

Rail, steel, power workers – join the strike now!

Miners must not stand alone!



Strikers confront scabherding cops outside Doncaster NCB headquarters, 26 March. The whole labour movement must back the miners to smash the Tory assault.

Bollocks to the ballot!

The miners must not stand alone! That must be the rallying cry of every worker in Britain today. Four weeks of bitter struggle, ruthless police terror resulting in the murder of Yorkshire striker David Jones and insidious sabotage by scabherders within their own union have not flagged the miners' fighting determination. The miners' flying pickets have descended on steel mills, docks and power stations in an effort to spread their strike. For three days 600 strikers fought pitched battles with battalions of cops in an unsuccessful attempt to halt the importation of coal to Port Talbot steelworks. But the miners cannot do it alone, and the labour misleaders are doing everything in their power to stab the NUM in the back.

It is hardly a secret that Labour Party chiefs Kinnock and Healey are manoeuvring behind the scenes for a national ballot. Right-wing union leaders like Bill Sirs of the steelworkers and Frank Chapple of the EETPU openly order their members to cross picket lines. And while seamen, dockers, T&G lorry drivers and railway workers have been officially instructed to black coal, the 'left' union leaders have not made it stick and have sat on their hands while their members get victimised. In less than a week British Rail has gotten away with sending home nearly 100 NUR and ASLEF members for refusing to handle coal, with no response from national union officials.

On April 2 in the Wirral some 250 railworkers walked out, shutting down the Merseyside suburban rail network after a train driver was disciplined for refusing to move a coal train from from a siding. This single act of class solidarity pointed the way forward far more clearly than all the hot-air rhetoric coming from the Jimmy Knapps and Ray Bucktons. Tens, even hundreds of thousands of other trade unionists

have demonstrated their willingness to join this fight by their solidarity actions. Class-conscious militants must smash the bureaucratic sabotage and organise for *joint strike action with the miners now! Spread the strike! Shut down the power stations! Bring out rail and steel workers! Bring the Iron Lady to her knees!*

The Cold War line-up

Fleet Street red-baits Arthur Scargill for waging 'war on democracy' and coal boss Ian MacGregor obscenely attacks strike militants as 'Nazis' while his thugs-in-blue turn the coalfields into police states and drag hundreds off to jail. The kind of treatment meted out for years to Catholics in Northern Ireland and blacks and Asians in Britain's inner-city ghettos is now being used against striking miners. Thatcher wants to humiliate the miners in order to break the back of the entire union movement. Yet the NCB's weeks-old anti-strike injunction continues to sit on ice. As the authoritative

Tory mouthpiece the *Financial Times* (30 March) puts it, the government 'has accepted the view that to press the order would unify a union which it is in its interest to split'. Who are designated for this splitting operation? The same Cold War 'new realists' who led the anti-communist vilification of Arthur Scargill at Blackpool last September, who are the most open and vocal in their hatred for the Soviet Union.

Sid Vincent of the Lancashire NUM, who along with scabherders Chapple and Sirs sponsors the CIA-backed, pro-NATO, anti-Communist Labour Committee for Transatlantic Understanding, echoes the Tory-inspired campaign for a national ballot while keeping his men at work behind picket lines. The likes of Vincent and Nottinghamshire's Ray Chadburn who are today scabbing on their own union's struggle have no place on any exec. What's needed is not a ballot (as one Yorkshire miner put it, 'bollocks to the ballot') but a *national strike council*, composed of elected strike delegates, to organise the pick-

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Kent NUM on London 'Democracy Day' demo, March 29.

Miners...

(Continued from page 1)

eting and spread the strike. The productivity bonus scheme which has fuelled regional fracturing within the NUM must be dumped in favour of a demand for equal pay for equal work, pegged at the highest rate. Disciplined workers defence guards must be formed to deal with cop/scab violence.

From the beginning of the strike the NUM has rejected intervention from the TUC. And, given Murray's General Council majority, who would seriously believe that the TUC's 'assistance' would be aimed at anything but selling the miners out. Murray is roundly detested by strikers up and down the country for stabbing the NGA and bowing to government union-busting at GCHQ Cheltenham.

But Scargill's own version of 'solidarity', centred on the so-called Triple Alliance, has proved hardly more effective than its forebear in 1919. Aptly termed the 'Cripple Alliance' by one militant, this bureaucratic lash-up began to crumble almost the day it was formed when Bill Sirs and the steelworkers exec stabbed the NUM in the back. And the 'left' leaders of the seamen's, transport and rail unions no more want an all-out confrontation with Thatcher than Murray & Co. Welsh miners report that T&G lorry drivers are being victimised for respecting picket lines. John Bell, secretary of the NUR branch in the critical Notts area, told *Spartacist Britain* that two to five rail workers were being sent home every day for blacking coal and said he had received reports that cops were riding shotgun on the trains. Yet the national union leaderships aren't even talking about strike action to defend their own members and back the miners. As an NUR spokesman told us, the union didn't want to 'escalate' things by affecting passenger services, and was leaving responses to the victimisations to the local branches. The treachery of the trade union leaders must be combatted. The Wirral rail workers showed the way: the road to victory is solid national strike action alongside the miners.

For international labour solidarity!

Militants must sharply differentiate between the necessity to stop scab coal being imported to break the strike and the protectionist policy

of import controls pushed by 'lefts' like Scargill and Tony Benn. Import controls do not save jobs, but they do reinforce the nationalism and racism which the ruling class uses to fuel anti-union reaction at home. Just as productivity deals divide workers in this country, protectionism undercuts the capacity to appeal to workers abroad for solidarity. Posed squarely in this strike is the need to call on American and Australian dockers to black the export of coal to Britain.

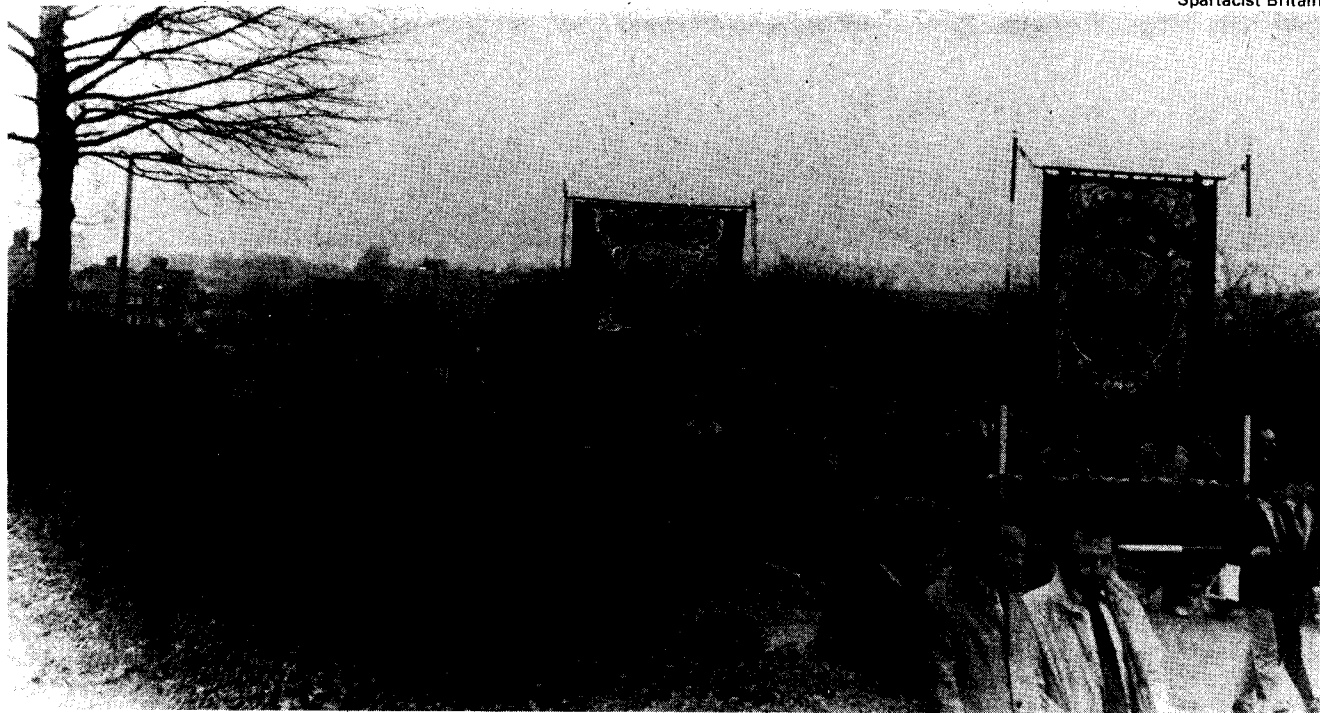
Scandalously coal is also still arriving from Poland. NUM officials have called on the Jaruzelski regime to stop the shipments. As Kent area NUM secretary Jack Collins put it, the actions of the Polish government are every bit as disgraceful as those of the scab Notts miners. With their refusal to kowtow to the anti-communist furore over Solidarnosc, the NUM leaders have some real authority to appeal to the government of the Polish deformed workers state, on the basis that Thatcher is the sworn enemy of both. It speaks volumes to the anti-working class nationalism of the Polish Stalinist regime that it is scabbing on the miners' struggle today as it did in 1972 and 1974.

