

Socialist ORGANISER

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Ian MacGregor

He has a deceptively simple view of the future of the NCB. He takes the example of the US Mid West coalfields which used British-developed longwall mining techniques to get ten times the UK's productivity by carefully selecting only thick rich seams, working them out, and leaving the rest, while all the time introducing computerised mining equipment underground.

"That kind of future does not offer Scargill's members much security as miners. The kind of industry he (MacGregor) is striving for should... go the way of steel, motor manufacture and other capital-intensive, labour-shedding sectors".

From the bosses' paper, the Financial Times, June 22

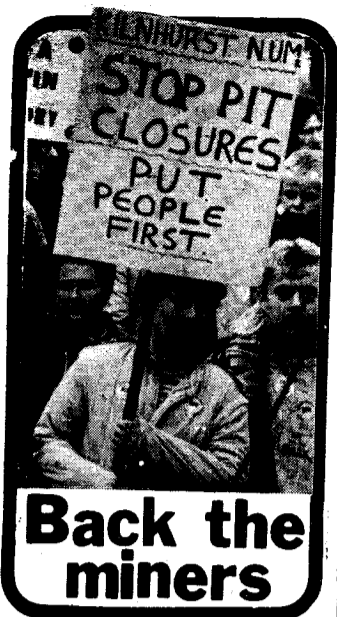
SOLIDARITY!

GENERAL STRIKE!



Pickets at Ravenscraig steelworks in Scotland. (Photo: Rick Matthews, IFL)

SUPPORT THE MINERS!



Back the miners

Ode to Maggie

Women against pit closures

By Ann Burrell (Rhodesia, near Worksop, Notts)

Maggie, you think our backs are against the wall
Don't you know a miner walks tall

A lamb may be led, but a man's man will fight
And you'll be sorry you tasted their might.

MacGregor the butcher and the rest of your crew
Aren't going to do what Heath could't do

The miners united will never be defeated
But Madam defied can be unseated.

Let us eat grass, deprive us of nosh,
We still won't give in to a policeman's cosh
Didn't you realise when you went for the kill

The miners have plenty of cast iron will
We won't give in, we won't be starved
We're not going to let jobs be carved.

Miners' wives and children too
We're all united to defy you
Into the ground we won't be trod
We'll fight back, you hard-faced sod
In a soup kitchen or on a picket line
I'm a hundred per cent behind that man of mine.

Stop Ravenscraig steel!

By Stan Crooke

AT MIDNIGHT on June 19, rail deliveries of coal to the Ravenscraig steelworks near Motherwell stopped, in line with the national agreement between the NUM and the rail and other transport unions.

To date, though, the impact of this 'blockade' has been zero.

As soon as rail deliveries of coal ceased, management immediately went back to using lorries (from Yuill and Dodds) to bring coal into the plant. There has been no fall in supplies, nor in steel production.

But the NUM Scottish area executive has given no instructions to restart mass picketing. It seems to be pinning its hopes on a deal being worked out between the NUM and the steel union ISTC.

If the talks fall through, then presumably it will restart mass picketing.

But scab coal is scab coal. Mass picketing should have been implemented as soon as the rail deliveries ceased, if only to increase the pressure on the ISTC leadership to reach agreement with the NUM on the miners' terms.

The NUM leadership has also failed to appeal for support to steelworkers at Ravenscraig over the heads of ISTC leader Bill Sirs and Ravenscraig convenor Tommy Brennan. There has been no regular leafleting of the plant, for example.



Pickets at Ravenscraig. Photo: Rick Matthews (IFL)

Both Sirs and Brennan have insisted that the present level of coal supplies to Ravenscraig, and the present level of production at the plant, must be maintained. Miners should be directly arguing the need for support from the steelworkers in the face of Sirs' and Brennan's call for scabbing.

The pledge to cut off rail deliveries of iron ore to Ravenscraig and other steel plants must also be implemented. But West of Scotland ASLEF full-timer Johnny Walker has stated that "we will continue to supply iron ore until we receive instructions to the contrary from our national executive".

And the Yuill and Dodds depot in Strathaven needs to be picketed too, to keep the scab convoys off the road.

To organise this necessary level of picketing — at Ravenscraig, at the lorry depots, and at any pits where Coal Board scare tactics result in even a few miners attempting to return to work — other sections of the trade union movement must rally to the support of the NUM on the picket line, as well as helping to implement a trade union boycott on coal supplies, iron ore supplies, and fuel supplies.

"Now is the time for action"

Phil Cowan, Fife NUM, spoke to Socialist Organiser

I think the Triple Alliance talks about Ravenscraig will break down on Friday — Bill Sirs has made it clear that he wants at least 50% production — so I reckon we'll be picketing from Monday.

Brennan [the Ravenscraig convenor] has turned right round from the man who was there in 1981. The miners supported the steelworkers when they were out, and I can remember him saying that if the miners needed support, then the steelworkers would be first in line behind them.

You read in the papers that Ravenscraig is going to be closed in 1986, and yet they're not taking any action themselves. I'm really surprised at that. Now would be the time for them to take some action, when the miners are already out.

The best support that we've had yet to date is the rail unions saying that they won't move the iron ore.

We're certainly getting more picketing to do now in Scotland. It's getting a wee bit more active now.

Paul Weller backs the miners

By Chris Hickling (Notts NUM)

I RECENTLY met Paul Weller, the ex lead singer with The Jam, now with the Style Council.

I asked Paul if he would be prepared to donate something that we would be able to raffle to raise money for the miners' strike. He said he would, and donated a gold and silver disc award and some signed records.

I hit on the idea about two weeks ago. I was sitting trying to think of ways of raising money to help us out, and suddenly I thought, why not contact Paul — who I had heard was sympathetic to our cause — and ask him to donate something.

I didn't know Paul at the time. I just took a chance that he might see me.

I can't really say how I got in touch with him, or he might get everybody phoning him up and asking for

donations. He's a really nice bloke and I wouldn't like to think that he was getting phone calls all the time. He might even get strike-breakers calling him up and making their usual snotty statements.

He asked me how the strike was going, and I explained to him about our money troubles.

He did show concern that some of the strike-breakers' families were being intimidated. I explained to him that this was all lies, created by the capitalist press.

We don't want to bring any harm to the strike-breakers' wives and children: it's the strikebreakers themselves that we want to join us in our fight against pit closures and the disembowelment of the trade

union movement. These people that are still working are condoning the actions of the pigs on the picket line. It's about time they backed their fellow-workers in this mighty battle.

As well as asking him if he would be prepared to donate something to raffle, I also asked him if he would be prepared to do a concert for us, and he was really keen on the idea. This has got to be arranged yet, though.

He said that he had already sent a cheque to the Barnsley offices, and that he was fully behind our dispute.

KEEPING THE LINKS WINNING TRADE UNIONISTS FOR LABOUR

Two-day conference organised by the Labour Coordinating Committee and the Institute for Workers' Control.

Discussion on responses to the Tory trade union legislation — includes a workshop on Labour Party workplace branches.

Speakers include Tony Benn, Ron Todd, Peter Heathfield, Audrey Wise.

July 7-8, in Nottingham. Credentials £3 per day (£1.50 unwaged) from the Organising Secretary, 9 Poland St, London W1.

Edinburgh support

By Ricky Houston

THE EDINBURGH Trades Council Miners' Support Committee, for the second week in a row, has collected £1000 in food and money.

The collections are done through a network involving both Labour Parties and trade unions.

The committee has now begun organising for the picket lines at Bilston Glen. On Thursday of this week (28th) a delegation will be going to Bilston. We hope to do this on a regular basis.

Support Committee: c/o Trades Council, Picardy Place, Edinburgh.

Women against pit closures

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

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

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

Thurnscoe: Sheila Jow, 105, Lidget Lane, Thurnscoe, Near Rotherham.

Blidworth, Doreen Humber, 50, Thorney Abbey Road, Blidworth, Mansfield, Notts.

Edlington: Veronica Balderson,

62, Blowhall Cres., Edlington, Doncaster.

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

Birch Coppice wives' group, Wendy Coxson, Tamworth 896069

Barnsley. Ann Hunter, 5 Packhorse Gn, Silkstone, near Barnsley phone 791187.

Maerdy Wives Support Committee, c/o Maerdy Strike Centre, Ferndale 755 301.

Oakdale, Gwent: 82 Markham Cres., Oakdale, Blackwood, Gwent. 0495 220158.

Calyen North, Gwent. c/o

Dorothy Phillips, 13 Thorn Ave., Newbridge, Gwent. 0495 240000.

Rugeley, Staffs: Mrs Jackson, 9 Woodlands, Handsacre, Rugeley; Staffs. Mrs Southwell, Rugeley 6179.

Littleton, Staffs: 6 Tower Road, High Green, Hednesford. Linda Platen, Hednesford 76614.

Merton, Durham. Hetton-le-Hall 267641.

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

North Staffs wives' committee: Brenda Proctor, 153 Broadway, Meir, Stoke on Trent. 0782 332151.



Pat Paris (speaking) and Chris Drake from Greenham Common with Mick McGahey. (Photo: Murdo Macleod)

Rail solidarity stronger

RAIL solidarity is strengthening in the few remaining areas — North and South Notts and Leicestershire.

The three rail depots, Shirebrook, Toton and Coalville, are now blocking the movements that should have been stopped weeks ago.

Shirebrook began to take action after a long overdue visit from NUR and ASLEF general secretaries Jimmy Knapp and Ray Buckton. Shortly after that, a joint NUR-ASLEF meeting voted to carry

out union instructions.

Management responded on June 11 by sending guards and drivers home, but then realised that there were too many to send them all home. Since then only about 16 each day have lost pay. The rest have been found alternative jobs.

This action seems to have inspired Toton where action, sporadic since the early days of the dispute, has started again. From Monday 11th no coal has been moved by train crews at Toton.

By Rob Dawber

And at Coalville in Leicestershire an attempt by management to impose normal rosters has backfired on them. From the first days of the instruction to stop coal, guards at Coalville were sent home. The rest walked out and stayed out for a week.

They only went back for a shabby deal (organised by we don't know whom) that they

would move open-cast coal only. Thus they were moving about 7000 tons a week.

Management gave an ultimatum to impose normal rosters and move deep-mined coal too. Staff at Coalville then voted to stop all movements on June 9.

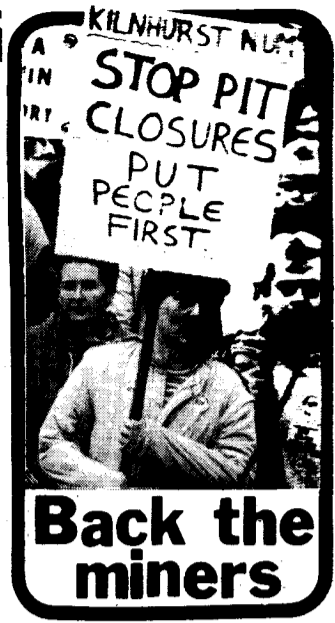
This has stuck. There are now NUR members in Leicestershire taking action in support of the NUM than there are NUM members on strike.

