

Socialist ACTION

Anti-Apartheid Movement
NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION
JUNE 16th

Assemble: 12-1pm, County Hall, York Rd., London
Rally: 3pm, Trafalgar Square



Black anger sweeps

WHEN 18 PEOPLE are killed by police in the squatter settlement Crossroads because they refuse to be moved to 'homelands' which many of them have never seen; when more than 20 people in a funeral procession get shot on the anniversary of the Sharpeville massacre, it sends a wave of revulsion around the world. But for the black people of South Africa violent death and state tyranny is part of their daily lives.

Since August of last year more than 400 people have died at the hands of the police or military. This is the regime's answer to those who refuse to accept state president Botha's 'reforms' at their face value — that is the millions of blacks who can no longer tolerate being governed by a government they never elected.

All over the world there are demonstrations against the brutality of apartheid. But demonstrations, even the most militant, are not enough. The fighting people of South Africa need active support in their struggle and, in the first place, from the

organised labour movement.

With the rise of the black trade unions (see centre pages) the black working class is playing an increasingly vital role in the struggle. The great stay-away strike last November, the huge May Day demonstrations, in which the unions joined with the United Democratic Front, Azapo, Cape Action League in united action against apartheid shows the road South Africa must travel.

In the United States the senate foreign committee has voted for an immediate package of sanctions against South Africa.

A campaign for sanctions can play a useful role in publicising the true situation in South Africa. But, in themselves, sanctions such as those proposed in the Senate play no decisive role.

The memory of 'sanctions against Rhodesia' is only too fresh in our minds. In the end it was

By Charlie van Gelderen

not sanctions but the fighting units of the liberation forces which brought down Smith. We must also beware that Reagan may use the passing of sanctions against South Africa to strengthen his argument for increased sanctions against Nicaragua. The defeat of the revolution in Central America would also be a defeat for the South African revolution.

International working class solidarity is an entirely different matter. Transport workers should refuse

to load, unload or convey goods to or from the apartheid republic. We will hear the pathetic cry: 'But this will hurt the black people most'. The black people themselves are asking for such measures.

South Africa's black workers are already suffering from a 25 per cent unemployment rate, falling incomes and increased taxation, and the oppressive laws of apartheid.

The report presented to the ILO conference in Geneva last year stresses that the recession is hurting the black workers: 'In practice, black workers are forced to make what, for them, are very significant contributions to the maintenance of the apartheid system which, in turn, refuses them a voice in the shaping of financial and economic policies.' It goes on to say that the fall in real incomes prompted a surge in strikes and black membership of unions.

The government has

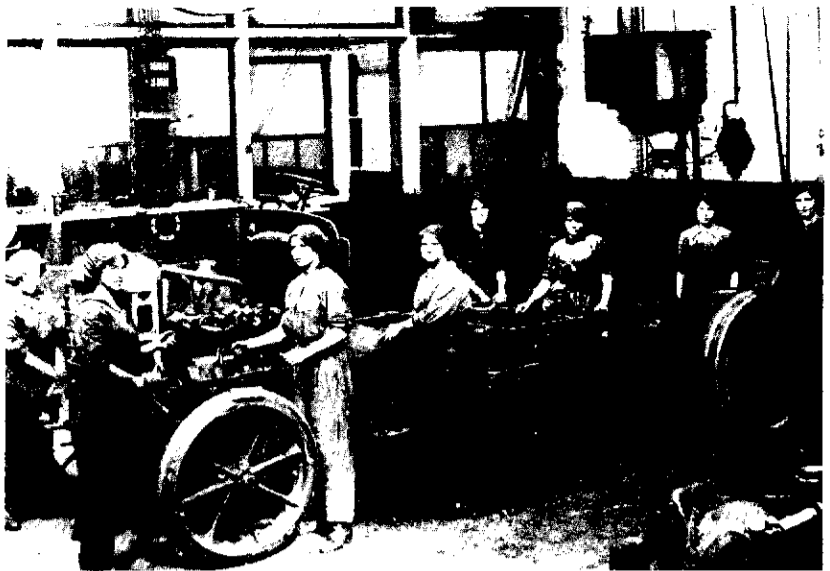
responded by using the repressive apparatus of apartheid to try to crush the unions. Unionists have been arrested, meetings have been banned and the Trespass Act used to prevent strike occupations.

To this must be added the daily killings. In the Eastern Cape, the scene of the March massacre, the army is now very much in evidence in all the townships. Road blocks and army tents are a common sight.

But the people are not intimidated. They know that it is they and they alone who can win the final battle. Neither terror nor fake reforms will deter them from continuing the fight for freedom.

Solidarity with the black freedom fighters of South Africa — including most urgently those facing frame-up trials for their lives — is one of the most urgent priorities for the entire labour movement.

South Africa



What alliances should women make to win their demands? This question, as old as the struggle for women's liberation itself, will be asked by many women again after the experiences they have gone through in the recent period.

It is a question posed very concretely for those in the Women's Action Committee of the Labour Party — who have fought hard for greater representation for women within the labour movement only to find that men win once again when it comes to the crunch at latest round of re-selections. Women remain the runners up. The issue of alliances is of concern to women in the peace movement. It is a burning issue for women in the mining communities who have to wait until July to know whether their tremendous contributions in the strike will be rewarded by associate membership of the NUM.

The first task in consolidating any alliance is the organisation of women *themselves* within the labour movement. This may seem an obvious point after the rise of the Women Against the Pit Closures movement, and the record of the Greenham women, but it is *not* fully grasped by many in the labour movement.

By Valerie Coultas

The labour movement has nothing to fear from women's self-organisation, and black self-organisation — and everything to gain. When discriminated groups come forward and fight they strengthen not only themselves but enrich the struggle of the entire working class. The involvement of women in the miners' strike showed everyone, who had eyes to see, that the future of the pits effected the community as a whole. The women stuck with the miners all the way and are still taking a lead in the fight for an amnesty for sacked and imprisoned miners.

The Greenham women's peace camp has won more women to the peace movement than any single other action CND has taken. The commitment of women to resist the missiles despite harassment and harsh sentencing and to campaign for unilateral nuclear disarmament is doubted by no-one.

Marx

Karl Marx was simply one of the first socialists to explain the hypocrisy of the bourgeoisie's concern for 'equality'. He pointed out that it is meaningless to say that everyone has 'equal opportunity' to accumulate capital, and acquire property, when some people in reality own and control the means of production, distribution and exchange, and others do not.

Within the labour movement it is also a purely formal, and bourgeois application of 'equal opportunity' that stops a political current such as *Militant* understanding that women and blacks are socially oppressed groups that *do not* enter the the workforce, or the labour movement, on an 'equal' footing to men and whites.

That is why positive action, and positive discrimination is necessary to give women and blacks *real* equality — not a false formal equality that ignores reality and the effects of centuries of discrimination and oppression. The onus is not on blacks and women to 'fit in'. It's the other way round. The

labour movement must go to blacks and women and 'fit in' with *them*. This the NUM began to do at its march in Barnsley in May for example when women marched at the front and men at the back.

Historically it was the failure of the labour movement to take up the demands of the suffragettes that precipitated a split within the movement. Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst consummated their split with Sylvia Pankhurst in 1912 in a context where the labour movement had refused over a number of years to come forward as the champion of women's demand for the vote.

But the debate that took place between those protagonists 73 years ago tells us something else about the kind of alliances women need to make to win. Christobel and Emmeline were understandably frustrated at the conservatism of the labour movement in refusing to take up the battle for women's demands. But they were hopelessly wrong to write the labour movement off because of this.

The strategy they adopted was an elitist one. 'We want picked women' said Christobel — who went off with her rich articulate band to support the imperialist World War I, drop women's demands, and eventually join the Tory Party.

Sylvia understood that the power to win women's demands lay with the labour movement and the mass of women. Her energies were concentrated on the mobilisation of women in the East End to fight for the vote and to better their conditions. Throughout the war she both continued to fight for women's demands and opposed the war. Afterwards she went on to help found the Communist Party of Great Britain.

Debate

Today a similar debate is emerging among women who have fought long and hard for women's demands to be taken seriously within the labour movement. Some women, like Bea Campbell are adapting to a Christobel Pankhurst view. Frustrated at the conservatism of the labour movement they turn to Bishops, Earls and Liberals as forces that can champion women's demands. Some in WAC place their hopes in convincing the officials of the trade unions rather than the rank and file.

When you have battled for years to see women taken seriously the idea of turning your backs on the labour movement, and looking for allies elsewhere, can seem appealing. But it is no solution whatever.

There are *no* progressive sections of the ruling class that have the inclination to win liberation *for* women. Women have to win it themselves by fighting for their demands within and alongside the labour movement. David Owen or David Steel have no answer to the problems of women.

The mass actions of women at Greenham common; the mobilisations of women from the pit villages during the miners' strike; the struggles of women trade unionists and black women; and a continued battle for greater representation — such as all women shortlists in reselection battles — are the ways to go forward and win.

The fight for women's demands must be waged through to the end and the fight must be waged *with* not *against* the labour movement if it is to be won.

'LADIES OF Great Britain, we are clever, we are efficient, we are trustworthy, we are twice the women that our grandmothers were, but we have not enough devil in us ...

Wherever one gets a gathering of women socialists, one gets a programme of such charity gifts from the State as free meals and school clinics for children: excellent things, but dangerous unless taken discontentedly as niggardly instalments of a long-due debt.

They should watch such things critically lest their children grow up in servitude. A slave is more of a slave when he is well fed than when he is hungry.'

Rebecca West: 'Women and Wages: Blacklegging and Timidity' from The Clarion, 18th October 1912.

The 1985 Labour Women's Agenda provides us with yet another programme of timid demands for charity gifts from the State, which Rebecca West satirized as far back as 1912. Not timid demands made of Thatcher's State, mind you, but — rather more weakly — of the much longed-for 'future Labour Government' so often mentioned in resolutions.

On the Agenda there are many minimal demands: for women prisoners to be allowed access to the NHS; for women in rural areas to be provided with decent public transport; for substantial child care allowances to mothers of young children; for improved housing and heating for single mothers; for the decriminalisation of abortion by the next Labour government; for the Labour Party — post the Powell bill — to start making policy on women's reproductive rights!

It is an Agenda that has been drawn up against the backdrop of a deeply prejudiced and discriminatory Party; while women have angelically been drafting resolutions; asking meekly for charity towards their own, the Party has, with a devilish intensity, been ensuring that the political power of the future Labour government remains firmly in the hands of men.

Selected

The result of this ruthless and pervasive and institutional discrimination? Eighty-two men and only eight women, selected or reselected — as we go to press. Of these eight women, four are sitting MP's, two are ex-MP's, one is a euro-MP and the eighth is the daughter of an MP!

It is clear from this that for a woman to become a Labour MP, she will have had to be one in the first place!

Only by demanding such insuperable qualifications from women can the Labour Party ensure that there will be no change in the composition of the next elected Parliamentary Labour Party.

WAC has considerable evidence of constituency parties fixing all-male shortlists; of CLP's ensuring that no women get to hear of a selection meeting before it is too late, and the selection already sewn up for the sitting male candidate; of attempts by the left (particularly in London)

to 'target' seats for individual males — thereby excluding open competition with women; of women with a number of nominations being excluded from final all-male shortlists; of women having to face discriminatory questioning by EC's and branches; of constituencies refusing to consider women on the 'A' and 'B' lists on the grounds that they want a 'local' candidate, i.e. a man.

How

WAC Editorial: Reselection scandal

All this is going on all the time. All this is evidence of the institutional nature of the party's discrimination. And all this still evades the attention of the NEC. *WAC demands an inquiry, and constitutional changes which will prohibit institutional discrimination — like all-male shortlists — and discrimination based on the negative attitudes and beliefs of large numbers of Labour Party members towards women.*

As time goes by, parties in marginal seats and Tory-held seats will begin to select their parliamentary candidate. We can ensure a sea-change will occur here. As in the selections for the 1983 General Election candidates, large numbers of women will be chosen as candidates.

For good reason men lose their ruthless grip on the selection process when the seat under consideration is unwinnable. It is at this point that the selection becomes more relaxed and women are made welcome.

Hypocrisy

The cynicism and hypocrisy of this position is breathtaking. The collusion of the NEC and its officers in this cynicism and hypocrisy would not be tolerated by a genuinely democratic and socialist party.

If our Annual Conference were not so undemocratic and so unrepresentative of the women of our movement, then moves would have been made years ago against the NEC's and the Party's discrimination.

As it is a Conference in which 90% of those who cast 90% of the votes (the trade union delegations) are

male, is hardly likely to support a vote of no confidence in an NEC so willing to reinforce prejudice against women. It is time for the women of the Party to declare that they have *no confidence* in an NEC committed to perpetrating inequality.

