



Blockade the power stations - Freeze Thatcher!

Road, rail, docks: Strike with the miners!

How can we make this a winter of victory? How can this government of war on the working class and all oppressed be brought to its knees?

Approaching the New Year, Arthur Scargill declared that the 140,000 striking miners and their families were even more solid and determined than at the start of the ten-month-old struggle. The post-Christmas 'back to scab' dribble appears to be going nowhere. The court-appointed receiver was last seen outside a bank entrance in Luxem-

bourg. Yet the power stations continue to work, the labour misleaders continue to sit on their hands, Thatcher & Co continue trying to starve the miners into submission. After promising for months that the NUM striking alone could inflict massive power cuts, Peter Heathfield recently backtracked with his tacitly defeatist pronouncement that, thanks to the Electricity Board's massive switch to oil and scab coal imports, power cuts were unlikely this winter.

The first days of 1985 see stalemate in the miners strike. But a waiting game is no way to win a war. Since the Brighton TUC the NUM leadership has looked all too often to the Congress House gang to implement their meaningless pledges of 'support', while the extent of picketing outside power stations has actually declined. But while the TUC worthies do everything to force the NUM back to work, many hundreds of rail and transport workers have been victimised for blacking coal. A massive campaign must be launched for all unions who claim to support the miners, in particular the rail and transport unions, to join the NUM in a fighting Triple Alliance and launch a general strike through co-ordinated national strike action. And miners together with railwaymen, transport workers and other militant trade unionists must throw up mass picket lines to blockade the power stations. That is the road to victory this winter.

Break the bureaucrats' stranglehold!

Today Thatcher's army of occupation terrorises the coalfields, but her war on the 'enemy within' targets many more than the miners. The Tories are destroying whole industries and whole communities. Their immigration laws and cop terror brutalise black and Asian minorities. Their troops shoot down unarmed Catholics in Northern Ireland. The recent Appeal Court verdict in the Victoria Gillick case effectively outlaws contraception for young women, thus cruelly condemning thousands to unwanted pregnancies or back street abortions.

The miners strike has become a beacon to all the oppressed, in this country and around the world. Women from the coalfields have stepped into the forefront of the battle. The



Strikers battle riot police at Kellingley last September. Don't let Labour/TUC traitors betray the miners!

broadly-based Miners Christmas Appeal easily doubled its fundraising target. One letter of support read: 'Middle class, middle aged, middle income, middle voters, but very much on your side'.

From the Soviet Union to France and more, millions of pounds in money and food donations have poured in to help the miners. This proletarian internationalism in action provides a vivid contrast to the nationalist protectionism of import controls pushed by various labour officials (including the NUM leadership), which only set worker against worker along national lines. Inspiringly, even the poverty-stricken, bitterly-repressed black National Union of Mineworkers in South Africa has offered a financial contribution to its British namesake. Millions are itching to see the Iron Lady eat dirt. But victory for the miners requires a struggle against the Labour/TUC saboteurs and their 'left' allies who refuse to launch strike action.

A number of small pseudo-revolutionary organisations have banked everything on appeals for the TUC to call a general strike. Recently several leading Labour 'lefts' like Tony Benn have also begun whiffling about it. But Len Murray didn't get a peerage along with Frank Chapple for nothing. They bought their seats in the Lords through their assiduous efforts to cripple the power of the trade unions, particularly the NUM, on behalf of Thatcher & Co. The Cold War split in the unions highlighted by the advent of 'new realism' and the anti-communist witchhunt of Arthur Scargill at Blackpool '83 has seen the right-wing TUC chiefs openly acting as agents of the bosses.

Indeed today's TUC has not simply ensured the isolation of the strike but has been carefully fashioned to play the role of administering the coup de grace to this militant struggle. The ruling class would like to see

John Harris (IFL)

a sellout defeat engineered by the TUC, with the attendant demoralisation that would inflict throughout the ranks of the labour movement. John Lloyd, writing in the 4 January *Financial Times* explained that if Tory energy secretary Walker "find[s] the 'drift back' strategy is stuck, he will turn to the TUC in the expectation of finding men who want a settlement as much as he does and who might be prepared to put pressure on the NUM to achieve one". Meanwhile, the Kinnock/Hattersley Labour Party leadership is rightly despised throughout the coalfields for its violence-baiting defeatism and sabotage.

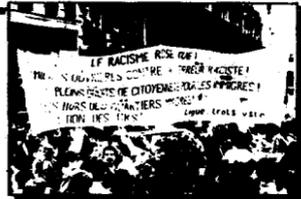
Eric Hammond and Norm Willis have picked up where the good lords Chapple and Murray left off, turning a blind eye to or even actively assisting one of the largest and most expensive strikebreaking

operations in history, aimed at keeping the power stations in operation and preventing General Winter from coming to the miners' aid. A year ago 5 per cent of the power output came from oil; now with the aid of North Sea oil and imports this is nearly 50 per cent.

Meanwhile coal imports, primarily from the United States and Poland, have virtually doubled. Massive 25,000 tonne coal loaders are leaving American ports from Chicago to Virginia and the Gulf Coast bound for Belfast, Rotterdam, Ghent and Antwerp, where coal is transloaded into smaller vessels bound for Britain. To cite just one example, according to an NUS spokesman, three Norwegian ships (the *Bajha*, *Bergelot* and *Burgous*) carrying a total of 67,000 tonnes of coal from southern US ports arrived in Belfast in the space of six weeks recently. Last month the dockers union in Ghent vowed to boycott such cargo. As the NUM has demanded, all transport, seamen and dockers unions internationally must black coal and oil destined for Britain. Follow the

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Fighting
for
proletarian power
in Cold War France



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Kurdish workers in the Iraqi revolution of 1958-9

New York, 1 November 1984
To the editor:

The Spartacist greetings to a recent Kurdish conference in Central Europe ['For a Socialist Republic of United Kurdistan', *Workers Hammer* no 61, September 1984] state that: 'While there are many Kurdish workers, most are working outside of the geographical regions with a predominantly Kurdish national identity'; and 'the Kurdish proletariat exists primarily in the diaspora'. This may well be true today due to the policy of 'Arabization' of Kurdistan conducted by Iraq's Ba'athist regime. According to the book *People Without a Country: The Kurds and Kurdistan* (1980), edited by Gerard Chaliand, more than 200,000 Kurds have been removed from the strategic oil region of Iraqi Kurdistan. Historically this was not always the case, however. Communist-led Kurdish workers concentrated in these oil fields played a vital, if contradictory, role in the revolutionary period following the overthrow of the monarchy in 1958.

Iraq, like most of the states of the Near East, is an artificial creation of the post-World War I imperialist partition of the Ottoman Empire. Under the Ottomans Iraqi Kurdistan was the *vilayet* (administrative division) of Mosul. Victorious Britain incorporated Mosul into a common state with the vilayets of Baghdad and Basra both to gain control of this petroleum-rich region and to give its newly created Iraqi protectorate something resembling a viable economy. Until recently Kirkuk province in the heart of Iraqi Kurdistan supplied 90 per cent of Iraq's oil production. Even with the development of the Basra fields in the south, during the late 1970s Kirkuk continued to supply more than 70 per cent of the country's petroleum output.

Around the oil fields of Kirkuk there developed a militant, Communist-led proletariat that was in its majority Kurdish. As Uriel Dann wrote in *Iraq Under Qassem* (1969): 'The thousands of workers at the oil installations, the majority of whom were Kurds, had nurtured a local communist branch with a fighting record unrivalled in Iraq.' However, this Kurdish working class was recruited directly from the agrarian and nomadic mountain people who were (and still are) governed by feudal and tribal rulers and custom. Although militant, the class consciousness of this proletariat was rudimentary. As the July 1959 Kirkuk massacre demonstrated, membership in the Iraqi Communist Party, which was at best equivocal about Kurdish self-determination, did little to break Kurds from nationalism.

