

A **Socialist** ACTION

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STOP

THATCHER'S

THUGS

CAVALRY CHARGES and riot police are what greeted the miners at Orgreave picket line on Monday. The Tories are determined that the miners will not score a victory in any confrontation with the police and are prepared to use the most open police brutality to achieve it.

Last week MacGregor and Thatcher also decided to blow up the negotiations between the NUM and the Coalboard by demanding the NUM accepts pit closures. The Tories have decided on their political plans for the summer. They want to smash the NUM into the ground and with it strike a devastating blow to the entire labour movement in Britain.

For the last three weeks Thatcher's government had played the 'hard cop, soft cop' game. Through carefully orchestrated leaks to the press about 'divisions' in the government and the NCB, Thatcher sought to create illusions in the talks. Meanwhile the government's real policy could be seen even then at Orgreave and the other key depots and power stations.

The reality is that there is no major concession Thatcher can afford to make to the miners. The government is in trouble on a number of fronts, meeting problems in its confrontation over local government, and falling electoral support. It is locked in a battle with Britain's most powerful industrial union in which the miners show no sign of giving in.

Thatcher's political conclusion is simple — and is why she blew up the negotiations and organised her thugs at Orgreave. Liverpool, local government, and above all the miners must be crushed.

A few fainthearts may have

dreamt of a compromise, but Thatcher was never interested. She knows that her government today cannot afford any major defeat at the hands of the miners.

The entire labour movement, and Labour Party *must* pick up that challenge Thatcher has thrown down. Labour's steps forward in the Euro-elections were a big boost. But the whole party must understand that advance will count for nothing if it allows the miners to be defeated.

National and local trade union boycotts of coal are being built. Local Labour Parties are actively building solidarity.

But the entire national Labour Party now has to be thrown behind the miners. Top of the agenda of every trade union branch, and of the first meeting of every local Labour Party, must be solidarity with the miners.

The NUM has to take the lead in spreading that solidarity not merely to the leadership but also the rank and file of other unions.

The key steps in the days ahead to build on the solidarity being carried locally are:

- The Labour Party NEC should urgently call a national Labour Party demonstration in support of the miners.

- The NUM should call a national solidarity conference of all trade unions, and trade union bodies, supporting the miners to map out a plan of campaign for solidarity.

- The campaign must be built for a national day of strike action in support of the miners.

If the labour movement builds on the victory it scored in the elections to secure the victory of the miners then Thatcher's decision to confront the NUM can be made a blow from which she will never recover.

EYEWITNESS AT ORGREAVE

WE GOT there about 7am. Before 8am, without any provocation, we were subjected to a charge by the police. The coke lorries hadn't even arrived.

The first big shove came when the lorries did eventually arrive after being delayed by pickets at the bottom end for over an hour.

I was at the front right under the riot shields which had been out from the start. The police response was to truncheon down the people at the front, hitting us on the heads and in the kidneys.

We pulled back and that's when they sent in the cavalry up the field and up the road. All the time there were half a dozen or more Mounties on our flank ready to charge from the side.

Then we saw a variety of riot police that we've never seen before with small shields and carrying truncheons. They came streaming from behind the police lines clubbing everyone they caught up with.

Even the TV showed that most people they hammered were just stood around. But this had led to quite a lot of hand to hand fighting as people tried to get their mates free from the cops.

The first convoy got through and in the two hours before the next lot, many of the lads went for something to eat. With less pickets there the police charged to move us as far up the road as possible. They forced us across the railway bridge and lines. Past the bridge they kept on charging and charging again, to break up the thousands of pickets that were still intent on getting down to the plant.

When it was clear that the street fighting was going to end up on a local housing estate, the police pulled back to the bridge. We followed them and it was at this point that wrecked cars from a scrapyard were set alight, purely as a defence against further cavalry charges.

We eventually moved off at about 1pm when a convoy of about 40 police minibuses came from our rear. The lorries had already been and gone and we had heard that the BSC were to suspend operations for this week anyway.

I think that the police, the government and the BSC management have decided Orgreave coke is not worth what happened this Monday. We've got to see this as some kind of victory for the NUM.



Photo: THE MINER

Socialist ACTION

Europe goes to extremes

It is ironic that the elections to such an irrelevant body as the European parliament should give such a clear insight into the state of European politics. Indeed when they are looked back at last weeks Euro-elections will be seen as a real political watershed.

Starting with the most widespread phenomenon of all — the simple refusal to vote — the elections were, as one commentator described it, a 'disaster' for the credibility of the EEC. That is a pure and simple gain for the left. The attempts of big capital in Europe to knit together credibility for its international organisation still lacks any serious popular support whatever.

But taking the three countries where there was a major shift in the elections — France, Italy and West Germany — there is a fundamental insight into European politics today.

In France the horrifying vote for Le Pen and the National Front confirms every single criticism made of French Neil Kinnock — Francois Mitterrand. In three years the Eurosocialist Mitterrand has brought the French labour movement lower than anything achieved by twenty years of continuous right wing government beforehand. Anyone with illusions in the dream ticket of Kinnock and Hattersley would do well to ponder those results in France.

As for the French Communist Party its rout was complete. The result of its three years in government was for its vote to collapse to its lowest level since the Second World War.

There will be no recovery to anything like the relation of forces between the Socialist and Communist Parties which existed prior to Mitterrand's campaign. Mitterrand has brought about a permanent shift in the relation of forces in the workers movement away from the Communist Party and in favour of the Socialists.

In Italy, of course, the Communist Party learnt the lesson of how to protect itself from demagoguery of Mitterrand's type a long time ago. The move of the Italian Party to Eurocommunism, to support for NATO and the EEC, to effectively functioning both as the Communist and Socialist Party in Italy, brutally dented the ambitions of Socialist Party leader Craxi — as well as exposing still further the cracks in the Christian Democrats.

But if France and Italy were the evident short term crises shown by the Euro-elections, overwhelmingly the most important result for the future was that in West Germany. The Greens soared effortlessly through the 'five per cent barrier' to gain representation in the European Parliament. Eight per cent of the vote in West Germany now goes to a party explicitly against NATO — and that means 10 and 12 per cent in the working class districts of the big cities.

If there were a general election in West Germany today, the Greens and the Social Democratic Party would have an overall majority in parliament.

But overall the elections confirm one massive fact. In May-June 1968 the general strike in France shattered the social calm of post war western Europe. That event aroused belief in short term socialist revolution in Europe — hopes that were dashed in the years that followed. A sort of despair gripped sections of the European 'far left'.

But both the hopes and the despair were based on a misunderstanding. May-June 1968 in France started, not finished, the social and political crisis in western Europe. Indeed only today is that crisis beginning to break out with its full force.

If you want to see the evidence of that just look around at those Euro-election results.



Photos: GM Cookson

Building a party of labour

IMPORTANT NEW developments are taking place in the base of the Labour Party. John Ross looks at where they are heading.

During the 1950s, 1960s, and most of the 1970s Labour's relation with the working class became eroded. While the newspaper picture of Labour party wards being filled with polytechnic lecturers, school teachers, and white collar workers was a caricature nevertheless it had sufficient truth to make even party activists laugh in recognition.

The cause of this huge erosion of Labour's active organised links with the working class was Labour's policies.

Why should the trade unions, and trade unionists rally to the party when under Wilson and Callaghan Labour spent most of its time imposing incomes policies and joining in the chorus of attacks on trade unions?

Why should women join the Labour Party when Labour was actually slower than many forces outside in taking up demands for women's liberation — and where Labour still has the absurd situation that men elect the women's positions on the National Executive?

It was the struggle over policies after 1979 — bloody as were the consequences in the short term — that began to lay any base for rebuilding Labour's popular appeal.

Interests

People do not join the Labour Party out of sentimentality. They are too practical for that. People will only join Labour in large numbers when it defends their interests. The number one problem in rebuilding Labour is therefore having policies and activities that defend people's interests — policies and struggles that defend the unions, defend the cities, defend democratic rights, that can really begin to tackle the problem of the economic crisis.

To show just how practical that is take what is undoubtedly the number one success story electorally for the Labour Party in the last two years — the campaign of the GLC.

Labour's support in London is now at a record high in comparison with the rest of the country. Even Neil Kinnock — after initially trying to shun him — is forced to try

to pick up some of Ken Livingstone's electoral glory (as anyone who saw last weeks press conference for Labour Euro candidates in London would recognise). And you do not have to be an uncritical admirer of the GLC to know that Ken Livingstone represents the left of the party, not its right.

Policies

The GLC built up its popularity not mainly by skillful use of the media (although why shouldn't Labour do that) but above all by its policies. No matter what the drawbacks — and there were many — significant sections of the working class, women, blacks and Irish workers supported the GLC because they believed it supported their struggles — and supported them not in a patronising sense but in terms of putting its resources at their disposal.

It is the same in Liverpool. People in Liverpool don't have to agree with all the politics of Militant to know that Liverpool council has no choice but to pursue the course it is following. A council fighting to defend the interests of the working people of an entire city inspires mass support. That is why Labour scored such successes in Liverpool.

Struggle

And on the trade union field Arthur Scargill has united the rank and file of the Labour Party in active support of the miners in a way that has not been seen in a trade union struggle in most people's lifetime.

It is in these fights — the miners, Liverpool, the GLC and metropolitan councils, the continuing mass campaign of CND — that real policies for the Labour Party are given

flesh and blood. Policies that remain on paper don't inspire large numbers of people. But policies translated into struggle do.

What is now crucial is that Labour — and that means the Labour left — translates not only elections but these campaigning gains into real organisational steps forward for the party. This means not just the usual appeals for more individuals to join the Labour Party — although that is necessary — but a real organisational strategy for building up the party.

Fortunately some of the nuts and bolts of this do now exist. What is necessary is to fit them in definite policies and goals and draw them together. What are the key steps in this — in addition to building up the individual membership of the party?

Links

First, and most important of all, is recreating and recementing the links between the Labour Party and the trade unions.

Nothing in British politics today can compare in importance with winning the miners strike. This was true even before the Euro elections. But with these elections out of the way every single Labour Party in the country must place right at the top of its agenda, at its next meeting, building up its mass solidarity work with the miners. Labour must call a national demonstration in support of the miners.

If this decisive struggle is followed up by a major campaign in defence of the political levy Labour's links with the unions in a year's time can look very different to those today.

Secondly, the mass campaign to defend the cities must be stepped up. Liverpool is entering into head on confrontation with the government. Ken Livingstone has now outlined the decision to go for GLC by-elections in London to show Thatcher has no support. There is going to be an increasingly direct need for industrial action to defend services and jobs as the attacks on the cities goes through.

Thirdly, the 9 June

demonstration showed the continuing strength of the anti-missiles movement. It is an open secret that the CND leadership did not want, and did not build, the demonstration. Its huge size however shows the huge scope for Labour to build and gain from this mass movement.

Change

Fourthly, Labour must change its internal structure on women. Women are the majority of the population. Their massive entry into the workforce is the single biggest social change in Britain in the last 30 years. The decline of women's support for the Tories is the biggest loss of votes the Conservative Party has suffered.

Literally tens of thousands of women's activists have now joined the Labour Party — and millions have joined the unions. The incredible mobilisation of women around the miners strike, the inspiring example of Greenham, shows the entire way women's role in the class struggle and labour movement is being openly revolutionised.

To give real self-government of women's organisation in the Labour Party, to pass the demands of the Women's Action Committee, is the single most vital organisational step Labour must take to transform its relations with women.

