

Socialist Organiser

Miners appeal to deputies

Paper of the Socialist Organiser Alliance No.201 October 18 1984 25p Claimants and strikers 10p

Threat to seize miners' funds

CLASS LAW CLASS WAR

By Paul Whetton, for and on behalf of the Notts Miners' Rank and File Strike Committee.

With the breakdown of the talks between the mining unions and the NCB, the Notts Miners' Rank and File Strike Committee calls upon our comrades in NACODS to turn their ballot result into action and join us on the picket line.

It is quite obvious that the chairman and the rest of the Coal Board have no intention of taking any notice of the workers within the industry and by their intransigence have clearly stated that they are merely puppets of the Tory government.

This blatant attack upon the mining industry must be answered in the only language that the Tories understand — total solidarity of all workers in withdrawing their labour.

Only by standing together can all the workers bring this dispute to a speedy and successful conclusion. Join us now and together we can save our jobs, our industry and our communities.

NOW is the time for the TUC to deliver the solidarity it has promised to the miners.

Next Thursday the funds of the miners' union could be seized, because they have refused to pay a fine for "contempt of court".

Talks at the government arbitration service ACAS broke down on Monday 15th, and compromise is off the agenda for a while at least.

The Coal Board was not even willing to concede enough to satisfy the very moderate pit deputies' union NACODS. NACODS has now decided to activate their 82% ballot vote for strike action as from next week.

The conservative leaders of NACODS are still looking for a deal to avoid action, but at present Ian MacGregor is not even giving them that.

If the deputies strike, they will shut every pit in the country, and bring much closer the day when the Coal Board has to try to move stocks from the strike-bound pits, maybe using troops.

Stockbrokers Simon and Coates reckon there could be power cuts before the end of November.

All the blather about ballots has been exposed. The same



newspapers that say it is wrong for the NUM to strike without a ballot are urging NACODS to stay at work despite a ballot vote to strike. 'The deputies didn't really mean to vote to strike', says Fleet Street.

The press is also encouraging individual pit deputies, in Nottinghamshire especially, to defy the NACODS strike if it goes ahead. And the scab miners in Notts, after all their cries that 'we want a ballot'.

talk about doing the deputies' work if they do abide by the ballot decision!

All's fair in class war, they clearly believe.

The issue is no longer just pit closures, but one of the development or crippling of effective trade unionism. The High Court is claiming the right to overrule the NUM conference on whether or not the miners' strike is official. The unelected, Tory-minded judges are threatening

to seize all the NUM's funds and maybe jail its leaders unless they call the strike off.

Unions at the TUC pledged to stop all movement and boycott all new supplies of coal, coke or substitute oil. Contacts must be made at rank and file level to implement these decisions, at the same time as we press the official leaderships to put their full weight and authority behind the action.

Railworkers are stopping almost all coal movements by

rail in Notts. A visit to Notts by rail union leaders Jimmy Knapp and Ray Buckton — later than it should have been, but effective nonetheless — was crucial in getting that action.

David Basnett, Moss Evans and Ron Todd, leaders of the GMBU and TGWU, should be visiting the power stations.

And if the High Court does seize the NUM's funds, the answer should be a general strike — to force the courts to

back down, to gain victory for the miners, and to smash the anti-union laws.

The TUC should be preparing for action. But if the TUC will not lead, then the rank and file must.

Spontaneous spreading strike action in July 1972 forced the Tories to back down on their use of the law against picketing dockers. Similar action now could bring quick victory for the miners.

ORGANISE FOR A GENERAL STRIKE

As deputies decide to strike, the truth on coal stocks - p.3

Socialist Organiser

The Brighton bomb

THE PRESS and TV — and Neil Kinnock — praised Margaret Thatcher's 'courage' because she kept cool after the IRA bomb exploded at the Grand Hotel in Brighton in the early hours of Friday morning, 12th. Probably very many people in Britain outside the ranks of regular Tories felt horror and anger at the IRA attack. The Tories and the media made the most of it.

The Tories met on schedule, a few hours after the bomb went off, in their heavily guarded conference hall, and turned the IRA attack into a triumph for themselves. Mrs Thatcher vowed that she would not be moved from her course. She denounced the attack on the Tory party as an attack on democracy itself — an idea echoed and re-echoed in the media and by Neil Kinnock.

Class polarisation

The striking fact, however, is that a very large number of people in Britain — though a minority — are sorry that the bomb did not kill Margaret Thatcher and wipe out her cabinet.

Not just striking miners and their families, or supporters of the Irish Republican cause, but many others feel that way. That is what Socialist Organiser supporters up and down the country report.

Class polarisation and class hatred are more intense in Britain now than for decades past. And Thatcher personifies the ruling class which has inflicted such heavy and relentless blows on the working class, and now makes ruthless war on the miners and their families.

Thatcher is a Tory pig. She is outstandingly vile even in the unsavoury ranks of the present government. Socialist Organiser feels the same hatred for her as do the miners and their families in villages like Kiveton Park, Yorkshire, subjected to intense police repression.

Democracy and terrorism

The Tory outrage and talk about democracy versus terrorism rings very hollow indeed to anyone involved in the miners' struggle. But the sober truth is that we would have gained nothing if the bomb had destroyed Thatcher and her whole Cabinet.

Far more likely than a new Tory Cabinet eager to abandon to fight with the miners would be one pledged to win at all costs and strengthened by public sympathy. Thatcher is important but Thatcher is not irreplaceable. The ruling class can quickly spawn new Thatchers and new Tebbits and Brittans.

Back in 1925 the Bulgarian Communist Party shot the prime minister and then blew up Sofia Cathedral during his funeral service, decimating the government and the aristocrats. It was the sort of spectacular success that the IRA just missed. The result? The ruling class was strengthened, and the Communist Party was almost wiped out.

From the point of view of British class struggle politics there could be no gains for our side from the destruction of a few leading politicians. They can be easily replaced. We need to remove not individuals but the government and, ultimately, the ruling class.

Why the bomb?

From the point of view of the working class struggle there could be no gain... But it was Irish Republicans who planted the bomb. British workers need to understand why.

Irish Republicans feel the same hatred for the Tory government as do militant miners and their families, but even more intensely. The attack on the Tory conference was prepared for not by seven months of bully-boy tactics by Britain's police, armed only with riot shields and truncheons, but by 15 years of military repression of the Northern Ireland Catholics by the British Army and the Protestant-sectarian Northern Ireland police force.

Britain partitioned Ireland in 1920 against the will of the Irish majority. In Northern Ireland, for 50 years, British governments propped up "a Protestant state for a Protestant people" which entrapped and oppressed a 35% Catholic minority.

In 1968-9, the Catholics rose in peaceful protest for civil rights, and the police of that Protestant state beat them down.

No democratic solution in Ireland, no stable conciliation between Catholics and Protestants on the basis of equal rights for all, is possible without breaking the framework of Partition and creating a united, independent Ireland (which should, in our view, have some sort of federal arrangement to give limited autonomy to the Protestant-majority area).

But Britain continues to send thousands of troops to maintain the Northern Ireland state. They maintain it by terrorising the Catholic community — with special laws, no-jury courts, torture in interrogation centres, brutal house-to-house searches, and soldiers on the streets.

At war

Plastic and rubber bullets have killed 15 people, including seven children, in Northern Ireland. Now police chiefs are preparing to use them in Britain against the miners.

Socialist Organiser is highly critical of the Irish Republican movement's politics. In 1982 we roundly condemned those who set off a nail bomb in a crowded Chelsea street. We believe, however, that the Irish Republicans have justice on their side in their fight against the British presence. They regard themselves as at war with Britain for the independence of their country. In that context the leaders of the government that sends troops to Ireland are a military target.

Slaughter is horrible. The answer is self-determination for the people of Ireland.

Whatever the intentions, it is unlikely that the Brighton bomb helped to bring that answer nearer. Perhaps the opposite.

But the class bitterness generated by the police action in the miners' strike should help British trade unionists to understand the national bitterness generated by Britain's role in Ireland — and to come to support the fight to give the Irish people as a whole the right to determine their future.

Tories' double standard

By Clive Bradley

PETER Walker set the tone for last week's Tory Party conference, with a spirited attack on the NUM and Arthur Scargill:

"Mr Scargill may destroy the Labour Party; he may damage the NUM beyond repair; he may set miner against miner, community against community; he may even thwart the expansion of the coal industry [?]."

"But as long as this government has air to breathe, he will not destroy the democratic institutions of this country."

On Friday, after the bombing, Thatcher echoed the same sentiment. "This government will not weaken. The nation will meet the challenge. Democracy will prevail."

It is difficult to know whether or not the Tories actually believe their own propaganda. Probably they do, up to a point. It is certainly remarkable that they, like the media that grovels to them, have been able to turn all the real issues in the strike upside down, and without batting an eyelid.

Walker's sudden touching concern for the state of the Labour Party and of the NUM is difficult to swallow. The fact that the entire conference applauded the incredible suggestion that MacGregor intends to expand the coal industry (well, this is 1984 after all) is even weirder.

Most sickening, however, was the way the Tories condemned violence one minute, and saluted it the next. They denounced the striking miners, defending themselves against a brutal and violent police operation, as a threat to democracy, but Michael Heseltine had this to say:

"The Prime Minister took the right decision. She took it at the right time. She deserves the credit for what she did."

The decision in question, of course, was wilfully to slaughter 350 Argentinians on board the Belgrano.

For the Tories, massive murderous violence in defence of 'the nation' is not only necessary, but creditworthy. Workers' self-defence, and defence of jobs, communities and working class livelihoods is to be opposed with all the force — physical and legal — they can possibly muster.

The Tories are logical, in their own way. But the problem is that Neil Kinnock accepts the Tory argument about 'demo-



Thatcher's democracy means the rule of unelected police chiefs and judges

cracy' and 'the rule of law'. The Labour Party leaders are also for the defence of 'democratic institutions'; and they mean the same thing by it as the Tories do.

They don't mean by 'democracy' the fundamental right of working class people to resist and to fight for their rights.

They mean the right to rule of a Tory-dominated Parliament, a vicious police force, and conservative courts.

And Kinnock also agrees with the Tories that mass, murderous

violence in 'defence' of 'the nation' is legitimate where picket-line self-defence is not. The Labour Party maintained its commitment to the blood-soaked NATO alliance.

And the fact that the Labour leaders go along with all this rubbish makes it that much easier for the Tories to spout more of it and sound convincing.

The Tory leadership did not get things all their own way, of course. They came in for a lot of stick about unemployment from the 'wets' in their ranks. Dele-

gates denounced — as much as Tories are likely to — the government for not caring enough about the unemployed.

Fortunately, the government was rescued from the potentially riotous repercussions by Patrick Jenkin, Minister of the Environment, boring the entire conference to sleep in a speech justifying their decision to do away with local democracy.

This is one democratic institution the Tories obviously aren't too keen on defending to the death.

The President's brain is missing

By Edward Ellis

IT'S terrifying to think that the most powerful man in the world might be an idiot.

Ronald Reagan, however, is clearly a bit lacking in the old grey matter. Last week, in a televised debate between Reagan and his opponent in the forthcoming presidential elections, Walter Mondale, he was challenged about his tax cuts for the rich.