The ICP was not only the most proletarian of the Stalinist parties in the Near East, it always had a large number of members from national and ethnic minorities who played an important and often leading role in the life of the party. In the period up to the 1958 revolution, Kurdish Communists spearheaded



Kurdish guerrillas in Iraq.

the revival of a party decimated and driven underground by the savage repression of the 1940s. Hanna Batatu, in her exhaustive study, *The Old Social Classes and the Revolutionary Movements of Iraq* (1978), notes that during 1949-55 every general secretary of the ICP was Kurdish, as was nearly one third of its central committee, and the party was run from Kurdistan rather than Baghdad.

This period was marked by a significant rise of class and national struggle, fueled by the infamous US-backed, anti-Soviet Baghdad Pact between Britain, Iran, Iraq and Turkey. While resented by all sections of the region's oppressed, by uniting the principal enemies of the Kurds it was particularly hated by them. On the other hand, the Soviet Union's generous treatment of its own small Kurdish minority and its support of the short-lived Kurdish Republic of Mahabad in Iran after World War II gave it enormous prestige in Kurdistan, so that in the 1950s even Kurdish nationalist parties claimed to be 'Marxist-Leninist'.

Thus the entire Kurdish nation and especially its urban working class enthusiastically welcomed the 1958 revolution, which was made as much against the Baghdad Pact as against the corrupt, decrepit and repressive British-backed monarchy. The unstable bonapartist regime of General Qassem, leader of the 1958 revolution, sought at first to consolidate its rule by relying on the ICP, which though small was the unchallenged leader of the Iraqi working class, both Arab and Kurdish. Instead of pursuing this rich opportunity for proletarian revolution, the ICP subordinated itself to Qassem through the 'United National Front' with three bourgeois parties (soon joined by the Kurdish nationalists). The betrayal of the Iraqi revolution was ordered directly from the Kremlin, in the name of cementing the 'Spirit of Camp David' with Eisenhower (whose answer to the 1958 revolution was to land 10,000 Marines on the coast of Lebanon). Marxist historian Isaac Deutscher noted at the time:

'Khrushchev refused to countenance a communist upheaval in Baghdad, afraid that this would provoke renewed Western intervention in the Eastern Mediterranean, set the Middle East aflame, and wreck his policy of peaceful coexistence.' (reprinted in Deutscher, *Russia, China and the West* [1970])

The contradictory role of the Communist-led Kurdish proletariat in this period was demonstrated by the events in Mosul of March 1959 and the Kirkuk massacre in July of that year. At the beginning of 1959, Qassem's rejection of 'pan-Arab' unity with Nasser and his modest land reform program created an unholy alliance between the old reactionary classes and the Nasserites, who plotted a right-wing coup. The coup was to begin with an army revolt in Mosul. Anticipating this revolt, the ICP called a mass rally: from all over Iraq 250,000 youth, many armed, flocked to Mosul.

The ICP was able to unite Kurd and Arab soldiers against their officers; the poor laborers of the Muslim Arab quarter were augmented by Kurdish tribesmen and Armenian peasants who swept in from the countryside. The coup was suppressed, and the popularity and revolutionary opportunity of the ICP grew to its height.

This makes the Kirkuk massacre of July 1959 all the more tragic. In the aftermath of the 1958 revolution the ICP concentrated in its hands control of many local governments, militias

and even army garrisons. The largely Kurdish ICP branch in Kirkuk used this control to escalate a squabble over the celebration of the first anniversary of the revolution into an intercommunal bloodbath, particularly directed against the Turkomans who made up much of the city's commercial and middle classes. One month later in a central committee plenum called to deal with the consequences of the Kirkuk massacre, the ICP in referring to its own membership was forced to condemn 'the dragging of bodies, torture of detainees, looting and trespassing on the rights and liberties of citizens'.

The Kirkuk massacre was a tragic turning point for the ICP and the Iraqi working class. It generated an enormous erosion of support for the ICP and Qassem used it as a pretext to repress the Communists. The revolutionary opportunity was squandered, and with it the opportunity to forge a class-conscious Kurdish proletariat. Leadership of the oppressed Kurdish toilers reverted to sheiks, khans and mullahs, as the subsequent Kurdish national revolt demonstrated. For that revolt, led by mullah Mustafa Barazani, was as much in defense of feudal relations in the countryside as it was against the Arab chauvinism of Baghdad. In 1958-59, the proletariat of this divided nation, carved up by four oppressive capitalist states, lost a unique opportunity to be the vanguard of social emancipation, not only for the rest of Kurdistan, but for the entire Near East.

Comradely,
Reuben Samuels

A note to our readers

Although *Workers Hammer* normally skips an issue this month, due to the continuing miners strike we have produced this extra, 8-page January issue.

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WORKERS HAMMER

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Spartacist League Public Meetings

Road, rail, docks: Strike now with the miners!

Speakers:
Eibhlín McDonald, Spartacist League
Central Committee
Dick Hall, North Derbyshire NUM
(in a personal capacity)

Sheffield
Wed 16 January,
7.30 pm

Rutland Arms,
Brown St (off
Paternoster Row),
Sheffield S1

London
Thursday 17 January,
7.30 pm

North Room,
Conway Hall,
Red Lion Square,
London WC1

For more information: (0742) 737067,
(01) 278 2232

Picket lines mean don't cross!

NUR member breaks with SWP

We reprint below the resignation statement of comrade Michael B from Tony Cliff's Socialist Workers Party. Last year when unemployed this comrade was involved in the fight at North London Polytechnic to drive fascist Patrick Harrington off that heavily minority campus. But once he started working in a racially-integrated workplace as an NUR member, the SWP didn't want him to mobilise co-workers for this anti-fascist struggle.

As notorious Russia-haters ('neither Washington nor Moscow'), the Cliffites have lately been running around trying to propagate the despair of Cliff's Cold War 'downturn' theory whereby the working class has already

still a workers state, albeit deformed, with nationalised property relations and a planned economy.

2) The Red Army's role in Afghanistan is not a reactionary one but, rather, progressive since the sections of society it opposes are directly responsible for, amongst other things, women forced to wear the veil, being forbidden to learn to read or write and generally treated as cattle.

3) The only way fascism can be defeated is by mobilisation of the working class and the oppressed to crush it. It can only do the working class movement harm when a purportedly revolutionary party even suggests, so called,

the political left (specifically 6th July 1980), which led to the obviously justifiable anti-SWP 'Labour Movement Protest Against Exclusion and Thuggery'. The conduct of the SWP in this instance disgusted me.

4) To cross a picket line is to place yourself firmly in the camp of the bourgeoisie.

Q. How do you get away with it.

A. By shrouding everything in secrecy and misinformation.

Are your membership asked to form workers defence guards to protect people at risk from fascist attacks?

I know I wasn't.

Are your membership even informed that it is apparently party policy to cross picket lines.

I know I wasn't told by the SWP, and furthermore I would refuse to do that. The picket line is not only the most fundamental trade union weapon, it is the class line, drawn in blood.

Feeling uneasy about all of these points I attempted, in vain, to prise some satisfactory answers from various branch meetings I attended. I was continually told there was no time for lengthy political discussion at weekly branch meetings. I was not even allowed to observe my party's conference.

Now what is that all about.

In conclusion:

1) I have no intention to deny the existing gains of the proletariat and the oppressed internationally.

I defend the Soviet Union against imperialism and internal social counter-revolution.

I am for the Red Army in Afghanistan and against Solidarnosc in Poland.

2) I don't want to sit idle and accept the fascist advancement but want to work to mobilise my fellow trade unionists and minorities against them and not to lead them away from the fascists as you did at 'Anti Nazi League' Brixton carnival.

3) I don't want to scab. Neither in anti-fascist fight nor through miners picket lines nor in the defence of workers states.

I do not want to inflict defeatism on the working class and guide them objectively into the arms of the ruling class. Building the Socialist Workers Party is simply serving this end. I have no identification, nor should any decent class conscious militant, with this social-democratic organisation.

I hereby tender my resignation of the SWP.

