

# Socialist ORGANISER

Paper of the Socialist Organiser Alliance No. 179 May 17 1984 25p Claimants and strikers 10p

## 50 face 'riot' charge

50 miners arrested in Mansfield in scuffles following the big NUM demonstration there this Monday have been charged with 'rioting'. They could face *unlimited* fines or jail sentences. This follows the mass arrest of 290 miners in one swoop in Scotland last Thursday, 10th.

## Miners Special p. 5-8

# SOLIDARITY WILL WIN!

RAILWORKERS will begin limited industrial action over pay from May 30. The teachers' unions already have selective strikes underway.

The Yorkshire and Humberside regional TUC has called a 24 hour strike in support of the miners for Monday May 21. The Wales TUC has scheduled a 'day of action' for June 12. These regional actions would be better for being coordinated into one national event, but they can still be used to increase the pressure on the Tories.

Printworkers have struck a blow for solidarity by forcing the Daily Express to give Arthur Scargill the right of reply, and blocking a witchhunting anti-Scargill picture and headline in the Sun.

And the miners' union leaders themselves, after consultation with the transport unions, are stepping up their struggle by turning the pickets towards the

power stations.

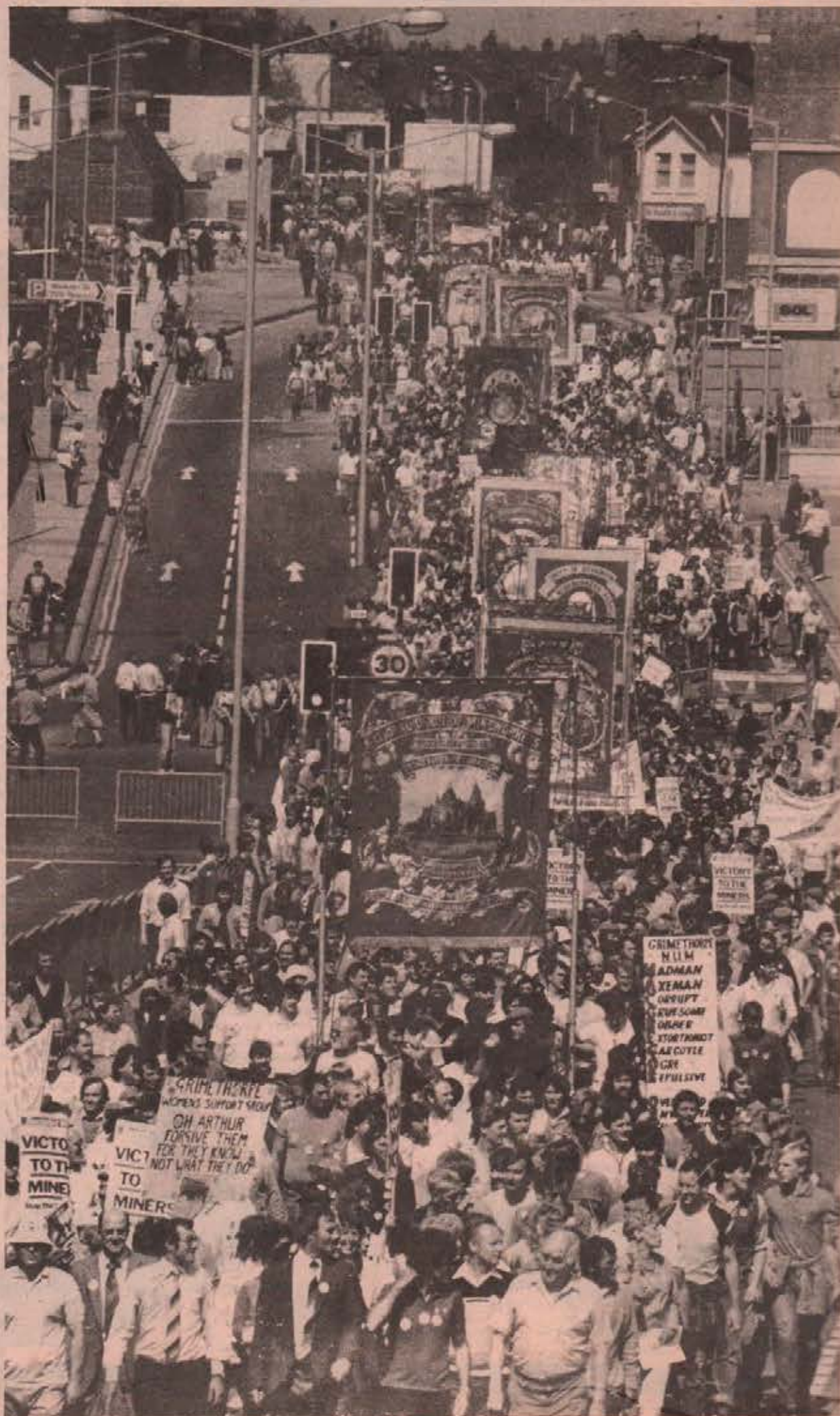
It is still a long hard fight ahead, and there are still problems. Jimmy Knapp of the rail union NUR told the press that his union's action was *not* a response to Arthur Scargill's call for railworkers to strike alongside the miners.

### TUC action

But don't believe the media stories about the pit strike weakening. The bosses' paper the Financial Times last Thursday, 10th, quoted the Coal Board's Midlands marketing director as saying: "The rail action is biting harder than has been generally acknowledged."

The TUC general council meeting next Wednesday, 23rd, should decide on solidarity action, starting with a 24 hour general strike. But if the leaders won't lead, then the rank and file must.

## ORGANISE FOR A GENERAL STRIKE!



20,000 miners and supporters marched in Mansfield on May 14

# A Dublin-London deal?

THE BOSS class nationalist parties of Ireland have spent the last year trying to work out a set of agreed proposals for solving the Northern Ireland problem, which they could offer to Britain as the basis for a new joint British-Irish 'initiative' to end the war in Northern Ireland.

On May 2 their New Ireland Forum reported.

The two main bourgeois constitutional nationalist parties, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, Northern Ireland's middle class constitutional nationalists of the SDLP, and the Irish Labour Party, Fine Gael's coalition partner, all put their heads together to seek a way to end violence, restore stability – and stop the growth of support for Provisional Sinn Féin.

They excluded Sinn Féin, which got 100,000 votes – 42% of the Catholic poll – in last June's election, because its nationalism is violent. They had the collaboration of a few maverick Northern Ireland Unionists, though the Unionist parties could not be persuaded to take part.

And what have they come up with?

The report declares the present situation untenable, and rightly notes that it is likely to get worse unless something is done about it. "Constitutional politics are on trial, and unless there is action soon to create a framework in which constitutional politics can work, the drift into more extensive civil conflict is in danger of becoming irreversible, with further loss of life and increasing human suffering".

The solution, they think, is a deal between the Green Tories, North and South of Border, and the British Tories.

## Alternatives

The report lists suggested alternatives to the present Six/26 Counties partition which has led to a complete breakdown of the old Protestant state in Northern Ireland and its replacement by brutal direct military rule by Britain.

Its favoured option is a unitary state for all Ireland. The "political unity which the Forum would wish to see established is a unitary state achieved by agreement and consent, embracing the whole island of Ireland and providing irrevocable guarantees for the Protestants and preservation of both the Unionist and Nationalist identities".

It is admitted that this implies a new non-denominational constitution for all Ireland. It would be formulated at a constitutional conference jointly convened by Dublin and London.

The report's other listed options are (a) a confederal linkage of the two Irish states and (b) joint London-Dublin rule over Northern Ireland.

The Forum's 'chosen option' is the highest common denominator of the bourgeois green nationalists. Much importance was attached to keeping Charles J. Haughey from breaking the green nationalist front, and that gave Haughey and Fianna Fail – those



The Forum report is presented in Dublin. John Hume is on the right, Garret Fitzgerald first on his left, Haughey and Irish Labour Party leader Dick Spring fourth and fifth.

least inclined to conciliate the Northern Ireland Protestants – much clout in deciding what the report said.

An appeal by Fine Gael and Labour Party coalition leaders for the Forum to endorse Fine Gael's 'constitutional crusade' to liberalise and partly de-Catholicise the 26 Counties was rejected by the Forum.

Fianna Fail pressure and the common nationalist goals and aspirations of all the participants determined the Forum's 'first option'. The sense that this was unrealistic and the search for a new way forward was expressed in the other options.

On that level the inclusion of the idea of joint Irish-British rule was a radical departure for the constitutional nationalists, particularly for Fianna Fail. But within a short time of the Forum's report being published, its authors had begun to differ about what their agreed text meant. The Southern prime minister, Garret Fitzgerald, followed his own bent and began exploring the more realistic of the listed options.

## Non-starter

That meant jettisoning the favoured option of a unitary state as a non-starter: only military coercion by Britain and/or the 26 Counties on a much bigger scale than has been known in the 6 Counties for the last 14 years could achieve a unitary state against the will of the Protestants.

So Fitzgerald tried to get the British government to discuss the other options.

Haughey denounced Fitzgerald for "walking away" from the agreed "first option".

Similar divisions emerged within the SDLP, with deputy leader Seamus Mallon paralleling Haughey against the more pragmatic and flexible party leader John Hume.

On the British response depended whether the Forum report

## Irish constitutional nationalist politicians have made a new attempt to push Britain into fresh initiatives, with their New Ireland Forum report. John O'Mahony looks at the prospects.

had any possibility of influencing events – and which of the options if any would become the subject of serious discussion and negotiation.

Thatcher called the report 'over-simple' and said she rejected its attempt to blame Britain. But she also said that something had to be done because the war in Northern Ireland 'can't go on forever'.

## Examination

Britain's Northern Ireland gauleiter Jim Prior immediately ruled out the unitary state and confederal states options, but did not rule out joint British/26 County rule in Northern Ireland. He welcomed the Forum's commitment to 'freely negotiated and agreed unity', as distinct from unity by coercion.

It now looks like the joint rule option is to be the subject of detailed examination and perhaps negotiations in the autumn.

According to the Irish Times (May 9) the following topics, the bones of the 'joint rule' option, will be discussed by Dublin and London later in the year.

\* The setting up of an 'executive joint authority' on the basis of a binding 26 County/ British treaty to be registered at the United Nations.

The Forum report defined an 'executive joint authority' as "the equal sharing of responsibility and authority for all aspects of the government of Northern Ireland by the governments of Great Britain and Ireland". It would

include the two prime ministers.

\* Joint control of security policy.

\* The replacement of the RUC.

\* A new system of criminal justice.

\* Joint Irish/British citizenship.

\* Equal status in Northern Ireland for the Union Jack and the Irish tricolour.

The 'executive joint authority' could either be a system of straight direct rule, or it could include an element of local self-government – on a basis of agreed Catholic/Protestant power-sharing a big element, the Forum says.

This would, of course, presuppose British government repeal of the legislation which enshrines the Protestant veto.

Prior's seeming willingness to discuss joint British/26 County rule has alarmed Protestant politicians. Any erosion of the present guaranteed constitutional position, and especially such joint rule, is, they say, part of a gradual drift to a united Ireland.

## Paisley

Ian Paisley declared: "The Protestants of Ulster will settle it and if need be meet this Dublin dictator in a hand to hand confrontation". Even the moderate Unionists of 'Alliance' say that any attempt to change the constitution will trigger a big Protestant paramilitary backlash.

The Provisionals say that the Forum has been a failure, and will not achieve what it was set up to

do – strengthen the Six Counties constitutional nationalists against the electoral challenge of the Provisionals.

But the signs are that the Forum will stimulate serious talks between Dublin and London about some form of powersharing. There is massive pressure on Dublin and London to reach some form of agreement. As Thatcher says: they can't let things go on as they are indefinitely.

