

A Socialist ACTION

No. 74 26 October 1984 30p



ONLY TREACHERY

'You keep smiling, Neil, I'll do the talking.'

IN SEVEN weeks since the TUC Congress the NUM has fought its way to the edge of total victory.

First the TUC decisions on the power stations have begun to be effective in key areas. Then NACODS decision to strike threatened to wreck the government's entire strategy of keeping the Notts coal field open.

The result, by the middle of last week, was an attack of panic within the British ruling class. When £6,800 million is lost from the stock exchange in two days, the largest fall in share prices in history, that speaks far more eloquently than any words.

The appointment of Michael Eaton as new chief spokesperson of the Coal Board, in the middle of the strike, was an admission of just how far the credibility of the government's position was collapsing.

Peter Walker's appeal to Neil Kinnock to step in and use his 'influence' with the NUM showed how conscious the government was that it can no longer win the dispute with its own forces. By the end of last week it was once more quite obviously *only* the TUC and NACODS leadership that could deprive the NUM of victory.

And that is exactly what they set out to do throughout this week. It started on Thursday with Ninnock spelling out his terms for a settlement over the heads of the NUM. Then by Tuesday this week NACODS was excluding the NUM from its negotiations with the Coal Board at ACAS. The TUC has still uttered not one word about the court's attacks on the NUM.

The aim of the TUCs operation was quite clear. To try to impose a 'compromise' on the NUM. The aim of the government's policy was equally clear.

The Thatcher government has found it cannot get the Scargill leadership of the NUM to back down. Therefore it intends to go over its head and try to stitch up a deal with those who are more 'reasonable' — the leadership of NACODS, the TUC, and Neil Kinnock. The aim is to impose that deal on the NUM.

The role of the labour movement, and particularly its left wing, has to be clear. The only people with the right to negotiate on the miners strike are the leadership of the NUM. The role of the labour movement is to support the miners — not work out how to sell them out.

The subject the TUC should be discussing is how to defend the NUM against the attacks of the courts —



not discussing with Thatcher and MacGregor how many pits it is acceptable to close.

The left wing of the whole movement, in particular the left wing unions in the TUC, have to block the treachery which is being cooked up against the NUM.

This means:
● An all-out strike of NACODS from Thursday
● No TUC talks on the miners strike

— only the NUM can negotiate for the miners

● Full implementation of TUC Congress decisions on stopping the movement of coal
● A national Labour Party TUC demonstration in support of the miners
● An emergency TUC General Council meeting to decide on industrial action to meet any sequestering of the NUM's funds by the courts.

CAN STOP THE NUM

Socialist ACTION

Why Kinnock scabs

RIGHT FROM the beginning of the miners' strike two of its key figures have been absolutely sure of what they wanted.

Arthur Scargill, resting on the membership of the NUM, has oriented to a total victory over Margaret Thatcher. Thatcher has aimed for total victory over the NUM. Any compromise which emerged between these two would simply be because one side was unable to crush the other. Thatcher would only compromise when she is convinced the only alternative for her government is total defeat.

On the side of the NUM it is the determination of its membership, and the nature of its leadership, which has kept the strike going for eight months. Each escalation by Thatcher has been met with an equal escalation by the NUM — until by last Tuesday total victory lay within the hands of the miners union.

From last Tuesday until the beginning of this week, with the NACODS strike going ahead, all that was needed was for the labour and union leadership to hold steady and Arthur Scargill could have written any settlement he wanted on a piece of paper and Thatcher and MacGregor would have been forced to sign it.

But also right from the beginning of the dispute another less openly spectacular force has known exactly what it wanted out of the dispute. That force is Neil Kinnock, David Basnett, and the leadership of the TUC.

Basnett was not actually lying at the TUC when he said that he did not want Thatcher to crush the NUM. Basnett's strategy is for the TUC to 'fight its way back to the negotiating table' — where of course it will surrender (but that is another matter). Allowing Thatcher to openly crush the NUM would not serve that purpose. Hence the efforts of GMBATU, and other unions, to gain support for the TUC guidelines in the power stations.

But if Basnett, and the TUC leadership, does not want the NUM simply to be crushed it does not want a victory for Scargill and the miners. Nothing would terrify the TUC leadership more than a triumphant NUM, led by Arthur Scargill, which had crushed Thatcher's policies. Because members of other unions would simply ask 'if he, and the NUM, can do it, why can't our leaders?' And that would mean years of trouble for people like David Basnett and Normal Willis.

So the TUC, having been forced by the pressure of the miners to give support for the NUM at this year's Congress, finds it is riding a tiger. The resolution of support for the miners at the TUC Congress, the overwhelming support from delegates at the Labour Party conference, together with the atmosphere which surrounded the NACODS ballot, have created a dynamic which made total victory for the miners possible. Therefore, for the labour bureaucracy and the TUC, that victory must be stopped and a 'compromise' delivered.

This process became public last Thursday with the quite incredible Peter Walker/Neil Kinnock all talking, all action TV show.

First Walker made his dramatic appeal to Kinnock to intervene to persuade the NUM to accept the ACAS settlement. Then Kinnock appeared and started negotiating over terms for ending the strike over heads of the NUM.

The basis of the whole operation is simple. To break up the united front the NUM has created around itself, to isolate Scargill and the NUM leadership, and prevent them dictating the course of the struggle.

This is why Kinnock negotiates over the heads of the NUM, why the NCB-NACODS talks on Tuesday excluded the NUM, why the TUC is making no campaign against the legal attacks on the NUM.

The bourgeoisie in effect says 'we can't do business with Scargill's leadership, or the rank and file of the NUM, so therefore we propose to go round it, over it, underneath it, besides it, or any route possible to negotiate without it.' And this is just what the TUC and Kinnock propose to deliver. It should be given its proper name.

Scabbing.

Editor: ALAN FREEMAN
Published weekly except two weeks in August and the last week of December.
Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent Socialist Action's views. These are expressed in editorials.

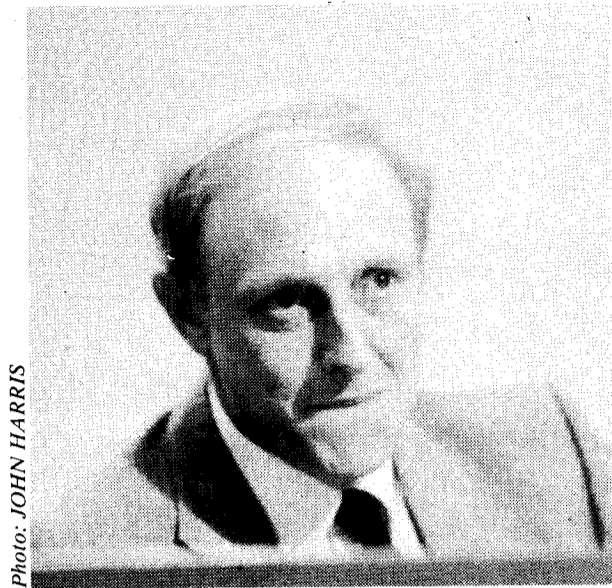


Photo: JOHN HARRIS



Photo: GM COOKSON

No mediation - step up the action!

REPLACING IAN MacGregor by Michael Eaton is a desperate gamble by the NCB, at a critical stage of the dispute. It is clear that the NACODS' strike call is likely to be widely supported. Even the very moderate Leicestershire area executive committee voted unanimously to instruct their members to strike.

A strike by NACODS would eliminate the 700,000 tonnes of coal a week which the CEBG is currently getting from the Coal Board. Eaton's appointment is a major retreat by the government and the NCB, in an attempt to avoid this development.

NACODS wants the appeals body to have wider terms of reference than simply pit closures. If the reference to closures were removed the body could consider the question of investment in a pit before it was run down.

If the board can get talks going before Thursday NACODS will almost certainly call off the strike. This now looks a strong possibility.

Such an outcome would be a considerable compensation for the replacement of Ian MacGregor. It would give the government a chance to recoup some of the ground it has lost since the breakdown of the last ACAS talks.

Eaton's arrival, however, does not mean that the NCB is about to give in. The central issue remains, and the main enemy will still be the NUM.

Eaton is likely to drop the attempt to get agreement on what constitutes 'uneconomic', and instead try for agreement on what constitutes exhaustion.

He is suggesting that an exhausted pit is one where coal could not be brought to the surface at an acceptable price. In short, they have changed the singer

not the song. The change however is in the context of an effort to stop the advance of the NUM. MacGregor told a meeting of directors in Derbyshire last June that he wanted to see the leadership of the NUM defeated, rather than a quick return to work.

By Pat Hickey

The situation is much more favourable to the NUM now. The government is still pursuing the twin-track strategy. On the one hand they have the courts waiting to sequester the NUM funds. On the other, the appointment of Eaton allows the NCB to adopt a more conciliatory face. The reason for this is that the Tories now want the labour leadership to come to their rescue.

The strike has cost them £3,300 million so far, and they are not yet ready to write off what Nigel Lawson called 'a worthwhile investment for the nation'. This sum is the equivalent of nine years subsidy to the NCB.

While a strike by NACODS would bring the end of the dispute a great deal closer, it is clear in

any case that the NUM will fight on, and that it is winning. The government is preparing the ground for the TUC, aided and abetted by Neil Kinnock, to intervene.

The labour leadership should give no credibility whatsoever to these moves. They do not represent a withdrawal of the pit closure plans.

The NUM must be left completely free to negotiate with the Coal Board. The task for the labour leaders is stepping up the solidarity.

The silence of the general council and of Neil Kinnock on the High Court action is unacceptable. So too is their lack of response to the treacherous role of Eric Hammond in the phoney ballot of EETPU members. This action was an open undermining of congress decisions.

Now that they have adopted a more conciliatory approach in the coal talks, the Tories will step up the pressure via the courts. They hope to frighten the TUC with the consequences of the strike, while giving Kinnock, Basnett et al an opportunity to play the role of mediators.

Of course, if the 'fair and reasonable' advice of the mediators is not accepted, this will 'prove' that the NUM is unreasonable. The only answer to this strategy is to step up the efforts to support the NUM.

Victory is within our grasp. It must be made plain to the leadership that their job is not to get involved in mediation. It is to deliver action.

Socialist Worker

The miners' strike: an appeal to organisations of the Labour left

Let's build united support

A letter to the Editorial Board of Socialist Worker and the Labour Co-ordinating Committee

Dear Comrades,

The miners' strike is the most serious industrial dispute since the war. It is a test of the strength of the Labour Party and the Labour left. It is a test of the ability of the Labour left to build a united front against the Tories and the Labour leadership.

The Labour leadership has failed the miners. It has failed to support the NUM in its fight against the NCB. It has failed to support the NUM in its fight against the Tories. It has failed to support the NUM in its fight against the Labour left.

The Labour left must step up its support for the NUM. It must build a united front against the Tories and the Labour leadership. It must build a united front against the Labour left.

Let's build united support for the NUM. Let's build united support for the Labour left. Let's build united support for the Socialist Worker.

SOGAT SUPPORTS THE MINERS

Better late...

BETTER LATE than never. But *Socialist Worker* is seven months late. Up to now they carefully avoided united action in the belief that only SW could win the dispute — which is why they were not very optimistic about the strike.

In March, SW was assuring its readers that the 'left controlled area leaderships are preventing the large-scale picketing that is essential to victory.' In April they were claiming that the Yorkshire Area officials were not 'giving the leadership required'. This particular piece of wisdom appeared under the sub-head 'Yorkshire puddings'.

By July, no doubt in the interests of unity, they were advising Arthur Scargill that he 'should not be bending over backwards before MacGregor and co even in private'.

