

Australasian

# SPARTACIST



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**Mass Union/Black Mobilisations Needed Now -**

## Smash Racist State Terror Campaign!

Hawke's anti-Soviet, union-busting government began its third term with a vengeance. First it launched a job-slashing attack in collusion with the bosses against the powerful miners union. Then, on 6 August, Lloyd Boney met his death in cop custody in Brewarrina. He was the 16th young black man to die in police custody this year, bringing the kill-

ing rate to one in every 11 days! This outrageous death toll is a grotesque measure of this murderous, sinister and corrupt government.

Aboriginal survivors of the near-genocide suffered under European colonisation live under Australian Apartheid. The rigidly segregated, tiny minority of blacks in this white imperialist enclave in Asia, is

bearing the brunt of social reaction, which is being fuelled to white heat by Cold War II. Hawke's racist regime brands blacks as pro-Libyan terrorists, kills blacks in prisons, punishes the relatives in kangaroo courts and enforces this with cop and racist terror around the country. As the nationalistic preparations for the Bicentennial build up, the state terror

against blacks marks the sharp edge of White Australian capitalism. Hawke's Australia rivals Botha's South Africa: the 16 deaths of blacks in cop custody in Australia this year would be an equivalent of 2,400 similar deaths in South Africa! In South Africa, however, the blacks comprise the working

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## Where is Gorbachev's Russia Going?

Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev calls it a "Radical Reorganization of Economic Management." His program, approved last week by the Central Committee of the Communist Party, would dismantle centralized planning. Under the pressure of imperialist militarism and fearing a resumption of economic slowdown, the Kremlin tops have responded with market-oriented reforms internally while seeking accommodation with Western capitalism. But Russia's current economic troubles are not due to the system of centralized planning and management, the motor force of the Soviet Union's transformation from a backward, overwhelmingly peasant country into a great industrial/military power. Rather, the underlying cause is bureaucratic rule by the parasitic and nationalistic Stalinist betrayers of the Bolshevik Revolution.

According to Gorbachev's program, by the end of 1990 individual enterprises (except in the military sector) will determine

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TASS from Sovfoto

Kremlin leader Mikhail Gorbachev exhorts Soviet oil workers to work harder. Only workers' overthrow of bureaucratic caste can revitalize Soviet economy.

**Return to the Road of Lenin and Trotsky!**

# Freedom for Mordechai Vanunu!

Arad/Newsweek



Mordechai Vanunu.

Mordechai Vanunu is currently under trial in Israel under charges of treason and espionage. He is facing a possible death sentence for his courageous act of exposing the massive scale of Israel's Doomsday Machine: 100-200 nuclear bombs targetting not only the surrounding Arab states but the Soviet workers state itself. All humanity owes Vanunu a debt of gratitude.

Vanunu has been in solitary confinement for one year. Sometime in July in Ashkelon prison he was able to write a manifesto in his defence which begins:

"My principal message is in several spheres. On the personal level, the individual, the citizen, anywhere on the face of the earth, has to find the way in which he can add his personal contribution to improve life on earth, its quality and safety. By taking this course of action he will make everyday life pleasanter and more tolerable. Much can be

made from what society offers. If for example, a person can contribute in the sphere of social equality so that people will be happier and not discriminated against because of their colour or religion or sex, such a person is worthy of respect and emulation.

"In my own case, I wanted to increase the awareness of the nuclear danger in this country and in the region so it was an action that contributes to the security and the brotherhood of nations."

In his moving statement Vanunu goes on to denounce Israel's role in the 1982 war against Lebanon: "They executed in cold blood civilians, and children and soldiers died following their follies blindly." Rev John McKnight, of the Anglican Church, Sydney, who gave us a copy of Vanunu's manifesto, has fought in Australia and Israel for Vanunu's freedom. He told Spartacist supporters that Vanunu was

radicalised around the Lebanon war. He has corresponded with Vanunu for the last year, and is currently seeking to visit him in Israel.

The trial is being held in secret, and the courtroom has been boarded up with the exception of one entrance. Two vans take Vanunu to trial from the prison each day with their windows painted white, the guards are equipped with sirens and he is forced to wear a motorcycle helmet, and was beaten for trying to remove it: all to prevent him any means of again communicating the truth to the outside world.

Vanunu was smuggled into Israel after being kidnapped by Mossad, the Israeli secret police, in Rome. Australia's secret police, ASIO, played a key role in his abduction. They tipped off British MI5 and Mossad about his intended departure from Sydney to deliver his story to the London Sunday Times, and Mossad agents had him under surveillance from the time

he landed at Heathrow, if not before. Hawke himself is a rabid Zionist supporter, and declared in 1974 that if he were the Israeli prime minister he would use the atom bomb!

What is necessary is an international campaign of mass protest, which brings to bear the power of the organised labour movement. Make his freedom your fight! Donations can be sent to: Mordechai Vanunu Trust Fund, 120 Darlinghurst Road, Darlinghurst New South Wales, 2010.■

## Gorbachev...

Continued from page one

what they produce and in what quantities. The centralized setting of prices along with most subsidies are to be gradually done away with. Enterprise managers will be given the right to cut wages and bonuses and to lay off "redundant" workers. Enterprises whose revenues still do not cover costs will have to close.

Summing up these measures, a New York Times editorial (1 July) concludes: "Yet another Communist giant, the Communist giant, now sets out to undo the Revolution of 1917 with the Revolution of 1987." This is wishful thinking. It would take more than a new Central Committee directive on the economy to undo the first victorious workers revolution in history — the October Revolution of 1917. It would take a bloody counterrevolution against the determined resistance of Soviet workers and peasants.

However, dismantling central planning, operating enterprises on the basis of market profitability and spawning a new class of petty

capitalist entrepreneurs — inevitably producing unemployment and inflation — will strengthen the internal forces of capitalist restoration in the USSR. To arrest and counter such developments, Soviet

later Gorbachev announced the most far-reaching "market-oriented reforms" in Soviet history.

The document also pointed out that under the slogan of glasnost



Soviet people have achieved a dramatic rise in living standards since devastation of World War II, but in recent years economic growth has slowed.

workers must struggle in the name of an authentically socialist program against Gorbachev's "radical reorganization" of the economy. A real socialist renewal in the USSR demands a proletarian political revolution to oust the Kremlin oligarchy, restoring soviet democracy and recasting the economic plan in the interests of the workers and peasants.

We are publishing below a section, "The Russian Question and Gorbachev," from the Spartacist League's draft national conference document, "Toward Revolutionary Conjuncture," adopted by the SL/US Political Bureau on June 16. The document, while noting that the actual economic changes introduced were not yet significant, observed, "the direction of these economic changes is toward greater dependence upon market competition." Nine days

(openness) Gorbachev has stated: "There should be no forgotten names or blanks either in history or in literature." This is an explosive question since the real history of the Soviet Union has long been hidden by lies and silence. Trotsky, Zinoviev, Bukharin and other Bolshevik leaders murdered by Stalin have for decades been treated as non-persons in the USSR. The late Isaac Deutscher stated that as Trotsky's biographer he had to dig the co-leader of the Bolshevik Revolution and founder of the Red Army out "from under a mountain of dead dogs, a huge load of calumny and oblivion" (preface to The Prophet Unarmed [1954]). But now the Soviet intelligentsia is digging at that mountain of dead dogs. The spectre of Trotsky haunts Gorbachev's Russia not only because his historic role in founding the

Soviet state has been hidden. It is the program of the Trotskyist Left Opposition which offers the revolutionary proletarian answer to the corruption, social pathology (eg, widespread alcoholism) and political and economic malaise which Stalin's heirs in the Kremlin now confront and cannot overcome.

In the absence of workers democracy, the now-dominant section of the Soviet bureaucracy sees the discipline of the market as the only answer to the country's serious economic problems. Thus Kremlin spokesman Gennadi Gerasimov remarked on the CBS News special "The Soviet Union: Seven Days in May" (24 June): "I would like for our workers to learn to work as hard as your workers do."

Even before the recent measures, Soviet workers were increasingly disgruntled over Gorbachev's economic policies. In particular, the prospect of layoffs and unemployment is social dynamite in the USSR. Soviet citizens naturally regard job security as their birthright (accounts of widespread unemployment under capitalism are often dismissed as just Kremlin propaganda!). Gorbachev promises that the "release of workers in conditions of the Socialist economy will not bring about unemployment." But if enterprises are free to hire and fire on the basis of market profitability, if government subsidies are

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Australasian

**SPARTACIST**

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## Insensitive Headline

In Australasian Spartacist No 115 (May-June 1986) we ran an overline on the back page which read "Hawke is Thatcher in Drag!" Our intention was to underline the similarities between Thatcher's Tory government in Britain and Hawke's vicious union-busting Labor government. Belatedly we note that the statement is at best insensitive and could be taken as offensive to homosexuals.

AUSTRALASIAN SPARTACIST

# Workers/Peasants Need a Revolutionary Party!

## Philippines on a Knife Edge

6 SEPTEMBER 1987: We print below an eyewitness report from two trade unionist supporters of the Spartacist League who spent several weeks in the Philippines just before the attempted coup of 28 August. Though it narrowly survived this latest and bloodiest coup, the made-in-the-USA Aquino regime has been plunged deeper into a mess as class polarisation sharpens in the country. The coup is the latest demonstration that stable bourgeois democracy is an impossibility in the Philippines. Over 1300 troops, mainly from elite units, led by Colonel "Gringo" Honasan came within an ace of success, briefly seizing key points in Manila and the provinces, including the second-largest city Cebu. Apparently intending to purge army chief Ramos and "leftists" in the cabinet while keeping Cory herself as figurehead, they planned a bloody crackdown on leftist, working class and peasant organisations. While Ramos this time obeyed Aquino's "shoot to kill" order and put down the revolt, "Gringo" and hundreds of his troops remain at large and sympathy for his cause is widespread even among "loyal" officers.

The coup was triggered by the mass strike of 26 August which paralysed Metro Manila in protest at the government's 20 per cent petroleum price rise. Submerged in the middle class "people power" of the February 1986 overthrow of Marcos, the working class has since emerged on the arena as a contender for power. Honasan and his "Reform the Armed Forces Movement" (RAM) of young officers played key roles in the coup which installed Aquino, and were lionised not only by Manila society but also Aquino-smitten Australian left groups like the Socialist Workers Party. "Gringo" himself is a sadistic macho psychopath known for carving the ears off his victims in the war against the Muslim rebels, and RAM ousted Marcos to turn the factionalised, demoralised and corrupt army into a more effective fighting force against the growing NPA insurgency. Demanding a free hand to kill



**Aquino's regime unravels: Philippines armed forces general headquarters Camp Aguinaldo, on fire after coup attempt number five.**

"communists," these butchers chafe at what they see as the "weakness" of the Aquino government in dealing with the NPA, while allowing leftists to agitate openly in the cities. Aquino's backdown, in reducing the petroleum price rises, was for them the last straw.

Cory Aquino's regime resembles the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy in France in 1815, with the old land-owning oligarchy recapturing their power,

Honasan after being implicated in his then-chief Enrile's plot last November. Since the end of the truce with the guerrillas in February, Aquino has "unsheathed the sword of war" against the NPA, in particular blessing the CIA-backed anti-communist "vigilantes" — death squads — like the *Alsa Masa* in Davao, or crazed cultists like the *Tadtads*, who chop off their victims' heads and drink their blood. But they're still losing.



**Workers under Aquino's guns: Purefoods strikers (above) courageously defended their picket against murderous troop attack in August.**

and wealth, from the *nouveauriche* bourgeois cronies of Marcos. Aquino's "democracy" means the landowners keep their land, IMF austerity is enforced to pay Marcos' debt, and the US imperialists keep their strategic bases which are aimed at the Soviet Union and Vietnam. Coup plots by reactionary officers are "punished" with 30 pushups, or a posting to the provinces, as was

Both Washington and its junior partner in Canberra hastily condemned the coup. But they are increasingly worried that Aquino cannot stem the growth of the NPA and hence the threat to their war bases. The government says it is investigating whether the CIA was behind Gringo's coup, which cannot be discounted even though Aquino is the US' main political asset. As the CIA has taken a greater role in the war against the NPA, the Philippines has become another battlefield of the "Reagan doctrine" of global counter-revolution. They call it "low intensity conflict" now but it's all been tried in Vietnam and El Salvador — the sinister death squads, strategic hamletting, disinformation, US special forces and spy planes — everything short of US ground troops to bolster the local client army. The sight of this army tearing itself apart in the streets of Manila, reducing its own headquarters to a blazing ruin, has parallels with Saigon circa 1965. Australian Foreign Minister Hayden's repeated "warnings" that Australian troops may be called on to defend the US bases, is now a step closer to



**Mendiola Bridge, 13 August: Aquino's troops, water cannon confront KMU demonstration against army murder of Purefoods striker.**

reality. "Communists the real victors of Manila coup," said the *Sydney Morning Herald* (1 September) and the NPA has gone on the offensive to exploit the disarray of the military, killing 21 soldiers on 3 September in its biggest single success of the insurgency.

### Eyewitness Report

The situation in the Philippines is explosive. The bombing and hamletting of villages continues unabated since the collapse of the ceasefire in January, but still fails to stem the growth of the NPA which is now reported to be over 25,000 strong. Recently they have made a number of daring strikes close to Metro Manila and their urban "sparrow units" now operate in the city. While we were there the CPP pulled off a brazen demonstration at the funeral of a "sparrow" killed by cops, where the Internationale was sung and the hammer and sickle flew in the streets of Manila. At the same time Cebu City has been hit by major strikes, and in one day the NPA struck right in the heart of the city four times. The truce with the Muslim secessionist guerrillas is about to collapse. Even the truce with Catholic priest Conrado Balweg's Cordilera Peoples Liberation Army guerrillas, a regional split from the NPA, looks shaky.

