

A **Socialist** ACTION

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AMNESTY!



Socialist ACTION

'Our fight will go on'

'THE STRIKE is over, but the dispute continues.' Arthur Scargill's statement after Sunday's special delegate conference expressed the spirit of struggle that continues to exist in the mining communities. The closeness of the return to work vote — 98 to 91, even after 12 months on strike — was adequate testimony to that. So was the reaction in the Kent and Scottish coalfields and at Armthorpe in Yorkshire.

The NUM's refusal to sign an agreement which would make it complicit in the Coal Board's closure programme was correct and necessary. Given the deteriorating situation faced by the strike, and the necessity to return in the short term, it was far better to refuse to make an agreement than to dress up a capitulation as a 'compromise'.

As Arthur Scargill wrote in the *Observer* on 3 March: 'The NCB is demanding that the NUM accepts closures on "economic" grounds prior to such cases going through the review procedure — which means that the fate of these pits and units would effectively be predetermined even before they enter the procedures. That is the Board's ultimatum to us. We cannot accept it.'

The crucial question

for those who voted not to go back was rightly the issue of amnesty for the 700 miners sacked in the course of the strike. This struggle is going to deepen. There are still over 2000 court cases outstanding against NUM members — many on serious charges such as conspiracy and riot.

The NCB will continue to use these cases to victimise militants. Defence of those sacked is now a key task of the entire

movement and not just the NUM.

Together with the overtime ban it is the immediate issue facing the union. Kent, Scotland and Armthorpe in Yorkshire led the way on Monday with their votes to stay out to fight for an amnesty.

The outcome of the strike is a defeat not just for the miners but for the entire labour movement. But the attitude taken by Scargill, and the NUM rank and file, has created the best conditions possible for an ongoing struggle.

This is despite the fact that the right has been sitting on its hands and waiting for an opportunity to isolate the Scargill wing of the union. And despite the fact that the South Wales executive decision to recommend a return — with the implied threat that the coalfield would go back whatever the national conference decided — effectively tried to preempt the discussion at Sun-

day's delegate conference.

The refusal of the NUM to sign an agreement, to become complicit in pit closures, means that the miners return to work in a much more favourable situation than, for example, the workers in British Leyland or British Steel — MacGregor's previous two victims. There the leaderships accepted the agreements and effectively policed the run down of the industries.

The NCB tried to force this same role on the NUM. It failed. Of course the NCB will try to move rapidly now to stamp its authority on the coalfields: to isolate militants, restructure the industry, and impose its spurious criteria of profitability. MacGregor has already announced he will be continuing with the closure programme.

But the miners under Scargill are in a much better position to rebuild for a fightback than the steel workers were under Sirs — or for that matter the miners would be under another Joe Gormley. This is what makes the Scargill leadership different from anything that has existed in the British labour movement for 60 years. That is, an intransigent determination to stand and fight on the basic issues.

That determination turned the miners' strike into a social and political struggle that welded the left together into a class struggle layer whose growth and development will continue in the next

period.

The blame for the defeat does not lie with the NUM leadership. The mining communities have given the greatest example of struggle in the history of the British working class. Responsibility for the defeat lies with the leadership of the TUC and the Labour Party.

As Mick McGahey put it at the December TUC general council, there were 'three kinds of leader round the table': the honourable ones who had tried to deliver support and succeeded, the honourable ones who had tried to deliver support and failed, and the dishonourable ones who had never tried.

The last are in a clear majority in the TUC. There is no room in the offices of the TUC for a leadership that stands and fights for its members' interests.

The NUM's refusal to allow the TUC to take over the dispute was correct. The decisions of the September congress to give 'total support' to the miners were sabotaged by Willis and the majority of the general council.

The TUC, no doubt, will use as an excuse the clause that support — particularly in the power stations — had to be 'by agreement with the unions concerned'. The truth is that from the beginning the general council have been more afraid of a Scargill victory than a Thatcher one.

To cap it all there can be few more despicable

incidents in the history of the British labour movement than the TUC using last week's talks to 'bring them closer to the government'.

The TUC's treachery is all the greater when one realises just how little effort was needed to bring power cuts and win the dispute. As few as eight of the major power stations had to be stopped to bring nationwide cuts. This was well within the TUC's grasp. Instead, along with Kinnock and Hattersley, Willis concentrated on attacking the NUM for so-called violent picketing.

As Scargill put it: 'the trade union movement in Britain, with a few honourable exceptions, has left this union isolated. They have not carried out TUC congress decisions, to their eternal shame.'

From Willis through to Hammond, and Kinnock through to Healey, the labour leaders have clearly shown that they are unfit to lead the labour movement.

In the present crisis the working class needs a leadership that will stand and fight. The miners' strike has driven this understanding deep into the trade unions, the Labour Party, and all sections of the oppressed in struggle. That is the permanent gain of this dispute, and the greatest guarantee of avoiding future setbacks.

The centre and right of the TUC and Labour Party will undoubtedly use Thatcher's victory as an

occasion to try and crush the left in the movement. They want the defeat of the miners to be, as the *Observer* put it last Sunday: 'the making of Neil Kinnock'. And now Kinnock has announced his opposition to an amnesty for sacked miners.

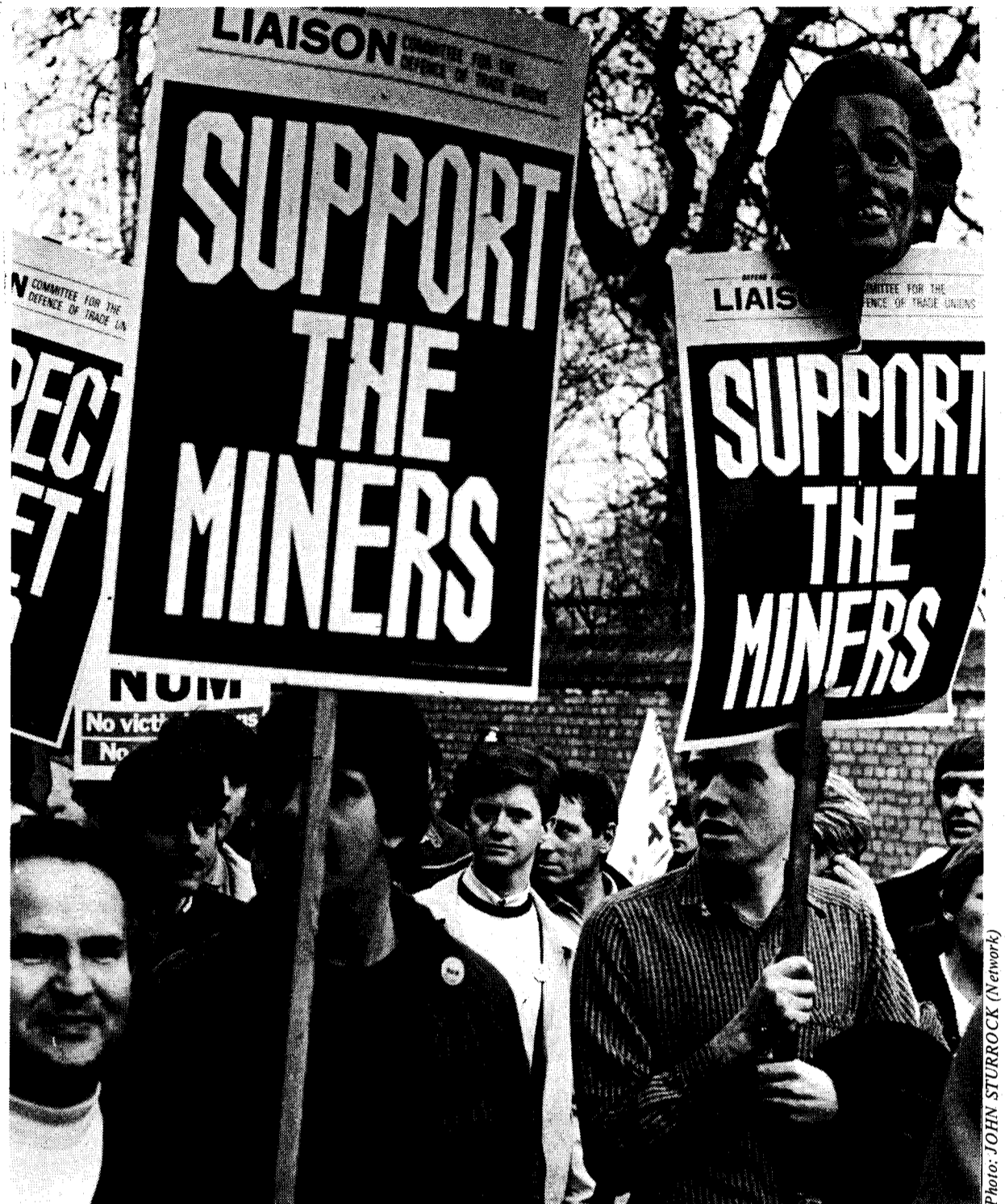
For the labour movement, such a strengthening of Kinnock would be a disaster. It would consolidate the leadership that betrayed the miners — one that couldn't fight its way out of a wet paper bag.

But Kinnock will not have an easy task. The miners' strike has brought into being a class struggle layer and leadership in Britain which is thousands strong and organised throughout the movement. It has opened a period of radicalisation and political struggle of a kind not seen in Britain since the 1920s. It is a radicalisation that will deepen.

The task now is to organise that left to throw out the traitors. It requires a programme for a government as loyal to our class as Thatcher is to hers — and a fight for the Labour Party to adopt such a programme.

We need a leadership that will follow the example of the miners in resisting the attacks on the working class. For the working class there is no other road — no matter how long it takes.

Arthur Scargill put it very well: 'It is on struggles such as ours that democracy itself depends. Our fight will go on.'



The greatest strike in British history



Photo: JOHN STURROCK (Network)

THE MINERS returned to work this week after the greatest strike in the history of British capitalism, the longest mass strike in the history of any imperialist country. It is a strike which is a chapter of glory in the history of the international working class.

It took £5000 million, a para-military police force, 9785 arrests, and starvation, in the effort to defeat the miners. In response the miners used mass pickets, open defiance of the state and the law, mobilised whole communities to organise collective provision of welfare, raised support and funds, mobilised thousands of activists in every part of the country.

The strike brought into being the most dynamic movement of women since the suffragettes. And the miners supported and were supported by all sections of the oppressed and ex-

ploited. They were defeated not by the Tories and their state, but by the treachery of the TUC general council and the leaders of the Labour Party. The Notts scabs, the failure to close the power stations, the lack of national solidarity action, were due to the divisions in the working class promoted by the reformist misleaders.

The miners burst through 60 years of class collaboration with the force of a tornado. In the course of the dispute they have created the beginnings of an alliance of the oppressed which, in the next period, will transform the labour movement in Britain. The labour movement will never be the same again.

The next years will see the fight to transform the labour movement, to secure a leadership which stands and fights — as the NUM did.

After the miners' strike, British politics will never be the same again. For the first time since the general strike, a force genuinely at war with British capitalism has emerged.

From the militants of that strike, and those who supported them, have come the future leaders of the British working class. No one who turned their backs on that struggle will ever amount to anything.

