

# A Socialist ACTION

THE GOVERNMENT, the NCB, and the scabs within the miners union suffered a severe defeat on the first day of the NUM conference. Delegates voted overwhelmingly to endorse 'all actions' of the executive which led to the national strike. The Nottinghamshire amendment to condemn the executive failed even to get a seconder.

In his presidential speech Arthur Scargill called for a future Labour government to release and reinstate all sacked and imprisoned miners. Scargill's speech thereby gave clear backing to the second step forward for the NUM last week — the publication of the Amnesty Bill being proposed by the Campaign Group of MPs — this proposes, in addition to reinstatement and release, that compensation will be paid for fines and loss of earnings both to the union and to individuals. This excellent initiative has already been condemned by Neil Kinnock.

The support given to the NUM executive, and the decisions taken by the area delegations, means that the bulk of the rule changes will be endorsed by conference. Media hopes of a bitterly divided union turning on the Scargill wing of the leadership of the NUM have been dashed. The leadership's determination to stand by the victimised miners will undoubtedly help prepare the way for future action in defence of the industry.

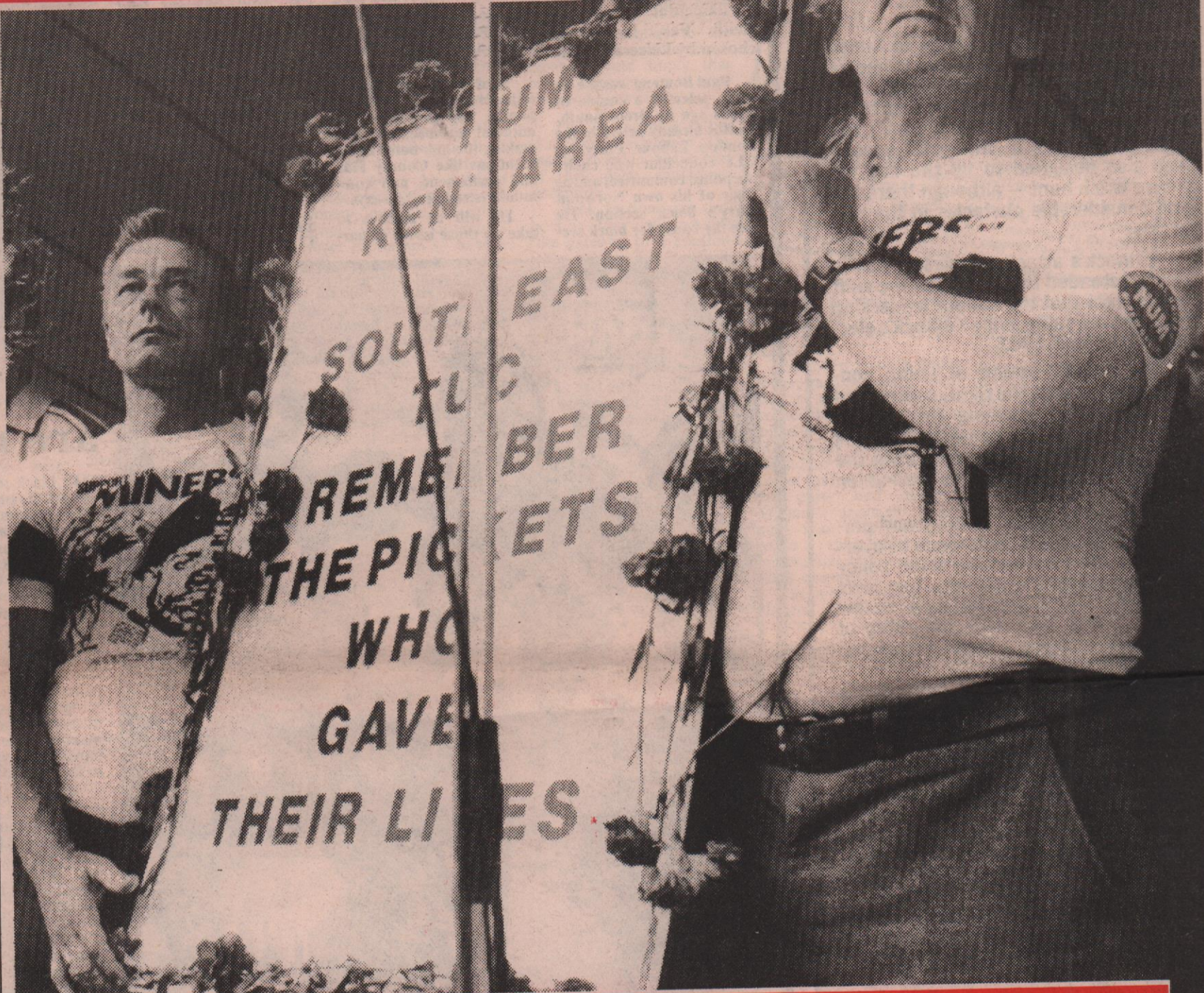
Arthur Scargill spelt out his rejection of the critics on the 'left' who have attacked the tactics used in the strike. The strike did not see a failure of mass picketing, but a failure to carry out sufficient mass picketing. Neither was a ballot the issue: by the time of the April 84 conference 80 per cent of the membership was on strike. While Scargill did not deal with them by name these were clear attacks on Neil Kinnock's supporters and on the Communist Party.

While there should be no underestimation of the difficulties facing the NUM in meeting the attacks of the Coal Board and government it is also clear that the Scargill wing of the NUM is determined to rebuild the strength of the union. It continues to base itself on the young militants who came forward in the strike. This is the base that has enabled Scargill to deal not only with the right but with critics on the left — such as South Wales which wishes to move the union to the right.

But one crucial rule change is almost certain to be defeated. That is the one giving associate membership to the Womens Support Groups. While Arthur Scargill has declared himself firmly in favour of this proposal there are many on the left who will not support it.

This attack on the role of women in the strike is being hidden behind a banner of 'unity'. In reality it reflects the backwardness and divisiveness of the right wing and the Communist Party — who are in open alliance on this question. This rejection of associate membership is a bitter blow and the entire left must fight against it and campaign to reverse this decision. It is in clear contradiction to the other decisions of the conference which are victories for those who recognise that the class struggle represents the only way forward for the miners and the working class.

In addition to building the huge campaign for amnesty that is now possible the fight must be kept up to win associate membership for the Womens Support Groups.



## Amnesty for

## all victimised

## miners!

# Socialist ACTION

## The union conferences

NEIL KINNOCK'S speech to the TGWU conference was widely presented as an attack on the hard left. It was in fact a cover for his own retreat to the right.

Despite Kinnock's advice to 'those whose concern is the outer fringe of politics' to 'take themselves off Labour's left wing is too strong to be easily removed — however much the right may desire it. Kinnock's speech was also designed to fly the flag for future witch hunt — although there are still considerable obstacles in the way of this.

Kinnock's attack on the left was in reality intended to strengthen the shift to the right that the Labour leadership has been pursuing since Kinnock's election in October 1983.

The current round of union conferences has seen the right, centre, and Kinnockite 'left' pushing through, in many cases against considerable rank and file resistance, a retreat from the struggle against the Tories' anti-union laws.

Knapp intervened directly and personally in the NUR conference to overturn a reaffirmation of the union policy opposing complying with the Tory laws on ballots. Knapp secured by a narrow margin a vote 'that it be the policy of this union to have a ballot before national strike action.'

This is an important retreat. As Hamilton Connolly, a senior steward at BREL's Springburn works pointed out, the decision makes the fight against closure of BREL workshops much more difficult. It turns away from a policy of allowing those most directly threatened to lead the way in the fight for national action. Had this policy been adopted by the NUM the 12 month strike would never have happened.

In addition both the NUR and ASLEF are to get involved in negotiations with BR over the demands for £200,000 compensation for the one-day strike.

NALGO conference saw gains for the right on the union executive, and a retreat on the policy of total opposition to abolition of the Metropolitan counties and GLC. The UCW conference saw the executive push through support for a massive productivity deal.

On the right of the party Alisdair Graham has proposed that a future Labour government should maintain important aspects of the Tories anti-union laws.

This line is not having it all its own way. The TGWU has rejected incomes policy and reaffirmed its opposition to the anti-union laws. Todd's re-election, the support for political funds and the rise of Labour in the polls, indicate clearly that the mood of the membership is not for wholesale retreat. It is the Knapps and Bucktons, and those who are trying to form a bloc with Kinnock, who are pushing this retreat through.

The stand taken by the Campaign Group in support of the victimised miners and by Scargill on the issues facing the NUM are the correct response to this retreat. It is on such moves, and the major resistance to the retreat by the union executives that the left must build the fightback.

WHILE THE LABOUR Party leadership are fighting a determined battle to head off the advance of black sections within the party, activists in the constituencies are showing in practice their commitment to supporting black members' rights to self-organisation and better representation. Black sections are springing up — and being recognised — in constituency after constituency. And just recently the third black parliamentary candidate, Keith Vas, has been chosen by Leicester East.

Paul Boateng was the second, selected a couple of weeks ago by Brent South. Paul is already active in the London Labour Party, as GLC councillor who chairs the police committee, and as chair of his own Norwood party's black section. He sees the battle for black sec-

tions, and the selection of black MPs, as an extension of the fight black activists have been waging for better representation in local government based on closer links between Labour councils and the black communities they represent.

A lawyer in a practice that specialises in civil liberties cases, especially those of the black community, he describes his work as: 'geared to using the law as an instrument of community defence — recognising the class nature of the law and recognising, as the labour movement must, that the law has always been used as a weapon against working class people. Anyone who believes it isn't is living in cloud-cuckoo land.

Paul relates this to his objectives as MP for Brent South. 'My political commitment has been towards making the link between institutions like County Hall and parliament, and community struggles,' he says.

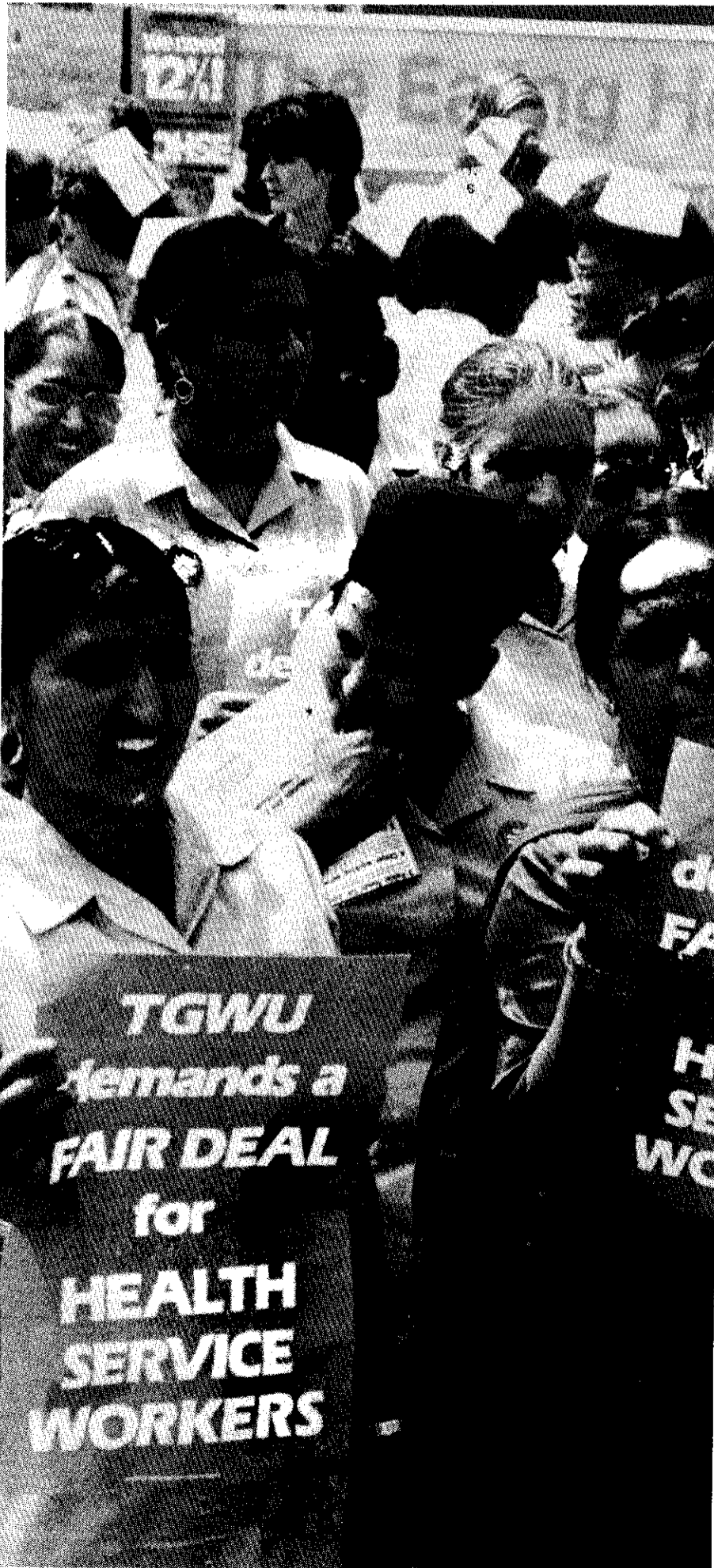
He will be anxious to take up those issues of par-

ticular concern to his Brent constituents. With a high proportion of Irish people, and the biggest black community in London, that means 'the reunification of Ireland is a key issue', and that the 'difficult areas for Labour's leadership, the issue of women and blacks' won't be forgotten.

