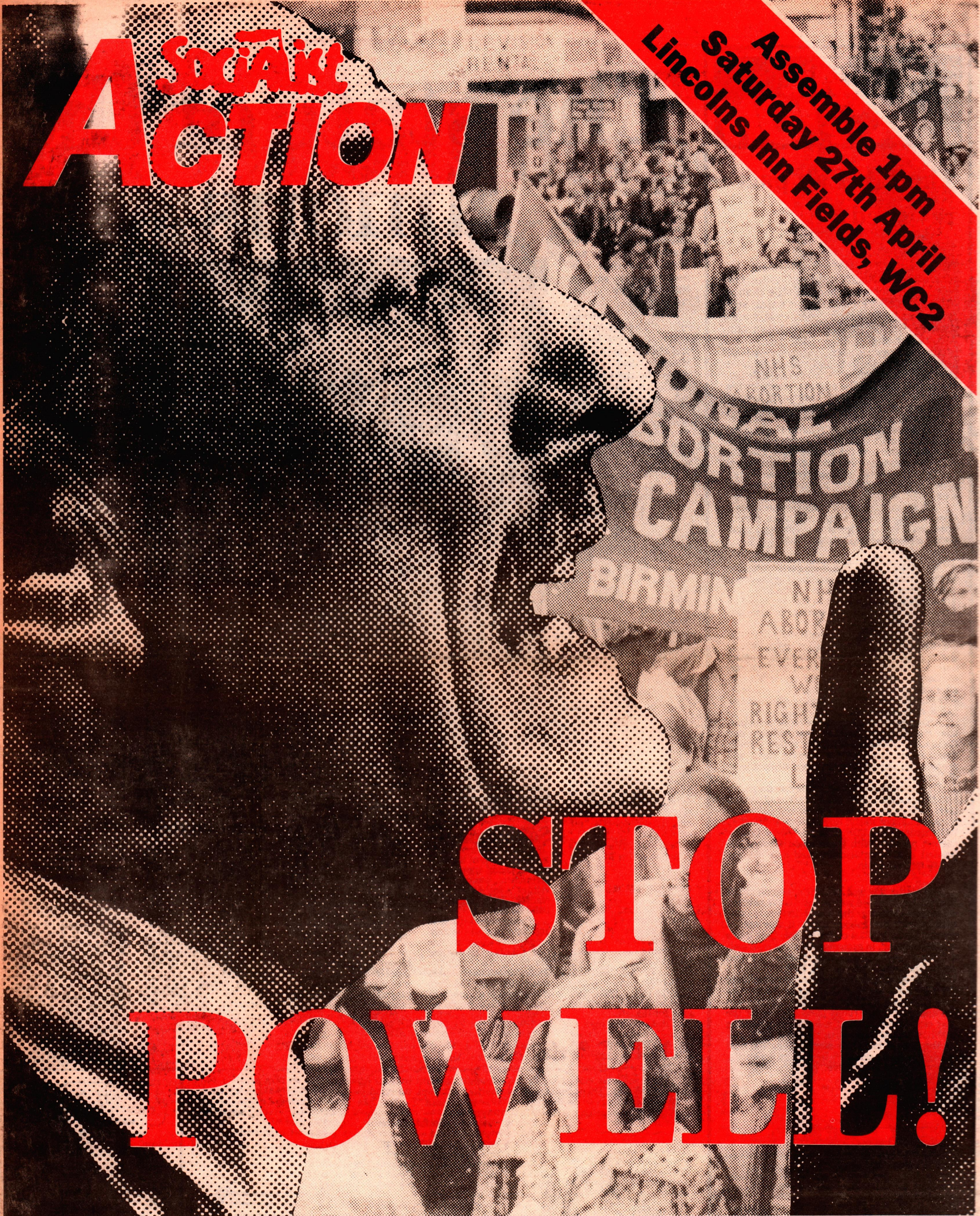


A Socialist ACTION

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For a woman's right to choose

Socialist ACTION

The Lib-Lab pact revisited?

THE NEWLY-FORMED Employment Institute has just launched its 'Charter For Jobs', with much ballyhoo but little chance of getting off the ground. This is hardly surprising. Its fuel is a strictly non-volatile mixture of watered down Keynesianism and wishful thinking.

The notion that a cut in employers' national insurance contributions, and increased public spending will overcome the crisis of the British economy is farcical. The proposal to employ the long-term unemployed on community service projects is another cheap labour scheme — a YOPS for all ages.

The scheme accurately reflects the political composition of its sponsors: Tory wets, the SDP-Liberal Alliance and the Labour right wingers. With a few trade union leaders and some liberal capitalists thrown in, it is the Communist Party's dream of the grand anti-Thatcher Alliance come true.

As a campaign against unemployment it is a damp squib. Its real purpose is more serious however. It is a step towards preparing a coalitionist alternative to Thatcher.

The miners' strike has done serious damage to the Tories' plans for this term of office. It has halted them in their tracks for 12 months. They are approaching mid-term in this period of office, and are nowhere near solving the basic problems of British capitalism.

The sections of the bourgeoisie who are backing this project are preparing for the possibility that the Tories will not win a third general election. A Labour government, even with Ramsay McKinnock at its head, is not an acceptable alternative. A Labour government in coalition with the Alliance, or trapped in some form of Lib-Lab pact is acceptable.

Such a government could be relied on to pursue the kind of policies that Wilson and Callaghan followed. It could strike similar demoralising blows at the working class, and prepare the way for an even more virulent form of Thatcherism.

The politicians involved in the campaign are just the coalition of forces to carry out such a task: Hattersley, Healey, Wilson and Callaghan from the Labour Party; Roy Jenkins and Shirley Williams from the SDP. It is the '74-79 Labour cabinet revived. With trade union leaders like Basnett and Tuffin also involved it is like the '74-79 all over again.

Roy Hattersley was not at the launch of the Charter for Jobs. He was at the AUEW national committee offering the trade unions a new alliance with the Labour Party. It was not, of course, called a social contract. This time it is a 'social compact'. In exchange for wage restraint, a Labour government will provide jobs and welfare benefits.

These developments are designed to consolidate the rightward move in the Labour Party. Kinnoock is getting together a project that will win the approval of the ruling class in time for the next election, or create the basis for a possible coalition should that be necessary.

The Labour left must start rocking the boat as vigorously as possible by putting forward a comprehensive alternative.

The state of the unions

THE CAMPAIGN against the TGWU over alleged ballot rigging and the AUEW's single-union deal with Nissan at its car assembly plant in Washington, Tyne and Wear, have little connection on the surface. But they are closely connected.

The campaign against Todd is part of a new offensive by the right in the unions. The Nissan deal shows where the right intends to take the trade union movement.

The Nissan deal is an excellent example of 'business unionism'. The deal will make strikes by the workforce virtually impossible.

The shop stewards will be 'replaced' by supervisors, and there will be complete flexibility between trades and grades. Power will be in the hands of full-time officials not workplace representatives. And the union will police the agreements.

The AUEW won the contract as a result of a deal with the EETPU. In return for the AUEW accepting the electricians' single-union deal at the Hitachi plant in South Wales, the EETPU gave the engineers a clear run at Nissan.

By Pat Hickey

In this US-style trade unionism the membership figure mainly as dues-paying, bargaining ploys in the union officials, relations with the employers. The new realist right in the TUC see this as the future for trade unions in Britain. It is the direction in which they intend to take the whole TUC.

The fight around Todd is important in this. It is not just the size and influence of the TGWU, although that is very important.

In the next 12 to 18 months there will be some crucial changes at the top in major unions. Due for retirement are Basnett (GMBATU), Keyes (SOGAT '82), Buckton (ASLEF), and Eccles (GMBATU). The elections which will result are vital for the left.

The aim of the right —

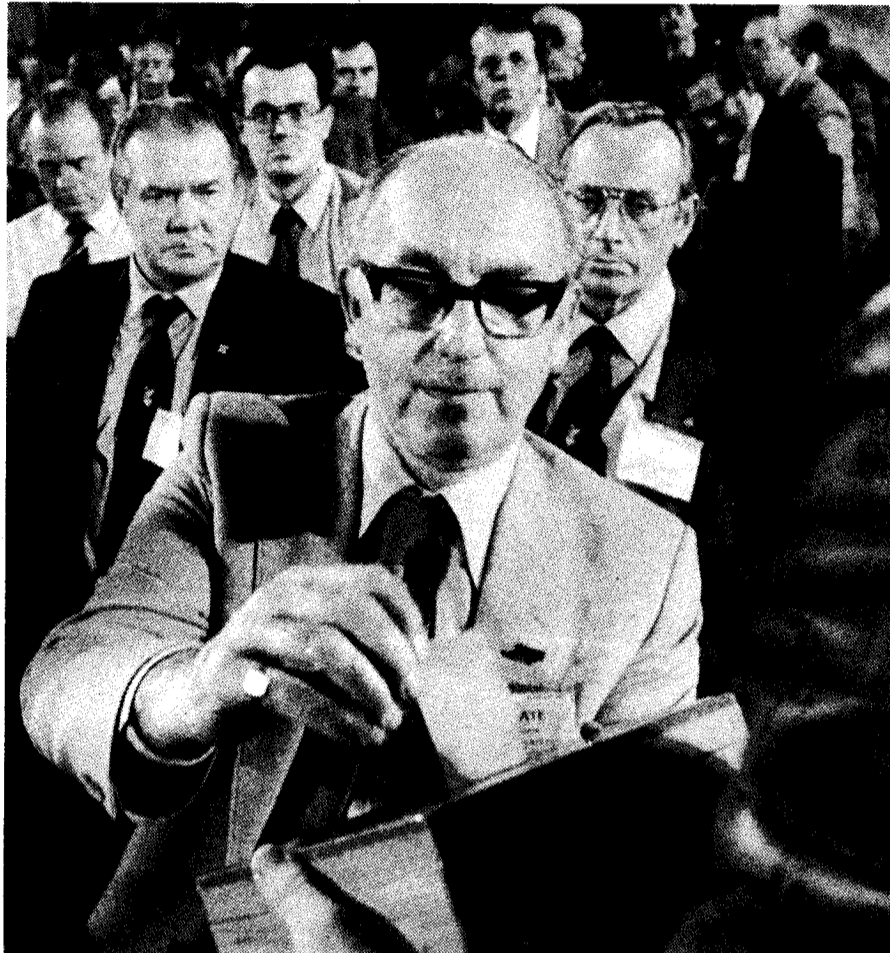


Photo: JOHN HARRIS

political basis was maintained in the local government fight, where it was yet again shown to be useless. In the trade unions this approach disarmed the working class in the face of the social contract, an idea which Hattersley is reviving.

Yet the broad left framework continues to dominate in the unions. Indeed, under the impact of the crisis, the Communist Party is pressing to extend this framework to the right, under the rubric of the anti-Thatcher alliance. The argument that the working class won't fight is the justification for this line.

Surrendered

Alan Tuffin in the UCW gave a classic demonstration of the real meaning of this argument. In the face of Post Office management's threat to force a national strike, he ignored conference decisions and surrendered to the blackmail. One week later more than 7000 UCW workers fought back.

The line that the membership won't fight is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Where a determined national lead is given, and the leadership bases itself on the militant sections of the membership, as in the NUM, the story is very different.

and the bourgeoisie — is to ensure that these posts fall to the right. They intend to take the TUC away from any policy of resistance to anti-union laws, away from any support for strikes such as the miners', and to distance it from the Labour Party.

Sabotaging

The success of the right in sabotaging support for the miners was a major victory for the new realists. They intend to build on that.

Their refusal to lead any fight against the anti-union laws, and the betrayal of the miners and the NGA, has taken the TUC substantial steps along this road. The Tory anti-union laws are now being accepted by major unions. It is not just the AUEW and the EETPU

who have rejected TUC policy in favour of collaboration with the law.

The TGWU quietly paid the £250,000 fine. The National Union of Seamen, the NGA, the CPSA and the NUT are all conforming to the law on pre-strike ballots.

The campaign on the political funds is being fought by the union leaderships on the most non-political basis possible. All of this is preparing the ground for the right to take the TUC back on the course that was set in 1983, and disrupted by the miners' strike.

The stakes for the labour movement in this process are the highest they have been since the general strike. The approach of the left leaders to this situation is entirely inadequate.

While the right openly campaigns, with the aid of the media, against TUC policy, the 'left' leaders by their inaction and silence are allowing that policy to become increasingly a purely formal stand that means little in practise.

Inadequate

The weakness shown by the left in the face of this determined right wing drive is a fundamental problem that must be tackled. The traditional broad leftist framework is increasingly inadequate. The basis for it has been undermined by the economic crisis and the ferocity of the attacks on the labour movement.

The Scargill wing of the NUM challenged this framework. But the attempt to unite all sections of the 'left' on an unclear

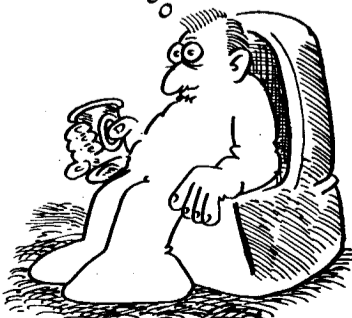
Decisive

It would be foolish to pretend that the working class is spoiling for a fight, and that only the betrayals of the bureaucracy prevent it sweeping the Tories out of office. Mass unemployment and defeats have taken their toll. But the working class has not been decisively defeated. The solidarity movement in the miners' strike showed that the basis for a fightback exists.

