

A **SOCIALIST** ACTION

Yorkshire miner sends back his medal

GORDON ROYSTON, now a Yorkshire miner, but formerly a soldier in the Coldstream Guards, has sent back to the Queen a medal he received for three tours of Northern Ireland. In his letter he wrote: 'I am now a Yorkshire miner and I feel that at the age of 31 I may soon be one of the forgotten masses. In other words I was good enough to be a Yorkshire bully boy fighting in Ireland, but not for my job.'

Kinnock must —

Back the pickets!



DESPITE the press campaign labour movement solidarity with the miners strike was building up last week.

- A one day engineering strike in solidarity with the miners has been called in Dundee.

- After NUR members at Shirebrook in Nottinghamshire voted to ignore union instructions, and move coal, the trains were blocked in any case by signals operators.

- Dockers at Middlesbrough blocked the import of 65,000 tons of coal from the US ship *Ambia Fair* destined for the BSC plant at Redcar.

- NALGO voted £10,000 to the miners support fund.

- Literally hundreds of solidarity meetings and collections have been organised by local trade union and Labour Party organisations throughout the country — some raising thousands of pounds for miners solidarity.

But amid all this a deafening official silence has come on all the real issues of the dispute from Neil Kinnock and the Parliamentary leadership of the

Labour Party.

Thatcher has a policy on the miners strike — the miners should go back to work and accept unemployment.

David Owen has got a line. He agrees with Thatcher — as usual.

The Liberals are showing their normal independence by agreeing with both Thatcher and the SDP.

In fact the entire world has got a policy on the strike — *except* the official leadership of the Labour Party.

Behind the scenes of course there is a policy. Labour Party leaders like Tony Benn, Eric Heffer, and Dennis Skinner, together with union leaders like Rodney Bickerstaff, Ray Buckton and Jimmy Knapp, have been backing the miners, going to the picket lines and getting boycotts of coal.

Neil Kinnock, Roy Hattersley, Gerald Kaufman, and Dennis Healey have been supporting the line of the right wing to force a ballot. That was in all the papers even before Healey leaked it last week.

Terry Duffy and Bill Sirs, like the Parliamentary Labour leadership, can criticise police methods. But that is to avoid the real issue, *who is right in the strike*.

Is it Yorkshire, Scottish, Kent and South Wales miners

fight for their jobs? Or are they 'bully boys' who the police must deal with — although 'not too roughly', of course?

Nor is Labour going to be able to avoid the real issue of the strike simply by concentrating on civil liberties. *Of course* the police actions are a huge attack on democratic rights and must be denounced. But if the strike has to be defeated, if the pickets are really 'bully boys', then the attacks on democracy are regrettable but necessary. That is the only practical conclusion people will draw.

There is only one basic choice. Either Labour supports the miners in their strike or it doesn't. The rank and file of the Party does. It is showing it up and down the country. Neil Kinnock isn't.

It is completely unacceptable to have a leader of the Labour Party who looks like an ostrich with his head stuck in the sand — but secretly is urging a ballot.

Neil Kinnock should be urging the Nottinghamshire miners to come out on strike. Not backing the right wing's demands.

Come out and back the miners, Neil. Or step aside and let those who will back the miners speak for the Labour Party.

Socialist ACTION

US mines Nicaraguan ports

AFTER several weeks of incidents in which ships bound for Nicaragua hit mines outside the Nicaraguan ports, it has finally been admitted that the mining of the ports is the work of the CIA — not just the US-backed 'contras'. This open admission of what amounts to an act of war against Nicaragua goes hand in hand with an alarming military build up by the US in Honduras, on the Nicaraguan border.

The United States last Monday unilaterally announced that it will not obey any rulings of the International Court of Justice on Central America for the next two years. Informal protests by France and Britain about the mining of the Nicaraguan ports have been swept aside.

No one should be under any illusions about what these new American moves represent. The two year deadlines on refusing to obey the International Court of Justice on Central America is a dead give away. It represents the US timetable to overthrow the Nicaraguan government.

It must now be clear to Reagan that only a full scale invasion by US troops stands a chance of overthrowing the Sandinistas, but such an operation could not be undertaken during a US presidential election. But if Reagan wins in November a showdown will rapidly advance.

The Nicaraguan revolution has been one of the most positive experiments in democratic socialism since the Second World War. Social advance, in terribly adverse conditions, has been accomplished with respect for democratic and human rights.

The Labour Party and the trade unions must do everything possible to defend the Nicaraguan revolution — starting with mobilising for CND's anti-Reagan demonstration on 9 June.

Neil Kinnock has supported the demand made by Stuart Holland and Donald Anderson in their pamphlet *Kissinger's Kingdom* that the US should keep out of Central America.

Now he can take a real step to defend Nicaragua. He should visit that country to show his support, and the support of the Labour Party for the democratic elections being held in November. Such a move would galvanise support for the Sandinistas, and be another obstacle to American war plans.

China — hands off Vietnam

For the second time in five years the Chinese Peoples Liberation Army has launched an invasion of Vietnam. By China's own admission, this criminal attack by one socialist country on another is designed to put pressure on the Vietnamese over their involvement military defence of the Kampuchean government against Pol Pot's insurgents and the Thai army.

China is only aiding pro-imperialist reaction by its moves on the Vietnamese border. China has made an open alliance with the right-wing Thai government and Pol Pot's degenerate guerrilla movement.

It is symptomatic of the rightward degeneration of the Chinese leadership that while Vietnam is invaded everything possible is done to facilitate an alliance with the United States.

No ballots for the dole

AS WE go to press an unholy alliance of the Tories, the media and the Labour right are stepping up their campaign to force a ballot in the NUM. Their aim is not democracy. There was no similar campaign in 1977, when Joe Gormley overturned a national ballot to impose the divisive bonus scheme. Their aim is to divide the miners and isolate them from the rest of the working class.

The argument against this spurious democracy is well put by Jack Collins who says: 'No one has the right to vote another worker out of a job, by putting a cross on a ballot paper.'

Behind the mealy-mouthed hypocrisy of the Labour right, and their concern to 'heal the breach' in the NUM, is a simple refusal to take on the Tories. The line of the 'new realists' in the TUC was well put by Terry Duffy in response to a request for help from the NUM: 'I feel saddened that the NUM has not obtained the unity that is needed to defeat an employer.'

The determination of the left on the NUM Executive to base themselves on the areas where jobs are threatened is absolutely correct. Only mass action can stop the threat to jobs. The issue facing the Executive is not one of 'democracy'. It is how to win.

By Pat Hickey

There is no doubt that

the first phase of the NUM left's strategy was overwhelmingly successful. It has achieved almost 80 per cent of miners on strike, and the support of the main transport unions to stop the movement of coal. Despite the sabotage of the right support is growing at the base of the movement.

Across the country, activists are building rallies, establishing labour movement support committees, and organising factory tours. This kind of support, along with stopping the movement of coal, and preparing solidarity action, can win.

When Bill Sirs says that he does not want steel workers 'sacrificed on someone else's altar' he is betraying the whole working class. If the miners are defeated the Tories' attacks on the closed shop, on the links with the

Labour Party and against local government will be greatly strengthened. A victory for the miners will be a huge blow to Thatcher.

The refusal of the TUC and the Labour Party leaders to give full support to the striking miners and to call on Nottingham to join the strike has aided the right and deepened the divisions in the NUM. It has undoubtedly helped to slow down the momentum that had been built up in the last few weeks.

Had the Labour leaders made a clear stand in support of the strike, the decision of the Notts Executive could have been very different. Their decision to cross picket lines has dealt a serious blow to the NUM.

Clearly, a fresh initiative is needed. The demands for a ballot are

aimed at preventing any initiative to win the strike.

The striking miners and their leaders have shown that they are prepared to fight and determined to win. This is in striking contrast to Sirs, Duffy, Murray et al.

As a result, the miners have tremendous support at the base of the movement. This support needs to be organised to force the TUC and the Labour Party leaders to stop their sabotage and fight alongside the miners.

The NUM and the transport union leaders with the Labour Party left should launch a renewed massive campaign to build solidarity, extend the picketing, and defeat the sabotage of the right.

Included in that should be the demand that the TUC name the day for solidarity action with the miners.

Vote with your feet

by Jack Collins
(President Kent Area NUM)

'Miners have got the right to sack me because they employ me but no miner has got the right to sack another miner by placing a cross on a piece of paper.'

The people that are calling for a ballot are doing so to kill the present struggle. They've got the audacity to suggest that they want a ballot to recommend national strike action. Why do they want to do this when we're already on strike? Roy Otley should accept a challenge and come into Kent and hold a ballot in Kent to determine whether he should be employed any longer. The answer he would give to this is that he's not employed by Kent miners, so we can't sack him. So why should he have the right to suggest that the miners in the Kent area should be thrown on the dole by

the Coal board? My area is one of the most democratic areas in the country and I'd ask the super-democrats, the 'Gang of Nine', to carry through their support for democracy to the National Executive. One of these people represents 600 miners in Cumberland. Another represents 1,000 miners in North Wales. They each have one vote on the executive. In Yorkshire there are 64,000 miners and they have 3 representatives. If we're talking about real democracy Yorkshire should have 63 votes not three. We'd like to see where they stand on the election of union officials in full-time posts as well. They think they are there for life.'

(Reprinted from London Labour Briefing, special issue on the miners)

Monitoring the police

OPERATION Police Watch was launched in Sheffield at a public meeting last Friday. Miners from Kent, Derby and Warwick regaled the 150-strong audience with their accounts of police behaviour during the dispute.

They described all manner of harassment to miners, including beatings, and explained how this directly affected the civil liberties of ordinary people. In one incident, a young woman motoring to a Staffordshire pit village from Birmingham late at night, was left stranded and alone at midnight when police refused to allow her across the county border.

The platform for the meeting included Bill Murrill, MP for Sheffield Heeley, and many local miners, by sponsoring the

dience. Bob Fryer from Northern College, a trade union college in Barnsley, opened the meeting by saying that the activities of the police today were learned from the lessons of Britain's operation in Northern Ireland.

By Paul Davidson,
Heeley Labour Party

Many trade unions and Labour Parties were represented among the audience, as well as a large attendance by Sheffield's black community. Members of the Asian Youth Group said the miners were now experiencing the same police harassment dished out on a daily basis to Britain's black workers.

So far, Operation Police Watch has collected an impressive list of sponsors, which includes Tony Benn, Dennis Skinner and other Labour MPs, as well as prominent trade unionists, journalists and civil libertarians.



