

A Socialist ACTION



**“For
a TUC as
loyal to the
miners
as the
CBI is
to
Thatcher”**

Socialist ACTION

For a TUC ...

RIGHT FROM the beginning of the miners strike only one force could save the Thatcher government from defeat. It wasn't the police. It wasn't the courts. It was the leadership of the TUC and Labour Party.

Every instrument of the capitalist class has been totally mobilised in this struggle. The popular press have poured out lie after lie on the dot every day. The television, with only a tiny handful of honourable exceptions, has served simply as a propaganda machine for the government.

What has startled some people even more has been the police and courts — supposedly 'neutral' instruments of the state. The police have acted as hired bully boys and thugs — as every serious survey has shown. The courts are an open mockery of justice, grinding out whatever decisions the government requires for its day to day tactics. Just work out beforehand what ruling would suit the interests of Thatcher and you will know in advance what the court's judgement will be. That is the level of British 'justice' today in this strike.

Democracy

What the miners' strike brings out into the open is simply what Marxists have always claimed. That our society is the dictatorship of capital. That opposition is permitted, and 'fair play' graciously granted by the courts and state, provided that no fundamental interest of capital is threatened. But if you threaten a really basic policy or interest of capitalism then the pretence of democracy is more and more openly abandoned. Then the 'neutral' cover is replaced by the iron hand of repression and state violence. The mechanism really is that simple.

But despite all this Thatcher still does not have the mechanisms to win this strike herself. In the first docks strike, around the TUC Congress, and at the time of the NACODS threat to strike the government has been sent spinning. With any determined effort by the TUC and Labour leadership the strike would have been won by now.

But what a total contrast between the total mobilisation of capital behind Thatcher and the miserable wretchedness of the leadership of the Labour movement! The media, police, and courts have hammered out their lies, brutality and injustice every single day. But where have Neil Kinnock and Norman Willis been?

Just let the police attack a picket line with the leader of 'Her Majesty's Opposition' on it. Effective action at only 13 power stations would win this strike. Norman Willis could address meetings at every single one personally with only that number involved! Send a general council member to each almost!

For while Thatcher has mobilised her class for war, Kinnock, Willis, Sirs et al have left their class completely disarmed. No ringing declarations of support for the miners from them. And in the case of Sirs, Hammond and others there is open scabbing — with no open denunciation from the TUC at all.

Militant

The shock troops of Thatcher have been met by the TUC and Labour Party leadership by a load of weeping, whining, moaners. No wonder Thatcher has such open contempt for the Labour leadership. She judged accurately and precisely the miners would never be able to rely on the leaders of the labour movement in the way in which she could totally depend on her forces. A mistress always understands the tricks of her performing seals.

The steps to win the strike remain clear and simple

- Full implementation of TUC decisions on boycott of coal.
- Total mobilisation of the labour movement in support of the miners.

With those steps Thatcher could be defeated easily and with certainty.

As Scargill said the goal must be a TUC, a Labour Party, as loyal to our class as Thatcher is to hers. That is a struggle that will have to be waged not only in this strike but for a very long time afterwards.

The fight to deliver victory to the miners is only its beginning.

How the TUC can put out the lights

THIS WEEK the right wing in the TUC was stepping up its pressure to get TUC Congress decisions on support for the miners reversed. The reason is simple. Despite government propaganda the 'back to work movement' has not broken the strike in the key areas.

If TUC guidelines continue to be operated the miners are going to put the lights out — and with it gain victory. If the NUM holds the solid core of the strike together, as it is doing then only a climbdown by the TUC can win for the government.

PAUL DWYER looks at the new GLC commissioned report on the situation in the power stations.

The great back to work drive by the government, the NCB, and the media has failed. Even the figures presented by the media show this. With a maximum of 10,000 accepting the Christmas bribe the core areas of the strike are solid.

It is this which is the decisive question for the Tories. Because even if coal production in the Midlands rises to levels above those at the beginning of the strike then, power cuts are still on the way.

The reason is that the Yorkshire power stations account for almost 20 per cent of the Central Electricity Generating Board's (CEGB) capacity, and regional imbalances of stocks are more important than total stocks in determining the ability to keep supplies going without cuts.

The CEGB at present is making every effort to keep its burning of coal at a minimum. A recent report, prepared by the GLC Industry and Employment Branch, predicts that power cuts are likely sometime between late December and the end of January. This is despite the attempt of the CEGB to utilise every alternative source of power to coal.

As the GLC report notes, 'apart from running its oil stations at maximum output the CEGB is reportedly using the light-up burners, which are fuelled by expensive light oil, on a permanent basis at some of its coal stations.'

The use of the light-up burners demonstrates the problem faced by the CEGB. The basic fact is that normally 75 per cent of electricity in the UK is generated by coal. The whole electricity supply in-

dustry is geared around this. Therefore no matter what substitutes for coal the government uses at the moment — nuclear, oil, hydro-electric — coal is vital.

Equally vital is where the coal stocks are situated. The TUC guidelines following the September '84 Congress are:

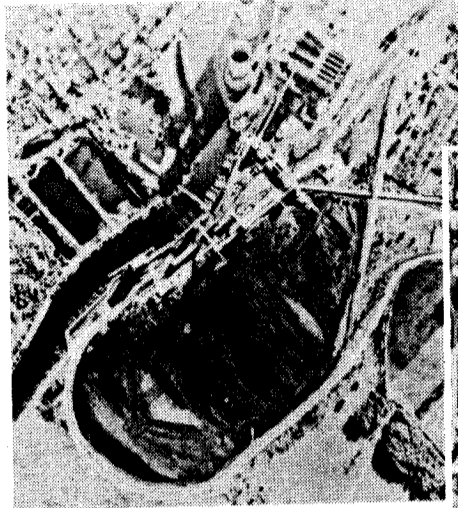
- not to engage in, or facilitate, the distribution or delivery of coal to power stations;
- not to handle coal transport between power stations;
- not to handle new deliveries of coal to power stations, including imported coal;
- not to handle imported coal at CEGB docks and wharves;
- not to handle additional oil to be used as a substitute for coal.

The GLC report notes that 'if these guidelines were even half-heeded there is little doubt that the ESI (Electricity Supply Industry) would be unable to guarantee the maintenance of supplies in anything but the short term.'

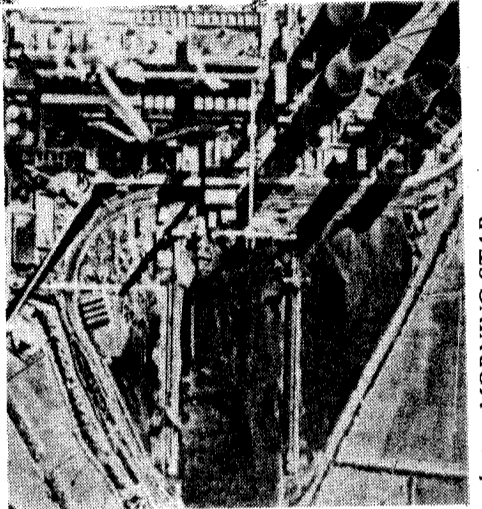
TUC

The government will have to either import coal on a huge level, or it will have to move coal from strike-bound pits to power stations in Yorkshire and the South-east, if supplies are to be maintained. Coal supplies can be maintained to Midlands power stations, but outside of that area, particularly in Yorkshire, levels of coal stocks will reach the operational minimum during January.

Moving coal to the power stations on the level required will be a huge operation. In the peak month, February, it would mean shifting about



Fast-dwindling coal stocks at Ferrybridge (above) and Drax (left)



photos: MORNING STAR

630,000 tonnes a week, and require 2,400 lorries travelling about 2.9 million lorry miles. A determined stand by the TUC would make this impossible.

Power stations which have voted not to accept new supplies of coal

Station	Area	Capacity (MWso)	Cumulative Capacity (MWso)
Tilbury	SE	1308	1308
West Thurrock	SE	1240	2548
Fiddler's Ferry	NW	1880	4428
Aberthaw 'A' and 'B'	SW	1706	6134
Didcot	SW	1820	7954
Thorpe Marsh	NE	942	8896
Skelton Grange	NE	448	9344
Eggborough	NE	1720	11064
Ferrybridge 'B' and 'C'	NE	2214	13278
Drax 'A' and 'B'	NE	2500	15778

The central failure of the back to work movement is that it has failed to bring any significant production in precisely the key areas for maintaining the supplies to the power stations. The movement has totally failed in Yorkshire, and the North

East. It will therefore almost certainly be necessary for the government to start the task of shifting coal before the end of December.

For the trade unions the answer is relatively simple. The GLC report

lists the 13 power stations which have voted not to accept new supplies of coal (see table).

According to the report 'if stations totalling about three quarters of the

would mean that peak demand could not be met.'

The task facing the TUC is a simple one. It is to direct its efforts to backing up the workers in those power stations which have agreed to observe the TUC guidelines. This, rather than equivocating about support for the NUM, is what the general council must do in the next weeks.

The crunch situation is already coming at Didcot — where industrial action by workers prevented coal deliveries four weeks ago, but scab coal is now being accepted by a number of workers.

But the situation is clear. There are so few power stations which need to be knocked out of the grid that victory can easily be achieved by the TUC if it wants victory. Willis himself can make an appeal to workers such as at Didcot.

If the TUC does not win the strike it is because they do not want to, not because they are unable to.

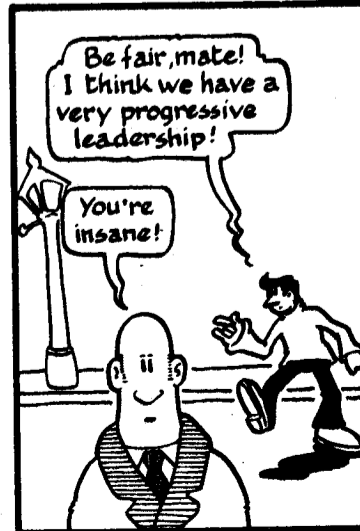
The task of the movement is not to let the TUC off the hook. To force the delivery by the unions of Congress decisions.

Five weeks ago, after the NACODS sell out, we ran the headline in Socialist Action 'Only treachery can stop the NUM'. That is still true. The fight of the entire movement has to be to stop that treachery now.

A PIECE OF THE ACTION

Looking on the bright side...

GORMAG



IN THE two weeks since Norman Willis's infamous speech at the South Wales miners rally on 13 November, attacking 'miners violence', it has become clear that Willis's attack on the miners was no mere flash in the pan. The speech won Willis praise from Margaret Thatcher as a 'very distinguished trade unionist', was a signal from the centre and right of the TUC that they intended to win back the initiative that 'new realism' had lost at Brighton.

A clear division of labour has developed with Kinnock attacking the miners' on the political front and the TUC right, and Willis, trying to break up any industrial solidarity around the NUM. The basis of the whole operation is to gain a major 'new realist' victory by completely changing the position of the TUC on the Thatcher government's anti-union laws.

This policy is now being completely systematically taken through the TUC. Terry Duffy on Monday openly welcomed the government's new laws on ballots. There has been no response to any of the massive legal attacks now taking place on the unions — including not only those on the NGA and NUM but now the £200,000 fine on the TGWU.

By Pat Hickey

The centre and right of the TUC are well aware that the miners' strike, and the support for it, are the main obstacle they face in swinging the TUC decisively to the right. They are therefore attempting to reverse the pledge of 'total support' given to the NUM at Congress. Predictably, the extreme right is leading the way.

John Lyons, of the Engineers and Managers Association has written to Willis to place the issue of support for the miners on the agenda of the general council meeting on the 28th November. His letter states that the 'general council, with its wider responsibilities to the trade union movement as a whole must establish clearly whether it has a view of its own in this protracted, bitter and ever more damaging dispute'. In other words, the TUC must state publicly that it does not support the NUM and reverse the Congress decisions.

