

Socialist Organiser

**YOUTH
AGAINST
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**Oct
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SUPPORT LIVERPOOL COUNCIL WORKERS

INDEFINITE strike action from September 25 – that is what council workers in Liverpool are now preparing. It is the proper answer to the Tories.

The jobs of all 30,000 council workers are at risk as a result of government cuts. The Tories have cut central government grant to Liverpool year by year, so that the City Council cannot get the money it needs to maintain services in the city without huge rate rises (which it refuses to accept). Special penalties have been imposed on Liverpool for 'overspending'.

The council has been told that if redundancy notices are not sent out to its workers the Borough Treasurer will refuse to issue any more cheques. And the councillors will be open to further massive surcharges.

According to the Daily Mail the government has plans to send in troops to run certain services in Liverpool, and to evacuate people in council care to the Isle of Man.

Ministers have denied the Mail report; but the Tory government is certainly determined to use the big stick of the law and financial penalties against the council. The Labour council was elected on a manifesto of no cuts and no huge rate rises, yet the Tories are prepared to ride rough-shod over the democratically-expressed wishes of the people of Liverpool.

The labour movement nationally must go into top gear to defend Liverpool from the Tories. Other local government workers must be prepared to respond to calls to action from Liverpool. GLC NALGO has agreed to strike on the 25th; other unions should follow suit.

And the struggle must be linked to broader issues, such as the abolition of the metropolitan counties.

Eric Heffer

Clearly the councillors in Liverpool are standing very firm.

As far as the 90 days business was concerned, that was merely to meet the requirements of the law so that they did not get surcharged further, and to bring the crisis to the government – to give them 90 days to negotiate.

But the workforce has said that there will be no redundancies, and now of course there's a strike on the 25th. The workforce has clearly taken the initiative.

The Labour councillors meeting last night [September 16] pledged their full support, so there is again unity between the workforce and the councillors.

There is now a clear understanding among that trade unionists and the party in the city that now it's a united fight against the government. The ball is back in the government's court.

On the 26th the Liverpool Labour Members of Parliament are going to meet Kenneth Baker to argue for financial aid to Liverpool – for them to give the necessary assistance in order that Liverpool can meet its needs.

The rest of the movement should back Liverpool, and we should certainly pass resolutions accordingly at party conference. Trade unionists nationally should give the Liverpool workers every assistance. It's going to be a vital struggle.

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Labour and South Africa

THIS WEEK the South African army has once more invaded Angola — and if it was any other country anywhere in the world invading another independent country they would be condemned by the British government.

But because it is Thatcher's friend in South Africa invading Angola, nothing is said.

Inexorable

The situation in South Africa is in my view moving to the inexorable conclusion of the end of apartheid. People in this country should give full support to the ANC and to SWAPO as the representatives of the black majority in both countries.

The meetings in Lusaka of the South African business representatives with the ANC are an inevitable consequence of the shift of power that is taking place in South Africa. The business people are trying to guard their own future by meeting the new forces.

The British government has continued the hypocrisy of 'constructive dialogue' while knowing full well it will have no effect whatsoever on the South African government. The only thing the South African government will understand is a complete boycott on South African

goods in this country.

The last Labour government did not have a very good record on South Africa. Trade and diplomatic relations continued. Very little support was given to anyone fighting apartheid.

It is essential that Labour campaigns for an end to all trade with the apartheid regime.

Oliver Tambo, president of the ANC, will be addressing the Labour Party conference. We must see a clear will to campaign as a party on South Africa.

Amnesty

There is a disgusting period of arm-twisting and shabby manoeuvring going on to try to gut the NUM resolution for conference and stop the party facing up to the consequences of the miners' strike.

I'm absolutely committed to fighting for the amnesty. Journalists are saying that this is a test of Neil Kinnock's leadership. Well, if he can defeat the miners on the question of amnesty, it's the ultimate kick in the stomach to the NUM who fought so magnificently and so bravely and so largely alone.

In large measure, the current very welcome revival in support for the party is due to the miners' strike.

Defeat in Islington

By Mary Corbishley

ISLINGTON NALGO's historic strike against racism ended in defeat on Monday September 9 when the strikers voted to return to work without a settlement.

The 5½-week strike demanded that the council should not have employees convicted of racial harassment working with the public. It was sparked off when Vi Howell — one of three employees convicted of racial harassment by a council committee after a series of black workers had found conditions unbearable in a particular section of the Housing Department — was transferred to a neighbourhood office under the council's decentralisation programme.

The workers in that neighbourhood office struck, and were joined by NALGO members in other neighbourhood offices and a few other sections.

The council conceded that the other two people convicted of racial harassment would not be put into jobs working with the public, but stuck firm on Vi Howell. The way to fight racism, it piously proclaimed, was not to argue about individuals, but to work out better procedures.

Seriously

NALGO members, some of whom had been attracted to work in Islington by the council's progressive policies (on paper), took Labour's anti-racist commitments more seriously than the council did.

The return to work followed the failure of two attempts to strengthen the strike.

A ballot for an all-out strike by the NALGO branch produced a two-thirds majority against. It was probably a mistake to go for this ballot: on such a political issue, a much better vote for strike action could not have been expected, and defeat in the ballot obviously harmed the strike's momentum.

The strikers then systematically lobbied all the September Labour Party ward meetings with a view to getting councillors mandated for the council Labour group meeting on Friday 6th. Despite considerable counter-campaigning



Marching to support the strikers. Photo: Stefano Cagnoni, Report

by some councillors, this effort was successful, with 29 out of 49 Labour councillors being mandated to support NALGO.

Come the Labour group, 12 of the 29 were absent and five broke their mandate, so a motion supporting the council's obstinate position was carried by 18 votes to 12.

The strikers returned to work on Wednesday 11th, and Vi Howell is due to return from leave and start at the neighbourhood office on Tuesday 17th.

Despite the overwhelming support for the strike from the Labour Party in terms of resolutions passed, the turn-out from the Labour Party at the lobby of the council Labour group on Friday 6th was disappointing, and was obviously a signal to some councillors that they could defy their mandates and get away with it.

Accountability was a major issue in the struggle in which the present group of Labour councillors pushed the Labour old guard out into the SDP and then thrashed the SDP in the

1982 elections. Now the new councillors are adopting the same attitudes as the old.

The struggle inside the Labour Party does not finish here. Islington Labour group is pledged to abide by the decisions of

joint meetings of the Labour group and the Labour Parties' Local Government Committee; a special joint meeting should be called urgently. And the councillors who defied their mandates should not be selected as candidates for 1986.

Women at conference

By Josie Edwards, press officer, WAC

AT LABOUR Party conference this year the Labour Women's Action Committee will as usual be campaigning to improve the representation of socialist women in Parliament and in public life generally, in order to promote the needs of oppressed women — black, working-class, lesbian, low-paid, and others — everywhere.

WAC-sponsored resolutions are, with one exception, under 'Women's Organisation' in the agenda. Motions 16 to 24 reiterate WAC's constantly tabled demands for the Women's Conference to elect the Women's Section of the Labour National Executive and be allowed to table five resolutions at Party conference, and for the inclusion of at least one woman on every parliamentary shortlist.

Only 12 women have so far been selected for safe Labour seats.