...MAN ... and the ...

Yorkshire miner speaks

Labour's muted response

FRANK ARROWSMITH is a branch committee member of Yorkshire Main colliery, Erdlington, who believes the best way to win is if Thursday's NUM national executive continue their mandate for Yorkshire and other areas to take action under rule 41. This, together with the sort of solidarity action which 'grinds industry to a halt', is the miners' road to victory.

He told *Socialist Action* why this is a political dispute and commented on the Labour Party and the TUC's role.

I DON'T dispute this is a political strike. The decision to run down the coal industry is a decision by the Conservative government. It's obvious that if the miners win the government will fall because its anti-union legislation will go, its plans for coal will go, and its plans for the rail and the docks will go too.

The Labour Party response is muted. Certain characters, like Tony Benn and Skinner, openly defend the miners. They've spoken in the Commons and they go on our picket lines. So I don't question their stance on the dispute. As to the Labour Party as a whole, well!

Kinnock has made a statement about violence

on the picket lines. The same day it was announced in the House of Commons that there had been 400 arrests. Ninety-nine per cent were for obstruction, not violence.

The Labour Party are after respectability to win an election. We're a very respectable union but we cannot get near the pickets in Nottinghamshire to argue our case.

The TUC is a paper tiger. They aren't out to change society — they see that as the Labour Party's responsibility. The TUC should put pressure on the Labour Party. They don't do that.

Look at the make up of the TUC. There's a lot of well-paid union leaders amongst them. The press

call them 'union barons'. They are never prepared to challenge political decisions. They see themselves like in the old Keir Hardie days when they formed the Labour Party, and leave it to get on with speaking as the parliamentary arm of the unions. That doesn't work.

The NUM didn't approach the TUC for obvious reasons. Len Murray wasn't going to say 'here we come supporting the miners'. Look at the TV interview by Sid Weighell the other night, for instance. 'Organise a ballot' he says — the same Sid Weighell who resigned after fiddling a ballot.

Unwritten

We've asked the Triple Alliance for support, but we've not yet asked them to come out on strike. The people we need supporting us are the NUR, ASLEF, the Seamen's Union and the T&G. With their support there's no problem.

We are not asking them to go on strike, simply to follow the unwritten laws of the trade union movement: if there's an official dispute they don't move the material involved in it.

Of course if our Margaret decided to use legislation, they might be forced into dispute. She's backed off using the anti-union laws for obvious reasons — they don't want to escalate the dispute yet.



Support spreads in Scotland

JOHN McCORMACK, from Polmaise Colliery in Stirlingshire, explained to a Dunbarton LPYS public meeting why the Scots miners are fighting pit closure.

'The actions of the NCB at Polmaise show the reality of MacGregor's plans. The NCB claim that geological faulting makes the pit unworkable, but the truth is there's at least 30 years work left in it if was properly developed.

'Even with our present machinery it would take only two or three weeks to cut through the faults making work for four to six years without further development.

Next

'Thatcher's claim that the massive nationwide police operations are to allow those who want to work to do so seems ridiculous when it's the police who are keeping us out of Polmaise so that the NCB can shut it down.

They'll keep pits open for a few scabs who want to cross picket lines, but not for thousands of miners who are wanting to save their jobs and their communities.

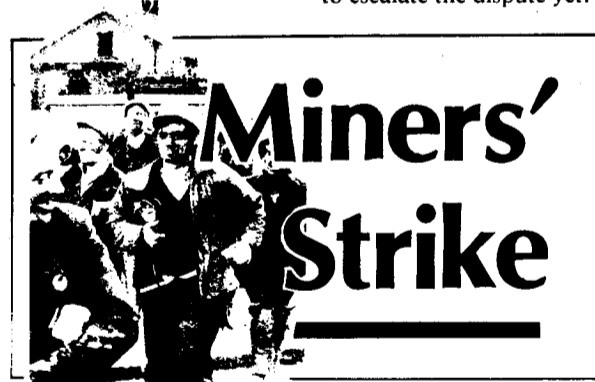
'At Polmaise we are 100 per cent behind the NUM and the members on strike throughout Wales and England. But we can't win alone. The NUM needs the support of the whole labour movement.

'If we lose this one, then I pity the trade unionist who tries to fight for the right to work.'

Scottish TUC

DUNDEE is leading the way in building solidarity with the miners in Scotland. Unions in the area have agreed to a day of strike action in support of the miners, probably to be held on 18 April.

The Scottish TUC will be meeting next week and will debate an emergency resolution from the NUM



Miners' Strike

on the day that the Dundee action takes place. The NUM resolution will call on the STUC to organise a similar day of action across Scotland.

At a thousand strong rally in Glasgow over £15,000 was raised for the NUM strike funds.

Sammy Gilmour, a steward on the Govan shipyards, told the meeting they would be collecting a weekly levy despite the fact that most workers were on short time, only working one week in two. He reminded the meeting of the £37,000 raised in the shipyards during the NHS dispute.

He said to the meeting: 'It is unfortunate that the initiative for strike action in support of the miners comes from Dundee rather than from the platform.' A meeting of the confed on the Clyde shipyards will

be called to discuss a similar stoppage.

Scott Lithgow workers have imposed a levy and are collecting £1000 per week for the miners. The confed convener from Dundee, who had already presented £9000 from his own works, Kestrel Marine, explained that most factories in Dundee had heard miners speakers at mass meetings, and were raising money.

Extension of the solidarity in Scotland now lies largely in the hands of the STUC. Resolutions critical of the NGA's treatment by the TUC have been submitted from several labour movement bodies. These have to be adopted, and then the STUC has to show the TUC the way it should behave by organising Scotland-wide activity in support of the miners.



Over 1300 people assembled at Camberwell Green, South London, on Saturday to join 30 Kent miners on the first leg of their 130-mile march on Nottingham. Many Kent miners trace their origins to Nottinghamshire mining families. It is ironic that they are marching back now to demand Notts miners join their fight to protect the industry.

John Jeffries and Wayne Richardson from Tilmanston pit told *Socialist Action* that their forebears had marched down from the north to find jobs in Kent, 'so we can march back up to keep our jobs'. Wayne, a third-generation miner, whose family comes from Scunthorpe, explained that one of the marchers had mining relatives in the Nottingham area. 'It is to people like them that the Kent miners are taking their message.'

At a County Hall rally, Jack Collins of the Kent NUM was joined by GLC leader Ken Livingstone, Ray Buckton of ASLEF and Jim Slater of the Seamen's union. All speakers drew out the strategic implications of Tory anti-working class policy, pointing out the connections between the anti-union legislation and the attacks on local democracy.

Midlands Region NUR have called a demonstration in Nottingham on Saturday 14 April to greet the miners on their arrival. This starts at midday at The Forest and marches to Market Square, followed by a rally at the Albert Hall Institute. Speakers include Arthur Scargill and Tony Benn.

Nurses support the miners

NURSES FROM ROTHERHAM have been organising practical support for the striking miners. **GWEN MELLORS** from Badsley Lane Hospital and a NUPE member told *Socialist Action* what she was doing and why.

We had an emergency meeting about the miners when the strike began. A branch meeting decided to make a donation towards the dispute, and we set up a soup kitchen at the Silverwood Miners' Welfare Club. But

I wanted to go down to the picket line as well. They gave us plenty of support during our dispute. So five of us — three nurses and two ancillary workers — went to Cresswell pit last Tuesday.

I was approached by a police inspector who asked me if I knew that it was illegal. I said I was well aware of it, but the miners were present on our picket lines last year and that they weren't arrested. All he could say was that this was a different situation.

Three policemen surrounded me so I couldn't move, then they sent a policewoman over. By then we were leaving anyway. We were with the flying pickets, and they don't stay long in one place.

The cops were completely thrown when we refused to move. They were obviously frightened of what would happen if they arrested nurses in uniform. We will be continuing our visits to the picket line until the strike is over.

OPERATION POLICEWATCH

Decoy picketing in Notts

A CND activist from Sheffield used her car to drive pickets into Nottingham. She described what happened on one day when she went out.

WE WERE destined for Cresswell colliery, about four miles over the Nottingham border, going by narrow, twisting lanes to avoid being turned back, threatened with arrest, or getting a windscreen smashed by the 'law'.

We arrived just after 8pm. Two hundred or so miners were already there, outnumbered nearly three to one by blue uniforms.

Our job was as a 'decoy' picket. The main thrust was elsewhere.

'We're here to keep the cops happy', they explained. The police lined the road to the gate, even the Cresswell miners on the picket weren't allowed to speak to their workmates. As we tried to join those behind the police blockade our exit was blocked, and we were closed in.

A local woman complained about this encirclement, saying it was against our democratic rights. She was told to move on... 'You're not too old to be arrested.'

The local community is divided but many are resentful of the police presence and tactics. A local youngster was thrown to the ground and his nose bloodied for trying to stay and watch. An Inspector told his angry mother that he was too busy to find the officer responsible.

As the nightshift started to trickle in convoys of cars used the other gate. Others, too ashamed to show their faces, sneaked in through snickets and hedges. All the pickets could do was shout, but their message was clear: 'Join us, or it'll be you next time'.

We overheard a chief constable say: 'Mrs Thatcher's got them under her boot, and that's where they ought to be.' But has she? With the help of the rest of us she'll have a problem.



Welsh snatch squads

MASSIVE pickets and police operations were the result of last week's attempts by South Wales miners to stop the movement of coke and coal at Port Talbot.

Rail traffic of coke and coal has been stopped with full support from the rail unions, but despite statements from road transport unions, many trucks have crossed the picket lines.

On Tuesday 3 April the miners responded with over 400 pickets blocking the road, the only effective way to stop the movement of coal. All trucks in and out of the plant were stopped.

This brought out massive numbers of police and snatch squads were used. Terry Thomas, Vice President of South Wales area NUM, accused one inspector of inciting drivers to cross the picket line. Police violence increased during the week with over 50 arrests.

On Friday a middle-aged picket from Mardy was set upon by two police while walking up the road to the steelworks. He was beaten unconscious and an ambulance was called when the police thought he had had a heart attack.

Police

The two police quickly disappeared. Police instructed an elderly witness that she was to give no statements to the press. On Monday morning the Mardy picket was still in hospital.

Ray Powell, Labour MP for Ogmore, who visited the picket line on Thursday, said that he would raise the question of police violence in the Commons. Ann Clwyd, the Euro MP, was there on Friday and said she would raise it in Strasbourg.

