

workers power

25p/10p strikers

Fortnightly paper of the Workers Power group

BEWARE THE T.U.C.

Miners: control your leaders

ARTHUR SCARGILL HAS no doubt the 116th TUC was a great success for the National Union of Mineworkers. Writing in the Sunday Times on September 9th, he claimed, "In supporting the NUM with physical and financial solidarity, Congress has placed itself squarely behind our campaign to secure a speedy and victorious end to the dispute..."

After the rhetoric of Monday's debate there might have been some excuse for this assessment. However, after five days the true balance sheet can and should be drawn by both the miners and all those in the Labour Movement mobilised to support them.

DEFINITE COMMITMENT

The NUM and its allies approached Congress with a resolution and amendments that called for certain definite commitments. The NUM's amendment called for a 10p a week levy on every TUC affiliated union member. This would have brought the NUM about £1 million per week — not an astronomical sum, just over £7 per week per striking miner. ASLEF's amendment called for, "all unions not to cross official picket lines established by the NUM and/or other unions who are supporting the miners' struggle." The Furniture, Timber and Allied

Trades Union called for a, "day of solidarity action as soon as possible."

This paper has frequently stated that we believe the miners should have demanded that the TUC call a general strike to smash the anti-union laws and in support of the NUM's full demands.

Throughout the strike, the NUM leaders have vehemently argued against calling in the TUC because they would stab the struggle in the back as they to the NGA on 'Black Wednesday' (December 14th 1983) and as they did to the miners in 1926. The length of the strike, the scabbing by a significant minority of miners and the refusal of solidarity by the Steel and Power industry unions, obliged the NUM to go to the TUC.

Despite Arthur Scargill's oft-repeated insistence that the unions are fighting for the whole working class against the full weight of the state machine and despite several calls for other unions to get into the battle alongside the NUM, he will not call for a general strike. Instead he preferred the more modest, he would say more realistic, demands outlined above.

In the end the NUM did not even get these! The NUM leaders might say in self defence that they got more, that they got a full declaration of support from the General Council and Congress. We think the bosses' paper was nearer the mark which said, 'The General Council gave the NUM a blank cheque and prudently forgot to sign it.'

The whole experience proves an important lesson with regard to the

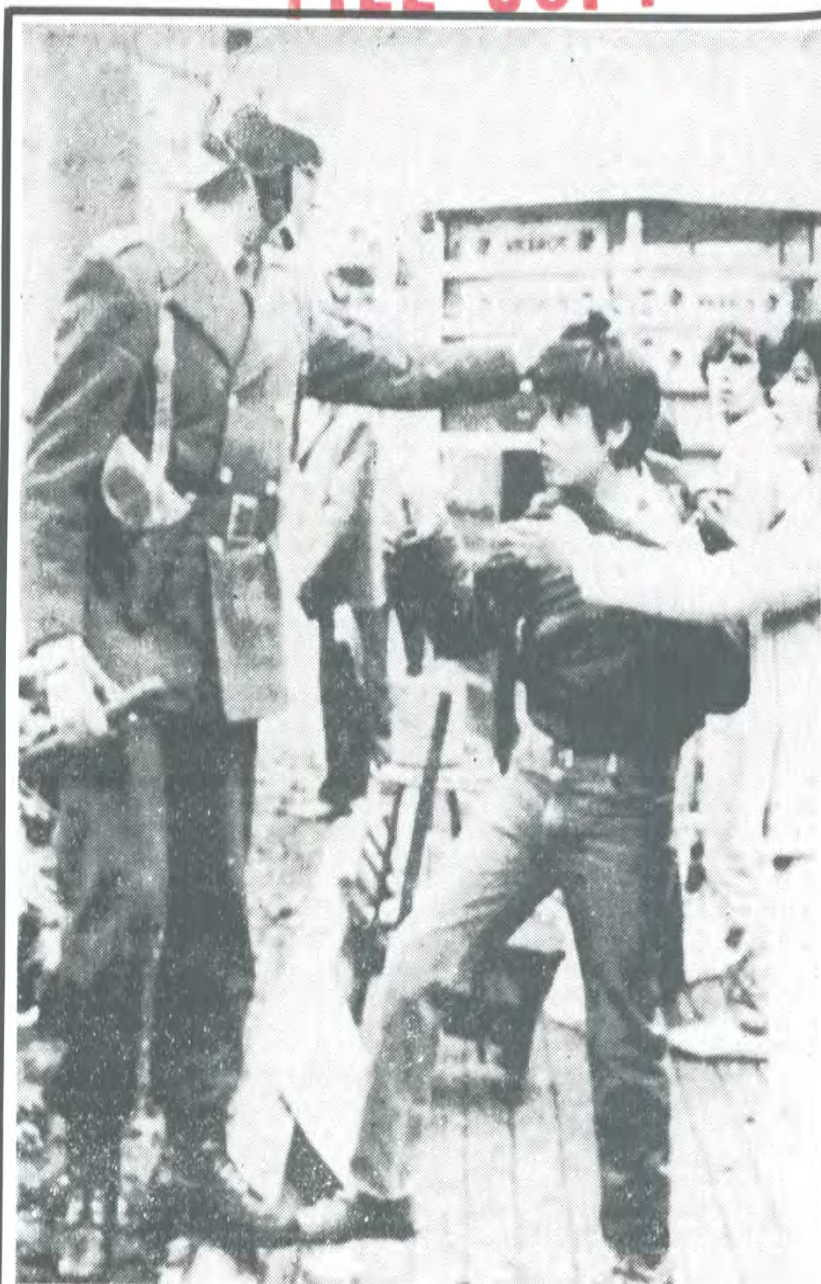
TUC which can be summed up in the motto, "Unto he who asks for little, less shall be given". A vigorous fight for a general strike on the floor of the Congress would have had a number of positive effects for the strike.

Firstly, it would have given the lead to the militant left in every union to pressure their leaders for every form of solidarity with the miners. Secondly, it would have scared the bureaucracy into doing more to help the miners than offering up a token declaration. Thirdly, it would have prepared the rank and file for a general strike call even if it did not carry the day at this Congress — and we too recognise that it would only have won minority support.

MASS AGITATION

In this strike any sudden turn of events; a massive new fine, the arrest of NUM leaders or the use of troops, can make a general strike a real possibility as millions of workers' eyes are opened by the government's savagery. It can also make such a response an absolute necessity if the NUM's continued ability to organise resistance is called into question. But, such a response has to be prepared for and the way to do that is by mass agitation for a general strike.

Such agitation must include demands that the leaders of the Labour Movement call it. These bureaucrats are under closer scrutiny and greater pressure at the TUC than at any



PINOCHET'S RIOT POLICE greeted the two days of protest marking the 11th anniversary of the establishment of the dictatorship with ferocious brutality. While the bourgeois opposition leaders were water cannoned and detained for short periods, the riot police directed their real venom against the working class areas where protesters were slashed with knives, scalped, burnt over smoldering road blocks and indiscriminately shot on the barricades and in their homes. The toll of 11 dead and hundreds wounded reflects the determination of Pinochet's junta to staying in power at all costs.

Pinochet had already made clear his intentions a few days before in an interview with the *New York Times*. Here he announced that there would be no Congress (ie no change in Junta rule) before 1990! He also mentioned in passing that he thought relations with Reagan and the US had never been better.

The junta's actions and statements over the last period have been a complete kick in the teeth for the Christian Democratic led Democratic Alliance which had entered into a 'dialogue' a year ago with the Minister of Interior, Sergio Jarpa and in return demobilised the growing protest movement against

the dictatorship.

Desperate at all costs to achieve a peaceful transition from Pinochet's dictatorship the Christian Democracy (aided and abetted by the Communist led Popular Democratic Movement) vainly sought a 'Grand National Democratic Accord' and compromise with the military.

Pinochet's actions and the complete resistance of the junta to any form of real democratisation has dashed these hopes and forced the AD and MDP to organise more protests and strikes.

Chilean workers must learn the lessons of the last year. Since May 1983 when mass protests began over 100 demonstrators have been killed. They must prevent a further round of protests being used by the Socialist and Communist party leaderships just to pressurise the dictatorship into negotiations. It is clear that the bloody Chilean dictatorship will only be broken by a mass working class onslaught - a general strike which paralyses the country and breaks the will of the police and army to resist.

The fight for such a strategy not only offers the only effective way of smashing the dictatorship but would open the road to the struggle for working class power.

other time. To let slip the moment when millions of union members are watching them is to let them off the hook.

Some left wingers who support a general strike would argue that it is premature to raise it now. They say, 'wait till the millions see the need for it and wait till the government goes for the NUM's very lifeblood.' We say that five minutes to midnight is too late. Those who will not tell the working class it needs a general strike to smash the crippling anti-trade union laws and to win total victory for the NUM are helping to maintain the apathy and indifference that has left the miners to fight almost alone for six months.

The alarm bells of the Labour Movement — the papers which support the miners — should be ringing to arms. This would all be 100 times easier if the NUM itself raised the call. Instead, it is left to the right wingers like Sirs and company to conjure it up as a bogey to frighten off the lefts. Sirs taunts the NUM leaders with wanting a general strike, with trying to get one without saying so and so on. His purpose like Kinnock's in posing "elections are the

only way to change governments" is to blackmail the left leaders into rejecting the general strike. When the lefts join the rights and the media in agitating against the general strike then the union movement is declaring its willingness to surrender without a fight.

REALISM OF THE RIGHT

The NUM leaders, along with their allies in the Rail and Seamen's unions, did not put up an intransigent fight for their own limited, but real, demands. The right was scared out of its wits that they would do so. Though Bill Sirs and John Lyons both frothed at the mouth about the final General Council statement, Murray voiced the realism of the right. He called on them to, "reflect on the alternative which is to allow those amendments to stand on the agenda, possibly have them carried ..." This would be a, "great deal worse" than passing a statement which Murray himself admitted he was, "not over the moon about".

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South Africa

WOMEN'S OPPRESSION

THE STATE IN EMERGENCIES

THROUGHOUT THIS CENTURY successive governments, including Labour governments, have perfected the state's strikebreaking machinery. Various Acts of Parliament, especially the Emergency Powers Acts of 1920 and 1964, have given the inner sanctums of government extensive repressive powers. The book *States of Emergency* by Keith Jeffery and Peter Hennessy, is very revealing about the scope and actual use of these powers over the last sixty years. Both socialists and militant trade unionists should read it in order to get the measure of what we are up against.

In the early 1900's, technological changes and developments in industrial processes led to two important advances being made by trade unionism. First, masses of unskilled workers became organised in general unions, the forerunners of the TGWU and GMBATU. Secondly, as enterprises extended so the need for national strikes became apparent.