Plan

David Basnett has followed this up with the proposal that the NUM and the NCB should discuss a new Plan for Coal in the light of new market conditions. Basnett is well aware that 'new market conditions' is the core of the NCB's arguments for the closure of 'uneconomic' pits, and the issue on which the strike has been fought from the beginning.

These moves from the centre and right can be seen in the light of the recent GLC energy report *London In The Dark*, which shows that 'refusal by at most six to eight large power stations to take deliveries of fresh supplies of coal or oil would mean that peak demand could not be met.' The report lists 13 power stations which have voted not to accept fresh coal deliveries, and predicts power cuts in January if TUC guidelines are adhered to by even a significant proportion of those 13.

If the General Council throws its weight behind those stations, now implementing Congress decisions, a victory for the NUM is assured. This level of support is something that is well within the general council's power to deliver — if necessary by Willis himself personally going to the power stations. The general council, however, has other concerns than winning the miners' strike. Once again the right is leading the way in what is now a concerted push to gain TUC acceptance of the anti-union laws.

The first step in this drive was the EETPU decision to accept cash for government-imposed ballots. The AEUW is to ballot its members on the same issue — with a clear recommen-



Can you tell stork from butter?

New realism rides again

dation from Duffy to accept the government money. Clive Jenkins of ASTMS has asked the TUC to review its policy, set at the 1982 Wembley Conference, which stated 'Affiliated unions shall observe congress policy and not seek or accept public funds for union ballots under the Employment Act 1980'.

Cash

The issue of cash for ballot is however just a symptom of what is at stake. The real issue is the TUC's position on the anti-union legislation as a whole.

The recent Austin Rover strike clearly showed the direction of trade union policy. The response of the AUEW and the EETPU to the use of the courts was to immediately comply with instructions to repudiate the strike. The result was a sharp defeat

for Austin Rover workers, and the isolation of the TGWU — which now faces further court action for contempt. The TUC was silent throughout.

Silence

The defeat of the Austin Rover dispute constitutes a major victory for the government. It was the first time that the 1984 anti-union legislation had been used in a major strike. The TUC leadership's readiness to condemn picket line violence contrasts sharply with their complete silence on the role of the EETPU and the AUEW in the Austin Rover strike.

That the right and centre of the TUC was preparing the ground for working within the restrictive framework of the Tories' anti-union legislation was made clear at Brighton. The TUC Congress,

although it criticised the general council's stand on the NGA dispute, effectively endorsed in policy terms that betrayal by allowing a 'case by case' approach to unions facing legal attacks. The general council's silence on the legal attacks faced by the NUM and other unions has deepened the hold of new realism on the trade union leadership. Despite the impact of the miners' strike the right is reasserting itself and is attempting to tighten its grip within the TUC.

Ballot

The unions, however, now also face attacks on two other key fronts: the closed shop and the political levy. The closed shop is now illegal unless secret ballots give an 80 per cent majority in favour. In firms such as Austin Rover the experience of the recent strike and the lack of leadership

from the TUC will prove no good defence of the closed shop.

The most fundamental political challenge facing the unions and the Labour Party over the next 18 months will be the defence of the political levy, and the organised links with the Labour Party. On this front the new realist line is a disaster. The fight for the political levy and the links with Labour need to be tied to policies which offer a way out of the crisis for the working class.

Hammond and Duffy offer only surrender to the 'reality' of Tory Britain — and June 1983 showed the futility of this approach.

For the right wing of course this reality is not a problem. Their policy is precisely one of non-political trade unionism, accommodation with the Tories, no-strike deals, and finally a coalition with the SDP/Liberal Alliance.

Business

But if the ballots on the political funds result in major unions breaking the ties with the Labour Party then it will seriously weaken Labour's chances of forming a government, and be a big step towards the kind of non-political business unionism Hammond et al desire. Just how far Hammond is prepared to go on this road can be seen by his statement after the CBI conference that the EETPU would like to join the CBI, and that he would 'be looking at the CBI's articles to see if there was a way to get round the point of our being a union and I will certainly be doing that.' A number of trade union leaders seem to have got round the point of being a union at all!

The most fundamental point about the present attacks on the unions is that the weakening of the effective strength of trade unions, and their freedom to engage in political action, undermines the most basic democratic right of the working class. The military style policing of the miners' strike, the use of the courts on an unprecedented scale in industrial disputes, the attack on local government, and the undermining of the Labour Party are all part of this same attack on democratic rights — on the organised strength of the labour movement.

New realism is *not* new. It merely codifies and extends the policy of retreat and betrayal that the union leaders have followed for the past five years. And this line has led to the present defeats.

Loyal

The Tories have taken advantage of every retreat to launch a fresh attack. Starting with the isolation of the steel workers in 1980, and the sell-out of ASLEF and the Health workers in 1982, though June 1983 to the NGA and GCHQ, the present leadership of the labour movement has, in its majority, shown itself to be utterly bankrupt.

The Tories have turned to attack the NUM because it thought that the labour movement was sufficiently softened up for a decisive blow against a key section of the organised working class.

The Tories miscalculated on what that struggle would cost them, because it found a leadership that was different within the British trade union movement, a leadership that was thrown up by the strikes of 1969, 1972 and 1974 and was, to use Scargill's words, 'prepared to stand and fight'. The NUM leadership has refused to use the TUC bureaucracy to get itself off the hook. It has refused to allow the TUC to step in and sell out its struggle. That Scargill leadership of the NUM remains firmly committed to victory.

It is the NUM's stand that needs to be taken through the whole labour movement. The present labour leadership has to be replaced.

The struggle in the labour movement, to use Scargill's words, is for a TUC as loyal to the miners as the CBI is to Thatcher and the NCB.

740 delegates already!

THE MINERWORKERS Defence Committee Conference on 2 December promises to be one of the biggest meetings of labour movement activists during the strike. It is vital that it gets its politics right. VALERIE COULTAS looks at some of the issues the conference faces.

Nothing is more important in politics today than the NUM's battle to save the pits. It is vital that solidarity is increased and TUC and Labour Party conference policy implemented.

This means attendance at the Mineworkers Defence Conference in London on 2 December is crucial for all those involved in the solidarity movement.

The conference was organised at the initiative of Labour Party members. The idea came from the Labour Briefing fringe meeting at Labour Party conference with Ken Liv-

ingstone, Tony Benn and Arthur Scargill.

By Valerie Coultas

The national forum created by the Mineworkers Defence Committee is a unique initiative. In the last eight months there have been many rallies and demonstrations in support of the NUM. But this conference is a chance to consolidate the links between the NUM and the broader labour movement by drawing together the activists who have been the backbone of solidarity work throughout the country.

So far it has been Neil Kinnock and Norman Willis who have been grabbing the headlines as the 'voice of the labour movement'. This conference gives the rank and file and the left wing of the labour movement a chance to spell out their support for the miners.

Action not words must be the theme of this event. But activists will have to confront three problems in order to achieve an action orientation at this conference.

The Communist Party, through the South East Region TUC (SERTUC) executive, has refused to sponsor the conference. It is only sending an 'observer', although the



Arthur Scargill speaking at South Wales NUM rally

Photo: G.M. COOKSON

NUM sub-committee of SERTUC has agreed to support the conference.

The enthusiasm of the SWP for the conference presents the opposite problem. Belated converts to working in the trade union and Labour Party sponsored solidarity movement they now want to take it over, expose the leaders — including of the NUM — and pit the rank and file against them. One SWP member went over the top and suggested 'bureaucrats like Scargill' should only be allowed 10 minutes!

The Chartist Tendency are the final problem that solidarity activists will confront on the day. One of its leading spokespersons, Chris Knight, lined up with the ultraleftism of the SWP and argued that a

labour movement demonstration would 'let the leaders off the hook' and urged the committee instead to adopt a declaration that called for the removal of Kinnock and pronouncements about troops joining trade unions.

This declaration was sent out to delegates by the Chartists against the advice of other members of the committee. It totally fails to come to grips with the needs of the NUM and the solidarity movement at the present time.

The strike is entering a critical stage. The NUM needs support to win the strike not leftist phrase mongering.

Firstly, through a massive Xmas appeal to raise money for the miners

and their families. Secondly, through increasing the campaign around the power stations to ensure the IOU's promised at the TUC that can win the strike are delivered.

Thirdly, to campaign for a massive labour movement demonstration in the early New Year, in support of the NUM, to make the leaders of the labour movement come out publicly in favour of the NUM and its strike to defend jobs.

If Sunday 2 December is used to promote these precise goals it will mark an important step forward in winning wider support for a battle that the British labour movement cannot afford to lose.

Mineworkers Defence Committee
Secretary: Ken Livingstone

National Conference

Solidarity with the NUM!

Camden Conference Centre
Subborough Street WC1

Sunday Dec 2nd
11.30 - 5.30pm

For more information ring 01-981 3289 or write to Mineworkers Defence Committee, c/o 31 Cranwich Rd, N16

VICTORY TO THE MINERS



Scabs arriving at Killoch Colliery

Scotland: Clarke calls for one day stoppage

'WE ASK now, and we have the right to ask after eight and a half months for physical support' Eric Clarke, general secretary of the Scottish NUM, told a one hundred strong meeting in Glasgow last Thursday.

The meeting, held mid afternoon, was organised at only 24 hours notice by Glasgow miners' support group, and attracted stewards and convenors from many large factories and workplaces throughout Glasgow.

In his speech, Eric Clarke, made clear that his purpose was to issue an urgent call for solidarity action. He explained that the miners need more than just declarations of support which were accompanied by the leaders backing down and 'doing a Pontius Pilate'.

Over £4,000 from factory collections was handed over at the meeting, but Scottish trade union leaders present, including John Walker (ASLEF), and Hugh Wyper (TGWU) were less forthcoming with support for the one day strike call. Indeed Hugh Wyper

suggested a one hour stoppage instead. However a one day stoppage was agreed unanimously by the STUC and subsequently took place on 9 May. Twenty thousand marched in Glasgow and large rallies were held in six other Scottish towns on that day. And as Eric Clarke pointed out, the miners now have a right to, and expect, increased action.

More support was evident from some factory delegates present and the STUC should now act in response to this call and call a one day stoppage, general strike in Scotland.

By Matthew Ford

He was 'disgusted' by the statement made by the Labour leader comparing Arthur Scargill to a First World War general and the miners' strike to Gallipoli. He stressed two key points. Firstly, the TUC decisions should be implemented. He included in this an appeal to Ravenscraig 'even at this eleventh hour stop using scab coal and scab iron ore.' Secondly, he called for a one day stoppage throughout Scotland as a physical demonstration of solidarity which would be a tremendous boost for the miners.

Free Davie Hamilton

Davie Hamilton, Monkton Hall NUM delegate, faces jail over Christmas, perhaps until February till he gets a trial. Davie was originally bailed on a breach of the peace charge but was subsequently jailed after allegedly 'breaking his bail conditions'.

However the Dalkeith central strike committee have called for the release of Davie on bail now. They see the decision of the courts as based on Davie's leading

role in the dispute and as part of a pattern of police harrassment of Lothian strike activists including arrests for non-existent misdemeanours during provocative police patrols in many villages. A Scottish demonstration to free David Hamilton will be called in Edinburgh.

● Messages of support should be sent to Davie Hamilton, Saughton Prison, Edinburgh.

Shirebrook still firm

SPEAKER AFTER speaker at last Sunday's 100-strong meeting of railway workers spelt out why every railworker who refuses to shift coal is not only supporting the miners, but is also defending jobs in rail.

The meeting was held in Shirebrook, in Nottinghamshire, where the divisions amongst the miners have extended to the railworkers. Called by the Federation of the two major rail unions, the meeting followed a similar open union meeting held in Coalville last month.

Both of these meetings, and future ones, are designed to show solidarity with railworkers who have stuck to working class principles and have backed union policy of refusing to shift scab coal despite a vicious campaign of harrassment by management.

