

Troops against the miners?

By
Tony Benn

There has been a great deal of hypocrisy about the government not intervening. They are deeply involved. The police are preventing peaceful picketing. They have set up road blocks, introduced curfews in the villages and provoked on the picket lines. There have been cavalry charges against unarmed pickets. That is a disgrace to the British police for the which the government are responsible.

This afternoon I asked in the House about the use of troops, and the Leader of the House was very evasive. At the beginning of the dispute, I asked the Leader of the House whether the armed forces had been alerted, and he gave a categorical assurance that they had not.

Now the Prime Minister has written to me. I had asked her whether the troops were involved. She used a very skillful phrase. She said that there has been no authorisation. She did not say that the troops were not being used, and she admitted that the army and the armed forces are supplying facilities and transport as part of a joint police and military operation. Either the Leader of the House or the Prime Minister was misleading the House.

The magistrates have come in and introduced bail conditions that amount to a sentence - a sort of exclusion zone - for those who have been convicted of nothing. Much has been made of the crudity of the way in which the government have turned off every source of funds, including social security, to starve the miners back to work. They have "deemed" that the miners have been getting strike pay when in fact they have not. They have cut maternity grants and excluded from strike pay workers who have been only indirectly involved and were never employees of the NCB. One case that came to my attention was of the government stopping a retired miner benefiting from the redundancy payment scheme



The arrest of this miner outside St Stephen's entrance to Parliament sparked off an hour's fighting between miners and police last Thursday

because, for a short while, he was on the NCB's books before the strike began. The government think that by starving the miners, or bribing them with thousands of pounds, the miners will respond.

The miners know that the large sums of money that are given to them is not real money. It is a lump sum payment for future social security benefits as they will not get those benefits until the redundancy pay has been

spent. Neither the tightening of the screw through the Department of Health and Social Security nor the attempted bribery through redundancy pay will affect the miners.

The most remarkable thing

that has occurred in the coalfields is that the miners are fighting the present policy and will go on doing so and the government can do nothing whatever to stop them.

Young miners know full well that if, at 29 or 30, they

take the money that is offered, there will be no work for them, their children or their grandchildren in the areas in which they live.

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They will not accept it. It is a most vivid example of the non-nuclear defence strategy. When people are fighting for something in which they believe they will make many more sacrifices than the policemen waving their £600 a week pay slips at the picket lines to provoke the miners. The women are supporting the miners as has never happened before and many have been arrested.

I believe that the leadership of Arthur Scargill and the NUM Executive has been brilliant throughout the dispute.

I heard Arthur Scargill at the Durham miners' gala three or four years ago describing the hit list of pits. Even Joe Gormley, who is now in another place, denounced what he said but every word that Arthur Scargill said was true. That is why miners support him. They are also getting enormous support.

The financial and other support, such as food, that is being given to the miners and mining areas is on a scale of which there is no parallel in any industrial dispute in living memory. The money and food are pouring in.

I have attended 10 or 20 meetings on the European elections and every one of them has concerned the miners.

I believe that the miners are getting such support because they are fighting for all of us. They are fighting to preserve local government, for public services and for the women at Greenham Common in such a way as to attract the support of the overwhelming majority of the labour movement.

The government were wrong in 1926. They were wrong again in 1972 and capitulated. They were wrong in 1974 and were defeated. This miners' strike will send the Secretary of State into his final retirement because they are fighting for the country's future and its energy supplies, which are now threatened once again by the Gulf war and are not to be entrusted to the private oil companies. When the House divides, I do not doubt that it will carry the government's amendment. However, the government will not carry the support of the British people who are overwhelmingly behind the NUM in its struggle.

This is an extract from Tony Benn's speech in the parliamentary debate on the miners' strike on June 7

Solidarity action on rail and buses

By
Pete Firmin
(NUR)

ASIDE from the arrests in Parliament Square, there were two significant events when the miners marched in London on June 7.

Soon after the demonstration left Kings Cross a police snatch squad arrested three miners for putting stickers on police uniforms. Well over 1,000 marchers immediately sat down in Grays Inn Road, refusing to move until they were released. This blocked traffic in a busy part of London so the police cleared a lane for buses to get through. But the bus drivers refused to drive through the marchers, treating the sit-down as a picket line which they would not cross!

Eventually the three miners were released and rejoined the march. Later, soon after 4 o'clock, train drivers at Charing Cross walked out in sympathy with the miners, totally disrupting commuter travel to the South East. No trains ran out of Charing Cross until 1 am the next morning.

These two spontaneous actions, in support of the miners, together with the large money and food collections which have been going on in London for weeks, show how much support there is for the miners in London.

They are examples we can build on to get maximum

support for the Day of Action called by Kent NUM and the South East Region TUC (SERTUC) in London for June 27.

Maximum effort must be put into getting 24 hour stoppages in as many workplaces as possible across London.

Initially SERTUC only intended to produce 50,000 leaflets for the whole of London - which is almost as useless as no leaflet at all. This is now being changed since Shelley Adams of SERTUC was informed at the Brent Miners' Support Campaign meeting on the 6th that we could use that number for Brent alone.

SERTUC also has an over-complicated plan for public transport workers to strike for two hours in the morning to disrupt commuter traffic, and then return to work so that people can get to the demonstration in the City. Far more effective would be for London trains, tubes and buses to be stopped for the whole day and hold local marches and this is what



Police photographers at the Orgreave coke plant picket

transport workers should push for.

SERTUC and its co-thinkers are relying totally on trade union regional and district officials to come up with the goods for the 27th. But even if they are willing to organise for a 24-hour strike across London that would be a tall order in the time available.

At the Brent support meeting it was agreed to approach convenors, stewards, etc., directly, offering assistance with leaflets and speakers in calling mass meetings to win support for strike action.

Across London rank and file trade unionists must get involved in this activity to mobilise the support that

exists for the miners and translate it into the kind of action that can win and increase pressure for an all-out general strike.

Also in Brent, Labour MPs and councillors are being called on to make a public statement in support of the miners and calling on workers to take strike action on the 27th.

To the shop floor!

A Notts miners who has been touring London building sites with Mick O'Sullivan talked to him about his impressions

Workers in London were a lot more help than I expected. I come from a small community where everyone relies on and helps each other. You can't expect that from such a big place. However there was real enthusiasm and support for our cause.

I found talking to the shop floor a lot more interesting than talking to those already committed. Going round the building sites we got thrown a whole load of different questions and were able to start a real discussion and debate.

It is important that we attend a lot more shop floor meetings throughout the country. It is through these that we will be able to get over our message to fellow workers and win more public support. It will also help us make the connection between our struggle and those of other workers which are looming in the near future - rate-capping, for example.

The most urgent form of practical help you can give us is - money! The Tory policy has been to try and starve us back to work. One of the ways they have done this in my area is that every conceivable obstacle has been put in our way to stop us collecting DHSS. Even when we do get our money through there is certainly not enough for anyone to survive on because of the £15 they take off for

strike pay they know we don't receive. The NUM has quite openly stated that they don't pay it.

However, as I hope we put over at our meetings, there is no intention of those out on strike going back to work.

'Not happy on Ravenscraig'

Fife miner Phil Cowan spoke to Stan Crooke

THE general feeling of the miners is that there's no way they want to go back to work unless we win this fight against pit closures.

Local Labour Parties have been very disappointing in their support as I feel they should be giving us moral as well as financial support.

The local miners aren't very happy about the deal over Ravenscraig steelworks. We would have preferred them to be allowed sufficient coal to keep the furnaces ticking over. Instead they have got enough to keep production up to 70% and keep the workers on good bonuses.

It does, however, keep scab lorry drivers off the road.

Naturally after 13 weeks on strike we are facing serious financial hardship. There is no social life at all. Bills are mounting up. We are being robbed of £15 a week from the social security as they assume we get strike pay. The main duty of local strike committees is to organ-

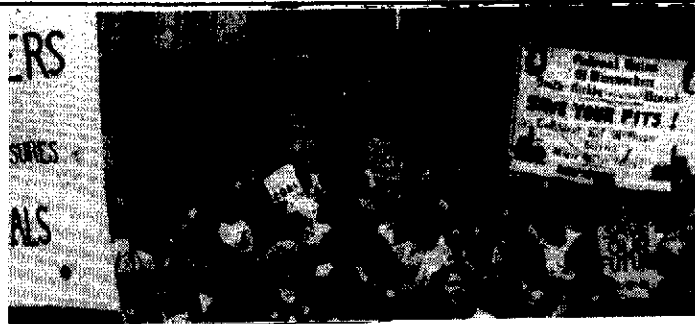
ise soup kitchens for miners and their families.

I was in Glasgow on May 9 for the Scottish TUC day of action in support of the strike. It was a fantastic turnout of up to 20,000 miners and other trade unionists who assembled on Glasgow Green to demonstrate their support of the miners' strike.

I have been arrested and charged twice since the strike started. Once for obstruction and once for taking donations in support of miners' families who are suffering severe hardship. I have also witnessed police intimidation and brutality on picket lines.

One of the great things about our strike is that I don't think there have been many weaknesses. Arthur Scargill has done a tremendous job as coordinator in the strike so far.

What seems likely to happen next is that more talks will certainly take place. I also think as the strike started in Yorkshire we will win the fight there which will mean more mass picket involvement at the Orgreave coking plant and other major depots to stop all movement of coal.



Women march in support of the miners

Six hours in jail

Howard Jones (Blaenau NUM, South Wales) told Mick O'Sullivan what happened to him on the NUM lobby of Parliament last Thursday, 7th.

DUE to the numbers, people began to spill onto the road. At that point the police began to arrest people who had one foot on the road, just like they do when we are picketing in Notts.

I ran across the road, and one policeman caught my arm. I asked him what I had done, and several others jumped on me. One gave me a lovely punch on the mouth.

Tony ran out and tried to grab me by the arm, saying to the police that I had not done anything wrong and was only trying to cross the road. The next thing we knew, we were both being dragged away with policemen on each arm.

We were locked into two individual cells in the police van for 1½ hours. Then we were taken to Rochester Row police station, where we were photographed and thrown into the cells.

The heating had been turned full up, and they insisted it could not be lowered. There was no ventilation or fresh air, and you could only just about breathe in there.

All the cells had five people in them. We all stripped off to the waist and lay on the floor to try to keep cool.

We had no toilet facilities and nothing to eat or drink, until just before 11 o'clock, when we were taken out for our second period of exercise. We got one sausage roll each.

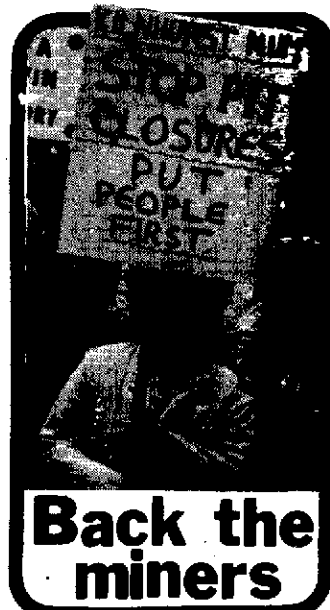
It was while we were out having exercise that we heard that Tony Benn had arrived. He arrived at 11 and by 11.50 everyone had been released. It was definitely a result of Benn coming over.

