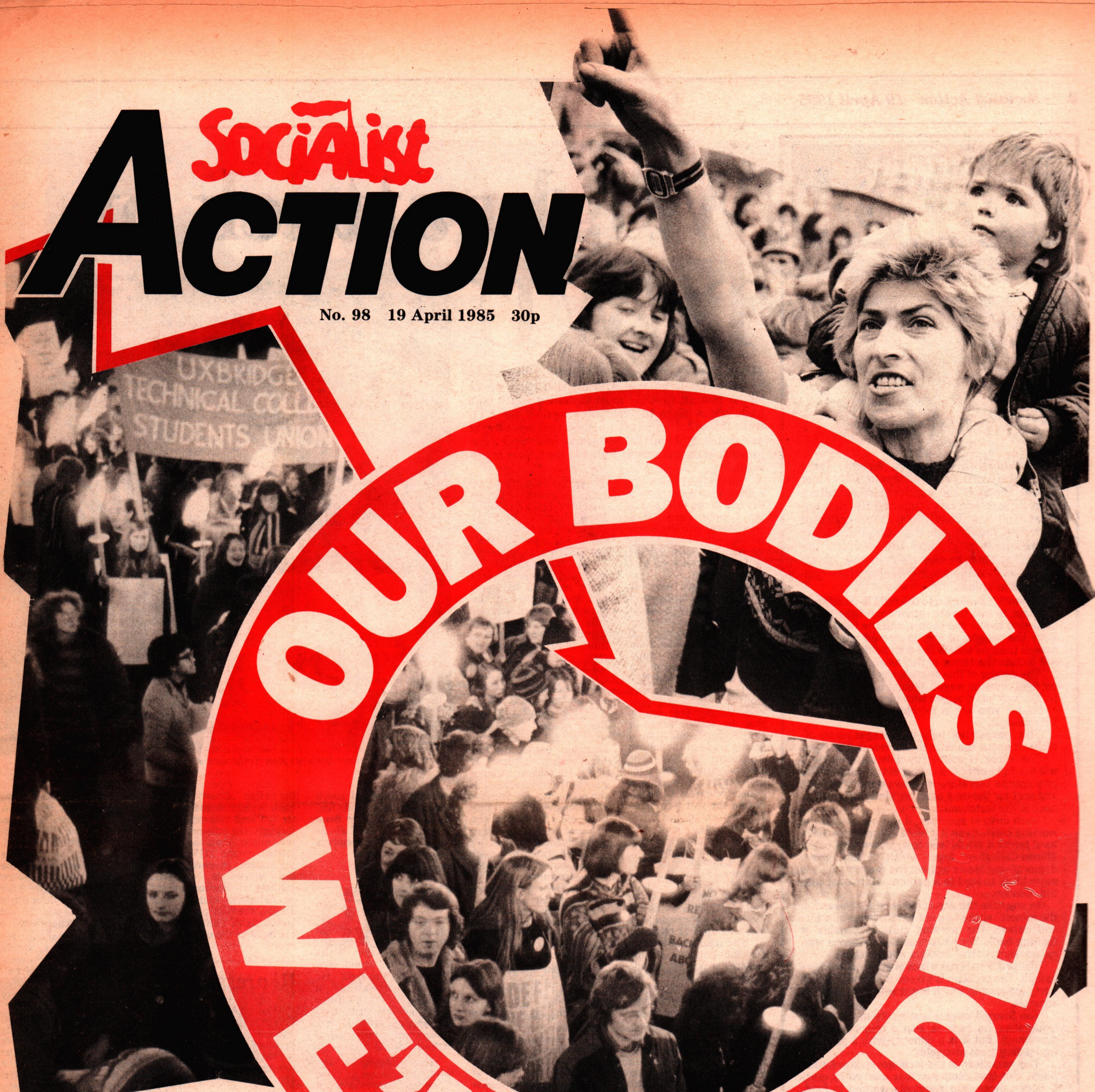


A **SOCIALIST** ACTION

No. 98 19 April 1985 30p



OUR BODIES WILL DECIDE

ENOCH POWELL's Unborn Children (Protection) Bill has been rushed through parliament and has its final reading on 3 May. If it becomes law the anti-abortionists will be rubbing their hands with glee. Ever since John Corrie's anti-abortion Bill was defeated in 1980 they have been looking for a back door method of attacking the 1967 Abortion Act.

The key point about the Powell Bill, as its title implies, is that it gives the embryo legal status. This could easily lead to abortion and contraceptives, such as the coil and the morning-after pill, being made illegal in the courts.

The Bill is directly aimed at banning experimentation on the human embryo. This research, is invaluable for the treatment of infertility through the method of in vitro fertilisation.

If passed it will prevent research into the cause of infertility, handicap and new methods of contraception. It could lead to 'licensed motherhood', where the secretary of state could determine who can and who cannot have test tube babies.

The resurgence of right wing moralism in the Tory party, with the rise of Thatcher, has given rich soil to anti-abortionists. The overwhelming

majority of the Tories voted for Powell's Bill at its second reading. To the disgrace of the Labour Party, which has a pro-choice policy, the majority of Labour MPs present

FIGHT POWELL'S BILL

voted for the Bill. Forty four for, only 41 against. Among those who went into the pro-Powell lobby were three shadow cabinet ministers — Donald Dewar, Michael Cocks and John Smith. One hundred and twenty two Labour MPs failed to turn up to vote!

John Corrie's attack in 1980 was defeated by the huge mobilisation of the labour movement through the TUC-sponsored demonstration in October '79. During the year-long

miners' strike, women showed the commitment to the struggle for jobs by standing solid with the NUM. Now it's the turn of the labour movement to rally in defence of women's abortion rights.

An emergency resolution was passed at the Women's TUC opposing this Bill, and calling on the labour movement to mobilise against Powell.

The National Abortion Campaign has always worked closely with labour movement organisations because it knows that it is working class women who will suffer most if abortion and contraception are not freely available.

Public meetings must be organised up and down the country to explain the issues involved in this Bill. Controlled research on embryos will help women to gain greater control of their fertility and therefore greater control of their lives.

Not only the TUC but also the NEC of the Labour Party must be bombarded with resolutions demanding that every section of the labour movement, including our representatives in parliament, oppose this Bill.

Make sure the banner of your organisation is present on Saturday 27 April in London. The fight to defend the '67 Abortion Act is on with a vengeance.

● For details of the demonstration see page 3.

Socialist ACTION

Wright attack on TGWU

THE CAMPAIGN against the TGWU being waged by the media in alliance with the right wing of the labour movement is the most sustained attack on a trade union since the campaign against the ETU from 1956-62. It represents a concerted drive by the new realist right and the bourgeoisie to achieve a major shift in the balance of forces in the labour movement.

The TGWU, with 1.5 million members, plays a key role in the TUC and in the Labour Party. If it were to fall into the hands of the right wing it would be a huge boost to the Duffy-Hammond wing of the movement.

The general secretary of the TGWU holds enormous power. In the hands of Bevin and his successor Deakin, the post was used to maintain a solid right wing bloc which dominated the labour movement from 1926 to 1956.

The *Daily Mail* and Lord Frank Chapple understand very clearly that the TGWU is key to the recomposition that is taking place in the labour movement after the miners' strike. The right and centre are making a concerted effort to incorporate the soft left, from Livingstone to the Euro-Communists, and to isolate the Benn-Scargill wing of the movement.

The miners' strike was a major blow to the 'new realist' project which Chapple unveiled at the 1983 TUC. This is why the 'ballot rigging scandal' has surfaced after 11 months.

The right were waiting for the outcome of the miners' strike, to parade their 'concern' for democracy. On this point it is worth noting that all the allegations are so far concentrated on areas where Todd won the vote.

Wright's vote, apparently, has been above suspicion. This is nonsense. TGWU elections, particularly for the general secretary, have always to some extent been a clash of 'machines'. There are reports of turn-outs of up to 100 per cent in Wales, Wright's stronghold.

The election last year resulted in the narrowest of victories for Todd. In TGWU terms, the margin

of 45,000 was tiny. In 1956, Cousins had a margin of 425,000; in 1969 Jones had a lead of 300,000; and in 1977 Evans had over 230,000. The change is significant.

The rise of Cousins — to some extent — and much more so of Jones and Evans reflected the growth of the shop stewards movement. Their base lay in the trade sections, most particularly in cars.

By Pat Hickey

Since 1979, when the union reached a membership of 2.2 million, this base has been hard hit. Membership is now at about 1.5 million. A large part of the loss has been in the main trade sections — cars, engineering, transport etc. It has taken a heavy toll of the shop stewards organisations.

The balance of power in the union has swung back towards the 11 regions, where there are many paper branches. These function only as administrative conveniences — an 'empire of skulls' to quote a pithy phrase from Scotland.

With the machines so finely balanced the pressure to deliver the vote last year was very great. But this applied to both camps.

The media's concern for democracy in the TGWU has not extended to taking a look at Wright's vote. The reason is simple. Wright was seen as the candidate who would make a decisive shift in the union.

As the *Daily Mail* put it during the election campaign: 'George is the union's new voice'. Wright built on this support. He told the *Daily Mail*: 'It's obvious that the



A striking Notts miner presents Ron Todd with a commemorative tea towel during the 1984 strike

Photo: MARK SALMON

Fight not fudge

THE ALLIANCE of George Wright, Terry Duffy and Lord Frank Chapple with Fleet Street, the SDP and employment secretary Tom King which has launched the current attack on the TGWU will be a constant feature of the struggle that is now unfolding in the labour movement. Their aim is a fundamental shift to the right in the labour movement, while strengthening state control of the unions.

Kinnock's evolution to the right is an attempt to adapt to this threat rather than fight it. His project is to link the centre with the hard right. With the weight of the state and the media behind them, it will, in the end, be the right who will dictate the terms of this alliance.

The danger of this approach is evident. A bitter fight must be waged against it. Unfortunately, Kinnock has dragged with him some sections of the left who are in retreat in the face of the Tory assault.

This retreat not only encourages more attacks. It opens the door to the new realist right.

The retreat is justified by claims that workers will not fight after the defeat of the miners. The only course therefore is to avoid confrontation and wait for the next election. Unity behind Kinnock is the watchword.

Such unity is spurious. It will not defend the working class. Even if it were successful in electoral terms it would lead to a government of the Wilson-Callaghan type which would strike demoralising blows against the movement. It is more likely to lead to a parliamentary pact with the Alliance.

In any case the argument is false. The end of the miners' strike has not led to demoralisation and defeat. The working class is capable of fighting back. We have seen the evidence with railworkers, postal workers and teachers.

The problem is not a lack of ability of workers to fight. The problem is a trade union and Labour Party leadership which is not willing to lead the struggle.

The Scargill wing is a minority in the labour leadership. Its base is also a minority in the movement. But it is a minority with a potential for leading mass struggles.

This was clear in the local government campaign. But that campaign was marred by unity between those who genuinely wanted to fight, and those who hid behind left talk and actually prepared the retreat.

The left did not fight this development sharply enough or early enough. We must learn the lesson. The half-way house positions, which have been the dominant tradition of the labour left, cannot deal with the most ferocious assault on the working class since World War II.

Even from a minority position, the left must fight to pose the issues clearly before the movement. We must fight fake unity.

In the past six years the left has gone through successive differentiations — the balance sheet of '74 to '79, the deputy leadership campaign and the NGA dispute. The miners' strike has qualitatively sharpened this development. Continuing this fight is the only way to develop the struggle against the Tories and secure the leadership that the movement needs.

Editor: ALAN FREEMAN
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.
Send all correspondence regarding subscriptions, sales and receipts to Socialist Action Distribution, PO Box 50, London N1 2XP
Send all material for publication (including advertising) to Socialist Action Editorial at the same address. We regret that due to the high cost of postage we cannot return or acknowledge unsolicited copy or photographs unless accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope.

executive is out of touch with the rank and file. They backed Tony Benn for leader of the Labour Party when the members didn't want him.'

Difference

As Wales regional secretary, and as general secretary of the Wales TUC, he has stood consistently on the right. He played a major role in derailing moves towards a Wales general strike during the steel strike. He is a determined opponent of Arthur Scargill.

His readiness to ally with such figures as Lord Chapple is therefore not new. His calls for a new ballot backed up with the threat of the courts, has left the executive with little choice. Even if the biennial delegate conference in June rejected Wright, a protracted campaign with the courts involved would only damage the union.