Now they propose that the rest of the left do what it has been doing for the past seven months. Good. A small step forward. But there is a long way left to go.

A PIECE OF THE ACTION

THE COMIC STRIP THAT REQUIRES AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION © GORMAC

Panel 1: A man asks, "What is the matter with this man Scargill?!"

Panel 2: A man says, "I don't know... Perhaps he just doesn't want a seat in the House of Lords..."

Panel 3: A man asks, "What nonsense! What other reason could there be for being the leader of a trade union? To defend the interests of one's members?"

Panel 4: A man says, "I know it's hard to believe but not everyone is overwhelmed by a desire to sit in the same room as Lord..."

Below the panels is a box: "HERE ENTER THE NAME OF YOUR FAVOURITE SOCIALIST PEER"

Workers of the world unite

NINETY MINERS and thirty women from the mining communities participated in a meeting of 300 trade unionists and socialists in *Socialist Action's* 'Miners' International Solidarity Meeting' at Bold NUM club, St Helen's on Saturday 20 October.

Delegations of miners and women against pit closures from Scotland, North and South Yorkshire, Lancashire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, South Wales and South Staffordshire took part in the meeting.

The school was opened by Colin Lenton, an officer of Bold NUM, who explained that Bold was a Lancashire pit that had come out from the first day of the strike action.

The first session was on 'The women's movement in the miners' strike'. Platform speakers included: Lorraine Johnson from Lancashire, Susan Bence from Kent and Anne Jones from South Wales, alongside speakers from Greenham Common, Jude Woodward of the Labour Party Women's Action Committee and Kipp Dawson a woman miner from the USA.

Anne Jones summed up the message which came out of the discussion: 'We've learned how to walk and we're not going to crawl again.'

The second session dealt with the lessons of the strike. It was introduced by Phil Sutcliffe of

Kent NUM, Roy Butlin of Coalville NUR, and John Ross editor of *Socialist Action*.

The third session of the meeting was an international solidarity rally. It was introduced by Dennis Pennington of Bold NUM explaining how his solidarity tours of Belgium and Germany had opened his eyes to internationalism.

Brian Pehan brought greetings from Peoples' Democracy of Ireland and related the experience of the Irish people to the present repression being meted out to the miners.

Nigel Bevan of Penrhiceiber NUM explained his tour of Holland. Speakers from Denmark, Holland and Italy described the solidarity campaigns in these countries.

Alain Krivine was the final speaker, there on behalf of the Revolutionary Communist League of France. The meeting ended with the singing of the *Internationale*.

In the evening a social organised by Bold NUM was attended by 600 miners, trade unionists and supporters. It raised £1800 for Bold NUM.



Ann Jones, Tower Lodge women's support group, speaking at the rally; Lorraine Johnson on the left of the platform

I'm not going back to the kitchen sink

WOMEN DIDN'T start organising at the beginning of the strike at Bold, it was the tenth week before we got going. And at first there was just a handful of us, but now we've got forty or fifty women involved.

We mainly organise the food. And I want to say that some of our women work for 11 hours a day in the canteen and they are not paid for it. Most of us

wouldn't do that even if we were paid for it.

Lorraine Johnson, Bold women's support group

I admire those women and the work they are doing and I think everyone else should too.

But we also have been speaking at meetings and have been on the picket lines. Before this strike it wasn't just that I had never spoken at a meeting — I had never even been to a meeting. That's all changed now.

When our few scabs started going into work at Bold some of the women went down to the picket lines. And we joined in. We had to, because we saw at first hand the terrible way the police were treating the miners on the picket line. We saw the abuse and the insults.

I've learnt about politics through this strike and I'm not going back to the kitchen sink after it finishes. I'm going to join the Labour Party — just as soon as I get enough time to go to a meeting!

The coal must come back to rail

THERE ARE only thirty miners striking in Leicestershire — and a magnificent thirty they are too. I've got 100 members in the NUR, and 60 of them are involved in the action.

We've forged an alliance with the striking miners. So you've got just 90 men holding back the production of 2500 working miners.

ried, then the NUM needn't ask us for support again.

And I'll finish with this. There's been 330 miners dismissed in this dispute, and it's the NUM's position that their reinstatement is part of the settlement. Well, you can add 3 railwaymen to that. I want their jobs back too.

Roy Butlin, Coalville NUR

Our depot is in a strategic position. We move 135,000 tons a week to three power stations, including Didcot which has been switched off the national grid since June.

They're getting very frustrated with us, because we're surrounded by working miners churning out all this coal and we won't shift it.

You're all longing for power cuts, you can't wait for them to start. If they break us at Coalville so they can shift coal by rail, it will put back the power cuts until after Christmas.

But I must say a word about the lorries. There's not much you can do about them, but it's got to be a condition of the settlement of the miners' dispute that all the coal that was on the railway, comes back to the railway.

And if it doesn't come back on the railway at the end of this dispute, if my members detect a drop in the tonnage that we car-

Brian Pehan



The 'dirty thirty'

THERE ARE 2500 miners in Leicester, and there are 2470 scabs. I'm speaking for the other 30, the 'dirty thirty' as we're known.

I want to start by giving my thanks to the Coalville NUR. The job they have done in this strike has been fantastic. They haven't moved any coal for seven months.

Coalville — what a name for a town. That's where the strike should have started, but instead it's a town of scabs. And if it was left to the scabs it would become 'Doleville'.

Leicester area secretary, Jack Jones, is the arch scab of this dispute. He has done everything he can to break this strike. He won't back the dirty thirty.

Mick Richmond, Leicester 'dirty thirty'

He denies that working miners are driving the coal lorries when they are not working. But I know that's not the case, because I got a number pushed through my door. I rang up and was offered a job driving coal lorries —

even though I can't drive.

I was told to pick up the lorry at 10pm then 'you're on your own'. I was fizzing by this time, and then he said, 'It won't take all night because I know you've got to get some sleep before you go down the pit!'

Our trouble in Leicester is that we're very spread out, some of us live 20 miles apart, so they try to pick us off one by one. But we are not going to be broken by them.

No surrender! Victory to the miners!

We're the ones with intelligence

I'VE NOW got more bail conditions on me than most of you have had hot dinners. They've even had the audacity to try and restrict me from talking to my own Lodge members.

The only place I'm allowed to go is 'my own place of work' — that's what they put on me 48

hours ago. So I asked them, what is my place of work. I'm employed by the NCB, so as far as I'm concerned my place of work is any place in the country where they've got a pit working.

Huw Edwards, Tower lodge, South Wales

The main danger in Wales is boredom. The strike is solid and we've not got one scab. Or there

was literally one and he did a moonlight.

We proved we're the ones with intelligence. We've shown this left, right and centre. But they won't respond to anything except brute force.

We don't want to get arrested, but if we do, we know what to say. We've got to win, and if we've got to spend another term in prison, of a few hours, days or months, then so be it.

'Kay Sutcliffe's husband'

Phil Sutcliffe, Kent NUM

WE'VE GOT very few scabs in Kent despite the big fuss they whipped up around the 'back to work' movement, and there were mass pickets waiting for them at every pit.

There were six went in at Betteshanger, there were 26 went through at Tilmanstone and that number is now down to 18, and there were none at Snowdown. That's the truth about the back to work movement.

But they haven't got them working, because from when the scabs started going through the picket lines, the NACODS men have come out on strike. Not just because we picketed them out, but in protest against the police harassment, not just on the picket lines but in the communities.

They picked on us in the spring, believing that the strike would only last a few weeks. But they miscalculated badly, because we've lasted the spring, and the summer and the autumn. And now we're nearly into the winter.

But we couldn't have lasted this long — and I know there have already been tributes to the women, but I'm not missing it out — we couldn't have kept up our morale or stayed so united without the women.

But I'm not paying them tribute just as women backing their men, but as women who are fighting for jobs and for their communities, women who are fighting for the whole working class.

It's been said that the women's activity in this strike is changing lives. It's certainly changing mine. My wife, Kay, is very active in the strike. If you go in our local strike headquarters you'll find all the phone numbers on the wall, but you won't find mine. It'd down as Kay Sutcliffe, not as me.

When Kay started doing meetings in London she was introduced as Kay Sutcliffe, Kent miner's wife. Now when I speak, I'm introduced as Philip Sutcliffe, Kay Sutcliffe's husband!

I'm not a philosopher or a prophet. I don't read Marx or Lenin. I'm a miner and I'm proud to be a miner, I'm proud of my class and I want to fight for it. I just want to fight for peace and true socialism for the working people of the whole world.



The scabs have nothing to offer

Brian Todd, Nottingham striking miners

I'M FROM Nottingham, the home of working miners, of Silver Birch, and scabs.

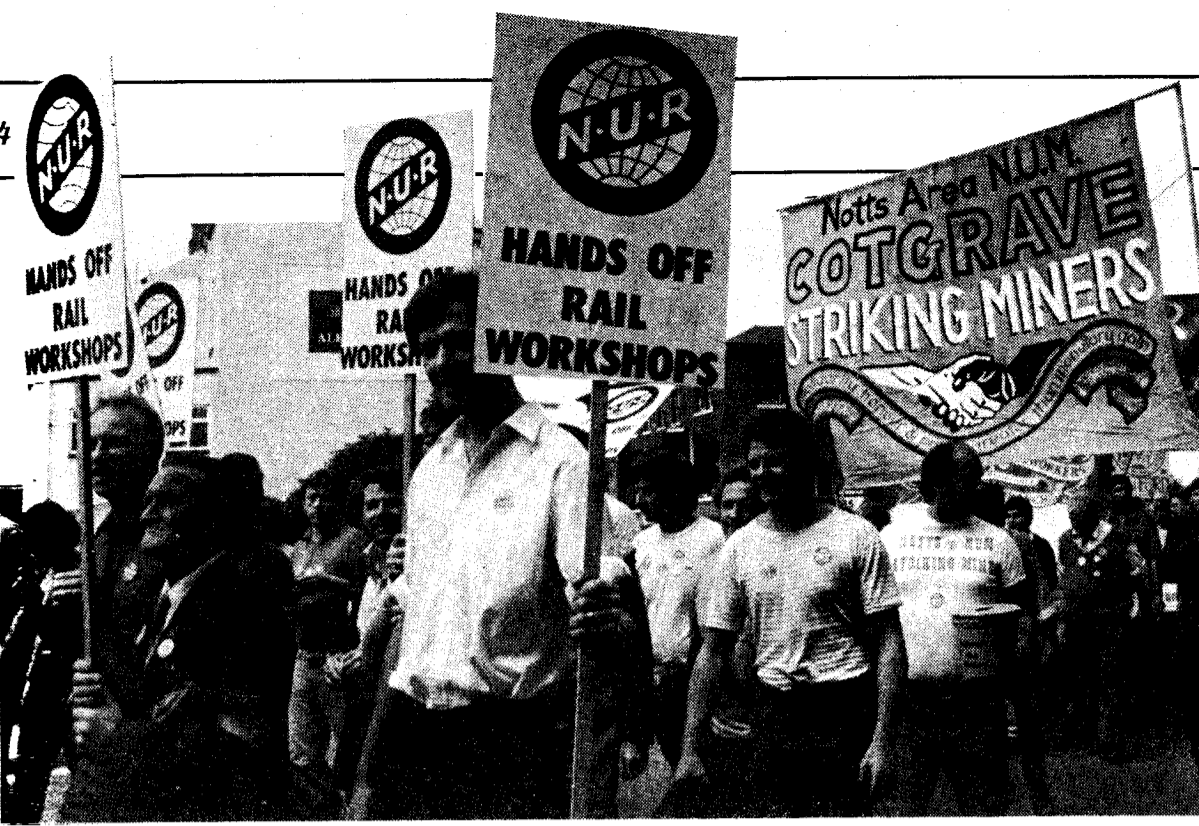
In Nottingham we were faced with having to build our own organisations, because the scabs who took over the union sacked all the union officials that went on strike, including myself. They saw the future being led by working miners.