Alliance

Fifthly, a similar shift in the relation of Labour to black people is both possible and urgent. The development of black sections — something we are devoting the centre pages of our paper to — is the crucial step in this.

Sixthly, although it will be resisted bitterly by the right and centre of the party, Labour must develop the dialogue with Sinn Fein. Labour's policy on Ireland, the alliance it must create, is very simple. Britain must withdraw from Ireland. Get out. Until that is done no serious basis for unity of British and Irish workers, or between Catholic and Protes-

tant workers will exist.

Seventh, drawing together many of these elements, is the need to build a serious youth organisation for Labour. It should be stated openly that the LPYS is absurdly small. The youth organisations of parties such as the West German SPD have 50-100,000 members on paper and 15-20,000 activists. The LPYS has in reality around 3,000 members in far more favourable circumstances.

The reason is no mystery. The Militant leadership of the LPYS is hostile to every mass movement — CND, women's liberation, black self organisation, gay liberation — that could build a mass youth organisation for Labour.

Steps

The left of the Labour Party building up the LPYS, and thereby taking it out of the hands of Militant, is the precondition for building up a real mass youth organisation.

Of course there is much more to be done than we have outlined here. But these steps — building up individual membership linked to active campaigning, recementing links with the unions through support for the miners and then campaigning on the political levy, defending the cities, winning the demands of WAC, establishing black sections, developing the dialogue with Sinn Fein, reviving and building the LPYS — are all steps which can be taken immediately in the next months.

Out of them can come a Labour Party, and a Labour left, greatly strengthened.

And most of all a Labour Party beginning to do what it is supposed to do — defending the people who built it and sustain it. A party fighting for socialism and a party fighting to defend every section of the working class.

In reality and not just in name, a real party of labour.

Editor: ALAN FREEMAN

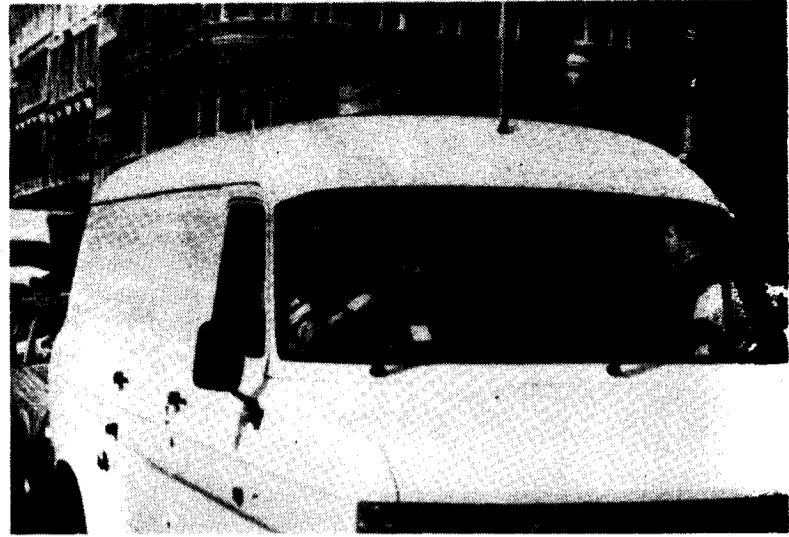
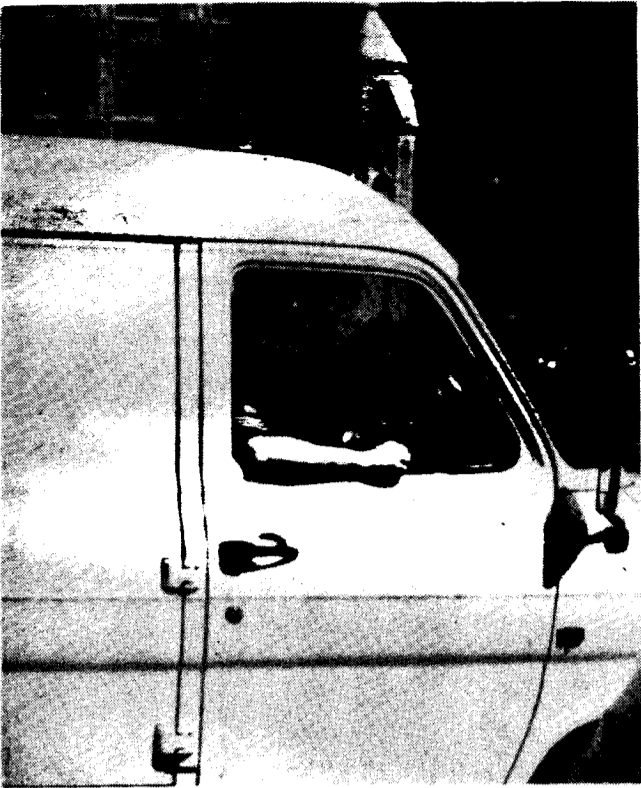
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The sequence of events (from far left): The Sergeant spots the photographer. Note the policeman in the background observing. The sergeant starts laying down the law, apparently, not realising that his army insignia is in full view; finally he attempts to use his windscreen shade to obscure his face. Seated next to him and only slightly visible in the original picture is a squaddie in open-necked uniform and beret. The pictures were taken in colour and show the uniform to be green and the insignia above the sergeant's stripes is on an orange background. The police van is of the standard type with a blue lamp above and a blue spotlight (half obscured) to the fore.

The Miner exposes

The army in the miners' strike

SINCE the beginning of the miners' strike there have been claims that the army is being used in the dispute. At the miners' lobby of Parliament, the NUM got photographic evidence that the army is involved. This is how the story was explained in *The Miner*.

The Government is using troops in the miners' strike.

Photographic evidence of military involvement has been obtained by *The Miner*.

The sensational evidence contradicts absolutely Government claims that there has been no such involvement.

Coming on top of re-

cent documents revealing major political interference in the strike — something always denied by the Government — an almighty row is sure to follow.

The photos, taken at the miners' mass lobby of Parliament on 7 June shows an Army sergeant driving a police van. The vehicle was one of many swiftly deployed as the size of the demonstration rapidly grew.

Yorkshire miner Tony Lowe, a keen amateur photographer, spotted the sergeant driving the van towards Parliament Square and immediately began clicking away.

Realising what was happening, the sergeant tried to hide behind his specially darkened windscreen, and obscure his face. But Tony has already snatched enough shots.

Camera

The sergeant then yelled at police nearby 'nick that bastard ... get the camera.' There followed a series of amazing scenes in the heart of the capital ci-

ty. Tony, knowing that the film would be lost if he were caught, dodged between two vans as the police gave chase. It gained him a few precious seconds to wind the film on.

He carried on running, got among a group of miners and threw the film to one, shouting to him to guard it with his life.

With the police breathing down his neck he told the other miners to surround him as he feverishly put another film in the camera.

A fight between one of the miners and a chasing policeman gave Tony a few more seconds before the police got to him.

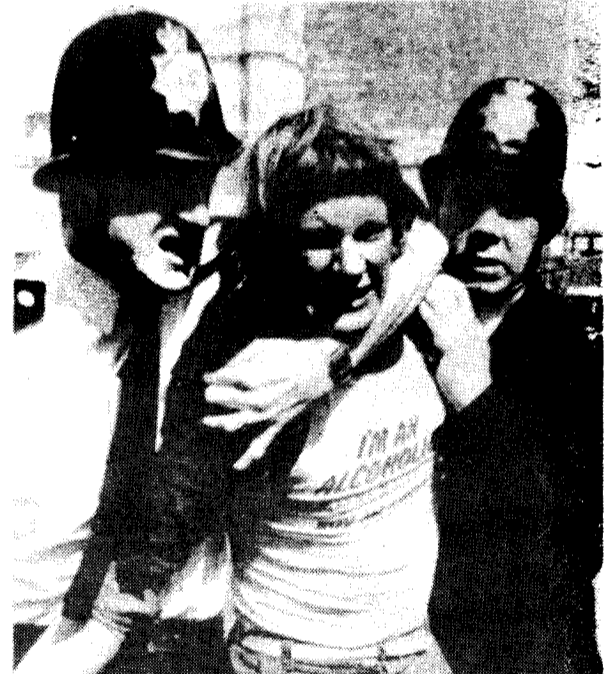
In full view of the public and at least four named NUM witnesses, the police demanded the camera, opened the back and exposed the film to the light.

Only now will they be aware that they got the wrong film.

Time after time, the Government has denied that troops are involved in the strike, despite a continuing flood of disturbing reports.

These pictures show that the Government has yet again been lying through its teeth.

Political embarrassment will now be acute and credibility reduced to a new low.



Wales march with miners

CARDIFF city centre rang with the confident chant: 'We will win, we will win, we will win', as 10,000 workers marched on the 13 June Wales TUC day of solidarity with the miners.

In defiance of the TUC general council, which declared the event unconstitutional, 250,000 Welsh workers took action on the day — from donations of a day's pay to total 24 hour stoppages.

Among those to strike for the day were engineering union members from the giant Port Talbot steelworks. Their solidarity was enthusiastically received by striking miners who have had bitter battles on the Port Talbot picket line because of scabbing by the main steel union in the plant.

Railway unions blocked all coal movement into the Llanwern steelworks and dockers from Cardiff, Barry and Newport struck for the day.

Seafarers from the SS *Mallin* were on the demonstration following their refusal to touch its cargo of imported coal.

They were joined by a contingent of black seafarers from the Geest line ships docked at the Cardiff port.

Garment workers from Ebbw Vale joined workers from the major Hoover plant in Merthyr Tydfil in

a 24 hour strike.

By far the biggest and most colourful support came from striking hospital workers in uniform. They were returning the solid support of miners given in the 1982 strike. Ancillary and domestic staff from all the major hospitals in South Wales walked out for the day.

By Celia Pugh

But pride of place went to the striking miners and their families. Visiting miners from Leicester and Derbyshire held their banners high with those of all the lodges in the South Wales coal field. Banner after banner followed from the miner's wives' action groups which are springing up across South Wales.

Speakers, Tony Benn and NUPE leader Rodney Bickerstaffe caught the mood of defiance when they attacked the TUC general council. Bickerstaffe declared: 'We let the NGA down and that's why we're here today. I don't care about the constitutional niceties of the TUC. You were right to call this action today'.

Benn backed this by remarking that 'You don't have to ask permission to take a stand'.

Vigorous applause greeted the announcement by Harry Harris, the GMBATU regional secretary that his union conference had voted to donate £1000 a day to miners' strike funds.

Summing up the fighting spirit of the march, South Wales miners president Emlyn Williams stated: 'We will not be moved. There is no question but that we are going to win. The closure plan is dead and now the miners charter has to be resurrected.'

As far as the miners are concerned there will be no compromise. Victory will be final'.



Belfast comes to Yorkshire

RECENTLY the small mining village of Maltby has become the target of police terror. But last Friday, 15 June, local youth struck back when 300 of them stormed the local police station, and ran through the town centre causing extensive damage to local shops.

The police and the media were quick to blame this on the frustration of picketing miners. But most of those involved in Friday's battle were unemployed youth from the area. This is confirmed by the fact that many of the shops damaged are known to have assisted miners' families since the start of the strike.

However, the miners aren't blaming the youth. Frank Slater, NUM delegate at Maltby pit, explained: 'These kids are fed up being on the dole and being pushed around all the time.'

The youth's main target was the police who have placed Maltby under a state of siege.

By Brian Lyons

Anyone who walks the streets is liable to be arrested, beaten up and abused. Men and women, young and old, are all targets. Young women who protested at police brutality were detained and subjected to constant abuse — 'slags' and 'whore' was shouted in their faces.