For 12 months a section of the British work-

ing class stood up. It showed it could remake society in its own image, that it could change the world. At long last, the miners' strike has produced a leadership that begins to match that potential.

Finally, the force that showed itself in the miners' strike will spread to the entire British working class. When it does, there is no power in the entire world that will save British capitalism. The miners' strike is not an end, but a beginning.

Today the militants of the NUM, more than any other union, are engaged in a bitter struggle to save their organisation, their jobs, their workmates, their communities. There should be no underestimate of just how difficult that struggle is going to be.

But Arthur Scargill got it right when he said the greatest achievement of the last year is the struggle itself. Thatcher would have been no 'softer' if the NUM had never struck. Out of that fight an entire generation of socialist fighters was born.

British labour movement politics will be reshaped from top to bottom — as its effects work themselves through. For 12 months those who participated in the miners' strike made history. The struggle will never be forgotten.

The miners' strike will be remembered for what it was. The greatest strike in British history. The living proof that one day the working class of Britain will make socialism.

THE NUMBER one task facing the NUM is to get its sacked militants back into work.

That is the fight to be carried out by the national union and in every area.

Socialist Action spoke to militants in Kent, Yorkshire, and Nottingham about the fight for an amnesty in the pits.

Kay Sutcliffe

Kent Women Against Pit Closures

WHEN I heard the results of Monday's mass meeting that Kent would be staying out I was really pleased. We are all disillusioned here with the decisions of the delegate conference. How can we go back without securing the jobs of those that have been victimised?

The miners haven't committed any offence. In Kent, for example, most of the charges relate to taking cameras down the pits in order to expose the Board's lies. It's sheer vindictiveness.

It's a strange situation. The Board is using the criteria of so-called crimes that have been committed. But such criteria never applied before the strike.

Whoever heard of such an idea? It's simply a cover to get rid of the militants. It simply must be fought.

We are sorry that a number of areas have decided to go back. But we are convinced that individual pits will join with Kent and Scotland in continuing the fight. We don't blame those who are going back. We blame the TUC and the Labour Party leadership. They did nothing to implement their own

decisions.

The TUC left the matter in the hands of individual workplaces. But this placed the militants in an impossible situation given the present climate. Then the TUC had the nerve to blame the rank and file.

But for Kent the fight goes on. So we'll still be asking for support from the labour movement to keep us going. We know from the experience of the last 12 months that such support will still be forthcoming.

In any event, we in Kent, especially the women, are still up to our necks in activity. At this very moment we have women touring Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands, as well as being out and about around the country.

We'll be trying to get as many as possible to the Chesterfield rally in celebration of International Women's Day.

Our feeling as a result of the strike is that the women have to get more involved in other struggles, especially of women. We feel we have a debt to repay to those who have helped us.

Jack Collins,

Secretary Kent NUM
AS FAR as we are concerned the issues facing

miners today are just the same as when we started the strike 12 months ago. If anything the Coal Board is even more intransigent. This is therefore not the time to go back.

We consider the decision of the delegate conference to go back without the reinstatement of the sacked miners as treachery. We are calling on all miners throughout Britain to stand and fight and not to go back until re-instatement of everyone is achieved.

This morning (Monday), we held a mass meeting of over 2000 miners. This is almost a complete turn out. Our motion to stay out was passed with only a handful voting against. Here we have 40 miners who have been sacked.

The Board has declared that it is unwilling to re-instate anyone. We will reconvene in two weeks or after we have had a further response from the Board.

Paul Galloway,

Thorsby Colliery,
Notts

THE SCABS may boo and jeer when we walk back — but that's the way they've always treated great people. We go back with our heads

up high knowing we did our duty to our families and our class.

Our mood is subdued. We don't want to go back without an amnesty for the sacked lads. But we feel that the South Wales leadership held a gun at the heads of the delegate conference.

Declaring their intention to return whatever the outcome of the conference played right into the hands of the Board.

Here in Nottingham we'll continue to fight till the lads are re-instated. We've set up a trust fund which will pay the top grade pay to all those who have been sacked until we get them back.

We believe that the links that have been created between striking miners, their families, the support groups and other trade unionists have got to be continued. We have to form a striking force in the labour movement to drive out the rotten traitors.

Our first job is to settle accounts with the scabs and those leaders, openly or not, that backed them.

Steve Shukla,

Armthorpe Colliery,
South Yorks

IT WAS clear from

AMNESTY!

Monday morning that things were happening at Armthorpe. Before light a mass picket assembled.

The six cops present weren't expecting us.

The scabs had to be sneaked in through the back door. Morale was sky high. We then went on to a demonstration at Rossington. About 1000 miners and their wives had assembled from the whole of the Doncaster area.

We met the scabs coming out of the early shift. They got what was coming to them.

And so we went to the branch meeting to discuss the recommendation to go back to work. The place was packed out. We thought the game was up because there was so many people who'd never been seen on a picket line.

But when the branch committee motion was put to reject the recommendation to go back to work, it was passed overwhelmingly. So we'll be staying out with Kent and Scotland until we get the re-instatement of the lads who've been victimised.

Tomorrow we're back on the picket line at 4.30am. We don't know how long we can last, but we do know that we can't only increase our chances of winning re-instatement and re-employment if we don't stand with the

A scab to the end



Photo: JOHN HARRIS

ONCE MORE Neil Kinnock has openly scabbed on the victimised miners, with his statement that there can be no general amnesty.

Over 700 miners have been sacked by the NCB already. More than 2500 are facing charges in the

courts, ranging from murder and threats to kill, to assault, bodily harm and criminal damage.

All these miners are guilty of only one crime: fighting for their class. They must have the full support of the labour movement and the socialist movement to win their amnesty.

Rebuilding Nicaragua's economy

WASHINGTON'S WAR threats against revolutionary Nicaragua have continued unabated. Recently Nicaragua's president, Daniel Ortega, seized the diplomatic initiative by unilaterally asking 100 Cuban military advisers to leave the country and declaring an indefinite moratorium on the purchase of new weapons systems. These measures are in line with the provisions of the 'Contadora' peace initiative — blown up by the US on a flimsy pretext.

Washington's initial reaction to these proposals was hysterically hostile. Nonetheless such steps underline to the world the peaceful intentions of the Nicaraguan government and people. What they need is a breathing space to rebuild their economy.

Below, we publish an article written direct from Managua by JOSE G PEREZ on a major government message on the economy in which the FSLN outlines measures to meet problems caused by Washington's war. The article is an edited version of one which recently appeared in the US socialist paper, *Militant*.

MANAGUA, Nicaragua. The top leadership of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), which heads the workers' and farmers' government here, issued a major statement on economic policy, 8 February.

The message was read by Commander of the Revolution Daniel Ortega, President of Nicaragua, at an assembly of top leaders of the Nicaraguan government, armed forces, and mass organisations. Ortega is one of the nine members of the FSLN National Directorate, which signed the appeal.

'We begin 1985 confronting the greatest difficulties of these five years of revolutionary struggle and work, under the weight of the aggression and the threat of US military power,' the message began.

The statement went over the many efforts made by the Nicaraguan government during the last several years to reach a peaceful, negotiated agreement with Washington, all of which have been answered by escalating US government aggression.

'In recent weeks,' the statement continued, 'that government has proceeded to blockade, suspend, or withdraw from all the peace-keeping processes that exist in the region.'

'They boast in an official document of having "effectively" blockaded Contadora; they have indefinitely suspended the Manzanillo talks...they have withdrawn from the World Court at The Hague.'

The US government, the statement reported, is also making great efforts to prevent 'the continuation of the dialogue between our government and the Misurasata organisation, which (Washington) has managed to split.' Misurasata is a group of Miskito Indians, led by Brooklyn Rivera, that has been part of the CIA war against Nicaragua.

Despite this pattern by the US government the FSLN plans to continue supporting the Contadora peace talks, as well as pursuing other avenues of negotiation with the United States.

'These peace efforts on the international terrain,' the Sandinista leaders said, 'are nothing more than the complement of the battle for peace that we are also waging in our homeland against the foreign aggressor.'

Since the US military threats and provocations around the supposed arrival of MIG planes in Nicaragua last November, thousands more Nicaraguans have joined in defence preparations here. Civil defence plans and installations have been refurbished and updated; many thousands of new militia members have been recruited, trained and armed. And enforcement of the Patriotic Military Service, Nicaragua's draft, has been strengthened.

The main part of the message by the FSLN National Directorate focussed on the economic situation. It explained the general principles behind, and reasons for, a package of new economic measures designed to strengthen the revolution and better defend the living standards of the nation's workers and peasants.

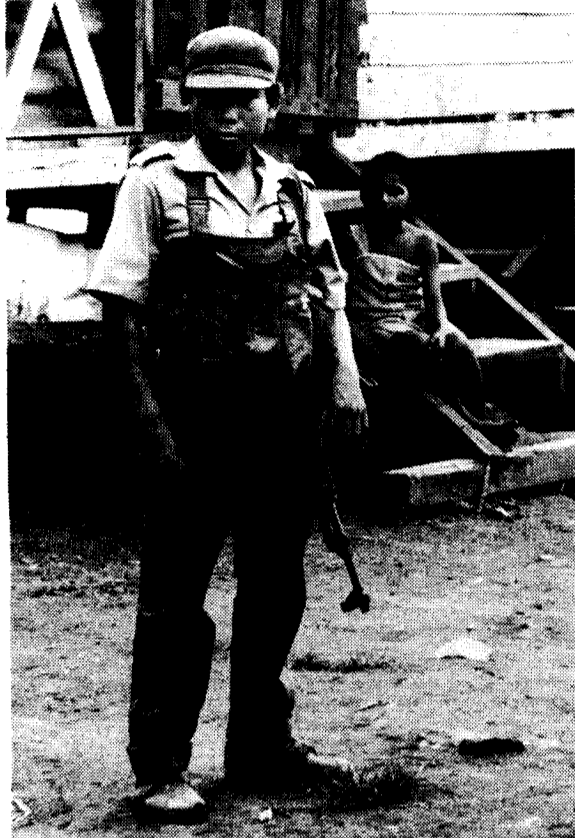
The outline of the measures was announced at a news conference by the president of the central bank and the ministers of finances, labour, and internal commerce. This announcement immediately preceded the message from the Sandinista leadership. Both that news conference and the FSLN statement were broadcast live over radio and television, rebroadcast together that evening, and published as a special supplement in the Sandinista daily, *Barricada* the following day.

In explaining the deepening problems of shortages, speculation, hoarding and inflation, the FSLN National Directorate pointed to the US war of aggression, which has, in four years, caused losses totalling more than \$1 billion.

In addition, Nicaragua, together with the rest of the semi-colonial world, is being subjected to ever-growing exploitation by the imperialist countries through unequal exchange and rapacious lending practices.

Since 1977 the purchasing power of Nicaragua's exports on the world market has been cut in half. The FSLN leadership cited one dramatic example in its message: whereas in 1973 a 100-pound bag of sugar could buy as much as 10 barrels of oil, today that same bag of sugar can buy only one-fifth of one barrel of oil.

