

A Socialist ACTION

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Unity can... STOP THE SCABS

AS THE MINERS stand to the fore in defence of jobs and trade union rights they have brought down on their heads the fury of the government, the police and the media.

Hostility from such quarters is only to be expected. The history of our movement shows that it can expect nothing but spleen and violence from the establishment when it dares to stand up for the rights of working people.

But when trade union leaders join in with the strike breakers that is an entirely different matter. And let there be no mistake about it: Eric Hammond of the Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunication and Plumbing Union (EETPU) has drawn the knife and stabbed the miners in the back.

His statement that: 'We in this union are not prepared to use our strength to bring down an elected government' is a reassurance to Thatcher that he intends to keep the power stations running to help her break the strike. The ISTC leaders have not been quite as brutally frank as Mr Hammond, but their actions over using scab coal in the steel plants have been of more use to the Coal Board than they have to the miners. Meanwhile, with a nod and a wink from some ISTC leaders, crane operators at

British Steel Hunterston unloaded a giant coal ship last Friday. As a result it seems likely that TGWU dockers will come out on strike in support of the miners.

These people are firmly in the camp of the Tory government, and like the branch officials in the Nottingham NUM who are encouraging and leading their members across the picket lines they are on the wrong side of the divide in the labour movement. Their actions can only weaken the strike, and produce divisions and splits inside the trade unions. This is why those unions who support the miners must now step up their actions in reply to the likes of Hammond.

The rail unions must make sure not one ounce of scab coal is allowed to run the transport of coal on the roads and at the docks must be stopped by the TGWU. Every trade union leader and member who wants to defend the unions against Thatcher and her allies in the leadership of the EETPU and the ISTC must rally behind the miners. Solidarity strikes, aid on the picket line and huge financial donations are what is needed.

It is the duty of the trade union left to make sure that they get the solidarity they need as they fight to defend the unity of the trade union movement.



Photo: GM COOKSON

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Ravenscraig Wivenhoe Nottingham

THATCHER'S LONG

IN THE TENTH WEEK of the miners' strike, two things are clear: that the NUM remains determined to win, and that the strike is fuelling an upsurge in the class struggle more widespread than anything since the steel workers' defeat in 1981.

In rail, in cars, in the public sector, the employers and the government are facing growing opposition. And in the mines, strikers are more determined than ever to pursue their fight.

Last week the changing situation was illustrated by the huge success of the teachers' one-day strike, by victory for the Longbridge car workers and the strikers at Cowley, and by the NUR and ASLEF decision to call for action on pay.

Combined with the local government election results — most notably the Liverpool victory, which prepares the way for a real fight with the Tories on rate capping and abolition — there is no doubt that Thatcher faces a long hot summer.

The real situation in the NUM was also neatly illustrated at the end of last week. At Manton pit in the South Yorks coalfield, a back-to-work call by a media-inspired scab was decisively crushed. While at Ramsgate, Kent, pickets charged with obstruction were urged by wives to reject a bail condition prohibiting participation on picket lines in any part of the country. They have said, quite rightly, that they will ignore this attempt to ground them.

The fact of the matter is that miners are more determined and more united than at the beginning of the dispute. Then, it seemed possible that South Wales and Scotland would face deep divisions over the strike. Now Notts is the main area of resistance — and even here, between 10-12,000 of the 29,000 Notts miners are out, with an increasing number of strikers taking part in pickets.

Nipped

In the mining communities, a remarkable feature of the dispute has been the involvement of women — not in the traditional role of staffing the soup kitchens, but building demonstrations, speaking at meetings, and picketing. The slogan 'Greenham women are everywhere' understates the case.

The active participation of women is a huge strength for the strike. It has nipped in the bud media efforts to exploit the position of women to sow divisions. Scargill's call for women to join the picket lines should also be the signal for the strike committees to fully integrate women in running the dispute.

That the tenth week of the strike should see the miners more united and determined is a remarkable achievement. The Tories clearly set their sights on dividing and isolating the strikers. The reverse has happened. It is the scabs who are isolated. And support in the wider movement is growing.

Only 10 per cent of coal trains are running. Support committees are blossoming.

Among the miners there are no illusions on how long this strike will last. Rank and file miners are already talking about a

tough Christmas. In one strike headquarters I visited, the picketing rota was for 1984-85.

Comparisons with 1972 and '74 are no longer relevant. In '72 the strike lasted from 9 January to 28 February — seven weeks. In '74 for about a month.

In both these disputes the miners were able to swim with the tide. The battle of Saltley was the best example of that. This time, after five years of Thatcher, they face the task of turning the tide.

This has begun to happen. But it has only begun. Victory is possible, but by no means guaranteed.

By Pat Hickey

The Tories have prepared long and carefully for this strike. The massive deployment of police and the 2,500 arrests since the dispute began demonstrates that. So does the strategic planning which has made the power stations less vulnerable.

Inside the labour movement the situation has also changed. The conflict at Ravenscraig shows the bitter fruits of the steel workers' defeat — the contrast with the 40,000-strong strike by Birmingham engineers in 1972 could hardly be greater.

Even the unity of the miners is much less than in those years. But the fact remains that the militancy and determination of the miners is slowly turning the tide.

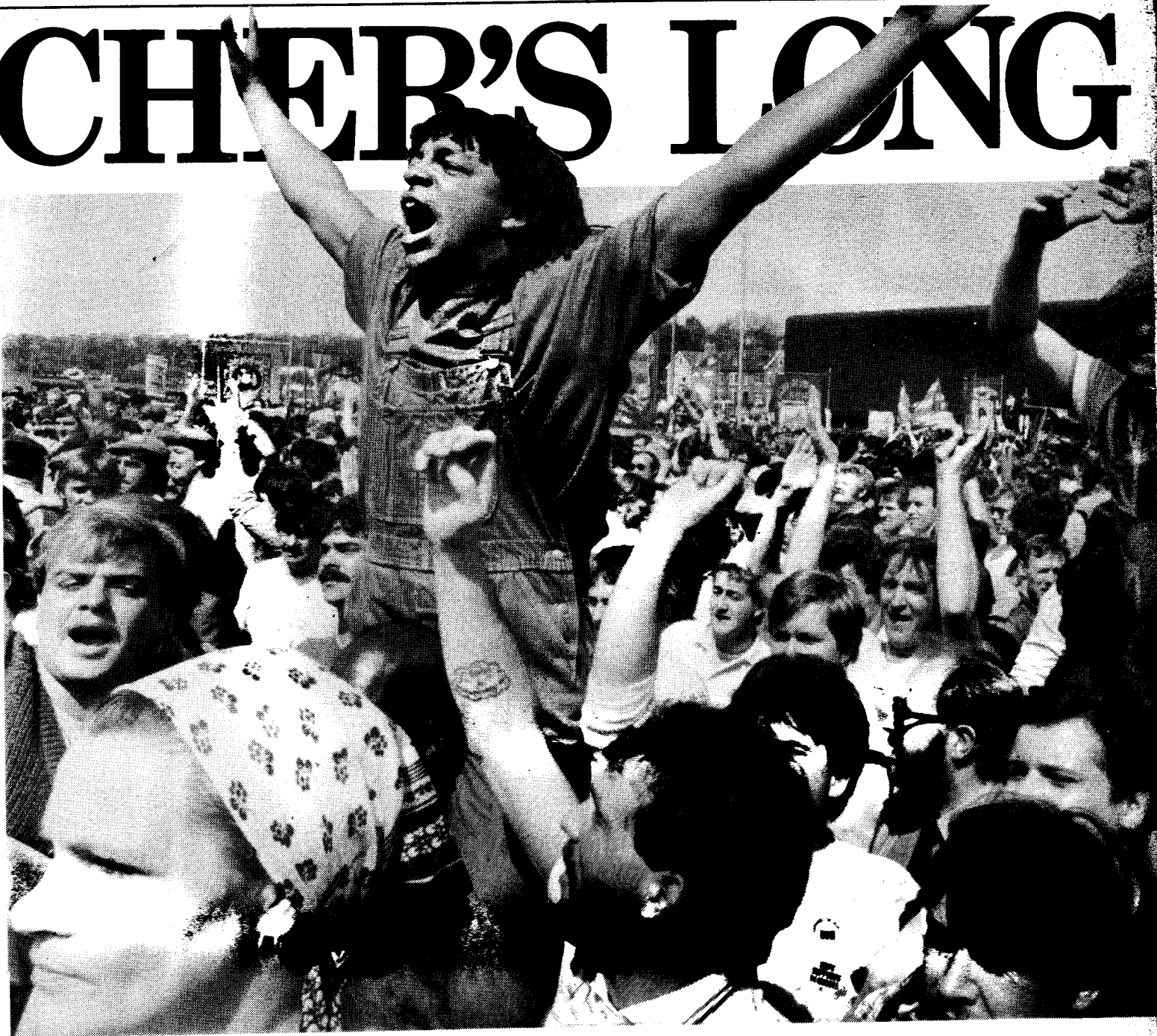
The miners alone will not defeat the Tories. Even they, in the end, could be starved back to work. There are enough scab drivers, scab ports and enough police to keep the power stations going. And the level of state repression is steadily being stepped up.

It cannot be said too often that the miners are fighting for all of us. They must not be left to fight alone. The 9 May day of action in Scotland was a step in the right direction. Such days of action need to be built in every area.

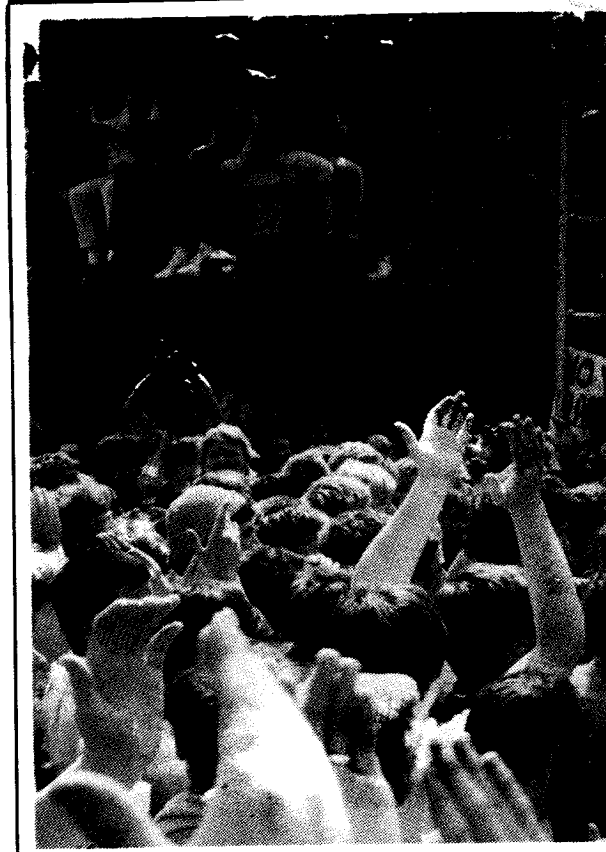
The British TUC must now be forced to act, to declare its full support for the NUM and name the day for a general strike — with the promise of further action. The example of ASLEF in levying all members 50p a week should be taken up in every union. And other trade unionists must join the miners on the picket lines.

The impasse at the steel works and in Nottinghamshire can be broken if other trade unionists show their support. The NUM can play a big role in achieving this if the leadership clearly campaigns for such focusses for the rest of the labour movement to build round.

