and try to witchhunt them, but Ted Grant's tame outfit considers electing 'left' MPs and councillors (especially its own) far more important than the class struggle. Ted Grant reportedly told a recent LPYS conference that the NUM's failure to bow to the ballot clamour was a 'crucial error'. For people tied to Parliament, sooner or later everything comes down to a ballot!

For *Socialist Action* on the other hand, the key lesson of the strike is the need to 'Scargillise the labour movement'. Translated, this means not to wage militant, if politically limited, class struggle, but to build the Labour 'left'. According to the 1 February *Socialist Action*, 'The development of the Labour left around Tony Benn, Ken Livingstone and Arthur Scargill is the most positive development in British politics for 60 years.' *Socialist Action* clings to Benn, who clings to Kinnock ... and on it goes.

Of the others, the Socialist Workers Party preached defeatist rubbish that the strike was on the 'downturn' from the first day to the last and had their own members cross miners' picket lines. The bizarre Revolutionary Communist Party made its calling card defence of the Notts scabs, nearly getting lynched by

militant miners.

Two smaller tendencies, around *Workers Power* and the *Leninist*, centred their strike strategy on pressuring the TUC to call a general strike, while raising one petty tactical criticism after another of the NUM leadership. In some cases, notably *Workers Power's* call for a 'national vote' (read: ballot), later echoed by the *Leninist*, they stood far to the right of Scargill. Today the only perspective they offer NUM militants is to 'democratise the NUM', to pursue mindless 'guer-



Militant strikers saw through scab ballot ploy.

rilla action' and 'to mercilessly bring Kinnock, Willis and co to account. To do this we must organise the militant forces in the unions and the Labour Party' (*Workers Power*, 20 March). The *Leninist* adds to this its own role within the CP manufacturing toothless 'left' analyses as a cover for the CP's fifty-year history of class collaboration. But pressuring the existing class traitors, even 'mercilessly', gets you exactly nowhere in providing an alternative.

In contrast the strategy advanced by the

Spartacist League started not from what the present leadership could be pressured to do, but what was necessary to win. When pro-CIA anti-communists like Len Murray and Frank Chapple witchhunted Arthur Scargill for opposing Solidarnosc at the 1983 Blackpool TUC (after the sinister *Newsline* of the so-called Workers Revolutionary Party passed them the ammunition), we recognised it as the signal for Thatcher to unleash the long-planned assault on the NUM. When Tony Benn embraced Denis Healey in the Chesterfield by-election on the eve of the strike -- refusing even to accept our offer of critical support because we stood for driving CIA-lover Healey out of the Labour Party -- it was clear evidence that the Labour/TUC 'lefts' would not defy right-wing scabberding.

Given the TUC's open hostility, we recognised that the only road to the general strike needed to secure a miners' victory lay over the head of the TUC. Our call for a fighting Triple Alliance -- aimed at the strategic rail and transport unions whose members were actively engaged in solidarity action -- sought to put the 'left' leaders on the spot instead of letting them pass the buck to the TUC's refusal to act.

Thatcher is wanted for murder by millions of her subjects. She can be brought down. The key task now facing strike militants is to preserve the fighting capacity of the union, to prepare for another day, to vent the anger and frustration not in fruitless, individualistic actions, no matter how understandable, but in the task of forging a new, revolutionary leadership which will see the next struggle through to victory.

Many militants have come to recognise in the *Workers Hammer* a paper that tells the revolutionary truth. Study what went wrong; study the historical lessons of past defeats and past victories, especially the victorious Russian Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. Join us in building around *Workers Hammer* readers and supporters groups out of which can grow the British Bolshevik party. To hell with Judas Kinnock! Enough of those who would cling to his coattails! What is needed is not more left-wing conference resolutions for the Labour Party to ignore once it enters Downing Street, but a programme for power and a party with the aim of carrying it out. ■

# Razor's edge...

(Continued from page 12)

then, centrally the consolidation of a black working class and the beginnings of its organisation. What this means is that today treason trials, mass arrests and the killing of some scores of blacks are insufficient to choke off black struggle. Two days after the Uitenhage massacre, a number of black collaborators of the apartheid regime were killed in the townships. And on 24 March an estimated 35,000 blacks, reportedly the largest demonstration ever in the Eastern Cape, streamed into Kwanobuhle to turn the funeral that had previously been broken up by the police into a mass protest. But Botha has made clear his intention to crush those 'fomenting disobedience, violence and destruction'. The Uitenhage massacre could be the signal for unleashing a Sharpeville many thousands of times over.