Both of these factors — new members and the increasing use of the national strike — shook the complacent Lib-Lab union leaders. They had feathered their nests during the preceding years of prosperity and relative industrial calm. Their strategy was based on 'conciliation' with the bosses and negotiated reforms with the Liberals.

These gentlemen weathered the storm of strikes that shook Britain from 1910 to 1926. Nevertheless, strikes like the national miners' strike of 1912, the national rail strike of 1911 and the engineers' strikes during the First World War, caused the government of the day to take measures against strikes.

The bosses could no longer rely on the machinery of conciliation. They badly needed new machinery for confrontation. In the wave of strikes ruling class sages saw the threat of revolution. Sir Henry Wilson, the Chief of the Imperial Staff, saw in the strike wave, "really a challenge to the government of the country."

The Lloyd George government met this challenge by establishing a strike breaking apparatus. In 1918, the Supply and Transport Organisation (STO) was set up to meet the implied threat of the Triple Alliance of rail, transport and mine workers. This organisation has survived to this day, albeit under different names. After the Second World War, it became the Emergencies Committee until it was again re-named (and re-organised) by James Callaghan as the Civil Contingencies Unit. Its role today, as in 1918, is to organise scabbing.

EMERGENCY POWERS ACT

To back up the special units the government, in 1920, passed the Emergency Powers Act. This is an enabling Act. It enables the cabinet, the top civil service chiefs and the police and army chiefs and the monarchy to do anything they like irrespective of Parliament, local authorities or workers in dispute. Section 2(1) of the Act makes this clear, "Where a proclamation of emergency has been made, and as long as the proclamation is in force, it shall be lawful for His Majesty in Council, by Order, to make regulations for securing the essentials of life to the community, and these regulations may confer or impose on a Secretary of State or other government department, or any other persons in His Majesty's Service or acting on His Majesty's behalf, such powers and duties as His Majesty may deem necessary for the preservation of the peace, for securing and regulating the supply and distribution of food, water, fuel, light and other necessities for maintaining the means of transit or locomotion, and for any

Thatcher and her loyal Army chiefs.

other purposes essential to the public safety and the life of the community, and may make such provisions as may appear to His Majesty to be required for making the exercise of these powers effective." (Jefferys and Hennessy p.271)

For good measure the Act adds that anyone breaking regulations decreed is liable to trial by summary jurisdiction — that is, without a jury! In 1964, the Tory government added a new dimension to the Act. They made it possible to use troops for non-military tasks in an emergency. This Act was explained in terms of coping with bad weather or natural disasters. It enabled the troops to be deployed without a full state of emergency being declared. Despite Tory claims to be worried about the weather, as the book points out, since 1964, "proclamations of emergency have only been made to meet industrial disruption, and under the 1964 Act, without an emergency proclamation, troops have been used on a number of occasions to break strikes." (p.229)

Neil Kinnock and Tony Benn teach workers reverence for change through the ballot box. They loudly sing the praises of Parliament as the seat of power in the land. Yet the Emergency Powers Acts show just how shallow, how much of a sham, this hallowed parliamentary democracy really is. They show that in a real emergency the top men in the ruling class and its government drop the mask and expose the real face of its executive power — the monarchy, the top civil servants, army chiefs, Tories and security-vetted Labour politicians.

RULE BY DECREE

This lot, Right Honourables to a man, can, as the Act stipulates, rule through the Privy Council by decree. They can declare war, peace, dissolve Parliament, requisition whatever they want for as long as they maintain the state of emergency. They, of course, can prolong the state of emergency as long as they like.

Of course, the Labourites argue that under democracy the Executive must have emergency powers to protect the 'nation' or the 'community'. They present the state as a neutral guarantor of safety for all.

Yet, in 1964, when the Labour Government was faced with a flight of money from the country, deliberately engineered by the capitalists, no state of emergency was declared. Two years later, when seamen went on strike for better wages and conditions, Wilson declared a state of emergency, publicly admitted to using M15 against trade unionists and used the RAF to break the strike.

This has always been the pattern. Since 1920, twelve full states of emergency have been declared. Every one of them was directed against a strike — four of them against dock strikes (dockers on strike today take note) four against miners' strikes, including the General Strike of 1926 and one each against electricity workers, and rail, road and sea transport workers' strikes. Emergencies, for the ruling class, are not accidents, earthquakes, snowfalls or any such things. They are threats to its power by the working class.

The first extensive use of the Act and with it the STO, the troops, special constables and volunteer organisations like the Organisation for the Maintenance of Supplies (OMS), came with the general strike of 1926. Within twelve hours of the strike being called the 1920 Act was put into effect. The excuse used by Prime Minister Baldwin was the threat to the constitution. He declared, "It is not wages that are imperilled, it is the freedom of our very constitution." So, in the name of

by Mark Hosskisson

States of Emergency by Keith Jeffery and Peter Hennessy is published by Routledge and Kegan Paul. Hard back price is £14.95

that constitution 226,000 special constabularies were enlisted to harass strikers and protect scabs. Troops were used everywhere with London being turned into something of an armed camp. Troops were stationed outside such pillars of the constitution as the Bank of England.

To demoralise strikers the strikebound docks of London's East End and their environs were occupied by the army. A reporter from the *New York World* described the effect of this invasion, "The sullen mass of strikers who congregated after dawn were awed by the military and permitted most of the moving to be done by mounted police, unarmed as always, but backed this time by enough artillery to kill every living thing in every street in the neighbourhood." (*The General Strike* - Christopher Farman p238)

DISPLAY OF STRENGTH

As the nine-day strike neared its end displays of strength such as this became more common. The state of emergency itself was maintained until the miners were defeated. From May through until December 19th 1926 Britain was ruled by decree.

Subsequent governments used the Act to strikebreak. Attlee's 1945-51 government became notorious for sending troops in to break dock strikes. They replaced the STO with the Emergencies Committee and used it to break numerous strikes. In June 1948 they declared a state of emergency against London dockers. In doing this they were encouraged by Ernest Bevin, TGWU leader and ruling class trustee. He argued, "They (the government - WP) should not be deterred by threats that if further troops were employed, the strike would spread to the meat markets. If the strikers got their way, the government would be at the mercy of unofficial strikers for many years to come." (quoted in *IS Journal* Summer 1984, p60) In other words the emergencies confronting the Labour government were not simply strikes but strikes not controlled by their friends in the union leadership.

It was under Edward Heath's administration of 1970-74 that a turning point in government attitudes took place. The old emergency units — even when backed up by no less than 5 proclamations of a state of emergency in 4 years — could not cope with the wave of union militancy.

This was graphically exposed at Saltley Gate in the 1972 miners' strike. The local police chief had warned that the miners' pickets would only close the gates of the coke depot over his dead body. Though he lived, with the help of mass strike action by Birmingham engineers the gates were closed. The police, at that time, were unable to cope with mass picketing. The ruling class learnt from that experience. Brendon Sewill, a Tory adviser at the time, wrote, "At the time (of Saltley - WP) many of those in positions of influence looked into the abyss.... This is the power that exists to hold the country to ransom: it was fear of that abyss which had an important effect on subsequent policy." (Jefferys and Hennessy p235)

Indeed it did. But this is precisely where *States of Emergency* loses its way. The authors' basic argument is that some strikes are harmful to the community and that special powers are needed to cope. However, as good reformists they argue that all that is needed is for the government employers and trade unionists to collaborate over the implementation of these powers to see that fair play is done. The model they cite is Alex Kitson's role in the 1978-79 lorry drivers' strike. The TGWU leader had daily meetings with top



civil servants to work out ways of lessening the strike's impact!

The fact is that such "neutrality" on the part of the state power is a myth. It has always acted against strikers. Moreover since 1972 it has developed its ability to enforce its will far more effectively. It was weaknesses in the field of enforcement, not in the field of emergency legislation, that Saltley expressed. By rectifying this weakness the ruling class added a further dimension to their special powers and special bodies of armed men.

From 1972, the Tories set in motion, and after 1974 Labour carried on, a revolution in police organisation and tactics. The fruits of this have been seen in Nottinghamshire in the 1984 miners' strike. In 1972, the government set up a National Security Committee with representatives of the police, the military and key government ministries. Across the country, and modelled on the Metropolitan Police's 'Special Patrol Group', para-military units of police, called, variously, SPGs, Task Forces or Tactical Support Groups, were hurriedly formed. In February 1974, the *Sunday Times* noted their adoption of 'snatch squads' and 'wedges' in demonstrations, and the use of roadblocks, all "based on the Army's experience in Ulster." (*Sunday Times* 3/2/74)

NATIONAL POLICE FORCE

The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) was developed as the hidden centre for a national police force — in theory not supposed to exist. Behind the SPGs stood a much larger force, capable of being mobilised in an emergency, the Police Support Units. These consist of 34 person units, each under a unit commander. They are trained in riot control and, by the early Eighties numbered some 12,000. In all probability their number has since risen sharply. By 1981, the amount of firearms training had enormously increased. Again, some 12,000 officers have been so trained.

Under Labour, the National Security Committee was re-named the Civil Contingencies Unit. It oversees sixteen, "essential services and industries." It has the power to co-ordinate the setting up of roadblocks outside the main metropolitan areas; it can cut off 95% of the country's telephones and has plans available for rounding up shop stewards and interning them in emergency camps such as Rolleston. Thatcher, who wept crocodile tears over the suppression of Solidarność in Poland, has all the powers and resources to do a Jaruzelski if she needs to. In the event of a prolonged 'state of emergency' the country would be handed over to 12 regional commissioners, each assisted by a three-man body consisting of a Regional Military Commander, Police Commander and a Controller, an executive officer of a major council.

In the weeks ahead it is possible the government will declare a state of emergency. The experience of previous ones related in the book *States of Emergency* is valuable. The conclusions drawn by the authors are not. Dockers and miners, as well as other workers, must draw different ones. In the guise of democracy the power of capital protects itself and excuses its injustices. In the name of 'emergencies' the 'neutral' state will use police and troops to break strikes, not to say strikers' heads. Our task is to punch a hole through the democratic disguise and expose the real loyalties of the police and the army. To do that effectively means recognising the need for our own strike enforcing apparatus — mass pickets and workers' self defence organisations — that can be deployed against the strike breakers and the state. ■



KINNOCK: ON THE FENCE AND PROUD OF IT

LABOUR WEEKLY, THE Labour Party's official paper was right to point out that Kinnock "used his first speech to Congress since becoming Party leader to launch his strongest condemnation yet of picket line violence." He used his platform to deliver an onslaught against the "divisive violence" of picketing miners.

