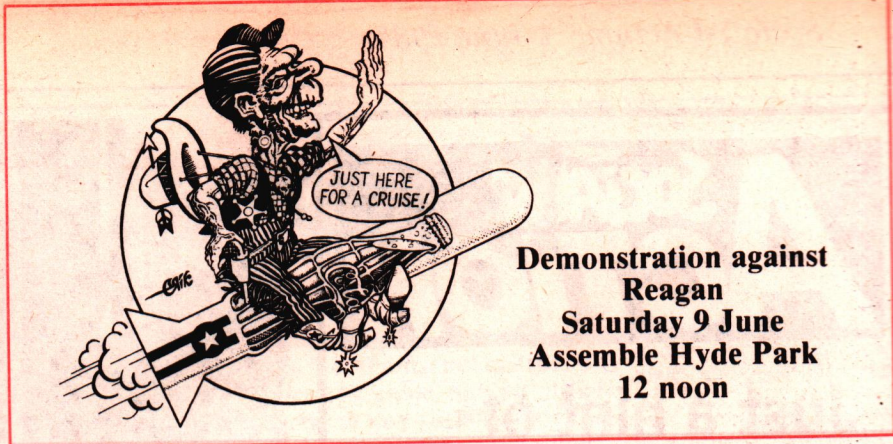


# A Socialist ACTION

No. 60 1 June 1984 30p

## All out for the NUM!

# Battle for Orgreave



**Demonstration against Reagan**  
**Saturday 9 June**  
**Assemble Hyde Park**  
**12 noon**

**THE GOVERNMENT has mounted the biggest police operation of the miners' strike at the Orgreave coke plant near Sheffield. Nearly 10,000 police have been mobilised from nine counties.**

Thatcher's goal is clear. She wants a 'Saltley gate' in reverse in the heart of Yorkshire to show that the police can smash by force action by the miners anywhere in the country. It is a decisive move by Thatcher to try to tip the strike in her favour.

The police operation at Orgreave shows the real nature of the negotiations the National Coal Board has opened with the NUM. These negotiations no doubt reflect pressure on the NCB to find a 'successful' settlement to a struggle the government never imagined would last so long.

But 'successful' means only one thing for this government. Thatcher cannot afford to lose this strike. There will be no 'negotiated' settlement which will halt the government's pit closure plan — unless negotiations take place with a gun against the NCB's head. The success of the strike is the only weapon that can win.

Arthur Scargill was right this weekend when he said of the attempts by the TUC, ACAS and Labour Party leadership to 'arbitrate' over the strike: 'I told the TUC and Labour Party that rather than talk about mediation, they should be asking the rest of the trade union movement to join us.'

So far the support from the rank and file of the trade union movement has been magnificent. Financial support

has flooded in from all over the country. ASLEF, the NUR, and the NUS have stood solidly behind the miners. Scotland and Yorkshire have had successful one day strikes. Wales have set a day of action on 12 June.

But now the most decisive battle of the strike is being fought out at Orgreave. If Thatcher wins this fight her police state tactics will be used to smash any resistance to the attacks on the miners — and if the NUM were to lose it would be a hammer blow to the entire trade union movement. *The battle at Orgreave must be won.*

Now is the time that every pledge of support for the NUM must be turned into action. Every rank and file supporter of the miners, every leader of the trade unions and Labour Party who supports the miners must get to Orgreave. All stops must be pulled out for industrial action to support the NUM in this battle and block the operation of Orgreave coke depot.

So far there have been regional days of action to support the NUM. The urgent need now is to set the day for a national day of solidarity strikes. But first the battle for Orgreave *must* be won.

● It is urgent that picketing and solidarity action for Orgreave is organised. Organise coaches and delegations from your area and workplace now. Contact Strike Committee, Yorkshire NUM, Miners' Offices, Barnsley, Yorkshire S70 2LS. Phone 0226-84006.



# Socialist ACTION

## Just a hint of terror

That was how the *Financial Times* headlined its review of the situation on Wall Street last week. The reason was the sudden technical bankruptcy of Continental Illinois — the eighth largest bank in the United States.

The London stockmarket showed the same downward pattern — suffering the single biggest fall in prices since the fall of Edward Heath's government. The words in London were the same as New York — one stockbroker stating he felt, 'the smell of terror, such as I have not sensed since 1974.'

Later in the week the panic spread still further up the financial tree with the shares of Manufacturing Hanover, the fourth largest bank in the United States, losing more than 10 per cent of their value in a single day.

The immediate causes of the banking panic are easy to find — Continental Illinois and Manufacturing Hanover are the US banks most exposed to the enormous foreign debts of Argentina, Brazil, Mexico and other Latin American states. But much more fundamental are the underlying causes of the crisis.

In August 1982 the international financial system was brought to the edge of collapse by the threat of Mexico defaulting on its international debt. The Reagan administration responded to the threat both by rapid loans to Mexico and by reflating the American economy — pouring money into the economy and simultaneously reducing interest rates to lower the debt burden.

The motor of US economic growth became its massive military build up. Military expenditure rose far more rapidly than taxation to finance it. The entire economy was pulled out of recession by the arms expenditure and the economic policies associated with it. The short term effects were dramatic. US industrial production has risen by almost twenty per cent in the last year alone.

But as the United States economy recovered new contradictions inevitably set in. The US government budget deficit to finance the military build up is colossal — it now stands at well over \$200 billion and its financing absorbs two thirds of US personal savings.

With such a high proportion of available funds going into financing the budget deficit little is left for the needs of capital expenditure by industry, consumer credit and the other requirements of industrial expansion. As the economy has expanded therefore US interest rates have started to move upwards again — a path which started at the beginning of 1983 and has speeded up recently. These rising interest rates have been reinforced still further by the need of the US economy to pull in foreign funds to finance the savings gap.

And with the rise in interest rates the foreign debt problem becomes still worse. Each one per cent increase in US interest rates adds well over \$1 billion to the debt burden of Latin America and brings forward the day of a possible default on the debt. Hence last week's banking panic.

'Terror' is a very appropriate word indeed. Because the world capitalist economy is caught in a vise. If the United States suffers economic stagnation the third world debt crisis worsens because the Latin American states do not have a market to export their goods. If the US economy expands on its present course the debt crisis worsens because interest rates soar.

Don't imagine that 1929 is just a year in the past.

Editor: ALAN FREEMAN

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Kent miners wives demonstration in Mansfield

# Why Scargill is listening to women

'SCARGILL is listening to women now. He has to listen. We've made him listen.' That's how Lorraine Bowler from Barnsley Women Against Pit Closures, saw the impact of the miners' wives movement on the NUM.

This movement of women around the strike has now reached an unparalleled scale. In every area of the strike there are now women's committees, based on the organisation of miners' wives.

Women of all ages are joining picket lines, organising women's pickets and marches, speaking at meetings and touring workplaces. Women who have never before had any contact with political action are travelling up and down the country to link up with each other, spending days away from home and building a powerful national organisation of women around the strike. In most areas they now have representatives on the official strike committees.

The demonstration in Barnsley on 12 May, when thousands of miners' wives and other women marched through the town, was a remarkable show of women's solidarity with the strike. Women on the march understood its significance — many were overcome with emotion. 'The feeling that day was incredible. I don't believe it will be recaptured again for many a long day' explained Lorraine.

It seems obvious that

this massive movement of women should command our support, both in deepening support for the miners' strike and in bringing women to the forefront of the struggle. But this has not been the case across the entire spectrum of the left.

By Jude Woodward

Stevi Jackson, writing in the May issue of *Labour Briefing*, claiming she was expressing the 'unease among many women in the left about women's involvement' in the strike, because women are 'likely to ... be treated as mere appendages to men'.

But it is women themselves who have come forward to assert their role in the leadership of the struggle. Women have forced themselves onto the NUM's platforms and into the strike committees by the power of their own organisation.

Arthur Scargill and the leadership of the NUM didn't tell them to do it. It

can hardly be claimed that they went out of their way to 'trick' or 'manoeuvre' women into tagging behind them — rather the reverse!

It was women who understood, even more rapidly than the NUM, that mobilising miners alone would not be sufficient to save the mining communities. They insisted on and fought for their role in the strike, and have forced the importance of women's support to the attention of the NUM leadership.

In Barnsley Scargill's speech marked a major step forward when he said of the miners' wives: 'This movement is so powerful they just can't ignore it any longer.' By 'they' he meant the media, but he might as well have meant himself. Progress indeed when you remember his spirited defence of the page 3 pin-ups in the *Yorkshire Miner*!

People who sneer at this movement as 'tagging behind men' miss the significance of what is going on. A powerful alliance is being built between the miners and women which will take both forward.

It is not a small question for the miners' strike. John Lloyd, industrial

editor of the *Financial Times*, spends a lot of time in his reports detailing examples of sexism on the picket lines. Clearly this is not because he is oh-so-concerned about women's rights and equality. It's because the ruling class use all weapons at their disposal to defeat struggles like the miners'.

The miners on the Mansfield demonstration who sang 'Get your tits out for the boys' played into their hands. As does every bit of sexism on the picket lines or anywhere else. But it is the miners' wives organising around the strike who have done most to counter this.

The biggest blow against sexism in the NUM has already been struck when Maureen Douglas spoke at the Barnsley rally saying: 'Don't insult the women you see here, who support you wholeheartedly by shouting crude and insulting remarks to other women on the streets.'

Sexism cannot be fought by abstaining from the struggle. The miners' wives have graphically shown that by fighting for women's right to be part of the struggle, by fighting to mobilise women in their thousands, the space for sexism is cut away from under the feet of even the worst male chauvinist.

It is not by using sexism as an excuse to stay out of the miners' strike, or the black movement, that women will combat it. Nor by the kind of sideswipes at the miners indulged in by feminists like Bea Campbell of *Marxism Today*: 'The miners are men's love objects.' (*Wigan Pier Revisited*).

The miners' wives are teaching the labour movement a lesson that will be vital for its future. Dealing with Thatcher and the ruling class will require more than the labour movement's existing strength. The mobilisation of women has doubled the size of the army defending the mining communities.

Dealing with Thatcher overall will demand that the labour movement links itself to the struggles of all the oppressed, and takes on board the political demands of many other groups, as on Ireland, the Scottish assembly, the peace movement and ecology.

First and most important among these now are women, for we are over half the population. And that means that all the concerns of the labour movement have to be changed and shaken up. But we can be sure that it will be women who do it. That is what the miners' wives are showing now, how women will do it.

## Not just mining women!

THE tremendous battles that the miners' wives are waging indicates some of the fundamental changes going on among women in Britain. It shows that it is not due to some special feature of the peace movement that the Greenham movement has emerged. Or to some special feature of the Labour Party that the women's conference is the most left-

wing section within it.

There is now a general phenomenon of women coming forward to give leadership to all struggles against inequality and oppression. This is closely connected to other facts, like the enormous rise in female membership of the unions over the last fifteen years, and the changing voting patterns among women — the fact that the Tories' old preferential vote among women has now disappeared.

Women are deserting

the Tories, the only question is whether they will be won to the labour movement or be attracted by the pseudo-feminism of the SDP/Liberals. A militant vanguard of women is clearly making the choice, launching itself into the leadership of many struggles and forcing the labour movement to change. The miners' wives have struck a vitally important blow in this fight.

The labour movement is faced with a tremendous challenge and opportunity. As the miners' wives

movement shows, women increasingly see their demands as being articulated through the mainstream of the labour movement and not counterposed to it. Their fight is for jobs, against the missiles, for shorter hours, for democracy and so on — concerns which are shared by large sections of the labour movement, but to which women bring their own particular demands as well, like abortion, childcare or positive action.

It is still only a minori-

ty of women who are actively engaged in this fight, but struggles like those of the miners' wives are helping turn it into a majority. And then the labour movement will have to sit up and listen.

And to those who think the miners' wives organisation is some kind of flash in the pan, the answer is best given by Lorraine Bowler: 'If they think we are going to stop organising when the strike is over, they've got another think coming. We're here to stay.'