In a recent *New York Times* (27 March) article, the generally perceptive reporter Alan Cowell remarked that 'Compared with 1960 ... the white authorities [now] seemed adrift, reliant as ever on force, but unable to provide any other answer to the questions spawned by their own troubled racial history....' This reflects a pervasive misunderstanding of South Africa shared by the American bourgeoisie and much of the 'left'. What's posed is not granting token democratic rights to an oppressed minority. In South Africa, a racial caste of 4-5 million whites share in the superexploitation of the 26-plus million blacks, Indians and coloureds. An important 1983 ABC-TV special on the rise of South African black unions was titled 'Adapt or Die'. But on the political level, South African rulers cannot adapt. White supremacy, whether in the form of apartheid or by some other name, is the foundation of South African capitalism, just as slavery was to the pre-Civil War American South.

What does majority rule, 'one man, one vote', mean in South Africa? To the white minority, it can only mean one thing: 'Drop dead.' But they don't want to drop dead, and they have all the guns. ABC's Ted Koppel referred to a slogan painted on a South African wall, 'Boer go home.' But the Boers are home. The Afrikaners see themselves as a 'white

tribe of Africa'. These trekkers who conquered the veldt (plains) lost the Boer War, but they won the country. In contrast to whites in Southern Rhodesia, the Afrikaners are not a settler colony anymore. The Rhodesians, like the Israelis in Lebanon, couldn't afford to lose steady casualties, even only ten a week -- trivial numbers in the abstract, but not with such a narrow population base. The Afrikaners, however, have the weapons, a sufficiently large white population, an ideology and the religion, history and bloody-minded determination to prevail.

Genocide is not the aim of South Africa's rulers -- they hardly want to kill off the black proletariat that has produced their golden egg. But their whole security set-up is designed for repression on a mammoth scale. They're probably already calculating what Henry Kissinger once cynically called the 'raped nun gap' -- how many atrocities against whites to allow, or instigate, to prepare foreign opinion for the bloody holocaust of blacks. (Recall the Western scare propaganda about raped nuns in Stanleyville which paved the way for the 1961 UN intervention against Lumumba in the Congo, engineered by Teddy Kennedy's elder brother JFK.) And when Botha lets loose it won't just be with Israeli machine guns firing out of gun slits of hippo troop carriers. The black townships were designed for civil war, laid out like giant concentration camps encircled by highways and empty 'free fire zones', so they can be isolated and, if necessary, napalmed into submission. Pretoria is prepared to impose a peace of the graveyards.

The contradictions of the Botha regime can be seen in the gold miners' strike last September. After careful study and passing elaborate legislation, the government had granted a highly circumscribed right to strike. One of the tamer black unions went through all the procedures and finally declared a first-ever legal strike. The *Wall Street Journal* proclaimed the advent of 'enlightened' labour relations in South Africa. But as soon as the legal strikers walked off the job, their example spread like wildfire through the gold mines, and the government responded by sending in the troops and shooting down unarmed strikers in cold blood.

\* \* \*

Meanwhile, the power of the black proletariat is still politically strait-jacketed by nationalism. And this is no accident, for the structure of South African society subjects the black population as a whole to the most hideous forms of colonial oppression. They are treated as aliens in their own country, without legal rights, colonial subjects constantly threatened with deportation to their kraals on the starving bantustans. The capitalist class and its state apparatus are entirely white (except for black cops who rarely rise above sergeant). There is no black bourgeoisie in South Africa. The very depth and totalitarian nature of this internal colonialism has tended to produce a nationalist-populist outlook among the black African masses, including the industrial working class. Historically, the black struggle has been under the sway of nationalist formations, principally the African National Congress (ANC).

