

# **Socialist** **ACTION**

**Missiles out of Europe**

**US out of Central America**

## **SMASH REAGAN'S**

## **EVIL EMPIRE**



# Socialist ACTION

## Bust up at the Star



Photo: JOHN BIRDSALL

THE SPLIT in the Communist Party over the *Morning Star* is now unfolding amid scenes bordering on farce. The Glasgow meeting of the People's Press Printing Society — the *Morning Star's* publisher — broke up in disorder. The faction led by Tony Chater which controls the *Star*, is replying to the Communist Party executive's instructions to change the editor not by argument, but by ruling the question out of order.

Other sections of the press and labour movement have also got pulled into the struggle. The *New Statesman* and *Guardian* have been assiduously supporting the Eurocommunists of *Marxism Today* and the CPGB executive. Ernie Roberts MP has been drawn into supporting Chater — as at various times have *Tribune*, and Tony Benn.

The attitude the labour movement should have is that the more splits in the CPGB the better. The Eurocommunists have no long term future at all. When Chater wins the battle for the *Morning Star*, and the split follows, the CPGB will doubtless attempt to put into effect its 'creative' application of *The British Road to Socialism*. We think, however, that it will lack even the rightest verve of *Marxism Today* — for there is no future at all for a Communist Party which is far to the right of many members of the Labour Party. A CPGB committed to *Marxism Today's* politics would sink without trace.

As for the Chaterites, and the openly pro-Kremlin forces allied with them, they give an image of standing for a more militant policy. But that is just the fashion of the moment. If the needs of Soviet foreign policy ever required a sharp shift to the right they would follow like obedient dogs. That particular brand of Communist Party politics is of the type which could go from the 'class against class' ultra-left lunacy of the early 1930s, to attacks on 'Tito fascism' in the early 1950s, to opposing a Labour government in 1945 in order to maintain a bloc with 'progressive Tories' such as Churchill.

The CPGB long ceased to be a party with any historical or political reasons for its existence. It is outflanked on its left by tens, and hundreds of thousands of workers in the left wing of the Labour Party. It has been progressively losing its base in the trade unions. It long since ceased to attract people to its youth organisation. Its past is polluted with its incessant manoeuvres and adaptations first to the needs of the Kremlin's foreign policy and then to its waning of the Union Jack in the nationalist *British Road to Socialism*. It is a party with nearly sixty years of inglorious past and with no future. The sooner it disappears off the face of the earth the better.

Hopefully, and probably, the split over the *Morning Star* will speed up this desirable process.

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# Lessons of the strike

LIKE EVERY major struggle the miners strike has clarified the nature of the forces in British politics. JOHN ROSS looks at some of the lessons so far.

When Thatcher provoked the miners strike she had far bigger goals in mind than the rationalisation of the mining industry. She intended to smash Arthur Scargill and the left wing of the NUM and thereby permanently shift the entire relation of forces in the trade union movement.

Remember the immediate background to the dispute. In December the TUC directly sabotaged the NGA struggle with Eddie Shah. It was the first time a government had been able to successfully impose anti-trade union laws since the 1927 Trades Dispute Act.

Len Murray's open sabotage of the NGA, his famous 'Black Monday' disavowal of the decision to support the NGA by the Employment Committee of the TUC was the high point of the 'new realism'. If Scargill and the NUM left could be crushed then the shift to the right inside the TUC could be made structural and irreversible.

No matter what the outcome of the strike Thatcher has already lost that battle. The right wing of the NUM executive collapsed like pricked balloons at every key turning point. Arthur Scargill and the NUM left have established a political hold over the 80 per cent of the miners who are on strike which is not going to be broken.

Instead of Scargill be-

ing crushed it is the TUC centre which has collapsed under the impact of the miners strike and GCHQ — a collapse dramatically symbolised by Len Murray's resignation. David Basnett and Alan Tuffin, pillars of the TUC 'centre', were forced to initiate the TUC's withdrawal from NEDDY.

### Realists

This in no way stops the drive of the 'new realist' right — on the contrary the EEUPTU is more rapidly signing 'no strike' agreements and the AUEW has broken TUC ranks by accepting government money for ballots. But for the moment the most open 'new realists' have been put in the minority.

The miners' strike has shown how clearly the conditions in the class struggle have shifted since the strikes of 1972 and 1974. There has not been the massive spontaneous wave of working class solidarity as in the early 1970s — solidarity has had to be much more con-

sciously organised. It would have been inconceivable that a key miners leader like Malcolm Pitt could have been held in prison without reaction in 1972 or 1974 as he has been now for more than two weeks.

Indeed one of Thatcher's big gains in this strike has been the ability to use a level of repression which is of a quite different order to the early 1970s — and one the working class movement is not yet equipped to confront. But she has still not been able to utilise the Tebbit laws against the NUM.

The miners' strike has confirmed, not overturned, the existing relation of forces between the classes. Thatcher is not strong enough to impose the crushing defeat on the NUM and trade union left she wanted. The NUM, and trade union left, is not strong enough to smash through the government's policies in perhaps the way Arthur Scargill expected. We continue to be in a long bruising war of attrition between the classes.

### Sharply

But if the miners' strike has confirmed the relation of forces between the classes it has sharply shifted them within the labour movement — and to the advantage of the left. Twelve weeks ago,

when the miners' strike started, there were only the first signs of trouble in Neil Kinnock's relation with the Labour Party membership. There was, it is true, very great opposition to his refusal to support Liverpool. But this was one issue.

### Divide

But the miners' strike is something else. It has drawn a real line of divide between Kinnock and very large sections of the Labour Party rank and file. It has been Arthur Scargill and Tony Benn who have been the trade union and Labour Party symbols of support for the miners. It has left Neil Kinnock's prestige floundering and done more to harm his standing than a thousand internal resolutions.

More importantly it has shown the hopeless internal contradictions of Neil Kinnock's project. There are only two coherent projects for the Labour Party. The first is that of the new realist right. To increase the distance between the Labour Party and the trade unions. To turn Labour massively to the right. To openly attack the miners — as Shore and Hammond did. It is a path that will finally end up in coalition between the

Labour Party and the Alliance.

The second coherent alternative is that advocated by Arthur Scargill and Tony Benn: to turn the Labour Party sharply to the left and place it at the head of all the mass struggles against Thatcher.

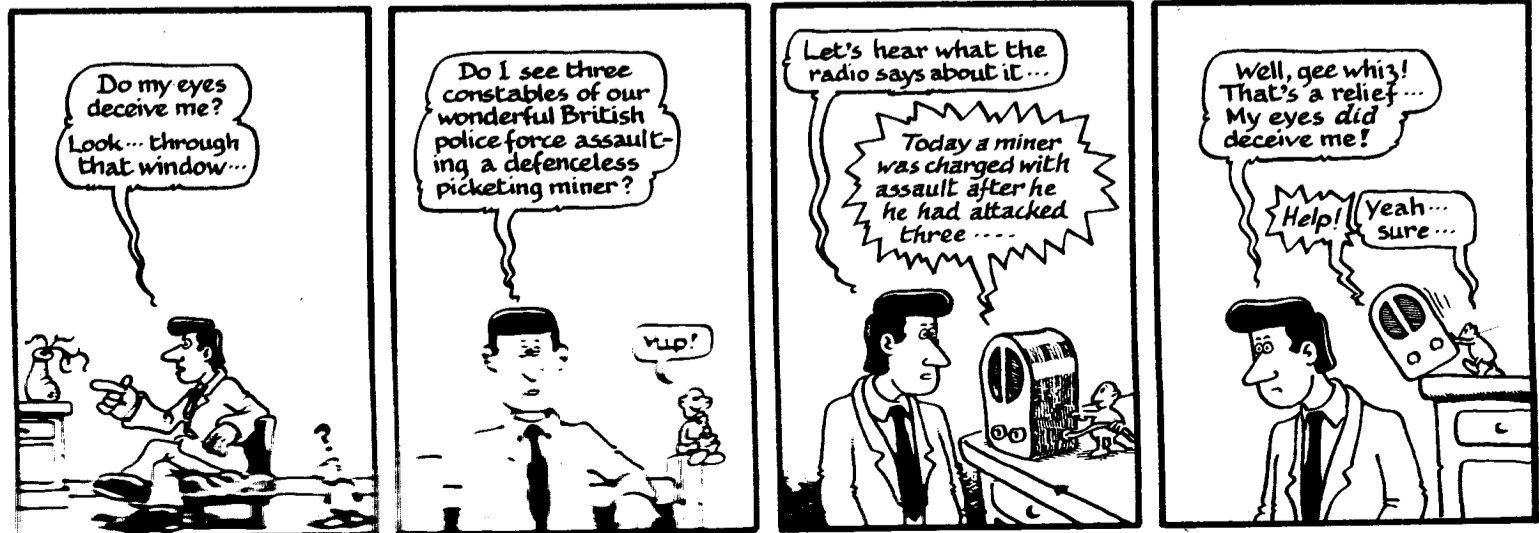
The line of Kinnock, the line of 'I support the miners but I back the right in demanding a ballot', 'I support the miners but I strongly condemn violent pickets' has neither coherence nor credibility. Kinnock has found himself squeezed between left and right.

### Inspired

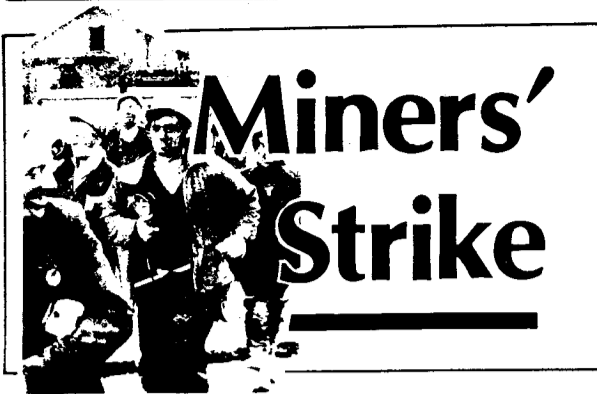
And as for the Labour left the miners strike has given it a coherence not seen since Tony Benn's deputy leadership campaign. The struggle waged by the NUM has inspired the entire trade union and labour movement left. The greatest ovation at this year's Labour Party conference would not be for Neil Kinnock or even for Tony Benn. It will be for the NUM representatives — and not as individuals but for the tens of thousands of miners who have revived and inspired the labour movement.

The outcome of that will last far longer even than the details of the final settlement itself.

## A PIECE of the ACTION



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**DAVE PARRY**, in this article, explains the problems that the NUM is faced with at Orgreave. He insists, and in our opinion correctly, that unless the pickets are increased on a really big scale the NUM will suffer a setback.

This means bringing all the resources of the NUM behind the Orgreave pickets. Now the NUM has called for an all-out mobilisation on Wednesday — the day after we go to press.

Dave will be pleased about that and so is Socialist Action. It is the way to win. It must, however, not just be a one-day action.

It must be repeated day after day and it must get the support of every single person who wants the NUM to win. Orgreave can open the way to victory.

**DAVE PARRY** is a member of the branch committee of the Thurcroft pit in Yorkshire. He has been on the picket lines every day since the strike began.

**JOHN KIRBY** talked to him about the picket at Orgreave and what is happening in the strike.

**What was the background to the Orgreave picket?**

Basically it was because the triple alliance agreement to keep Scunthorpe steelworks going on a care and maintenance basis was broken.

Many branches were unhappy about this agreement in the first place because there were limited stocks and we knew that when they ran out BSC would take any steps to continue production and scrap the agreement.

**How was this move seen by the Yorkshire miners?**

It was quite clearly seen as a provocation. In twelve weeks we had never seen anything like this — armoured convoys and huge police escort right in the heart of the Yorkshire coalfield.

**So what was the response to this provocation?**

First a mass picket was held at Scunthorpe on the Friday but without much effect. Then the pickets built up at Orgreave over the spring bank holiday weekend mainly due to the work of Arthur Scargill who was on the picket line every day.