Solidarity is the key to victory. The fight for that solidarity is vital now.



All photos: GM COOKSON



Out till victory

'BEFORE I BEGIN, I want to make a special request that no miners should stay in Notts beyond August this year.' So said Arthur Scargill in a clear hint to miners assembled from all over Britain that they should stay on in Nottingham after Monday's Mansfield demonstration.

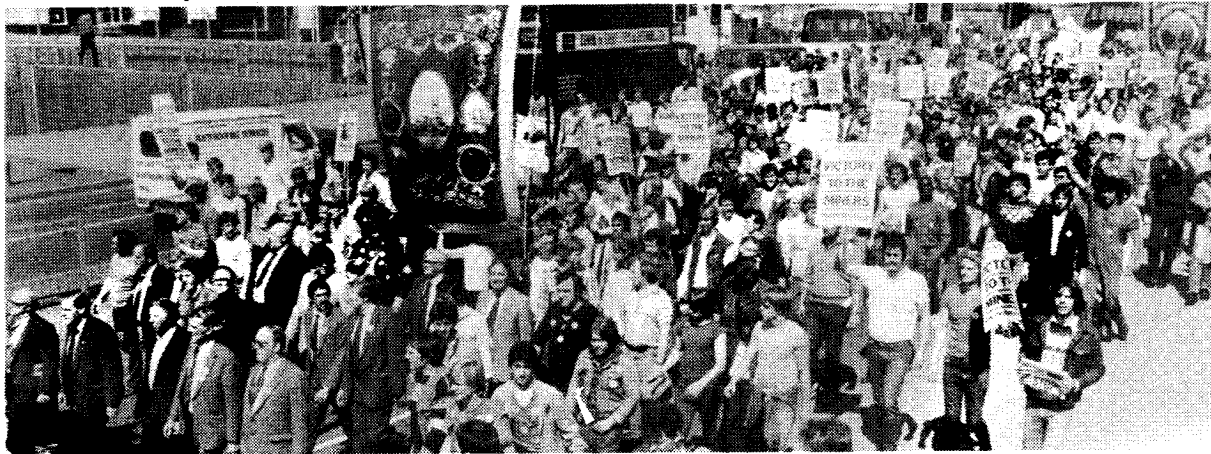
The speech reaffirmed the complete determination of the NUM to stay out until the strike was won. Up to 45,000

people attended the demonstration and rally in Mansfield on Monday, overwhelmingly miners and women from the mining communities throughout Britain.

The mood was determined. The miners are well aware that the stakes were not the 20 pits claimed by McGregor, but 70 to 100. The demonstration was the largest ever held by the NUM. It was an impressive mobilisation of the strikers.

Many miners had come prepared to stay

HOT SUMMER



Notts strikers organise

MAJOR STEPS have been taken in South Nottinghamshire in the past week to organise striking miners, coordinate solidarity, and take the dispute into the labour movement. At an open meeting organised by Nottingham Trades Council and attended by 100 people, a strike committee composed of the trade union executive and representatives from South Notts pits was set up.

Before this, there had been little communication between striking miners in the area, except through the Notts miners' rank and

file strike committee, based in the northern part of the coalfield, where the left has traditionally been better organised.

This step offers a real chance to take the dispute into the South Nottinghamshire labour movement. Local Labour Parties have been in the forefront of organising solidarity, and most parties are now collecting the 50p levy. Getting similar action in local industry will be tougher, but it still is a priority.

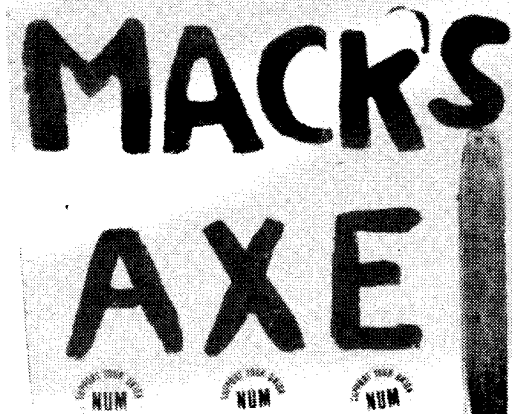
Last Thursday the county's women's support group held their first meeting in Mansfield. Some 70 women turned up. They organised transport to the Barnsley demonstration and

discussed picketing and fundraising.

With the cooperation of the local AUEW the Nottinghamshire Trades Council has set up a strike centre. This is the main reception and distribution centre for money and food to the strikers. It is producing material for the local labour movement.

At present the centre is staffed from 9am until 5pm, Monday to Friday, by local volunteers and one of the south Notts strike committees. Donations (made out to 'Notts Miners Forum') should be sent to the Notts NUM Strike Centre, 218 Mansfield Road, Nottingham, phone 0602

609626. Help is urgently needed.



'We're out till we win' says Notts miner

SOUTH NOTTS miners have had difficulties organising the strike in their part of the coalfield. There are fewer of them on strike, and a high proportion of the branch officials are working. As a result, they have been cut off from all branch resources, and their leaders are crossing the picket lines.

At Pye Hill the branch officials threatened to take the union to court to stop funds going to the strike. The strikers are therefore mainly rank and file miners who have not had much previous organising experience. **PAT HICKEY** spoke to **JIM ROBINSON** from Cotgrave Colliery about the problems.

'We need a strike committee in south Notts, and at last we have got one. At first we had big problems because we had never done this before. At Cotgrave a lot of men came out to begin with, but then they decided to go back to lobby by their mates to come out.

'Trouble was that there was more lobbying the other way! I did a one-man picket as a protest against wrongful arrest. Now we have a hardcore of 80 or so. Some of the people think that they should protect the branch and work. But we put the national union first.

'The NCB and the press try to make out that things are nearly normal in Notts, except for the Yorkshire lads coming down. But the Notts lads are also picketing. There's about 10 to 12,000 men out here. The NCB is bribing people to stay in. At Cotgrave, production is down by 20,000 tonnes, but the bonus is only down from £55 to £45.

'At some pits where bonus was only £8/9 a

week it's now £30/40. During the overtime ban when maintenance had to be done on Mondays men were sent home without pay. Now they pay them to sit in the canteen. They also let them off early to avoid the pickets.

'But the strikers are determined to stay out. We are now getting organised much better. We have the strike committee and the Trades Council has up a support committee. It's late in the day after nine weeks. We are the frontline troops. For seven weeks there was not one soup kitchen in the area. We've lost £1500 in wages so far. The rest of the movement now has to make sacrifices. We need money and food. We need to coordinate our activity. Some people are talking about Spencer unions.

'There will be no Spencer unions in Notts. We've got 7000 flying pickets. We need money for them as well to keep them on the road. We're having a big effect. Coal production is down and falling. We're out till we win.'

Police violence in Mansfield

An Eyewitness Report
POLICE violence erupted at the end of Monday's Mansfield demonstration when local cops tried to arrest a couple of miners waiting for their coaches to leave. Immediately, scores of Special Patrol Group vans were in the car park, reinforced by six mounted police.

One group of police ran past us shouting 'at last there's some action'. The understandable anger of many miners at regular police intima-

tion on picket lines was released.

The police tactics were to surround and beat to the ground the growing group of miners and supporters. Many people were unable to get to their coaches for fear of attack by baton-wielding police.

One miner was beaten unconscious and many more intimidated by police horses driven straight at them. It was obvious the police were taking out their growing frustration on miners who had just taken part in the massive, well-organised and peaceful demonstration that day.



over in Notts to keep up the pressure on those still at work. As Scargill pointed out, it was the supply of coal from Notts that was prolonging the dispute — without this the CEEB had only eight to nine weeks of stocks. Nonetheless, the strike could be won even without Notts.

Women

The NUM was not going to surrender. In the coalfields the support for the strike was

strengthening, as evidenced by the Saturday demonstration in Barnsley organised by Women Against Pit Closures. As Scargill pointed out, the women were on the march, playing their part on the picket lines.

Scargill again appealed to Notts miners to support the strike. They too were in the firing line: south Notts and north Derby faced cuts of 50 per cent in the NCB's plans, north Notts and Yorkshire cuts of 20 to 25 per cent.

The main burden of his speech was that the strike would continue: 'If it takes until November or December we will win. You have a leadership prepared to lead, not a leadership whose only interest is a seat in the House of Lords. I pledge that this leadership will not accept pit closures. The leadership will lead until we win.'

From the response to this message, it was clear that the membership was equally determined. Maggie's long hot summer has just begun.

Scotland Big support for 9 May

TENS of thousands of people took part in Scotland's day of action in support of the miners last week, with big demonstrations throughout Scotland.

Over 15,000 people demonstrated in Glasgow alone, marching from Blythswood Square to Glasgow Green to hear Scottish miners' leader McGahey appeal to the whole Scottish labour movement to support the miners and stop scab lorries taking coal to Ravenscraig after coach loads of pickets had been arrested on their way there earlier that morning.

By Our Labour Correspondent

The Fire Brigades Union was 100 per cent solid for the day. They came out for 24 hours after Strathclyde's Labour controlled regional council threatened to dock their pay if they struck. They arrived at the demonstration

amid cheers in full uniform.

So too, health workers in uniform were warmly greeted on the march. But the best response of all came from railway workers. Practically the whole of west Scotland's rail network ground to a halt for Wednesday 9 May.

The Glasgow Daily Record, one of Scotland's biggest circulation papers, didn't appear on the streets after Scottish SOGAT's demand that their statement in support of the strike appear on the front page was turned down.

Over 1000 teachers were estimated to be out for a half day, closing many local schools. And Scott Lithgow were out, together with Clydesbridge steel workers and Wills Tobacco workers, most of whom are women.

But support was not total. Delegates from all the main ship yards were on the demonstration, but Govern and Yarrow men didn't come out

despite the fact that they are holding regular levies in support of the mine workers.

There can be no doubt that the Scottish TUC's yards didn't stop work,

day of action has been a big success. It is an example to be followed throughout Britain, to ensure a successful conclusion for the miners and the whole labour movement.

Edinburgh rally

OVER 7000 workers marched through Edinburgh last Wednesday in support of the miners on the Scottish day of action.

This was one of the largest demonstrations in Edinburgh in recent times. It was led by more than 1000 miners and their families.

Despite the much-publicised row over coal supplies to Ravenscraig, the demonstration was attended by a delegation of steelworkers and thousands of workers from industry and the public services.

The strongest contingents were from engineering, transport and

the health service.

At the beginning of the demonstration miners from Lothian pit told other workers of their experience when buses and cars were turned back when attempting to picket coal supplies to Ravenscraig.

The Scottish police have started the same tactics that are being used by the police in Nottinghamshire. Eric Clarke, Scottish NUM secretary, told the rally of the police threat to coach firms 'advising' them not to hire out their coaches to the NUM. He appealed to steelworkers not to accept scab coal and to other workers to help in the strike and support the picket lines.



Photo: GM COOKSON

Lancs miners rally

A DETERMINED and swelling column of over 3000 marched through St Helens in Lancashire last Saturday led by the Bold colliery band and 250 miner's kids carrying placards proclaiming 'sack Maggie, not daddie!' There were solid contingents from the Lancashire pits, backed by Northumberland 'Zulus' (flying pickets). A sea of red banners proclaimed support from Labour Parties, YS branches, Wives Support Groups, Burtonwood Peace camp and there was a Labour Party campaign bus.

