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150 MINERS ARE IN JAIL



THE MINERS' strike has been over for a month. But the labour movement is still rattling on the miners.

150 miners are in jail — some of them with five year sentences stretching out ahead of them — and the official labour movement is doing little or nothing about it.

Some of them are in jail because they were outstanding

By Jackie Cleary

working-class fighters who stood up to the police, or acted vigorously to stop scabs or scab lorries. Five Kent miners were jailed last week for three years because they tried to set fire to scab lorries carrying strike-breaking coal. Other miners have received similar sentences for trying to immobilise scab coaches.

Others are in jail because they

were unlucky enough to get caught in the net when the police were trying to fill the arrest quota for that day.

All of them have one thing in common — they are class-war prisoners. All of them and every one of them — those done for belting coppers on the picket line, and also those who burned scab trucks and did other illegal things necessary in the strike —

are class war prisoners.

They are in jail because this time round we were not strong enough to beat the Tories. They are victims of ruling-class vindictiveness and thirst for vengeance. They are being made an object-lesson by a triumphant Tory government.

When the patriotic Mrs Thatcher crowed her triumph in Malaysia last week, she truly expressed the feelings of the

Five more
jailed last
week

Hundreds
still await
trial

900 miners
sacked

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300 dead in S.Africa

BLOODY clashes between police and black protesters are now taking place practically every day in South Africa.

Some 300 blacks have been killed in battles and police attacks since last September.

The spiral of conflict began with the elections, at the end of August, to the new assemblies for Coloureds and Indians. The objective of the white-supremacist regime in organising these elections was to nudge the apartheid system into minor reforms that would make it more flexible and stable. In fact the great majority of the Coloureds and Indians — let alone the blacks — saw the new assemblies as an insult: the elections were massively boycotted.

Since then civil rights issues have intertwined with economic issues. The first big violent clashes were on September 3, during protests against rent rises in black townships. Many of the occasions on which police have opened fire since then have been at funerals of victims of previous repression.

On September 17 black gold miners struck — legally, for the first time. But hun-



dreeds of miners were wounded when police attacked strike meetings.

On November 6-7 there was a 48 hour general strike in Transvaal against rises in rents and electricity and water charges. The police followed up by arresting South Africa's leading black trade union leaders.

School students have also been campaigning against corporal punishment and for

school books to be provided free.

Since 1973 a mass black trade union movement has developed in South Africa. The outcome of the present struggle depends on whether this workers' movement is able to develop politically to tie the various issues together into a coherent strategy for the overthrow of apartheid and of capitalism.

Sudan coup pre-empt popular uprising

THE coup in Sudan last Saturday, April 6, appears to have been a pre-emptive move in face of a genuine popular uprising.

Riots by students and the urban poor started the movement. Then middle-class professional associations organised massive demonstrations.

On Wednesday April 3, a general strike began initiated by doctors, teachers, engineers, etc., but also joined by railworkers and other manual workers.

President Numeiry was due to return from a trip to the United States, and his arrival back in Sudan could have been the signal for further militancy. So the army stepped in.

Numeiry has remained in Egypt — and sent a message to the leader of the coup, his own appointee as chief of the armed forces, wishing him well.

People rejoiced at the coup. According to Ed Hooper in the Guardian, "Within minutes, the streets at the centre of Khartoum were thronged with tens of thousands of celebrating civilians... (Some) marched to the notorious Kober prison to applaud as the gates were opened and 2,000 prisoners and political detainees freed."

But the general strike continued. The military have now got it called off by a

combination of threats and promises of civilian participation in the new government.

Two factors fuelled the movement: economic pressure, including recent price rises introduced on IMF instructions, and Numeiry's ferocious imposition of Islamic law.

Sudan is only half a Muslim, Arab country. The southern part of Sudan is black-African and predominantly Christian or animist. Bad relations between the two parts of the country go back a long time: the Arabs of the north used to trade slaves from the south.

Conflicts after independence in 1956 (Sudan had previously been under Egyp-

uan, and then Anglo-Egyptian rule) subsided after the southern provinces were granted autonomy in 1972. But they have recently revived: a full-scale guerrilla war has been raging in the south.

Sudan is also terribly poor. 20 million people live in an area as big as the whole of Western Europe less Scandinavia, most of which is barren. Oilfields have recently been developed in the south, but as yet without much effect on Sudanese society as a whole.

Illiteracy is 74%; life expectancy is 47 years.

With the current drought, about four million people face starvation and — according to aid workers — 250,000 could die. Sudan's problems are even worse than those of other drought-hit African countries because of a big influx of refugees from Ethiopia.

Anti-racist strikes

ON Tuesday March 26 a number of French factories held stoppages or mass meetings to protest against racist violence.

According to the French socialist weekly Lutte Ouvriere, there was action at Alstom, St-Ouen, Chausson, Criel, and Citroen, Aulnay.

On the same day students in many high schools also organised meetings or demonstrations. The initiative came from an organisation called 'SOS-racism', which is promoting a badge with the

slogan 'Touche pas a mon pote' — 'Don't touch my pal'.

The March 26 protests were sparked by the murder of a young Moroccan by two whites who blandly told the police that they 'didn't like Arabs'. On the following weekend, March 30-31, there were new racist atrocities: a North African youth was shot dead in Marseilles, and a Paris cinema showing a festival of Jewish films was bombed.

The anti-racist movement responded with large demonstrations in Paris.

Conditions for the fascist National Front to grow have been created by the Socialist Party government's helpless attempts to 'manage' the capitalist crisis, and by the immigration policy of both the Socialist Party and the Communist Party (both oppose new immigration, and the government, while the CP was still in it, introduced measures to make it easier to deport immigrants from France).

But now the French labour movement seems to be rallying its forces.

150 miners in

Continued from p.1

ruling class towards the workers they have beaten.

By contrast the official labour movement stands passive and mute, as though it were a thing without feeling, loyalties or minimal awareness of its own interests and responsibilities.

Up to 2000 miners still await trial, and many of them will go to jail unless there is a tremendous outcry against the class 'justice' now being dished out by the ruling class's law courts and judges.

These courts are not today in the business of rendering impartial justice to the defeated

miners. They are putting the legal stamp on the ruling class's mopping-up operations against militant miners — operations designed to intimidate other militants.

The courts give judgment and sentence on the basis of police evidence that miners broke laws which in the circumstances forbade them to stand up to the violence of scab-herding cops.

Much precise police evidence will simply be lies — but it should not matter to us if the police are telling the truth. The five Kent miners pleaded guilty to attempted arson — but they are still class-war prison-

ers, not criminals.

Many miners did break the law. They were a hundred times right to do so. The miners' strike was naked class war. The ruling class is now pursuing that war by other — legal — means in the law courts.

The labour movement too must continue to pursue that class war by way of a vigorous political campaign for the release of the jailed miners.

The hundreds of miners still to be tried will not only face jail or heavy fines: if convicted, they will also be sacked. Even many charged but acquitted are at risk of being sacked. Nearly a thou-

No to company unionism!

By John Bloxam

THE Coal Board and their Tory masters want to develop company unionism and break up the NUM.

The NCB have already given qualified recognition to the newly-formed Colliery Trade and Allied Workers' Association in Durham.

The new scab union numbers probably few more than 1,000, and they are mainly pit-top men. But it can easily be seen as a front-runner to much more substantial forces. Already "the association has had close contacts with the Nottinghamshire area". (Financial Times).

For the moment, the Notts Area — together with the other elements in the so-called 'democratic section' (Leicestershire, South Derbyshire and COSA) — is staying within the formal framework of the NUM. But if they openly break away they will get full support from the NCB, who want to build up Notts as a permanent scab coalfield.

30 started

Last week, the NCB started to move significant numbers of leading scabs from other coalfields into Notts. In Bevercotes, over 30 were started. Some were from Scotland, but most were from Yorkshire including the scab who was shown on TV during the strike threatening pickets with his shotgun. Council houses in the Ollerton area are being kept open for more 'transferees'.

Albert Wheeler — the notorious Scottish Area director — will be moved to become the new area director for the combined Notts Area.

The moving-in of the scabs and of Wheeler has probably been done in close consultation with the scab leadership of the Notts Area of the NUM. And in the pits Roy Lynk and the other scab

leaders are doing pretty much management's bidding.

In January alone, the Area Council minutes record a staggering £27,127 spent in legal costs (not including compensation cases, which are paid for by the national union). Most of this must have gone into legal actions against the NUM.

Last Tuesday the scabs got the thumbs up from the judges again, when Justice Mann ruled in the High Court that they had a right to sack area secretary Henry Richardson.

Richardson summed up the situation immediately after the case. "How can these people say they are not organising a breakaway union when they are breaking with every national decision?" Lynk's organisation is also victimising Notts miners who stood behind the NUM and the strike.

Few ex-strikers doubt the target of a recent circular threatening disciplinary action against those who 'disrupt' branch meetings. Already one ex-striker at Bevercotes pit has been summoned to appear before the scab branch committee under the rule outlawing 'abuse and vilification' of branch officials and committee members.

The scabs have also demanded that strikers pay back 50p a week union dues for every week they were out (after the first eight) on pain of being deemed 'unfinancial' and barred from the union.

In most pits the deadline for payment is this week, and in one case already scab

officials have demanded payment in cash! For those who have been on strike the whole time, the lump sum demanded is £21.50.

When challenged on the constitutional basis of this move, committee members at Bevercotes admitted that the rule being used didn't fit, but as the strike had been ruled unofficial by the courts the strikers had to pay. And if they didn't like it they could always appeal — to the Area Council and Roy Lynk!

Fine

All those who loyally supported the strike rightly see this as a fine from the scabs. In three South Notts pits, meetings of ex-strikers have decided on principle that they won't pay it. The majority, however, are paying it — so that they can fight Lynk and the other scab leaders. The scabs will have to face their challenge in the forthcoming June elections.

The only principle involved is how best to defeat the breakaway and the company union, and those who argue that the money has to be paid so the fight can be carried on immediately are right. It gives them more time to continue organising amongst many of the rank and file strike-breakers, breaking them away from the company union people, and maximising the number who will stay with the NUM in the area.

The problem at the moment, however, is that this resistance has no clear lead.

Many of those who won't pay the money demanded by the scabs could be convinced if they could see how this related to a strategy for settling the score with Lynk.

Rightly concerned to avoid an organisational break-up of the NUM if at all possible, the national NUM lead-

AT OUR last Socialist Organiser delegate meeting on March 31, one major discussion was about miners' support committees after the strike.

We felt that the committees should continue, campaigning for the sacked and jailed miners.

Some activists have been talking about the committees continuing as general support committees for all workers' struggles — a sort of alternative labour movement. We thought this was unrealistic: but that overall assessment should not stop us encouraging committees to support specific struggles.

Some support committees, inevitably, are going to decline. If a committee becomes unviable, we should propose it is amalgamated into a Labour Party trade union liaison committee, a Trades Council campaign committee, or whatever is suitable locally.

The delegate meeting also stressed the importance of getting round to miners' support committee activists with the SO special 'Magnificent Miners', and discussing with them about their plans for political activity after the strike.

jail

and miners have already been sacked.

Nearly a thousand miners have already been sacked. The vote by the NUM against a 50p levy to support sacked miners registered in a terrible way the effect that defeat has had on the morale of the miners (though the NUM area leaderships, who did not campaign on the issue, bear a big part of the responsibility for that vote).

We could have hoped for better, but the result is not surprising in the circumstances. It means, however, that the sacked and jailed miners need

all the more support from the broader labour movement.

The Tories are now politically on the defensive. Many people who did not support the miners, or didn't do anything to help them, will deeply resent and detest Mrs Thatcher's howls of triumph in Malaysia.

The Tories' continuing legal vengeance against the defeated miners is beginning to look like a scaled-down version of what was done by the hanging Judge Jeffreys to the defeated country people after the Duke of Monmouth's rebellion — for which Jeffreys' name is still detested 300 years later.

They are sweeping through the coalfields picking out the militants, identifying the rebels and the hard fighters for legal retribution by the courts, and arbitrary retribution by the industrial dictators of the NCB, ag-

ainst whose decision to sack there is no effective appeal.

These rebel miners won't be hanged — but many hundreds of them, together with their families, will suffer the prolonged crucifixion of unemployment by decree of the NCB and the government.

Millions of people can be rallied to make an outraged protest at this way of doing things. The Labour Party should rally them.

The Campaign Group of left-wing MPs has launched a campaign for amnesty and reinstatement. The Labour Party national executive should throw its full weight behind it.

Neil Kinnock now sits pretty securely at the head of the Labour Party. Kinnock and his circle appeal for unity against the Tories. Let them do something to create unity in defence of the

miners!

Kinnock's behaviour during the miners' strike will for long stand as an indictment not only of Neil Kinnock himself but of the entire school of timid, hawking, cap-in-hand reformist politicians which he stands for and personifies. Kinnock will not be forgiven for that by militant miners, nor by many other workers. Since the end of the strike Kinnock has repeatedly said that he is against an amnesty for miners convicted of criminal offences.

The Labour Party national executive should demand that Kinnock and the Parliamentary Labour Party play their full part in a campaign for amnesty for all jailed miners, for an end to charges arising out of the miners' strike, and for the reinstatement of all sacked miners.



The fight goes on

'STARVED, BATTERED, DEFIANT: MAGNIFICENT MINERS'

The first full account and analysis of the miners' strike. 75p plus 22p postage from Socialist Organiser, 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY

Regroup!

By Paul Whetton, former secretary of the Notts miners' rank and file strike committee

THE DEPUTIES have behaved as predicted, and once again backed down.

They were quite aware of what was going off, so they can't claim that they were conned. They have been put to the test and again found to be wanting.

I personally don't believe that the NUM appearing reasonable and calling off the overtime ban is going to make the Coal Board alter its mind. The Coal Board will do just as they see fit. I think it's quite a mistake to lift the overtime ban.

There's very little that the NUM can do at the present time except regroup and try to plan out some sort of programme.

It's an unpleasant fact, but we have to reiterate it. We lost. Yes, there were quite a lot of important victories and notable successes, but at the end of the day we lost. And that puts the Coal Board firmly in the driving seat.