Defend the workers unions, defend the workers states!

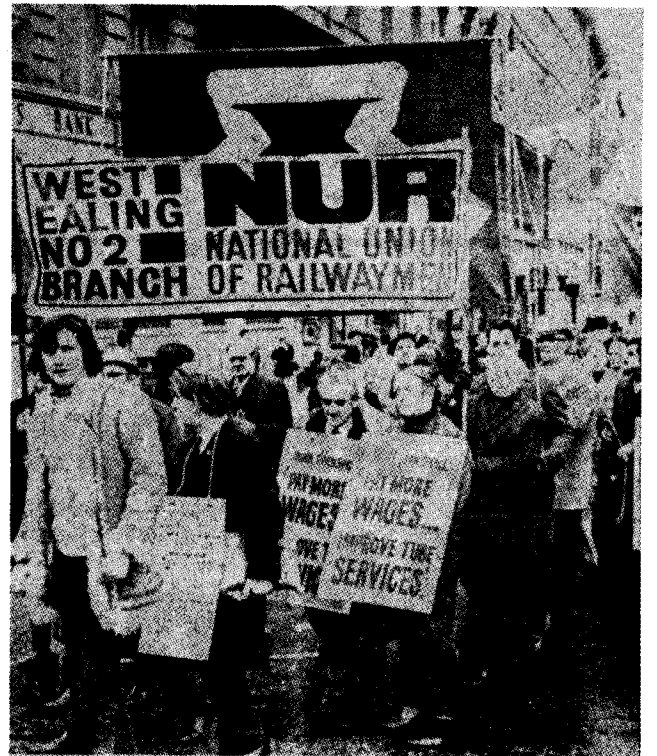
The Communist Party (CP); despite its significant base in the unions, is indistinguishable from its fellow TUC 'lefts'. *Morning Star* touted an April 5 conference of 800 shop stewards in Glasgow as a big step in building support for the miners. But the conference organisers didn't even present their earlier proposal for a token half-day general strike in Scotland. Instead, CPer Mick McGahey and other official speakers droned on about moral and financial support for the strike. But one NUR militant from London Transport, a supporter of the Spartacist League, intervened to demand, 'Shut down rail and power now' -- and was greeted with applause.

Against the rights' open scabbing and the do-nothing talk of the 'lefts', our supporters in the unions have fought to mobilise strike action. A week after the strike began, two NUR branches in London Transport adopted motions put by Spartacist supporters demanding the blacking of all coal and a national rail strike

Spartacist Britain



March 23: 4000 miners in funeral procession for murdered striker David Jones, South Kirkby, Yorks.



Railwaymen strike alongside miners, 1973-74. Spread the coal strike for victory today!

(including London Transport) in the event of any victimisations (see insert). At BL's Rover Solihull factory, the shop stewards committee endorsed a resolution initiated by a Spartacist supporter calling not only for financial and

The following motion was adopted by the Camden 3 branch, NUR, on March 21 (a similar motion was passed by Finsbury Park branch).

Our Branch notes that:

The National Union of Mineworkers is engaged in a bitter struggle against the Coal Board which poses the very future of the British trade unions;

The Thatcher government is engaged in a savage strikebreaking assault on the miners, including institution of martial law measures like the massive police occupation of the Nottinghamshire coalfields. Thatcher's bloody attacks are responsible for the murder of miners picket David Jones.

The fight of the miners is the fight of the entire working class. The NUM cannot go it alone; it is our class duty to back this fight which they are in for us all.

We therefore resolve that the NUR immediately implement the following policies:-

- 1) Honour all picket lines and black all coal, including an immediate ban on shipments from Nottinghamshire.
- 2) That in the event that the NUR or any of its members are victimised by British Rail or the government for engaging in solidarity actions with the miners, that the NUR go out on national strike, joining the miners. In particular, we resolve to shut down London Transport in the event of such victimisations.

That this motion be forwarded to the NEC for immediate consideration.

picket support but for shutting down T&G-organised open cast mines.

Meanwhile the fake left tails the pro-capitalist TUC tops. *Socialist Action*, *Socialist Organiser* and *Militant* plead for the TUC (and even Neil Kinnock) to intervene. *Militant* condones scabbing in Notts with appeals for 'special dispensation' for crossing picket lines

Are you ready to take the power?

Our 23 March miners strike supplement ran a short excerpt from Aneurin Bevin's autobiography *In Place of Fear dealing with the union leaders of the 1919 Triple Alliance and the Lloyd George government. We reprint below a fuller excerpt from the same book.*

I remember vividly Robert Smillie describing to me an interview the leaders of the Triple Alliance had with David Lloyd George in 1919. The strategy of the leaders was clear. The miners under Robert Smillie, the transport workers under Robert Williams, and the National Union of Railwaymen under James Henry Thomas, formed the most formidable combination of industrial workers in the history of Great Britain. They had agreed on the demands that were to be made on the employers, knowing well that the government

would be bound to be involved at an early stage. And so it happened. A great deal of industry was still under government wartime control and so the state power was immediately implicated.

Lloyd George sent for the Labour leaders, and they went, so Robert told me, 'truculently determined they would not be talked over by the seductive and eloquent Welshman'. At this Bob's eyes twinkled in his grave, strong face. 'He was quite frank with us from the outset', Bob went on. 'He said to us: "Gentlemen, you have fashioned, in the Triple Alliance of the unions represented by you, a most powerful instrument. I feel bound to tell you that in our opinion we are at your mercy. The Army is disaffected and cannot be relied upon. Trouble has occurred already in a number of camps. We have just

emerged from a great war and the people are eager for the reward of their sacrifices, and we are in no position to satisfy them. In these circumstances, if you carry out your threat and strike, then you will defeat us.

"But if you do so", went on Mr Lloyd George, 'have you weighed the consequences? The strike will be in defiance of the Government of the country and by its very success will precipitate a constitutional crisis of the first importance. For, if a force arises in the State which is stronger than the State itself, then it must be ready to take on the functions of the State, or withdraw and accept the authority of the State. Gentlemen', asked the Prime Minister quietly, 'have you considered, and if you have, are you ready?' From that moment on', said Robert Smillie, 'we were beaten and we knew we were.'

'to argue the case for the strike' (23 March). Leave it to an outfit which stands for having cops in the unions to look for disgusting lawyer's arguments for crossing picket lines. The Socialist Workers Party masquerades as a more militant alternative, but its trade-union supporters push the same kind of 'moral and financial' gestures as the CP. And so does the more left-talking Workers Power, calling for 'support committees', collections and a 'barrage of publicity' for the strike.

