

# Socialist ORGANISER

Paper of the Socialist Organiser Alliance No.182 June 7 1984 Claimants and strikers 10p

## Vote Labour on June 14

Fight for a socialist Europe!



JOHN HARRIS

Arthur Scargill arrested at Orgreave — in an obviously calculated move by the police

# SPREAD THE PICKETING!

By John Bloxam

So now we know for sure. MacGregor is just a glove puppet for Thatcher.

Documents published by Paul Foot in the Daily Mirror (Wednesday 6th) prove that the general on the bosses' side in this fight to beat down and starve out the miners has been Thatcher herself. The government has orchestrated the way other wage claims have been handled so that other workers would not fight at the same time as the miners, thus facing the government with an industrial war on two fronts.

British Rail chief Robert Reid was instructed not to use the Tories' anti-union

laws against the NUR, for fear that he would trigger a united fight. Then he was told to make concessions on pay and productivity strings.

The miners on their own have shaken the Tories. They knew that a joint strike of miners and rail workers would have crippled them.

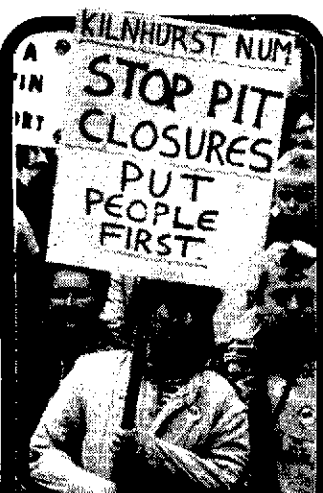
Overall, the strike has cost well over £200 million. It was the main cause of last month's huge trade loss.

And despite the Tories' efforts, the teachers are now taking action. The postal workers are shaping up for a fight. And Liverpool City Council is determined to defy

Continued on page 2

## On to victory!

## No compromise!



**Back the miners**

**Spread pickets**

Continued from page 1

the Tories' cuts. Now is the last time to relax or talk of compromises. It is time to step up and spread the picketing, especially at power stations.

Many trade union and Labour Party leaders are openly pressing for the strike to be called off - instead of working to spread it, as real leaders of the labour movement would.

But there can be no compromise on pit closures. It should be made clear now that a Delegate Conference called the national strike, and that only a recall national conference can decide when it's over.

The bosses have great advantages in the strike. They have used them ruthlessly. But they have not got their way. The battle is a long way from over, but it is clear that the miners can win.

Picketing must be stepped up and spread, so that all coal and coke movements are controlled by the strikers and steel production is halted. The labour movement should help the miners - on the picket lines, with money, with transport and accommodation.

Teachers, postal workers and others should bring their action forward, and make it a united fight with the miners against the Tories.



Orgreave: "The horses would come through, and behind the horses the riot police..."

# 'Like a mini Ireland'

**Tony.** We were pushing really well. We got the police really worried. And then I heard someone in the police say, 'Kick the legs from under them'. I didn't know much what happened then. I didn't get my legs kicked from under me. But I went down. The next thing I knew I was waking up on the pavement.

**Les.** The weight, the pressure, was like being in a vice.

**Tony.** I was surprised they didn't use the riot police on the Friday. The tactics on the Tuesday were different. After a while, the police lines would part and the riot police would chase right through and try and gain ground. That way they pushed us back, back, up the road.

On our side, after a time someone would throw a stone and a few would follow. I even saw a mop bucket being thrown. But then you would get everybody saying 'stop', and it would stop.

As soon as stones were thrown the horses would come through, and behind the horses the riot police. I get the impression that some of those throwing stones weren't pickets, because they were told 'no throwing', and they did listen to each other.

With arrests, the police would pick out those who looked scared. They wouldn't

The police mounted a huge operation last week to enable British Steel to get coke from the Orgreave depot to its Scunthorpe works. Each scab lorry trip cost about £35,000 to police.

Wide scale arrests were part of the operation. At chosen times police officers would shout, 'Take prisoners.'

At the end of the week, they upped the charges for arrested pickets to unlawful assembly, and hinted at riotous assembly - in law, little short of 'treason'.

pick the big lads out.

Anybody on the left hand side of the road was just thrown down the hill. There were dogs there - five to ten yards apart - and anybody who went down that hill, a dog had him.

I've been in the army 15 years, and I respected the police. But after the last 13 weeks, if I saw a policeman rolling in the gutter I wouldn't help him - because of what I've seen at Orgreave, and also on my own picket line.

I got two cracked ribs in the first week of the strike, and that was just because I was a Yorkshire-man living in the wrong place [in the Midlands].

On the very first day out on strike a police inspector came to me and said, 'That dialect isn't from down here. Where are you from?' And I said, 'Yorkshire'.

I was thrown against the fence, army style. I know how it's done because I've done it myself in Ireland - put the arms up, legs kicked apart, searched and questioned.

They thought I was a flying picket. I had to get the President of the union branch here in Keresley to verify for me.

And from that day I was watched. A few days later I was dragged out of the picket line and kicked. Two cracked ribs.

*Will the police always be able to stop the pickets?*

**Les.** No. They're stretched

On Friday June 1 police used the tactic of collapsing crowds of pickets. One picket had to be dragged out and given the kiss of life to start him breathing again.

Two of the pickets injured that day were Tony Thewlis and Les Allen from Kersley colliery, near Coventry. Tony's main injury was a broken left leg; Les suffered bad bruising.

It was their fourth day on the Orgreave picket line.

They talked to John Bloxam.

down here now, because of Orgreave.

**Tony.** It's illegal to secondarily picket, but why haven't they enforced that? They're frightened. Because they would have to arrest thousands and thousands of people.

They're always denying that the government is going to intervene, but it's evident that the government is in it up to its neck. They're directing the police operation from the central office in Whitehall.

**Les.** They'll try to privatise the super-pits and keep the money themselves. But I think this goes deeper than just trying to smash the NUM. They're trying to scoop money from everywhere - and where it ends up, they're trying to finance things like Trident. They have to reap money from somewhere else - like cutting down on the National Health...

**Tony.** For the cost of one Trident look how many kidney machines. People dying because they can't get kidney machines. They should cancel Trident and then they could buy all the kidney machines they ever wanted.

A lot of people say the TUC should act now - but the TUC is totally ineffective. Len Murray was spouting on the TV about wanting to look at the green grass and the trees... the bloody sod wants to eat some grass, I can tell you.

He's done nothing - look at the GCHQ affair and the Eddie Shah affair. As the TUC

general secretary he should have had the lot stopped there and then - that's what his job is.

I'm not politically minded at all - I've been in the army all that time, I had no political views there. I'm just a miner with a family, and I want to preserve a job for my kids.

And you get people like Len Murray, Neil Kinnock - rubbish, honestly rubbish. They're not fighters for us; they're not working class fighters. They're people feathering their own nest.

Len Murray will probably get a lordship at least - like Joe Gormley.

The working class has got to keep fighting - if you don't keep fighting, they've got everything against you. The working class in this country have got to get together, and that's why Arthur Scargill by-passed the TUC. He knew about the TUC.

A general strike? Certainly, if it takes that, it should be a general strike. If that's what it takes, so be it.

*What do you think about the support you have got in this area?*

**Tony.** Brilliant. I've been around hundreds of factories, and they've all given us great support.

*What about support through industrial action?*

**Tony.** I don't think they've been asked. The only one I think would help would be Massey Ferguson. We were at a mass meeting there and we asked them if they would support us with strike action and, to a man, they put their hands up. That was at the beginning of the strike.

But at other factories, they've been bashed about that much with redundancies and I suppose everybody is a bit frightened of losing their job. I don't blame them really. I blame the union at all these places. Even in our own union there are problems.

*Do you think pickets should be getting out a lot more now, to the power stations etc?*

**Tony.** Definitely. At this pit we had a misconception that

we wouldn't go anywhere until we got our pit out solid - we've got 150-200 men working.

But as time has gone by we've realised that short of breaking their necks we're not going to get them all out on strike. We've started to move about, to Orgreave and places like that. We also had some pickets at Talbot, Ryton - because there's coal coming in there from Germany and France.

*Tony, you were in the army. Do you think the police have learned any lessons from Ireland?*

**Tony.** I was in the first regiment that went into Northern Ireland in 1969 and we trained what were then the B Specials in riot control. And the police here now are using the same methods that we trained the B Special police in Northern Ireland for.

The only thing missing is the gas masks, and I don't think they're far behind - I bet they're parked at the back in the wagons somewhere. I don't know about rubber bullets, but they'll certainly bring in tear gas.

In Ireland, kids use to taunt us to fire rubber bullets at them because they hate the Brits. They're brought up to hate the Brits.

They've seen what the soldiers do - it's natural they're against them. They have seen them arresting their fathers, they have seen them flooding the villages. So kids are bound to turn against the police.

You're not going to get the same situation here as in Ireland - with kids roaming the streets and throwing bottles - but you'll get like a mini-Ireland. Kids are going to turn against the police.

This is one war the Tories are going to lose. The miners won in 1972 and 1974 and they'll win this one, because people are more hardened.

They didn't have the women's action groups in '72 and '74 that they have now. You want to be on this picket line when all the women are there. They can give the police as much as the men do, and it really rattles the police.

## 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.



Kent miners' wives with NALGO nursery workers' pickets outside Islington Town Hall last Friday. The Kent women were invited to tea by

the mayor at the Town Hall, but refused to cross the picket line. The nursery workers gave the miners' wives food donations.

## A common struggle world wide

I'd like to pay tribute to the Nottinghamshire miners on strike who are taking a leading part in bringing this strike to a successful conclusion. You are striking on behalf of all the Nottinghamshire miners, whether they are on strike or not. If this strike were to be lost, which it will not be, this coalfield would suffer directly under the policy of the present government.

Many of the pits in Nottinghamshire would be sold to the multi-nationals.

We are learning now what many trade unionists and socialists have said over many years - that it's one big struggle, which brings together the interests of every miner, and all the miners' wives and families, and everyone else fighting for the living standards, jobs and services of working people.

The young miners today are the finest generation that the NUM has ever produced. And we have learnt that the women, if you are ready, as you are, to

### Tony Benn, speaking in Nottinghamshire last weekend, underlined the links between different battles

make use of their skill and talent are able to do a lot more than just back up the old man at home... they're on the picket lines, they're organising the soup kitchens, they're speaking at meetings, and I believe the mining community has every reason to be proud of the women who work and live in the mining villages.

