

Socialist ORGANISER

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**Demonstrate
this Saturday**

Saturday April 14 in Nottingham
Assemble 12 midday at The Forest
Speakers at rally include Tony Benn MP and
Yorkshire Area NUM President Jack Taylor

POLICE OUT OF THE COALFIELDS!



Martin Shakeshaft (IFL)

SUPPORT THE MINERS!

3% for nurses?

By Mary Williams

A SHROUD of secrecy seems to surround the current pay review body which is deliberating on nurses' pay. April 1 is when nurses are due to hear what pay rise, if any, this body is to award us.

Nothing has been 'leaked' to the national press, nothing has been sent to the NHS unions. Nothing has been done in advance to organise resistance to what inevitably will be either a paltry 3% or, as rumoured amongst nurses, a wage cut for student nurses and dramatic rises for ward sister grades and above to deepen divisions amongst nurses. That is all speculation, however.

What we do know though is some of the evidence that has been submitted to the pay review body. It seems that NUPE has emphasised parity with other professional workers — a neat little table shows how far behind librarians, primary school teachers and management executives is nurses' pay.

It also shows the tasks that nursing auxiliaries do — which they shouldn't be doing and seems to suggest that more money is the best reward! Although nursing auxiliaries should, of course, receive massive wage rises, we should not sanction the unfair workload that is placed upon them by using it as justification for a pay rise.

The report also stresses how nurses' earnings are below the poverty line and calls for a £32 a week flat rate minimum increase which is better than calling for a percentage increase solely. However it fails to pose a long-term solution which inevitably should be a sliding scale of wages, in line with inflation.

We don't want to be compared with policemen or firemen — our negotiators should not be going, cap in hand, saying how deserving we are. They should be giving us a lead, organising nurses to fight for a decent wage — because no pay review body will give us one.

Police guns

WHILE the Tories are using the police as a para-military strike-breaking force against the miners, Home Secretary Leon Brittain has now given the police 'permission' to carry submachine guns.

Twelve police marksmen are to be trained in the use of the 9mm Heckler and Koch MP5K quick-firing weapon which fires 14 bullets a second.

The official excuse for this development is that the weapons are needed to protect visiting Heads of State, and in particular President Reagan, at the Lancaster House summit in June.

But that just establishes a precedent for yet another ominous extension of the technology of policing and repression, which in reality is directed against real and supposed threats to 'national security and stability'.



Join the Labour Party
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A socialist NHS?

Martin Barclay, Secretary of the Cardiff NUPE No. 3 branch, who recently defeated an attempt to victimise him spoke to a meeting organised by Cardiff Labour Briefing to discuss 'Why we need a Socialist Health Service'. This is an edited version of his speech.

THE aim of this meeting is to discuss how we can take our response to the relentless Tory attacks on the NHS beyond a merely defensive fight.

If we are to convince people that the NHS is worth defending then we must go beyond what we already have and fight for what we need — a socialist health service that meets real needs.

I must admit, this is particularly daunting after the decision today by South Glamorgan Health Authority to mount such a massive attack on the service by privatising most of the ancillary jobs. But, in a situation like the one we are faced with, it is all the more necessary to spell out the alternatives.

Privatisation holds within it all of the Tory attitudes to the NHS. It replaces the notion of public care with the idea of private profit. It denationalises large chunks of one of the biggest areas of state expenditure. It drives wages even lower than the pathetic Whitley Council rates. It is, probably, a bigger attack on trade union rights than GCHQ, because no contractor is going to tolerate a union.

Finally, it means cuts in the level of service on an unprecedented scale, because NHS workers will be forced to cut corners on staffing and conditions to compete for their own jobs.

All of these capitalist reasons for privatisation need socialist answers because it is becoming more and more difficult to defend the status quo.

Cash limits

It was Labour minister David Ennals who, eight years ago, introduced 'cash limits' to reduce NHS spending. After all, it is less politically embarrassing to cut £50 million from a budget than to announce you are going to do away with 50,000 beds.

Four years ago, the Tories took up where the Callaghan government left off, and they've been cutting ever since.

Just after he came to office, Patrick Jenkin, the Tory Secretary of State for the Social Services rejected the findings of a government commission, the 'Black Report', as "quite unrealistic".

The Report found that in all areas of illness and death, working class people get a worse deal from the NHS than other classes.

We also get a worse deal than European workers whose governments spend far more per head on health than in Britain.

The Black Report showed that far from being a service that is free in all the points of need, the NHS is neither free nor an adequate service, nor does it cater for the changing health needs of our society. But what must have really stung the Tories was the fact



Rita Maxim (right) and others protest against victimisations at St Mary's hospital, West London

that the Report pointed the finger very firmly at poverty as the main cause of this inequality.

Low pay

It picks out stress caused by low pay and unemployment as a major cause of disease and it puts forward an 'anti-poverty strategy' costing £300 million a year. It also argues for a shift away from the prestige and status of hi-tech medicine to prevention and a community based service.

Of course all of this had been said already by socialists, but Black gave it enough weight to turn it into the basis for most Labour Party and NHS union policy. In fact, in the last four years, 'prevention not cure' as a principle has become so trendy that even an organisation like the BMA can call for 4,000 more General Practitioners (GPs) to be trained in the next ten years and a switch of resources away from hospitals to general practice.

Britain's 29,000 GPs deal with most of the illnesses with 6% of the resources while hospitals deal with only 2% of illnesses and get the bulk of resources.

What underlies the bias

£7m scandal

THE National Health Service is being looted of £7 million a year by the London Rubber Company.

A report in the Observer (April 1) reveals that the LRC has kept a contract to supply surgical gloves to the NHS thanks to the help of MPs in top civil service positions.

LRC's gloves cost 5p more than similar-quality products from competitors.

The lid should be lifted off all such profiteering by opening the books of the Health Service and revealing the full details of all the gain made from it by private suppliers.

towards acute medicine is the power of the upper reaches of the medical profession. These obscure figures sit on Health Authorities of course, but, more importantly, they set the terms for the whole decision-making process. Within the overall financial limits, they say who gets what treatment where, when and how much.

The power of this reactionary group made Nye Bevan back down in 1946 when he "filled their mouths with gold" to stop them wrecking the NHS. It also ensured that the Wilson government in 1964 failed to challenge the existing structure of the service, despite all the guff about the 'technological revolution'.

Pouring profits

The same power has turned the NHS into a conduit pouring guaranteed profits into the pockets of the drug companies and suppliers like BOC.

Unless it is seriously challenged it will ensure that Labour Party policy on the NHS will stay just that — policy.

A recent Labour Party circular concludes: "An important aspect of the 'Save Our Health Service' campaign is to move beyond a mere defence of the NHS by presenting a positive perspective for the development of the NHS."

Weight that against Neil Kinnock's statement to the Perth conference of the Scottish Labour Party recently where he said: "We are not going to be able to say 'yes' to everything. It is no good there being a galaxy of promises which prevents us from being able to fulfil hardly any of them."

What are the hopes for a radical and expensive transformation of the NHS if such a leadership is left to its own devices?

That private companies should make profits out of illness is certainly wrong. But

we must go beyond apolitical moralising.

We must also get away from the idea of the welfare state as a safety net for the old, the poor and the sick: We must point out that people get sick, age prematurely and fall into poverty precisely because we live in a capitalist society, and not because they happen to be less fortunate than others. What else should we expect under a system where the profit motive permeates every aspect of our lives — and deaths?

Defending and extending the NHS is the immediate aim, but in itself, this is not socialist — it only becomes so when we link it to a wider anti-capitalist perspective.

Right now this is very easy. The Tories are determined to hand the NHS over to contractors and they are just as determined to stamp out any opposition so that the slightest resistance to them becomes a fundamental challenge. In this pressure cooker it is the job of socialists to draw out the political implications of the

campaigns against the cuts and privatisation.

Any fight about staffing levels, for example, begs the question, whose staffing levels — ours or theirs? What levels do we think are safe, and what levels are needed to improve the kind of care that patients get?

A fight over the closure of a small, geriatric hospital like Thornton View in Bradford means a fight for a more caring approach to the nursing of the elderly, away from the distant, multi-storey car parks they call modern hospitals.

The Thornton View occupation shows that health service workers, along with relatives and the local community, are the best people to run hospitals and the health service.

Our job is to tie in the demands that arise naturally and inevitably out of these struggles and combine them with the kind of working class socialist policies that will transform the NHS. We must provide a bridge between now and the future — otherwise we will have no future.

Victim of the law



Solidarity won Anwar Ditta's fight

THE Home Office has decided to proceed with the deportation of Vinod Chauhan.

Vinod fell foul of the racist immigration laws because his marriage to a British woman broke up.

Vinod has had strong support from the local labour movement and community organisations in Tameside, Greater Manchester, where he lives.

For further details and offers of support, etc., contact: Vinod Chauhan Defence Campaign, c/o 18 Firs Avenue, Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancs. Tel: 061 330 5784 or 061-226 1751.

Stand firm with Liverpool

ON Thursday 29 March Liverpool's biggest general strike since 1945 took buses off the roads, trains off the tracks, closed schools and council offices and brought the city to a near standstill.

The Liverpool labour movement rejected Neil Kinnock's advice that the council should do the dirty work for Thatcher and cut workers' living standards by raising rents and rates.

At the Liverpool-Everton Milk Cup final at Wembley, a section of the crowd saw Kinnock and started shouting: "How did you get in? Don't you know we're all socialists here?" A sign of the times.

Kinnock may not have been prepared to support Liverpool Labour Council's stand, but 30,000 council workers were, and so were other sections of the working class in the state and private sector, some of whom had come from boroughs outside the city.

At least 25,000 marchers converged on the Town Hall to say that they were prepared to resist the continued Tory attacks on local services. Individual workers were well aware of the issues involved and explained their mood of defiance.

Honest

"It is easy to sit in pubs and complain about what the government is doing to Liverpool," said one industrial worker, "but by coming out here we can at least say we are doing something about it. The Labour Group were elected to maintain jobs and services, and they are doing exactly that. They have been attacked in the media for being nothing other than completely honest."

Another worker employed by a neighbouring council said: "I have been on demonstrations in the past, but this has been the best. I'm only here because I am thinking about my kids' futures. There is nothing down here for them, and this is the only place we can protest."

The big myth is that the demonstration, and the council's fight to implement an 'illegal' budget, are all part of a Militant master-plan for 'Marxist-Trotskyist' revolution.

In actual fact, the Militant Tendency are less than 14% of Labour councillors in Liverpool, and are by no means the most ardent oppositionists to the government's strategy, or to Kinnock's Pontius Pilate actions.

It reflects badly on some so-called left-wingers in other Labour-controlled councils that they have swallowed, hook-line-and-sinker, the media myth that the council is motivated by a desire for self-aggrandisement on the part of Militant and Derek Hatton.

If the media were right, then the council would not have even half the support it has now got.

On the line

Forty-two councillors would not be putting their future and that of their families on the line. The Joint Shop Stewards Committee and the Militant carries small numbers of pickets but have come in for a lot of support of the council. Even the local Community Party, which has been smarting in recent years at its decline in support, has been a strong supporter of the council's stand.

Move this resolution

THIS CLP fully supports the militant fight against pit closures and job losses. We support the militant use of flying pickets - regardless of the Tory anti-union laws - to secure the maximum unity and effectiveness in the strike.

We call on all sections of the movement to make clear their support for the miners' fight and their challenge to the government.

We call on the CLP to break all deals with the government in the NEC, WSA, WSA and other bodies and to not make any new such deals.

We call on the Labour Party

Bas Hardy reports from Liverpool

port for what the council is doing.

The budget strategy is a plain ordinary 'common-sense' response of honestly motivated working class people to the devastation that capitalism has inflicted on Merseyside. The strategy was best summed up by Tony Byrne, Chair of the Finance Committee: "The issue is about jobs and services. The budget is no more than that."

"Since 1979 Liverpool has lost 40,000 jobs in the private sector, 5,000 jobs at the Town Hall. There are 60,000 unemployed in the City, and in parts of Liverpool youth unemployment is running at 90%."

"I believe it's a crime for one single council job to go on the City Council when there are 60,000 unemployed. There are 20,000 unfit homes in Liverpool. Young married couples sleep in the same bedrooms as their children. They cannot make love in a proper fashion."

What then of the six Labour rebels who received the tacit support of Kinnock in their opposition to the Liverpool Labour Group and District Party? This group represent the old right wing Braddock rump of boss politicians. Few, if any of them, will be standing for Labour in the local elections on May 3. It is significant that this group received a Special Branch escort into and out of the council chamber last Thursday, and were taken by the Branch to "undisclosed locations" before they returned home.

Mandate

The Liverpool Council at present can't levy a rate because of Tory, Liberal and right-wing Labour opposition. Labour's strategy will be put to the electoral test on May 3. All indications are that the predominantly working class electorate will return Labour councillors in greater numbers than before and give them a clear mandate to carry out the 'illegal' budget strategy in defence of jobs and services.

It is up to the rest of the labour movement to clearly defend this mandate against the Tory government and Tory laws - and against those Labour leaders who are trying to undermine the heroic fight of Liverpool's labour movement.



Control of the council by Militant (above: editor Peter Taaffe) is a media myth. Only 14% of Labour councillors are Militant supporters.



25,000 marched on March 29

'The movement wakes up'

SOME people who in the past thought that we should accommodate the government now realise that there is no room for accommodation.

The only way we can defeat this Tory anti-union legislation, the only way we can force the government to retreat, is by positive united struggle on the part of the trade union movement.

I think the forces of the movement have gathered a bit more strength recently. Despite people resigning from their unions at GCHQ, the fact is that the rest of the movement suddenly woke up.

I think there should have been a more positive response, and an initiative immediately the government made its announcement. There was too much talking, and not enough action at the word go.

Should the action have included the workers at GCHQ itself?

It's not for me to tell trade union leaders what to do, but let me put it this way. Had I been a trade union leader with my workers in that situation, I would have immediately urged strike action. I don't think anything else could have been done.

How do you see the situation inside the Labour Party?

The mood in the Party, clearly, is one of wanting unity. I think it's a mood of wanting to rally behind agreed policies. I don't think people want any backing away from the policies.

They also don't want any great constitutional upsurges and changes at the present time. There is this deep feeling that we are beginning to recover, and let's keep a united front and concentrate our fire against the Conservatives.

That is the mood at the moment, and I hope that it is a mood that will continue positively - positively in the sense that I hope we don't lose sight of the fact that we do have policies which have been carried at the last Party conference: on the question of nuclear weapons, on a basic socialist approach to jobs and alternative economic policies, an extension of public ownership

Eric Heffer MP, chair of the Labour Party, spoke to John Bloxam about the situation in the labour movement now



and so on; and as far as the EEC is concerned, still a policy of saying let's get more Members of the European Parliament, let's do what we can to get a bigger representation, let's do something about trying to change the Treaty of Rome from inside - and if we don't get that, in the last analysis, then we should come out.

Don't you think the feeling for unity in the movement can sometimes stifle necessary debates and the fight for accountability?

When I say that there is a great mood for unity, what I mean is that people don't want to see the leaders of the Party doing as was done during the General Election, and conducting a campaign against the decisions of the movement.

But open discussion within the Party is absolutely fundamental.

I think it was Nye Bevan who once said that you can have unity but it can be the unity of a graveyard. If we got to that stage, then we'd have a monolithic type of organisation as they have in the Soviet Union, and there would be nothing democratic about it and nothing socialist about it.

Of course you continue to have the discussions inside the Party about policy, about greater democracy, and so on and so

forth. But I think that the overriding thing at the moment is that the Party members say: 'For God's sake, don't let's hand things to the media so that they can seize on every argument we have and then use it against us as a party'.

But if we ever came to the stage where in the name of unity policies were distorted or changed or altered, that would not be a genuine unity. It would be a phony unity.

Do you think mandatory reselection is under threat?

Well, I've read about in the newspapers, but I haven't had anybody come to me as chairman of the Party. All I can say is that at the Organisation Sub-Committee [of the Labour Party National Executive] recently it was not raised, and at the end of the meeting the chairman of the Organisation Committee, Sam McCluskie, said: 'If anybody has got any ideas about wanting to change reselection, forget it'.

I'm assuming that Sam was just saying what he thought was the mood of the movement.

On the positive side, are there any particular democratic reforms that you think ought to be pushed?

This year, and perhaps for a year or so ahead, I don't think there is any fundamental change of the kind that we did have to have.

We can return to that at a later stage, when we're in a different atmosphere - when we've won back a lot of support.

I think there are some changes. The Org. Sub. is putting forward to the NEC a suggestion on the election of women to Labour Party regional committees, that in future they will be able to do this by decision of each regional conference. So if in London they wish to elect the women a certain way, they will be allowed to do so. If in Scotland they want to do it another way, they can do so.

I also think that we have got to look at the question of women's representation on the NEC. I think we've got to proceed fairly carefully so that we don't have a great upheaval, but I think it's got to be done.

I think we should have the women elected at the Party conference, but in such a way that it is a direct input from the women's organisation. I don't want to see the Party conference, as it were, pushed aside - if we denigrate and downgrade the Party conference, then that could be very serious for the future - but I think we have to get to find a way to meet the requirements of the women in the movement. I think they have got a good case, and we have got to work out the most sensible way to do it.