The lesson of this is that we may be a minority now, but when we win — and we will win — they will think again and have us back as their leaders, because the scabs have nothing to offer them.

We have a struggle on our hands. We can't even touch our area funds. All our support comes from the support groups here and abroad. Without that we'd be starved into the ground.

I want to say something about Margaret Thatcher, because she's not the only one to blame. This was all planned back in 1975. Who brought MacGregor into the country? It wasn't Thatcher, Varley did. They put him in BL, then moved him to steel, and now he's with the NCB. But it didn't work. It won't work. We are going to win.

I think we all saw Margaret Thatcher with a tear in her eye when that big daft fool of a son of hers got lost in the desert. Well, we should all be determined to see her cry again when we march past 10 Downing Street on that victory parade.



Mass picket at Didcot

WEDNESDAY 24 October marked the first mass picket of Didcot power station near Oxford. The picket was called by South Wales NUM and backed by the support committees in Oxford and the Thames Valley area.



tankers which are unmarked and non-union are essential to keep the station running.

By Mike Picken, Oxford East Labour Party

The NUM picket, miners from Merthyr Vale, has so far been only token due to the distance from mining areas. But the South Wales NUM area executive decided to step up the pressure by calling the mass picket and appealing for support from the local labour movement.

A further aim of the picket is to put pressure on power station workers not to handle scab fuel in line with TUC policy.

There is an enthusiastic

response to the picket from the Oxford labour movement. It is coordinated through the Oxford Trade Council miners' support committee. Thousands of leaflets were distributed and transport organised.

Students starting college have been mobilised — last week over 300 attended a miners' meeting at Oxford University Labour Club and support groups are now established in the Poly and other university colleges.

Ruskin College Student Union has not only organised transport for its own students, but has paid for an extra coach to bring South Wales miners to the picket.

After some pressure the South East Region TUC miners' committee has backed the picket, and has considered plans to picket Tilbury power station.

Since the start of the dispute, the NUM has picketed Didcot, one of the largest coal-fired power stations in southern England, and quickly stopped all rail deliveries of coal.

However, in recent weeks deliveries of oil have been going into the power station by road — up to 30-40 tankers a day. The station has been converted to burn oil and is now running 50-50.

The station was closed for most of the summer, and was estimated to have only two weeks of coal supply when working at full capacity. The oil

'Now I'm an Internationalist'

DURING THE present dispute in the coal industry I have had the great privilege of visiting West Germany and Belgium to ask workers in these two countries for aid. Also to describe to them the nature of our dispute and the reaction of the Thatcher government and its attempts to defeat the NUM and the wider trade union movement in Britain.

My visit to Germany lasted two weeks and together with another colleague of the NUM we travelled the length and breadth of the country. They tour was organised through the efforts of Socialist Action and the GIM, (Gruppe Internationale Marxisten) West German section of the Fourth International.

The West German 35-hour week struggle was underway and we attended pickets at the Opel factory in Rüsselheim near Frankfurt and at the Knecht car component factory at the town of Lorsch near Stuttgart. At both pickets we received an enthusiastic welcome and collections were made for us after we had addressed the pickets.

Public meetings were held throughout West Germany (and West Berlin) where we described to the German workers our reasons for striking, our living conditions and the hardships that miners' families are now suffering.

After every meeting the questions from the floor always concerned the national ballot; how did we

survive without strike pay; and the role of the women's support groups.

By Dennis Pennington, Bold NUM, St Helens, Lancs

Unfortunately we did not have much contact with German trade union officials, with the notable exception of the printers union. We soon realised the bureaucratic nature of German trade unionism.

In Belgium myself and a miner's wife received a warmhearted and enthusiastic reception from members of the SAS/POS, the Belgian section of the Fourth International.

We visited steel workers in Liège and the Renault works near Brussels. The format of the tour was much the same as that in Germany.

Susan, my companion on the tour, was also interviewed by several women's magazines, the interviewers showing deep concern for the hardship suffered by miners' wives and families.

In Belgium we had more contact with trade union officials than in West Germany, but of course the development and histories of the unions in both countries is entirely different.

The politico-social history of Belgium and Britain are closely linked and Belgium has a long history of militancy and workers' struggle.

The trade union movement in Germany, on the other hand, was destroyed in 1933 and the top-heavy, bureaucratic trade union system of today was formulated by the allies in 1945 with the assistance of such TUC notables as Vic Feather!

As regards financial support, both visits were a tremendous success and I am still in contact with newly formed friends from both countries.

For me personally both visits were an unforgettable experience. Before going abroad I considered myself to be conveniently pigeon-holed thus: miner, British, Lancashire. Now I feel I can be categorised simply as 'worker'.

If every working man and woman could have the opportunity to visit other workers they would soon realise that what unites us is far greater than what separates us. What separates us is really only fiction on the globe's surface.

Thanks to the efforts of supporters of Socialist Action in Manchester, and similar groups in Germany and Belgium, I feel I can now truly call myself an internationalist.



Solidarity attacked in Coalville

THREE RAILWORKERS from Coalville in Leicester were sacked last week. They now face criminal charges brought by British Rail management.

The charges are of theft of BR property, in one case to the value of £4! But the court action has more to do with the fact that no coal has moved from Coalville depot for the last seven months.

Doreen Weppler, member of the NUR, spoke to ROY BUTLIN, leader of the Coalville railworkers about what is happening.

Why do you think that the sackings are part of management's harassment campaign?

First of all in Coalville — a town filled with scabs — my members have stood by the handful of striking miners since April. As winter gets nearer everything is being done to get coal trains back on the road.

To my mind, it is not coincidental that rail workers' houses were visited by transport police on the same day that management threatened our depot with closure unless we shifted coal.

It was devastating to our families. Blokes went home and broke the news that a closure plan had been announced.

As if that wasn't enough, a few hours later

seven members had transport police searching their homes for BR property.

To date, three of the seven have been summarily dismissed.

Never before has this kind of offence ended up in sackings. In fact I was sent home this morning for refusing to take a coal train by a supervisor who was found guilty of stealing from wage packets from the safe several years ago.

This is what convinces me that the sackings are nothing but punishment for my members who have backed union policy.

What has been the effect of the sackings on your members?

At the most critical stage in the dispute the morale

of my members is at its lowest point. They've put up with financial problems, police raids and sackings.

We need a tremendous morale booster while we're preparing the appeals. The decision by the local NACODS to back their national strike call will be a big help.

Over the next few weeks railworkers and miners from our area will be in London drumming up support. So far the response has been tremendous. We are also planning an open meeting at our depot on 4 November.

We've invited Frank Dobson, a local NUR-sponsored MP, as well as Dennis Skinner and Peter Heathfield. All of our supporters in the rail industry will be invited to attend.

Many London depots have said they will send delegations.

When my members see the support that I have seen since arriving in London, we'll be more united than ever.

You seem to be winning a lot of support, but what has the union done?

I must be frank. My

members feel let down by national union, especially at district level. A lot more could be done for us in respect of fund-raising.

Our closure threat should have been banner headlines in the union paper, *Transport Review*. It should have been 'A depot faces closure for backing the union'.

Our depot is the number one depot as far as this dispute is concerned. Yet no one in the country knows what's going on.

Can this change?

I'm sure it can. The support is there in the membership. But our trade union needs to be shaken from the roots. We need to get rid of the old Weighell-type mentality in the union and at head office.

We need an Arthur Scargill to emerge from our ranks and we need to learn from how the miners conduct their affairs and how they struggle.

Contributions and messages of support to: Roy Butlin, 23 Capson St, Ibstock, Leicestershire, LE5 1LD.

Electricians must support the NUM

THE FIGHT to carry out the TUC resolution supporting the miners is at the centre of the NUM's struggle for solidarity action.

initiative has come from rank and file engineers and some local officials such as John Tocker, AUEW divisional organiser.

Jon Silberman AUEW

convenor at Colman Fasteners explains: 'As a result of a resolution from our branch, the local AUEW district committees have called a meeting in Salford on 31 October with local NUM strike committees to being to organise, not just talk about, solidarity action.'

The struggle for the TUC resolution in the power industry is made harder by the scabbing of the EETPU leadership. Ray Sinfield, an EETPU distribution group shop steward, told us:

Ballot

'No one should be surprised if the EETPU ballot comes out against supporting the miners. The union paper *Contact*, edited by an SDP member, has been attacking the NUM for months. I received a union circular headed 'Why we

can't back the NUM leadership'.

'To crown it the question on the ballot paper was "Do you support your union?" Imagine the confusion. Who is going to vote against their own union?'

'But many EETPU members do support the miners. Members from my workplace in Oldham are regular attenders at the local support committee.'

'Whatever the outcome of the EETPU ballot electricians in the power industry must organise locally to carry out the TUC guidelines. Our allies will be power workers in the AUEW, TGWU and GMBATU, not our own union's misleaders.'

'That's why EETPU members from my workplace will be sending a delegation to the AUEW/NUM meeting in Salford.'

Solidarity conference with NUM called

THE Mineworkers Defence Committee, established at a 700-strong Labour Briefing fringe meeting at party conference and chaired by Ken Livingstone, has called a national solidarity conference.

The date of the conference is yet to be confirmed. The Mineworkers' Defence Committee can be contacted via Ken Livingstone, at County Hall, London SE1, or by ringing Paul Franklin on 01-633 6153.

WHEN LABOUR PARTY conference deplored the role of the police during the miners' strike, the bourgeois media howled that Labour had become a party of violence and disorder. The truth is the opposite.

At the beginning of the strike SUSAN MILLER and MARTIN WALKER went to the heart of the Yorkshire coal field to find out for themselves what was going on. Their report makes fascinating reading.

Susan, who works for Islington police committee support unit, and Martin, who works for Greenwich, have teased out what is really going on: the development of a national, riot-control police force modelled on European lines. They told CAROL TURNER where their conclusions lead and how the labour movement should respond.

What's your involvement in the miners' strike, and why did you write your book?

Sue: We thought there was something significant about the way the police were handling this dispute, and that reflected changes taking place in the police force over a number of years.

As trade unionists, we wanted to find out for ourselves what was going on. So we got an office at the NUM's Barnsley headquarters; we went to strike centres and to miners' houses and took statements about what had happened to them.

And we went back on several occasions. Our books is written jointly with Jim Coulter, a striking Yorkshire miner.

Martin: And we added to that our experience with the police committees in Islington and Greenwich.

And what are your findings?

Martin: Very simply, the Association of Chief Police Officers, working from the National Reporting Centre (NRC) were controlling a national riot force which had been built up since about 1965. But this is the first time the state has used this force. It's a classic third force, like the continental riot police.

Sue: Now the police are actually admitting that it has been created. The head of the NRC reports to the Home Office daily, and presumably receives instructions. It's very much in the political control of the Home Secretary.

So what conclusions do you draw?

Martin: The policing of the miners' strike is organised by the central core of the state. The police are acting as a paramilitary force, modelled on the armed forces — in the same way they've been acting in the Six Counties of Ireland.

It's not so much a matter of arresting people under criminal law as clearing up public order situations or stemming insurrections.

Sue: It's public order policing. No one on the left ever thought the police were impartial, but many others did. Now they are beginning to question what's going on; it seems obvious that the police are being used for strike-breaking.

Martin: It throws into question the whole 'process of the law'. If one thought that police officers were acting on behalf of the courts, that meant processing through the police station, the magistrates courts, and

finally the trial system worked in conjunction with a set of rules which were legally binding.