At the same time, for the black unions, having to deal with economic reality tends to cut across nationalist principles, and there have even been reports of joint white-black union action, such as at the Highveld Steel plant where common mass meetings were held (*Work in Progress*, October 1984). In meetings of the National UDF, a nationalist coalition rivalling the UDF, exclusion of whites was rejected by leaders of black unions formerly associated with the Black Consciousness Movement. But politically the South African black unions are still inchoate where they are not directly integrated into one or another nationalist popular front.

In the case of the ANC, the strategy of seeking alliances with the more 'liberal' wing of imperialism and its 'own' ruling class extends back to its founding. Hoping to exploit the sometimes sharp antagonism between British capital and Afrikaner nationalism the ANC supported British imperialism in both the First and Second World Wars. And following the savage repression in the wake of Sharpeville, in 1964 ANC leader Luthuli appealed to 'South Africa's strongest allies, Britain and America ... for sanctions that would precipitate the end of the hateful system of apartheid'. As if the City of London and Wall Street, the butchers who slaughtered blacks in the 'Mau Mau emergency' in Kenya and communist guerrillas in Indochina, are any more humane than

# Defend Jackie—Jail police rapists! Racist outrage!

It was South African apartheid-style 'justice' here in Britain. Jackie Berkeley, a 20-year-old black woman, protested that she had been beaten up and gang raped by policemen in the notorious Moss Side ghetto of Manchester last April. She went to court -- only to be herself accused, convicted and sentenced! The 70 protesters who attended her trial daily and demonstrated outside the court in her defence raised a cry of outrage when the magistrate read out his verdict on 11 April. While the cops walked free, Jackie was convicted of threatening behaviour, assaulting three policewomen and wasting police time, and sentenced to three months imprisonment, suspended for one year.

This is the 'democracy' meted out to the oppressed in Thatcher's Britain. Everyone from the courts to the cops conspired to keep the accused police rapists from facing a trial by jury. By blaming the victim for 'provoking' her own injuries, the capitalist state was able to ensure that the case was heard before a single magistrate, who put the cap on a vicious racist frame-up.

Jackie Berkeley was arrested on 19 April 1984 after an alleged street disturbance. Taken to Moss Side police station, Jackie said she was thrust into a single cell, stripped naked, racially abused and raped first by one cop and then another while two policewomen held her down. A day later she made a complaint against the cops. To the magistrate, the delay was 'proof' that she was lying. But for a young black woman to report gang rape by white cops at all showed tremendous courage in this deeply racist country. Author Ruth Hall testified on Jackie's behalf that in only one in twelve cases women reported rape to the police and that none of the black victims in her survey had ever reported the crime.

The Moss Side cops launched a five-month investigation to try and break down her story. But after 22 identity parades Jackie

was consistently able to pick out three of her assailants. And during the trial the cops called as witnesses contradicted not only each other's stories but their own recorded statements as well.

PC Reubens claimed in his statement to have gone with WPC Roberts into the cell where Jackie was being held with two other women, but Roberts denied this. Then Reubens changed his statement, claiming he went into the cell alone, even though no policeman is allowed to accompany female prisoners alone. Sergeant Fellows, the other policeman accused by Jackie, also contradicted his colleagues' testimony. As Jackie herself began to give evidence she became too upset to speak.

The magistrate accepted that the injuries to Jackie's neck and chest, admitted to by the police casualty officer, were sustained when she was thrown into the police van. But, unabashed, he went on to state that the injuries to her right thigh and hand, also admitted, were provoked by Jackie herself. He then claimed that if PC Reubens had really raped Jackie, he would have gone home immediately instead of staying in the police station. This was the magistrate's 'proof'!

While Jackie's lawyers are considering appealing against this outrageous verdict, they admit that Jackie's state of health after the first trial may preclude subjecting her to another such tortuous ordeal. This vicious verdict is not only another green light to the thugs in blue to terrorise and rape minorities with impunity, but is an expression of Thatcher's onslaught on all the oppressed, from minority communities to gays to women and all of the working class. There's no justice for the oppressed in the bosses' courts. The labour movement must mobilise to demand that the charges against Jackie are thrown out and to ensure the racist terror-mongers are brought to heel. Defend Jackie Berkeley!

Afrikaaner leaders Malan, Verwoerd and Botha! They're just more remote and cool.