Any further electoral advance by the Provisionals, even if they fell short of eliminating the SDLP, would narrow and maybe close the options for new constitutional experiments by the ruling classes in London and Dublin. It is now or maybe never.

The Forum itself has created an added pressure on Britain and Dublin to act now. If the Forum report produces no constitutional movement then it will strengthen the IRA and make their military approach seem the only possible one.

## Zig-zags

Haughey and Fianna Fail, both Seamus Mallon and John Hume in the SDLP, and, in a different way, Fitzgerald's Fine Gael, all want what the Provos want, a united Ireland. Some or all – of them will compromise and settle for less, but if even their sort of compromise proves impossible, then the Northern Ireland Catholic pendulum will swing powerfully towards the IRA.

The net result of the Forum – an idea suggested by John Hume to revive the SDLP – will be to speed up the consolidation of Sinn Féin's hold on the Six County Catholics and further undermine constitutional nationalism.

The history of Irish nationalism for the last 150 years is the history of zig-zags from militarism to constitutional reformism and back again. 100 years ago Frederick Engels noted that the ability of the constitutional nationalists and land reformers to wrest concessions from the English Liberal government owed a great deal to the Fenian dynamiters lurking in the background. The constitutional nationalists have always ridden on the backs of the 'physical force' people towards sell-out deals and compromises.

That, on one level, was what John Hume and the southern bourgeois parties wanted to do with the Forum.

Today the ability of the constitutional nationalists to make Britain take notice comes to them from the IRA campaign in the North. But it works the other way round too.

If they fail, then their failure will reinforce Republican militarism.

London and Dublin must know it. So they may indeed try some form of joint rule.

From the British point of view it could, minimally, increase the level of British and Irish bourgeois cooperation in repressing the IRA. It would be one way of 'solving' the hopeless task of recreating a political superstructure in Northern Ireland.

## Socialist

But they would have a long way to go from talking about it to doing it. Fianna Fail support might not be forthcoming for joint rule. It would, after all, be a partial restoration of the Act of Union dissolved in 1921.

In the North, Protestant reaction would probably be fierce – in the same way as, ten years ago, the Protestant general strike scuttled the last large-scale London/Dublin attempt at remodelling the Irish state system.

What should be the attitude of working class socialists? For us it is a basic principle that Britain never had and never can have any rights in Ireland. But Irish socialists should not simply throw their weight behind military and populist versions of nationalism as against constitutional versions.

They need instead a socialist and democratic programme which could be a basis for beginning to unite the Irish working class, North and South, Catholic and Protestant. This programme, in my opinion, should include regional autonomy for mainly Protestant areas within a united Ireland.

## Strike for 35 hours

WITH unemployment in West Germany now standing at 9.1%, the 2.6 million strong metalworkers' union IG Metall has launched a major struggle for a 35 hour week with no loss of pay.

Some 13,000 workers, in 14 plants (mostly vehicle components) around Stuttgart, have been called out on strike from Monday 14th.

IG Metall had balloted members around Stuttgart and around Frankfurt on strike action, and over 80% voted yes. The West German trade union movement is generally conservative, and IG Metall rules require a 75% majority for strike action.

Members of the print union IG Drupa have also been staging scattered strikes for the 35 hour week. The public sector union OTV is pursuing the same demand, and has called on members to join demonstrations in support of IG Metall.



January 1974: the last major political initiative, the power-sharing executive. It was brought down by the Protestant general strike of May 1974.

## Local elections May 3

# Defiant Mersey

LABOUR in Liverpool now has a clear majority of at least two for the illegal City Council budget. This budget is not some kind of revolutionary proposal. It is merely the amount needed for the council to maintain existing levels of local authority services.

The Tories will, however, fear the consequences of imposing Westminster rule on Liverpool, especially in the middle of a miners' strike. Environment Minister Patrick Jenkin may well adopt a compromise approach — face-saving for both sides — but one which will be clearly tilted in Labour's favour.

It all depends on continuing the principled, combative approach which won Labour its gains in the May 3 poll.

Left wing politics are unpopular in Fleet Street, with Sir Robin Day, Dr Owen, Mr Kinnock and the Communist Party — and, so they would argue, with the British electorate. Those who put forward red-blooded socialism are Labour's 'kamikaze pilots'.

Fortunately, the electorate are not as stupid or easily conned as the pundits would have us believe. On May 3 Liverpool Labour Party achieved its greatest local election victory in more than ten years. Its majority on the council increased from two to seventeen, despite the barrage of mass media propaganda against our 'extremist' council, the dirty trick 'electioneering of the populist' Liberals, and the back-stabbing exercise of some members of the shadow cabinet.

## —Scotland—

### A second Liverpool?

By Ian McCalman

THE Labour Party achieved sweeping victories in Scotland on May 3.

This rebuff to the Tories must surely also be seen as an endorsement in many areas of a more thoroughgoing socialist approach to local government. Tories were predicting a conflict with central government in Edinburgh which fell to Labour for the first time.

Labour Group leader Alex Wood said, "This is just the beginning. The people of Edinburgh have reacted against what has been happening in the region and in the country."

In Stirling, Labour, led by Michael Connarty, held on to office, despite a barrage of Tory propaganda against their pioneering work in implementing Group accountability to the District Party and in introducing trade

#### Bas Hardy reports on how Liverpool could open a second front against the Tories.

Some of the ward results appear staggering. How could these wards not have been Labour in the first place? Abercromby ward was won from the Liberals with the following vote:

|         |       |
|---------|-------|
| Labour  | 2,739 |
| Liberal | 350   |
| Tory    | 252   |
| CP      | 92    |

One reason for the Labour success on May 3 was the very high turnout — over half the electorate. This beat the previous 41% turnout in 1983 when Labour clocked up two net gains.

National politics and the desire to get Thatcher out played a part. But nobody on the doorstep said they were going to vote Labour because of Neil Kinnock or his new leadership team. They said, 'At last the council is doing something to fight the government'.

The Liberals' 'pavement' politics approach has faded, both because of the community orientation Labour has adopted over the past five years, and also because the Liberals are viewed as a party which will carry out the Tories' dirty work, by making cuts and sacking workers.

The Liberals this time were desperate and this was reflected in their hysterical election propaganda. Apart from the usual 'red-baiting' slurs, they even played the racist card by putting out a leaflet attacking a local school which had a large black intake.

Yet although the Liberals are in decline, they still have a large working class vote. Part of the reason for this is the failure as yet for Labour to develop a more relevant housing policy, which recognises the fact that the majority of workers in the city are not council tenants.

For the Tories May 3 was nothing short of a disaster. They lost a further five seats and are now down to 13. The Tory vote totalled 37,418. Tory voters seem to be transferring their allegiance to the Liberals.

Within the council Labour group, the 'sensible' six or seven who voted down the illegal budget — mainly an old Braddockite rump in both the literal and figurative sense — have lost one member who stood down. Paul Orr, the right wing leader, won Vauxhall ward with a 2,823 majority, after being given a clear run by the Liberals. It was the only seat in the city in which they chose not to stand. A book could be taken giving odds on Orr joining them in the near future.

The election results added two important Militant members to the council, Tony Mulhearn (President of the District Labour Party) and Felicity Dowling. Militant are the largest grouping in the Labour ranks and the only one to have a coherent political ideology. Yet it would be a mistake to say that Militant are the most radical, or call all the shots as the media claim.

#### Blinkers

They have two basic failings — political blinkers and kow-towing to the limits of the labour movement as it is, and its bureaucracy. These are expressed in their policy towards blacks, women and white collar workers, and in housing.

The shying away from confrontation has been most vividly illustrated in their acceptance of the NEC ruling that Orr should be allowed to stand for Labour in Vauxhall. Many Labour supporters opposed this, and the District Labour Party was split virtually down the middle with the Militant leadership winning but only just.

In the last analysis, the Militant will curb the militancy of the party to please Kinnock, if this means short term advantage can be gained for them. The Iron Laws of History will see them right in the end.

But Liverpool Labour Party is back, alive again and fighting. It is a force that can breathe life back into the body of radical Merseyside.



NALGO member Mohammad Idrish is threatened with deportation. Trade unionists marched to support him on May 9.

## Manchester: mobilisation needed

By Pete Keenlyside

THE decision of the Labour Party National Executive Committee to reinstate the 25 Labour councillors currently expelled from the Labour Group in Manchester and to hold a new Labour Group AGM has confirmed what many of us have known for some time. That, in order to hold onto their council positions, many of the right wing councillors are prepared to split from the Party and enter into an alliance with the Tories and Liberals.

The strategy of the right wing

### Hackney

By Jo Thwaites

HACKNEY, in East London, has been considered a left-wing Labour council under the leadership of Anthony Kendall.

But at a borough conference of the Hackney Labour Parties and the councillors on April 28, Kendall was voted out to be replaced by a new more left wing leader, Hilda Kean.

The conference condemned the outgoing leadership for their 17½% rate rise, their hidden cuts, and their hostile attitude to tenants and DLO workers who occupied the St. John's Area Base in exasperation at the council's failure to make adequate provision for housing repairs.

Resolutions were also carried pledging a fight against rate-capping and a commitment not to co-operate with any government officials in calculating the level of grant for next year. This means not using the 'appeals' system set up by the Tories whereby councils can appeal against figures set if they accept conditions imposed by the Tories on expenditure.

However, the Left did not make a clean sweep, and other key positions in the council and Labour group are still held by the old regime.

is to refuse to recognise any meetings in which they are a minority and to cling to the illusion that they still run the Labour group and therefore the Council.

They then hope they can go to the Council AGM on May 23 and get their people elected. At the same time they are appealing to the NEC to reverse their decision.

That position is clearly absurd. For a start, as the 25 of us found, you can't appeal to the NEC over a decision that the NEC has made. We have been reinstated and that is that. Only annual conference can reverse it.

As Eric Heffer, this year's chair of the Labour Party pointed out, the AGM of the Labour group was called by the NEC and that is the only meeting that is recognised by them. By refusing to accept the decisions of that meeting the right wing are cutting themselves off from every level of the Party.

The problem now is going to be getting enough votes to put those decisions on what admin-

istration the council should have through the meeting on the 23rd.

There are 99 seats on the Council and the left have 41. To get the extra nine votes needed some hard bargaining has been going on with people previously connected with the right. Several of them have been promised chairs of committees in return for their support.

While there is nothing wrong with this, providing it does not compromise the left's ability to get its policies implemented, it does have the effect of leaving matters to small negotiating meetings. What is needed as well is the mobilisation of Party members to oppose the right and put maximum pressure on would-be waverers.

Unfortunately a meeting of the District Party last Wednesday rejected proposals from Socialist Organiser supporters that would have helped bring this about.

Yet at the end of the day, even if the left win on the 23rd, without the full involvement of the movement as a whole, no even the most brilliant tactical manoeuvring will see us through the coming battles.

Conference against the cuts called by  
Liverpool City Council

Saturday June 23  
Philharmonic Hall, Hope St., Liverpool

Invited speakers include

Tony Benn, David Blunkett, Alex Kitson, Arthur Scargill  
Rodney Bickerstaffe, Dennis Skinner, Ken Livingstone

Up to five delegates from labour movement  
organisations

Credentials £2 from Andy Pink, Central Support Unit,  
Liverpool City Council, Dale St, Liverpool

# Scots turnout for solidarity



Solidarity reciprocated: four of the 'Stockport Six' NGA members who were at the centre of last year's dispute with Eddie Shah present food donations to Yorkshire NUM president Jack Taylor.

THERE was widespread strike action throughout Scotland on May 9 in response to the STUC's call for a Day of Action in support of the miners.

In the West of Scotland, rail services were virtually at a standstill. Workplaces under threat, or recently under threat of closure — such as the Scott Lithgow and Kincaid shipyards in Port Glasgow — were shut down for the day. Clydebridge steelworks struck. And many other strongly unionised workplaces like the two Rolls Royce plants in Hillington and East Kilbride were out on strike.

