

# A Socialist ACTION

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## Stop Press

As we go to press the executive of the Nottinghamshire miners has ordered picket lines to be set up at the Nottinghamshire pits and for NUM members not to cross the picket lines.

This decision has been brought about by the solidarity of other workers. As Henry Richardson of the Nottingham executive declared it would be a history of rottenness if the Nottinghamshire miners didn't fight when other workers were fighting their struggle for them and were putting their jobs on the line for the miners. The recommendation will also be going to an Area Council on Thursday.

If the Nottinghamshire miners do come out this strike is going to win. The government has put all its cards on dividing the NUM. If that fails Thatcher's entire strategy for confronting the strike will snap.

The decision of the Nottinghamshire executive redoubles the needs for solidarity. If the labour movement can stop the movement of coal the Nottinghamshire miners can be won to the strike.

The recommendation of the Nottinghamshire executive gives the chance to win. The entire Labour and trade union movement must seize it with both hands.



# Solidarity can win!

**THE NUR, ASLEF, and the National Union of Seamen's executives have given a lead to the entire labour movement. By banning all movement of coal they have taken the action that can win the miners strike.**

By defying Thatcher's anti-union laws they are showing united trade union action can defeat the government's policies and the courts. The rail unions and the NUS are doing exactly what the TUC should have done over the rail drivers dispute, the health dispute, the NGA and GCHQ.

But there is still a long way to go to win. The police occupation of Nottinghamshire has kept the mines running. By Tuesday all movement of coal by rail had stopped in Lancashire but coal was still moving in Nottinghamshire.

**The vital task in the next week is to ensure that all movement of coal in every part of Britain is brought to stop. If that is done then the miners strike is going to win.**

The government's boasts about coal stocks are bluff. Once the movement of coal has been brought to a halt then, no matter how long and bitter the strike, the miners are going to

be victorious. Only if the government can keep the coal moving can Thatcher win.

The problem is now to turn the executive resolutions into action on the ground. And to make sure the TGWU stops all movement of coal by road.

Union links and rank and file solidarity have been eroded by the recession and by Thatcher's victories. British Rail is backing the government's policy by victimising and sending home workers who carry out NUR and ASLEF decisions. The threat of the courts is still in the background.

What is vital now is to extend solidarity right down to the grass roots of the movement.

In Dundee the Trades Council has called a meeting of all shop stewards in the city to discuss solidarity action with the miners. In Manchester and Stockport support committees based on support from NUR, FTAT, UCATT and the Manchester City Labour Party have been set up.

These initiatives need to be followed up in other areas. Local conferences of the labour movement, which can be rapidly convened by Trades Councils and other authoritative labour movement bodies, provide a good means of organis-

ing solidarity. Support committees can be established based on Labour Parties and trade union branches.

There are many things that need to be done. Miners need to be brought to speak to rail and transport workers involved in stopping the movement of coal. Workplace meetings can be organised. Collections of money, and workplace levies — as organised at Scott Lithgow for example — are vital.

Before the NUM executive meeting on 12 April the press is going to be screaming for a ballot and devoting pages of the press and hours of television to every ton of coal that moves in Britain. Thatcher's government is already putting the pressure on Kinnock and the TUC to intervene in favour of the right wing.

They mustn't get that chance. By the time that vital executive meeting convenes, all movement of coal must be stopped. It must be obvious that the miners have only to hold out and then they are going to win.

The NUM has thrown down the gauntlet to Thatcher. If it gets the solidarity it needs and deserves it is going to win and the backbone of Thatcher's government will be broken.

# Socialist ACTION

## Their fake democracy

THE DECISION by the transport unions to stop the movement of coal in support of the NUM has given a big boost to the media's concern for democracy.

This concern, needless to say, does not extend to defence of local government or union rights at GCHQ. It is concerned entirely with 'democracy in the NUM'.

According to a MORI poll, published on Monday almost 90 per cent of trade unionists think that the NUM should hold a national ballot, and a national Opinion Poll survey published in the *Mail on Sunday* puts 69 per cent of the NUM in favour of a national ballot.

It is clear that the media will be stepping up their efforts to secure a national ballot in the ten days leading up to the NUM National Executive meeting.

But the concern of the media is not democracy for the workers. It is to divide and defeat the NUM.

The reason for the bosses concern with democracy is simple. Faced with one of the most powerful unions in the country, and with the extension of the strike to the transport unions, they are not confident of victory.

Despite the defeats that the working class has suffered under Thatcher, the British working class is still the most strongly organised in the world. If that strength were to be used the Tories would be swept out of office. Thatcher's only hope is to divide the working class, to isolate the striking miners and then defeat them.

The real weakness of the Tories has been shown in their unwillingness to use the anti-union laws against the NUM. This would unite the NUM and could sweep the Tories anti-union laws away. This is the real content of the Tories concern for democracy.

All of Thatcher's successes against the labour movement have depended on divisions in the class, and the betrayals of the right wing leaders.

The 90 per cent of trade unionists, and 69 per cent of NUM members who support a ballot are wrong. The action that Yorkshire, South Wales, Scotland and Kent have taken is correct. A national ballot would be a diversion from the task of spreading the strike and making it effective.

It is not democratic for miners whose jobs are safe to vote other miners out of work. It is not democratic for miners who want redundancy money to put other miners out of work by putting a cross on a piece of paper.

The media hopes that a national ballot will give them the maximum opportunity to influence the outcome. The present campaign of misinformation has produced the kind of response the opinion polls have shown. The best answer to this is for the miners to build the biggest possible campaign of solidarity. In Scotland Mick McGahey has been pressing for solidarity action from other groups of workers. This, and building on the transport unions' blockade of the movement of coal is the way to deal with the bosses media. The message that the Tories can be defeated is the nub of the argument on democracy. The essence of democracy is workers in action defending their jobs, their communities and the labour movement.

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Photos: JOHN HARRIS



Thatcher and friends

# The strike Thatcher daren't lose

THE miners strike is well into its fourth week. JOHN ROSS assesses the stakes of the dispute for the Thatcher government and the labour movement. Ian MacGregor's declaration last Saturday that the miners dispute is a political strike is just about the only true statement he has made since he became head of the National Coal Board.

The Conservative Party has been politically preparing for this strike for ten years. It has been technically preparing for five years — because the enormous police operation in Nottingham was not put together at only a few months notice.

The TUC leadership has been preparing for the confrontation for five years also — by trying to ensure it didn't happen.

And Neil Kinnock confirmed the direction in which he intends to take the Labour Party last week by blocking with Gerald Kaufmann and Roy Hattersley to veto Labour forcing a debate on the miners strike in Parliament.

Neil Kinnock's politics of the ostrich however will not alter the fact that the outcome of this strike is going to determine the course of British politics in the next five years far more than any election or any opinion poll.

For five years the Thatcher government has won almost all the strategic battles for capital. Privatisation, introduction of anti-union laws, creation of mass unemployment, massive reduction of the Labour Party vote, creation of a new anti-Labour Party in the SDP. These are merely some of the prizes which the Thatcher government has delivered to British capital.

But almost none was important as the victory won last autumn over the NGA, the POEU

SOGAT, and the NUJ.

For fifty years, since the introduction of the 1927 Trades Disputes Act, every attempt to pass laws limiting the powers of the trade unions in Britain has been defeated. The Donovan Commission, *In Place of Strife*, and Heath's Industrial Relations Act all went down to

## Cities

defeat amid mass union opposition and a shower of political strikes.

The defeat of the NGA, preceded by the capitulation of the POEU Executive, and followed by the acknowledgement of defeat by SOGAT and the NUJ, showed that the government for the first time had succeeded in imposing laws limiting the effective right of trade unions to defend their members. It was the greatest restriction of the position of the trade unions for fifty years.

But the success against the NGA was only a partial victory for the Thatcher government and the new framework of law. The victory at Warrington ended the days when relatively small groups of workers, or most single unions, could take on and defy anti-union legislation — as the dockers had successfully done in 1972 for example. Since the NGA dispute all small scale defiances of the Tebbit laws have been abandoned in

the face of court writs.

But defeating the NGA, or the Stockport 6, is one thing. Defeating the NUM is another.

It was obvious even in December that while the government, with the backing of the TUCs new policy, could pick off and defeat individual groups of workers it did not have the power to impose the anti-union laws on the miners, the Ford workers, or on the TUC unions as a whole.

This is why right from the beginning the struggle with the NUM was about far more even than the miners — vital as that struggle is. It was about the government's ability to impose the entire new framework of law it had erected on the whole trade union movement.

## Illegal

Linked to that however is another question. Even the defeat of individual unions such as the NGA, was possible only because the TUC General Council voted to operate within the Tebbit laws. The united weight of the trade unions easily had the power to break any court decision — as the TUC day of action on GCHQ, which was technically illegal, again demonstrated.

Imposing the anti-union laws was completely interlinked for the government with maintaining a right wing leadership of the TUC which would accept these laws.

It is therefore this right wing control of the TUC which is the second decisive issue at stake for the government. Scargill's leadership of the NUM

represents the section of the trade union movement most resolutely opposed to any acceptance of the Tebbit laws. To isolate and completely defeat Scargill within the TUC, and if possible within the NUM itself, is therefore the second key need of the government.

## Example

The development of the strike has already created just what the government feared. The alliance to boycott coal by the NUM, the TGWU, the NUR, ASLEF, and the NUS, is the emergence of the type of opposition within the TUC the government cannot afford. It was already there around the NGA dispute. For Thatcher this left must be defeated now, before it can gain any victories.

In that the government has the backhanded, and in some cases conscious, support of the right wing of the TUC, Len Murray, Alastair Graham, and Frank Chapple's 'new realism' would be completely discredited as the dominant line in the TUC if the miners were to win.

As one anonymous member of the General Council told *The Times* on Monday 'The trouble is that if Arthur Scargill wins, it is a victory for the National Union of Mineworkers, if he loses, it is a defeat for all of us. That is something we must be very conscious of.'

Furthermore behind Scargill stands all sorts of forces in the Labour Party. Tony Benn has plunged into supporting both the miners and Liverpool while Kinnock has remained silent on the miners and let it be known he opposes the policy of Liverpool council. If the miners win Kinnock's position in the

Labour Party will be weakened and the left wing greatly strengthened.

A Tony Benn linked to constitutional reform in the Labour Party was bad enough. But a Tony Benn linked to a victorious miners strike, with a massive victory over Thatcher under the unions belt, and with struggle in Liverpool in prospect is one of the ideas of which capitalist nightmares are made. Go into next years struggle over rate capping and the big cities with that type of combination around and the future of the Thatcher government itself would not be a certain one.

## Laws

For Thatcher she has already suffered tactical setbacks in the strike.

The union laws still cannot be used against the NUM — as MacGregor's retreat on court action against the Yorkshire NUM showed. Scargill has got out on strike a far larger proportion of miners than the NCB anticipated.

