

A Socialist ACTION

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30p

Rail strike

THE RAIL unions have called for selective depots in the London, Midland and Eastern regions to take strike action in protest at management's harassment of crews that implement TUC policy and refuse to move coal. The date has been set for 17 January.

Jimmy Knapp, NUR general secretary, described the treatment of railway workers at Coalville, Leicestershire — where coal had not moved before Christmas — as 'diabolical'.

Roy Butlin, Coalville NUR, urged railworkers to turn this call into a national protest that would really force management to back down, by branches and district councils throughout the country coming out on 17 January.



Labour must plan for victory

AS THE MINERS' strike goes into its eleventh month the Tories, the NCB and the media are claiming that victory for the government is in sight. The truth is very different. The back to work movement has failed to break the strike, and it is now clear that it will not succeed. The 'return to work' movement this week completely failed to meet government hopes. The core areas of the strike remain solid.

On the other side, Peter Walker's claim that there will be no power cuts this winter rests entirely on the CEBG's ability to use scab coal and

oil. Use of the chief coal substitute, oil, has increased 1000 per cent in the course of the dispute. The problem here is that while TUC guidelines on the use of coal are in general being followed, those on the use of oil substitutes are not. It is here that the refusal by the general council to campaign to carry out TUC congress decisions is having deadly effects.

The fact is that the miners can win and that solidarity from the rest of the movement remains the key. The need now is for a real worked out plan of action to mobilise and organise the support for the miners that exists at the base of the movement. The battle to implement the TUC congress decisions must be re-opened immediately.

Some steps forward are being taken.

The Yorkshire and Humberside region of the TUC has decided to organise a week of activity from 4 to 11 February. On 11 February trade unionists will be urged to join the picket line nearest to their workplace or home. Regional action, culminating in a day of industrial action, and action on the picket lines, should be campaigned for in every region if there is no central call.

Particularly important however is that Scottish miners' leaders are to call for a national day of action on Wednesday 20 February, with a national demonstration in London led by the TUC and the Labour Party. Scottish area general secretary Eric

Clarke is expected to launch the call at the LCDTU conference on 12 January in London.

The Mineworkers Defence Committee has also been campaigning for a demonstration in London. These two campaigns should be immediately co-ordinated, and an agreed date set. National political action, including a national demonstration and a national solidarity conference called by the NUM is vital to deliver national industrial action.

It is clear that neither the miners nor their supporters are defeated. The Tory hopes of victory continue to rest on the TUC sabotaging the decisions passed at congress. A systematic plan

of action to reverse this situation is the key to victory.

- For a national day of action, and national demonstration in support of the miners — preferably called by the Labour Party and TUC but called by the left wing if they refuse.

- For regional weeks of action, culminating in industrial action and physical support on the picket lines.

- For mass action to win support in the power stations for implementing TUC congress decisions of the boycott of both coal and oil.

- For a national solidarity conference called by the NUM.

Socialist ACTION

Come back Chris

LAST WEEK'S *Tribune* marked an important turn for that paper — one whose potential significance was well clarified by the publicity it received in the press.

For the last five years *Tribune* has been to the forefront of what the press chose to call the 'Bennite' left in the Labour Party. Under the editorship of Chris Mullin *Tribune* became the chief open supporter of Tony Benn in the Labour Party — and faced a vicious legal attack headed by John Silkin in the same period. But last week's *Tribune* embarked on a new course — although whether it can be carried through time will tell.

The front page editorial of *Tribune* went out of its way to attack those who made 'irresponsible' calls for a general strike. The target of this attack was not the Marxist left in the Labour Party but Tony Benn, Dennis Skinner, and others associated with active support for the miners who have raised this issue.

Tribune's article also went on to attack making obeying the law a dividing line for those engaged in the fight against rate capping — as though there were any way to fight the cuts within the law.

Tribune's article in fact echoed almost exactly a similar piece written in the *New Statesman* before Christmas by Peter Hain of the Labour Co-ordinating Committee. This proposed that Michael Meacher, David Blunkett, and Tom Sawyer should offer Neil Kinnock an alternative 'centre/left' bloc on Labour's NEC to the centre/right bloc that Kinnock has been pursuing. Michael Meacher, David Blunkett, and Tom Sawyer are exactly those who are reported by the press to be behind *Tribune's* new initiative.

Naturally *Tribune* made some suggestions for this proposed new bloc. The first was that Neil Kinnock should abandon the drive to push 'one person one vote' through the party on reselection. The second was that the proposed new witch hunt against *Militant* and others in the party should be stopped.

David Blunkett attempted to implement this new policy by deleting any reference to investigating *Militant* in the terms of reference for the new committee to draw up the statement on Kinnock's version of 'democratic socialism'. Kinnock's supporters made it clear however that there is going to be no drawing back on 'one person one vote' or on the witch hunt.

What in fact *Tribune* proposes is a second Bishops Stortford. A situation where the left agrees not to fight back and the right wing mounts its attack — including in the election campaign itself. That road led to the disaster of June 1983 itself — a vote that would have been far higher if Neil Kinnock had not delivered the deputy leadership to Denis Healey against Tony Benn.

In fact *Tribune*, not to mention Hain, completely fails to outline Kinnock's real position. Neil Kinnock's politics are those of the 'centre/right' bloc — that is what makes them distinctive. The 'dream ticket' of Kinnock/Hattersley is just the continuation of the old ticket of Foot/Healey that Kinnock ensured remained in place during the 1981 deputy leadership campaign.

More important however is *Tribune's* whole concept of unity. Division is of course to be avoided where possible. Those who artificially create divisions are idiots. But the precondition for unity is that Labour supports those who are in struggle and those who built it.

Furthermore Kinnock's road is not even a path to winning the next election but an attack on such hopes. Winning the next election depends not on 'image', tricks and manoeuvres but Labour's supporters winning the real fights which confront them. Winning the miners' strike, winning the struggle to defend local government, winning the fight on nuclear weapons. A 'unity' with Neil Kinnock that means sabotaging those struggles is the unity of the graveyard. Also the best way for Labour to lose the election.

Tribune's new course is not a way of advance for the left. It is simply an invitation for more people to become puppets of Kinnock in the way that his record prior to the last election prepared him for his present role as the 'human face of Denis Healey'.

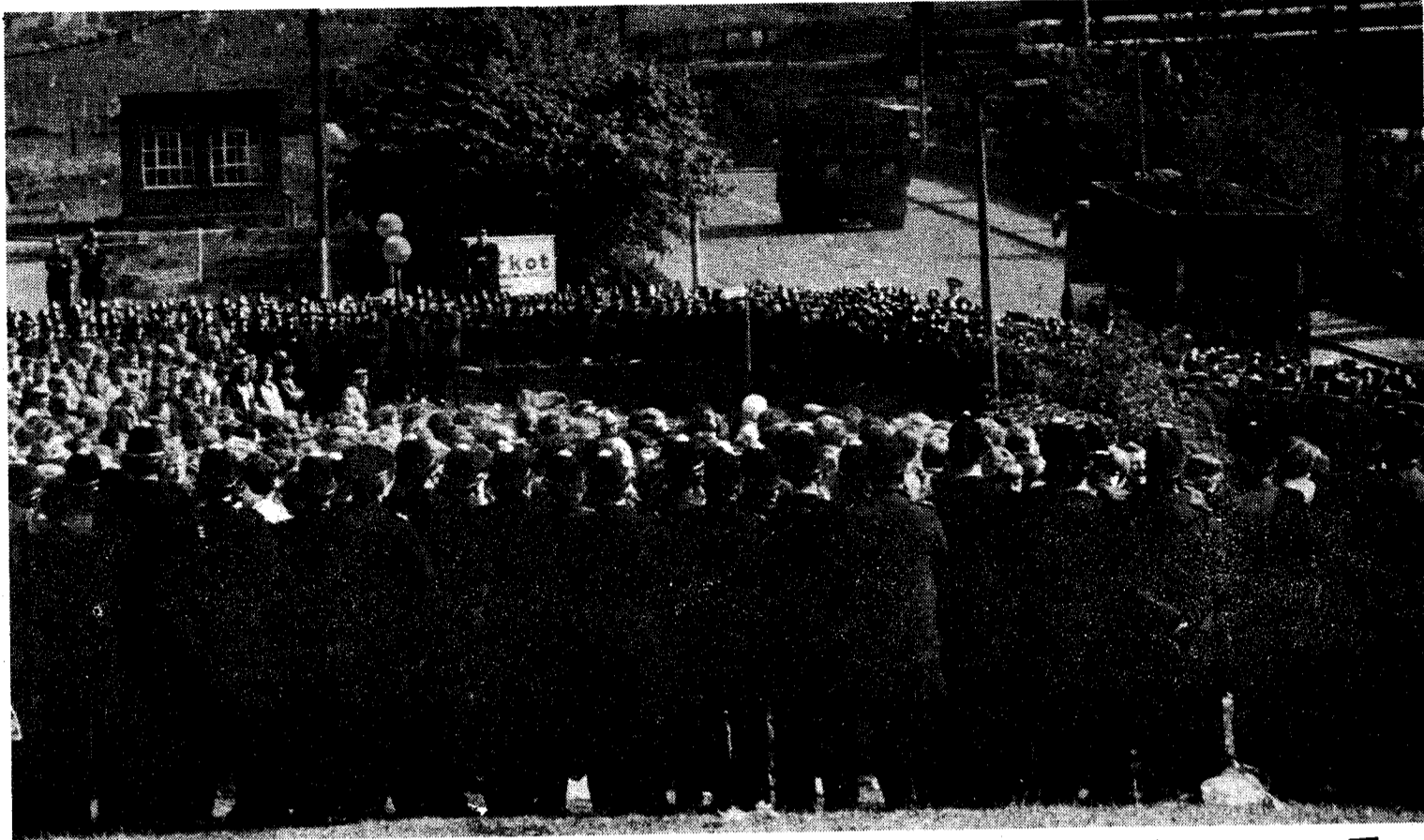


Photo: JOHN HARRIS

The right strikes back

1984 BEGAN WITH the majority of the TUC leadership firmly committed to the 'new realist' course decided on at the '83 congress, in the wake of the general election defeat. They marked their commitment to this policy through their betrayal of the NGA in December '83.

1985 begins with that same majority still firmly committed to this policy and intending to register that fact by betraying the NUM. In 1985 however, this policy is being pursued in a very different political situation to that which existed at the beginning of '84.

Then, the left was on the defensive both in the unions and the Labour Party. New realism ruled the roost in the TUC, and the 'dream ticket', in alliance with the LCC, was eroding the Bennite wing of the Labour Party.

The miners' strike has transformed all that. Its size and its militancy threw the right on to the defensive, and provided the left with a major focus to organise around. The strike has marked the emergence of a kind of leadership in the labour movement that has not been seen since the period before and after World War 1.

The Scargill leadership of the NUM is of the same kind as the AJ Cook leadership of that period. The Scargill leadership led the miners' strike from the start, and steadfastly refused to compromise on the question of economic closures.

The tactics of mass picketing, the refusal to accept court decisions, carried the impact of the strike into all sections of the movement. At the TUC congress in September the extreme right was isolated and defeated and the 'total support' for the NUM was carried.

At the Labour Party conference, the miners' strike dominated proceedings, with conference endorsing mass pickets, defiance of the law, and pledging total support for the miners. At Labour Party conference it became clear, that the miners' strike had become the focus for the struggles

of all sections of the oppressed: blacks, women, gays turned to the NUM for support. The miners strike also fuelled an upsurge in militancy in other sections of the labour movement, and the days lost in strikes rose by nearly 30 per cent, to 4,044 million in the first 11 months of this year.

In the course of the strike it became clear that a class struggle leadership and current had emerged in the labour movement which was prepared to confront the Tories on the law, the police, in defence of jobs and the cities and of democracy. It incorporates the demands of women, blacks, and youth and links itself to the struggle of the Irish people for self-determination.

by Pat Hickey

Despite these developments, however, the labour right has seized back the initiative. The general council has sabotaged the decisions of the '84 congress to give 'total support' to the miners. The crucial question has been the boycott of coal and oil in the power stations. This has not been done. At no point has the general council fought for this in the power stations. It has not issued a single appeal to power station workers to take action. If the authority of the TUC were thrown behind such an appeal it would undoubtedly get a big response.

The line taken by the general council has been very different. Its kind of support was seen in Norman Willis's speech to South Wales miners when he condemned the use of 'the brick, the bolt and the petrol bomb.' At the same time it has undermined solidarity for the miners by pressing the NUM to agree a NACODS-type settlement which accepts the



Photo: JOHN CHAPMAN

closure of uneconomic pits.

The refusal to support the miners has been tied to the fightback by the new realists on the general council, against the left. The AUEW and the EET-PU are moving to take government money for ballots in defiance of Wembley Conference decisions. There is now a proposal from the right for the TUC to 'reconsider' its stand on the anti-union laws. Alistair Graham of the CPSA has argued in the *Guardian* that the TUC needs to change its rules so that 'it is not hijacked into support for a dispute as it has been on this occasion.'

Divisions

The response of the left to these moves has been to threaten the suspension of the unions concerned. If carried out this would remove about 13 per cent of the TUC's membership at a stroke — and shift the political complexion of the general council and the TUC to the left. Both unions have said that they will carry on regardless.

The lines of divide in the labour movement are therefore much deeper than they were at the start of '84. There is a minority class struggle left wing with a leadership in Benn, Scargill and Livingstone, a hard right around Duffy,

Hammond and Graham, and a centre around Willis and Basnett that is being pushed increasingly to the right by their refusal to fight the Tory attacks.

The right wing have a clear idea of where they intend to go. They are moving towards the type of business unionism that exists in America. They believe that by accepting the law, making no-strike deals, and avoiding conflict, they will prosper. They include in such a project the belief that it will be necessary to form a coalition with the Alliance after the next election.

The battery of government legislation which the Tories have adopted will assist the right — unless it is confronted and defeated. This year will see the ballots on the closed shop and on the political levy. The first is aimed — in the medium term — at reducing trade unionism to a minority political current in the work places. The second, at breaking the links with labour. The law has already been used to considerable effect against the miners, and will be used again.

Despite the 10 months of the miners' strike, and the massive, if minority support that it has won across the movement, the left is not yet prepared for this. Its forces are not organised across the movement to confront both the Tories and the treachery of the right. With the exception of Arthur Scargill it is

much less consistent than the right. The TGWU which has supported the NUM throughout, for which it deserves full credit, passively accepted the High Court decision to sequester £250,000. The NUR which has also been a major source of support for the miners has been slow to take action for the Coalville workers who are being victimised by British Rail, just as they refused to press for strike action in the last pay round.

There is now no possibility of the TUC delivering on its congress mandate unless the left take the initiative. The left leaders should start the new year by openly mobilising the mass base that exists in the movement — including in the unions which presently have scab leaders. There is a need for an open political break with the majority of the TUC general council, to force Willis et al to deliver support for the miners in the power stations.

The political divisions have not been created by the left. They are the result of the scabbing role of the right. These divisions exist from top to bottom of the movement, and threaten the whole future of workers in Britain. They are actively encouraged by the right, and no section of the movement is immune to them. Even the NUM faces the prospect of a hardened right wing in its ranks, which is effectively a breakaway business union.

It is in the interests of the whole movement to bring these divisions into the open where the scabbing role of the right can best be fought — and their support won away from them. The message for the new year is that organisation of the left from top to bottom by the left leaders — the only people who can do this at present — is vital. The majority of the labour leaders, from Willis through to Hammond, from Kinnock through to Healey, are leading the labour movement to disaster.

A political campaign for the miners

TONY BENN has produced a paper for the labour movement for a campaign in support of the miners. It proposes days of action, political campaigning, and industrial support for the miners as well as establishing a representative steering committee for such a campaign.

He will be presenting it at the Liaison Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions (LCDTU) on 12 January.

THE TIME has now come for a major political campaign in support of the miners. The solidarity shown, and the financial support given, have been much appreciated, but it is not enough and the movement must do more, and do it urgently, if we are to sustain the NUM and their families.

The forms of support needed are:

- First: to win acceptance of the principle that you do not cross a picket line.
- Second: to extend industrial action into related activities — especially power stations, road transport of coal and oil and associated work.
- Third: to step up the financial support and make it systematic, perhaps by regular levies, or the contribution of a day's pay, by those at work, on a regular basis.
- Fourth: to provide an effective political campaign to get the miners' case across to the general public, and link it with other attacks on working people including unemployment, health and education cuts, privatisation, reductions in the living standards of the old and the young, threats to women's interests, to civil liberties and to the democratic role of local authorities.

It is no good waiting for others to move when the labour movement has the power, and the duty, to take the initiative where we live and work. What are needed are political campaigns with public meetings, rallies, canvassing, collections and street corner gatherings exactly as is regularly done in general election or by-election campaigns.

These campaigns would need to be jointly planned with, and endorsed and supported by the NUM, Labour councillors, MPs and MEPs, the Women's Action Groups, the trades councils and its affiliates, and if possible by community groups and the churches.

To be effective they need to lead up to a particular day of action so that



Photo: GM COOKSON

Photo: GM COOKSON

By Tony Benn

those who take part will have something to look forward to, those who are invited to take action will know, in advance, why they are doing it, and the miners will know that they are getting support in the critical weeks that lie ahead. It may be that the best way to launch this programme would be by arranging a public meeting at which all those who had indicated their readiness to assist could explain what was to be done and seek support from everyone in the area.

Ideally we should aim at a general stoppage of work as this would be the most effective way of establishing the extent of support, but this is by no means the only way of bringing pressure on the government. The really important thing will be to consult on the widest possible basis and to encourage all interested groups to think out how they could best assist where they themselves live and work.

Some examples might be — and these are only given as illustrations:

1. Schools where the teachers ask local trade unionists to come in and talk over with the pupils what the dispute is about and how it relates to education cuts.
2. Hospitals where the unions set up a discussion, inside the hospital, on the effect of the cuts in the health service.
3. A day when the buses run but no fares are collected and every passenger is given a leaflet on the effect of the new government policy of de-regulation, with an opportunity to talk about its effects with councillors and union members who might travel on the buses for this purpose.
4. A similar policy on British Rail, with especial emphasis on the need for electrification.
5. Labour local authorities to put advertisements in the papers calling meetings for local people to hear exactly how rate-capping will affect services.
6. An invitation to all the unemployed to attend local colleges for an all-day seminar on how unemployment could be tackled — by earlier retirement, a 35 hour week, longer holidays, more public investment in industry and public expenditure on services etc.
7. Joint conferences between the miners and the pensioners to talk about the ways in which fuel poverty could be eradicated at a cost much lower than the cost of the strike — and extending to all those on social security.
8. Demands by local journalists and broadcasters that on the day of action the media unions be allowed one page in their own papers, or one hour on the air to put across, the news as they see it, and give their own comments on it.
9. Social and cultural activities at which artists could express their sup-

LCDTU conference

THE LIASON Committee for the Defence of the Trade Unions has called a conference on 12 January, to discuss mobilisation of more rank and file support for the miners, and to promote action against the attacks on trade unionism coming from government policies and laws.

NUM general secretary, Peter Heathfield, will be on the platform, along with Ron Todd of the TGWU, Jimmy Knapp of the NUR, Danny Sergeant of SOGAT, Tony Benn MP, and Betty Heathfield from the womens support groups.

by Paul Dwyer

With such a platform, the turnout for the meeting has the potential to be the biggest for many years for an LCDTU conference. It would provide an opportunity to step up the campaign for support for the NUM, and in particular to step up the fight against the general council's refusal to honour TUC congress policies on support for the miners.

The topics of the conference cover the most important issues facing the labour movement — the miners strike and the legal attacks on the unions. Every move to deal with these questions and to strengthen the fightback is to be welcomed. But yet another conference is not enough.

The crucial point that must be confronted is that the right wing on the general council of the TUC is on a clear line of refusing to fight the anti-

union laws, and refusing to support the miners. TUC Congress decisions on the boycott of coal and coal substitutes have not been implemented. The task of taking on the anti-union laws and securing victory for the miners cannot be separated from the task of fighting the policies of the majority of the general council.

The left needs to be organised from top to bottom of the movement to deal with the right. This is vital to the success of any fight against the Tory attacks. Norman Willis, David Basnett and Eric Hammond are taking the TUC away from any kind of struggle. The left can only prevent this by organising its forces against this.

The LCDTU conference itself cannot achieve this task. It can only be effectively carried out by the left trade union leaders. The leaders of the NUM, TGWU, NUR etc in alliance with the Labour Party left

port, and link it to the international struggles of working people for the same objectives, maybe with some invited to come from abroad to show their solidarity.

10. Peace movement campaigns that highlight the cost of nuclear weapons and the starvation of essential needs, and the high cost and danger of nuclear power as against coal.

11. Invitations to government and Coal Board representatives to public debates on their policies to which the local business community could be invited to hear the case for negotiating a fair settlement to the strike by cancelling the pit closure programme and getting the investment necessary for real economic advance.

12. Organising public opinion polls to be conducted by every interested group to establish the extent of public support for policies that would end the threat of pit closures, bring back full employment, build homes, extend health care and educational provision, help retired people, women and youngsters, and work for peace.

To be effective, work on such a campaign and day of action must be set in hand at once. Firm proposals would have to be formulated by a small and representative steering committee and circulated to all those individuals and groups, especially in the labour movement, who might be ready to cooperate, with an invitation to each of them to think out urgently what part they would like to play and how they would propose to pay for it.

This latter point is very important as all costs must be covered, and more, to avoid diverting money away from the miners' funds — indeed the miners should receive more as a result of what is planned. These groups would be asked to get on with it quite independently, letting the steering committee know what they had decided.

The NUM and the women's support groups have taught the labour movement many lessons in the last 10 months, of which the most important are that you do not need to wait for permission from anyone before you defend your rights, and secondly that there is a need for strong and clear leadership.

It must be our task to take the initiative now and offer the leadership that will be necessary if we are to protect the interests of those whom we represent.

have the weight to mobilise massive numbers for the battle against the Tories.

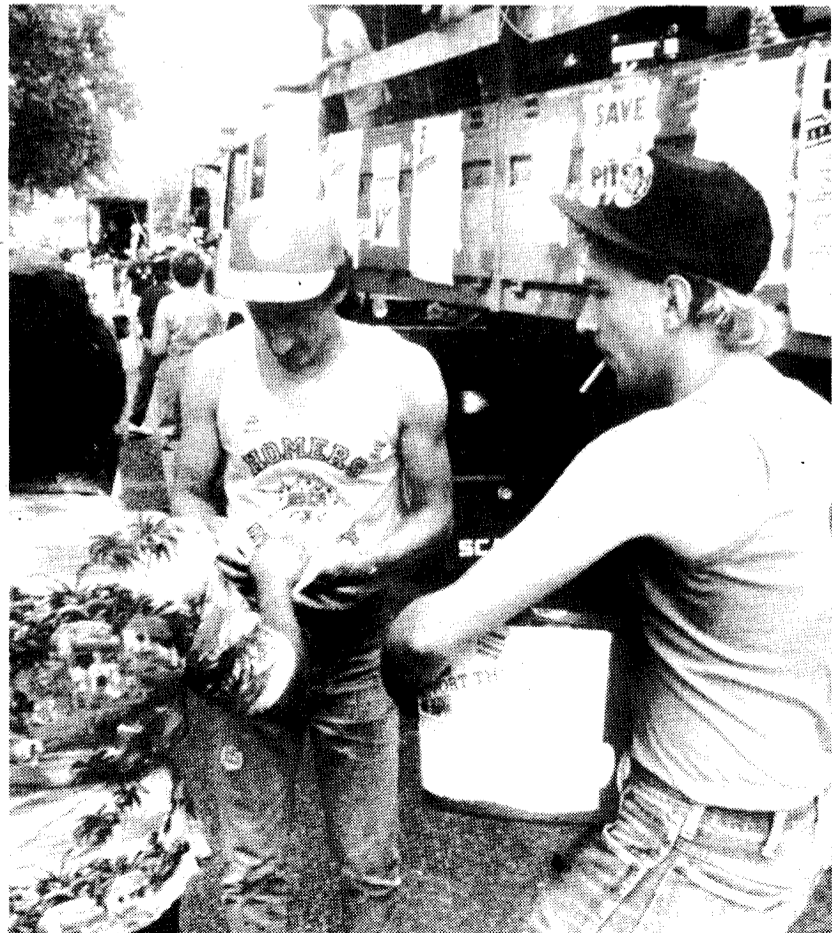
Any such policy would have to be pursued in the face of bitter right wing opposition. 'Regrettable' though such divisions in the movement are, they have to be faced. The truth of the matter is that any effective fight against the Tories will face the hostility of the right. But as the miners strike has shown it is necessary to confront the right in order to win.

The left leaders should make a start in this direction at the LCDTU conference, by fighting to call a national solidarity demonstration in London with the miners as soon as possible, and by setting a date for a national solidarity conference to build action in support of the NUM. Such a conference should set itself the task of implementing the decisions of TUC congress that the general council have refused to honour.

The miners' strike is still the number one priority for the movement. The NUM is not going to surrender, and the Tories' hopes of victory rely entirely on the general council. It acts as a prop to the Tory government.

The left leaders should mobilise all their support in the movement to remove that prop. They can start that task at this conference.

● The LCDTU conference is at Friends House, Euston Road, London 12 January, from 10.30 to 3.30



Collecting money



Photo: MARK SALMON

NUR must back Coalville

250 RAILWORKERS, miners and supporters, lobbied the Federation of Rail Unions on Tuesday 8 January to get national industrial action to stop the coal trains running from the Leicestershire coalfield.

The coalfield was completely sealed off to rail traffic for 38 weeks from April 4 to December 17. This is unique in the history of the miners strike. This action was undertaken by less than 100 workers at Coalville depot who have stood by the Federation directive not to move coal, coke or oil.

The action of the Coalville railworkers in support of the miners was broken by management bringing in signalmen who did not work at the depot, and were not members of Coalville NUR.

A Coalville signalman wrote to management explaining that he was not willing to move coal trains. He was the only barrier on the afternoon shift which stopped a train being moved from Bagworth pit to Drakelow power station.

The Derby area manager, Sam Reed, summoned him to Derby for an interview on Monday 17 December, booking him off work for the day.

By Doreen Wheppler, NUR.

This enabled management to bring in a relief signalman from outside the area, who was willing to move coal trains, providing the Coalville man was not suspended.

Then the chain of signal boxes along one line was then fully operational for the first time.

At the interview in Derby the Coalville signalman was offered a bribe: paid leave so long as he stayed away from the depot. He refused.

The next Tuesday he was again summoned to Derby by the area manager so that he could not sign on for duty and once again coal trains moved.

He had now become the only obstacle stopping two trains a day to Drakelow. He was told by the area manager that in his opinion he was 'mentally unstable' and he should report to Derby again on the Wednesday for an interview with the board's medical officer.

Victim

On that day there was no medical appointment, and he was offered a temporary job sweeping platforms at Burton-on-Trent station, 17 miles away from Coalville until a medical could be arranged.

He refused, and reported the events which had taken place to the shop stewards' committee. They informed the NUR NEC immediately because of the sinister nature of the victimisation taking place.

Jimmy Knapp, general secretary of the NUR, gave assurances that the matter would be taken up immediately with the general manager of the Midland region.

But Coalville has heard nothing since. The workers at Coalville regard the victimisation of

the signalman as the most serious in a lone line of harassment which has included police raids of workers' homes, sackings for alleged theft, harassment of individuals and finally a threat to close the depot from the area manager himself.

One of the most disturbing aspects of management's campaign to get coal trains moving again has been the involvement of the Federation of Professional Railway Servants (FPRF) the scab union.

Homes of some members were leafleted by the FPRF. Its leadership has offered incentives to leaders of the Coalville dispute to leave the NUR, join the FPRF and build it into an alternative union.

The minority of workers, whose vote in the recent shop stewards election indicated that they were willing to move coal have also been approached to form a break away branch at Coalville

Support

Coalville workers stand firm in support of the miners despite all the pressure. For ten months they have carried out the Rail Federation directives in the most difficult of circumstances means and now they expect industrial action to back up their stand.

Roy Butlin, chair Coalville shop stewards committee, said at the lobby: 'The leaderships of ASLEF and NUR have made a commitment to the miners' strike which must be carried through — we can't back down now.'

He demanded that the rail unions call immediate national industrial action around the following demands: no movement of coal trains; no scab labour at Coalville; no victimisation of workers not moving coal; for the right of Coalville men to sign on an be given alternative work.

These demands have the backing of the Sheffield and Chesterfield district council of the NUR and the other freight depots in the Trent Valley like Shirebrook, Tinsley, Immingham and Toton.

As Butlin said: 'The only way for the labour movement to stop the dirty tricks and maintain the firm stand on no movement of coal and oil is there to be industrial action to force the board to pull back.'

He called for the district councils, branches and depots to take such action immediately and for the federation to back it.



Photo: GM COOKSON
Roy Butlin addresses support meeting

Help close Didcot on 16 Jan

MASS PICKETING continues apace at Didcot power station. Following the successful picket on 26 October, supported by over 500 people, several smaller ones were called at short notice, in an attempt to avoid police harassment.

They were successful in expressing support for the workers boycotting coal inside the station, but failed to keep the police away. It was therefore decided to change tactics and give maximum publicity to future mass pickets.

On 11 December a mass meeting reaffirmed support for Didcot's policy of refusing to handle coal. Contrary to press reports, power workers at Didcot had not used coal but merely marshalled it into stacks.

But oil is still being used there, contrary to

TUC guidelines. In fact 150 tankers a day are going into the power station.

By Patrick Baker

It is vital that this traffic is stopped and South Wales NUM and Oxford miners' support

committee have called a mass picket on 16 January with that aim in mind.

As many pickets as possible are needed. All Labour Party and trade union branches and support groups are invited to attend.

Let's make 16 January a major labour movement mobilisation — and stop oil going into Didcot power station.

● For more information and leaflets, phone Oxford 724317.

South Wales NUM urges you to STOP SCAB OIL AT DIDCOT!

Assemble 6.30am at the main gate Wednesday 16 January



Photo: JOHN HARRIS

This slavering account of the rise and rise of 'our Neil' written by former Panorama director Robert Harris has a unique historical method.

Marx described all history as being made by the struggle between social classes, Harris introduced the hitherto undiscovered role of 'luck'. It is to this factor that we must turn to unravel the Kinnock phenomenon.

Neil started life — as luck would have it — with one of the purest working class pedigrees a Labour leader has ever had. As if to illustrate the point we are told of grandad Archie.

'A formidable character' recalls Kinnock, 'but only five foot three inches tall and as strong as an ox.'

Archie used to get drunk once a week, on a Saturday night. According to family legend, he came home one Saturday, proclaimed undying love for his wife Margaret and told her he would do anything for her: he would punch a hole through the door if she asked him to.

'She told him not to be so daft,' says Kinnock, 'so he turned round and battered a hole into the back room with his fist.'

Kinnock's authentic pedigree is noted by Glenys as she recalls their first date in the students' union bar at Cardiff: 'He had been knocked about playing rugby that afternoon, drank too much and was violently sick — it was a case of me taking him home rather than the other way round.'

Reviewed by Martin Collins

His first political speech is described as an attempt to get back into Glenys's good books but it didn't take long for childhood ambitions of becoming a private detective to be ditched in favour of a political career.

The 1960's may have been a time of great upheaval elsewhere in the world, but Bedwely stood

Neil Kinnock: 'red blooded lad'?

unmoved. The moribund Labour Party was to be the stage for Kinnock's launching as the lefty that the workers could identify with.

'He slots effortlessly into crude and earthy conversations. There's something of the beer swilling rugby playing valley boy about him.'

Kinnock felt strongly that 'young Labour Party supporters should look neat and tidy and that long hair was offensive to the average voter' — hence the ever present short back and sides.

Sexist

Insecurity about his own sexuality has at times reached absurd lengths — telling sexist jokes at a *Tribune* rally, or boasting that he was on the 'balls wing' of the party to support Michael Foot's sabotage of the infamous Bermondsey by-election. 'I'm not in favour of witch hunts, but I do not mistake bloody witches for fairies,' he said.

The smallest fringe meeting at the 1981 party conference (when Kinnock's abstention almost certainly cost Tony Benn the deputy leadership) took place in the men's

toilets of the Grand Hotel.

As Kinnock washed his hands, an over enthusiastic Benn supporter ran in and kicked his elbow. 'The shadow education spokesman (sic) seized his attacker and pulled him in close. 'Then I beat the shit out of him'.

Kinnock recalls somebody going in to check. 'Apparently there was blood and vomit all over the floor'.

Certainly there is ample proof here that Kinnock is a tough customer. During the miners' strike in 1972 he is quoted in Hansard as complaining that 'the Hon. Gentlemen opposite have bemoaned picketing'.

Picket

He asked them to put themselves in the picketer's place. 'What would be the reaction of any red-blooded man in this House if he saw someone riding roughshod over his picket line? I know what my reaction would be. In fact, I should be worried if it were not the case.'

The whole book provides a hilarious insight into the thoughts of a man who once shared a flat

Kent NUM call on you to stop scab oil at Tilbury

Transport details from your trades council or local support group or phone: 01-595 4252/01-981 6515

Food and cash collections are important but most of all the NUM needs action. TUC policy says scab oil should not be going in to power stations. This must not be merely words on paper, but action.

Oil supplies must be stopped at Tilbury and every other power station. West Thurrock power workers have refused to handle scab fuel and that station has stopped generating. Let's follow that lead at Tilbury...and spread it to power stations across the south east.

STOP THE SCAB OIL AT TILBURY

Camden Miners' Support Group

BENEFIT

Friday 11 January

'Pogues' and 'Steel & Skin'
Hampstead Old Town Hall, Haverstock Hill, NW3 (Belsize Park tube)

Doors open 7.30pm ● Bar and Food
Tickets: £3.00 and £1.50 (concessions)

Hackney Miners' Support Committee

Solidarity With The Miners Rally

Thursday 17 January, 7.30
Stoke Newington Town Hall, Church St, N16

speakers include:

- Tony Benn MP
- Emlyn Williams, South Wales NUM
- Betty Heathfield, Women Against Pit Closures
- John La Rose, Race Today Collective
- Paul Foot, Daily Mirror and Socialist Worker columnist

with Don Concannon. On the *Militant* — 'they once stuck a dead rat and a used sanitary towel through my door' (*Militant* deny this). On Ken Livingstone — 'he was joining the Party at the only time I ever considered leaving' (at the height of Labour's pro-American collaboration over Vietnam. On Scargill — 'destroying the coal industry single-handed'.

A chilling thought is that in the year 2,000, if we get there, Neil Kinnock will still be only 58. As Robert Harris concludes: 'the painful truth for Labour is that the rise of a third political force has led to a disastrous split in the anti-conservative vote.'

'In the end, Labour must either destroy the Alliance, or come to some electoral agreement with it. The first course currently appears to be impossible, the second intolerable'. Kinnock's self defined method is for 'socialism by plod'.

Those cynics who think that only having read one book on economics (Galbraith) is inadequate to cope with such a challenge have obviously forgotten the role of luck in history.

● *The Making of Neil Kinnock*, Robert Harris, Faber and Faber, £4.95

Miners need your support

COLIN TAPPER is a striking miner from Oakdale colliery in South Wales. Since the end of May he, along with other miners from his colliery, have been stationed in Hackney Town hall in the local government campaign unit to raise funds for the strike.

VALERIE COULTAS asked him about the state of the strike in his area. Is the back to work movement biting in South Wales?

On Monday last 117 miners went into work out of total of 22,000. This is the same number as before Christmas. One colliery, Methyr Vale, where two scabs were going in before Christmas is now strike-bound.

Another colliery, Cynheidre where the back to work movement is being focussed, has 100 men working out of 1200.

Tony Holman works there. He's the back to work co-ordinator.

A letter is being sent to each NUM member in South Wales with a form on the bottom that they can tear off to request special help to go back to work.

If enough people in any given colliery ask to go back the Board arranges transport and a police escort into work.

This is their big push at the moment. The government is obviously behind this.

But why is the back to work movement so weak in South Wales?

I think it's because of tradition. Even is there's not total political awareness, people understand what trade unionism is about.

They realise that this strike is not only about jobs in this industry, or jobs for our children, but it is also about the future of our trade union.

In one sense the fact that the coalfield is in decline works against us. One lad from our pit travels from Tallybont 35 miles away to work.

Pit closures mean that people are no longer working and living in the same community. The pit is just a place of work like any other job.

In another way this strengthens people's opposition to closures because if the pit closes the community breaks up.

What was going on in your area at Christmas?

The feeling was very good over Christmas. Some children had a better Christmas than ever. People pulled together to give the children presents and parties.

Before Christmas hopes were up but afterwards people started feeling 'which direction are we going to go now?'

As one man said to me: 'We picked up the gauntlet 10 months ago. We've fought and stood by the cause. But we've fought alone. Now it's someone else's turn to pick up that gauntlet so we can stand together and win'.

People were feeling a bit lost and at sea. But the resolve's still there.

Neil Kinnock came to your lodge to justify his role in the strike. How was he received?

He produced every speech and he told of all the meetings he'd done. He reported on what he had said in parliament. He talked his way around the points of criticism, just like a politician.

If Neil had used more actions than words he would have more credibility today.

He's a mining MP from a mining community. He should have spent



Photo: NEIL MARTINSON

the early days of the strike on the picket lines.

He hasn't even visited the food centres in his own constituency Iswlym. The people of Iswlym have got a lot of respect for Neil and it would have given them a big boost to see him there.

What's your view of the day forward to win the strike?

The state is trying to alienate the NUM. We've got to alienate the state. We've got to win the argument and then mobilise to stop coal, oil, and all other substitute fuels.

What we've got to concentrate on is winning people over to support us. Mass picketing was unsuccessful because of the sheer scale of police activity.

At Orgreave they were waiting for us. The big battle occurred just two days before all the coke had been moved. In one

sense the mass picketing there came too late.

The NUM called on the rest of the trade union movement to support but we didn't get the same response as at Saltley.

There it was not the mass picket as such that closed the coke depot. It was the threat of strike action by the engineering workers. It was the power of the organised workers that closed it

But don't you think that because of the political context of this dispute, where the NUM has got a much harder battle on its hands, that the call for support needs to be put forward in a more organised way?

The only way we can effectively do that is for the grass roots to rise up. For eight weeks this strike was unofficial.

What we want is for others to follow our lead. The NUR members at Coalville are an example of this.

We know that the leadership in the trade unions won't fight. Chapple's knighthood was decided on in 1974. The right wing have been infiltrating the key positions over a long period now.

Yes those leaders base themselves on the defeats and setbacks of the social contract and the betrayals of workers who have fought the Tories but what is the NUM going to demand of the left leaders? How is the right-wing to be fought and defeated?

We've been asking for support for 10 months now. We've asked the steelworkers, we've won some backing from the NUR and from the Seamen. We've got to hold tight. What else can we do?

The Labour Party could give a lead and call a demonstration. It should be showing that it exists to represent our class.

That's why the Labour Party was formed to be the voice of the trade unions in parliament. It's about time our voice was heard.

Mineworkers Defence Committee Date set for demo

THE MINEWORKERS Defence Committee meeting on Tuesday 8 January decided to push ahead with calling a labour movement demonstration early in the new year. The date's been set — 9 March — and members of the Campaign Group of MPs will be approaching the NUM over the next week to get their backing for the plan.

The meeting, which has a very positive air, decided that it was high time activity in support of the NUM was stepped up. All NUM members there agreed with the proposal to go ahead with the plans for a demonstration on that date.

The recall conference date having been set for 9 February and the first issue of the committee's bulletin *Black Dragon* having been mailed out, the meeting came forward with a number of useful initiatives that solidarity activists will want to put in their diaries.

gress policies to be implemented. The committee agreed to build this lobby as long as the NUM endorsed it.

By Valerie Coultas

Jeremy Corbyn has drafted an appeal to the European trade union movement to set up a special fund to replenish the NUM's funds in the face of sequestration.

The meeting ended on an optimistic note when one member of the committee said that power cuts

on Monday in Oxford Street, at Fords Dagenham and all over London were not simply due to 'breakdowns'.

They were obviously a product of a CEBG decision to try and preserve electricity because of the strain on the generators due to cold weather and low coal stocks. They were likely to recur next week.

The planning group for the women's solidarity conference will meet at 7pm on 16 January in County Hall in Ken Livingstone's office.

The weekly bulletin costs £5 waged, £2 unwaged — it is free to striking miners — for the first 8 issues. The deadline for copy each week is Thursday morning. Send to: 127 George Lane, London SE13.

Mineworkers Defence Committee

National Conference

Solidarity with the NUM!

OCTAGON CENTRE

SHEFFIELD

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 9th

11am-5.30pm

DELEGATES: 2 per TRADE UNION ORGANISATION

1 per OTHER ORGANISATION

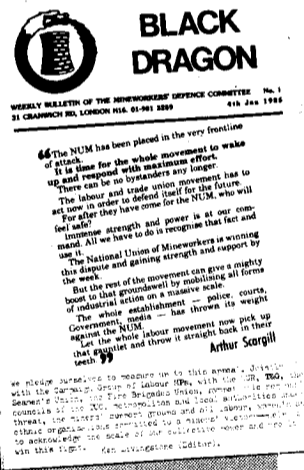
CONFIRMED SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

PETER HEATHFIELD BETTY HEATHFIELD
TONY BENN JOHN TOCHER PHIL HOLT

SPONSORS SO FAR INCLUDE:
CAMPAIGN GROUP OF MPs, FIRE BRIGADES UNION,
BROAD LEFT ORGANISING COMMITTEE, LABOUR BRIEFING,
LESBIANS AND GAYS SUPPORT THE MINERS,
GREENHAM WOMEN FOR A MINERS' VICTORY

Accommodation, Credentials and Creche:

Ring 01-981 3289 or write to
Mineworkers Defence Committee, c/o 31 Cranwich Rd N16



Women in the committee intend to call a women's solidarity conference in London at the beginning of March.

The representatives from BLOC proposed a joint lobby of the TUC with the committee on 23 January to call for con-

Rail solidarity

ALTHOUGH coal movement in the North West has ceased since the miners' strike began oil traffic is increasing reports Lance Crossley, district council delegate from Miles Platting NUR branch.

Since the strike started the number of oil trains seems to have increased.

British Rail Board claimed it was all domestic oil. But never before has this quantity of oil been transported.

A lot of it is being moved during the night. It's being taken to places like Scarborough and Harrogate but then it seems to disappear. NUR members are refusing to move it to power stations but scab lorry drivers may well be.

Management have kept a low profile in relation to the boycott of coal. If we find proof that oil is being used as substitute fuel for power stations our aim is to stop that as well. Then management would come down heavy.

The miners fight is our fight. If the pits close railway jobs would go as well.

During the TUC day of action last year only 4 out of 80 guards crossed picket lines although a lot of drivers went through.

The railways are rapidly deteriorating due to lack of investment. The inspectorate put the last spate of accidents down to vandalism. This is hardly an adequate explanation.

The truth is the stock we are working with was

only meant to last 15 to 20 years. Most of it is already over 30 years old.

The Signals and Telegraph Department threatened industrial action because management wanted the maintenance of equipment to be spread over a longer period to save money. Management were forced to back down.

The removal of guards off trains will also affect safety. They've had trials already and they'd certainly tighten up even more if the miners get beaten. Knapp's been a complete let down.

In April we were offered 4 per cent wage increase. The union accepted it. The majority of my workmates think that at that point we could have been brought out alongside the miners.



Photo: JOHN HARRIS

The of capital

ONE OF the most widespread phrases now being used in debates on the left on economic policy is 'the control of capital'. It has been popularised particularly by Ken Livingstone.

The issue on which the content of the 'control of capital' has been made completely clear is the demand for the immediate nationalisation, by a Labour government, of the complete banking and financial system. This is the question Ken Livingstone has particularly tried to popularise.

Other supporters of the policy have gone further. Mike Ward, chair of the GLC Industry/Employment Cmttee in a reply to Roy Hattersley's economic strategy in the *New Statesman*, has proposed that the full nationalisation of the banking system be accompanied by radical measures to take control of relations between Britain and the world economy — measures including full exchange controls, state control of foreign trade, and taking over of assets of British firms abroad. He also proposed full nationalisation of North Sea oil to use its profits for the rebuilding of industry.

The reason the ideas of the control of capital have begun to achieve such popularity is that they are authentically different to either the right wing mass unemployment policies accepted and pursued by Roy Hattersley, or the anaemic and unworkable 'Alternative Economic Strategy' which used to be advocated by the Communist Party and its supporters. Measures such as the full nationalisation of the financial system, and complete control of Britain's relations with the world economy, are an absolutely indispensable part of any socialist economic policy.

But there is another historical reason why the phrase 'the control of capital' strikes such an echo. It is because it links with the classical discussion on the transition to a socialist economy — the real experience of all countries which have abolished capitalism. Every country which has abolished capitalism has necessarily passed through successive phases in doing so.

● Firstly and above all, the working class must conquer political power — without this the ownership and control of the economy by capitalism cannot be broken. This conquest of political power need not, indeed usually does not take place around directly economic issues at all but, for example, flows out of a struggle against dictatorship, the fight for national independence, etc.

● Secondly state and workers control of the economy must be established — for without this the real practical power and control of the capitalists over the economy cannot be broken. While workers' control — a real regime of 'the control of capital' — can begin to develop before the working class takes political power it cannot become a comprehensive and complete economic system until state power is in the hands of the working class.

● Thirdly when practical control of the state and economy has been taken into the hands of the working class the capitalists can in reality, as opposed to purely legally and formally, be expropriated — the full nationalisation of all the decisive sectors of the economy be carried through.

The time it takes to pass through these phases differs. In Russia, under the pressure of civil war, the regime of workers' control, and of 'the control of capital', lasted only six months before the full nationalisation of the economy — although Lenin and Trotsky pointed out that the extreme speed with which this process had to be carried through caused great economic damage. They would have preferred, if the foreign interventions and civil war had not developed, to carry through the economic processes much more slowly.

In the case of China, which was not faced after its revolution with immediate foreign intervention, the full

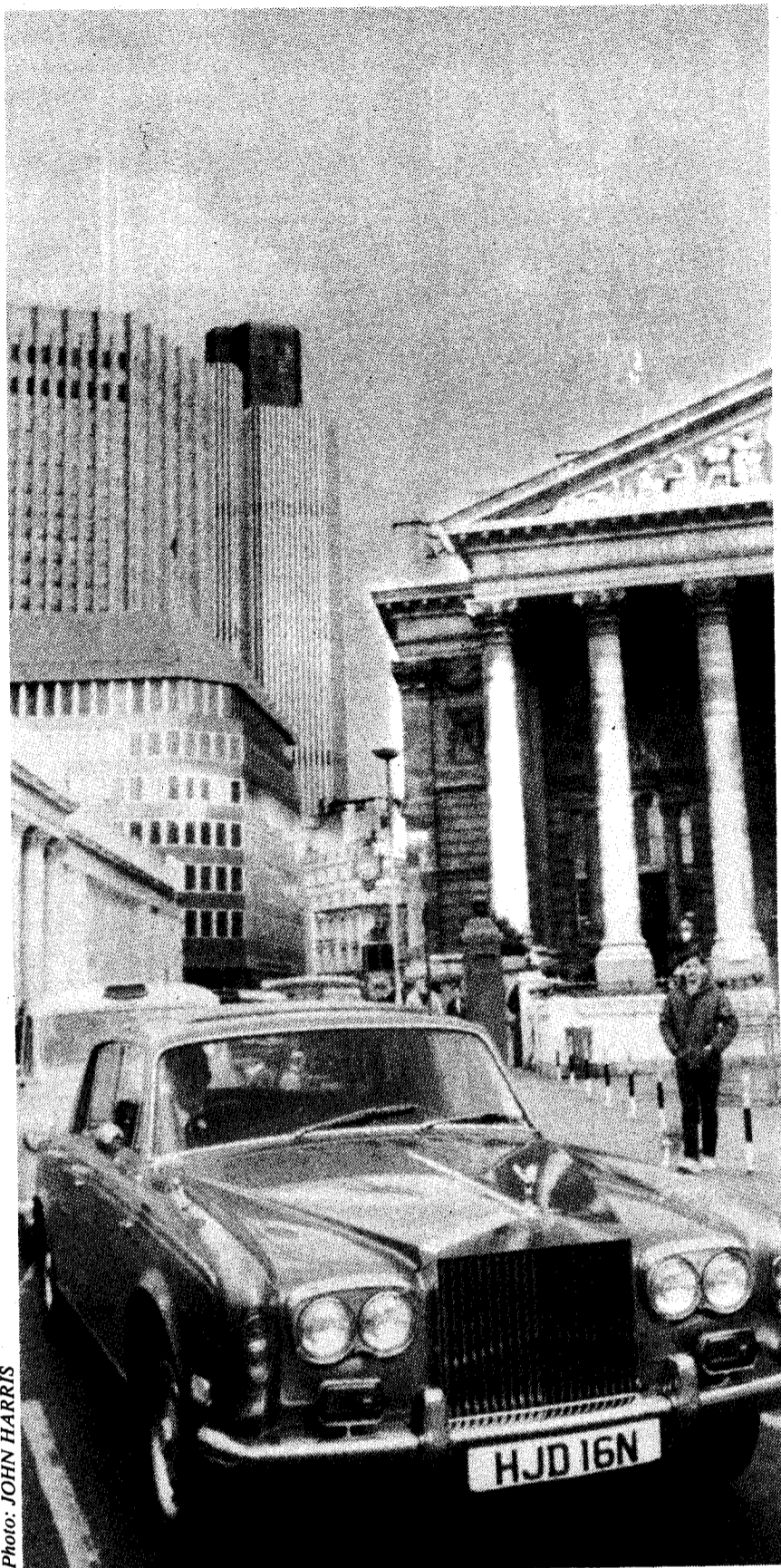


Photo: JOHN HARRIS

The City, nerve-centre of capital

nationalisation of the economy did not take place for several years after the working class had taken political state power. Other tempos are possible.

The speed with which such a transition must be carried out is a purely tactical question. From an economic point of view it would be preferable to make this transition in the economy in a slow and ordered way — for the working class to use 'its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie' as Marx put it in the *Communist Manifesto*. However concrete political considerations may make it necessary to proceed much more rapidly no matter what the immediate economic consequences.

This question of tempo is a concrete matter which can only be decided in the light of a specific situation.

But this reality, that the actual expropriation of the bourgeoisie, the nationalisation of the economy, can only be carried out in practice through workers' and state control of the economy, remains true in every case. A real 'control of capital' is precisely the transition to the practical nationalisation of the economy.

The approach of 'the control of capital' is therefore completely counterposed to the absurd proposal of the *Militant* that the capitalist class can be expropriated by passing an act of parliament nationalising the 250 monopolies. No expropriation of the capitalist class by such parliamentary means could take place at all — both because state power would not be possessed by the working class by such means but also because no practical control of the economy would exist.

It is the approach of 'the control of capital', but carried through in a much more thorough-going way than its ad-



vocates at present envisage, that is the real way to approach the transition to a socialist economy. Nationalisation of the financial system, and control of Britain's relation to the world economy, must be extended into the industrial sector through workers' control if a real transition to a socialist economy is to take place.

In order to show the real historical and theoretical framework in which the control of capital should be looked at, the classic case remains that of the Russian Revolution — which is what our article by DAVE BAILEY looks at. It originally appeared in the journal *International* in 1977. Socialist Action has edited it.

RECENT YEARS have seen a revival of interest on the European left in the subject of workers' control of production. For decades socialism has suffered grievously from its identification with Stalinism, and the rediscovery of slogans which, in one way or another, embody the theme of workers' democracy, has served to reassert the connection between socialism and the liberation of the working class.

The Stalinist model of state power is surely one of the greatest impediments to the advance of socialism in the West and it is vitally important that socialists be able to demonstrate that proletarian power can and does require that the institutions of a workers' state, both political and industrial, be run by the workers themselves. The discussion of one such slogan, workers' control of production, is therefore to be welcomed.

In Britain this revival has been animated to a large extent by the Institute of Workers Control (IWC). This has made a modest contribution to overcoming the idea, unfortunately prevalent among most workers today, that socialism automatically implies bureaucracy.

On the other hand there are serious political weaknesses in the discussion. The literature is doggedly Anglocentric — and workers' control of production, properly speaking, has hardly ever been established in Britain — but also resolutely avoids discussing the great revolutionary upheavals of the past, in which abundant examples of workers' control can be found.

In the early days of the Communist International, workers' control was not used as a synonym for workers' self-management of industry in a socialist society, as is often done today. On the contrary, a sharp distinction was drawn between workers' management and workers' control, the latter term being reserved for a particular phase of transition from capitalism to a planned economy.

During this transitional phase, the proletariat, rather than move directly to the management of production, might simply exercise control over the capitalists. This presupposes the continued existence of the capitalists and their administrators for a temporary period.

Some of the confusion which surrounds the subject of workers' control is terminological in origin, for in the Communist tradition, the term workers' management is used to refer to the administration of things (after the bourgeoisie has been removed), while control is used to refer to the administration of persons (the bourgeoisie).

Confusion is compounded in the English-speaking world by the fact that the words 'control' and 'management' are frequently interchangeable in common English usage. Other languages draw a finer distinction between the two ideas: *contrôle* and *gestion* in French, *control* and *gerencia* in Spanish, *kontrolia* and *upravljeniye* in Russian.

In English, many people innocently use the term 'control' to refer indif-

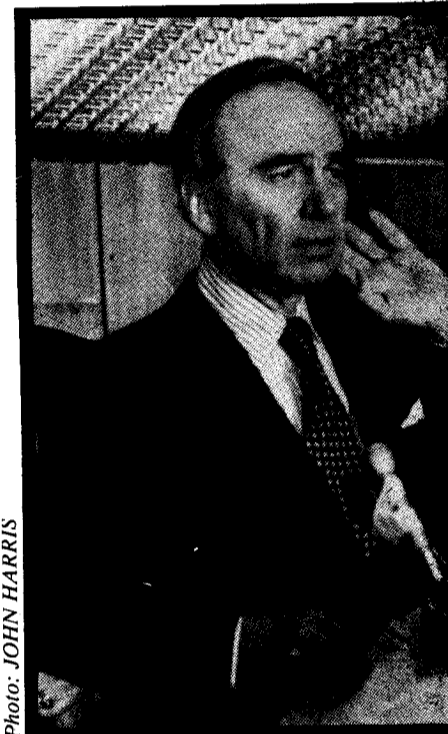


Photo: JOHN HARRIS

Workers' control — a question of who w

ferently to all forms of workers' sovereignty in industry, thus obscuring the distinctions made in the Communist tradition. Nevertheless, in all countries, the slogan of 'workers' control' has been an object of political contention. The reason is that to many people, the idea that the working class movement should not nationalise private property and substitute worker-administrators for the capitalists and bourgeois managers at the first opportunity, represents an unacceptable compromise with capitalism. Anarcho-syndicalist writers, for example, consciously refuse to employ the term control as anything but a synonym for workers' management of socialised property.

By Dave Bailey

Many may therefore be surprised to learn that by workers' control the Bolsheviks meant something less than the complete socialisation of industry. But Lenin, who wrote and spoke a great deal on the subject during the Russian revolution, was quite unambiguous on this point. In his *April Theses*, he stated: 'It is not our immediate task to "introduce" socialism, but only to bring social production and the distribution of products at once under the control of the Soviet of Workers Deputies.'

In his pamphlet *Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?*, written on the eve of the October Revolution, Lenin stated: 'The important thing will not be even the confiscation of the capitalists' property, but country-wide, all-embracing workers' control over the capitalists and their possible supporters.'

Another important pamphlet, *The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It*, a comprehensive statement of Bolshevik economic policy published in October 1917, speaks repeatedly of 'control over' and 'supervision of' the capitalists and not their immediate elimination.

On coming to power, the Bolsheviks pursued no other policy.

Control Capital



the power

before the escalation of the civil war in May 1918, nationalisation (of whole industries) on government orders went no further than the banks and the sugar syndicate, and although local soviets often confiscated factories on their own initiative, a large part of industry remained in private hands.

Why did the Bolsheviks adopt such policies? Trotsky's explanation ran as follows: 'The very idea of this slogan (workers' control) was the outgrowth of the transitional regime in industry when the capitalist and his administrators could not longer take a step without the consent of the workers; but on the other hand, when the workers had not as yet provided the political prerequisites for nationalisation, nor yet seized the technical management, not yet created the organs essential for this.'

Furthermore: 'The proletariat... is interested in seeing to it that the transition from the private capitalist to the state capitalist and then to the socialist method of production be accomplished with the least economic convulsions and the least drain upon the national wealth. That is why, while nearing power and even after seizing power by the way of the boldest and most decisive struggle, the proletariat will demonstrate complete readiness to establish a transitional regime in the factories, plants, and banks.'

The foundations of this reasoning are partly political, partly technical. Let us examine the technical aspect first.

The employers in Russia sabotaged production extensively during the months prior to the revolution and for some time afterwards, hoarding goods, creating monstrous inflation, and so on. Indeed, the bourgeoisie invariably embarked on economic sabotage during periods of revolutionary upheaval, partly out of fear for the future of private property, partly in a spirit of malicious obstruction. The means of production, distribution, and exchange were turned into political weapons.

The Russian proletariat therefore had to take far-reaching measures to

avert complete economic and political catastrophe. During the revolution itself, however, the proletariat lacked the 'political prerequisites' and 'organs of technical management' needed to run industry. The bourgeoisie, like any other ruling class in history, is not a mere excrescence on society, but performs a specific role in the social division of labour, in this case organising and administering production. The revolutionary class does not come to power fully equipped with the skills and institutions needed to assume that role immediately.

Difficulty

The Bolsheviks had considerable difficulty in organising a nation-wide apparatus for running industry. In December 1917, for example, the group around Bukharin and Radek, which disagreed with Lenin's policy and favoured immediate nationalisation of all major industry, secured the creation of Vesenkha, the Supreme Council of the National Economy. But even they did not find it practical to proceed immediately to sweeping nationalisation.

In practice, Vesenkha's authority did not extend much beyond Petrograd itself. It had no plan of production and no network of trained personnel — communist administrators, technicians, or even clerks — able to coordinate and manage production throughout Russia. The only way to overcome this was to

Speaking of the workers and their administrators, Lenin said bluntly: 'We must learn from them, and there is something to learn, for the party of the proletariat and its vanguard have no experience of independent work in organising giant enterprises which serve the needs of scores of millions of people.'

The policy of workers' control was designed to respond to bourgeois economic sabotage while taking due account of the difficulties of the proletariat in managing the entire economy

directly without relying on the expertise of the capitalists and their agents. The aim was to expose the activities of the employers and merchants to public gaze, to prevent them from sabotaging production, and to persuade them, by force where necessary, to remain at their posts. If some could be compelled to continue productive activities, subject to strict accounting and invigilation by the workers, that would be all to the good.

At the same time, the new regime would gain a breathing space during which to form new institutions, train a cadre of communist administrators, and repair the infrastructure so as to draw the workers into the management of industry at all levels of the state. Workers' control, therefore, an interim policy designed to see the revolution through its most arduous period, would serve a twofold purpose: to restrict and gradually suppress the social power of the bourgeoisie while simultaneously enabling the proletariat to train itself to manage industry.

State employees

Even during War Communism, when the exigencies of the civil war obliged the Bolsheviks to nationalise the bulk of the industrial economy, which was 'transferred to the management of the republic' as the official slogan, the Bolsheviks did not force factory administrators and their administrators, offering them posts in industry as ordinary state employees.

The political aims of the workers' control policy were explained by Trotsky this way: 'By its readiness to establish transitional forms of workers' control, the proletarian vanguard wins over to its side the more conservative strata of the proletariat, and neutralises certain groups of the petty bourgeoisie, especially the technical, administrative, and banking staffs. Should the capitalists and the entire upper layer of the administration demonstrate an ut-

ter irreconcilability by resorting to methods of economic sabotage, the responsibility for the severe measures that follow therefrom will fall, in the eyes of the nation, not upon the workers but upon the hostile classes.' Such, he added, is the 'political import' of the slogan workers' control.

This issue was of particular importance in Russia, where the petty bourgeoisie (in this case the peasantry) constituted an outright majority of the population. Most of the nationalisations carried out after October, whether locally or nationally, were described as 'punitive' — retribution for sabotage or non-cooperation by the owners.

Although workers' control in Russia was cut short, it seems reasonable to conclude that the political import of the policy played its part in the Bolshevik success. As Trotsky wrote, the slogan of workers' control 'retains an enormous (political) significance independently of the degree to which it will be realised in reality, if realised at all'.

The controls exercised by various proletarian institutions during the revolution were quite comprehensive. No doubt many readers familiar only with present-day discussions in Britain about workers' control will be surprised to hear just what the measures taken entailed. One of the earliest decrees, issued in April 1917 by the 'exploratory conference of factory committees of the Petrograd War Industries', stated: 'From the Factory Committee should emanate all instructions concerning internal factory organisation (ie instructions concerning such matters as hours of work, wages, hiring and firing, holidays, etc). The factory manager to be kept notified.'

Inspection

At the first full congress of Petrograd Factory Committees, which met in May 1917, Lenin's resolution, which passed overwhelmingly, stated that to establish control 'it is necessary, first to make certain that in all the basic institutions there is a majority of workers, not less than three-fourths of all the votes, and that all owners who have not deserted their business, as well as the scientifically and technically trained personnel, are compelled to participate'. Furthermore, all commercial and bank accounts were ordered open to inspection by any shop or factory committee, central or local soviet, or trade union, with management 'compelled to supply them with all the data'.

The Second Conference of Factory Committees declared that the committees had 'the right to dismiss all those who could not guarantee normal relations with the workers' and that 'administrative factory personnel can only enter into service with the consent of the Factory Committee'. All these powers were codified at the First All-Russian Conference of Factory Committees, which met on the eve of October. This conference accorded the factory committees the power to 'exclude from participation in the discussion any member of the factory administration' and to confiscate the enterprise in the event of 'illegal acts'.

In other words, workers' control meant that the workers would have veto power over the decisions of the employers and administrators. It was 'punitive' and 'conservative' only in the sense that it aimed to ensure the continuation of existing production methods and to prevent the workers from being deceived by the promises of the bourgeoisie.

Have no fear, said Lenin, the workers 'would institute such supervision that every Tit Titych will be surrounded as the French were at Sedan'. The workers would be sovereign. In his *History of the Russian Revolution*, Trotsky tells us that during the summer of 1917, when workers' control was first put into effect, the workers in various parts of the country were subjecting individual employers 'now to enforced appearance before the soviet, now to house arrest... no wonder that the workers' militia became an object of special hatred to the possessing classes'.

In other words, as conceived by the Bolsheviks workers' control implied that the working class would hold effective state power. The February insurrection, after which the soviet formed, had delivered nearly all real power to the armed proletariat and soldiers (with the exception of the governmental apex); in this sense, Trotsky was able to say that 'the dictatorship of the workers and soldiers had already been a fact ever since 27 February', and Lenin frequently spoke of the possibility of the 'peaceful development' of the revolution.

Naturally, this state of affairs — proletarian power — did not altogether exclude agreements with the industrialists. Nevertheless, such 'agreements' occurred under the massive weight of organised proletarian domination. This reflected an alignment of forces opposite to that of trade unionism, where workers are permitted to bargain and come to agreements, but only under the organised weight of bourgeois domination.

Writers on workers' control sometimes imply that control is an intermediate state of affairs prior to the outbreak of the revolution.

But the value of such demands does not depend on their realisation before the revolution. The purpose of raising the demand for control today, like the objective function of factory occupations and other such episodic struggles, is primarily to expose the bourgeoisie and to prepare the workers for a struggle to overthrow it. To this end, every opportunity must be used to promote the idea that the labour movement can and should take the place of the employing class at the head of society.

This means that socialists must constantly question the existing order. Why shouldn't the labour movement have unconditional access to all company information? A community, for example, has an absolute right to know if a company is planning to close a plant upon which many thousands depend for their livelihood. Again, it is unnecessary to know a company's financial condition before formulating a wage claim, but the demand that the books be opened will often silence a recalcitrant employer who rejects a claim. Furthermore, workers should get into the habit of demanding the right to invigilate company finances.

Veto

And why shouldn't the labour movement have the right to veto managerial decisions? The Bullock Commission formally endorsed the idea of 'industrial democracy'. But what is democracy if not the rule of the majority? Since the workers are indisputably the majority in industry, they should have nothing less than a majority on every management board in industry, and certainly on every commission ostensibly set up to 'control' private entrepreneurs. If the employers will not grant the workers 'industrial suffrage' they had better stop chattering about industrial democracy and confess that 'democracy' does not extend beyond the bounds of Westminster.

The labour movement should constantly seek to establish the justice and rationality of the claim for 'industrial democracy' — that is to say, workers' control. To demand workers' control is to demand that society should entrust the management of industry to the workers and their representatives and not to the employing class.

The workers' demand for control is not a demand for ownership. Many people may come to question ownership through understanding the reasons behind resistance to control. The demand for control is an explosive one regardless of the extent to which a phase of workers' control may actually materialise during the transition to socialism.

There can be no socialist revolution unless the workers are convinced that it is necessary, possible, and just to deprive the employing class of its commanding role in industry and to expropriate its property. The demand for workers' control can play an important role in convincing them.

The Solidarnosc left

SINCE THE beginning of the miners strike messages of support for the NUM from the *Solidarnosc* underground in Poland have revealed some of the political ferment still taking place in that country. But they are only one small part of the political differentiations taking place among various groups in the underground. JACQUELINE ALLIO and CYRIL SMUGA look at some of the developments occurring in the left of the movement.

DURING 1984 several currents or groups of the left in the broadest sense, or even of socialists, have emerged inside *Solidarnosc*. This process began out of a growing awareness that effective resistance to the rule of the totalitarian bureaucracy cannot be achieved through the sheer determination of the social and trade-union movement alone.

It is recognised it is also necessary to organise politically within the movement in order to be able to draw up programmes and strategies for struggle against the bureaucratic dictatorship and for the construction of a self-managed republic. The enormous backwardness of the Polish movement in this regard is reflected more and more in its activity. *Solidarnosc* is continually plunged into a programmatic and strategic crisis which comes out more clearly in moments of heightened political tension. But this crisis is also felt very keenly in periods of relative calm in the midst of the routine day-to-day activities within the structures of *Solidarnosc* and particularly in the workplaces.

In response to this problem, certain attempts are now being made to take political initiatives as — in the case of the 'Fighting Solidarity Organisation' which decided in the summer of 1982 to give itself a formal structure. Up until now most of the attempts to organise politically in

the workplaces within *Solidarnosc* have come from the left, except in the case of the Confederation for an Independent Poland (KPN), a nationalist



organisation which has practically ceased to exist since 1981.

The other exception is *Niepodleglosc* (Independence) which puts forward the idea of a setting up of a liberal-democratic party, but which has taken its distance from *Solidar-*

nosc, considering it to be a movement without perspective. The initiatives taken by the left are very limited, not so say embryonic, and at the same time very diverse.

The majority claim to stand on the tradition of the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) — which was the main reformist workers' party in Poland from the end of the nineteenth century until 1948, when it ceased to exist. This party

played a leading role in the national and social revolution of 1905 and was the most influential party within the structures of the 'underground government' under nazi occupation.

The new socialists look to the PPS mainly because

this party not only defended the notion of the emancipation of labour, the demands of parliamentary democracy and independence for Poland but it was also anticommunist. Within *Solidarnosc* most people identify communism with Stalinism and totalitarianism of the Soviet type.

Jacek Kuron and Adam Michnik were among the first to claim that to stand in the tradition of the PPS when they broke from Marxism and began to work within the Worker Defence Committee (KOR) before August 1980.

KOS

It is generally assumed that Kuron, Michnik and a number of other ex-KOR members have a perspective of building a socialist party in the future based on the traditions of the PPS. The point of departure, organisationally speaking, for this project was the building just before the declaration of the state of war, of the Clubs for a Self-Managed Republic and for 'liberty, justice and independence' (WSN).

Since 1983 this project has been continued. It is carried out under the banner of WSN groups, although not much is heard about them and their publications have a very limited circulation. This comes from the fact that the main initiators of this current were in prison up until last July.

The Committee of Resistance (KOS) has a much more important influence. It was created immediately after December 1981 as an underground structure linked to *Solidarnosc* and was set up through a network of five-



Jaruzelski

person groups. KOS itself declares that, 'It is not a secret organisation of cadres based on discipline and hierarchy, nor a political party with a unified programme aiming to seize power.' The committee produces a weekly paper, *KOS* (Blackbird), which has a circulation of about 20,000 copies and which is one of the two main underground journals.

KOS is opposed to setting up a political organisation today because they are afraid that it would become a substitute for the wider social movement, thus weakening it and undermining unity. They do not call themselves socialists because they believe that 'in

Poland, as in other countries in the Soviet empire, socialism is identified with a regime of violence, lies and exploitation.' It is, however, generally considered to be a current of the left. It has established contacts with certain social democratic parties in the West and initiated contacts with peace groups in END (European Nuclear Disarmament), the first group in Poland to do so. As with the WSN, the KOS represents the right-wing of the Polish left.

In February 1984 a political group was formed around the weekly newspaper, *Wola* (Willpower) which is produced by trade-union militants with links in the factories in the Wola district of Warsaw.

The only group which for the moment calls for the construction of a socialist party is the group around the weekly *Robotnik* (The Worker).

This journal has a circulation of several thousand copies. It is produced by members of the Workers Interfactory Committee of *Solidarnosc* in Warsaw.

In some articles the *Robotnik* political group presents the view of Western social democracy, whose positions and real nature they completely idealise, as the reference point of the whole of the international workers' movement.

On this subject it says, for example, 'Through the methods of gradual reform they [Western Social Democracy] try to limit the influence of private capital, to appease egalitarian principles in social relations. Above all, they try to contribute to the development of the standard of living, the welfare state and culture of the workers.'

The attitude towards social democracy combined with the methods that *Robotnik* puts forward for the construction of a workers' party, have been the object of a polemic with the monthly *Wolny Robotnik* (Free Worker), produced in Silesia. This latter group stand for a programme of struggle for power through workers' councils put forward in the famous 'open letter' of Jacek Kuron and Karol Modzelewski written in 1964 when they were still revolutionary Marxists. The appearance in Poland of a revolutionary socialist current is proof of the ideological and political radicalisation of certain sections of the Polish new left.

THE WEST German Green Party held its congress in Hamburg on 2 December. At the congress a resolution on the British miners' strike, drafted by the Green's group in the European parliament and its district leadership in Bonn, was circulated with the authority of the party leadership.

THE FEDERAL Delegate Conference resolves — that the media coverage of the British miners' strike in the Federal Republic has been either nil or false and one-sided; the Greens want to counter this. — at the same time the Greens want to help alleviate the material want that the miners face owing to the length of the strike and the repressive measures taken by the Thatcher government; we want to express our admiration and sympathy for their courage and their tenacity.

— finally, the Greens want to express their solidarity by actively participating in the miners' struggle.

1. The Federal Delegate Conference welcomes the solidarity initiatives already undertaken: the initiatives taken by the Nord-Rhein-Westfalen, Schleswig Holstein and Hamburg groups, together with the GEW (Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft, the teachers' union), the two-week-long hosting of the NUM general secretary, Peter Heathfield, during which he spoke at 12 solidarity rallies and the call was raised for donating a day's wages to the miners.

We also welcome the decisions of the national

committee and the Green-Alternative European Alliance (at the urging of the Greens) to contribute respectively 20,000 and 10,000 German marks to support the miners.

2. We instruct the national committee, along with the state groups, to build two "Solidarity Weeks." During these weeks of action, at regional, transregional and local rallies, the district could hold discussion evenings, literature tables and other such activities.

3. We instruct the National Committee, the federal and state

parliamentary fractions, as well as the European parliamentary groups, to mount a truth campaign, by means of placing ads in publications, holding press conferences, issuing leaflets, and so on.

4. The district leaderships should check to see how best they can organise local solidarity actions, based for example on already existing twinning arrangements between cities (such as exchange visits, fund collections for specific purposes and so on).

5. The Greens will send a combined delegation to Britain to participate on the picket lines alongside the British miners. This is to expose the police brutality (use of horses, dogs and clubs) and insofar as possible to deter it.

6. The National Committee and the state groups, supported by the European group, will prepare two summer camps for miners' children.

Nuclear

7. The Federal Delegate Conference condemns the lack of solidarity shown by the IG Bergbau (West German miners' federation), and calls on this union to stop undermining the strike of the British miners by allowing increases in the exports of West German coal to Britain.

8. The Federal Delegate Conference urges the DGB (Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund, German Confederation of Labour)

to support the striking miners by extending them special financial aid on an adequate scale, which means millions of marks.

The British miners' strike against the mine closures forced by the Thatcher government has been going on for over nine months now. Their strike is not just about wages or even about saving some 20,000 jobs. They are also fighting a premeditated and calculated attempt to convert to the use of nuclear energy, which is inseparably linked to arming for nuclear war. 'Jobs, not bombs', as the striking miners' wives demands!

The problems of nuclear waste disposal, radioactivity and so on, have in fact not been solved in Britain any more



Green's earlier this year supported West German struggle for 35 hour week

than they have anywhere else. One only needs think of the Sellafield case to say nothing of the predictable development toward an atomic police state because of the alleged special needs for protecting nuclear facilities from all sorts of spies and 'terrorists'.

Thatcher's so-called policies mean simply writing off whole regions, sweeping away the historically evolved structures of the mining communities. These plans have no regard for the problems of the health, human needs or dignity of the population. To the contrary, the Iron Lady is trying to crush the resistance to such antihuman schemes.

It is clear that Thatcher's aim is to mount a head-on attack to weaken,

cripple and demoralize independent, strong unions.

Supporting the British miners is also supporting our own struggle. We must not be so blind as IG Bergbau. This union, in fact, has not only been conspicuous by its absence from the solidarity campaigns but it has also short-sightedly sought to feather its own nest in this case by going along with a 35% increase in coal exports from the Ruhrhole company to Great Britain.

In the long run, such an attitude means sawing off the branch on which IG Bergbau and all trade unionists are sitting.

We have to fight this with all our strength. Solidarity with the British miners is not just a moral question. It is our own interests, our own concerns, that are at stake.

Greens back the miners

The fight for Irish self-determination

BEFORE CHRISTMAS Socialist Action carried an interview with **JOE AUSTIN**, chairperson of Belfast Sinn Fein, on the struggle for Irish independence.

Last year's Labour Party conference passed resolutions condemning plastic bullets, strip searches, and the use of Diplock courts. But a resolution calling for self-determination for the Irish people and the immediate withdrawal of British troops was lost.

Left MP Martin Flannery argued against immediate withdrawal. It would create a blood-bath, he said, and was a demand not even Sinn Fein in Ireland campaigned for.

Concluding our interview, **REDMOND O'NEILL** asked Joe Austin what Sinn Fein's view of the tasks of the British labour movement was.

Martin Flannery is misquoting Sinn Fein. What we have said consistently for the last 15 years is that what has to be done is an immediate recognition of the right of the Irish people to self-determination. If we can negotiate for the Brits to leave Ireland next Tuesday, then we'll do that.

But the reality is that such negotiations have to

take place. We have said to Martin Flannery, the Labour Party and the British left generally that a number of things have to take place before the Brits leave, in order to make the Brits leave sooner rather than later.

First the Loyalist veto has got to be challenged. Number two, the right of Ireland to self-determination has to be recognised and take place.

Those actually quicken the pace of British withdrawal rather than delaying it. Flannery is arguing for delaying tactics rather than speeding up the process which is what our position is.

With regard to the British labour movement, what we seek is a normal relationship. That's all.

The British labour movement, or at least sections of it, has got a fair record in terms of its policies for national liberation and self-determination. But the closer you come to England, the fuzzier those concepts become.

We have delegations here virtually on a weekly basis. We find there is a sliding scale: Nicaragua — no problem; South Africa — no problem; Ireland — well...er...ehm...Ireland's a problem!

But we will not allow the British labour movement to be neutral. You can't be neutral. It's a violation of socialist prin-

ciple to be neutral in terms of oppression.

I don't want to be offensive or unpleasant to our comrades in England, but we will not allow you to be neutral. We seek a normal relationship, that's all.

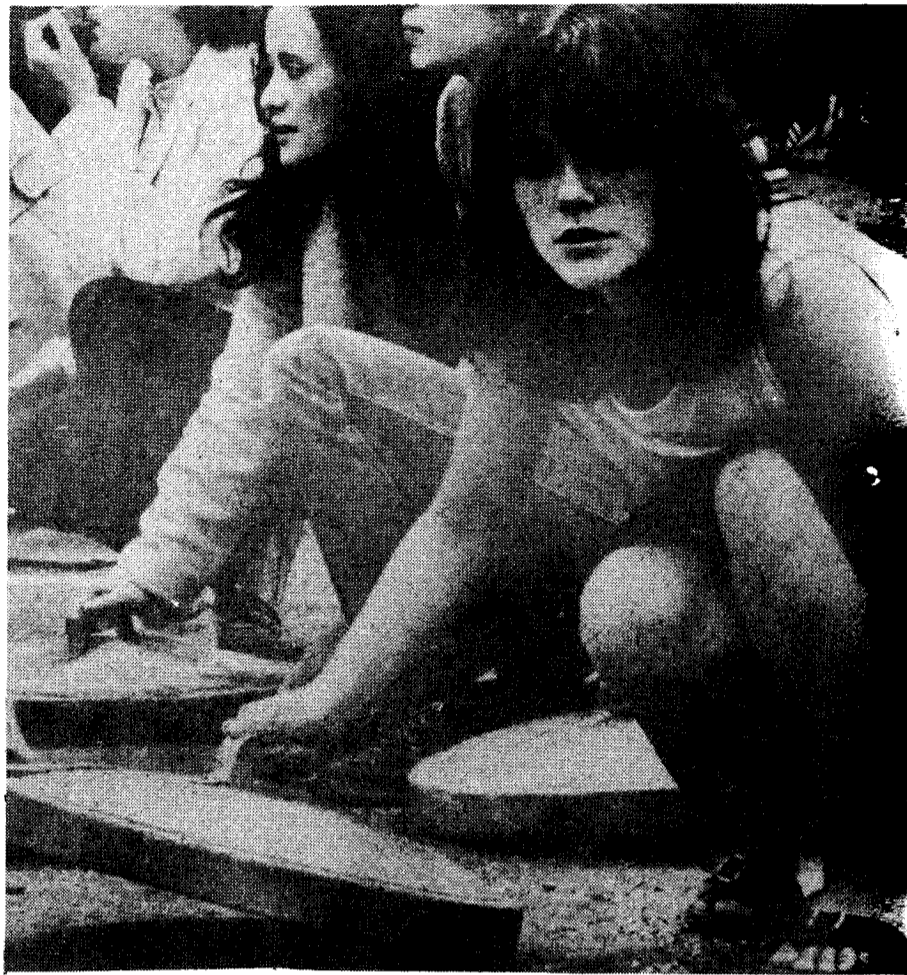
We don't ask the Labour Party to be divided by the Irish struggle. They can't even be divided by the English struggle, let alone the Irish.

That said, from a tactical point of view, how can people expect motions calling for the immediate withdrawal to be successful at the British Labour Party conference? When you look at the complexion of the British labour movement you see that the politicisation of the Labour Party on the question of Ireland hasn't even begun.

From a comradely point of view, I would say that the struggle in terms of politicising sections of the labour movement has to begin. In five years time we can talk about getting the Labour Party conference to call for immediate British withdrawal — not the other way round.

The only policy that you can adopt, and the one which is a foundation of everything else, is self-determination. Self-determination, if it's successful, opens the door to Brit withdrawal. It's a sort of stepping-stone to Brit withdrawal.

Unfortunately people like the Irish Solidarity Movement make demands on the British working class that we wouldn't even make on them. For example that as a precondition for concern on Ireland you have to support the IRA. The IRA didn't even make that demand in Ireland! Sinn Fein



Irish women bang their bin lids in protest at the death of a hunger striker

don't make it a precondition for support anywhere.

At the other end of the scale people like Neil Kinnock should not be allowed to hide behind mere phrases like 'eventual unification'. So against both of those types of position you need a strategy that politicises sections of the labour movement and forces the direction of support for self-determination.

We are effectively at the beginning of that pro-

cess. The explanation of the Irish situation — the explanation of our English problem — hasn't happened in the British labour movement. It has to happen.

What are useful are positions like the Labour Party conference motion condemning the use of plastic bullets in spite of the opposition of people like Merlyn Rees.

The Labour Party position on paid perjurers is a sound one. The positions on Armagh and the

strip searches are sound positions.

These are obviously platforms which can be built on in the British labour movement.

The troops have to be withdrawn, of course. If the right of the Irish to self-determination is being acknowledged, then why do you need 40,000 members of the British security forces over here to subjugate that right?

The withdrawal of troops follows on from self-determination.



Give 'em hell, lads. Remember you're fighting to preserve the same kind of system that gave you no better choice than to join the army and come out here and get shot at in the first place.

Victoria Gillick wins appeal

ROMAN CATHOLIC mother of 10, Victoria Gillick, has won her appeal for no contraceptive or abortion information or treatment to be given to young women under 16 without their parents' permission.

The judges said they were ruling on legal grounds only and that it was now up to parliament to change the law if necessary. The ruling applies only to young women — young men will still be legally entitled to buy sheaths from chemists or machines.

The ruling brought an immediate outcry from the medical profession, who are now placed in the difficult position of having to refuse prescribing contraception for young women under 16 — even when they have already been doing so — unless they can persuade the young woman to tell her parents.

It is feared that this will not simply mean more unwanted pregnancies, but could also lead to a blackmarket in birth-

control pills and an increase in VD (as young women will be worried about going to a doctor with evidence of illegal sexual activity).

By Leonora Lloyd

The DHSS has indicated it will be appealing to the House of Lords and hopes the case will be heard within the month. A number of 'pro-life' Tory MPs claim this will be a waste of money. Presumably, if the verdict had gone the other way, they wouldn't complain about Mrs Gillick's continuing use of public funds in the form of legal aid.

It is not certain that the House of Lords will reverse the verdict. And if they do, no doubt Tories will attempt to get the law changed to prevent doc-

tors treating young women without their parents' permission.

It is important not to wait till this happens before starting a campaign.

One does not have to favour early sexual activity to believe that it is important that young people get all the available information they need to make up their own minds. And, if they decide to have sex, that they do so in a responsible manner. That means avoiding unwanted pregnancies.

Victoria Gillick believes that the ruling means no one can give advice to the under-16s about contraception or abortion — and that includes sex education! But there is no evidence to show that ignorance enhances 'innocence'. Quite the contrary in fact. The better educated tend to start their sexual activity later than those who get little or no accurate sex education.

The ruling ignores the

reality of many young people's lives, and the poor nature of their relationships with their parents. It is clear from parents' attitude to sex education than many prefer that schools and doctors impart information to their children. And many youngsters who choose not to take their parents into their confidence do so because they sense their parents don't want to know.

The National Abortion Campaign has taken up the challenge of the ruling and produced an action guide and a petition. NAC is holding a meeting on Saturday 12 January, at 2pm, to discuss setting up a broad-based campaign to ensure that the Appeal Court ruling is reversed — if not in the Lords, then in parliament.

● The meeting is at, and more information is available from: Wesley House, 70 Great Queen Street, London WC2B 5AX.

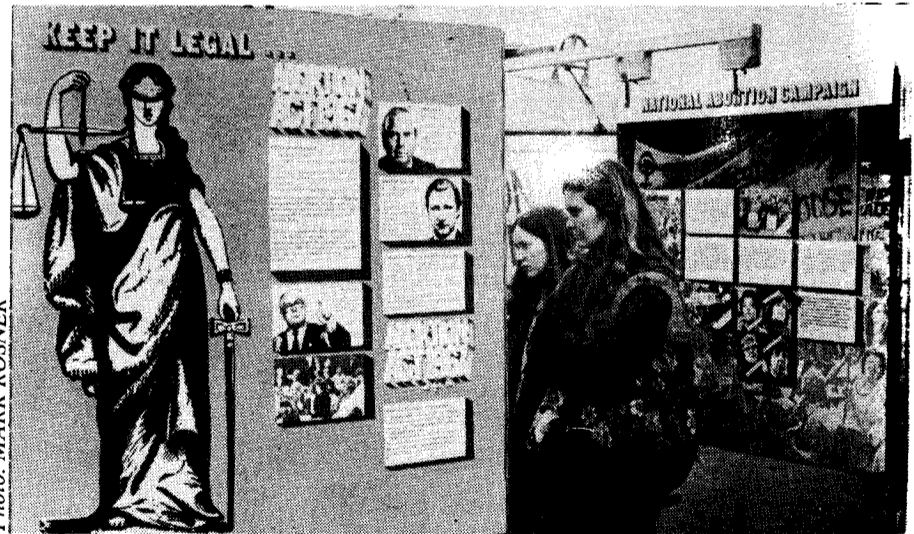


Photo: MARK ROSNER

Happy Birthday NAC!

FEBRUARY 1985 will see the tenth anniversary of the founding of the National Abortion Campaign. And NAC wants to celebrate with all its friends!

NAC came into being in response to the White anti-abortion bill, and stayed around to fight the Benyon and Corrie bills which followed. They were all defeated by the combined strength of the women's movement and the labour movement.

The campaign's aim is not just to change the law, but to change society's attitudes.

At present the most disadvantaged — working class and black — women have no right to choose. Not just because of the law, but also because of economic circumstances and racist attitudes.

The highlight of NAC's tenth birthday celebrations will be a demonstration and rally in Glasgow on Saturday 16 February. Glasgow was chosen because that's where James White MP came from.

The celebrations will close in London on Monday 4 March, with an anniversary meeting in the House of Commons with

Jo Richardson MP. Up and down the country members and supporters are encouraged to organise events. And NAC is organising an exhibition highlighting the last 10 years of struggle. Search your memories and attics to help build the exhibition! Anything loaned will be returned if required.

● Donations and offers of help are welcome. For more details contact NAC at Wesley House, 70 Great Queen Street, London WE2B 5AX. Telephone: 01-405 4801 or 01-993 2071.

Target Labour Government What policies for Labour?

TARGET LABOUR Government is calling a national conference in conjunction with *Labour Briefing* on 16 February in Birmingham's Digbeth Hall. The media have already latched on to the opening of the new reselection season in the Labour Party. Since last December local constituencies have had the chance to start the process of reselecting their MP or parliamentary candidate.

Speculation centres on whether well-known figures such as Peter Shore, John Silkin and Reg Freeson will be removed by their local parties, and replaced by left wingers like Ken Livingstone.

There's no doubt that the miners' strike has made many Labour and union activists think again about the role of the Parliamentary Labour Party. The scabbing role of many of the Labour front bench, including Kinnoch, has refuelled the desire of militants to ransack the PLP.

How many MPs have campaigned actively for the miners in the past 10 months? Less than half the PLP has shown any enthusiasm.

The continual desire of Labour and union activists to have parliamentary representatives who share their aspirations and strategy lies behind the support for Target Labour

Government. Its national conference will be an ideal forum for discussing the type of Labour government that activists want to carry through radical and socialist policies.

**By Davy Jones,
Islington South
Labour Party**

Policy papers have been prepared for the conference around issues such as economic policy, international and defence policy, social policy, freedom, justice and the state. They aim to stimulate debate on radical alternative policies to previous right wing Labour governments.

Both Labour CND and the Labour Committee on Ireland have supported the conference.

There will also be a discussion on positive discrimination to ensure more women and black MPs. The conference is an

opportunity for women and black people within the party to state their case in a united way for measured representation.

Both the Women's Action Committee and the Black Section Steering Committee have agreed to sponsor and build the conference.

The conference will conclude with a rally on building a movement to get rid of the Tories. While highlighting the tremendous struggle of the miners and its potential to remove the hated Tory government, it will also discuss building a left wing across the labour movement committed to socialist policies and a transformation of the PLP.

Labour Briefing, jointly organising the Target Labour Government conference, will be arguing for strengthening the national Briefing network as a key step in building Labour's left wing.

● *Speakers at the conference include Tony Benn, Ken Livingstone, Merle Amery, Frances Morrell and Bernie Grant. Details and registration from: D Jones, 60d Barnsbury Street, London N1 1ER.*



Photo: LAURIE SPARHAM

Target Labour Government: radical alternatives to previous right wing Labour governments



Idrish must stay!

THE House of Lords rejected Muhammad Idrish's appeal against deportation on 8 November.

On the same day the Home Office issued Muhammad with a letter of intent to deport him. Now Idrish has lodged an appeal with the adjudicator.

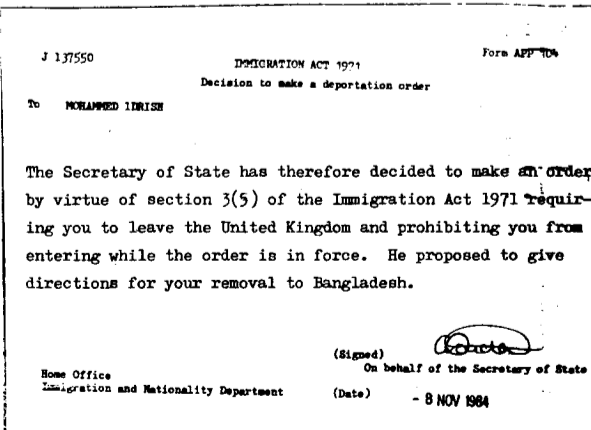
NALGO, Muhammad's union, has a policy from their 1983 and '84

conferences to call a day of action. The day has now been named: 30 January 1985.

Many NALGO branches will be taking industrial action, including strikes on that day. The campaign has now reached a crucial stage.

Muhammed must stay and the racist laws which allow this situation to happen must be fought and highlighted. A big turn out on 30 January will be a good start.

They say Muhammad must go



We say: Muhammad must stay

DEMONSTRATE

Labour must fight immigration laws

AS 1985 BEGINS, Tory racism rolls on. David Waddington, Home Office minister responsible for immigration matters, wished an unhappy new year to Ayse Halal and her family by deporting her and her three year old daughter.

Waddington's implementation of immigration laws is ruthless and relentless. And he has similar plans for unhappiness for thousands of other black, and Asian families this year.

Mrs Halal's deportation is another gloomy example of Tory values which place harsh racist rules first, and decent family life and citizenship nowhere.

Ayse Halal, a 32 year old Cypriot-born woman missed British citizenship by an unfortunate quirk of fate — because her parents forgot to register her while she was under 18, after the family emigrated from Cyprus in 1971.

Both her sons, aged four and eight, are British by birth. Her brother has had British citizenship since 1976, and both her parents have been British citizens since 1947.

Indeed her father served in the British army in Cyprus for 25 years.

All this counted for nothing to Waddington. Interviewed on BBC TV about her deportation, he proceeded on a monologue about the rules, ignoring the interviewer's attempted interjections like 'but aren't you splitting this family?' and 'isn't this a case for compassion?'

Finally Waddington had the gall to say that Mrs Halal herself who was

Commission for Racial Equality report on immigration policies. It was started after vaginal examinations on Asian women had begun at Heathrow in 1979.

The report has been long delayed, because the government tried to stop it in the courts. The Home Office has forced parts of it to be rewritten.

Its central conclusion is that current policy causes distress and humiliation to black people who have legal rights to live in Britain, and it does serious harm to race relations. This has long been apparent even to the Tory government.

But they have other objectives — like appeasing the racist right wingers in their own party. The government is also appealing to what it knows is ignorant racism in the community, instead of combatting it.

The Tories of course have an eye to what they think will be their political advantage from such a policy. However the battle in the community as a whole against this racism will be incessant and increasing until, along with its promoter and appeasers, it is swept away.

Labour must give a higher profile to the fight against racist and sexist immigration and nationality acts, and guarantee their repeal, so that families like Mrs Halal's can remain together in this country.



By Harry Cohen, MP for Leyton

splitting her family by not taking her sons with her. What a lie! The boys are British and have lived in Britain all their lives.

It is the Home Office under the Tories which has divided this family — as it did with Afia Begum, for whom I fought, and countless others in recent years.

After the last minute appeal to Mrs Thatcher by Ayse's MP, John Silkin — which met with a predictable (non) response — Mrs Halal and her daughter were forced out of the country just as the South African athlete Zola Budd arrived. Mrs Halal commented: 'If I'd been a runner rather than a mother, I'd have been allowed to stay.'

This month should see the publication of a critical

London Labour Party special conference

Stand firm on jobs and services

THE NEW YEAR marks a crucial stage in the campaign against the Tory attacks on local government. Early in March councils up and down the country will be making their budgets and setting their rates.

Between now and then the fight is on to ensure that Labour councils, together with local government unions and community organisations, take a united stand against the Tory assault on democracy and local jobs and services. That means a firm commitment to non-compliance with government legislation — based on mass action by the labour movement — whatever the particular tactics that each council decides to adopt.

Just before Christmas, the ILEA lost the case brought against them by Westminster council. The judge ruled that the 'Save ILEA' publicity had a 'persuasive' as well as informational content. The ILEA is appealing the decision, but have withdrawn such publicity till then.

Of course, in view of all the decisions last year on the miners' funds, it comes as no surprise that the court should rule in this way. And it affects the GLC campaign as well.

Until legal advice is obtained, GLC publicity has been restricted too. And the Democracy for London campaign has been reduced from nine workers to two as a result of this decision.

As yet the GLC Labour group has taken no decision on what stand it will take in March. Left wingers like John McDonnell and Ken Livingstone favour a position of not setting a rate — an illegal action for any precepting authority to take.

But some right wingers in the Labour group have

already made clear that they will not take any action outside the law — and that means simply caving in without a fight.

In that context the forthcoming special conference of the Greater London Labour Party (GLLP) will be an important one. It takes place on Saturday 19 January and will consider a policy statement from the executive together with amendments submitted by local parties and affiliates.

By Carol Turner

Both Democracy for London and London Bridge campaigns are supporting a resolution to constituencies calling for Labour councillors who are not prepared to take 'illegal' action to resign and allow by-elections with candidates who are.

The Fire Brigades Union and others have submitted an amendment along these lines to the GLLP conference.

During the next week many London parties will be electing delegates and considering their position.



This conference will be the first opportunity in 1985 for the London labour movement to make crystal clear that it will fight Tory local government policy right through to the end. Conference must demand that all Labour councillors take a united stand against government attacks. The basis of that stand is: no compliance with the Tory laws — united action to defend local government jobs and services.

The London Assembly

Saturday 23 February
Wembley Conference Centre
What to do about abolition rate-capping and jobs

Further details: phone 01-633 4400
or write to: M Saunders, Room 217, County Hall, London SE1

London Bridge Conference

RATE-CAPPING and the restrictions on local authority capital spending are the most concerted government attack yet on local government workers and the services they provide.

Thousands of workers face the prospect of unemployment as a result of these Tory policies. And whole communities face massive deterioration in services already under attack from previous cuts.

The question is not whether to take actions against rate-capping — but when and how! London Bridge campaign — the joint committee of local government workers in the London boroughs — is organising a conference of workers and tenants to discuss just that question.

The local union has refused to accept the company's decision, asking the company to test its case in the courts. The company's refusal to do so is in stark contrast to their legal enthusiasm during the pay strike!

Cullen's victimisation is part of the same policy which has seen the sacking of Derek Robinson and Alan Thornett, as well as the unilateral imposition of a dictatorial code of discipline.

The difference is that in this case management know perfectly well that

Cullen didn't do what they say he did.

It is also now apparent that Cullen's sacking is to be followed by further actions against other stewards.

The local TGWU branch has called for national union intervention and Cullen himself has publicised his case widely in the Oxford labour movement.

He is hopeful that when the issue comes to the plant membership he will get mass support. We must make sure this happens.

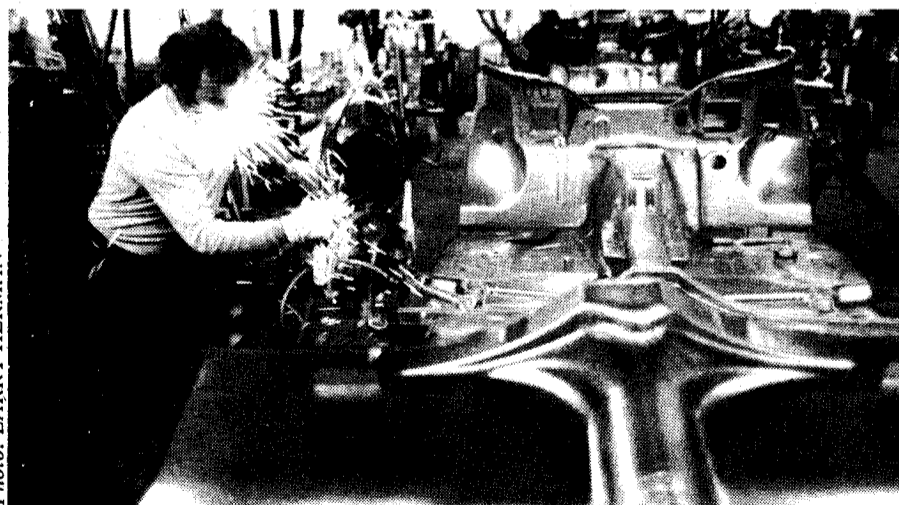


Photo: LARRY HERMAN

Frame-up at Cowley

IN THE WAKE of the recent pay struggle, long standing shop steward Bob Cullen has just been sacked by British Leyland's Cowley management.

Cullen, who last year was elected deputy senior shop steward, was accused of damaging the wiper of a foreman's car.

The incident is supposed to have happened at Gate 16, on an early Sunday morning picket during the overtime ban pre-

ceding the pay strike.

The only problem is that Cullen was on duty at Gate 10 and has 12 written testimonials in his support, including one from the security guard who says he spend most of his time there talking to Bob!

The company's only witness to the contrary is the foreman himself, Derek Jones, whose evidence is somewhat shaky to say the least.

It was dark, raining heavily, Jones himself had sight in only one eye. His complaint was only made after an interview with management.

None of the security personnel on Gate 16 can remember Cullen being there. In addition there are two written testimonials naming actual culprits.

Despite this overwhelming evidence, Cullen has been sacked. The whole affair can only be a frame up.

The incident occurred outside company property and jurisdiction. Any complaint should have gone to the police, two of whom were on Gate 16 at the time. Yet Jones didn't even bother to inform them.

GLLP Policy Statement

1 The Greater London Labour Party (Regional Council) reaffirms its support for Labour councils defending and promoting jobs and services under democratic accountability and control.

2 Furthermore, we recognise that Labour councils are in the forefront of the battle against this government in protecting jobs and services and we call upon all trade unions and other sections of the labour movement to give full support to those councils in confrontation with the government.

3 The Greater London Labour Party calls upon all Labour councils to construct their budgets for 1985-6 in accordance with local wishes, but ensuring the maintenance of existing services and jobs and recognising the growing needs of their communities and more particularly of those sections of the community most hit by the Tory economic and social policy. In particular, there should be a rents freeze in 1985-6.

4 Recognising that the government will seek to divide and isolate Labour councils and will put pressure on individual councillors, the regional executive should endeavour to develop a unified approach among Labour councils supported by the NEC, the parliamentary party and the TUC.

Local councils cannot succeed in reversing Tory attacks without the full support of the trade unions, both locally and nationally, tenants associations and community organisations. Furthermore, it is essential for councils to link up with other workers suffering from government cuts and other attacks such as health service workers, mineworkers etc, and we call upon the NEC to initiate a national campaign among those groups fighting to defend their jobs, services, their local communities and basic trade union rights and democratic freedoms in order to assist and facilitate local campaigns.

The regional executive will have a particular responsibility to ensure the success of those campaigns in boroughs where Labour is not in majority control.

5 Labour councils should refuse to co-operate with either the interim or final abolition proposals for the GLC. Labour councils should refuse to co-operate with central government wherever jobs or services are at risk. No rate-capped authority should seek or enter into individual discussions or negotiations with the Department of the Environment regarding rate support grant or expenditure limits. Any discussions should take place on the basis of collective bargaining.

6 Whilst recognising that many tactics may be adopted, Liverpool's defiance of Tory policies has shown that a broad fight can be mobilised around the struggles of a local 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. Such action would unite all councils under attack — both those rate-capped and those hit by further penalties and grant loss.

7 The Greater London Labour Party demands a firm pledge from the NEC and parliamentary leadership that the next Labour government will restore the level of government grant to at least the level in 1979 in real terms. We also demand a commitment that the next Labour government will introduce legislation to indemnify councillors retrospectively from any penalty, financial or otherwise imposed for refusing to implement job losses and cuts required by the present government's local government legislation.

Workers and Tenants Conference Saturday 30 March, Manchester

Conference starts at 10am with presentations from tenants organisations and unions on the present situation, and includes time for contributions from floor. Workshops planned include: organising in the workplace, industrial action, working with Labour councils, support in the private sector, coordinating events and actions, privatisation, and Tory policy.

Shop stewards committees, tenants associations, trade union branches and Constituency Labour Parties are invited to send delegates.

Further details from: Ed Hall, Secretary London Bridge Campaign, London Borough of Lambeth, Courtenay House, New Park Road, London SW2; or phone 01-674 9844 ext 180.

A Socialist ACTION

Star Wars goes on!

'DURING THE meeting they discussed the subject and objectives of the forthcoming US-Soviet negotiations on nuclear and space arms. The sides agree that the subject of the negotiations will be a complex of questions concerning space and nuclear arms, both strategic and intermediate range, with all the questions considered and resolved in their inter-relationship, the objective of the negotiations will be to work out effective agreements aimed at preventing an arms race in space and terminating it on earth, at limiting and reducing nuclear arms, and at strengthening strategic stability.'

That was the communique issued at the end of the meeting on nuclear arms in Geneva between US secretary of state George Shultz and Soviet foreign minister Andrei Gromyko. As the real significance of the talks had little to do with what was stated in the communique, and the negotiations are likely to go on for years amid western press distortion, it is worth outlining what is really at stake.

The first point to be understood is that on the narrow issue of the nuclear weapons right is wholly and completely on the side of the USSR. The 'Star Wars' programme of space weapons proposed by Reagan is the most dangerous and insane project for armaments in world history.

What Reagan is proposing is that the United States should attempt to use its superior economic and military resources to construct a 'failsafe' system to defend the US from any Soviet nuclear retaliation to an American attack on the USSR or its allies.

Have no illusions. If the United States ever did gain that capacity it would launch a Third World War.

The US has discussed the use of nuclear weapons for its foreign policy, including launching an attack on the Soviet Union, many times since World War II. Each time it has

hold back the much weakened Soviet counter-attack.

The chief demand the United States makes on the Soviet Union at the talks — that the USSR radically reduce its numbers of land-based missiles — fits perfectly within this.

The simplest, and cheapest, way the Soviet Union can respond to the threat from the Pershing and Star Wars systems is to build a larger number of land-based missiles to survive any attack by the Pershings and to be sure of penetrating the US space defence system. Putting the missiles into submarines is both vastly more expensive — which forms part of the United States plan to strain the Soviet economy — and provides less weapons to get through the American defences.

In short the US demand for a reduction in specifically land-based missiles is part of its aggressive military strategy — not part of any move to 'reduce tension'.

As these talks proceed expect a torrent of lies from the United States government. But don't be taken in by them for a minute.

stepped back only because it was convinced it would lose. If the United States were convinced it would face no retaliation for its actions, it would not hesitate to use its atomic weapons.

The so-called 'peaceful proposals' of the United States in the negotiations are in fact simply part of the same policy of gaining advantage for a nuclear war. By installing its cruise and Pershing missiles in Europe the United States has reduced to six minutes the flight-time for its weapons to hit the USSR's defences.

The aim of the United States in war would therefore be to rapidly knock out as many as possible of the USSR's missiles by an attack from Europe and then rely on the 'Star Wars' defences to



Andrei Gromyko

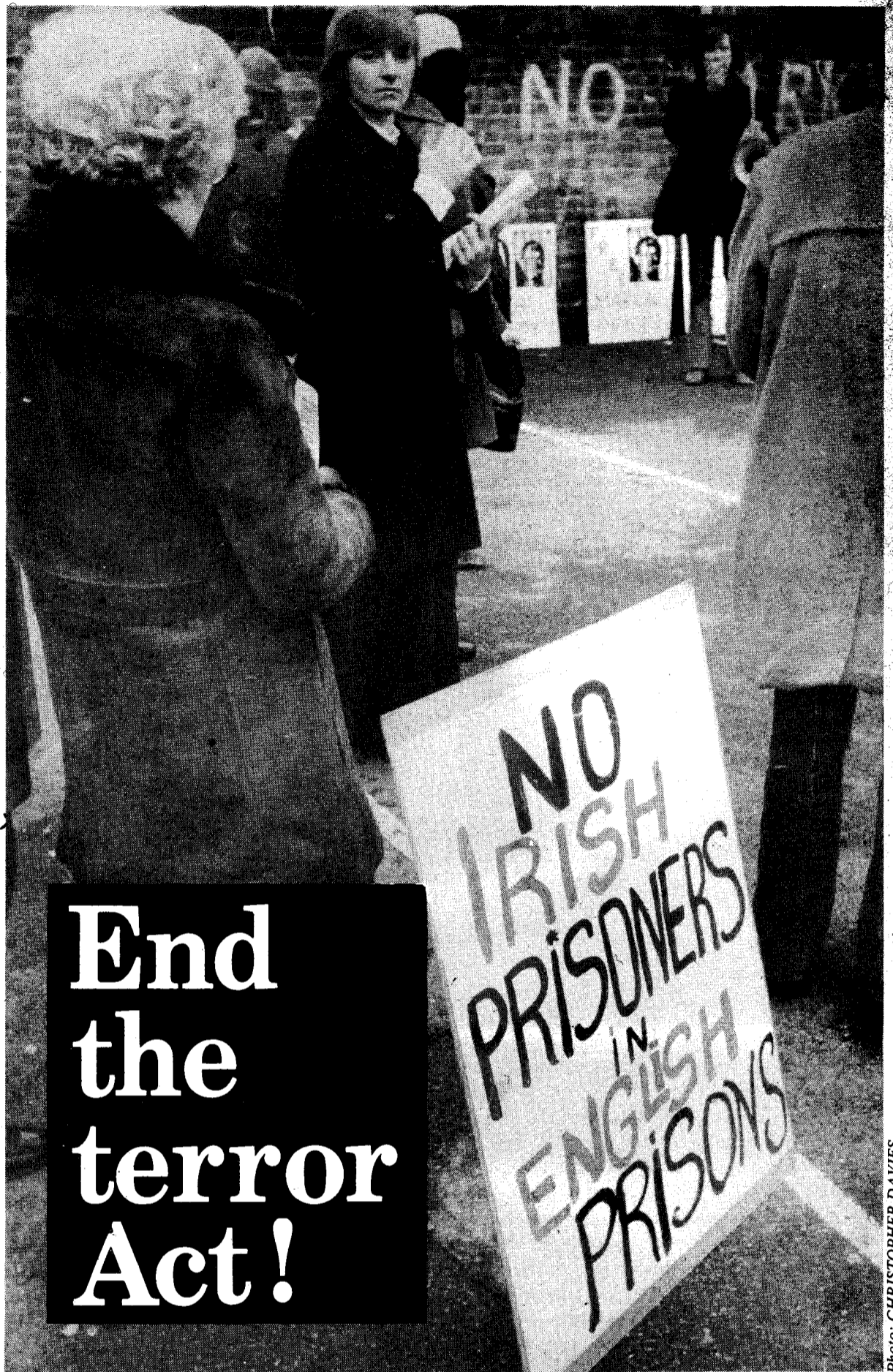


Photo: CHRISTOPHER DAVIES

End the terror Act!

THE CHRISTMAS holiday season this year produced the traditional police offensive against the Irish in Britain. Since New Year's Eve there have been eight arrests under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA), of which four have resulted in release without charge, and four in charges.

This year, the police have switched their attention to the Irish in Britain Representation Group (IBRG). The IBRG is a community organisation working with Irish prisoners in British jails, which aims to promote Irish culture in Britain, and combat anti-Irish chauvinism.

It has recently campaigned against *Daily Express* editor John Junior for his 'I'd rather be a pig than be Irish' editorial.

One of those arrested, Peter Lynch, a member of the IBRG and a former executive member of the Sparkbrook constituency Labour Party in Birmingham, has been charged with conspiracy to cause explosions.

This vague charge, coming at the end of the seventh day is a clear indication of the weakness of the police case, and of the likelihood of yet another frame-up trial.

The police attack on the IBRG has not stopped at Peter Lynch. Dr Maire O'Shea, a 65 year old retired consultant psychiatrist, has also been arrested under the PTA, and

held in Liverpool. Dr O'Shea has been denied access to a solicitor, and her family has not been allowed to visit her.

By Pat Hickey

Dr O'Shea's detention under the PTA is clear proof of the vindictive police use of the act. She had returned voluntarily from Ireland where she was on holiday, after she was informed that police had raided her home in her absence. Confidential medical records were tampered with.

On Sunday 6 January Dr O'Shea's daughter, Deirdre, spoke on television against the detention of her mother. The police responded by raiding her home on Monday 7 January.

Geraldine Egan, president of Birmingham Trades Council protested at the raid and asked: 'Is this an attempt to silence relatives of Irish people arrested under the PTA? I would be very interested to know why the warrant has been issued to the police. Birmingham Trades Council reiterates its call to the Home Office to authorise the immediate release of Dr Maire O'Shea.'

Arrests to

This round of arrests and raids under the PTA demonstrates the way in which the authorities use the act to attack the Irish community in Britain. It is used to intimidate the Irish community generally, and political activists in particular.

Since it was introduced 10 years ago there have been 5987 people arrested of which only 147 have been charged and even fewer convicted. Irish activists are convinced that the present raids are connected with the campaign to secure a review of the convictions in the Birmingham bombing case.

Rough Justice — a

campaign which focuses on false convictions — has been working on this issue and has called into question the forensic evidence used to secure a conviction. The Home Office steadfastly refused to consider the case.

Anger

The O'Shea and Lynch cases have caused widespread anger in the Birmingham labour movement, where both have been publicly involved in wholly legitimate campaigns. A picket of West Midlands police headquarters attracted 200 people, including four local councillors, Birmingham trades council, and a regional official from Dr O'Shea's union, ASTMS.

Groups in Britain which are active on the Irish issue will be campaigning for the release of Dr O'Shea and others arrested under the PTA, but the labour movement must also take on the task of ending the 'Terror Act' — which, it should be remembered, was introduced by a Labour government.

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