

# A <sup>Socialist</sup> ACTION

## All-out on May Day

SCOTLAND IS leading the way in solidarity action for the miners. The Scottish TUC on Tuesday unanimously adopted a resolution calling for a day of action, including strike action, on May Day. Moving the resolution Mick McGahey called for this to be a day of strike action on 1 May — May Day.

All over the country the labour movement should follow Scotland's lead. Make May Day a real workers' festival behind the miners!

# MINERS: ALL OUT FOR VICTORY

THE DECISION of last week's magnificent NUM executive meeting in Sheffield has given the labour movement its greatest opportunity since the Thatcher government was elected five years ago.

Despite the press campaign and the police intimidation the strike has been getting stronger every week. There is a clear majority for a national strike — even the press is forced to admit this now. If this week's NUM rule change goes through that will allow the majority view to be expressed with or without a ballot.

The serious press — the *Financial Times*, the *Sunday Times*, the *Daily Telegraph* — already admit that Thatcher has lost the first phase of the war.

But what happens now depends entirely on the response of the rest of the labour movement.

Thatcher is prepared to try to sit out the strike indefinitely. She is willing to sacrifice hundreds, if not thousands, of millions of pounds to win. The £200 million the NCB has already lost is peanuts compared to what Thatcher would give to defeat the NUM.

The government's tactics are simply and solely to starve the miners into submission. To exhaust the NUM before it can close down the power stations, shut industry, and force the government to surrender — as the miners have the power to do.

Thatcher has every reason to be worried. Just look at what's coming up behind the miners to take on Thatcher.

● Every sign is that Labour is going to win a huge electoral victory in Liverpool on 3 May — which will put the council and the city in a better position than ever before.

● With the economy slowly making an upward turn workers at British Leyland and other firms will be trying to take revenge for the defeats and humiliations of the last five years.

● Even some weaker sectors such as teachers are showing new militancy.

All this means for Thatcher that she *must* win the strike. If she doesn't it is the end of the credibility of her government and much of its ability to intimidate workers.

The Scottish TUC has shown the way with its resolution for financial support and a day of solidarity strike action in Scotland. The rest of the British labour movement must follow Scotland's example.

It only needs a determined push by the Labour and trade union movement and the backbone of this government's policies can be broken. Because if the NUM can hold out it has the industrial muscle to bring the government to its knees. But exactly because so much is at stake the struggle will be long and bitter.

What matters now is *solidarity* above all.

*Solidarity* to raise money to alleviate the incredible financial hardship of the strike.

*Solidarity* to stop the movement of coal and shorten the strike.

*Solidarity* strike action that could crush the government's resistance in days.

*Solidarity* that now makes support for the miners strike the number one priority for the activity of every trade union and Labour Party in the country.

Thanks to the leadership of the NUM the labour movement has it within its grasp to break the back of the most hated and reactionary government for half a century. It must take it with both hands.

The labour movement must have one key slogan in the hard weeks battles to come:

**All out on May Day!  
All out with the miners for victory!**



# Socialist ACTION

## Labour's resurgent left

TEN MONTHS ago, when Thatcher won the general election, a whole section of the capitalist press thought they could succeed in marginalising the Labour left in British politics.

They were joined in that by Neil Kinnock, the Labour Coordinating Committee, the *Guardian*, *Marxism Today* and the *New Statesman*. All merrily set about burying the Labour left and exorcizing the ghost of what they chose to call 'Benism' — although Labour's left was always far more than one person anyway.

Rally to the 'dream ticket' was the slogan. All the Labour left's past had to be junked in favour of 'new thinking' and the 'new realism'.

What a contrast today. It is the left wing of the Labour Party and the trade unions, together with their allies outside, that are leading the struggles which are shaping British politics.

For the Labour left which has emerged in the last ten months has a quite different level of activity and political sense to anything seen for years.

Tony Benn, Ken Livingstone, Arthur Scargill and others were dead right, after Neil Kinnock had won the Labour leadership election, not to get bogged down in purely internal party fights.

There are internal struggles which need to be waged in the Party today — to win the demands for the election of women to the NEC, to create black sections, to defend reselection, to stop the local witch hunts going on. But the key issue is how the left of the Labour left has turned out to the mass struggles which have erupted.

In 1979 to 1983 the Labour left made its name by the struggle for internal reform and party policy. But now, since the election, it is the miners strike, Liverpool, Greenham, the fight to defend the cities — and with mass support to do it.

Arthur Scargill, Peter Heathfield, and Jack Taylor leading the most militant trade union struggle seen for a decade. Tony Benn speaking to miners rallies, in Liverpool, and in defence of Greenham. Liverpool Council, Ken Livingstone and David Blunkett leading the fight to defend their cities — and with mass support to do it. That is the image the Labour left is giving today.

And that's how it should be. The struggle inside the Party was to get the freedom to act in the class struggle outside it. Never an end in itself.

It is also how the leadership question should be settled. By his actions over Liverpool and the miners Neil Kinnock has already discredited himself far more than any amount of criticism from the left.

If Kinnock is prepared to lead the Labour Party to defend its supporters and those on whom the movement rests then well and good. If not then the Labour left must act independently of, and if necessary against, him. Never must it be paralysed by what Kinnock is prepared to accept.

That is the tactic of the last ten months. They are the correct ones. It's the Labour left, not the 'new realists' who understand what mass politics means.

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Photo: MORNING STAR

# Organise to win the strike

AFTER FIVE weeks of phoney war and ballyhoo about ballots what people really think about the miners strike is now out in the open.

MacGregor has said openly what we've known all along. He and the NCB don't give a damn about ballots. Ballot or not their intention is to starve the miners back to work.

More significantly the TUC leadership has started to step into the dispute.

On Monday Terry Duffy demonstrated his fear for the future of the right wing's policy when he called on the government to intervene — to bring 'both sides to the negotiating table'. But his 'negotiations' were that 'if they (the government) can convince the mineworkers of the inevitability of some closures I am fairly sure that the miners as responsible negotiators, will accept that.'

By Pat Hickey

David Basnett broke five weeks of silence at the Scottish TUC when he issued an 'invitation' to the NUM to ask the TUC general council for assistance. Perhaps he had the example of the General Council's 'assistance' to the NGA in mind?

The sole reason the top ranks of the General Council are becoming involved is because the miners are tearing the 'new realism' of Duffy, Sirs, Basnett, Graham and co to shreds.

The TUC General Council has already led ASLEF, the health workers, the NGA, and

the GCHQ workers to crushing and humiliating defeat. Now the miners are showing that militant struggle can win.

## Union

The union leaderships who wanted the strike to win spoke out a long time ago. The rail unions, with the urging of Ray Buckton and Jimmy Knapp, have done a magnificent job in fighting to shut down the movement of coal. They are backed up by real union solidarity at the base. The leadership of the AUEW under Duffy showed its attitude when it publicly insulted the miners by offering a pitiful £3,000 support. The left/right split is going through every level of the trade union movement.

Its the same in the Labour Party. Tony Benn, Dennis Skinner, Bob Clay and other MPs — including the Campaign group of MPs as a whole — have played a full supporting role in the strike. Local Labour Parties have played an active role — Peter Heathfield has publicly thanked the

CLPs for their support in areas where miners are continuing to work.

But Neil Kinnock for the first five weeks of the strike tried to carry on an imitation of an ostrich with his head stuck in the sand. Then finally he ventured out to support the right wing on the NUM executive. This move having been defeated Kinnock then relapsed back into silence on the real issues again.

It was Arthur Scargill and the NUM left which reaffirmed its unchallenged leadership at the miners' union executive on Thursday. The chants outside the meeting of 'Arthur Scargill walks on water' weren't far from the truth as the 'courageous' union moderates collapsed like pricked balloons.

These 'democrats' are now arguing up and down the NUM to prevent the rule change that would allow the union to decide its policies by a majority vote.

What is happening is that a left/right split is opening up throughout the labour movement. A split no longer on resolutions but of those for and against taking decisive action to back the miners.

Organising that left is a key to victory — because the TUC General Council will take no action to support the miners unless it is forced kicking and screaming to do so.

There are four key steps to victory:

- The miners urgently need financial support. £50,000 has been voted by NUPE. A levy has been introduced by Scott Lithgow. Thousands of pounds has been raised by local support committees and workplace collections. The Scottish TUC has called for support.

- But much more is needed. Trade unions and workplaces should be looking to a 50p and £1 a week levy to support the unions.

- In towns and cities support committees for the miners strike based on the labour movement should be established bringing together trade union branches, trades councils and Labour Parties. This has already been done in places like Stockport, Birmingham and Bristol.

- These support committees can prepare solidarity action through organising workplace tours, delegations to picket lines, win-

- ing boycotts of coal, and making collections.

- Local demonstrations like those planned in Manchester and Huddersfield, following up the huge success of the Kent to Nottingham NUM march, should take place up and down the country. The miners should be at the forefront of every march and rally on May Day.

- But more than that is needed. The success of the Kent miners march shows the huge possibility for a national demonstration in support of the miners.

- A day of industrial action with the miners should be named. The STUC has taken the lead here.

- There should be a fight to force the TUC to call a day of solidarity strike action. But if this is refused the unions already taking solidarity action with the miners must name the day for industrial action themselves.

## 'Labour's Alliance for Socialism' — an interview with Tony Benn.

The May Day issue will carry a special 8 page interview with Tony Benn carried out for Socialist Action by John Ross.

Order your copy now!

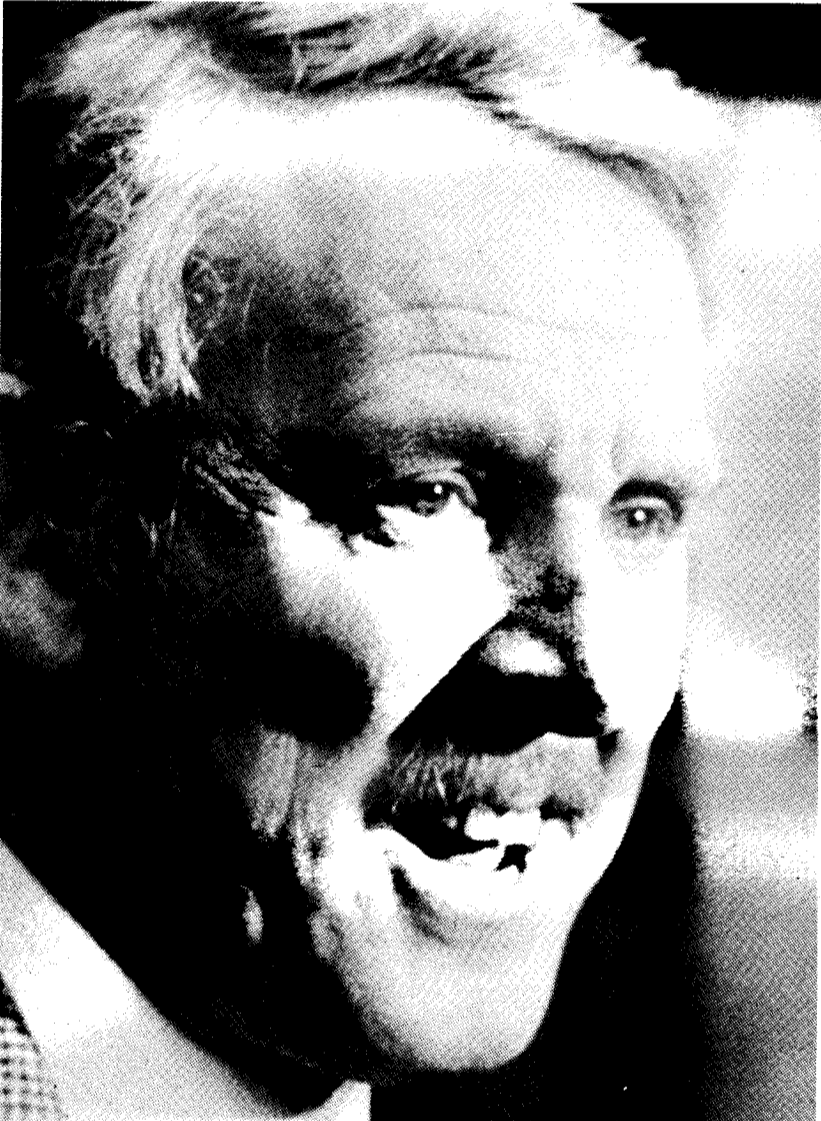
## A PIECE OF THE ACTION



GORMAC #52 4/84

# Determined to win

## “Solidarity: an act of self interest”



Peter Heathfield, General Secretary NUM

Last week the NUM national executive decided in favour of a recall delegate conference. PETER HEATHFIELD, NUM general secretary, told *Socialist Action* why the conference had been called, what's at stake in the strike, and what's needed to win.