It is time for women to declare that programmes pleading for charity gifts from a future Labour Government from which Labour women will once again be excluded — are worth less than the paper they are printed on.

The experience of 1976 — when leading members of the Labour Cabinet connived with leading members of the TUC to ditch the introduction of Child Benefit — must be expected to recur again.

We know already that

the overwhelming majority of those forty-four Labour MP's who gave support to Enoch Powell's Bill — have been reselected and will therefore form part of the next Labour Government, should one be elected.

What confidence can women have in *their* ability to alter the imbalance of economic, social and political power that pervades our society: a society that permits a Bill which penalises women for their infertility to proceed through Parliament without consulting the majority of the electorate — precisely that majority most likely to suffer its consequences.

It is time for women to take the 'niggardly instalments of a long-due debt discontentedly'. It is time for women to discover the devil in us ...

WAC's NEC Slate
Margaret Beckett MP
Joan Maynard MP
Claire Short MP
Frances Morrell
Diane Abbot

Friary Ward Labour Party Public Meeting
Gillick — A Woman's Right to Choose
 Monday 17 June 7.30 pm
 North Peckham Civic Centre

Socialist Action and Revolution
Women's Right to Choose
Women's Right to work
 June 17 7.30 Unemployed Workers Centre
 Willesden High Road.
Speakers include Rose Cooper (SA NALGO), Ann Kane (Revolution Hackney South LPYS), Kay Sutcliffe (Avelsham women's support group), John Moynihan (NCU branch secretary).

can women win?



Preview Labour Women's conference

THIS YEAR'S national Labour women's conference (Bournemouth, 16-18 June) takes place after the large mobilisations of women fighting against pit closures across Britain. Hopefully the conference will reflect that experience, and we will see women's organisation in the Labour Party strengthened as a result.

Several resolutions refer to that experience, and call for support to be given to the women's support groups as they continue to organise. A proposal which will doubtless be controversial comes from Islington South and Finsbury women's section.

This argues for constitutional changes to be brought forward to allow the Women Against Pit Closures, to affiliate to the Labour Party and Labour women's organisation at all national and local levels.

Amendments to this resolution include one from Nottingham East women's section which is critical of the Labour leadership's role in the dispute and calls on the Labour Party to back the NUM's 'campaign for coal'. Amnesty and support for imprisoned miners are points included in other amendments.

The miner's strike has highlighted the strength of women's self-organisation. So it is no surprise to see that the resolutions initiated by supporters of the Women's Action Committee from all over the country, have wide support.

The 1982 and 1984 national Labour women's conferences have overwhelmingly supported measures to give women more power in the party, but national party conference continues to reject them. This year attention will be drawn to the conference's view that the women's seats on the party NEC should be elected by the national women's conference, with a proposal that 'shadow elections' should be held at the 1986 women's conference.

These election results, which would reflect the views of women in the party, would then be campaign-

ed around in the labour movement. This year COHSE adds its voice to support the election of these seats by the women's conference.

The Women's Action Committee will also be campaigning around a proposal for the election of the women's committee, which will reflect regional and trade union representation, but would mean that all seats on the national women's committee are elected directly by the women's conference. This is not the position at the moment.

By Ann Henderson

Labour women, unlike many Labour MPs, are also crystal clear about opposition to Powell and Gillick. Labour MPs would be well advised to take notice of this debate at women's conference and begin to get clued up on the Warnock Report.

The resolutions condemn the Powell Bill as an assault on infertility research and an attack on a woman's right to choose. A number of resolutions stress this latter point and Ealing women's section puts male



Women Make the Links

A set of eight postcards issued for International Women's Day 1985 and the anniversary of the start of the miners' strike. They make the connections between the struggle of the miners and the struggle for peace.

Published by Women Make the Links, distributed by Housemans, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1.



Photo: JOHN HARRIS

Labour MPs on the spot by calling for an end to the free vote.

The National Labour women's committee has made a detailed submission on the Warnock Report, expressing the view that the terms of the report are too narrow.

A very large number of resolutions have been submitted on women's health, reflecting the Tory attacks from all directions. Resolutions oppose cuts in the health service, the closure of women's hospitals, the reduction in 'community care' provision and cuts in the social security system — all of which put more pressure on women to take on work that should be the responsibility of the state, without proper facilities.

passed last year, in opposition to strip searching in Armagh. Calls for a national speaking tour around Tony Benn's Bill for Withdrawal and for a labour movement women's delegation to Ireland and Armagh, will hopefully be well received by the conference.

Only the resolution from Bootle women's section, backed by the *Militant*, raises a dissenting voice on Ireland condemning IRA 'terrorism' and calls for the formation of a Northern Ireland Labour Party.

Chastise

Also on Nicaragua it will be the *Militant* who stands up at conference to chastise the Sandinistas for failing to take their revolution through the course dictated by Ted Grant, immediately nationalising all the monopolies regardless of the tasks posed in a semi-colonial country like Nicaragua.

There are many other issues covered by the resolutions submitted, reflecting the issues discussed and campaigned on by women up and down the country. While conference will be interesting, and hopefully should advance positive policies, it will also bring home that the Labour women's conference and organisation is only advisory, and has no real political power.

We have to begin now to campaign for wider labour movement support for the demands of the Women's Action Committee on women's representation, and for the party to take seriously the importance of links being built with the Women Against Pit Closures groups.

Powell pops up again

POWELL'S BILL is dead, but it was killed by a barrage of procedural handgrenades not by a convincing political bomb. A campaign has now been started by its supporters to persuade the government to bring in its own Bill to ban embryo research in advance of the Warnock Bill — now not expected before late 1986.

To back this up, a diplomatic campaign of distortion has begun. For example, Powell claims a majority in and out of the House opposes embryo research. But a poll conducted for BBC's Panorama showed 51 per cent approved if it would lead to ad-

vances in prevention of handicap.

His supporters claim that embryo research has no positive benefits — but in vitro fertility treatment is just one direct result of such research.

By Leonora Lloyd

NAC is now planning to continue its campaign by producing material explaining various aspects of the Warnock Report in a way that is accessible to non-scientists. At our 1985 conference in October, the first session will be devoted to this subject, with a panel of speakers discussing various aspects of Warnock. The aim is to arm activists with the arguments and facts they need to campaign ef-

fectively.

Meanwhile the fight against Gillick's ruling is building up. Coaches to the demonstration on Sunday 23 June are being organised all over the country. In many areas trade unions and Labour Parties are sponsoring seats for school students and other young people.

The march, which will be gathering in Lincoln's Inn Fields from 11am onwards, will be led by a band and youth contingent. At Jubilee Gardens there will be speakers, music, and stalls selling food in aid of various international solidarity campaigns.

• The organising committee have produced leaflets, posters and badges, available from the NAC office, phone 01-405 4801.



Sharp

There promises to be a sharp debate on our attitude to black sections in the party. Last year's conference did support the building of black sections — since then national party conference has rejected it and the NEC has threatened those parties with black sections.

The resolutions from *Militant* supporters to the women's conference, explaining that black sections are divisive and only an organisational measure to be rejected, should be campaigned against and overwhelmingly thrown out in Bournemouth this year.

These arguments are still applied to women's organisations throughout the labour movement, and we are well familiar with their role in suppressing progressive political activity.

A number of resolutions have been submitted which seek to build on the policy

In his evidence to the Employment Committee, Scargill says: 'We will fight for reinstatement'

ON BEHALF OF the National Union of Mineworkers, president Arthur Scargill recently gave evidence to the House of Commons employment committee. He put a forceful case for the reinstatement of all miners dismissed as a result of the strike, pointing out with crystal clarity the vindictive — and, between the areas, inconsistent — approach of the National Coal Board under Ian MacGregor's butchery. Below we reprint the major part of Scargill's report.

IN March 1984, the National Coal Board announced its intention to reduce annual output by four million tonnes. The Board admitted that this policy would result in the loss of at least 20,000 jobs and the closure of 20 pits. It also intimated that five collieries (Polmaise, Cortonwood, Herrington, Snowdown and Bullcliffe Wood) would close within a very short time scale.

Following this announcement — which was in breach of all accepted procedures in the mining industry, in particular the Colliery Review Procedure — miners in individual coalfield areas took strike action. By mid-March, 80 per cent of the National Union of Mineworkers membership was involved

in the longest major dispute in British trade union history.

Throughout the 12 month strike, over 11,000 people were arrested, the vast majority of them mineworkers. Without the slightest attempt to follow the rules of 'natural justice', the NCB adopted a ruthlessly-pursued strategy of dismissals in complete contradiction to policy followed during and after the coal disputes of 1972 and 1974.

It has become increasingly clear that the Coal Board has used arrest (regardless of conviction or acquittal) during the course of the strike as an excuse for dismissing NUM members. This is a matter for serious concern.

This concern is heightened by the Board's policy of arbitrarily dismissing individual mineworkers on the basis of statements or complaints made by those who had returned to work in defiance of NUM policy and/or instructions.

The Coal Board has adopted an attitude of vindictiveness previously unknown in management/workforce relations in the British mining industry. It is an attitude summed up by NCB chairman, Ian MacGregor, speaking to the *Sunday Telegraph* on the 10 March 1985: 'People are now discovering the price of insubordination and insurrection', he said, 'and boy, are we going to make it stick.'

That statement demonstrates clearly the policy decision overriding the evidence presented in any individual case. It is a decision which flies in the face of 'natural justice' and can do nothing but harm to industrial relations in our industry.

By mid-April 1985, 994 people had been dismissed for offences or alleged offences arising from the



'NCB wants our blood': Scargill's evidence to the employment committee shows just how right the slogan is

dispute. That latest net total of those still not reinstated in 671.

These figures present a sharp contrast to the public statements from spokesmen of the National Coal Board, who intimated prior to the end of the strike that possibly 80 per cent of all those dismissed would be reinstated, and that only

those termed persons who had committed acts of vandalism against Coal Board property, or acts of violence against employees, would not be considered for reinstatement.

Indeed, on the 11 April 1985, the Board's deputy chairman, JR Cowan, told the NUM at a Joint National Negotiating Committee meeting that the Board would not take back men who had committed acts of vandalism against the Board or acts of violence against Board employees. This statement clearly implied that all other cases would be sympathetically considered and the men reinstated.

The Coal Board also told the NUM that decisions on dismissal would be left to area directors and confirmed it had sent out directives outlining general guidelines.

The Board's submission to this employment committee substantiates this point. On page 3, paragraph 7 of its evidence to the committee, the Board reiterates that as criteria for re-employment, it has instructed areas that they may not re-employ anyone who has been dismissed following conviction for offences of serious violence, intimidation or vandalism, or dismissed on good evidence (available to management) and involvement in them.

According to Home Office statistics and up to date information supplied by solicitors acting for the National Union of Mineworkers, only eight per cent of all alleged offences fall within that definition. Of the 671 persons not yet reinstated, only a small number in each area fall within the category for dismissal laid down by the Coal Board.

If the criteria contained in the Board's submission to this committee had been strictly adhered to, at least 80 per cent of all those dismissed would have been reinstated. It is pertinent to draw to this committee's attention the fact that this would have left the NUM and the Coal Board to discuss no more

than a handful of cases in each area.

The NUM wishes to make it clear that we will continue to fight for the reinstatement of all dismissed miners because we feel that if a person has been convicted of an offence by a court of law, that person has already paid the penalty to society and should not be punished twice for the same offence.

The Coal Board has refused to allow cases of dismissed mineworkers to

unreasonably. In Scotland, the area director, Wheeler, has made it clear that none of the 205 miners dismissed will be reinstated.

The grounds for dismissal in many cases are an added cause for concern and indeed alarm. Men have been summarily dismissed — without the opportunity to present evidence in their own defence — following complaints from other NCB employees of threatened intimidation and abusive behaviour, including shouts of 'scab'.

In addition, there are now many cases where miners found *not guilty* in the courts have nevertheless been dismissed by the NCB. In other words, while the British legal system has found such people innocent, the Board has judged them guilty...

Since 1947, the British coal industry has operated in a way which allowed the Coal Board and mining unions to resolve differences through negotiations. Current NCB strategy is at complete variance with accepted practice and the spirit of the Nationalisation Act.

The provocative appointment of Ian MacGregor as NCB Chairman in 1983 was a clear signal that the government intended to pursue a policy of attack against the coal industry, wiping out thousands of mining jobs, closing at least 70 pits and destroying communities already vulnerable in regions of high unemployment.

Ian MacGregor, with the decimation of British Leyland and British Steel under his belt, is now intent on butchering British coal. An integral part of his strategy, apparently, is the dismissal from the industry of miners who have fought to save pits and jobs.