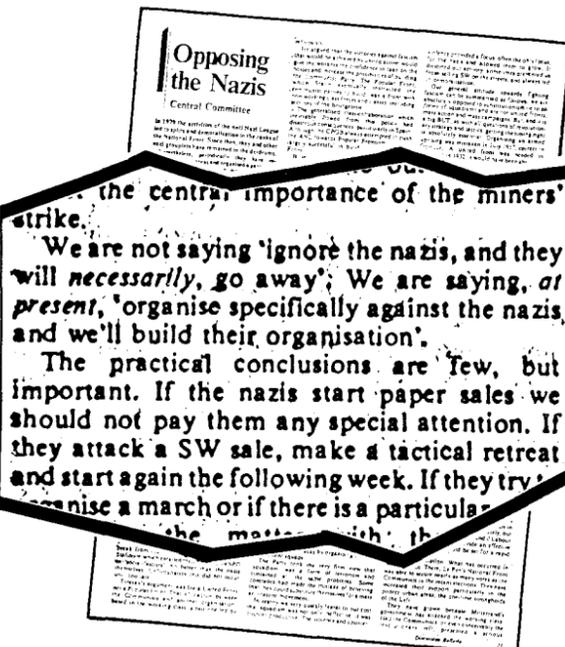
I have now met an organisation, Spartacist League, that tells me the truth, 'Truth is always concrete' -- V.I. Lenin, and intend to continue close discussion with them as regards my political future and desire to be a good communist.

Michael B

4 December 1984



Workers Hammer



How SWP 'fights' fascists, 1978 and today. Left: As NF marched in London's East End, Anti Nazi League Carnival paraded in the opposite direction. Right: August 1984 SWP 'Discussion Bulletin' calls for 'tactical retreat'.

been decisively defeated. Thus the SWP leadership has instructed their members in steel plants to scab on the miners strike by crossing NUM picket lines. Now Cliff & Co have made another 'turn', seeking a 'united front' (read: political accommodation) with the Labour Party's so-called lefts. We recall that two decades ago, during Cold War I, Socialist Worker was called Labour Worker and the Cliffite organisation was deeply buried in Harold Wilson's Labour Party.

There are doubtless other militants in or around the SWP who feel repulsed by their leadership's scabbing on the miners strike and on defence of the Soviet Union against Reagan/Thatcher's war drive, as well as by their 'tactical' retreat from the fight against the fascists. We urge them to follow the lead of comrades like Michael B and Gordon Mitchell, whose resignation from the Middlesbrough SWP we printed last September, and look to the Trotskyist politics of the Spartacist League. (For details of the 6 July 1980 attack, see Spartacist Britain no 24, August/September 1980.)

Comrades,

When I joined the SWP in March of this year I honestly thought I was becoming part of a theoretically sound revolutionary vanguard whose role was to be the leadership of the working class towards its self emancipation.

However, nine months on, I can see I made a serious error of judgement. Everything is paid lip service but, as the saying goes, actions speak louder than words.

Your severe anti-Sovietism despite the enormous social and economic gains of the October revolution is enough to make Thatcher proud of you.

In fact it appears to me that she could have supplied the scripts to the SWP over important issues such as: the Red Army entering Afghanistan; supporting Solidarnosc, the only 'union' that she loves, for social counter revolution; fighting -- or rather not fighting -- fascism; and as for actually condoning the crossing of picket lines if the majority are crossing... When she heard about that she must have taken Dennis out to dinner.

Look: All of these issues, and the position taken by the SWP over them, place your organisation clearly on the wrong side of the class divide.

1) Even taking into account the Stalinist bureaucratisation of the Soviet Union it is

'tactically' retreating in the face of nazi advancement. I know of at least one case, personally, where an Indian member of the SWP was physically assaulted on a paper sale and the matter was left to quietly disappear. Can you imagine the terrible lack of confidence, and in most cases actual fear, that kind of defeatism inflicts on the members of ethnic minorities. Specifically at North London Polytechnic, this is demonstrated by the constant refusal of the SWP to appeal to trade unions and minorities for mass mobilisation against the fascist filth. So, effectively, I, as well as other SWP trade unionists, am guided to sit on my arse in a heavily minority workforce.

And all this, incidentally, from a party that regards retaliations against nazi attacks as acts of individual terrorism whilst in the past having openly assaulted other members of

LT workers say: 'Stop fascist Harrington!'

The following resolution, submitted by a Spartacist supporter, was adopted by the Camden no 3 branch of the NUR (London Transport) on 5 December. Similar resolutions have been presented to other NUR and ASLEF branches in London.

This branch notes:

1) That the presence of fascist National Front organiser Patrick Harrington at North London Polytechnic (NLP) is a deadly threat to every working class and minority student on that campus. Harrington openly boasts of his support for firebombing attacks on minorities.

2) The National Front carries out race terror to further its aims of smashing the workers movement and genocide directed at blacks, Asians, Irish and other minorities. Minorities, including workers at LT, have frequently been the target of vicious racist assaults. We recognise that if Harrington is not stopped, it will be a direct incitement to a stepped up campaign of race terror throughout this city.

3) That NLP students have courageously mobilised for several months, braving police assaults and court injunctions in order to drive this scum off the campus. Further, that two NLP students have now been jailed for protesting fascist Harrington's presence at

NLP.

4) While the cops and courts have victimised anti-fascist students, the educational authorities have disgustingly offered to provide public money for private tuition for this fascist thug. The government's support for Harrington is part of the ruling class' racist union-bashing offensive that has unleashed the full power of the capitalist state and its police in an effort to break the miners strike and cripple the unions. In the face of this state offensive, NLP students must not be left to fight alone. It is only the trade unions, as well as minority organisations, that have the social power to stop fascist scum like Harrington for good.

The branch resolves:

1) That this branch demands immediate release of the two student anti-fascist fighters imprisoned in Pentonville prison, and the dropping of all charges against arrested anti-fascist fighters.

2) That this branch seeks to mobilise the power of its membership at the picket lines established by students at NLP, and urges other branches to do the same, as part of a citywide trade union/minority/student mobilisation to drive fascist Harrington off NLP.

3) Copies of this resolution should be sent to NUR national and other branches.

Mitterrand's 'Socialism': Racist terror, anti-Soviet reaction

Fighting for proletarian power

Le Boichevik

Last month Workers Hammer printed extracts from the presentations and discussion on the miners strike at the 10 November Spartacist League dayschool, 'Forging a revolutionary leadership'. This month we are pleased to publish the translation of the presentation on the present situation in France by comrade Dominique Arnaud, a member of the Central Committee of the Ligue Trotskyiste de France (LTF), section of the international Spartacist tendency.

* * * * *

Comrades, I am very pleased to bring you fraternal greetings from the LTF, which has been fighting for four years against frenzied anti-Sovietism, and since its formation against popular frontism. It's these two questions, the question of defence of the USSR, and the intransigent fight against popular frontism, which justify the struggle and the very existence of Trotskyism.

When I joined the LTF we were a dozen nationally. We shouted out like lunatics outside huge meetings in Paris, 'Don't vote for the popular front! Don't vote for the CP/SP [Communist and Socialist parties] in alliance with the bourgeoisie!' And I can tell you we were really alone -- against a CP of 700,000 members in a popular front, and a 'far left' which led hundreds and hundreds of militants into support for the popular front.