Also I think we've got to reconsider now the whole question of affiliated organisations. I believe it was quite right when we founded the Party to have the Fabians, the Social Democratic Federation, the Independent Labour Party, Poale Zion and other such organisations affiliated. There are an awful lot of organisations now which have members who are not members of the Party as such, but could be affiliated, and then perhaps their members could be urged to join the Party as individual members.

There is a committee established to look at that.

At the moment I would say that we should hold back on any further serious changes.

Palestine conference
May 19

By Andrew Hornung

PLANS are already well advanced for a Labour Movement Conference on Palestine to take place on May 19.

The first steps towards this ambitious project were taken some months ago, when the Labour Movement Campaign for Palestine approached various other campaigns on Palestine with a view to mounting a big conference, with a special emphasis on trade unions and trade union rights.

The proposal was received sympathetically by Palestine Solidarity and by Women for Palestine and the London Office of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) agreed to support the move. Since then many MPs and leading union officials have offered their sponsorship as has the AUEW-TASS.

The task is not an easy one. Not only is the Zionist lobby in Britain extremely strong — it has influential MPs including the last two Labour Prime Ministers and the support of trade union leaders like Bill Sirs of ISTC — but its central message has been part of the "common sense" of the British labour movement for over half a century.

The idea that Jewish people have a right to settle in what used to be Palestine and build their state there while the Palestinians have not, is a view strongly entrenched in the British labour movement.

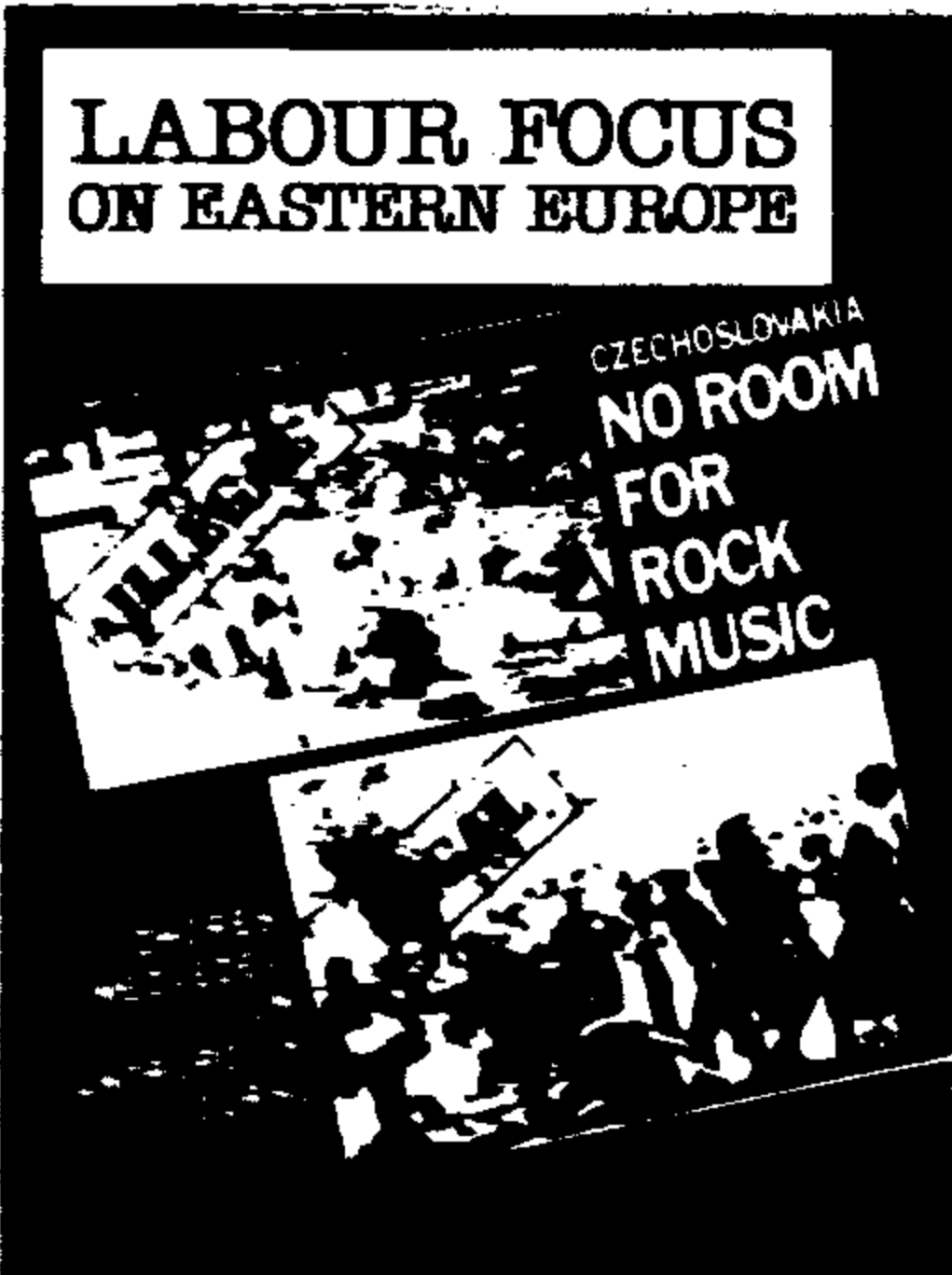
Today, under the cover of a humanitarian concern for the victims of the Hitler Holocaust many people — including a large number on the left — find themselves supporting a state — Israel — which is racist and expansionist.

Taking these issues into the labour movement means taking into the movement the questions of imperialism and the link which sections of the labour movement itself have with imperialism.

Two years ago the Labour Party adopted an Emergency Resolution which condemned Zionism and supported the national struggle of the Palestinian people.

The May 19 Conference provides a platform for re-raising the issue and mounting a drive within the labour movement to establish a firm commitment to the Palestinian cause and a firm opposition to Zionist and imperialist oppression.

We urge all readers to try to get their labour movement organisations to send delegates to the conference.



Box 23 136 Kingsland High St. London E8

Ireland and the left



JOAN MAYNARD made Ireland an issue at the Broad Left Organising Committee conference in Sheffield on March 24th.

"It astounds me," she said, "how the British working class movement ignores the issue of Ireland — the hell that goes on there and keeps on coming back here."

"Britain is responsible for dividing Ireland without the consent of the Irish people. There must be something

wrong with a state like Northern Ireland which can only be maintained by Special Powers Acts, Emergency Provisions Acts and Diplock Courts. The law is now being used in Northern Ireland as an adjunct of military force.

"The training for the police action on the picket lines in Nottingham was done in Northern Ireland. The labour movement must grasp the nettle of the question of Ireland."

"What's going on there is a training ground for the army to be used against workers here."

"Ireland should be reunited — that's the only solution, a united Ireland. They've got to have the right of self-determination."

The Militant tendency, dominant in the conference, put up two speakers from Ireland to answer Joan Maynard.

Their approach was to ignore all the concrete and specific political questions, such as the democratic right of self-determination, the Border, the Catholic/Protestant conflict, etc., and instead talk in socialist generalities about some ideal solution in the sweet by and by.

"Fundamentally the problems workers face in Northern Ireland are exactly the same as workers face in Britain," said Mickey Duffy from the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast. "The only solution is the struggle for socialism, North and South."

A speaker from Southern Ireland equated the IRA with the Protestant paramilitaries, and called for "a mass Labour Party in Northern Ireland" as an answer to all these sectarians."

The decisive question is: how do we get from Ireland as it is now to an Irish Socialist Republic? Militant ignores this question because it has no answer to it. The fight for socialism in Ireland cannot be separated from a fight for a consistently democratic and anti-imperialist solution to the inter-communal conflicts there.



Rogues' gallery at the EEC summit

Behind the EEC row

LABOUR front-benchers are busy bickering with the Tories about whether Britain is getting a good deal from the current EEC negotiations. But the issue of how the costs of international capitalist reorganisation are divided among the different ruling classes is — or at least should be — of little interest to the labour movement.

Besides, the argument over the British budget contribution has now been narrowed down to a difference of £150 million in the 1985 starting level for a new contribution schedule. £150 million is a lot of money — but very small change in Britain's overall state finances.

The Financial Times came closer to the essentials when it commented on the March 31 agriculture ministers'

agreement: "Despite reservations, last weekend's deal is at least a step along a route that Europe's steel-makers, shipbuilders and miners have already been treading for several years".

Although workforces in EEC agriculture have declined as drastically as in those heavy industries, the Common Agricultural Policy has provided much more cash to lubricate that rundown. Now, with the expansion of the EEC and the worsening position of capitalism, the CAP is being revised and made more austere.

The big farmers will still do very well. The smallest farmers and farm workers will feel the squeeze — and so will working class families as they pay higher food prices.

These are the issues which should concern the labour movement. How to protect working-class living standards by automatic cost-of-living escalators in wage agreements. How to take over the big farms and run them under workers' control, and how to safeguard the livelihood of the smallest farmers.

How to increase food production for the benefit of the 800 million people worldwide who live constantly hungry, rather than cutting production or producing for expensive stockpiles. How to work out a Europe-wide workers' plan against the EEC-organised rundown of the heavy industries.

Nationalism is no help to answering any of these questions.

Ninety killed in Sikh clashes

OVER 90 people have been killed since the beginning of March in clashes between Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab area of India.

The Sikhs, a religious sect which split off from Hinduism in the 16th century, are concentrated in the Punjab, and are demanding special religious and provincial rights.

India's constitution theoretically gives each state extensive autonomy, but in practice the central government has frequently intervened against state governments and come into conflict with minority ethnic and religious groups.

India's ruling Congress Party is supposedly secular, but the problem is made worse by frequent identification of Indian national consciousness with the majority Hindu religion.

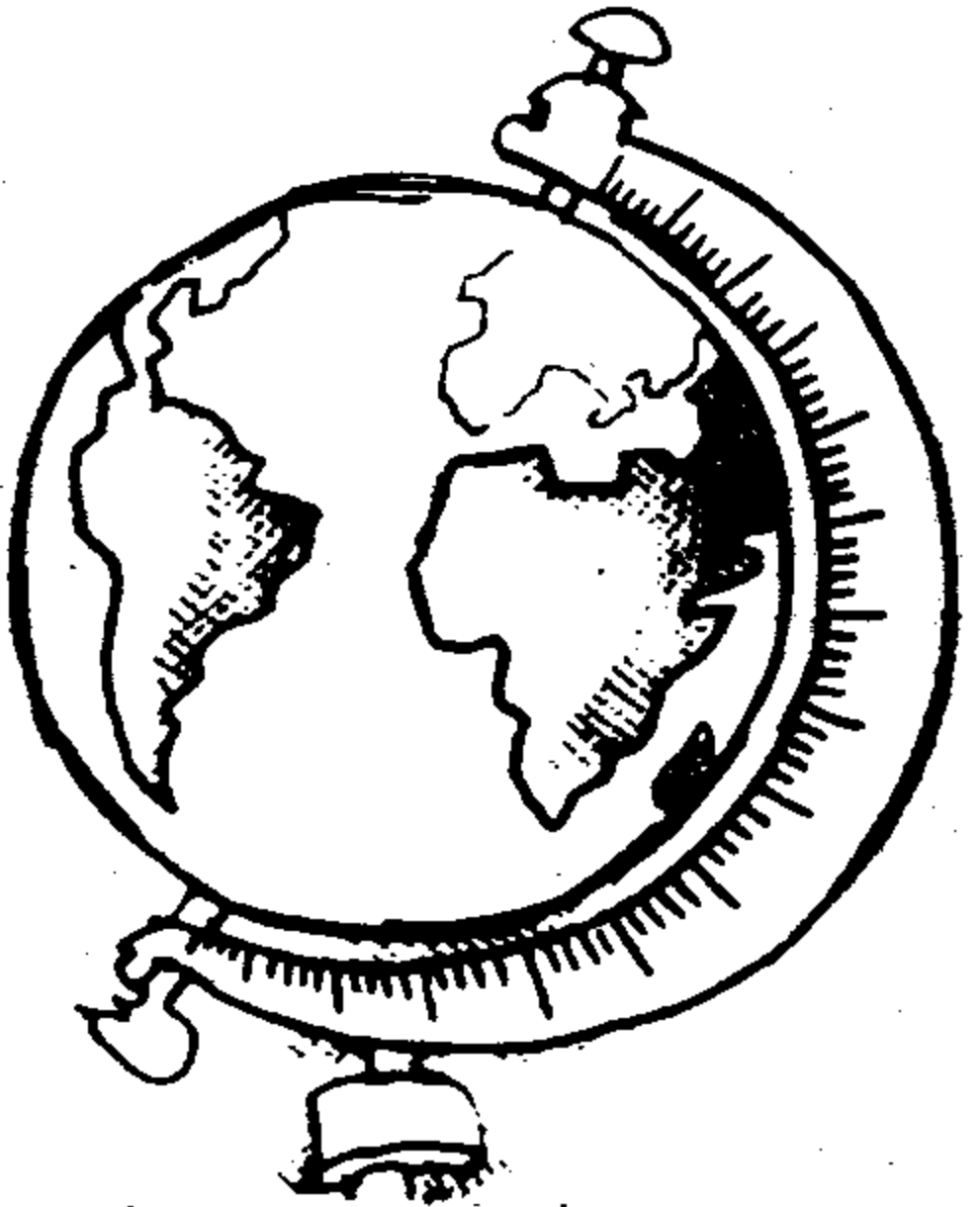
Unlike some other groups in conflict with the central government, India's Sikhs are better off than the average.

They were heavily recruited into the army under British colonial rule, and still make up 11% of the army (they are only 2% of the total population of India). The president of India, the Governor of the Reserve Bank, the Chief of Air Staff, and the Bombay Commissioner of Police are all Sikhs.

Punjab is one of the better-off states in India where the 'Green Revolution' has been relatively successful, and the Sikhs (52% of Punjab's population) are more likely to be landowners there than landless labourers.

Only the fullest and most flexible rights for minority groups, however, can allow communal conflicts to be overcome and clear the way for socialist class-struggle politics in India.

WORLD



BRIEF

El Salvador

EARLY reports on El Salvador's presidential election indicate that the Christian Democrat, Duarte, secured about 45% of the vote, less than required for victory on the first round.

This means that there will be a run-off sometime in May between Duarte and the extreme rightist D'Aubuisson, who got 30% of the vote.

Meanwhile, it has been reported that the Democrat chairperson of the US House of Representatives Appropriations Sub-Committee has warned Reagan that escalating violence in El Salvador make it unlikely that he will get the \$ 62 million in military aid that Salvador's government has been demanding.

The Democrat, Clarence Long, was in San Salvador when a civilian court released Captain Avila, who is charged with the murder of two US land reform advisers in 1981.

Honduras

President Cordoba of Honduras has exiled General Alvarez, a member of the military high command. Alvarez was central in the current US-Honduras joint military exercises.

Cordoba has told US ambassador Negroponte that Honduran foreign policy will remain unchanged.

World torture

PAKISTAN, Turkey, the USSR, El Salvador, Guatemala, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Zaire, Uganda are singled out in a recent Amnesty International report as practising particularly widespread and brutal torture.

The report claims that one government in every three worldwide is using torture as a "tool of state policy".

Italy and Spain are among those charged with using torture. Amnesty says that suspected members of the Red Brigades jailed in Italy have alleged "burning with cigarette ends, exposure to jets of icy water, twisting of feet and nipples, tearing of hair, squeezing of genitals, and the use of electric shocks."

In recent years Amnesty has criticised mistreatment of prisoners by the British Army and RUC in Northern Ireland but stopped short of calling it 'torture'.

David Owen

NOT heard much of David Owen recently? Well, he's been busy.

Between April 1 and 4 he was shut up in a special meeting of the Trilateral Commission, a sinister international capitalist think-tank.

And before that he was busy drafting the report to be discussed at that meeting, on the world prospects for capitalism and imperialism.

The co-authors with former Labour foreign secretary Owen were Japanese politician Saburo Okita and the ultra-hawkish former US national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski.

Socialist ORGANISER

Stop all coal!

Industrial Special

VICTORY TO THE MINERS!



BY ROAD, rail or sea – all movement of coal must be halted.

The decision of the TGWU, the National Union of Seamen and the rail unions to instruct their members not to touch coal provides a vital means of pushing the miners' strike forward.

In particular it can provide the means for a breakthrough in Nottinghamshire by closing the 'merry-go-round' system which links the pits to the power stations.

But despite setbacks this requires an intensification not a relaxation of flying pickets. Head Office

instructions are in themselves insufficient. They must be policed and deepened by miners on the ground.

Our job is not only to halt all movement of coal but to use this to take the argument into the power stations and explain to the workers there that the miners' struggle is their struggle and the struggle of every worker in Britain.

There is tremendous latent support in the wider movement. It must be mobilised.

The lies of the media must be answered. Even the yellow press, Mail on Sunday, publishes a poll which shows that when 'don't knows' and 'won't says'

are excluded 60% of miners want a national strike.

Every local Labour Party, every union branch, every stewards' committee must in the next few days put the miners' strike at the centre of all their activities.

- *Victory to the miners!
- *Intensify the picketing!
- *Boycott all coal movement!
- *Bring out the power stations!
- *TUC: call a 24 hour general strike!
- Organise for an all-out general strike.