The 'moderate' nationalist ANC talks of 'multiracial democracy', but means by this a 'power-sharing' deal with elements of the white racist ruling class, from the United Party in the 1950s and '60s to the Progressive Federal Party today. Meanwhile, Bishop Tutu, picked as the black saviour of South Africa by the Nobel Prize committee, warns of the danger of a bloodbath, appealing for the intervention of the American imperialists. So that in the South African black movement talk of inter-racialism is exclusively associated with popular-front do-gooders of the CP/ANC stripe, and those who warn of the danger of a bloodbath turn out to be weepy friends of the Kennedys. The more militant of the nationalists, such as AZAPO which demonstrated against Teddy Kennedy's visit to Soweto last January, close their eyes to the dangers looming over them and harden up the enemy camp, driving whites into the Afrikaaner laager.

The black movement in South Africa doesn't seem to realize that they're looking down the barrel of a cannon that's being wheeled out to blow them away. They vastly overrate the humanity of their oppressors. Botha & Co are now looking for provocations -- and they may get them. ANC sources indicate that their guerrillas are shifting their military strategy from attacking exclusively strategic installations to 'softer' targets, exercising 'much less caution about incurring [white] civilian casualties' (*Work in Progress*, February 1985). This, combined with their talk of moving from sporadic bombings by small commandos to 'people's war' is a deadly dangerous fantasy, playing directly into the hands of the Afrikaaner hardliners. Any actions along this line will trigger a monstrous slaughter without threatening Pretoria militarily. In contrast to such light-minded playing at war, well-selected actions by the black workers movement can strike the apartheid system in its Achilles heel, its absolute dependence upon black labour.

Unlike the Bishop Tutus, we do not talk of bloodbaths as an excuse to preach pacifism and reconciliation with the apartheid state. Blood will flow in South Africa: the question is

whose blood, when, where, why and how. Certainly there is no solution in South Africa without a civil war. But if it is fought on a purely white v black, national basis it will be a disaster for the oppressed. One only has to look at Angola where a few hundred South African soldiers drove almost all the way to Luanda before the Cubans intervened to stop them.

In Britain and the US, the anti-apartheid movement has centred on the slogan of 'disinvestment'. This is a call for an international strike of *capital*, to force Pretoria to abandon apartheid, whose net result will be to allow some sharp speculators to buy South African shares at a discount. When Kennedy tried to cash in on the South African issue with a visit in January, the Johannesburg *Financial Mail* ran the headline, 'He's teaching us morals?' Who is demanding that the bloodsoaked Anglo-American imperialists stop exploiting, Botha must be asking. The disinvestment campaign is an appeal to the 'democratic' hypocrisy of the mass murderers of Northern Ireland and Vietnam to get their South African ally to clean up its act.

The pro-imperialist Labourites, Liberals, bishops and other 'respectable' figures who sponsor the popular-frontist Anti-Apartheid Movement and call for disinvestment, like the Kennedy/Jesse Jackson liberals in the US, have only tactical differences with arrogant apartheid apologists like British foreign office minister Malcolm Rifkind and IBM president John Akers, who claim that foreign investment in South Africa benefits the black masses. They share with the Cold War bureaucracy of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and the American AFL-CIO, the aim of taking over the new black unions before they get 'out of hand'.

Communists look to the working class, from Durban to Doncaster to Detroit, as the vanguard of the fight for freedom. We fight for union action to stop military shipments to South Africa, such as the export from Britain of helicopters and jeeps to the regime. And we hail the actions of San Francisco dockers in refusing to handle South African death cargo

for ten days last December, despite sabotage from union bureaucrats and their fake-left waterboys. International workers solidarity, against their bosses and ours, is key to the struggle against Reagan/Thatcher/Botha racism.

The savage apartheid dictatorship in South Africa is the result of uneven and combined development in which the latest advances in industry and technology coexist with imposed colonial backwardness of the oppressed black masses, condemned to suffer the most brutal aspects of serfdom, slavery and tribalism. The most elementary democratic demand or social gain can only be achieved in an anti-capitalist revolutionary context. The fundamental political right of 'one man, one vote' -- real majority rule -- would mean the overthrow of white supremacy and would sound the death knell for the white ruling class. Those such as Bishop Tutu, the UDF and ANC who preach a 'peaceful' end to apartheid through moral suasion and 'economic sanctions' of international finance capital disarm the oppressed ideologically in the face of impending catastrophe in which it will overwhelmingly be the blood of the black masses that flows.