He describes his 'overall parliamentary job' as making sure that 'those dimensions of policy that may not be obvious to the leadership or even to the whole of the Parliamentary Labour Party' are taken up. 'That means campaigns in parliament alongside the campaigns that already exist within the community'.

Like today's generation of black Party activists in London, Paul is much influenced by the alliance between Labour and black people that the GLC has fought to build. And influenced too by the impressive links forged with the NUM during the 12 month historic strike.

PAUL BOATENG discussed this with CAROL TURNER.



# The C



Photos: GRAHAM COOKSON

## Black Section struggles are making the link

THE black section struggle has put the issue of race and representation high on everybody's agenda. That's important.

Brent has been tackling this problem for many years now. There was a grass roots struggle in Brent, organised by black activists with the support of white activists, for black councillors, to make sure that the policies of the party recognised the potential that existed in the black communities. The black section movement has brought that to the fore nationally.

What is important to recognise — and, in my view, is all too often forgotten in the discussion about black sections — is that it's not simply about more black faces in town halls and parliament, on school governing bodies and so on. It's also about policy: getting the policy of the party changed so that it reflects the multi-racial nature of our society, and black people have an opportunity to make a policy contribution. It's about broadening the membership base of the party and mobilising within the black community on behalf of the party.

So we mustn't get hung up on the question of representation of black sections, important though it is. Policy is the battle. Representation without policy is futile.

At the end of the day it's no use having black faces in parliament or anywhere else, if the party is not able to deliver policies that are relevant to black people, to women, to working people. It means organisation and having a constitution that enables us to focus on this issue, but it also means support from both black and white members of the party for those policies.

The party is challenged by the concept of black autonomy, just as it is challenged by the concept of women's autonomy. There are sections of the party's leadership who see themselves 'lumbered' with women's autonomy. Very many of the people who are now vehemently opposed to black sections, if the truth be known, are also opposed

to women's sections.

But the Labour Party from its inception has recognised the right of autonomous organisation. It recognised it for cooperators, for trade unions, so it's a logical extension of that to recognise it for black people.

There is absolutely nothing inconsistent between the right to organise autonomously and unified action. On the contrary, one leads to the other. Because the party becomes that much more acceptable a vehicle, and that much more rich if it's able to give expression to black people, women and so on.

It's a completely false analysis that says a recognition of sectional interest is somehow divisive. It isn't. I stand four square behind the right of black people to organise autonomously within the party. That is the best way I know of enriching and broadening the base of the party.

The alliance between Kinnock and the *Militant*, against black sections, is a strange and unholy one based on a fundamental misconception as to what black sections are about.

Look at the experience of Labour in local government. We had many of the same arguments about apartheid and about separate development when we began to identify race and ethnicity as aspects of local government deserving special attention and separate resources, as we now hear levelled against black sections.

When we first started talking about ethnic minorities committees, about consulting the black community as a community about aspects of local government, this was regarded as divisive. It was regarded as 'patronising', to use a word that Kinnock is often quoted as using in relation to the creation of black sections.

The very reverse has proved to be true. There never has been a greater identity between the Labour Party, the black community and local government than there is now. The support of the

# Case for Black Sections



Collection for miners at Notting Hill Carnival.

## What's behind the Militant argument?

**THE VIEWS of the Militant tendency on the question of racial oppression in general, and Labour Party black sections in particular, are well-known by now. What is more surprising perhaps is that they have the nerve, after the Liverpool council fiasco with the black caucus, to spell them out for Labour Party conference. But that is exactly what their anti-black section resolution does.**

*Militant's* resolution stinks of the sort of British chauvinism that is rife in the labour movement. The sort that ensures the Labour Party and the trade unions are controlled by the predominantly white-male hierarchy that has always existed and that never operates with the interests of uniting a movement divided by race and sex in mind. The sort, in fact, that plays into the hands of the Tory bosses who welcome a labour bureaucracy doing their own divide-and-rule dirty work for them.

Black people, say *Militant*, will only join the Labour Party if they are convinced it will carry out policies that tackle the problems they face. Quite true. But, in a white-dominated party, how should black people make sure this happens? The *Militant* answer is simple: rely on the whites who think they're socialist

concessions to the ideology of British imperialism.

They argue the same basic case against black self-organisation and self-activity that they argued against women: 'wait till the revolution, dear, then we'll make sure you're alright'.

As ever, they completely fail to take up the not-insignificant question of how to bridge the gap between what exists and where we want to be. That gap simply won't be bridged unless black people — and women, and all the other people who are oppressed under capitalism — have a real say in how to change society in their favour.

The interests of the working class are objectively opposed to the interests of capital. There are infinitely more working class people in an advanced capitalist country like Britain than there are ruling class. One of the reasons why this sheer weight of numbers doesn't change things is because the ruling class have been extremely effective in dividing the working class, persuading them that they are in competition with each other for the resources of society.

Racism is a powerful tool in capitalism's armoury — but it's powerful because sections of the white working class are persuaded, in a word are racist — and no amount of moral exhortation by self-righteous sects changes the facts.

Only by united action between black and white

an infinitely better position to fight for than any white so-called socialist who argues otherwise.

By arguing that 'divisions along racial lines should never be allowed to enter the labour movement', *Militant* square the circle. They simultaneously ignore the fact that such divisions do exist — are, in fact, fundamental to the disunity of the labour movement — and imply that black demands are what creates the divisions.

This is nothing other than a racist argument. The case is proved in the last part of their party conference resolution.

Black sections are out, because they will provide 'the gateway to a comfortable career for a few'. Parliament and town halls have, for decades, provided a comfortable career for white men — if women and black careerists get in on the act then the worst you can say is that nothing changes.

In fact black sections are not that at all. They are a way of ensuring that Labour's black representatives are accountable.

If black people believe that black representatives will improve their national and local lot, and that they can have a say in electing them by participating in the Labour Party and its caucus of black members, then they are going to make damn sure that the black representatives they fight to elect

### The Militant resolution:

*This Conference welcomes the initiatives of the NEC to investigate the reasons for lack of active participation of black people in the Labour Party, by the working party being set up. But we view the working party's preoccupation with constitutional arrangements and disregard for political issues with disappointment. Black workers (and all workers) will only join the Labour party when they are convinced that it is committed to policies that will tackle mass unemployment, bad housing, poor education and inadequate health care and social services which they suffer.*

*Racism is a product of capitalism, which is used as a tool to divide workers, diverting their attention from the real enemy, the Tories and the system which they maintain. Divisions along racial lines should never be allowed to enter the labour movement. Racism can only be defeated by a united campaign by black and white workers mobilised together around socialist policies.*

*Black sections may provide the gateway to a comfortable career for a few, but for the mass of black workers outside the party their lives remain unchanged unless the Labour Party takes up socialist policies, campaigning on them and implementing them when next in government.*

*We therefore oppose the setting up of formal black committees, involving black and white members of the party, and call upon the party to give full support to trade unions involved in action against racist bosses.*

stick to the policies they elected them on. The argument is the same as for reselection.

Far from being a home for aspirant careerists, black sections will ensure the opposite: that people who genuinely reflect the demands of the black community are elected to the positions of power and control within the party and outside. *Militant's* argument is no more than a demand that white careerists have preferential treatment over black careerists.

Given their views on the 'danger' of black sections, it's not surprising that *Mili-*

*tant* advocate a false alternative: anti-racist committees, composed of black and white members, devoid of any teeth. *Militant* support the politics of the ghetto, so why not advocate setting one up specially for the uppity black activists in the Labour Party?

If and when this resolution gets to party conference in October, it is not simply the duty of every socialist in the party to throw it out. They must also call it what it is: another racist argument, another means of institutionalising the racism that is already so rife in the Labour Party.

les

black community against abolition and rate-capping — as well as the support the black community gave to the miners' dispute — has been enhanced by the fact that the Labour Party in terms of local government is perceived as having identified itself with the struggle of blacks.

As for *Militant*, their handling of the situation in Liverpool towards their own black community is a classic example of the way they misunderstand it. They really aren't in a position to lecture black or white activists about black sections, about the unity of the working class in Liverpool by their attitude on race. We have established real alliances with the workers in the areas where our view of black sections and our view of local government prevails.

Kinnock and *Militant* have lessons to learn from local government and the work of black and white activists in this area. And *Militant* also have lessons to learn in terms of effectively mobilising black and white people together.

One of the great gains of the miners' strike was the links that were established in the course of that strike between blacks and miners, to take just one example. They arose from the experiences of the mining community when they came to places like London and Birmingham canvassing support. Miners found that black people gave, and gave generously.

Of course the black community identified with the miners' struggle, particularly on policing. They saw the same techniques that had been used against them used against the miners: the same brutality, the same complete disregard for civil liberties. It struck a chord, as did the prospect of mass unemployment for the miners.

Black people know what it's like to have communities where there's no chance of kids getting a job. That describes our communities. They knew instinctively

what the miners were fighting for.

But also there was a willingness on the part of the miners to learn from the experience of the black community, in terms for example of organising community defence. They were prepared to learn lessons from the experience of the black community, and they were prepared to say they had a lot to learn. That's something for a white working class organisation, to look to blacks for leadership.

It didn't end there. The influence of miners and the mining community was brought to bear on apartheid in South Africa, when the miners saw that their livelihood were being undercut by the import of South African coal. White miners have been over to South Africa to talk to black miners, to tell of their experiences.

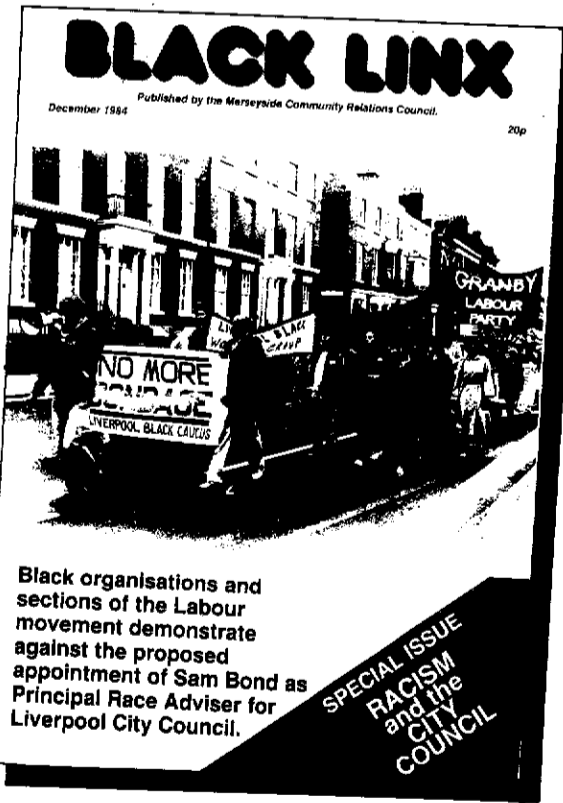
There are links that have been developing during the strike that aren't going to go away. It's noticeable that the only vote in support of black sections from a major union at last year's Labour Party conference came from the miners' union.

