

# A Socialist ACTION

18 January 1985

30p

No. 85



# Defend the

# NUM

THE MINERS strike faces another threat from the right wing. The decision of the scab leaders in Notts to break from the NUM and establish a yellow union as a national 'alternative' to the NUM is a fundamental challenge to the whole labour movement.

The Tories and the NCB have made it clear that they will give every possible encouragement to this development. They are already preparing to recognise the scab union. South Derbyshire has stated that it will support the Notts breakaway. Other scabs can be expected to try to follow suit.

The Tory government intends nothing less than the destruction of the NUM. If it succeeds in that project it will pursue a similar course with other sections of the labour movement. Weakening, dividing and ultimately destroying the labour movement is the central part of Tory policy. This attack must be defeated.

The responsibility for the present attack on the NUM lies squarely at the

door of the TUC and Labour Party leaders. Their failure to build support for the miners, and to deliver on conference pledges, has encouraged the growth and strengthening of the scabs in Notts and elsewhere.

The special delegate conference of the NUM on 30 January will undoubtedly vote to expel areas which attempt to put local rules above those of the national union. This step is essential to defend the NUM against destruction from within. The NUM will be reestablished in Notts and elsewhere, and a fight with the scab unions will be opened up. *In this fight the NUM must have the unwavering support of the whole labour movement.*

A clear stand by the TUC and the Labour Party against the scab leaders is necessary now. The scab leaders are attempting to steam roller Notts into a split. They have rejected a call from Ray Chadburn for a ballot. They are ruling out of order attempts to pose the question of loyalty to the national union. It is clear that many working miners are opposed to forming a breakaway union.

The TUC must come out clearly immediately, and publically, against

the scab unions. It must declare its support for the NUM in this struggle, and make it clear that a scab union will never be recognised by the TUC — and that the TUC will assist the NUM to defeat and destroy it. The TUC should instruct all affiliated unions to boycott the scab breakaway.

The Labour Party must also make its opposition clear. In particular it should pledge itself to maintain or

reintroduce the provisions in the 1947 Act that the NCB shall negotiate with the NUM, and exclude recognition of scab unions.

In addition to these steps, the labour movement should recognise even more clearly that the NUM's fight with the government is not just about miners' jobs. It is more than ever a fight for the whole labour movement.

This means the four key steps to

winning the dispute remain

- Full implementation of TUC Congress decisions to boycott the movement of all coal and oil to the power stations!
- The TUC and Labour Party must call a national demonstration in support of the NUM!
- For a national solidarity conference called by the NUM!
- For a national day of industrial action in support of the miners!

# Socialist ACTION

## That sinking feeling

THE RAPID fall in the pound, and the political stir it has created, have done more than any other recent event to expose the real bases of support of the Thatcher government.

Despite the huge amount of theorising on the left concerning the supposedly 'ideological' character of Thatcher's support, the reality is that the revenues she has received from North Sea Oil are a thousand times more important than any 'ideology' in explaining the relative political level of support of the government — including its ability to win the 1983 election.

It was the revenues from North Sea which generated the consumer boom which Thatcher deliberately started to create from 1982 onwards. Thatcher was able to use those oil resources in turn to seriously exacerbate the divisions within the working class. A major section of those in work have seen their living standards sharply improve under the Thatcher government. Those out of work, and those in low paid jobs, have seen their conditions seriously deteriorate. The government's political policy has been based on a massive redistribution of income within the working class to conceal the still more substantial redistribution towards capital.

Given this political policy the rapid decline in the value of the pound is a decisive question for the Thatcher government. The enormously high exchange rate of the pound crushed to death sectors of manufacturing industry and further lengthened the dole queues. But it also lowered the price of the flood of consumer goods which entered the country. The 'video recorder boom' in 1982-84 was just the tip of the iceberg of that process.

A falling oil price, and a falling value of the pound, creates real problems for a Thatcher's policy of 'divide and rule' no matter which way the government tries to tackle the problem. If the pound is allowed to continue to fall the price of imported goods will continue to rise significantly hitting the living standards of the working class — including those skilled workers whose votes Thatcher has so carefully nurtured for five years. If interest rates, and therefore mortgage rates, are raised to protect the pound then this also hits living standards of those same workers. Either way the political support of Thatcher is seriously undermined.

All this makes even more criminal the policy which the Labour leadership has been pursuing during the miners strike. The Thatcher government is not, and never has been, impregnable strong. At the time of the first and second dock strikes, and at the TUC and Labour Party conferences, the government found itself in deep trouble confronted with the miners. A push by the Labour and TUC leadership would have either won the strike then or maintained its full momentum. But instead the TUC and Kinnock oriented to blocking and sabotaging the strike and not developing it.

Imagine the situation today if Thatcher had either lost, or was openly losing, the strike simultaneously with the new outburst of an economic crisis. Today Thatcher finds herself faced with a new economic crisis but with Labour having failed to take full advantage of the last ten months of miners struggle against the government. Simultaneously Hattersley is rapidly marching Labour to the right on economic policy.

For if there is one thing many sections of the working class found made them even worse off than Thatcher it was the types of income policy Hattersley is once more trying to foist on the movement.

There is no doubt about it. Kinnock/Hattersley are a disaster machine for the Labour Party whether it comes to a miners strike or to economic policy.

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Published weekly except two weeks in August and the last week of December.  
Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent Socialist Action's views. These are expressed in editorials.

# No scab union in Notts!

THE SCAB LEADERSHIP of the Nottinghamshire area of the NUM are set to form a breakaway 'Spencer' union in competition with the NUM. The national union has given the Notts area until 29 January to rescind the rule change that puts area rules above those of the national union. The decision by the national NUM is a flat rejection of any compromises with the Notts areas' attempt to establish a 'union within a union'.

The area executive voted 13:1 to continue its defiance of the national union, and this stand was confirmed by the area council on Saturday.

The intention of the scab leadership in Notts was made quite clear by Roy Link, Notts area financial secretary. He has stated that an independent Notts area could become the basis of a new national union.

The Tory-inspired working miners' committees are hard at work trying to produce just such an outcome. South Derbyshire has indicated that they will support Notts, and there is speculation that Leicestershire would also join Notts.

The fight against the Notts scabs is vital to the future of the NUM. Their decision to put area rules above national ones faced the union with the prospect of becoming a federation of conflicting areas.

Notts would have been a union within a union, and its example would quickly have been followed by some of the other areas.

The special delegate conference on 29 January

will undoubtedly expel the area. The fight will then begin to reestablish the NUM in the area and drive out the scab union.

There are already clear signs that many of the working miners in the area do not support the breakaway union. At Ollerton over 300 have signed a petition stating that they do not wish to join a breakaway union. Similar developments are reported at other pits in the area.

By Pat Hickey

The scab leaders have misled many of the working miners into believing that they would all be expelled from the union. In many cases the rule changes were steam-rollered through branch meetings.

Striking miners have been prevented from asking the working miners whether they still want to belong to the NUM — at branch and area level the question has been ruled out of order.

A move by Ray Chadburn for an area ballot to rescind the rule change



A sizeable minority of Notts miners oppose the scab union

was quashed by area council, the main upholder of ballots throughout the strike. If the Notts area continues its present course of action expulsion will be essential.

The national union will then be established in Notts, and new branches would be empowered to admit into membership all members of a branch en bloc or individually.

Area secretary Henry Richardson who was suspended by the meeting on Saturday for defending the national union, said that any member of the former area who wished to remain in the national

union would be welcome. It is clear that a bitter fight, with scabs, the NCB and the Tories on one side, and the NUM on the other, is now being prepared.

The TUC should make it clear that any breakaway union in Notts will face the hostility of the whole trade union movement, and that everything possible will be done to break the scabs and assist the NUM.

The development of an open scab union which could survive only by the grace and favour of the employers is a threat that must be defeated.

Within the TUC, leaders like Hammond and Duffy will be reluctant to support the NUM. These union leaders already support no-strike deals.

The difference between them and the scab leaders in Notts is minimal. The left must force the TUC to come out clearly against the scab unions.

The greatest contribution that the TUC could make at this stage however, is to fight to implement congress decisions. Victory for the miners will be the biggest single blow that could be struck against the scabs and their Tory backers.

## Action not words!

SOUTH WALES AREA NUM has remained amongst the most solid areas of the strike. In recent weeks the press have tried to imply a weakening of the strike in the area and divisions with the national executive. REDMOND O'NEILL asked DAI DAVIES, a member of the South Wales NUM executive and chair of the Penrhwiweiber Lodge, for the facts about the area and his views on trade union and Labour Party solidarity with the miners.

I HAVE always thought that we were involved in a war of attrition. In that war the communities have been unbelievable in the way they have rallied round. We are bitterly disappointed at the attitude of certain unions, particularly in the power industry where if they can't get coal they are using enormous quantities of scab oil against the TUC guidelines.

We've seen that at Aberthaw power station near Cardiff where transport union drivers are not only prepared to cross a picket line but to cross without even acknowledg-

ing that it's there.

It's all very well for us to criticise rank and file members, but if there's no push from the top — from the TUC, and the trade union leaderships — then they are just going to carry on. The least that should have been done is for the trade union leaders supporting the TUC decisions to allow us to go into the power stations and talk to their members.

If myself or other miners want to go into a place like Aberthaw, which we are picketing, and talk to the members of the TGWU, AUEW and

so on, we cannot. We are not being given the opportunity to explain face to face to the rank and file workers what our strike is all about.

Even the officials of the unions which say they are carrying out TUC guidelines don't give us that opportunity. This is the case throughout the country.

The truth is that the national leaderships are not leading and this percolates right down to the rank and file members. Literature is being circulated but that's not good enough as far as we're concerned.

Our opinion is that if the TGWU leadership were sincere in their support then they would have their full-time officials down on the picket lines alongside the NUM at Aberthaw and other power stations. Then they would be seen to be doing something.

The rank and file Labour Party members have given us outstanding support. The leadership have been looking over their shoulders.

Kinnock wants to be seen as a moderate leader, someone acceptable to the right wing or to middle class people in this country. He is looking to the next general election.

But his criticisms are having the reverse effect. The only damage that has been done has been as a result of Kinnock's hesitancy to come out in support of the NUM.

Kinnock condemns the pickets and the police. You've never heard Thatcher condemn a policeman.

We've had over 12,000 lads arrested, 60-odd are now in jail, and 600 have been dismissed from their jobs. Not one policeman has been charged with an offence committed on the picket line.

So as far as I'm concerned Kinnock's credibility is at an all-time low.

In South Wales I think we have been fooled in the past that only barristers or solicitors could be credible MPs. So we've got a lot of that type of people.

As an area we see it as important that we try to get more NUM-sponsored MPs. We have lads, whether they work on the coal face or the surface, who are more than capable of holding a position in the House of Commons.

Miners are joining the Labour Party. We've had recruits at Penrhwiweiber. I think locally we're at our most buoyant in the Labour Party for 10 to 15 years.

We've got young lads who are coming into the party who, before the strike, were not political. They have seen that this strike is political and has been political from day one.



Picket at Aberthaw

LAST WEEKEND the Communist Party executive committee expelled *Morning Star* editor Tony Chater from the party. But the impact of the developing split in the Communist Party will spread far beyond that organisation. JOHN ROSS looks at the implications.

THE OPEN split in the Communist Party starts the most important fight for the future of socialists in Britain — the fight over the whole direction of the Labour left.

The right wing line pursued by the Communist Party throughout the whole last period has greatly weakened its hold over the Labour left. *Marxism Today*, with its support for coalition with the Alliance and open endorsement of Kinnock, placed itself far to the right of the developing Labour left. The Labour left, symbolised by Tony Benn, Arthur Scargill, Ken Livingstone and their supporters was in turn able to outflank the Communist Party on the left on particular issues, and at the level of tactics, without a programmatic fight with the CP.

The consequences of this inside the Labour Party were also clear. A spontaneous alliance developed between Marxist, basically Trotskyist, forces and the emerging Labour left. Newspapers such as *Labour Briefing*, *Socialist Action*, *Socialist Organiser*, and in a different way, *Labour Herald*, were able to substantially influence the developing Labour left.

*Militant* also grew although it was essentially parasitic on the development of the Labour left and did not shape its main development. Their chauvinist and opportunist politics in any case led to *Militant* being outflanked on the left by the developing Labour left forces — as is being shown graphically now in Liverpool with the collision between the black caucus and *Militant*.