Today hundreds of thousands of black, coloured and Indian workers are enrolled in black unions, which have repeatedly broken through the labyrinth of state controls to unleash mass strike action. The economic organisation of the black workers is a necessary condition for the South African workers, but it is not sufficient. A recent book titled *Power! Black Workers, Their Unions and the Struggle for Freedom in South Africa* (1984) reports a revealing remark by a shop steward of a black union in Port Elizabeth:

'We long for the day when there is majority rule government in South Africa and [imprisoned ANC leader] Nelson Mandela is our Prime Minister. But when that day comes we must have an independent trade union organisation to make sure the black workers don't get kicked around simply because our people are in power.'

For the oppressed to emerge victorious from the inevitable civil war in South Africa, they must be organised and led by a class-conscious vanguard infused with the understanding that those who labour must rule.

Continuing Lenin's struggle for independent communist parties in the fight for a Fourth International, his companion-in-arms Leon Trotsky, founder of the Red Army, wrote to his supporters in South Africa in 1935. Trotsky noted:

'The Bolshevik Party defended the right of the oppressed nations to self-determination with the methods of proletarian class struggle, entirely rejecting the charlatan "anti-imperialist" blocs with the numerous petty-bourgeois "national" parties of czarist Russia....

'Only thanks to this irreconcilable class policy was Bolshevism able to succeed in the time of the revolution to throw aside the Mensheviks, the Social Revolutionaries, the national petty-bourgeois parties and gather around the proletariat the masses of the peasantry and the oppressed nationalities.' (L D Trotsky, 'On the South African Theses', *Writings 1934-35*)

In South Africa today, the construction of a Bolshevik party based on the black proletariat is more urgent than ever, but also the possibilities are possibly better than in the past. The government has a lot on its plate right now, and its highest priority probably isn't tracking down inconspicuous red nuclei in the workers movement. As a result of what has happened to government informers in the townships in recent months, there seems to be an involuntary relaxation of security control within the black population.

A Leninist-Trotskyist party in South Africa must be built in irreconcilable struggle against every kind of nationalism and popular-frontism, counterposing the programme of *permanent revolution*, for the emancipation and reconstruction of the oppressed nation under the dictatorship of the proletariat. A workers revolution in South Africa, with its concentration of industry and wealth, will be the motor force for the liberation of the desperately impoverished black masses throughout the continent. Where to begin? Now is the time for internationalist communists, black, coloured, Indian and white, to undertake the construction of unobtrusive nuclei, in and oriented toward the workers movement, laying the basis for a multiracial revolutionary workers party in the struggle to reforge the Fourth International.

Adapted from *Workers Vanguard* no 376, 5 April 1985

## South Africa: Razor's edge

**Nationalism is  
a deathtrap for  
black masses -  
Build a proletarian party  
to smash apartheid!**

On Thursday, 21 March, rallies were held in South Africa to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the massacre at Sharpeville, the black township near Johannesburg, where police of the white supremacist regime mowed down 69 black demonstrators peacefully protesting against the apartheid pass laws. This year black students in Sharpeville put up barricades and boycotted classes. At the strategic Vaal Reefs gold mine, the largest in the world, 40,000 black workers went on strike. And in the Eastern Cape province after a three-day 'stayaway' shutdown by the black population of Port Elizabeth, the authorities celebrated Sharpeville by staging another massacre.

The massacre at Uitenhage was the racist regime's answer to eight months of defiant struggles by the oppressed black population of South Africa. A massive boycott last August by the Indian and 'coloured' (mixed-race) communities doomed Botha's 'reform' constitution to reinforce apartheid disenfranchisement and provide the executive with new martial law powers. Peaceful protests of rent increases in black townships around Johannesburg were met with police terror and the unprecedented introduction of the army. They were followed by black gold miners battling the police and army in September. In November came the massive two-day stayaway general strike in the industrial Transvaal. In February, black squatters at the Crossroads shantytown outside Cape Town erupted in defiance of government plans to move them to an isolated township far from the city. Even though more than 250 blacks have been killed by Pretoria's security forces since the beginning of 1984, it hasn't stemmed the waves of revolt. But things cannot go on this way indefinitely.