**THE DELEGATE** conference was born out of attempts by certain people within the union to compel an individual ballot. The national executive felt the purpose of a ballot at this stage would be to say to striking miners we have a right of veto over your efforts to defend your jobs. That's completely unsatisfactory. It was a device to end the dispute.

Consequently we decided to have a special conference to enable rank and file members involved in the original decision to introduce an overtime ban to have their say about the direction we should be travelling. The delegates are working miners, selected by the area they represent.

It is sad that Nottingham, South Derby and Leicester have not fallen into line. Had there been an immediate response we should have been in a position to conclude the dispute quickly. Traditionally, Nottinghamshire has had a different attitude to industrial conflict, mainly because it is an area less affected by closure problems.

In the 1920s and '30s Notts broke away from the Miners' Federation, under the right wing leadership of a bloke called Spencer. In our view, Spencerism still thrives.

The problems for mining are the same throughout the country. Notts isn't immune. The executive recognises the miners can't win this struggle alone. We need the assistance of trade unionists generally, and particularly the transport unions who played an important part in our 1972 and '74 victories.

We are developing a strategy based on the support we've had from the seamen, the rail workers and the transport and general workers. With their help, this strike is having a considerable impact.

There is ample evidence that the

Coal Board, the government and even the Electricity Board are playing down the effects. We have been made aware of a government edict that no coal-stock figures will be given for the remainder of the dispute.

We are very wary of involving the TUC. We have no intention of asking for their assistance at this moment in time. We're mindful of the problems ASLEF had over flexible rostering and the problems of the NGA at Warrington — and we're determined to win this dispute.

We are disappointed we haven't received the out-and-out support of the Labour Party leadership. I'm bewildered that they speak of a ballot as if they believed it would resolve the problem. It won't. Yorkshire men, Welsh men, Scotsmen, and miners from the North East will not allow people working in profitable pits to deny them the right to defend their jobs.

Neil Kinnock's recent statement was pretty miserable — it amounted to a call for a ballot. The Labour leadership should be calling on the government to intervene to redirect MacGregor to enable us to return to work and continue producing the coal this nation requires.

We've had a tremendous response from constituency parties, and considerable support from the Campaign Group of MPs. This includes constituencies — and trades councils — in areas where miners are continuing to work.

It indicates a recognition throughout the whole labour movement that this is not only the miners' struggle. I think it's a recognition that if the miners fell on this occasion, then the labour movement would crumble.

In many ways this onslaught is worse than the situation the miners faced in 1926. After the virtual decimation of the NUM, the re-

mainder of the movement was intact, almost untouched, after the general strike. Today, the 1980 and '82 legislation is designed to achieve the disintegration of the whole labour movement.

The miners still at work must recognise who's supporting their right to work and their right 'to express a democratic view': the tabloids and the media generally, the government and the police — hardly the traditional allies of the labour movement.

The police are implementing Tory anti-union legislation. The same bobbies will be knocking lumps out of those miners if they try to defend their jobs in six, 12 or 18 months time. To date, we've made a nonsense of the legislation.

When the government took out an injunction, we thought they intended to activate it straight away. That would have been to our advantage. They'd have paid a price. Mrs Thatcher recognised that too. She's got to make her mind up to use it or scrap it.

Personally I think she will try to break the miners' will by having a go at our resources. She has a pathological hatred of the unions, particularly the miners after 1974. She will use all the forces at her disposal to ensure our defeat. Otherwise, she would travel the path of Heath into oblivion.

This introduces another element into the formula. Perhaps it accounts for the reluctance of some Labour Party leaders to see the party actively involved. But at this stage, I'm interested in seeing the miners victorious — we'll deal with the consequences thereafter.

To win, first of all we must develop maximum unity within the NUM. Then the response from other unions will intensify. Solidarity is not an act of altruism, it's an act of material self-interest. If enough support comes from other unions MacGregor will have his terms of reference modified, he'll negotiate.

Miners are determined to defend their jobs and their industry. I'm confident the NUM national executive will get a vote of confidence at next Thursday's meeting.

## “Rank and file workers come and join us”

**TWO OUT OF** Kent's three pits are due to close under MacGregor's plan. Kent miners have reacted with militancy to the area's call for action. Kent NUM secretary, JACK COLLINS, told *Socialist Action* why this is and what the stakes are.

Kent was first staffed by people who walked to the coalfield looking for work. My dad walked into the coalfield before the First World War. Many had been barred from other pits because of their political views.

They brought their militant traditions with them. That's why we organised the march to Nottingham. We walked to Kent looking for work; we are prepared to walk from there to keep it.

The government's not acting from a position of strength. If they were, they'd not need thousands of police on the streets propping up their rotten laws.

In a class-based society, the ruling class have got to maintain their own rule. What we're seeing is a

straightforward example of the class struggle. It is not simply confined to the shop floor, it's out on the streets.

The divisions in society have moved on since 1972-74. Conflicts worldwide have become sharper. Look at the arms race, and the huge build-up of nuclear weapons.

What are the Greenham women fighting for, and why are they so abused for their sexuality? Why do the police and the army have to be used to try and silence their protest?

If millions are put on the dole, eventually people are bound to take action. The only people that can give a lead, apart from political organisations, are the organised workers.

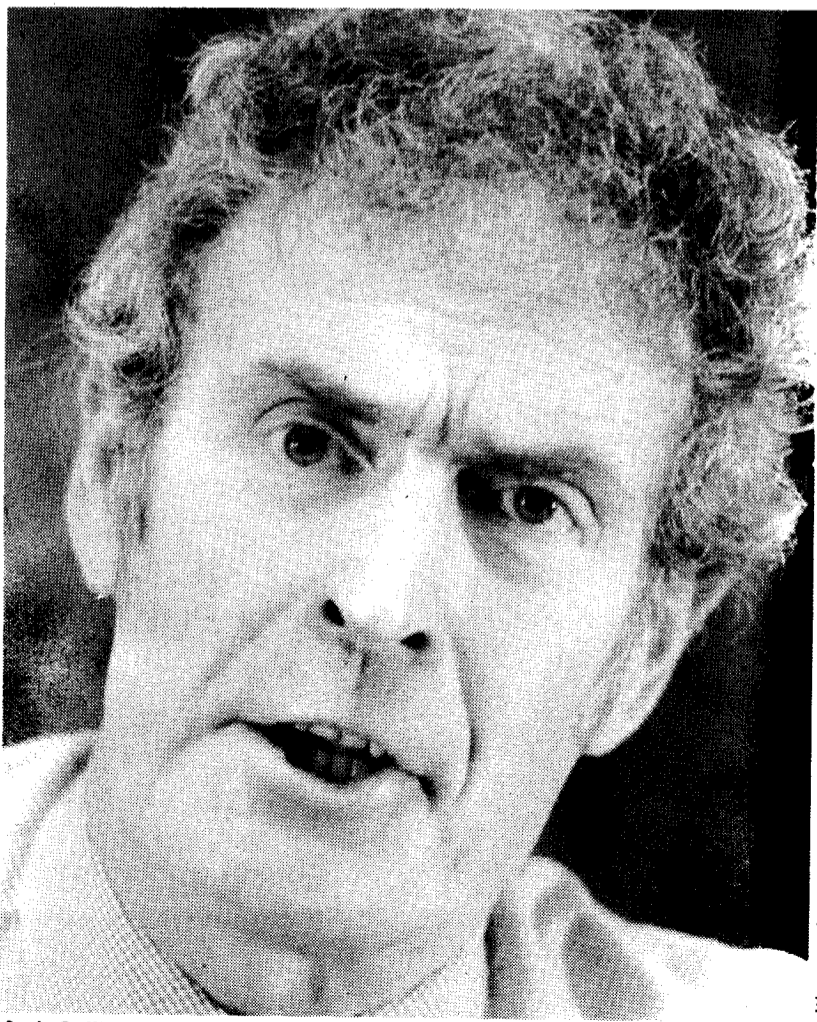
That's why the government is out to destroy the trade unions, and in particular the best-organised and strongest section: the miners.

We're told by the press that we're losing people's sympathy. I came back from London recently with £3500 of sympathy! We've got more support from the NUR, the NUS, ASLEF and the TGWU than we had in the strikes 10 years ago.

For the steel strike in 1980 we levied Kent miners, provided hotel accommodation for the pickets, refused to handle steel, and supported the picket lines at Sheerness. We'd like to see our support returned in this dispute.

This strike is a battle for whole communities. Even the local paper, *The Mercury*, recognises this. This is why women have come forward and are more active in this dispute than last time. We're fighting because our livelihoods are at stake.

Miners going in think they're safe. But what right have they got to stop us fighting to save our jobs? The question I'd like to see answered is whether a miner going into work in Nottinghamshire is prepared to take responsibility for sacking another somewhere else.



Jack Collins, Secretary Kent Area NUM

# South Wales NUM President 'The fight is going to be bitter'

**EMLYN WILLIAMS, president of the South Wales NUM, spoke to a 1000-strong rally in Aberdare last Saturday.**

**THIS RALLY is just the first of a series that will culminate in a mass rally in Cardiff on 28 April. That will be organised by the Wales TUC.**

When you say Wales TUC you feel a shudder going down your back. Yesterday at the Wales TUC a proposal was put that the only way to positively assist the miners was by calling out the mass of the working class movement for industrial action.

The Wales TUC were swallowing Anadins by the handful then. They were looking at each other and almost crying. They realise that without the miners and the other industrial unions the Wales TUC would perish.

When we embarked on this struggle for survival, work and the right to bring up our children properly many people said to me: 'But Emlyn, these are not the miners of 1972 and '74, these youngsters have got mortgages and are up to their necks in debt.' I can tell those doubters that these youngsters have forgotten about their mortgages and have been a credit to the miners.

Yes, we've got scabs in some parts of the British coalfield and we've got the resurrection of Spencerism (yellow unions) in Nottingham area in particular.



Photo: JOHN HARRIS

But I must also say this — there are thousands of comrades in Nottingham who have been on strike since Day One. They have not only been victimised by the employers but by a gullible leadership in that area. Many of them have received letters that they will be suspended from the NUM!

I tell those comrades and others incarcerated in police jails — you will have the support of the South Wales miners. If they won't support you in Nottingham, we will support you from here.

At the NEC on Thursday the response of the men at the lobby was fantastic — out of this world. I'll never see a scene like that as long as I live, but I must point out that there are certain weaknesses with the decision reached. George Rees and I were quite clear that the NEC should have called everyone out. That is what its function was and that's what it should have done.

## Protest

As for the delegate conference on Thursday, we met as a South Wales exec yesterday and decided to support the amendment of the rules for 50 per cent plus one: and to present a resolution for the conference to instruct every member to come out without a ballot. That day of the ballot is over — this one is only a ploy to destroy the working class and the credibility of the miners.