# Judges — tried and tested



Photo: MORNING STAR

**THE High Court decision of vice chancellor Sir Robert Megarry that the NUM must not instruct its Nottinghamshire members to come out on strike should come as no surprise to any socialists, or for that matter any militant miner.**

But that in no way means that it should not arouse our contempt and anger with a system of justice that is based on maintaining the *status quo* and which is used against working peoples' right to organise. The decision follows the judgements against the NGA; the Kent NUM whose members were threatened with arrest for driving along a public highway, and countless pickets whose bail conditions have been set by magistrates in such a way that they constitute 'house arrest'.

But Sir Robert Megarry was not just reflecting the climate of opinion constructed by the Thatcher government and encouraged by the media. He was acting in a manner that has been consistent with the judiciary since its establishment. Of course Sir Robert does not ring up Thatcher and ask for her instructions but like all the rest of his kind who sit on the bench he is a political appointee. The High Court and circuit judges, recorders and even the stipendiary and lay magistrates are appointed by, or on the advice, of the Lord Chancellor who is a member of the cabinet.

Lord Chancellors who are notoriously conservative people inevitably discuss with the senior members of the judiciary when the most important judges' positions are filled. In the free masonry of the legal world these appointments only get the nod of assent if the candidate is considered safe and reliable — ie does not suffer from liberal inclinations.

In the years from 1832 to 1906 50 per cent of the judicial appointments went to barristers who had

without exception they are middle or upper class males and generally elderly. They only get there over a long period of time in a process described by EP Thompson who says: 'They go through a caterpillar stage before as lawyers. Then they pupate for a while in silk. And finally they blow in ermine'.

By Bob Pennington

Later there came a shift from direct political nominees to so-called unbiased professionals. But Lord Hailsham let the cat out of the bag about this 'independence' when he argued '... judges like everybody else, are influenced by the economic and political climate of their time. If they were not, they would be considered either revolutionary or reactionary, and they would become political judges.'

According to Hailsham then the judge stands in the middle — neither to the left nor too far right — but the middle is influenced by what is established and how best to defend it. So a non-political judge by Hailsham's reasoning is one who stands for the present system.

The make up of the judiciary ensures the continuity of man and system. Some four out of every five judges come from public schools and Oxford and Cambridge. Hardly

This makes sure that in the end the right man comes out and it explains why no English judge has ever been removed. Megarry like the rest of the High court judges is the tried and tested representative of the British establishment — appointed to defend its laws and its property. To win this strike and in the long term to defend our basic rights, Megarry and his courts have to be challenged.

In the shameful words of the *Guardian* that 'discredited voice of 'liberalism', he gave a decision which meant the 'Miners win the right to work.' Yes he did. But the ones who work are the scabs. Four million unemployed and 20,000 miners threatened with the loss of their jobs apparently don't have any rights, either to work or even to control their own union.

The labour movement must say no to the conspiracy of the judges and their obedient echoes in Fleet St. It must make clear that it rejects any law and judgement that injures the interests of the working class.

## No miners in jail!

**JAILED Kent NUM President, Malcolm Pitt, is due back in court just as we go to press. If he is not released Sogat '82 and other Fleet Street unions have threatened to call a strike that would shut down the national press.**

This is the only way for the labour movement to respond to the attempts to use the police and courts to repress workers engaged in struggles.

Since the beginning of the miners' strike the government and the NCB have clearly been weighing up whether the time is right to use the courts against the strike.

They retreated from using the anti-union laws against the NUM in the way that they had done against the NGA in Warrington, because it was clear that this would simply serve to unite the miners in their determination to struggle.

Since then we've seen them using the police in a nationwide military operation against the strike. There have been hundreds of arrests, and many strikers, and women supporters, have been detained in custody for hours.

By Jude Woodward

Early on in the strike there was the scandal of arrested pickets being asked their political affiliations and whether they read certain left newspapers. There's been phone-tapping and probably 'agents provocateurs' on the picket lines.

In Malcolm Pitt's book about the 1972 strike in Kent, *The World On Our Backs*, he details examples of how the miners knew their phones were tapped.

'On one occasion, the women at the local telephone exchange made a collection for the miners and, when they brought the money over to the Hall, a steward told the pickets that their phone was definitely tapped by

the police. The men arranged for a phoney call to be made through the Hall for a number of 'flying squad' men to move immediately to a certain power station. A subsequent call from pickets on the power station confirmed that a couple of carloads of police had turned up to anticipate the expected trouble.'

All through this strike the police have denied that they are tapping phones, but it is obvious that they are using this or a similar method to monitor the miners' movements.

Other forms of legal and illegal harassment have been used against the pickets. One group of miners were arrested for distributing a leaflet with a quote about scabs from a book by Jack London, on the grounds it was 'offensive and obscene'. Others have been threatened with arrest for simply chanting the word 'scab'.

On the Mansfield demonstration they dug up medieval riot laws to charge demonstrators involved in clashes with the

police. Women arrested on one of the Nottingham picket lines were kept in custody for 12 hours without access to a toilet. One woman was kept in handcuffs until her wrists bled. They thought they could frighten women off the picket lines, but their response was to go straight back on the gates.

It is obvious that the NCB and the government would like to try the approach of stepping up the repression, sending a few miners to jail, in the hope they can scare the miners into scaling down the action. Maybe the first one to be jailed will be Malcolm Pitt.

If they choose to do that they will have to learn straightaway that it is a very big mistake. The immediate response must be to step-up the action all round the country. The pledge for action from Sogat '82 lays a firm basis for that and must be built on.

For we can be sure that even if they draw back from jailing Malcolm Pitt,



Photo: MORNING STAR

## Miners win the right to work

**Notts leaders wrong to order members to strike**

The National Union of Mineworkers was ordered by the High Court yesterday not to instruct its Nottinghamshire members to join the pit strike or to make any arrangements to withdraw from work. The court said that the union's instructions were unlawful and that the union must not instruct its members to do so.

## British miner speaks at French rally

**A RALLY of two and a half thousand people at the Rally against Austerity organised by the French Trotskyist organisation the LCR in Paris last weekend, heard miner Colin Lenton from Bold colliery appeal for aid for the British miners strike.**

Also on the platform was Sandra Lenton, herself an NUM member on strike. Colin brought special greetings from the NUM to the IG Metall workers in Germany fighting for a 35-hour week. IG Metall was among the organisations represented on the platform, as was the Basque

## Apology

**WE strongly apologise to Barbara Edwards of the Hirwaun miners support group in South Wales. In an article last week she was wrongly named as Barbara Taylor. This mistake entirely originated in the Socialist Action office, so we also apologise to Carol O'Byrne who wrote the original article.**

# Agecroft walk-out The strike still spreads

LAST WEEK nearly 70 workers from Agecroft, the only pit still working in Lancashire, walked out and joined the picket for the first time. About 10 cars were turned back. Later on in the day they elected a strike committee and are seeking official recognition. Manchester Confed and the AUEW have already provided them with an office and a phone.

ALAN CHADWICK is the chair of the strike committee. He spoke to Socialist Action.

THE MASS meeting at Agecroft on Tuesday was one of the shortest I've ever attended. What really annoyed those of us who walked out was that we had no time even to ask questions, and we weren't allowed to put our views.

Jim Lord, the branch

secretary, told the meeting that all Agecroft men have been suspended from the union, even those who weren't working.



So 40 of us went to the Bolton offices and Sid Vincent told us this was wrong, and we wouldn't be suspended if we didn't work. The lads who came out then joined the picketing in force, and we turned a few back. I'd say only 70 or 80 per cent went in on the morning shift.

The trade union and labour movement is look-

ing to the miners to win this battle. We should all have been out from the start. OK, we did want a ballot in the first place, but now we've got 80 per cent of the NUM fighting for our jobs.

It wasn't very hard for us to come out. For many weeks now we've been thinking we should join in. To the rest of Agecroft I'd say this. Try and forget the past, if we do stick together then it will be a battle well worth taking part in. It can lead to a victory for miners' jobs and our children's futures.

My message to miners still working is this. If you are adamant about the ballot, realise that there isn't going to be one, so please come out so that we can have a strong and united union.



## Barking Hospital fights on

FOR THE last 13 weeks, 90 women cleaners at Barking Hospital have been on strike against a massive attack on their working conditions by a subsidiary of the dinosaur of the privatisation world — Pritchards.

By Dave Benlow, Wandsworth District NUPE

Six years ago Crothalls (Pritchards) won the contract to clean Barking hospital. Conditions and wages were comparable to those of domestics in the NHS, they were unionised through NUPE, and normal negotiating procedures were followed.

But when the DHSS told all health authorities to submit plans for tendering ancillary work this year, Crothalls put in a winning tender based on slashing hours, wages and conditions. A total of 876 hours were cut, leaving some workers with a pay



Crowthall's manager attacks a NUPE picket

cut from £57 to £17! Holiday and sick pay were also cut.

The workers had to learn a lot in a short time. They have 24-hour pickets, and managements have been forced to bring in scabs with police

escorts. This has led to a total of 19 arrests so far, with 'stay away' bail conditions like the miners.

NUPE made the strike official from the start and support is being organised across London through Health Emergency groupings.

The battle has also been taken to outside Prit-

chards HQ, and national coverage caused share prices to fall. Women from the hospitals also demonstrated angrily outside the Pritchards AGM at the fashionable 'Inn on the Park' in London.

NUPE national conference voted for national industrial action in support of the women as a 'test-case'. There are many problems still to overcome, but the resolve of the women remains 100 per cent solid.

As the struggle deepens their demands are developing. Increasingly the women now demand that their work be taken over by NHS direct labour.

## Miners' Support Committee

### Bristol

c/o TGWU, Transport House, Room 1, Victoria St, Bristol BS1

### 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 Alverston Hse, Kennington Park Estate, London SE11

### Southall

c/o 14 Featherstone Rd, Southall, London

### Birmingham

c/o Trade Union Resource Centre, 7 Frederick St, B1 1 1

### Easing

c/o West London Trade Union Club, 35 Action High St, London W3

### Southampton

c/o NUPE District Office, 93 Leigh Rd, Eastleigh, Hants

### Cardiff

Room 219, Transport House, 1 Cathedral Rd, Cardiff. Tel: 0222 31176

### Hounslow

c/o Ian MacDonall, 220 Wellington Road South, Hounslow, Middx. Tel: 01-577 3429

### Medway

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

### Bury

c/o Brian Marden, 061-769648

### Oxford

c/o Claimants Union, Princes St, Oxford

### Leeds

c/o District Labour Party, 9 Queens Sq, Leeds 2

### Lewisham

c/o Labour and Trade Union Club, Limes Grove, Lewisham, London

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



## Orgreave: no coke must move

'MARK my words, it's not because it's a bank holiday that those scab lorries are not coming but because of the 5000 people assembled here today.'

By John Kirby, member Heeley Labour Party

This was how Arthur Scargill summed up the first victory in the union's campaign to stop the movement of coke from the Orgreave coking plant near Sheffield.

For four days up to 40 scab lorries protected by wire mesh and 3000 police have removed coke from the British Steel plant to the steelmaking works in Scunthorpe.

The pickets turned out after a call from Scargill, since a massive police presence had prevented attempts to stop the lorries. The show of force by the police was aimed at intimidating the Yorks miners.

Mass picketing will continue until the move-

ment of coke is stopped for good. Reinforcements for the NUM picket line from the rest of the South Yorks labour movement would help to bring a quick victory in the fight to close Orgreave.

And the importance of solidarity was underlined by the NUM president as he addressed the pickets: 'Instead of trying to mediate the Labour Party the TUC should be winning the support of the wider movement.'

food collections outside supermarkets. Last weekend over 20 such stalls were set up throughout Birmingham.

A fortnightly bulletin, *The Miners Strike* is published by Birmingham Trades Council.

The basic solidarity tasks have to be extended and regularised. Upon this solid basis, the momentum towards solidarity strike action can be built. Solidarity is key as Merlin, a miner at Birch Coppice, explained, 'The scabs that are working think that they will starve when they come out on strike. But from what I've seen of the organisation in Birmingham, we won't starve or eat grass or crawl back to work. Mr MacGregor, Mrs Thatcher, up yours!'