There was also strong support for the Day of Action among local government and public service unions. By far the largest contingents on the Glasgow demonstration were those of NALGO and EIS (the teachers' union in Scotland), and there was a large and vocal NUPE contingent, too.

Also present on the demonstration, though in much smaller numbers, were contingents from unions where the leadership had given no backing to the Day of Action: the EETPU and the Inland

By Stan Crooke

Revenue Staff Federation.

The Daily Record, the largest-circulation Scottish morning paper, did not appear on the Day of Action after the editor refused to print a short statement from SOGAT in support of the miners on the front page.

The demonstration in Glasgow was 10,000 strong. But it could have been bigger, given that Edinburgh's demonstration was the same size.

Bus services, staffed by TGWU members, were running normally in Glasgow and the West of Scotland. Steelworks other than Clydebridge worked. Despite the size of the NUPE contingent on the march, there were widely differing responses to the Day of Action in individual hospitals.

Some workplaces with a good track record of support for past Days of Action, such as Govan shipyards and Weir Pumps, remained at work, and others, like Wills Tobacco and Barr and Stroud, took only limited action. In many workplaces, donations to the

miners' strike fund were organised rather than strike action.

Most union leaderships did not campaign for strike action. Instead they simply "urged support", a formula which can mean all things to all people. Nor did the leadership of the Scottish TUC attempt to rally the troops. STUC General Secretary Jimmy Milne and fellow Executive Council members were on a trip to Moscow until the eve of May 9.

Support for the Day of Action was also limited by the media's success in promoting the image of a deeply divided NUM and focusing attention on certain areas of Nottinghamshire.

The line that the miners were trying to shut down Ravenscraig completely, and thus destroy other people's jobs, also had some impact.

But what now? From the platform at the rally after the Glasgow demonstration there were only general appeals to maintain and step up financial support for the miners.

Whatever the limitations of support for the Day of Action — and they were magnified out of all proportion by the media — it did mark a tremendous step forward in rallying the forces to win the miners' fight.

It is necessary to follow up the Day of Action by taking the arguments to the rank and file. The truth about Nottinghamshire and Ravenscraig needs to be got across.

Class-wide

And the central political importance of the miners' fight needs to be re-emphasised. The Tories are not just fighting one group of workers, but attempting to break the back of the trade union movement. A class-wide mobilisation is necessary to defeat them.

If we can take up and win such arguments, then the way is open to indefinite general strike action and not just further Days of Action, which can be used by the trade union bureaucracy as a "safety valve".

## Uniting the nation

"I have always thought that the Queen is a very nice person indeed. Today confirmed that view," so Greater London Council leader Ken Livingstone assured the press after the Royal opening of the Thames Barrier last Tuesday, 8th.

If Len Murray fails to get the seat in the House of Lords which he surely must deserve on his retirement from the TUC, then he could do better than rage impotently at the ingratitude of the ruling class. He could look at what Ken has done and learn from him.

So Len Murray did help sell out a few strikes. But when did he ever invite the Queen to open the TUC Congress? Bill Sirs showed what could be done by making Prince Charles the guest of honour at the ISTC conference a few years back, but Len remained set in his stuffy old ways.

Len Murray has often tried to create a common front between the TUC and the bosses' organisation, the CBI, and he has pressed strongly for the TUC to work co-operatively with the Tories. But still his understanding of the need for broad alliances looks feeble indeed compared to Ken, who in this sphere could shine as the very model of a thoroughly modern Eurocommunist.

Tory MPs, SDP PR men, malcontent Lords, and now the Queen — there's an alliance for you! Of course, if you defend the GLC with such an alliance, you have to throw talk of trade union action against abolishing the council out of the window. But you may win a vote in the Lords. And Len Murray has never been

very strong on trade union action, either: the difference is that Ken knows how to get the tinsel and glitter, and Len doesn't.

Look at the latest issue of the GLC's freesheet, 'The Londoner' — a tasteful little royal crown emblem in the masthead, and a big picture of the Queen. You never find that sort of imaginative graphics on TUC pamphlets, do you?

US trade union leaders — people who in the business of class collaboration outstrip the Congress House crew just as US capitalists outstrip British capitalists in profit-making — lead the singing of the US national anthem at the end of big trade union demonstrations. And they haven't even got a House of Lords to go to! When did you ever hear Len Murray closing a demonstration with 'God Save the Queen'?

Len Murray has obviously remained stuck in the grey pages of minutes, circulars and reports, rather than broadening his outlook and reading Eric Hobsbawm on the need for the Left to appropriate the symbols and images of patriotism to its own purpose. True, Ken Livingstone probably hasn't read Hobsbawm either, but at least he has had the good sense to take advice from those who have.

Of course, it's all too late now for Len Murray. And indeed, perhaps it has been too late for a long while. To bow to the Queen, to ingratiate yourself with Lords, to woo Tories and to get elected president of the Young Liberals is not enough. To get the full value you must first establish a reputation as a red revolutionary before you do these things.

After all, if a sober, greyly-conservative citizen like Len Murray were now heard saying that the Queen is a nice person,

who would take much notice? Everyone knows that she is the Queen of the Conservative Nation: the point is to prove that she is the Queen of the whole nation, Left and Right, humble and haughty.

Only when the endorsement comes from someone like cheap-fares, gay-lib, free-Ireland Ken does it have real value in shoring up the ideological props of the monarchy and the established system.

## Labour and gays

LABOUR MPs have responded to the resignation of Tory junior minister Keith Hampson by agitating about the "security implications".

They should instead be denouncing the foul way that Hampson has been witch-hunted. The fact that Hampson is a Tory does not affect the issue.

Hampson was arrested for 'indecent assault' in a gay club. The alleged assault was on a plainclothes policeman — who went to the club specifically in order to get 'assaulted'.

The police operation was an up-market version of what has been done in Manchester, where police have drilled holes in the walls of public toilets and keep watch so that they can arrest gay men for causing offence and disgust to the citizenry — though in fact the only citizens 'offended' are the police spies.

In an added twist, the police and the press between them are now finding Hampson 'guilty' before he is even charged.

The talk about "security implications" is a sly and under-hand way of endorsing anti-gay bigotry. "Personally I am not bigoted", Labour MPs might say. "But we must recognise that other people are. Therefore gay people are likely to get black-

mailed. Therefore we must watch out for gays and exclude them from important positions..."

Labour should commit itself to repealing all anti-gay legislation and affirming that lesbians and gays have as much right as heterosexuals to a sex life free from interference by cops and bigots.

Agent Orange

US chemical corporations have agreed to pay \$180 million in compensation to 40,000 Vietnam veterans affected by 'Agent Orange'.

This chemical-warfare weapon was sprayed in large quantities over Vietnam during a three-year period, and the veterans say that it has caused extra cases of cancer and circulatory diseases among them and their families.

The corporations have no plans to pay a single cent compensation to the people of Vietnam.

A chance for Len?

LEN Murray could of course try private enterprise instead. John Boyd (sorry, Sir John Boyd), former general secretary of the AUEW, has just been appointed a director of ICL. And there are a few other jobs where that came from.

Join the Labour Party

**Socialist ORGANISER**

Scargill gets it right

**BREAK LINKS WITH TORIES!**

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## Miners Special

## Watching the cops!

A 'Policewatch' group has been set up in Sheffield to monitor police operations during the miners' dispute. They explain:

Operation Policewatch was set up at a meeting in Sheffield on April 16. Teams of six to ten observers have been working in relays, monitoring police activities.

Generally, observers have found police officers are far more willing to release information to observers than to pickets. For example, divulging numbers on uniforms. Pickets themselves state that the presence of observers makes a marked difference to police behaviour — obviously, this is not something that we can test!

But on several occasions Policewatch teams have been turned back by police officers and threatened with arrest.

It seems that there is no clear legal basis for police turning members of the public away from the coalfields. On each occasion our teams have made it absolutely clear that they were present merely as independent legal observers.

Nevertheless, the police alleged that they might, by their mere presence, contribute towards a 'breach of the peace'.

Contact: Sheffield Policewatch, 73 West Street, Sheffield S1 4EQ.

# Police out of the coalfields!

## ....in action!

Ollerton Colliery: "only three pickets, plus an NUM official were allowed to stand on the pavement of the road leading to the colliery... when one picket shouted 'scab' a Metropolitan Police Sergeant warned him that he was likely to cause a breach of the peace".

Between Sheffield and Bentinck Colliery: "We were stopped just before Selston on B600 by Notts. police. After questioning we were allowed through."

We were stopped again on minor road to Annesley Woodhouse also by Notts. police who again allowed us through after questioning... Between Annesley Woodhouse and Bentinck Colliery stopped a further three times — the last two by City of London Police...

The police at road blocks close to Bentinck Colliery said the pit was not working (not true) and there are no pickets whatsoever (also untrue)."

Reports collected by Sheffield Policewatch.

ON Wednesday May 9 32 miners were arrested on the picket line at Florence Colliery, Stoke on Trent.

200 miners on 5.30 am picket duty were matched by 200 police, some mounted on horses. As the scabs arrived, some of them enticed the pickets to fight. Four pickets, but no scabs, were arrested.

Then most of the pickets went to the nearby NCB fuel distribution premises at Longton, where they moved a trailer to block the main access road and prevent coal lorries getting in and out of the premises. Then the trailer caught fire.

The police arrived five minutes later and picked up 28 suspects 'at random' — they just happened to be the hard core pickets at Florence.

The men were detained for 14 hours at the police station. Charges of criminal damage have now been brought, and they were also threatened with conspiracy charges, though there are no witnesses or hard evidence.

Most of the pickets who were not arrested, went to protest at the police station.

Mark Dobson, Stoke SO.

A blue police van pulled up. A number of policemen got out and three of them ran across the road, and the next minute I saw them dragging Mr. L. Tomlinson back across the road.

They took him on to the pavement and threw him up against the van. I started to cross the road. When I was in the middle of the road I saw that they were being rough with him putting the handcuffs on him.

Extracts from statement by Mrs B Woods

A police van pulled up. Three policemen got out and ran across the road and grabbed Leonard, then they ran him back across the road up to the side of the van. In my opinion it was done very forcefully, as we had not heard any arguments from the fellow arrested. The police took him round the side of the van against the pavement. We heard him thrown against the van.

Extract from statement by Mrs Lynne Humphreys

Between 4 am and 4.30 on Friday 27 April 1984, I was walking to the picket line at Ollerton Colliery and I was stopped by three policemen. They asked me where I was going and I said "Ollerton Colliery picket line". They then asked me, was I official, and I said I was — I carried a card.

One of the policemen said "Can I see your card", which I took out of my top pocket and gave to him. He read it and handed it to the biggest one of the three. After he had read it I asked for it back.

The big one tore it up and threw it on the ground and said "That's what we think about the pickets" I said they were nowt but a bunch of sods and they weren't stopping me going on the picket line, and I turned away to cross the road.

I was about half way across the road when they grabbed me and two of them held me up against the Cricked Ground fence and one started hitting me round the body. After they finished I was on my knees, winded and feeling a lot of pain.

Whilst the policemen were hitting me about half a dozen men were walking to Ollerton Colliery down Walesby Lane. I shouted for help but they just kept walking.

Later I went down to the Ollerton picket line. I was standing at the front and I told the police who were on duty that I'd been beaten up in the morning but I was still back on the picket line, and I would keep coming back until this dispute was settled.

Extract from statement by Robert Cooper

Statements about police behaviour are being collected at Ollerton Strike HQ. Phone Pete, Mansfield 862790.