It is not the first time Kinnock has denounced miners' "violence". He rushed out a denunciation of the miners after watching Orgreave on the TV. But this was the most sustained attack on militant miners that he has delivered to date.

Kinnock posed as the miners' friend before sticking the knife into them. He attacked picket line violence for "obscuring" the validity of the miners' case. This was sheer hypocrisy on his part. If Kinnock thought the miners' case was so valid why did it take eighteen weeks of the strike before he appeared for the first time on an NUM platform? According to Kinnock it was picket violence that had enabled Thatcher to "evade promoting a settlement" and allowed the Tories to introduce "politically motivated changes in the methods of British policing."

What rubbish. Thatcher has never intended to reach a settlement with the NUM except on her own terms and her police thugs have been practising for this kind of show down for years. Kinnock claimed picket line violence had divided "trade union attitudes", and disgusted trade union opinion. Once again he's wrong to blame the miners. It's not the miners' fault that the Trade Union and PLP leaders have fought to dampen effective solidarity with the miners at every stage. Kinnock's message that the pickets are to blame for police violence, for the length of the dispute and for divisions within the TUC just will not wash.

So why then does Kinnock go out of his way to seize the opportunity provided by maximum media time to castigate the NUM for violence while letting the picket-busting police squads off scot free?

One rank and file miner who walked out of the Congress during Kinnock's speech told waiting TV reporters that had Kinnock ever been on a picket line and at the other end of police thuggery he would not be so quick to blame the miners. Certainly miners should demand that representatives elected by them and their communities, both councillors and MPs, regularly join the picket lines. The odd punch in the mouth from the boys in blue might stop some of their wailing about miners' violence on the picket line.

But Kinnock's condemnation of picket line violence stems from more than his notable absence from the picket lines. It flows from the fact that Kinnock, like every other Labour leader, is committed lock, stock and barrel to the "rule of law". He was using his platform time to signal to the bosses that he can be relied upon to fight to make sure that workers only challenge the government within the framework laid down by the courts, the law and Parliament. In return, the *Times* editorial next day acknowledged that Kinnock had shown "a quality of political leadership" by telling the miners to play to the rules laid down by the bosses. That's what the bosses call "leadership" from a Labour leader.

CONSISTENT SUBSERVIENCE

Kinnock and the Labour leaders have always been consistent in this subservience to the bosses and their courts. On the very same day, Kinnock's deputy Hattersley was giving his own version of exactly the same basic theme. "We have to be visibly, unequivocally and triumphantly the party of democracy - respecting the law and realising that in a free society bad laws have to be changed, not broken." No wonder then that Kinnock told the South Wales NUM to pay up when the 'lawful' sequestrators came to take their funds. No wonder that the Kinnock leadership has refused to support any strategy for councils fighting the cuts which involve 'illegal action'. It was all of a piece that he should go to the TUC to condemn the miners' 'illegal' violence.

The 'rule of law' that Kinnock defends is the



Hattersley and Kinnock - united against the miners' pickets.

rule of the bosses' law. The police are there to force the scabs through the picket lines - by law! The judges and magistrates use the courts to back them up. When workers defend themselves against police attack or try to enforce a national strike to save jobs they are breaking 'the law'. And that is precisely what Kinnock and Hattersley don't want them to do. They could not conceal their fury when Martin Flannery simply denounced 'tame Tory judges' and got himself expelled from the House of Commons for daring to do so.

TRUSTED BY THE BOSSES

Kinnock, Hattersley and co demand obedience to the law and the judges because they want to prove to be reliable defenders of this system, trusted by the bosses enough to run it for them. Indeed Kinnock knows that, like every other Labour leader before him, in power he would rely on the courts, the judges, the police, to enforce unpalatable policies on rank and file trade unionists. To encourage 'disrespect' for law would be fatal for these gentlemen.

Rather than break the law, Kinnock and Hattersley argue for a time honoured recipe for changing laws and governments - waiting for a general election. Kinnock put it this way, "This Congress and its affiliated unions, its leadership and its rank and file, have repeatedly demonstrated and asserted the abiding belief that trade unionism is for changing conditions, and general elections, and only general elections, are for changing governments."

He reminded Congress that Labour had three years until it could get power and begin to change the laws. 'Violence' or organised resistance to the Tories' anti-union laws would be counterproductive to the task of returning a Labour government.

It is no accident that it was the miners and their supporters who heckled and protested at Kinnock's

tirade. They have experienced week after week, month after month the reality of the bosses' law on the picket line. They recognise the need to defend themselves against police thuggery. They realise that to bow down before the law would be to surrender to Thatcher. Yet Kinnock's remarks were clearly welcomed by the majority of the TUC delegates who applauded his condemnation of violence.

Like Kinnock the majority of TUC delegates shared his view of violence and democracy. And not surprisingly, given the onslaught of the media and the condemnations of Labour and Trade Union leaders, a majority of trade unionists probably found themselves in agreement.

In order to win over these workers we have to draw them into struggle alongside the miners so that they can experience the ruthless determination of the forces of law and order to smash this strike. But we also have to combat the ideas that Kinnock was putting forward - the reformist perspective that dominates the Labour Party and the TUC.

RESPECTIBLE IMAGE

For Kinnock and his advisers the miners' strike is jeopardising the respectable image and electoral prospects of the Labour Party. The miners should be sacrificed for the good of labour as a whole so that a Labour government can be returned to power.

This is the real reason that the Labour Party as a party has remained on the sidelines of the miners' dispute. While thousands of rank and file Labour Party activists have joined the struggle, their leadership has kept its distance. Kinnock's speech carefully reinforced that position. His 'even-handed' condemnation of Thatcherism and the NUM's conducting of the strike deliberately distanced Labour from the NUM leadership and the miners' strike. The constant harping on the

need for 'conciliation' and the Labour Party's role in it, was a mere reflection of the Labour Party's preferred position as 'honest broker' rather than a party straining every limb to achieve a miners' victory.

It would be a disaster to demobilise the miners' strike or hold back any struggle against the Tories and their laws in return for the prospect of Kinnock in power in three years time. He has shown that he and his leadership crew will do the bosses doing. He is a faithful servant of the bosses law and order and the Parliamentary mask that they rule behind. The bosses have an enormous military and economic arsenal defended by the law and the courts. Only a mobilised working class can stop Thatcher now. And only a mobilised working class could prevent Kinnock administering the bosses system against the working class in the footsteps of Wilson and Callaghan before him.

Many miners and militants may agree that what we say may be true of Kinnock and Hattersley. But they will say that Skinner and Benn have given unwavering support to the strike. It is true that Skinner and Benn have gone on to picket lines. So too have some other Labour MPs although you only have to think of their names to realise what a pathetically tiny number have actually thrown themselves into support and this in a party with numerous NUM sponsored MPs. If Benn and Co were really fighting to win the Labour Party's support for the miners why are they silent when Kinnock uses the mantle of Labour leader to attack the miners? Why are they not prepared to mount a challenge to a leadership that has stabbed the most important working class battle against Thatcher in the back by contesting the leadership with him at the coming Labour conference?

The truth is they are not prepared to fight Kinnock or Hattersley. Four months ago Benn even withdrew a resolution committing Labour's NEC to a campaign in support of the miners. The result is that the Labour Party nationally has not organised one single event, demonstration etc., in support of the miners in 6 months of the strike, bar only a half-hearted 50p levy. The fact is that since the Bishop Stortford agreement in 1982 the 'left' in the Labour Party has agreed to support first foot, then Kinnock and their policies. Again - in the interest of the 'higher good' - unity and the supposed return of Labour at the next election.

AGAINST KINNOCK

Against Kinnock and those who lie down before him we say the only way Thatcher will be defeated is by mobilising the working class in struggle. Every retreat, every defeat - GCHQ, NGA - strengthens this government. The miners' strike, the determination shown on the picket lines, the willingness to challenge the bosses laws and courts, has already transformed the class struggle, lifted the morale of militants struggling to end the Tories' attacks on working people. The task now is to extend that struggle, to take on and smash Thatcher's anti-union laws, to defeat her attacks on the the miners and if possible drive her from office. In telling workers to wait for the 'proper time' to be rid of Thatcher, to castigate the miners for not respecting the law, to condemn violence on the picket line, Kinnock is being not only a traitor to the miners but to the whole working class. If the left in the Labour Party is to prove that it is not tied to Kinnock's apron strings they must turn the Labour Party conference into an attack on his treacherous leadership. To fail to do so is to let the miners down. ■

by S. King

For workers' democracy - Against the bosses ballot

The miners' strike and the dockers' strike have both shown how urgent the need is to assert working class democracy against the bosses' democracy of the private and secret ballot. They have also posed most urgently the need to fight for working class democracy against the bureaucratic, hidebound routines that prevail in most workplaces and unions.

Workers can only decide to take action when they have heard and discussed the issues with their workmates. All must be able to see who is prepared for action and who is not. That is why we say that the democratic mass meeting is the bedrock of workers' democracy. It is the democracy of fighters, not sheep.

The onset of the miners' strike, at Bilston Glen, for example, and the confusion that has surrounded mass meetings in the docks strikes, show that this tradition is often viewed with suspicion not only by time-serving officials but

are not respected by all workers. Mass police protection has emboldened the scabs, adding many waverers to their number. This happens all the more easily if they think their scabbing has a 'democratic' mandate or that they have not had the opportunity to voice their views and to hear those of others.

There is no short cut to countering the lies and the slander of the media. At the very core of the docks dispute lies the question of whether the Hunterston dockers should be supported in their stand in solidarity with the miners. The papers scream that the strike is political and that the dockers are being manoeuvred into backing the NUM. Daily Mail hero Medlock is given peak time to complain (without an ounce of proof) that the union leaders are all set on 'anarchy'. Yet the TGWU leaders wash their hands of arguing for a fight alongside the miners. They are desperately hoping that a national strike call will,

also by militants who suspect their members. Worse, they fear an open argument with them. All too often the best militants hide behind a bureaucratic instruction. They organise mass meetings - at best - to endorse national decisions, hear reports and then disperse.

Such tactics are no answer to the Tories' 'democracy' charade. We know the democracy that they want is a sham. As the Tilbury ballot showed the employers want ballot papers signed for scabbing in conditions most conducive to it. That is why they want votes to take place in individual isolation, where the maximum pressure of the media, the bills and the family are felt. It is where the minimum awareness of collective will and determination prevail. But that kind of 'democracy' will be accepted by many sections of workers if no other form of democracy is presented to them. It is an unfortunate fact of life that calls not to cross picket lines

in and of itself, solve the issue, bring everybody out and disperse the clouds of reactionary propaganda against the dock militants and the miners.