One indication of the acuteness of Nicaragua's economic problems is that



Youngsters defend the Nicaraguan revolution

its foreign debt has grown from \$1.6 to \$4.35 billion, of which fully one-fifth — \$872 million — represents interest payments that have become part of the debt.

'The low prices that we receive for our export products, the financial obligations that our creditors impose on us, and the economic damage caused by the aggression manifest themselves in a lack of hard currency, which, in turn, translates into limitations to acquire raw materials, agricultural inputs, spare parts, machinery, medicine, food, and basic goods — all basic resources for subsistence and production in the life of the people.'

The statement then went over the advances

made since Nicaraguan workers and peasants seized political power five and a half years ago.

Even as the US war of aggression has steadily escalated over the past four years, the revolutionary government has carried out an investment equivalent to more than US \$1 billion.

'In sum, if we had to point to some economic error as the basic one, it is that we tried to cover too much at the same time. In reality, we have done more than we were able to do with our limited material resources. And all this despite the enormous degree of destruction we inherited from the Somoza dictatorship, and of the destruction that foreign

aggression continues to cost us.'

'Today,' the statement continued, 'the quantity of resources that the war demands of us is ever growing. Forty percent of the national budget is destined for defence.'

'These tremendous expenditures,' the statement continued, 'to a large degree explain the problems of shortages, price rises, inflation, and speculation that we are confronting and that we are going to combat.'

Calling merchants who take advantage of the situation to make profits through speculation 'a layer of parasites', the FSLN message said they have 'stolen thousands of millions of córdobas from the people.' Speculators sometimes manage to create shortages that temporarily double, triple, or quadruple the price of goods overnight.

One of the main aims of the economic measures announced by the government is to 'regulate demand'. One way this is being done is by holding down the government budget and reducing the budget deficit. Another way, combined with the first, is to increase taxes, targeting especially the informal commerce sector where billions upon billions of córdobas are being hoarded. New luxury taxes, income-tax reform, and capital-gains tax are expected to increase revenues by 2.5 billion córdobas, largely out of this sector.

Government subsidies of basic consumer goods like rice, beans, and cooking oil will be eliminated. The official prices of such goods as beef, chicken, eggs and milk will go up.

To a certain degree, these increases in official prices merely reflect ones that have already taken place. Beef, for example, was already selling for

more than double its official price in many places before the recent increase. But the price increases are also aimed at transferring money from the commercial toward the productive sector, both public and private.

The aim of the new pricing policy is to eliminate the gap between the government-determined prices and the free market price. It is this gap that has allowed speculators — especially the 're-sellers' — to make millions of córdobas at the expense of working people.

Instead of going to speculators, the income from the higher prices will now go to the government, the producers, and honest merchants — that is, those who play a necessary social role by distributing goods to the population, who are not simply parasitic intermediaries or 're-sellers'.

The official córdoba exchange rate — which was 10 to 28 córdobas to the US dollar — will rise to 28 to 50 córdobas to the US dollar. Prices of goods involved in the government-controlled import-export trade will rise. In addition, hidden subsidies implicit in the previous rules governing exchange rates have been eliminated.

Together with the measures to regulate demand, measures that increase the supply of food and basic goods by stimulating production are necessary,' the National Directorate's message explained. These measures include higher prices to agricultural producers and factory owners; a more favourable credit policy; and ensuring that foreign currency allocated to buy spare parts, machinery, agricultural inputs, and industrial raw materials is in fact available. In addition a system of bonuses paid to workers who meet or surpass production

quotas will be implemented.

'For workers there will be periodic readjustments of their wages so that they can buy those products at the new prices, and a guaranteed supply of such products at official prices through secure channels.'

The purpose of this is not only to protect working families against inflation, but also to stimulate the return to productive labour of workers who have become small merchants because this is more lucrative.

The FSLN message emphasised that top priority for getting wage increases and scarce goods will go to productive, manual workers — those in factories and fields who create the wealth of society. Already an initial wage increase has been put through under this policy, compensating non-agricultural workers for inflation during 1984. The increase at the bottom of the scale — for wage levels of manual workers — is nearly 50 per cent, but at the top of the scale, managers and administrators are only receiving 13 per cent increases.

'On this we are clear and we do not make false promises nor feed expectations,' the National Directorate declared. 'When readjustment of wages is posed, this does not mean that a worker will be able to buy more goods than he presently gets, but rather that his salary is being protected against the inflationary process that affects our economy.'

The FSLN leaders explain that neither this nor any other set of economic measures can conjure away Nicaragua's economic crisis.

'We will succeed in overcoming the crisis in the medium and long-term to the degree that we defeat imperialist military aggression and we increase the country's total production.'



Preparation for a US invasion: women factory workers in Managua learn how to use a rifle

PLO abandons national liberation

Arafat's road: a sorry end.

LAST WEEK'S joint statement by Yasser Arafat and King Hussein of Jordan calling for a Palestinian 'state' on the West Bank and Gaza, federated with Jordan, marks the abandonment of the PLO's historic goal of national liberation for the Palestinian people — 'a democratic, secular Palestine'. The statement is the culmination of a process of redefining the PLO's objectives which started with Arafat's 1974 call for the establishment of a West Bank statelet.

Ironically, the proposal for a Palestinian 'entity' federated with Jordan is identical to the proposal put forward by Israeli prime minister Begin in the mid-1970s, a position abandoned after the first Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1978.

The crucial operative part of the pact signed by Arafat and Hussein is the proposal that a Palestinian 'entity' federated with Jordan be exchanged for 'peace' in the Middle East — in other words the recognition of the state of Israel by the PLO. The Hussein-Arafat initiative has been cooked up together with the Saudi

Arabian monarchy — paymasters of both Hussein and Arafat. Last week King Fahd issued a joint statement with Reagan calling for 'security for all states in the region and the exercise of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people'.

By Phil Hearse

Evidently the objective of Fahd and Hussein is to attempt to utilise the weight of the United States to pressurise the Israelis into talks. But it has to be said that despite the utter reliance of the crisis-ridden Israeli economy on US

support, political factors in the United States itself make it extremely difficult for any US government to impose policies on the Israelis.

Just a month before the joint declaration with Hussein, Arafat proclaimed his continued commitment to the 'armed struggle'. But everyone knows that with the dispersal of the pro-Arafat fighters to eight Arab lands, and the devastating split in the PLO, Arafat has no fighting forces in a position to engage Israel.

The largest concentration of Fedayeen fighters is the anti-Arafat forces in Syria — and the Syrians have no intention whatever of letting them anywhere near the Israelis.

The one factor which might encourage the Israelis to seek peace talks is the continuing strife of Lebanon, where their troops have been bogged down, harassed by Shi'ite fighters



Hussein

as they withdrew to the Alawi river, and where the Israeli puppet 'buffer forces', the South Lebanese Army, has collapsed.

But for the Israelis the only worthwhile settlement in the Middle East would be one which involved general recognition of Israel by all the Arab states. Such a general



Arafat

peace could only be delivered with the participation and agreement of the Syrians. But Syria's Assad, who still holds the whip hand in Lebanon, is implacably hostile to Hussein and Arafat and will not go in behind any initiative of theirs.

Assad is desperate for US recognition as the key

leader of the Arab world, and the diplomatic, military and economic advantages which would accrue to him from such a recognition. But to keep his mantle as the front line Arab leader, and the subventions from the Gulf states and Russia which maintain his costly army, Assad cannot possibly be seen as the leader eager to settle with Israel.

Overall then the dream of Arab recognition of Israel seems far off. Israel has little interest in a deal with Arafat who has nothing to trade with. Why bother to give an inch of Israeli-held territory in exchange for exactly nothing?

Why does the Palestinian movement find itself in this impasse — with Arafat dragged along by Hussein and Fahd and the opposition beholden to the Syrians? The decline of the PLO as a credible force began in 'Black September' 1970 when King Hussein, now in alliance with a

tamed Arafat, launched his bloody attack and drove the Palestinians from Jordan.

This episode showed the Achilles' heel of the PLO, its dependence on the reactionary bourgeois and semi-feudal Arab rulers.

Without a strategy which based itself on a strategic alliance with the workers and peasants of the Middle East, which would have meant fighting against imperialist-backed Zionism and all forms of Arab reaction, the PLO gambled on being able to out-manoeuvre its reactionary backers. Sacrificing its independence, such manoeuvres became increasingly difficult.

Despite the leftist demagoguery of leaders like Hawatmeh of the Democratic Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DPFLP) and Frabash of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the PLO as a whole has never risen above bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalism. It has never been the kind of movement that could build an alliance of the exploited and oppressed in the Middle East.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. In Lebanon the PLO built a vast bureaucratic apparatus, awash with Saudi money. Despite the personal heroism of many PLO fighters, the movement acted as almost an autonomous state apparatus with a bureaucratic and commandist attitude to the Lebanese masses. For many Lebanese workers the PLO were the tax collectors and local bureaucrats. The bitter truth is that even many of the Lebanese left regarded the PLO apparatus with hostility.

The 'old' PLO strategy of military struggle with the tacit approval of the Arab governments could never work. Arafat's 'new' road is one of craven capitulation to the Hashemite monarchy and imperialism. None of the other wings of the PLO can put forward anything better, other than rote repetition of the old strategy.

Only the rebuilding of the movement on a completely new political basis can rearm the Palestinian resistance. Whatever Arafat and Hussein think, the Palestinian masses will never accept the existence of the Israeli state or the fate of being herded into Jordanian 'bantustans'. Neither will the mass of the Arab people accept such a total capitulation to Zionism.

Ever since the evacuation of the PLO from Beirut the whole movement has been debating the way forward. Answers can only come on the basis of a reappraisal of the whole history and strategy of the PLO. Arafat's road has come to a sordid and sorry end.

Israeli torture on West Bank

THE INTERNATIONAL Commission of Jurists (ICJ) of Geneva has accused Israeli occupation forces of torturing young Palestinian detainees at the Al-Fara'a concentration camp near Nablus in the West Bank. The ICJ released a 56-page report on 30 January in Geneva.

Neil McDermott, Secretary-General of the ICJ and former British barrister said in an interview with the BBC World Service programme *24 Hours* on 31 March that 'it had been compiled by our affiliated organisation in the occupied West Bank, which is called Law in the Service of Man (LSM)'.

In the same programme Raja Shehadeh, a Palestinian lawyer in the West Bank and a member of LSM said that 'the trend has been to concentrate more on psychological tortures, such as deprivation of sleep, keeping them standing for a long time, putting them in rooms with water, some beatings which do not leave marks, treatment in an inhuman fashion so that the person feels he is below a human being, keeping them in crowded conditions and with deprivation of basic services'.

He added: 'We did treat in the report certain specific aspects which we have felt are of importance such as the lack of medical care, and the fact that people who complained to the delegates of the International Red Cross have had action taken against them for making complaints to delegates.'

The report covering the period 1982-1984 contained 20 former detainees' cases aged from 15 to 25.

The report said: 'Detainees at the camp are made to stand naked in freezing weather, and psychologically

humiliated.' It also gives details of prisoners being forced to masturbate in front of interrogators.