Lessons have been learned, and it will pay dividends for the movement generally.

#### STOP PRESS

**LEICESTER** East joined two other Labour Parties — Lewisham East and Brent South — a week or so ago by selecting Labour's third black candidate to fight the next general election. Keith Vaz is a London activist and a member of the black section's national committee.

He successfully beat local competition, including city council leader, Peter Soulsby. One delegate described Keith, quite simply as 'the most competent and able candidate'. Leicester East has yet to establish a local black section with representation on the general committee.



and who think they know what's best for black people!

Racism, a product of capitalism, is used as a means of dividing the working class and diverting attention from the main enemy, they say. Yes. But let's have just a tiny bit of analysis about how this operates.

Such analysis scares the pants off groupings like the *Militant* — because it would force them to begin to face up to their own racism, based on their own political

workers, will the working class learn in practice that their interests are in fact the same. This is what the NUM learned during the course of its 12-month long strike, when black people were among the strongest supporters of the strike.

But the condition for such action can never be that black people tag along with white demands. They experience oppression which is specific to the colour of their skin. They want that taken into account, and they know that they are in



# Amnesty campaign launched



The photos on this page are taken from *Unfinished Business* which can be obtained at £3.00 (plus 34p p&p) from the Acorn Press, 240 Water Street, Accrington, Lancashire BB5 6QP. Limited edition only — order now.

The letter circulated jointly by the Campaign group of MP's and the National Union of Mineworkers in defence of 'Sacked and Jailed Miners' can be used widely in the labour movement to really get a NATIONAL amnesty campaign off the ground.

It is just what is needed to really begin to mobilise broad forces to rally behind the NUM's call for a general amnesty for all those involved.

By Maureen Lansbury

The letter points out that 'scores of miners and some supporters remain in prison following the NUM dispute. The men, from virtually every coalfield in Britain, are enduring prison sentences ranging from months to years. *'Of key importance is the need to maintain maximum outside contact so that their spirits and their families are not allowed to sink.'*

Arthur Scargill, Peter Heathfield and Mick McGahey on the other side of the leaflet point out that 700 miners have been sacked by the National Coal Board. 'Despite all reasonable arguments Ian McGregor refuses to reinstate them. Most have been dismissed for trivial or no offences and the majority are union branch officials whose crime was to fight for jobs and mining communities.'

Their statement 'welcomes the assistance of the Campaign Group of Labour MP's in bringing this message to you.' The list of proposed initiatives at the end of the leaflet urges supporters to make donations, organise benefits and support meetings; pass resolutions; write to all Labour MP's; visit the families of miners; ask MP's to write to jailed miners; write to local newspapers trade union journals in support of victimised miners.

Above all to 'campaign through trade union, TUC and Labour Party conferences to commit the next Labour Government to a General Amnesty, reinstatement and compensation to all miners sacked because of their activities in the 'dispute'.

Copies available from Alan Meale, Secretary, The Campaign Group of MP's, House of Commons, London WC1.

NAME	SENTENCE—PRISON/CENTRE
Ian Kestle	2½ years-Walford
Brian Little	2 years
Steven Lowe	2 years-Walton
John Little	2 years
Gordon Miller	6 months-Legford
David Mason	2½ years-Millers Park
Patrick McHale	Remand-Murder
Gary Mould	2 years-Youth Custody
Peter Newbold	60 days-Featherstone
Dennis Pennington	3 months-Kirkham
Raymond Patterson	2 years-Walton
Peter Pearson	2½ years-Sudbury
Mark Rochester	2 years
George Richardson	4 months-Wetherby
Stuart Stephenson	4 months
Ian Stephenson	2 years-Youth Custody
Ron Staniland	6 months-Ranby
Dale Scofield	4 months-Arnsley
Michael Southwell	2½ years-Cardiff
Russell Shankland	Cardiff
Phillip Strland	2½ years-Millers Park
Chris Tazey	3 years-Chelmsford
Billy Taylor	Featherstone
Kevia Wyville	9 months-Ranby
Steven Wakefield	Remand-Lincoln
Joseph William Smith	2½ years
William Bannister	2 years-Walton
Kevin Beal	2½ years-Sudbury
Andre Bradley	9 months-Sudbury
Paul Brothwell	12 months-Leicester
Jeffrey Budworth	6 months-Durham
Guy Bennett	3 months
Glen Black	2 years
Peter Cooper	6 months-Ranby
John Elic	60 days-Featherstone
A. Edwards	4 months-Lincoln
Paul Foster	12 months-Stafford
Terry French	5 years-Wandsworth
Mark Glare	60 days-Featherstone
Kevin Green	2 years
Stanley Gregory	18 months-Lincoln
Victor Gregory	18 months-Lincoln
Steven Gregory	18 months-Lincoln
Gary Steven Hopper	4 months
Kevin Hughes	2 years
Colin Hardisty	Remand-Murder
Christopher Hatfield	15 months
Dean Hancock	Cardiff
Peter Hurst	6 months-Haverigg
David Jones	Millan
Michael Jones	2 years-Walton
Paul Jones	2½ years-Millers Park
Gary Kristerson	2 years

In many cases the prison authorities are stopping mail getting through. Two ways round the problem are a) to write your letter to the prison governor asking him to pass the letter on b) write as though you know the person concerned. If your mail still fails to go through consult your local NUM area.

**MINERS SOLIDARITY FUND, St James House, Vicar Lane, Sheffield. Cheques and postal orders made payable to Miners Solidarity Fund, Co-op Bank, Sheffield Branch, Account No 300000009. Sorting code 08-90-75.**

## Back the NUM rule-change on women



**THE FIGHT** for amnesty for sacked and imprisoned miners has received a welcome boost with the decision by the NUM and the Campaign Group of MPs to launch a 'Solidarity with Victimised Miners' campaign. An appeal is to be circulated to all labour movement bodies asking them to campaign in support of victimised miners, and to raise money for the families. Individuals and organisations will be asked to contribute to the Miners Solidarity Fund.

A central aspect of the campaign will be a fight to commit the next Labour government to a general amnesty, re-instatement and compensation for all miners sacked for their activity in the dispute. This aspect of the campaign will mean confronting the scabbing role of Kinnock on this question. The centre and right of the party will not wish to abandon their defence of the 'rule of law' and face the hostility of the media.

The ruling class is determined that the victimisations shall stand as an example to the whole labour movement. Following the refusal of the TUC to give financial support to the NUM the raising of

money for the families is extremely important. Many of the support groups, and Women Against Pit Closures have continued to raise money and to campaign on this issue. The work will now be given a much clearer national focus. It will be

By Pat Hickey

possible to take the issue to every trade union and Labour Party branch in the country in the run-up to the TUC and Labour Party conferences.

The aim should be to build major meetings and lobbies at these events, to force labour leaders to support. More than 2,500

leaflets have been sent to CLPs, trades councils, and trade unions. They contain a statement by the Campaign Group, as well as a letter from Scargill, Heathfield and McGahey, and it names all of the imprisoned miners. The Campaign Group has over 1,000 requests for speakers — and will respond to all efforts to publicise and build support for the fight.

The rally at party conference this year will be given over to this issue. It is vital that local and regional rallies and meetings are organised as soon as possible. SERTUC and Kent NUM have organised a rally on 18 July around the demands for reinstatement and release of imprisoned miners, which will be addressed by Arthur Scargill.

## Euston

SERTUC is printing a large number of leaflets and posters to build the rally which is at Friends Meeting House, Euston Road. It is essential that this rally be built as widely as possible in the London Labour movement, as it should provide an opportunity to get a widely based and active campaign off the ground. Also planned by SERTUC and Kent is a petition and a lobby of Parliament in October.

Their support groups which played such a vital role in the strike can play an equally important role in this campaign. The aim must be to keep the issue of victimisations alive and in front of the movement. There is wide opposition to the victimisations and this pressure must be focussed on the fight to commit the Labour Party leadership to reinstatement and amnesty.

**BEA CAMPBELL** must have had a shock when she heard that South Wales NUM were opposing the rule change that would give women associate membership in the union.

She had projected the South Wales leadership, in her articles after the strike, as less 'macho' and more sympathetic to the demands of women that the dreadful Arthur Scargill.

But Arthur Scargill has stuck to the promises made by the executive to women during the strike and will be proposing that the conference adopts the clause that would allow women to become 'an associate member who shall not be eligible to vote receive benefit, attend meetings (except by invitation) nor hold any specific post in the unions'.

brought new forces into play. Everyone said the women did a wonderful job. It was that was true when the strike was on then we should build on that and go forward. We should recognise the organisations of the women as a positive, progressive development that should be supported.'

This is why it is vital that the left backs this rule change in Sheffield this coming week. It was only possible to sustain the strike for as long as it was because of the commitment and enthusiasm of the women's support groups who organised the community as in a war operation to keep everyone fed and mobilised behind the battle against pit closures.

The courage of the women on the picket lines, confronting the police for the first time in their lives should not be forgotten. Nor should the dedication of women be forgotten, who had never previously been actively involved in politics, to defend their communities and the National Union of Mineworkers, whatever the press threw at them.

Kent NUM has stood firm over the issue of women's involvement in the union. Both at the beginning of the strike and now will defend the position of the national executive.

The women's support groups in this area have been allowed to send representatives to branch meetings and were allowed to keep their own funds.

This has meant that the women's organisation and confidence has increased at every stage. Large numbers of women have decided to join the Labour Party although the local party officials in the area seem to have been reluctant to let them in — fearing their socialist ideas, according to Sue Bence, the secretary of Ayelsham Women's Support Group.

Jack Collins, Secretary of Kent NUM puts it this way. 'We think the strike

To vote against this rule change would deny this contribution. But it would do more than that. It would mean that women everywhere would be encouraged to distrust the labour movement.

The miners' strike challenged the rotten class collaborationist traditions of the British labour leaders. The strike also challenged those traditions by entering into an alliance with women in their communities and outside. To go back on the commitment they gave to give women associate membership of the union when the strike was over would be a betrayal not only of women but of the working class as a whole.

## Jobs Massacre

**THE NCB** has decided to bypass the unions on the review procedure and to unilaterally impose the criterion of 'economic', as well as imposing an 'independent' review body consisting of one person. This decision goes against even the very limited agreement that was given to NACODS in October last year.

That agreement was clearly intended only to prevent NACODS joining the strike, and the NUM's position that it was not worth the paper it was written on has been proved correct. It is, unfortunately, the NUM that will pay the heaviest price for NACODS cowardice.

The NCB has announced 16,000 redundancies since the end of the strike, which, with the 4000 announced before the strike began, brings the total job loss in this round of closures to 20,000. MacGregor and his deputy James Cowan have both rubbed home the Boards intention to continue to close pits, in order to achieve 'a high-volume low-cost industry consistent with market requirements'.

What this means is that the Board's medium term aim is for up to 70,000 redundancies, as Scargill has argued all along, with the eventual aim of privatisation. The task facing the left in the NUM is rebuilding the strength of the union to challenge this plan.

# Stop the Moral Right

**THREE THOUSAND** people marched from Lincoln's Inn Fields to Jubilee Gardens on 23 June calling on the Law Lords to reverse the Gillick ruling which makes it illegal to give advice on contraception and abortion to under 16's without parental consent.

The appeal, which began in the Lords last Tuesday, is being made by the Department of Health and Security against Victoria Gillick.

Gillick won her case last December in the High Court by challenging the DHSS guidelines on counselling with regard to young people, which urged parental involvement in normal circumstances but recognised that there were exceptional circumstances where this decision should be made by the doctor alone.

This ruling made it illegal for doctors to give advice or treatment on contraception or abortion and for schools to do the same without parental consent. Whether or not it is illegal to give information, like sex education, is still ambiguous.

The presence of a large number of young people — the ruling affects young men's access to contraception as well as young women's right to choose — behind the NUS banner, Young Socialist banners and YCND banners at the front or behind far left banners at the back, made

it clear who would be leading the fight against the values of Victoria Gillick.