A powerful platform included Charlie Limp, a local striking miner; local and district rail union officers; the assistant general secretaries from both rail unions and national executive committee members from each.

Lou Adams, a driver from Stratford in East London and a member of his union's executive, explained, 'We have to support the miners because 80 per cent of coal in this country is transported by rail. And coal makes up 60 per cent of the total amount of freight traffic.'

Britain's rulers understand that railway workers and miners form a powerful combination. In the Serpell Report with its infamous proposals to slash the railways to pieces, there are two options of cuts which if implemented would mean that no coal would be shifted by a rail

route to a power station anywhere in the United Kingdom.

Jobs

'We meet regularly with the Transport Workers union and they explain that it's been cowboys in the main who are doing the work. We have reports of up to £500 being paid daily to these cowboys. Farmers tractors, suitably camouflaged, are even being used to shift coal.'

But above all, he said, 'we must take seriously the miners' pledge that when they win, they will guarantee that all coal contracts return to rail.'

During the meeting tribute was paid to outstanding efforts of railworkers despite harrassment. Tommy Taylor, from Shirebrook ASLEF, told how the depot normally shifted more than 400,000 tonnes of coal weekly and with the railworkers who are scabbing today, 300,000 tonnes of coal could be moved. 'But hats off to a lone signalman who has stood up to the pressure. His actions mean that only 50,000 tonnes are being moved each week.'

The Federation has blacked all movement of aviation fuel which is now being used to keep open

power stations, like Neasden. The desperation of the government to supply power stations was evident in management's approach to a small drivers' depot of 16 men in Thame, near Nottingham. This depot moves limited amounts of oil in emergencies, for the Ministry of Defence. The drivers were bribed with enormous amounts of overtime if they'd agree to shift oil to Didcot.

Fight

'Although these men normally exist on a basic week's earnings, and they saw other sections dipping their bread in the gravy, their credit, these men refused,' explained Neil Milligan.

It's railworkers like these who 'should play Big Brother to the miners in Nottinghamshire'. That was the view of Paul Galloway, a striking miner from Thoresby pit, where only 130 of the 1400 workforce are on strike.

Both Coalville and the Shirebrook meetings were successful. If they are repeated in other places like Immingham, Llanwern, and Bar Hill, the union will be in a better state to respond to job losses in the rail industry. The Coalville men recognise this and have planned a second open meeting at their depot, to take place on Saturday, 15 December.

Tony Donaghy from



Photo: JEFF BIGGIN

London Labour women raise £9,000

THE Piccadilly Theatre in London's west end resounded on Sunday to the singing and chants of hundreds of women. The occasion was a benefit organised by London Labour Women (the regional women's committee for the Greater London Labour Party) for Women Against Pit Closures.

By Hilary Driver

After a few strange (and occasionally dubious) acts the event got off to a swinging start with the Annie Whitehead and some traditional Irish songs from Rosy Gibb.

Between the performers, various well-known personalities including Miriam Karlin and Julie Walters presented facts and figures about the strike and testimonials from miners and women in the mining communities about police brutality,

Tory hostility and their determination to fight to the finish.

This spirit was summed up by Betty Heathfield in a stirring speech in which she appealed for renewed efforts in support and fundraising to counteract the bribes of the bosses.

Unfortunately, the first half of the benefit overran by 40 minutes, so many of the best performers — including Peggy Seeger, Robyn Archer and Carol Grimes & the Iguanas — were squeezed for time.

Finally, about 40 women from Women Against Pit Closures joined with all the performers in a final song, and were greeted with a standing ovation while the theatre rang with the now famous 'Here we go' chant.

The benefit was an unqualified success, with £3,500 raised in the collection and £5,500 from ticket sales, advertising and so on — a grand total of £9,000!

Cardiff women rally

The mass women's rally in support of the NUM on 8 December in Cardiff will be the third national women's rally since the beginning of the miners strike. The aim of the rally is to show the solidarity between women and the NUM at a crucial point in the struggle. The rally will show that despite the so-called drift back to work support for the miners is solid in South Wales and other areas.

Delegations of women from all parts of Britain will be joining their Welsh sisters in this show of strength against the Tory attacks. South Wales Women Against Pit Closures also want to involve women from outside the coalfields in this demonstration, because if the miners lose, women everywhere will suffer under the Tory government.

We feel that a mass turn-out on 8 December will show the Tories what they are up against. Women in South Wales have been active since day one of the strike. We are on the picket lines and have taken important initiatives such as occupying the pit-head baths in Cynheidre colliery which stopped 20 scabs going on day shift. Further actions are planned.

Speakers at the rally are Anne Scargill, Gaynor Lagalle (black councillor),

by Rhian May

Anne Davis (GLC Councillor), Anita Gale (National Organiser Wales Labour Party), Helen John (Greenham), Anne Clwyd (MP Cynan Valley) and other labour and trade union speakers. The rally

has the backing of the NUM and the Wales Labour Party Womens Conference.

Obviously, after the last nine months women in mining communities need funds to arrange transport for the rally. We appeal to everyone to dig deep and support us both physically and financially. We are assembling outside the Museum in Cardiff at 11.30 for a short march to the rally. We are hoping to arrange creche facilities for the day. Bring your banners. Here we go!

Address for further information and donations: South Wales Women Against Pit Closures, c/o 108 Bookshop, Cathays, Cardiff.

Eccles shut up!

LAST WEEK national press headlines were grabbed by protests by Labour MPs in the House of Commons over the government's £1 a week supplementary benefit cut for striking miners. It was one of the most effective actions by Labour MPs during the entire strike.

Socialist Action asked JOAN MAYNARD, one of the MPs involved, to explain what happened and how she saw Labour's role in the strike.

On Wednesday 21 November, at o'clock at night, Norman Fowler attempted to make a statement, which Labour leaders demanded, about the upgrading of supplementary benefit which should have meant the miners got an extra £1. The purpose of asking for that statement was to publicise the fact that the government weren't going to let them have it.

This was the bitter end, another example of the government on the one hand trying to starve the miners back — a real Scrooge effort immediately before Christmas — on the other trying to bribe them back with their own money, money that was due to them. We felt we had to make a stand.

About 30 of us stood in front of the mace, a procedure which effectively put an end to the sitting. We refused to go away, so in the end the Speaker had to adjourn the House.

We wanted to highlight just what the Tories are prepared to do. They were all there to relish the fact that their government was going to take another £1 off the miners.

This struggle of the miners is the most important struggle going on in society today. Since NACODS settled it has been much more difficult for the miners. This is the time when all 'good men and true' — and women! — really must put their money where their mouth is.

We need particularly industrial action from other workers in support of the miners. We need to stop the power stations.

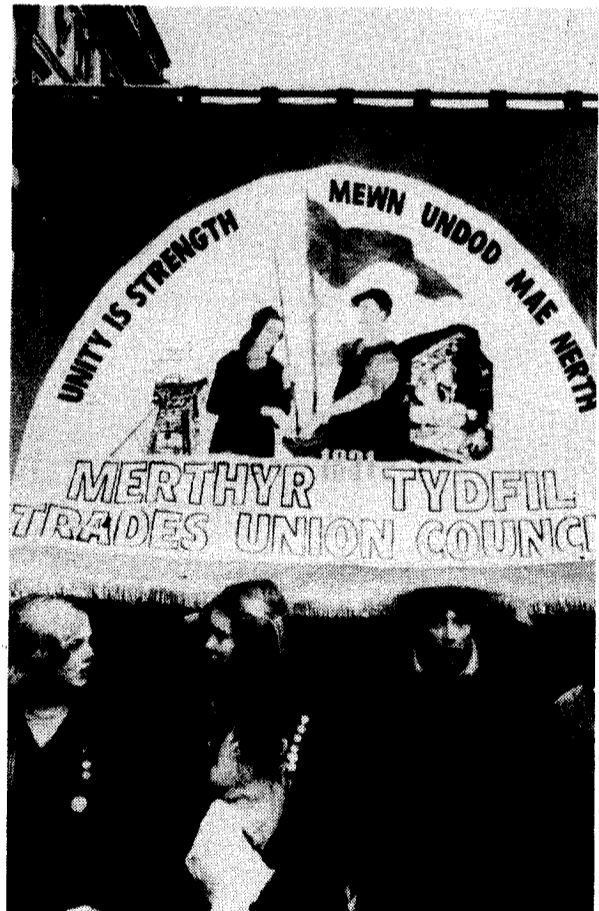
There must be a real campaign to reach them — by leafletting the factories and by speaking to them directly, irrespective of what the leadership of those unions are saying — in order to persuade the power workers that if the miners get beaten we're all going to be in very, very serious trouble.

Just at the time when the crunch is on we have the spectacle of the so-called 'leader' of the Labour Party, Neil Kinnock, saying he can't find time to go to even one of the major rallies which the NUM recently held. I just don't believe that.

He found time to go to India, now he's in Moscow. I don't oppose him going, but it is an absolute disgrace, just when we all need to stand together behind our party and behind the miners who are conducting the struggle on behalf of all of us.

Then we had Eccles, chairperson of the TUC, saying the miners can't win. Trade unionists should say to him: 'If that's the best you can do, please keep your mouth shut!' And if he can't keep it shut, they should remove him from the TUC.

The tragedy of Willis' speech on violence, and similar statements by Kinnock, is that instead of exposing who is creating the violence in society — Thatcher and the Tory government, and their agents in the miners' strike, the police — they attack the miners. Just go and have a look in Yorkshire and North Derbyshire, where we've got virtual police occupation and a police state.



£150,000 for the NUM from Sweden

'IT'S NEVER been this easy to collect money for any other cause,' said a Swedish construction worker who has been collecting money for British miners every week since the beginning of August.

All over the country trade union branches, political organisations and solidarity committees are engaged in different forms of solidarity work. The Gruvarbetarforbundet (National Union of Mineworkers) has launched a campaign with lists going around most mines.

So far, more than £150,000 has been paid to the solidarity fund of the Swedish NUM, money that has been transferred to the British miners.

In Malmfalten, a mining area in the far north, miners have donated £23,000 from a strike fund that was set up during the 1969 miners' strike in the area.

The decision was made at a meeting of miners. The four in charge of administering the fund spoke against the decision. They were immediately sacked from the committee, and miners in favour of the decision were elected to replace them.

Other unions have been active in solidarity work as well. One good example is Kommunalarbetarforbundet (public sector workers' union). They launched a fund-raising campaign, limited in time. The closing date was postponed due to overwhelming support. Altogether some £20,000 was collected.

Several organisations have also arranged tours with British miners, who have spoken at public meetings, visited factories and trade unions, and have been able to speak for their cause in the local press.

IRELAND HIT the headlines of the British press spectacularly last week with the blazing row following the summit between Dublin premier Garret FitzGerald and Margeret Thatcher.

Scared of the electoral and political successes of Sinn Fein, FitzGerald has been working through the New Ireland Forum to try to get a southern government involvement in the six county north of Ireland state. Thatcher turned him down flat — creating an immediate political crisis for the Dublin government.

To help understand the background to the blow up, Socialist Action is printing large parts of GERRY ADAMS' remarkable presidential address to this year's Sinn Fein Ard Fheis. MARTIN COLLINS looks at the crisis in relations between the London and Dublin governments.



We have to

IN EXPRESSING solidarity to those suffering in prisons we recall, in the fifteenth year of this last phase of our historic struggle for independence, those throughout the world who are engaged in similar struggles.

To our black brothers and sisters in Africa, and especially those who struggle under apartheid in South Africa, we express solidarity. To those in Central America, oppressed by totalitarian regimes, to the Palestinians, deprived of a homeland, to the Basques and to all men and women denied freedom and to people committed to gaining freedom, we pledge our solidarity, mindful that the successful conclusion of our struggle is a victory for you, just as a victory for you is a victory for us.