There is no doubt that

the High Court would back Wright. It is far better to call the election through the channels of the union than have it foisted on the TGWU by the courts. In particular, the workplace ballots method of election must be defended against the Tories, the SDP, and the labour right. This will be a big issue in the event of a re-run.

Repression

Ron Todd's declaration that he would favour a re-run if the executive so decides is a correct step. It is vital that the union sorts the matter out, not the courts.

The union's internal inquiry should proceed. This is not the time to be stampeded by media pressure. Wright's claims have yet to be scrutinised. His disloyalty should be exposed. If a re-run becomes necessary the left must seize the initiative.

The challenge now is to

inflict a decisive defeat on Wright and his new realist and media allies. The prospects for the left in a re-vote are not unfavourable.

The election this time would almost certainly be a straight fight between Todd and Wright. Last time there were three other candidates. Todd is the more likely beneficiary.

The real challenge for the left, however, would be to run a genuinely mass open campaign. The emphasis must be on winning the vote, not merely delivering it.

The shop sections, and the shop stewards organisation still have plenty of weight. The weak stand taken by the TGWU over the £250,000 fine in the Austin-Rover strike and the failure to campaign effectively for support for the miners will not win mass votes.

The issues must be squarely posed: for a leadership that will stand and fight, or for a retreat towards capitulation to the Tories with Kinnock and the right wing?

A PIECE OF THE ACTION



#95 © GORMAG 1/85

Labour and Powell

SUE LLOYD is an executive member of the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign. She gave this interview to SOCIALIST ACTION about the Labour Party and the Powell Bill.

A very large number of Labour MPs were absent from the House for the second reading of Enoch Powell's Unborn Children (Protection) Bill. Forty four Labour MPs even voted for it. How do you account for this?

The Labour Party has no policy on in vitro fertilisation or any of the points covered by the Powell Bill and the Warnock Report. It does have a policy on abortion on request and it can be argued that because the Powell Bill gives embryos rights for the first time in English law, this is likely to be used to outlaw abortions.

The Powell Bill is an extrapolation from one of the areas covered by the Warnock Report. It's likely that the government still won't find time for the Bill.

We believe Kenneth Clarke wants to legislate for the government on the whole of the Warnock Report. It's possible that the Tories will outlaw surrogate motherhood, in vitro fertilisation and embryonic research.

The most important thing therefore for the Labour Party is to develop a policy on Warnock.

But even though the Labour Party has policy on abortion MPs still seem to ignore it?

Yes. Labour Party conference in 1977 and 1979 reaffirmed policy for a woman's right to choose and LARC has been campaigning to get a Labour government to make this a reality through policy on various forms of legislation but abortion is still deemed a 'conscience' issue.

Whips have never been applied even on a major vote such as against Corrie's Bill in 1980. At that time LARC was campaigning for a three line whip to make it mandatory for MPs to vote for party policy.

Why has Powell chosen the 'embryo rights' issue?

He's always been an anti-abortionist. The Tory Party sees abortion as a moral issue. They don't want people 'fiddling around' with nature. The moral climate in the Tory Party has shifted to the fight. Many Tories believe that women don't have rights, that human life is sacrosanct and that this form of experimentation on the human embryo is against nature.

The anti-abortionists have been burrowing away since 1980. After the defeat of Corrie they decided that if they couldn't go through the front door they'd try the back door.

First of all the DHSS regulations were tightened up. In 1981 the three options on the green card were reduced to two and the social clause was

removed. This was why Huningford got into trouble.

There has never been a move to make abortion provision mandatory on the NHS and cuts have affected women's facilities.

Consultants in each Area Health Authority still have the right to decide on what grounds abortions can be carried out. The DHSS also appointed a watch dog to check abortion statistics. Victoria Gillick has become an important figurehead for the anti-abortionists. She symbolises their new confidence.

What are LARC's immediate plans?

We are working very closely with the National Abortion Campaign to oppose Powell. This Bill would have very serious implications for women's control over their lives if it was to become law.

We are very concerned that it could lead to parenting by approval of the state. Surrogacy needs more discussion. The labour movement has a very strong policy on abortion. It's vital that it opposes this Bill.

● *The annual general meeting of the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign takes place on 20 April at 2pm at the NAC offices, Wesley House, 70 Great Queen St, London WC1 (Holborn tube).*



**APRIL 24TH
MASS LOBBY
OF PARLIAMENT
HOUSE OF COMMONS
ALRA, NAC, WRR**

OPPOSE THE POWELL BILL! DEMONSTRATE

SATURDAY 27 APRIL

**ASSEMBLE
1PM
LINCOLNS
INN FIELDS
WC2**

27

**RIGHTS FOR EMBRYOS MEANS
RIGHTS TAKEN AWAY FROM WOMEN!**

National Abortion Campaign, Wesley House, 70 Great Queen Street, London WC2 8AX

Abortion Resn for Labour Women's Conference

The following resolution is submitted for the sixtieth annual conference of Labour Women which will be held this year in Bournemouth, 16-18 June.

Resolution 15

This conference gives full support to the present Abortion Act and would resist any alteration putting a time limit on the availability of abortion to any woman who should want one.

It calls on the next Labour government to

make provision in each district for comprehensive services (information, clinics, day care, surgery after-care), enabling women to exercise their rights to control their own lives.

Windsor and Maidenhead CLP

Amendment

This conference also:
a) calls on the next Labour government to decriminalise abortion, as being the best way to ensure that women will have the right to choose;
b) believes that MP's consciences should not be allowed to be exercised against the interests of working class women and that therefore the party whip should be applied in line with party policy on abortion.

c) calls on the NEC to campaign for, and the next Labour government to implement, the extension of the 1967 Abortion Act (and any improvements to the Act) to the Six Counties, Northern Ireland.

Ealing-Acton Women's Section

Reverse Gillick

SINCE LAST DECEMBER young women under 16 have been unable to get contraceptive and abortion advice or treatment without parental consent following the Court of Appeal ruling in the case of Victoria Gillick versus the Department of Health and Social Security.

On 24 June the DHSS appeal against this ruling goes to the House of Lords. The National Abortion Campaign have called a demonstration for Sunday 23 June.

This event has already won the backing of the National Union of Students and the Labour Party Young Socialists and the date has been chosen with young people in mind.

By Leonora Lloyd

It will take place after the majority of school examinations have finished. A Sunday has been chosen because many school students work on Saturdays.

Over 200 organisations and individuals concerned with the welfare of young people have supported the campaign so far and they are being approached to sponsor this demonstration.

The main slogans will be: 'No to Victoria's values - reverse Gillick' and 'Under 16s are people not property - reverse Gillick'.

Badges and other

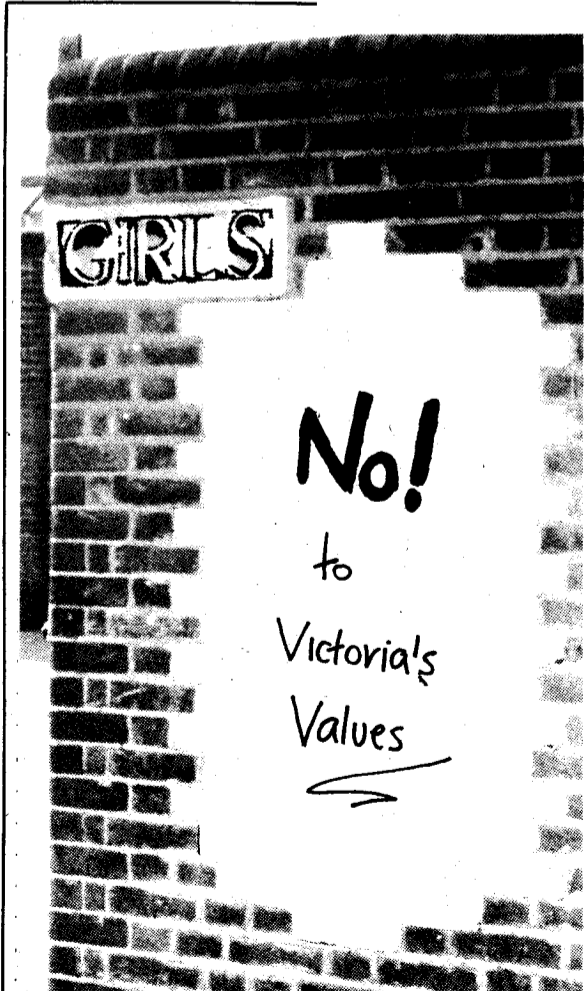
mobilising material will be available on the Powell demonstration on 27 April and a special bulletin is being produced by NAC.

The march will start from Hyde Park at 11.30am in order to reach Jubilee Gardens in time for a rally and gig. Young people's organisations will be well represented on the platform.

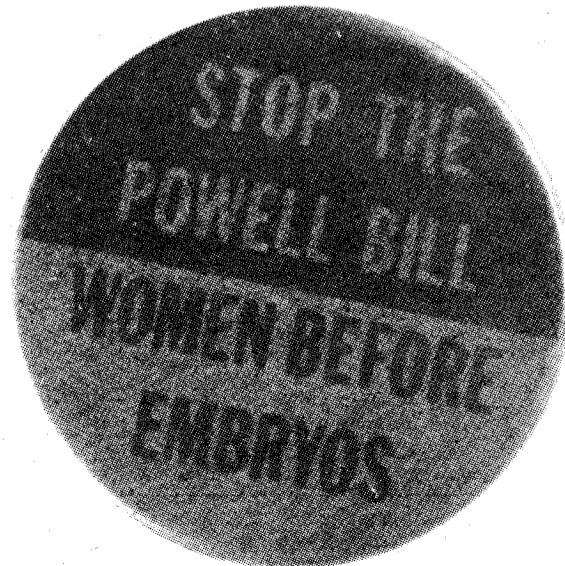
With plenty of time to organise this should be a large demonstration. The campaign against Powell will be a key mobilising point. The organisers are particularly keen to ensure that school students are aware of the campaign and leaflets and posters will be produced with them in mind.

Sponsorship and support from unions at a local level should include subsidising transport costs to ensure the maximum number of young people can get to the demonstration.

If the House of Lords upholds the Appeal Court ruling the demonstration will be the start of a campaign to ensure the Department of Health sponsors a bill to get the ruling reversed.



Young women will be forced into backstreet abortions if Gillick has her way



Coalville jobs under attack

THROUGHOUT THE miners' strike, Roy Butlin, — one of the leaders of the Coalville railworkers who refused to shift coal, warned that Coalville would be victimised for their principled stand in support of the miners. He often added that the losses incurred during the miners' strike would be used as the excuse to carry out line and depot closures which were already part of British Rail's local closure plans.

Only six weeks after the miners returned to work, Butlin has been proven right. Last Monday management informed shop stewards that 11 jobs were to go by 13 May, including nine shunters, a guard and a driver.

At the end of the meeting, the union side forced a partial retreat — but only saved one railworker's job.

Coalville men won't be the only victims. The workers at Toton depot who were divided over the miners' strike are to lose between 60 and 80 jobs.

As Butlin told Socialist Action: 'This proves that scabbing doesn't save your job. Management draws up its plans to cut jobs to suit them regardless of how much workers collaborate with them. And the same thing will happen in the pits.'

These job losses were not unexpected. Coalville men returned to full working after the miners' strike, to find train crews from Leicester, Bescott and Bedford learning their routes.

Management is doing nothing other than using its age old tactic of divide and rule, setting one group of workers against another competing for jobs. Plans are clearly underway to transfer work away from Coalville so there will be no basis for keeping the depot open.

Butlin explained: 'The miners tell us that the strike is over, but the dispute is not. It's the same for us. After 49 weeks of pain and hardship, Coalville men are not ready to sit back and see their depot close.'

'These plans are nothing other than punishment for our loyalty to our union. We fought against harassment of our members before, and we will do it again.'

'The one day strike in Scotland against the loss of 1200 jobs at Caley Workshop in Glasgow should let management know that just handing over a 4.8 per cent rise won't stop railworkers defending their jobs.'



NOMPAS says No to victimisation

THOSE MINERS locked up in prison cells must feel pig sick when they hear Neil Kinnock saying he's not in favour of an amnesty for miners who committed 'criminal' offences during the strike. The real criminals aren't the labour movement militants who fought for their jobs, but the Tory government backed up by the apparatus of the state.

