

Socialist ORGANISER

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"In view of what happened in Northern Ireland at the weekend, I want to warn the mining community here that the police tactics that are being developed and used in Northern Ireland would represent the next stage in Britain."



Northern Ireland: **TORY POLICE STATE!**



JOHN HARRIS (IFL)

Orgreave, June 18



JOHN HARRIS (IFL)

Belfast, August 12

Belfast today-Britain tomorrow



Stoke

On the picket line

Day after day the Coal Board and local press say that there has been a record turnout at local pits, but no one can believe their claims.

However, it is clear that a substantial number of scabs are going in to work in North Staffordshire. One picket at Wolstanton last week told us that he estimated that more than 50% were going in to work at every pit in the area other than Wolstanton. Even at Wolstanton the number going in to work has risen from five at the beginning of the strike to about 50 now.

It also appears that the local leadership is beginning to bend. At a meeting of the Miners' Wives' Support Committee a couple of weeks ago, Area President Joe Willis is reported to have said that the time had come for Scargill to start compromising so they could get back to work.

Last week at Florence colliery a clear example of the lack of leadership was given. In the morning there had been a meeting to discuss Rule 51. At midday there was a large queue of miners outside the social club waiting for their food parcels. Few of them had turned up to the meeting (which voted to oppose Rule 51). The women asked the men to do a bit on the picket line while they waited for their parcel. They all refused, so the women said right, we're shutting up so that we can go on the picket. You'll have to wait.

On the picket line the women soon confronted Florence colliery's own 'Dutch Elm' only to have one of the branch officials come and tell them to let him through. In the end the women ended up pelting the scabs with eggs.

A number of miners have joined the Labour Party with the intention of shaking it up. Given the bureaucratic control that the soft left have over the Party at a local level it is likely to be some time before that comes about, but if sufficient miners join the Party and help turning it outwards to the strike that will help turn the tide.

Vigorous leadership is needed at a local level. At the present time the signs are that the only place that can come from is the rank and file miners.

Lobby TUC on Sept. 3

"I've been asked over the past few weeks to condemn members of my union. I'm going to make my position absolutely clear. My stand is a principled one and it's a class stand. I am not prepared to condemn the magnificent men and women who have been on our picket lines and who are determined to fight for the right to work."

"All yesterday, TV, radio and the press were talking about violence. During the course of this dispute, over 2,000 of our people have been injured. Two of our members have been killed. One young miner has died working voluntarily underground to save a pit. And even as I speak we've a young lad, 24 years of age, fighting for his life in a north-eastern hospital as a result of an injury on a picket line. Don't talk to me about violence. Talk to this government and the police — they're responsible."

ON Tuesday, Arthur Scargill underlined the reasons behind the latest combined media, NCB and government propaganda campaign against the NUM.

"One, we are approaching a vital TUC congress where the matter will be discussed and the NUM will be seeking support. Secondly, as we go into September the amount of coal burnt will increase substantially and everyone recognises that in those circumstances the union's position becomes stronger."

Frightened by the prospect and the effect of wide-scale support for the miners on the floor of the TUC congress, an attempt is clearly being made to try to minimise and undermine it.

The new campaign to organise a significant scabbing movement is geared to coincide with the opening of the TUC. The scabbers have called for a concerted return to work in Yorkshire on September 3. Meanwhile the dirty propaganda campaign against so-called NUM violence reaches hysteria pitch.

Massive resources were put into trying to get scabs into the pits over the last week, the first after the holiday for many collieries. It flopped.

Certainly a few more individuals did return. But the numbers were very small.

Arthur Scargill commented: "The position today is as solid as it was just after the dispute started, with 80% of our members on strike."

And the Financial Times presented a sober picture from the bosses' side. "Nationally, the week-by-week 'drift back' figures remain modest". On Wednesday they said, "The drift back to work at the pits inched forwards yesterday — but the rate continued to be painfully slow, in spite of much lighter picketing than on the previous day."

Picketing over the last week has been aimed at keeping the strike solid.

But for the next few weeks the NUM is also focussing on the TUC. This was confirmed at last Friday's Special Delegate Conference. It was also the message that came from last Monday's 'council of war' between the NUM, the transport unions and the Wales TUC in Cardiff.

Called to respond to the threat

Rochdale Miners' Solidarity Committee Public meeting
Speakers:
 Peter Heathfield, NUM General Secretary
 Jack Taylor, President, Yorkshire Area NUM.
 Lorraine Johnson, Women Against Pit Closures, Bold Colliery
 Terry Fields MP
 Tuesday 21 August at 7.30
 Broadfield School, King St. Rochdale

By John Bloxam

of legal action against the TGWU, the main concrete proposal to come from the council of war was a call on unions to support the NUM at the TUC.

The most significant amendment to appear on the TUC agenda was a last minute one from the furniture-makers union, ETAT, which is reported to be calling for a one-day general strike in support of the miners.

Apart from this the "total trade union commitment" that Ron Todd called for last week amounts to amendments from the left unions calling for a weekly levy for the miners, together with calls not to cross picket lines or handle coal, coke or other materials "delivered by non-union labour or members of the armed forces."

These are disgracefully inadequate.

Meanwhile Neil Kinnock continues to denounce calls for general strike action in support of the miners. And the trade union right wing find even these inadequate amendments too much to take.

Despite the NUM's urgent need for finance, Alan Taffin of the UCW went on radio to insist that any trade union levy should be 'voluntary'. The EETPU, which is led by the arch-scab Frank Chapple, have produced an amendment to delete criticism of the police. Instead they want to condemn the NUM's picketing.

The miners will get a major boost if the pro-NUM amendments are carried and the right wing solidly defeated. After Saturday's women's demonstration Arthur Scargill issued a call at the rally to campaign for such a TUC decision.

"I'm going to ask you to take the issues and to take the case of this union to every single branch of every single union during the course of the next three weeks. We want to win massive support at the Trades Union Congress. We've a right to go to that Congress not to beg, but to demand assistance from our brothers and sisters."

Mardy Lodge NUM Rally and Gala
 Darran Park, Ferndale
 Monday 27 August.
 Assemble, Mardy Park 9.30 am.

Rally/Gala, 1 pm
Speakers: Dennis Skinner MP, Alan Rogers MP, Emlyn Williams, President South Wales NUM.

Midlands Women Against Pit Closures
 Meeting for miners' wives support groups and women's groups in support of the miners.
 Wolverhampton Civic Centre
 Saturday 1 September
 11 am to 3 pm.



Brenda Stout's story

Brenda Stout, who has to rely on a wheel-chair to get about — was assaulted by police three weeks ago at Bickershaw colliery, Lancs. She has photos showing serious bruising of her arm and throat where the police roughed her up. She told Judith Bonner what happened.

I regularly go down to the picket line with my husband, Joe. That morning we got down there for about 6 am. Well, it was six by the time Joe got me out of the car and into the chair.

There's a road into the pit gate and on one side there are two houses facing a grass verge.

Usually the police keep us at least 80 or 90 feet away from the gates. On this particular morning there was no-on there — no pickets or police, just me and Joe.

So I said we may as well not keep so distant. Still we were about ten feet from the pavement, on the grass, and about 50 feet from the pit gates.

So, that morning, Joe just stopped my chair there and knelt on the side of the chair. We talked about how unusual it was to see no pickets or police there. I talked too soon. Out of the pit gates came a

Brenda Stout spoke to Judith Bonner.

police constable. He turned round, directed nothing at Joe but directed himself at me by saying "You'll have to move".

"I beg your pardon" I said. "I'm not moving. I'm not obstructing or harassing anyone or anything". I told him this, so he went back.

Then a police sergeant came out and again he didn't confront my husband, but me. "My inspector says you've got to move". He was very adamant. I turned round. "Tell him I'm not moving" I said. He went back in.

Out walked an inspector, the sergeant, the first constable and another constable besides.

The sergeant turned to my husband. "Are you going to move your wife". So I said, "Joe, don't move me. Don't touch my chair, love, I'm doing nowt wrong, causing no obstruction, nothing."

Joe retorted, "I'm not moving her, she's a mind of her own. If she doesn't want to move, she doesn't."

With that the sergeant said, "If you don't move her, we will" and he stepped

between the handles of my chair and started to move me with the brakes still on.

Then this constable got hold of my kneecap and really applied pressure on my pressure points. It hurt like hell, so I put my cigarette out on his hand. With a jump he let go, but the sergeant was still hassling me.

The constable then tried to release the brake on my chair.

I grabbed hold of the wheels to stop them moving me. When the PC saw this he grabbed my arms. I pulled away so he went for my neck. He made me dizzy, he hurt me that much. I threw my hands out trying to stop him. Then the sergeant turned round to me. "Don't you dare hit one of my police constables". Honestly!

Police

The result of all this was a fractured fourth metacarpel and a good load of bruises.

By now pickets had started arriving so the PC swung my chair round to face them. The police started to calm. The lads asked me to move.

"The police aren't worth it, Brenda. Come away, they're only trying to cause trouble."

So we moved. "Not because you want me to" I told the police, but because the lads do.

They've had a go at the men and they are having a go at the women. It'll be the children next.

The press play on the wheel-chair — but I don't. It just happens to be my mobility. I think in my mind that they think the chair gets sympathy for the miners. They are out to get me because I get support for the miners. But it won't stop me. Chair or not, police or not, as long as the men are on the picket, I'll be there.

I won't take the police assault on me through the police complaints board. They'd only — get slapped hands. My solicitors are sorting it out.

As for the police, I'd not trust another copper as far as I could throw him.

We'll win this dispute. We will win.

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Address

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Frontline Nottingham



Smashed miners' windscreen after police riot

In the front line

THE village of Ollerton has become the symbol of the Nottinghamshire police state during the miners' strike. When you arrive the appearance of things can be deceptive.

I got there at about six on a Monday evening on the service bus from Nottingham and apart from one police car at the roundabout into the village there was no sign of anything out of the ordinary. But as soon as you meet anyone who is on strike all that changes. In the bar of the Miners' Welfare, which almost no scabs venture into, the conversation is entirely about the state of the strike, its prospects and the political implications of its outcome.

On this particular Monday Mr Chris Butcher had just 'come out' as Silver Birch and he was the main topic of discussion. 'He can't be Silver Birch — he's too bloody stupid.' 'I worked with him for two years and I had to carry the sod every step of the way'. 'It's clear as day he's fronting for someone, the Board (NCB) or the Freedom Association or someone.'

Many people are of the view that it won't be safe for Butcher to work in any pit in Britain after the strike as he is extremely likely to be very accident prone in the future.