One resolution is not in the women's section of the agenda — no.31, which demands immediate action to get women onto parliamentary shortlists, is oddly isolated

in the 'Party Franchise' section.

WAC will this year be supporting four rather than the full five women needed for the women's section of the National Executive. These are Joan Maynard MP, Margaret Beckett MP, Clare Short MP, and Diane Abbott (Westminster City councillor, women's officer of ACTT, and a Black Sections activist). The missing name is Frances Morrell, who cannot be nominated since she is not, this year, a conference delegate.

Existing NEC members and MPs are eligible ex officio but new contenders not in parliament have to be delegates.

For those ready once more for the fight, WAC is organising at conference as follows:

Fringe meeting: September 30, 6.15, Bournemouth Pier Leisure Centre. Speakers will include Jo Richardson MP.

Revue: October 2, 9pm, same venue.

The WAC hotel for sisters wanting advice or a chat is the Cliffside Hotel, Durley Gardens, West Cliff, Bournemouth. Tel. 0202 27833. Contact Jane Slowey.

Black sections

THE REPORT of the Labour Party working group on black sections published last week describes black sections as a "success story".

The working group, chaired by Jo Richardson MP, proposed that the party should provide for black sections on the same basis as it already provides for women's sections. Racial oppression is comparable to women's oppression, and black people should have the right to a voice within the party as black people.

The majority of the working group rejected the idea that this proposal would ghettoise blacks or create 'bantustans'. If the Labour Party forbids black sections, this is more likely to lead to black people being 'ghettoised' by organising outside the labour movement. But black people who join the Labour Party through black sections can also become fully active in ward branches and constituencies.

Despite all the arguments it seems however that the debate at the Labour Party conference this year is

already sewn up. Bill Morris, a black full-time official in the TGWU, has been persuaded to lead the opposition to black sections, and the trade union block vote is likely to be heavily against the black sections.

It is important that black activists stay in the Labour Party and the trade unions and continue to fight, rather than allowing Kinnock's arrogance to drive them out of the movement.

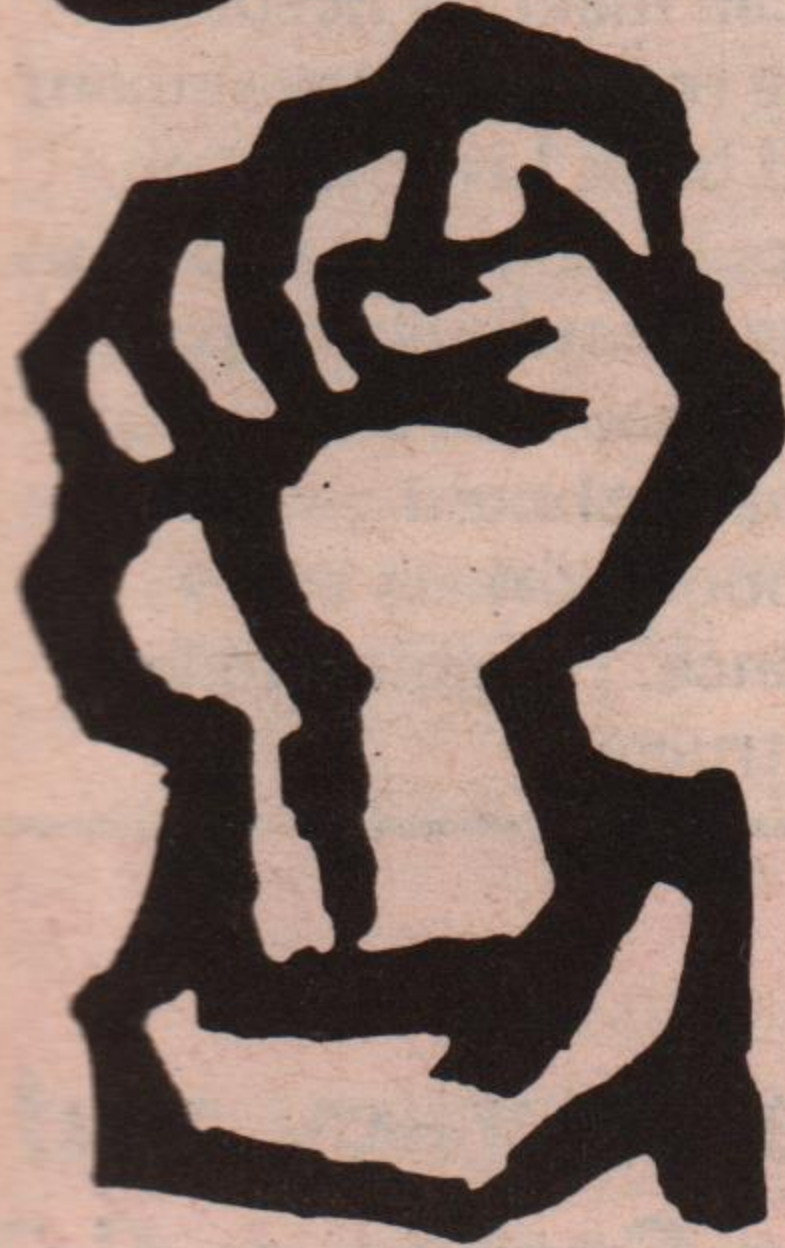
Move this motion

This conference deplores the response of Neil Kinnock to the passing of the resolution moved by the NUM at the TUC Congress on Tuesday September 3.

His statement that he would prevent the policy commitments contained in that resolution appearing in the Labour Party Manifesto, even if they were also carried at this year's Labour Party Conference, can only damage the Party and the movement. Such claims for a veto have no constitutional basis and are repugnant to the overwhelming majority of Party members.

This conference repudiates Neil Kinnock's claim and calls on all Party representatives, including the Leader, to ensure that Labour's democratically agreed policies are loyally put before the electorate.

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Reform in South Africa?

ARE SOUTH Africa's ruling racists about to give up the ghost? President P W Botha's latest pronouncements — returning citizenship to several million blacks and proposing abolition of the pass laws — have given rise to widespread speculation that internal reform is a real possibility.

Insist

The US administration and the British government have been insisting on the reality of such a possibility. In the US it is called 'constructive engagement' — although in order to

outflank more liberal critics, Reagan has opted for a new term, 'active engagement'.

Flexible

The more far-sighted among South Africa's big capitalists are in favour of fairly wide-ranging reform. They would prefer a more flexible, more normal system — if only the blacks will stay quiet and let the reforms come bit by bit from above. Gavin Relly of Anglo-American, the apex of South African capital, has even gone to talk with the ANC.

But the 'reformist' South

African capitalists have big problems. From their point of view, reforms would be preferable to being overthrown. Even Botha can see that — his own election slogan in the past has been 'adapt or die' (and he didn't just mean it figuratively).

Rule

But full democratisation would mean rule by the black majority. And the 'reformists' will never be able to persuade most of white South Africa to accept that — to give up their political power, and therefore

almost certainly their privileges.

And the speculation that Botha was going to introduce really radical reforms has proved unfounded. The institutional foundations of apartheid are not to be dismantled.

The Group Areas Act — which defines the areas within which whites, Coloureds and Indians live — will stay, the South African government insists. So, apparently, will the series of laws dating back to early this century which compel Africans to live in 'townships' outside the main cities.