But if the police are not arresting people under those rules, all that changes. The whole structure of the law has changed — it is being used as a political weapon against the working class.

If the law is used this way during a strike, obviously that can continue afterwards. Have you looked at that question?

Sue: It already has been to a limited extent, before the strike. It's obvious where policing in this country is going: towards very heavy-handed national policing.

Martin: The police force has developed in such a way as to mop up the great mass of people who aren't involved in the productive process — the unemployed, women, ethnic and political minorities. It's role is to contain them. This is the whole process of criminalisation. And it's not just the police force, the law itself is changing.

Sue: The Police and Criminal Evidence Bill for example. It's presented as helping the police clear up crime. But it's about public order policing: police powers to search premises and get information on political activity, to stop people and keep them in detention, and reduce people's rights in custody.

And it's worth pointing out that the Tories have planned for this. The Ridley Report of 1978 prepared for the coming conflict with the unions.

Martin: The state has learned from Northern Ireland. Police officers are no longer trained just in the criminal law and their duties as public servants, but in paramilitary activities such as the use of CS gas, plastic bullets, baton rounds, the use of shields and staves, the use of horses and dogs — military not police training.

What should the labour movement do?

Martin: The build up of a military police is inexorable, because it's part of the development of the capitalist state. At the same time, the organised labour movement has got to realise what is going on, and take quite a different attitude to their conflicts with capital.

They've got to understand them not just as industrial disputes for economic demands, but as an almost military conflict with the state — and they've got to be prepared and organised for that.

The leadership of the TUC and Labour Party have



Photo: ANDREW WARD (REPORT)

BRITAIN'S PARAMILITARY POLICE

done a great disservice to the labour movement in this respect. They have openly deplored violence in an abstract sense, without pointing out that the state is to blame. Neil Kinnock has, in effect, sided with the Tory Party and the capitalist class by saying that miners' pickets cause violence.

Martin: The Labour Party is in a difficult position. It's part of the parliamentary system, and for that reason has always taken a bipartisan view of the police. Not just over the miners' strike, but on questions like the British presence in Ireland.

Neil Kinnock has said the Labour Party has fundamentally the same view as the Tories; both want to reorganise the coal fields so that capital survives and profits are kept up.

Sue: In the first weeks of

the strike Kinnock said very little. When he did speak, he was defensive.

When Arthur Scargill is asked about violence, he always says: 'yes I condemn violence, I condemn police violence'. But Kinnock doesn't take a class stance.

You can't look at violence abstractly. The state has a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence. The miners are branded as criminals and agitators — that's quite different.

On the other hand, the Labour Party conference didn't take Kinnock's line at all. It came out for the miners' strike and against the violence of the police. Neil Kinnock doesn't speak for the ranks of the party, and the same can be said of the TUC leaders. But what can be done about that?

Martin: Anyone on the left has known for years that the dead hand of the bureaucracy at the top of the party and the TUC has to be overthrown by the rank and file. They are the people who experience the struggle — in the coal fields, the NGA, the women at Barking Hospital, and Hammersmith Hospital.

People are beginning to take a class stand and throw off the ideology of the bureaucracy. It's a matter of educating, agitating and organising.

Sue: Nothing educates so much as being involved in a struggle. Take the women of the mining community. They say they never used to get involved in politics, now they are keeping the strike going.

Martin: One of the things to be said is that the increased consciousness of the rank and file has a lot

Mining women face cops

ANN JONES is a miner's wife from South Wales, and SUE BENICE comes from Kent. They talked to us about the experience of the police in their areas.

ANN JONES: In South Wales most of the women are still a bit apprehensive about picketing. But I've been to Nottingham and to Point of Ayr. We've had two warnings and I was nearly arrested myself.

Once it was for carrying an offensive weapon. Do you know what it was? A rolled up poster. The policeman told me to put it down, which I refused. Then he threatened to arrest me.

In Port Talbot the Greenham women came with us on the picket, and that day was like nothing I have ever experienced in my life. The women sat down at the gates. I thought they would come to remove us, but I never thought I would see a policeman kick a woman, drag a woman by the head. The boys retaliated and it was terrible.

The attitude of the NUM to the women's organisation in South Wales was terrible at the beginning, but it's much better than it was.

At the beginning they'd have all-male platforms at the rallies, and they'd expect the women to come with their banners, but no woman was allowed to speak on that platform. Now the women are allowed to speak.

But the problem is that anything we want to do has to go through the NUM. And as someone said, if women wait for permission from the men before they do anything, then we'll never do it. We've gone ahead with the pickets because the strike would have been over by the time they'd umm'd and ahh'd about it.

At Tower lodge itself it is different. We've had support there from the start. And now I think if I said I wanted to be the first woman in space they'd gladly send me.

I write a lot of songs for on the picket line which we use when we go out there. Your voice is the

only weapon you've got if you're up against a six foot policeman.

And until we've won this strike, they'll hear it. Every day if need be.

SUE BENICE: Things are different in Kent because we've had a hundred per cent support from the NUM since day one of the strike.

We were first on the picket line at Wivenhoe in Kent, and it was horrific.

My sister in law was told that if she stepped off the pavement she would be arrested. So she asked what she would be arrested for if she did, and they said 'loitering on the queen's highway'.

But the time I was nearly arrested was on the lobby of Parliament. I really did blow my top that day.

I had a letter to see an MP, which I presented to the policeman. He asked me whether I was with the miners, and when I said yes, he told me to go to the back of the queue.

I pushed my way through the police picket line and ended up on my own in Parliament Square surrounded by police. I stood there shouting: 'It's a virtual police state. And she's not even in there, because she's down at Lancaster House with that other stupid fascist'.

It was only my son pleading that stopped them arresting me.

But we haven't had that kind of problem in Aylesham itself, except when one miner wanted to go back to work. Six hundred police cut a street off from one end to the other just for the sake of one miner.

But the person who saved that day was not a picket, or a miner or anybody like that. It was an 84-year-old granny that had migrated to our village from Scotland in the '30s for work.

The NUM's been repeatedly told we're not allowed to shout 'scab', but she was standing at her gate and shouting 'You scabbing bastard! Let me get at you, you scabbing bastard!'

That's the strength of feeling there is around this strike, and why we are going to carry on 'til we win.

to do with the leadership of the NUM, to do with Arthur Scargill and Peter Heathfield. There's no question that Arthur Scargill's never stood down from his basic class position — and he's not going to.

Sue: Not only that, he never stands down from anything he's mandated to do by the NUM. That always gets missed out.

The union is the rank and file. They're the ones who set policy. Scargill was elected by such a large ballot because they knew he could be relied on to carry out their policies.

Some people have said our book is depressing because it describes in detail the level of violence and brutality to the miners. But I want to make it clear that we're not depressed.

When you go into the mining communities, you see the strength of feeling, the way they're fighting back — and you have no reason to be depressed.

It's important to say: the miners are not going under, they're very strong in their struggle.

● State of Siege is available now as a book, price £3.50 from Greenwich NALGO, Staff Side Office, Borough Treasurer's Department, Wellington St, SE18; and from Housmans and other left bookshops. It combines all three volumes of research, two of which (State of Siege and The Iron Fist) have previously been published as separate pamphlets. Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to Susan Miller or Martin Walker.



One year since Maurice Bishop's death

IN MARCH 1979 the New Jewel Movement, led by Maurice Bishop, overthrew the dictatorship of Eric Gairy in Grenada. On 19 October 1983, Maurice Bishop was murdered on the orders of Bernard Coard, the Grenadan minister of finance and deputy prime minister. On 23 October 1983, American marines and army rangers invaded Grenada, installing a new puppet government.

The four and a half years that lay between these events saw a fundamental reshaping of politics in the Caribbean, and had a tremendous impact throughout the world.

That impact was not simply or primarily the bloodiness or cynicism of the final American intervention, or the catastrophe for the Grenadan revolution represented by the Bishop murder. Not even the fevered imagination of Ronald Reagan could credibly claim that an island of 110,000 people — the majority agricultural workers — was a threat to the military power of the United States. The impact lay in the superb policies pursued by the Bishop government, and the tremendous results they achieved.

In his speech reprinted here, Maurice Bishop called Grenada 'a new socio-economic development model'. More plainly put, it was a vast exercise in democratic socialism — one of the most important that has taken place in the world.

For Bishop, socialist development had two *inextricably linked* features: economic and social development, and the democratisation of politics and of society.

In the economic and social field, the achievements of the Bishop government were enormous. Few states in history have more directly applied the truth that, for a revolution to count for anything, it must deeply touch the everyday lives of ordinary people. Unemployment was significantly reduced. A universal literacy programme was begun. Free health care was introduced. Education expanded. Agriculture diversified.

These were not side issues, not 'purely economic' questions. They were the *core* of the social policies pursued by the Bishop government, which brought immense benefits to the Grenadan people.

The effect of the American invasion was immediate, open and brutal. Since then unemployment has more than

tripled. The cooperative sector of the economy has been broken up. Grenadan agriculture is being reconverted to exports of individual specialised products for the United States and its allies, instead of serving the needs of the Grenadan people.

But the foundation of the Bishop government's policies weren't just economic and social, but *political*. Maurice Bishop conceived of, and practiced, a totally different concept of socialism to that seen in Eastern Europe — or developed by labourism in Britain, for that matter. It was a type not seen since the height of the Russian Revolution in 1917.

The Grenadan state did not substitute for the self-organisation of its people — it was the basis for that self-organisation. The state was a *resource* for Grenadians to draw on and use to organise themselves. The self-organisation of producers, of trade unionists, of women, of young people was the core of Bishop's Grenadan state.

Because it had mass democratic support, the Grenadan state — as Maurice Bishop said — was one of the few in the world that dared to arm its people. The Cuban and Nicaraguan states are the others that are able to take that same 'risk' with ease. The government had nothing to fear from the people of Grenada.

It was no accident that the first action of the new government, after the Bernard Coard grouping murdered Bishop, was to *disarm* the people.

There is, of course, a marxist name for the type of state that existed in Bishop's Grenada and which exists today in Nicaragua: the *dictatorship of the proletariat*. It reminds us that the crucial question for socialism is not how much of an economy is nationalised (in Grenada little was), but which class holds state power.

In Grenada that democracy of the workers and peasants over the rest of society constituted the dictatorship of the proletariat in its true sense — not a restriction of democracy but its enormous expansion.

It was this integration of democracy and socialist economic and social measures that made Grenada such an example of democratic socialism. That, together with the internationalism of the New Jewel Movement, was one of the reasons why Reagan could not tolerate a government such as Maurice Bishop's.

Questions of geography apart, the United States can far more easily coexist with a dictatorial regime, such as that of Jaruselski in Poland, than it can

with a democratic and internationalist one such as Bishop's. After all, the United States *wants* to portray socialism as repression and tanks, not as health care, literacy and a vast extension of democracy.

More to the point, it is far easier to *overthrow* an East European style regime, of the type Bernard Coard was seeking to install, than a democratic one of the Bishop type. America was able to intervene to overthrow the Coard government after it had murdered Bishop and started to attack the gains of the Grenadan people. The United States boycotted, but never dared attack, a democratic Grenada under Bishop.

Bishop was inspired and educated by the Cuban revolution. That was his government's strength. Understanding that socialism is about uniting in practice great historic goals and people's everyday lives is one of the greatest strengths of the Cuban leadership.

One of the lessons Castro has hammered home to his audience in Latin America and the Caribbean is that democracy, not to mention socialism, does not exist as long as capitalism holds state power.