In the name of "People Power" Aquino has sanctioned the unleashing of "vigilante" death squads whose terror has claimed scores of lives, especially in the southern island of Mindanao. While we were in Manila Aquino's Local Government Secretary, Jaime Ferrer, a key figure behind the death squads, was blown away in a daring attack. While even much of the bourgeois press speculated this was quite possibly the work of some disgruntled local caudillo, the AFP (armed forces) predictably pointed the finger at the NPA. In any case this was the pretext to set up ongoing road checks and widespread searches throughout Metro Manila. Following this Defence Secretary Ito revealed plans to implement "limited" martial law "to restore order."

The military continues to be a cauldron of intrigue. An infamous "poison letter" attacking the government had been widely circulating in the military recently, and elements in the AFP are openly disgruntled with what they perceive as Aquino's softness in cracking down on the left. While Camp Crame was put on alert for yet another reported coup attempt, one bourgeois paper, referring to the increasing repression, observed that Aquino has already carried out a "coup in slow motion."

The economy is visibly crumbling under the combined weight of political instability, corruption and the foreign debt. The working

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## Anti-Tamil Lankan Regime Bows to Rajiv

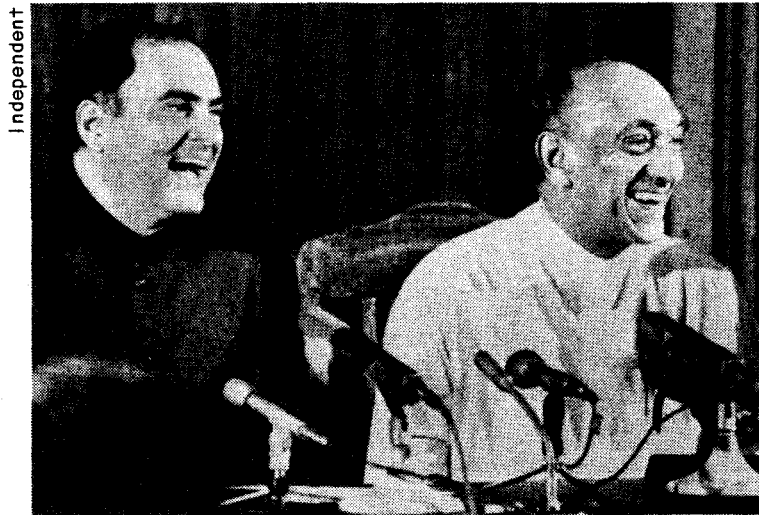
# Sri Lanka: India Takes Charge

LONDON, August 4 — On Wednesday, July 29 Indian prime minister Rajiv Gandhi and president JR Jayewardene of Sri Lanka (Ceylon) signed an agreement "to establish peace and normality in Sri Lanka." The next day the agreement's provision that an Indian peacekeeping force "may be invited" was translated into reality as thousands of Indian troops began disembarking in the Tamil-populated Jaffna Peninsula. At the same time, Indian aircraft began transporting Sri Lankan army units out of Jaffna to quell rioting by Sinhalese opponents of the treaty in the South.

What is posed is nothing less than overt Indian overlordship of the island. The presence of Indian troops in the north, removing the Lankan armed forces from the area, seals the de facto partition between north and south established by the anti-Tamil pogroms of July 1983, which aimed at destroying the Tamil business layers in the south and forced hundreds of thousands of terrified Tamils to flee to Jaffna (and to India). The new pact, while a long way from granting the Tamil state of "Eelam" which the separatist rebels have been fighting for, establishes a federated administrative unit combining the Northern and Eastern provinces. For the Sinhalese chauvinists, this link-up between the north and east is a "sellout" to "Tamil terrorism," and powerful forces within and outside the government are threatening to blow the whole thing sky high.

The Colombo regime is deeply divided over the pact. Prime Minister Premadasa, whose base is among the Sinhalese urban and rural poor, and the more patrician "national security" minister Athulathmudali, who orchestrated the anti-Tamil military campaign in the north, both dramatically boycotted the ceremonies with Gandhi. These sections of the ruling United National Party (UNP) could serve as a lightning rod to unite ultra-racist forces including the ex-New Left Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), the Buddhist clergy and the bourgeois Opposition SLFP (Sri Lanka Freedom Party) in a bid for power.

A big question is to what extent the Lankan government can count on the armed forces, especially the embittered veterans of the anti-Tamil slaughter. As Gandhi was leaving Lanka one sailor from the naval guard of honour clubbed him with his rifle butt. (Gandhi ought to be thankful that there are no Sikhs in the Sri Lankan navy.) Having made the deal with India, the regime's last hope of survival may now be the looming presence of the Indian army and navy. There have been at least two military coup attempts since independence and the current situation appears ripe for another. The Philadelphia Inquirer (2 August) wrote of an attempted coup reported in the New Delhi Statesman:



"The Statesman said the dissident government ministers abandoned the planned coup against Jayewardene when India dispatched troops to the Jaffna Peninsula and ships to the port of Colombo."

Finance Minister Ronnie de Mel, a staunch backer of the pact, called for the removal of Athulathmudali but remarked that the cabinet is united on the main issue of the accord especially now that it is a fait accompli. Moreover an evidently well-informed article in India Abroad (7 August) states that SLFP leader Mrs Bandaranaike, who has publicly denounced the agreement, has privately assured the Indian government "she will honor the accord if she returns to power.... The Indian High Commission sought to keep Bandaranaike posted on the developments at every stage of the negotiations."

In preparation for Gandhi's arrival in Colombo to sign the agreement, a curfew had been slapped on the whole island and police were given orders to shoot any violators on sight. In the two preceding days police killed at least 38 people during anti-government protests led by Buddhist monks and Sinhalese communalists. This agreement between capitalist rulers is intended to end the bloody conflict between the Sinhala-chauvinist Jayewardene regime and the oppressed Tamil minority but it will only work on the basis of continuing bloodshed and suffering.

### INDIAN OVERLORDSHIP

Since independence from Britain in 1948, Sinhalese politics has seen the bourgeois parties vie with each other in communalist hysteria directed against the Tamils and also other minorities like the mixed-race Burghers. The July 1983 anti-Tamil pogroms, instigated and orchestrated from within Jayewardene's UNP, were a watershed, marking the de facto partition of the island. Since then the government has escalated a bloody war of suppression against the Tamil population of the north and east, associated with increasing communal atrocities on both sides.

In late May the Sri Lankan army undertook a brutal offensive

Gandhi (above left) and Jayewardene announce accord in Colombo, July 29. Indian troops in Jaffna Peninsula, July 31.



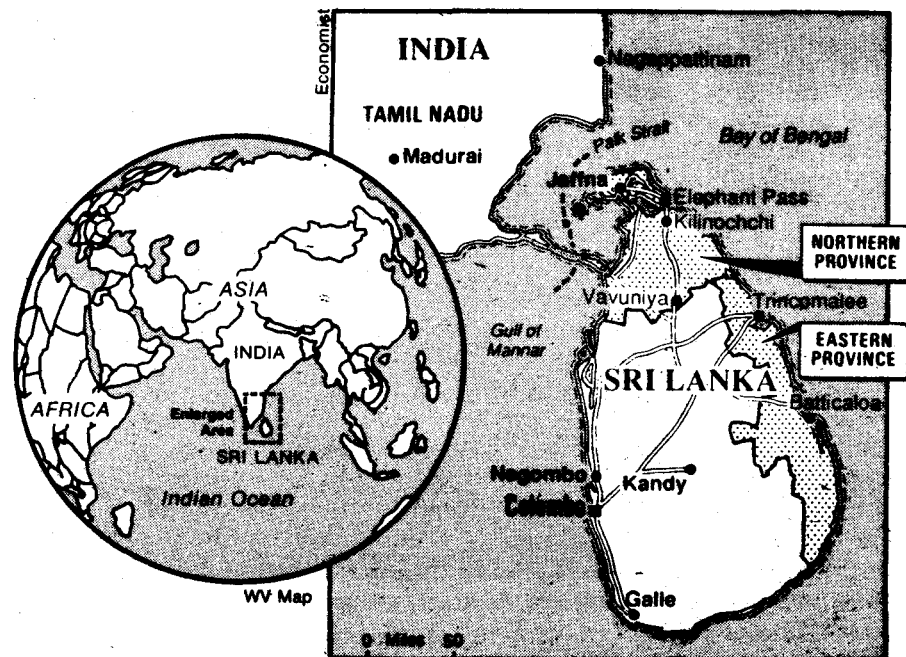
Mydans/NY Times

in the Jaffna Peninsula which had effectively been under the control of the main Tamil guerrilla group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). This offensive was decisively stymied when the Indian air force flew in relief supplies to besieged Jaffna. As we wrote at the time: "With its act, the Indian government asserted suzerainty, posing possible annexation of northern Sri Lanka. New Delhi is determined that henceforth the bloody Sinhala-chauvinist regime of president J.R. Jayewardene will heed India's dictates regarding the Tamil areas or face more decisive military measures" ("Indian Jets Over Jaffna," WV No 430, 12 June).

The presence of Indian ships and planes bringing relief supplies concretised the Indian threat against any further Sri Lankan offensive operations in the north. Jayewardene says that the agreement was all due to "the stars and planets," but it is more the case that he at least appears to have realised the geo-political realities of the region. India, with its 700 million people, including 50 million Tamils in the south, would not forever acquiesce to the con-

tinued mass slaughter of Lanka's Tamils, which has already claimed an officially estimated 6,000 lives.

The New York Times (31 July) reported that the influential Indian high commissioner in Colombo, Jyotindra Nath Dixit, said on July 30 that "the peacekeeping contingent, which brought its own equipment and transport, would answer only to him and to the Indian Government, independent of the Sri Lankan military." The next day, as UNP politicians cringed at the clear acknowledgment of Sri Lanka's status as an Indian protectorate, Dixit downplayed the controversy surrounding his statement and said the Indian troops were "at the disposal" of Jayewardene. But the relationship of forces between the island and its giant neighbour is clear. Now Palali air base, formerly the hub of the Sri Lankan military operation in the north, is an Indian air base, with the Sri Lankan armed forces a diminishing presence. The original Indian force of 3,000 men in the north has already been doubled and their field of operations extended into the Eastern Province, occupying Trin-



comalee harbour. And two Indian frigates loom off Colombo.

## SETBACK TO IMPERIALIST APPETITES

India, a diplomatic ally of the Soviet Union, fears a US-brokered encirclement including Pakistan, China and Sri Lanka. Part of the current arrangement, wrapped in diplomatic niceties, is that Sri Lanka's advisers — Israeli, British SAS mercenary and especially Pakistani — will have to go. As well Sri Lanka has pledged to reconsider the installation of the powerful Voice of America transmitter at Chilaw intended to beam counterrevolutionary propaganda to the Indian subcontinent and Soviet Central Asia.

But the crucial question is the strategic harbour of Trincomalee, which the US imperialists have had high hopes of getting their hands on under the auspices of the rightist, pro-US Jayewardene. India has forced Sri Lanka to agree not to let any foreign power use the port for military purposes "prejudicial to India's interests." An Indian presence is underlined by an agreement to jointly restore Trinco's oil storage facilities. Earlier the United States tried to get a foothold by volunteering to undertake exactly the same project. Another provision entrusts India with providing all future training facilities and military supplies for the Lankan armed forces. These developments are to some extent a setback for the imperialist designs on Trincomalee

Reuters



**Outburst of Sinhalese hostility: Lankan honour guard clubs Gandhi. He's lucky there are no Sikhs in the Lankan navy.**

as part of the Americans' war plans against the Soviet Union. While the US has said it supports the pact and has offered military assistance to Jayewardene, the terms can hardly be to America's liking.

As we go to press, the situation is still unfolding and many interesting questions remain unanswered. Among them: How did Rajiv Gandhi get J R to go along? And how was the Indian occupation kept secret until the ships and troops were already in place? India could have annexed Ceylon at any time, but the normal expectation would have been that the US would go to war rather than see Lanka go this route. But somehow, Gandhi has pulled off a real diplomatic coup and has slithered past the Americans to assert India's interests while the attentions of US imperialism were overcommitted elsewhere. Champagne must be flowing in Delhi, and in Moscow too.

**Melbourne, February 21: Spartacists join with Tamil demonstrators protesting visit by Lankan minister Athulathmudali, demand Lanka army out of Tamil areas.**



At the same time we have repeatedly warned that the Tamils' illusions in the Indian bourgeoisie are deadly dangerous. It is clear that wide sections of the Tamil community welcome the arrival of Indian troops as ending the bloody onslaught of the Lankan armed forces.

The bourgeois parliamentarian TULF has always centred its hopes on Indian intervention and they will try to use the Indian presence to reassert leadership of the Tamil population. TULF leader Amirthalingam has in the past explicitly identified with the Bangladeshi leader, Sheik Mujibur Rahman, who rode to power on the back of the Indian invasion of

the Tigers issued a statement that "We are satisfied that Mr Gandhi understands our fears and is fully sympathetic to our Tamil aspirations." And by August 3, reportedly in exchange for the promise of a top position in the newly created Tamil province, Prabhakaran had fallen into line and returned to his men in Jaffna to promote the accord and urge the surrender of weapons. British television reported that Prabhakaran, addressing a rally of 100,000 people in Jaffna today, did indeed tell his "boys" to turn over their arms. He still cherishes the dream of an independent Eelam, he said, but "the war is over."