By Paul Atkin

Speakers at the rally included Derek Hutton from Liverpool Council who called for the unity in struggle of the council and the miners.

Keva Coombes from the threatened Merseyside Met County said they would not pay for the police operations: 'The chief constable is going off on a frolic of his own, we won't pay,' he said.

Bev Potter spoke for women from the mining areas denouncing the

government for cutting social security by £15 for strikers. She said they were trying to starve the miners back to work, but 'they didn't count on the women organising'.

Dennis Skinner appealed for a long term view. 'If there's too much coal, let's have retirement at 55 and a 35 hour week', he said. He appealed to county authorities: 'Don't pay a penny piece for Thatcher's political army, let her pay herself. This strike isn't about ballots, it's not about heavy picketing, it's about them and us.'

Peter Heathfield, stressing this was already the longest national dispute since 1926, said: 'MacGregor has said 20,000 jobs and 20 pits are non-negotiable, but he claims his door is always open. It's not his door I'm worried about, it's his mind.'

Other speakers included leaders of the Lancashire strikers, Harry Carradine from the Seamen's Union, and Tony Mulhearn from Liverpool Council.

At the rally we spoke to some of the miners and

women from the mining communities about the dispute.

Miners' Support Committee

Bristol
c/o TGWU, Transport House, Room 1, Victoria St, Bristol BS 1
Tel: 0272 293001 ex 55

Manchester
c/o FTAT, 37 Anson Rd, Victoria Park, Manchester 14

Preston
c/o John Parkinson, Trade Union Centre, St Mary's St North, Preston

Huddersfield
c/o Friendly and Trades Club, Northumberland St, Huddersfield

Vauxhall
c/o Joan Twelves/Greg Tucker, 1 Alverstone Hse, Kennington Park Estate, London SE11

Southall
c/o 14 Featherstone Rd, Southall, London

Birmingham
c/o Trade Union Resource Centre, 7 Frederick St, Hockley.

Ealing
c/o West London Trade Union Club, 33 Acton High St, London W3.

Medway
c/o Vince Drongin, Medway Towns Trades Union Council, 19 Randall Rd, Chatham, Kent

Bury
c/o Brian Marden, 061-764 9648

Oxford
c/o Claimants Union, Princes St, Oxford

If your local support committee is not included here it means we have no address for it. Send it in!



Right of reply rocks 'Express'

MEDIA BIAS against the miners' strike hit the headlines itself last week. Print workers on the Daily Express demanded that Arthur Scargill get a right of reply to a scurrilous front page article ridiculing Scargill.

In the next few days the editor threatened to resign, the paper's London edition failed to appear one day and the proprietor, Lord Matthews, made a front page 'statement' on the affair. What on earth was going on?

Since Larry Lamb took over as editor of the Express the paper has changed. Gone is the boring old conservative (in every sense) Express. In came the strident Sun-style populist anti-union hysteria.

By Davy Jones

The miners' strike was a godsend for Lamb. Since it started there have been a stream of gross slanders against the NUM and Arthur Scargill especially. Professor Eysenck was wheeled in to compare Scargill with Hitler for example.

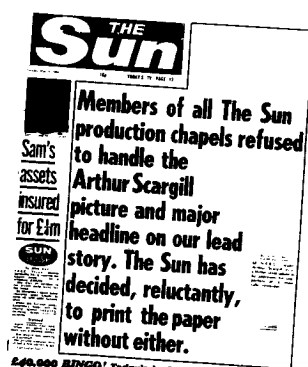
The print workers in the Express had been threatening to take action against this bias when last week's mock Scargill speech ('The truth that Scargill dare not tell') appeared. The copy was typed and proofed but

signed 'under protest' by SOGAT printers. The union chapel and union leader, Bill Keys, then began to negotiate for a right of reply.

Larry Lamb refused but knuckled under when Lord Matthews overruled him. In today's jingo-bingo circulation war the prospect of losing millions of copies concentrates the mind wonderfully and puts 'principles' about editorial freedom into perspective.

Twist

Lamb is no fool however. Knowing that journalists on the Express are not exactly radical he appealed to them about editorial independence from either 'threats' from Bill Keys or proprietorial interference from Lord Matthews. Lohro and the



Printworkers refused to print the Sun's 'Mine Fuehrer' picture of Scargill last Monday

Observer case were mentioned.

When the NUJ chapel voted not to handle the copy 'under threat', even though they recognised the right of reply as being legitimate, Lamb immediately abandoned the 11 May London edition. The Northern edition had a blank centrespread with a note blaming the journalists for the non-appearance of any centre story.

Since then events have taken a bizarre twist. Having agreed a right of reply for Scargill, Lord Matthews then insisted on vetting the content! When

Scargill compared the role of the Express with Goebbels' lie-machine, Matthews refused to let it go in 'his paper'. Nothing could better illustrate who are the real censors and the real threats to the freedom of the press.

But the good side effect of the whole affair has been to publicise the notion of a right of reply for victims of media bias and to show that media workers themselves can be allies in trying to combat distortion.

Clique

It is because the media are dominated by the clique of Lord Matthews, Rupert Murdoch and the like that they are so unrepresentative of the population as a whole, and are so anti-union. That is why organisations like the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom are so important in helping to bring together media workers and people wronged by the media to challenge its bias and distortion.

You can contact the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom at 9 Poland Street, London W1. 01-437 2795.

FRED Bilocerhowicz from Agecroft colliery is one of the very small number of miners on strike at the pit. He's been out since week one, and told us about the situation here.

THERE IS an age gap at Agecroft, 45 per cent of the men are 45 or over.

To me the feeling at the pit is that the young lads are taking it off the older men. They're hanging on for their redundancy.

It's a bribe to get them out, like British Steel and the dock workers. More than 100 of them are up for early retirement in three or four months.

Mass picketing will be needed to shut Agecroft. Not just miners, we want the whole of the trade union movement out to shut it down.

DENISE Harrison, Bold miners' wives action group

WE'RE trying to get collections of food and money. All money is being turned into food, otherwise we get the social on our backs.

We're supplying all miners and their wives with a food parcel. We've also set up a play group for the young children so that the wives can get involved in supporting the strike.

Up to now we're getting quite a lot of support, and we've only been going for two weeks. We're mainly trying to do the same as the men have been doing. But we're doing it for the women.

There are 40 to 50 of us involved. And we're producing a mass leaflet and weekly broadsheet of what we're doing to go to every wife and girlfriend.

An NUM women's movement is born

THE ROOF of Barnsley Civic Hall nearly came off last Saturday when thousands of miners wives rose to their feet to pay tribute to the NUM. 'Here we go, here we go, here we go' and 'Arthur Scargill, Arthur Scargill, we'll support you ever more', they sang at the top of their voices.

As many speakers pointed out it was a truly historic occasion. Contingents of women from every area of the NUM — Yorkshire, Durham, South Wales, Kent, Scotland and Nottingham — had piled off coaches to march with their own banners through Barnsley.

A women's movement that started with one demonstration in Nottingham has mushroomed into one of the most powerful weapons on the side of the miners. Ten thousand marched. Two thirds were women. The miners marched behind.

Two women from Nottingham, Annette and Doreen, took the stage after Jack Taylor at the lunchtime rally. There was a particularly warm reception for their news that since they had begun to organise 10 days ago, miners wives from all over Notts were phoning up to ask how they could help.

Not all Notts women were backing the NUM. Annette said. But the sooner they realised they had to unite and back the union fight the better. Doreen agreed. 'We'd rather eat grass than give in to Maggie Thatcher'. She could hardly finish for the cheers.

Maureen Douglass of Doncaster was explicitly feminist: 'Although I've spoken before in support of the NUM, I can honestly say that it gives me the greatest pleasure of all to speak here at this rally. Because it is a unique rally. It's unique because it

shows the great strength of the organisation of women and how powerful women can be'.

She gave special greetings to the women from areas where the strike wasn't solid, because their job was more difficult, and said that women's actions in this strike are dealing another blow to the idea that women were simply wives and mothers.

By Valerie Coultas

And she made a controversial point: 'Please don't insult the women you see here, who support you wholeheartedly, by shouting crude and insulting remarks to other women on the streets. All women must be regarded as equals. A lot of women are isolated in the home and all they get are the lies of the media. Our job must be to dispell the illusions they have in this government and show them what we're fighting for'. The pattern of women's organisation in this strike will set a precedent for women's future involvement in the labour movement.

PUNCTUATED by loud cheering and clapping, ARTHUR SCARGILL told the Barnsley rally:

This demo is actually making history because it is revealing a new phenomenon, something which has not been witnessed before. No longer are the media able to go to a mining village to get a woman to speak out against the strike ... Our women are not just helping the men in the kitchen — they're with the men on the picket lines ... I'll tell you why this lot came from the BBC and ITV today. This movement is so powerful they just can't ignore it any longer. The women in our community are on the march.



'This is a unique rally because it shows the great strength of the organisation of women'

'AT LAST I FEEL like we've got a union here again'. This was how one shop steward summed up the feelings of the victorious British Leyland, Longbridge workers. They have taken an important step forward in reorganising their trade unions against the BL management at Longbridge.

Seven hundred Metro trim track workers had been on strike for a week after the management had attempted to force up productivity. This was in anticipation of an increase in Metro production from 4,100 to 4,300 cars per week.

Decisive strike action by the 700, mainly TGWU track workers, was supported throughout the plant. Production of all cars and engines built at Longbridge came to a complete standstill. Pickets stopped supplies going into the giant BL plant and stopped engines for the new Montego going out to BL's Cowley plant. Even the East Works, which is notorious for its unwillingness to take strike action, came out.

The trim track workers unanimously agreed to return to work on Wednesday 9 May. The management completely climbed down. It was agreed that any increases in track speeds to step up production, would be done by taking on new labour.

Most stewards regard this as the most successful strike at Longbridge for four or five years. Bitterness and frustration are now turning into the will to re-organise the shop floor. New stewards are being elected in areas that not so long ago had no union representatives.

By Grant Keir

The Shop Stewards are sure that the management will be back with another attack. However, the success of this strike has boosted confidence and is a much needed victory after a series of defeats over the past few years.

Sales of the Metro are running high and the new Acclaim, Maestro and Montego engines are being

built in Longbridge. This is the background to the workforce beginning to flex its muscles again. Despite the savaging Longbridge suffered under Edwardes, the trade unions are still intact and capable of being effective. As the build up to the renegotiation of the two-year wage deal gets into swing over the summer months, successes such as these can only build the confidence of the workforce. The fighting spirit is returning to Longbridge. As one shop steward put it: 'For the past eight weeks, the miners have been showing us how it's got to be done'. This connection was not lost on the 700 strikers who gave generously to a miners' collection.

It would be foolish to imagine that all BL workers' problems are over. However, what this strike represents is a turn-



ing point. For the past five years, BL workers have suffered nothing but defeats at the hands of the management and trade union bureaucrats. The united action of the workforce has, in this case, stopped the management forcing through another productivity increase. Upon this important start, the shop

stewards' movement can be rebuilt in Longbridge, which can take on and beat both the management and the trade union bureaucrats. This is the task facing union militants in BL.

This strike proves this to be a realistic possibility, rather than a pipedream of the left. Such chances must not be wasted.

Longbridge victory!