If Dublin's submissiveness and willingness to assist in Reagan's controversial electoral visit to Ireland is any indication, then we can be sure that Dublin, despite lip-service to the principle of Irish neutrality, is content to make us pawns in Reagan's NATO chessboard, a chessboard upon which that geriatric whizz-kid seems intent on starting World War III.

Irish republicans need to be active in campaigning for world peace, against nuclear weapons and for Irish neutrality. And before our opponents point to our position on the legitimacy of armed struggle in pursuance of national independence and freedom, let me point out that there is no contradiction.

The suppression of small nations throughout the world and the arms race being pursued by the super-powers are but opposite sides of the one coin. To support national liberation is to be opposed to imperialism and Dublin's position on international issues is based on its position on the national question as surely as the London government's foreign policy is reflected in its attitude to Ireland.

Democracy

We will continue to campaign for the restoration of Irish democracy and to articulate the desire of our people for freedom and independence, regardless of Dublin smears or British violence.

Ireland geographically, historically and culturally is one nation. We as one people have the right to be free, and in that freedom the divided sections of our people will find the will to unite, regardless of religious affiliations.

The Dublin Forum report does not provide the basis on which such a society can be built.

What emerged was not a blueprint for a united, independent and peaceful Irish society but an Irish establishment alternative to the policies of Sinn Fein. Nowhere in the Forum report is the reality of Britain's claims to Irish sovereignty contested. Nowhere in the report is the right of the Irish nation to national self-determination asserted.

It should be noted that Sinn Fein's exclusion from the Forum effectively

Photo: AN PHOBLAcht

Gerry Adams

disenfranchised at least 102,000 nationalist and republican voters, the very people whose 'alienation' the Forum report stressed.

Sinn Fein's view is that the British government needs to be met with a firm, united and unambiguous demand from all Irish 'nationalist' parties, for an end to the unionist veto and for a declaration of a date for British withdrawal.

Within the new situation created by these measures, it is then a matter of business-like negotiations between representatives of all the Irish parties, and this includes those who represent today's loyalist voters, to set the constitutional, economic, social and political arrangements for a new Irish state.

Partition

Over sixty years of partition, of neo-colonial status, has so conditioned the Dublin establishment that it is not within their grasp to tackle the British government in the way that government understands.

The Thatcher government has no respect for Dublin. Mrs Thatcher accepts silver tea-pots from Haughey and heaps praise on FitzGerald. For our part we are not surprised by any of this. Nothing has really changed — things are merely becoming clearer and the contradictions inherent in our two partitioned statelets are becoming more starkly exposed.

Loyalism can only be tackled by removing the system of privilege which sustains sectarian divisions and by

undermining its quasi-religious base by the creation of a just and pluralist society.

Sinn Fein offers to those presently tied to loyalism the equality denied to them for so long under the British connection. Irish independence means for loyalists the opportunity to play, for the first time, a meaningful role, with the rest of us, in shaping a new Irish democracy.

Dublin

Dublin has failed these people and left them to the mercy of the Paisleys of this world in much the same way as successive Dublin governments have failed Irish nationalists.

A lot of attention is drawn by Dublin's politicians to the 'threat to democracy' in the twenty-six counties. Most of these 'dangers to democracy' are self-inflicted.

Democracy within this statelet is diluted by Section 31 (the section of the Irish Broadcasting Act denying Sinn Fein access to the television — eds), by extradition, by disenfranchising voters, by the denial of the true origins of this statelet and the facts of Irish history — particularly that part of our history dealing with physical force resistance to Britain's claims on Ireland — and by an impressive armoury of repressive legislation.

The smokescreen of nationalist rhetoric raised by Dublin fools no one, no more than the verbal and intellectual gymnastic displays by establishment speakers at monuments through this statelet. We at least are consistent. We

not only salute Roger Casement. We salute also the brave men aboard the *Marita Anne*.

For my part, I wish to concentrate on another election in the North this year — an election that we all missed. It was, however, based on that central principle of democracy, the secret ballot. So secret was this ballot that the names of the candidates were kept a secret, their election manifesto was kept a secret and even the date of the election itself was not disclosed. Even the voters were unaware, until afterwards, that it had taken place.

The results, however, have been well publicised. Apparently, Northern nationalists voted in a secret landslide for Garret FitzGerald, Peter Barry and Dick Spring to be their representatives. Not surprisingly the British government has accepted this election result. They were obviously in on the secret as well.

North

If Dublin wishes to represent nationalist opinion in the North then they are quite welcome to contest as many seats as they like. In the meantime, on behalf of those we represent in Derry, Tyrone, Armagh, Fermanagh, Antrim and County Down, Sinn Fein denies Dublin any right to speak or act on our behalf. We are quite capable of doing that ourselves.

While on this theme — it's called democracy — have you noticed the effects of just 2,304 votes cast for us in Dublin Central? As soon as the upholders of democracy discovered



that over two thousand people voted for Sinn Fein, they decided that all Sinn Fein councillors elected in the twenty-six counties several years before should suddenly stop representing those who elected them.

And so we have seen the ministerial campaign of refusing to meet Sinn Fein councillors making representations on behalf of their constituents. We have even seen attempts to interfere in the internal elections of a trade union.

EEC

Yet according to the EEC election results, Sinn Fein represents just about the same number of voters as the Official Unionist Party; 52,500 more voters than the Labour Party; 90,000 more voters than the Workers Party — with or without their fundraising wing — and 112,000 more than the Alliance Party. And yet those in high places continue to pontificate about the threat to democracy.

In another equally important and related dimension of life in Ireland there is an absolutely hypocritical attitude on the right to family planning and contraception, the question of divorce and marital breakdown, the invidious social distinctions which sur-



Photo: CAMERAWORK

the right to be free"



Photo: ANDREW WIARD (Report)

around the question of illegitimacy, one-parent families and so on. These are questions which we as people are mature enough to decide and settle for ourselves without fear of reproaches or duplicity by salaried politicians and without the tragedy of an Anne Lovett to remind us that such problems exist in Ireland. This is the quality of life in Ireland. What passes for the quality of life, the cause as well as all this, living standards here are being eroded by the application of Thatcherite monetarist policies which deprive an increasing number of people of their right to a meaningful existence.

Jobs

According to official statistics, unemployment in Ireland, North and South, is now very close to 350,000. That is one in five of the workforce without a job. The real jobless figures, however, must be well over half a million when we include all those artificially trimmed from the official figures. In the most deprived working class areas of our major cities the jobless figures are much more staggering, with one out of five workers having no job,

no prospect of a job and, in many cases, no experience even of a job. The economic and social hardship which accompanies this is evident in sub-standard overcrowded housing, insufficient health services, inferior educational opportunities, a total absence of recreational or cultural facilities; deprivation piled upon deprivation.

Monetarist

And what has been the response of those who follow the monetarist economic gospel, North and South? Where there are few jobs, more factories are allowed to close. Where workers have jobs, their wages, in real terms, are reduced. Where there is sub-standard housing or a total lack of housing, the house-building programmes are cut back. Where social welfare is already insufficient, it is restricted further and discretionary grants are withdrawn. Where classrooms are overcrowded and special educational needs exist, teachers are left on the dole and pupils are made to pay to travel to school. Where health services are needed more than ever, less medicine is available free, hospitals and health centres are closed, health workers are

made redundant. Where young people are left, through no fault of their own, with time on their hands there are no facilities to occupy that time — and petty crime becomes aimless attractions, further adding to the spiralling misery.

In response to this, the Coalition government offers the Irish people a plan; they call it a 'National' Plan and entitle it 'Building on Reality'!

It quite obviously is not a national plan because — for all the time spent in the Forum — it ignores the economic and social cost of partition and deliberately fails to recognise that Irish unity is a prerequisite of the economic independence required for progress.

But does it even address itself to the reality it claims to be building upon? Does it offer any hope to the people of the twenty-six counties to which it is addressed? On the contrary, it actually promises an increase in unemployment, cuts in public spending, redundancies in the public service, the removal of the remaining food subsidies and increased educational costs.

Pay

Those least able to afford it are going to be made to pay. Those with no responsibility for the recession in the capitalist economy are going to be forced to make all the sacrifices.

A sobering reminder that the economic and social misery that these policies bring is as nothing to those in power.

Their response to the misery they have created is to make the victims pay, to jail workers who have resisted redundancy, to imprison students who have objected to spending cuts and to denounce and insult those desperately concerned parents who have tried to free their communities from some of their policies' worst side-effects.

Their response to the problems they have created is typified by the Criminal Justice Bill which is now almost law: the extension of the methods of legalised political repression across the whole of society. This law does not address the problems of urban crime, as it pretends, but rather, quite coldly, deprives every person in the state of most basic civil liberties.

Sinn Fein has consistently presented an alternative to this. First of all we state that the Irish people themselves must have the power to take the decisions themselves and that this can only be done in a united, independent Irish Republic which is not fettered by the interests of other states.

Planned

We advocate a planned economy which is not concerned with the maximising of profits for multi-nationals and private enterprise, but is concerned with maximising the benefits to the Irish people themselves.

We reject the negative, misery-inducing policies of the establishment parties, directed, as they are, at the protection of the interests of capital.

We declare our concern to be people, not profits. We state our confidence in the ability of the Irish people, through the implementation of a radical socialist economic programme in a united Ireland, to solve their own problems and to end the years of joblessness and social misery.

Sinn Fein, in presenting the alternative, has a responsibility to be in a position to deliver the attainment of those objectives.

This means the development and expansion of our organisation through detailed and arduous work.

We need to expound not only the patriotic reason for unity and independence but the logical, social and economic reasons as well.

There are no shortcuts in the task of making revolution. There are no easy options or magic formulae. Only by painstakingly perfecting, educating and structuring our organisation so that it becomes relevant to our people and their needs will we be ready and capable of giving the leadership which will be demanded of us in the years to come.



Thatcher and Fitzgerald

Bust up at the summit

IN THE space of a week the Thatcher government has switched direction of British policy on Ireland, unravelling any achievements which James Prior could have been credited with and thrown Dublin's political establishment into chaos. The rejection of the Forum report and its collaborationist philosophy has boosted the confidence of Unionist politicians and led to a new wave of sectarian assassinations in the North.

What changed was not so much what the British government had to say, but the way that it said it. The carefully cultivated diplomatic double talk was thrown out of the window, Thatcher merely spelt out what Republicans have known for years. She is an incorrigible Unionist.

The press, long used to lionising Dublin premier Garret Fitzgerald, was thrown into confusion as he tried to extricate himself from the humiliating debacle. In the build up to the summit as it became clear that the British would not respond in any way positively to the New Ireland Forum, the story was circulated that optimism was running high for Britain to respond favourably to the philosophy of the report if not its final conclusions. In return for this response, Dublin was to announce some further measure of security cooperation.

Irish tax payers already contribute more to maintain the border than the British. Dublin courts have already been made available to London both for the extradition of republicans and the sequestration of the funds of the miners.

On Monday, the last day of the summit, the *Guardian* announced: 'security accord possible'. On Tuesday: 'summit sets agenda for initiative'. By Wednesday it could editorialise it was 'very much a working summit', that it was 'one that really tackled the issues' and that there was 'less differences than in previous years'.

So optimistic was the editor that he felt it would be 'churlish to complain about the blandness of the official communiqué'. The *Mirror* (Tuesday) felt confident enough to headline 'Thatcher Gets Irish Backing — A major blitz on the IRA was launched jointly yesterday by Britain and the Irish Republic'. Fitzgerald was quoted as welcoming the new security framework between the two countries.

In the real world, things were moving in the opposite direction. Whilst Fitzgerald was still claiming he had won Thatcher's support, Thatcher herself was talking of the 'fullest, frankest, and most realistic bilateral meeting ever'.