This bureaucratic attitude, always bad, is disastrous at a time of recession when union rights and their ability to deliver are jeopardised. Unthinking loyalty simply will not come. Militants need regular bulletins, democratic workplace papers and, above all, mass meetings where they can explain the case, refute the lies and break through the stonewalling of the union bureaucrats at the same time.

The Tories and the bosses are fighting the militants for the allegiance of a large section of trade unionists. Only the fight for genuine workers' democracy can counter the offensive, win the allegiance of wavering workers away from the scabs and swell the picket lines sufficiently to drive the diehard scabbing minority back underground. ■

"... A LOT OF women after the strike will not be able to go back to what they did before like sitting at home and being a housewife. There's a lot that's to be done for the working class and the women can do it."

This view must sum up the feelings of many of the miners' wives involved in the support movement in the present strike. Before the strike most of them saw the centre of their lives as their home, their children, their husbands. Now for 6 months they have been active outside the home, demonstrating, picketing, organising collections, running the strike canteens and restaurants, speaking about the strike to other trade unionists.

Whilst the women of the mining communities see all these activities as defending their families, their husbands' jobs, their children's future, they have increasingly come to see how suffocating being tied exclusively to the household duties was. The individual family household is a place where women are sentenced to a lifetime of hard, monotonous physical labour cleaning, shopping, cooking, managing the household budget, looking after the children and often an elderly parent.

It is the lifelong task of women to provide a haven of security in an insecure world. Outside the home there is little defence or provision for the individual in a society built on exploitation, competition, unemployment. The home - whilst it is an indispensable fortress as anyone who loses its protection can testify to is also a prison for women.

THATCHER'S FAMILY

It is no accident that whilst Margaret Thatcher has launched the most vicious attack on all aspects of the welfare state since its creation - she also loudly proclaims the value of the family! In fact she means by this women taking the whole responsibility for the care of children, ageing relatives and the sick, so that the Tories can axe services like nurseries, school meals, old-peoples homes and hospitals. She means that families must take financial responsibility for unemployed youth unable to get a decent job in Thatcher's decaying Britain. She glorifies, 'the family' which reinforces the idea that a woman's place is in the home. So weighed down with the anxiety of keeping going and making ends meet, the woman in the home becomes turned into a conservative force. She fears and opposes disruptions to the home economy like strikes. Isolated, she becomes a victim of the torrent of anti-working class ideas pouring out of the papers, the radio and the TV. Thatcher wants to see the isolated housewife pass on these views to her children.

The only collective action the Tories and their media wanted was the 'Back to Work' movements they have engineered in some disputes - at Cowley in 1981 for example. They tried it at the beginning of the miners' strike and produced a massive counter-attack from

the wives determined to back the strike. Thatcher hadn't bargained for militant wives throwing themselves into the strike, organising committees and picketing with the men, breaking away from the notion that women should stay at home.

When the women first organised many of the men were unsure about it. "At first they caused a bit of a problem. They thought that the women should be at home. I had difficulty with my husband, he was against me going out on a picket line! I said, 'Well, we'll have to see about that' . So I went and it turned out good. He was glad in the end to see the women in support." That experience of a Yorkshire woman must have been similar for many wives.

ESSENTIAL FOR CAPITALISM

It raises the question of why women are expected to be at home and why family life seems such a burden for many women. In fact women perform an essential service in the home without which industrial production could not go on. When a miner comes in from a shift physically exhausted, and hungry, he has to rebuild his energy so that he is fit to turn up for the next day's shift. He needs food prepared, clothes washed, a home maintained and the kids looked after. These tasks normally fall on the woman, so her labour in the home actually maintains his ability to work. It also helps produce the next generation of workers. This work is therefore absolutely essential for capitalism to continue production, but it is not wage labour, no payment is made for it. As a result the housewife is forced to be financially dependent on her husband. On this fact rests the whole edifice of women's unequal position with regard to men. However 'generous' and 'reasonable' a man may be he still has economic power over his wife. The wage, including the housekeeping is his money. The crude exercise of this power may be offset by love, companionship, mutual concern for the children but it is always there and poisons these very relations. The social inequality between men and women fuels the men's feelings of superiority and women's feeling of subordination. The whole culture of our society expresses this.

But perhaps all this changes if women themselves have a paid job? Alas it doesn't. Our position in the home affects us when we go out to work.

All the features of these jobs - low pay, limited to "women's occupations", little job security - presuppose that women's main role is still in the home. The assumption that women are adding a 'second income' or working for 'pin money' is completely false when so many families need two incomes to survive, or when the woman is the sole breadwinner since her husband is unemployed! Bosses assume that women are more flexible, because we always have another job to do as



Banner Theatre

"We're not

well. Women do not need good pay and certainly no job security according to them. In fact because of the need to do the household work in addition to earning money, many women (over 40%) work part time, which means very low rates of pay, only 58% of the hourly rate for male workers, and no job security.

The fact that women are responsible for family life and the home is useful for the bosses in two ways. Firstly it ensures that domestic chores are done, unpaid, so that they don't have to provide and pay for those services. Secondly it provides a large group of people who can be brought into industry if more workers are needed, can be given low wages and poor conditions, and then kicked out, back into the home when capitalism's going through a bad patch and can't continue expanding.

WORKERS AND MOTHERS

Since the Second World War married women have worked in large numbers, but previously it was mainly single girls who got paid employment. While at the turn of the century only one in ten married women were employed, this rose to one in three between 1945 and 1961, and to over a half in 1979. But by 1980 the numbers of employed women had begun to decline. When women were needed in production, such as during the Second World War, all at once the ideas about a woman's place being at home were quickly shelved. Instead women were told they could be good workers and good mothers whilst "backing Britain". Nurseries and canteens sprang up in order to make it possible for women to work in the munition factories. In the fifties and sixties with a shortage of labour, women were encouraged to work. But now, when rotten capitalism hits another crisis and needs to shed workers, cut production and savage public spending, a new attack is launched on the 'working mother'. Thatcher starts to talk about a return to Victorian values. Its purpose is to weaken the defence of women's jobs and open the way to pushing them back into the home.

Although many miners have changed their attitudes to women during the strike and are now proud of their wives' activities in the struggle, there are still trade unionists and indeed striking miners who are hostile to women's activities.

Ideas which were formed in our earliest years and which are confirmed in every news-



Top Left: Asian women strikers at Kewals, Birmingham
Top Right: Abortion rights demonstration, 1979

paper and TV broadcast don't give way at the first push. On all sides women are presented as the caterers for male consumption. This is most obvious in our role as cook, house cleaner and nurse but extends to our bodies and personalities. Women are presented and expected to present themselves as glamorous objects of sexual pleasure for men. To say this is not to engage in some sort of puritanism or prudery.

Thatcher's "Victorian values" include a stifling hypocrisy which covered up and denied sexual pleasure and attraction. The last thirty years has seen an enormous release from these dishonest moral constraints. But the 'sexual revolution' didn't equalise the situation between men and women.

In our society it is overwhelmingly women who must be attractive to men, who must conform to certain ideals and standards that stare out at us from every magazine, from the TV screen. In millions of images and not just

Keep the groups going

We print below an interview with Carol Greathead a miner's wife from the Hatfield Main wives' group in Yorkshire. Carol is on the wives' national coordinating committee.

What sort of meeting would you like to see take place in the miners' wives' movement now?

What I would like to see happen is that a national miners' wives' conference is called with a delegate from every wives' group and support group. It should be held over a couple of days. We'd like to develop a national organisation and develop a relationship to the NUM.

There are lots of people who feel they've been left out. There are ten pits in our area and I'm the only one on the steering committee. I think there should be ten delegates.

At the last conference you were elected onto the national coordinating committee - How do you see the wives' organisations developing in the future?

By going round a meeting a lot of people I've found out that a lot of women after the strike will not be able to go back to what they did before the strike - like sitting at home and being a housewife.

There's a lot that's to be done for the working class and we women can do it. Lots of things are affecting our communities like cuts in the National Health Service and in education and there's a lot of solidarity work with others that are struggling.

I hope the NUM will recognise us for the work we've been doing in the strike and that we will be able to coordinate with them in some things.

There must be no end to the wives' groups after the strike, it's opened our eyes.

How do you see the role of women in the strike, is it more than just backing their men?

The women have kept this strike going as long as it has. The women are in the front and not behind, we are the backbone of the strike.

Our role isn't just to mash tea and make sandwiches but lots more. Wives have done things in this strike we've never done before in our lives. We've been out fundraising,

speaking at meetings, been picketing. This has become a political battle, not just making tea.

You talked about another national conference, this time made up of lots of delegates from every area. What do you think such a conference should discuss?

It should discuss things like a national miners' wives' organisation and its relationship to the NUM. It should discuss the strike and what we are fighting for and how to spread the action. It should discuss the issues affecting our communities and workplaces as well as about picketing. And, although we are not NUM members, we should have a say in terms of the settlement of the strike. We would want to issue statements from the conference which say all these things. The conference would take women forward and take up the idea of maintaining the organisation after the strike. □



Bernie Malone

MIDLANDS' WIVES

MINERS' WIVES AND other women's support groups have set up a Midlands Women's Coordinating Committee. On September 1st, nearly 100 women, the majority of them miners' wives, met to discuss the work of wives' groups and support committees and to see how this could be strengthened.

Many of the wives had not had this opportunity before and everybody enjoyed this aspect of the day, hearing of both the successes and problems of other groups. All were agreed on one aspect; women had found themselves doing things they hadn't known they could do - organising catering and finance on a big scale, speaking in public and so forth.

The participants in the conference showed that this affect spread beyond the miners' wives. Even women who had been active before in unions or Labour Party had found themselves stepping forward to take the lead. For instance, in Kidderminster, the Labour Party women's section was the starting point. For the town's support committee. In some colleges young women had been in the forefront of the fight the miners' cause. In Birmingham, the street collections and distribution network is run by

women trade unionists who went on from that to organise the conference itself.

EXTEND THE FIGHTBACK

The conference wanted to build on this activity and to extend the fightback against the attacks that have been made by the Thatcher Government against working class women. Several workshops proposed that the new committee should continue after the miners' strike to lead the fight against Health Service cutbacks, nursery closures and redundancies. This had overwhelming support especially from miners' wives who say they want to continue using their new-found confidence and to pass on their experience to others. More immediately they want to meet and discuss with dockers' wives.

Widening the struggle was one of the themes of a speech by Carol Greathead, a wife from Hatfield Main and a member of the National Women's Coordinating Committee. Carol de-



Mark Rusher (IFL)

going back!"



ported by Scottish miners, 1984
Hatfield Main Wives Group

tortions that wreak emotional havoc on so many people. We cannot guess what sexual relations will look like under socialism, but we can say that love and attraction will, unlike their fate under capitalism, be freed from exploitation.