Picket lines vary tremendously. On the 5 am turn at Ollerton main gate three, not six, pickets are allowed at the bottom of the pit lane and the rest are hemmed into the car park of The Plough pub opposite.

The atmosphere between police and pickets is one of sullen resentment most of the time, but it takes very little to put an edge on it. Needling is frequent. One picket is pushed and threatened with arrest on a completely quiet picket because he has part of one foot over the line between the car park and the pavement. Naturally he

responds with a few remarks about the police and more threats of arrest follow.

The fighting spirit among the striking miners in Notts is irrepressible. They take policemen for long aimless walks to nowhere to keep them on the move and laugh and joke constantly. No-one, — man, woman or child — moans or complains despite 22 weeks lost income, police occupation of the village and the ever present background of sullen scabs.

The scabs really are a miserable crew. They seem to fall into two categories. Some are cocky about what they are doing and don't seem to give a damn. But the majority won't make eye contact with you and keep quiet. They go out of their way to do these things in pubs as well as when they're crossing picket lines. It's quite clear that in the bottom of their hearts many of the scabs know that what they are doing is terribly wrong.

But, describing the tragic situation of himself being on strike and his son scabbing, one striker suggests how things now stand with some of the scabs: 'I think he knows now that the strike is right and he wishes he was out. But it's gone so far now that he probably feels he can't.'

Talk is spreading of much more militant action in the event of troops being used to move coal stocks. 'Before the strike I'd never have dreamed of it, but if they use troops to move coal by rail we can drop the railway arches — they couldn't possibly stop us unless they had a policeman every ten yards every hour of the day and night. I heard similar remarks from a number of different miners.'

Other picket lines are much nearer explosion point. On a decoy picket at Gedling colliery (our job was to draw off police from another pit where a mass picket was to take place) the

By Alasdair Jamison

police on duty are a mixture of Metropolitan and Nottinghamshire. The Mets are bored. The Notts police by contrast arrive late and are looking for trouble from the start; but the pickets, being on a decoy, have no special point to make and take care to avoid giving the police an excuse to attack.

When five or six extra transit van loads of police are drawn in by the decoy many of the pickets can't resist laughing and making it plain that the picket is a decoy. Some of the Notts police seem barely able to restrain themselves faced with this.

Most strikers' families have, as Arthur Scargill says, 'passed the pain barrier'. They are accustomed to living on bare subsistence and are able to cope with the very real hardships of the long strike. What hits you most of all is that most of them had never been political or trade union activists before the strike. They are ordinary working class men and women who are fighting for bread and butter issues which they see as vitally important to them now, and to their children in the future.

Many, however, are drawing far-reaching political conclusions about the political role of the police, the jelly-like nature of Labour parliamentarians and about the objectives of the government in the dispute. Perhaps most fundamental of all is the fact that hits you in a pit village on all sides — that women are totally involved in the struggle in this traditionally male industry. Can things ever be the same again?

The women who run the soup kitchen are performing several minor miracles every day. Starting work at 4.30 am and not finishing until 2.00 pm, probably with domestic work to follow. Good meals are prepared for unpredictable numbers of pickets arriving at only roughly predictable times, but no-one goes unfed.

The soup kitchen is also an information centre — you can pick up most things there, often before they're known at the strike centre. Food parcels are made up and distributed to strikers' families.

On Thursday late morning a

mass picket comes into Ollerton. The police swarm everywhere, sweeping down the village streets in strength in scenes that are reminiscent of World War Two resistance movies. On this occasion there is no aggro at all as the pickets, for very good reasons, have been instructed to cool it. Nonetheless, one young striker is chased, knocked over and beaten by three police. Having had their fun they subsequently release him without charge. There is no shadow of doubt that, in the words of the strikers' song, the police are 'Maggie Thatcher's boot boys'.

On the same day I returned to Basingstoke in a mini-bus

bringing two families, including six children, to Hampshire for a

week's holiday. It is a very deeply emotional experience watching the strain visibly fall away from the Ollerton people as the miles are covered. They aren't Superman/women. They are just working class people battling against a poisonous government and an evil social system. They're part of the class in struggle and it's an honour to be able to work in their support.

(To date Basingstoke Miners Support Campaign has raised £6,360 and 180 cases of food for striking miners and their families).

NO SURRENDER

Statement by Leicestershire striking miners to NUM delegate conference

WE are a small band of striking miners in Leicestershire given the name of 'The Dirty Thirty' by the 2,000 who are still working.

The name was meant to be a derisory title but we are proud to be so named because it identifies us from the rest who are prepared to see their pits close and the future of their families put in jeopardy by not supporting the strike and NUM policy.

This was said loud and clear with an area ballot result of 9 to 1 against striking. This sort of result cannot be achieved if the case for the union is put to the membership clearly and in a manner designed to win their support.

Therein lies the tragedy of the Leicestershire NUM. Leadership has not been forthcoming from the very men who voted at past NUM conferences in support of defending our industry.

Indeed, instead of leading by example they have actively encouraged members to cross picket lines by word and deed.

Our purpose in bringing these Coal Board lackeys to your notice is to impress on you that the Leicestershire

union but for Thatcher and MacGregor.

Their votes mean nothing, neither do their words at the rostrum. So why should they have the privilege of sitting in the same hall beside men who are not only defending our industry but also defending our union.

It is intolerable that this conference has to harbour in its midst creatures who are prepared to render that sacrifice meaningless.

We ask conference delegates to accept the only voice that matters in Leicestershire: that of the Dirty Thirty.

We say: No surrender. The strike goes on till we achieve victory on our terms.



Dutch workers aid miners

By David Harris

THE Dutch labour movement is giving increasing financial support to the British miners.

After the small OVB trade union had sent them an initial 40,000 guilders (nearly £10,000), towards the end of July the public servants' union AbvaKabo gave them 100,000 guilders. The 255,000-strong AbvaKabo is the largest union in the largest union federation, the nearly one-million-strong FNV.

Other FNV unions have since followed AbvaKabo's example. The FNV Building and Wood Union gave 100,000 guilders. On August 7, the FNV Industrial Union, which has nearly as many members as AbvaKabo, decided that it would donate 100,000 guilders to the NUM. The FNV Food Union has given 10,000 guilders.

The FNV itself has opened a special giro number for individual contributions. Already 40,000 guilders have been raised in this way.

At the same time personal contacts have been established. A group of young FNV members in Rotterdam recently visited South Wales miners.

The outcome of the miners' struggle — closely followed by Dutch press, radio and television — has immense significance for workers in Holland.

In October-November 1983 Dutch public servants, including the police who belong to normal unions, one of which is in the FNV, were involved in a massive wave of action against the conservative CDA-VVD coalition government's cuts programme.

If the British miners are successful, Dutch workers will be encouraged to follow their example.

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: Mansfield 862790.

Notts strikers need money

Send money or invitations for fund-raising visits to the Notts Miners Rank and File Strike Committees.

North Notts. Strike Centre, Ollerton Miners' Welfare, Ollerton, Notts.

South Notts. Miners' Strike Centre, c/o AUEW, 218 Mansfield Road, Nottingham.



New dock strike?

AS we go to press a renewed national dock strike looms — sparked off by dockers' loyalty to the striking miners. It depends on the outcome of talks at the National Dock Labour Board.

Dockers at Hunterston in Scotland are blacking coal imports to Ravenscraig steel works, so they refused to unload the cargo ship Ostia, which has around 90,000 tonnes of coal for the steel plant.

According to the 1980 agreement which brought Hunterston into the National Dock Labour Scheme, the unloading of BSC coal should involve registered dockers in the TGWU working inside the ships, and crane operators in the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation.

BSC are aiming for an agreement whereby the ISTC members can unload coal directly by crane without the assistance of registered dockers. TGWU officials have disputed the legality of this proposal which is being discussed by the National Dock Labour Board.

The Clyde Port Authority has threatened to suspend without pay the 24 registered dockers at Hunterston if they refuse to unload the Ostia. If this is done, or any attempt is made to unload the ship with unregistered labour, the union has threatened strike action.

TGWU area secretary John Hardie has said: "If they dock this vessel without the assistance of tugboat men, a dock strike in Scotland would take place and a national dock strike would follow relatively quickly."

Action stepped-up in Scotland

By Stan Crooke

AFTER the lull of the summer break, a new series of demonstrations and rallies in support of the miners is being organised in Scotland.

Together with local trades councils, the NUM is organising a number of local demonstrations, whilst the Scottish TUC, the Labour Party Scottish Council and the Clyde Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions are together organising a shop stewards' meeting and a further all-Scottish demonstration.

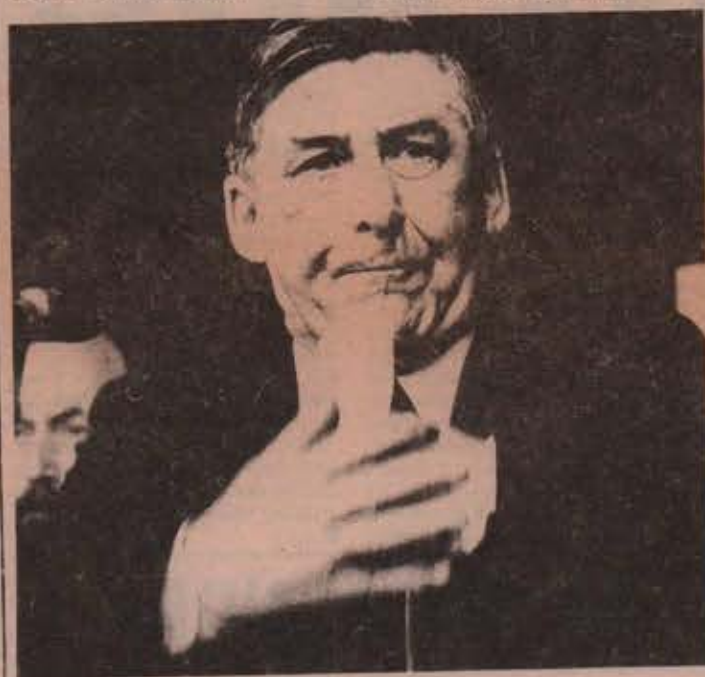
Compared with the fall in the level of activity since the end of mass picketing at Ravenscraig and the Scottish Day of Action in May, this new round of activity marks a step forward and contains the potential for reviving the momentum of the dispute.

But it is also important to recognise that for many Scottish trade union leaders such activities are "pressure cooker" events — a way of letting off steam about the dispute, rather than part of a thought-out effort to raise the level of confrontation.

The STUC/Labour Party Clyde Confed demonstration on September 15 is the clearest example of this. As against the May 9 Day of Action, it is a step backwards: the former was on a working day and linked with strike action; this one is on a Saturday, and will be an extremely short march through part of Glasgow city centre.