On the Tuesday there were about 8000 of us from Notts, Derbys, as well as Yorkshire. But there was a massive police saturation of the area. That was the one day that Yorks area had prioritised the coke plant.

On Tuesday there were about 8000 of us from Notts, Derbys, as well as Yorkshire. But there was a massive police saturation of the area. That was the one day the Yorks area had prioritised the coke plant.

Scargill was right to call for a major focus round Orgreave to draw in much more involvement from the NUM and other trade unionists who have been looking for ways to help the miners, on top of the financial support.

There have been few situations where we have felt we could be effective. We are definitely in a war of attrition and any victories so far have been small.

We desperately want a big victory. Orgreave could provide such a focus and give a boost to morale.

**If Scargill's view is for a big mobilisation then what has happened?**

Well, the government threw down the gauntlet and Scargill was all for picking it up. So were the pickets. On the Wednesday, the day after the big picket, everybody expected to go to Orgreave and there was real disappointment when we were sent to Notts.

Scargill is all for a major effort at Orgreave but he is not in a position to mobilise the rest of the NUM without a call from the Yorkshire area. We have the organisational capacity to make a much bigger effort which has not yet materialised.

The only explanation can be that for some of the leaders of our union the negotiations have taken priority over picketing. But at a time when negotiations are taking place we need to step up the picketing and make it more effective.

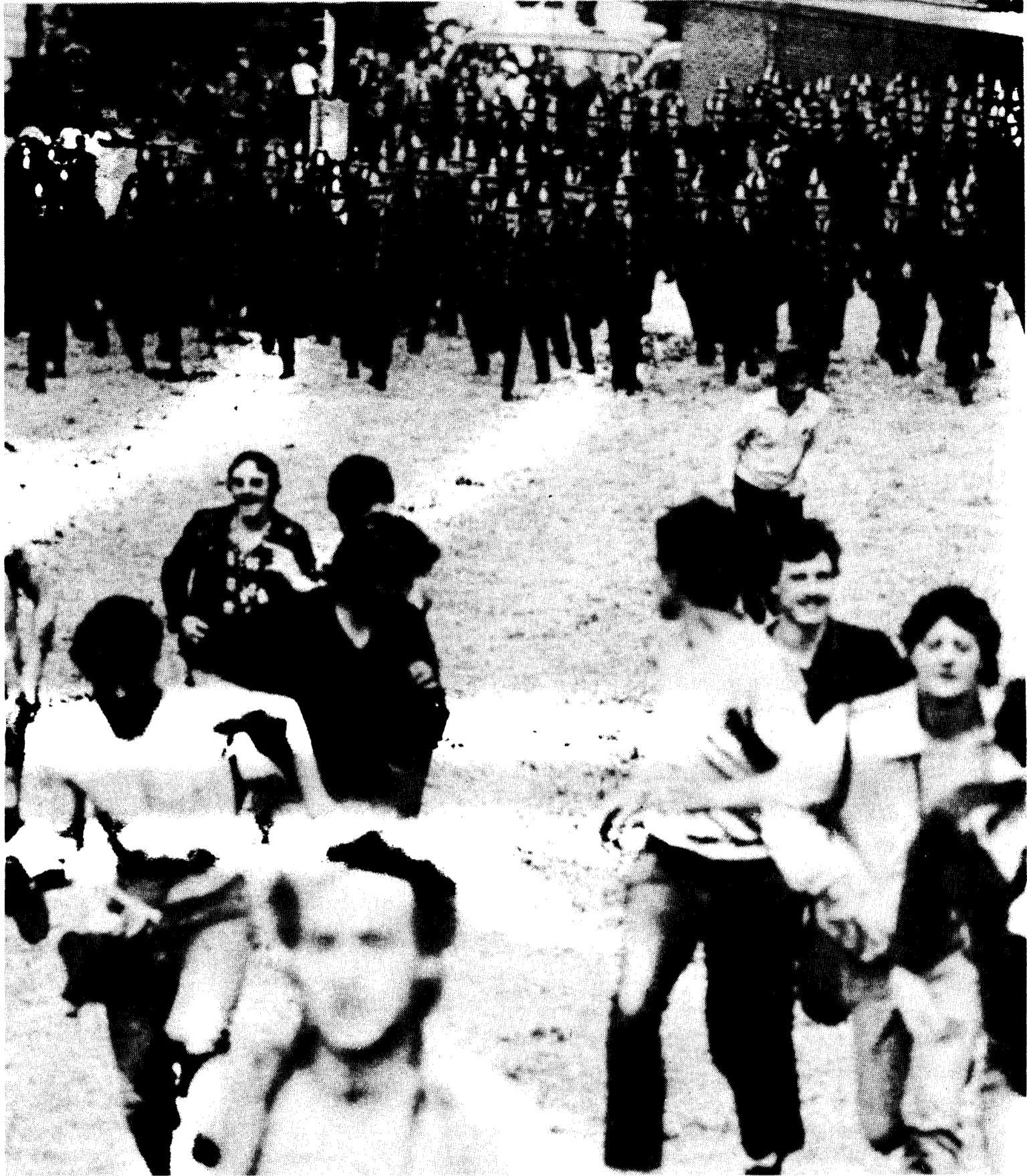
It's very dangerous to play the Grand Old Duke of York game, and demobilise the blokes who are looking for the opportunity to make Orgreave into a massive successful event.

**What is the situation today and how can the NUM win the battle for Orgreave?**

Most people on the picket line accept that we are now involved in a holding operation. Some say it is a continual embarrassment to the government, while others say that they are helping to make this coke the most expensive in the world.

Building the picket up

## The Battle of Orgreave



# NO COKE MUST MOVE!

to the numbers present at the beginning is what's needed. What we need is rank and file involvement like the Yorkshire Miners' Forum that we tried to revive some time before the strike began.

If we had built such an organisation we could then organise independently in situations like this, to put pressure on the area leadership to get the picket built up again.

We need more organisation on the picket line itself, and not just orders from the area leadership in Barnsley.

But we really need to support the position taken by Scargill and prioritise mass picketing, drawing on the national resources of the union, and the resources of other unions, trades councils, Labour Parties and so on.



# Barnsley Women against pit closures



WE STARTED organising at the beginning of the strike. One or two of the wives got together, initially to write a letter to get published in various newspapers because we'd been so angry about the coverage.

The letter was published. From the publicity around this letter we got things moving and decided to form a support group. So we advertised that we were holding weekly meetings.

We had meetings in Barnsley and had women coming from areas all around Barnsley. So we helped them set up their

own groups in the various areas.

**Lorraine Bowler,  
Barnsley Women  
Against Pit Closures**

At least 300 women are now organised in Barnsley and surrounding areas. We've got a kitchen set up in the Civic Hall to feed the miners and kids. Women also organise welfare rights sessions in each area, and we put on Easter parties for the kids.

Then we went on a demonstration in Notts and we saw there were a lot

of women there, but split up behind each banner, so it looked like women weren't represented.

That's why we decided to hold a demonstration in Barnsley, to show just how many women were organising around the strike. We wrote to the NUM to ask for speakers and Scargill and others came.

The feeling that day was incredible, I don't think it will be recaptured for a long time. The Notts women in particular got a tremendous reception.

We've also been on picket lines. On one occasion some women went down to Notts and found

the others hadn't arrived. They went to the pit anyway, but were surrounded by police and were arrested.

Some women were kept in custody for 12 hours. In that time they weren't even allowed to go to the toilet. One woman wet herself.

Another woman had knocked a policeman's helmet off and was put in handcuffs for assaulting a police officer. The handcuffs were so tight that her wrists were bleeding.

I can honestly say that I have never seen so many women politicising as fast as I have in the last few weeks.

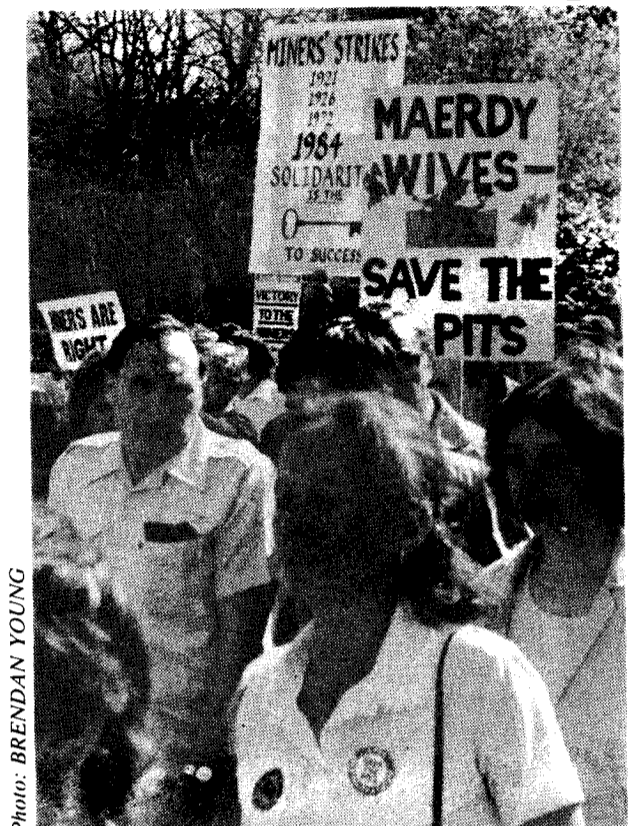


Photo: BRENDAN YOUNG

## Lancs workshops: We're out 'till we win

THE Coalboard's workshops in Walkden, Lancs are on strike, but the NUM branch officials are crossing the picket line. We spoke to COLIN CLOUGH, secretary of the newly formed Walkden Yard strike committee.

We've been out since 22 May when the strike was declared official but even before then many of us refused to cross any picket line that was put on our gates. Now between 30 and 40 of us are out and we form our own picket line.

Our workshops are on the cards for closure. They've been transferring work from here to other yards and they've lowered the voluntary redundancy age from 55 then to 50 and then to any age. A copper asked us on the picket line: 'Why are you bothering? This place is closing soon.'

That's why we're on strike — for jobs, and against all pit and workshop closures. A lot of the 170 men still crossing the picket line here don't realise yet that the only way to keep our jobs is to fight for them.

We are staying with the NUM, all the way 'till we win. Our coming out has already stopped redundancies; none have been discussed during the strike.

We've had overwhelming support for our stand; from other trade unionists, support groups and the local community. It's put to shame some of our own members who are still working.

We've begun to organise factory tours, precinct collections and our wives are starting to get involved too. We're new to this but we're learning all the time and we intend to win.

**Manchester Central  
Euro-Constituency  
Rally**

**Jobs Yes! Bombs No!**

Speakers:  
Eddie Newman,  
LP candidate  
IG Metall speaker  
NUM  
European peace  
movement

7.30pm Friday 8 June  
Manchester Town Hall

## Women's support office opens in Notts

THE NUM women's support group in Notts, with the cooperation of NUPE, now have the use of an office. The organisation and mutual support of the group is already tremendous.

The office will be used to strengthen this by help-

ing the women liaise, print leaflets, and most important, raise material support. They can be contacted: Notts NUM Women's Support Group, c/o NUPE, Sherwood Rise, Nottingham or phone Nottingham 603522 ext 29.

## 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,  
Hockley

**Ealing**  
c/o West London Trade  
Union Club, 33 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 MacDonald, 220  
Wellington Road South,  
Hounslow, Middx. Tel:  
01-577 3429

**Medway**  
c/o Vince Drongin,  
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

**Haringey**  
c/o Unemployed Workers'  
Centre, 28 High Rd,  
Tottenham, London N17.  
Tel: 801 5629

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



## The view from Westminster

### Fighting 'new realism'

THE MINERS' dispute is a fight for the soul of the labour movement. Since last September's TUC the right wing forces of 'new realism' have been calling for accommodation with the Tory government. Essentially they're calling for cooperation in the destruction of the welfare state that the government is trying to carry out.