On the Forum report, and its three options, Thatcher declared the unitary state was 'Out', the confederation was 'Out' and the joint sovereignty option was 'Out'. Fitzgerald said British reaction to the Forum had been 'a considered reaction, but not a complete considered reaction'.

He went on that both parties were 'talking about realities in a new way'. Thatcher, he said had recognised there were 'two identities' which had to be respected.

But Thatcher clearly saw the 'realities' like any Orangeman — you are either for the Queen or are a disloyal Fenian.

As for the concept of 'alienation' which the Forum found to explain the high vote for Sinn Fein, Thatcher said it was nonsense, 'one knows a number of people are republicans, they have been republicans for a long time, their views are different from the unionists'.

Whereas Prior had held out hope for Dublin politicians to play a role in the future of the North, they interpreted this as being given the right to speak on behalf of Northern nationalists. Thatcher and Hurd could not have given them a blunter rebuff. Hurd said 'there will be no executive role for the South in the affairs of the North... Dublin can express its views, Britain would listen and discuss them'. But this was as far as it goes or would ever go.

In Dublin, the glue was coming unstuck. Fitzgerald, who had talked of useful agreement on Monday, said the British had been 'gratuitously offensive' (Thursday) and that there could now (Friday) be 'no hope of progress whilst Thatcher was Prime Minister'.

The parliamentary opposition in the South were having a field day. Fianna Fail leader Charles Haughey, 'scathingly critical' on Monday, was by mid-week preparing for a new General Election. Fitzgerald was guilty of an 'abject capitulation to a new British intransigence' and a 'craven desertion of the principles of the Forum report'. He was guilty of 'incompetence, misjudgement and ineffectiveness'. It was 'a wonder he had the nerve to come home at all'.

The Unionist parties were overjoyed — Thatcher had made it clear that the only settlement she was interested in was internal to the North. In rejecting the proposals and the ethos of the Forum report, the Unionist veto over political progress has been extended.

Kinnock, who can be relied upon to say something stupid, 'wished formally to endorse the summit's rejection of violence.'

Thank you Neil, it was a point that everyone else overlooked.

STUDENTS

Ultra vires and the miners' strike

Over the past five years, student unions have suffered serious attacks on their status as independent organisations with political freedom over their own activities. Changes in student union financing handed over our purse strings to the governors of our institutions. These have been closely followed by a hard-line re-interpretation of the law on so-called 'Ultra-Vires' spending.

By Martin Huseyin, exec, Sussex University (personal capacity).

A letter from the Attorney General to college principals, Vice-Chancellors, etc. gives the green light for legal action against student unions that use funds for activities not in 'the interests of either the students as such or the affairs of the college as such'.

The letter goes on to list examples of spending that would be judged 'Ultra Vires'. These include supporting industrial disputes, political campaigns or demonstrations and providing transport to any of these. Simple donations to political causes would be judged illegal.

This is a clear attack on the students unions aimed at preventing any serious solidarity action with workers or other political struggles. As such, the use of the charity laws against student unions have a clear political relation to the legal attacks on the trade unions in the Tebbit and Prior acts.

The widespread support for the Miners' struggle in the student movement, constantly raises the issue of 'ultra-vires' and the attacks on student union autonomy. Student unions that open their facilities to the NUM and the local support groups, or provide transport to picket lines and demonstrations, may find themselves in direct conflict with the law. These are the activities mentioned in the Attorney Generals letter.

It is important to recognise that legal attacks by the State are aimed at discouraging all solidarity activities, not just direct solidarity payments.

The NUS leadership has failed to organise any effective opposition to the use of this law within the student movement. They have called for student unions to stay within the law, have collections and discos for the Miners, and generally avoid the issue of 'ultra vires' spending. Politically, this is just the same as Kinnock's calls to the Miners, not to defend their picket lines against organised state aggression from the Police.

Recent occupations and demonstrations by students have proved that given a lead, students will mobilise to defend their rights. They have also shown, as in the cases of Manchester and Glasgow, the police use exactly the same violent tactics against any form of organised expression of opposition to government policies. There has never been a better time for the NUS leadership to mobilise and take on the government over 'ultra vires' than during the Miners' dispute.

It is therefore up to the 'left' in the student movement to organise to take up the political capitulation of the Kinnockites in the NUS leadership. Particularly, we must organise around the motions at the December Conference on the miners, calling for full legal and financial support for any union that comes into conflict with the law in the course of its support work.

We must also organise around the demand for full NUS support for the miners. This should be expressed publicly by participation in a national demonstration along with other youth organisations like the LPYS and YCND.

However, if the Kinnockites of the NUS do not act on this issue, we will have to organise a national meeting with delegates from all the student unions attacked for 'ultra vires' spending. Such a conference in the next academic term, would have the aim of mobilising the whole of NUS to fight these blatant political attacks on the student movement.

ACTIVISTS DIARY.

NUS NATIONAL CONFERENCE.
BLACKPOOL, 7,8,9,10, December
All supporters urged to attend!

Sexual Harrassment Conference. Saturday 1 December. University of Sussex, Falmer House, Brighton, 10.00am - 6.00pm. Contact 0273 - 678111 for further details.

Refuse Cruise! 12 December. 6.00pm
Trafalgar Square, called by Student CND. Book transport NOW!

Every Friday, Picket the racist Harrington, PNL, Holloway Road site, 8.30am onwards.

Young women have the right to choose

MRS GILLICK, whose case against the DHSS came before the Appeal Court last week, is a member of LIFE, part of the Festival of Light. She does not want her five daughters to be given advice or treatment for contraception or abortion without her express consent before they reach the age of 16. (She seeks no such assurance for her five boys!)

The festival of light — Britain's own 'moral majority' — believes that sex education is 'amoral and perverted'. It leads children to experiment in sex, and to increased teenage pregnancy and VD. Teaching children about contraception takes away the fear of pregnancy and leads to more sex. Instead of sex education what is needed is firm parental control.

Her case is based on two main points. First, sexual intercourse for girls under sixteen is illegal — even with the girl's consent. In fact the law is that a girl cannot give consent — the law was enacted 'to save her from herself'. So doctors who prescribe contraception are 'aiding and abetting' a crime and, even if not themselves committing a crime are acting 'illegally'.

Second, because children under 16 are under the control of their parents, including in all matters of medical treatment, the patient-doctor relationship is between doctor and parent. Hence, a doctor must tell the parent — there can be no breach of confidentiality because the child is not the patient!

Although Mrs Gillick's case refers only to her own

daughters, if she wins (either at this stage or at the Lords) it will clearly present the DHSS with big problems. The world is a long way from being composed of ideal, cosy families. In real life, children suffer from incest, battering and neglect from their loving parents.

By Leonora Lloyd

If they believe that their parents will be informed without their consent, how many girls will seek contraceptive advice? The rate of illegal abortions and abandoned babies will certainly rise.

The right wing campaign on this issue is building up, and if the DHSS wins there will be pressure on MPs to get the current Guidelines changed. The National Abortion Campaign and other



groups must act now to campaign on the left to prepare a fightback. We

cannot rely on the courts or Parliament to do it for us.

Defend the Rugby 18



photo: CAPITAL GAY

Rugby demo arrest

1000 MARCHED in Rugby on Nov 10th against that council's ban on Lesbian and Gay employment. Socialist Action spoke to one of those arrested, **MATT WILLIAMS**, after police charged the demonstration:

Why did you go to Rugby?
The fact that the council had taken out the clause on 'sexual orientation' from its 'equal opportunities' policy, mattered to me and other Lesbians and Gays.

There's no doubt that this is the start of a more vigorous attack on other groups, for example women, and black people, and I, like others, thought that councillor Colletts anti-Gay remarks shouldn't be allowed to just pass.

Were you pleased with the day?

Besides the arrests, and the police harassment, the rally and the march were very successful — lots of non-Lesbians and Gays, union members, showing support. The march was called by NALGO not us, a big step in the right direction.

The rally in particular was very good with prominent Labour movement speakers and of course the first 'voluntary' coming-out of a Gay MP, Chris Smith (Islington South), who got an enormous cheer when he introduced himself as Gay.

Why were you arrested?
First the march was unofficial, then the rally decided that we should march back through town, because the first march had been sent through the back streets by the police.

The police said that if we marched again (our right!) they couldn't guarantee our safety. Someone in the rally said this meant against them!

The trouble started when the police attacked the Gay Youth Movement banner, trying to rip it down. When they succeed-

ed a large section of the march sat down and then the pigs moved in. There was utter confusion and 18 arrests.

They went for the Lesbians first and anyone who went to their aid. Sixteen were charged with obstructing the highway, two, including myself, with obstructing the police.

We were kept for six and a half hours in a cell with no food or drink or shoes and they kept abusing us all this time. We only saw a lawyer half an hour before we were let out.

What's happened since?
The case was postponed at a hearing on 16 Nov — where we had to remove badges etc as this constitutes contempt of court! It was reset for 16 Dec — and please be there!

A defence committee has been set up. We urgently need money for legal costs as 16 of us are receiving no legal aid. Collections have started but we need lots more. We'll gladly send speakers out.

Where do you want support from?

Obviously all sections of the Lesbian and Gay movements and also groups such as Lesbians and Gays support the Miners (LSGM) — because all of us feel that the harassment we faced on the march, and that faced by the miners, are all part of the same general attack. We've approached LSGM so we can use their contacts with miners groups and the NUM to canvass for support.

● Contact for the defence committee is, GALOP, 38, Mount Pleasant, London WC1 (01-278 6215).

AS LABOUR spokesperson for overseas development, STUART HOLLAND MP has visited Nicaragua three times in the last year. His most recent visit was for three weeks during the November elections — as Labour's official representative. He told CAROL TURNER how the elections were organised and the way in which Reagan and Thatcher have attempted to undermine them.

IT IS estimated that there were some 250 foreign observers in Nicaragua for the elections on 4 November. All the Socialist International observers declared the technical holding of the elections was excellent. Voting was secret, and the ballot paper listed the coloured symbols of the seven parties who ran, along with the candidates' names.

My election day was typical of many other observers. We all had transport provided at government expense. I started in Managua, then went on to Chinendega, Corinto, and Leon. I visited some 15 polling stations throughout the day.

I spoke to 50 or 60 people, not only around the polling stations but also on the streets, including people who hadn't voted — it was marked by a red dye on their thumb — and asked them whether the elections were free and fair. Almost all replied they were free, and fair, and secret. They had never before had an election of this kind.

Of those I interviewed, only three expressed any reservations. I spoke in Spanish and no one else was present. People were clearly talking straight.

My second question was that president Reagan says these elections aren't free and fair, because the Sandinistas had overwhelming media presence before the elections were called. Only one person made a point of that, but they also stressed the elections were free and fair.

On another occasion I went to a man outside his house with a crucifix around his neck, anticipating his answer. He said they weren't free, there had been intimidation. When I asked him about it, he said it was 'out in the countryside'. He hadn't personally witnessed it.

The third person expressing reservations said the Sandinistas had threatened to lock him up. As he replied I realised he was swaying on his feet. There was an alcohol ban for the three days during the election. He was drunk!

Contradiction

The atmosphere on election day was remarkably serious and sober. The overwhelming impression from the vast majority of people was a sense of the dignity of the occasion.

When I asked about Reagan not thinking the elections were free and fair, I frequently got the comment: 'President Reagan isn't voting here.' Several people made the point that there were seven parties standing in Nicaragua, only two in the United States. Someone commented: 'two which in practice are both the same — in their attitude towards Nicaragua, in their opposition to our freedoms and our rights to determine our own future'.

In other words, the elections were impeccable. Tharvaod Staltenberg, former Norwegian defence minister and senior observer for the Socialist International; and Willi Brandt put out a statement to that effect. Claude Cheysson, French prime minister, publicly declared the elections had been free and fair, and so did I. O'Higgins, leader of the Irish Labour Party, declared them to be more secret than in Ireland.