Policewatch

Sheffield Police watch: 73, West Street, Sheffield S1 4EQ.
Kent police monitoring group: Richard De 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.



Pickets at Orgreave coke plant give the police a rough time



Keresley women

By Jean Lane

THREE women from the Keresley mining village near Coventry spoke at a meeting organised by the Coventry North Labour Party Women's Section on Thursday June 7.

Liz Sugrue began by explaining that the Midlands miners are striking in solidarity with Yorkshire, Wales, Scotland, Derbyshire, etc. That the strike is about ensuring an expansion of coal as a fuel and not the use of nuclear energy.

In 1955 there were 850,000 NUM members, in 1968 there were 450,000 and in 1984 there are 186,000. Now the NUM have said "enough is enough" and we stand by our men. About the police at the Mansfield demonstration she said "the Gestapo would have been proud of them. They are being used by the government to smash the union".

Sylvia Jackson went on to say that the miners' fight had traditionally been a men's fight. "But we women are not prepared to sit by and see our men thrown out of work and our children put on the scrap heap". She said "they can put every policeman in Britain against us but we will not go away".

Pearl Staple followed up by saying that it is not just jobs but whole communities at risk. "We won in '72 and in '74 and we intend to win in '84 or '85 if it takes that long."

They spoke about the activity of the police in the village, knocking on doors at night and harassing the kids. One woman said that she and her son (aged 7) were alone in the house one night. When she went to bed she heard a noise on the stairs but thought nothing of it and went to sleep. When she got up the next day her son said, "Mum, there was a policeman in my room last night. He shone a torch in my face."

When asked about the reaction of the police to women on the picket line one woman said, "They would rather face 1,000 men than 100 women. We scare them."

The women's committee first got off the ground to organise food for the kids who don't get free school meals. Then the food kitchens spread till there are three in Coventry and North Warwickshire now and food parcels going out. About £1400 a week is spent on feeding the strikers and their families. An appeal was made for money, food, clothes and maternity goods.

Send donations to: 2 The Crescent, Keresley, Nr. Coventry.

Skinner: The miners will win!

ONLY yesterday Mr Ashton came along with the information that two police agents provocateurs had gone to the community kitchen where food was being provided for the striking miners, the wives and all the rest. Who has been taking the food? Two coppers. They have been stealing.

At Creswell in my area a lady, a pensioner, Mavis Seals, was out collecting one Friday night. She is in a wheelchair, having been on sticks since she was a young girl. She went out collecting for the miners who are on strike and when she came back her front door had been smashed in. The television cameras and the media do not care tuppence about Mavis Seal's smashed door. There are plenty of examples like that.

The same is true down in Kent today where Malcolm Pitt, a miners' leader, has been released after many days in prison. Part of the Prime Minister's gestapo, the police, are down there filming all the pickets who have gone to try to pay a compliment to Malcolm Pitt on his release.

In Stoke only the other day the buses that had brought down the Durham miners to picket were not allowed to stay. They were sent away and several score of Durham miners were left without transport 150 miles from home. That is the sort of carry-on that is taking place.

The Minister talked about investment. I wish he would tell the House the whole story about the National Coal Board accounts. According to

This is part of Dennis Skinner's speech in the House of Commons debate on the miners' strike last Thursday



the last figures that we got officially, out of the so-

called subsidy to the NCB and to the miners, which is much less than is going to the farming fraternity, £366 million has to go on interest

"This will be a historic victory for the miners. Make no mistake about that"

payments. The Minister calls that part of the subsidy to the Coal Board. There is £200 million for stocking charges. This is all part of the so-called subsidy.

When the Prime Minister has been bragging in the past about investment she never said that in 1979 6,300 young men entered the mining industry. What are the figures now? As a result of

all the glorious investment that the Prime Minister has talked about, there are fewer than 1,800 jobs for young men in the pits.

Where is the investment going? As my hon. Friends have said, it is going on interest payments. They are like an albatross around the coal board's neck. The board has to get £2 million at every pit in Britain before it starts making a profit. The first £2 million goes on interest charges. I have been told that, in the latest set of accounts, well over £400 million goes on interest charges before they turn a cobbler of coal.

In 1926 when the miners went back to work they found that their shovels, hammers and picks had rotted and rusted. In 1972 my dad said to me, "It is a different story now. It is their tackle that is down the pit. It does not belong to us. It belongs to them. It belongs to the Coal Board and the insurance companies will have to pay up." All the stuff that is down the pits is deteriorating. Dowty Props and all the rest of the firms went running to Mr. MacGregor last week and said, "Hi, hold on. it is all right shouting and bawling about the strike, but it is hitting my pocket and my Caribbean holiday." So they

are running for cover and the managers who are on £30,000 a year are beginning to say, "I am fighting for my job".

We have never been more confident. The Coal Board conceded Cortonwood last week and Polmaise. We have a list as long as one's arm that it will have to concede before this is settled. We will call for the writing off of the debt. We will call upon the miners to make sure that when they put in a pay claim in November, when there is hardly any coal at the pit top, that claim will cover all the money that they have lost, every single penny. We shall get rid of the evil bonus scheme as well so that every miner is made the same and the bonus moneys are incorporated in the day wage. We shall get rid of the massive overtime that has been worked and then we shall demand a four-day week so that we can obtain more jobs for young miners in all mining constituencies. Before we go back to work - listen to this carefully - we shall demand that every miner who has been sacked by the NCB during the dispute is reinstated.

This will be a historic victory for the miners, make no mistake about that. It will change the entire industrial - economic power base of Britain. The rest of the working class will remember the dispute. They will remember the sacrifices made by 150,000 miners and their families. We shall smash the myth of the Prime Minister's industrial invincibility. The miners united will never be defeated.

"We shall smash the myth of the prime minister's industrial invincibility. The miners united will never be defeated"

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 Alverstoke 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.

Maesteg Trade Union and Labour Party Support Group: Idwal Isaac, 10 Bridge St., Maesteg. (Tel: 738321).

"Over £400 million goes on interest charges before they turn a cobbler of coal"

200 Notts miners at SO meeting

Learning the political lessons

Last Sunday nearly 200 miners attended a meeting on the politics of Socialist Organiser in Ollerton, Notts. Alasdair Jamison reports.

"THE MINERS' fight started as a struggle for jobs but now it's a fight against the Tory government for the future of the whole working class".

Mick McGinty of Ollerton NUM opened a Socialist Organiser meeting of close on 200 Notts miners at the Ollerton miners' welfare on Sunday June 10 with these words. He continued: "For too long the Labour Party has been propping up the capitalist system. It's essential that we have more meetings to discuss the politics which we need for the Labour Party and the trade unions".

Alan Fraser of Basingstoke Labour Party and Socialist Organiser drew unanimous agreement when he emphasised that solidarity action by other trade unionists was the key to the strike's success. He outlined the inadequacy of the rail union, TUC and other leaders: "The NUM leadership is almost alone in the trade union movement in taking a principled stand".

Alan described the failure of Neil Kinnock and the Labour Party leadership to throw the weight of the Party behind the miners as criminal, and called for rank and file miners to join the Labour Party and unite with Socialist Organiser supporters in the battle for socialist policies.

Anne Crowder of Women's Fightback highlighted the role played by women in building and sustaining the miners' strike. [See report of her speech, centre pages]. She called for a brief meeting of women to take place after the end of the main meeting to discuss the next steps for their action.

Paul Whetton, secretary of Bevercotes NUM, said: "The 1974 Labour government kicked the miners in the teeth. The rank and file must take control of their own movement and its facilities at local and national level". But, he warned, "It's impossible to take control without getting yourself actively involved!"

John O'Mahony, editor of Socialist Organiser, asked the miners in the meeting to con-

sider why it was that after their crushing victory over the Heath government in 1974 they were having to fight Thatcher under such difficult circumstances ten years later.

"The problem was that in 1974 there was nothing effective to replace the Tory government with. The bitter experience of the Wilson/Callaghan government which resulted from the miners' victory brought Socialist Organiser into being as a part of the right to take control of the entire labour movement by and for the working class"

Power

Although Britain's workers movement is tremendously strong, it does not have the politics it needs to make it capable of taking power in society. Socialist Organiser fights for the necessary socialist politics in the mass movement, and for the widest unity in action among those who commit themselves to that fight.

A short but lively discussion involved miners and Socialist Organiser supporters from Nottingham, Basingstoke, Coventry and elsewhere. It was agreed to hold further SO discussion meet-



A section of the meeting at Ollerton miners' welfare

ings in Ollerton, and a number of miners said they wanted to become regular readers of Socialist Organiser.

The meeting ended in an

atmosphere of confidence about carrying forward the strike and the support work around it to a successful conclusion, and working to

ensure that the political lessons of past and present struggles are carried into every possible corner of the working class.

Get involved in the movement

Paul Whetton, secretary of Bevercotes NUM, was one of the speakers at the meeting.

to live them again.

Who remembers what happened in '73? I'll tell you what happened in '73 - we were sold out by our own leaders.

And what's happened since '74? The miners sat back. They said: we've got it cracked. There's no need for us to take up any fight. All we need to do is rattle the sabre and we'll get what we want.

We sat back. And slowly but surely the wheels moved and we were ground down.

In '74 the Labour government was very grateful, of course. They gave us a nice pat on the back, and then promptly turned round and kicked us in the teeth.

In '77 we had the introduction of incentive schemes.

This welfare is one of the very, very few in the Nottingham coalfield where we have taken control. We have been able to set the soup kitchen up and use the welfare to the benefit of miners.

Is it not important that rank and file miners take control of their own institutions and their own organisations and run them to suit the mine workers?

We have been out to Basingstoke; we've been to Preston, Blackpool, and all points north; we've had lads all over the place. The support that we get is fantastic. But you know where that support is weakest? Weakest, right at grass roots level, is in the coal fields themselves.

The biggest stumbling block we've got is Mansfield, where we've got a Labour

councillors - we've got NUM-sponsored candidates to councils - who are putting the shackles on us and stopping us.

I want to put to you, and especially to the young lads, that having experienced what those blocks mean, it is important to take over in some of the institutions - like the welfare, and like the councils.

Soup

If the Ollerton and Bevercotes rank and file miners hadn't been in that committee room when this dispute broke out, there would have been no soup kitchen and no central organisation of pickets. The strike in Nottinghamshire would have collapsed within a month.

I want to appeal to you to take control of the institutions that run your life. They make decisions every day of the week, and those decisions affect your lives.

Again, the Labour Party. We have been kicked in the teeth by the Labour Party more times than we have by the Tories. Harold Wilson

shut more pits than Winston Churchill dared dream about. And we sat back and accepted it.

When Harold Wilson was challenged about conference decisions, he said: I'm the captain of the ship, and I'm up on the bridge. You're down on the decks. You can only see so far. Because I'm higher up than you, I can see a lot further. And so this ship is going where I decided to take it.

It's time that you, the crew, turn round and tell whoever the leader is: We are the motivating force, and we will decide where this ship is going.

And the only way you can do that is to become involved. It's painful, it's heart-breaking at times, and there are no medals at the end of the road unless you want to head for the House of Lords.

Too many of you stand outside and point the finger inside. But you've got to get inside your local organisations and change them and shape them for the future.

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)



Back the miners

Iron ladies

Stan Crawford (Bevercotes NUM) spoke to Alan Fraser after the meeting.