But miners are not prepared to accept pit closures or sell off the jobs of young miners — they're fighting back. And every cause the labour movement holds dear is at stake in this strike.

Some unions have made clear that 'new realism' is unacceptable — that trade unions have a right to defend their members in any way

necessary. The miners' dispute is getting support from these left-led unions.

**By Jeremy Corbyn,  
MP for Islington North**

They are getting very considerable support, for example, from my own union NUPE, who have given £55,000 nationally and will be giving more. And that's not just because of the leadership.

It's a real feeling among the grass roots membership that the miners supported us in 1982, we'll support them now. This isn't returning favours, it's recognising the unity of struggle.

The TUC leadership is looking for a way out of the dispute. But I don't want to hear talk of honourable settlements, I want to talk about an end to the pro-

gramme of pit closures.

Statements like Eric Hammond's recently give the media a field-day. This same union — the EEPTU — is deliberately pursuing an anti-Labour Party course. It's trying to reduce affiliation to the party to a minimum, whilst promoting SDP people within its own organisation.

This is the first serious attempt in this country to follow the 'non-political' course of American unions.

A union which doesn't have regard for the feelings of the rest of the trade union and labour movement is in a position, for example, to follow private medicine for its members (an anathema to my own union), and such things as no-strike clauses with foreign companies wishing to set up shop in Britain.

The parliamentary leadership of the Labour Party should have come out at the very beginning of the strike and given unequivocal support to the strike. They should have forced a debate in the House of Commons. They should have mobilised much more clearly in support of the dispute.

Despite this, local Labour Parties are

mobilised: they dominate many support committees, they are organising food collections and financial appeals.

I wish the parliamentary Labour Party were as clear and as determined in its support. This Thursday, the issue will be debated — for the first time, 13 weeks after the strike has started!

There was a shaky period at the beginning of the dispute, when the NUM leadership were under a lot of pressure to call a ballot. We must pay tribute, and willingly so, to the leadership of the NUM for fighting it out at that point.

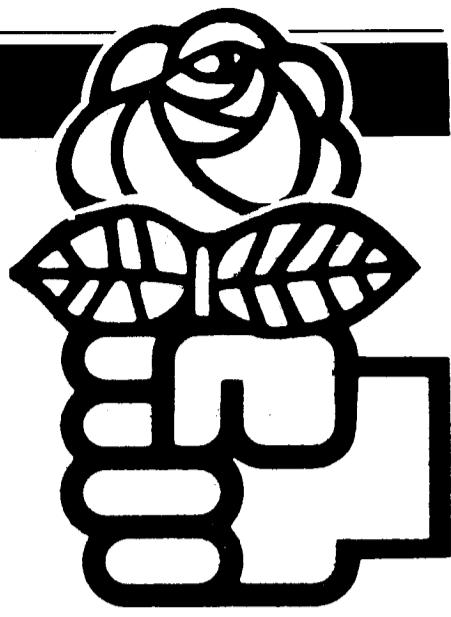
They said they wouldn't be dictated to by the media, they would continue the area-by-area policy and that each area could make its own decision. That choice was right.

The strength of the strike now is phenomenal. The striking miners are very poor and very hungry. But they're determined to defend their jobs against the state.

Arthur Scargill told me that 50p per head per week from every trade union member will keep the strike going for as long as it takes. The rest of the trade union movement must wake up to this.

Labour and Europe

# Intentions good, but action zilch!



LAST WEEK BOB PENNINGTON took a look at Labour's EEC *Manifesto* and examined its proposals on nuclear weapons, its attitude to NATO and its approach to democratic rights. This week he looks at Labour's proposals on unemployment and notes its desecret silence on Ireland.

IF LABOUR is going to rally voters behind its Euro-banner it has to come across as the party that is speaking up on the issues that concern them. What's more, it must have policies that look capable of solving the problems that plague society right now.

An issue worrying millions of people is unemployment. In Britain alone there are four million on the dole and the prospect of most of them getting a job in the immediate, or even the medium term look distinctly bleak. Nor is this a problem that is peculiarly British.

Unemployment is a scourge that is spreading across capitalist Europe. France, Italy and Germany alone have over 10 million workless. But don't get carried away with the idea that Labour's 'crusade for jobs' is a clarion call for international working class solidarity to beat the dole queue.

The *Manifesto* lamely calls for 'all the member

states to work together — with others — to pull Europe out of the slump'. Such a proposal in a Europe torn by inter-capitalist rivalry is, to say the least, utopian. Chancellor Kohl is more interested in boosting German capitalism and making it more competitive so it can corner markets the other European capitalists would like, rather than cutting Britain's dole queues.

Nor are Mitterrand and his socialist supporters too keen on helping Britain out. Maire, the socialist leader of the CFDT, puts competition above cooperation when it comes to French capitalism. He has been moaning: 'We are beginning to see our competitors

producing more reliable cars.' Labour's hopes that the European capitalists are all going to pull together to keep us in work is a futile dream. The European governments are committed to programmes of austerity — Krasucki, the leader of the French CGT, damns Mitterrand's so-called plan for steel as an 'anti-steel plan'.

Meanwhile Mitterrand is promising to lower taxes in industry to encourage the bosses to invest. In Germany the austerity programme is summed up by the IG Metal leader Hans Mayr who says it means 'high profits for them and lower purchasing power for us'.

Like Thatcher the other governments in the EEC are out to slash jobs, cut public spending and reduce living standards — in Germany last year, profits went up nine per cent and real wages dipped by four per cent. Last year British industry broke its own record by importing more industrial goods than it exported.

Against this background of accelerating slump and savage government-inspired

austerity programmes Labour's plan for 'new public investment' and its offer 'to help British industry to win markets at home and abroad' falls flat. It is a programme that is dependent on collaboration with the capitalists who keep stubbornly insisting on investing their money overseas because they can get a better return there!

do in the here and now about job losses. Presumably we must wait until Labour gets a majority in Britain and the Euro-socialists take over in Brussels. This is why the miners' strike, which has been the most inspiring and determined fight to keep jobs gets no mention.

Ah, say the authors of the *Manifesto*, we are in favour of achieving 'rapid

class, like the British miners, prefer action to faith and have been organising to get a 35-hour week. They have rejected Kohl's claim that 35-hours without a pay cut is 'daft and silly' and know that firms like Daimler Benz won't give an inch over what *Guardian* correspondent Walter Schwarz calls the 'sacrosanct 40-hour week'. The last demonstration for the 35-hour week held in Bonn was attended by over 200,000 people. But the *Manifesto* is coyly silent about linking up with this mass opposition to job loss just as it keeps quiet on the miners.

And this will not do. Either Labour stands four square with those who refuse to go down the road at the bosses' bidding or it restricts its opposition to promises of how life will be better when it gets elected. Such an approach will inspire no one, nor will it solve anything. But it is on Ireland that Labour gets its worst mark — a nought out of 10.

As British troops rampage and intimidate their way through the North and the courts dispense a justice that is an affront to human rights, Labour's

*Manifesto* stays quiet on Ireland. Yet opinion polls after opinion poll shows that there is a majority in Britain for the withdrawal of British troops and in favour of a united Ireland. But instead of building on this mass support and linking up with most of the European socialists who are against Britain's presence in Ireland, Labour maintains its bipartisan policy.

It puts the interests of its own capitalist class before that of the Irish people and is prepared to turn its back on what could be a mass base against Tory policy on this issue. Even when Labour is on a winner its leaders muff it because of their allegiance to British imperialism.

On Europe it ducks the issues. Nowhere does the *Manifesto* say it is committed to coming out of the EEC — but after all that is only a conference decision — but says it has an 'option of withdrawal'.

Such an inspiring programme can please no one but Labour's enemies. If 14 June turns out worse than Labour hopes for, then it has only its timid and its impractical leaders to blame!



There are no suggestions for nationalising the firms where public investment is supposed to go. All the *Manifesto* suggests is making the 'institutions of the community' being made 'fully accountable' through their own parliament. There are no plans for taking over control of the banks and thus stopping the flow of capital out of the country.

Even worse the *Manifesto* has nothing to say about what we should

progress towards a 35-hour week without loss of pay'. However they don't make any proposals about building a united trade union and socialist action to win the 35-hour week. Perhaps they think the employers can be persuaded during a slump to cough up more money for less pay. Such faith is rather touching.

The German working

## Greenham lives on!

THE main reason why President Reagan will be greeted with such hostility when he visits Britain this week will be because of the decision to station cruise missiles here.

The women at Greenham have waged a constant fight to draw attention to the siting of the missiles and to mobilise women against them. But lately the women at the camp have been suffering high levels of police harassment while the press keeps a determined silence.

TRACY LITTERICK explains what has been going on.

THE WOMEN of Greenham have been doing a lot lately, but the media have not been reporting it. There are over 30 women in prison, 21 on remand for refusing to accept a bail condition to stay away from the camp — their home.

On 1 May 23 women rode into the base on bicycles and roller skates. One woman was charged with criminal damage. On 7 May 21 women went into the base and painted the runway. One woman painted on an observation tower (so much for tight security!). Only two were charged with criminal damage.

On 12 May the women held a 'visibility action' cutting their way through the fence to the silos, say-

ing we will not make our protest against Cruise invisible.

The police use the law arbitrarily and try to trivialise the women's persistent breaching of security. Some women were arrested and charged, given heavy sentences in court, while others were released without charges.

### Bail

Of those charged, 21 refused to accept the bail conditions and are in prison on remand. The women and 'others unknown' have been charged with over £5000 of criminal damage, for allegedly pulling down 81 sections of the fence with their bare hands on 29 October last year.

Their charge sheets say they had done £25 worth

of damage each, and suddenly the amount was increased. The women were so shocked they elected to go to Crown Court as they did not want to face such massive charges without legal advice. When they go to court they may have a compulsory custodial sentence.

### Police

Soldiers and police continue to threaten women, arrest without charges, and use violence against the women at all hours of the day. Soldiers have been throwing stones and rocks at sleeping women over the fence.

A letter has been written to the Home Secretary asking him to take action to stop this violence. It seems ironic that Leon Brittan can make strong statements about violence and alleged incidents of miners throwing stones, saying how the police should make very effort to prevent it, while this is going on at Greenham.

There has been heavy security near the silos lately, when a Galaxy plane landed and six containers unloaded into the silos. Women saw what was going on and they were warned not to take pictures. A

new camp (Emerald) has been set up next to the silos.

### Violence

On 12 May 10 women were arrested and stripsearched after entering USAF Alconbury to look around and expose the appalling security.