And STUC general secretary Jimmy Milne has called for support for the demonstration, in an STUC circular, on the grounds that "we have to convince our (!) government of the necessity of working for an amicable resolution (!!) of the difficulties outstanding between the NUM and the NCB".

Inseparable from the STUC's pleas for a "friendly" compromise to end the fight as quickly as possible is the role of the Communist Party (CP) in the dispute in Scotland, where it is an influential force in both the leadership of the NUM itself and also a number of trades councils, especially in the West of Scotland.



The CP's approach amounts to an attempt to freeze the dispute at its present level: organise food and money collections to provide material support, support demonstrations and rallies to provide moral support, but reject and block arguments in favour of escalating the dispute through solidarity strike action.

The new round of meetings, rallies and demonstrations is therefore a mixed bag. On the one hand, they are an expression of the desire of the STUC bureaucracy and the CP (which overlaps) to maintain support for the strike whilst preventing any escalation of it. On the other hand, the activities will be a pole of attraction for miners and other sections of the labour movement demanding an all-out confrontation.

Delegates to the STUC-Labour Party-Clyde Confed shop stewards' conference on August 24 need to be demanding that it be the start of a sustained campaign to build support for a general strike. A commitment to this effect must be demanded from the Labour and trade union leaders who address the conference.



Workers occupy the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk. One of the slogans reads 'Justice and equality for the entire people.'

Polish miners strike '81

By Tom Rigby

Last week we printed a message of solidarity from Polish miners to Britain's striking miners. This is the story of the Silesian miners' 1981 strike.



Jacek Kuron leading dissident

that the strikers in the Thorez mine had been dispersed by force.

At night, at the forge of the Wojek mine the strikers were getting hatchets ready for hand to hand fighting.

On December 15 the ZOMO (military police squads) attacked. When the ZOMO broke through the entrance close fighting broke out.

His aim was to smash and destroy Solidarnosc, the independent Polish workers' movement which had been created after the victorious general strike of August 1980. Before the strike wave of that year, the only 'unions' in Poland were police state unions run by the state. From August 1980 to December 1981 the only independent labour movement in a Stalinist state flourished. It had over ten million members.

Then, on December 13, thousands of Solidarnosc activists were arrested. Telephones, telexes and the media were closed down. Cars were banned off the streets.

Soldiers and police appeared everywhere and a curfew was announced. The political police, backed by the army, had taken control of Poland. Neither the Polish nor the Russian bureaucrats who controlled Poland could live with an independent workers' movement.

Most of Solidarnosc's leading activists were arrested almost immediately but a few escaped the grip of the secret police. But our class cannot be so easily crushed. In defiance, Mirosław Krupinski, vice chair of Solidarnosc put out the call for a general strike from the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk.

"No union, no organisation, can allow their leaders to be repressed, and the union to be deprived of its rights."

Throughout Poland the workers responded. In Gdansk and Poznan, Wrocław and Szczecin and in the capital Warsaw, all the major industrial plants were occupied.

At the very heart of the struggle stood the Silesian miners and steelworkers ready to die in defence of their organisation.

This is how one leaflet, called "The Fourth Silesian Uprising" described the miners' strike against martial law:

"In the majority of Silesian mines, strikes started already on 13 December. At first miners did not go underground — the possibility of an attack was not considered seriously. Miners blocked the gates only... on the afternoon of December 13 news came

"Nights were very cold and we stayed close together.

After five days the food supply was stopped and the rations caused more and more hardship. After Xmas we had only a third of a sandwich, a tiny piece of sausage and two cups of water a day. The miners used to look for crusts of bread that had fallen on the floor the previous day.

Under those conditions, we left the mine on December 27. The majority of the miners were able to get away from the yard, which was filled with police and military, but the strike committee was arrested and taken away."

Occupations and confrontations with the police state also took place in the Silesian steel industry. At Huta Katowice in Silesia, nearly 20,000 workers — 16,000 of whom were members of Solidarnosc — occupied the steel plant, raising banners saying 'Strike until victory' and 'Jaruzelski, traitor to the working class'.

"No union, no organisation, can allow their leaders to be repressed, and the union to be deprived of its rights".

It took two assaults by the ZOMO on the Wojek colliery before they cleared out all the miners. They left seven miners dead and over 70 badly injured. Four members of the militia were killed. The miners armed themselves with petrol bombs, steel cables and sticks of dynamite.

The first attack by the ZOMO and police included six armoured cars, six transport vehicles and 40 tanks, but it was still turned back. Helicopters dropping tear gas grenades were used in the second attack.

In Ziemowit the miners occupied the pit and continued their resistance for ten days. In Piast the underground occupation continued for 13 days. Their demands were: The lifting of the state of war, the freedom of all detainees and immunity for strikers.

In both Ziemowit and Piast collieries, the workers continued their struggle in terrible conditions until finally they were forced to the surface by starvation. One of the miners later told his story to a Dutch lorry driver and it was published in the Dutch newspaper Die Nieuwe Revue.

But eventually the mass resistance, organised by the steelworkers and their families, was broken by the army — tanks broke down the gates and ejected the workers; strike leaders were arrested and sentenced to between 3 and 7 years imprisonment.

An underground Solidarnosc leaflet from Katowice, quoting a young miner, sums up the spirit of working class resistance. "We'll wait until spring. And then what? We'll have an uprising. We, Silesians, we do not forget, we forget nothing."

The time scale has changed. But Solidarnosc and the Silesian miners and steelworkers refuse to be crushed.

One indication of that was their message of solidarity to the British miners last week.

The international labour movement should not forget them either. British miners, against whom the Stalinist dictators send scab coal to help Thatcher and MacGregor, should remember the heroic miners of Poland, kept down under an iron heel. Their heroic struggle against police state repression is an example to us all.

Socialist ORGANISER If they use anti-union laws — general strike

STOP STEEL Police and courts help the

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Making ends meet

Striking miners and their families have now gone for half a year without wages. How do they cope with this catastrophic drop in their incomes? Ann Bowns visited Stepney and Bethnal Green Labour Party recently and spoke to the General Management Committee about how her village was coping during the strike. She is the wife of a striking miner who was one of four jailed for two weeks for picketing offences. As a mother of four children with a part-time cleaning job, she has had to live on a very low income and support the whole family. She has been actively supporting the strike, helping with the formation of the Women's Action Group.

Ann Bowns talked to Sue Carlyle

The Women's Action Group has been working hard since the early weeks of the strike. We've been providing families with three food parcels a week, since we don't have cooking facilities in our club.

We started off by raising voluntary funds ourselves — by going out in the street with the NUM banner and standing out all morning. We got some funny looks at first, but soon contributions started coming in.

We also go to Rotherham to collect, but the funds are drying up now. We've bled our own areas dry. If people are not unemployed, they're pensioners or strikers — mind you some pensioners are our best supporters.

We also run a weekly coffee morning and jumble sale and run raffles all the time. Last month we had a good laugh holding a funny football match between the women and the "flying pickets". We didn't raise much money but we got a lot out of our system.

We cook at home in my kitchen and so when pickets get back we have a home-baked meat pie and peas — it's called Picket Pie — and we can't cook anything else now, the men won't have it.

Some weeks we cook 3 or 4 times but because you don't always know when it's required, it's difficult to have a

come. Others we get in jumbles and spend ages washing and ironing them so they look nice. When a cot or pram is needed, the word goes round and we find one.

Another aspect of clothing kids is that we are awaiting a decision from our council to have shoes provided for under 5s (usually provided for school age only). We're hoping they will give this concession. We've also heard that any money for fuel paid out under Section 1 Social Services funds won't have to be paid back.

The education committee has kept the schools open for free school dinners to be provided, although they ran out of cooked food the first day with demand being so great. A social worker has been put in to the local community centre to help with welfare rights problems.



In comparison to some villages then we're lucky having a sympathetic council. I feel sorry for those women in Notts — they can't even go out and collect on the street.

At home we rely on coal to burn a fire and heat the water. During the year miners' coal just about covers us with nine loads a year. I've been completely out now for a month and so we have to burn rubbish or old clothes.

If we haven't got any I'm heating water on the stove which costs about £3 a day. My electric meter doesn't stop

turning and I hate it running up and downstairs with water for baths.

If you are caught stealing coal from the tip miners are warned that they can be prosecuted and lose their jobs after the strike: even so people have to take that risk. The farmers round here won't have many potatoes and veg left in their fields this summer, but it was the same in 1972.

We've all used our savings now. All insurances have been cashed in. If any of us die it's paupers' graves for us. It'll take some of years to get over this strike financially.

People do get very down every now and again. You can't blame them and women are taking a lot of the strain in the families. Some of their elder lads have left home to live with other relatives because they get nowt, and don't want to burden their parents — yet they are some of the most active picketers.

Attitudes to the police have changed, especially towards the local ones who were always walking through the estate and chatting to people. Now no one will talk to them, even though there hasn't been trouble actually in this village. We have scabs living amongst us too — the deputies (overseers) live further down our street.

The kids don't play the same. I heard one kid answer another back the other day — "At least I'm not a scabby deputy's kid!" — In Notts the kids play pigs and pickets games.

When my husband was locked up in Lincoln jail our youngest put NUM stickers on everything he could find. It was his way of coping with it. In school, kids have got their exercise books plastered with them and there are some different playground songs now. The little three year old daughter of one of our women was very disgruntled with the songs in her new nursery school. She wanted to sing miners' songs rather than Bo-peep. She knows them all and she's been on every march with her mum.

Most of us realise tht it's going to go on until at least

Christmas and we're bracing ourselves for it with the weather getting colder and kids needing new clothes. Families will find it harder. How are some people going to keep warm without coal? We've got to think ahead to provide Christmas toys and get more funds.

Last week an enormous convoy from London print workers brought us some extra food to fill our food parcels, but it's consistent and regular funds that keep us going. A couple of union branches have been good that way, bringing food every week to us. However the numbers for relief food are growing all the time. We had an extra 40 last week alone.

We distribute some fresh food or meat, sugar and tea in each parcel, but if someone's got a young child we've got a baby box so someone can choose baby milk or disposable nappies. Donations from outside Sainsbury's in London brought those in because they hand out leaflets asking for them. We feel someone has cared a little bit to send those up.