What leaves all these groups disarmed in the face of Thatcher's onslaught against the NUM is that when it comes to the key question of the anti-Soviet war drive they share Thatcher's ground. While the Eurocommunist majority of the CP openly appeals to anti-Soviet, anti-union sentiment with its pro-Solidarnosc, pro-SDP-coalitionist line, even the pro-Soviet, industrial-based 'tankie' minority bows to the Cold War union-bashers in pursuit of its 'broad left' unity. At Blackpool all the TUC 'lefts', including supporters of the CP's pro-Soviet 'tankie' minority, sat in silence while Scargill was under attack. And one organisation, the grotesquely misnamed Workers Revolutionary Party, actually helped set up the attack: with its lurid 'expose' of Scargill in the midst of the mini-Cold War in Blackpool, the WRP wilfully gave ammunition to the anti-Communist barrage aimed against Scargill and the NUM. Not surprisingly, the WRP today exhorts, the 'TUC must back the miners' (*News Line*, 28 March), a position that puts them to the right of Scargill, who at least knows better than to expect aid from Cold Warrior Len Murray.

A question of power

We of the Spartacist League and our supporters in the trade unions have thrown our full resources into fighting to win this strike. More than 15,000 copies of our special strike supplement, as well as thousands more leaflets, have been distributed up and down the country, from Scotland to Yorkshire, South Wales and Kent. Our banner on the March 29 'Democracy Day' demonstration in London stood out with its call to 'Smash Tory assault -- Miners must not stand alone!' The same day on the Liverpool demonstration, a contingent of striking miners from St Helens distributed a stack of our supplements, giving one to anybody who contributed money to the miners' strike fund. We have organised public meetings to get out the truth about the strike. In Dunscroft, South Yorks, striking miners turned out March 29 to see the



Kent NUM president Malcolm Pitt addresses London Spartacist League public meeting on miners strike, 30 March.

film 'Harlan County USA' and hear speakers including Gene Herson, a seaman from the US who is an organiser of a class-struggle opposition in the National Maritime Union. The following night a London SL public meeting featured as guest speakers Kent NUM president Malcolm Pitt and a militant from the NUR. A Spartacist spokesman laid out the central issues of this strike:

'From a simply trade union standpoint it should be obvious that if the miners are out on strike, the railwaymen don't handle scab coal, and the steelworkers don't handle coal, and the lorry drivers don't handle coal, and the powerworkers don't handle coal. The problem there is that if these simple tactics of trade-union solidarity are carried out then this country doesn't run. And the reason why these kind of elementary solidarity actions, which are now being addressed in words, have not been implemented, is because the trade union leadership and the leadership of the Labour Party are quite well aware that if they precipitate a general strike around the question of the miners, then they pose the question of power -- and they do not want to get rid of capitalism....

'And the fundamental issue that I want to address myself to is the question of the attitude towards the Russian Revolution and the Soviet Union. It's quite obvious if one looks

at this particular strike, that those elements in the workers movement who hate the Soviet Union the most are the ones that most violently talk about urging workers to cross picket lines.... And that is why Blackpool was so important.... When Scargill made that point [about Solidarnosc] and not one single delegate at the TUC congress got up to defend him when he was being red-baited, then Margaret Thatcher knew that she had a good chance of isolating this union. And that's why she provoked this.'

Today the Labour Party leadership is openly trying to sell out the miners, while from the 'left' Tony Benn, so keen to maintain unity behind Kinnock refuses even to oppose a strike-breaking ballot. The British working class is today in the throes of its most decisive struggle for many decades against the raw, naked power of the capitalist state. *This battle must be won.* The workers of this country desperately need a fighting revolutionary vanguard party, forged through splitting the Labour Party, winning the working-class base away from the pro-capitalist leaders around a programme of revolutionary class struggle. That is what the Spartacist League seeks to build, and why we say today:

- Victory to the miners!
- Spread the strike! Shut down rail, steel and the power stations!
- Smash Tory attacks! Bring down Thatcher!

RCP: Ray Chadburn Party

Picket lines mean 'don't cross!', and militant picketing is what has made the miners' strike bite and spread. The national ballot being pushed by the Tories, Fleet Street and their right-wing echoes in the union is aimed at breaking the strike. Every NUM militant knows these basic facts. But the bizarre cult known as

the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) says different:

'Picketing out is no substitute for winning political arguments with fellow workers. As a tactic picketing only becomes powerful when employed by workers who are united....

'Instead of the defeatist "we don't want a ballot because we would lose", we must declare "we're not afraid of a national ballot" and fight to win it. We don't have to commit ourselves to the result -- we do have to commit ourselves to argument. In Coventry RCP supporters are joining with miners to organise meetings with men presently at work.' (RCP leaflet, 'Strike Bulletin no 2')

In short, screw the flying pickets and take a vote. And meanwhile have pleasant chit-chat with the scabs who cross the picket lines. Miners in the Doncaster area correctly smelled a rat. At the Hatfield Miners Welfare Club on April 3, some militants had a ready reply for RCP honcho Bob Radcliffe: 'Bollocks to the ballot'. A couple of days earlier, when the RCP leaflet first appeared, the same strikers had described it as 'only good to wipe your arse on'. Radcliffe persisted with his version of Thatcherite democracy until one miner interrupted him, denouncing those 'who want democracy for scabs' and 'democracy to cross picket lines'. Then when the Spartacist comrades present pointed out that the RCP also opposed the closed shop, all hell broke loose and the RCP hurried out the door.

This gaggle of petty-bourgeois 'democrats' joins Thatcher in standing in flat opposition to just about every historic conquest and honourable tradition of the labour movement. For years the bosses have been seeking to enact legislation instituting mandatory secret ballots as a 'pre-condition' to authorising strikes. This is part and parcel of the reactionary campaign of government union bashing. The purpose of such Thatcherite measures as the 'secret ballot' is to curb militancy by atomising the working class. Class-struggle militants counterpose genuine

methods of workers democracy such as mass meetings at which strike questions are openly discussed and debated, and the institution of flying pickets, under which the more advanced and militant sectors of the working class can spread their influence.

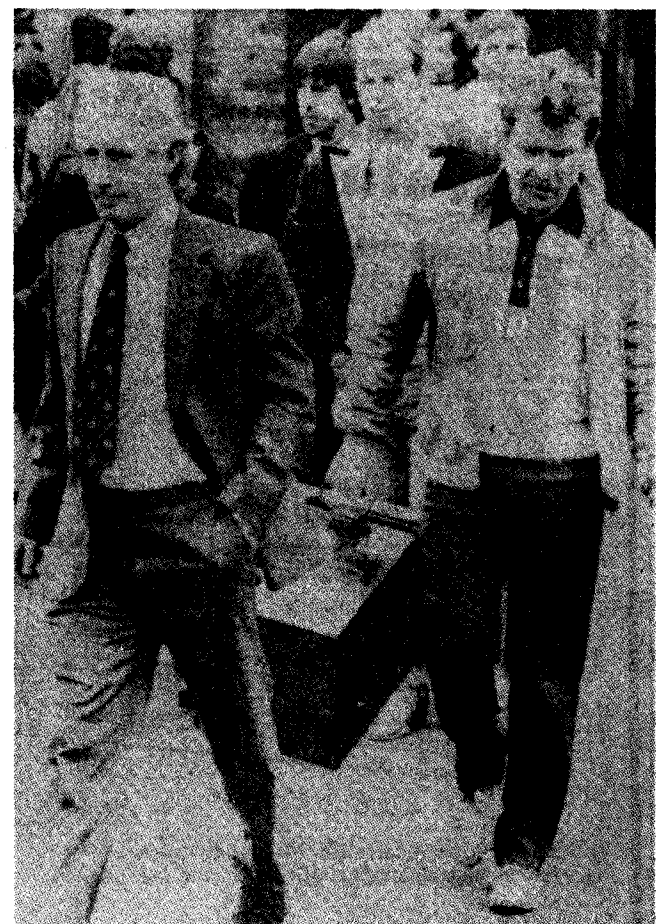
The RCP directs its appeals to the most backward sections of the class. Two months ago we called them 'Norman Tebbit socialists' for their refusal to defend the closed shop and political levy to the Labour Party against Tory attack. We said, 'This outfit believe that "The Soviet Union is the enemy of the working class." Indeed from the revolutionary conquest of the planned economy down to the closed shop, the RCP does not have the slightest conception of the class line.'