The police occupation of Nottinghamshire has kept the pits there working but even that can be nullified if the transport unions boycott of the movement of coal can be made effective.

In the fourth week of the dispute Thatcher's whole strategy rests on the right wing of the NUM executive, and the right wing of the TUC pulling her irons out of the fire for her, isolating the NUM, and defeating the strike.

If just one push were given by the TUC MacGregor's confrontation would come crushing down and the Thatcher government's strategy with it.

# The women's army is marching too



WOMEN of the mining communities up and down the country have put a nail in the coffin of Fleet Street's attempts to whip up the so-called 'women's backlash' against workers' struggles. These women have shown themselves to be one of the most class conscious groups of people.

Let's hope it also lays to rest the sexist nonsense that abounds in the labour movement that women workers are an obstacle to struggle.

When women from Kent marched through Coalville in Leicester last week they explained: 'We are proud to stand alongside our men.' But they were also striking a mighty blow for women.

The NUM can be quite sure that the next time women are marching, be it for abortion, equal pay or equal rights, we will expect the miners' union to play their part, saying: 'We are proud to stand alongside our sisters.'

JUDE WOODWARD spoke to KAY SUTCLIFFE, from Aylesham in Kent, who was at the centre of organising the Leicester march last week.

The idea for the march came when a few women in the village got together to involve other women around the miners' strike. We held an emergency meeting and 40 women turned up. This was our first surprise as we hadn't expected so many. 'We decided we wanted to march through Nottingham. So we saw the union the next day, and they asked us to stick to Leicester as that is within the Kent NUM's area for picketing.

'We marched to the Miners' Welfare Club, and there were one or two groups of women there who were against us.

'A couple of us spoke to three miners' wives who were there. We got them to calm down and in the end they were quite sympathetic. They asked us to go and have a cup of tea with them.

'They didn't get to the point of saying they would ask their husbands to go on strike. But they said they had never heard our arguments before. They hadn't understood that it meant whole areas being closed down with no jobs for anyone in the future.

## Response

'We called a meeting for the next day to find out who would go. 100 women turned up! It was quite unbelievable, especially given the short notice. All the women there were really keen to carry the idea right through.

'We contacted Betteshanger and Tilmanstone, the other two Kent pits, and 20 women from those areas joined us.

'Saturday was a terrible day, the weather was awful. I was so disappointed that morning as I was sure no one would turn up. I was hoping and praying they would as I knew that the Press would be there and I wanted it to be really successful. But they all turned out.

## Songs

'We had decided that we wanted the march to be a women's only march with no men. A real women's protest. The press had already been asking us how many pickets we'd brought with us. We'd decided that the miners who were there should stand aside and cheer us along. Our miners had agreed to this.

'But when we got to Coalville we found that some other organisations were there, like the Young Socialists, and they wanted to join in. We decided it would be too difficult to try and stop them so in the end our miners marched as well.

'Some women came down from Yorkshire to join us and so we marched off shouting our slogans and singing our songs.

## Press

'I think it is really important that women get involved with the strike. For too long the women have sat back and thought it had nothing to do with them. But now they see the whole future of their families is at stake.

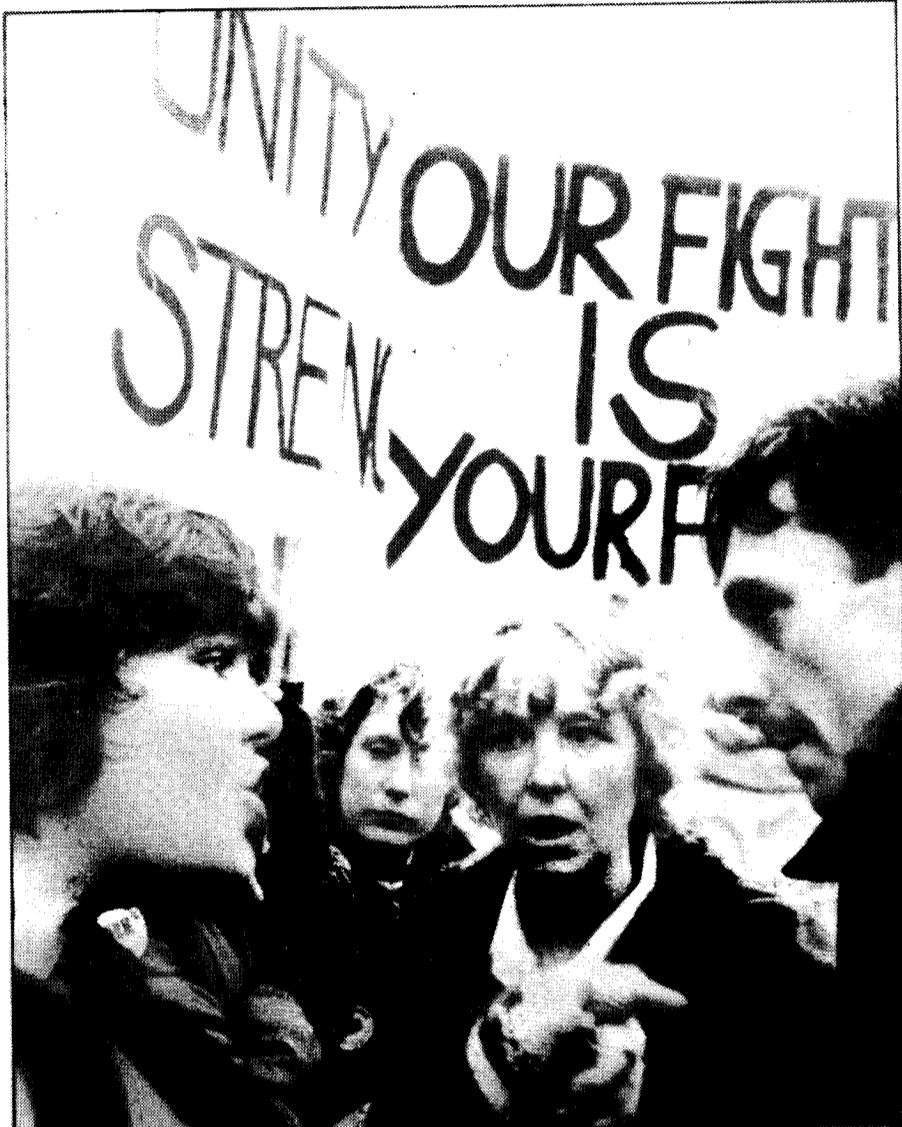
'When we started out even in this village not everyone agreed about what was going on. But since the women have been meeting we've all come to the same conclusion, and it's going to be a joint effort.

'We had a women's committee in the 1974 strike, but it was small and it didn't do this kind of thing. At the time it was mainly some of the wives with young children who weren't working. I had young children then. Now it's different, we are older, we've been through it before, and many of us have had jobs ourselves.

## Future

'In 1974 we were mainly concerned with food parcels. They came in from all over the country and we had to decide how they were distributed and who was the most needy. That will probably be needed again, as the strike is hard and creates need very quickly.

'But this time we've had a much bigger response. We've all to get involved, as it's a much bigger issue. It's not just pay like last time but our whole future that's at stake.'



Miners wives in Coalville make their point

**Don't cover before the press**

**JOHN CONNELL and BRENDAN DAWSON** (Allerton Bywater colliery in Yorkshire, picketing in Lancashire)

DEALING WITH the police is like dealing with an organised army with our arms tied behind our backs. They can fight us, but we're not allowed to fight back. It's like trying to kick bums when you've only got one leg.

The strike's been having an effect, but the government is keeping a low profile to try and keep sympathy away from the miners. I don't think they'll go back to court at this point as that would

bring us all together. If they get us on the run, well then they'll twist the knife. But at the moment it would just win us sympathy.

The people that are determined will remain so, and those who want to go back won't change either. It's those in the middle who count. No one can afford a strike so I don't think the hardship will make much difference to what anyone decides. But on the other hand it takes a long time to save money as a miner, and you've had to work hard for it, so people don't want to dip into what they've got in the bank.

But they shouldn't call a ballot. The executive on 12 April will only call a ballot if they are covering in front of the press coverage.

## Chesterfield women march

MINERS' WIVES marched through Chesterfield last Saturday to demonstrate their support for the striking miners.

The march was joined by Dennis Skinner MP and Peter Heathfield, who showed their support by marching at the back.

The demonstration was organised by the Chesterfield Wives Support Group, and supported by similar groups from Barnsley and Doncaster.

A group of wives from Nottingham joined the march too, giving a tremendous boost to morale.

A public meeting has been organised to follow up the Chesterfield march.

Miners' Wives Support the Strike

Doncaster Trades and Labour Club  
South Bus Station

Thursday 5 April 7.30pm

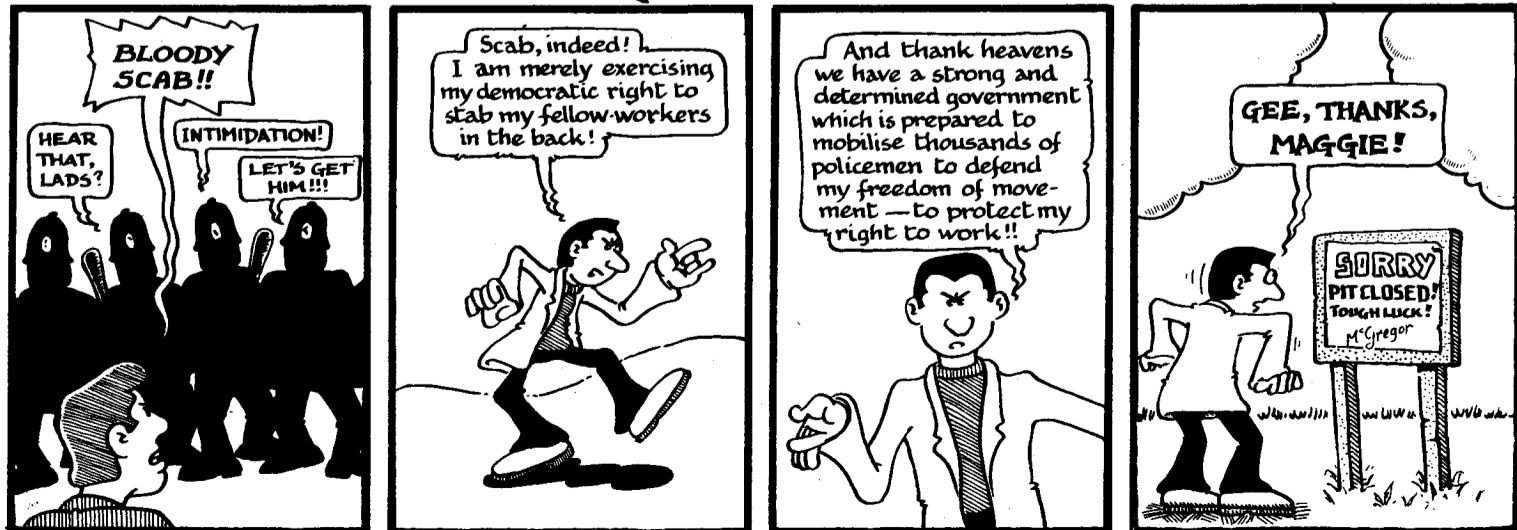
Speakers include: Jack Taylor

Organised by: Yorkshire Miners Wives Support Group



Miners wives march in Chesterfield

## A PIECE OF THE ACTION



## Scargill speech

# "Together we can't lose"

ARTHUR SCARGILL addressed a packed meeting in Doncaster last week organised by the local trades council. He explained the significance of the current strike and what is needed to win. We reprint here the main points from his speech.