We've learned the connection between the miners' struggle and everybody else's struggle.

I went down to Greenham Common the day the police evicted those women who've been camping for three years in appalling conditions outside the US Cruise missile base. I saw exactly what you've been seeing in the coalfields of Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire - hundreds of police, police roadblocks, and

police turning on women who are explicitly non-violent in what they are doing.

While we are meeting, a man has gone to Chequers called Mr Botha. He is the Prime Minister of South Africa. Why has Thatcher invited him here?

Firstly because the uranium that goes into the nuclear power stations in Britain comes from Namibia, which the South African government has occupied. She wants to be sure she can get enough uranium for nuclear power and nuclear weapons.

Secondly, she wants cheap coal from South African pits to beat the Notts miners.

Thirdly, she's learning from the very police techniques that Botha has used against black South African miners.

I was in Liverpool recently for a public meeting. Liverpool has been bankrupted by this government. You know why there isn't any money for Liverpool? Because they're putting the money that should be going to



Tony Benn

Liverpool into buying nuclear weapons from America. So Liverpool, and the miners and the Greenham Common women and the South African blacks are all part of one big struggle.

The same goes for London. London is to lose its power to elect its own government. Why? Because Mrs Thatcher hates democracy as much as she hates the trade union movement.

What about the teachers? They are on strike. The money that should be going to educate our children is going to build a new runway in the Falklands. £500 million spent on one runway. Why? Partly so that the multinationals can get control of the natural resources in the South Atlantic and also to protect Mr Botha in case there's rioting in South Africa.

This is one big struggle and it's not only happening in Britain. In Germany last weekend, a quarter of a million workers were out on the streets because they want the 35 hour week.

They say the police are there to let you get to work. Well, last week, they sacked 2,000 workers at Bathgate. Supposing those BL workers turn up at Bathgate the day they finally close it. Are you going to find thousands of police arresting the management of British Leyland because they won't let them work?

The great saying is 'The miners united will never be defeated'. That's right, but what we're saying in Ollerton today is even bigger than that. The working people of the world united will never be defeated.

## Editorial Rip up the anti - union laws

THE Tories are using their agitation against the miners' strike as a springboard for further drastic moves against trade union rights.

The Trade Union Bill now before Parliament already says that unions must ballot their members before strike action, or else employers will be able to get injunctions to stop them or to sue them for damages.

The existing text of the Bill says only that there must be a ballot, not that there must be a majority. But at a Conservative Trade Unionists meeting on Saturday, 2nd, Employment Minister Tom King indicated that he was considering an amendment to say that a majority of those being called out on strike must vote yes.

If the Tories go ahead with such an amendment, the results will be drastic indeed. Since ballots rarely get more than a 70 or 80% turnout, a 65 or 75% majority among those voting would be needed for a strike.

The Guardian on June 4 reported that "government sources" had "indicated that it was unlikely that the government would insist that there must be a majority of those being called out on strike rather than those voting".

Even so the threat is bad enough. On many issues - victimisation, speed-up or other employer-imposed changes in work practices - strike action has to be immediate to be effective.

And the individual ballot is a biased form of democracy. The decisive consideration for workers in deciding whether to strike or not is often their degree of self-confidence, and the balance in their minds between feelings of solidarity and immediate self-interest.

In mass meetings, the factors of collective strength and solidarity are emphasised. The chief influence is the views and arguments of fellow-workers. In an individual ballot, feelings of individual weakness and self-interest are given maximum weight, and the chief influence is likely to be the capitalist-controlled media.

Trade unions have a right - and a duty - to choose the form of democracy which corresponds best to working class interests.

The Tories did try to impose a similar requirement in 1972. Under the Industrial Relations Act, the National Industrial Relations Court had the right to impose strike ballots.

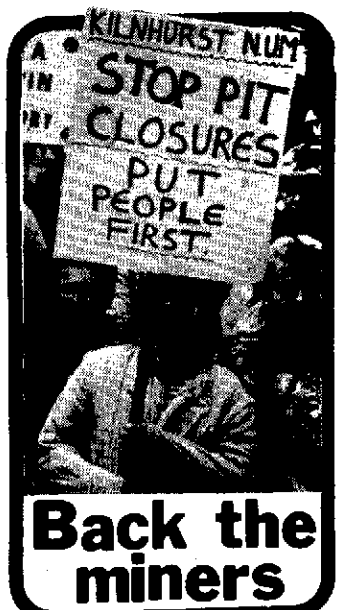
But the one time this clause was used, it backfired. In the summer of 1972, the NIRC imposed a strike ballot on the rail unions. Resenting the imposition, railworkers rallied to the unions: 95% of ASLEF members, 88% of NUR members, and even 70% of non-unionists, voted to strike.

The Tory government and the employers were worse off than when they had started. They might have been able to make some small concessions and rely on the union leaders to foist the deal on their members. But now the union leaders were tied by the ballot, and British Rail had no option but to capitulate.

That the Tories are moving for similar, only more drastic, legislation now shows that they are growing in confidence and the arrogant will to beat down the unions.

In 1972 the Industrial Relations Act was shattered by the mass strike movement against the jailing of five dockers. Hundreds of thousands of workers struck spontaneously. The TUC called a one-day general strike, and if the Tories had not rapidly backed down and freed the five it wouldn't have been just one day, for sure.

The same sort of action can beat this new round of anti-union laws. Solidarity with the miners is the starting point. We should organise for a general strike which can win the miners' battle but also stop new anti-union laws and rip up those already on the statute book.



Back the  
miners

laws

## Notts strikers need money

The job of organising the strike from within Notts goes on with the Notts Miners Rank and File Strike Committee carrying out the bulk of the work.

Send money or invitations for fund-raising visits to me at 10 Nicholas Place, Tuxford, Newark. Tel: 0777 871500.

PAUL WHETTON (Sec., NMR&FSC)

## Women against pit closures

Dalkeith, c/o Dalkeith Miners' Welfare, Dalkeith, Lothian.

Fish Cross, c/o Fish Cross Miners' Welfare, Fish Cross, Clackmanan-shire.

Durham, c/o Heather Village, 18 Halffield Drive, Easington Village, Peterlee, Co. Durham.

Kent, Kay Sutcliffe, c/o Aylesham Miners' Welfare, Aylesham, Kent.

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.

Maesteg: Teresa Parry, 13 Charles Row, Maesteg, West Glamorgan. (Tel: 738825).

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.

Celyen 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-Hall 267641.

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

Sheffield Trades Council Miners' Support Committee, c/o Sheffield TC, Trades and Labour Club, Talbot St., S2 2TG. Phone 24964.



May 25  
The CGT miners' union unloaded a coal train for Britain in the port of Calais and threw the coal over the railway line. The CGT mine-workers' union is organising a national day of action on June 8, including meetings and stoppages at each pit head in solidarity with the NUM.

The Mineworkers International Federation conference in Luxembourg announced that Western mining unions had agreed a "coal blockade" of the UK. Countries involved include the USA, Australia, South Africa and West Germany.

THE South Wales area of the NUM has called for an all-out strike on the Wales TUC day of action in support of the miners, June 12.

CPSA members at the Welsh Office and NALGO and National Union of Seamen members in Cardiff, have already decided to strike, and the local miners' support committee is working for wider action.

The support committee has also been active in organising meetings and collections for the miners.

Barry docks are collecting £230 weekly through a levy, and the UAWE at the Rover factory has also decided on a regular levy.

Overall the support committee has collected about £7,400 so far, plus another £2,500 which has gone through the support committee direct to the NUM.

Two Labour Party wards are doing door to door collections for the miners, and six ward bulletins are leading on the miners' dispute.

Farmers are also supplying free milk to miners' families.

## Rail workers fight for jobs

THE campaign against the threatened 1,100 job losses at the Springburn British Rail Engineering Limited (BREL) depot in Glasgow is now underway after a fashion. 906 hourly-paid jobs and 188 salaried staff are to be cut over the next three years. This is part of the cutbacks planned nationally in British Rail workshops.

Other major proposed cuts are:

\*Shildon is due for closure on June 30 this year at a cost of 1,100 jobs, though possible privatisation might mean up to 500 jobs continuing.

\*Swindon is scheduled to lose 882 of its 2,082 hourly paid workers and 174 of its 374 salaried staff by March 1986. Closure by the end of 1986 is then likely or, if not, 735 further job cuts by March 1987.

\*No apprentice intake at all into BREL this year, cutbacks in future years on the current level of apprentice intake, and "only limited prospects of offering craft employment" to the 2,400 apprentices under training.

\*"Moth-balling" of all Works Training Schools, apart from the Litchurch Lane School in Derby, and cuts in training staff.

All BREL works, with the exception of Doncaster, will see cutbacks in their workforces in the next three years.

Overall, hourly paid jobs will be cut from 22,505 to 18,100 and salaried staff from 4,491 to 3,400.

The main causes are the loss of contracts for new-build and repair work, due to the contracts now being put

out to tender, and the end of the current refurbishment programme of "diesel multiple units", which, in particular, is the cause of the heavy job losses planned for Springburn.

But the campaign against the cutbacks at Springburn remains low-key.

The Glasgow District Labour Party passed an emergency resolution at its May meeting opposing the cuts and calling on the "Party Executive and the Labour Administration to exert every effort in support of the workforce's campaign against the redundancies."

But that campaign has yet to take off properly. A meeting was held on Monday June 4 to discuss the campaign and there are tentative proposals for a demonstration and rally on Saturday June 16.

But the campaign at the moment tends to be a head without a body, and not a very good head at that. The local Labour MP, Michael Martin, is involved in the campaign, but he is a former Private Parliamentary Secretary to Dennis Healey and controls his Constituency Labour Party in the old-style Glasgow fashion, on the basis of a Catholic "mafia".

For the jobs at Springburn to be saved it is necessary to open up the campaign to delegates from the local Labour Party branches and other trade union branches, as well as injecting some life and militancy into the campaign at national levels.

The fight against the threatened job losses also presents a real opportunity for the left in the local CLP to draw in new members in the course of the fight, and for militants at the Springburn depot to establish a new leadership in the shop stewards committee.

The first stage is to ensure that the demonstration planned for June 16 goes ahead with a good turnout.