## Right

In this entire struggle in the Labour Party from 1979 onwards, the Communist Party appeared obviously to the right of the Trotskyist forces. Developments which were 'spontaneously' part of a Trotskyist programme — unilateral nuclear disarmament, black sections, the demands of the Women's Action Committee, moves for democratisation in the labour movement — developed within the Labour left.

This did not mean that there were not important sections of the Labour left that continued to be influenced by Stalinism, the East European bureaucracies, and to some extent by the Communist Party. When the struggle between the *Morning Star* and the Eurocommunists started a whole series of trade union general secretaries dashed in to support the *Morning Star*.

Arthur Scargill took wrong positions over Solidarnosc — although he was also driven into violent denunciation of the Polish government over its scabbing on the miners' strike. *Tribune*, under the editorship of Chris Mullin, also clearly came out for the *Morning Star* in its fight with the CP executive.

## Open

These weaknesses however did not play a big role in the situation as long as the Communist Party itself remained on a right wing line. The Eurocommunist line of the party as a whole, and *Marxism Today* in particular, left an open space for Trotskyist-influenced forces to operate in the left of the Labour Party.

In this field of the fight for the future of the Labour left the significance of the split in the Communist Party is obvious. The orientation of the *Morning Star*, compared to *Marxism Today*, is clear. It is to move in to try to give a quite alternative set of alliances, and programme for the Labour left, than is offered by Trotskyist forces.

# The ★ Morning Star & the labour left



Photos: MORNING STAR

This orientation is evident from the initiatives of the *Morning Star* itself. The platform of last weekend's Liaison Committee for the Defence of the Trade Unions — Tony Benn, Jimmy Knapp, Eric Clarke, Peter Heathfield, Ken Cameron, together with Stalinist stalwarts such as Kevin Halpin — was an evident move to reorganise the trade union left bureaucracy around the *Morning Star*. The conference was effectively boycotted by the Eurocommunist wing of the party.

While *Marxism Today* has been stepping up its praise for Neil Kinnock, the *Morning Star* has been moving to distance itself from him and move closer to Tony Benn. Last Monday's *Morning Star* column by the paper's political correspondent Mike Ambrose significantly concluded: 'While the position of the left members on the (national) executive has not changed their distance from Mr Kinnock and his entourage has increased — because he has moved to the right.'

## Huge

The *Morning Star* has also announced its intention to hold a huge two-day festival on 25-26 May to celebrate the end of the Second World War. This was characterised by the *Morning Star* on 14 January, when it announced the festival, as: 'the broadest alliance of democratic forces seen in history.' According to the paper, 'there is no doubt that the Soviet Union played the crucial role in that victory... But it was a victory in which all the democratic and peace-loving forces played their part.'

We can be sure that the *Morning Star* will be going all out to ensure that the Benn left of the Labour Party, together with various bishops and 'progressive Tories', will be participating in the rally.

More generally what the split in the Communist Party is opening up is a fight over the entire future, strategy and programme of the Labour left. Historically left social democracy, which is objectively the character of the left wing of the Labour Party, has no independent programme of its own. The radical left wings of social democratic parties have always fallen under the influence of either Trotskyism or Stalinism. It was true of the Independent Labour Party in the 1930s. It was true on a much bigger scale with the left wing of the Spanish

Socialist Party in the same period.

This of course does not mean that these forces have always taken explicit positions 'for Moscow/for Stalin(!)', or 'for Trotsky'. But these two programmes are completely incompatible as regards their practical conclusions.

Is the Labour left for or against Solidarnosc? Is it for or against popular front alliances in the bourgeoisie — and therefore is it for

## LCDTU calls national demo

THE LIAISON Committee for the Defence of Trade Unions (LCDTU) conference in London on 12 January attracted around 460 delegates. Peter Heathfield told conference that 70 per cent of NUM members were standing firm on the position taken on 6 March when the dispute began.

He gave a firm declaration that the NUM would not 'crawl back defeated' and called on the labour movement to 'redeem the IOUs pledged at TUC and Labour Party conferences'. He called for a major series of rallies throughout the country, culminating in a demonstration in London.

Despite reports earlier in the week in the *Morning Star* that there would be a call from the conference for industrial action on 20 February, this failed to materialise. Conference called for support for the regional demonstrations, such as the one in Glasgow on 25 February and for the Yorkshire week of action between 4-11 February. And Sunday 24 February was named as the day for a national demonstration in London, which conference called on the TUC and Labour Party to support.

The LCDTU will be writing to the Mineworkers' Defence Committee to coordinate with them on building the demonstration, in response to a proposal from Ken Livingstone to work together on such an action.

This demonstration will have the support of the NUM and can be a ma-



or against class independence? Does it stand unequivocally on the basis of unilateral nuclear disarmament or does it orient to multilateral talks between Washington and the Kremlin?

Is it for independent black and women's organisations in the Labour Party or does it regard them with



major focus for all those who support the miners and who want to see the implementation of TUC guidelines. The build-up for this demonstration will need to start immediately.

The lack of a clear call for industrial action, and the move away from 20 February (a weekday) to 24 February (a Sunday) was criticised by a number of speakers. A Notts miner's wife spoke of the hardship suffered in the coalfields and said: 'Today, I'm not asking for money but for more. I'm asking for an end to this dispute.'

By Pat Hickey

She went on to call for a national one-day strike. This call was also taken up by Tony Benn in his speech, in which he talked of the need to prepare for a 'general stoppage'.

Dave Temple of the Durham Mechanics criticised the conference statement for its lack of reference to industrial action: 'Money is one thing, but we need the trade unions to support us and join with the miners in industrial action.' He proposed an amendment to the statement calling for a day of national action. But as is usual at LCDTU conferences, the

suspicion? It is for or against withdrawal from NATO? Is it for or against Sinn Fein and its leadership role in the struggle for independence in Ireland? These, and many others are the different practical choices which are posed by the two programmes.

United action with the Communist Party must be undertaken of course. But for the developing Labour left to fall in anyway under the influence of the Stalinist orientation of the *Morning Star*, or the alternative one of *Marxism Today*, would be an historical disaster.

A Labour left tainted by the brush of Stalinism and Eastern Europe would never gain mass support. Its practical policies would trap the development of the left of the party within a popular frontist framework and break its dynamic. A Labour left which was influenced by Stalinism would be a Labour left inevitably doomed to defeat by the right. It would be a break with everything that has made the current so attractive to forces coming into politics.

Of course the chances of the Labour left going over openly to support for the positions of the East European bureaucracies are very small. The days of the 1930s, when radicals could be mesmerised by Stalin and the Soviet Five Year Plans are over. The situation is no longer even that of the early 1950s when the Soviet Union carried the recent prestige of the struggle against Nazi Germany and when many people turned to support for the Soviet bureaucracy out of justified hatred against the cold war policies pursued by the United States and its allies.

Today the great majority of those active in politics know the real facts of the systematic repression of the working class carried out in Eastern Europe and the crimes of the Soviet bureaucracy. But the more local, and strategic, forms of class collaboration advocated by the Communist Parties and by Moscow still are influential.

The developing split in the Communist Party does open up the really fundamental fight over the direction of the Labour left.

amendment was not put.

The possibility of building industrial action was shown in Jimmy Knapp's speech, when he predicted that Thursday's strike in the East Midlands and South Yorkshire areas of British Rail would be 100 per cent.

The most important issue facing conference was developing a strategy to confront the general council's refusal to fight for the decisions of congress. This the conference failed to do.

While the moves by Basnett to convene a conference of union executives in order to reverse Wembley conference decisions were condemned, there was little in the way of real proposals to deal with this threat to the entire policy of the TUC.

Despite the huge limitations of the conference, the decision to go for a national demonstration does represent a step forward, and deserves the widest possible support. All sections of the movement should now put their weight behind the call.

The demand must be that the Labour Party and the TUC call a demonstration. Official support from the Labour Party and national trade unions will be decisive in ensuring that 24 February is a real show of strength in support of the NUM.



# Stop the coal trains

**THE STATEMENT** issued by the Rail Federation around the victimisation of workers at Shirebrook and Coalville states that if regional action is not successful, the rail unions will organise national action.

Railworkers welcome such statements. But past practice does not give us much confidence in our leadership.

Industrial action to protest the treatment of Coalville and Shirebrook workers has been threatened twice in the last ten months.

Each time the unions retreated, because management made a few concessions before regrouping their forces and beginning a fresh campaign of dirty tricks to get the coal trains moving again.

difference and broken the class collaborationist line of the TUC.

They have not conducted a real fight for the 'no movement of coal' policy decided last April.

Small handfuls of rank and file members in freight depots have held the line against management, the scabs and the government.

The leadership has put a brake on the action in rail by stalling over gross acts of victimisation.

The rail unions have always been in an ideal position to lead a unified trade union and labour party campaign to carry out the TUC guidelines on the miners strike.

They must take a lead by continuing the action until all the coal and oil trains are stopped.

They should use their weight to overcome the scandalous inaction of the TUC and Labour Party by making sure that the proposed national demonstration in support of the miners on the 24th February has the widest support possible within the rail and transport unions themselves.

Meanwhile, rank and file railway workers need to meet on a cross regional basis. A meeting of all freight depots, with branch delegates and LDCs represented needs to be organised as soon as possible.

We should call on the district councils to have 'No Movement of Coal Rallies' which could involve thousands of railworkers, miners and others.

The links between local pits and rail depots need to be strengthened, following on from the example set by Coalville in working with the miners from the minority areas in the Trent Valley. And above all the demonstration on the 24 February should be built widely in our depots.

By Antonia Gorton

The Coalville workers are quite right to insist that all their demands are met before any action is suspended.

If the Federation retreats again once again, then the BRB will hit us even harder, and there will be more sackings and more harassment.

24 hour action is a first step but this will not stop the joint BRB and NCB project to get the trains moving. This project has two aims. It is part of the propaganda offensive to demoralise miners back to work. It also has a strategic aim — to free coal for the power stations, Drakelow, Rugby and Didcot. Lorries are proving an expensive way of breaking the miners.

The action of the Coalville workers has also had a big impact on the militancy of the minority areas, and its collapse would affect the recent attempts to unite together and organise more effectively.

The second question we have to look at is the record of the Federation. They gave into the government over the 1984 pay deal just at the point when united action with the miners would have made a

## White male MPs watch out

**A PROCESS** has just begun which will decide once and for all whether or not Labour deserves the continuing support of Britain's have nots.

Black activists particularly, bloodied but unbowed by the leadership's disgraceful hatchet job on black sections, will be watching to see whether the hard fought for gains of mandatory reselection are relevant to our cause.

Given that conference failed us, we are now waiting to see if constituency labour parties strong on anti-racism 'deliver up' on Black Prospective Parliamentary Candidates (PPCs).

As activists engaged in the struggle to turn 'No representation' in the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) into 'Fair representation', our greatest hope is the selection and reselection process.

Like other disadvantaged members of society, we have been excluded from power for much too long and we are fighting back.

The movement must now react positively to demands for fair representation from black people, women, gay people and the Disabled.

If we are ignored the Party will surely perish.

But first, past experience tells us a good deal of humbug needs to be overcome for fair representation to be achieved.

General management committees (GMCs) have got to stop using as an excuse that good black candidates are 'opportunists' or 'careerists'.

There are 209 predominantly male and middle class White opportunists and careerists in the PLP.

What GMCs must do instead is make sure prospective candidates fully endorse their democratically decided policies.

And, just as importantly, if sitting members do not support these policies then they should be summarily deselected without sentimentality or rancour.

Reselection and selection is the ordinary party member's powerful opportunity to decide the political and social complexion of the PLP.

The process must be used decisively and bravely. The movement must, in 1985, strike a telling blow for true equality.

We urge all CLPs who back black sections to demand a positive declaration of support from your chosen candidate.

By Mark Wadsworth  
(Black activists campaign)

This include CLPs that support us despite the corrosive influence of *Militant*, the most vociferous and spiteful opponents of black political self-organisation in the movement.

We have already put on record our disgust at what they are doing to the black community in their Liverpool strong-hold.

Twice in 1984, we took the fight to their heartland (the YS Summer Camp and Coventry South East CLP).

Both times we defeated their bankrupt opposition to black sections. This should be a lesson to the rest of the movement.

It can no longer be tolerated that the top of the Party is dominated by an unrepresentative clique.

The present PLP is little different to the House of Commons as a whole — a white, middle class gentleman's club.

As socialists we have an urgent duty to smash this cosy tradition. At the last General Election up to 90 per cent of Black people who went to the polls voted Labour.