Reagan mumbled: "The system is still where it was with regard to... er... the... er... with regard to the... er... progressivity, as I've said, and that has not been changed."

Reagan-gaffes are nothing new of course. Before he was elected, Reagan used to get muddled between Indonesia and Indo-China, and confused Afghanistan with Pakistan.

His knowledge of geography didn't improve once he was in the White House.

Once, climbing off the plane in Brazil, he extended



But Mondale represents the same principles...

his warmest welcome to the people of Bolivia...

Apparently, he used to get most of his information from the Reader's Digest, and it left him not knowing who the President of France was.

His expert knowledge of nuclear weapons has never been in doubt, however. Replying to reporters' questions in 1981, Reagan commented wisely: "I think

again, until some place... all over the world this is being research going on, to try and find the defensive weapon."

"There never has been a weapon that someone hasn't come up with a defence. But it could... and the only defence is, well, you shoot yours and we'll shoot ours."

And he has got the problem of war well sorted out. On hearing that a computer

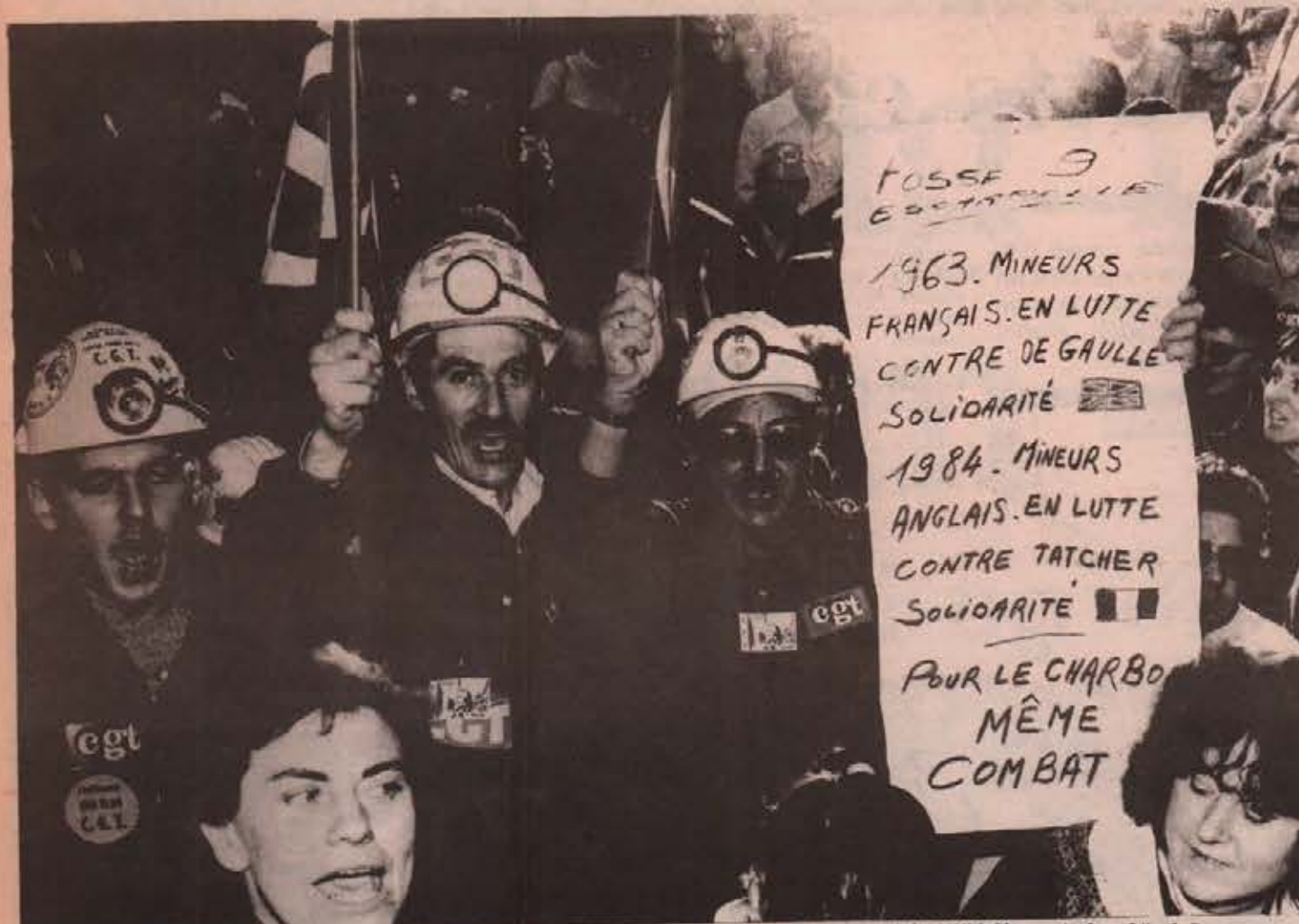
error had nearly led to nuclear war, Reagan insisted that if war had taken place, he would have seen to it that the computer company lost its contract!

US politics are getting almost as bad as British politics in Winston Churchill's last years as prime minister, when it turned out that he didn't know that the electricity industry was nationalised.

What's worst about it, though, is that Reagan's gaffes are a better expression of the fumbling and inhumane system he presides over than the competent, colourless moderation of Mondale.

Remember John F. Kennedy? He was slick and smart. Yet he managed to get the US launched into the Vietnam war and an attempted invasion of Cuba.

Reagan is a fitting leader for US capitalism. Speed the day when the US workers get rid of the whole crazy system.



French miners last weekend at Aylesham Welfare Club who had brought food and money in support of the NUM. Photo: Andrew Ward, Report

'The battle now is on the picket lines'

PERSONALLY I had no great faith in the ACAS talks. Not because I've got no faith in our leadership in the NUM, but because I know the Coal Board have been given an impossible task by their Tory masters - not to shift and not to let a victory be seen for Arthur Scargill or the NUM.

I hope that NACODS will now utilise that mandate that they've got, and call their members out on strike. We call upon them now to come out and join us.

The battle is going to be won on the picket lines, and that's where I expect the main struggle now to take place. We call upon the T&G to deliver the goods as promised, to take action against any of their drivers that are crossing picket lines.



Paul Whetton

I think there is great support for us at rank and file level in the power stations. It is a reflection on the lack of firm leadership from the big unions that they have lost contact with their workers, and the promises they have made have been empty promises.

They have failed to communicate with their rank and file.

We've tried to get the message over to the rank and file in the power stations, although we're facing great difficulties.

The fact that the NUM negotiators accepted the prin-

Paul Whetton's weekly diary

ciple of third-party arbitration on pit closures was a bit worrying to me. The evidence on arbitration in any industry is that nobody in any sector has made any substantial gains thanks to third-party arbitration.

I was worried that we had accepted a principle that could rebound on us some time in the future.

Unease

But I have to say that we have been promised by the leadership of the NUM that although there will be secret talks there will be no secret sell-out. One always feels a bit of unease when secret talks are going on, but up until this present time we haven't been able to fault our leadership.

I would like to see a more open style of negotiating, but I don't mean to say that in any disrespect to our leadership. We've got complete faith in our leadership, but open negotiations in the style carried out by Solidarnosc in Poland could be better.

When you see two sides coming out of negotiations, and each side saying, "It's us that shifted, not them", then clearly one side is lying. I think there's got to be some more openness so that the workers can judge just who it is who is telling the lies.

I think open negotiations could show people that the Coal Board are being completely intransigent and merely carrying out government instructions.

After the bomb at the Tory party conference, MacGregor made a statement trying to link it with the miners' strike. I think that was a direct insult to every honest British miner, and I think it

will rebound against him.

I want to get rid of Maggie Thatcher. I don't want to do it by the bomb. In the first instance I want her to accept that on the question of pit closures she is wrong.

I want to get rid of her by the ballot box. I think that attempting to blow her up arouses a great deal of public sympathy which she doesn't deserve. I think it takes away the spotlight from the real issues and sidetracks it onto violence.

Even if they had blown up the entire Tory party in Brighton there would have been another team to take its place, as bad if not worse. The only way to get rid of the Tories is to vote them out of office and build a society where Toryism is as dead and as long gone as a dinosaur.

But the Irish have been talking for maybe 300 years, and they are no nearer a solution. After 300 years I should think that the Irish people are pretty sick of banging their heads against a brick wall.

Deafness

The bombs and terrorism illustrate a complete deafness on the part of the ruling class, a failure to listen to and understand the problems of the Irish people. I can well sympathise with them having decided that after 300 years no-one is going to listen, and that the only way they can make them listen is to deliver bombs.

It is time that the ruling class - and I include in that Labour governments that have shown the same deaf ear to Ireland - listened to what the Irish are saying. There is going to be no military solution in Ireland. A solution has to be brought about by the Irish people themselves. Brit-

ish governments, of whatever shade, trying to solve it by pouring troops into Northern Ireland, are not going to achieve a peaceful settlement.

On Friday I went up to Wath Main and spoke to a group of Yorkshire pickets. In the trade union movement we've neglected the swapping of experiences and problems from one area to another.

And after the strike we've got to make sure that the contacts that we have made with our comrades in Wales, Scotland, Yorkshire, and Kent are continued.

Come good

For years the British trade union movement has laid dormant, and the shop stewards' movement has been butchered. We need to rebuild that shop stewards' movement. We need to rebuild contacts, not only within our own industry but across industries.

I think we've got to step up the picketing now, at the pits and at the power stations. We've also got to have more involvement from other trade unions. The broad spectrum of the trade union movement and the Labour Party has got to become physically involved, and not just in terms of finance and food.

There is the prospect now of the courts sequestrating the funds of the NUM or throwing Arthur Scargill in the nick. If they do that, the trade union movement and the Labour Party must come good on their promises of action.

I noticed recently a report in the newspaper that the High Court has ruled that the action of Nottinghamshire magistrates in imposing restrictions on pickets is quite lawful. What that must say to every other trade unionist and Labour Party member in the country is that we're entering a very dangerous age.

Back the miners



Only a shadow

It's four in the morning as the front door slams,
And out steps a figure of a shameless man,
He shuffles along hoping not to be heard,
Although deep inside he knows that's absurd.

Clutching his jacket in total fear,
Praying his lift will soon draw near,
Hairs on his neck still standing upright,
Knowing what he's doing is a hopeless plight.

Pride and respect have gone out the door,
As he climbs into the van and lies on the floor,
Waiting in silence for the engine to start,
To deafen the sound of his beating heart.

At first turn of the key the engine fails,
And now he's resorted to biting his nails,
Then suddenly the van starts to speed away,
The mind ticks over another day's pay.

Yet deep inside he knows what awaits,
They're waiting for him outside the pit gates,
To watch him disgrace all what he was taught,
For a golden rule which his fathers had fought.

Too late to regain all that he's lost,
Dignity, Friendship! Was it worth the cost,
As the cries of the men echo inside his head,
The feelings of which never before have been said.

Men in blue make sure this man gets in,
And today he thinks he's scored another win,
But these same men won't always be there,
So who will he turn to! He knows not where.

The day is drawing near to an end,
And the scab at his side is an only friend,
While we have to make do or borrow
He still has to go through it all tomorrow.