## Birmingham supports the miners

'I've been in Birmingham for two weeks and the response has been magnificent. We are proud to act as a figurehead for all trade unionists and the entire working class of this country for as long as it takes to beat this lunatic Tory government.' So said Alan Williams, a striking miner from St John's lodge, South Wales NUM.

Striking miners from South Wales and Warwickshire have been touring Birmingham's factories, trade union and Labour Party branches. The response they

have received has been excellent. Upon hearing of the hardships being endured by the miners and their families, Birmingham's labour movement has been moved to donate generously to the hardship appeal.

The West Midlands Regional TUC and Birmingham Trades Council are cooperating to push the idea of factories, Labour Party branches, and trade union organisations adopting a specific pit. This allows a working partnership between Birmingham's labour movement and the striking miners to be set up at the rank and file level. This work is supplemented by street stall

## Welsh farmers support the strike

FARMERS joined striking miners at a demonstration at Pontyberem near Cynheidre colliery in South Wales last Saturday. Speaking at the rally John Howells from the Dyfed farmers action group said:

'We as farmers tend to have forgotten where we came from — there was no one more working class than the farmer. We face a 20 per cent cut in income. We are fighting to save jobs and ancillary industries. You people are in just the same situation.'

'The whole social fabric of our community is threatened. I can't stand by and see people starved into submission. Our battle is the same. I only wish we farmers had the unity and courage you have shown.'

The farmers brought to the rally 200 gallons of milk which were given to miners' families. They have promised further deliveries of milk and food.

These moves followed miners from Cardiff support committees joining a farmers' demonstration in Cardiff earlier in the week.

The farmers are protesting against the new

EEC milk quotas which threaten to drive many small farmers, especially from the west of Wales out of business.

By Carol O'Byrne

At a recent demonstration at Llandysul members of the Dyfed farmers action group imprisoned the minister for agriculture, for over four hours and virtually sealed off the town.

The farmers have been invited to join the Wales TUC day of action in support of the miners on 12 June. The day of action is going ahead despite recent pressure from Len Murray.

But Wales TUC Secretary David Jenkins has no intention of calling for strike action on the day. He is merely asking affiliated unions to support the rally.

It is being left to rank and file trade unionists to raise the question of strike action, except in NUPE where the union is asking members to strike.

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Euro-elections

# Labour and Europe

ON 14 JUNE the Euro-elections take place against a background of growing Tory unpopularity. How is Labour responding to the elections and is it taking advantage of the Tories' increasing problems?

**BOB PENNINGTON, in the first of two articles, looks at what Labour is saying about the Euro-elections and what policies it is proposing. In this article he examines Labour's Euro-policies on nuclear weapons, NATO and democratic rights.**

**HARDLY MORE than a year after the Tories' election victory of June 1983 we will be voting in the Euro-elections. Following the recent local government elections, people will have another chance to give the Thatcher administration a decisive thumbs down by giving Labour the biggest possible vote.**

But Labour faces a much tougher task than it did in the council elections. As far as most people are concerned, the EEC is treated with indifference, educated guesses put the expected turn out at less than 33 per cent. Add to this many Labour supporters are hostile to the EEC and probably see no reason to vote on 14 June.

So it's not going to be an easy job marshalling the ranks and getting Labour's supporters to the polls. Nor is this unbal-

but important, fight much helped by Labour's *Manifesto*. This is more likely to go down like a bromide rather than a political stimulant.

Under the heading Peace and Security the *Manifesto* comes out against cruise and Trident and states the aim 'is the removal of all nuclear weapons from the continent of Europe' adding 'Labour will start by removing them from Britain.'

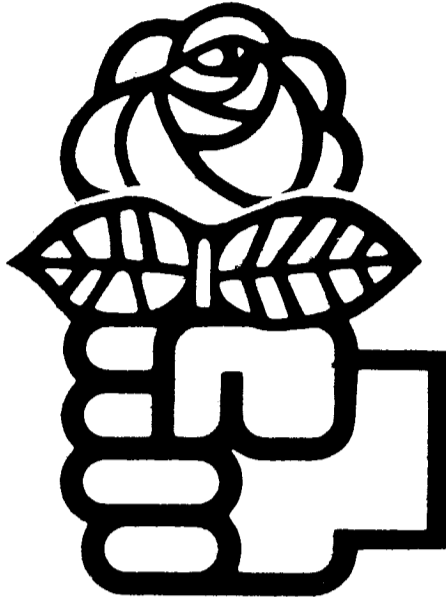
So far so good. However, Labour's *Special supplement* which is backed by the socialist group in the European parliament fails to mention unilateralism. The *Manifesto* says 'Labour believes in effective and sound defence for Britain, through NATO.' In case you didn't get the message about Labour's commitment to NATO, Neil Kinnock told a Channel 4 audience last Friday evening that 'Labour was committed entirely to the security

and defence of our own country and full participation in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.' But NATO is controlled by a super-imperialist power, namely the USA, whose political and military strategy is based on the use of nuclear weapons along with the concept of the 'limited nuclear engagement in Europe'.

Gordon Brook-Shepherd writing in this week's *Sunday Telegraph* understands things better than Neil Kinnock when he writes that 'the Common Market remains the economic and political arm of the Atlantic Alliance in Europe.' Curiously, only the left wing seems aware of this vital link. So many of them in this country want us out of NATO and out of Europe... It's a pity Neil Kinnock doesn't think matters through as thoroughly as Mr Brook-Shepherd!

## Combat

Nor does the *Manifesto* have anything to say on how we can combat the nuclear threat, except a generality that we 'work with other socialists and others who desire peace.' But there is a snag here, some socialists like president Mitterand are not too keen on campaigning against nuclear weapons, in fact he is most emphatically in favour of



their deployment!

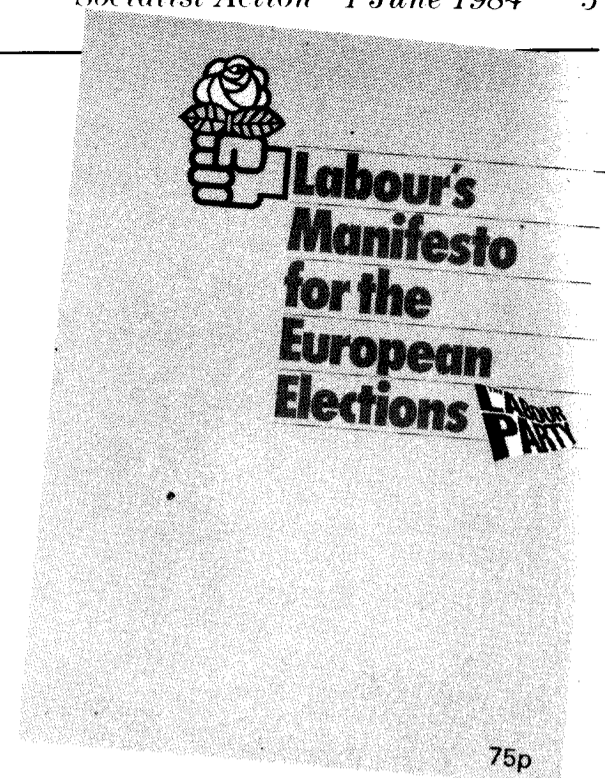
As long as Neil Kinnock thinks a deal can be made with the pro-nuclear weapons' 'socialists' like Mitterand, then the less can Labour be part of a wide-based European anti-nuclear movement which is the only effective way to challenge the threat of a nuclear war.

Britain has not been alone in seeing an almost unprecedented attack on democratic rights. The miners' strike has resulted in police brutality and intimidation. The courts have been used to frame up pickets and only last week a High Court judgement ordered the NUM

not to instruct its Nottinghamshire members to come out on strike.

On the streets young people, especially black youth, are subject to constant harassment and violence by a racist police force. Even Lord Justice Scarman characterised the Brixton riots of 1981 as 'a spontaneous act of defiant aggression by young men who felt themselves hunted by a hostile police force.'

The new Police Bill will mean even more people will be 'hunted by a hostile police force'. The government's banning of trade unions at GCHQ and their latest attacks on trade union rights in the civil ser-



vice is just one step along the road to a British *Berufsverbot* — the West German law excluding people from certain public sector jobs because of their political beliefs.

But this erosion of democratic rights and the use of state violence against the labour movement is not a British phenomenon. It arises out of the crisis of all the political and economic institutions of European capitalism. Labour should be right to the fore in defending democratic rights and building a euro-alliance on this issue.

Instead the *Manifesto* lamely talks about: 'The protection and extension of our democratic rights and freedoms'. This will not do. It offers no way forward now and because of its insipid approach it misses the chance to win

over to Labour many, many people who are not automatically Labour voters but who are deeply concerned on this matter.

Labour's refusal to go to the roots of the matter by exposing, and opposing, the undemocratic actions of the state means it fails to come across as the champion of the persecuted and oppressed.

Its silence on this almost certainly derives from the fact that Neil Kinnock is scared to let Labour be seen as a party against so-called law and order. He is also well aware that his 'socialist friends' like Mitterand have not at all been reluctant to use cops against strikers like the French government recently did at Lyonaise.

Next week we will look at Labour's euro-policies on issues like employment, jobs and the missing factor called Ireland.

# South Africa's deal with Mozambique

TEN YEARS AGO, when the Portugese colonial empire in Africa crashed and Samora and his Frelimo troops marched triumphantly into Lourenco Marques (now Maputo), it acted as a great stimulant to the forces of liberation in Southern Africa. Mugabe's ZANU forces now had a hinterland from which they could advance in the battle against Ian Smith's white-dominated Rhodesia and a safe refuge for strategic retreats. The common border between Mozambique and the apartheid republic of South Africa provided an escape route for the persecuted victims of the Pretoria regime and a base for re-assembling the forces of resistance.

Samor Machel unhesitatingly placed himself on the side of the continuing struggle and recognised the main enemy. Addressing a mass rally in Inhambane in March 1982 he told the crowd that the working people in Mozambique had not only defeated Portuguese colonialism but had to fight against and defeat the Smith regime in Rhodesia.

He then went on to say: 'Now we are called to war once more, this time to liquidate the armed bandits who are the agents of the racist and minority regime in Pretoria, the agents of international imperialism ... Let the South Africans come themselves. We don't want the agents, we want the boss. Let's fight against the organ-grinder, not the monkey.'

Well, the South Africans did come. In March the South African Prime Minister P.W. Botha met President

Machel at the border town Nkomati and signed the so-called Peace Accords. This was a stunning blow to the South African freedom movements and especially to the ANC who had made Mozambique their main base for operations.

By Charlie van Gelderen

The treaty provided for no more transit facilities for ANC fighters through Mozambique; a drastic reduction in their permanent presence down to only 10 people; a non-aggression pact with Pretoria; an open door for South Africa capital; the abandonment of the policy to isolate the apartheid regime.

There can be no doubt that Machel was forced into this action by the difficult circumstances of the Mozambican economy. After centuries of colonial rule, the havoc created by

the South African financed and trained MNR bandits, and one of the worst and most prolonged droughts in the area's history, the country was economically prostrate.

Workers and peasants were literally starving. Morale was at its lowest.

The one thing which could have saved the Mozambique revolution would have been massive economic and military aid from the workers' states. Moscow, aware of American stakes in the region, was obviously not prepared for a confrontation.