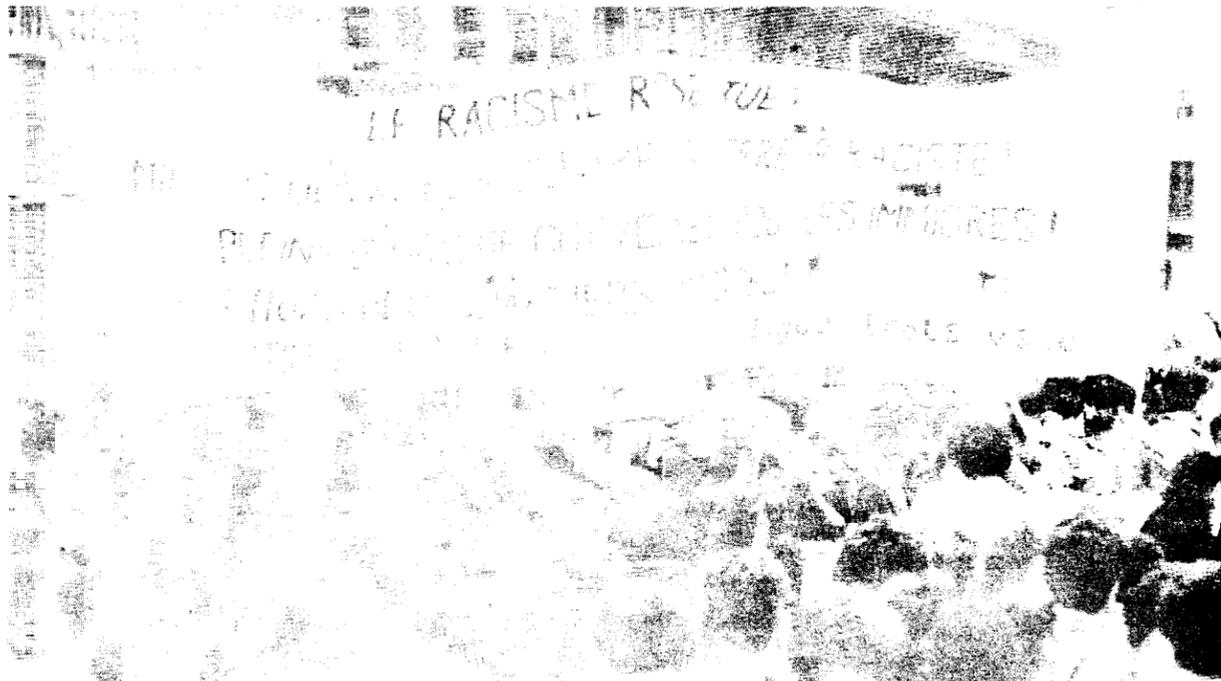
In 1981 at the time of the presidential elections we were again the only ones to say no vote for Mitterrand. And everyone at the time said 'But you're playing into the hands of the right.' I can tell you we were the only ones against it while everyone else was celebrating Mitterrand's victory. Now we have maintained positions of principle, and we can say that we bear no responsibility for putting this government of austerity and Cold War into power. And today our programme receives a more and more favourable echo after three years of this popular front, because first of all this popular front of Mitterrand means savage austerity and frenzied anti-Sovietism, and it also means a campaign of racist terror such that I assure you immigrants today in France live in real fear.

We noticed the chord we struck at the time of the trip we were able to make to the Lorraine region, for example, where the steel workers are hit by Mitterrand's crisis. We also felt the resonance of our programme during our intervention in the car industry strikes, and when we sell the paper at factory gates, saying 'The only paper that never called for a vote for Mitterrand'. And what we say today is that it is high time to act because reaction is waiting in the wings in France, and it's encouraged by the government's campaign. I will come back in a moment to the question of racism, which actually dominates French society today. I would like to say a few words first on the austerity and anti-Sovietism of this government.

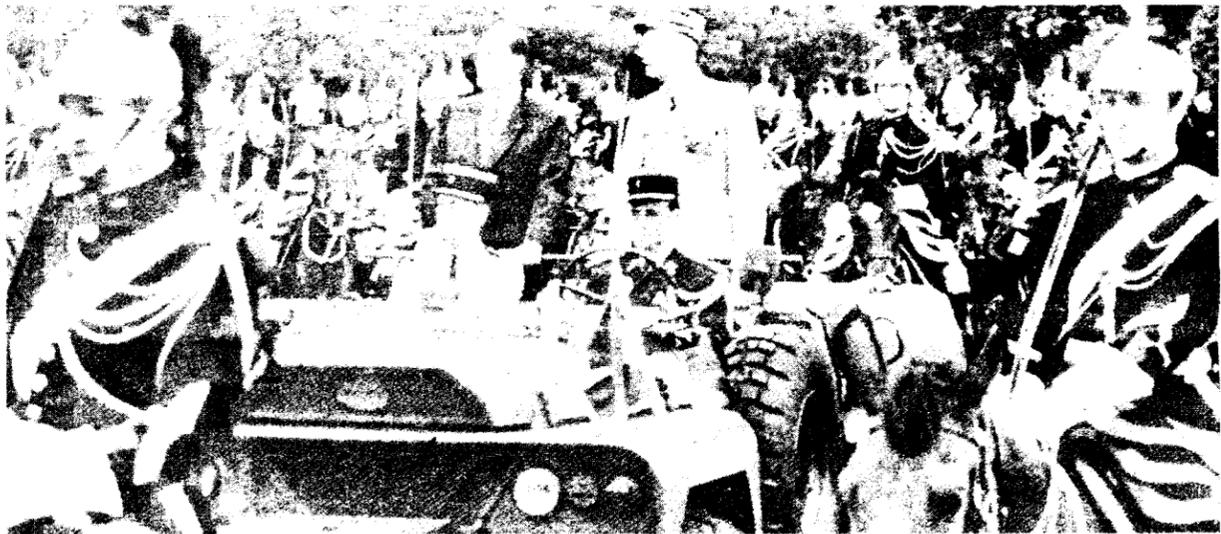
'Socialist' austerity and anti-Sovietism

Austerity is first of all galloping inflation, anti-working class measures like wage freezes, which only got through with the complicity of the trade union leaders. And it's also tens of thousands of redundancies in the key sectors of the working class, in particular in steel, shipyards and the car industry -- where we had a daily intervention at the time of the strikes at the beginning of the year. The first to be made redundant were obviously immigrants to whom the government generously offered 'help' to repatriate. And I can tell you that immigrant workers have been in the forefront of the struggle for three years now. And during this strike we were able to talk to the members of the strike committee, with the organisers, the organising cadre of the struggle, about the question of how to take power within the unions. Now these workers have become demoralised after the defeat following the betrayal of the trade union leadership, but we were able to have some very interesting discussions with them and we established some points in their minds.

Our intervention was also the work which our comrade did at Renault Cleon, where he



French Trotskyists call for workers militias against racist terror, Paris, 1 December.



'Socialist' anti-Soviet warmonger Mitterrand, a latter-day De Gaulle.

organised a delegation of support to the workers of Talbot, under the slogan 'For a general strike in the car industry!' And recently during a strike he used the magnificent example of struggle shown by the British miners on their picket lines. He agitated around this question in his factory and for the first time in years picket lines were set up. I can tell you that picket lines are something which is absolutely not rooted in the traditions of the French labour movement, so much so that Krasucki, for example, leader of the CGT [CP-led union federation], said a few weeks ago that picket lines were fine for British miners, but weren't adapted to French society [laughter]. So I tell you it will be necessary to fight for years to establish this tradition in the workers movement. So what our comrade did, since for us solidarity is not just a question of good intentions, he organised a collection in support of the British miners and sent a telegram of solidarity, which was signed by several workers in Renault. Now this comrade is respected by the dockers, who are Stalinists, the dockers of the CGT, for the work he has done. So that's just an idea of the work we have been doing in the car industry.

Now I would like to deal a bit with the question of the anti-Sovietism of the government. First I would like to say that this government was put in power on the basis of anti-Sovietism. Mitterrand was put in power by numerous votes from Gaullists, and the reply Mitterrand gave to the CP which was asking for some seats in the government, was 'All right, but let's agree on three things: Poland, Afghanistan and the missiles.' Which is what the CP did, it abandoned its formal defence of the USSR by signing an agreement with the SP in order to enter into the government.

Anti-Sovietism in France was above all the question of Poland. You had a veritable holy alliance in support of the capitalist counter-

revolution of Solidarity, and you had demonstrations which went from the extreme right to the 'far left', in the streets of Paris in support of Solidarity. I can tell you that there too, as in all the sections of the 1st, we were very isolated, and for our part we had to face up to a campaign which was conducted by the administration of the university and the 'far left', who wanted to drive us out of the university where we were intervening.

Mitterrand's anti-Sovietism came out in a tough speech he gave in the Bundestag in January 1983 where he declared himself against neutralism and said it was necessary to take a side. It was in a June 1983 meeting of NATO in Paris; it was the first time since 1966 that there had been such a meeting. It's the Sakharov affair too, where Mitterrand will say that the problem with the Soviet Union is not the past few or thirty years, but since 1917. And recently it's the affair with the television journalist who was arrested by the Afghan army for having entered the country illegally, for having brought in money for the rebels; he was also the bearer of a letter calling on the rebels to intensify their operation against the Afghan army. There is an anti-Soviet campaign, where every day you have to put up with talk about this martyr to freedom, and the journalist himself has pointed out that there's been a fair amount of anti-communism in the campaign around his release.