This strategy is draconian, vindictive and counter-productive in every sense. The Coal Board is pursuing a policy which, unless changed, will continue to disrupt Britain's coal industry.



Arthur Scargill

Photo: GM COOKSON



IN HIS submission to the parliamentary committee at the end of May, NUM president Arthur Scargill highlighted, area by area, cases of miners unfairly dismissed by the area Coal Board management. They included:

Notts

The Board had adopted a discriminatory approach which can be shown very clearly by examples from the North Nottinghamshire area of the NCB, compared with the North Derbyshire area.

Approximately 30 miners employed at Whitwell colliery in the North Derbyshire area, and three at Creswell colliery in the Nottinghamshire coalfield were involved in an incident at Whitwell colliery and subsequently charged with unlawful assembly. Four of the men charged were allowed during the strike, to return to work and the charges against them were dropped. At the trial these four were used as prosecution witnesses but the judge intervened on the grounds that these men had to work together after the dispute and he said these working miners should not be giving evidence against the others.

Following consultation between the barristers, it was agreed that if the men pleaded guilty the judge would give them a lenient sentence and the case would be terminated on the understanding that the Coal Board would reinstate them when the dispute was over. The parties subsequently pleaded guilty, were each fined £7 and ordered to do community service.

The North Derbyshire area of the Coal Board have honoured their part of the bargain and all the Whitwell employees have been reinstated.

But despite the undertakings given, the Creswell men have been refused reinstatement by the North Notts area.

Midlands

In the Midlands area an incident took place involving two men who were on strike and one who was at work. Although all three men were charged with assault, only the two striking miners were dismissed. The case was heard in the Crown Court and Messrs Edwards and Bolton — the striking miners, and the working miner were all bound over to keep the peace.

Yorkshire

In the Yorkshire coalfield, the story is the same. Although the NCB is taking a discriminatory approach in all four areas of Yorkshire, its strategy has been applied with particular harshness in the Doncaster area.

The case of Mr H Day and Mr G Deakin of Rossington colliery illustrates the situation. They were alleged to have assaulted a working miner and were dismissed from their employment. The case never went to court and all charges have been dropped but the Coal Board has refused to reinstate them.

Durham

The case of Mr H Parkin in Durham is again an example of how Board policy varies from area to area. He was involved in an alleged assault on a working miner whilst picketing at Bilston Glen colliery in Scotland. He was found not guilty.

Whilst men found guilty of the same offence in, for example, North Derbyshire have been reinstated by the Board, Mr Parkin was dismissed in Durham.

Kent

Of the 147 miners dismissed during the dispute, not one has been reinstated although most of the sackings were for minor offences.

During the occupation of Betteshanger colliery in June 1984, Mr Leonard, who lives very near the pit, was dismissed by the Board because he had taken food across the pit yard to feed the men involved in the occupation.

But even more bizarre than that dismissal is the case of the Betteshanger NUM branch official, Mr T Harrison. During the occupation, Mr Harrison obtained the permission of local NCB management to go into the mine to try and persuade the men to end the occupation. For his pains, Mr Harrison was sacked and has so far not been reinstated.

Wales Congress ... A congress of struggle?

FOUR HUNDRED OR MORE delegates gathered for the first all-Wales conference of the Wales Congress in Maestag last weekend. The Wales Congress is a significant body in Welsh politics, with the support of the Wales TUC, the Wales Labour Party, Plaid Cymru, and the Communist Party. Its support extends to other areas in Britain and internationally.

The coalitionist politics of the Communist Party were a central inspiration to its inception during the miners' strike, when mass activity in support of the miners was still largely in the hands of the support groups. During the strike, the Congress gave political cover to the rightward moving South Wales NUM executive, by involving broad forces which did not necessarily inspire mass action.

However, since the return to work, the Congress assumes new importance around its central aim: the defence of the mining communities. Without the national dimension of the miners' strike, the Congress provides the only overall co-ordination of activity in defence of the mining communities in Wales, and will increase in importance if local struggles are not to be isolated. The conference saw the potential of a congress of struggle as many of the delegates were intent on the continuing fight to defend the mining communities.

The morning session was introduced by Terry Thomas, vice president of the South Wales NUM. He spoke of the continuing pit closure plans of the Coal Board and the need to open up a second chapter in the fight against pit closure.

His appeal for unity was undermined by his total lack of proposals for action, and his concern for the 'respectability' of the Congress now that it was

recognised by the Wales Labour Party and TUC.

Further limited concepts of unity were put forward by Wayne David from the steering committee: 'There has been much talk on the left about a popular front against Thatcher,' he said. 'The Wales Congress has translated that talk into action.'

By Maggie Simpson and Graham Atwell

Hwyel Francis, one of the founders of the Congress, talked of the need for 'alliances which go beyond our own power to fight Thatcher'. But appeals for a popular front cut little ice with most delegates, and it was Derek Gregory, divisional officer of NUPE, who began to put forward unity in a manner which posed the defence of the working class.

'We need the broadest possible campaign', he said, 'that includes Labour councillors, the Labour Party, the Wales TUC, and trade unions with

members in the mining communities. We have to rid our movement of hypocrites and rebuild from the grass roots.'

'We are all fighting the same enemy. If the bureaucrats who control the labour movement at a regional level won't fight, then the members must make them. An apolitical trade union movement that thinks we can preserve jobs by no-strike deals with multinational firms is living in cloud-cuckoo land.'

Women were to the fore in proposing action. But Cath Jones, secretary of Wales Women Against

Pit Closures, was prevented from finishing her contribution to conference by Terry Thomas. Needless to say women were very angry.

Cath had been talking about action of the women's groups in defence of men on trial, and support for those men who had lost their jobs. The South Wales NUM executive has done little to campaign in defence of these men, and is concerned that such campaigns as do exist don't escape their control.

The women's work shop in the afternoon spent some time talking

about the need for the recognition of women, both their role during the strike and in the Congress. But the fight for Women Against Pit Closures affiliation to the NUM will be critical if the activity of the women's groups is to be recognised.

The influence of the executive was obvious, as was its concern that initiatives emerging from the support groups escape its control.

As well as the Rhymney two, another issue dominating Congress, the threatened closure of St John's colliery at Maestag, led to an emergency resolution calling for the Congress to campaign publicly for all pits in danger. Finally, following an emotional appeal from sacked miners from Notts and the Phurnacite plant in the Cynon Valley, Congress decided to fight for an amnesty for all victimised miners.

The democratic functioning of the Congress will be important in ensuring that campaigns can be built. This was reflected from the support groups workshop, which demanded that 60 per cent of the national committee of the Congress should comprise representatives from the support groups, and that the national committee



At the Wales Congress angry women demanded full recognition of their role

should produce a fortnightly newsletter.

There will surely continue to be obstacles in the Congress. The building of mass action in defence of the mining communities particularly if the politics of coalitionism and class collaboration hold sway. All the more reason that every activist should be involved in building the Congress, a congress of

struggle thoroughly rooted in Wales.

What Terry Thomas needs to understand when he talks about the need to open the second chapter of our struggle is that we are fighting to win. The Congress gives us the opportunity to build on that support network which was established in solidarity with the NUM during the strike.

Hancock and Shankland

Recent issues of Socialist Action have told of the campaign waged by Rhymney and Newport support groups in defence of Russell Shankland and Dean Hancock which has organised the biggest demonstration in South Wales since the end of the strike. The NUM executive has had to respond to this development.

The following emergency resolution was passed by Congress: 'The Congress should work with the South Wales executive to seek a review of the sentences meted out to Russell and Dean.'

An appeal was launched by Ann Clwyd earlier in the meeting for the families of the two. And Tim Richards from Rhymney support group gave an indication of the seriousness of the campaign: 'I'm sure the people of South Wales know where they stand. Sod the law — we want justice. We didn't get justice on the picket lines, from the DHSS, from the press — but Thatcher's gone too far this time.'



Scottish trade unionists lobbied the TUC in 1979 demanding action to save jobs — the same still applies

Scots' Miners Gala

OVER 5000 gathered in Edinburgh's Holyrood Park last weekend for the thirty-ninth Scottish miner's gala, dominated this year by the aftermath of the miners' strike. But if the crowd were expecting any sort of lead on how to campaign for the reinstatement of sacked and imprisoned miners, they were to be sadly disappointed.

Scottish miners' and CPGB leader Mick McGahey showed his true colours when he thanked the treacherous TUC boss Norman Willis, to much booing and hissing, for... supporting the NUM during the strike! Willis himself spent most of his highly unpopular speech concentrating on the plight of pensioners in an unsuccessful attempt to avoid his disgraceful role in last year's strike.

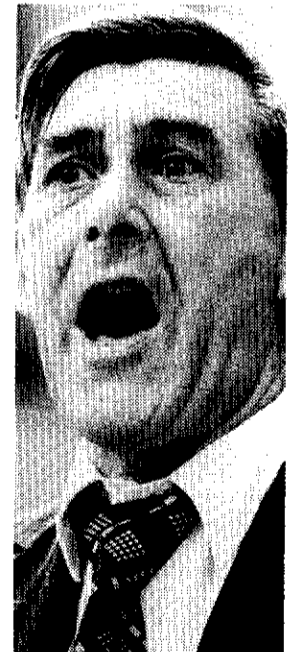
His hollow call for unity to achieve the reinstatement of sacked miners cut no ice. The jeering crowd interpreted it for what it was: rhetoric, devoid of any proposals on how to fight.

By Jill Lee and Carol Turner

The same empty cry was echoed by McGahey himself, together with Labour leader Neil Kinnock who got a better (if undeserved) reception from the massed ranks of the Scottish labour movement. These speakers stressed the need for unity to elect a Labour government. But it was left to NUM general secretary Peter Heathfield to give real content to that demand.

Amid thunderous applause he pointed out that the support for the NUM's historic strike from some sections of the labour movement was equivalent to that given by a noose to a hanging man. The failure of the strike, he said, was a failure to explain to the rest of the labour movement that the NUM's struggle was a common one.

Condemning those who attacked the leadership of the NUM — and singling out Communist



Mick McGahey showed his true colours

Party theoretician Eric Hobsbawm — he defended as correct the miners' strike and their campaigning methods. Rejecting the new realism of the TUC leadership, he called for a Kinnock government firmly based on class.

Neil Kinnock's support for the reinstatement of sacked miners — he called for a public enquiry into the conduct of the Scottish NCB management — received a standing ovation. It comes late, and is not enough.

In Scotland as elsewhere, labour movement activists must put flesh on the demand of Peter Heathfield by campaigning for a Labour government committed to releasing from prison and reinstating in their jobs every victimised miner up and down the country.

Europe's youth back miners

YORKSHIRE AND Northumberland miners, carrying a six-meter wide red banner, headed a demonstration of 5,000 youth from all over Europe in Luxembourg on Saturday 31 May. The demonstration was the high point of the three-day festival organised by the International Union of Socialist Youth — the youth organisation affiliated to the Socialist International.

The contingent was swelled by delegations from all major countries taking part. They carried

banners calling for an amnesty for the 80 jailed, and 700 sacked victims of Thatcher's crusade to crush the spirit of resistance in the miners.

By Alan Freeman

'This was not just an industrial dispute. It was a political class war,' explained sacked Lancashire miner Dennis Pennington to a meeting of over 400 on Monday. He told why support and defence for the sacked and jailed miners was vital and urged the audience to keep their supporters going — and to keep the links by adopting jailed miners. Many signed up to support

his call, and the collection raised around £300.

Rapturous applause greeted militant speeches from sacked miners, from Kent miners wife Sue Bence, and from Northumberland miner Alan Maltman. 'Thatcher has failed to break the miners' spirit,' said Sue. She invited the audience to a huge three-day 'Mines not Missiles' festival to be held by Kent miners' wives, Kent NUM, and local CND and women's peace groups on 24-26 August in Aylesham, Kent.

Organisers expect at least 3,000 to attend and are writing to all abroad who helped during their year-long strike to invite them to the festival.

Labour Party resolution from Bold NUM

Conference notes the campaign waged by the National Union of Mineworkers to reinstate all miners dismissed as a result of the 1984-5 strike, and for the release of all prisoners imprisoned as a result of the strike. Conference further notes and welcomes the Labour Party Scottish executive statement, adopted by Labour Party Scottish council conference on 9 March 1985, pledging 'full support for the campaign to ensure reinstatement of all men victimised by dismissal during the dispute'.

Conference further recognises that the miners were fighting a legitimate battle in defence of their jobs, their communities and their union, and that the miners' strike was deliberately provoked by the Tories. With regard to miners sacked/imprisoned as a result of their activities during the strike conference therefore calls for:

- a) the Parliamentary Labour Party and the national executive committee to mount a campaign for dropping of all charges against miners, reinstatement of all sacked miners and release of all imprisoned miners;
- b) the next Labour government to release from prison any miner still serving prison sentences and to ensure the reinstatement of all miners still sacked.