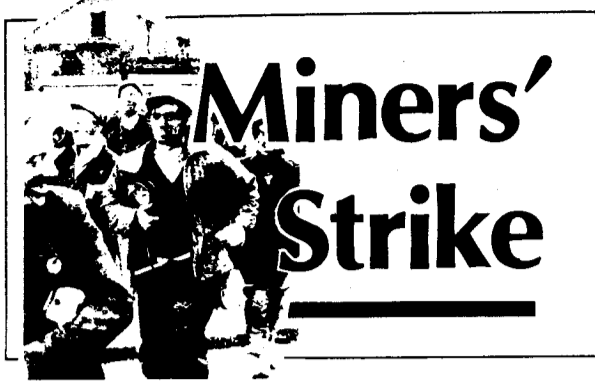
But young miners who they know as pickets are a particular target.

On the Saturday night following the youth revolt cops were provoking people as they left the town centre. In one case police threw a woman of 55 through a shoe shop window.

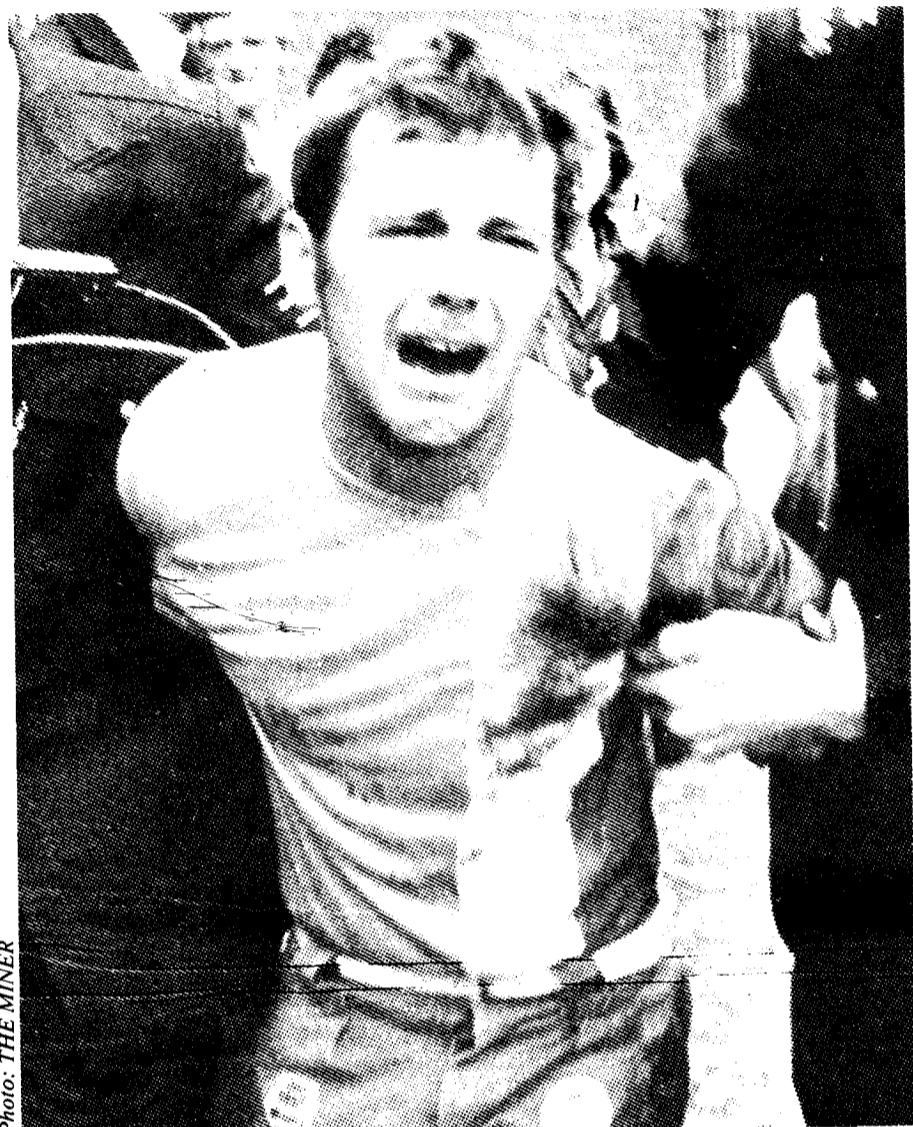
When people defended themselves they were immediately surrounded by van loads of cops. Hundreds jumped out, truncheons at the ready. The entire town centre was cordoned off and for nearly an hour people were prevented from going home.

One young picket, Ronnie, was batoned over the head for several minutes. He now says he won't return to the picket line.

Many local people now make a point of stepping out of their homes at late hours in a direct challenge to the unofficial curfew. The centre of Maltby, with its boarded shops and police patrols, looks like another city at war — Belfast.



Miners' Strike



Police have sharpened their brutal tactics from experience in Belfast.

Women fight for their future

SYLVIA JACKSON is a miner's wife from Keresley in Coventry. Recently she spoke at a rally in the city.

TRADITIONALLY a miner's strike has always been a men's fight. But not today. We women are not prepared to sit back and see our men thrown on the scrap heap, our children raped of their future and our communities decimated through MacGregor's policies.

At the beginning of the dispute we saw Nottingham women herding their men like sheep across picket lines and into work.

But they didn't realise what they started...

The wives, mums and girlfriends of the true miners were angered so much by these scenes, that the end result is women's support groups are now set up all over Britain.

We say the men's fight is our fight — because it is our future too. We stand side by side with our men on picket lines. We hold our head high with pride in our men.

Thatcher can put every policeman in Britain against us — but we won't go away. We will not be browbeaten into submission.

We have got one thing on our side which MacGregor and the Tories have not. That is — we are right.

We are right to stand and defend our mining industry. We are right to defend our men. We are right to defend our children's future. And we are right to defend trade unions against Thatcher's policies.

Every trade union member in Britain should stand and be counted with us — because if we lose it's not just the miners who lose — it will be the whole trade union movement.

Nobody is safe. It's the NUM in battle today, but it will be another union tomorrow. We say enough is enough.

The Tory policy has always been divide and rule. We have seen the propaganda churned out on TV which attempts to do just that. But it won't work.

The people involved in this dispute have got the guts and courage to carry on. We women have got the stamina to stick by our men, however long it takes.

They have tried to starve us into submission. But it hasn't worked. We have our soup kitchens set up to ensure that every miner and their family have at least one meal a day.

These are funded by donations from other trade unions and people from all walks of life who support us in our cause.

Many of our children have been denied their basic human rights, such as free school meals. It is wrong to use children as a political weapon. This is a despicable attempt by the Tories to try and drive the miners back to work.

They have every right to stand and defend their jobs — and we're with them all the way.

We've got just one message for MacGregor tonight: Get back to America and look after your grandkids.

And one last message for you who are here: No surrender!

Women interrogated by police

By Hanna Khamis, Coventry South West Labour Party

FOUR women arrested for obstruction at the Keresley pit picket line were held overnight by the police, and woken up every hour or two to be interrogated about their political affiliations.

Maureen Shevlin, Julie Khamis, Beth Hens and Derris Whitstone had gone to the picket line to follow up links made when miners' wives had addressed the local Labour Party women's section.

The women believe the police assumed they were all miners' wives and intended to make an example of them. The police refused to release them after the usual couple of hours, despite knowing

they all had responsibilities for children.

Dave Nellist MP plans to take the case up with the Home Secretary. They were all released without bail conditions on Friday morning, and their case will be in court on 19 October.

Coventry Miners' Rally

Fri 22 June
12 noon

Speakers Corner,
Little Park St

Organised by Coventry
TC; NUM; and Confed.

Fighting for dignity

Joint statement from Bristol Rape Crisis Line and Incest Survivors Group to accompany their £95 donation to the miners.

We declare our complete support for the miners and are holding regular collections.

We see a clear link between us and you — that is one of dignity. We fight for women to regain their dignity, you are fighting to maintain yours.

What goes on in society is reflected in the rapes we come across. When a woman is raped she is often made to feel it is her own fault.

The ruling class and their media use society's prejudices in such a way that those who suffer injustice end up being blamed, whether it is women being raped or people fighting for jobs. Part of our job is to challenge the myths that keep us all divided.

Victory to the miners.

South Yorks buses on strike

By Martin Hill, TGWU 9/10 branch, personal capacity

FIFTEEN angry busworkers staged a sit-in last Monday at the offices of South Yorkshire County Council. They were protesting at the refusal of the ruling Labour Group to hear a delegation explain their case for a better wage deal.

Labour is proud of the bus service in South Yorkshire. The average fare, at 10p, has risen only once in 10 years. Services are probably the best in the country.

But busworkers feel that the only people not benefiting from the 'socialist transport policy' are the women and men who keep the buses on the road. Their wages have fallen behind inflation

year after year. The present strike is for 6.2 per cent pay rise, and for consolidation — incorporation of weekend rates, into basic pay so that projected cuts in weekend services won't lead to a cut in earnings.

But council leaders' response to bus workers new militancy has been that 'management's job is to "manage"'. The attitude is particularly shortsighted at a time when the council and the transport policy face government attacks.

Tactics have become more militant. Besides opening up a campaign inside the labour movement, to put pressure on the council, flying pickets have been organised to stop other bus companies running into the country.



Photo: THE MINER

Miners' Support Committee

Leicester
56 St Stephens Rd.
Tel: Leics 552386

Coventry
Donations to: D Jones, 11 De Compton Close, Keresley, Coventry.

Bristol
c/o TGWU, Transport House, Room 1, Victoria St, Bristol BS1

Manchester
c/o FTAT, 37 Anson Rd, Victoria Park, Manchester 14

Preston
c/o John Parkinson, Trade Union Centre, St Mary's St North, Preston

Huddersfield
c/o Friendly and Trades Club, Northumberland St, Huddersfield

Vauxhall
c/o Joan Twelves/Greg Tucker, 1 Alverston Hse, Kennington Park Estate, London SE11

Southall
c/o 14 Featherstone Rd, Southall, London

Birmingham
c/o Trade Union Resource Centre, 7 Frederick St, Hockley

Ealing
c/o West London Trade Union Club, 33 Action High St, London W3

Southampton
c/o NUPE District Office, 93 Leigh Rd, Eastleigh, Hants

Cardiff
Room 219, Transport House, 1 Cathedral Rd, Cardiff. Tel: 0222 31176

Hounslow
c/o Ian MacDonald, 220 Wellington Road South, Hounslow, Middx. Tel: 01-577 3429

Medway
c/o Vince Drongin, Medway Towns Trades Union Council, 19 Randall Rd, Chatham, Kent.

Bury
c/o Brian Marden, 061-764 9648

Oxford
c/o Claimants Union, Princes St, Oxford

Leeds
c/o District Labour Party, 9 Queens Sq, Leeds 2

Lewisham
c/o Labour and Trade Union Club, Limes Grove, Lewisham, London

Haringey
c/o Unemployed Workers' Centre, 28 High Rd, Tottenham, London N17. Tel: 801 5629

York
c/o Terry, 3 Scaife St, York. Tel: 0904 25223.

Brent
375 Willesden High Road, London NW10

Birkenhead
Trade Union & Unemployed Resources Centre, Argyle St South (next to Central Stn), Birkenhead. Tel: 051-647 3904.

If your local support committee is not included here it means we have no address for it. Send it in!

