

SDP backs working miners

From Julian Haviland
and Tony Hodges
Edinburgh

A motion strongly critical of Mr Arthur Scargill and the miners' leadership was debated by the Social Democratic Party's policy-making council in Edinburgh yesterday, but withdrawn after members criticized it as one-sided.

In an emergency debate on the miners' dispute members condemned intimidation of miners who wish to work. But they also criticized police road-checks and the Government's refusal to intervene in the dispute.

Mr William Rodgers, the party's vice-president, said the Government should accept responsibility for dealing with the human and social problems of pit closures.

The council passed a motion supporting Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire miners in their determination to work on.

On Saturday the council adopted the Alliance platform for next month's European elections, jointly constructed with the Liberals.

The document argues that the real crisis of the European Community is not agricultural but industrial. The Alliance parties have no qualms about increasing community spending by first raising the value-added tax ceiling and then seeking other sources of taxation. They say this need not mean net increases in Britain's taxation.

They say they are alone among British parties in looking for "an ever-closer union among the peoples of Europe", and they want the use of the national veto in the Council of Ministers to be severely restricted.

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