## THE TIGERS' DILEMMA

In Jaffna the Tiger militants had adamantly refused to turn in their arms until the return of their leader. A crowd surrounded and rocked the jeep of the commander of the Indian forces Maj. Gen. Harkirat Singh in a village near Jaffna when he met with Tamil leaders there on July 31. If the Tigers and other groups do not hand in their arms, Singh said, "my charter is, yes, to go and look for them" (*New York Times*, 1 August). And to underline the point, big Indian air force Soviet-made jets have been landing armoured personnel carriers and tanks equipped with anti-mine flails at Palali. It was agreed that a general amnesty will be granted to all prisoners held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and other "emergency" laws. However, joint patrols were immediately instituted in the Palk Strait to interdict Tamil guerrilla supply lines and India has promised to crack down on the militants' bases in south India.

The Indian army is ready to do to the Tigers what it did (with the assistance of the Pakistani army) to the Mukti Bahini in Bangladesh — wipe them out. One reporter drily commented that at Palali base it is difficult to tell the Sri Lankan and Indian officers apart since "Their British-style uniforms are almost identical" (*London Guardian*, 1 August). If the Tamil Tigers refuse to come to terms, they are likely to find the Indian army a far more formidable proposition than the Sri Lankan forces.

But it is not just the Tigers' blood that will run. The Eastern Province is heavily interpenetrated, more or less evenly among

Tamils, Sinhalese and Muslims. A referendum is proposed to be held later next year on whether the Eastern Province should remain linked to the Tamil Northern Province. This arrangement is a recipe for massive communal bloodletting and forced population transfers as the different communities fight to control the province. And, while the agreement will repatriate 130,000 Tamil refugees who have fled to India, some sources report that 100,000 Tamils from the plantation areas of the central highlands will be sent to India. These low-caste, horribly exploited "stateless" workers of the tea plantations, who have historically produced most of the wealth of the island have always been ignored by both the reformist, Sinhala-chauvinist "left" and the petty-bourgeois nationalists of the Tamil liberation groups. In any case, the Sinhalese communalists, impotent before the power of India, are likely to turn their frenzy against the plantation workers and against Tamils in Colombo and the south.

The Sinhalese communalist forces which the UNP government has fomented for so long are enraged at the settlement, seeking to tap racist xenophobia and Sinhalese fears of being engulfed by the greater masses of Tamil and other Indian Hindus across the Palk Strait. Buddhist monks have been in the forefront of the protests. On July 29, with central Colombo deserted, police and troops battled enraged Sinhalese communalist mobs in the suburbs. In Ratnapura, one government MP has been assassinated. The *Washington Post* (3 August) reported:

"Hundreds of buses, government vehicles and buildings have been burned in mob violence that has left parts of Colombo looking like battle zones. The government's hold in the southern part of the country seems tenuous."

With the arrival of the Indian troops and the communalist frenzy in the south, the reactionary logic of nationalism/communalism has taken its predictable course. The whole Indian sub-continent is a seething prison house of its various nations, exploited classes, oppressed castes, minority religions. It is a bitter irony that many of the Indian troops in Lanka are Sikhs, a minority community which faces harsh repression from the Indian government. Gandhi badly needs a foreign policy "triumph" to divert attention from his troubles at home: corruption scandals, recent electoral setbacks and the multifaceted horror of life in capitalist India.

A *New York Times* report from Jaffna quoted a Tamil School principal who welcomed the arrival of Indian troops: "Many of the Indian soldiers who have arrived here are from southern India, where Tamil is spoken, and Mr Balasingam said they might have better relations with residents" than the Lankan army (*New York Times*, 1 August). The Sinhalese are reaping the bitter fruit of "Sinhala Only," the chauvinist campaign spearheaded in the mid-1950s by the SLFP (and criminally tailed by the class-collaborationist "left" which claimed to find in the SLFP a "progressive" or "lesser evil" section of the ruling class).

Continued on page nine

# Brewarrina Under Apartheid Martial Law

## Report from Brewarrina

18 AUGUST: Brewarrina is under an undeclared state of martial law. There's 40 to 50 cops all over town, which is one cop for every 40 people, but it feels more like one in four, because everyone's staying indoors. Today we saw a police range rover come in loaded with stretchers. The cops are preparing for something. Everyone thinks that more cops were moved into town as well today. As we drove in several families were leaving town, but most, the men especially, are staying on guard. The big cop presence is in response to the demonstrations over Lloyd Boney's death and the Saturday night fight. No-one believes it was suicide. They think he was dead before he even got to jail. Boney's brothers went into the jail to prove it was impossible to hang yourself from those bars. The two cops who arrested Lloyd were sent out of town early the next morning and haven't been seen since.

Before the funeral on Saturday there was a march which ended with five minutes silence outside the cop station. After the funeral, during the wake in the park, a shot was fired. There were two plain-clothes cops, or maybe vigilantes, standing on a corner holding rifles with telescopic sights. There were Aboriginal cops, liaison officers, who were acting as spies and who also joined in busting blacks' heads alongside the regular cops in the fight. The fight against the cops was a big victory. We heard from people that it was a joy to see the cops with their crumpled riot shields climbing into their smashed-up paddy-wagon in retreat. There were other cops hiding behind lamp posts and pillar boxes. The blacks withdrew in a disciplined formation to their camps. Several were badly injured, one had a broken leg, others broken ribs.

On Sunday, the Tactical Response Group was moved into town. On Monday the cops began laying charges. The way they did this was, they walked across the street from the police station to the Aboriginal Legal Service (ALS) which is the Aboriginal headquarters, and demanded that they hand over the people who were being charged. One of these is Arthur Murray, whose son was killed by the cops in 1981 in Wee Waa. He was brutally beaten with a baton on Saturday night and still has scars on his back. On Monday he was charged with conspiracy to murder. Albert "Sonny" Bates has also been charged with conspiracy

to murder. He and Arthur Murray have had to report to the cops twice a day, and then are banned from town between sunrise and sunset. Arthur Murray's young daughter, Anna has been charged with assault. Glen Boney, Lloyd's brother-in-law, has also been charged. The cops are out to take revenge for their beating on Saturday night, but more import-



Arthur and Priscilla Boney at funeral of their son Lloyd. First their son is killed in cop custody and then their family is subjected to a campaign of provocation and terror.

antly to victimise all those who want to oppose the killing of Lloyd Boney.

Meanwhile the mass cop presence in town is terrorising blacks. Children are being kept out of school. The Boney family who command great respect in the town sent their women and children away. The mother, Priscilla, is staying with the Boney boys at the head of one camp. Over the last couple of nights the cops have renewed their old practice of spotlighting — sitting some distance from the camps training spotlights through the houses, focusing on the Boney house. For Priscilla Boney, who is convinced her son did not kill himself, it is terror on top of tragedy. Around January this year, due to increased cop harassment in the camps, the blacks established that the cops would not enter and so far they haven't. Groups of white vigilantes, the sons of local, prominent whites, calling themselves the Ninja, have recently gone into camps brandishing swords. They have been dealt with. The town is evenly balanced racially, black and white kids hang around the town together. But many of the blacks live in camps just out of town. Mark Olsen, the coroner and local National Party flag bearer is also the Clerk of Petty Sessions, out of which

office he runs the local town newspaper. He's a kind of American South small town Dixiecrat mayor.

Last week's Brewarrina demonstration demanded a Royal Commission of Inquiry. One person noted that it was as if Hawke had heard the demands all the way from Brewarrina Park as two hours later he announced that the

pushed to the limit by the massive cop presence in the town and that she worries that they won't take it much longer.

19 AUGUST: Today was court day and pension day, so more blacks ventured into town. There are still many cops, particularly around the court house. On our side of the street, outside the legal service, small groups of blacks are gathering. The cops call across the street for the men charged to enter court. As Arthur Murray and Sonny Bates are called they straighten their bruised backs and march proudly across the street. We joined them in the small court room, crowded with cops and reporters. The sergeant appearing for the prosecution wants the bail conditions revised. We can hardly believe it when the judge bans Arthur and Anna Murray and Sonny Bates from setting foot in Brewarrina until their trial on 28 September. These bastards think they are running South Africa. The ALS solicitors don't even question their right to ban people from town, it is such a common occurrence. As we leave court, Leila Murray exclaims, "Next they'll be giving us passes." Later talking with a group of blacks about the outrageousness of the conspiracy to murder charge, one says, "It's them who are murdering us."

Back across the street the ALS is preparing for the second round of charges, making sure all eleven charged are present. At least one of this group was not even in Brewarrina on Saturday night. It seems the cops have gone through their files and picked out those with records, especially those who have run up against the cops before. All eleven are charged with riotous assembly. We show around copies of *Australasian Spartacist*, with our articles on Goondiwindi and in defence of the Toomelah 21, "Hawke's Racist Regime Kills Blacks", and our demonstration calling to avenge the murder of

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Apartheid Australia — blacks in Palm Island lock-up. Australian blacks, just one percent of population, make up ten percent of prison population.

AUSTRALASIAN SPARTACIST

## State Terror...

Continued from page one

class which is the gravedigger of capitalism.

Mass labour/black/minority mobilisations to stop racist terror are urgently needed all around the country. Blacks from Brisbane to Adelaide have called small protest demonstrations. In Sydney on 28 August the Spartacist League joined blacks in a picket on the anniversary of Robert Walker's death. But it is the union movement which has the power to stamp out these racist attacks, and deliver a message to Hawke's regime that it will not tolerate this terror. The miners, historically militant, are uniquely placed to stand shoulder to shoulder with the blacks in country regions. If the working class is to defend itself, it must also take action in defence of all the oppressed, from labour/black defence actions through to class struggle to bring down this rotten, vindictive regime.

The awesome scale of the death toll of young blacks in cop custody has become an embarrassment for Hawke at home and abroad. From the London-based Anti-Slavery Society to the United Nations, from France to South Africa, attention is increasingly being focused on Australian Apartheid. Fearing that blacks will create an international scandal during next year's racist Bicentennial celebrations, Hawke announced that he would offer some vague "compact" with the Aboriginal people in an effort to buy their silence. Bourgeois press reports drip with hypocrisy about the horrendous conditions in which Aboriginals are forced to live, and simultaneously bury the truth about "deaths in custody." But when Brewarrina blacks twice demonstrated, protesting "murder," the government's hand was forced. Hawke ordered a Royal Commission, to be run by Justice Muirhead (who sent Lindy Chamberlain to jail on trumped-up murder charges in 1982), designed to propagate the lie that blacks commit suicide in jails. The racist rationalisation that blacks can't handle "white man's" jails is truly disgusting — in fact blacks occupy jail cells in ten times the proportion of whites. When the loyal "left" toadies of the ALP government, from the Socialist Workers Party to the Communist Party, acknowledge the deaths of blacks in custody, they all give support to this state cover-up. Amnestying Australian Apartheid, they echo the Big Lies about "suicide" and "riots" such as when blacks like the Toomelah 21 defend themselves against racist terror. The Socialist Labour League's *Workers News*, have their own peculiar Laborite bent, calling for a union-run inquiry!

From Hawke and his "left-hand" man, Aboriginal Affairs minister Gerry Hand, to NSW Minister of Police Paciullo to the Western Australian Police Union, the state intends its Royal Commission to protect its cops. In Brewarrina the announcement of a Royal Commission was immediately followed by an occupying army of cops bringing terror on the black population. The Spartacist League opposes the Royal Commission, warning that

## Stop the Legal Lynching of the Murrays!

Arthur Murray's son Eddie, 21, was killed by cops in Wee Waa, NSW, on 12 June 1981. One hour after being picked up by cops, he was found

"hanged" in his cell, with his feet touching the floor. The coroner found that Eddie Murray died by hanging at the hand of person or persons un-



Arthur Murray (right) and family outside Brewarrina court house 19 August 1987, with Anna (left).

reliance on the state is deadly dangerous. We demand: Jail the killer cops and throw away the keys!

The Committee to Defend Black Rights, seeing no alternative to appealing to the Hawke government, has long fought for a Royal Commission. However many blacks are sceptical, desperately hoping for some justice, but all too aware of the contradiction of trusting the very forces which are perpetrating these atrocities. Mrs Alice Dixon, who believes her son, Kingsley, was beaten to death by cops in Adelaide jail on 9 July, stated, "If they want a joint federal-state royal commission they can just forget about my son's death. I'd rather let him rest in peace as they're just blocking off justice" (*Australian*, 13 August). In Western Australia (WA), Ken Colbung, chairman of the Black Action Group, called on families of those who had died in police custody not to co-operate with the Royal Commission: "They think they can just give us something to keep us quiet during the Bicentennial celebrations. We've been double-crossed right from the outset!" (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 August). Colbung points to the Royal Commissions into the 1927 shootings of blacks at Forrest Creek and the Skull Creek massacre in the mid-70s, where white racists attacked blacks: the evidence was never published!

The acquittal by an all-white jury in 1983, and subsequent promotions, of the cops who murdered John Pat in WA was a green light for racist terror. Since then there has been a long list of young black men getting the John Pat treatment. When Fremantle, WA, prison warders took Robert Walker from his cell at 4am on 28 August 1984, his screams of "They're going to kill me! Murder! Murder!" woke the jail. 41 cell inmates witnessed five screws beat Walker for 20 minutes. Never questioning the screws, coroner David McCann pronounced "death by misadventure." On 4 October 1984 in WA, Charlie Michael was killed by four screws after a 40 minute struggle. His handcuffed hands were tied to his feet. Again David McCann protected the screws and called it "death by heart attack." When 18-year-old

in jail on July 9, in Cherbourg, Queensland, his mother, Harriet Simpson refused to believe it was suicide: "There is no way my son would have killed himself" (*Sunday Mail*, 19 July). The death of Lloyd Boney was called "suicide," yet blacks in Brewarrina believe he was killed by cops. The recent inquiry in Queensland, where eight blacks have died in cop custody this year, was carried out with only one coroner's report! The verdict from Uncle Tom Eric Law was to promote the lies that blacks are driven to suicide by depression and alcohol. There is a sinister cover-up of this systematic state execution campaign which goes right to the top of Hawke's White Australia.