Taken with the recent changes on housing benefits forcing young people to stay at home and the swinging cuts in benefit for the thousands of youth on the dole it is

By Valerie Coultas

clear that the moral majority is on the offensive, to roll back the gains of the 'permissive society'.

At the centre of this offensive is the need to stabilise the family and defend the British way of life. What was considered crankish 10 years ago is becoming more and more acceptable in Thatcher's Britain.

But as the speaker from the Brook advisory said on the demonstration a very large number of parents would rather their children used contraception than became pregnant and forced into early motherhood. It's the pain and misery of being forced to have children that young people cannot afford and are not ready for

or visit the back street abortionist that has to be understood. 'I had a child at 15 and I don't want my daughter to have to go through what I went through,' was the reaction of many parents according to the speaker.

The so-called 'problems' of under age sex will not go away because of Mrs Gillick's ruling. The myth that 'nice girls' don't was destroyed long ago. Under age sex breaks through class and race barriers and anyway what right have the Victoria Gillick's of this world to tell young people how they should or shouldn't behave?

The National Union of Students representative pointed out that this was International Youth year and young people of 14-16 would be able to vote in the next election. 'We will not forget a government that overturned our rights. We will not allow Mrs Gillick to trample all over us'.

This fighting message needs to be taken into the schools, colleges, workplaces and dole queues to prepare a huge response in six weeks time when the Law Lords announce their decision.

But most crucially the message has to be taken into the Labour Party and the trade unions. The *Mili-*

*tant* led YS National Committee did not implement its conference mandate and build this demonstration in a big way.

Young people have to organise and go out into the labour movement and explain why they should have the right to decide, why banning contraceptive and abortion advice will do nothing to help them and why knowledge and control over their lives is the best way to improve the lives of young people today.

Jo Richardson read out a message from the ACTT supporting the demonstration but Labour Party and Trade Union banners were few and far between.

The left-wing in the trade unions and the Labour Party cannot be complacent because Powell's bill has been defeated as Jo Richardson pointed out. 'If this decision goes against us in the Law Lords we have to campaign for a change in the law. We have to defeat them with resolutions, demonstrations, by lobbying our MP's'.

Even if we win the moral right will look for another loophole in the law or another private members bill. They are on the offensive and the pro-choice movement has to be re-built to be in a position to counter attack.

## Labour Women support Right to Choose

**THE LABOUR** Party women's conference virtually unanimously supported the composite resolutions condemning the Powell Bill and the Gillick ruling. It then went on to set a precedent by suspending standing orders to allow the abortion resolution on the agenda and its amendments to be discussed even though the mover of the resolutions was not present.

The composite resolution on reproductive rights condemned the 44 Labour members who voted for Powell's Bill and called for the National Labour women's committee to formulate a socialist women's policy on reproductive rights and the ending of the conscience vote on these issues.

A note of caution in the debate by a clause which referred to the 'self-imposed standards of scientists' on embryo experimentation were already very strict as people felt that we shouldn't place trust in scientists to act in the best interests of women.

This was to some extent corrected in the resolution from Manchester women's council which called for working class control over the health service and health research.

However the mover of the resolution from the *Militant* stressed that embryo and other research on infertility should be controlled by working class men as well as women — a prospect which I find alarming — women are the only people who can decide for themselves!

The one mistake that conference made was to vote for the Leeds Central, University women's section motion which stated that conference 'does not believe that the high technology approach of in vitro fertilisation is appropriate for most women, nor does it find

By Kath Potter, Manchester Gorton Women's Section

surrogacy an acceptable solution, given that it can be exploitative of other women'.

Instead the resolution urged more money to be placed into research into causes of infertility 'such as pelvic inflammatory disease, contraception, iatrogenic causes and malnutrition'.

This of course was a false choice being offered to conference. High technology research is not appropriate for all women but it is for some and money should be invested in all areas of research.

Surrogacy can be exploitative when controlled by profit-making agencies but if women choose to do this for other women under conditions which

they control it does not have to be exploitative and can give children to women who wish to be mothers.

The debate on abortion very nearly didn't happen as the proposer of the rather weak resolution from Windsor and Maidenhead CLP was not present.

However two good amendments to the resolution made it important that the item appeared on the agenda. The conference voted by a two-thirds majority to be suspend standing orders to allow the resolution to be debated — an unprecedented step showing the concern of women on this issue.

The resolution as amended called for a woman's right to choose by the decriminalisation of abortion, improvement of facilities and an end to the conscience vote.

If the women's conference had the power to influence party policy by sending five resolutions directly to party conference such issues as these would be at the top of the agenda.

As it is women will have to fight to get such resolutions through their constituencies against a host of competing interests or remain at the mercy of the views of male MPs when they ask their 'representatives' in Parliament to vote for a woman's right to choose.



Catholic zealot Victoria Gillick was the focus of many young people's anger on the march a week ago, called by the Coordinating Committee Against the Gillick ruling, outlawing advice on contraception and abortion to under 16's.

The march, starting in Holborn, ended up in Jubilee Gardens where Maggie Stead compared a rally and the audience listened to the music of the Guest Stars.

'Although this ruling affects young people it sets a dangerous precedent for us all' Nathalie from the campaign explained.

Women's organisations, youth groups and left-wing

contingents made up the bulk of the march along with smattering of trade union and Labour Party banners.

Sheila and Ellen Smith (see picture above), sisters-in-law and miners wives from Anstley workshop in Warwickshire, were among the marchers. The workshop faces closure at the end of this year and they had leaflets on the march appealing for donations to be sent to the Women's Support Group to save a Warwickshire striking miner from eviction because the building society will not give him adequate time to clear his mortgage arrears caused by the strike! Contact Ellen Smith on 0203 395972 if you can help.

# Why the Labour Party is wrong on the USSR

**AT THE People's Press Publishing Society meeting in Manchester on 11 June Arthur Scargill spoke in favour of the pro-Moscow state for control of the Morning Star. Moss Evans, Tony Benn and other leading figures of the labour movement have also made statements in favour of the Morning Star against the line of Eurocommunist Marxism Today.**  
**JOHN ROSS looks at why any support for the politics of the Morning Star is a disastrous error for the left wing of the Labour Party.**

THE reason why millions of determined socialists on a world scale still support the line of the pro-Moscow Communist Parties — and why a significant number of militants in the labour movement give a credibility to the politics of the *Morning Star* which they would never give to *Marxism Today* — is easy to understand. No Socialist, or Labour Party anywhere in the world has ever overturned capitalism.

In contrast parties calling themselves Communist have overturned capitalism in the USSR, Yugoslavia, China, Vietnam and other states.

The organisation which overthrew capitalism in Cuba, the 26 July movement, also later became the nucleus of the Cuban Communist Party. The FSLN in Nicaragua was openly inspired by the leadership of the Cuban Communist Party.

Organisations such as the Phillipines Communist Party are leading a major struggle against the Marcos dictatorship in that country. All this gives a prestige to the Communist Parties which is absolutely not possessed by the social democratic and Labour Parties.

## USSR

In addition to the role of various Communist Parties internationally there is the tremendous weight of the USSR itself. Again this is a formidable question for anyone who seriously thinks about the struggle for socialism.

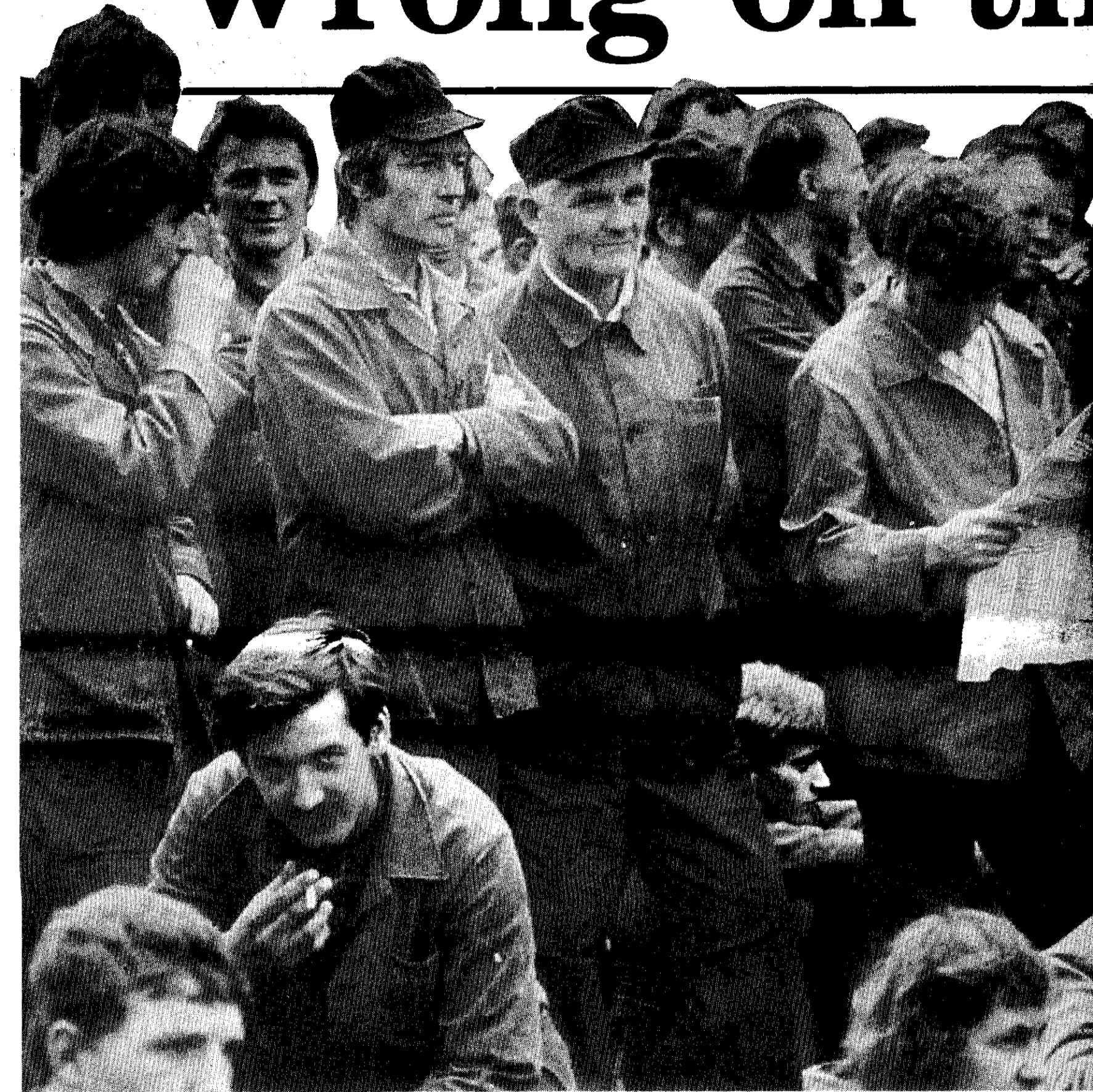
The existence of the USSR is a tremendous weight in the world in the interests of the international working class — no matter what were the horrific crimes carried out by Stalin and his successors. The destruction of the USSR would be a historic disaster for the international working class.

If the USSR had not emerged victorious from World War II we would today be faced with an inter-imperialist nuclear arms race — a threat of a repeat of World War I and World War II only this time fought out with nuclear weapons. If anyone imagines that the world today is a dangerous place just imagine what it would be like if an imperialist Germany, the United States, and Japan were today competing with each other in the building up of nuclear arsenals!

## Nazism

Furthermore each overturn of capitalism has in turn built on, and only been made possible by, the existence of the USSR. It was the victory of the Soviet armies over German Nazism that provided the background against which the Yugoslav Communist Party under Tito could liberate that country. The material aid, and military support, from the USSR also allowed the Chinese state to survive after 1949 when it was directly threatened by the United States.

The joint aid of the Soviet



Polish workers at the Lenin shipyard fight for the creation of Solidarnosc

Union and China allowed Vietnam to win its war of liberation against first the French and then the United States. It is material aid from the USSR which allows both Cuba and Nicaragua to survive. It is similar material and military aid from the Soviet Union which supports many liberation movements around the world.

If you add to all this a more 'militant' tactical line adopted by the *Morning Star* then it is easy to see why many serious people in the labour movement give, or are tempted to give, at least critical support to the *Morning Star* against the openly right wing line of *Marxism Today*.