## Agreement

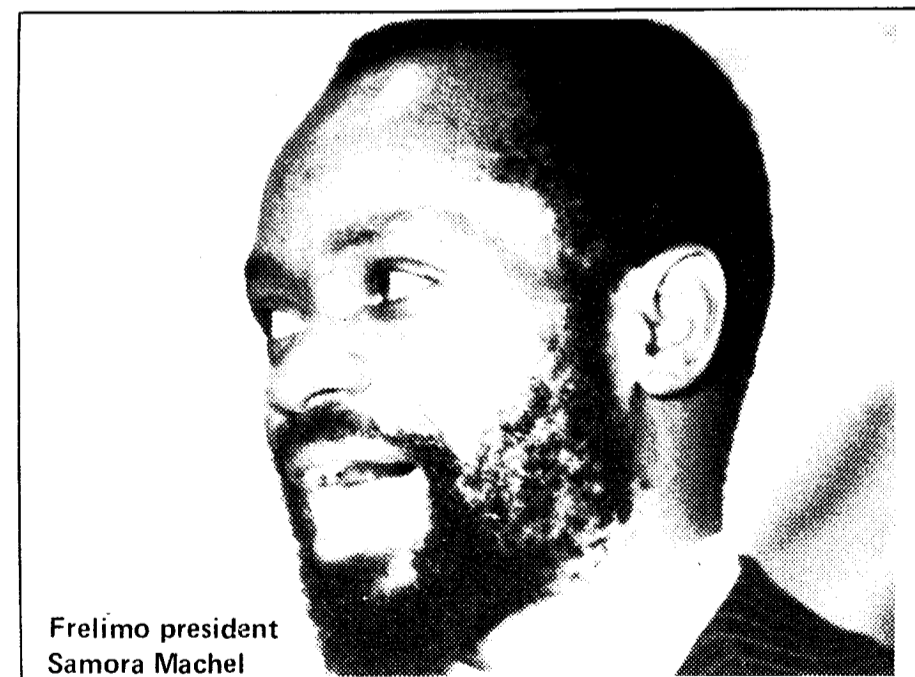
The Nkomati Agreement, while its chief immediate beneficiary is South Africa, was not entirely the brain-child of the think-tanks in Pretoria. Speaking on 'The United States and Africa in the 1980's' on 2 February George Schulz, Reagan's Secretary of State explained the role of the USA in the peace negotiations: 'We have helped foster a dialogue ... between South Africa and Mozambique ... We have made clear to both sides that our goal is to nurture mutual security. In such a climate we are prepared to do our part to assist in Mozambique's development and to bolster its chances for genuine nonalignment ... we have moved swiftly to res-

pond to cyclones and drought that have frequently brought Mozambique to the edge of disaster.'

While the Soviet Union, in its own way, has given support and encouragement to anti-imperialist struggles, it is quite clear that it is not prepared to create 'a second Cuba' in Africa. Soviet strategy has, generally, been to encourage the 'non-capitalist' road of development for the newly-independent African states and, where a socialist-oriented intelligentsia had come into being during colonial times, a 'national democratic' struggle as a first stage towards eventual socialist reconstruction has generally been advocated.

This has not provided the basis for a rapid economic advance and successful resistance to imperialism such as we have seen in Cuba and Nicaragua and in Grenada before the counter-revolutionary overthrow of Maurice Bishop.

While we can understand the basic economic and political reasons for abandoning his 'Marxist-Leninist' programme and for South Africa and imperialist economic blackmail and blandishments, it is not so easy to see why Machel has hailed the pact as a 'victory for our socialist policy



Frelimo president Samora Machel

of peace.' Lenin and the Bolsheviks also had to make concessions in the early years of the Russian Revolution — Brest-Litovsk. NEP — but they always called things by their right name — a retreat was a retreat and not a victory.

The immediate consequences of the Nkomati Accords and the so-called South Africa peace initiatives pose problems for the liberation movement in South Africa. There may be 'peaceful co-existence'

between South African and its black-ruled neighbours at an official level, but there can be no class peace between the rulers and the ruled inside the apartheid republic. The class struggle continues as before.

Already there are voices raised in South Africa claiming the Accords open the road to dialogue between the 'authentic leaders' of the South African people and the government. This would not be talks between parties which are formally equal but between

the oppressor and the oppressed.

The South African government will only be prepared for 'dialogue' when they are faced with the fact that they are no longer able to govern in the old way. For the South African liberation forces the task now is to prepare for the coming struggle by strengthening their forces inside the country and to develop the political power of the black working class which will emerge from the rapidly-growing trade union movement of the black workers.

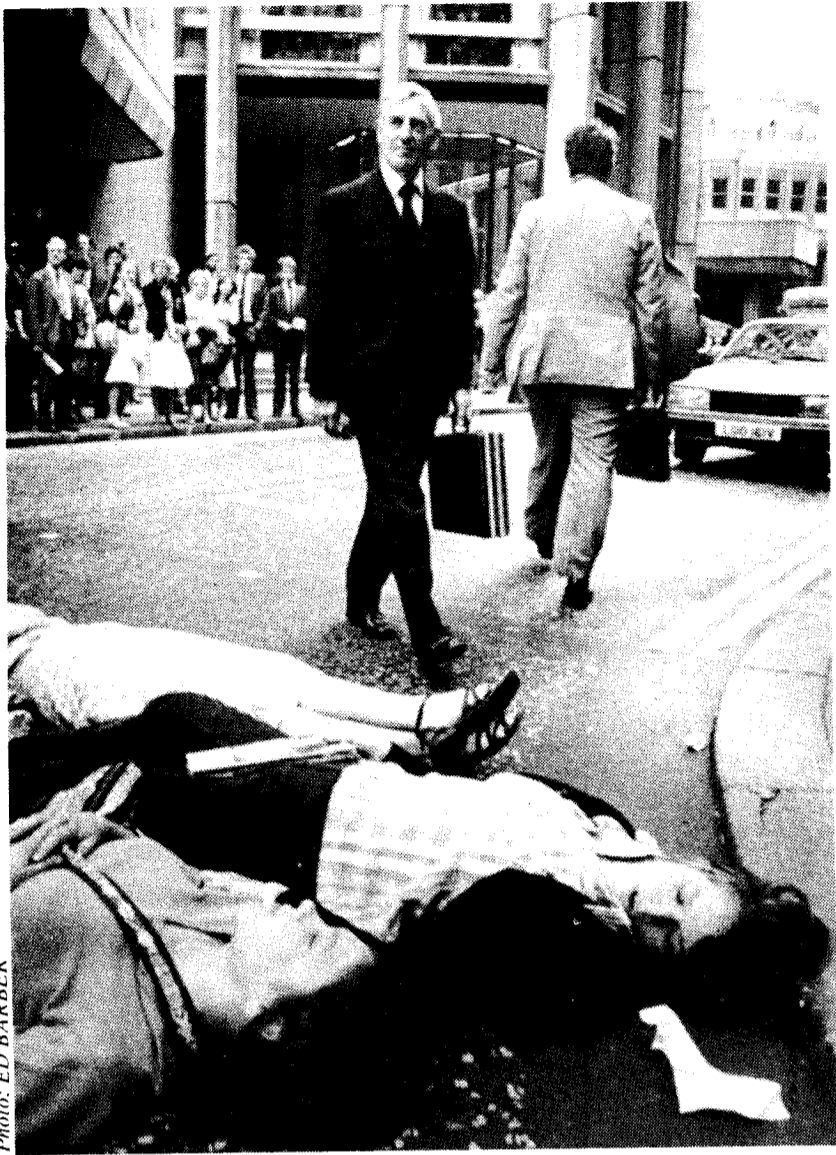


Photo: ED BARBER

## **May 24: international women's day for disarmament**

IN LONDON International Women's Day for Disarmament was celebrated by a protest both outside and inside the AGM of Rio Tinto Zinc.

Inside women 'proxy' shareholders gained access to the Intercontinental Hotel, at Hyde Park Corner (they had persuaded sleeping shareholders to allow their shares to be used by peace women) to protest at RTZ's huge profits from uranium mining in South Africa, Australia and worldwide.

Uranium is used to produce cruise missiles and it is mined in appalling conditions for starvation wages. Outside the AGM and at RTZ headquarters in St. James Square, peace women demonstrated, highlighting the protest inside.

By Valerie Coultas

Earlier in the morning Southwark Greenham Women and women from South East London camped on the Elephant and Castle roundabout. Their leaflet said: 'We must stop production now, dismantle the arsenals and free our countries from the greatest threat ever faced by humanity.'

It pointed out that £15.58 per household is spent every week on nuclear weapons when it could be spent on schools, houses and hospitals and transport.

The women then went on to join Lambeth Women for Peace to do the 'Lambeth Walk' down Brixton Hill for an afternoon of international events in St Matthews Town Hall, Brixton.

Wimbledon Women for Peace held a demonstration outside Merton Town

Hall, Broadway, North Paddington women held a Women's Fun Day. East London Peace Pledge Union showed the film 'Arming the World' at Quaker Meeting house, Bush Road.

Brent women organised a march with street theatre, music and decorated bikes. Chiswick women camped from Thursday to Saturday on Turnham Green.

Last year women had ended the days events by encircling the Ministry of Defence. This year women came together at the end of the day in Jubilee Gardens and went to Southwark Unemployed Centre for a women's party.

Other events took place in most other areas of the country. On the Isle of Wight women organised a protest directed at Plessey which makes nuclear arms components.

In Manchester a women's demonstration in the city centre was followed by a 100-strong public meeting. The meeting was women-only, with Greenham speakers and three representatives of the Bold colliery women's group. The links between the use of the police at Greenham and in the miner's strike were clearly drawn out.

The day was less political than last year when Labour Councils were approached for support and local government trade unions took strike action. But the women's peace movement is still one of the most dynamic sections of CND.

Socialist women should be active in it and socialist men through their Labour Parties, trade unions and CND groups should give it their full backing.

# **"Freeze" "no first use" "non-nuclear defence" -Return to sender**

ON 9 JUNE CND is holding a mass demonstration against Reagan. DICK WITHECOMBE, a member of CND national council (writing in a personal capacity) looks at the struggle to build the demo and the future for CND after it.

The movement against nuclear weapons is the largest international movement on any question since the Second World War. It has the capacity to put in motion millions of people and wields a real influence in world politics.

Throughout the last four years of the rebirth of CND as a mass movement its national demonstrations have seen the movement in its greatest unity and strength. The October marches, the 250,000 on the streets against Reagan's last visit, the demonstration

in October after the general election, the mobilisations by Greenham women, have been the closest gauge of the peace movement's continuing growth.

A massive turn out on 9 June will be our best answer to Heseltine's claim after the election that CND was defeated and the clearest reply to those in the movement demoralised by the arrival of cruise. Building and mobilising for 9 June is not about 'just another London march'; it's our chance for the peace movement to say 'we're here, and we're here to stay.'

Unfortunately it is likely that 9 June will be smaller than our response to Reagan's last visit. Sections of the leadership of the movement will want to use this to say no more big marches, prepare for the long haul. The 'new realism' of the nuclear freeze is already being resurrected from the dustbin it

was placed in by the movement's last CND conference. Proposals are circulating in upper circles for 'a vision', gradual steps to disarmament from the next general election in 1988, a ballot for no first use and a nuclear freeze. Voices are already raised on CND national council that it is possible to win over those backbenchers who are sympathetic to less 'hawkish' policies than Thatcher's hardliners.

The duty of socialists in the peace movement should be to give unreserved commitment to CND as a single issue mass campaign against nuclear weapons, and to act as a unifying force behind the slogans, programme and the campaigning methods that have seen the movement grow in size and influence since 1980. Bluntly that means all out for 9 June, build CND, and defend it against the 'new realism' of its leadership.

But to do this we must explain what is the real situation inside the movement, and the real story behind the June demonstration. Talk of a 'crisis' and 'demoralisation' of the peace movement is now widespread. But is it really a movement in decline? To that question we must give a resounding answer of no!

## **Strength**

Since US imperialism embarked in 1979 on its major campaign of nuclear rearmament the strength of the anti-missiles movement in Europe has grown from a particular combination of three developments.