## Scab

One of the leading strike-breakers at Agcroft pit (Greater Manchester) is Burnley Labour councillor Eddie Fisk. Burnley Labour Party has condemned his action and totally disassociated itself from statements he made on television attacking the NUM leadership.

# S. Wales: strike on June 12



Massed police at Orgreave

## Durham against pit closures

By Gary Scott

The Durham area experienced pit closures in the '50s and '60s. Since 1953 over a hundred pits have been closed in County Durham, with the loss of over 100,000 jobs.

Since 1980 seven pits have closed — Blackhall, Bolden, Houghton, South Hetton, East Hetton, Marley Hill and Bearpark. Horden is under threat of closure.

Against this background, SEAM was officially launched in February with a huge rally in Easington Colliery. Over 2,000 people listened to speeches from Neil Kinnock and Peter Heathfield.

Since the strike began there have been two further rallies, one in Seaham and one in Thornley. The main aim of SEAM has been to involve the whole community in the fight to stop pit closures. There is now solid support for the miners in every mining community in the Easington district.

Food kitchens have been established in Murton, Easington and Horden. Shops in the area have donated food or sold food at much reduced prices. Fish and chip shops have allowed their cooking facilities to be used, and home

made pies are being baked in the ovens of local bakeries.

The response to the food kitchens has been tremendous. In Murton up to three hundred people a day are being catered for. The food kitchens have also provided people with a meeting place.

Apart from collecting, cooking and distributing food, women have also been on picket lines. And they have made a very special contribution to the picketing.

Members of the white collar union COSA are still going in to work. The (understandable) abuse hurled at them by the men has had no effect on them.

### Women

Women in SEAM produced a leaflet specially for women and were allowed to hand them out and talk to women in COSA. Some COSA members have since refused to cross the picket lines.

Women from SEAM have produced a leaflet with the heading "A Message to Women from Women in SEAM" inviting women to attend the next SEAM meeting. At the May SEAM meeting held in the Council Chamber women far outnumbered men. It was the largest ever SEAM meeting and there must have been over a hundred people in attendance.

This meeting showed that the real strength of SEAM is in the rank and file.

Apart from the councillors who initiated the campaign, there has been little support from other councillors in the area. Most of the work seems to have been carried out by the women in SEAM and the rank and file members of the NUM. Traditional labour movement organisations such as the trades councils and the

Labour Party Young Socialists have, so far, given little more than moral support.

As the campaign grows and more young people and women get organised the whole labour movement in the area could find itself transformed.

Within the next month SEAM will be organising rallies in Seaham and Murton. There will be a large rally in Peterlee where either Benn or Skinner and Scargill will be the speakers. SEAM will also be extending the food kitchens to other villages.

## N. Staffs organises

FORTY rank and file miners and miners' wives discussed the strike and agreed on the need for a rank and file organisation, at a meeting organised by Stoke Socialist Organiser on May 24.

Speakers at the meeting were John Lumsdon, a local miner from Florence colliery, Paul Whetton of the Notts, Rank and File Miners Strike Committee and Rob Dawber, secretary of Sheffield and Chesterfield District Council of the NUR.

The meeting discussed the experience of Nottingham, and the relevance of their rank and file committee to the situation in Stoke. Nearly all the miners present said that they felt that some form of rank and file organisation was needed because of the extremely poor organisation of the strike at local level. It would operate not as an alternative to the official structure but as a supplement to it.

The meeting agreed to produce a leaflet for a public meeting addressed by Arthur Scargill the next night.

A meeting has been organised for June 5, but already there has been a good effect. At the end of the Scargill meeting, Area President Joe Wills for the first time used a public platform to encourage the rank and file to take part in the picketing and to attend the 9 am strikers' meetings. If such calls had been made more strongly 11 weeks ago, and proper picket rotas established, it is likely that

would not now have the increasing number of scabs going into Florence colliery.

The Scargill meeting itself was attended by about 1,000 local miners, and was a welcome boost for morale.

But there are more scabs going in to work — at Florence, counting all three shifts, about 700 out of 1100. At one time the number of scabs going in had been reduced to about 20. We need proper organisation of picketing and maximum mobilisation of the workers to reverse this, and stop it spreading to other pits.

But serious discussion of the problems has been blocked by a campaign against Socialist Organiser by a thoroughly unprincipled combination of the Militant and soft left.

## Glasgow

CATHCART Constituency Labour Party on the south side of Glasgow, has raised over £2,000 towards the miners' strike fund in two collections at Hampden football ground.

The Labour Party members who turned out were accompanied by miners from Barony pit in Ayrshire, now threatened with closure.

Permission for the collections was given by Glasgow District Council. Collections of the levy are also proceeding at branch level, and a public meeting is planned with local MP John Maxton, and a representative of the NUM.

## Frontline Nottingham

# Police swoop on strike activists

THE self-styled "anti-intimidation" police squad have struck again in Blidworth. This time, surrounding the houses in massive force, the police banged on the doors at 1.45am last week, and arrested the husbands of the main activists in the Women's Action Group.

Doreen Humber, Pauline Radford, and Sue Petney spoke to Socialist Organiser about the events that led up to the arrests.

THE self-styled "anti-intimidation" police squad have struck in Blidworth again. This time, surrounding the houses in massive force, the police banged on the doors at 1.45 in the morning and arrested the husbands of the main activists in the Women's Action Group.

Doreen Humber, Pauline Radford, and Sue Petney spoke to Socialist Organiser about the events that led up to the arrests.

"We were in the Jolly Friar pub, just having a drink and enjoying ourselves - something which has always annoyed the scabs. There were two scabs and their wives having a drink as well, when one of them, quite unprovoked, came over and grabbed Ken by the lapel and threw him onto the floor.

"The other scab then jumped over the tables, and smashed Ken over the head with a chair. One of the scab's wives also started hitting Ken.

"It all happened so quickly that the other two husbands didn't even have time to leave their seats.

"We all tried to leave as quickly as possible, but were prevented by more scabs at the door. We finally got out and went home. We made sure Ken was all right - although we wish we'd taken him to hospital - and we just went to bed because we

knew we hadn't done anything wrong.

"Then we had the police banging on the front door at 1.45 in the morning, waking up the kids and surrounding our houses.

"We said our husbands hadn't done anything wrong but they said 'If they haven't done anything what are you worried about?'

"They then told us that the scab who started the assault had a broken ankle and a probable fractured nose. We haven't a clue how he got that - probably when he pulled at Ken he fell onto the scab's leg.

"We haven't had any sleep since the arrests (24 hours) and they are still holding them without saying what they are charged with.

"The police have been building up to this over the past few weeks. They told us four weeks ago that they were watching us. They've been stopping kids in the street and asking them if their dads are on strike. They are trying to wear down our resistance. It only makes us all the more determined.

"We are having a day out in Cambridge, courtesy of Cambridgeshire County Council. The support we've had from people such as this is fantastic. With this sort of support we'll win in the end."



Pickets at Orgreave, looking down on the police line

MARTIN SHAKESHAFT [JFL]

## Monitoring the police

AT the strike centre in Ollerton, Notts, Pete Edwards has been collecting statements about police behaviour on the picket lines. He talked to Socialist Organiser.

How did you start collecting statements?

It started with an open letter by four of us to the Chief Constable of Nottinghamshire, Notts County Council Police Committee and the Association of Chief Police Officers. In it we said that the four who signed it would lawfully picket but we feared we would be charged with some offence to stop us doing so.

What happened then?

Police came to investigate the writers of the letter and we were warned not to talk to each other. The letter would be treated as an official complaint.

After that Colin Dixon from Ollerton pit contacted us about the harassment of himself and his son Darryl. The police obviously wanted to "take him out".

After that many more people came forward with statements. Over 100 - all with full particulars.

Has there been any change in police tactics?

They are now worse than ever. They have stopped official pickets altogether because they say the High Court in London has declared the strike in Notts unofficial.

A lot of assaults by the police now happen when the police corral pickets into an enclosed space. Behind the wall of police, all sorts of

things are going off.

The police now try to conceal their identities by covering up their numbers with their sweaters or swapping their numbers around and so on. In one incident PC 1150 went away and came back as PC 5110.

Have you been in touch with other people monitoring incidents - such as Sheffield Police Watch?

Sheffield Police Watch have tried to get into Nottinghamshire a few times and have been turned back. A group of four came down at 4 am to the strike centre and collected a bunch of statements. It might be an idea for such committees to link up first of all by exchanging statements.

Do you think you are having an effect?

The police are definitely worried by us collecting statements. They would rather have the rest of the country thinking that pickets are violent and need to be locked up.

People of previous good character suddenly find themselves on alleged offences in order to stop them picketing and carrying out ordinary trade union activities. The bail conditions are set so that for several months they can do nothing involved with the strike without risking imprisonment.

The police have got to be exposed.

\*Money is needed to carry on this work. Send to: Pete Edwards, Ollerton/Bevercotes Miners' Welfare Strike Office, Ollerton, Notts.

## Policewatch

Sheffield Police watch: 73, West Street, Sheffield S1 4EQ.  
Kent police monitoring group: Richard D. Friend or Ian Grieg Spall; 0227 66822.

Nottingham Co-ordinating Committee Against the Police Presence: c/o Ivan Wels, 11, Osborne St., Sherwood, Nottingham.

Ollerton strike HQ is collecting statements about police behaviour: Pete, Mansfield 862790.

## Basingstoke strengthens the links

By Alan Fraser

WHEN Notts miners recently came to Basingstoke on a fund-raising tour, they were very insistent that we make a return visit.

Through the Labour Party and Trades Council, Basingstoke Socialist Organiser supporters took a leading role in organising regular money and food collections in the town centre and on local housing estates.

On Saturday June 2 at 6 am, eight SO supporters and two Labour councillors who formed the delegation from Basingstoke headed for Notts.

A food collection was due to be brought up on the Sunday morning in a truck, driven by another SO supporter.

We arrived at Ollerton at 10.30 am and joined the demonstration taking place that day in the town.

The march ended with a rally, attended by about 3,000 with Tony Benn on the platform. Striking miners had travelled from every area of the country to offer each other support. The contingent from Wales treated everyone in the bar to an exhibition of Welsh singing.

Sadly, during the afternoon one of the Welsh miners heard that his wife had died. A minute's silence was held after which the Welsh contingent left the centre to board their coach.