This is of decisive importance in the recomposition that is now working its way through all sections of the movement in the wake of the miners' strike. In pushing forward that process, it will be essential to distinguish between the fake left that will merely talk and those who really want to fight.

A PIECE of the ACTION

There must be more to life than this. There must be better things to do than slouch in an armchair with a can of beer....



Maybe I should make another attempt to read 'War and Peace'? Or maybe not.... Maybe I should get on my bike and.... get on my bike and....



Get on bike and.... what? Make another futile visit to the job centre? Visit Japan with Norm? Get on bike and....



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Roy Butlin, Coalville NUR

The lessons of the miners' strike

DURING THE last year ROY BUTLIN led Coalville railworkers' strong and determined stand in support of the miners' strike — refusing to move coal through the depot. When the workers were victimised for that support, Coalville struck. Now the miners' strike is over and British Rail management looks set to retaliate, taking away depot jobs and making sure that the Coalville workers aren't in such a strong position when the next strike comes round.

At the third Socialist Action International Miners' Solidarity meeting, in Kent last weekend, Roy outlined management's latest attacks. He stressed the special links between his Kent hosts and Coalville, pointing out that Kent miners were the first to join the Coalville picket line last January and that women from the Kent mining community braved the hostility of the town to come and build support for the miners fight during the strike.

We reproduce below an edited version of his weekend speech.

LAST Monday I went to the Clarendon Hotel in Derby. We're meeting management in four-star hotels now to soften us up! It was about a scheme to take 11 jobs away from Mantle Lane.

We managed to salvage one, a domestic cleaner. We couldn't do anything about the others because they're taking traffic away from our depot. The work is being taken away as a punishment.

On the Tuesday, we went to the Belmont Hotel in Leicester, and discussed the sudden closure of Desford colliery signal box. When the Leicester power box scheme comes in, in March '86, some small signal boxes — including the ones in our branch — have been excluded. They were to go later, in 1987.

Not a word about bringing that scheme forward ever came up during the miners' strike. We've been back to work six weeks and now they're going to close that box next March. So that was another three signalmen's jobs down the chute, as a punishment, that wasn't in the original scheme.

On Thursday, it's the Railway Hotel. We convened there for lunch and we're told from July we're losing our Rugeley traffic.

Leicestershire coal has gone to Rugeley power station in Staffordshire since steam days. We've drivers who've been on the job 40-odd years. That traffic's been given to Stoke and Essington Wood, and depots in the Crewe area as a punishment.

It's also cut off an important market for Leicestershire miners' coal. So the 2500 Leicestershire miners that scabbed have just lost a market for their coal as a punishment to the railwaymen. How's that for irony?

On Friday we had another meeting. This time about shunt locomotives.

Our yard used to have three, one each shift. That's been eroded to one. We've been told that from 10 May that locomotive

will go — and there's a driver's job gone with it, and it's a green card job for a medically restricted man.

Ruling

Old Agatha's going to the scrap yard on a Friday afternoon, the busiest day. When she comes across one of the junctions the lads are going to drop the plug. She'll seize up. So I've got some advice for you: don't travel to Sheffield that day!

All this is happening in a matter of a month. By railway standards, that is faster than the speed of light. There's a reason, and it's to do with geography.

Our depot is situated exactly between Leicester and Burton, 15 miles of freight-only railway linking two main lines. That strategic position was why we were so successful in supporting the miners. That's why management is taking work gradually away till there's no depot.

They'll chop this section out and work what's left of Leicestershire coal from the eastern end of the branch. They'll work the South Derbyshire coal and other jobs we've got, like the quarries, off the western end.

They don't want to be in a position again where a small group of railway workers can seal off a working coalfield. There's always a possibility of another miners' strike while Arthur Scargill's the president. You can see the long-term thinking behind it.

Locally, they've got a problem. There's a lot of feeling building up in the town — I've done my best to fuel it — about restoring the passenger service.

There's local elections coming up on 2 May. We've even got one of our members standing as a Labour councillor. Everybody is in favour of restoring the passenger service.

The excuse in the past was subsidence. But the new light-weight units are alright for these branch lines. So we say let's have



them and provide the service. It's new business, linking several towns with good sized populations.

The lobby to return the passenger service to our line interferes with the plan to sever the middle portion of Leicester's rail network. It's become as big an obstacle to management as the signalman who wouldn't remove coal.

Even the Conservatives say they're for restoring the railway. They're on our side!

There's three lessons been learned from the miners' strike at Coalville: one by the management and two by ourselves. The management's lesson is don't let a small group of true trade unionists block off a working coalfield. They've learned a lesson about geography and about planning traffic flow. We're going to suffer for it.

We've learned two lessons. One is that we

can't rely on our NUR national leadership. When we had our strike in January, there was a lot of trouble and pain to try and get them to do anything. So we're disillusioned with our own leadership, both in the NUR and the TUC.

Our strike cost the Railway Board £300,000 in lost revenue. They haven't taken ASLEF or the NUR to court under the new

legislation. They won't — because they're scared.

The regional manager had me in. He said: 'Roy, I hold you personally responsible for the loss of £300,000 because of your lobbying.' And I said, 'I'll pay it.' He says: 'You what?' I says: 'I'm quite willing to pay it. Stop it at 50p a week.'

The other lesson we've learned from the miners' strike is about fighting. At our depot the miners' struggle throughout the

coalfields was an inspiration.

We've learned how to fight, how to lobby, how to campaign. We've learned how to be a pain in the arse to everybody — management, union, the lot.

When we're locked in to our next fight — it'll be a bigger one than we had during the miners' strike because it's our livelihood we're talking about — I'll know I can rely on the NUM.

The Third Socialist Action International Miners Solidarity Meeting

ONE HUNDRED and fifty people gathered in Aylesham, Kent, last Saturday for the Third Socialist Action International Miners' Solidarity meeting. Kay Sutcliffe summed up the message of the day when she asserted that the strike had finished but the struggle to defend pits and communities, and sacked and imprisoned miners, was in no sense over.

This was underlined by Jack Collins, secretary of Kent NUM, and other speakers who pointed out that not only were pits threatened through miners taking voluntary redundancies and the Coal Board threatening closure but the entire branch committee had been sacked at Betteshanger.

Jack Collins explained this was why Kent had been so strongly opposed to calling off the overtime ban.

Mark Jones, father of Davy, who was killed on the picket line, made a moving speech that showed that he blamed the TUC for failing to give the

miners the support they deserved. 'Norman Willis was about as much use as a one legged man in an arse kicking contest,' he said.

Greetings were given to the rally by Jaap Van Kleef of the SAP (Dutch Section of the Fourth International) and Hans Christian Nielson, an aircraft shop steward from Copenhagen Airport who reported on the Danish general strike over anti-union laws. Belfast councillor and People's Democracy member Fergus O'Hare roused the meeting with a speech that explained it brought 'joy into the hearts of people in Ireland to see other people rise up

and fight against oppression'.

He interrupted his speech to donate a plaque of James Connolly to Snowdown branch NUM. Phil Sutcliffe, exchanging an NUM plate, said that 'as long as there was a Snowdown branch of the NUM there would be a place for James Connolly in their office.'

The key political lesson of the event was that while the NUM had fought and made new alliances with oppressed groups and with the left in the unions and the Labour Party who were willing to fight, the new realist leaders of the TUC had let the NUM be isolated.

Militants' main task is to keep backing the NUM now and to fight for a leadership that stands and fights across the labour movement.



Photo: SOCIALIST ACTION

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NUM militant released

DENNIS PENNINGTON, editor of the *Lancashire Miner* and member of Bold NUM, was released from prison last Friday 19 April, after serving three months for causing damage to a motor vehicle at a mass picket outside Goldthorpe colliery. He is one of 70 miners sacked by the Coal Board during this dispute. Despite MacGregor having said that these men would only be reinstated 'over his dead body', 17 are now working.

Dennis below tells of the 'justice' that is being meted out by the courts and the Coal Board to miners who stood by the policy of their union and fought for their jobs and communities and points out that the NCB, at the moment, has the 'whip hand' in the pits.

I WAS found guilty of causing damage to a motor vehicle belonging to a strike breaker. Three of us were indicted for the same charge — myself, John McGrath, Alan Cowley.

There was a mass picket at Golborne colliery in Lancashire. A car was stopped. There was some damage done in the crush but the police came in with match squads and arrested eight people.

At first we were charged with breach of the peace but much later we were charged with criminal damage to a motor vehicle.

It's hard to believe that it was just a coincidence that the three miners charged with the most serious offence came from Bold Colliery.

Bold has achieved notoriety in Lancashire as Arthur Scargill's 'stronghold'. The Bold pickets were under constant surveillance throughout the country.

After these random arrests three pickets were charged with the more serious offence.

We elected to be tried at Bolton Crown Court. We all pleaded not guilty. The other two were acquitted

while I received a three month custodial sentence.

I immediately launched an appeal. My grounds for appeal were that one of the jurors was a working miner. I had objected to being tried at Bolton because of its close proximity to Agecroft colliery which in Lancashire was the main pit that refused to join the strike.

Many miners work at Agecroft and live in the Bolton area. Both councils in the trial assured us that the normal procedure was that no interested party would be allowed to serve on the jury — this did not happen.

My solicitor only learnt after the trial when the juror in question applied for expenses and he stated his profession as a miner.

We also learnt that on the same day as my trial had taken place, 18 February, preparations were being made by another judge and council in Bolton Crown Court for another trial concerning an offence committed during the miners' dispute.

The judge in question advised the jury members before they were sworn in that if any of them had any

connection with the mining industry that this would sway their objective judgement and they should stand down. Four of them did. The jury had been drawn from the same panel as my jury.

At the Court of Appeal, when my case came up, Lord Lane, Lord Chief Justice of England stated that 'bias of a juror is no grounds for unfair trial'.

My council, Mr Mansfield QC, told the judges that I'd been dismissed although I had a good work record and that there was a lot of bitterness in the area as a result of my dismissal.

I am the only miner to have been dismissed in the Lancashire coalfield. Other miners have been convicted and served sentences for more serious crimes and they have not been dismissed.

He argued that my dismissal was a form of double punishment by the Coal Board. The appeal judge replied that the Appeal Court was not an industrial tribunal.

He deemed the sentence of three months for an offence of 'moderate gravity' was not over-harsh.

My appeal was thereby dismissed both on the grounds of conviction and on grounds of sentencing.

In prison I received only three letters a week. A lot of my correspondence was stopped by the prison officers.

They treated me much the same as the other inmates but a lot of them were ex-servicemen and they seemed to think that the miners were led by the 'demon king' Arthur Scargill as if we couldn't

think for ourselves.

One of them said to me that 'I must carry a card', suggesting I was a Communist Party member, as if that was an imprisonable offence in itself! The whole mentality was very much that of a *Sun* editorial.

Since I've come out of prison, last Friday 19 April, I've realised that the wives support groups and associated support groups are still active and that they've diverted their attention to amnesty and the support of the imprisoned men's families.

This campaign will ensure that men will not be forgotten.

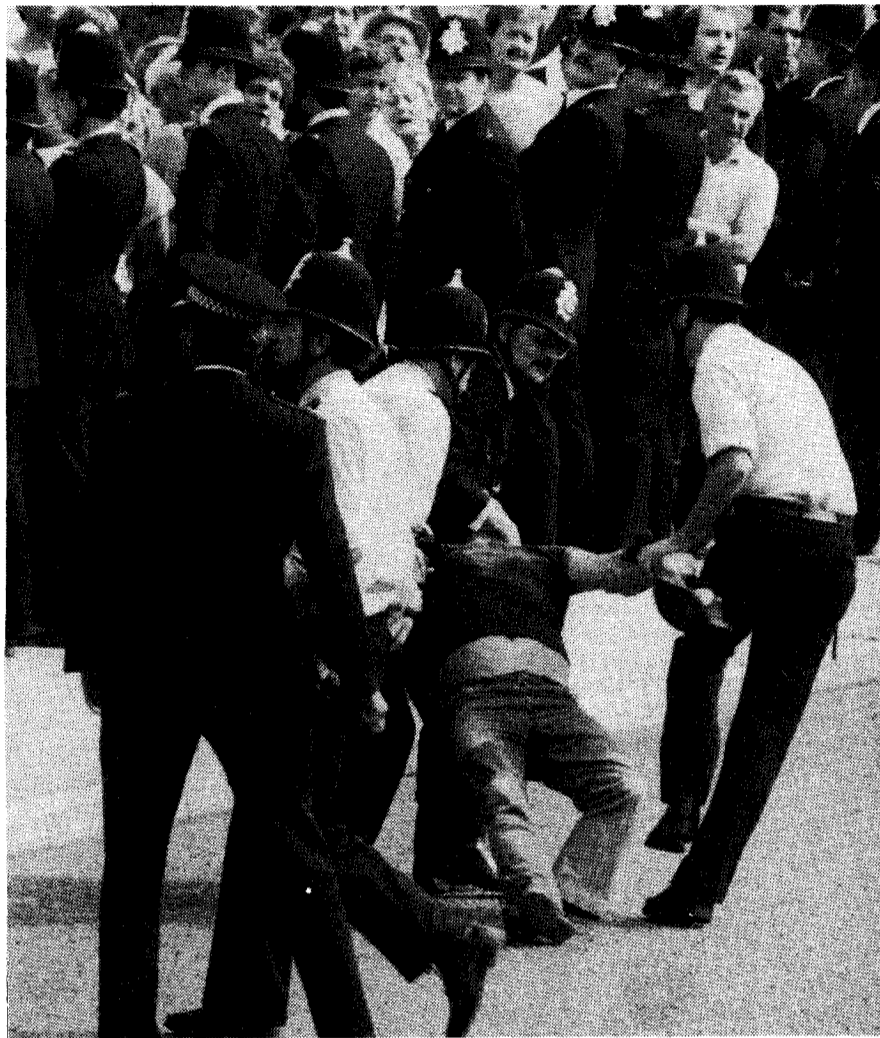
Together with the politicisation of women in this dispute the international links that we've made have been one of the big gains for the NUM.