'WE MUST TAKE a lead from Margaret Thatcher. The next time that Labour becomes the government we must show the same class loyalty to our people as she shows to hers.

'This dispute was not created by the NUM, but by MacGregor's decision to close the pits. It is a sick society that condemns as hooligans people who take strike action to save jobs and the industry. When MacGregor creates permanent unemployment that's described as good business sense.

'I would like to have a national ballot. The question would be "Do you agree with the appointment of Ian MacGregor as Chairman of the National Coal Board?" But would he accept the result? The Tories talk about democracy, but they don't understand the meaning of the word.

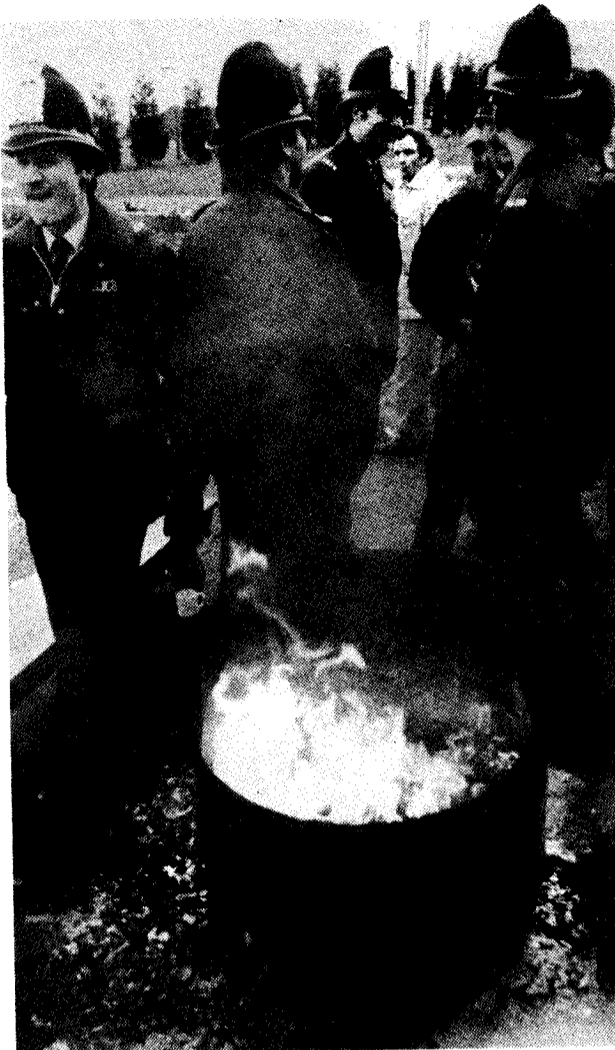
'Miners are fighting for the right to work. Why don't the police protect the four and a half million unemployed? If they sequester our union funds, that will take us back to the situation of the

Tolpuddle Martyrs, who established the movement with no money, but with only their commitment.

'Yesterday's meeting with other unions should not be misunderstood. It was an historic meeting. The decision was taken not merely because they support the miners, but because they recognised it was their fight, their jobs would be under attack next time. We are beginning to learn this lesson. That's why the media is baying hysterically.

'The greatest victory of the 1972 dispute was not winning the wage claim in full, nor the additional items. The real victory was restoring the faith, loyalty and commitment to the union. I ask you to raise your vision now. We are fighting to save the pits, not just to save jobs and your future, but to retain democratic and free trade unionism.

'We are fighting for our rights as citizens and our dignity as human beings. It's time to get off our knees and fight. If we do, together we can't lose.'



## Miners' Strike

### SOUTH WALES

ATTENTION has switched in South Wales to the power stations and steel works.

Following the refusal by the boilermen's union to stop unloading Polish coal at Port Talbot steelworks, the miners have threatened to picket all supplies entering and leaving the works. The mass picket of the steelworks last Wednesday was joined by members of NUPE.

On Saturday a rally in Blackwood, Gwent, was clapped and cheered by shop workers and passers-by. Derek Gregory, NUPE Wales Divisional Officer, presented the miners with a cheque for £5000. He urged all NUPE members in the coalfields to take action in support of the miners: 'There's a greater law than transient Tory law', he said, 'that's the law of trade union solidarity.'

Nearly all coal movement in South Wales has been halted. Llanwern steelworks has only a week's supply left.

One train a day carrying coke was moving out of Port Talbot steel, even after the NUR Wales divisional officer had instructed his members not to move coal. He said he hadn't realised the miners wanted coke stopped as well. That was changed after a picket line went up.

The strike is biting in other areas too. South Wales police were forced to call off last weekend's rugby match as all the team were on picket duty!

**TERRY THOMAS (Deputy President South Wales NUM)**

WE'VE SEEN hundreds of police on duty at the pickets without numbers on their uniforms — there's no way we can identify which force or division they are supposedly from.

They've taken over four barracks in Nottinghamshire for the police. I believe that one of these barracks Rutherford barracks is housing army personnel. I believe that paratroopers are being used on picket lines against the miners.

I very much regret voting for a return to work in 1981 without sufficient guarantees. Everyone has got to understand the importance of united action in this dispute. There can be no going it alone. The Notts miners must understand this and if they don't — well they can dig as much coal as they like but they won't get it out.

### DERBYSHIRE

LAST WEEK North Derby miners launched the biggest pickets in South Derby so far, at Rawdon and at Cadley Hill. Over 1200 miners were involved, including some from Kent and South Wales. Initially this allowed very effective picketing, but the police brought in reinforcements.

By last Wednesday there were about 5000 police and pickets couldn't get near. Dave Crowther, delegate to the North Derby NUM council, explained their new tactics.

'After the police blocked our major pickets in South Derbyshire we decided to change tactics. We're splitting people into small car convoys and spreading out to cover depots, power stations as well as collieries. We're scoring some success in turning back trains and lorries as well as some miners.

'This has been very important in maintaining the morale of our lads. It looks good with the transport unions' decision to stop coal movement. We're looking forward to a good week.'

### OXFORD

SUPPLIES of coal to Didcot power station near Oxford have been badly hit by flying pickets. Kent miners began a 24 hour picket of the power station last week, and have now been replaced by miners from South Wales.

The usual 20 trains that take in coal have been cut to less than half a dozen. Even this trickle could rapidly dry up with the renewed support from ASLEF and the NUR nationally. But stocks are high and the pickets are prepared for a long stay.

The pickets are being put up by workers at the power station, whose AUEW convenor chaired a solidarity meeting in Didcot last Thursday. It was attended by 100 people. The miners were overwhelmed by the support they received in Didcot. This will be extended when Oxford trades council hold a support rally in the Town Hall next week.

## SOLIDARITY ROUND-UP

### LANCASHIRE

WHY were representatives of the Yorkshire miners sent away from Preston's thousand-strong Neil Kinnock rally last Friday?

It wasn't because the local Labour Party didn't want them on the platform. The executive and the GMC had voted that representatives should be invited.

By Mike Martin, Preston CLP (personal capacity)

It wasn't because there wasn't time for them to speak. Len Brindle, local AUEW official, agreed to stand down for them.

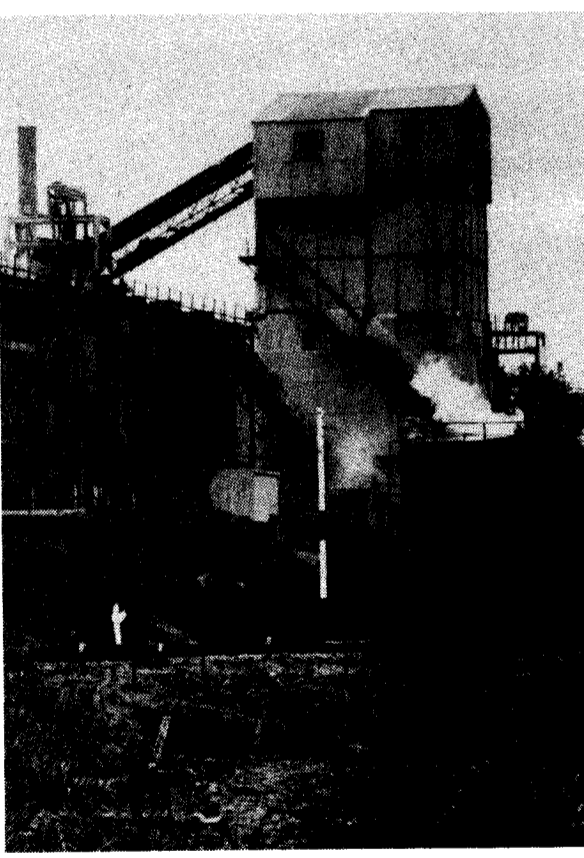
All through the week in the run-up to the meeting the local Labour Party

treasurer, who was organising the meeting, was placed under tremendous pressure from Walworth Road that it would be unwise to have a miners' speaker.

By Thursday it was finally settled that a miner would speak and the Vice President of the Yorkshire NUM was invited.

But ten minutes before the packed meeting was due to start an officer of the Regional Labour Party decided that no miner could speak. 'We might lose the affiliation of the Lancashire NUM', he explained.

The miners were packed off back to Yorkshire. And Neil Kinnock spoke at the meeting without the unwelcome intrusion of the miners' strike.



### NOTTINGHAM

PICKETS travelling into Nottingham twiddled last week as police successfully blocked the roads.

This has increased the pressure on Nottingham miners who support the strike to go back to work. Some miners on strike are being threatened with suspension from their trade union branches. One area council delegate faces a motion of no confidence because they refused to cross picket lines.

But pro-strike miners in Nottingham have begun to organise. A mobile picket has been set up by miners at Ollerton colliery

to take over from pickets who are no longer able to get in. They are trying to link up with other pro-strike miners in the county.

Independently of this 70 miners at Cotgrave colliery in South Notts walked off the job last Thursday night. Colin Atkins, one of the Cotgrave miners leading the action explained what happened:

'Ever since the ballot the atmosphere in the pit has been changing. Now the Notts miners are beginning to see through the

Tories' lies.

'The fact that the coal stocks are dwindling; the police violence they see on the lines and in the community; the fact that other trade unionists are coming to our aid and that other NUM areas have changed their minds and come out on strike — all these things have combined to make the local miners see that they must make a stand.