Comrades, the fight is going to be bitter and we are suffering. I would like to thank the miners' wives for the way they are responding despite the hardship. And lastly on behalf of the South Wales executive council I must say that you've been a credit to us. We must be steadfast and next time I speak here it will be after a victory against this vicious government.

# Around the country

## LEICESTER

### 'We are the iron ladies, not Thatcher'

150 PEOPLE packed into Leicester's Unemployed Workers Centre on Thursday 19 April to hear speakers from the South Wales NUM, Kent miners marching to Nottingham, miners' wives from Hadfield's Main colliery in Doncaster and local trade unionists. The rally had been called by the Support Committee established by Leicester Trades Council.

Tony Stephenson, a Kent marcher, spoke of the enthusiastic reception their 10 day march had received even in Tory strongholds like Rochester. A bucket collection there had raised over £200.

He also recalled how in London he had gatecrashed a CND meeting since they had been 'sitting on the fence' when it does concern them. 'If coal goes what do they think there is left to use?', he said. He left with a collection of £117 after telling the CND members present

that if the NUM was smashed CND and its campaign would be a great deal weaker.

A rousing reception was given to Lynne Greig and Margaret Dalton from Hadfield colliery in Yorkshire. Lynne, part of the women's support group in Doncaster, spoke of Thatcher's concern for democracy. She won strong applause when she said:

'Thatcher is only interested in democracy for scabs. She says they have a what about the four million on the dole, they've also got the right to work.'

Both women showed the determination of miners' wives to fight alongside their husbands, as Margaret Dalton put it:

'I believe it is very important to show Margaret Thatcher that we women of this country are stronger than she is. We are the iron ladies of this country, not her.'

## HUDDERSFIELD

A MINERS' solidarity committee has been set up locally by the trades council jointly with the Labour Party following a resolution from TGWU 9/14 bus branch.

A delegate body, its first meeting was attended by 25 representatives of local trade unions and Labour Party branches, with speakers from the NUM.

The meeting made a donation to the miners and agreed to hold a public meeting on Thursday 19 April with Jack Taylor speaking. A demonstration has also been organised for Saturday 28 April.

Following the meeting the union branch at the local ICI works agreed to join the NUM in picketing the company which has been accepting coal.



Photo: NEWSLINE

## NOTTINGHAM

### The mood for strike is rising

NOTTINGHAM, heart of resistance to the strike, was the scene of a massive show of solidarity last Saturday as 8000 miners, their families and other trade unionists marched through the town. They were led by 30 Kent miners who had walked 200 miles from Kent, arriving in Nottingham the day before.

They were followed by hundreds of local Notts miners who support the strike from most of the area's pits, led by branch banners from two of their most militant collieries Blidworth and Bolsover. Delegations from almost every other coalfield were present in large numbers behind their area banners.

Addressing the rally Terry French of the Kent miners said: 'Our coalfield came into existence in the 30s when miners from many other coalfields in Britain came to Kent having been blackballed after the '26 strike. Many came on foot, too poor to travel any other way. We have now reversed this. We have walked 200 miles from Kent to save the jobs of miners all over Britain.'

Henry Richardson, Secretary of Notts area NUM, said: 'It is about time I started talking about my principles instead of being told what I'm supposed to say. Notts miners must get off their knees and support this strike. There are 5000 to 6000 Notts miners that have not crossed picket lines, and I want to raise my hat to those lads.'

The march then moved off to the Albert Hall where Jack Collins, Kent NUM, chaired an emotion-packed rally. Tony Benn told the rally:

'Everything that the working class has ever got, it got through struggle. And that is the only way to hold on to what we have now, in the face of this Tory government. Every single member of the Labour Party should be giving the miners 100 per cent support. The miners are fighting for all of us.'

Arthur Scargill speaking after a tremendous ovation said that the unity to win the strike was being achieved:

'I must point out to you that the two leaders from this area did vote for the motion in Sheffield in favour of the strike. We must recognise and appreciate that.'

He then read out public opinion polls from the next day's Sunday Times showing 68 per cent nationally in favour of a strike, and very significantly 44 per cent in Notts, which would be double the figure for strike in the Notts ballot a few weeks ago. If that poll bears any relation to reality then the mood for strike is rising throughout the country and in Notts in particular.



Photo: MARK SALMON

# Country with the miners

## MANCHESTER

LANCASHIRE miners, at their Area Council last Saturday, backed the NEC recommendation to change voting rules for ballots. Delegates representing 7500 miners decided by 102 to 50 to support the change to the ruling.

Following the decision, Sid Vincent, right-wing Lancashire General Secretary said: 'I do not think we can escape drifting into a national strike.'

Nearly 100 miners from Bold and Sutton Manor, the two pits on strike in Lancs, were lobbying the Area Council, saw this as a big step forward. They later joined a demonstration of nearly 500 people in Manchester and listened to miners from Cortonwood, the South Wales Executive and Lancashire NUM.

Colin Lenton, Bold NUM treasurer, finished the rally, calling on other Lancashire miners: 'Don't hide behind the ballot box. Get off your knees.'

The week-end before last a new peace camp was set up at Burtonwood air base. Striking miners from nearby Bold colliery immediately organised for free coal to be sent to the camp as and when they need it. The following day a delegation from the camp went to join the miners picket lines.

The Manchester Support Committee has called a demonstration in sup-

port of the miners for 7 May in the City Centre. Sponsors so far include local AUEW District Committees, and the communication workers' union.

Jeff Gregory, President Bold NUM

WE'VE BEEN waiting for the decision changing the 55 per cent required for strike for a long time. It's undemocratic when a minority can stop a majority going on strike.

It's wrong to have a ballot on putting yourself out of work. You can get people in collieries that are safe who can stop the rest of us who are under threat taking action.

But I think a ballot has probably got to come. Though I think that the people who should be allowed to vote are the miners, surface workers and COSA workers at the pits and no one else.

Colin Lenton, Treasurer Bold NUM

WE WILL win with the support of the trade union movement. Support so far has been tremendous all over Greater Manchester, Merseyside and Lancashire. We've received donations in support of between £6000 and £7000.

Cronton colliery has

this week started a £2 per head levy to support us. We are being sent food parcels all the time.

The main people building support have been the Manchester District Labour Party and the Support Committee in Manchester through an office provided by the FTAT and there's also been help from the polytechnic students union.

Preston Trades Council have given us tremendous financial support and are organising visits to factories for us. Even in Merseyside we've had massive support despite the high level of unemployment.

The Manchester Support Committee can be contacted c/o FTAT, 37 Anson Rd, Victoria Park, Manchester 14.

Oldham Rally

Support the Miners

Friday 27 April 7.30pm  
Pennine Lounge, Bus Garage, Mumps.

Speakers:

Sam Thompson, Vice President Yorks NUM  
Michael Meacher MP  
John Tocher, Confed Secretary  
Malcolm Gregory Sec. Bold NUM

## BIRMINGHAM

400 PEOPLE turned out for the West Midlands TUC rally held in Birmingham on Wednesday 18 April. The main speaker was the NUM General Secretary Peter Heathfield.

He saluted those trade unionist who 'are spending considerable energy and resources in trying to defend the action of the miners.' He singled out the National Union of Seamen whose support he described as 'magnificent'.

Attacks on the police and on those 'desirous of hiding behind a ballot' received thunderous applause.

The wildest applause however greeted Mary Coombes, one of the thirty miners' wives from South Wales who had been in the city all day drumming up support for the strike. She explained: 'We have come up here because this is where we should be. The miners' wives should be in the front of this fight, because if we lose this fight we will never have another chance again as far as I'm concerned. Once the strength of the Miners' union has gone every other union is diminished by it.'

'In our little valley we have lost most factories, with one mine left out of 54. In the 1920s there was 200,000 miners working there, down now to 750.'

A collection taken at the meeting raised over £700. It included a donation of £250 from school dinner ladies, 5000 of them are threatened with dismissal by Birmingham's Tory Council for refusing cuts in pay and conditions.

Other donations came from the Labour Group on West Midlands County Council, and Labour MPs. Clare Short sent a message of support and a personal donation of £50.

## Stockport support committee grows

THE STOCKPORT Support committee for the miners has been building solid support in the area, especially in the engineering union.

At its first meeting a debate developed as to whether its main activity should be to go down to the picket lines to give physical support, or whether it should concentrate on collecting money and fighting for workplace delegations.

This debate was resolved at its next meeting when two Lancs and two Yorks' miners attended. They pointed out that although

help was needed on picket lines the number one problem was money to pay for their own members to go picketing.

By John Cutts

The meeting also agreed to organise a fundraising social. This meeting of the support committee was better attended than the first, showing that support for the miners is growing.

Having miners at the meeting stimulated useful discussion on the police, the ballot issue, and strategy in the strike.

## BRISTOL

THE FIRST meeting of a miners' solidarity committee established by the Bristol District Labour Party took place on Wednesday 11 April. The local trades council has been invited to take equal part.

The TGWU region has made office space available for it to meet and work. It will be organising for miners to speak across the labour movement in Bristol.

North Avon Labour Party has agreed to organise a public meeting on 24 April, and many CLPs have passed resolutions of support. It is hoped that the miners will be invited to speak at the May Day rally with Tony Benn.

The TGWU Passenger Transport group has adopted a resolution calling on bus employees not to cooperate in taking the police to break up miners' pickets.

## SOUTHALL

A KENT miner and members of the Southall miners' support committee toured Southall High Street shops on Saturday and collected over £500 from the Asian community for the fund.

At the same time, thousands of leaflets were distributed and a further £75 collected on the street.

to sign a privatisation contract, won the warmest applause. She called on all working people to unite, of whatever race or colour, to defeat the government, and to stop nuclear weapons.

'Everyone is under attack', she said, 'When you go on the dole they ask you who your boyfriend is, pry into your past.'

When the coaches finally left everyone had been inspired by the enthusiasm of the miners for their cause.

councillors, the Save Marylebone campaign and representatives from East London factories.

Danny Deary said he'd welcome a ballot, if the question on the paper was 'Do you want to abolish the GLC'. Lawrence Knight, Snowdon secretary, said that the miners were turning the tide after the defeats in the steel industry and GCHQ.

Rita Maxims, sacked from St Mary's Hospital, Paddington, for refusing

coal that it had to be mixed with coal from the Midlands before being sold.

Before long the manager turned up and we were asked to go, underlining the fact that the mines may be nationalised but they don't belong to the miners.

At the welfare club we heard speeches from miners and visitors. Speakers included Danny Deary, the Snowdon branch secretary, Labour



Young miners:

**'We're for striking a future!'**

YOUNG MINERS have been prominent on the picket lines during the dispute, despite speculation that they would not favour industrial action to protect their jobs and their future. STUART BORTHWICK, of Conisborough pit near Doncaster is the first youth representative in any Yorkshire pit. He told Socialist Action why so many young miners are supporting their union.

THE STRIKE is about pit closures and MacGregor. We want shut of him. We saw what he did to steel workers and British Leyland before that.

We want to stop pit closures because British deep-mined coal is the cheapest in the world. It's cheaper to keep pits open than put people on the dole.

We believe we've got a future. I think it's ironic that MacGregor at 72 wants to tell miners of 21 and younger that they haven't. But the strike's not really started yet — we've still got to get Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire out.

Young miners are playing a big role — a role nobody believed they'd play. But now it's come to fighting, they're fighting hard. They've realised that survival is at stake.

In my pit the youth are out picketing. On the whole, the pickets going out are relatively young. They believe if they don't

strike they'll be on the dole. And the youth in Notts have started to come out too. The problem is they're threatened with the sack and the union isn't backing them up.

If we were on the dole it would make Thatcher's life easier. If everybody is under her thumb, they're easier to handle. Her calling for a ballot is the best reason for not having one — you know then there must be something wrong with it.

Why should we have a ballot when two-thirds of the British mining industry is out? It's up to us to get the rest out. Nobody standing in their little corner with a little piece of paper and a pencil is telling me I can't have my job back at the end of the strike.