MOLES EYE VIEW



Don't cry for Keith

DON'T SHED any tears for Tory MP Keith Hampson who had his collar felt in the Gay Theatre in Soho. All Mr Heseltine's former aide got was his comeuppance.

The poor lad got fitted up by a plain clothes copper. Now a lot of miners on the picket line, a lot of women at Greenham and lots of black people, as well as thousands of gays, will know the feeling. Time after time they have come across pigs out of uniform pretending to be human beings; only to discover they had been framed by professional provocateurs.

At Scotland Yard and other police stations,



the lads in blue happily boast to one another about their achievements in logging up false convictions — looks good on their record sheet. Mr Hampson has no grumbles on that score. Along with his Tory mates at Westminster he has extolled the role of our 'much maligned' police. The pleas of their innocent victims met his contempt.

When the dog bites the master, who cares a damn?

A PIECE OF THE ACTION



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COMMON MARKET - T

WHY DO the European capitalists need the Common Market? In this article, Belgian Marxist economist ERNEST MANDEL argues that in order to face the challenge of American and Japanese capitalism, the European bosses need to club together to co-ordinate both finance and industrial production.

But, argues Mandel, the attempt at European integration — which has the objective trend towards a European 'super-state' — has come up against the limitations of the existing nation state which acts as a barrier to political integration.

Moreover, while all the European capitalists have some interests in common, there are crucial areas such as agriculture where their interests clash. Therefore, for the time being at least, the countries of the Common Market will continue to fight one another, but try to keep their market afloat. 'There is no honour amongst thieves, but they stick together'.

SINCE the onset of the twentieth century, the productive forces developed by capitalism have periodically rebelled against the nation-state, as well as against the private ownership of the means of production. Twice, the international ruling class has sought to resolve this conflict in a violent way, through the world wars of 1914 and 1939. The objective purpose of these wars was to try to create room for one dominant imperialist power (Britain, Germany or the US) to unite under its sway a much broader sphere than that of the market represented by any nation-state, a unified domain in which capital could be invested and draw profits unhindered.

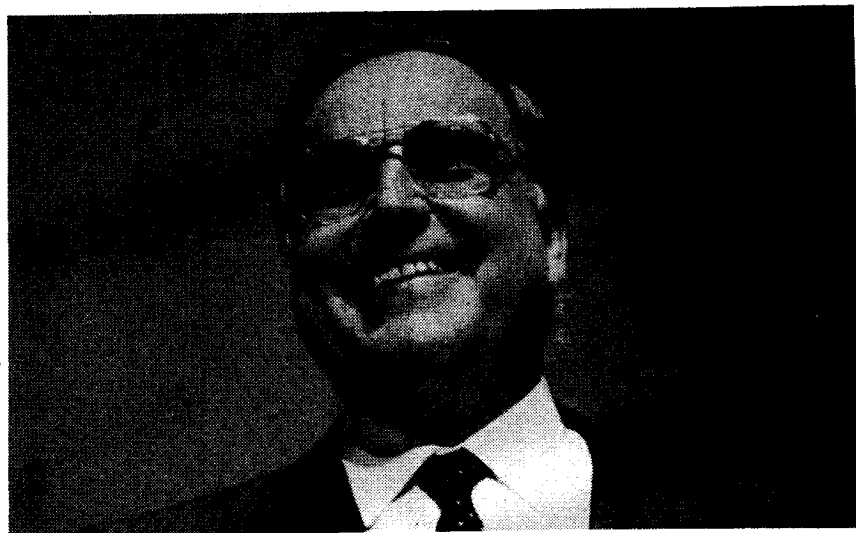
These two attempts failed. The European Economic Community (EEC) set up in 1958 after the signing of the Treaty of Rome is the first attempt by the imperialist bourgeoisie in Europe to achieve the same end without wars, essentially by collaboration on the basis of negotiations.

This historic cause of this change in method is the growth in the sector of the world wrested away from capitalist domination in the aftermath of the second world war. The antagonism between the capitalist countries and the 'communist' states became too deep, the risk of additional vital parts of the globe falling out of the sphere of capitalist domination too great, to permit new inter-imperialist wars. Inter-imperialist competition continues to operate but within what has proved to be a lasting alliance against all the non-capitalist forces throughout the world.

However, the contradiction between the extent of development of the productive forces and the 'national' realm of each imperialist power is more acute than ever. What can no longer be



Lorraine steelworkers march against unemployment



Kohl — West German Chancellor

settled by war must be resolved if not by consensus, at least by constant bargaining. This led to the attempt to build the Common Market. It was, moreover, only a first experiment in the context of a general tendency. As long as capitalism survives, this experimentation may be extended to other continents.

Japanese imperialism, unable to hold onto its 'East Asian Co-Prosperty Sphere' (that is, its new colonial empire) after the second world war, is now seeking to create a kind of common market including South Korea and Taiwan, or even the ASEAN countries. Within American imperialism, some groups aim — at least historically — to create a common market embracing Canada and Mexico.

This in no way means the realisation of Karl Kautsky's nightmare of a 'superimperialism' organising the world market peacefully. To the contrary, every one of these 'common markets' would be designed essentially for trade warfare, for sharpened competition with all the others. In the longer run, they would prepare the way for a war against the workers' states to

reconquer the space that capitalism has lost in these countries.

All that such common markets mean is an attempt to make a group of bourgeois states into a basis for inter-imperialist competition, rather than each one of them continuing to try to compete on its own.

Interests

The main obstacle to carrying out such schemes is social and political in character (and ideological, as well). What a common market really means is a new federation of old states, that is, a new 'supranational' federal state. However, the bourgeois state is not just a means for upholding the economic interests of a ruling class. It is also an instrument of social and political power, a means for upholding and reproducing the domination of capital over the workers.

In order for the bourgeois state to play this role effectively, simple repression is not sufficient. It is necessary to get the exploited to accept the general

framework of their exploitation as legitimate.

For this purpose, in normal times, the 'national' tradition of the bourgeois state and the legitimacy of the institutions of bourgeois democracy play an essential role. To replace these institutions with European ones takes time, a lot of time. There is a marked desynchronisation between the tempo of the internationalisation of the productive forces, the emergence of supranational institutions of the European Common Market type, and the rate at



which broad popular layers are coming to identify with these institutions.

The bourgeoisie is not ready to give up a relatively effective instrument of power in exchange for a new one that has yet to be tested. This is the main reason for the slowness in setting up the machinery of European unity on the political level.

However, there are other factors. There is not only the desynchronisation between economics and politics. There is also a desynchronisation between the trend toward internationalisation of the productive forces and the organisational forms of capital, of the capitalist firms themselves. In every member country of the Common Market, as in the US and Japan, the bourgeoisie is not homogeneous. It takes the form, rather, of a conglomerate of four elements:

- Multinational corporations producing surplus value in several countries. These are more and more predominant. But this is a relatively recent development. They nowhere hold absolute sway.

- National trusts (monopolies) producing surplus value still essentially in one country.

- Small and medium-sized non-monopoly corporations. While these are only junior partners of the monopolies, they still control a not unimportant part of the production of surplus value. They dominate at the two ends of the industrial chain, in the technologically backward sectors, and in the advanced technology sector. In the latter sector, where the risks remain great, the monopolies commit themselves only after the little people have blazed the trail, and often lost their scalps in the process.

- The nationalised sector, the top levels of which are being integrated into the bourgeoisie, if they were not recruited from it at the start.

Of these four components, only the multinationals have everything to gain economically and nothing to lose from the emergence of supranational states. Every other sector of the bourgeoisie runs the risk of losing the benefits of protection and subsidies. They are hesitating to enter into the stepped-up competition that flows inevitably from the widening of the market.

Since this risk is compounded by the political and social risk that the ruling class as a whole has to run, including the multinationals, and since the rela-

THE BOSSES' CLUB



Education not bombs'

relationship of forces within each bourgeoisie is constantly changing without any of the four components being able to bring the others to heel, this lack of economic homogeneity within the European bourgeoisie is another major obstacle to making the qualitative leap forward to economic and political integration of Europe.

When the capitalist economy is expanding, every partner in a capitalist business can get a part of the cake. The same is true for every faction of a 'national' bourgeoisie. It is also true for every partner in an 'international' bourgeois enterprise.

Of course, even in a period of ex-

pansion competition continues. Some gain more than others. Some grow stronger at the expense of others. But in general everything is rosy for all of this charming society as long as capitalist property prevails. Thus, the golden age of the Common Market was its first decade, 1958-1968. The period 1968-73 represented the period of transition.

When the economic crisis erupted, and especially when it took the form of a prolonged depression, competition became fierce. For many capitalist firms, the crisis has posed the question of life or death. They face bankruptcy. This applies both to the multinationals and the 'national' trusts, as well as the small and medium business. 'Every man for himself' is more and more becoming the rule. What goes for capitalist firms also goes for 'national' bourgeois classes and their states. This is why for the Common Market the long economic depression means a long phase of crisis and challenges.

Survived

If the simple correlation between depression and stepped-up competition were all there was to it, the Common Market would have already disappeared, as a lot of people in fact predicted it would. But it has survived, even if it has become prey to numerous ills.

While the crisis is sharpening the competition within Europe and thereby obstructing the pursuit of European economic integration, it is also above all sharpening competition on the world market. And on the world market, the American and Japanese multinationals can rely on states and 'economic spheres of operation' with a far greater weight than that represented by any of the European imperialist powers taken separately.

For all these reasons, the impact of the crisis on the Common Market has not led to its breakup, to its disappearance pure and simple. The result rather is that it has been 'blocked' at an intermediary stage between a mere free-



trade zone and a new supranational federal state.

To understand the reasons why the Common Market has become 'blocked' halfway on the road to real economic and political integration of capitalist Europe, the analysis has to be carried further. We have to look at the nature of the changes that have taken place within the European bourgeoisies over the past quarter of a century.

In the sphere of finance capital, there has been genuine success. Substantial progress has been made in integrating the banking systems of the Six (and to a lesser extent, the Ten). The financial market has been Europeanised, as evidenced by the role of Luxembourg as a centre for issuing

European loans. The market for Euro-Dollars has lost all 'national' character. 'Common' opposition to American and Japanese finance capital has increased, with the Swiss and Canadians occupying an intermediate position.

On the military level, integration has made spectacular advances. There is no longer any 'national' arms industry, except for small arms. That is, the production of airplanes, tanks and artillery has been internationalised in Europe. There are no longer any essentially 'German', 'British', 'French' or 'Italian' heavy weapons. All such arms are produced in common. In a nutshell, this is a drastic change by comparison with the situation in 1939 and 1945, to say nothing of 1914.



French President Mitterrand

In the sphere of industry, there has been a very widespread disappointment. The hope that the Common Market would stimulate the interpenetration of capital, giving rise to more and more firms like Dunlop-Pirelli and FIAT-Citr en, has to a large extent failed to materialise. Some new firms of this type have emerged, such as Phillips-Grundig recently. But this is far from being the predominant trend.

Moreover, there are also as many examples of associations between European firms and American or Japanese multinationals as between 'European' firms themselves.

As regards so-called North-South relations, the EEC has emerged as a neo-colonialist force (the Lome Accords, Lebanon, etc).

Finally, in the field of agriculture, integration has run into a total impasse. Nowhere has a North American type agribusiness emerged, with a sphere of activity (production) extending across the territory of several 'national' states. European capitalist agriculture remains confined to relatively small surfaces, even if landholding continues to become more concentrated.