I'd like to say a few words on the politics of the other organisations in relation to the Russian question. I shall be quite quick on the 'far left' since it has capitulated wholesale in the face of the anti-Soviet campaign. It declared itself against the intervention of the Red Army in Afghanistan, and for the capitalist counterrevolution of Solidarnosc. Basically the 'far left' says the Soviet Union is not threatened. It thinks the Soviet Union will only be threatened after the Pershings have been launched. The problem is that by

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then there'll be only eight minutes left to defend the Soviet Union. The most interesting is the question of the CP which is the party of the working class, with 700,000 members, which is seen by many of its members as the continuator of the party of October, because it hasn't crossed the rubicon as the PCI and the PCE [Italian and Spanish CPs] have been able to, explicitly abandoning all links with Moscow. Finally the CP is still divided between capitulation to its own bourgeoisie and a certain loyalty to the Soviet Union, which moreover allows us to have a great deal of discussion with militants of the CP. But the problem is the CP betrays the interests of defence of the Soviet Union daily.

First it shared power with the Atlanticist government of Mitterrand, so it carried responsibility for the anti-Soviet politics of this government. In the name of socialism in French colours, just as the British CP could espouse socialism of the Union Jack, or any CP could do the equivalent, the CP supports national defence, the anti-Soviet French 'force de frappe' [nuclear 'striking force']! The CP voted for the military budget which is explicitly directed against the Warsaw Pact. And recently it said it was going to break off all relations with Afghanistan if the arrested journalist was not released. At the time the bourgeoisie said to it 'Afghanistan isn't bad, but it's Moscow you must break with.'

The campaign of the CP is today -- in fact has been for years -- for peace under the slogan 'Neither Pershing nor SS-20.' Just a month ago there were tens and tens of thousands of people in the streets of Paris for peace. The trouble is that the CP equates the armaments of the Soviet state and the armaments of an imperialist state. This question of peace is at the heart of the differences we may have with the Stalinists, because if as communists we are for peace, the question we pose is who will disarm imperialism and how will it be done? What we say is that it's by the mobilisation and arming of the working class and its states, and not by diplomatic pressure on Reagan and Thatcher and Co. What we say is that unfortunately, and in fact it's pretty criminal, the price to pay for detente, for the bureaucracy's search for peace is Salvador and Nicaragua, where the left has a burning need for Soviet and Cuban arms, which never arrive because the bureaucracy does not want to offend imperialism. Reagan has already 'seen' Soviet MIGs being unloaded in Nicaragua. But when you know that the Kremlin was in a hurry to send congratulations to Reagan after his election, you might well doubt whether there were MIGs in those cases.

Racism and the fascist rise

Now I would like to come on to the question of the racist campaign, which as I said just now dominates French society, and which blows



Dominique Arnaud (2nd from right) addresses Spartacist dayschool, 10 November.

directly into the sails of the fascists. When Mitterrand came to power, his first measure was to establish special brigades for the Metro [Paris underground] whose job was to hunt down non-whites, and I can assure you that if you have dark skin and you haven't got your papers on you, you'll find yourself at the commissariat and you'll be severely beaten up. It's the CRS [special riot police], who never ask questions, who patrol the immigrant districts. In the car industry it was immigrant workers who set off the first strikes, and the declaration of the Mitterrand government was, 'Watch out, these are dangerous Islamic agitators.' It was Deferre, who was minister of the interior of this government, who was elected as mayor in his own town by a section of the fascist vote, so racist was his campaign. It was last summer, after the government's announcement of a purge of 'illegal' immigrants, where you had young immigrants killed week after week by plainclothes cops or some racist killer for having stolen a jacket or made a noise. There are the Tamils who are not recognised as political refugees who are deported from France to a waiting death. There are what are in fact concentra-



French riot cops' racist dragnet targets immigrants.

tion camps, officially called 'detention camps'; thirteen have been built to 'park' immigrants awaiting deportation.

Then there are the new racist decrees of last month prohibiting family regroupment by imposing draconian conditions on families wanting to join a husband who has come to work in France. And since the announcement of these decrees the green light for racist terror has been lit again. What you've had in the last few weeks has been, for instance, a North African trader who was injured in a car accident and then assassinated by a member of the National Front; an Algerian killed by the cops right in the centre of Paris for having refused to undergo an identity check; an organiser of young immigrants who was injured last year by the cops and is now convicted for thefts he never committed. By contrast you have a racist who only gets a two year sentence for having shattered the skull of a young Moroccan and broken the legs of an Algerian. That is Mitterrand's justice. And it's not surprising that such a campaign gives some confidence to the racists and fascists.

For example last summer you had thousands of students organised by a fascist pseudo-student union chanting, 'Allende we got you, Mitterrand we'll get you' and who said to the CRS, 'Go get the "boughole" ["wogs"] in the car worker districts.' Then there was a demonstration of the cops, which was joined by the National Front, which marched towards the Elysee shouting against the 'sovietisation' of France. There was also [fascist leader] Le Pen's speaking tour for the European elections which drew thousands and thousands of people to meetings protected by the cops, by Mitterrand's cops, against the anti-fascist demonstrators. Le Pen won 11 per cent of the vote for the European Parliament, the same figure as the CP; and his line is to 'smash the dictatorship of the CGT and CFDT [Socialist-led union federation] in the factories', and for 'no more Maghrebian [Arab] picket lines'.

While other organisations undertake pacifist protests calling on Mitterrand to please ban the fascists, and while the 'far left' says the fascists are not really a threat, what we say is that powerful mobilisations of workers are necessary to crush them. Because fascism is not a question of ideas but a programme of action to destroy the working class and the racial minorities physically. This is the perspective we have put forward in the anti-fascist demonstrations we have taken part in, where, moreover, quite a few people joined our contingents.

We have a certain experience of the anti-fascist fight in France, since in Rouen in 1981 after the election of Mitterrand, we organised an anti-fascist demo. We were eight in the beginning and we built a demo of 400 in the streets of Rouen. I can tell you no fascist showed his face that evening. But the trouble is that that type of demonstration, even if it provides an example, has been overtaken, since the fascist threat is much greater now.

Capitulation or class struggle

Now I would like to come back to the policies, to the response of the other organisations to the racist campaign of the government. The 'far left' contents itself with vague calls for solidarity, for equal rights. The organisation which formulated this the best was the Pabloite organisation [LCR, co-thinkers of *Socialist Action*], which didn't hesitate to call on a cops 'union' to join it on a demonstration it had organised against racism. So an organisation which proclaims itself to be for revolution thinks it's possible to reform the apparatus of the bourgeois state!

As for the CP, it can't even pretend to defend immigrants given the policies it has pursued for years. The CP was in the government at the time of the massacres by French imperialism of the revolts by the colonies in Madagascar and Setif in 1947. The CP voted special powers to Guy Mollet, the social democrat, for the dirty war in Algeria in 1956 and besides, the CP never called for Algerian independence. The CP programme is summed up as 'to regulate the flow of migration in accordance with economic needs' and as 'stop official illegal immigration'. And Mitterrand does apply their programme.

The CP carried out a racist act during the presidential campaign. What they wanted to do was give a guarantee of loyalty to their own bourgeoisie, which was isolating them because of the anti-Sovietism. What the CP did in the name of the struggle against the ghettos in

continued on page 6

Cold War France ...

(Continued from page 5)

the housing estates, was to attack an immigrant hostel with bulldozers. We had envisaged voting for the CP in the presidential elections, because for the first time in 40 years the CP was presenting itself independently from the bourgeoisie, and moreover it had, at that time, some formulations against the Atlanticism of Mitterrand and against popular fronts. We said then that if it were possible to have [CP leader] Marchais as president we would be able to unmask him easily in front of the working class because he wouldn't have any bourgeois partners on whom he could foist his responsibility. But the racist act committed by the CP prevented us from voting for him, because voting for the CP after what it had done would have been voting for the bulldozers against the immigrant hostels.