Kinnock and Willis too must share the blame. They could have done more than most in the labour movement to make sure that no one miner went to jail — by mobilising the full support of the whole working class to stop pit closures.

The National Organisation of Miners Prisoners and Supporters (NOMPAS) has been set up in support of the prisoners and to campaign to win their freedom. Against the view of the miners which Labour

leader Neil Kinnock is peddling, NOMPAS secretary and author of *State of Siege*, Martin Walker makes it clear that these are ordinary working class people who have been victimised by the state and the Coal Board.

'The campaign against the miners was an exhibition of state violence,' he says, 'orchestrated state criminalisation of an organised section of the working class. Thatcher used the courts and the police to solve a political problem.'

The miners are prisoners because they are trade unionists — and we have to defend them'.

There are now between 50 and 80 NUM militants in prison. Some have been released after serving short sentences. But many are still awaiting trial.

The latest issue of *The Miner* points out that the national levy ballot wasn't lost because the membership voted against the sacked men. It was because many saw the levy as a soft option which would discourage the union from fighting hard for reinstatement of the 600 miners sacked so far that they refused to support the levy.

Local areas have already started to arrange pit collections to support

the sacked men and their families while the reinstatement fight goes on. It is vital that the rest of the labour movement responds to the NUM's call to give these militants support.

'The labour movement responded to the imprisonment of the five dockers in 1972, but failed to do so in the case of the Shrewsbury building worker, Des Warren, jailed for conspiracy to intimidate,' said Martin Walker.

'The movement let the Shrewsbury workers down. We don't want a repeat of that.' The number of trade unionists victimised as a result of this dispute is higher than the British labour move-

ment has experienced for decades.

NOMPAS plans to begin publishing a newspaper in a few weeks time. They are pressing for prisoners' committees to be established in every area to support the relatives of jailed miners as well as campaigning on amnesty.

To make its point, NOMPAS is planning a national march in June in support of an amnesty for the militants who are victims of the Tory state.

● The National Organisation of Miners Prisoners and Supporters can be contacted at: 5 Caledonian Road, Kings Cross, London N1.

Marching for jobs

NEARLY £1000 was raised last Saturday for victimised miners on a sponsored march for jobs in West London. Forty of us were joined by a contingent of miners from Whitwell pit in North Derbyshire on the 15 mile march, organised by Hounslow Miners' Support Committee.

We set off from Ashford Hospital in Middlesex, after hearing from Cliff, a steward in the catering department of the hospital, who explained that 248 domestic workers there were threatened with redundancy.

The area health authority has plans to privatise hospital cleaning services at Ashford and West Middlesex hospitals and up to 350 job cuts are being proposed.

The march passed through all the major high streets in Hounslow borough, and got a good response from local people.

Our first stop was at the Hounslow Trade Union & Unemployed Centre, where the AUEW convenor from Magnatex, Chander Prakash, spoke to us about their fight to save the factory from closure.

Magnatex is an engineering factory which was saved because of support from the Greater London Enterprise Board, set up by the GLC to fight for jobs in London. Chander told us that the workers at

Magnatex had raised thousands of pounds for the striking miners because they realised that the NUM was leading the fight against unemployment.

By Hilary Driver, secretary Hounslow Miners' Support Committee

In the afternoon we made a small detour from the route to lay a 'Save Jobs' wreath at the United Biscuits, where 2000 workers were laid off in 1982. We were met there by Colin, who had been an USDAW steward at the factory, who said that the only way to prevent closures and redundancies was to fight as the miners had.

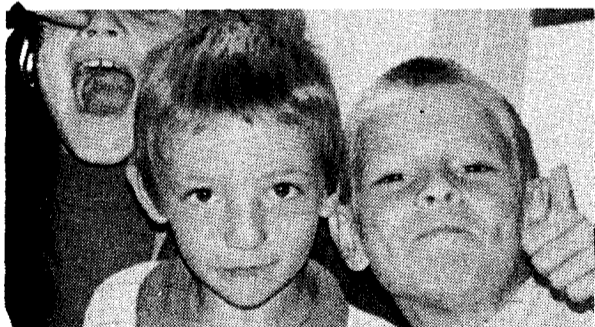
The march was an unqualified success, and achieved its aim of raising much-needed support for victimised miners, and linking up their fight with the fight for jobs in Hounslow.

The Hounslow Miners' Support Committee is continuing to plan activities to raise money and

support for the victims of the Coal Board's purges, including plans for a West London forum on unemployment with local and national speakers — hopefully including Arthur Scargill and Tony

Benn or Dennis Skinner. Socialist Action supporters in West London are also organising transport to the Socialist Action International Miners' Solidarity Meeting in Kent this coming Saturday.

● For details of transport for the Kent meeting, telephone Pete on 01-574 2420. Hounslow Miners' Support Committee can be contacted c/o 18 Staines Road, Hounslow, Middx. Tel: 01-572 3764.



Notts Socialist Action dayschool

SEVENTY-five people attended the Nottingham Socialist Action Miners' day school last Saturday. In attendance were representatives from South Yorkshire, South Derbyshire, from the Leicester 'Dirty Thirty', and Coalville railworkers.

Despite Thatcher's success in defeating the strike, the mood of the meeting was one of real determination to continue the fight.

Doreen Humber and Sue Petney, women from Blidworth in Notts, explained that the defence of sacked and imprisoned miners provided a focus

for organisation among all those who had supported the strike.

Roy Butlin, Coalville NUR, highlighted new moves by the British Railways board, to continue the victimisation of Coalville railworkers because of their refusal to move coal during the dispute.

The British Rail board are threatening the loss of 11 jobs at Coalville and evidence is already coming to light that they are planning to close the depot altogether.

The meeting heard speakers from the Newham 7, and the Central American solidarity campaign. John Ross spoke for Socialist Action.

The Third Socialist Action International Miners Solidarity Meeting

Lessons of the Miners' Strike

Saturday 20 April
Snowdown Colliery Welfare Club (New Club), Aylesham, Kent

Speakers invited include Kay Sutcliffe; Terry Harrison (sacked miner, Betteshanger); Joe Mohammed; Roy Butlin; Campaign Group MP and a speaker from the Fourth International.

Video: Days of Hope

International guests will be in attendance from Denmark, Holland, Belgium, West Germany and the USA.

Registration will take place from 10am. First session starts at 11am.

Transport: British Rail from Victoria to Aylesham, Kent. Road by the A2 to Dover. Coaches from London Saturday morning/ creche and accommodation Friday or Saturday night: Telephone 01-254 0128.

MARK SAMMON

Militant imperialism?

THIS YEAR'S LPYS conference saw a violent attack launched by *Militant* on Arthur Scargill and his leadership of the miners' strike. It also saw an open clash between the black community and *Militant* at the 300-strong fringe meeting organised at YS conference by the Liverpool black caucus.

The LPYS conference itself was attended by 50 branches less than last year — and with far fewer miners present than a year previously. All this after 12 months of the greatest peace time class struggle in Britain for sixty years.

JOHN ROSS looks at the reasons for Ted Grant's violent outburst against the lessons and dynamic of the miners' strike.

For many on the left *Militant's* politics seem to represent a paradox. *Militant* combines extreme sectarianism, resolute hostility to black sections, opposition to the demands of the Women's Action Committee in the Labour Party, with violent condemnation of the national struggle in Ireland, support for strikes, a militant struggle by Liverpool city council last year, and capitulation to British imperialism over issues such as the Malvinas (Falklands) war. All these positions are accompanied by continual rhetoric presenting socialism as the 'nationalisation of the top 250 monopolies'.

Militant appears by turns, and sometimes at the same instant, sectarian, ultra-left, and extremely right wing.

The apparent inconsistencies of *Militant's* positions however rapidly become clear when its positions are considered in terms of the fundamental categories of Marxism. *Militant's* politics represent what Lenin termed 'imperialist economism' — that is a current in the workers' movement which, while apparently radical and even ultra-left, in reality represents an adaptation and capitulation to imperialism within the working class movement.

Lenin in his famous book *What is to be done* stresses that by itself even the most militant economic struggle — of the type *Militant* em-

phasises — remains consistent with capitalist politics and capitalist domination of the working class.

Lenin stressed: 'trade unionist politics of the working class is precisely bourgeois politics of the working class' and 'working class trade unionist politics is precisely working class bourgeois politics.'

In Lenin's sharp but precise formula: 'The economic struggle of the workers is very often connected... with bourgeois politics,' and even, in certain circumstances, 'trade unionism means the ideological enslavement of the workers by the bourgeoisie.'

The fact that it supports or pursues militant economic struggles would not in itself rule out *Militant* even being a bourgeois reformist current — although for other reasons *Militant* is obviously not a capitalist current within the working class.

In order for a current to represent a really revolutionary force within the labour movement it must defend the interests of all the exploited and oppressed on all issues, national and international of the class struggle.

In Lenin's words, Marxism: 'represents the working class... in its relation to all classes of modern society and to the state as an organised political force. Hence it follows that not only must social democrats (the

name used for Marxists at the time — JR) not confine themselves exclusively to the economic struggle, but that they must not allow the organisation of economic exposures to become the predominant part of their activities.'

In Lenin's words: 'Working class political consciousness cannot be genuine political consciousness unless the workers are trained to respond to all cases of tyranny, oppression, violence, and abuse no matter what class is affected.'

Narrow

It means, in Lenin's phrases, that socialists will 'never be able to develop the political consciousness of the workers to the level of social democratic (Marxist — JR) political consciousness by keeping within the framework of the economic struggle, for that framework is too narrow.'

This tendency to reduce the struggle of the working class to the economic struggle, and its placing within a primarily economic framework, was termed by Lenin 'economism' or 'striktism'.

In the epoch of imperialism however, Lenin noted, economism takes on the specific and virulent form of *imperialist economism* — a trend Lenin examined for example in his article *The nascent trend of imperialist economism*. This is a current with longer and deeper roots in Britain than in any other society in the world.

Imperialist economism, the reflection of the weight of imperialism within the working class movement, takes the form not simply of an emphasis primarily on economic struggles but also of utilising rhetoric around these to adapt to imperialism. Imperialist economism, as Lenin put it, is 'persistent "sliding" from recognition of imperialism to

apology for imperialism (just as the economists of blessed memory slid from recognition of capitalism to apology for capitalism).'

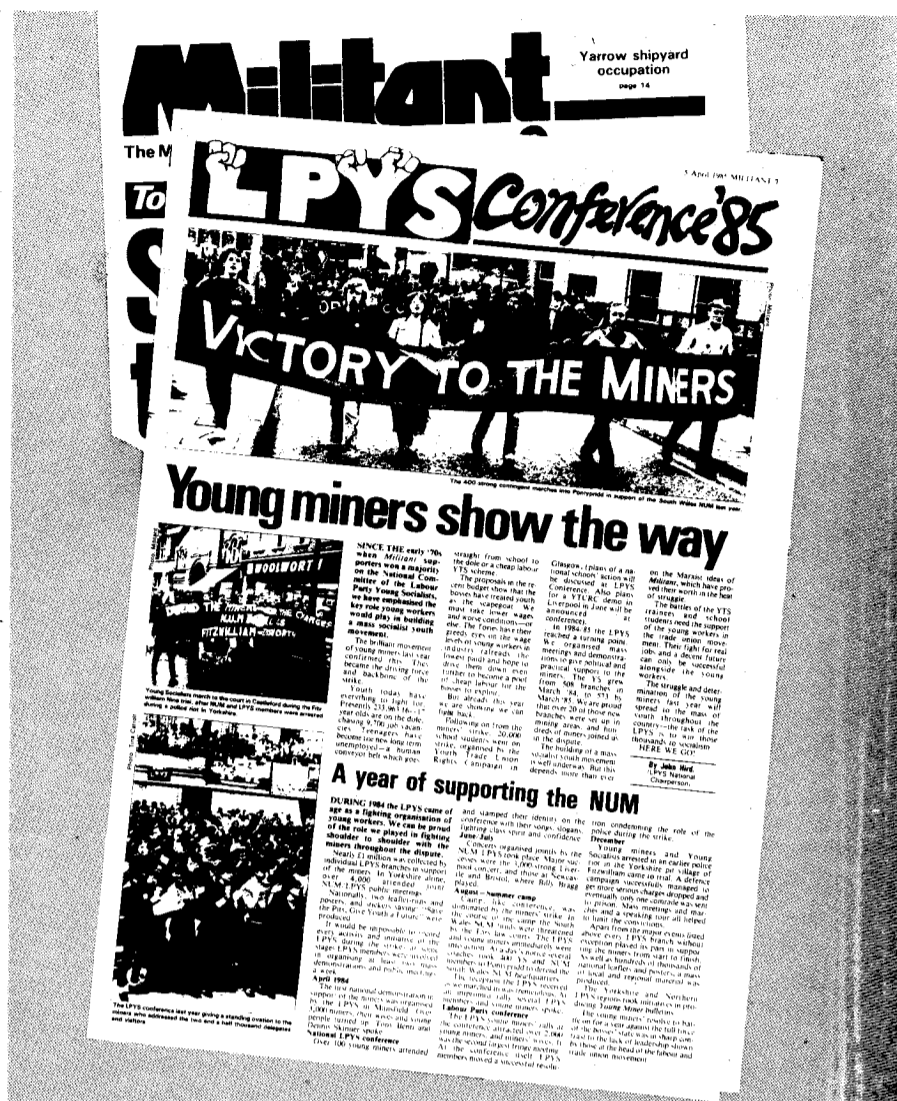
Imperialist economism, in addition takes the form not simply of direct apologies for imperialism but also of ultra-left rhetoric used to cover up a refusal to fight against the imperialist system — and in particular a refusal to consistently oppose the imperialism of one's own state.