Notts miners lined the street and clapped as the coach departed. The Welsh miners responded with clenched fists.

We were then welcomed into the homes of striking miners and soon realised that in Notts, miners and their families are probably suffering more than in any other

areas. Money has not been coming in so readily due to the number of scabs.

In Ollerton itself, out of a workforce of 1,060, 610 are working, but production is down by approximately 60%, since most of the strikers are coalface workers.

### Divisions

The divisions in Ollerton became obvious to us. A woman came out of her house waving her fist and shouting abuse at us. We were told of a butcher who had his window smashed for supplying food to the soup kitchen, and women who have had bricks thrown at them by scabs.

Not a day goes by without someone being arrested on trumped up charges. Police cordon off areas where they believe flying pickets might be staying and then systematically search the houses.

Threats have been issued by the Coal Board that anyone putting up flying pickets will be evicted. Even a miner out walking his dog at the edge of a forest was stopped by a policeman and asked if he was poaching rabbits for the soup kitchen.

In the words of one miner of Polish origin, "I've seen it all before - 40 years ago, by the Gestapo".

But despite the harassment by police and scabs alike, and despite the hardship they are facing, Notts miners show their determination to carry on.

According to a young striker,

Lee Jackson, aged 17, the young miners recognised from day one, after Yorkshire miners sent pickets, the need to fight pit closures.

They were not prepared to let MacGregor dictate what their future would be. He said that he believed the riots of Brixton and Toxteth demonstrated the frustration felt by young people today. He appealed to all miners not to let themselves be bullied and shoved around, and to get on the picket lines and join the fight to preserve their future, and the future of all working class people.

### Women

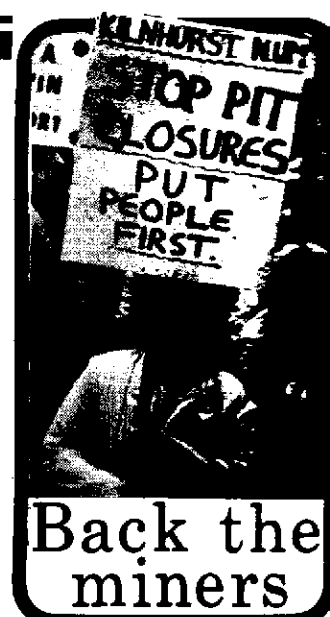
Women were also stung into action by the media coverage of the "petticoat brigade" women. They have set about organising soup kitchens and food parcels but they haven't stopped there. From kitchen maids to pickets they have been regularly on the picket lines and along with the men have been arrested and beaten up.

The women are proving that they can also take a leading role in any strike action.

Unfortunately some men have still not recognised the importance of the women's role and continue to use slogans that are offensive to women.

Hopefully, as more women become involved that will begin to change.

On Sunday morning the truck arrived from Basingstoke and after unloading it we attended an open meeting in the miners' welfare. Arthur Scargill was due to have spoken but unfortunately



## Notts

TWO days after the NCB reopened all twenty-five Notts pits after the Whit week holiday, it is still too early to say whether Justice Megarry's legal judgement in favour of the scabs just before Whit is having any effect on the twelve thousand Notts strikers.

The NCB are certainly trying to use the judgement. Last week a number of Ollerton miners received a letter from the colliery manager spelling out the terms of the judgement and urging them to "consider whether it is not now in your own best interest . . . to come back to work and join those workers who have already returned to work after being absent".

On Tuesday there were reports of isolated individuals drifting back, but the strike remained solid. This will certainly be strengthened by improvements in the picketing organisation in the area.

There are now next to no pit head coal stocks in the area. And the latest NCB figures show the strike is biting.

Output in the second and third weeks of May was down on the corresponding weeks last year, by seventy per cent and fifty-six per cent respectively in North Notts, and by twenty-four per cent and forty-six per cent in South Notts. For both weeks combined the total loss of revenue was over thirteen million pounds.

he was unable to attend.

About 250 people attended, including some scabs and an appeal was made to them to join the strike.

Paul Whetton, secretary of the Notts Rank and File Strike Committee reported that he had spoken at an Afro-Asian meeting and that the issue of police tactics had been raised. They had taken a collection and raised £50 and added to this a further £50 from the organisation's funds.

Paul went on to point out that despite the distorted media coverage of the strike there was still solidarity between working people and support for the miners was growing.

Basingstoke was thanked for all our efforts and Alan Fraser, an SO supporter, was invited to speak from the platform. He thanked the strikers and their families for their hospitality and insisted that they had done more to raise the morale of Basingstoke comrades than we could ever do for them.

### Sainsburys

Since the Notts miners' visit, workers at the Sainsburys depot had come out on strike over a wage claim. Basingstoke comrades would continue to give whatever support they could to the strikers and their families.

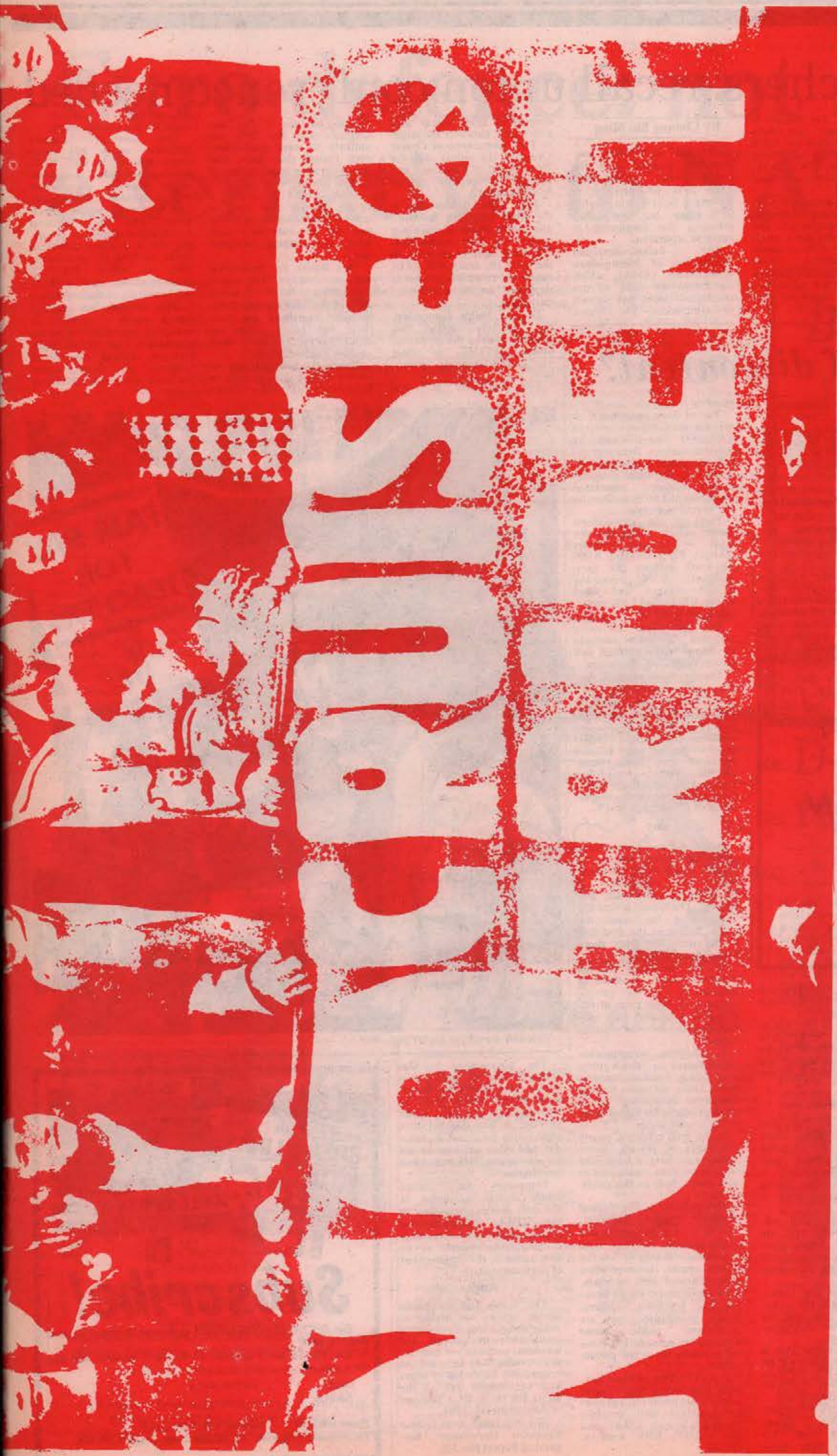
The whole visit finished with a game of football on the green behind the miners' welfare.

Basingstoke are organising a further visit for Notts miners to include Southampton and Portsmouth and contact is to be made with trades councils in the Berkshire area to arrange visits there.

**Socialist  
ORGANISER**

**BRITAIN OUT  
OF NATO!**





**JOBS NOT BOMBS**



# Teachers: recall union conference needed

By Cheung Siu Ming

THE teachers' pay dispute is at a critical stage. Two weeks ago the NUT called out 4,000 teachers in 50 local authorities for three days. This week, 5,250 NUT members are called out.

The strikes have generally been well supported, despite poor central organisation. The numbers involved are a small fraction of the 10% of union members balloted. Many balloted schools were furious that they were not called out. Even more are angry that they were not balloted at all.

The NUT leadership, however, is pleased with the "cost-effective" publicity. They have no intention of leading a fight to win the full 12% claim, but are merely pressing the employers to agree to arbitration.

The Labour-controlled Association of Metropolitan Associations (AMA), which represents ten votes on the employers' side, has agreed to arbitration. The Welsh

employers (two votes) may also agree. However the large Tory Association of County Councils (13 votes) and the Department of Education and Science (15 votes) remain firmly against.

The NUT leadership is therefore targeting its third and fourth phase of three-day strikes on Tory authorities. The most militant sections, in the inner city areas, will not be called out on strike, in what is supposed to be a national campaign.

Despite feeble leadership, the teachers' action has already spurred the lecturers' union NATFHE, to reject 4½%, and to reject arbitration.

The employers' side are

meeting on June 11. The Tory Councils and the DES are unlikely to want arbitration, even though they know that the arbitration panel is biased in their favour.

They intend to inflict a defeat on pay this year on teachers in order to pave the way for job cuts next year when rate-capping becomes law.