Nor are all those giving such support blind to the incredible crimes that have been committed in the USSR. Virtually no one

anymore doubts the reality of the mass murders and crimes carried out by Stalin. The invasions of Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968 — together with the imposition of martial law in Poland and the evident economic crisis in Eastern Europe — have severely shaken both the mass support of the Communist Parties and the confidence of their militants in the system they defend.

## Europe

But despite all this there is still a feeling among many that 'after all it is absurd to believe that socialism could be built without mistakes'. People see bureaucracy in Eastern Europe and don't like it, but they fail to see that the bureaucracy of the USSR and Eastern Europe

represents a definite *social layer*, a social caste.

Take the FSLN for example. Every single major founding leader of the FSLN, except Tomas Borge, was killed in the struggle against Somoza. The FSLN waged a twenty year revolutionary struggle against dictatorship and imperialism. Every single leader of the FSLN faced, and many suffered, extreme personal danger, sacrifice and repression. They have nothing personally, or morally, in common with a Brezhnev, Chernenko, Gorbachev, Jaruselski, or the corrupt average bureaucrat of Eastern Europe.

But the attitude many militants have internationally to the Soviet leadership is rather like the famous remark of one US leader on Somoza. 'He may be a bastard but

he's our bastard.' The idea is that naturally the leaders of the USSR and Eastern Europe are guilty of great crimes, they are conservative and even distasteful. But somehow they are *still* part of a force for socialism.

## Solidarnosc

This is also rather directly the attitude of Arthur Scargill. As is well known Scargill had a wrong line on Solidarnosc in Poland. He accused Solidarnosc of interfering in 'politics'. He failed to support Solidarnosc against Jaruselski — which did not, to their great credit, prevent militants of Solidarnosc declaring their support for the NUM during its strike.

Scargill's position on Solidarnosc however *did not* stop him

# Our left is the Morning Star



other international political current.

Other forces in the world have a similar attitude to Scargill's. The revolutionary nationalist Basque organisation ETA, for example, failed to support Solidarnosc. Writers such as Isaac Deutscher and Perry Anderson express the view that while Stalinism is reactionary in innumerable aspects nevertheless the Soviet bureaucracy is still somehow a 'revolutionary' force either inside the USSR, outside the USSR, or both. The problem is that the facts show the exact opposite to be the case.

## World

First no force in the world has ever carried out a socialist revolution on the line of the Soviet bureaucracy. Every party that has overthrown capitalism in a revolutionary struggle had to break with Moscow to do so.

The first major Communist Party to break with the line of the Soviet leadership was the Chinese. In 1935 Mao Tse-Tung took control of the Chinese Communist Party away from Stalin's representatives and began the long struggle which in 1949 finally resulted in the overthrow of capitalism in China.

The second Communist Party to break with Moscow was the Yugoslav. Under the impact of World War II Tito broke the Yugoslav Communist Party from Stalin's line of subordination to the Yugoslav bourgeoisie and overthrew capitalism in his country.

## Vietnam

The Vietnamese Communist Party developed its struggle in the 1950s against France with major support from China — but was

Castro developed his struggle against the Batista dictatorship completely independently of the pro-Moscow forces in Cuba — they



Arthur Scargill

Photo: MARK SALMON

supported his struggle against the regime only at the last minute.

Far from following the line of Moscow aiding a struggle against imperialism it is only by breaking with the Soviet bureaucracy that a successful struggle against capitalism has been carried through. No party following the line of Moscow has ever succeeded in carrying through a revolution against capitalism. Where Moscow has succeeded in imposing its line — as in Spain during the civil war, or in France, Greece and Italy after World War II — the result has been defeat.

The material aid from the USSR is one thing. The political line of the Soviet bureaucracy is quite another.

The contradictions of Arthur Scargill are of course quite explicable. He was a leader of the Young Communist League. He broke with that organisation to move sharply to the left — unlike figures such as Jimmy Reid who broke with the Communist Party to the right. By becoming a leader of the left wing of the Labour Party, and forming alliances with figures such as Tony Benn, Scargill continued to hold positions to the left of the Communist Party — a position of course shown graphically during the miners' strike itself.

## Bureaucracy

But this is why it is a disastrous error for both Arthur Scargill and any section of the Labour left to support the *Morning Star*. Because the *Morning Star* is not a paper 'defending the USSR'. It is a paper defending the Soviet bureaucracy — which is quite a different matter. As we have already shown support for the struggle against capitalism means the necessity to break with the line of Moscow.

It is also why Arthur Scargill was wrong on Solidarnosc. Undoubtedly one of the worst of the crimes of the East European

regimes is to completely discredit the very name of socialism. This helps explain why Solidarnosc did not have the leadership that does, for example, the FSLN in Nicaragua or Sinn Fein in Ireland. Lech Walesa, for example, lagged behind the most advanced developments of Solidarnosc. He also had close ties with the Catholic church.

## Walesa

But this political weakness of its leadership does not alter that the immensely progressive independent trade unions under the control of the workers, reduction of inequality in the society, elimination of the bureaucratic repression were completely and unequivocally to be supported. The problems created for socialism in Poland are those created by the bureaucracy and not by Solidarnosc.

Jaruselski's regime does not represent 'errors' it represents crimes against the working class — and each day his regime goes on will result in a further discrediting of socialism in Poland. The way forward in Poland lies against Jaruselski and not with his regime.

## Scanlon

In Britain the record of the positions of the *Morning Star* is equally clear. During the early 1970s it supported Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon without criticism — which strengthened their position in 1975 when they broke the back of the support for the Labour government with their support for Harold Wilson's incomes policy.

just successfully urged the NUR to comply with the law. Certainly Jimmy Knapp is a step forward



Stalin

over Sid Weighell but he is not a figure of the same type as Arthur Scargill either in words or, more important, actions.

The reality is the same whether in Britain or internationally. In order to fight against capitalism it is necessary to break with the line of Moscow — and not support it.

The Czechoslovak revolutionary socialist Peter Uhl put the right position very well. He said, 'I am an enemy of imperialism and therefore I fight against Stalinism.' It is a phrase every militant in the labour movement should learn by heart.

When a figure like Arthur Scargill, or Tony Benn gives any support to a paper such as the *Morning Star* they are making a



publically and viciously attacking the Jaruselski government for its scabbing role during the miners' strike. Scargill publically read out a letter contemptuously rejecting the Polish government's offer of holidays for miners children as long as Jaruselski continued to send coal to Britain.

But despite this Scargill still spoke out in support of the *Morning Star* — a paper that supports the Polish government. He declared it stood for socialism and peace.

'Jaruselski may be a swine but somehow he is still a swine in our camp.' That is the logic of Arthur Scargill's position — one that does have similarities with say that of the Cuban's or FSLN. This is not surprising as Scargill probably identifies more with Cuba than any

then sabotaged in the 1954 Geneva talks by both the Soviet and Chinese leaderships. The relaunching of the struggle in South Vietnam at the beginning of the 1960s was undertaken independently of, and without any agreement with Moscow.



Tony Benn

The *Morning Star* today refuses to differentiate between Arthur Scargill, who led forward the struggle of the miners in defiance of the law, and Jimmy Knapp who has

disasterous mistake. And those who most supported the miners and most supported their role in that strike have the biggest duty to tell them so.

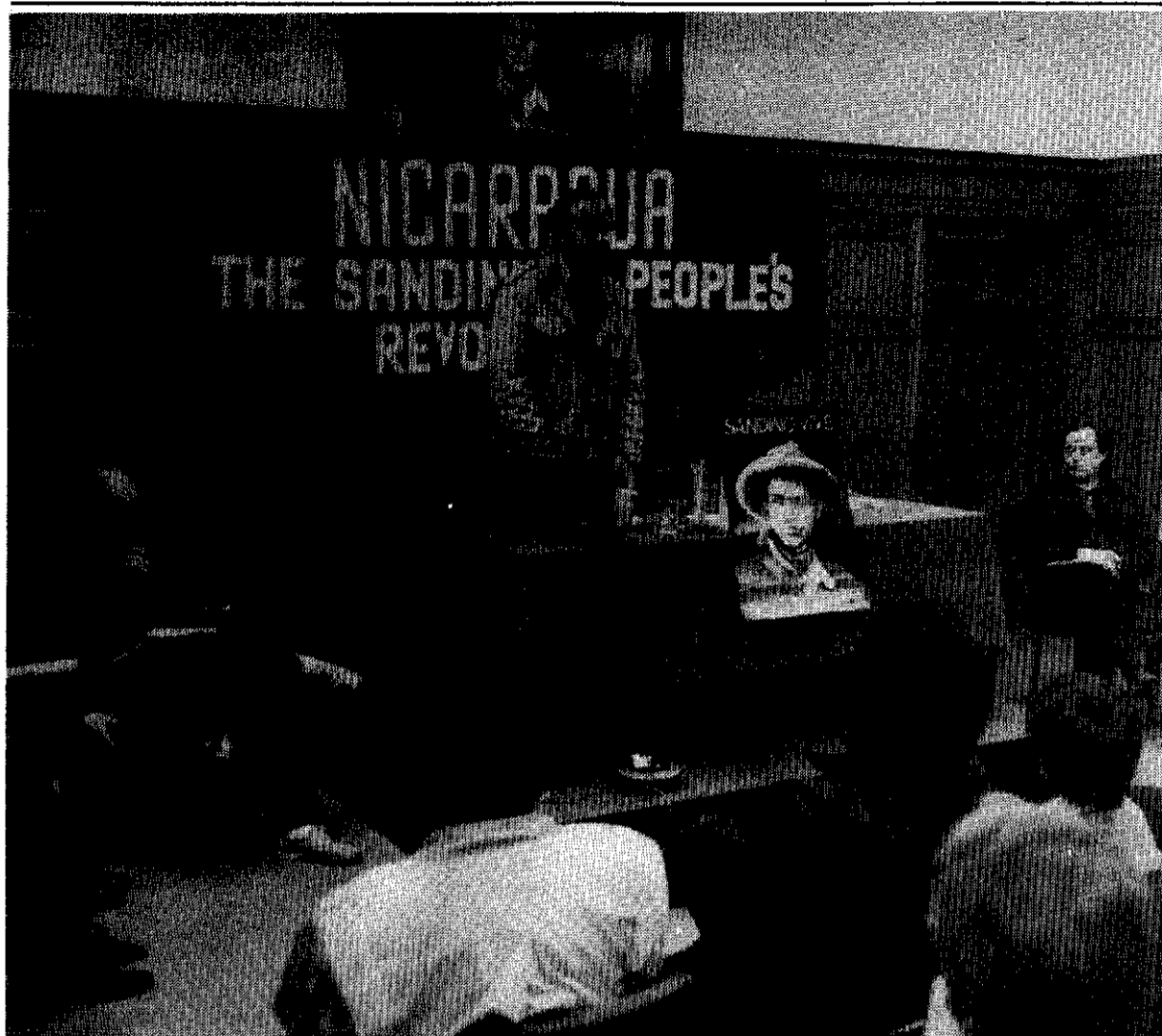


Photo: GM COOKSON

## Nicaragua book launched

'THE INVASION is on,' Senor Francisco d'Escoto, Nicaragua's ambassador to Britain declared to the launch meeting for the new book *Nicaragua — The Sandinista People's Revolution*. D'Escoto explained, 'the US troops are ready, the only thing that is lacking is the word GO.'

The meeting held on Friday 21 June at the Caribbean Centre, London was attended by 130 people. The platform reflected the growing determination to build solidarity for the Nicaraguan revolution. Speakers included Stuart Holland MP, Jack Collins of the Kent NUM, as well as representatives of the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign, Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement, Britain/Cuba Resource Centre, Socialist Action and Pathfinder Press.

Stuart Holland, who has visited Nicaragua three times since the 1979 revolution, forcefully described what he called 'The real popular base' of the Sandinista government. Referring to a speech by Tomas Borge 'Women and the Nicaragua Revolution' Holland argued 'the involvement of the women is for real. It's evident not only in a support role but in the front line, in the militias.'