Implementing pit closures was obviously going to be the first step they would take once the strike came to an end.

The Coal Board are bringing in scabs to Notts from Yorkshire and Scotland. We're not yet aware of the full numbers, but there seem to be quite a few at my own particular pit.

The Coal Board is working hand in hand with Roy Lynk on this. Roy Lynk needs to protect himself — he's like one of the Roman Emperors, he needs to surround himself with body armour. And the Coal Board are providing it — these super-scabs.

I think Lynk is trying to get himself expelled from the NUM. He wants to be expelled, and have that give him a justification for setting up the breakaway union that he wants.

First there was the decision to change the Area rules. He wasn't expelled for that. Then there was the decision to lift the overtime ban. He didn't get expelled for that. Now he is openly twisting the knife in the backs of the strikers by fining them for

going on strike. And he's not going to get expelled for that.

But Lynk knows that within a certain length of time the striking miners are going to take control of the branches again. What exactly that time-scale is, nobody can tell. Lynk is going all out to try and protect himself by bringing in super-scabs.

I think Lynk has got to be expelled. I dare say that the tactics of when and how will be determined by either the national executive or annual conference. However much we in Notts desire the expulsion of Lynk, I don't think things are really going to come to a head until around the time of annual conference.

Women

I think it's important that we don't let the women's support groups fade away. Quite a lot of men during the strike made the point that had it not been for the women the strike could not have sustained the momentum that it had. It would be a disaster if we now said to women: 'Thank you very much, and now get back to your kitchen sinks.'

We've got to find some way of involving them in the battle. I'm not sure what form that ought to take, but it's vital that we keep the links.

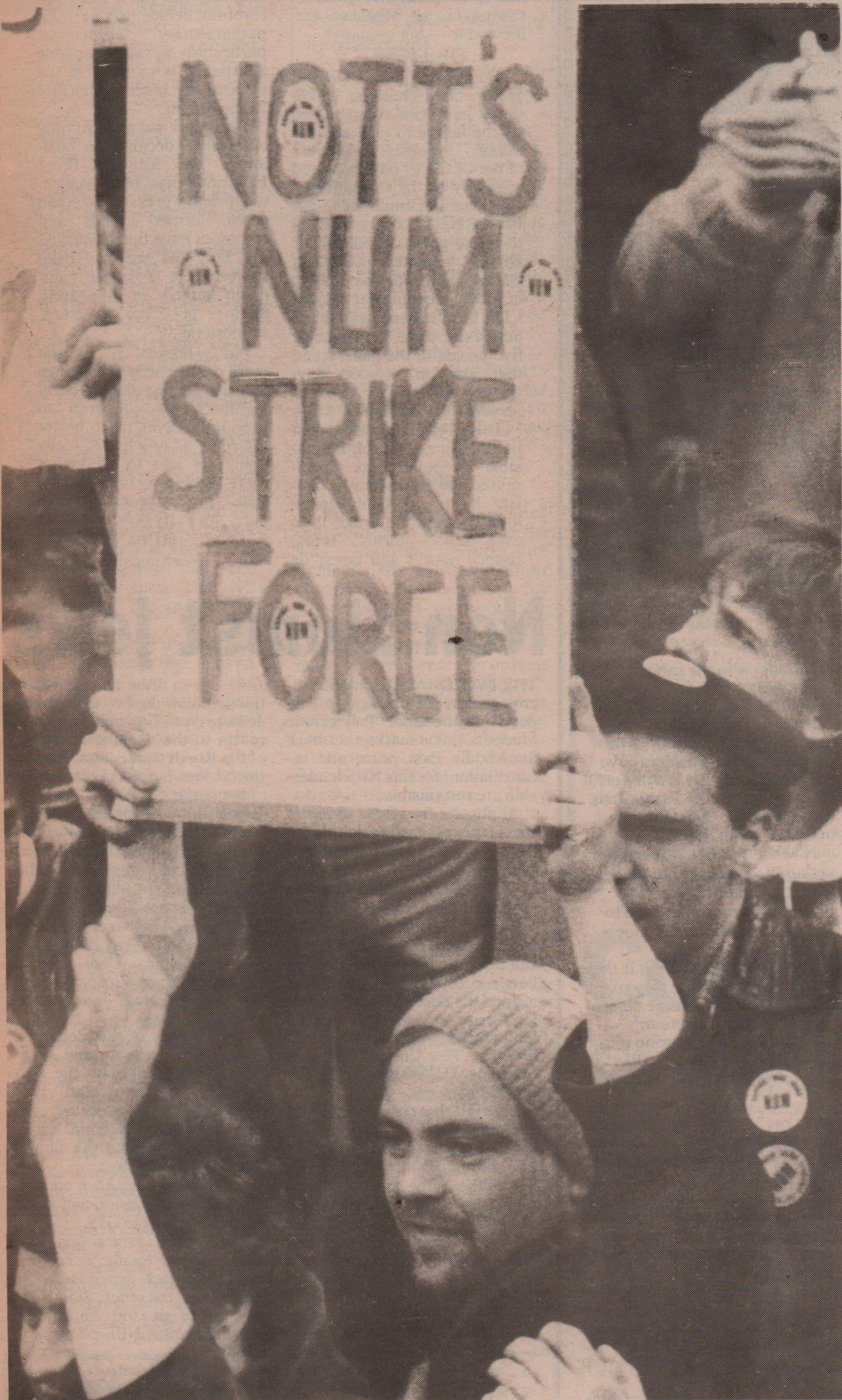
It's vital that the women have their own autonomy and their own decision-making, while also having some formal links with the NUM in order that we are not seen at odds over certain issues.

I think the new programme that Neil Kinnock has come out with shows that the Labour leadership is in reality a second eleven — that they will cooperate with the employers, the bosses, and the ruling classes, in maintaining the system.

Whenever this country is in crisis, the bosses let a Labour government sort things out and present an acceptable face of capitalism — and then as soon as things are back on an even keel they put the first eleven back in again.

Socialism is a complete change of the society in which we live. But the leadership of the TUC and the Labour Party don't want to substantially alter society.

John Harris, IFL



ership only started talking about expelling the Notts Area when it openly severed links with the national union last December. It threatened expulsion in January. But then the issue was quickly dropped, and various attempts were made to conciliate the scab leaders.

Most of the ex-strikers in Notts now believe that expulsion will probably never happen. Although the Yorkshire Area Council recently voted unanimously for a special delegate conference to expel Notts, there has been silence

on the issue at national level.

Last week, Arthur Scargill went to Durham and "urged the union's Durham Area to act with restraint on expulsions and avoid driving potentially good NUM members into the arms of the breakaway Colliery Trades and Allied Workers' Association." (Financial Times).

Clearly, only a fool would want to split the union. But the real issue is, can a split now be avoided? And if it can't, how to minimise the split and rebuild the national union? If we want to buy

time, then for what purpose? To expel the scab leaders in more favourable circumstances or because people believe it's possible to defeat them from within?

Certainly, the idea they can be kicked out by a 'peaceful revolution' within Notts is likely to gain ground. Election results since the end of the strike, where strikers have been gaining important victories and decisively defeating scabs even in areas where the overwhelming majority were strikebreaking, seems to back this up.

The Nottinghamshire area is not the same as most of the other coalfields. It has a hardened scab leadership, which has been openly organising a breakaway over many months, and has managed to polarise a section of the coalfield behind it.

They have already declared UDI. They have a tight control of the union machine and finances, and they have already purged almost everybody sympathetic to the strike from the union offices at Berry Hill. If their control was seriously threatened in elections, then they wouldn't retire gracefully. They would cut loose.

Hart

David Hart, one of the organisers of the 'working miners committees' during the strike and personal adviser to both Thatcher and MacGregor, spelled it out in a Times article in January entitled 'Nothing short of victory':

"Whatever happens to the strike, the NUM will continue to break up... (the working miners) want to destroy Scargill. Their dream is to so organise themselves and the other areas that the breakaway union will eventually reunite, embracing the entire NUM membership" (emphasis added).

For the present, it is convenient for the scab leaders to continue organising their company union by staying within the framework of the NUM, but entirely on their terms. They can use the time to consolidate their position and organise links with other areas, when they do go, they are planning to take a sizeable chunk of the NUM with them.

It is for the purpose of identifying, rallying and organising such forces that Lynk is standing against Mick McGahey for vice-president this year. It also gives them time to rally support in the Labour Party and among other unions.

Expulsion

The argument for taking decisive expulsion action against the scab leaders is to short-circuit this process — to stop giving them time to organise their breakaway, and to face the rank and file ex-strike-breakers with a sharp choice of either the NUM or a breakaway company union.

Once it is accepted that the scab leaders are intent on forming a breakaway union, and have already taken the decisive steps along that path, the issue is no longer whether a split can be avoided but how the damage can be minimised and the NUM reunited. In this situation, the issue of the timing of a move to cut out the breakaway is simply — when would give the NUM the best advantage?

Not racist?

CALLING someone "a dirty black bastard" is not racial abuse, according to an industrial tribunal.

The tribunal, hearing the case of BL Longbridge worker Zedekiah Mills, offered the wise comment that such expressions are "part of the general language used".

During the miners' strike, police and magistrates declared that shouting 'scab' was outside the limits of the law. Coal Board bosses have even threatened miners with the sack for 'glaring' at scabs. But somehow black people are supposed to put up with more than scabs...

Mills hit the foreman after he had insulted him, and was then sacked. Longbridge workers, less indifferent to racism than the tribunal, struck for two weeks to try to get Zedekiah Mills his job back, but failed.

Now the tribunal has turned down an 'unfair dismissal' claim.

to deport him. Contact: c/o 9 Lucy St, Manchester M15 4BX.

CIA?

While the 'Marxism Today' wing of the Communist Party is harking back to the '30s with "celebrations" of the Popular Front, the 'Morning Star' wing seems to be harking back in a different way.

A review by Vic Allen, in the Morning Star of March 28, of E.P. Thompson's latest book, reads like a revival of the line that Trotskyists were "agents of Hitler and the Mikado".

E.P. Thompson, of course, is not a Trotskyist. But he is hostile to the Kremlin rulers, and for Allen that is bad enough.

Rather obliquely, but unequivocally, he accuses Thompson of being an agent of the CIA and NATO!

Doesn't Thompson's long socialist record, and his campaigning for unilateral nuclear disarmament, make this accusation improbable? Not for Allen. He sees the devil's hoof in Thompson's "concern with where bourgeois liberalism has been destroyed, namely the Soviet Union".

Haiti

Haitian authorities single out potential opinion leaders for arbitrary arrest, torture and political killing, according to an Amnesty International report.

Journalists, opposition leaders and trade unionists are targeted by the secret police and President Jean-Claude Duvalier's militia, commonly known as the 'ton-ton macoutes' (bogeymen).

Most arrests and detentions take place outside any legal framework, without reference to courts, constitution or law, the report said.

Political prisoners are often held incommunicado for long periods, naked or almost naked, in damp, dark and dirty cells in the Casernes Dessalines, headquarters of the SD (Service detectif), the secret police. This barracks, near the presidential palace, is one of the biggest buildings in the capital, Port-au-Prince.

Victims include those who stand up for human rights as



well as people suspected of challenging government policy on other issues. For example, Gerard Duclerville, a lay preacher arrested in December 1982, apparently for his work with the poor, said he was beaten until he asked his torturers to kill him 'and get it over with'. Released after appeals from the Catholic Church in Haiti and other organisations, he is reported to have needed skin grafts and other hospital treatment as a result of the beatings.

Prisoners are killed and their bodies dumped in areas of Port-au-Prince known for a high crime rate.

Haiti has the firm backing of the US government.

Rates

On Thursday March 28 the doors of the Trade Union Centre in Glasgow were locked and posters stuck up in its windows announcing that it was closed until further notice.

The Centre had just received its rates bill for the next financial year and was unable to pay it.

To be sure, the likes of Edinburgh District Labour Group leader Alex Wood will continue to argue that rate rises represent a socialist redistribution of wealth. But he won't be able to argue that case in the Glasgow Trade Union Centre in the foreseeable future.

Spectre no more

CURIUS — this business of Militant's alleged internal documents which Neil Kinnock's supporters in the Labour Coordinating Committee have leaked to the press, producing headlines about the tendency's decline, financial problems, etc. Presumably these are the headlines they wanted to produce, signalling that the 'Militant threat' is over.

Not long ago Militant was the great big bogeyman, and served both the Kinnockites and the press as a scarecrow against the Left. Now the Kinnockites are trying to tell us that Militant is dissolving and crumbling like Dracula when Peter Cushing pulls the blinds back to let the wholesome sunlight get at him.

The truth, of course, is that Militant's alleged predominance in the Left was never anything else but black propaganda by the witch-hunting press and Labour's right wing.

Militant was quite sizeable, distinctive, its supporters identifiable by their uniform language and hand gestures. It could be branded as weird and peculiar. But Militant was just the easy target, not the real one.

The mainstream Labour left was the target. Militant was never central to that Left — or to the struggle over democratisation and accountability. More than once its antics brought it into conflict with the Left.



Ted Grant, no longer a bogeyman

Militant is in the Labour Party, but rarely of it. Far from being the organiser at the hard core of the Left, Militant has kept very aloof, tending its own garden. Labour's leaders gave the hostile Tory press a powerful weapon against the Party when they forced the 'Militant' mask onto the face of the Left.

Now the broader Left is differentiating, some making peace with the Establishment. The Kinnockites no longer need to pretend that Militant is a big threat.

The good thing about it is that it seems to mean that they rule out going for a big purge before the next general election: instead they are conjuring the 'Militant threat' away — like they conjured it into existence.

Lynk

Mary Hallam, of Edwinstowe, Notts, wrote this after seeing the scab Notts NUM area secretary Roy Lynk on TV:

Roy Lynk — the weak link in the NUM movement? On the other hand, you could look on him as a shepherd, leading his flock of scabby sheep to the slaughter.

He won't go with them himself. He'll send Prendergast the dog, then pension him off with a few bones.

Lynk will get a good price for his sheep, Maggie and MacGregor will see to that. After all, he's doing their job for them.

We have dogs of our own and were teaching them to bite to sever the weak Lynk. They're called strikers!