IF A stronger Labour government had been put in in 1974, we might not have moved into the situation we have at the moment.

And now if the whole trade union movement got behind this dispute we would have been finished weeks and weeks ago.

The women's support has been absolutely fantastic. If it wasn't for the women, a lot of men would have gone back to work.

Some men - with the hammering they have had from the police, and the financial pressures - may be considering going back to work. But the wives are saying no.

They talk about Thatcher as the Iron Lady for the Tories. There's millions of iron ladies, and if you had all those iron ladies organised in the labour movement the Tories wouldn't have a chance.

Neil Kinnock, as far as I am concerned, has been sitting on the fence. He will not represent the working class as they should be represented.

If an MP is put forward by the NUM or whoever, and he doesn't do his job by representing the working class, then he should be out. To me that is what the Labour Party is all about.

The solidarity from the rank and file has been tremendous. If the leadership of the other unions had the solidarity that the rank and file have, then we would have had a general strike long before this.



The platform at the Socialist Organiser meeting: from left, Ann Crowder, Michael McGinty, Paul Whetton, Alan Fraser, and John O'Mahony

Back Scargill! No compromise!

RICK MATTHEWS (JFL)



Miners' gala in Edinburgh

'Kinnock should stick to videos'

The women's support group and the Labour Party have been outstanding. They distribute a bag of food once a week to the families of the needy miners.

On the picketing front — the local picketing in South Wales has been handled more than adequately. We feel, however, that there should be larger numbers of men going away to picket around the country. We have to go away in larger numbers to counteract the numbers that the police force are putting in one place.

It is our belief that there are more police in Notts than troops in the Falklands.

But while the local Labour Party has supported us, we have had a very negative approach from Kinnock. My father is secretary of the local

Tony Rees and Howard Jones, from Blaenau Colliery in the Dulais Valley, South Wales, spoke to Mick O'Sullivan

Labour Party, and he spends much of his time raising funds for the Party.

So he wrote to Kinnock explaining what has caused this strike — that it was down to weak Labour leadership in the past, i.e. Gormley and Chadburn, who did a deal over the bonus scheme which had been rejected in two national ballots.

He told Kinnock in his letter that if he didn't put his full weight behind the miners he would never get to number 10. If he couldn't do it he should resign and let someone

who could show us strong leadership get in instead. With the letter he enclosed Jack London's description of a scab.

Kinnock is a classic example of an opportunist leader who happened to go in at the right moment for his career. He would be better off sticking to making pop videos with Tracy Ullman.

The response we have received since we have arrived in London has been overwhelming. It is a tremendous morale-booster to see the amount of work other people are doing on our behalf and to see that the trade union movement is alive and kicking.

The NUM membership will not accept a compromise. After the discussion we had at Rochester Row police sta-

tion with members from other areas the unanimous decision was that we will only go back with total victory.

What about the future? We hope that we can mine coal for many years to come. We must also ensure that no government is allowed to erode our living standards and the future job opportunities for our children.

The working class of Britain is starting to wake up to what the government is trying to do, and has succeeded in doing with many sections of workers. We must always stay vigilant against sliding into the situation we were in at the beginning of the strike, where the government dictated terms on which we came out. We have to stay militant, we have to organise ourselves politically.

Sack threat in Notts

The following letter has been sent to miners in Notts. NUM general secretary Peter Heathfield has responded by giving notice on behalf of the union that "It will be a condition of settlement that any man dismissed for supporting his union by strike action must be reinstated with full continuity of service before there will be a return to work".

National Coal Board
North Notts Area
Bevercotes Colliery
Retford, Notts

I note that you are still absent from work despite the fact that the High Court has ruled that men at work in Nottinghamshire are perfectly in order and have not broken any rules of the union nor can they be disciplined for breach of union rules relative to the current dispute.

You will be aware that since the Spring Bank Holiday there has been a return to work by a large number of men previously absent for one reason or

another. You are, therefore, becoming one of a decreasing number of men not at work.

In order to operate this pit efficiently and economically, we require the presence of every man on books. I therefore ask you to seriously consider your position and let me know when you intend to return to your employment.

I would appreciate an early reply as I need to know your position in planning the future manning of the Colliery.

Yours sincerely,
D.S. Widdowson,
Colliery Manager

Continued from
front page

of Thursday's EC meeting.

The Coal Board also say that up to 30 pits could close because of damage during the strike. But it is not so straightforward. Some of the pits threatened are the most profitable ones. Selby, the prize super-pit, suffers from massive flooding.

And there is evidence that the Coal Board is allowing the damage in order to put pressure on the strikers. Warsop Main is a case in point. The strikers had been providing emergency teams to prevent an underground fire developing. Those teams were withdrawn when scabs went in — and the scabs can't control the situation.

The NUM should say bluntly to the Coal Board that they will not allow emergency cover to be provided only in those pits that are convenient to the Coal Board. In cases of immediate danger, the best response may be for miners to occupy the pit to make it safe.

Shirebrook

In general, the response to pit closures through exhaustion must be to share out the work under union control, with no loss of pay, so that no jobs are lost. The four-day week must be pushed as a central part of winning the dispute. The union should also be demanding a veto over whether pits are exhausted or not.

On Thursday 7th there was a national agreement by transport unions to start boycotting all coal, coke and oil movements to the power stations. On Saturday a joint NUR-ASLEP meeting of 90 out of 250 members at Shirebrook depot, Notts, agreed to implement this policy.

Despite union policy, three previous meetings at Shirebrook had voted to move coal.

The coverage in the Daily Mirror about Thatcher's lying about her role in the dispute had an effect.

On Monday and Tuesday, 11th-12th, there was some scabbing, but over 50% of the trains were stopped, and 60 drivers and guards suspended. To date British Rail has taken no action against signallers supporting the action — because of the threat of widespread solidarity action if they do.

The action at Shirebrook



shows not only what could have been done, but what can still be done now to put some flesh on the national unions' agreement. Direct approaches from rank and file miners to transport workers are essential.

At Orgreave mass picketing has been drastically reduced this week. Sheffield Trades Council call for a mass picket on Wednesday 6th flopped because it was never worked for. It is reported that TGWU national official Roy Todd has been advising his members to ask for local dispensations.

Orgreave has only 10 to 15 days coal supply left for the coking ovens. After that the ovens will collapse unless they get a dispensation — or bring in scab coal. The workers in the plant, and the pickets outside, show say the coal will only be allowed in to protect the ovens if British Steel first agrees to stop sending coke from Orgreave to Scunthorpe.

The effect of the strike is still building up. Even in the Nottingham coalfield, where there has been drift back to work in some pits, production is still massive: down.

Scabbing

And the drift back has been nothing like the scale predicted. On the Coal Board's own figures the number scabbing in Nottingham increased last week by only 174, or less than 3%.

The fact that the right wing sweeping the annual Notts elections is not at all unexpected. There is a majority scabbing the whole area. The election being conducted at the pits in most cases, and is being decided valid by the area office despite examples of police preventing strikers voting.

Secret meetings and talk of deal at this stage not only threaten a sell-out, but can demobilise the strike and increase the drift back to work. The weight of the rank and file needs to be brought in urgently to change this situation and to ensure that the majority on the executive starts speaking and acting like Scargill.

Scots flashpoints

By Stan Crooke

OPEN-CAST sites and the Ravenscraig steelworks look set to become the flashpoints in the miners' fight in Scotland.

The so-called compromise deal between the ISTC and the NUM which ended the mass picketing at Ravenscraig in early May has now been superseded by last week's agreement between the NUM and the transport unions. This called for a blockade of the movement of coke and coal in the steelworks, allowing only sufficient to enter to keep furnaces intact but not to enable any production.

A meeting of the Scottish leaders of the Triple Alliance is being held this week to discuss the implications for Ravenscraig.

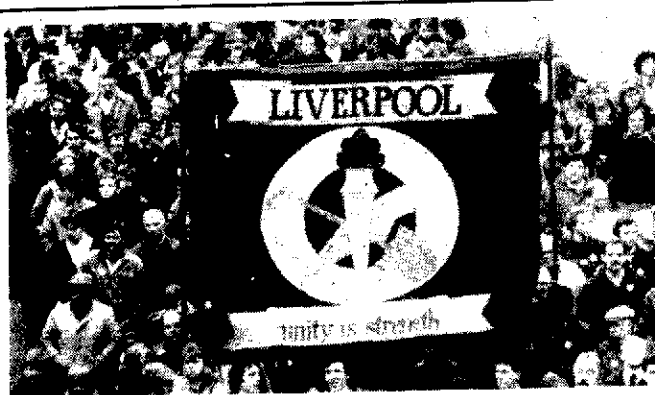
If the rail leaders adhere to last week's agreement, then the current supplies of coal delivered to Ravenscraig will

be halved, at least. Management at Ravenscraig will respond by using scab lorries and if the rail leaders keep their word they should then stop all rail deliveries, and we will be back to the situation in early May.

The likely resumption of picketing at Ravenscraig, together with the picketing open-cast sites, will be a crucial test of strength for the miners and for the broad labour movement.

So far the number of miners involved in picketing has been relatively small. But a massive turnout will be needed to win both at Ravenscraig and at the open-cast sites.

Thousands of pounds every week will be needed to top of the present level of donations to make the picketing financially possible. And a mass turnout from the rest of the labour movement for the miners' pickets, as Salfley in 1972, will also be necessary.



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, Kep Livingstone

Up to five delegates from labour movement
organisations

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

"Women are stronger ... we

Can you explain how the women's committee got off the ground?

The women were so angry at seeing the scenes on TV of the Nottingham women herding their men into work. We thought that that was the picture being put nationally of miners' wives. So we just wanted to show our support for our men. It was a couple of women got together who talked it out one night and decided that it's obvious it's going to be a long strike so the main thing is going to be food.

So the following day they invited as many women as could come round to their house for a chat and there were about 12 of us.

Just by talking we could see that it was going to be a bigger job than we thought. It's alright saying 'we'll feed the kids' but how are you going to get the money. We had meeting after meeting for a week and got nowhere. So then we got in touch with the Yorkshire women and they said they would come down and give us a hand. They were from Hatfield.

They're great, those women. They gave us some advice of fund-raising - because you need your own funds. You can't organise as a women's group and keep going by asking the strike committee for money. So we said we wanted to act independently. And that's what we've done.

How did you go about fund raising and setting up food kitchens?

We had a lot of help from the Labour councillor here, Irene Jones. She's a woman so she was all for it. We didn't have any funds to start with so the men supported the kitchen until we had enough finance of our own.

We went to local factories, and the university. Once people heard of us they were inviting us to come and speak, and then they were putting the word round as well.

I understand that the women have been going on the picket line as well.

Oh yes, we said all along that we wanted to go on the picket line to show that the women weren't just there purely to feed people, that we had a more active role in the strike. And I think that has come to the forefront in this strike. We went on the picket line regularly. We've organised our own rallies, and we've done this coordinated around the country - Kent women, Yorkshire women.

Sylvia Jackson, from Keresley (Coventry) miners' wives' committee, spoke to Jean Lane

up in Barnsley. I personally didn't attend because I was working but a delegation went from here. They said it was absolutely fantastic. All the men lined the whole route and cheered the women.