S. Piotrowski
Ollerton NUM

WILL YOU REMEMBER? (For Lisa, Richard and Ross)

What I wonder will your memories be,
And the effect of the strike on you three?
When you look back at your grass roots,
Will you remember your marching boots?
The miles that you walked come rain or shine
To fight for the future that was yours and mine?
Will you remember the songs and the cheers,
Or will you remember the tension and tears?
Will you remember how you played your part,
And how with pride you filled my heart?
Will you remember how I stood on a picket line
And how you had so little of my time?
Will you grow up feeling bitter,
Because you were left with a babysitter?
Or will you remember with affection and pride,
When mummy stood by daddy's side?
Will you remember how I felt so bad
Because I couldn't give you what others had?
Will you remember as you grow older,
How you cried upon my shoulder?
Or will you remember how we managed to laugh
While the Bobbies and Tories thought us daft?
Will you remember how you made me smile,
And made my struggle all the more worthwhile?
But will you remember the principles and traditions
I've taught
Or in vain have I fought?

ANN BURRELL

WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK

New issue, 20p plus postage from 8 Aubyn Square,
London SW15.

Back the miners



By Tony Dale, (NOLS NC member, personal capacity).

STUDENT Labour Clubs all over the country are reporting record membership figures, and interest in Socialist Organiser has also been high.

Labour students are setting up miners' support committees to raise money and collect food.

The National Organisation of Labour Students (NOLS) National Committee last weekend decided to call for all NOLS members to pay £1 a week to the NUM until the end of the strike.

It also passed a motion from Socialist Students in NOLS supporter Tony Dale calling for a wave of solidarity action in colleges should the leaders of the NUM be sent to jail or the NUM's funds be seized.

Durham University Students Union voted to back the miners. It was a clear shift in a traditionally right wing university. Durham Tories have written to the Attorney General demanding his department looks into a sale of UHT milk to the miners by the Union at cut price.

The Tories say it is an infringement of the Charity Laws which prevent student unions from handing over money or goods to any non-educational campaign unless students themselves benefit from it.

Student unions are suffering restrictions on their rights like the Tebbit Prior and King laws which weaken trade unions. Student unions are now financed by colleges and not by students, so as soon as a union takes action that college management objects to, they can fine the union — or simply withhold its money.

Law suits

Tory students are now waiting for their chance to take a union to court for making possibly illegal payments.

Many student unions have made dodgy payments and some have received notification that law suits have been filed against them. Whether or when the Tories do push for a legal test

Students back miners

case depends on the strength of both the student movement and the trade union movement.

Student activists and trade unionists need to be ready and willing to start up a campaign to defend any students union which gets taken to court.

Communist Party

But there are problems. At Manchester University, the Communist Party threw its efforts behind stopping a motion moved by Socialist Organiser supporters Paul Gamble and Helen McHale. The motion called for 7,000 copies of The Miner to be ordered and for the student union mini-bus to be made available for trips to picket lines and demonstrations.

The CP argued that The Miner wasn't suitable for students and that students weren't welcome on the picket lines. They were also concerned that buying The Miner was illegal.

Militant, the largest opposition to the Kinnockite/Stalinist leadership of the Labour students, have of course firmly supported the miners. But they have been pursuing counter-productive tactics in their struggle within NOLS. Militant decided to tape the NOLS National Committee and then to disrupt the NC because it voted against taping.

Militant

In our view it was irresponsible to walk out of the meeting to try to make it iniquitous.

Militant are right to demand that the committee's business be made public and they should be able to tape meetings if they want. But the matter had been brought up at the last meeting, the point had been made, it is of minor importance in itself and it is just one small propaganda gesture.

When Labour students have important things to do in the miners' strike, Militant's tactic only plays into the hands of the 'Democratic Left', the ruling group, who can brand the whole of the opposition as disruptive.

Notts coal down 30pc

John Bloxam reveals that power cuts could be a lot nearer than the government's official stories suggest.

THE government boasts that production and distribution from the Notts coalfield is running at over 400,000 tonnes of coal a week, and could even rise to 500,000 tonnes.

But Coal Board figures recently passed to Socialist Organiser show that Notts

colliery output for the whole week ending 22 September was only 305,650 tonnes — 25% less than the boasts and a 30% drop from the output registered in the week before the overtime ban came in. So much for 'normal' production!

The picture was confirmed



Coal for Llanwern is unloaded at Newport. Photo: Martin Shakeshaft, IFL

'A trumped-up charge'

Arthur Bough spoke to Jimmy McMillan, branch secretary, NUM, Hem Heath Colliery, about his trial, which is due to be heard in December.

"On July 26, we had a deputation from SOGAT and NGA in London. They brought us £4,000.

I went down to see them at about 8pm and was presented with the cheque and a commemorative plate from SOGAT.

After a chat we went down to the picket line. When we got out there was a disturbance already going on between the police and pickets.

There were two lads arrested and as night secretary I went to see them at Stoke Police Station to find out how they were being treated. There were no problems, they were OK.

A fortnight later I was taken from home by two plain clothes coppers and charged with "inciting

a person or persons unknown to use threatening or abusive behaviour, thereby liable to cause a breach of the peace."

A fortnight later I appeared before the magistrate. I pleaded not guilty. I asked to go to Crown Court but they refused on the grounds that the charge doesn't warrant it, despite the police putting up a barrister instead of a solicitor against me.

Loaded dice

So they fix a charge so it doesn't go to Crown Court in front of a jury of my peers. It's like playing a game of dice where the dice are loaded against you.

How can I incite persons when the trouble had already started? Why did it take them a fortnight to lift me? Especially as I'd actually appeared at the police station that same night!

I know my conscience is clear, particularly where violence is concerned, because I

have been on local radio to ask pickets not to intimidate or harass the families of working miners. I've also asked local radio not to divulge the addresses of either working or striking miners, because there have been cases where local miners have appeared in court, whose addresses were given, and the next morning had their cars and houses damaged.

I know it's a trumped up charge. I appear on December 19 and I think that without a jury trial, they will be determined to do me.

Whatever they do they will not get me to change my position. Even if they send me to jail I'll continue to support this strike wholeheartedly.

They've not put any conditions of bail on me, but if they ban me from the line, I'll disregard it anyway, because under their law I'm entitled to picket my own place of work.

Long live the NUM!"

Women's picket

By Jill Mountford

THE first mass women's picket organised in the Midlands took place on October 11, when 150 women gathered at Florence Colliery, North Staffs.

The picket was made up of miners' wives, women trade unionists, and various women's groups from around the Midlands.

The fun began around 9pm when the 150 women descended on the picket line armed with 'A woman's place is on the picket line' song sheets, candles, streamers and bags of enthusiasm. The all-male police presence, who have seen little action in this area, were at first slightly bemused at the sight of the women, but soon called on a couple of dozen women PCs to handle them.

Florence Colliery has a big problem with scabs, but this, made the women only more determined.

The non-stop singing and jeering turned three scabs back, but much more than that, the whole atmosphere of the evening generated vast quantities of energy, confidence and determination.

For a lot of women it was their first time on the picket line. Of course the scab-herders lived up to their reputation as bullies, strike-breakers and wizards of improvisation, making up rules and regulations on the spot.

As a grand finale, the 150 women joined together to form 'The Miners' Strike Conga' and danced and sang around the main road to the pit. The police found this 'intimidating', and it threw their strategy into complete panic. But for the women it finished the evening off just right.

I think it is fair to say that the party atmosphere of the picket and the solidarity shown is a lesson well learned from our sisters of Greenham Common.

Labour campaign for the miners

tempt of the High Court allegedly committed by the President of the National Union of Mineworkers.

In a covering letter, Ken Livingstone, secretary of the Mineworkers' Defence Committee, writes:

"Our aim is to present the High Court with the fact that the Greater London Council, Liverpool Council, Sheffield, Manchester and many other City Councils, together with the Executives of a number of trade unions and other organisations, along with the bulk of the Labour Party, are in 'contempt' of

it. "The resolution is being pressed in view of the failure of the Conference Arrangements Committee at the Blackpool Labour Party Conference to allow a similar (more moderately worded) resolution to be moved as an emergency by the Transport and General Workers' Union. We feel that it is our duty in this situation to underscore our solidarity with the National Union of Mineworkers."

Contact: Mineworkers' Defence Committee, c/o County Hall, London SE1.



THE MINeworkers' Defence Committee is circulating the following model resolution, based on one recently passed by Lewisham East Constituency Labour Party.

"This [...] repeats the statement by Arthur Scargill that the current industrial action of the National Union of Mineworkers is an official strike, and thereby repeats and affirms the con-

Socialist ORGANISER If they use anti union laws general strike

STOP STEEL Police and courts help the

JOIN THE PICKETS Help the miners win

Subscribe!

Get SOCIALIST ORGANISER each week delivered to your door by post!

RATES: £5 for 3 months; £8.50 for 6 months; and £16 for a year.

Name

Address

Please send me months' sub. I enclose £

To: Socialist Organiser, 28, Middle Lane, London N8 8PL.

Our history

Striking for freedom

Attacks by courts on union rights have been defeated before. Martin Thomas describes how.

Right: John Donaldson, chief of the National Industrial Relations Court in 1972



How to beat anti-union judges

IN July 1972 a mass strike wave freed five dockers who had been put into Pentonville Jail for picketing in contempt of court.

There had been a long build-up to this explosion.

Demonstrations and meetings throughout 1971 had protested at the Tory government's Industrial Relations Bill, but the major part of it came into law in December 1971.

The employers did not use the Industrial Relations Act during the miners' strike, in January and February 1972. The first — and, as it happened, a crucial — test case was the dockers' struggle over jobs.

Container firms had built depots outside the ports where containers could be stuffed and stripped by labour which did not have the relatively good conditions and protective agreements won by dockers. Dockers were picketing the depots to demand that the work be restored to registered dockworkers.

In March, Heaton's of St. Helens took the TGWU to court. After a show of defiance, the TGWU leadership collapsed and paid a £55,000 fine — on May Day, as it happened.

But the port shop stewards remained firm. In June three London dockers were served with an injunction to stop them picketing the Chobham Farm depot.

They defied the injunction. Other workers were ready to strike if they were jailed. The Court of Appeal cancelled the injunction.

It said there was not enough evidence that the named dockers were in fact picketing the depot. Meanwhile the three were appearing on television, defiantly on the picket line!

In a parallel to today's cases brought by scab miners, the Chobham Farm court action had been started by workers at the

depot. But the next, and decisive, court action was brought by employers, the owners of Midland Cold Store.

They got their injunction — and on Friday July 21 the five dockers were jailed for defying it.

Dockers struck nationwide. Lorry drivers who had differences with the dockers over the picketing of the container depots struck too, declaring that "as trade unionists, we must fight the Industrial Relations Act together".

Many container workers struck too. Most major newspapers were shut down. So were Heathrow Airport and many building sites, pits, factories and shipyards.

On the last day of the strikes, Wednesday July 26, a flying picket on the Kirkby Industrial Estate, near Liverpool, brought out several more factories. On Monday 24th, Liverpool Trades Council executive had called on all workers on Merseyside to strike until the five were freed.