From our reports, only a

few train crews are continuing to work at Shirebrook, taking coal into High Narnham and Ratcliffe on Soar power stations. Even those few are declining.

Normally Shirebrook shifts about 350,000 tons of coal a week. From the start of the dispute this has been down to 180,000 tons.

From June 11 this dropped again to 60,000 tons, and towards the end of last week (June 22) it was down to 25 or 35,000.



North Notts

In view of the tremendous response from the public in providing food and money for the miners in North Notts that are on strike, and also offering holidays to children and families in this area — we have set up a special committee to coordinate transport and accommodation for miners' children and families.

If you are willing to give these children a holiday, would you please contact Pat Crowe on 0623 861674. Pat is the chairman of the Notts miners' children's holiday committee.

Or write to Peter Edwards (secretary), at The Haven, Upper Row, Dunham on Trent, Nr. Newark, Notts NG22 0UF.

Mrs S.Hart, Mr S.Crawford, and Mrs A.Brazier are also on the committee.

I would also like to stress the fact that this committee has been set up and is being run by rank and file members. We are appealing for funds to cover the cost of transport of our members to the holidays offered.

P. Edwards, Secretary



Astro (left) and Ali Campbell of the UB40 pop band with miners' general secretary Peter Heathfield at a NUM press conference. Photo: John Smith, IFL

'The movement is capable of a general strike'

Continued from page 12

has been ripped up in the coalfields — by the police. They make up their 'law' as they go along — stopping, searching, imprisoning, beating and forcibly directing the movement of miners.

But the miners have stuck it out — some of them say they have thrived on it! Listen to Notts miner Robert Cooper in Socialist Organiser this week (p.5), telling how he feels after being beaten up by police at Orgreave.

"I arose this morning and though on crutches and wearing a surgical collar and in severe pain, I made my way to Bevercotes Colliery to stand on the picket line.

"And when I can't walk I'll



crawl'.

At any rate the labour movement has thrived on it. Tony Benn was right:

Wider strike action "would be the best and most direct way to help now. The financial and moral support that has come from the movement has been much appreciated, but it has still been left to the miners and their families to carry the main burden. They are fighting for us and we cannot let them fight alone".

The miners have shaken up the labour movement — their 16 week battle has had the effect on the labour movement of a powerful engine deep within it stirring, agitating, moving and rousing the movement.

At first the calls for solidarity seemed to fall on stony ground. This wasn't just because trade union leaders like Jimmy Knapp of the NUR made calls and then did not organise and fight for them, though that was an important part of it. It was also because the movement was in a bad and demoralised state.

The miners did not have the level of sympathy they had had in 1972 and 1974.

Then people began to understand what the miners were doing, to see what an example it was for their own immediate concerns. The savage police brutality such as at Orgreave began to bring home to the labour movement

what Thatcher is trying to do to the miners — and to the labour movement.

Today there is a rash of solidarity action across industry. London tube workers came out on Wednesday 27th. Train drivers are refusing to take iron ore across picket lines into steelworks. Edinburgh bus drivers have refused to drive when their coaches are hired to transport police thugs to fight miners.

Fleet Street workers shut the Sun's dirty mouth for a day because it would not print their statement in support of the miners.

Labour Parties throughout the country have done collections and other support work.

Days of action have been held in most areas of the country.

This level of solidarity is still a long way from the level needed by the miners. But it is developing and growing. The incidents of solidarity become more frequent and more widespread. The willingness of workers to have a go for their own class, and for their own immediate interests, is increasing.

This is no longer the same labour movement that it was on the eve of the miners' strike, after five years of defeat and retreat and inept and treacherous leadership. It has been, and is still being, transformed by the miners' stand, and by their magnificent example.

This movement is capable of a general strike. It is capable of taking on and beating the Tories.

If the TUC had leaders like Arthur Scargill instead of the sub-grade office boys it does have, the TUC would organise now for a general strike.

But most of the leaders won't lead, so the rank and file must do it themselves. We need a general strike right now. What we ourselves can do is agitate, organise and prepare for it.

We must demand that the TUC calls a general strike. These people will only do that under great pressure, and then they would take the first chance to sell us out. But they are at the head of our movement.

In practice the way to a general strike is through the growth and escalation of solidarity action with the miners, and through other workers linking their fight to the miners'. Right now the Tories are weaker to resist working class action than at any time in the last five years.

One way to help the miners is to fight for your own claim. We know that Thatcher was mortally afraid of a rail strike coming together with the miners, and intervened to buy off the rail unions.

Benn is right. You don't have to wait for the leaders. "You don't" have to wait for permission.

As the miners' strike continues

and the broad labour movement once again rouses itself fully awake to its interests, the likelihood increases that the Tories or the courts will provoke an explosion and a general strike.

Up to now in this strike the Tory anti-union laws have counted for nothing in practice. Noone has dared use them, though the ban on secondary strikes and secondary picketing is being ignored left, right and centre. But the Tories still have the option of using those laws to bankrupt the NUM and other unions.

Right now the courts are ruling in favour of scabs at Age-

croft colliery in Salford that the union cannot call a strike.

An attempt to use the law may create a qualitatively new situation and spark a mass strike movement like the one which greeted the jailing of five dockers in 1972. Or the government may declare an emergency and bring in troops, triggering a mass labour movement reaction.

It is impossible to know in advance. Our job, as socialists and militants, is to push for a full scale labour movement mobilisation to confront and beat the Tories — that means a general strike to support the miners.

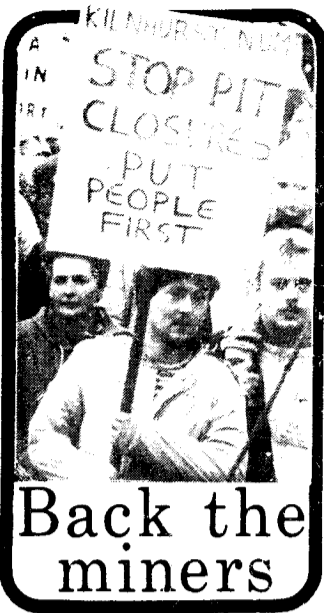
Notts strikers need money

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

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

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

POLICE OUT OF THE COALFIELDS!



Back the miners

By Susan Carlyle

RECENTLY a group of East London Labour Party members decided to go north to see for ourselves the situation in a pit community under siege from the police.

We knew miners in South Yorkshire who had visited London to collect funds and speak to meetings, and our constituency Labour Party (Bethnal Green & Stepney) wanted to send them money and food.

So we loaded our minivan with foodstuffs and household goods collected by ward members outside supermarkets, and travelled up.

Kiveton Park, just south of Sheffield, was a surprise to the Londoner who expected narrow little streets and not much light or space between houses. We found a mining village set in beautiful countryside.

We walked through cornfields and shady woods to visit the pit head — across grassed and forested slag heaps, finding a fishing club on the way, with striking miners and their children relaxing by the water-side.

We felt a million miles from industrial conflict. But just sharing stories with Harold, a local miner, put us in the picture.

The pit itself has an air of desolation and ruin after being out of operation just three months. The hazards and dirt involved even above surface showed what a dangerous industry it is.

But in Kiveton there is little or no alternative to working in the pit. Almost every family has a member down the mines.

A couple of factories in an outlying district provide some jobs, mainly for women. But it hits you very strongly when you walk around just how dependent on the pit for employment everyone is.

"You give us courage"



Miners from Six Bells pit, Abertillery, picketing the main railway line into Llanwern steelworks. (Photo: Martin Shakeshaft, IFL)

This was borne out by what people told us. This is a tight-knit community. Every face has a name, every person is known.

It is a community with a spirit that will take more than Ian MacGregor and Margaret Thatcher to break it. For East Enders this was a salutary experience and a bitter one. We come from an area where the docks and local industries have been decimated, and the old East End working class communities are gone.

Kiveton has something there to preserve beyond just jobs and employment.

We talked to women who were organising the welfare of miners' families. Here the NUM is offering every support it can. Despite having a club where they sort out food, they couldn't cook hot meals or run a canteen, but were making food parcels containing fresh food, meat and veg — enough to provide a family with a decent hot meal.

Our donations of groceries were warmly welcomed and filled half the kitchen. We felt it had been worth standing all those hours outside Tesco's, since it stretched their meagre funds a lot further.

I was impressed with the organisation and the delegation of responsibility. Not all

people picketed. Some had other jobs to carry out, and people relied on them.

One man ensured deliveries of free coal to all the pensioners so no-one goes without. As most houses heat their water with a back boiler in the coal fire, coal is necessary even in summer if people are to live with some comfort.

Everyone we met, including the children, was firmly and proudly committed to the strike. They had an unshaken faith in their ability to win.

This impression of the unbreakable spirit of the mining communities was strengthened when we took a trip to the Notts area the next day and visited Ollerton with men and women from Kiveton Park. They wanted to meet Notts strikers and their families. They had often only glimpsed Notts strikers from behind police lines or had been stopped before getting to Notts pits to help pickets.

They had time to talk about their common cause which added to a successful visit.

The women also took time to meet, to exchange ideas and to discuss linking up all the action groups, on the lines of South Yorkshire area where Women's Fightback is producing a bulletin.

We encouraged women to come south to collect and speak since it's so difficult in the Notts area and that seemed the least we could do.

Finally we travelled up to a meeting of the South Yorkshire NUM panel, where we were given a warm welcome, especially one of us who had just come out on strike in Tower Hamlets with NALGO.

Connie Durrell spoke and she said how strong the support for the miners was among ordinary people: "If you lose, we all lose".

She explained about the number of strikers in her own family — she is out, her son was out the previous week for the teachers' pay claim, and her husband had been taking industrial action in the Post Office. The working class is fighting back.

"We're all getting the courage from your strike, and we want you to win for all of us".

**£4,000
a week
MacGregor**

By Tim Anderson

EVERYONE knows you can lie with figures — in fact, that official figures quite often are lies, like the one from the Notts Coal Board which says that only 4,000 Notts miners are out on strike.

But some figures are worth looking at — Ian MacGregor's wages, for example, or the number of jobs lost in his tour as manager of the nationalised industries.

The record:

At BL MacGregor axed 34,000 jobs. His justification for this — making BL profitable — was not even achieved. In fact, during his fifth year there BL recorded its highest ever loss, £387 million.

From BL MacGregor went to British Steel. He wanted to have British Steel breaking even in three years. He failed — but destroyed 85,000 jobs in the attempt.

The damage inflicted on British Steel — a decline to only 43% of the British market — cut the market for his next industry, coal.