Competition

Today the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) no longer looks like a transitional institution geared to opening up the way for real concentration in capitalist agriculture. It seems rather to have become a durable system serving to protect an uncompetitive agriculture on the world market. As a consequence, it has become the Achilles Heel of European capitalist integration, the occasion of a succession of crises.

Now all the conflicting forces in the picture have to be labelled as 'national', 'sectoral' or 'political' special interests.

In the case of West German imperialism, over the past 25 years capital accumulation has become much more dependent on foreign markets. The share of exports in the Gross National Product has grown from 15 to 33 per cent. And the Common Market represents West Germany's main outlet. Therefore, it is determined to maintain it at any cost and is ready to pay the bill. It is the main source of financing for the EEC which in reality has become a disguised form of subsidising West Germany's big export industries.

Likewise, the Benelux countries and Italy have seen the importance of the Common Market grow greatly as the main outlet for their exports. Some 70 per cent of Benelux exports go to the EEC. Since they are much less competitive than the West German ones on 'third markets', they cherish the EEC as the apple of their eye. For these countries, the collapse of the Common Market would be a real economic catastrophe.

The pressure of the crisis, stepped-up competition, the rise of protectionism and sectoral conflicts are still operating. They will continue to weigh on any new advance in European integration. Thus, the fundamental features of the situation have in no way changed.



Central America

Reagan escalates war plans

IN A SPEECH last Wednesday night, Ronald Reagan made a savage attack on Nicaragua and appealed for more financial aid to the El Salvador regime from the Senate — which he duly got. Reagan's appeal coincided with the results of the re-run of Salvador presidential election; he was obviously cashing in on the apparent victory of the 'moderate' candidate Duarte, who had been backed by the United States.

In fact, Duarte's electoral victory was not nearly as decisive as commentators had expected. Official results gave Duarte 56 per cent of the vote, and his ultra-right wing opponent Roberto D'Aubuisson 44 per cent of the vote. D'Aubuisson, reknowned as leader of Salvador's right wing death squads, produced at a press conference evidence of large-scale US funding of the Duarte campaign.

D'Aubuisson's larger-than-expected vote was a result of the huge political swing to the right among the Salvadorean middle classes, petrified by the military victories of the revolutionary forces of the FMLN. On the other

hand, since voting in El Salvador is compulsory, a large number of workers and peasants will have voted for Duarte, who while a supporter of the military dictatorship at least is not the organiser of the death squads.

The sending of more military aid at precisely the time that Duarte has won the elections is symbolic. In the run-up to the election Duarte made much of his promise to open a dialogue with the left wing opposition, the FDR-FMLN. But Reagan and the US administration have other plans.

During his last term as president Duarte presided over one of the most intense periods of activity by

the death squads and a major escalation of the war. No one expects him to behave any differently this time around.

The main thrust of Reagan's Wednesday night speech was on Nicaragua. Reagan claimed that since 1979 the Sandinistas had carried out a 'reign of terror', including the killing of Miskito Indians, persecution of Jews and Roman Catholics, the burning of crops and churches and subversion of neighbouring states.

Anyone with the slightest familiarity of the real situation in Nicaragua knows these accusations to be pure flights of fantasy. Reagan's conclusion could not have been more explicit: 'let us show that we want no hostile Communist colonies here in the Americas: South, Central or North'. In effect, Reagan was spelling out that the United States intends to bring down the Sandinista government in Nicaragua.



Salvadorean soldiers fight on with US dollars

The continued military conflict on the Nicaraguan border was vividly shown by last week's shooting down of a helicopter over Nicaraguan territory by Sandinista troops, killing eight people. The Honduran government claimed the helicopter as one of its own, whereas FSLN sources said that the helicopter had painted on its tail: 'US Army commander HH 3729 (A1 14 A1 1101)'. It is not contested that the helicopter came from Tiger Island off the Honduran coast, where the US has a 200-person marine base.

Whether anyone in the helicopter was in fact American is not known. One possibility is that the helicopter was taking part in another as yet unannounced round of exercises on the Nicaraguan-

Honduran border.

Reagan's campaign against Nicaragua suffered a major propaganda blow last week when the World Court unanimously ruled that the United States should stop any attempt to mine or blockade Nicaragua's ports.

By a vote of 14-1 the Court also ruled that Nicaragua's political independence 'should be fully respected and should not be jeopardised by any military or paramilitary activities'.

Although the World Court has no powers to impose its judgements, its authority is derived from the fact that the jurists who sit on the court panel have to be ratified by both the General Assembly and the Security Council of the United Nations.

Soviets torpedo the 'Corporate Games'

VERY FEW people will take seriously the hand-wringing sorrow of Ronald Reagan and friends over the Soviet Union 'playing politics' by pulling out of the Los Angeles Olympics. When the United States, strongly backed by Margaret Thatcher, attempted to wreck the Moscow Olympics over the Russian invasion of Afghanistan, they must have known that they opened up the Los Angeles games to retaliation. And the truth of the matter is that virtually every one of the Soviet Union's accusations are true.

Take for example the commercialism of the games. The Olympics are being sponsored by thirty major US corporations. Mars Inc. (manufacturers of what helps you to work, rest and play) are providing the money which enables their best-selling US bar ('Snickers') to be the 'official snack' of the Games.

By Phil Hearse

The official food supplier is — you've guessed it — MacDonald's. Coca-Cola is the official Olympic drink and Anheuser Busch is providing the Olympic beer. Privatisation Reagan and Thatcher-style is getting a free reign in Los Angeles.

Or take the anti-Soviet campaign. Whether the Soviet athletes were in physical danger is hardly the point. The Olympics were being used as the occasion for a huge anti-Soviet propaganda campaign, not just by fring East European exile groups, but leading members of the US Senate.

In any case, just why should the Soviet Union go to advertise the United States multinationals when Reagan is waging his war against Nicaragua and in El Salvador and building up his anti-Soviet war machine the world over? Only believers in the fraudulent 'Olympic spirit' of alleged international understanding and cooperation can believe that the Soviet action is a big disappointment.

Today the Olympic games are in reality nothing to do with international cooperation but on-

ly international competition and national self-aggrandisement. The number of medals won by each competing country is infinitely more important than the spirit of 'Olympic cooperation'.

Rick Gruneau, writing in the May/June issue of *New Socialist*, explains that while the present day Olympics are open to only a small elite of highly trained athletes, between the wars 'Workers' Olympics' were organised. Sport was considered an integral part of the workers' and revolutionary movement. While Hitler was staging his 'Nazi' Olympics in Berlin in 1936, the 'Workers' Olympics' were held in Barcelona. As Gruneau points out, in terms of numbers of spectators, competitors, culture and sometimes even sporting records, the Barcelona games surpassed the official Olympics.

In 1924 150,000 people attended the Workers' Olympics in Hamburg. The aim of the movement, which involved over 4 million people by 1930, was to organise sport on a basis which broke from national chauvinism, commercialism and the obsession with stars and records.

The modern Olympics of course will never break with these things, but embodies them to the nth degree. Which is why the Soviet decision and its allies to pull out of the imperialist Olympiad in Los Angeles will annoy and embarrass only the likes of Ronald Reagan, not those who really embrace international understanding and solidarity — the socialist and workers' movement the world over.

The Tripoli killings

THE SHOOT-OUT which occurred in the Libyan capital Tripoli last Tuesday has been attributed by the Libyan authorities to the Islamic fundamentalist 'Moslem Brotherhood'. But the attack has been claimed by the anti-Qadhafi National Front for the Salvation of Libya. While there is considerable evidence that the Moslem Brotherhood is active in Libya, it seems much more likely that the National Front is in fact responsible for the attack.

The day before the attack in Tripoli, a former Libyan diplomat, Ahmed Ibrahim Ehwass, was killed in a gun fight on the Libyan-Tunisian border. Ehwass was a leading member of the National Front, and had been in London just four days before the shooting. Ehwass's shooting and the battle in Tripoli were obviously connected.

Ehwass and another leading member of the National Front, Youssef Magarieff, were recently in Washington. State Department officials have been denying meetings with either of the two men.

It is now quite clear that there is an exile force, of which the National Front is the public face, which is seeking to overthrow the Qadhafi regime. The precise political character of this group is obscure, but their public statements talk of a return to Western-style

democracy', albeit with 'a firm Islamic foundation'.

The exile network is based in Western Europe, and particularly in Britain. Whether it enjoys the active support of Western governments cannot be proved either way; nonetheless they do not appear to have encountered major problems in organising their anti-Qadhafi activities from the West.

By Paul Lawson

And the fact that Ehwass was in London just days before his death on the Tunisian border is at least an indication that the attack in Tripoli might even have been planned in Britain.

It would hardly be a great surprise to those with just a passing knowledge of the CIA and other Western security agencies if it were indeed confirmed

that the campaign against Qadhafi by the National Front enjoys the active support of Western government agencies.

It looks very much as if the National Front has seized the opportunity provided by the Peoples' Bureau siege to dramatically grasp the political initiative by staging a shoot out in the centre of Tripoli, as a first step towards gaining more Western aid for their campaign, and de-stabilising Qadhafi's government.

Socialists should be in no doubt about the real character of the Qadhafi regime. It is a tightly controlled military dictatorship with an Arab nationalist ideology. The paraphernalia of 'people's committees' is a front for Qadhafi's power.

Nonetheless, attempts by imperialist-backed groups to overthrow Qadhafi will do nothing to aid the Libyan workers — on the contrary they will only deliver them to their worst enemies.

Socialists should defend Libya's right to self-determination. And that means opposing the 'state-backed terrorism' of the US and British-backed anti-Qadhafi groups.



Libyan leader Qadhafi

Labour Movement Conference on Palestine

Saturday 19 May
County Hall, London

with Palestinian trade union speakers
Delegates from trade union/labour movement organisations. £2 per delegate at the door.

Observers welcome
Organised by PSC/LMCP

CONTINUING the debate on 'Labour's alliance for socialism, we this week follow up the interview with Tony Benn, and the contribution from Peter Hain, with an article by Jon Bloomfield, a well-known member of the Communist Party.

THERE IS no running away from the crisis facing the British left. 9 June was an electoral disaster and the Stafford and Surrey by-elections warn against over-confident predictions of electoral recovery. The organised labour movement faces great difficulties. Further there is a crisis of socialism itself and what is commonly understood by it.

How is the labour and democratic movement replying to this crisis? The gut reaction of the centre-right is to head for the centre ground, shy away from controversial policies and duck awkward class conflict. The response of the mainstream left is different. From this quarter, firstly there is a clear recognition of the gravity of the election defeat. Secondly, there is agreement on the great danger presented by a second term of Thatcherite rule and that the movement's energy and attentions must be channeled against this main threat. This requires unity within the labour movement and increased campaigning among the people to arouse popular opposition to government policies.

Thirdly, successful campaigning will require the left to address new issues of the 1980s and to promote a clearer, more relevant vision of a future socialist and democratic Britain. As the recent Communist Party congress put it: 'The starting point must be the definition of the main enemy and identification of the combination of forces necessary to defeat it. That main enemy is the Tory government ... Developing mass, class and democratic struggles, uniting the labour movement and seeking out allies in a broad anti-Tory fight is the way forward...'

Similar

That approach creates the conditions for the return of a Labour government. The extent to which that would be a left government of a new type will depend upon the success and popular impact of the left over the next few years.