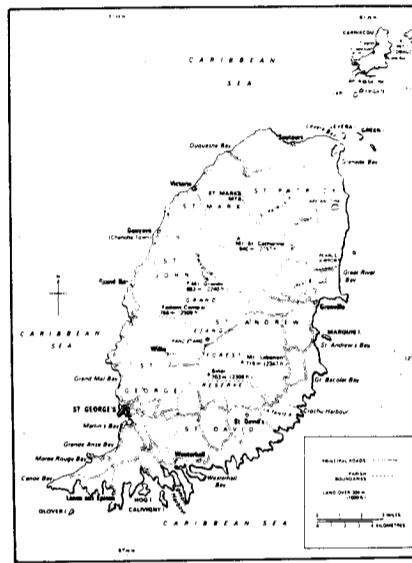
But the Cuban party itself — particularly after the 1970s, when the Cuban state became more tied to Moscow economically — placed limitations on that democracy. Political differences in the Cuban Communist Party are never made known to the party ranks, much less argued out publicly.

In that sense, the Cuban Communist Party models itself on the Communist Party of Stalin, not the Communist Party of Lenin. And that too was the one weakness which proved fatal to the Maurice Bishop government.

The open democracy which Maurice Bishop had begun to build so magnificently in Grenadan society was not extended into the party itself. Had the differences within the New Jewel Movement been known, 99 per cent of Grenadians would have supported Bishop against Coard. But they didn't know, and this was a tragic and fatal weakness.

One year after Maurice Bishop's death, that is not what we chiefly remember. In commemorating Bishop, above all we remember that he was the first black person ever to lead the working class to power, and one of the finest revolutionaries ever produced by the working class. One year on, the world has urgent need of two, three, many Maurice Bishops.

THE FOLLOWING speech by Maurice Bishop was given to an international conference of solidarity held in the Grenadan capital of St George's in November 1981. The editing is by Socialist Action.



Comrades, 13 March 1979 was a bright new dawn for the people of Grenada and the working people of the Caribbean. That dawn marked the end of a long dark night of terror and the beginning of a new day. Our heroic people — the anti-Gairy masses — rose to the challenge of history and, in the words of the Caribbean poet, Edward Brathwaite, 'shattered the door and entered that morning, fully aware of the future to come, there's no turning back.'

As it has been said so often before, when a conscious, determined people rises as a united body and cries 'enough', injustice, tyranny, and exploitation are doomed...and thus begins a new and glorious chapter in the history of man (sic), the construction of a just and equal society by the poor, for the poor, and with the poor.

The people's struggle through time for the realisation of that dream is the long march of history. From the very inception of our party, the New Jewel Movement, we have been guided by the clear understanding that the struggle against the dictatorship was not an end in itself, but a necessary precondition for the infinitely larger struggle of building that new and just society.

Building the new society involves a long and difficult process of national reconstruction. Twenty-five years of Gairyism had devastated the social and economic fabric of our society....

Fifty per cent of the labour force of our country was unemployed. Our infrastructure was totally dilapidated. Our tourist industry was one which brought little benefit to the country. Despite our fertile soil, and with Gairy's political interference in the development of agriculture, the production of our main export crops had stagnated. Food crop production had declined, and our food import bill was approximately 40 per cent of total imports....

Financial mismanagement over many years had reached staggering proportions, and left the national treasury in debt to local commercial banks and in considerable arrears to local,

regional, and international agencies. Our people's revolution was therefore faced with the difficult twin task of economic reconstruction and democratisation of society.

Our fundamental objective has always been, as detailed in the 1973 manifesto of our party, the construction of a new life and new society... These principles and objectives were as valid at the dawn of our revolution as they were five years before when they were formulated, and as they are today — almost three years after that first morning of our revolution. Already we have begun to implement these aims, although in addition there were certain initial priorities that we set ourselves upon taking power — jobs for the thousands of unemployed, health care, the improvement of the agricultural infrastructure, mass education, and above all, the process which would facilitate all other developments, the democratisation of the society....

Like our sister Caribbean islands, we continue to be plagued by natural disasters. Each year since the revolution, hurricanes, high winds, or torrential rains have caused considerable damage to our agriculture and infrastructure. In 1979 we suffered US\$6 million worth of damage. In 1980, the total destruction of 27 per cent of our nutmeg crop, 40 per cent of the banana and 19 per cent of the cocoa, amounting to some US\$20 million. In 1981, damage to crops, roads, and bridges totalled US\$5 million.

With an open, dependent economy tied to the economies of the capitalist world, we have suffered and are suffering from the ongoing economic crisis in the capitalist world. Demand for our principal commodity exports has dropped....

This year, our tourist industry, poised for recovery with full-house bookings at all the main hotels, was dealt a major blow with the sudden destruction by fire of undetermined origin of a substantial part of our largest hotel — the Holiday Inn....

Strangulation

Another economic difficulty facing us at this moment is the US economic squeeze. US imperialism has embarked on a coordinated campaign of economic strangulation of our country designed to deprive us of access to financial resources from the bilateral, regional, and international sources....

Confronted with the belligerence of US imperialism, and having the vicious legacy of 25 years of 'Hurricane Gairy' to recover from, how has our revolution responded to the urgent task of national reconstruction?

In agriculture — the pillar of our economy — our main policy and tactic has been one of diversification. Diversification of agricultural export production to increase the range of agricultural commodities which can earn foreign exchange; diversification of agricultural export markets with the objective of penetrating new markets and lessening our dependence on any one buyer; diversification and expansion of domestic agricultural production for import substitution, as a basis for agro-industrial development, and the linking of the domestic agricultural sector with the tourist sector.

Since the revolution, fifty times more money has been allocated in the national budget for agricultural

Grenada

not

Grenada is alone

development. In the building of the new tourism, we have also been diversifying our tourist markets through increased promotion in Western Europe, the Caribbean, and Latin American markets, while nonetheless attempting to maintain and indeed to achieve diversification in our traditional North American market.

Activity

With a 50 per cent increase in our energy costs, energy conservation measures have been put into effect, resulting in a decrease in consumption by private motorists but a 20 per cent increase in state consumption (mainly the operation of equipment) on account of increased developmental activity. Several major infrastructural improvements have been undertaken: a new international airport, highway development of the east coast, the construction and opening up of 67 miles of agricultural feeder roads, improvement of electricity services, vastly increased water supply, major expansion of telephone service, forestry development, and conservation.

The revolution, with the active participation of our people, has brought

concrete benefits to our working people. Unemployment has been reduced from 50 per cent of the working population to less than 30 per cent by the expansion of the cooperative and state sectors. The people's budget has removed the burden of income tax from the backs of the 30 per cent of the lowest-paid workers.

Financial assistance to the tune of \$4 million has been provided to the poorest sectors of the population for house repair, and a Ministry of Housing with responsibility for a national housing programme has been created. Conditions of life in the villages are being progressively improved by the construction of community centres, bath and laundry facilities, and post offices by the voluntary labour of our people in their community work brigades.

In education the revolution has made important gains: the establishment of a national literacy and adult education programme, the Centre for Popular Education, the institution of free secondary education, a 300 per cent increase in the number of university-level scholarships, the creation of a national in-service teacher programme for the professionalisation of all our primary school teachers....

As in the vital areas of housing,

jobs, and education, the revolution has brought concrete benefits to the masses in the field of health. A national milk distribution programme has distributed 1100 tons of milk to the elderly, to our youth, and to expectant mothers since 1979. Free health care made possible by increases in medical personnel and the expansion of services, particularly in the rural areas, has transformed the pattern of health.

The transformation of the national economy, begun since the people's revolution, has been guided by the same basic conception of an economy at the service of working people and freed from external domination and control which we proposed since 1973.

It is worthy of note that the vast majority of the new programmes and bold initiatives embarked upon by the revolution are not bright ideas spontaneously conceived in some moment of inspiration, but the product of collective discussion and analysis within our party and among the broad section of our people of needs, problems, and long-term goals....

But more important, comrades, more significant than all the other achievements of the Grenada revolution, because it is the means whereby we achieve all other benefits and will move to achieve even more social and economic benefits as this process unfolds, is the outstanding success of the Grenada revolution in the task of the democratisation of our society.

One of the earliest acts of the revolution was the repeal of all anti-worker laws and the enactment of democratic, progressive labour laws such as the Trade Union Recognition Act, which guarantees the right of workers to form and participate in trade unions of their choice. As a result, there are nearly 10,000 workers organised in trade unions today and most of these unions are developing programmes of democratic participation and education for their members.

The revolution has also taken several steps to stimulate and make possible the participation of women in the development of our nation. There can be no talk of real democracy if half of a nation's population is either disqualified from participation or can only participate in a very limited sense. And there can be no talk of women's participation if the conditions for this participation do not exist. Our sisters cannot participate fully unless the society encourages their participation. And in Grenada, in barely two and a half years of revolution, we have a proud record of measures taken to bring the women of our country fully into the development process.

'Idle Lands'

Consistent with our slogan, 'Idle Lands and Idle Hands — An End to Unemployment', in year two of the revolution we moved to set up a National Land Reform Commission, with terms of reference to identify existing idle lands and make recommendations for their productive use.

In like manner the preparation of our national budget has since the revolution involved the participation of trade union representatives; and this year the process of deciding how our resources will be used for our national development will involve an ever wider participation.

This year the budget discussion is



Maurice Bishop speaking in London just before his death

being taken to the people — our national budget will be debated and shaped not by a handful of men sitting in an exclusive 'parliament' but by our organised people in their thousands, in the community groups, their zonal councils, their parish councils.

Spectacular growth

And the mention of these structures, comrades, brings us to the fact of the spectacular growth of mass organisations in our country in the two and a half years of the revolution. Our National Youth Organisation, National Women's Organisation, both founded by the New Jewel Movement, and our NJM Young Pioneers are mobilising increasing numbers of our youth, our women, and our children. The youth organisation is close to a target for this year of organising one-third of the country's young people. Our sisters in the NWO have passed the 6000 mark and are fast approaching their target of 7000 organised for action, participation, and community development.

The revolution has fostered the formation of student councils in every secondary school, linked into the National Students Council. In the villages you will find community work brigades, which, in fact, determine priority needs and spearhead work on community building, cleaning, and maintenance projects. Three weeks ago the Productive Farmers Union, one of the most unique organisations that the revolution has produced, held its first annual general meeting with its full membership of just over 1000 small and medium farmers in militant attendance.

In addition to the many organisations and action groups operating at community, parish, and national level, our people met regularly with the leadership of the country in parish and zonal councils and in workers' parish councils, where the twin principles of the accountability and responsibility of the leadership to the people become a reality for the first time in the English-speaking Caribbean.

The leadership is accountable because in its face-to-face meetings with the people it must report on the achievements and the difficulties of particular ministries and state bodies, it

must answer the questions of the people on those issues which affect their lives.

The leadership is responsible to the people because it must take action where the people indicate that action is required.

In Grenada the people do not only listen passively to their leaders, they talk back. They do not only glimpse their so-called representatives now and then in the press, they meet them regularly, they rub shoulders with them. In Grenada, structures have grown up and are developing daily to ensure the real participation of people — a continuous, day-by-day process, not a seasonal exercise which changes nothing. Our democratic process is our strongest weapon for change, for development, for the improvement of life in our country....

Dire problems

Our revolution is an attempt to build a new socio-economic development model. It is an attempt to solve our problems by new methods. It is the boldest attempt, in the history of the English-speaking Caribbean, to tackle the dire problems of underdevelopment which so drastically affect the lives of the mass of people in our region, the problem of poverty, illiteracy and poor education, substandard nutrition, unemployment, and all the other evils.

It is an approach which rejects some of the manifestly inadequate strategies which the ruling class in most of our sister islands are still clinging to, because these strategies are guaranteed to safeguard their own position and to yield nothing but the barest minimum of political power and material benefits to the majority of the people.