In all, we provided the party with a million votes. We are on in eight of all supporters electorally. We are Labour's most loyal supporters yet we have nothing to show for it in the Commons.

Year after year the movement states its opposition to racism without

doing the obvious thing within its own ranks to eradicate this great social evil.

Black voters can no longer be conned by paper support. CLPs must deliver on representation. We have seen through labour's charade of choosing just six black PPCs at the last election and all of them in impossible seats.

Meanwhile, seats made super-safe by large black electorates were fought predominantly by white males.

There are at least 25 seats where black candidates should be selected — genuinely 'anti-racist' hopefuls should look elsewhere.

### Equality

We have divided these seats between 12 'Tory marginals' we say we can win for Labour and 13 'safe Labour' seats where we say we would probably increase the majority.

The marginals are: Leicester South; Leicester East; Edmonton; Oxford East; Nottingham East; Bradford North; Westminster North; Feltham and Heston; Lewisham East; Dulwich; Lewisham West and Slough.

These constituencies have black populations ranging from eight per cent in Oxford East to more than 25 per cent in Leicester East.

Potentially, the proportion of votes the black electorate can give a labour candidate is higher than the New Commonwealth and Pakistan (NCW&P) statistic suggests because it does not take account of the burgeoning 'second generation'.

If you take the fact that black people are four per cent of Britain's overall population, we should have around 30 MPs.

Labour's safest seats are, significantly, those, in the main, with the largest black population. A number are likely to be vacant at the next election because the MP has announced his retirement.

We urge MPs with 'fat

### TARGET LABOUR GOVERNMENT

Conference jointly organised by Target Labour Government & Labour Briefing

What Type of Labour Government?

Ken Livingstone, Merle Amory

Forward to Victory — Out With the Tories!

Tony Benn, Sharon Atkins, Frances Morrell, Bernie Grant

Workshops on Economic Policy, Justice freedom & the state, social policy, international & defence, accountability, positive action

SATURDAY 16th FEBRUARY

10am - 5pm

DIGBETH CIVIC HALL,  
DIGBETH, BIRMINGHAM

Sponsors so far include: Black Sections Steering Committee, Labour Committee on Ireland, Labour Against the Witch Hunt, Labour Women for Ireland, Mineworkers Defence Committee, Womens Action Committee, Labour CND.

\* Creche — bookings in advance \* Food available on day \* No wheelchair access  
Registration: £5 organisation delegate, £2 waged individual, 50p unwaged  
Available from: David Jones, 60d Barnsbury Street, London N1 1ER.

majorities' provided by black voters to stand down if they are over retirement age.

Syd Bidwell (Ealing, Southall) should do the decent thing. It would be his greatest contribution yet to the fight for racial equality.

After all, Southall — second only to Brent South, in size of Black population — is a national symbol. It has a large Asian population and deserves an Asian MP.

### Careers

White activists in Southall who have the final say must stop spouting clap trap excuses about Asian disunity.

John Silkin (Deptford) should follow his fellow Tribune out the door for reasons best explained by his local party.

And Peter Shore (Bethnal Green & Stepney), so out of step with the views of a constituency where Bengalis get the rawest deal, should make way for a black successor.

Other seats made safe by the 'black vote' range from Brent, South (47 per cent NCW&P) to Bow and Poplar (16 per cent) where Ian Mikado has already announced his retirement.

These seats are: Brent, South; Birmingham,

Smallheath; Tottenham; Hackney North and Stoke Newington; Brent East; Bradford West; Battersea; Warley, East; Walthamstow and Wolverhampton, South East; Coventry, North East; Perry Barr and Bow and Poplar.

The short-list for selection of a PPC in these constituencies should consist entirely of good black candidates. It is no use CLPs hoping this will happen somewhere else.

If this cannot be achieved because no nomination for Black candidates are received from a local branch then the party's Executive Committee has the power to make a nomination itself. The EC should use this power positively.

Finally our message to all those white, middle class, males currently agonising with their conscience is: Stand Down or Stand Aside in 'black seats'.

Too many of you have already built careers as 'race experts' — advocates of the principles of race equality.

Yet, like Alf Dubs (Battersea) the 'Shadow' spokesman on race, you bottled out when faced with the chance of going somewhere else to allow in a good black alternative. black people must never be denied like this again.

# All out on rail 17 January

**THE RAIL FEDERATION** last Tuesday decided in principle to take some sort of strike action on the Midland and Eastern regions in protest at the harassment of workers carrying out union policy and refusing to move coal.

The details were decided by a sub-committee of the Federation which met the next morning. The outcome was that 11 depots were selected for 24 hour strike action this Thursday coming.

In the Eastern region the depots are Sheffield Midland, Doncaster, Worksop, Tinsley, Barrow Hill and Shirebrook. In the London-Midland region they are Toton, Derby, Nottingham, West Houses and Coalville.

For us at Coalville this decision was a tremendous let down. They are asking the depots who have suffered the most victimisation from management to take action.

Most of these mentioned are freight-only depots that work in the coalfields. We were hoping that they would call out the big London stations, where we have a lot of support.

What we wanted was a national strike, at the least a 24 hour national strike. Some members of the executive committee were pushing at the Federation meeting for such action.

But after a big battle between the right and the left, the action was reduced to selective, regional 24-hour action.

There's been a lot of talk since then from the

Board to the press saying that they'll be able to sit down with the Federation and resolve things round the table.

**By Roy Butlin,  
Coalville NUM**

When the Federation does sit down and talk out branch at Coalville wants the following four points conceded before the threat of action is lifted:

- first, no movement of coal trains
- second for the right of Coalville workers to sign on and be given alternative work
- third no more scab labour at Coalville
- fourth no more victimisation and harassment and reinstatement of the Coalville signalman who has been moved to Alrewas box.

Incidentally, this is the signalman who was initially classified as 'mentally unstable' for refusing to let coal move, and



Photo: G.M. COOKSON

demoted to a position as station sweeper.

Now he's working on a line where there are no coal trains running, there is no question being raised about his mental stability.

This is disgusting. Now some lads at Coalville have got a new badge saying if you support the miners get some therapy!

Nothing less than these four points will satisfy the workers at Coalville. If they think they are going to negotiate any kind of deal that lifts the strike threat without those four points being conceded they will find themselves having to confront not only Coalville NUR but all those railworkers who have been implementing

the boycott of coal since the miners' strike began.

The NUR leaders work for us. We pay their wages. They're not doing their job and giving us the backing we deserve at the present time.

I have circulated most branches with a personal letter and all ASLEF and NUR district councils have received a direct call to their members to support the action on Thursday.

At the time of writing we did not know which depots would be called out by the Federation.

We realise that the government will walk all over railway workers if we don't support the miners. If pits close, jobs on the railways will be directly affected.

If the secondary action was to collapse through lack of support, the miners in the minority strike areas such as Leicester would be in great difficulty.

Railway workers have been number one in giving support to the miners. Our fate is interlocked with theirs.

If the government is allowed to establish the principle of closing pits on purely economic grounds the same arguments would be applied to most railway depots and most passenger services. The government must not be allowed to establish that principle.



Photo: G.M. COOKSON

## Which side are you on?

**KEN LOACH'S** programme last Wednesday was the clearest statement yet made on television as to why the mining communities have resisted the Tory government over 10 months.

Songs, poems and experiences of the 1984 miners' strike captured the collective community of the villages and the spirit of resistance that has kept the miners battling against pit closures despite all the odds.

Nor did the programme draw back on letting the miners and their families state their own case. It was crystal clear why London Weekend television was reluctant to show it.

Even Channel 4 ended the showing with a caveat urging viewers to write in if they had a different opinion.

The first half dealt with the reasons for the strike. Something that the media hopes you'll forget.

Miners told of how pit closures would lead to job loss on the railways and in the steel plants. South Wales miners reminisced bitterly over a meeting in 1981, during the steel strike, where Bill Sirs had openly cried after miners and railway workers had come out on strike for one day in protest at MacGregor's attack on steel jobs.

Inhabitants of Cortonwood explained how there was one main street in the village leading from the pit to the school. If the pit closed the community would be decimated.

Cartoons explained the case against voluntary redundancy and how workers had no right to sell the jobs of their children and grandchildren.

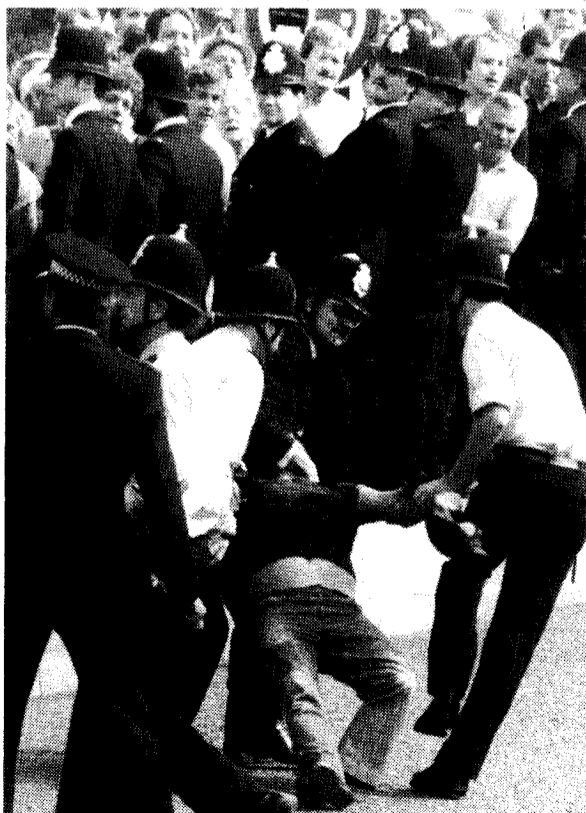
Women, prickling at the suggestion that miners should pack up and move, asserted that they had no intention of becoming industrial gypsies again.

**Reviewed by  
Valerie Coultas**

Women were a central part of the story. They have risen up, explained a miner's mother and wife from Wardley, and there's some iron ladies up here who are not giving in to Thatcher.

Women were shown marching in August, staffing canteens and reading poetry. Unfortunately they were not shown engaged in picketing as many of them have been throughout the strike.

The poems and songs reflect the strong culture of resistance in the mining communities. One older man read a poem full of press insults, their attacks



countered by the assertion of class solidarity. 'All you high-up nobodies take note of what we say'.

This tradition of solidarity explains the second half of the programme which features the conflicts with the police on the picket lines at Orgreave and in the villages like Armthorpe.

Police brutality is clearly exposed at Orgreave. In Armthorpe a woman explains how on 22 June 1984 2000 riot police charged into the village breaking into houses, smashing windows, pushing her against the wall and hitting her.

Baseball bats were used in that raid, not trun-

cheons. The police act just like the black and tans, argues one young miner.

Of course he's dead right. Where a community resists, be it black, Irish, or a mining village, it has to be crushed and criminalised.

'If you do get rid of this government, we'll be the next government,' says a policeman to a miner on the picket line.

### Clique

The growth of arbitrary policing throughout this strike combined with the Tory attacks on trade unions and democratic rights bodes ill for the future if the miners are not victorious.

'Who tells them to hate working men? When they say they are simply following orders to rub their boots down our shins and hit us with such venom, who gives these orders?' Five miners and a child have died because of police actions explain the miners furiously.

These young people, far from being the thugs, bully boys that the *Sun* suggests, have chosen which side they are on — becoming modern heroes and heroines of the class.

'The tale of your courage through these bitter times will live on and shall never die.'

## Pits and profits

**THERE IS NOT** one pit in the country whose closure would save the government money, according to a new report based on a careful analysis of the National Coal Board's profit and loss account.

The report entitled *The Economic Case Against Pit Closures* was prepared by Andrew Glyn for the National Union of Mineworkers.

**By Andrew Glyn**

Glyn draws on the Coal Board's own figures for each individual pit during the period 1983-84 prior to the overtime ban. But he comes to radically different conclusions about the economics of pit closures, for he also quantifies the cost to the government of redundancy payments, unemployment benefit, and loss of tax revenue.

Of the 166 pits in the British coalfield, he concludes that not a single one would cost less to close down than to keep open.

Even the pits whose threatened closure precipitated the strike should be kept open on purely economic grounds, the report argues. Under present conditions of mass unemployment, any sav-

ings made by closure would be outweighed by the resulting costs of keeping the workers affected on the dole.

For example, Cortonwood colliery requires a subsidy of £74 per miner each week from the government. But to close it would incur costs and loss of revenue of £295 per miner each week.