When you first got involved in the picket line in Keresley, what was the attitude of the men strikers?

They didn't like it. They said it's no place for a woman. They sort of hinted 'well, it's all right for you to do the food, but stay back from the men's work'. And we just stuck it out. We said 'You've got our support whether you like it or not'. And that was it. That only lasted a couple of weeks.



Some of the Yorkshire women have said that the scabs feel ashamed when they see the women in the picket line, and that this brought the striking men round to seeing that it's really important to have women in the pickets.

Yes, well women can, just by being there, shame them. And also with the police, they've got an active role there as well. Because women are different to men - men lose their rag when the police irritate them, but women are just sarcastic. And the cops can't handle it, they don't know what to do.

Have you had much physical hassle from the police?

Not physical - there's only been one or two incidents up here involving women. One incident was when a woman was standing down the road from the picket.

The police came up and said she'd got to move up to stand with the rest and she said "I can stand where I like". They said "Move or you'll be arrested". She refused to move and they just dragged her up the road. But when everybody saw what was going on they soon let go.

I've heard of police trying to recruit kids to spy on their parents.

Well, I told you about my lad. The NUM had a meeting up at the colliery club and he was coming home from the youth club when he was stopped.

The police asked him where he was going and he said "home". Then they asked him "do you want some sweets". Of course he said "yes" like any kid would. He's 11. And the police said "will you do us a favour then. Go up to the club and listen in on the men's meeting and let us know where they're going next". But as luck happened, my son had been briefed and I won't tell you what he said to them.

There was another incident. The kids were at fault a bit because kids are kids. They'd all told their mothers that they were sleeping at their friends house. There were about 12 of them. And they weren't of course, they were camping out in the woods, playing hide and seek in the middle of the night and the place was surrounded with coppers - plain clothes, uniform. The kids were terrified.

They just ran like hell and the coppers chased them. My lad, he hid in the long grass. The coppers got one. He'd jumped the fence and the copper just grabbed him and dragged him over the fence and gave him a good kicking. He was only 14.

The police asked them what they were doing there. Then it got onto "does your dad work at the pit" and each child was asked individually "is your dad on strike?" If the answer was "yes" then it was "you must know something about the vandalism that's going on."

Well, we wrote to Jocelyn, the chief superintendent of Warwickshire, and he never even had the courtesy to reply to us. We demanded a meeting with him because of what's going on with the kids. I mean, it's got to the stage now where we've told the kids that they're not allowed to speak to coppers.

One day this strike is going to be over, and they're growing up hating coppers, believing that coppers can't be trusted. But they wouldn't even meet us. Then they had a cheek to put a report in the Telegraph (local paper) that he'd been round the mining villages and that complaints

about the police were minimal.

How many coppers are there in the village at any one time?

There must be 200. They patrol around in their vans and cars and there's always a bus load up at the pit. And then you've got them on the gates as well. But they're also going up to the school. We were annoyed about that. The kids all wear their NUM badges at school and they were taken off them by the Headmaster. Then the police came up in the lunch hour and were sticking police badges all over them. You know there's one rule for us and another rule for them.

Now that the women have organised in the village, do you think it will stop after the strike?

No. We've said that. It's opened a lot of women's eyes on what is actually going on - not just with the miners' strike but like with the health cuts, the education cuts. And they've realised now that when you're organised you can do something about it. Women are stronger when they're together. In that respect, I think there's a lot of good going to come from this strike. We've already said that we're not going to let it slide.

How do you see the strike now? Do you think you can win?

We'll win. There's no doubt about it. I mean we've got too much to lose to back down, we can't afford to back down. And as luck happens, Scargill is not the kind of bloke to sell you out. If it was any other union leader there might be a danger there. Yes, in my own union in the Post Office, our executive have back pedalled like mad to prevent a strike. We saw what happened with the rail unions...

Yes. But this is all coming out now and I think it's changing people's attitudes about Thatcher and how she's pitching one group of workers against another.

Why do you think the other unions are back pedalling?



Women against pit closures national demonstration, Barnsley

I think it's fear. She's ruled in a way for so long that nobody dare tackle her and anybody who does - God help them. People think 'oh well, we're lucky we've got a job'

Has there been any attempt to coordinate the women's committees nationally?

We discussed it last week. So we're in the process of getting in touch with Betty Heathfield, because she is in touch with every women's committee. We want to get everybody together in a central place either for a weekend or just a day. That is in the pipeline now. We have had single meetings with the women from Kent and Yorkshire. But we all need to meet, you can get good ideas from each other.

And it means those links will last after the strike...

Yes. It's amazing the people we've met because of

the strike. We've had pickets stopping here a number of times now and half the time you don't even know their names but the trust that you've got between each other... You're just told that you've got people stopping. If you're not in you leave the back door open and you know everything will be OK. And I know that when my husband goes anywhere he'll be well looked after. He won't be sleeping in a field.

You said that the women will probably go on organising after the strike. Has the committee discussed political issues like the cuts and the effects on women generally?

Well, we were saying last week how if the women in the village had been organised a couple of years ago the way we are now they would never have got those schools shut. Never. We would have fought.

Women against pit closures

Dalkeith, c/o Dalkeith Miners' Welfare, Dalkeith, Lothian.
Fish Cross, c/o Fish Cross Miners' Welfare, Fish Cross, Clackmananshire.
Durham, c/o Heather Wood, 18 Hallfield 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.



Soup kitchen at Ollerton miners' welfare

won't let it slide"



JOHN SMITH (JFL)

And do you think that will remain the case when the strike is over?

Oh yes. They've realised how strong women are. Like they hear about the women who have gone to pieces during the strike and given their husbands a real ear hole bending. Then they appreciate the women who are actively involved. But that's another role that the women's committee has. As soon as we hear of anything like that we go round straight away to give that woman moral support, and usually it works.

There have been some really good examples of women fighting against these slogans, like in Mansfield we started chanting "Ian MacGregor's got one, a scabbing miner is one".

That's it. That's how you've got to do it.

Also, some men, like you say, are starting to tell them to shut up. Because it can intimidate women so much that they stop coming along. Has that happened in Keresley?

No, because we just tell them. Because we're miners' wives, when we tell them to shut up they will. But that isn't the point. They shouldn't say it at all. But when they won't shut up we really give it to them.

Some women's committees have also organised around the cutting off of electricity like for example putting a picket on a house and asking the electricity board worker not to cross. Have you had much to do with that?

Two families had their electricity cut off but they had it put back on again within a couple of days because the union stepped in. Then we said that we've got to get organised to prevent it happening in the first place.

So we're getting in touch with the electricity board and if they don't take any notice of us we said we would organise a mass women's march to the electricity board, and then try and speak to their representatives. Because the problem you've got in any industry is that when management realised that there's a picket on, they use scab labour and they pick their labour out very carefully to go and do that job.

Can you just explain the daily life of one of the women, like Mrs. Hood in Keresley?

She's up at 3.45 am every morning. She cooks the breakfast for all the lads on the picket line. She gets it all prepared, carries it up and she stays there with them. She then goes to work, I think full time, and comes home at about 5 pm. Then she does all the food parcels. All the food donated goes to her house. She sorts it all out. These parcels go as far as Leicester. So you can imagine the amount of work involved. She then does more sandwiches for the lads on the picket line. She's on the women's picket against the canteen women still going in.

There's a way the sexist thing goes the other way. The police told the lads that they were not allowed to shout at the women going through. So we said "fair enough, we'll go up" and we go up at 7 pm.

The men move off the picket line and the women stand.

Then she goes home, and then she's back up there again at 9. Her family are grown up now. But she's told me that many a night she doesn't go to bed before midnight. Then she's up at 3.45. And that's been from day one of the strike.

Is that the case for everybody?

She's an exceptional case. I don't think any body else has got her energy. But take the likes of Mrs Fraser. She's chief cook down at the kitchen. There's only one ordinary cooker for 160-170 meals a day. So obviously it's all got to be prepared in her house and then taken down. she gets up at 6 am to start preparing it and to take it down to the kitchen. Then in the afternoon she's making pastry for the pies for the next day. And she has to do all the shopping as well. And she also comes out to the meetings.

How often does the wives committee meet?

There's a committee meeting once a week and a general meeting once a week. That's in the evening.

How do you all manage with the kids?

We have a baby sitting service set up. The men have been roped into that as well.

Just to change the subject. Has the police intimidation had any effect in terms of demoralising people or making them want to go back to work?

It's turned us very much against the police. Before this dispute none of us had had anything to do with the police. The most I'd had to do with them was at work at the hospital, when they bring in patients. And I always thought "well they've got a difficult job to do".

But now I wouldn't give them the time of day. If they think they can demoralise us, what they're doing is making us stick together even more. They don't understand mining communities.



JOHN HARRIS

What school's that?

In Keresley. It's shutting this summer. They're leaving one year there after this summer and all the other kids have to go down to Ash Green. And also I think it's the infants school which is going to close. So we'll just have the one school and the nursery here.

You've said that the men have come round to accepting women on the picket line. But you still get really bad sexist attitudes, like the "Maggie Thatcher's got one" chant. Has the committee discussed that? What do the women think about it?

Funnily enough we were talking about this the other day. The rally some of the girls went down on to London, they noticed that the men make direct sexist remarks to the women. But if you've got your NUM stickers on

and they think you're a miner's wife, they don't. But that's not good enough.

We had some problems with one of the blokes at the pit here, he really is a male chauvinist pig. They were having a meeting at one of the houses and one of the blokes mentioned Sylvia. And he wanted to know which one I was. This other feller said "the one sat next to so and so, or the one with brown hair". And he comes out with "oh, the one with big tits".

I mean, it was really insulting so we had him about it, and we said we didn't like it. We were there to support him and we're not going to put up with that, and that we don't do it to him.

He just took it as a joke. We said that we weren't joking. Really we demoralised him in the end. It was the only way to get through to him.

We said things like "how would you like it if we described you as the one with the little bulge in your trousers". He just went bright red. He couldn't handle it at all. So we said "well that's how we feel".

So we got an apology out of him and he said "I didn't realise and I'm sorry".

But every now and again we still get a remark out of him, but before we can say anything now the other men say something like "shut up" and "who do you think you're talking to?" So it has changed a lot of attitudes of the men round here.

Coal mining is swamped in tradition and the tradition is that it is a man's job and it's no place for a woman. But the attitudes have changed very much during the strike.

Like when they were singing "get your tits out for the lads" we all started singing "get your balls out for the girls". We just give them a taste of their own medicine and they don't like it. But the men round here anyway, are coming round to our way of thinking.



Ann Crowder

Unite to fight sexism

-Ann Crowder spoke for Women's Fightback at the SO meeting in Oller-ton on Sunday (see p.4)

First of all I'd like to say, as a representative of Women's Fightback, that we pledge our admiration and support to the magnificent show of strength and militancy by the miners' wives committees during the strike so far; both as collectors and distributors of food and as class fighters on the picket lines.

Women's Fightback was organised in 1979. It was initiated by women in the public sector - in unions, in the CND campaign, etc., who felt it was necessary for women to get together nationally and produce their own paper to fight and campaign against the capitalist system as it oppresses us.