Daws Hill, Warwickshire: miners arriving for work by coach meet police and pickets

Miners '72

Close the pits, close the country

IT would be self-deluding to pretend that today's miners' strike is anything but an uphill struggle. The miners are divided. The price is now being paid for the weaknesses of the past period. Conditions are very different from those prevailing in the victorious struggles of the early '70s.

Nevertheless, a look at those strikes can provide lessons and encouragement for miners doing battle today. 1969-1972

On January 1 1947 the post-war Labour government nationalised the mines and the miners took a holiday. The industry was falling apart. Truth to tell the bosses were glad to get rid of it in exchange for high compensation.

And it made little difference to the miners who had fought the long bitter years for public ownership and who sang the Red Flag that freezing New Year's Day.

As Lawrence Day, ex-NUM General Secretary, commented: "Far from seeing a realisation of his hopes and dreams, the miner can look back upon the post-war period as a time of confusion and disappointment. He has been persuaded to greater effort by successive governments and he has responded. He has been crushed by government policies which have obliterated whole mining communities in the national interest and he has accepted that tragedy in the manner born from years of living and working with imminent disaster."

Until the mid-sixties the majority of miners worked for payment by results. In many areas this produced strong organisation at pit level. It was needed. Right wing leaders like Sir William Lawther, Sir Sidney Ford and Communist Party member Will Paynter were in bed with the bosses.

As Alf Robens, chair of the NCB said of Paynter, "His purpose was to lead men away from damaging the industry and away from the destructive influences that were challenging the official leadership. Paynter was still a Communist which made his speech all the more remarkable but his devotion to the union and

By John McIlroy

the men always came before his party affiliations . . . He told his hearers that he accepted that the Board's offer of 9/6 (45p) a week on the minimum was the most the industry could afford. Paynter saved the day. Harold Wilson was on the platform that day and congratulated Will Paynter on his courage."

There was a lot of that kind of courage around the top of the NUM in the '50s and '60s. Right wing giants, men who made Joe Gormley appear a pillar of principle, trod the boards, their treachery dwarfing the pitiful antics of the Sid Vincents, the Trevor Bells and the other supine squirts of the '70s and '80s.

Nonetheless, with piecework, the miners climbed the wages league table throughout the '50s. By the turn of the decade, many faceworkers could earn up to twice the national average.

There was another side to matters. In 1955 the closures began. Between then and 1970 the number of pits was halved from 600 to 300 and the workforce fell from 700,000 to 270,000. Initially most miners found work easily. Later it became more difficult.

By the end of the '50s international shortages of coal which had put the NUM in a good bargaining position was coming to an end.

The Wilberforce Report in 1972 could claim "from a position in which average weekly earnings in coal mining had stood well above average earnings in manufacturing industry, the industry found itself in 1971 in the reverse situation where its workers earned substantially less on average than those in manufacturing."

This was accomplished through the replacement of piecework by what was called the National Power Loading Agreement. The 1966-7 NCB report specifically stated that with this measured-time system, "wages can be more effectively controlled."

As Wilberforce commented through the new system the NCB, from 1964, ". . . had



Yorkshire miners in dispute, September last year

aimed to reduce wage drift by removing wage bargaining from pit and area level to the national level."

The introduction of measured day work (MDW) went hand in hand with the fear of redundancy. The number of days lost on strikes per 1,000 employees collapsed from 778 in the mid-'50s to 225 in the early '60s, to 125 in 1968.

As the jobs bonfire flamed, the NPLA was used to level wages down into national rates. Miners actually suffered wage reductions in the heart of the prosperous sixties while productivity soared.

One widely publicised example at the time was faceworkers at Houghton Main: in 1966 they were earning 100-120 shillings (£5-£6) per shift. By 1971 they were

getting the NPLA rate of 89s 10d (£4.50) per shift.

But the militancy which had characterised the years 1900-1926 and which had smouldered through the thirties, was not quite burnt out. A storm was gathering.

In the autumn of 1969 the NUM was claiming an increase of 27s 6d (£1.37½) and a reduction in working hours. The claim was piss poor. It was less than many workers were winning in increases.

Pits in Yorkshire stopped. So did some in South Wales. On the second day of the strike Alf Robens accepted the claim. The militants stayed out another fortnight. They were attacked not only by the board but by new general secretary Lawrence Daly, who having campaigned on a programme of "guerrilla strikes" now argued that the powder should be kept dry for a big struggle in 1970.

The Board's 1970 offer of £2.50 against a claim of £5 was the highest they had ever made. In relation to the NPLA, inflation and the successful militancy of other groups of workers, it did not amount to much. 55% of the miners voted for strike action.

In those days you needed a two-thirds majority. Daly went back to the table. Yorkshire miners went on flying pickets. There were stoppages in Yorkshire. 50,000 out of 70,000 came out. In South Wales, Scotland, Kent and Durham over 100,000 miners struck.

The movement was defeated by lack of leadership from the left, a red-scare press campaign and the kind of right wing chicanery Jack Jones and Sid Vincent are trying on today.

after a vote on the Yorkshire Executive, 43-33, for an all-out strike, (so close because secretary Syd Scho-

delegates to change their votes) Syd advised the 33 delegates to get their pits back. That's democracy for you!

Instead of calling a delegate conference, the NEC organised a national ballot. The momentum had gone and it favoured a return to work.

Nonetheless lessons had been learnt which would pay off in 1972. It renewed confidence and it revived the flying picket.

When the 1972 strike began again over a derisory offer, the odds looked stacked against the miners. Heath was seen then as a firm and decisive leader like Thatcher today. He had had the power workers for breakfast.

After a bitter stoppage, the postal workers had been decisively beaten. His policy that each big wage increase should be smaller than the last was gathering momentum.

"Coal stocks away from the pits", The Times said on 6 January 1972, "are large enough to withstand a strike for weeks". They added, "if it does not spread".

There was a total stock of 31.8 million tonnes. Defeat was indeed certain "if the strike did not spread".

The militancy was intense. At 140 pits all the safety men were withdrawn. Feelings bottled up for years broke forth.

It was all too much for Gormley. Faced with the first national stoppage since 1926, he muttered "the men are being a damn sight more militant than we would want to be."

Too true. Taking the strike into their own hands, the rank and file picketed the docks — Cardiff, Middlesbrough, Hull, Dover. Imported coal was sent back.

Next, the power stations were ringed and movement of coal by road and rail halted.

To stop coal being taken to Battersea Power Station miners commandeered a ferry boat and addressed the crews of the coal boats with loud-hailers.

This was necessary because as the dispute began, the EETPU were negotiating for power workers. Joining their claim to the NUM's would have toppled Heath two years ahead of schedule. But Frank Chapple came to the rescue and settled for what the miners were being offered.

The need to try to bring the power workers out as well as picketing to stop coal movement, however, should not be forgotten today.

By the third week of the duel, three power stations were out of action.

another crunch was the coal depots. There were 130,000 tons of coke at Saltley where Scargill won his spurs.

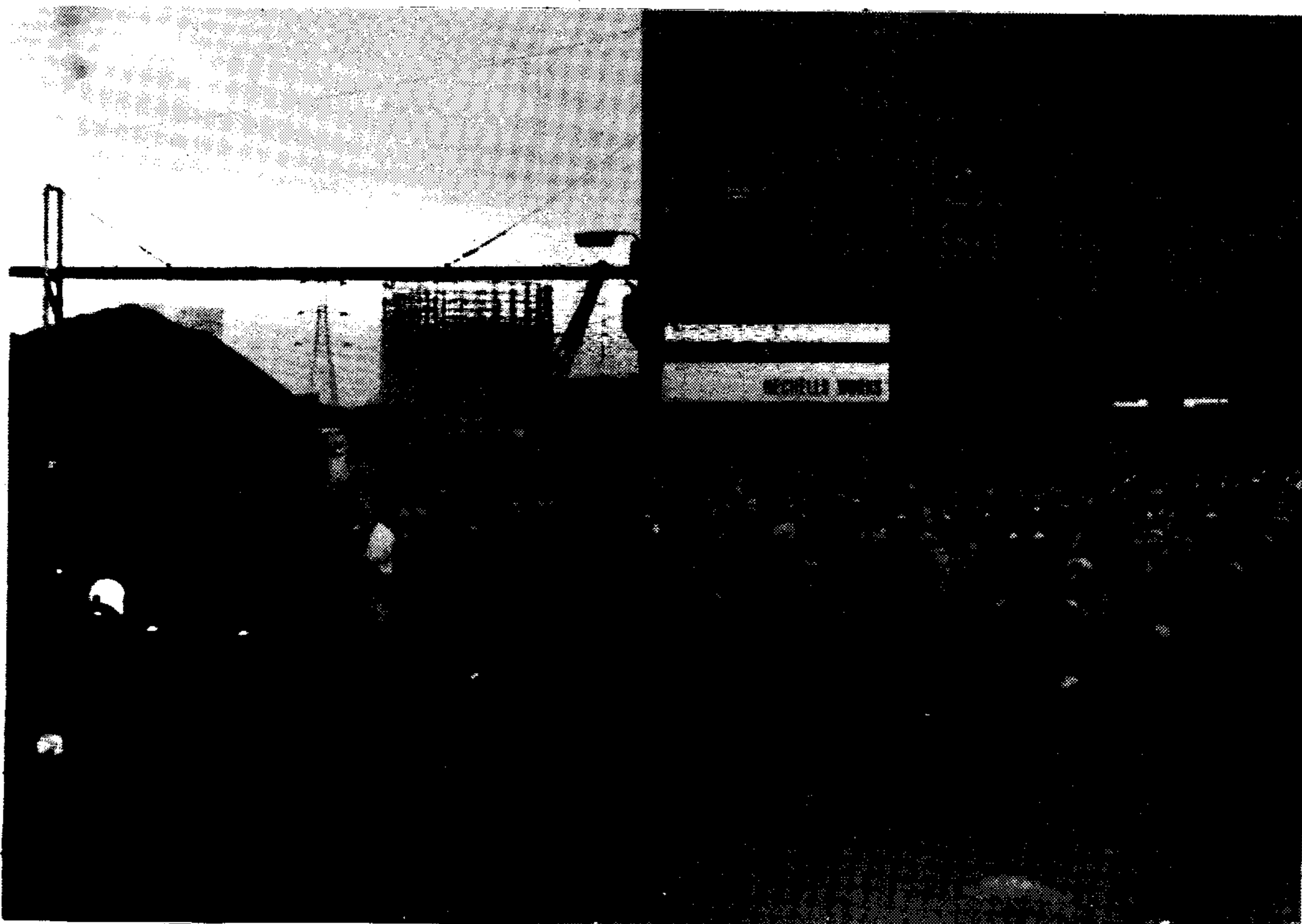
A picket began with nine members on February 4, by the following Monday there were 600 pickets from local factories building sites and Warwick University.

A meeting of the AUEW Birmingham East District voted for a walk-out on the Thursday. 11,000 workers gathered at Saltley and the gates slammed shut and stayed shut.

After seven weeks with Britain blacked out, Heath sued for peace. Lord Wilberforce, in charge of the face-saving inquiry, stated "We looked into the whites of their eyes and calculated how much we could get away with."

The miners didn't get the full claim, but they won a great victory. For the first time since 1926 they were really back in business.

Close down the mines then close down the whole bloody country. That was the logic of a miners' strike in 1972 and it remains the only logic for a miners' strike today.



Mass picket of a Birmingham depot, 1972

... '74 ... '84

How the miners cracked the Tories

ONE of the weaknesses of the 1972 strike was that, as is not uncommon in union struggles, the leadership was amazed at the success of a strike which more than any other was built and pushed forward from below.

The number of rank and file miners involved in fighting the strike in 1972 was unbelievable. Around 8,000 workers were said to be involved in picketing within the first week. By the end of the strike some 40,000 miners were said to have been involved in the flying pickets and the mass pickets.

Once faced with negotiations, the leadership reverted to type. One of the concessions the Wilberforce settlement imposed was a clause extending the agreement by four months. In future agreements with the NCB would terminate not in early winter but in february. So if there was a breakdown in negotiations the miners would be taking action in the spring, a far less suitable time.

In 1973 there was a downturn in struggle as Heath, aided by the union leaders recovered from the twin debacles for him of the miners' strike and the Pentonville dockers. With some strokes reminiscent of the nimble tread of the feet of Fred Astaire choreographed by Vic Feather, Hugh Scanlon and Jack Jones, he made the switch with dexterity from free market economics to incomes policy.

Joe gormley was on hand to juggle the conference claim of the miners around until winter ended, and settle in March under Phase II of the incomes policy for a swiftly conjured up £2.29.

The lefts had not pushed hard. 'You can't go over the top twice in two years was the orthodox wisdom.

But for 1974 such a push began early. From the moment the July conference decided on a rejection of the wages policy and a demand for new minima

of £35, £40 and £45 for surface, underground and face workers a frisson of fear ran through the establishment.

Heath had run out of options. There was talk of a general strike and a last stand. But like Will Paynter before him Joe Gormley was a noble savage whose moral courage and love of high living might pull the Tories' chestnuts out of the fire.

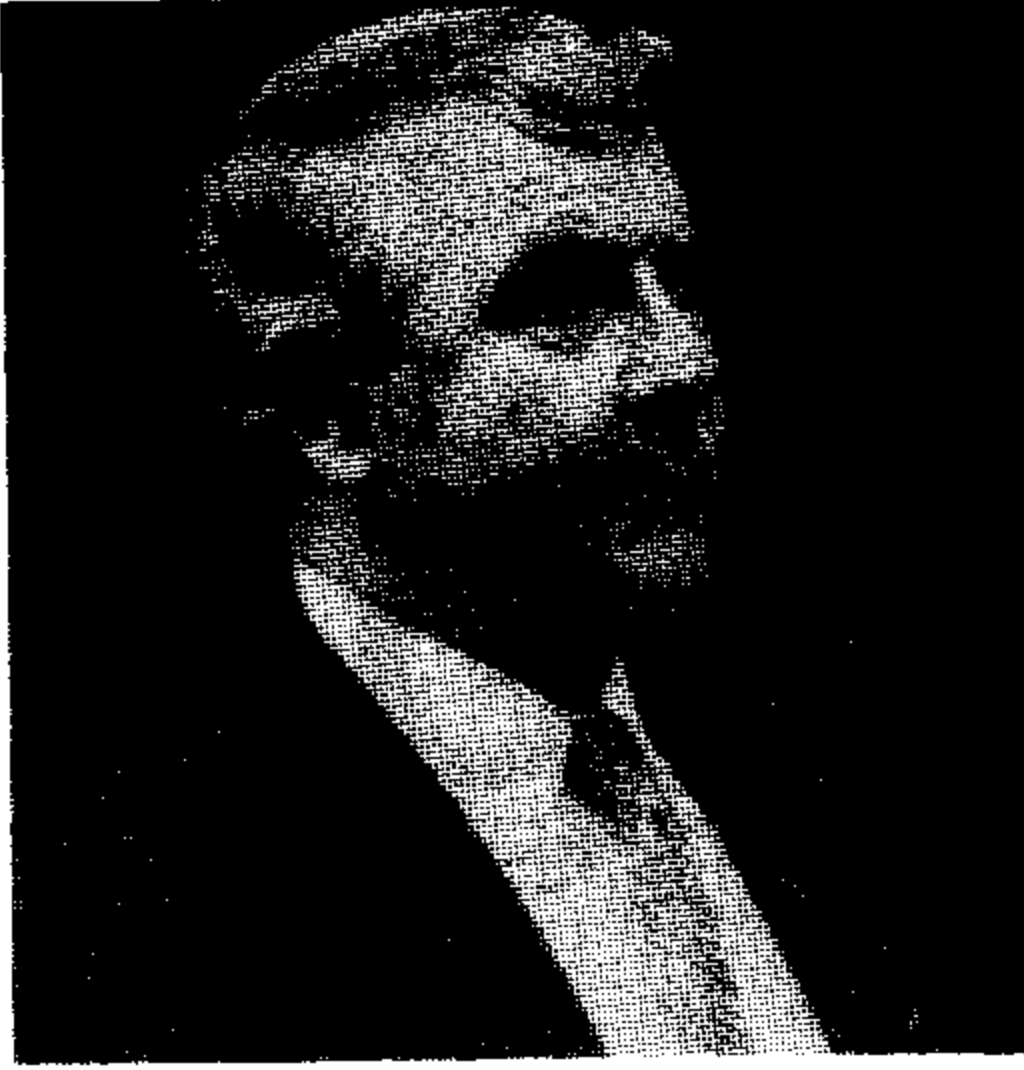
And when negotiations failed to progress satisfactorily and a Special Conference was called for October 1973 the Bolton Boozer was first to the podium. In a matter of moments, Joe's motion for a complete overtime ban encompassing even safety and maintenance work had been carried and Joe was in the bar annihilating his second pint of bitter. "The ban," he informed — with increasing incoherence — the reporters who purchased his subsequent pints, "would ensure the miners would grind to a halt within a few weeks . . . days . . . hours . . . minutes . . . seconds!"

All of this took just 90 minutes. The overtime ban lasted more than two months. The left fell into line behind Joe though they started from widely differing ends of the political spectrum there was at this time little difference between Joe Gormley and Lawrence Daly.