We can see that the oppression of women in capitalist society has its roots not in legal inequalities nor in a sort of conspiracy by men to keep them down but in the condemnation of women to domestic labour within the family. Feminists have always argued that women's oppression is due to men and that only a united struggle by women can alter this.

COMMON INTEREST?

Against this revolutionary socialists argue that it is the capitalist system of production which leads to women's oppression in contemporary society. We argue that the condemnation to childrearing and domestic labour in the tiny family unit can only be overcome in a society that plans the economy for social need, not for private profit. Only the working class, men and women together, have the numbers and the organisation and the power to put an end to capitalism. Therefore the road to women's liberation lies through the abolition of capitalism - a task that requires a united working class.

The feminists are also wrong when they assume that all or at least all but a tiny minority of women have a common interest in ending their oppression. Whilst it is true that all women suffer some degree of oppression, even Margaret Thatcher must have met prejudice and discrimination on her road to the top, the women of the ruling class can unload most of the oppression onto the backs of working class or lower middle class women. They have cooks, nannies, nurses to look after their husbands and children. Since they share the benefits of their husbands' exploitation of the working class they have no interest in freeing working class women. Quite the opposite, Thatcher is no sister to the miners' wives as they well know. And no Womens Movement that tries to ignore class differences and include upper middle and working class women can mount a struggle for women's liberation.

Working class women are the most cruelly exploited and oppressed in capitalist society. Often they bear a double or triple burden. Exploited at work like men, they are, except in certain professions or white collar jobs, relegated to lower paid jobs or

grades. Added to low pay and bad conditions at work is their 'job' at home. Working class women have thus the most to gain from their class's liberation and from their liberation from domestic slavery. Also they have, in the unions and in workplace organisation the instruments to organise for this fight. The miners' wives have shown an impressive ability to organise. By spreading such organisation across the working class, by building a truly mass movement of working class women the forces for socialism and womens' liberation will be at least doubled.

NOT FADE AWAY

That is why it is so important that the movement of the women of the mining communities does not fade away after the end of the strike. There are many many struggles in the here and now that women need to be organised for. To link up with the health workers to defend our hospitals, with education workers to defend schools with women workers who need extra help to put up a strong fight against losing their jobs. The NUM women's groups must not perish. The mining communities need them and so do other sections of the working class.

Whilst the great task of women's liberation cannot be solved by small scale voluntary measures like husbands sharing the housework or baby sitting, women do need help here and now to play a full part in the struggles ahead. That means that the union, the men and the women need to plan and organise to make this possible. We need creches, meeting facilities, materials for publications to build up a movement. Militant women need to link up with rank and file men to force the changes in the unions to make this possible. Every union with women in membership should have a special organisation for them so that they can raise questions that directly affect them. The union officialdom is largely unsympathetic to women. In unions with a large preponderance of women a tiny minority of officials are women. The cause of workers' democracy in the unions, the fight to make the fat salaried, elected for life officials accountable to the members is also the cause of women. The minor part of the TUC's agenda devoted to women and the absence of many male delegates from these debates indicates the bureaucracy's patronising indifference to women workers. If there is to be a working class womens movement based on women in the unions or whose husbands are unionised but linking up with working class women as housewives, tenants and unemployed youth, then it cannot and must not await the initial

tive of the union officials. We must challenge those officials who praise women's organisation to help us. We must fight those who try to sabotage and prevent it. We must train our own leaders and organisers.

We revolutionaries believe that a mass working class womens movement that seriously fights the attacks on women, that defends past gains and goes onto the offensive for things we badly need will find out in practice that no plan of action that ignores the need to replace capitalism root and branch can really liberate women. To achieve this means sweeping away the whole paraphernalia of the bosses' state - the various upper class judges now jailing miners, the police thug squads that terrorise Hatfield, the army that murders unarmed civilians on the streets of Northern Ireland. We believe that the party of Kinnock and Tony Benn is both unwilling and unable to settle accounts with the bosses once and for all. Consequently it cannot create a truly socially owned, democratically-planned economy. In the fight to defend the interests of working class women, to build an organised movement we are confident that the best fighters will rally to the cause of revolutionary communism and help build a leadership capable of leading the fight for working class power and womens liberation to victory. ■

by Helen Ward

...AND AFTER

"The revolution made a heroic effort to destroy the family hearth - that archaic, stuffy and stagnant institution in which the woman of the toiling classes performs galley labour from childhood to death. The place of the family as a shut-in petty enterprise was to be occupied, according to the plans, by a finished system of social care and accommodation: maternity houses, child-care centres, kindergartens, schools, social dining rooms, social laundries, first-aid stations, hospitals, sanatoria, athletic organisations, moving picture theatres etc. The complete absorption of the housekeeping functions of the family by institution of the socialist society, uniting all generations in solidarity and mutual aid, was to bring to woman, and thereby to the loving couple, a real liberation from the thousand-year-old fetters."

Leon Trotsky: *Revolution Betrayed*



John Sturrock (Report)

Above: Women demonstrate during the 1980 Steel Strike

DEBATE THE WAY FORWARD

clared, "I think that the miners' wives here today can be the basis of a movement that should link up with women at work, a movement that could really change things. For the last five years of Thatcherism we have been on the defensive, people have been frightened to fight back in case they lose their jobs and because they have not fought back they have lost them anyway. Women have been hit hard by job losses, low pay and loss of services. The example of ordinary working class women fighting Thatcher's plans can be an inspiration to all women. We can help them overcome the idea that nothing can be done."

Later in the afternoon, conference resolved to ask the national coordinating committee to hold a conference at which all miners' wives' support committees would be represented and would be a working conference taking resolutions. Meanwhile organisation of the new Midlands Committee went ahead. The conference resolved that the new committee should have a majority of miners' wives on it, including delegates from every wives' group in the Midland area, as well as representatives from the East Midlands. It

charged the new committee with producing information sheets on welfare and civil rights, and with ensuring that there is a central phone number staffed for advice and coordination. It also felt that the wives' groups, with the support of women from the town committees and other women's organisations should increase their activity to publicise the miners' cause and to win increased support. This would include both picketing and a roadshow to tour women's workplaces, community groups, school gates etc appealing for money, delegations to picket lines and solidarity strike action. The week of action planned by the West Midlands TUC for October was seen as a focus for this activity.

BRINGING POLITICS INTO IT

Differences emerged in some workshops and in the plenary session. A number of feminists felt that socialist women, especially supporters of left wing newspapers, shouldn't be telling

miners' wives what to do. Workers Power supporters challenged this view, explaining that we don't try to dominate miners' wives - we would certainly get short shrift if we did - but we certainly do argue for the policies and activities in the strike which we think necessary, and for our politics on wider issues such as the police, race, women's liberation and so on.

A number of workshops did discuss the direction of the strike and one report to the plenary called for strengthening the democracy in running the strike - regular mass meetings, wives' delegates on strike committees and no secret negotiations. This was not popular with some miners' wives who felt that Scargill was being attacked and one declared, to applause, "Arthur Scargill is the best leader ever of the NUM and he can have as many secret meetings as he likes." Other women trade unionists replied that Scargill himself was not being attacked but that the rank and file had to be in control of the strike, especially when the rats on the TUC were eager for a settlement and would be leaning on the NUM Executive.

The debate during the conference showed

that women - miners' wives, trade unionists and others - can and do discuss politics and make policies. If the new committee and future meetings were to, 'stop bringing politics into it' which one woman called for, it would kill the committee stone dead. Organising picketing, arranging and briefing speakers, writing leaflets for women workers, all these are political activities which mean using political arguments about what the Tories are doing, what the unions are for, why the police are violent and so on.

TRUST AND COMRADESHIP

But the debates that will undoubtedly take place can be in the atmosphere of trust and comradeship felt by those who are working hard together for a common cause - winning the miners' strike, supporting working class women in struggle and turning the tide against the Tories. ■

by Sue Thomas

FRENCH CAR WORKERS UNDER ATTACK

AS WORKERS AT the giant Citroen plant at Aulnay took their annual holidays in August, the French government, under new Socialist Premier, Fabius approved management's plans to sack nearly 2000 of them.

One thousand nine hundred and fifty workers received letters firing them and telling them not to return to work when the plant re-opens at the beginning of September. In order to ensure that none of the 1,950 got back into the plant, Citroen set up huge steel frames - popularly known as 'rat cages' - to act as chicanes at the entrance to the factory. All workers have to go through the rat cages and present their identity cards to security guards at the gate.

Management are determined to see that there is no fightback by the workers against the sackings and the rat cages. When local union leader A. Ka Ghazir tried to get in through the main doors, rather than through the rat cages, the bosses called in the hated CRS riot police who beat up Ghazir viciously.

As the first shift returned to work on Monday 3rd September, a series of strikes and go-slows crippled production as workers protested against the sackings, the rat cages and the attack on Ghazir. At the moment the union leadership and the workers seem undecided as to how to respond to the bosses' actions. Unless decisive action is taken quickly - in the form of an occupation and an all-out strike - the initiative will pass to the bosses.

For Citroen - part of the massive Peugeot group, France's largest private firm - the sackings at Aulnay are particularly important. They are the spearhead of a new wave of attacks on employment levels in the car industry. Last year the Peugeot combine made a net loss of Ffr 2.6 billion (about £220m) Its total debt is running at Ffr 45 billion (about £4 billion). The French car industry bosses as a whole are trying to launch an all-out drive against the workers for higher profits.

Last month a government commission recommended 50,000 car workers should be sacked by the end of the decade. The outgoing Peugeot combine boss, Parayre, chopped 55,000 jobs from the pay-roll between 1979 and 1982. The new boss, Calvet, is no slouch either. 11,500 jobs were slashed in 1983, his first year in charge of the cars division.

The Mitterrand government means to go through



Occupation against redundancies at Peugeot-Talbot's Poissy plant, 1982

with a 'restructuring' of the car industry even more vicious than the 25,000 sackings that are to take place in the steel industry. When Citroen first proposed the sackings, in May an immediate, if brief occupation of the plant forced Mitterrand's government to tell management to think again. All they came up with was increased re-training for sacked workers. That was enough for the avowed 'socialist' Mitterrand to give the sackings the green light.

The struggle at Citroen is an important test for the French working class in the face of this new bosses offensive. The Citroen showdown is the first major class battle since Mitterrand changed his government during the summer when most workers were on holiday. The resignation of Socialist Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy in July prompted Mitterrand to reshape his government, with a weather eye on the elections for the Assembly in 1986. Mitterrand gave no ministerial posts to the French Communist Party (PCF) who previously had held four ministerial posts and appointed his young protege, Laurent Fabius, as Prime Minister. The

move was designed to try to avert a major right-wing electoral victory. Mitterrand hopes to gain votes by explicitly moving his presidency to the right, breaking with the PCF and going full steam ahead with his austerity programme.