The majority don't want a ballot, it's only the minority who do. If we don't strike, if we don't picket, if we don't support the union now — we'll all be on the dole.

## LONDON

THE NORTH and East London labour movement delegation to the Kent coalfield last Saturday filled 10 coaches. The reception given at the Miners' Welfare clubs was warm and welcoming.

VALERIE COULTAS travelled with the delegation.

At Snowdon colliery we were shown around the pithead. The original shaft was sunk in 1918 and produced such high quality

South London Labour Movement RALLY

**SUPPORT THE MINERS**

Wednesday 25 April 7.30pm

ASSEMBLY HALL  
LAMBETH TOWN HALL  
ACRE LANE SW2

SPEAKERS INCLUDE

Jack COLLINS KENT NUM  
Tony BENN MP

Richard BALFE MEP  
Paul BOATENG

ALSO INVITED

Ray BUCKTON ASLEAF  
Kay SUTCLIFFE

Photo: NEWSLINE

# Workers' struggle rocks Europe

**THE BIGGEST** wave of workers' struggle for ten years is sweeping Europe. Across the continent the major unions are conducting their biggest campaigns against the governments. In France the 35-hour strike has taken the country to the edge of chaos. In West Germany the print workers' strike has closed down a major newspaper. In Italy a million workers have marched in Rome against the attempts of the Craxi government to limit the sliding scale of wages, won during the 'hot autumn' of 1969.

Last week in Germany the print workers went on strike for a 35 hour week with no loss of pay — part of a giant campaign for this demand being waged in the workers movement. During the last year there have been a constant series of strikes, including a week long general strike, against the austerity plans of the Martens government in Belgium.

The current wave of struggles is the first to take place since the major recession in the world economy in 1974-5. Since that time millions of European workers have been made redundant and huge attacks have been made on welfare and social services of every kind. For ten years the workers of Europe have fought defensive battles.

A really co-ordinated counter-attack against the bosses' offensive has been stalled at each stage by the sabotage of the major unions and workers parties — not least by their support for austerity plans. In Britain it was the 'social contract' in the late 1970s. In Spain it was the 1977 'Moncloa Pact' supported by both the Communist and the Socialist Parties. In Italy it was the Communist Party explaining to the workers that austerity provided the opportunity for 'new consumption habits' — an end to the 'obsession' with consumer goods!

The betrayals have been compounded by the performance of the European Socialist Parties in government. The Euro-socialists (in reality the Euro-social democrats) have been the parties of super-austerity. Millions of workers who gave their confidence to Mitterrand in France and Gonzalez in Spain have been sold out as these governments moved rapidly to the right.

It was inevitable that sooner or later the workers would fight back on a general scale. Below we look at some of the struggles taking place, and ask what road — the Labour Party take — will the Euro-socialist, austerity merchants or anti-workers struggle?

## France

THE wave of resistance against the government's right-wing policies began in December 1979 in the struggle at a car factory just outside Paris. It was a struggle of hundreds of redundant workers. Most of the workers were immigrants from North Africa. It is an accident that the young workers are the most exploited. French industry is a struggle of the young workers. The age of 25 is the age of the students in the struggle against the divisions inside the unions and by the actions of the government. At a secret cabinet meeting, Mitterrand gave the order for the eviction of strikers occupying the plant by hundreds of riot police. The pro-Communist GCT union federation, not wishing to embarrass the CP ministers in the government, opposed the strikers. A violent street battle was fought between the strikers and those wishing to return to work.

Talbot was just a warning of the storm to come. Two weeks ago that storm broke in the steel area of Lorraine. In 1979 the Lorraine town of Longwy was the centre of a virtual uprising as workers rioted against closures. Two steelworkers were killed

when shot and fired on demonstrations. This resistance affected the whole region. Last week Lorraine was virtually cut off from the rest of France by a general strike which involved the whole region. They know that the threat of 10,000 redundancies would affect the whole community. In Longwy the workers sacked the offices of the Socialist Party in protest against the government's proposals for 'modernisation'.

While the government has announced the plan to reduce our minister's remuneration, the Communist Party has signed from the party to protest against its participation in the government. The Left must call for the abolition of the right to work.

**By Paul Lawson**

Protest against Mitterrand's austerity policy extends also to the miners in the north west of the country. Like their British counterparts they are threatened with closures, especially in the region around the town of Lille. Thousands of them in pit helmets marched against the government in Paris two weeks ago. This weekend tens of thousands of steel workers will follow them in a monster anti-austerity march. These struggles reflect the bitter disappointment felt throughout the country at what the Mitterrand government is doing. The hopes of three years ago — for a government of change — have crashed in an orgy of anti-working

## Germany

LAST Thursday West Germany's newspaper workers went on a 24-hour strike in favour of the 35-hour week with no loss of pay. The strike was a response to the campaign which was being conducted by IG-Metall, the largest engineering union. So far the workers have not decided on a national strike for this demand — but the proposal is still on the table.

The IG-Metall campaign is a result of the rapid rise in unemployment in West Germany — from just a million in 1974 to around 3 million now — and this in the star 'boom' economy of post-war Europe. The result of the unemployment was a dramatic loss of membership by IG-Metall itself, and hence a feeling by their top leadership that a campaign against unemployment was needed.

During the long IG-Metall strike in 1978-9 the demand for the 35-hour week was dropped as part of an overall pay settlement. But with union elections coming up even some of the most 'moderate' union officials have been forced into supporting the 35-hour week demand.

Even some of the West German bosses have been saying that a cut in working hours is the only way to attack unemployment. But of course they put

forward the idea that there must be wage cuts in order to bring it about. The campaign for 35 hours with no loss of pay has been spearheaded by IG-Metall's new vice president Franz Steinkuehler, who has argued the case on an explicitly anti-capitalist basis. The union, according to law, needs a 75 per cent majority in a ballot to get an all-out strike. Before an attempt at a ballot is made, they are considering a series of sectional strikes, of which the print workers strike was the first. The next target is the auto industry.

## Italy

BENIGNO Craxi, leader of the Socialist Party, is prime minister of Italy. But the government he leads is in all but name a Christian Democrat government. He became premier through one of the many sordid parliamentary deals which keep the wheels of Italian ruling class politics spinning. True to Euro — social democrat form, Craxi plunged ahead with austerity measures, and in particular an attempt to limit the *scala mobile*, the sliding scale of wages which protects the living standards of millions of Italian workers.

On 24 March Craxi got his reply from the workers — a demonstration of a million in Rome, organised on the initiative of the factory councils, and supported by the Communist Party-dominated union the CGIL.

One of the most striking features of



# goggles



surge of workers militancy in Italy — been the re-emergence of the factory councils in the major industrial areas. In January 120 councils, including delegates from all the major union federations, met in Brescia to organise the fightback. This was immediately followed up by assemblies of councils in all the major cities and demonstrations of over 100,000 workers in Milan and Rome. While different union federations have been attempting to divide the movement, the factory councils have maintained their initiative.

Now it seems likely that the government's restrictions on the *scale mobile* will be defeated by a parliamentary majority of the Communists, who have put thousands of amendments to the government's bill.

steelworkers have been the target of plant closures. The most prolonged battles have been fought by public sector workers, most notably the fight of the Liege workers in 1983 and the general strike of public sector workers from September to January.

In Liege the city was faced with bankruptcy, and decided on swingeing cuts in wages and jobs — the wage cuts involved reductions of between 3 and 15 per cent. During the worst period of the crisis the city council simply stopped paying wages to 17,000 workers. The struggle in Liege was defeated, with a consequent loss of some wages by up to 19 per cent.

The result of the nationwide attack on public sector workers is the



Steelworkers banner: 'The government of the Left must not continue the politics of the right'.

## Spain

THE Spanish Socialist Party leader, Felipe Gonzalez, promised one thing before his landslide election in 1982 — *El Cambio*, 'change'. But for the workers and national minorities the change has all been for the worse. In addition to continuing charges of torture and repression against national minorities, the Gonzalez government has introduced open and severe austerity measures.

Since last autumn however a wave of militancy has struck the country. As in France and Britain coal miners have been the forefront, in the militant stronghold of Asturias, fighting against proposed mine closures.

Also involved in major struggles have been the steel workers in Valencia and shipyard workers in Galicia. Since the advent of the Gonzalez government there has been a dramatic fall in trade unionism. Now this fall is most marked in the pro-socialist UGT federation. The more combative workers commissions have begun to grow again.

## Belgium

FOR a year and a half now the Belgian working class has been engaged in strike struggles against the austerity measures of the Martens government. Unemployment in Belgium is running at 13 per cent, and the Belgian

general strike in September. Despite the widespread support for the strike it was eventually called off by the union leaderships. 800,000 workers on strike had the rug pulled from under them by the decision of the GSC and FGFB union federations to engage in negotiations with the government — from which they got nothing. Despite these defeats, a new wave of public sector strikes has been taking place in February and March of this year.

## Netherlands

AS in Belgium, the fight against austerity in Holland has been led by the public sector workers. Out of a workforce of four million, 700,000 are public sector workers, and another 500,000 have their wages pegged to public sector levels. Last October a fight developed around a proposal to cut public sector wages by 3.5 per cent.

Immediately a series of rotating strikes developed among the rail workers. These were followed up by transport strikes in Rotterdam and Amsterdam, and then by strikes in the whole public sector.

Eventually the strikes were ended by a series of court injunctions, and the decision of the union leaderships to comply with them. But the cutback in public sector pay was limited to 0.5 per cent — a real defeat but not a catastrophic one. The basis for a continuing fightback against austerity had been laid.

## Euro elections

# Labour — with the Euro-socialists or the workers' struggles?

THE EUROPEAN elections come at a time when a new mood is sweeping through Europe. In addition to the workers' struggles reported on these pages, European politics is being reorganised around the other offensive of the European capitalists — the militarisation offensive which led to the siting of the Cruise and Pershing missiles.

Already the fightback against this offensive has produced the biggest mass movement since the war, mobilising millions in days of action against the missiles. The fight against the nuclear plans of NATO has produced a political crisis in country after country — the latest being that in Holland which might even default on its commitment to take Cruise.

Out of the struggles against austerity and nuclear weapons the outlines of a new Europe are emerging — not the Europe of Kohl, Thatcher and Mitterrand, but the Europe of the French steel workers, the Greenham Common women, the British miners and the Italian workers who have gone into action in their millions over the last month.

For socialists the fight against the missiles and the fight against the worst effect of the capitalist crisis — unemployment — must be at the centre of any programme for Europe.

The problem is that the Euro-socialists, like Gonzalez in Spain and Mitterrand in France, are the champions of austerity and militarism. Gonzalez is fighting for Spain to come into NATO. Mitterrand is a virulent defender of the missiles and the French *force de frappe*. Gonzalez presides over police repression of the struggle of the Asturian miners, while Mitterrand lays off 20,000 steel workers. These people are not our allies in a fight for a socialist Europe, they are our bitter enemies.