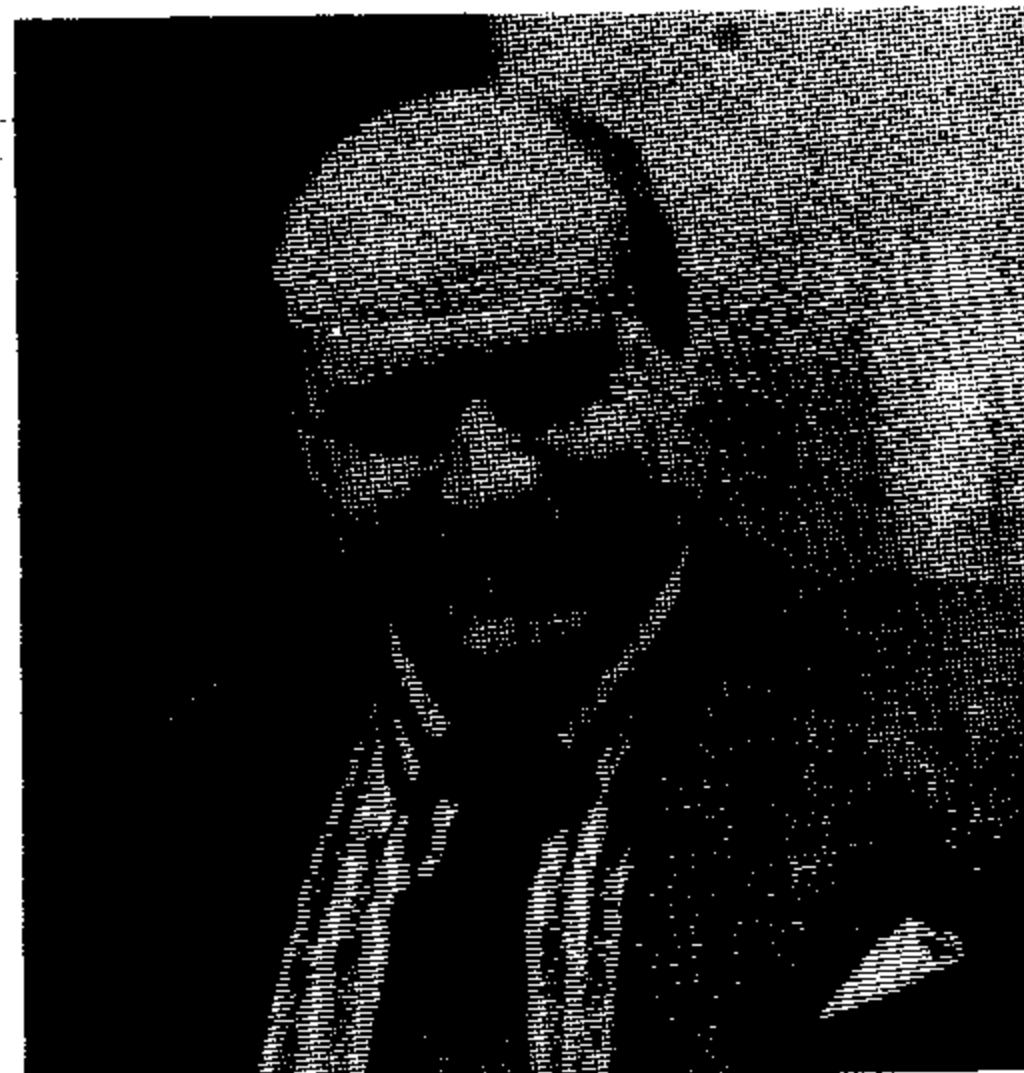
Daly was even more enthusiastic than Gormley about the ban. "Coal production will not slowly grind to a halt" he lectured the Morning Star, "supplies will drop speedily".

By the end of November this seemed to be the general view on the left. rom Joe gormley's point of view it cut across any preparation for a strike.

In December his call at the executive for a strike ballot was defeated. Joe was seen as attempting to derail a successful tactic. Militants who argued that the time had come to move forward were seen as playing into his hands. The ban itself would do the job.



Joe Gormley



Lawrence Daly

have seen a clear run to March and another small settlement.

But Heath decided to go for the miners. Like Thatcher today, he wasn't willing to rely on his collaborators in the trade union leadership.

He decided to put the frighteners on, hoping to isolate the NUM.

Just before Christmas he put the country on the three-day week. Despite government propaganda, there was three months' stocks at the crucial power stations in mid-January. Heath's move backfired and so did a vicious media campaign. A mood of anger swept the pits. Calls came from the lodges that the time had arrived.

At the Executive meeting on 24 January, a move for a ballot was won. The result was a massive 80% for a strike.

Given the lack of preparation this was amazing. The majority in 1972 had only been 58%. There was a feeling of hatred against Heath, a feeling that the harvest of the earlier victory had been denied the miners, a sense that now was the time to fully settle accounts.

But Heath and Gormley were still in there battling for Britain. On 7 February, Heath called a General Election rather than face things out. Gormley announced the next day that the strike should be called off until after the election. A wave of resolutions called for his resignation. The executive voted to fight on.

But the struggle was very different from 1972. Picketing was cut to a minimum. There was little involvement. In reality things were hanging on for the ballot box.

With a minority Labour government installed after the February 28 Election, the executive again didn't maximise its bargaining position. Faceworkers got the full £45 but underground workers got £3 and surface workers £4 less than the full claim and concessions were made on holidays. Most shameful was that the settlement was to be operative from March 1974, not November 1973.

Yes, the fight is political

IAN MacGregor is absolutely right to argue that this strike is about politics. The Sunday Times is right to claim that "If Mrs Thatcher loses she will be left presiding over a country which is not worth governing."

We need to stand four square with the miners but we also need to develop political answers which will enable the working class to break through from the pattern of Labour governments we have known in the past.

The main task facing the miners now is winning the strike. We have to point out to the waverers that Arthur Scargill has told the truth. He has been right in the past and he is right now.

*In 1977 he argued that the bonus scheme would be divisive and he was 100% right.

*In 1982 he alleged that a hit-list existed and he was right.

*A year ago he explained the extent of Tory plans and he was right again. Thatcher and MacGregor are still telling lies.

A job lost is a job lost to our class forever.

A future of industrial barbarism awaits those who keep their jobs if the union is beaten. Compulsory redundancies in Nottingham, Lancashire and Staffordshire will be on the agenda if the union is beaten.

As the Report of the Select Committee on the Mines pointed out: "If the scale and pattern of redundancies in 1983-4 is repeated in 1984-5, the number of miners aged over 50 will be relatively small by the end of the year."

There is never a "right time" to fight. The time of year is wrong, the bargaining balance embodied in the large coal stocks is wrong. The time is tough. But the time is right.

If miners stand up now they have a chance of turning back Thatcher. A defeat now can only intensify existing weakness, strengthen Thatcher's and MacGregor's bargaining hand, lead to recriminations and demoralisation and make another national stand very difficult indeed.

The main task is winning the strike. But it is not the only task.

Winning would strengthen the miners and the resolve of every other militant and the nerve of every waverer in other unions and industries.

But in itself this is insufficient. It would still leave Thatcher and MacGregor there for another round. We have to think not only of deepening and extending the strike but of the future of coal as long as we realise that without the strike, future plans will be utopian schemes.

Nationalisation has failed. The strike illustrates that. 1972 and 1974 illustrate that.

Now, a decade after the miners toppled Heath, the boss class is trying to return the pits to the 1930s.

We must not simply oppose privatisation. We must point to a future where the workers own and control the wealth they produce.



Capital already bleeds the mines. The Financial Times points out: "If the UK (mining industry) were to enjoy the same levels of subsidy as that granted to other EEC countries, the industry's finances would in themselves show a profit."

West Germany subsidises its coal at £8.6 a tonne, the French at £17.2 per tonne, the UK at only £3.2 per tonne.

Meanwhile, since 1974, interest charges have risen by 642% to a total of £341 million. To the immense benefit of the finance houses, 98% of the NCB's assets are financed by interest-bearing loans.

A discussion has to start in the NUM as to how an industry which exists for the benefit of capital can exist for the benefit of the workforce. How can that clause which states one of the NUM's objects to be "to join with other organisations for the purpose of and with a view to the complete abolition of capitalism" be implemented, whether that capitalism is of the free market or the state capitalist variety?

Some of the starting points we must argue for are union veto of all pit closures and job loss and the sharing out of work between all existing miners with a reduction of hours and no wage reductions.

We must argue for the finances of the NCB and its suppliers and customers to be opened to the NUM and for the companies which have spent years cashing in to be taken into public ownership.

We must argue for all debts and charges on the NCB to be cancelled.

But we must state and restate that old fashioned nationalisation has failed. e need a system by which the workers who produce the coal manage the mines as part of a planned fuel industry in a planned society.

It is essential that a discussion of these issues, dead as a strong force for many years, should revive in the mines and in other industries.

We must raise all these points in relation to winning the strike.

The Tories have a revolutionary strategy. They wish to rip up society as we have known it. They want to change British society from what they see as a seedy, run-down holiday camp, into a slightly relaxed version of Auschwitz.

We cannot just answer this by defensive measures such as strikes, essential as they are.

we must plan to rip up today's society in the same way as Thatcher and MacGregor. We need a socialist vision and a socialist programme.

e need to urgently think through how, if politicians like Thatcher are "left presiding over a country which is not worth governing", they can be replaced by a government which will act in the interests of the working class and move in the direction of building socialism.

What we can do

WHILE Neil Kinnock dithers, what can your Labour Party or union branch do to help the miners?

*Invite a miner to your next meeting.

*Run off leaflets supporting the struggle.

*Take collections at every workplace to ensure that the issue is raised and to ensure that funds already spent on food, petrol and accommodation are replenished. Make union and party funds available to the NUM.

*Make all Labour Party facilities, rooms, telephones, printing, available to the

NUM. Labour councils should be urged to place council facilities at the disposal of the miners.

*Get your MP to make a statement of support and get to the nearest picket lines.

*Make a list of people who are prepared to picket in consultation with the NUM.

*Build miners support committees involving union branches, stewards' committees, trades councils, GMCs, and Labour councils.

*Arrange accommodation for visiting pickets.

*Write letters to your local paper. Try to get somebody on local radio supporting the miners.



The Minework

Introduction

The future of our pits and towns is threatened today as never before.

The Government and NCB are determined that 70,000 jobs and 70 pits will go. With them will go our villages.

And that will not be the end. The Tories would like to privatise the coal industry. They are trying to turn the clock back 40 years. They are trying to destroy the nationalised industry past generations fought for.

But there is an alternative.

We should have a properly supported nationalised coal industry.

Even without economic recovery, huge new industrial, commercial and domestic markets are available for coal. The nuclear programme must be stopped. Exports could be increased.

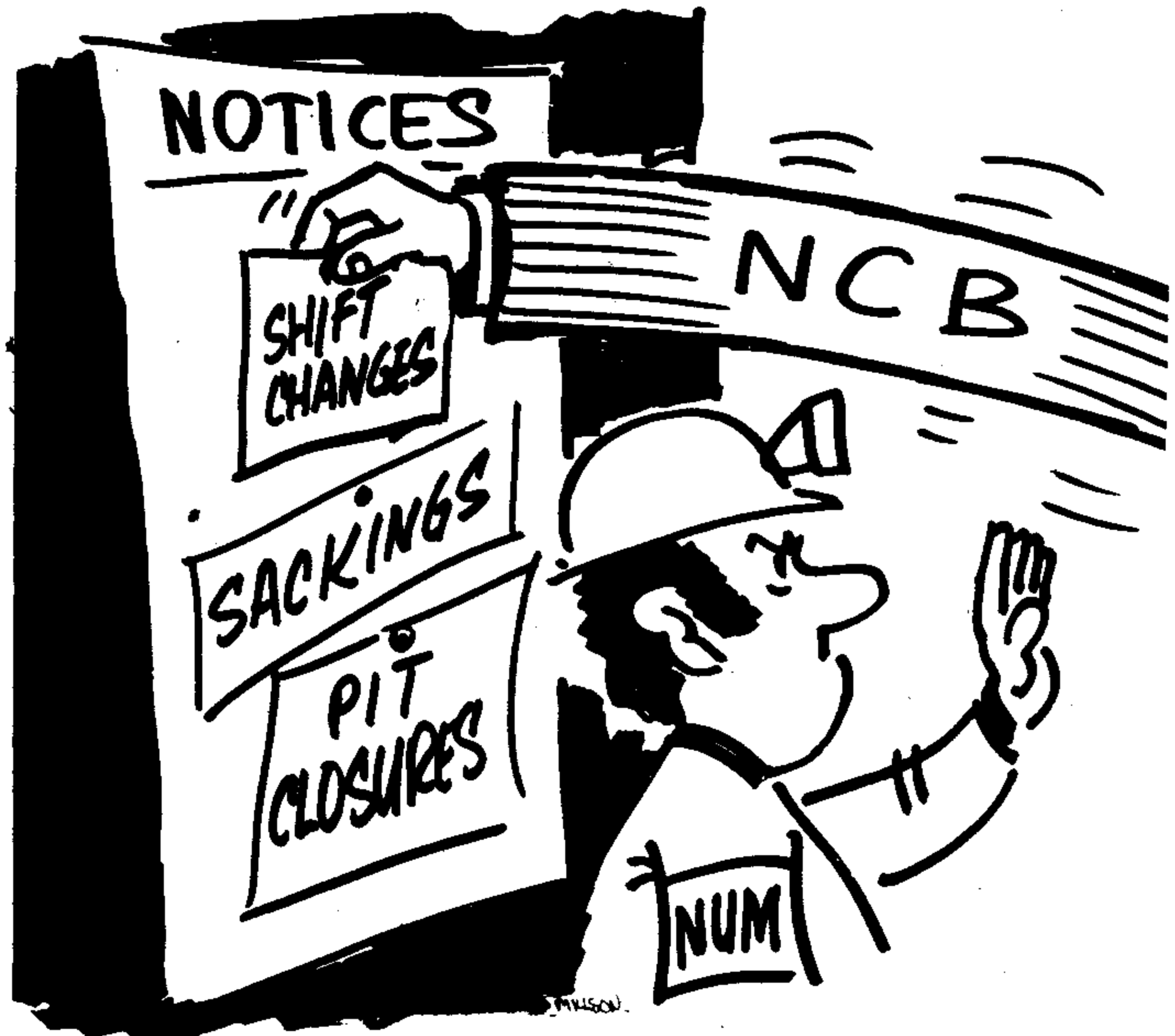
With more markets for coal and better ways of producing it, working hours underground could be shortened. Miners could retire earlier.

The cold wind blowing through the coalfield is bringing a message of doom. But we must fight for our alternative: coal for the country, not dole for the miners.

In your pit

THE tough and harsh new regime in the industry has brought closures and sterilisation, harassment and sackings. Since Ian MacGregor started as the new Chairman of the Coal Board on 1 September 1983, the screws have been turned on pits and works:

- The rate of redundancies has been stepped up – it is now 450 per week.
- The rate of pit and works closure has increased.
- Big modern pits as well as smaller pits are in the firing line as:
 - machine shifts are cut back drastically;
 - developments are shelved and seams closed.



- Consultation is being broken off and agreements torn up.
- Union Branch Officers face stepped-up harassment.
- Large valuable coal reserves are being mothballed.

And now the Board Chairman wants changes made to the Plan for Coal which would eliminate all units where coal production costs more than £60 per tonne. This would mean the closure of 44 pits – signing the death warrant for collieries throughout the coalfields.

Divide and rule tactics are being used across the coalfield as the NCB tries to set miner against miner, pit against pit, area against area. The bonus scheme, transfer allowances and redundancy payments are the wedges driven between men.

- The bonus scheme cuts earnings at low investment pits. It increases them at high investment pits. No wonder men are so eager to transfer.
- Transfer payments tempt men to transfer from pit to pit.
- Redundancy pay seems a large sum of money. No wonder men are tempted to sell their jobs, and those of future generations. But it doesn't last long and cannot substitute for doing a skilled job well.

In your street

Colliery closures kill the community.

- The Government's plans to cut back the coal industry will only create more unemployment in already hard hit areas. In many mining areas unemployment is already 20 per cent.

- Even the Monopolies and Mergers Commission report has said:

"We recognise that the closure of high cost collieries would have serious implications for employment in some of the most depressed regions of Great Britain."

- With the death of a pit come other closures — shops, local businesses and leisure amenities. The loss of spending power in a town losing 700 jobs has been estimated at £2m a year. Bankruptcies and closures are inevitable.
- Not only small businesses, but also larger companies will be affected. Engineering and wire, for example, will be forced to cut back production once the pits have closed.
- Alongside this, the Government is already cutting back on public services. With less rates from the industry, local councils will have little choice but to close schools and libraries. They will be forced to cut social services in the area, at a time when these are most needed.
- Unemployment causes stress, suffering, increased ill health, more suicides and increased crime.
- Research put to the House of Lords shows that a rise in unemployment of one million over five years will increase the death rate by 50,000.
- This means even more crowded doctors' surgeries and hospitals.

But there is always Social Security. Or is there? With successive government cuts and changes in rules, Social Security is now worth less and harder to get.