Al Fara'a, a former British and Jordanian camp is situated about 12 miles north-east of Nablus. During the widespread demonstrations and protests in the West Bank in spring 1982, the Israelis used it as a detention camp to intimidate young Palestinians and to discourage unrest.

Al-Fara'a camp is divided into two blocks. The first block is called The Stables, which is divided into individual horse pens in which as many as five prisoners are put. Inside the cells there is a plastic pot used as a toilet. Family members and Red Cross officials are not allowed to visit this block which is used for new arrivals.

The second is for those who have been severely tortured and those who have capitulated as a result of the vicious methods of the military and intelligence authorities, the carefully-chosen soldiers of Meir Kahan's Kach Party, and other extreme settlers from the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Among the cases dealt with by the ICJ is that of an 18-year-old construction worker who says he was hooded, handcuffed and forced to stand for two days in toilets before being interrogated. Another 15-year-old student said:

'They beat me with electricity cables and ordered



Photo: ASSOCIATED PRESS

me to turn round and round for a long time so that I got giddy and nauseous'. A third student says that interrogators beat him around the genitals and extinguished cigarettes on his body.

The report states: 'Detention at Al-Fara'a should be understood, we believe, in the context of measures aimed at controlling the West Bank population, such as curfews, house demolitions, and withdrawal of basic services from whole

neighbourhoods.'

KUNA reported from Amman that 87 percent of young Palestinians who reside in refugee camps and 64 percent of those who reside in the cities have been arrested since 1967. Among them were children of 7-14 years, and 73 percent of them were sentenced to between one month and 90 years imprisonment. In the report also, the Israeli Army arrested 2,680 young women and 2,000 of them

were imprisoned for between one month and 25 years.

Since 1967, the Israelis have put 3,027 cities and towns under curfew, and on 12,640 occasions the Israeli army opened fire on demonstrations and 638 Palestinians have been killed or injured, among them more than 100 women and children.

Israeli settlers have opened fire on Palestinians 31,715 times, as a result of which 314 were killed or injured.

THE YEAR of the miners' strike has shaken British politics to its foundations. But what forces have emerged from it? And how does the strike and its effects fit into the long-term development of British politics? JOHN ROSS puts the strike in its historical setting.

THE simplest way to understand the long-term impact of the miners' strike on British politics is to take the comparison which everyone now makes for the strike — that of the events surrounding World War I. The huge crisis of British capitalism which culminated in the first imperialist world war, and which was ended by the defeats of 1926 and 1931, was the product of decades of rising class struggle. The key dates in this process stand out clearly.

In 1874, preceding the beginning of the crisis in Britain itself, Home Rule candidates achieved their first major electoral breakthrough in Ireland — inaugurating an open crisis which culminated in the pre-World War I fight for Home Rule, the 1916 Dublin rising, and the Irish war of independence. In the 1880s, under the impact of the long economic recession, the first serious Marxist and socialist groupings began to form in Britain.

In 1889 the modern mass trade unions were born. In 1900, directly as a result of the capitalist counter-offensive against the unions, the Labour Party was founded. From 1909 onwards a mass strike wave began to unfold — the high points being the 1909 South Wales miners' strike, the 1910 Durham miners' strike, the 1911 dockers' and railworkers' strikes, and the 1912 national miners' strike.

The third decisive social force thrown into the struggle was that of women. In 1903 the Women's Social and Political Union was founded. From 1905 onwards it launched a militant mass campaign for the vote. From 1905 until war broke out, the combination of the Suffragettes, the struggle in Ireland, and the tumultuous strike wave together dominated mass British politics.

Finally, in 1914 a still greater force — World War I — shattered the existing framework of British politics, transforming everything it touched. That war

had been boiling up over the preceding 10 years. Out of the war came the October Revolution in Russia. The Communist Party was born, at that time a revolutionary organisation.

This entire cycle of struggle in Britain culminated in the general strike of 1926.

Seeing this period of class struggle in its entirety is vital — in particular because it completely destroys the economic interpretation of politics, which major parts of the British left like to pass off as 'marxism'.

The crisis which led up to, and surrounded, World War I was incomparably the greatest social upheaval in the history of British imperialism. Precisely for that reason, it showed the hallmarks of similar crises in every country.

A socialist revolution, or a deep social crisis, is not as the British left would have it a 'strike writ large'. It is, in Lenin's words: 'a carnival of the oppressed'. Every single group that has been exploited and oppressed rises up and seeks the opportunity to inflict historical vengeance on its oppressor. A great political crisis concentrates the most apparently diverse crises into a single centralised and combined assault on the capitalist state.

In Russia itself the revolution was not the product of economic struggles. It was a total crisis of the entire society. In Russia, war, the struggle of oppressed nations, economic struggles, the fight for political democracy, the demand of peasants for land, the fight against anti-semitic pogroms, the struggle against rising economic chaos, were all fused together in a vast political convulsion — a convulsion which alone had the power to overthrow capitalism.

The historical concentration of the British labour movement on economic questions, including after 1926, is a sign of backwardness — not of the advanced nature of the labour movement. It is the violent convulsion around World War I — the simultaneous explosion on to the political scene of mass trade union struggles, of the fight for Irish independence, of women's struggles, of the battle for democratic rights, of the fight against the war threat — that shows the main characteristics of any social crisis. It marks out the period of the first imperialist war, without comparison, as the greatest crisis in the history of British imperialism.

One of the characteristics of the period of defeat after 1919 to 1926 was precisely the collapse of the mass struggle into a far narrower field. That

struggle itself, of course, was at a relatively lower level than the preceding period.

The political forces developing within the British state today bear an uncanny resemblance to those which emerged in the great crisis surrounding World War I. The difference is that each struggle has now been raised to a new and higher level.

By 1921, the demand for Home Rule in Ireland had culminated in the independence of 26 of the 32 Irish counties. Cutting its losses, and abandoning a large part of the Irish state, had been a precondition for British imperialism to resolve the crisis in its internal colony. It was also a precondition for concentrating its energies against its own working class.

Since 1968 a new struggle has erupted within the Six Counties, continually threatening to spill over into the rest of Ireland and the British state. This struggle has given rise, in the form of Sinn Fein, not merely to a struggle for national independence but to the most advanced political force with a mass base in the whole of Western Europe.

British imperialism was equally forced to defuse the Suffragette struggle by granting women the right to vote in 1918, and extending it to all women over 21 in 1928. A truly mass independent women's movement was removed as a factor of British politics for 50 years, until the emergence of the new women's liberation movement in the late 1960s.

That women's movement has again emerged as a tremendous force. As with Ireland, it is at a far higher political level than prior to World War I. The

'The crisis which led up to World War I was incomparably the greatest social upheaval in the history of British imperialism'

independent organisation of women has developed now as a cutting edge of every mass struggle.

Nothing like the scale and role of mobilisation of women in the mining communities during the 1984 strike has ever been seen in British history — or indeed in any other country. The women of Greenham have been the most consistent activist force in the struggle against nuclear weapons. The National Abortion Campaign is probably the most continuously successful united front campaign seen over the last 10 years. In turn, these movements are the most advanced expression of deeper developments in women's position in the labour movement, in the working class, in society, and in politics.

The tradition of the struggle for women's formal political equality — the right to vote — has now been rejoined by a higher level of demands for the full political, economic, and social liberation of women. This is shaking up the structure of society.

At the level of the trade union struggle, the 1984 miners' strike, apart from the general strike itself, is the most important and advanced strike in British history. It eclipses the six-month miners' strike of 1926. The 1984 strike is the longest mass strike ever to take place in the history of any imperialist country.

In its conduct of the dispute the Scargill wing of the NUM has employed methods beyond those of AJ Cook and his supporters in 1926. For all his militancy — and he was the greatest mass trade union leader the British working class had produced before this, current strike — Cook still engaged in secret negotiations with the mine owners and consistently refused to withdraw safety cover during the dispute.

Arthur Scargill is without doubt the greatest mass trade union leader in the history of the British working class — the most authentic expression of the most militant sections of the working class. The Scargill current of the NUM is the greatest militant force seen in the British labour movement since 1926.

As regards the threat of war, nothing prior to 1914 can compare with either the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign of the late 1960s or the revival of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

Only the struggle against British intervention in the Soviet Union in 1920 stands on a higher level than the VSC or CND.

In addition to movements which have a continuity with the World War I period, new fundamental forces have emerged in British politics in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. The black community in Britain is larger than it was at the time of the first imperialist war. Its struggle is qualitatively more advanced. The struggle of the cities was prefigured in

population.

Although the repressive statelet in the northern Six Counties of Ireland was created in 1921, 26 out of the 32 Irish counties gained their independence from Britain. Women *did* win the right to vote. Although the trade unions were weakened, compared to their peak of strength around World War I, they were still far stronger than before the beginning of the labour upsurge.

In the field of the economy the image of the 'hungry thirties' is only part of the truth — despite the defeats of 1926 and 1931. The 1930s were a period of sharply rising living standards for the majority of the working class in employment. The 1930s were a period of house-building boom, of the beginning of the mass production of motor cars, of cheap food and of the development of modern consumer industries. Although the suffering of the unemployed is rightly regarded as the symbol of the 1930s, political stability was achieved, and Conservative Party dominance secured, through substantial increases in living standards for the majority of the working class.

Internationally the 1930s were a period of dark reaction, with the rise of fascism and the greatest working class defeats in history. It was this combination of factors that made 1926 such a definitive defeat — one closing an entire epoch. It was the combination of repression and concessions which enabled British imperialism to inflict such a crushing long-term defeat on the labour movement.