We approached Baby manu-



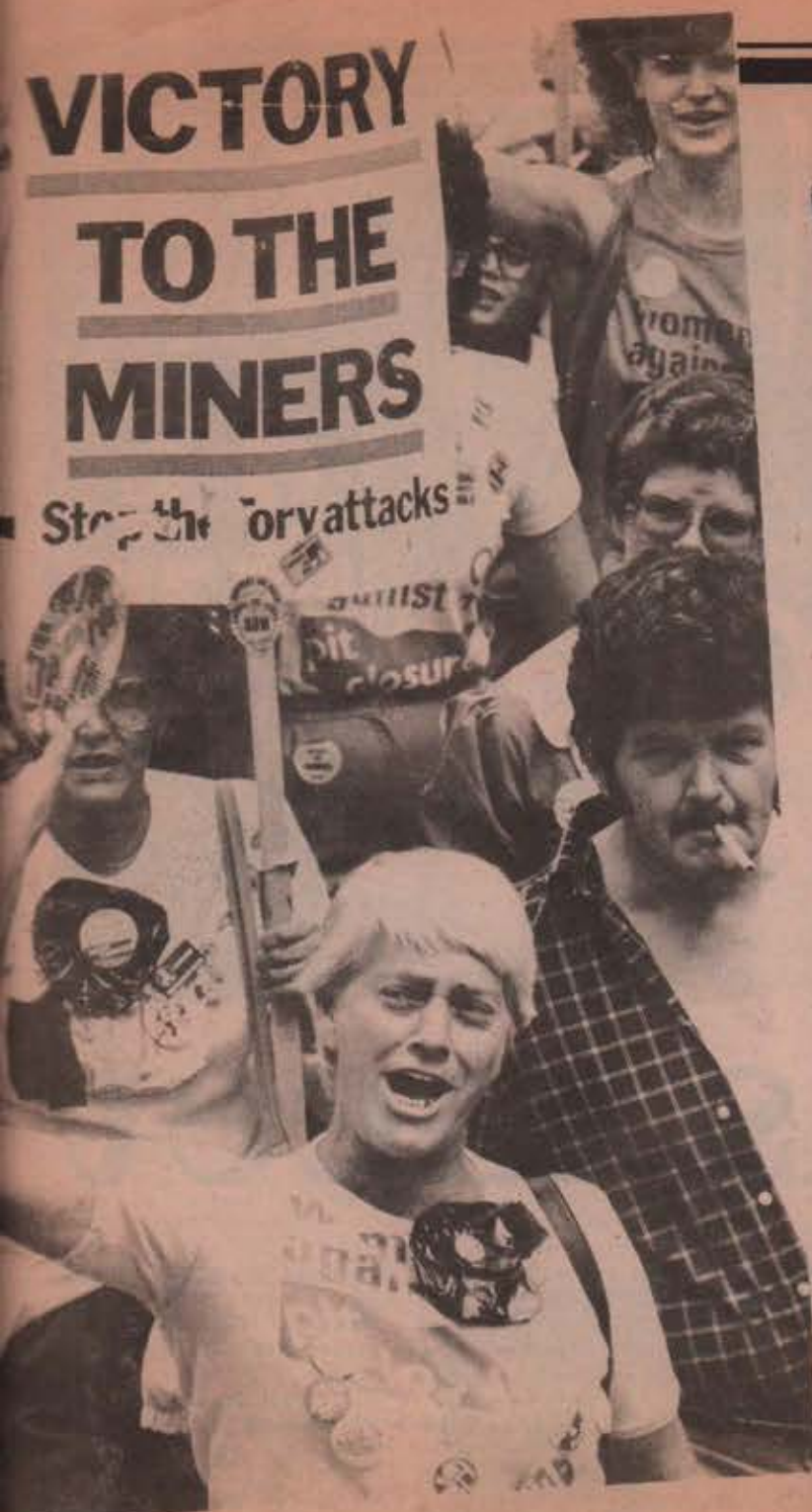
facturers about bulk buying but it wasn't worth it with transport. They were only prepared to knock them down by 3p.

A local meat canning factory where some of the women work give concessions to employees, but they did stop it for a time because the girls were buying so much and staggering out with arm-loads. During the factory shut-down we've been stuck again and had to pay top prices for tinned meat. Now they are restricting each employee to five tins each. The local hair dresser on her day off does free hair cuts for strikers' kids and next door the bicycle repair man has said no child should be in danger because their parents can't afford to buy bike parts. Parents can pay him after the strike. The local doctor has a collection box in his surgery.

The reception down in London has been marvellous with the ordinary people coming up and giving you a pound and saying how much they are behind us and want to see Thatcher out. If they are ever in trouble, we'll be repaying them.

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: Mansfield 862790.



Miners' demonstration, August 11

20,000 march in London

WOMEN FIGHT! BACK!

By Kim Hickling from
Hucknall, Notts.

**Women
against
pit
closures**

The women's march last Saturday proved to be a unique event in trade union history. Women from all over Britain, not only those connected with the mining industry, converged on London to march from Temple to the Elephant and Castle, where a cheque for £49 million was presented to DHSS headquarters representing the extra amount that would have been paid to miners' families if the £15 "strike pay" hadn't been deducted from payments.

The march then proceeded to a rally and festival in Burgess Park. The men respected our wish for a women's march and took up their position at the back along with Arthur Scargill. It was amusing to hear that men and women disagreed about who was going to carry their region's banner. Needless to say, the women won. After all, it was our march.

'Let's go

By Councillor Susan
Carlyle

Last Saturday's demonstration of 20,000 miners' wives and other women must have been the most lively seen in London for a very long time. There were solid groups of women carrying their banners, some of them wearing matching T-shirts and hats and singing — singing their hearts out with solidarity for the miners' struggle against MacGregor, Thatcher and pit closures.

"We will win, we will win, we will win". The chant echoed in the streets amidst the empty office blocks, expressing the confidence women have gained with the experience of this strike.

"There's no going back if you've gone as far as this. We can only go forward and win. I'm never going to sit at home again" one woman said on her way down to the march in a Nottingham coach.

For once an overwhelming amount of working women dominated a London demonstration and set the whole tone.

Comfortable atmosphere

But it was a comfortable atmosphere for others to join in, too. When a "Gays and Lesbians support the miners" banner unfurled, they were clapped and women made room for them near the front of the contingent. As the march wound down to South London, trade union and trades council supporters cheered, clapped and waved. Most women had complied with getting signatures for the petition to the Queen, but the handing in ceremony at Buckingham Palace was just a small and not very important episode of the march.

We observed a moment's silence as we passed Maggie's Den (Downing Street). Black armbands and flowers were left in memory of the two miners killed during the strike. Many women felt like shouting, but as she was in a villa in Switzer-



ARE NG

Women 
against
pit
closures

Two women give their view on the Women Against Pit Closures demonstration which took place in London on August 11.

It was a pity that the demonstration wasn't held in a mining area like Nottingham where it would also have served to shame the scabs and at the same time would have made it cheaper for miners' wives to travel to. Moreover, marches in London tend to lose a bit of momentum because so many are held there.

The march was mostly very noisy, with plenty of singing, especially from Notts miners' wives who were making their presence known. However, there was a silence when we passed Whitehall, while black roses were laid in the middle of the road in memory of the two pickets who gave their lives fighting for their jobs.

A very big thanks must go to the people in London who did an excellent and professional job in receiving our sisters. The creche was very well equipped with a large playground and paddling pool and food and drink was given out in plenty to all the mining families. It was a nice atmosphere for people to listen to speeches and meet the friends they had previously made in other areas.

to Notts'

land there wouldn't have been much point anyway.

The brandishing of a huge "giro cheque" symbolising the millions of pounds denied to miners' families by the DHSS was an effective stunt for the TV screens, but again most of us didn't see it, and by the time we got to the Elephant and Castle the combination of heat and distance was getting to us a bit.

Children started conking out, but thanks to some brilliant women from Brighton and Manchester with strong backs we carried on. Normally one looks around for strong men!

The festival at the end of the demonstration was crowded and the park was bursting with activities for children and a rally. By that point most of us were desperate for a cup of tea, which was impossible to queue for even if it was free to miners' families. Thanks to NUPE we got some sandwiches.

The taste in music and type of organisation wasn't totally appropriate but most women have been going on marches all over the place and are getting used to it. Trestles of ready poured tea and sandwiches would be better.

All the speakers were well received — adulation, kissing and Arthur Scargill being mobbed for his autograph.

Speakers identifying and linking the police harassment of the miners with police harassment of the black communities brought a new dimension to many in the audience.

Keep marching

"Next time there's a national march, let's go Notts," said many women before Saturday. Many of them, though, found the London one hit the mark and enjoyed it.

Next time the organisers must take account of the length of the route with so many children and elderly women involved. But let's keep marching "till we win, we will win, we will win!"



Arthur Scargill addresses rally at end of women's demonstration, 11.8.84

ANDREW WIARD (REPORT)



Kent miners' wives march through Coalville, Leicestershire

France in '68

The greatest strike in

BY May 27 1968 there was nothing remotely resembling a government in France. The students and revolutionaries, despite the CP's anathemas, were gaining support. Thousands of young workers, disgruntled with the stick-in-the-mud unions, rallied to them.

On May 27, despite a number of CP counter-meetings, 30,000 attended a revolutionary socialist rally, demonstrating the chasm that separated the timid leaders from large sections of the workers.

But what was to be done? On May 28 Francois Mitterrand, today's President of France, thought he knew.

Mitterrand in 1968 had recently been defeated in the Presidential elections by De Gaulle. The leader of the then feeble and splintered 'socialists', Mitterrand was bolder than the CP. He dared call for the resignation of the government.

On May 28 Mitterrand hurried in with a solution to harness the workers' energies in the best interests of capitalism and of . . . Mitterrand. He proposed a Provisional Government to supplant De Gaulle immediately — headed by Mitterrand, with former Socialist Prime Minister Mendes-France as Premier.

The CP agreed. But it had to haggle with these bourgeois politicians in whose small shadow it chose to walk, for a promise of a place in the new government.

On 29 May a mass demonstration for "a change of policy opening the way to progress and democracy" covered Paris, two miles long. It looked as if by sheer strength of the mass working class movement the Left leaders and the CP would be lifted into the governmental saddle despite their earlier reticence.

But then De Gaulle and the bourgeoisie recovered their nerve. President De Gaulle had been thrown into a panic at the beginning of the strike and fled to the French army units in West Germany.

Now he had arranged for reinforcements of the strike-breaking special police, the CRS, and for tanks to converge on Paris.

On May 30 De Gaulle went on radio and made a belligerent speech. He drew confidence mainly from the proven timidity of his opponents, especially of the CP, and from their ability to confuse and mislead the workers.

In that general strike, the greatest in history, this was the greatest real strength he and his class had.

Recognising that the strike must end either in insurrection or collapse, he said in effect to the "Communist" Party: "Attempt to take power, or put your hands up". Knowing his opponents, and perhaps preparing their retreat, he announced a general election. They jumped at the chance.