'So closing the so-called "unprofitable" pits, whilst perfectly in tune with the NCB's task of increasing profitability, would have imposed substantial losses on the rest of society as well as on the miners concerned.

'In no sense, then, can these "unprofitable" pits be labelled "uneconomic" from the point of view of society,' argues Andrew Glyn.

● *The report is available from book shops or from Turnaround Distribution, 27 Horsell Road, London N5 1XL, price £1.50 (including p&p). For more information contact Andrew Glyn on 0865-249431 or 248019.*

£ per miner per week	Costs of closure for threatened pits		
	If colliery was closed cost to Government revenue would be	Present level of subsidy to keep pit open was	So to close pit means net loss to Government of
Herrington	281	82	199
Cortonwood	295	74	221
Bullcliffe Wood	467	251	216
Snowdown	260	232	28

# No legal way to

## Conference agenda

**WE ARE NOW coming to a crunch period in the battle to defend local government in London. Jenkin set 15 January as the final date for councils to appeal against his set spending limits.**

**All 18 ratecapped authorities in London have decided not to appeal and are therefore on course for a confrontation. This conference was called for Saturday 19 January to prepare for a co-ordinated fightback in London in March when councils have to decide on their budgets.**

**By Keith Veness, Ealing North Labour Party and Secretary of Ealing Local Government Committee**

At the conference next Saturday the regional executive has drawn up a seven-clause policy statement of its views on how to fight ratecapping (See SA No84).

There are 8 amendments being put forward for debate, all of which are aimed at firming up the existing statement.

Hackney South's resolution amends clause six, which urges councils to unite around not setting a rate suggests that while councils should unite around the strategy of non-compliance the tactical question of *how* to fight (through deficit budgeting or not setting a rate) should be decided according to local circumstances.

Vauxhall CLP calls 'on all councils to take such action to ensure that they run out of money simultaneously eg by transferring assets out of the city to ensure that they run out of money at the same time.'

The Fire Brigades Union have moved an amendment which urges any councillor who through their personal circumstances would find themselves unable to support the GLLP statement to resign now with 'honour and dignity' as a positive statement that Tory policies are forcibly stopping democratically elected councillors from carrying out the manifesto they were elected on.

Several London boroughs have already adopted the FBU position on this. John Mills, a right-wing Labour councillor in Camden has recently announced his resignation.

Bow and Poplar Labour Party, coming from Tower Hamlets where a right-wing Labour group is pledged to abide by the ratecap limits on spending,

want the executive to 'explore the possibility of using sanctions against Labour Councils who do co-operate with the government.'

The Islington North amendment will probably cause some controversy with the union delegates because it urges the executive to work with the London Bridge Shop Stewards organisation.

'This special annual meeting notes the formation of the London Bridge Joint Shop Stewards organisation from the hit list boroughs in London and welcomes its commitment to fight ratecapping.

'It agrees to include the London Bridge organisation with any plans of campaign and further agrees to provide any material assistance that may be asked for.'

It's very important that we unite the trade unions, the Labour groups and constituencies in the boroughs to win the fight.

Different councils have achieved different levels of success on this front.

Some have held meetings with as many as 1,500 council workers to discuss ratecapping. Others have had lots of smaller meetings with their workforce.

It is also vital that we build support for Labour groups in each borough.

In Hackney you can afford to have a few right wing Labour councillors voting against a fight and the non-compliance resolution will still be carried because you have got a huge Labour majority.

In a borough like Camden, with a majority of seven it's a different story. If four right wingers vote with the Tories you can't get your policy through.

At the GLC the Labour group has not decided its policy yet. It's difficult to say which way it's going to jump. I'm fairly sure the group will adopt a non-compliance strategy.

But whether or not there will be sufficient numbers to vote in council is another question.

The aim of this conference must be achieve unity around a non-compliance strategy and to mobilise both trade unionists and constituencies in support of those councils which are beginning to fight.

Some councils in London, like Hackney and Islington, have no choice but to fight because they cannot afford to make the level of cuts required by Jenkin even if they wanted to.

The whole balances question is one of how much money is available. The people who know that are in the Town Halls.

Fortunately the government has set the rate limits so low that most councils are so far out of line on what they need to spend with Jenkins limits that they will have to go into confrontation.

could actually start reducing rates and rents.

We want our JSSCs to implement a full non-cooperation policy, to use strike actions, sit-ins, or whatever to support that, and to develop solidarity action with any borough that's attacked. We want councils to prepare budgets based on the needs of ordinary people in their boroughs.

The next time we call industrial action — and we're asking our unions to clearly consider it — we want it to be for real: part of a strategy to make the government change its mind. We want more than symbolic actions.

This is the last ditch in defence of the jobs that we have and the services we provide. That's not to say we won't support one-day actions, but our members expect that next time they're called out, it's for real industrial action in defence of their jobs.



Photo: GLC

**NEXT TO THE miners' strike the campaign to defend local government jobs and services is the biggest test currently confronting the labour movement. Last year the determined stand of Liverpool set an example to councils up and down the country.**

There's no doubt that Tory eyes will be on breaking the will of London councils in the months to come. Since last summer there has been debate and argument throughout the labour movement about the tactics councils should adopt.

As the London Labour Party opens its special local government conference, the basic issues are clear. But there is still a debate raging between the deficit budget tactic and that of not fixing a rate.

This is not the most fundamental issue. The first thing to understand is that non-compliance — and that means breaking the law! — is the only way to defend jobs and services. Second, that councils must stand together and build a united campaign across the whole labour movement.

Divisions between the different Labour authorities are a sure-fire way of guaranteeing that at least some authorities will crack and give the government its golden opportunity to divide and rule. This is the most significant fact for every delegate to the London Labour Party conference to grasp.

The response of the unions will be a determining factor in the success of a local government fightback. CAROL TURNER spoke to the secretaries of the two union campaigns in London, ED HALL for London Bridge, and JIMMY FITZPATRICK for Democracy for London.

## Democracy for London

DEMOCRACY FOR London's (DFL) — the GLC joint unions' campaign against abolition — priority at the moment is rate-capping. Abolition will mean devastation of jobs and services, but that's 14 or 15 months away. Rate-capping is less than three.

We're one of eleven rate-capped hit-list boroughs in London, and we are affiliated to London Bridge. The political direction of the campaign is a London Bridge decision and, as an affiliate, we support its policy.

The Greater London Labour Party (GLLP) special conference is a priority. The London Bridge policy is generally contained within the executive statement to conference — and if it isn't, it's being amended.

If that's passed the joint policy of the GLLP and London Bridge will be a united Labour group-union policy to defend jobs and services against rate-capping. Our aim is to engender unity within the different boroughs. United action is the order of the day: that's got to be solidarity, that's got to be strike action, that's got to be the defence of jobs and services.

DFL along with London Bridge is going to lobby special conference. London Bridge is issuing a policy statement and there'll be leaflets from the DFL and Save ILEA trade union campaign — calling for support for the policy of non-compliance passed at last year's Labour Party annual conference.

Our recommendation to the union is support for the conference statement issued by the London executive and support for the majority of the amendments to it, with the exception of Hackney.

Although trying to establish a firmer line — deficit budgeting — they apparently try to legitimise independent action by councils: a low-rate deficit budget should be decided locally by individual councils. We're trying to get a generalised policy for all Labour groups, which is why we've agreed the lowest common denominator: not fixing a rate.

In the argument over the best tactical approach, a deficit budget and a no-rate budget, we're plumping for a no-rate budget because we think that's the best way for a united campaign.

## London Bridge

THE SERIOUSNESS of what the government is proposing dawned on us at the beginning of last year, which is why joint shop stewards' committees (JSSCs) in London boroughs really got off the ground. London Bridge, the campaign of the JSSCs across London, met in Hackney on 5 March and we've pulled the 11 rate-capped boroughs in as the core of our campaign.

Through the autumn the campaign has consolidated into a rather powerful organisation. We are concerned with one issue: the financial cuts and the 1984 Rates Act.

The basis of our campaigning policy: not to cut jobs or services and to defend local democracy. We are absolutely of the view that we shouldn't save our own jobs through the mechanism of putting up rates and rents. If the Rate Support Grant were restored to London boroughs, you

# to save the cities

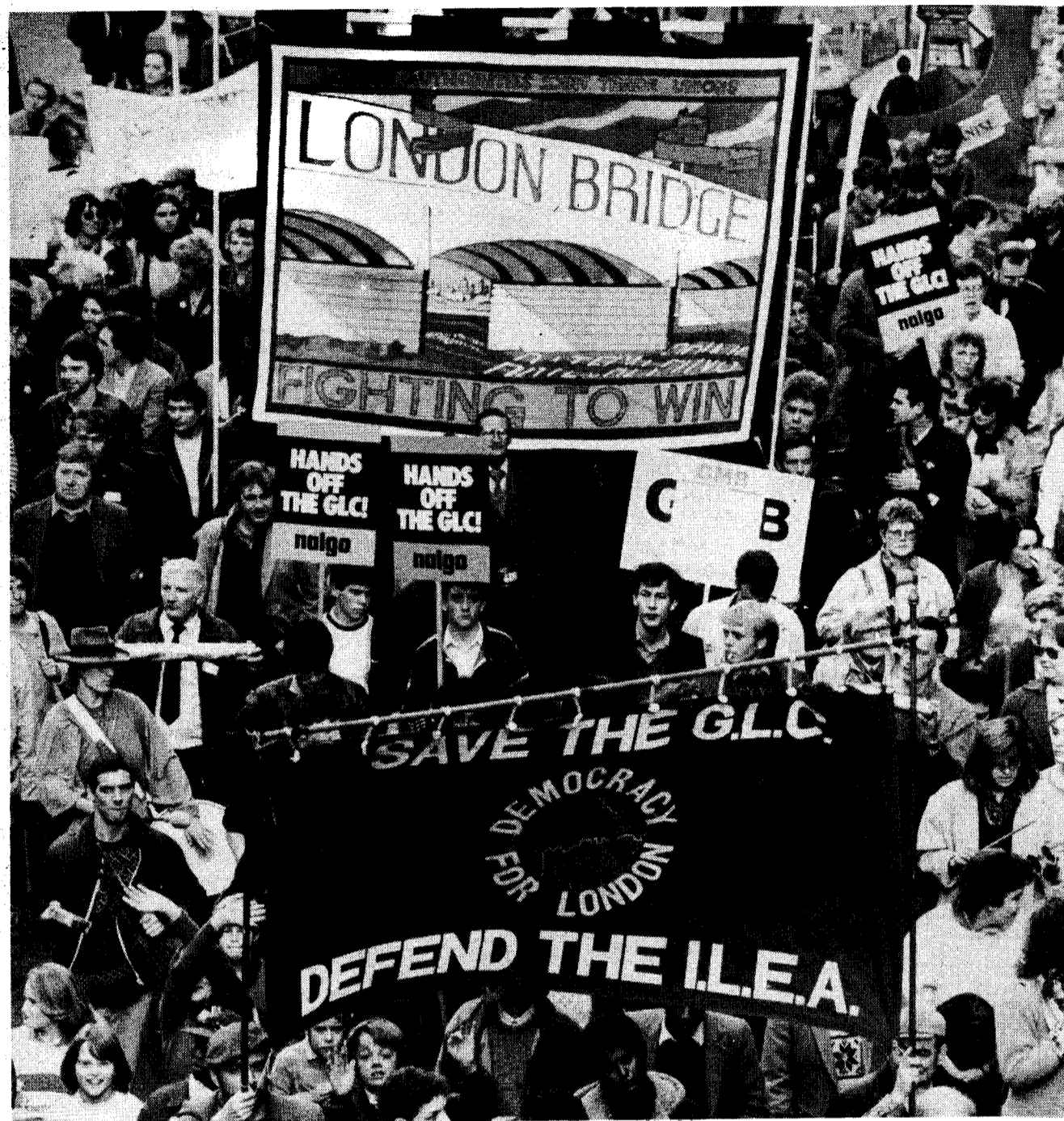


Photo: STEPHANO CAGNONI (Report)

## Labour Briefing

THE FOLLOWING article has been agreed by *London Labour Briefing* as its line on the struggle against rate capping. It appears as an editorial in this month's issue of that journal. Socialist Action fully supports this position.

IN THE WAKE of the government's latest announcements on rate-limits and cuts in overall local authority grants, the most important task for socialists involved in local government is to mount a massive resistance to rate-capping. This struggle could also be a crucial focus for saving the GLC and Met Counties from abolition.