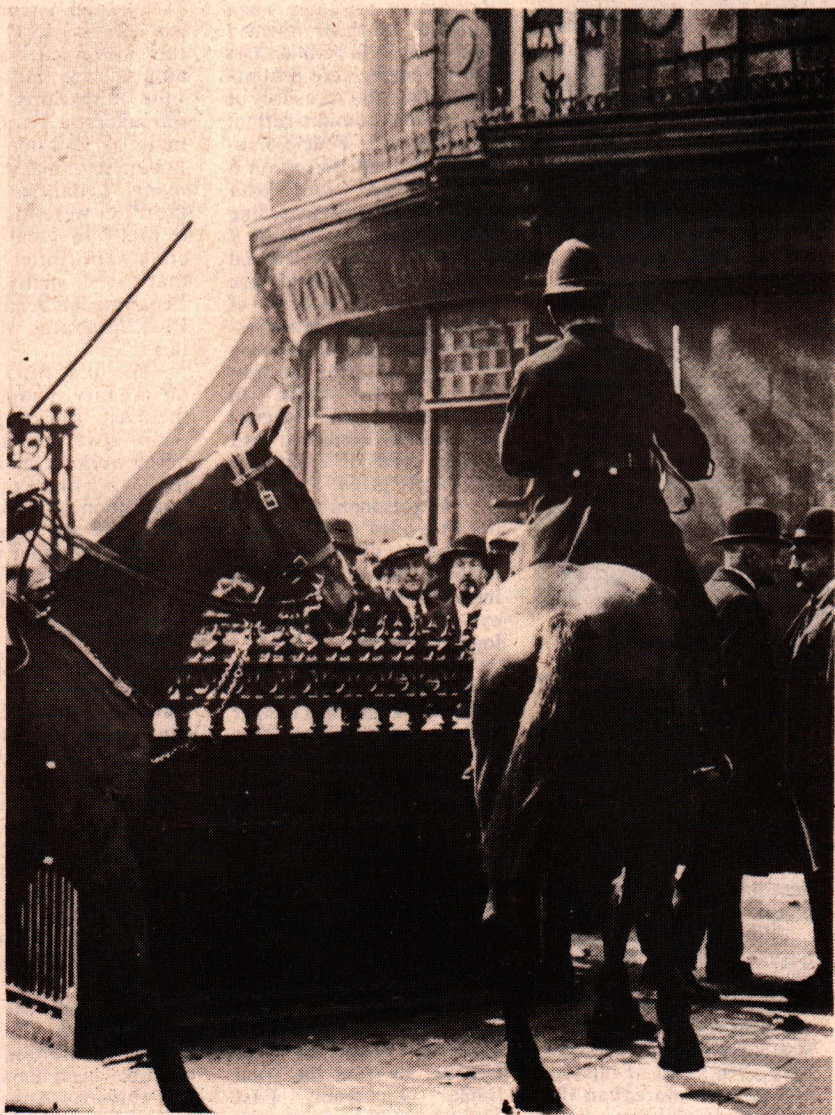
No such possibilities of concessions are open to British capitalism today — politically or economically. It cannot afford to be seen to be driven out of its final toe-hold in Ireland. British capitalism is taking away, not adding to, the rights which women won in the 1960s and early 1970s. There is no prospect of any economic growth which would lead to an increase in living standards — on the contrary the long-term decline in the exchange rate of the pound, and the absence of sustained economic growth is going to erode living standards even for those in work.

Internationally, no defeats whatever are qualitatively comparable to those suffered by the working class in the mid-'20s and '30s. Domestically the outcome of the miners' strike cannot even remotely be compared to that of 1926 — none of the conditions of stability of the 1920s and 1930s exists.

Behind all this lies another feature which dominates the situation. From 1931 onwards, almost uninterrupted for 40 years, British capitalism experienced economic growth — as well as a huge wave of industrialisation during the 1930s and 1940s.

The recovery from the slump of 1929-31 was in reality — and contrary to popular belief — a period of the most rapid economic growth in British history. Startling as it may seem, the British economy expanded by over 25 per cent between 1931 and the outbreak of war in 1939 — an average rate of growth of three per cent a year. Unemployment fell by a third in the same period.

No such prospects of economic growth exist today. The most optimistic economic forecasts are simply that



Police attack strikers in 1926

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ival of ressed

unemployment will not rise substantially — and that is undoubtedly too favourable an estimate. The types of concessions in the economic or social spheres which British imperialism was able to make to contain its position after World War I are simply not available today.

This is precisely why the struggle in Ireland, or the struggle of women, was not able to be removed by the bourgeoisie as an element in the situation before the miners' strike had to be confronted. The international context is totally different. The labour movement is equally nowhere as weak as in the 1920s.

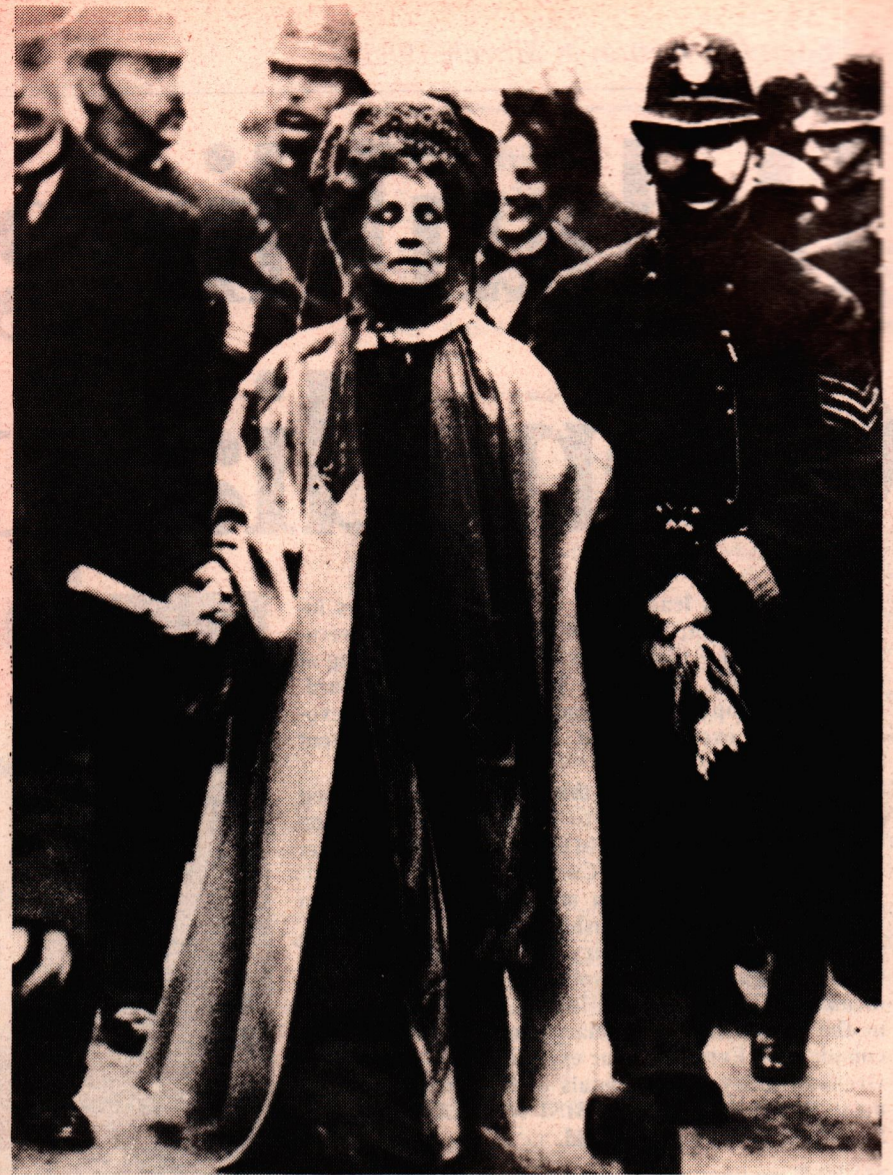
For all these reasons the miners' strike of 1984 occupies a quite definite place in the process of political radicalisation: not the end of an era, but a link in its development. The social and political radicalisation is going to deepen, and not diminish, as a result of this strike.

British imperialism today does not have the resources to buy off the struggle in Ireland, of women, or the crisis in the cities. These radicalisations will continue to deepen; their consequences will extend further into the labour movement. So too the international crisis of imperialism.

While the NUM will take time to recoup its strength, the idea that the trade union movement in Britain has passed through a new 1926 is simply impressionist nonsense.

The miners' strike — the greatest strike in the history of British capitalism, the longest mass strike in the history of any imperialist country — is not the end of an epoch. It has given us the greatest glimpse so far into the future of British society.

We stand today on the threshold of a new radicalisation in British politics — the opening of the greatest crisis in the history of British imperialism. The 'carnival of the oppressed' is just beginning.



Emmeline Pankhurst

To the People of Ireland!

"Our Freedom must be had at all hazards." — Wolfe Tone.

The time has come to practice the advice of Fintan Lalor, namely: to train our hands and our sons' hands, for the day will come when we and they will have to use them. E J

The workers must be disciplined and alert if they are to enjoy the just proceeds of their labour. It has been well said:

"The Price of Liberty is
Eternal Vigilance."

The methods of discipline and alertness and the means of power to train our hands, are provided by

THE IRISH CITIZEN ARMY.

This organisation embraces the full principles of Republican Democracy: its aim is to sink the difference of Birth, Privilege and Creed under the common name of the Irish People. It stands for a Union of Progressive Nationalism with the Democratic forces of Ireland, and its policy is to achieve that, for which

Theobald Wolfe Tone died, and John Mitchel suffered

AN INDEPENDENT IRELAND.

L'athma! Join the Citizen Army NOW and help us to build up an Irish Co-operative Commonwealth.

All inquiries to be addressed to:

HON. SEC., LIBERTY HALL, DUBLIN.

Museail do Mhisneach, a Bhanba!

1911 dockers' strike

Rebuilding the Grenadian revolution

IN THE WEEK leading up to the United States invasion of Grenada, the People's Revolutionary Government of Maurice Bishop was overthrown by a wing of the New Jewel Movement led by Bernard Coard. Maurice Bishop and other leaders of the Grenada revolution were executed, and a military government established.

The United States used this as a pretext for its long planned invasion in order to roll back the revolution which had become a source of inspiration to the workers and farmers of the whole Caribbean.

In May of last year a new party was formed in Grenada, the Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement, pledged to free the country of US domination and defend the gains of the revolution. One of its founder members, GEORGE LOUISON, who was a minister in the People's Revolutionary Government, recently completed a European tour explaining the situation in Grenada today and the goals of the Patriotic Movement. RICH PALSER and BISI WILLIAMS spoke to him when he visited Sheffield.

SO FAR we have been to Holland, the Federal Republic of Germany, Sweden and France, with three objectives in mind when we started.

The first was to re-establish contact with political parties throughout Western Europe which had developed over the years whilst the party was still the New Jewel Movement. We wanted to discuss with the social-democratic parties about the whole issue of re-entry into the Socialist International, and contact many communist parties with whom we had relations, as well as other political movements which had given solidarity to Grenada both before and after the revolution.

Our second objective was to bring the international community up to date with the situation in Grenada, so that there can be assistance and a propaganda offensive for the removal of all foreign troops from Grenada, which is something our party is actively engaged in working for.

The third aspect was to reach the friendship societies and the solidarity movement which have given Grenada support over the years, and to reactivate them for those forms of political, social and economic assistance they have given to the Grenada revolution before. At this stage in the tour we can say we have achieved some important contacts and been able to really re-establish our international work.

In a statement made in Grenada you said that the New Jewel Movement was now dead and the Patriotic Movement was the continuation of that movement. Can you explain this?

In essence and in practice in Grenada there is no New Jewel Movement. The basis of our position comes from the fact that the events of October — and 19 October in particular — smashed the party into two.

There was one wing of it that carried out the most terrible, horrific and brutal

crimes that were ever seen in the country, against another section of the leadership of the party. They executed Maurice Bishop, several leading members of the party, ministers and top trade union leaders.

They broke the sacred promise of the revolution and turned their guns on the people. They then went on to impose an around the clock, shoot to kill curfew.

In all they established a reign of terror over the people between 19 October and 25 October. Of course the people recognised the other wing of the party led by Bishop as the leadership of the party.

The tradition of the party was of work amongst the people, a tradition being built on the sweat of ordinary Grenadians. None of the Grenadian people were prepared to support the Coard clique any longer. So that is why we say that the party that was built in the 1970s as the New Jewel Movement, as the party of the people of Grenada, was killed on 19 October.