Police confront pickets at Lea Hall, Staffordshire

### THE POLICE have been planning for this strike since 1972.

With their flying pickets in 1972, the miners were rediscovering a tactic not used by the British working class for decades. The police were caught on the hop and overwhelmed.

They planned for the next time. They have centralised themselves. They have created special squads — Special Patrol Groups, Instant Response Units.

They have acquired new legal powers under the Tory antiunion laws — and grabbed other, illegal, powers for themselves de facto by simply ignoring the legal rights of citizens and suspects. They are now in the process of getting those de facto powers made legal with the new Police Bill.

They have trained themselves in such operations as the 1981 youth riots, 'Operation Swamp' in Brixton, and the vicious assault on an anti National Front demonstration in Southall in 1979 which killed Blair Peach.

They have learned from the methods of the police and the army in Northern Ireland. Kenneth Newman, current chief of the Metropolitan Police, was previously chief of Northern Ireland's police.

Firearms have been distributed to police more and more frequently, with results like the shooting of Stephen Waldorf.

Each time the police get away with some new strong-arm tactic, they pave the way for that tactic to become regular practice thereafter.

If the police get away with their operation against the miners, then every future workers' struggle will be at risk.

But resistance is growing. Anger is growing among the picketing miners. In the same arsenal of working-class history that the flying picket came from, there is an answer to this strong-arm policing: the organised workers' defence squad. Such squads have been common in strikes in the US.

Labour Parties have been putting pressure on the Labour representatives on police authorities, and those representatives have been breaking the silence of decades, refusing extra funds for the anti-picket operations. That first step needs to be backed up with further demands for each local police force to withdraw from the centralised operation. Police authorities have very limited powers, but they can call for the resignation of Chief Constables if they refuse to comply with the authority's demands. Such a call would be a considerable political blow against this overt class-warfare policing.

The police force is a weapon of the ruling class. We cannot afford to let it gain in power and arrogance.

March against the Police Bill May 19, Noon, Hyde Park

Independent video and film makers throughout the country have got together to produce a series of videos putting the case for the miners as it is never seen on BBC or ITV.

Cash is needed to complete the tapes. Send to Miners Campaign Tape Project, 13 Tankerton House, Tankerton Street, London WC1H 8HW. Endorsed by the following areas of the National Union of Mineworkers: Kent; South Wales; Derbyshire; Northumberland; Yorkshire.



# Ravenscraig: stop steel production!

IGWU dockers in Scotland have been narrowly headed off from striking in protest against a scab operation last Friday to unload imported coal for Ravenscraig steel-works.

That same day, rail, steel and coal union leaders had reached a compromise agreement on supplies to Ravenscraig. The works would receive 18,000 tonnes of coal per week by rail, and the scab deliveries by lorry would be ended.

But crane operators at Hunterston — members of the steel union ISTC — were co-operating with a scab operation to take a huge consignment of coal — 68,000 tonnes — to Ravenscraig.

At a TGWU Scottish docks group meeting on Tuesday 15th, according to the Guardian, "delegates demanded an immediate strike of Scotland's 3,500 dockers". Full-time official James Gilligan, however, managed to postpone the strike and asserted that the issue had "nothing to do with the miners' dispute".

Scottish miners' president Mick McGahey promised support to the dockers if they did strike.

Friday's compromise deal was problematic anyway. According to ASLEF Scottish organiser Johnny Walker, it represented "between 10 and 11 trainloads", as compared with the 14 trainloads originally demanded by British Steel, but the press has defined it as 13 trainloads.

However, the deal is now waste paper. And picketing miners may legitimately feel bitter about the way it was arranged over their heads.

The last attempt at a mass picket at Ravenscraig was on Monday (7th). Since then, pickets had been of little more than token.

One factor was the Nottinghamshire tactics of the police: stopping miners en route for the plant and arresting those who refused to turn back. Over 200 flying pickets were arrested in a single swoop on Thursday 10th.

Another factor was that pickets went instead to Hunterston, the BSC fuel depot from which the coal was being transported to Ravens-

craig. Some 1,500 pickets turned up there on Tuesday, (8th) and were savagely attacked by police with horses.

Still, on Monday, 7th, NUM Scottish President Mick McGahey had promised a mass picket by miners from Northumberland, Durham and Yorkshire the next day. Come Tuesday, there were only 40-odd pickets.

The following day, May 9, was Scottish TUC Day of Action, and a natural day for calling a mass picket. But there were only some 30 miners, plus the same number of NALGO members.

Thursday 10th was even worse. 200 lorry-loads of coal were brought in within the space of 24 hours. By Thursday night there was just one picket left, and the police polished him off by arresting him for breach of the peace (shouting at the scab lorry drivers).

This downward spiral shows that the NUM leadership in Edinburgh must have dropped the tactic of mass picketing before the Triple Alliance meeting on the 11th.

And the Friday settlement took place without any consultation with the membership of the unions involved.

There was also a major failure to take the arguments to rank and file members of the ISTC in Ravenscraig.

# Kick the Tories



'Together, the rank and mining communities will not only win and more important we will and roll back the year. We will turn the tide of employment. We will recovery, and we will to elect a Labour government.'

AS THE miners' pickets turned to stations this week, electricians' union Eric Hammond set himself firm Tories' side against them.

Hammond, successor to Frank general secretary of the EETPU union conference:

"We in this union are not prepared our strength to bring down elections."

"Who do these nursery revol think they are kidding? Abandon of for law and parliamentary democracy trade unions are defenceless."

"There are other powers exerting in the balance of our society, some command disciplined men with guns hands."

"If we remove — if we provide cation for removing — the muzzle of these hounds, we will not be quickly."

Now the Police Federation, reckons that the police roadblock against the miners' pickets may be a miners may support "the law and tary democracy" ten times over, doesn't impress the Tories, and it do the miners when blue-uniformed, dragging them from their cars or them with horses on a picket line.

## Biting in Notts

The NUM has released these figures

|            | Production<br>14 April | Production<br>28 April | Fall in<br>Production<br>% |
|------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| Bevercotes | 14,600                 | 9,000                  | 38.5                       |
| Bilthorpe  | 13,801                 | 9,100                  | 34.1                       |
| Blidworth  | 7,059                  | 2,927                  | 58.8                       |
| Clipstone  | 13,000                 | 8,001                  | 38.5                       |
| Cresswell  | 7,800                  | 3,050                  | 61.0                       |
| Harworth   | 17,500                 | 9,800                  | 44.0                       |
| Mansfield  | 15,486                 | 10,221                 | 34.0                       |
| Ollerton   | 18,632                 | 5,330                  | 72.4                       |
| Rufford    | 9,448                  | 3,243                  | 65.8                       |
| Sherwood   | 8,284                  | 4,246                  | 48.0                       |
| Silverhill | 9,573                  | 7,110                  | 25.8                       |
| Sutton     | 10,384                 | 7,817                  | 25.0                       |
| Thoresby   | 35,214                 | 11,327                 | 68.0                       |
| Welbeck    | 17,501                 | 4,822                  | 72.5                       |
| TOTAL      | 198,282                | 95,994                 | 51.8                       |

## 'Make no mistake, we're

THE OPERATION in the CEBG to burn oil instead of coal is costing the tax payer £20 million a week with foreign oil 50% more expensive than British coal.

This Tory government are so paranoid in their determination to smash the miners, they are prepared to tax the British taxpayers to the tune of £1,450 million so

Extracts from Arthur Scargill's speech at Mansfield on May 14.

far.

In fact Thatcher compared it to the cost of the Falklands war. Well I've got one message. She was successful in the Falklands, but she'll lose this battle.

And not only must we ensure when this dispute is

over that we get a sensible increase in pay, a four-day working week, a rent reduction scheme, early retirement and not redundancy. We must also ensure there will be no more overtime and we've got to get rid of the divisive incentive scheme.

## Unite to fight MacGregor

By Pete Gilman

industry. Anything preventing this, be it steelworkers using scab coal, right wing union leaders encouraging this (supposedly to protect jobs but their record on protecting jobs speaks for itself), or alternatively deals between NUM officials and the BSC allowing coal in, helps to strangle the strike and lead to a crushing defeat for the miners.

The Tories and the BSC plan to close at least one major steel plant (probably Ravenscraig), and possibly others. They plan to do this anyway, no matter what happens to those plants during the miners' strike. They planned plant closures and a substantial cutback in steel long before the strike began.

The difference is now they

will blame the miners.

The only thing which can save the steel plants is the strength of the trade unions to prevent their closure. A victory for the miners will increase that strength and weaken the Tories. A defeat will tremendously strengthen the Tories, substantially weaken the trade union movement and make those closures a certainty.

Moreover, if the miners are victorious they will add their muscle to preventing steel plant closures. But if they are defeated they can do nothing when Thatcher carries out the already decided closure programme.

Miners and steelworkers have a common interest. They must stand united against a common enemy, the Tory government and its butcher MacGregor, whose butchery they both know so well.



Mansfield colliery, Notts: Police grab a picket as a scab jeers

# es out!

and file of this movement, the whole and the leadership of this union, have our pits and save our jobs — but will pave the way for the transformation of Thatcherism.

and turn unemployment into economic ruin into economic have the way for a general election government pledged to our industry'.

Arthur Scargill, Mansfield, May 14

power leader on the apple as told his d to use govern-

ionaries support cy, and

their will of whom in their

justifi- w from orgiven. o less, tactics gal. The diamen- ut that n't help ugs are ampling

Blind obedience and loyalty to the established order by the labour movement will not keep the "muzzle" on the Tories' hounds. All our rights and protections depend on struggle.

Law is class law. The 'referee' in the class struggle is in fact a player on the other side. The labour movement cannot afford blindly to obey the laws of the ruling class. It needs its own law and order.

Could a general strike bring down the government? Once really underway, indeed it could. In fact, it could do a lot more. It would paralyse the established system of ruling class administration, and begin to develop an alternative — and much more genuinely democratic — system of working class administration.

But none of that could happen without the workers involved wanting it. Despite the lies of the media, strikes in individual workplaces and industries cannot be engineered by tiny groups of conspirators. The same goes for general strikes.

Massive pit closures, however, can be, and are being, engineered by small groups of conspirators!

Ian MacGregor never asked Eric Hammond whether pit closures are acceptable. Only the working class has to consult Eric Hammond's code of democratic behaviour before it strikes a blow in the class struggle.

## on a winner'

've got the Coal Board's figures which show that North Notts they've lost of production, in South its approaching 50% loss production. And this ch in the media have the acity to say they're king normally.

want to say to every ts miner, "Examine your science. When the Conser-

vative government supports you, the Daily Express, ITV and the BBC, there's something radically wrong with the position you're holding".

There's something wrong with the situation where they require 10,000 police in order to ensure that some members can go through picket lines.

Last Saturday was one of the most historic and momentous demonstrations I have ever seen. 10,000 women working in the industry and miners' wives demonstrated in South Yorkshire against the pit closure programme.



## Adopting a pit

BIRMINGHAM Trades Council has "adopted" Birch Coppice strikers in Warwickshire. At this pit about 30% of the miners have so far come out.

Because the strikers are in the minority, and the Warwickshire District Hardship Fund is controlled by scabs, ("I don't know how they've got the nerve to turn up to meetings, but they do", commented one Birch Coppice striker) the strikers and their families are in a desperate situation.

The Birch Coppice strikers have joined forces with those at Baddersley pit where the situation is even worse — only ten men are striking and most of the lodge committee is working so they haven't even got access to lodge funds!

But the strikers are undaunted and have set up their own strike committees and hardship fund. Wendy Coxson (wife of the Birch Coppice hardship fund treasurer, John Coxson), explained to the Birmingham Trades Council solidarity bulletin how they are getting organised.

"We have been able to collect money which has been used to buy food parcels for the families of striking miners. This is being done on a weekly basis, except

The women are not just working in kitchens, but out on the picket lines fighting with us.