Therefore, comrades, when you show your support for our revolution, you are asserting with us the right of a small and poor, but courageous and determined, people to build their own process, to solve their problems in their own way, without threatening the sovereignty of any other people, nor compromising their own proud and unshakable principles....

For 400 years the exploited masses of the region have struggled with dignity for bread, jobs, justice, and peace. Today in Grenada, today in free and revolutionary Grenada, this struggle at last is beginning to bear fruit....



Talks about talks about...



LAST WEEK'S talks between the FMLN-FDR and President Duarte were undoubtedly a major new development in the Salvadorean revolution. Both sides described them as such, and both sides could claim their own particular victory.

Yet the only thing the talks actually decided was that they should arrange to talk again.

As Socialist Action pointed out in its last issue, the real power centre in the rotten Salvadorean establishment, the army — not to mention Uncle Sam — would not have let Duarte negotiate any real concessions to the rebels.

He merely repeated his totally unacceptable offer of an amnesty if the guerrillas would lay down their arms and take part in 'free elections'. Equally predictably, the FMLN-FDR showed not the least sign of agreeing to any such thing until their basic demands were met.

As if to demonstrate that it was business as usual, immediately after the talks ended the Salvadorean army launched a big push into the north eastern guerrilla stronghold of Morazan, in an attempt 'to get the guerrilla commanders in one go' as they met to discuss the outcome of the talks. As usual, they found nothing.

CIA

Just to drive the point home, on the Friday the CIA managed to fly one of its spy-planes into a hillside outside San Salvador. This exposed just how busy 'Casey's boys' are down there, sorting out the civilian targets — 'guerrilla sympathisers' — that need to be bombed back into line.

So why were the talks important, and what kind of victory could anyone claim? Why, indeed, did they bother to talk at all? The answer has something to do with the fact that in El Salvador, after four years of revolutionary civil war, Clausewitz's famous old maxim has been turned

on its head: politics have become the continuation of war by other means.

Both sides need to break out of the relative impasse they encounter on the military terrain. This impasse is not a total stagnation. It is a fluid semi-stalemate which has been drifting unevenly in favour of the FMLN.

By Stuart Piper

But with the stepped up level of US technological and logistic support, the revolutionary forces have not been able to go beyond the spectacular gains they made in the latter part of last year and to a lesser degree earlier this year. They do not have any immediate prospect of militarily defeating the government forces.

On the other side, it is clear that the army can do no more than contain the FMLN; it has no chance of eliminating them.

For Duarte there are only two options: either he forces a major political climb-down by the revolutionaries (which even he must realise is most unlikely), or he prepares the political ground for massive direct imperialist intervention.

It is just possible, though again unlikely, that Duarte himself has sufficient megalomaniac belief in his own role as 'saviour' of the nation to kid himself that his call to negotiations is a step towards the former solution.

It is much more certain that the Salvadorean army and its Pentagon paymasters see the negotiations as merely a diplomatic step towards



Duarte

the latter, military, solution.

For the revolutionaries, last week's talks have been a different kind of political boost. The FMLN-FDR has been demanding unconditional negotiations since 1982. For the first time, the Salvadorean government has conceded to this demand, and been seen by the eyes of the whole world to recognise the revolutionaries as a genuine belligerent force.

Perhaps more importantly, the meeting in La Palma has given the FMLN a new prestige and a new profile within El Salvador. For the fact is that there is undoubtedly a large section of the Salvadorean people, including many workers and peasants, who, while they may have a basic sympathy with the revolutionaries' cause, have had no direct contact with it, at least since the mass movement

was massacred wholesale after 1980.

These people are fed up with the killing and discouraged by the only information they do receive about the revolutionary struggle, the *misinformation* of the regime's press, radio and television.

Last Monday gave the FMLN-FDR their first ever opportunity to speak directly to these people, on every radio and television station in the country, and to present themselves as a firm and serious alternative to all these sectors.

In the end, the important thing is not what was talked about, but the fact they talked at all. Only the coming months will show which side is able to turn this new phase of the struggle to their best advantage.

As the FMLN statement says, negotiations are a complement to the armed struggle, not a substitute for it.

Prospects for the Spanish peace movement

THE CAMPAIGN FOR a referendum to take Spain out of NATO and remove US bases has involved greater numbers of people than any other recent struggle in Spain. Last autumn the anti NATO committees which have formed in many towns, together with other pro-disarmament organisations, began a series of huge mobilisations culminating in a demonstration of more than half a million people in Madrid on 3 June this year.

The very next day, Felipe Gonzalez, Spanish prime minister and leader of the governing Socialist Party (PSOE), made a statement. He had been forced to recall — publicly — something he would rather have forgotten: the promise made during the elections to have a referendum which would finally decide the question of NATO.

Gonzalez has since continued to disguise his firm adherence to NATO by an intentional and shameless ambiguity. Nevertheless, the government will almost certainly have to call a referendum. The political cost of doing otherwise would be too great.

As the polls show 60 per cent in favour of

Spanish withdrawal, there are real prospects of a serious setback for the nuclear alliance. But the peace movement will have to exert all its strength to prevent Gonzalez turning a referendum on a clear issue — NATO and US bases: yes or no? — into propagandistic support for the government.

By Andrew Kennedy

Only last month, the PSOE's own previously-dormant anti-NATO wing registered a significant increase in strength. On 8-9 September, regional congresses of the party were held all over the country in preparation for the PSOE national congress in

December. The anti-NATO current gained a majority in 11 out of 45 congresses, and gained overall many more delegates than the 20 per cent expected.

Gonzalez saw this as a sufficient threat to state on 14 September that the government, not the PSOE, has the 'last word' on NATO.

This wing could prove an ally to the peace movement as it struggles to combat the fudge on the referendum and the power of the pro-NATO bourgeois media. And keeping the pressure up could cause deeper divisions still at the PSOE congress.

However, an outright anti-NATO majority is unlikely, and anyway would be ignored by Gonzalez. Only an increase in the level of the mass campaign will ensure victory.

Preserving the autonomy of the mass campaign is all the more important as there is little hope, at least in the short term, of a left wing surging up from the base of the PSOE.

The party is bureaucratically dominated. For instance, one in three members, has an institutional post. The so-called 'socialist left' grouping, which is at the head of the anti-NATO current, is essentially the opposition of part of the bureaucracy, formerly the majority but now forced into a minority position.

Hence, for example, their calls for greater party democracy. On the economy and the national questions (Euzkadi, Paisos Catalans, Galiza) their positions are just as reactionary as those of the 'official' Gonzalez current.

Abstention

The effective abstention of the established left parties from the anti-NATO campaign (the Communist Party, PCE, is conducting its own) is that the greens and feminists, together with the far left, have been able to take significant initiatives in the

peace committees. These forces, in fact, are leading the campaign.

If the government tries to represent the increasing anti-establishment character of the peace movement as an attack upon its electoral mandate, the peace movement could build a big campaign for Spanish neutrality, and against American imperialism and bloc politics. It could show how the government's wasteful military spending and the consequent threat to jobs were in fact bound up with its allegiance to a military bloc.

Thus the whole campaign could be centered around the twin, *positive* demands for a neutral Spain, and for jobs, rather than just spontaneous protests.

This would begin to pose a real alternative to government policy, and would at the same time give the movement a momentum that would carry it past any defeat on a fudged referendum.



Getting the South to do the dirty work

THREE YEARS after the hunger strike, the British establishment is preparing for a new summit with the Dublin government. Editor of *Labour and Ireland*, MARTIN COLLINS, look at ruling class thinking on the current stage of politics in the North.

Retiring to the country farm, a lucrative chair at GEC and a graceful departure from the backbenches, James Prior is viewed by the establishment as a man with an exquisite sense of timing.

The *Guardian* said that after three years as head of the Northern Ireland Office, that 'most unrelenting of posts', he had 'through slow progress and rapid, random disasters, constantly revealed the touch and authority of a political heavyweight.'

Prior was despatched to the North not to solve a problem in Ireland, but to solve that in the British cabinet — neutralising a wet threat to Thatcher.

The key to his image of success has been the pompous, relaxed stance which meant any hint of progress was attributed to his political authority, whereas any set-back was put down to the 'perplexing realities of Irish politics'.

By making the right noises about law and order when required, Prior has been able to concentrate on gently steering the Dublin government towards doing Britain's job for it. By refusing to be harried by the loyalists into stepping up army profile, allowing the RUC and UDR to remain in the front line, Prior is accredited great success in reducing the casualty figures for the British army.

By refusing to be stampeded into a banning of Sinn Fein, allowing their political profile to replace that of the car bomb, he has 'engineered a return to normality in Belfast city centre life'.

The economy he leaves is in ruins, promised relief of unemployment has not arrived and the North remains the most heavily subsidised economy in Western Europe, the only growth area being in the security forces.

Assembly

The much heralded Assembly as a prelude to rolling devolution has 'rolled' nowhere. Boycotted by the entire nationalist community and by significant sections of the loyalists, it remains as a monument to the impossibility of a 'Northern solution'.

James Prior was not deterred. No matter how much he continued to 'patiently argue' with politicians to drop their boycott, he realised that the 'problem of the North' can only be solved by looking at Ireland as a whole.

The cooption of the Southern government is the key policy goal of the British government. Here is the real 'progress' of the last three years.

Peter Barry, the Foreign Minister of the Coalition Government

recently spelt out four reasons for optimism:

- There is a clear recognition by British and Irish governments that 'alienation in the North' (read support for Sinn Fein) is so threatening to stability that some action is necessary.
- The forum report has destroyed the 'unalterable realities'.

Despite the fact that the wording of the forum report gave the 'preferred option' of reunification, its message was that Dublin was prepared to drop its constitutional claim on the North and negotiate a 'sovereignty option' that would be acceptable to Britain.

● The British government have accepted that the Irish government have the right to speak on behalf of the Northern nationalists.

● The British government have accepted that the Irish government have the right to speak on behalf of the Northern nationalists.

Unionists

Spelling out the implications, Barry has publicly apologised to Unionists for raising issues which upset them — the royal visit to the Drumadd (UDR) barracks, border incursions, plastic bullets, shoot to kill actions of security forces and remarks of judges commending them. He explained 'any failure on my part to do so would by default legitimise the serious pretensions of the Provisional IRA and their political henchmen'.

So although not one Northern nationalist voted for Fine Gael and 42 per cent voted for Sinn Fein, the southern government



Prior, turning his back on three years of failure

will now speak to Britain on their behalf.

● Dublin and London both have now solid governments which together will have time to make a new and sustained attempt to bring peace in Northern Ireland.

Barry's claim is that there is sufficient stability in the South to push ahead with plans to combat the alienation in the North (read Sinn Fein), this means 'a transformation of the system of public

authority' (read security forces) in Northern Ireland.

He shares unionist outrage at 'the genocidal slaughter by the IRA of your people [read the UDR] in the border areas...' 'the IRA are as much my enemy as they are yours. I want no part of the Ireland [read socialist republic] they want to bring about.'

A section of the British ruling class now realise that harnessing the col-

laboration of the Free State rulers is the best long term solution, but doubts remain. Is the Southern government strong enough to suppress the nationalism of Sinn Fein? Is the South a reliable ally for the Western block? Can it control working class resistance to austerity policies?

Despite the willingness of the South to offer reassurances, they can achieve little without the

active support of the British government. Remaining sceptical of their ability to deliver the goods the cabinet continues to allow the Unionists to sabotage their humble efforts.

While we may expect some cosmetic 'advances' to be projected from the Anglo-Dublin summit, the Tory government so soon after the Brighton bombing is unlikely to give Fitz-Gerald the helping hand he so desperately craves.