At the centre of a socialist programme for the European elections should be the fight for a 35-hour week with no loss of pay, and the demand for nuclear weapons and American bases out of Europe. Mitterrand and Gonzalez will have nothing to do with these

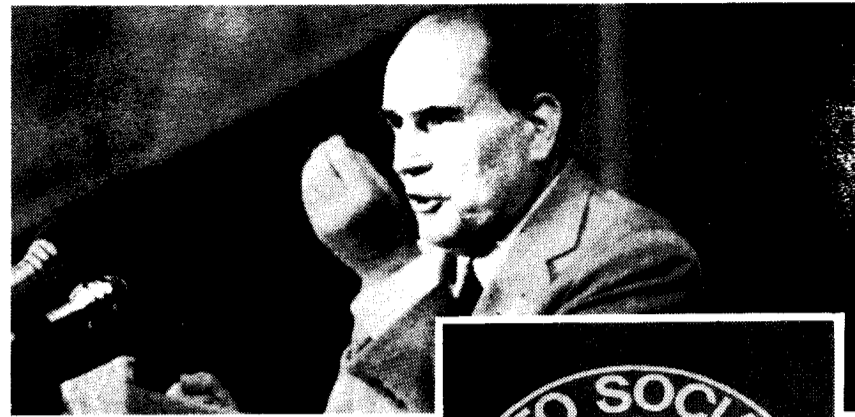


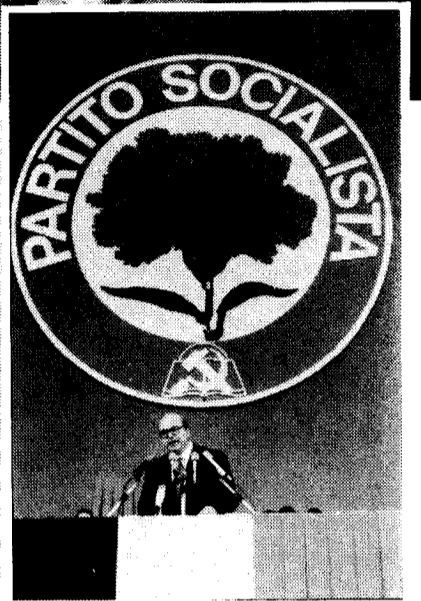
Photo: JOHN HARRIS

Mitterrand (top), Craxi (right) and Kinnock

demands.

The answer of the Euro-socialists to the strength of the US economy and US imperialism has been to build up the European economy and European imperialism. Their central organisation for this project is the club of the European capitalists — the Common Market.

Press leaks about the manifesto which the Labour Party is about to sign with the European socialist parties reveal that it is a very right wing document indeed, with no mention of opposition to the missiles, no mention of the 35 hour week or any other anti-capitalist measures to solve unemploy-



ment.

The European elections are now not far off. The European workers have taken austerity and unemployment for more than ten years. For the whole of that time the leaders have tried to tell them that it is inevitable, or that nothing much can be done about it. Now they are taking the struggle into their own hands.

The only socialist response can be to welcome this wave of workers struggles and to endorse it wholeheartedly. Socialists should argue in the European elections for a socialist Europe. That means being against the missiles, the Common Market and the austerity. And it means being against government's of the 'left' which carry out the policies of the right.

## 35,000 on steel workers march



The storm before the calm: steelworkers sack the offices of the Socialist Party in Longwy

By Steve Roberts

TO CHANTS of 'Mitterrand watch out — the working class is in the streets!' 35,000 Lorraine steel workers and their supporters marched through Paris last Friday. While the march was angry and bit-

ter against Mitterrand, it was peaceful.

However the government were taking no chances. All police leave was cancelled and 5000 riot police were on standby.

The march was called against the government's plan to cut 20,000 jobs in the steel industry. While the Lorraine workers will be the hardest hit, there were also delegations from more modern plants in Dunkirk and Marseilles. Underlining the role of the Common Market in the cuts were militant steel workers contingents from West Germany and Belgium.

Also on the march were four Socialist Party deputies from Lorraine who have resigned their party's whip, and Georges Marchais, leader of the French Communist Party. However Marchais was careful to point out that his action was not directed against the government in which four PCF ministers still remain, and also emphasised the trade union character of the demonstration.

The march was initiated by the CGT, the pro-Communist trade union federation and was supported by the other major federations, the CFDT and Force Ouvriere. However the march has sectarian aspects, with workers from a number of plants splitting up to march with their union federations rather than their fellow workers.

Unity in the struggle was one of the main slogans of the 1000-strong contingent of the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire whose banners called on the SP and the CP to unite to reject the betrayal of the steelworkers.

# Greenham still strong

**THE CAMP AT Greenham Common is still there — despite what many would like to think, and despite ruthless treatment by the police and Ministry of Defence. Women at the camp are submitting a series of complaints against the police, and against articles that have appeared in the Daily Express.**

The main gate camp has divided into three, as the Ministry of Transport have sealed off access to the driveway and the public path to the main gate. The camp lives on, and so do two others in the clearing and across the road on common land.

The police persistently patrol, putting out all camp fires with US extinguishers. Even through the night, every 20 minutes, they harass women, making it impossible to cook, make tea, heat water, and keep warm. They do it in gangs to intimidate, blowing

whistles to keep women awake, shining torches into tents, and trying to prevent women putting up any dry form of shelter.

**By Tracy Litterick at the Greenham camp**

They hose piles of firewood collected, and women too. The police prevent visitors from parking near the camp, harassing them as well.

There is verbal abuse — one policeman said the women should be gassed and he wished he could do it. References to Nazi Ger-

many are used.

This is not a civil police operation. It is military style, with collaboration from the American military inside the base.

## Bender

The police were actually doing the bailiff's job by evicting the camp at 4am. Women were given no warning as their tents were pulled down.

On Sunday 8 April, 28 women were arrested for breach of the peace, myself included. We broke down the MOT fence, reclaimed the land and built a bender and a fire. We were taken to Newbury police station and kept there for about five hours.

They released us with charges dropped. I guess if they want us to appear in court they have to acknowledge our existence! Police have now stepped up security around the area so the contractors can work without further break-ins.

Twelve Greenham women are on trial in Comiso, Sicily, for obstruction at the peace camp there last year. About 30 women have gone to support them. So more women are badly needed at Greenham.

Women are needed more than food or Gortex bags, so spread the word. People must know that Greenham is still strong and will not go until cruise does.



Women were dragged away from the Main Gate at Greenham last week

Photo: TRACY LITTERICK, Sheffield



## Labour CND — LCC muscles in

**THE COMPOSITE resolution carried at the 1983 Labour Party conference, based on a Labour CND model, called for unconditional removal of all nuclear weapons and bases from British territory. It was passed by an enormous majority, after unsuccessful attempts to have it remitted.**

Some resented Labour CND's high profile and determination to defend unilateralism. It seems they are still out to make Labour CND ineffective.

**By Walter Wolfgang,**

After party conference, CND national executive were persuaded to suspend Labour CND. But CND annual conference in December remitted a resolution calling for its reinstatement, thus refusing to endorse the national executive action.

At the same time, Joy Hurcombe, the elected secretary of Labour CND, was voted a vice-chair of National CND. Two other Labour CND executive members, myself and Dick Withecombe, were elected to the national council. Labour CND's 1984 annual meeting will take

place on Saturday 28 April. While maximum publicity for this meeting is more than welcome, the Labour Coordinating Committee's last bulletin contained a rather disturbing paragraph:

*'For further information about Labour CND contact Cathy Ashton 01-272 0065. And for information on the Labour Party's policies on defence and disarmament contact Mike Gapes at 150 Walworth Road (01-703 0833).'*

Mike Gapes was part of the dissenting minority on the Labour CND executive who asked CND to intervene. Cathy Ashton, a vice-chair of CND until December's conference, was one of CND's executive members most hostile to Labour CND.

Many LCC members have been critical of the LCC's stance, and agreed

with the campaigning commitment of the 1983 Labour CND committee. We still need such a committee determined to defend and propagate Labour's unilateralist commitment, and to keep open a discussion on NATO within the Labour Party. All this is at risk if what looks like an LCC-sponsored take-over bid is allowed to succeed.

Labour Party members should make Labour CND's annual meeting a priority. Delegates and individuals attending must be Labour Party members and members of CND nationally. Individuals are entitled to one vote, and affiliated constituencies five. Non-affiliated constituencies can also send a non-voting observer.

Labour Party branches, CND and Labour CND groups all have two

votes. And trade unions either two or five votes. The meeting will elect four officers and four ordinary members to serve on the 1984 Labour CND committee, alongside Labour Party members elected by the CND regions, to carry out Labour CND's work for the next year.

Those who register before 19 April will have conference papers sent them, but registration will be accepted on the day only if space permits. So everyone should register as soon as possible, and if you're not yet a member of CND nationally, you can join when registering.

● **Labour CND AGM, University of London Union, Malet St, WC1, from 11am till 5pm. Applications for registration to Duncan Rees, Labour CND, 11 Goodwin St, London N4.**

### London Labour CND

*is holding an eve-of-AGM fringe meeting at County Hall, starting at 8pm on the theme of mobilising Labour Parties for the Reagan demonstration called by national CND on 9 June. Speakers will include Joy Hurcombe, CND vice-chair, and Walter Wolfgang, national council member.*

## All out for a Reagan-free Europe

**THE DECISION OF CND National Council to organise a national demonstration on 9 June, in opposition to President Reagan's visit, is a major success for activists in the anti-missiles movement. It now puts CND back into line with the peace movements across Europe who are organising to make sure that opposition to cruise and Pershing is a big theme in the European elections.**

In Spain a large demonstration is organised in Madrid for 27 May and the Belgian peace groups have also agreed to a joint national demonstration during the elections. In Denmark, the trade union movement is organising a warning strike between 11.45 am and midday.

**By Dick Withecombe, CND National Council member (personal capacity)**

The German Peace Coordination had a successful conference in February and will be stepping up its campaigning against NATO. And there has been a resurgence of the peace movement in Italy, particularly among women. Lastly the government crisis in Holland gets worse. It is unlikely to accept cruise, and certainly not its full quota of 48.

The activists of the peace movement have brought together a high level of coordination across Europe for these elections. A joint European poster has been designed by the Dutch movement, with a logo showing a woman releasing a dove from a ballot box. CND will be using the slogan 'We want a nuclear-free Europe' on the poster.

British CND have proposed a joint appeal from the European movement for the elections calling for the removal of cruise and Pershing and for a nuclear

free Europe.

CND also plans to arrange a tour of speakers from European peace movements during the election, and is asking CND groups to work together with other groups in their constituencies. It is hoped that in each constituency extensive lobbying, leafletting, and public meetings of all the candidates will be organised.

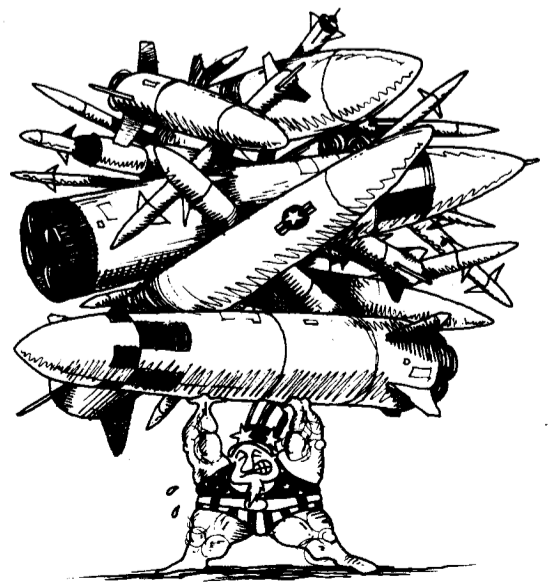
CND is using the European elections as a focus for campaigning for European disarmament. It will be a continuation of the issues already concerning the campaign this spring: cruise, Pershing, and Trident; US bases; NATO war-fighting strategies;

and AirLand Battle.

CND is anxious not to be seen to be supporting any move towards making the European parliament a forum for defence issues, and is therefore campaigning under the theme 'for a nuclear-free Europe' and 'no to a European battle field'. Lastly CND is producing a map showing all the US bases in Europe.

CND groups can obtain further information from the May issue of *Campaign*, due out this week. Groups in large towns and cities who wish to organise meetings with European speakers should contact CND at Goodwin Street as soon as possible.

Most of all, activists in CND — having forced National Council to reverse previous decisions and organise 9 June as a national demonstration — must go all out to build this as the high point of the Euro-elections, a massive turn-out for a Reagan-free Europe.