Botha's government has laid down three 'non-negotiables': separate residential areas are to stay; segregated schools are to stay; and "participation in the political process on a group basis" is to continue — that is, the new constitution is to be maintained, with its three racially-defined houses of Parliament. (Two of these houses, the Asian and Coloured, have no power, and there isn't one for Africans.)

Proposal

Moreover, the proposal to repeal the pass laws is only a proposal; to be carried out maybe in six months' time. Passes will be replaced by new 'identity documents' — checked, so the proposal says, on a colour-blind basis, but that remains to be seen.

It looks as if the Botha government is trying to make enough reformist noise to relieve the diplomatic and mass-struggle pressure on them — with the calculation that if they can bring the situation under control, then wriggling out of promises in six months' time will be easy enough.

It is because of the struggles of the black workers, and the oppressed blacks in general, that the racists are manoeuvring to introduce reforms or promises of reform.

But apartheid will not magic itself away. It will have to be overthrown by the black workers. And one thing they will have to fight against is the New-speak that calls no change a reform.

It is worth recalling that the present pass laws are enshrined in an Act entitled the 'Abolition of Passes Act'.

After the riots

By Jim Denham

BIRMINGHAM Trades Council invited Afro-Caribbean and Asian community activists to a meeting on Monday 16th to discuss how the labour movement can best respond to the Handsworth riot.

Trades Council secretary Mick Rice outlined proposals that had come from the executive for a public meeting and a march in Handsworth on the theme of unemployment. He stressed that the Trades Council would only take such an initiative with the agreement of local black organisations, and that he was anxious not to cut across the plans that black activists may already have made.

Speakers from the Handsworth Defence Campaign (an alliance of left-wing Afro-Caribbean and Asian groups) argued that the meeting and demonstration should also highlight the position of the 190 or so people arrested during the riot. Avthar Joul from the Indian Workers' Association pointed to the dangerous situation arising within the Asian community as a result of 'opportunistic middle-class' Asian leaders stirring up feelings against the Afro-Carib-

bean community and organising an Asian youth vigilante group.

Avthar Joul stressed that the riots had involved youths of all races, and that attacks on Asians, though extremely regrettable, had not been racially motivated. It was vital, he argued, that we do not allow a wedge to be driven between the Afro-Caribbean and the Asian communities.

His sentiments were echoed by Tony Huq from the Bangladeshi Workers' Association, who added that white socialists from the Trades Council and elsewhere must be involved in the defence campaign, but that they in turn must be aware of the deep distrust that many black activists have of the 'white left'. Extreme sensitivity would be called for if a united campaign was to be built.

Mistrust of the labour movement and of the white left was evident in the contributions from the 'Black Sisters' who argued that the defence campaign should not involve whites, at least not for the time being. They pointed to the Sam Bond affair in Liverpool as an example of the left's insensitivity to the wishes and aspira-

tions of black people.

A Sikh youth intervened to disagree with this and argued that unity with white workers was necessary to deal with the real causes of the riots, unemployment and deprivation.

Councillor Phil Murphy, who represents Soho ward at the centre of the riot area, condemned the role of the Birmingham City Council Labour group and its leader Dick Knowles. They had shown themselves completely indifferent to the problems of the black community in Handsworth, and their only response to the riots was a blanket denunciation of 'criminals and hooligans'.

Cllr Murphy pledged himself to fight within the Labour group and within the council for a massive programme of investment and rebuilding in the area as well as full compensation for all victims of the riots.

Unfortunately the meeting did not draw up any definite plans for action. But the black activists present agreed to take the Trades Council's proposals back to their organisations for discussion.

Handsworth Defence Campaign: 104 Heathfield Rd, Birmingham 20.



Policeman in Lozells Road on September 11. Photo: Andrew Moore

Liverpool: a need for unity

ON SEPTEMBER 5 Liverpool City Council announced that their money would run out at the end of December.

There was talk of issuing 90 days' notice of redundancies, but then the council held a press conference to say that the redundancies were being withdrawn and it was all a mistake.

It soon became clear that the council did intend to issue the redundancy notices. The council said that the Borough Treasurer would refuse to issue any cheques unless the redundancy notices were sent out. And the councillors would be open to massive surcharge.

On September 12 the council personnel committee, chaired by Derek Hatton, reiterated that the redundancy notices would be issued. NALGO said that if the council attempted to issue redundancy notices then they would not process them.

On Saturday 14th there was a City Council shop stewards' conference, and the GMBU — in which 'Militant' are a leading force — proposed accepting the redundancy notices (though GMBU chair Ian Lowes had opposed this earlier in the week at a District Labour Party meeting).

The GMBU line was narrowly defeated.

The stewards then agreed to blockade the council meeting on September 16. The Labour councillors applauded the pickets, but there was still no clear statement that the redundancy notices would not be issued.

On the evening of September 16 Derek Hatton said that because they could not get in to the meeting the councillors are clear from any legal action for not issuing redundancy notices. They had attempted and failed.

But it seems that if the councillors want to keep within legality they have to try to reconvene the council meeting within the next few days.

The stewards have also agreed to go on an indefinite strike from September 25, integrating the protest strike over surcharges into a more general battle.

Later this week the council want to have a mass meeting of all the workforce addressed by councillors.

But at present it still looks as if the redundancy notices will go out sooner or later.

So what is going on? There is certainly some cause for alarm. The council — most notably Militant, who would be in the best position to do it — have not raised the sort of hue and cry appropriate to a struggle of this magnitude. (Last week's Militant gives

huge coverage to the threat of surcharge against the councillors for their delay in setting a rate, and one short report to the council running out of money and proposing to issue redundancy notices!)

And there is some suggestion that the council is looking for a compromise: a call for the council to cover its cash shortfall by financial juggling (apparently proposed by the Communist Party) was only narrowly defeated at the stewards' meeting on Monday.

The council is trying to ride two horses at once. It wants strike action against surcharges as part of a strategy of confrontation; but it has proposed to issue 30,000 redundancy notices in an effort to avoid surcharges and fraud charges.

Is it going for confrontation or isn't it? The result is confusing and therefore dangerous. The council should state clearly that it will not issue the redundancy notices.

Worse, the council's line over the Sampson Bond affair has clearly alienated large sections of Liverpool's black community, leaving the council in a much weaker position to mobilise a fight against the Tories.

All these things should not blur the main issue: at stake now is a confrontation between the council and the government, between jobs and cuts, between services for the people of Liverpool and monetarism for the profit of capital.

The labour movement and all the working-class people of Liverpool — including the Black Caucus — should stand by Liverpool council.

A vital step towards building a united campaign can be taken on Saturday 21st at the conference called in Liverpool to support the council.

This must be a genuine conference — not a rally. It must elect a democratic, open organising committee which will organise and lead the campaign and ensure that the workers and the community are fully informed.

Defend local councils under attack!

Merseyside Trade Union and Labour Movement Campaign Committee Conference

Saturday September 21, 11-4.30, Central Hall, Liverpool.