The South East Region TUC-NUM

Stop Pit Closures

ALL OUT BEHIND THE MINERS

WED JUNE 27th
DAY OF SOLIDARITY

MARCH AND RALLY

1.00 p.m. TOWER HILL, E.C.3
3.30 p.m. JUBILLE Gdns

March and Rally
Assemble: 1pm Tower Hill EC3. Rally: 3.30pm Jubille Gdns, SE1.

IRELAND UNFREE



Poll fatigue

IT WOULD have been good to start the column with the revelation that even though the Euro-elections had been interminally boring in Britain, in Ireland... But alas it could not be.

Picture Ian Paisley erect in khaki-green popemobile bedecked with Union Jacks driving through Ballymena. 'Sinn Fein must be smashed at the polls! The Shadow of the Sinn Fein gunman lies across the province! Danny Morrison, the incarnation of evil!' Is this the voice of Ian Paisley! Well yes, and then again no.

The man of iron lungs has become a victim of the new technology — replaced by a mini-cassette recorder — better able perhaps to repeat the same thing over and over again than a human being.

Another victim could be seen south of the border. Charlie Haughey bemoaning 'me wounds for me country' held out his hand for reporters to show open sores on three fingers, sustained in a prolonged bout of hand-shaking. Maybe they will invent a machine for that!

With such newsworthy stories, it is no wonder that minor issues like partition, the Forum, jobs, neutrality and the role of the multi-nationals have been forced into second place.

In the North, everything hinges around the contest for the nationalist vote between SDLP sitting Euro MEP, John Hume and Sinn Fein Danny Morrison. Hume is apparently using his record in Strasbourg rather than the Forum report as the main campaign issue. Failing to comment on Judge Gibson's acquittal of three RUC men and subsequent endorsement of army shoot-to-kill policies, Hume hopes to clinch the seat by winning transfers from the protestant Alliance party.

Morrison on the other hand concentrates on the 'double-jobbing' of Hume, the SDLP's record of collaboration with the British, and the 'dolly-mixture' packaging of the Forum which answers none of the problems faced by the nationalist community. He hopes that the lack of interest in the election will work against the SDLP whose electoral machine is disintegrating as fast as Sinn Fein's is growing.

In the Unionist camp, the jostling for position between the 'triple-jobbing' Official Unionists and Democratic Unionists continues to revolve around just how much of a threat is posed by Sinn Fein. The theory goes that under threat loyalists will turn to the DUP, otherwise they slip back to complacency and the OUP.

In the South, European issues have featured more. On farm policy, a recent report showed thousands of small farmers living on an average of £25 per week. EEC money now seems to flow almost unendingly into the pockets of the few rich farmers and ranchers. Despite the last minute pledge of the Worker's Party to build an underground railway and oil refinery in Dublin, neither they nor the Labour party have extended their verbal defence of jobs and living standards to an assault on partition which has opened up the South to the ravages of the multinationals whose investment policies have broken up traditional industries and led to rocketing unemployment.

Neutrality made a last minute entry into the headlines last Wednesday with the resuscitation of the Western European Union in Paris. The decision of the European members of NATO to use meetings of the Euro-parliament as a caucus for their intervention into NATO was bound to raise hackles in a country where 84 per cent of the electorate are actively in favour of maintaining neutrality and already see membership of the EEC as a threat to it.

Irish CND have been circulating a neutrality pledge to all candidates which has further exposed Fianna Fail's hesitancy. Labour's Frank Cluskey suggested a referendum on the issue. Sinn Fein has now formally endorsed the aims of CND and despite having to change the names of their candidates so that the words 'Sinn Fein' could appear on the ballot paper, have waged a high profile anti-imperialist campaign in the elections. This has been endorsed by Peoples' Democracy, and promises to be the sole lasting benefit of the whole charade.

The break-up of India

THE STORMING of the golden temple in Amritsar by the Indian Army has turned the spotlight on the growing political crisis in India. JOHN ROSS looks at the background to the current events and India's place in the 'third world'.

India under Indira Gandhi still represents, from an international point of view, almost a throwback to another era. It was the leadership of the Indian Congress Party, under Nehru, which launched the famous 'non-aligned' movement with Yugoslavia's Tito and Egypt's Nasser.

During the 1960s and 1970s that movement had crumbled. Egypt, under Sadat, had moved from being 'non-aligned' to being firmly in the camp of the United States. The 1970s were the era of the US-backed regimes in Latin America such as in Chile, Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay.

In East Asia the 1970s saw the rise of the 'miracle economies' of South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore — economies which were fuelled by US bank loans and whose growth was based on exports to the imperialist economies.

Apart from a few individual states which became direct allies of the Soviet Union — the most important being Ethiopia, South Yemen, Angola and Mozambique — the semi-colonial capitalist states during the 1970s were being tied more closely and directly into imperialism than at any time since the Second World War. The same pattern is continuing today with Angola and Mozambique being forced by economic and military pressure into close links with South Africa.

The basis of this intensified imperialist domination was clear. Following the working class struggles in Western Europe after 1968, the oil price increases of 1973, and the economic recession of 1975, the imperialist countries began an intensified export of capital into some of the more developed countries of the 'third world'.

Debt

Huge bank loans, which now form the basis of the international debt crisis, were made to finance the economic growth of Brazil, Mexico, South Korea, Taiwan and similar states. Simultaneously their industries were built up by direct export of industrial capital from Western Europe, the United States and Japan — the creation of a large scale car manufacturing industry in Brazil is a classic case.

India was the most important semi-colonial country which tried to hold out against this trend. When India gained independence in 1947 it possessed the most powerful and developed ruling class of any ex-colony and one of the largest economies of any third world country.

The British rulers had always constituted only a tiny proportion of the population of India — less than 0.01 per cent. The Indian capitalist class had been able to build up a powerful all India political force — the Congress Party. In Mahatma Gandhi the Indian bourgeoisie had

found a leader and ideology — that of 'non-violent resistance' — which had simultaneously been able to lead a struggle against the British and prevent any uncontrollable explosion of the workers and peasants.

The Indian bourgeoisie was further strengthened by the policy which Stalin and the Indian Communist Party pursued during the Second World War. Under the political line of the 'anti-fascist popular front' the Indian Communist Party abandoned the struggle for Indian independence in favour of so called 'unity' with the British against the Japanese. The prestige of the independence struggle therefore fell wholly and completely to the Congress Party.

Non-aligned

With its political position secure, and with the country not shaken by Japanese invasion or civil war, the Indian bourgeoisie after independence was able to embark on a relatively coherent economic and political project.

Economically India tried to achieve a relatively self-sufficient industrialisation. Participation of foreign capital in the economy was kept low — per head of the population capital imports into India were only one third those of Pakistan and only a twelfth of Taiwan or South Korea. A large state industrial sector was created. Major economic aid — in particular in fields such as the steel industry and power supply — was sought from the Soviet Union.

Politically, 'non-alignment' was an expression of the same process. India maintained all its practical links with the world capitalist economy. But it made major defence purchases from the Soviet Union and kept up a verbally 'socialist' rhetoric.

Land

The effect of this economic orientation was increasing economic differentiation within the country. For the majority of the population their standard of life has not improved since independence. Landlessness among the peasants has increased sharply.

The chief beneficiary of the economic growth was the big Indian capitalist groups and the employers and large farmers in certain specific regions of the country.

In some of the poorest states, with the highest levels of landlessness (West Bengal, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh) the Indian Communist Party and Indian Communist Party



Indira Gandhi

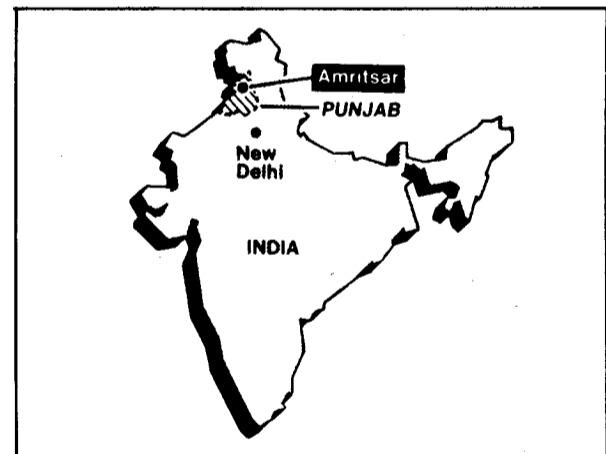
(Marxist) have built up major regional bases against the Congress. In slightly better off areas of the Indian state — the Punjab, Gujarat, and Uttar Pradesh — Hindu communalist parties (notably the Jan Sangh) and the Sikh Akali Dal have major support.

Chaos

The Punjab itself, where the Indian army has now acted, is the richest state in India in terms of per capital income and the most prosperous agricultural area.

The strains within Indian society produced by the economic orientation of the Congress party already came to a head in 1977 with the defeat of Indira Gandhi in the general election by a combination of regionalist and particularist parties. Gandhi found herself back in power simply because no other capitalist force was capable of keeping India together.

Indira Gandhi's Congress party, however, now finds itself squeezed on two fronts. India's slow rate of economic growth is insufficient to keep together the centrifugal forces in the country. The artificial state welded together by the British into 'India' already came apart once in 1947 with the partition into India and Pakistan. Pakistan then exploded in 1971 with the creation of Bangla Desh. These centrifugal tendencies have only been



strengthened by the economic policies pursued since independence.

But the only alternative open to Indian capitalism — that of attempting to speed up economic growth by importing foreign capital on a larger scale — would be likely to speed up the economic unevennesses of the country still further.

Confronted with these pressures the policy of the central Indian government is tending to become less and less coherent. On the one hand the government is stepping up moves to import foreign capital — the number of authorisations for collaborations with foreign firms approved by the government has doubled in the last two years. Imports of Japanese capital have increased tenfold.

But on the other side the Indian government's attempt to move its military purchases away from the USSR have fail-

ed. Indian proposals to build West European Jaguar and Tornado fighters came to nothing and instead it has been forced to go back to reliance on production of Soviet MIG aircraft. Tensions between India and the United States have increased again.

With an increasingly incoherent economic and foreign policy, and with rapidly increasing regional and national tensions within the country, Indira Gandhi maintains her dominant position in Indian politics primarily by the fact that no other bourgeois force is capable of keeping the country together. Following events such as in Amritsar even her ability to do so is increasingly in doubt.

As the 1980s unfold the world's most populous capitalist state is heading inexorably towards chaos. The storming of the golden temple is just the beginning of the process.

Black Sections:

Here to stay!

THE ISSUE of the black sections of the Labour Party is likely to be the major debate at this year's Party conference. Over 200 black activists attended its launch conference in Birmingham last week.

Rebuilding support for the Labour Party after its massive election defeats means creating a new, broader coalition of forces around it. Not a coalition as argued by *Marxism*

Today — meaning pacts with anti-working class forces like the Alliance — but a coalition in the sense that the Labour Party must represent the interests of all the oppressed.

Black people must be part of this. But first Labour has to thoroughly break from its past record of betrayal on black rights. Giving black people a voice is a first step to doing this.

Socialist Action: What is your view on black sections in the Labour Party?

Paul Boateng: Black sections have a very important role to play in ensuring that the Labour Party delivers to the black community at every level, not simply in terms of representation, but also in terms of the policy-making functions of the Party.

We, as a Party, if we are to progress electorally, and if we are to create a genuinely socialist society, have to become a mass-based campaigning party. Otherwise we shall die in terms of our capacity to implement policy once we are elected. A Labour government can only implement socialist policies if it is capable of commanding mass public support and black sections, along with women's sections have an important role to play in this.