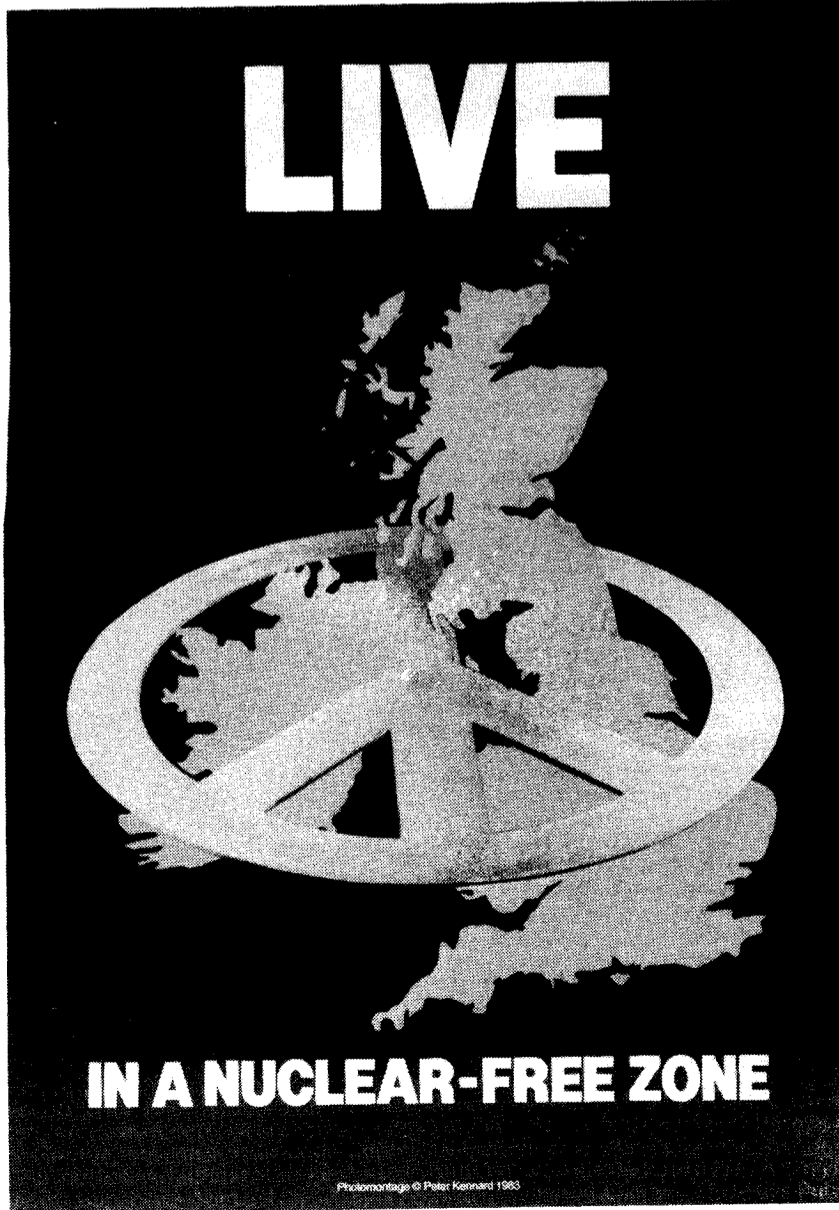
First the domination of the imperialist ruling classes has been weakened by the heightened exposure of their brutal nature in the Vietnam conflict, and succeeding events, and by the profound crisis of the capitalist economies themselves.

Second, the developing colonial revolution has sapped the political and material strength of imperialism.

Thirdly, despite overwhelming hostility to the repression in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the strength of the workers' states is clearly shown even in a distorted form in fear of their military strength. No significant section of the Western working class believes that a nuclear war with the USSR is one that can be won.

Can anyone argue that any of these factors has lessened? Quite the opposite, since 1979 these processes have deepened. There is now a growing hostility to the actions of imperialism from the Middle East to Grenada. One could even say that there is an increase in anti-US sentiment among millions of workers across Europe. But its real substance is a growing fear that US foreign policy and actions can give rise to nuclear holocaust. Fundamentally it is that 'fear' that has fuelled the growth of the anti-missiles movement among the mass of people.

Where the movement has keyed in to that sentiment it has shown its re-



Photomontage © Peter Kennard 1983



Meryl Streep plays Silkwood in Mike Nichol's film of the same name now on release.

## Silkwood

ON 13 NOVEMBER 1974, Karen Silkwood was driving alone to meet a *New York Times* reporter. With her was a dossier she had compiled on the dangerous and haphazard work conditions at the Kerr-McGee plutonium factory where she worked as a lab technician.

She never kept that appointment. Later the wreck of her car was found by the highway. Inside was Karen, dead. The dossier was missing.

A hasty investigation led to the official verdict of accidental death. The case was declared closed.

By Paul Lawson

Not everyone was satisfied. A seven year investigation by family, friends and anti-nuclear campaigners grew into a campaign to uncover the truth. As recently as February 1983 legal attempts were being made to prevent the release of *Silkwood*, Mike Nichol's new film about Karen, starring Meryl Streep.

But the attempt to suppress the film failed, and with its twin superstar lead (Cher plays Karen's friend Sherri) the film is now on general release.

One of the people who played a key role in revealing the Silkwood story was David Burnham, who came to fame as the reporter who uncovered the *Serpico* story of corruption among the New York city police.

For his troubles, Burnham was the subject of an investigation by Oklahoma senators keen to defend the Kerr-McGee corporation, one of the state's leading companies.

Burnham discovered that in 1973-4, when Karen was amassing information on safety violations at Kerr-McGee, there were over 3000 violations of safety precautions reported nationwide by the US Atomic Energy Authority (AEC). But said the AEC, many of those were minor violations.

Says Burnham: 'I don't think that when it comes to plutonium there is such a thing as a minor violation.'

If *Silkwood* is going to convince you of anything, it will convince you of the truth of that statement. Not only that, it will convince you, if you needed convincing, that nuclear energy is inherently unsafe.

The scenes where workers contaminated are 'washed down' with chemicals, removing layer after layer of skin, are horrifyingly frightening.

Karen herself eventually suffers plutonium poisoning, with the strong

implication that it is deliberate retaliation for her investigation of the company.

The dramatisation of the dangers of nuclear powers is one of the film's strongpoints. Its other main strength is its portrayal of the anguish of isolation which can face anyone fighting a large company or bureaucracy, but which in this society can affect women in particular.

As Karen becomes more and more alarmed at the company's activities, and more involved in union activity, her relations with the other workers suffer and her boyfriend Drew walks out on her. All the pressures on her are to give up the fight and cut her losses, but she refuses to submit.

Also well portrayed is the sinister sexual content in the harassment she suffers from supervisors and employers.

There are two crucial weaknesses. First, the emphasis which is put on Karen's sexuality, the portrayal of her as flirtatious and raunchy. Pervading the film is the suggestion that hostility to her, and indeed her self-assertion is somehow linked to her sexuality. I strongly suspect that this aspect of the movie, and the use of Meryl Streep in the lead role, owes more to the need to make a 'commercial' film than to present reality.

The full extent of the cover-up over safety precautions at Kerr-McGee is not brought out. After all, the factory provided the fuel to get a fast breeder reactor on line. Karen was fighting not just a tin pot local management at a small factory, but all those in the nuclear industry pushing this project through. By personalising the conflict as one between her and local managers, the full sinister implications of the conspiracy to force through a nuclear energy policy are somehow lost. With the exception of the contamination scenes, the film curiously lacks tension and drama.

When Karen Silkwood took up her fight the movement against nuclear energy in the US hardly existed. Three Mile Island had not yet happened. Commonplaces such as that plutonium causes cancer were not even known among many workers in nuclear plants. *Silkwood's* weaknesses do not obstruct what is essential about its 'message'.

Through her lonely struggle Karen Silkwood helped to create an understanding of the evil of nuclear power, and a movement against it. Despite its pitfalls, the film will spread an understanding of nuclear power and a knowledge of Karen's fight to hundreds of thousands who knew little of either.

strength — from the 250,000 against Reagan two years ago, behind the spirit and determination of the Greenham women, and in the very successful local actions outside the US bases this Easter. The demonstration on 9 June could have been added to this list; but from the start the right wing in CND have done their best to sabotage it.

### Support

As early as January many of us on CND national council raised the question of Reagan's visit for the world economic summit. We even put a resolution to organise CND's annual demonstration to coincide with Reagan's visit and the European elections — for no cruise, no Trident, no US bases, and for a nuclear-free Europe. That was defeated in favour of a resolution, supported by the Communist Party, for actions at Greenham and Midlothian instead. But even that was a trick. It was dropped immediately after the national council. It was simply a device to stop any actions against Reagan's visit.

But the movement is bigger than the national council. A loose grouping called *Action '84* put out a call for non-violent direct action against Reagan's visit. More than 150 representatives of CND groups from around the country crowded into GLC's County Hall to lay plans. An impressive national network was soon established. London Region CND themselves started to organise a demonstration for 9 June. The Youth CND called for a national demonstration. Many CND groups, areas and regions started to book transport.

And CND leadership? Well it panicked. Decisions to condemn mass

civil disobedience were quietly hidden. CND projects committee, executive and officers were put into emergency session; the deadline for CND's newsletter *Campaign!* was put back, and a statement appeared: 'CND supports the national demonstration in London on 9 June, and well considered non-violent direct action (NVDA)'.

The negotiations that followed went on into the candlelight hours. But CND's national resources were still to be put behind a Coventry demonstration on 26 May calling for no nuclear weapons east or west.

Finally in April CND national council came to its senses. The demonstration on 9 June was to become a nationally organised action. But in a fit of pique the right insisted on the same status for the Coventry march. From a hatred of mass action, they now wanted two national marches within two weeks of each other.

### Struggle

Even then the struggle wasn't over. Somewhere up high, I'm still not sure where, it was decided that 9 June would not be a demonstration but a rally in Trafalgar Square. A great way for more than 100,000 people to spend an afternoon! Scores of phone calls were made before even this was dropped. So eventually everyone finally agrees to 9 June and... *Campaign!* appears late, leaflets and posters don't arrive until May, and the attractive large posters don't even mention Reagan.

No, the movement isn't in decline, it's here to stay, although a little confused. But CND leadership? That's where our worries must lie. Those same activists based in CND groups around

the country, at the grass roots of the movement, who combined to force sense into CND and win the march on 9 June, must now look to organising the fight for the future of the movement. Resolutions for CND conference must be in by 6 July — not long to prepare for probably its most important discussion in four years.

CND leaders are preparing for the 'historic compromise' — supposedly finding a simple message for what we stand for which is acceptable to broad sections of the population but in reality means winning an alliance including the SDP and 'wet' Tories.

### Unite

However ruling class circles are also re-discussing; much has already been made of the new Europeanisation of defence, in particular the moves towards the Western European Union. Even in US ruling class circles, figures such as General Rogers are discussing new conventional long range mass destruction weaponry that can emerge from the new technologies of the US arms industries. The popular frontist orientation of the CND leadership means that 'Europeanisation' and 'Non-Nuclear Defencism' is likely to become intoxicating within CND's upper circles.

Activists in CND must now start to organise within the movement: for British unilateral nuclear disarmament; to defend CND and put forward a programme for a Nuclear Free Europe from Poland to Portugal; oppose not only US missiles but also French and British nuclear weapons. These are the policies behind which a mass campaigning movement can unite.

## Gulf war

## Reagan to attack Iran?

LAST FRIDAY a Panamanian-registered oil tanker heading for the Iranian port of Bandar Khomeini was sunk by Iraqi jets — the first ship to be sunk in the Gulf war. Dozens of ships have now been attacked by the Iraqi air force, although this is the first to be actually sunk. The Iranian oil terminal at Kharg island has been repeatedly attacked by the Iraqis, utilising the French-supplied Super-Etendard aircraft and Exocet missiles.

But now the picture has changed, with a number of Saudi and Kuwaiti planes headed for Iraq being attacked by Iranian fighters. There is every likelihood that the Iranian retaliation will lead to a further internationalisation of the conflict.

The choice of Saudi and Kuwaiti planes for the Iranian attacks was not accidental. Iraq has been financed and armed by the reactionary pro-imperialist regimes to its

south — in particular Saudi-Arabia. Indeed most of the Arab regimes have backed Iraq, not necessarily because of political sympathy with Saddam Hussein and his Ba'ath regime, but because they fear Iranian Shi'ite expansionism.