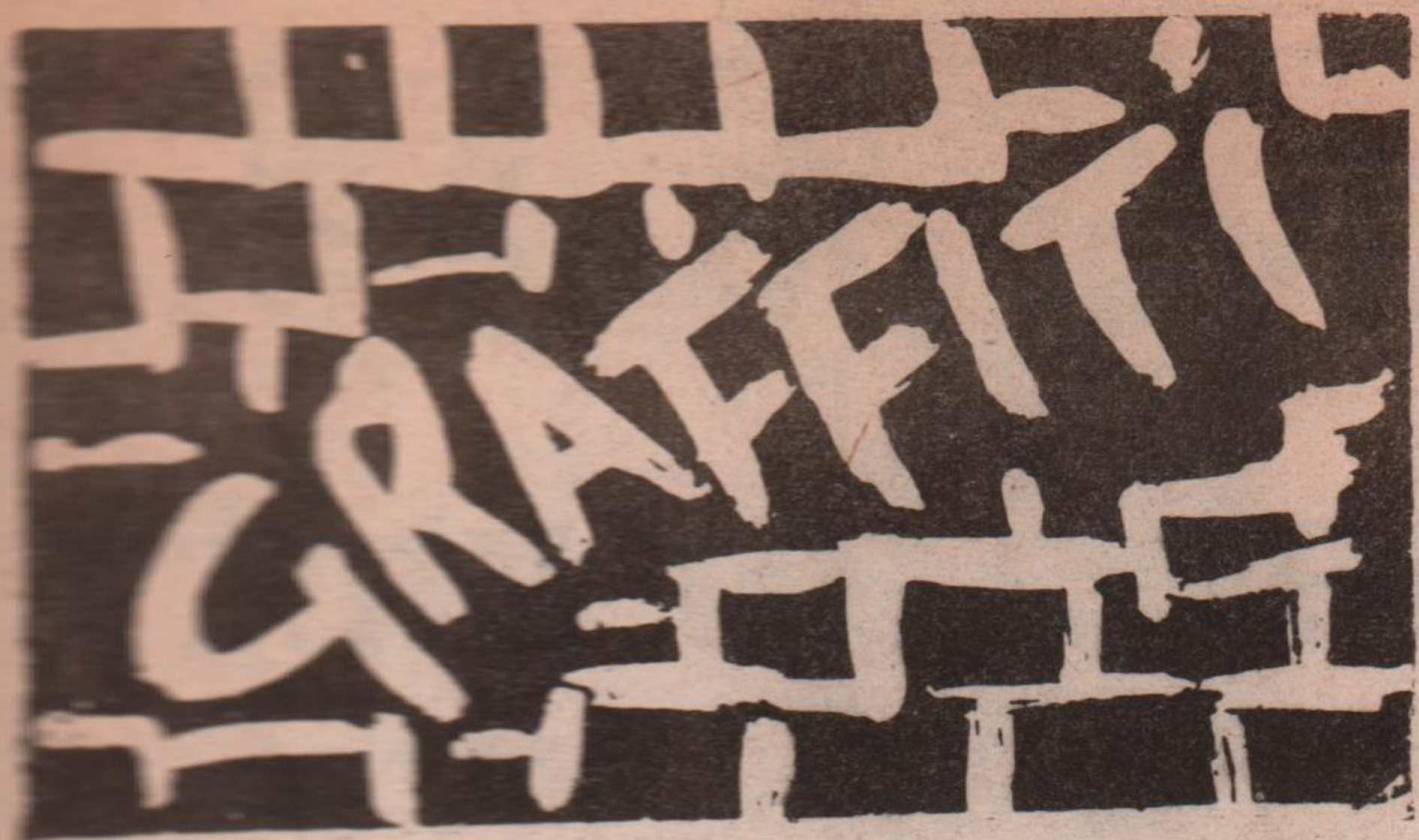
Labour movement organisations may send up to five delegates. Credentials £5 from Andy Pink, Room 41, Municipal Buildings, Dale Street, Liverpool L69 2DH.

Socialist Organiser Labour Party conference fringe meeting

SOUTH AFRICA: BLACK WORKERS BREAK THE CHAINS

Speaker: Bob Fine (author of 'A Question of Solidarity: Independent Trade Unions in South Africa'; recently returned from South Africa) and a sacked miner.

Monday September 30, 5.30pm, Purbeck Suite, Wessex Hotel, West Cliff Road.



The honourable schoolboy

OLEG Gordievsky is not a homosexual. This has never, to the best of my knowledge, been stated openly and publicly. But it must be true. It can be deduced logically.

All the Britons who defect to the other side have been practising sodomites. Whilst in general of sound aristocratic character, educated at all the best schools, sporting the most perfect accents and professing the healthiest interest in cricket, they have all suffered from this one fatal flaw — Aristotelian in its tragic implications.

As a result, as everyone knows, they have been easily misled. First anonymous lavatorial sex; then drugs; then espionage. A slippery slope.

It thus follows that the KGB must have something to offer these perverted misfits. And whilst the image of the average KGB agent as a limp-wristed, hair-dyed ponce is perhaps a little difficult to accept, it must — logically — be the case that far higher levels of buggery are behind the Iron Curtain.

Sex

It must therefore be true, sex (as any Freudian will confirm) being the root cause of everything, that defectors from East to West are motivated by an urgent need to escape from this cloying atmosphere of moral depravity. Hence dear Oleg.

Oleg of course exhibits further features necessary to the psychological make-up of the Top Level Defector.

It is clearly possible to be in fact a faithful Tory whilst convincing the KGB that you are really one of them (one of the KGB, that is, as opposed to 'one of Them' — although who knows what poor Oleg may have had to endure?) From this we can reasonably deduce that there is little difference between the two — which is hardly surprising when you consider that the KGB were all educated at Eton.

And moreover it is clearly possible to be a Top Level Spy, slipping vital information to the enemy and therefore very important, and yet in reality be completely useless and not worth the high salary both sides are paying you.

Despite Oleg's centrality to international politics, and despite his unique position to pursue objectives dear to the Foreign Office's collective heart, there are still no free trade unions in Poland. Nor are troops out of Afghanistan, or various dissidents out of the loony bin. The profound irrelevance of



Oleg Gordievsky, straight up

such spies can be confirmed by the fact that despite our own deviants and defectors, Russian tanks have yet to roll down Whitehall. Civilisation survives.

This of course raises a question: is it worth bothering about spies, espionage, defection and all the rest at all?

We conclude that it is in fact worth bothering. It follows, after all, from what has been said, that the KGB must be a major source of the AIDS virus. In fact, it probably follows that AIDS was a deliberate policy of Moscow, who consciously recruited homosexuals in an attempt to undermine the Free World.

Life

And if we want to preserve our way of life, we must take measures to contain AIDS to the KGB and not allow them to spread it through double

agents.

It is therefore remiss of the Prime Minister to have expelled a mere 31 Russian homosexuals, when she must know of the existence of thousands more.

Public

In this there is cause for public concern. For the sake of both public health and state secrets, we must set about making it impossible for the KGB to recruit. Russian should be banned in schools. Society parties to which the KGB are invited should be declared illegal. And all public toilets, and in fact all public schools, must be demolished forthwith.

If these simple measures are enforced we will — and this is by no means to minimise Oleg's moral heroism — be able to rest easier in our beds. Or indeed in each other's.

A shift

TUC analysis by Mark Starr

The miners and Kinnock

THE DECISION of TUC Congress to back the resolution on review, reinstatement, and reimbursement for the miners, against the wishes of the General Council, was a gleam of light at an otherwise almost uniformly bleak TUC.