Imperialist economism, in Lenin's words, continually engages in rhetoric of the type 'socialism alone is the "way" out' in order to cover over its refusal to struggle against concrete manifestations of the imperialist system. Trotsky outlined a typical example of imperialist economism in the 1930s when various organisations refused to support Ethiopia, under Haile Selassie, in its war with Italian imperialism under Mussolini on the grounds that this was 'a war between two dictators.'

Opportunist

Similar types of arguments were used by *Militant* to refuse, for example, to support Argentina in its war with Britain over the Malvinas.

The second characteristic feature of *Militant's* politics also flows from its adaptation to imperialism. As Trotsky put it in *The Transitional Programme of the Fourth International*: 'Opportunist organisations by their very nature concentrate their attention on the top layers of the working class.' The hostility of *Militant* towards black self organisation, the women's liberation movement, gay liberation and other forms of social oppression is all of a piece with its adaptation to imperialism on international politics.



Militant's adaptation to imperialism, finally, determines also its sectarianism. *Militant* hates and loathes all that is most politically progressive in the new developments within the workers' movement precisely because these forces represent a break with *Militant's* imperialist, labourist framework.

This is why Ted Grant decided at the LPYS conference to so firmly close the door against the lessons of the miners' strike. Because the entire dynamic of that strike began to take it outside a labourist framework.

The mass social alliances created in the strike in particular, were completely in contradiction to *Militant's* entire political framework. The dynamic of the strike deepened, and did not bypass, women's self-organisation, black self-organisation, and the rallying of every section of the oppressed to the miners. The NUM itself, in turn, began to politically reach out to these layers — both in the struggle and in the role the NUM played at the Labour Party conference in supporting black sections, the demands of the Women's

Action Committee, supporting the fight to defend local government, and establishing contact with gay and lesbian organisations inside the Labour Party.

Militant was faced with the choice of either breaking with its imperialist framework or turning its sectarian back on the dynamic and lessons of the miners' strike and its leadership. It was to deepen this sectarian and imperialist course, and to blot out the infection of the miners' strike, that Ted Grant set out to achieve at this year's LPYS conference.

Black sections: where do Militant stand?

THE CHALLENGE of the black sections to the right wing leadership of the NEC is becoming more explosive every day. Black sections are really testing out how far the leadership will go in order to exclude black people from having their rights in the Labour Party. The new loyalty oath to be imposed on the London CLPs will not allow black sections to take part in the selection process. If the CLPs allow black sections to take part, then their parliamentary candidates will not receive official support and recognition.

This is a clear message to the black community by the Labour leadership: we will use witch-hunts to deny you your rights in the Labour Party and deny you your own representation in such a situation is a simple one: fight this witch-hunt tactic. It is to launch a campaign for the CLPs to give black people rights to participate through the black sections in the selection process. No loyalty oaths must be imposed to break the movement for black sections.

A major question in all this is what stance will

Militant take. Will they join the fight against these right wing attacks? Will they stand on the sidelines and refuse to defend these CLPs on the question of the loyalty oath? Whose side will they be on? These questions have to be asked because the reactionary line of *Militant* on the question of black sections and black self-organisation within the labour movement may lead them to abstain.

They may stand by while loyalty oaths are being imposed and official support for candidates selected with black section participation withdrawn.

This would allow the right wing to increase their attacks on the left wing and the rank and file of the movement. It would be sectarian to the height of folly.

The line of *Militant* has failed in Liverpool, where the Labour movement has been split over the refusal of Liverpool city council to fight the racist exclusion of black people from the receipt of jobs and services. Instead black people only get 0.7 per cent of jobs in a city with 8 per cent blacks.

The NUM by contrast proved the strength of their support for black sections because that led to the flowering of black People Support the Miners in 1984 and increased the unity of the working class. So, comrades: are you with the black sections and against the witch-hunt or with the witch-hunt and against the black sections.

Atma Singh, Colne Valley Labour Party



Militant-controlled Liverpool council demand the labour movement stand firm in support of their fight against the local government cuts. The council stand equally firm against the wishes of the black community on the

question of Sam Bond's appointment as the city's race relations chief. Liverpool black caucus still picket council offices to protest.

Photo: T.M. RIGBY



Photo: BRENDAN YOUNG

The women's pickets at Port Talbot were among the most successful of the strike

What tactics for Scargill valley?

THE CYNON Valley is in the heart of the South Wales coalfield, bordered to the west by the Rhondda and to the east by Merthyr Vale. Running from Abercynon in the south, nearby Pontypridd area headquarters of the NUM, to Hirwaun in the north, it boasts five South Wales NUM lodges as well as one which covers the Phurnacite plant in Abercwmboi, part of the coking section of the union and separate from the South Wales area structure.

Locally it's known as Scargill Valley. There's good reason. Throughout the last 12 months it has been solid in support of the strike.

Dai Davies, a member of the South Wales executive from the 800-strong Penrhwceiber pit, explained: 'The five lodges voted in favour of the strike. If you consider that only nine of the 28 lodges in South Wales initially voted for the strike, then you can see how strong the Cynon Valley was.'

'Prior to scabs going in, our main preoccupation was North Wales. First we got Bersham out, then we went to Point of Ayr.'

'In the autumn a few lads went back to work in this area. Our main attention then was here at the Phurnacite plant. But out of more than 6000 miners in this valley we had only one going into work.' As far as Dai was concerned, that was still 'a blot on the valley'.

The five Cynon lodges are Abercynon, Lady Windsor (not in the valley itself, but linked to Abercynon

underground), Penrhwceiber, Tower, and Mountain Ash Mechanicals, a surface lodge. In March this year feelings in support of the strike still ran strong. Tower and Penrhwceiber both voted to remain out.

Jimmy Evans, secretary of the 'Ceiber, explained: 'Penrhwceiber wanted to remain on strike. At the delegate conference we were asked to vote in support of the position of the South Wales executive council's recommendation for a return to work. Conditions were put on that — the need to get the boys reinstated — but it passed at the conference. Penrhwceiber abstained. We wanted to bring it back to the members.'

'The general meeting of the lodge wasn't in favour, and Tower took the same position.'

'Our lodge wanted to hold out till those dismissed were reinstated, rather than going back and trying to negotiate reinstatement after. Once we returned we would be in a weakened position. But of course we abided by conference decision.'



Photo: GM Cookson

Dai Davies, South Wales executive member

Instead of pursuing a policy of mass picketing advocated by Scargill and the South Wales militants, the area executive chose to support guerrilla action, culminating in over 100 arrests when the Port Talbot crane and Newport transporter bridge were occupied. Not only that but the executive kept tight control on the purse strings after sequestration, thus blocking any mass picketing initiatives from the lodges themselves.

Kim Howells, a NUM research officer, emerged during the strike as the spokesperson for a willing executive. He played a significant role in launching the Wales Congress in Support of the Mining Communities in November 1984. A brain-child of the Communist Party and the Kinnockites, it was a further tool of the Wales bureaucracy in heading off support for the tactics of the NUM national leadership. The Congress pursued the Communist Party's revamped popular front line: the 'anti-Tory alliance'.

'There's mixed feelings about the return. The people who were active during the strike are not completely happy with the state of affairs.'

Brian Jones and John Jones, who's intending to stand this time in the lodge election, are both from Tower. They were blunter. 'The membership were sold out,' said Brian. 'The executive lost us the strike a long time ago, when they didn't get up off their arses.'

'Around Christmas there were a few weak lodges where the men wanted to go back. The executive should have gone to their meetings and given them a morale boost. Instead they sat in Pontypridd and let the rank and file get on with it.'

'Now they'll close the real militant areas: Kent, Scotland, South Wales. We should have stopped out and fought.'

There is a real anger in Cynon Valley about the role of the South Wales executive. Discussion still rumbles on about the secret meetings they organised to win the return to work position.

Hugh Edwards, chair of Tower, insists the executive 'jumped the gun'. 'It's said by the rank and file in places like Yorkshire that South Wales sold them out. But that's not the case for the rank and file here. They never betrayed the strike.'

'Arthur Scargill had a lot of work on his hands, but he got us together. The South Wales executive never fought to keep us together.'

No faith

Malcolm Cook from the Phurney, where the valley's only scab, Paul Watson, went back at the end of October, agreed. 'The Phurnacite was active from day one, going up to Nottingham and Derbyshire. Picketing was well organised by the rank and file in the Cynon Valley. But as far as the executive in Ponty goes, I've got to be honest, I've not a lot of faith in them.'

'They were quite prepared for the rank and file to put their jobs on the line, but when their jobs started to be on the line they had secret meetings saying we've got to go back to work to save the union.'

'Was it to save the union? Or was it to save their own £20-£30,000 a year jobs? We went back under the same wording that the secret meetings were discussing after Christmas.'

'We knew what was in the press about the drift back to work was propaganda. But those who weren't coming out on the pickets each morning were believing it. They were prepared to go back and there was no leadership to say don't listen to the propaganda.'

'I'm not taking anything away from Scargill or Heathfield or our own president Edwin Morans (of the cokemen's section — ed). This strike needed leadership. We had it among the generals. We had it among the rank and

Whilst the Congress failed to build any significant rank and file support, during the winter period it was able to act as a cloak for the initiative to organise a return to work. There are many tales circulating the Cynon Valley about secret meetings held at the behest of the NUM area executive. Howells was already publicly advocating a return to work without an agreement, and continued to do so despite censure from an area delegate conference.

Demoralisation

In February a poorly-attended meeting organised by the Congress brought together influential intellectuals and some lodge leaders from the Northumberland and Durham coalfield with the Welsh leadership. The executive was finally able to win a vote for its position at an area delegate conference at the end of February, and thus force the hand of the national union.

After Christmas there was undoubtedly the beginnings of demoralisation among rank and file militants in South Wales. But the executive themselves first helped to create the conditions for that with their hostility to mass picketing, and hence the inability of the union to bring any effective pressure to bear for support

South Wales after the strike

THIS week Socialist Action continues its assessment of the state of the coalfield after the strike, with a visit to South Wales. CAROL TURNER toured the Cynon Valley to investigate.

file. It was the middle part that was missing.

'If everyone of those executive had done the same amount of work as Arthur Scargill did, I say we could have won this strike. It was in the balance. You don't have to look further than the state of the economy to tell you that.'

'But Thatcher hasn't won. The simple fact is that we've still got our communities and our union. And we've learned a lot in the last 12 months.'

from workers in the power stations or steel workers in Port Talbot and Llanwern.

Fight

After that, fearing for their own position, the area executive organised for the return to work — riding on the sentiment they had helped create, and arguing that a return was better than a split in the union. In valleys with powerful traditions of trade union solidarity, that proved a telling argument indeed. The men returned because they felt they had no option but to 'save the union'.

At the same time the very way in which the return was organised created confusion which still exists among the militants in the valleys. This was signalled recently by the high votes at Bedwas and Celyn South collieries not to fight the closures threatened there.