This leaves our leadership with no strategy. The three-day strikes will use up about 20% of the NUT's strike fund, because members are paid their full salary when on strike. Yet the NEC have voted against a national levy.

Unless the members can be shown a clear lead on how to fight for the full claim, demor-

alisation can quickly set in.

The Socialist Teachers Alliance, which has three supporters on the NUT NEC, have demanded national action against government policy, and strikes to be extended to every school which votes with the required two-thirds majority. It is calling for a one-day unofficial strike on June 21, to coincide with an official NATFHE demonstration, and a NUT NEC meeting on the same day.

STA members are arguing for a recall conference to revise union rules on strike pay and to take the pay fight forward. Unless our union leaders are kept under pressure, they will be selling us out.

## A summer of discontent?

THE MINERS could have allies in new quarters.

Already the teaching unions in England and Wales are taking industrial action over their pay claim, and initial offers of 3% made to the civil service, NHS, and university non-teaching staff have been rejected.

To meet this challenge the Tories are raising pay offers marginally above their stated 3% public sector pay increase norm for 1984. The 3% figure should be seen as an initial guideline — set deliberately low by the Treasury to undermine pay demands — rather than as an upper limit that the Tories did not expect to be broken.

By Bryan Edmonds

Further education teachers in England and Wales have rejected an offer of 4.5% and started a no cover policy. They have also rejected arbitration.

University manual workers have started a round of selective one-day stoppages and a work-to-rule over pay.

And Post Office workers in the Union of Communication Workers are discussing all-out national strike action for the first time since 1971.

They have been offered a 4.4% pay increase with strings attached. The UCW are asking for 5.2% and say they will continue negotiating separ-

reached.

Two of those agreements — for 4.1 to 5.8% — covered 1,021,100 local authority manual workers. Over half the 600,000 public sector workers covered by the other 35 agreements have negotiated increases of 5.99% or more on the lowest basic rate.

Parts of the nationalised motor vehicle sector top the table — Leyland Vehicles (Lancs), 8.7% covering 6,000 non-staff workers; BL (production), 9.9% covering 37,000 workers; and Land Rover UK Ltd., 12.1% covering 8,500 workers.

But all these increases included substantial amounts of bonus consolidation and cuts in relaxation allowances.

The increases are less than they appear, and are more than matched by speed-up and productivity increases over recent years.

Other nationalised industries — British Steel (72,300 workers) and Rolls Royce (24,900 workers) — have fallen significantly behind the going rate, with increases respectively of 2% and 2 to 3.51%.

### Pay

Rates of pay in the public sector lag behind those in the private sector in all the three main job categories — unskilled manual, craft, and clerical. The reason is that the government has used the public sector as the first line in its drive to push down wages generally.

In the unskilled manual category, about one-third of agreements in the private sector have basic rates of £90 or more compared with only one-quarter in the public sector.

In addition, industry-wide settlements in the public sector (e.g. local authorities, NHS) leave no room for the company bargaining which often produces far higher rates in the private sector.

In the craft category, nearly two-thirds of private sector agreements have a basic rate of £110 or more, compared to well under half in the public sector.

The position in the clerical category appears different, with 61% of public sector pay scales starting at £80 or more compared with only 41% in the private sector. However when other features such as hours, bonus payments, fringe benefits (e.g. luncheon vouchers, cheap mortgages, etc) are considered, public sector workers are seen to be worse off, overall, than the private sector.

Even in terms of basic pay, large numbers of public sector workers are badly off. For over half-a-million civil servants basic pay is only £70.81, and for 130,000 NHS workers, £67.50.

ately over job flexibility and the introduction and operation of new technology.

As in most of the public sector unions, the UCW leadership does little to inspire confidence in its ability and will to take on and fight the Tories.

### Misleaders

In this fight for pay, jobs and better conditions, many trade unionists are realising that a struggle against their own union mis-leaders is necessary — and thus strong rank-and-file organisation is essential.

Postal workers, civil servants and miners are one thing; but the Tories have shied away from the potential cost of confronting the nurses over their pay.

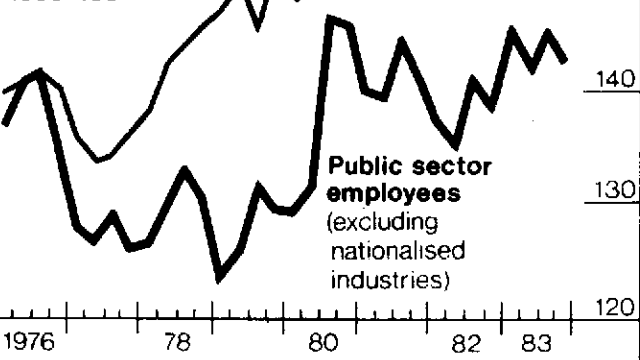
After the new pay review body had reported, the settlement date was put back six weeks for further consideration by the cabinet.

It is now expected that a formal cabinet decision will be taken on June 7 to increase nurses' and midwives' pay by about 7%, as recommended.

Analysis of public sector pay to date shows that 37 agreements covering over 1.6 million workers have been

## How the gap has widened

Real average earnings 1963=100



Source: Nieser review

But this week the CPSA and other civil service unions seem likely to reject the Tories' latest offer of 4 to 5% and to recommend holding out for their original demand.

The unions are pressing for 7% or £7 a week, whichever results in the larger pay rise, and want to go to arbitration (a call opposed by the Left in the CPSA).

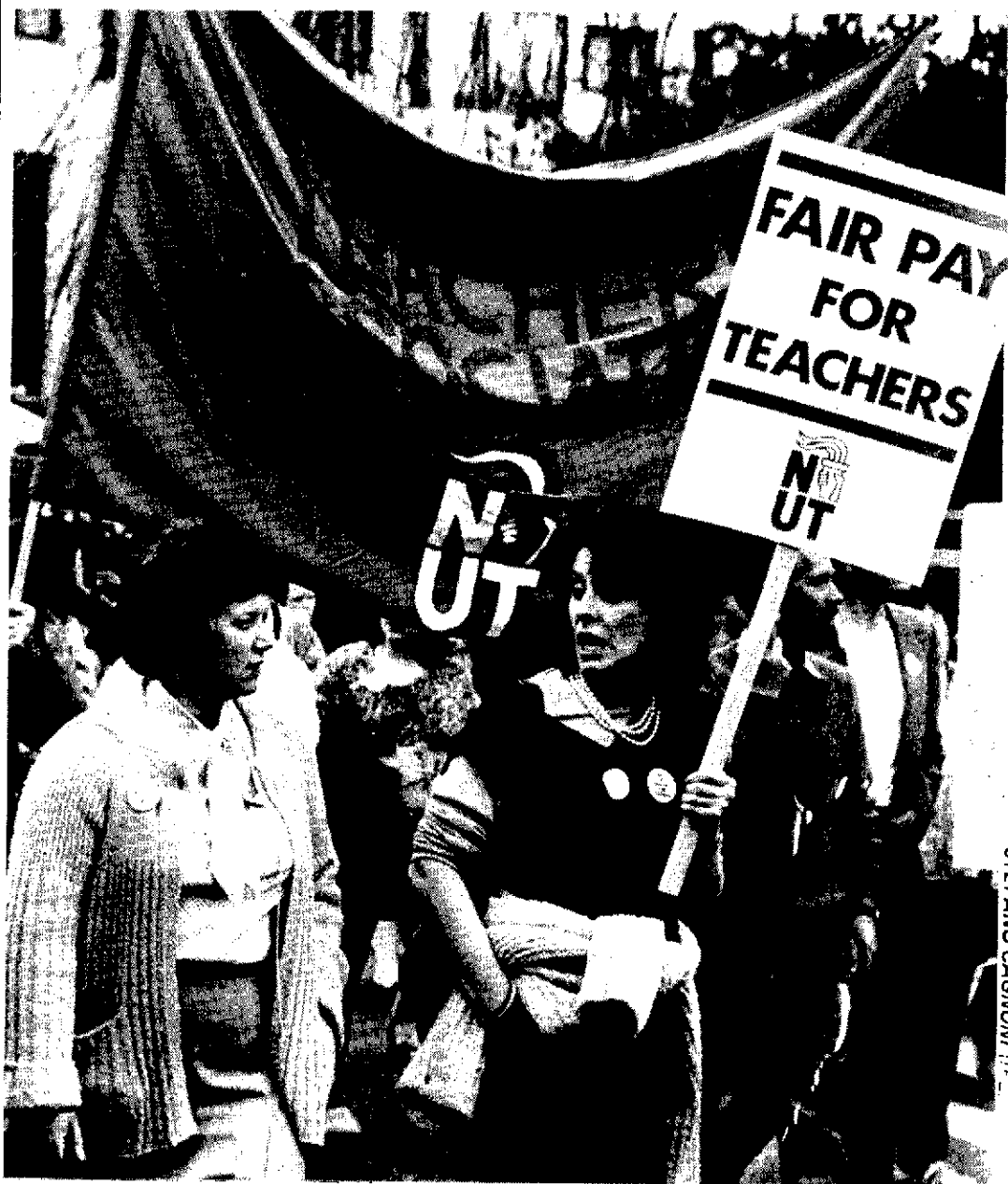
Union members are to be consulted over what course of action to follow and the Left will be pressing for industrial action linked to the present miners' battle against the Tories.

**The Broad Lefts**

**What they are and what they must become**

Socialist Organiser 35p

35p plus postage from SO, 28 Middle Lane, London N8



Teachers march for higher pay, May 9

The government is also trying to turn low paid public sector jobs into even lower-paid private sector jobs, by privatisation. In the health service, it has decided that contractors for cleaning, laundry and other services do not have to match NHS wages and conditions.

Temporary and casual labour is also increasing. In the civil service, according to the CPSA, "Departmental managements are increasingly employing casuals as an alternative to the employment of permanent staff."

### Anger

The Tories and the public sector bosses are trying to make the working class — and particularly its poorest and weakest sections — pay for their crisis. They have not yet reaped the whirlwind of anger and resentment but all the signs are there for a summer of discontent this 1984.

(Figures taken from Labour Research Department Bargaining Report No. 33).

Join the Socialist Party

**Socialist ORGANISER**

Scargill gets it right

**BREAK LINKS WITH TORIES!**

**JOBLESS KEY TO WAGE-CUT PLAN**

**Subscribe!**

Get SOCIALIST ORGANISER each week delivered to your door by post!