Nicaragua

# Mines explode in Reagan's face

**THE SECRET MINING** of Nicaraguan ports, carried out by exile 'contras' working from a US ship just outside Nicaraguan territorial waters, has resulted in Ronald Reagan's first big defeat in the US Congress over Central America policy. By 84 votes to 12 the Senate, dominated by the Republicans, expressed the grave embarrassment felt in the United States that Reagan has been caught openly committing an act of war, in defiance of international law.

There's no doubt that the Nicaraguan revolution does not have many friends in the Senate, which continues to vote financial assistance to the CIA-backed contras working from Honduras. But even some of the most reactionary Republicans understand that the US is getting a bad press when it deounces 'state-backed terrorism' in Lebanon and elsewhere, and then proceeds to carry out a brazen act of state-backed terrorism itself.

by the Senate, proposed by Edward Kennedy, was 'non-binding'. In fact, the first phase of the mining of the ports has already finished. Ronald Reagan remarked 'if it's non-binding, then we can live with it'.

By Paul Lawson

In a letter from ultra-reactionary Senator Barry Goldwater to the CIA Director William Casey, the dilemmas of even the

most staunch anti-communists were starkly revealed.

Goldwater said: 'The president has asked us to back his foreign policy. Bill, how can we back his foreign policy when we don't know what the hell he is doing? Lebanon, yes, we all know he sent troops over there. But mine the harbours in Nicaragua? This is an act violating international law. It is an act of war. For the life of me I don't see how we are going to explain it'.

Everyone agrees that it is impossible for Reagan to organise a full scale attack on Nicaragua during an election year. The CIA strategy has doubtless been to try to keep the pressure up on Nicaragua, waiting for Reagan's expected re-election for the all-out assault.

Nonetheless there seems to be some confu-

sion inside the administration about precisely what US policy objectives in the region are. In a recent interview Reagan argued that the US objective was to 'restore democracy' by forcing elections in Nicaragua. But elections are now being held in November. In a joint statement last week US defence secretary Caspar Weinberger, Secretary of State George Schultz and CIA director William Casey publicly denied that they even had plans to invade any country in Central America.

In fact, there are 'two factions' in the administration on this question. The 'hards', who are pushing for an invasion are led by Casey, Fred C Iike, undersecretary of state for defence policy, and Nestor Sanchez, deputy assistant secretary of defence.

The doubters are led by George Schultz, doubtless smarting from the drubbing he received for his fiasco in Lebanon.

But these divisions in the administration are tactical and can change rapidly. While the debate about policy options continues, the real military build up continues with the now well under the way *Operation Grenadero* in Honduras, and the CIA overflights of El Salvador and Nicaragua.

Whatever the White House 'wets' may think, it is going to be extremely difficult to achieve any of the US policy objectives in the region without overthrowing the Sandinistas in Nicaragua. Nothing less than a full scale invasion will achieve this end — and that is the trump card for Casey and his friends.



US trained contra



Friday evening's mixed rally at Irish Women's Conference

## 'We need each other'

'WHY has it been so much worse for Irish women — we are far behind our sisters abroad, what is it in Ireland? The Catholic Church in the South and the reactionary Loyalist ideology in the North, that is the answer.

The organisers of the first 32 County Irish Womens Conference in Dublin since 1980 must be congratulated for bringing together over 600 women from all over Ireland, to look at and debate these questions.

In the context of the Abortion Amendment — recently passed in the South to give the 'unborn' equal rights to the mother — women needed to get together. The Amendment was part of the backlash, attacking gains made in the 70's on equal pay, marriage, and contraception.

The Amendment is probably the biggest attack unleashed by the Church, and backed up by

politicians in 50 years.

By Stephanie Grant

But their victory was an empty one, because many women have started organising, as women, often for the first time.

The Amendment had its effect on Sinn Féin women as well. The new Womens Department, the participation in womens' daily struggles through the

Falls Road Womens Centre in Belfast, and their contribution to the discussion at the Conference are welcome steps forward.

The feeling in the womens' movement in Ireland is overwhelmingly one of wanting to come together as 32 county women to support each other.

Partition, which affects every aspect of life North and South of the Border, is at last being tackled in the womens' movement. Possibly the largest workshop was on 'The National Question and Feminism' — even five years ago it would have been an unpopular debate, but with Margaret Ward, who wrote *Unmanagable Revolutionaries*, and Rita

O' Hare, head of Sinn Féin Womens Department, it was one of the most important events of the conference.

There has traditionally been an uneasy relationship between women outside the Republican movement and feminists in the Republican movement, because the political make up of Ireland is different to other European countries. In both North and South, right wing forces are entrenched in an impregnable position, all under the pretence of parliamentary democracy. And in both, the Church holds positions of power.

In the North, women face the continual harassment of the British Army on the streets are arrested, interrogated and abused. You can see why

the first Anti-Valium group was set up in Belfast.

We all want an autonomous womens' movement in Ireland, and in opening up the discussion among women on Nationalism and Feminism, women are gaining strength.

Watch out for the proposed Lesbian Conference and Anti-Imperialist Womens Conference that women agreed they wanted to organise to continue the fight.

This strength is going to be needed. The Criminal Justice Bill in the South is another piece of repressive legislation and the government is investing £10 million in building another prison for women so more of them can be locked up.

## Mitterrand threatens Solidarnosc leader

ON 28 MARCH the French Prefecture of Police refused to renew the residence permit of the Polish socialist exile Zbigniew Kowalewski. Kowalewski was a member of the leadership of Lodz branch of Solidarnosc before the imposition of martial law in December 1981. Several of Kowalewski's comrades from Lodz Solidarnosc have received long prison sentences resulting from their activities. If Kowalewski were forced to return to Poland a similar fate would doubtless befall him.

While the French government has given as the official reason for refusing him further stay his inability to show sufficient means of livelihood in France, *Le Monde* has indicated that the Mitterand government is displeased with his political activities in France. Unlike many Polish exiles Kowalewski has strong left wing socialist views.

The French government is currently in the process of establishing better relations with Jaruzelski's Poland, and the ban on Kowalewski may be related to that process.

Kowalewski is a former member of the Polish Communist Party, which he left in the late 1970s, and also worked for a time as a teacher of languages in Cuba.

In February 1982 Kowalewski came to London to speak at the Labour Party rally in support of Solidarnosc, and he was also a visitor to the Labour Party conference that year.

Labour Party chairperson Eric Heffer has sent a telegram to the French interior minister Gaston Defferre expressing his shock at the ban on Kowalewski. Other protests from the labour movement are urgently needed.

Please send telegrams to Gaston Defferre, Minister de L'interieur, 1 Place Beauveau, Paris 8, France.

Photo: An Phoblacht

# "We're going to fight"

**LIVERPOOL COUNCIL** has won the support and admiration of the labour movement for its determined stand against Thatcher's local government cuts. True to his pledge at the city's Democracy Day rally, **ERIC HEFFER**, a Liverpool MP and chairperson of the Labour Party, recently put forward a resolution calling on the National Executive Committee to pledge its full support for the council's stand. He told *Socialist Action* why Labour's national leadership must be 100 per cent behind the front-line council.

THE SITUATION in Liverpool is similar to Poplar in the 1920s. At that time, when the problems of unemployment were being thrust on local authorities, one dynamic group of Labour councillors decided they'd had enough. They refused to pay the precept to the then-London County Council.

They did so because they were having to bear the cost of the very high levels of unemployment in Poplar borough. They broke the law and they were imprisoned.

By doing that they actually helped to change the law. As a result of that action in Poplar, the government were forced to bring in legislation — a sort of equalisation of the rate — that meant the rich London boroughs were helping pay for the levels of unemployment benefit in the poorer ones with the highest levels of unemployment.

Liverpool are acting in line with the spirit of Poplar council. They're saying the level of unemployment in Liver-

pool is far too high. The government has, at the same time, cut the rate support grant, and cut the housing investment programme — while there are thousands of unemployed building workers, 20,000-odd on the housing waiting list, and all the slums waiting to be dealt with. Liverpool has also had its urban aid programme cut.

Labour said, quite rightly, enough is enough. We have to get off our knees and fight. They know they could be bankrupted and disqualified under legislation brought in in 1927 (and, incidentally, three Labour governments since have not got rid of that legislation). But they are going to fight. This is very courageous.

Of course, the press has said it's just a small group of people dominated by the Militant tendency. The fact is that about seven out of the 51 councillors are Militant supporters. The overwhelming mass of Liverpool council is not Militant.

tant tendency. Some of those who are not, in my opinion, are stronger and even more determined than those who are.

The Labour council of Liverpool, backed by Labour supporters, have decided this government's

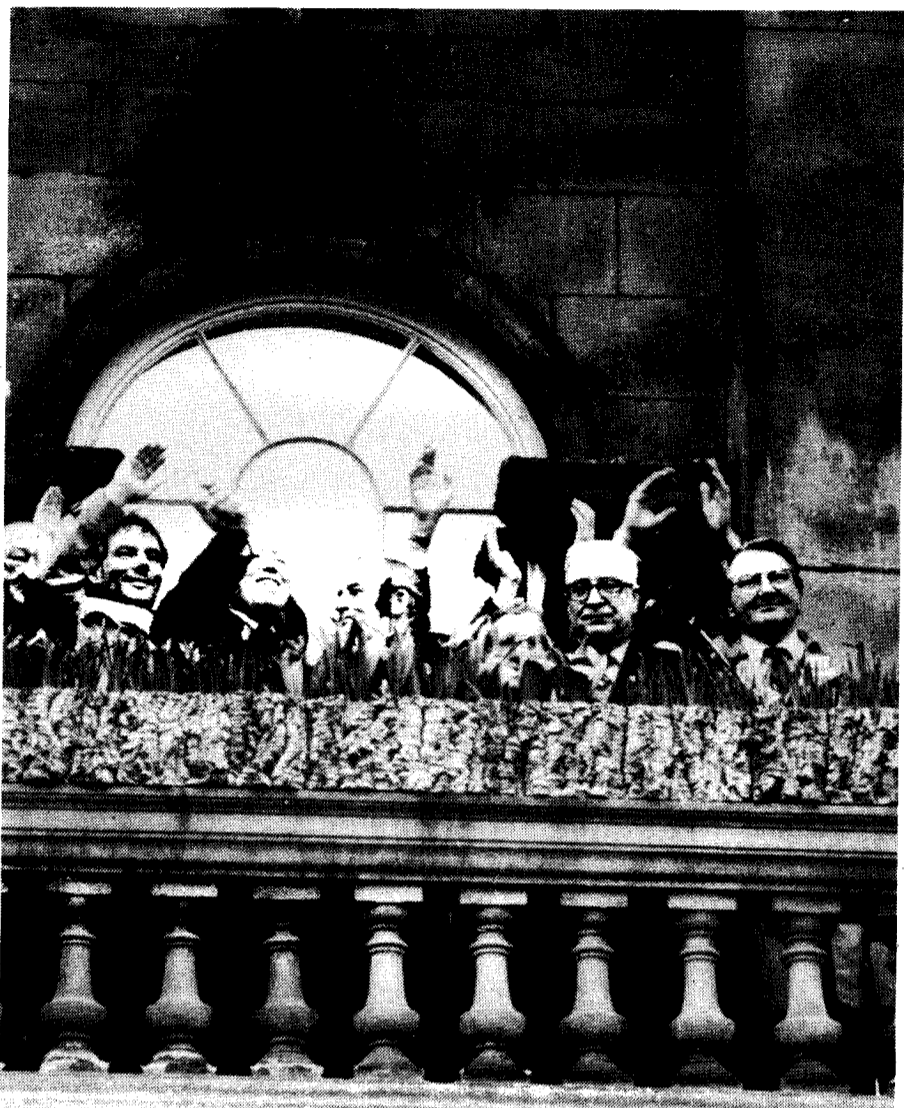
policies have to be firmly challenged. They are rightly saying that what Liverpool is doing this year, most of the Labour authorities because of the government policy of rate capping, will be faced with next year.