It did reflect the pro-miner, pro-struggle sentiment, undeveloped as it is, that still exists in the unions, but it harshly highlighted the commitment of the labour movement's top leaders to an electoral strategy which requires the swift strangulation of even the most limited struggles.

The issue will now be

THE TUC Congress at Blackpool represented a further shift to the right, despite the narrow and unexpected support for the NUM.

Nonetheless the fluidity of the situation, and the intensification of the tendencies towards fragmentation that Thatcherism has stimulated within the unions, makes for complexity and confusion.

The application of Thatcher's strategy for weakening and remoulding Britain's unions is now six years old. It has involved, as essential underpinning, the use of unemployment to weaken bargaining power and diminish membership. Legislation has been introduced to re-define the legitimate ambit of industrial action and undermine security devices such as the closed shop. The Tories aim to cut the activists off from the rank and file through the plebiscitary system of secret ballots.

Wages

The state has been used directly to drive down wages in the public sector as an example to the whole economy, though the series of set-piece battles heralded in the Ridley Report. And no effort has been spared to mobilise employers to restructure the labour forces and the work process, with unions transformed into bodies with the weaknesses (or from Thatcher's point of view the strengths) of the debased workers' organisations of Japan and the USA.

Intrinsic to the whole project

has been an onslaught on the limited Labourist culture of UK industry and the extended role of trade unionism, spearheaded by incessant propaganda, the political fund ballots, and the refusal to admit the trade union bureaucracy into even minimal consultation regarding state decision-making or grant them even token concessions in return

carried into the Labour Party conference in a fortnight's time. The issue provides an excellent platform for the left to hammer home once more the lessons of the miners' strike and the politics of Neil Kinnock and the Labour leadership.

If Kinnock is, as he states, not willing to accept a democratic decision on a limited issue, two years away from an election — if he is already, today, asserting his right to jettison decisions of the movement — does this not speak volumes for his position if Labour is elected and he is confronted with the pressures of the capitalist state?

for policing their members.

Until the 1983 election a carefully-waged war of attrition was coupled with a gradualist and piecemeal approach to union legislation, and tactical flexibility, as when the Tories withdrew from confrontation with the NUM in 1981. After the election the tempo increased.

Important victories for the



Miners could have expected more from the TUC during their strike. Photo: R. Matthews, IFL

to the right



For the sake of a long line of bureaucrats. Photo: John Harris

Tories, such as that over the NGA at Warrington, led to GCHQ and the confrontation with the miners, which in its turn has produced the attack on the NUR and the employers' offensive in print.

Thatcher's success has had its limitations. The year-long struggle against the NUM was rendered victorious only at an appalling cost both financial and political. It has singularly failed to usher in the same defeatism over the whole front as after 1926. While a certain balkanisation of unions has been achieved, and the span of wage settlements extended, real wages remain surprisingly buoyant given the unions' loss of about three million members since 1979.

Disquiet

Above all, an expanding economy looks as far away as ever after six years of sacrifice. The electoral scenario for 1986 or '7 is increasingly disquieting for the Tories.

Nonetheless, Thatcher has scored successes against the unions. A framework of legislation against militant trade unionism, of an extent and sophistication unparalleled in Britain,

has been moved into position, and is being increasingly complied with. The traditionally strongest unions have been battered into grudging submission. The strike rate has been decimated.

Forced

Workers have been forced to accept detailed blueprints for speed-up and flexibility of labour. Productivity gains have been registered in key industries. Employers have successfully pushed into the area of short-term contracts with minimal fringe benefits. These are used for increasing numbers of 'peripheral' workers employed on worse conditions than the 'core' full-time employee.

In crucial sectors like print, the curtain of union protection against the introduction of new technology on unfavourable terms has been pierced, and the unions turned in on themselves. Established entrepreneurs like Maxwell and Murdoch emulate the audacity of the Thatcherite Eddie Shah.

The politics and practice of the unions have been shifted towards the right, and the TUC towards disintegration.

There were three strategies

The political fund ballots

THE SUCCESS of the ballots on the maintenance of union political funds has been a triumph for the trade union leadership.

Every single union which has balloted has voted overwhelmingly to maintain the political levy. The margins have been resounding, the turnouts relatively massive.

In ASLEF the majority was 93% on an 80% turnout. The electricians voted by 84% to keep the fund. In the GMBU there was a 3:1 majority. Even in a right-wing white-collar union like APEX 39,500 of the unions 90,000 members were for continued political involvement, and 14,000 against, in a 60% poll.

The left can only welcome these results. In one sense they illustrate the fundamental loyalty of the union rank and file to the Labour Party, for in essence the ballots are about whether or not the unions should maintain links with the Party.

They also illustrate the fundamental loyalty the ranks give to their union organisation and its existing leadership.

But the union leaders did

on offer at Blackpool earlier this month.

The EETPU have grasped the Thatcher project of business unionism with both hands, at the industrial level. They see this as a means of guaranteeing organisational security for themselves and stimulating a friendly response from the government at the political level.

Contrary to some analysis, the AUEW/EETPU hard right's much preferred option is a Kinnock government in 1986-7. They see their collaborationist approach as the best means of ensuring this. But they also want to keep their options open in relation to a further Thatcher administration, and to keep limited relations with the SDP-Liberal Alliance as a possible power broker.

The TUC majority wants to

over a hundred cases members of unions — left, right and centre — have ignored the Wembley decision not to participate in the rigged ballots over the closed shop.

This drift to accepting the law in practice has encouraged the hard right. The objection of the TUC General Council majority to the engineers and electricians accepting state cash for ballots is that it is so blatant and clear-cut a collaboration, involving direct liaison with the Thatcher government, which cannot be justified by direct coercion. The unions are requesting the cash voluntarily and in the full glare of media publicity.

The TUC's authority and its negotiating posture with a future Labour government are at stake.

The TUC Congress decision to maintain the Wembley principles has to be seen in that light. Union opposition to the laws formally remains. In practice their essential provisions will be accepted until a Kinnock government can come to the rescue.

campaign. Had operations of this dimension been mounted in struggles such as the miners' strike, who knows what the results might have been?

Put in a wider perspective the results are far less heartening. As a whole the campaigns were carefully controlled. The Labour Party link was usually (though not always) played down. Politicians were kept out of the picture. Initiatives promised by the left to use the occasion to go on the offensive and raise the question of why we need the Labour Party, of the present politics of Labour, of closer links between unions and party, and of more democratic links between unions and Labour, never materialised.

The campaigns have been conservative and defensive. They have illustrated the limits of how far Thatcher can push unions to the right despite the victories under her belt. They also showed once more the inability of the left to do more than hold an unsatisfactory line.

A rebuff for the government but hardly a blow for socialism in the unions.

hold the line formally. They bitterly oppose the attempts of the hard right to drop formal positions of defying the Tories. But they also wish to restrain struggle now — because they think it is a barrier to their crock of gold, a Kinnock re-run of the Wilson/Callaghan social contract.

Balanced

So at Blackpool TUC general secretary Norman Willis took up a 'balanced' position on the crucial question of anti-union law. "We're not departing from Wembley — that would be a signal that we're giving up our policy of opposition. But nor are we being daft and embarking on a collision course which will result in desperate losses".