The RCP's line on the miners strike is, flatly, a strike-breaking line. Luckily few miners would ever want to listen to them. Any decent class-conscious militant ought to do like those at Hatfield and send this Ray Chadburn Party packing. They've got no place in any coalfield. ■

CONTACT THE SPARTACIST LEAGUE:
BIRMINGHAM.....(021) 554 7141
LONDON.....(01) 278 2232
SHEFFIELD.....(0742) 737067

SPARTACIST BRITAIN

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Nottingham area NUM officials carry the ballot box. Pickets not ballots!

Women organise for strike victory

While the bosses' press has devoted pages of coverage to a handful of scabs' wives, hundreds if not thousands of women have mobilised throughout the coalfields in defence of the striking miners. During the critical first days of the strike -- as flying pickets spread out from Yorkshire, Kent and South Wales to picket out scab pits, particularly in Nottinghamshire -- some 80 or so women turned out before a gaggle of press photographers in Harworth; one even theatrically brandished a toy pistol in a so-called 'gunning for Scargill' publicity stunt. Angered by such reactionary crap, wives, mothers and daughters of striking miners joined together with other women from their communities and fought back.

They started organising food and money collections for the beleaguered strikers, and also demonstrations and delegations to confront scabs and pro-scab wives. Kent women beat the police blockade at the Dartford Tunnel in order to join a demonstration against pro-scab women in Leicestershire. The statement of the Kent women's group eloquently points to their commitment to winning this class battle: 'We are engaged in the most important struggle of our lives for your future, our future and our families' future and the continued well-being of our mining industry and own communities.' These courageous women in the coalfields are demonstrating in action that in the midst of sharp social struggle, the capitalists' design to keep women isolated to home and hearth can be broken down.

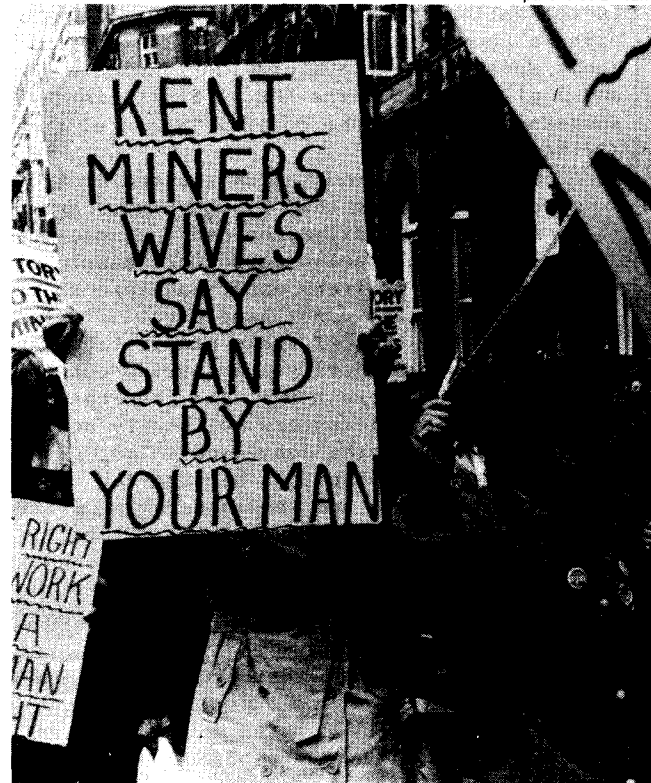
At the first meeting of the Dunscroft women's group in South Yorks, many agreed with the need to stand together with the men on the pickets and discussed child care arrangements to facilitate their playing an active role in the strike. A Spartacist League supporter was warmly applauded when she stressed the need to spread the strike, particularly to the power stations, and drew attention to the Cold War attacks on Scargill and the miners at last September's Blackpool TUC. In fact several of the leading militants in the group had cancelled previous subscriptions to *News Line* for its sinister role in fuelling the anti-Communist witchhunt against Scargill.

Two of the Dunscroft women told our comrades how they had lobbied the pithead ballot over national strike action against the Lewis Merthyr closure last year with a banner calling for a 'yes' vote. The men who laughed at them then now admit how wrong they were. And at the Coal House demo another woman described her outrage when her husband's mates expressed disgust that 'women should have to come out in support of men'. She shot back that they weren't there to 'support' the men, but because it was just as much their fight to defend the unions and jobs and get a 'half-decent life'.

The back-seat-in-the-struggle attitude of some trade unionists is also pushed by fake lefts from the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) and Workers Power group (WP), who in their interventions into the women's groups pander to the backward sentiment that women's role is to be 'supportive' and 'apolitical'. Just like Len Murray treats the Women's TUC! At the Dunscroft founding meeting, the RCP and WP restricted their interventions to 'useful hints' about or-

ganising money collections and suchlike. The most class-conscious women well know that their necessary and energetic efforts to sustain the strikers and their families through collections and the like will come to nought if the strike is dragged to defeat because of a losing strategy. A week later, one angry woman slammed an RCP'er arguing Thatcher's 'national ballot' line: 'We're not going to ballot on our livelihoods!' On another occasion, when Spartacist supporters were engaged in a lively discussion with some Dunscroft militants over the role of the Red Army intervention in liberating Afghan women from feudal slavery, a WP supporter was talking

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Miners' wives march for strike victory, London 29 March.

to another woman about ... 'chip pans' (safe enough, given their reactionary opposition to the Red Army intervention in Afghanistan).

Women are not strangers to miners' struggles. During the nineteenth century women (and children) known as 'pit brow lasses' performed various slave labour tasks in the mines. In the bitter miners' strike that dragged on for seven months after the betrayal of the 1926 General Strike, women organised food distribution and initiated all kinds of fund-raising activities. During the 1972 strike, women's groups once more emerged to play an important role in spreading and defending the strike. And this has been characteristic of miners' struggles internationally. Mother Jones, one of the most militant union organisers in the American coalfields at the turn of the century, once said: 'No matter what you fight, don't be ladylike.' The bitter Harlan County strike in the US in 1974 was a graphic example. The Brookside Women's Club earned a well-deserved reputation internationally for their courage and militancy. Brookside women threw themselves in front of scab cars and warded off scabs and strikebreaking cops with inch-thick tree branches.

As one picket at Snowdown colliery said, 'women should be able to work in the mines'. In many countries, including in the US, they do. In the Soviet Union in particular, women miners have much improved safety conditions and child care centres which allow them to go to work. Today in Britain women have become actively involved in this strike because they understand all too well the implications of defeat or victory. It is not simply that during the five-month-long overtime ban it became crystal clear to every miners' family that their supposedly 'high' rate of pay was barely enough for subsistence. The Tories are intent on destroying what is left of the NHS and are engaged in a broadside attack on women's rights -- from Thatcher's 'Victorian values', to the sinister censorship of the 'video nasties' bill, to cutting back on nurseries, to organising reactionary crusades to deny young women access to birth control.

The bosses lie that women's role is to do

nothing but bear and rear children and look after 'their men'. We communists seek to build special women's transitional organisations linked to the revolutionary party to facilitate the struggle to make working-class women leaders of the whole class. It was a demonstration of Russian working-class women in February 1917 that triggered the revolutionary upheaval which culminated in the first and only successful workers revolution in October. In our struggle to build a women's section of the future Bolshevik party in Britain we fight against all aspects of women's oppression -- against sexual discrimination in employment and education, for equal pay for equal work, for full free 24-hour child care facilities, for an end to every form of reactionary social legislation like the licensing laws and censorship codes. We have every confidence that this fighting proletarian party will include as leading elements many of the women who are now fighting to win this crucial strike with such militancy and determination.