Within two hours of De Gaulle's ultimatum, in a situation where they were not merely strong enough to boycott any capitalist election but could actually prevent it being held, the heroes of the CP announced that they accepted this election, stage-managed by the Gaullist state.

In fact, De Gaulle was bluffing, as even the serious British bourgeois newspapers pointed out at the time. He didn't have the power to break the strike. In fact he didn't have the power to organise a general election if the ten million strikers didn't agree to it. De Gaulle's ability to break the strike depended on the strike being undermined from within — by the CP.

De Gaulle could safely bluff. He was aware of one great asset: the inbred reformist inertia and fear of action of the CP, who had publicly proclaimed their intentions by maintaining their dog-tail relationship with Mitterrand and Co.

Now their demand for De Gaulle's and the government's resignation, so belatedly adopted, was hastily dropped.

The others followed, with varying degrees of protest, where the CP led. Even before the cabinet had announced its promise to respect the previous weekend's wage increases, the trade unions, disassociating themselves from the students, were engaged in back to work talks with their employers.



"Down with the rhythm of the production line"

With De Gaulle's radio ultimatum and the response of the workers' parties, his previously cowed right wing supporters raised their heads.

Paramilitary 'Committees of Civic Action' sprang up here and there across the country, in one or two areas celebrating their legitimised thuggery by firing a few shots at trade union or CP office buildings.

The police had vacillated. Now they regained their loyalty to the force which appeared strongest in face of the CP's feebleness. "At least we now know where we are" was the general police reaction to De Gaulle's speech.

Gaullists

And the Gaullists took to the streets, 500,000 strong, some chanting "cohn-Bendit to Dachau". Daniel Cohn-Bendit was a popular student leader at the Sorbonne. An anarchist of German nationality and Jewish background, he had habitually been referred to in the bourgeois press as "the German Jew". In reply the students and young workers — including Moslem Algerians — took up the slogan "We are all German Jews".

Having accepted the elections, the CP now again ignored all but bread-and-butter issues. It explained to its militants, as it did the latest summersault, "we have not changed — life has".

Meanwhile, the reinvigorated police began to break up the strikes, starting with the post offices, radio, TV and fuel. The CP stood on the sidelines — warning against 'ultra-left provocateurs'.

The British Morning Star reported as follows on June 1, the statement of the French CP:

"(it) warned today that General De Gaulle had threatened to use 'other means than the elections' . . . Yet 'the Communists would enter the electoral battle with confidence and (the CP) called on everyone to guard against giving any opening to provocations wherever they might come from . . . Cancellation of last year's social security cuts will not now be part of the

In part two of an article that began in last week's Socialist Organiser, Jack Cleary continues the story of the French General Strike of May 1968. Last week we saw how the strike began as years of frustration exploded in protest at the brutality of the police against the students and unemployed youth. Workers began to seize the factories and take up their own demands. The huge strike wave by 10 million workers began to threaten the very foundations of the system. But the workers' leaders held them back.



"We choose our battleground"

present settlement, because the government has said the issue should be discussed in the new National Assembly."

Lack of shame or self-consciousness is one major asset these people possessed, then as now.

Thereafter the CP energetically set about getting the workers back to work, splitting up their unity by instructing everyone to return to work as soon as their separate settlements were made, and isolating the hard core to face the increasing violence of the police, which was to result in several deaths.

The Party's mind was on the coming elections. As the Sunday Telegraph put it:

"Now there can be elections. The energy and violence generated by the upheaval can be canalised into a campaign for votes."

Slogan

The Gaullists fought on a slogan of "Never Again" — cashing in on the inability of the workers' parties in May to go beyond the necessary anarchy of the strikes. And this slogan appealed to many who during the strikes had seen the anarchy as a prelude to something better, but who in disillusionment now saw them only as an interlude of anarchy leading to possible repression.

The CP and Mitterrand's Left Federation, remained silent at the CRS reoccupation of the Sorbonne and the brutality of the police in beating striking workers to death.

Fear

Essentially they took the same line as the Gaullists. Their version of it said: "Keep the Gaullists and there may be a bigger explosion later!"

But the Left's respectability was easily outdone by the persuasion of fear so lavishly used by the Gaullists. "Hopelessly torn and bewildered by the revolutionary crisis" the left "was permanently on the defensive, trying to prove that it had nothing to do with riots and barricades. Whether this was true or not turned out to be irrelevant. As a champion of established law and order M. Waldeck Rochet could not compete with M. Pompidou." (Economist, 29.6. '68)

Finally the CP and Left Federation succeeded in getting less votes than the number on strike in May. Only the small opportunist left wing party, the PSU, which defended the students, made any gains.

Many workers and petit bourgeois who could have been simply not ready in the cold anti-climatic atmosphere of the election to vote for those who had stood in their way. Many didn't bother to vote at all. On the other hand, the Right and Centre rallied to De Gaulle. The CP lost 39 seats out of 73, and the Left Federation 61 out of 121.

Cretins

The parliamentary cretins foresaw none of this. Instead they succeeded only in hurling back the advance of the masses and alienating many who were beginning to be educated in class action.

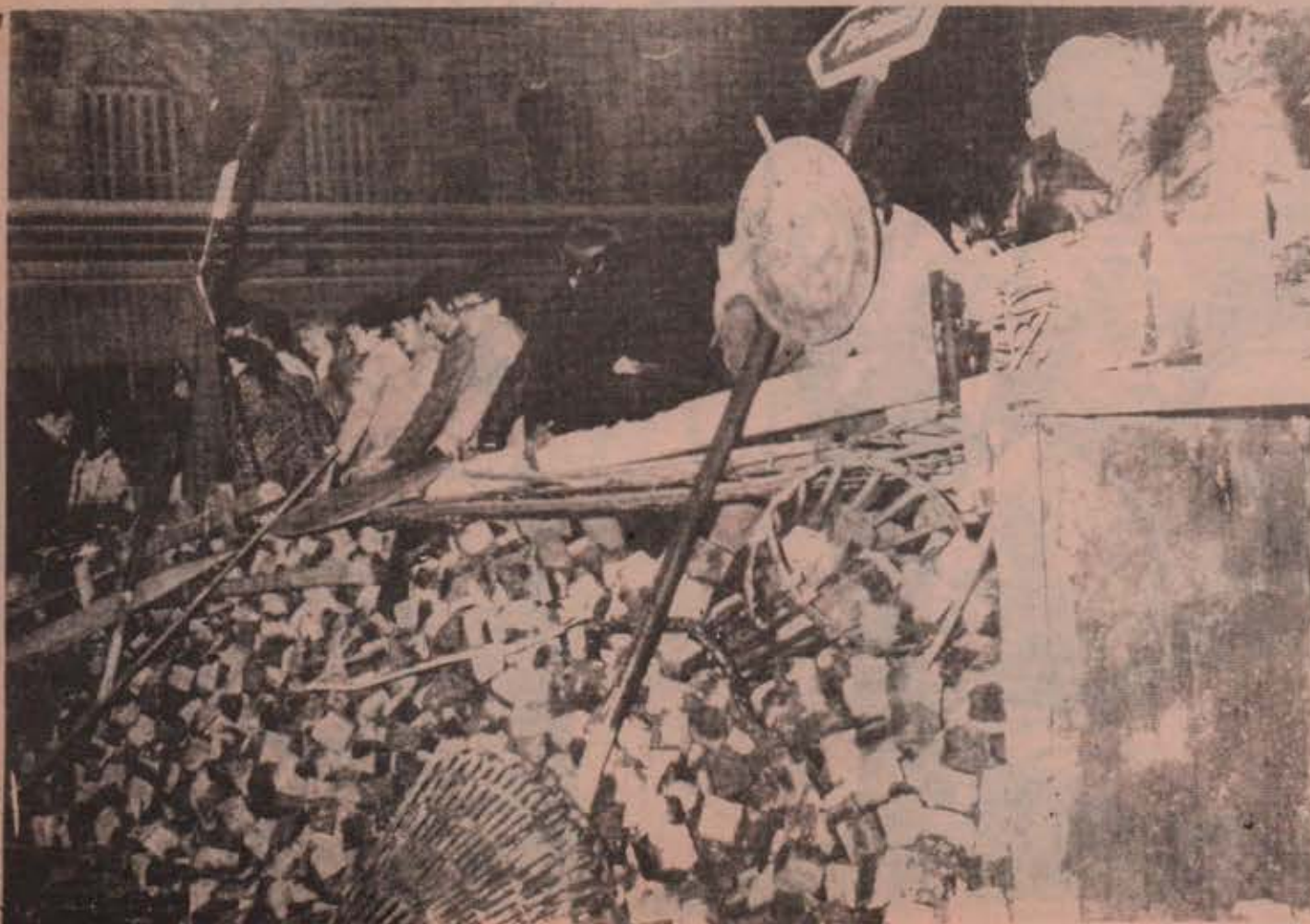
Was a socialist revolution possible in France in May 1968? Yes it was. Between May 16 and 30, as we have seen, and even after that, there was a mass working class movement openly striving for more than just wage concessions. There was active support from the petit bourgeoisie in town and country. The state was almost totally paralysed — even the police wavered.

Logic

Objectively, had the movement developed in accordance with its own drives and its own logic, the ruling class would no longer have been able to rule, and in fact their rule was momentarily suspended. There was a deep, long-germinating national crisis, an eruption of 20 years of working class frustration. The deepest layers of the normally unorganised working class masses were brought into action by the struggle. Conditions were uniquely favourable for a relatively easy and comparatively peaceful takeover by the workers.

Party

One key element only was lacking to transform this revolutionary upsurge into a revolution: a revolutionary party at its head.



Paris: May 10 1968, "The Night of the Barricades". Students and unemployed youth fought with the police.

history



"The vote changes nothing, the struggle goes on". Workers and students fight the riot squads

The organisations of the working class were anything but revolutionary. The CP, built over decades by devoted militants as a revolutionary party, was by 1968 a timid reformist party (as it has been during the last three years in the French government which attacked working class living standards).

Split

The organisations of the working class of all shades and stripes held it back, derailed it, split it up. This allowed the bourgeoisie and its state to ride out the storm, and reestablish its suspended control over France and the French working class. The workers' organisations were not merely passive or negative, but actively hostile to the interests and the drives of the working class. The decisive role in maintaining the bourgeoisie in power fell once again to the Communist Party of France.