I have been requested by Belgium members of the Fourth International to participate in the May Day march in Brussels. I visited Belgium last October and a very close association has developed with the pits in Lancashire and the labour movement in Belgium. Forty of us will be going on May Day.

The men fortunate to go abroad in this dispute have changed their attitudes to foreigners. British working people can be very nationalistic and the dispute has knocked this attitude out of us.

We've made lots of good friends and this is a very positive gain of the great strike.

I've made a formal request to management and local management has given a good account of my work record. But the NCB's policy on reinstatement is unclear.



Some areas are reinstating miners, others like Scotland are taking a hard line.

Ian MacGregor has said that insubordination and insurrection must not go unpunished and there's obviously a battle going on within the NCB with the wets and the hardliners over what scale of the witch hunt should be launched.

In Bold, the miners are

very angry with conditions in the pits. They are stopping all bonus payments, clawing back all the rent owed in the dispute and the wages being paid are so low it's hardly worth going to work.

The Coal Board and the media are trying to cover all this up with propaganda by silence. The NCB has the whip hand and this is creating dissatisfaction.

There are two camps now among miners. Those who want to reach a new consensus with management and then there's those who know the only way ahead is preparing for another strike. My branch voted not to return to work.

These are ordinary miners at Bold who were not militants until this strike began.

Muhammad Idrish fights on

ON Wednesday afternoon, 17 April, Muhammad Idrish, a Bengali, received notice from the Home Office, that his appeal against his adjudicator's decision to recommend his deportation, had been rejected.

The following day, around 100 labour movement activists and members of the black and Asian communities, with whom Muhammad lives and works, gathered in Chamberlain Square, Birmingham to protest at this inhuman ruling. Notice was given that the fight continues until Muhammad and the many others are given the right to stay — and until all racist laws are overturned by a Labour government.

Muhammad stated: 'There are many people in a similar situation who do not even have a trade union to fight for them. If we can be put out, what chance for them?'

There are divided families, widows and dependents — for many are only relatives are over here. What can they go back to?'

'The law is inhuman and racist — it must be smashed. I will fight on

and I will not go voluntarily, they will have to come and take me.'

By Bob Smith, Defence Campaign Treasurer

Muhammad had fallen foul of the Illegal Immigrant Intelligence Unit.

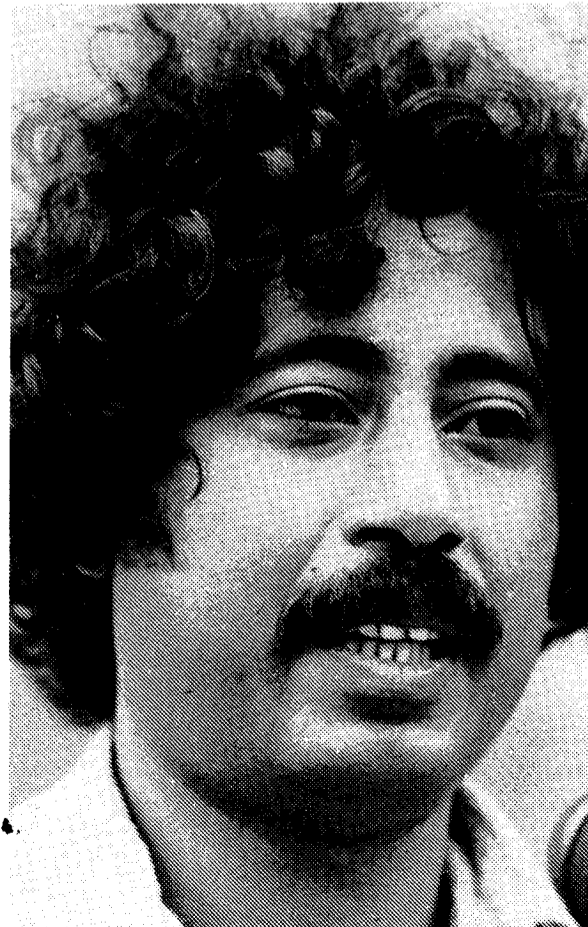
A social worker and active member of NALGO, he had been voluntarily helping the black and Asian communities in the inner city area — obviously an undesirable in Thatcher's Britain.

Campaign

The next moves in the campaign will include a visit to the Home Office by the West Midlands Group of MPs. Then the Campaign Group and a TUC delegation at NALGO's instigation, will make approaches to David Waddington, the home office minister.

Muhammad has only a few weeks to prepare an appeal. It could be rejected — unless the labour movement makes the political price too high for Waddington.

• More information, please contact: Barry Lovejoy, 30, Antrobus Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, B21. Phone: 021-523 8923.



Defend Lewisham East

LEWISHAM EAST Labour Party is very near the end of its process of selecting its MP candidate in the next general election. It's likely to be the first constituency Labour Party to select a black person as its prospective parliamentary candidate. But what's the reaction of the Labour Party national executive committee?

Is it welcoming this likelihood as an example of black people having some say in the Labour Party or as the first step towards Labour winning this Tory marginal, which contains a large number of black people? The answer is no!

Instead it is preparing to disallow the selection because Lewisham East has allowed its black section to nominate a candidate and put forward two delegates with voting rights on the general management committee.

What a wonderful advert to black people for the Labour Party! Here is a CLP attempting to involve black members in its structures and possibly about to select a black candidate — and the all white leaders of the Labour Party want to squash them.

Lewisham East is only one of six constituencies which have changed their

rules to allow black section delegates to play a part in the reselection processes. The other five are: Vauxhall, Deptford, Nottingham, Newham North West, and Hornsey and Wood Green. Other CLPs have indicated that they will be changing their rules soon.

If these parties continue to allow black sections to take part, the NEC is asking all the GMC delegates to sign an 'oath of loyalty' to the Labour Party constitution. This bureaucratic move will only create unnecessary division at a time when Labour should be moving to attack the Tories, whose popularity is sinking to new depths.

By Chris Khamis, Black Section National Committee (personal capacity)

No such oath has ever been used before in such a wholesale fashion. It's being introduced to cover up political differences.

These moves take place as the national executive working party on involving black people in the Labour Party — set up after the 1983 conference — is about to give a guard-

ed welcome to black sections. This will not be enough unless the working party's report states that not only should black sections be allowed to exist at the constituency level with voting delegates on GMCs, but that black sections should also be represented on regional and national bodies, including the national executive.

Black sections will be wet rags if they are not given constitutional power.

Resistance has begun. On Sunday 14 April, Vauxhall Labour Party called a meeting of black section and CLP delegates to plan out what to do next. They decided the following:

- to encourage as many Labour Parties as possible to change their rules to allow black sections to send delegates to GMCs and local government committees;
- to push for all CLPs and unions to send to the NEC resolutions condemning the 'loyalty oath';
- to call for a big turn out of support for Lewisham East when they are visited by a national agent on Friday 26 April, at 7.00 pm at Lymes Hall Labour Club, Lymes Gove, Lewisham.

Postworkers fight back

ACTION LAST week by postal workers at 23 sorting centres from Preston to London dealt a serious blow to Post Office management's efforts to introduce productivity proposals. Coming, as it did, within a fortnight of the agreement between the UCW executive and the Post Office on a sweeping new productivity agreement it is also a blow to the UCW executive, which hopes to win the approval of the union's national conference on 19 May for this agreement.

The dispute started when postal workers were refused payment for the additional work involved in delivering polling cards. Management attempted to over-ride existing practice and refuse payment for the extra work involved. Post workers at Northampton refused to handle the extra work, and there was an immediate walk-out over the suspensions which resulted.

By Paul Dwyer

Management then tried to divert mail to other offices. Refusal to handle diverted mail from striking offices led to further suspensions. More than 7000 workers were eventually involved in the action. The Post Office was forced to retreat.

Allan Tuffin, UCW general secretary and main supporter of the recent productivity deal was clearly worried. He did not approve of the solidarity action which led to the spread of the dispute. He said: 'Our members aren't going on strike in support of those at Northampton. As the Post Office moves mail around, our lads are blacking it and the Post Office is sending people home. We are trying to

contain it and telling our members not to be provoked, but it is very hard for them not to respond.'

Blow

The strike, and the solidarity action which led to the escalation of the dispute, is a big blow to the union executive's hopes of selling the productivity deal to conference on 19 May. The proposed deal would mean a big deterioration in the working conditions of UCW members. In particular the Post Office plans to hire up to 20,000 part-time workers is a major step to the casualisation of the service on the US model, where workers turn up in the morning with no guarantee that work will be available.

Tuffin and his co-thinkers on the executive thought that the deal could easily be pushed through the union conference. Last week's action indicates that the left have got a real base to fight back from: not only are the members ready and able to struggle. They can win.

Kinnock joins TGWU witch hunt

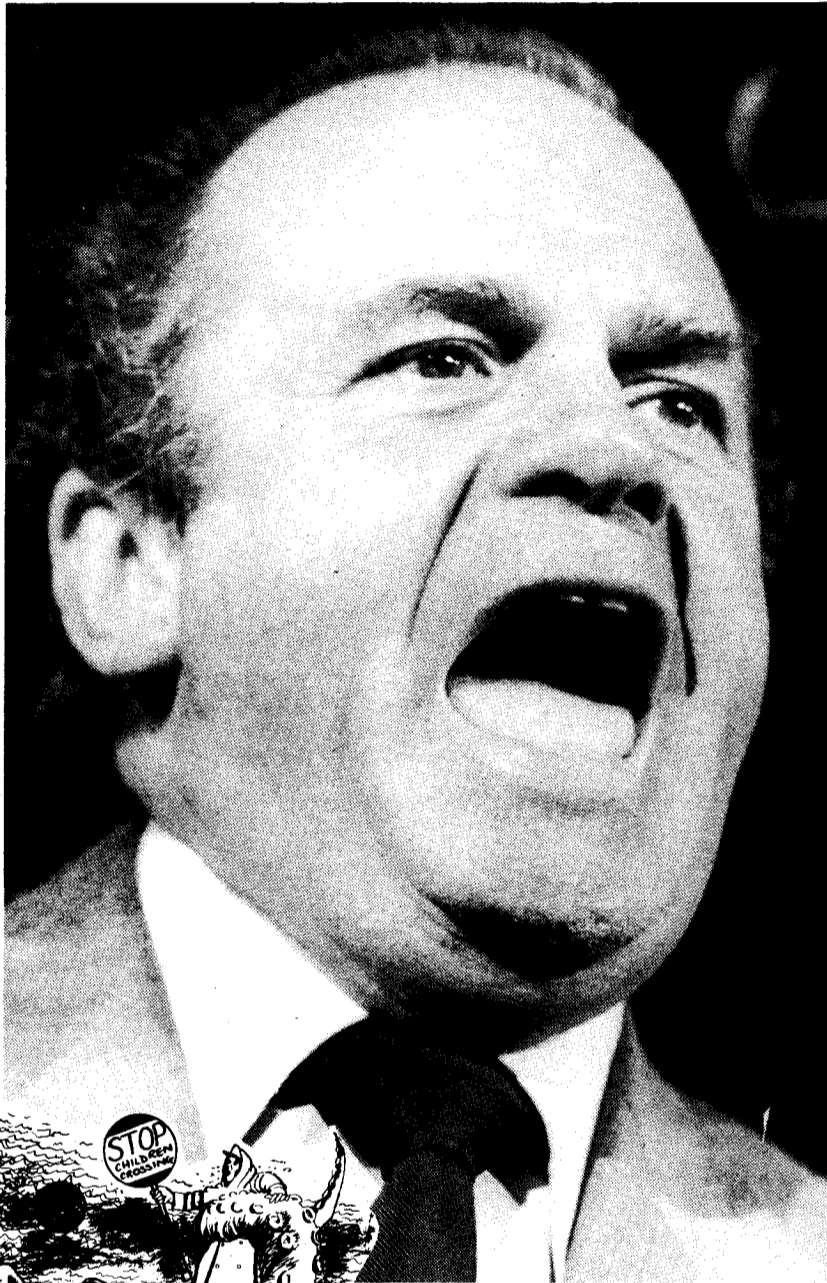


Photo: GM COOKSON

NEIL KINNOCK's decision to join the press campaign against the TGWU shows, once again, the Labour leader's determination to strengthen his alliance with the new realist right of the movement. His call for a new ballot is designed to pre-empt the investigation which the union is conducting and which is due to finish on 29 April, and to be considered by the executive on 9 May.