Dai Davies, a South Wales executive member from Penrhwceiber, who had advocated the tactics of the national leadership, explained the confusion that existed after the heroic year-long struggle. 'There are pits that are still prepared to fight,' he said. 'The question is how?'



Photo: GM Cookson

Tyrone O'Sullivan, secretary of Tower Lodge

TYRONE O'SULLIVAN, secretary of Tower colliery, has an answer to that question. Tyrone is a lodge official with a purpose: rebuilding the fight in the South Wales union.

While he believes that the correct and only way to bring out the membership last year was under Rule 42, next time round there must be a national ballot. The fight against closures is more urgent than ever, says Tyrone. It has to be rebuilt pit by pit.

For Tyrone and the hundreds of militants like him in the Cynon Valley and elsewhere, the first battle is over, but the war goes on.

MINERS won't be prepared to come out pit by pit again. They'll say if 150,000-odd miners couldn't stop pit closures what can our pit do? But a lot of pits haven't got much time. We could see as many as 40 closed this year. However hard it might seem after the last year, we've got to carry on fighting pit closures.

One or two areas might provide the spark for that. With the right leadership and the situation here in the valleys

Wales

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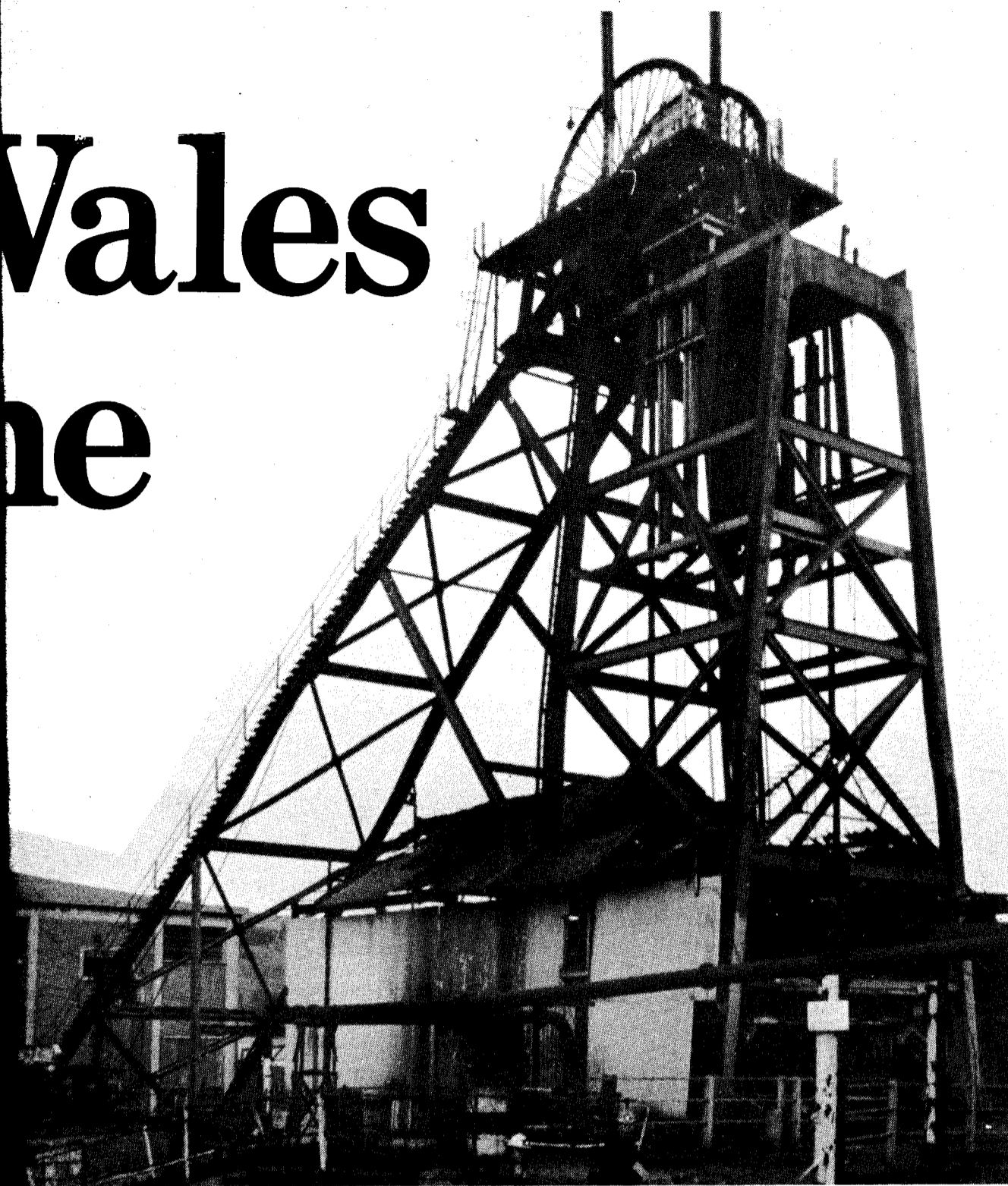


Photo: NIGEL BEVAN

Women strike out

THE NEW women's movement born during the year-long miners' struggle is as big a success story in South Wales as anywhere in the country. Throughout the Cynon Valley women from each village organised, gathering strength and confidence as they went.

For many, ideas of women's liberation were remote. Traditional, male-dominated culture is still strong in the Welsh valleys.

Ann Jones from Hirwaun explained: 'The women in South Wales are not as prominent as in other areas. It's not like London or Birmingham say. But now the support groups are active and a lot of women have joined. We want women here to be more political and more activist, to be prepared to stand up for their rights.'



Photo: Socialist Action

Ann Jones, Hirwaun women's support group

Mary Davies from the Penrhieiber women's support group agrees. 'I don't think the men liked us getting involved in the strike at first,' she said. 'But once we got stuck in there was nothing they could do about it. In the end they began to accept it. In a way they couldn't have done without the women.'

'It's definitely changed their attitudes. Now we've got to make sure that attitude is kept changed. Our group intends to continue meeting once a month.'

Women from the Cynon Valley villages collected money, distributed food, spoke at meetings, and took part in some of the most successful women's pickets held anywhere during the strike.

Barbara Edwards told how much the strike had changed her views: 'When the firemen were on strike and they brought out the Green Goddesses, pre-war fire engines, I was married to a soldier. I wasn't interested then why they were on strike. I can remember saying to my husband: "If you've got to do their job, you've got to have their pay for it." Marrying a miner and coming here, it's a different world completely.'

Ann and Barbara met through the Hirwaun support group. It was, claims Ann, the first off the ground in South Wales. They joined the women's pickets at Port Talbot, and later the local ones.

As Barbara explained: 'Our husbands were away all the time doing flying picketing. We were fed up being at home lifting their spirits and getting the food parcels. We wanted to do more. So we joined the picket lines.'

Sue Cook, from the Abercwmboi support group tells the same tale: 'We packed the parcels and helped collect the food. But we were a support group as well as a food parcel group. We used to go picketing down in Port Talbot. And we've been up at four in the morning picketing here at the Phurnacite plant. Seven or eight women from Abercwmboi regularly went on the picket lines.'

'I went down in the beginning to see for myself what was going on. I've had verbal abuse off the police and I've seen them kicking and hitting the men. And I can say it was frightening too.'

Mary Davies frankly admits that the violence scared her off picketing. But Ann Jones drew different lessons. 'It was terrible,' she said, 'how the police treated the pickets.'

'Women Against Pit Closures had only been going a few weeks in Wales when we decided to have a picket down in Port Talbot. The Greenham women came to help. The police actually went out to get them rather than miners' wives. They wanted them at whatever odds. But the Greenham women made fools of the police. They sat right across the road.'

'The women were prepared to do more than just throw verbal abuse at the scab drivers on the convoys. A lot of people said we were wrong that morning. But I think it was good myself. The men could see how far the police were prepared to go and they were warned. That was the first time people had seen violence on the picket lines in South Wales, and it was against women first of all.'

Opinions on picketing might differ but every woman agreed on the need to maintain their organisation after the strike. Mary has been heavily involved in the Cynon Valley women's coordinating group which grew out of the mayor's distress fund, now dismantled. 'We found it so useful to discuss the problems of the various groups in the valley that we decided to stay together and meet weekly,' she explains.

The Hirwaun group has actually recruited new members since the return to work. Ann and Barbara are now discussing launching an amnesty campaign in support of those arrested up the Port Talbot crane and on the Newport transporter bridge. 'The cases are coming up in June,' explained Ann, 'but it's important not to wait till then. We've got to organise on a large scale now. I believe we should have a demonstration in Pontypridd first to make the executive stand with us.'

Arrests

'They didn't show support for the boys on the Port Talbot crane from day one,' says Barbara, whose husband is one of the 101 on trial. 'They didn't come to the police station when they were arrested, and they didn't even send transport to pick them up when they were released.'

'As well as organising support, the campaign should have a personal side. It should get together the women whose husbands are on trial. They need to be involved and to know that they're not isolated.'

The South Wales Women Against Pit Closures group is discussing its future. Like others up and down the country they are considering what form of organisation and how activity should continue after the strike.

Such discussions are not without their problems. The proportionality between miners' relatives and women from support groups in places like Cardiff and Swansea, the majority of which aren't miners' relations, is hotly contested. So too the political direction of the movement itself.

During the dispute, the forces of the Wales Congress have played a guiding role in the South Wales WAPC, directing it into 'safer', more traditional and passive form of support for the miners. Such confines have acted to limit the confidence and creativity of women who have come to the fore during the last year.

But if people like Ann and Barbara from Hirwaun and Mary from Penrhieiber have their way, women's role in the mining valleys of South Wales won't be so limited. They are already preparing for their next campaigns to fight for their communities' future. In the words of Ann: 'We want to fight so that we're not left with our valleys dying.'

Rebuilding the fight

after the strike, we could probably run such a campaign.

But the role of the present executive in South Wales should be completely changed. We should go over to the same system they have in Yorkshire where each colliery has one delegate at area level. At present each group of South Wales pits has an executive member. The middle of this coalfield, which has traditionally produced good, solid leadership, only has two delegates at most.

Pit by pit representation would be a more democratic system, and there are already moves to change the rules along these lines. It would mean a fighting, more determined leadership in close touch with every pit in the coalfield.

By Tyrone O'Sullivan

And we've got to build bridges too, links across each coalfield. That includes Notts. They worked through the strike because they didn't have the right preparation, the right education, before the strike began. The national leadership should encourage such links. And, of course, we've got to keep those we built during the strike.

Tower intends to build those links. We will begin by inviting other collieries to our May Day gala. Before the strike the joint lodges planned to invite other pits down here, three or four each. That fell apart because of the

strike. But now we're back we should begin again.

Morale is good in Tower after the strike. The boys are still in a good mood. We had a high vote in favour of the levy. If the lads were called on to vote tomorrow to strike against closures, then the vote in favour would still be high. I'd put it around 70 per cent.

Truth

Tower has a good history over the past 10 years. The lodge has tried to make the men aware politically. We've had education on disarmament, on apartheid, on Central America and so on. And we've encouraged discussion on everything. That's what counts.

We were prepared for the miners' strike because we understood the political context in which pit closures were being proposed. When we addressed our general meeting last year, they knew the case was larger than just Cortonwood. We had already explained the facts about pit closures.

Being a Scargill lodge and a Scargill leadership, the 12 Just Men (the lodge leadership — ed) were always preaching Arthur Scargill's line. We defended him against the press and explained the Scargill case.

There's no simple answer to building a lodge that's prepared to

fight. But you've got to take things on as they come. You can't build a strong branch by trying to please the membership, giving them what they want. Even if it's unpopular, you've got to tell them what you believe is right. That way the lodge leadership wins respect and you can win the membership to your point of view.

The truth always comes out. Arthur was proved absolutely right on the hit list. He'll be proved absolutely right on the need for mass picketing during this strike. We could have used more in South Wales.

I can't see the working class has much option but mass industrial struggle. They won't get far by lobbying and trying to change public opinion. I don't much like the Wales Congress for that reason. It's the same old people who let us down in the past — with a new name.

Fresh ideas

The rank and file are already organising with the support groups and Women Against Pit Closures. It's them we should keep together. They've got fresh minds and fresh ideas. The women will be able to do more to change things in a few years than we've been able to do so far.

The political awareness we're trying to encourage in the lodge is paying results in many ways. There was little interest in the Labour Party a few years back. But now Tower has filled all five of its places on the Cynon Valley general management committee. Over the last few years 45 to 50 NUM members here have joined the party. In fact, before the strike started we had plans for a workplace branch.