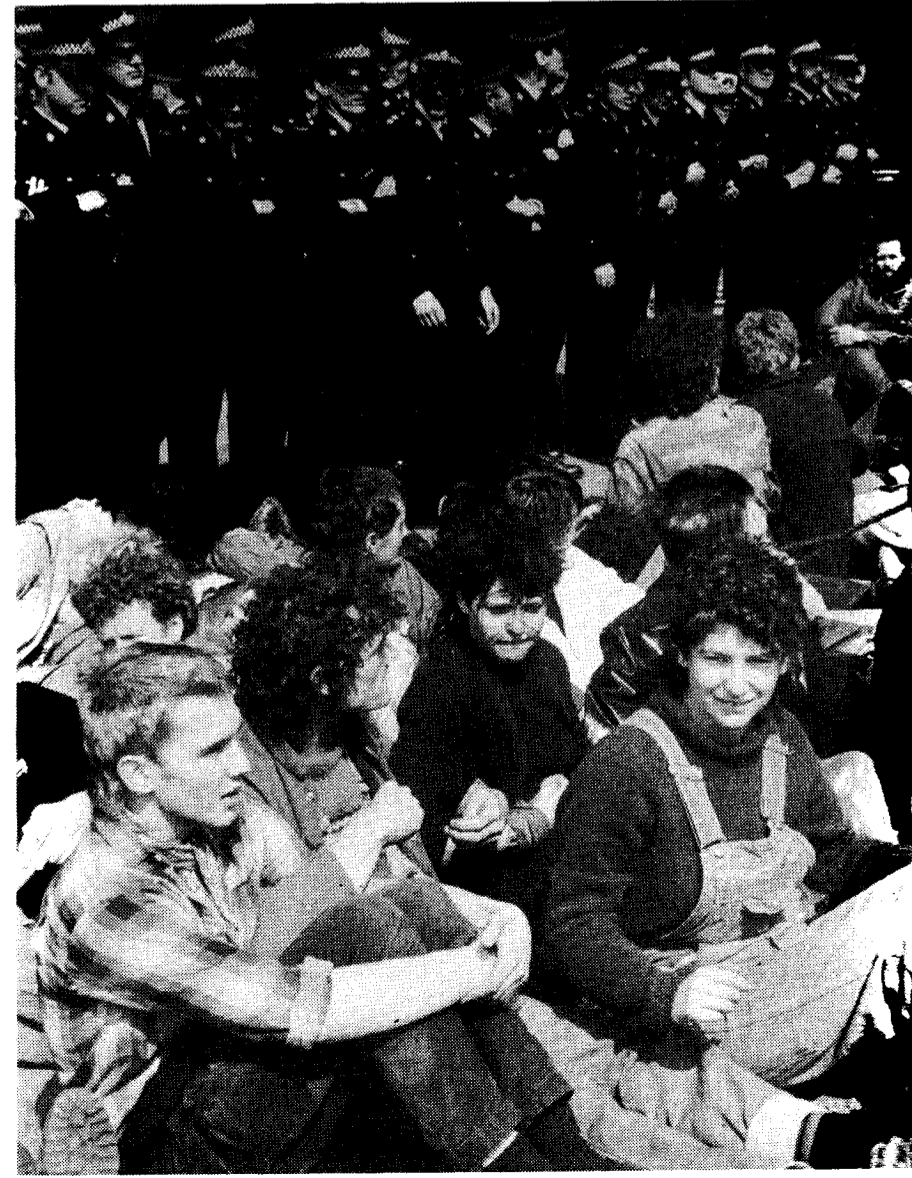
The Greenham women have taken on the military establishment, faced up to capitalism, the media, government, law, police and prison. Now the miners face the same things. Bail conditions too have been similar — stay away from the picket lines, stay away from Greenham.

### Miners

The miners have given the Greenham women a lot of support and now the Greenham women support the miners in their struggle against profits for the capitalists.

More women are needed at Greenham! Support the women in prison! No to pit closures!

• A campaign for those facing heavy sentences has been set up — contact 01-833 2831.



# Reagan Victory

THE REAGAN administration may not be able to handle the Lebanese masses or crush the Sandinistas, but it has certainly managed to run rings around the supposedly ever-so-sophisticated bourgeois politicians of Western Europe over the last couple of years.

The first phase of Washington's drive to re-establish its control over events among the West European states is over now, and the second, so-to-speak 'positive' phase is about to begin. And funnily enough the political leadership that has been most grovelling in its sycophancy towards Reagan — namely the Thatcher leadership in Britain — is likely to be the biggest loser in Reagan's new scheme of things for Western Europe.

The key target in Reagan's political strategy for pulling capitalist Europe back into line has been West Germany. Barring a socialist revolution in some West European country, the only state in the EEC that could pull the rug from under the Pax Americana is the Federal Republic: it is the strongest military power in Europe outside the USSR, the strongest economy and occupies the key geographical position on the continent.

By Oliver MacDonald

As the crisis of the capitalist world economy intensified, and economic rivalry between Europe and America grew sharper, the danger of increased political independence on Bonn's part began to seriously alarm Washington.

The cry went out from Washington that West Germany was threatened by 'Finlandisation' and it didn't understand the Soviet threat. When Bonn refused to bend over the gas pipeline deal with Moscow, Washington denounced the spectre of neutralism in the Federal Republic of Germany and repudiated any deal with Moscow over Cruise and Pershing. Feverish West German efforts to push Washington into a compromise were brushed aside and the entire military relationship between East and West was transformed.

Over the last few months Bonn has continued to struggle to keep its links with Moscow, by adopting the guise of 'intra-German' policy, flooding the Leipzig fair two years running with half the German political establishment and preparing a visit of the East German leader Honnecker to the FRG for this autumn, the first such visit since the war.

But in the last couple of weeks it has become clear that this game is more or less played out. West German foreign minister Genscher's visit to Moscow two weeks ago was a fiasco and after it, the *New York Times* commented (29

May) that there is 'a growing sense of foreign policy drift and impotence' in Bonn as Kohl has 'lost influence in Washington and Moscow'. Fifteen years of Ostpolitik seem likely to be over.

And within the Kohl cabinet the 'Europeans', Genscher and Woerner (foreign policy and defence) are on their way out. The rising star is America's man in Bonn, the Finance Minister Gerhard Stoltenberg. Reagan has pulled off a great victory.

The true dimensions of this victory can only be grasped by appreciating the complete transformation that Reagan is bringing about in something much more fundamental than mere diplomacy. He is completely changing the military relationship between Europe and America.

From the time when the USSR achieved the capacity to retaliate against US cities in the event of nuclear war an interminable debate has been going on between the elites of Western Europe and the US. If the US militarily guaranteed Western Europe it risked its own destruction. If it assured its own protection by doing deals with the Soviet Union it was in effect withdrawing its nuclear guarantee from Western Europe.

## Intolerable

Reagan has now made that all increasingly obsolete. His entire thrust has been to prepare plans and resources so the US can both fight a war in Europe and prevent the USSR from retaliating against the US. This military drive is scaring the hell out of serious bourgeois politicians in Europe. But what can they do about it? Tell their electorates that Washington is threatening them with genocide? To do that would mean tearing apart the whole anti-socialist basis of their own domestic politics.

What then is the alternative? It is to appease Washington and try to bargain. After all, Reagan is no madman, he is after real interests of US capitalism. As far as Europe is concerned, he wants to create intolerable economic and social strains within the Soviet bloc, pull Western Europe decisively back under US control and ensure that West European capital does not inflict serious damage on American capital, as it has been doing in various fields in recent years.

This then brings us on to the 'positive' aspect of Reagan's plans for Western Europe, so to speak the second phase of the American reorganisation of Atlantic relations. There is every sign that Reagan is ready to back a new drive for West European 'unity' hinged on a Franco-German axis. For Washington, 'Europeanism' as an ideology remains acceptable, indeed it is indispensable as a means of integrating the populations of Western Europe under US hegemony.

The debate on this 'positive' phase of Reagan's plans for Western Europe is already far advanced and its results will begin to appear in public as soon as the European elections are over. Two parallel initiatives will then be taken. On the one hand there will be the revival of the Western European Union, dealing with defence and foreign policy matters; on the other there will be the Kohl-Mitterand project for strengthening co-operation within the Common Market. The French and German governments seem to have cleared both these projects in Washington and they are all set to go.

## Client

This then brings us to the increasingly ridiculous figure of Thatcher who finds herself totally outmanoeuvred and staring humiliation in the face. The really fundamental principles of her foreign policy have not been any different from those of Callaghan in the 1970s. The key idea that has been the 'special relationship' with Washington. In other words, the influence of the British state would be maintained and enhanced by being the most loyal client state of Washington, thereby getting Washington's backing as the 'leading' European ally and

thereby also getting Washington's backing for British capitalist interests on a world scale.

Loyalty to Washington has entailed spending more money on defence than any other NATO member in Europe. It has also meant refusing to have any truck with the loose, anti-American talk that can be heard now and again in meetings of European leaders. And it has also meant offering the US as many military facilities both at home and abroad as Britain can possibly offer.

There are politicians on the nationalist right in Western Europe, like Chirac in France, who would like to give Europeanism an anti-American, and savagely anti-labour, political content. But the Reagan administration very carefully vetted the schemes of Mitterand and Kohl during their trips to Washington earlier this year to purge them of any elements that might jeopardise US control.

## Humiliated

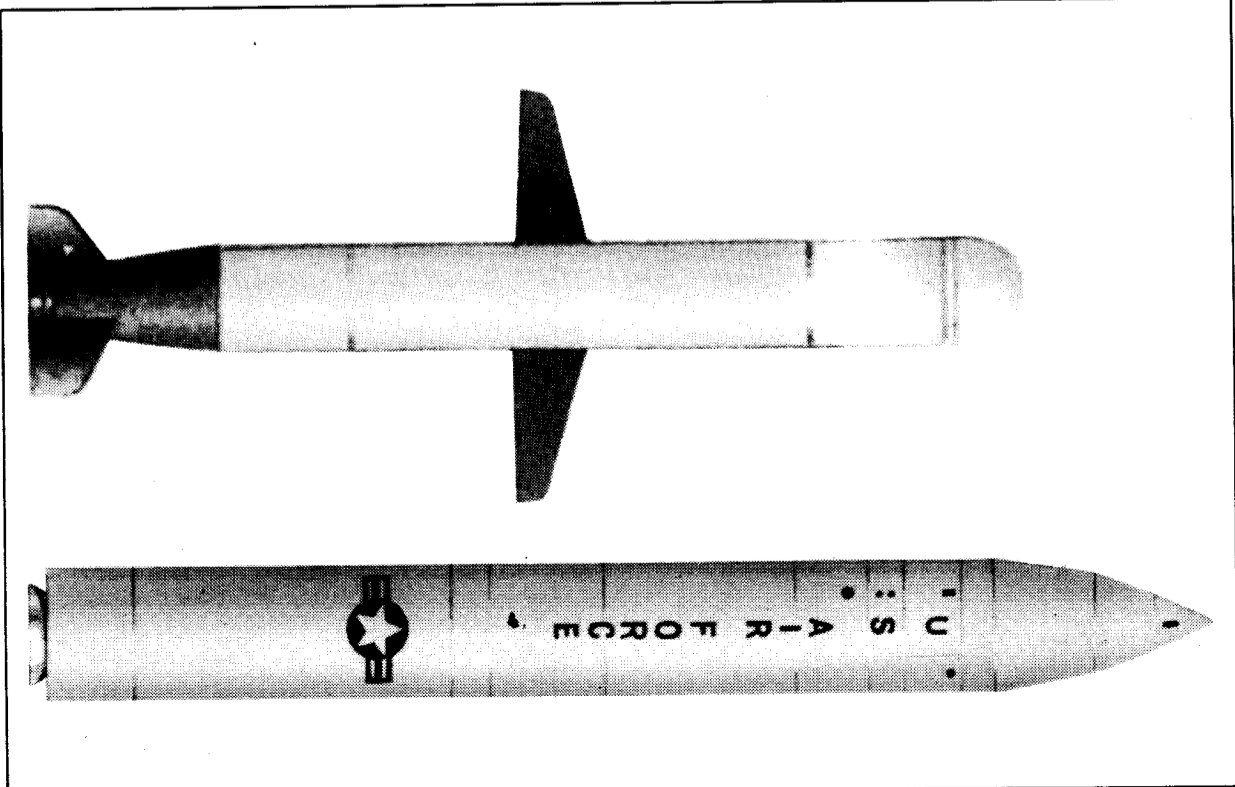
As soon as the Euro-elections are out of the way two Franco-German initiatives will be unveiled: the revival of the Western European Union, and further measures to tighten West European integration. Both will be presented to some extent as anti-American initiatives in the media to siphon off as much of the peace movement's anti-Reagan energies as possible. Their real purpose will be to re-integrate Western Europe and the US in a new partnership.