What are the points of agreement with Tony Benn here? (Socialist Action, 4 May). The most welcome point of agreement is on the priority given to mass campaigning and struggle among the people, with solidarity with the miners as the immediate task. This forms the most crucial common bond across the left. Further, the support for the elected Labour leadership symbolises a desire for unity to enable the most effective campaigning to proceed.

But there are substantial differences, some of which have come out more clearly in Benn's other post-election interviews. As this is a debate there's no point in fudging them.

The Next Stage In British Politics

The critical point at issue is over the next stage in British politics. Increasingly, Benn argues that the way forward now is for Labour to present itself as an 'explicitly socialist alternative'. 'The real answer will be found next time round ... in organising a real socialist campaign' (SA, 13 January). The view that the answer to Thatcherism is instant socialism is

Facing up to the left's crisis



Delegates at the 35th Congress of the Communist Party of Great Britain

By Jon Bloomfield

also advocated by Eric Heffer (see *Marxism Today* December 1983) as well as the Trotskyist left.

It is based on three assumptions. Firstly, that at the grassroots the movement is healthy, confident and socialist. The left is 'very strong' and 'deeply entrenched'. Secondly, that historically the Labour Party has been a socialist party which has been blown off course by revisionist leaders since 1959, or a bit earlier, but whose socialist essence is undiminished and has now been reaffirmed. And thirdly, that the deep capitalist crisis requires a socialist answer.

It is these assumptions and assessments that are most sharply contested by the broad left and the Marxists within it. Firstly, Benn in contrast to Peter Hain, refuses to face up to the reality of the present low level of socialist consciousness. The Labour election result is still described as 'amazing' when to most of us it was catastrophic. He refuses to consider Labour's long-term electoral decline or, for example, why the *Sun* has a circulation of four million (see the revealing interview with Bea Campbell, *City Limits* 20 January) since serious answers to these questions would undermine the myth that all is well at the grass-roots.

Secondly, the analysis is based on a myth about the past. Tony tells us that 'labour history is so important' and he has countless references to 're-founding' and 'reconnecting with' the

Labour Party's socialist traditions. His picture of a socialist Labour Party which shifted rightwards some time after the war and in which Gaitskell represented 'the first stage of revisionism'. This is unsound historical judgement, with serious political consequences. Benn equates the profound Labourist character of trade union and working class support for the Labour Party with socialism. A quick read of Miliband or, dare one whisper it, Hobsbawm, should dispel this illusion.

Frightening

Thirdly, historical experience should caution the left against extravagant claims that capitalist crisis brings about socialist solutions. It didn't in the 1930s. And the left must oppose the frightening logic of Socialist Action's editorial (4 May) which claimed that 'Thatcherism, by its very brutality' accelerates the development of 'a socialist force ... inside the working class' (my emphasis). As in the 1930s the crisis is deep but it is reckless to present demands far in advance of the masses. The vital issue is to move the working class and its allies from where they are now.

These and related points have been made by Eric Hobsbawm in reply to the discussion on Labours 'lost millions' (*Marxism Today* March 1984). It is unfortunate that Benn's professed desire 'to open up the

dialogue within the socialist movement' seems to exclude Hobsbawm 'who isn't even a member of the Labour Party', a fact Hobsbawm shares with Mick McGahey, Bea Campbell, Stuart Hall, Paul Foot and thousands of others. Are we all disqualified?

Or, perhaps, this is just another sign of Benn's ridiculous attitude to Hobsbawm. The statements he purports to come from Eric in the interview are just absurd. Nowhere has Hobsbawm said that Labour 'could not have won because of certain sociological changes in the class structure of society'. It is also time to stop the anti-intellectual smears directed at Hobsbawm and others like 'high intellectual defeatists' (*Morning Star*, 3 October) and 'intellectual pessimists' (SA, 13 January). Our movement is meant to eradicate all prejudice, not to foster it.

The Future Character of the Labour Party

There is a key issue at stake in the debates with which Hobsbawm has been involved but its not around possible electoral arrangements with other parties. The real issue is the future character of the Labour Party. Here there are two contrasting views on the left. The first recognises that Labour has developed as a broad class and progressive front containing views from the social-democratic right to the

revolutionary left. This has been the basis of its mass trade union affiliation and electoral support. The left must seek to shift the Labour Party in a socialist direction in a way and at a pace which retains these two crucial assets. That is the case that has been argued in the columns of *Marxism Today* and explains its appeal and attraction to wide sections of the left.

Hain's call for a campaigning left independent of the leadership but not oppositional is the tactical expression of this strategic approach. The second view is one which strives for a socialist Labour Party now, irrespective of these considerations. In other words the broad church character is dispensable in the battle for Labour to 'become a truly socialist party' (John Ross, SA 4 May, his emphasis). The implications of this view presented most forcefully from the Trotskyist left are that the centre and right would have no place within a future Labour Party.

Quite where Benn stands in this debate is unclear. After the 1979 election he vigorously defended Labour's broad church. 'The Labour Party is a very broad party reflecting a wide range of opinions from left to right. This diversity of views is a great source of strength and we must vigorously resist any attempt that is made to drive the left or the right out of the party' (*Tribune* 11 May '79). His support in the interview for the Kinnoch-Hattersley leadership and his parliamentary colleagues 'right across the board' suggests he adheres to this view today.

In which case he must know that one can't meaningfully describe the present Labour Party as socialist or as one which will fight the next election on a socialist programme. Does Tony stand by his 'broad church' view of Labour, for if he does his agreement with Socialist Action is not as intimate as John Ross tries to make out.

Space precludes more than a word on alliances. The phrase is open to very different interpretations. Communists believe that alliances between social movements and forces are essential to the creation of a popular majority for progress. They are not primarily about making the women's or peace or environmental movements appendages of the Labour Party.

Strategy

The CP has often been advised to dissolve itself and join the Labour Party as individuals. Other Marxists favour entrism. The Communist Party prefers to remain an independent organisation with a clear strategy for socialism; a commitment and ability to organise class and popular struggle — with the most extensive industrial network on the left; a belief in the importance of autonomous social movements above all for women's liberation and peace and journals which present these politics to the labour and democratic movement, although this is hampered at present by the attempted hijack of the *Morning Star* from the Communist Party.

This approach gives us a clear role on the left without slipping into sectarian hostility to Labour. Our party is playing an active part in the development of the broadest struggles against Thatcherism, most notably at the moment in the fight against pit closures. We see tremendous opportunities for the left to develop new levels of unity and militancy in this and other campaigns and to inflict defeats on the Thatcher government.

Mass struggle is the surest method to isolate the government, reduce the influence of Liberals/SDP and to regain Labour's lost millions. It's a strategy which if conducted correctly can win hegemony in the labour movement, where it would be wrong to ignore the strength of the centre-right.

To reject the passivity and defeatism of 'new realism' requires a sober left approach able to win millions of trade unionists and other movements into struggle now. Unity in that task is crucial if we are to resume Labour's forward march.

● Jon Bloomfield is a regular contributor to *Marxism Today*.

Manchester City Council The left now in charge

WHILE THE confrontation between Labour councils and the government grows, Manchester looks set to step into line with London, Sheffield and Liverpool. For the last few years a minority of Labour councillors have fought for the city party's policy of no cuts, no job losses. Twenty-nine of them have been excluded from the Labour Group by a right wing majority for persistently voting against cuts and rent increases.

The right have had a policy of 'obeying the law', 'creative accounting' and making cuts 'slowly' while waiting for something — anything! — to turn up. Last year Cllr Billy Egerton, group leader, expressed the hope that Manchester could avoid the Home Office hit-list by keeping its head down.

A pro-Labour swing in this month's local elections took away a third of the Tory seats in the city, and shifted the balance among Labour councillors to the left. A slim majority now supports city party policy.

The Labour Party national executive, meeting last Wednesday, voted for a report by Eric Heffer to reinstate the excluded councillors and for the united Labour Group to follow party policy. This victory is only the start.

By Paul Atkin,
Gorton Labour Party

Manchester 'corporation' is not popular. The town hall is a creaking, archaic institution with the atmosphere and architecture of Borgia Palace. The city party's intention now

is to throw that town hall open to people in struggle — to bring trade unionists, tenants and so on onto council committees and party policy bodies; to bust open management cliques; to ensure control over the council Labour Group by the party; and to deepen and organise the party's popular base.

The idea is to transform the council from a dull, grey agency of the state into a focus for popular resistance. As Councillor Graham Stringer put it: 'This is a victory for the whole labour movement — the doors are open for people to get involved — we want a lot of people to walk through those doors.'

This should be an example for Greater Manchester council, whose current strategy to fight abolition is lobbying local business interests, rather than mobilising the working class.



Councils must defend services

North London poly pickets Nazis

TWO YEARS ago students at the Polytechnic of North London (PNL) were shocked to discover a top National Front organiser, Patrick Harrington, was studying for a history and philosophy degree at the poly.

The students responded by picketing Harrington's lectures, with the result that he disappeared from the course. Apparently he'd left the poly.

Students breathed a sigh of relief that one of Martin Webster's closest colleagues had been disposed of. But not so.

Last March, Harrington reappeared having been granted readmission to PNL. Immediately the pickets were on again — a cross-section of students from the Young Conservatives to the Socialist Worker Student Organisation, and including staff and students from his

philosophy class. Since then, Harrington has been prevented from attending any lectures. At times the pickets have been 150-strong.

By Jon Gorvett,
PNL Labour Club

With the help of his NF cronies, Harrington has now taken legal action against the pickets

On 10 May, the judge

declared that anybody picketing Harrington is liable to immediate arrest. Harrington will have a police escort next time he wants to enter PNL.

Despite this, an emergency general meeting of students on 11 May voted to continue peaceful picketing. Now there will be an attempt to identify pickets and serve them with summonses. Their arrest is a real possibility.

Details are available from the Student Union, PNL, Holloway Road, London N1 (01-609 1212). If Harrington's action is successful, this will create a dangerous precedent. Support the picket! Fight the National Front!

Idrish appeal delayed

ON WEDNESDAY 9 May over 1000 people protested against Home Office efforts to deport Muhamed Idrish, who came to Britain in 1976 to study at Bristol University and subsequently married a Scottish woman. Within two weeks of them splitting up he was ordered before the Home Office adjudicator and eventually recommended for deportation.

Muhamed is a social worker, active in the black and Asian communities. These activities are the real reason for his exclusion.

His defence campaign and NALGO, Muhamed's trade union, brought supporters from all over Britain for Wednesday's demonstration. At a rally in Jubilee Gardens near County Hall, speakers included Jeremy Corbyn MP, NALGO's president John Daly, Avtar Jouhl of the Indian Workers' Association, and a speaker from the Afia Begum campaign.

All condemned the hypocrisy of the racist immigration laws which let in Zola Budd and allow Muhamed's deportation.

While supporters were preparing for an all-night vigil before the High Court

study the documents was the reason given — but it's more likely to be recent publicity about the exclusion of Afia Begum and the entry of Zola Budd, which is helping to discredit the immigration laws.

The campaign still needs your support. Keep the funds coming in to help us continue the fight.