### Mood

'The mood was building up in the last few

days and it came to a crunch on Thursday night. We had a meeting at work and 70 of us decided to

come out. We immediately set up our own picket line. About 400 miners on the day shift decided to support our picket in a massive show of solidarity.

'We are confident that the rest of our pit will see through the Tory lies and support us in a united stand. And then we will be calling for support from the rest of the area to stop Notts from being a mini

police state.

'We will go and beg the miners from other pits to support the NUM. We are pleading for support to save the NUM from the butchery of the Thatcher government.'

### Next

At the next branch meetings the Cotgrave miners' pickets are putting a motion of no confidence in their branch committee for crossing their own picket line and not supporting the strike.

### EAST LONDON LABOUR MOVEMENT DELEGATION TO THE KENT COALFIELD

Saturday 14 April

Coaches leave Islington, Hackney and Stratford in the late afternoon for Betteshanger Miners' Social Club. Full details on tickets.

Sponsored by: Harry Cohen MP; Jeremy Corbyn MP; Kent Area NUM; TU Liaison Officers for CLPs in Hackney Nth, Hackney Sth, Leyton, Newham NW, Walthamstowe and Islington Nth. Islington Sth & Islington Nth CLPs.

For tickets ring 01-558 0069 or 986 6439

## The Hem Heath stay-down 'The biggest put-up job we've ever seen'

HEM HEATH colliery is the pit where six miners were staging a sit-in against the miners' strike. ROB ANDERSON, who works there, told us what lay behind it.

Four of the men came up last Friday after their union membership was threatened if they continued. There are still two in the Central Stores.

The four who were down the pit are all nightshift face workers from the Ragman seam. That shift is known as a moderate lot. They get plenty of overtime and are well in with management.

The four are very shallow people who wanted to steal a bit of the limelight. They said they'd been intimidated by the pickets, but that's ridiculous. Three of them are very big blokes. One of them, Jimmy Yates, was trying to intimidate us, saying: 'You won't always have the police here to protect you.'

The media blew it up out of all proportion. When the *Daily Express* reporter came up he said that it was the biggest put-up job he'd ever seen.

The NCB put them up to it. It is illegal to stay down a pit for more than 9 hours. When Monkton Hall staged a stay down on overtime the Coal Board forced the men out of the pit by sending the police to

arrest them. There was one law for those men and another for the Hem Heath scabs.

Hem Heath stopped three weeks ago when the Yorkshire miners first came out. We were working on Monday but I went down the pit and persuaded the lads on my shift to stop. That had a snowball effect and by Wednesday it had stopped. They haven't drawn a cobbler from here since then.

Florence, another North Staffs pit, was stopped by last Thursday, and the area executive made it official.

South Staffs is the trouble now. We don't have enough liaison at any level in this area. The South Wales miners put us to shame. They've got minibuses organised, while we rely on our own cars and our own petrol. We'll need concerted mass pickets like Yorkshire to get all the pits shut.

The government is using the police as a paramilitary force and playing it hard. The only way to respond is to do the same.

They'll find it hard to jail 200,000 miners.

# Enthusiastic campaign needed

THE POLITICAL and financial links between the trade unions and the Labour Party are under attack in a number of ways.

Firstly because the Labour Party's minority support in the unions in the 1983 General Election has severely threatened the party's claim to speak on behalf of the working class.

Secondly because, since 1978, the number of trade unionists paying the political levy has fallen from 82 to 77 per cent. In a large union, like the AUEW, only 65 per cent of members pay the levy.

Thirdly because the government's new Trade Union Bill, designed to weaken the finances of the Labour Party, will subject political funds to a ballot of union members every ten years, starting in early 1986.

How do we respond to these combined threats? It's clear that an enthusiastic and effective political campaign is desperately needed. But there are grounds for concern that the TUC General Council's agreement with Employment Minister Tom King will be seen by some as the end of the argument.

However, the real challenge is that the government-imposed 1986

ballots are designed to take advantage of a situation where trade unionists no longer automatically support the Labour Party.

By Derek Fatchett MP

The only effective response must be a political campaign. But it is also amusing to note that this campaign will inevitably draw attention to Tory Party finances, and in particular to the limited legal control over company donations to the Tories. Maybe trade unionists will not only note the unequal way in which unions and companies are treated, but also recognise the fact that employers are eager to finance a party of capital to secure their own class interests.

We have been told that trade unionism and politics are separate activities. Indeed many trade union leaders have subscribed to that division. This naive and dangerous dichotomy must be abandoned.

It now looks especially false when employment is threatened in the pits due

to political decisions; when jobs will be lost because of the abolition of the Metropolitan Councils; and when the whole philosophical basis of monetarism begins to undermine the social and welfare gains of the labour movement.

This list of political threats to trade unionists and their families is almost inexhaustible. This is the seed corn of the political campaign we need.

The essence of the campaign must be to proclaim the natural political link without embarrassment at all levels of the unions. It is not sufficient simply holding a special conference of executives, or sending circulars to local branches. It is in the workplaces, to the non-active rank and file member, that the arguments must be taken.

This means the campaign cannot be the property of general secretaries or full-time officials. It must belong to the activists, and gain strength and commitment accordingly.

Our task is to ensure that each individual trade union organises such a campaign. The unity must be broad, as the threat to the political arm of the labour movement is so fundamental.



Notts miners ballot against company unionism.

## Scotland



MICK MCGAHEY, Scots miners leader, called for solidarity action from other unions 'whether it is for two hours or one day'. He made this call at a 300 strong rally in Dundee on Thursday night. Dundee Trades Council has already responded to this call by convening a conference 'for all Dundee shop stewards' to decide on solidarity action.

The 1000-strong workforce at Kestrel Marine, a nearby oil platform construction works, have already raised a £10

per head levy.

In Aberdeen the trades council is planning a major rally next week. In Glasgow local Labour Parties are calling on the trades council and district Labour Party to organise an emergency conference to discuss days of action and other solidarity.

With all the Scottish pits closed miners have turned their attention to the other sectors of industry moving or using coal. Imports of coal through Inverness and Peterhead will be a major target in coming days.

Three ships carrying coal have already been turned away.

The effects of stopping these imports will be to starve Ravenscraig steel of coal and reduce it to minimum production.

Mick McGahey also explained that it was the aim of the government to eliminate the coal industry in Scotland. 'Let me say had we a Scottish assembly to defend the Scottish people they would not be getting away with what they are doing to the Scottish coal industry today', he added.

**Doncaster demonstration and rally**

**SUPPORT THE MINERS**

**Saturday 14 April 11am Coal House, Doncaster**

**Speakers include: Dennis Skinner MP**

**Organised by Doncaster Trades Council**

**Public meeting**

**'NO TO PIT CLOSURES'**

**12 April 7.30pm Albert Hall Institute, Nottingham**

**Speakers include: Ken Coates (Notts Euro candidate) and Gordon Skinner (Gedling NUM)**

**Organised by Notts Trades Council and Notts East LP**

## Labour Party and the unions Charter

The Labour Co-ordinating Committee has launched the following charter for a campaign to win the ballots on the political levy. The campaign is supported by Socialist Action.

It is vital that we defend the partnership between Labour and the unions and indeed strengthen it at every level. To this end we call for:

1. Active opposition to the Tory assaults on trade union rights.
2. A campaign of activity and education to win the argument for trade union affiliation to the Labour Party
3. The promotion of socialist policies and support for Labour at workplace level
4. The strengthening of local union/constituency Labour Party links and the formation where appropriate of Labour Party workplace branches.

Launching sponsors:

Tony Banks MP  
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Arthur Scargill (NUM)  
Red Tadeo (CWL)  
Thomas Storey (MPS)

WHERE ARE the peace demonstrations in Russia and Eastern Europe?' is a question most CND activists are only too familiar with. The simple answer, of course, is that they do exist — in Moscow, Prague and East Berlin — but that they have great difficulties in making their voices heard in the face of the repression against them. Olga Medvedkova of the Soviet 'Trust' group has just gone on trial; the Hungarian 'Dialogue' group has been forced to dissolve itself; members of Charter 77 have been detained for initiating protests against the deployment of Soviet nuclear missiles in Czechoslovakia; and East German peace campaigners have been arrested, sentenced and expelled to the West.

But this simple answer, true so far as it goes, would be misleading in one crucial respect. The East European peace movements which are independent of the party and the state, are not simply extensions of CND beyond the 'Iron Curtain'. There are of course similarities, such as opposition to the new cold war and the arms race, the prominent role of the Church in some of them and the adoption of certain 'bloc-transcending' symbols and slogans.

But in another way they are very much the product of the internal contradictions of East European and Soviet society and cannot be understood in terms of some spurious East-West symmetry.

By Günter Minnerup

By far the largest independent peace movement in the Soviet bloc, and the one which most closely resembles those of the West, is that in and around the Protestant churches in East Germany.

Almost every major town and city in the German Democratic Republic (and many minor ones) has its group of predominantly young people meeting both within the structures of the churches' youth work and in informal circles of friends to discuss questions of war and peace. They exchange views on books about, and experiences with, militarism, organise poetry readings, musical and theatrical performances, and peace services.

Many of these groups do not remain content within the confines of the church and seek various ways of reaching a broader audience: by circulating petitions, staging demonstrative events (candlelight vigils, open workshops, art exhibitions) or daubing slogans on walls. Such activities tend to get them into conflict with the local police as well as, all too often, the church hierarchy — which is nervous of 'provocative excesses' threatening its relations with party and state.



Soviet dissident Andrei Sakharov



# Peace beyond the Berlin Wall

The sharpest conflict so far took place in the industrial city of Jena where an especially cautious local church pushed the 'Jena Peace Community' into particularly bold public activity: marches under their own banners, demonstrations in the city centre, public expressions of sympathy with *Solidarity* in Poland. Most of its members have now been arrested and expelled to West Germany.

In East Berlin, where the church is more supportive, open air workshops attracting thousands of participants have so far been possible without provoking a repressive reaction on this scale. But there have been some arrests, in Weimar, Leipzig, Cottbus and Karl-Marx-Stadt.

## Greens

Much of what goes on in these East German groups would be very familiar to any CND activist: the serious discussions of international politics and the technology of the arms race, the concern not only with peace and disarmament, but also with ecology and feminist issues.

In the GDR, where West German television and radio can be easily received and where most people have some kind of link with West German relatives and friends, the influence of the Western peace and women's movements and especially of the West German Greens play a major role.

The 'German Question' itself is never far below the surface: the demand for a withdrawal of all foreign troops from both German states and the creation of a nuclear-free zone in Germany, with all that this would imply for the status quo in that divided country, is occasionally articulated quite openly.

What is the significance of this movement? Although closely

associated with the Protestant churches, it is certainly not a religious revival movement. The churches simply provide a space which is relatively free of the otherwise all-pervasive ideological regimentation and party supervision. The pacifist implications of some Christian teaching articulate the widespread antimilitarism among East German youth.