At the same time Mitterrand has attempted to spike the guns of the right's calls for 'liberty', while at the same time preparing himself for the distinct possibility that the right will gain a majority in the Assembly elections of 1986 - two years before his Presidency is due to come to an end. Mitterrand's proposal to call a referendum on 'liberty' shows how the constitution allows the President to 'rise above' the Assembly and use the referendum to endorse his decisions. At the moment, the referendum may seem to be being used as a tactic against the parties of the right. However it can equally well be used against workers in struggle.

The removal of the PCF ministers satisfied both coalition parties. For Mitterrand it was a move towards 'consensus' politics. For the PCF it was an opportunity to try and halt their current decline.

The PCF is the major party of the French working class. It has the largest individual membership with a large, if shrinking and slightly ramshackle, network of factory cells. During the recent European elections, the PCF suffered disastrously. Its vote was barely greater than that of the Fascist Front National.

The PCF was paying the price of its continued support - in office - of Mitterrand's anti-working class policies. With over 2 million unemployed (9.6%) and increasing inflation (currently 7.5%), the PCF's star was showing signs of waning, not only in electoral terms, but also in terms of its ability to control rank and file workers' resistance, as shown by events at Poissy at Christmas, and in Lorraine in the Spring (see WP 51,53 for full accounts).

With the PCF out of government it is likely that there will be an increase in the level of the fightback against Mitterrand. The Communist-led union federation, the CGT, is the biggest and most disciplined of the French unions, and has the greatest implantation in major industries. Official backing for workers' struggles is now more likely, but only on the CGT leadership's terms. The response of the CGT big guns will be to ensure that any fightback remains under their control, and that the main thrust of any action is to increase the standing of the PCF and its ability to influence Mitterrand.

For Mitterrand and Fabius, the Citroen dispute will be a major test of their new-look government. By holding fast against such struggles, and sugaring the austerity pill with promises of massive 'youth training' (ie slave labour), they hope to ride the coming storm. French workers must ensure that there is no 'honeymoon' for Fabius. The Citroen dispute must spark a wave of protest through the car industry against the proposed 50,000 redundancies. PCF and CGT leaders must be forced to initiate action against the sacking and support all struggles for jobs. However, workers must also organise on their own behalf within all the union federations to fightback against all job losses and to ensure that the bureaucrats are unable to derail and betray their struggles. With such methods, a famous victory can be won against Mitterrand's austerity plans and the needs of capital. ■

by Emil Gallet

Cosmetics can't hide apartheid's ugly face

DESPITE ITS NEW constitution, South Africa remains a bloodsoaked racist dictatorship. The aftermath of the August and September elections has witnessed school boycotts by thousands of black children, and massive protests against rent rises by blacks in the townships around Johannesburg.

Sharpeville, the scene of apartheid's massacre of 69 unarmed black protesters in 1960, was once again the scene of violence. The police went in with machine guns and rhino-whips. The 'official' death toll, as we go to press, is 31 with many more wounded. More have probably died, the majority having been killed by the police.

The new president, P.W.Botha, moved quickly and violently against his black opponents in a desperate bid to pretend to the world that 'democracy' is flourishing in South Africa.

MOCKERY OF DEMOCRACY

The truth is that the new constitution is a mockery even of bourgeois democracy. So much so that even The Times was forced to declare the new regime an "unrepresentative sham" (1.9.84). The new parliament has three chambers - one for the whites with 175 MP's, one for the Coloureds (the racist state's name for people of mixed race) with 85 MP's and one for the Indians with 45 MP's. Not only does this give the white chamber an overall majority over the other two but the fact that each chamber's votes are taken as a whole means that one half plus one of the white chamber can veto all decisions. On top of this, there is a massively strengthened executive, headed by the president, P.W.Botha. He, in turn will preside over an extremely powerful advisory council of 60 - 15 of whom he himself can pick, 20 of whom are picked by the white chamber. This body is charged with resolving disputes between the chambers and will, together with the Botha selected cabinet, constitute the real concentration of power - white power - in the new government.

It is not really the constitutional niceties that guarantee the maintenance of white power. It is the fact that the 23 million blacks, 73% of the pop-

ulation, are totally excluded from the new set up. The 4.5 million whites, the 2.5 million coloured and the 800,000 Indians get 305 MP's, the blacks none. The question is, why has the regime chosen to give non-whites any MP's at all?

Several factors explain this apparent 'reform'. Botha and company are keen to incorporate a layer of non-whites into the racist regime. Without giving them any real power they hope to use them as a transmission belt for offsetting the influence of the intransigent opponents of apartheid in the African National Congress (ANC). The Coloured Labour Party, which dominates the coloured chamber, is a good example of this. Uttering hopelessly utopian and deceptive statements about defeating apartheid 'from within' and with slogans like 'Forward with Faith' the Rev. Allan Hendrickse, its leader, has become a useful propaganda weapon for the white regime. It can advertise him as an example of the regime's reform and tolerance.

Incorporating traitorous leaders is only the beginning though. Through them Botha hopes to incorporate the slightly more privileged non-white communities as a means of dividing them. By incorporating coloured and Indians the regime hopes to split them from the black majority. This follows a growing identification amongst the coloured population in particular, with their black brothers and sisters. It follows their growing self-identification as blacks in common struggle against the white regime.

MASSIVE BOYCOTT

The truth is that the election results clearly suggest that this strategy of incorporation has fallen at the first fence. The United Democratic Front (UDF) formed in August 1983 to campaign for opposition to the new constitution and a boycott of the elections, was successful in achieving its objectives. Denouncing the likes of Hendrickse as traitors, the UDF organised a massive boycott amongst the coloured and Indian population. The stooges who did get their parliamentary seats and salaries were elected by only one-fifth of their re-



spective electorates. Amongst the coloured, only 18% of those eligible to vote did so. In Capetown, where there is a large coloured population, only 10% of those registered to vote did so, and only 40% of those eligible to vote had registered. A similar scale of boycott was organised for the Indian elections. With 30% of the Indian population living below the poverty line, most have little reason to identify with the Pretoria regime.

To counter the UDF's campaign, the rhino-whip wielding police went in. In this 'democratic election' all anti-election meetings were banned. UDF protests outside polling stations were set upon by police - even causing BBC commentators to criticise the police action. During the Asian elections, seven protesters were shot.

Frustration at these oppressive measures has built up to an enormous pitch. The black townships rightly feel themselves to be under siege. The raising of rents in Sharpeville was enough to turn frustration into violent protest. Black councillors, who had collaborated with the regime, were killed when this

violence began, but the main victims of violence were the protesters themselves.

The contradictions that lie at the heart of the apartheid regime cannot be forever subdued by rhino-whips. The South African economy is vulnerable to two things. Its dependence on gold makes it highly vulnerable to fluctuations in the world's money markets. With an economic upturn in the imperialist heartlands, particularly the US, confidence in the dollar, ironically, weakens the South African economy. Today the value of the Rand is falling and consumer prices are rising at a monthly rate of 12%. Last year GNP fell by 3% and, significantly, foreign investment is declining. The recent bombings in Johannesburg are likely to deter investors even more. Indeed, it was partly to attract more foreign investment that the constitutional cosmetic exercise was initiated. Its clear failure is a bad omen for the economy. The Governor of the Reserve Bank, Gerhard de Koch, said that, "South Africans have got to accept they are entering a period of slump and inflation."

The second threat to the South

African economy, the decisive one in the end, comes from the enormous black proletariat. Just as it is politically discriminated against, so it is economically. In the mines a white miner, in 1981, received 1,250 Rand per month while a black got 220 R. Inflation has widened the gap. The development of black trade unions such as the General Workers' Union, the South African Allied Workers' Union and the Federation of South African Trade Unions, are beginning to challenge that economic discrimination. The two year old National Union of Mineworkers, for example, is threatening to strike for higher wages. In response the employers have promised to take on workers from the enormous pool of unemployed to break the strike. The stage is set for a massive battle. If it takes place the National Union of Mineworkers in this country must, at every level, declare its support and dockers must ensure that no goods move to or from South Africa.

BLACK WORKING CLASS

If the strike takes place it will demonstrate the power of the black working class. That power should not be dissipated into what are, in the end, class collaborationist schemes for change pushed forward by the UDF. Nor should it be subordinated to the military campaigns of the ANC. While we commend the militancy, heroism and intransigence against the apartheid state of these organisations we cannot endorse their subordination of the working class to either the whole 'community' or the needs of a guerilla war.

The apartheid state rests on the cruel exploitation of the black majority. Without that exploitation there could be no white supremacist state. That is why we say that the struggle to end apartheid is a struggle to end exploitation. This has, at its heart, a class struggle, one that the black working class, leading into battle behind it the rural poor, the unemployed and all fighters against apartheid, can alone take forward to final victory. ■

by Mark Hoskisson

AT EVERY STAGE of the six month British miners' strike the bosses have sought to break the strike by importing Polish coal. The Ostia, for example, was laden with coal from "socialist Poland". Its delivery served the dual purpose of earning currency to shore up Poland's hated military government and enabling British Steel bosses to break the grip of the miners' strike.

While Poland's 'socialist' masters break the miners' strike they are also set on destroying the independent organisations and militancy of the Polish workers represented in the 10 million strong Solidarnosc union in 1980 and 1981. Despite enormous pressure in every workplace and apartment block the regime's June attempt to hold one candidate elections to endorse its stooges was undermined by a highly successful boycott campaign. This left the authorities able to only claim 74% attendance as opposed to the normal 99.9%! Underground Solidarnosc put the figure at 20% less than that. Despite martial law and ruthless censorship the underground networks of Solidarnosc remain relatively intact to this day. Underground papers proliferate. The leading figure on the Solidarnosc Temporary Coordinating Commission - Zbigniew Bujak - has survived on the run for over two and a half years.

BREAK RESOLVE

The regime has visibly failed to break the resolve of the principal Solidarnosc activists. In May they tried to deal with the Catholic Church to persuade "the eleven" major detainees to agree to 2½ years exile or abstinence from political or trade union activity in exchange for their release. In July it moved to try the 4 leading intellectual members of the workers defence committee (KOR) - Kuron, Michnik, Wujec and Romaszewski. Again amidst frantic dealing between the Polish top



POLISH COAL AND SOLIDARITY

bureaucrats and the bishops and cardinals the trial was first off and suspended and then terminated when the regime announced an amnesty for 600 political prisoners. Those freed include Solidarnosc and KOR leaders as well as Moczulski and other leaders of the avowedly pro-capitalist, virulently 'Greater Poland' nationalist, "Confederation for an Independent Poland" (KPN).