By Bob Smith,
campaign treasurer

Insufficient time to

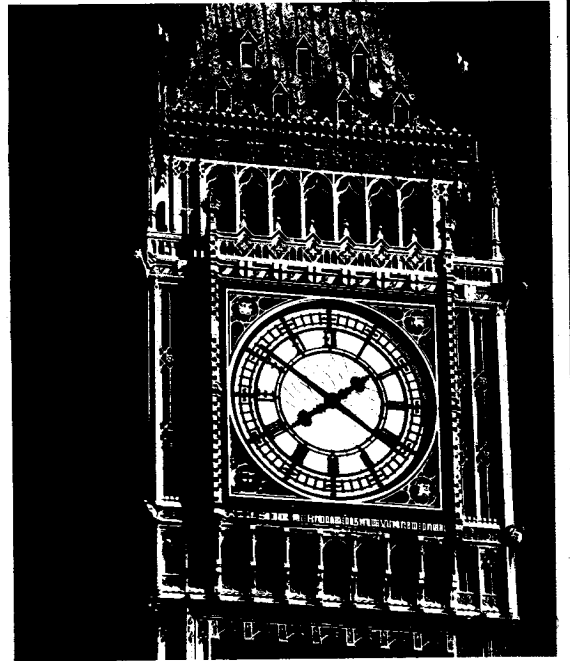
For more information, including a video, contact: Barry Lovejoy, 30 Antrobus Road, Handsworth, Birmingham 21, or phone 061-523 8923.

No Police Bill! No Police State!

National March on Saturday 19 June

Assemble 12 noon Hyde Park, march to Jubilee Gardens
Speakers include NUM, Indian Workers' Association etc

The view from Westminster



Defend Liverpool No Witch hunts

By Joan Maynard
(MP for Sheffield Brightside)

THE working class struggles going on in Britain today are having a clear effect on the Labour Party leadership. The local government election results, especially Liverpool's tremendous victory, definitely influenced the national executive's decision last Wednesday to support Liverpool city council's stand.

Those of us who've supported Liverpool all along, pointed out that any sign of weakness from Labour would be disastrous. Although there were two amendments to the original resolution from the local government sub-committee, I believe they were face-savers for those people who hadn't been taking a strong line on Liverpool up to now.

They didn't dilute the resolution, they certainly didn't weaken it. The NEC is now supporting Liverpool's stand to protect jobs and services.

This is no time to do otherwise of course, after the great election results and on the eve of Environment Secretary Jenkin's visit to the city. At the very least, our responsibility is to declare full support for Liverpool Labour council. After an hour and a half's debate, that view carried the day.

That wasn't the only gain from the NEC meeting. Manchester was another.

After a running sore of a row on Manchester council, that's lasted for about two and a half years — between those Labour councillors who want to follow group policy and those who want to follow local party policy — we recommended the councillors expelled from the Labour Group be reinstated and the group reconvene its annual meeting.

Recently the 'old' group held an AGM without the expelled councillors. We want the full group to elect new officers, and we want to see bridges built for a united Labour Group instead of a divided one.

It will be interesting to see if our recommendations are accepted. But the real power behind these excluded councillors is that they have just been returned to office by the people of Manchester on a party ticket of no cuts in services and no job losses. That's their greatest authority.

The third victory at the national executive is that we're having another look at the Blackburn expulsions. The Young Socialist rep on the NEC, Steve Morgan, raised it as an emergency because of the antics of the accuser, Councillor Gregory.

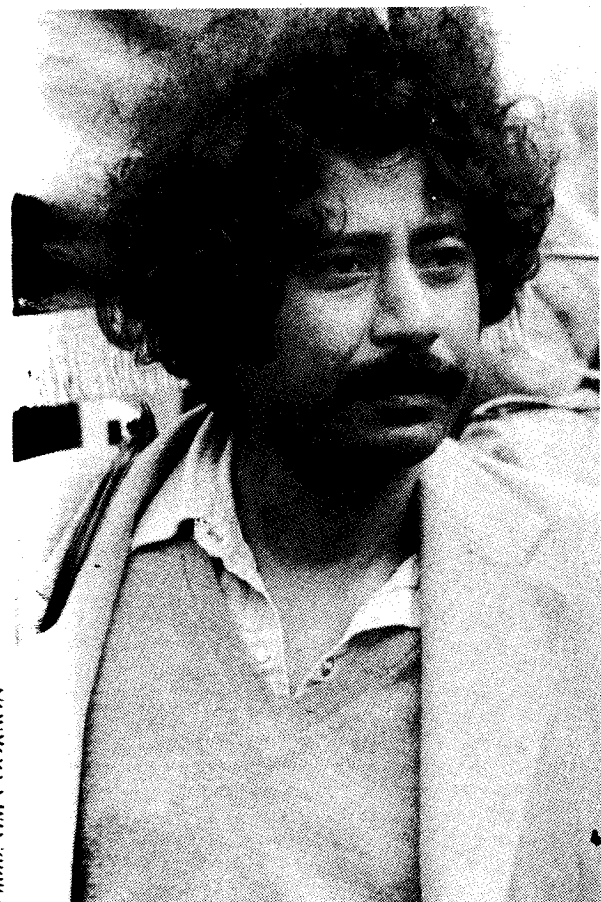
Gregory has left the Labour Group, and there are rumours he's applying to join the Liberals and threatening to stand against Labour in elections. These haven't been confirmed yet, but the fact still remains that he's left the group.

We're going to make the party a laughing-stock — throwing people out on the word of a bloke who's not in the party. Eventually, the discussion was deferred till the next NEC by a slim majority, but it will be rediscussed.

All these debates show there's been a distinct movement within the national executive. The struggle going on outside, particularly the miners, is reflected in Wednesday's decisions.

What we've got to do now is get a regular supply of money to the miners each week, so they're not forced to think about going back to work. That's why the levy is crucial.

Eventually, that struggle will even reach the people here in parliament, providing we can keep it going and build it up.



Muhamed Idrish

Labour women demand power

LABOUR WOMEN in conference at Swansea over last weekend showed yet again the vital contribution they make to policy and debate in the party.

On Saturday conference gave a lead to the whole labour movement on a number of crucial issues both on policy for women and on questions of concern to all sections of the working class.

In the debate on employment, Bridget Elton, speaking for the POEU, moved a resolution calling for: 'a firm commitment to legislating for positive action for women'. The resolution went on to suggest that the American experience should be used as a model.

The motion, seconded by AUEW-TASS, was passed overwhelmingly by conference. Only *Militant* supporters voted against, having argued that positive action is 'divisive'.

Barbara Switzer of TASS, replying to the *Militant's* arguments said: 'Women are not prepared to wait until the top 200 monopolies are nationalised. Nor are we prepared to wait for the revolution. We want action now!'

Teresa Conway, Islington North delegate, took up the theme saying: 'legislation is not enough, but it provides a focus for women to struggle'.

The next major debate was on the question of black sections of the Labour Party. Diane Abbot, from Westminster women's section, put the case most clearly against those arguing it was divisive: 'It is very hypocritical of people who

have not been bothered about an all-white conference and all-white constituencies for years and years to start saying we're arguing for separatism. We've got *de facto* separatism already'.

The resolution was adopted overwhelmingly, to tremendous cheers, despite a recommendation from the platform that it be remitted for further consultation.

By Jude Woodward

The *Militant* voted against, this time in clear alliance with the right-wing in the conference — a pattern that was to be repeated time and again through the course of the weekend.

The debate on Ireland, brought forward to Saturday after a vote on conference floor, was the most enthusiastic of the day. A resolution calling for action against strip searches in Armagh was carried.

Militant's resolution for the establishment of the British Labour Party in the North of Ireland was overwhelmingly rejected, showing conference agreed with Vera McChlone, a Cardiff

delegate, when she said: 'We want less British involvement in the North of Ireland, not more'.

Mandy Moore replied to the debate for the platform explaining that the problems of Ireland could not be resolved by exporting the British Labour Party across the Irish Sea.

Sunday's debate was dominated by the debate on women's organisation, following a 250-strong fringe meeting of the Labour Women's Action Committee on Saturday evening. But before reaching this debate, conference confirmed its support for unilateralism, gave wholehearted support to the miners' strike, and overwhelmingly adopted a resolution against witch hunts and calling for the reinstatement of the six expelled Blackburn members.

Organisation

In the afternoon WAC's demands were all clearly passed, as were a series of amendments to standing orders democratising many conference procedures.

The *Militant* again allied with the right in trying to defeat WAC supporters, but were defeated on all counts. Their approach to women's organisation was to fight for 'parity with the YS', in their view the 'most dynamic section of the Labour Party'. But only



Women give a lead to the labour movement

their own 30-odd votes were registered in support of this demand.

On conference floor the absolute majority of delegates were clear WAC supporters and the WAC slate swept the board in the elections for next year's Conference Arrangements Committee. The left majority on the CAC this year contributed greatly to the democratic functioning of conference, and ensured that women got what they wanted on the agenda

rather than other priorities being imposed.

The one major weakness of the conference lay in the debate on Europe. Unfortunately no resolutions put to conference called explicitly for British withdrawal from the EEC, indicating a further drift away from this policy across the entire spectrum of opinion in the party.

But continuing doubts about the EEC and the possibility of turning this

situation around were revealed more than anything by the protest from the NUPE delegation that banners at conference did not mention women and entirely focussed on the Euro elections.

Many successful fringe meetings were held, over 70 women heard Chris McAuley, of the Sinn Fein women's department, at the Labour Committee on Ireland meeting and a hundred plus packed into a

crowded NAC meeting.

All in all conference showed that, as at Newcastle in 1982, the women's organisation remains the most radical and most dynamic section of the party.

Neil Kinnock will have a tough job on his hands if he remains determined in his opposition to women's demands in the party. Women are sure to be in the forefront of the fight to prevent him leading the party to the right.

Unions should support WAC

ONE OF the resolutions aimed at giving the women's organisation more power in the party was moved by SUE NYFIELD on behalf of her union, FTAT. Here we print part of her speech.

My union, FTAT, is moving and supporting this composite because it contains one of the simplest and most straightforward demands at this conference. It is simply that the women's representatives on the NEC should be elected by women, so that they can advance the interests of women within the party and be accountable to our women's conference.

The NEC has five different sections within it, the constituencies, the trade unions, the YS, the cooperative and socialist societies, and the women's section. Each section except the women's section is elected by their policy making body.

Why can't women elect their representatives to do the same? At the moment those women in the women's section of the NEC are not able to advance the interests and put the view of women, for they are elected and accountable to the male-dominated trade unions at annual conference — who will only re-elect them if they advance their male views.

Sisters, in the old days rich and powerful landlords used to cast votes on behalf of their labourers, but then the Chartists demanded direct elections, so that labourers could themselves decide who best could advance their interests. We want a similar reform for women in the party.

There is nothing new in our demand for the women's section to be elected by women's conference. Between 1906 and 1918 the Women's Labour League elected Margaret Bondfield to represent the views of the women's conference on the NEC.

Our struggles aren't new, our sisters have all fought these struggles before. We mustn't kid ourselves that we — the younger ones at this conference — are the first to think of them. But we have regressed since then, we want an end to men electing women on our behalf.

Moscow women

Moscow Women
By Carola Hansson and Karin Liden
published by Allison & Busby, £3.95

THE FAMILY is alive and kicking and doing very well thank you in the Soviet Union today. This new book by two western feminists, *Moscow Women*, contains thirteen interviews all carried out unofficially. It is a sad indictment of Soviet society.

The interviews were done in 1978, but the fundamental issues they raised in each interview reflect the contradictions of a society that started out on a new road, and came to a sudden halt.