Police have been tapping phones and trying to stop South Wales miners going to the Port Talbot picket line. On Saturday the South Wales area executive of the NUM announced it would reduce the number of pickets if police presence was also

reduced, to avoid further clashes.

On Monday morning there were about 20 pickets and six police at British Steel and the trucks weren't impeded. Some pickets said that the token picket was a tactical retreat after last week's attacks. Others felt the executive should step things up, but all agreed on the need to stop the trucks.

By Brendan Young, Swansea Labour Party

Keri Evans, a Swansea LPYS member, was arrested on Tuesday morning on the NUM picket line at Port Talbot, when police started using snatch squads.

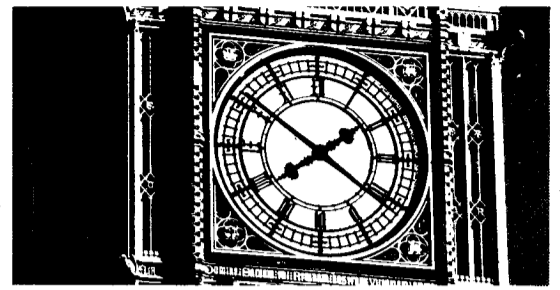
'As a coke lorry tried to come out of the works the pickets surged forward to block the road. As the police moved in to clear the road I was standing at the edge of the crowd. The next I knew I was being carried towards a van.'

'At Port Talbot police station I was photographed three times, was fingerprinted, and my arresting officer was changed. I was charged with obstructing the highway and was asked if I was a "bit of a revolutionary".'

'In the press the police have denied the use of snatch squads, but Assistant Superintendent Viv Brook admitted they were being used when he told pickets in the Port Talbot police station that "anybody could be snatched" at a picket line.'

The NUM will defend Keri when he comes to court. Keri also hopes that local labour movement organisations will organise a defence campaign for those arrested. They could do this by picketing the trials, holding collections to pay fines and supporting the NUM strike fund.

The view from Westminster



The miners and the police

Bob Clay MP (Sunderland North)

THE PRESENT miners' strike is for the miners themselves an historic struggle. If the government's plan for coal industry goes through, it will decimate employment in the mines. But there is now a wider significance to this struggle. The whole mood of the country has changed towards the Tories over the last few months — even over the last few days — and this is now an opportunity for millions of people, the whole labour movement, to get behind the miners and deliver a major blow to this government.

Last week Tony Benn asked in the House of Commons for an assurance that the armed forces if they thought it was to their advantage, this government would mobilise the armed forces if they thought it was to their advantage. But they are unlikely to because of the response they know they would get from the whole labour movement, and because the para-military way in which the police are being used is virtually the same as using troops.

Many people are overestimating the significance of the divisions among the miners. Reading the press you wouldn't realise that over 80 per cent of the union are on strike. It seems to me a very strange situation when all the government is talking about is the 20 per cent of miners who aren't on strike and the internal democracy of the NUM — which is none of their business.

What they should be talking about is the fact that this is a growing dispute involving other sections of the trade union movement. There's already a desperate shortage of domestic coal. The steel industry is in a very bad way. The situation is getting worse day by day. The overwhelming majority of miners are on strike.

In my own area of Durham, where the NUM has traditionally been moderate, the strike is 100 per cent solid. All the miners want to discuss is where we picket next.

The Party National Executive has adopted a position of complete support for the miners' struggle, and grave dis-

quiet about the role of the police. At the last three meetings of the Parliamentary Labour Party the miners strike was discussed, and there is a very strong feeling, which is not just restricted to the left, that the police activity is a major encroachment on civil liberties, and that that question ought to be raised by the front bench.

As each industrial dispute comes along the media coverage of it becomes lower and lower, and more dishonest. On this occasion they've told blatant and open lies. For example they claimed that branches in Durham were calling for a ballot at a time when they weren't. The whole personal attack on Arthur Scargill is quite disgraceful, and the media have done everything to play up the situation in Nottinghamshire, and disregarded the fact that the overwhelming majority of miners are on strike.

But that's nothing to be surprised about — the media are owned and controlled by a small unelected bunch of capitalists — and they know where their allegiance lies!

The police repression in the coalfields parallels that at Greenham Common.

Over the past few months we've seen a massive stepping up of the police operations against the NGA pickets, the miners and Greenham. The conclusion that I, and a number of other Labour MPs are drawing, is that we are moving towards an authoritarian state. The role of the police and the behaviour of the government in our society has changed qualitatively in the last few months.

There is now a pattern of the government turning every issue that involves effective class struggle against the government, or effective struggle by the peace movement, into an issue of law and order — and then deploying the police to win that issue.

If this continues, and if we don't concentrate our minds on fighting this and the repressive legislation like the police and Criminal Evidence Bill, then even the least alarmist people are going to wake up and realise that it's happened, and that we are living in a police state.



Northumberland protests police violence

PICKETS IN Northumberland have successfully stopped delivery of coal to Blythe power station, 30 miles from Newcastle. Miners from Whittle colliery told Socialist Action about the police response to the peaceful mass picket.

Northumberland miners started picketing Blythe three weeks ago. It's Northumberland's only power station, and we've stopped coal waggons going in there.

Last Tuesday there was a major police presence at the picket, mostly special patrol group. During the morning six miners got arrested. They were beaten up in the van before being taken to the station. We could hear the noise and see the van shaking about.

We decided to demonstrate against police brutality, so we marched to the nearby town, Ashington, with our banners and sat down in the main street. We were joined by some of the town folk, but there was no police presence.

They didn't follow us

into town, they were keeping a low profile there. We stopped traffic for two hours or more.

It was a peaceful protest. During that time a funeral passed by — the church is next door to the police station — and the whole demonstration was silent and took their hats off in a sign of respect, except for the police that is.

So much for pickets causing trouble! The demonstration finally broke up when Dennis Murphy, NUM area chairperson, asked it to disperse.



Break the law - win the strike

IT'S MORE THAN a coincidence that the miners' strike of 1984, like its predecessor of 1972, is taking place when other sections of the labour movement have suffered a series of bad setbacks.

The Tory government that was elected in 1970 defeated both the power workers and the postal workers. By 1972 it was running an unofficial incomes policy.

Emboldened by their successes, Heath's ministers decided to crack the real tough nut — the miners. As the *City of London Newspaper* wrote: 'Months before the coal strike started, ministers were saying in private that the government would establish their "anti-inflation" policy by a resounding victory over the miners'.

The *Times* was boasting: 'Coal stocks away from the pits are large enough to withstand a strike for weeks' but added the cautionary words '... if it does not spread ...'. Just like now the TUC did nothing to help the miners. No call came from Congress House for solidarity action. It did nothing to bring the transport unions together so an effective embargo could be put on the movement of coal.

Naturally, it was prepared to offer its services so 'an amicable settlement' could be reached. In 'TUC-speak' this means it would help to get the miners back to work as fast as possible. The Labour leader Harold Wilson, just like Neil Kinnock today, kept well away from the picket line. He was quick to condemn violence on the picket line — that was the miners' 'violence' of course, not that of the police!

The police and the judiciary openly collaborated with the government and employers' strike-breaking plans. Dennis Skinner, the Labour MP, told how police encouraged truck drivers to drive at speeds of 40 miles an hour at picket lines. The Director of Public Prosecution made it obvious where he stood in the strike in the case of 'the scab and the iron bar'.

By Bob Pennington

He had been sent a picture of a scab wielding an iron bar. The DPP replied: 'It would be necessary for the prosecution to prove that the truck driver carried the bar with the intention of using it to injure. If therefore he was merely holding it so as to cause the pickets to move away from his truck so that he could drive away without danger to himself or anyone else, I do not consider that an offence would be established. I do not propose to take any action in the matter.'

Like now the stakes were high. If the workers' movement was going to be decisively defeated then the miners had to be crushed. The lines were drawn. The government, the police, the judiciary and



the media were on one side, on the other stood the miners and their allies, who couldn't have had a better spokesperson than the picket at Murton colliery in Durham who told the magazine *Seven Days*: 'They want the pickets to be respectable. Being respectable got us where we are — at the bottom'.

Stocks

From the beginning the rank and file set an 'unrespectable' pace. Whilst their union president, Joe Gormley, moaned about the men 'being a damn sight more militant than we would want them to be', at all the 140 pits the safety men were brought out. With coal stocks totalling 31 million tons the miners sent out flying pickets across the country.

The power stations, one after the other, were closed down by mass pickets. From Yorkshire, Kent, Wales and all the coal fields the miners took to the roads and motorways. The strike had to spread to the power sta-



POWER STATION

Flying Pickets vocal group get where the action is

numbers so they can't enforce their law.

Of course the miners now face a much tougher situation than they did in 1972. The state has learned its lesson and has improved its policing methods. They have greater coordination. They have set up police blockades miles away from the pits so they can stop the pickets getting to the scab pit heads. Inside the NUM there are deep divisions, which start in these areas and reach right into the national leadership.

In 1972 the miners could by-pass the TUC's abstentionism and cowardice, by going direct to the rank and file in the power stations and depots. Now they face even more powerful opposition. The government has dropped all pretensions about democracy. The police know full well they have got its go-ahead to break the law, and physically attack the pickets and beat them up when they want to. The local magistrates see the chance to 'teach the miners a lesson'.

Law

This can only be answered by doing what the pickets did in 1972 — defying the law. The government and its police thugs can be defeated. But the miners can't do it on their own this time. They need the support of the workers in transport, in the power stations and in the National Union of Seamen.

Whenever the police bust up the picket lines other union members must take a leaf out of the book of the workers who went to Saltley gates. In 1972 the miners broke the law and won a victory for all the working class.

Now with the support of the left of the labour movement they can once again challenge the law and win a victory for all working people.

Saltley

After weeks of bitter struggle came the great victory of Saltley coke depot. For a week 600 police fought to keep the depot open. The battle for Saltley swung first one way, then the other. Finally the Birmingham labour movement decided to act. Forty thousand workers downed tools in solidarity with the miners. Eleven thousand of them poured down the streets on to the Saltley Gates and the police were overwhelmed by sheer numbers. At 10.45 on the morning of 10 February 1972 the gates were slammed shut and stayed like that until the strike ended.

Power

The strike was won because the miners were prepared to take extreme measures. The pits were closed, the safety workers were brought out, the coal was stopped moving by any means necessary and the violence of the police was met by the power of organised labour. At Saltley when there were too many coppers the workers knew the answer — swamp them by greater

NO POLICE BILL! NO POLICE STATE!