South Africa appears to be rumbling down the tracks to a bloody confrontation. The system of apartheid -- a bogus partition in which the whites give up nothing -- is coming apart. Blacks have made it clear that they are not taking this oppressive situation any more. And the white population is armed to the teeth, determined to defend what they've got. The coasts are secure, there is a belt of cowed black African states to the north, and the struggle is along white-v-black national lines. So long as the national principle predominates, in a military confrontation, now



Uitenhage, South Africa: Massively armed apartheid police state wants bloodbath. Black struggle for freedom needs programme for proletarian power.

and for the next period the whites will win hands down. The danger is of a pointless bloodbath, something on the scale of the partition of India in which hundreds of thousands died, and a very one-sided bloodbath in which the vast majority of the victims will be from the oppressed black, Indian and coloured majority.

Yet the class principle can prevail. In South Africa there is a black proletariat with a growing sense of its power. Over the past decade it has entered into struggle, from the gold mines and industrial heartland of the Witwatersrand to the car factories of Port Elizabeth. By its very bulk, this five-million-strong working class has forced the petty-bourgeois black leadership to take it into account, but not programmatically. The black proletariat is still being used as cattle to haul the ideological cart of nationalism. A Bolshevik party must be built to lead a victorious struggle for 'amandla', power, for the oppressed, through workers revolution.

Instead of the mass starvation and internecine tribal strife which have marked the 'independent' neocolonial states of black Africa, proletarian class rule in South Africa will open the way to socialist construction, based on the higher levels of industry and culture, in which whites will also have a necessary place. Only such a perspective of a black-centred workers government, through forging a multiracial working-class vanguard which struggles for class power, can break down the iron white-v-black line.

South Africa is the one place in sub-Saharan Africa where there is the possibility for a workers state, because here the black population has been partially absorbed, at the bottom, into a modern industrialised society which can, based on the revolutionary reorganisation of society, provide a decent life for its citizens. The white population must have a place in an anti-racist society; the model is how Trotsky offered thousands of tsarist officers a job to do, placing

their skills at the disposal of the new Bolshevik regime and the Soviet peoples. South Africa's two and a half million coloureds, who comprise a strategic part of the Cape proletariat, and the nearly one million Indians, mainly a commercial population, are no less a vital component.

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South African whites are an oppressor people who can easily and guiltily envision the terms of oppression reversed, and are determined not to be on the receiving end. That makes them extremely dangerous. South Africa is unique. Unlike Ulster Protestants, Israeli Jews, the Sinhalese in Sri Lanka, and, formerly, Cypriot Greeks, where the group on top is not qualitatively, if at all, economically advantaged, in South Africa you have, in bulk, one whole people exploiting another. Ulster is the triumph of ideology over social reality, for Catholic and Protestant alike are impoverished even by the standards of run-down British capitalism. In the Near East, Palestinian Arabs are at most half a social revolution behind the Israelis. But the Afrikaners have the qualitative military, economic, technical and cultural superiority to carry out the bloody 'scorched earth' programme which the Zionists can only dream of imposing on the Shi'ites and Druze of Lebanon.

While the Botha regime is not crumbling, it has plenty of problems which cannot be solved by the *sjambok* (whip) and Uzi machinegun. A new generation of urbanised black youth burn with anger at their grossly inferior schooling, limited job prospects and the denial of their birthright. Black workers, getting a taste of their growing social power, refuse to continue servilely grovelling before the white *baas*. With stones and petrol bombs, with boycotts and strikes, the black masses are defying not just the pass laws or residential restrictions but the whole oppressive structure of apartheid rule. The South African bourgeoisie -- the English in the mines and the Afrikaners on the farms -- thrived for a century on the slave labour of blacks. Now they need to stabilise a layer of black skilled workers in industry and to contain the labour militancy of the emerging black unions. --

Sharpeville 1960 brought a decade of police state silence. All black resistance was crushed. South African society has experienced important changes in the quarter century since

continued on page 10



Crossroads, 18 February: apartheid police engaged in cold-blooded murder of blacks.