The Paris correspondent of the Economist described it thus:

"The French Communists did everything in their power to control the revolutionary wave, and once the General had made it plain that he would not abdicate, to direct it back to electoral channels. On the night of May 30 there was

a risk of confrontation between the armed forces and the army of labour. Next morning the risk had vanished because the army of strikers had been dispersed. M. Seguy, the boss of the Communist-dominated CGT, could not demobilise his followers. But, followed by other trade union leaders, he divided his troops into separate battalions, each seeking additional gains, particularly in wages, from its employers. What had begun to look like a frontal attack on the state, rapidly became a series of individual skirmishes.

And L'Humanite, the Communist Daily, started to use the language of an election campaign... The Communist decision to call a retreat and the General's speech marked the turning point in the crisis. They were more decisive than the big Gaullist demonstration that followed the General's speech on May 31."

Instead of focusing the movement of the workers on the goal of workers' power, the most extreme demand the CP dared make was for a change of bourgeois regime, removing the strong President De Gaulle and putting in Mitterrand as President and Mendes-France as Prime minister.

Instead of workers' councils they put pressure on the bosses' parliament (which

pressure drove the parliamentary centre to the right). Instead of revolutionary leadership, traitorous manoeuvring to frustrate the workers' desires. ("Behind the smoke-screen of public polemics M. Pompidou and France's Communist leaders established a secret link at the very beginning of the strikes. Messages were exchanged every day and it is known who the contacts were and how they operated". (New Statesman)

Unity

Instead of unity of workers, students and farmers in action, deliberate attempts to divide them and confine "unity" to the parliamentary tops.

Instead of a workers' militia the most cringing self-abasement and cowardice before even the threat of the violence which it was by no means certain De Gaulle could inflict.

Instead of being the left party, the CP and CGT were usually to the right of both the Catholic unions and the small reformist union Force Ouvriere.

What could have been the greatest working class revolution ended as a lost election. The bourgeoisie and De Gaulle came out of it strengthened. Even sections of the middle class had rallied to the workers during the strike, propelled

LE VOTE
NE CHANGE
RIEN
LA LUTTE
CONTINUE



The men behind Silver Birch

By Edward Ellis

THERE is no doubt that organised scab movements like the so-called 'Voice of Moderation', and court action against the NUM, are being financed by somebody who has the ready cash available. Exactly who is not altogether clear. There are a number of likely candidates.

The Freedom Association.

Set up in 1975 with more appropriate initials - the National Association for Freedom (NAFF) - this gang rose to fame in 1977 as the money behind George Ward, the tin pot exploiter of the Grunwick workers.

It also secretly financed the campaign by Julian Lewis and Paul McCormick to save Newham North East's Labour MP Reg Prentice from the members of his party. Prentice, of course, afterwards joined the Tories.

His big names include notorious cold-warrior and union basher Brian Crozier, and Norix McWhirter.

During the 1983 election, FA, newspaper 'The Free Nation' produced a hit list of 86 Labour candidates it alleged were Marxists, and followed this up with another hit list of 53 such MPs who'd been elected. Both lists were drawn up by Douglas Iden, a former Labour GLC councillor expelled for being a member of the Social Democratic Alliance which in 1981 announced its intention to stand against Labour.

The FA, whose number one priority in 1983 was "to expose and combat CND", has been trying to drag unions through the courts for the investment of trade union funds in the Labour Party's new headquarters in South London.

Aims of Industry.

Aims of Industry dates back to 1942. It is most famous for its anti-nationalisation crusades: it invented Mr Cube to oppose the nationalisation of Tate and Lyle; and in 1980 it awarded a special 'Free Enterprise Award' to the Campaign Against Building Industry Nationalisation (CABIN). This

was to celebrate its 'Free Enterprise Day', which is intended to answer to May Day.

Aims of Industry produced publications like 'Ugly Face of Mr Wedges Benn', and 'Dealing with Marxist Threat to Industry'.

Aims insists that it is not political. But in 1983, according to its deputy director, it is "hundreds of thousands of pounds" in an anti-Labour campaign. This included a national newspaper adverts around the theme 'Don't let Labour Britain to extremes' and a pamphlet attacking Labour manifesto called 'If Labour Wins'.

The Economic League.

The Economic League occasionally blitzes council elections with leaflets on why shouldn't go on strike, how communists control the unions. Its main service to the community is to provide blackmail employers. They used to do this, but Saxon Tate (of Tate Lyle), who is chair of the League, is more open about it these days.

And in 1978, the personal director of Shell justified listing like this: "We are interested in identifying overt opponents of the system to which we are committed. The last thing we want to do is have political verses on our pay roll."

The Economic League subscribes surreptitiously to left press, including Socialist Organiser, using the name Wood, 7 Wine Office Court, Fleet Street.

There are other organisations too. The Institute for the Study of Conflict (founded by Brian Crozier), which has received money indirectly from the state and has produced both attacks on the Allende government in Chile and hymns of praise for the gunging murderers who rule South Korea.

The Centre for Policy Studies was set up in 1974 with Kenneth Joseph as chair and Margaret Thatcher as president. It is basically a monetarist 'think tank'. Adam Smith Institute is dedicated to privatisation.

The New Right

The Men behind Mrs Thatcher

Nigel Williamson

Spokesman 7/8/83



'Silver Birch'

This information is in 'The New Right - the Men Behind Mrs Thatcher', by Nigel Williamson. Spokesman pamphlet no. 83. Price 80p.

SOCIALIST ORGANISER WEEKEND SCHOOL

August 25-27, in London

Plenary sessions on THE MINERS' STRIKE and THE POLICE AND THE STATE. Workshops: workers in South Africa; workers in Poland; general strikes - France 1968, Britain 1926 debate on 'alternative defence'; forum on the Labour Left today; the politics of Ken Livingstone; working class women's movements in history and today; series on labour history; series on basic Marxism; Middle East; Cuba; Central America; the Marxist theory of imperialism and capitalism in the Third World, should boxing be banned; and more...

For details and registration (£4 waged, £1.50 unwaged), write to SO, 214 Sickert Court, London N1.

TORY MURDER

Continued

From page 12.

Downs has once again forced people in Britain to think about the situation in Northern Ireland.

The basic situation is this: There is a big minority community in Ireland, the one million (out of a population of five million) usually identified by their Protestant religion. When the Irish majority tried to separate from Britain around the turn of the century, sections of the British ruling class opposed this. They were led by the Tory Party, which threatened armed rebellion if the Liberal government gave "Home Rule" to Ireland. The Protestant minority mainly in the north-east of Ireland formed an alliance with the Tory Party against Home Rule. A few weeks before Britain went to war with Germany in 1914, the Tories were running in guns from Germany to north east Ireland to resist the British Liberal government.

The upshot was that at the end of World War I Ireland was divided, against the will of the majority of the Irish people into six counties and 26 counties.

It was an artificial division. One third of the people kept in the six county Protestant state were against dividing the country and for a united Ireland.

For the following 50 years, the six county state was ruled as a "Protestant state for a Protestant people" as one of its Prime Ministers said. The six county Catholics were brutally kept down. They were terrorised and oppressed by a Protestant sectarian police force which had the

same mentality as Ian Paisley.

At the end of the '60s the Catholics revolted. They called for equality and civil rights. They were met by sectarian attacks and many were burned out of their homes. The British army was sent in to stop the fighting. Catholics welcomed them at first.

But instead of facing the fact that Northern Ireland was hopelessly artificial and unviable as a state, the then Labour government just made a few reforms.

Withdraw

Within months the British army and the Catholics began to clash. The IRA re-emerged. By 1971 the Northern Ireland political structure had broken down and there was a full-scale Catholic revolt, led by the Provisional IRA.

In 1972 Britain abolished the Belfast parliament which was always an instrument of Protestant rule. Since then there has been direct British rule. In practice, Britain's commitment to maintaining the six county state has meant that for over a decade the British army has tried to beat down the Catholic revolt. With out success.

The latest atrocity shows yet again that the present situation is untenable. The only possible way to sort things out is by way of a united Ireland within which the one million Northern Ireland people who think of themselves as British will have guaranteed rights.

Britain should withdraw from Ireland.



Carol Ann Kelley, aged 12, after being killed by a plastic bullet in 1981

Fight the racist checks!

THE government is going to introduce a system of racist checks, which they call 'ethnic monitoring', in all dole offices in September.

Under this scheme, counter clerks will be ordered to visually assess all claimants according to the categories: Africans/West Indians; Asians; Europeans; Chinese, Arabs and all others not

in groups one and two, refusals.

This information, along with the claimant's name, National Insurance number, address and the date of her or his first claim will be put on the Unemployment Benefit computer. It will then be transferred to the central Government Statistical computer at Run-corn. Anyone who is classified as 'Europeans, Chinese, Arabs and others' will not be put on the computer, but all refusals will go on the computer. In this way the government will have a list of black claimants - there is no way a black claimant will be able to escape going on the computer.

The scheme is supposed to be voluntary. However, to be recorded as a Refusal, claimants will have to know about the scheme and tell the clerk that they don't want to be monitored. Of course, even if a claimant refuses, she or he will still go on the computer. The clerk will be under orders not to tell the claimant. The only notification will be one small poster hidden somewhere in the dole office.

The government claims that it is "committed to the fight against discrimination and the promotion of equal opportunities for all. As part of this commitment it needs to know how many unemployed people belong to each ethnic group." However, the government's record, including the Nationality Act, the Police Bill, the introduction of passport checks at hospitals, housing agencies, colleges, universities and dole offices, police harassment of black communities, and the recent wave of deportations, shows that this 'commitment' is a blatant lie.

International Women's Conference

400 delegates, representing 120 women's organisations from 60 countries, attended an international conference on reproductive rights in July.

The conference focused particularly on the problems of women in the third world. In addition to the world-wide problems of poverty, appalling social conditions and domination by a handful of national and international exploiters, third world women face extra problems of control over their bodies: new, untested contraceptives and sterilisation are often imposed by force.

As one delegate put it, "We are laboratory animals for western drug companies."

Although the conference stressed the importance of the fight against imperialism, it also called for unity between women in 'North' and 'South' in their struggle for liberation.

Support Lairds sit-in

By Lol Duffy

THE occupation of the gas rig and naval destroyer at Cammel Laird shipyard at Birkenhead, now in its eighth week, has been made official by the GMBU executive in what is reported to have been a unanimous decision.

Most shipyards' annual shut-down for holidays have now finished, and this will be the time when the solidarity of other yards is put to the test.

We expect to see the convening of a national lay delegates' conference very shortly, either by the Confed Shipbuilding Negotiating Committee or by the shop stewards' national combine committee.

The announcement that seven yards are to be privatised comes as no surprise but will add even more pressure to the call for a lay delegates' conference.

Speakers from the occupation

are being requested throughout the country and especially on Merseyside. Support for the occupation, both financial and physical, has been tremendous.