MacGregor now wants 20,000 job losses in the mines this year. Thousands more will follow if he gets his way. He still has two years remaining of his contract with the Coal Board.

In 12 years, MacGregor could have cut anything between 150 and 200 thousand jobs in nationalised industry, with thousands more jobs lost in related or dependent areas.

What about wages?

At BL MacGregor was paid somewhere between £10,000 and £15,000 per year. At British Steel he got £52,000, and now £59,000 from the Coal Board.

This is by no means his total income.

He is still receiving consultancy payments from AMAX, a US mining company. These payments amounted to £100,750 in 1981. From Alumax, a 50% owned affiliate of Amax, he receives £31,200.

As an outside director of Amax he gets £11,400 a year plus £570 for every meeting attended.

A conservative estimate would put MacGregor's total income at about £200,000 a year, but with the percentage he receives from the compensation paid by the Coal Board to US companies for his transfer it could be as high as £350,000.

40 workers from nationalised industries have joined the dole queue every day under his direction.

An ironic footnote to the whole story is that the person who originally brought MacGregor into the boardrooms of the nationalised industries was none other than Eric Varley — a Labour MP sponsored by the National Union of Mineworkers.

Information from Labour Research magazine.

Organising women in the strike

By Susan Carlyle



AROUND 30 women attended a Women's Fightback meeting at Ollerton, Notts, on June 17. People met each other for the first time, swapped experiences, and began to exchange ideas and make contact.

Two women who were part of a delegation from Bethnal Green & Stepney Labour Party (East London) brought some money. Women from Norwich were also visiting, having raised funds at their market stall and linked up with the Ollerton women.

Locally women had found it very difficult to raise funds in public shopping areas, with the police constantly moving them on.

As a result of offers of help from London and Coventry, women from the Notts pits are now planning to travel further afield to make contacts, speak to Labour and trade union meetings, and raise money in East London.

We also heard about wide differences in NUM attitudes to the women's action groups. Some groups have found the NUM very helpful, and have been able to work together; others have had to work and raise funds separately because of insurmountable barriers.

We discussed premises available in different areas,

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and how women got round different catering problems, such as having no cookers, but still providing home-made pies or sandwiches: how a food parcel containing small portions of fresh meat and vegetables can be more useful, to provide a good meal for a family, and the relative advantages of tinned-food collections outside supermarkets.

My impression was that each group was operating differently, but the lessons need to be shared and compared.

It was also valuable that women from South Yorkshire met women from Nottinghamshire and learned how much more isolated they are, with a sea of scabs and police around them.

Finally, we were all moved by a contribution from a woman from Norwich, a refugee from Chile, who reminded us that workers are struggling everywhere all over the world, and how important it is to unite.

Support committees

Cardiff: c/o Hoom 219, Transport House, 1 Cathedral Road.
Birmingham: c/o Trade Union Resources Centre, 7 Frederick St., B1 3HE.
South London: c/o Joan Twelves, 1 Alverstone House, Kennington Park Estate, SE11.
Manchester: c/o FTAT, 37 Anson Road, Victoria Park, M14.

Brent Miners' Solidarity Committee, c/o Local Economy Resource Unit, 389 Willemsden High Road, NW10. Ken Evans, 459 6221.

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

Get ORGANISED!

Become a supporter of the Socialist Organiser Alliance — groups are established in most large towns. We ask £1.50 a month minimum (20p unwaged) contribution from supporters.

I want to become a Socialist Organiser supporter / I want more information.

Name

Address

Send to Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8 8PL.



Orgreave

Eyewitnesses speak

Robert Cooper

WE KNEW the lorries were due to arrive when we saw the police donning their armour and equipping themselves with riot shields. There were shouts from some of the lads, "They're getting ready"...

The pickets surged and the police moved forward behind their riot shields. The police used their batons freely. Some of the police really enjoyed themselves clubbing miners remorselessly.

Whenever a policeman of this type knocked a miner down he beat a rapid tattoo down on the head and body of whoever was unfortunate to fall into range. This manoeuvre was assisted by mounted police riding at a gallop through the pickets and weaving about to scatter them. They had their batons drawn as they charged.

When they completed this operation the police returned to their positions and left the casualties lying where they fell. I did not see a policeman offer assistance to anyone who had been injured.

There was plenty of blood. I went to the assistance of a young miner who was lying in the grass. He was bleeding profusely from the head. I knelt on one knee beside him. I could give no useful medical assistance other than trying to comfort him.

I called to the police for an ambulance. The police lines were no more than 15 yards from this injured man. An Inspector shouted over, "We've got an ambulance coming, son". They made a gap in their ranks for an ambulance to come through.

I was still knelt there waiting for the ambulance when a black policeman ran through this gap and straight to me. As he reached me I looked up and he was above me and flashing



The funeral of Joe Green, the Yorkshire miner killed by a lorry while on picket duty. (Photo: John Harris)

through the air was his truncheon, which he brought down on the back of my neck. There was a sickening, deadening pain in my neck, and as I was trying to get to my feet I saw this black policeman run back through the gap in the police ranks. The police closed ranks and stood behind their riot shields...

As I was walking from the scene a solitary policeman riding a grey horse rode his horse straight at me, swinging his baton freely. The horse knocked me down and the mounted policeman struck me across the right thigh and knee. He then rode off...

I was taken to hospital and treated for my injuries. The hospital was Rotherham Gen-

eral. The staff were brilliant. I've the greatest admiration for the way I was treated. The hospital phoned Silverwood strike centre and the strike centre arranged transport for me.

I got home at 8pm. When I got sat down with a cup of tea I thought about my experiences since the strike began and determined that whilst I could stand, police violence would not keep me from the picket lines.

I arose this morning and though on crutches and wearing a surgical collar and in severe pain, I made my way to Bevercotes Colliery to stand on the picket line.

And when I can't walk I'll crawl.

Intimidation fails

Albert Bownes from Kiveton Park NUM, South Yorkshire, recently spoke at Tower Hamlets Trades Council. He told us how he had seen the peaceful picketing at Orgreave turned into an orgy of violence by mounted police.

"There were lads from Scotland there, and Welsh lads, lying with their chests covered in blood and broken bones. We've got a family down from Scotland staying in our village still visiting their son with a fractured skull in Rotherham hospital.

"When the mounted police charged into a local Asda supermarket car park the scene was terrifying. Can you imagine women and children shopping, an ice cream van in the middle, and all of a sudden policemen hitting running pickets who are trying to get away? It's amazing no-one was killed.

"The police at Orgreave are deliberately trying to force us to retaliate. But having said that, if someone is going to charge at me on a horse, or try to club me and hit me round the head, then I'm going to pick up the nearest thing to defend myself. I've no choice"

He also commented on the insensitivity of the Coal Board in sending out letters by Ian MacGregor on the same day as Joe Green was buried. Joe Green was a miner of 55, close to the end of his working life, who was fighting for the sake of young people, and lost his life doing it, crushed by a lorry on the picket line.

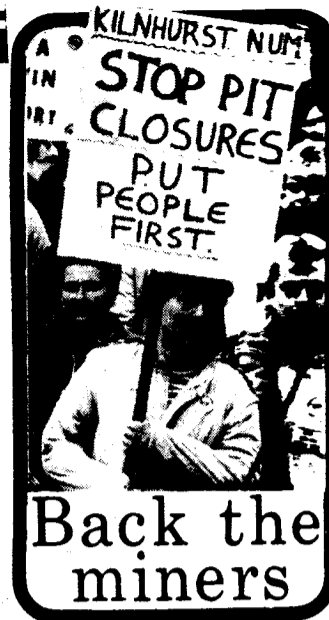
At Kiveton Park the letters were returned marked 'Return to Sender', or burned. At Kiveton Park the latest mass meeting was solidly in support of the strike, despite jailings, beatings from the police, and intimidation to prevent them going picketing in Notts.



Albert Bownes (on the left)

Policewatch

Sheffield Police watch: 73, West Street, Sheffield S1 4EQ.
Kent police monitoring group: Richard De Friend or Ian Grieg Spall, 0227 66822.
Nottingham Co-ordinating Committee Against the Police Presence: c/o Ivan Wells, 11, Osborne St., Sherwood, Nottingham.
Ollerton strike HQ is collecting statements about police behaviour: Pete, Mansfield 862790.



Excerpts from a statement by Geoff Baxendale, Thoresby NUM, on his experiences at Orgreave

The police charged... I ran... I met up with a miner from Yorkshire... we sat together on a wall.

I looked to my left down the road towards the Coke Works and saw police in riot gear with shields and truncheons. They were hitting the running pickets. I saw a policeman lash out at a running man and hit him three times. Somehow the man kept running.

I saw the policemen were lashing out at everyone and the man I was with stood up and shouted, "Stop running. do not throw. They can't do anything — you haven't done anything wrong".

The pickets had started throwing stones at the police who were laying about them. About five or six of these policemen were particularly very nasty and the men who were throwing stones were trying to stop these policemen from truncheoning the pickets.

I ran down a jitty between the houses. It was about three feet wide and about fifteen feet in length. At the end was a door, half glazed. It had a flowered curtain. I tried the door but it was locked. Then more pickets started to run in the jitty. The jitty was full of pickets. Then the police came to the end of the jitty. Three of them, and they were waving their truncheons.

Clubbed

Two of them were shouting "Come on, out, out". The pickets started to run out and the police clubbed every picket. As they ran out they struck the pickets violently on their heads and backs.

The pickets were not offering violence to the police as they left the jitty.

I was the last one out. Before I came out of the jitty I heard a policeman shout. "Grab the last one".

As I left I was grabbed by one and hit by another policeman who brought his truncheon down on my back near my left shoulder. The two of them took my arms and walked me backwards down the road. I said, "What are you arresting me for?" but they did not answer.

As they walked me backwards down the road we came to some lines of police. As I was taken through, those policemen nearest to me were jabbing me in the back with the end of their truncheons.

(Geoffrey Baxendale was then taken to Doncaster, and from there to Rotherham Police Station. He was charged with 'illegal assembly' and 'riot').

Arguing



for
Socialism

BRITAIN appears to be democratic. Everyone has a vote, and all major decisions are taken by our elected representatives.

But appearances are deceptive. Sometimes, as at Orgreave, it is very plain that appearances are deceptive.

Who ever voted for the police operation against the miners, and the long process of planning, going back at least 12 years to 1972?

Who ever elected the chief constables who are directing this operation?

Parliament is only one face of the system by which we are ruled. The body of that system is the permanent state machinery — civil

The state

Martin Thomas begins a series of articles on some basic political issues

service, armed forces, police, prisons, courts.

This machinery shapes the decisions of parliamentary governments far more than those governments shape it. And it takes many decisions and does many things with no reference to Parliament at all.