Margaret Thatcher had just got in and we did not think that she was the type of woman who was really going to represent our wishes. We had already seen a previous Labour government slowly taking back the small gains that women had been able to make in their growth in the public services, in childcare facilities, etc, a small growth in jobs. We saw that being attacked and we knew that Margaret Thatcher and the rest of the Tories were going to be even worse.

Thatcher got in saying she stood for the family but she

certainly didn't. What she meant by the family was women staying at home doing no paid work but looking after the family and producing new workers so that she could exploit them.

Women's Fightback saw itself involved in a two-pronged attack: first around fighting for jobs, fighting for a woman's right to work, fighting to organise women together in the Labour Party and trade unions - and it's gone a long way to doing that.

But also, secondly, it has a major role to play in fighting the sexism that exists in the unions and the whole labour movement.

Women realise above all that they have got no interest whatsoever in maintaining the present system because it just keeps us down - it keeps us in the home, thrown out on to the scrap heap and kept as a reserve labour force to be used when jobs are needed and then thrown back out again.

We are kept down by our own men, and kept down by the labour movement. So Women's Fightback has been actively organising in unions to fight against that.

Miners' wives have shown us how much the labour movement has to learn from women and how it ought to take note of what women are doing.

And not to come out with the sexist crap that further divides our movement. When we stand together - we stand firm!

WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK

10p

From a docker's wife to a miner's wife

We won't sell our jobs!

June 9th:
March against Reagan!

Latest issue 10p plus postage from Women's Fightback, 8 Aubyn Square, London SW15

Resistance in Iran

Can you tell us what the present situation is, and more usefully, what is happening that is not being reported in our newspapers and on our media?

What has been lacking in the media reports is the nationwide resistance to the Khomeini regime which is going on. English people seem to think that the Iranian people have given up hope of regaining freedom and democracy in Iran, but this is not so.

The struggle against the Khomeini regime started on 20 June 1982 and is continuing. The resistance forces have suffered the loss of 30,000 people by execution, and more than 100,000 have been imprisoned. These figures have been confirmed by Amnesty International and the United Nations.

What is the main base of opposition to the Khomeini regime? Does it embrace what we would term the working class or middle class in this country?

The main base embraces all walks of life. It does embrace the working class, of course, and the trade unions. For example, three years ago there was a big strike in a steel complex in southern Iran at Ahwaz, and 7,000 workers were sacked for joining the strike. Strikes are, of course, illegal and have been from the outset. The ILO convention has 158 clauses, and the Khomeini regime has only signed 11 of them, and even these are not being respected.

The Iraqi-Iranian war appears to most of us a senseless and cruel war benefitting no one. Did you support the Iranian government in defending the

Ellis Hillman interviewed an Iranian activist on the situation in Iran after five years of the Khomeini regime and four years of war with Iraq

country from the original Iraqi attack? Where do you stand on the question of the war now and where is it leading to?

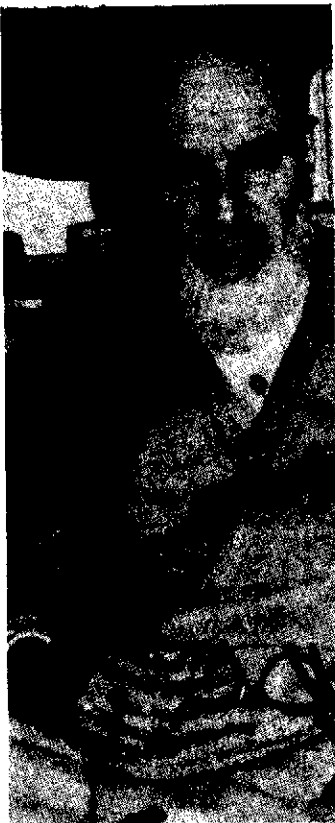
Everyone supported the regime when it was first attacked by Iraq, but after a while it became obvious that the war was being used in order to keep the regime in power. The prospects for an honourable peace could be reached. In fact, the National Council of Resistance has already published a peace plan to end the war between the countries and the Iraqi government has signed it.

The peace plan has been ratified in the UN and the European Parliament. But the Khomeini regime is the only party which insists that this senseless war goes on. They need this war to keep themselves in power.

What is the nature of the opposition to Khomeini abroad among the student population? What are your politics and programme of action?

Our main policy is to expose the Khomeini regime as much as possible regarding the belligerent policies which hide the economic disaster at home — shortages, and an inflation rate of 400-500%. We would like to see an independent alternative which secures freedom and democracy in our country, and that alternative has been combined in the National Council of Resistance, the only independent alternative available of all the resistance forces.

What has been the attitude of the Soviet Union to the Khomeini regime, and what is its attitude now — not forgetting the Tudeh Party?



Khomeini

The Tudeh Party (the Iranian Communist Party) is still the main channel through which the Soviet Union directs its policies. The Tudeh Party fully supported the Khomeini regime until last year. Khomeini excluded the Tudeh Party from any position of influence in the government and civil service, because of the differences and splits in his own ruling

party. The Soviet Union has yet to condemn the Khomeini Party outright, although since its Party [Tudeh] was excluded from any office, it has expressed its reservations.

The Tudeh lost any respect from the moment it joined the Khomeini government.

Where would you put the Mojahedin movement on the political spectrum?

We are the largest resistance movement affiliated to the National Council of Resistance. We regard ourselves on the left, and socialist inclined. We want freedom, including the right to strike, freedom of assembly. We believe in the nationalisation of the main industries as a step towards eliminating class differences.

What can we do practically, in Britain, to help your cause?

Simply putting pressure on MPs, the media, to publicise our cause, and, at least publicise the truth about the resistance in Iran.

"Half a Euro-Parliament"

THE elections to the European Parliament are getting nearer. This institution should, however, be called the 'Half-European Parliament', because half the countries of our continent, which find themselves under Soviet domination, cannot be represented in it. That is why it is so important for the enslaved nations of Central and Eastern Europe to have their representatives, if only symbolically, in this Parliament.

The Committee of Social Resistance in Poland turns with this appeal to Western European electors: that, in casting their votes, they take on themselves the responsibility of offering a European Parliamentary platform to millions of their neighbours whose mouths are gagged by force. We ask you to vote for candidates who will also undertake to speak for the interests of the nations of Central and Eastern Europe. We especially turn to the Italians with the appeal to



Cartoon above, statement on EEC elections, and Bogdan Lis's letter to Chilean workers reproduced from 'Voice of Solidarnosc'

support the candidature of Jiri Pelikan, a highly regarded fighter for human rights.

We hope that our appeal is received in the same spirit as that in which it was issued — not as an attempt to usurp rights which do not formally belong to us, but to give expression to the belief that, despite the divisions imposed by the EEC, Europe remains one.

Committee of Social Resistance, 3 April 1984

Solidarnosc leader seized

By Colin Foster

BOGDAN Lis, a prominent leader of the underground Solidarnosc organisation in Poland, was arrested in Gdansk recently, according to Polish television.

Lis was the president of Solidarnosc in Gdansk before the martial law, and since then has been a member of the underground 'Temporary Coordinating Commission'.

Lech Walesa responded by telling the press: "It is hard for him, but we will replace him. We will give the Temporary Coordinating Commission (TKK) three other underground members to replace him, and like that they can go

on chasing us for another 50 years". Nevertheless the arrest is a blow.

Bogdan Lis was the author of a recent letter from Solidarnosc TKK to Chilean trade unionists. He now needs the same international solidarity that he offered to the Chilean workers.

"Polish trade unionists send their words of appreciation and solidarity to the Chilean nation in its struggle for fundamental human and civil rights.

Totalitarian systems and

dictatorships — no matter what form they take — fear their own societies: they fear the organisation of workers.

It is the fear of their own nation that makes them deprive it of all its rights. However the desire for absolute power leads, sooner or later, but inevitably... to the downfall of totalitarian systems.

For it is not possible to rule against obvious interests, against the will of the nation. The Poles, after 40 years of dictatorial rule, believe in this fact deeply.

We are convinced that a just social system can only be achieved through the realisation of the principles of democracy. And democracy cannot exist without the right of Free Trade Unions to act, without the right to human and civil liberties.

That is why we support your struggle.

We know very well what the dispersal of demonstrations and firing at defenceless people look like. We know what overcrowded prisons mean, and what price one has to pay in this situation for the courage to voice one's democratic convictions. But precisely because you did not give up, because you decided to bear the cost of continuing your struggle, you will win!

Your success will limit the amount of evil existing in the world and will therefore also be the success of all people acting for human rights.

We believe also in our victory, the victory of Solidarnosc. Our belief is strengthened by all those who, all over the world, do not reconcile themselves with social injustice, all the nations that do not allow their dignity and sovereignty to be trampled upon, the societies that do not reconcile themselves to the deprivation of their fundamental rights.

We share with you our belief and hope for a better tomorrow.

We sincerely wish you a quick and final victory".

Salvador danger

By Paul Muddle

THERE ARE reports from El Salvador that talk of a negotiated settlement between the FDR/FMLN and the new government is in the air.

The process was started a month ago when Guillermo Ungo, Social-Democrat leader of the FDR, asked President Monge of Costa Rica to approach Salvadoran president Duarte with a suggestion of 'dialogue'.

According to the Sunday Times no agenda or preconditions have been set for the talks, which are due to start in mid-July, but it is safe to assume that the FDR will be pushing certain demands they have made before.

In December 1983 Guillermo Ungo told Labour MPs Stuart Holland and Donald Anderson that any negotiations should deal with:

1. The reform of the army
2. New elections
3. A 'broadly based' new government.
4. Social reforms; and
5. Non-alignment.

According to Holland and Anderson, Ungo stressed that the opposition did not want a military victory and would be

prepared to be a minority in any new government.

The civil war in El Salvador is the product of centuries of oppression and exploitation. To imagine that you can negotiate the oligarchy and the Death Squads out of existence is nonsense.

At best any such government would be a repeat performance of the October-December 1979 junta in which Ungo sat. People like him gave the junta a reformist face while the army and the death squads carried out a reign of terror.

Many people in the FMLN recognise how foolish such talk of negotiations is. The murderous faction fight which led to the suicide of Salvador Cayetano Carpio (founder of the 'Popular Liberation Forces') was precisely over this question.

As one FMLN militant told the Sunday Times, "Talks are more likely to be aimed at neutralising the guerillas than at inviting them into government".



Sikhs demonstrated in London last Sunday, 10th, against repression of Sikhs in India. After years of playing on Sikh-Hindu antagonisms, the Congress Party regime has come into head-on conflict with a movement for Sikh rights in Punjab, the state where the Sikh population is concentrated. The central government has sent in the army to repress the Sikh movement.

JOHN HARRIS



Demonstration in London in 1982 in support of the GLC's Fares Fair policy. But the GLC leadership had already, in 1981, come out against the underground workers over their pay claim. In Sheffield it is the same story - cheap fares at the expense of low wages

— Sheffield — Cheap fares - low wages!

By
Rob Dawber

THE leadership of South Yorkshire Labour Party agree with those like David Blunkett, Leader of Sheffield City Council, that it is wrong for Liverpool to take on the government this year. It is better, they say, if all local authorities went together next year when rate-capping is meant to come in.

To this end, South Yorkshire fixed a budget this year which included a rate rise to continue subsidising the bus and rail fares - its single biggest item of expenditure.