The message of Jack Collins was summed up by

a banner in the room which read 'NUM — Nicaragua: in the front line.' Collins said, 'During our struggle we received the fraternal greeting of the Nicaraguan people, it was a message from the heart of a revolutionary people, and we wish them well in their struggle.'

### Crime

'The only crime the Nicaraguan people are committing is that the road they are following has been lit by the Cubans before them. The Nicaraguan people, like the Cubans, have committed the crime of trying to run their own society.'

They're guilty of trying to provide education, medical care, and homes for people who've never had them before.

'All these things in Nicaragua are a challenge to the US, to an ideal where money and capital rule supreme and labour is a commodity. Many people believe capital and labour can be reconciled, even many in the working class. There can be no reconciliation.'

Other speakers at the meeting included John Ross from Socialist Action, Brian Lyons from Pathfinder Press, Jessica Datta from the Britain/Cuba Resource Centre and Andy de la Tour from the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign.

## Spanish workers strike back

NEARLY THREE million Spanish workers downed tools for 24 hours last Thursday in the country's first general strike for nine years. Called by the traditionally Communist-led Workers' Commissions in protest against the Socialist government's plans to slash state pension rights, the strike won support that was 'much higher than we hoped for'.

Seventy five per cent of factory workers and 65 per cent of workers in the transport and service sectors were estimated to have joined in. The mines in Asturias and main industrial centres of the Basque country and Catalonia were paralysed. Valencia and the industrial outskirts of Madrid came to a virtual standstill, whilst press and TV coverage was partially blacked out and air traffic severely disrupted.

About 100 arrests were made as workers in the better organised, larger plants mounted mobile pickets to bring out their colleagues in smaller workplaces, then went on to hold protest rallies in the city centres. In one

part of Madrid there were even reports of police firing live ammunition over strikers' heads.

By Stuart Piper

Coming hard on the heels of the mammoth, million-strong demonstrations against NATO membership that welcomed Ronald Reagan to the Spanish State in early May, this 20 June general strike suggests a growth of popular mobilisation beyond anything seen since the last days of Franco's dictatorship. Certainly the strike call had a lot to do with manoeuvres by different factions of the

disintegrating Spanish Communist party in the leadership of the Workers' Commissions.

But none of this, nor the refusal of the rival Socialist-led General Workers' Union (UGT) to back the strike — they called their own diversionary protest two weeks earlier — could detract from the basic fact: hundreds of thousands of workers saw this as a first real chance to join together to resist premier Felipe Gonzalez' 'socialist austerity' policies, policies that in 2½ years have raised unemployment to 23 per cent and cut wage-earners share of the national income by several per cent.

### Warning

Nobody expected the strike to reverse government policies immediately. Its success has to be measured against the

dramatic fall in union membership in recent years, by its ability to generate new confidence amongst rank and file trade unionists (including those in the UGT) and to draw in the support of social movements well beyond the traditional workers' organisations.

It is this growing convergence with the peace movement especially, but also with neighbourhood organisations, unemployed youth, and the national movements which may prove to have been the strike's greatest achievement, posing a real obstacle to the right-wing social democratic plans for modernising capitalism at the expense of the peoples of the Spanish state.

That obstacle should stand as a warning to the like of Kinnoch and Hattersley who would like to follow a similar path in this country.

## Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign

Andy de la Tour, representing the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign, spoke to the meeting:

'Forty per cent of Nicaragua's GNP is now spent on defence. In order to do this, Nicaragua has to take away resources from other areas of the economy. It has had to take, in the last year, some severely drastic measures. It has abandoned food subsidies — the cornerstone of their agricultural policy. It has effectively stopped building new houses, health centres, schools, and many other measures.'

'Such measures bear some resemblance to the austerity policies that the IMF ensures its client states in Latin America carry out. In the Dominican Republic, for example, such measures could lead to riots against the government, but in Nicaragua there is increasing support for the government.'

'Why? Because behind these decisions something more fundamental has happened, because in the final analysis the revolution is not about the specific social reforms. The major conquest of the

revolution is the conquest from fear.

'The people know their government won't negotiate that, they have undertaken a historic change and they know it, they have seized destiny into their own hands'.

'Nicaragua can make no more concessions, they've made them — there's only sovereignty left and that's non-negotiable. The US has also run out of options: the trade embargo won't work, the economy won't collapse, the contras are not gaining a base — there is no doubt invasion is on the agenda.'



## Anti-Irish lies stepped up

THE THATCHER government and press has launched a vicious campaign about an alleged 'seaside bombing campaign' to be launched by the IRA. The aim of this is to whip up hysteria to cover over the major political successes which have been scored by Sinn Fein in the elections in the north of Ireland — and the rise of their activity in the south.

Despite the hysteria however one simple rule will guide finding out the truth about the Thatcher's claims. The old saying 'Who profits?' Who would gain from IRA attacks on seaside resorts, the British government or Sinn Fein? Evidently the British government, not the Irish Republicans.

In reality the IRA and Sinn Fein have continued to show both their military and political successes.

After the district council elections, despite unionist attempts to exclude Sinn Fein representatives, two Republican

chairs of local councils, and one deputy chair, have been elected. In the majority of councils Sinn Fein can now truly represent the nationalist minority for the first time — giving aid in exposing Loyalist privilege and discrimination and defying 'normalisation'.

Militarily the IRA in Crossmaglen came pretty close to knocking an army helicopter out of the sky and recently struck again in the centre of Belfast — defying British claims of normalisation. Even the armed fortresses of RUC stations are not in-

vulnerable — as the attack in Newry showed.

In the 26 county state, despite the reactionary Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act which denies Sinn Fein access to electoral broadcasts, Sinn Fein polled well — gaining 48,000 first preference votes. In county Monaghan Sinn Fein was the second largest party.

Sinn Fein is making major political successes. It has explained a thousand times that it has no quarrel whatever with the British people — simply with any British government that continues to occupy the north of Ireland. It has no interest whatever in attacking British holiday resorts.

Thatcher's is a crude and blatant frame up from beginning to end.



# Gay Liberation in the '80s

**IF YOU want to know more about the lesbian and gay liberation movements in the advanced capitalist and so-called 'communist' countries, and especially if you want to know what Trots say about them, read 'Gay Liberation in the 80's', by Jamie Gough and Mike McNair. (Pluto Press 1985, £4.95)**

The book's main thesis is basically that 'the capacity for homosexual relations is in our nature', (ie as well as heterosexual ones) that the identification of a group of people as 'gay' is specific to capitalist society, and that 'lesbian and gay liberation implies the eventual disappearance of heterosexuals and homosexuals'.

Yes, it's the 'we're all bisexual really' argument, presented convincingly in a Marxist framework. For the book also holds that 'the liberation of gay people can be achieved in building a socialist society' and 'fighting for socialism today, therefore, also means fighting for gay liberation'.

While the authors call for a system of workers power, though, they leave open the question of whether it could be brought about without a 'civil war', or world revolution, which as Trotskyists we must say it couldn't. But in taking up this cowardly retreat on their part, far be it from me to cry 'where is the blueprint for smashing the state tomorrow morning?'

What comes across very clearly is that gay liberation is about the liberation of everyone's sexuality rather than just a group of people who identify as homosexual. That is, that capitalism, through the essentially economic unit of the family, 'fetters sexual capacity as heterosexuality'. Thus 'it is not only gay

people who are affected by gay oppression; but it is gay people who experience this oppression in its sharpest most inescapable form'.

Apart from the odd phrase which could only have been written by two gay men (viz 'women's economic independence from men has a particular importance for lesbians', which implies that most important rejection of men is a sexual one!) the book does include, to a greater or lesser degree, almost all the issues relevant to a discussion of lesbian and gay liberation.

While the discussion with respect to lesbians' situation may lack detail, its essential aspects are there in that at least the authors maintain that the repression of 'gay' sexuality is fundamentally linked to the regulation of women's sexuality through monogamy and the family.

## By Polly Vittorini

Thus they avoid the traditional misogynist gay male theory that gay men are oppressed by the family because they have to marry women! Secondly they point out the role of lesbians as the political, if not numerical vanguard of the womens and gay movements.

However the book is rather a discussion of gay men's liberation rather than anything more representative.

Perhaps as far as the gay men's scene is concerned the family is break-



ing down visibly, but the fight for women's liberation necessitates a more serious view of the constraints still imposed by the family in the here and now.

The authors confuse a (real) historical breakdown of the family with an immediate one: thus their statement that 'the family is obsolescent' comes out looking more glib than it ought.

The whole text of the book is also linked rather unnecessarily in my view to the idea that there is a transhistorical human nature which gives us the 'capacity for homosexual relations'.

This human nature is also supposed to contain a desire for collaboration and a commitment to the future. Whether or not, it is perfectly possible to posit a 'more diffuse human sexuality' without tying it to such prescriptive

notions of human nature.

Also very importantly, Gough and McNair point to the continued existence of the family as the reason for women's and gay oppression in the so-called communist countries.

This, they say is fundamentally due to imperialism and the rise of a bureaucracy with a deepening interest in a 'stable hierarchy of relations'. The argument that gay sexuality is a 'bourgeois perversion' is seen to be only a defence of the ruling caste's stake in the regulation of the people through the family.

In the last section of the book is contained a 'manifesto for action', including the demand for an end to all laws and discrimination against gay people, for women's economic and legal independence from men, and for children to have

the right to determine their own sexual lives.

This section stresses the need for autonomy of the lesbian and gay movement, as well as of autonomy for lesbians, since they will lead the fight against heterosexuality.

The gay movement argue the authors cannot avoid taking sides on other political questions, such as the election of a Tory government or anti-trade union legislation, since these also have direct effects on gay rights.

An essential point that this section ignores is the gains to be made from gay people organising around these other issues, a lesson we have learnt in the past year through the astounding success of Lesbians and Gays Support the Miners.

This is perhaps excusable since the book was finished before the strike

began, but the way was already being shown by the Greenham women.

The book also makes the proposal of a lesbian and gay rights bill, a project which is likely to be taken up by the Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights.

As the authors envisage it such a bill would 'abolish all the principal gay crimes' and 'make discrimination on grounds of sexuality actionable as a civil wrong'.

I would differ with the view that there should be a new crime 'homosexual rape'. The courts would use such a crime against gay people and when the police have so little respect for women reporting rape, it is half-baked to suppose that they will take steps to protect a gay person in the same situation.

The book links the oppression of women's oppression in the family to

the oppression of children. There is an explanation of the false division of the population into 'children' and 'adults' a call for no age of consent and for children's rights to 'divorce' their parents.

What is completely lacking is any discussion of how 'the family' affects black people, since the authors concentrate on a classical Euro-centric explanation of capitalism for white people. A critique from black people in the lesbian and gay movement is badly needed!

I would have preferred a more international perspective — nevertheless 'Gay Liberation in the '80s' is an important addition to the theory of the gay movement, and anyone who is serious about the subject should read it. So should people who aren't serious about the subject — yet!

## From the Land of Milk and Fruit

**THE TIMES of Harvey Milk is an unusual documentary: unusual in its power at the same time to move one to anger and to tears, to pride and to despair. It is a magnificent film and should have lesbians and gay activists, and all socialists scrambling for tickets.**

Harvey Milk made history when he became the first open gay to be elected to San Francisco's Board of Supervisors. When he was assassinated eleven months later (November 1978), tens of thousands of people — lesbians, gay men, black people, chinese, latinos, senior citizens, rank and file trade unionists — marched in a deeply moving candlelight procession to demonstrate their collective grief outside the City Hall.

When the murderer of Milk and Mayor Moscone was given a derisory sentence by an all-white, all-straight jury, those thousands came onto the streets once more outside the City Hall to vent their fury at the injustice of the system — the same injustices against which Harvey Milk had fearlessly fought, a struggle of which he had become both an unquestioned leader, and a potent symbol.

The film eloquently illustrates the circumstances in which Milk became a heroic focus for the struggle not only of lesbian and gay men, but also of

all the downtrodden and oppressed in the untrammelled capitalism of Jimmy Carter's America.

It was a time of the beginnings of what was to

## By Peter Purton

become the 'Moral Majority' and its spearhead was the national campaign led by people such as Anita Bryant to reverse the gains in civil rights made by the lesbian and gay movement.