The party is starting to change here because a lot of new blood is coming in. The effects of this strike will help that along. The Labour Party's got to do the same as we do in the union: it's got to get out on the doorstep and fight for its case.

FOR THOSE who argue that the European working class has been defeated by the austerity campaigns of the last period, the recent events in Denmark demonstrate the contrary. They mark the greatest class struggle for 30 years in Denmark. Despite attempts by successive governments to attack the unions, break the closed shop system, and create mass unemployment, the Danish working class remains solidly organised and ready to fight back.



The strike of 300,000 industrial workers, which began on 25 March took a directly political character from the first. The demands for a 35-hour week, a minimum wage, and index-linking meant a head-on confrontation with the government's austerity drive. The hard line taken by the government in response forced

the leadership of the Danish TUC (LO) into strike action.

The threat of 200,000 public sector workers joining the strike led to the Schluter government declaring the strike illegal. An explosion of anger led to two mass demonstrations, and hundreds of mass meetings.

But neither the CP nor the social democrats were prepared to lead a general strike. They stopped at days of action. After the massive national strike and demonstration on 10 April no perspectives were offered.

The return to work began on the following day. But the situation remains explosive. Public

sector workers will not accept the two per cent limit. The labour court system — in which the LO is involved — is in crisis. There is now a strong left wing in the shop stewards movement, outside the control of the CP.

By Martine Davies, reporting from Copenhagen

Danish workers fight austerity

IT HAD been snowing the night before and neither buses nor trains were running. Copenhagen was at a standstill.

However, around the Parliament masses of demonstrators were already gathering, from all over the city. Their banners and placards demanded the 35-hour week, the dismissal of Schlüter, the prime minister, the opening of trade union strike funds to support the now illegal strikes.

By 12 o'clock, it looked like a gigantic CND demonstration, with so many people that it was impossible to move around. Speakers were applauded, though they didn't propose any concrete future. The day of action showed the enormous strength of the workers and their will to fight back. It was an impressive demonstration of disciplined anger.

The action attracted 50,000 demonstrators, one-tenth of the population of the capital, without any transport available. Similar events took place around the country. For the capital, it was the third demonstration of over 100,000 in the last twelve days, centering around the Parliament, symbol of the political nature of the struggle between the reactionary government and the workers.

1,500 occupied the 9 bridges that lead to Parliament and also, given its location in the heart of the city, that give access to the centre. It was 8 am and the police were taken by surprise. The bridges were immediately blocked by cars, buses and wires. When a police car tried to drive in, the picket on one of them, the car was grabbed by dozens of men and turned over. Two riotated policemen had to crawl out through the windows. Though they knew the picket would stop at 12 as a demonstration was planned then, the police wanted to force the



pickets and drive MPs through. On one of the bridges, they managed to push the pickets away but could not undo the barricade. On another one, after some fighting, they succeeded in repelling pickets behind the cars. By the time they believed they were winning, demonstrators arrived, joining in and surrounded the police, then forced them to leave one by one in a narrow alley opened in the crowd.

Danish workers demonstrate on 10 March bringing Copenhagen, the Danish capital, to a standstill



Gorbachev's offer

MIKHAIL GORBACHEV's 7 April declaration of a unilateral Soviet freeze on deployment of medium range missiles in Europe was the first public move in a campaign that has real historic significance.

What the Soviet leadership is doing is essentially speaking to establishment, right-wing opinion in Western Europe and in private, through diplomatic channels it is telling West European foreign offices some extremely embarrassing truths.

In the first place, it is pointing out that the West European states have for centuries accepted the idea that the political sovereignty of states depends upon military sovereignty — freedom of decision over fundamental issues such as whether to go to war or not. In the second place, the Soviets are pointing out that the US's present military drive — cruise and Pershing, but also above all Star Wars — will completely destroy Western Europe's military, and therefore political (and economic) sovereignty.

In other words, West European imperialism will have ceased to be anything more than a satellite and plaything of the US. Thirdly, Gorbachev is saying to the West European establishments that there is an alternative: a new relationship with the USSR in which the freedom of action of the West European states would be guaranteed, they could do what they liked as capitalist and imperialist states, provided only that they respected the security interests of the USSR.

This Soviet campaign is being launched against the background of the Geneva talks and the US drive to complete cruise and Pershing deployments and carry through the Star Wars research and development.

Agreement

It is becoming increasingly obvious that a very sizeable chunk of established, right-wing opinion in Britain, France and West Germany agrees with what the Soviets are saying. In Britain, for example, only the *Times* — whose demoralisation as a voice of bourgeois opinion now involves total subordination to Washington — is fully behind the US. Even the *Economist* — so dependent on US sales and advertising — is shamed about its support for Reagan, saying it hopes he will get only a 2/3rds victory in the negotiations.

As to whether the West European states will actually break ranks with Washington over the negotiations is another matter. They are terrified of doing so, not on the whole because they fear the USSR's future behaviour but because they are trembling over Washington's response. As the *Economist* puts it: 'It is European weakness, not European strength, that is likely to thwart Mr Gorbachev's hopes of detaching Europe from America.' The US business, political and media lobbies in Western Europe, not to mention the power of the US state, are powerful forces for any West European right-wing leader to take on.

By Oliver MacDonald

At the end of March, that master of small-mindedness in the field of tactics, Sir G. Howe, took most people by surprise by launching a timid attack on Star Wars. His speech was one of the most pathetic imaginable — on the one hand, he said, the Russians are trying to divide us, and Star Wars may be a good thing; on the other hand, it may be a bad thing, bad because it would be like the Maginot line! He got such a roasting from Washington for that speech that we aren't likely to hear much from him on that subject for a while. Meanwhile, President Mitterrand has been seek-

ing to establish a common West European response to the US through the Western European Union. The idea is that all the seven West European states will have a joint line against the US on military issues, and will share all their Star Wars information, participating jointly in the US's research programme. But this has already raised Washington's anger, producing a formal diplomatic note of protest against the West Europeans discussing their own military policy without the US present. Nothing could be a more direct challenge to the will of the West European establishments. A WEU meeting is scheduled for the end of this month, involving foreign and defence ministries. Will they back down over their joint scheme or not?

Castration

In principle, of course, the left has no objection whatever to the castration of the West European states as military imperialist powers. But it does object to this work being done by Washington for the following reasons: first, it will involve the continued barbaric US drive in the Third World; second, by threatening the security of the USSR, it aids continued oppressive Soviet model and Soviet control in Eastern Europe; third, the subordination of Western Europe to the USA will involve a stepped-up drive by West European capital against the workers of Western Europe.

None of this means the left should turn itself into a mouthpiece of the new Soviet leadership. It would be the height of folly to imagine that Soviet diplomatic manoeuvres will necessarily coincide with the interests of the left. But in this particular case, Soviet attempts to pull the West European states over to its opposition to Star Wars are very much in the interests of a very wide spectrum of, otherwise hostile currents of opinion in Western Europe.

THE LEFT PRESS has been flooded with post-mortems of the miners' strike.

The Eurocommunist wing of the Communist Party has tried to hijack the discussion with an analysis that argues that the methods of mass picketing were the essential cause of the NUM's defeat and that the union should have held a ballot in April. Public opinion was alienated because of these errors.

Bea Campbell, in an article entitled 'Politics Old and New' in the *New Statesman* (8 March 1985) endorses this view. Posing her argument within the framework of a supposedly feminist critique of both the 'hard left' and the hard right she attacks the 'male left' for equating 'muscular militancy' and violence with political strength, and for failing to assimilate the lessons of the Greenham Common women's peaceful encounters with the police and the military.

But the real core of the debate is about what kind of alliances the labour movement needs to turn the tide against Thatcher in the light of the experience of the miners' strike. VALERIE COULTAS takes up the argument.

TO take Bea Campbell's supposedly strongest point first, Orgreave was not the same kind of confrontation with the state as Greenham Common women's peace protest.

The women's peace camp at Greenham was and still is a very effective protest demonstration to alert public attention to the danger of cruise missiles.

The non-violent demonstrations there have made it very difficult for the police and the authorities to claim that they are keeping the peace when it is clear they are preparing for the most horrendous of all forms of war.

The picket line at Orgreave was different. It, and the other pickets in the strike, involved a different type and scale of mobilisation altogether: the industrial power of the most militant trade union pitted against the mighty forces of the British state. Ability to paralyse the economy is a decisive part of any such struggle, and mass picketing is necessary in any such dispute. This is why bourgeois courts and law have always legislated against such picketing.

The dominant view of women from the mining communities about such conflicts is deliberately misrepresented in Bea's article. 'It wasn't hard to find women in Oller-ton who supported the strike and yet felt alienated from what one described as "men behaving like men do; angry, brutal, useless. One side's as bad as the other."'

Thousands of women from the mining communities fought for the right to go on the picket line — and also had many illusions about the state destroyed overnight when they experienced the provocative behaviour of the police.

Many women in the mining communities didn't have to even go to a picket line to experience the state's persecution of the miners as their homes and villages were invaded and they were beaten up.

In fact anger at media bias and police interference with the miners' right to travel freely round the country, when they thought they were fighting for a just cause, was one of the factors that stimulated the women to organise the Women Against Pit Closures movement in the first place.

Women who couldn't distinguish between the violence of the oppressor and the oppressed stayed at home. Nor were mining women alone in this understanding of the role of the state.

Bea Campbell talks as if she speaks for the mainstream of women in the solidarity movement but many, many women would disagree, having seen how partisan was the treatment of the police, the judiciary and the media.

Women, violence and the miners' strike



Photo: MARTIN SHAKESHAFT (JFL)



Photo: GM COOKSON

Greenham women, long before the dispute began, had been careful to distinguish between their chosen form of protest and the situation confronting women in El Salvador for example.

Bea Campbell claims to be the authentic voice of feminism. But in reality her political allegiance is first and foremost to the theses of Eric Hobsbawm presented in *Marxism Today*. Her political support for the project of a popular front, a 'broad anti-Thatcher alliance', determines her attitude to everything else.

Her article is aimed centrally as an attack on the left, particularly the Scargill leadership of the NUM, to assert the validity of the LCC-*Marxism Today*, assessment of the dispute.

This assessment is spelled out around three central attacks on the NUM. Firstly the NUM allegedly lost the 'argument' by not holding the ballot. Secondly the NUM supposedly did not have an 'intelligible' negotiating position. Thirdly the NUM allegedly failed to win support from other trade unionists because of its syndicalist arrogance and its failure to popularise the issues in the

strike. In short Scargill and the NUM were the cause of the problems.

Tribune is praised by Bea, along with the Labour Coordinating Committee for spreading doubts about the NUM tactics.

Neil Kinnock comes under fire not for sticking the knife into the miners but for failing to twist it effectively enough — for not telling the miners outright not to engage in mass picketing and instead to adopt more 'subtle, strategic and satisfying forms of struggle.'

Bishops

Bea's orientation can be summed up by the forces she lists who could have supposedly become key parts of an alternative alliance for the miners — the bishops, the Earl of Stockton and David Steele.

'Both Bishops and the Liberal Party deny the category of class. In its place they offer community versus state. It's a tradition of radical dissent in which conflict is about ideas, not about power.'

This analysis of the strike, and the alliances to win, is false to the core. The NUM had to start its 'arrogant' battle for jobs on its own. But it was up to others within the labour movement as well to mobilise the forces necessary to win the war.

The failure of the TUC and Kinnock to lead, to popularise, to go out and fight for action, was the obstacle the NUM confronted.

A drive was needed across the labour movement to turn words into action. The NUM made the calls for support but with the exception of the NUR, ASLEF and the NUS, and particularly their ranks, the labour leaders stood back and gave money but little else.

Nor, contrary to the line of the Communist Party today, can the South Wales NUM, or the Wales Assembly, be held up as models of how the strike should have been won.

The decision of the South Wales area to avoid mass mobilisation at Port Talbot steel works early on in the dispute, and instead to encourage miners to adopt the 'guerrilla' tactic of the occupation of cranes, means that 102 good militants face very long prison sentences — with no effective

measures taken to stop movement of coal and iron ore.

And if ever the ability of the working class to take social initiatives, and reach out to new forces, was to be demonstrated in text book fashion it was in this strike.