Alongside the campaign of executions goes legal lynching of anyone posing the slightest resistance to Hawke's apartheid terror. Witchhunting "conspiracy to murder" charges were laid against Albert "Sonny" Bates and Arthur Murray in Brewarrina, and 15



Charlie Michael, 9 October 1984, handcuffed hands tied to his feet, tortured and beaten to death by WA screws. Jail the killer screws!

others got charges varying from assault to riotous assembly, because they dared to protest the killing of Lloyd Boney. There is murder alright, and conspiracy to cover it up, but it is the state which is doing it. Those who take a stand against racist attacks, such as the Toomelah 21, who did a fine job of taking out white racists in Goondiwindi back in January, are victimised with massive court charges. Drop the charges against the Toomelah 21 and the Brewarrina 17! The racist

known. The Murray family, who are prominent in the Committee to Defend Black Rights, have always fought to prove that he did not commit suicide. Now the state is giving the Murrays a legal lynching. Having murdered the son, the state is now charging the father with "conspiracy to murder." Arthur Murray's daughter, Anna, who had her shirt torn off and was beaten by cops in Brewarrina on 15 August, has been charged with assaulting a cop. Outrageously, the Murray family has been banned South Africa-style from Brewarrina. Drop the charges against Arthur and Anna Murray! Stop the victimisation of the Murray family!

state terror campaign is fomenting the formation of armed white vigilante squads. Against the liberals and leftists who support the current State government plans to introduce tighter gun control laws, we say this will leave the guns in the hands of the criminals, the racists and the cops. We Marxists advocate the democratic right of citizens to bear arms and defend the right of the oppressed to armed self defence.

The alliance between the union leadership and the Hawke government and the bosses is deadly to the union movement and to all minorities. The struggle to build labour/black/minority mobilisations to stop racist terror means a struggle to break the working class from its ALP misleadership, the labour lieutenants of White Australia capitalism. The union movement has done little to defend the rights of the oppressed Aboriginal minority. A political fight is necessary to win the van-

## South Africa: Forge a Bolshevik Party!

# Black Miners Strike Showed Power of Labour

They work deep underground in black pits where the temperature reaches 110 degrees. Every year hundreds are killed and thousands are maimed. They live in male-only, prison-like barracks forcibly separated from their wives and children eleven months of the year. The gold they dig out of the ground supports the most hideously racist state on earth.

But for almost three weeks the gold stopped flowing from the Witwatersrand to the banks of Wall Street, London and Frankfurt. The apartheid state was hit with the biggest, costliest strike in South African history as over 300,000 black gold and coal miners walked out. Every day the Randlords lost some US\$8 million. This was not just a strike, it was a war. A raw, savage class war in the racist hell of South Africa.

In the aftermath of this hard fought strike, the bloodsucking apartheid capitalists were in such a hurry to start up gold production that they plunged 89 miners into a fiery death as an explosion rocked the No 10 shaft at St Helena, about 160 miles south of Johannesburg. The mine is owned by the General Mining Corp (Gencor) who also own the Kinross mine where last September 177 black miners died in the world's worst gold mining disaster.

The strike ended in a standoff. The union accepted the same terms it had rejected before the strike began including a 15-to-23 percent wage increase (the union had demanded 30 percent). While there is no guarantee that the 44,000 union militants fired during the course of the strike would be reinstated, the overwhelming majority probably will be. Most importantly, the miners union was not broken, its forces remain intact.

Although the immediate demands of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) did not go beyond wages, benefits and conditions, this great labor struggle has had an enormous political impact. As the *Philadelphia Inquirer* (21 August) observed:

"The strike is more than a wage dispute. It is a direct challenge to a government that has snuffed out all other forms of black protest.

"By disrupting a system in which black laborers help produce enormous wealth for South Africa at minuscule wages, the miners are at the forefront of the anti-apartheid struggle."

Gold in South Africa is mined and processed from very low-grade ore. The billions in profits extracted by the mine magnates every year represent the brutal superexploitation of black labor subjected to a vicious form of indentured servitude. But the recent strike, in its massive size, duration and discipline demonstrated the growing power and sophistication of the miners union. The last black miners strike in South Africa on this scale — in 1946 — was crushed after four days and the union was destroyed. Before the rise of organized black labor

Campbell/Sygma



Strategically placed gold miners, the key value producers for apartheid capitalism.

in the 1970s, whites in the mining industry earned 11 times the wages of black workers. Now that ratio has been reduced to five-to-one, and most whites are foremen or supervisors. Moreover, on the second day of the strike the NUM won the elimination of the "reserve" clause which previously barred blacks from getting blasting certificates, the ticket to higher-paying jobs in the industry.

The black miners are recruited from the deeply impoverished bantustans and black client states bordering South Africa. They are forced to live hundreds of miles from their families 11 months a year in prison-like male-only compounds. But even the mine magnates have made noises about abolishing the "migrant" labor system, a demand raised by the NUM. The mine barons tried to buy off the growing militancy of the black miners with significant pay raises on a base wage of around US\$170 per month. Even this lousy wage is far above what most American multinationals pay in South Africa and Asia, and represents a standard of living incompatible with the kind of police-state regimentation black miners and their families back on the bantustans are subjected to. Black miners produce the wealth of South Africa and they are becoming increasingly conscious of the disparity between the vicious exploitation they endure and their real social power.

So the miners waged a hard strike for the wealth that is theirs. The economic power and combativity of the miners will surely inspire the oppressed black African, coloured (mixed-race) and Indian toilers of South Africa. But the mine struggle underscores the urgent need for a communist political leadership to lead the anti-apartheid struggle for workers power.

### SHOWDOWN ON THE WITWATERSRAND

The racist apartheid regime has tried through naked terror to crush the three-year-old nationwide revolt against apartheid rule.

Anti-apartheid organizations have been banned and their activists in the thousands have been jailed under "Emergency Regulations" or murdered by right-wing death squads. But in defiance of this savage police state, black unions have only grown stronger and more militant, as demonstrated by the phenomenal growth of the NUM. And the three-week-long strike showed the power of proletarian class solidarity to transcend in struggle historic tribal antagonisms and the social backwardness of the less urbanized "migrant" workers; these divisions have been exploited for decades by the mine magnates to keep these toilers enslaved.

The six-million-strong black proletariat of South Africa, with black miners at its core, can smash apartheid and be the powerhouse for the liberation of all southern Africa. The mine strike posed the question of power: which class will rule South Africa? When Anglo American began mass firing of the mine strikers, the giant COSATU federation intimated that plans for a general strike were under way. But the NUM leadership drew back, unprepared to lead the revolutionary struggle which was posed. The insurgent black labor movement in South Africa desperately needs a multiracial Bolshevik party, which must be, as Lenin said, the tribune of the people, uniting the townships, the migrant workers, the women, the Indian

and colored masses, the anti-apartheid whites in a struggle for workers revolution to topple the racist slavemasters.

The union leadership urged miners to go home for the duration, signaling the determination to wage a long strike if necessary. At the same time, having union militants leave the mine-fields tended to weaken the strike in the face of the bosses' massive scabberding by security guards and police. Nine strikers were killed and hundreds wounded, and according to union sources over 400 have been arrested. But black miners have not been passive victims of apartheid terror. They fought back with stones, knives and gasoline bombs.

The mine bosses' main weapon in trying to break the strike was the wholesale firings of union members — over 44,000 dismissed. When the union rejected the Randlords' take-it-or-leave-it offer last week, Anglo American spokesman Neville Huxham warned, "we will now concentrate all our efforts to returning our mines to full production" (*New York Times*, 27 August). But the black miners were not cowed. They answered Huxham by sitting in more than a mile underground at Anglo American's Western Deep Levels, the deepest pit in the world.

Anglo American has been the main target of the strike and the most ruthless of the mining houses trying to break it. The company's chief negotiator, Bobby Godsell, threatened:

"There is a continuing romanticism in the minds of people inside and outside South Africa which thinks that the trade union movement is the short cut to revolution. They are wrong. "If the trade union movement devotes its resources to a head-on confrontation with the South African state through a national strike, the government will smash the trade union movement."

— *New York Times*, 25 August

Most of the strikers killed were killed by Anglo American security guards and most of those fired were fired by Anglo American. Even the moderate Ramaphosa leadership of the NUM accused Anglo American of seeking "to break the strike with the aid of the South African police."

This giant mining and manu-

Louise Gubb/JB Pictures



Cyril Ramaphosa, leader of National Union of Mineworkers.



facturing conglomerate constitutes the core of English-speaking capitalists in South Africa and is the key link to Wall Street and the City of London. The corporation is well named since half its owners are Americans and Englishmen. No less important than Anglo American's economic dominance has been its crucial political role in contemporary South Africa. Harry Oppenheimer, the corporation's founder, and its current head Gavin Relly have been viewed as the mainstays of the so-called "liberal" or "progressive" wing of the white ruling class. Thus the petty-bourgeois nationalist African National Congress (ANC) has long looked to Oppenheimer, Relly & Co as its hoped-for partner in dismantling apartheid and constructing a "democratic, nonracial" South Africa.

Relly and his political underlings meet with ANC spokesmen in various black African capitals and declare their desire for a "peaceful, negotiated solution" to South Africa's crisis. But Anglo American security guards terrorize black workers daily, and faced with any serious level of class

Gubb/JB Pictures



Black militants defiantly raise red flag of communism.

Into this explosive situation stepped the young black African lawyer Cyril Ramaphosa. In the mid '70s, as a student activist in Steve Biko's Black Consciousness Movement, he was held for 18 months in police detention. This was typical for young black intellectuals of his generation. However, in the late '70s Ramaphosa served on the board of directors of the Urban Foundation, a fund launched by the Oppenheimer empire to promote a black middle class.

When the Anglo American bosses decided to allow the growth of "responsible" unions with which it could bargain, Ramaphosa launched the National Union of Mineworkers in 1982. Doubtless Oppenheimer and Relly hoped and expected that the NUM under Ramaphosa would restrain the seething anger of the black miners. But the nostrum of class-collaborationist unionism could not be sold in the infernal pits and prison-like barracks. Black miners have never bought Anglo American's much touted "liberal" image. And this strike has exposed

Gavin Relly as just as vicious an enemy of the black oppressed as PW Botha.

**SMASH APARTHEID!  
FOR WORKERS REVOLUTION!**

Communism is a positive word among South Africa's black masses, symbolizing opposition to the hated system of apartheid capitalism. At funerals for the victims of police-state terror, defiant protesters carry red flags with the hammer and sickle. Sympathy for Communism is further reinforced by the war in Angola, where Soviet-backed Cuban troops are defending a black African state against the South African army.

Nonetheless South Africa's black proletariat can be politically tied to the Randlords through the medium of petty-bourgeois nationalism, principally the African National Congress. The ANC and its long-imprisoned leader, Nelson Mandela, possess great moral authority among the black African masses, including unionized workers.

For decades the ANC's strategy has been to pressure "progressive" white capitalists like Oppenheimer and Relly against the

Afrikaner nationalist regime. In the fall of 1985 Gavin Relly himself led a delegation of white businessmen which met with Tambo in Lusaka, Zambia. Significantly, only a month before this meeting the NUM reached a last-minute settlement with Anglo American which averted an expected nationwide gold strike. Doubtless Ramaphosa did not want to embarrass Relly on the eve of his "historic" meeting with the ANC. As a result, the NUM struck only one of the six major mining houses. Isolated, the 1985 gold strike was quickly crushed.

The miners strike and especially Anglo American's role in it expose not only the ANC's dangerous illusion in class collaboration but also its narrow nationalism. Over 40 percent of the miners on the Witwatersrand come from outside the borders of South Africa, from glorified bantustans like Lesotho or neocolonies like Mozambique. Yet

neither the ANC nor the remnants of the Black Consciousness Movement raise the elementary democratic demand of full citizenship rights for all workers in South Africa.

More fundamentally, the ANC in no way opposes neocolonial rule in black Africa. On the contrary, it looks toward the black regimes from Senegal to Zambia — savagely oppressive of their people and subservient to Wall Street and Washington — as its main source of diplomatic support. But neocolonialism need not be South Africa's future. 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 industrialized society which can, based on the revolutionary reorganization of society, provide a decent life for all its citizens.

For socialist revolution to become a reality in South Africa a racially integrated Leninist-Trotskyist party must be forged in irreconcilable struggle against all forms of nationalism and class collaboration, counterposing the program of permanent revolution, the emancipation and reconstruction of the oppressed nation under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The great miners strike has demonstrated anew the enormous economic power and heroic combativity of the black proletariat. But for that proletariat to conquer political power there must be a Bolshevik party at its head. There is no other way.

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## Sri Lanka...

Continued from page five

The Tamils' superiority in English, a legacy of British "divide and rule," had placed the majority Sinhalese at a disadvantage in the professions, universities, government bureaucracy, etc. Under the cover of "anti-imperialist" rhetoric, the Sinhalese dethroned English and got preferential access to masses of jobs, from humble clerks on up. The 1972 Constitution, which officially mandates the protection of the Buddhist religion, even changed the name of the country to a Sinhala word, complete with an honorific with religious connotations. The provision of the new Indo-Lankan agreement restoring Tamil and English as official languages alongside Sinhalese is an elementary democratic measure.