Photo: REPUBLICAN NEWS

LETTERS

Hidden from history

ANYONE READING my article in last week's issue of *Socialist Action* on the early gay movement might well have come away with the feeling that the total male domination of the gay rights movement in the present day must have been reflected both in the earlier version of it, and in the concerns of the author.

I would like to make it clear that my original article did contain a section on the relationship between the Scientific Humanitarian Committee and the struggles of lesbian women in Germany: but this was cut out without

my permission. In fact, although (as now) the early campaigns for gay rights through their exclusive concern with laws outlawing male homosexuality tended inevitably to exclude women from participation, and lesbian women therefore concentrated their activities in the womens movement, the leadership of the Scientific Humanitarian Committee made big efforts to involve lesbians in its work.

Lesbians played a part in the SHC's publications and

forums, developing the relationship between lesbian liberation and the general women's struggle. Hirschfeld wrote in 1902 that lesbians 'have ... become an almost indispensable and prominent component of all our events.'

But the only major campaign waged jointly with women took place in 1910, when the government proposed to extend the anti-gay legislation to women. This proposal was resisted by a very broad alliance of forces including the SHC, the socialist party, and both social democratic and bourgeois womens organisation.

Operating on the view that the move represented not 'an inequality ... eliminated, but rather an injustice doubled', the campaign represented the first commitment of the women's movement to ending the oppression of homosexuality. The campaign was successful in its objectives.

PETER PURTON
Southall

Voting for black sections

I WAS somewhat surprised by your report in last week's *Socialist Action* (12 October) that the delegate from Hampstead and Highgate CLP to party conference was opposed to black sections.

As the delegate I can only say that I actively supported the CLP's motion on black sections when it was first raised at my branch and at the general committee and voted for both composites at conference.

When I stood in the elections to be the CLP delegate to conference, with the full backing of the local *Briefing* group, I stated that the issue of black sections would be a critical debate at conference and I would support the CLP's position in favour of establishing black sections.



Socialist Action frequently gives a clear perspective on struggles both inside and outside the Labour Party. It is a pity that its reporting on this issue is not of the same standard. I would appreciate it if you would put the record straight. DAVE JOSEPH
Hampstead and Highgate CLP

● Many apologies for this error. It is true we accepted the information given to us on the black section voting without verifying that it was accurate.

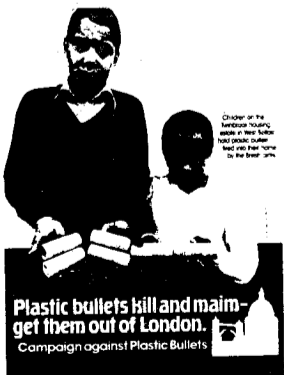
Brocks fatal fireworks

CAMPAIGNERS have warned the British public that if they buy Brocks' fireworks this year they will be boosting the profits of the company which manufactures lethal plastic bullets.

They said: 'Fireworks give immense pleasure to millions of children and their parents, but plastic bullets have brought misery to the families of the 15 people (seven of them children aged 15 or under) killed in the North of Ireland, and to the countless people who have suffered grievous injuries, including blindness and brain damage.'

Brocks, whose factory is near Sanquhar in Dumfriesshire have the contract to supply plastic bullets to the Ministry of Defence and British police forces, who currently stock over 20,000 of them.

Last week the European Assembly for the second time called for plastic bullets to be banned. The Labour Party conference has voted twice for such a



ban, as did the Liberals in 1982.

It would be paradoxical if local councils opposed to the use of plastic bullets were to buy large quantities of fireworks for public displays from their manufacturers. This year boycott Brocks.

Against abolition and rate-capping

Defend jobs and services

All out 7 Nov

IT IS NO longer possible to imagine that the government will change its mind about abolition and rate-capping because opinion polls and by elections have consistently shown a majority against, or because, through arguments about democracy, we have 'proved our case'.

These policies are part of the Tories manifesto. They need to 'save money' by slashing jobs and services, and to get rid of the Labour GLC as a popular opposition to the government.

Union stewards and activists have thrown all their weight behind the miners' strike, collecting levies and organising meetings. Through this we have been able to point out the similarities of our fights, and to deal with the arguments about taking industrial action and breaking the law — something which local government workers are reluctant to do.

But we cannot ignore the campaign against abolition and rate-capping. The government will be publishing its Abolition bill on 12 November and hopes to have abolished the GLC by the end of 1985.

This will throw 6,500 workers on the dole im-

mediately, and a further 14,000 will follow. In the meantime, rate-capping will hit the GLC and other local authorities.

By Fred Leplat, GLC/ILEA NALGO shop steward

Democracy for London (the joint GLC unions' campaign), London Bridge (the organisation of stewards in the London hit-list boroughs) and SERTUC have called strike on 7 November, the day after parliament opens. This is to step up the campaign against abolition and rate-capping, and to focus on the loss of jobs and services.

It's a welcome change in the direction of the campaign. Until now democracy was the only feature.

Solid support is expected from many London boroughs, and some sections of the GLC will come out. This will make the day a success, in terms of publicity and a large turn out on the demonstration.

But we cannot rely just on days of action which the government can easily sit through. It is non-cooperation with government plans, backed by industrial action, which will make the government retreat.

Not all unions agree with such an approach. In particular, the 12,000-strong GLC Staff Association is asking its members not to strike on 7 November. Although it agrees with non-cooperation, it will only oppose compulsory redundancies.

The GLCSA is basically scabbing on any proposals to take the campaign forward. It has now withdrawn from the

Democracy for London campaign.

There is, however, a minority in the staff association who want to support a campaign of industrial action, and it is no surprise that these same GLCSA members support the miners, unlike the GLCSA leadership.

To stop government plans for abolition we must build up union organisation and establish joint shop stewards committees. The unions who really do intend to fight must make it clear that there will be no golden handshakes, and no guarantee of a job in boroughs or quangos.

As abolition gets closer it is becoming clear that only industrial action will succeed.

Although we must continue our campaign against abolition and rate-capping, all our efforts must be behind the miners. A victory for the miners will put the government on the run — and our fight against abolition and rate-capping will be that much easier.



Photo: GM COOKSON

York: mines not missiles

By Helen Collinson, York Miners' Support Group

FOLLOWING A women's march in August, from Capenhurst Uranium processing plant to the Nottinghamshire coalfield, 'Mines Not Missiles' is to be the theme of another national women's march on Saturday 3 November in York.

This march will have a double importance. First it will be a protest against the Tory government which spends billions of pounds of our taxes on nuclear weapons and lethal nuclear power stations, but closes mines, destroys communities and refuses to invest in coal — a safer and cheaper fuel than nuclear power.

The march in York will be for jobs and a future for our communities without the threat of nuclear death. But there is another reason for holding this march.

In the mining communities and in the peace movement, women are on

the front line. Through their experience of fighting pit closures and struggling against nuclear weapons, women are turning their backs on the image of themselves as passive, non-political bystanders marooned in the home.

In York on 3 November, women involved in the miners' strike and from the peace movement will pool their strength in a united demonstration of anger against the Tory government. After the march and rally, there will be a meeting open to all women, to discuss future joint actions and get to know each other.

Other attractions on the day include street theatre and music, food, stalls, an exhibition, and a social in the evening with Contraband. Creche facilities and overnight accommodation are also available.

● Assemble Heworth Green Car Park, 11.30am and march to a rally in St Samson's Square, York. Further details, phone 0904 37022.

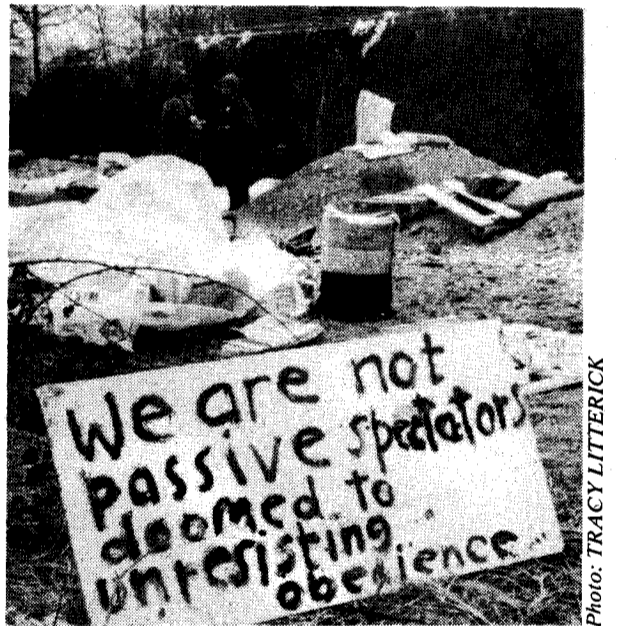


Photo: TRACY LITTERICK

'... HE HAD NO intellect, and not much intelligence — he is a quivering mass of emotions — a mediumistic magnetic sort of creature — an inspired idiot, drunk with his own words, dominated by his own slogans.' This was Beatrice Webb on A.J. Cook.

It could easily be Eric Hammond on Arthur Scargill. His attack on 'nursery revolutionaries' was of the same ilk as Webb's attack on Cook.

The hatred of the labour right for the left was as deep then as it is now. The reasons are simple. The period in which A.J. Cook was one of the leaders of the left wing of the labour movement was one of tremendous class struggle, which reshaped British politics.

By Pat Hickey

The years after 1909 were marked by bitter class confrontations. The number of strike days grew from 2.7 million in 1909, to 10 million in 1910 and 1911, and to 40 million in 1912. Trade union membership more than doubled in the same period.

In August 1910, miners from the Cambrian Combine in South Wales, where Cook was the leader, struck. The strike lasted until August 1911. It became a landmark in labour history.

There were bitter clashes with police as the owners brought in scabs. Police and troops were brought in from all over Britain. At Tonypany one man was killed, and scores injured. The official leaders stood by and watched.

These struggles, and the inaction of the union leaders, provided fertile ground for the growth of syndicalism in Britain. Syndicalism aimed to build revolutionary industrial unions, under the control of the members. After the Cambrian strike, Cook turned his attention to this task. With Noah Ablett, he formed the Unofficial Reform Committee Movement.

In 1912 he helped produce syndicalism's most famous pamphlet, *The Miners' Next Step*. Its aim was a union whose central policy would be that 'a continual agitation be carried on in favour of increasing the minimum wage and shortening the hours of work, until we have extracted the whole of the employers' profits ... That our objective be to build up an organisation that will ultimately take over the whole of the mining industry and carry it on in the interests of the workers.'

Its shorter term aims included a seven hour day. This demand was won in 1919.

Throughout the war Cook had maintained his class struggle, positions defying wartime regulations to defend the position of the miners. He was elected Agent for Rhondda No 1 District in 1919.



A.J. Cook

A.J. Cook: a class struggle leader

But the post-war boom ended in 1920, and the employers counter attacked. In 1921, the government ended war-time control of the mines and returned them to private ownership. The miners fought back, but the collapse of the Triple Alliance left them to fight alone. They were defeated.

The end of the boom, and the employers' offensive, forced the syndicalist currents in Britain to reconsider their perspectives. At the Second Congress of the Comintern in 1920, Jack Tanner had stated that '... the dictatorship of the proletariat must be wielded by a minority — the revolutionary minority of the proletariat in England as expressed through the shop stewards movement...'

The inadequacy of this position to deal with the crisis and the deepening employers' offensive, led the Communist Party to launch the National Minority Movement. Cook was the most prominent trade union leader associated with this body.

In the year of the Minority Movement's launch, Cook became secretary of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain. By now, the coal owners were again pressing for wage cuts and longer hours. He coined the slogan 'not a penny off the pay, not a second on the day.'

With the Minority Movement he was the driving force behind the TUC's decision to call a general strike in support of the miners, on 3 May 1926.

The General Council's betrayal found the left incapable of responding. They had not prepared the movement for this. Even Cook's intransigence was not enough to deal with this situation.

Like others, he had expected the militancy of the workers, once unleashed, would carry the movement through.

The miners fought on alone until November, after which the eight hour day was imposed on them.

Cook's political weaknesses are clear. But he was a class struggle leader. For over 50 years there was no equal to Cook in the British labour leadership. Today, around the miners strike, that has begun to change.

No Nazis in our colleges!

FRIDAY 19 October, Polytechnic North London, Holloway Road Site. Patrick Harrington, National Front organiser, is escorted to his lectures by police.

Of the 3000 students who have turned up to protest his presence, 4 are arrested. The campaign against his presence is moving towards a decisive point.

By Grant Keir, Kingsway Princeton CFE

Harrington is not just a racist with lunatic ideas. He is a fascist organiser, responsible for the intimidation and violence that is meted out by the National Front. His very presence in a college is intimidatory towards students, lecturing staff and auxiliary staff alike.

He should not be allowed into the college to study at all. But the police protect his 'rights' to education, and there is a danger that the NUS, NATFHE and NALGO will back down from supporting the pickets. This would open students and staff to victimisation from both the

NF, and more importantly, the courts.

To back down under court threats to imprison students and staff, would be an important victory for the NF, it would be an enormous boost to the right in NUS who want to stop all political activity inside NUS.

The NOLS-dominated NUS executive should organise mass opposition to Harrington. And the issue should be taken to NUS conference if necessary.

In the meantime, Labour Clubs should be raising the issue in every college and organise transport to the picket (every Friday morning).

However, activism is not enough to build the type of action necessary to stop the courts and police defending Harrington. The NUS leadership must be called to order by students, who must demand the full mobilisation by the union to kick out fascists from our colleges.

Lairds Strikers fight on

'WHAT WILL YOU do now?' asked the reporters as the first 11 of the 37 Cammell Lairds workers were released from Liverpool's Walton prison early last Friday. 'We'll be straight on the picket line at the yard.' 'The occupation is now the strike committee,' was the answer from Lol Duffy, occupation secretary.

Although they served their full sentences — because they refused to crawl to the bosses and 'purge their contempt' for occupying the unfinished vessels in the Birkenhead yard — the Lairds 37 earned full remission for 'good conduct', and were released eight days early.

John Dooley, a Birkenhead Labour Party member, described conditions inside. 'We were locked inside our crowded cells 22 hours a day. Paint was peeling off and there was even shit up some of the walls.'

'The warders were not too bad. Some were obviously sympathetic. There was a lot of respect from the other prisoners. They were really made up when we all stayed in

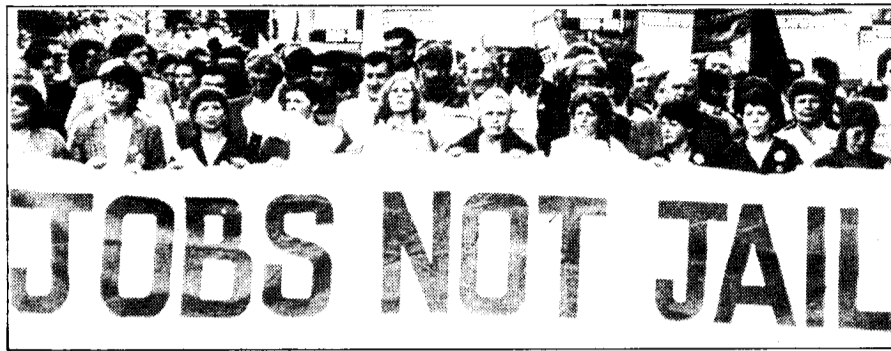
prison rather than creep to the judge to get out.

'One of the prisoners asked us to remember them still inside for doing all sorts of things, some not very serious. Many of them will be inside for years.'

By John Nolan, Cammell Lairds Support Committee

'So we're telling the labour movement, the press, anybody that will listen, just how bad it is for those people in jail.'

On the previous Friday, Frank Field, Labour MP for Birkenhead, visited some of the Lairds prisoners who lived in his constituency. He admitted that if he'd been in their place he 'might have done



the same thing'. He explained he felt he had to oppose the occupation because 'so many other Lairds workers wanted to go back to work'.

His explanation wasn't good enough for the 37, nor for the organisers of a march in support of them through the Liverpool city centre the same day. Field's demand to speak in support of the prisoners 'as their MP' was turned down flat. 'You should have supported them from the start, Frank. It's too late now.'

The newly-released strike committee will have the full support of Wirral Trades Council. Funds are already being raised and contributed to enable the strikers to lead the campaign and be in independent control of it.

A picket will be maintained at Lairds yard, and a mass picket is called for every Monday morning at 7am, when the scabs try to cross picket lines under police escort.

This is an official strike. The strikers will be

visiting other British shipbuilders' yards — like Swan Hunters on Tyne, where 2000 redundancies have just been announced — to build solidarity right across the industry.

They need the widest labour movement support — on the picket line and in hard cash.

● **Contact:** Cammell Lairds Strike Committee, c/o Trade Union Unemployed Resources Centre, Argyle Street South, Birkenhead, or phone 051-647 6122.



Vauxhall pickets

Vauxhall workers blockade the ports

WORKERS AT VAUXHALL'S car plants at Ellesmere Port and Luton have been solidly behind a national strike which has closed their plants since 10 October. The strike is over the rejection of a 7.5 per cent wage offer from the company. The unions want substantially more, as well as a shorter working week and improvement in conditions.

The emphasis is now on stopping the movement of all cars and components of General Motors, the American multinational corporation which owns Vauxhall. Flying pickets have been despatched from the 11,000 strong workforce to docks around Britain.

They are picketing ports on the south-east coast, Portbury near Bristol, and Hartlepool in the north-east, which is a major port of entry for General Motors products.

Mick Whitley, the TGWU deputy convener at Ellesmere Port, has brought flying pickets from Merseyside to Hartlepool. They are staying with members of the Middlesborough Labour Party.

His stewards' committee have been actively involved in raising money for the NUM and supporting Cammell Lairds oc-

cupation. Mick's brother Chris is one of the 37 imprisoned in Walton jail.

Last month Mick attended an international conference of General Motors stewards and convenors, in Amsterdam, where the shorter working week was one of the main topics of discussions.

By Dave Carter Middlesborough Trades Council

He explained the background to the dispute:

'This is the first occasion where we've managed to get solid support from Vauxhall's workforce in Ellesmere Port, Luton and Dunstable at the same time. We've had two company-imposed wage deals since 1980.'

'We got 7½ per cent last year, and we're the lowest paid company in

the industry.

'We're sharing a picket line at Hartlepool docks with miners from Eastington colliery, who've been fantastic, offering us their food. It's strange after we've been levying money for them and organising a "Bring a tin to help them win" campaign in the plant.'

'Vauxhall's import over 50 per cent of all their cars in the UK. All Carltons and Novas are imported, and some Cavaliers and Astras. So, if we're going to win, we've got to block off their supplies at the ports.'

'We've got full support from the drivers at Hartlepool. We're now appealing to all trade unionists not to move any General Motors products and to respect our picket lines.'

The miners have given confidence to other workers to take on their employers. The practical support on picket lines at the docks between car workers and miners is the sort of real solidarity which must be extended throughout the trade union movement if both strikes are going to win.

Socialist ACTION STUDENTS

'The New Deal' — what is it?

By Gill Lewis, City of London Polytechnic SU Executive (personal capacity)

THE POLICY of the 'new deal' was passed at the NUS 1984 Easter conference. Personally, I have a few misgivings over its potential effectiveness. It is worth noting why such a new deal has been formulated and how it relates to students.

Since the late 1960s, the value of the student grant has decreased by 17 per cent outside London, and by a massive 32 per cent in London. Over half of this decline has come in the last two years. More than half a million students over the age of 16 in Britain receive no grant whatsoever.

In addition to this, the Tory government has slashed thousands of jobs and services within the education system, and plans further closures and tighter fiscal controls. As a result of the introduction of undemocratic legislation regarding local authorities, that is no rate support grants and impending rate-capping, ILEA have been forced to cut the grant it makes to City of London Poly alone by £50,000 per month — that is £600,000 per year!

If you think that's bad enough, wait until the Tories abolish the GLC. Again using the example of City of London, it will be funded from three separate sources (regardless of their political composition), placed under severe financial restraints through the government's proposals around rate-capping, and its budget and staffing levels will be subject to direct political control by the government. And this leaves out the 40 per cent increase in travelling costs due to the Transport Bill.

The icing on this 'cuts cake' is the possibility of a vast merger scheme that the Tories are busily cooking up. 'Poly-versities' will become the order of the day, accompanied by cuts in jobs and facilities that make our present problems seem small by comparison.

The new deal offers a limited beginning — at least on paper — to fight back against this. It is, however, up to students to mount campaigns against the cuts. These must be linked to the NUS nationally and locally, but must also draw in coordinated support from unions such as NATFHE, NUPE and NALGO.

One crucial point must be made. We have to link up with groups that are prepared to take on the fight, not only to defend the rights and standards we already have, but who also see the need to demand an increase in education facilities and a decent job at the end of our period of education.

Right now this means we must support the struggle of the miners. We can only expect their support for our struggle, if we support them in theirs.

A victory for the miners will be a victory for all students who want and need a new deal. Given that I have just been informed that the planned cuts for City Poly in 1985-86 amount to £1 million, support from students for the miners is not so much our duty, but a burning necessity.



ACTIVISTS DIARY

● **National CND Conference**, Sheffield, 23/24/25 November. Deadline for delegates is 5 November. Don't delay, make sure your college sends its full delegation.

● **NUS Women's Conference**, Birmingham University, 10 November. All women supporters urged to attend.

● **Founding Conference Further Education Labour Students**, Liverpool Polytechnic, 10/11 November.

Want to advertise meetings or events in the activists' diary? Write to Activists Diary, 328 Upper Street, London N1 2XP.

Critique Conference

Goodbye to the working class?

Friday 9 November, 7.30pm

● The universal class?

Hillel Ticktin and Richard Hymn

Saturday 10 November, all day

- Working class and British miners' strike
Huw Benson
- Workers in the 'workers' strata' — 1917-1984
Steve Smith, Don Tiltzer and Bob Arnot
- Working class and market socialism
GAE Smith
- Marxism and Lukacs
Chris Arthur
- Working class in the cold war
Mick Cox
- Nationalism and socialism
Baruch Hirson and Lionel Cliffe
- Women and class
Kate Marshall
- The working class in Latin America
Phil O'Brien
- Workers in post '56 Hungary
Nigel Swain and Bill Lomax
- Labour process and H Braverman
T Elger

University of London Union

Registration: £4 and £2.50

Further details: 041-339 5267

A Socialist ACTION



JOBS NOT BOMBS

MINES NOT MISSILES!

SUBSCRIBE

RATES:
Inland
6 months £8;
12 months £15
Overseas
(12 months only)
Europe £17; Air Mail £ 24
(Double these rates
for multi-reader institutions)

Special free book offer!

Take out a years inland subscription and we will send you *free* one of these books:

Thatcher and Friends by John Ross
or **Over our Dead Bodies —**
Women Against the Bomb

Introductory offer
for new
readers: **Eight**
issues for
just **£2!**

Name

Address

.....

.....

Please send me as special offer

I enclose cheque/PO payable to Socialist Action for £

Send to: Socialist Action Subs, 328 Upper St, London N1 2XP.

CND Barrow demonstration

Saturday 27 October
Assemble: 1pm Trident dock
Rally: 3.30pm