No one on the left should get away with the idea that this process was an automatic one either. Arthur Scargill in the early 1970s was a defender of page 3 of the *Yorkshire Miner* and the pin up it carried at that time. Miners sang very sexist songs on the Mansfield march back in June.

But the Women Against Pit Closures movement swept through the mining communities changing attitudes. Significantly, as women took on the state they were strengthened in their resolve to take on their husbands. The movement was encouraged by the national NUM leadership.

The first national women's march in Barnsley on 12 May was built by the NUM, despite some uneven response at a local level, South Wales being a notable weak spot here.

Nor could it be said that the NUM lacked the ability to popularise the dispute or draw other social groups behind them. Scargill's speech at a Labour Party conference galvanised the entire event for example and the NUM created the greatest solidarity movement round a strike in post war history.

Not for years had there been a trade union leader with such resonance among the ranks of the workers — and other layers of society. And, unlike 99 per cent of other leaderships in the history of the British trade union movement, Scargill and the NUM sought out and spoke up for the demands of the oppressed — women, blacks, the key demands on Ireland and for the rights of gays and lesbians.

One of the oldest, most proletarian unions was beginning to challenge the prejudices of the British labour movement.

The Eurocommunists are hostile to this alliance between the exploited and the oppressed forged in struggle against the Tories.

Ruling class

They wish to create an alliance with sections of the ruling class that agrees not to struggle too hard against Thatcher in a way that alienates 'public opinion'.

The birth of the Women Against Pit Closures movement is a permanent gain of this strike. The strike could not have lasted without the political and material support of the women in those communities. That is the real type of social alliance which is required. Now the NUM is discussing giving the women associate membership and representation through the structures of the union — another move which should be encouraged.

The women's support groups had an electric effect on the mining communities. Aware of their social contribution in the strike women gained in confidence. 'We started as wives, mothers, girlfriends, sisters and wives, we have ended as organisers, speakers and seasoned fighters in our cause. We have faced the state... our eyes are open to the many struggles in society, we are not going back to our kitchens...' There is absolutely no reason for that movement to now turn its back on the leadership of the NUM or the so-called 'hard left' that helped to create its dynamic.

The church, the Liberal Party and the aristocracy are not more enlightened than the labour movement when it comes to the question of women. They have tolerated women's oppression for centuries and done nothing at all about it.

Women should continue to concentrate their energies on pushing the labour movement to take up their demands. The strike gave us a glimpse of the kind of alliance that will be necessary to turn the tide against Thatcher. That alliance of the exploited and oppressed, organised with the left wing of the labour movement, must be consolidated. That is the sole type of alliance that can show a way forward for women.

IRELAND UNFREE

Tomorrow's leaders

IN THE MINERS' strike young miners were the driving force in all the main actions of the strike. This is not surprising. Youth have been the activist vanguard of every major struggle. Ireland is no exception. We reprint below the editorial of *Republican News* 14 April 1985, on the role of youth in Ireland.

THE SPIRIT of freedom which keeps the struggle for liberation alive is demonstrated most clearly by the young members of the Republican Movement. They have borne the brunt of the oppression of British occupation in the North and the injustice of poverty and repression in the South.

In every phase of the fight for freedom, before and since Easter Week 1916, young men and women and sacrificed their lives and liberty. As we commemorate that Rising this weekend, we should be conscious of the ongoing contribution which youth is making, and can make in the future.

The Roll of Honour on the centre-pages of this paper carries the many names of Fianna and young Volunteers of the Irish Republican Army and Cumman na mBan who died on active service.

In the H-Blocks and Armagh the average age of the prisoners is 25 years, and a significant number of these young prisoners have been in jail from the age of 17 or 18.

Besides those young people who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the cause of freedom and those who languish in prison for the same cause, it should be remembered that day-to-day harassment in the six counties is directed primarily against youth.

Not that harassment stops at the border, because in the South, where young working-class people are maligned as trouble-makers and thugs, they suffer similar harassment from the gardai. Such harassment is bound to increase now with the operation of the Criminal Justice Act, which was designed primarily to deal with the 'Bugsy Malone' syndrome invented by a sensationalist media.

The consumer society offers little of nothing to youth but is quick to condemn those misguided young people who act outside the norms of society to obtain the material goods that they have been brain-washed into believing are essential.

Despite this, even in the South, where the struggle does not have the same immediate relevance and where sustained media propaganda and the rewriting of history by the establishment attempts to twist the truth, young people have rejected this insidious pressure.

Youth were to the forefront in supporting the hunger strikers and youth have been to the forefront as Sinn Fein's electoral workers.

Massive youth unemployment North and South has produced a groundswell of understandable resentment and political cynicism amongst many young people. The establishment's answer has been to try and dissipate this resentment through encouraging emigration or through dead-end training schemes.

It must be the task of Sinn Fein in the twenty-six counties to channel these young people into disciplined revolutionary political activity which has clearly-stated meaning and objectives for them.

Republican youth in the six counties have shown the determination and commitment to bring about real change in Ireland.

In this International Youth Year, we salute our young activists.



Sheffield faces the crunch

THE CRUNCH is coming for Sheffield City Council. Its meeting on the 24 April will decide whether the campaign against rate-capping will continue. But unlike previous meetings this vote will not avoid the issue of illegality. With no rates, the council will quickly run into the red and councillors will face the possibility of legal action. So far the Labour group leadership has avoided directly breaking the law.

At its 7 March meeting the council decided that it was 'unable' to set a rate. It did not refuse to set a rate as this would have been illegal. Three further meetings have been adjourned rather than face the issue head-on. Central to the leadership's tactics has been the idea that Sheffield should avoid going illegal as long as possible.

The over-optimistic view was encouraged that this might be enough to force Jenkin to the negotiating table. But there is a solid bloc of Labour councillors who will not be prepared to break the law, and the Labour group leadership has bent over backwards to maintain unity with this right wing.

Tremendous support has been won from the council workforce, and from local people.

In the council workforce there has been a campaign of workplace meetings, leafletting, etc, to win support for the council's stand against rate-capping. NALGO members have pledged £4500 to a fund in defence of councillors facing legal costs.

by John Kirby, Sheffield Heeley Labour Party

With all this support it is unfortunate to say the least that the council has done a number of things which undermine the campaign. Some heads of department have imposed a freeze on vacancies, and asked for cuts in spending, even though this is not official policy. Council tenants have been asked to

pay the rate at the rate-capped level.

In addition, council workers have been asked to defer two hours pay until April. Worse still, 3000 workers in the direct works department have been locked out in a dispute over bonus. Abolition of bonus is local party, council and union policy. In an effort to get management to implement this policy, the workers have been refusing to fill in time sheets: the department was losing large sums of money as a result, and management locked out the workforce.

These actions are the result of a failure to take a clear stand on 7 March. They are aimed at reducing council costs so that the day the council goes into the red is postponed, while the appearance of a fight is kept up. Now the fight is for the campaign to continue beyond 24 April.

The best way for this to happen is for the leadership to refuse to set a rate. Any fudge on this issue, will dissipate the support that has been won.



Sheffield Labour leader David Blunkett leads the Democracy Day demonstration in London last March. His stand on Sheffield council is leading to a fudge.

Photo: JOHN CHAPMAN

LT — noose tightens on thousands of jobs

'THERE'S NO need for a wage increase this year. I can fill any vacancy in any grade!' That was the message from Dr Ridley member of the London Regional Transport Board for London Transport Underground Ltd. Opening what Ridley and his colleagues intend to be a new era of Edwardes-MacGregor style management in the recently demunicipalised transport system, the message to the unions, at what was an 'informal' response to the wage claim for LT's 25,000 underground workers, was brutally clear. Agree to the job cuts or there's no wage rise.

Management want rapid extension of one person operation (OPO) of underground trains on the East London and District lines this year to be followed by the Metropolitan Main and Piccadilly lines next year. In addition they want rapid progress on the wholesale destaffing of most stations outside the central London area. A rolling programme of an

annual 2 per cent cut in the permanent way staff who maintain the tracks is being sought.

Patrick Sikorski, NUR

At the same time back-up services such as the engineering workshops, cleaning services, canteens, etc are being packaged for the purposes of making them compete for their own work against

outside contractors and face eventual closure of privatisation.

The LRT Board, having been appointed by Tory transport minister Nicholas Ridley (no relation to the Doctor), did not object when the orders came down that the subsidy being paid to LT was to be cut from £192 million to £95 million over a three year period. Such a cut can only be achieved through massive job losses although there will inevitably also be fare increases and reductions in service levels. Most estimates agree that 16,000 bus and tube jobs are at stake between now and 1988.

But there is resistance. Against the background of the miners' strike the unions on the under-

ground were able to force management to withdraw a round of station staffing cuts planned for 12 September last year. The LT district council of the NUR has had 'no job loss' policy for 2 years. Fighting against agreements accepting the principal of OPO going back to 1968, and the setback suffered in 1982, the NUR has forced the other unions, the NUR and ASLEF executives and the Federation into unity behind a job sharing with no loss of pay demand which is completely unacceptable to management. The implementation dates for OPO on the East London and District lines are already months behind schedule.

It is this resistance which leads Dr Ridley to

wield the big stick. In addition to threatening a nil wage increase he also threatens to withdraw a 7½ per cent productivity bonus being paid at the moment as a result of the Hammersmith and City and Circle lines having been converted to OPO last autumn.

His aim is to turn the workforce against the NUR district council. There is an entirely reasonable wariness amongst the rank and file about the likelihood of success in the all out battle that will be necessary to halt management's plans. But the real fear amongst those who want to organise a fightback is that those negotiators elected for life or merely appointed, will buckle rather than calling management's bluff.

Left gains at NUT conference

THE NUT has been forced to step up action on pay. More astonishing at the Scarborough conference was the card vote (103,000 to 96,000) which supported the Lambeth amendment to the executive report. This effectively places the NUT behind the miners' fight to save jobs, while criticising the failure of the TUC to give serious support to the miners.

This decision was important for two reasons. Firstly it comes from a union with an insular sectoral background which under pressure of Tory attacks is beginning to break out of narrow professionalism. Secondly, it is the first major union to meet since the end of the miners' strike.

Therefore, in gauging the realignment of the labour movement following the strike this decision is positive, and cuts across

the conclusions drawn by some sections of the left who have started the retreat and allied with Neil Kinnock. For the left of the NUT, of which the Socialist Teachers Alliance is the biggest component, there were many successes.

By Ray Sorotkin, Lambeth NUT (personal capacity)

The entire conference gave a standing ovation to Tito Blanco of ANDES (the El Salvador teachers'

union) when he addressed conference. A majority of delegates supported a move to suspend standing orders so that the NUT could discuss opposition to the threatened deportation of Shahida Zubair Ali, a teacher in Tower Hamlets. Although the required two-thirds majority was not achieved, the new president Gordon Greene was compelled to read out a statement against the deportation threat.

Further evidence of the NUT breaking out of 'professional' limitations was unanimous opposition to the Devon education authority's attempt to ban the wearing of badges or the displaying of car stickers which might be construed to be political.

These cases show that teachers are not hiding behind the banner of professionalism as in the past.

Pressures work both ways. Kinnock's 'dented shield' line has had a disastrous effect on local councils. The NUT was not immune to this pressure. A card vote (80,000 to 131,000) defeated a resolution urging non-compliance. But the executive was on the defensive.

A key test of the union's progress is the issue of sexism. In a union whose membership is two-thirds women, 85 per cent of speeches were made by men — the majority of these by executive members.

They wheeled out an executive member to give the usual 'I got where I am by hard work, any woman can do that if she wants' type speech. This was counter to the demand for there to be women on the executive elected by women. Despite positive discrimination policy not being won at this conference, the male, particularly executive, role at this conference makes positive action all the more necessary.

STA fringe meetings were all well attended, and the positive role of the SWP towards the STA opens up the possibility of building a united left organisation following the advances made at conference.

Black sections want your support

AFTER LAST weekend's national press coverage of the Vauxhall conference in support of the black sections in the Labour Party few people will be left in any doubt that the right of black self-organisation within the party is a number one issue for all activists.

The bourgeois press certainly isn't. Labour leader Neil Kinnock certainly isn't. He understands the real threat to his 'opinion poll' politics that an influx of black activists represents.

With more black people active in the party the pressure will be on to get rid of white elitist attitudes and to push the party four-square behind the demands of all the oppressed within society. This upsurge of black militancy will bring welcome support for all the demands the Labour left are campaigning around.