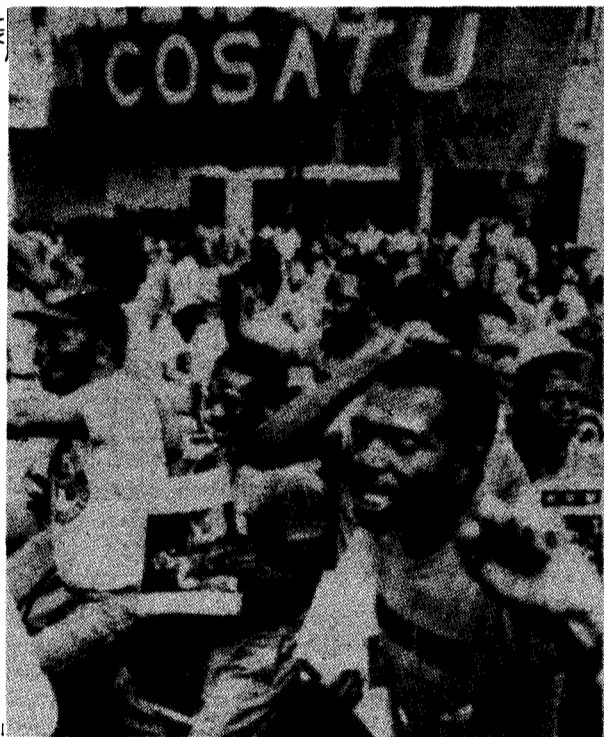
Severing their children's links with English through the Sinhala education system, the Sinhalese made themselves an enclave cut off from India and the rest of the world, and split the island's populations apart, for English is the lingua franca between national/religious communities throughout the Indian subcontinent. In the sequel, the Sinhalese troops who went north to combat the separatist insurgency had no shot at "winning the hearts and minds" of the Tamil civilians; they could be only an army of alien occupation.

Revolutionary Marxists, unlike nationalists and their "left" apologists, take no pleasure in the reversal of terms of oppression.

Ceylon has been "Ulsterised." Within the nationalist frame of reference, which confers on whole peoples a supposedly "reactionary" or "progressive" status, the Tamils, especially those in Jaffna, are now the favoured "reactionary people" and the racist Sinhalese the new oppressed, in roughly the unenviable position of Cypriot Greeks after the arrival of the Turkish army. "President Jayawardene is now being protected by the empire of beggars," one Sinhalese man remarked bitterly (Independent, 1 August).

The working masses of India and Ceylon need Bolshevik parties to lead the workers and peasant masses in the struggle to overthrow capitalism through socialist revolution. No confidence in the blood-soaked Indian rulers! Defeat US imperialism's sinister plans for Trincomalee! Down with the Prevention of Terrorism Act! Free all victims of JR's terror! For the federated workers republics of Eelam and Lanka, part of the socialist federation of South Asia!

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Black unionists cheer founding of COSATU, November 1985.

struggle, Relly & Co turn to the police and army — the core of the apartheid state. For the fundamental basis of the apartheid system is capitalist superexploitation of the black majority. There can be no liberation from apartheid slavery without the revolutionary expropriation of capitalist wealth.

### GOLD, ANGLO AMERICAN AND RAMAPHOSA

The main source of capitalist wealth in South Africa lies in the mines. Gold exports alone account for 60 percent of the country's foreign-exchange earnings. Coal, which was also struck, is also crucial for the South African economy as its main domestically produced energy source.

The more far-sighted Randlords, like Oppenheimer and Relly, realized that their total subjugation of the black miners could not last. In the late '70s Anglo American and the other mining houses were hit by a series of bloody wildcat strikes. Recognizing that black unionization of some sort was inevitable, Oppenheimer and Relly wanted to ensure that the leadership of such unions was moderate and reformist.

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# Gorbachev . . .

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largely eliminated, this will bring about unemployment in the Soviet Union. Just look at the effects of "market socialism" and self-managed enterprises in Yugoslavia, where the unemployment rate is 14 percent and prices have been doubling every year.

Gorbachev, who is an intelligent politician, knows he cannot simply call for the free play of market forces without inciting massive working-class resistance. So along with economic "restructuring" (perestroika) there is also a lot of talk about "democratization" — not the reality but the semblance of workers democracy. Here lies a fundamental contradiction. It has been proposed that workers are to elect their own enterprise managers. But what worker is going to vote for a manager who advocates a program of speedup, reintroducing piece rates, widening wage differences and laying off "redundant" workers? And if workers can elect their managers, they may demand to elect the higher-ups as well.

Thus, the Gorbachev regime is permitting and even encouraging dissent and criticism of the status quo while introducing economic policies detrimental to the workers' material interests and repugnant to their collectivist and socialist consciousness. That creates an explosive combination

concessions to imperialism for the sake of "peaceful coexistence."

Under the watchwords glasnost (openness) and perestroika (restructuring), the two-year-old Gorbachev regime has effected dramatic changes in the Soviet Union. From the White House basement to cafeterias in Moscow factories, people are asking: what does it all mean, where is Russia going?

Schematically, the current developments in the Soviet Union can be broken down into three major components, which Gorbachev and his supporters regard as integrally linked. One, there is a genuine liberalization of political and intellectual life marked by an outpouring of criticism and dissent within both the bureaucracy and intelligentsia; the relaxation of censorship and publication of long-suppressed works; the freeing of some political prisoners (there weren't many); renewed attacks on the historic crimes of Stalin; and a purge of the bureaucracy, including at the highest levels, for corruption and other violations of legality. Two, there is a strenuous effort to accelerate economic growth by increasing the rate of investment and by strengthening labor discipline through anti-alcoholism/anti-absenteeism campaigns as well as widening wage and income differentials. Three, Gorbachev has expressed a strong desire to improve relations with Western (and Japanese) imperialism, indicating



Turnley/Newsweek

**Soviet leader with rabid warmonger Reagan. Gorbachev's pipe dream: peace with imperialism.**

which can blow away the parasitic Kremlin bureaucracy and restore the Soviet Union as a bastion of workers democracy and vanguard of world socialist revolution.

(Subheads in the following document are by Workers Vanguard.)

## "THE RUSSIAN QUESTION AND GORBACHEV"

The paralysis of the Reagan regime parallels and to some degree interacts with the emergence of a new, highly competent and reform-minded leadership in the Soviet Union. In the media and American bourgeois political circles the contrast is made between the lazy, ineffectual and dull-witted Reagan and the energetic, able and highly intelligent Gorbachev. More substantively, significant sections of the American bourgeoisie and its allies believe Reagan incompetent to negotiate advantageously with Gorbachev, who appears decidedly more willing than his predecessors in the Kremlin to make major

a willingness to make greater concessions than his predecessors in the Kremlin, especially to secure arms control.

The Gorbachev regime is not an aberrant development in the Soviet Union. Rather it is a response to the mounting objective pressures upon the Soviet bureaucracy since the mid-1970s, centrally matching the massive military buildup of US imperialism, during a period of decelerating economic growth. Additionally, the Gorbachev regime reflects the recrudescence of a Soviet intelligentsia both overlapping but also to some degree alienated from the bureaucracy.

Gorbachev, like Andropov before him has sharply condemned the stultifying complacency and fatuous self-congratulation as well as the rampant corruption and nepotism of the last Brezhnev years. These attitudes in part reflected the genuine accomplishments of the first decade of the Brezhnev era. Between 1965 and 1975 the Soviet Union simultaneously achieved a rough strategic nuclear parity with the US, which was bogged down by the



Yevgeni Khaidel

**Red Army liberated Europe from nightmare of Nazi occupation. Soviet soldiers hoist red flag from Reichstag, Berlin, May Day 1945.**

Vietnam War, and increased the living standards of its citizens by around 50 percent. Additionally, the Kremlin was able to massively subsidize East Europe, Cuba and various Third World client states.

## BEHIND THE ECONOMIC SLOWDOWN

Beginning in the mid-1970s things began to go badly for the Soviet bureaucracy. US imperialism partly recovered from the effects of the Vietnam War and began a major military buildup aimed at restoring nuclear first-strike capability. At the same time, the Soviet Union was experiencing a sharp decline in economic growth. The period 1977-1982 marked the worst economic performance in the post-World War II history of the USSR.

Historically, the growth of Soviet industrial development has been what Western bourgeois economists call extensive growth, constructing new factories and increasing the labor force to match. During the 1970s, 80 percent of Soviet industrial investment went into new construction compared to only 50 percent in the US. By the early 1970s the Soviet Union (except for the Central Asian republics) began to experience a serious labor shortage. Drawing workers from the countryside into the industrial workforce only further weakened agriculture, the weak link of the economy.

For the past decade and a half,

switching to intensive economic growth, through retooling and modernizing the existing industrial plant, has been a standard theme in official Soviet economic pronouncements. However, this confronts a fundamental obstacle in the microeconomic effects of bureaucratic parasitism. Managers routinely hoard labor and waste raw materials, sacrifice quality to meet the quantitative plan targets, understate actual capacity and resist innovation and risk-taking. No less a debilitating effect of bureaucratic rule is the workers' slack attitude toward labor discipline, captured in the joke common throughout the Soviet Bloc: we pretend to work and they pretend to pay us.

At a time when resources were needed to modernize the aging Soviet industrial plant, the Kremlin leadership sharply cut back the rate of investment to match the rapid US military buildup under Carter and Reagan. The planned growth of investment fell from 7 percent a year in the early '70s to 2 percent a year in the first half of the 1980s. However, the Soviet Union clearly could not continue to maintain its military strength at the cost of economic stagnation.

From the standpoint of the Soviet bureaucracy, there are only three alternatives. One is to sharply cut back living standards to create an additional surplus for both investment and military spending. No element of the bureaucracy has to date advocated



TASS from Sovfoto

**Kamaz truck factory near Moscow: last December workers protested against cuts in their bonuses due to their managers' production incompetence.**

or apparently contemplated such a policy. Two is to reduce military spending. There appears to be a consensus within the Soviet leadership that a major reduction depends upon "arms control" agreements with the West. Hence, the Kremlin, especially under Gorbachev, makes this its primary aim in dealing with Washington and the other NATO capitals. The third alternative is to increase labor productivity by one means or another.

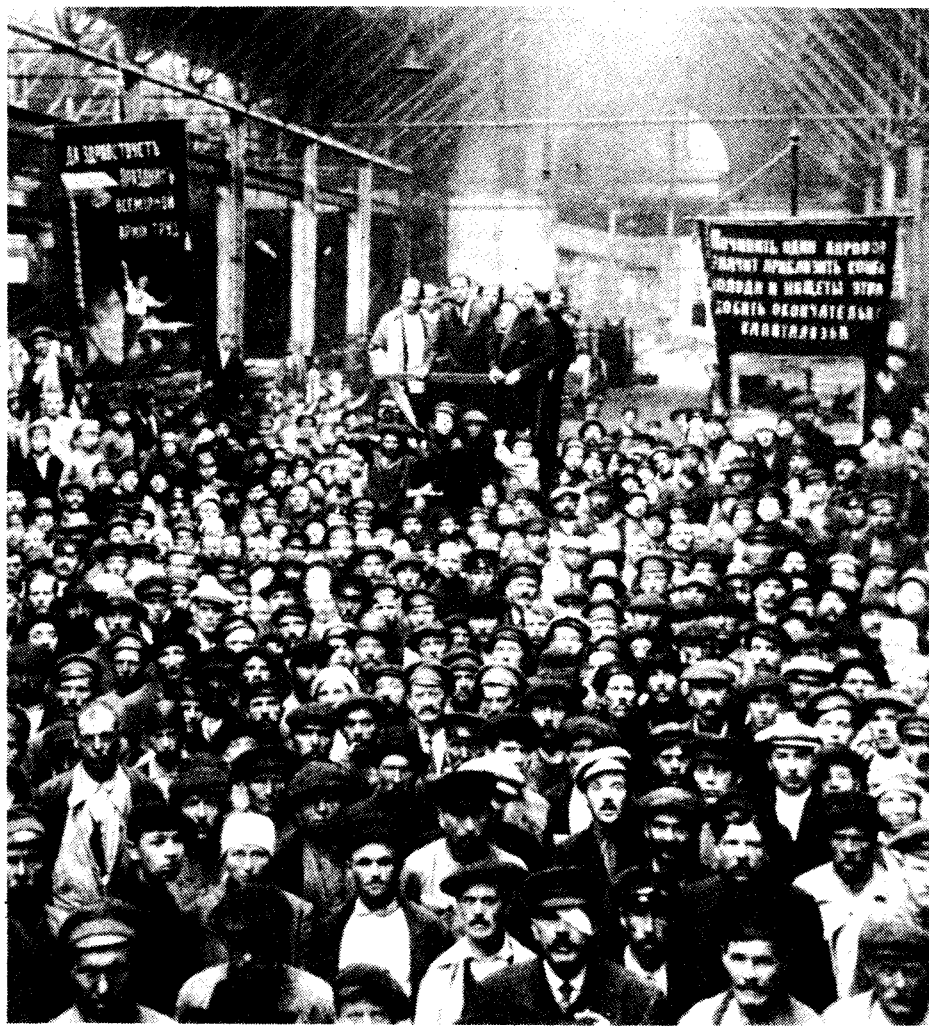
Andropov, during his short period of leadership, attempted this not through structural changes in the economy but through purging especially corrupt and incompetent managers and officials and by countering slack work discipline through anti-alcoholism/anti-absenteeism campaigns. Such policies have been credited for the moderate improvement in Soviet economic growth over the last few years, but the economic effects of such campaigns are inherently limited and short-term.