In the aftermath of the miners' defeat, the third tendency at Blackpool was much weaker than the other two. It was represented by Arthur Scargill, arguing for a strategy of class struggle which starts with the minority in the unions who see the necessity of combining the struggle in the factories and plants with the struggle for a government which will implement socialist policies, rather than a re-run of the disastrous social contract by whatever name.

The hard right made the running at Blackpool. Confident and defiant, the EETPU and the AUEW brought the majority to heel. Paralysed by the threat of a major split over the issue of taking government money for ballots, the TUC centre and left drew back from confrontation. Such a split would be immediately exploited by Thatcher and could seriously undermine the TUC General Council's ability to act as a broker for a new social contract with Labour.

Yet the problem is only postponed. The EETPU and the AUEW would prefer to live without the anti-union laws. Those laws limit the manoeuvres of



Arthur Scargill spoke for a class-struggle minority. Photo: Mark Salmon.

even such pliant bureaucracies. But they also wish to drop defiance now and to wait for a solution from a Labour government.

Not only the Airline Pilots and the Power Engineers, but also the building union UCATT and the white-collar union ASTMS are also embracing this conclusion.

The compromise arranged by the TUC was that AUEW members would vote again on the issue of taking government money for union ballots. If this re-vote goes in favour of taking the money, then either a split is on the cards or even the TUC's limited gesture of defying the laws will be shown up as a sham.

Dynamic

In a dynamic situation like this it is difficult to predict. Despite other unions assimilating in practice to the hard right's industrial policies, the intransigence of the AUEW and EETPU leaders could lead to a split. There could be an 'alternative TUC', opening up the same possibilities for capital on the industrial front as the SDP's split did on the electoral level.

Certainly Labour's leadership will spare no effort to stop this occurring. Given the demoralisation that could follow such a split, at least in the short term, they will be right to do so. It is the basis on which they will move that is bankrupt.

Despite the embarrassment of the successful NUM motion at the TUC, Labour's leaders feel that the acceptance of the National Economic Assessment and the joint TUC/Labour Party statement 'A New Partnership, A New Britain' while the left sat silent, is a big move forward. They are a lot nearer building an incomes policy on the weakened union movement that they hope to inherit from Thatcher.

As Norman Willis put it "Will pay be on the agenda? Unavoidably".

The Labour leaders will attempt to conciliate the engineers and the electricians on the basis of a future right-wing Labour government.

While that prize is dangled by Neil Kinnock and Norman Willis before Gavin Laird and Eric Hammond, trying to purchase their forbearance over state cash in return for carte blanche for collaboration with the employers, the absence of a clear fighting alternative at Blackpool illustrates the weakness of the left. Only in a flash or two, here and there, of the politics of resistance, was there any strategy for recovering the ground lost since 1979 and fighting for a transformation of the conditions of Britain's trade unionists and oppressed groups. In the aftermath of the miners' struggle, the defeat on the railways, and the disarray in print, the left was weak.

Yet there will be new opportunities to rally the minority of militants who wish to fight and to strengthen the converts each struggle brings.

It seems unlikely that That-

cher will readmit the union leaders to talks on economic and social policy. Lord Young's offer to talk to the TUC is as yet far from that. If some variant of 'Mondism' (the 'social contract' of the 1920s, under a Tory government) does not develop, then we will be in for further sharp conflict between government and unions.

And that can only be our opportunity.

More no-strike deals

THE BLACKPOOL TUC Congress passed a resolution from APEX which gives the TUC greater powers where one union comes to an agreement with employers to exclude other unions in workplaces where those unions have had a prior presence.

The resolution gives the General Council far fewer powers where, as with Eddie Shah's decision to deal with the EETPU not the print unions, we are dealing with a 'green field' site.

The first point to note is that harsh limitations on the right to strike are only part of the deals pioneered by the AUEW and EETPU. These unions are coherent advocates of a business-union approach of collaborating with the employer in disciplining the workforce.

The rationale of the no strike deal is the identification of the workforce with the employer's interests and a total acceptance of a conception of the union as a professional facilitator of the employer's imperatives. The union moulds the workforce to economic necessity, rather than being an organisation pledged to conflict on the basis of divergent interests between employer and workforce.

In the new high-tech industries the intent is to incubate from the beginning a race of worker-eunuchs. In established industries — print is the cockpit — the project is to free the labour process from worker controls, to transform work organisation, and to introduce new technology.

The EETPU and the AUEW are the most determined purveyors of this 'new realism'. But all unions are affected.

At Nissan, for example, several unions offered themselves for the role of employee policeman before the AUEW was chosen as the most suitable.

TASS has circulated high-tech companies and held seminars with employers talking of the need for "good in-company communications and industrial relations" requiring "the effective management of change". Despite being led by life-long Communist Party stalwarts, TASS like other left unions feels it must join the scramble for new members on the terms that the hard right has laid down.

The anti-union laws

IN LATE 1983 and early '84 the telecom engineers and the National Graphical Association were defeated while the TUC stood idly by and refused to back its affiliates.

This showed that the decisions taken at Wembley to combat the anti-union laws had everything to do with negotiations with a future Labour government and nothing to do with practical measures to fight the legislation when it was used.

"Solidarity action is critical to our very existence" Len Murray had said at Wembley, yet as the 1984-5 season commenced with the TGWU being fined £200,000 for backing the strike at Austin Rover without a ballot the General Council did the same as it did when the NUM was legally mauled — precisely nothing.

The miners' strike crucially, but also the Austin Rover dispute, opened the gates for

wholesale collaboration with the legislation. In case after case employers have used the anti-picketing and anti-boycott provisions of the 1980 and 1982 Employment Acts. In case after case union leaders have called off the action.

In case after case employers went to court to force the unions to hold secret ballots before industrial action. Initially accepting the court orders, union leaders have increasingly ordered ballots themselves prior to action, thus saving the employers the expense of resorting to the judiciary.

At Nabisco Foods, the TGWU and GMBU have just signed an agreement banning all industrial action until there has been a secret ballot of all workers.

All unions under threat have changed or plan to change their rules on elections to meet the requirements of the law. In

Socialism, Democracy

A TORY students' poster shows a Soviet tank with the words "If you think the Soviet threat is a myth, ask a Pole". On it someone had written, "If you think the British State threat is a myth, ask a miner".

In recent years we have seen:
*The creation of a national police force during the miners' strike.

*Special strong arm groups of police have been created — Special Patrol Groups, Instant Response Units — modelled on paramilitary forces like the CRS in France.

*The right to free movement no longer exists. Pickets have been prevented from moving around the country, and peace protesters prevented from entering Molesworth for fear of another Peace Camp being established.

Passes

Residents in the village now have their own passes to get in and out.

*Widespread phone tapping, and other surveillance is carried on against trade unionists, socialists and peace activists.

*The Police Act has now made legal many of the formerly illegal, but customary practices of the police.

Juries are vetted to ensure that no-one sits on them who holds "deviant" views, i.e. opposes the status quo.

The Tories said that the miners' strike was 'a threat to democracy'. From the viewpoint of most people, the real threat to democracy is the increase in police powers, weaponry and numbers. Arthur Bough discusses how Labour should respond.

British capitalism is sick, even sicker than the system as a whole. Over the last two decades the British labour movement has not been strong enough to replace the bourgeoisie but it has been strong enough to repel the bosses' attacks like the Industrial Relations Act.