In pursuance of these aims conference calls for:

- 1) the national executive to approach the National Union of Mineworkers to discuss jointly organising a national demonstration as part of this campaign;
- 2) the national executive to discuss measures to support the NUM national miners' solidarity fund and the raising of money for the families of sacked and imprisoned miners, and to recommend to CLPs and other affiliated organisations the collection of a regular 50p levy from the membership towards these ends.

Soweto — June 1976

TO MOST white South Africans, Soweto, if they thought about it at all, was just a great sprawling black township south-west of Johannesburg. Its one-and-a-quarter million inhabitants were there to supply white-owned industry with an abundance of cheap labour and domestic servants for the whites in their luxurious flats and houses.

All this changed in one day. On 16 June 1976 Soweto not only impinged itself in the minds of white South Africa, it thrust itself violently on to the front pages of newspapers all over the world.

It all began relatively peacefully. On the morning of Wednesday 16 June 1976, 20,000 Soweto schoolchildren marched in protest against the decree by the South African government's Department of Bantu Education that henceforth Afrikaans had to be used as one of the languages of instruction in secondary schools. To the black people of South Africa, Afrikaans is the language of their oppressor, the Afrikaner nationalists whose ruling party had codified racist discrimination in the series of legislative measures which constitutes apartheid.

Newspaper photographs and eyewitness accounts testify that the marching students were good-humoured, high spirited and excited. They were carrying placards with slogans such as 'Down with Afrikaans'; 'We are not Boers'; 'Afrikaans is Oppressors' Language'; 'If we must do Afrikaans, Vorster must do Zulu'; 'Viva Azania!'

Violence began when the police, who had raced to the scene in their armoured vehicles, seized placards and tried to stop the march. They responded to the taunting of the students with teargas. A shot rang out; a thirteen-year old schoolboy, Hector Petersen, lay dead on the ground. There had been no order from the police for the marchers to disperse, no warning shots. Hector Petersen was killed by a bullet in his back. Several other youths were also shot dead. All hell broke loose!

Revolution

A cascade of stones pelted down on the police vehicles; a black policeman was dragged from his vehicle, beaten and his own handcuffs secured his wrists. Police dogs were knifed and set alight. The Soweto revolt had begun!

The fury of the students turned first against the West Rand Bantu Affairs Administration Board — which administers Soweto on behalf of the Department of Bantu Administration and Development (BAD). Vehicles belonging to the Board were burnt and nearly all its offices in the township destroyed. Commercial vehicles and delivery vans of white-owned business were also set on fire.

Soon Beerhalls, liquor stores, a bank, a hotel, several post offices — all symbols of white rule — were blazing. Two white officials of BAD were hacked to death. Cries of 'Black Power' rent the air.

There was no holding the enraged students. They surged through Soweto with their objective to attack and destroy all symbols of state power. As Barusch Hirschon in his analysis of the revolt, *Year of Fire, Year of Ash* put it; if it was not a 'rehearsal for revolution' it was 'a rehearsal for revolutionary awareness that had grown out of the increasing tempo of clashes in the preceding months'. By the end of the week the death toll reached 176.

If this was not yet a revolution, or a rehearsal for a revolution the government was nevertheless taking no chances. Schools were closed and armoured cars carrying anti-riot units were sent into Soweto. The army, navy and airforce were alerted. Troops were mustered outside the township.

THE STRUGGLE against apartheid has a long history. The strength and combativity of the black population of South Africa against ferocious oppression has been an inspiration throughout the world.

The high point of that struggle so far was the events in Soweto in 1976 — the uprising which marked the biggest confrontation yet between blacks and the naked violence of the apartheid police.

Since the experience of Soweto the struggle has developed in a new form with the mass emergence of the black trade union movement. That new rise of struggle is coupled with a debate of strategy, unity and the way forward among the liberation forces.

CHARLIE VAN GELDEREN traces the background to the struggle in South Africa today.

South Africa in revolt

Within a few days 143 vehicles (50 belonging to the police) and 139 buildings (including 33 BAD buildings) had been damaged by fire or burnt out. A newspaper reporter who flew over Soweto in a helicopter wrote that he 'felt like a war correspondent flying over a city after a bomb attack.' As after Sharpsville, sixteen years earlier, South Africa's white overlords were shaken and fearful.

The violence was not confined to Soweto. It was as if a genie of pent-up fury had been released from a bottle.

From Mohlakeng in the west, to Daveyton in the east the townships serving Johannesburg, as well as those around the seat of government Pretoria, were giving vent to their rage.

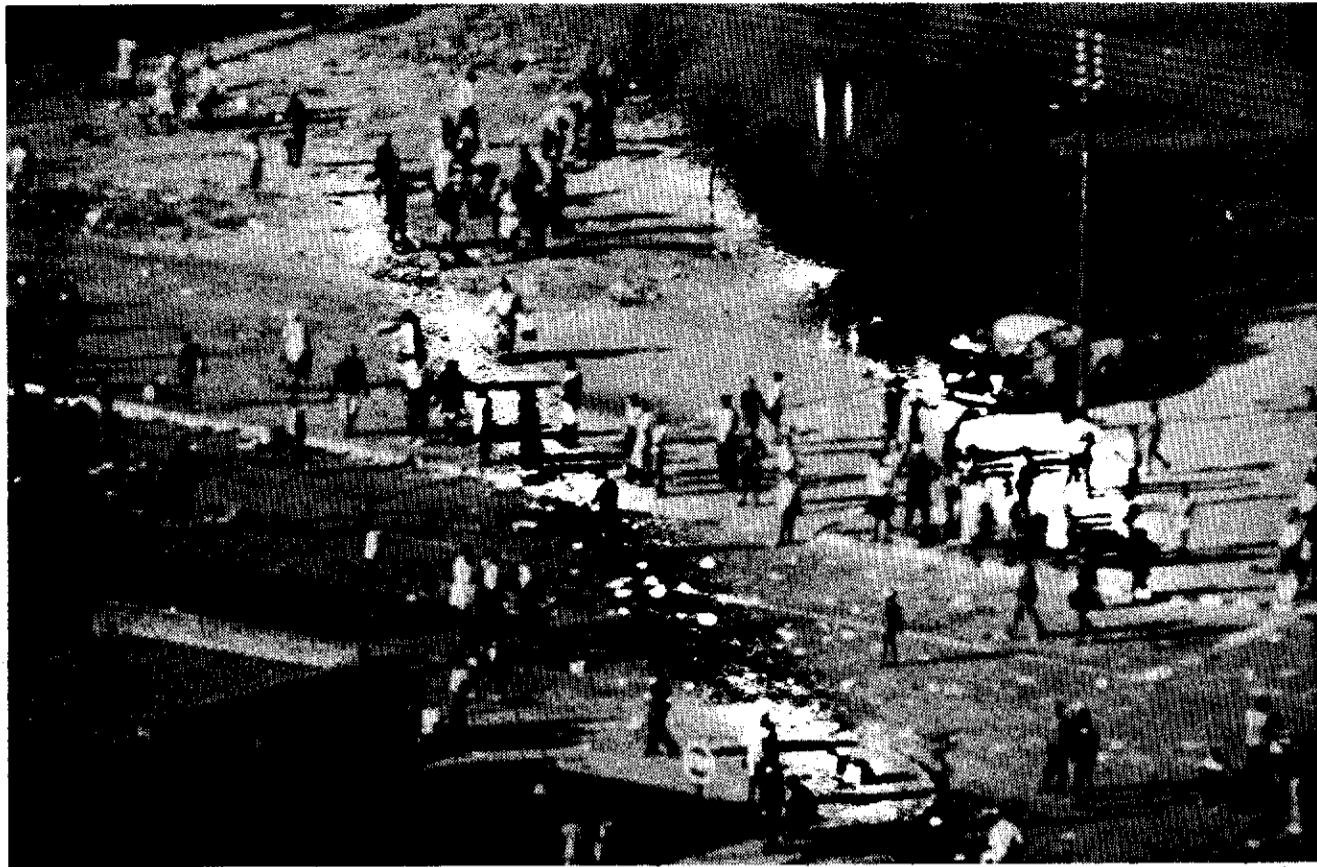
Soon reports were coming in of outbreaks from more distant places — Nelspruit in the eastern Transvaal, Joubville in the south-western Transvaal, Bothaville in the Orange Free State, Galeshewe near the diamond town Kimberley, Langa and Nyanga in the Cape.

Mass

Despite the reign of terror which the state unleashed, the violence continued and spread. By August, two months after the Soweto uprising, at least 80 black communities all over the country were expressing their fury. Two months later 160 black areas were involved. The legislative assembly building of the BophuthaTswana 'homeland' in Mafeking was burnt to the ground. Soldiers from a military base in the north of Namibia were called to quell a disturbance in that territory.

There can be no doubt that this was a mass struggle on a scale hitherto unknown in south Africa. In Soweto — which remained the centre of the revolt — and Cape Town tens of thousands were involved. Even if one accepts the official figure of BAD that 'only' about 20 per cent of Soweto's population had participated in the protests, that is more than a quarter of a million in one township alone.

Although the uprisings appeared spontaneous in character, it is obvious that the young militants of Soweto had been inspired by the ideas of the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM). But they had also been influenced by the rise and growth of the black trade union movement.



Black miners in South Africa

The combativity of the working class reinforced black militancy. These militants also increasingly realised that if they were to win they could not do so without the powerful support which could only come from the black working class.

Towards the end of July 1976 the students organised the first of a series of work boycotts by Soweto workers. On 23, 24 and 25 August there was a second stay-away from work. This time, the police, instead of directly intervening, incited some migrant workers living in a hostel near Mzimhlope station in Soweto to attack students. This did not deter the students however who

organised another three-day stay-away on September 13.

September 1976 was also the month in which Henry Kissinger visited South Africa to discuss the 'Rhodesian question'. His trip was a signal for a new outbreak of protest in the Soweto schools. He was greeted with a poster which read: 'Kissinger, your visit to Azania is bullshit. Even animals are angry'.

By the end of July, the students could register a partial victory. The edict making Afrikaans compulsory was modified. Schools were re-opened and the attendance began slowly to in-

crease. But many school buildings had been burned down by militants.

Although there was a short period of comparative calm, underneath the surface the revolt continued to simmer. On 4 August twenty-thousand students tried to march from the township through the centre of Johannesburg to the police headquarters in John Vorster Square.

On 23 September, pupils held a peaceful demonstration in the centre of Johannesburg but on 17 October violence returned to Soweto. The catalyst for this new outbreak was the funeral of a schoolboy who had died in police custody after being arrested during the demonstration in Johannesburg.

A large crowd of angry students destroyed thirty vehicles in a municipal depot. This was followed by attacks on the homes of black policemen. The police responded with a raid on Morris Isaason High School — detaining 16 teachers and sixty-two pupils.

On 24 October seven people were killed when police opened fire on a funeral. That night the Jabulani police station in Soweto was damaged with explosives and there were more attacks on the homes of black policemen.

Rents

Although the language question was the immediate cause for the eruption which was to shake South Africa for more than a year it was in reality only the spark. The struggle which was unleashed on 16 June 1976 encapsulated all the grievances against white rule which had accumulated over the years. Having achieved a measure of success on the language issue, the Soweto students widened their campaign.

Toward the end of April 1977 the students organised a march against the rent increases imposed by the West Rand Administration Board. Rent is a perennial issue in the townships. The Urban Councils which run the township administrations on behalf of the government have no authority to raise revenue through rates or taxes. The administrative incomes have to come solely from the municipal-owned houses in the townships, and when additional money is required this can only be raised by increasing rents.

The campaign against rent increases was one of the most successful organised by students. It led to the complete collapse of the Urban Bantu Council, the only civic body in Soweto officially recognised by the West Rand Board. In its place, the people set up their own local authority interim committee, commonly known as the Committee of Ten.

The Committee of Ten was the most widely representative body to emerge in Soweto for years. If one wishes to draw parallels, it can be compared to the first birth-pangs of Soviets in Russia in 1905. The committee had the support of the most important black consciousness organisations and the Soweto Students Representative Council which had been set up in the after-

Photo: INPREFCOR



Forward march of black unions

THE GROWTH of the black trade union movement in South Africa has given increased confidence to the developing struggle against the apartheid regime. South Africa today has the fastest growing trade union movement in the whole world.

Prior to 1978, black trade unions had no formal recognition. But in that year the Wiehahn commission's report laid the basis for black union recognition. Between 1980 and 1983 the number of registered black unions rose from under 60 to nearly 470 — and unregistered black unions increased from 170 to more than 270. The number of workers organised in black unions went up by 200 per cent — from 220,000 in 1980 to 670,000 by 1983.