Roy Lynk will go down in history as the biggest traitor the working class has ever known. He ought to be taken out and shot. I personally would like to pull the trigger.

Chile

PEDRO Galleguillos is a 24 year old Chilean who has been living in Manchester for the past 2½ years. Told that he was to be deported in November 1984, he has been held in Strangeways Prison, Manchester, ever since.

Chile is a vicious anti-working-class dictatorship which has no respect for human rights. The present regime took power in 1973 by way of a brutal military coup against a left-wing government. Many tens of thousands of workers were butchered.

At the United Nations, the British government recently voted to condemn Chile's violations of human rights. However, the Home Office has no reservations about sending Pedro back to Chile.

Some Chileans who have returned from exile have been assassinated by the regime. Pedro could face torture or death if he is sent back.

He intends to marry a Chilean exile resident in Britain for 10 years, who faces similar difficulties in returning home. But Pedro's appeal has now been rejected.

The Pedro Galleguillos Defence Campaign has been set up to mobilise public opinion for his immediate release from prison, and to oppose Home Office attempts



The future Lord Redken?

A classic

"It was a classic Labour Party position: we did not think it through". Thus Ken Livingstone, as quoted in the 'New Statesman' of March 29, blithely explains the GLC's renegeing from its 'fix-no-rate' policy.

"We contented ourselves with slogans and then reacted to events".

It's true, of course. The 'fix-no-rate' line was a classic: sufficient hint of a fight to maintain credibility with the activists, sufficient escape routes to capitulation to bring the centre-right in behind it.

Against left-wingers who demanded more definite plans for struggle, it was defended by equally classic ploys: an appeal for 'unity', and the claim that it would be bad policy to fix our tactics in advance.

Now, when it comes to the crunch, many politicians are suddenly discovering all the difficulties, and retreating, reading us lectures about the follies of left-wing sloganising!

A classic Labour Party position. But then Ken Livingstone was one of the main people promoting it. What does that make him? A classic Labour Party politician?

Letters

Challenging Ken

THE DECISION by the Greater London Council to join Labour's ranks of shame by surrendering to Patrick Jenkin's rate-capping demands must be the final blow for many of their dwindling band of supporters in London. With a few honourable exceptions, the councillors have broken almost all their manifesto commitments.

The whole sorry business once again calls into question the Labour Party's methods of selection and accountability. Why were so many right-wingers chosen to stand in the first place? Why have most of the so-called Left turned out to be plausible, smooth-talking fakes? Mistakes are inevitable — but so many?

Observers

This lack of perception and judgment in choosing candidates has been compounded by the failure to take accountability seriously. Members of the GLC may have reported regularly to their constituency General Committees, but how often did observers from the local party attend Labour Group meetings? Having been to quite a few as observer for Westminster South CLP, I can honestly say that I never saw more than four or five people in the gallery and that was on a good day; usually only one or two observers were present.

This wretched episode must be the final end of Livingstone's reputation as a committed and trustworthy socialist. It has certainly taken long enough. He broke faith over school meals, rents, council houses and fares; he

sabotaged the 'can't pay, won't pay' campaign before it could get off the ground; claiming to be a republican he grovelled and slobbered before the queen at the opening of the Thames Barrier.

At group meetings he hurled abuse and charges of left-wing careerism at anyone who opposed or criticised him. Now he has surrendered over rate-capping but has, apparently, no intention of leaving office. To be defeated is one thing; to cling abjectly to the leadership to carry out Tory cuts is another.

I only hope that the comrades in Brent East are drawing the right conclusions from all this and will think long and carefully before making their parliamentary selection, particularly as an acceptable alternative is to hand in the person of black councillor Diane Abbott.

Diane has had a tough time of it since deciding to challenge 'Red Ken' in Brent East. She has been subjected to heavy pressure to stand down, former friends and comrades have fiercely criticised her, and she has been subjected to a smear campaign aimed at alienating many of her natural supporters.

But whoever is chosen there or anywhere else, things will not change unless party members are prepared to keep themselves much better informed as to what is really going on and to be rather more ruthless in insisting that their representatives carry out Party policy.

PAULA WATSON,
Westminster S. CLP.

Non-zionist jews

THE NATIONAL Union of Students conference decision to suspend Sunderland Polytechnic Students Union marks a set-back for Middle East peace and reconciliation; for this NUS leadership are responsible.

At the centre of the issue is the failure to distinguish Judaism — a religious, cultural and ethnic identity — from Zionism — the political philosophy and practice of Israeli nationalism.

Zionism emerged in the 1880s as one response to persecution. But Jewish people were divided between Zionists and others who argued the need to fight for their legitimate equal rights in the land of their birth. Jews are still divided. The Union of Jewish Students (UJS) represent the pro-Zionist view.

The UJS have made much of claiming their right to define their Jewish identity; yet by integrating Zionism and Judaism in the name of Jewishness, they have effectively defined for all Jews that to be Jewish one must be a Zionist, and if a Jew is an anti-Zionist s/he is not a 'real Jew'.

More dangerously, the UJS thereby define to the non-Jewish world that all Jews comply with policies of Zionism, to oppose Zionism is anti-semitic, and that to be a real anti-racist one must support their right to promote Zionism.

Because Zionists hold Zionism to be integral to Judaism, they feel threatened by anti-Zionism. Any attack on Zionism is an attack on them as Jews. This bonding of the issues has always served as an ideological justification for the Israeli state, and as a means of ensuring support from the Jewish people.

But for Jews who disagree with Zionism it is of paramount importance to distinguish the two, for the bonding implicitly encourages anti-semitism: if

Jews fail to draw the clear distinction, how do they expect non Jews to do so? As public opinion reacts to the ongoing atrocities of the Israeli state, Jews become the obvious targets of blame.

Sunderland Poly Students Union did not deny the UJS the 'right to define their identity', it simply recognised and enforced the distinction between Judaism and Zionism. While refusing to ratify a pro-Zionist society, it did ratify another non-Zionist Jewish society. They did not act anti-semitically. They upheld the rights of non-Zionist Jews to define themselves free of the taint of Zionism.

The tragedy of this debate is that it will generate anti-semitism, particularly with the suspension of Sunderland Poly Students Union, because the Conference and National Executive have repeated the failure to distinguish the two.

By so doing they have endorsed the Zionist position and given implicit support to UJS.

Palestinian aspirations and Zionism are totally irreconcilable since each depends on the negation of the other. Zionism is the cause of the Palestinian diaspora which NUS purports to condemn.

A fierce debate is raging amongst Jews about Zionism. It must continue.

However the NUS Executive and conference, far from defending the right to that debate through suspension of Sunderland Poly Students Union, have actually taken sides in it in support of Zionist Judaism, and in betrayal of the hopes of Palestinians and anti-Zionist Jews struggling for reconciliation. NUS has made that struggle even harder.

ROBERT ROSENTHAL,
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Labour Party

Challenge in Labour youth

"I'VE joined Socialist Organiser because they're the only rational left-wing group in the Labour Party," said Ben Channell from Richmond Labour Party Young Socialists after last weekend's YS national conference.

"The Militant thought they could rule just as they wanted" said Lorraine from Holton YS, echoing the thoughts of the other comrades who have joined up with Socialist Organiser after seeing a "24 hour a day Militant rally" as Robert Head from Ipswich described the conference.

Despite being substantially smaller than last year, the conference was much the same. The YS National Committee and Militant still dominated debates and made sure there was little real discussion.

In the debate on lesbians and gays, there were two clear composites, one from Militant and the other from YS branches supporting Lesbian and Gay Young Socialists. The Militant motion was supported by six speakers from the floor, but only two spoke for the LGYS. And then the NC "summed up" for another 15 minutes.

But as Matt Williams and Karen Briscoe, the LGYS secretaries pointed out, the motions were far better than last year. Militant have changed their position and now accept many of the arguments LGYS have been putting for two years and Class Fighter (Socialist Organiser youth) for five years before them.

Jimmy from St Helens, who met LGYS for the first time, realised how important LGYS is for taking on the Militants' attitudes and was particularly disgusted by the jokes made by a Militant supporter from the rostrum about AIDS and buggery.

Unfortunately many Class Fighter/Socialist Organiser motions were not taken. Most disgracefully our motion on Ireland was not called. So the YS had no chance to vote for support for the Republicans and for a united Ireland while still retaining the right to criticise the politics and tactics of Sinn Fein.

The Durham motion on Afghanistan was not called - which means that the YS is still silent as USSR troops

Jane Ashworth reports on the Labour Party Young Socialists conference, which took place over the Easter weekend in Blackpool

create four million refugees and napalm villages.

On the fringes, Class Fighter and Socialist Organiser had one of its best years. Unfortunately supporters of Revolution Youth tried to prevent the Class Fighter meeting from taking place by organising without consultation a Labour Briefing meeting at the same time and organising a meeting for the regional bulletins at the only other suitable time.

However the Class Fighter meeting did go ahead and was attended by far more than the Labour Briefing fringe meeting.

Bulletins

Clive Bradley explained our politics in contrast to the way Militant substitute demands for a future Labour government to carry out for the realities of working class struggle.

Throughout the conference there were problems with the "regional bulletins". These bulletins are the latest project of Revolution Youth. The idea is to link together all those in the YS dissatisfied with Militant in a broad opposition alliance. They intend to tie all the bulletins together to form an anti-Militant national newspaper.

One problem was that Class Fighter comrades involved in the bulletins were not consulted about decisions taken in their name at conference. But far more important are the dangers of seeing the fight against Militant being won without serious debate on Militant's programme.

Vocal

Such an alliance is likely to be to the right of Militant and to be unable to answer Militant on the key question of how to achieve socialism.

But despite such problems, Class Fighter/Socialist Organiser did once again prove ourselves to be the organised, vocal and political opposition to Militant in the Labour Party Young Socialists.



Hattersley pushes incomes policy Kinnock pushes the sugar-coating

Trying to cure capitalism?

By John Bloxam

LAST Tuesday Neil Kinnock launched the first part of Labour's 'Jobs and Industry' campaign with a press conference. Local Parties received a campaign pack from Labour's headquarters at Walworth Road, to encourage them to set up local campaign teams. At the same time three separate opinion polls showed Labour with a clear lead over the Tories for the first time in many months.

Bitter

Labour has revived because the Tories are becoming unpopular. Bitterness that there are over four million unemployed is growing and there is resentment at the government's blatant vindictiveness towards the miners and disgust at their gloating.

But there is still no clear Labour alternative to the Tories - a fact that the razzmatazz and

glossy packaging do little to disguise. In substance, the "Jobs and Industry" campaign is a re-packaging of the policies of the last Labour government which will convince few and is certain to be greeted with disgust by many Labour supporters.

Labour, once more, offers its candidacy as the administrator of a convalescent home for British capitalism. We'll make the system work, the campaign says. We are "the party of partnership, the one which brings unions and management, the public and the private sector, together." Vague promises are made about unemployment and living standards. Specific commitments made by Labour Party conferences - for exam-

ple on the 35 hour week and on re-nationalisation of firms sold off by the Tories - are left out. There is talk of a "future that works", but no mention anywhere of socialism.

Biscuit

To put forward the record of the last Labour government as the alternative to the Tories, as an answer to unemployment, is sick enough, but the document that takes the biscuit is the pamphlet on 'The case for public enterprise'. Written in February 1985, with the miners' strike still on and nearly a year old, it seriously bases its case for "public control" (not, note, nationalisation) on the "proud record" of the existing nationalised industries, who are "industry leaders". As part of a "Jobs and Industry" campaign, it's an insult to the labour movement and especially to the mining communities.

The miners' strike was, of course, the acid test in the fight against the Tories and unemployment. The Labour leadership tried to knife the miners in the back.

Of course, there is a desperate need for a Labour campaign on jobs, but to get anywhere it must convince people that there is a working class alternative to the Tories, and to the anarchy of capitalism. At a minimum, it must advocate Labour conference policies like the demand for a 35 hour week and nationalisation. It must be based on solidarity with those who are fighting for their jobs now. It must offer a clear programme to get rid of capitalism. Such a programme will still need to be fought for at this year's Party conference. Local Parties should go ahead and campaign for it now, using the meetings and concerts proposed in the 'Jobs and Industry' campaign.

Council sacks nine

By councillor Susan Carlyle, one of the nine who have had the Labour whip withdrawn

AT the budget making meeting of Tower Hamlets council two weeks ago, a group of nine Labour Party councillors refused to endorse the cuts programme.

Joined by the Liberal group they defeated the budget and no rate was set.

Five days later, the nine were suspended from the Labour Group, and the Labour Whip was withdrawn.

Although the matter was unconstitutional, because the local party was not consulted or involved, the physical split between a treacherous right wing council leadership and the so-called rebels, who have voted for party policies for the last three years, has finally emerged publicly.

The proposed budget contained £5.8 million worth of cuts, and reduced funding for housing. However conscientiously Tower Hamlets Borough Council has followed Tory guidelines, cutting back each year, and even though they had voted not to go above the target, the level of services cannot be maintained.

The main cuts hit jobs with a continuous under-

staffing in some departments.

In social services, the threatened facilities include a hotel for the disabled and sick, a 10p rise in the cost of meals on wheels, a 25% increase in the charge to parents with children in nurseries, scrapping the social work team serving the homeless and deletion of all youth and community work teams.

The list is endless - much of it leading logically to further cuts because of starvation of cash.

At the same time, the reserves and balances in council bank accounts stand at around £11 million.

The suspensions leave the ruling Labour leadership without an overall majority, if the next proposed budget contains similar cuts. The maverick Liberal Group cannot be relied on, however, to pursue an anti-Tory confrontation.

The leadership have con-



Shore: at risk

Hovering in the wings also is the parliamentary reselection, especially in the Bethnal Green and Stepney constituency.

Part of the Machiavellian plans of present incumbent Peter Shore, were routed last week, when recalled AGMs in three wards were held after an appeal from Spitalfields ward was turned down by the NEC.

This came about after mass recruitment to the Labour Party by Shore supporters (a total of 79 in one night) was questioned and investigations revealed many of those memberships to be bogus.

The ward agreed to have another AGM after which a campaign was conducted within the Bangladeshi community resulting in the reconvened AGM last week.