The police build-up for anti-strike operations — which continued steadily under both Tory and Labour governments, with never any parliamentary decisions — is one example.

Some state forces, like M15, are not even in theory accountable to Parliament. It is likely that during the last Labour government M15 was actually spying on some ministers.

But the state machine is not a completely independent force. It rules in the interest of the capitalist class — the top 5 per cent or so who own and control industry, commerce, and finance.

This is for three reasons.
* The top ranks of the state machine are closely tied to the capitalist class personally.
Four judges out of five, for example, went to public schools. 90% of army officers of the rank of Lieutenant-General and above,

and two-thirds of civil servants of the rank of under-secretary or above, went to public schools.

Police chiefs are generally less upper-crust in their backgrounds. But none of them could get where they are without being firm supporters of the present social system — or without becoming fairly well-off. The story of the Chief Constable of Derbyshire who was recently exposed as having spent tens of thousands of pounds improperly on his 'executive suite' tells us something about the style in which they live.

* The bankers and bosses, having immense power directly through their economic position, are much better able to influence the state machine than any other group.

* Even apart from the personal background of the top people, and the influence of big business on them — and these things vary from country to country — the state machine is a machine for administering, stabilising, and reconciling society as it is.

Its most basic structures and rules of functioning tie it to the defence of private property and of the 'good' — that is, profitable — functioning of the economy.

But the great majority of the population — the working class — have interests diametrically opposed to that of the top 5%. Why do they allow the state to be run in the interest of that 5%?

We'll look at that in a follow-up article next week.

Socialism and

THOUGH coal is basic to the economy, relatively little research has been done into what it is and how to use it.

Coal is the heated and pressurised remains of giant ferns that died, but did not decompose, some 300 million years ago.

More recently deceased plants are preserved as lignite (brown coal) or peat.

Coal comprises the same elements as living things — carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, oxygen and sulphur — but has become carbonised by its treatment. Thus instead of the original 10% of carbon, coal ranges from 60% to almost 100% carbon (anthracite). But even now, the exact chemical structure of coal is imperfectly understood.

Gas and oil (and nuclear power) have displaced coal somewhat as mainstays of the energy and chemical industries, but since all are likely to run out within the lifetime of 50% of SO readers, coal is set to make a come-back. Conservative estimates put exploitable coal reserves at 300 years' worth.

Capitalism

Coal possesses possibilities and problems. Let's look at these, and see how capitalism is failing to deal with them.

Coal is a mixture of complex and valuable chemicals. Burning it can only be justified if attempts are being made to replace coal burning by renewable methods of energy production, freeing coal for the chemical industry.

Extracting chemicals from coal has usually been a by-product of coke-making. Coal is heated strongly without air to drive out coal tar, oils and coal gas, leaving almost pure carbon (used in iron production).

Coal gasification (known for over a century) can take the process further. The hot coke is blasted with first air, then steam, to make 'water gas', a mixture of carbon monoxide and hydrogen (also called 'syn-gas'). This technique fell into disuse with the discovery of huge natural gas fields, but



Support for the miners is spreading

will become popular again as the gas runs out.

Modern research is building up an extensive repertoire of chemical reactions based on syn-gas.

Ways have been found to encourage carbon monoxide from syn-gas to combine with methanol (wood alcohol), itself produced from syn-gas, to make such useful products as acetic acid, anti-freeze, ordinary alcohol, and even a high octane petrol (a replacement for lead in petrol?)

Starved

At present, research into coal gasification (and liquefaction) is starved of cash. Just two years ago, the National Coal Board had to abandon plans for a syn-fuel plant in job-starved North Wales when the government refused to advance promised funds.

The closure of pits with remaining coal reserves, which has precipitated the miners' strike, cannot be justified. The present price of coal is politically determined, while the value of coal as a

natural resource makes it worthwhile to keep 'uneconomic' pits open.

Closed

Once closed, a pit deteriorates, so it becomes expensive or impossible to open. For instance, the Thorne colliery, closed in 1956, is being reopened at a cost of £200 million and will not be working until 1990.

Nevertheless much coal cannot be mined because it is under the sea, the seams are too thin or are faulted (broken up), or it is just too deep.

But this important resource can be exploited — by a technique praised by no less a person than Lenin, coal gasification *in situ* (i.e., underground).

Bore-holes are drilled and

Following his article on nuclear power last week, Les Hearn looks at the role of coal in a socialist energy policy

oxygen and steam injected. Some of the coal burns and the heat causes the surrounding coal to break down into methane or react to make carbon monoxide and hydrogen (syn-gas). This can be collected from the bore-holes and burnt or used for making chemicals.

Fire

Ironically, coal seams often spontaneously catch fire, sometimes causing mines to be abandoned.

This technology could possibly make it unnecessary to send people underground and reduce working hours.

It could also increase exploitable coal reserves from 300 to 1000 years' worth.

Continuing coal extraction and burning makes it essential to deal with mining waste, subsidence, acid rain and miners' health. At present, economic arguments allow the Coal Board to litter the land with slag heaps and the Central Electricity Generating Board to pour sulphur dioxide into the air.

Slagheaps

Coal gasification *in situ* would avoid slag heaps and subsidence, while ultra-modern pits like Selby remove miners from the most dangerous parts of the mine. Here, the NUM has demanded a four-day week to match increased productivity.

'Clean coal' is the solution to air pollution. Most acid gases can be removed from



Pickets at Lea Hall, Staffs, with the power station in the background. (Photo: ...)

flue gases by 'scrubbing', a technique that is resisted for 'economic' reasons (though Battersea Power Station possessed it).

Coal can be pulverised and washed to remove half the sulphur, while coal from Welsh and Scots pits under threat of closure has only half the sulphur of Midlands coal.

In Fluidised Bed Combustion, pulverised coal is mixed with crushed limestone. A stream of hot gas keeps the powder fluid, so the coal burns more efficiently, at a lower

temperature. The limestone combines with the sulphur dioxide, reducing pollution by some 80%.

Research

The International Energy Agency (IEA), representing most industrialised countries, reported last November that lack of research threatened coal's future as a major replacement for oil. Research dropped by over a quarter at a time when solutions to acid rain were urgently required.

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Miners supporting a nuclear disarmament demonstration. (Photo: 'The Miner')

coal

Time for a four day week!



John Harris

"Our priorities would be the health of miners, the prevention of pollution, and the survival of mining communities where pits are genuinely worked out"

Meanwhile, two-thirds of IEA research was into nuclear power, supplying only one-twentieth of IEA members' energy.

In Britain, the Tories made a political decision to favour a nuclear programme which "would have the advantage of removing a substantial portion of electricity production from the dangers of industrial action by coal miners and transport workers".

Therefore, only peanuts are available for research into coal gasification and liquefaction, Fluidised Bed Combustion, and acid rain (which the Tories refuse to admit is largely caused by power stations).

Nuclear

An integrated system of coal, oil and renewable energy would be crucial for a socialist state.

Our priorities would be the health of miners, the prevention of pollution, and the survival of mining communities where pits are genuinely worked out.

But burning coal for energy is like living on our savings,



and we would quickly wish to go over to renewable energy alone, using coal as a source of valuable chemicals.

More on renewable energy in later issues of Socialist Organiser. Meanwhile, those who would close pits are, as E.F. Schumacher (economic adviser to the Coal Board for 20 years, and author of 'Small is Beautiful') said, like "the spiteful burglar who does not merely pinch the valuables, but in addition destroys everything he cannot take".

What kind of victory do we want in the current strike?

With negotiations taking place we have to be clear exactly what we want out of this dispute and *it has to be much more than just a freeze on pit closures*. The fight has been hard and it'll get harder. Our efforts should not be squandered on some compromise that gives us nothing but a stay of execution.

We can win much more.

It's worth recalling the other things we have been fighting for over the past few years for ourselves, our families and future generations.

- * Shorter working week
- * Protection of earnings scheme
- * Retirement at 55 along with the equivalent juvenile recruitment
- * Consolidation of the incentive scheme into the basic wage
- * An integrated, sane energy policy based on 200 million tonnes per year output – coal gasification, coal to oil industry, development of renewable resources and an end to the nuclear power programme.

Of all these a shorter working week and a shorter working life are the most important.

Shorter hours at work answer many of our demands in one go.

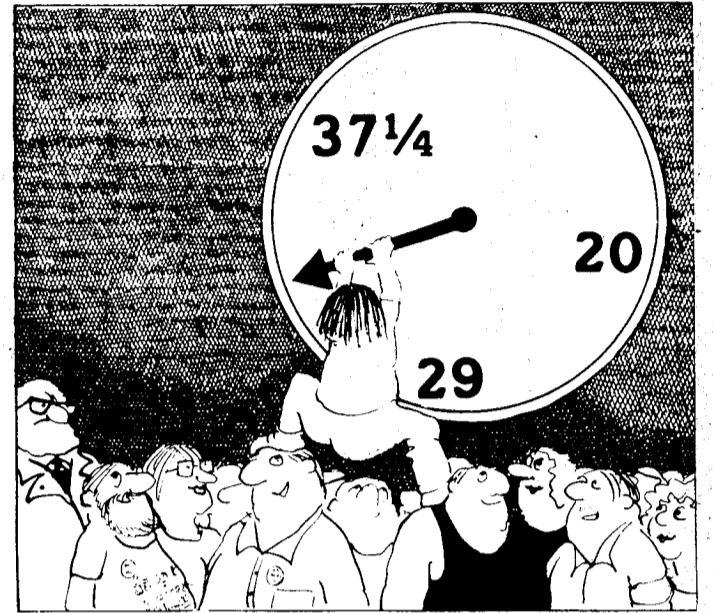
It gives us more leisure time, more time for the family and kids and more time for educational opportunities.

It paves the way for creating jobs. If there are more people working in the industry we share the workload and have a better life.

IG Metall (the largest union in the world) is currently campaigning through strike action in Germany for a 35 hour week. It's the biggest industrial dispute in Germany since the 1920s.

They are convinced that shorter working hours is the most important issue on the agenda for workers. It's time we in the NUM gave it the same priority.

Shorter hours are particularly important when we consider the introduction of new technology. If we are to reap the benefits of that technology then



higher productivity must be rewarded with more time off.

The NUM has a *New Technology Agreement* which it has presented to the Coal Board. *Any return to work following this dispute must include the ratification and signing of that agreement – otherwise we may well win this battle against job losses but lose the war!*

The benefits of victory are often short-lived. Wage increases are soon eaten away by inflation. Pit closures may be halted for a while but started again when our defences are down.

A shorter working week is a permanent benefit. If there is one thing we haven't missed in recent months it's been the daily grind of working shifts and gobbling dust.

If we are fighting for jobs let's make them jobs worth having.