The initiative came from the rank and file — but the official leadership was forced to move, too. The TUC called a one-day general strike for Friday 28th. Many workers would have stayed out longer than one day.

So the Tories backed down. They discovered the Official Solicitor and sent him to make an appeal on behalf of the dockers. They came out of Pentonville Jail in triumph on Wednesday 26th.

It was a great victory, but also a missed opportunity. If the strike movement had continued, it could have forced the repeal of the Industrial Relations Act, and maybe more.

But the Act remained. If the Tories had not been forced to the polls by the miners in February 1974 and voted out, in due course it could have been made usable again.



Dockers' demonstration in 1972

THE CASE OF THE SHREWSBURY SIX

IN 1973-4 the labour movement failed to free the Shrewsbury Six.

These were building workers arrested for alleged crimes during their national strike in the summer of 1972.

Flying pickets — a long-forgotten tactic — had been pioneered once again by the miners in their 1972 strike, and were used to great effect by the builders, going from site to site.

During the strike there were no arrests. Months later, in February 1973, 24 workers were arrested. The most serious charge brought against them was "conspiracy" to cause damage and intimidate.

The evidence was threadbare, but — as during the miners' strike, today — the Tories were much better able to get away with using ordinary criminal law against trade unionists than with action under special anti-union laws.

Class law

The law is class law, every bit of it: but many trade unionists only saw the specific anti-union laws as particular "bad laws".

Three of the 24 were given jail sentences in December 1973, and three more in February 1974. The first reaction of their union was to oppose all support for them.

George Smith, then general secretary of UCATT, declared that any action in support of the 24 would do the union "a great disservice".



The Labour government made the jailed pickets serve their full sentences.

At first only a small left-wing group, Workers Fight (a forerunner of Socialist Organiser) helped the workers to organise a defence campaign. The Communist Party's Morning Star "lost" material about the case sent to them by local CP members. (George Smith was a TUC "left", and the CP wanted good relations with him.)

The Shrewsbury case also showed what a determined minority could do.

Bit by bit, the campaign to defend the pickets won wider support. The TUC called a demonstration for them, and the

Labour Party conference demanded the release of those in jail.

But the Labour government elected in February 1974 made them serve their full terms.

The final chance to free the pickets came in November 1974, when the final appeal came up for the two longest-serving prisoners. Several building sites in Manchester struck, under the influence of Workers Fight, and the next day sites in Liverpool came out and called a mass meeting.

Communist Party members told the meeting — untruthfully — that the Manchester sites had gone back, and Liverpool was isolated. So Liverpool went back — and then Manchester was isolated.

Quebec

ON MAY 9 1972 the three main leaders of the trade unions in Quebec (the French-speaking province of Canada) were jailed.

There was a hitch because the leader of the jail guards' union urged his members to refuse to take the three men into prison. "The deputies (MPs) should be in their place", he said. But eventually the three were locked up.

They had been given a one-year sentence for contempt of court because they had defied a "cooling-off" order imposed on a government employees' strike for wages and conditions.

The strike had actually ended — after further legal action against it — at the time of the court decision. Perhaps the judges thought that the workers were on the run.

If so they were wrong. Spontaneous strikes rapidly spread. The day after the jailing, workers in the town of Sept-Îles besieged the local police station, blocked the main road, and took over the airport and radio station.

The strikers imposed price controls in local shops, and formed their own "police force" to patrol the streets and keep an eye on the official police.

Strikes and the beginnings of workers' control developed in other towns and cities, too.

As with the strike wave in Britain in July 1972, the Quebec general strike did not reach its full potential. It ended when the three jailed leaders withdrew their previous refusal to appeal and were released.

Australia

IN May 1968 — at the same time as the greatest general strike of all time was shaking France — Australia had one of the biggest strike waves in its history.

One million workers, all across Australia, struck to free Clarrie O'Shea. O'Shea, leader of the small Victoria Tramways Union, had been jailed for contempt of court because his union had repeatedly refused to pay fines imposed for unlawful strikes.

To get the government off the hook, an anonymous donor paid O'Shea's fines.



Vic Turner carried in triumph from Pentonville Jail

Advertisement

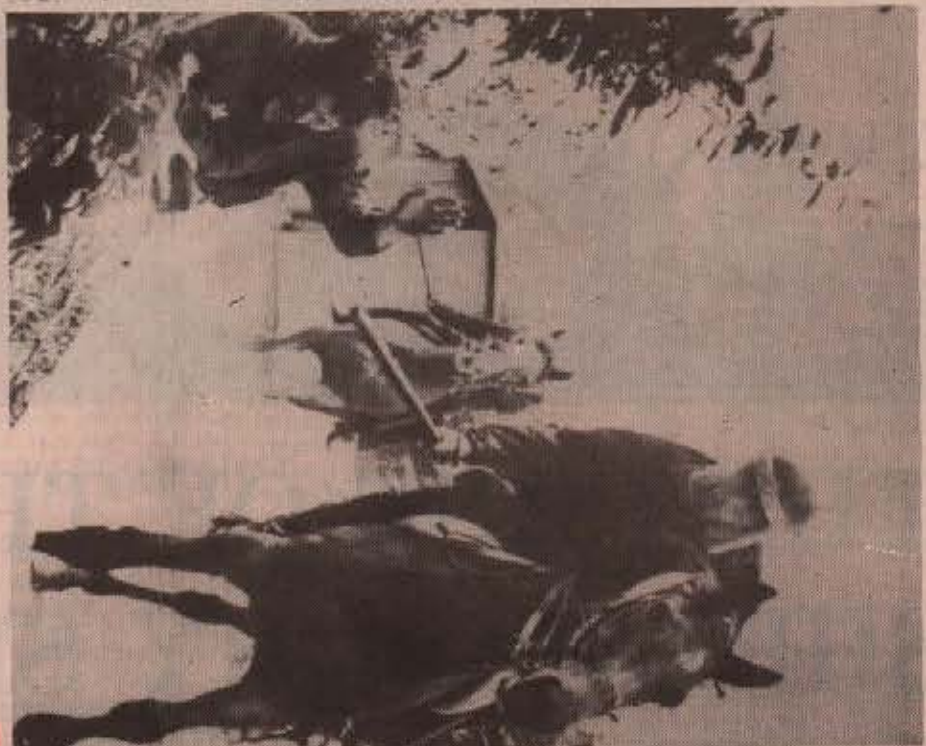
A collection of articles on the history and theory of the general strike.

Available from PO Box 135, London N1 0DD, price 20p plus postage.

Why we need a General Strike



A mounted policeman chases a picket at Orgreave. Photo: John Harris



Orgreave, June 1984. A mounted policeman attempts to train-charge Lesley Boulton from the Sheffield Miners' Support Group. Her 'crime' was going to help an injured miner. Photo: John Harris.

POLICE OUT OF THE GOALFIELDS

The Tories blame picket line violence on the miners, and say that the police are defending democracy and law and order. Police Federation leaders say that photos showing police brutality are faked or, at least, misleading. Here is the truth. The police are the mailed fist of the ruling class.

Socialist Organiser

POULICE VIOLENCE



JOHN HARRIS

June 1984: The battle of Orgreave. A riot policeman in full gear lies into a picket in a fit of wild frenzy. Photo: John Harris.





Whose rights, whose loyalty?

By Francis Prideaux

"THE Party must get selections and reselections under way". This was the National Executive Committee's unambiguous undertaking given to conference on October 1 by their official spokesperson, John Evans.

But although conference succeeded in defending its hard-won reselection procedure, it cannot be assumed that Constituency Labour Parties will now be left to make a free and open selection without interference.

In this respect there are clear lessons to be learnt from the previous round of reselections. Its many negative features included:

*Widespread adoption of "Shortlists of One" — even

when more than one candidate was validly nominated. From Pontefract to Dunfermline, candidates with significant support were crudely eliminated without any contest.

In West Bromwich West, Cllr. John Edwards was denied a hearing even though he received no less than eight valid Branch nominations.

*Failure of Party officials to inform CLPs that Shortlists of One are, in such circumstances, not just at variance with natural justice but also in conflict with the NEC's own guidelines. Some Party officials, indeed, were alleged to have actively opposed any idea of alternative candidates.

*Widespread failure to shortlist

women, black people, and manual workers and other disadvantaged groups. A CLP's Executive Committee has always got the right to propose such additions to the shortlist for its General Committee's consideration, and to challenge the unproven prejudice that such candidates are "unelectable".

*Failure by those unhappy with their sitting MP to get together in promoting alternative candidates and build enough support for them in time to win their selection. Comrades need not be alarmed by predictable screams of "caucusing", provided that

such discussions are purely "advisory" and are not themselves conducted in such a way as will exclude or alienate potential supporters.

*Allowing the NEC simply to prevent reselection occurring (as in Brent East) — and then to pin the blame for this on the CLP itself! The Euro results in Leeds and in Yorkshire South present fresh evidence that deselection of sitting candidates can lead to excellent results at the polls.

*Accepting the establishment's assertion that criticism of an MP should be based not on "ideological grounds" but on "constituency performance."

The establishment would like us all to accept that a Labour MP should be allowed to advocate nuclear weapons and incomes policy till s/he is blue in the face — provided that s/he answers constituents' letters and keeps an occasional "surgery". We must not swallow this kind of rubbish.

All those CLPs with sitting MPs must now be prepared for a series of sanctimonious lectures, not just from the Tory media but also from the Party's own establishment.

The words "rights" and "loyalty" will be widely heard. What the Party must decide is whose rights and what loyalty is most important. The "rights" of a single individual to pursue

his/her parliamentary career for yet another 5-year period?

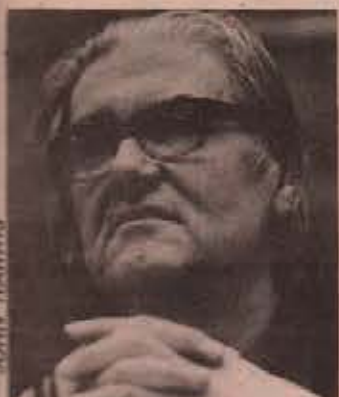
Or the rights of a whole CLP to freely choose the candidate who it thinks will represent the Labour interest with the closest perception and the greatest vigour?

As to "loyalty", there is always a higher loyalty to a sitting MP (however decent a person and however full of "experience"). It is the socialist loyalty to the Party's policies — and to all who require their full and speedy implementation.

The whole purpose of reselection is to assist the necessary "shift in the balance of wealth and power". We must not leave it rusting on the shelf. We owe it to all to use it to best effect.

Signs of recovery

By Vladimir Derer



Vladimir Derer (secretary of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, writing in a personal capacity) contributes to the discussion on Labour's Blackpool conference with an assessment critical both of the 'soft Left' and of the 'far Left' like Socialist Organiser.

DECISIONS at this year's Labour Party conference indicate that the Party is recovering from the panic into which it was thrown in the aftermath of the 1983 general election. Uncritical support for the present leadership is waning.

Conference disregarded the leadership's homilies on violence in general, and picket line violence in particular, and gave its overwhelming support to the NUM. It also threw out the NEC's Kinnock-supported proposals on reselection.