Thatcher has done all this, and more: she has trumpeted all the catch phrases of Reaganite ideology on every possible occasion. In return she got her own survival in the 1983 elections, thanks to the indispensable US military and logistic support in the Falklands war. Apart from that it has been one long tale of humiliation: she asked for 'dual key' and was turned down flat, her needs were ignored over Grenada, she wasn't allowed to pull out of Belize, she was publicly lambasted for doing underhand military trade with Iran, she was threatened by Bush with having British nuclear weapons thrown into the talks between Washington and Moscow. And now she is forced to watch helplessly while Washington does business with France and Germany over the future power relations in the Atlantic Alliance.



The British establishment thought until recently that its status as America's key partner in Europe was assured by two factors. It could pull rank on the FRG by being a nuclear power; and it could pull rank on the French by being firmly entrenched in the central institution of the Atlantic Alliance, NATO. Trident would make the first factor secure, while slavishly following Washington's demands for 3 per cent annual growth in defence budgets would shore up the second factor.

Today all that is in ruins. The catchword in Washington and Europe is for the increasing conventionalisation of NATO in the aftermath of the huge peace movement mobilisations and with American high technology 'deep strike' conventional weapons looming on the horizon. Secondly, Washington is not so formalistic as to insist on France rejoining the NATO command structure when the task required is to provide a new political framework for integrating the people of Western



# an's :ory Four



against nukes and US bases has been a grave blow to the anti-war struggle.

The real threat to Reagan's new order may come from a longer-term challenge that is now only beginning to appear on the horizon. Reagan has kept the political legitimacy of Atlanticism through the electoral victories of Thatcher and Kohl and through Mitterand's willingness to squander the resources of the French left on a wild turn to the right. But the costs of this operation have been heavy.

## Ugly

A new awareness of the militarist realities of NATO capitalism has arisen among the peace movement and the socialist activists in Europe. These forces are now beginning to regroup for a new and much more radical alternative to the crisis than the slogans of the Social Democratic leaders used in the boom years.

This challenge need not worry Reagan himself. He will be buried soon enough. But in historical terms the challenge is very great because the long-term basis of post-war Atlanticism was never the traditional parties of the right in Europe but the social democratic labour movements. And the ascendancy of the Wilsons, Schmidts, Callaghans and Mitterands rested on something very real, things like full employment, expanding welfare rights and growing prosperity.

US capital did much to create all this after the war. But now the US capitalists are in a very ugly mood and the big question, now that Reagan has re-asserted US *political* control over Western Europe, is whether US capital will go in for the kill on the economic front. More and more, US ascendancy is going to drive European capital into an ever more desperate struggle against the workers of Western Europe to keep their end up against the Americans. And as that happens welfarism is destroyed and with it any room for old-style Social Democratic politics, and indeed democratic rights as well.

## Reaction

This destruction of welfarism, full employment and democratic rights would, of course, destroy the ideological basis for NATO's anti-Sovietism: What would West German workers think if faced with a choice of an authoritarian state with mass unemployment and no welfare state and another authoritarian state in East Germany with full employment and welfarism? Thus to carry through the destruction of 35 years of working class gains would require quite a new form of hysterical, right-wing reaction in Western Europe. But if profit rates call for this, it will start to raise its head.

Oliver MacDonald is the editor of *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*.

Europe into the Atlantic system. Thus Thatcherite Britain is becoming marginalised in both the military and political new order that Reagan is interested in building in Europe.

In these conditions, wild thoughts are passing through the heads of some leading Tories. For example, some, including the *Times* are interested in pulling the 55,000 strong British Army on the Rhine back home and spending the money saved on Trident and on a strike force for killing people in the Third World: in other words you drive a tank through the propaganda about the Soviet military threat in central Europe but you plug into imperialist chauvinism back home with Britain and America jointly defending 'the West' against the Third World.

On the other side of the debate, the *Financial Times*, David Owen and the Labour right want to respect the Soviet threat, give priority to the British Army in Germany, raise the banner of European capitalist unity, scrap Trident and spend more on conventional defence

since the US insists on this. It would be justified on leftist grounds of denuclearising — a little — NATO strategy.

But what will persuade the Reaganauts to be nice to Western Europe's capitalists and thereby give Social Democratic leaders like Neil and Denis a future? The answer to this question may seem paradoxical but it contains the difference between blinkered Social Democratic cretins and people engaged in serious politics. The cretins think that Washington will be nice to Europe if Europe's labour leaders go down on their belly like Len Murray in front of the New Reagan-Thatcher Reality. The truth is in fact quite the opposite: the American plutocrats will only consider giving a future to European welfare capitalism and social democratic reformism if it believes the capitalists of Europe might really go under thanks to socialist advance.

So if we want to give our Neil any chance (and more seriously the Labour

Party any chance) then the left must go Arthur Scargill's way and send MacGregor and Thatcher packing to Washington with serious problems to talk about. And this takes us back to where we began — to Reagan's inability to beat the Sandinistas and El Salvadorian masses, despite the butchery of tens of thousands on the orders of the US. Thanks to the revolutionaries in Central America, there is some future for reformists in Europe. In Mexico and Brazil and other parts of the region. Washington has come through bitter experience to understand and respect popular power. They have nothing but contempt for the petty intrigues and hypocritical double-talk characteristic of the present imperialist leaders of Western Europe.

This new Reagan-ite order in Europe could still be undermined by further peace movement actions like the blocking of cruise in Holland. But the criminal refusal of the leaders of the Socialist Parties in the EEC to turn the Euro-elections into a great mobilisation



# A GREEN ALTERNATIVE?

THE RISE of the Green Party in West Germany has inspired peace and ecology activists in other countries to try to emulate their success. In the forthcoming European elections 'green' movements from all EEC states are putting up candidates on a separate political platform, which in Britain is represented by the Ecology Party.

Although there is no prospect of the Ecologists gaining any of the British Euroseats or even winning more than a derisory 'fringe' vote, the growing influence of the green current among a certain layer of radicals both within and outside the Labour Party, and especially in CND, demands that socialists pay some attention to the lessons to be learned from the German Greens.

There can be no doubt where on the West German political spectrum the Green Party is located. The main body of its members and activists is drawn from the traditions of the student movement and 'New Left' as well as from the feminist movement. Its programme and demands are in the main unequivocally anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist.

Their success in the March 1983 federal elections, when their vote of just over five per cent secured them 27 seats in parliament under the West German system of proportional representation, was widely hailed as the first electoral breakthrough in Germany of a party to the left of the SPD since the collapse of the once powerful German Communist party in the early days of the Cold War.

## Missiles

The gains of the Green Party were almost exactly equivalent to the losses of the SPD, and it was clear that, among young voters, in particular, the Greens had made very heavy inroads into traditional social-democratic strongholds.

This success was due to the principled stand of the Greens on the issue of nuclear disarmament. Although the SPD did — under the pressure of its rank and file and after the break-up of their government coalition with the Liberals — eventually reject the deployment of Cruise and Pershing II missiles, it was the Greens who had made the running on this issue. Hundreds of thousands of young voters

had come to regard them as the political wing of the peace movement.

By Günter Minnerup

The decisive importance of the missiles issue is also born out by the fact that in the previous 1980 elections, the Greens had polled less than two per cent, despite their leading role in the big anti-nuclear power movement of the late 1970s. Despite their very comprehensive 'ecological' programme, the Greens' electoral success last year must be viewed as primarily the fruit of a single-issue campaign.

This explains the futility of any attempt to launch a similar movement onto the very different political scene in Britain. Supporters of the British Ecology Party freely conceded their lack of electoral prospects in the immediate future, but tend to explain this in terms of the first past the post voting system. In reality, however, it is not the mechanics of the electoral system, but the lack of any real social and political base which will abort this project.

## Blush

In West Germany, the SPD has been in government continuously from 1966 until 1982, in coalition first with the Christian Democratic CDU and then the business-oriented liberal FDP. Every generation of young left-wing militants since the 1960s has had to confront the SPD as a government party practicing right-wing policies of the kind that

would even make Harold Wilson blush.

The social-democratic Chancellor (Prime Minister), Helmut Schmidt, used to boast of his role in persuading NATO to deploy new nuclear missiles in Western Europe, and remained consistent in his support for NATO rearmament until his fall in autumn 1982.

The West German trade-union federation DGB loyally supported 'its' government in endorsing the controversial nuclear energy programme — and in banning its youth section and individual member unions from mobilising for the huge peace movement rallies until two years ago.

Under such conditions it is hardly surprising that tens of thousands of activists could no longer see any future in the organised labour movement and set about organising their own political voice independently of the SPD. The Greens are the result: a powerful expression of the deep gulf between German socialist reformism and the radicalised and politicised youth of the Federal Republic.

## Hostile

In Britain, where the defeat of the Callaghan government in 1979 initiated a deep upheaval in the Labour Party, where the mainstream labour movement is committed to unilateral nuclear disarmament and hostile to nuclear power, where the major industrial unions are affiliated to CND and thousands of ecologists (SERA) and feminists active in the Labour Party and TUC unions, the picture is very different.

Here the Ecology Party represents, at best, those activists who are still suspicious of the genuine nature of Labour's conversion to the causes of saving the natural environment and abolishing nuclear arms. At worst, they are simply hostile to the working class movement. Either way it represents a cop-out from

the crucial struggle to harness the power of organised labour to the fight for humanity's survival and the sectarian preserve of a small minority of politically confused individuals.

The German Greens are themselves now finding that the organised labour movement cannot be simply bypassed. The SPD in opposition is an entirely different proposition from the SPD in power. Now that it has consolidated its anti-missiles position, modified its stance on nuclear

energy and other ecology issues, and aligned itself — albeit cautiously — to the trade unions' campaign for a 35 hour week, many Greens are increasingly worried about their electoral support drifting back to social democracy and especially its rejuvenated left wing.

## Sectarian

Deep divisions have opened up over this in the ranks of the Greens between those — like the former East German dissi-

dent Rudolf Bahro — whose response is a sectarian one rejecting any kind of joint campaigning and political alliances with the SPD, and those — the so-called 'red Greens' — who are prepared to enter united fronts and even come to parliamentary agreements.

These differences are more than tactical disputes over how to hold on to green vote: they represent deep philosophical and strategic divisions over the causes of the arms race, the threat to the environmental balance, op-

pression and exploitation, and the social and ideological forces capable of combating them.

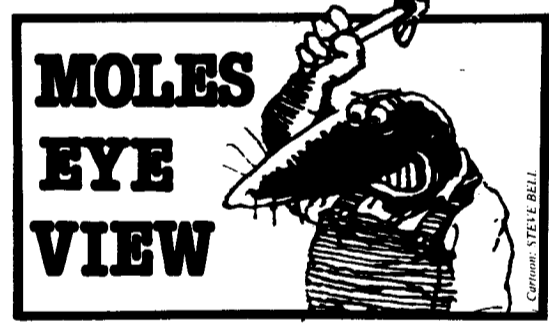
This reveals the fact that progressive and anti-capitalist causes do not, in themselves, make for a coherent philosophy and strategy and it exposes the social rootlessness of much of the youthful radicalism behind the Greens' electoral success.

Those toying with the idea of counterposing a green political party to the party of organised labour in Britain should ponder these German lessons.

ASTMS members must be dead chuffed with the refusal of their NEC members to give in under pressure from a bunch of APEX strikers at the union's HQ. Rather than bow to the strikers' demands, which would add some £25,000 to the wages' bill the executive has cancelled the union's annual delegate conference.

The cancellation will cost an estimated £100,000 at least of the union funds, and the members will lose their democratic rights for this year to decide policy.

But clearly the executive like MacGregor and Thatcher can't give in, whatever the cost, to a bunch of irresponsible workers demanding more money.



## Islington picnic

The Islington council invited a deputation from 'Women in Support of the Miners' to have tea with the Mayor last week. The Kent women being a bit keen on picket lines said they didn't feel like crossing the one set up by the strikers from Islington's Children's Day Centres who have been out now for nearly eight weeks.