Miners for the New Technology Agreement



A closed pit at Danby, South Yorkshire. (Photo: John Harris)

What do you think about the future of coal and the options for a socialist energy policy? Write to Socialist Organiser, 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.

Making the CP safe for capitalism

BERLINGUER'S political career in the PCI really began in the month April 1944, when he was freed from prison and when the Badoglio government, which had succeeded Mussolini, put the political structures to follow fascism into place with the aid of the Anglo-American forces.

Palmiro Togliatti, the leader of the Stalinist PCI, had just arrived back in Italy and

the PCI made its entry into the Badoglio government, giving its collaboration to the Italian bourgeoisie to reconstruct a state apparatus, to redress the economy and above all to block, by its influence on the masses, the road to any revolutionary possibilities.

It was in this party of government, this 'party of a new type' as Togliatti called it, 'with its positive and construc-

Neil Kinnock's performance during the miners' strike has brought home sharply to many activists the fact that the Labour Party needs to be turned upside down if it is to be a real working class party. But most would be startled to think that the Communist Party in Italy is to the right of Kinnock's Labour Party. Such is, however, the fact: the Italian CP (PCI) favours coalitions with the Italian equivalent of the Tory Party. This article by Andre Frys (translated and abridged from the French socialist weekly Lutte Ouvriere) explains some of the history.

Luigi Longo, to define a policy that would permit the PCI to get back into governmental political life.

In 1973, following the Chilean coup d'etat, Berlinguer formulated the idea of the 'historic compromise'. To avoid what had happened in Chile, he said, it was necessary to establish collaboration between the two big Italian parties: the PCI and the Christian Democracy.

Stripped of spurious justifications, this proposition came down to this: the PCI would not claim access to government power in alternation with the Christian Democracy, which had dominated Italian governments until then, for the Italian bourgeoisie would never accept such a thing, but it would seek access to government in collaboration with the Christian Democracy.

In other words, the PCI limited its ambitions to the possibility of participating in a Christian-Democrat government. In the name of the compromise necessary with the 'Catholic masses' whom the Christian Democracy (DC) was said to represent, the PCI declared itself willing to serve the DC as a buttress and a cover, even as a life-belt or safety-net, in return for a few ministerial seats.

The 'historic compromise' began being realised in the years 1976 to 1979. In the elections of June 1976 Berlinguer's party got its best score, with 34.4% of the vote. By compromises and bit by bit, the DC gained the collaboration of the PCI, but still without giving it what it wanted in return: ministerial portfolios.

In 1978 the PCI was even allowed to participate, explicitly, in the Parliamentary majority of... an exclusively Christian-Democrat government!

All in all, the 'historic compromise' came down to the fact that the Christian Democrat leaders accepted... the PCI members of parliament voting for them!

Loyal

For the communist militants, for the working class, this was hard to swallow, and more so because the 'national unity' governments of this period had to pursue cuts or repression against student demonstrations and against the violent actions of the terrorist groups.

But, under the leadership of Berlinguer, the PCI insisted on showing itself a loyal supporter of these governments of crisis, conscious that this was the price it had to pay to show the Italian bourgeoisie its loyalty and that it was a governmental party.

Berlinguer's party paid for this policy with an erosion of its electoral position.

After the assassination of Aldo Moro — who had been the main artisan of the com-

is not to have its position as the main left party taken away from it by its rival, the Italian Socialist Party which, for its part, has been trying since 1980 to show that it can enable the Italian bourgeoisie to govern without the help of the PCI.

In his determination to occupy the place of a social-democratic party, and not to have the PSI take that away from him, Berlinguer made some demonstrative gestures in relation to the USSR, and notably the gesture which will go down in history as 'lo strappo', 'the break'.

USSR

In December 1981 the PCI daily L'Unita, declared that "the phase in the development of socialism which began with the October Revolution has exhausted its dynamism": in other words, the PCI no longer had any reason to have special links with the USSR.

The PCI declared that it would "maintain normal relations with all the Communist Parties, in the same way as with any other socialist, revolutionary and progressive force, without any special or privileged link with any of them and on a basis of autonomy of political thought and action, without any ideological or organisational link".

This 'break' did of course lead to some difficulties inside the party. A pro-Soviet tendency was created around Armando Cossuta. But

Cossuta's motion at the following Congress of the party only got 5% of the votes. Basically, the 'break' was well accepted by the party.

But Berlinguer's political skill in those years lay also in maintaining the hold of the PCI and its control over the reactions of the working class, sometimes at the cost of radical words.

Thus Berlinguer could be seen threatening to call for the 'occupation' of the Fiat factories in September 1980, at the time when the management decided to sack thousands of workers.

He could also be seen, at the beginning of this year, at the head of workers' protests against the Craxi government's decree cutting back on the inflation-protection of wages... all the better to lead that action into a dead end and in the last analysis to have it play the role of a buttress to the parliamentary jousts of the PCI.

Berlinguer was, as all the press emphasised, an honest, moral, serious and hard-working man, which isn't common among Italian politicians. But this honesty and seriousness was basically in the service of the bourgeoisie.

He worked, seriously and patiently, to make of the enormous force which a party like the PCI could have been for the working class, a force which was controllable, integrable and usable by the bourgeoisie in the framework of its political and social system.



Berlinguer advocated coalition between the CP and Italian Tories

stamped on the PCI what has gone down to history as the 'Salerno turn'.

This 'turn' removed any possible ambiguity about the role that the leaders of the PCI wanted to play in the post-fascist order. There was no question at all of social revolution. The PCI declared itself ready, on the contrary, to collaborate in a government of national unity with "the participation of the great mass parties", "a government capable of organising a real serious war effort throughout the country" against the Germans.

Proclaiming that "there is a place in the national front for all those who want to fight for the liberty of Italy", the PCI even abandoned any insistence on the abdication of King Victor Emmanuel — the 'fascist king' who had installed Mussolini in power — and the abolition of the monarchy.

In that month of April 1944,

active activity', that Berlinguer began a brilliant career.

He became general secretary of the Communist Youth then, as from 1948, a member of the leadership of the party.

The PCI had left the government in 1947. But it still continued on the path traced in 1944, becoming a party heavily involved in the administration of municipalities and trade unions, basically a profoundly reformist party despite its name 'communist'.

For many years, just like the French CP, the PCI was excluded from all governmental coalitions. Not until the 1970s could its leadership once again envisage the possibility of participating in government, thanks to the PCI's steady electoral progress and the increasing discredit of the centre-left government coalitions.

It fell to Berlinguer, elected general secretary of the party in March 1972 as successor to



Italian president Pertini beside Berlinguer's coffin



Italian workers destroy last symbols of Mussolini's rule, 1943

International

John Fernandes story



Arch-bigot Ian Paisley got 56% of the Protestant first preference vote

Sinn Fein slumps

By Paddy Dollard

EVERYBODY believed that the Euro-elections would be the big test for Provisional Sinn Fein — and so did Sinn Fein.

Would the unprecedentedly large vote got by the legal wing of the Provisional IRA in last year's UK elections hold up? Would SF's vote grow and fatally eat into the vote and credibility of the SDLP's John Hume, the sitting MEP?

As always in Northern Ireland, there was not one but two elections running in parallel: the election in the Protestant community and the election in the Catholic community. There is very little cross-voting.

83% of the Catholic/Nationalist vote last year seemed to put SF within striking distance of the constitutional nationalists. The prospect that SF would replace the SDLP as the majority party of the Catholic community alarmed both the British and the Dublin governments — and the Catholic Church, which fiercely threw itself against them.

Sinn Fein was confident. But in the event its share of the Catholic vote was 5 per cent down. The SDLP seemed to have attracted a lot of tactical votes, and some who were Sinn Fein in 1983.

In the Six Counties Provisional Sinn Fein got 91,476

votes (13% of the total and 38% of the Catholic vote). The SDLP got 151,399, 22% of the total and 62% of the Catholic vote.

One likely consequence is thought to be that the British and Dublin governments will feel that the SF threat is off, and therefore abandon recent moves to edge towards some sort of agreed solution to the Northern Ireland situation.

The first response of Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams suggests that Sinn Fein's reaction may be to become more election-oriented. Of the lost votes he said:

"What we failed to take out was the vote of those nationalists who, while they had voted Sinn Fein in '83, may have had misgivings about IRA operations in which civilians were killed or injured. I think there is a need to refer to what I said at the 1983 ard fheis (conference). That is that revolutionary force must be controlled and disciplined so that it is clearly seen as a symbol of our people's resistance".

In Ireland as a whole, Provisional Sinn Fein got 5% of the vote.

In the Protestant community, arch-bigot Ian Paisley got nearly one quarter of a million first preference votes, 56% of the Protestant vote.

Colin Waugh looks at a new pamphlet, 'Police Racism and Union Collusion: the John Fernandes Case', from the National Convention of Black Teachers (£1), and at the issues behind this case of a lecturer sacked for exposing racism among police cadets

HENDON Police School stands in the Tory-controlled outer London borough of Barnet. However, the nearest ordinary further education college is part of Kilburn Polytechnic, which comes under Brent.

Until recently, nearly 30 lecturers from the Poly were permanently based at the Police School, servicing (among other things) a course for cadets.

After the uprisings of 1981, and in line with a recommendation in the Scarman Report, a 'multi-cultural' unit was introduced onto this course, and the staff involved, representing about one third of Brent's employees on the site, elected John Fernandes, a black teacher with eight years' experience at the Police School site, to coordinate it.

From the start, they were agreed that their aim in designing and running this 'multicultural' element should in fact be to counteract racism which they knew to be widespread among the cadets.

In the summer of 1982, the head of the Police School, Commander Richard Wells, who has since become Deputy Assistant Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, intervened to exclude the multicultural unit from the course and replace it with a unit on 'decision-making' to be taught by police instructors rather than by civilian staff from Kilburn.

John and his colleagues on the multicultural unit fought hard to prevent this. In the course of doing so, they tried to convince Wells of the necessity for anti-racist teaching by

drawing to his attention essays written by cadets which included such comments as "can a 12-bore shotgun blast a black man into tiny pieces at 12 yards?" and "do black people burn better with oil or petrol on them?"

However, Wells was unwilling for such evidence to be discussed, so that by the mid-autumn of 1982 John felt that the only thing left was to release the essays to the media. They were eventually publicised on the Channel Four programme Eastern Eye.

Despite the fact that no cadets' names were given, and despite the fact that the programme gave Wells ample opportunity to have his say, his next action was to give John two hours to get off the premises.

More surprisingly, his employer, the London borough of Brent, which at that time was Labour-controlled, ordered its staff at the Police School not to go into work there until he was reinstated.

In other words, the struggle looked winnable, especially since editorials favourable to John began to appear in the *Guardian*.