The amnesty reflects the regime's inability to risk a protracted show trial of KOR's leaders given the depth of support for Solidarnosc amongst Poland's workers. Over one million still pay regular dues to it. The state unions set up after Solidarnosc was illegalised have failed to attract even sufficient time-servers or dupes to give them any credibility.

The amnesty does not signify any weakening of the Polish bureaucracy's war against the working class. Bogdan Lis is still being held on treason charges. Trade union activity will result in the rearrest of those who have been amnestied.

The amnesty was also intended as a signal to the international banks and Western regimes that Jaruzelski's military regime wants to come in from the economic cold of the last three years. Its debts stand at a massive \$28 billion. It wants to press urgently ahead with its bid to join the International

Monetary Fund. What better way of earning precious hard currency and signalling its desire to co-exist and fully cooperate with international capitalism than helping Margaret Thatcher and Ian MacGregor break the miners' strike?

The import of Polish coal opens up once again the question of what attitude should militant workers take towards Solidarnosc? Arthur Scargill has never hidden his preference for the regime's bureaucrats and fake house unions. He distanced the NUM from Solidarnosc in its periods of open activity - although many areas did support a struggle that involved the overwhelming majority of Polish miners. Back in May he claimed that the Polish unions were repaying him by supporting a coal blockade. Nothing of the sort has happened. Successive NUM delegations have left the Polish Embassy tight lipped and empty handed.

RELIGION CRAZED

Arthur Scargill was not alone in this stance. Leading Nottinghamshire strike militant Paul Whiston was recently interviewed in the *Leninist* Speaking of Solidarnosc he said, "You've got to realise that with Solidarity, anything the Church has got its dirty little paws in I'm suspicious of immediately. I mean we made ourselves very unpopular by saying so at our branch meetings..." Claiming Poland to be "a socialist country", Paul goes on to look at the regime's scabbing "unemotionally"... "Poland's got problems with its balance of payments and its economy etc, and an opportunity to sell coal would seem to quite a lot of them to be an ideal opportunity to what seems to be a downward spiralling chute." The view that Solidarnosc was a religion crazed movement against a basically 'socialist' government leaves Paul and Arthur Scargill providing cover for the Jaruzelski and his scabbing pact with Thatcher.

Unlike Poland's house unions Solidarnosc units in Poland's coalfields have come out in support of the NUM. We print some of the resolutions below. They denounce the regime for behaving like capitalists and coal owners intent on saving their bureaucratic skins by the sweat of Poland's miners and at the expense of British mineworkers.

Poland is a country where the capitalists have been expropriated and a planned economy established. To that extent we must recognise that it is a historic gain for the working class which we defend. However from day one of the creation of that state the working class has been deprived of political power which has remained the monopoly of an extremely privileged and corrupt bureaucracy which holds on to power through armed force. Only if the planned economy was taken into the hands of the workers themselves could it really be used to effect a transition towards socialism - towards ever greater equality, the gradual abolition of the state, the annihilation of the morals and culture of capitalist society. Until that day we cannot agree with Paul or Arthur Scargill that Poland is 'socialist'

Whenever the workers have moved against their



"socialist leaders" they have done so with traditional working class methods and organisations. They have mobilised in mass strikes and occupations and waged a war against bureaucratic privilege, inequality and repression. Solidarnosc had its origins as just such a movement and organised millions of Polish workers under its banner. As everywhere the workers have had no shortage of false friends. The church has always tried to climb aboard the bandwagon, contain the militancy and use the working class struggle to increase its own bargaining power. The KOR intellectuals tried to steer the movement towards compromise with the bureaucrats on the road of gradual reform in the direction of capitalism. Out and out counter-revolutionaries did raise their voice within Solidarnosc. Thatcher and Reagan also claimed to be its friend. But none of this is reason to turn away from the legitimate struggles and demands of the Polish workers and offer the hand of friendship to their "socialist" masters.

TASTED DEFEAT

The Polish working class remains prepared to fight. Most of the old arguments for reliance on church or state that led the workers to bloody defeat in 1981 are circulating in even stronger form today. They predominate in an underground that has tasted defeat and which is under enormous pressure to exercise caution by the Catholic hierarchy. We must help win the argument that only by organising for a political revolution to take the planned economy into their own hands can the Polish workers defeat their bureaucratic masters. Against the clerics and nationalists we must win the argument that it is the international working class - and not Thatcher or the Pope - who are the only natural consistent allies of the Polish workers. We will not win that argument by being silent about Jaruzelski's strike breaking.

Thatcher and MacGregor have shown that they stand firm against the class solidarity that is expressed in these resolutions. So too General Jaruzelski. NUM members must raise their voice to break all links with Jaruzelski's scab house unions. Black all Polish coal to win the miners' strike and hasten the day of Jaruzelski's destruction at the hands of the Polish workers. ■

by D. Hughes

RESOLUTION BY UNDERGROUND SOLIDARITY IN MAZOWSZE REGION

For four months the British miners have been on strike against a programme of mass closures of mines for economic reasons. The miners are threatened with unemployment. The government has rejected compromise solutions and has resorted to severe police methods against the strikers. Thousands of miners have been arrested; hundreds have been hospitalised and one has been killed.

The government of the Polish People's Republic, despite hypocritical condemnations of the activities of the British police in the columns of the regime press and by the

regime's pseudo-trade unionists, is profiting from the export of coal to Britain. It sells dirt cheap coal which has been mined in scandalously neglected working conditions and with reckless exploitation of the labour force and the coal field. The slave labour of the Polish miner serves to break the resistance of the British miner.

British miners! The true sentiments of Polish trade unionists towards the authorities of the Polish People's Republic and their practices was shown in the recent electoral farce which was boycotted by the

workers. In the prevailing conditions of terror, the Polish workers' movement is at present not in a position to undertake protest actions. But you may be certain that as you have supported and are supporting our struggle, so we are in solidarity with you. We strongly oppose every case where force is used against workers struggling for their rights and interests.

Long Live Trade Union Solidarity!

Warsaw, 26 June 1984

RESOLUTION BY UNDERGROUND SOLIDARITY IN UPPER SILESIA

The following Solidarity Co-ordinating Committee statement was read out at 10 a.m. on Sunday 17 June by the Solidarity underground radio station in Upper Silesia, Poland's main coal-mining region.

'The Underground Provisional Co-ordinating Committee of Solidarity miners vigorously protests against the present policy of the Polish People's Republic on the management of our major source of wealth - coal. Selling it on foreign markets at competitive prices (ie. at less than world market prices) is first of all a violation of the Jastrzebie Agreements (August 1980) in which it was clearly established that coal is a national resource which must be used ra-

tionally. The above-mentioned pricing policy transforms investment in the mines into a straight economic loss.

Secondly, the Polish government's policy blatantly contradicts official propaganda which declares respect for the miners' dignity and endeavour. Thirdly coal distribution and trade is organised outside of any social control. The Polish government has no right to behave like a mine-owner and to dispose of the national wealth as it pleases. Only the damned capitalists and dictators act in this way. Fourthly, the Polish government's policy in this field affects the basic interests of brother miners from other countries who lose their jobs as a result of it.

NUM TOUR IN IRELAND

ON A FOUR day visit to Galway and Dublin, organised by the Irish Workers' Group, Colin Ward, chairman of the Keresley strike committee, and Barbara Ward of the Keresley women's support committee, addressed Trade Unionists in a number of workplaces. These direct contacts won a powerful response with generous on the spot collections and pledges of more to come.

Forty people turned out to a public meeting in Galway to discuss the issues of the strike. A morning spot on national radio was organised where Colin and Barbara spelt out the determination of the miners and their families and explained how the NCB had provoked the strike initially.

Ninety people attended an IWG public meeting in Dublin and debated the issues of solidarity, the role of women, the support of the ethnic groups, picket defence and the general strike.

Three resolutions were adopted on a unanimous show of hands. The meeting condemned the Dublin Government's prosecution of Welsh miners for collecting without a permit and also demanded the return of the seized money to the NUM. Secondly, it protested the presence of the Special Branch outside the meeting place. Finally, it called on the Dublin Trades Council to open up its solidarity work by organising regular meetings for union activists from the city's workplaces.

THE RIGHT CHALKS UP ITS VICTORIES

THE WEAKNESS AND hollowness of the NUM's "victory" on the first day of the TUC was reflected in the victory after victory for the Centre-Right throughout the rest of the week.

On Tuesday the condemnation of Murray and the New Realists for betraying the NGA was totally gutted by the AUEW's amendment. The General Council is free as a bird to do the same again when the courts fine a union. And it isn't hard to guess which union that will be!

On Tuesday afternoon, Neil Kinnock was off the leash, blaming the miners' "violence" for Thatcher's onslaught on trade union and civil rights. He felt free to read the riot act to the miners on "respect for democracy", and got a standing ovation from all - including the NUM delegation.

That Kinnock got away with this lecture, drafted for him by the Shadow Cabinet, who insisted this message be taken to Brighton, in the middle of a strike which has seen the most outrageous brutality by the police against the miners, is a terrible comment on both the TUC and the Labour Party leaderships. The fact that police brutality was going on in Kent and Yorkshire at the same time as the TUC only makes their cant all the more nauseating.

The fact that neither the TUC nor Labour Party leaderships have been condemned explicitly by the leaders of the left wing is a testimony to the left's spinelessness and to their unseriousness about replacing the likes

of Kinnock and Basnett.

On Wednesday, by rejecting the resolution calling for the TUC to permanently leave the National Economic Development Council (Neddy), the Congress signalled its early return to this body. It sat there impotently for four years with Thatcher's hit-men before the GCHQ union ban. Basnett and Co can hardly wait to get their snouts back into the trough with the CBI, to be once more padded and down the plush-carpetted "corridors of power".

By defeating resolutions calling for withdrawal of co-operation with the government's YTS false training schemes, the Congress again signalled its approval of this system for providing cheap non-union labour to anti-union employers. A similar defeat of a resolution condemning no-strike deals indicated that the Centre-Right faction of retreat and capitulation were firmly in the saddle.

These gentlemen have now abandoned the misnomer "new realists". The British trade union bureaucracy hates anything "new" like the plague. Murray called it "the oldest realism in trade union history" - that is, recognising when you are in a "no win situation" and surrendering.

To cap it off nicely the TUC shelved indefinitely its plans for a daily paper. Who needs one when Maxwell's new plaything - the *Daily Mirror* - is doing such a lovely job of blasting "miners' violence", leading the pack for "Our Neil" in his onslaught on the right to re-select

Labour MPs, and pressing hard for a sell-out in the miners strike. What more could the likes of Murray wish for?