Black and Irish people, gays and lesbians, Greenham women, NGA pickets ... and now the miners. Who's next? The Police Bill will legalise and extend already repressive police powers. It must be stopped.

National march to oppose the Police Bill

From HYDE PARK (Speakers' Corner) to JUBILEE GARDENS, SATURDAY 19 MAY (assemble 12 noon)
Speakers from: Labour Party, Trade unions, Greenham Women, GLC, Black and Irish organisations, gay and lesbian groups.

HALF DAY WORKSHOP:

'Defending Democratic Rights'

THURSDAY 26 APRIL at 1pm, Camden Town Hall, Euston Road, NW1.

Labour Movement conference to oppose the Police Bill

SATURDAY 12 MAY at 1 pm, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, WC2.
Speakers from: Labour Party, NUM, NGA, CPSA, NUR and others.

RALLY AGAINST POLICE BILL:

'Policing and the miners'

WEDNESDAY 25 APRIL, 7.30pm, East Ham Town Hall, High St South, E6.
Speakers: from Kent and Yorks NUM, IWA.
More details 555-8151.

All details: *The National Campaign Against the Police Bill*, 50 Rectory Road, London N16 7QY (01-249-8334)



Photo: MORNING STAR

THE MINERS' STRIKE

A London meeting with a senior Kent miner

18 April 8pm
The Freemason's Arms
81 Long Acre, London WC1

All comrades welcome
Further details from Theo Dennison 01-692 4998

Organised by: *The Socialist Society*

Greenham: You can evict the camp but you cannot kill the s

LAST WEDNESDAY they tried to evict the women's peace camp at Main Gate of Greenham Common missile base. Women have been living there for more than two and a half years. But it won't be the end of the Greenham Peace Camp.

As the women have already shown, destroying the camp is more than a matter of pulling down a few benders. A whole movement that has mobilised tens of thousands of women has to be destroyed too.

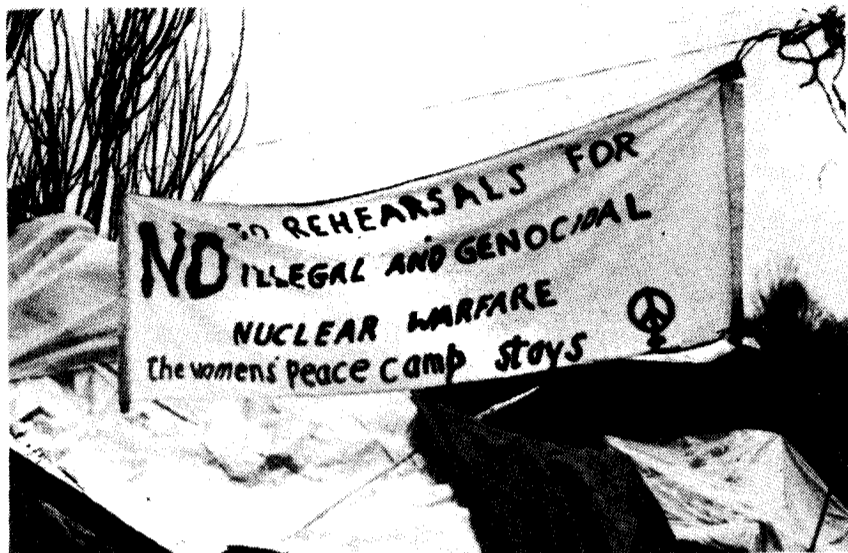
JUDE WOODWARD looks at the achievements of the Greenham women over the last two and a half years.

THIS is not the first time that the powers that be have tried to evict the Greenham women. The Main Gate camp was evicted 18 months ago when Newbury changed its by-laws to prevent the women having the right to camp on common ground. But the women moved on to Ministry of Transport land, and have been there ever since.

Newbury Council littered the site of the camp with massive boulders. But the women decorated the rocks and moved back.

The Tories are about to learn what Newbury Council learnt before, you can evict the camp, but you can't kill the spirit!

Tenacity and courage are not in short supply at Greenham. They have



Greenham 1984, just before the eviction at Main Gate

had to be. Women have had to brave continual harassment — maggots and blood thrown into the 'benders' (tents), verbal and physical abuse — as well as the problems of living under polythene through rain and snow, for weeks, months and years.

It is this courage and self-sacrifice of the women at the camp that has inspired a whole movement around Greenham, bringing all kinds of women into political activity.

Women at the camp have left their friends and families, lived for two years in the mud, broken the ice on water to wash, lived on what can be cooked on a campfire. At the same time as enduring this incredible hardship they have kept up a constant and ingenious campaign of harassment of the military authorities at the camp: dancing on the silos, cutting the fence, invading the observation post, organising blockades

and demonstrations, and generally making fools of the powers that be.

Up and down the country women, and men, have seen that courage and self-sacrifice and been inspired to take at least one or two steps to express their own opposition to cruise, by wearing a badge, going on a march, voting on a policy, or, in thousands of cases, becoming a CND activist.

Tarzan

The whole movement against cruise was given a powerful new impetus. Greenham Common Support Groups flourished everywhere. 'Affinity groups' were set up in virtually every town, and the rank and file of the labour movement and CND gave enthusiastic support. For them a women-only action was no problem because they could see the truth that Greenham broadened the Peace Movement not narrowed it.

The Tories had been pushed onto the defensive on the missiles and they decided on drastic action. 'Tarzan' Heseltine was appointed Secretary of State for Defence, to vamp up the image of the missiles. Lady Olga Maitland tried to do her bit by launching her 'Women and families for peace' and the bomb!

Lady Olga was singularly unsuccessful, but the press had obviously been quietly told to give her a boost and to avoid giving Greenham favourable publicity.

Since then Greenham has been a massive thorn in the Tories side, keeping up the pressure on the missiles, and preventing them from being sneaked into the country. No doubt the example of the Greenham women helped Sarah Tisdall to decide that she would leak the document giving the date of cruise's arrival.

Sharp

Despite this massive impact a lobby began to emerge within CND that opposed women-only groups and actions, claiming that they divided the movement.

The only sense in which Greenham divided the movement is that it sharpened the debate on how the movement against cruise should be built in 1983. The objection of some CND leaders was, in reality, to a movement outside their control.

Following the 1982 CND conference the CND leaders had planned no mass actions against cruise for the coming year. Even the traditional October demonstration was in doubt, on the grounds that CND had no money — despite its rising membership and

large scale labour movement support.

The December 1982 action forced the issue and put cruise back at the centre of CND's agenda, with the Human Chain from Greenham to Burghfield, and the massive October march.

That didn't end the debate in CND. *Sanity*, the CND journal, ran a letters debate on women-only action. The editors claimed that the vast majority of letters received had been against. But once again the dynamism and inspiration of Greenham carried all before them, so that by 1983 CND conference a resolution supporting women-only actions was overwhelmingly supported.

Doubters

It wasn't just the doubters in CND that were carried along by Greenham. It had enormous impact in the labour movement.

In the General Election CND was inclined to play a low key role as it didn't want to be seen as too political. No mass actions were organised and the Labour Party was kept off CND platforms. EP Thompson even suggested calling for a vote for the SDP and the Liberals.

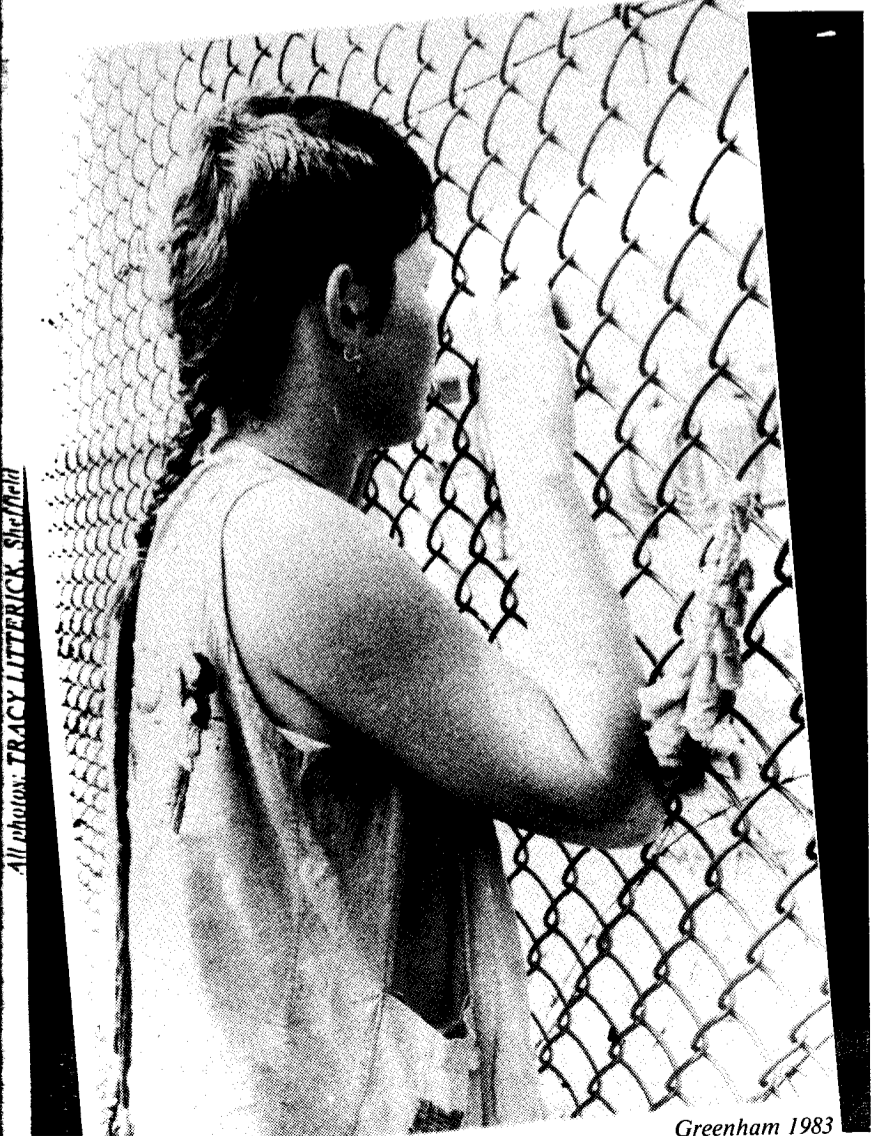
On 24 May, sixteen days before the poll, on International Women's Day for Disarmament, Greenham women broke through all this. Actions, backed by the TUC and the Labour Party took place up and down the country. Workplaces were visited, and some unions responded to the Greenham women's call for token strike action.