The cheap fares policy, along with buses with a frequency and reliability unmatched anywhere else in Britain, is understandably very popular here. And an attempt by the government to take it away could meet with a very determined and popular resistance.

But the support is being squandered. Not the support of the general public but of the busworkers themselves. This is because along with cheap fares goes low wages and many busworkers feel that the fares policy is being carried on their backs.

For a basic week, Monday to Friday, a driver will get £92.57 top line, or as little as £65 after deductions. Large amounts of overtime are worked to make this up.

Overtime, however, is paid at a lower rate than ordinary time except weekends which is between time and a half and time and three-quarters.

Living standards have been

eroded since the establishment of the Metropolitan Authorities in 1974 - a rise of about £30 would be necessary to raise them back up.

Perhaps because of the restriction on local government, rate-capping, etc., for the Labour council, local TGWU leaders have submitted a claim which can only be described as very moderate.

*A wage rise of inflation plus 1% (including sick and holiday pay) i.e. 6.3%.

*An end to paying overtime at a lower rate.

*Consolidation of weekend rates into a single rate throughout the week.

*Retirement at 60.

*Free bus passes for spouses.

Three offers have so far been made by the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYPTe), the latest being 4.9% on basic rates; 6% on sick pay; and spouses travel at £10 a year.

All three offers have been rejected by individual ballots despite the leadership's recommendation to accept. And Sheffield District Labour Party is supporting the busworkers despite Blunkett's tirade against them for a lightning strike on local government polling day. He told the local press at some length about how this had made him speechless.

In arguing for the claim busworkers have pointed out that, apart from the reasonableness of 6.3%, consolidating weekend rates throughout the week would make rate-capping by the government more difficult because they couldn't then simply cut back on weekend services to save most money. For the moment it would cost SYPTe nothing extra.

However, opposing a resolution at my own Labour Party branch, Alex Waugh chair of South Yorkshire

County Council Transport sub-committee, argued the opposite. The offer was reasonable, he said. There was no more money, and consolidation would make it more difficult next year when rate-capping comes in.

As the Sheffield TGWU branch 9/10 puts it in their bulletin: "Alex Waugh... preaches socialism with one hand and carries out Tory Party policies with the other. 'Cheap fares' keep him safely elected, and Tory wage settlements show him up for what he really is."

The SYPTe - which takes its orders from the County Council - has now gone to the length of putting adverts in local papers explaining how reasonable their offer is.

The advert on June 6 explains that "The Executive - on behalf of the County Council - operates the most enlightened transport policy in the country, which has provided the basis for improved services; increased passenger demand; more employment opportunities; greater job security for all staff."

No one disputes this. But it goes on to say "The Executive has to ensure this is achieved in the most cost-effective manner". In true Michael Edwards style it then claims that weekly wages last year averaged from £146.21 to One Person Operation at £176.71.

South Yorkshire Labour Party has followed Neil Kinnock's advice of minimising cuts and holding fire "till next year". This is increasingly antagonising the workers whose loyalty Blunkett, Roy Thwaite (leader of South Yorks County Council) and Alex Waugh demand.

When rate-capping comes in next April, the people who now confront transport workers as tight-fisted and mean minded Employers will be calling for the support of these same busworkers to defend the socialist transport policy of the "Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire" - a name coined ironically by a local Tory councillor.

Fighting Euro-pollution

By
Les Hearn

THE EEC's achievement in combining a glut of food with high prices has fuelled many demands for British withdrawal. However, the opposite lesson might well be drawn from the Common Market's record in environmental protection and combatting pollution. While not brilliant, it is far better than that of British governments, Labour or Tory.

With this in mind, members of the Socialist Environment and Resources Association (SERA) have collaborated with some Labour MEPs to produce a socialist programme for the environment in Europe, published as "Europe, the Elections and the Environment" (EEE)*.

Acid rain

This pamphlet takes several problems of health and environmental protection and lays down the sort of policies needed to deal with them.

As a prime example of a European issue, EEE chooses "Acid Rain", where acid gases are produced in Britain and Germany (for example) and are then blown over Scandinavia.

Acid rain affects forestry, farming and fishing (in Britain as well as Scandinavia) and also has consequences for public health. Acid gases cause respiratory problems especially in the very young and old, while acid drinking water dissolves lead pipes, increasing danger of lead damage to children in Glasgow etc.

Who pays?

EEE wants the European Community to adopt the "Polluter Pays Principle". Industries that burn fossil fuels (such as the Central Electricity Generating Board) would then find that it paid them to remove acid gases from power station emissions or to develop more efficient ways of burning fuel.

This might lead to an increased reliance on nuclear power, a technology that carries its own very serious implications for public health, so EEE suggests an energy policy that relies on "Clean Coal" as well as developing energy conservation and renewable sources of energy (such as solar, wind, wave power).

Seveso

Other "European" issues discussed are pollution of seas with radioactive and poisonous wastes and oil spills, as well as pollution of air, water and land with lead. The transport of waste, from one country to another to take advantage of lax regulations is another scandal which has resulted in dioxin from Seveso in Italy turning up in barrels in a barn in France and a ship-load of poisonous wastes from Holland being stranded in a British harbour.

These problems are already candidates for Europe-wide legislation, as is proposed in EEE.

EEE also deals with some particularly British problems which it points out are more likely to receive attention from the European Community, a damning indictment of the

lation in the European Parliament has been the British Conservative MEPs.

Of course, EEE is aimed at activists in a particular area of struggle and does not deal with how the European working class can develop joint policy and action on the environment. It does provide a basis for socialists to argue for such policy and action, however.

Such links are beginning to be made and SERA and others are involved in getting trade union action against sea-dumping, transport of radioactive waste, etc.

Socialists should recognise the value of the European dimension to this struggle, regardless of their opinion of the Common Market.

*£1 plus 17p postage, from SERA, 9 Poland St., London W1.

The price of coal

The coalman came every Friday
Tipped me a wink
As he spilled the sacks into the shed
Then folded them up carefully as clean sheets
The smoking heaps lay around in ruins
Soon sprinkled with red-rust
From the flaking roof
As we shovelled them into sweated hods
Lugged them indoors for the scuttle
Fiddled and poked the lumps with tongs and irons
And swept up the blackness which leaked everywhere
Common as rain

Or spilt salt
Often the coal fizzled and bubbled
As if still underground
Struggling for breath
Wheezing like the coalman
And neither his hooked back and raked phlegm
Nor my cold-complaining parents
Meant much to me.
No one explained
How hacked and grubbed for
Each painfully extracted nugget
Or with what hard labour
Our fire burnt.

Les Tate

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Industrial

Why Bathgate voted to end sit-in

WORKERS at the BL Bathgate plant voted narrowly at a mass meeting on Thursday May 31 to end their nine day sit-in against closure of the plant.

BL has announced that the plant will be closed by 1986, with the loss of 1800 jobs. 500 jobs are to go immediately.

By Stan Crooke

Why did the workers vote to end the sit-in?

Two days before the mass meeting, the Lincolnshire-based tractor manufacturer Marshalls announced an interest in taking over the engine section of the plant, where

1000 workers are currently employed. Marshalls did not state how many of the 1000 it would take on.

BL Bathgate bosses said that talks could not start with Marshalls until the sit-in had been ended. Some workers must have regarded the possibility of a takeover of part of the factory by Marshalls as

better than continuing the sit-in.

Then there is the question of redundancy payments. The main placard at the factory gates during the sit-in read: 'Don't take the fool's gold'. But the message did not get across to enough workers. Management bumped up the amount of redundancy mon-

ey at offer, and at the same time warned that the money would be jeopardised if the sit-in continued.

Lack of confidence must have been another factor. The transfer of tractor production, truck cabs, and vans, and a share of the axle production have all been successfully implemented by management over the years. The last sit-in at Bathgate, in 1982, ended in defeat after BL got a court interdict.

Still, the vote, against the shop stewards' recommendation, was so close that it had to be taken twice. There were angry exchanges before the vote, and violence as workers disputed the outcome of the vote. A miners' delegation which had turned up to show solidarity left in disgust.

The campaign to save jobs at Bathgate will continue, but it will now follow the well-established Scottish TUC pattern of joint meeting with vicars and all-party delegations of MPs and councillors.

Fighting rail closures

By Ian McCalman

SPRINGBURN, Glasgow, was once known as the railway metropolis of the world, employing over 10,000 people in its workshops. But we are now perhaps at the closing chapter of that saga.

British Rail management now plan to cut the workforce from 1800 to 700 by 1986, with little in the way of a future after that.

It is hardly surprising that many people are sceptical of the possibility of a successful campaign to save jobs, considering the way in which thousands of jobs have been lost over the last 30 years with only token resistance.

And they will not have been inspired by the message from the platform of the protest meeting held in Springburn parish church last week. George Dyke, the shop stewards' committee secretary, was joined by right wing local Labour MP Michael Martin, Helen Liddell for the Scottish Council of the Labour Party, Douglas Harrison of the Scottish TUC, and the local minister.

There was a good deal of talk of the 'successful' campaign at Scott Lithgow, as if a slashed labour-force and privatisation represent 'success', and of the job creation in the Clydebridge Enterprise Zone in place of the closed Singer factory — as if retail and microchip businesses are to compensate for the massive job losses suffered there.

Workers should have no illusions in these capitalist 'solutions' to their problems. A successful campaign can only begin by realising the need for an occupation of the factory and a call for support from workers throughout the workshops, in Crewe, Derby, York and elsewhere.

The situation is not without hope. The works employs many young workers who know they face the threat of a life on the dole. With over 30% unemployed in Springburn, there is no hope of a job in the area. The workshops have a long history of trade union organisation. The miners' struggle must be a source of inspiration.

Whatever the setback at Bathgate, surely within the workforce there are those who will step forward to lead this fight.