Despite a scurrilous leaflet put out the night before by Shore's supporters, in Bengali language only, referring to ward members as "seduced by drink" and "deviant" and other accusations, the AGM overwhelmingly returned delegates to the GC committed to de-select Shore

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The legacy of 1952

Bolivia is the poorest country of mainland Latin America.

For a long time it was entirely dominated by cliques of landowners and the millionaire owners of the tin mines. The peasants and the tin miners — mostly Indians — toiled in indescribable misery.

In 1952 the peasants and the tin miners rose up in revolution. The old army was shattered. Land was distributed to the peasants. The tin mines were nationalised, and the unions acquired a large say in their management.

But the leadership of the revolution remained in the hands of the middle-class politicians of the MNR (National Revolutionary Movement). They kept the revolution within the limits of capitalism.

Bit by bit, the state machine was consolidated, the gains of the workers and peasants were whittled away. By the late 1950s president Siles Zuazo was enforcing IMF austerity measures.

Another big upheaval took place in 1970-1. The savage dictatorship of Rene Barrientos was overthrown and replaced by a military regime of junior officers with a nationalist, reforming bent. Trade union and peasant organisations, and left political parties, set up a Popular Assembly.

After a few months, however, the army top brass regrouped, and carried through a counter-revolutionary coup. Military dictatorships of varying savagery succeeded each other until 1982, when Siles Zuazo took office again at the head of a civilian government.

The big capitalist powers — weary of the rampant corruption of the military regimes, under which cocaine smuggling had become Bolivia's no. 1 industry — backed the civilian government. They also thought that Siles would be better able than the military to force the workers and peasants to accept austerity measures demanded by the international bankers.

IN Bolivia, a general strike which began on Friday March 8 was finally called off after negotiations between the government and the Central Obrera Boliviana (COB) — a sort of equivalent to the TUC.

The precise details of the deal are not yet clear — information is still only trickling out of Bolivia. It certainly did not include all the COB's demands for the strike — called to resist the effects of a collapsing economy — and further strikes are almost inevitable. Bolivia now is close to a revolutionary situation.

By the beginning of this year, the Bolivian economy was nearing the brink. Since then it has all but disintegrated. Inflation has been at 1000% and more for several months. It now stands at around 3000%. Basic foods are in deperately short supply. Bread has disappeared from the shelves in the capital of La Paz.

IMF

The weak government of Siles Zuazo's Popular Democratic Union (UDP) is trapped between the demands of the IMF for 'stabilisation' and 'austerity' and the resistance of the powerful workers' movement.

And attempts to introduce an austerity package at the end of last year provoked two huge general strikes (see Socialist Organiser no. 213). The second of these won 750% wage increases and a government promise to freeze the prices of basic foods.

Given the economic collapse, these gains were soon whittled away. Big strikes continued. Private bank workers were locked out on January 22 after holding the management hostage for three days. In the towns and the countryside, new pressures were building up.

The government had by February promised a further 200% pay rise, but had failed to deliver on it. Thousands of

The General Strike in B

workers across the country went on hunger strike in protest, including 10,000 in the city of Cochabamba.

On February 3, the COB called a 24 hour general strike to press for payment of the 200%. The strike was solid; and it keyed into public rejection of 380% fare increases on public transport, declared without government authority, and transport strikes in protest.

Violently

The military was mobilised, but did not move against the strikers. Armed forces head General Simon Sejas merely commented that the officers "viewed the strike with concern".

Police and students clashed violently later in February. By the beginning of March, the workers' movement was gearing up for strike action. On March 4,

a demonstration of 50,000, including 15,000 tin miners, marched on the National Palace in La Paz demanding wage increases. In traditional fashion, the miners threw about sticks of dynamite as part of the demonstration.

On March 8, the COB called an indefinite general strike. Its main demands were for a suspension on debt repayments, nationalisation of the banks and transport system, wage rises linked to inflation, and price controls.

Government

According to some reports, the COB also called for a 'socialist workers' government'.

Government offers that fell far short of the workers' demands were summarily rejected. On Wednesday, March 13, troops were sent into La Paz to meet an increasingly polarised situation.

Bolivia is in a pre-revolutionary situation. The economy is in full collapse. There have been three all-out general strikes recently. Clive Bradley reports.

Thousands of workers, joined by peasants coming into La Paz from the surrounding villages, were erecting barricades and road blocks; dynamite — a basic tin-miners' tool — was thrown at the troops.

The calling off of the strike can only be a temporary respite before further struggles. One way or another, the UDP government is utterly doomed. Siles Zuazo himself, supported in this by many in the labour movement, like the Bolivian 'Communist' Party, speaks of the threat of a coup from the right.

Coup

Such a coup is indeed a real danger. The army has intervened in Bolivia, on average, once a year since independence. The last military ruler was driven from power in 1982; and it was then that the UDP took office — as victors in the elections suspended by the 1980 coup.

New elections are scheduled for the summer — one of Siles Zuazo's concessions to the strikers last year. But according to reports, favourite to win, with some 30% of the vote, is the semi-fascist Accion Democratica Nacionalista (ADN) of Hugo Banzer.

Banzer, who was a particularly brutal military dictator between 1971 and 1978, has been appealing to disappointment with the UDP. With slogans like 'peace, order, work', he

is a real threat to Bolivia's fragile bourgeois democracy. And many have used this fact to try to repress the workers' struggle.

But a coup can succeed only if the workers' movement hesitates — as it has done in the past; and if it does not strike out for its own independent interests.

The Bolivian left, it would appear from available information, is currently confused.

Last September, the COB sixth congress saw a victory for the 'United Revolutionary Leadership' (DRU) platform, which brings together various organisations — would-be Trotskyists, Maoists, trade union groups, and PRIN, the party of long-time COB leader Juan Lechin. The DRU defeated the old CP-dominated leadership which was close to the government.

Lechin

But the DRU platform is by no means a clear class-struggle programme. Lechin himself is of dubious revolutionary pedigree. A 'worker minister' after the 1952 revolution, Lechin went on to become vice-president in 1960 at the height of the 'normalisation' being carried out by the MNR regime. In 1970-1 he supported the ill-fated bourgeois government later overthrown by Banzer. In 1980, he appeared on TV to call for an end to the general strike called to resist the Garcia Meza coup. Many times

**"The possibilities now are tr
The workers' movement has strength to strength. The thr
general strikes have produce**



4 workers' and peasants' militia, 1952



al olivia

since 1982, Lechin has attempted to dampen down the class struggle.

In a recent interview in 'El Pais' (March 21) Lechin put the blame for threatened coups firmly on the shoulders of the Siles Zuazo government. And he went on: "There is no other alternative but a new revolution like that of April 9, 1952." He even went as far as to say that armed struggle is necessary; but "the people don't have arms."



Bolivian socialist Guillermo Lora

Lechin also expressed interest in becoming president.

Other COB leaders have called for a 'government of national salvation' including the left parties and 'patriotic' military officers.

At the centre of much of the confusion are the related demands for 'co-management' and 'co-government' — each with a tradition going back to the 1952 revolution. Co-management was re-won in the state mining industry, COMIBOL, at the end of 1983 — agreed by the government in the face of a strike threat.

Co-government — if not 'majority' then 'minority' co-government — may be offered to the COB by the government as a way out of the impasse. Lechin accepted such an offer in the 1950s, and entered the government.

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Its effect then was disastrous the Bolivian working class was eventually brought under control by the bourgeoisie. And a central task of revolutionaries now would be to explain the lessons of that period — when the Trotskyist movement was quite strong.

From that point of view, it is not at all clear that the participation of Trotskyists in the DRU bloc with Lechin altogether helps such a task. Certainly the United Secretariat of the Fourth International are confused. In an article last year, Livio Maitan, leading USFI theorist, argued:

Coalition

"Today, the demand for co-government implies specifically that the COB and the [peasants' union] do not consider themselves to be represented by the UDP...but that they want to represent the workers and peasants in the government themselves in an independent way.

Then, this demand helps the masses to understand the class nature of the...political issues." (International Viewpoint, March 12, 1984)

This line is quite clearly an endorsement of a possible coalition between the COB and a bourgeois government. If the USFI's Bolivian group are following such advice, it could prove disastrous for the Bolivian masses.

Stalemates

The possibilities now are tremendous. Possible leaders of a right wing coup, like Banzer, clearly do not feel strong enough to move; and the workers' movement has gone from strength to strength. The three all-out general strikes (four if February 3 is included) have produced stalemates rather than victories — certainly not defeats.

Traditional trade union militancy in Bolivia has never been matched by worked-through political organisation. If such political organisation can be developed, the pre-revolutionary situation now simmering in Bolivia could explode into socialist revolution.

Independence for the Ukraine?

SUCASNIST is one of the main publishing houses in the West which smuggles literature into and out of the USSR. We publish a Ukrainian monthly ('Sucasnist') and a Russian-language quarterly ('Forum'), as well as two English-language bulletins — 'Focus on Ukraine', and 'Soviet Nationalities Survey'.

In the '40s the Ukrainian underground opposition struggled against both the Nazis and the Soviet occupation forces, through establishing the UPA (Ukrainian Insurgent Army) and, in 1943-4, the UHUR (Ukrainian Supreme Liberation Council).

Through the struggle against the Nazis finished in 1944, it continued against the Soviets until 1952. The opposition was fighting for independence and democracy and, contrary to the Soviet propaganda that we were tools of the Germans, for economic and social equality. In the '40s, for example, it refused to allow the old landlords and industrial managers to reappear. The emphasis was on socialism, with democracy and independence as short-term aims.

We are willing to cooperate with any group that shares our aims, that nothing can be done in achieving liberty in the USSR until it has been decolonised, because we believe that the Soviet Union is the last empire in the world. We believe that each country has the right to independence, and the Ukraine is a nation of 50 million people.

The question is not just one of Klebanov and Nikitin [pioneer campaigners in the USSR for Solidarnosc-type trade unions], important though that is in itself, but also of campaigning for national and human rights. A manager is not just a manager but also a Russian manager.

We cannot see social liberation without national liberation. In this sense we see our struggle as similar to the Irish struggle.

What is the present level of opposition in the Ukraine to the Kremlin regime?

The Ukraine was always a peasant nation. The landlords were either Russian or Polish. By destroying the peasantry as a social class Stalin helped destroy the Ukrainian national base. Stalin also wiped out the Ukrainian intelligentsia through physical liquidation.

People still have these things in mind. Though the regime is not as oppressive today as it was then, people fear a reversion to the repression of Stalin's day and this inhibits them from becoming members of the opposition.

But opposition groups have been springing up in the Ukraine since the 1960s.

During the '60s, 'Internationalism or Russification?', by Ivan Dzyuba, a leading member of the Ukrainian intelligentsia, was circulated among Communist Party members in the Ukraine. It was written from a Leninist point of view and argued that the regime's policies on nationalities had nothing to do with Lenin but were a continuation of the old Tsarist policies.

This led to a big wave of repression in 1972, with many leaders of the Ukrainian Communist Party being arrested and accused of being bourgeois Ukrainian nationalists.

In the USSR, a Russian minority rules over a majority made up of many non-Russian nations — one of which, the Ukraine, 50 million strong, is the biggest oppressed nation in the world. Stan Crooke spoke to an Ukrainian activist in exile in Britain.

In 1976-7 another group began campaigning. It was active for a number of years but eventually succumbed to repression.

Another main current of opposition is in south-east Ukraine, in the Donbas region, which has the largest number of strikes in the USSR. It is where the workers' opposition has its strongest roots: Klebanov and Nikitin began work there three years before Solidarnosc was set up in Poland.

The area of Ukraine with probably the highest level of activity now is western Ukraine, which only became a part of the USSR during the war and was where the UPA operated until 1952.

It has a strong tradition of Ukrainian nationalist opposition, visible very much up to the present day. It is linked to the underground Catholic Church, made illegal in 1944. Many forms of nationalist discontent are linked with the demand for the restoration of legality for the Catholic Church.

Church

The head of the underground Church is Josef Terelya. Its magazine, 'Chronicle of the Catholic Church in the Ukraine', has published a lot of material on the extent of opposition to the regime. Terelya's own brother, Boris, was killed in a shoot-out with the KGB in 1982 after leading volunteers in blowing up police stations and derailing trains.

The Ukrainian opposition voiced solidarity with Solidarnosc. In 1981 a worker, Pohyba, wrote a letter to the authorities attacking the situation of workers in the USSR and arguing that Poland was a precedent.

When Western journalists travelled illegally to the Donbas

region the miners there all supported Solidarnosc and there were reports that a free trade-union movement, 'Unity', had begun. Recently Terelya wrote to Walesa citing his support for the struggle of the Polish people.

In the prison camps the dissidents now realise that the future course of the opposition in the Ukraine has to be along the lines of developments in Poland — that in future Ukrainian dissidents should ally themselves with the workers and link up the struggle for social, economic and national rights into one movement.

What effect is the continuing war in Afghanistan having?

This does not come out clearly in Western press reports, as Western journalists are all based in Moscow. But the impact has clearly been very strong.

Soldiers demobilised after their two years' service have tremendous psychological problems and need accommodation in special hospitals.

The Western press give a figure of 10,000 USSR soldiers killed, but we estimate 40,000 plus, based on samizdat literature, eye-witness accounts, demobilised soldiers, etc.

Afghanistan

Any soldier killed in Afghanistan is brought back for burial, which increases unrest at home. People ask why they should be fighting on behalf of Russian imperialism, as it is of no benefit to areas like the Ukraine.

The underground press has increasingly taken up the question of Afghanistan, publishing casualty figures and interviews with demobilised Red Army soldiers. People are coming to realise the true nature of the

war. For example, if soldiers are attacked, then the village nearest to the attack is bombed.

Opposition to the war can also be seen in the lack of enthusiasm of people going into the war, unlike in the Second World War. Today, the Red Army are the Nazis in Afghanistan. In fact, parents have tried to bribe recruiting officers not to call up their children.

**КОНЧАЙ ВОЙНУ!
ВСЕ ПО ДОМАМ!**



ДОПОЙ ЙЗ АФГАНИСТАНА!
Sticker circulated by USSR oppositionists. 'End the war! Everybody go home! Get out of Afghanistan!'