However, this would be to reckon without the role of NATFHE's leadership, both at a local level in Brent and nationally in terms both of officials and of lay members of the National Executive. It was not long before the union's machinery was brought into action — against John Fernandes. Fawzi Ibrahim, the Regional Secretary, who, like John, was also on the Brent Liaison Committee, managed to discover a short break in John's contributions.

The Regional Official, Geoff Brass, arranged for a new course to be set up purely within the Police School, on the basis of a 'questionnaire' conducted without the existing branch's knowledge, and with the obvious effect of isolating John from his support in the existing branch as a whole.

Instead of the issue being treated as one of principle, John was offered casework.

Meanwhile, rather than forming an alliance with the Labour council against the Police School management, NATFHE's leadership entered into talks with that management themselves, while simultaneously going to the media to accuse John of 'gross professional misconduct'.

They attempted to justify this behaviour by claiming that the whole episode was a smokescreen behind which Brent was manoeuvring to make staff redundant. In other words, a 'trade union issue' was wheeled in to hide their unwillingness to support a black member over the issue of anti-racism and academic freedom.

There then followed a period of struggle within NATFHE at the level of Outer London Regional Council and at the National Conference. This struggle is still going on, though it may show how the Left has been weakened by the Socialist Workers Party's withdrawal from College Rank and File.

At the local level, the result of the leadership's behaviour has basically been that those who supported John have been relocated to other work in Brent, while those who went in to work against Brent's instructions have been transferred



Police in Southall. Although investigations after the killing of Blair Peach showed that police were keeping 'unofficial' deadly weapons in their lockers, no-one was ever prosecuted. Photo: John Sturrock Report

to the employ of Barnet, along with all civilian servicing of the Police School.

More recently, one of these lecturers has brought a complaint against the officers of Kilburn branch under NATFHE's Rule 8 ("bringing the union into disrepute"), and the national leadership has allowed this to go forward to a tribunal. However, a vigorous campaign by anti-racists was rewarded when the tribunal decided that there was no case to answer.

This pamphlet was written before this most recent turn of events. It gives an account of events from 1982 in some

detail, quoting many relevant documents, and also tries to place the whole affair in a theoretical context.

It argues that the whole concept of 'multicultural' (as opposed to anti-racist) teaching, along with the increasingly fashionable courses in 'racism awareness', is itself racist, because it fails to treat racism as a power relationship in which whites seek to oppress blacks.

Since there are many teachers, including on the Left, who still see multicultural studies as at least potentially progressive, it would be well worth getting hold of this book.



Iranian oppositionists in London demonstrate against Khomeini's terror. Photo: Andrew Moore

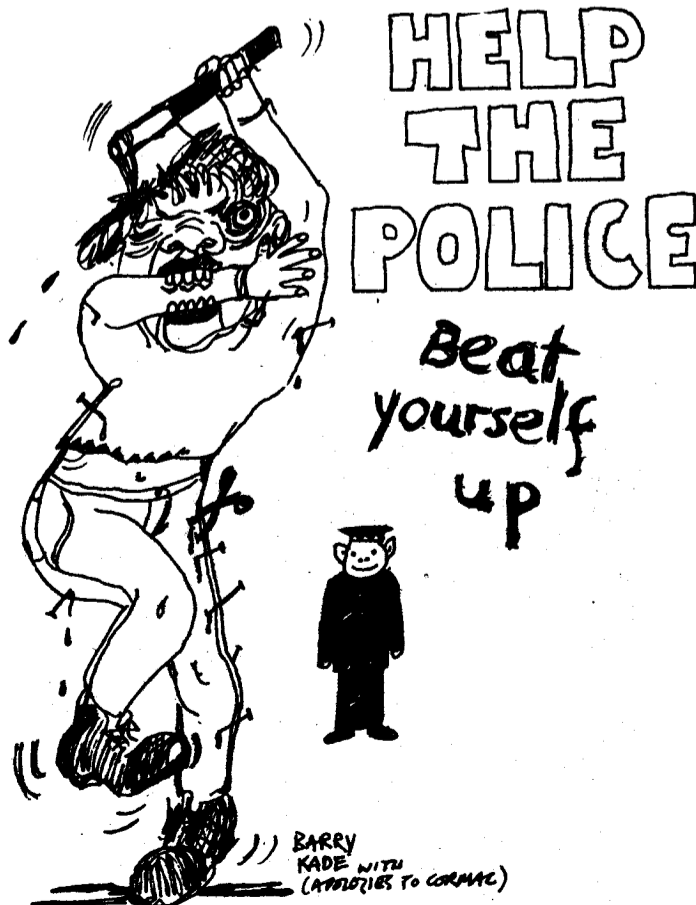
People in the Kurdish city of Baneh have been successively bombed by Iraqi planes, then down by Iranian troops when they demonstrated for peace.

According to reports by Iranian left-wingers abroad, Baneh was bombed on June 5. "The poor areas of the city, where the bombings mainly took place were razed to the ground.

Over 1000 people were killed and wounded".

The Kurdish people exist as minorities in Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Syria and the USSR.

Baneh is in Iranian Kurdistan, near the border with Iraq. After the bombing, people took to the streets demanding an end to the war. Iranian troops fired on the demonstration, killing and wounding many and arresting many more.



Labour council does a Tebbit

NALGO fights no-strike clause

Derek Ralph is vice chair of Tower Hamlets NALGO and staff side rep. He was previously convenor of shop stewards during the social workers' dispute in 1978-9 — a bitter strike that continued for ten months.

Tower Hamlets' Labour-led council was the last to settle a national agreement, and following that a reorganisation of social services resulted in cuts and loss of service.

He spoke to councillor Susan Carlyle.

How does the present dispute compare with your experiences last time?

Even though the issue is different, it is the same cabal of councillors who are running the negotiations and this council. I cannot see that they have moved one inch since the social workers' strike.

They are using the Head of Personnel for their mouth-piece, and far from attempting to mend industrial relations in the borough they are being more provocative.

They are effectively trying to smash the council trade unions.

Do you think there is a deliberate policy behind the council's decisions?

There have been miscalculations and blunders by management, but at the same time councillors on the staff side committee, who refused to take the libraries item on the agenda after the suspension of the librarians, were being deliberately provocative. The trade unions had no other way of responding except by strike action.

Labour parties back NALGO

DURING THE last two weeks NALGO has brought libraries, housing departments, social services offices and town halls in Tower Hamlets, London, to a halt.

Some 1200 workers are on strike.

The strike was triggered by the suspension of 50 librarians taking limited action to oppose the closure of two libraries. They were refusing to collect library fines.

The librarians were told that unless they agree to guarantee that no industrial

action will be taken, they will not be reinstated.

Negotiations have led to a deferment of the library closures. The issue now is the defence of trade union rights. All other sections of the council have come out in support of the librarians.

The local Labour Parties are actively opposing the Labour council's behaviour. One party headquarters has been turned into the picketing centre, and at the Labour Parties' local government committee (Friday June 22) full support was pledged for the strike.

I think the council has to cut back in order to keep its spending down, and in doing so saw NALGO as one of the main unions which was capable of resisting. They are therefore set on a policy of breaking NALGO.

Similarly with the 1978-9 strike — what followed was cutbacks under the guise of 'reorganisation' and consequent demoralisation of workers in NALGO.

I am very impressed with the speed with which NALGO have supported us. The paying of strike pay at a decent rate was accepted very swiftly, and there were no waverings about their support, which we hope will continue.

The support from other workers within NALGO is tremendous, and the librarians' action has opened up a can of worms in the council's industrial relations attitude to its workers.

At present 1200 out of 1500 NALGO members are on strike

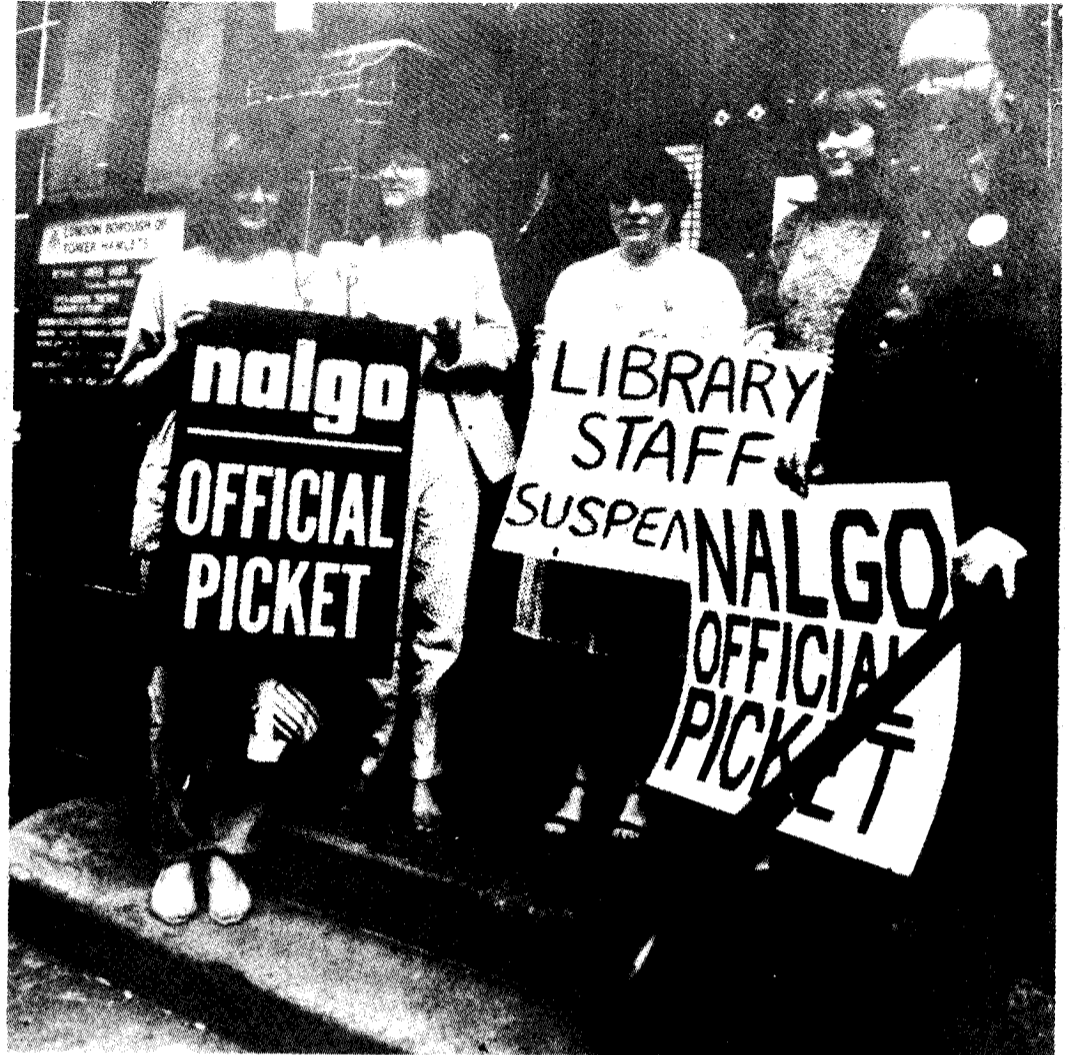
with up to 50 other trade unionists refusing to cross picket lines into work.