**The following resolution in the names of Eric Heffer and David Blunkett, was recently passed by seven votes to one at the newly established local government sub-committee of the Labour Party NEC. It will go before the national executive on 25 April.**

*This NEC understands the circumstances which have led to the situation of no budget from Liverpool council. It acknowledges that the Labour Group have proposed a nine per cent rate increase. We condemn the cuts that have been made to the rate support grant, housing investment programme allocation and the operation of penalties by the Thatcher government which have helped to contribute to Liverpool's severe problems, problems which have been further aggravated by the previous Liberal/Tory administration in the city.*

*We recognise that Liverpool Labour Group have fully consulted the trade unions and have also had meetings with the public explaining the city's problems and why the councillors are acting as they are. We acknowledge the stand made by the Liverpool City Council Labour Group and recognise that this has been caused by government cuts. They are right not to agree with sacking staff and to have at the same time accepted that rate increases are necessary.*

*In the circumstances we believe that Liverpool have acted within Labour's conference policy and therefore we pledge ourselves to give all the support we can to resolve the present impasse. The NEC therefore believes that the blame for the present situation in Liverpool lies with this Conservative government, and therefore we demand that they should provide in this unique situation the necessary financial support.*



Eric Heffer with John Hamilton and Derek Hatton — the leader and deputy leader of Liverpool council.

Photo: TIM RIGBY

## Black caucuses: Labour must show its hand

**LAST WEEK** the press gave prominent coverage to Neil Kinnock's statement that he 'remained to be convinced' about the desirability for black sections within the Labour Party.

**MARK WADSWORTH** and **LEO DICKSON** are founder members of Vauxhall Labour Party's black section, the first constituency to give full voting rights to such a section. They told *Socialist Action* why they founded their black section and what its aims were.

LAMBETH IS a black area. Almost 30 per cent of Vauxhall's population is black. But if you look at the party, you'll see one — or if you're lucky, two! — black people attending meetings. As a representative proportion of the black population it's pathetic.

From our own experiences on the doorstep, we were concerned at black people's response to the party. 'What does the Labour Party offer?' 'We've been voting Labour ever since we came here and Labour has brought in racist immigration legislation, just like everybody else.' 'Why are we to believe they'll be different in future?'

Labour wasn't faced with black people saying they'd vote SDP or Tory, they just weren't coming out to vote at all. They were disenchanted.

We argued they should come in and change the party from within. The only way they'd be confident

enough to do that was by meeting in a caucus as party members.

We set up Vauxhall black section last October. We meet once a month. The numbers coming along rise all the time. Our top figure, at the last meeting, was 48. An average is between 18 and 20. Most people at the black section never attend their ward meeting.

At the moment we've tended to talk about procedure, although we've discussed some local issues too. We spent a lot of time on procedure because we want to get it right. We want to resolve our status within the party framework.

The local government by-election in Vauxhall's Ferndale ward is an example of what black sections can do. This is the first time a black section in the Labour Party in Britain has endorsed a black candidate. Irma Critchlow is a grass roots candidate, and we're committed to bring-

ing out the troops to see that she's elected.

We have full voting rights in Vauxhall, with two delegates to the general committee and one to the executive. The constituency has sent a resolution to the national executive on this.

We were greatly heartened by Vauxhall's response. We would have been quite happy to have voting rights except on constitutional issues. But leading members of the party felt this was wrong — we should go all the way and challenge the national party to state its position.

The London Labour Party passed a resolution at its March annual meeting, with a resounding majority of 334,000, supporting setting up black sections. And senior members of its executive have said if the NEC isn't prepared to move, then London will go it alone.

Support isn't just in London. There are interesting developments in Luton and in the West Midlands, particularly Birmingham. Kinnock said it was just activists in London making a lot of noise. That's wrong. It's a national issue.

Statements like his undermine and pre-empt the findings of the national executive's own working party. They are

prejudicial to what we're doing. Neil Kinnock told us that he's worried about 'infiltration', but he wouldn't elaborate.

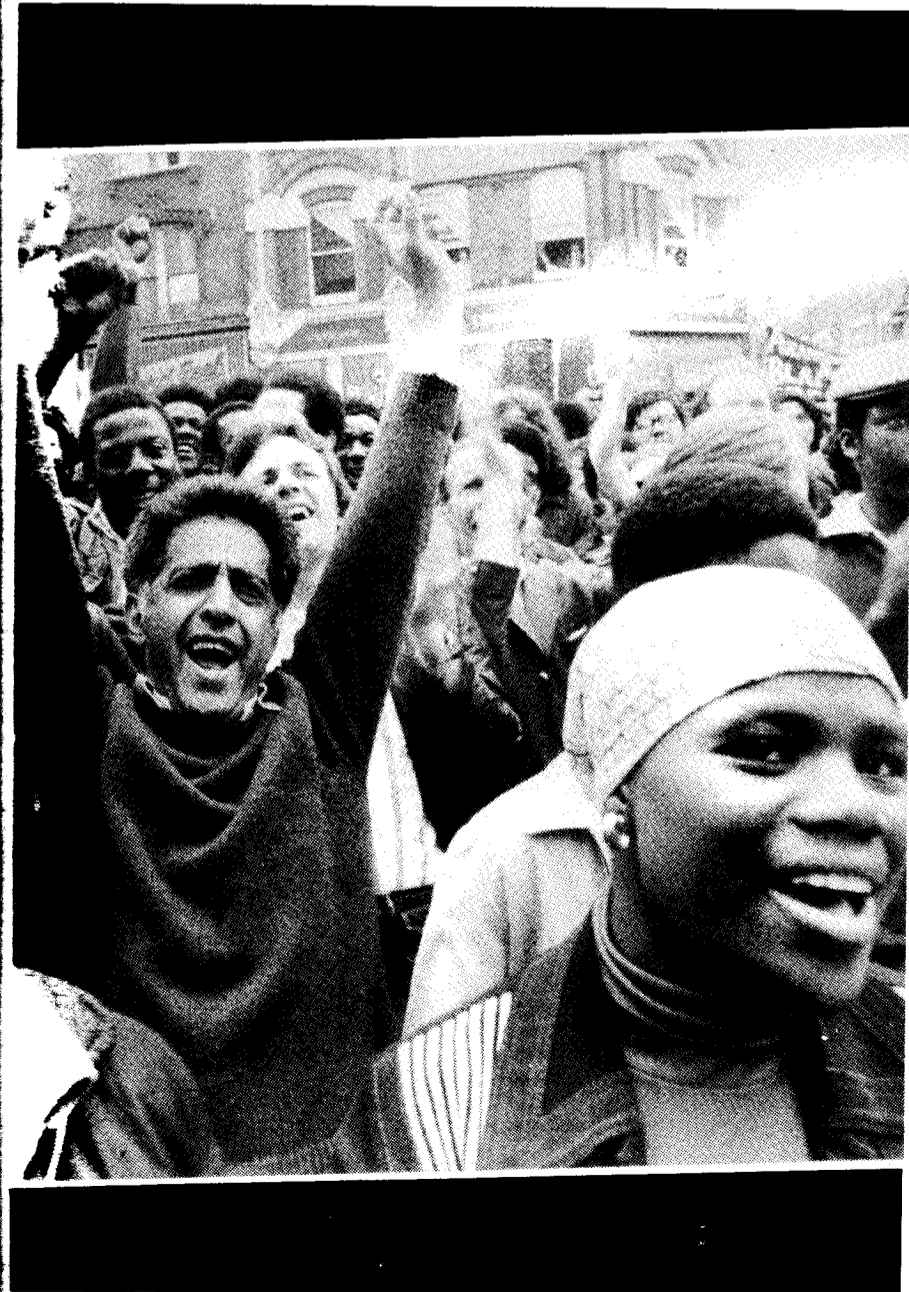
This is not a left-right issue. Left, right and centre can play quite a maverick card on the black issue. Our own MP, Stuart Holland has admitted that Vauxhall black section is strong. He said 'Now's not the time to doubt.' But our sounding of the first meeting of the working party, on 11 April, tell us that there is equivocation.

The resolution to last Labour Party conference on positive discrimination was remitted. Part of this remit was setting up a working party with NEC, PLP and constituency representation as well as the Labour Race Action Group. Vauxhall's action is a parallel movement. We are challenging the party to show its hand.

### Apologies to Muhammed Idrish

**OUR** article last week supporting Muhammed Idrish's campaign to stay in Britain mistakenly stated that his marriage broke up after two weeks. It should have said 'after two years'.

We apologise for any confusion caused.



# Labour needs youth

**THIS YEAR'S** Labour Party Young Socialists' national conference takes place on 20-23 April in Bridlington. GRANT KEIR looks at the issues facing the Militant dominated LPYS.

This year's LPYS National Conference takes place amid growing problems for Thatcher's Tory Government. But the Tories problems should be the LPYS's opportunities.

The miners dispute, mass opposition to the nuclear arms race, the growing radicalisation of young women young blacks, lesbians, gays, the opposition to the Police Bill, the Tories attempt to bolster up 'family morality' are just some of the issues. The backdrop is provided by the miners strike, the recovery of Labour's position in the opinion polls, and Tony Benn's victory in Chesterfield. The LPYS is presented with enormous opportunities to spread its influence and grow.

There are some positive developments as well. At last the YS leadership is taking seriously work with Youth CND. We are promised an LPYS National Young Women's conference to discuss how the LPYS as a whole can help lead the fight against women's oppression by struggling against the disastrous effects Thatcher's policies are having in particular against young women. At last we are going to have a serious discussion on the question of lesbian and gay liberation.

## Rhetoric

Unfortunately we are also likely to be subjected to some of the most reactionary rhetoric concerning the British Army's occupation of the North of Ireland that you are likely to hear anywhere in the labour movement.

However, despite the ritual denunciation of the 'Green Terrorists' and 'Bigotted Sectarians' (for this read Sinn Fein), the conference is likely to register a move away from the sectarianism toward the Central American liberation forces that has been the hallmark of years gone by. It is hoped that two Sandinista youth currently on a tour of Britain will be allowed to address the conference during the Saturday session.

Youth CND is the organised expression of the biggest youth radicalisation that this country has ever seen. It can mobilise hundreds of thousands of youth in action against the Thatcher/Reagan war drive.

The second question upon which delegates will judge the leadership is the miners' strike. Will the

LPYS place all its resources at the disposal of the miners' struggle, or will it simply attempt to recruit a few young miners to support the Militant newspaper?

For many delegates, the need to change the political positions and practices of the current leadership will express itself as a desire to organise to build the LPYS around the crucial political questions of the day. Supporters of the newspaper Revolution will be linking up with these forces and proposing a new newspaper for the LPYS.

There are some other people in the YS who are a little dissatisfied. They usually parade around in 'Put the LP back into LPYS' badges. They describe themselves as supporters of the LCC, fighting for unity inside the LP. Unfortunately to date the supporters of the LCC have not proved themselves very genuine in their claimed desire to build the YS. Most recently voting with the right to cut the YS national budget down to the minimum.

The opportunities to build a mass campaigning LPYS are there! They must be grasped with both hands!

## 'Gays the word' raided

By Paul Canning, London LCGR

GAY'S THE WORD, the London Gay community bookshop was raided by officers of HM customs and excise on Tuesday, 10 April. They took away the American stock of the bookshop, which is most of it. The homes of the workers and directors of the shop were also visited, personal notebooks, letters etc were taken away. A prosecution for 'obscenity' is expected.