Instead they decided to have tea with the strikers on the town hall steps and being polite people invited the mayor, Islington MPs and other local celebrities to join them. The mayor did turn up but the previous mayor Labour councillor Pat Haynes however refused to sit down and eat with the strikers and the Kent women.

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



Fitzpatrick — the army's answer to Nielson

## Killing your 'friends' — that's OK

YOU MUST have seen those films about how Britain's 'lost army' conducted a brilliant strategic retreat — ie ran away — from the Japanese army in Burma in 1942.

There they were, a thin khaki line, all alone, except for Errol Flynn, sweating away in the jungle fighting those savage Japanese who didn't care a damn about civilisation and western values. But it was a job our lads had to do, because weren't they there to save the locals from a ruthless enemy?

Well, in that heroic rout nobody played a more valiant role than the officers who led the retreat from the front. Take second lieutenant Gerald Fitzpatrick who noticed one day that the

Japanese were getting a bit close to a village near where the Brits were camping. Our Gerald decided not to take any risk that the villagers might go and give the game away so he ordered his men to shoot 26 of them.

He did the first one in by knifing him personally. You might think that a murderous thing to do. Well, not really. How do you think the Brits could defend the Burmese from the Japanese if the Japanese got their hands on our lads? So Fitzpatrick and his gallant men had only one choice: massacre the locals.

You see, unlike the Germans who broke the military code by killing their enemies, we were OK, we bumped off our so-called allies.



THIS WEEK Ann Pettifor takes up the debate started by Tony Benn's interview on 'Labour's alliance for socialism.' Ann Pettifor is the secretary of the Labour Women's Action Committee which has been fighting for constitutional change to give women power in the Labour Party.

THE Labour Party, the Communist Party and Trotskyist parties are men's parties; the labour movement is a men's movement. These parties, and indeed the movement as a whole, have achieved their political and industrial power by means of 'masculinist' political and industrial strategies: the strategies of division.

'Masculinist' strategies of division and re-division have been largely responsible for the gradual extension and steady consolidation of the labour movement's political and industrial power; and are based on labour's willingness to conform to capital's demand for the endless division of our class on the basis of gender, skill, race, pay and time spent in paid work. Most dangerous of all labour has been willing to accept capital's demand for a division between those in paid employment, and those that are not.

Let me hastily correct any impression that I am referring here only to the industrial strategies of the labour movement. Labour's industrial strategies of division and re-division (which of course have advanced the interests of skilled, white, full-time male workers considerably) are informed by the 'masculinist' political strategies of the parties mentioned above.

Ironic then, that these same male political parties and strategists should be initiating a debate about 'Labour's Alliance for Socialism'. And in doing so begin the debate by making overtures to those they benevolently define as the 'dispossessed' — the unfortunate groups who are not part of the men's movement.

## Black

Women and blacks view all this talk (and writing) with deep suspicion. They rightly see that white men are, as ever, more concerned with dalliances than with alliances. That as ever, the terms of the debate are being defined by men already deeply entrenched in the politics and strategies of division. And that as ever, this debate is more about finding a role for dispossessed men — in the Communist Party, the Labour Coordinating Committee, the Parliamentary Party and Socialist Action — than it is about empowering the already powerless.

But let us generously put these (admittedly considerable) reservations on one side for the moment and consider what is on offer from our brothers.

On the one hand we have Tony Benn arguing (in Socialist Action 4 May 1984) that he 'personally and for a very long time has seen the Labour Party as the true alliance of progress and has tried over ten years or more to get the Labour Party to open itself to affiliation from other groups who represent different interests — the women's movement, the community groups and so on.' (My italics).

## Analysis

There are some interesting, if unconscious admissions in this statement and analysis, which surface throughout SA's interview with Benn. The first is inherent in Benn's view that the Labour Party is an alliance, which nevertheless has failed to ally itself with interests different from those of the organised, white, male skilled and manual working class. In other words the Labour Party is an alliance of 'progressive' men (between whom there may, admittedly, be some differences in skill, political perspectives etc) who have failed to ally themselves with other

# Alliances or dalliances?



Photo: GIM COOKSON

By Ann Pettifor

'progressive forces'.

What Tony Benn offers here is an admission of how narrowly based this particular 'alliance' is, and indeed how narrowly the term 'alliance' can be interpreted and used.

More disturbingly, we have an admission that the interests of women are 'different' from those of the organised male working class; that in effect women are not part of that class.

## New

There is nothing new in this analysis. Radical men, beginning with, and including, the Levellers, Tom Paine (of 'Rights of Man' fame), the Chartists — through to the male heroes of our time — have always had difficulty in aligning their interests with the interests of the women of their class. Tony Benn, one of the most admired and progressive of those within Labour's male alliance, can only define women's interests as 'different' from those of the dominant group; to which he, incidentally, by virtue of his gender, belongs.

Here we have the politics, the analysis, the strategy of division writ large. For these are the politics, and this is the analysis which cannot conceive of the working class as anything other than narrow, divided and male. Which is therefore unable to devise a strategy which will unite the working class; but most disturbingly of all which cannot conceive of, or imagine an alliance which is an alliance of the

whole class.

However this at least, is an improvement on Eric Hobsbawm's and the Communist Party's offer, most clearly expressed by Jon Bloomfield in April's edition of *Marxism Today*. There Bloomfield argued openly and in unison with other prominent Marxists, that the women's and anti-racist movements are not part of the working class. However, he added condescendingly, the Communist Party tries hard 'to encourage these movements to have a close, mutual relationship with the working class movement, which for theoretical and political reasons' (he might have added 'white male-centred' reasons) 'the party rightly considers the fulcrum of an alliance for progress.'

## Women

He went on to assert that women (we, who conveniently are all thrown together into one pot, in company no doubt, with Margaret Thatcher and Baroness Young) 'are people's rather than class-based movements (and) it is inappropriate to seek to attach them organisationally to the Labour Party. In this sense', he added emphatically, just in case not all of us had been able to sweep aside a vision of 9 million working women, 3½ million of them in trade unions: 'in this sense women's movements are clearly different from trade unions.'

Now anyone who has ever had the privilege of surveying from a balcony

the endless rows of grey-suited, Labour Party-tied men that occupy the trade union benches at Labour Party conferences; or similarly the never-ending rows of men that line the floor at TUC congresses; anyone who has had the privilege of access to such a balcony for a survey, will be in no doubt that 'trade unions' as represented at these conferences can in no sense be identified with the women's movement.

## Unions

In this respect at least Jon Bloomfield is right. Where he is profoundly wrong, and indeed disturbingly arrogant, is in his assumption that these men, this 'trade unionism', this grand alliance, constitutes the working class.

It is however an assumption that was endorsed again by Peter Hain in the 11 May issue of *Socialist Action*. Hain argued in his contribution that the Labour Party has to find a 'way both of rebuilding our traditional class base and integrating the "new politics" groups which have grown in importance this past decade; women, black people, ecologists for example.'

In other words: men constitute the 'traditional class base' and women are part of the 'new politics'. Like ecologists, we have just been discovered by young men like Peter Hain.\*

It is clear that all these men are talking about dalliances not alliances. That they remain entrenched within their divisive politics; and that what is not on offer is the genuine consolidation of our class — on the basis of the unified interests of the black and white men and women within it.

But then what more could one (a woman) expect of a dominant alliance whose immediate and particular interests would be severely undermined if they were to be subsumed beneath the interests of the whole working class? I suppose one could expect these male heroes to understand that there are more valuable, long-term interests for the class as a whole, if we had at last an end to the politics of division and embarked instead on the politics of cohesion.

## Strategy

Political strategies which would begin to genuinely empower the majority of our class — instead of enforcing upon it vertical stratification — by gender, skill, race, time and pay. Political strategies which would not keep women and blacks at arms length, but which would include them in the mainstream of our parties, our movement, the organised forums of our class. Not just as 'the affiliated', but as equals in the struggle against the immense power of capital. Political strategies which would — and here comes the crunch — disband the dominant alliance of men, and replace it with an alliance less narrow, but which empowered the majority: women.

Such an alliance would begin to break down the divisions which elevate the employed, skilled, high-paid, full-time workers (mostly men) and divide them from the unemployed, unpaid, downgraded workers (mostly women) — and would lead to the development of a unified class consciousness that could pose a most formidable threat to capital. More importantly it is the only strategy for dealing with the radically divisive tactics of Margaret Thatcher's government.

## Alliance

Sadly, the prospects of such a genuine alliance developing within our class are dim. Men in the Labour Party and trade unions are reluctant to permit women to make even the most modest advances. They will not, for example, allow the 650 women that attend the National Labour Women's Conference to submit five resolutions to the men's conference — the Party's Annual Conference. They continue to insist on exercising their right — on behalf of the women absent from the men's conference — of electing the women's section of the NEC of the party.

They will not agree to this power being conferred on a body which is far more representative of the women of our class, where trade union women are represented — the Labour Women's Conference. Nor will they even consider the structural changes necessary if there is to be a transformation of the parliamentary labour party — overwhelmingly and oppressively male.

If these modest concessions can't be made by the dominant alliance, what hope is there of a genuine alliance, a developing cohesion within our class? Precious little. Margaret Thatcher Rules. OK?

\*Can I, in passing, refer brothers Hain, Benn and Bloomfield to three books which might help them understand the role of working women within the political struggles of our class. First, Sheila Rowbotham's 'Women, Resistance and Revolution' (London, Allen Lane, 1972); second, Barbara Taylor's superbly researched 'Eve and the New Jerusalem: Socialism and Feminism in the Nineteenth Century' (London, Virago, 1983); and third, Liddington and Norton's 'One hand tied behind the other' (London, Virago, 1978).

# Hodgson's Choice

GEOFF HODGSON has been a member of the International Socialists and several other far-left groups. He was active in the early days of the Conference of Socialist Economists.

More recently he stood as an unsuccessful parliamentary candidate for Labour. He now plays a leading role in the Labour Coordinating Committee and is rumoured to tutor Neil Kinnock in economics.

JOHN HARRISON reviews his latest book, *The Democratic Economy*.

I STARTED this book on a train journey through the Midlands, hoping it would inoculate me against the horrors of the industrial graveyards rattling past the window. Half an hour later, I was wishing I'd brought Agatha Christie.

Political disagreements seldom prompt such a morbid response. I chuckled with admiration at Gavin Kitching's *Re-thinking Socialism* and I would give Crossland's *The Future of Socialism* the Booker Prize any day. Nor was it Marxism (with a capital Ark, as Dury might say). This is the first time Geoff has explicitly abandoned The Creed. But I think I've outgrown knee-jerk reactions.

No. The real culprit was Kinnock-speech: old ideas regurgitated in a prose style which set my teeth on edge. The sub-title — a new look at planning, markets and power — must contravene the Trades Descriptions Act.

Enough self-analysis. What does the book say? Well, it beats me. Every statement is stitched up in enough qualifications to straight-jacket any normal brain.