Make no mistake we're on a winner. And I'm telling you this, if we've got to stop out till November or December, we'll beat this Coal Board and government.

## North Staffs

FOR the last seven weeks the strike in the North Staffs. coalfield has been more or less solid. Only at Florence colliery has there been any sizeable scabbing. About 300 out of a workforce of 1100 have been going in.

One of the most important areas for picketing locally is the coal stocks at Holditch colliery, where there are 85,000 tonnes. Last week seven lorries from Smith's of Clitheroe in Lancashire burst through picket lines at Holditch to take out coal. Members of the NUM claim that the Board gave the first five loads away free as a means to ensure that the line would be broken.

One picket was coshed by a lorry driver. All the drivers were TGWU members, and all claimed that they were instructed by the TGWU full-timer in Bolton to cross the picket line.

It is rumoured that the eventual destination of the coal is Ravenscraig, but wherever it's going it must be stopped.

WE WILL EAT GRASS  
WE WILL LOSE BRASS  
WE WONT GIVE IN TO  
THE STUPID ASS  
MACGREGOR GIVE IN  
YOUR FIGHT IS LOST  
ARTHUR SCARGILL  
IS OUR BOSS  
THE MINERS WIVES  
SUPORT YOU ALL  
PENRHINCEIBER  
SOUTH WALES



Miner's wife in Barnsley — Saturday May 12

## Phone union queries taps

By Ricky Houston

POST Office Engineering Union general treasurer David Norman has made an appeal for the POEU to be allowed to take part in or conduct an investigation into allegations that miners' phones are being tapped. This follows a letter from the Westminster POEU Branch, circulated nationally.

Since the beginning of the strike, many miners actively involved in the strike have reported an unusually high level of interference and calls going dead on their telephone lines.

One picket organiser I spoke to said that to test whether or not their lines were tapped, miners in his area had organised a dummy mass picket over the phone.

A handful of pickets were sent to the appointed place — and found a large contingent of police. A police sergeant actually asked them "Where are the rest of you? There's supposed to be more." Incidents like this certainly back up the strikers' claims.

Phone tapping can be carried out quite easily. The phone tapping "Midnight Busbys" can gain entry to telephone exchanges to put on the taps unseen. An investigation by POEU engineers could probably track down the taps, but the POEU cannot officially conduct an investigation or reveal proof

of tapping unless Parliament grants immunity from prosecution under the Official Secrets Act. Any evidence presented without such immunity would almost certainly lead to sacking and jail

sentences (like Sarah Tisdall!)

Home Secretary Leon Brittan and the Thatcher war cabinet can therefore choose if and when to reveal the truth behind the miners' claims — unless POEU members break the Official Secrets Act.

## CONTACT ADDRESSES

### Support Committees:

Cardiff: c/o Room 219, Transport House, 1 Cathedral Road.  
Birmingham: c/o Trade Union Resources Centre, 7 Frederick St., B1 3HE.

South London: c/o Joan Twelves, 1 Alverstone House, Kennington Park Estate, SE11.  
Manchester: c/o FTAT, 37 Anson Road, Victoria Park, M14.

Brent Miners' Solidarity Committee, c/o Local Economy Resource Unit, 389 Willesden High Road, NW10. Ken Evans, 459 6221.

Notts miners' rank and file strike committee: Paul Whetton, 10 Nicholas Place, Tuxford, Newark NG22 0HU.

Joint Lodges, c/o Aberaman Strike Centre, Aberaman 876112, Birch Coppice Strike Committee, c/o Hughie Clarke, 89 Kitwood Avenue, Dordon, Tamworth, Staffs. Phone Tamworth 895430.

### Women against pit closures:

Thurnscoe: Sheila Jow, 105, Lidget Lane, Thurnscoe, Near Rotherham.  
Blidworth: Doreen Humber, 50, Thorney Abbey Road, Blidworth, Mansfield, Notts.

Edlington: Veronica Balderson, 62, Blowhall Cres., Edlington, Doncaster.

Birch Coppice wives' group, Wendy Coxson, Tamworth 896069  
Barnsley: Ann Hunter, 5 Packhorse Gt, Silkstone, near Barnsley phone 791187.

Maerdy Wives Support Committee, c/o Maerdy Strike Centre, Ferndale 755 301.

Oakdale, Gwent: 82 Markham Cres., Oakdale, Blackwood, Gwent. 0495 220158.

Celyn North, Gwent. c/o Dorothy Phillips, 13 Thorn Ave., Newbridge, Gwent. 0495 245000.  
Rugeley, Staffs: Mrs Jackson, 9 Woodlands, Handsacre, Rugeley, Staffs. Mrs Southwell, Rugeley 6179.

Littleton, Staffs: 6 Tower Road, High Green, Hednesford. Linda Platen, Hednesford 76614.

Merton, Durham. Hetton-le-Hai: 267641.

Sheffield Women Against Pit Closures. Kath Kackey, Sheffield 381594 or 454163.

Sheffield Trades Council Miners Support Committee, c/o Sheffield TC, Trades and Labour Club, Taibot St., S2 2TG Phone 24364

# Jaruzelski's coal SCAB IMPORTS

A POLISH government delegation is visiting Britain this week — trying to profit from the miners' strike by getting new customers for imported Polish coal.

Poland has already been increasing its supplies of coal to British wholesalers.

NUM leaders visited the Polish embassy on Friday 11th to try to get these imports stopped. But the bureaucrats who are willing to shoot down Polish miners who fight for union rights will not readily show any sympathy with British miners.

## Jaruzelski's jails

IN A long overdue move, TUC general secretary Len Murray has written to the Polish embassy to protest about the torture of Solidarnosc members held in prison in Poland.

Andrzej Slowik, chair of the Lodz region of Solidarnosc, has been on hunger strike since December 17 together with other prisoners at Barczewo jail, including Trotskyist Edmund Baluka. The hunger strike is organised in relays. Their demands are for the



**Free Political Prisoners**

restoration of rights won after a previous hunger strike in

September. Andrzej Slowik described what they won then

in an interview with an underground Solidarnosc newspaper when he got out of jail for his father's funeral.

"In the first place, we are now together... They are preparing a reading room, which all the prisoners will be able to use.

"For the time being they have installed a television in our cell: each day we discuss the news. We have started to receive some weekly papers.

"They have not, in fact, confirmed that we can have the light on after 9 p.m., but they do not turn the power off then. We have an additional lamp and can read in the evenings.

"We also have a tap-recorder and cassettes for learning languages.

"They have made us a screen out of a bed sheet for the toilet... They provided our cell with scissors and



Len Murray

shaving gear. We are also allowed to wear our own underwear, sweaters, scarves, gloves, apart from prison clothes."

Now the prisoners have had those rights taken away and are being held separately.

Hunger strikes have also been organised in other Polish prisons, though information about them is scarce.

In Strzelin jail 13 prisoners went on hunger strike from November 26, demanding political prisoner status, better conditions, more visits, and no

restrictions on mail. The hunger strike was provoked by several prisoners getting food poisoning because of tainted prison food.

Some of the Strzelin prisoners were forced to end their hunger strike on January 27, but it appears that a few continued after that. There is also a hunger strike at Braniewo jail.

(Information from 'Voice of Solidarnosc' bulletin, available — £8 for six months — from 314-320 Grays Inn Road, London WC1X 8DP).



## Discussing the way forward

Each week we will be carrying comments and letters from miners and strike support activists

ON April 18, the Coalville and Meir Miners' Wives' Committees went to the Florence colliery picket line after a demonstration.

The women soon showed that they know how to picket. Where the men simply shouted at the scabs the women followed them for yards, haranguing them all the way.

After a while the official six pickets shouted to the women for six of them to take over. The six women turned away more miners than the six men so the police moved in.

They asked the women to move because they were not official pickets because they were not members of the NUM. (This technicality could easily be solved. All women involved in the Wives Support Committees should be made members of the NUM, and have their own wives' branches.)

Arthur Bough, Stoke

One strategy that has been suggested by a number of pickets is to threaten the Board with the removal of all cover on the super pits like Selby, whilst keeping it on the old threatened pits. Given that it's these pits the Board is interested in, and the Tories want to privatise, they will not allow the millions of pounds of investment there to be destroyed, the pickets argue.

Another tactic being argued for is occupations of the pits, because it is much more difficult for the police to get miners out of the pit than it is for them to get scabs into it.

Some miners are also critical of inefficient picket organisation, and are arguing for proper picket rotas to be established and enforced.

Arthur Bough, Stoke

THERE seems to be an almost instinctive tendency amongst socialists to criticise, unfortunately, that seems to be mainly directed at the NUM.

stroke of genius. It's still up in my window and it's caused lots of discussion in the area. The whole paper was refreshing because it didn't try and say the same thing over and over again but had clear, concise analysis along with clear instructions on action.

The coverage of YTS has been of a similar quality. So let's have more graphics which can be fly-posted, and less hack journalism.

JIM WELLS

Birmingham P.S. Can't we also forget bitchy, back-biting comments on other socialist groups. Most readers have the intelligence to judge these antics for themselves.

WOULD the miners be much stronger, psychologically and physically, if during the present struggle, at appropriate times, they not only moved in more compact bodies (10, 100, 500, 1,000, etc) but wore their normal working clothes, clothes which provide protection (especially the helmets) and command considerable authority and widespread respect?

DAVID HARRIS  
West Sussex

## A prisoner's story

"BECAUSE of the situation at Barczewo, all communications have been impossible. For a long time, every trip outside the sector has been preceded by a very detailed search, including being stripped naked and having to squat.

Jerzy Kropiwnicki and I at this point are continuing our hunger strike. They [the prison guards] have been force-feeding us since Wednesday 11 April 1984. I refuse to be force-fed, so for the last three days I have been rendered helpless by first being handcuffed, and then my mouth is forced open with the use of torture, and a lever.

I am using the word "torture" literally, because after sitting me in a chair, they trample on my toes and twist my arms and legs — often in opposite directions. Or they press my shin bone hard, against the edge of the bedframe.

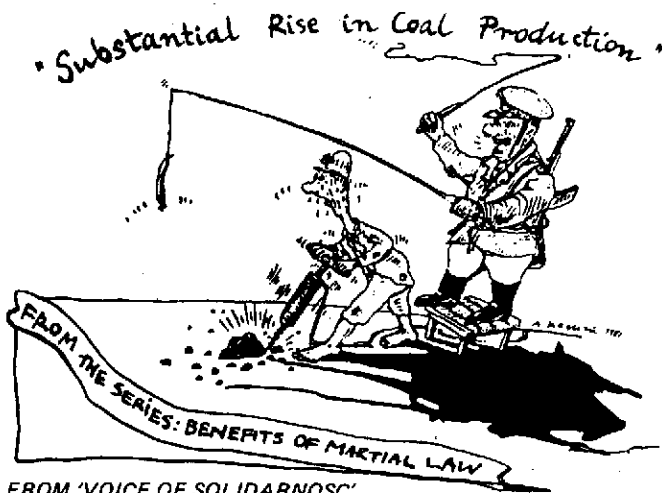
At the same time, others will wrench my head back and press hard on the jaw joints and a doctor or a nurse goes to work on my jaws with forceps. When I start to scream the prongs of the forceps are inserted between my teeth, and then they have me.

All they have to do is insert the stomach tube and pour the gruel in. Usually this will take five or six functionaries as well as a doctor and nurse.

One of the nurses has progressed to torturing me. On April 12 1984 she started to press very hard on my lymph nodes. This is very painful.

As you know, I have been alone in the cell since March 29, 1984. Jerzy Kropiwnicki, Wladyslaw Frasnyniuk, Taduesz Stanski and Ronald Szeremietiew were each given a month of solitary confinement.