It puts him alongside such figures as Frank Chapple and Terry Duffy — not to mention David Owen and Fleet Street. The fact that he is a TGWU-sponsored MP makes his treachery all the greater. Kinnock has a strong interest in securing the general secretaryship of the union for George Wright.

By Pat Hickey

A left-led TGWU is a major obstacle to Kinnock's drive to the right which has accelerated since the end of the miners' strike. The TGWU supported Benn in the deputy leadership campaign, and stands on the left on policy issues — most notably on nuclear disarmament and incomes policy. Labour's shift to the right on policy will include Hattersley's incomes policy position.

Important

Wright would be a major factor in changing the TGWU's stand on these questions. The TGWU has played an important role in the Wales Labour Party on the right. The latest contribution from the Wales region of the union is a resolution which seeks to bar Militant supporters from holding office in the union, and to exclude them from the Labour Party.

While the press campaign has centred on Todd's vote, there is a good deal of suspicion in Wales about Wright's vote. The turnout there was 61 per cent, which is very high. Wright got 89 per cent of the vote while Todd managed only 4.9 per cent.

It seems extremely unlikely that the vote there would be so out of step with the national picture. These are questions for the union to deal with — not the media or the courts.

Internal

The campaign is being conducted with the primary aim of discrediting the left. It is clear that the right wing is assisting the campaign, in the belief that after the defeat of the miners the right will be strengthened in a re-run ballot. Moss Evans should deliver a sharp rebuff to Kinnock for his disloyalty, and insist that the union's internal investigation be allowed to proceed without interference.

Kinnock's stand will aid the SDP's campaign against work-place ballots, and will also damage Labour's prospects in the political funds ballots. The left in the Labour Party must defend the TGWU's right to deal with its own affairs, and dissociate itself from Kinnock's position.



By John Kirby, Sheffield Healy Labour Party

(personal capacity) SHEFFIELD'S fight against rate-capping has received its first major set-back. But it was not at the hands of Jenkin or Thatcher. This was an own goal.

The next council meeting on Wednesday 24 April will vote to defer setting a rate yet again. However, it is proposed that financial losses made by the council should be made up by contributions from the workforce and council members.

By continuing this tactic the leadership of the Labour group is preparing the way to abandon the fight. Council leader David Blunkett has put forward a paper to district Labour Party proposing a deficit budget. This is a clear retreat on the tactic

Sheffield council's own goal

of not setting a rate. It will mean the end of any campaign against the Rates Act.

Council workers have already had a taste of what deficit budgeting would mean. Because of council losses chief officers have imposed stringent controls on spending including freezing recruitment. These 'economies' will intensify

with deficit budgeting, because council officers will not allow the council to go into the red.

The result will be disastrous. Instead of fighting with the council against the government, council workers and users will be forced to fight the council.

The fight is not yet over. One-third of

Labour councillors and District Labour Party members have voted to step up the campaign by adopting a 'no rate' resolution at the 24 April council meeting.

Now the left must campaign to win the District Labour Party to carry on the fight. This might mean that the Labour group splits and the vote is not carried on

council because of Labour defectors.

This issue must be faced up to. Only by attempting to continue the campaign could the Labour Party retain any kind of credibility for a renewed fight in the future.

This is more important than the spurious 'unity' of the Labour group.

Newham council attacks NALGO

AS NEWHAM Labour council's fight against rate-capping sinks into a quagmire of creative accounting and cutbacks, the way is being paved for a savage attack on jobs and services next year. The Labour group, which could not unite to confront the Tories, now looks set to unite against any section of the labour movement with the political will to defend jobs and services.

In Newham, which has a massive Labour majority, the Labour group voted on 15 April for a 20 per cent rate rise. It also voted to end the victimisation of NALGO convenor Barry Gray.

This followed an intensive campaign within NALGO and the local Labour Party, and a number of one-day strikes. The campaign however alarmed the Labour group.

It was clear that NALGO would be in the forefront of resistance to cuts. To ensure that in the future it will be impossible for NALGO to carry out such a campaign, councillors were urged to try to stop NALGO addressing ward meetings.

By Carolyn Sikorski

If this should prove impossible, councillors were to make sure that the 'true picture' from management was also given to the ward. One councillor put the group's position in a nutshell. 'There are lies, damned lies and NALGO allegations'.

Councillors then voted to refuse any further delegations to the group.

The most immediate and serious attack was to give the chair of social services the green light to sack residential social workers,

for attending a shop meeting, and to sack stewards who undertook union activity without permission from management. The union activity extends to talking about the union with someone else — one social work steward has been docked pay for discussing union activity with another steward.

Failure

The attack, which was led by a right wing councillor, has been supported by the 'soft' left and even some of the hard left — all of whom voted originally not to set a rate.

The failure of the council to fight the Tories has put them in the position of administering the cuts. That inevitably means a confrontation with the most militant sections of the council workforce.

The choice facing Labour councils is fight the Tories or fight the local government unions. Newham appears to have opted for the latter.

Abortion is a class issue

I THINK the record of this government in recognising that a sensitive subject (ie abortion) is a matter for individual conscience is unparalleled,' boasted Barbara Castle about the last Labour administration from 1974-79. On 3 May a large number of Labour MPs will follow Barbara Castle's advice and, ignoring the votes of three Labour Party conferences for a woman's right to choose, either go into the lobby with the Tories and vote for the Powell Bill or stay away frightened to show their faces.

The reason for this unparalleled disgrace is the free vote. When it comes to votes on abortion, the party whip is not applied. The conscience of male MPs is more important than the abortion rights of working class women.

The Powell Bill and the Gillick High Court ruling represent a change in tactics by the anti-abortionists. Having been defeated on three successive occasions in parliamentary attacks on the 1967 Abortion Act they have now turned their energies to the courts.

Victoria Gillick, mother of 10, took the DHSS to court — as a result doctors can no longer prescribe or give contraceptive advice to the under-16s without parental consent. Gillick has already announced she does not want to stop there. She wants sex education banned in schools.

Enoch Powell wants to stop research on the human embryo and give legal status to the foetus from the moment of conception. Such protection has only been given in fascist countries and — since 1983 — in Southern Ireland where abortion is completely illegal.

The debate in parliament clearly showed that Powell's aim is to outlaw abortion and some forms of contraception such as the coil and the morning-after pill.

At the second reading of Powell's Bill only 41 out of a total of 267 Labour MPs voted against this attack on the '67 Act. When the implications of Powell are made clear — basically, it's a backdoor way of getting abortion outlawed by giving legal status to the foetus — no Labour MP could argue that he or she was not mandated to vote against it.

While the Labour Party needs to get a policy on Powell and the Warnock Report as quickly as possible, the ranks have already made their views clear: for a woman's right to choose.

Moral

So why is it that the Labour Party in the House views abortion as a moral and not a class issue? Defining abortion as a matter of individual conscience allows an MP to ignore party policy if he or she disagrees with it personally.

This reflects a long tradition in the British labour movement which considers that these issues are not properly the concern of the labour movement. It lets the ruling class off the hook.

In every capitalist state the ruling class controls women's reproductive rights. The labour movement has every interest in challenging that, and fighting for women to have control of their bodies.

Freed from unwanted pregnancies, the justifications for paying women badly and depriving them of their rights at work will be lessened. Women's dependence on men will be less if they can plan their children — and their involvement in the labour movement will be much greater.

At each Labour Party conference where the issue of a free vote has been discussed, the trade union bureaucracy has blocked with the parliamentary party against ending the free vote.

This is out of line with the expressed wishes of the ranks of the unions who have not only voted for abortion on request but also won TUC sponsorship for the anti-Corrie march in October 1979. Unions like NUPE and the Tobacco Workers, which have a high female membership played a key role in that.

It is because of the elitist, unaccountable nature of the parliamentary party and the trade union delegations to party conference that MPs can get away with treating abortion as a moral issue and trampling over women's rights.

The working class is the only class in society that has the power to win the struggle for abortion rights. This struggle involves a head-on challenge to the right of the ruling class to use women as reproducers and servicers of labour power.

It is vital at a time when unemploy-

ment is high and the ruling class wishes to throw back the gains of the abortion legislation of the 60s and 70s — to increase divisions between male and female workers — that the labour movement rallies its forces against Powell and Gillick.

Since 1968, some two million women have had safe, legal abortions. Yet abortion is still a criminal offence, and over 50 per cent of women are forced to go outside the NHS.

The last Labour Party manifesto failed to adequately represent established party policy on abortion despite an extensive section on women's rights.

The miners' strike showed the importance of having women involved in the struggle to save jobs and communities. Now every trade union member, male and female, must return that support by putting on the pressure at every level to stop Powell and Gillick. Unions must discuss their policy on the Powell Bill, and how to win support for the pro-choice movement.

Disgrace

The real issues behind this attack have to be brought out, and people's prejudices and fears about experimentation on embryos confronted. Above all inside the trade unions and the Labour Party, the argument against the free vote has to be taken on.

Labour MPs think they know better than women themselves or than Labour Party conference policy when it comes to issues of women's sexual and reproductive rights. That is simply not true.

The unparalleled disgrace of the free vote must be ended. That is the only way to stop Powell and also the other anti-abortionists queuing up behind him.



Victoria's v

Labour MPs who voted for the Powell Bill are:

Allen Adams (Paisley), Donald Anderson (Swansea), Jeremy Bray (Motherwell), Dale Campbell Savours (Workington), David Clarke (South Shields), Tom Clarke (Monklands), Michael Cocks (Bristol S.), Harry Cowans (Tyne Bridge), Jim Craigen (Maryhill), Eric Deakins (Walthamstow), Donald Dewar (Barscadden), Don Dixon (Jarrow), Richard Douglas (Dunfermline W.), Albert Duffy (Attercliffe), Harry Ewing (Falkirk E.), Frank Field (Birkenhead), Norman Godman (Greenock), James Hamilton (Motherwell), Peter Hardy (Wentworth), Norman Hogg (Cumberland), John Home-Robertson (E. Lothian), Denis Howell (Small Heath), David Lambie (Cunninghame S.), Ron Lewis (Carlisle), Terence Lewis (Worsley), Tony Lloyd (Stratford), Geoffrey Lofthouse (Pontefract), Hugh McCartney (Clydebank), Kevin McNamara (Kingston upon Hull), David Marshall (Shettleston), Michael Martin (Springburn), Bruce Millan (Govan), Austin Mitchell (G. Grimsby), Gordon Oakes (Halton), William O'Brien (Normanton), Robert Parry (Riverside), Tom Pendry (Stalybridge), Peter Pike (Burnley), George Robertson (Hamilton), Smith (Monklands E.), Nigel Spearing (Newham S.), James Tinn (Redcar), James White (Pollock), David Young (Bolton S.E.).

This list of MPs was circulated in the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign mailing. LARC can be contacted at PO Box 110, London SE21 8ND.



'EVERYBODY knows that once young women have sexual intercourse they lose all interest in academic studies'. This is the view of Victoria Gillick's husband in justifying his wife's campaign to prohibit contraceptive advice to young people under-16.

As is clear from Mr Gillick's statement, the issue is not really the under-16s in general, but an attempt to control and punish the sexual activity of young women in particular.

This implication has already been picked up in a number of areas. Waltham Forest education authority interpreted the ruling to mean that under-16 year old women were no longer to be given sex education in school. No similar guidance was issued in relation to boys. The NUT in the area objected to this and the status quo has been reestablished pending further clarification. But we can be sure that Waltham Forest will not be the only education authority to see the ruling this way.

Many youth clubs and youth groups have already been affected. Advice and educational groups on sexual matters for the under-16s now have to be vigorously curtailed if discussion wanders onto the 'dangerous' area of contraception!

Drawing the line between legitimate discussion on the 'facts of life' and the, now, illegitimate discussion of contraception and abortion means an arbitrary halt to inquiries that naturally lead onto all aspects of conception and sexuality.

The impact of this ruling on young women will be devastating. Surveys

How Powell threatens women's choice

ENOCH POWELL'S Unborn Children (Protection) Bill specifically claims that its provisions: '...do not involve any issue concerning abortion, surrogacy or legitimation.' But MP after MP, in supporting his Bill, gave arguments that could equally be applied to abortion.

Norman St John-Stevias said: 'the embryo is ... human and alive ... the interest of the child comes first.' (He means the unborn child.) Tory Ann Winterton claimed that: 'basic human rights are applicable from the moment of conception...civilised tradition must exclude the killing of the innocent.'

MP Campbell-Savours said that if Warnock had defined when life began: 'it would have put the arguments about abortion on a different plane and...the law on abortion into the area of absurdity.' Sir Bernard Braine believed that the embryo is: 'a member of the human family from the moment of conception'. And so on, ad nauseam.

These MPs and Powell claim that 'experimentation' on human embryos (or, to be accurate, concepti) is wrong because all such research should benefit the 'patient' and not kill it.

The Bill, as Sir Hugh Rossi spelt out most clearly, gave the embryo legal protection against this.

But Powell's Bill affects more than just the possibility of attacks on abortion and contraception if the embryo is given legal status. It directly affects the ability of doctors to give women in vitro fertilisation treatment. It also restricts many promising areas of research which promise benefits for women and their children.