RATES: £5 for 3 months; £8.50 for 6 months; and £16 for a year.

Name .....

Address .....

Please send me ... months' sub, I enclose £ .....

To: Socialist Organiser, 28, Middle Lane, London N8 8PL.

# Euro-defence: not an alternative to NATO



IN A speech in Strasbourg two weeks ago, French president Francois Mitterrand advocated more statutory powers for the EEC and a revival of the "West European Union" (WEU).

The WEU was formed thirty years ago to supervise German rearmament and since then it has done little, but now Mitterrand wants to revive it as a sort of West European defence consortium.

By the late 1980s Europe's military establishment wants to introduce a new generation of non-nuclear precision guided missiles and a whole host of high-tech conventional weaponry. With government expenditure being slashed it would be difficult for any European state to justify enormous expenditure on American equipment — hence the argument that national competition between arms producers should be replaced by a slimmed-down, centralised, European-wide arms industry.

The Economist magazine put it like this:

"Every pound, franc, lira and mark thus saved means a more efficient defence of Europe, plus a chance to make a more serious European contribution to the defence of the Gulf."

The NATO "Eurogroup" (of which France is not a member) put forward similar proposals after meeting in Brussels on May 15. Such proposals have already borne some fruit. The Jaguar strike aircraft was an Anglo-French product, the Tornado was jointly produced by the British, Germans and Italians. Only this week a new Franco-German helicopter deal was announced.

What lies behind this? The NATO Alliance was formed after World War II to coordinate US and West European responses to the consolidation of Stalinist states in Eastern Europe and the

"It is quite possible that the leadership of the Labour Party could capitalise on anti-Americanism and come out for a programme of European rearmament as a supposedly progressive alternative..." Paul Muddle looks at the issues.

challenge of the colonial revolutions.

But NATO is far from monolithic. In particular there are tensions between the US and Western Europe. These differences can be seen at an economic, political and military level.

Economically, Europe has been hit by high US interest rates and is behind the US in such highly competitive areas as information technology. The only feasible response of European capital to the American (and Japanese) challenge is greater integration which would provide it with a larger "domestic" market and make available the necessary resources for expanded research and development.

Politically there are differences with the US over its strategy in such areas as the Caribbean and the Lebanon. One recent example was the protests by EEC powers at US mining of Nicaraguan harbours and the French offer of minesweepers to the Nicaraguan government.

Many European leaders are also uneasy about the rising cost of American military equipment and desire greater military autonomy for European imperialism.

At a time when the US is increasingly concerned about problems in its own "backyard", there are many Americans who question the wisdom of sending a US fleet to the Gulf to defend what is essentially Europe's source of oil.

It is quite possible that the leadership of the British Labour Party could capitalise on anti-Americanism and come out in favour of a programme of European conventional rearmament as a

supposedly progressive alternative to present NATO policy. Neil Kinnock has already said that a Labour government would increase spending on conventional weapons and a report in last week's Guardian suggested that a Labour Party National Executive Committee sub-committee was recommending such increases to compensate for nuclear disarmament.

Peace campaigners must be clear that a European military alliance is in no way better than NATO. The weapons produced by the joint efforts of European capital have already been used in places like Chad and the Lebanon. Imperialism is the same militarist, exploitative force whether it is American or European.

Indeed, greater military research and production in Western Europe would actually strengthen NATO in the long run. As the Economist puts it: "a more efficient Europe means a more efficient NATO".



## May 26 action

Sue Arnall reports from Rochdale

MAY 24 was International Women's Day for Peace and the women's peace groups in the Rochdale area decided to mark it by a symbolic sit-in at the Army Recruitment Office in the centre of Rochdale.

It was to be a low-key affair at lunch-time to fit in with job commitments.

We wanted to draw attention to the army's constant presence in our midst and militarism, as well as protest against nuclear weapons.

We had prepared a statement explaining this. We baked a cake in the shape of a woman-sign and took song sheets and guitar along. There were 19 of us with about four toddlers in push chairs.

We walked into the recruiting office at 12.30 pm, and one of us read our prepared statement explaining our purpose and that we would leave at 1 pm. The soldier at the desk looked embarrassed and surprised, but we seemed fairly harmless as we began to sing peace songs, weave a

web, and share out our cake.

We had got to about the third song when two policemen came in.

They called reinforcements and then began carrying us out onto the pavement.

My little one started to cry, but otherwise no voice was raised as one by one we left or were dragged. We carried on giving out leaflets on the pavement but the police began to get heavy.

We were told to move on, and those who resisted were thrown into the waiting transit van. Seven women in all were arrested, and one small child.

The rest of us were threatened with arrest if we didn't disperse, and we were given no indication of the charges or time to take details of our sisters who'd been arrested. Nearly four hours later they were released, charged with obstruction, to appear in court on Friday June 1.

This heavy response to what was clearly a symbolic, unthreatening event is quite surprising. In the past, Greenham support actions have been met in Rochdale by a cool, tolerant police presence. Certainly my four year old learnt a telling lesson about the nature of the British Bobby!

## Britain out of NATO!

NATO — the military alliance of the main West European nations, Turkey, Canada, and the US — accounts for about 45% of all world military spending, and 90% of Britain's military spending.

It has consistently led the nuclear arms race, and its current plans, involving the deployment of Cruise and Pershing II missiles, are centred on giving itself the option of using nuclear weapons first in any conflict.

Although NATO's main forces are lined up against the USSR and the Warsaw Pact, it also threatens other areas. The Cruise missile base at Comiso, Sicily, puts the missiles within range of Libya and large chunks of the Middle East.

NATO gave Portugal considerable help in its wars to keep its African colonies before 1974.

And NATO is also a threat to the people of the countries in which it operates. The armed forces which imposed dictatorships in Greece in 1967 and Turkey in 1980 were NATO forces.

And when Portugal was in the midst of revolution, in 1975, NATO forces gave a warning by doing exercises in the area.

## D-Day: what it really meant

By Clive Bradley

ON the face of it this week's celebrations of the D-Day landing in 1944 are a celebration of the victory of democracy over Nazi dictatorship. But dig a little under the surface and you see they are really a 'celebration' of British nationalism.

Thousands of men and women in Britain and all over the world died in the Second World War. Most of them were genuinely concerned to rid the world of fascism. But for the British, French or American ruling classes, the fight against fascism was a fig-leaf to cover their real imperialist motives.

Before the war, Churchill made no secret of his admiration for Mussolini. During the war, working class action — in Britain or in areas occupied by Allied armies such as Italy towards the end of the war — was suppressed. After the war, the 'anti-fascist' ruling classes savagely fought to protect their interests.

In Greece, the British army launched a campaign of terror against the left, arresting 50,000 militants and successfully defeating the revolution.

In France, De Gaulle mobilised 16,000 fascist thugs against the militant workers' movement. In Germany after Hitler's defeat, the Allies for a period kept a Nazi — Doenitz — in power; and later they suppressed a

movement of workers' councils that sprang up as the German working class moved into action after years of Nazi rule.

Many former colonies gained independence after the war — but some only after fighting wars of liberation against the 'democratic' colonialists. The Vietnamese had to fight British and then French colonialism before eventually fighting the US. In Malaya, it was the Labour government of Attlee that sent in troops in old-fashioned colonial style to beat down the independence movement.

Whatever the motives and aspirations of working class people who fought in World War II, for the capitalist ruling classes it was a war like any other they fight — to maintain their own reactionary self-interest and greed for profit.



Conference against the cuts called by Liverpool City Council

Saturday June 23

Philharmonic Hall, Hope St., Liverpool

Invited speakers include

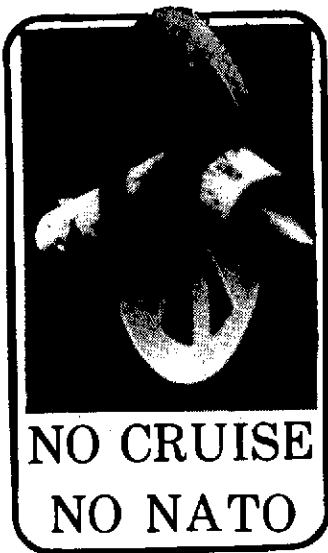
Tony Benn, David Blunkett, Alex Kitson, Arthur Scargill  
Rodney Bickerstaffe, Dennis Skinner, Ken Livingstone

Up to five delegates from labour movement organisations

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



Two pamphlets for 45p, including postage, from Socialist Organisation, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.



PT: The Labour Party has to come up with credible radical alternatives which act as some thing positive to put in place of the existing system. That applies in defence just as much as to the health service, education or industry.

It's very easy to be negative and oppositionist, simply to oppose nuclear weapons and oppose NATO — but to win those debates you have to come up with a radical practical alternative.

I think the basic reason we haven't won the unilateral argument is that many people, rightly or wrongly, fear that without the Bomb we'd be left defenceless and vulnerable.

JB: What should we be defending and against what?

PT: We would be defending the right of British people to determine their own future, the right of self-determination which all nations and all peoples have.

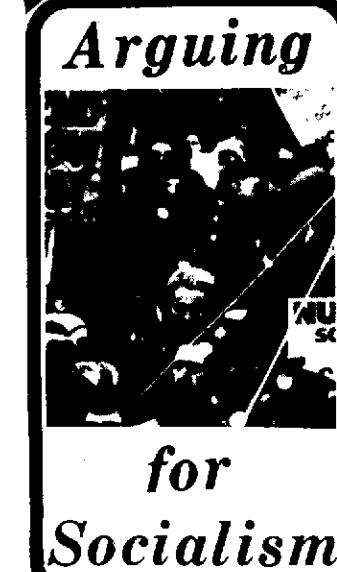
It isn't a nationalistic argument. It's saying that all peoples and all countries ought to be free to determine their future free from foreign or internal dictat.

JB: Would a citizen's army be separated from the State?

PT: No, we need a radical reform of existing military institutions, in the same way as the Swedish, Swiss and Yugoslav labour movements have achieved.

JB: But that's still within the framework of capitalism. Surely the fight against fascism, even during World War 2, must include a fight against our own bourgeoisie? Fascism is not something separate from capitalism. Can you develop a citizen's army which is based on the self-organisation of workers, women, the black community, and the defence of their demands, within the present state structures?

PT: Yes, I believe you can.