Hundreds of soldiers have defected in Afghanistan. This is especially true of Ukrainians, Lithuanians and Moslems. Some have joined the Mojahedeen, others are kept as prisoners of war.

There is no enthusiasm for the war among soldiers. Before they go they are told they are going to fight American, Chinese and Pakistani mercenaries, but when they get there they soon realise they are fighting Afghan people themselves, and this turns them against the war.

Sections of the Left in the West have a tendency to dismiss all Ukrainian oppositionists as right-wing nationalists. Is there any basis for this?

Soviet propaganda claims that all Soviet emigres were one-time accomplices of Hitler and are today accomplices of Reagan. In fact there is one group of an extreme right-wing persuasion. But they are not representative of the opposition as a whole.



USSR oppositionists

**GERRY BYRNE'S
TV
WATCH**



Strikes in Soapland

WONDERFUL thing, television: you can have your post-natal depression by proxy — which is surely an improvement on experiencing it first hand.

Poor Sheila Grant, it only seems like yesterday that she was 'our Mam', beating her teenage children out to Mass, shocked to discover our Karen's pills (they really were just to regulate her periods), not to mention what our Barry was getting up to.

Now here she is, 44 and lumbered with a new baby, trapped in a house that needs new wallpaper, weeping and shrieking and generally falling apart. How are the mighty fallen!

Bobby Grant does try to help but he's at the end of his tether really, what with Sheila's antics and all the bother, now he's a bureaucrat, of selling his member's jobs. (Bobby is played by Ricky Tomlinson — one of the building workers jailed for their part in flying pickets in 1972 — who clearly brings a wealth of first-hand observation to his portrayal of nuances of back-laying and compromise).

You will gather from the above that I am a compulsive Brookside watcher.

Home and work

One of the most peculiar conventions of most soap operas is a complete separation of home and work. There are the 'work-is-life' shows, usually taking place in hospitals or cop-shops, where the characters have no existence outside of their work roles. And then there are the home-based one where all the action takes place in the Street or Square, and you never see anyone working except in the shop, pub or café. All people's problems, conflicts, tensions, are seen as their individual responsibility, and it's impossible to envisage anything other than individual solutions.

Now Brookside more than any other manages to break with these conventions. You do see the impact of work on home and vice versa. Some problems are seen as rooted in the class/sexist/racist organisation of society.

Racism

There is a young black woman, Kate, a nurse, who is not only serious, reads Spare Rib, but also sufficiently uppity to retort to her nice white flatmate: "Racism isn't my problem, I just have to suffer the consequences of it".

You wouldn't get that in any other soap. Insofar as their existence is recognised at all, black people are portrayed as chirpy, uncomplaining, and with such a great sense of humour. This is just 'Them black folks sure have rhythm', in more sophisticated clothes.

Similarly, other heroines may have to face unwanted sexual advances and the spiteful consequences of rejecting them, but it will all be part of the drama of the individual. "These things happen".

You certainly won't hear the words 'sexual harassment' except in jest, nor the suggestion that this is a collective problem faced by women at work.

In Brookside, Heather, a bright young independent woman (now that she's got shot of that hideous husband) is taken off an important job because she resists the chief accountant's dubious charms. She is vindicated by the deus-ex-machine of Archie the storeman, who happens to be a mate of Tom Curzon, the (charming) big boss. But not before a point has been made about power within the workplace.

All classes

Brookside manages to suggest that not all problems are the individual's by a device which, if slightly implausible, provides a lot of its dramatic interest. The Close assembles all classes. The lower echelons of the bourgeoisie rub shoulders with the proletariat, the professional middle class with the lumpen.

At the beginning of the series, just-about-adequate reasons were suggested for how this disparate collection happened to be residing alongside each other. It's not entirely clear why the rich don't get out and the poor default on their mortgages, but that matters little. Paul Thing is the manager of Petrochem's bottling plant, who wants to bring in outside contractors to do the maintenance and sack some of the existing workforce. He explains his motivation — it will weaken the union and undermine any action over future sackings and reorganisation.

Strike

His neighbour Bobby Grant is the full-time union official who sees his job as winning the best redundancy terms and dissuading the militant steward, Colin, from any 'kamikaze' tactics.

In the course of a row at the union office, Colin bursts out: "Haven't you learned anything from the miners' strike? They're not just our jobs".

What? There was a miners' strike in Soapland? Strikes are something you learn lessons from? He'll be selling Socialist Organiser next.

As well as the worry of breaking the union and sacking workers, Paul has other problems on his plate. His son Gordon has run away from home, and it transpires that he has had a relationship with a male school-friend. Unfortunately, it's a bit of a stereotype (overprotective mother, posh school, confused adolescence).

It would have been more daring to have had one of the working class lads, Barry or Terry, turning out to be gay. And his parents are dreadfully concerned and hope it's just a passing phase.

But who knows, the wimp may turn, even suggest that he's not the one with the problem. Or is that too much to hope?

A Soldier's Story

THE HERO of 'A Soldier's Story', which is set in 1944, is not the black lawyer, captain Davenport, who comes to the Louisiana army camp for black soldiers in the USA's still racially-segregated army to investigate a murder.

The hero is Sgt Watters, the twisted, brutal, perhaps sadistic long-serving professional soldier who badmouths the black recruits and hates those of them who talk or act anything like the racist stereotype of the "cotton-pickin', watermelon-eating, guitar-strummin'" happy-go-lucky rural black. He gives them all a hard time.

"What kind of a coloured man are you anyway?" asks one of the recruits (using the usual language of the time, which many blacks now find offensive). Watters' hatred is sincere, bitter and implacable — very like that of a hard-core white racist, except that in his case it is defensive.

Like a white racist, he is prepared to persecute and hound blacks: one of them, C J Memphis, he drives to suicide. Memphis is a naive, guitar-playing, good-natured country man who is the outstanding athlete of the platoon.

Watters served in the US army in France during World War 1, where he won the Croix de Guerre. But, he says: "My race got nothing out of that war". He wants it to be different this time round.

The enemy? One of the main enemies of black advance is blacks who display any of the traits of the hated stereotypes which oppress and haunt Watters. Hounding C J to jail, Watters visits him to explain why. "If it wasn't for you silly niggers, white folks wouldn't think we was all fools".

Sgt Watters is perhaps the man most sharply conscious and aware of racism in the film, and certainly he is marked most deeply by it. But he blames it on rural blacks and not on white society. He accommodates to white society, and fights against rural blacks, acting as an agency of that society.

He tells his mate in a flashback about how white Americans in France told the French women that blacks had tails, and got one black soldier to dress up and go around with a tail to prove it. "When we slit his throat he asked us what he'd done wrong".

Flashback

Watters is found shot to death on a roadway outside the camp. The film unfolds as an investigation by Harvard-educated black captain Davenport. We see the pieces of the puzzle in flashback.

Davenport is the first black officer most black soldiers have seen and they are happy about it: their officers are white. This is still apartheid America. The armed forces will not be officially desegregated until 1948. In Louisiana seats are signposted: "Whites Only". The audience at a black versus white army baseball match is segregated. The lynchers of the Ku Klux Klan have an accepted position in local life.

Did the KKK kill Watters, as they have killed others? No, explains one soldier to the visitor: his stripes were still on his arm, and the Klan would have ripped them off.

Like a lens in the middle of the relationship between the army establishment and white society on one side, and the black recruits and other blacks on the other, Watters picks up the hatred and prejudices of white society and directs them at his own people, or some of them.



Adolf Caesar as Watters

Mick Ackersley reviews 'A Soldier's Story', currently showing in London cinemas

But where does that leave Watters? Radically split against himself. For up to World War 2 and the vast movement of blacks to the war industries in the cities, most US blacks were rural helots, deprived of education and civil rights and riddled with superstition.

This is what Watters rejects, together with its bigoted racist caricature.

Of course, from a working-class point of view it is right that he should reject it and refuse to accept it as any necessary part of the identity of US blacks. The future for American blacks lay in the cities, as part of the industrial proletariat — where they gained the social weight and power to shake the system and force important changes in the 1960s. Watters' sickness lies in the fact that he does not just repudiate and reject the characteristics imposed on many blacks by rural squalor and ignorance. He rejects with it their humanity.

C J Memphis seems to Watters to be a hateful embodiment of the racist stereotype. Watters is pained and indignant when he plays the clown for a white officer. (Perhaps C J is being ironic: he is also able to pity and perhaps understand Watters and defends him to the others: "any man who isn't sure where he belongs must be suffering a lot of pain", he tells them.

The CJs can change and grow, remaining human beings. Watters is dehumanised, warped and twisted by his way of handling the terrible pressures of the racist society around him. The process is reinforced by Watters' role in the army's undemocratic, dehumanised, mechanical system of breaking in and disciplining recruits.

In his own way Watters is trying to say no to being a black in Jim Crow America. But he cannot identify with the whites fully: they won't let him. And he hates the whites. He gets incapable drunk on the night he dies, and tells them he "won't do nothing white folks say", and how much he hates... himself.

Watters is concerned for his own race and in his own way proud of it. He wants to stamp out the representatives of the stereotype "so that my race can get something out of this war", unlike the last one.

Watters' dilemma is the di-

lemma of the oppressed, deprived and subordinate groups. In relation to those who are strong enough to hold them down or oppress them, the question inevitably arises: what is it about us or our history or our way of doing things that allows them to do this to us? The oppressor usually has very dogmatic answers to explain the subordination of the oppressed by their 'inferiority'. The pressure on the psyche of

the oppressed is terrific. Some years ago a survey in Britain found that young black children, asked to draw themselves, drew themselves as white.

Should the person who is oppressed adopt the oppressor's standards — or can an independent way be found? Psychologists have a name for a common technique of ego self-defence used by the weak and vulnerable (in the first place and normally children): 'identification with the oppressor'.

Watters reacts against the bitter experience of racism, repudiates the conditions and standards of rural blacks together with their racist caricature. But he has not succeeded in making sense of it all.

Collective black action is necessary to change the system: better still, united black and white working-class action. Isolated and limited, Watters does not know anything of this.

Tragedy

In the army he is as isolated as the most benighted rural black sharecropper. He doesn't know any way of seeing the black stereotypes he hates and rejects except in the conventional white way. He is in thrall to the white view of blacks. His form of black race consciousness is an extension of theirs.

That is his tragedy. The way 'A Soldier's Story' explores it, centring on the performance of Adolf Caesar as Sgt Watters, is what makes it an important film socialists should see.



Songs of liberty and rebellion

LAST WEEK we published the usual English version of the Internationale, the song which since the 1904 Congress of the Second International has been the hymn of the world workers' movement. The original words were written in French, by Eugene Pottier, in June 1871, in the midst of the terrible repression that followed the defeat of the Paris Commune. Below we give the French text and a literal English translation.

Debout! Les damnés de la terre	Arise, the wretched of the earth
Debout! Les forçats de la faim	Arise, the prisoners of hunger
La raison sonne en son cratère	Reason sounds in its depths
C'est l'éruption de la fin	This is the outbreak of the end
Du passe faisons table rase	Let's wipe the slate clean of the past
Foules esclaves, debout, debout	Enslaved masses, arise, arise
Le monde va changer de base	The basis of the world is going to be changed
Nous ne sommes rien, soyons tout!	We are nothing, let us be everything!
C'est la lutte finale	It is the final struggle
Groupons-nous et demain	Rally, and tomorrow
L'Internationale	The Internationale
Sera le genre humain!	Will be the human race!
Il n'est pas de sauveur suprême	There is no supreme saviour
Ni dieu, ni césar, ni tribune	Neither god, nor Caesar, nor tribune
Producteurs sauvons-nous nous-mêmes	Producers, let us make our own salvation
Decretons le salut commun	Let us decree the common good
Pour que le voleur rende gorge	So that the thief makes restitution
Pour tirer l'esprit du cachot	To free the spirit from prison
Soufflons nous-mêmes notre forge	Let us blow our forge ourselves
Battons le fer tant qu'il est chaud	Let's strike the iron while it's hot

A prisoners' campaign

THERE was a tradition in America of solidarity in defence cases. The IWW [Industrial Workers of the World] had a defence committee called the General Defence Committee. It was strictly an IWW committee.

I first became involved in the movement as a 16-year old kid in 1906. The Socialist party in those days was pretty strong, and *The Appeal to Reason*, the socialist paper, with half a million circulation, made the Haywood trial the weekly front-page event.

Then — I don't know where it originated but it proliferated all over the country — Moyer-Haywood conferences were held of delegated bodies of the Socialist party, sympathetic trade unions, Workmen Circles and so on. Meetings and demonstrations were organised for the defence of Haywood.

He was made candidate for the governor of Colorado while he was on trial. That was a very good stunt.

They employed the best lawyers. Clarence Darrow headed the defence. He was big news himself, he was so famous. The central national defence was controlled by the union because they had to collect a lot of money.

The general procedure was that when someone was arrested, his own organisation would set up a defence committee. They'd ask for the support of others, but they didn't broaden out the defence committee. The Sacco-Vanzetti defence committee, in fact, was a little group of Boston anarchists, who kept tight control of everything. The campaign didn't get under way until the International Labour Defence came in on the propaganda side. We didn't participate on the legal and financial side.

White terror

In the early twenties, after the uprisings that followed the Russian revolution, the Russian party first set up an organisation of their own in Russia to collect funds and so on for the victims of the white terror in Eastern Europe.

In early 1925, when we were there to attend a plenum, a proposal was made to organise international support for the victims of the white terror. The organisation was to be called the International Red Aid. Its primary function would be to collect funds and to protest on behalf of the victims of the white terror.