The ruling National Party hoped that by bringing black unions within the framework of industrial law they would be able to exercise a tight control over them. But they have been unsuccessful, in curbing the militancy of the unions. This is illustrated by the table.

This shows that after a temporary dip, which reached its low point in 1977, the combativity of the black workers began to soar again. These figures do not include the massive strikes in the goldfields last year, nor the important strike in the state-owned Sasol plant, which produces oil from coal, in November 1984. This strike, the first mass action in a state-owned enterprise, mobilised about a million workers and constitutes the most important political strike in the history of the country.

The black unions are mainly organised in two federations: The Federation of South African Unions (FOSATU) and the Council of Unions of South Africa (CUSA). The three most important unions outside the Federations are the General Workers' Union (GWU), the Food and Canning

Workers' Union (FCWU), and the South African Allied Workers' Union (SAAWU) — three of whose leaders are among those facing treason charges.

It is significant that Soweto has been chosen as the place where the unions will be meeting this week in an attempt to forge unity. They will be discussing a draft constitution for a wider federation of black trade unions. Unions already committed in principle to unification, and whose representatives have helped to draft the constitution, are FOSATU, CUSA, GWU and FCWU. The two other unions invited to the talks, SAAWU and GAWU, will have to refer back to their constituent bodies so no early solution is expected. But the Soweto talks will set the scene for greater unity.

The black trade unions are now playing a bigger part in the political campaigns against the regime. In the first years of their existence the black unions saw their first task as the building of support by concentrating on improving wages and working conditions.

FOSATU and CUSA joined with the UDF and AZAPO in calling the hugely successful two-day stay-at-home strike last November. The death of Andries Raditsela, a prominent Fosatu leader, shortly after his release from police detention, increased the bonds between the unions and the political movements. The unions also played their full part in the anti-election campaign last August.

October of this year has been set as the target date for the unification of the trade unions into a single federation. This will undoubtedly give a great fillip to the process of drawing more workers into their ranks and increasing the role of the organised black working class in the struggle against the apartheid system.

STRIKES BY BLACK WORKERS 1973-1983

Year	No of disputes	Black workers on strike
1973	370	98,029
1974	384	58,975
1975	276	23,295
1976	248	26,931
1977	90	15,091
1978	106	14,088
1979	101	17,323
1980	207	56,286
1981	342	84,705
1982	394	141,517
1983	336	64,469

math of the shootings. The Committee of Ten drew up a blueprint for a representative Soweto city council, but it was prevented from presenting this to the people by a ban on all public gatherings.

The authorities responded to the apparently endless violence of the oppressed with their customary ferocity. More and more blacks were arrested under the various laws empowering the police to detain people without trial. In August 1976, 110 young people between the ages of 12 and 25 were convicted of public violence at Hammerskraal, just north of Pretoria. Fifty-three of those arrested were males, 57 females. Young women participated actively in all phases of the revolt. In July, one press report referred to '280 schoolgirls on the rampage'.

Repression

Among those taken into detention was Steve Biko, the intellectual leader of the black consciousness movement. On 12 September, 1977, he became the 40th black South African to die in police custody while under detention without trial.

A month after Biko's death virtually all the black consciousness organisations, including the Soweto Students Representative Council were banned. This was the severest act of police suppression since the outlawing of the African National Congress and the Pan-African Congress after the Sharpsville massacre in 1960. The most important black newspapers *The World* and *Weekend World* were closed down. In all 17 African organisations and the Christian Institute were outlawed.

By the end of 1977, the state repression had managed to contain the violence. The first phase of the revolt was over. But this was to be the beginning not the end of the struggle. The fight would go on as long as apartheid reigned. It began anew with the massacre at Uitenhage on March 21, 1985 — the anniversary of Sharpsville itself.



South African township



Riot police in central Cape Town

Rivalry aids enemy — ANC expresses concern

ONE grave consequence of the intensification of the liberation struggle in South Africa is the increased rivalry between the organisations striving for leadership. This has been evident since the setting up of the National Forum Committee (NF) in March, 1983 and the United Democratic Front (UDF) three months later. The UDF identifies with the *Freedom Charter*, which was the programme of the Congress Alliance in which the African National Congress (ANC) played a leading role before it was banned in 1960. Azapo, which emerged out of the black consciousness movement, is the main constituent of the NF.

This rivalry was aggravated during the campaign against the new constitution in which both organisations, as well as the unions played an active role. UDF, however, seemed to hog most of the publicity and members of Azapo and the Cape Action League, another affiliate of NF, were annoyed to see pictures of themselves in the newspapers and on TV being described as UDF supporters.

After the Uitenhage massacre last March, matters came to a head. The UDF took complete charge of the funeral arrangements. Azapo and NF supporters were barred from attending by youths wearing UDF T-shirts. A message of condolence from Azapo president Ishmael Mkhabela was not read out at the funeral. Bereaved families told Azapo that they had 'strict orders' not to hold discussions with any other organisations except UDF. Fosatu (Federation of South African

Trade Unions) members who approached relatives of the shooting victims to see if they required any assistance met with the same response.

At times, this rivalry has led to violence and bloodshed. Leaders of both groups have expressed their belief that government *agent provocateurs* are fanning the flames and that physical attacks on individual members of their respective organisations were probably the work of government agents. There is little reason to doubt this.

From its headquarters in Lusaka, the ANC has expressed its concern at this situation. The 'preservation of unity' it says, is a 'top priority'. The statement continues: 'Let us stop the enemy from exploiting the temporary problems between the UDF and Azapo ... We should not give comfort to an increasingly uncomfortable and frightened regime. Our watchwords must be unity in action ... the enemy on all fronts.' It calls on the people 'to seize the initiative and build their own organs of popular power which must be the only authority in the townships ...'

This would appear to reflect the new direction which is emanating from the ANC consultative conference in Lusaka, its first since 1969. The heightened struggle in South Africa has raised many doubts in the ranks of ANC. In particular, the spectacular growth of the trade union movement has underpinned the importance of the working class — without whom the liberation struggle could not be won. There is now a clear demand, within the ANC, for a sharper definition of the role of the working class within the liberation struggle, rather than the wishy-washy reference to its 'leading role' as defined by the Morogoro consultative conference in 1969.

90p

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IRELAND UNFREE



Labour women to debate Ireland

'I COULD feel my stomach churning and tears welled up in my eyes at the thought of those screws scrutinising my body, naked and pregnant'. These are the words of a five-month pregnant woman prisoner after being strip-searched last month in Armagh jail in the North of Ireland. Her experience unfortunately, is not unusual.

Recent statistics even show an increase — with 70 strip-searches in April compared with 59 the month before in the prison. As well as pregnant women, babies have also been 'searched' in this way. The tactic is almost wholly directed towards remand prisoners — in other words women who haven't even been found guilty of anything.

This policy has been implemented since 1982, with the clear intention of demoralising the women political prisoners. But the effect has been quite the opposite. Apart from strengthening the resolve of the women themselves, it has generated a broad campaign of opposition among relatives, friends, trade unionists, the church and most importantly women. Although one would never guess this from Neil Kinnock's statement on Ireland, strip-searching is also opposed by the British Labour Party.

A delegation of women from the National Labour women's committee (NLWC), including shadow spokesperson on women's rights Jo Richardson, visited the prison as the central focus in a trip to the Six Counties. Supporting the campaign to stop the searches and arguing that they have never been justified on security grounds, the NLWC have recently published an excellent pamphlet reporting on the delegation.

The Northern Ireland Office has responded by dismissing the mounting criticism and refusing to abandon what they describe as 'reception searches'. Their latest ploy has been to argue that more strip searches are carried out in Scotland than Armagh. This argument only reinforces the need to oppose the policy which has also been used against Greenham women and miners' wives.

This year's Labour women's conference is likely to set the pace on this issue, as last year's did, with Labour Women for Ireland organising a fringe meeting and seven resolutions submitted from women's sections on the subject of Ireland. Apart from one which advocates a solution to the war based on the loyalist dominated trade unions, they are all very positive: opposing strip-searching and other forms of repression, and arguing for a wide ranging discussion in the party based on Tony Benn's draft Bill on a British withdrawal from Ireland.

Women in London have already fought off an attempt by the party's national agent, to prevent a resolution on similar lines passed at London Labour conference being implemented. As well as opposing strip-searches and calling for a broad discussion on withdrawal, it stressed that this should involve the representatives of the majority of republican opinion in Ireland.

This victory is important. It will further the dialogue among feminists and anti-imperialists in Britain and Ireland.

The next initiative planned in connection with this dialogue, is a delegation of relatives of strip-searched women, organised by the London Labour women's committee. The delegation is backed by the Camden Council women's committee, who are writing to other council women's committees calling on them to take similar action.

• The NLWC pamphlet is available from: Women's Officer, The Labour Party, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17 (price 75p inc. p&pi).

• Labour Women for Ireland can be contacted by writing to: LWI c/o Feminist Library, Hungerford House, Victoria Embankment, WC2.

Contra forces get a pounding

Contra Columns operating in Nicaragua are being rapidly broken up and driven out by the Sandinistas. The defeat of Reagan's aid proposals last month has put them in to some disarray.

The Honduran military — now worried by the real prospect of having 15,000 defeated, frustrated, armed Somozistas and mercenaries concentrated in large camps that the Sandinistas are beginning to hit — have begun to disperse them into smaller, less dangerous, but less effective camps.

The Reagan administration has responded with new proposals for even more aid. \$32 million is offered this time, to shore up the Contras' sagging strength and morale.

Further, the Pentagon rumour mill has begun grinding out 'tripwires' for direct US military invasion of Nicaragua. These are said to include Nicaraguans acquisition of advanced military aircraft, or the construction of a military base in Nicaragua that 'could' be used by the Soviet Union. Remember the airport in Grenada?

For the time being, all this is likely to be designed to scare the congress into voting the increased Contra aid as a softer option than having to send the blue eyed boys into the teeth of Nicaraguans popular resistance.

American secretary of state George Schultz put it plainly. In April this year he said: 'Our goals in Central America are like those we had in Vietnam.'

Meanwhile here in Britain,

the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign has called for actions on 4 July, US Independence Day, to focus opposition on American attempts to deny independence to Nicaragua.

• 3 July, 12am-2pm: There will be a picket at the US embassy in Grosvenor Square, London. The petition against the US trade embargo will be handed in and the ambassador will be offered a pound of Nicaraguan coffee. Will he break the embargo and accept it?

• 4 July, 'Not the Boston Tea Party': a rally in Jubilee Gardens, South Bank (by the GLC) at 4.30 with Meg Beresford (CND), Paul Boateng, and other speakers. This will be followed by a concert at 6.45pm with cabaret and music (Skint Video confirmed).

• These events will launch the Container X projects to send direct aid to Nicaragua and break the embargo. Posters,

leaflets and petition forms available from NSC, 20-21 Compton Terrace, London N1. Be there!

Public meeting to launch Nicaragua: The Sandinista People's Revolution

Speakers include:
Senor Francisco d'Escoto — Nicaraguan Ambassador
Jack Collins — Secretary Kent NUM
Stuart Holland MP
John Ross — Socialist Action
Andy de la Tour — Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign
Friday 21 June at the Caribbean Centre, 5 Westminster Bridge Rd, SE1.

'I shall value this book greatly and will be able to use it in speeches and broadcasts... I urge you to attend the 21 June launch meeting.' Tony Benn MP

The Outsiders

TERRIBLE SOCIAL tragedies often throw great light on previously obscure phenomenon and the nature of existing social relations. The death of 41 people in the Brussels disaster is one such case.

It was devastating to watch people trapped and dying underfoot and to see the utter lack of adequate safety precautions provided. It also proved a

different nationalities mingle in the stadium and lastly the National Front. Is it not surprising that no one, not least Kinnock, has the insight or courage to point the finger at the ruling class and its institutions, propaganda and ideology.

In the face of a completely house broken Labour leadership that has no class or collective alternative to answer this bourgeois crisis then the ideology that working people take into the sports arena graphically mirror capitalism itself. It is in this milieu that fascist groups like the NF can steel their 'cadre'. The search for national prestige on the field of sport cannot but be influenced by the ideological content of the contending nations.

Labour should disavow the constant propaganda in favour of individualistic solutions to what is the basic contradiction that is progressively destabilising the social

order, that is the tension between the defence of individual wealth on the one hand and the highly socially organised system of the manufacture and distribution within which the vast mass of working people are engaged.