A religious motivation is the only one accepted for conscientious objectors to military service, who serve in unarmed but uniformed 'construction brigades'. Such former objectors often provide the backbone of the independent peace groups. Conscription, together with the compulsory military education in schools — introduced against a wave of protests in 1978 are their main practical concerns rather than nuclear missiles as such (although that may change now that the Soviet Union is deploying them, for the first time, on East German territory).

Military service and the education system are also, of course, the main points of contact between young people and the authority of the state. Rather than just a single-issue peace movement these groups and their activities are an expression of a broader alienation of East German youth from their 'workers' and farmers' state'.

The peace activists tend not to be students — who have too many privileges to lose and are generally conformist — but young workers whose first clashes with authority may have been quite unrelated to the peace question.

Most of the members of the 'Jena Peace Community', for instance, saw themselves as to the left of the ruling SED. Some had links with the long-established 'dissident' current in the town which had already been involved in protests against the expulsion of communist songwriter Wolf Biermann in 1976.



Soviet troops in Czechoslovakia 1968

There is nothing pro-Western in these activities. Those who persistently seek to embarrass CND by asking about the demonstrators on the other side of the Berlin Wall would get little solace from a conversation with any of the East German peace campaigners recently expelled from the GDR (and, incidentally, little more from Charter 77 and others elsewhere in Eastern Europe). They do not demand surrender to imperialism, but a surrender to the people; not the reintroduction of the capitalist market, but an end to the political monopoly of the bureaucracy.

The slogan of the East German peace movement 'Swords into Ploughshares' — a biblical quote, but taken from a sculpture donated to the UN by the Soviet Union — does not translate into naive unilateralism, but into the desire for a world-wide order in which humanity can reap the fruits of its labour without fear of wars. It is thus fundamentally democratic and socialist in content. It is the duty of all socialists and peace activists in the West to give this movement their full and unconditional support.

● Günter Minnerup is a member of the Labour Party and CND, and an editor of Labour Focus on Eastern Europe, which provides in-depth coverage of the East European peace and dissident movements.

Red Square



P THOMPSON's notion about 'exterminism' — that there is a war drive that has nothing to do with the logic of capitalism but has a momentum of its own — has rightly been attacked from many quarters on the left. But much of this attack has focussed on the sociological roots of the arms race. Too little attention has been paid to the foreign policy aims of the West's military build-up, in other words what kinds of changes NATO is trying to bring about within the USSR itself.

Too often people fail to realise that weapons like cruise and Pershing are not just for use in a war. They are already in use at this very moment, as foreign policy instruments for changing realities inside the USSR. The staggering growth of the US military budget over the last three years is exerting a profound political influence inside the USSR and Eastern Europe, trying to push these societies in directions that correspond to American interests.

And as ideas spread in and around the peace movement about 'alternative defence policies' less reliant on nuclear weapons, the Americans are respon-

ding with new strategies of their own, such as *AirLand Battle* which could in the future replace battlefield nukes and even tactical nukes with conventional weapons that would achieve these same foreign policy goals, perhaps even better than the existing nuclear deployment in Europe.

For the Labour left to be able to fight the Reagan and Thatcher governments over defence policy it must therefore raise its own discussion away simply from military hardware to dealing with the left's foreign policy aims towards the USSR. And by foreign policy aims we do not just mean phrases like 'restoring detente' or 'improving relations with the USSR'. We mean also changing the internal course of events inside the USSR and Eastern Europe.

By Oliver MacDonald

For many decades, bourgeois circles in the West have had a settled set of aims towards the USSR, long-term goals for changing Soviet society, and for preventing other changes in it that would greatly harm the capitalist world. We can briefly list some of the main goals of this policy.

The first and most obvious aim has been to undermine those features of the Soviet state that makes it inclined to support revolutions in the third world — the aid it has given to Cuba, Angola, Vietnam, Nicaragua and so on. It doesn't take much imagination to see that what needs to be broken in the USSR for this purpose is the planned character of the Soviet economy and the ideological commitment that corresponds to such a fully nationalised economy.

The West has therefore sought to bring pressures to bear on the USSR — both carrots and sticks — that would lead to the opening up of the Soviet economy to Western capital, that would marketise the USSR, destroy the monopoly of foreign trade and tie the Soviet economy to the West.

A second great NATO aim has been to prevent any positive political development within the USSR or any big advances in the social position of the Soviet working class, changes that would make the Soviet Union more attractive to workers in other parts of the world. It thus exerts pressures designed to limit Soviet social spending and to strengthen the authoritarian institutions of the Soviet state.

The main tools of this NATO foreign policy are military and economic. Since the end of the war, the USSR has been ringed by many hundreds of American bases and has been permanently threatened by huge military arsenals. From this starting

point, the West can then influence internal Soviet developments by either increasing the military pressure or offering to ease it in exchange for the changes in Soviet behaviour that the West wants.

In the economic field, the Americans have organised all the main capitalist states for economic warfare against the USSR — through such institutions as *Cocom*. It can thus alternately offer attractive economic packages that would stimulate Soviet economic growth while making the USSR dependent on Western capital, or it can close off economic links, trying to hit the bottlenecks in the Soviet economy especially hard.

Thus, at the present time, the US administration is using a massive military build-up and economic warfare to ensure that the USSR becomes more internally authoritarian and repressive and to hit the living conditions of working people in the USSR and Eastern Europe.

There is remarkably little discussion of the left about what active aims it should have for changing the USSR. Too often discussion gets bogged down in interminable debates on how good or bad life is in the USSR or on how 'friendly/unfriendly' we should be towards it. But a serious *policy* discussion must start with a different question: what features of Soviet society do we want to strengthen, what do we want to undermine, and how do we achieve these objectives?

On any sober assessment, the USSR is an extremely authoritarian state lacking any authentically democratic mechanisms of popular control over the government. It must be a prime ob-



Leon Trotsky, theorist of the degeneration of the Soviet state

# The left and the USSR

jective of the left to seek political changes that enable the working people of the USSR to strengthen their control over the affairs of state. We want to achieve this not only as a matter of principle but because of the enormous practical impact of such changes on

world politics.

It is surely an ABC of politics for socialist that such democratic development is a matter of political pressure and struggle by the working people of the USSR and the working class everywhere can best exert its power in politics when it is in the strongest possible economic and social position.

## Rights

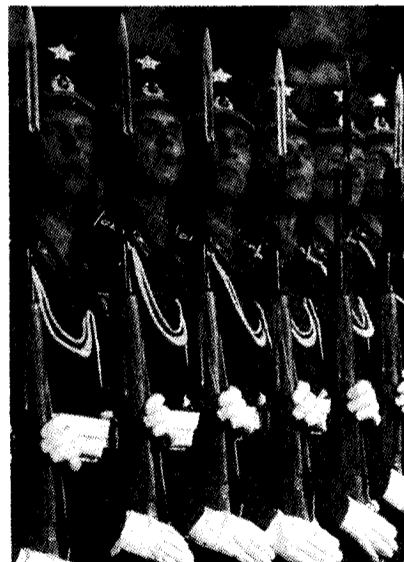
This means that the left must want to strengthen to the maximum the social and economic rights that working people in the USSR possess: full employment and economic security, cheap food, nominal rents, nominal transport prices, nominal fuel bills, plentiful and cheap cultural facilities, an ambitious housing programme, rising wages, egalitarianism in income distribution.

The point is not how fully all these points are at present implemented or how high living standards are at present. The point is that we want to strengthen these things.

Again, this is not only a matter of general principle: the more these social rights are strengthened in the USSR, the greater difficulty the bourgeoisies in Western Europe will have in obliterating what welfare rights exist in the capitalist world.

And finally, the left must want Soviet aid to those in the Third World trying to break out of the bloody stranglehold of imperialism to be increased and not diminished. And this too depends upon pressing ahead with policies designed to strengthen the positive domestic features of the Soviet Union.

So how can the left achieve these aims? In the first place by fighting tooth and nail against the NATO military pressure against the USSR, the main means of buttressing the authoritarian structures of Soviet domestic policy and policy towards



Eastern Europe. In the second place the left must break up the machinery for economic warfare against the USSR and work out a programme for massive, planned trade between Britain and the Soviet Union. There is enormous scope for a huge increase in trade, provided that it is organised on a long-term planned basis. Thirdly, the left must maintain its ideological debate and struggle against authoritarian-bureaucratic models of socialism.

Such a programme could meet with very wide support within the working classes of Western Europe and should be taken up within the peace movement. And those trying to construct so-called 'constructive', 'non-provocative' defence strategies for NATO should be forced to answer the basic question: what political aims do they want NATO to pursue towards the USSR? When the discussion moves on to this ground, the absurdity of notions fashionable in the Labour Party now about turning NATO into a 'progressive' alliance can be easily exposed.

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



# A cottage in Wales

CARMARTHEN LABOUR PARTY has quietly persuaded its long-serving MP, Dr Roger Thomas, that he should resign his seat. This worthy and well respected pillar of the local community was convicted on 30 January of importuning to commit an act of indecency with another man in a public toilet — something known to gays as cottaging.

The £75 fine imposed by the court was rather less than an MP caught speeding fends to get. The difference is that while an MP convicted of drunken driving might lose a driving license, Dr Thomas, who has harmed no one, has lost a career and will have suffered considerable personal agonies.

The leadership of the Party dealt with the crisis in the finest liberal tradition. Naturally concerned about losing a marginal seat, they have pressed Thomas to stay on until the Autumn.

## Issue

The issue could have been the basis for a major campaign against the backward view in Carmarthen that people convicted of homosexual 'offences' have no place in public life. It could have highlighted the daily harassment of lesbians and gays by the police and courts, and it could have taken on the popular prejudice and bigotry which is made legitimate by the attitude and behaviour of the cops and the courts — and also by the silence of Neil Kinnock and his colleagues.

The importuning law under which Thomas was convicted has no

heterosexual equivalent. The so-called crimes they outlaw have no victims. They serve too to reinforce the common prejudice that homosexuality is inferior, perverted or criminal. And they give an artificial boost to police arrest and conviction figures. The Labour Party should be campaigning vigorously for their repeal, not sacking those entrapped by such legislation.

The Party could also have explained that most gay men who go cottaging do not do so because of an innate urge to have sex in public lavatories. They do so because of the need to preserve their anonymity from a hostile public gaze, or because there is nowhere else where they can meet other gay people and have the sort of opportunity for relationships which most heterosexuals take for granted.

## Endorse

It is disgusting hypocrisy to endorse prosecutions for cottaging while not campaigning for the rights of lesbians and gay men to their own organisations and meeting places and against prejudice and misunderstanding.