Reagan's allegations predated the elections themselves. Coat-tailing the Reagan administration, Mrs Thatcher decided not to send observers. This is scandalous. They both gave a clean bill of health to the El Salvador elections, which were undertaken in entirely different circumstances. It is clearly an example of the double standards of the British government: legitimating questionable elections in one country,

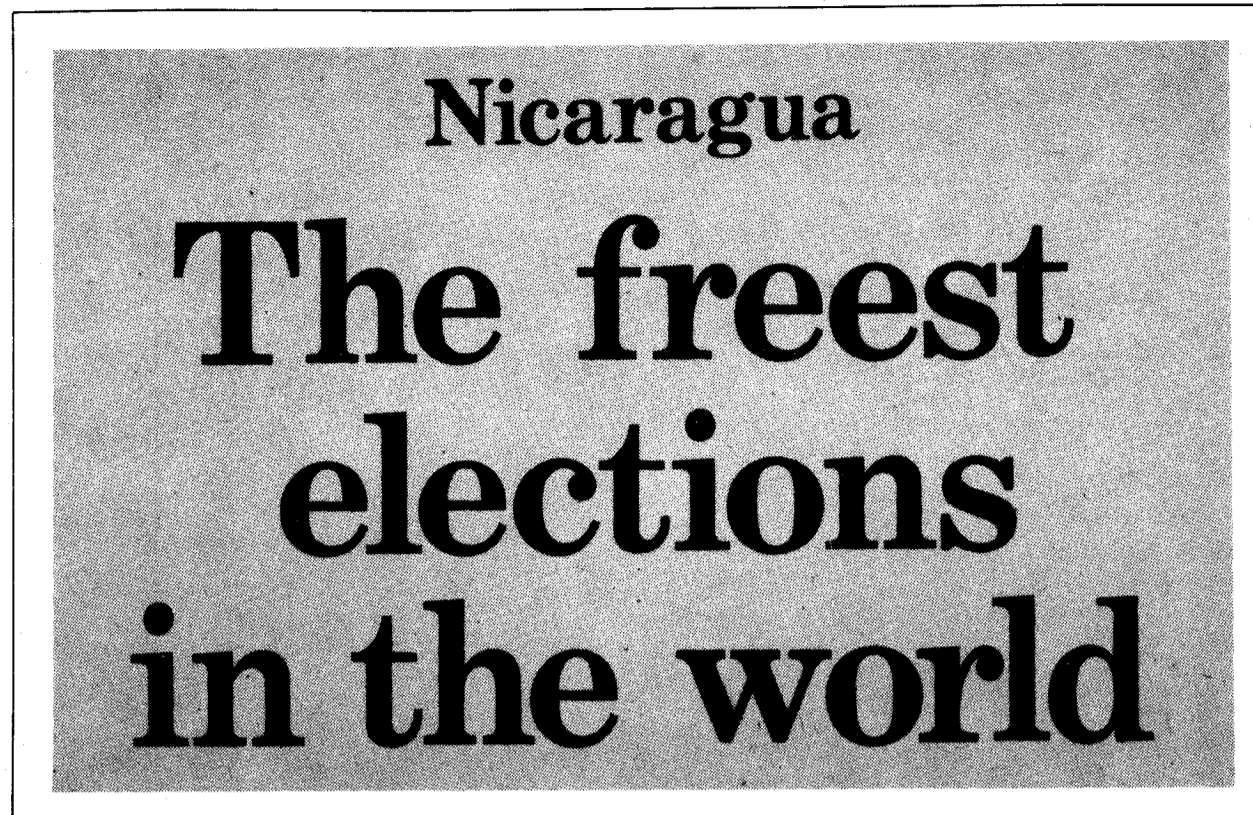


photo: STUART HOLLAND

and deriding what were clearly free elections in Nicaragua.

Reagan objected that some parties were not contesting. This included Arturo Cruz for the Conservatives and Virgillio Godoy for the Liberals. In fact it is admitted that the American embassy was putting direct pressure on both of them not to stand, thereby trying to delegitimize the elections.

Both those parties picked up 20 per cent of the vote, roughly a tenth each. Even though candidates withdrew — their status was unclear: first they were standing, then they weren't — their names were on the ballot paper and votes were counted as support for those parties. Other parties picked up about 10 per cent.

The implications are that the opposition is alive and kicking in Nicaragua. It got a significant vote. There is no way in which the Sandinistas, who got 67 per cent of the vote, are guaranteed such support in a future election. In a real sense it is quite fantastic to claim that an election did not take place.

The elections were called in February, and there was a period of some seven or eight months in which the opposition could have fought the campaign. In the so-called 'Mother of Parliaments' (if not democracies), it is accepted that the governing party has the right to call elections within four weeks and at a time which will be to that party's advantage. Whereas in Nicaragua that schedule was set months ahead and kept to.

Reaction

In Britain Mrs Thatcher is seeking to undermine the financial basis of the Labour opposition and its ability to wage an effective election campaign by the anti-union legislation requiring a ballot on unions' political funds. In Nicaragua, each of the parties was given \$250,000 from government funds for the election campaign. All of them had equal access to television and radio during the campaign period.

A further criticism made by the Americans is that there is overwhelm-

ing media coverage of the Sandinistas, that it is a Sandinista press and radio. It is not. For instance, the church hierarchy — which everyone knows is opposed to the Sandinistas — runs its own radio station.

There are three main newspapers: *La Barricada* which is the Sandinista paper, another which is sympathetic to the Sandinistas, and *La Prensa*, an oppositional paper with a circulation of some 65,000 — not insignificant in a population of 3.3 million. *La Prensa* has consistently complained about censorship.

In fact 85 per cent of material censored is military material. There is no other country defending itself from foreign incursion, which does not have such censorship. And this material is usually cleared for release within 24 to 48 hours.

When Mrs Thatcher was in the South Atlantic, or the Americans were on the beaches in Grenada, there was no way they allowed a 'free press' to independently report — or even have access to — what was happening.

In Nicaragua, on all my visits, I've been free to see anyone at any time and frequently without any foreign office or party officials present. In Grenada recently Jeremy Corbyn wasn't allowed access to those who'd been detained by the Americans.

The international press has claimed that there are human rights derogations in Nicaragua. This is distortion and misrepresentation. For example, Marcel Niedergang, in one of a series of three 2,000-word articles on Nicaragua in *Le Monde*, reported without qualification that there had been 15 deaths last year, by implication attributable to the Sandinistas.

I spoke to the Permanent Human Rights Commission, which is independent of the government and church-aligned, about them. These were 15 deaths which had not been investigated by the Sandinistas. This is for the whole of 1983, a whole year. Six were in provinces subject to contra incursion. I asked whether those killed were carrying arms, they couldn't confirm that; I asked whether or not they were contras, they couldn't confirm that.

Goals

There were three cases of people shot while resisting arrest, or trying to escape. One of the cases, where I could gain information, was a teenage boy told to stop running by armed police. The commission couldn't tell me whether the boy was armed or unarmed; they could not tell me whether the police had fired a warning shot which went wrong, or if they had shot to wound.

In the United States — as happens several times a week — if someone running to resist arrest had been shot by the police, this would be the case of a civil action against the police, not for an indictment of the government for human rights derelictions. I asked whether such cases had been brought against the police, the commission couldn't tell me.

There was a further case of a hanging in a prison cell. In Brixton prison there have been several such deaths. I tried to raise them with the Home Secretary and met with his stone-wall refusal to launch a special investigation.

The last case was of a 79 year old man who died in prison. The average life expectancy in Nicaragua is 55. The commission granted he might well have died from natural causes, but he'd been ill and not been released. I regret that, but it can't be considered a case of human rights.

The fact is that every time Amnesty International has raised a case with the Nicaraguan government, they have got a positive response — including the release of several people who clearly should not have been detained.

I was in Nicaragua for three full days after the election. The abstention rate in the US elections was 45 per cent, 5 times more than in Nicaragua which was about 8 per cent. People are under no illusions about what propaganda use the United States would have sought to make of a 45 per cent abstention in Nicaragua. They regard this as another case of the double standards being applied to their own country.

Everyone in Nicaragua was aware during the presidential election campaign of the claim that MIGs were approaching Corinto on a Bulgarian freighter. It was constantly flashed across the screen in the States throughout the elections. In other words, at a time when the US public should have been able to hear of the Nicaraguan results, the overwhelming support for the Sandinistas, all they heard was the claim that MIGs were approaching Nicaragua.

This of course was denied at the time by the Nicaraguan foreign minister and the Soviet Union. It has ultimately been accepted by secretary of state Schultz that no MIGs were on the way. The claim was part of the 'dirty propaganda war' being pursued by the hard-liners in Washington, people who are intent on crushing the Nicaraguan revolution.

All out on 9 December

CND IS NOW committed to increased support for the women's peace movement, especially the women-only action at the Greenham camp on Sunday 9 December. Greenham women must have the support of everyone in the anti-missiles movement to build the traditional December action which marks the fifth anniversary of NATO's announcement that cruise missiles would be deployed in Britain.

The emergency resolution to CND conference last weekend followed on the heels of the announcement earlier in the week that the second flight of 16 cruise missiles have now been stationed here.

The resolution passed by CND conference was:

Conference notes the protest made in Trafalgar Square last Tuesday evening about the stationing of 16 cruise missiles at Greenham Common. We are outraged that General Rogers of NATO communicated this information to us and that it did not come from the British parliament.

We urge national CND and CND groups not to abandon the campaign against those cruise missiles already deployed in this country. We would like to see CND increase its

support for the women's peace camp in whatever way it can, but particularly through women participating in 'night-watch' and committing themselves to the camp on a regular basis. Support for this should come in the form of local group actions.

National CND should provide publicity, material assistance and transport to ensure that the campaign against cruise is sustained. CND conference agrees to lend its support to the women-initiated protest on 9 December this year, and to any women's actions at Greenham.

Missiles Out! Bases Out!

THE DEAD HAND of CND's leadership weighed heavy on annual conference in Sheffield City Hall last weekend. But despite the fact that both the agenda and debates were arranged to prevent discussion of the real issues facing the peace movement in 1985, conference asserted against the platform the need to make opposing the missiles CND's first priority.

After much wrangling by the conference arrangements committee, an emergency resolution supporting Greenham action came top of the priority ballot. And 'next business' was successfully moved, in throwing out the debate on the nuclear weapons of the Soviet Union.

Despite opposition from the leadership, amendments to strengthen the AirLand Battle resolution were won. They reasserted the focus of the campaign around 'the closure of US bases and the return of cruise missiles', and demanded — yet again — that British withdrawal from NATO must figure more prominently in CND's campaigning.

At the same time, the argument — and the vote — on non-nuclear defence

was lost. And the chair successfully kept London Region's demand for a national demonstration in London in October off the agenda.

By Carol Turner

The alliance built amongst the most determined anti-missiles campaigners — youth, the Labour left, Greenham women and sections of the non-violent direct action (NVDA) wing of the peace

movement — has been destabilised by the publishing of Labour's defence document. The same confusion within the Labour Party left itself was reflected in the support for that document at Labour Party conference earlier this year.

Without accepting every dot and comma, the leadership of CND have gone over to the basic strategy expressed in Labour's policy: staying within NATO and trading off getting rid of nuclear weapons in British territory against a conventional arms build-up. But this position has no clear support as yet among CND's rank and file.