These decisions, as well as that on the police, do not necessarily mean that the Party's drift to the Right has been halted. The leadership's future pronouncements on the miners may turn out to be more cautious. Its basic position, however, remains unchanged.

As for reselection, Neil Kinnock has already indicated that he intends to press on with what he claims to be the extension of franchise in

the selection of parliamentary candidates.

Above all, conference rejected the proposals for this alleged extension of franchise largely because of the ineptness of the NEC's own proposal. The more sophisticated version of it (contained in the Bolton West/Selly Oak resolution) fell because of the rigidity with which the right wing trade union block votes were cast rather than because of lack of potential support for it.

The fact that conference is of several minds is shown by the subsequent rejection by conference of the NUM emergency resolution asking for more consultations and the defeat of the Composite resolution which unequivocally sought to uphold the existing procedure.

It was to be expected that after the Labour government's defeat in 1979 the demand for MPs' accounta-



bility would eventually come to be felt as less urgent. Memories of Labour's record in office were bound to fade. With the defeat of the Tory government as the overriding priority, a climate of opinion has been created within which abandoning Labour's socialist objectives has become "acceptable".

Thus from recent statements by leading members of the PLP it is clear that moves to undermine the Party's commitment to public ownership are underway.

The current campaign to "extend the franchise" for the reselection of MPs is another symptom of this trend to water down Labour's policy commitments. Unfortunately a large section of the Party and above all the unions regard purely formal participation as a sufficient basis for a genuine democratic process. They do not see mandatory reselection and the Electoral College as mechanisms vital for ensuring accountability.

Of course in an ideal world all Party members would directly participate in internal Party elections. In the real world, however, only a relatively small proportion of the membership is prepared (or able) to be as active as to attend even one extra monthly meeting.

But as things are now the General Committees of CLPs are the only rank and file bodies which — at their monthly meetings — can systematically monitor an MP's parliamentary performance.

Should the function of reselection be taken from the General Committees, MPs would cease to be accountable to any body but themselves. Once again they would be free to pursue policies contrary to the Party's programme and to conference decisions.

The enthusiasm shown for "one member one vote" by those who fought tooth and nail against mandatory reselection and the Electoral College should make this obvious.

The fact, however, that a section of the Party which originally supported democratic reforms — "the soft Left" — has joined in this attempt to neuter the reforms they helped to promote is symptomatic of the current trend to weaken the Party's commitment to socialism.

Like CLPD, the soft left organised in the Labour Coordinating Committee and Clause 4 correctly perceived that once mandatory reselection

and the Electoral College had been won, continued internal conflict would damage Labour's electoral prospects. But whereas CLPD held that so far as the immediate future was concerned limited progress could be made, and this only provided internal conflicts were contained within Party channels, the LCC called for an immediate halt to any further reforms.

The difference of opinion was of little practical importance at the time because even slow advance turned out to be impossible.

Caution

LCC's caution, however, proved to have other sources than just the need for retrenchment. This is revealed in the LCC's recent pamphlet 'Reconstruction — How the Labour Party and the Left can Win'.

According to its authors the struggle for reselection and the Electoral College were never really necessary. The Left could have achieved more influence had it become the standard bearer in turning the Party "outwards".

It is of course also important, as the authors argue, to emphasise the urgent need for the Party to take account both of changes in the occupational structure and the growing political consciousness among disadvantaged sections of the population, such as women and blacks. This need, and the Party's reorientation towards "cam-

paigning" however cannot take the place of the equally urgent need to fight against the forces which seek to weaken the Party's commitment to socialist policies.

The Left cannot dodge this fight without at the same time abandoning socialist objectives. It can only seek to minimise its damaging consequences.

Thus any satisfaction from the fact that the Right has failed to make progress at conference must be tempered by the knowledge that this happened largely because of the upsurge of sympathy for the miners and the ineptitude of the NEC.

The Right's advance is only temporarily checked. It is essential that the Left now mounts a major campaign in favour of the principle of accountability.

It was not just the defection of the "soft Left", however, which made the Right's advance possible. The Bennite and "far Left" also prepared the ground for it.

Firstly by marginalising itself within the Party when it misjudged the Party's mood following the setting up of the Electoral College. Secondly by ceasing to regard constitutional issues as being central to political class struggle.

Support for the economic struggles of the working class and the defence of municipal authorities cannot replace systematic efforts to transform the Labour Party into a socialist one.





Militant leaders (from left) Tony Mulhearn, Peter Taaffe, Tony Saunois, Ted Grant and Pat Wall, with Les Huckfield (third from left)

JOIN THE FIGHT

Militant: not a Marxist voice

ONE of the big battles of this year's Labour Party conference was over the setting up of Black Sections. The Labour Party machine, resolutely opposed to black sections, was backed up by the Militant tendency.

Militant went so far as to second the motion against black sections put in by the right wing electricians' union, the EETPU.

Of course, Militant's reasoning is different to the reasoning of Labour leaders like Stan Orme and Gerald Kaufman. For the Labour leadership, an influx of new, radical people determined to change the priorities and way of operating of the Labour Party, is a threat to their entrenched power.

For Militant, black self-organisation, including in the Labour Party is divisive and leads black people away from the fight for socialism.

Denying rights

But the end result was not an argument about the best way to fight racism, but Militant using their voice and their votes to help deny black people in the Labour Party a basic democratic right — the right to organise.

And that is typical of the Militant tendency. Left-wing sounding arguments — an insistence on workers' unity, the need for socialist policies — are used in practice with a very right wing effect.

It's the same on Ireland — 'workers' unity' means, for Militant, condemning the just struggle of the Republican movement and echoing the Tory press on 'terrorism'. Or on the Middle East — 'a socialist answer' means refusing to

This week, the Militant tendency is holding a rally at the Wembley Conference Centre to commemorate 20 years since the newspaper first appeared. Militant claims to be the 'Marxist voice of the Labour Party' and to offer a radical socialist alternative to the existing policies of the Labour Party. But does it? Clive Bradley looks at the issues

recognise the democratic right of the Palestinians to choose their own representatives — the PLO.

Self organisation

Militant's apparently left wing line on workers' unity has meant opposing the self-organisation of women, or of lesbian and gay people (their general arguments even contradict the work they themselves have done in Labour Party women's sections — why aren't those 'divisive' too?)

They opposed gay rights motions in the Labour Party Young Socialists for ten years, putting themselves to the right of the Young Liberals on this.

And this explains the cosy relationship Militant has had with the Labour Party bureaucracy and still has, despite the token expulsion of five Editorial Board members.

Rallies

Even at the height of the witch-hunt Militant contented itself with rallies and propaganda for their 'bold socialist programme'.

They refused to get involved with those constituency activists — organised in Labour Against the Witch-hunt — who wanted to seriously fight the expulsions. Often they found themselves to the right of ordinary Labour Party members.

General argument for a bold socialist programme is good and necessary, but it is not the same as tackling the Labour Party leadership on the sharp issues of the day. In fact Militant panders and accommodate to the prejudices many working class people have, and which the bureaucracy relies upon. Sometimes Militant can be forced to change their minds — as they have to a large extent over the issue of lesbian and gay rights. But their basic impulse is not to fight those prejudices.

In place of a fight Militant talk blandly about 'socialism'. So when the Tory government went to war against Argentina, and the bulk of the Labour leadership lined up behind them, Militant informed us sagely that it was a waste of time to call for the return of the fleet, and refused to participate in the campaign against the war. Instead Militant talked about a socialist federation of Britain, Argentina and the Falklands.

That sort of socialism has no real meaning at all. In fact, Militant's 'bold socialist programme' is a far cry from the programme fought for by Lenin and Trotsky, whom Militant claim to follow. What Militant's programme boils down to is a whole series of reforms (many of which are good ones and should be fought for) with a call for mass nationalisation tagged on

as the 'way to get them'.

The programme to 'nationalise the top 200 or so monopolies' is really only a radical version of the existing programme of the Labour left. Militant put forward a strategy for socialism through Parliament, using the existing capitalist state by introducing an Enabling Act. Mass action is only a back up to what the MPs do.

And even when Militant warn of the possibility of ruling class resistance, they go on to dismiss it by insisting that it is possible to get socialism peacefully.

Workers' power

The programme of Lenin and Trotsky, on the other hand, focuses on the mass action of the working class. It is a programme to establish direct workers' control by fighting for it, not by Parliamentary edict — and the direct power of workers' councils. Its aim is to overthrow the existing capitalist state and replace it with a new one, by building on the actual struggles of workers now and trying to develop them in a revolutionary direction.

And Lenin and Trotsky realised that the ruling class will always resist any threat to their power with violence. The current police action in the coalfields gives us a taste of what the ruling class might do if their whole position were threatened.

Winning workers' power — carrying out a socialist revolution — means developing workers' struggles now, like the miners' strike, and uniting all sections of the oppressed and dispossessed in society — drawing them into the labour movement and radically shaking up and transforming that movement.

The appearance of Women Against Pit Closures, the support of black people for the miners, and the work done by lesbians and gay men in support of the miners, shows what can be done. Women's sections and black sections in the labour movement are part of that fight.

And a serious battle against nationalism and pro-imperialist ideas in the labour movement is vital as well. It need not be done in a ranting or sectarian way, but Militant have barely done it at all.

SCIENCE

Science, war and peace

Les Hearn looks at the interaction of "pure" science, war and peace in the life of Sir Martin Ryle, Astronomer Royal and CND supporter, who died last Sunday.

RADIO-waves are an illustration of the power of science. They were predicted by pure theory before they were discovered.

One hundred and eleven years ago, Clerk Maxwell proposed his famous theory that the electric and magnetic forces, hitherto thought to be separate, were aspects of each other, and that the combined electro-magnetic force was transmitted by means of light rays. Furthermore, he showed there must exist a whole spectrum of electromagnetic radiation of which visible light was just one type. These include ultra-violet, heat, x-rays and radio-waves, the latter discovered some 14 years later by Heinrich Hertz.

Radio-astronomy was born 60 years after Maxwell's breakthrough when Karl Jansky detected a "cosmic hiss" of radio-waves, but the infant science was the preserve of just one amateur, Grote Reber, until 1946.

Then several war scientists, including Martin Ryle, turned their attention to the new discipline.

Ryle had made an important contribution to the war effort, but had resolved never again to put his science at the service of war and was looking for a field with no possible military value.

Ryle had been working on another application of radio-waves — radar for night-fighters trying to detect German bombers.

When the Germans cottoned on to radar, they started trying to jam English radar. On one occasion, when anti-aircraft radars had been jammed, the enemy was found to be...the Sun!

A large solar flare and group of sunspots had given out a burst of radiowaves which "dazzled" the radar receivers.

Ryle started his post-war research on this phenomenon.

Ryle soon ran into a problem — the resolving power of his "telescope", the arrays of aerials that picked up the radio-waves, was too poor.

For a radio-telescope to have equal resolving power to the human eye, it would have to be several kilometres across, and, to equal the largest light telescopes, it would need to be as wide as the Earth.

This is because the wavelengths of radiowaves are some ten million times greater than

those of visible light.

However, Ryle and others soon realised that small details could be resolved by having just two aerials at the right distance apart. The picture would be sharp but rather dim since many waves would be received.