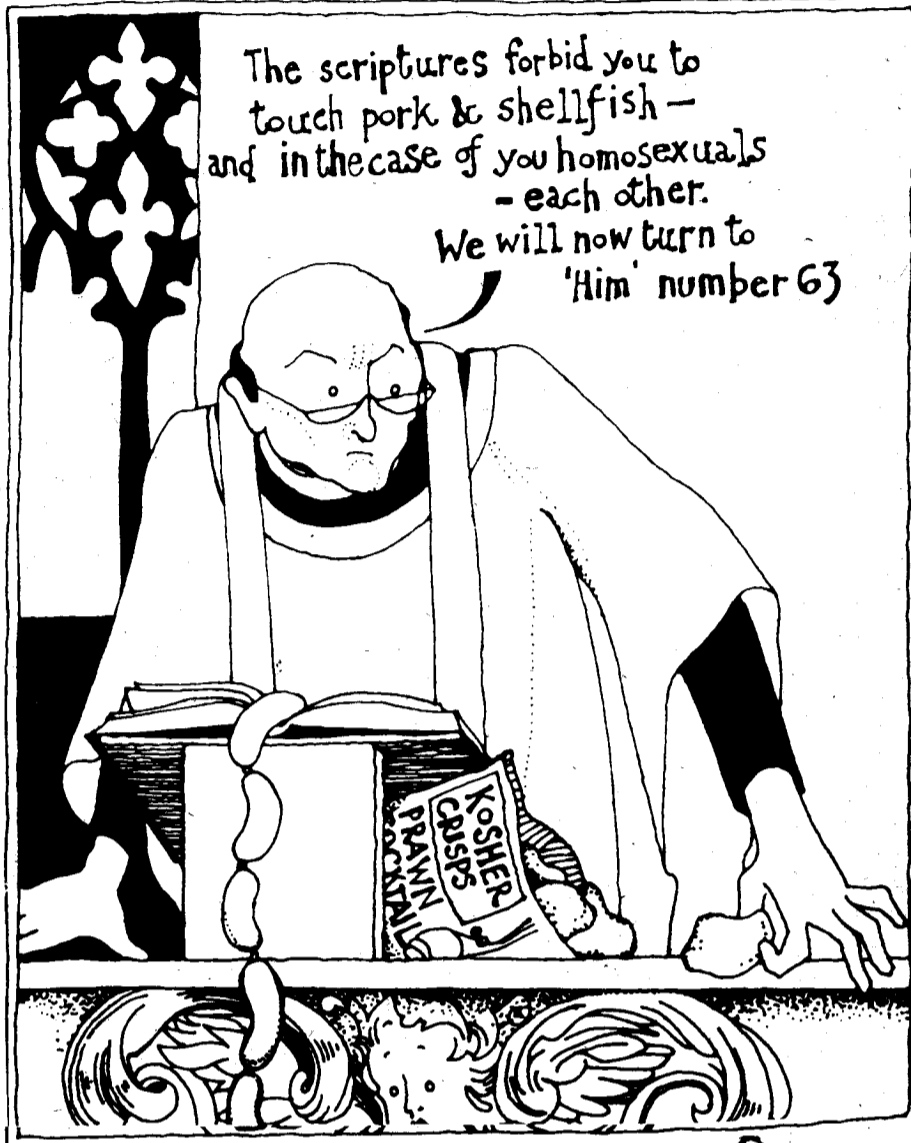
To shy away from these questions on the

ground that they are purely 'personal' and therefore not the concern of the Party is wrong. Not only does it ignore the fact that the oppression of lesbians and gays in their everyday lives is a political question of the first order around which the Party should be campaigning, it also stores up ammunition for the right wing and the media, who have never shown any inhibition about exploiting 'personal questions'. Two other Labour MPs in recent years fell foul of the fate of Dr Thomas, but with the full backing of their local Parties they held on.

## Period

In a period in which further advances for those struggling for lesbian and gay rights has been confirmed by the massive vote for a gay rights resolution at the Greater London Labour Party conference, the sad case of Roger Thomas has shown that neither the Carmarthen Party nor the Kinnock team have understood the issue.

By doing that, they have brought about a major disservice both for the labour movement, and for those lesbians and gay men who have turned to it for support in their battles.



No 13  
**GAY SCOTLAND**  
 MARCH/APRIL

## Labour bows before gay witch-hunt

'THIS EVIL man' screamed a headline of the 25 March edition of the *Sunday Mail* — Scotland's largest circulation newspaper.

This 'evil' man was Ian Dunn, editor of *Gay Scotland* and a leading Labour Party activist.

Buried beneath a diatribe against Ian was one fact — he had allowed his address to be used as a contact address for a paedophile group. The only thing the paper did

admit in an otherwise offensive article, was Ian's denial that he was a paedophile.

Naturally the paper seized on the fact that he was editor of *Gay Scotland* and is employed by the Edinburgh district council. Unfortunately his local Labour Party has not been supportive but has forced him to resign as party agent for the coming elections. The commitment of sections of the Labour Party to civil liberties, never mind radical sexual politics, seems to be paper thin.

In February the Scottish LPYS amended a resolution on gay rights and deleted a section calling for positive images of gays and lesbians in the media.

The Ian Dunn case shows what a regrettable error this was. Now Labour in Edinburgh remains silent against the witch hunt of gay people and removes an election agent because of the witch hunt in the Tory press.

● *Messages of solidarity to Ian Dunn, Gay Scotland, 58a Broughton St, Edinburgh EH1.*

## Deported?

YEARS AGO — when Britain had an empire — the upper class used to send any of its sons who had blotted their copy books out to the colonies.

Now it has to push them off to some car lot in Arizona or Delaware. Mark Thatcher is not being put into 'care' but has landed a job as US representative with Mr David Wilkins of the Lotus car company. This is because Mark is highly qualified and has nothing to do with his family.

The fact that daddy is deputy chair of another of Mr Wickin's companies is just a coincidence. The firm claim that Mark knows a lot about cars — and so he should, he has got lost in enough of them! They also point out that the job requires some business expertise with finance and as Mark failed his accountant's exams he fits the bill a treat.

Lotus is at the moment having a bit of trouble with its figures. The Inland Revenue is chasing them for £85 million — an assessment that arises out of the great dollops of money missing from the failed De Lorean car venture.

Clearly Mark had better not take his new boss to see mummy when Nigel Lawson is having dinner at number 10. Mark says he has severed his links with his old firm Cementation and admitted he was a bit 'naive' in some of his business deal-



Mark: deported to an American car lot

ings. I suppose it was a bit naive letting all those reporters catch him chatting to mam, just when she was batting away for that nice contract.

## Who leaked?



Di: who sold the info?

BOOKIES got suspicious when chinless wonders started wandering into their betting shops and having scores and even 'monkeys' (£500) on

## MOLES EYE VIEW



## On the beat

ALL YOUR friendly neighbourhood cops did was break the door down. Well, they had to get in and the woman who lived there was asleep in bed.

They had gone around to arrest her son. When she told them he wasn't there, what else could they do but hold her to the radiator and belt her? She could have been lying, couldn't she? That's why they left her in the hallway with a black eye and bruised body.

What you cop knockers must understand is that women like

46-year old Mrs Clementine George could intimidate our police when they are doing their duty. So they had no choice but for four of them to beat the truth out of her.

There is only one snag. They had 'no lawful excuse' to arrest her son in the first place. They had evidence he had played no part in the alleged offence.

OK, they made a mistake and now they are forking out £8000 compensation. Well, more truthfully the ratepayers are forking it out and the lads are free to deal again with dangerous people like Clementine George.

Lady Di having twins. From 50-1 against, the odds tumbled and now you can't get one penny on two more royals turning up. Along with the big scandal in the horse racing world where three top jockeys have been accused of selling information this last leak has rocked the establishment.

A full scale enquiry will be held into the royal stables which will take in

gynaecologists and even Charles, who may have flogged the information to get a bob or two on the side.

Me, I still think Richard the Third got it right.

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

Cartoon by David Shenton from Prejudice and Pride





# Bailiffs thwarted at Greenham

A MOBILISATION of hundreds of women prevented the threatened eviction of the Greenham peace camp last Monday, 2 April. The bailiffs were threatening to remove the women in order to make way for a road-widening scheme to make the passage of cruise missile launchers easier.

The women at the main gate and two other gates had packed up their personal belongings in full expectation that the bulldozers would move in, but in the full glare of press publicity, and with Glenys Kinnock among the supporters at the main gate, the bailiffs and the Under-Sheriff of Berkshire declined to act.

At the end of the day 80 women with their benders were still firmly ensconced at the main gate, with smaller numbers at two other gates.

By Kathy Kirkham

Women at the smaller camps have been harassed almost daily by the bailiffs over the past two weeks. They take down their tents during the day and put them back up at night. But last Monday their spirits were blossoming as much as the flower garden they've planted at Violet Gate, as the news of hundreds of supporters at the main gate filtered through.

While everyone was heartened by the turnout, they all stressed the need for continual reinforcement to keep the camps intact. The rapid mobilisa-

tion which tracked and harassed the second missiles convoy to come out of the base ten days ago has also boosted their spirits. But nobody at Greenham doubts that the bailiffs will return in force and tear down the benders. When that happens the women will continue their struggle by sleeping in Gortex bags and re-erecting their tents when it becomes impossible.

Last Sunday's *Observer* quoted the Greenham office as saying that it was 'no coincidence' that the trial of 15 women charged with criminal damage at the camp was opening at Reading Crown Court on the very day of the threatened evictions. The trial is the first of Greenham women to take place before a jury, and

stems from the fence cutting incidents in July last year. The court was packed with women supporting the accused.

Many of the 15 women are defending themselves. After defence objections to the jury, the majority of jurors are now women. The police have until now been reluctant to take women arrested to jury trial precisely because they know they can secure convictions from the magistrates. The trial is likely to continue for at least another week.



## Greenham women are everywhere!

GREENHAM COMMON Airbase is protected by some completely barbaric technology. Bob Clay MP described what he had seen on a visit to the base to a 60-strong meeting organised by the South East London Greenham Group on 21 March. The meeting was organised jointly with the Peckham Labour Party and CND.

Bob Clay described the layers of traps around the silos. There is simulated rifle fire if you get close (this was probably triggered off by some women recently); followed by razor edged wire; nerve gas; knife edged wire; and, if you're not dead already,

you're finished off with automatic gunfire in the inner circle.

By Elaine Hume  
(South East London Greenham Support Group)

Inside, where there's the button that says 'execute', it is clear that all orders come from NATO and not from 10 Downing Street.

Helen John, another speaker, explained that she thought the government's military manoeuvres were backfiring, because they simply inspire more women to fight against cruise.

Angie Low, from the local Greenham Group, described how our activities have grown over the last year. 'Starting with

a few women we now have over a hundred involved. The group has organised benefits and actions in support of women at the base. We're out on the Old Kent Road every time the convoy comes out.

We are now involving a lot of working class and older women in the group and we're endeavouring to involve more black women. Our support from the labour movement is growing.