In a number of cities and states, lesbian and gay rights legislation was overturned. In California, senator Briggs' Proposition 6 aimed to prevent lesbians and gay men — and those who defended them — being teachers.

A massive grass roots campaign, led by Harvey Milk, but involving a coalition which drew in forces from across the spectrum of the oppressed, confronted the Briggs initiative head on and succeeded in turning back the offensive, defeating proposition 6 by 59 per cent to 41 per cent.

The victory was possible because Milk had cam-

paigned for the right of all the oppressed. He had fought openly and without compromise, from his first day in City Hall to his last; and he had fought alongside them, participating in and encouraging their campaigns, not as a distant self-appointed 'leader'.

Black people, senior citizens, women interviewed on the film give personal weight to the overwhelming evidence of this support presented in the

footage of the marches and the funerals.

But Harvey Milk's most important achievement was for the rights of lesbians and gay men (and we should note that the film gives unusual prominence to the position and role of lesbians).

Milk was a product of the San Francisco gay movement; but he gave it also a political focus and a strength and coherence which enabled it to register genuine gains. Most im-

portant, he challenged something against which one cannot legislate for.

His achievement was to give the courage and support to lesbians and gays to come out the closet, not just in San Francisco, but across the USA. But it also began to change the consciousness of other groups of people. An old trade unionist says at the end of the film, most people once thought it was natural and right if fruits and faggots got beaten up by the cops;

it was because of Harvey Milk's campaign that he, and many others had changed their opinion.

A socialist will see at once that Harvey Milk whose politics were radical, not revolutionary, did not have all the right answers. But his weaknesses pale into insignificance beside the achievements of his brief career. The lesbian and gay movements have countless martyrs. Most are anonymous. Harvey

Milk was very definitely not!

See this film at any cost. You will come out with a new sense of pride, of potential power, and above all of purpose — purpose to ensure that we are never again pushed back into the closets.

(The Times of Harvey Milk won an oscar as best documentary in 1984. It is currently showing at the Academy, Oxford St.)

**ON MONDAY 24 June the committal hearing of what is expected to be the major literary trial of the 1980s opened at North London Magistrates Court.**

It involves the nine directors of the London bookshop Gay's The Word who face a staggering array of criminal charges under a century-old customs law of 'conspiracy to import indecent or obscene literature'.

This follows the raid that took place in April 1984 by customs officials as part of 'Operation Tiger' where thousands of books on the way to the bookshop from the United States were denied customs clearance and detained at the ports. Over the next seven months formal seizure notices were issued on a total of 142 titles.

This literature would merit no particular comment if it was for heterosexuals. It is only possible for this to happen because of an anomaly in the law which means that imported books are subject to the 1876 Consolidations Act.

Many of the seized titles are or have been published completely legally in this country. Once again a little known, and largely disused law — as in the Gay News 'blasphemy' case in 1976 — is being wheeled out to attack what lesbians and gays can read. (If you want to know about Gay's The Word Defence Campaign contact Andrew Hodges on 01-286 2084.



# Liverpool stays in the fight

**AS REPORTED** in last weeks Socialist Action, Liverpool city council has agreed a deficit budget which involves a nine per cent rate increase. A proposal by the council's leadership to increase rates by 20 per cent was eventually withdrawn after strong representation by local trade unionists.

Opposition had also come from some of the delegates to the District Labour Party who argued for Liverpool to follow the path of Lambeth and refuse to make a rate at all until the government returned money taken in grant penalties. The new budget conforms with the position taken by the joint shop stewards committee which was one of no cuts, no rent rises and no massive increase in rates.

The budget brings the council into direct conflict with the law. It means individual councillors could face surcharge and disqualification from holding office for five years for setting a rate too low to cover

planned expenditure. There is already the threat of action by the district auditor who has started moves to recover losses due because of the original delay in setting any rate. If successful, that could lead to surcharge and disqualification anyway.

Liverpool leader John Hamilton, in pledging support to council workers taking action, demanded that 'between £30 million and £50million should be passed over to us to provide work and give us the services needed'. Derek Hatton, deputy leader, said councillors fully understood the danger of bankruptcy and disqualification after last Fri-

day week's vote, but claimed that 'the Tory government's policy of destroying jobs and services of the people of Liverpool has left us no choice'.

Last Friday week the Liverpool council joint shop stewards committee, at a meeting attended by over 500 union members, voted to take immediate strike action if any moves are made against individual councillors. It also planned a series of workplace meetings throughout the city's departments and pledged itself to total non-compliance and non-cooperation with the district auditor. This is especially important since a number of trade unionists have been threatened with, and in some cases had imposed on them, a £200 fine for non-cooperation.

Future plans by Liverpool's council workers in-

cluded a mass rally last Wednesday addressed by Lambeth leader Ted Knight and Alex Wood, leader of the newly-elected Labour council in Edinburgh. The aim now is to spread the campaign at a national level both through support among the trade unions and the Labour Party.

As echoed in the views of a number of Lambeth councillors following their refusal to set a rate, there will now need to be greater co-ordination at a national level. This means a common front between Liverpool, Lambeth and newly elected Edinburgh councils. A good example of the type of action that is needed came last Thursday week from manual unions in Lambeth who occupied the town hall in support of the council and against any cuts in jobs and services that are being

threatened. Initiatives of this type, particularly on a national scale, are the best way for local authority workers to defend services and jobs as well as local democracy against the Tory attacks.

Pete Cresswell, Liverpool NALGO, said of the decision by Liverpool council to agree a deficit budget that it was correct because the option of not setting a rate would have been confusing in the present climate. The nine per cent rise in rates is on the borders of legality and is in line with the aim to get through this financial year with a huge deficit.

'We have been preparing for this confrontation for two years now and it is coming to the crunch. We fully anticipate the need to go on strike in defence of the council over the next two weeks. The money runs out shortly and that

will speed up the process. It's clear that it will be a confrontation with the Tory government. It is them we will be dealing with. The court action may well be delayed as a result while they decide what action to take.

'If the action drags on through the summer it could go to Labour Party conference — in fact we have to take it to the conference and make sure that there is full support from the Labour Party for our fight.'

## Lambeth - deadline 3 July?

**LAMBETH COUNCIL** — the only authority yet to set a rate — looks likely to end that stand at its next meeting on 3 July. With the resignation this week of one Labour councillor and the continued 'rebellion' of two others there is no longer a majority for the 'no-rate' position. But the fight is far from over!

On 3 July we will be mobilising our forces outside the council chamber. Inside our councillors will

By G Tucker, Chair Lambeth Labour Local Government Ctee

fight it out to the finish. At the last council meeting two Tories could not be bothered to turn up so we do not rule out the possibility of success. But even if a rate is set we will still carry on fighting.

Firstly, our councillors still face surcharge. Our campaign for their defence has already begun to attract support from across the country.

If an elected Labour council carrying out official Labour policy can be forcibly removed from office that has widespread implications for the whole

labour movement. Labour Party and trade union activists should be raising the cause of Lambeth, together with Liverpool and Edinburgh, as a major priority.

Secondly we still have a duty to the people of Lambeth. We stand by our pledge that no cuts will be made. Our conference and rally on 22 June showed clearly that the support exists for a continued stand.

But the emphasis will have to shift towards the trade unions. If councillors are removed from office the only effective answer will be an all out strike to bring Lambeth to a halt.

● Lobby of the next council meeting 3 July from 6pm outside town hall. Speakers for meetings from 01-582 2955.



## Newham 7 in the dock

**WHEN THE** prosecution case against the Newham 7 ended it had several central questions still unanswered. How could an official police record say 25 whites were fighting when no officer admitted seeing any at all? Did police know of or suspect a link between the hammer attacks on Asians from a silver Granada and the racist Duke of Edinburgh pub?

DC Bonczoszek was the star police witness: he was right at the scene when the Asians 'attacked' the pub. He saw no whites until Asians ran into the pub, after which there was an 'ebb and flow' outside. In his desire to exaggerate the number of Asians he had 30 of them throwing missiles from behind a double-decker bus!

'Bonzo' also revealed the politics underlying this case: 'certain groups in Forest Gate are trying to stir up trouble about racist attacks', including defendants Zafar and Parvaiz Khan. He knew of the hammer attacks that day, but all he did was watch the Wimpy bar where Asian youth gather. However, he did later take Scott Young from the pub to the police station thinking he was one of the Granada attackers.

had been discovered in court beforehand, 'checking on the layout'. Cross-examination showed they had made their notes together without properly recording the fact; the only one who hadn't omitted all the incriminating details. None of the three defendants was properly interviewed about alleged 'offensive weapons' in the car. The only description they supposedly fitted was 'young Asian'.

It was for DS Gillie to explain why the white defendants were at first released without charge. 'Lack of evidence' was the reason even though they

were arrested carrying 7-foot poles. Of course, when Asians were kept overnight it was due to delay! He called the case the 'Khan inquiry' and only charged the whites with affray after his legal advisors told him to. He himself retired very shortly after that, pleading overwork: the judge refused to order release of the Home Office Inspector's report made around that time.

Right at the end was Pavinder Sain, one of the hammer victims the police had failed to trace. He had been kidnapped and only escaped by jumping from the moving Granada. In cross-examination he unexpectedly admitted being present at the final incident and seeing one of his attackers among whites throwing glasses and other missiles from outside the pub. The prosecution were furious: how could Sain be both a 'victim' and part of an 'attacking mob'?

But that is exactly the defence in this case. Asian youth were under attack by whites who at any rate seemed to be based in the Duke of Edinburgh. They went in numbers to warn the racists that they could

defend themselves and to prevent further attacks.

Barrister Rudy Narayan stated the case in a powerful opening. 'This trial is not about gang warfare, it is about racism and fascism. It was unsafe to walk the streets that day if you were Asian'. He quoted the Steven Waldorf case where a pre-emptive strike in self-defence was allowed. Reasonable force can be used in prevention of crime.

The first defendant, Athar Chaudhri, was attacked three times on 7 April, once by Scott Young (for which Chaudhri faces an ABH charge). Police interview notes refer to him admitting going to 'attack the pub' but these he said were fabricated. He said 'We were going to confront the pub, the attacks had to be stopped'.

His first witness was subjected to harassment by whites at the Wimpy earlier that day and said how Chaudhri protected him. In the past he had been viciously stabbed by a white gang and when he reported it to police had been accused and nearly



Harassment and arrest of Asian youth continues outside the Old Bailey

charged with wasting police time.

As the trial continues it will become obvious that no line can be drawn between Asian 'victims' and 'attackers'. Victims are

subject to police abuse as though they were responsible for the attacks that threaten their lives. They look for protection to their own community when necessary.

And one conclusion the police cannot escape: after the Duke of Edinburgh was confronted in this way, the silver Granada was never seen again.

# Why trade unionists should vote "Yes"

**AS UNION AFTER** union returns a 'yes' vote in favour of keeping their political fund, it's been one in the eye for the Tories' efforts to break the links between the Labour Party and the trade unions. Even more worrying for Margaret Thatcher is how the campaign to maintain the funds has prompted a number of new unions to consider setting up a political fund for the first time.

The voting results have astonished the Tories and union leaders alike. To date every union has returned a positive vote. Four ballots have been announced — including the print and steel workers,

furniture makers and postal workers in the Union of Communication Workers.

Ballots are currently being counted, or are underway, in four other unions. They all expect a

'yes' vote.

Yet when the voting started, the executive committees of all of the 40 unions with a fund predicted hard-fought battles with every likelihood of defeat. Why have they been proved wrong?

Above all, it's because workers are fed up to the back teeth with the Tories

**By Doreen Wepler**

and the media meddling in our affairs. The Tories' hypocritical interest in the democracy of our union doesn't sit easy with the dictatorial lines along which their own party is run. And as many union members are asking, why shouldn't we be able to freely fund the Labour Party when big business pumps a steady flow of funds into the Tory and SDP coffers without any controls whatsoever?

This same sentiment helped to increase the margin by which transport union general secretary-elect, Ron Todd, won on his second ballot — forced on the union by a media-orchestrated campaign which challenged the results of the first election. But it has also impressed on union leaders just how high the stakes are in this ballot.