The anti-alcoholism campaign expresses more than simply economic calculation on the part of the Kremlin leadership. There is a genuine concern about the moral debilitation of Soviet society. Within the Communist Party, including its higher ranks, there are ascetic Communists (Andropov and Mikhail Suslov were notable) who willfully do not drink or collect fancy foreign cars like Brezhnev did. Such attitudes are shared and appreciated by a wide spectrum of the intelligentsia.

#### RESURGENCE OF THE INTELLIGENTSIA

Gorbachev's new course is more than a conjunctural response by the Soviet leadership to increasing pressure from imperialist militarism amid mounting economic difficulties. It also reflects the changing social environment in which the bureaucracy itself exists. After the Bolshevik Revolution, Stalin's purges and the Hitlerite invasion, there has re-emerged in Russia a substantial intelligentsia with considerable social weight. The technical intelligentsia wants to modernize the country even if this entails driving the workers harder and making the concessions necessary to secure economic cooperation with Western capitalism. The intelligentsia resents the philistinism of the typical party boss and is repelled by the drabness of official culture. They are embarrassed and also perhaps envious that leading artistic figures (eg, Brodsky, Baryshnikov, Rostropovich) emigrated to the West. Gorbachev has set out to overcome the alienation by the apparatchiks of the intelligentsia, including among elements of the "dissidents" and emigres.

While there is presently no known tendency within the Soviet intelligentsia which aspires to revolutionary Marxism, the present intellectual ferment and openness could lead elements of the intelligentsia back to authentic Bolshevism. In this respect the most positive aspect of glasnost for us is the critical re-examination of Soviet history. "There should be no forgotten names or blanks either in history or in literature," Gorbachev stated last February. There has been a spate of new and pre-



Bolshevik Revolution gave power to the working class. Putilov factory workers elect delegates to Petrograd Soviet, 1920.

viously suppressed books and films about the crimes and failures of Stalin. Even more significant is the renewed attention to the old Bolshevik leaders killed by Stalin. A play about the treaty of Brest-Litovsk scheduled to open in Moscow, presenting Trotsky and Bukharin as historical figures — ie, as leaders of the Communist Party — constitutes clear repudiation of the Moscow Trials' shameful fabrications. Lenin's Testament has been publicized for the first time (although it has long been available in the Collected Works). The new edition of the Soviet encyclopedia The Great October Socialist Revolution to be published next fall will include for the first time such figures as Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev and Radek.

Gorbachev and his supporters have denounced Trotskyism not as a disguised form of counterrevolution but as ultraleftism. Thus intellectuals who consider themselves to the left of Gorbachev, especially on international questions, may well be drawn to Trotskyism as they are given to understand it.

#### POTENTIAL FOR WORKER RESISTANCE

While Gorbachev's course has been generally and warmly welcomed by the Soviet intelligentsia, the working class has been far from enthusiastic if not outright distrustful. And for good reason. Before Gorbachev took power in the Kremlin in 1984, there was much speculation in the West that he would introduce sweeping market-oriented reforms along the line of Kadar's Hungary and Deng's China. Gorbachev himself has spoken of the need for "radical" and even "revolutionary" changes in the economy. However, to date the economic changes have been quite modest, far less significant than those introduced by Brezhnev/Kosygin after they ousted Khrushchev in the mid-'60s. The main economic changes thus far have been making legal

and therefore taxable individual and family entrepreneurship (eg, handymen, taxi drivers); granting the 20 industrial ministries and over 70 industrial associations and large enterprises the right to conduct foreign trade; and most recently widening income differentials between workers and technical intellectuals, and reintroducing piece rates, only now based upon quality.

While modest in scope, the direction of these economic changes is toward greater dependence upon market competition.



Extend social gains of Bolshevik Revolution to Afghanistan! Woman computer technician in Soviet Central Asia (left); enslaved Afghan women under the veil (right).

Within the framework of Stalinism there is an inherent tendency toward economic decentralization as an alternative to workers democracy. Since managers and workers are not subject to the discipline of soviet democracy, a section of the bureaucracy sees subjecting the economic actors to the discipline of the market as the only answer to the Soviet Union's serious economic problems.

A leading Soviet manpower expert, Vladimir Kostakov, maintains that layoffs of redundant workers are necessary to improve labor productivity. The Gorbachev regime itself identifies more rapid economic growth with increasing

inequality. A recent television program presented an imagined debate between a young Gorbachev reformer and an older, conservative apparatchik. The latter argued that things aren't that bad and then said, in any event, "People would prefer to live equally in poverty, rather than unequally in wealth." Many workers are bound to ask, why can't we have both wealth and equality as is promised us by our country's official socialist doctrine?

Gorbachev's perestroika not only goes against the immediate material interests of most workers but also affronts their deep reservoir of collective feeling. At the same time, the regime's call for glasnost permits a degree of organized dissent against official policies. Thus last December workers at the Kamaz truck plant east of Moscow protested against cuts in production bonuses, arguing that they were being penalized for the faults of management. The present situation in the Soviet Union is probably more favorable for the emergence of an independent workers movement than at any time since the 1920s.

#### PRAGUE SPRING 1968, MOSCOW SPRING 1987

In its internal dynamics the present situation in the Soviet Union bears a resemblance to the 1968 Prague Spring. (Perhaps it is more than a biographical accident that Gorbachev's roommate at Moscow University in the early 1950s was a young Czech Communist, Zdenek Mlynar, who later became one of the leading architects of the Prague Spring.) After a period of economic stagnation, there was a linkage between a section of the Czechoslovak intelligentsia and a modernizing section of the bur-



eaucracy against the old-time Stalinist apparatchiks, secret policemen and trade-union functionaries. There were proposals to close uneconomic plants and to make labor more plastic.

Initially, the Czech workers, through their bureaucratized trade unions, opposed the Dubcekite reformers since they did not want labor to be plasticized. They were satisfied drawing down a not very good wage while doing nothing. But then the issue of soviet democracy came into play, and sections of the workers began to realize that the parasites who were sitting on top of their "trade

Continued on page twelve

**AUTOBIOGRAPHY  
OF A BOOK**

**ON THE HARM DONE BY  
BLANK WALLS**

I USED to give lectures fairly often at the Vladimir Ilyich Plant in Moscow. One day, I was going down the stairs together with my listeners after a lecture and answering their questions. One was about my impressions of the



No "blank walls" in Soviet history? *Moscow News* (24 May 1987) still removed Trotsky (next to Lenin, saluting) and other Bolshevik leaders from historic photo (right) taken on second anniversary of October Revolution.

**Gorbachev...**

Continued from page eleven

unions' could be dumped, that maybe they could get something fundamentally better than the status quo. There was a historical moment — not very long — in which the censorship, secret police and the rest of the Stalinist ruling apparatus was embarrassed and paralyzed. It was fear of an incipient proletarian political revolution which caused the Soviet-bloc armies to invade Czechoslovakia and put a stop to the Prague Spring.

Compared to Czechoslovakia in 1968 the divisions within the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy today are far less sharp and the popular response far more passive. Thus the present liberalization could well gradually give way to a conservative restoration, as happened with Khrushchev's "thaw" in the mid-1950s. But there is also in the dynamic of the situation the potential for a Soviet version of the Prague Spring. The Soviet army has been reliable in suppressing working-class unrest (Hungary 1956, Czechoslovakia 1968). However, in the face of an incipient proletarian political revolution within Russia, the army might well split, with some units (both ranks and officers) going over to the Soviets, other units supporting the existing Kremlin regime. It would look perhaps more like a civil war, with the armed forces already in place, than a revolution. (A variant of this was sketched in Craig Thomas' novel *The Snow Falcon*.)

**FOR SOVIET VICTORY IN  
AFGHANISTAN!**

The fundamental difference between what is now happening in Russia and the Prague Spring is that the Soviet Union is not Czechoslovakia. Gorbachev's policies are very much directed at improving relations with Western imperialism. For the Kremlin tops

are genuinely frightened of nuclear war and in this they reflect the mass sentiment of the Soviet people: a deep-seated, desperate desire for peace. However, the nationalistic and parasitic bureaucracy translates the justified fear of war into a detentist outlook that is groveling, absurd and self-defeating.

Gorbachev has indicated he is prepared to go further to secure "peaceful coexistence" than his predecessors in the Kremlin. Addressing the international celebrities who assembled for the Moscow "no nuke" conference last February, he declared:

"Before my people, before you and before the whole world, I state with full responsibility that our international policy is more than ever determined by domestic policy, by our interest in concentrating on constructive endeavors to improve our



Soviet forces land at Kabul airport, December 1979. Spartacists hailed Soviet intervention against Islamic counterrevolutionaries.

country."

Georgi Shakhnazarov, a senior official in the CPSU's Socialist Countries Department, has stated that "political ends do not exist which would justify the use of means liable to lead to nuclear war." The implication of this position is that the Soviet Union should not seriously confront or challenge US imperialism anywhere on any issue.



L.Y. Leonidov

While Shakhnazarov's is an extreme expression of the Gorbachev line, the perception among the imperialist bourgeoisie, including sections of its far right wing, is that the current Kremlin regime is softer, more capitulatory on international questions than its predecessors. Thus Arthur Hartman, who recently completed a five-year stint as Reagan's ambassador to Moscow, believes:

"The Soviet leadership is preoccupied with their domestic situation. Our relationship is colored highly by the Soviet reactions to what they really have to do internally. And I think basically what they would like to have now is a period of calm. And therefore, there could well be opportunities for serious negotiations in a variety of fields."

— *New York Times*,  
29 March 1987

from Afghanistan is finding an acceptable, face-saving compromise. The nature of Afghan society and the savage civil war it generated precludes establishing a stable, "nonaligned" regime in Kabul which would honor agreements with Moscow. It is impossible to envision the Finlandization or Austrianization of Afghanistan.

From the standpoint of the protection of the Soviet Union, Afghanistan must be won. It is an organic component of the already assimilated Soviet Central Asia. This is why the bureaucracy has found itself, against its will, so deeply involved and so unable to extricate. We must demand, in consonance with all Soviet peoples, that this nettle be firmly grasped. To promise war here for a generation is to conclude that war in a few years. To temporize is to protract it and leave endless opportunities for imperialist provocation. It is also important, as Soviet victory is seen as inevitable, that effective means be used to facilitate the return and integration of the millions of the pathetic, murderous, backward emigration in Pakistan. Victory in Afghanistan!

**DEFEND THE USSR THROUGH  
WORLD REVOLUTION!**

More generally, Gorbachev's apparently greater willingness to make concessions to imperialism has not yet been tested, for the imperialist bourgeoisie has yet to offer anything of value to the Kremlin in return. However, we must warn of the possibility of new deals, even if their concrete nature cannot now be predicted, between Washington and Moscow at the expense of revolutionary and national liberation struggles around the world.

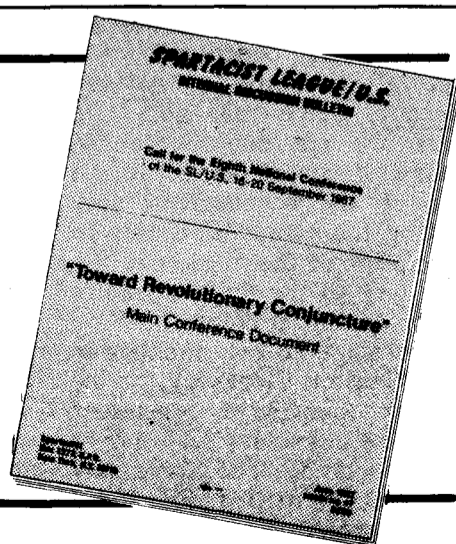
From our standpoint, the Gorbachev regime in the Soviet Union represents a highly contradictory development. Internally, the combination of *glasnost* and *perestroika* produces a more favorable condition for the emergence of left-wing currents among the intelligentsia and of an independent workers movement. Externally, there seems a greater likelihood for abandoning support to revolutionary and national liberation struggles in the Third World and reducing economic aid to Vietnam, Cuba and Nicaragua, thereby strengthening and emboldening imperialism and weakening the defense of the USSR. One should however keep in mind that the Kremlin tops could pursue an aggressive detente line, as Brezhnev did in the early 1970s, without an internal liberalization



Above all, Washington aims to pressure the Kremlin to capitulate in those armed conflicts it considers proxy wars with Russia: Afghanistan, Vietnam/Cambodia, Angola and Nicaragua. For US imperialism, the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, on the southern border of the USSR, is a key test of Gorbachev's "sincerity."

For his part, Gorbachev has called Afghanistan "a bleeding wound" and stated: "We should like, in the nearest future, to withdraw the Soviet troops...." In this same speech, given at the 27th Congress of the CPSU in February 1986, he denounced "revolutionary war" as "Trotskyite" and "Left Communist" heresy. These remarks were presumably directed at those elements in the Soviet bureaucracy less ready to abandon Afghanistan and perhaps also more supportive of the Vietnamese in Cambodia and the Cuban forces in Angola.

The main obstacle to the Gorbachev regime extricating itself



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## Philippines...