- If you have £2,500 of savings or redundancy pay you don't qualify for supplementary benefit at all.
- If you do qualify, the levels of payment are too low for a decent standard of living

In the corridors of power

It is clear that the Tory government is laying plans to decentralise and privatise our coal industry.



Yorkshire area NUM headquarters, Barnsley

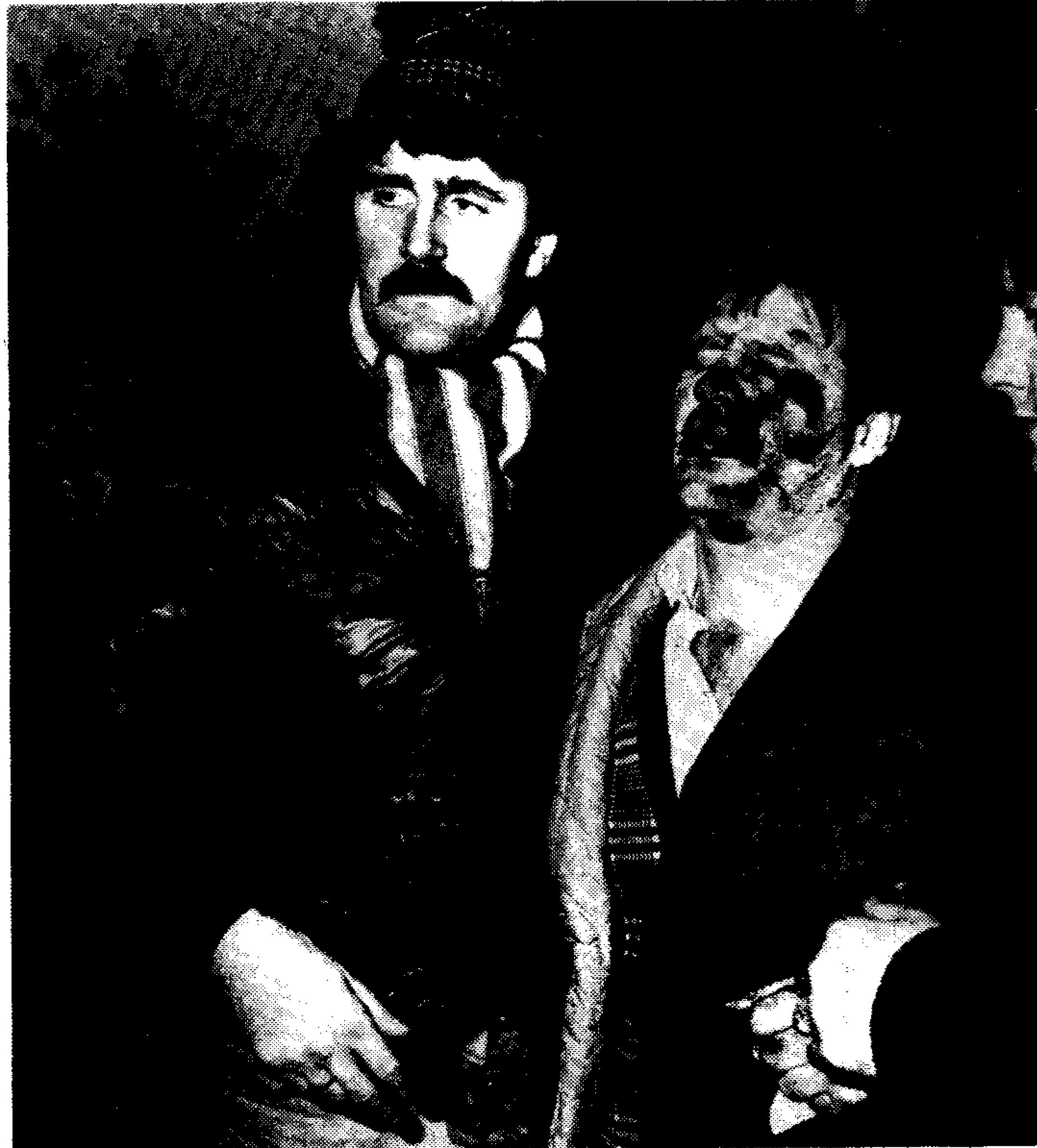
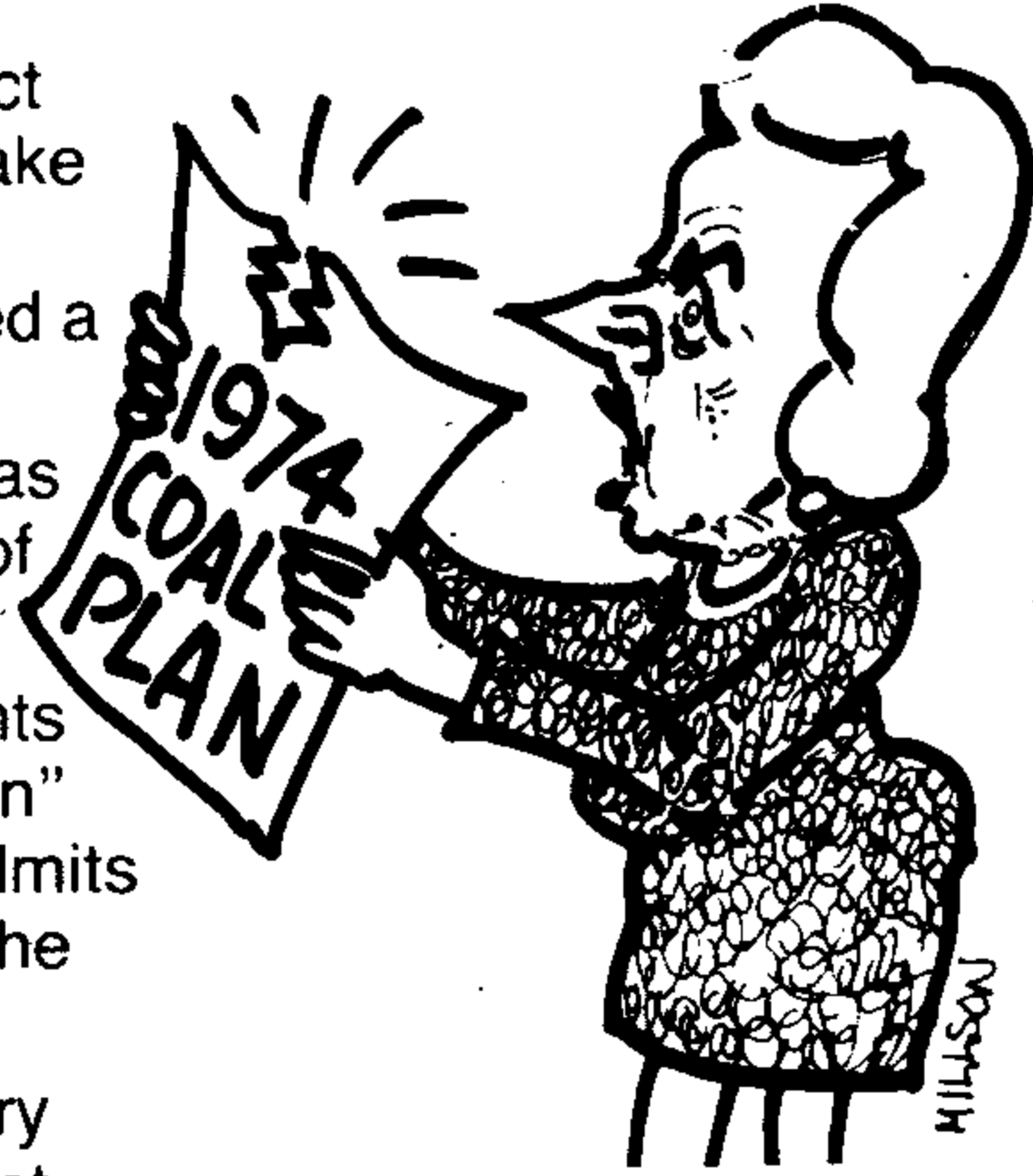
THIS IS THE MINeworkERS' OWN CASE. DISPLAY IT

Workers' case

- No one wants to return to the days of the private coal-owners. Accident rates were high, and medical care for injured miners was poor. Wages were low. Hours were often long. Sometimes there was no work. Private owners starved the pits of investment. Miners fought for decades to get the coal industry nationalised.
- But shortly after his appointment Ian MacGregor said that he would welcome private foreign capital in our coalfields.
- Economists close to the Prime Minister have been writing that coal is a good candidate for private ownership.
- The Monopolies and Mergers Commission has recommended that Areas of the Coal Board become independent business units. If this happens, some Areas will go under, and others could be sold to private enterprise.

The Government is withdrawing funds from the coal industry.

- The 1980 Coal Industry Act was the first attempt to make the coal industry "break even". It would have provided a programme of rapid and widespread closures. It was modified under pressure of NUM industrial action.
- Now the Government wants the industry to "break even" by 1987/88. The Board admits this means closures and the loss of 60-70,000 jobs.
- But the British coal industry already receives the lowest subsidy in Western Europe. In 1982 total aid per tonne was a mere £4.20 compared to £24.87 in West Germany. With a larger subsidy, the NCB would sell more.
- In fact, the industry is being starved of investment and other funds. The 1974 Plan for Coal, which promised financial assistance, has been torn up. The Government does not support a strong coal industry as part of rational, long-term energy planning.
- Meanwhile, the Government continues to put a huge interest burden on the Board. The interest charge in 1982/83 was £366 million, or nearly £2 million per pit.



Picket injured by police at Thoresby pit

Coal not Dole!

The government has also decided to develop the nuclear industry at the expense of the coal industry. In this case — unlike when it talks about coal — the government is not interested in the balance sheet. Nuclear power is more expensive, as well as more dangerous, than coal. The government is interested in using nuclear power to crush the NUM.

Fighting for our future

The future of our pits and towns is in jeopardy.

- 70 pits and 70,000 jobs at least are to go by 1988. Over 100,000 jobs will go by the year 2000.
- Government and management are attacking on all fronts. Basic wage rates are falling. Management threatens miners over the head of the union. Rich coal reserves are sterilised or by-passed so that men can be sacked.
- Our villages and towns face decay and misery. They will be left without employment opportunities. Young people have no hope.

Yet, above and underground things could be different. Above ground:

- Instead of starving the industry of funds, Government should pay subsidies per tonne at least at the level of other European coal industries. The money that goes into redundancies and closures should go into production.
- The nuclear programme should be halted, instead of being used to crush the mining industry.
- Imports should be stopped. Where coals, such as anthracite, are not presently available in great enough quantities, investment should be undertaken to produce them.
- Exports should be increased. Europe is supposed to be self-sufficient in energy. Yet it imports over 70 million tonnes of coal, including large quantities from South Africa!
- The Government must support new ways of using coal. Many of these are already well advanced in other countries:
 - Combined Heat and Power uses waste heat from power stations to heat homes and industry. 20 large CHP schemes would use 10-15 million tonnes of coal a year.
 - With more Government aid, more factories and public sector establishments, such as hospitals, would convert their boilers back to coal. Industrial use of coal could rise to over 22 million tonnes per year.
 - Fluidised bed combustion and other new technologies can burn coal more efficiently and cleanly.
 - For the long run, we must begin now to develop liquefaction to produce liquid fuels and chemical feedstocks. We must develop gasification.

- By the year 2000, if the Tory Government has its way, nuclear power will provide almost half our electricity. That may mean over 50th tonnes of coal pushed out of production or over 100,000 jobs lost.
- Each station the size of the proposed Sizewell B PWR displaces 2.5 m tonnes of coal, or about 5,000 jobs.
- And the Tories have not been able to conceal their intentions. A leaked Cabinet minute of 23rd October, 1979 noted that: "A nuclear programme would have the advantage of removing a substantial portion of electricity from disruption by industrial action of coalminers and transport workers."

Under ground:

- Pits must stay open to provide the coal we need. And they must remain publicly owned.
- Management must negotiate sensibly with the Union, not try to undermine and ignore it. Procedures are there to be followed.
- Workers who produce the wealth of the industry must be properly rewarded. Basic pay, which has fallen drastically as a percentage of earnings since 1974, must be increased. Bonus must be consolidated into basic pay.
- There must be orderly progress towards a four day week and a proper early retirement scheme.
- Unsocial hours pay, nearly the lowest for any group of shift-workers, must be increased.
- Miners' health, safety and working conditions must be radically improved.
- Investment in computerised mining techniques must benefit miners. The micro-revolution must cut worktime not jobs.
- The situation where a man starts on a lad's wage and ends on a lad's wage must end. Earnings must be protected.

We must now take action on jobs and pits.

- Both the Annual Conference in July and the Special Conference in October committed the union to oppose pit and works closures and all reductions in manpower.
- This was backed up by the September NEC decision to organise a national campaign against pit closures on an unprecedented scale.
- The Special NEC meeting on 27 September made the Monktonhall strike against rundown and closure in Scotland official. The NEC agreed to mobilise all moral and financial support possible and ask miners' MPs to take part in the campaign.

- A new mood of militancy is evident in the union, with local action taking place in every coalfield.
- There is a long history of struggle in the coalfields. The National Strikes of 1972 and 1974 were just two examples of miners fighting for their industry and themselves and winning.
- We must build the broadest possible base of support. Rail and steel, the other Triple Alliance industries, are under similar attack.

So is the rest of the trade union movement. We must help each other. We must also win our families and communities to fight for our, and their, future.

We must have coal for the country, not dole for the miners.

From the NUM pamphlet, 'COAL NOT DOLE'.

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THE NOTICEBOARD AT YOUR WORKPLACE.

Solidarity can win the

MANY militants hoped that March 29 would be a double celebration, combining demonstrations and industrial action over the Tories' attacks on local government with the news that all of Britain's pits were closed down. It did not come to pass.

The police are fighting the pickets — and the police are winning.

Part of the problem is lack of preparation. Yorkshire President Jack Taylor feels "There is a lack of political awareness in some areas. Perhaps the union has not explained its case long enough. Over the last two years the union has been a campaigning union but if you plant seeds one day you don't get fruit the next."

Fair enough. And the objective situation facing the left is a tough one.

The incentive scheme has divided the union. Many miners do feel they will be OK and should keep their heads down. Some may even feel that their brothers going to the wall may help them survive.

But surely the defeat of the ballot in late '82 should have been the danger signal and should have led to the whole union being put on a war footing.

Is it really true to say that the last 12 months have seen a detailed, inspiring, sustained campaign in Lancashire, in Nottinghamshire? Many of the miners picketing have said that miners in those areas are hearing the argument for the first time now.

The ammunition has been there for 18 months at least. Yet it hasn't been got across to very many Joe Averages.

By John McIlroy

It isn't getting across now, of course, because of police organisation and brutality and because of media propaganda.

The police have thrown a ring of steel around those areas which are working. They have physically divided the NUM in two.

A tremendous amount of energy, ingenuity, time and money has gone into evading the attentions of the boys in blue, and in the last week it has been decreasingly successful. Detours down minor roads or going the long way round has still meant, sooner or later, encountering a police roadblock.

At its gentlest, police intervention represents harassment. One group of miners travelling from South to North Wales was stopped no less than 12 times! Another group of Yorkshire pickets were forced to leave their cars and walk seven miles to the nearest colliery, where they were then picked up by police and taken back to Yorkshire.

Harsher has been the fate of the pickets who had their windscreen smashed by police crowbars to be arrested for obstruction.

Pickets from Kellingley Colliery near Pontefract who went into a Notts pub for a drink were arrested and taken to Mansfield police station where they were questioned about their political beliefs.

Four pickets from Bentley Colliery were detained for three hours, photographed and fingerprinted and their personal details filed. Obviously extensive dossiers are being built up.



Pickets at Lewis Merthyr

Pickets who do get to working collieries have faced increasing violence. Police have quickly charged and dispersed any meaningful gatherings of pickets, even intimidating those going in who want to stop, and confiscating leaflets.

Those working have been supported by their leaders who have simply refused to campaign for national policies and have amplified and developed the media lies about 'violence', 'lack of democracy' and so forth.

As the number of pits still working has remained at 38, including the whole of Nottinghamshire, the right has gathered courage.

When Trevor Bell moved a national ballot at the last executive he got just three

votes. By Tuesday March 27 eight right wing area leaders held a semi-clandestine cabal near Leicester to intensify their strike-breaking campaign for this demand.

As we have pointed out, this demand, in today's specific circumstances, has nothing at all to do with democracy. It is simply an attempt to stop miners in South Wales, Yorkshire and Scotland fighting for their jobs — a bankrupt attempt to say to them "For God's sake go to Thatcher's dole queues quietly."

Where were these people — Jack Jones, Trevor Bell, Ray Chadburn, Sid Vincent in 1977?

In July that year Joe Gormley was defeated in his attempt to impose the divisive bonus scheme. This decision confirmed the result of a national ballot held in 1974 when miners voted by over 60% to keep a united wage structure and a united union.

These gentlemen conspired with Gormley to overturn those decisions. They campaigned loudly for another national ballot.

It took place in October 1977. 55% of the miners said no to the incentive scheme. In Yorkshire the figure was over 75% against. In Scotland it was 83%.

What did these people, who live and die by a national ballot, who knelt at the side of their bed nightly to pray to the Almighty Hewer for its immediate deliverance do? Did they accept the verdict so strongly delivered by this vessel of perfection?