So the capitalist class has attacked with greater force. The Tories laid their plans (the Ridley Report), replenished their arsenal (more, better-trained and equipped police, new anti-union laws) and took on the miners.

In the wake of the miners' defeat, socialists must take the threat to civil liberties seriously, and work out a programme for defending and extending demo-

cratic rights.

The need for a police force seems to most people to be obvious, yet the police force has existed for only just over a century.

The working class was hostile to the new force. In North Staffordshire in 1842, for example:

"During the week the inhabitants of Lane End have been in a state of fearful apprehension and excitement from the disorderly conduct of a number of persons in the lowest ranks of society. We have been at considerable trouble to attain accurate information as to the cause of the tumult and find that the principal one is the extreme aversion and hatred entertained by the parties towards the new

police force lately established in that neighbourhood." (North Staffordshire Mercury, May 11, 1842).

Nevertheless, in a broad historical view there was something progressive about the establishment of police forces. The arbitrary private power of the landlords, squires, and magnates was replaced by a public power operating under publicly-decided general laws and procedures.

Public power

Now we see that public power becoming more and more a power *against* the public. In times of sharp class struggle it becomes clear that the police enforce the interests not of the majority, but of the ruling class. Their rigid hierarchy, their training, their separation from the rest of society, and the personal ties of their upper ranks make sure that they do that.

Society today has an alternative, more democratic way of regulating itself — patrols organised and controlled by the labour movement and local communities. Police duty should be made a part-time job of every citizen, like jury service.

To bring that about we will have to break up and dismantle the existing police force. In the meantime we must fight for more control over it.

The police force in Britain is marked by the almost complete absence of democratic control. Police Committees exist (except in London!) but a large proportion of their members are unelected magistrates and they have virtually no power.

In Merseyside it has recently been reported — though officially denied by the cops — that the police have mounted surveillance on Labour members of the Police Committee whom they find too argumentative. Who's controlling whom?

The following demands would be a start to democratising the police force in Britain.

*Chief Constables and their Assistants to be elected at regular fixed periods.

*Directly-elected Police Committees to have full operational control over the police force in their area. The power to instantly dismiss Chief Constables who act contrary to their instructions, and to call fresh elections for a new Chief Constable. Access to any police station and to police files at any time for members of the Committee.

*Democratic rights within the police force including the right to form trade unions. The right not to be used as scab-herders.

The recent revelations about MIS confirm that the secret service is far more concerned about surveillance of the labour movement and peace movement than

with Russian spies. And they passed on their information to the Tories so that they could use it against CND and the Labour Party in the last General Election.

Not even Parliament can discuss their activities of financing. Far from MIS being under government control, members of the last Labour government were probably themselves the subject of surveillance by it.

MIS and the other branches of the secret service should therefore be scrapped.

Britain has been at war somewhere or other — Palestine, Malaya, Korea, Kenya, Cyprus, Aden, Oman, Northern Ireland, the Falklands — continuously since 1945. Not once have these wars been about defending the people of Britain. They have all been about defending British ruling class power overseas.

General Frank Kitson has explained in his book 'Low Intensity Operations' that he sees the future of the British army as mainly in 'counter-insurgency'. For him the war against the Catholic community in Northern Ireland is a test run for later operations against the British working class.

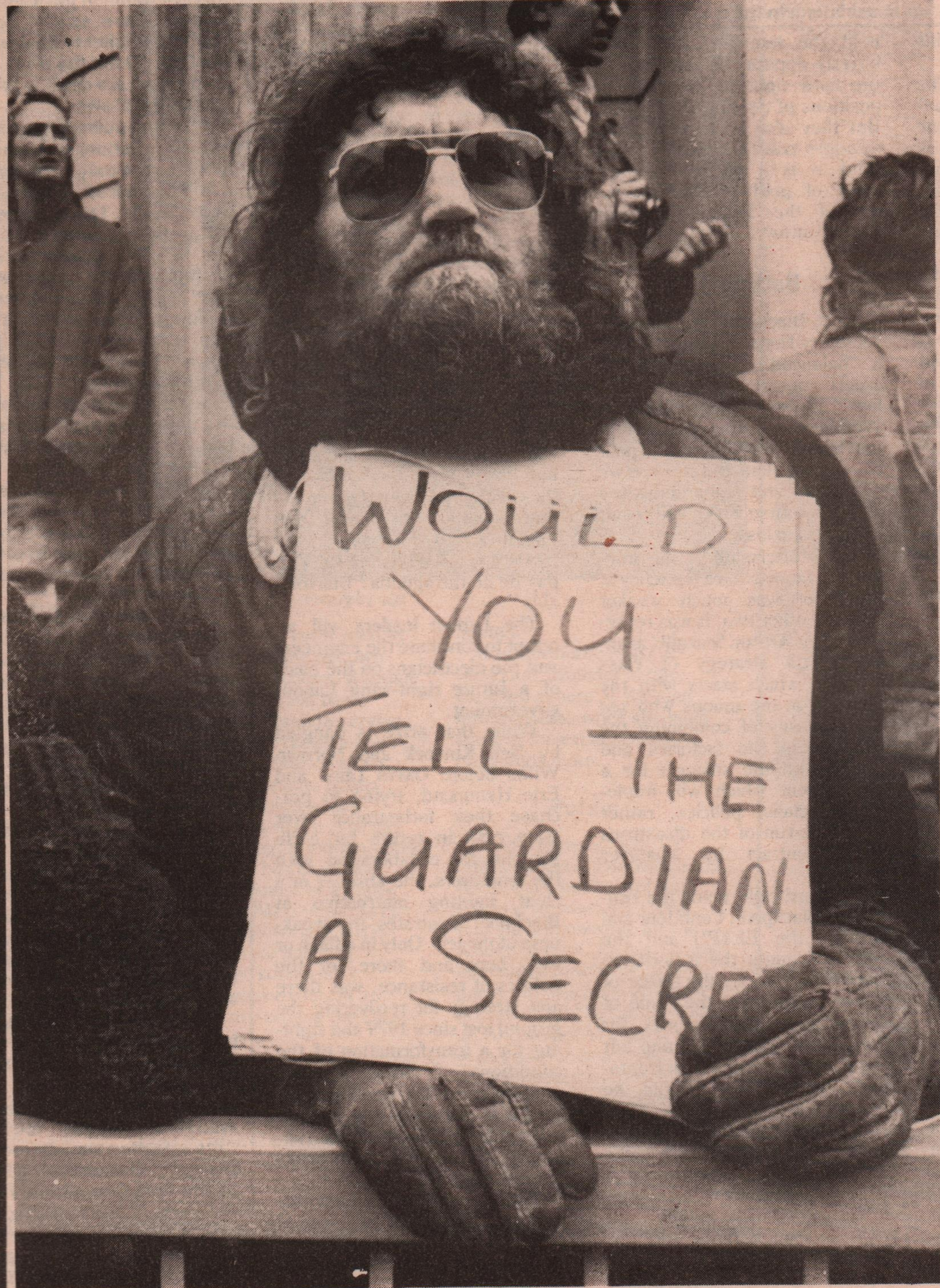
Field Marshall Michael Carver has revealed that in 1974 "some fairly senior officers" talked about a military coup should labour unrest continue. They were slapped down then by more sober-minded superiors? But next time? And the coup-planners of 1974 are now probably at the top of the hierarchy themselves.