The Tories turned their press guns into a full frontal assault on Greenham. The press blared away about the 'smelly' Greenham women, all lesbian drugtakers with pins through their noses. Scandal was whipped up when a baby was born at the camp.



Blockading at Greenham, July 1983

Sections of the labour movement hesitated. Some tried to distance themselves from the Greenham movement. Jean Mc Crindle gave Greenham the only mention it got at the Labour Coordinating Committee conference in Manchester, when she explained how she found it 'hard to relate' to some of the things the Greenham women did.



Greenham 1983



Greenham April 1984

All photos: TRACY LITTEKICK, SUE/ICM

pirit



for the Greenham movement.

The successful harassment of the cruise convoy two weeks ago once more put cruise in the public eye. On the miners' picket lines in Lancashire last week mentions of Greenham were met with cheers. A couple of Yorkshire pickets took time to explain how much they admired the Greenham women. 'They know how to deal with the police', they said, 'And now we know what they've been up against.'

Glenys Kinnock's appearance on the picket line last week put the 'dream ticket's' seal of approval on the Greenham camp. Better late than never!

As long as the Greenham peace camp is there no one is going to be allowed to forget cruise. That's why Heseltine hates Greenham, and why the Tories are prepared to put so much effort and money into evicting the camp.

Wordiness

It also keeps the labour movement on its toes. The camp has to be defended. So perhaps this time round the labour movement will respond to the calls that have come from the Greenham movement to call strike action against the missiles. The crime of the labour movement leaders in relation to Greenham is not any lack of wordiness in support. It lies in the fact that for the last 18 months they have left the fight against the missiles to the Greenham women.

In this abstention they have been much aided by the miserable sectarianism of much of the British 'far left'. *Militant* and the *Next Step* have told us these 'middle-class' women are anti-socialist. *Socialist Worker*, in what is becoming time honoured fashion, had 50 per cent quotas on their coaches



Obstructing the cruise convoy, March 1984

to the Greenham actions. *Socialist Organiser* only gave its support grudgingly.

Advising the working class to ignore the biggest mass movement of women since the suffragettes is in a long tradition of sectarian British Marxism, which has done much to give the left a bad name among women.

Fortunately Greenham has actually brought out the best in large sections of the labour movement as they have rallied to its support. And the Greenham women have begun to demonstrate the truth of the understanding that women, in rising up from the bottom of the heap to throw off centuries of oppression and degradation,

will help free a lot of other people on the way.



The court case against Reagan, the 'Sound around Greenham' demonstration of 50,000 women, the fence cutting exercise, and the mounting arrests once more forced the issue, and rallied even the new 'respectable' leadership of the Labour Party behind the women. No one in the labour movement could afford to be seen as less than enthusiastic



Greenham — another attack on democratic rights

Last Wednesday, BOB CLAY MP went down with Tony Benn to Greenham Common. That was the day of the evictions. Here he tells us what happened and how the police at Greenham are abusing and destroying people's democratic rights. I WENT DOWN to Greenham the day of the evictions. The morale of the women was very good, and their resolve shows no sign of slackening.

The government probably chose this moment to evict the women because they can't deploy the missiles as they would like so long as there is protest outside the base.

Each time the missiles have come out it has been at night or in the early hours of the morning, and they don't get very far. The longer that goes on, the more it will become clear that the activities of the base are being curtailed



by the peace movement. Last week's eviction was an attempt to close down protest for good.

The widening of the road was, as Jon Prescott said, a conspiracy. We have copies of the document where this conspiracy was hatched between the Ministry of Defence, the police, Berkshire County Council and the Ministry of Transport. This has been planned since last year.

When Tony Benn and I went down there yesterday and arrived long after the evictions at lunchtime, there were still roadblocks. We were stopped at a roadblock a mile from the base. So here we have, as in Nottinghamshire and the other coalfields, what in my view is a totally illegal erosion of civil liberties. Putting roadblocks on roundabouts a

mile from the base can only have been designed to stop people getting to the base to support the women. They have now fenced off not only the area which they wish to use for the road widening, but the way they have done that fencing all along the main road is actually preventing access to common land.

They have no right to prevent access to common land. We saw a situation where women were trying to get on to common land, and were prevented by the police. We asked the police what authority that had to do that, and they refused to answer.

The whole operation was massive with hundreds of police. We counted more than 20 police vehicles. They haven't succeeded in closing down the protest, and they won't succeed.

Protests challenge Mitterrand

IN THE Lorraine steel town of Longwy ten days ago workers facing the closure of their steel plants sacked the offices of the local Socialist Party, in protest against the government's economic policy. Furniture was broken up, windows smashed and documents burned in the street. This was followed up last week with a day of protest action which brought the whole region to a standstill.

The protests in the steel-producing region comes hard on the heels of anti-government demonstrations by coal miners from the north west of the country, again protesting against government closure plans.

Mitterrand and his prime minister Mauroy have presented the closure plans as 'restructuring' and modernisation of the economy. But this policy is being carried out at the expense of the most solid supporters of the Socialist Party-Communist Party alliance which came to power three years ago — the industrial working class.

When Mitterrand came to power there was an explosion of joy in the working class. For the first time for decades the left was in power, and the real prospect of change — if not socialism — was in the air. But the heady hopes of three years ago have disintegrated.

While the parties of the right are carrying on a ceaseless campaign against the government, the SP-CP alliance is demoralising its own supporters by pushing through a harsh austerity programme. The continued presence of the CP in the government is being challenged by the party's own rank and file.

Protest

In response to the protests against the proposed 25,000 redundancies in the steel plants, Mitterrand has promised that no one will actually be made unemployed — merely 're-deployed'. But he vigorously defended his economic policies and rejected criticism from Communist Party leader Georges Marchais.

During the first year of the SP-CP government a policy of economic expansion was adopted to try to overcome the crisis of the French economy. But in the absence of socialist policies to direct investment and control price increases this policy inevitably produced rising inflation and a balance of payments crisis. Mitterrand reacted with the time-honoured technique of capitalist politicians — austerity.

Disillusionment with the government has fed the growth of the right, even

of the extreme right. In the town of Dreux outside Paris the semi-fascist *Front National* received 17 per cent of the vote in a recent by-election. Anti-immigrant racism has grown dramatically. On the other hand a series of bitter industrial disputes, often led by immigrant workers, has broken out.

The most dramatic was that at the Talbot car factory in Paris in December 1983, where North African workers led the struggle against proposed redundancies. Riot police were used to attack occupying factory workers, after a secret meeting by the 'inner core' of Mitterrand's cabinet.

By Phil Hearse

The policy of the main trade unions towards workers' struggles has been conditioned by their respective political allegiances. The CGT which is led by the Communist Party has until recently been reluctant to champion industrial struggles because of the participation of the CP in the government. Thus at Talbot the local CGT section opposed the immigrant workers' struggle and organised demonstrations against them.

A similar approach was taken for some time by the CFDT federation, which is closer to the Socialist Party. But after a decline in its membership, the CFDT made a turn towards participation in struggles. Thus at Talbot the CFDT section which led the strike. Being a more open and democratic union the CFDT also has to reckon with dissident class struggle oppositions, for example the 'self-management' current led by Richter.

It seems however that the CGT, and with it the CP, has decided that it is losing too much by standing aside from anti-government protest, and now has to walk a difficult tight-rope between participation in the government and opposition to its policies.

It's not only on the domestic front that Mitter-

rand's government is pursuing a hard right-wing line. Through French intervention in the Lebanon and Chad, Mitterrand has shown himself to be a staunch member of the Atlantic Alliance. France has supported the siting of cruise and Pershing missiles in Europe, and pressed ahead with its own plans to procure new and more modern nuclear missiles.

In his recent visit to Washington Mitterrand went out of his way to stress the 'affinity of French values and culture' with those of the United States, and repeated endlessly that 'we have not collectivised our economy'. Only on Central America does the French government have a major international difference with Reagan.

In the face of Mitterrand's rightward evolution the Communist Party faces an acute crisis. Its participation in the government, with four ministers, is its justification to its supporters for its policy of alliance with the SP. But while its departure from the government would be seen as a major strategic defeat, it cannot for long stay in a government which its militant supporters are beginning to oppose. The Communists' dilemma represents a victory of Mitterrand's long-term policy towards them — to drag them into the government and associate them with this right wing policies, then gradually moving further and further to the right.

With an absolute majority of Socialist Party deputies in the Assembly, Mitterrand can govern without the Communists. If they choose to stay in the government they are his prisoners. If they leave, they admit that their whole strategy has been a failure.

Two years ago the Labour Party magazine *New Socialist* carried an article on Mitterrand entitled 'So far, so good'. Doubtless the author, Dennis MacShane, was influenced by the democratic reforms of Mitterrand's first year — decentralisation of the administration, abolition of the death penalty, an extra week paid holiday for all employees.

But from any socialist point of view Mitterrand's government has been a failure. 'Euro-socialism' has in France, as in Spain, proved to have more in common with traditional right wing social democracy than radical socialist politics.



Mitterrand

Germany

Can a wall separate

THE DIVISION of Germany after 1945 created a time bomb which is still ticking away in the centre of Europe.

For a long time this bomb was forgotten. Recently however its subterranean ticking has become much clearer again.

Britain, France and the United States have sizeable armies stationed in West Germany. A large part of the United States' arsenal is stationed in Germany. Germany is in the frontline of any European nuclear war.

So it is hardly surprising that it is Germany that has produced the broadest peace movement; in West Germany the 'Greens' — a new political party whose greatest political appeal is against the missiles — in East Germany the most advanced peace movement in any East European country.

As part of our series on the key political questions confronting the European working class we print here an article by ERNEST MANDEL in defence of French soldiers on trial for demanding the withdrawal of the armies of occupation from Germany.

* * *

THE DIVISION of Germany took place essentially at the expense of the German working class and the

European workers' movement. For the immense majority of German workers the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic are mutual repellants condemning the working class to abstain from important political initiatives.

The working class of East Germany hates the bureaucratic dictatorship but, at the same time, instinctively distrusts the regime of Adanauer, Kissinger and Helmut Kohl, whose names signify social inequality, the threat of unemployment and speed-up.