No they did not! They immediately to break the result. Jack Jones announced he would not abide by the result. "I supported a national ballot because I thought it would go my way," said Jack. "I only support national ballots on that basis."

On 9 December 1977 the NUM Executive, led by Jack and his cronies of 1984, overturned the national ballot.

Each area, they said, could go its own way: the very thing they are saying today should not be allowed to happen at any price.

The strategy of the right wing is clear. Keep the union divided. Keep their members working. Intensify the clamour for a national ballot and at the April 12 Executive show their hand.

They claim they already have 13 out of 24 votes in their pocket. This is the strategy for breaking the strike and breaking the union. For the first time since Gormley's demise a hardened-out right appears

Why Notts

By John Douglas, with thanks to Robbie Roberts

ANYONE who has been on the picket lines in Nottinghamshire must be asking themselves — how is it that Notts miners are prepared to cross official picket lines mounted by miners from South Wales and Yorkshire? Is it because the Notts miners have traditionally elected the most right wing leadership in the NUM? Or are there other factors?

For example, coal seams in Nottinghamshire are thick and straight. In Yorkshire they are half as thick and plagued with geological faults. So Nottingham coal is easier, cheaper and therefore more profitable to mine. A tradition of better wages than other areas is undoubtedly a factor in explaining Nottingham's "moderation". But this does not explain why a 'yellow' union — the Spencer Union — could rise and fall in the same coalfield.

Class struggle has been as much a feature in Nottinghamshire as in any other area. The "non-political" union founded by George Spencer, MP for Broxtowe, in '27, arose out of the defeat of the General Strike. Spencer was a Nottingham Miners' Association (NMA) official who agreed locally to a reduction in wages which lasted five years.

The Spencer Union's influence spread to other coal-

fields, particularly to South Wales. It was supported by the 'Anti-Socialist, Anti-Communist League' as well as the British Workers' League which aimed to be 'anti-Bolshevik'. NMA members were victimised for their union membership.

In close alliance with the Industrial Peace Union, Spencer praised the passing of the Trades Dispute and Trade Unions Act of 1927 which made sympathy strikes illegal; made strikes against the government or public illegal; restricted picketing; changed the political levy so workers had to contract in rather than contract out.

All of which, today, in 1984, seems to have a familiar ring to it. It was known as the 'Blacklegs' Charter'.

The collapse of the Spencer Union has echoes that should ring loud around the Notts coalfield now.

A victory by the NMA at Harworth Colliery in 1937 caused the membership of both unions to be amalgamated under the name of the NMA which was again recognised by the coal owners.

Last week pit workers from Harworth sauntered through

picket lines protected by a modern blacklegs' charter enforced by the police.

Yet the restructuring of the coal industry in the '50s and '60s affected the Notts miners as much as miners anywhere else. Having been 'moderate' and apolitical didn't help them. The vast programme of pit closures was not as heavy in Notts as in other areas, but the attack on wages and conditions was.

In 1966 when the National Power Loading Agreement (NPLA) was introduced, Notts miners' wages were 15% higher than the national average. This was to be significantly eroded during the six years leading up to the miners' strike of 1972, when the Notts miners supported the strike with as much vigour as other areas.

However the area to make the most impact in that strike was Yorkshire. Previous to the introduction of the NPLA, Yorkshire had as right wing a leadership as Notts, though without the history of Spencer Unionism. It had, however, a record of rank and file strike activity, especially in 1955 and 1961.

The NPLA introduced a standard shift payment system and for Yorkshire an accelerated pit closure programme. Miners affected by previous



strike!

prepared to fight and it possesses a clear conception of where to go.

It is also successfully pinning down the forces which could be used to take the strike out of the pits and providing the main motor for the anti-strike propaganda.

If this is the bleak side of the present situation, the other side is that some progress has been made in extending the struggle.

Steel production at Scunthorpe and Ravenscraig is already being affected. And if steel can be halted, the factories and industries it supplies will be in trouble.

at a meeting on Thursday March 29 of leaders of six transport unions, it was decided to recommend a total blockade on all movement of coal in Britain. They decided to establish a central coordinating committee based on Transport House in London with local committees throughout the country.

News of one of the most hopeful developments in the hostilities so far was hardly out before Bill Sirs, who had already been seeking to undermine the limited impact of the strike by asking for Ravenscraig to be declared a neutral zone announced that he would not see "the steel industry crucified on someone else's altar."

The jobs of Sirs' members were crucified long ago. They were crucified by one Ian MacGregor, while Bill Sirs stood by like Pontius Pilate.

Sirs fought with might and main to ensure that the 1980 steel strike should be about wages, not about jobs. More than 70,000 steel jobs have been sacrificed on the altar of capitalism by MacGregor and Thatcher since 1979 and Bill Sirs bears a burden of blame.

Sirs should either shut up or act like a union leader and point out to his members that their best bet lies in a miners' victory and that means supporting the miners now.

The key to the strike remains the power stations. Half of their stocks are at the pit heads so a transport boycott can be a big blow here.

The National Union of Seamen can also halt all imports of coal in combination with the TGWU. Flying pickets are essential, but given the difficulties, boycotting by other union members is the way forward.

But more than that: we must campaign for other workers not only to refuse to touch coal but to come out themselves. This is not an abstract call for solidarity.

There is a clear material basis for this: other workers have wage claims pending. Other workers, as well as the miners, are facing job loss. They have a common enemy — the Thatcher government.

The Electricity Council has promised the power workers an offer by April 11 in response to their claim for a substantial wage increase and a shorter working week. There is little doubt that the response



Kent miners' wives in Coalville, Leicestershire

will be inadequate. If the leaders of the EETPU and the GMBATU had the slightest grasp of strategy they would be preparing their members for walk-outs now.

The gas workers too have a claim in. After them come the railworkers. United we stand... Now is the time to get on the field.

Arthur Scargill should point out to Moss Evans, Jimmy Knapp and company that the best way of helping the miners is by dealing with their own claims now and appealing over the head of Frank Chapple — who has told power workers to cross miners' picket lines — to come out and fight for

themselves and fight with the miners and for the whole working class against the common enemy.

The NCB is still sitting on the injunction against the Yorkshire Area NUM. They are quite satisfied with the way the law is being used at the moment.

The police acting as the private militia of Ian MacGregor, are beating the flying picket tactic, stopping pickets hundreds of miles from their destination on the grounds that they will cause a breach of the peace when they get there. And the courts are countenancing the police action.

Enforcing the injunction could unify the NUM. So the NCB is waiting for the April 12 Executive meeting.

Nonetheless, another employer may take action. A firm of coal merchants applied on 29 March for an injunction against the Scottish Area NUM to restrain picketing of its Falkirk depot. Serious action by the transport unions could lead to further developments from British Rail and British Steel.

We have to counter a slight but discernable feeling amongst the NUM left that the dispute is turning the wrong way.

Things are tough. But a major effort must be made before April 12 to develop the strike at every level. We can expect an intensified offensive from the Tories' house media and the right wing as that date approaches.

*We must argue.

*We must keep up the flying pickets.

*We must use the transport unions' initiative to establish local support committees for the strike in every area.

*We must appeal to the power workers — support your own wage claim and strike now.

is working

programmes had moved from Scotland and the North East with guarantees of jobs for life and now these assurances were broken.

31 pits closed between 1965-74 and 35,000 jobs went.

The standard shift payment system affected pit bargaining. All negotiations on wages became national, so local or area full-time officials, including pit-top full-time branch officials, focused on other areas of pit work to negotiate around.

Therefore the NPLA had the effect of unifying workers at the pit — miners with craft and surface workers — both locally in the areas and nationally. This is not to say that this development was welcomed. The high wage piece work rates in Nottingham were to fall below the average industrial wage.

Yorkshire's militancy arose out of the pit closure programme. 18 pits had closed in four years by 1969 and out of work miners were finding alternative jobs hard to get in their communities. 1969 saw the emergence of rank and file strike action in Yorkshire. It was largely absent in Notts.

Action that year began with the market men's dispute in March at Cortonwood — the pit currently threatened with closure. 'Market-men' were

face workers allocated different jobs at lower rates of pay — around 17% less.

The strike lasted two weeks and similar action took place at other pits until the NCB conceded in the autumn after another strike at Cadeby Main.

However, Cadeby Main stayed out as 70,000 other Yorkshire miners came out for shorter hours and minimum wages of £16 per week for underground workers and £15 per week for surface workers.

The Yorkshire area panels — delegate bodies from each pit — spread the strike by sending flying pickets to South Wales, Scotland, Kent and Notts., bringing out in total 140 pits (out of 306) — 130,000 miners.

The NCB conceded on the money but not on the hours. Notts and Derbyshire settled immediately and returned to work. But not Yorkshire which only went back after the personal intervention of Vic Feather, then General Secretary of the TUC, who promised an inquiry on their claim for shorter hours!

This strike was run by the rank and file through the building of strike committees by the four area panels in North Yorkshire, Barnsley, Doncaster and South Yorkshire.

In Notts the full-time leadership have always controlled the rank and file, capitalising on the regionalism and sectionalism of the membership. After the strike in 1972, the Notts miners got a 15.3% increase in wages, almost half the increase gained by lower paid areas.

In 1977 the Notts leadership accepted at area level a productivity deal, negotiated with Tony Benn, Minister for Energy. This action by Nottingham, along with Leicestershire, Lancashire and South Derbyshire weakened the NUM as is only too evident today.

There have been divisions over wages and now divisions over pit closure, which of course the NCB encourages. The leadership from Nottingham at the 1980 conference at Eastbourne called for increased redundancy payments. Four years later the NCB has complied.

The Notts motion in 1980 was thrown out in favour of a fight against pit closures. Four years later that fight is only seriously being begun, at a time of considerable disadvantage to the NUM, given the powers of the so-called Employment Acts.

The lesson should be clear to all trade unionists — if you decide to act — ACT!



Pickets at Lea Hall colliery, Staffordshire

The way to win

THE miners' strike is a tremendously important mobilisation, the most important working class battle for many years. Although the strike was provoked by the Tories because they thought the time had come when they could take out the NUM, the government has bitten off more than it can chew. This is a qualitative development in the revival of working class militancy.

Slowly but steadily the forces are building up for a fullscale working class confrontation with the Tory government. The movement is growing and escalating. Solidarity like that taken by some NUR members will turn the industrial tide for the miners.

How is the government going to react? They will escalate further. MacGregor is now saying that the strike is politically inspired. The government has already used the police in a paramilitary way not seen in Britain until now. Their next step, as the struggle escalates and solidarity bites, may be to send in the troops — something not known in Britain for about a third of a century.

Once again, the miners — despite their divisions — are the shock troops and standard bearers of the working class. Once more the miners are telling a foul anti-working class Tory government that they can't run things exactly as they like and that the miners are calling them to account. It is the most vital and direct interest of every worker in Britain to stand on the line with the miners and help them win.

The miners' strike must be put at the centre of the work of all socialists. We must put ourselves on a war footing.

STOP ALL COAL!

Every union must be committed to boycotting all movement of coal not licensed by the NUM — and committed to strike action in defence of any workers victimised for boycotting coal. We should demand that the TUC adopts, advocates and fights for this policy throughout industry.

FOR A GENERAL STRIKE!

We should argue for railworkers, power workers, gas workers, water workers and others to bring forward and link their claims and strike alongside the miners. We should hit the Tories with a clenched fist.

We should oppose exemptions for steelworkers and argue with steelworkers for a common working class struggle to save jobs in all industries. This is the only way to save steel jobs.

A general strike could stop MacGregor's pit closures plan and rip up the anti-union laws. It can win this struggle. And it can do more. It can make it impossible for the Tories to govern; and the level of mobilisation involved would open up big possibilities beyond that. We should call on the TUC to organise for a general strike.

SCRAP THE ANTI-UNION LAWS!

Since the June 1983 election and especially since the September 1983 conference of the TUC, the Tories and the bosses have gone on the offensive over anti-union laws. These laws are now used in every major industrial dispute. Though the Coal Board made a tactical decision not to use the anti-union laws because it did not want to unite the miners in response to an attack from the courts, the laws are almost certain to be used later — for example if all coalfields are out and solid. Then the tactical considerations that have restrained them so far will have disappeared.

POLICE OUT OF THE COALFIELDS!

The massive, nationally coordinated police operation in the coalfields is a gigantic step in the development of a paramilitary centralised police force. The question of police accountability is therefore now one of the most burning political questions. So is the danger that this militant class struggle Tory government will use troops against the strikers.

We should campaign in the Labour Party for Labour councils to try to deny funds for the police operation and to demand the resignation of the Chief Constables responsible for coordinating the present first stage of police-state Tory operations against striking miners.

AGAINST A NATIONAL BALLOT

As the strike gathers strength it may be that soon a national ballot would produce the necessary 55% majority for a national coal strike. A recent opinion poll amongst miners says that miners are now 60% for strike action. We should still however support the NUM Executive against a national ballot because:

- a) it means demobilisation now;
- b) The NUM militants are right when they argue that miners in relatively prosperous areas do not have the right to veto the action of miners in areas facing closure;
- c) the individual ballot is not the most democratic method (even apart from the 55% rule. Votes at mass meetings immediately after miners have heard and discussed all the issues are far more democratic and responsible.

BUILD SUPPORT COMMITTEES

We should argue in Labour Parties, Trades Councils, etc., for building miners' support committees which organise collections in workplaces; accommodation and transport for flying pickets; solidarity delegations to physically back the miners on the picket lines against the police. South Wales NUPE has given a vital lead in doing this.

We should argue that Labour councils should offer their facilities (accommodation, communications, etc) to the strikers.

ARGUE FOR A SOCIALIST SOLUTION!

Against the rundown of coal, steel and rail jobs, we need a socialist alternative to the vandal Toryism of Mrs Thatcher and the inadequate policies of Neil Kinnock.

*We need a sliding scale of hours. Divide available work with no loss of pay.

*We need a workers' plan for the energy industry, transport and steel. Such a plan would have to be a plan for energy, transport and steel throughout Europe. We need to fight for a Socialist United States of Europe.

*We need training and re-training under workers' control.

*We must open the books of the nationalised industries, expose the profits of the money-lenders and suppliers.

*We must nationalise the banks and financial institutions, and the supply industries without compensation.



JOHN HARRIS

Miners struck to support health workers [above]. Support the miners now!

We need to relaunch and continue the fight to transform the labour movement, to make it capable of creating a Labour government accountable to the movement and committed to such measures — a real workers' government.

KICK OUT THE TORIES! FIGHT FOR A LABOUR GOVERNMENT!

We can make Britain ungovernable. In 1974 when the miners forced him to 'go to the country' — which rejected him — Edward Heath also had a big, stable Parliamentary majority. We must bring down this Tory government.


Labour under Kinnock cannot be relied upon to implement the working class policies we need. Nevertheless, the Labour Party is the only conceivable immediate alternative to the Tories. We must fight for a Labour government. At the same time we must fight in the labour movement to commit such a Labour government to anti-capitalist measures. That means continuing the battle in the Labour Party for democracy, accountability and for socialist policies.

Right now the miners' strike is putting the new Labour Party leadership to the test. Neil Kinnock has made sympathetic speeches generally supporting the miners. At the same time he has talked as if the miners are to blame for picket line violence and not the police. The labour movement must demand of Neil Kinnock that he stand on the line four square with the miners without wesseling and without talking out of both sides of his politician's mouth.

Right now the miners' strike is the measure of every grouping and every individual in the labour movement. Neil Kinnock will not be forgiven if he doesn't unequivocally take sides with the miners.

Victory to the miners!

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ORGANISE FOR A GENERAL STRIKE!

Luxemburg's legacy

ROSA Luxemburg is probably the Marxist thinker whose ideas have been most distorted, misconstrued and misunderstood.

While Stalinists have tried to portray her as a wild, idealistic worshipper of the spontaneity of the working class as it is under capitalism, many bourgeois commentators focus on her critique of Lenin and of some aspects of the Russian Revolution, of which she was an ardent supporter.

Norman Geras's book "The Legacy of Rosa Luxemburg",

By Tom Rigby

now available in paperback for the first time, is an attempt to map out an alternative view of Luxemburg's basic politics.

Geras effectively disposes of most of the major myths about Luxemburg. For example, he points out that her political writings were not based on a crude economic determinism — the idea of mass mobilisations and socialist revolution, flowing inevitably from conditions of capitalist crisis and decay.

On the contrary her ideas were founded on a position which put human agency and working class self-activity at the centre of politics.

After all, her classic slogan "socialism or barbarism" was fundamentally a call to action, and not a recipe for quietism, for passively waiting for the inevitable final victory of socialism.

The aspect of Luxemburg's work that Geras draws out most strongly and usefully is her theorising on the question of the mass strike. His chapter on this topic is, in my opinion, the strongest in the entire book.

Geras presents Luxemburg's theory of the mass strike as a first attempt to work out the basic idea of a transitional programme, i.e. a strategy that could link up and integrate the struggle for immediate goals and short term demands with the goal of socialist revolution.

His basic argument is convincing. However, there are a number of important gaps in Geras's account of Luxemburg.

The main weakness of the book is the way it avoids facing head on Luxemburg's attitude to the Leninist theory of the party.