Labour should reject the 'star' system that reinforces the divide between the haves and have nots and breeds the elitism without which class society is doomed. Stars — political, theatrical and sports — all rest on mass populist appeal that is by its very nature unaccountable in all respects except to violence. It is this unaccountability coupled with the acceptance of violence against working people that provides the framework for the grab for recognition that impels alienated 'outsiders' to public demonstration of personal violence. This is in no way qualitatively different from the state violence against working people which guarantees the recognition and legitimacy of bourgeois governments.

The other side of the massive bourgeois endorsement for the recogni-

tion of individual achievement is the view that those of us who do not rise above and separate ourselves from the mass are worthy of recognition only en masse. And this recognition only extends to the power we wield through our mass organisations — the trade unions and Labour Party. With growing mass alienation of large sections of the population from the government; with the inclusive political and economic consensus broken at the feet of an increasingly threatened capitalist class, more and more individuals will seek escapist adventures to assert their self identity.

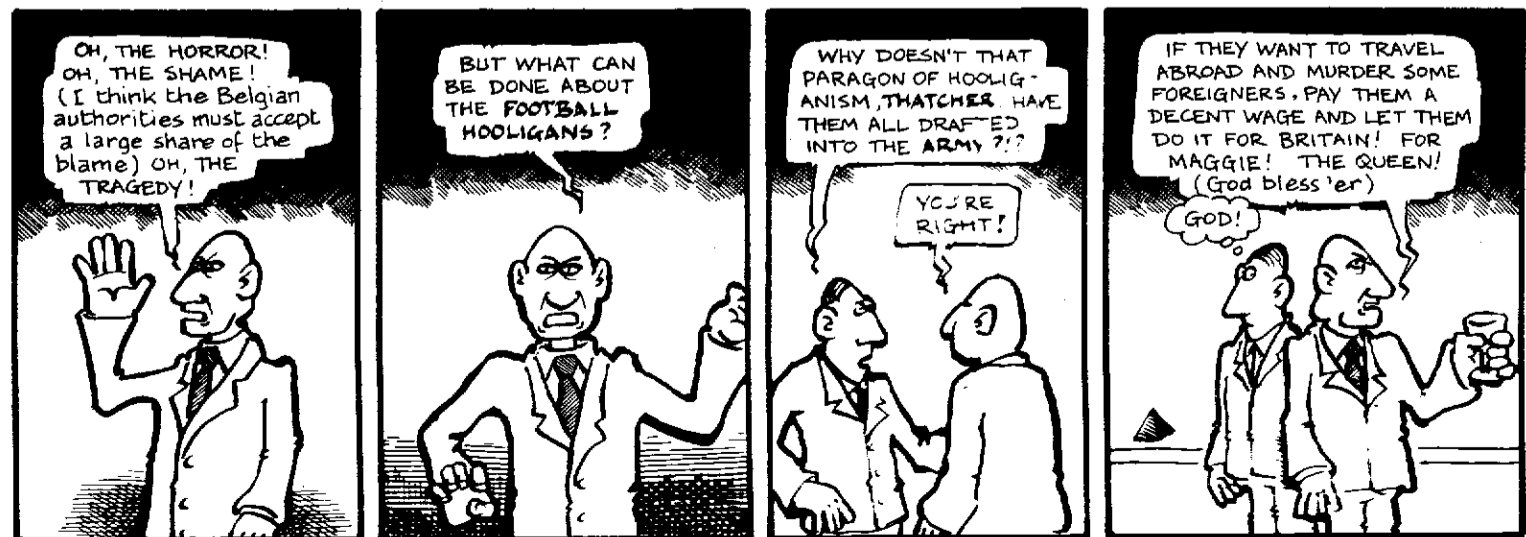
Our job is to fight for the collective identity of our movement against the ruling class. We also have to solidarise against the anti-internationalist scabs who while not being responsible for the Brussels tragedy were instrumental in precipitating the carnage there. They are scabs against humanity. They are scabs against the right of the working class to peaceful assembly. They are scabs against the most oppressed sections of

society who have the most to fear from stepped up policing. They are scabs who will cause further restrictions on travel rights such as those experienced by the Kent miners. And they are scabs against all those whose daily lives are made less oppressive by following the recreation of their choice.

There is an alternative to increased state intervention into and control over sport. The labour movement should campaign to make the social activity of the working class its own. It should campaign against the 'professionalism', the result orientated, advertisement sponsored sport. For what we have now is more like a war for profit than a search for athletic and team excellence.

To end this state of affairs the game should be wrested from its business supporters and reinvested in the hands of the genuine supporters. And these supporters would know how to control and marginalise the violence of anti social elements. They would treat them like scabs should be treated — without recourse to the bourgeois courts — firmly.

A PIECE of the ACTION



655 © CORMAC #101

THE BOOK *Nicaragua: The Sandinista People's Revolution*, is by far the most comprehensive collection of speeches and interviews with FSLN leaders available in English. For that reason alone it belongs on the bookshelf of every socialist. No serious debate on the politics and strategy of the FSLN is possible without reading it. Despite its length, 398 pages, it consists of 42 separately readable pieces.

This book should knock completely on the head any idea that the policy of the FSLN is 'empirical' or 'unconscious'. Reading an article such as Jaime Wheelock's 'The Great Challenge', which is undoubtedly the centrepiece of the book, reveals a perfectly coherent and worked out political strategy.

The key point of that strategy is undoubtedly the *primacy of politics*. Social and economic questions are placed within the framework of politics and, in that optic, subordinated to them. The FSLN's is an application of Lenin's dictum that 'Politics comes before economics, that is the ABC of Marxism.'

As the issue is clearly put in the declaration of the third congress of the Sandinista trade union federation (CST), 'the fundamental achievement of the revolution is the maintenance and defence of revolutionary power.' 'The fundamental step taken by Nicaraguan workers to carry out the transformation of the political, economic and social structures, and to build a new society free of all exploitation, was taken on 19 July 1979, with the conquest of political power.'

It is within this framework of FSLN state power that one of the most misunderstood aspects of the Sandinistas policies is carried out — the economic policies of the FSLN and the well known continued existence of capitalist economic relations in Nicaragua. It is the *political* framework that determines, as Tomas Borge puts it, that 'a mixed economy in Nicaragua is not the same thing as a mixed economy in Costa Rica or in Uruguay and other countries of Latin America. This is a mixed economy within the revolution.'

By John Ross

More precisely, as Sergio Ramirez states in comparing Nicaragua to Chile under Allende: 'the difference between Nicaragua and Chile of Popular Unity resides in the fact that Allende barely had one part of the mechanisms of government. He didn't really have power, the power was in the hands of the rightist parliament, of the army. And here in Nicaragua, in turn, the destruction of the *somocista* guard ... is one of the basic conditions of our ascendance to power. Therefore our most basic task in the face of North American aggression is to defend this power ... The Sandinista front has the power here.'

It is the reality of which class holds armed state power that determines the nature of the situation and process in Nicaragua. As Jaime Wheelock states it, 'the working class is in power in Nicaragua ... it is the working people that hold power here.'

It is this reality of working class state power in Nicaragua — that Nicaragua is a workers state — but that the state has not yet expropriated the capitalist economy that causes confusion among sections of the left in Britain and leads to ultra-left and sectarian responses to the FSLN. In reality the process taking place in Nicaragua is perfectly coherent and logical.

Marx explained the transition from capitalism to socialism in the *Communist Manifesto*: 'The immediate aim of the Communists is the same as that of all the other proletarian parties: formation of the proletariat into a class, overthrow of the bourgeois supremacy, conquest of political power by the proletariat.'

The utilisation of this political power by the working class is clear: 'The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the state, ie of the



Women from the FSLN militia — just one of the pictures in 'The Sandinista People's Revolution'

The FSLN in power

proletariat organised as the ruling class; and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible.'

This is the perspective outlined by Wheelock in the given circumstances the FSLN faces: 'In industry there aren't more than 120 plants with more than fifty workers. At the same time, there are more than 15,000 small shops with fewer than five workers ...

Change

'We have to combine two things in the process of change. First, the formation of a sector of state production that brings together the most developed and strategic areas of the economy. Second, the strong presence of an artisan economy, on which we are trying to impress a certain degree of association ...

'Although we may have socialist principles — and we do have them — the solution to transforming our society does not lie in expropriating all the means of production. That wouldn't lead to socialism but rather to its opposite. It could even lead to the destruction and dismantling of society.

'What we are searching for is a way to combine, on the one hand, a plan in which the starting point will be the strategic and developed sectors of the economy, and on the other, the organisation of a social plan in which cooperative forms of work — even if of a rudimentary character — will predominate.

'So a significant sector of self-employed workers and small businessmen exists in our country. But it is the new relations of production created by the revolution that dominate the process of economic development. This domination was achieved by the nationalisation of foreign trade, natural resources, the strategic industrial sectors, and the banks.

'With these steps we have created a system of production and management that is predominant and has

hegemony — but that also co-exists to an appreciable degree with forms that we would call capitalist and with forms that are backward or precapitalist.

'Inside what we call a regime of mixed economy, we have formed various sectors: state property; large, medium and small private property; and cooperatives. Our tendency is toward having state and cooperative property predominate but at the same time coexist with medium, small, and even large scale private production. Over time, property relations of backward capitalism will surely become secondary, subordinate. This is our conception of how we must march forward. The pace, however, is determined not only by technological questions but also by political questions.'

Development

The overall development — although naturally in a unique form — is as seen by Marx. What exists in Nicaragua is the first phase of the dictatorship of the proletariat: the conquest of state power by the working class. This state power is being progressively used to carry through the transformation of the economy and dominance of state over private capitalist property. *Purely economically* it would be preferable to carry this process through progressively and without sharp breaks. However these economic considerations, as Wheelock outlines, are subordinate to the political considerations which are dominant, and which may necessitate more radical steps.

Far from the economic policies of the Sandinista's being ill thought out, or not radical enough, they are undoubtedly *correct* in the given circumstances of Nicaragua.

When this primacy of politics is understood then the policy of alliances of the FSLN also becomes clear. In Nicaragua, in order to carry through the democratic tasks of the revolution, it was necessary for the

working class to take state power. As Victor Tirado puts it, 'It was necessary to make a revolution to be able to apply basic precepts that already reigned in capitalist countries not ruled by tyrannical governments.'

The bourgeois democratic tasks of the revolution had to be carried through *against* the bourgeoisie itself however — due to, as Borge puts it, 'the congenial helplessness of the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie, or, more precisely, the absence of the anti-somocista movement.' The result of this development was that 'the bourgeoisie really did not have a party of their own ... No modern party of the bourgeoisie had appeared in this country. The MDN (Nicaraguan Democratic Movement) was born at the moment when the bourgeois regime was in total agony.'

The formation of the FSLN *itself*, in the struggle against Somoza, signified the outflanking of the bourgeois alternative to the dictatorship — the fact that the FSLN could place itself at the head of the nation in the struggle against Somoza. Again as Borge put it, 'The Sandinista National Liberation Front was founded in July 1961. This historic event signified the people's alternative, as opposed to the bourgeois reformist alternative, in the struggle against somocismo ...'

Links

From this forged a definite social and political connection — the crucial link forged by the FSLN in Sandino's struggle against the United States in the 1920s. As Borge explains that link, 'Only the workers and peasants are capable of struggling to the end against imperialism and its local political representatives. With this notion Sandino's intuition grasped above all the class character of the revolutionary movement.'

Or in Jaime Wheelock's formula 'The axis of our policy of alliances was not the bourgeoisie but the people. Our assessment of the relation-

ship of forces is based on a reality. We have the arms, and the people are with us.' The core of the FSLN's policy was the alliance of working class and peasantry — not any strategic alliance with bourgeois forces.

In this framework the much discussed question of the FSLN's tactical relation with bourgeois forces also becomes clear. Daniel Ortega explains clearly the FSLN's policy of hegemony in every alliance it created.

It did not negotiate with the bourgeois forces. The FSLN outlined the programme it considered correct in the objective situation and approached all forces to carry out its programme. As Ortega puts it and there is no reason to disbelieve his account, 'at no time was any agreement or political pact made with another political force: even the composition of the Junta of the Government of National Reconstruction was not decided as the result of any pact or agreement made with another political group. Rather, we called upon persons who were well known nationally ... They were asked: 'This is the Sandinista Front's programme, do you support it?''

Alliances

This framework of alliances with the bourgeoisie on specific questions, on terms dictated by the Sandinistas, is in no way incompatible with classical Marxist positions. Critiques to the contrary are simply ultra-left.

The development of the revolution in Nicaragua is a striking confirmation of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution — that in a semi-colonial country to solve the democratic tasks of the revolution it is necessary for the working class to take state power into its own hands.

There is no doubt that the overall policies of the FSLN in Nicaragua are *correct*. We are faced in Nicaragua with a situation where not merely is the revolution 'in general' to be supported but where the *specific political course* being pursued by the FSLN should be supported.