Last autumn in West Germany, strikes and factory occupations broke out in the key Hamburg and Bremen shipyards against massive redundancies of the workforce. The nine-day Hamburg HDW (Howaldtswerke-Deutsche Werft) shipyard occupation in September was sparked in large part by the militant actions of a group of women, wives of the shipyard workers. These militants not only faced arrest for disrupting Hamburg parliament prior to the occupation but were also the only militants in the occupation itself to raise the question of class unity between foreign-born and German workers and the defence of foreign-born workers who faced deportation for their participation in the occupation. Our communist journal for women's liberation *Women and Revolution*, along with comrades of the Trotzkistische Liga Deutschlands (TLD), section of the international Spartacist tendency, interviewed one of these women, Birgit Wojak about the lessons she drew from her experience. Stressing the counterposition between the communist intervention of the TLD and the sellout of the bureaucrats and fake lefts, she said:

'The question of extension was already very close, even without a revolutionary leadership, and only a spark would have been necessary to ignite it. But with a revolutionary leadership there would have been a guarantee for extending it.... The first thing the workers have to have, that's a decent party that represents their interests.... All the political groups except the TLD said, the workers -- they're not that advanced; they can't do all that yet; and they don't understand all that yet. But I'm a worker myself. If somebody asks me ... do you want to determine how much you earn, then I'll say, of course I want to determine that. And do you also want to determine your hours and your working conditions? Then of course I say I want to determine that too. I don't have to be so all-fired advanced for that; every worker understands that. And that's what the TLD said. And it's simply necessary to have a party, one you can really turn to with your interests and doesn't turn right around and betray the workers again. ■

Young Spartacus

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NO 28 SPRING 1984

Women and Revolution

Journal of the Women's Commission of the Spartacist League

In Honor of the Women of the Paris Commune

International Women's Day 1984
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Thatcher's Cold War union-bashing at Cheltenham

Following the TUC's sellout of the NGA, Margaret Thatcher's ban on trade-union membership at the Government Communications Headquarters in Cheltenham (GCHQ) again ignited wide-scale opposition to the Tories' union-bashing offensive. On February 28 hundreds of thousands of trade unionists from civil servants to building workers and miners took various kinds of industrial action in protest. Nearly 40,000 marched through London, with smaller rallies in cities and towns up and down the country.

The Cheltenham ban is part of the ruling class's drive to turn trade unions into little more than ineffectual 'staff associations'. From the Prior and Tebbit acts to the new King legislation, the Tories continue slashing away at the right to strike and picket, the closed shop and other historic hard-won gains of the working class. The latest 'think tank' leak shows that Thatcher wants a no-strike rule in essential services including gas, electricity, water and health, and a ban on strikes which affect these services (including transport and the mines). Already a no-strike rule for phone workers has been added to the Telecommunications Bill in Parliament.

The blanket ban on trade unions at GCHQ implemented on March 1 harbingers the threat that all government employees and the broader labour movement face. At the same time basic democratic rights and liberties are increasingly threatened by legislation like the Police Bill. Now she talks of McCarthyite purges of opponents of government policy (including CND members and even Liberal and SDP supporters) from part of the civil service, and total bans on political activity in the army. These sweeping attacks on basic rights, including the very right of trade unions to function or even exist, must be stopped through mobilising the social power of the labour movement. Defend trade-union rights at GCHQ! Smash the Tories' reactionary onslaught!

The Cheltenham ban directly serves the NATO imperialist anti-Soviet war drive. GCHQ is an integral part of the mammoth international spy network directed against the USSR and other Warsaw Pact countries and run by the sinister American National Security Agency (NSA). Established through a secret 1946 treaty between the US and British (Labour) governments, GCHQ monitors communications and intelligence from the Soviet bloc as well as compiles its files on 75,000 individuals, including so-called 'enemies of the realm' like trade-union militants and leftists. Under Tory and Labour administrations alike, GCHQ provided the Americans with crucial information during the Vietnam War which undoubtedly helped the US army murder thousands of heroic Vietnamese fighters.

Britain is about the only country where you can even imagine workers at such an institution being unionised. It must have horrified the CIA/NSA as they geared up for Cold War II, especially when industrial action at Cheltenham reportedly disrupted intelligence-gathering at the time of the December 1979 Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and the rise of Polish Solidarnosc in 1980-81. Then came the Geoffrey Prime case, when a minor GCHQ operative arrested for child molesting turned out to have been passing information to the Russians for years previously. And all this after Burgess, Maclean, Philby, Blunt and god-knows-who-else. Since the CIA/NSA foot most of the bill for GCHQ anyway, they must have wished they could just cut the British off and run the show themselves. 'Jeezus', someone in the CIA or NSA HQ must have exclaimed, 'they've got unions too! Goddamn British unions with strikes for longer tea breaks, work-to-rules every other Thursday and shop stewards who speak Russian!' So the US demanded improved security vetting with polygraphs and a union ban. And the diehard anti-Communist union-hater Thatcher was only too happy to comply.

True to form, the Labour Party/trade-union misleaders have sought to turn the defence of trade-union rights at Cheltenham into a question of (bourgeois) 'national interest'. Their rallying cry is not 'Defend the unions' but 'Who is endangering national security?' CPSA head



Civil servants rally against GCHQ ban (top). Thatcher and Reagan: union-bashers and anti-Soviet warmongers (bottom).

Alistair Graham pleaded that his members would be distressed if they really damaged the spy network at Cheltenham and vowed he would have given Thatcher a no-strike pledge if she'd only asked. In Parliament Denis Healey complained that the decision was a 'kick in the teeth for all those union leaders who had been prepared to try to develop a constructive relationship with the Government'. From the 'left', Tony Benn chimed in with a reported comment about how he helped set up 'positive vetting' (nice polite English security checks without horrible American lie detectors) when in office. Fresh from his Washington junket to pay homage to Ronald Reagan ('a man with whom I have a great deal in common'), Neil Kinnock made clear his own fealty

to the Cold War right by sacking two of his 'left' MPs from the opposition Front Bench. Their 'crime' was to vote against the Tories on an SDP-initiated motion attacking Thatcher's handling of the GCHQ affair, thus defying a parliamentary whip demanding abstention. Throughout the dispute the bureaucrats, Labour and union alike, worked overtime to channel working class anger into social-chauvinist concern for the effective functioning of the imperialist anti-Soviet war machine.

As fighters for the interests of all workers and oppressed, we oppose the very existence of counterrevolutionary spy agencies like GCHQ and its NSA big brother. But we recognise that the imperialists' bloody state spying and snooping can only be ended through mobilising the working class to rip power from the hands of the capitalists through socialist revolution. Even then, rather than shut down GCHQ the victorious proletariat might well need to turn it around against the inevitable bourgeois reaction at home and abroad. (We'd have to rename it though: perhaps the Donald Maclean Communications HQ?)

And we certainly do not equate the white-collar clerical workers in GCHQ with their war-mad imperialist paymasters. Nor do we equate the GCHQ spy clerks with cops and prison guards, the racist armed thugs and professional strike-breakers of the ruling class whose so-called 'unions' should be expelled from the labour movement. The relationship of the former to their job is the relationship of paper to pencil or keyboard to computer terminal; for the latter it is the relationship of a truncheon and a gun to someone's skull and vital organs. In general, white-collar workers tend to make pretty low-grade unionists. Given the nature of the place and current circumstances, a lot of these 8000 may not exactly be the types you'd want to recruit to a communist organisation (from all reports they voted Tory last election). But the fact that, like the American PATCO air controllers, GCHQ's workers are a normally conservative and fairly marginal sector of the labour movement points only to the depth of the Tories' attacks and intentions.

The central issue at stake here is whether these workers can exercise their fundamental right to belong to a union. Thatcher, firm upholder of 'free world' (pro-capitalist) trade unions for Poland, says they can't. And behind this attack stands a much broader assault on the basic rights, the jobs and the working conditions of broad sectors of the labour movement and the oppressed. Defence of these rights and liberties requires hard class struggle to take on and defeat the capitalist attacks, and that requires the ousting of the pro-imperialist bureaucrats and the forging of a new revolutionary leadership of the labour movement. Stop the union bashers! Defend democratic rights! Defend the workers unions, defend the workers states! ■

Free Sarah Tisdall!

Sarah Tisdall, 23, was a junior Foreign Office clerk until her outrageous sentence to six months in Holloway Prison at the Old Bailey 23 March. Her crime? She handed classified documents by Defence Secretary Michael Heseltine to the *Guardian* which revealed the planned arrival date of cruise missiles at Greenham Common airbase as well as certain details about security at the base. The government sought to suppress this information, in particular publicly lying about the arrival date of cruise, in order to avoid politically embarrassing demonstrations by the Greenham women and other anti-cruise protesters. When the *Guardian* published one of the documents, Thatcher unleashed Scotland Yard to hunt down the 'mole' and make an example of her. Under court order, *Guardian* editor Peter Preston handed the document original over to police, Tisdall was interrogated, gave herself up and was charged with a breach of Section 2 of the Official Secrets Act.

Questioned in court on her view of nuclear weapons, Sarah Tisdall said: 'I realise that

under present circumstances we have to have them. But I felt this was indecent, sort of doing it by the back door, and I could not stomach it.' An unlikely heroine, Tisdall simply believed that the government could be constrained by a modicum of moral decency; but how wrong she was. Cruise installation is integral to NATO imperialism's drive to war against the Soviet Union, and Thatcher will not allow any disruption to the war preparations, however partial or ineffectual. She seeks to drive home a series of punitive 'lessons': the constant harassment, arrest and eviction of Greenham women, the attack on GCHQ workers and now Sarah Tisdall's vindictive jailing.

The Labour Party sought to make political capital out of the affair in parliament by decrying the use of the Official Secrets Act to railroad Tisdall to prison. Thatcher's reply was brief, scornful and appropriate: Labour never abolished or even amended this act while in office. Indeed the last Labour government's anti-

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For permanent revolution in southern Africa!

Black front line states bow to racist South Africa

In the steamy no man's land along the crocodile-filled Komati River in southern Africa, a solemn diplomatic ceremony took place in a wood-panelled railway car originally built for King George VI. Mozambique's 'Marxist' president Samora Machel embraced South Africa's Pieter Botha and flourishing solid gold pens they signed a non-aggression pact pledging not to support any insurgents seeking to overthrow the other's government. In the background former Frelimo guerrillas, who had fought Portuguese colonialism, mingled amiably with white South African soldiers. To prove its new friendship with the apartheid butchers, Mozambican police have since raided the homes of African National Congress militants, seized their weapons and arrested at least four.

Across the continent a joint military force of 300 Angolan and 300 South African troops is now patrolling the Namibian border to enforce the recent cease-fire. Reportedly this Angolan/South African force has on three occasions encountered and bloodied groups of SWAPO guerrillas fighting to liberate black Namibia from South African rule. The so-called black 'front line' states have become South Africa's front line against the forces battling apartheid imperialism.

American Cold War liberal journalist Flora Lewis observed: 'The nonaggression pact with Mozambique and the cease-fire with Angola, though still tenuous, look like a triumph for South Africa' (*New York Times*, 22 March). They are no less a triumph for US imperialism. In fact, the State Department's top African troubleshooter Chester Crocker brokered both deals. A decade ago US imperialism suffered a major setback in southern Africa when Soviet-backed nationalist forces in Mozambique and Angola won their independence from Portuguese colonialism. Ever since, and especially after Reagan took the reins, Washington has encouraged and backed South Africa's murderous efforts to overthrow these black nationalist regimes or force them to submit to the 'free world'.

Mimicking his big brothers in Washington, Botha describes his campaign of massive state terror against the surrounding black states as the 'promotion of stability and the strengthening of democratic forces against communist subversion' (*Johannesburg Star*, 27 November 1982). Ravaged militarily and starved into submission, the desperately impoverished bourgeois-nationalist regimes in Mozambique and Angola have been broken by South African imperialism. Once Soviet clients, they are now entering the 'free world'. Their entry fee is to be paid in blood, the blood of the courageous militants of the African National Congress of South Africa and the guerrillas of SWAPO who have been fighting apartheid imperialism for 18 years.

'Machel has betrayed black Africa in its quest for freedom', exclaimed a black office worker in Johannesburg (*New York Times*, 20 March). No one can question that. But what is involved here is not simply the treachery of one man, despicable as that is. The pan-Africanist notion of a classless unity against the apartheid system has always been a myth. The wretchedly backward bourgeois states of black Africa -- their economies arrested by the world capitalist market, their borders artificially drawn across tribal groupings by the old colonial powers -- cannot achieve genuine national independence, much less liberation from imperialism. Despite constant declarations of undying opposition to apartheid, the black 'front line' states are economic colonies of South African capitalism, the industrial powerhouse of the region. Mozambique is little more than a glorified bantustan supplying South Africa with port facilities and, most important, contract labour for its gold mines. Angola's rich diamond mines are owned by South Africa's De Beers. (Its other main export, oil, is owned by the American multinational Gulf.)

The struggle for genuine national independence for all the peoples of southern Africa is inseparably linked to the struggle for prolet-



Mozambique's president Samora Machel (left) becomes border guard for South Africa's Pieter Botha.

arian socialist revolution in South Africa. It is the black industrial proletariat of South Africa -- from the gold mines of the Rand, to the docks of Durban, to the car factories of the East Cape -- which has the social power not only to overthrow white racist rule but to liberate all of black Africa from the murderous military despots, tribalist chieftains and treacherous nationalist demagogues who suck the blood of their people.

At the same time, the struggles for national liberation on the periphery of South Africa destabilise the apartheid state and inspire its black masses to resist. Thus, the Soweto uprising in the summer of 1976 erupted just months after the South African army was driven out of Angola by Cuban troops. Here we see the reciprocal dynamic of permanent revolution in southern Africa. What is needed to realise the programme of permanent revolution is a Trotskyist vanguard party linking South Africa's black proletariat to the struggles for national liberation and democratic demands throughout the region. Such a communist vanguard can be forged



Free ANC leader Nelson Mandela imprisoned for 20 years by racist South African police state!

only through political combat with petty-bourgeois nationalism.

MPLA nationalists become border guards for apartheid

When the petty-bourgeois nationalist Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) finally won independence from Portugal in 1975 after a bloody decades-long struggle, South Africa launched a massive invasion, backed by the US, attempting to install its puppets in power. US imperialism, fresh from its humiliating defeat in Vietnam, was unable to intervene directly, and the apartheid terrorists were driven out of Angola through the introduction of thousands of dedicated Cuban troops. Now numbering between 25,000 and 30,000, the Cuban troops, armed with Soviet tanks and SAM missiles, have protected Angola's hard-won independence against the Pretoria/Washington axis.

And this protection has been desperately needed. Since 1975 South Africa has invaded Angola 12 times, the latest and biggest attack coming last December-January. South Africa's war machine has killed several thousand Angolan villagers, uprooted millions of people, economically devastated entire regions and destroyed resources estimated at £5 billion. South Africa carved out a 30-mile-wide zone in southern Angola, from which it supplied air cover and logistics to its puppet forces of Jonas Savimbi's UNITA, wreaking terror and economic sabotage throughout the southern third of the country.

The public pretext for Pretoria's massive use of state terror in Angola was the suppression of the SWAPO (South-West Africa People's Organisation) military bases. Pretoria and Washington also insisted that independence for Namibia be conditional on the 'parallel' withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. Until a few months ago the MPLA regime vocally rejected this 'linkage' and constantly reaffirmed its support to SWAPO. Even as he was negotiating to betray them, Angola's minister of external relations, Paulo Jorge, declared, 'it is the absolute duty of the Frontline states, just as it is the duty of all African countries to support the ANC, to continue to help SWAPO' (*AfricaAsia*, February 1984). The MPLA nationalists are 'helping' SWAPO all right -- helping the South African army kill them.

Shortly after the deal with Pretoria, Angolan president Jose Eduardo dos Santos flew to Havana to discuss the question of Cuban troops. According to the Cuban-Angolan statement, Cuban troops are to be withdrawn upon South Africa's mere promise to carry out various UN resolutions on Namibian independence. In other words, South Africa will still occupy Namibia, its army will still be poised on the Angolan border after the Cuban forces are withdrawn.

The direct and immediate victims of the Angola/South Africa deal are the SWAPO guerrillas and the peoples of Namibia. But the wily politicians of the MPLA may be too treacherous for their own good. Once the Cuban forces are gone, what is to prevent South Africa's racist rulers from tearing up their agreements, invading Angola once again and this time going all the way and installing Jonas Savimbi in Luanda's presidential palace. Honour? In any event, the MPLA nationalists are selling their people to apartheid imperialism.

The past decade has seen a rising line of black struggle within white-ruled South Africa

Cops target strike supporters

In a nationally-coordinated operation thousands of police have swamped Nottinghamshire and other Midlands coalfields, attempting to break the striking miners' fight to picket out scab pits. Leon Brittan's cops have blocked roads, seized cars, smashed windscreens, threatened Kent miners with arrest just for leaving their own area. Counties like Yorkshire where the strike is solid have been transformed into open prisons for the strikers. The Nottingham and District NUR confirms that police have mounted coal trains on the Nottingham to Gedley line to thwart union blacking instructions. Suspicion is rife among pickets that SAS and paratroopers dressing in police uniforms have been deployed for strikebreaking.

Despite this martial law operation many strikers and supporters have succeeded in making their way to the picket lines, sometimes walking miles to beat the cop blockade. Already one picket militant, young David Jones, has been murdered, a martyr in the class war raging today in the coalfields. With calculated barbarity, the police even stopped a coachload of South Wales miners bound for his funeral procession in Yorkshire on March 23, in order to ensure they arrived late.

Hundreds of strikers have been arrested on trumped-up charges of 'obstructing the highway' (read: standing on the pavement) and 'threatening and abusive words' or 'behaviour with intent to provoke a breach of the peace' (read: shouting the word 'scab', simply being a picket or spitting -- black lung is an occu-

pational hazard for miners). Three Yorkshire miners found themselves arrested simply for being in a Nottinghamshire pub (though the cops later felt compelled not to press charges). Arrested strikers have been subjected to sweeping Star Chamber political interrogation by Special Branch aimed at conjuring a sinister 'Communist conspiracy' behind the miners' strike. Especially in Nottinghamshire punitive bail conditions have been imposed in a special processing operation (including late-night court sittings) centred on Mansfield Court. To avoid months-long incarceration whilst awaiting trial pickets have been compelled to agree to keep away from all NCB property apart from their home pit for the duration of the strike.

And it's not just the miners themselves who have been harassed, intimidated, arrested and taken out of circulation by Thatcher's martial law. The dragnet has been extended to trade union and socialist supporters of the strike. Three supporters of the Spartacist League were arrested near Welbeck Colliery in Notts on March 22 solely because their car contained *Spartacist Britain* supplements supporting the strike and calling for a strategy to win it 'Down with Thatcher's martial law in the coalfields: Spread the strike! Black all coal! Shut down the power stations!' -- it is that political statement for a winning strike strategy (reprinted in full in our strike supplement) that the cops were out to suppress. The three comrades had not even reached a

picket line when they were hauled in. The moment the cops read the literature they were arrested, photographed and threatened with breach of the peace charges before being carted off to Mansfield police station. There they were held for five hours before the county Chief Prosecuting Solicitor figured out that the cops were playing with fire and had them released without charges. But on the same day two other SL supporters were arrested and charged with 'breach of the peace' after simply handing out leaflets on a picket line at Blidworth Colliery (these charges are still pending).

These arrests add a further sinister dimension to the police strikebreaking efforts. *The right even to distribute literature supporting a strike and urging a strategy for victory is under threat.* While Thatcher and Fleet Street rave on about imposing 'democracy' on the NUM, their cops and courts impose sweeping martial law measures on anyone who wants to see this strike win. If proof was needed that the bosses' state -- even with its windbaggy in Westminster -- is an organ of class repression against the workers and oppressed, this vicious strikebreaking offensive should do it.

We say: Drop the charges against all the arrested strikers and strike supporters! Hands off the workers' press! But it will not be the Labour Party's appeals for parliamentary 'investigations' into the police measures that smashes this martial law in the coalfields and avenges the murder of picket martyr David Jones, but a sweeping class struggle mobilisation that can win this strike. Victory to the miners! Spread the strike now!

-- the 1973 Durban mass strike, the Soweto uprising in 1976, the explosive growth of black trade unions. The African National Congress (ANC), which had been decimated and reduced to a shell of an organisation in the 1960s, has experienced a remarkable resurgence despite savage repression. For the survival of the apartheid rulers, the destruction of the ANC is even more important than the suppression of the SWAPO guerrillas. Hence the nonaggression pact with Mozambique.

So the apartheid rulers are determined, as the ANC put it, 'to compel the independent countries of our region to act as Pretoria's agents in emasculating the ANC'. Immediately after the attack on the air force headquarters in Pretoria, South African jets bombed ANC offices in Maputo, located in the same neighbourhood as Machel's presidential palace. At the same time, South African-organised terrorists have been carrying out a campaign of economic sabotage, which along with drought caused the deaths of 40,000 Mozambican villagers from starvation. While starving Mozambique's people, Botha & Co are offering the Frelimo officialdom a generous supply of Krugerrands. One of them, perhaps with an eye on opening a Swiss bank account, exulted during the negotiations for the nonaggression pact, 'South Africa will give us everything we need' (*Wall Street Journal*, 7 March). Don't bet on it.

Even before this pact the Machel regime did not permit ANC military bases on its territory, only political offices. 'We have made it clear to South Africa that we do not have ANC military bases and will not allow the ANC to use Mozambique as a springboard for attacks on South African territory', Machel's foreign minister stated late last year (*Washington Post*, 2 January). However, ANC militants were able to slip across the long, ill-guarded border and carry out attacks on South African police and military installations. While these raids have a very limited military effect, the political impact is great. When an ANC car-bomb attack demolished the air force headquarters in downtown Pretoria last May, all of black South Africa rejoiced at this humiliating blow against their apartheid masters.

When asked by a Western journalist how a 'hardline Marxist' like himself could make such a deal with the most despised imperialist country on earth, Machel replied blandly: 'South Africa is a racist country with apartheid. But they, too, want peace.' And, of course, South Africa's white slave masters do want peace. They want to pacify the tens of millions of black toilers under their brutal racist rule. The Machel and dos Santos have become the border guards of the vast and horrible slave plantation of South Africa/Namibia.

We hail the heroism of the ANC militants and we stand with them against the apartheid state and its black border guards like Machel and dos Santos. But their struggle against the apartheid system is subverted by the ANC's strategy, also promoted by the Stalinist Communist Party of South Africa, of seeking to pressure 'liberal' elements of the white ruling class such as gold

and diamond magnate Harry Oppenheimer, and the 'democratic' imperialist countries, such as Reagan's America, into forcing the South African government to abandon apartheid. The apartheid system cannot be 'reformed'. It must be smashed. The black working class mobilising behind it all the oppressed masses of South Africa will be the gravedigger of apartheid. On that grave, and under the leadership of a revolutionary vanguard communist party, will arise a black-centred workers and peasants government, the industrial core of a Socialist United States of Africa.

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Tisdall...

(Continued from page 5)

working class crimes included the authorisation of prosecution under the very same act in the 1978 ABC official secrets trial. Ex-army corporal John Berry and journalists Crispin Aubrey and Duncan Campbell were tried and convicted for leaking information about Britain's signals intelligence services to *Time Out* magazine. Meanwhile the spineless liberals of the *Guardian* have taken time out from decrying the 'violence' of NGA and miners' union strikers to agonise over their 'painful' decision to pass the incriminating evidence to the cops. Naturally these righteous gentlemen didn't get themselves charged with anything, while the woman they helped finger languishes in prison.

Sarah Tisdall has committed absolutely no crime from the point of view of the working class and oppressed; indeed she sought in her own way to perform an honourable and useful service. As part of our fight against this government's across-the-board attacks on basic rights and its lockstep march with Ronald Reagan towards anti-Soviet nuclear way, we say:

- Free Sarah Tisdall!
- Down with the Official Secrets Act!

Lanka...

(Continued from page 8)

created a deep hatred in the minds of Sinhala communalists. We were subject to filthy disgrace and threats by angered Sinhala communalists.

The challenge by the Tamil nationalist movement in the North and East has created a situation where a government dedicated to fulfilling interests of the capitalists cannot smoothly function. The main challenge to the government within the country today is the Tamil Question (National Question). JR's plans are to attempt to get out of this problem and launch an attack on the left simultaneously. It is according to this plan that all others -- especially the left -- were blamed by the government for the recent anti-Tamil communal violence, except for the people who really did it.