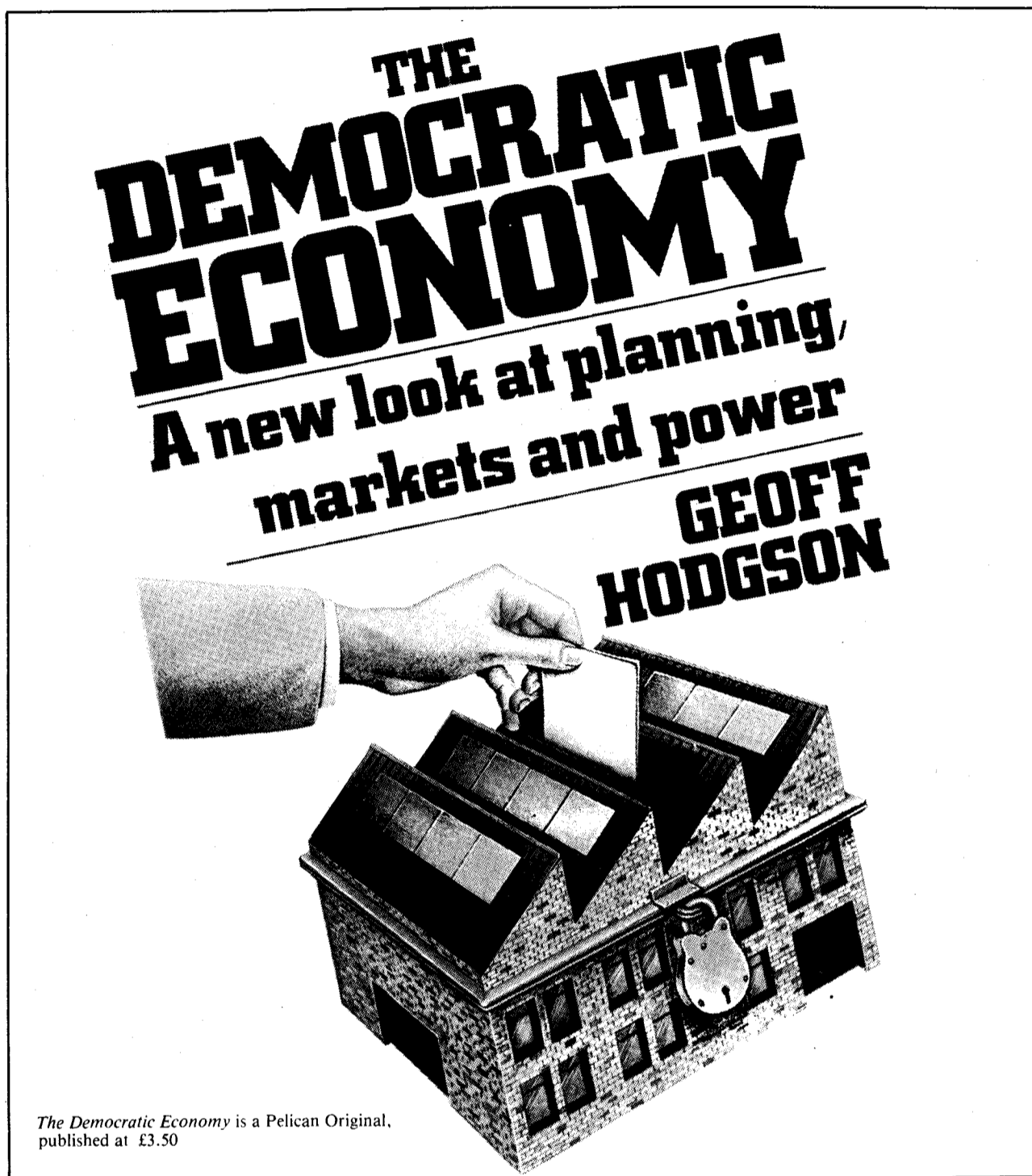
The general drift may run something like this. A branch of the thought police, popularly known as the Wrong Question Brigade, has haunted debate about the kind of society we want off into a rusty siding. Counterposing markets to central planning is silly. We need both.

## Nutters

The New Right are nutters who expect too much from markets. Marxists are mirror-image loonies who expect too much from planning. All societies organise labour and distribute products in more ways than one. Enter the 'impurity principle' — theoretical star of the book (I vote for Jack Nicholson in the movie.) This screaming banality is justified by a quick run through civilisation and its deviations (Roman empire to Joe Stalin) and a theoretical aside on cybernetics.

The way out of this cul-de-sac is sign-posted Democracy (distance unspecified). The notion that economic crisis renders capitalism and democracy increasingly incompatible (the best idea Benn ever borrowed) is naive. Democracy and Big-C interact in a more complex fashion (elucidated via the cliché metaphor of a stormy love affair). So socialism and democracy are separable, though equally laudable, projects. Cue for a fashionable left shopping list. Greenham and Citizen Ken: of course. Gay rights: by all means. Nationalisation of the commanding heights: well... that depends. The stuff of which dream tickets are made.

This may be unfair, but I doubt it. (I've waded through the book twice and the index is useless). Anyway, let's assume I've got the general idea,



*The Democratic Economy* is a Pelican Original, published at £3.50

sit back, pour ourselves a drink, and see what we can make of it.

Hodgson makes some correct criticism of the New Right whilst both caricaturing their ideas and letting them off the hook. (See why we need that drink?)

His good criticisms concern the limits of markets. Some of us enter Sainsbury's with a better American Express rating than others. Nobody's kids would buy fish finger junkies if Captain Birds Eye had never marketed the product and so on. It is a decent, if fairly standard, demolition job.

## Pinkos

The caricature is an archetypal New Righter, supposedly convinced that markets are the best way to organise all human activity. Now, nuts do abound. Milton Friedman's son, David — who styles himself as 'anarcho-capitalist' — advocates private armies and legal systems. His father lobbied against the draft in the Vietnam war (economic theory suggests that career sadists achieve more cost-effective body counts than do conscripts).

But, honestly, Geoff, how many New Righters really want all sexual relations to be regulated by the market? Even J. Edgar Hoover once

lamented — in a thinly veiled attack on the pinkos of the Republican administration — that 'unfortunately, we of the FBI are not empowered to act in cases of oral-genital intimacy, unless they have somehow interfered with interstate commerce'.

New Righters claim to abhor 'political' decisions because they are imposed by arbitrary coalitions of 'interest groups'. Hodgson accepts this smokescreen as naively as those parents who believe their kids are only smoking giant roll-ups.

## New Right

In fact, the New Right has nothing against politicisation as such. 'Taking the state off our backs' is the last thing on its mind, as any NUM picket knows all too well. It fêtes those special interest groups in the pockets of the powerful. What it cannot stomach is the labour movement and the reforms it has wrested.

Hayek, the only really bright and up-front theoretician the New Right has, pulls no punches:

'Public policy concerning labour unions has, in little more than a century, moved from one extreme to the other. From a state in which little the unions could do was legal if they were not prohibited altogether, we have now reached a state where they have

become uniquely privileged institutions to which the general rules of law do not apply. They have become the only important instance in which government signally fail in their prime function — the prevention of coercion and violence ... the whole basis of our free society is gravely threatened by the powers arrogated by the unions.'

(*A Tiger by the Tail*, pp. 66-68)

## Snide

Monetarism is similarly just a device for marketing deflation. Surprisingly, the Bank of England recently admitted as much:

'... it would have been impossible to initiate (Thatcher's policies — JH) with a familiar 'Keynesian' exposition about managing demands downwards, ... But this would have meant disclosing objectives for, *inter alia*, output and employment. This would have been a very hazardous exercise, and the objectives would either have been unacceptable to public opinion or inadequate to ensure a substantial reduction in the rate of inflation, or both. Use of strong intermediate targets, for money supply and government borrowing, allowed the authorities to stand back from output and employment as such.'

(*Quarterly Bulletin*, June 1983, p.207)

So much for the New Right. What

of the way forward? I doubt if Geoff and I differ much about the kind of society we want to live in. I certainly agree that markets have a place under socialism, as do co-ops and other non-state forms of economic organisation. Rival political parties must be free to slug it out. I also buy his powerful defence of utopianism. To dismiss questions about the nitty-gritty of socialism by snide references to 'blue-print deviationism' is tantamount to political amnesia (remember Stalin?).

The question is how can we get there — a trickier exercise than planning my train journey. One issue is the future compatibility of capitalism and democracy. Geoff is agnostic here — anything might happen. I am not. I believe that existing democratic gains are increasingly incompatible with capital's needs and will face greater and greater attacks. Battles for democracy and socialism will become less and less separable.

## Slippery

Geoff's mistake is to view democracy, and other working class gains, as having contradictory economic effects for capital, the net result of which is unpredictable. The argument is an extension of one once made by Bob Rowthorn — that UK capital might have done better if wages had grown faster (since this would have forced firms to innovate faster). In reality, democratic rights and material concessions almost always hurt capital economically. The bourgeoisie introduces them for political reasons. When it can no longer afford those concessions it attacks them savagely.

Another disagreement may concern the key agent of progressive change. Here I find Geoff very slippery. He acknowledges that 'orthodox Marxist talk of socialism being about the dominance in political and economic power of the majority, the working class' is 'a worthy objective'. But goes on to dismiss it as a 'hopelessly inadequate' and to reject 'the worker-centred fatalism of the orthodox Marxists'.

Mostly he refers to 'progressive forces'. Certainly, he fails a number of litmus-tests of support for the organised labour movement, saying of free collective bargaining, for example, that 'arguably it has done little to enhance the power or influence of the working class as a whole'.

## Centrist

Hodgson is clearer on state power. He rejects any notion of proletarian, as opposed to bourgeois, democracy on the slanderous grounds that supporters of the former are inevitably hostile to one-person, one vote national assemblies. On a more down to earth level, he opposes any fundamental reorganisation of the repressive arms of the state, preferring a system of police and military monitoring committees. I take a more traditional view. So I suspect, do most picket these days.

The cover blurb concludes: 'The "impurity principle", he suggests, means that some sort of pluralist economy is inevitable: far from being a centrist, however, he outlines a radical programme of decentralisation and worker participation as the surest safeguard of political democracy, with his emphasis on autonomy for individual and community alike.'

Well, yes. Probably. Or something like that. Apart from that bit about *not* being a centrist, of course.

Guards and shunters conference

# Determined to fight ➡

A STANDING OVATION greeted miners' leader Arthur Scargill as he entered the Bridlington hall where over 300 delegates and observers from the rail industry assembled last weekend. The miners' strike was a central concern of this annual conference of guards and shunters, the strongest section of the National Union of Railwaymen.

If there was one point delegates agreed on, it was that our recently-concluded wage settlement — an increase of between 4.9 to 5.6 per cent with no productivity strings — was the direct result of the miners' struggle.

By Jane Austin, Marylebone guard

As Doreen Weppler, delegate from West Ham branch, argued: 'This climb-down by British Rail occurred because the Tory

government made a political decision that it would avoid a united fight by miners and railworkers at any cost.'

Delegate after delegate expressed disgust with the leadership's acceptance of a measly 4.9 per cent for guards. The miners' struggle put railworkers in the strongest position ever to push forward the fight against the drastic drop in our living standards over recent years. And union leaders threw away a golden opportunity to fight.

But even if a wage settlement has been won, the major battles in our industry lie ahead. Management now plan to drive ahead productivity exercises. They want more work from fewer workers. In the past three years alone, over 36,000 jobs have been lost in the industry.

## Nuclear

Arthur Scargill explained how railworkers are faced with the same problems as miners. 'The mining and railway industries are inextricably linked and 80 per cent of all rail freight depends on the coal industry,' he said. Lance Crossley, Miles Platting branch, pointed out another common interest

— opposition to the Tories policy to promote the nuclear industry at the expense of coal.

'The nuclear flasks are dangerous. Guards and shunters have no way of knowing if we are being contaminated with radiation. The results appear only in future years, and in future generations. As long as we can't ensure safety, we should not go near the nuclear flasks.'

As Daryl Hillgrove from West Ham branch put it: 'The transport of nuclear waste will never be safe. Our safety will only be guaranteed if the Tory nuclear energy policy is rejected and this country's energy comes from coal.'

The number one battle for railworkers in the coming months is over the introduction of a 'Driver Only Operation' (DOO). This 'productivity exercise' threatens the entire grade. Working conditions, safety and job losses are at stake. The message was: we won't have it.

## Lobby

Conference unanimously agreed on a course of action to keep the union committed to take no part in any talks involving productivity.

Rose Knight from Kings Cross No 1 branch, called on delegates to organise a lobby of the coming union conference against productivity talks and DOO. And she called for the guards conference to be 'urgently reconvened should any depot be involved in action against productivity schemes'.