Ultimately all these organisations of the workers movement leave immigrants quite disarmed in the face of the campaign of racist terror, so much so that the social-chauvinist policies of the traditional organisations of the workers movement only inspire disgust and distrust in the hearts of immigrants. Now the young immigrants are trying to organise themselves. Last year they built an enormous demonstration against racism after a bloody summer and you had nearly 60,000 in the streets of Paris in December last year. The problem was that the *only* slogan of that demo was limited to equal rights. The organisers of the demo banned all political slogans and banners. We had to confront political suppression when we unfurled our banners which said, 'Don't crawl before Mitterrand! Full citizenship rights for immigrants!' and, 'Cops out of immigrant areas!' To give you an idea of this demonstration, the organisers invited the government personally to come and address the final rally, and the leaders of the demo were kindly received by Mitterrand afterwards.

Today the same thing is happening again, though perhaps it's even more right wing than last year. They're simply calling for the 'right to be tolerated' and the 'right to be different'. This is 'humanism', which forms an obstacle to a real struggle against racial oppression. The organisers are again refusing any intervention by the organised labour movement. For example in a town in France they accepted a cheque from the CGT but they would not allow the CGT the right to speak. They re-



Singing the Internationale at SL dayschool.

fuse to put forward the slightest democratic demand, because today any real demand in defence of immigrants represents a confrontation with the government. And today this mobilisation is viewed benignly by the government, and one might well ask oneself to what extent it's not manipulated by the government, so much does it protect it.

A programme for power

As Leninists, what do we say? First we say to them that it's the system of racist oppression which creates racist ideas and not vice versa; racism is not an evil idea in people's heads but a programme of action. And who can fight effectively against this system of oppression if not the working class which is the only class with nothing to lose under this capitalist system? We say it's necessary to mobilise the working class in defence of immigrants under the following demands.

First, obviously, down with the racist laws and quotas. Full citizenship rights for immigrants, which we are the only ones to put forward today, since the other organisations regard it as 'ultra leftism'. The 'far left' is content to call for the right to vote, and the CP not even for that. So what do these full citizenship rights mean, what do we mean by it? Firstly, equal wages with other workers, comfortable accommodation and rents comparable with other workers, the right to the same social services as any other worker, the right to stay in France without being deported. And this is just a democratic minimum, it's not revolutionary. We also call for the disbanding

to where they live. They escorted him all the way, nearly a mile and a half through the lanes....

'On our picket line we had some coloured lads. And we were talking to one, and he kept looking up to see where his brothers were, as they were going into the car. A policeman came across and arrested him. And when he went to court the charge he was fined with was 'confusing a police officer', because he didn't know what they were saying about him. And the following week we had one man go to work, one scab went into our pit. So the lads on the picket line rushed across the road to prevent him from going in. There were 54 arrested in ten minutes, and in that 54 were two black lads. All the rest of the lads were charged with Section Five, 'disturbing the peace', but the two black lads were charged with 'malicious wounding of a police officer'. And the men on the picket line started to realise that the harassment that the ethnic groups, the blacks, had been getting in England, was very prominent in the strike now with the white miners. So we now know what the black people have been suffering....

'The problem with the TUC leadership of the unions is it's got an incentive, and it's called the House of Lords. So if they're good little boys and toe the government line, when it comes to retiring they automatically become Lords. And the laws that go to the House of Commons have to go to the House of Lords, so the union men that have become Lords have a chance -- a second chance -- to toe the party line. As soon as we get into power -- a workers power -- we shall abolish the House of Lords....

'The question of the Labour Party. Next door to me where I live I've got a retired miner. He hasn't voted since 1926. He was talking to me when he knew I was going collecting with the Spartacists. He said it was very nice to see the younger people voting for an alternative to the Labour Party. He hasn't voted because he didn't think it was right to put the Labour government into Parliament to caretake the government until the Conservatives

of all special [police] bodies such as the CRS and the Metro brigades. We also say cops out of the immigrant areas, because if the British miners and the blacks in Great Britain have been able to see the real role of the police, in France they have rather always been known as assassins.

I would like to give an example from October 1961. You had thousands and thousands of Algerians demonstrating in Paris against the Algerian war, peacefully, and in one night you had hundreds and hundreds of Algerians who were massacred by the police, beaten up or thrown into the Seine, and they were fishing bodies out of the Seine for days and days. And the left was completely silent at that time. That gives you an idea of the power of the police. But also because we have no confidence in slogans for 'democratisation' or 'purging' of the police, we call for worker/immigrant self-defence against racist terror, because immigrants all alone in their districts can do nothing in the face of a police presence which resembles a real army of occupation.

And now how can these demands be won? It's not by a strategy of pressure on the government but by mobilising the working class in a general strike, because we think the objective conditions are ripe for that. That is to say that the working class no longer wants to live as before and the ruling class cannot rule as before. A general strike will free the working class from the grip of the reformists and establish workers militias which are the only means of fighting in a consistent way against the fascists and the racists, the general strike which impels the working class towards one goal, a workers government, because it will pose the question who is master of the ship, Mitterrand and the bourgeoisie which he defends or the working class.

The way has been shown by October 1917. Now the central question for that is to forge a Leninist vanguard party and that's what we try to do by active propaganda, by the intervention which we have had and which we continue to have in the car factories, by the contingents we have had on different demonstrations. Because in contrast to others we do not think that the working class does not want to fight, we think that it is demoralised by the experience of the popular front, and that it's a Trotskyist programme such as I have begun to outline which could address the situation.

I should like to finish by inviting all the comrades present and particularly the miners to come to France and share their experience with us. ■

French workers ...

(Continued from page 8)

opoly on sectarianism -- the LCR, French section of the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat, outdid itself in stupidly and shamefully attempting to prevent a collection even outside of its 12 December Paris meeting!) This is in the worst tradition of French trade unionism, in which it's normal to scab on the strike of another union in the same plant if its leadership has political differences with your own. That simply plays into the hands of the bosses. Fortunately CGT workers had other ideas. Both the Rouen workers and postal workers in Paris gave generously to the miners. Indeed, one CGT postal worker organised his own workplace collection of 300F.

The British miners are certainly grateful for the aid they have received from workers around the world. It would also be good if the French workers movement learned something from the militant miners. We print below excerpts from the remarks of Paul Brewin, member of the Warsop Main strike committee, made at a public meeting organised by the LTF in Paris, 13 December.

* * * * *

'On the 21st week of the strike, the police moved into my village -- 400 men. They change every week from Sunday night to the following Saturday. There is a curfew from 7 o'clock at night to 5 o'clock in the morning. If you go out of your house to a friend's, six or seven policemen follow you. If you go shopping, they follow you to the shops. When my children go to school, the police follow them to school to make sure they are going to school. A friend of mine lives in the next village a mile away. And you cannot travel by car, because the police stop you and turn you out. So he had to go on the local bus. And as soon as he went into the next village, the police stopped the bus and asked if there was any striking miners on the bus. When he said yes, they made him and his family get off the bus and walk back

came into power again. He hopes the younger generation finds an alternative so he can start voting again.' ■

'British miners show the way'

We print below two resolutions submitted to a November congress of the Renault Cleon CGT (Rouen region) by Gilles Cazin, a congress delegate and comrade of the LTF:

● The Cleon CGT expresses its satisfaction at the solidarity shown by the Confederation for the British miners strike. We hail the Soviet miners union's contribution of 10 million francs to the British miners union. In view of the British miners' urgent appeal to boycott coal shipments to Britain we urgently demand that the Jaruzelski government of Poland stop its shipments of coal to Britain and we take note of Walesa's disgusting declaration supporting Thatcher against the miners.