The anti-abortionists have played on fears concerning modern technology and medicine. Norman St John-Stevias referred to *Brave New World*. It is true that scientific advance is not always progressive, but most has progressive features — it is a question of who controls it in whose interests.

Infertility affects one in 10 couples in the UK. In some parts of the world it is even more serious. In some areas of Africa, there is a veritable plague of infertility. For women in the affected

areas, it is a very serious matter indeed — their status and to a large extent their economic security depend on being able to bear children.

Finding the causes and cures for infertility would radically alter the lives of millions of people. In vitro fertilisation is a treatment that enables about one in 10 of those women undergoing it to have a baby.

By Leonora Lloyd

Powell's Bill would so severely restrict the effectiveness of the procedures that many doctors have said that they would have to either break the law (and face unlimited fines and up to two years' jail) or stop doing it. Rich women would still be prepared to go abroad or find some way of getting the treatment here. Poor women would suffer.

The right to abortion — the right not to be forced to continue with an unwanted pregnancy — is (or should be) an absolute right. The 'right to have a child' is not an absolute right and cannot be. But the right to be treated for a curable condition *should* be a right in a civilised society.

To argue that women (and men) should not be obsessed with having children is to ignore much human suffering and to forget that knowing that you are infertile in itself creates part of the need. It is to forget that women can have children and still be 'whole people'.

Not all infertility can be treated by in vitro fertilisation and one important area of research that will be affected by the Bill is into the causes of infertility and the search for possible treatments. Some couples dare not have a child, or they face the prospect with mixed feelings, because of the risks of passing on some hereditary disease or defect. For them, too, Powell's Bill has dire consequences in terms of treatment (in vitro fertilisation can be used to screen embryos) and research into causes and cures.

Recent research has shown that existing contraception is far from adequate. We have to choose between ease

and safety in use, but low effectiveness (the sponge), high effectiveness combined with problems in use (barrier methods), near certainty of protection, but a high risk of sterility or ectopic pregnancy (the IUD) and nearly 100 per cent effectiveness but high health risks (the pill).

More research on contraception that can be used by all women, male contraception, and contraception that can be used in conditions often found in the Third World, where few or no doctors are available, is urgently needed. This research, too is threatened by the Powell Bill.

Almost certainly, the Bill will not reach its third reading, but the same proposals will be made when the government brings in its own Bill in the next session on the Warnock Report. Other areas affecting women's reproduction will be up for grabs, too.

We cannot turn the clock back. The technology exists and can be used for our benefit or against us. We must use the time between now and when the government Bill comes out to increase our understanding of the issues at stake and to develop policies on how we, and especially women, can control these new developments.

Ethical committees set up to control and oversee research must have a majority of lay members and a majority of women — it is us who are most affected by the research. We must determine where the resources are to be directed — is the development of a new contraceptive more urgent than finding the causes of handicap? It is we who must decide.

We are on the brink of many exciting break-throughs much more worthwhile than many areas of dubious research. We should develop positive policies in relation to them.

Only a few years ago, effective contraception was almost non-existent and abortion dangerous and difficult. The new research could radically expand our choices.

The labour movement must throw its weight behind our campaign to increase women's choices. This way lies a better life for women and our children.

values

have shown that among young people themselves there is a majority for maintaining some form of age consent, mainly from the point of view of providing an element of protection from the sexual pressure of older people, especially men. However alongside this there is also a clear majority for freely available contraception and abortion advice.

The views of young people are quite explicable, they want the choice to develop their sexuality at their own pace, with the right to the necessary advice if they need it.

For young women, who either choose or are coerced into early sexual relationships, this ruling is simply an attempt to enforce unwanted pregnancy as a punishment for their sexual activity.

By Jude Woodward

While the implications for young women are tremendous the ruling also undermines young people's rights in general. The DHSS's appeal against the ruling gives a number of examples where young people's legal rights would be unclear, or overturned.

For example, can a young person of either sex discharge themselves from hospital without parental consent? Or contrarily, can a parent insist on discharge from hospital without the young person's consent?

In the area of contraceptive advice the dangers are obvious. What if a young woman attends a family planning clinic asking for contraception, agrees to her parents being contacted, but the parents fail to respond. She explains they are not interested in her sex-

ual activity. Can advice be given?

Or if a parent asks a doctor to examine a daughter to see if she is a virgin, which the daughter does not agree to. Does the doctor have to carry this examination out?

Property

If a young woman in advanced pregnancy attends a doctor's surgery, can the doctor carry out an examination and give ante-natal advice if she does not consent to her parents being informed?

Who will decide if a young woman may have an abortion or not, herself or her parents, whichever way round her views are?

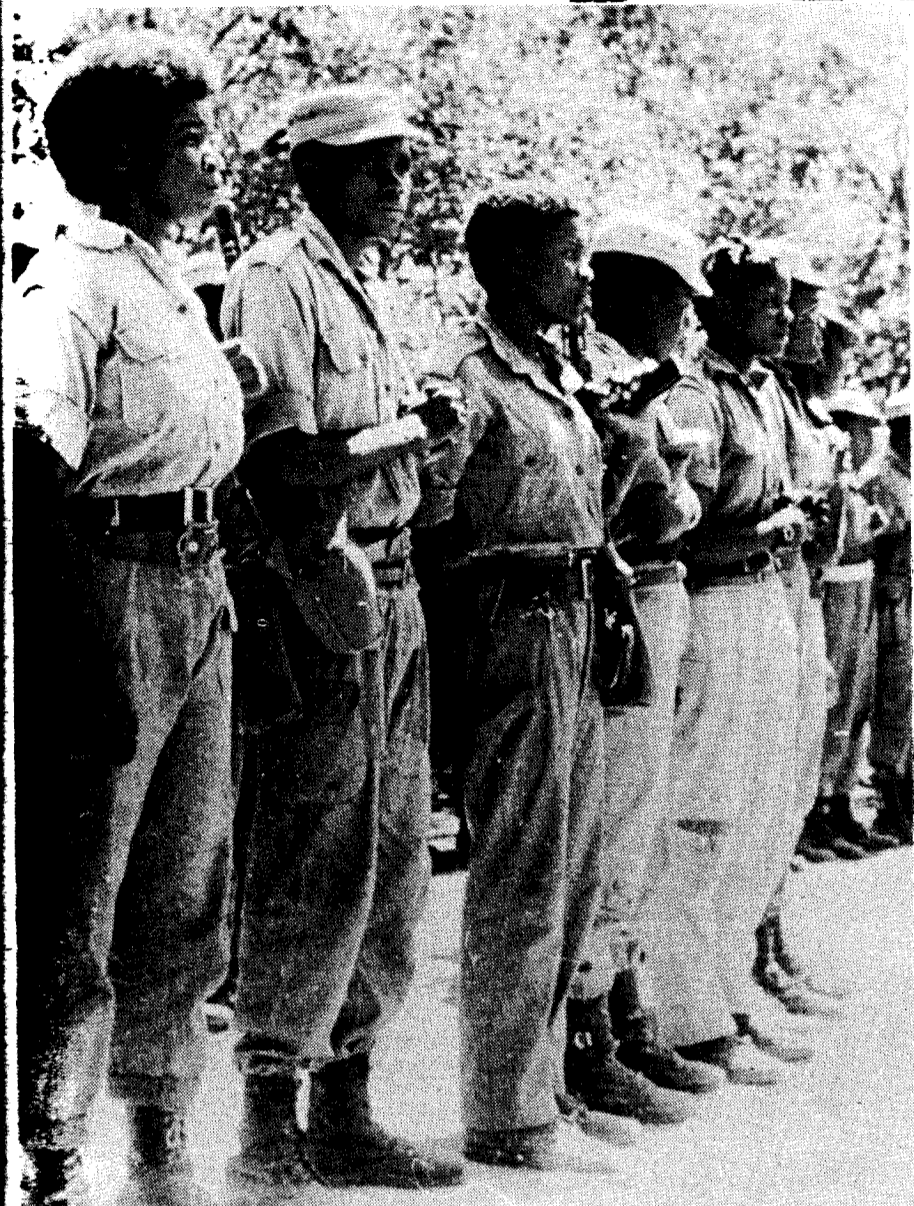
The Gillick ruling makes young people the property of their parents, with no independent rights or opinions of their own. Secondly, it reinstates the old double standard which turns a blind eye to male sexuality, but attempts to coerce and punish the sexual lives of women.

Gillick's ruling must be reversed. Women, young people and the labour movement must be out on the streets over the next months, and on the 23 June march in London, to make their views known in no uncertain terms.

Contact the Youth Campaign, c/o Wesley House, 70 Great Queen St, London W1, for details of the campaign, fact sheets, petitions, posters, leaflets and badges. And affiliate to the National Abortion Campaign at the same address.



No to puppet regime



SWAPO fighters

THE 19 APRIL is the 25th anniversary of the South West African People's Organisation's struggle for the independence of Namibia against South African military occupation. At a 25th anniversary rally on 18 April in London, Shapu Kaukungu, SWAPO representative for the UK and Western Europe, explained the current stage of the struggle. Below, we print an edited version of his speech.

'You could not have helped but notice the considerable coverage of Namibia and Angola in the media during the last few days. It is all related to two events: the apparent withdrawal of the remaining South African forces from Angola, and the expected announcement this afternoon by the regime of its plan for setting up another puppet government in Namibia.

'Pretoria has attempted, in its usual arrogant manner, to present the first of these events as some sort of magnanimous gesture. It is outrageous that the regime should expect praise when they cease their illegal occupation of Angolan territory. They should never have been there in the first place.

'The racist South African regime decided it was in its best interests to produce something which the Reagan administration could use to defend its constructive engagement policy with Pretoria. At the same time they declared that during the course of this year they would scrap the Mixed Marriages Act and the Immorality Act in South Africa, two pieces of legislation, while being

symptomatic of the vile nature of the apartheid system, the repeal of which will do nothing to alter the fundamental nature of the exploitative and repressive system...

'Both of these serve as the smoke-screen behind which Pretoria intends to continue with its exploitative apartheid system in South Africa and its domination of Namibia. As our president, comrade Sam Nujoma, explained a couple of days ago: 'The withdrawal of the remainder of South African troops from Angola is a trick aimed at perpetuating Pretoria's influence in Namibia and deflecting attention from a so-called "internal settlement" in our country.'

'This afternoon PW Botha announced in the South African parliament that he intended to proceed with the setting up of another puppet government in Namibia. The racist South African regime has tried this once before. The previous puppet administration collapsed a couple of years ago as a result of considerable corruption and quite evident mal-administration.

'If the Pretoria regime believes that it is possible

for them to build up an alternative to SWAPO which will be attractive to the Namibian people then they have simply failed to learn from history. We can tell them now that this puppet government will go the way of all puppet governments throughout history. They will be rejected by the masses of the people with the contempt and the derision they deserve.

'Botha's statement this afternoon is again a statement of rejection of UN resolution 435, the UN plan for elections in Namibia leading to independence... Botha says that they will continue to work for an internationally acceptable settlement — what he clearly means is that South Africa intends to seek international approval for its own plan to impose on the Namibian people a pseudo-independence not dissimilar to that imposed on certain South African bantustans.

'The racist regime has consistently avoided the implementation of resolution 435 and in recent years has more openly campaigned for its destruction. The so-called contact group (Britain, US, France, Canada, West Germany) must cease defending Pretoria's defiance of the UN Security Council. Failure to act means continued collaboration in events like the brutal massacre of seven men at Ochikuku, in Northern Namibia, a few days ago...

'Of primary importance, when British imperialism is itself a fundamental obstacle to the implementation of Resolution 435, is the solidarity work that you do here in Britain. We have appreciated over the past few years the work that has been done by the solidarity organisations, trade unions, the peace movement, and the many dedicated friends of SWAPO.

'We welcome the campaign for the release of all political prisoners which the Namibia Support Committee has launched this evening, and which will especially draw attention to the way in which British collaboration is directly linked to the perpetuation of the Pretoria regime's atrocities and reprisals. You have the capacity to raise considerably the consciousness of people in this country and extend your solidarity work still further in support of SWAPO.'

● For more information contact: The Namibia Support Committee, PO Box 16, London NW5. Telephone: 01 267 1942.

The Namibia Support Committee convenes the following campaigns: Campaign Against Namibian Uranium Contracts (CANAC); Namibian Support Committee Health Collective; SWAPO Women's Solidarity Campaign; Political Prisoners and Repression Campaign; Action on Namibia Publications.

Lebanon crisis deepens

THE LABYRINTH of Lebanese politics has taken a new twist with the resignation last week of prime minister Rashid Karami, following 15 hours of fighting in West Beirut which left 36 dead and 150 wounded. The fighting had pitted the Shi'ite Muslims' Amal militia and their Druze allies against the Sunni Muslim's Murabitoun (apparently assisted by pro-Arafat Palestinians) — all groups usually described as 'left wing' by the Western media.

The result was a clear victory for Amal, the humiliation of the Sunni community, the resignation of Karami (the chief Sunni leader), and the collapse of present Amin Gemayel's 'national unity' government.

What lies behind the latest shift in Lebanon's complex pattern of sectarian alliances? First it is necessary to understand the relationship between Shi'a and Sunni communities in West Beirut.

Although the Sunni have traditionally been in the ascendancy over the past 30 years, an influx of poor Shi'ite peasants from the south into Beirut's 'belt of misery' has transformed the demographic balance.