At Southwark we were given exemption by the

NALGO picket to hold the meeting in the Town Hall. NALGO is one of several unions in the area who have supported us. SOGAT gave us £500.

Every trade union and Labour Party member should be raising Greenham, making the political connections and getting donations for tents and equipment.

● Find out what you can do for the Greenham women by ringing the offices on 01-226 6285/6980.

Fight for the right to know

**FREE SARAH TISDALL**

RALLY

Thursday 5 April 7.30pm

Conway Hall Red Lion Square  
London WC1

Followed by

A march to Holloway Prison

SARAH TISDALL has appealed against her sentence of six months for giving *The Guardian* a copy of a document concerning the arrival of cruise.

In the last week vigils have been held outside Holloway, calling for her release. On Thursday the Socialist Society is planning a major London rally and march to Holloway prison. Speakers at the rally will include NCCL, Duncan Campbell (*New Statesman*), Paul Foot, Anna Coote and Jill Tweedie.

Organised by: Socialist Society, 9 Poland St,  
London W1

## Get to Labour CND's conference!

THE LABOUR CND conference on Saturday 28 April is of vital importance. A new Labour CND committee must come out of it that is as committed to an uncompromising stand on unilateralism as its predecessor.

By Walter Wolfgang

To achieve this attendance of every CND activist in the Labour Party will be crucial. To attend the AGM you have to be a member of national CND

and the Labour Party. So if you are planning to go you should check that you are a current member of national CND.

The AGM will take place at the University of London Union, Malet St, London WC1 and will start at 11am on the Saturday morning.

Registration forms for the conference can be obtained from Duncan Rees, Labour CND, 11 Goodwin St, London N4 3HQ. This is also the address for national CND where you can check your membership.

Make sure you register — your attendance may be vital.

## Italy — one million demonstrate against austerity

ON 24 MARCH the centre of Rome was awash with red flags and workers' banners as one million workers descended on the city in protest at government austerity measures. 5000 coaches, 40 special trains and two ships from Sardinia were part of the huge cavalcade of transport bringing the workers to the demonstration.

The immediate reason for the protest was the plan proposed by the coalition government of the Socialist Party premier Bettino Craxi to put a 10 per cent limit on this year's *scala mobile* — the sliding scale of wages which guarantees many Italian workers automatic wage increases to compensate for inflation.

By Paul Lawson

This year's inflation will be well above the 10 per cent mark — probably nearer 20 per cent. The *scala mobile* was won during the tumultuous working class upsurge in 1969 — the famous 'hot autumn'.

The main organising force behind the last Saturday's demonstration were the CGIL, the Communist Party dominated trade union federation and the multi-union factory councils. Their decision to mobilise is in sharp contrast to the policy of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) in recent years which has sanctioned austerity as necessary. This policy was particularly marked during the period 1976-1979, when the PCI effectively participated in government under the aegis of Christian Democrat Godfather Aldo Moro, through a host of joint parliamentary committees with the DC.

The CGIL's decision to fight the attack on the *scala mobile* reflects a growing movement of discontent in the workplaces since the end of January, reflected in a new growth of the factory council movement.

In January 120 councils, embracing delegates from the three major union federations, held a meeting in Brescia which appealed to the union leadership to take a stand against the new attacks on the sliding scale. This was immediately followed by assemblies of factory councils in all the major industrial towns, and demonstrations of over 100,000 workers each in Turin and Rome.

In the face of the united factory council movement, the leaderships of the three main union federations — the PCI-led CGIL, the Catholic CISL and the Socialist UIL have each manoeuvred to split the movement, to demobilise the embryonic unity of the factory councils.

In particular the PCI and CGIL organised their own local strikes and demonstrations on 6 March with the objective of taking the initiative away from the councils, which involve rank and file delegates from all the federations.

On the same day hundreds of delegates met in a national assembly of the councils. In addition to mobilising for the demonstration which took place last week, the delegates decided to call a new assembly for 30 March which will discuss following up the Rome demonstration with a general strike.



FMLN slogan: 'Your vote doesn't count'

# Bombing offensive after election fiasco

US OFFICIALS are proclaiming last Sunday's Salvadorean elections a major success, but they and everyone else know that the elections were a catastrophe. Many fewer people voted in this election as compared with 1982, despite the fact that voting is compulsory — reflecting the fact that a much larger area of the country is under the control of the FMLN guerrillas.

The voting was marked by administrative chaos in those areas where it did take place, with many aspirant voters unable to cast their ballot. After all the confusion on polling day, the super-technology supplied by the United States proved useless and a large number of polling boxes have still not been returned to the scrutineers. Nobody seriously believes the elections were fair or in any way meaningful.

By Paul Lawson

Still, the United States looks to have gained something from the elections — the temporary checking of the political advance of Roberto D'Aubuisson's ARENA party, a fascist organisation, which has gained mounting support among the prosperous middle classes.

It looks as if D'Aubuisson has received less votes than Napolean Duarte's Christian Democrats, and that there will have to be a run-off between the two in May, when the third party, the National Reconciliation Party (PCN), will drop out. Duarte will be the favourite to win in May.

## Elite

The halt of ARENA's advance is easily explained. Despite D'Aubuisson's growing support among the ruling elite in El Salvador, large numbers of urban workers and peasants voted for Duarte. Forced to vote by law, and in a situation where the left and the opposition parties could not participate in the elections, the poor voted for Duarte to keep out D'Aubuisson — but not because they had many il-

lusions about Duarte.

Western press descriptions of the Christian Democrats as 'centre-left' are wildly inaccurate. In reality Napolean Duarte will prosecute the war against the FDR/FMLN guerrillas with American aid, just as he did when he was president in the two years up to 1982.

## Unit

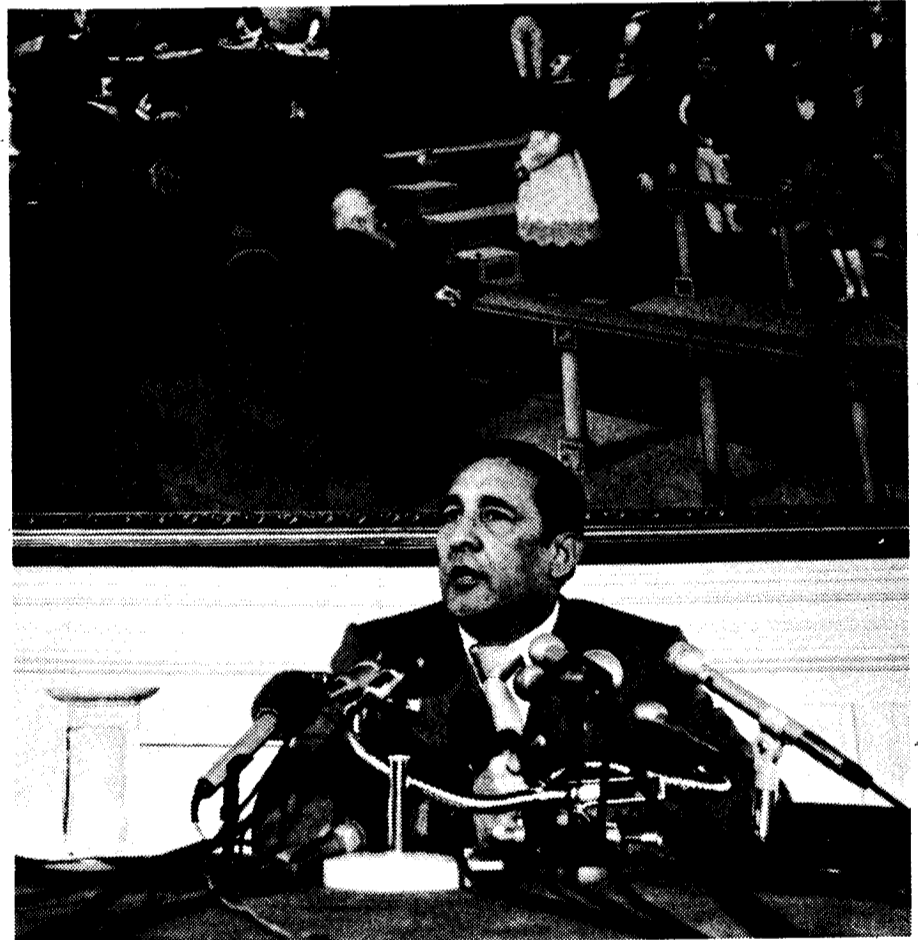
Serious negotiations with the guerrillas are extremely unlikely. The advantage for the United States is that Duarte's fake 'moderate' credentials will make him a more acceptable figure to international public opinion.

The US has been busily stepping up its military preparations, a sure sign that it is not seeking negotiated settlement. At Palmerlo in Honduras the 224th Military Intelligence Battalion has established a 300-man base in a strictly guarded compound, forbidden to all other US personnel. This unit is charged with flying Mohawk and Beechcraft aircraft over El Salvador in the attempt to track down guerrilla columns and summon up air strikes.

## Raids

There is evidence that the United States is urging a new bombing offensive against the guerrillas. One of the objectives of such an offensive would be the saturation bombing of towns known to be sympathetic to, or harbouring guerrillas, with the objective of forcing the civilian population out of guerrilla-held territory. This is exactly what the US did in Vietnam.

Another proposal is that the United States



Napoleon Duarte

## Soviets offer 'no attack' deal to Holland

CASPAR WEINBERGER, the US Defence Secretary, flew to the Hague last week to put pressure on the Dutch government to accept the proposed deployment of 48 cruise missiles on Dutch territory.

The Christian Democrat party, which is the dominant party in the ruling coalition government, has been badly split on the issue of deployment. The Liberals, the other coalition partner are however strongly in favour of deployment. (?)

While US pressure on the Dutch government has increased, the USSR intervened in the dispute by guaranteeing never to make a nuclear attack on Holland if the missiles are not deployed.

The Labour opposition is totally against the deployment of the missiles, and there is no doubt that they represent the majority. Last October more than 500,000 people turned out for the anti-missile demonstration in the Hague, an extraordinary number for a small country like Holland.

should supply CIA pilots for air strikes. Already they have the capacity to use their facilities in Honduras to mount such air raids. On 1 April a major new military exercise involving upwards of 5000 American troops starts in Honduras — Grenadero I. If the US intends to start committing its own personnel, openly or covertly, to the Salvador war, then they will certainly come from the thousands of US servicemen in Honduras.

Last week 250 soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division parachuted into Honduras from C-130 transport planes. Whether they were training for El Salvador or Nicaragua wasn't certain. What is certain is that the increasingly huge US commitment to Honduras is not there for show.

# Campaigning for Jobs & Services

## LIVERPOOL - A SOCIALIST COUNCIL

### All the way with Liverpool

THE LIVERPOOL CITY council meeting last week is a beacon on the dark sea of Thatcher's punitive local government laws — a symbol of Democracy Day 1984.