When the TUC first considered its response to Norman Tebbit's 1984 Trade Union Act, it decided to implement only the section which forces unions to ballot themselves every 10 years if their political fund is to be maintained. Opposition was registered against the other two sections of the

Act. These compell unions to ballot before industrial action and in the election of union leaders.

Nevertheless, despite their capitulation on the political levy ballot, union leaders recognise that a 'no' vote could have devastating effects. For instance, the Labour Party gets a full 80 per cent of its national funds from the unions. So, in addition to the political significance of a negative result, Walworth Road would face crippling financial problems if union support is cut.

But the unions themselves also have a lot to lose. The 1984 laws are part of the more general attacks designed to weaken the organisation of working people. Since 1913 unions have been legally entitled to pursue political ends, as long as a ballot decided that a portion of union dues could be set aside in a special fund to finance this activity. The 1984 laws changed that. Now unions are forced to go back to the ballot box every 10 years. And every union already with a fund or wanting to set one up must organise a fresh ballot by March 1986.

Furthermore, if they get a 'no' vote, and undertake any activity which can be construed as 'political' — and this definition is now much broader in the new laws — the union is open to court action and the sequestration of its funds. Just how serious this can be was demonstrated during the miners' strike.

As more and more union members are asking:

'With thousands of jobs disappearing in industry after industry, what resistance isn't political? We've got the wrong government in office if we're going to save jobs.'

With these considerations in mind, executives of a number of unions launched campaigns to get a 'yes' vote. It has clearly paid off, and will have further dividends in the future. The National Union of Railwaymen (NUR) with its August ballot is a case in point.

Extensive resources have been poured into the political levy campaign. It is seen by activists as part of a more general attempt to re-build the union, weakened by years of misleadership under the company unionism of past general secretaries.

Over 1000 union activists have attended one-day schools to learn about the issues, and about how to effectively campaign for a 'yes' vote. Lost wages have been met by the union.

Activists are even given the green light to establish direct links with the campaign office at NUR headquarters — without the backing of the local union branch, if it's dragging its heels. Posters, leaflets and campaign bulletins have been churned out in their thousands. Meetings to promote a 'yes' vote have been encouraged at every level of the union. Weekend schools have been organised.

Of course the campaign has short-comings. It would be enormously strengthened if it went

hand in hand with an aggressive recruitment drive to the Labour Party. It would inspire more workers if the promotion material explained why the working class needs unions that are more political today. It would have increased power if it linked up with other industrial unions and with the Labour party activists nationally and locally. And some branches are just too weak to respond to the campaign. But even with its limitations, this effort

has been a big step forward for the NUR.

If the same determination were applied to the other attacks faced by the union — especially the thousands of job losses suffered — then members would have more confidence to stand up and fight. With the correct lead, trade unionists will insist on their right to decide how union action should be organised without any interference from Tory laws or the media.



**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.**

## Left gains in AUEW

**FOR SEVEN** years the open right wing has totally dominated the situation in the AUEW. But in the last year the left has begun to make limited gains again. JON SILBERMAN looks at the development.

**IN APRIL** the AUEW executive committee put the finishing touches to its latest piece of 'new realism' — the deal with Nissan for its new car plant at Washington, Tyne and Wear.

The agreement sums up the whole policy of Terry Duffy and Gavin Laird. A so-called 'company council', with 'representatives of employees' and management, will be the main body dealing with day-to-day affairs at the plant.

There will be no shop stewards. While the AUEW is given sole negotiating rights there will be no closed shop. Workers will wear identical dress and there will be just two grades of workers — with no job descriptions and complete flexibility within the grades.

The deal has been publicly hailed by both management and union officials. While it stops short of actually including a no-strike clause, the procedural agreement is a long drawn-out affair, including a mandatory stage of going to ACAS. The deal has class collaboration written all over it.

But despite the Nissan deal the present AUEW national committee, the latest election results in the union, and this year's Broad Left conference

have registered increasing opposition to Duffy and Laird.

In the agenda at the national committee 14 out of the union's 26 divisions submitted resolutions which anticipated deals of the Nissan type. They ruled out the possibility of the union concluding no-strike arrangements.

This year's national committee was the first held under the union's new amalgamated structure. Its 124 members now include delegates from engineering, construction and foundry section — as well as the union's women and youth conference. Despite the fact that the AUEW still has no authentic conference, and despite the dominance of the executive, this year's national committee by no means went smoothly for

Duffy, Laird and co.

Discontent has been fed by the purely token support given to the miners — a donation of £10,000, and by the fact that at the same time the miners were battling it out, the engineering unions negotiated a derisory £4.70 increase in national minimum rates — a figure worth just 66p after stoppages according to one national committee delegate.

Anger has been further fuelled by Duffy and Laird not merely failing to promote genuine solidarity with the miners, including in the power industry, but also choosing the middle of the strike to break ranks with the TUC and accept Tory money for union ballots.

This last issue helped bring things to a head. The ballot organised by the executive committee to accept the Tory money was held in contempt of the rules of the union and the policy of the national committee.

The ballot papers failed to explain the policy of the union but included an appeal by the executive committee to 'aid' union finances by accepting the £1 million that was allegedly due from the government. Not surprisingly the vote was 12 to 1 in favour.



Photo: MARK SALMON

This manoeuvre however went too far even for the traditional right wing base of the leadership. Tynesider Jack Crystal accused the executive at the national committee of 'sharp practice' when he spoke in favour of a resolution

severely censuring the executive council. The resolution instructed the executive 'not to seek or participate in the funding of postal ballots from the Tory government.'

The national committee voted 120 for the critical motion which, in

addition, provided for a new ballot to be held with a recommendation to vote against accepting government money. The committee however stopped short of agreeing a second proposition which provided for money already accepted to be returned to the government.

The executive also suffered a series of setbacks on other issues at this year's national committee:

- The committee reaffirmed its traditional policy of multilateral nuclear 'disarmament'. But it combined this with a decision, by 65 votes to 57, to defy the executive and endorse a policy of unilateralism and affiliation to CND.

- The national committee drastically shifted the union's policy on women's rights. It voted 98 to 18 in favour of a woman's right to 'free, safe, legal abortion under the NHS'.

- The national committee voted against the policy of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions, which is supported by Duffy, of abolishing the traditional four year apprenticeship.

The executive however managed to pass its proposal calling merely for a 'substantial increase' in national minimum rates

and avoiding setting a definite figure to campaign around.

Other developments which show the beginnings of the revival of the left against Duffy are the recent union election results. John Dougherty, Broad Left candidate and convenor of Mirlees Blackstone Stockport, won the post of regional officer in EC Division 4 — the first time for many years the right wing have been defeated in this area.

The elections for the union's final appeal court were dramatic. Ten out of the eleven candidates elected were supported by the Broad Left.

It would undoubtedly be wrong to overstate the case for a left revival in the AUEW. There has been no simple 'swing back to the left' in the union. Gerry Merry, the Broad Left candidate for assistant general secretary, received just 23,129 votes behind J Crystal (63,310) and B Chambers (42,773).

But Duffy has received a knock. There are stirrings in the ranks. John Tocher, Broad Left candidate in this year's presidential election, has undoubtedly received a boost in the last month. The left in the union have to build on these developments.

# A Socialist ACTION

## Lebanon BLOW TO U.S.

**THE OUTCOME** of the Beirut hijacking is a sharp blow to United States prestige throughout the Middle East. It became a crisis, and a proof of the limits of US power, almost of the same type as the Iran embassy hostages siege of 1980.

The demands of the Amal militia for the release of 720 Lebanese prisoners incarcerated in Israeli prisons was a just demand which had to be supported. Throughout Israel's last three years of occupation of Lebanon the Israeli forces indiscriminately rounded up thousands of Lebanese and Palestinians. The whereabouts of many of these people is still not known. Many have undoubtedly 'disappeared'.

Typically, the press concentrated its news coverage almost exclusively on the American

hostages rather than what forced Amal to take this form of protest. The hijacking was the consequence of Israeli aggression in Lebanon and the US backing to this. To Nabih Berri as mediator, they used the media coverage of the hostages to gain maximum international publicity — and to influence the US public's growing annoyance over the intransigence of Israel in refusing to hand over its prisoners.

There is no doubt that in the end the Americans gave in to Amal's demands

— and forced the Israelis to do the same. Reagan may claim in public that no deal was done but the whole world knows there is a private agreement — as will become evident as the prisoners are released. The United States also forced Israel to back down.

But the most important for the long run development in the area was the evident inability of the United States, or Israel, to act decisively in the crisis. The US moved its fleet to the Eastern Mediterranean and threatened an economic blockade against Syria and Libya. But it was in reality unable to take any action. Neither was Israel.

The United States is of course using the Beirut hi-



jacking to step up its crusade against international 'terrorism'. That is the US threatens war against any anti-imperialist liberation movements which threatens or challenges United States aggression and domination. In particular Reagan is stepping up preparations for action against Nicaragua and Central

America.

But the outcome of the Beirut hijacking is a blow for the United States. It shows a strong continuing pressure in the United States against foreign military adventures and the new limitations of Israeli power in the Arab East. That is a welcome development in world

politics.

Any reprisals against Lebanon, military or economic, should be vigorously condemned by the labour movement. The people of Lebanon have suffered quite enough at the hands of US and Israeli aggression.

Amal are not the saviours of Lebanon. Only

a few weeks ago this same organisation massacred hundreds of Palestinians in the refugee camps of Beirut. But in their present action they are striking a blow against imperialism.

The labour movement must clearly and unequivocally demand **HANDS OFF LEBANON!**



*PRIDE, ANGER and solidarity: these words best sum up the magnificent Lesbian and Gay Pride march last Saturday. Nearly 10,000 Lesbian and Gay men turned out to make it one of the biggest ever in this country.*

*But unique to Pride '85 was the presence of a large contingent of women and men from the South Wales Mining Community at the head of the march.*

*Their lead, and the large contingent of militant Lesbian and Gay banners and organisations which assembled behind them, gave the march a mood of anger at the attacks on the Lesbian and Gay communities in the last year — from the trial of Gays the Word bookshop to the mass hysteria whipped up around AIDS.*

*It gave it also a mood of public resistance and greater confidence as a result of victories already won like that over Rugby council.*

*Above all, it was the sense of solidarity gained through the miners' strike, and demonstrated by the fantastic response given to the sister from Dulais Valley who spoke at the end of the march, which gave Pride '85 its sense of purpose and made the celebration, and Lesbian and Gay pride, what it always should be: a true carnival of the oppressed.*

By Peter Purton

## Pride '85 ~ How far we have come!

**THE LAST year has been a very positive one for lesbian and gay liberation. The Labour Campaign for Lesbian and Gay Rights has continued to grow and we look likely to see the first ever debate at Labour Party conference.**

Organisation continues to grow within a number of trade unions; NALGO for example has now established a national Lesbian and Gay Steering Committee. NUPE and NALGO have issued leaflets for their entire membership on AIDS which seek to counteract the press hysteria. The debate within the LPYS continues despite the hostility of Militant and the weakness of Lesbian and Gay Young Socialists.

But it was the development of Lesbians and Gay deeper into the labour movement than ever before. In the two previous miners' strikes, around the Right to Work marches and within CND, lesbians and gay men have been organised. We have had visible contingents on

most major demonstrations.

By Terry Conway

But despite all this we have been ignored — or scorned by many labour movement activists. It took the great strike of '84 for these notions to be challenged in a new way — not only by lesbians and gay men — but by significant numbers of heterosexual trade unionists.

Dai Donovan, from Dowlais NUM told us at our Xmas benefit that we, along with women and black people are not separate from the working class, but a crucial part of it. Hopefully his sentiments are now shared by militants not only within the NUM but more

generally within the labour movement.

Given all this, one would have hoped that the organisation of Pride 85 would have sought to build these developments. After all, Lesbian and Gay Pride is primarily a celebration of the Stonewall riots where people in the pubs and clubs rioted against police repression.

Sadly this years organisers seem determined to make the event as apolitical as possible. As socialists, we would agree that as many lesbians and gay men as possible should be involved including those who spend their time on the commercial scene.

Not only is this where Stonewall was born, but Lesbians and Gay men support the Miners often had a warm hearing in working class lesbian and gay pubs. But for the gains of the last years to be consolidated then we have to develop an even firmer labour movement orientation throughout our activities.

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