By Paul Lawson

Saddam Hussein's decision to attack Iran-bound shipping in the Gulf was designed to internationalise the conflict and thus more rapidly end it. This move could prove successful. Last week there were urgent discussions between the United States and Iran about providing an aerial shield for Iraq-bound ships in the Gulf.

The most likely force to carry out this task in the first instance is the Saudi air force, which has aerial reconnaissance provided by USAF AWACS planes. The Saudis are equipped with the world's most modern jet fighter, the F-15 but are thought to be cautious about taking on the combat-hardened Iranian air force.

If the Iranians attempt

to close the Straits of Hormuz through which a quarter of the West's oil is transported, then the United States is likely to intervene directly in the conflict. Last week, Reagan formally requested the Saudi's permission for the US to use their air bases along the Gulf.

Even more ominous was the announcement last week that the US had taken a policy decision to intervene in the Gulf war against Iran, if there was any possibility of the Iraqi regime falling. A State Department official commented: 'We do not want to see the government in Baghdad destabilised. We want to see a stable and internally secure Iraq. We see it as the first line of defence against Iranian expansionism...'

Like the reactionary Arab states, the US has no great love of the Saddam Hussein regime, but fears the consequences of an Islamic fundamentalist surge in the region.

The form of US intervention currently being discussed is the use of US



Iraqi gunners attack Iranian troops

aircraft to attack Iranian tanks and troop formations, and the staffing of anti-aircraft weapons in Iraq by US personnel.

Among the Arab states only Syria has maintained good relations with Iran and backed Khomeini in the war. Reports suggest

that Syria is intensely worried by the prospect of a military confrontation between the Arab states and the United States and Iran and is urging an ending of air attacks on shipping. Saddam Hussein, however, has indicated that there will be no let up

in Iraqi attacks to try to cripple Iran's oil industry.

Khomeini's regime in Iran is undoubtedly one of the most barbaric anti-working class governments in the world, guilty of untold atrocities and crimes. But the working class and the poor can expect nothing from an American intervention.

Opposition to US intervention is a question of the defence of Iranian self-determination. The working people and oppressed of Iran will have to deal with Khomeini themselves.

## Labour movement conference launches Palestine campaign

ON 19 MAY nearly 100 delegates and more than 50 observers gathered for the Labour Movement Conference on Palestine organised by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign and the LMCP. The call for the conference lay in an increasing recognition among activists on this question of the enormous strength of Zionism in the British labour movement represented for example by organisations like the Labour Friends of Israel and recently-launched Trade Union Friends of Israel.

Despite an overall change in attitudes at the base of the labour movement, represented for example by the resolution passed at the 1982 Labour Party conference which called for Palestinian self-determination, the fact remains that this issue is much less supported than many other anti-imperialist causes. Zionism myths about Israel, the only 'democracy' in the Middle East, the 'socialist' kibbutz and so on, are deeply rooted in the British labour movement.

This situation was explained by Richard Balfe MEP, who described how he had been recruited to Labour Friends of Israel upon entering the House of Commons. The person recruited him was Ian Mikardo, a stalwart of the Labour left. At that time, explained Balfe, the left was associated with defence of Israel, while the right wing like SDP defectors John Cartwright and Christopher Mayhew were associated with sympathy for the 'Arab cause'.

Balfe also explained how Bernadette MacAliskey had been 'leaned on' by left Labour MPs when she came into the Commons, to stop supporting the Palestinian

cause, in return for their support on Ireland.

By Phil Hearse

The myths of Labour Zionism were explained to the conference by well-known experts on Israel, Uri Davies and Moshe Machover. Uri Davies also explained in detail the nature of the Histadrut, allegedly the Israeli trade union federation, by in fact the second largest employer in Israel and a fundamental pillar of Zionist state.

### Delegation

Moshe Machover, like Jeremy Corbyn MP, received a letter the day before the conference, on conference notepaper, explaining that the event had been cancelled — a typical product of the Zionist 'dirty tricks' department.

The conference also heard presentations by a speaker from the General Union of Palestinian Journalists, the PLO office in London and a woman trade unionist from Palestine.

The conference passed resolutions calling for a campaign to recognise the



Victim of the Sabra-Chatila massacre

PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and for the expulsion of Poale Zion from the Labour Party. Poale Zion, the British affiliate of the Israeli Labour Party, is a 'socialist society' like the Fabians, and has representatives on GCs, as well as the right to vote in the electoral college.

Speakers explained how the affiliation of the British component of a capitalist party should be fought in the labour movement. By raising the issue of the nature of Poale Zion the whole question of Labour Zionism could be raised in the Labour Party.

To carry forward the work of supporting the

Palestinian cause the conference decided to organise a labour movement delegation to Palestine in 1985 to report back on the situation of the Palestinian people in general and the Palestinian labour activists in particular. It was also decided to organise a speaking tour by Palestinian trade unionists in Britain.



## Mel Mason to tour Britain

In June United States presidential candidate and black activist Mel Mason is touring Britain at the same time as President Reagan is paying his visit.

Mason is a veteran of the civil rights movement and was a member of the Black Panther Party in the late 1960s. He is an active trade unionist and is standing on the ticket of the Socialist Workers Party of the United States.

In 1980 Mason was elected to the Seaside City Council in central California. In 1982 he ran for governor of California.

As a city councillor Mason has opposed Washington's war policies — he has spoken out against new Vietnam's with what his election appeal calls their menacing potential

for escalating into nuclear annihilation.

Mason's campaign is taking him from one end of the United States to another — to factories, mines, mills, union meetings, picket lines, among Black and Latino people, in the prisons, among the GIs and in schools and colleges.

Mason is taking time out to trail President Reagan and bring his own message of 'Jobs not Bombs' to Britain. He is also supporting the miners strike and all those fighting Washington's war drive.

● Mel Mason will be speaking in London at Friends Meeting House, Euston Rd, London N.1. on 8 June at 7.30.

He will also be speaking in Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield and Nottingham.



THIS WEEK the debate started by Tony Benn's 'Alliance for Socialism' is taken up by Kent miners' leader JACK COLLINS. He spoke to CAROL TURNER of Socialist Action about how he saw the miners' strike playing an important part in building a broad alliance to fight for socialism.

MANY THINGS COULD happen as a result of the miners winning their strike. Not only will we save pits and jobs, but we can transform the labour movement into a fighting machine, fighting to change society.

The basis of any alliance of the working class is that first of all you've got to determine whether or not you want to change society. I believe we can draw many people into such a movement — I'm thinking for example of the peace movement and the trade unions — and build an alliance of all the political forces on the left. The only condition is that those people must want a socialist society.

The only way forward for the working class in any society is through struggle. The Kent miners have never attempted to run away from a struggle. We've built broad alliances with many sections of the trade union and labour movement. Today we can see those actions paying off. The support the Kent miners are getting during the strike is overwhelming. We get that support because we've built alliances and always stood by others. It's an alliance that has to be worked for.

For example, it's not enough just to discuss the question of peace without discussing the politics of it. Why have we got cruise missiles? For one reason: to maintain the *status quo* in society. Why have we got thousands of the police pushing miners about? Because the role of the police is to defend the capitalist system.

If we come out of this miners' strike preventing pit closures but without anyone learning any political lessons, then we've lost. It's no good striking to save jobs if in the process nobody is politically developed. But, after three months, many young miners and their wives and the pit villages have been politicised. They have learned political lessons. If the message is taken to the people, they will respond and help to work for a socialist society.

**Criminal**

It is criminal that sections of the working class and trade union movement are running away from the struggle. Everywhere we can see the confusion being created by the right wing. We can see it in our own union, and we can certainly see it in the Labour Party. People like Neil Kinnock and Peter Shore are sabotaging the miners struggle because they don't want to change society. But the activists in the Labour Party are doing tremendous work for the miners, financial, physical and moral. So we must differentiate between the membership and the leadership. I'm convinced there's a basis for establishing a socialist society within the Labour Party — but first the right wing leaders and their ideas have to be unloaded.

Those who control society know the potential of the miners strike. They will attempt to find a way to divide the miners. They will bamboozle some of the miners' leaders — scab leaders like Jack Jones who are already on the bosses' side, and others who might be wavering. We must not give in one little bit to the Coal Board.

If we show weakness the NCB would ride over the top of us. They would shut pits and do all the other things that go with a defeat. This also means that when we win, we must go

# An alliance for struggle

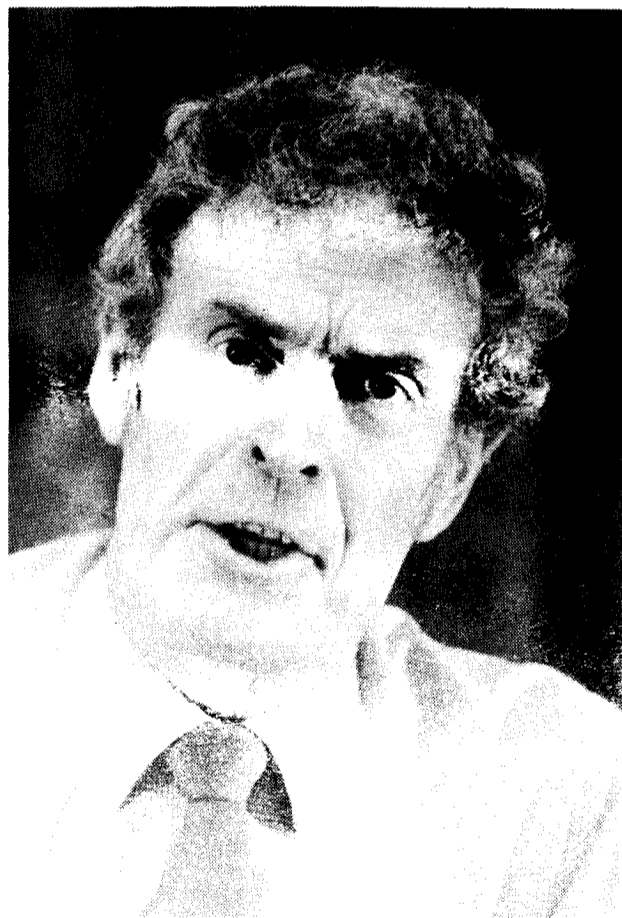


PHOTO: G. M. COOKSON



for everything. For a shorter working week, for early retirement, and for longer holidays — which would have a tremendous effect on the working class. And the miners must stand alongside other trade unions and other organisations to make sure they secure the things they are fighting for.

There are people in leading positions in the NUM who are noted for not wanting to fight. But of course that goes for other sections of the working class as well. That goes for the TUC and people like Len Murray, who's never fought a battle in his life. He talks the way the TUC bureaucracy has always talked.

But the miners don't associate people like Ray Buckton with the Len Murrays. Buckton has made a definite statement in our support and, more important, it's not just talk. ASLEF has delivered the goods. So have the NUR and the seamen, and — with the exception of scab haulage workers — so have the TGWU.

But then you hear people in the power industry saying we mustn't use our industrial muscle to solve political problems. They are completely removed from reality. The fact that the miners are fighting is political.

The fact that there is a working class at all in a capitalist society is political.

Our problem is how to get leaders of the movement who are prepared to point the way to a new society. We will do this by putting trustworthy people in leadership positions. And, most important, having got them there we must make sure we've got control over them.

Look at the miners' union. Not many years ago it was dominated by the right wing on the national executive. We organised and now the left have a majority. We democratised our union — and once you do that it's safely in the hands of the left. This was no accident, it was worked for. It took many, many years of discussing and organising. If the miners could do it, with the forces that were against us at the time why can't workers take control of the TUC? But the TUC will not bring about a transformation in society. That needs a political organisation, one that wants to establish a socialist society.

New leaders are being created during the miners dispute, who for the first time in their lives are taking

leading positions in the struggle. The Kent miners aren't directed by me, they have a free rein. And that creates the conditions which allow our men and women to bloom. This is the way to forge a broad alliance for transforming society.

In the drive for more profits, capitalists must intensify the exploitation of working people. The way to defeat people is by breaking the working class organisations especially the trade unions.