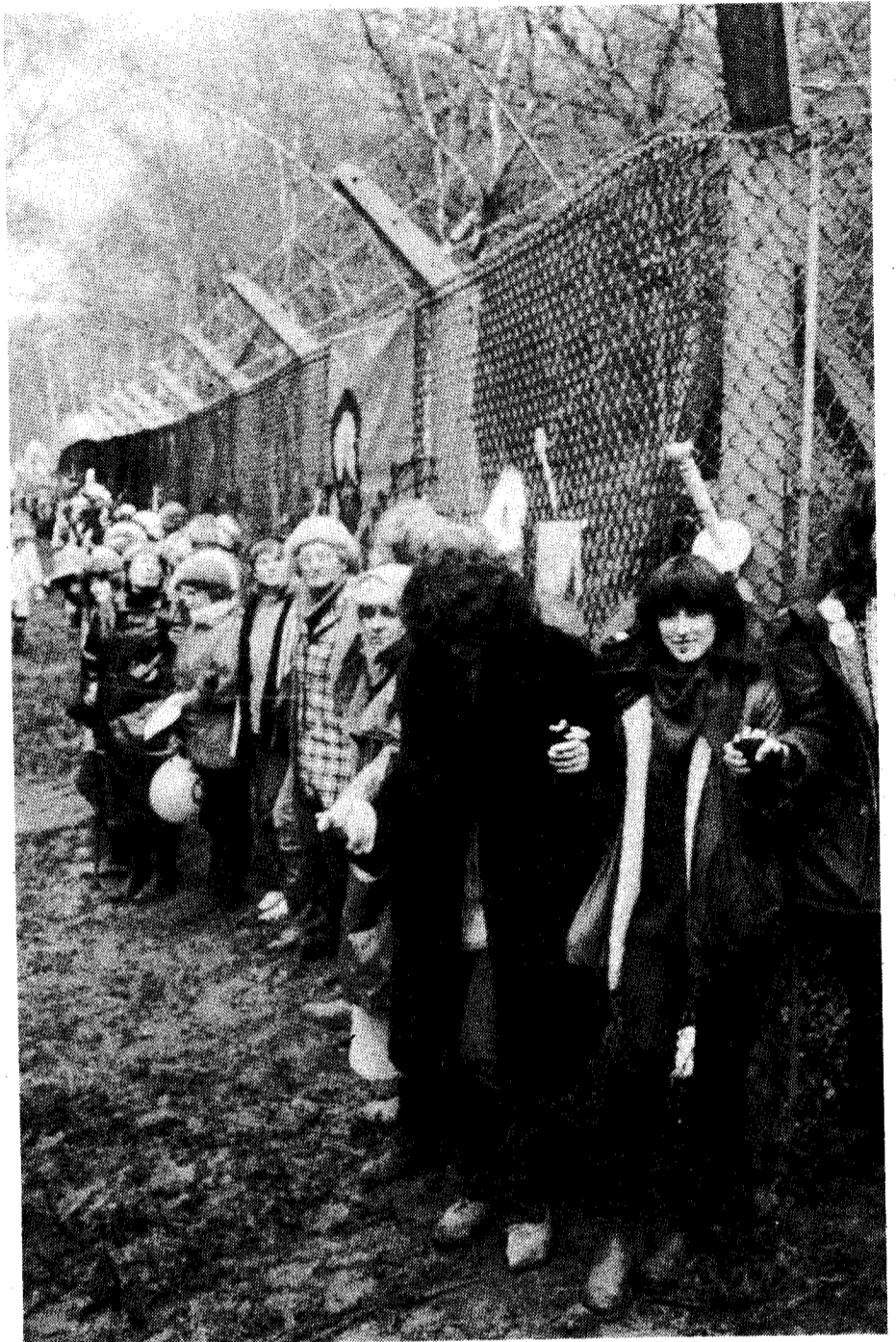
Rather, support for Christian CND's clever amendment to the non-nuclear defence resolution — that CND takes no position on specific non-nuclear strategies, whilst recognising the need for a 'national security police' — represents a confused

sentiment that anything's better than the nukes.

Non-nuclear defence will be the terrain of much policy debate in 1985. The job of consistent anti-missiles campaigners is to make clear what non-nuclear defence *a la* Labour Party really means.

The elections proved a sensitive barometer of the state of the campaign. Overall, there was a slight shift to the right on national council membership. But the most well-known of what E.P. Thompson terms the 'fundamentalists' were resoundingly supported. Pat Arrowsmith, Rebecca Johnson and Helen John were clearly top of the pops. And Joy Hurcombe retained her vice chair.

The stage management of conference raises questions about democracy within the campaign. The activist 'left wing' of CND remains a powerful minority.



Greenham women are everywhere

Friday, 6pm:

Everyone is arriving at Sheffield City Hall for CND's annual conference. Amongst all the bump is a list of Friday meetings. Where is the women's workshop organised for tonight?

Cancelled! But we have things to organise: a resolution supporting action at Greenham on 9 December, and getting our demand for a women's peace conference onto this weekend's agenda.

A Greenham Women Against Cruise stall is set up in the hall. Women refuse to be moved on by CND stewards. A hastily-scribbled notice calls a women's caucus in the bar. A handful of women assemble.

There is confusion. London Region CND has withdrawn its emergency resolution on Greenham we're told. We draw one up, but the conference arrangements committee tell us it's 'out of order'.

First thing on Saturday, Sue from Hackney YCND will take the conference floor and demand women are put back on the agenda.

Saturday morning, 9.05 am:

Joan Ruddock is in the chair and announces the

report on the conference agenda, in two parts. First is an announcement about fringe meetings. Then a report from the committee. Any questions?

Sue is on her feet, only to be ruled out of order. She should have raised it in the other bit. But this wasn't clear. Sorry, too bad, can't do anything about that.

We try again when the annual report is discussed. Ilona from Newham CND moves reference back. Lost. The women's conference is referred to the new national council. Women are very angry.

Saturday lunch time, women's workshop:

Conference is not supporting women. As usual we're pushed off the agenda. Don't they realise we're at the centre of the peace movement, leading the campaign against cruise?

Perhaps we ought to get on with organising our own conference by ourselves? No, CND must offer its resources, we must demand CND supports us.

But how? What's the way through all these formalities, these tricks of conference?

We'll raise it again right after lunch. If conference doesn't agree, we'll storm the platform.

Saturday, 2pm:

It doesn't. We don't. Women mill around in the corridors. A council of war is held. Conference isn't with us. We have to organise better tomorrow. Someone gets to the mike to announce a women's caucus at 8am (!) on Sunday, before conference starts.

Sunday, 8.30am:

We've been waiting on the steps of a locked city hall for half an hour. The women's caucus occupies the coffee bar, men are shooed away. The caucus has grown since yesterday, and is in sober, fighting mood.

We don't know the result of the priority ballot on emergency resolutions. If we win Rebecca Johnson from the camp will move the resolution. We will meet again at lunch time to talk it out.

Meanwhile we can't trust national council with our women's conference. If conference won't let us talk about it, we'll demand a women's delegation to national council. We plan how to organise it, and swap names and addresses.

Sunday, 12.30pm:

We've won the emergency

ballot. Greenham is on the agenda.

The caucus has grown. Seventy or eighty women take over the coffee bar again.

Rebecca will move the resolution. We discuss what she'll say, and who else will speak.

Someone suggests the camp women should be given priority. No, they say. Every woman here is a Greenham woman, whether they live at the camp or not.

Does everyone have a delegate's card to get into the debate?

We discuss whether they will try to close the debate quickly, on the grounds that it's not contentious. And how to stop that. We want to raise all the aspects of the camp, and we want to raise the women's delegation to national council.

The group breaks into two. Women who are going to speak to discuss who's saying what. Women who aren't organise to provide moral support. Those not speaking will sit at the front to make our presence felt.

We rush back to conference in jubilant mood.

Sunday, 3.30pm:

Rebecca speaks to a silent

audience. Women give up a large part of their lives to fight the missiles. The women at the camp are evicted for breakfast, harassed for lunch, and arrested for supper.

She explains what is happening at Greenham, and why everyone must support the camp. The red light flashes. Joan Ruddock glances nervously over Rebecca's shoulder. How far is she through her speech? The red light flashes again. Rebecca will not be stopped. At last women have the conference floor.

As she draws to an end, conference stands. For several minutes there is thunderous applause. There's no way this debate can be stopped.

One woman takes the mike. We should oppose separatist actions, she says. They are sexist. There are a few hisses. Conference waits till this irrelevance is over.

The women's delegation is raised during the debate. It's our conference, and we will organise it.

One speaker captures the feelings of the whole room. At last, he says, conference is discussing what really matters: how to fight the missiles.

Defend Nicaragua!

CONFERENCE demonstrated its good sense when it decided to prioritise discussing the two most pressing issues facing the peace movement today: opposition to Reagan's threatened invasion of Nicaragua, and support for the women on Greenham Common.

Conference supported an emergency resolution from Tottenham and Shipley CND groups to condemn the Reagan administration for 'threatening military intervention against Nicaragua' and calling on the British government to publicly oppose 'any armed attack

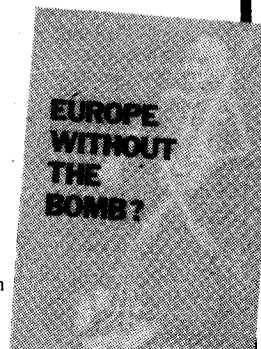
against Nicaragua', on the grounds that: 'A US invasion of Nicaragua could quickly result in another Vietnam-type situation, with leading forces inside the US government pressing for nuclear escalation. Nicaragua could spark a nuclear conflagration.'

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Ford women fight on

THE STRIKE of 270 women sewing machinists at Dagenham and Halewood has shut down all Ford car production in Britain. Ten thousand production workers are laid off and the company is losing £10 million worth of cars a day — on a strike it would only cost £1,800 a week to settle.

All Ford workers are part of a five grade A to E wage structure, with most assembly workers on grade B. Six times in the last sixteen years the women have gone through the grievance procedure demanding upgrading from B to C to bring them into line with other more skilled production workers. Each time they have been knocked back. This time they have decided enough is enough.

Last Monday mass meetings of the sewing machinists in both plants were unanimous in their

determination to continue the strike — despite the decision of national union negotiators to recommend the acceptance of Ford's seven per cent wage offer with the usual company condition of a freeze on all grading grievances.

This led to lively exchanges at Thursday's meeting of all senior stewards which agreed to recommend the offer to mass meetings but committed Ron Todd to refusing to sign any deal until the women's grievance was resolved. A militant lobby of Dagenham machinists

underlined the point.

Nevertheless the senior stewards compliance is unfortunate. The company is now going on the offensive saying the whole pay deal is questioned if the unions don't sign by 5 December and ditch the women's claim. The best way to deal with this blackmail would have been to have all Ford workers out on strike for better wages and conditions rather than sitting at home without pay.

The women themselves are rising to the challenge. Picketing has been stepped up to prevent the importation of scab trim into the assembly plant and assurances are being sought from convenors that no material carried through a picket line will be touched. Women at

Dagenham have made it clear that they will stop Ford's internal truck fleet, and keep the plants closed that way, if any attempt is made to restart production with scab material.

Male workers are also being leafleted with official union bulletins explaining the sewing machinists case when they pick up their tax rebates.

In 1968 striking sewing machinists at Ford's did more than any to fight to establish the principle of equal pay for equal work. Sixteen years later they are fighting for recognition of equal pay for equal skill. All Ford workers and millions more outside have every interests in their victory.