By Philippa Jones,  
Hackney South and  
Shoreditch Labour Party

- The political basis for resistance is
- 1) the refusal to pass on Tory policies in any form — neither making cuts in jobs and services, nor increasing rents and rates,
  - 2) the demand to restore the Rate Support Grant to the level of 1979,
  - 3) non-compliance with the Rates Act and
  - 4) a refusal to seek individual solutions or negotiations. Unity between authorities must rest on these principles.

As we face the build-up to budget-making, it is time to put words into action. We must make clear to the national leadership of the Labour Party that we are determined to implement Labour Party policy and fulfill our obligations to the people who elected us. Their duty is to do the same.

Neil Kinnock in his New Year's message, and John Cunningham have both taken their 'stand' — they would rather break the poor than break the law. Our response must be to follow the NUM's lead and oppose the Tories' attacks with every political force that the labour movement can muster.

The greatest danger is that Labour councillors themselves will fail to stand by manifesto commitments for fear of taking illegal action. There is still time to call for their resignations 'without dishonour' and build a panel of comrades who are prepared to face the consequences.

Labour Party activists need to unite with trade-unionists, council tenants and community groups and keep up the maximum political pressure on councillors. The question of tactical options can be subsumed within the broader

strategic approach. In Hackney, the left is in a strong position having united the Labour Group and Labour Party around a deficit budget approach with the final decision on tactics being left in the hands of Labour Group.

In some other London boroughs and amongst trade-unionists in London Bridge, comrades have opted for not fixing a rate as their fighting option. In all authorities, including the GLC and ILEA, wherever one of the tactics can be won, councillors must be brought into line.

The question is not which tactic to choose — what really matters is that each authority does choose one (according to local conditions) and fights to win. The strength and resolution of the labour movement united across authorities and between Labour Party and town hall trade unions will be decisive. Over the next few weeks there will be enormous pressure on councils to negotiate with the government — the key issue here is that we are not prepared to negotiate away jobs and services.

If we take a united position from the 19 January Greater London Labour Party Conference on rate-capping which endorses the strategic approach and both tactical options then our major target is the TUC Day of Action on local government called 'Democratic Day', on 6 March.

### LABOUR BRIEFING NATIONAL SUPPLEMENT

We should aim to contribute to the TUC Day of Action by consolidating our political campaign. Budget day on March will also be a time for further action. To build for these events, Labour Parties must work alongside town hall trade unions, and with them take our struggle to the wider movement, calling workplace meetings and rallies, supporting community sector initiatives, uniting with women organisations, black groups and lesbian and gay groups.

And above all we need to link our struggle with the miners by holding joint meetings, building pickets at power stations and so on. The miner's ten months of heroic battle could be greatly strengthened by our determination to defend the gains working class people have made through democratic local government. And in turn, they make our victory more possible — together we can win! See you on 6 March!

want a united front with everybody doing the same thing. That's what we're going to the GLLP conference on.

The councillors who vote for illegality, non-compliance, know that they're exposing themselves to surcharge, disqualification, debarment from office, or indeed imprisonment. There's no easy decision being made.

That's why at the 17 October shop stewards' conference a London Bridge policy was agreed that any councillor who did not consider they could sustain that pressure could legitimately and honourably resign — it wouldn't be regarded as betrayal but as a positive statement; we could use those resignations and by-elections to campaign around a budget for community need and defence of jobs and services.

### Confidence

No councillor is going to expose themselves to those consequences without the confidence that they will be supported by their staff and by the community. Our members have repeatedly demonstrated over the last year — especially on 7 November when there were over 100,000 local authority workers on strike — their opposition to the government on rate-capping.

Local authority workers are prepared to defend their jobs and services, and if it comes to a fight with the government we will take that fight up. Any borough that's taken on, any group of workers that's taken on, can appeal for solidarity from the other boroughs and get a response.

Nobody can wave a magic wand and say they will get 150,000 local authority workers out on strike the

minute one person is sacked, but we will do everything in our power as shop stewards and convenors to ensure that there's solidarity action from every borough on the hit-list.

There's a fight on the cards, and we're preparing the membership. That's been underway for the past four months, and we've still got another three months of conferences and meetings where we can undertake education and agitation amongst the membership so that they are prepared to defend every job.

The local authorities have got to explain to the community that if the GLC goes and rate-capping comes in, a whole city is going to be devastated. We need their support. Whether that means rent strikes, demonstrations, lobbies, pickets, whatever — we will have to organise the biggest campaign of industrial action and civil disobedience yet to defend our jobs and services and the democratic control of our own communities.



The lesson from Liverpool last year is that of a united campaign that took in the Labour group, the unions and the community. Together they held mass demonstrations and strike action and they had a determined Labour group who were prepared to stand up

to the government.

The government weren't prepared to put the commissioners in to take over Liverpool. They weren't prepared to let Liverpool to default on the debts they had to the City of London. And this time it's not one authority, it's 18. I think the joint debt owed to the City by the 18 London authorities is somewhere in the region of £6000 million.

### Illegality

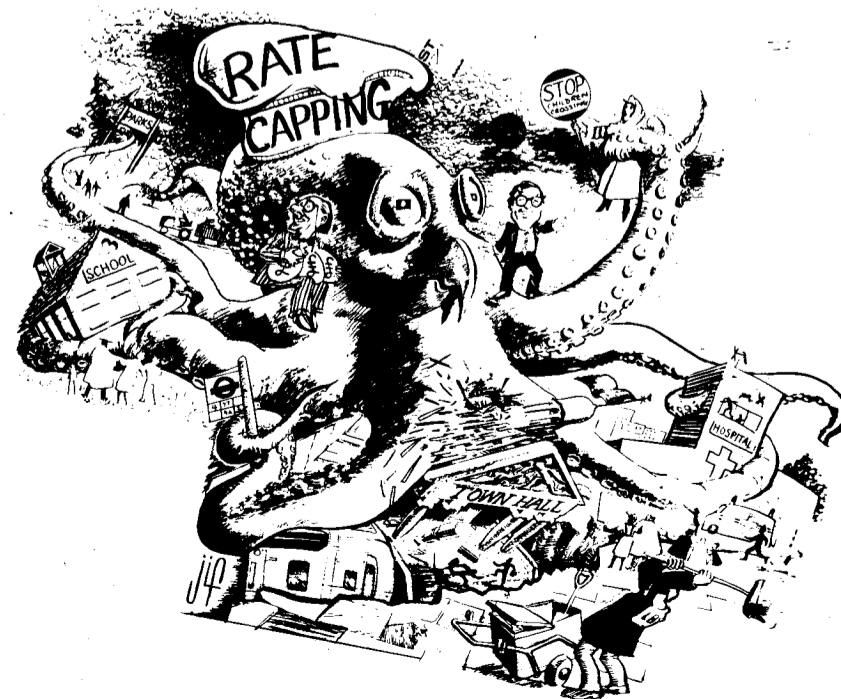
Councils either decide to sack workers or they say to the City 'we ain't paying your debt charges, we're keeping jobs and services' — that means going illegal. But it wouldn't be illegal to sack workers and pay the financial institutions!

Non-compliance as an instrument to challenge the government's basic policy of cutting jobs and services in local authorities to finance tax cuts in the next financial year is not on.

Deficit budgeting worked for Liverpool because they were one authority and they campaigned. We've got 18 different authorities, with 18 different levels of finance, who are going to run out of money at 18 different times over a period of 9-12 months.

With a no-rate policy those 18 different authorities should run out within two or three weeks of each other. They'll all be in the same boat.

We must have a joint united strategy for Labour controlled authorities, in conjunction with the trade unions, in conjunction with community organisations — and be prepared to mount a fight against this Tory onslaught.



# Kennedy- GO HOME!

WHEN SENATOR Edward Kennedy arrived in South Africa on 6 January, he expected the same rapturous reception which greeted his brother Bobby 10 years ago. But much has happened on the South African political scene in the last decade.

Most important is the development of the political consciousness of the black people, symbolised by the mushroom growth of the black and independent trade unions, the leftward development of the Black Consciousness Movement, and the advance of the black working class to the head of the struggle.

Kennedy's visit was hailed by the white liberals and that section of the black people that supports the popular frontist United Democratic Federation (UDF). Opposition came from the supporters of the National Forum (NF), principally from the Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO) and the Cape Action League (CAL).

The UDF — also known as 'Charterists' because they base themselves on the Freedom Charter which was drawn up by the Congress Alliance in 1955 and signed, among others, by the African National Congress (ANC) and the Transvaal Indian Congress — has as its strategic programme political freedom for all race groups, and seeks to unite them in a national drive to win political freedom for all. They see the liberation struggle as an end in itself.

The National Forum and its affiliates are more concerned with a direct attack on the capitalist system. It is capitalism, they say, which oppresses the working class (which is mainly black while the owners of the means of

production are mainly white).

Liberation in itself, they maintain, has done little to help the downtrodden workers in most African countries which have achieved political independence.

The Forum manifesto therefore stresses that: 'the struggle against apartheid is no more than a point of departure in our liberation effort. Apartheid will be eradicated with the system of capitalism.'

By Charlie Van Geldren

They have linked national and economic oppression and insist that the two cannot be separated.

These differences explain the different attitudes to Kennedy's reception. Greeted with open arms by Bishop Tutu and Winnie Mandela — UDF supporters — and hostility from AZAPO who met him with posters proclaiming 'Kennedy is a Yankee imperialist: we want a socialist Azania'.

The South African white liberals, including the Anglo-American business magnate Oppenheimer, will support the Charterists up to a point.

They will undoubtedly draw back when they see that the abolition of apartheid could mean the end of the migrant labour system which provides them with cheap labour and super-profits in the gold and diamond mines.

But they undoubtedly favour a move towards easing the explosive tensions within South Africa by some extension of the franchise to the blacks — but one which would leave the capitalist system intact.

## Capital

The National Forum and its supporters say this is just not on. For them the permanent revolution is a fact of life and not simply a theoretical trajectory.

Kennedy represents that section of the American ruling class which, for its own reasons, would like to see the worst features of apartheid concealed, while retaining the economic system which has proved such a profitable field for investment by American capital.

There is therefore some common ground between him and the Charterists. From the supporters of the National Forum he can only expect what he got — open hostility.

But even among those who welcomed the Senator to South Africa there must have been some confusion about some of his speeches. To take, for example, his remark that his fellow countrymen (sic) would never be able to understand the policy of

forceful displacement of black people from their homes in the designated 'white areas' and dumped in primitive wastelands in the so-called homelands.

Does this aspirant to the presidency of the United States know nothing of the history of his own country?

Does he not know of the Indians — those who were not exterminated by the white man's bullets — who were uprooted from their ancestral homes and dumped into reserves — exactly what the apartheid regime is currently doing to the black people? Does he remember the segregation laws in the South which were only brought to an end by the militant struggle of the black people themselves?

Does he not know that even today there are segregated housing estates in the South; that black people throughout the United States are still very much second-class citizens when it comes to job discrimination, housing, educational facilities, and so on?

If Kennedy wants to fight racism, let him go home and fight alongside the blacks, the Latinos in his own country. If he is for self-determination, let him show support for the freedom fighters of Puerto Rico.

The black people of South Africa, headed by the working class, will themselves throw off the shackles of apartheid and capitalism which today hold them in bondage. They will look for support to the workers of the world, and not to the Kennedys and their ilk.

## Truth!

THE 8 November issue of *De Waarheid* (The Truth), daily paper of the Dutch Communist Party, carried a major article challenging the official Soviet version of Trotsky's role in the revolution.

For the first time, the Communist Party daily gives a fundamentally accurate account of Trotsky's role in October Revolution and in the civil war period. On the question of the social fascist policy pursued by Stalin from 1929 to 1933, and Trotsky's call for a united front in opposition to the view of the Communist Party of the time, *De Waarheid* sides with Trotsky.

Trotsky's analysis of the character of the Soviet Union, in *Revolution Betrayed*, was also fundamentally correct, according to the Dutch CP.

The final section of the article dealt with the Moscow trials. 'Trotsky and the other accused,' says *De Waarheid*, 'were said to have worked with Hitler and the Japanese Mikado in organising industrial sabotage and poisoning Russian workers.'

'An impressive list of left wing intellectuals, writers, and politicians, such as Ehrenburg, Khrushov, Feuchtwanger, Dimitrov, Aragon, and the Ghandi-admirer Roman Rolland, issued public variations on the theme — Shoot the Mad Dogs!'