The Shi'ites were asserting their authority even before the 1982 Israeli invasion. Since then Amal has emerged as an increasingly strong contender for hegemony amongst Lebanon's warring sects.

Whatever the feelings of the Shi'ite masses, Amal is far from being a Khomeinist or fundamentalist current. Its leader,

Nabih Berri, is a sophisticated bourgeois politician and his organisation essentially represents a 'bourgeoisie of the dispossessed'.

Similarly, although the Sunni community relies for its military force on the Murabitoun militias (basically lumpen street gangs which were formed in the late '60s and have developed a 'Nasserite' ideology), the old establishment, based on the merchant and land-owning classes remains in firm political control.

By Bernard Gibbons

What the current situation represents then, is a war between two establishments in the context of a disintegration of the Lebanese state.

The Shi'ite and Druze establishments have formed an alliance around changing the distribution of power within Lebanon's sectarian state, and see the Sunni establishment as being in league with Gemayel

against them. It represents a big shift from the days when the Muslim and Druze communities were united around the 1975 programme of the Lebanese national movement which called for the abolition of political confessionalism altogether.

The situation is further complicated by the roles of Syria and Israel, and the continuing relevance of the Palestinian question in Lebanese politics. Israel invaded in 1982 with the aim of establishing a strong unitary pro-Israeli state in Lebanon.

That goal is now unattainable, and the Israelis seem quite happy to see Lebanon break up into warring statelets. This fits the vision of the Zionist far right of a Middle East shattered into myriad sectarian states.

Whilst maintaining their control of South Lebanon through their own forces and the puppet South Lebanon army, Syria is concerned to exert its traditional predominance in Lebanon, preventing cross-border attacks on Israel and guaranteeing itself a leading role in any imperialist 'settlement' of the Israeli-Arab conflict.

Traditionally Syria has allied itself with the Sunni establishment, but the growth of links between pro-Arafat Palestinians and the Murabitoun posed the question of an anti-

Syrian alliance emerging in Beirut. So the Syrians turned to Amal as the only force strong enough to curb it, the Lebanese army being an impotent joke.

However Amal was rather too enthusiastic in the offensive against the Sunni. Karami (traditionally pro-Syrian) was forced to resign rather than endure the humiliation of his community. He remains as caretaker prime minister. But now, he and Gemayel are begging Syria to save what remains of their regime.

Confused? You will be, as the crisis deepens and new alliances emerge.

However it's clear what socialists should be calling for in the current situation: self-determination for the Lebanese people — free from the machinations of Western Imperialism, the brutality of the Israeli invaders or Syria's cynical power-broking. Most concretely this means calling for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Israeli troops from the Lebanon, and building solidarity with the heroic resistance in the south.

A defeat for imperialism on that scale would provide a breathing space in which the Lebanese left could regroup and renew itself to offer a genuine alternative to endless communal bloodshed.



An Israeli concentration camp

Photo: PER SANDEN

THE FOLLOWING is an excerpt from an interview given by Cuban President Fidel Castro on 13 February. It was taken from *Intercontinental Press*, 15 April 1985. It begins with Castro's answer to a question on the 'process of democratisation' in Latin America.

I think that these democratic processes take on a strategic importance at this time and have a deep significance.

The US administration may say that democracy is advancing, but what is advancing is the crisis of the US system of domination in Latin America. This process signifies that military dictatorships are on the decline; that resorting to repression and force to maintain the system has failed; and that the murders, the sophisticated torture, the missing — things the United States taught the repressive forces, the army and the police in Latin America — that all these atrocious methods no longer serve to maintain the system. The crisis is so profound that the military has understood that these countries have become unmanageable.

They are withdrawing from government and transferring it to civilians after having totally failed in the leadership of the state and also after having ruined the countries to greater or lesser degrees. In Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay they ruined the countries to an extraordinary degree; in Brazil, they handed the country over to the transnationals so that they could go there and produce with cheap labour in the midst of tremendous poverty.

Legacy

But I detect a certain difference between the policy followed by the Brazilian military and that followed by the Chileans, Argentines, and Uruguayans, who opened the doors wide to competition and wiped out national industry. The policy of the Brazilian military was different, but they all know that their countries have become unmanageable and they are handing over the power to civilians. That is, the crisis is so profound that they no longer consider themselves capable of ruling.

They've been handed a tragic legacy: in Argentina, a foreign debt of \$45,000 million; in Uruguay, \$5,500 million; in Brazil, Tancredo (Neves) inherits a \$104,000 million debt; that of Chile, where there will inevitably be changes, is now \$22,000 million. During the period of the Popular Unity government, the debt was \$4,000 million, the price of copper was not so low, and the situation was becoming very difficult.

Of course, Allende's situation was compounded by being refused foreign credits. The United States adopted economic measures against his government. But now the civilians are receiving a tragic legacy. In Argentina, as in Uruguay and Brazil, there is huge, unmanageable inflation and extremely serious cumulative social problems.

A few days ago a journalist handed me an Argentine one-million-peso bill and said: 'Do you know how much this was worth a few years ago?' I said: 'Not exactly'. He said: 'Two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Do you know how much it is worth now? Seventy-nine cents.'

Perhaps the great success of these military governments is that they turned all the citizens into millionaires. Inflation makes the economy unmanageable. Living standards have considerably declined in all those countries. I estimate that in Argentina the standard of living has dropped by 65 per cent in comparison with before the military's ascent to power; by 50 per cent in Uruguay; and in Brazil, I don't know exactly, but it could be between 65 and 70, at least 70 per cent, although I do not know precisely.

Twenty-four years ago, Kennedy promoted the Alliance for Progress as an antidote to prevent social convulsions, and undoubtedly the measures

Latin America is a powder-keg



were imaginative. He proposed reforms and economic aid totalling \$20,000 million over several years to solve the problems of development and social problems.

The population is now twice as large as 24 years ago and the social problems have multiplied. The foreign debt is 18 times greater than what Kennedy proposed as aid and the interest payments are \$40,000 million a year, \$400,000 million in ten years. So it's not a matter of whether the countries want to pay the debt or the interest rates. It's that they have no alternative; they cannot pay them.

If these democratic processes try to pay the debt — not the debt, but simply the interest rates — they will be ruined politically. And the danger will not be the return of the military for the military do not want the government even if it were given to them. The danger is a complete political destabilisation and social explosion. That's what I say is going to occur if there's an attempt to impose the Monetary Fund's formulae and collect those interest payments.

So I suggest the following: that Latin America needs a grace period of approximately 10 to 20 years as a minimum in terms of its foreign debt obligations, including the interest.

As I explained in the beginning, the problems of unequal exchange and the protectionist measures will have to be solved for the development of trade. In other words, it would only be a breather for a new international economic order, just a respite.

Selfish

This is not easy because the governments of the industrialized countries have their difficulties. Each one reacts thinking about its own domestic problems: I have so many unemployed; I am undergoing industrial modernisation, say the French and the Spanish. The Germans see their unemployment climbing to 2.6 million, a record postwar figure, while the British have three million. Unemployment is on the rise in many countries.

The United States adopted the most selfish of all policies. It imposed a financial monetary system supported by its great economic might and based on high interest rates which

extracted hundreds of thousands of millions from the world economy, including the economies of the Third World countries.

Everyone was depositing their money in the United States, because if they kept it in the currency of their country, it dropped in value. There would be a devaluation and for all those who had money, let's say someone with a million pesos, to use a currency with a certain value, like with the Mexican devaluation, its worth dropped by 25 per cent in a few weeks. The same in Argentina and Brazil.

With free exchange and inflation, no one was motivated to deposit money that was not secure anywhere and it was taken abroad, attracted by high US interest rates. For the time being the United States has solved its economic problems with this policy of high interest rates and the extraction of money from other countries. But neither can the United States withstand this situation much longer. Another problem which has affected the world economy is that country's \$200,000 million budget deficit. The history of the Vietnam war, which was waged without taxes, is being repeated. Now we have an arms race which is being conducted without taxes and a \$123,000 million trade deficit which is untenable for the US economy. Thus, these are objective realities that must be taken into account.

In 1984, 24 per cent of the net savings of the United States was deposited from abroad. The international economic crisis has not been solved; everything's limited to optimistic words. The US government said that the United States was the driving force behind other countries for economic recovery. It has in fact driven them, not to recovery but rather to a worsening of their difficulties.

Regarding the debt of the Third World, we propose the following: since the creditors are primarily private banks, the solution will be for the industrialised countries to take over the debts owed to the private banks if bankruptcy of the financial system is to be prevented.

The United States has a public debt of \$1,650,000 million and this would only increase it slightly. The aggregate Third World debt is less than what is spent every year in

military expenditures and will have to be cancelled in the long run.

My opinion is that no other alternative exists. To try to collect this debt, at least in Latin America, would be socially explosive.

What do the recently elected civilian governments propose? The Argentine government has clearly said that it is unwilling to accept recessive measures or allow the consequences of this debt to fall on the people, that they cannot halt development. The president-elect of Brazil and other political leaders have spoken in a similar vein. But if the countries have to extract \$40,000 million every year, how is development possible? They would have to adopt terrifying measures on top of living standards which have declined considerably.

Divide

The positions are clear: I don't want to do this, that, and the other. But the formula has not been mentioned. The United States has tried to divide the Latin American countries in the debt renegotiations, negotiating with each government separately. How many times have the main debtor countries met and made the solemn promise that they will not found a debtors' club, a front, a committee, whatever is necessary, and meet with the creditor countries? The creditors are already closely united in the Paris Club and the International Monetary Fund.

What does it mean to say that the problem is political? Simply that the seriousness of the situation and all the foreseeable consequences must be discussed on a political level.

What I am simply saying is that now the threat is not that the military will return to power; the danger is that Latin American societies will explode. I will give you another example: Bolivia, where there is a president whom I really esteem, with every desire to salvage the democratic process, a Communist Party even which is not involved in subversion or disorganising the country but is rather an ally of the government, which participated in the coalition that won the elections, which has taken on the policy of the government. And yet the real situation now is that no govern-

ment party controls sectors of the labour movement which refuse to make new sacrifices. Inflation increases, strikes come one after the other, the social situation is untenable, and the communists are not the ones stirring up protest, it is the unions, the workers, peasants, the people in general who can no longer take the sacrifices. You see there the presence of objective factors, not subjective ones.

Who will they blame for subverting order? It is the people who are no longer resigned, no longer accept limitations on their standard of living. Ah! Because the debt must be paid, the interest rates and the demands of the Fund must be met.

Less than four years ago, a civilian government came to power in Peru in elections where they won more than half the votes cast and obtained a majority in parliament. Now that party which won the elections has the support of only 3.8 per cent of the voters. Indications are that APRA (American People's Revolutionary Alliance) will win the elections with a majority, but then how will it handle the debt and other social problems the next day?

Clear

The problems of the region are clear. In my opinion, according to how people see it, there will be social revolutions, for better or for worse, there will be social revolutions if this problem is not solved.

This issue came up recently when I was asked about the famous question of exporting revolution, and I said: it is impossible to export the conditions which give rise to revolution, because if we are to talk of subversive elements, my view is that the measures of the Monetary Fund, the foreign debt, the \$40,000 million in interest rates every year, the international economic crisis, the drop in the prices of the main export commodities of Latin American nations, protectionism, high interest rates, are all very subversive factors.

The enormous economic and social problems that have accumulated and the crisis which has developed are the objective conditions for revolution. There is no need for the flame. There can be spontaneous combustion, and then not all the water in the world will be enough to put it out.

I think these are the factors that determine social change. I am not interested in preserving the existing social order; I think it must change. Nor am I interested in preserving the system of US rule over our peoples. My view is that this order can't continue and that system of rule can't be preserved. It will change, and I think the change will start in the light of this situation.

In many parts the military took power and implemented fascism and torture, disappearances; they ruined the nations they ruled. What is the alternative? In Brazil the opening came as a result of the people's struggle, the mobilisation of many millions of people on the issue of direct voting, the intelligent action of political parties that united and, although they lost in parliament, won in the electoral college which had been set up exclusively to elect official candidates.

Now you can see the political change which has taken place in Brazil. It was not violent but it was profound; that is, the opening is serious and solid.

Now the people are on the scene. In my opinion, there is no risk of a military coup in Argentina, Uruguay, or Brazil. There are always some military with those inclinations, eight or 10 per cent, madmen who talk of coups, but the majority realise it would be crazy.

When problems like Grenada's are not on some small island, or in Nicaragua, or in small countries of our area, when a profound social crisis breaks out, in Chile, Peru, Brazil, or Argentina, the United States would be powerless to do anything, because such problems cannot be solved by landing a battalion of paratroopers with some pretext or fairy tale.

IRELAND UNFREE

THE 1985 conference of the Labour Committee on Ireland, attended by double the number of delegates from 1984, marked an exciting new stage in its development. Editor of the LCI magazine *Labour and Ireland*, MARTIN COLLINS, looks at the committee after its first five years.

Three years ago, LCI conference was like a bear pit of squabbling male leftists. Its leadership were trying to claim for themselves the credit for the awakened interest in Ireland created by the men and women of H-block and Armagh, attempting to give respectability to the Irish solidarity movement by watering down its programme. The majority of left groups were fighting to score petty debating points and factional advantage. This year there were greetings from at least 20 MPs, Labour parliamentary spokesperson on Ireland, Peter Archer, from Sinn Fein and from South Wales NUM.