The working class of West Germany itself is increasingly turning away from this regime. But it has no desire to exchange it for that of Stalin, Ulbricht or Honnecker. As a result of this situation the German working class is left fundamentally out of the picture of German politics. And since the German proletariat, more than ever, makes up the most important component of the working class of Europe, this weakens the chances for the socialist revolution in Europe and for seeing the creation of a Socialist United States in Europe.

Nevertheless today the capitalist crisis and, above all, the missiles crisis, appears to be reviving the German national question which has remained asleep

for 35 years. An unspoken anxiety is shaking up broad layers of the population of West Germany. They are aware that in the event of a nuclear world war their country will be threatened with destruction. They are faced with being wiped out in the very first hours of such a conflict. So the instinct for self-preservation is driving them to question West Germany's involvement in the international imperialist alliance — something which the great majority of them have ac-

cepted in the past.

Of course the West German working class' loathing of the bureaucratic dictatorship in East Germany has not diminished in the slightest. But they ask themselves whether the 'advantages' of capitalist property, which are gradually being undermined by the economic crisis, deserve to be defended at the risk of collective suicide.

The German people are not yet ready to immediately struggle for a reunified socialist Ger-



Anti-nuclear movement raises question of German unity

Behind the All-Ireland Forum

ONLY THOSE with extra-tinted rose coloured glasses would describe the deliberations of the New Ireland Forum as an attempt to draw up a blueprint for a 'new' Ireland, though spectacle it has been.

Proposed by John Hume after the swing to Sinn Fein in the Northern Assembly elections, the Forum first met in a blaze of publicity two weeks before polling in the Westminster elections.

Widely interpreted as an attempt to save the SDLP from electoral embarrassment, the deliberations of the Forum have been a mixture of charade and farce as politicians and parties jostled to look after their own interests.

Whereas the terms of reference openly excluded Sinn Fein, Forum participants have bent over backwards to incorporate the Unionist point of view.

A leak just before voting on the Abortion Referendum in the South showed the 'constitutional nationalists' deliberating on what exactly was the ethos of those who 'adamantly oppose nationalism'.

'Are we ready,' the leaked document asked 'to demonstrate our commitment to make uncongenial adjustments to our constitution?'

But as *Republican*

News argued the 'ethos' of loyalism is not a notion of the liberty of individual conscience, but more of a pro-imperialist racist ideology which owes more to Mussolini than Martin Luther.

By the end of September the Forum had to send out for more Unionism. Sir John Biggs Davidson returned with a lesson on the right of nations to self determination which somehow was meant to explain why you needed 'a Protestant state for a Protestant people'.

By Martin Collins

In November, they worked out that the cost of maintaining partition since 1969 had been £12 billion. In December gifted economists explained that a United Ireland was not economically viable.

Whilst Charlie Haughey insisted that Britain would go on pumping money into the North after the troops left, the first deadline for the final report passed by.

In January the Catholic hierarchy created a small stir by reminding the Forum that it thought that a majority had the right to see its wishes incorporated into the Constitution, warning of the grave dangers posed if the sanctity of 'family life' were not upheld. Politicians were immediately in a quandry about how they could make some gesture to the 'loyalist ethos' without criticising the church.

Things got worse as Catholic priests deepened their break with ecumenicism by throwing concepts like 'Bloody Sunday', 'Diplock Courts', 'Internment' and 'Informers' into the discussion. And still, little progress was being made on that final report.

Off went a delegation from the Forum to London to find out what kind of a 'new' Ireland might be acceptable to the British government.

Stories of bitter rows between the Coalition and Fianna Fail, a scandal involving the bugging of SDLP deputy Seamus Mallon's house, and Prior putting his foot in it all point to the proximity of the final report and the high stakes involved for all concerned.

The rift between the two middle class Southern parties is easiest to explain. Both are prepared to militarily defend the border and imprison Republicans. Both want to bolster the fading image of the SDLP and marginalise the influence of Sinn Fein.

But Fianna Fail must protect its image as being the 'more Republican' of



Charles Haughey

the two with the June EEC elections approaching.

Party leader Charles Haughey therefore wants to be seen as pushing the Forum to back proposals for a United Ireland. He has said that British withdrawal is a precondition for progress. Fine Gael on the other hand wants to be seen as 'statesmanlike'. They are prepared to back any formula as long as the British government will reply positively.

Options

A Forum report with a range of options for future discussion and a few measures which can be agreed on now would be ideal for them.

Similar differences and considerations divide the SDLP. The Forum was John Hume's idea. He needs an agreed report if he is to emerge as the new 'great thinker' who broke 'the logjam of Irish politics'. He has put forward a list of three options — a unitary state, a federation of six and 26 counties, and joint sovereignty.

Others in the SDLP like Seamus Mallon look to the EEC elections and the danger of a swing to Sinn Fein. They do not want to back a sell-out and so support the 'unitary state' option.

As Ian Paisley thunders out the message that Britain is planning a betrayal, his supporters (who have really little to fear) continue to chant 'no surrender'.

Prior affirms that the Loyalist veto will be upheld and ponders on how the debacle of constitutional nationalism might be turned to Britain's advantage. Of course the Assembly must be kept alive to give the world the impression it has worked, but if a promise of 'consideration' of joint sovereignty could produce cooperation from the South on extradition of republicans, and 'joint security measures' in the short term, it might be worth keeping an open mind.

Tory MP Michael Mates interviewed in the *Sunday Independent* asked: 'How could we possibly share sovereignty with a country that is not a member of our defence pact?' This prompted a reposte from Sinn Fein that for the privilege of seeing the Tricolour fly beside the Union Jack, northern nationalists were being asked to uphold the sectarian framework of the Six County state and renounce Irish unity. The South was being asked to join NATO and receive cruise missiles.

Peter Archer has said that he will be demanding a full debate in Parliament when the report is published. There is only one option that is in line with party policy of moving toward reunification of Ireland. That is the call for a 'unitary state'. Any other option will in practice be no more than a cosmetic for continued partition, continued sectarianism and continued repression.



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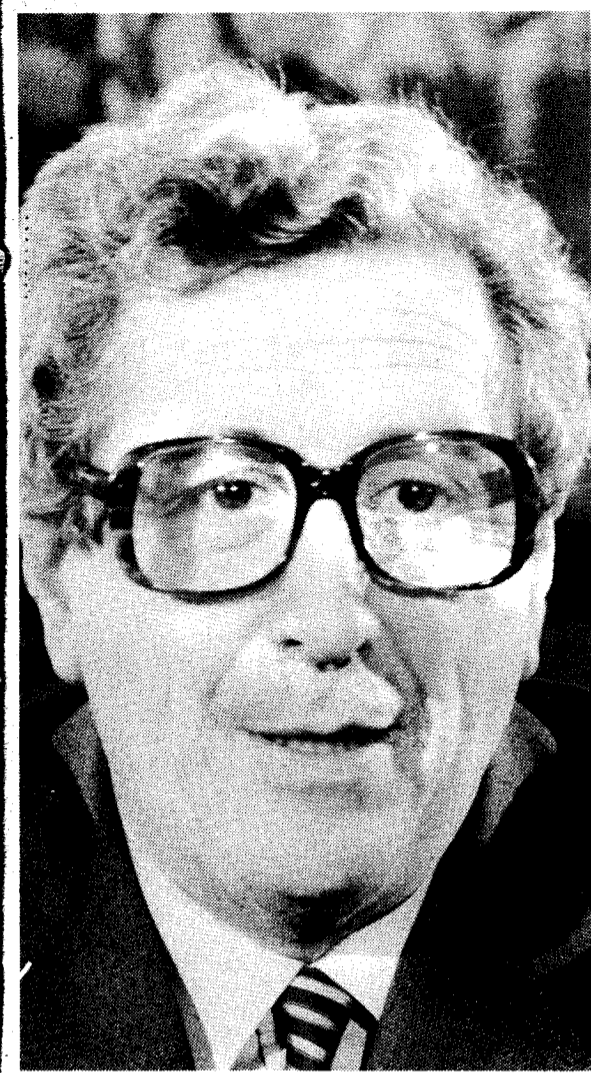


Photo: GM COOKSON

Gareth Fitzgerald

ate a people?

many. But they are increasingly becoming committed to the idea of a neutral Germany outside of the imperialist alliance and unilaterally disarmed. And because they are perfectly aware of the international context in which this change of opinion is taking place, they have a deep sympathy with the movement, with the same roots, which is developing amongst young people in East Germany. All this is giving birth to the hope of a reunited Germany at the price of its

neutralisation — a project moreover which the Soviet bureaucracy itself has put forward many times since the death of Stalin.

This awakening deeply worries the international bourgeoisie, and above all the French bourgeoisie. Not only would the imperialist alliance be greatly weakened by such a realignment of Germany, but the spectre of socialist revolution, and the socialist unification of the whole of Europe, would, as a result, acquire a new weight.

In order to respond to this threat the Gaullist leader Chirac and company are prepared to play with fire. Spectacularly overturning the classic positions of Gaullism they are ready to offer the West German bourgeoisie the alternative solution of a European nuclear army centering on defence of 'German territory' — that is to substitute a 'European bomb' for the 'French bomb'. The German bourgeoisie could, in this way, turn to its own advantage (and to the advantage of its own war preparations, which could be just as formidable as those of US imperialism) the rebirth of German national consciousness.

The international workers movement must in its turn be conscious of the historic risks involved in this adventure by the French and German ruling classes. It has every interest in moving in exactly the opposite direction.

As soon as there is an awakening of German national sentiment (which in the long term is inevitable), it is necessary, by a return to the situation of before 1948, that this sentiment be favourable to the revolution — and that this time round it is integrated into the struggle for socialism. That means: understand and explain that German reunification can only be achieved on the combined basis of a victorious socialist revolution in West Germany and a victorious political revolution in East Germany. The alternative is suicidal war.



Photo: GM COOKSON

Ernest Mandel

This also means understanding that the revival of national consciousness amongst the German working class, as well as their pacifism, can be transformed into a powerful motor of anti-capitalist and anti-bureaucratic movements. The condition is that they do not move out of the framework of the workers movement and of those profoundly democratic social movements which are their allies, and that they are in no way annexed by bourgeois political forces.

This is why the initiative of the French Landau soldiers, calling for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of occupying troops from Germany is so highly positive. It contributes to the objective of drawing the powerful potential of the German proletariat into the common struggle for the Socialist United States of Europe that the German nation will be able to be reunited into a United Socialist Germany by peaceful means.