What does it matter that the miners on the picket line are daily slandered by the bosses' press? What does it matter that leaders who fight like Scargill are vilified or lampooned?

Never was the need for a voice of the labour movement sold actively in every work place so obvious. If the photographs of police violence at Orgreave that appeared in *The Miner* appeared daily in every unionised factory and office, the NUM would have had 100 times the support it has.

Willis, Basnett and Co know this and that is precisely why they will not shell out a penny from their vast resources to create a daily paper.

The shift to the right at the Congress was finally shown by the reinforced centre-right majority on the General Council, when all commentators had resigned themselves to a shift leftwards in the year of the longest miners' strike ever. This is doubly ominous since now it is the General Council which will set the tone for the TUC's intervention in the miners' strike.

It may have been a nice week out at the seaside for the delegates, but there was little of substance for the miners, and plenty of signs that there are tough battles to come against "our" leaders. ■

WORKERS IN ACTION



TEACHERS PAY: LEARN THE LESSONS OF DEFEAT

"Arbitration has failed teachers, they will be appalled". These were the words of Doug McAvoy, deputy General Secretary of the NUT - on hearing of the arbitrators' decision to award the teachers 5.1%. What he failed to say was that teacher militants have been arguing for years that arbitration was a trap that the NUT should avoid like the plague. It is the likes of McAvoy who have been telling us that arbitration was our best bet and in fact called industrial action in order to achieve it.

The end result of this year's pay rise is that teachers are once again worse off and have seen the most serious campaign of industrial action for years come to nothing. The danger now is that teachers will feel that in order to get more money it will be necessary to concentrate on the contractual negotiations which have been stimulated since July. This would be fatal. The employers are seeking to obtain substantial benefits from these negotiations which we would do well to consider carefully.

Teachers want:-

- * Compulsory dinner duty - this would mean sacking many low paid women who currently supervise meals etc.
- * An entry grade - this would mean even worse pay for newly qualified teachers and power for the employers to 'weed out' the 'unsuitable' (or should that be undesirable?) teachers.
- * Merit payments for outstanding teachers - no guessing what sort of

teachers will get these.

Instead of selling jobs and conditions militants should use the special salaries conference to tie the executive to a set of demands and a plan to action to win them. The executive memorandum would appear to concede certain things that militants have long argued for, most notable a united salary structure and the need for flat rate increases. But nowhere in the document is there any suggestion of how we are to achieve them.

In fact on further reading the executive's proposals change very little. Salary differentials will actually increase ranging from £6,800 to £28,000 for heads. Apart from the initial claim the principle of flat rate is not conceded.

At the salaries conference we should argue around the following demands:

- * Teachers to be paid for the job of teaching, responsibility to be organised collectively, no above scale allowance.
- * All pay rises to be flat rate, only this will benefit lower paid teachers.
- * No reference to arbitration, any settlement must be agreed by a special salaries conference.
- * No concessions on a new contract, no entry grade, no merit payments, no dinner duty.
- * A plan of action to stand alongside next year's salary negotiations culminating in all out strike action and the blocking of all exams if the proposals are not agreed to. ■

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

His conclusion was that, "adoption of the statement would be a great deal better than the alternative, which is slogging it out on the questions of the amendments in Congress."

Why did Lionel the Lamb not want to slog it out? The reason is pretty clear. If those amendments had been taken each union would have had to make clear whether or not it would instruct its members to respect the NUM's picket lines, whether or not it would shell out 10p per week per member to the NUM, whether or not it would support even a one day strike or other action in support of the miners.

Some of the right wing unions - probably the Engineers and GMBATU - would have been flushed into the open. It was doubtless the leaders of these unions Eric Hammond was referring to when he reported that some leaders had commended the resolution to him because it committed them to nothing in practice and they could claim afterwards that their members would not implement it. Other unions would have been forced by their delegations to put their money where their mouths were.

In fact the NUM leaders - despite their threats to take the matter onto the floor of congress - did a deal at the last moment and, in return for an empty resolution, gave the General Council a definite hold on the dispute. This is true despite the so-called categorical assurance from the TUC that it will not interfere in negotiations.

John Lloyd, the influential (in Labour circles) Labour correspondent of the Financial Times reported, "Last

night TUC leaders were rejoicing that 'the miners have come in from the cold' and some forecast the beginning of the end of the 25 week-old strike"

Such rejoicings should be looked at with the gravest suspicions by the miners. The cold these gentlemen refer to is the cold of the picket lines, the streets, the police cells. Of course, it is not the miners themselves that the TUC chiefs want in from the cold. Murray met earlier with the scab-herding police chiefs to plan a possible blockade of Brighton against the miners. He wants them out in the cold alright. But he wants the NUM leaders back in the warm offices of the TUC - with MacGregor and the NCB. He wants an "honourable settlement", not a victory for the NUM and he sees this resolution as a dripfeed of support to the NUM that they will soon be unable to do without - but which the TUC can turn off or on depending on the good behaviour of the NUM.

If the NUM leaders negotiate, show a willingness to "compromise", i.e. sell out on the defence of every job and every pit, if they run down the mass picketing and restrain the miners from "violence" (i.e. from defending themselves against police thuggery and from justified intimidation of scabs) then they will get a little money and, perhaps, some blacking.

The mechanism for controlling the drip-feed of support is the TUC sponsored negotiations between each union and the NUM on support. As the Financial Times again pointed out on 1st September, "... unions retained autonomy to decide in discussion with the NUM what level of support they would offer. For many this is likely to amount to little or nothing." A week later the same paper was talking about a "bid by the TUC leaders to win a degree of control over the dispute as a quid pro quo for delivering the kind of support promised this week at TUC Congress" (FT 8/9/84).

In the light of the resolution the General Council has appointed a three-man Commission, Willis, Buckton and Basnett to liaise regularly with Scargill, Heathfield and McGahey. This body, plus the meetings of the Finance and General Purposes Committee will become the pressure point on the NUM to be "reasonable" and keep the strike "reasonable", "responsible" and ineffective!

The miners and all militants should beware the evil consequences of this shameful Congress evasion of its duty. What it has offered is so elementary as to deserve no praise. What it threatens to do would make

"Black Wednesday" look bright red by comparison!

What must we do to offset this? Militants must step up the fight in every union for solidarity with the miners, the dockers and the supporting action of railwaymen and seamen. Miners must demand total strikers' control over the running of the pickets and accounts of and accountability for the negotiations with the NCB and with the TUC and the other unions.

There must be no slackening of the collections and the campaign to win support from the rank and file of other unions. Every right-winger, every time-server and routinist in the unions will be opposing collections, levies etc on the grounds that it is "all official now" and it must be left to head office to "negotiate" with the NUM.

Above all the striking miners must create a means whereby they and only they can decide directly and free from media pressure whether to accept or reject any deal negotiated. The delegate conference is insufficiently broad-based and representative (and it still all owes the scabs representation). A national ballot has all the defects miners know and would also allow the scabs to vote. Regional ballots would disenfranchise the striking minorities in the scab areas.

Mass meetings of striking miners must have the final say - and this means rank and file miners organising now to make sure any settlement is decided on in this way.

The forces of a sell-out are marshalling to put pressure on miners' leaders. If those leaders want to show that they prefer to be out in the cold with their members than round the fire with the right-wing Judases of the General Council, then they will strengthen rank and file participation in and control over the strike.

They will step up the picketing which alone can isolate the scabs and thwart the Tory media's back-to-work campaign. They will appeal directly to the rank and file of all the unions they need money and blacking from.

Meanwhile, encouraged by the TUC's lukewarm support and their moves to stifle the miners' militancy, Thatcher and her war cabinet are planning new legal, police and perhaps military repression.

It is the duty of all militants to raise, to amplify, to get over to thousands and then millions the need to smash the anti-union laws before they can isolate and smash the miners. And the only way to do this is to win the struggle for a general strike!

CAMEL LAIRDS OCCUPATION

The occupation of a gas rig and "HMS Edin'burgh" at the Cammell Lairds ship yard at Birkenhead, Merseyside, is now in its twelfth week. The sit-in by 100 workers is against management enforced redundancies. The latest redundancies would take the workforce at Lairds down to under 2,000. In the 1940s it was the town's major employer with a workforce of 20,000.

Following Scott Lithgow the attack on jobs in Lairds is part of the continuing offensive against shipyard workers. Faced with competition from cheap labour ship producing countries like South Korea, Britain's bosses want a massive reduction in domestic shipbuilding capacity. Since the shipbuilding industry was nationalised in 1977, 30,000 jobs have gone. Sufficiently pruned of workers the Tories have now announced that 7 yards are to be privatised.

The occupation by the Lairds' workers is in the frontline of the struggle to stop the slaughter. They are now facing a legal attack. The management have taken writs out to enable the police to go in and evict the strikers. On September 13th the court

will hear the case and no doubt grant the bosses an injunction. When the writs were issued a mass picket, 100 miners from Bold colliery in Lancashire, defended the occupation. The same sort of protection and support will be necessary on September 13th. All Merseyside trade unionists and more besides should get down to Lairds on that day.

Like the miners and dockers the Lairds strikers face a Tory press orchestrated back-to-work campaign. Their own version of Silver Birch, Harry Ewers, is getting full backing from the Liverpool Echo for his attempts to help management force through redundancies. He, along with the courts, must be beaten if more jobs in Birkenhead, already one of the worst unemployment black spots, is not to see more workers thrown on the dole. Support the Lairds sit-in!

Send messages of support to: Lol Duffy, c/o Birkenhead Unemployment Centre, 1 Argyle St South, Birkenhead, Merseyside.

BLACK COAL AT LONGBRIDGE

The long running struggle to stop car-workers at the Longbridge plant in Birmingham handling scab coal took a new turn last week. The local trades council spearheaded Miners' Support Committee took the issue to a full Trades Council on September 6th.

At the meeting it was agreed that in the light of the decision of the TUC to support blacking, a letter should be sent to Longbridge convenor and Communist Party member Jack Adams. The letter will demand that the 50,000 tons of scab coal inside the plant be completely blacked.

Adams and his CP cronies on the Stewards' Committee successfully

opposed such blacking at a shop stewards committee in July. They have consistently refused to take solidarity action alongside and in support of the miners. The Trades Council call, however, puts the issue back on the agenda. The fight to get the blacking must be restarted inside the plant.

Such a fight will be backed up by the miners. If Adams continues to sanction the handling of scab coal the Trades Council and Midlands Area Miners have promised a mass picket of the plant. If he does not give a satisfactory reply by September 11th, then picketing will commence. Every trade unionist in Birmingham must support it if it goes ahead. ■

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