'Trotsky submitted himself in Mexico to a public trial — and was found innocent. But this fact received no international recognition. And to this day Trotsky has not been rehabilitated or given his due honour in the Soviet Union.'

'His books are still forbidden. And not a single West European Communist Party has protested against this', *De Waarheid* concluded.



## The Greens divided

1985 IS GOING to be a crucial year for the West German Green Party, the most radical force in the parliamentary politics of a major European country today. Their conference, however — held in Hamburg just before Christmas — gave little indication that the Greens are equipped to meet the challenges ahead.

Swept into parliament on the back of the powerful wave of protests by the German peace movement against the deployment of cruise and Pershing II missiles, and riding higher than ever before in the opinion polls, the Greens have yet to solve a basic strategic dilemma.

Are they to align themselves with the Socialist Party (SPD) in forging a new, red-green majority which could sweep the conservative CDU and their liberal coalition partners from power at both central and regional government level, or are they to remain in 'fundamental' opposition to all the established parties?

This issue dominated the Hamburg congress and split the party right down the middle. The national executive and the majority of the parliamentary party favour the 'fundamentalist' line, while some regions and a minority of Green MPs argue in favour of an alliance with the SPD, including the possibility of coalition government.

In the end, after heated and often vicious debates, a compromise which left the decision in the hands of the local and regional parties was adopted — at federal level, after all, there is no urgency to make a decision right now.

With the SPD-Green agreement in the state of

Hesse just having collapsed, and three important regional elections coming up in West Berlin, North Rhine-Westphalia (the important industrial heartland of West Germany, where the SPD is likely to lose its absolute majority) and the Saarland (where the SPD is led by Oskar Lafontaine, sometimes dubbed the 'German Benn'), the congress thus left local party activists without a clear political orientation.

By Gunter Minnerup

At the same time, the mass peace movement to which the Greens owe their electoral success has experienced some decline after its failure to prevent the deployment of the missiles, and its federal coordinating bureau nearly split up after demands by Christian groups to abandon its activism in favour of a period of 'reflection'.

Again the Greens were incapable of giving a lead and forced to steer a middle course between the Christian-pacifist groups and the pro-Moscow West German Communist Party.

At the heart of the Greens' problems lies a developing split between two factions: a reformist wing which sees its long-term role as the 'ecology and peace' conscience of social democracy, and a fundamentalist wing with delusions about its ability to replace the historical role of the organised workers' movement with its 'new politics'.

It is a choice between adaptation to the pressures of parliamentary *real politik* and an impotent sectarianism. For the time being, both wings are held together by their electoral success. Any serious setback on that front may well threaten the unity of the party.





THE EUROCOMMUNIST wing of the Communist Party around *Marxism Today* claim to base their politics on those of Antonio Gramsci — the leader of the Italian Communist Party in the mid-1920s whose *Prison Notebooks* constitute one of the greatest series of theoretical writings within Marxism.

*Marxism Today* seeks to counterpose Gramsci to the views of Lenin and Trotsky. They claim him as the originator of the theory of a 'peaceful transition to socialism' and the 'popular front/broad democratic alliance' strategy which forms the core of both wings of the Communist Party.

These claims are quite simply factually false — in fact the reverse of the truth. Gramsci advanced political positions explicitly opposed to both the idea of any peaceful transition to socialism and to a popular front alliance.

The only major first-hand report of Gramsci's immediate political views in prison, the *Athos Lisa* report, recorded clearly that the themes Gramsci was developing were those of the need for a military organisation capable of taking on the power of the bourgeois state — a military organisation conceived not in narrowly technical terms, but an essentially political one, and the importance of the intermediate slogan of a 'constituent assembly' — first as a means of winning allies for the proletariat in its struggle against the ruling class and subsequently as a terrain on which to fight against all the projects of peaceful reform. These were conceived of for remonstrating to the Italian working class that the only possible solution in Italy lay in proletarian revolution. An excellent introduction to Gramsci's views in period can be found in Quintin Hoare's introduction to both Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks* and his *Political Writings 1921 - 1926*.

By John Ross

But more important than second-hand accounts of Gramsci's views are his own writings. These show the essential continuity of the framework of his analysis both before and after he was imprisoned by Mussolini's dictatorship.

In the famous *Lyons Theses*, written in 1926 after the seizure of power by Mussolini, Gramsci advanced two central slogans for the struggle against the fascist regime. The first was 'republican assembly on the basis of workers' and peasants' committees; workers' control of industry; land to the peasants'. The second was 'workers' and peasants' government'.

## Prison

These slogans are obviously in continuity with the positions reported to be held by Gramsci in prison. They are classic Marxist demands of the struggle against dictatorship — exactly those of a constituent assembly and workers' and peasants' alliance. They are identical in all fundamentals to the slogans advanced by Trotsky in the fight against fascism.

Far from Gramsci favouring a popular front he wrote in the *Lyons Theses* that: 'The possibility that action by so-called democratic anti-fascist groups might bring down the fascist regime would only exist if these groups succeeded in neutralising the activity of the proletariat, and in controlling a mass movement that would enable it to break the latter's development. The function of the democratic bourgeois opposition is rather to collaborate with fascism, in preventing the reorganisation of the working class and the realisation of its class programme.'

Gramsci understood that the fundamental role of the bourgeois opposition to Mussolini was to *undermine* the sole means that could actually fight against the fascist regime — ie the mass struggle of the working class and peasants.

# Gramsci, Lenin and Trotsky



Gramsci

Trotsky and Lenin

Gramsci explained to the political commission of the Lyons Congress: 'if the Mussolini government had fallen, whatever the means which had caused it to fall, an extremely deep political crisis would have opened up in Italy, whose development no one could have foreseen or halted. But the Opposition forces too knew this, and they therefore excluded right from the beginning 'one' way of bringing fascism down, which was the only possible one, ie the mobilisation and struggle of the masses. By excluding this sole possible way to bring down fascism, the Opposition in reality kept fascism upright, and were the most effective prop of the regime in dissolution.'

In short, far from favouring a 'popular front' alliance against Mussolini, Gramsci explained that the role of the capitalist opposition was actually to aid Mussolini's regime by restraining the struggle of the working class — the sole force that could practically smash fascism. The bourgeois forces were far more frightened of the working class than of fascism. This, once again, was to be the classic

theme which Trotsky outlined in the struggle against fascism in Spain and France. The 'popular front' orientation, by attempting to lock the working class within capitalist limits, actually sabotaged the struggle against fascism.

## Stages

As regards the second key view of *Marxism Today* and the Communist Party, the 'stages' theory of revolution and the concept of the broad democratic alliance within it the theses drafted by Gramsci for the Lyons Congress explicitly stated, 'there is no possibility of a revolution in Italy that is not the socialist revolution.'

The theses argued that, 'In Italy, there is a confirmation of the thesis that the most favourable conditions for the proletarian revolution do not necessarily always occur in those countries where capitalism and industrialism have reached the highest level of development, but may instead arise where the fabric of the capitalist

system offers least resistance, because of the structural weakness, to an attack by the revolutionary class and its allies.'

Gramsci finished the Lyons Theses by stating that the formula of a workers and peasants government was *not* an 'intermediate' stage of the revolution.

Gramsci argued, 'The party cannot conceive of a realisation of this slogan (workers and peasants government) except as the beginning of a direct revolutionary struggle: ie of a civil war waged by the proletariat, in alliance with the peasantry, with the aim of winning power.'

'The party could be led into serious deviations from its task as leader of the revolution if it were to interpret the workers' and peasants' government as corresponding to a real phase of the development of the struggle for power: in other words, if it considered that this slogan indicated the possibility for the problem of the state to be resolved in the interests of the working class in any other form than the dictatorship of the proletariat.'

In order to fight for the dictatorship of the proletariat Gramsci conceived that the necessary alliance of workers and peasants must be realised through 'workers' and peasants' committees'. He advanced as central that, 'The slogan of workers' and peasants' committees must be considered as a synthetic formula for all the party's activity, insofar as it proposes to create an organised united front of the working class. The workers' and peasants' committees are organs of unity of the working class, whether mobilised for a struggle of an immediate nature or for political actions of a broader scope.'

'The slogan calling for the creation of workers and peasants committees ... is a political solution and an agitational slogan appropriate for a whole period of the party's existence and activity. It makes evident and concrete the need for the workers to organise their forces, and counterpose them in practice to those of all groups of bourgeois origin and nature.'

## Origin

Here, once again, Gramsci makes it absolutely clear that this united front based on the alliance of workers and peasants, was *counterposed* to 'all groups of bourgeois origin'. The role of these workers' and peasants' committees was that of: 'The "united front" of anti-fascist and anti-capitalist struggle which the communists are striving to create and (which) must aim at being an organised united front ie at being based on bodies around which the masses as a whole can regroup and find a form.'

This view is identical in every substantial element to Trotsky's famous characterisation of Soviets as 'the highest form of the united front' and his graphic description of their role in the 'Transitional Programme of the Fourth International.'

'The deepening of the social crisis will increase not only the sufferings of the masses but also their impatience persistence and pressure. Ever new layers of the oppressed will raise their heads and come forward with their demands. Millions of toil worn "little men" (sic), to whom the reformist leaders never gave a thought, will begin to pound insistently on the doors of the workers organisations. The unemployed will join the movement. The agricultural workers, the ruined and semi-ruined farmers, the oppressed of the cities, the women workers, housewives, proletarianise layers of the intelligensia — all of these will seek unity and leadership.'

'How are the different demands and forms of struggle to be harmonised, even if only within the limits of one city? History has already answered this question: through soviets.'

'Soviets are not limited to an a priori party programme. They throw open their doors to all the exploited. Through these doors pass representatives of all strata, drawn into the general current of the struggle. The organisation, broadening out together with the movement, is renewed again and again in its womb. All political currents of the proletariat can struggle for leadership of the soviets on the basis of the widest democracy.'

In short on each fundamental feature — on the alliance of exploited and oppressed *against* the bourgeoisie, on the inevitable necessity of the working class to defend itself against the violence of the bourgeoisie, on workers' and peasants' committees as the fundamental organisations for cementing the struggle — Gramsci stood *not* counterposed to but precisely on the basis of the fundamental positions of Marx, Lenin, and Trotsky.

The attempt by *Marxism Today* to enlist Gramsci in *their* system of class alliances is a sheer historical fraud. On every fundamental question of this type Gramsci's positions were those which Trotskyists defend — that is not the alliance of the working class with the bourgeoisie but an alliance of all the exploited and oppressed against the bourgeois order.

**STUDENTS**

**Victory at Polytechnic of North London**

AT A MEETING of 1500 students last Thursday, 10 January, a decision was made to accept the offer made to the students by the new Director of PNL. Described by student union sabbaticals as a '90 per cent victory', National Front organiser Patrick Harrington is to be 'educated', (is this possible?!), off campus, totally isolated from other students.

Unofficially, all the other students on the same course as him will continue to be given lectures on campus. This represents a complete climbdown by the college authorities in the face of a long and bitter struggle waged by the students at PNL and other students and trade unionists who have supported the campaign.

This victory has been achieved despite the failure of the NUS NOLS-dominated leadership to support the struggle at PNL against fascist infiltration of higher and further education colleges. December NUS conference registered its disapproval of the NUS leadership's failure to support students at PNL who have been beaten up, arrested and even imprisoned for opposing Harrington's presence at PNL.

In future, demands insisting that the NUS leadership actually organise the membership to support struggles such as the one at PNL, must be central to campaigns against fascists like Harrington.

However, the struggle is not over yet. Sixteen students still face charges arising from pickets and anti-Harrington activities at PNL. If these students are imprisoned a campaign to release them must become an immediate priority for all student activists.



**Attention all supporters**

ALL SUPPORTERS are urged to put emergency motions to Labour clubs and UGMs, condemning the arrest of leading Irish activist Maive O'Shea.

Speakers from the Labour Committee on Ireland should be contacted to speak at such meetings if required. Apart from the obvious importance of opposing the State's extending use of the PTA against Irish activists in Britain, the extremely successful fringe meeting on Ireland at December's NUS conference indicates growing support for the work and activities of the LCI in Labour clubs and student unions.

**Militant fights black caucus**

Anonymous leaflet circulating in Liverpool

In Liverpool, the campaign by the black caucus and support group against the appointment of Militant supporter Sampson Bond as race relations adviser continues to gain support. Militant, however, has refused to meet the demands of the black caucus for the redeployment of Bond, and the readvertisement of his post. The following interview with STEVE FRENCH, spokesperson for the black caucus, shows that Militant will pay a heavy price for their hostility to black sections.