The Tories will only break the trade unions in Britain if they break the strongest union. If they smash the miners the rest will go. The miners are on the streets because they're demanding not to be. They are fighting to make sure they don't have to keep fighting.

But I'm overlooking the most important thing of all. As socialists, communists, Marxists — whatever we call ourselves — we cannot look at Britain in isolation.

If there had been no revolution in Russia in 1917, there'd be no Cuba, no Nicaragua, and no workers fighting in El Salvador. I suggest there wouldn't be many miners fighting in

Britain either. Everything is a process of struggle. The workers in struggle are changing this society. If we look at the world as a whole we'd be absolutely 100 per cent convinced that the working class on this planet are winning.

The outcome of the workers' struggle won't be determined by Liverpool, or Greenham or the miners. But they are part of the revolutionary change. Perhaps we are not in a revolutionary situation in Britain today, but the world is. Nicaragua, El Salvador, Africa and Asia — there's a revolutionary change taking place.

The system that people in Nicaragua and El Salvador are fighting is exactly the same system we're fighting. Different conditions make them fight in a different way. I suspect if the capitalist system in Britain is pushed far enough, the British working class will have to fight in the same way as the people of El Salvador and Nicaragua.

In Britain today you see masses of police everywhere, breaking and entering houses in Nottinghamshire. At the beginning of the strike you wouldn't have thought that possible. Yet now we see it. Leon Brittan set up the Gestapo in Britain when he gave police special powers recently. It was all on the pretext that miners had been rioting.

I was in Mansfield the other week and I saw the riots. The rioters had blue uniforms on. They were the people riding their horses into the miners, the people swinging their truncheons.

This society will become more and more oppressive. That's why eventually we might have to do what the people of El Salvador are doing. Nobody wants it to be that way, but the bosses will go to any lengths to maintain what they have. That means defeating the working class, and the working class won't stand for it.

**Socialist**

Finally, I'd like to return to my first point, that the basis of a working class alliance is wanting to change society. I would say to Mr Hobsbawm — when he proposes a 'broad popular' alliance based on support from parties like the SDP and Liberals — that he's not put putting forward that proposition in order to establish a socialist society.

A socialist society won't be established by all sorts of wierd alliances of that sort. The people who will change society are the people who have been won to the socialist argument.

But then I accept that many, many people — the white collar sections of the trade union, the peace movement — are members of the working class. We're seeing the teachers in action, the nurses in action, other professional people in action — along with the blue collar workers.

I think it's important that alliances are forged — but they've got to be honest alliances. We can't make alliances just to prop up the system.

I'm not a member of the Labour Party but I don't have a sectarian attitude towards it. In the present struggle people right across the political spectrum are allied to the miners. From the Labour Party, right through to the extreme left. I am convinced that these people can unite.

They may argue about many of the ways of achieving unity and developing the struggle, but I believe they are as sincere in their desire to establish a socialist society as I am. Because somebody belongs to what is referred to as an ultra left organisation, I don't write them off. I might think they're misguided, but then again they might think I'm misguided!

I'm absolutely convinced that the unity the miners have created in this struggle can be developed to create a united front to build a new society. The Jack Jones and the Len Murrays in our unions will be swept away because they won't do anything apart from prop up the system. History demands they'll be swept away.

● Jack Collins is Secretary of the Kent miners, and has been a working miner for more than 30 years.



Initially the LCC 'offered the left a broad forum to meet, exchange ideas and argue out differences'. Now it has become politically narrow and 'too closely linked to the Labour leadership'.



To Paul Convery, Secretary, Labour Co-ordinating Committee

Dear Paul,

Please inform the executive that after consulting with fellow members of the ILP (Independent Labour Publications), I have decided to resign from the executive of the LCC (Labour Co-ordinating Committee). Put bluntly I see little purpose in remaining. This is not simply because I have political differences with the majority, but also because I am increasingly concerned about the way in which the LCC 'leadership' conducts the LCC's politics.

In the four years that I have been on the executive I have had many political disagreements with the positions adopted, but I never found that being in a minority was quite as futile and frustrating as it is today.

Notice of my growing concerns was given in my candidate's statement for the executive elections. I expressed worries about the way the LCC was being led in the aftermath of the General Election. Too often the public image presented of the LCC seemed to be in advance of decisions taken by the executive, let alone the membership. I argued that it was important for the LCC to maintain itself as an independent socialist pressure group inside the party. I am not confident that progress has been made on either count.

Having called for a more organised and politically coherent left inside the party (something which Neil Kinnock expressly opposed in debates in *Tribune* and the *Labour Leader*, 1977/78) the ILP welcomed the setting up of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee. It offered the left a broad forum to meet, exchange ideas and argue out differences.

But today the LCC is becoming politically narrower and less democratic. Important issues are not decided at annual meetings but are remitted to the executive for decision (even with the encouragement of executive members). That was the fate of the debate on "one member, one vote".

Moreover the executive is no longer the political cross section of the left that it once was. One indication is the fact that eight out of its twenty members belong to the same

political grouping, Clause 4, and others seem politically close to them.

Having represented the ILP on the executive I do not oppose the presence of any other group, but when one organisation has such a prominence the effect is often suffocating. Clause 4's representation is in excess of what is reasonable and desirable.

At the first meeting of the new executive I made a careful and measured statement criticising this development and asking those concerned to show some restraint in the future. This was in anticipation of proposals from the then chairperson, Harriet Harman, and vice-chairperson, Peter Hain, that we appoint immediately an existing executive member — and leading member of Clause 4 — to the post of Organising Secretary.

Because of the resistance put up by some of us the comrade concerned did the honourable thing and withdrew. Now instead he has been elected Chairperson of the LCC, and the new Secretary is also a member of Clause 4. I have no wish to question the qualities or the integrity of the two comrades concerned, but I do oppose this further unhealthy growth in one group's influence.

At the first meeting I asked Clause 4 members to reply to my comments. After all if I am wrong they should put the record straight. The group has remained silent. It may be as some suggest, that Clause 4 is not a hard, political tendency but nor is it entirely a bunch of individuals. As an organisation it does have some political coherence and rationale for its existence. Its origins in the student movement, its battles with *Militant*, the way its key members seek influence (as researchers and political advisers) or office (as MPs and MEPs) surely indicate aspects of its political character? This political narrowing of the executive effects the political agenda and priorities of the LCC: a consensus is presumed and those who disagree simply appear to be awkward.

Too much of the practice is organisational rather than political in emphasis, and opposing such practices is becoming increasingly futile.

For example the LCC has not adopted any specific policies towards youth. Indeed at the annual meeting it defeated a motion from the ILP advocating outright opposition to the Tories' Youth Training Scheme. Yet the LCC launched and has given financial support to the LCC youth committee. On what political basis does it operate I wonder, other than several of the comrades concerned (from Clause 4) being opposed to *Militant*?

Those who I identify as the current leadership of the LCC — good comrades and hardworking as they are individually — have a political approach with which I am increasingly at odds. The LCC has been set on a political course that is deeply pragmatic and eclectic (for all its talk about campaigning and mass politics).

What now seems to matter is the opportunity to whisper into the ears of party leaders, and to manage the LCC's image so that it does not upset anyone. The preference seems to be

for politically fudged positions, which seek to please all. The LCC leadership's views on "one member, one vote" is a prime example. At least the early LCC — much as I disagreed with it — had a firm position against one member, one vote. The present executive's 'permissive' approach as it calls it owes more to acrobatics than to politics.

Vacillation and image consciousness do seem to be uppermost. An example of the latter is the much publicised appeal for left unity. This appeal was sent to the left and to the media at the same time.

I had not supported the appeal because I wanted to know just what its purpose was (so many appeals for unity are thin disguises for sowing disunity). Nonetheless the appeal went out and many left groups and individuals replied, but the issue has been dropped. I can only conclude that it was geared towards gaining some press publicity for the LCC and not much else. Part of the problem these days is struggling to find out just what is going on.

For instance I learned recently that during the party leadership contest the LCC office was given over to Neil Kinnock's campaign. Given that the majority of the executive favoured his election this may not have been unreasonable, although no decision was taken to devote the LCC's resources to the campaign, and two of the LCC's three elected officers were never informed.

Had I felt that these and other matters could be usefully aired and resolved on the executive, then I would not be resigning now. But experience tells me otherwise. Nor can I catalogue the full list of my concerns although this letter tries to indicate what I think is going sadly wrong.

I have tried unsuccessfully to get the LCC to reply to fierce criticism from one far left group which accused the LCC of being involved in a generalized witch-hunt against the left. But nothing has happened. Instead of the matter being cleared up it has been brushed under the carpet.

Although I know of no desire by the executive itself to support witch-hunts the situation (and perhaps the views of individual members) is more uncomfortably ambiguous than it should be.

In supporting my resignation from the executive the ILP has not decided to pull out of the LCC itself. But for the present at least we have no wish to be associated with the LCC executive, preferring to be rank and file members.

Finally, can I thank those who voted for me in the past. Let's hope it is not too late for the LCC to sort itself out, and for the membership to make the executive more accountable. I don't regret my experiences but have no desire to prolong what has become the 'agony'. As the old woman declared on her death-bed, 'It's all been very interesting!'

Yours in comradeship,  
Barry Winter.

P.S. I would be grateful if you could let the membership read this letter in your next circular. This resignation will be made public.

# Resignations from LCC executive

SOCIALIST ACTION has been sent the following two letters of resignation from the executive of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee.

Neither Judy Sadler nor Barry Winter are in any way associated with Socialist Action. But we think the

questions they raise regarding the present policies and tactics of the LCC, its refusal to oppose witch hunts, and its lack of independence from the policies of Neil Kinnock are questions which very much merit being discussed on the left and echo points made in our pages.

John Denham, Chair  
Labour Co-ordinating Committee.

Dear John,

I am writing to inform you that I am resigning from the LCC Executive. Now that I have a job, I must cut down on my political commitments. My unhappiness about the drift of the LCC means that it is no longer a priority for me and, on the contrary, I increasingly find that being on the executive is a political embarrassment.

I have always been in a 'minority position' on the executive, but have been willing previously to continue in this position. I have always wished the LCC to represent a broad sweep of the left who are fundamentally committed to the Labour Party. I have therefore not expected my views to coincide completely with other members of the executive.

However, the present executive can no longer be said to be widely representative of the left. It has become a very narrow group and it has become much too closely linked to the Labour leadership. Though I do not think the left has necessarily to take an oppositional position in relation to the leadership, I do feel the LCC should be a pressure group external to the leadership. Though I think those close to Kinnock were personally right to argue as they did over the one-member-one-vote issue, this incident is illustrative of the close ties between the LCC and the leadership (though in practice only selected members of the executive were informed, whilst rumours on the issue spread).

I have also found myself increasingly having disagreements over policy. For example, I do not think the time is ripe for us to be arguing for a small private sector, when we haven't won the arguments for

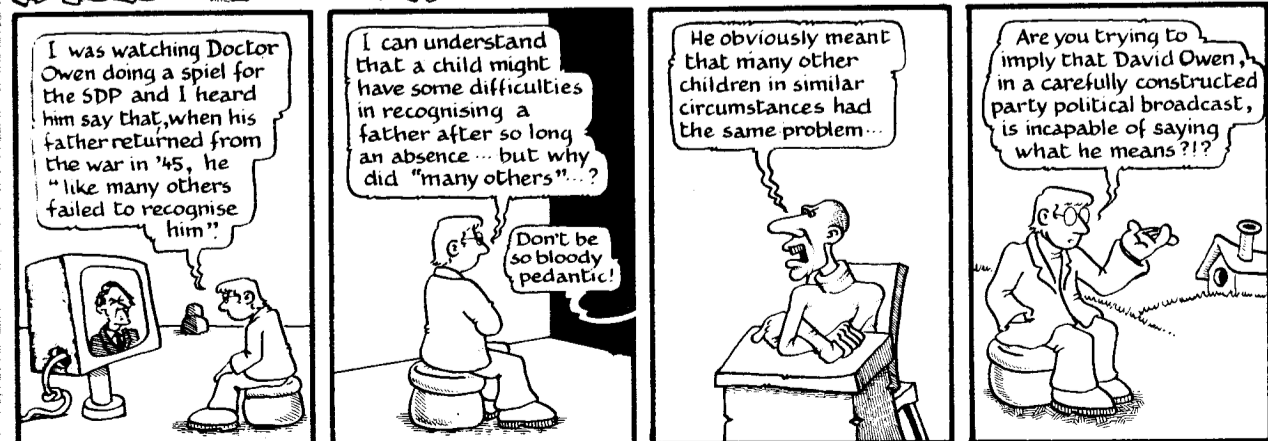
economic planning and public control over enterprises yet. When it comes to 'the corner shop', there may be arguments for it to be a community facility with some community control, but in Thatcherite Britain we are a long way off from having to argue the pros and cons of this matter: it is at best an irrelevance, at worst we are falling prey to the increasingly acceptable ideology of private enterprise.