In a similar vein, Geras avoids a full examination of Luxemburg's views on the national question, views that put her in conflict with Lenin. But he does provide an interesting view on the relationship between Luxemburg's, Lenin's and Trotsky's theories of the Russian Revolution. He argues that Luxemburg's theory of the mass strike provided her with the analytical framework to understand the relationship between democratic demands (democracy, the Republic, etc) and the socialist revolution in Tsarist Russia.

This argument is very interesting but it tends to downplay the importance, originality and clarity of Trotsky's theory of Permanent Revolution.

All in all Geras has provided an interesting and sophisticated appraisal of Luxemburg. It is probably the best that is readily available (at the restrictive price of £4.95). Serious socialists and working class militants should read it.



Muck and brass

By Les Hearn

IN capitalist Britain, everyone is against pollution. Hence, the minority Labour government of 1974 got Tory support for its Control of Pollution Act (CPA).

However, the fact that anti-pollution measures tend to hit polluters' profits explains why the CPA has never been implemented.

Capitalist industries have always treated the environment as theirs to do with as they would. In particular, they have poured industrial effluent — acid, alkalis, toxic metals, detergents and other organic products — into the rivers.

The result is that more than 2,800 kilometres of Britain's largest rivers are too dirty and devoid of oxygen to keep fish alive. This is despite laws passed in 1951 and 1961. In fact, leading firms such as Coalite (of Eric Varley fame), British American Tobacco and the National Coal Board habitually break the law by exceeding limits set for the discharge of effluent into rivers.

To avoid pollution controls, other firms have shifted operations (and pollution) to the (unprotected) coasts and estuaries of Britain. For the Mersey, this means that it no longer provides a living for fisherfolk and now stinks in summer. One Michael Heseltine described it as an affront to the standards a civilised society should demand of its environment" and as Merseyside's "single most deplorable feature". (See below for the Tory answer to this horror).

Next most polluted estuary is the Tees. Industry pours cyanides, ammonia and organic chemicals that remove oxygen into the Tees. The last salmon seen was in 1937 and at times the river smells like "a thousand tom-cats".

Meanwhile, the waters of the Humber estuary contain a long plume of rust-coloured pollution and are treated to acid wastes.

The silt contains 69 parts per million of arsenic!

How does industry get away with it?

When water authorities set limits on discharge of effluent, a company may appeal, and continue as before until the hearing, years later, which it may in any case win.

Prosecutions are rare and result in derisory fines. Thus for endangering public water supplies, tainting fish flesh and filling town air with fumes from suspected carcinogens, B&N Chemicals of Suffolk (a repeated polluter) received a fine of £325!

Even the actual limits of discharge set are secret. The part of the CPA removing secrecy has not been implemented and any Sarah Tisdall of the Water Authorities faces 3 months' jail.

Thus, the new limits for the Coalite plant at Bolsover are secret. What is known is that above Bolsover, fish live in the Doe Lea while below it is "grossly polluted and likely to cause offence".

With these provisions, the CPA will do nothing to improve our rivers. In fact, the successes in cleaning up rivers seems to coincide with factory closures due to the recession, and any upturn will cause an increase in pollution.

Grading rivers according to the life they contain results in a league table with the River Test top with 239 points, the Thames at Chiswick with 61 and the Doe Lea with 3.

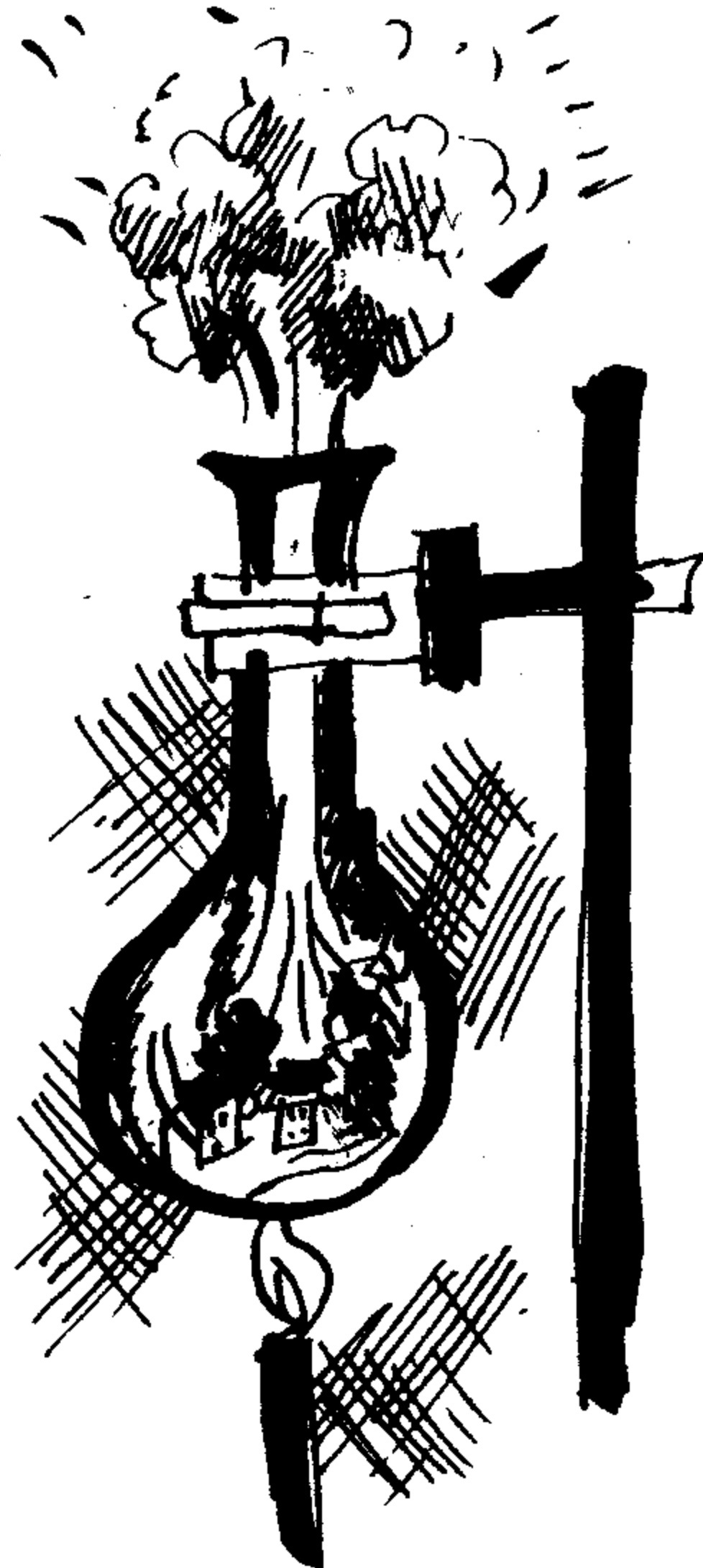
Despite the secrecy, it is known that flouting of limits is widespread, ranging from one third of all discharges in the North West to over 80% of discharges in Wales. Some companies have never met their limits.

The response of water authorities, which often have representatives of polluters sitting on them, is to make the controls less strict.

The CPA was intended to tighten up river controls and extend controls to coasts and estuaries. However, implementation was delayed several times under Labour, finally being scheduled for late 1979. Then the Tories got in . . . and started a review that lasted three years. Implementation was set for July 1983, postponed to November, then to February 1984. We are still waiting.

Anyway, it seems the Tories may be about to implement the CPA, an Act which gives Water Authorities a duty to bring an end to pollution that injures plant and animal life in rivers. However, the Tories have made "transitional provisions" that mean that most discharges escaping current controls will be exempt.

Some discharges are black-listed by the EEC and cannot be exempted (like discharge of the toxic mercury and cadmium into the Mersey). So the government is giving these "deemed consents" so that pollution may continue as before.



Don't forget the Armagh women

Helena Kettleborough

ON THE weekend of 9-11 March, 200 women from Britain went to Belfast and Derry to celebrate International Women's Day. For the last five years this has culminated in a picket of Armagh Jail where 36 women republicans are held.

The women are continually harassed by the prison authorities. Since November 1982, the governor, Thomas Murtagh, has introduced strip searching of all prisoners leaving and entering the jail. This particularly affects women on remand who have to make a court appearance every week. Quite often women are held on remand for 1½ to 2 years before coming to trial.

They are taken to a reception area and put in a small cubicle and told to remove their clothes item by item, including their sanitary towels if they have their period. These are all searched. They then have to wait while the wardens (between two and ten) inspect first her front and then her back. If a woman refuses to strip she is forcibly stripped. The whole process is degrading and humiliating.

Then they are taken to court to make the two minute appearance necessary and then back to jail. At no time do they have any contact with the public. Yet as soon as they get back they are strip searched again. The whole process is deliberate sexual harassment by the British state to try and break the women.

As well as the picket, a conference was held on the Saturday. There we heard from a woman, Mrs Grove, who had been shot by a plastic bullet and lost the use of both her eyes. At the time Mrs Grove was shot, she was standing in her own front room and the soldier was standing outside on her footpath. Some riot!

Plastic bullets, which are only supposed to be used in riot situations and only fired below waist level, are used whenever and wherever the British army feels like using them. As well as killing people (like an eleven year old girl fetching a bottle of milk for her mother) they can cause serious and maiming injury.

The police and the army in Northern Ireland have always had wide and special powers of arrest and detention. But now they use the so-called "supergrasses". People are charged and held



on the word of paid informers. There is no jury in the Diplock Court and no collaborating evidence is needed to find someone guilty. The informers are offered huge amounts of money and the chance of a 'new identity'. One woman told us she'd been offered £250,000. She could go to whatever country she wanted, take whoever she wanted, if she'd inform on four men. In May trial will start where 65 people are being charged on the word of an informer.

A resolution was passed at the conference for British women to go back and campaign for:

The resolution demanded:

1. An end to strip searches.
2. An end to the use of plastic bullets anywhere.
3. An end to the "supergrass" system of non-collaborating evidence and an end to the no jury Diplock Courts.
4. British withdrawal from Northern Ireland.

In the words of Ann-Marie Quinn, a prisoner in Armagh "Don't forget us."

Solidarity stepped up

"We need to go to power stations"

ROB Anderson is a miner from Hem Heath colliery near Stoke on Trent. He spoke to Jim Denham.

"After the area ballot went against striking, some of us at Hem Heath were really ashamed about not being out on strike.

The first day, about 50 of us got together spontaneously in the canteen and decided not to work. The next day it was about 100, then 200, and so on.

But we couldn't picket our own pit because of the area ballot result against striking. When the South Wales pickets came up, we were able to mingle with them on the picket line and stop the pit.

Now Littleton, Lea Hall and Silverdale have been stopped as well.

I think the reason for this turnaround is that the blokes were ashamed to be faced by pickets from outside the area. We finally had a pit meeting and voted unanimously to strike.

The other factor in this has been the massive police presence. Blokes felt intimidated and angry.

Management have now threatened to close the pit for good. They persuaded four clowns to stage an anti-strike underground sit-in, but that flopped. Even the parents of one of them swore never to speak to him again.

At the moment we're playing a cat and mouse game with the police, concentrating all our forces at one pit, then at another, to keep the police confused.

We're also using decoy squads of 20 or 30 to lead the police in the wrong direction.

The need now is to picket the power stations, docks and wharfs. I don't think we can win by ourselves. We need the support of other unions.

The decision of the TGWU, NUR and ASLEF to black movement of coal has been a big boost".

Forum

By Rob Dawber

NO DOUBT the supporting action from the transport unions has helped shame the Nottinghamshire area miners' leadership into changing from their scabbing position.

But the Notts Miners' Forum also played a role. This is a group of representatives of the 5000-plus Nottinghamshire miners who voted for strike action.

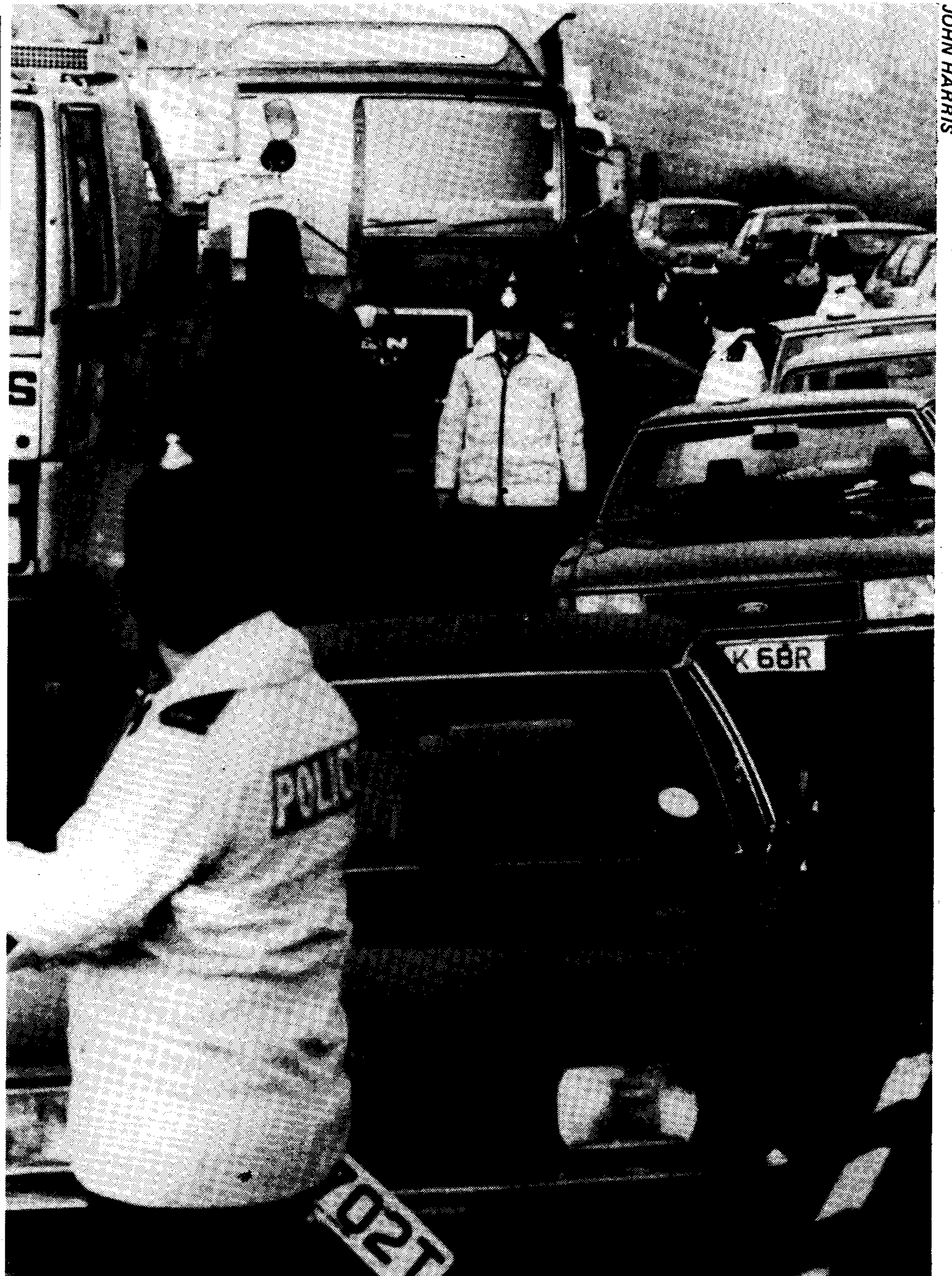
Denied the right to picket their own pits by the police, they have published leaflets for distribution round Nottinghamshire pits, demolishing the media and Coal Board arguments.

Women

BARNSELEY and Sheffield women against pit closures are organising socials and welfare rights evenings in those cities.

On Tuesday 3rd, 29 NHS workers from Middlewood hospital in Sheffield picketed Wavercotes colliery in solidarity with Yorkshire miners from Shireoaks.

On Wednesday 4th, however, pickets from Middlewood were stopped by police only yards from the hospital entrance.



JOHN HARRIS

Cops push cars off the motorway and arrest the drivers, near Derby, after a miners' 'go-slow' protest. Other incidents have included building workers being arrested on their way to work in a car, arrested miners being asked questions by police about their political views and NUM officials being arrested in their own homes for paying out union money to pickets.

Rail: bring forward action

RAIL WORKERS should bring forward action on our own pay claim, to join the struggle alongside the miners.

By Pete Firmin

Negotiations on the claim at present have virtually ground to a halt.

For the first time it is a joint claim from the two rail unions NUR and ASLEF. It includes:

- * A substantial (37 per cent) increase on the basic rate from the anniversary date of April 16;
- * The minimum earnings level to become the minimum enhanceable basic rate;
- * A cut in the working week from 39 hours to 35;
- * An increase in annual holidays from four weeks to five.

It is also the firm policy of both unions that there should be no further productivity discussions. They know that such discussions mean job cuts.

The British Rail Board [BRB] is offering a 4 per cent increase conditional on agreement on the extension of one-person operation of trains, the phasing-out of guards on some routes, and a reduction in the number of second drivers - in all, a loss of about 4000 jobs.

The union leaderships have a 'commitment to reject the offer as it stands' - but they are not breaking off negotiations and campaigning for industrial action. They are still meeting with the BRB, and have only asked branches and local rail federations to hold meetings and pass resolutions 'telling us what to do'.