Women in the Salvadorean revolution

SINCE the attempted insurrection of 1932 was defeated by the army with the massacre of 30,000 workers and peasants the Salvadorean people have been trying to put an end to poverty, hunger and repression. Seventy per cent of children under the age of five die each year from malnutrition. Sixty per cent of the population is without land or stable employment.

Salvadorean women have always been involved in the struggle against the national ruling class and US imperialism. Women students were in the forefront of the student movement of the seventies and the female dominated teachers' union ANDES has played an important role in the workers' movement, while its members have often helped peasant mobilisations in the countryside.

But until recently the vast majority of women workers and peasants remained isolated from the popular struggle. The macho ideal of women as passive, combined with women's double day of work in the factory or field as well as in the home, meant that few women participated directly in the struggle.

Women's demands were seen as marginal to the Salvadorean struggle and the only women's groups which existed were bourgeois feminist.

Few

In the last few years however things have been changing. Women's organisations have been formed to represent the demands of working class and peasant women and women are increasingly involved in all aspects of the struggle. They work in the diplomatic bodies of the FDR/FMLN and are on the leadership bodies of the politico-military organisations. Forty per cent of the FPL leadership is female.

Women are involved in the mass organisations and in the provisional governments of the FMLN controlled zones. They participate in barrio committees organising support for the FMLN among the poor of El Salvador's cities and one fifth of the guerrilla fighters are now women. The heavy involvement of women in the struggle is a reflection of the severe oppression they suffer under the present regime in El Salvador.

Life in the countryside for the whole Salvadorean peasantry is hard — with long hours, low wages, high unemployment and the constant threat of assassination by death squads. But for women, conditions are even worse. Many peasant women marry at thirteen or fourteen years of age and have had five pregnancies by the time they are twenty.

In the whole of El Salvador there is one maternity hospital and sixty-seven per cent of

women in the countryside give birth without any medical attention whatever. Women have a double day of work: they do a full day's work in the field as well as their domestic work.

Salvadorean peasant women are expected to supplement the family income by weaving cloth, making mescal (an alcoholic drink) as well as cooking, cleaning and looking after the children.

Six out of ten families do not have access to clean water and one third of all Salvadoreans live in one-roomed shacks. Sixty per cent of the population have an income of less than £140 a year.

Under these conditions women's tasks of keeping the house and family clean, cooking and budgeting the family income become harder and harder. During the harvest women's wages are three-quarters those of men even if they cut the same amount. Moreover, it is not even the woman who receives this wage but her husband who is paid on her behalf.

Men

In the factories of El Salvador women are paid on average twenty-five per cent less than men. Women constitute about seventy-four per cent of all unemployed and as a result, many migrate from the countryside and small towns to look for work in the big cities. There they work in conditions of near slavery. Maids are expected to be on call twenty-four hours a day, many are only allowed to leave the house one day a month and they have no rights to social security benefits and no contracts of employment. They are frequently subjected to unwanted sexual demands by their employers.

Once pregnant they are thrown out of the home in which they have been working, faced with no alternative to prostitution. The prostitutes who work

from San Salvador's 'Calle Celis' are constantly subjected to harassment by the police who make them pay bribes in money or in sexual services to stay out of prison. Working in tiny 'rooms' formed by cardboard partitions they earn about thirty pence a client.

By Gill Lee

There are now three women's organisations belonging to the FMLN/FDR. These are CUMS, the United Committee of Salvadorean Women, AMPES, the Association of Progressive Women of El Salvador; and AMES, the Association of Women of El Salvador. Set up in the last few years they have taken on the tasks of integrating women into the revolutionary struggle within El Salvador; working with Salvadorean refugees; and winning international solidarity for the Salvadorean struggle.

Six hundred thousand refugees, the majority of whom are women and children, have fled to refugee camps in Costa Rica, Honduras, Mexico and Nicaragua since the war began. Conditions in the camp are often deplorable.

In one camp of one thousand six hundred and eighty refugees, of whom over seven hundred were children under seven, eighty-two per cent were suffering from malnutrition.

Women's organisations help with health care, teach basic hygiene and also help organise work shops where refugees can learn the manual and technical skills they need to earn a living.

The women's organisation with the largest mass base in El Salvador is AMES. Set up in 1978/79 as a result of the struggles of San Salvador's women street vendors against police and state harassment, it now also incorporates peasants, factory workers, students, teachers and housewives.

Levels

AMES is involved at all levels of the struggle: giving logistical support to the guerrillas, organising women's committees in the barrios and has representation on the provisional government of Chalatenango. AMES also sees part of its work as propaganda within the revolutionary organisations over women's role.

AMES says that in order for women to participate fully in the struggle male militants must share housework and childcare responsibilities with their companions. They believe that the need for women to raise their consciousness of their oppression is necessary before during and after the revolution, and that the liberation of women is inseparable from the liberation of the Salvadorean people as a whole.



Operator at FMLN's Radio Venceremos

Muhammad Idrish must stay

MUHAMMAD Idrish goes before an Appeal Court on 9 May. If he loses his appeal then he will almost certainly be deported.

Muhammad came from Bangladesh in 1976 to study at Bristol University and married a woman from Scotland. He then applied to stay here but two weeks later their relationship ended.

Within weeks of their break up, he was told his application has been turned down. Since leaving university he has worked in different places as a social worker. Now, like 250 other black people

who are deported each month, he has become a victim of the immigration laws.

He was made a target for the government's racist laws, because of his work in the black community. NALGO — the local government union — are backing his campaign and carried a resolution at its annual conference in his support.

They have printed and distributed thousands of leaflets explaining his case. This has taken the issue into the labour movement and inner-city areas. Supporters of Muhammad intend to mount a big lobby of support outside the court when his appeal comes up.

Every anti-racist who can, should turn up at

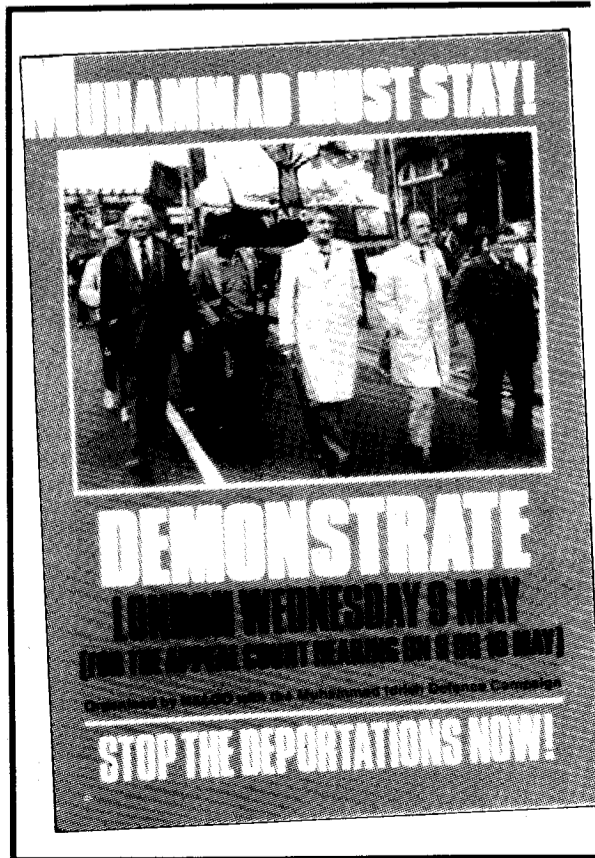
Temple Place, London — adjacent to Temple underground station — at 11.30am for a march on to Jubilee Gardens next to London's County Hall.

This will be addressed by Ken Livingstone and Clare Short MP. A senior NALGO official will also speak, along with another victim of the racist laws.

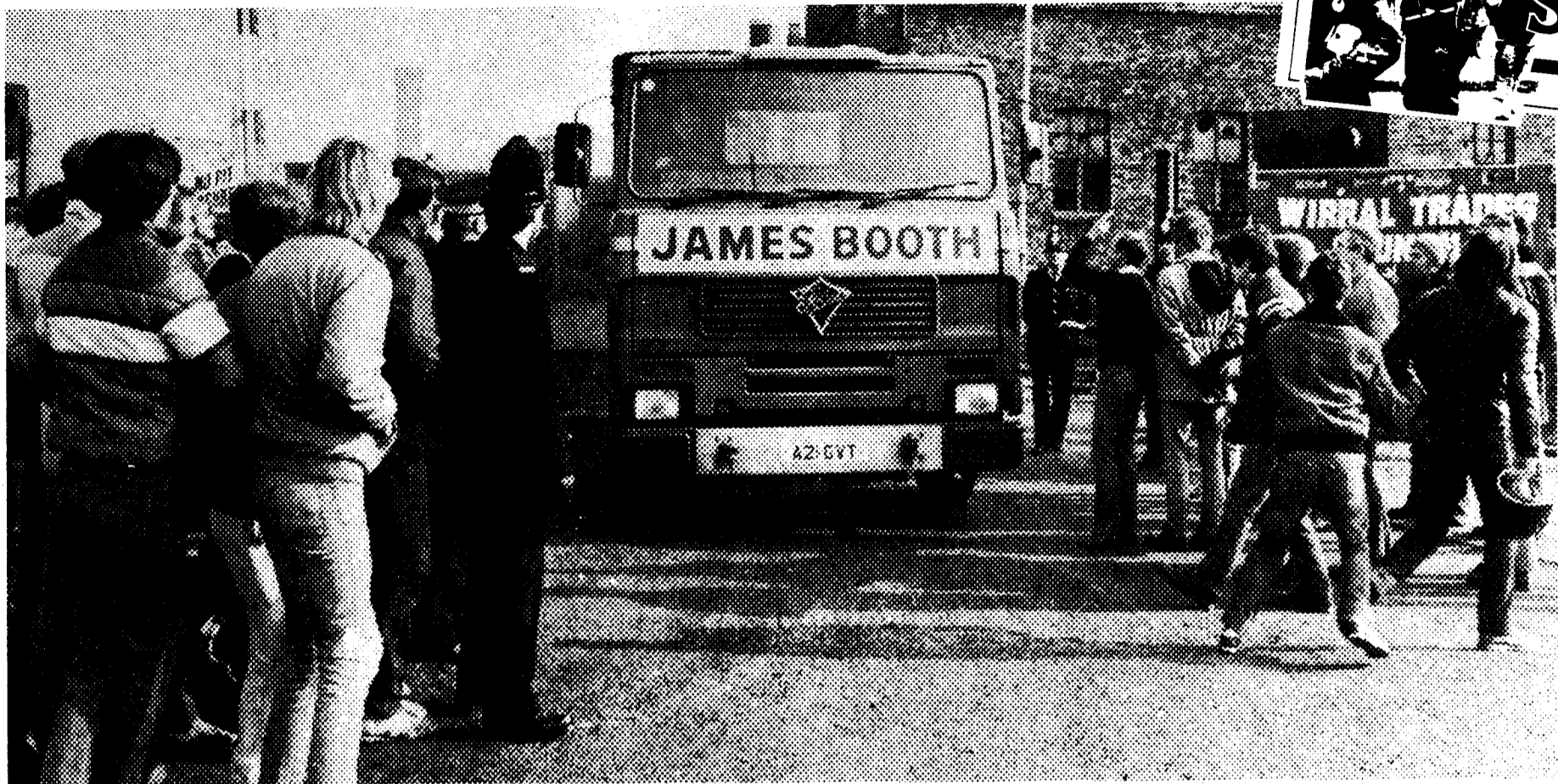
Coaches leaving Shaheed Udam Singh Centre, Soho Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, 8.30 am 9 May.