We are still a Party that is dominated by the white, middle-class male, not simply in terms of our parliamentary representation, but right across the board. We have to change that and black sections are a part and a way of doing that.

Paul Boateng

Why should the large number of black activists outside the Labour Party join the Party? Why not form an independent black political party?

It is vital that black people always retain the right to campaign autonomously outside the Party around issues of specific concern to the black community. There are occasions when the best strategy is to adopt a campaigning approach that goes beyond party political affiliations.

But at the same time if we are to bring about the sort of fundamental changes in our society which are going to benefit black people this involves altering the economic and social conditions which exist.

Anyone who believes otherwise is living in cloud cuckoo land. So if people are seriously concerned about political action then the Labour Party, as a socialist party and socialism, are the only way we are going to bring that about.

Those that suggest an independent

black party are falling into a trap. They have to recognise that it is not possible to organise around the issue of race alone. Race and class and the struggle against racism and capitalism are inextricably linked.

But that isn't to let white socialists off the hook in believing that all they have to do is accept a class analysis of the problem. They also have to recognise the racial dimension to any analysis that is going to have any meaning.

What do black sections offer black youth?

Among black youth there is a growing bitterness and alienation not simply from society as a whole, but also from the political process and there is a conscious withdrawal from that process. Well not withdrawal, because for very many of them they have never been part of it.

We have to get the message over that there is a role for black youth, for the wider black community, and that the Labour Party and unions recognise and respect that role. In this black sections, and autonomous black organisations *within* the trade unions, have a very important, indeed historic, role to play if we aren't to drift into a situation where black people write themselves off politically because other people have written them off.

The result of this is that black people are beginning not to vote at all, and that damages both the Labour Party and the black community.

How can black activists take up Kinnock and Hattersley's public opposition to the black sections?

Kinnock and Hattersley would have done better to remain silent, until they'd had an opportunity to consider the views of the working party which has been set up as a result of a decision of conference.

They should have acquainted themselves more with the views of the

black rank and file members of the Party, the views of the CLPs and the membership, both black and white. They've voted with their feet on this and have actually established black sections. Therefore I regret both the timing and the content of their interventions to date.

Black activists should not lose any opportunity to bring home to the leadership their own views and make sure their local parties do too. This is the responsibility of all members of the Party, black and white. If they don't change their minds, then conference will be the final arbiter.

We must not spend too much time wringing our hands over the unfortunate attitude of the leadership. Our responsibility is to make sure that not only the CLPs, but the trade unions recognise the importance of the right of black members to organise autonomously within the Party.

Won't black sections become just a way for black careerists to further their parliamentary careers?

Anyone who believes that black sections are no more than a means of getting black people elected to certain positions within the Party or in local and national government doesn't understand the whole history of sectional organisation within the Labour Party.

They are by no means the only focus, or indeed the primary focus of black involvement in the Party. That remains, and must remain, the GMCs, where ultimately the decisions will and should be made. The purpose of black sections is to provide a basis for organisation, a basis for the development of policy and to help focus the Party's attention on these issues.

Were black sections to become the dustbin of the Party for all black issues and snake pits of personal ambition then they would be an absolute disaster. But I don't believe that the grass roots black activists will allow that to happen.



Asian and black women have joined unions and fought bosses but Labour has not put itself behind their struggles.

By Mike Wongsam
member of the Labour Party
Black Section steering committee,
in a personal capacity.

UP UNTIL now a controversy has raged among the British left, both black and white, about the desirability and significance of Labour Party black sections. This controversy will intensify up to and beyond the coming Labour Party conference.

Whatever is said about them one thing which must be thoroughly understood is that black sections are an established fact in London, and will soon become so in other parts of the country. Therefore, despite the reticence of the national leadership of the Labour Party to formally recognise them, the essence of the debate must be to clarify what attitude one takes to such a development.

In my view this is impossible without an assessment of the relationship of the black community as a whole to the rest of British politics and in particular to the developments taking place in the labour movement.

Nobody on the left can deny that the Labour Party has a lot to answer for in relation to black people both here and in other countries. And yet black people remain the most implacably loyal supporters of the party in election after election of any section of the working class.

But what is essential and new is the tendency for black people to join the party in numbers and organise as black people. In order to understand this one must look back over the past history of the relationship between black people and the Labour Party.

The first large black communities to settle here this century were mainly composed of seafarers in Liverpool, Manchester, North Shields and Cardiff. Economic decline and unemployment followed the First World War and ushered in a protracted period in which riots and systematic street violence broke out, notably in Manchester.

The black population were forced to form 'self-help' communities and were prevented from organising within the structures of the labour movement.

The same pattern followed the next wave of immigration after the Second World War, due to the labour shortage and the destruction of the colonial 'one-crop' economies. There was a re-emergence of racism in the '50s and '60s, with riots in Notting Hill and Nottingham in 1958.

In all of this, the mass organisations of the working class played a reactionary role and black people fought mainly rearguard actions in defence of their communities. The direction taken by black political organisations reflected this reality.

The founding of the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination and the Universal Coloured Peoples Association started a continuous line of development which was essentially from necessity outside the structure of working class organisations.

However, the changes taking place



In many strikes like this at Fords black workers have been among the most militant in the labour force.

A real step

towards class unity

in working class politics today open up the possibility of a new period in black political organisation.

Against the background of economic depression, within which the black community is a particularly oppressed sector of society, the results of the last general election show that electorally Labour has been pushed back into its traditional strongholds: the big metropolitan centres.

Champion

In this context a section of the Labour left has grasped that the only credible way to rebuild Labour as the mass party of the working class is to assemble forces such as the peace movement, the women's movement, the unions — and now the black movement — under the banner of Labour.

It is the existence of this minority current on the left, but with mass proportions, which marks a breach in continuity with the traditional outlook of the Labour Party. This makes a space for black political activity inside the party.

It is not insignificant that the most advanced expression of this is the Livingstoneite left in London, where the largest concentration of the black population is (according to the 1974 census, 57.7 per cent of black people live in the south east).

The increased activity of black people within the Party is the impetus for the demand for a Labour Party black section. Over 200 black activists attended the black section conference in Birmingham.

It is now crucial, if this progress is to be developed, that the Labour left as a whole takes up and champions the demand. It is perhaps not surprising that Kinnock and Hattersley are opposed to a black section. They realise, as with the women's section, that a black section of the Party would not only apply pressure on questions that affect black people, but would probably become a permanent left pressure on the Party on all questions.

In this context, while the *Militant* tendency's position against black sections is not surprising given their position on other similar questions, their arguments must be refuted, as they provide a 'left' cover for Kinnock and company's opposition to the black section.

Bob Lee, in last week's *Militant* explained: 'Such sections, effectively separating blacks from the rest of the party might actually serve to undermine the unity between black and white workers who are already active in the party at a grassroots level.'

The fact is that very few black people are active at any level in the party, despite the fact that a growing number of black people are joining. As an op-

pressed minority they need to organise to ensure that their demands are taken up in a serious way by the mainstream of the Party.

But more serious in *Militant's* argument is the claim that black and white unity already exists in the Party. This is patently not the case. At Party conference the black faces are few and far between, black candidates are not put forward at any level of the Party.

Outside the Party black people have to confront deeply ingrained racism within the working class itself, and this is reflected inside the structures of the labour movement.

A black section is precisely an instrument to overcome the existing disunity. By talking as though black and white unity already exists the *Militant* cover up the real problems confronting black people, and the fight that will have to be waged within the working class to create a basis for real class unity.

Separatism

The *Militant* argues that a 'bold commitment by the Labour Party to carry out a genuine anti-racist policy' would solve the problem. But unless the black section is organised to fight for such a policy, it will never happen.

Finally they argue a black section would take black people out of the mainstream of the party. The problem is that they are not there now. As Diane Abbott said at the Labour Party Women's Conference: 'It is hypocritical for people to go on about the black section creating separatism, when they haven't complained about the white separatism that exists in the Party today.'

Given the process of realignment in British politics today the black section begins to act as a bridge between the black community and the Labour Party. It begins to pose the real issues of class unity in a more profound way than at any time since the abolition of slavery.

But class unity can only be built on the basis of complete and absolute equality of representation at all levels of the movement. Any other kind is only disguised disunity.

The argument that all that black sections are about is lobbying for more MPs or councillors both misrepresents the stated aims of the black section itself, and totally misunderstands the nature of British politics today. The black section is a first step in the fight against the racist division of the working class, and therefore a step towards the kind of unity the working class needs to build to take on the Tory and ruling class offensive against our rights and living standards.

Benn

THE PROPOSALS for black sections which have been pressed for some time on the Labour Party by the black ethnic communities are now being considered by the NEC working party set up after last year's conference. There are many people in the movement, and I am one of them, who believe that the case for establishing such sections is very strong and the party must respond positively.

Labour is, and always has been, a federal organisation recognising the differing interests of the trade unions, affiliated organisations, women, young people and a whole range of special interest groups. Against that background, there is no doubt whatsoever that black sections would fit into an accepted pattern and provide a strong voice for hundreds of thousands of people who, at present, feel that their voice is not heard strongly enough. We need to see that this argument is strongly presented while the working party is sitting and that conference hears the case for black sections not only from the black communities but from across the whole spectrum of the party.

Today's conference provides an opportunity for Black activists in the party to get their case across and for this reason it is a very important event.

Hain

I fully support the demand for Black Sections and am encouraged by your initiative which we must press at this year's Party conference. Indeed, in Putney CLP we established just such a section three years ago and it proved extremely valuable, both in drawing in black people who would not otherwise have been involved actively in the Party and in representing black interests and anti-racist policies.

The Labour Party has taken black people for a ride for too long and these vehicles for black self-expression will be an important means both of changing this and contributing to re-building Labour's political base.

Peter Hain, Vice-Chair, Labour Coordinating Committee

Livingstone

DEAR COMRADES, on the occasion of your first national conference in Birmingham, I wish to extend my greetings and best wishes for a successful initiation. It is a sad state of our racist society that black people are forced to organise independently within organisations in order to determine strategies and pursue action in pursuit of equality and justice.

I am totally committed to the achievement of a society free from racism, sexism, inequality and prejudices against any minority or disadvantaged groups in our society. Your struggle for justice is ours too.



Haringey councillors' stand is good — but where are black councillors?

Photo: ANDREW WIRAD

Nicaragua

The workers in power

ON MAY DAY this year, Commander JAIME WHELOCK, one of the four main leaders of the Sandinistas, spoke to agricultural workers in Chinandega, in the North-west of Nicaragua.

His speech covered a wide variety of topics. Here we reproduce some sections of the speech dealing with the problems confronting the Nicaraguan economy in the context of the world crisis and military aggression on the country's borders.

On this May 1, 1984, the people of Nicaragua are engaged in struggle, a struggle that is still necessary to attain national sovereignty and to attain a higher standard of living and social progress. How different it is from the May Days of other years, such as 1963, when worker and student demonstrators were massacred; such as in 1965, when workers were repressed and tortured; such as in 1978 and 1979, when some workers' leaders were murdered, imprisoned, or sent to the torture chambers.

How different it is today, with the people holding a demonstration in freedom, celebrating with joy the Day of Workers.

We are poor. We have inherited debts, destruction, and a people living in extraordinary poverty. We still have a long way to go to reduce to zero the number of children who have no shoes, to eliminate

the general poverty of this country. But there is a fundamental factor that must be stressed this First of May.