Despite government threats supported by Liverpool's Liberal and Tory parties alike, and capitulation from the top ranks of Labour's own leadership, 42 councillors stood firm on a budget to fulfill the necessary and popular promises which brought them to power last May.

The city is rightly proud of its council's stand. Offering a lame amendment to bring the budget into line with Tory restrictions, Liberal Sir Trevor Jones called Labour's proposals 'a propaganda exercise' and an 'expensive charade'. The Liberals led a miserably unsuccessful attack on the Labour councillors drawing council allowances to the 'tune of £7000 a year'.

'Derek Hatton was the best paid Marxist in the country' claimed one Liberal. 'Aye and he is worth every penny' shouted a woman from the public gallery to the cheers of the meeting. 'The Labour Party we see in Liverpool today is the Labour Party nationally in 10 years' another Liberal claimed. This 'prophecy' brought a standing ovation from the public gallery.

Despite the obvious support for Labour's proposals, six Labour renegades — the seventh was 'sick' that day — one Liberal, and the Tories, supported an amendment to defer the decision and reconsider 'making a legal and acceptable rate' which would allow the council to re-open futile discussions with the Department of the Environment.

Both Liberals and Tories have requisitioned a special council meeting to re-discuss the budget. This obliges Labour to set a date for that meeting within seven days. But it allows the choice of when it takes place.

Confident in the popularity of their policies Labour will opt for a meeting after this year's May elections. Labour candidates are already pledged to support that same budget. With the authority of public opinion behind them the new council will be in an even

stronger position to stand out against government threats.

So far Liverpool lacks the whole hearted support it deserves. Many prominent Labour lefts remain evasive about it. They offer weak moral support. But they are quick to point out there is nothing practical they can do. This is not true. It leaves them an avenue to retreat when the fight starts in earnest.

If Liverpool doesn't get the support of all the labour movement it will go down. Derek Hatton, Labour's deputy leader in Liverpool summed up this position when he said: 'When they came for the Jews I did nothing; when they came for the trade unionists I did nothing; when they came for me there was no one left to protect me'.

Front-line Labour councils next year will be facing what Liverpool faces today. Without the resistance of all the labour movement they will go down. Between now and the local elections it is in their interests that Labour builds the maximum support for Liverpool.

Labour parties, local authority trade unions and local Labour council groups acting together can bring the needed pressure on the Labour Party to make it act against all Thatcher's anti-working class and anti-democratic legislation. This means supporting all those in the labour movement who have stepped outside the Tory laws to defend their interests and their democratic rights.

It means support for the miners' pickets. It means support for those refusing to move scab coal. And it means going down to the end of the road with Liverpool city council.



Photo: CARLOS AUGUSTO GUARITA

### Liverpool rallies behind its council

THOUSANDS OF LIVERPOOL workers marched on the Town Hall last Thursday in a tremendous show of solidarity with the stand of the City council against the Tories' local government axe which has fallen on money vital to the city.

Hundreds of local trade union and Labour Party banners were on display as Liverpool's Labour MPs and city and county councillors, arms linked, marched round the city.

The bulk of the city council workforce took strike action on Democracy Day. They were joined by contingents of county council workers and a large delegation of Liverpool dockers, 2500 of whom had struck in solidarity, along with representatives from local car plants. Printworkers, engineers and electrical workers. Two delegations of miners from Lancashire and Yorkshire also joined the demonstration.

Traffic was forced to a halt as the march snaked its way around the shopping centre, forming at one point a circular cordon which embraced Lime Street and the St George's

precinct before moving down Whitechapel for a rally outside the Town Hall. Deputy council leader, Derek Hatton told a cheering crowd: 'The Labour Party isn't here to do Thatcher's dirty work for her.' Liverpool MP Terry Fields likened the council's stand to 'that taken by Poplar in the twenties'.

By Tim Rigby

Referring to Neil Kinnock's strictures to stay within the law, he reminded the rally that such a plea was 'as bankrupt today as it was then...' Eric Heffer another Liverpool MP and

London says:

### Take the Liverpool road

JUDE ARKWRIGHT a member of Finsbury Park branch of the NUR and PATRICK SIKORSKI a member of that union's London district committee, tell Socialist Action what happened on London Transport around the Day of Action and say what they think should happen next. Both are speaking in a personal capacity.

THE STRIKE on 28 March had much wider support than people expected. Why was this?

Judith: There has been a build-up of dissatisfaction in LT over the last year or so. We have a much more aggressive management who take lots of petty disciplinary action. There is a growing feeling that this is due to the preparation for the transfer.

Under Weighell there was no leadership. Since Knapp was elected the activists have had more confidence and have begun to come to the fore. We have a left-led District Council which has given a lead and fought for it. The DC has built mass meetings, organised flying pickets, and so on.

Patrick: Since the defeat in '82 there has been a big reorganisation of the unions. With Knapp, there has been a real development of cooperation between the unions in LT. This is the first year that the NUR and ASLEF have made a joint submission on the pay claim.

There have been joint branch meetings, and cooperation between militants at the depots. The London Transport Trade Union Committee, which embraces all the LT unions, has been set up. The main political reason however was the GLC propaganda campaign — this made it clear that 16-20,000 jobs were under threat. And promises about no compulsory redundancies were worthless.

Judith: The GLC leaders say that some things are matters for the unions. This is a cop-out. It should give a clear lead to the unions. It should take the Liverpool road, and involve the Labour Group, the Regional LP, and the unions — particularly the rank and file leadership.

Now what?

Judith: LT gave a clear lead on the week of action. The success of the strike has been a big boost for the unions. The next step is for the different unions in the GLC to get together to plan out a strategy for defending London against the Tories. I think such a conference needs to adopt the LTTUC policy of opposition to all redundancies, and break up of GLC.

Patrick: This should be the basis for a conference of all the unions

affected by the Tory plans, GLC, ILEA, local authorities, LT to defend jobs and services.

There is a resolution from the NUR DC (LT) at the regional executive of the LP calling for a conference of the London labour movement. This needs to be pushed in every area.

The DC reorganised in this period. It used to be a very routine body, a bit like a glorified branch. It has drawn in activists, built a shop stewards system, and it has campaigned for recruits to the Labour Party. This has given the membership confidence.

Judith: Some of the response was due to the Tory attacks on the unions. There was an element of loyalty. The Victoria line has never been shut down before in strikes. We used the Scott-Lithgow example to explain that they would be the first for privatisation. This had a big effect.

Did the GLC campaign around Democracy Day have much effect?

Patrick: The members saw the GLC policies over cheap fares as reversing a long decline. Cheap fares has meant more passengers, and this has at least given partial protection to jobs.

Judith: The strike call was seen by the members as tied up with the GLC campaign and was easier to build for that reason. Leafletting the 33 stations and 34 bus routes that would be lost helped to build up the feeling of wide support.

The initial call was for strike on the 29th, but the TUC stepped in to change that to the 28th. I think it should have been the 29th, because only strike action will defend jobs and services.

The GLC campaign has a big impact. The building up of local branch leaderships was also essential. At Finsbury Park we got Ken Livingstone to speak. He had a big impact.

Patrick: Under the GLC there has been an erosion of jobs, with one person operation on buses and tubes. The GLC has mainly concerned itself with cheap fares. This is good, but it does not protect jobs. The GLC, if it is to defeat the Tories, will need to rely on the work force.

I SUPPORT LIVERPOOL LABOUR COUNCIL



# A Socialist ACTION

**John Hamilton speaks for Liverpool**

**LIVERPOOL'S COUNCIL leader JOHN HAMILTON told the council meeting last Thursday:**

"If we are to maintain services, avoid redundancies and at the same time fail to levy the income by applying heavy rate burdens to meet this expenditure we are told with all the force and majesty of British law that this is illegal.

Yet the government can arbitrarily remove £20 million of grants from this city since 1979 and this is both legal and justified.

When you help to relieve unemployment and provide services for those in need. When you attempt to eradicate the justified criticism that our housing standards are too low. When you try to meet the needs of those who are desperately seeking housing accommodation and are not in a position to buy a house, and when you wish to add a touch of colour and brightness and provide for proper maintenance of the buildings — we are told we are overspending and reckless with money.

What is illegality? Since when in this country has it become illegal to help the poor and the unemployed? In Tory Britain it has now become a crime to provide a house for the homeless. It is wrong to help the aged and the sick. To spend money on housing is a crime.

Let us take all our tanks, guns and all the other things we have in store of the arms and munitions industry and bring this Labour Government to a halt in this country — stop.

Do not continue down the path you are going, because it will end in economic disaster and social disorder.

For other articles on Liverpool see page 11.

Greenham

# Evict cruise not the peace camp



**BAILIFFS WERE** successfully turned back from their attempt to evict the camp at the main gate to Greenham Airbase last Monday. But that doesn't mean the threat of eviction has gone.

The bailiffs had the equipment and the back up to make the eviction on Monday if they had wanted to. It's clear the decision to back off was essentially tactical. They didn't want to be seen pulling the camp to pieces under the eyes of the world's press.

There were more than 200 women at the main gate ready to resist the eviction and that would have meant using the police for large scale arrests. Again not something they wanted to do with too many people looking on.

But they will be back. So the mobilisation of women down to the camp has to be kept up over the coming days.

Of course eviction won't end the camp. There have been evictions before and the camp has surviv-

ed. This time will be no different.

Women have already said that they are prepared to stay there in Gortex bags until the benders can be got up again. And with the weather improving it will be possible to maintain the camp.

But they are bound to step up the harassment. The success of women at the camp in disrupting the cruise convoy last week indicates the reason. Now that cruise is there the camp becomes much more potentially disruptive to their plans. The pressure is

going to pile onto the camp from all directions.

That's why all possible support must get down to the camp itself — women and materials. And it's also why the protest actions round the country must be stepped up.

London women who want to protest against the evictions should get to Leicester Square for 2pm on Saturday 7 April.

Contact your local Greenham group or CND to find out about transport to the camp and local actions.

The camp must stay!

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The response to our appeal for the fund drive two weeks ago has been good — but it needs to be stepped up. Sales are beginning to increase and many areas are asking for more papers to sell on the picket lines, at Labour Party meetings and trade union branches.

The next week will be crucial for the miners strike with six other unions pledging solidarity. We've covered the key areas — solidarity reports have been coming in as we go around the country with the miners. But money from sales is not enough.

We need commitments from our readers on a regular basis. If the Guardian is worth 23 pence a

day — look what it did to Sarah Tisdall — surely we are worth a £1.15 donation! Money is a problem for us — its no problem for the Tories forcing local authorities to finance thousands of para-military style cops to defend the right of scabs to work. No problem there about councils overspending.

There's no need to worry about what happens to your money when it goes to us. It goes to improving and developing our paper — a paper written for and supported by the labour movement.

Support Socialist Action. Help us to continue to reach the people who matter. Take out a subscription to add to those we've had this week. Send your money today.

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