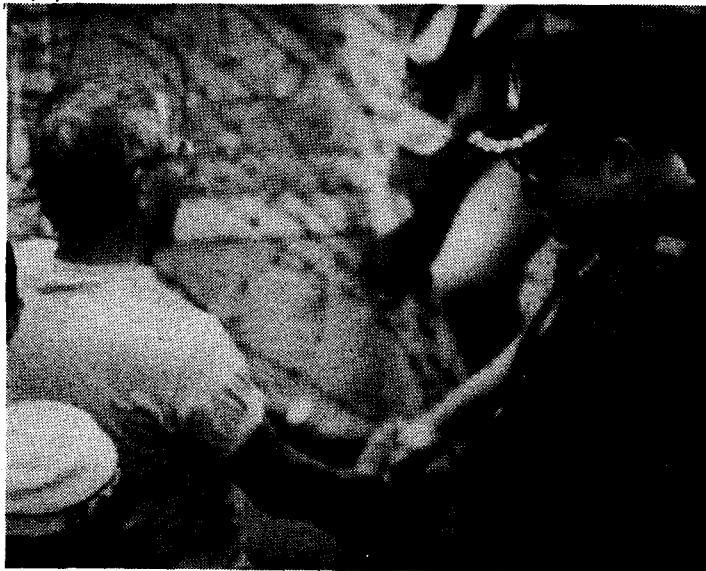
Continued from page three

class and poor, bearing the brunt of this, are being driven to the wall. Manila is becoming one gigantic slum as tens of thousands migrate into the city looking for non-existent work. Even most of those "lucky" enough to have a job are forced to subsist on less than the minimum wage of some 57 pesos (about \$4) a day (32 pesos for agricultural workers). "Smoky Mountain" in Manila epitomises the fate of the poor: thousands living in shanties on top of a rotting, putrid garbage dump. Added to all this Aquino had just decreed a massive 17 percent rise in the price of petroleum fuel. This will trigger a whole series of price hikes and push thousands already living on the margin into the abyss of unbearable poverty. The union movement signalled its intention to fight this. One jeepney drivers union threatened to paralyse all traffic in Manila and even the CIA-funded Trade Union Congress of the Philippines felt compelled to threaten a national strike. This is shaping up to be a big showdown between Aquino and the unions.

Everywhere we went in Manila there are picket lines, and every second day some plant was walking out. 1100 academics at Santo Thomas University walked out for the first time in its 300-year history, stopping all classes and defying a return to work order. Workers at one of the bourgeoisie's leading newspapers, the Bulletin, walked out over the bosses' attempt to bust their union. Even one of the two casinos and a golf club were struck while we were there. Clearly the bourgeoisie will not long tolerate this situation. Aquino has already used troops several times to break strikes, and while we were there hundreds of riot police were mobilised at the Bulletin picket in preparation for an attack. A one-month-long strike at Purefoods Corporation was attacked by 300 heavily armed troops on 5 August who shot three strikers and took some casualties themselves when the strikers courageously fought back (significantly this plant is owned by the Philippines' pre-eminent capitalist, Ayala, and Defence Secretary Iletto is a director).

Amid this working class restlessness and growing bourgeois reaction sits Aquino's new congress, supposedly the new hope for stability. But even the bourgeois press here have trouble treating it seriously. The product of an election accompanied by widespread

ASp photo



At KMU 13 August demonstration (right) protesting troop murder of Purefoods picketer, KMU chairman Crispin Beltran grasps bloody hands of Aquino's officer corps (top).

allegations of fraud, the new congress is made up in large part of millionaires and landowners. It reflects the clique lines on which Filipino bourgeois politics has always been based. Laurel, ostensibly Vice President, has been relegated to the back seat (the press refer to him as the "spare tyre"), while the leadership of congress looks like an Aquino family reunion. Cory's brother Peping, brother-in-law Butz, and uncle Francisco Sumulong all occupy leading positions (Sumulong looks set to get the lucrative Manila ports contract). The bourgeoisie have such a hard job trying to sell this new facade of democracy that the Inquirer commented, "the solons [congressmen] better put a stop to the fire-eating sideshow lest social forces (among others) would again reduce Congress to a museum piece." The government is patently incapable of resolving any of the fundamental social questions confronting the Philippine masses let alone cohering stable bourgeois rule.

Nowhere is this more graphic than in the debate around Aquino's land reform program (CARP). Under CARP landless farmers would have to buy the land they till and landowners would be compensated. Those farmers, led by the CPP-aligned peasant union KMP, who have seized idle land will be evicted. While congress was debating it, a group of landowners (mainly "solons" themselves) vowed to oppose CARP in a proclamation signed in blood. The sugar barons of Negros and the Panay landowners have threatened armed rebellion against Aquino if she tries to touch their land. Aquino even had

to threaten her own cabinet members with the sack if they voted against CARP!

The other big question is the foreign debt, whose interest payments alone represents some 50 per cent of export earnings. In the face of widespread and growing resentment at having to pay this imperialist ransom, part of which was run up by Marcos' plunder of the economy, a section of the bourgeoisie (tailed by the CPP-aligned trade union KMU) are talking about "selective repudiation." The World Bank sternly cautioned their Filipino lackeys not to lightly bandy about such terms. But after a lot of bluster about seeing "the true face of foreign finance" Aquino could only whine that the Philippines has been the World Bank's best lackey. While the country is visibly crumbling under the weight of this debt, the bourgeoisie are starkly unable to even contemplate breaking this massive chain that is bleeding the Filipino masses.

The massive US bases at Subic Bay and Clark best exemplify the "special place" the Philippines occupies in the eyes of US and Australian imperialism. Tour guides told us Australia has a permanent military presence at Clark, and while we were there five Australian warships were in town for war manoeuvres with the US Seventh Fleet in the South China Sea (ie somewhere off Vietnam, the main target of Australian imperialism's designs to roll back social revolution in South East Asia).

While the working class is increasingly vocal, the CPP continues to grow in authority, but

it's clearly squandering the immense social power of the proletariat. Nowhere was this clearer to us than at a demonstration called by the KMU over the death of one of the strikers who had been shot at Purefoods. While the Purefoods workers told us they expected tens of thousands the KMU pulled out a mere 600 on the day. The politics of the KMU leadership were laid bare at the end when KMU chairman Crispin Beltran went over to the commanding officer of the troops barring the demonstrators access to Malacanang, joked with him and shook his hand: the hand of the armed forces that was still fresh from the blood of striking workers. The program of class collaboration this gesture represents sits in flat opposition to the interests and sentiments of the class conscious proletariat. While the CPP looks to Aquino to hold the more rabid anti-communist fanatics at bay, workers at Purefoods told us that under Aquino "things are worse now" than under Marcos. They said Marcos used water cannons on strikers but Aquino uses bullets.

The situation is fragile. The bourgeoisie is still divided and threatening to tear itself apart but they are agreed on the need to repress the workers and peasants. The CPP's popular frontist politics are a millstone around the neck of the proletariat. With the danger of a reactionary bloodbath mounting, the working class desperately needs a revolutionary leadership, a Trotskyist party which fights for a workers and peasant government, which alone offers the Filipino masses a future. ■

which can open the road to proletarian political revolution.

The future of the Gorbachev regime is organically linked to developments in the imperialist West, centrally the United States. The Reagan administrations, as well as that of Carter, were and are a response of the American bourgeoisie to its loss of imperialist hegemony growing out of the defeat in Vietnam. Central to this response has been a massive arms buildup designed above all to give US imperialism capacity for an effective thermonuclear first strike against the USSR. This has been accompanied by a virulent anti-Soviet propaganda campaign, as well as an aggressive policy of

military provocation aimed at the Soviet Union.

During this period the SL/US has indeed faced the Russian question "pointblank." Our principled unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union against imperialism, from Afghanistan to Central America to opposition to the capitalist-restorationist Polish Solidarnosc, has given us a very high profile indeed in this period of disgraceful capitulation by the fake-left to the bourgeoisie's rampant anti-Sovietism. After Reagan & Co sent over 200 helpless airline passengers to their deaths aboard the Korean Air Lines 007 US spy provocation, the SL/US and international Sparta-

cist tendency waged a virtual campaign of propaganda documenting the US government's lies and incidentally underlining the flinch of the CPUSA. Our forthright Soviet-defensist propaganda on Afghanistan, Poland, Vietnam, KAL 007, "detente," etc has brought our small French section to the attention of a layer of advanced workers as "the Trotskyists who defend the Soviet Union."

American imperialism's military program aims to break the will of the USSR, extracting counter-revolutionary concessions from the Soviet bureaucracy. However, this program has now brought the US and indeed imperialism internationally to the brink of a major

crisis. The present conciliatory tack of Gorbachev and Co is thus doubly stupid and dangerous—both the best evidence that Gorbachev represents simply another variation of Stalinism, historically anti-revolutionary and committed above all to "socialism in one country," and also an imperative argument for a Soviet section of a reformed Fourth International to lead a proletarian political revolution to defend the gains of October and pursue a course of revolutionary proletarian internationalism.

— Reprinted from Workers Vanguard, no 432, 10 July 1987

## Miners...

Continued from page sixteen

and reliance on the Hawke government, workers' worst enemy. This has only given the employers and their government time to sharpen their knives. Union leaders offered up give-backs to cut production costs by \$2.50 per tonne, but the bloody-minded employers demand cuts of \$12.00 per tonne. At the August 4 Branxton mass meeting, Maitland voiced the union bureaucrats' rotten defeatism: "we know we are going to have to take our losses."

When Hunter Valley miners struck for two weeks in July in opposition to sackings they were kept criminally isolated and scabs were able to cross undemanded picket lines. Then Maitland and Swan bowed to the Hawke-concocted one month "truce." Two days later CSR-Esso laid off 227 men, and shortly after BHP sacked another 137, Coalex announced 200 job losses and Ulan Coal forced through a \$200 cut in weekly bonuses. Every backdown by the union has been met with increasing provocations and attacks. Enough is enough! Militant mining unionists, many of whom can trace generations in the industry, know that, as one miner put it:

"Nobody ever gives you anything. The only way you get anything is by fighting for it. No matter what you ever go for any condition you ever want — some are slight things — they'd fight you tooth and nail and say: 'It's impossible,' no matter what it was. The place would go broke, the markets would frizzle up, they'd say, no matter what it was" (Age, 29 August).

As the defeat of the BLF showed, if you don't fight you lose. The miners' leadership has a program for defeat. They plan a national coal strike limited to one week, purely to let the ranks blow off some steam. But the miners are eager to fight. Hunter Valley miners pre-empted their leadership and walked out a week early. What is needed right now is an indefinite national strike uniting miners across the country in powerful class action. This strike must be extended and an all-out struggle waged to win, bringing Hawke and the bosses to their knees. The waterfront and transport unions, themselves next on Hawke's "restructuring" hit list, should black all scab coal and join the struggle, as should metal miners at Broken Hill, the iron ore fields, who have been facing similar attacks. All mines must be shut down solid, with militant mass picket lines that really mean don't cross, and roving pickets to stop the bosses moving their stockpiled coal. Elected strike committees will be needed to plan and organise the strike and guard against sellouts by the union tops.

A hard-fought strike would cut against the craft-union and



Striking British miners defending picket lines against Thatcher's cops.

regional divisions fostered by the bosses and the Laborite union bureaucracy: NSW miners against Queensland miners, open-cut miners against underground miners, miners producing for the export market against mining for the domestic market. It would lay the basis for one powerful industrial union of mineworkers.

### REMEMBER HEROIC BRITISH MINERS!

The class confrontation now posed elicits memories of the heroic 1984-5 British miners strike, when miners fought for a year in massive confrontations with the cops to defend their picket lines. And the lessons need to be drawn. The strike drew behind it the support of all those victimised by Thatcher's rule. It posed point blank the question of power — which class shall rule? The miners were defeated because of the treachery of the British Labour Party under "Judas" Kinnock and the class collaborationist union misleaders, who did Thatcher's dirty work for her by keeping the miners criminally isolated in the interests of British capitalism. Despite the defeat, Britain today is not the same, and miners went back beaten but not broken. If the British miners strike showed the enormous power of the proletariat, it also threw into stark relief the desperate need for revolutionary leadership.

The defeat of the historic seven week coal miners strike of 1949, led by the Communist Party, under the bayonets of the Chifley Labor government's troops, brought home Cold War I to the Australian proletariat. It showed that the anti-communist Labor Party will stop at nothing to smash the struggles of the working class. The union-busting campaign spawned by today's anti-Soviet war drive is once again aimed at the Miners Federation with its militant history. From SEQEB to the BLF the union leaders' Cold War "Accord" with the Hawke government, their reliance on the capitalist courts and especially Arbitration, their mealy-mouthed legalism — in a word their collaboration with the class enemy — has led to defeats. It is

necessary to break from the ALP. An alternative revolutionary leadership of the working class must be forged in political struggle against the ALP traitors, based on a program to unite the workers and oppressed to overthrow the capitalist system of unemployment, poverty, racism and war.

Today with the Australian capitalist economy in crisis, amidst intensified inter-imperialist rivalry and anti-Soviet war preparations, even the most elementary democratic rights and working conditions are being rolled back. The great Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky, wrote nearly 50 years ago:

"Under the menace of its own disintegration, the proletariat cannot permit the transformation of an increasing number of the workers into chronically unemployed paupers, living off the crumbs of a disintegrating society. The right to employment is the only serious right left to the worker in a society based upon exploitation. This right today is being shorn from him at every step. Against unemployment, 'structural' as well as 'conjunctural,' the time is ripe to advance, along with the slogan of public works, the slogan of a sliding scale of working hours." (The Transitional Program — The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International)

### NATIONAL COAL AUTHORITY: CHAUVINIST FRAUD

The partnership of labour and capital is a lie, and nowhere is this made clearer than in the mining union bureaucracy's pathetic plea for a National Coal Authority, which envisages union, government and employers co-operating to oversee production and marketing and bailing out failing companies with state subsidies. This protectionist poison lines up workers behind their bosses against their class brothers and sisters overseas. Such racist

White Australia nationalism is the essence of reactionary Laborism. Australian miners must know that their allies are workers like the South African and South Korean miners who today are waging bitter and bloody struggles against their capitalist exploiters.