After the leftists were blamed for the anti-Tamil riots in July and the suppression then expanded to leftist parties, now *Lanka Spartacist* and *Elangai Spartacist* are targeted for

suppression. Comrade Vincent Thomas, publisher of *Lanka Spartacist* and *Elangai Spartacist*, was called to the infamous fourth floor of the Secret Police (CID) to be questioned on articles explaining our position on the Tamil national question and against the oppression of the Tamil people. Here a police officer abused him in filthy language and severely assaulted him. This cannot be treated as an isolated incident. It is a result of state repression extended to the leftists.

After completely creating the suitable economic and legislative environment for capitalist exploitation, now JR's government has lined up behind Reagan for anti-Soviet activities. The discussions JR had with the chairman of the US Congress defence committee, Joseph Addabbo, and with the US Congress delegation during the past few days reflects the keenness of the government to move closer and closer to the anti-Soviet camp. It is reported that JR asked them to 'provide a large ship capable of strengthening the Sri Lanka Navy and to provide modern combat training to the Sri Lanka Navy personnel'. The delegation had informed JR that, 'we will recommend to the US government to immediately release US\$350,000 for Lanka's defence activities' and that they will consider the 'special request'. These are the same things that American imperialists do elsewhere in the world.

It is clearly seen that the opportunity for American military activities as in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Grenada to be repeated in this country is not too distant. This pro-imperialist programme of the UNP led by JR should be defeated. Tamil people's rights and their security should be guaranteed. Suppression of the left movement should be defeated. The plans to offer even an inch of land from this country to American imperialists for their war drive against the Soviet Union should be smashed. Only through workers' actions can all plans of the capitalist class and of their government be defeated.

Spartacist League/Lanka
16 January 1984

Spartacist League Public Meeting

MINERS MUST NOT STAND ALONE!

Birmingham Thursday 12 April
7.30 pm
The Crown
Broad Street

With speakers from South Wales NUM and TGWU Rover Solihull (in a personal capacity)
for more information ring (021) 554 7141

SPARTACIST BRITAIN

Stop racist deportations! Defend Muhammad Idrish!

Muhammad Idrish, a Bangladeshi social worker and active member of NALGO in Birmingham, is under threat of deportation. Since 1977 the Home Office has subjected him to repeated harassment concerning the details of his marriage to a Scottish woman, in order to prevent him having the right to permanent residence in Britain. Now the Home Office threatens to deport him on the grounds that his marriage has broken down. The Spartacist League says: Stop this racist deportation! Full citizenship rights for all workers and their families!

Idrish is officially defended by his union, a number of local trades councils and minority organisations throughout the country. Last October approximately 500 trade unionists, leftists and minorities demonstrated in Birmingham against the threatened deportation. Following an earlier such protest in June last year the Home Office called Muhammad to London for a hearing on less than 24 hours notice --

where his appeal was once more rejected.

Over 2000 people a year are now being deported from Britain, many of them ending up in concentration camp style deportation centres. Increasingly the deportations are being carried out on the basis of 'misinformation', based on the omission of even the most trivial details from immigration interviews at the time of entry. Under the new Nationality Act, such categories of persons are no longer deported but simply 'removed', which means they have no right of appeal. Church and liberal organisations have been alarmed at the nakedly racist character of the deportations over the past 18 months or so. The *Guardian* (3 April) quoted one anti-deportation campaigner saying, 'with Waddington [present immigration minister] it's ... as if he feels campaigns are just run by a load of Bolshies ... and becomes more determined not to give in'.

The organised labour movement has the

social power to lead all the oppressed in a fight to stop these deportations and all the capitalists' across-the-board attacks on minorities and on basic democratic rights. In Muhammad Idrish Defence Campaign meetings, as well as in trade unions and colleges in the Birmingham area, Spartacist members and supporters have fought for Muhammad's defence, calling for the mobilisation of labour to demand citizenship rights for minority workers, to smash the racist immigration laws and Nationality Act, and to forge union/minority defence guards to crush racist/fascist attacks.

NALGO and the Defence Campaign have called a national demonstration, demanding 'Muhammad must stay -- Stop the deportations!', for Wednesday, May 9 on the eve of his appearance in the appeal court. Assemble Temple tube, London, 11.30 am. Defend Muhammad Idrish! Stop the racist deportations!

Down with anti-Tamil terror!

Hands off Lanka Spartacists!

In the aftermath of the July 1983 anti-Tamil massacres in Sri Lanka, the bonapartist UNP government under president J R Jayewardene has continued and even escalated its assaults on leftists and pro-Tamil organisations. On 28 March Sri Lankan air force troops opened fire on a Tamil crowd in Chunnakkam, near Jaffna, killing 10 and seriously wounding 25 people. JR then announced an emergency 'National Freedom Defence Fund' to 'defend the shores of Sri Lanka'. From 1 April virtual martial law was enforced in Jaffna and Trincomalee. Accusing India of harbouring Tamil guerrillas, JR further announced a general call-up of civilians to 'defend national freedom'.

Our comrades of the Spartacist League/Lanka too have been targetted because of their courageous defence of the brutally oppressed Tamil minority. We print below a statement from the Spartacist League/Lanka (SL/L) protesting the suppression of *Lanka Spartacist* (in Sinhala) and *Elangai Spartacist* (in Tamil) and the murderous threat against their publisher, Vincent Thomas. The murder threat took place when comrade Vincent, summoned by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) secret police, appeared for interrogation on January 5. As stated in his complaint of January 8:

'During this time the police officer who was seated at the other table nearby came up to me, scolded [me] in filth[y] [language] and hit me seven or eight times on my face and head. Thereafter he caught me by my neck, took me to the window and threatened saying "It is from here Dodampe Mudalali was pushed. Jump you rascal!"'

Dodampe Mudalali, a member of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, was in fact pushed to his death from the fourth floor CID office during the 1965-70 UNP government. The secret police are well known for their tactic of setting up the deaths of leftists and oppositionists to look like suicide, destroying their homes and then accusing them of having been 'terrorist Tamil Tigers' or 'spies' for the Tigers. It is particularly galling for the authorities that the SL/L raised its voice against Tamil repression in the Sinhala community. We demand: Hands off SL/L and other left parties! Stop repression against



Colombo, Sri Lanka: Devastation of Tamil property during last summer's anti-Tamil terror. Spartacist League/Lanka actively defended Tamil people against massacre.

Lanka and *Elangai Spartacist* immediately! Stop anti-Tamil terror!

COLOMBO -- Local and foreign capitalists have laid big hopes on JR. The only aim of the capitalists is to use JR to fulfill their ambitions. More than any others, the American imperialists have laid great hopes on JR. This is why JR has been known as a pro-American throughout a long period. For Reagan's war drive against the Soviet Union, JR was the man he was searching for in Lanka. From the day he came into power JR began implementing one by one the hopes of the local capitalists and of the foreign imperialists. For that, he has up to now taken many actions.

These aims of the Lankan capitalists and im-

perialists did not originate automatically. They are the results of the subjective conditions of the greatest economic crash since the depression in the 1930s. JR understands these very well. He took power with the intention of doing everything possible for the capitalists. His ambition is to do everything that other capitalist rulers failed to do.

From the beginning JR took steps to prevent labour action. For this, legislative regulations, thug forces and the state armed forces were used. The meaning of this was the suppression of the left movement. Just like the craziness of Reagan's attempt to 'stop the expansion of communism' -- a

thing that not only he but even his 'God' will never be able to do -- JR's intention is to suppress the left movement and stop all its activities.

This anti-labour-left suppression plan of the UNP [United National Party] government led by JR was disclosed in advance through *Lanka Spartacist* and *Elangai Spartacist*. The voice of *Lanka Spartacist* and *Elangai Spartacist* against the continuous suppression of the Tamil people echoed not only within but even outside the island. Whilst reporting to the working class and to the other oppressed classes in this country about the activities of the proletarian internationalists denouncing the suppression of the Tamil people in Lanka, we clearly explained the Marxist position on the national problem. This

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