**Picket Customs and Excise Woburn Place, WC1. 27 April 12-2.00 pm.**



NALGO social workers strike, which led to Southwark victimisation

# Southwark NALGO fights Labour council's attack

**1000 council employees belonging to NALGO have been on strike for four weeks over the sacking of mobile social worker Siobhan Stokes just half an hour before her probation period was due to end. Southwark council is alleged to be a 'left' council. But the council leaders, most of whom belong to the local NUPE council officers' branch, appear to want to break the strength of the local NALGO branch in preparation for future cuts.**

Southwark is one of several councils which seem to want to provoke disputes to defeat the stronger of the local government unions. The formal reason for Siobhan's sacking was her refusal to be assigned to work in Sidcup in Kent —

which would have meant four hours travelling a day — and her refusal to sign a loyalty oath, in effect an agreement not to go on strike.

The behaviour of the local Labour council has been a disgrace. Alan Davies, the leader of the

council, got the NUPE officers' branch to agree to take industrial action if Siobhan was reinstated. During the residential social workers strike the council organised the

By Jean O'Rourke

notorious police raid on The Hollies children's home, evicting the children and smashing up the building.

Last Friday over 1000 people marched through Southwark to protest against the sacking, which

has been condemned by local Labour Parties. Five hundred people picketed the meeting of the council Labour Group last Wednesday.

Last Friday evening Alan Davies announced that an agreement had been reached to 'reinstate' Siobhan — suspended for six weeks on full pay while negotiations take place. The danger is that if the strikers return to work, it will be difficult to bring them out again if she is eventually not reinstated.

Southwark is yet another example of

Labour councils in London attacking, and even trying to crush, local council workers. If unity is going to be built against next year's rate capping, it means unity between the council and their workers, and unity between the different council unions. Alan Davies and his friends are a shining example of how not to do that.

## STOP PRESS

\*Last Monday a mass meeting decided on a return to work pending negotiations. More details next week.

# TGWU bus conference

By Steve Vokes, TGWU 9/14 branch shop steward

**BRITAIN'S BUS workers met on 7-8 April at the Transport and General Workers Union Passenger Group Consultative Conference. Tory government attacks on wages, conditions and employment were reflected in agenda discussions on privatisation, wages and conditions, and the attack on local democracy.**

In the last few years, the industry has lost 20,000 conductors and drivers, and membership of this section of the TGWU is now under 200,000. Tory plans for abolishing the metropolitan counties and the introduction of rate-capping, coupled with hiving off parts of the industry, would lead to break up of trade union organisation of bus workers, and to a huge round of redundancies and wage cuts.

Unfortunately the national committee and Bill Morris, the national officer, did not give a lead on the issues.

Some speakers referred to the conference two years ago, saying nothing had resulted except that attendance this time was significantly down. No resolutions were allowed. And delegates believed it was called to 'let off steam'.

Given the crisis facing the industry, it is necessary to unify all sections of bus workers to defend themselves against the Tory attacks — and to ally with local government workers and others affected by the Tory threats to local democracy.

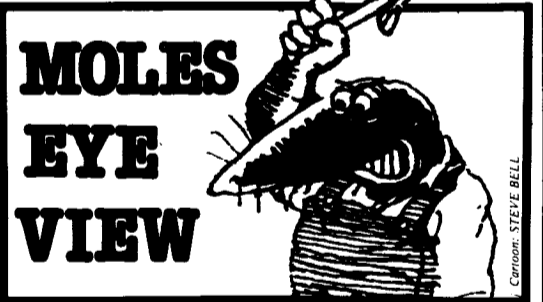
The hour is rapidly approaching when bus workers have to take industrial action to defend jobs and services. Militants must demand a recall Passenger Transport Group Delegate Conference to map out a strategy of action, not just talk.

## He does walk on water

ONCE UPON a time there was this guy Bishop Berkely who thought the real world only existed in your head. Myself, I thought the Bishop had been dead for years — that is until I read last week's Socialist Worker. Now I know he is alive and well and putting pen to paper for SW.

You lot, along with the whole of the British ruling class, the Tory government, the media and most miners had the crazy idea Scargill was organising mass pickets and openly taking on the law. Sorry, it's all in your minds. As Socialist Worker says: he is 'hide-bound by the constitutional niceties of the union' and should be appealing over the heads of the area leaderships for rank and file activists.

So now you know that Scargill and his co-leaders in the NUM never held a meeting and demonstration in Nottingham last Saturday. It was an illusion. All those flying pickets from Yorkshire don't exist. The media has just deluded us all with scare stories about the miners from Scotland, Kent, Yorkshire and Wales



travelling the country spreading the strike.

Socialist Worker knows the score about all those so-called area officials and has blown the gaff on them by saying: 'Some of them have simply sat in their offices like puddings.' No wonder its front page urged 'No Surrender'. They alone knew that Scargill, in a conspiracy with the militants, was preparing the great surrender when the NUM executive met last week.

That's why they are calling a delegate conference, instead of a ballot and that's why they are undermining the struggle by insisting that a 50 per cent plus one vote can call a strike, rather than 55 per cent. Anybody as devious as that can surely walk on water!

Moles Eye View is compiled by Bob Pennington. Contributions should be sent to arrive by Thursday am.

## What a shame

THE SUNDAY TIMES got all excited about the SAS trip up Mount Everest. It would be a boost for Britain and as the cash was coming out of SAS funds it would not cost the taxpayer anything. Where the SAS get their money from wasn't revealed — but being naive I always thought it was from the taxpayer.

And then, oh dear, along came an avalanche. One of our brave lads died on that far away foreign slope. Another broke his knee, another fractured his collarbone and one poor boy got frost bite. So the trip was called off — £120,000 worth of expense got buried in snow and they all came home. Now for the sad part — 10 came home intact.

# Socialist ACTION

# Nicaraguan town bombed



REAGAN'S decision to mine the Nicaraguan ports led last week to his first major defeat in Congress, as the Senate voted by 84-12 to condemn the president's actions. But the mining of the ports had more or less been completed anyway, and the US is pressing forward its attacks on Nicaragua.

Last weekend 450 US-backed counter-revolutionaries launched an attack on the Atlantic south coast port of San Juan del Norte capturing the town — the first to be captured by anti-Sandinista rebels since the beginning of the US-organised destabilisation campaign two years ago.

Nicaraguan Interior Minister Tomas Borge described the town as being of little strategic significance. The 1500 inhabitants left the town several weeks ago. In fact the seizure of the town by Edan Pastora's ARDE movement is more of a propaganda coup than a significant military success.

San Juan del Norte lies a stone's throw across the border from Costa Rica in a strip of territory which is very difficult to defend without the deployment of enormous forces. With the northern border with Honduras constantly under threat, and

Nicaraguan ports and strategic installations being regularly sabotaged, it is difficult to maintain a huge garrison in the south.

Daniel Ortega, co-ordinator of FSLN leadership junta, commented that the attack on San Juan del Norte came at the same time that the US had despatched a ship to the nearby Costa Rica port of Limon — 'a coincidence that we cannot call casual.'

The attack on the Nicaraguan port also coincided with the resignation of the Democratic Senator Daniel Moynihan as vice-chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee, in

protest against the administration's clandestine operations against Nicaragua, in particular the mining of the ports.

The US operations against Nicaragua are one part of a sinister operation worldwide which the United States has decided to conduct against 'international terrorism'. On 3 April Reagan signed a secret directive, National Security Decision Directive 130, instructing 26 US agencies to prepare for pre-emptive strikes against the US's allegedly 'terrorist' opponents. The FBI and CIA have been instructed to form quick reaction 'anti-terrorist' combat units which could be used anywhere in the world at short notice.

This instruction is just part of the process of rehabilitating the CIA, in the doldrums after Watergate and Vietnam.

Over the past year 1500 US graduates have been recruited by the CIA, and vast amounts of money have been pumped into the agency. A US State Department official commented: 'What we're trying to grapple with is how to use little amounts of force on little problems in far away places — and convince the US public that it's necessary (!)'

Reagan's defeat in the Senate is important from the point of view of influencing US public opinion. But it will not deter the administration from its course of trying to overthrow the Sandinistas, or backing the death squad regime in El Salvador. After his defeat on Nicaragua Reagan used emergency procedures to by-pass Congress to send another 32 million dollars to El Salvador for ammunition and helicopters.

## Sandinista Youth tour Europe

ALVARA PORTE is 23 years old and a member of the National Leadership of the 'Juventud Sandinista 19 July'. Lautara Sandino is 24 years old and a member of the 'Committee for International Relations'. Both these young Nicaraguans are touring Britain over Easter as part of their

European tour. They are here to draw attention to the mounting threat of US military intervention against their revolution.

They are also here to raise money for 'Los Muchachos' the newspaper of the Sandinista Youth Organisation (Juventud Sandinista 19 July).

## Sandinista youth meetings

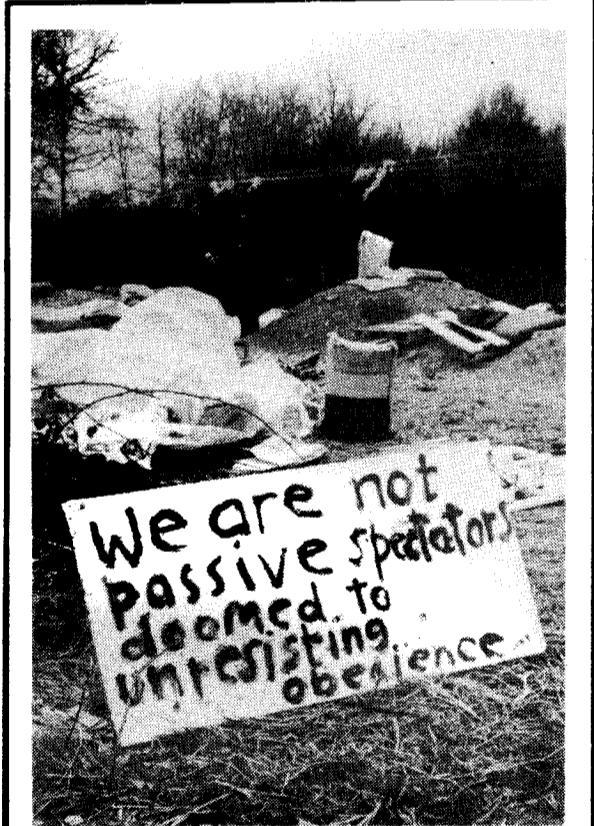
Wednesday 18th April at the 'Support the Miners' meeting, Council Chamber, Camden Town Hall, Judd St. 7.30pm.

Thursday 19th April at the 'Solidarity with the Central American Revolutions' meeting, McLellan Galleries, West Room, Glasgow. 7.30pm.

Friday 20th April at the

Benefit Bop with a Venezuelan Band & Disco, Black Lion Pub, Chapel Street, Manchester, 8.00pm.

Saturday 21st April. The Sandinista Youth will be addressing the National Labour Party Young Socialists Conference in Bridlington, as well as speaking at a fringe meeting on the Saturday lunchtime.



By Mike Schneider, Greater Manchester CND  
**COMING FROM** as far apart as mid-Wales and Cumbria, thousands embraced the Burtonwood weapons storage base in Lancashire last Saturday. Women, youth, children — all with the common aim of demonstrating the growing strength of the campaign to rid ourselves of the US occupying army and nuclear weapons.

Even the weather was on our side! Although the boundary fence was heavily policed it was breached in several places. At least 11 people, led by Greenham women, broke into the base. A young child also broke in, confusing the police who in the end did nothing about it.

The fence was festooned with balloons, family photos, ribbon and yarn webs and so on. The action made clear that the movement is growing both in size and awareness, and has rattled the government.

This was shown by Heseltine's Sunday response: 'For every US soldier in the UK there are two UK soldiers in West Germany', and, 'We thank CND for making us aware of how much we welcome our US allies.'

Now CND is going to keep up the pressure with events all through the Easter period. The next major focus will be 9 June, when CND has called a national demonstration to greet Ronald Reagan when he visits Britain.

That's when Heseltin will see truly 'how must we welcome our US allies.'

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