Finally, it appears (I was not present at the discussion) that the executive is taking a position on the left slate for the CLP section of the NEC which is likely to threaten the place of those who have consistently, and for many years, supported the needs of women in the Labour Party. It is very important that the number of women on the NEC is not reduced, but even more crucial that those who consciously seek to represent women do not lose their places. I dislike this move on the part of the executive not only for its possible effects on women's organisation, but also because it is part of a general trend within the LCC to circumscribe very narrowly who is a legitimate part of the Labour left.

I am sad to see the LCC turn the way it is at present, as it has done some good work as an organisation of the left. I hope it does not become an organisation concerned solely with the changing of generations within the Labour Party (i.e. a section of a younger generation struggling to become part of the Labour establishment) but serves to swing the party towards socialist aims.

Yours,  
Judy Sadler.

## A PIECE OF THE ACTION



News



Photo: JOHN HARRIS

# Coalitions mean witch hunts

**THREE MEMBERS OF the Exeter Labour Party are under threat of expulsion over the production of Exeter Labour Briefing. While witch hunts must always be resisted, the situation in Exeter is particularly crucial since the Labour Group of the city council went into coalition with the Liberals after the 3 May local elections.**

The decision by the Executive Committee of Exeter Labour Party to start expulsion proceedings against the three editors of *Briefing* follows a long argument over the name of the journal. For some time, the EC have been trying to persuade the editors to change the name of the publication, claiming that the views expressed there might be mistaken for Exeter Labour Party policy.

At the March general committee meeting, a resolution was passed instructing *Exeter Labour Briefing* to cease publication under that name. The issue was not discussed — the resolution was passed on the nod as part of a long report from the executive, without being noticed by *Briefing* supporters at the meeting.

The three editors — Peter Bowing, Mike Hingley and Mark Wilkinson — who are now facing expulsion have refused to change the paper's name, wanting to identify with the policies of national *Labour Briefing*. Apart from this, no reading of the Labour Party constitution could possibly give the general committee power to instruct party members to change the publication's name.

The editors therefore carried on publishing under the *Briefing* name, but included a disclaimer on the front page. The expulsions constitute disciplinary action resulting

from this defiance of the general committee resolution.

The political reality behind the arguments about the name is that, in a party where policy is rarely discussed, a small group of young activists are under attack for trying to keep socialist principles alive in Exeter. This is particularly important since the city council elections in May.

**By Ian Clifford, Exeter Labour Briefing**

Following both Liberal and Labour gains, the Tories lost control of the council. Without any consultation with the constituency party, the Labour Group entered a 'working relationship' with the smaller Liberal Group.

A Lib-Lab majority control all council committees. Chester Long, leader of the Labour Group, is now leader of the council with Liberal backing. Needless to say, the policies pursued by this coalition are unlikely to change much for the city — a point conceded by Cllr Long in the local press recently. Since the party manifesto had to become the basis for the working relationship with the Liberals, it was necessarily devoid of socialist content.

MP Frank Field may have been among the first to consider parliamentary coalitions. But in Exeter we are already living with

one.

One Labour councillor who considers himself left wing relied on the recent writings of Eric Hobsbawm when explaining to the university Labour Group before the elections why it would be necessary to go into coalition with the Liberals after the election. The same councillor launched the most bitter, witch-hunting attack on the *Briefing* editors when calling for their expulsion. And it was Cllr Long who proposed the expulsions at the executive.

It is imperative that all talk of coalitions is vigorously attacked. Tony Benn recently referred to Hobsbawm's ideas as 'the strategy of pessimism, the tactics of defeat'. Quite right. Coalitionism is based on the idea that socialism is no longer achievable.

But it is more than this. It is a politics rooted in fear generated by the present economic crisis. It provides an excuse for those who are afraid to take their place in the struggles now facing ordinary people. It provides an excuse to abandon real struggle against capitalism and to mount witch hunts against anyone who tries to draw attention to these struggles.

The supporters of *Exeter Labour Briefing* intend to carry on fighting for such a fearless, democratic vision of socialism — starting by fighting the witch hunt itself.

● For more information contact Peter Bowing, 42 Powderham Crescent, Exeter, Devon or phone Exeter 58692.

# CPSA: Reject merger with managers' union

**AT THE 1984 Annual Conference of the Civil and Public Services Association delegates voted (though not overwhelmingly) for a merger with the Society of Civil and Public Servants (SCPS), the union representing managerial and executive grades. This move initiated by the right wing organised around CPSA General Secretary Alastair Graham and backed by Militant supporters spells naught but danger for rank and file CPSA members.**

Taken at face value the proposition for a merger could be seen as advantageous to a union which has been losing thousands of members since the arrival of Thatcher's 'New Order', and the cuts in jobs and services it has entailed. In addition the CPSA is also to lose some 40,000 members in its Post Telecommunications section which is about to ballot its members on joining the POEU.

**By Howard Fuller, CPSA**

However this particular amalgamation would not be in the interests of the grades represented by the CPSA, who would face the prospect of attending union meetings with their supervisors and managers present — rather a daunting prospect in the civil service!

Although it can be argued that there are a large number of good activists in the SCPS, it must be remembered that when it comes to the crunch most SCPS members put their managerial duties first! Although CPSA members receive backing from the Society over pay, there are too many areas where the interests of the two groups clash.

## Stopped

The advocates of the merger argue that the CPSA's larger membership will enable members to keep the executive grades under control. However one has only to look at the experience of other 'top to bottom' unions to see this is not going to be the case. The NUT is dominated by the headteachers and NALGO is well controlled by the higher grades.

The problems of the merger for the ordinary member stem from the way the civil service is structured and controlled. What kind of relationship can be expected from a union rep who is also your supervisor responsible for your annual report. It is likely that the CPSA's growing rank and file militancy will be neutered as executive grades dominate the new unions' structures.

## Facing

A campaign against the merger is gradually taking shape. But the forces opposed to the merger are as disparate as those who are in favour.

On the right a substantial section of the 'Daylight' group are opposed despite Alastair Graham. Only one group has so far actively campaigned against the merger — the 'Socialist Caucus', an alliance of the hard left which operates within the Broad Left has taken the initiative and is planning to run a campaign for a no vote in the forthcoming referendum.

## Frightening

However sections of the non-militant left still need to be won over — and this will be an uphill fight as the acolytes of *Militant* have thrown their weight behind right wing General Secretary Alastair Graham as he manoeuvres to force through the merger. Both Graham and *Militant* see benefits for their various strategies in this. Graham would secure himself a stronger base from which to pursue his ever rightward leaning 'new realism' policies. *Militant* hope to create (eventually) one big civil service union (under their control) as they continue to move away from Marxism.

## Just being matey

**DID you know that 'nig nog is not a term of abuse, unlike the hateful nigger or coon. In the real world it is almost an affectionate description used all the time by people who are in no way evil racists.'**

**That must be true because it's written large in last week's Sunday Telegraph. And that bastion of anti-racism and tolerance, the Sun, explains to all you carpers that the expression 'nig nogs' are just two 'naughty words'.**

**As they say it's not people like him that use the words 'nig nogs' who cause all the trouble: it's those dedicated warriors sniffing out alleged race discrimination (who) do**

far more harm to harmony between the different communities ... than a whole police force of Peter Johnsons.'

**Our police reckon kicking some black person around a cell in Brixton and calling her or him a nig nog is the best way to show their affection.**

**Now and again when they are beating up a black prisoner they suffer from what the Sun calls 'a slip of the tongue' and get a bit nasty and refer to her or him as a 'coon' — but then anyone can make a mistake. After all some of those guards at Dachau and Belson made the same slip of the tongue when they called those Jews 'yids' but surely they shouldn't have lost their jobs for what the Sun calls a 'trivial slip'?**

**Whatever happened to the tolerance of the**



# Manchester: right wing vote for Tory mayor

**SINCE MAY'S local elections a right wing rump has boycotted the new Labour Group of Manchester city council, now committed to party policy of no cuts, no rent rises and no job losses.**

The first meeting of the full council last Wednesday saw the Labour right voting with the Tories to secure seats on the policy committee and defend the municipal monarchism of the Lord Mayor.

**By Paul Atkin, Gorton CLP**

The Labour Group proposed saving money by cutting out the pomp and circumstance of this post, replacing it with a functional 'chair of council', left winger Ken Strath. The right wing voted instead for Tory Harold Tucker, thereby ensuring he got the job and the ceremonial hoo-ha to go with it.

Further, in voting down Labour Group members for an assort-

ment of Tories, Liberal and old-guard Labour — the right wing have served notice of their future intentions.

These old-guard are no longer a majority in the Manchester party, just as they are no longer a majority of the Labour Group. They can only defend their personal positions on the council by collaborating with class enemies.

These people must go! This unholy alliance is a threat to the successful implementation of Labour Party policy.

That policy cannot be won solely in the council chamber. It needs mass support on the streets and in the workplaces. Building that support is the task of the whole Manchester Labour Party in the coming months.



white race?

## Degenerate

**WHEN TROTSKY wrote Revolution Betrayed he explained how the first workers' state had degenerated. But even he hadn't reckoned with the lot they have got running the show now.**

**Soviet bosses, with the approval for sure of the party, have gone one**

step further along the path of degeneration and are buying Benny Hill programmes of ITV. Mr Vesevoldody Chichovski, a Russian 'cultural' TV expert, explains they will scrub out the Hill jibes at gays — official USSR line is they don't exist anyway — but 'the rest of the jokes and the girls will be kept in'.

It's nice to know there won't be too much censorship.

# A Socialist ACTION

**Demonstrate**  
**2 June 11:45am**  
**Hyde Park**



## NO TO BOTH!

## NO TO APARTHEID!

**THE VISIT** by South African prime minister PW Botha which starts on Saturday is an insult to black people in Britain and world-wide. It is symbolic of the desire of the Thatcher government, and of Reagan and his friends in the United States, to bring South Africa back into the fold of international respectability.

During the next few days Tory leaders will huff and puff about their opposition to apartheid, but claim that 'reforms' can only be achieved by talking to the South African leaders. This line is just a smokescreen for the real attitude of the Tories and their friends towards the South African regime — one of support and co-operation.

Africa is regarded as vitally important to the Western alliance from a military point of view. Despite the formal ban on arms sales to South Africa, this is regularly breached with a nod and a wink from the British government. Huge British investments in South Africa reap fat profits for the British monopolies and banks.

The hypocrisy of the

Tories' arguments about 'reforming' apartheid is exposed daily by events in South Africa itself. Far from the position of blacks in that country getting better, it is getting rapidly worse.

The policy of transporting millions of black people to outback 'homelands' is being speeded up. More than 4 million people will be transported under the 'Surplus People' project, while only 'useful' black workers will be allowed to live in the bulk of the country reserved for whites.

That is the reality of apartheid — white supremacy is being

deepened and strengthened under Botha, while he is feted and praised by the governments of the 'free' world.

South Africa, far from being treated as a respectable part of the international community should be treated as what it is — a racist regime based on institutionalised thuggery.

On the day Botha arrives Anti-Apartheid are promising their biggest demonstration for decades. 2 June must be made into a huge demonstration of opposition to apartheid by the British labour movement and progressive public opinion. All out 2 June!

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