Today those who survived and carry the torch and banner of what the New Jewel Movement stood for in the 1970s are the ones who have started the Patriotic Movement. In the past few weeks there have been a small number of people who support the Coard position who are saying that the New Jewel Movement is alive. But these are the people who carried out the crimes, who still hold the position today that they were right in their actions.

In your manifesto you say that in addition to Bishop, the Patriotic Movement comes from the tradition of Fedon, Butler and Marryshow. Can you say more about them?

I think one thing that is not very well known about Grenada is that resistance has gone back well over 200 years. In the case of Fedon, he was a half slave, one who became a free coloured, and, being influenced by the French revolution, he led an insur-



George Louison (second left) speaks in Sheffield

rection in 1795 to take power from the British colonialists and abolish slavery. He held power in all but the capital, St Georges, for almost four years before the British sent superior troops. That was the first Grenada revolution.

Marryshow has come to be known in the Caribbean as the father of federation. He launched a vigorous battle against colonialism and for West Indian federation, and started the newspaper *The West Indian*.

It was the only newspaper of that time which remained a consistently anti-colonial newspaper. In the early 1900s he established in Grenada a branch of the International Workingmen's Association.

Butler was a Grenadian who fought in World War I and on returning to Grenada was engaged in a number of fundamental protests on behalf of ex-servicemen and on behalf of working people. In 1920 he led one of the biggest general strikes in Grenada at that time.

He subsequently migrated to Trinidad and in 1937 led the great oil strikes which later led to the formation of the oil-field workers' trade union there.

So that is the tradition of fighters that Grenada has produced in the last two centuries, among others. Our movement comes out of that history of patriots and fighters.

How successful was the Patriotic Movement in using the recent elections in Grenada to oppose the US presence?

When the elections were announced we had to consider whether to take part at all. That was a big debate.

Eventually our decision to participate was based on one major consideration. We asked ourselves what form of struggle could be most effective at that point in re-establishing the progressive movement in Grenada, because that was the number one issue.

Could we have moved to mass mobilisation on the streets and bring the people out? The answer of course was no.

Could we have moved to even higher forms of struggle that have been used in occupied countries by a resistance movement? The answer to that also was no because of the actions leading up to the invasion.

We used the election to raise consciousness about the invasion and put on the agenda of people what the revolution stood for. We used the election to rebuild a party in Grenada that could continue to struggle for our cause immediately the Yankees succeeded in installing a party of their choice, as we knew they would succeed in doing.

We thought it was vital that the moment the

election finished we should already have a party that had been going throughout that period of heightened political activity.

We think our objectives in the election have been satisfied. We were able to openly and nationally condemn the invasion and explain why we condemned it. We were able to openly and nationally go into the houses of ordinary working people in Grenada and remind them of the programmes of the revolution and the successes that the revolution had brought.

We were able to produce a manifesto in the country and present it at every home. And we were able to test our cadres in active political struggle once again, because since the smashing of the party and the invasion they had not gone out amongst the people to do any active political work.

We came through with a group of young and trusted comrades who will be part of the new party. One of the problems of the post-October period was a crisis of confidence that everybody suffered from in relating to the progressive movement. We were able to test that and overcome it.

We went into the elections without a party, but we came out of them with one. Today we have serious and committed comrades who have once again fought a cause,

What about after the elections, what terrain for the struggle now?

It is very important to give you an idea of the political problems that surround the invasion to answer this question. The absolute terror that was unleashed on the people by the Coard group on 19 October made the people of Grenada want to identify with any force whatsoever that could get rid of the Coard group.

So when the Americans invaded in a climate where people were prepared to accept anybody — even if they came from Mars — who could get rid of the Coard group, there was little resistance to the invasion. That has posed a difficult task for the progressive movement. In the past year we have had to struggle to point out to the people a number of facts.

First, to once again bring to their minds all that the revolution had already pointed out — that the US had planned to invade for a long time and that this was their opportunity. Second that the invasion was a form of banditry. It was criminal, and it had violated every known principle of international conduct.

Third that the Yankee presence would not bring any benefits to the people but would in fact destroy the benefits that the revolution had brought. Because there was another contradiction in the minds of the people. They naively held the view that once the Coard group was removed they would be able to just go back to the programmes of the revolution.

But of course the Yankees had a different agenda, and they have moved to scrap the programmes of the revolution. So in pointing out these things we were saying that only the progressive movement was committed to bringing lasting gains to the people where — because of the shattering of the New Jewel Movement from inside — the people's confidence and trust had been shattered.

Against this background the period ahead lies in continuing to bring these points to the people. Second it lies in rebuilding the party from the ashes — out of the top 20 leaders of the New Jewel Movement, only two were around after the October crisis in terms of being able to set about rebuilding any political movement. That was Kenrick Radix and myself. **What have been the effects of the October crisis within the Caribbean progressive movement as a whole?**

The effect has been disastrous for the left movements throughout the region was a shining example to the people of every single country in the Caribbean, and had given a new acceptability to the

left and progressive movement. The Grenadian revolution was a shining

example to the people of every country. They have spent over \$21 million in militarising the region and been able to get away with arming the police in the region. They have gone into the most virulent anti-communist denunciation of anything left that raises its head.

And in addition to all of that, the left itself split over the Grenada question, with some sections of it backing the Coard group initially. Even those who could not back the Coard group were confused because they had no knowledge of what happened in Grenada given the fact that it happened so suddenly.

Now the left and progressive movements have begun to discuss the issues thoroughly again, and there have been two meetings in the past year at which most of the progressive parties were present. I think now every single party in the Caribbean accepts that what happened in Grenada was a complete and total aberration from marxism-leninism by the Coard group, and is therefore prepared to recognise that the Coard group was responsible for the collapse of the Grenadian revolution.

I think the only party that had some difficulty was the Workers' Party of Jamaica. But they have now come out and at least taken that position. However what we have found with that party and with people here in Britain is that some people hang on to a new position in order to keep the Coard group in the news for their own purposes. They cover their position under a Human Rights Committee. This is a complete misapplication of the sacred principle of human rights, because what really they have is a Free Bernard Coard committee. Both objectively and in practice that is how they function.

I think that those knowing and understanding the background to the Grenada events have to be very forthright in pointing out to honest people that really what they are getting involved in is nothing but a Free Bernard Coard committee. That it has absolutely no base in Grenada and no possibility of helping rebuild the progressive movement in Grenada.

Further attacks on abortion rights

FIGHT THE POWELL BILL

THE POWELL Bill represents the biggest threat to abortion since the 1967 Act was passed. The White, Benyon and Corrie Bills would have severely restricted the Act. Powell's Bill potentially goes much further because, for the first time in our law, it gives legal status to the foetus.

There are only three other instances where the foetus has been given such a legal right: in Ireland, following the constitutional amendment in 1983, and in Spain and Italy when the fascists were in power.

The supporters of Powell's Unborn Children (Protection) Bill made it clear during the debate on the second reading that the title is the most important thing about the Bill. For them it was but a prelude

to banning abortion and post-coital forms of contraception.

The Bill sets out to prevent an ovum fertilised in vitro from being used for anything other than being placed in the body of a named woman — a requirement that Leo Abse described as 'licensed motherhood'.

If the Bill is passed the immediate consequences will be that all research

By Leonora Lloyd,
NAC Steering
Committee
(personal capacity)

using fertilised ova will cease. This includes research into contraception, causes of infertility and prevention of handicap.

At the moment three or four embryos are placed in the woman to ensure that at least one will implant. In a series of cases where only one embryo was implanted, one out of twenty-eight women became pregnant. Even using three or four the rate is only one in ten.

When in-vitro fertilisation is used, several eggs are taken at a time in the hope that one will be successfully fertilised. Under the Bill, if more than one is fertilised the doctor will be liable to imprisonment.

Underlying the Bill is the idea that at the moment of conception a full human exists, with all the rights of born humans. It is unsurprising that Powell and other extreme right wingers have this philosophy. They believe we are our genes, that the environment is immaterial.

Anti-abortionists claim

that science proves we are human from conception. Science certainly has proved the importance of our environment even before birth. Drugs, radioactivity, alcohol can all damage the foetus.

Science has also proved that about 60 per cent of all conceptions are lost at a very early stage and a further 15 per cent are spontaneously aborted. Presumably these are 'human beings' too.

Unfortunately it was not just right wing Tories who voted for Powell. Forty four Labour MPs did too — and only 41 were there to vote against. One hundred and twenty two did not bother — or dare — to attend.

We must fight Powell tooth and nail, and without delay. We have only a few weeks to mount a massive national campaign.

• Act Now! Send a delegate to the meeting called by the National Abortion Campaign, on Saturday 9 March. NAC has produced a 'Fight the Powell Bill' bulletin, 20p (plus 13p for postage). They can be contacted on 01-405 4801 or 01-993 2031.



Every mother a willing mother, every child a wanted child

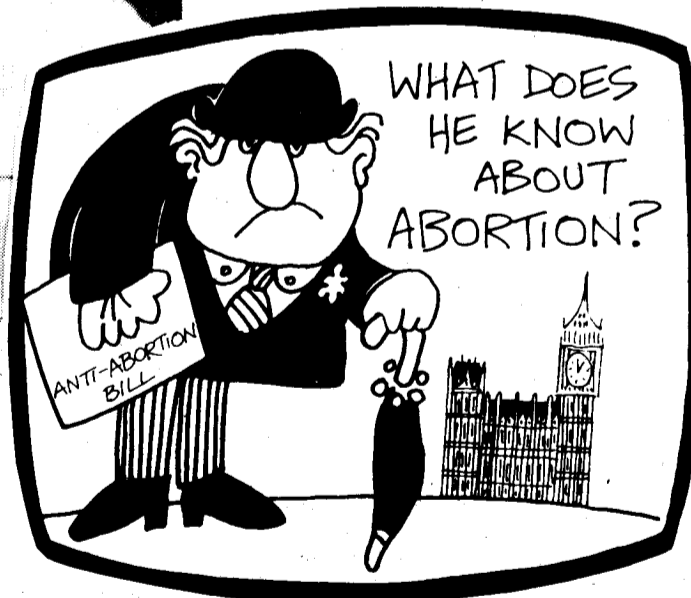
Model resolution

This (organisation) believes that the Enoch Powell Unborn Children (Protection) Bill is an attack on women's rights and must be opposed, because:

1. It requires that the names of individual women undergoing treatment for infertility are sent to the secretary of state — an invasion of privacy and doctor-patient confidentiality.
2. It will restrict research into the causes and treatment of infertility, foetal abnormality and miscarriage, and into the development of contraception.
3. Because it restricts the number of fertilised ova that can be implanted into a woman to one, it will reduce the effectiveness of in-vitro fertilisation and will not allow abnormal embryos to be rejected.
4. It gives, for the first time in our law, a legal protection to the embryo, thus opening the door to legislation outlawing certain forms of contraception, post-coital contraception and abortion.

We therefore determine:

1. To write to our MPs outlining our opposition to the Bill
2. Affiliate/donate to/support NAC
3. To organise a local meeting to explain the implications of the Bill
4. To send a delegate to the meeting called by NAC on 16 March.



AND NOW POWELL...

The debate in parliament

For a Friday afternoon the House was unusually full. Below we quote from the debate on the Powell Bill. MPs clearly saw the issue as the rights of women versus the rights of the foetus.