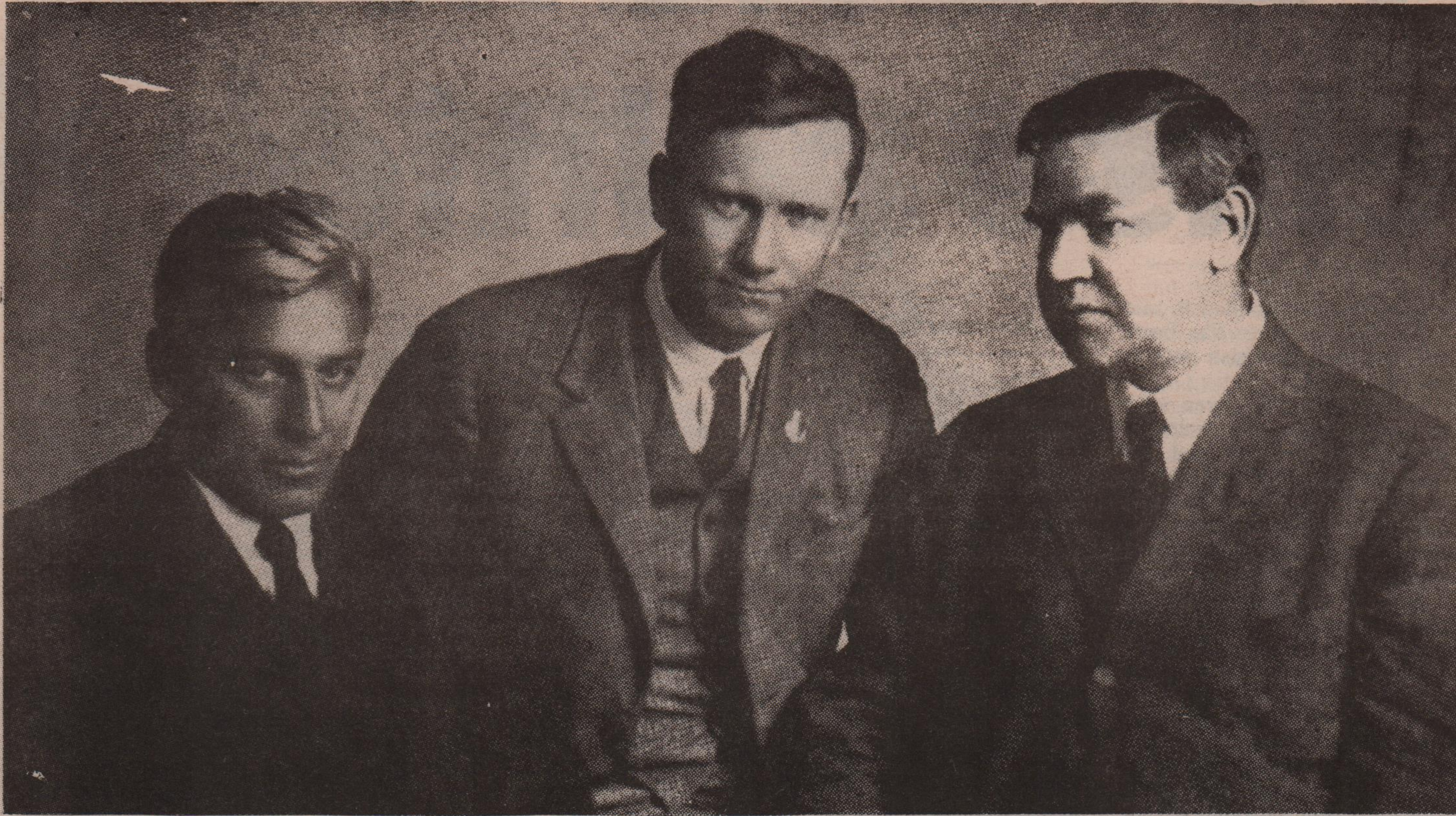
We talked about this in our delegation. We had the custom of congregating in Bill Haywood's room in the Hotel Lux.

Bill Haywood and I were talking about it one day and we came up with, "By God, we ought to do something about the American prisoners".

There were a lot of them. There were over a hundred men still in jail from the old prosecution, and new criminal-syndicalist prosecutions were under way in various states.

"We ought to do something about the Americans. We ought to broaden this thing out and make the committee take re-

** The militant IWW — half a trade union, half a revolutionary party — and the Western Federation of Miners, which under Bill Haywood's leadership was affiliated to the IWW, suffered considerable legal repression before 1914. But the worst came during and after World War I. 'Criminal syndicalist' laws were passed to outlaw the IWW. Many militants were jailed in the 'Palmer Raids' of 1919-20. Sacco and Vanzetti — two anarchists — were framed up on a murder charge. Bill Haywood had to flee the US and take refuge in Moscow.*



Cannon with Max Eastman (left) and Big Bill Haywood (right) in Moscow in 1922

James P Cannon, later a leading figure of the US Trotskyist movement, was organiser of a class war prisoners' campaign in the USA, the International Labour Defence, in 1925-8. In these excerpts from an interview given in 1974 — the last year of his life — he described how the campaign was organised.

sponsibility for the American prisoners — really Americanise the American section".

The more we talked about it, the more the idea took hold. I was then a member of the Political Committee of the Communist Party and all I had in mind was just to promote the idea. Get it accepted in Moscow and then, when we came back, have the PC endorse it, take the initiative, get hold of somebody, and do it.

Well, when we got back, I went before the Political Committee for the first meeting, explained what had developed in Moscow, what the proposal was.

The fact is that while we were in Moscow, they had sent delegates to the different countries to promote the International Red Aid idea. Their representative here had presented a formal motion that the PC support it. International Red Aid membership cards had already been printed.

A very quiet, inoffensive operation — they were going to organise a few committees, get a few dollars for the victims, and let it go at that.

Well, my idea was to expand the operation and make something out of it. The committee immediately adopted my plan. "My idea", I said, "is not only just to have party members. Let's go out and get some prominent people to support it".

There was a defence committee in Pittsburgh on a special case there. There was a defence committee in Chicago on some still pending case of the Communist Party. Some old Wobblies [IWWers] might become interested because they had friends still in prison.

I got Ralph Chaplin interested. He wasn't active in the IWW but he was sympathetic. And so were two or three other prominent ex-Wobblies.

An ex-Wobbly was not somebody who had repudiated the movement, but somebody who had simply dropped out for personal reasons. They were well-known people. We made them members of the Executive Committee.

And in fact in the Executive Committee, as we laid it out in our plans, the majority would consist of non-members of the Communist party, people who were sympathetic to the general idea.

The more we talked about it, the more enthusiasm grew. We finally decided that we wouldn't just proclaim this committee; we would organise a national conference to launch the International Labour Defence. We projected publishing a magazine.

Chicago

As I say, the thing simply got out of hand. I recall one meeting just before the conference was called. We were laying out the plans and came to a point about the secretary of the Chicago Defence Committee possibly being named national secretary. Some Wobbly said, "Uh, uh: you got it all wrong".

"What do you mean?" "You're going to be secretary. You want us to hustle? Well, we're not going to hustle for some fellow we don't know. We know you and we'll support you".

Then it became evident to everybody that I had gotten so deeply involved in the thing and I was so much better known than any of the other potential candidates that I would have to take over. I had never planned on that at all.

Then Rose Karsner said she would like to come in and run the office. She was the head of another organisation called the International Workers' Aid, which had originally been called the Friends of Soviet Russia. It was organised during the famines of 1921 and had continued as a fund-raising organisation for different countries and different movements in need of financial help, where there were famines and persecution, etc.

We were going to set up a national office with a secretary and an office manager. We planned it as a big operation. She would come in and run the office so that I'd be free to travel and organise locals and one thing or another.

So it culminated in a good-sized first national conference of the International Labour Defence. We had the endorsement of a lot of prominent people, including Upton Sinclair. We announced that we were defend-

ing all prisoners — what we called class-war prisoners — in connection with labour. And there were quite a bunch of them.

There was a large number of IWWs in different cases. Mooney and Billings were in prison. The Centralia fight had resulted in a dozen Wobblies being imprisoned.

Then we discovered that in Texas, Cline and Rangel, who had been helping Mexican revolutionists, had been framed up and were serving long sentences. In San Quention were a lot of people who had been up under state criminal-syndicalist laws. Up in Maine there was a case.

It added up to about 140 people. We said we will help all of them; we'll raise money to send a monthly stipend of \$5 a month to every prisoner for commissary.

A commissary is a place in prison where you can buy a little extra stuff. It's very important. You get the routine meal. But if you have a little money you can buy candy bars, cigarettes, cookies, apples, oranges and things like that. It makes a big difference.

Fund

We would send \$5 a month to each prisoner and we would send \$25 a month to their families if they had a family. Then we would plan — without promising definitely — we would raise a Christmas fund to give a bonus of \$25 or \$50 to every prisoner for Christmas. We would publicise all their cases through our magazine and other media. It was a very enthusiastic national conference.

The plan outlined in the constitution made it a membership organisation. Anybody sympathetic to the cause could join. Ten cents a month dues and donate whatever you could and if you had a little extra money, send it in to the national office.

We organised locals all over the country and not only that, we put in full-time district organisers in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and places like that — Cleve-

land. Full-time organisers! They coordinated local branches and stirred up activity. The thing took hold and was quite well received.

In 1925 we started the 'Labour Defender'. It was an illustrated monthly magazine. In the magazine, on which Max Shachtman was the editor and worked full-time, we decided to revive all the old cases.

Haymarket

We told the story of the Haymarket martyrs, and Mooney and Billings. We put out a special edition on the lynching of Frank Little in Butte, Montana. We publicised the Sacco-Vanzetti case and campaigned on other cases.

It was the most popular magazine in the radical movement. Sold wider than the party press.

The second national conference was in 1926. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn was brought in. She had been very prominent in the IWW. She became national chairwoman and was sent on a national tour.

The third national conference in 1927 was held under the slogan, "Third National Conference of the International Labour Defence, Fortieth Anniversary of the Haymarket Martyrs".

Lucy Parsons, the widow of the martyr, was the guest of honour. These things were very effective in stimulating a sense of solidarity in the radical movement.

Obligation

And throughout all that period we kept up our obligation. We sent \$5 a month to every one of the one hundred prisoners regardless of what organisation they belonged to; but we didn't send it over the head of their own committee.

For example, for members of the IWW, we sent it in a lump sum to their general defence committee to distribute; so that we were not interfering with the work of any of the other committees.

Our work was propaganda and agitation, and legal defence only if it was needed. New cases were brought to us and we had quite a number of those. Our Christmas fund was very popular.

Smoking kills non-smokers too!

By Les Hearn

THERE ARE many drawbacks to living or working with smokers — ashtrays full of smouldering butts, hair and clothes stinking of someone else's fags, the acrid fumes that always seem to drift towards you, and, the ultimate injustice, your health can suffer as well as theirs.

It is now well-known that non-smokers can inhale significant quantities of other people's tobacco smoke, a phenomenon known as 'passive smoking'.

This can harm the development of fetuses, babies and children. In particular, fetuses of smokers who receive the poisons of tobacco from their mothers' blood tend to be smaller at birth and have a higher rate of death.

In addition, children and adults can get all the diseases of smoking such as bronchitis, heart disease and lung cancer. Obviously, the rate of contracting such diseases will be lower than with smokers.

Recent results from US research show that non-smokers living with smokers have excess rates of cancer of between 1½ and 2½ times the normal for non-smokers, depending on how many smokers they live with.

A surprise finding was an excess risk of contracting cancers not usually associated with smoking. For breast and cervical cancer, the rate is over three times higher, while for leukaemia, the excess is an astounding seven times.

We might expect other people's smoke to have the same though diminished, effects on non-smokers as it does on smokers, but something more seems to be happening, according to the US research.

The problem might not be so bad if non-smokers were only subjected to the exhaled smoke of smokers. This has been quite well filtered by smokers' lungs.

Unfortunately, there is also the 'side-stream' smoke, produced as the cigarette smoulders. Smouldering tobacco burns at a lower temperature and rate than tobacco having air drawn through it, and side-stream smoke actually contains more poisons and carcinogens. This ranges from three times as much benzo(a)pyrene to 50 times as much nitrosamines (both notorious carcinogens).

In the light of such findings both smokers and non-smokers need to consider ways of reducing 'passive smoking'. Official advice amounts simply to 'Give it up!', something a nicotine addict will find very hard to do without quite a lot of intensive help and support (as with other drug addictions).

Improved ventilation (e.g. extractor fans or an open window) can help disperse side-stream smoke. Restricting smoking to one room or to outdoors and trying not to smoke in the company of children will help to protect non-smokers (and smokers, who can also suffer from passive smoking).

THE SPRING issue of 'New Ground', the quarterly magazine of the Socialist Environment and Resources Association, is just out, price 60p, and it contains several articles of interest to SO readers.

The major theme is that of the chemical industry and the pollution, poisoning, and disasters it causes. A centre-spread looks at Union Carbide's products and its safety record at Bhopal, while a chronology of chemical disasters puts Bhopal in perspective — it's the worst ever!

"By god, we ought to do something about the prisoners. There were over a hundred men still in jail..."

The Left needs class politics

By John O'Mahony

person in six in London is said to be Irish. In places like Brent and Islington the Irish vote is massive.

Ethnic politics has given much to the sudden mushrooming of support for Ireland and for 'dialogue with Sinn Fein'. Many — though not all — of the Labour Left are interested less in a dialogue with Sinn Fein than in profitably picking up and espousing the lowest-common-denominator Irish nationalism of the Irish community in Britain.

Sections of the powerful Labour local government Left of the '80s also mirror the populist, Third-Worldist attitude to Ireland which was the dominant strain on the pro-Irish left in the '70s (and still is today in, for example, Socialist Action).

Most of the Left simply do not have the minimum required for

a dialogue with Sinn Fein — or anyone else — on Ireland: a worked-out opinion of their own.

Take as an example the much-publicised speech by Ken Livingstone in which he said that Britain had done the equivalent of Hitler's holocaust against the Jews during the Irish potato famine of the 1840s. Good Irish nationalist headline-grabbing stuff. But it's bad history. More than that, and worse, it is middle-class Catholic-nationalist history.

During the potato famine grain was exported from Ireland that could have kept the people alive. Who exported it? Catholic Irish middlemen!

One of the worst consequences of the famine was the 'clear-

ances' from the land of 'unwanted' surplus tenants. Who cleared them? In many cases it was wealthy Catholics who had bought out the old landlords after the Encumbered Estates Act of 1849.

The best you can say is that if there had been a national Irish legislature in Dublin it would have done better than the 'United Kingdom' administration. Perhaps. The facts of later 19th and of 20th century Irish life don't bear this supposition out. The Irish capitalists bitterly opposed the early welfare state.