Libraries

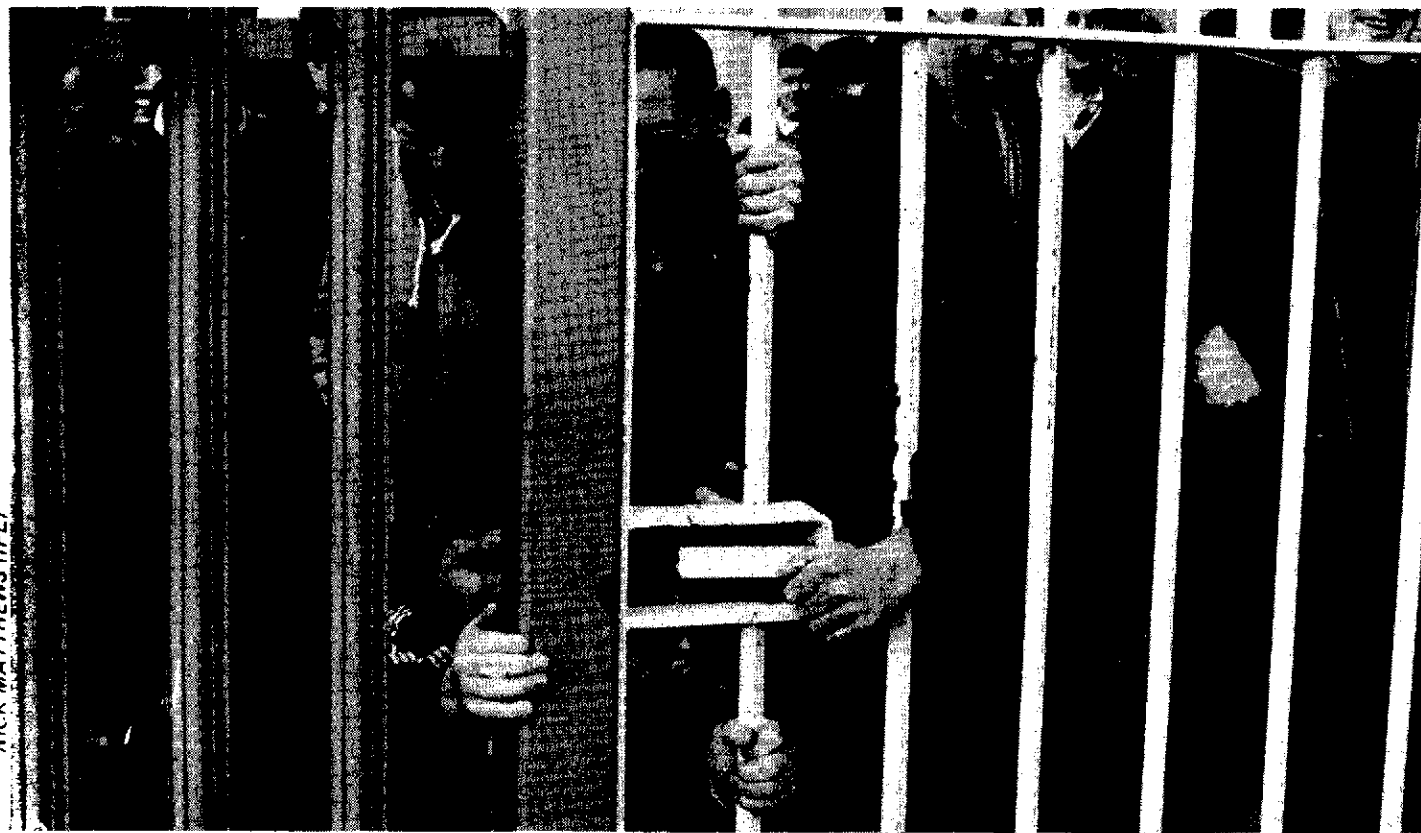
By Will Adams

LIBRARY staff in Tower Hamlets are on strike against the Labour-controlled council's attempt to close two libraries.

The staff had originally agreed not to accept fines on overdue books or handle any money from June 11. When they arrived for work that day they were each handed a letter stating that they would be suspended without pay if they went ahead with the action.

They went ahead and were given another letter later the same day suspending them.

A strike was called, which NALGO has made official. At a full NALGO branch meeting this Wednesday, 13th, it is hoped to spread to the strike to the rest of the Borough's departments.



Workers lock the gates after occupying the Bathgate factory

LETTERS

Time for action, not talk

IN THIS, the 14th week of the strike, those thousands of trade unionists and committed workers who have flocked to the call of their comrades in the NUM for all support in the struggle, can lift their heads proudly and sniff the scent of victory.

Their efforts, with those of the overwhelming majority of miners who completely understand the reason and nature of this fight, are proving the success of solidarity.

The battle is being won in spite of the state violence directed against the pickets. In spite of the attempts to starve miners' wives and children. In spite of the campaign of lies and distortions emanating from the Tory press and their friends in the mass media.

We are winning despite the whingeing and whining of those 'friends of the people' in the Labour and trade union hierarchy who go to their beds at night offering up a prayer for the workers to 'come to their senses' so that the 'statemen' can get us all back to the game of 'common cause' and thousands more of our class can be sacrificed to the God who preaches save the ruling class and maximise the profits.

Where the 'friends of the people' have run so the miners have stood rock hard. In just a few short weeks look at what the miners have given to us.

Their courage has swept away the doubts and fears, they have destroyed the idea that compulsion through anti-labour laws and the use of naked state violence is

impossible to resist.

Their pride has lifted us all to a feeling of purpose and enthusiasm for the future. When did the politicians and the union bureaucrats ever give us such precious gifts?

The young workers, whose efforts in this struggle are everywhere evident, are privileged to be learning the lessons that older workers have already had beaten into them. The story goes that on the picket line at Drayton a senior police officer approached and asked to speak to 'the picket leader'. The reply he got was 'speak to us all, we are the leaders'. That's better than anything young workers will learn on a YTS, the lesson of class unity.

And the time has come for this class unity to be raised up another level. It is now time for all workers to board the train that is going full ahead for the miners' victory that is now in sight.

Let the power workers stand up with the proud miners and join in the great victory that they are making possible.

Railway workers, refuse to move any fuel anywhere!

Engineers, close the industries, bring home to the employers the reality of class unity.

Print workers and all trade unionists in the media, refuse to publish or broadcast the lies, distortions and personal attacks on the miners and their representatives. Your masters offer these slanders as their contribution to the attempt to smash the trade union movement, put an end to it.

When that day of victory to the miners arrives you will want to have played a part, you will want to tell everyone how you made your contribution. There is no greater feeling in this world than that which comes from such a victory.

The time for using the cheapest commodity on earth, talk, is over. Now is the time to get into the action.

S.T. Ruggle, Kilburn

GCHQ

THE International Labour Organisation, a UN body composed of representatives of governments, employers and trade unions, last weekend ruled that the Tories had no right to ban civil servants at GCHQ from joining a union, and called for new negotiations.

No fight in Glasgow

THE article (SO 179) from Ian McCalman, on the District Council election results in Scotland was way off the mark.

Labour's unexpected victory in Edinburgh was certainly an important achievement, and could well pave the way for a confrontation with the Tory government.

Somewhat more dubious is Ian McCalman's praise for the Michael Connarty-led Labour Group in Stirling. Whatever 'barrage of propaganda' may have been mounted by the Tories, the Scottish bourgeois press (e.g. the Glasgow Herald) has of late been praising Connarty for his moderate policies, promotion of local businesses, and record on the sale of council housing.

But what about Ian McCalman's 'intriguing possibility' that Glasgow may become a second Liverpool?

Whilst Labour candidates made great play in their election material of the decision to freeze

rents and rates, scarcely any of them used the election to try to build the now non-existent 'Hands Off Glasgow' campaign, avowedly set up in order to defend the freeze.

The commitment not to sell off council land has already been evaded by the sale of a property in the city centre for £1 million on the basis of a 'lease-back' deal.

And whilst the Labour Group may be committed to a 'defence of jobs and services', it will apparently be defending them unsuccessfully: housing repairs have already been cut to the core, whilst there is no end in sight to the ongoing commercialisation and 'rationalisation' of the council's Building and Works Department.

Glasgow as a second Liverpool is indeed an intriguing possibility — like pigs flying.

STAN CROOKE
Glasgow



Part of the 100,000 strong demonstration in London against President Reagan last Saturday sat down in Oxford Street.

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.

UCW : shaken but not shifted Sainsburys: fight back begins

Greg Birch (Basingstoke UCW, personal capacity) looks back at the UCW conference

THE Annual Conference of the Union of Communications Workers took place in Blackpool from 13 to 18 May.

The main issue under debate was pay, and the Executive Council's recommendation to take industrial action in the event of an acceptable offer not being made.

Tuffin

The first amendment to be debated was a call for a national ballot on the pay offer, which was defeated overwhelmingly. Following this the recommendation from the National Executive Council was put to the vote and carried. Alan Tuffin, the general secretary, clearly implied that any action would take the form of selective strikes, overtime bans and so on, but not an all-out stoppage.

He also pointed out that other public sector workers were at present in struggle - miners, teachers and railway workers - and the possibility of a link-up between these struggles was not given any serious consideration.

Five day

The next major issue was the five day week for postal staff whilst maintaining a six-day service. The EC recommended that none of the proposals so far put forward would be feasible. Postal delivery staff at present work a 43 hour, six-day week, usually commencing duty between 5 and 6 am - hardly sociable hours.

Workers are torn between providing the best standards of service or bettering their working conditions. What was needed from the EC was a firm lead and a firm stand on the principle of a shorter working week, combined with the abolition of the Saturday delivery.

Following the acceptance of the EC recommendation we are at a point no further forward and no light at the end of the tunnel.

Union laws

On the issue of support for unions under attack by the employment legislation, the EC once again dodged the issue. At a time when the whole trades union movement should be backing any individual union threatened under the Employment Act, the UCW seem to be adopting the ostrich approach and hoping the problem will go away of its own accord.

At conference a motion calling for moral, verbal and financial support for the NGA against the Stockport Messenger group was narrowly defeated on a card vote.



Basingstoke UCW branch - betrayed by the bureaucrats

This week's UCW conference, four weeks ago, massively backed a call for industrial action in support of this year's pay claim: a 5.2% wage increase, a three hour reduction in the working week, longer holidays and full pay for postal workers at 18.

The Post Office were prepared to increase their pay offer only marginally, and there was widespread unofficial action, particularly in London. 2000 postal workers lobbied the pay talks two weeks ago. True to form, the UCW executive tried to stop this action. They did everything they could to get a deal in time to stop postal workers taking action alongside the miners.

Last Thursday, 7th, the executive voted to recommend acceptance of a deal that gives the miserable wage increase demanded and nothing else. The demand to reduce the working week has been ignored once again. In the ballot over the next few weeks this sell-out should be rejected, in favour of the postal workers coming out alongside the miners for their full claim.

Along with the remainder of the TUC leadership, the UCW hang their heads in shame over this decision.

In asking conference to oppose the motion, Aln Tuffin said that the NGA had held a pistol to the head of the TUC General Council in that backing the strike would be considered unlawful, making the whole of the General Council liable to prosecution.

New tech

Two amendments on new technology - no further trials until an agreement with the Post Office has been reached and the non-inclusion of new technology in pay claims - were carried unanimously. The UCW policy on new technology has been virtually non-existent until now. It has crept in via productivity agreements, leaving local reps in no position to negotiate agreements and unaware of the impact on jobs its introduction will have.

Machines are now available which can process 70,000 letters an hour, compared to a manual average of about 1,000. Small business computers are now being introduced on the clerical side, again with consequent losses of jobs.

Dismissals

The UCW leadership have known of the likely consequences of the introduction of new technology for several years, since commissioning a report from Sussex University Policy and Resources Unit. It has taken until this conference to even agree a common policy.

Conference was asked to reject the amendments in order to avoid 'tying down' the union leadership, who claimed to already know what the members wanted and were doing it.

The debate on discipline was brought about by the dismissal by the Post Office of Bill Willoughby and Alan Fraser and the handling of these disputes by the Executive Council.

The case of Bill Willoughby was concerned with the existence of a separate disciplinary code for union representatives, and the apparent unwillingness of the EC to admit this. In the face of certain defeat, Alan Tuffin said he now supported the publication of this document.

JOHN HARRIS



Alan Fraser

Two issues arose from Alan Fraser's dismissal. Firstly, the publication of his sick record by the EC to which Alan Tuffin said they had only done this to protect themselves from scurrilous accusations made by certain left wing organisations. The point was lost on most delegates and the amendment stating that sick records can only be published with the consent of the individual was carried.

An amendment giving Basingstoke a right of reply to an article by the Executive in all the union's publications, giving their version of the events was defeated.