Bristol is also sending a coach — details from Graham Reid, 62 Bedminster Parade, Bristol 3 0272-667933.

London details from NALGO, 1 Mabledon Place, WC1H 9AJ 01-388 2366.



Merseyside backs miners



Birkenhead pickets act to stop movement of coal.

Solidarity with the miners

Briefing public forum
Friday 13 April
7.30pm
County Hall, London SE1
Speakers include: Tony Banks MP, Kay Sutcliffe (Kent Miners' Wives organiser), Kent NUM, Valerie Wise

Support the miners

Middlesborough public meeting
Tuesday 17 April
7.30pm
Middletown Social Club
Lindhope Rd.
Speakers: Easington colliery NUM, ASLEF
Organised by Cleveland Assoc. of Trades Councils.

Support the miners fight for jobs!

Public meeting
Friday 13 April 7.30pm
Hackney Town Hall,
Mare St, E8.
Speakers include:
Jack Collins, Kent NUM
Brian Sedgemore MP
Ernie Roberts MP
ALSEF, TGWU, LPYS

Called by: Kent NUM,
Hackney Labour Parties.



Benefit for the Cotgrave Miners

South Nottingham and Carlton Labour Party Women's Sections
The Narrow Boat Inn
Canal St
Friday 13 April
8pm till late
£1.50 (75p unwaged)

Support the Miners public meeting

Wednesday 18 April
7.30pm
Council Chambers,
Camden Town Hall,
Judd St WC1.
Speakers: Jack Collins (Kent NUM), Kay Sutcliffe (Kent Miners' Wives Action Group), Jeremy Corbyn MP and speaker from NUR.

called by Holborn and St Pancras LP; London Regional LP, Camden Trades Council and Hampstead and Highgate LP.

MOLES EYE VIEW



Compounding a fiddle



The police know a 'good' man when they pay him

SOME CALL it greasing a palm. The customs authorities and business call it compounding. So when Redman Heenan got into trouble for smuggling arms making equipment to South Africa they escaped prosecution by paying £193,000 in penalties.

One of Redman Heenan's non-executive directors just happened to be Tory MP Eldon Griffiths who is rather partial to the South African regime. Now when the firm's

subsidiaries got into trouble for illegal smuggling the senior directors kept Eldon well informed because as they say it might have caused 'a political stir' and even worse, some of them might even have finished up in 'stir'.

Meanwhile Eldon himself is just a little bit unforthcoming about it all, saying he expressed his concern and 'was assured the matter had been resolved by financial settlement.' Eldon apparently did not think there was anything amiss in the firm buying its way out of law breaking.

Now you can understand why with all that business experience the police federation have got him on their pay roll.

Moles Eye View is compiled by Bob Pennington. Contributions should be sent to arrive by Thursday am.

who had been patiently waiting for the constable to come and kill him. Which naturally Robinson did.

MacDermott explains this by saying he is satisfied 'the accused honestly believed he had been fired at and his life was in danger'. Only a bigoted supporter of terrorism could dispute what the learned judge said. The fact that no shots were fired and that neither Grew nor Carroll had a gun is neither here nor there.

If you let things like that clutter the legal mind you could never keep all those Brits in the north of Ireland and then what would MacDermott and Robinson do for a living?

MERSEYSIDE labour movement showed its support for the miners at the end of last week when pickets stopped coal imported from Rotterdam leaving Birkenhead's Vittoria Dock.

NUM pickets from Yorkshire and South Wales were joined by striking refuse collectors who have stopped work over holiday and sickness pay. Feelings are running high over the bad treatment by private contractors Waste Management, who stepped in when the Tory council privatised the service early last year.

The dock-side picket was also supported by the local trades council. Paul Davies, chairperson of Birkenhead Trades Council told Socialist Action:

There is over 5000 tonnes of coal at Birkenhead docks, which was dropped before the miners stoppage. Last week the word went round that the coal would be moved, so there's a picket to stop this.

On Friday only five

waggons went in to collect the coal, the rest were turned away. The miners' picket is supported by the trades council and the centre for the unemployed. And between 150 and 200 bin-men have been down. Dockers have also sent a delegation to the picket line, and NUS members are refusing to pilot in a coal ship waiting to unload.

The local labour movement is billeting the miners: men from South Wales are staying in Liverpool, and others in Birkenhead. And various unions are giving money to feed them while they're here.

This is a continuation of the solidarity shown by Liverpool railmen, when they refused to drive coal at the beginning of the week.

Southampton

By Mike Tucker, Southampton Labour Party member.

THE SOUTH EAST Region of the TUC has set up a weekly meeting support committee for the miners' strike launched at a meeting where all the main workplaces in the area were represented.

South Wales miners were represented at the initial meeting and delegations have been running an information picket at Fowley Power station on Southampton water.

Workplace tours have been organised and more are planned. The local Labour Party is now fully involved. A major rally is planned for 17 April at the Labour Club, 8 Queensway at 7.30pm with speakers from the South Wales NUM.



the next step

review of the Revolutionary Communist Party

No 46 April 1984

20p

The RCP hits the pits

I couldn't have put it better myself!

A Socialist ACTION

Evictions won't end the camp!



By Jane Kelly, Southwark Greenham Support Group

ABOUT 500 women brought Greenham to Central London on Saturday in a demonstration which kept 100 or so police running about for three hours.

Meeting in Leicester Square the women formed a chain and wound their way into Piccadilly Circus, Covent Garden, and Trafalgar Square. Despite repeated attempts by the police to break the demo up women kept reforming and reappearing in different places.

Singing the songs of the camp and clapping their hands they brought the issue of Cruise to London. Some of the women attempted to blockade the roads around Trafalgar Square the women formed a chain and

The evictions at Greenham will not end the peace camp. Moreover, it is clear that the actions of Greenham women all over the country will

continue to force the issue of Cruise and US bases to the forefront of people's attention.

What is needed now is a coordination of the many groups all over Britain that support Greenham so the energy and commitment of the women involved can make as big an impact as possible.

May 24, International Women's Day for Disarmament, is the next major focus. There will be regional actions up and down the country. On the Isle of Wight a peace camp will

be established outside the Plessey works, one of 20 firms in Britain with Trident contracts. At the end of the week the women hope to organise a mass meeting with the workforce to discuss the issues.

This kind of activity should be repeated up and down the country on May 24 to back up the women at the camp, who, despite the evictions, have no intention of going away.

CND calls march against Reagan

CND HAS put out the call for a mass demonstration in London on 9 June against the presence in Britain of Ronald Reagan President of the United States. The National Council of CND made this decision following the enthusiastic response from CND branches all over the country to the call for a demonstration by London Region of CND.

Reagan will be in Britain to attend a meeting of the heads of the richest states in the world. His

visit takes place just a week before millions of people go to the polls in the Euro elections. So one aim of his visit will be to show united support for American nuclear missiles in Europe.

A demonstration of hundreds of thousands against Reagan can make it clear that whatever the heads of state may claim, the majority of European people are against the deployment of nuclear weapons. It can be a show of mass support for 'A nuclear free Europe — from Poland to Portugal'.

This is all the more necessary when the manifesto of the European Socialist Parties — signed by the British Labour Party — avoids opposing nuclear weapons in Europe. So CND's June march will also be a focus for the left-wing of the labour movement to demand that the Labour Party campaigns on the basis of unilateral nuclear disarmament and links up with other Parties campaigning against Euro-missiles in the EEC elections.

9 June can be an enormous demonstration of opposition to the missiles and Reagan's war policy. It should be the top priority for every CND branch while the Labour Party must be won to give it official support.

Release Sarah Tisdall

JUDGES on Monday turned down Sarah Tisdall's request to appeal against her sentence for leaking information about cruise to the *Guardian* newspaper.

The Judge described her actions as a 'gross breach of trust', saying she must serve her sentence. He went on to say: 'It is a dangerous arrogance for anyone, either a Foreign Office clerk or a newspaper, to decide which laws they are obliged to obey and which they are not.'

In fact, of course, the only arrogance in the case is that of the Tory ministers, the judges and the *Guardian* newspaper. Tory ministers' arrogance in believing they can send people to jail for embarrassing them publicly. The Judges for believing they have the right to send Sarah to jail for six months as an example. And the *Guardian* for thinking it could hide its own hypocrisy by allowing Sarah to be prosecuted.

The overwhelming majority of people in this country are opposed to the American cruise missiles being stationed here.

Sarah Tisdall, in leaking Heseltine's document, was not threatening state security but simply acting in the interests of the majority of the population.

The 'due process of law' might have stood a chance of getting Sarah out of jail if the Tories weren't determined not to back down on anything in the face of the missiles movement and the miners' strike. The only force that can free her now and prevent further such 'examples' being made, is the

combined activity of the CND, the Greenham women and the labour movement.

CND in particular have an urgent responsibility to initiate a campaign to free Sarah. It should begin immediately with public meetings, lobbying, petitioning and demonstrations. The Socialist Society meeting in London last week was a beginning, but now the forces with some real power to do something must take up the cudgels.

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Saturday 14 April

Coaches leave Islington, Hackney and Stratford in the late afternoon for Betteshanger Miners' Social Club. Full details on tickets.

Sponsored by: Harry Cohen MP; Jeremy Corbyn MP; Kent Area NUM; TU Liaison Officers for CLPs in Hackney Nth, Hackney Sth, Leyton, Newham NW, Walthamstowe and Islington Nth, Islington Sth & Islington Nth CLPs.

For tickets ring 01-558 0069 or 986 6439