Officers' reports took a cool look at progress — the birth of a thriving women's section, Labour Women for Ireland, a strong parliamentary presence in Westminster and Brussels, the launch of a trade union department, and what one delegate described as 'the best political magazine of the left' — *Labour and Ireland*.

The centre of discussion was a debate, 'strategies for withdrawal', in which Euro-MP Christine Crawley and Labour front-bencher Clare Short MP were joined by Des McLernon and Martin Collins from the LCI.

Having successfully involved all those opposed to British presence in Ireland, the LCI can now fruitfully host such a debate. Having a firm programmatic position in favour of unconditional immediate withdrawal, the LCI can discuss the nature of withdrawal with those who still think that the traditions of social chauvinism and labourism can be turned aside by well-meaning appeals.

The essence of Labour's front bench position was described by one delegate as 'unity by stealth'. Sharing with *Militant* and *Socialist Organiser* a distrust of the republican movement, they want to cook up a deal with Dublin politicians that will be acceptable to loyalist reaction. The British establishment know that to be acceptable such a deal would not only have to firmly lock a future Ireland into NATO, it would also have to underwrite multinational investments, ensuring the destruction of free trade unionism in Ireland. It would have to guarantee the future of a reactionary church, both North and South, which protects the social stability, and the oppression of women. Finally it would mean the total destruction of the republican movement and its support.

British rulers know that such a deal is inconceivable. The establishment in the 26 Counties is far too weak to give any such guarantees. So the debate boils down to whether you think the character of the British state and Labourism can be altered in advance of British withdrawal from Ireland, for a 'humanitarian' government to 'withdraw by consent'; or whether Britain will be forced out of Ireland when political defeat is inevitable. Such debates are not won or lost in a single conference. It will be a debate that will deepen and continue.

Other positive features of the conference included a session on the Irish in Britain in which PTA victim Dr Maire O'Shea and GLC's Steve Bundred welcomed fresh moves to politically organise the Irish community in Britain and the help given by the GLC. Conference agreed to improve the LCI's internal structures and to participate in a national withdrawal demonstration in January. Its model resolution to this year's Labour Women's conference and party conference deals with the proposed NEC sub committee report on Ireland — making sure that any future discussion is linked to consideration of the Benn 'Withdrawal Bill' and the statement from Irish trade unionists calling for withdrawal.

Latest issue of Labour and Ireland now out includes a special feature on the church in Ireland with articles on Contraception, Liberation Theology, the Kerry Babies trial, Paisley's Protestantism. Also has a review of a new biography of SDLP leader John Hume written by Gerry Adams and of Sanity on Ireland by Desmond Greaves.

Articles on Europe and neutrality, the Philippines and interview with Plaid Cymru's Dafydd Elis-Thomas.

Labour must campaign for unilateralism

MORE THAN 100 delegates attended Labour CND's annual meeting last weekend, at the City University in London, to discuss the continuing campaign to win full support for CND's platform within the party. After a year in which the energies of many labour activists have been bent towards supporting the miners' heroic strike, attendance at this year's LCND meeting was a gratifying reminder that support for unilateralism in the party is not on the wane.

When Labour's policy statement, *Defence and Security for Britain*, was published in the summer of last year, many CND supporters in the party breathed a hearty sigh of relief to see the commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament up-front in the document. That's why it sailed through party conference by such a massive vote.

Since then, there's been a bit of time to reflect. The result of that showed in the discussion and resolutions last weekend.

First, there was big concern that the policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament for Britain is something Labour's leadership would prefer to keep very quiet. Unilateralism doesn't figure in any of the party's national campaigns, nor are there any plans that it should.

Resolution after resolution, speech after speech at the annual meeting demanded such a campaign. Attention also focussed on the sting-in-the-tail: the document's commitment to remaining in America's nuclear club.

The recognition that

commitment to NATO mars Labour's unilateralist policy showed in the questions fired at Labour's defence spokesperson, Denzil Davies. 'What would Labour do,' asked one delegate, 'if America invaded Nicaragua?' Mr Davies thought this would be alright, they would use

By Carol Turner,
Secretary Labour CND
(personal capacity)

their own troops not NATO's! And, of course, the party would protest. Not good enough replied the audience. It was clear that many delegates now have seen the Catch 22 of Labour's new defence policy.

Labour CND's executive was left in no doubt what activists want at this year's party conference. The committee was instructed to draw up model resolutions on campaigning, on withdrawal of all foreign bases from Britain, demanding a discussion on NATO's new strategies (Airland Battle, Follow-on-Forces-Attack, and so on), and a 'reasoned' one demanding



Photo: MARK SALMON

THE RECENT Molesworth demonstration against siting the next flight of cruise missiles in Britain at the as yet unbuilt base, brought renewed publicity for the determination of cruise activists up and down the country. The massive police presence — and the rotten weather! — didn't deter hundreds of thousands of anti-missiles campaigners joining the 20,000 plus demonstration on Easter Monday.

Meanwhile, renewed harassment of the Greenham camp took a new twist last week when two women campers were beaten up by silent assailants. As a result, one of the women has been in hospital for several days with broken ribs. Both women believe their attackers were American soldiers from the Greenham base who remained silent to avoid detection.

withdrawal from NATO.

Not content with resolution-mongering though, the meeting instructed the LCND committee to win a higher profile in the party by ensuring that all constituencies are bombarded with the CND case and become ac-

tively identified with it.

The annual meeting gave Labour CND a good start for 1985. It's up to every unilateralist in the Labour Party to make sure that enthusiasm is turned into new campaigns and new policies in the year to come.

Support the Newham 7

JUST over a year after their arrest, a national demonstration is being called to support the Newham 7.

The march is part of a build up towards their trial which begins at the Old Bailey on 13 May. The defence campaign explains the background to the case: 'The charges against the Newham 7 are a major attack on black people. By ignoring the offences of those carrying out racist attacks while criminalising those defending themselves from such attacks by using conspiracy charges, the state is challenging the right of black people to defend themselves against racist violence.'

'The challenge has to be met head on, by rallying to the defence of the Newham 7 on the widest possible basis,' says the defence campaign. 'The fight of the Newham 7 is everyone's fight. The Labour movement and wider community must stand by them at this critical time.'

'It must be shown, that not one single racist attack will be tolerated and that the black community will defend itself.'

● Assemble 1pm, Saturday 27 April, at Plashet Park, Plashet Grove, London E6 (nearest tube is East Ham).

Pulling the Lambeth Trigger

WITH MORE homeless people in Lambeth than in any other London borough, with 3500 council properties unfit for habitation and a further 5500 homes in a poor state of repair, the scale of Lambeth's problems before rate-capping can easily be imagined. Since 1979, £113 million has been lost from government support. Rate-cap plans would mean cuts of £15 million this year.

The loss of services and probable 1500 redundancies are unacceptable. But how to stop them?

Council workers have been getting ready to fight. But up to now the focus has centred on the council chamber. Whilst other Labour groups with bigger majorities have crumbled, Lambeth with a majority of only four has managed to stay secure.

This has been done by a softly-softly approach that has convinced councillors that they have yet to commit any illegal acts which could lead to surcharge.

This stage is now at an end. The next council meeting on 15 May will be faced with openly illegal choices.

Two councillors have declared that they will not break the law, so the Lambeth parties are now calling on them to resign honourably or face the consequences. Even if they refuse to go, the Labour group still expects to be able to avoid setting a rate.

The approach of the Labour group has had unfortunate demobilising effects, especially as the government is obviously prepared to manipulate the money market to allow councils to borrow money

and thereby carry on without a rate. If 7 March was not the crunch when will it come?

Lambeth leader Ted Knight now reckons to be able to run the council at least until the end of May if not longer. But that is dependent on a number of choices being made.

Greg Tucker, Chair of the Lambeth Local Government Committee

Does the council pay its precept to the police and GLC? What about interest repayments? Defaulting would not only leave some councillors open to prosecution but would mean the 'crunch' had come.

A debate on these sorts of questions will be part of a borough conference of all Labour Party members this coming Sunday. As the fight in the council chamber ceases to be the focus, the spotlight is moving to the council workers.

Any decision taken by the Labour Party must be based on one simple consideration: what tactic best prepares the ground for the council workers to take action and gives the best possibility of rallying

public support behind them?

The question of precept and interest payments is not one of principle but one of tactics to be decided in conjunction with the council trade unions. From the party point of view it must not be separated from discussion of how we go out and campaign for our policies amongst the people of Lambeth.

Linking

Having spent six months out on the streets linking rate-capping with the miners we know we have the support of local people. Inside the council workforce a campaign of workplace meetings, leafletting, etc has prepared union members. But we cannot keep holding back week by week.

We have to be prepared to go into action. We need to work out a financial strategy which brings matters to a head quickly while still pinning the blame fairly and squarely on the government's refusal to give councils back their stolen rate support grant.

When that happens only all-out strike action from council workers will be sufficient. The talk of limited occupations which has come from some quarters must be rejected.

But council workers will only have the confidence to take action if

they are convinced that people are behind them. That now must be the role of the Labour Party — mobilizing support on their behalf.

Duties

The party has three duties. First to ensure that councillors present a clear united opposition to the government whatever the risks. Then to mobilise the community explaining the issues. And thirdly to be clearly standing in unity with the council workers.

In Lambeth the next opportunity to put that into practice will be 15 May, the next meeting of the Council. Unions and Labour Parties are organising a mass rally to show their feelings.

Beyond NATO A CND Dayschool

Polytechnic of Central London
10am till 5pm
Saturday 18 May

Registration £4 (£1 unwaged)
please register by 8 May by contacting: NATO
Dayschool, 11 Goodwin Street, London N4

speakers:
Ben Lowe ● Mary Kaldor ● Diana
Johnston ● Gunter Minnerup ● Paul
Eakins ● Bruce Kent

Scottish rail workers strike for jobs

LAST WEDNESDAY the Scottish rail network was closed down completely for 24 hours. This was part of the campaign which has been going on for the last 18 months to save over 1200 jobs at the Glasgow Springburn British Rail Engineering Works. Five days before, the NUR NEC had responded to repeated calls from NUR branches in the West of Scotland and declared the day of action official, instructing its 13,000 Scottish members to take strike action.

The West of Scotland NUR district council had already indicated its intention to proceed with strike action in support of the workshops, whatever the outcome of the executive decision, and much ground work had been done amongst the membership. The decision to make the strike official was welcomed and pickets were rapidly organised for all depots around Scotland.

Ray Buckton instructed Scottish ASLEF members not to cross official picket lines and the majority of ASLEF members did not go into work that day. It was argued by many railworkers that ASLEF should have also called for official action. The Transport and Salaried Staffs Association was, however, another story, and their members cut themselves off from this fight to save jobs in the rail industry, by crossing

picket lines.

British Rail have already indicated their intention to run down the BREL workshops at Springburn employing over 2000 people. This would have a disastrous effect on the surrounding area where unemployment is already very high and places other aspects of the rail industry in Scotland at risk.

By Ann Henderson, NUR, (personal capacity)

Already the maintenance of a number of the Scottish line locomotives has been transferred to Crewe, although the skills and facilities for this work exist at Springburn. NUR members have been particularly worried by the recent BR announcement that they are seeking tenders abroad for the new 'splinter train' rather than investing in jobs and production in Scotland.

Work has been done to involve the community and broader labour movement in this campaign. The Scottish Labour Party has already declared its support as have the district council and Trades Council in Glasgow. The Scottish TUC meeting last week in Inverness gave its unanimous backing.

Battle

The overwhelming support that came from the NUR membership for the strike showed that there would indeed be a battle, using industrial action and not relying on lobbying and petitioning alone. Clearly, as pickets in Glasgow on 17 April explained, the fight to save Springburn works is part of a much broader fight to save and develop the rail network.

Despite attempts to cover up the lack of investment through marketing promotions, with the new 'Scot Rail' image and endless 'customer care' courses, the reality is that the network is being progressively run down. We should remember that one option of the Serpell report proposed no trains north of Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Threats to jobs still hang over many railworkers in Scotland following the miners' strike and negotiations continue for the return of the Ravenscraig coal delivery from road to rail.

On 17 April morale was high in the West of Scotland. Given the recent defeat on pay with the NUR executive accepting 4.8 per cent the strike showed that a high level of union organisation and opposition to the Tories remains. As one NUR divisional officer said: 'The response to the strike call was nothing short of magnificent'. There will be a recall West of Scotland NUR meeting to discuss further action. Discussions will also continue with ASLEF through the rail federation.

Call

The threat of legal action by the BR Board to regain the money lost during the strike did not deter Scottish members of NUR. British Rail should respond to the call from the NUR to discuss an alternative strategy for jobs for the West of Scotland, rather than using their resources to research into legal actions and their costs.