Since yesterday, Frasnyniuk, Stanski and Szeremietiew have been locked up in the so-called "thermos flask" — a cell without a toilet,



FROM 'VOICE OF SOLIDARNOSC'

water or air. It is constructed with double walls, double doors, excellent soundproofing and security. They will probably stay there for about 24 or 48 hours.

They ended up in there for demanding to be treated as political prisoners, including the right to exercise in the yard which has been denied everyone since March 29.

Yesterday, each one separately was granted 30 minutes of exercise, following which they were locked up in the

"thermos" again.

Try to spread this news as far and as wide as you can. I hope there will be demonstrations on 1 May again this year. It is important to maintain these traditions. Any interruption may bring them to an end for a very long time.

I send greetings to all who remember and who continue to act.

Andrzej Slowik  
13 April 1984  
Barczewo Prison, Poland

## Get ORGANISED!



Become a supporter of the Socialist Organiser Alliance — groups are established in most large towns. We ask £1.50 a month minimum (20p unwaged) contribution from supporters.

I want to become a Socialist Organiser supporter/ I want more information.

Name .....

Address .....

Send to Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8 8PL.

# Not quite Chandler

SOMEONE wrote after the first episode of 'Marlowe' — "Who cares whether or not it's Chandler, it's wonderful".

I wouldn't go that far, but it's pretty good, if you like that sort of thing (and I do).

1930s Los Angeles — cars, houses, furniture and even such details as the lid the tin in which police lieutenant 'Violets' Magee gets the purple pastilles which give him his name — has been recreated with great care. The atmosphere is authentically that of Chandler's stories.

Powers Boothe, who played Jim Jones in the lightly fictionalised television account of the mass suicide in the Guyana jungle of nearly 1000 members of the religious/political Jones cult, is a very effective presence as Marlowe.

But somehow it jars a bit.

**Mick Ackersley reviews**  
**'Marlowe — Private Eye'**  
(ITV, Fridays 9pm)

All right, so who cares about Chandler? Chandler didn't, much. There is an oft-told story that when the 1946 Howard Hawks/Humphrey Bogart version of 'The Big Sleep' was nearly finished, the director could not make sense of the script, and finally managed to get a well-oiled Raymond Chandler on the other end of the phone to ask him for an interpretation. 'How the hell do I know?', said Chandler.

Screen versions of Chandler have not been good or bad to the degree that they were literal adaptations. Hawks' version of 'The Big Sleep' enhanced the novel, created its own

atmosphere of mystery and murkiness, and turned the turgidities of the plot to its advantage.

It turned even the Hollywood 'formula' demand for a heroine and a 'love interest' to its advantage. By effectively fusing two women from the book, to create the character played by Lauren Bacall — a nasty, even disgusting, character in the book — it put Chandler's misogyny under control.

Compare that with the Michael Winner/Robert Mitchum early-'70s remake. It is more pedestrian and literally true to the original, despite being set in London, but it is pretty dull and uninspired. It lacks the vitalising touch that was in Chandler, and it deploys Chandler's misogyny straight and raw from the novel.

On the other side of the argument, take Robert Aldrich's 1972 movie version of 'The Long Goodbye'. Written at the beginning of the '50s, the novel is, in my view, one of Chandler's best. The movie, set in 1970s Los Angeles, turned Marlowe into a slob, messed about with the story line, brutalised it foully.

It stank. Even a pedestrian version of the novel would have been better.

London Weekend Television's 'Marlowe' does recreate and convey the essential world that Chandler created, but it crudifies it and 'TV-ises' it.

Marlowe acquires 'a steady', Annie Riordan, and a grizzled lovable 'back alley cop', whatever that is, 'Violets' Magee. Both are transmuted characters from Chandler. Powers Boothe looks too young and isn't seedy or reflective enough.

But it is nearer to Howard Hawks than to Michael Winner. And that is pretty good.



Powers Boothe as Marlowe and Kathryn Leigh Scott as Annie Riordan

## — SCIENCE —

By Les Hearn

## Cure for AIDS?

ACQUIRED Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) seems to behave like a virus infection and there have been many speculations as to the identity of the guilty virus, including Hepatitis B virus and African Swine Fever virus.

The latest candidate seems the strongest to date and looks set to shed light not only on the cause (and possibly cure) of AIDS but also on the mechanisms that underlie the development of cancer.

The story starts with the discovery of Lymphadenopathy-Associated Virus (LAV), a year ago by a team led by Jean-Claude Chermann of the Institut Pasteur in Paris. They showed LAV to be related to a virus called HTLV-1, itself a past candidate for AIDS.

HTLV-1 (Human T-cell Leukaemia-lymphoma Virus) was discovered by Robert Gallo of the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, Maryland. Gallo has reported in the last few weeks his discovery of a relative of HTLV-1 called HTLV-III, and it now seems that LAV and HTLV-III are one and the same. Furthermore, both are found in people suffering from AIDS or at risk of AIDS, but not in healthy people.

None of this is direct proof, but there is further circumstantial evidence. Many scientists believe the AIDS virus originated in Central Africa. Gallo believes

that HTLV-1 and III have a common ancestor and it is known that HTLV-1 infection is quite common in Central Africa.

Not only are AIDS cases on the increase in Zaire, but Kaposi's sarcoma (one of the diseases that AIDS sufferers contract) has been known in Central Africa for generations.

It is thought that AIDS spread from Africa to Haiti, and the French researchers have found antibodies to LAV in both a Zairean woman and a Haitian man.

AIDS may then have spread to the US via gay tourists visiting Haiti. Though its victims are predominantly gays, others are also at risk and it seems that all humans may be susceptible to infection. For example, Zairean victims do not seem to fall into any of the common risk categories while Gallo has found evidence of HTLV-III infection in two young children which he believes may have been transmitted via the placenta or in their mothers' milk.

So how might LAV/HTLV-III operate? HTLV-1 acts or those white blood cells called T-helpers, causing them to proliferate uncontrolledly. Result — leukaemia.

LAV/HTLV-III seems to act on the T-helpers, stopping them from proliferating at all. Result — AIDS.

This is because the body needs T-helper cells to encourage other white blood cells to make antibodies to deal with infections.

Thus the two types of virus may be acting on the same part of the T-helper cells — the gene that acts as a control on cell growth and division, but having opposing effects on it.

In the meantime, Gallo's team have found a way to grow HTLV-III/LAV and are hard at work trying to understand its actions and find ways of defeating it.

INFO: New Scientist.

## Banners

Get a banner made for your trade union or Labour Party organisation and contribute to Socialist Organiser funds. Send details of design required to Carla Jamison, 75 Freemantle Close, Basingstoke.



## Letters

### Time for the left to discuss Europe

WHILE multinational capital is now more effectively coordinated at the European level than ever before the Left, particularly in Britain, has been slow in looking past the national effects of the crisis to the international dimensions of the forces against which we are all in common struggle and have consequently been bereft of the means for confronting capital.

The crisis in international economic relations, the choice of a European 'Theatre' for confrontation between the super-

powers, and the self-evident limit on what socialist governments can achieve in a purely national context, all provide the need and the opportunity for articulating a socialist strategy for Europe. The Socialist Society is now organising a conference with this title for June 2 at Caxton House, 129 St. John's Way, London N19.

Leading figures from the Left Green, and peace movements in Europe — such as Petra Kelly, Ernest Mandel, and Luciana Castellina — as well as from organisations of the Left in Britain have

been invited to the conference and acceptances are now coming in.

At the moment of writing, the conference is being organised into four sessions. First, there will be a general plenary session. Second, there will follow a workshop on 'Low Paid Workers, Unpaid Labour and the Threat of Counter-reformism'.

In the afternoon there will be a workshop on 'Capitalist Crisis, Socialist Struggle and European Initiatives' where we will hear and debate the possibilities for

exploiting the contradictions and resources of the EEC, the socialist organisation in industry on a common European front (such as with the Kodak workers), and the plans for reconversion and restructuring of industry for social need in the future.

Finally, a second workshop in the afternoon will be on 'European Non-Alignment, Nuclear Disarmament, and Superpower Disengagement'.

John Palmer, Jeremy Beale  
9 Poland St., London W1

### Poland: linking with whom?

The Labour City Council with the support of the Liberal-SDP Alliance wants to twin Cambridge with the Polish town of Torun (the birthplace of the astronomer Copernicus).

The link is advocated by Labour and Alliance councillors as a step to reduce Cold War tensions. Opposition, as is to be expected, is coming from Conservatives and their supporters, who employ the usual "Cold War" arguments.

This line up, of course, makes for a consensus in the Labour Party — as in so many local Labour Parties and CND branches

of uncritical support for such links.

Yet Cambridge CND has an excellent record of sympathy and support for those struggling to bring about progressive changes in Warsaw Pact countries. And the Solidarity Trade Union Working Group has already written a letter to the leaders of the council and local CND pointing out the realities of the Polish situation.

Ordinary citizens could not participate in the link-up arrangements, and they would only see it as Cambridge Council giving endorsement to the officials administering the hated martial

law regime.

Cambridge CND has made 'links' of a different sort, sending several protests and petitions to the Russian Embassy about the treatment of peace activists in the Soviet Union. Throughout 1983 a highly successful correspondence network was run with members of the "Dialogue of Peace Group" in the Hungarian capital, Budapest.

Both here and abroad, supporters of Cambridge CND have had informal but very fruitful meetings with people belonging to peace movements from all parts of Europe.

ALEX SIMPSON, Cambridge

# T&G: vote Todd!

## Telecom union says: don't buy these shares!

### these shares!

By Ricky Houston

A FORTNIGHT ago all employees of British Telecom were sent a letter from BT Chair Sir George Jefferson advising them that the Privatisation Act was now law and that shares in BT would soon be on the open market.

BT are to send every employee of BT who is eligible (almost everyone) an application form for £70 worth of free shares. They can also apply for special "cheap rate" shares costing £100 and worth £370.

BT's assets are estimated at £10 billion.

The forthcoming sale of 51% of the highly profitable BT, has sent stockmarket and big business types into a frenzy of speculation. Articles have appeared in the national press informing the jet-setting investors of the gains they can make.

0.1 per cent

A leaflet from the POEU, arguing against shareholding points out that "£60 worth of free shares . . . represents 0.00000075% of all shares." All BT employees' free shares clubbed together would represent less than 0.1% of the total.

The POEU's leaflet, issued last week in response to Jefferson's propaganda ploy, also says:

"Employees who own shares will be placed in a very awkward position. What happens when BT plc wants to 'improve efficiency' by cutting the wages and jobs of those very same employees . . . Owning a few shares won't save these jobs.

"Aren't employees' shares just a way of management getting employees to acquiesce in 'awkward' management decisions?"

The leaflet points out that the POEU will be urging the next Labour government to renationalise BT without compensation. It cites examples of other employee-shareholding companies making workers redundant.

Paltry

The offer of free and cheap-rate shares is a propaganda ploy for the government's privatisation drive and an attempt to divert BT workers' attitudes from defending their real interests. It aims to create a clash of "interests" — paltry dividends or wages and jobs.

BT workers should demonstrate their distrust and disgust at the privatisation of BT by refusing to apply for free shares.

BT workers cannot gain a real voice in the running of BT by turning up to shareholders' meetings with a voice of 0.00000075% while BT is run for profit.

We have to organise now for a fight to implement the POEU policy of renationalisation without compensation, and struggle to take that policy further through workers' control of the industry so that BT is run not for profit but for public need.

By Jim Denham

BALLOTING is now in progress for the position of general secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union. The two serious contenders are Ron Todd, secretary of Region 1 (the London area) and George Wright, the Welsh secretary.

Because of the TGWU's position as the country's largest union this election has considerable implications, not just for the TGWU itself, but also for trade unionism as a whole, over the next few years.