What point has the campaign reached so far?

There's another meeting of the black caucus and support group being called for Monday (13 January) and we're hoping that what becomes of that meeting is a full go-ahead in the lobbying and campaigning for the redeployment of Bond and the readvertisement of the post he holds. As we know, the black community groups still aren't communicating with Bond, and the unions have come out in full support of us.

We've got NALGO, TGWU, GMBATU, NUPE, ASTMS, the trades council and the joint shop stewards' committee. We've got 11 Labour wards and 2 constituencies in support. And we hope that the support will grow.

What were we hoping for out of today's stewards' meeting (9 January to build support among stewards for the 1985 campaigning against the government) is that people would be asking questions and addressing the meeting to the problem that the city council's faced over the last couple months over the Bond issue and race relations as a whole on Merseyside, and in particular in Liverpool as regards the city council's function.

We were hoping that the unions such as NALGO, TGWU, GMBATU, would be saying to the city council and in particular to the Militant Tendency, 'if you want our support in the campaign, then the best thing to do would be to try and reach a resolution in the matter because there were a lot of black people on the march for services and to fight against the Tory cuts last year'.

If they want us to be a part of that fight this year, then they have got to recognise the strength that we have with us. We're also hoping that once we've had our meeting on Monday we'll be able to get people such as Russell Proffit and other Brent councillors and workers down there and make it more of a national campaign.

Possibly we'll even call on people like Ken Livingstone, Neil Kinnock and others to come up and talk on race policies that are going on around the country. On Merseyside it just doesn't seem to be happening at all either within the city or the county really as regards positive action programmes.

How has the council been behaving over positive action in recent months in general?

There have been no dealings with the council over any particular organisation and services as yet, but we can have people like Derek Hatton, Tony Mulhearn and others finding an opportunity to say, 'Look, we are doing something for the black community'.

And I think that's what's going to happen in the next couple of months if people do approach the city council. I mean there are leaks going around that they are doing things in the Chinese community, the Somali community and Asian community in order to gain their support and break the support we've got from these particular sections.

But we hope that these groups do realise that this campaign we've got isn't just about the Bond issue but about all race relation matters that the city council has ignored for a long

time. If they're going to accept the 30 gold pieces and sell us out with regards to support, then in the future they're going to find it very difficult to gain support from other black and ethnic organisations in their campaigns when they city council decides to withdraw the funding from any particular organisation.

That's what we've got to look out for because that's where unity will break down when we find that people have gone against the wishes of our campaign



Photo: TIM RIGBY  
Hatton  
How successful has the boycott of Sam Bond's post been?

It's been quite successful although we've found out that there's been one telephone call through to Bond by the telephonist. NALGO are taking that up, but as far as I know, there've been no black or ethnic organisations dealing with Bond although he did go to the Chinese Pagoda Centre just before Christmas. But that was a public meeting — anyone could go in — and no one from the Chinese community spoke to him about race relations on Merseyside.

So far as we're concerned the boycott is working quite effectively, and when unions have been talking to the Labour Party, they have also been looking at the Bond issue. The TGWU is really our ace card as the Labour Party want to get the TGWU support in this campaign against the Tory cuts.

The TGWU have got to consider their dispute they've got with the Labour Party at this moment over the Bond issue.

**Defend the PTA victims!**

Five Irish people are now facing conspiracy charges following the recent arrests under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. In Birmingham a defence campaign has been set up focussing on the two local Irish in Britain Representation Group (IBRG) members Peter Lynch and Dr Moira O'Shea have been charged with conspiracy to cause explosions and bail has so far been refused.

Dr O'Shea works part-time for the NHS at the Connolly Hospital Day Centre in Birmingham, following decades of service as a psychiatrist. Worries over her health — she is 65 and suffers from arthritis, bronchitis and a varicose ulcer — goes alongside concern for her patients who are now left unsupported. Moira's medical reputation as a tireless and humane doctor has produced a storm of protest from her co-workers. She is an active member of ASTMS, and

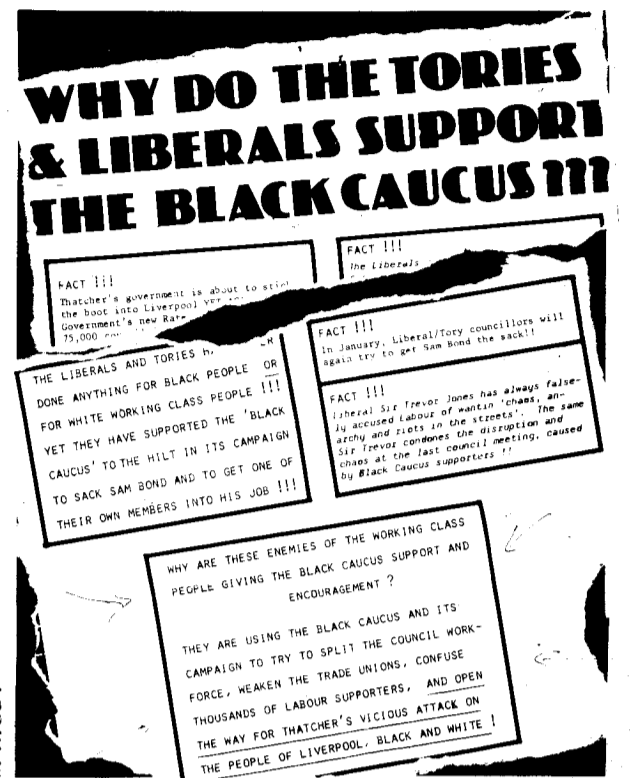
as a fellow member stated: 'She has always raised the issue of Ireland in a perfectly legitimate way.' The local divisional council sent a banner and a representative to the picket following her arrest.

By Anita Richards

Christine Crawley, Euro MP, and three Labour councillors have condemned the use of the PTA against her and Peter, and Roy Hattersley has expressed concern.

Birmingham Trades Council has been at the forefront of the defence campaign, and on 6 January it held a meeting at its Centre for the Unemployed, which was attended by over 60 people. Representative from Labour Committee on Ireland, Irish in Britain Representation Group, Troops Out Movement, and from ASTMS and District Labour Party agreed to set up a defence campaign which will be in solidarity with campaigns in defence of the other three arrested and for repeal of the PTA.

There have been local pickets and vigils almost daily, and the campaign is planning to involve a wide range of leading members of the Irish community, and local MPs, and civil



We feel that the TGWU won't withdraw their support because people have already tried to achieve that through the constitution and rule books etc and they've been unable to do so.

We've been assured by one of their officials that he feels there's no way TGWU support will be taken away from us. I mean, we can see how with the joint shop stewards or the GMBATU support can be taken away by different resolutions concerning the constitution, but we know with the TGWU that won't happen.

NALGO are very adamant that if Bond is redeployed to any other job they don't want to see him in any other position with regards to race of the black community.

At the moment we are going for the redeployment of Bond. We were going just for the readvertisement of the job, but since Bond's in the job, NALGO's got to support him getting redeployed somewhere else in the City. We suggest that he goes to the architect's department where he came from in Brent.

We've already had comments from Russell Proffit who said that in his two boroughs, Lewisham

and Brent, Bond would never get a job as race adviser. That's someone who works for Brent, is a councillor for Lewisham, is very active in the race field and knows most of the people who are active in the race field in London, and has never come across the name of Sampson Bond in any matter.

We've now really got to get down to looking at Bond's application that he made which is very vague with regards to the work he has done. We could prove he's been misleading people at the interview with regard to his application and his statements at interview, and we'll have a better chance as well of getting Bond removed from his race relations job, because we feel that he hasn't got any expertise in the race field that he could offer to the black community not only in Liverpool but elsewhere.

If the city council want to put him into the publicity department of the central support unit or whatever, they can do so as long as he has got no titles as race adviser or anything to do with race relations in Liverpool.

● Reproduced by permission of Merseyside Labour Briefing.

liberties and labour movement figures. Press Officer for the campaign, Mary Pearson stated, 'The defence campaign has been established because local people are so angry that these innocent people were arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and charged under the Conspiracy Law. We are convinced that Moira O'Shea and Peter Lynch are innocent. The Prevention of Terrorism Act and the Conspiracy Laws are pieces of legislation that the South African government would be proud of — they are so extreme in their repression.' The campaign is also calling for public inquiry into the police action in the arrests.

The number one task at present is to get Moira, Peter and the others out of prison, and to end their

ordeal as soon as possible. This will also give the campaign against the PTA some of its best activists back. Peter and Moira's involvement in Irish politics leaves no doubt where they stand on Irish unity and British withdrawal, but in accordance with their wishes the Birmingham campaign is committed to the single issue of securing their release and the dropping of the charges. This cannot but bring into question the use of the PTA and indeed its existence.

Information can be obtained from the Moira O'Shea/Peter Lynch Defence Campaign, c/o Birmingham Centre for Unemployed, 448 Stratford Road, Sparkbrook, Birmingham. Press Officer Mary Pearson 021-773 8683.

# More support needed at Greenham

**THE PRESSURES** of the winter months are allowing the government to press forward in their campaign to demoralise and smash up the women at Greenham Common peace camp. Over the last few weeks harassment has been steadily stepped up.

Combined with the apalling bad weather this has made just surviving at Greenham a full-time job. Support and solidarity of the most basic kind is now needed to ensure that the camp continues to exist.

Women are presently enduring daily evictions, constant harassment and physical violence. It means that possessions, including the necessities for survival, are constantly removed by bailiffs.

The women are unable to regularly collect wood, keep fires going or maintain shelters. They are suffering the most extreme cold and hardship. In addition now almost every public facility, including hotels and bars, in Newbury refuse service for camp women.

Consequently, numbers at the camp have dwindled on some occasions recently. The women are dependent on material aid from outside just to ensure a basic presence there continues through the winter months. In particular, frequent supplies

of hot food, wood and other fuel, candles, waterproof sleeping bags and bedding are desperately needed.

**By Anne Kane, Glasgow Women for Peace**

Women in London Greenham groups have begun to organise to coordinate more effective support for the camp. Food supplies and rotas for cruise watches are being planned, and it is hoped to further build a support and communication network from the women's peace conference, sponsored by CND, later in the year.

Women elsewhere must follow this example and try to organise to give the camp the vital support needed to hold out through the winter.

● All women in London are invited to attend the next London meeting to coordinate support for the camp on Friday 25 January at 144 Caledonian Road, at 7.30pm.

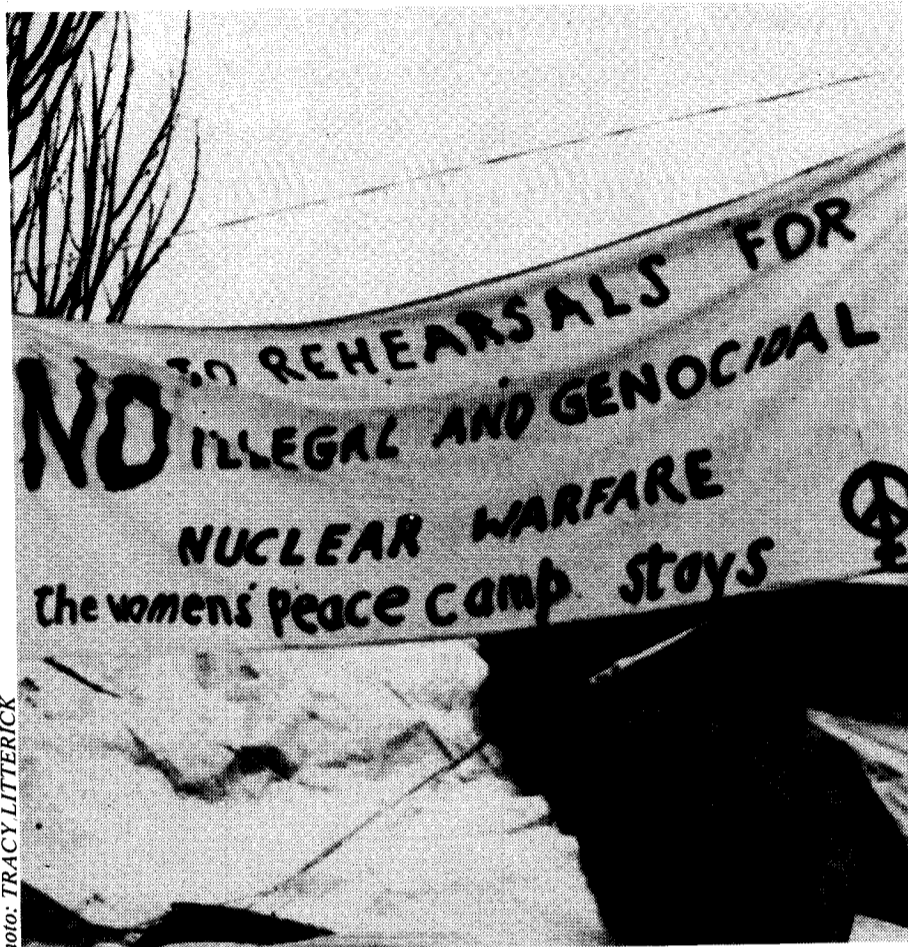


photo: TRACY LITTERICK

## Women's peace conference planned

**LAST WEEKEND'S** national council of CND heard a six-woman delegation explain why a conference of all women active in the peace movement must be a number one priority for 1985 — and agreed to help peace women organise one for June or July this year.