Ruling classes, especially weak ruling classes, are not normally more concerned for or necessarily more merciful towards their co-nationals or co-religionists. On the contrary.

The whole notion that the famine was 'English' is Catholic

Irish middle-class propaganda. Listen to the sober assessment made by the working-class socialist James Connolly 75 years ago. Having bitterly described how Irish middle-class 'revolutionary' leaders like William Smith O'Brien defended the landlords' right to private property in grain though the peasants were starving, Connolly goes on:

"Had Socialist principles been applied to Ireland in those days not one person need have died of hunger, and not one cent of charity need have been subscribed to leave a smirch upon the Irish name. But all except a few men elevated landlord property and capitalist political economy to a fetish to be worshipped, and upon the altar of that fetish Ireland perished.

"At the lowest computation 1,225,000 persons died of absolute hunger; all of these were sacrificed upon the altar of capitalist thought.

"Early in the course of the famine the English Premier, Lord John Russell, declared that nothing must be done to interfere with private enterprise or the regular course of trade, and this was the settled policy of the Government from first to last... In all the Acts establishing relief works, it was stipulated that all the labour must be entirely unproductive, so as not to prevent capitalists making a profit either then or in the future... In 1845 a Commissariat Relief Department was organised to bring in Indian Corn for sale in Ireland, but none was to be sold until all private stores were sold out...

"In 1846, England, hitherto a Protectionist country, adopted Free Trade, ostensibly in order to permit corn to come freely and cheaply to the starving Irish. In reality, as Ireland was a corn and grain exporting country, the measure brought Continental agricultural produce to England in competition with that of Ireland, and hence, by lowering agricultural prices, still further intensified the misery of the Irish producing classes.

"The real meaning of the measure was that England, being a manufacturing nation, desired to cheapen food in order that its wage-slaves might remain content with low wages, and indeed one of the most immediate results of free trade in England was a wholesale reduction of the wages of the manufacturing proletariat.

"The English capitalist class, with that hypocrisy that everywhere characterises the class in its public acts, used the misery of the Irish as a means to conquer the opposition of the English landlord class to free trade in grains, but in this, as in every other measure of the famine years, they acted consistently upon the lines of capitalist political economy.

"Within the limits of that social system and its theories their acts are unassailable and unimpeachable; it is only when we reject that system, and the intellectual and social fetters it imposes, that we really acquire the right to denounce the English administration of Ireland during the famine as a colossal crime against the human race.

"The non-socialist Irish man or woman who fumes against that administration is in the illogical position of denouncing an effect of whose cause he is a supporter. That cause was the system of capitalist property."

In Britain the Irish workers need class politics — not warmed-up Irish middle-class nationalist politics in the service of short-sightedly ambitious Labour Party local government politicians.

We are for a dialogue with Sinn Fein. But for the Labour Left to mimic the politics of Sinn Fein — inadequate, sectional, narrowly nationalist as they are, with no pretence of either appealing to the Protestant workers or offering them anything other than incorporation as a minority into a Catholic Ireland — can do nobody any good.

Least of all can it do good to the Irish workers in Britain, whose special need is to be emancipated from the traditional 26-County Fianna-Faill-type nationalism, a radical version of which is promoted by Sinn Fein.

Fools

Habitual fools and fantasists like the publishers of Socialist Action can go on about Sinn Fein being a working-class or — so they sometimes seem to say — a Marxist party. The reality is that Sinn Fein is a Catholic communal organisation, confined to the Catholic community; its socialism is diffuse and ill-defined; its attitude to the majority of the Northern Ireland working class is hostile; its notions of socialist transformation of society are elitist and militarist.

Against this the sociological fact that they have a working-class membership is not decisive. Politically, whatever their good intentions, they are in no sense a working-class organisation.

A dialogue presupposes a viewpoint on each side, and, as we have said, the problem with the British Left is that it does not have an independent working-class viewpoint. It needs to develop one.

We want to open a discussion in the British labour movement on Ireland. We invite contributions.

THROUGHOUT the '70s, the dominant attitude in the labour movement towards the Provisional IRA and its political partner Sinn Fein was one of hostility and blank incomprehension. 'Sectarian murderers' was the common basic comment.

Today everything is changed. Wide layers of the labour movement, and especially the local government Left, say they want a 'dialogue' with Sinn Fein.

So far, so good: but in fact many on the Left are uncritical mouthpieces for the Sinn Fein view on Irish politics, on Irish history, and on possible solutions to the conflict in Northern Ireland. They function as ventriloquist's dummies rather than independent partners in a dialogue.

On balance the whole situation is better than the way things were in the '70s, but it is a long way from working-class politics.

There are two reasons for the change. Many of those now prominent in the Labour Left, and especially in the local government Left, were educated during the '70s in what was then the minority view of Sinn Fein, the IRA, and the war in Ireland. That's the good reason — some knowledge and understanding, together with sympathy for the oppressed Catholics of Northern Ireland and rejection of the lying and self-serving Establishment account of the conflict in Northern Ireland.

The bad reason is that the Irish vote is very important. One

After troops out, then what?

FOR MANY years now — since about 1972 — there has been a solid majority in opinion polls for British withdrawal from Ireland.

Some ruling-class opinion favours withdrawal. Despite all the efforts by successive governments to doctor the media, enough evidence about the day-to-day repression of Catholics by British troops in Ireland has come out to make sure that a majority of constituency delegates at each Labour Party conference are willing to vote for 'troops out'.

Labour is officially committed to a united Ireland.

Yet despite all this we seem caught in a stalemate. Campaigning on Ireland in the British labour movement is not at a high level. Labour is not committed to 'troops out' until a majority of Northern Ireland's population want a united Ireland, and recently Neil Kinnock

Gerry Bates reviews 'Socialist Forum' no. 2, just published by Socialist Organiser

has been showing signs of wanting to retreat even from Labour's very limited commitment.

A Kinnock Labour government would do nothing much different from the Wilson/Callaghan government — or the present Tory government.

One reason for this, of course, is that the Labour leadership are protected from constituency opinion by the trade union block votes, tied to the status quo by their Protestant memberships in Northern Ireland. Another, surely, is that the Left has not been able to propose a convincing comprehensive alternative to the status quo.

Over the 1970s we managed to convince Labour activists — and many other people too — that the troops are doing no good in Ireland. But the sticking point still remains for most people that they can see no immediate alternative to the troops but bloody chaos.

It is not, as some over-emotional sectarians allege, because of 'anti-Irish racism' that the labour movement continues to condone a British presence — but because of honest concern to avoid bloody civil war.

A parallel problem exists in Ireland. Sinn Fein has moved left: but its whole strategy is based on the Northern Catholic community, with little grip on the Southern working class and no opening at all towards the Protestant majority of the Northern working class.

Side by side with its left turn, in fact, has come an attitude to the Protestant workers that rules out even a remote possibility of them being conciliated. The long-time Sinn Fein/Provisional IRA policy of a federal Ireland has been dropped; and the distinct Protestant Irish community is now defined as a political entity, just a 'pro-imperialist' group.

The IRA is thus locked into a war of attrition. Its strategists reckon that this war of attrition could continue for decades. It is not at all clear how it will bring a united — let alone a socialist — Ireland nearer.

The logical development, if the current Catholic/Protestant conflict were to develop into the next stage of open civil war, would inescapably lead to a very bloody repartition and the end — for decades at least — of any prospect of a united Ireland.

Much of the Irish left are either political satellites of the Provisionals — or blankly hostile to both the Provisionals and the just revolt of the Northern Catholics (Workers' Party, 'Militant').

This pamphlet suggests some ideas to help cut through this double stalemate.

The crucial stumbling-block to all progress in Ireland is the fact that a major section of the working class — the Northern Prot-

estants — have been rallied round a programme of die-hard bigotry.

Many socialists try to evade this obstacle. 'Militant', for example, takes its stand on bread-and-butter trade-union unity. From such unity, it claims, socialist politics can be developed, dealing with the national question in passing.

Other groups focus on the national question. Intensified national struggle, in their view, will 'grow over' into socialism — and create working-class unity in passing. This approach is the mirror-image of 'Militant'.

But a serious socialist policy in Ireland — so this pamphlet argues — must combine a search for working-class unity at whatever level possible with a consistently democratic programme on the national and communal issues.

It calls for a federal united Ireland — for self-determination for the people of Ireland as a whole, but within that for the maximum autonomy for Protestant-majority areas compatible with the rights of the majority.

This suggestion, the pamphlet emphasises, is not a cure-all, or a recommendation to be sent to Thatcher and Fitzgerald to help them at their next meeting. But it might be a basis on which socialists, in Britain and in Ireland, could begin to organise forces capable of cutting through the stalemate.

The pamphlet also includes a concise but vivid account of the last 16 years in Northern Ireland — "for working-class Marxists", it stresses, "the facts, not fantasies and wishes, are the necessary starting-point" — and a summary of the ideas of the British Isles' greatest Marxist, James Connolly.

Labour Committee on Ireland

Annual General Meeting
Sunday April 14 1985
County Hall, London SE1.
Regist. £1.50 (50p unwaged)

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Why Militant and IRSP are twins

Editorial: Dialogue yes, ventriloquism no!
Militant's record on Ireland...
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James Connolly
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Rail union leaders back down again

By Rob Dawber, Sheffield and Chesterfield District Council NUR (in a personal capacity).

4.85 PER CENT is rubbish. For the second year in a row, the rail unions ASLEF and NUR formulated a pay claim of around 30%, plus an extra week's holiday, a 35 hour week, and a minimum enhanceable wage.

For the second year in a row they have sold out for no good reason.

Last year, of course, the miners were out. This year they have just lost.

Last year the excuse was that BR had suddenly dropped their demands for productivity deals as a condition of a rise. It emerged later that the government had told BR to make concessions in order to prevent a second front.

This year the excuse is that after what has happened to the miners there is no feeling for a fight on the railways.

To the extent that this is true, it is only half the story. Though the NUR and ASLEF emerged from the NUM dispute smelling of roses in the noses of most militants, the leadership of our unions shares a large part of the blame for what happened to the NUM.



Not willing to fight? NUR/ASLEF picket Coalville. Photo: John Harris (IFL)

By calling off action repeatedly — on our pay claim last April; over closures and loss of jobs last September; and over victimisation last October, the rail unions helped to keep the NUM isolated.

And now they use the NUM's defeat to justify capitulating on our pay packets.

In any case it was not so clear

that the members were not interested in a fight. There was no consultation of the membership. The press tells me that local officials reported no appetite for industrial action. I didn't report it.

There was very little propaganda for the claim itself — only a very good leaflet saying we would not accept productivity deals.

And while the end of the miners' strike has had some demoralising effect on trade unionists, is the ruling-class that rock-solid? Why did British Rail shift so rapidly from saying on February 26 that there was no money for a pay deal, that 30% cuts had to be made in the freight sector, and that they wanted agreement on Driver Only Operation within four

weeks — to offering 4.85% without strings at the end of March.

Clearly the reduction in coal stocks at the power stations has them worried. And while coal production is nowhere near back to normal, they can't afford the coal trains being stopped just now.

There was clearly plenty of room for the rail union leaders to push for more money.

They'll say we did well. Once again guards and 'second men' still have their jobs.

But British Rail management will be emboldened. Already they have said that they want to extend Driver Only Operation to the Kings Cross/Moorgate North London and Hertfordshire line by August. And this settlement, far from making guards' jobs safe, will endanger them.

One of the strengths of the rail unions recently has been the unity between ASLEF and NUR since former NUR general secretary Sid Weighell got his comeuppance. But all this while BR have been dangling £35 per week before drivers (ASLEF members) to cooperate with Driver Only Operation, i.e. getting rid of guards (NUR members).

Now that the union leaders have once again accepted an 'offer' below 5%, that £35 is going to look very enticing.

Barking women determined to keep up the fight

By Jean Lane

ON APRIL 2 Crothalls, the private cleaning firm, won back their contract to clean Barking Hospital for another four years.

The decision was taken at a meeting of the District Health Authority by five votes (Tory councillors) to one (the trade union representative). Ten DHA members — mainly representatives of the medical profession — abstained.

The decision is obviously a blow to the domestics, who have been on strike for over a year against the cuts in pay, hours, and conditions which Crothalls attempted to impose on them in order to win the contract. But the dispute is still going on.

The strike committee met after the decision had been taken by the DHA and agreed to continue their action to get rid of Crothalls, to get their jobs back (they were all sacked by Crothalls last year), and to bring to public attention the scandalous way the DHA came to their decision.

The decision was made with no scientific evidence and without the support of an environmental health report about the level of cleanliness in the hospital. One of the Tory councillors admitted at the meeting that he did not know what the specifications for the contract were!

The decision was taken on purely subjective views about the cleanliness of the hospital.

Yet the women on strike will tell you about that — how the

surgical wards are cleaned less regularly, the toilets are cleaned only once a day, dirt and soiled materials are clogging up the corners. The patients' health is at risk and the domestics' job is made impossible.

The health service is becoming less a public service and more a profit-making concern as the government opens it up to private contracts, gives businessmen choice positions at the top, and cuts to the bone the cost of care and counselling for patients.

The Barking domestics are staying on the picket lines to fight the Tories' policy of privatisation, which is happening not just in the health service but in all areas of the social services and local government. They are fighting without the support of the other hospital unions, who are also affected by the DHA's decision.

They have had the media, the police and the courts thrown at them in an attempt to break their dispute. This week they heard that an eviction notice has again been served on the picket line.

This was tried last year, but the women appealed and won. This time the conditions of the eviction notice are more specific, and it is less likely that the women can fight it just by an appeal.

They need the support of the wider labour movement if they are to stand their ground.

Crothalls could still lose their contract. The Health Authority can give a private firm three months' notice to quit if their cleaning performance is not up to standard. So the women have not lost yet, despite their isolation.

They have said that they will not give up until Crothalls is out and they are reinstated.

UCW leaders cave in

Cont'd from back page.

union's special conference only last month, which decisively threw out proposals to capitulate to management.