Is there a contradiction between this reality and the evident fact that there is evidently not a common international programme between the views of, say, Socialist Action or many on the left in Britain and the FSLN — that the Sandinistas for example supported the bureaucracy and not Solidarnosc in Poland? That contradiction exists for those who cannot see history as a *process*, who do not understand that the break of the world working class from Social Democracy and Stalinism cannot, and will not, take place in a single leap.

Programme

The point about the FSLN — in addition to the much more fundamental question of its achievements in Nicaragua — is that it is a tremendous step *towards* the programme of revolutionary Marxism. That Nicaragua, the freest country in the world, shows that as the revolution develops in the world it progressively moves towards the socialist, humanitarian and liberating ideals first proclaimed by Karl Marx 140 years ago.

The FSLN — as, at a very different level, the forces symbolised by Gerry Adams and Arthur Scargill — is a touchstone for the left in Britain. It is a mortal threat to all sectarianism. Because political currents in the world are no longer writing the ideas of Marxism in books. They are applying parts of its ideas — and in the case of the FSLN whole parts of its ideas — in practice. It is the height of sectarian mania to believe this is some sort of threat — as does much of the ultra left and sectarian left in Britain.

The most advanced of these currents on a world scale, the FSLN, has conquered state power in Nicaragua. That is a gigantic step forward for humanity.

If you want to know how they did it read this book.

Nicaragua: The Sandinista People's Revolution, Pathfinder Press. £5.95



Newham 7 fight continues

Week two of the Newham 7 trial began with five arrests on the Old Bailey picket showing yet again the state's desire to cause trouble at every stage. Inside, the overt harassment has — for now — died down. But the Asian defendants are invariably detained ten minutes longer than the whites.

As the courtroom battle is joined it becomes rapidly clear that the police are covering up for the Duke of Edinburgh pub and blaming the Asians for the disturbances on 7 April last year. The pub landlord and regulars have obviously something to hide.

Scott Young, alleged victim of an earlier assault said he had his arm in a sling but no one else has recalled it. He admitted leading a sortie from the pub but conveniently claimed to have gone a different way from the others.

The landlord managed to forget parts of his original statement which suggested that he knew of that attack. Other regulars were apparently innocently playing pool when the windows were smashed. 'Hear no evil, see no evil' has been the watchword from within the Duke of Edinburgh.

Other witnesses have been more frank. One saw police ring the pub bell after Scott Young was 'assaulted', but for some reason no one answered. Others saw a group of whites run from the pub with weapons and viciously attack a Mercedes full of Asians, smashing the back windscreen.

Before the pub windows were smashed, a group of whites outside the pub were abusing Asians gathered opposite the Wimpey bar. The window of the Wimpey was broken by a pool ball and pool cues were thrown.

No police officer has yet admitted seeing any whites at all at this stage except possibly 'middle aged ones with shopping bags'. Yet the official police occurrence book records 'a fight between 50 Asians and 25 whites'. The

figure of 50 Asians is also unsupported by photographs taken of the incident.

To identify the defendants, the prosecution rely on an ex-waitress of the Wimpey bar to recognise them from photographs. In cross-examination she admitted to being a police informer, though she later retracted this.

She needed 'reminding' of at least one name before she gave evidence. Then she claimed to identify one defendant just by his 'body structure'.

The horrifying series of racist attacks on that day have been chillingly recounted to the jury by the victims. One youth (still only 'O' level age) was hit on the head with a hammer, taken to a common two miles away, thrown in a ditch and attacked with a block of concrete. It was known that the car used had been parked near the Duke of Edinburgh.

Police response: just circulate the car details to officers on routine patrol. Not all of them got the message.

The judge has already said that provocation is not a defence, and the charge of 'affray' is so wide that even if the whites started the trouble, the Asians can still be convicted for joining in.

So, however good the defence, the central issue still remains: is it criminal to protect the community when no one else will?

● **Rally on Thursday 13 June, 7pm, at East Ham Town Hall, High Street South, London E6.**

● **Mass picket of the Old Bailey Crown Court (nearest tube: St Paul) from 12-2pm every Monday till the end of the trial. Free transport available from East Ham at 11am.**

Newham council draws back

NEWHAM's overwhelmingly Labour council drew back last week from its previous position of backing the attempt by management and hard right councillors to break up the local NALGO branch and its shop steward organisation.

Three residential social workers had been sacked for attending a union meeting. Last Friday the appeals were heard by a specially convened committee of councillors.

The sackings were quashed and the social workers will be back at work in their old jobs from Monday this week. However the three will all have 'final warnings' on their records.

This means that a mutually agreeable trade union facilities agreement must be negotiated as soon as possible between the unions and the council. This would open the door to a speedy review of these 'final warnings' and their complete removal from the files of these union activists.

Both the council and the unions must now put this whole episode behind them and organise for a mass campaign of resistance against the Tory rate-capping which is sure to hit the borough like a cyclone next year. Hundreds of redundancies and massive slashing of the services was only averted this year by eating into the reserves and setting a rate well above that recommended by the Tories.

There will be no hiding place next year. Some Labour councillors and departmental managers were well aware of this some months ago when

they started the whole sorry business of attempting a full frontal assault on the Newham NALGO branch. The attack started in October last year when the left lost the branch elections.

Carolyn Sikorski, Newham NALGO

They blocked the progression of social services convenor and Socialist Action supporter Barry Gray. It was a blatant attempt to frighten off the further development of the stewards system in the rest of the branch and victimise a leading union activist.

A vigorous campaign was launched in support of Barry from the shop stewards committees while the newly elected branch committee watched from the sidelines or in some cases actively undermined support. There were two one day strikes, weekly campaign broadsheets and a series of shop meetings. Crucial however from the point of view of forcing the Labour councillors to come off the fence and support the union was a speaking tour round every single ward in the borough.

But it was NALGO activists who were also active members of their wards

and general committees who won over a decisive majority of the party. Support built up outside the party and Barry won his regrading.

But at the very same meeting at which Barry was regraded the council set a rate and launched the attack on the three residential workers. This time as well as touring the Newham party yet again the newly launched 'Reinstatement Campaign' went into action across London and also nationally.

The majority of 'left' councillors joined in the attack on NALGO. They were in the lead-up to the group elections in which, for the first time, they hoped to win the key positions of leader and chair of personnel.

They should have known better. Having provided a 'left' cover for their dirty work the right said 'thanks a lot' and far from giving them their votes kept a firm hold on the key positions in the council as well. The decision of the appeals committee has corrected this error.

There can be no unity with those in the party who don't really want to fight the Tories except of course unity in the graveyard of smashed services, smashed unions and thousands of jobs lost. Those who really want to see Newham Council stand and fight the Tories next year must begin to organise now in the unions, Labour Party and the whole borough.



Defend Anne Francis

AMONG the variety of activities Labour CND has underway this year, the most immediately pressing is defence of and support for Greenham woman Anne Francis, recently jailed for 12 months by Aylesbury Crown Court for keeping the peace at the cruise missiles site.

That's why we're encouraging support for an emergency resolution to this weekend's Labour Party women's conference in support of Anne. This should be tied too to the home defence exercise planned by the Tories in

September this year, when 7000 territorial army volunteers and 2000 reservists, along with thousands of regular forces, will 'practice' defending Britain from a commando attack by the Soviet equivalent of the SAS, the Spetsnaz.

By Carol Turner, Labour CND (personal capacity)

This represents a massive waste of money which could be used for creating new jobs for Britain's thousands of unemployed and ploughed into vitally-needed services like the NHS. Instead it will be used for useless 'war practice' and to rein-

force the Tory propaganda that Russia is the enemy.

That's why Labour CND is demanding that as well as campaigning in support of Anne and the women like her camped at the Greenham airbase, Labour-controlled authorities give time off with pay to all their employees willing to spend a day demonstrating for peace, and organise their own anti-missiles events during the two weeks of Exercise Brave Defender

● **Anne Francis' appeal against her sentence will be heard this Friday at the Appeal Court in the Strand. Gather outside at 10am.**

More Militant excesses in Liverpool

THE MILITANT-dominated Liverpool city council excelled itself recently when it called police into its council meeting to evict Liverpool black caucus members, there to protest against the latest race relations skulduggery of the council.

The black caucus were protesting against the lack of any consultation about the council's new equal opportunities policy, so-called, and demanding formal talks.

The council decision to wind up the old race relations liaison committee (which the black caucus originates from) has been through no Labour Party bodies before the council took its decision. Obviously Labour councillors want to break all their links with what has become an extremely vocal and effective thorn in Militant's side.

The proposal to shut the committee was made to a recent council meeting by none other than Sam Bond himself. The black caucus supporters at the meeting organised a sit-down protest heckled during the report.

Lambeth and Liverpool surcharged

AS WE go to press it has been announced that surcharge certificates have been issued to councillors in both Lambeth and Liverpool the only remaining authorities who have refused to set a rate.

This latest attempt to beat Labour controlled councils into submission comes a week after Lambeth had voted again, by 32-30, not to set a rate and continue the fight. As part of the campaign, Lambeth is organising a series of events and meetings to publicise and sustain the campaign. A public rally has been organised for 22 June at 3.00pm at Brixton Recrea-

tion Centre with Jo Richardson and other leading labour movement figures. In addition Lambeth councillors are planning to take the message up and down the country and to link up the fight with Liverpool's. Next week Socialist Action will carry more detailed material on the likely effects of the surcharge and the way forward for the campaign now.

Emergency resolution to Labour Party women's conference

This Labour Party women's conference condemns the recent decision by Aylesbury Crown Court to jail Greenham woman Anne Francis for 12 months after finding her guilty of a mere £130-worth of damage to the airbase fence. Conference notes:

1. the increasing harassment of women at the peace camp, evidenced for example by the daily, violent evictions of the campers, the beating up of two women campers at the beginning of the year by 'silent' assailants (widely believed to be American airmen), and the recent arrest and detention overnight of 400 women protesting against the introduction of the new by-laws to restrict the peace protest there;
2. that the government intend to hold the biggest home defence exercise since World War II, called 'Brave Defender', in September of this year, which will include the use of 7000 members of the territorial army and 2000 reservists who will be paid for their two week war preparation.

In view of this, conference therefore agrees:

- a. to campaign in every way possible for the release of Anne Francis, including (i) calling on the Labour Party nationally to organise a suitable form of protest, (ii) calling on all Labour MPs to raise questions in the House of Commons, regarding the case, and (iii) mobilising in constituency parties, especially women's sections, to organise a rota for visiting the peace camp;
- b. to demand that those campaigning for peace have equal, and paid, facilities to do so as those preparing for war, namely by (i) calling on all Labour-controlled councils to give their employees time off with pay to demonstrate against nuclear weapons during the two weeks of Exercise Brave Defender, (ii) calling on the Labour Party nationally to use time during a party political broadcast, during or immediately before the exercise, to point out that party policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament is the best contribution Britain can make to peace and disarmament world-wide and that such exercises do nothing to defend this country, and (iii) sponsoring the CND national demonstration which will take place on 23 October this year in London.

Union conferences

Defend jobs in rail

Photo: G M COOKSON



THE BRITISH RAIL BOARD is spoiling for a fight with the rail unions. Last week, the Board decided to make full use of the Tory anti-union laws, in an attempt to weaken working class opposition in the industry.

First, it demanded £200,000 compensation, lost when railworkers took

By Ray Varnes, NUR guard

action on 17 January in defence of members victimised by management for supporting the miners. The Board will also present another crippling claim to the unions for revenue lost when Scottish

workers shut down the rail network in defence of jobs last April.

Second, the Board has broken the railways' nine-year old closed shop agreement.

British Rail is making full use of the Tory laws because the railways are a running sore for the bosses. The rail unions must be taken on and defeated like the steelworkers, British

Leyland workers, and the miners if the rapid and fundamental restructuring of the industry, which the bosses urgently need, is going to be carried through.

Legal

The decision to move ahead on the legal front signals the danger that management will try even more quickly to impose Driver Only Operation and other productivity measures. The grades conference which includes guards — whose jobs stand to disappear with

DOO — voted unanimously to fight to defend their jobs when it met at the end of May.

British Rail aims to destroy the grade of guard by the domino theory. Passenger guards at Kings Cross and in the Strathclyde Region in Scotland are the number one target, and they'll be followed by the removal of guards on freight trains, if BR gets its way.

Strike

Delegates called for a 24-hour national strike as a first step to defend jobs in the industry. No one considered that the coming year will be an easy one for railworkers, but as Roy Butlin, delegate from Coalville, put it, 'Nothing is inevitable. Driver Only Operation can be defeated. But we can't win grade by grade. We need unity across the industry, including with the workshops, and beyond.'