Enoch Powell

'The bill has a single and simple purpose, to make it unlawful for a human embryo created by fertilisation to be used as the subject of an experiment...'

He described: 'a sense of responsibility, a sense of deep and instinctive' when talking about the Warnock Report and realising that 'whatever it may be defined, of which the subject of the object is that it may be a human life, and it is subjected to experiment to its destruction for the purpose of acquisition of knowledge.'

He asked the House to uphold the rights of man by giving the Bill a second reading.

Jo Richardson

asked the House to consider the effects of the Bill on the dignity of women. The provision for the names of women to go to the secretary of state was a 'serious threat to the civil liberties of the women concerned'.

'The criminal offence hanging over the medical profession will literally mean the end of the observation of the human embryo.'

Questioning the moral arguments for the 'protection of the embryo' she pointed out that millions are lost naturally and others destroyed by the use of the IUD. 'The future well-being of all children...should take precedence over the protection of individual embryos.'

Norman St John Stevas

thought the interests of the 'unborn child' must come first. 'The embryo is a unique form of matter, it is human and alive'. Such 'Brave New World' technology was 'not necessary to relieve the tragic predicament of infertility,' he said quoting Professor Jerome Lejeune as his authority.

Clare Short

disagreed, pointing out that if the Bill had been passed years ago 'developments in in-vitro fertilisation would not have happened' and this was a contradiction at the root of the Bill. 'Genetic defects at an early stage of conception could not be screened out' and 'couples would have to wait till a later stage of pregnancy and then have an abortion'.

When people realised that the Bill would mean that parents who desperately wanted children would not be able to have them they would change their minds about the Bill.

Sir Bernard Braine

did not trust the scientists and 'their monstrous new techniques for freezing, cloning, manipulating and killing human embryos...'

Michael Meadowcroft

pointed out that the house 'could not legislate solely from a theological standpoint'. 'There was a difference between the potentiality of life and the actuality of life...'

He found it 'astounding that a Bill can come before this House in 1985 which forces a woman requiring assistance to conceive through IVF to have to get the approval of the secretary of state.' Women had willingly donated eggs to help with the research.

Leo Abse

struck out at Powell's Bill as 'a recipe for licensed motherhood' by 'a faceless and anonymous bureaucrat.'

'He is interested in birth...He has always been interested in the birth of blacks. His interest is founded on his prurient curiosity about their sexual habits...men who are not confident in their sexuality fear in-vitro fertilisation. If there were fewer eunuchs in the country, there would be fewer Enochs in the House.'

Kenneth Clarke

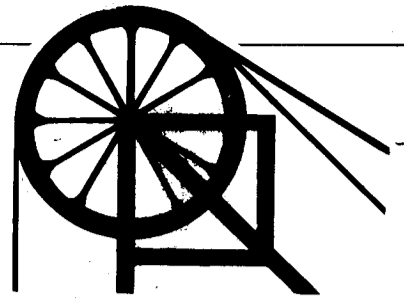
said that the government was neutral. He would vote against the Bill, but there was a free vote.

Fight Powell

Meeting on Saturday 9 March
Wesley House, 70 Great Queen Street,
London WC2B 5AX (near Holborn Tube)
Starts: 10.30 for NAC affiliates, 2.00 for open meeting

We only have a few weeks to mount a campaign against the Powell Bill — potentially the most serious threat to abortion we have faced

A new alliance of women



WOMEN AGAINST PIT CLOSURES

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S Day will be celebrated differently this year than at any other time in the last 17 years. The centre of the activity will be the 9 March rally in Chesterfield organised by the Women Against Pit Closures movement.

This is testimony not only to the key role that women have played in sustaining their communities participating side-by-side with the miners in every aspect of the strike over the last year. It also demarcates a new stage in the upsurge of militancy in the labour movement.

The Women Against Pit Closures movement is the most powerful expression of the process of radicalisation among working women that has been developing over the last two decades in Britain.

When the Ford machinists struck for equal pay in 1968 they initiated this process. It was followed by working women's strikes at SEIs, Hoover's and this year again at the battle over equal pay and regrading conditions. Women fought for recognition at Grunfos and against job loss at Jeans and Timex and the effects of privatisation of school meals and closure of hospitals.

These battles reflected the fact that women were not allowing the gains of the last years to be taken from them easily. Their social position had changed and they were not prepared to allow their economic independence to disappear without a fight.

Women did not wish to be reduced to the kitchen sink they could not afford to. Increasingly many women were the only winners, or their contribution as a breadwinner was vital to their survival. This propelled them to the trade union movement to fight back.

But in 1979, when Margaret Thatcher came to power, a qualitative leap forward took place among women. Women were no longer content to simply participate in the trade unions and fight back on a piecemeal basis. Women found a new expression for their demands in the left-wing of the Labour Party.

At the Debate of the Labour Party in 1979 Tony Benn and Audrey Wise urged women to join the Labour Party. They did. They organised the women's groups and turned them into the most left wing inside the labour movement.

The most left wing on the left in the Falklands war. The most left wing on Ireland. The most left wing on the peace movement. Far to the left of the Labour Party Young Socialist Conference whose platitude about a socialist programme mask accommodation to British imperialism.

Women took up the white banner of accountability and made it their own. The labour movement under-represented women blacks for decades. It is time to become more accountable to these groups as well as to the rank and file.

The Women's Action Committee spearheaded this fight for positive action, winning the overwhelming support of the Labour Party women's conference for its demands.

But it has been continually thwarted by the majority of men in the Parliamentary Labour Party and the trade union delegations to Labour Party conference.

The support that the Campaign Group of MPs, the left Labour Councillors and the NUM have given to women's demands has broken through that tradition and shows where women's allegiance has to be to win — with the left-wing emerging inside the labour movement today.

The Women Against Pit Closures movement, the organisation of women in the peace movement, in the trade unions and the black sections has greatly deepened this process. It is no longer possible for the labour movement to ignore the militancy and the demands of women.

This radicalisation and politicisation of women is a mass phenomenon and flows directly from women's experience of this government and of the labour movement. The Tories can only solve the crisis of the British economy if they decimate the living standards of the British working class.

This is why they wish to dismantle the welfare state and privatise the nationalised industries. In doing so they have to attack women because women are highly dependent on these services.

Thus Thatcher forces women to become political just like she forces politics on the miners and other trade unionists.

Right now the Tories aim to deepen their attacks on women. The Gillick victory against the prescription of contraceptives for under 16 year olds and the huge vote for Powell's bill to restrict experimentation on embryos establish principles that the moral majority will use to further attack women's rights, abortion rights and sexual rights in general.

They, along with the reactionary 'gay plague' campaign being initiated by the press around AIDS, are aimed at turning the clock back from the gains of the '60s and '70s. Forty four Labour MPs voted for Powell's bill. If the cause of Labour is really to be the cause of women these MPs have no role in 'representing' the labour movement.

Now is therefore the time to consolidate the alliance between women and labour. It must be consolidated in action on 9 March and against these reactionary attacks on sexual and abortion rights.

But women must also be members of the Labour Party to ensure that their



Women Against Pit Closures rally in London, August 1984

concerns are acted on.

Women from WAPC, from CND, from the trade unions, from the black struggles and the abortion movement must join the Labour Party to participate

actively in the fight to build a left-wing inside it.

Women have shown how they can fight Thatcher. That must not be lost.

If women want a Party of Labour that consistently

champions the cause of women and all the exploited and oppressed they have to enter the Labour Party and fight the right wing.

This is our message for International Women's Day.

'Proud of our struggle'

BETTY HEATHFIELD is a member of the Chesterfield Women's Action Group that is organising the rally this coming weekend, 9 March. She is also a leading member of Women Against Pit Closures.

We reproduce below an edited version of her speech made at the LCDTU-called demonstration in support of the miners on Sunday 24 February.

SISTERS and brothers and friends, I think the doom merchants of the mass media have excelled themselves in a last ditch attempt to persuade everybody that the miners must give in and go back to work.

I've been going round the coalfield areas these past few weeks speaking at meetings that were packed out, crowded. The lads and their wives were saying to me: 'No surrender.'

I think that we can congratulate ourselves because we've won many victories up till now, despite the wealth, the power, the resources and the relentless campaign against us.

We've stood out for almost a year. We've helped to wake up this slow and laborious trade union movement of ours.

Where else can you get people coming to meetings, meetings about trade unionism, about politics, in their thousands? Never before since World War II have you had such large meetings. And we've done that!

Never since the war have we got people talking about politics, talking about trade unionism —

I'm saying to you let's celebrate the victories we've already won.

The young miners going back to work are very different from the lads that came out on strike. Highly articulate, intelligent and knowing everything they need to know about trade unions, political parties and this government.

The women have had the quickest and surest social and political education that they could ever have. They would never have got that through meetings and books and

Then we had the violence and we couldn't believe the things they were telling you about us. I hope you didn't believe them either.

They had to drop that one when it became very clear that there was also a lot of police violence. And it wasn't all from our side.

Then they tried to sequester all our funds. That way they thought they would destroy our union. Thank God we've got some thousands of supporters that didn't let us down and kept the money flowing.

We need that money. We need the support. We need help and we need solidarity and it's got to be in a much more tangible way than you have done up until now.

Sisters and brothers,

Hackney Benefit

HACKNEY Miners' Support Committee is organising an evening of entertainment for women on Saturday 16 March to celebrate International Women's Day.

The event will bring together women in Hackney with women from the mining communities in Kent, Nottinghamshire, South Wales and Yorkshire. Fifty women from each of these areas are expected to attend.

Hackney is a multi-racial area, and this will be reflected in the celebration. The evening will include exhibitions and stalls, performances from local women's organisations.

So far the list of participants includes: Equity (women's reggae band); Shikhisa (African women's

dancing group); Tamil Women's League (songs and poems); Stoke Newington Defence Campaign; Lesbians Against Pit Closures; Greenham Women for a Miners' Victory; Kay Sutcliffe, Kent NUM; Angela Lumbe (Nicaraguan trade unionist).

Entrance, transport and food will be free to women from the mining communities. For local women there will be a charge of £3 (£1.50 concessions) for entrance, and a small charge for food.

Doors open at 8pm, Wally Fosters Community Centre, Homerton Road, E9. For more information contact: Jane Drinkwater 01-278 6601 (work) 01-241 1774 (home). Please note changed date of this event.

Women's solidarity conference

MINERS' wives and women in support of the miners have made close links throughout this strike, which they do not intend to give up.

Very early on in the strike women from the mining communities visited Greenham Common to show active support for the struggle against the stationing of cruise missiles in Britain.

Later on, two Mines not Missiles marches were organised jointly by women

talks. They've done it in action and that's how we intend to continue.

Our women's movement is here to stay. We've got our next huge rally coming up on 9 March to celebrate International Women's Day. On that day we'll be celebrating those liaisons and friendships we have already made because we are the women's movement, a working class women's movement pledged to fight in the struggle against everything that happens to us in mining communities.

We are helping in the

fight for jobs — jobs for everyone, not just jobs for a few. We're helping in the peace movement — peace is indispensable to our struggle.