Last Sunday's conference called on party members to support the stand of Lewisham East Labour Party by demonstrating outside the constituency meeting in April — when a national agent will be there armed with a loyalty oath — and by

passing resolutions in support of black sections.

Demonstrate in support of Lewisham East on Friday 26 April. Turn up at the Limeshall Labour Club, Limesgrove Road, Lewisham at 7pm.

Oppose the loyalty oath by passing the following resolution: 'This body opposes the Labour Party national executive committee's plans to introduce a 'loyalty oath' for delegates to selection conferences in CLPs that support black sections.

'It believes that this will lead to a witch-hunt of supporters of black sections at a time when the party should be concentrating on campaigning against the Tories and winning the fight against the abolition of the GLC and metropolitan counties, rate-capping, and threats to the political levy.

'This body urges the NEC not to take action against CLPs who have black sections.'

• Further information can be obtained from: Labour Party Black Section, c/o 39 Chippenham Road, London W9 2AH.

(See also page 12 for Vauxhall conference report.)



Photo: JOHN CHAPMAN

Defend the Newham 7



Today it is the Newham Seven, tomorrow it could be you

A NEW OUTBURST of racist attacks has taken place in Newham, East London. The police have colluded in these attacks by failing to arrest those responsible and instead charging seven black youth with affray for daring to defend themselves.

On Saturday 17 April in Newham a partially disabled 16 year old Asian youth was dragged into a car and assaulted with a hammer by white racist thugs.

The thugs then turned on a family out shopping, an apprentice and an Asian woman and beat them up too. Later that day, leaving the Duke of Edinburgh Public House, 20 of these racists, wielding among other things garden implements, attacked black youth.

The police arrived on the scene and proceeded to arrest one of the victims of the attack.

Six more Asian youths were rounded up later along with three white youths. But five of the black youths arrested, in-

itially on charges of possessing offensive weapons and criminal damage, were remanded in custody for 7 weeks on the flimsy excuse that the police were busy preparing their case.

No such treatment was meted out to the white youths who were immediately released on bail. None of the youths in the car on 7 April have yet been arrested by the police.

Police behaviour in this incident follows the pattern that the black and Asian community in Newham has come to expect.

In the case of the Virk brothers in Newham 1978, the murder of Ali Baig in 1980 and the arrest of the Newham 8 in 1982 the

police also turned on the victims of racist violence rather than the perpetrators of these outrages.

But the Asian community does not accept this behaviour. The Newham 7 Defence Campaign is calling a National demonstration to protest at this attack and other such attacks on black and Asian people's right to live in their communities free of intimidation and assault by racists.

As the Newham Seven leaflet says: 'By charging three racists the state is attempting to present the Newham Seven incident as one of 'gang warfare'. This attempt must be resisted.'

'We cannot tolerate one single attack by racist thugs on our people and will defend ourselves if the need arises. Yesterday it was the Newham Eight. Today it is the Newham Seven, tomorrow it could be you.'

Youth reporting from Blackpool

THE CONTRAST between the LPYS conference in 1984 at the beginning of the miners strike and the 1985 conference after the strike has ended, is startling.

The 1984 conference was a confident outward looking event which featured centrally young fighters in the mining communities. The Militant leadership of the LPYS made many radical statements about the doubling or trebling of the size of the LPYS during the miners strike.

But none of these promises was realised. This year's conference was a smaller and more demoralised affair, with none of the promised gains of 500 young miner recruits or 20 new branches on show.

Militant found themselves under sharp attack from a 300 strong meeting called to discuss Liverpool city council's attack on the right of the black community of Liverpool to organise themselves autonomously.

Despite Militant's orientation to steer the LPYS away from participating in key struggles policy was passed that calls on the LPYS nationally and locally, to work jointly with Youth CND to build and mobilise for the Anti-Trident demonstration 1 June in Glasgow. Similar policy was passed on building for the demonstration against Powell 27 April and the demonstration against the Gillick ruling 23 June.

By Paula Frampton

Conference also passed demands to produce literature on lesbian and gay rights, repression in Ireland and a Young Women's Charter, as well as building an annual young women's school, supplemented by similar schools in the regions.

KEVIN DAVIES was one of the 15 miners who attended this year's LPYS conference in Blackpool. Kevin, a member of Rufford pit NUM in Nottinghamshire which has a workforce of 1300, was one of the 54 strikers who stayed out to the end.

I DID NOT agree with Militant and other people who argued that the NUM should have held a ballot, especially when they came out with it after 12 months of the strike in order to explain why the miners did not win.

The miners lost because of the lack of support from the TUC, the Labour Party leadership and the minority of miners who refused to come out on strike.

If there had been a ballot there is no way that Nottinghamshire would have voted for the strike. In fact it's unlikely that even South Wales would have voted for a strike. Only a minority of South Wales pits came out at first.

The only mistake that

Scargill made was not to be president of this union in 1972 or 1974. If he had been, the dispute would not have had to take place.

Scargill had been made a scapegoat by a lot of people. But no one in the union blames Scargill, Heathfield and McGahey for what they did.

Take the picketing of Notts. It was done peacefully. There was no trouble at all until the police moved in. My pit, for example was almost entirely picketed out until the area leadership announced we were having an area ballot.

Now that was a mistake. The Notts area ballot gave the men an excuse to cross picket lines and go to work. The mis-

take was not that Scargill did not organise a ballot. It was that Notts did!

Since the 54 strikers have returned to work I've been surprised at how subdued the scabs are. They don't argue with us, we argue with them. Sixteen scabs have been transferred into our pit from Yorkshire. They claim that they resigned and reapplied.

Scabs

But young lads from our village can't get jobs at the pit. These people have been transferred from Yorkshire by the NCB to ensure their safety.

Now that the overtime ban has been lifted the striking miners from our pit are winning votes at branch meetings which take place on Sunday mornings. At our last meeting a striker was voted onto

the welfare committee and another as the NUM's dust representative. This shows that with the strike over the scabs aren't interested in the union anymore.

In my opinion, however, the Nottingham area should be expelled from the union. The ultra-right union leaders like Lynk should be suspended for five years. I don't think we can just vote them off in Notts.

A lot of the strikers in our area have joined the Labour Party. A lot of the women who were active around the strike have also joined. In fact it's virtually

all strikers at the meetings because we're the activists.

At the first meeting I went to I proposed we set up a Young Socialists branch. I was surprised to get the full backing of the party. I'd thought they would be against it.

So now three of us miners are trying to establish an LPYS. We're trying to set up a meeting with the local Labour candidate — the MP is a Tory — and our aim is to establish a North Notts LPYS that joins together the different constituencies.



A Socialist ACTION

Labour Party
black sections say:

DROP THE LOYALTY OATH!

LABOUR PARTY black sections drew national attention again over the weekend when Vauxhall Labour Party hosted a conference in support of black self-organisation within the party. The meeting was held in response to the Labour leadership's latest attempts to silence black activists, by threatening to invalidate MP reselection meetings if black sections delegates take part.

In a front page article, Monday's *Daily Mail* described the fightback as 'the revolt' which posed 'the biggest internal problem for Neil Kinnock since he became leader 18 months ago.'

They're right. Black activists have already proved they won't be fighting on the side of the status quo.

The racist *Daily Mail* attempted to give the campaign the flavour of a race riot. It dwelt on a statement by black section national committee vice-chair Linda Bellos, who said the national executive were 'making up the rules as they go along' in an attempt to 'maintain white supremacist rule'.

Linda's right. The fundamental challenge to the institutional racism of the party is what makes Kinnock and the rest of the leadership respond so ferociously.

CHRIS KHAMIS, assistant secretary of the black section national committee (writing in a personal capacity) reports on the Vauxhall conference.

AROUND 100 delegates and observers met in Lambeth Town Hall last Sunday to plan a campaign to defend black party activists from the latest attack by the Labour Party national executive.

The NEC is telling constituencies that they cannot accept MP nominations from their black sections or allow black section delegates to vote at reselection meetings — on

pain of declaring the reselection procedure invalid. If parties refuse to bend to this threat, the national leadership will dispatch its full-timers to those constituencies and demand every general committee delegate signs an 'oath of loyalty' to the party constitution.

This threat is currently directed at Lewisham East and Vauxhall parties in South London. The

reselection process in both is well advanced.

Lewisham East in fact will be visited by a national agent at the end of April. Last Sunday's conference called on all party members to turn up and show their support for black sections and for Lewisham's stand.

Four other parties — Deptford, Hornsey and Wood Green, Newham West and Nottingham East — will soon be starting their reselection rounds with blacks section delegates taking part. And many other constituencies are changing their rules to accommodate black sections as they begin their reselection.

Sunday's meeting called on all parties to make provision for black sections in their own constituencies, and to pass resolutions in support of Vauxhall and Lewisham East and against the loyalty oath.

Further support for black sections is now growing within the unions. The black section steering committee are holding press conferences to get their message across, and are seeking a meeting with party leader Neil Kinnock.

● See page 11 for details of the Lewisham lobby and for the model resolution against the loyalty oath.

Mass mobilisations continue in South Africa



AS FOUR more blacks died in South Africa this week at the hands of apartheid's police, 80,000 attended the mass funeral in a football stadium near Uitenhage of the 28 shot dead on 21 March. This was one of the biggest mobilisations ever of blacks in South Africa, showing the spirit and determination of an unbeaten population.

The coffins were carried to the cemetery draped in the colours of the banned African National Congress — black, green and gold. As the resistance to 'bloody Thursday' on 21 March continues, CHARLIE VAN GELDEREN analyses the current situation.

LATEST reports from South Africa indicate that the townships in the Eastern Cape are still simmering. Homes of black councillors and officials are still being stoned and burned to the ground. Up to now the violence in the Eastern Cape has not spread to other parts of the country. For the government it must be a great relief that the townships of the Vaal triangle, which includes Sharpeville and Soweto have remained relatively calm.

On Wednesday 10 April police reported that one of their vehicles had been set alight in a township on the outskirts of Johannesburg but they did not name the

township. The fact that they gave publicity to this isolated incident reflects their general nervousness. The authorities are also keeping a watchful eye on Crossroads, the shanty town near Cape Town where 18 people died in riots in December last.

It is proposed to move thousands of squatters from Crossroads to the new purpose built black township of Khayelitsha. This is part of the regime's policy of 'controlled urbanisation' of Africans in the Western Cape. Under South Africa's apartheid legislation, this area was designated for 'coloured' labour.

Until recently the government tried to pre-

vent any new African settlement there and for the last 20 years froze all development of established African townships in the vicinity of Cape Town, refusing to build new houses, schools or other facilities. Apart from those already settled in the region, the only Africans who were to be allowed in were a limited number of rural migrants on temporary work permits.

While government regulations may propose, economic facts have a tendency to dispose. The impoverished and dispossessed blacks, dumped in the inhospitable and bleak 'homelands', the Ciskei and Transkei, inevitably made their way back toward Cape Town and the Cape Peninsula. With nowhere else to go they established themselves in Crossroads where today an estimated 70,000 people live in make-shift huts and tents.

Khayelitsha, to which the authorities are trying to get the squatters to move, is a sprawling new township situated in the windblown sand dunes on the coast of False Bay, about 15 miles from Cape Town. Although super-

ficially, the bleak and soulless new township with its row upon row of identical two-room boxes, each supposed to house a family of five, may appear to be an improvement to the shacks of Crossroads, the great majority of the squatter-town inhabitants have shown no eagerness to make the move.

In the first place it would be farther from their places of work and travel costs make a big dent in the wages of black workers. Furthermore, in Crossroads they pay no rent and have developed a measure of autonomy which they are reluctant to exchange for the tight controls to which they would be subjected in Khayelitsha. The move would also result in a sort out of 'illegals' — black people who are in the region without the required permits and face the prospects of being 'deported' to the homelands.

So far the government's efforts to remove the people of Crossroads and also of the three long-established townships near Cape Town, Langa, Nyanga and Guguletu has been fiercely resisted, culminating in the 18 deaths in December.

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No, the black South African workers' fight against the apartheid regime hasn't spilled over into Britain. This is how the Daily Mail chose to describe the conference organised last weekend to campaign against the Labour leadership's latest attempt to scotch the fight for black self-organisation within the party. Institutionalised racism within the Labour Party helps maintain the rule of Neil Kinnock and his ilk.