But any successful fightback must involve a sharp break with the current low-key approach of the union leadership. With thousands of jobs under threat, the union newspaper has carried only a single article on DOO in the last year. It's a scandal that it's been left up to Kings Cross depot itself to distribute a petition declaring opposition to productivity, and aimed at getting railworkers involved in the fight against job loss. Several thousand

petitions were taken back to local depots from conference.

With feelings running high, delegates welcomed Jimmy Knapp, the NUR general secretary, when — in answer to the questioning on his report to conference, he accepted that strike action would be necessary if BR pushes ahead with DOO.

An important feature of this year's conference was how much delegates had learned from their solidarity action with the miners. This was evident not only in the large vote Roy Butlin received when elected to the conference executive committee, but also in the standing ovation which greeted miner's wife, Marie Price.

Thanked

Price, the Notts delegate to the national committee of the Women Against Pit Closures, thanked delegates for their solidarity action during the strike, and explained how the links between miners and railworkers should be strengthened to defend sacked and imprisoned miners today. 'But,' she said, 'solidarity is a two-way street. If we can ever aid you in your fight, get in touch and we women will be there before you can put down the phone.'

Although this grade conference deals only with issues relating directly to guards and shunters, many delegates were pleas-

ed when in answer to another question on his report, Knapp pledged the union's support for the Nicaraguan government which is currently under threat of invasion. 'This very issue will be under debate at our annual general meeting in a fortnight's time,' noted Knapp.

With big battles looming in the industry, *Socialist Action* supporters at conference were pleased that the sale of *Railworkers and Miners*, the new pamphlet, went down so well. A full one in three delegates purchased a copy of this account of the struggle or our members at Coalville.

The Left in the CPSA

THE SPLIT in the largest Broad Left organisation in the country, that of the CPSA, has produced the expected result: the re-capture of the National Executive Committee by the right-wing in this years elections. Because of the divisions between the 'old' Broad Left and the breakaway Broad Left 84 grouping over policies, politics and candidates, which were highlighted at this years conference, there appears to be no chance of re-unification and a distinct probability that the right will remain in the leadership of the union for the next few years.

By Rod Bacon (formerly NEC CPSA 84/85)

This of course puts tremendous pressure on the Broad Left to build a mass based organisation, rooted in the work places and the branches in order to mount a fight-back for socialist policies in the CPSA. This fight-back will have to be waged, not only against the right wing, but also against the rightist BL 84. The Broad Left consists of many independent socialists, supporters of *Militant*, the Socialist Workers Party and the *Socialist Caucus* group. The *Socialist Caucus* (which includes supporters of Socialist Action) has been in existence since 1978. It has always been a constituent part of the CPSA Broad Left, but also has support in other Civil Service unions.

The political objectives of the Caucus have been to mobilise the rank and file to challenge the full time coterie that controls the leadership, and raise political issues inside the unions, such as Ireland, racism, womens rights, gay rights and international questions. As part of these objectives, the *Socialist Caucus* has been in the fore-front of the fight to extend union democracy, accountability of full time officers, positive discrimination in favour of women, full support for members taking industrial action and total opposition to witch hunts against other socialists. Thus when the BL 84 group makes continual sectarian attacks on *Militant* supporters in particular, the Caucus will stand with *Militant* although we have major political differences.

In the new climate, the policies of the Caucus

have a major role to play to re-build the Broad Left. Even the *Militant*, which has in the past relied upon capturing the leadership of the union rather than raising socialist politics amongst the membership and creating mass support for left policies, has realised that the Broad Left has to go back to the membership and develop the fight against the right wing and the renegades.

Finally the internal divisions in the CPSA cannot be regarded in isolation to events taking place in the rest of the labour movement. The split in the Parliamentary Campaign Group, the witchhunting of *Militant* inside the Labour Party, the dominance of the *Marxism Today* trend inside the Communist Party and the growth of the 'new realist' left with their concept of 'Bennism without Benn' and virtually uncritical support for Neil Kinnock, proves there is a rightist trend. The only problem that the 'new left' have is that they are essentially elitist. The socialist left by basing their politics on the needs and aspirations of the working class can expose the movement towards the centre and continue to develop the growth of socialist policies throughout the labour movement. This is the task of the *Socialist Caucus* in the CPSA, to struggle for the left to win back power in the coming period.

● The Socialist Caucus National Meeting takes place on Saturday 15th June at the 'Cock', Phoenix Road, NW1 (Nr Euston Stn) starting at 11am. All Socialist Action supporters in the CPSA, SCPS etc should attend.

Policy gains in NCU

THIS YEARS National Communications Union (NCU) conference will be remembered for the historic merger of the clerical and engineering sections but for little else. The different sections, CPSA, P&T and POEU met separately at the beginning of the week then joined on Thursday to convene its first policy making conference.

The Broad Left (BL) dominated Engineering Executive Committee (EC) gained 2 seats in the engineering section but

By Ann Fiander, City Branch NCU (pers. cap.)

made no attempt to lead the union forward either on pay or jobs. This BL EC did its best to stop debate in the engineering section by asking for all controversial policy making propositions to be remitted.

The first major debate of the engineering conference was to dominate. This centred around the *Broad Strategy* and the NEC's proposed action to win a 32 hour, 4 day week. Before conference the NEC had recommended September 1 as the date for industrial action if the British Telecom Board refused to negotiate. During the debate they amended their own proposition to say sometime in the future. With conference's decision to back the NEC,

the right wing blocked with the NEC and used this decision to stop conference supporting any call for national industrial action in support of branches fighting BT and the Post Office's demands for redundancies.

These debates clarified many activists in the union on the nature of the *Broad Strategy*. The *Broad Strategy* while an informed document is being used for not fighting jobs now. It argues that all industrial action on jobs must wait till the NEC calls national action to get a 32 hour, 4 day week. This strategy played into BT's hands — they are currently picking off branches one by one, demanding job losses.

If the NEC refuses to back branches prepared to take action to save jobs, they will be powerless when BT eventually forces 'voluntary redundancies'. By the end of conference many of the branches involved were looking not to the NEC or the BL for industrial solidarity but to sister branches who spoke



to defend them during the debate.

On pay, conference rejected BT's offer of 6.7 per cent which included wage cuts for workers in BT's factories and cable ships.

The NEC claimed plans for industrial action but wouldn't reveal them to conference. Later the NEC made it clear they planned to hold a ballot on taking action on pay.

Photo: JOHN HARRIS (NUJ)

Socialist ACTION

Tamils must stay

ON 20 MAY Leon Brittan, Home Secretary, announced that it was safe for Tamils to return to Sri Lanka. Nine days later he curtailed MPs traditional rights on behalf of those seeking refugee status. He also took the unprecedented step of demanding that Sri Lankan passport holders, Commonwealth citizens, should only be allowed entry into Britain if they had visas from the Sri Lankan High Commission.

This means that Tamil refugees, fleeing from genocide in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka, will be denied refuge in this country and those already here are under threat of deportation.

Under United Nations conventions visas cannot be imposed on refugees fleeing from terror. The British government is a signatory to these conventions.

Thatcher knows full well that Sri Lankan

By Valerie Coultas

airlines will not transport Tamils to Britain without a visa because the airlines themselves will be charged the cost of a Tamil's stay in Harmondsworth.

Amnesty International has documented in 1981 and 1982 the instances of anti-Tamil repression, systematic torture, arbitrary arrest, extra judicial killings. Under the Sri Lankan Prevention of Terrorism Act people can be imprisoned for 18 months without trial.

The violence in the North carried out by Sinhalese fanatics and the Sinhalese security forces is indiscriminate violence against the entire Tamil community. As Rajes, of the Tamil Refugee Action Group, explains, 'The Tamil nation is dying in the hands of Sinhalese fascism. Jaffna is a ruined city. It's been bombarded by the army who have destroyed houses, schools and temples.'

Yet the Tory government has insisted that the issue is one of dealing with Tamil terrorists. This is exactly how the Buddhist fanatic Jayawardene regime

portrays the situation in the Sri Lankan press by only reporting Tamil Tiger killings to stir up hatred between the Sinhalese and

would be no problem.'

Thatcher's ruthless policy is a direct result of her visit to Sri Lanka where she made it clear she would back the Sinhalese regime. She also urge Ragiv Ghandi to clear the Tamils out of southern India on that trip. In April 1984 Tamil refugees were being allowed to stay, without any status admitted. But now they are being asked to leave.

Thousands have fled to



Tamil population.

'How can the Tory government say that it is 'safe' for Tamils to return?' asks Rajes. 'Have they seen the mass murder? Have they seen the representatives of our community? We are part of the commonwealth.'

'I think it's pure racism. If we were from a white country, such as Poland or Russia, there

India and others to West Germany, Holland and Switzerland. Sri Lanka was a British colony from 1833. Until 1956 English was the official language of Sri Lanka. Britain should be a natural refuge for Tamil victims of this new outbreak of terror. The Tory racists must be forced to let the refugees come here and forced to let them stay.



Photo: GM COOKSON

Defend the NUR Defend ASLEF

THE GOVERNMENT and BR management gave public warning last week that they have targetted the rail unions for their next attack after the miners.

The two measures announced by BR management — one demanding a £200,000 payment from the NUR and ASLEF for January's strike in support of Coalville depot, and the other announcing the end of the closed shop in rail — are open provocations. So is the sending by BR management of a letter to every rail workers informing them it is no longer a condition of employment to belong to a union.

The threat to take the NUR and ASLEF to court unless they 'voluntarily' pay the £200,000, and the

By Dick Carter

threat of further court action over April's rail strike in Scotland against the closure of railway workshops, is a further tightening of the screw. It has to be met by a clear promise of industrial action by the rail unions unless BR's threats are withdrawn.

But the NUR and ASLEF leadership are not giving the type of lead which will defeat these attacks. NUR general secretary Jimmy Knapp simply attacked the unilateral ending of the closed shop by BR as 'a stupid industrial relations move that will rebound on them.'

Ray Buckton's statement was still worse. He argued, 'In order to have stability you have got to have good industrial relations, but this attitude seems totally contrary to it.' In other words the danger of BR is that they are threatening stability!

The new round of attacks have in fact been set up by the failure of the rail unions leadership to respond adequately to BR management's previous provocations.

The response to the 17 January strike in support of Coalville was solid from those depots which were called out. But the NUR and ASLEF leadership worked to narrow down the solidarity action to a regional one.

There should have been a national strike called against BR's intimidation at Coalville. Instead, sensing a weakness in the response from the unions' leaderships, BR and the government were encouraged to push on with their attack.

The same result came from the easy acceptance by the NUR and ASLEF of the 1985 pay deal. A continual policy of retreat by the NUR and ASLEF leaderships also served to undermine support for May's tube strike. Each concession has encouraged the government and BR management to go a step further.

Jimmy Knapp con-

tinued the process again with his statement over the threatened fine. He stated that BR proceeding with the fine would 'rule out co-operation with BR over new working measures.' In other words no threat of action was made over either the closed shop or the fine. However Knapp made it clear the NUR would continue negotiations on the management attacks — such as Driver Only Operation, produc-

tivity and the closure of the workshops — provided some 'stability' was restored to the situation.

This line of constant retreat is disastrous — and has already been proved to be disastrous. It has to be broken with, and a clear policy of industrial action to defend the NUR and ASLEF embarked on. Without that there is a danger Thatcher will chalk up another victory in her assault on the unions.

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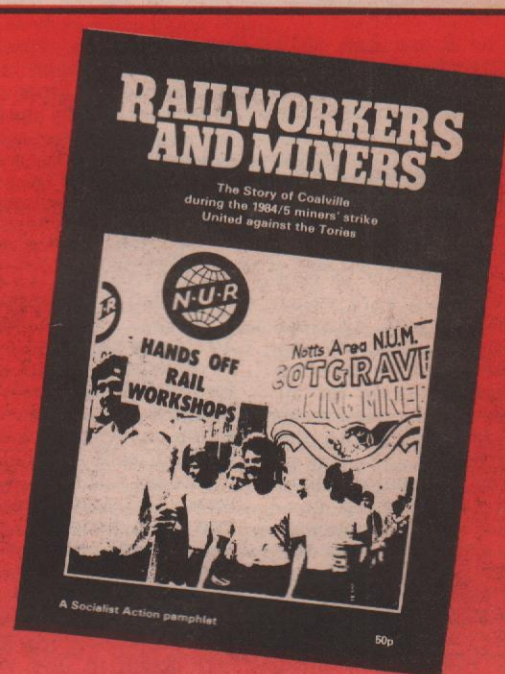
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Socialist Action supporters in rail have produced a pamphlet called 'Railworkers and Miners', the story of Coalville during the 1984/5 miners' strike. It costs 50 pence per copy and is available from Socialist Action, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP.