

Socialist Organiser

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Build joint action committees

Dockers, miners and all workers supporting them — seafarers, railworkers, drivers — face a common Tory enemy, determined to hammer them into the ground. Dockers, miners, railworkers and drivers should therefore link arms firmly by organising joint action committees.

Dockers and miners can



Kellingley Colliery, Yorkshire

GET THE TORIES ON THE RUN!

This open letter was written by Paul Whetton on behalf of the Notts Rank and File Strike Committee.

After six months on strike the Notts. strikers wish to make it clear that we are not prepared to accept any compromise, or face-saving settlement or anything less than 100% total victory. We have come too far, and suffered too much, to contemplate anything else.

We realise this will entail further hardship and suffering, but if we are to achieve a worthwhile victory, this is something we are readily prepared to accept.

We therefore strongly urge the National Executive to accept no compromise on the question of pit closures and further, to insist on full implementation of the package as presented to the NCB prior to the present industrial action being undertaken by our members.

By that we mean:

- *Full rate protection scheme.
- *Early retirement.

*Shorter working shift.

*A four day week.

*Extra holidays, extra rest days.

*The implementation of a technology agreement for the benefit of all workers.

There is however an exception, and that is in regard to the pay rise. We would respectfully suggest that the question of a pay rise for the year November 1, 1983 to November 1984 be abandoned. A pay rise for that period would be of benefit to those who have worked in defiance of the National Executive's call for a united front against the NCB.

We urge that a pay rise be negotiated that takes cognisance of the financial loss of wages of our members, due to the intransigence of the Board, to be implemented on a full return to work and not before.

The pledge that all members dismissed during the course of

the dispute will be reinstated, must be honoured.

We further urge, that as a sign of good faith by the government, the Chairman of the Coal Board, Mr. I. MacGregor be dismissed, and that a new plan for coal be negotiated that will give cast iron guarantees by this or any future government, of an expanding and prosperous coal industry.

We urge these things in the full knowledge that the miners are on the road to victory. That victory will be the most momentous ever achieved by the working class of this country, and the terms of the settlement must be seen by all to underline this.

The National Executive must recognise the depth and strength of feeling in the rank and file of our union and deliver a just and honourable settlement that reflects this feeling.

We address this appeal to the National Executive in the full confidence and knowledge that you will not fail us.

Back the miners



The media... ...theirs...

AT the end of last week the press and TV added a new image to their picture of violence on the picket line. After the mass picket outside Kellingley, North Yorkshire, on Thursday, the most common picture was of an overturned ITN car and reports of over £10,000 worth of equipment 'looted'.

What the pickets were meant to do with this supposedly stolen equipment was never said. Nor was there any comment about why this had happened after six months, when the only previous physical attacks on the media had taken place right at the beginning of the strike.

Pickets at Kellingley that day explained to Socialist Organiser what really happened.

That morning the police had been particularly violent and aggressive, even by their standards. Calling pickets 'yellow bastards', banging their riot shields, vandalising pickets' cars; launching into groups of pickets with batons.

During one incident, when the police were laying into some pickets, a TV crew were filming nearby in another direction. Other pickets shouted to them to start filming the police brutality for a change.

The camera crew stopped what they were doing; turned and looked at what the police were doing and then turned back and continued filming their 'safe' sequence.

It was after that their car was turned over.

Far from being 'looted', the camera equipment was strewn over the ground. It was collected and returned by NUM officials.

and ours...

ONE little-reported target of police attention has been some of the press photographers covering the strike. This isn't surprising since the pictures some of them have taken have blown the gaffe on police tactics and provided hard evidence of savage police violence - photos such as John Harris' famous picture of a mounted policeman with a big club bearing down on a woman appealing for help for a wounded miner.

Mostly the police have tried to stop photographers getting to certain places where the police didn't want them to be.

However, two weeks ago, shortly after the police started bussing a handful of scabs into Kiveton Park in South Yorkshire they also stepped up their war on left-wing photographers.

On Friday August 31, local police called at the home of John Harris in Stratford-upon-Avon, to do what they called a 'visual check'. They said it was in response to a request from the South Yorkshire police, because a scab had supposedly reported John's car as following him. The next day, the police say, the scab was beaten up.

The 'visual check' rapidly turned into questions about who John worked for.

They were information gathering and conducting petty harassment.

Central Region Federation
of Trades Councils
MINERS SUPPORT RALLY
Saturday September 22
Stirling
Assemble, Raploch Community Centre, Glendevon Drive,
11.30 a.m.
Rally, Annfield Football
Ground at 1.00 p.m.



Conversations in the Welfare

Women's sit-in

Continued from page 12.

women from the pit community. Their job was to protect those inside from possible attacks by scabs or police and to liaise with the outside world.

It didn't take the police long to arrive, and soon they were stalking round the building, checking the doors and even knocking on the windows, asking if they could come in!

At this point, some of the men who had intended to stay outside realised they might be more use inside in case of police attack and were quickly hoisted through the kitchen window.

However, there were always a few people outside, and the police remained outside all night as well - their official reason was to protect those occupying from an attack by scabs.

However, the night was relatively calm with only a heavy breathing call on the phone which is connected to the pit.

The men rallied round, cooking the evening meal. Eventually the occupiers huddled on the stage and got some sleep.

On Tuesday morning, Foster, the pit manager, rang the hall and asked for a couple of people to negotiate with. Jill Timmins and Jan Spencer went down to the manager's office with their lawyer. Jill explained:

"Foster said the situation had not changed. They most definitely would not allow us to use the hall. They even went as far as denying there was a strike. At the end of a heated interview he handed over a letter stating that unless we vacated the hall by 6 pm, they might take further action against us."

One hour later back at the hall we drafted a letter, telling them

politely what they could do with their offer, and reiterating our demands."

During that day and the following days, the occupation was visited by all sorts of people who supported them, including women from the surrounding pits and a reporter from Holland who came with Kath Slater, from Sheffield Women's Coordinating Committee.

The occupation also began to attract attention from the media, and was visited by assorted film crews and journalists, who were allowed in on production of their union cards.

The police had left saying that as it was a civil offence, they could do nothing about the occupation, but of course Welbeck has throughout the dispute had a continuous police presence, so you can be sure they weren't far away.

Jill continued: "On Wednesday morning we were visited by Mr Hughes, head of Nottingham Social Services. He had visited the trustees and Social Services had been threatened with withdrawal of the lease unless they told us we could not use the hall. They also wanted the County Council to take out an injunction against us."

To their credit the County Council have refused to do this and have in fact tried to pressure the trustees into giving in, by saying that Social Services regarded the family unit as including the father, in this case a striking miner, and that the trustees should do the same."

On Thursday, the women were visited by Ann Scargill and the women from Barnsley Support Group. This gave everybody there, including those on

picket duty outside, a tremendous boost.

At 4 am the following morning, seven of the lads outside were taken by the police for questioning, only to be released later after everybody's sleep had been disturbed.

At 8.30 on Friday morning, Mr Hughes paid the women a return visit, informing them that he was negotiating for the use of a local school hall for them. The women said they would agree to this provided there was a properly drawn up contract, signed by the Women's Action Group and the County Council.

Contract

At 10.30, Mr Harris, director of education, arrived with the contract which said that striking miners and their families in the Welbeck area would have the use of the school kitchen from 3.30 to 8.00 pm, five days a week for the duration of the dispute.

The women examined and discussed the contract in great detail, to ensure that it was watertight. It was then signed by Sandra Taylor on behalf of the Welbeck Women's Action Group and Mr Harris on behalf of the council.

The women got one of the trustees into the hall and demanded that he sign a paper saying that no damage had been caused and they refused to leave until he did. This done the women came out victorious.

For months now the Labour-controlled county council has failed to provide adequate accommodation for the cooking and serving of meals. But after five days of occupation, they managed to come up with the goods. It's amazing what you can do if you try!

Paul Whetton's diary

Getting organised after the TUC



Paul Whetton

they do fear is the strength of the shop stewards' movement and rank and file trade unionists.

The TUC decision on the miners' dispute does free a lot of rank and file trade unionists from certain shackles that were placed on them by full-time officials. It gives them a certain amount of freedom to go out in the workplaces and openly agitate for support for the miners.

What's happened in Notts so far has not been spectacular, but it's important that there has not been any stampede back to work. In spite of an unprecedented campaign by the Coal Board, the media, and the government for a return to work, it just hasn't come off.

The rank and file strike committee is making moves to contact not just rank and file members, but also branch secretaries, area organisers, etc. in other unions on the basis of the TUC decision.

Leadership

The statement we've done on the aims of the strike was raised at the strike committee on Friday, and we wanted to get it out as quickly as possible before the negotiations started.

You always tend to hold your breath, whenever you hear that there are talks on, in case your faith in your leadership is let down. But so far they've held up, and more power to their elbow.

I went to Norwich last weekend and spoke at a meeting on the connection between pit closures and nuclear power. If they build a nuclear power station in the Trent Valley, it could straight away turn very economic Notts pits into uneconomic pits.

This dispute isn't just about one word, 'beneficial'; it's about a whole economic strategy.

At the last Ollerton Labour Party ward meeting, we had 40-odd new applications for membership, most of them from striking miners or from miners' wives. Maggie Thatcher has really politicised a lot of people who weren't political before this dispute began.

When Kinnock makes speeches like the one he did at the TUC, he wants to remember who he's alienating and who he's supporting. He's supporting the scabs and alienating himself from his own grass-roots rank and file support.

Diary of a striking miner

AT THE TUC, Neil Kinnock said exactly what we thought he was going to say. He was backing the miners, but... and he went on to condemn pickets' violence.

Yesterday the Beloyed Shirl was addressing her party conference, and again the theme was violence by pickets. They're talking the same language. They might as well belong to the same party.

Neither of them talked about the issues at the back of the dispute - jobs, pit closures, communities.

It seems as though when you get to that level you don't care about communities, and people's lives and jobs - just about what they see on the telly every day.

I think the standing ovation for Kinnock at the TUC was politeness and not euphoria.

The TUC decision on the NGA was aimed at being a slap on the wrist - but it finished up as not even a finger-wagging.

But we did get something out of the TUC. Most things were signed and sealed before the Congress started, but the strength of feeling by rank and file delegates that the lobbyists met outside the conference was very encouraging. They understood that the miners have got to win a resounding victory, otherwise Thatcher will just roll over anybody.

If the miners don't win, all the resolutions and compromises passed at the TUC are worthless. You can pass resolutions until you are blue in the face if Maggie Thatcher beats the miners, and you will get exactly what she sees fit to dole out to you - dole being the operative word.

The Tories knew what they were doing when they set out to smash the shop stewards' movement. When Derek Robinson was sacked, that was declaring open season on the shop stewards' movement. And it's interesting to note that the man behind the sacking of Derek Robinson was Ian MacGregor. The government don't care so much about the TUC. What



Kirkintilloch miners' rally

Notts strikers need money

Send money or invitations for fund-raising visits to the Notts Miners Rank and File Strike Committees.

North Notts. Strike Centre, Ollerton Miners' Welfare, Ollerton, Notts.

South Notts. Miners' Strike Centre, c/o AUEW, 218 Mansfield Road, Nottingham.

Police in Yorkshire

'We'll beat some sense into this one'

Paul Laws told Socialist Organiser:

"I was an official picket. Following arrests at the other gate and a report of a police build-up there, we all went down.

Before we were half way there five transit vans came along at high speed and police leaped out at us. The van swerved at us and put us in a corner. They started to make arrests.

They took me in the van and as I was dragged away with both arms held I got thumped on the back and the neck. I was thrown in the back of the van and another lad was thrown on top of

me.

Four officers got in and sat with us.

Police Inspector Sykes, now known as Psycho, arrived. "We've done you today, you communist bastards, we've got 400 in the pit, you're now't but scumbags".

I told him what I thought of that. At which he then blew his top and said to his officers, "Get his legs and arms, we'll beat some sense into this one". He swore violently the whole way through.

They held me down, and I couldn't move my legs. He knelt on my chest and when I grabbed one of his arms to stop him hitting me, he used his radio

and was going bang, bang across the top of my head. Bits of radio were falling all round and that made him worse. He asked the other lad, David Moorhouse, what he'd got to say. "Nothing", said Dave. "How about 'sorry'", said Psycho and smacked him in the mouth.

I was banged up in a cell in solitary for ten hours with the door kicked every half an hour and completely cold food. When they charged me they said "you can choose between breach of the peace or obstruction". "No comment. I'll see my solicitor," I said.

Nine of us at the same time

were all offered a choice as to what charge. When the magistrate heard the police opposing bail, she just cut in and granted it. No messing like there was in Notts. Even the law don't support the police in Yorkshire."

David Moorhouse told us:

"Before I was arrested I saw this transit coming at us. We all ran except this guy Lenny. The Black Maria swerved at him and just missed - if he hadn't stepped back a few steps he'd have been dead against the canteen wall.

While I was running a copper came behind and pushed me.

"Keep running" he said. Another rushed across the road and kicked me on the leg. I fell over. Another ran up and kicked. He dragged me to the van because I couldn't walk properly.

I got hit by an inspector right in the jaw, after he'd beat up Paul Laws in the van. I was locked up all night and the next day and then I was charged.

I've got more involved in the strike recently and started going on flying pickets some weeks ago. I'm still picking up what it's all about. I live opposite the chief scab. He needs a police escort, even for an evening out. It makes me sick."

Back the miners



On the picket line

DAVE BURTON, a striking miner at Kiveton Park, spoke to Matt Cooper of his experiences on the picket line on August 30.

"At fist I stood in the mass picket. We asked the police if six of us could form an official picket. From where we stood we could see the police and the mass picket clearly.

As soon as the official picket was out of the way, the police inspector said over the tannoy.

"I'm asking you to move back and if you don't I'll bring the horses in and forcibly move you back."

The pickets were not even in a position to stop the scab vans coming in, so this was just provocation, and the pickets started pushing forward.

Immediately about 20 police horses charged. As soon as this happened the mass picket line moved back about ten yards as the police wanted them to.

Then they allowed the TV crews in which caused more pushing and shoving.

The police told us on the official picket, "We've got order now. The vans are coming in."

One of us asked how many scabs were in the van. The police said there were seven.

The inspector said: "You know the procedure. I will get in touch with the van bringing the men (scabs) in and if they agree to talk with you, they'll be allowed to stop. Otherwise, you are not to move from this spot.

With that the van came in. It did not stop.

When it had gone there was a bang on the side of the police vans. They thought that someone had fired a catapult from the stockpiles and suddenly a load of riot police appeared from their hiding place behind some trees and searched the stock piles.

I think they were there in case the mass picket or the official picket tried to stop the van. We hadn't seen them before."

Stoke sacking

Charlie McLaren, Stoke City Councillor, has been sacked from his job as a miner at Hem Heath colliery following his conviction on an assault charge.

Charlie was fined £25 recently by local magistrates for trying to head-butt a scab. Now the NCB are sacking him for "gross misconduct".

The union has taken the case up as a flagrant breach of procedure by the NCB. Under the agreement between Hem Heath management and the union, Charlie should have been given an official warning for his first case of 'misconduct'.

Midlands NUM President Joe McKie said "The union has a policy that before there is a return to work, all strikers sacked during the dispute must be reinstated."

The NCB are using sackings as a new tactic to try to force miners off the picket line. The police are now saying to miners when they take them in: "Right, that's it now. You've lost your job."

Under siege

By Cllr. Sue Carlyle



THERE are now seven scabs at Kiveton Park. To support and defend their right to scab, and help the Coal Board break the strike, the village has been turned into a mini-police state.

Despite the NCB trying to organise a back to work campaign and offering intimidatory police protection, the number of scabs has not increased. They are just a small bunch of mavericks and home-owners with Tory values.

They now have police guards back and front of their houses, or hiding in their garages and back gardens. After each shift the scabs are taken home in convoys consisting of from three to five transit vans loaded with police.

As you look through the guarded windows at them speeding past, the scabs hold their heads down. Some of them have cut their family ties and are being shunned. Even the one who withdrew after the first day is now excluded from the community.

Throughout the community the message has gone out: anyone who crosses a picket line at this stage of the strike should understand that there will be terrible consequences for themselves and their families. Inevitably there is great bitterness in this strike.

Scabs' wives, stuck in their houses all day, can't find a Co-op shop willing to deliver groceries to them, or a hairdresser to set their hair.

Their days are spent making tea for resident policemen, or, as one recently did, pulling faces and abusing strikers' families. She was told by the cop to draw her curtains and withdraw to the back of the house. They increased the police guard on her house.

Memories of the 1926 strike are revived, where to this day some old people still do not talk to one another because of scabbing then. The attitude is that once you cross the picket lines you can't undo it or alter it - or change people's response.

The scab commits a crime against the entire community, now in the seventh month of a hard strike. The scabs are the saboteurs within. So the attitude is something like: 'Once a scab, always a scab'.

The village has always had a quiet way of life, where active policing has never been necessary. House robbery is rare and vandalism hardly seen. A place you might walk around at night



JOHN HARRIS (JFL)

A picket is arrested as a policeman tries to get rid of the photographer

and not see a soul. Now every morning in the early hours between 2,000 and 3,000 police drive in to barricade the pit from pickets and conduct a massive police operation.

THE picket line is physically pushed every morning from the pit entrance into a country road away from the village. There pickets are trapped for hours, to prevent them getting back to their vehicles, in case they should travel to picket other nearby pits.

The manner in which they are pushed by horses is provocative and unnecessary force is used. Arbitrary arrests are made and pickets suffer sadistic attacks from the police.

Not content with scattering picketing miners into fields and ditches, they catch others trying to make their way back through the village. They make charges through the old people's estate and parade horses and riot gear through the main street, endangering local people, young and old.

Policing in Kiveton Park is nothing but a clear show of bully boy tactics to hold sway over everyone.

Mounted police with batons waving, regularly chase pickets through housing estates, fields and streets.

Now the public footpath which goes through the pit yard is blocked off by the police, who

permanently occupy the area. Where the police can't park or drive their vehicles, alsatian dogs are let loose to guard surrounding areas that used to be free for walking.

Picking coal from the tip is now very dangerous. Local people can't take their own dogs for a walk. They see it as a further infringement of their liberty.

No one wants the police, except the scabs. It is estimated that the police guard costs £700 a week for each scab's house. But for Kiveton miners the strike won't be ended until the black-legs are isolated and transferred. No one will work with them again.

Increasingly local people actively support the miners in face of policemen running amok.

Some pensioners have opened their doors to pickets as they are chased, and take them into their houses for refreshment. They've even prevented police beating up a picket by shouting as a group.

The police had the cheek to come back to them later in the day "to take any complaints against pickets' behaviour". But they get no change out of them.

The old people are woken up by the police horses thundering around at 4 am or 5 am, but they are no longer intimidated.

Their fear has now turned into solid support.

The first week, three of them were sitting on a bench next to

the newsagents shop when mounted police charged from the pit lane opposite and ended up milling around them. A member of the women's group told me:

"The horses mounted the pavement both sides and were going so fast that one horse got its head into the paper shop before he was pulled up. Long batons were waved all over the place, like they were playing polo.

The old people were naturally frightened and pickets, women and men, were pinned against street walls. Then a police sergeant on foot patrol objected strongly and the copper in charge had to tell his men to back off.

Considering they'd come straight across the main road, it was one of the most dangerous things we've seen. One old lady let us stand in her front garden and now she's up every morning with the pickets. She doesn't half give the police some stick."

At lunchtime every day a picket gathers where the scabs exit into the main street. Women with young babies and old folk and disabled people come along with the strikers, just to shout at the scabs and to remind them what the village thinks of them.

Traffic is stopped and convoys of police line the street.

The red van carrying the scabs goes full pelt down the street. Every now and then the police get cocky and take off the protec-



The NUM have got a formulation of a policy on new technology through which we would get the benefits of new technology, whereas the Coal Board see the benefits going in their direction.

We have an alternative and what we are going to have to do is fight for the implementation of our alternative and not the one which the Coal Board want to inflict on us.

In Nottinghamshire, we've seen piecemeal efforts to introduce aspects of new technology. Most pits have got one or more of the versions of technology operating.

There are four. MINOS, FIDO, IMPACT and MIDAS.

At the moment they are putting one or two in at each pit, never all of them at once. So nobody has yet felt the impact of all this automation being brought together. The first target for bringing it all together looks like being Selby.

The Coal Board estimate that when it is on full production, Selby will produce 10 million tonnes of coal a year in the five Selby pits and Gascoigne Wood. It is estimated that the total manpower working at Selby to produce this ten million tonnes of coal will be something in the region of 4,000 men.

The Board's own figures state that to produce that same amount of coal through normal pits, like ours at Bevercotes and Ollerton, which are not uneconomic pits, would take 20,000 men.

Job loss

So you can see immediately there's a job loss of 16,000 jobs, just as result of Selby, and that's due to nothing else than new technology.

What they are doing in Yorkshire is to form complexes by joining pits underground. They've got to have a drift to make these things practical. It's no good getting all the coal to the bottom of the shaft if you can't get it up the shaft. You are limited by shaft capacity. But with a

New technology

Who benefits?

Gordon Darlington, Bevercotes NUM, speaking on New Technology at Ollerton Miners' Welfare on September 2.

belt running up a drift, there's no problem. It just keeps going. And at Selby, some of the biggest reductions in manpower are amongst those people who we seem to be lacking support from in this fight.

The biggest drop in manpower takes place among surface workers. If five pits join together as they have at Selby, there's only one pit top for five pits. So four lots of pit-top men are going to go to the wall.

It's unbelievable that these men are not prepared to take on the Coal Board when it's their jobs that are in danger.

Here, if they put one major drift down and joined Thoresby, Ollerton and Bevercotes, two pit tops have got to go.

So let's look at the new technology schemes.

MINOS stands for Mining Operating System and it is the culmination of all the different aspects of new technology working together.

FIDO stands for Face Information Digested Online. This is management's clue to what is happening at the pit, which machine's turning, why it's not going or whatever.

IMPACT stands for the Inbuilt Machine Performance And Condition Testing. Basically, this means that machines are now being built which will diagnose their own faults. This does away with craftsmen. Instead of having a fitter, an electrician and a chockman, the machines will tell when they are going to break down using computers. The computer will alert the manager who will send a team in to replace the fault before it breaks down. So there will be a small elite force whose job it is to change parts in machines as they are due to break down,



A closed pit in Danby, South Yorkshire

not when they've broken down.

The Coal Board's aim is to maximise production and one of the main restrictions on production is break downs, which can be avoided if they can be predicted.

MIDAS stands for Machine Information Display and Automation System. This will replace machine drivers who at the moment are probably the most important men at the pit.

By using this they can actually double production on any given

face. They've done this in Yorkshire. They put one of these machines on a face and sent seismic tests up and down to determine where the level of the strata is, where the coal ceases and the rock begins, so it takes every ounce of coal, and it works automatically, because it knows when it has reached the end of the coal.

At the newest face at Bevercotes they've got down to 12 men using mechanisation. Take away two of those because you don't need machine drivers and you are down to ten men and more job losses.

One study on the impact of all these new technologies being implemented throughout the pits estimated that in the worst variant, 74% of mining jobs could go by the year 2007. We're talking about getting down to 50,000 jobs from the present level of 184,000.

A more realistic one was something like 55%. The study said that a job loss on this scale could more or less be guaranteed — half the workforce.

The Coal Board estimate that one-third of delays are 'avoidable delays' and this is what they are out to eliminate. And if they succeed, they can double production.

If your machine is turning twice as long as it would normally be turning, what you get is an increase in productivity, except that you don't get anything.

The ramifications of what the Coal Board intends to do is a reduction of 100,000 jobs by the year 2,000. Craftsmen will be deskilled and paid as lower grade workers.

Twice as much

If the machine is turning twice as long because there are no delays and no stoppages you'll be breathing twice as much dust, so there is an increasing health hazard as well.

When the belt stops now, you have a breather, and the pressure is off you, but when the belt no longer stops, you won't have a breather and there will be no getting away from the pressure.

Management's spying machinery, which can tell how long you've had for snap, is against us. And with fewer men, the less your bargaining power.

The NUM's response to this is if there is an increase in production without an increase in manpower, and if it is an increase in production with a decrease in manpower, then we are entitled to have the same number of men working and a shorter working week.

We say the benefits of the technology should go to the people who produce the coal.

We think a 28 hour week on a four-day basis is not unreasonable. This is one of our demands, along with retirement at 55, on redundancy terms, which makes room for new jobs and allows miners to retire with a bit of money.

They've spent millions and millions on new technology, but of all the money that has been spent, only 5% was spent on safety. 95% was spent to maximise production. We say more money should be invested in the health and welfare of our workers.

All this is dependent on one thing — the support of the men. It is essential when all this is over that you don't go away and hide your heads.

Every time management try to implement this we've got to fight it. We've got to tell them that they're not going to introduce it until they have agreed our alternative plan for new technology.

Who is Bibby?

WHO is Medlock Bibby? Did he come from nowhere to beat "Silver Birch", Mr Chris Butcher in the race to be the scab superstar of 1984? No, in fact Bibby has been around a long time.

One of our readers, Harold Youd, who was for many years a militant docker in Manchester remembers him back in 1968 as an organiser of a march by some hundreds of London dockers — in support of arch Tory Enoch

Powell.

Powell made his notorious racist speech about "rivers of blood" running in Britain's streets if blacks weren't kicked out. He was dismissed by Edward Heath from the Tory Shadow Cabinet because of it and then some hundreds of confused dockers took to the streets in support of Powell's "right to free speech".

Bibby, it seems, was one of the march organisers.



SCOTLAND'S leading scab, Bilston Glen miner Harry Fettes, came out in his true colours last week — Tory Blue — with his announcement that he was standing for the Tories in a forthcoming Regional Council by-election.

Fettes was one of the first scabs in Scotland and a founder member of the self-styled "Bilston Glen Working Miners Association". The membership of his association is, to put it mildly, pretty limited in size, and intelligence.

Last week Fettes announced that he would be the Tory candidate in the Inch-Gilmerton Regional Council by-election on September 27, caused by the resignation of the current Labour councillor after his having become a Euro-MP. The following day Fettes attended a reception in Edinburgh held in "honour" of a flying visit by Thatcher to the city.

Scotland's leading scab

The Tory Group convenor on the Lothian Regional Council has welcomed Fettes' candidature and insulted everyone in Inch-Gilmerton by describing Fettes as "a candidate of a style that suits this particular ward". Is Inch-Gilmerton really full of scabs?

Fettes is clearly an industrious person. Not only is he busy with his scabbing and his election campaign (suggested campaign slogan: "Hit the pits on election day — vote for a scab"), his Bilston Glen Scabs Association is also currently engaged in attempting to obtain an interim interdict against the

Scottish NUM to ban picketing and to force the holding of a national ballot.

And Fettes does not need to worry about how his campaign will be financed. Donations of £13,000 have already been made to his Association, on top of a further £50,000 jointly held between his Edinburgh solicitors and the Nottingham solicitors of "Silver Birch".

Though Regional Council by-elections are normally small-scale affairs, this one should be turned into a display of support for Labour and the miners' strike, and of condemnation of the Tory-scab alliance.

Letter Quotable?

WHAT was the point of sticking a quote from Mick McGahey on the front of last week's Socialist Organiser?

Using quotes from labour movement "celebrities" as front-page captions is an acceptable practice — if they are playing a positive, mobilising role in a dispute, and if they have something useful to say.

Does McGahey fit the bill? I think not. He has certainly stood firm against attempts to force a "return-to-work" (scabbing) and against the media witch-hunt of "picket line violence". But in many other respects — the lack of mass picketing at Hunterston or Ravenscraig, the absence of appeals for solidarity strike action, his cross class approach to politics — McGahey has proven grossly politically inadequate.

Moreover, last week's editorial correctly pointed to the need for "a properly conducted campaign by the official labour movement to mobilise working class support for the miners and against the Tories". But a major obstacle to the building of such a campaign in the West of Scotland is the Communist Party's bureaucratic, depoliticising control of local miners' support committees — and McGahey is a



Mick McGahey

Communist Party.

For McGahey to play a role in such a campaign would mean him having to ditch politics he has held for decades and acting against the party to which he has belonged for the same length of time. I do not consider this a likely prospect.

The Communist Party is playing an absolutely disgraceful role in the miners' support committees in the West of Scotland, and McGahey is going along with that every inch of the way. This can only undermine, instead of strengthen, the miners' fight.

STAN CROOKE
Glasgow

Out of their own mouths

"SINCE Mr Scargill has sworn he will give 'not one inch' on his demand to veto any such closures, the concession will have to involve his defeat, disguised or not.

It is now unlikely that the vehicle of this defeat will be either Mrs Thatcher or Mr MacGregor: the antagonism of Mr Scargill and his supporters is too implacable, the back-to-work movement too hesitant. Nor will defeat come at the hands of the

From the 'Economist'

government's inert trade union laws or from some new judge-enforced ballot, which Mr Scargill will disregard. Instead, Mr Scargill's defeat will come from within the union movement itself, as workers refuse to put their jobs at jeopardy to feather-bed the miners.

On Monday, the Trades Union Congress took the first shamb-

ling step, six months late, towards this defeat when its moderate executive gathered the miners into the bear-hug of "total-support" — support which it has neither the capacity nor the intention to deliver. This year's chairman, Mr Ray Buckton of the train drivers, knows about that support: he received it during the 1981 rail strike shortly before he was left bruised and defeated in the ditch. There is still far to go

before the TUC finds the nerve to send railwaymen and dockers across miners' picket lines. But its new executive (like its old one) loathes Mr Scargill, and is alarmed by the violence of his miners and the damage they are doing to the union cause. Union members are in revolt, crying out already for the secret ballots which Mrs Thatcher is about to give them.

The TUC may be an ironic weapon for Mrs Thatcher to

Back the miners



wave in the face of union militants. But at present it is the best she has.

Black miners speak out 'Workers must fight racism'

Joe Muhammed from Cotgrave, Mick, Bernard and Morris from Warsop and Andy from Hucknall were five miners on the anti-racist day in Lewisham, SE London, last Saturday. They've got themselves together to cover as many black community events as possible so that they can talk, discuss and raise funds for the strike. Lal Chanda and Judith Bonner from Peckham spoke first to Joe.

What have you been doing?

Well, we went to the carnival a couple of weeks ago to show the black people there that there are black miners who are solidly with the strike and intend to carry on and win. That's why we took a minibus full down to the carnival. We also had a float and 50,000 stickers printed "Black people support the miners". The response was amazingly good and we collected several thousand pounds and a lot of goodwill.

Black people were surprised that black miners exist — they were doubly surprised when we said we were from Notts. We were told to "stick with it and win".

How did you get into mining?

People don't realise there have been black miners for ages. Two I know personally have been miners for 28 years. There have been black miners ever since black people got here. I've been in it for 13 years.

Mining is very much a father to son industry. Three of the lads here are second generation miners.

Judith: I've found it difficult sometimes working with miners because of the sexism, even though I feel I can contribute to this struggle. Have you hit on much racism?

First there is a problem of sexism — miners are no different from any section of men when it comes to attitudes towards women, unfortunately. One problem is that there are no women miners.

I believe women should be miners if they want to. Miners don't get into contact with women in a work environment — they think women can't do their job.

We had the shock of our lives once. A delegate from a mine in the United States came over to speak to us during the first weeks

of the strike. The delegate walked in and it was a woman! You should have seen some of their expressions.

In some ways it's easy to get past the shit of racism and comments, it disappears once you are established. Of course I've felt racism from individual miners but not as a group. I'm happy to work in the mines — part of the problem with the men is that they don't work with women — they have no sense of camaraderie with women.

Lal: You said earlier that the NUM have a decent record supporting other peoples' struggles like Barking Hospital. Are you going to push them to link in with say the Newham 7?

We'll be there on Friday at the Newham 7 picket. I'll make sure we are there. For me, doing fundraising and winning support for the strike is most important, so if I go anywhere I do that.

Most people won't support something like your strike unless they can relate to it, perhaps through their own-experiences. Don't you think you have a responsibility as black miners to both make



Black youth confront the police, Lewisham 1979

those links with the black community to draw support for the strike and push the NUM to support black people's struggles?

Yes, it is important to make these common links. There is a lot of racism in the trade unions — the whole trade union movement needs a shake up. But the community is distracted by racism away from class struggle.

The strike is a class issue, but they, the Establishment, like to see us divided, fighting ourselves. We need to fight as a class to change things. It is not in the bosses' interest to fight racism. We workers must fight it.

Lal: Don't you think it's important to do both — to fight racism and make class struggle? They aren't opposed. They are part of the same fight. Too often, though, black people fight both struggle on their own, because racism exists. Don't you think as a black person in a strong union you can promote those struggles?

Yes, it's not in their interests for us to have working class unity. We shouldn't split ourselves up. We're black but we're miners.

Only communities outside mining areas don't know there are black miners. I stood for election and missed by only two votes in a pit at least 95% white. You can overcome racism by putting yourself about, by understanding the issues.

Andy Coupes told us:

"In '78 and '79 when the Anti-Nazi League were formed, Hucknall and the whole of the NUM were one of the first trade unions to donate to it. Recently when Botha arrived we reaffirmed our support for the Anti-Apartheid Movement and went on the demonstration.

I realise there are a lot of links between what is happening to striking miners and the experience of black people.

When I came down last week for the carnival I stopped with a bloke from NUPE. His son reckoned if he doesn't get stopped three times in a week by the police, something's up. His dad makes him carry a "Know your rights" card.

At the time I said it doesn't happen like that yet to us — but it does, it's happening in Notts. You're stopped, asked your name, where you're going, where you've been — and all this in the middle of the day.

I used to live in a dead-end street in Nottingham — Station Terrace. Two friends came to pick me up to go picketing. When we went to reverse the car out of the street the police stopped us and wouldn't allow us to leave.

You think that sort of thing doesn't happen, but it happens all

the time to the black community. I always thought sus was overblown — but it isn't, it happens.

The police themselves, the Met are in my village, they are arrogant about being police.

We were in South Normanton and this policeman saw us behind a hedge and told us, "We're the f...ing Mets, not some country cousin police force" — asserting themselves. They wind us up, trying to stick "Mets are Magic" stickers on your back — real bastards.

The police action has opened a lot of people's eyes. They're supposed to be there to protect us — when they're not ordering plastic bullets! It makes you think what they are planning to do with those bullets.

What are we doing so wrong? What are people planning that they think is so objectionable? We're protecting our jobs and they're going to use plastic bullets on us. They've ordered them. When are they going to use them?"

Morris told us:

"It's been a good day here. I reckon we should do this in all communities — black, white, Chinese ...

I've worked at Warsop for 12 years now and have been on that picket line for 26 weeks — and not been arrested ... yet!

All I've got to say, especially to the black women back home in Women Against Pit Closures, is they're doing a good job. We all need to come together and fight with the miners."



Is this a Notts village? No, it's Lewisham in 1979.

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OUR AMM

The US working class has a long history of militant struggle — including a 105-day miners' strike in 1977-8. Martin Thomas reports.

THE United States is the only one of the world's great capitalist countries which has no large political labour movement. It is the only one where the general idea of socialism — even diluted or distorted — has no widespread support in the working class.

The rulers of the US hope and believe that this is a permanent state of affairs. But there is good evidence to show that they are wrong.

The miners' strike of 1977-8

In militancy, determination and inventiveness, the US working class has been in no way backward. Sit-down strikes and flying pickets were pioneered in the US, in the 1930s.

A recent newspaper report claimed that US miners' leaders were shocked by the British miners' strike. In the US, they said, miners would never defy the law!

If any US miners' leader did say that, he has a short memory or a lying tongue. One of the greatest recent battles of US labour was a 105-day coal miners' strike in 1977-8.

After three months of that strike, President Jimmy Carter ordered the miners back to work for an 80-day 'cooling off' period — as he had power to do under US law. Just 100 out of 160,000 strikers returned work.

The miners accepted a settlement soon after. But they forced the coal-owners to back down on their major demands — the right to fine unofficial ('wildcat') strikers and to sack their leaders — and won concessions on other

fronts.

In that dispute, as in the current British miners' strike, the employers' chief objective was to break the strength of the union. Following the oil price rises of 1973, the coal owners saw a future of rapid expansion for coal, and wanted to make sure that all the benefits would go to them.

They had built up large stocks and planned for a four month strike.

Other trade union leaders gave little support to the miners.

But the miners sent pickets over vast areas. They faced not only National Guardsmen, but armed security men employed by the coal owners. In Kentucky one of these security men shot a picket dead. 100 car-loads of pickets from Ohio swooped on the area.

Trucks carrying scab coal were stopped, and their loads dumped by the roadside.

Indiana was another tough area. One mining company got an injunction limiting pickets to three at any site. The strikers ignored it. Hundreds of union miners arrived at the scab pit. Three trucks and two cars were set on fire, and there were dynamite explosions.

By unrelenting militancy — helped by a harsh winter — the strikers forced US industry close to the point of wide-scale power cuts and shut downs.

They also knew how to deal with wavering at the top of the union.

The union had grown weaker over the 1950s and '60s. For many years it had been run by a gangster-type regime under Tony Boyle. One challenger — Joseph Yablonski — was assass-



Miners' pickets vs. police, US-style: Pennsylvania, 1978

inated on Boyle's orders, but in 1972 Boyle was finally ousted by Arnold Miller.

Miller introduced democratic reforms into the union — but in the course of the strike he proved weak. After 60 days he tried to sell it out.

When miners heard Miller announce that he had signed a deal, hundreds of them piled into cars and made for Washington, where the union's Bargaining Council was meeting to ratify the deal. They invaded the union HQ — and the Council voted 33 to 3 against the deal.

After that Miller had to go around with 50 bodyguards. (Bill Sirs was reported to be content with four for last week's TUC!).

There was a whole series of class battles from 1877 through to World War 1.

Next week: from the 1930s to the present.

The 1977-8 miners' strike did not lead to a general new wave of industrial militancy, nor to any working-class political action. Indeed, the history of the US working class has many times underlined the truth that trade unionism is not socialism.

The most militant struggles over the terms and conditions of

100 YEARS ST

wage slavery — even when they lead workers into bloody battles with the armed forces of the state, as often they have done in the US — do not necessarily lead to a challenge to the system of wage slavery itself.

But broad, escalating trade union action, drawing in different sections of the working class and rallying them as a class against the exploiters, does push workers towards socialist conclusions. That tendency has been visible in many US workers' struggles, starting just 100 years before the 1977 miners' strike.

Between 1860 and 1900 the US went through a tremendous industrial revolution, and central to that were the railways, which grew from 30,000 miles in 1860 to 200,000 miles (more than the whole of Europe) in 1900.

By 1900 almost one wage-worker in every five in the US was a railworker.

Thus a railway strike in 1877 became a general rebellion of labour against capital. The railworkers struck against the employers' demand for a 10% wage cut. But in many cities their struggle spread into a local general strike.

In Pittsburgh, for example, local state militia men deserted in droves when ordered to act against the strikers. Fresh militia forces were sent in from Philadelphia and shot twenty workers dead. The workers responded by burning down the railway yards, destroying 104

locomotives.

In St. Louis there was a full-scale general strike and for a few days the strike committee controlled the city.

The railworkers were eventually defeated. But over the next few years a movement grew up called the Knights of Labour.

It had many strange features. It aimed to organise not only wage-workers, but all 'producers', including small business people and farmers. It proposed not collective ownership of large-scale industry, but a system of small producer cooperatives. Its chief leader, Terence Powderly, said he was opposed to strikes.

Nevertheless the Knights of Labour led many strikes, particularly in 1884-6. They preached the unity of black and white workers and appointed a full-time women's organiser. They had a system of Knights of Labour courts in which members could resolve disputes without going to the boss-class courts.

The Knights declined after 1886, in the face of vicious red-



Striking miners stop coal train, Pennsylvania, 1979

ERICA



Eugene Debs led a great rail-workers' strike in 1894 and later became a leader of the US Socialist Party. He won a million votes as socialist candidate for president in 1912.

EARS OF RUGGLE

...ing. But in 1894 railworkers took the lead again, with a tremendous struggle against the Pullman company. With the help of federal troops — 34 people were killed during the strike — the employers smashed the American Railway Union. But after the defeat, Eugene Debs, leader of the ARU, became a socialist and joined together the remnants of the union into a new Socialist Party.

The miners, 1870s-1905

The Socialist Party grew until it got nearly one million votes in the presidential election of 1912. At the defeat of the ARU left the railways dominated by craft unions. And it was the same in most other industries.

In 1886 an American equivalent of the TUC had been created, the American Federation of Labour. In 1893 it adopted a platform calling for the collectivisation of industry. But from it was firmly dedicated to craft unionism and business unionism.

It organised only skilled workers, on a craft basis — and mostly only white workers. It saw trade unionism strictly as a business of getting a good deal out of the capitalist system, and a good living for the trade union leaders.

The only exceptions, in that period, were the miners' unions — the United Mine Workers (coal) and the Western Federation of Miners (metal miners).

Both waged major strikes in 1894, the same year as the ARU Pullman strike. Both strikers involved bloody clashes with police and militia. The coal miners also sent out squads to blockade railway tracks carrying scab coal. The coal miners' strike (late April to late June) overlapped with the rail dispute (early May to early July), and trade unionists in Chicago argued for a nationwide general strike.

The UMW followed up by successfully organising the anthracite mines, their major weak spot in 1894. Insisting that "the coal you dig is not Slav or Polish or Irish, it's just coal",

they managed to overcome deep ethnic and language divisions among the workers.

The IWW, 1905-17

In 1905, the Western Federation of Miners, under the leadership of Bill Haywood, joined with the coal miners' organiser, Mary Jones, and with Eugene Debs to create a new trade union centre, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW).

The other major figure at the founding of the IWW was Daniel De Leon, leader of the Socialist Labour Party and a Marxist writer of great originality.

Together they asserted: "The working class and the employing class have nothing in common... Between these two classes a struggle must go on until all the workers come together on the political, as well as on the industrial field, and take and hold that which they produce by their labour..."

In fact the IWW was never an ordinary trade union federation

The rising of women

THE struggle of women for equality has a longer and stronger history in the US than anywhere else.

America's first feminist movement got under way in the 1840s. It was closely linked with campaigns for the abolition of slavery and with other radical causes. Victoria Claflin Woodhull, the first woman candidate for president of the US (in 1872 for the Equal Rights Party), was also the first person to publish Karl Marx's and Frederick Engels' Communist Manifesto in America.

The leading demand in the 19th century was for the right to vote. The newly-settled Western states, where the economic condition of women was more equal, granted it earlier (Wyoming was first, in 1869), but votes for women nationwide were not won until 1920.

The modern women's movement also began in the US, in the 1960s. By then women had become a very large part of the wage-working class in the US — 37% of the labour force in 1972, as against 18% in 1900.

But women had long played a major role in the workers' movement. The AFL was solidly male-dominated, but all the more radical movements of labour — the Knights of Labour, the IWW, and the CIO of the 1930s — had women in the forefront.

These verses — 'Bread and Roses' — were inspired by the IWW-led struggle of women textile workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts, in 1912.



From the film 'Harlan County'

As we come marching, marching, in the beauty of the day,
A million darkened kitchens, a thousand mill lofts gray
Are touched with all the radiance that a sudden sun discloses,
For the people hear us singing "Bread and roses! Bread and roses!"

As we come marching, marching we battle too for men,
For they are women's children, and we mother them again.
Our lives shall not be sweated from birth until life closes,
Hearts starve as well as bodies: give us bread, but give us roses!

As we come marching, marching unnumbered women dead
Go crying through our singing their ancient cry for bread.
Small art and love and beauty their drudging spirits knew.
Yes, it is bread we fight for — but we fight for roses, too!

As we come marching, marching, we bring the greater days.
The rising of the women means the rising of the race.
No more the drudge and idler — ten that toil where one reposes,
But a sharing of life's glories. Bread and roses! Bread and roses!

in the style of the TUC. It was something halfway between a militant trade union organisation and a revolutionary political party.

The Western Federation of Miners, becoming more conservative, disaffiliated from the IWW in 1906, and from then on the IWW was essentially an organisation of activists, with its main strength among that large army of workers who at that time travelled round the US from one casual or temporary job, to another.

Its routine activity was agitation, free speech fights, defence campaigns for jailed workers. It never won a permanent mass membership, though it did from time to time lead tremendous local strikes.

The greatest of these was the textile workers' wages strike at Lawrence, Massachusetts, in 1912. The IWW organised mass pickets, brought women into the struggle as equals, won the strike — and led the workers in singing the Internationale, in many different languages.

Setbacks in the 1920s

The IWW was destroyed as a major force by World War 1, which the US joined in 1917.

It suffered terribly from repression, both by the state and by patriotic lynch-mobs. But it suffered even worse from political disorientation.

Since 1905 the IWW's thinking had focused more and more narrowly on 'direct action' to the exclusion of politics. De Leon and the SLP — whose own ideas were rather sectarian and legalistic — had been squeezed out. In 1917, when the US entered the war and the Russian Revolution burst on the labour move-

ment of the world, the IWW did not know how to respond. Some went over to the new Communist Party which was formed in 1919; the rest settled into a doctrinaire 'anti-political' stance.

There was a general strike in Seattle in 1919; a big steel strike

the same year; and a whole series of strikes in the coalfields from 1919 through to 1923. But the US ruling class weathered the post-war tumult and then stabilised its position as the US went through a tremendous boom from 1921 to 1929.



Polish strikers attack Pennsylvania coal and iron police in 1888. The Polish miners called the police "the Cossacks".

Two sides: bosses and workers

Whose side is Kinnock on?

Mr Chairman, comrades and friends, I'd like to bring you the fraternal greetings of the campaign group of MPs in the House of Commons — a group of socialist MPs who have supported the miners from day one of the overtime ban, and all the way. That, we feel, is the very least we can do.

I must say that I'm tremendously proud to show my solidarity with you all — with the women and the fantastic struggle that they're putting up in this campaign; with the men and with the families and with the communities. With all of you we stand today and every day in solidarity for your victory. And now we have the support of the TUC and, I must say comrades, not before time!

With a few honourable exceptions — I'm thinking of the seamen and the railway unions and the TGWU — we've had to wait until now to get the support of the majority of the TUC. The decisions that were carried at the TUC — we want to see the trade union leadership now campaigning for those decisions. We don't want to hear that it can't be done. There's no such word as "can't", comrades, if you want to do it, you'll do it.

Success

Now, I believe this week Arthur and the miners union have scored a tremendous success, and that means you've scored a tremendous success. And you know what McGahey said, if you stop running, they'll stop chasing us. I agree with that. And you know it's MacGregor that's running now and we're chasing him and the Tory government.

We need very much to educate our unions politically. I say that, comrades, because, fancy organised workers — workers in general — not seeing the tremendous importance of winning this struggle and not seeing that if you go down we all go down.

Now if we'd done our job properly — if we'd educated people politically — they would have understood that message.

Civil liberties

I want to say a word or two about civil liberties. Because you've been at the sharp end an attack on civil liberties which has never been witnessed in this country before.

I'm thinking of the police activities, not only on the picket

Joan Maynard MP spoke at an NUM rally at Dinnington, South Yorkshire, on Saturday September 8.

lines — though god knows that's been pretty horrendous, and you know that better than me because you've been at the forefront of it — but also the police stopping people on motorways and not allowing people to move freely in our country.

The fact is that our police force has been organised on a national basis.

Comrades, I want to link this with another struggle that's been going on for a hell of a long time — the struggle to unite Ireland. Because, all that the police are doing to you they've been doing to Irish people for a very long time. That's where they practice it.

We ought to be ashamed of ourselves in the labour movement that we haven't years ago identified ourselves with the struggle of the Irish people to unite their country and gain their right to self-determination.

Comrades, you can't keep freedom and justice for yourselves if you deny it to others. And now we've got repression here on our own doorstep. So remember that, because that's another struggle we're going to win as well as the one that you are conducting.

Now, there are a lot of struggles going on in society today. There's yours, there's the struggle in local government to keep democracy and to allow the local people to elect their own local councils and decide what rates should be levied, etc. There's the Greenham women's struggle for peace, and let's not forget that either, comrades, because if we don't win that struggle, the others won't matter.

And there's a close connection between the struggle of the Greenham women and the struggle that we're all conducting for peace, and the struggle that you are conducting.

You see, I've always been opposed to nuclear power. I believe that nuclear power is dangerous and that we don't need it and that what we should be developing is a coal industry

not the nuclear power industry. And the nuclear power industry is connected to the nuclear weapons industry.

So these struggles are all linked up together and as Tony Benn, who's standing here behind me so often says, we've all got to support each other. When we all learn that lesson — you know the old lesson "united we stand" — then we can't lose.

It amazes me, you know! Working people who go to work in the morning (those who are still lucky enough to go to work) — I say to them, do you not think when you're going to work that if you all stayed at home for ten days the whole job would stop? In other words, comrades, if we could only get over to working people their tremendous power, we could take over tomorrow — another example of how we need to educate them politically.

Social violence

Next, a word about the violence. In that speech Neil Kinnock made earlier this week, I think when he started talking about violence he must have forgotten this poster up here showing the policeman on horseback about to club down a woman. What about that violence?

What about the social violence that the Tories are perpetrating in our country — deindustrialising our country? What about the violence to four million unemployed? And what about the violence involved in the destruction of our health service, so that people are dying because the money isn't there?

That's what we should have been hearing from Mr Kinnock. He should have been telling us where the real violence comes from.

And the other thing he should have been doing is coming out clearly and categorically on your side in the struggle. Comrades there are only two sides in society — the bosses' side and the workers' side. You have to decide which side you're on, as the song says. So Mr Kinnock needs to decide which side he's on.

Anti-union laws

Now then, comrades, anti-trade union laws. With the laws that this Tory government is bringing in, they are making it impossible for trade union people to defend their members. If you stay within the law, the



Joan Maynard

Tory laws, you can't defend your members — it's impossible.

The Tolpuddle Martyrs understood that many years ago and if they hadn't broken the law you and I would not have been here today celebrating the fact that we've got a miners' union and a trade union movement in this country.

Because every right that you and I have has been fought for, and they've often been fought

for against unjust laws.

Class law

The laws and the courts in this country are the laws and courts of the other class, not of our class. We've got to remember that in this struggle.

And we've also got to remember that the employers break the law when it suits them. They break safety laws, they break health laws, they break tax laws

— they break any law when it suits them.

Finally, we've heard a lot this week about getting a settlement. We all want a settlement. But we want a settlement — and we're going to have one — that means victory to the miners!

Comrades, I end with this. I stand with you in solidarity today, tomorrow, and every day until that victory is won. Good luck.

Labour CND re-launch

By Aleks Szczerbiak

THE Labour Party conference in October is due to debate a new statement on defence policy. This statement contains Labour's toughest commitment yet to British unilateral nuclear disarmament. Some have even argued that a consensus is developing in the Party around 'unilateralism'.

History, however, has taught CND supporters in the Labour Party to take nothing for granted.

A great deal more work needs to be done in promoting maximum activity at all levels in the Party to further the aims of CND. Whatever its paper positions it is vital that the Party be seen as active day to day alongside CND locally and nationally, transforming its fine unilateralist words into deeds.

Moreover, there are other areas in the nuclear debate where discussion needs to be initiated in the Party. In particular, how long must Labour's defence policy be constrained by a need to appease the 'Atlantic wing' of the Party, which wallows in its slavish devotion to NATO? More work also needs to be done on arms conversion and in 'fleshing out' the Party's non-nuclear defence policy.

A group of CND supporters in the Sheffield Labour Party are working to ensure that Labour maintains and deepens its commitment to non-nuclear defence actively campaigns for it and implements it when in govern-

ment.

Labour CND, a specialist section of CND campaigning within the Labour Party, has been rather inactive in the last few months, but is currently being relaunched with a major meeting in the week before Labour Party conference. From this meeting it will work to broaden its base of support and formalise its organisation.

The meeting, on the theme Can Labour Stop the Bomb? will place the issue of nuclear weapons high up on the Party's agenda and instil a sense of urgency among Party members: encouraging them to prioritise peace and disarmament campaigning. Speakers will include: Bob Cryer, local Labour Common Market Assembly member, and Joy Hurcombe, chair of national Labour CND (and a vice-chair of national CND).

The meeting will be held at Sheffield Town Hall (Surrey Street entrance) on Thursday September 27 at 7.30 p.m.

Scottish CND grows

By Stan Crooke

LAST weekend, 8/9 September, Scottish CND held a well-attended Annual General Meeting in Glasgow, at the end of 12 months of sustained growth by the organisation.

Membership has almost doubled in that time, from 4,500 to 8,623, nearly a quarter of its members being youth (2,053).

Scottish CND covers 140 local groups throughout the Scottish region and has 189 organisations affiliated to it.

Moreover, some of the Scottish CND "specialist campaigns" have made considerable progress in their own particular fields in the last twelve months.

Trade Union CND, for example, received a boost from the invitations extended to CND General Secretary Bruce Kent to address this year's Scottish TUC and the Edinburgh Miners' Gala, and has also begun production of its own broadsheet, with a print-run of 25,000, while Labour CND has gained recognition from the Labour Party Scottish Council Executive.

Much of the discussion at the conference was low-key, given the general agreement on the contents of many of the resolutions: support for workers (such as those at Rolls Royce, Hillingdon) who boycott work related to nuclear weaponry; support for Dumbarton District Council in its fight against the siting of Trident missiles; development of alternative employment strategies; beginning a campaign

against sea-launched Cruise missiles, etc.

In relation to other resolutions, however, there was controversy, sometimes sharp, over their contents.

A number of speakers opposed a resolution supporting a policy of British withdrawal from NATO on the grounds that it was "not a credible policy to raise at this time", it would "alienate potential support for CND" and that "nuclear disarmament is not incompatible with membership of NATO". After a long debate, the resolution was finally passed overwhelmingly.

While delegates recognised the setbacks suffered by CND in Britain, and elsewhere, by the siting of Cruise missiles, the outcome of the recent Canadian elections, and the danger of Reagan's re-election, the mood of the conference was a generally optimistic one. In the year ahead, Scottish CND faces the test of whether such optimism can be translated into effective action.

International

Orange hunger strike

By Paddy Dollard

IN 1981 ten imprisoned Republicans starved themselves to death to back up the Republican prisoners' demand for changes in the condition of their imprisonment.

The hunger strikes changed the face of Northern Irish politics.

As one after the other the coffins came out of Long Kesh, the republican movement gained a level of support in the Catholic community such as it had known since 1972.

The Republicans won their recent electoral gains at the expense of the constitutional nationalists of the SDLP by building on and developing that support. Yet again the Republican phoenix renewed itself from the ashes of its martyrs.

There is a new hunger strike in Northern Ireland. Two prisoners at Magilligan in Derry are now in their fourth week without food. Over the last three weeks eight others have joined them in what they say is an indefinite hunger strike and this week 400 other prisoners in Long Kesh, Magilligan and Crumlin Road refused food for three days to

back up the hard core strikers. But the new hunger strikers are Loyalists, not Republicans!

The Loyalist prisoners, of whom there are 600 — are demanding segregation from Republicans. They say they live in permanent fear of assault or worse.

The British government refuses all concessions on the same grounds that they refused to meet Republican demands in 1981. Both Loyalists and Republicans are, they say, criminals and to concede anything to them would be to admit they were political.

Thus the Loyalists from their side are now challenging the government's regime in the jails and implicitly challenge its "criminalisation" policy.

The Loyalists have been the overlord and therefore they have no tradition of passive resistance in jail such as the Republicans have. They have no pantheon of martyrs to look to, men who resisted the government to the

death, using their own wasting bodies as the battlefield.

Over the years quite a few Loyalist hunger strikes have been started — and then quickly ended.

This is the longest-ever. It is backed 'outside' by an existing support network which has been agitating for segregation.

Large sections of the Protestant working class are edgy and alienated. They fear a "sell-out" by the British government. The exceptionally serious nature of this hunger strike may reflect that. If the hunger strike continues it must have a powerful impact on the Protestant community.

Politically motivated or not the Loyalists are not the equivalent of the Republican prisoners. Many are in fact in for robberies, but others, of course, are convicted sectarian assassins.

Nevertheless they are challenging the criminalisation policy. In principle, their demands are perfectly reasonable.

The Republican movement supports their demand for segregation.



Police fire on youth, Sebokeng township, near Johannesburg

Support S African workers

By Bryan Edmands

AS black gold miners announce protest strikes for next week in five mines, the Anti-Apartheid Movement in Britain has called for an emergency demonstration in London for Friday September 14.

The demonstration will protest at the continuing police shootings of black youths in the black townships surrounding Johannesburg — youth who are protesting against increasing state repression, 30% increases in rent, recent large increases in the price of food, water and other essential commodities, and for better schooling.

It will also coincide with the formal inauguration of South African prime minister PW Botha as the regime's first executive president under the recently introduced constitution.

Last Thursday, 6th, tenants' leaders in black townships called for an indefinite rent strike and the resignation of stooge black township councils who are collaborating with apartheid legislation.

Meanwhile, the death toll

approaches 50 and there are hundreds injured and arrested.

The South African state has now banned all meetings — outdoor demonstrations being already illegal — fearing the further spread of black rebellion on the seventh anniversary of the murder of black consciousness leader Steve Biko — killed

in police custody; and expanded ten-fold the security force which normally guards ministers and Parliament, in order to protect all government buildings.

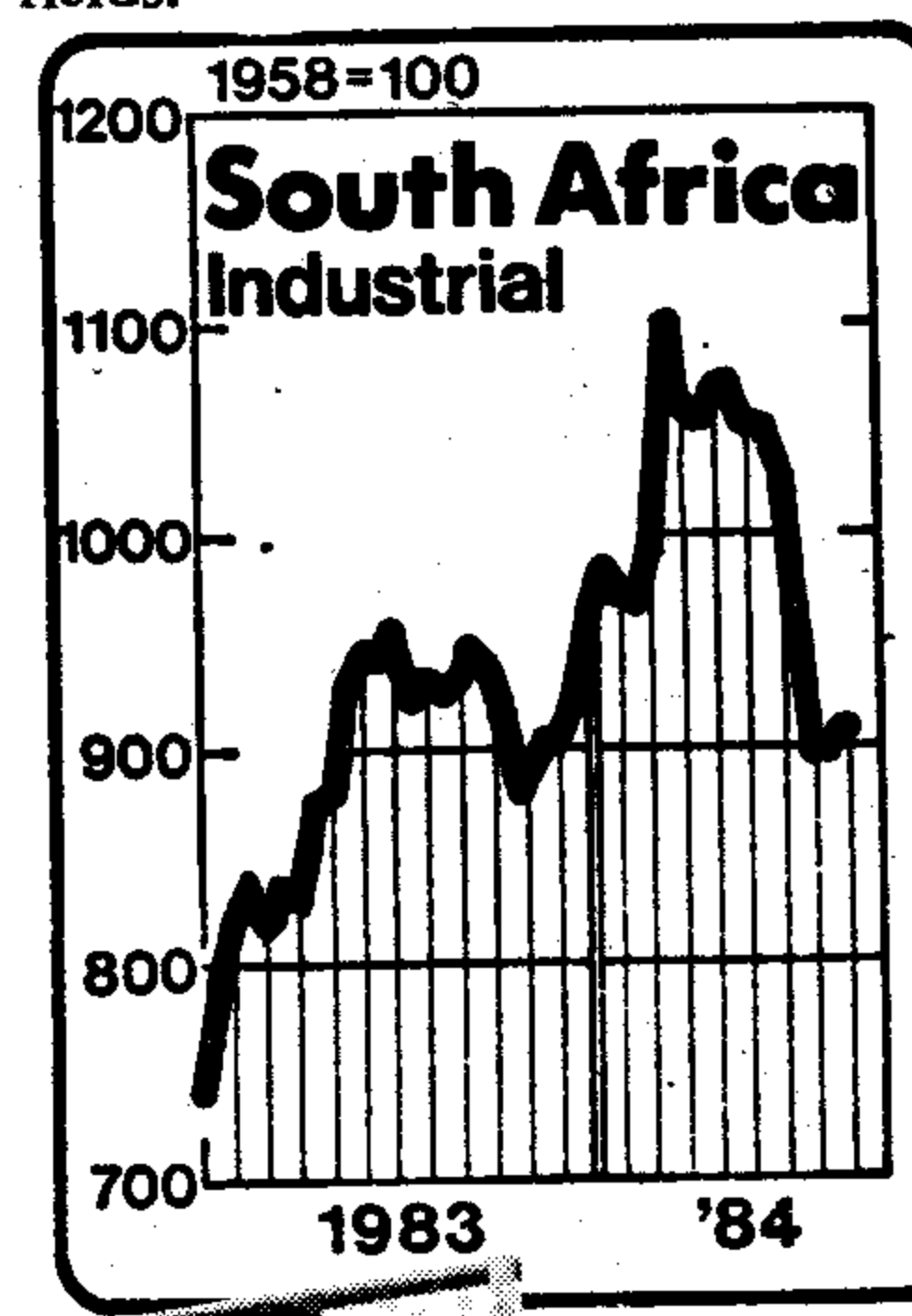
The London demonstration leaves Parliament Square at 6.00 p.m. and marches through Trafalgar Square in front of the South African Embassy.

The continuing unrest in South Africa is partly a consequence of the deteriorating economic situation there. Higher taxes and over-draft interest rates of 25% are squeezing down profitability and affecting, in turn, sales in many sectors; productivity is falling; and inflation is now 12% and rising.

Gold prices and exports have not risen as expected, and with heavy overseas borrowings needed to be repaid and with workers (e.g. black gold-miners) taking action over wages, little prospect of recovery of the South African economy can be expected in the immediate future.

The graph shows a marked contrast between the year-on-year increase of 8% since July 1983 in manufacturing output figures and the abrupt 1½% and continuing fall from July — despite the South African govern-

ment's austerity package involving such things as rent increases and cutbacks in capital expenditure in the usually highly profitable gold fields.



For Namibia against Trident

A THOUSAND tonnes or more of uranium from Namibia will be used, illegally, to provide fuels and warheads for the Trident programme. Without this supply Trident would probably be sunk.

The theft of Namibian uranium is by arrangement between the British government and British-based multinational Rio Tinto Zinc. RTZ happily flouts United Nations rulings against the robbery of Namibia's resources, because it makes super-profits from its operations under

an apartheid regime enforced by South African military occupation.

We can act in solidarity with the people of Namibia and can help to scuttle Trident in the process.

On Friday November 2, 1984, mass protest actions have been called by the Campaign Against the Namibian Uranium Contracts, focussing on British Nuclear Fuel's involvement in the processing of Namibian uranium for Trident. As well as

the BNFL headquarters at Risley (near Warrington, Lancs) we will be protesting outside BNFL Springfields (near Preston, Lancs), Capenhurst (on the Wirral, Cheshire) and Chapelcross (Dumfriesshire). These sites are crucial in producing Trident's fuel and weapons ingredients.

For more information contact Campaign Against the Namibian Uranium Contracts, 53 Leventon Street, London NW5 2NX. Tel: 01-267 1941/2.

100 years of colonialism

By Nathan Jones

slave labour for foreign — principally British — owned mining companies, out to exploit the country's considerable natural resources and the readily-available cheap labour.

Namibian resistance was fiercely repressed.

British governments backed South Africa through all this. In 1966, when the United Nations terminated South Africa's 'mandate', it was a Labour government that opposed this, and went on to block UN sanctions against South Africa.

Resistance became more organised from the 1940s on culminating in 1966 with the launching of an armed struggle by the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO). SWAPO has been recognised by the UN as the representatives of the Namibian people.

In September 1978, UN security council resolution 435 put forward an 'Independence Plan' — agreed to by all parties, including South Africa and SWAPO. Walvis Bay, annexed by South Africa in 1977, was excluded from the plan.

In any case, South Africa has refused to honour the agreement. Excuses include a demand that Cuban troops be withdrawn from Angola at the same time as South African troops are withdrawn from Namibia.

The British government — originally opposed to this argument — now supports it. And in June 1984, following Botha's visit to Britain, Margaret Thatcher said that Namibian independence "will not occur until there is, in parallel, also the withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola".

In the meantime the brutal oppression of the Namibian people continues.

'Radical' Libya backs Morocco

By Clive Bradley

ON August 14, Colonel Gaddafi of Libya and King Hassan of Morocco announced that they had agreed an act of union between the two countries. On August 31, a "referendum" in Morocco 'endorsed' the proposal.

It is not a serious agreement. 'Unity proposals' and even fully fledged agreements are commonplace in the Arab world, where there is still something of a sentimental attachment to the ideal of Arab unity. The only agreement that ever really got off the ground was the union of Egypt and Syria to form the United Arab Republic in 1958 — and this fell apart in 1961 when Syria seceded. That union was typical: it had more to do with Egyptian aggrandisement than serious unity on an equal basis.

Gaddafi is much given to

flirt engagement parties and unconsummated marriages. There was a unity proposal with Egypt in 1971; with Syria and Egypt in 1972 (then Syria backed out); Tunisia in 1974; Syria in 1980; Chad, Mauritania and Algeria in 1981; and Syria and Algeria in 1982.

The latest round with Morocco has more to do with the fact that Libya was excluded from the "treaty of friendship and concord" linking Tunisia, Algeria and Mauritania.

What it does show convincingly is the absurdity of Gaddafi's claim to be a radical, anti-imperialist influence in Middle Eastern politics.

King Hassan of Morocco is a dictatorial butcher. Since the mid-70s the Moroccan

regime has been at war with the people of the Western Sahara, led by the Polisario Front, who wish to secede.

And in January, riots caused by food price increases were brutally suppressed.

Gaddafi had already made clear his attitude to Hassan's regime when, last year, he dropped his previous moral support for Polisario. It seems likely that Gaddafi — who is increasingly irritated with his Soviet allies — is using Morocco as a gateway to Western friendships and partnerships. For Hassan, the dropping of Libyan support for Polisario is a boost.

The union itself is unlikely to come to much. But it is Gaddafi's clear message to those who genuinely are fighting or want to fight imperialism and oppression: don't expect any help from me.



Chile demonstration in London, September 11

CHILE: REBELLION GROWS

By Edward Ellis

ELEVEN years ago this week, the socialist Popular Unity government in Chile was drowned in blood by a military coup.

The dictatorship of General Pinochet proved itself from day one of the coup to be one of the most brutal in recent history. About eighty thousand people died in the weeks following the coup: many of these were rounded up into the football stadium in Santiago and exterminated.

The Chilean workers' movement was decimated.

But today, the Chilean working class is recovering and fighting back. They need and deserve our support and solidarity.

And we need to learn the enormous lessons provided by the Chilean experience.

The Popular Unity government of Salvador Allende tried to put into practice the peaceful, parliamentary road to socialism.

Before September 1973 Chile had a history of many decades of stable parliamentary democracy. Allende insisted that the Chilean bourgeoisie and their military machine respected the constitution and democracy and would not resist the elected government. Chile was not like other Latin American countries. It was a special case, a country often referred to as the 'Britain of South America'.

This faith in the democratic commitment and good will of the bourgeoisie and their army, navy and air force officers proved a tragic disaster.

When the coup came in 1973, the workers pleaded for arms to defend themselves. Without arms they suffered a terrible and temporarily crushing defeat.

In Britain, the workers commented on the coup that any

military leader would, like Pinochet, have regarded it as his 'constitutional duty to intervene'.

The then US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, said before the coup, "I don't see why we should stand by and watch a country go communist just because of the irresponsibility of its people."

The lesson of Chile is that the illusion of a peaceful road to socialism inevitably paves the way for bloody and victorious counter-revolution. In Britain today both the Communist Party and the allegedly Trotskyist Militant Tendency preach the ludicrous notion that the workers could take power peacefully. Tell them that in the coalfields comrades!

We owe it to the heroic struggles of the Chilean workers to take that lesson to heart.

TUC Congress

Stumbling and fudging

By Ann Crowder
(NALGO delegate, in a personal capacity)

The press predicted a certain split at the Brighton TUC. Instead we got the pledge to back the miners.

So far, however, the pledge has produced only words. No doubt some of the leaders supported the statement cynically and with tongue in cheek. But militants can use the TUC pledge. Our number one task is to build on it to gain real solidarity with the miners. We must insist that the trade union leaders act on it.

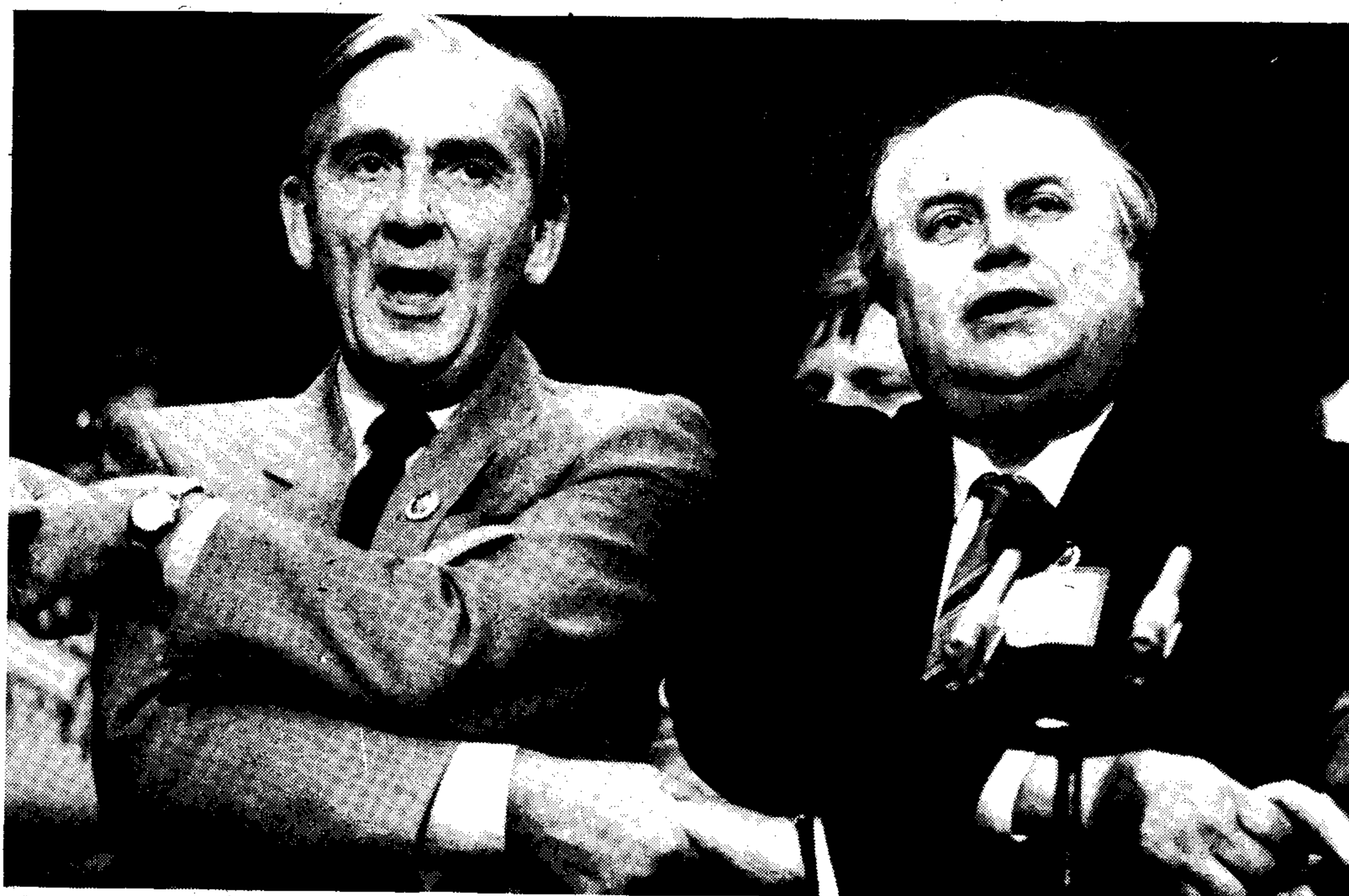
But all in all it was a disappointing Congress.

The only working class answer to the vicious propaganda war of the Tories and the media against the labour movement is a vigorous, self-confident counter-offensive. So we need a massive campaign of agitation and education in the working class and we need the educative action of building solidarity with any and every group of workers who come up against the employers or the Tory government.

But this stumbling and faltering TUC — which didn't even condemn Len Murray for ratting on the NGA last December — is a long way from being able to provide either the one or the other.

The decisive test was its response to the Tory anti-union laws — yet more of which are being got ready. It failed the test as miserably in Congress as in real life.

At every point there was fudging, complacency, spirit-



Len Murray and his successor Norman Willis

lessness and confusion.

The TUC was criticised for its betrayal of the NGA — but the motion passed did not commit the TUC to automatic support for any union running foul of the laws.

Tony Dubbins, NGA general secretary elect, put it well: "It's just not possible to have an effective industrial dispute and remain within the law". And again: "It's no good waiting for the right ground because we will never be able to choose the ground for a fight".

Murray, Grantham and the right wing justified the TUC's failure last year with the argu-

ment that it was wrong to back losers. As Murray put it: "To tell someone they are in a no-win situation is not new realism, it's the oldest realism in the book".

On GCHQ, a motion from the CPSA criticising no-disruption agreements was heavily defeated. And the decision to withdraw from the NEDC, over the banning of the GCHQ unions was reversed.

Taken as a whole, the TUC decisions on fighting the anti-union laws do not commit it to much. Serious action in defence of victimised unions will have to be fought for.

Murray's retirement: best thing he's done

By John O'Mahony

He spent his last week in office stitching up the TUC-NUM agreement — an agreement which is almost certainly seen by himself and the right wing of the TUC as the first step in a series of moves to derail the miners' strike.

His last year in office was notable for one of the dirtiest pieces of sell-out merchantry in living trade union memory — the TUC betrayal of the NGA.

That betrayal, last December,

was very much Len Murray's doing. For one brief moment, in a mediocre career, Len Murray took a stand and spoke out boldly — against striking workers. Legless Len became King Rat for a day.

Murray might have been censured and condemned by Congress for what he did then. But conference instead gave him the send-off traditional on these occasions.

In eleven years as TUC general secretary, Murray has presided over the loss of two million members. Worse, he has presided over the TUC in the years when it has proved unable to defend the working class or itself against the Tory onslaught.

At the point of its worst crisis in many decades it was the misfortune of the trade union movement to have a spineless, grey, time-serving office-boy at its helm.

He goes in the middle of a very bitter and prolonged working class battle which marks the utter failure of his attempt after the June 1983 election to inject a spirit of "New Realism" into the unions — a bleak "realism" that would lead the unions to bow their necks to the Tories.

It seems that the lines of poetry he quoted were from Robert Browning. He'd have done better to quote Dickens' Sidney Carton, who voluntarily went to the guillotine in place of someone else: "It is a far better thing I do now than I have ever done..."

Len Murray's retirement is by far the best thing he has ever done for the working class movement. What a pity he had a choice in the matter, and that he leaves with all the praise the TUC can give him ringing in his ears, instead of being drummed out of the movement for his treachery to the NGA.

SDP and the unions

By Gerry Bates

The Social Democratic Party's fringe meeting at the TUC, on Thursday 6th, seemed to show that David Owen has few hopes of a big impact in the trade union movement.

The attendance was respectable — 200 to 300, of whom perhaps two-thirds were sufficiently sympathetic to applaud at the end of Owen's speech. But Owen must have known that the content of the speech could not attract much support among active trade unionists.

David Owen's main theme was strikes in general, and the miners' strike in particular.

"I have no doubt", he declared, "that public opinion in this country wants a much greater expansion of no-strike agreements, especially in the public sector."

He then criticised the Tories' anti-union laws for being too soft on postal ballots. On the coal strike, his main fear was that the Coal Board and the Tories would concede too much to the miners.

Uneconomic pits must be closed, he insisted. "This is not an issue which the nation should allow to be fudged."

But how were the miners to be defeated? Owen's answer was the "trigger ballot". Parliament should pass a law empowering the Certification Officer to impose a postal strike ballot on the demand of a "substantial number" of the workers involved in any dispute. The flexibility of such a provision would allow the ballot to be called at the best time, and in the best way, from the employers' point of view.