We're helping in the local government struggle, against the cuts in education, against the cuts in the health service, against the cuts in transport. Above all we are helping in the fight for women's equality because we've played an equal part in this struggle.

We're very proud of that, and so should everybody else be.

from the peace movement and WAPC: one from Capenhurst to Nottingham, the other from South Wales to Bristol.

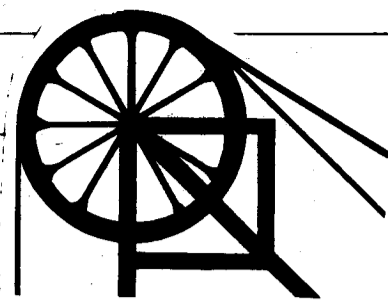
A huge women's solidarity movement has been built around the strike, spearheaded by Women Against Pit Closures. In many solidarity committees women's groups now exist.

The idea of a women's solidarity conference came out from a workshop at the first Mineworkers' Defence Conference in Camden

Town Hall last December. Midlands women have taken on organising it for mid-April.

The aim will be to draw out the lessons of our different struggles and to focus on joint action in the future.

An open planning meeting for this conference will take place on 22 March in County Hall at 8pm. For further information telephone Ellen 0203-395972, Valerie 01-249 2742, or Liz 01-367 0021.



ORGANISED BY THE
**WOMEN
AGAINST PIT
CLOSURES**

'Women are on the picket lines'

KAY SUTCLIFFE, a member of Kent Women Against Pit Closures, was involved in the 1972 and 1974 strikes helping to organise food parcels through the women's network that existed at that time. In this strike she has helped organise the first women's demonstration in Coalville on 23 March 1984 to challenge media reporting that gave the views of women in the scab areas and ignored those of women who were supporting the strike.

Out of this demonstration and others all over the country, the Women Against Pit Closures movement was born in August 1984, an autonomous women's organisation in support of the NUM. Never before had women in Britain, not organised at the point of production, built such a powerful movement in support of a strike.

Kay's speech below was made at the Second SOCIALIST ACTION International Miners' meeting held in Penrhwi-ceiber on Saturday 16 February 1985.

THIS government is launching an attack not only on the mining communities but on the working class as a whole. You only have to live in a mining community to understand why.

I have a particular personal link with Penrhwi-ceiber because my father was born here. Along with many other miners from Wales, Scotland, Yorkshire and the Midlands, during the 1930s these men were forced out of these coalfields to find work elsewhere. Our coalfield in Kent was formed from amongst these men who travelled many, many miles on foot in order to make a future for themselves and their families.

That's why we're fighting to keep our communities together. Our forefathers have fought for this. These communities

young men suffering years and years of torment because they want to work, they want to keep this country alive. They do not want to be on the dole queues for the rest of their lives. They are not idle men despite what they would have us believe.

We have seen many attacks against the miners and the mining communities. Many tactics have been used by the Coal Board and the government, cuts in social security payment. The press and the media have been used against us and Arthur Scargill in particular.

He is not the NUM personally, he is just a leader and one of the best leaders that any union has ever had. If the rest of the trade union movement had leaders like Arthur Scargill, we wouldn't be in this position now.

We've seen a back-to-work movement that hasn't been very successful despite the figures that the Coal Board puts out on the television.

What are these men doing? They are getting paid to sit on the pit top, they're paid to make cups of tea, paid to paint the pit top. They are not being paid to work.

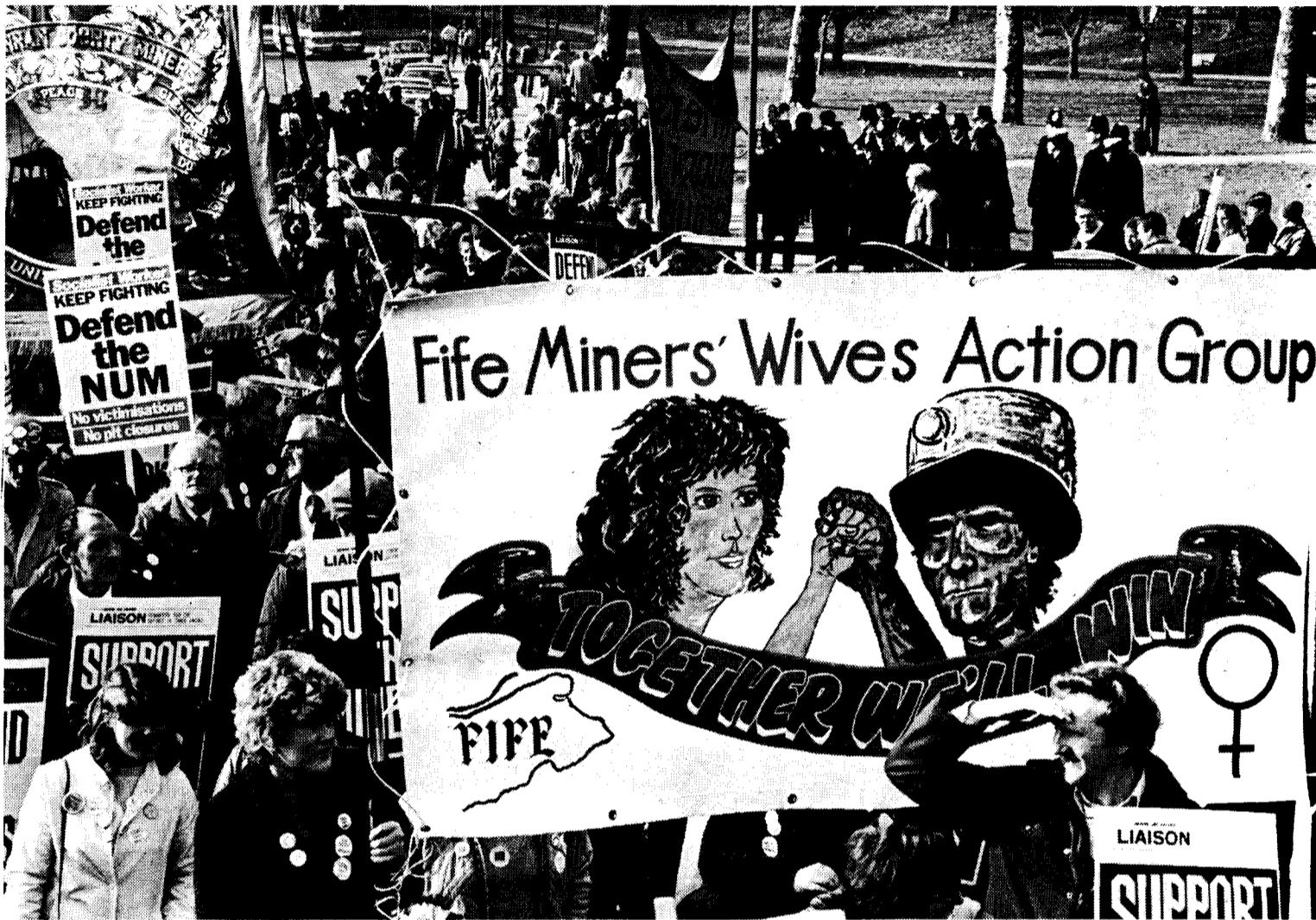
It's a waste of time and money. The real men are on the picket lines. They're not scabbing on their workmates.

We've had the police thrown against us right from the beginning of the strike. Men in Kent have had their civil liberties taken away.

They weren't allowed to go from Kent up to the Yorkshire coalfield. Many of the men in Kent have links with men in Leicester because that is where they first did their lot of picketing.

Because of these petty restrictions on the movement of miners' pickets we have seen the roles in mining communities reversed. The women are now on the picket lines and the men are in the kitchen, helping to feed the families.

When we consider the police activity against us — the way they fiddle about with film clips to show that it's the miners that are causing the violence — we



Women's contingents brought their banners to last week's London demonstration in support of the miners

all know that it's the police that are causing the trouble.

We have got two miners in jail for offences on the picket lines. Terry French has been jailed for

'If the rest of the trade union movement had leaders like Arthur Scargill, we wouldn't be in this position now.'

five years for an assault on a police officer. Chris Tately has got three years in a remand home for a similar offence.

These sentences were imposed on those lads on the very same day that the policeman who had assaulted his wife and put her into hospital was fined just £100 for his offence.

When you consider these charges and see that these lads have been sentenced in the middle of an industrial dispute, they are in fact political prisoners.

We ought to take action to ensure that these people are all taken out of jail and let back into society where they belong.

The police activity has been stepped up since the 1974 strike. They have

been trained for what they are doing now. They have been trained very hard.

And we all know who they have been trained on and we've stood back and watched it: the black people in this country; the gays and lesbians in this country; the Greenham women and the people in Northern Ireland.

How long have we sat back and never taken up any action for them? None of us have done very much. But these people were out on the picket lines, out collecting for us, from day one. They have never turned their backs on us and we should be ashamed that we ever turned our backs on them.

The tactic of the Tory government has always been divide and rule, worker against worker. They know that they will have a hard fight against the working class and they can't beat us if we stick together.

It's now that the TUC and the Labour Party should be thinking about what action they should take. We don't need Norman Willis to negotiate a settlement for the miners. We've got a good executive that can do that for us.

What we need for Norman Willis and Neil Kinnock and others to do is to back us in the actions we've taken.

The rank and file have done a lot in terms of picket lines and collections and we are thankful for that.

But these leaders are there to represent the working class and it's

'If we all stick together, we'll win for everyone.'

about time they did their jobs. If they were getting paid as working class men are, then perhaps they'd

fight a bit harder.

The workers have produced the wealth of this country for many years and it's about time they reaped the benefit.

We have had a lot of international interest shown in this struggle.

We'd like to thank them all for the money and the food and even the action they've taken.

From people in Germany, France, the Netherlands and the Soviet Union and even from countries as far away as Australia and Nicaragua.

We've got the next round of pay talks coming up with industrial action from teachers, railwaymen, council workers and particularly ratecapping on 6 March. We've got to use that, use it to fight together, to win for everyone, not just for the mining communities.

If we all stick together, we'll win for everyone. We've got to see unity in the working class in order to get socialism...The miners deserve to win, the communities deserve to win. Victory to the miners.

'Our coal field in Kent was formed from amongst these men who travelled many, many miles on foot to make a future for themselves and their families.'

are our right — we deserve to keep them and we will fight every step of the way to ensure that we do.

There is no point in saying that there are jobs elsewhere because we know that there aren't any jobs elsewhere. When they have put all the miners on the dole what will be the consequences?

My father was a miner and he suffered a very serious accident at Snowdown (Kent) colliery. This meant that he was unable to work after his accident even though his mind was very active and willing.

He wanted to go to work but it was practically impossible. I and my family watched him suffer during his last four years in utter torment because he wanted to go to work.

This is the kind of thing we don't want to see — our

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**Socialist
ACTION**

INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY

RALLY

on the 9th March

**AT THE
SALTERGATE
FOOTBALL
GROUND
CHESTERFIELD**

**GROUND OPENS 10.00 am.
RALLY 11.30 am. to 1.00 pm.**

Information ring 79729