WARS don't happen simply because political leaders are vicious people. Historically, wars have occurred for different reasons, depending upon the kind of society.

A system based upon the ownership and produce of land, for example, generated wars between rival landlords, competing for land.

Under capitalism, too, wars are rooted in competition — but a competition based on profit.

The driving force of capitalism is the accumulation of profit. In their search for profit, the capitalists need to

## Interview with Peter Tatchell

# Alternative defence?

**Peter Tatchell is currently writing a book on non-nuclear defence. He talked to Judith Bonner from SO.**

Sweden, Switzerland and Yugoslavia have similar social structures to our own, but through the historic structures of the labour movement they have won a radical democratisation of military power. It's not perfect but they now have achieved a system of defence which is basically non-provocative and non-threatening. It is not dependent on nuclear weapons, and it does not rely upon power alliances or foreign bases on their soil.

JB: I don't think you can compare those countries to Britain — a major imperialist power.

PT: They are actually practical examples of West European countries where the labour movement has made a conscious decision to oppose foreign military alliances and bases and nuclear weapons.

Those countries made a conscious choice. They could easily have ended up as part of NATO, having nuclear weapons. But they chose, and won the majority of people to their side by posing a radical alternative based on territorial defence by a citizen's army. There's no reason why such a system could not be applied in Britain if we persuade enough people that it is necessary?

JB: Whom are you trying to persuade? Do you believe that the Generals and the military would peacefully allow it? Remember, Kitson has developed counter-insurgency tactics.

PT: Some very high people in the British Defence Establishment, much as they hanker after the glorious days of Empire, see that dependence on the US and reliance on nuclear weapons is suicidal. Like Lord Carver, I don't

agree with 90% of what he advocates, but he recognises now that our nuclear policy is mad.

That aspect of his arguments is progressive.

JB: Yes, nuclear weapons are the most abhorrent system of warfare to be developed, but the generals who are opposing the use of nuclear weapons are still in favour of crushing the El Salvadoran liberation struggle, napalming in Vietnam, bombing out the PLO and supporting British troops in Ireland. They want to defend their social system against the liberation struggles or socialists.

I think it is dangerous to side with those people.

PT: I'm not siding with them. It's a fact that more people in the military establishment are recognising the dangers of nuclear war and are looking at alternatives.

That's a concrete effect of the efforts of the peace movement and we have to push them further.

JB: But who will actually prevent nuclear war? Who will stop the production of nuclear weaponry? Who will stop that military machinery?

PT: It's possible at certain points in history radical ideas can come from the military. Look at the Portuguese revolution in 1974 and the British army in World War II.

JB: But in Portugal rank and file soldiers turned bayonets on their officers.

PT: There were officers involved.

JB: Due to the rank and file soldiers' pressure. That leads on to your points about extension of

liberties and democratisation of the armed forces.

Two demands are not present in your examples of citizens' armies: the right to strike and the right to disobey.

PT: I don't hold those up as ideal examples. I'm showing there are examples where quite radical democratic reforms have been achieved and they are happening in societies similar to our own. By citing these examples I'm showing that my idea is not a pie-in-the-sky alternative but has some prospect of being achievable.

In fact, in Sweden, they have the right to strike and co-determination between officers and men. Officers have to consult with lower ranks before implementing policy and decisions. It doesn't apply in battle.

JB: By defence we mean defence of working class lives and interests. The military mean defending the bosses — their countries and their interests. How do we get from defence as defence of "the country" to them defending themselves as the working class against attacks not just by fascists or anti-gay bigots, but by the bosses too.

PT: This strategy is trying to move in that direction. Ordinary people, as opposed to a standing army, ought to have the right to defend themselves and their communities and their interests.

But we have to transform the existing military apparatus to the way we want it, not set up a parallel or rival.

I want a self-reliant, non-imperialist defence strategy which is non-provocative and non-threatening to other states — which does not rely upon the US or upon nuclear weapons.

We ought to reconstruct international relations on the basis of equality and partnership, not on an imperialist basis of subjugation and exploitation.



A workers' militia: Russia 1917

JB: You would not be protecting the interests of the British state and bosses?

PT: Look at Sweden. It is not in its international relations such a rapacious exploiter of countries as it once was.

JB: But exploitation exists. Sweden has big foreign investments. It's just that they can rely on the US to keep them safe.

PT: But that's a separate question. I'm arguing for a democratisation of one area of the state, the military apparatus. Some people say we should not be trying to reform a militaristic capitalist state.

Yet the labour movement tries to reform other aspects of the state. The left supports all types of reforms.

JB: You are divorcing the military from the state. "Reforming" the state must mean challenging the existing structures by struggling for alternatives.

Take policing for example. Why is it that workers, the black community, women throw up their own "policing" to defend themselves? The working class have very opposed sets of answers to the police about what needs defending. Your citizens' army idea doesn't take these up.

PT: Look at what has been achieved in the Netherlands, Sweden, the Leninist left said none of this would be achieved. The capitalist state would never allow it. But on the contrary, by the labour movement winning majority support, these changes have occurred.

# Socialism and war

By Clive Bradley

We believe the nationalised property relations and planned economy in the USSR and similar states should be defended against imperialism. But we do not believe people should be trapped by a choice between the two power blocs. There is a link between the struggle of the workers in the West against the ruling class here, and the battles of the workers in the East trying to rid themselves of their bureaucratic overlords.

Capitalist wars are nearly always waged for reactionary ends, and socialists need to resolutely oppose them. But, in the past — and sometimes still today in countries that are denied national independence by other, stronger, countries — wars can be for progressive, liberating ends.

## Freedom

Genuine anti-colonial wars, even if led by capitalists or would-be capitalists, can and should be supported by socialists, because potentially, they add to the cause of human freedom.

If 'our' ruling class is oppressing another people we have to fight against 'our' ruling class and for the armies of the oppressed, if their cause is just. That's why socialists should support Irish republicans against British imperialism, and the FMLN against the US-backed regime in El Salvador.

Socialism — genuine working class socialism, not the caricature created by the bureaucrats of the USSR — can abolish war.

Aggression may at some level be a constant element in human nature, or it may not be. Scientists can argue about that. But for sure social conditions determine whether that aggression is expressed in individual scuffles or in world wars killing millions.

All wars have been fundamentally motivated by the drive for gain of ruling classes or groups. Abolish ruling classes, create a society of cooperation, and ensure a decent living for all, and you take away the fundamental cause of war.

But war cannot be abolished just by wishing for that.

We have to take on and

defeat the ruling class. And the military power that they possess will not just lie down and die if the bosses' system is seriously threatened by the working class.

To overthrow capitalism we may well have to fight a 'civil war' — the working class, to defeat the capitalists and their state, will need to be armed and prepared to fight.

## LABOUR MOVEMENT CONFERENCE ON TURKEY

**Saturday September 22, from 10.30 at NUR headquarters, Unity House, Euston Rd, London NW1.**

**Called by Clare Short MP, Richard Caborn MP, Chris Smith MP, Jeremy Corbyn MP, Ernie Roberts MP, Bill Michie MP, and Roland Boyes MP.**

**Five delegates per labour movement body: credentials £2 (50p unwaged) from 'Turkey conference', 129 Seven Sisters Rd, London N7.**



The regimes the US props up: the ruling classes in Saudi Arabia, above, and Abu Dhabi, right



# The Middle East Where nuclear war could start

THE Middle East is a crucial area for US foreign policy, and for NATO.

Recent events have shown the difficulties involved for the US, and other imperialist powers, including Britain, in imposing their will on the region. In Lebanon, for example, the US was unable to contain all the explosive elements and was forced to withdraw.

It was a setback that continued a trend. In 1979, the Shah of Iran was overthrown, despite US support.

And the setback in Lebanon has repercussions now. The US administration, like the British government, is reluctant to repeat the Lebanese debacle with too direct an involvement in the escalating Gulf war.

They are reluctant — but not unprepared. If it comes to it, and it may well do so, the US and its allies have the means to intervene in the Middle East.

## Cornerstone

The cornerstone to US policy is the so-called Rapid Deployment Force, set up in 1979 under the auspices of the 'Carter Doctrine'. The 'Carter Doctrine' states the US will intervene in the Middle East to protect its 'vital strategic interests'.

That is, in the event of a threat to US investments or local allies, military force will be used to beat down that threat.

The US perceives three main kinds of such 'threat'. Most important is 'internal disruption' (i.e. revolution — though not necessarily socialist revolution). Second is 'regional disruption', such as the present Gulf war. Third is any real or imagined threat posed by 'Soviet aggression',

## Clive Bradley looks at the world's tinderbox, and the US military build-up focused on the region

such as in Afghanistan.

The RDF is an integrated military force that, in theory, as the name suggests, would be able to intervene 'rapidly' and decisively to protect US interests. A wide network of US military bases have been established from which the RDF would operate, in addition to the existing US fleets in the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean.

The RDF has at its disposal a large range of tactical nuclear weapons (a significant portion of the 17,000 warheads possessed by the US). Its weapons systems include B-52 bombers for which new airfields are being constructed in the Middle East, including in Egypt, Oman and Diego Garcia.

In addition, the three carrier battle groups (i.e. ships and submarines) in the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean are loaded with hundreds of nuclear weapons, and their nuclear capacity is being steadily increased. These include light-weight nuclear bombs, nuclear depth charges, nuclear anti-aircraft missiles, sea-launched cruise missiles, and neutron bombs (which Ronald Reagan says he regards as 'conventional weapons').

The essential basis to US strategy is the idea that its own interests can be best preserved if it has a 'credible' nuclear capacity to obliterate its opponents. On the face of it, the central thrust of this strategy is to force the USSR to think twice about intervening anywhere in the world because of the threat of US nuclear retaliation.

US Secretary of Defence Caspar Weinberger put it like

this:

"... if you advise potential opponents in advance that you do not intend to cross certain lines... you have almost assured another Vietnam... the possibility that you will use every weapon available has to be left open."

Or again, on another occasion:

"In the region of the Persian Gulf in particular, our strategy is based on the concept that the prospect of combat with the US... coupled with the prospect that we might carry the war to other arenas, is the most effective deterrent to Soviet aggression."

But the RDF is also part of a strategy that is wholly dominated by the policy of 'first strike'. The US administration, the Pentagon and NATO firmly believe that they could fight and win a nuclear war in the Middle East.