Workers participate in all of the state's consultative bodies. There are no decisions on the economy or prices, on subsidies or wages, on which the working class, through its organizations, does not express itself in a militant way. Workers participate directly in power through the CDS's (Sandinista Defence Committees), through thousands of organizations, and in assemblies aimed at reviving and raising production.

Power

But most important of all is the fact that the revolutionary leadership, the Sandinista National Liberation Front, is the organization of workers, the organization that returned power to workers after taking it away from Somozaism.

We have given power to the working class, and it is the working class that holds power here!

You will remember the period after the triumph, when Somoza had left us a devalued currency, an economy in ruins, a country in debt. What happened in those first months? There were no beans because nobody had planted any. There was no rice because that had not been planted either.

Eggs were in short supply because all the chickens, all the hens, had disappeared. And what happened? The price of eggs tripled or quadrupled. Why? Because there was a shortage. And when goods are scarce but wages continue to be paid at normal levels, when there is no production, the prices of the items that are scarce go up.

Scarcity

We were short of certain products. Sugar, for example, was not scarce, because we had sugar. Milk was not scarce, because we had milk. But eggs, meat, corn and beans were scarce. What did we do? What we could not produce, we imported. During 1980 and 1981 we maintained ourselves on the basis of imports, on the basis of international loans, using our hard currency to buy corn, milk, beans and rice. And the shortages were not felt: there was no longer a scarcity.

But following these

phenomena, we have suffered others. First among them is the fact that the Sandinista People's Revolution coincides with a crisis.

The crisis is striking blows at all poor economies. Even some strong ones have had to devalue their currencies and throw thousands of workers out of work. We have been fighting against this international crisis, trying to prevent the workers' economy from being hit.

Last year, for example, we exported a lot of coffee and we produced more rice, beans and sorghum than ever before in the history of the country.

But this production is insufficient, because from the beginning we wanted to give our people the best. We wanted to give the peasant more food, the working class more food, and at cheap prices.

The products we sell internationally are going at low prices. The products we buy on the international market are going at very high prices.

In short, *companeros*, since 1979, and in particular from 1980 to 1983, Nicaragua has lost in international trade, because of the crisis, about \$2 billion. That is what we have lost through selling our products at the prices they impose on us, and through buying expensive goods, again at the prices they impose on us.

Year after year, the



Only the workers and peasants will go all the way

country is losing some \$400 million. What could we have done with that \$2 billion? We could have given more support to health care, we could have built more houses, we could have strengthened our economy more.

That is, in a nutshell, there are today certain products of which there are not enough to meet the needs of all workers.

The problem of food, of shortages, will be

resolved in the long term. But we are not going to be able to emerge from this situation of shortage as long as we have an international crisis that forces us to assign priorities for the hard currency we have left after we pay for the oil, after we make payments on the debts — that forces us to choose between medicines or houses, milk for babies, or toilet paper (we have no paper mills here, we just repackage the toilet paper), deodorant or baby toys. We will have to keep assigning priorities for this hard currency.

It is important that the people understand that some elements of the shortages are part of the price the people of Nicaragua have to pay for real development. For we are setting genuine priorities for the use of hard currency. We are going to spend it only on things that fill an effective and fundamental need of the people.

Speculation

We are using hard currency to buy, first of all, medicines and milk for children, for mothers, for the sick, and for the combatants. Secondly, to purchase oil to keep the economy functioning. Thirdly, for production.

And there remains the problem that wages are very low and are not sufficient to buy products of primary necessity.

Imports to saturate the market will not solve it. Subsidies will not solve it. Because we are in the midst of an aggression. The phenomenon of shortages, *companeros*, we are going to have with us for some time.

What has exploded here in the midst of the phenomenon of shortages is the phenomenon of speculation. The Ministry of Internal Commerce says that a pound of corn

should cost 1 córdoba, and yet when you find a pound of corn in the market, what does it cost? Eighty córdobas a *medio*, 8 córdobas a pound, 3 córdobas. First of all there is an anarchy in the prices; secondly, the official price is not being respected even though there is a subsidy.

Okay, we are going to do three things. The first thing we are going to do is finish the reorganization of wages, so that we do not have one truck driver at a sugar mill making 6,000 córdobas (a month), another 10,000, and another 8,000. All should make the same. There should be uniformity in wages.

Incentive

Secondly, we are going to establish realistic wages, not the wages of two years ago we are going to give a reasonable wage increase, and we are going to give workers a material incentive. The good worker is going to make more money. He who produces is going to make more. So there is going to be a standardization of wages, an increase in wages, and incentives for the better workers.

The other two measures will be the following. We have to intervene in distribution. We have to direct products through secure channels. We have to remove products from channels where someone is taking advantage of the heroic and patriotic efforts of the people in defense, in the economy, and in work for the future.

How is it possible for us to have here workers who cut sugar cane 10 or 12 hours a day, receive their pay, and then have to turn it over to a speculator, to a criminal, to a parasite who cannot even be called a revolutionary?

10 days to shake cruise

GREENHAM WOMEN are calling for ten million women to mobilise at Greenham and around the country for 10 days, starting on 29 September. Each woman taking part is asked to get 10 others along too.

The Greenham women's protest has been the most successful action of the peace movement, and a key factor in the growing unpopularity of cruise. It has forced the pace of CND.

The government has reacted by using state coercion to stop the protest at the camp. And now the existence of the camp is under threat. This raises a big issue for CND and the labour movement.

All unilateralists must organise to support and maintain the protest at Greenham, and the right of women to organise within the peace movement. This is not an added extra — it plays a vital role in defending the movement's commitment to unilateralism and to mass action perspectives.

Everyone must organise to ensure the success of the September action. Women in the Labour Party and trade unions are

inspired by the example of the Greenham peace women. Miners wives have shown their support, and many Labour Party women's sections double up as Greenham support groups.

By Ilona Aronovsky, Newham NELP

But the Labour left must force the party leadership to take up the issue, and show that the party as a whole is supporting the camp. For instance it could coordinate a rota of women's sections to visit the peace camp.

We should call for a big labour movement women's demonstration as part of the 10 day action.

All sections of CND should mobilise in support of the camp. National CND and especially Labour and Trade Union CND must build the 10-day action and make sure it's a big success.



For feminism and class struggle

WIGAN Pier Revisited, by Bea Campbell is an important book. There are now two fundamentally opposed strands of thought in the women's movement. Bea Campbell leads one of them.

This current argues that the women's movement should abandon 'childish, leftist' ideas of fighting the ruling class, and that advancing the interests of women centres on persuading the ruling class to take money and 'privileges' from working class men and redistribute them to women.

The second strand argues that women's interests will only be advanced at the expense of the ruling class and that women must therefore fight, with or without men, against the ruling class to achieve their just demands.

This current argues that this struggle can coincide with the interests of the broader labour movement to the degree that the labour movement is forced to learn that it cannot win alone; that it must champion the struggles of all the oppressed.

In this article JANE KELLY explains what is wrong with Bea Campbell's ideas.

BEA Campbell's work articulates a legitimate frustration experienced by women, with the workings of the labour movement. The silencing of our voices, the exclusion of our demands, male-dominated practices, all these she opposes. At the same time she provides a left-feminist cover for her co-thinker and fellow communist, Eric Hobsbawm, and *Marxism Today's* political project of the creation of an anti-Thatcher alliance—commonly known as a popular front, the classic Stalinist compromise with the bourgeoisie.

How does she balance these apparently contradictory and incompatible aims, and how on earth does she get away with it?

By using the language of feminism, but blurring the important distinctions between radical and socialist feminist ideas, she confuses the identity of the enemy. She gives priority to the fight against the male trade union and labour movement but ignores, on all but a few occasions, the larger fight against capital. She therefore locates the fight for women's rights within the labour movement alone, instead of both there and in the class struggle.

Apparent

Her apparent radicalism appeals to some women, acutely aware of the shortcomings of the male labour movement, but as unsure as Bea Campbell appears to be, of the main enemy. Is the problem man as the oppressor, or man as the agent of oppression? The systematic confusion sewn by her conflation of radical with socialist feminist ideas produces an opening for her pessimistic and reformist project. If she succeeds it will confuse and derail the women's movement, which is at last making real gains inside the Labour Party and trade unions, despite the Thatcher government: and it will be our undoing.

She gets away with these deliberately unclear and confusing ideas, because of the lack of any developed tradition of Marxist theory in Britain, either in the labour movement or among feminists. Her speeches, her feminist demagoguery, her articles in *City Limits*, *Marxism Today* (an ironic name if ever there was one), and her books, all try to win over those women who, lacking a theoretical framework, cannot spot the flaws and fail to recognise the similarities of her apparent radicalism and Hobsbawm's more obvious



Bea Campbell

Photo: GLORIA CHAIMERS

Photo: VAL WILMER

pessimism and popular front politics.

A debate on her work is, therefore, of great importance. First because she represents part of a retreat from the feminist demands of the '60s and '70s in the face of Thatcher's attacks, a retreat that is evident not just in the politics of *Marxism Today* and sections of the LCC, but is also visible in the recent work of Betty Friedan and Germaine Greer. Important secondly because it is, at the same time, a disguised but coherent element in the retreat into popular frontism of the Euro-communist wing of the British Communist Party. And although the majority of Labour and trade union leaders deny any interest in such a project, the recent formation by Frank Field and an SDP peer of the openly coalitionist Rainbow Circle is evidence of the existence of such forces.

The pessimism which underlies this project also informs Bea Campbell's recent book *Wigan Pier Revisited*, an attempt to rewrite Orwell from a contemporary, feminist stance. The chapter on the miners is especially telling, both of her wrong analysis of the period and of the way she misuses feminism to back up her reformist politics.

Attacks

She attacks the masculinity of the NUM, the romantic, male myth of their invincibility, the lack, until very recently, of any commitment to the transformation of the conditions of work of the women in the mining communities—all this without any political or historical analysis.

She names, but doesn't explain, the compromise between capital and labour which underlies labourism. She ignores completely Britain's imperialist past that produced and paid for the compromise, she fulminates against but gives us no way of overcoming the sexist and often racist character of the British labour movement. Indeed, she

blames the 'political settlement between men and women' which 'produced a historic compromise with capital which closed their socialist imagination' (page 229).

And her pessimism leads her into positions which are just plain wrong. With false gloom she claims that last year's vote in the NUM against fighting for more pay and to save pits 'confirmed the suspicion that gone are the old ways of fighting the class war that we've all been raised on and still have the power to excite me'... 'the rhetoric of the rallies had a kind of doom about them'. She then uses the collapse of the NHS strike in '82, in fact sold out by a leadership unprepared to fight, as proof that the 'long war... can't be won the miner's way' (pages 114-5).

True

While it is true that real changes will not be brought about by purely economic struggles, and that the divide between trade union and political organisation, the product of labourism, will have to be overcome if we are to move forward, it is clear now that with the right leadership, as in the miners' strike, it is possible to fight 'the old way', and in so doing to change the balance of forces. The truth is that she, like her friends around *Marxism Today*, oppose class struggle. She can't allow that it is the way forward, because it contradicts their analysis of the period and also cuts across their reformist project.

What is more, her position renders her silent on what the women in these same mining communities have been up to. These 'immigrants in their own communities' (page 98) have not only backed up the militancy of the strike, and have often been firmer than the men in supporting it, but have gone way beyond what they themselves thought they could do: organising women's marches, speaking tours and support groups, joining the women at

Greenham Common. Yes, the mining women have been inspired by the example of the Greenham women, but the point is that they have both recognised that the miners' fight is their fight—however 'masculine' the tactics of the strike—both have recognised that if the miners win all progressive demands will move forward.