A network of key people has been set up so that in the event of management trying to evict us from the yard, a mass picket will immediately take place.

On management's side, a number of blue-eyes led by a shipwright called Harry Ewers, are attempting to organise a back-to-work movement. Last week they put a call for an unofficial mass meeting to be held outside the yard on Monday August 13 to call for an official mass meeting.

Management responded by sending out letters to every laid-off employee inviting them to come into the yard at 10 am to discuss the present situation and for their expenses for the day they would receive eight hours flat rate pay.

On Monday, management asked the Confed shop stewards committee to supply Harry Ewers and co. with loudspeaker equipment, which the stewards refused.

The Liverpool Echo reported that 500 attended the meeting but the bulk of these were staff sent out by higher management to bolster the numbers.

At the meeting Harry Ewers argued that the best way to save jobs would be for the picket to come off the gangway.

One speaker from the floor claimed he had been conned. He had thought that management would address the meeting to inform them that the dispute had been resolved. Another said that the meeting was totally out of order and those fighting for their jobs should be supported. Ewers quickly ended the discussion.

Those occupying the vessels are determined to continue fighting for the right to work. We know we are not just fighting for our jobs but for the future of the yard and future generations.

A rally in support of Lairds is planned for 7.30 pm on Thursday 23 August at Transport House in Liverpool.

Messages of support, donations, etc., should be sent to Lol Duffy, 3 St James Court, Victoria Road, Wallasey, Merseyside, L45 9LB.



Kemal Brothers on strike

THE strike at Kewal Brothers, West Bromwich, is now in its third month. The dispute began when the owners of this sweat shop sacked three TGWU mem-

bers in a bid to break the union organisation within the factory.

Fifteen other workers came out demanding reinstatement and union recognition.

Most of the strikers are Asian women who earn as little as £1 an hour in appalling conditions.

The employers are ferrying in scab labour to keep production going but the strikers have maintained a regular picket and have been joined by striking miners.

Last week the scab van was forced to turn back when faced by a joint picket of Asian women and miners from Birch Coppice. One miner explained to us why they were supporting the action.

"The backing in terms of food and money that we've had from the Asian community in Birmingham and West Bromwich has been wonderful. It's made many of our blokes rethink their attitude towards black people. We wanted to show our appreciation by backing these Asian workers in return."

Contact Kewal Brothers strikers c/o Shaheed Udhan Singh Centre, 346 Soho Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, phone 021-551 2258.

SELF-DEFENCE IS NO OFFENCE!

Mass picket in support of the Newham 7: West Ham Magistrates' Court, West Ham Lane, Stratford, London E15, from 10am on Friday September 14.

The Newham 7 are seven Asian youths arrested on April 7 and the few days following for defending themselves and their community against racist attacks. They face charges ranging from possessing offensive weapons to criminal damage, plus affray and conspiracy to cause criminal damage.

Newham 7 Defence Campaign: PO Box 273, Forest Gate, London E7 9JN. (01-555 8151 day, 01-534 1640 evenings)

Sri Lanka

Defend the Tamils

THE death toll in Sri Lanka increases daily in communal violence between the oppressed Tamil minority community and the dominant Sinhalese. Last summer there were large-scale pogroms in which many Tamils were slaughtered. Many thousands

more were driven to the north of the island where Tamils are a majority, 25 miles across the sea in the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu there are 50 million Tamils.

The Tamil United Liberation Front has claimed that 45 civilians and members of the

Tamil Tiger guerrillas have been killed since the beginning of August alone by government forces in northern Sri Lanka.

Special police, composed of Sinhalese, have run riot in Tamil villages, burning them down and attacking civilians in retaliation for Tiger activity directed against security forces.

Similarly, the Sri Lankan army has gone on the rampage in Tamil communities. In Jaffna in northern Sri Lanka, troops opened fire on a funeral procession chanting anti-government slogans. A Roman Catholic bishop commented that the scene was "like an army of invasion flattening everything in its path".

There are also reports of naval bombardments of Tamil villages.

The Tamil United Liberation Front was elected to Parliament on a manifesto calling for a Tamil state. Since last year's pogrom a war of secession has developed on one side and an increasingly all-out war of oppression by the reactionary government on the other.

Socialists and consistent democrats must support the right of the Tamils to set up their own state if that is what the Northern Tamil majority wants. Increasingly it begins to look as if the only alternative to that is a genocidal war.

Mines in the Red Sea

SOMETHING suspiciously similar to the multinational force that left Lebanon earlier this year is being recreated to sweep the Red Sea of mines that have been damaging cargo vessels. It is still unclear who is responsible for planting the mines.

Egypt has blamed Libya and Iran - which is plausible, although the motive remains a bit mysterious.

Some Arab states have blamed the US - claiming it is an excuse to lead up to the establishment of new bases in the area. That may not be as silly as it sounds. Certainly a renewed presence of US, British, French and perhaps Italian troops in the region does not bode well for the future.

Israel

Anti-fascist demonstrations

Massive protests have met the election of Rabbi Meir Kahane to the Knesset. When Kahane, leader of the extremist Kach party arrived to take his seat at the Knesset, thousands of protesters surrounded the building chanting "Fascism shall not pass" and carrying placards equating Kahane with the Nazis.

The left-Zionist Mapam Party, which is part of the Labour Align-

ment, has promised to bring in an anti-racism law. Their own consciences are not clear. But there is no doubt that Kahane's election has caused deep ruptures amongst the Jewish community in Israel which is a hopeful sign.

Kahane calls for the expulsion of the Palestinian Arabs from 'Eretz Yisrael' (Biblical Israel) i.e. the whole of what is now Israel and the occupied territories.

Letter

Naive on USSR

IN last week's Socialist Organiser, Tony Benn was asked about the refusal of the Soviet government to issue visas to unofficial peace activists who wanted to attend the conference of European Nuclear Disarmament (END) in Italy.

Benn replied simply by saying that "there is no country where people have human rights", but he "didn't object" to the demonstration making their point (presumably in protest to this action by the Soviet government).

While I understand the point Benn was trying to make - that there is a lot of hypocrisy in the crocodile tears shed for Soviet dissidents by Western governments - that is no excuse for failing to condemn the Moscow bureaucracy.

Western 'democratic' imperialism is hypocritical; but we can't be consistent opponents of imperialism if we don't oppose all forms of oppression.

The Stalinists in the Soviet Union are the sworn enemies of

socialism and of elementary democratic freedoms.

It is also naive to believe that they are our allies in the fight for peace; and to say that is not to go along with the mythology of the 'Soviet threat'. Think what a much rougher ride Reagan would have had with his arms drive if the USSR hadn't invaded Afghanistan in December 1979.

It is also a matter of fact that the Russians, right now, are waging a bloody Vietnam-style war against the people of Afghanistan - using napalm, obliterating towns in reprisal, holding 15-20 million people in subjection.

If we are to fight successfully for world socialism and peace we have to firmly condemn the Soviet bureaucracy, firmly condemn their anti-democratic repression of 'unofficial' peace movements, and show a hand of solidarity to all those fighting such repression in the Soviet Union and its satellites.

CLIVE BRADLEY,
Deptford,
London

Organise the unemployed

ON the weekend of 8/9 September, the Tyne and Wear Association of Trades Councils is holding a conference in Sunderland on the twin questions of trade union membership for the unemployed, and the role of unemployed workers centres. These are burning questions for the labour movement.

Some 70 TUC-affiliated unions are now attempting to retain unemployed members, as against about 30 in 1980. How hard they are trying to do so is, however, another matter. And no union at all has yet changed its rules to allow the recruitment of unemployed workers, despite two million trade unionists having been lost to the movement in recent years and a real unemployment level of four millions.

Although this issue was raised at two recent national conferences — the Trades Councils conference, and the TUC Centres for the Unemployed conference — no progress at all was made at either.

The state of unemployed workers' centres (UWCs) nationally is even more depressing. One delegate to the TUC's UWC conference aptly described much of the activity being carried out in many of them as "being as useful as rearranging the chairs on the deck of the Titanic".

In many MSC-funded centres, it is the MSC, not the unemployed, who call the shots. They are strictly controlled by MSC-paid workers who prevent political activity or joint work with the trade union movement. Instead, the centres offer only individualised welfare rights advice, educational activities and leisure pursuits for the unemployed.

UCWs merely duplicate the work of Citizens' Advice Bureaux or voluntary service agencies, while a chasm opens up between the UWCs and the local trades council and trade union movement.

Moreover, whilst the welfare rights advice provided by UWCs does cushion a few of the unemployed from the rawest edges of the cutbacks in social security spending, the depoliticisation of UWCs through the MSC and the trade union bureaucracy,

By Stan Crooke

means that UWCs do not campaign against the Tories' overall offensive against the social security system (e.g. the current Fowler reviews).

UWCs thus help the specific problems of individual claimants — at the expense of combatting the general problems and attacks faced by claimants as a whole. In many cases they have become nothing but an extension of welfare rights and social services agencies.

The trade union bureaucracy has not only gone along with this, it has actively encouraged it. In 1981, for example, there were secret TUC-MSCs discussions, which, in the absence of any consultation with the unemployed or the rest of the labour movement, led to the restrictions on UWC activities laid down in the TUC's "Guidelines on the Running of Unemployed Workers' Centres".

Similarly the TUC conference held in June of this year on UWCs was organised in such a way as to prevent any real input by the UWCs themselves and to stifle criticism.

Resolutions were not allowed; the conference agenda was circulated at just four days notice; only one delegate per UWC was allowed and the concluding plenary session was a mere seven minutes in length.

Although the conference did allow for an insight to be gained by delegates to it of the grip which the MSC has on many UWCs and the acquiescence of the union bureaucracy in this, its organisation deliberately ensured that those delegates who wanted to see a different kind of UWC were denied the right to argue out their case.

It is in this context that the Tyne and Wear Association of Trades Councils took the initiative to hold the September 8/9 conference. Originally open only to delegates from Tyne and Wear itself, in the aftermath of the TUC's June conference, it has now been made into a national conference.

For further details contact Alec McFadden, 115 Nuns Moor Road, Fenham, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, tel. 812242 (day) or 720158 (evenings).

BR: now it's time to fight

TODAY'S action is a welcome change within the NUR. After seeing the last three big workshops close — Shildon, Temple Mills and Horwich — and countless other jobs go out to contractors within regional workshops we can't sit back any longer.

Five years ago BREL (BR's engineering subsidiary) employed 35,000 but a policy of run-down, closure and attempts to open it up to outside competition aims to reduce that by 13,000 in under three years. They also want more than a thousand regional workshops jobs to go. We've suffered this long enough but already the policy of non-cooperation has scored a victory.