Owen concluded with a sharp attack on any TUC criticism of NATO and of US bases in Britain.

No wonder dissidents in the SDP are complaining about David Owen's "sub-Thatcherism". What price Eric Hobsbawm's new Popular Front now? What meaning would a Labour-Liberal-SDP "anti-Tory alliance" have when the SDP is to the right of the Tories on some crucial working class issues?

SCIENCE

Are women really the weaker sex?

Les Hearn asks whether women can beat men at sport

IN SPORT, women have always been discriminated against, being discouraged and denied facilities and opportunities. For instance, in the Olympics (aren't they sick of them?), women are not allowed to compete in hammer throwing, pole-vaulting and triple jumping, as well as distances over 3,000 metres (except for the marathon, introduced this year).

The reason is of course male prejudice about the "weaker" sex — but instead of helping the "weak", male bigots have hindered and discouraged.

Weaker?

But are women necessarily the weaker sex? Two articles in a recent New Scientist examine women's athletic performance. Craig Sharp compares the anatomy and physiology of men and women, while Kenneth Dyer looks at how the gap between women's and men's athletic records has been narrowing.

Sharp looks first at height. On average, men are 7% taller than women but there is a large overlap with the tallest women being taller than the vast majority of men.

Women's wider hips mean that the angle of the thigh bone is different on average and makes many women throw their heels out when running (what difference this makes, I don't know). More seriously, this different angle tends to cause aching knees, but this can be corrected by strengthening the muscle on the inside of the thigh.

Balancing

Hormone differences tend to broaden male shoulders, making the muscles longer and broader (and therefore stronger). However, this raises the centre of gravity of the body, so women may have a better balancing ability.

Men's arms are relatively longer, too, giving an advantage in some throwing events.

Sharp identifies three main areas where women may be at a real disadvantage in many sports:

1. Lower muscle mass.
2. Lower oxygen-carrying capacity of blood.
3. High proportion of body fat.

1. Lower mass of muscle may be a disadvantage in events calling for a burst of energy, such as throwing or sprinting, while the extra weight of fat would make things worse.

2. Oxygen capacity of blood seems lower in women, but may not actually make much difference. After allowing for body fat, men's and women's bodies have the same maximum rate of oxygen use, so both must be able to get adequate oxygen from their blood.

3. Body fat actually seems to be an advantage in events calling for endurance, providing a store of extra energy for use when the glucose and starch stored in the tissues has been used up.

Women seem better able to use their fat for energy production and it also helps in floating in water and in insulating from the cold. Put these factors together, and we find that the fastest long-distance swimmers are... women!

Record swims

Women hold the records for channel and two-way channel swims.

Women can withstand dehydration better and can acclimatise to high altitudes faster. Their muscles seem less prone to painful exhaustion and may be less susceptible to damage through exercise.

Sharp thinks that the fastest, etc., men will always beat the fastest, etc., women in the present-day selection of athletic events, though he points out the considerable overlap of achievements between men and women.

But Sharp says it would be a different story in a competition involving a long swim, followed by a run through deserts and mountains. In this women could probably out-perform men.

More next week



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Industrial

Rail: no victory

By Mick Sidaway

ON FRIDAY September 9 the rail unions NUR and ASLEF called off their national policy of non-cooperation due to start on the 10th.

On the 11th, they called off the strike due for the 12th on London Regional Transport and suspended the strike planned on British Rail for the same day.

By their own admission, the NUR are dissatisfied with what the British Rail Board are saying. NUR general secretary Jimmy Knapp said in a circular: "I would be misleading you if I told you that they [the union/BR joint statements] represent a victory."

In fact BR offered nothing new. They have no firm proposals to close lines — but will continue with the ones already in the pipeline. There are no present proposals to reduce opening hours, except at Fenchurch St Station.

On timetables, there are no significant changes proposed in 1985.

BR agreed to hold back on rundowns of regional workshops until further discussions. Proposals for cut-backs at main workshops will continue.

So is the plan for the 'internal financing' of the electrification of the London-to-Edinburgh East Coast main line. Where is that money going to come from?

The fight against cuts, closures and privatisation will be won — but only by using industrial muscle. If the NUR keeps calling off actions in this manner, then the muscle will be wasted and weakened.

Tilbury is solid

Martin Thomas reports

Tuesday September 11

PICKETS at Tilbury today told me that the bosses' claims for the number of dockers working were totally exaggerated. Yesterday they said that 200 worked, but only 15 dockers crossed the picket line this morning.

The postal ballot carried out by the Port of London Authority means very little, because it included not only Tilbury but also dockers at Purfleet and Erith who were already working before the ballot.

So dockers at Tilbury are confident and ready to extend picketing to other ports. 'There's no point 50 of us standing on this gate when we could be more useful somewhere else', one said.

Contingents have already been to Felixstowe and Ipswich, and further trips are planned.

The issue is the use of scab labour at Hunterston — and, behind that, the threat to the National Dock Labour Scheme. Set up in 1947, the Scheme gave dockers job security after decades of casual labour.

'This situation would have arisen even if the miners weren't on strike', I was told, 'because the employers are attacking the National Dock Labour Scheme. They've told the government they want it changed, and that's sure to come in the life of this Parliament.'

'After the last dispute, they wouldn't say that they would not abolish the Scheme in the course of this government. They only said that they had no immediate plans to change it.'

The Port of London Authority and the press have talked about

'intimidation' of dockers who want to work at Tilbury, but the only intimidation has been the other way round. Two pickets were attacked last week, one by a lorry driver and one by a scab docker.

The port area has been flooded with police from Kent and Essex, who now find that they have nothing to do. 'They're disappointed — they haven't been able to get blood on their truncheons'.

The major problem on the Tilbury picket line is that large numbers of lorries are still going through, and with modern techniques even a tiny number of dockers can handle a substantial amount of cargo.

Brains Haulage, one of the major container firms, told its drivers that unless they crossed the picket lines they would be sacked. There is an official TGWU instruction to drivers not to cross the pickets, but what's needed is firm action by the union. A few TGWU road haulage section full-time officials on the Tilbury picket line would be a good start.

The dockers, for their part, say they are willing after the dispute to make sure no non-union drivers are allowed to use the port.

There was some criticism of the TGWU full-time officials. National official John Connolly is running the dispute in a very low-key fashion, suggesting that contingents of only six pickets should be sent to ports like Felixstowe.

The pickets I spoke to thought that it was not realistic for the strike to demand the extension of the National Dock Labour Scheme to Felixstowe, Dover, and other ports not presently covered by it.

Extension of the Scheme is

certainly very important: but, they felt, there are two problems. First: 'We won't get it under this government. We need a Labour government with a big majority'.

Second: a real struggle for extension of the Scheme is not possible without the unregistered ports. 'If any unregistered port goes into dispute for extension of the Scheme, we'll support them. But it would be a farce if we stopped to get them registered and they worked right through it'.

Most dockers in ports like Felixstowe, the pickets explained, are not particularly interested in extension of the Scheme. There is little trade union tradition in Felixstowe, a new port, and in a short-sighted view they seem to have few problems. Wages there are double what they are at Tilbury. Felixstowe is booming, taking on new labour, and job security does not seem a big issue.

The problems will hit Felixstowe in due course. Already in some ports like Newhaven the employers use casual labour when they have extra work. But for the present 'there's a funny mood in this country now — an attitude of f... you, Jack, I'm all right'.

But despite the clear difficulties, is it not best to fight now for the extension of the Scheme?

The fact that the dockers are fighting alongside the miners gives both added strength. The government is not as strong as it looks. Even with all the problems, a national dock strike can hit very hard, very quickly.

With the employers continually trying to nibble away at the Dock Labour Scheme, there is no prospect of registered dockers being stronger at some future date than they are now.



Pickets outside Tilbury docks

If dockers do not go on the offensive now, to demand the extension of the Scheme, then they will be forced into a wearying series of partial defensive actions against one attack on the Scheme after another.

The pickets I spoke to accepted this — 'I think there will be a whole series of disputes, as long

as this government lasts' — but they still thought that extension of the Scheme could not be the immediate demand.

Money is needed, especially for flying pickets to go out to ports which are still working. Send to: George Lake, c/o TGWU, 80 Calcutta Road, Tilbury, Essex.

Barking still needs support

By Tim Anderson

DOMESTIC staff at Barking Hospital, East London, have been on strike since March 19 against their employer, Crothalls.

This firm is a subsidiary of Pritchards, who won a renewal of their contract with the District Health Authority by cutting its price to the NHS by 41%.

They achieved this by cutting total working hours at the hospital by 40%, cutting holidays from 4½ weeks to three per year, and abolishing sick pay entitlement. A new shift system was introduced which most of

the workers found they could not fit in with their domestic responsibilities.

Crothalls originally refused to negotiate with the strikers and have been bussing in scab labour through the picket lines.

An independent environmental health officer who conducted a survey of the state of the hospital after five weeks of Crothalls scab labour, found accumulated dirt and grease in 'hard to clean' areas and dirty kit-

chens and toilets.

He concluded that 'the cleaning is now so far deficient that 'routine' cleaning will be insufficient to redress the situation.'

The hospital is on crown land — which, believe it or not, makes it immune from prosecution under public health legislation! Barking and Dagenham Council wrote to the health minister in June requesting that Barking Hospital be exempted so that prosecutions could be brought.

Patients are now refusing to go into the hospital because of the health risk and are being referred to other hospitals.

Pritchards have been severely hit by the dispute and the exposure of the standard of service they provide. Several DHAs have removed Pritchards from their list of approved contractors and hopefully others will follow this example.

A spokesperson for the strike committee has said: 'Pritchards are unlikely to win many new NHS contracts on the basis of their performance at Barking.'

Support for the strikers has been encouraging, with days of action in Scotland and New Zealand where Pritchards originated. Messages of support have been sent by Canadian workers. And hundreds of miners from around Britain have picketed at Barking.

The strikers at Barking need support, both money and help on the picket line. Contact Barking and Dagenham Health Emergency, AUEW House, 588 Rainham Road South, Dagenham, Essex or phone 01-595 4252.

Half-victory in pensions strike

By Alan Williams

THE strike at Crown Agents Pension Division in East Kilbride has now been settled with a partial victory for the strikers.

The fight lasted five months, during which time the workforce received little support from the union bureaucracies. For example, the largest union, CPSA, only put out an 'All members' circular on the dispute on August 7, four months after the strike started.

The dispute has been a model of a Tory attack on the unions, combining both privatisation and the Tebbit laws. But the union leaders, after being threatened with court action, attempted to turn what was an openly political, and therefore 'illegal' strike into a fight purely over terms and conditions.

The fact that the settlement reached last week relates solely to terms and conditions is thus a 'victory' for their strategy... and another step back in the face of the government's attempts to hamstring the unions.

The eventual settlement, which guarantees workers their present terms and conditions until 1989, represents a considerable retreat for the Crown Agents management who had been trying to impose new 'commercial' terms. It is also a vindication of the strikers' repeated rejection of an earlier and much poorer offer, despite coming under intense pressure from their own union leaders to accept it.

More positive, however, has been the magnificent determination and resolve of the strikers

themselves, who remained solid for so long. Not one member returned to work while the strike lasted.

The strike has served to prove to Civil Service trade unionists

that militancy does get results. It leaves the door open for further action in pursuit of the East Kilbride workers' ultimate claim for full Civil Service status.

Spread CPSA strike

By Steve Battlemuch

THE strike by 400 CPSA members at Newcastle Central Office and Washington Child Benefit Office is now in its fifth month. The strike began in protest against management's attempt to bring in new shift rotas which would cut shift workers' pay by up to £14 a week.

After negotiations broke down in August, the CPSA National Executive Committee agreed in principle to try and involve Reading and Livingstone computer centres in the action, in a major escalation of the dispute.

However, this move to extend the action, which must be fully supported, has with it some problems.

The Reading and Livingstone computer centres, which are at the centre of any escalation plans, are the offices which send out claimants' weekly giro. If Livingstone and Reading come out on strike, then management will try to force workers in dole offices to work emergency procedures and write out all giro by hand.

CPSA members in the dole offices have been opposed to these emergency procedures and rightly so as it means working flat out with massive amounts of overtime, to clear all the work.

Therefore, membership meetings are being held at the moment to try and discover the feelings of dole office workers.

Reading and Livingstone must come out to support the New-

castle strikers and dole office workers should agree not to implement the emergency procedures and to strike if any member is suspended as a result of their actions.

COWLEY

WORKERS at British Leyland's Cowley car plant, near Oxford, have again shown they are prepared to take action over management heavy-handedness and intimidation.

Production of Maestro and Montego cars was again at a standstill this week when 300 paint shop workers, who are taking part in a factory-wide overtime ban, begun last week to protest low bonus earnings, were prevented from clocking on by bosses until they lifted their ban.

The paint shop workers refused, and more than 2,000 other workers were laid off.