While the reformist "left" organisations are simply tailing behind the miners' union bureaucracy, the Socialist Labour League (SLL) has called for a national strike and for the nationalisation of the coal industry, a left-wing version of the bureaucracy's National Coal Authority scam. As shown by the British nationalised coal industry, nationalisation of an industry under the generalised condition of capitalist decay does nothing to stop capitalist "rationalisation," ie wage-cutting, job losses, loss of conditions.

The only solution to the irrational chaos of capitalist decay is the expropriation of capitalist private property through workers revolution and the international socialist reconstruction of society. Australia is the world's number one exporter of coal. Workers revolution in Australia will place its resources at the services of humanity. For a racially-integrated workers republic of Australia, part of a Socialist Asia!■

## Cockatoo...

Continued from page sixteen

the island to vote for an island-wide strike. This meeting must elect a strike committee to run the strike through to victory. The island must be shut down tight with militant mass picket lines! Occupy Cockatoo Island! No job losses — for a shorter work week with no loss in pay! All crafts and trades out together — For industrial unionism!

### FOR CLASS STRUGGLE! DOWN WITH ARBITRATION!

Florrimell was sacked on 1 September and the island's ironworkers immediately went out on a two-day strike. On 3 September Federated Ironworkers Association (FIA) organiser Collison orchestrated a four-day return to work, with overtime bans, sending the case to Arbitration, which passed by two votes. The FIA tops have been out to kill any action, with the defeatist line that this struggle can't be won. The Combined Unions Shop Committee is sitting on its hands, trying to divert the struggle against the destruction of jobs into campaigning for some paltry severance pay. And in the midst of ironworkers' overtime bans to reinstate Florrimell the shop committee chairman, Bill Haggerty, allowed boilermakers to work "back to back"

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ASP photo



Neil Florrymell (first right at rear) with Cockatoo workers, celebrating 1985 victory.

without ironworkers. Top management stated that they don't want to lose this one, and the foremen have threatened to strike if the unions win Florrymell's reinstatement. They sure know where the class line is, but where will their jobs be when the yard closes?

At the following ironworkers meeting on 9 September one third voted for a motion calling for an island-wide strike. In the preceding days FIA militants and other unionists distributed over 500 copies of Florrymell's leaflet. Half a dozen FIA militants who escorted Florrymell to the 9 September Arbitration court hearing left disgusted at this "kangaroo court," after it predictably let the bosses' sacking stand. The next morning the ironworkers by a two-thirds majority rolled the bureaucrats' defeatism and resumed their strike, determined to win. Class struggle is the only way to victory. This struggle has forced together the two sections of the historically divided FIA.

Florrymell's leaflet entitled "To Cockatoo Workers: An Injury to One is an Injury to All!" stated clearly why he had been targeted by the bosses:

"The bosses excuse of 'bad timekeeping' was exposed as the bald-faced lie it is when they told the FIA organiser the next day that they didn't want me back because of my 'bad attitude.' What they are talking about is my union attitude. In March 1985 during an electricians' strike I refused to work with apprentices being used by the boss to break the strike. I was sacked and reinstated only after the threat of

an island-wide stoppage and the electricians' refusal to return to work without me. This victory for union solidarity was an important blow to the bosses' attempts to play off the unions here against each other while using apprentices to break our strikes.

"Since then I have been in the forefront in the fight for strike action to defend our jobs against Hawke's plans to close the island. I was involved in the successful spiking of the bosses' attempts to introduce widespread ASIO vetting of the workforce. I was also prominent in the struggle to hold the Jervis Bay here to foil Hawke's anti-Soviet war plans against Fiji. And at every point along the line I have fought against the bosses' attacks on our jobs and conditions.

"The company has responded to this 'bad attitude' with a

#### DOWN WITH UNION-BUSTING HAWKE GOVERNMENT!

Florrymell has long been a thorn in the bosses' side, a widely respected militant who has fought for the SL's class struggle program from fighting for an occupation to defend jobs, opposing chauvinist protectionism, for solidarity with the BLF against the anti-worker ALP governments, to fighting for union-based defence guards to stop attacks by Vietnamese fascists in 1985. A class-struggle leadership of the unions is urgently necessary throughout the country. This requires a fight to split the working class from its treacherous labour tops. The CIA-loving FIA leadership is out to kill any action at Cockatoo with the defeatist line that this struggle can't be won. While they spend thousands of dollars of union dues on campaigns for reactionary Polish Solidarnosc, they sabotage union action to defend jobs and

conditions. Their class collaborationist strategy is writ large in Crean's ACTU which has been Hawke's executioner in every union-busting attack from SEQEB to the BLF.

Ironworkers and Painters & Dockers are in the front line of Hawke's plans to axe unions at Cockatoo, which mainly does naval work, in the service of his anti-Soviet war drive. But there's a problem here: how does Hawke get his war-crazy two-ocean navy if he axes this skilled workforce? In this defence industry, the workers confront the imperialist war drive point blank. Every victory over the bosses strikes a blow for proletarian internationalism against Reagan/Hawke's mad drive towards nuclear holocaust. The fight to defend Florrymell in this traditionally militant workplace is everybody's fight. Already support is coming in from unions at other workplaces, such as Fairfax metal workers who have agitated for union defence of Florrymell, and the Metropolitan Mail Centres Committee of the Australian Postal and Telecommunications Union passed a motion condemning the sacking as an attack on unionism. From the coal fields to the shipyards hard class struggle is needed. The working class desperately needs a revolutionary leadership which fights to smash the capitalist system and establish in its place a planned socialist economy. ■

## Scabs Squirm

The Socialist Labour League (SLL), the bizarre outfit with the newspaper Workers News (WN), tripped over some class struggle this week. When the Cockatoo ironworkers went out on strike to defend Spartacist supporter Florrymell, the SLL got nervous. So, poison pen WN reporter, Martin Symonds phoned us up for the goods.

The SLL, who try to warn their members away from the Trotskyist politics of the Spartacist League with wild slanderous CIA-baiting (they call us agents of the

Kremlin too!), have a supporter at Cockatoo and face the problem of supporting or opposing a Trotskyist militant fighting for the survival of unions at one of Hawke's plants for building naval ships as part of his anti-Soviet war preparations.

Militant workers should never forget that this outfit are scabs: crossing a Builders Laborers Federation (BLF) picket line and early on signing the scab contract to bust the BLF. While sacked BLF militants, including a Spartacist supporter (sacked for refusing to sign the scab contract), battled cops on a picket line at Footscray pool in Melbourne last year, SLL

supporter Bruce Cameron daily crossed the picket line. When Australasian Spartacist exposed this crime against the working class, WN denounced us for "slandering" the working class. But then, as now, it was the Trotskyist SL which fought in the front lines against Hawke's union-busting drive. Now as the government and bosses try to follow through on smashing the BLF by going for Cockatoo unions, the SLL are worried that scabbing on the BLF is going to come back to haunt them. Workers who don't want to become Bruce Camerons had better consider the class struggle program exemplified in the struggle of Neil Florrymell. ■

## Brewarrina...

Continued from page six

John Pat and for jailing the killer cops. People crowd around and eagerly begin reading the articles. Sonny Bates is in the group. He exclaims, motioning to all the cops in the street, "Hey, you're game showing those papers around here. Haven't the cops picked you up for that stuff yet?" We weren't picked up, but fully expected to be the whole time we were there.

As we all waited around for the court proceedings to finish, we spoke with various people keen to tell us their version of what had happened. Everyone was proud of the demonstrations they had organised the week before. One woman told us that the day of the funeral the cops had driven up to the Boney house and delivered a threat: "We're going to get you black cunts tonight." She told us how she had tried to stop the fight which broke out after the funeral, warning that it was madness to fight against cops, pointing out that they had only sticks and pipes against the cops guns. But she was told, don't stop us now, we've



Spartacists demonstrate alongside blacks at demonstration on the anniversary of the murder of Robert Walker, Sydney, 28 August.

stood this long enough. And so she joined them. She also told us that the cops were going around harassing people daily, enforcing their will with batons. Another woman told us that she nearly cried when her children asked for an explanation as to why they couldn't go out at night anymore. We met Priscilla Boney again, and asked her if the cops had been spotlighting again the previous night. No, she said proudly, I got

Tombo (the ALS officer) and marched into the station and demanded it stop.

One young man told us the story of Lloyd's death. One of the young cops who arrested him was a notorious racist, locally known as "Rambo Rampling." The young cops called in the Chief Sergeant, who told the cops to leave. He then called in Coroner Olsen and an ambulance officer. These three were the last people to see Lloyd

in the cell. They pronounced suicide. Lloyd, he said, was a young man with a family, a bit wild to be sure, but with plenty to live for. This was true too of 23 year-old Mark Quayle who had been found dead in his cell in nearby Wilcannia on 24 June. Lloyd, like so many blacks, was accustomed to jail, having done time in Long Bay, Bathurst and Oberon — why would overnight in the Brewarrina lock-up suddenly drive him to suicide? No, blacks here at Brewarrina are convinced he was killed and determined to bring the truth to light, and to get justice. And the government knows it — that's why NSW Police Minister Paciullo put the town under siege, to attempt to terrorise the blacks into silence and acceptance.

Many blacks also feared the white vigilantes who have been sighted around town in trucks, with guns prominent. One of the squads is organised out of the whites-only Brewarrina Hotel. But everyone we spoke with was determined to fight. As one young man said, we don't want any more trouble, but we will defend ourselves. ■



## Cockatoo Ironworkers Fight Anti-Union Sacking

# All Out to Torpedo Hawke's Union-Busting Drive!

10 SEPTEMBER: Over 100 ironworkers at Cockatoo Island dockyard in Sydney are out on strike in defence of militant rigger/ironworker and Spartacist League (SL) supporter Neil Florrimell. His sacking was an act of blatant anti-communist and anti-union victimisation. It is the cutting edge of what every worker at Cockatoo expects as Hawke "revitalises" the Australian defence industry by breaking the unions at Cockatoo and Newcastle dockyard. Brandishing his union-busting election mandate, Hawke and his ACTU lieutenants are moving to implement their Accord threat of

all-sided givebacks and job losses across the country.

In an interview with Australasian Spartacist Florrimell said:

"The bosses and their government have thrown down the gauntlet to the unions in this country. This is the Accord Mark III, brought to us by the ACTU, Hawke's cops in the union movement. Last year the BLF was smashed. Now the coal miners are facing the biggest attacks on their jobs and organisations in 50 years. Hawke is Reagan's man and the bosses' man. He is embarking on a massive naval build-up as part of his

drive to war against the Soviet Union. At Cockatoo it means wiping out our unions altogether. This attack is a front line in his union-busting war. The fight against this victimisation gives us an opportunity to avenge the busting of the BLF, and to take the offensive."

Florrimell is a symbol of everything the bosses and government want to destroy. Ever since 1985 when he successfully led a struggle for industrial unionism, the bosses have been out to reverse that victory. It was Hawke's mate, Murdoch's viciously anti-union Australian

(19 April 1985) which led the bourgeois press in expressing their fear that the "Cuckoo Island" disease could spread. Cockatoo Island workers can and must lead the fight to roll back Hawke's attacks on unions. Striking ironworkers must link up with Painters and Dockers who are out on strike in defence of their delegate, John Panuccio, who is also facing victimisation. This situation threatens to explode in the bosses' face. There is plenty of will to fight. What is necessary is a strategy to win. There should be an immediate mass meeting of all unions on

Continued on page fourteen

**Break the ALP/ACTU Stranglehold! Stay Out to Win!**

# Miners: Bring Hawke, Bosses to Their Knees!

**No Job Losses!  
No Givebacks!**

Even before the votes had been counted to return the union-busting Labor government for a record third term, Hawke and the coal industry bosses were unleashing class war against mine workers. Coal accounts for 16 per cent of export earnings for Australia's debt-ridden economy and the industry is caught in the crosshairs of an international coal market downturn and the US-Japan trade war. For years the coal exporters tried to compensate falling prices by boosting export volumes, only compounding the world glut of coal and leading to further sharp price cuts. Having gorged themselves with profit in the 60s and 70s, they now are driven to sharply increase the rate of exploitation. For months now the press empires of Fairfax and Murdoch have been screeching for miners' blood. The Financial Review (21 July) called the attack on the miners "a litmus test of our national will, spirit and future."



Miners mass meeting, Branxton, 4 August. Bureaucrats' strategy sabotages miners struggle in face of state/bosses attacks.

Hawke's "restructuring" is the codeword for across-the-board attacks on union organisation and conditions and the powerful miners' union is in the front line today.

Thirty thousand miners are poised to strike as we go to press — a national strike is desperately needed. This fight can and must be won. In this class confron-

tation, pitting the ruling class and its state against the historically militant, powerful and strategic mining unions, the stakes are high — for the entire working class and all the oppressed. The miners are uniquely placed to lead a fight which would galvanise broad layers of this society — unionists, blacks, gays, women, who have suffered four years of Hawke's

grinding austerity, union busting and vicious attacks on minorities — in action which could smash the capitalist "consensus" and even topple Hawke's Cold War regime.

Under the umbrella of "economic restructuring" and the second tier wage case the government/bosses have already killed 2200 mine jobs this year with thousands to follow, have slashed miners' pay and are planning to axe crucial safety procedures like minimum manning levels on heavy underground machinery. In this most dangerous industry in the country the employers' attacks on safety conditions are literally a death sentence for miners. As one miner said: "My father died in that pit and if I were to turn around and give up the conditions he died for he'd get out of his grave and punch my head in" (Sydney Morning Herald, 29 August).

So far the miners' union power has been kept treacherously bottled up by the Miners Federation leadership of John Maitland and Barry Swan with sellout compromise proposals, moratoriums

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