In October 1981, Reagan commented that he could see "where you could have an exchange of tactical nuclear weapons against troops in the field without bringing either one of the major powers to pushing the button."

In the event of a sufficiently serious threat to Western interests, therefore, the RDF would be mobilised with the object of using its nuclear weapons in a first strike.

This need not be against the USSR. Ex Vice-Admiral Gerald E. Millar, in a testimony to Congress in 1976 detailed the strategic underpinnings to US 'first strike' policy. He said:

"I do not assume that all

threats we will face will come from the Soviet Union or only from nations capable of a nuclear response. We may have confrontation with non-nuclear states... whose geographical location is such that we have no adequate means of protecting our interests with conventional weapons."

The development of the new weapons' systems that aim to wipe out enemy missiles before they take off is central to the strategy behind the RDF. The ability to destroy Soviet missiles in order to protect existing US allies in the Middle East is regarded as vital the 'credibility' the US seeks to project.

As Henry Kissinger put it, "The countries in the Gulf have to understand that we are prepared to protect both their domestic structure and their frontiers; and they need to be given confidence in the means which we will use... we must generate a credible capability for rapid support against internal upheaval." And Reagan has insisted that the US will not permit Saudi Arabia "to be an Iran".

## Reactionary

MX and Pershing II missiles form part of the means whereby to secure this "credible capability" to shore up the reactionary regimes of the Middle East. The RDF is the means whereby to enforce US interests via, if necessary, 'theatre' or short-range nuclear war.

So the fact that the US is not throwing its full weight into the present flare-up in the Gulf should not lead us to think that it will not. According to the US defence secretary's classified 1984-88 Defence Guidance document:

"Whatever the circum-

stances, we should be prepared to introduce American forces directly into the region should it appear that the security of access to Persian Gulf oil is threatened."

The Pentagon's 'Airland Battle Doctrine', codified in an August 1982 field manual, intensifies the aggressive thrust of US policy. "The offensive is the decisive form of war", it states, and goes on, "the attack must continue for as long as it takes to assure victory."

The idea behind Airland Battle Doctrine is that the more aggressive the US is, the less likely retaliation will be. And further, that small, nuclear attacks are more effective than 'wasteful' and large conventional ones.

## Alliances

But there is a problem for the US. The Rapid Deployment Force — as recent manoeuvres have shown — is not as rapid as they would like. Consequently it has to be backed up by the building of reliable alliances with local powers.

The Camp David 'peace' agreement signed in 1977 by Israel and Egypt was a step in making such an alliance.

The Reagan Peace Plan (which cannot be implemented) would be a step further by incorporating Jordan. Proposals for a Jordanian RDF have already been made.

At the moment, the US's allies are relatively unstable because of the Arab-Israeli conflict. But an alliance consisting of Israel (which is militarily by far the strongest), Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia is on the cards.

The so-called 'peace process' is in fact only part and parcel of the same strategy as RDF. It is a war process: the development of a pro-imperialist alliance with a military ability to defend local capitalist and imperialist interests from 'internal upheaval'.

It is vital that the peace movement recognises this. The Middle East is probably the most likely area for all-out nuclear holocaust to start. Even the introduction of new weapons systems into Europe are connected to policy in the Middle East.

The missiles in Comiso Sicily, are far more likely to be aimed at the Middle East (notably Libya) than at Eastern Europe.

And Pershing II is part of the policy of securing 'credible capability'.

| June      |              |
|-----------|--------------|
| Monday    | 4 11 18 25   |
| Tuesday   | 5 12 19 26   |
| Wednesday | 6 13 20 27   |
| Thursday  | 7 14 21 28   |
| Friday    | 1 8 15 22 29 |
| Saturday  | 2 9 16 23 30 |
| Sunday    | 3 10 17 24   |

Glasgow SO pamphlet, 'Hands off Glasgow', about the local government cuts. One copy 40p, five £2, ten £4, from S.Crooke, 63 Dixon Avenue, Glasgow G42.

Saturday August 18 A major demonstration in London for British withdrawal from Ireland is planned. Sponsors are sought write to August 18 Demonstration Committee, 27 Clerkenwell Close London EC1.

'Labour Zionism — socialist or colonialist?' New pamphlet from the Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine. 35p, plus postage from LMCIP, 28 Carlton Mansions, Holmleigh Road, London N16.

# Socialist Organiser

## NO CRUISE, NO TRIDENT, NO NATO!

LAST Friday, 2nd, the Christian-Democratic/Liberal government of the Netherlands decided to postpone deployment of Cruise missiles there.

The decision was a compromise. It reflects the strength of the movement against the missiles, but is designed to placate that movement with very minor concessions.

The Netherlands will go ahead with work on the proposed missile sites as from this October, and it will deploy 48 Cruise missiles from 1988 (rather than 1986, as originally scheduled) if the USSR deploys a single additional SS-20.

The decision also provides for a scaling-down of the number of Cruise missiles in the Netherlands if arms control talks make progress.

Missiles have already arrived in Britain, West Germany, and Italy, and the present Belgian government is firmly committed to them. But the peace movement is far from beaten yet.

In the Netherlands, the opposition Labour Party is committed against the missiles. So is the Social Democratic Party in West Germany, and the Flemish Socialist Party in Belgium.

The demonstrations against Reagan's visit, and the campaigning against nuclear weapons by some candidates in the Euro-election, can give a new boost to the movement.

And last Sunday over 100,000 people demonstrated in Madrid against NATO

By Judith Bonner

membership and US bases in Spain — the biggest protest so far against the Socialist Party government's defence policy.

What is most needed now is a turn to the trade unions. The West German trade unions have already had a protest strike against the missiles (although it was only for five minutes!) We should be campaigning for an all-Europe protest strike against the missiles, and for trade union boycotts of the missile bases.

Despite its large membership and its ability to call mass demonstrations, however, CND has become passive. The CND leadership is looking towards the next election.

CND campaigns carefully within what it defines as public opinion. After all, it has an image to maintain. So, too, has the Labour Party.

Many CND 1983 conference decisions have yet to be acted upon. Resolutions which called for joint action with trade unions have not been implemented.

NATO has been dealt with in a similar fashion. Slowly but surely it has disappeared from CND's demands.

CND now talks about a non-nuclear defence policy or even non-nuclear NATO, without questioning what is being defended.

There is a correlation here, too, with what the Labour Party leadership is pushing.

CND has also ignored a whole pool of people who could be their biggest allies — the unemployed. No major strategy which attempts to organise with the unwaged has come from CND.

The CND magazine *Sanity* is expensive, unwaged rates at CND events are rare, and the image is middle class.

Youth CND offers the best way to organise with the unemployed and should develop this as a major campaign strategy.

We need more concrete methods of making links between the organised labour movement and CND. To date the left has concentrated on the Labour Party.

Organising Labour Party

## Strike against racism

By Jim Denham

BL's Longbridge plant has been halted by its second major strike in a month. Internal transport drivers in the West Works walked out on Thursday 24 May when the sacking of a black internal transport driver Zedekiah Mills was upheld at a final appeal hearing.

The next day all the internal and external drivers in Longbridge walked out in support. This action will quickly halt all production. When the factory reopened on June 4 after the spring holiday, the strike by 300 transport drivers led to 9,000 workers being laid-off.

Zedekiah was involved in a fight with a foreman who had called him a "dirty black bastard" and told him to "go back to your jungle". This was not the first time that this particular foreman had abused Mills and racism of this sort is well known to be rife amongst Longbridge

supervision. BL consistently refuse to recognise racism amongst their supervision and are quoted in Monday's *Guardian* as claiming that no racism exists in Longbridge at all!

This is not the first time a black worker has been sacked for reacting to racist abuse while the foreman has escaped with no action being taken against him.

Zedekiah has at least one witness who confirms his version of the event and the Longbridge Works Committee are hoping that this witness (who was not present at the appeal) will persuade management to reconsider the dismissal.

On previous experience, however, a solid strike by the internal transport department seems much more likely to change management's mind than any witnesses or appeals to reason.



A Sandinista fighter killed by US-backed counter-revolutionaries

workplace branches is one way. CND has about 7½ million trade union affiliate members. We should be fighting for trade union action around specific demands — boycott of the Greenham USAF base, and support for the women. That means linking up with unions who have already started. The NUM, UCATT, FBU and the Bakers

Union have all given material help to the women's peace camp.

Workers in Rolls Royce have taken action against the building of Trident. CND offered little help to these workers putting their jobs on the line. Yet it is just that sort of action which needs building.

CND conference will be in December. Resolution dead-

line date is July 6. It has been tightened up this year and many groups may not be aware that conference arrangements are underway.

Find out if your Labour Party or union is affiliated and start organising now for a huge labour movement presence at that conference.

## £5 for \$0

This week, the fund is pleased to announce — just — the arrival of £104. Just, because in the last hours of preparing the paper, an equipment breakdown nearly sabotaged this week's fund column altogether!

Fortunately, repairs were completed just in time. But the lesson is, we can't afford to spend money on leaflets, bulletins and travel round the miners' strike by saving on regular equipment maintenance.

If you're reading — or selling — this paper, you must recognise the need for socialist papers, to report the miners' side of the dispute, to mobilise for anti-Peagan demos, and in all areas, to argue for socialist policies to win. Support us! Send donations to, 214, Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.

Special thanks this week to Bob & Glyn, for a donation of £50, and thanks also to Brent supporters, £17 Oxford supporter, £5, Mary and Geoff, Cardiff, £12, Steve Harvey, £5, and Patrick Murphy, whose donation and money from extra paper sales raised £10.

## Walesa

'I think I owe Lech Walesa an apology', said Arthur Scargill in Sheffield last Tuesday, 5th. He was commenting on the fact that 'Socialist' Poland is sending coal to Britain and thus helping Margaret Thatcher and the Coal Board against the miners.

The anti-working class Stalinist police state in Poland banned the independent workers movement *Solidarnosc* in December 1981, jailing its leaders like Walesa and thousands of active trade unionists. Polish coalminers were shot down during protest strikes. *Solidarnosc* is now underground. In the past Arthur Scargill has refused to support *Solidarnosc* against the Polish Stalinist state which he thinks is socialist.



Join the Labour Party.  
Write to: The Labour  
Party, 150 Walworth  
Road, London SE17  
1JT.  
Subscription is £7 per  
year, £2 unwaged, 50p  
OAPs.