Under pressure from the government to speed up privatisation preparations, BR originally awarded the order for 50 x 2 car DMUs (class 150/151), 50% to BREL and 50% to Metro Cammell. They claimed that they had not got time to do the extended tests to decide which was best; the reason being the Tories want BR's five year corporate plan of closures and redundancies to be completed in three years.

This is supposed to be part of opening BREL up to "outside competition". In this case the competition was 15% more expensive. BR ordered an audit of BREL to try and find extra costs, but now with the action so far they have put the whole order with BREL.

As with our pay claim last May, BR are no doubt under government instructions to make concessions while the miners are out in an attempt to undercut action and try to keep the NUM isolated.

This small victory is an argument not for now calling off the action but for stepping it up. The closure and rundown threats still remain; they plan to close Swindon by the end of '86 and to starve Glasgow of work so that by the beginning of 1987 it becomes unviable. They hope to therefore justify its closure.

After March 1987, the EMU refurbishment programme will begin to end and then the effect of new build and repair work will

Text of an SO industrial bulletin put out on the BR workshops day of action.

really begin to bite. An indication of their intentions is the freeze on recruitment of apprentices everywhere, except Derby Litchurch Lane, which means an end to new life blood for the industry.

All of this is intended to whittle down the numbers and the capacity, speed up the work rate for those left and then flog it off cheap to business friends of the Tories — like the £66 million they took for Sealink which was worth £170 million.

The same goes for regional workshops on a smaller scale. Recruitment has been mostly frozen and then they claim they can't do the work and so bring in contractors. More and more work is being lost to cowboy firms in this way employing casual labour. It all amounts to an attack on our rights, conditions agreements and job security.

So far management have had it all their own way. They've been able to close what they want with little action to stop them, despite the best efforts of brothers and sisters such as at Horwich and Shildon. Unlike the guards, BR don't have to ask the union to help them get rid of jobs as part of productivity deals.

So what is the official leadership, particularly the NUR, doing? After today they have no plans. They are waiting to judge the success of today's action and the reaction of the Confed officials to it. So far the Confed have been dragging their feet.

But the rank and file members of all the workshop unions can't afford to wait. We need to begin now to build rank and file committees in all workshops whether the officials support them or not; in most cases these will need to be across-union committees. These can then link up with other areas to strengthen the action. That way we can make the present policy of non-cooperation really begin to hurt by ensuring we know what everyone else is doing and acting together. We need then to



NUR/ASLEF demo in Derby against threatened closure of BR workshops.

push the officials into calling strike action until the present closure threats are withdrawn.

Action along the same lines of non-cooperation begins for all other BR and London Regional Transport staff on September 10. Workshops can lead the way on this and make common cause against the common enemy — BR's 'Ian MacGregor' — chairman Bob Reid and behind him the Tory government.

But without waiting for September 10 (and LRT's 24 hour strike on September 12) we can begin now to make common cause with the miners. 22 weeks

they've been out, longer for some, but so far the Tories with the help of Frank Chapple, B. Sirs, Len Murray and so on have managed to keep them isolated apart from blacking action by the transport unions. There is nothing the Tories fear more than a second front being opened against them — as happened with the dockers.

The miners are on strike against an initial threat to 20,000 jobs. BREL want 14,000 of our jobs to go and with the rest of BR the figure mounts to 38,000. The time to fight is now! Let's get organised!

Out of their own mouths

The rich got richer

This week the Central Statistical Office published its estimates of the distribution of personal income in 1981-1982. The table compares the figures with those for 1978-79, to show the effects of the first three years of Mrs Thatcher's rule. The figures, unsurprisingly, show that the best-off households (strictly, "tax-units") got a bit richer. More surprisingly the tax system makes little difference: in both years, the share of the rich was cut, thanks to tax, by about 2½ percentage points, that of the poor rose about half a point. What has happened since? Mrs Thatcher will no longer know; calculating these figures every year was dropped as part of an economy drive.

Percentage shares of personal income				
Income group	Before tax		After tax	
	1978-79	1981-82	1978-79	1981-82
Top 10%	26.1	28.3	23.4	25.6
11-20%	16.5	16.7	16.3	16.4
21-30%	13.5	13.2	13.5	13.2
31-40%	11.2	10.7	11.3	10.8
41-50%	9.2	8.6	9.3	8.8
51-60%	7.3	7.0	7.7	7.3
61-70%	5.8	5.8	6.4	6.3
71-80%	4.5	4.4	5.1	5.2
81-90%	3.5	3.5	4.1	4.0
lowest 10%	2.4	2.0	2.9	2.4

The Economist, 11-17 August 1984

UCW sold out

MANCHESTER postal workers have gone back to work after a week long strike. A mass meeting of over 3,000 on Monday August 6 voted overwhelmingly to accept a recommendation to return from national officer John Taylor.

The strike started in the main Newton Street sorting office when a shop steward was suspended for refusing to operate a disputed sorting method and the rest of the staff walked out in support. It then spread to the outlying delivery offices, the parcels office and the counter staff until in the end all Manchester postal workers were out.

In my own office our night staff were told that they were suspended for refusing to cross a picket line at Piccadilly station. When I called a meeting first thing in the morning to discuss the situation we were instructed to go and work at the Newton Street office. If we refused we were going to be suspended as well. As this would have meant crossing a picket line of our own members we took a decision to come out there and then and go down to Newton Street to make sure no-one else went in.

It was obvious right from the start that the management were trying to provoke the situation. They chose what was a fairly trivial issue to confront the union and then put the rest of the workforce in the position of either scabbing on their mates or coming out as well. And by

PETE KEENLYSIDE
Manchester Amalgamated UCW

insisting that other offices do work that was proper to Manchester, they spread the strike outside the area as well. At one time Sale, Altrincham, Stockport, Oldham, Bolton, Crewe, Huddersfield and Stoke were all out for refusing to do our work.

Why the management should have adopted this strategy is not completely clear. They are not exactly noted for their diplomacy when it comes to dealing with the unions and maybe they just cocked the whole thing up. But a more likely reason is that it has been an open secret for some time that management want to get rid of the closed shop. If Manchester, which is the largest and one of the most militant branches, could be taken on and beaten, then the way would be open to scrapping it.

Whatever the intentions of management they must have been surprised at the strength of the response. Throughout the strike there couldn't have been more than a dozen scabs prepared to cross picket lines. Most people clearly understood that what was at stake was the existence of the union in Manchester and there was a real determination not to back down.

Unfortunately for us the militancy of the membership wasn't reflected in the full time officer and executive members

who were doing the negotiating. It will come as no surprise to UCW members elsewhere to hear that all John Taylor was interested in was getting us back to work.

The mass meeting that voted to end the strike lasted all of ten minutes with no questions or discussion allowed. The lengthy recommendation that we were asked to vote on was read out at the meeting so no-one was really sure what its implications were.

What we ended up with was the lifting of all suspensions and an agreement by management to resume negotiations on all the disputed issues. Oh yes, and another inquiry into industrial relations in Manchester, the third in three years.

Many branch members spoke angrily after the meeting, not just about the way that Taylor had stitched up the meeting, but about the way a position of strength had been thrown away. We are now back to square one with the management able to come back at us any time they want.

What happened in Manchester is just the latest example of how the UCW membership have shown themselves prepared to take on the post office management, only to be sold out by our leadership. Some of that energy and determination must now be turned into fighting to remove the current leadership and replacing it with one committed to militant action in the struggles that are to come.

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



TORY MURDER!



DEREK SPEIRS (REPORT)

**Clockwise:
RUC man
aims a gun
into the
crowd; a
vain attempt
to give Sean
Downs the
kiss of life;
the shot that
killed him.**

"WANTON MURDER"

Notts miner sees RUC killing

"As part of the Troops Out delegation, we were heading the demonstration. We were only 20 feet away and we saw the RUC commit wanton murder.

On the first occasion when the RUC attacked the march we took cover behind a wall. Gerry Adams appealed to everyone to continue, saying that the RUC should not be allowed to stop us. So we reassembled on the road and carried on past the Sinn Fein headquarters, and moved onto a bank outside.

Ian Juniper, the Nottingham Trades Council secretary, spoke. It was after that, when Martin Galvin came forward to speak, that the RUC went berserk. They were prepared to murder 2,000 people to arrest one man.

One of those seriously injured was a drummer in a band. I suppose the two drumsticks he was carrying were considered sufficient reason by the RUC to get him.

They fired wantonly into the crowd

and rammed their armoured vehicles straight into it.

I don't normally agree with David Steel but he was right when he described it as a police riot.

As miners there was a fantastic response to us. Nearly all the coalfields were represented on the march, and as part of the Troops Out delegation we led the procession.

But everywhere you go there's a gun pointed at your head. I saw this building which I thought was a fort - it turns out it was a hospital, surrounded by barbed wire. There are gun turrets all over the place.

I was naive on Ireland up to this point. But this police riot and wanton murder should alter every trade unionist's view on Ireland, especially when you see it first hand."

MARTIN BOWER
Notts striking miner,
Cotgrave NUM



Daily Mail photo.

Belfast Police riot

Last Sunday the RUC killed Sean Downs with a blow to the heart from a heavy plastic bullet fired at point blank range. The only thing special about Sean Downs' death was that he was killed on, so to speak, a brightly lit stage with a world-wide TV audience looking on.

They saw the RUC drive their speeding land rovers straight into an Irish Republican crowd and then lay about them firing plastic bullets indiscriminately.

But in fact Sean Downs was the 15th person to meet his death from one of these lethal weapons over the last nine years. Half of the others were children. As well as the dead there have been large numbers injured, some of them very seriously.

Outcry

There has been too little outcry so far in Britain about the dead children and the many others maimed, blinded and injured since plastic bullets replaced the earlier rubber bullets in 1975.

Last Sunday's "police riot" in Belfast and the death of Sean

Cont'd page 10

"As the police moved in they acted with indiscriminate brutality towards the crowd. Those who tried to flee in panic, or simply cowered on the pavement were batoned. Plastic bullets were fired from close range and at specific targets, in contravention of rules governing their use.

One elderly man, blood pouring from his head where he had been hit by a plastic bullet, could be seen lying unconscious in the road ignored by the police around him. Two youths ducked out from behind a garden wall and, with the police guns going off around them, dragged him into a nearby house, from which an ambulance was called."

Guardian, August 13

IRELAND

1969-1984

15 YEARS TOO LONG

**DEMONSTRATE
FOR WITHDRAWAL**

SATURDAY 18th AUGUST 1pm Speakers Corner
to Jubilee Gardens

**Self Determination For The Irish
People As A Whole**