Socialist Action Fund Drive

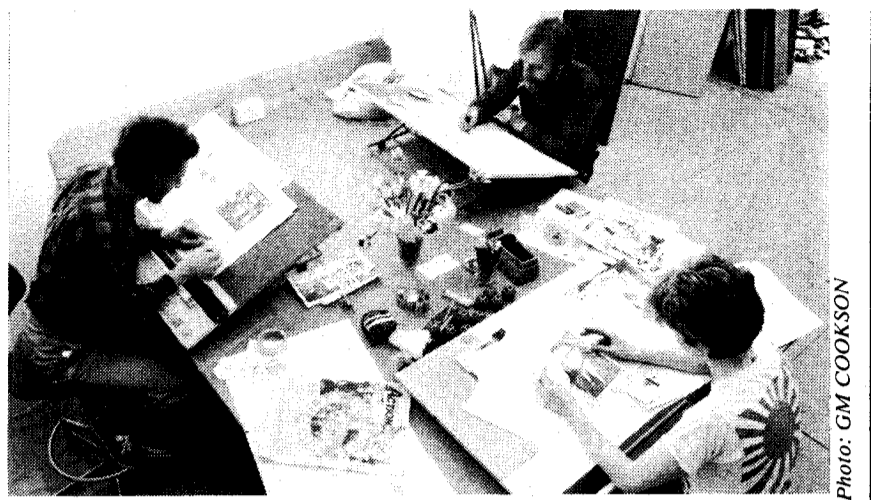


Photo: GM COOKSON



Get the money rolling in

THE FINISHING touches are being made to our new premises. After weeks of work building new offices and rooms for our print shop, we can now see the results. And there is no doubt that your money has been spent wisely and well.

With its new design and typesetting rooms, and its own purpose-built dark rooms, along with the big investment we are making into new equipment, our print shop is already attracting new customers. We are now poised to make a big leap forward in efficiency and in providing a better service for our readers and our customers.

To take full advantage of this new breakthrough means we must raise our fund drive target and if possible go over the top. Below we list what our supporters' and readers' groups have sent in already. Make sure that your area at least reaches its quota, or better still follows South West London's example and surpasses it!

We have also received £24,000 in individual donations. That gives us a grand total of £27,195. Now make sure we close that gap and raise that vital £5,975!

Area	Raised £	Target £
Aberdeen	115	180
Bath	0	40
Birmingham	200	500
Bristol	85	160
Brent	50	650
Camden	150	320
Cardiff	0	300
Coventry	100	100
Ealing	200	240
East London	300	1100
Glasgow	15	280
Haringey	70	200
Huddersfield	35	200
Islington	280	560
Leamington	0	180
Leicester	25	340
Liverpool	0	80
Liverpool	65	80
Manchester and Oldham	60	1000
Middlesboro	0	40
Nottingham	100	280
Newport	0	180
Oxford	0	40
Preston	0	160
Sheffield	0	420
Southampton	80	60
SE London	150	500
SW London	800	600
Swansea	0	300
York	0	40
Dundee	0	40
TOTAL	3195	9170



Photo: JOHN HARRIS

LRT bosses go for blood

DURING THE COURSE of last week the management of London Underground Limited (LUL) made the first move to impose the next stage of one person operation (OPO). This is being done at New Cross depot on the East London line without agreement with the unions, who have been arguing for job-sharing with no loss of pay to save jobs and protect operators from the massively increased stress and strain of OPO.

In addition, management completely bypassed the highly structured negotiating machinery inherited from LT which is composed of sectional councils on which management and staff representatives have operated in the classic Whitley Council manner since the 1930s. Consensus, supplemented by the occasional tussle fought strictly according to Queensberry rules, is being rapidly replaced with ruthless no-holds-barred confrontation.

It is clear that Tory

transport minister Nicholas Ridley expects his new team to earn their recent massive pay increase. Directors have received rises between 10.5 and 77 per cent over the sums earned by their GLC-appointed predecessors. Although management have made their intentions clear the implementation process could take at least another three weeks to complete.

The NUR national executive have responded rapidly by instructing its members not to cooperate

with any moves to implement OPO until such time as agreement may be reached with the unions. In addition it has stated that any further moves from management will result in the immediate issuing of a strike instruction to all NUR's 15,000 members on LUL.

By Patrick Sikorski, NUR

The position was reported to a well-attended and angry meeting of the traincrews at the New Cross Depot which finds itself in the front line of plans to slash 6000 underground jobs in the next three years. During the meeting a vital message of solidarity was telephoned through from a meeting of LUL signal operators who voted unanimously to

support any strike call over the issue of OPO and defence of jobs.

LUL management made their move at this time not only because they fully intend to force the issue to a strike if necessary but also to test the strength and resolve of the unions in advance of pay talks being held this week.

Threats

Management have threatened a nil wage increase plus the withdrawal of a 7½ per cent productivity bonus being paid at the moment to LUL workers in the train grades line of promotion as a result of a limited introduction of OPO last autumn. Of course they

could dangle the 4.95 per cent given to BR — as long as there is total co-operation on all productivity.

However many of their ranks have a diametrically opposed line. A crucial meeting of the Federation of Rail Unions takes place this week following the pay talks.

In their recent communication with the unions convening the talks they explicitly included reference to 'major items of productivity'. But outside of a total capitulation by the NUR there is little chance of such co-operation.

Unfortunately it is now clear that the head office and executive committee of ASLEF are no longer opposing the introduction of OPO in any way.

But even an ASLEF leadership still deeply traumatised by the 1982 defeat must be aware of the rapid development of fully automatically controlled trains — FACT — which will be introduced on the Central line within the next seven years. As one local union poster says 'The FACT is that no-one's job is safe'.

Whatever the problems a fight must be waged this year. Next year we will be thousands of jobs weaker and the workforce that much more demoralised.

A Socialist ACTION

Apartheid and morality

Anti Apartheid Calls National Demonstration

The Anti Apartheid Movement's national committee has decided on a programme of action, ending in a National Demonstration on Sunday 16 June. The theme will be an end to the police killings and a demand for the British government to act against the apartheid regime.

Labour Party

Ireland discussion blocked

LABOUR PARTY national agent David Hughes has moved quickly to prevent the implementation of a resolution on Ireland passed by London Labour Party annual meeting. The resolution simply calls for 'open and wide-ranging debate and discussion throughout the labour movement on the matter of British withdrawal'.

It goes further, saying the basis for discussion should be Tony Benn's Withdrawal Bill, published last summer. As part of the debate it proposes Labour hold public meetings with, among others, women and Irish speakers.

Hornsey and Wood Green women's section and Haynes and Harlington constituency, who moved the composite, have made it clear they want to see the involvement of all Irish nationalist and Republican opinion, including the SDLP, Sinn Fein and the Republic's Labour Party.

Irish people living in London, particularly organisations like the Irish in Britain Representation Group and the London Irish Women's Centre will be involved.

David Hughes' response is a disgrace. There

is now mounting evidence of the disinformation and misinformation that exists on Ireland. The London Labour movement is being bureaucratically prevented from having any open debate on this issue.

Policy

This is nothing but a witch-hunt which Hughes is seeking NEC confirmation for. Open discussion on withdrawal is well within Labour Party policy and Labour spokespeople on Ireland, including Peter Archer, have said they are prepared to meet all elected Irish representatives.

The argument against formulating policy at variance with national policy doesn't stand up

either — London Labour Party has got a very different policy on rate-capping for a start!

Hughes' letter to George Page, London Labour Party secretary, instructs him not to implement the resolution passed and says Hughes is seeking an NEC decision 'preventing your council complying with the resolution.'

All those concerned with opening a debate on the question of Ireland and fighting the bureaucratic moves to stop it should support the following resolution as a matter of urgency:

'This body calls on the London EC to implement Composite O in line with standing democratic procedure. As the paid officers have been told not to implement it, we call on the elected members to implement the resolution themselves and that all necessary facilities be made available to enable them to do this.'

THE ANNOUNCEMENT by the South African government that it was proposing to scrap the Mixed Marriages Act, which made inter-racial marriages invalid, and the Immorality Act, which made sexual relations across the race barriers a criminal act, will do little to appease the civil unrest which is still ravaging the Eastern Cape townships.

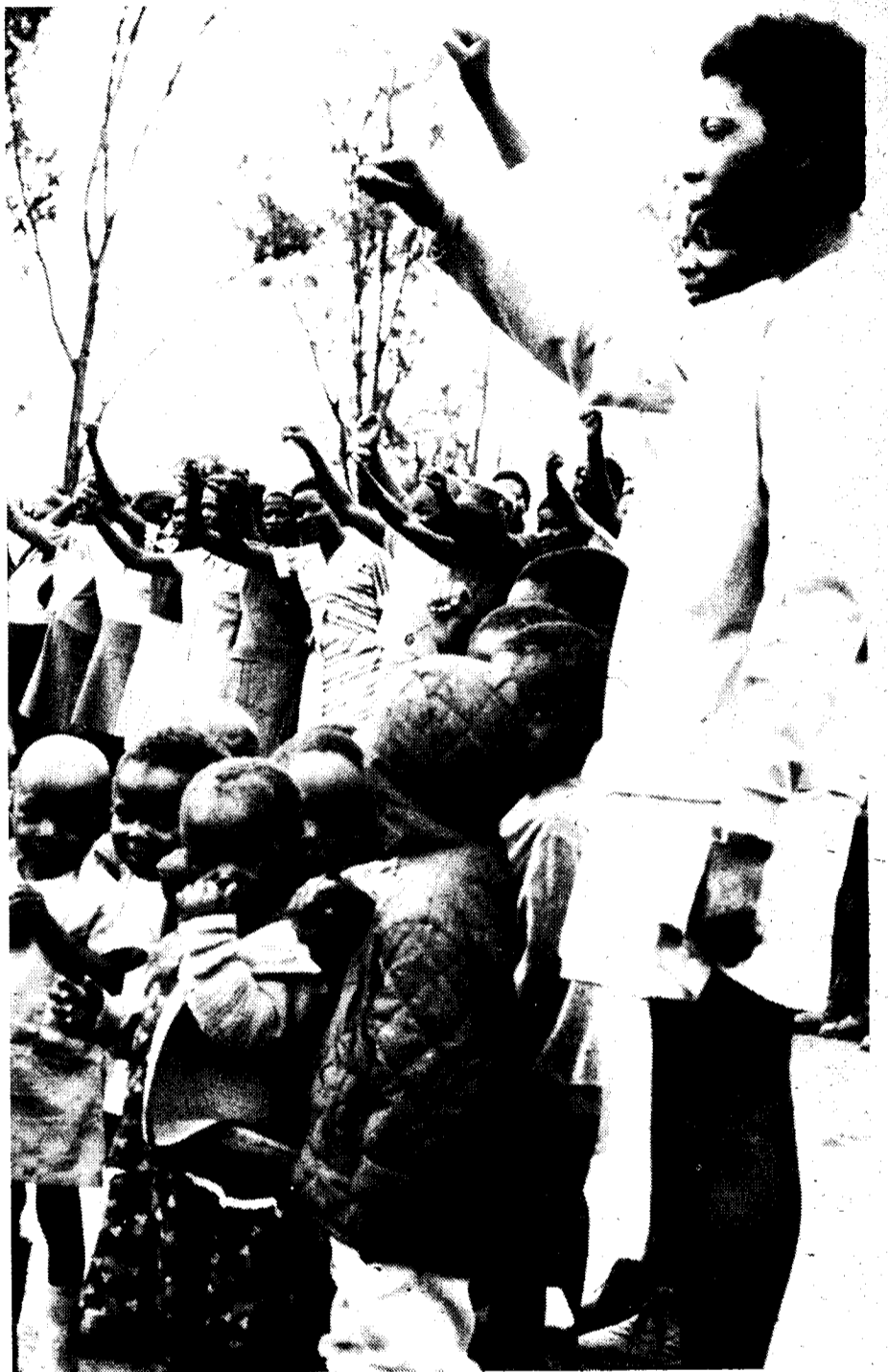
Although between 1974 and 1982, 1916 people were prosecuted and 1586 convicted under these racist acts, this legislation did not touch the lives of millions of black people living in the townships and 'homelands'. Through its policy of residential segregation of the officially-designated ethnic groups, there was little social contact between the great mass of the black and white populations.

Middle Class

What comfort the withdrawal of the legislation will bring will mainly affect the small, but increasingly politically significant, middle class which the government is trying to woo to its side. Even when their marriages and liaisons will no longer lead to police harassment or prosecution, the 'mixed' couples will still find themselves confronted by racist obstacles to any relationship.

By Charlie van Gelderen

The *Survey of Race Relations in South Africa* for 1983, reports that in the whole of South Africa there were only 74 hotels and 34 restaurants with 'international' status which permits them to admit people of different races. Fifteen applications for multiracial cinemas were received by the Department of Community Development; 11 were successful, and four were not. In April 1982 there was an outcry because Sir Richard Attenborough's film *Gandhi* was to be premiered in South Africa in front of segregated audiences.



Life in Soweto

South Africa because blacks could not use pools set aside for whites. These, of course, comprise at least 90 per cent of pools in South Africa.

The newly-wed couples would also find it difficult to plan a seaside holiday together because many beaches are still designated for 'whites only', 'blacks only', 'coloureds only', 'Indian only'. The same

applies to camping. Above all they would have the problem of where to live. Under the racist laws, blacks are not allowed to live in areas designated as 'white', 'coloured' or 'Indian' — and there is no proposal to do away with these laws which are the very cornerstone of apartheid. This will also affect the schools which their

children may attend. Quite clearly, this is not a major step toward the dismantling of the whole pernicious system, but simply another exercise in cosmetic change to appease world opinion. Apartheid itself is the real immorality, and this will not end until the whole system is brought down by the resistance of the people.

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