My own particular department, Social Services, has undergone various reviews, the most important recently being carried out by the DHSS in the light of the borough's plea that because of cuts they were no longer able to meet their statutory responsibilities.

The report revealed not only an under-resourced department but the remoteness of management. With the council's present cumbersome procedures, no dialogue with management was possible.

The report was leaked because the council failed to respond. When made public it was rubbish by the then Chair of the council Social Services committee, who went on to refuse to meet and discuss it with NALGO.

For two years there has been an elderly care review, which includes a re-submitted



Library workers outside Bethnal Green Library. (Photo: 'Tower Power', Tower Hamlets NALGO bulletin)

claim for parity with other local authorities, based on a national agreement. These workers are still waiting, with little confidence in this council.

Three years ago nursery workers were paid their increase two years late after a dispute!

The crunch, however, has come in the libraries.

A decision to close two libraries, Poplar and Roman Road, was taken at an Amenities Committee, though the closures had not been negotiated with the trade union side.

Having jumped the gun, management then offered librarians a trade-off with enhanced pay and gradings — saying that the decision to close could not be rescinded. They also offered redeployment for those displaced.

The librarians took a laudable decision to refuse the extra money rather than harm the public with the loss of service. They also started lengthy official NALGO procedures, with meetings and a ballot, which came down overwhelmingly in favour of pursuing minor industrial action on the following demands:

- not to cooperate with any administrative measures to effect the closures,

- not to collect any money on behalf of the council from June 11 1984,

- to embark on a campaign to demonstrate we need improvements in the library service, and to condemn the council's decision to close libraries outside an agreed review of the service.

During the ballot the Director of Community Services sent out letters urging a 'no' vote, and as soon as the librarians were moving towards their action letters of suspen-

Comments from librarians at Bethnal Green library

"To be thrown out of the building every time you embark on minor industrial action is unbelievable.

"The non-collection of fines is the minimal kind of

action you can take in libraries — it's been going on for months in Tory Westminster, as well as other London boroughs. None of them have been threatened like us, and we're meant to be employed by a Labour authority."

sion were given to them on their desks on the Monday morning, telling them that they would be in breach of their contracts if they started industrial action.

This was seen as an over-the-top reaction. We expect a Labour council to have a different policy in relation to its workforce. You might expect it from Margaret Thatcher or Norman Tebbit.

NALGO librarians' response was an immediate walk-out, and, with all workers in other sections being potentially threatened with similar industrial relations, the rest of NALGO followed two days later.

Now, if you had been in NALGO for the last few years, you would know that the union has been weak — meetings poorly attended, sometimes inquorate, and not especially militant in its membership. We never expected such a response. At a mass meeting in the first week, over 600 out of 800 voted in favour of strike action. This affects all sections of the council.

When we tried to raise the matter of the librarians' suspension with councillors, we were barracked and procedurally blocked, and the personnel section would not meet NALGO until the following week.

We've made some progress and reached agreement on deferring closures. There will

Left councillor says: 'I won't cross pickets'

I WRITE in support of the NALGO workers' stand against the irresponsible action of the council in suspending the librarians who were courageously defending the library service against closures. Many people have been shocked by the council's behaviour and have asked me to protest.

One ward constituent has said: "Hitler didn't manage to close our library all



'A Labour councillor in negotiations with NALGO' From 'Tower Power', Tower Hamlets NALGO bulletin

Statement issued to the East London press by councillor Susan Carlyle.

through the Blitz. What is this council doing?"

In effect the 'cowboy leadership' of this council are threatening to kick workers out of their jobs unless they promise never to take industrial action in any form.

The non-collection of fines policy, decided democratically both by meeting and ballot, was to stop the closure of Roman Road and Poplar libraries. It is minimal industrial action which at present is being pursued in other authorities, including Tory Westminster, and has not provoked anywhere such hostile anti-trade-union overreaction.

The clause on no strikes or any industrial action is a pretence of industrial negotiation. This attitude leaves no choice but for other council workers to strike to defend their trade union rights. Even Norman Tebbit would hesitate to implement such a trick.

Another voice within the

Labour council has to be heard. Labour Party councillors who are accountable stand with NALGO to defend services and against the infringement of trade union rights. We do not stand for the council to carry out Tory policies and Tory cuts.

The high-handed cynics in charge will no doubt bow out in the 1986 elections, either through de-selection or abandonment of their responsibilities. Some should go now so the Labour Party will no longer be tainted by their treacherous antics.

P.S. I would also like to thank NALGO for being instrumental in exempting the special Housing Meeting to resolve the urgent problems of tenants suffering racial harassment, and will be donating my council attendance allowance towards the hardship fund.

Until the strike is resolved, I with other councillors shall refuse to cross picket lines unless our participation will bring the council leadership to its senses and grant NALGO its basic requests.

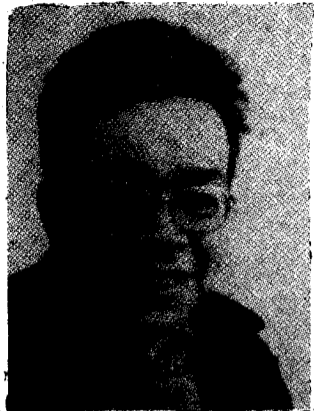
Solidarity betrayed

LESSONS OF THE BASINGSTOKE POST OFFICE WORKERS STRIKE

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

Liverpool stands firm

By Nik Barstow (Islington NALGO delegate, in personal capacity)



"THERE WILL be no sell-out. On July 11 we will go to the Council meeting with the same budget we went with on April 29. There will be no compromise on jobs, services or rates".

Derek Hatton, deputy leader of Liverpool City Council, used the opportunity of their open conference on June 23 to squash rumours of a climbdown by the Council's Labour group.

He stressed that the Tories had refused to move into the city, not because Jenkin wanted to negotiate, but because of the level of support in the city for the council's policies.

The conference was, however, disappointing in terms of working out how the Tories are to be fought, and mapping out a detailed plan of action.

Council leader John Hamilton stressed that the Department of the Environment's (DoE's) officers could not even come up with plans to meet the targets they themselves had set the council.

Though Jenkin had described housing in the small part of Liverpool he visited as "the worst I have ever seen", the DoE officials want rent rises of £1.70 and cutbacks in the Direct Labour Organisation. Liverpool refuses.

Speakers from outside Liverpool concentrated on linking the city's fight to a national strategy for Labour local authorities under attack.

Alistair McRae, NUPE's general-secretary-elect, reaffirmed NUPE conference's support for Liverpool's stand and called for the Labour Party special local government conference on July 7 to adopt a policy that could unite all Labour councils.

Sheffield council leader David Blunkett made a clearer call for the July 7 conference to adopt a policy of refusing to implement the Rates Act, following Liverpool's example, and for the Party nationally to swing its full weight behind Liverpool's stand. He also pointed out how the money the government was forcing councils to spend on police operations denying miners their rights would be at the cost of jobs and services in local government and education.

There was a lot said in general about the links between the miners' and the local authorities' fights, but there were no practical proposals on what council workers or Labour councils should do to make the links.

The whole conference, after the opening speeches, in fact became simply a tub-thumping rally for the Militant, who dominate the Liverpool District Labour Party.

Workshops planned for the afternoon were called off in favour of an orgy of self-congratulation about the 'strength of the Marxists'.

For many delegates this was an annoying wasted opportunity. Instead of having a chance to discuss the 'nuts and bolts' of council confrontation with the government with fellow council trade unionists from Liverpool, we had to sit through endless repetitions of 'the need to get rid of capitalism and have a socialist Labour government'.

As a rally it was a well-run, even impressive, event. As a conference to build coordinated national support for Liverpool, and to press for Labour authorities to take a united stand following Liverpool's lead, it was an irritating lost opportunity.



Cuts chief Patrick Jenkin



CLEANERS from Barking hospital were joined by Kent and South Wales miners for a demonstration on Tuesday June 26.

The cleaners have been on strike for 16 weeks now against enforced cuts in pay, hours and cleaning standards by their employers, private contractors Crothalls, and the march went to the headquarters of Crothalls parent company, Pritchards.

June 26 had been declared a national day of action in support of Barking by the strikers' union, NUPE, and there were NUPE contingents on the 1000-strong demonstration not only from London but also from Wales, the North East, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Cambridge, Oxfordshire, and Essex.

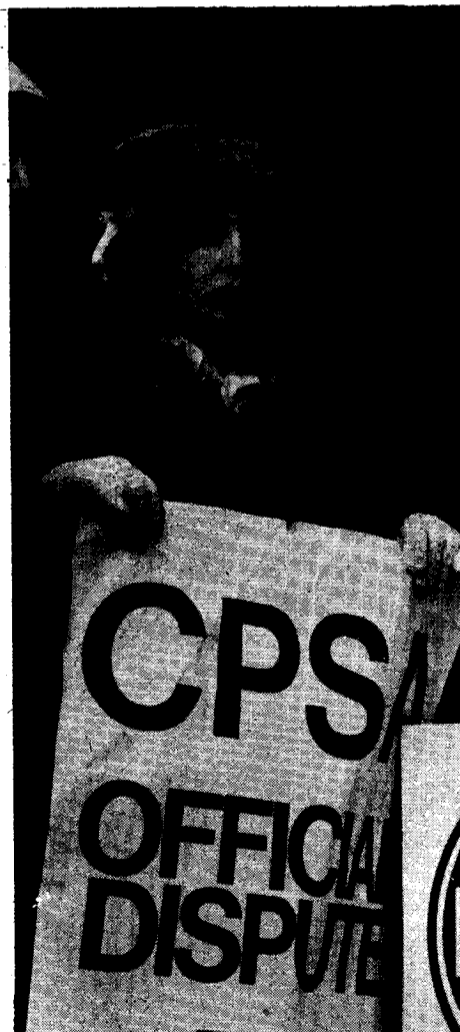
Also on the demonstration was a contingent from the two week old strike at Hammersmith Hospital against privatisation.

Both Barking and Hammersmith now need further and more decisive action by NUPE nationally to spread the struggle against private contractors in the NHS.

For latest details of the Barking strike phone 01-595 4252 (24 hours), or 01-592 5038. Messages of support and donations to: AUEW House, 588 Rainham Road, South Dagenham, Essex RM10 7RA. Cheques payable to Barking & Dagenham Health Emergency.

PHOTO STEFANO CAGNONI (IFL).