In return for Thursday's deal, the Post Office gave a lump sum of £100 to every postal worker, and the promise of a further £150 if the conference surrenders on part-time workers. But if the May conference rejects the sell-out, then postal workers

will have to pay the £100 back! If it doesn't, then the sell-out will be recorded as one of the cheapest in history. The deal is estimated to be costing the Post Office £12 million, in return for savings put at £180 million.

Tuffin's calculation is that a majority of the membership, faced with the alternative of national strike action against militant Post Office management and with a

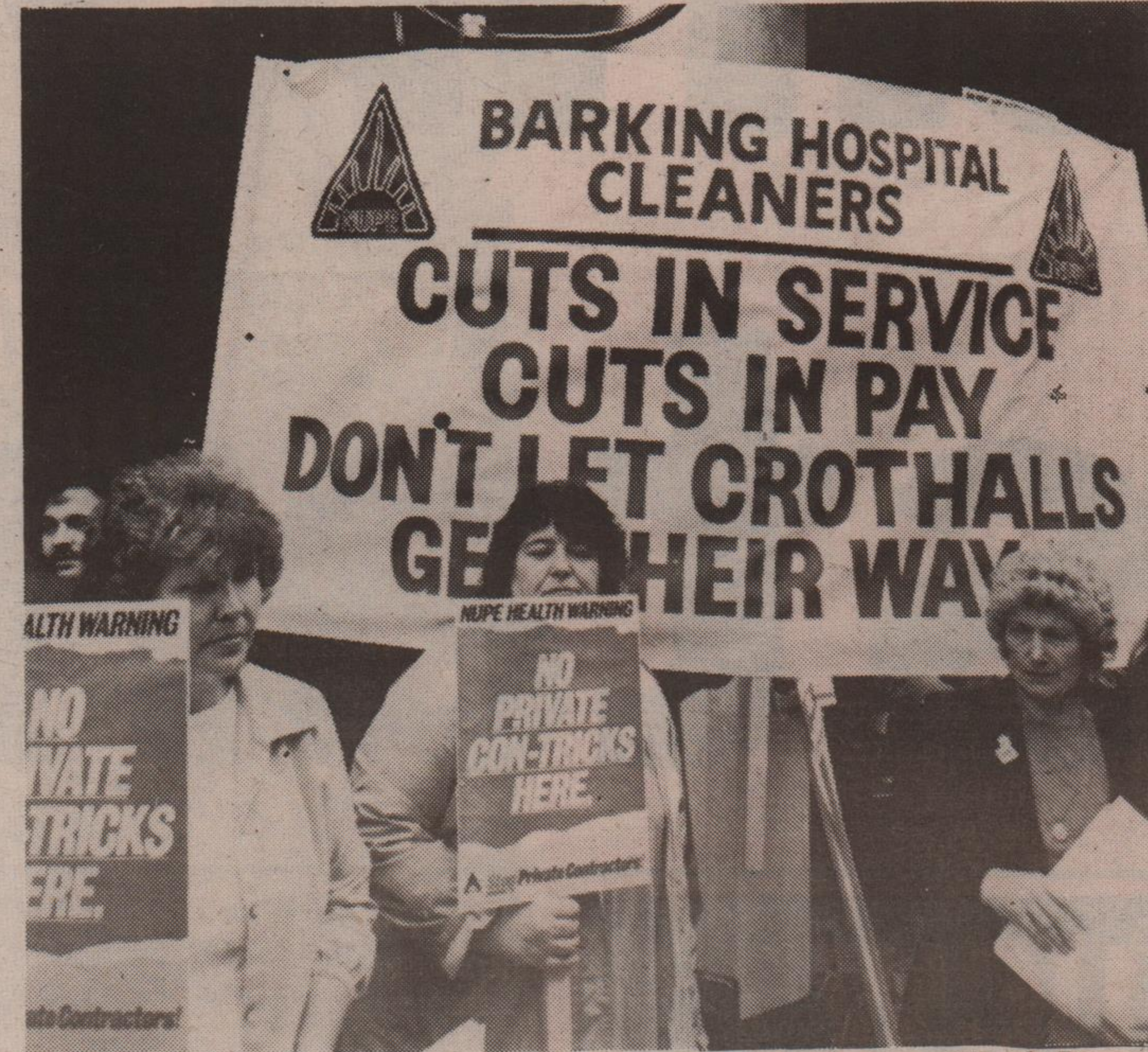


Photo: Andrew Ward, Report

leadership that openly wants to surrender, will vote to back down. The threat of having to pay back last week's £100 bonus will also be an additional pressure to capitulate.

But there is a great deal at stake. The management package represents the most serious threat ever to jobs, wages and conditions. Not very far behind it stands the threat of privatisation.

In such a situation, management "guarantees" of no compulsory redundancies means no more than the National Coal Board's similar promises. And the strikes at Mount Pleasant and other offices show a will to fight.

The battle is by no means over. A major campaign is needed from the branches to throw out the whole deal at the conference and to organise immediate national strike action.

Police raid factory in Hackney

ON TUESDAY morning April 2 ten Turkish and Cypriot workers went to their factory as usual, in a run-down rag-trade sweatshop in Hackney's Richmond Road.

At 2pm several squads of uniformed and plain-clothes police stormed into the factory, questioned everyone there, demanded to see passports, and took the ten workers away.

No-one knew where they were until two days later. Repeated inquiries at Hackney's police stations failed to secure an admission from police that they were holding any of the workers.

On Thursday a substantial picket of Hackney police station by Hackney Anti-Deportation Campaign forced the police to make a statement. Two senior police officers emerged to say that they were not racists, but only doing what the Home Office had authorised them to do. The Home Office said all these workers were illegal immigrants.

When asked what proof they had of this at the time they took the workers away, the police said they had warrants for some of them. So far as they were concerned, Turkish or Cypriot workers in Hackney are guilty until proved innocent!

Two members of the picket were allowed inside the police station to talk to the only worker remaining there — a young Cypriot man. They reported that he was extremely confused and frightened. He had no idea of his rights and he had had no legal advice.

He had been tricked into signing a statement saying that he was willing to be deported; and he had been 'allowed' to contact his brother — to tell him that he had to buy the airline ticket to Cyprus for him!

Four of the others had been held for shorter periods at Hackney police station and released — three of them were due for deportation.

The police still deny all knowledge of the whereabouts of the other five.

Contact: Hackney Anti-Deportation Campaign, Box 39, 136-8 Kingsland High St, London E8; or phone 254 4898. Affiliation: £1 individuals, local organisations, £5 trade unions.

NUT action continues

TEACHERS will be continuing industrial action next term over pay, and will refuse to cooperate with the government's plans for 'assessing' teachers.

The National Union of Teachers conference over the Easter weekend decided to continue refusing out-of-hours work and to organise three-days-a-week strikes in selected areas.

Calls for strikes against the assessment plans were defeated, and the conference did not decide a strategy leading up to an all-out strike. But as the Guardian put it, teachers are now embarked on a straight trial of strength with the government.

Full report from the NUT conference next week.

Socialist Organiser

Court's threat to rate-cap fight

By Jo Thwaites

DESPITE the court ruling last week that Hackney Council must set a rate by April 16, feeling throughout the borough remains strong for continuing the fight and not setting a rate.

Hackney Council Joint Shop Stewards' Committee has called on the Councillors to stand firm and defy the courts.

There has also been a change in the JSSC's position of workers in the event of workers not getting paid. (This threat has been lifted, in the short term at least, as Hackney Council won the court case on whether it is allowed to borrow money to pay its workforce for April). The JSSC has now declared itself for strike action with occupations of council premises in the event of any councillor being penalised for defying the law — or the Council backing down and adopting the media-touted 'no cuts' budget, allegedly drawn up by the Council's Finance Officer, which no-one has yet seen.

Budget

Apparently this budget means not filling any vacancies, and may include rent rises as well as a 9% rate rise.

The council Labour Group meets on Thursday 10th to decide what to do next, and resolutions are going through emergency Labour Party branch meetings calling on the councillors to stick to not setting a rate. Party members are also arguing for the campaign to be stepped up — as the 'not setting a rate' strategy cannot continue for very long.

Refuse to pay

We are calling for a joint conference of all the rate-capped boroughs to work out an April strategy which includes not setting a rate until the Secretary of State suspends the operation of the Rates Act 1984; Councils refusing to pay PAYE money, the Metropolitan Police precept, or debt payments to the City. This most certainly would force the Government to take notice!

As long as the councils do no more than not set a rate, individual authorities can be picked off one by one through the courts. It is important that the rate-capped boroughs collectively resolve to step up the fight.

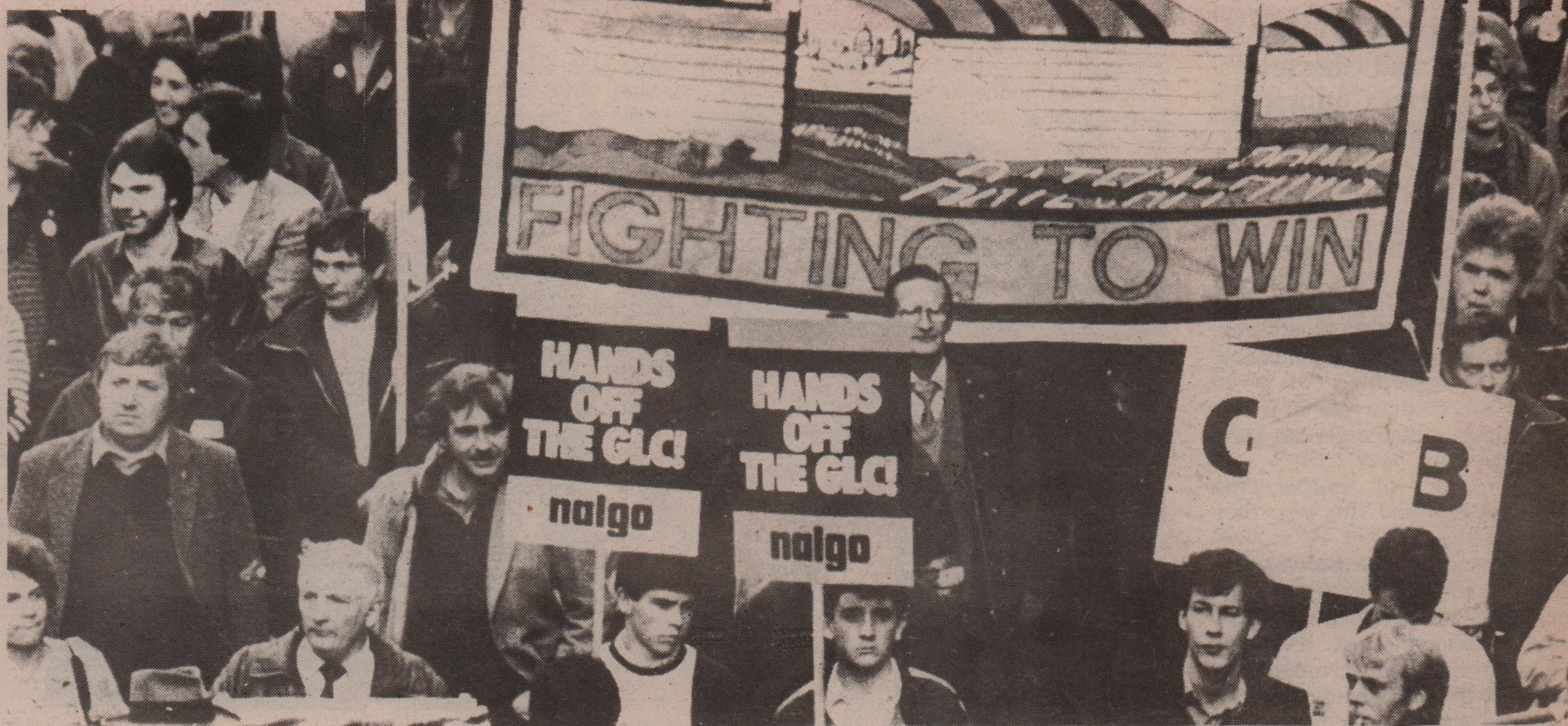


Photo: Andrew Wiard (Report)

Hackney unions say: stand firm!

UCW leaders cave in to Post Office

LAST Thursday's London Evening Standard summed it up: "£100 bonus buys off postmen".

The UCW leaders' capitulation came as little surprise. When Post Office management threatened to impose a whole range of "efficiency" measures without negotiated agreement, the UCW leadership called a special conference to overturn the union's policy of defending jobs and conditions and insisting that workers must benefit from new technology.

When management unilaterally introduced a job-slashing OCR (optical character recognition) machine at Mount Pleasant, suspended workers who refused to operate it, and then went to court to stop the resulting strike action, the leadership ordered back the Mount Pleasant

workers until a ballot was held, and told them to keep working the OCR machine.

Then management hinted that they would delay for two months the imposed introduction of 18,000 part-time staff — to give the union leadership a chance to push a sell-out through the annual conference starting on May 19. General secretary Alan Tuffin and his friends immediately cancelled both a ballot on strike action at Mount Pleasant and the threatened national ballot over strike action.

Tuffin

Tuffin might call the deal they signed on Thursday "satisfactory" but the only people smiling were the Post Office. As the Financial Times reported, it gave

management "virtually everything it wants".

The immediate introduction of OCR machines into 20 offices, at the cost of over 250 jobs. Unrestricted use of other mechanised equipment, including machines that monitor workers' 'productivity'. The immediate imposition of the IWM productivity scheme on the 47% of union members who had refused to accept it over the last four years. The immediate recruitment of 2,000 more part-time workers, and the promise unilaterally to set them to work after June 17, with a further 16,000 if the union leadership gets knocked back at the union conference.

The agreement on IWM and the part-time workers tears up the decision of the

Continued on page 11.

FUND

MANY readers have told us how much they appreciated our 'Magnificent Miners' pamphlet. Complimentary words are nice; but not as good, nor remotely as useful, as donations that would enable us to produce similar pamphlets again.

The first print run of that pamphlet (a second is due) cost £1000. We should cover that cost, and more, when all the sales money comes in. But in the meantime... far from being able even to think about another publication on the same scale, we're scrabbling for pennies.

Send donations to SO, 214, Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.