The battle between Todd and Wright is essentially a showdown between the left and the right in the union, although both candidates have been bending over backwards to present a different picture.

Ron Todd is Moss Evans' chosen successor and is backed by the CP-dominated Broad Left. Despite this, he vehemently denies being the candidate of the left and insists that the contest is not political.

Similarly, George Wright, who is backed by the centre and the right wing of the union claims that he has no significant political differences with Todd and points out that like Todd, he is also a member of CND.

There is some truth in both Todd's and Wright's protestations: on paper there is not a lot to choose between them. But what is important is the style of leadership that each would bring to the TGWU.

Todd — standing in the tradition of the present leadership — is quite capable of selling out struggles, but can also be forced into backing a fight when pressured by a left-of-centre executive and a militant membership.

Wright, on the other hand, makes no secret of his intention to reintroduce an autocratic,



Ron Todd

presidential approach, modelled on the style of the TGWU general secretary of the 1950s, Arthur Deakin.

In addition Wright boasts of his close relationship with Labour leader Neil Kinnock and hints at what a good team it would be with Kinnock as Prime Minister and himself as leader of Britain's largest union.

All this should sound alarm bells for all those who remember how Moss Evans' predecessor, Jack Jones helped bring in and police the last Labour government's Social Contract wages policy, especially as Wright as secretary of the Welsh TUC, was

a leading advocate of the document 'A Social Plan', which proposed an incomes policy and full cooperation with employers under a future Labour government.

Todd may be a reluctant left winger, but at least his election would give the rank and file an opportunity to make their wishes heard in the TGWU and make it more difficult for a future Kinnock government to force in another Social Contract-type deal. That is why socialists in the union must advocate a vote for Todd, whilst continuing the fight to build a genuine rank and file movement in the union.



George Wright (left) with Bill Sirs

## Public pay gap

FOR three successive years the Tories have managed to hold down central and local government pay rises — with the significant exception of the police — well below those in the private sector.

However, this year a number of public sector groups are challenging the 3% cash limit. Local government manual workers have won 4.1 to 5.1%, electricity power workers 5.2%, BBC staff 5%, and gas workers 4.6%. The Tories probably allowed for this sort of 'slippage' above the 3% figure.

But now the review body is due to report on nurses (who have been made to wait a further four weeks).

Teachers have been offered 4.5% but are taking action for at least 7%.

Pressure is building up because of the widening gap between pay in the private sector and the public services. In the private sector the average pay settlement is around 6%.

### Closed shop

IN the only known ballot so far held under the terms of the Employment Act 1982 (which takes full effect on November 1), workers at Steeley Brick in North Staffordshire voted overwhelmingly for the continuation of a closed shop agreement.

TGWU officials were opposed to the ballot but shop-stewards cooperated. 94.5% of those voting and 93.5% of the total workforce were in favour of continuing the closed shop.

The Employment Act 1982 requires that existing union membership agreements must be approved by secret ballots if bosses are to retain protection from damages if sued by employees dismissed for non-membership of a union.

If the closed-shop agreement was made before 1980 then either 80% of the workforce or 85% of those who vote, must vote to keep it.

## Southwark NALGO wins job fight

By John Mulrennan, secretary Southwark NALGO, in a personal capacity.

SOUTHWARK NALGO recently returned to work after winning our strike for the reinstatement of Siobhan Stokes.

On March 19 1600 NALGO members walked out on indefinite strike following the summary dismissal of Siobhan, a mobile care officer. She was among a group of workers employed during the residential social workers dispute last September to alleviate the problems caused by a ban on overtime and new admissions, problems which were accentuated by a 29% vacancy level in the residential sector.

### Refused

At the time of her recruitment, Southwark Council refused to enter into negotiations on terms and conditions for mobile care officers, a new category of

employee. This was a complete departure from normal practice.

It was coupled with their unilateral 'suspension' of an agreement between the Council and NALGO which had been secured following industrial action in 1982. The consultative procedure, as the agreement was known, dealt mainly with staffing levels in Social Services, but also stated that no worker should be expected to move between the Council's establishments in London and Sidcup, Kent.

Siobhan Stokes, along with others taken on at the same time, joined NALGO and immediately began taking the same industrial action as her colleagues. The union adopted policies designed to protect mobile care officers and guaranteed support for them if they were required to undertake unreasonable moves.

The national industrial action in pursuit of a parity claim for residential workers ended in January of this year.

On March 5, Siobhan Stokes was ordered to move from the London home at which she had worked for five months to a residential home in Kent. In line with union advice she refused to move, but made herself available for work in any London home.

On March 19 she was called to a meeting with Social Services management. She was told to sign a statement to the effect that she would at all times in the future comply with her contract of employment. It was pointed out by her union representative that if she complied, it would be tantamount to signing away her trade union rights and ability to follow trade union policy.

This argument was ignored and Siobhan was told that unless she signed such a statement and

moved to Kent she would be sacked on the spot.

She refused and was sacked. There were thirty minutes of her six month probationary period to run, so she had no right of appeal to Councillors or to an Industrial Tribunal.

NALGO members in Southwark held immediate shop floor meetings and a spontaneous walk-out began. A Branch meeting the following day voted overwhelmingly to stay on indefinite strike until Siobhan was reinstated. Picket lines were placed on all Council buildings.

There were not many strikers who thought that they would be still picketing six weeks later.

Then began a series of manoeuvres and similar tactics which would have done justice to the most reactionary Tory employer. Among these were:

\*The Public Relations Officer told the press that Siobhan was a member of a far left revolutionary group — it would not have mattered, but the fact is she wasn't.

\*Her sickness record was released at the same time.

\*Labour councillors were instructed by the chief whip to cross official picket lines.

\*The Industrial Relations Emergency Committee refused to meet us for two weeks.

\*A new loyalty oath was circulated by senior management to staff still working, which called for Siobhan to remain sacked.

\*A 'rumour' was started that Siobhan was seven months pregnant and had another job anyway.

Faced with such tactics, the NALGO National Executive Council declared the strike official and sanctioned the payment of full strike pay.



Two pamphlets summing up the ideas of Socialist Organiser. 'Where We Stand' — 20p plus 16p postage. 'How to fight the Tories' — 10p plus 16p postage. Or the two together for 45p including postage. From Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8

## Industrial

UCW  
no to  
YTS

By John Bloxam

THE most significant decision taken on the first day of this year's UCW conference at Blackpool was the overwhelming rejection of the YTS scheme.

The scheme had been introduced in the last year on the postal side by the UCW Executive. The issue hadn't been reached at last year's postal section conference and had never been discussed in the branches.

Where it was discussed - at the Telecom section conference - it had been rejected.

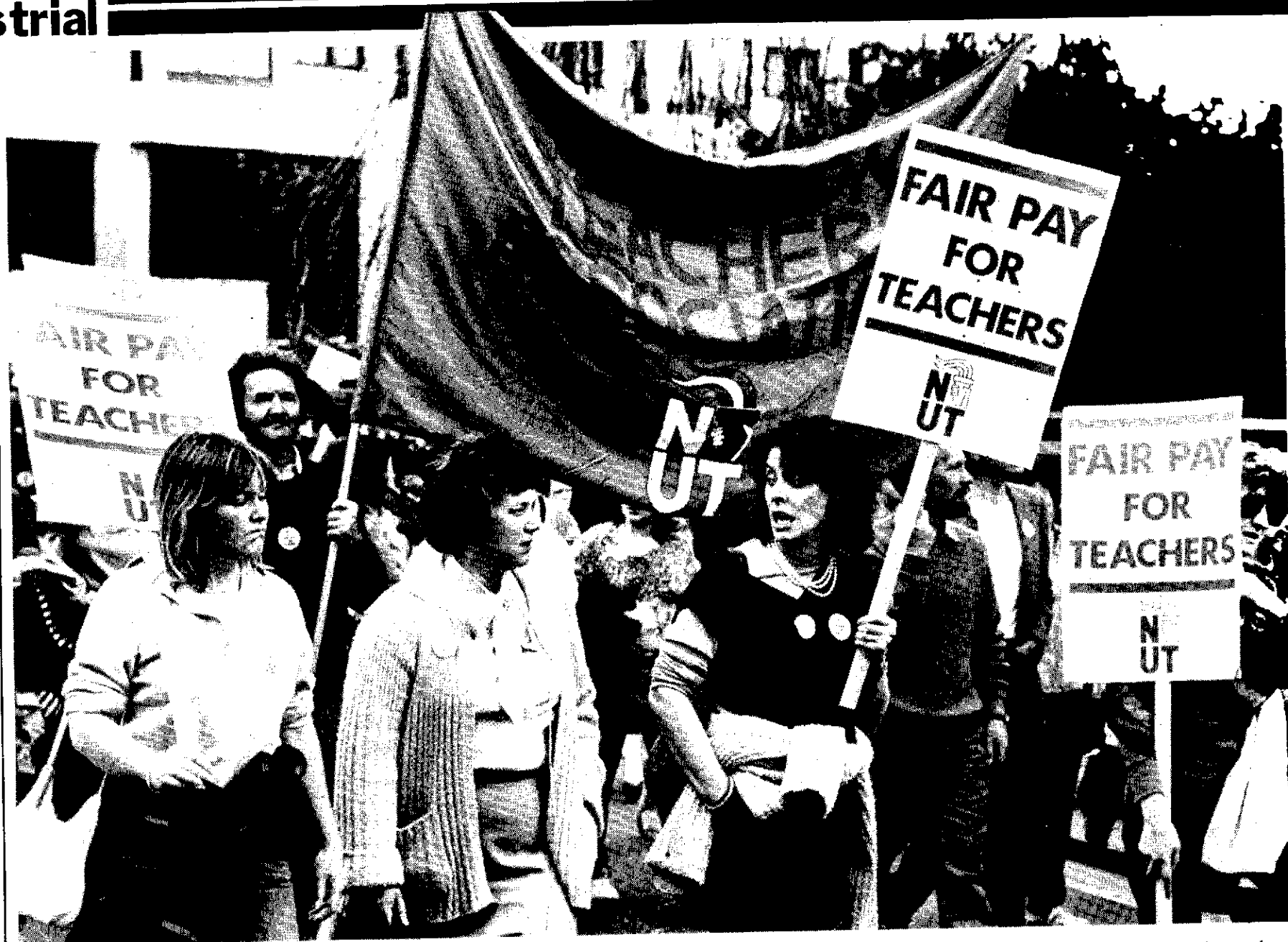
The membership's anger at the EC's action was reflected in the 66 amendments submitted opposing the scheme.

The strongest amendment from Oldham Indoor, seconded by Manchester Amalgamated, was overwhelmingly carried.

The amendment read: "The scheme now be rejected as it is not in the interests of the membership or the unemployed youth themselves. Those already in posts under the present agreement, would have their contracts honoured."

On Tuesday the counter section conference voted to take action to stop the closure of Crown Offices.

The other major issues at the conference - pay, conditions, five day week, the victimisation of Alan Fraser - are scheduled from Wednesday onwards.



Teachers throughout England and Wales joined a one-day strike called by the National Union of Teachers on May 9, and there were demonstrations in London (above) and many other cities. The second biggest teachers' union, the NAS-UWT, is also calling strike

action to win an improvement on the employers' 4½% pay offer. It has called one day strikes in Hampshire and Leeds, and plans half-day strikes in further areas. The NUT plans a rolling series of three-day strikes, starting May 22, in selected areas.

## CPSA slips on pay

AS expected, on the first day of CPSA conference in Brighton, on Monday 14th, a censure motion was carried against the right-wing leadership for its refusal to hold a special pay conference to determine the 1984 claim, as mandated by the 1983 conference.

However, when the actual

By Steve Battlemuch

debate on this year's pay claim came up, the Broad Left slipped badly.