Women have equality — it is written into the constitution of Soviet society. Both the state, and individual women explain that there is no need for a women's movement because they have the vote, education, training, childcare. All these gains are present and visible.

But the trap of 'traditional' women's jobs remains, especially for teachers and doctors. These are the service industries. The extended family role performed by women, and the fact that the family remains the strong bastion of women's oppression, means that these jobs are seen as 'less important', and 'women's work' and are lower paid.

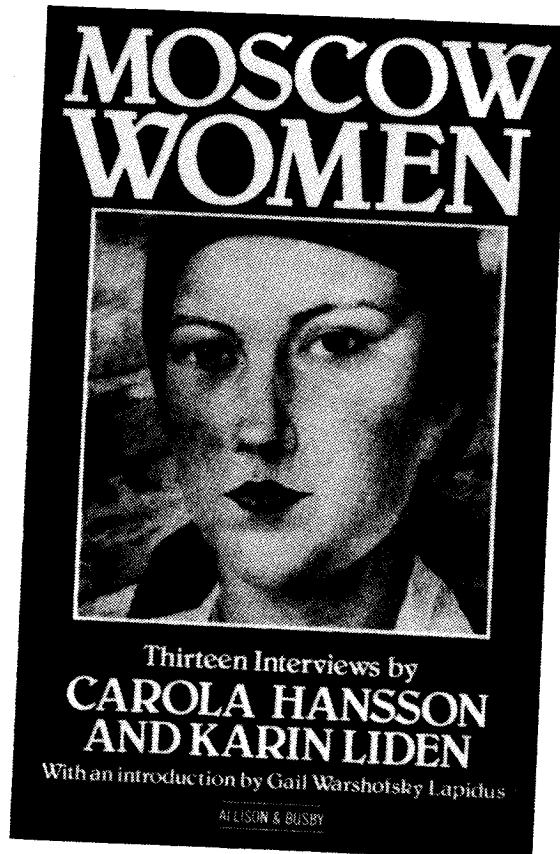
But to the heart of the matter — the Soviet family. A woman who has given birth to 10 children still has the title 'Heroic Mother!' And the concept of motherhood, of caring for children, is overpowering.

Reviewed by
Steph Grant

It's very complicated because the birthrate in the Soviet Union is falling, and the officials are concerned. All the women interviewed explain that they wanted children, but couldn't afford two or more kids — it would mean the woman going out to work as well as running the home and incomes don't stretch that far.

At the same time a woman's right to control her own body is a mockery. Women can expect to have an average of five abortions in their lifetime — it is used as a form of contraception. There is so much mistrust of the pill, women confuse it with Thalidomide, while other forms of contraception are completely unreliable.

All this reinforces women's role in the home, so it is all the more worrying when Anna, one of the women, explains: 'There are almost no differences left. Except in the home ...'



The women interviewed all thought that their husband's job was more important, that women were better at working with young children, that the division of household tasks was fair — men do the washing up and maintenance, women do the cooking, washing, ironing and queuing for food. Queuing for food is

an occupation in itself and it is a constant problem, especially for women who work.

Queuing is a visible exposure of the complete bureaucratic mismanagement of the Soviet economy. For all the reasons the women touch on, the family acts as the buffer to all this.

It's a vicious circle, because the contradictions of the family and the values it represents find their way back into the work force — where women have achieved 'equality' — and so Lyuba explains: 'It's not because I'm a woman but because I'm a mother that I'm discriminated against'. As far as the outside world is concerned, 'Fathers don't have children'!

The women interviewed are conscious of all these contradictions that bear down heavily on their lives. Their responses to it are varied. Natasha puts it bluntly: 'No laws are strong enough to penetrate the family'. Meanwhile the Soviet bureaucracy refuses to acknowledge the position of women in society: 'Officially, there are no women's problems here'.

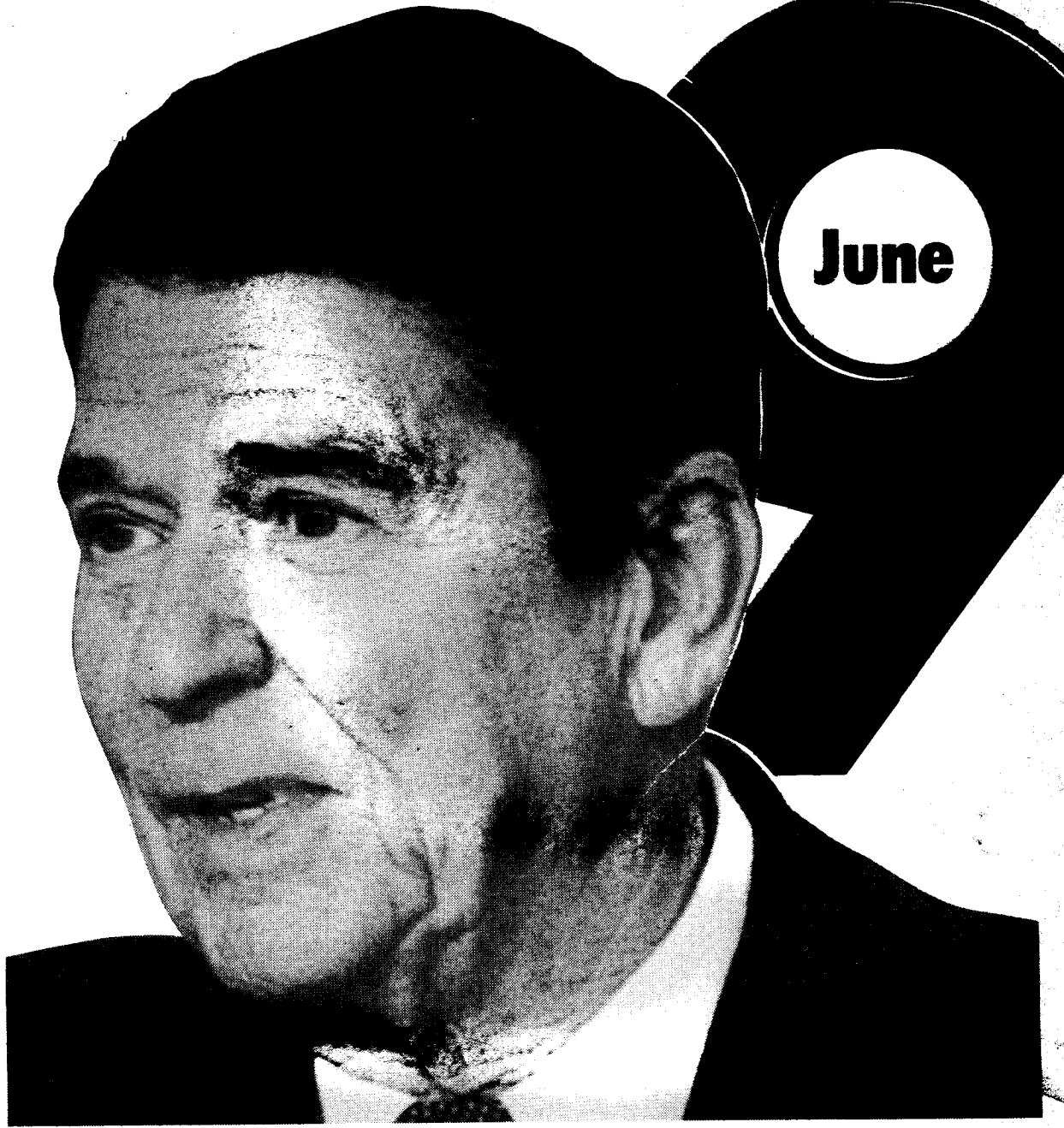
But the overwhelming impression I'm left with is one of admiration for these women, they are silent in suffering, caught in a cruel time warp, carrying the burden of the tragic mistakes made by Stalinism.

But it's a sign of strength that women can speak so powerfully. That is a power Soviet women do have today, but which must be supported by the collective strength of an autonomous women's movement. **SISTERHOOD IS POWERFUL**

A Socialist ACTION

March against Reagan

June



CND'S CAMPAIGN for the 9 June demonstration to coincide with the visit of Ronald Reagan to the London economic summit has got into full swing with the printing of one million leaflets. The fact that such a demonstration is needed against the chieftain of US militarism was vividly demonstrated last week during Reagan's speech to the American people on Central America

called *AirLand Battle*, are designed to fight nuclear wars not just on the European continent but also in the third world.

Ronald Reagan's nuclear escalation against the Soviet Union, is designed precisely to maximise the United States overall military superiority, and hence its military freedom of action worldwide. Thus the overall US military escalation is closely tied to United States aggression in the third world.

9 June will be a major opportunity to demonstrate against the leader of the government which has set the pace in the new arms race. All our readers should now be making sure that their CND and YCND branches, and their labour movement bodies are organising transport and preparing for a massive turnout.

amount to indiscriminate mud-slinging against the opponents of the US in Central America, with the hope that some of the mud will stick. The ground is being prepared for a deepening US military involvement in the region, with the specific aim of overthrowing the Sandinista government.

The war-mongering of the Reagan regime in Central America is something which should be of concern to all supporters of CND. The US nuclear battle plans, in particular the new war-fighting doctrine

Reagan said that the Sandinistas in Nicaragua were a 'bloody dictatorship', which among other things had apparently been persecuting Jews and Catholics. The overwhelming majority of the Nicaraguan population who are Catholics and support the Sandinistas are going to find it difficult to work out how they're being persecuted, as are the Catholic priests who are in the FSLN government!

Neither is there any evidence that the small Jewish population has suffered any persecution whatever. Reagan's flights of fantasy reached even greater proportions when he accused the Cubans of 'harbouring the people who poison our children with drugs'. Precisely who these people are, or why or how the Cubans 'harbour' them no one knows.

Reagan's rantings

March against Reagan

9 June

Assemble 12 noon Hyde Park
March to Trafalgar Square

Public Meeting Evict cruise not the peace camp

Speakers include Joan Ruddock, Cecil Gutzmore (Campaign against Police Bill), Bob Clay MP, Greenham Camp, Kent miners' wives.

Thursday 31 May, 7.30pm
Westminster Cathedral Hall, Ambrosden Ave, SW1

Demonstrate against apartheid PW Botha not welcome here

Saturday 2 June
Assemble 11.45am Speakers Corner
March to Downing St and Whitehall to Jubilee Gardens
Organised by Anti-Apartheid

Fighting for jobs and education

BERNARD REGAN is a member of the national executive of the National Union of Teachers. Speaking on the union pay claim he says:

'Mass meetings on 9 May voted overwhelmingly against management's offer of four and a half per cent and voted for further action.

'Many of the meetings were addressed by striking miners. Roger Godfrey of the Kent NUM spoke at a mass rally of London teachers where over £1000 was donated by inner-London teachers to the miners' strike fund. Even rural areas like Devon had guest miners speaking at their rallies.

'Further three-day strikes are now planned in the next three weeks. Myself, I think we need indefinite strike action in selected areas. This could prepare the way for joint national action with civil servants and other public sector unions with claims in the pipe line.

'Eventually we will almost certainly need a national strike and a united campaign with these other unions because that's the best way we can make sure we win.

'The Rates Bill now going through parliament threatens 60,000 teachers' jobs. We are not just fighting for better wages, but we are fighting for our jobs and the right of millions of young people to have an education.'

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