Overall, many delegates felt that there had been a definite shift to the left at conference. Certainly several Broad Left motions and amendments had been carried, and the support offered to the NUM was encouraging.

However, the bureaucrats on the Executive Council still remain firmly in charge. There were no debates on political issues or broader trade union issues. The lack of political awareness of the UCW membership on the whole, and delegates in particular leaves us floundering in a vacuum.

The simple fact is that until there is a change of government, and the implementation of socialist policies, all the fine sounding resolutions are a waste of time.

New technology will be introduced with massive job losses, we'll be given only 4% pay rises and privatisation will go ahead regardless of motions passed at conference.

DHSS: miles worse!

By Jayson Sloss

'GLASGOW'S miles better' is the slogan being pushed all round the country to promote Glasgow as a tourist attraction. But the slogan of three local civil service unions - 'Partick's miles nearer' - has more meaning for local unemployed people.

CPSA, SCPS and CSU are campaigning against the closure of Partick DHSS office. Claimants would be sent instead to one of three other DHSS offices - needing at least one bus, and a fare of 35p to 60p, to do so.

Partick is just one example of many proposed DHSS office closures throughout the country. There are another two in Glasgow.

To understand these closures, you need to understand what management means when they talk about 'service to the public'.

To most people, this would mean recruiting extra staff to deal more quickly and efficiently with the large increase in claims, to make sure people don't have far to go to their local office, and that when they get there they do not have to wait long to get seen.

Each claimant should have an interview outlining all their entitlements.

But management's view of 'service to the public' is things like piped music, name tags, potted plants, and more frightening forms such as the B1.

They aim to place every claim, including some visits, on forms similar in format to the B1. By doing this they hope to cut staff massively and to close all the smaller offices, replacing them with larger centralised offices.

Management feel that improved service to the public is forcing everyone to fill in large, complex forms, and then never need to visit their local office.

The flaw in this is that you will only receive the entitle-

WITHIN Sainsburys distribution depot, Basingstoke, there has been a sharp reaction to the derisory wage offer. Selective 24 hour stoppages have already taken place, and as more groups of workers are told of their offer, more stoppages are expected.

The unions' claim for a substantial increase in basic rates, a reduction in the working week, and a commitment towards an increase in the annual holiday entitlement of 20 days, has met with a miserable response.

In the last ten years, Sainsburys have gone from strength to strength, increasing profits and building new supermarkets. They are now the leaders in grocery retail.

Unfortunately, the workforce have not seen a corresponding share of the spoils. Increases of £4.25 a week on a basic of as low as £78 in the face of profits this year of £138 million, are an affront to the workforce.

Over the past years, management have contained the workforce with sweeteners such as bonus and profit sharing, but significantly,

management are now mentioning these payments in wage negotiations.

But the inadequate basic increase, no move towards a reduction in the working week from 40 hours, and only an increase in holiday entitlement from 20 days to 23 after five years' service, has now motivated the workforce into response.

Maintenance staff, followed by hygiene staff have already been involved in 24 hour stoppages, and with production staff and warehousemen empowering stewards to take action at a moment's notice, there is an increasing awareness that to make this company come across, we will have to take them on.

Over the past few years, the workforce have been dormant with an apathetic leadership. Now, new faces are to the fore, and they are showing the way forward. To organise and build upon this base is the main objective for now and the future.

Two Sainsburys shop stewards

Nursery strike

By Sue Arnall

NURSERY nurses working for the Education Department of Bolton Metropolitan Council have been on strike since May 2.

Their employer is a Labour-controlled council which in January 1983 produced a joint working party report assessing the changing work of nursery nurses and recommending regrading.

This recommendation was rejected, and that has led to the strike. NALGO supports the strike may call all its members in the Council out this month.

Nursery nurses are notoriously badly paid, and once trained are often stuck in a job with increasing demands and stress but no prospects of promotion. Inevitably the teacher is in control, however experienced the nursery nurse is.

Solidarity betrayed



LESSONS OF THE BASINGSTOKE POST OFFICE WORKERS STRIKE

This pamphlet tells the story of the victimisation of Socialist Organiser supporter Alan Fraser and how the fight to defend him was sold out by the union officials. 25p plus postage from 75 Freemantle Close, Basingstoke.

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Adf

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Socialist Organiser

Scargill: 'No deal!'

IAN MacGregor is sticking to the aims he started the dispute with.

To make a profit, the Coal Board will slash pits and jobs: closures are to be on the basis 'of exhaustion or because of

By John Bloxam

economic non-viability". The NUM is to be smashed: "The Coal Board will recover its responsibility for managing the coal industry".

MacGregor made this clear in a 'Times' interview on his so-called new 'Plan for Coal' issued on the eve of the third secret negotiating meeting with the NUM.

Whatever disagreements exist in the Coal Board about MacGregor's style - they want the same thing.

Arthur Scargill's response was immediate. "The revised Plan for Coal merely confirms that the NUM arguments are being substantiated, and that the real intention of the Coal Board is to close 70 to 100 pits and reduce manpower by 70,000 to 100,000. There can be no other interpretation put on it."

"The fact that Mr MacGregor wants to withdraw what he describes as uneconomic capacity means he is intent on butchering this industry... We are on target for more and more conflict".

On Thursday in London, Scargill again called for mass picketing at Orgreave, and for strike action from other trade unionists. "I would dearly love to have seen and would dearly love to see every single member of my union who is here or on strike and every single trade unionist down at the Orgreave plant picketing... The only way you can beat the bully tactics of the police is by having thousands on those picket lines..."

"I'm sick of hearing mealy-mouthed messages. To those workers in power stations, I say: 'You're using blackleg fuel, stop

work now'."

Speaking at Thoresby Miners' Welfare on Saturday, he made clear his view about the present negotiations. "Yes, there will be secret meetings, but there will be no secret deals. Any deal or settlement will have to go before the special delegate conference".

But NUM general secretary Peter Heathfield was putting the emphasis on being able to get a deal. He was widely quoted on Tuesday as expecting to get a deal to put to the delegate conference in Sheffield on July 11-12.

Other disagreements clearly exist between Arthur Scargill and other members of the executive majority. There has been a long-standing dispute about the over-generous dispensations that the Yorkshire, Scottish and South Wales area leadership allowed the local steel works, permitting large-scale production.

This came to a head on Tuesday with South Wales president Emlyn Williams publicly opposing the policy of tightening the screws on the steel plants by stopping coal, coke and oil shipments.

Scargill appears isolated in his call for Orgreave. How many other executive members joined in his call, and went down to help organise the picket with him?

So there is pressure for a deal. But unless there is a spectacular turnaround by the Coal Board, a deal at the present time will involve pit closures and will be a sell-out.

The Coal Board are clearly on the retreat, but they need to be driven back further by stepping up industrial action. Arthur Scargill is right on this, and he should be backed up by a lobby

Continued on p.5

Longbridge strike against racism stays solid

By Jim Denham

THE strike by 300 Longbridge transport drivers remains solid.

The strikers voted by an overwhelming majority to stay out when they met on Thursday June 7.

Their demand is simple: the reinstatement of Zedekiah Mills, who was sacked after hitting a foreman who had called him a 'black bastard' and told him to 'go back to the jungle'.

As more of the facts surrounding Zedekiah's sacking emerge, it is becoming even clearer that he had acted under extreme provocation. Longbridge management have indirectly admitted this by belatedly issuing a verbal warning to the foreman, although they still deny that the abuse he used against Mills was racist.

Convenor Jack Adams has made it clear that the aim of the strike is not to force the

Jim Denham was a shop steward at Longbridge until he was victimised together with 7 others in December 1980

dismissal of the foreman (BL custom and practice is that both parties to any fight are automatically dismissed), but to obtain the reinstatement of Mills.

Nevertheless the strikers must beware any back-to-work deal that involves any form of 'inquiry': this was the method BL used to defuse the strike in defence of Derek Robinson in 1979 and of the eight victimised Metro workers in 1980.

Once a strike is called off to allow an inquiry to proceed, the company has a free hand to do as they please and the victimised workers almost invariably stay sacked.

The resolve of the strikers has been strengthened by the

crude efforts of the company to discredit Zedekiah and portray him as a violent man with a history of indiscipline. In fact Zedekiah had already complained to supervision about being spat upon and racially abused by a contract engineer before the incident with the foreman.

Management had ignored his complaint. Another fact that has only recently emerged is that the job Zedekiah was on when the fight took place was extra work that he was doing to help out another foreman!

The strikers are in a strong position. As well as halting all production at Longbridge, they have also stopped the transport of components to

other plants, causing lay-offs at Cowley, Dreads Lane, Swindon and Llanelli.

The magnificent display of solidarity against racism at Longbridge is in sharp contrast to the astonishing and disgraceful intervention of one-time militant Arthur Harper, the Dreads Lane convenor. Harper denounced the strike as 'stupid' and defended the company's action in sacking Mills. He called for 'ACAS or an arbitrator' to be called in.

Harper, whose comments were splashed over the front page of Friday's Birmingham Evening Mail, even had the audacity to claim to be speaking on behalf of 'all shop-floor workers in the company'. The transport department at Longbridge certainly don't want Harper speaking for them, and intend to stay out until Zedekiah is reinstated.



Last week Greenpeace militants scaled Big Ben and hung out a timely message. 'Time to stop nuclear testing', said the banner over the face of the clock that symbolises London for millions throughout the world.

On Saturday 100,000 CND demonstrators marched through London (another picture, page 10). Meanwhile at the 'economic summit', all went as planned: the leaders of the big capitalist powers were in agreement on their plans to step up the arms race and squeeze the Third World further.

FUND

IT'S been a busy week - but however busy, it is vital that other supporters find time to dig into their pockets to produce a contribution of £1, £5, or whatever they can afford, and send it in for the petrol, fares, phone bills, leaflets and all the other costs of our work round the miners' strike.

Thanks for sending money this week to Sue Arnall, £17.50, Bev Wood £2, Mary Turner, Brent, £1, and Bryan Edmands £1. That's £124.50 so far this month. Help keep the wheels ticking over, and send your donations to 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY. Better news next week!

Liverpool near the crunch!

By Gerry Bates

SINCE THE council elections on May 3, the fight to defend jobs and services in Liverpool has gone through the period of phoney war.

There have been few signs of the lively campaign which produced the mass turnout on March 29 and the excellent election result. The council leaders have had various meetings with the Tory minister, Patrick Jenkin, and Jenkin has made his token appearance on the streets of the city, on June 7.

The District Labour Party is still committed to the position of no loss of jobs, no cuts in services, and no rate increases to compensate for Tory cuts. At an aggregate meeting on June 4 the Party committed itself to action if councillors are attacked or commissioners sent in.

This open-ended commitment is likely to be put to the test before the month is out.

The report from Jenkin's civil servants finally appeared on June 11, and recommended a combination of redundancies, unfilled vacancies, early retirement, and a rate increase of 37% as an absolute minimum.

Government Auditors have also been arguing that further delays in setting a rate are likely to lay the councillors open to surcharge and suspension. It appears that the government is trying to force the council to make a budget not later than June 20.

Liverpool can still win. The council must keep to the District Labour Party line.

If the government acts against the council, it needs to be met with mass strikes and a policy of total non-cooperation. A broad-based campaign to build for such action has to be re-launched as a matter of urgency.



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