Ryle developed the technique of Aperture Synthesis in which the aperture between the two outer aerials was "filled in" with a few more intermediate aerials and a computer was used to enhance the picture.

Radioastronomers were soon producing maps of radio sources of unparalleled beauty and detail. It was soon recognised that most radio sources were outside our galaxy; for example, the intense source in Cygnus is some 1000 million light years away (its radio-waves set out when life on Earth was emerging onto land).

The multitude of such radio sources was recognised as strong confirmation of the Big Bang theory of the origin of the universe, and radioastronomy made possible the discovery of pulsars, incredibly dense neutron stars, and quasars distant objects pouring out a seemingly impossible amount of energy.



A radio-map of a super-nova remnant (an exploded star) in Cassiopeia made using aperture synthesis with a telescope of width 300 metres.

In 1972, Ryle was appointed Astronomer Royal. At the same time he developed a serious illness.

He came to realise that radio-astronomy was, in fact, a servant of militarism through its encouragement of better radar and sonar techniques, and this led him towards the peace movement. He wrote a pamphlet "Towards a Nuclear Holocaust".

He also campaigned against nuclear power ("Is There a Case for Nuclear Power?") and for alternative energy sources and more rational use of conventional energy resources.

His answer to those who mystify with science and to those who react by rejecting science was stated in "Towards a Nuclear Holocaust":

"We must ensure that the public is educated independently of official propaganda."

Socialist Organiser

WHEN we started our current drive to increase Socialist Organiser sales, some comrades said: "You're living in the past. You could sell dozens of papers on the streets and on the estates in the early '70s, but things are different now".

Experience so far seems to show that the real difference is the other way round. Yes, on a sober estimate industrial organisation and industrial militancy today are still lower than before the downturn of the mid '70s. But paper sales are easier. The minority interested in socialist politics is

bigger.

With last week's headline, "Scargill is right", one comrade sold 17 papers in an hour at Highbury Corner. Another comrade from the Islington group decided to do an extra hour's sale there the following day, and shifted ten. Total, 27.

Meanwhile, the estate sales in Islington, Southwark and Manchester are continuing, and so are the sales at colleges — ten sold at Keele University last week, and sufficient names collected to start a Socialist Organiser student society.



International News



Tamil building gutted in 1983 pogroms

Tamil agony

SRI LANKA was much in the news a month or two ago for the heavy repression being meted out to the oppressed Tamil people. The state and the government of JR Jayawardene are dominated by the Sinhalese, with a growing tradition of racism and pogroms towards the Tamil population.

After a new military administration came into effect in the mainly Tamil northern area, savage assaults were carried out by state goon squads. In one week over 100 civilians were killed and over 200 injured. The armed forces were given new powers, extending those they already have under the draconian

Prevention of Terrorism Act (which combines the worst aspects of both the British and South African acts). The precise number of casualties now is not known, but runs into hundreds of dead.

The Tamil Tiger guerrilla organisation claims considerable success in resistance. In September their official bulletin, 'Voice of the Tigers' claimed that a recent guerrilla offensive had killed nearly 70 military and police personnel.

But the repression has continued. One spokesperson for the recently re-legalised Nava Sama Samaja Party (NSSP) is

quoted in the British 'Militant' (with whom the NSSP is associated) as saying that in the mainly Tamil northern area of the island, it is a 'luxury to be alive'. According to 'Militant', the NSSP waged a major campaign, winning wide support, to force the government to lift the ban on their party.

The Sri Lankan state, which has developed institutionalised Sinhala racism that gives effective official backing to anti-Tamil pogroms, has justified its brutal actions as a campaign against 'terrorism'. In fact the anti-Tamil racism of the state predates the guerrilla campaign,

which was a response to it. And the regimes of the past fifteen or so years in particular have all carried out brutal acts of repression. The crushing of an uprising of Sinhala youth in 1971 left 8,000 dead. And a general strike in July 1980 was brutally suppressed by the security forces; following it the government sacked no less than 80,000 workers.

The labour movement internationally should commit itself to opposing the brutal, 'democratic' dictatorship of Jayawardene, and to support for the oppressed Tamils and the Sri Lankan workers' movement.



Deng

By Gerry Bates

THE West likes the post-Mao Deng regime in China. Deng has, on the whole, had a very good press in the last few years. There is no outcry about violations of human rights in Deng's China.

But then there isn't much in the press these days either

China: the truth about repression

about the Butcher Pol Pot, the Hitler of Kampuchea, whose Khmer Rouge regime killed millions of Kampuchians between 1975 and 1979. Pol Pot is now a 'guerrilla leader' fighting the Vietnamese who ousted him five years ago.

For, of course, both Pol Pot and Deng are allies of the West against the USSR and Vietnam. The same indulgence is now extended to the Western 'Communist' allies as has long been on offer to the many bloody right wing dictators around the world who, though covered in blood, stood with the righteous 'in the front line against godless communism'.

The grim facts about Deng's 'reforming' regime are contained in a new report by Amnesty International on human rights in China.

The report cites evidence that there are mass executions, that political prisoners are held for years without trial or after summary conviction and that

there is widespread ill-treatment of prisoners.

Non-violent dissent has been suppressed in China. Political activists are convicted of 'counter-revolutionary offences' and sentenced to 10 or 15 years in prison.

Workers and students active in the 'democracy movement' that emerged in China in 1978 have been imprisoned. So have Roman Catholic priests loyal to the Vatican and Tibetans accused of supporting nationalist groups.

Prisoners

Political prisoners have been held for years without charge or trial, sent to labour camps for 're-education through labour'. Some prisoners are reported to have been held in solitary confinement, manacled day and night for days or weeks, beaten or made to stand without moving for 24 hours without food.

Egypt and Jordan are both major allies of Iraq in the Gulf War.

Official reconciliation is actually part of an attempt to develop a 'moderate' Arab alliance — i.e. one allied very closely to the US — to the mutual benefit of local and imperialist capital. Meanwhile, at home, Mubarak has turned on opposition forces. Following the workers' resistance to food price increases last month the government has arrested seven members of the legal left-wing Progressive Assembly of National Unionists. They are the first arrests of members of a legal party since the gerrymandered elections last May.

EGYPT is slowly returning to the Arab fold. After being readmitted to the Islamic Congress earlier this year, Egypt received official diplomatic recognition by Jordan at the end of September. Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak swiftly followed this up with a state visit to Jordan.

It was, on the face of it, quite a historic event. The other Arab states broke off diplomatic relations with Egypt after president Sadat signed a peace treaty with Israel in 1979. In fact commercial links between Egypt and Jordan — and other Arab states — have remained strong. The Egyptian embassy in Jordan's capital, Amman, was never closed. And

**Egypt:
back in
the fold**

Letter

Walesa is not our friend



Walesa

WHILST I agree with the headline, sub-headline and much of the content of John O'Mahony's article in SO 200 on Solidarnosc, I think that the article was unnecessarily generous to Lech Walesa.

It says that Walesa is the equivalent of a Tom Mann, Jim Larkin, AJ Cook or Arthur Scargill. No. He is, at best, the equivalent of Jimmy Thomas and the right wing of the TUC General Council in 1926, or of Len Murray.

Throughout the existence of Solidarnosc we have carried articles in the paper which showed Walesa to be clearly to the right of the rank and file, to be an influence holding the movement back. It was Walesa's politics, in essence the same right wing politics as Murray or Thomas, that led him to call a halt to the Polish workers' moves against the Stalinist state — just as the TUC in 1926 called a halt.

Activists

In Poland hundreds of union activists have been imprisoned, or are on the run. Yet Walesa was first kept under house arrest, rather than in prison, and is now virtually a public personality in Poland, able to go about saying things for which most people would be locked up.

The reason is that the Stalinists, like the bourgeoisie, recognise the usefulness of trade union bureaucrats who are able to act as a safety valve to hold back the working class. Just like the Catholic Church, which is allowed an amount of freedom, Walesa may prove useful to the Stalinists again in the next period of workers' unrest.

This brings me to a much wider criticism of the article. It argues against the attitude of 'my enemy's enemy is my friend', but in one way seems to adopt that position itself.

Walesa is the enemy of the Stalinists who are our enemy, therefore Walesa is our friend. This is no more true than that Chiang Kai-shek was the friend of the working class, because he opposed imperialism.

It is just as important to retain

our belief in the need for Trotskyist parties and a Trotskyist programme in the Stalinist states as it is for any capitalist country. It is just as vital to oppose the petit-bourgeois politics of Walesa as it is to oppose the petit-bourgeois politics of the Sandinistas.

After all, if we can 'understand' 'my enemy's enemy is my friend' being the reason for Walesa's bad politics then we can hardly criticise Castro or the Sandinistas for lining up with the Stalinists.

I also want to take up the point about the Polish working class deciding 'in reaction against Stalinism' to restore capitalism. The whole way this is posed is unrealistic.

In such a situation there would be no unanimous view of the working class. There would be a section of the working class opposed to restoration and prepared to take up arms against it.

If only one million of Solidarnosc's ten million members took up such a position I would unreservedly be on the side of that one million, just as I am unreservedly on the side of the minority of Notts miners on strike, and their use of whatever force is needed against the scabs.

Moreover, if civil war broke out in Poland against the restoration of capitalism I would be in favour of a united front between the working class opposing the counter-revolution and the bureaucracy, on condition that the workers maintained their independence.

Fortunately, Solidarnosc is not advocating a return to capitalism. Fortunately Solidarnosc is supporting the miners.

That is what the article should have based its argument on, without bringing in any question of defending or justifying the reactionary politics of Walesa, or the possibility of Solidarnosc advocating a capitalist restoration.

Yours comradely,
ARTHUR BOUGH
Stoke

Wei Jingsheng, editor of a banned unofficial magazine, has been held in solitary confinement since his trial in 1979; he is allowed out for exercise only once a month...

He became mentally disturbed as a result.

Information

Amnesty International does not have enough information to estimate the number of political prisoners now held in Chinese prisons and labour camps, but former inmates say there are political prisoners in most of the country's penal institutions.

Mass executions — some of them in public — began with the launching of a nation-wide anti-crime campaign in August 1983. 44 crimes are now punishable by death in the People's Republic of China. These include 'counter-revolutionary offences', theft, embezzlement, molesting women and pimping.

Defendants can be brought to trial without being given a copy of the indictment first. Summary proceedings are used. Appeal procedures have been cut short and executions have been carried out within six days of the alleged offence. There is no recognition — either in law or in practice — of the right to be presumed innocent before being proved guilty in a court of law.

*China: Violations of Human Rights is available from Amnesty International, 5 Roberts Place, (off Bowling Green Lane), London EC1R 0EJ, price £3 plus 50p p&p.

Gay's the Word is raided again

Gay's the Word bookshop in London has been raided again by Customs and Excise. 132 titles were seized last week, and 22 were confiscated earlier this year.

Last week's raid totalled over 2,000 items and could raise the cost of challenging the seizures to £30,000.

The new seizures which include works by Gore Vidal and Jean-Paul Sartre, are blatant harassment of the bookshop. Many of the titles are freely available elsewhere, and the claim that any of them are pornographic is absurd.