Kings Cross, Strathclyde, Sheffield and St Pancras are all targets for DOO. And Strathclyde railworkers have already staged a 24-hour stoppage in protest.

John Wotton from Marylebone station explained how his depot was doubly threatened. Marylebone is the first London mainline station earmarked for closure. Guards have been told they'll be transferred to Paddington — where driver-only units are planned as well!

Active support for the miners' strike makes us stronger for all our coming battles. Guards are responding to solidarity appeals. A mass picket of Shirebrook pit in Notts, where some railworkers have not acted on union instructions, will be held this Wednesday, led by Jimmy Knapp and Ray Buckton.

The response to the miners' struggle and the commitment to fight for jobs in our own industry, made this the most determined conference many delegates had ever attend-



Left to right: Jim Thakoordin, Paul Sharma, Mark Wodsworth, and Billy Poh at the press conference

# Black Sections - here to stay

THE LABOUR Party Black Section is here to stay. That was the clear message from the Labour Party Black Section press conference on Tuesday 29 May in Birmingham. The national conference of the black section, in Birmingham on 9 June is now set to be a major success and an irreversible step towards the creation of black sections throughout the party.

But, at present, these developments are taking place without the blessing, and sometimes with the direct hostility, of the party leadership. Roy Hattersley, for example has declined to address the conference because he does not support the setting up of black sections.

By Chris Palmer, Ladywood CLP

In his letter of refusal, he writes that they would be 'a retrograde step' in his Sparkbrook constituency of Birmingham. Yet in a constituency in which 36 per cent of the population are black, there are only a handful of black GMC delegates. The really retrograde step would be to keep that unrepresentative situation.

As Jim Thakoordin, Bedfordshire county councillor and convener of the black section steering committee, said black people have remained loyal to the Labour Party and trade unions despite the fact that they have been allowed little or no input into the decision making process. Far from being divisive, black sections have a positive contribution to make to the party, giving black people confidence and motivating them to join and take part in the work of the party.

The fight is not simply for black representation in parliament. Neil Kinnock may talk about the possibility of six or seven black MPs in the next parliament, but as Paul Sharma, black section treasurer, pointed out, that figure should be thirty to take account of the size of the black population.

Rather, the fight is about input into the party at all levels, from ward to the NEC. Nor can it be reduced to concentrating on questions of immigration and nationality. The problem that faces all black people is racism at

secretary, replied to Neil Kinnock's claims that black sections would be divisive and a potential minefield. He noted that the reason for such a division would be the racist attitudes of white people in the party and society as a whole. The party as it stands is intrinsically racist in structure.

## Racism

Now the task is to make the black section a national movement. Work is already underway in one hundred constituency parties, in London, Liverpool, Bristol, Manchester, and Birmingham in particular. The national conference on 9 June can coordinate these developments and organise a constitutional basis for further developments.

● The Labour Party Black Section can be contacted at: 39 Chippenham Road, London W9, telephone 01-286 9692 or 01-221 7050.



Photo: GM COOKSON

Kings Cross station where jobs are threatened

## Teachers

# Out for arbitration?

JUST IMAGINE if Arthur Scargill had called out the miners on a one-day strike, got overwhelming support for more action and then told them to get back to work, bar around 2½ per cent of them.

These would then be allowed to strike each week for three days. But not about a fixed wage increase. All they would be striking for was arbitration on a yet unspecified claim.

By Rich Hatcher, NUT

MacGregor would roll over laughing and the police could go back to helping old people across the road. But believe it or not this is the plan of the NUT for winning our pay claim!

Now half-term is over the token three-day strikes go on for another two weeks. All over the country this has caused frustration and anger among

teachers who reckon they are being held back by their union leaders.

Unlike the miners the teachers' leaders are not out to win. They've put their money on arbitration. Their aim is to win the majority of the Burnham negotiating committee over. But even though the Labour metropolitan authorities are on our side, the Tory counties and the government's direct representatives have a majority.

Now the danger is that the NUT leaders will do what the NAS/UWT have done and call off the action in the cities Labour controls — where teachers are most militant — and

concentrate on the tough Tory shires who are against arbitration.

The Socialist Teachers Alliance is pressing for a stepping up of action and for conditions to be set on arbitration to make sure there is no sell out.

## National

This is a national struggle against government pay policy. Action must take place in every area before the end of term. The NUT must ally with all the other public sector workers now taking action on pay.

The STA is suggesting that teachers join the NATFHE demonstration on 21 June and then lobby the NUT executive meeting at 4.30 that day.

If need be we should take unofficial action to get the campaign rolling.

THE RT HON ROY HATTERSLEY MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

17 May 1984

Dear Billy Poh,

Thank you for your letter inviting me to attend your National Conference on 9th June. I am afraid that I must decline, both because your aims do not conform to existing Labour Party policy and because I do not support the setting up of Black sections which, certainly in my constituency, would be a retrograde step.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Billy H N Poh  
Labour Party Black Section  
63 Chepstow Road  
W2

# A Socialist ACTION

## Step up the pickets

AFTER a week of relative quiet in the miners' dispute the NUM leadership has done the right thing. A massive picket has been called to stop the movement of coke at Orgreave. And a mass lobby of Parliament has been called to coincide with the debate on Thursday.

But the miners have not been receiving the support they could expect from the rest of the labour movement. Last Friday Neil Kinnock issued a statement condemning the use of violence by the miners on the Orgreave picket. There is no mention of police violence, presumably the authorities (as the Sun has dubbed them), the riot and the dogs are all to be expected and entirely normal.

The TUC and the right wing leaders of many unions have made sure that solidarity has remained limited, and in many cases have sabotaged the strike by encouraging their members to scab. This is the case with the ISTC at Scunthorpe. There would be no need for a picket at Orgreave if the steel unions at Scunthorpe

refused to work with scab coke.

But even with this kind of sabotage, the strike is biting much harder than either the NCB or the government cares to admit. That is why there is pressure from some sections of the Coalboard management to reach a negotiated settlement.

But Thatcher and MacGregor are only interested in one thing, and that is bringing the miners to their knees. Even gigantic losses will be worth it if this is achieved, because then the rest of the unions will be easy meat.

That's why it would be wrong for the NUM to place much hope in what it gets at the negotiating table. If the NCB management are feeling the pinch, then the thing to do is pinch harder.

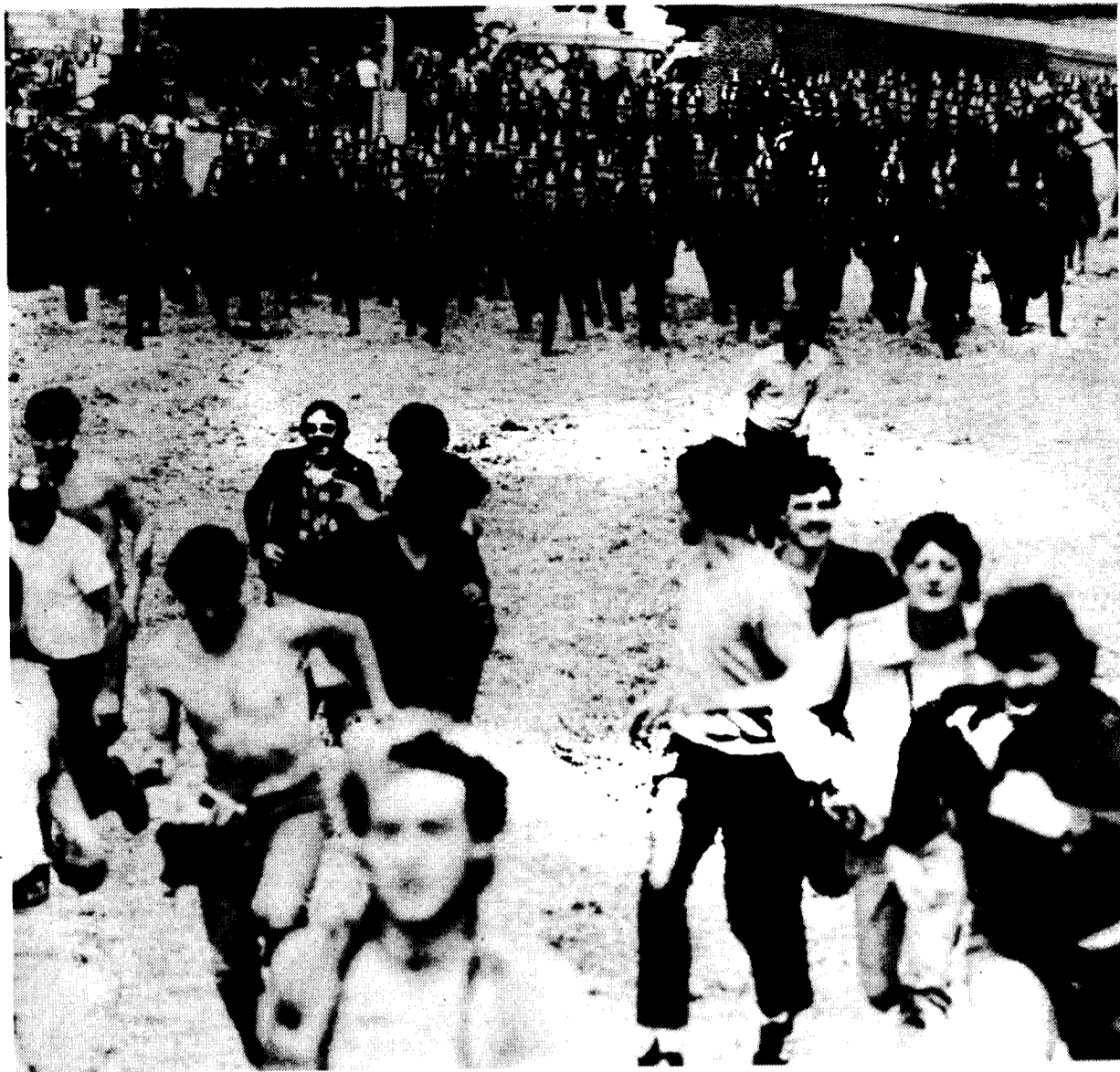
Now is the time to step

up the pressure from all sides. Picketing, money, and solidarity actions are now needed even more than before.

Above all the Labour Party has a tremendous responsibility. It should step into the space so dishonourably deserted by the TUC and call for a national solidarity demonstration with the NUM straight after the Euro-elections.

If Kinnock did this, and urged all the Labour Party's affiliated organisations to join such a demonstration in their thousands, then new life would be breathed into the solidarity movement.

The miners would see that the organised labour movement is on their side, and the NCB would be forced to concede. That's what Labour's National Executive should do in response to the many resolutions it has received calling for such a demonstration from party branches up and down the country.



Twenty five thousand responded to Anti-Apartheid's call for a massive turn out against the racist Botha's visit to Thatcher on 2 June

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## Fund Drive — Off we go

PRIDE OF PLACE this week goes to Islington supporters who have sent us £150 towards their target for the fund drive.

This puts us on the road to our £50,000 target. They raised this money by organising food and catering at a conference last weekend. This shows what can be done with a bit of initiative. And it only involved a small number of people. Many thanks to the Islington Catering Corps and we look forward to the fruits of their labour on future occasions.

Thanks also this week to supporters in Southampton who sent us £10 as their opening offer towards their target. Big or small all donations

are an important step towards our goal. Manchester supporters have told us that they are producing badges and T-shirts for the fund drive.

These are the sort of schemes that local areas can easily organise. Sponsored runs are another way of raising money. Sunday 1 July is the day a supporter is running in the Lambeth half marathon. Sponsorship is going well and it's still not too late if you want to sponsor our runner — send in the money today.

We have made progress in our search for a new building. We are currently looking at a couple of offers which could suit us. Negotiations to move out of our present building are going well. Things are looking good.

You can make the prospects for Socialist Action even better — just keep the money rolling in!

Photo: GM COOKSON