Delegation spokesperson, Annette Taberner, who had travelled from Blackpool to be there, explained to council why women — a central part of the campaign against the new generation missiles — urgently need to coordinate their efforts.

Activities in support of the Greenham camp, as well as an exchange of local experiences and information will be the main components of the weekend conference.

And it is hoped to set up a network of women in-

involved in peace activities up and down the country.

**By Carol Turner**

Despite a few lame protests over the 'technicalities' from some men who still aren't sure that women organising autonomously is a good thing, the council voted without opposition, to support the demand held over from CND's annual conference last December.

Details are still to be worked out but an interim steering committee — of

women from the delegation, representing among others the Women's Peace Alliance, together with women members of CND national council — has been set up to start the work of organising what will be a huge event.

All women's organisations with an involvement in this issue are invited to send representatives to the steering committee, which will be meeting on Saturday 19 January, 2pm and Saturday 2 February, 6pm — at County Hall, London; and on Sunday 3 March — no venue yet fixed.

● For more details contact: Judith Hanna at CND's HQ, on 01-263 0977; or Annette Taberner, on Blackpool 895353.



photo: TRACY LITTERICK

**Manchester Rally against the Prevention of Terrorism Act**  
 jointly sponsored by:  
 Labour Committee on Ireland  
 Manchester City Labour Party  
 Irish in Britain Representation Group  
 7.30pm, Monday 21 January  
 Manchester Town Hall  
 Basement Theatre  
 speakers will be:  
 Christine Crawley MEP  
 Deirdre O'Shea (Dr O'Shea's daughter)  
 Miriam James (London Secretary LCI)  
 Father Raymond Murray from Armagh  
 (co-author of *The Birmingham Six*)

## We're on the move!

**SOCIALIST ACTION** is moving very soon. We are making the move to improve our efficiency and to avoid the heavy rent increases which are due on our present premises. It will save large amounts of money that, under the terms of our present lease, we would have to spend on repairs.

We are adding to our typesetting equipment by purchasing a new machine — considered to be one of the most reliable on the market. It has the added advantage for the future that for an extra £3500 we could run another keyboard on the same typesetter, thus improving our output facilities. And beside this we are buying a guillotine and a new camera.

With the better conditions a new building will provide, and the new equipment, we can increase productivity and improve standards. This can only be of benefit to Socialist Action and all the other political campaigns we serve.

But these improvements cost money.

We will have to pay for the move — shifting our

printing equipment means hiring a crane, for example. In collaboration with a sympathetic architect we plan to build work rooms and offices, and that means erecting partitioning and paying labour.

The new equipment means our printshop needs a big cash injection. And finally, there will be plumbing and electrical works, and painting to do.

This is why we are appealing to you to make a donation to our £50,000 fund drive so that we can finance all these improvements and put Socialist Action on a sound financial footing.

● Please make cheques payable to IRG Development Fund, and send them to 328 Upper Street, London N1 2XP.



## NAC launches new campaign

**THE HIGH Court** ruling that no contraceptive or abortion information or treatment can be given to young women under 16 is a serious attack on their rights as well as a direct threat to the role of doctors.

But it is more than that. It is the latest challenge to the abortion rights that women have fought for and won in the last 20 years.

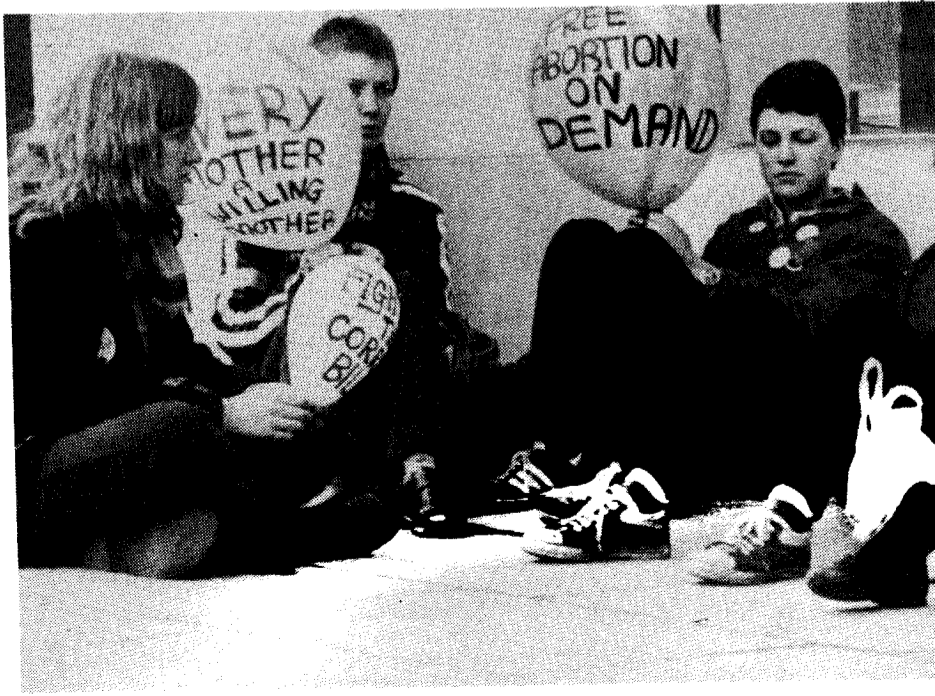
The National Abortion Campaign has responded,

and a well-attended meet in London recently launched a campaign to reverse the decision.

NAC are producing an action guide and a petition as part of that campaign to change the court decision.

We reproduce the petition below so that NAC activists can start now building support in the local areas.

● For more information contact: NAC, Wesley House, 70 Great Queen Street, London WC2B 5AX.



## NAC petition

To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Parliament assembled. The Humble Petition of UK Residents Sheweth That to prevent unwanted pregnancies amongst young women under sixteen years of age the DHSS Circular of December 1980 should be fully implemented, wherefore your Petitioners pray that your Honourable House do urge the Secretary of State for Social Services that:

If the House of Lords upon Appeal in the case of *Gillick v West Norfolk & Wisbech AHA* and *Another* do uphold the decision of the Court of Appeal this would leave many young women in danger of unwanted pregnancies and prevent doctors from giving treatment they feel necessary for the health of their patients and the law should be changed to allow doctors to give abortion and contraceptive advice and treatment as set out in the DHSS Circular on the organisation and development of family planning service.

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray, etc.

# A Socialist ACTION

# Kinnock in Nicaragua



ONE OF the few useful things Neil Kinnock has done since he became leader of the Labour Party has been his trip to Nicaragua for the inauguration of SLN president Daniel Ortega.

On returning to London Kinnock made it clear that his concern was not at all for a socialist future for Nicaragua. He warned, 'everyone should see that the Nicaraguans are not obliged by the force of poverty and war to move towards the Eastern bloc.'

Nevertheless Kinnock was also forced unambiguously to rebut the American government's lies on Nicaragua. He stated at Heathrow airport on his return to Britain, 'in terms of respect for human rights, freedom of expression, absence of racial repressive measures (Nicaragua) deserves the title of democracy.' Kinnock condemned Arturo Cruz, leader of the most active pro-American party, as 'cynical and opportunist.'

The press campaign to

discredit the visit has therefore already started. The *Sunday Times* ran a piece this week condemning Kinnock for failing to 'hear all points of view'. The *Times* on Monday homed in on its front page with an article headlined 'Kinnock warms to Castro'. Doubtless Thatcher will denounce People for 'naive' illusions in the Nicaraguan government.

All this makes it still more urgent that the labour movement uses Neil Kinnock's visit to get out the real facts on

Nicaragua. Stuart Holland MP, in particular, has done a very fine job in pushing awareness of the issues at stake in Central America through the Labour Party. His pressure undoubtedly helped bring about Neil Kinnock's visit. But the urgent need is for organisation within the Labour Party to take up the issues of Nicaragua and Central America.

Precisely because of the widespread international support for the Nicaraguan elections, the United States is rapidly stepping up its armed attacks on the country. Increasing reports of massacres carried out by the American backed forces in the north of Nicaragua are now coming out of the country.

Although the United

States government has officially stopped giving aid to the 'contras' the real state of affairs was clearly brought out in a major investigation in Monday's *International Herald Tribune* — the international paper produced by the New York Times and the *Washington Post*.

The *Herald Tribune* found: 'Honduras and El Salvador have replaced the United States as key sources of aid to

Nicaraguan rebels ... Israel had also increased its aid to the rebels, providing more weapons and advice.'

'Although the three countries began assisting the rebels several years ago, the level of their support and its importance to the insurgents increased as assistance from the United States diminished ...

'El Salvador and Honduras are impoverished nations heavily dependent

on US aid ... Administration officials said this indirect method of aiding the rebels followed a pattern set in 1982 and 1983 when Honduras supplied the insurgents with more than 6,000 Belgian automatic rifles.

'The Hondurans gave the rebels the rifles, which a former Honduran military officer said were 'like new' after the Honduran Army got new automatic rifles from the

United States.'

In short the United States is continuing to pump arms to the counter-revolutionary butchers in Nicaragua despite every statement it makes to the contrary. Socialists in the Labour Party must use the publicity generated by Kinnock's visit to redouble their efforts to build support for the revolution in Nicaragua and get out the truth on Thatcher's complicity with Reagan.

## New Caledonia: Independence leaders murdered

TWO LEADERS of the Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS) were shot dead by police in New Caledonia last Saturday after a weekend of rioting between European settlers and the FLNKS freedom fighters.

The Kanaks are demanding independence from France. The press have attempted to portray their struggle as that of a band of savages on the warpath to divert attention away from the cause of the revolt.

The truth is that French Caledonia has launched continual attacks on the Kanaks, stealing their land, practising rampant racism and assassinating independence leader Pierre Declercq in September 1981.

Following the recent elections in November, which 80 per cent of the Kanak population boycotted, the native rural population rose up and occupied the 'Caldoche', white settler lands and their roads, calling for the release of their leaders arrested during the election and for a declaration making the election null and void.

The Kanaks set up a provisional government to lay the basis for 'a future state of Kanaky' free from French colonial domination.

By Valerie Coultas

Their demands are strongly opposed by the white settler population which wishes to keep control of what it has stolen — the raw materials such as nickel, as well as the island's favourable position in the Pacific for trade.

Following the two recent killings the Mitterrand government announced a new state of emergency, sending 1000

more gendarmes and paramilitary police to New Caledonia to 'reinforce law and order'. French forces now total 3,250.

The murder of the two Kanak leaders, El Machoro and Marcelo Monaro took place early Saturday near La Foa, 80 kilometres from the capital, after the FLNKS had occupied an abandoned farmhouse.

### Police

Police stationed behind armoured cars used bull horns to demand that they surrender.

Thirty minutes later another call to surrender was issued by the police and at that point Machoro and Manora, leading other militants, emerged from the farmhouse.

Sharpshooters shot Machoro and Manora in cold blood. The bullet that hit Machoro entered through his breast near the shoulder.

El Machoro, 38, was a leader of the Kanaks. He had been named security minister in the Kanak provisional government.

The High Commission in New Caledonia claimed that the two leaders were accidentally killed when orders had been given only to wound.

### Provisional

Jean Marie Tjibaou, president of the Kanak provisional government disagreed, arguing that the murder was a 'barbarous act' that 'created a new situation in the struggle of the Kanak people for independence'.

He made it clear that he would give no support to the French government's Pisani proposals which envisage a neo-colonial solution for the colony, with France giving up sovereignty but retaining responsibility for internal and external security.

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