How CPSA dumped Graham



CPSA militants are fed up with Graham. Photo: John Harris

Rod Bacon, recently elected to the National Executive Committee of the civil service union CPSA, spoke to Socialist Organiser about the NEC's decision to remove general secretary Alistair Graham from the TUC General Council.

When was the idea of removing Graham first raised by the new Broad Left dominated Executive Committee?

In the week following the CPSA conference (May 14-18), Broad Left NEC members met in caucus, and the idea was raised by Militant supporters.

Some of the 'soft left' opposed it, on the grounds that Conference had given no mandate for such action, and that we should not engage in such a major dispute so soon after the Left's election victory. Others were merely taken by surprise, and didn't want to commit themselves one way or the other at that time.

Some time later, papers were produced by NEC members both for and against the removal of Graham. These were discussed at a further Broad Left NEC caucus on June 16-17, and the vote was 11 to 10

against getting rid of Graham.

The idea was to set up a sub-committee of three people who would discuss the business of the TUC General Council with Graham, and basically see that he didn't step out of line.

However, it was also agreed that if Graham refused to accept this proviso, the Left would nominate Ray Alderson (a Communist Party member, recently elected as vice-president) for the seat on the General Council.

What was Graham's response?

At the NEC meeting on June 19, Graham refused to accept the terms of the motion on the sub-committee. The Broad Left therefore nominated Alderson for the position, although Militant nominated their own candidate, Kevin Roddy (the Left's candidate for the presidency, who was very narrowly defeated by right-winger Kate Losinska. The right-wingers on the NEC nominated Graham despite his refusal to accept the sub-committee plan.

So three people were nominated. What was the outcome of the NEC vote?

Graham got five votes, Roddy got 7. Ray Alderson received 14 votes.

Graham stated at the meeting — and later to the media — that this decision meant that the campaign for his re-election "started now". As CPSA elects its General Secretary every five years, Graham comes up for re-election in the autumn of 1986.

But there's little the right wing can do immediately. There's talk of them trying for a referendum of the membership. But to call such a referendum, they require the support of enough branches to represent a majority of union members. It's very unlikely that this could be achieved.

How do you think the union should elect its representatives onto the General Council in the future?

I'd like to see a system similar to the one CPSA uses now for election to the NEC: individual votes at workplace meetings, so that all union members have a hand in electing their spokesperson. There are certain practical difficulties, but the main aim must be to see that the rank and file have great input into the TUC Council.

Sell-out danger in Germany

By Tom Rigby

AS WE go to press, it is not yet clear whether or not the metalworkers' strike movement for a 35 hour week in West Germany is over.

The strike is the most serious since the 1920s. Car production has been almost halted and 450,000 workers laid off. Newspaper production has been hit by a series of one-day and two-day strikes by the printers' union, which is fighting for the same demand.

However, it looks like the dispute could end with the officials of the 2½-million strong IG Metall union accepting a deal that would not give the workers the 35 hour week.

At the centre of the search for a compromise, in effect a sell-out, has been Georg Leber, a former Social Democrat minister and trade union leader, who is the chief arbitrator.

We should beware of the TUC, Kinnock and Orme trying to do the same to the miners' strike in Britain.

At a time when the employers have called for a supreme court injunction to overrule a lower court ruling that state benefits should be paid to 200,000 workers who have been laid off, IG Metall should be looking to escalate the

action, not holding back and waiting for the outcome of arbitration.

The strike is beginning to have effects in Britain, too. There may be lay-offs at Vauxhall Ellesmere Port and Luton plants. Effective international combine committees for the car industry could help spread the West German fight into a Europe-wide struggle for the 35 hour week with no loss of pay.

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



Socialist Organiser

Strike with the miners

By John O'Mahony

"There's a power, there's a power in a band of working men, When they stand hand in hand That's the power, that's the power, that must rule in every land One industrial union grand"

THE POWER of the miners stand against Thatcherism -- for 16 heroic weeks so far -- has already transformed the industrial, social and political climate of Britain.

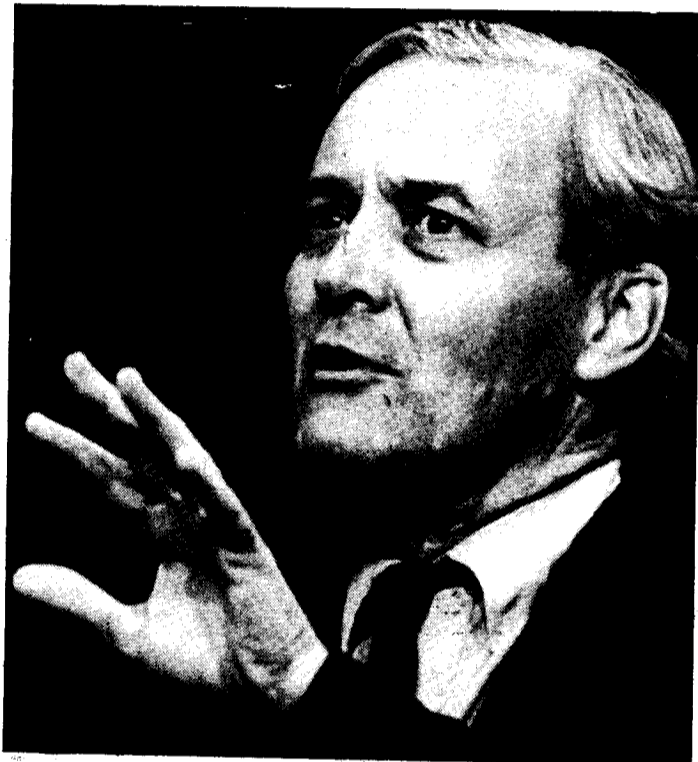
Labour MP Martin Flannery was right when he said in the House of Common on Tuesday 26th that an "inexorable march towards a general strike is now under way".

It may not yet be quite inexorable, but a general strike to support the miners is now a real possibility. The defensive Tory response to Flannery showed that they think so too. John Biffen attacked Flannery for "bullying" and "threatening" talk.

Tony Benn expressed the possibilities and the needs of the new situation in the working class when he said this on Monday 25th in East London.

"No one need wait for permission to begin. Trade unionists in a whole range of industries and services should plan to take industrial action where they work."

"An extension of strike action would directly assist the National



Benn gets it right!

Union of Mineworkers and give them a tremendous moral boost at the same time".

The press said Benn had called for a general strike. In effect he had.

The Campaign Group of left Labour MPs are right, too, when they call for other unions to press their own claims and to act alongside the miners against the common enemy.



Pickets outside Bethnal Green Town Hall. They were protesting against Tower Hamlets' Labour councillor's refusal to transfer Bengali families from estates where they have been suffering sustained and vicious racist attacks. The attacks have occurred for many months on the Teviot Street Estate, and three people have been hospitalised as a result. Mr Ali, whose family has been attacked eight

times, said, "Does someone have to die before the Council will act?"

Labour councillor and Socialist Organiser supporter Susan Carlyle successfully moved a resolution to transfer eight families and to recognise racist harassment as a priority for rehousing. See also page 10.

PHOTO STEFANO CAGNONI (IFL).

A general strike in support of the miners would shatter Thatcher like the limited strikes of 1972 and 1974 first humbled Heath and made him climb down (1972) and then defeated him (1974).

Six months ago a general strike was scarcely thinkable. Everywhere gloom and depression reigned in the labour movement after five years of Tory rule and years of retreats and defeats for the labour movement.

The working class did not react explosively to the attacks of the Tories after 1979. On the one hand there was political disorientation and confusion after five years of a wretched Labour government under Wilson and Callaghan which had attacked workers' living standards. On the other, the slump undermined militant trade unionism: with millions on the dole, many workers saw dim prospects for the strike action which had served them so well for the previous two decades.

The strikes that did occur became prolonged and bitter.

The ruling class gained confidence against the working class from the slump, unemployment, mass misery and social decay around them. They gained confidence from the militant capitalist government of Thatcher.

The sell-out right-wing or left-

talking trade union leaders were usually ignored in the years of boom and militancy. Now they had returned to centre stage, and became a deadly danger to the movement.

Things went from bad to worse. The power and the strength of the labour movement seemed to be unravelling and wasting away. That's what the Tories thought.

Before they came to office they had worked out an anti-union strategy. They thought they could safely take on such groups as health workers. But on no account, they told themselves, must they go for a head-on clash with the miners in their first years of office.

They backed down from a confrontation in 1981.

But by 1984 the labour movement was in such a state after years of retreat that they thought they could take on the miners and win.

Miners seemed at first reluctant to follow Arthur Scargill when he warned them about planned pit closures. NUM leaders had been weak and unsure in their response to closures at Polmaise and Bogside. Tory victory in a head-on confrontation would complete the job of breaking, neutering and house-training the labour movement.

They went in for the kill, provocatively appointing the butcher MacGregor as head of the Coal Board. With deliberate planning and malice aforethought, they took on the miners.

And look what has happened! Spreading from Yorkshire, the strike is now solid in 80% of the NUM. Most of the mining communities -- women, and even children too -- have mobilised themselves to fight back, and they are fighting back magnificently.

State violence not seen in Britain for many decades has been thrown at them. The rule of law

Continued inside on page three

Fund

Fund income has practically come to a halt this week, leaving us with a total of £291.45 for June so far. We need much more to keep our work round the miners' strike going. Send to: SO, 214 Sickert Ct, London N1.



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



Statement issued by the London Region NGA, London Press Branch EETPU, AUEW Fleet Street Branch, the London SOGAT 82 branches, and members of the NUJ.

TRADE UNIONISTS in Fleet Street -- the ordinary printers, journalists, clerical and distribution workers -- have demanded, through a 'Right of Reply', that the miners' voice is heard for a change. We have produced this statement because we want you -- the reader -- to know that the men and women who make your daily newspaper are resolute in their support of the miners.

Why? We want to stop thousands of miners -- and their families -- joining the four million people who daily endure the indignity of being without work.

June 27

Printers shut the lie machine

• Britain needs coal: We have greater reserves of coal than any country in Europe, but in 10 to 15 years we will -- on present policies -- once again be dependent on imported energy. The present Middle East war demonstrates just how vulnerable we are.

• North Sea Oil is a precious resource. At the moment it is being frittered away on funding the army of unemployed. In another decade or so, the oil will be gone... forever.

• The Government lied to you. The Prime Minister has repeatedly said that the government will not interfere -- but the truth is that she has deliberately been working to prolong the strike.

Were the miners to lose, Britain would be the poorer, harsher and more divided. We will not allow that to happen.

SALTLEY GATE DEMONSTRATION

MARCH WITH THE



Saturday July 7. Assemble 10am at Saltley Gate, Birmingham. March 11am to rally in Chamberlain Square -- speakers will include Arthur Scargill.