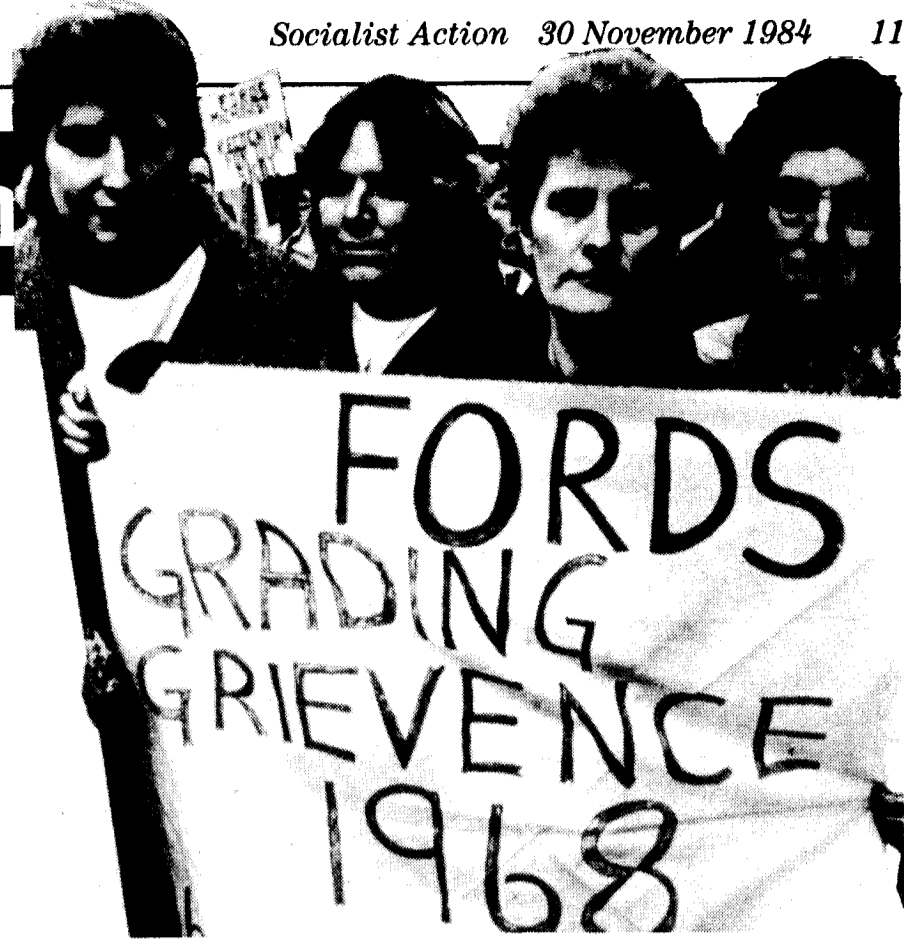


Photo: CARLOS GUARITA (Reflex)

Big Brother in Liverpool

By John Nolan

IT WAS reported last week that 'security' spy cameras were to be set up outside Liverpool council offices including that of deputy leader Derek Hatton. They were there according to *Militant* council leaders to protect them against the 'thugs' of the councils race relations committees black caucus.

The excuse for the spy cameras was provided by the explosion of anger that erupted in the local labour movement over *Militant's* refusal to re-advertise the job of head of the race relations unit — as Derek Hatton had previously promised.

Despite the fact that there were several experienced workers in the Liverpool black community who were better qualified for the post, a 26

year old *Militant* supporter from West London, Sampson Bond, was given the job. The *Militant* dominated Liverpool district Labour Party and Liverpool City Council endorsed Hatton's going back on his original promise to re-advertise the position.

Before the City Council meeting over three hundred blacks trade unionists and Labour Party members gathered outside

the Toxteth Caribbean centre. They heard Merseyside County Council leader Keva Coombes describe Bond's appointment as wrong. 'There are racists embedded in the Labour movement as there outside,' said Keva.

After the meeting many people marched to the town hall and black caucus members crowded into the council chamber

to demand that *Militant* leaders re-advertise the post. As the obedient hands went up in defiance of the black communities demands, black's surrounded Hatton chanting 'Racist, racist.' And as scuffles broke out the council meeting was abandoned.



Fight deportations

On Thursday 8 November Muhammad Idrish was served with a deportation order from the Home Office. This means that all the appeals against the Home Office decision have failed: adjudicator, Immigration Appeal Tribunal, Judicial Review, Appeal Court, House of Lords. The legal process has not been fully exhausted, as we still have the European Court of Human Rights.

In 1976, Muhammad, a Bengali came to Britain to study at Bristol University. While there he met and married a Scottish woman. The relationship lasted over two years. But within a few weeks of the break-up, Muhammad was told that the Home Office had turned down his application to stay. Since his arrival Muhammad has worked with the black and Asian communities, first in Bristol

and now in Handsworth Birmingham. The local labour movement has taken up his case and built a Defence Campaign with his trade union, NALGO.

by Bob Smith, Muhammed Idrish Defence Campaign

We have won the support of 86 MPs, 32 Peers and many black and Asian religious leaders. NALGO Conference in 1983 and 1984 supporting Muham-

mad, pledging industrial action, and calling on other trade unions to support. This case is an illustration of the present government's campaign against black trade union and community activists. Last year alone 2,282 people were deported, and a similar number left under threat. Under the immigration laws people can be imprisoned without trial, the Home Office makes the charges, and the final appeal can only be made to the Home Secretary. The fight against deportation must be taken up as part of the fight against racist laws. Nalگو has called on its membership to support a demonstration on 30

January 1985. Branches will be encouraged to strike and send a contingent. Support is invited from all sections of the labour movement, and supporters are asked to bring their banners.

● **Demonstrate, Wednesday 30th January. Assemble 11.30 am in Booth St., off Soho Rd., Handsworth, Birmingham, for march to city centre and rally at Central Hall, Corporation St. For details contact Muhammad Idrish Defence Campaign, c/o Barry Lovejoy, 30 Antrobus Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, B21. Telephone 021-523 8923. Donations welcome.**

Black section statement on Liverpool

IT IS with grave concern the National Steering Committee of Labour Party Black Sections view recent events involving Liverpool council and black people.

We have contacted activists at the City Hall who have formed themselves into a black caucus and offered them our full support.

We view with alarm the cavalier attitude of the city council, repeatedly disregarding the opinions of the black community of Liverpool.

But, given our experiences of Labour Party Conference and elsewhere with 'Militant' Tendency who run the ruling Labour Group in Liverpool, we are not surprised.

We would remind Labour leaders in the city that black people have been settled in Liverpool, Britain's oldest slave port, for hundreds of years.

Black people based in Liverpool have helped

make this country economically strong.

Yet black people in the city continue to live in the worst housing, have the least jobs of any workers and get the rawest deal.

Militant cannot claim significantly to have reversed this crisis in the Black community.

Even on the issue of black political representation, they have lamentably failed.

There is not a single black city councillor, only one black county councillor and just one black member of the District Party's executive.

Black confidence in the Labour Party in Liverpool could not be at a lower ebb.

Militant's vision for tackling inner city poverty ignores black people by reducing everything merely to 'class'.

Hence the Tendency oppose 'positive action' as a means of reversing the hundreds of years of inequality and repression which have stymied black progress in Britain.

This brings us to the ruling Labour Group's choice of candidate for

the all-important position of Race Unit head.

While we do not want to question the professional qualifications of their candidate, Sam Bond, the manner of his proposed appointment is thoroughly reprehensible.

First, because of the Labour Group's abject failure to consult the black community over this key appointment.

And second, because Mr Bond's declared opposition to 'positive action' is simply incompatible with him holding the post.

The Liverpool crisis demonstrates the bankruptcy of *Militant* Tendency opposition to black sections in the Labour Party.

We say to the activists in Liverpool: 'Your struggle is our struggle. Let this be a warning to Labour leaders who choose to ignore us.'

Black sections are here to smash racism and fight for greater black representation in unions, town halls, city halls and Parliament. Black sections are here to stay.'

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Christmas for the miners

Photos: MORNING STAR



ON MONDAY 26 November Susannah York, Stan Orme, Kath Chaplin (Women Against Pit Closures), Dafydd Elis Thomas (President, Plaid Cymru) and Liberal MP Simon Hughes launched the Miners' Families Christmas Appeal.

'It's not hard having my husband on strike but it is hard saying no to my children at Christmas,' said Kath Chaplin.

The appeal hopes to unite a lot of people to raise an Xmas bonus for the miners. Neil Kinnock, Roy Hattersley, three liberal MP's, football managers Jack Charlton and Brian Clough, Glenda Jackson, UB40 and the Flying Pickets are also sponsoring the appeal.

The address of the Miners Family Christmas Appeal is c/o 14, Whitesley Street, London, SE1 8SL.

CHRISTMAS IS not going to be an easy time for the miners and their families. It may be the festive season but it's also the expensive season and the Tory propaganda machine will not show any 'mercy' in its campaign to break the miners' spirit at yuletide.

That's why we're publishing Vicky Currie's article below. At 10 years old she has been quick to learn what working class solidarity is all about. It would be good if some others in the labour movement could understand just as well.

Vicky Currie, age 10.

WELL I don't really understand a lot about the strike but I do know that my dad and mum are standing for what they believe in it. It is so me and my brother Peter can work when we leave school.

My mum is in the action group she goes out a lot to get money to feed the miners. My mum goes on the picket line. One copper smacked her, she lost her tooth. I sometimes hear my mum crying at night because she can't get us a lot for Christmas, my Dad says, 'Don't worry love, the kids will be alright.'

She says that it's bad without money because it's the first Christmas without her Dad. He died on May 20th 1984 and she misses him very much.

I am trying to be good and don't ask for much money now. But my brother still does. My mum says if I had two bob she would have two bobbies from Donny guarding it.

I know she's only kidding as she does not like the bobbies anymore. They beat up pickets and throw money at them. That's what they do at our pit.

I don't want my mum to meet Maggie or MacGregor. She says that it's grass pie before we go back to work. I won't eat it I'll go to my nana's.

My Dad says that when we start work we must never cross a picket line. Our great grandfather went without in 1926 so we could have what we have today.

My brother Peter says not to worry, he will look after me as he is going to be Prime Minister after he plays for Liverpool.

TGWU- time to fight

'ALL THE Act does is take away from the union some of the privileges that unions have been given for generations.' So declared Mr Justice Hodgson when he fined the TGWU £200,000 for defying a High Court order to call off the Austin Rover strike.

Despite the collapse of the strike Austin Rover has ruthlessly pursued its case against the union, in order to demonstrate its tough stand against the workforce — and to give the government the first major opportunity to enforce its 1984 anti-union laws.

The company has threatened to sack unofficial strikers in its plants, and the action against the TGWU is designed to prevent the unions from backing their members.

This fine is a vital challenge to the

trade union movement because it is the major test of the new Act which came into operation in September. During the Austin Rover strike all the other unions involved retreated in the face of the court order, and repudiated the strike.

Ken Cure of the AUEW stated that his union 'was not going down the road of sequestration'. The EET-PU followed suit. The result was the unions handed BL victory on a plate.

The TGWU has now been given 14 days to pay the fine. If it does not pay, it will be faced with sequestration of its £55 million assets — the pattern already established with the NGA and the NUM.

Moss Evans has made it clear that the union will abide by its Conference policy and will not pay the fine. There must be no moving from this position.

The TGWU fine is even more im-

portant because there is now a concerted attempt by centre and right wing union leaders to change TUC policy on the anti-union laws. These leaders want to reverse the stand that the TUC is committed to by Congress decisions and by the Wembley Conference in 1982.

They have been encouraged in this by the lack of response by the TUC first to the fine of the NGA and then the seizure of the NUM's funds. This move to accept the 1984 laws must be defeated.

The TGWU is the largest union in Britain, with over 1.5 million members. It is capable of bringing the country to a standstill. Its members are in key industries such as the docks, power supply, water supply, gas, transport, chemicals and engineering. The leadership of the union must use the 14 days to explain to the membership that this is an at-

tack which threatens to cripple the union for standing by its members. And they must turn to the rest of the trade union movement for support.

Whatever steps the TGWU has taken to protect its assets from the courts, a simple refusal to pay the fine will not be enough. The union must appeal for action to stop the courts.

Moss Evans, acting on union conference decisions, has now taken a stand against the anti-union laws. That stand must be translated into action. The TUC general council must now give its full backing to the TGWU.

- No compliance with the courts. Stand by TUC policy!
- Prepare for strike action if funds are sequestrated!
- The TUC must declare its support, and build national action to back the TGWU!