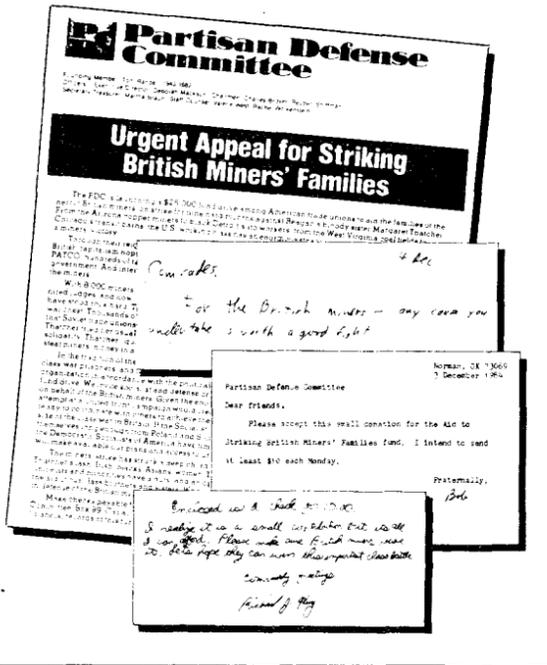
● During the last strike, on the second day of the strike, the organisation of strike pickets to block the factory gates was voted and initiated by our union. This expressed the intention to make the strike effective. A strike means a total shutdown of production.

The British miners show us the importance of mass picketing. This is the way to consolidate and extend the strike, convince those who hesitate and above all protect the strike against scabs and management.

Therefore it was a mistake to have abandoned the picketing which blocked the entrances, to have transformed it into ineffectual 'filtering pickets' and this despite the determination shown by many strikers, including those from the CGT. Picket lines mean: don't cross!

American fund drive kicked off

As we reported last month, the Partisan Defense Committee (PDC) -- a class-struggle, anti-sectarian legal defence organisation in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League/US -- launched an appeal to raise \$25,000 to assist striking miners families. The PDC has kicked off the campaign with a contribution of \$5000 and is assuming all administrative costs for the campaign. In the past few weeks, several trade union locals have made contributions. And many *Workers Vanguard* readers have answered the appeal with cheques of \$100 and \$200. As Eibhlin McDonald told members of the New York Tunnel Workers Local 147, who contributed \$247: 'It's really a life and death question for this union.'



Road, rail, docks...

(Continued from page 1)

lead of the French workers who last month tipped over lorryloads of coal in Calais.

The imported and domestic scab coal is being off-loaded and transported around the country, mainly by road but also by rail. British Rail is sending home at least 120 railwaymen without pay each day for blacking coal; one signalman in the strategic Coalville depot was even declared 'mentally unstable' for refusing to work coal trains. Until BR began using scabs in late December, the heroic solidarity of these railwaymen in the heart of scab Leicestershire had completely paralysed mountains of coal for months. It is an open secret that the rail unions are the government's next union-smashing target after the miners. Yet as Coalville NUR branch secretary Roy Butlin complained, 'We've been patient and waited for our leaders to do something, but all we've had is assurances that they'd talk to British Rail... We want industrial action' (*Socialist Worker*, 5 January).

The two dock strikes last summer could have been the springboard for a general strike and brought the miners a rapid, decisive victory. But the TGWU docks leaders worked might and main to keep the strikes separate and derailed the militant dockers into go-it-alone sell-outs, while the NUM leadership conspicuously did nothing to unify and extend the strikes. Now the port employers are driving hard for massive 'voluntary' redundancies and, most recently, have moved to smash any level of union organisation at Southampton. And some 400 TGWU lorry drivers have been sacked for standing by union policy to black coal, while TGWU money has been seized by Thatcher's courts. Yet Ron Todd & Co refuse to stand by their members and bring this whole powerful union out in their defence.

The road to the necessary general strike is for those unions who claim to support the miners -- centrally the T&G, NUR, ASLEF and Seamen -- to strike now with the NUM, raising a series of demands which can unify all workers in struggle. For an end to redundancies and privatisations, for a 10 per cent across-the-board pay rise with cost-of-living indexing! Victory to the miners -- Stop the victimisations, defeat the anti-union laws! Mass pickets to blockade the power stations can be combined with effective appeals for power workers, along with steelworkers and others, to defy their scabherding misleaders and join the fight.

Mobilise the masses of unemployed youth onto the picket lines and make this a fight for jobs for all through worksharing on full pay. Secure the pithead stockpiles through mass pickets. Form disciplined trade union defence squads to defeat the cop/scab reign of terror and link up with the solidly pro-strike inner-city minority populations to sweep away the fascist filth who maim and murder blacks and Asians while vilifying 'Red Scargill'. Joint strike action must be co-ordinated through elected joint strike committees, drawing in delegates from the women's support groups, other striking unions, minorities and the unemployed, to organise the struggle, provide a forum for forging a solid, fighting leadership and lay the basis for alternative centres of power to the strikebreaking capitalist state. All workers and oppressed have a stake in the outcome of this strike; they must be brought into the struggle. Bring down the Iron Lady!

Why hasn't it happened yet? Why isn't it

happening today? Because what is posed by a winning strategy is the question of power. The power of the working class which must be unleashed to defeat the Tory attacks necessarily points the road to replacing the rule of the capitalists altogether. But the Labour/TUC misleaders who have their eyes set firmly on seats in Westminster and influence in Whitehall refuse to countenance anything which challenges the basic institutions of capitalist rule, the cops, courts etc. Remember Wilson/Callaghan: the Labour Party in office simply manages capitalism, launches its own anti-working class attacks and keeps the benches warm for the next gang of Tories.

The fight for a miners' victory this winter is part and parcel of the fight for a new, revolutionary leadership of the labour movement whose goal is a workers government to expropriate the bosses. A revolutionary workers party must be forged through splitting the base of the Labour Party away from the Hattersleys, Kinnocks and their 'left' valets like Tony Benn.

The NUM leadership has demonstrated through ten months of bitter class war its superiority to the lot of backstabbers and capitulators that populates the rest of the labour officialdom. But the one thing it has not offered is the most crucial: the strategy for victory. Scargill's commitment to Labour is not just a matter of occasional electioneering but a concrete obstacle to victory now. While Kinnock plays the role of self-appointed frontman for the Coal Board's scab ballot campaign and provides ready-made copy for Fleet Street's propaganda war against 'violent' strikers, the NUM president refuses to present an open challenge to his leadership of the labour movement. Instead Scargill is wedded to the perspective that the road forward for the British working class is another Labour government pledged to rationalising (through the Plan for Coal) an inherently irrational and visibly decayed capitalist economy. In seeking to stay on the good side of Thatcher's violence-baiting poodles like Kinnock, Scargill significantly refused to defend his South Wales members against the murder charges stemming from the death of scab driver David Wilkie in late November. And the NUM leadership continues to amnesty the 'left' rail and transport union leaders, praising their 'magnificent solidarity' rather than demanding joint, co-ordinated strike action.

What about those who claim to offer an alternative to Labour? The deeply-fractured Com-

munist Party has generally been to the right of Arthur Scargill. Scottish NUM leader and prominent CPer Mick McGahey was instrumental in cementing a scab agreement to keep coal pouring into Ravenscraig steelworks, while CP trade union officials in the car industry (eg BL Longbridge) and elsewhere turn a blind eye to the shipment of scab coal. *Morning Star*, which represents the party's supposed pro-Moscow 'left' opposition, has been a publicity organ for the Labour/TUC chiefs. The so-called 'revolutionary left' alternates between crossing miners picket lines (Socialist Workers Party), championing scab ballots (Revolutionary Communist Party) and pleading for action from Judas Kinnock and/or Lord-in-Waiting Willis (*Militant*, *Socialist Action*, *Socialist Organiser*, *Workers Power*, *Leninist*). Where a fighting programme and urgent action are needed, they offer gimmicks and bureaucratic sideshows. Late last year the London Labour 'left' around Ken Livingstone and sundry fake revolutionaries got together a Mineworkers Defence Conference of 2000 delegates from union bodies and Miners Support Committees around the country, which decided to do nothing but collect a bit more money and ... meet again in two months.

Britain needs workers rule!

Challenged by anti-Soviet barracking over 'human rights', in the House of Commons last month, Soviet leader Gorbachov replied aptly with 'a few facts about human rights in the United Kingdom. For example, you persecute entire communities and nationalities. Again, you have got 2.3 million unemployed.' Gorbachov got his figures wrong (as one Tory backbencher put it, he wished the unemployment figures were that low), but even this conservative Stalinist bureaucrat can make mincemeat out of the 'democratic' capitalist alternative to the Soviet Union.