Both the actions of the Greenham women and the mining women are visible proof of the gains made by the women's movement. While Bea Campbell is right to point out that in the second half of the '70s 'the economic conditions for its (WLM) demands' (page 63) evaporated, she leaves out the real gains won and not conceded, both at a political and ideological level. The defeat of Corrie in the face of the huge, feminist campaign to protect abortion rights, which forced the TUC for the very first time to back a fight for women's rights: the fact that despite Thatcher's attempt to force women out of work and back into the home, this has not happened.

Lost

Women have lost their jobs faster than men during the recession but they have clung on to employment, part-time and low paid, because they know what it means to return to the home. The right to work, the right to control fertility, the right to meet together without men, the right to fight against sexual harassment, these are gains which have been won as a result of the women's movement and have come to millions of women who may not see themselves as feminists but who nonetheless agree with the demands.

The problem for women who dislike Bea Campbell's pessimism, and who disagree with her sniping at the Labour left from the sidelines, is that without a theory of the oppression of women in a male-dominated, capitalist society, there is no coherent alternative. While Ann Pettifor can

successfully argue against the false naivety of Bea Campbell's call for 'conversations' (pseudo-feminist for alliances), and call instead for socialist feminists to fight for power inside the labour movement, without returning to the theories of Marx and Engels on class, and working to develop ideas on the oppression of women within that framework, we will not be able to defeat the reformist ideas of Campbell and her ilk.

The recognition of the political nature of personal life has been a major achievement of the women's movement in the last 20 years. It has had a real impact on the lives, both public and private, of many women and men; but in and of itself, it is not enough. To develop a set of demands and tactics on how to achieve them, we must place the oppression of women within the broader framework of the relations of production and class analysis. Such an analysis will recognise that the sexual division of labour into unequal parts is one element in a system of production and reproduction which can only be understood by using the tools of Marxist analysis.

Despite the weaknesses in the work of Marx and Engels on the oppression of women, their writings on the subject is where we have to start from. To understand the role of the family and women's position within it, Engels' book on *The Origin of the Family* cannot be overlooked. The relationship between the development of the family and the state as a result of economic and productive relations, the transformation of the family as a productive unit during the industrial revolution, the recognition that the employment of women outside the home was in the long term progressive—none of this can be overlooked when we formulate our demands now.

Works

That Bea Campbell works outside this framework is evident when we look at her demand for a 'feminist incomes policy'. This seeks to restructure the family income, to redistribute labour and wealth within the family, among working people, and 'last but not least, there must be a redistribution from employers to workers'.

This last is simply a sop—last and not at all, is what it really means. It is a pay policy which transfers income within the working class, between the sexes, instead of from the bourgeoisie to the working class. It is the policy of the right wing of the trade union and Labour Party bureaucracy, not progressive or feminist. It is upside down: we will not overcome the divisions within the working class by taking from one group and giving to another.

It is an analysis which plays into the hands of both the right wing and groups like the *Militant* alike—both argue against positive action for oppressed groups as divisive, neither recognise that these divisions are already there fostered and cultivated by the ruling class and used against us. Both positions are wrong: we must support the organisation of oppressed groups, not in order that they may fight their own class, but so that the whole class can fight the real enemy.

So Bea Campbell's project is to manipulate the understandable antagonisms that women feel towards the labour movement, in order to reorient feminists away from fighting in the trade unions and Labour Party for a voice. It is interesting that her own party, the Communist Party, (guilty of some of the worst practices of sexism in the movement) is ignored in her tirade: precisely because her own project is linked in to the popular front politics of *Marxism Today*.

Her credibility amongst feminists is being cynically used by the CP for their own ends—ends which will be as much opposed to the interests of women as they are against the interests of the working class.

Wigan Pier Revisited
By Bea Campbell
Virago £4.50

The local government debate

Fix no rates

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT conference takes place in Sheffield over the weekend of 5-7 July. Labour councillors and local parties will get together in an attempt to hammer out a united strategy to fight Thatcher's local government axe. We print below a discussion paper presented (in their personal capacities) by London council leaders for consideration by Labour Groups, constituency parties and trade unions prior to the Sheffield conference.

THE THATCHER government's rate-capping legislation completes the establishment of a Whitehall dictatorship over every local authority.

Together with cuts and manipulation of grants it means that councils can no longer carry out their mandates from the community to provide much-needed services and protect jobs.

All Labour local councillors are being told they must become agents of government policy, which is designed to put the burdens of the economic crisis on the backs of our communities.

Abolition of the GLC and the metropolitan counties is being fought all the way with the active support of the unions and communities. The local government union NALGO at its annual conference endorsed a policy of non co-operation with abolition and support for all councils which refuse to implement cuts or comply with the rates legislation.

Liverpool

Liverpool's defiance of Tory policies has shown that a broad fight can be mobilised around the struggles of a local Labour council. The point at which every Labour-controlled authority can be united is the end of one financial year and the beginning of the next. The common action to each is the levying of a rate or precept.

A refusal to levy a rate or precept will unite each council in the same action, at the same time. In the face of such a challenge, the Tory government will have to evict every Labour councillor from town and county halls, or deal with a breakdown of local government. The City of London, too, will face a crisis of confidence in the money market.

It is not that we are setting out to become law-breakers. The fact is that under the legislation it is no longer lawful for councils to carry out the policies on which they were elected.

Other tactics have been considered. Designation of an authority as rate-capped under the legislation cuts off the option of protecting services and jobs by increasing rates to compensate for grant losses.

For other hard-pressed authorities, the prospect of levying further major rate increases will no longer be politically acceptable or even practicable. No Labour authority, rate-capped or not, is asking for the right to levy high rates.

Central

Our common argument is against the withholding of central government funds raised through taxation from services to meet local needs. The call for deficit budgeting, whilst levying a modest or 'capped' rate does not provide the basis for unity because of differences in each authority's financial position.

The point at which each authority would run out of funds — if at all — would differ. Confusion as to when this would happen would weaken the united action of workforces and the local community.

Similarly, calls for mass resignations of Labour councillors poses the dangers of temporary Tory control. Even successful re-election, does not alter the reality facing councillors, trade unionists or working class communities.

Majority opposition is an attempt to relieve Labour councillors of direct responsibility, leaving council workers and those in need of the services to fight Tories in control of the bureaucratic machine.



Refusal to levy a rate or a precept in order to confront the Tory government can only succeed with the support of the trade unions and the local communities. Council workers know that a failure to fight will result in tens of thousands of jobs being lost.

Labour councillors must declare now that they will defend services and jobs and demonstrate a willingness to challenge the government at one and the same time. Then trade unionists can be rallied to that platform.

The community knows that their services are under threat. On seeing a determination on the part of councillors and workers to defend services and

democratic rights it will respond to a common fight.

The Labour Party leadership — the National Executive and the Parliamentary Labour Party — must give full support to an agreed initiative by Labour-controlled authorities. The Labour Party local government conference in Sheffield in early July provides the opportunity to develop a common strategy which can unite Labour authorities at risk whether rate-capped or not.

Labour councillors, local government workers and the communities we serve cannot wait for the outcome of a future general election. The time for action is now.

John Austin Walker, leader Greenwich council
Ted Knight, leader Lambeth council
Tony Ritchie, leader Southwark council
Ron Stockbridge, leader Lewisham council
John McDonnell, deputy leader GLC

Merseyside Trades Union and Labour Movement Campaign Committee

National Fightback Conference

Saturday 23 June, 10.30am to 5.30pm
Philharmonic Hall,
Hope St, Liverpool

speakers include:

Tony Benn, David Blunkett,
Ken Livingstone, Arthur Scargill,
Dennis Skinner and Eric Heffer

delegate credentials (up to 5 per org) at £2 each:
Andy Pink, Conference Arrangements Sec,
Rm 41, Municipal Buildings,
Dale St, L69 2DH
or phone: 051 227 3911



Exeter victory: expulsions withdrawn

EXETER's right wing were disappointed last Friday when the general committee heard chairperson John Sheppard rule out of order a resolution to expel the three editors of Exeter Labour Briefing.

After receiving a copy of a letter from Tony Benn, in support of the editors, Exeter's 'soft left' chairperson was persuaded to rethink.

By Carol Turner,
Labour Against the Witch Hunt

The result? Briefing was approached in a fine spirit of compromise: if you make a concession on the name, we'll rule out the expulsions. This the editors did, agreeing to rename the bulletin Devon Labour Briefing. The technical niceties were forgotten by party apparachiks in their haste to withdraw from an untenable position.

The argument that 'Exeter Labour' was the sole property of the local Labour Party — the original grounds for expulsion — just didn't apply to the joint Labour Parties of Devon. So, what's in a name? Now the Exeter bulletin can look forward to building on its short period of notoriety — a welcome addition to the Briefing fold.

4 June,

Dear Mark,

I was concerned to hear that the executive of the Exeter Labour Party are recommending to the GMC, on 15 June, that you and your two colleagues be expelled from the party for editing Exeter Labour Briefing.

As you know various editions of Labour Briefing are published in different parts of the country, and are widely welcomed because they help broaden the discussion of problems facing the party. Nowhere has it been argued that the name Labour belongs in any legal sense to the party as such — hence Labour Herald.

There are many groups inside the party which use the word Labour in their title, even when some of them support policies that are at variance with conference policies. When the register was approved at conference it was made absolutely clear, by the general secretary, that this was not going to be interpreted by the NEC, as any sort of official approval for expulsions based on the views or activities of those who held minority opinions in any CLP.

If by chance the GMC were to expel you, and your colleagues, from the party on these grounds, it would be open to you all to appeal to the NEC. Were you to appeal I am almost sure that the NEC, on the basis of recent decisions, would disallow your expulsion and reinstate you all.

But of course the best thing that could happen would be for the GMC not to proceed with the motion to expel, when it meets on 15 June. With the party now working together so well, we really do not want to damage our prospects of victory in the next election by starting a series of expulsions.

You can, of course, quote this letter and I am sending a copy of it to John Sheppard, as a courtesy to him and the officers of the Exeter party, many of whom I have had the privilege of knowing, and working with, over the years. I am also sending a copy to the national agent and the regional organiser, in the hope that they may be able to help avert this problem before it arises.

Yours fraternally,
Tony Benn

Next Week:

The LCC Strikes Back!

In Socialist Action next week we will publish a reply by Geoff Hodgson to John Harrison's sharp review of the book *The Democratic Economy*, and the LCC executive replies to Barry Winter's letter of resignation that we carried two weeks ago.

NALGO

Left begins to organise

THE 2000 DELEGATES, representing 700,000 members, who met in Brighton last week for NALGO's annual conference turned a defeat into victory when they collected £32,000 for the miners.

Conference rejected an amendment to donate £25,000 to the miners' strike from national funds, and decided inside to match pound-for-pound a collection taken at conference. This set a target for delegates, and now £64,000 will go to the NUM.

Solidarity was also extended to the sacked NUPE cleaners at Barking Hospital, when conference sent a unanimous message of support to NUPE's day of action and instructed the NEC to coordinate supportive action by NALGO members.

But the debate on Youth Training Schemes saw a defeat which wasn't reversed. Previous policy of refusing to approve YTS schemes unless they paid £52 per week was watered down when the restriction was dropped this year.

For the third year running, despite improved organisation by black members, the resolution on fighting racism in the union was defeated. But delegates voted for a day of action on 4 July in support of Muhammad Idrish, a black member facing deportation.