The NUR leadership's excuse for their softly-softly approach is that they do not want a repeat of the 1982 pay fiasco. They ignore the fact that the main reason why that action flopped was that we had a general secretary, Sid Weighell, who tried to undermine the action before it started, and a National Executive which failed miserably to campaign among and convince the members.

The left in the unions needs to launch a vigorous campaign of leafletting and mass meetings. We must convince the members:

- * That we can win if we fight;
 - * That accepting these job losses would only open the door to thousands more;
 - * That the best way to win is to take action alongside the miners now.
- We should flood the trade union leaderships with resolutions calling for:
1. Break off negotiations.
 2. Reject arbitration. (This only means delay and cannot be expected to come up with a decent offer.)
 3. The National Executive to launch a campaign of industrial action in support of the rail claim.
 4. Action to start as soon as possible, alongside the miners.

Tie up coal

THE decision of the National Union of Railwaymen [NUR] is clear enough - "We reaffirm our instruction to members not to cross NUM [National Union of Mineworkers] picket lines.

"Further, we instruct all members to refuse to deal with the movement of coal or coke unless a specific request is made by the NUM at the central coordinating committee.

"This decision to take effect immediately".

Already action at Tinsley marshalling yards in Sheffield has reduced British Steel Scunthorpe to running at 50% of capacity. NUR members at Tinsley have refused to move coke out of British Steel's Orgreave coking plant.

In most coalfields the NUR instruction will make little difference, because trains carrying coal have already stopped. The main focus, therefore, is the Midlands

and Nottinghamshire.

Reports so far are of a patchy response by NUR members, but since the branches have only just received the instruction this is not surprising. All coal and coke movements should now be tied up in a matter of days.

British Rail management will be under pressure not to seek an injunction under the anti-union laws - the Tories seem to want to avoid escalation at the moment - but BR have been making threats.

At Tinsley, all management threats about disciplining, sackings, and injunctions have been shown to be hollow in the face of a strong stand by the NUR and ASLEF branches.

But the best way to counter BR threats would for the unions to say that if the NUR-ASLEF pay claim is not met in full by April 16, then we will be out alongside the miners from that day.

By Rob Dawber

Defending the community

A MEMBER of the women's action group at Edlington, in Yorkshire, spoke to Socialist Organiser supporters in Nottingham last Friday, 30th.

She asked not to be named for fear of police victimisation. "We've been at the picket lines at Thoresby and Harwood twice. About 30 of the kids at Ed-

lington comprehensive school decided to come out in support of their dads at the pit, so we went to the school gate with placards, and over 100 of them came out.

It was all 15 and 16 year olds who came out, because they know what's in store for them when they leave school.

We all marched through the village to the pit - Yorkshire Main colliery.

One woman with five kids has

just received her first social security payment, after five weeks. It was £6.

I know things are going to be hard. But I come from a Scottish mining area. I've seen pit closures destroy a whole community. I'm not going to let it happen here.

We don't think there should be a national ballot. The union should be united. Notts and Leicester should come out with the majority."

Holding back in Notts

By Steve Battlemuch

"EVERY bloody union supports us except our own", said one miner from Bolsover colliery.

Bolsover is geographically in Derbyshire, but covered by the Notts NUM. The pit has been on strike for two weeks now, and miners from Bolsover have staged an occupation of the Notts NUM headquarters to demand

that they make the strike official, but they refused to do so.

At Cotgrave pit a minority of the miners have started a strike. The branch officials there, under orders from the Notts NUM, are on the whole not supporting the strike.

Solidarity from the broader labour movement is increasing. Nottingham South Labour Party women's section raised £200 from a disco in support of the Yorkshire miners. But Nottingham Trades Council executive

last week defeated a motion from a Socialist Organiser supporter to organise a support committee, as agreed by the full Trades Council the week before.

Communist Party members said that our job was to win over the Notts NUM executive.

And Don Concannon, Labour MP for Mansfield and the man who visited Bobby Sands just before he died to tell him that Labour would never grant political status, has said that the rail unions were too quick to give the miners support!

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



LaBour Northampton

'We'll win in the end'

Ray Lane, AUEW convenor at LaBour, talked to Tim Pilsbury

IN the past, before this present management took over we'd had quite good relations with management. But this lot are completely anti-union. They made that clear from the first day they arrived. The chairman of the company said that he wouldn't even be in the same room as the trade unions.

On 10 February a charge-hand fitter was asked to move two pumps against our usual procedures. So the bloke told him where to go and he was suspended with threat of dismissal for swearing.

Management wouldn't back down so our members walked out in sympathy.

On Monday 13 we returned to try to resolve the situation and the general manager told us that if we weren't back to work by 8.30 on that day then we would be disciplined. It was 8.20 so we discussed it and got in touch with the District Secretary. But the manager had gone home by then so we left it that we'd go back to work from the Wednesday.

On the Tuesday we received by recorded delivery, dismissal notices. On the same day the fitter at the centre of the dispute had a disciplinary hearing and was found not guilty. We approached management about our dismissals and they said they'd made a decision so 'get off the premises'.

We've been picketing since February 15.

With the 37 dismissed members we are trying to picket the place 12 hours a day. We can't do it for 24 hours, there aren't enough people.

The call for the mass pickets on Mondays by the Trades Council has been tremendous. On the first Monday we had 150 people.

The call for blacking was put out by the District Secretary. It's gone out nationally. The response has been tremendous. I've had many people phone me up from oil refineries and main suppliers. We've got a sister plant in Sheffield, Darwins, that we're visiting this week. We understand LaBour are still getting things through from there but we'll resolve that this week. Overall, the blacking has been excellent.

LaBour is owned by Katy Industries, Indiana. They own Darwins Casting in Sheffield and Bat Simpson in Cornwall. The plant in Cornwall isn't unionised.

LaBour have said they won't take us back and they've advertised our jobs in the local paper. We've contacted the



At a mass picket, two Socialist Organiser supporters, Tim and Eustace, were arrested

Tim told us, "The police were obviously looking out for people to make an example of. We were standing in front of a car while the pickets talked to the driver. He accelerated and

took us with him. We went along on the bonnet. I fell off and Eustace clung on.

We were later arrested on suspicion of criminal damage and after five hours we were released on bail. This was after we had complained to the police about the scab's dangerous driving!



NGA and have made a start to get the advert withdrawn.

But they cannot employ anyone else from this area. They haven't got the skill. LaBour Pumps products can only be made by the 37 they've dismissed. I don't think they can get the people. They're into the seventh week now and they've only employed five new people. There's no way they can replace our skills.

Our families are meeting in people's houses to discuss

tactics. In the past they've felt isolated. They're organising a social and a jumble sale. They have been to see the general manager to ask why he cannot get around a table with our union or ACAS. He totally twisted the situation. He can't even remember why or how he sacked us. Because he told a lot of lies, the women are now even more resolved than the men are to beat this company.

The District Committee of the AUEW hold open meetings every week. We get lots

of ideas from them. At these meetings you meet the activists. This is a good thing. These people are guiding us; we take their advice.

We had support from NALGO, TGWU, the Bakers Union, the teachers' union, and the students' union.

What we want now is the AUEW District Committee to call a day of action. We feel they should be doing more. The AUEW leadership should be getting the AUEW moving. We've had a lot of help from

outside unions, they've put in a lot of time and effort and the AUEW have got to move themselves.

We'll win one way or the other. We'll either get our jobs back or the firm will shut down. We want our jobs back but if the company is not going to take us back then it might as well shut.

We'll black the company's products and we'll beat them by picketing day in and day out even if it takes a year, or two years.

Phillips scabs

By Tony Dale

THE expected attempt to break the dispute at Phillips Rubber in Manchester came last week when scabs were brought in by management.

The strikers responded with a mass picket on Monday 2nd. They were unable to stop the 15 scabs crossing the picket lines.

But the situation can be reversed. For too long the strike has been dominated by a few people who are given the role of speaking to labour movement meetings and organising the strike. Too many strikers have been left on the picket line unaware of all that is happening. That isolation has led to some demoralisation.

A major turn to the local labour movement is needed to mobilise support for the pickets. A regular weekly mass picket has to be organised. The number of strikers going to trade union and Labour Party meetings has to be increased.

The strikers should demand that the regional TGWU gives

them more than the nominal support given so far. The TGWU should start building active support on the picket line.

Southwark

SOUTHWARK NALGO members are now well into the third week of their strike over the sacking of a child case worker, Siobhan Stokes.

The Labour-controlled council has been acting just like any anti-trade union employer. For instance, they attempted to force Siobhan to sign a no-strike 'loyalty oath'.

Over the last week this dimension of the dispute has become much more prominent. It has come to light, for instance, that Siobhan was the only person in her section who took action in support of the residential social workers.

Another nasty side to the dispute has been the various press "leaks" organised by certain Labour councillors to the effect that Siobhan is a member of the WRP (which

she isn't); that she has a poor work record and is a malingerer. In fact she has a rare blood disease.

Brum NUJ

By Andy Barrett

THREE journalists at the Birmingham Dispatch are now in the third week of their strike over union recognition and low pay.

The three, all NUJ members, were receiving between £50 and £60 for doing a job for which the Newspaper Society have agreed a minimum rate of £108.50.

The paper's owner, Mike Shanley, refused to negotiate with them as an NUJ chapel.

To avoid legal action by the NGA over non-payment of holiday money, Shanley is re-launching the Dispatch as a new company, and the NUJ members have been told that they must apply for their jobs to this new company.

Shanley has also tried to split

the strikers by offering two of them more money, but they refused this.

There will be a mass picket this Thursday, 5th, at the company's office, 926 Stratford Rd. Donations and messages to 16 Willes Rd, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire.

Ten sacked

By Paul Muddle

SALFORD'S Labour-controlled council has sacked ten NALGO members.

The union held a protest strike on Monday April 2.

The ten swimming teachers were sacked when they refused to accept new pay scales and conditions of work.

At a NALGO meeting which took place during the one-day action, a call for all-out action was heavily defeated. Instead, it was agreed that a further meeting next week would decide on future action.

In the meantime, the NALGO executive has said that they will seek to negotiate with the council.

Industrial digests

Barking cu

Pickets have reduced Barking General Hospital in East London to an emergencies-only service in their strike against attempts to cut contract cleaning income by as much as 60% and change conditions of employment.

About 90 cleaners, employed by Crothall, a subsidiary of Pritchard Services, have been on strike since March 19. Crothall announced that it was renegotiating the hospital cleaning contract it had to undergo competition by paying less than the going rate. NUPE views the dispute as a test case for the abolition of the fair wages agreement which previously obliged outside contractors to match NHS pay and conditions for employees.

On Monday April 2 when cleaners were deemed to be dismissed with the expiry of their former contract, scabs broke out on the picket line when Crothall brought in bus loads of scab workers. One woman NUPE picket was arrested and charged with threatening behaviour for facing intimidation by drivers.

BBC strik

The six-week strike by 595 BBC every workers, members of the Entertainment Trades Association (formed recently out of an alliance between the Association of Broadcasting Staffs and the National Association of Technical, Television and Employees), at the BBC centre in London threatened to escalate by the weekend.

The strikers, who were last week sacked by the BBC, have the dispute over revised working practices. They are now seeking financial support from members of the Alliance of Independent Technicians directly involved in the dispute, including those working in other companies, and are pressing for action by technicians to programme. So far two programmes have been cancelled and a further sixty postponed though with supportive action by technicians the blacking of programmes by the end of the week could be expected.

Plessey jobs

The strike by manual workers at Plessey's telecommunication plant at Edge Lane, Liverpool, begun three weeks ago over redundancy terms, seems likely to strengthen with the announcement this week of management of further substantial job losses.

In January, Plessey announced plans to axe 840 jobs at 11 of its factories in South Shields (near Newcastle on Tyne), Lamberhead (near Wigan) which is to close completely next month. Now more than 100 jobs are to go at the Edge Lane plant by the middle of March — falling from about 3,000 to about 2,850 by March, with another 180 to go soon afterwards.

Dunlop win

By John Douglas

THE DUNLOP Slazerdun strike in Barnsley has ended in victory.

The management climbed down from their demands for redundancies, speed-up and pay cuts. They have offered a 10% increase for parity with other Dunlop factories.



35p plus postage from Socialist Organiser, c/o 214 Sickert Court London N1 2SY.

Socialist ORGANISER

Stand on the line Kinnock!



other ways of getting over a wall than driving through it." Exactly what he meant by this isn't clear and he refused to elaborate.

A fortnight ago Kinnock stated "when people become violent in the process of picketing, I condemn it." Pressurised by the Tories last week he repeated his condemnation of "violent pickets".

Many of Labour's leaders like Eric Heffer, Tony Benn and scores of MPs have supported Liverpool Council and the miners. Kinnock hasn't. You know why? He thinks they are both vote losers. That is the long and short of it.

He is said to privately want a national ballot to get the miners back to work and for the seven Liverpool scab councillors to pull the rug from under the Council.

"Mr Kinnock is using his influence behind the scenes in an attempt to secure an early meeting of the miners' executive" said the Observer on April 1. That's strike breaking).

So that is his idea of leadership. Like Wilson and MacDonald he'll do literally anything for votes and a few points on the polls as a short and painful glance at recent editions of Top of the Pops testifies.

Oh, and he's been reading his Eric Hobsbawm again. He won't support miners or rebel councillors, but he informed a gathering of small businessmen last week that they had a lot in common with Labour and he supported their efforts.

You might have a lot in common with small capital, Neil, but we haven't. We'd rather have the miners and the Liverpool rebels.



BEFORE and since his installation as Labour Party leader, we have criticised Neil Kinnock. We have argued that he is not a man of the left.

Labour needs a leader like Tony Benn or Eric Heffer, who would stand by Party policy and support struggles like the miners'.

We have been criticised in our turn for not giving Kinnock a chance. Many on the left in the Constituency Labour Parties and in the unions have a strong sense of fairness.

Let's see how he performs, they argued. You are too quick to condemn him.

Perhaps they had a point. But he's now had six months as leader.

The litmus test in recent weeks has been support for Liverpool and support for the miners.

If Kinnock was willing to support Liverpool against Everton (he never supports the underdog) he wasn't prepared to support Liverpool against Thatcher.

The Labour Council, he argued, should increase rates by 60%. He was not prepared to give any expression of support for what the council was doing. It would be "an idle gesture" said the idle jester. He refused point blank to come to Liverpool on the 29th. He said, "It would be pointless".

Criticised by Eric Heffer on the 29th, Kinnock refused to change his position. He still wouldn't support the Council. They should, he argued, do the Tories' dirty work for them by raising rates and cutting jobs.

But he did say, "There are



Hands off Greenham

AT dawn on Wednesday 4th police sealed off all approach roads to Greenham Common, and at 6.30 hordes of police and miliffs descended on the peace camp at the main gates of the missile site.

They gave the women five minutes to get their gear together and move out. Anybody who obstructed them, they said, would be arrested.

They then set to work and demolished the camp. 30 women were arrested for obstruction. By the afternoon over 100 feet of fencing had been erected where the camp had been, in preparation for 'road widening' work.

The assault on the camp had been long expected. They had had eviction notices for the Monday, and many supporters turned out to help them resist. Nothing happened — until the early hours of Wednesday morning.

The camp had long been a thorn in the government's side. Now that Cruise is here and roaming the roads of Britain, the government has become desperate to wipe it out.

The women of Greenham have had their camp destroyed before. It hasn't put them out of business. They say that their protest will continue.



Free Sarah Tisdall!

OUTRAGE at the six months jail sentence on Sarah Tisdall for leaking one of Mrs Thatcher's secrets continues to fuel a campaign for her release.

She has had tremendous support for her courageous action in treating the Official Secrets Act with contempt. "My cell is like a florist's shop", she says.

This Thursday, 5th, the 'Free Sarah Tisdall' campaign is holding a meeting at Conway Hall, London (7.30pm).

MINERS from page 1

electricity grid, there is very little the chief constables of Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire could do on the day to make sure supplies were not affected if the workforce could not enter the premises".

But the miners need solidarity to win. They fight at a disadvantage. There are tragic divisions in their own ranks. Coal stocks are high.

But high coal stocks are as good for Thatcher and the bosses as their ability to move them. The entire labour movement must take whatever action is necessary to stop them moving coal.

The transport unions NUR, ASLEF, NUS and TGWU have decided to defy the law and refuse to move coal. That's the way to win!

But we need to translate words and decisions by union executives into action. The unions should campaign vigorously using all their sanctions and powers of persuasion to make sure that in fact no coal does move.

When management sends workers home for refusing to handle coal, the union should support them with strike action — as has already happened in Merseyside.

The miners fight for us all. We should join them and fight for ourselves. On the railways our pay claim is due for settlement by April 16. Power, gas and water workers also have claims under negotiation. Action on these claims should be brought forward so that we can fight alongside the miners.

For the second time in ten years, the miners are the front line champions of the entire labour movement. We must be with them. We must help them win.

FUND

THIS week we thank Basingstoke supporters for raising £60 for the fund; Rochdale supporters Sue Arnall (£10) and Ian Cavenagh (£5); and Islington badge enterprises, which have raised a further £5. Please send donations to 214 Sickert Court London N1 2SY.