Customs and Excise — who have already put one gay bookshop out of business — are trying to restrict the freedom of lesbians and gay men to sell and buy literature as they please.

The campaign organised earlier this year will obviously be set up.

The shop continues to be open for business. Cheques and postal orders for the defence campaign can be sent to: Defend Gay's The Word, 38 Mount Pleasant, London WC1X 0AP.

Nursing hive off

By Mary Ireson

THE last couple of years have seen a mushroom growth of private nursing homes.

Encouraged by the fact that the Department of Health and Social Security are prepared to pay up to £180 per week to keep an old person in one of these homes, more and more unscrupulous profiteers and entrepreneurs are attempting to cash in.

The Tories' policy of 'get on your bike and find work' has meant that more old people have been left to cope on their own as their children have moved away to find work, or not found work at all.

Also, the DHSS refuse to pay married women any allowance to look after an elderly person, and community care (much lauded by the Tories) now often means a bath once a fortnight by a harassed district nurse, only three meals-on-wheels a week, and three hours of home help.

It is not surprising that many elderly people would prefer to be in a home.

However, council-run homes are being closed down and people are advised to go to a private home.

Usually the home owners start with good intentions. All the residents to have their own rooms, a good nurse-to-patient ratio, qualified nurses on duty 24 hours a day, etc.

However, desire for profit usually means that things slowly slip down hill — three old people sharing a room; nursing auxiliaries left in charge; and bed linen left unchanged.

Many of the nursing staff will be employed on a casual basis, with cash in hand being the usual rule. Thus nurses can be sacked at a moment's notice and organising in a union is very unusual.

There is a real threat to the National Health Service. Already, in East Sussex, there are plans to run down all geriatric wards.

All elderly people will be cared for in the community. Only those acutely ill will be admitted to hospital.

Any resident of a nursing home who becomes chronically ill — for example, after a stroke — will be discharged from hospital back to the home.

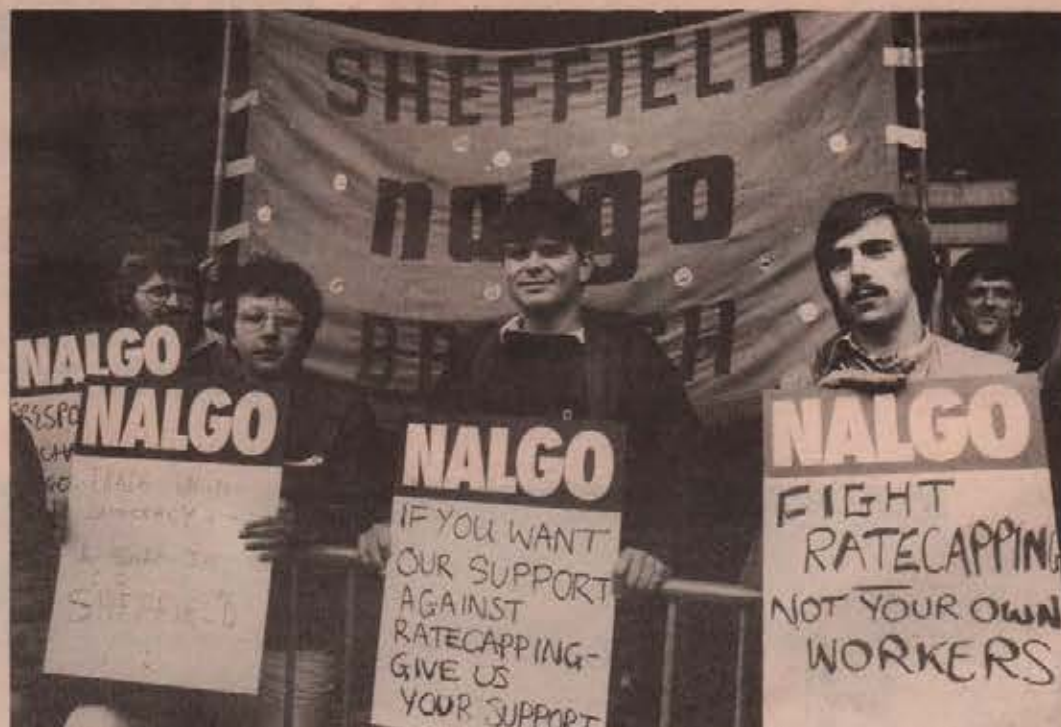
And this is where the catch is. Most residents of homes are fairly fit when first admitted. However, as time goes on, and they get older, they obviously require more nursing care. This is precisely what home owners cannot afford to do properly. They cannot afford to employ more staff who are properly trained and still make a profit.

Gradually the care given to the residents will deteriorate.

Alternatively, the home can be just shut down. The owners will have made their profits — but where will that leave the residents?

We must be pushing for more council-run homes for the elderly; so that the fees from the DHSS do not pass into the hands of greedy home owners.

If we don't, we could soon find the whole of geriatric care in the hands of the private sector, with just the unprofitable parts in the NHS.



Sheffield NALGO strikers lobby Labour Party conference. Photo: John Smith, IFL.

Where was the Left?

Ann Crowder reports on the NALGO conference

name but a few.

There is talk of a break-away union, with the right wing leading the break. We may be glad to lose some of these members, but others may leave, not having a full understanding of the issues and merely listening to the voice of the mass media.

NALGO stewards need to take the issues, campaigns and strategies adopted by annual conference into the workplaces, to stop the Tories destroying our union from within and without.

In NALGO we haven't just got a Tory government destroying unions from the outside, we have Tories within the union, Tory shop stewards, Tory branch officers, Tory district officers, and Tory NEC members — all intent on dividing the union and immobilise it.

The right wing have won far too many arguments amongst the members. The Left should organise now, but not only to get good sound-

ing motions passed, but to get NALGO members active supporters of these motions.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the press have used every opportunity to whip up hysteria amongst the NALGO rank and file against the NUM and against trade unionism itself.

The move for the conference had clearly been orchestrated by the right wing in NALGO (shaming the left into insignificance) and was widely reported by the press.

Some right wingers had gone round telling members of a 10p compulsory levy to be imposed on them, and the Sunday before conference, leading newspapers told of how the left wing had stampeded the members into a compulsory levy.

This was not merely a distortion, but an out-and-out lie.

Further press and media coverage only heightened hostility to support for the NUM. It was brilliantly organised by the active Conservative Trade Unionists within NALGO, and so begged the question where was the Broad Left?

AN attempt to stop NALGO paying anything towards the miners' strike was defeated last week.

At a special conference on Wednesday, 10th, a motion was put to stop any further donations to the NUM from NALGO's national fund until a ballot of the membership takes place.

The motion, which required a two-thirds majority, was not carried at the conference, yet the NEC may still be reluctant to give any more money to the miners, given the closeness of the vote.

This would not only be unfortunate but also a great step back, both in terms of support for the NUM, but also in NALGO's own campaigns and strategies for the future.

There are so many important battles in the immediate future for NALGO, rate-capping of local authorities, privatisation, not only in hospitals but in local government, in gas, and in electricity, cutbacks in public spending and the abolition of the Metropolitan Counties to

Setback in DHSS strike

By Steve Battlemuch

In my view dole office workers should have refused to cooperate with management's emergency procedures and refused to write out giro by hand.

That proposal was lost in a consultation exercise, although there are doubts about how well that consultation exercise was carried out.

The NEC did vote to look into escalation of industrial action in other DHSS offices, on a selective basis. The details of this are yet to be worked out.

The Broad Left in CPSA must get its act together very soon so as to avoid a substantial defeat. The DHSS Section Executive Committee of CPSA must now call a massive escalation in the DHSS network in support of Newcastle. Members should also be asked to stop doing the extra work caused by the strike, previously sanctioned by CPSA.

The fiasco of this strike again proves that selective strike action cannot win a major dispute like this. Un-

THE strike by 400 CPSA members at Newcastle and Washington computer centres over pay cuts and new shift rotas, suffered a severe setback last Thursday, 11th, when the Broad Left-dominated National Executive Committee of CPSA voted by 15 to 8 not to call out CPSA members in Reading or Livingstone computer centres, who had previously voted to strike in support of the Newcastle workers.

The strike desperately needed escalating and the strikers have been demanding that the other computer centres be brought out.

Many in CPSA believed the NEC, with a massive Broad Left majority, would surely rubber-stamp the decision of Reading and Livingstone workers to join the strike.

Their refusal to do so must be condemned.

However, the issue is not clear cut. To have brought Reading and Livingstone computer centres out would mean dole office workers writing out by hand 1½ million giro a week. Dole office workers are, quite justifiably, hostile to that.

fortunately, the strike also shows the inadequacy of the Broad Left leadership of CPSA. Only the hard left in the Broad Left, those in and around the Socialist Caucus, have consistently supported calls for escalation and non-compliance with emergency procedures in order to win the dispute.

This issue, amongst others, will be hotly debated at the CPSA Broad Left conference in Manchester on November 3-4. All militants in CPSA should attend and make their feelings known.

PLASTIC BULLETS

LAST Thursday, October 11, the European Parliament voted by 150 to 29 for an immediate ban on plastic bullets in Northern Ireland.

The British Tories and Ian Paisley could not get even the most conservative Euro-MPs from other countries to vote with them against the motion from Southern Ireland Fianna Fail members.

Car workers revolt

By Jim Denham

CARWORKERS have suffered more than most during employers' "counter-revolution" of the last seven or eight years.

Wages, conditions and union organisation were all systematically attacked by confident aggressive management — and nowhere more so than at nationalised British Leyland under late MacGregor's protégé, Michael Edwards.

Now carworkers seem set to regain some of the lost ground. Vauxhall workers have been on all-out strike since October 9, when AUEW members at Ellesmere Port voted by a show of hands to walk out in support of the national wage claim. They were joined by the 7,500 manual workers (both AUEW and TGWU) at Luton and shortly afterwards by TGWU members at Ellesmere Port.

Pickets from Luton closed down the nearby Toddington plant and track workers at the Dunstable, Bedford plant came out despite a plant vote against the strike, forcing a complete stoppage.

The company's offer is a 7½% "package deal" which involves the consolidation of existing bonuses; breaking down demarcation lines between craft and manual workers; and the introduction of extensive new technology.

Meanwhile Jaguar workers have voted to reject the newly privatised company's "21% over two years" package. Shop stewards pointed out that the offer includes consolidation of a £3.75 bonus already earned and is in fact, worth only around 7% a year in new money.

The claim is for £25 a week, the board over 12 months. A shop steward at Jaguar Browns Lane plant in Coventry told us that the vote to back the stewards' rejection of the deal was overwhelming.

"The only slightly worrying aspect of it is that the call for rejection was presented more as a way to strengthen our hand in negotiations, rather than as a mandate for strike action. I think we can get a strike but it's going to need more preparation at shop floor level."

On October 12, the Austin Rover Joint Negotiating Committee submitted a £22 across the board pay claim. In addition they are demanding 2.5% days holiday per year, one hour reduction in the working week, sick pay from the first day off, early retirement at 55, lay-off pay at grade rate for all external lay-offs, a renegotiated grading structure and a complete reorganisation of the bonus scheme.

The company's response to the claim was to offer a two-year deal working out at around 4.7% per year in new money.