Some gains resulted from the left organising during the last year: most notably the fight against privatisation and for lesbian and gay rights. NALGO now has the beginnings of a national strategy to fight privatisation.

NALGO will now endorse industrial action which is unlawful as a result of the employment and abolition laws. The general secretary John Daly, aided the left by refusing to give any explanation or apology for his part in the TUC sell out of the NGA and delegates voted to severely criticise his role.

Surprisingly NALGO's

Southampton health workers fight for unions

HEALTH WORKERS in Southampton have been on all-out strike since 11 June, protesting the sacking of NUPE shop steward Steve Ferris. A 24-hour picket is stopping supplies to Southampton General Hospital, including oil and oxygen.

Other local hospitals have held sympathetic strikes and striking South Wales miners have been on the picket line. Steve Ferris told us, 'It started when management terminated an agreement which allowed me to carry out my duties as secretary of the NUPE branch.'

'I refused to recognise their right to do this, so they sacked me. Management just unilaterally altered the agreement so if I had agreed to attend any discussion hearings it would have meant I accepted their right to do

own policy now includes support for councils engaged in deficit budgeting. But each branch still has to fight alone.

By Carolyn Sikorski,
branch secretary
Newham
NALGO (pers cap)

In some branches, particularly those with Tory employers, this lack of district and national support has meant jobs and services. However Tower Hamlets NALGO is currently taking indefinite all-out strike action against the Labour council's attempts to victimise library workers taking action against closures.

If NALGO is to successfully protect public sector jobs and services the left need to organise around action and policies and to gain control of the union. It must also organise in the Labour Party.

Attempts to organise a national Broad Left over the last two years have progressed slowly. Many members fear that it would be a front for *Militant* (who made no real intervention at conference) or the Communist Party (who distinguished themselves by arguing against instructing members not to cooperate with abolition, and in favour of a secret ballot to decide).

The left must organise to support Tower Hamlets

that. 'Since the 1982 dispute we have built up a strong union organisation to defend services and staff. We intend to oppose privatisation and staff reductions which is why management have gone for the unions.'

'They knew a sacking like this would provoke a strike but they have met a strong resistance. We have 500 people out in the General, and the Princess Anne maternity wing and pickets are covering the entrances, 24 hours a day. The strike is hitting the administration.'

'Appointments have been cancelled and waiting lists are growing. This is an important dispute. If we lose it will be a real blow to trade unionism.'

'If we win then we will be in a good position to stop privatisation and defend patient services. It will also give trade unionism a boost in the area.'



and Liverpool and, longer-term, to develop a strategy of national action against Tory attacks on the public sector.

Opportunities to organise are coming up. Islington and Camden branches have organised a meeting on rate capping, abolition and cuts when

local government delegates meet to discuss pay.

Later in the year there will be a privatisation meeting supported by the Wandsworth, Bury and Westminster branches. In the autumn, a broad left conference to hammer out policies and action, and to seriously organise around

elections, will be held. All NALGO activists should attend.

The NALGO left is alive and kicking. But without national organisation and a voice in the Labour Party it will not be strong enough to swing the union into action.

Muhammad Idrish in court again

THE MUHAMMAD Idrish saga will continue on Wednesday 4 July, at the High Court, London. He will appear before the Lord Chief Justice in a delayed appeal court hearing—a final appeal.

Muhammad is threatened with deportation if this appeal is unsuccessful. He is a founder member of his NALGO branch and well known as a black activist.

Black people are denied full citizenship in the United Kingdom, and consequently around 250 leave this country every month as a result of current immigration laws. They can be imprisoned without trial: the Home Office makes charges, appoints the adjudicator, and the final appeal can only be made to the Home Secretary himself.

Fortunately, in Muhammad's case, his

union have supported him at last week's NALGO annual conference.

By Bob Smith,
campaign treasurer

On the evening of the hearing, 4 July, an anti-deportation rally will be held at Friends Meeting House in Euston Road, starting at 7.30pm. Provisional speakers include, Tony Benn and John Daly of NALGO, as well as Muhammad himself. That same morning, beginning at 10am, a picket will be mounted outside the High Court in the Strand.

★ For transport details, contact your nearest NALGO branch. For further information on the campaign contact: Barry Lovejoy, 30 Antrobus Road, Handsworth, Birmingham B21, or phone 021-523 8923.

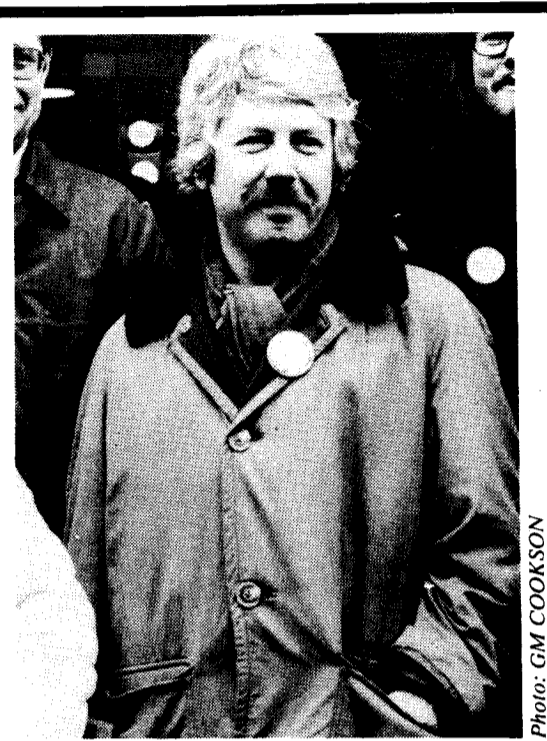


Photo: GM COOKSON

Keep it going

Says Bernard Regan NUT executive member

Despite the commitment to strike action by overwhelming majorities of the National Union of Teachers members balloted in the current selective action, the executive of the union has no confidence in the possibility of winning the teacher's pay claim through action.

Instead the right wing leadership, have placed their hopes in getting the employers to agree to arbitration.

The Socialist Teachers Alliance, the biggest left organisation in the NUT, has been campaigning for a programme of escalating strikes and united action with other public sector unions against cash limits. Currently over one million public sector employees are linked up against the government — a programme of joint campaigning would give strength and confidence to each of the separate struggles.

If teachers' pay is referred to arbitration, the NUT leadership will call off all action and the whole outcome of the claim will be in the hands of the government who have the right to accept or reject any arbitrator's recommendations. The right wing want arbitration because it provides them with an alibi whatever the outcome. They even refuse to limit the employers' room for manoeuvre by laying down restrictions on the terms or reference for arbitration.

The employers however have no such inhibitions — they are insisting on 'acceptable terms of reference' — an indicator that they expect teachers' pay rises to be paid for out of cuts in jobs.

They have talked about 20,000 jobs for every one per cent above cash limits. The STA is against calling off any action, it is for stepping it up. All the strikers from East London schools last week joined the NUM demonstration on 7 June. In London the STA is at the forefront of organising for strike action in support of the Kent NUM on 27 June.

A meeting of Burnham, the negotiating body has been called on 22 June and the STA is calling for a lobby of this and demanding that the union negotiators demonstrate their intention of defending teacher's pay and jobs with the same commitment displayed by Education boss Keith Joseph.

A failure to do so will expose their policy for what it is — a sell out — not just of teachers but of other public sector workers and of the miners.



Socialist ACTION

Liverpool

ACT NOW TO STOP THE TORIES

WHITEHALL IS STUMPED by Liverpool's budget problem. After a month of meetings between city council and Department of the Environment officials, the men from the ministry have finally admitted they can't make ends meet.

Even cuts in services, together with voluntary redundancies and a big increase in rents, doesn't bring Liverpool's projected rate increase below an unacceptable 37 per cent — and it could be as much as 70. And these Whitehall figures still mean spending £29 million — £13 million more than Thatcher's target.

With such conclusions before him, Tory minister Patrick Jenkin can't have been looking forward to his Tuesday meeting with Liverpool. Perhaps that explains the smiles on the faces of Liverpool MPs and councillors at their press conference immediately following, when they spoke of a 'fruitful discussion'.

Fruitful or not, Jenkins has made no offer, and Liverpool's ruling Labour Group will go ahead with its budget-making meeting planned for Wednesday 11 July.

Labour's manifesto commitment means spending £270 million on the city. In plain terms: an 'illegal' budget or an astronomical 170 per cent increase in rates.

This has forced even

the last bastion of private enterprise out in the open. 'Even a 37 per cent increase,' said Barry Marsh, chairperson of the Merseyside Chamber of Commerce, 'would be disastrous. We recently made a calculation that on the basis of a 60 per cent rate rise, there would be the potential loss of 13,000 local jobs in the private sector.'

By Carol Turner

Talks between Jenkin and city councillors may not have broken down, but the results of the joint officers' report make Labour's position clearer than ever. There is no room for a negotiated compromise on Liverpool's budget. If the government won't con-

cede Liverpool's just case, the labour movement as a whole must force them to back down.

On 11 July, Labour will — yet again — present its original budget to the council meeting. This time, it will be backed by the Department of Environment's own figures for the city.

The government has 'discussed' without moving one inch. The fightback conference in Liverpool this coming Saturday must be the first stage in a united fightback by all Labour councils facing the Tory axe in the months to come.

It must be the stepping stone for a demand at the recall local government conference (in Sheffield on 5-7 July) that the labour movement joins ranks behind all Labour councils in a united and determined fight to keep public services and protect council jobs.

This fight demands that no council wavers. Most of all it demands that the Labour Party leadership get off the fence and stand firmly on the side of Liverpool and all those prepared to act now to stop the Tory slaughter.



Photo: TIM RIGBY



TEN YEARS ago in Red Lion Square Kevin Gately died. He was killed because he believed in all that is best in life. He hated racism. He abhorred the violence of the state.

That is why he picketed the National Front meeting in Conway Hall. And that is why the police beat him to death. Like Blair Peach and the miners he dared to fight for the rights of us all.

His death was not in vain. He left us a heritage. It's a heritage of inspiration. Ten years later we salute him and all those like him who put humanity and decency above the squalid interest of capital and its hired thugs.

Socialist Action gets moving

SOCIALIST ACTION is running two fund-drives simultaneously this summer. For the miners our supporters are raising thousands of pounds every week. At the same time we are starting to get organised to meet our goal of £50,000 to secure a new premises for the newspaper and our printshop.

If you don't think both are possible read on... For the miners, Socialist Action, has now helped to set up three international tours — two to France and one to Germany. On the first French tour over £400 was raised for the NUM. On the German tour 6,000 marks have been raised in a two week tour. The second tour of France is now starting.

In addition Socialist Action is active in support campaigns in every part of this country. It is because we are able to make that type of contribution to building support for the miners that our own fund-drive is also off to an excellent start.

At last week's NALGO conference 141 copies of Socialist Action were sold, and £15 collected for our fund drive. In Lambeth, South London, one reader will be running in the Lambeth half-marathon and is already sponsored to the tune of £100 if he can complete the course. We've even had our first donation in dollars — with a cheque for \$250 from a reader in Louisiana USA.

How it is necessary for all our readers in every part of the country to start their activities to meet their fund-drive targets. Already in our national offices a large part of our efforts are devoted to all of the details of procuring new and better premises.

Ideally we would like to move in the early part of the autumn when the loss of trade for the printshop would be least damaging. Over the summer we will be looking at every way to reduce our costs so that we can concentrate all of our resources on the move — thereby securing the longterm future of the printing operation and the newspaper.

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