So far this year more than 120 unofficial stoppages have taken place, many of them sparked off by management attempting to assert their will over such issues as the 'transfer of labour' between lines cutting across union-agreed procedures, and by imposed changes in shift rotas.

WORKERS
Socialist
Review

No. 4, out now, includes articles on Afghanistan, on the Northern Ireland Protestants, and on the theory of imperialism in the light of the South Atlantic war.

Back the miners

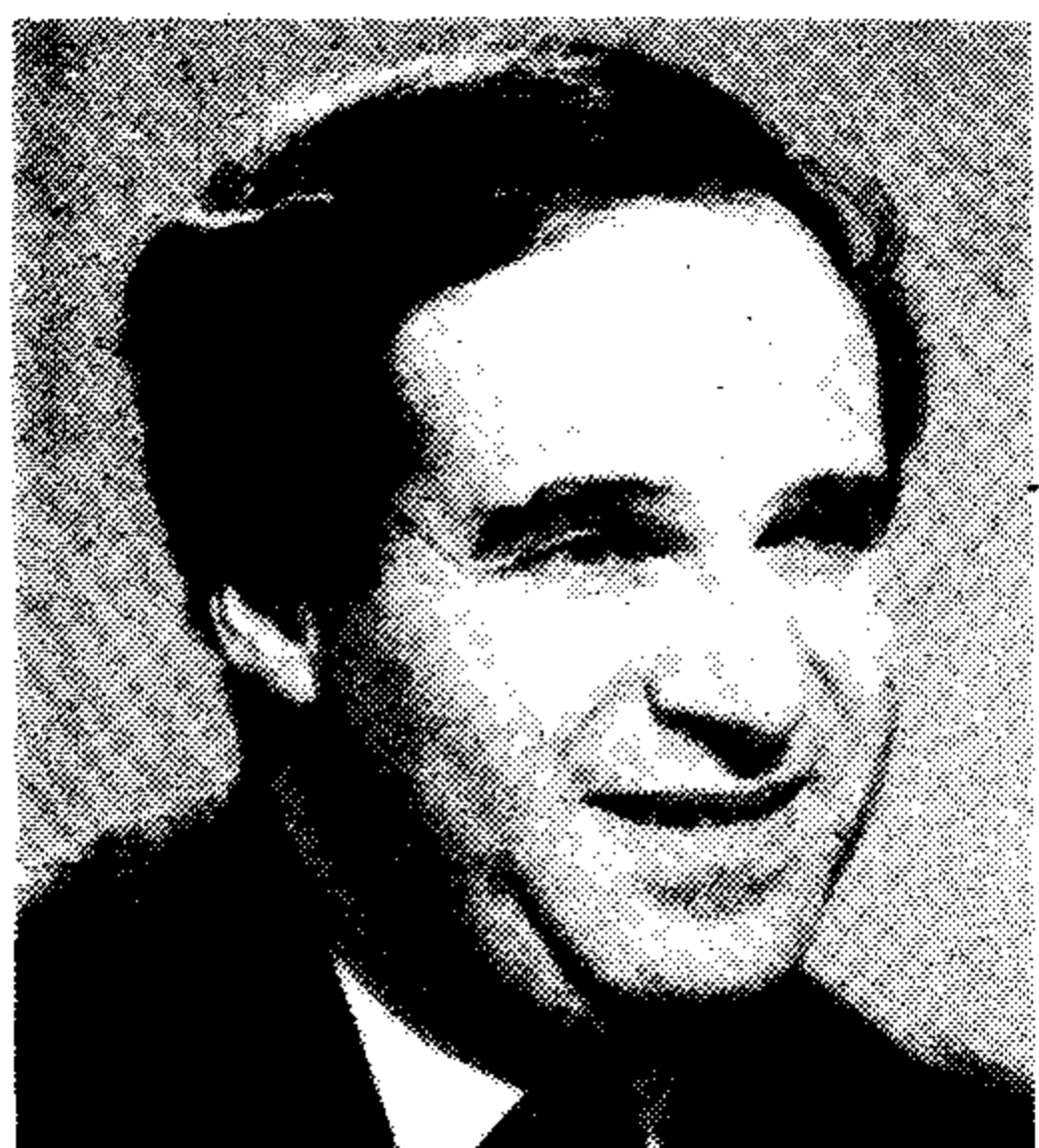
GENERAL STRIKE!



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Socialist ORGANISER

Brittan's law



LIFE imprisonment for miners who stand up to police thugs and defend themselves on the picket line — that's the threat now made by Mrs Thatcher's tame Home Secretary, Leon Brittan.

Brittan is in overall charge of the police who run rampage through the mining villages, beating and injuring miners and their families. He is the boss of the mounted policeman photographed charging his horse at a woman appealing for help for a wounded miner, getting ready to strike her down with the long club he was brandishing. In the final analysis his is the direct political responsibility for every act of police violence in Britain — against blacks and unemployed youth as well as against striking miners and their families.

Yet this little creep accuses the miners of using "Jackboot tactics"! More dirty Dr.

Goebbels-style propaganda. Listen to him:

"The fact is that vicious assaults on police officers, intimidation of working miners and their families, vandalism against Coal Board and other property, and arson, are what are being used today in a desperate attempt to keep the strike going."

He then listed "offences" "which carry life sentences as a maximum". Ominously he said: "... for the offences of riot and affray there is no limit to the length of sentence which the court can impose."

So Thatcher's Home Secretary has laid it on the line. If they win this strike they will conduct a legal reign of terror against the miners they have defeated and against those who have given them active support.

After twenty-six weeks in which over 2,000 pickets have been injured and two miners killed on picket lines, it is starting to dawn on the Tory government that only with stepped up violence, more savage repression and threats of the mass imprisonment of strikers are they going to have any chance of defeating this strike.

Brittan seems to have embarrassed some of his Tory colleagues. But he expresses the ideas and the feelings of the Tory Party in the country.

It's the sign of an increasingly desperate government which has failed in six months to beat down the miners.

OPEN LETTER TO ARTHUR SCARGILL

Dear Mr. Scargill,

For months we and thousands of our union colleagues have attentively observed your union's struggle for the right to work.

We know well that at the present time your fight takes on more universal significance. This is a matter of fact for the existence of the British trade union movement. We have already condemned, and we maintain this condemnation with all firmness, the coal exports to Great Britain made by the Jaruzelski regime.

If Thatcher is getting along so well with Jaruzelski it is a great time to make logical conclusions. That is

Lairds Court threat

By Lol Duffy, secretary, Cammell Lairds occupation committee



THE NATIONAL combine shop stewards' committee for the shipbuilding industry has given its backing to the sit-in at Cammell Lairds, Birkenhead.

For the last 11 weeks Lairds workers have been striking and sitting-in on the yard's last two contracts — an almost completed Type 42 Destroyer and a North Sea gas rig — in protest at compulsory redundancies.

The combine committee pledges financial and moral support, and will send a delegation to join the mass picket at the shipyard this Thursday, 13th.

Management are now refusing all negotiations. Their resolve has been stiffened by the activities of a 'Silver Birch' type scab in the yard, one Harry Ewers, a shipwright, who has agitated against the sit-in.

This week's picket has been planned to coincide with a management application to the courts to enforce an injunction already granted, ordering an end to the sit-in. The High Court at Manchester will hear a call from the company for police action against 43 of the occupying workers.

why we hope that in the name of workers' solidarity you will reverse your unfriendly positions towards our movement.

We want to express through you our solidarity and support for the striking miners and all British workers.

The Executive Board of Robotnik [Worker] (Paper of the Inter-Factory Workers Committee of Solidarnosc) Robotnik Political Group Emmanuel Goldstein Group.

Robotnik is an underground left-wing paper with a circulation of 7,000; the Emmanuel Goldstein Group is a libertarian organisation.



VOTE LABOUR!

Jeremy Corbyn MP calls for support in the GLC by-elections.

"We called these by-elections to give the voters in the four constituencies the chance to express their views on abolition of the GLC and the Tory government's... the right to vote for a London-wide authority."

The elections are the culmination of an unprecedented media and government campaign against the GLC. They come at the height of the struggle to defend the jobs and services that go with it. This is, in microcosm, the sort of struggle a socialist Labour government will have to face.

The support for the Labour candidates has been phenomenal, but we can only win the elections convincingly if our majority is increased in the four constituencies and if we secure a higher turn-out in them this time than in the 'routine' election last time. I appeal to everyone who can possibly do it to turn out and support Labour on the 20th."

PADDINGTON: Ken Livingstone. Election HQ: 39 Chippenham Road, W9. Tel: 286 9692.

EDMONTON: Ken Little. Election HQ: 205 Fare Street, N18. Tel: 807-1627, or 303 0280 (messages).

HAYES & HARLINGTON: John McDonnell. Election HQ: 2A Pump Lane, Hayes, Middlesex. Tel: 759 1442.

LEWISHAM WEST: Lewis Herbert. Election HQ: 43 Sunderland Road, SE23. Tel: 699-2001.

FUND Help us move

WE'VE had a number of contributions for our premises fund — one big one, and a lot of smaller donations. We have now raised £1384.15 towards the sum — £2,000 at least — that we need to finance our move into proper premises.

Thanks Collection at SO weekend school: £248.30, of which half went to the miners' strike funds, leaving £124.15 for premises. Scotland. Glasgow SO £25.

Yorkshire and North East. Alison Willis £5; Simon Pottinger £10; Andy Bennett £15.

North-West; Paul Gamble £15.

Nottinghamshire and Midlands. Ann Crowder £23; Steve Battlemuch £20; Matt, Joe and Hanna £5; Richard John £5; Richard McCance £5; Ivan Wels £5 and another £20; Di Gash £5; Bev Wood £1.

South Wales and West. Chris Whytehead £50 and another £25; Cardiff reader £25; Ian Somerville £1.

London: Cheung Siu-Ming £150; Nik Barstow £25; South London SO sponsorships for Les Hearn's cycle ride £20; Will Adams £30; E. London SO £10; London reader £750; Brian O'Neill £15.

We hope to see more coming in over the next month from fund-raising events organised by local groups and from a wider range of individual donations.

Please send to: Socialist Organiser, 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.

In the meantime, remember that we also need regular donations for day-to-day running. We're asking SO supporters to put in £5 per month extra (£1 unwaged) for the duration of the miners' strike.

Women's Action Group occupies

Welbeck: how we got our hall

By Mirian Fielding

WELBECK Women's Action Group, in North Notts., had nowhere to feed striking miners and their families.

The village hall was the obvious place to use but the trustees of the hall, two of whom are scabs and the rest unsympathetic to the strike, blocked the Women's Action Group from using it, despite the fact that Notts County Council, who lease

the hall from the trustees, had said that families could be fed from there.

Jill Timmins from Welbeck Women's Action Group, explained:

"The trustees would not allow us to use the village hall. We went through all the usual committees, and were continually turned down. At one point the trustees said we could have the hall for women and children, but not for striking miners. We turned that down flat.

So a number of women on the Action Group decided to try and occupy the hall to force the trustees to reconsider.

Some of the women were a bit nervous about actually going into the hall. So they stayed outside to give us moral support.

For instance Margaret Graham acted as liaison officer for us, running up and down, telephoning and so on.

The first night we got into the

hall Margaret stayed outside till after midnight in the pouring rain ready to run for help if we were attacked by scabs."

The whole event was organised very quickly in order to keep it from the trustees who would doubtless have had a heavy police presence at the hall if they had any notion about what the women planned.

Chris Benzie, from Welbeck, said:

"Jill Timmins only asked on Friday if I would go in on Monday night. It was the only way. Some people were nervous, but I was not worried at all. Once we got in the hall, I knew we were going to win. None of us were going to leave until we had what we wanted. I say to any of the women's action groups in a similar situation, get in and occupy and worry about it later.

I felt so bitter towards the trustees, some of them were scabbing and they were trying to

put their foot in any way they could, to make us go back to work. That made me determined to go ahead."

At 6 pm Monday evening nine miners' wives and their supporters, plus one man, Mick Newburn, marched into the hall and immediately barricaded the front door with tables and chairs.

There was a children's marching band still inside, just finishing their practice, who left with minimum fuss through the back door, which was then immediately padlocked. Meanwhile, the women had also padlocked the kitchen door, secured all the windows and hung up posters and their banner declaring "We demand the right to our village hall". They were in and determined to stay in until their demands were met.

There was a back-up team outside the hall of striking miners, a couple of NUM solicitors and

Continued inside on page 2



NEWHAM

7

A series of successful meetings have been held on the Newham 7 and Karamjit Singh throughout the country, ensuring a successful national mobilisation for the mass picket on Friday.

SELF DEFENCE IS NO OFFENCE!

Mass picket in support of the Newham 7 West Ham Magistrates Court West Ham Lane, Stratford London E15 10 am, Friday September 14



Join the Labour Party. Write to: The Labour Party, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17 1JT.

Subscription is £7 per year, £2 unwaged, 50p OAPs.