Austin Rover boss Harold Musgrove described the claim as "almost irresponsible". In fact the claim, good though it is, scarcely begins to claw back the earning power that BL workers have lost over the past ten years.

Austin Rover workers should prepare to come out from the settlement date of November 1 (in past years negotiations have often dragged on into the new year) and to link up with workers at Vauxhall, and, of course, the miners.



Police on Monday's mass picket. Photo: Stefano Cagnoni (IFL)

Barking pickets

STRIKING cleaners at Barking Hospital have called for a renewed effort to support their pickets. They want support especially on Tuesdays from 6 am and on Sundays.

Last Monday, 16th, the strikers called a mass picket. Scab cleaners were paid a £5 bonus for crossing the picket line in their boarded-up coach.

Support on the picket line included some of the women occupying the South London Hospital for Women and some South Wales miners, as well as workers from other London Hospitals.

The industrial tribunals, where strikers are claiming unfair dismissal, have been postponed to allow the union time to prepare its case.

Meanwhile the hospital is not being cleaned properly. Scabs are not staying on the job and Crothalls are still having to recruit workers from Essex and East Anglia to do the job.

Reports of unhygienic conditions in the hospital, including cockroaches crawling over newborn babies, have resulted in patients opting for other hospitals. Jo Richardson, the local MP, is to ask a question in the Commons on the numbers of patients who would normally be treated at Barking going elsewhere.

The strike committee can be contacted at 14 Porters Avenue, Dagenham, Essex, phone: 592 5038 or 595 4252.

Socialist Organiser

SOLIDARNOSC AND THE MINERS Fleet Street lies

THE Fleet Street disinformation machine has been at work again, trying to use Solidarnosc against the miners' strike and the miners' strike against Solidarnosc.

The Daily Mail on October 9 claimed: "Solidarity leader sends message of support to working miners — Scargill slapped down by Lech Walesa". "Through three British

miners who flew to Gdansk at the weekend, Mr Walesa sent a message of support to the back-to-work movement in the NUM."

The Daily Telegraph on the same day carried a similar report, but claiming support for the scabs not from Walesa personally but from Solidarnosc as a body. "A member of the (scab miners') committee said that they had been told by Solidarity that the working British miners were being confronted by the same intransigence as Polish workers seeking reform in their unions."

Both papers said that the visit to Poland was arranged through "Solidarity representatives in Britain".

Investigations by the real Solidarnosc representatives in Britain reveal that the story is quite untrue. And it looks as if it has been fabricated by people who are enemies both of the British and the Polish workers' movements.

The Solidarnosc office in London had nothing to do with the visit. On investigating after they saw the reports in the Mail and the Telegraph, they found that the Paris office had been contacted.

Conservative

Paris simply took the inquirers' phone number and told them to go through London instead. The phone number given to the Paris office turns out to belong to a former official of the Young Conservatives.

It is true that three scab miners visited Poland. But they did not meet Lech Walesa. (The Mail article, if you read it carefully, admits that; the Telegraph says only that the scabs "had gone to meet" Walesa).

Walesa was out of action due to illness on the weekend of the visit.

The three scabs did meet Fr. Jankowski, a priest who is close to Walesa. Fr. Jankowski may have given them some words of support (though the scraps of sympathetic comment quoted in the Mail do not prove very much). But the priest was not speaking for Walesa, and Walesa did not give the scabs any statement of support.

Even according to the Mail, the nearest thing to a justification of their headline, "Scargill slapped down by Walesa", is the mild comment (by Fr. Jankowski) that: "What this man (Scargill) has said (about Solidarnosc) is not true".

The policy of the Solidarnosc miners' union, expressed in statements which we have published in Socialist Organiser, is to support the NUM in its struggle. The policy of the Polish government is... to send increased supplies of coal which help the Tories to fight the strike.

LOL DUFFY

MESSAGE FROM WALTON JAIL

I HOPE someone makes the obvious call on Friday. Strike action is vital. Try and find out what is happening with the Combine Committee. Tell everyone we are in good spirits. Despite numerous attempts to get the lads to apologise for fighting for their jobs, the courts and their messengers have been told it's not on. See you on the 19th, if not sooner — that's up to you.

MINERS SEND SUPPORT

Paul Whetton, secretary of the Notts Miners' Rank and File Strike Committee, has sent this message to Lol Duffy, secretary of the Lairds occupation committee.

On behalf of the Notts Miners' Rank and File Strike Committee, I send fraternal greetings of solidarity to all our comrades from the occupation force of Cammell Lairds shipyards imprisoned by the State.

Your fight for jobs for yourselves, for your children and for your community is an honourable one and you have our total support. The Tories as the political agents of the ruling class may imprison your bodies but they can never imprison the working class spirit or crush the ideals for which you stand.

Be assured that whatever the establishment throw at us, be it

injunctions, fines, imprisonment or worse, the fight goes on.

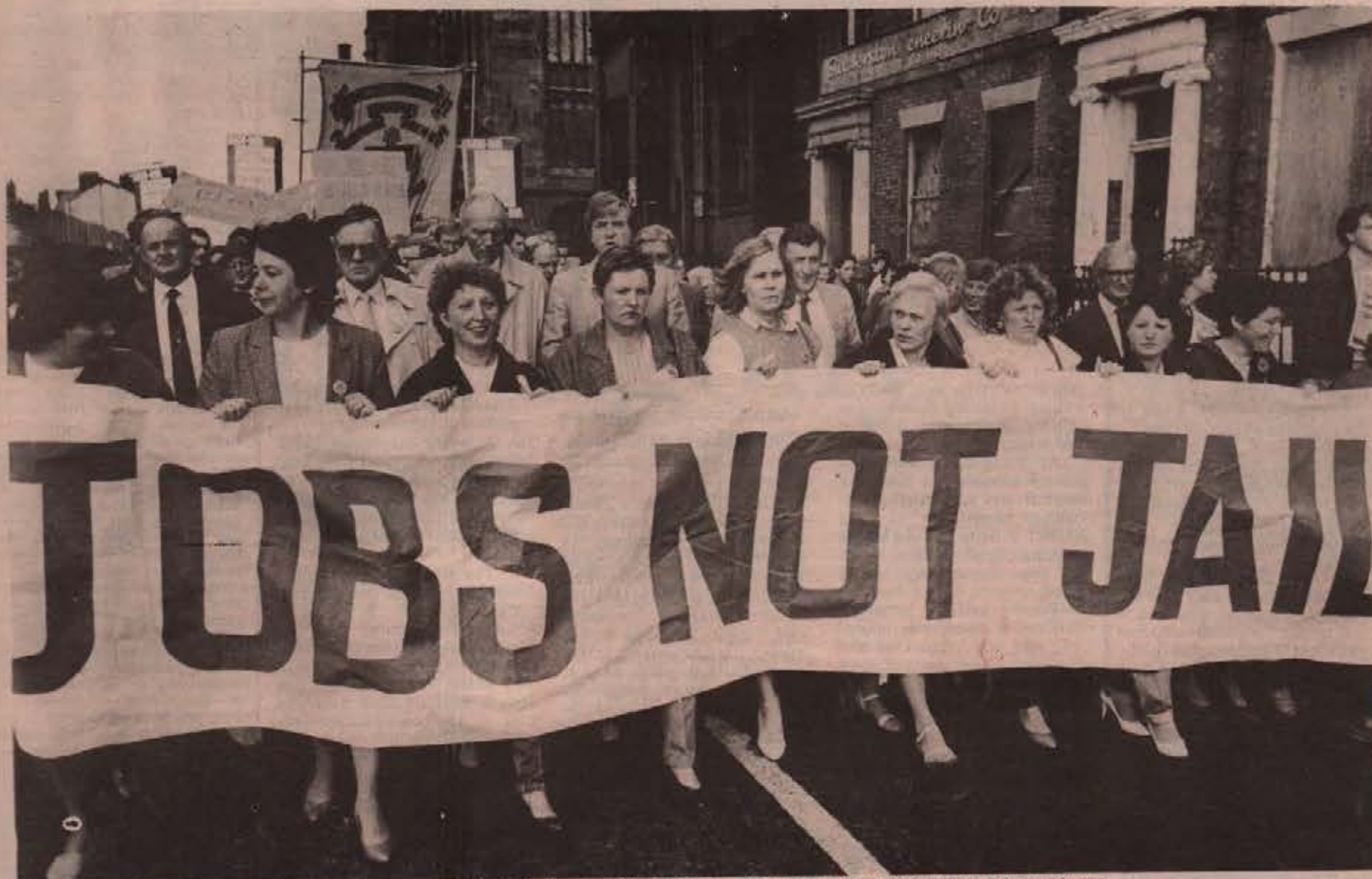
DEMONSTRATE

Oct 27

National demonstration in Barrow-in-Furness (Cumbria). Assemble: Trident Dock, 1 p.m.

TUCND

Trade Union CND day-of-action, Wednesday October 24. Workers are urged to "leaflet their place of work, organise lunchtime meetings, and initiate symbolic and token protests at work."



Wives of the 37 jailed Cammell Laird workers lead demonstration in their support through Liverpool last Friday, October 12. Photo: John Smith, IFL

Workers strike for jailed 37

Mass picket on Monday

Mass picket at Cammell Lairds — Monday October 22
Assemble before 7 a.m. at the yard.

SEVERAL thousand GMBU council workers in Merseyside struck on Wednesday October 17 to protest at the jailing of 37 members of their union.

The 37 workers at Cammell Lairds shipyard in Birkenhead, were given one-month prison sentences for contempt of court because they defied writs instructing them to end a sit-in at the yard. They were occupying a gas rig and a frigate, the last work left in the yard, in a fight to save jobs.

The national leadership of the GMBU have been painfully slow to act. On Tuesday 16th, GMBU general secretary David Basnett called on the TUC to send a deputation

to the Home Secretary and to call a day of action in the north-west.

But the first 11 of the jailed 37 are due out of jail — with remission — this Friday, 19th, and the remaining 26 on Tuesday 23rd.

The GMBU is still main-

taining an official strike at Lairds, and the local Confed has called on members not to cross the picket line. Substantial numbers are however going into work.

GMBU officials are calling a mass meeting at Lairds on Monday 22nd, and the jailed 37 have promised that they will go to the picket line as soon as they are released from jail.

Swan Hunter

The Swan Hunter yard on Tyneside has called a meeting on Thursday October 25, and invited delegates from all other shipyards to come to discuss the fight against closures.

The picket must be kept up at Lairds, so that wider action throughout the shipyards can be developed after the meeting on the 25th.

FUND

ONLY £82 this week for the fund, bringing our special stop-gap appeal to £357. We need £800 rapidly to get our regular budget back on the rails before we can start setting money aside again for our premises fund.

Thanks to: East London reader £5, Susan Carlyle £2, James Ryan £24, Gary Scott £10, Bev Wood £1, Karen Reissman £5, Nigel Bodman £10, Tom Cashman £10, Jo Thwaites £10, Cheung Siu-Ming £5.

Remember that we're asking every supporter to contribute an extra £5 per month (£1 unwaged) during the miners' strike to help meet the extra expenses for work round the strike.

Send money to: 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.