Despite bureaucratic degeneration, the collectivised planned economy created out of the 1917 Russian workers revolution -- with no unemployment and reasonably decent living standards and social services for the working people -- stands in sharp contrast to the misery and decrepitude of capitalist Britain. The laudatory efforts of the Soviet workers to aid their struggling class brothers and sisters in Britain is but one reflection of the progressive social basis of the Soviet Union. But unlike the narrowly nationalist Stalinist rulers, most disgustingly portrayed by the Polish Stalinist bureaucracy's vile exports of scab coal to Britain, revolutionary governments in the Soviet bloc states would be encouraging widespread solidarity action as part of a programme for international socialist revolution.

October 1917 showed the road out of capitalist degradation and oppression for the workers and oppressed of Russia. This is the road of workers revolution which Britain's toilers must seek out if this country is to be made a decent place to live. The goal must be a workers Britain in a socialist united states of Europe.

The miners strike, and along with it the future of the British labour movement as a whole, stands at a crossroads this winter. One hundred and forty thousand courageous fighters and their families cannot continue forever to battle against the full power of the capitalist class and its instruments of violence and repression. The bureaucratic stranglehold of the Labour/TUC traitors must be broken in order to go forward to an historic victory for the workers of Britain and the entire world. Road, rail, docks: Strike now with the miners! Blockade the power stations! Forge a fighting Triple Alliance to launch a general strike!

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Militants face hangman's noose in South Africa

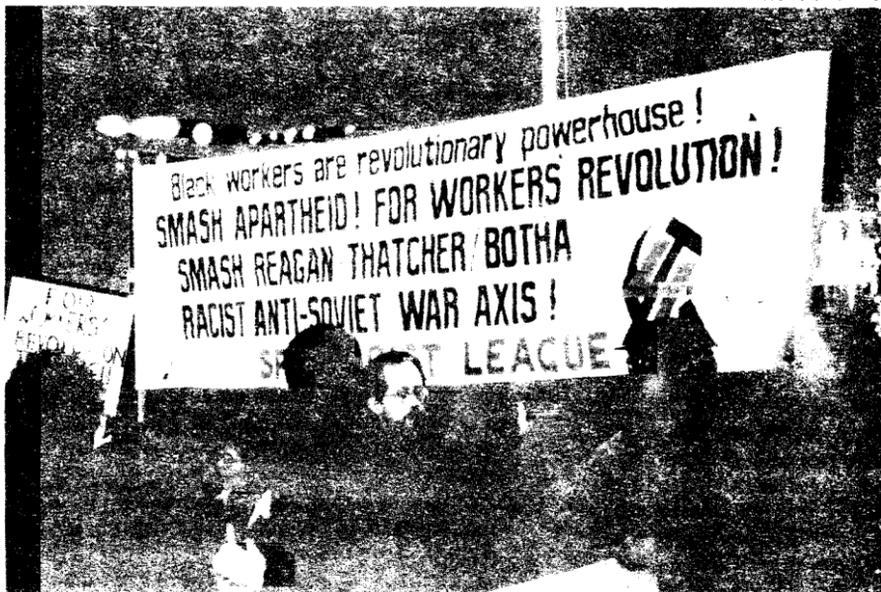
Free anti-apartheid fighters!

At 5.15 am on 10 December, the South African government released eleven anti-apartheid fighters from prison, only to rearrest six of them immediately on charges of 'high treason'. These charges could mean death by hanging for many leaders of the current wave of black struggle!

To date 44 militants, including leaders associated with the United Democratic Front (UDF), the largest anti-apartheid political grouping in South Africa, face the hangman's noose. Among them are five of the Durban Six who took refuge in the British consulate only to be harassed back into the clutches of the regime by Thatcher's diplomats. They include 72-year-old Archie Gumede, who was also a defendant in the infamous Treason Trial of the African National Congress in the late 1950s. And another five leaders of the powerful two-day stay-away strike which paralysed the industrial heartland of the Transvaal in early November have been imprisoned and charged with 'subversion', which carries a 20-year sentence.

Many of the imprisoned UDF leaders now facing the death sentence were first arrested last August during the successful election boycott/protest against South African president PW Botha's 'constitutional new deal' for impotent, separate, segregated 'coloured' (mixed race) and Indian parliaments. This was the beginning of an explosive black revolt which for four months has ripped through the apartheid police state, from the impoverished townships to schools to the black workers in the gold mines and industrial plants. South Africa's racist rulers are seeking to behead this widening struggle.

Now is the time for mass mobilisations and international working-class action in solidarity with our embattled class brothers and



Protests against murderous 'treason' frame-ups: Outside South Africa House, Trafalgar Square, 21 December (left); in Handsworth, Birmingham, 22 December (right).

sisters in South Africa! On 21 December a Spartacist League contingent joined a picket called by the City Anti Apartheid group outside the South African Embassy in London. The Stalinoid honchos of *Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!* who lead the City AA led slogans calling for impotent consumer boycotts of Sainsburys and Barclays Bank and pleading for Botha's 'free world' ally Thatcher to 'Shut down the embassy'. But they were unable to stop a substantial section of the 40-strong picket from chanting with us: 'Smash apartheid, now is the hour -- Black workers have got the power!' The following day an SL-initiated street protest in the largely minority district of Handsworth, Birmingham, em-

phasised the link between police repression of Britain's miners and the brutal terror directed at the struggles of South Africa's non-white population: 'South African gold miners, British coal miners, same struggle, same fight -- Workers of the world unite!' As well as augmenting the regular Saturday miners collection in Handsworth our comrades themselves collected money for the NUM and sold 31 items of Spartacist literature at the protest.

Free the 44, the organisers of the Transvaal Regional Stayaway Committee and all victims of apartheid repression! Smash apartheid slavery -- for workers revolution!

French workers dig deep for the miners

Le Bolchevik



Collecting for the miners at the Maison-Blanche market in Paris.

Last month our comrades of the Ligue Trotskyste de France hosted two striking British miners in a highly successful fundraising drive to aid the strikers. The following report on the visit has been abridged from the December 1984 issue of the LTF paper *Le Bolchevik*.

Paul Brewin and Troy Natriss, accredited representatives of the Warsop Main lodge of the NUM, visited factories, workplaces, union offices and campuses in Rouen and Paris with comrades of the LTF. In ten days a total of more than 17,700 francs (£1500) was raised. From Rouen dock workers to bank employees in Paris, French workers dug deep for their brothers and sisters in Britain.

One of the most successful collections was at the Banque National de Paris, where the strikers raised over 1800 francs. Paul and Troy received cooperation and support from the Socialist-led CFDT union federation, which organised a collection of about 1000F, while the enterprise committee also donated 500F and the Christian CFTC labour group gave 300F. One black worker there who was pleased to contribute said that he had been visiting his family in England this summer and had seen TV films of the cop violence directed at the miners' picket lines.

To French workers facing Mitterrand's austerity, the British miners' courageous struggle in defence of their jobs and union has clearly been an inspiration. One shipyard worker in Rouen who donated to the miners noted that his union was about to occupy the yard in response to the bosses' threats to shut it down.

The LTF sought to coordinate solidarity activities and fundraising with other groupings which are supporting the miners. In Rouen and Elbeuf the LTF co-sponsored two public meetings initiated by the Committee to Support British Miners which had already invited two other striking miners and their wives. The benefits from the meetings were split between the two mining lodges. This committee organised fundraising among the car workers of the Renault Cleon plant in the Rouen region, which was also supported by the LTF; with the participation of officials of the Communist Party-led CGT union federation (who quite correctly remarked the absence of the CFDT) quite generous donations were received. A local newspaper, *Le Journal d'Elbeuf*, reported on the fundraising campaign.

To its credit, the CGT has mounted a major nationwide campaign of raising funds and organising convoys of food and Christmas toys to the families of striking British miners. Outside Calais, French miners, members of the CGT, dumped lorryloads of scab coal destined for Britain. Paul Brewin emphasised the fact that the lads on the picket lines appreciated not only donations, but also this kind of solidarity action.

The LTF sought to secure the cooperation of local CGT officials in raising money for the families of the Derbyshire strikers. Unfortunately some CGT officials in the Paris postal workers union sought to obstruct the fundraising campaign, which they saw as competition. (But the Stalinists don't have a mon-

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