Many supported an emergency motion from the Executive Com-

mittee merely agreeing "to campaign for an improved pay offer and, if necessary, the right of referring the CoCSU claim to the Civil Service Arbitration Tribunal" - rather than support another emergency motion, argued for by Socialist Organiser supporters.

This was the only motion on the agenda which set out a serious strategy for the fight this year. It called on the Executive to withdraw from the CoCSU pay claim and submit a new one based on the decision of the present conference. The motion also recognised that the only way to win the claim was by all-out action alongside the miners.

This was apparently too much for the softer elements in the Broad Left, who ensured the passage of the Executive's wishy-washy motion by voting alongside the right wing.

This may well have destroyed the last chance of a real fight on pay this year.

## Condemned

On Tuesday, the leadership were soundly condemned for breaking another 1983 conference mandate: on the introduction of YTS into the Civil Service, which the Executive had gone along with despite the widespread opposition of the membership.

On Wednesday morning, a motion calling on Alastair Graham to resign was manoeuvred off the agenda.

Islington NALGO  
backs nurseries

ISLINGTON NALGO members will strike on Monday May 21 in support of nursery workers in the borough who have been on strike for five weeks demanding better pay and more staff.

The branch voted by a 2-1 majority for the strike because the council, after being forced to the negotiating table, has refused to make any serious offer.

On pay, the council has ripped up its manifesto commitment to "ensure that childcare workers are adequately paid". They made an offer that added up to between £2 and £4 a week for some of the lowest paid staff on the council. And that offer was wrapped up in a complicated "regrading" scheme riddled with anomalies and confusion.

On staff levels, the council has ignored an even clearer pledge that "staff ratios should be based on 1 (staff) to 4.2 (children).

At present Islington's day nurseries have some of the worst levels of staff in any London borough, and staff often have to look after a dozen under 5s on their own for hours on end.

The council are 'standing firm' and refusing anything other than 13 extra staff, one per nursery. Staff and parents want a 20% staff increase.

The May 21 strike is likely to be only the start of a series of actions by Islington NALGO against Islington council ripping up its promises. The council

By Nik Barstow

seems determined to try to 'sit out' the strike. If only they would show such firmness and strength of will in standing up to the Tories!

It may seem strange that the Assistant Secretary of nearby Haringey Council's NALGO Branch has been regularly crossing NALGO picket lines to go into Islington Town Hall.

Perhaps not so odd, though, this NALGO official, Rosemary Nicholson, is also the chair of Islington Council's social services committee.

Do councillors somehow lose their trade union principles when they get home from work?

## Victory at Longbridge

THE strike which brought Longbridge to a complete standstill last week has ended victoriously for the workforce.

The dispute began on April 30 on the Metro trim track when six workers were given a warning for allegedly "not working hard enough", following the imposition of manning cuts. By Friday May 4, thousands of other Longbridge workers had either joined the strike or were laid off, and virtually all production was halted.

Following a successful mass picket on Tuesday 8th, when the last remaining areas of production were halted, the company

climbed down and agreed to restore the old track speeds and manning levels.

To drive home their confidence and militancy, the trim track workers walked out again within a few hours of returning to work on Thursday because management wanted to wait until the following Monday before bringing in the new labour they had agreed to.

The new labour was brought in the next day.

After several years of defeats and demoralisation, this victory represents an important step forward in the task of rebuilding an effective shopfloor organisation at Longbridge.

## Labour plans workplace drive

By Nik Barstow

THE Labour Party has at last decided to start "a nationally organised drive for more workplace branches". The Party's national agent, David Hughes, has written to trade unions announcing a meeting of "representatives of workplace branches . . . and affiliated unions" to be held after the Euro-elections to launch the campaign.

Unfortunately, as we discovered at the second unofficial national meeting of workplace branches on May 11, he hasn't bothered to tell workplace branches about it!

The May 11 meeting brought together a dozen of the Party's 70 workplace branches, and produced a lot of ideas about what we want done, which will be taken to the official meeting.

Locally, union branches have mostly been keen to help Labour Party workplace branches with donations and publicity. But at a national level unions have been less than enthusiastic.

Most unions haven't really discussed them because the Labour Party officials haven't been able to give them any clear guidelines about what is involved. Only SOGAT, where workplace branch members have raised the question, seems to have supported a campaign to build them.

The May 11 meeting decided to push for the existing branches themselves to take charge of providing advice and experience to trade unions. The Party should appeal for national trade union

support to provide special staff and resources for a campaign.

The National Federation of Workplace Branches set up by the May 11 meeting will contact other bodies such as the LCC, BLOC, IWC and CLPD, and trade union affiliates, to ask for their backing for a campaign.

A national campaign to place an appeal for support for workplace branches in trade union journals is planned, as well as resolutions for Labour Party conference and a fringe meeting there to appeal particularly to trade union delegates.

When the Party does hold

## BARKING

PICKETS at Barking Hospital in East London, where cleaners are fighting an attempt by contractors Crothalls to cut wages and worsen conditions, got three bits of good news on Monday 14th.

They heard that the national conference of their union, NUPE, had agreed to a national campaign of industrial action to support them. (But exactly what this means is in the hands of the union executive: pressure will have to be kept up to ensure that the action is effective rather than token).

They saw only a dozen scabs go in (usually there are about 20). And they heard that the District Health Authority is investigating the possibility of taking the contract away from Crothalls.

Messages and donations to: AUEW House, 588 Rainham Rd., South Darenth, Essex RA11 1TR. Telephone: Barking 33111. Fax: Barking 33111.

its official workplace branches conference, every branch should be there and pressing for the Party to give real support. To get details write to: D. Hughes, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17.

Even though the official machinery is now taking an interest it will still be vital to keep up the regular contact through the National Federation of Workplace Branches. A further national meeting is planned in London for September 1.

## Model resolution

This conference:

1) Notes the role of workplace branches presently established in recruiting, political education, and building the Party. However with little over 100 formed in two years we recognise that the Party should put in more resources and support.

2) This is important in light of the attacks on trade union-Labour Party links, including the political levy. Labour Party workplace branches have a major role to play in winning the argument on the shop floor.

3) As part of a campaign to ensure a massive expansion of workplace branches, this conference instructs the NEC to:

a) Appoint a national officer to be in charge of the campaign for workplace branches.

b) Establish an NEC committee for workplace branches with non-NEC members drawn from members of workplace branches.

c) Provide assistance and support for national meetings of workplace branches.

d) Produce and circulate campaign material within two months to CLPs and affiliated unions about establishing workplace branches.

e) Instruct regional staff to assist and facilitate the formation of workplace branches.

# Socialist ORGANISER



Women Against Pit Closures march in Barnsley - Saturday May 12

## Women in the front line

ON Saturday May 12 Barnsley was invaded by some 10,000 miners' wives, marching to oppose pit closures.

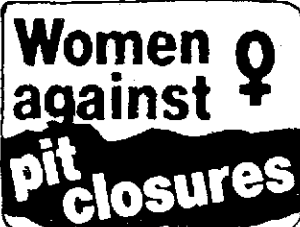
It was very much a women's march, not just in its constitution but in its atmosphere.

Women from all over the country - Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Staffordshire, Northumberland and South Wales - came together to give a very lively and resounding NO to MacGregor's closure plans.

Not your boring run of the mill trudge, this... chants of "the miners united will never be defeated" and "I'd rather be a picket than a scab" continued throughout the march. Drum majorettes provided more noise and colour. And I don't think anyone in Barnsley centre escaped without getting a 'Coal Not Dole' sticker plonked on some part of their anatomy.

The march got a very positive response from bystanders and there was clapping along the route.

By Helen Rigby



By the time we reached Barnsley Civic Hall for the rally, excitement had reached fever pitch. Chanting continued in the hall. Particularly warm applause was given to the Nottingham Women's Support Group when they arrived with their banner.

I was glad to see that, as during the march, the men kept in the background. This was very definitely a women's meeting, and the men kept to the back of the hall.

Emotions were running high and Anne Hunter, chair, (and secretary of 'Barnsley Women Against Pit Closures') was visibly moved.

"When we first tried to get involved we were told that it was a bad enough job to organise the men... but look... we don't need any organising."

This was the first time miners' wives had organised on such a large scale. As Arthur Scargill said:

"This is the first time that the media haven't been able to go to the villages and find women to speak out against the strike."

The strike isn't just about mines, but about communities and saving those communities. Talk to any of the women's support groups, and they can tell you of numerous ways in which communities are pulling together to survive the strike.

Miners' wives from Oakdale colliery, Gwent, told me that during one street collection in Blackwood they had collected £500 worth of groceries!

What came through very clearly, too, was the way in which women organising is challenging stereotypes.

Lorraine Bowler, a miner's wife, gave much of her very moving speech to this subject.

"There are arguments in my house about who goes to a demonstration or the picket line and who looks after the kids... my husband says its coming to something when he has to make an appointment to see me."

Judging by the reaction of the other women in the hall this was an experience shared by many.

Lorraine went on: "We aren't just separate as a class, we're separate as men and women... We're not encouraged to get active in the trade union movement... but I've seen a change coming in the last few weeks."

"If this government thinks this fight is just against the miners then they'd better think again... I'll say this to the government... Men, women and families are together now and you've got one hell of a fight on your hands."

## 'On equal terms'

THE WOMEN in North Staffs are organising. This has provided the basis for effective action and breaking out of women's traditional role of giving moral support and being meal-providers for the men.

Since the deduction of £15 a week from social security, very real need has arisen. At least ten women's support groups have been set up in the North Staffs area, and have been dividing up food parcels among striking miners' families on a regular basis.

Since its formation this group has organised a march which finished in what was probably the first women's, kids' and men's picket to hit North Staffs.

The afternoon shift of scabs at Florence met a vociferous picket which resulted in threats of arrest to the women and kids. One of the miners on the picket was arrested after a scab tried to run him down with his car.

This was followed by the largest march and rally in Stoke since the 1930s, and Brenda spoke on the platform of the rally.

Her speech, which received a standing ovation, rejected the media's portrayal of women.

"Women are usually shown in the media as good little housekeepers, urging their wayward menfolk back to work on the bosses' terms. They've not had that opportunity this time, nor will we give it to them. This time women are organising independently. This time we are fighting alongside the men on equal terms."

Brenda Proctor, of the Florence Colliery (North Staffs) women's group, spoke to Paul Barnett

We've been on the picket lines with the men. We've been pushed around by the police. We've been threatened with arrest. Well we've got a message for them. Arrests or not, we'll be there again and again until we win."

### Sexist

Since then the women's group banner has been to the Mansfield demonstration on the 14th.

Brenda affirms that the women are now fully integrated into the struggle, but have criticised some of the sexist slogans shouted by men, and in some cases, women.

Brenda said, the men probably aren't aware that they are

insulting all women and not just Margaret Thatcher, but even so we must and we do point it out to them.

This is a great opportunity to stamp out some of the sexist attitudes which exist in the mining industry.

Brenda is enthusiastic about the proposal for a miners' gala in the North Staffs area. "Marches, rallies and mass pickets are great but they don't get to everybody. There are still a great number of miners who are passively on strike. Miners who won't cross picket lines but who won't do much else either."

"They are the ones who can easily get fed up, particularly now they are beginning to run out of money. We need to wake them up a bit and get them on the picket. What better way to get them involved that to have a bloody great day out."

This is certainly a good opportunity to firm up the strike in North Staffs which is still ragged around the edges.

## £5 for \$0!

Thanks this week go to yet another area which has organised to collect donations. But still, this week's £44.50 total - £148 this month - won't get us very far! Let's have some other groups of supporters collecting donations too, and sending them to 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY. Thanks to: Nik Barstow, Pat Longman, Bruce Robinson, Peter Kenway, £5 each; Francis Lawn £1; Steve Battlemuch £15; Bob Sugden £5.



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