Instead of strengthening the armed forces of the capitalist



if a Labour government attempted to abolish the House of Lords the Courts should rule it unconstitutional.

Lord Donaldson, the Master of the Rolls, has commented that "The legal system is not in practice even handed as between employers and unions; current functions put the courts almost



Stop The City demo, March 1984. Photo: Andrew Moore



Lewisham, 1979

state, the Labour Party should be advocating:

*Replace the armed forces with a people's militia.

*Scrap all nuclear weapons — we have no control over them, and no desire to see the world destroyed.

*Britain out of NATO, NATO out of Britain.

*Democratic rights for troops. The armed forces depend on rigid, mindless discipline to act as anti-working class bodies.

*Workers' control of the armaments industry, and conversion of the bulk of it to socially useful production under workers' plans.

Four fifths of all judges come from public school and Oxbridge backgrounds. Their background, training, and way of life makes them all hostile to the working class.

Lord Denning ruled the GLC's cheap fares illegal and said that

entirely in the business of restricting the latter, and not of remedying their grievances.

Not only judges but also magistrates and JPs are unelected. They are chosen only after they have shown themselves staunch supporters of the status quo. JPs drawn from the ranks of the Labour Party and trade unions usually try to prove themselves by being even more reactionary than the Tories.

*All judges, JPs and magistrates should be elected.

*End all vetting of juries.

*All legal representation to be paid for by the State. Wealth should not determine whether you get a fair trial.

*Defendants to have access to police files on them, and other witnesses, etc., involved in the case.

The modern civil service dates back to reforms proposed by the Northcote-Trevelyan Report

acy and the state



of 1854, and introduced because Britain's Crimean War was being undermined by the total incompetence of the civil service.

Its growth was a major element in shifting day-to-day power from the Parliament and the monarchy to a bureaucratic machine.

Within the civil service real power lies with the 500 or so Permanent Secretaries, Deputy Secretaries, and Under Secretaries that make up the higher civil service.

Between 1948 and 1956, 78% of those recruited to the position of Assistant Principal had attended Oxford or Cambridge universities; in 1957-63 this actually increased to 85%; and in 1971 and 1972 it was still more than half.

By background, education, personal situation and connections, the top civil servants are flesh and blood of the ruling class. Many go on from the civil service to top jobs in finance and industry.

They have tremendous power and influence. Ministers move from one Department to another every two or three years, but the higher civil servants are in their posts for a lifetime.

The civil servants can use their control of information to get Ministers to adopt particular courses of action, and discard others.

Benn

When the last Labour government was elected, so Tony Benn reports, the civil servants in the Department of Industry had prepared a report for the incoming Minister which was marked "For the attention of the Minister, unless Mr. Benn".

The cases of Clive Ponting and Sarah Tisdall illustrate the conservative bias of the civil service and the way it operates to keep many public affairs secret from the public.

An irresolute, unprepared reforming government can easily have its measures filtered down, delayed, and neutralised by the civil service machine. And a determined radical left-

wing government would certainly face open sabotage.

The Official Secrets Act should be abolished; a Freedom of Information Act introduced; and top civil service jobs made elective.

It took a long and sometimes bloody struggle by the labour and women's movements to get our present rights to vote. But at the same time as the capitalist class has conceded wider voting rights, it has protected itself by moving real power away from Parliament.

Every four or five years we get that vote that our ancestors fought so hard for. Control of the media — and the first-past-the-post electoral system — give two big parties a near monopoly, and drive those two parties to-

wards the "centre" ground of politics. Even the SDP-Liberal Alliance — well-connected, wealthy, favoured by the media — has had great trouble breaking through. Little surprise then that radical or revolutionary views can't get represented in Parliament.

Control

Then, once the MPs are elected, Parliament is almost entirely controlled by the leadership of the government party — which work much more closely with top civil servants, bankers and industrialists than with any elected MPs. Manifesto promises are routinely ignored. Many important decisions are taken outside Parliament.

And even if by some fluke

a determined, cohesive majority of MPs opposed to the status quo should be elected, the other institutions of Parliament would stand in the way of change.

Between 1906 and 1910 the Liberal government had 18 Bills thrown out by the House of Lords. Things boiled over when the Lords threw out the Liberals' Budget of 1909. The Liberals called a General Election over the issue, and threatened to create 1,000 new Peers. Having won the election, the Liberals passed the 1911 Parliament Act which said that the Lords could only delay Bills, not stop them altogether. That power to delay was further reduced by the Labour government of 1948. But it is still a substantial — and firmly conservative — power.

And then, before any Bill can become law it must be given Royal Assent. Normally this is a formality: Kings and Queens have signed Bills which the Tories vehemently denounced. But what would happen if a Labour government tried to abolish the House of Lords, amidst cries by leading judges that this was unconstitutional? Let alone if a Labour government legislated directly socialist measures?

Reserve

The monarchy represents an important reserve power for the ruling class in case of crisis.

For example, it is the Monarch who has the power to dissolve Parliament. She could use that power to force an election. A similar thing was done in Australia as recently as 1975. The Governor-General — the Queen's representative — sacked the reforming Labour government of Gough Whitlam.

Constitutionally, the Courts, the police, the armed forces, etc., derive their authority not from the government but from the Crown. In such a crisis the Queen could call on all these institutions to 'defend the Constitution'.

Over a hundred years after they were raised some of the demands of the Chartists still have not been met. For example, the demand for annual elections. It is ludicrous for any government to claim that the result of an election gives them a mandate for up to five years after especially as in that time most of them renege on what they promised. Annual elections would ensure that governments were far more accountable, and that they would be less likely to renege on their promises. If Britain was to live up to even the ideals of bourgeois parliamentary democracy then the following demands would have to be met.

*Annual elections on a fixed date.

*Voting to be by Proportional Representation, the current first past the post

system amounts to ballot rigging.

*Scrap the deposit, and other qualifications for candidates.

*Equal TV and Radio time for all parties except fascists.

Most bourgeois democracies have laws setting out the right to strike — though with qualifications and limits. Britain has none. All the legal rights of trade unions in Britain are 'immunities' which exempt unions from the general laws about conspiracy, breach of contract, etc. Indeed, there are no basic human rights for British citizens which Parliament cannot constitutionally take away.

A major step forward for civil liberties in Britain would therefore be to adopt a written Bill of Rights as exists in America and most other bourgeois democracies.

While the experience of the Equal Pay Act and the Sex and Race Discrimination Acts show that such legal documents are no guarantee of equality, it is better to have such documents to refer to than not to have them.

Bringing women's, black, and lesbian/gay groups together with the trade unions and labour movement and groups like the NCCL to discuss the elements of a Bill of Rights could be the basis of a strong campaign. The campaign for such a Bill of Rights could be conducted on the same basis that the Chartists and Suffragettes campaigned for their demands — by industrial action and civil disobedience.

The best constitution in the world cannot guarantee that the rights it provides for are met. At the end of the day only class struggle determines that. But the balance of forces in the class struggle itself depends partly on what rights are written into law at any particular time.

Rights

The question of democratic rights is therefore of great importance for the labour movement. The labour movement should put itself at the head of a campaign to defend and extend democratic rights in Britain.

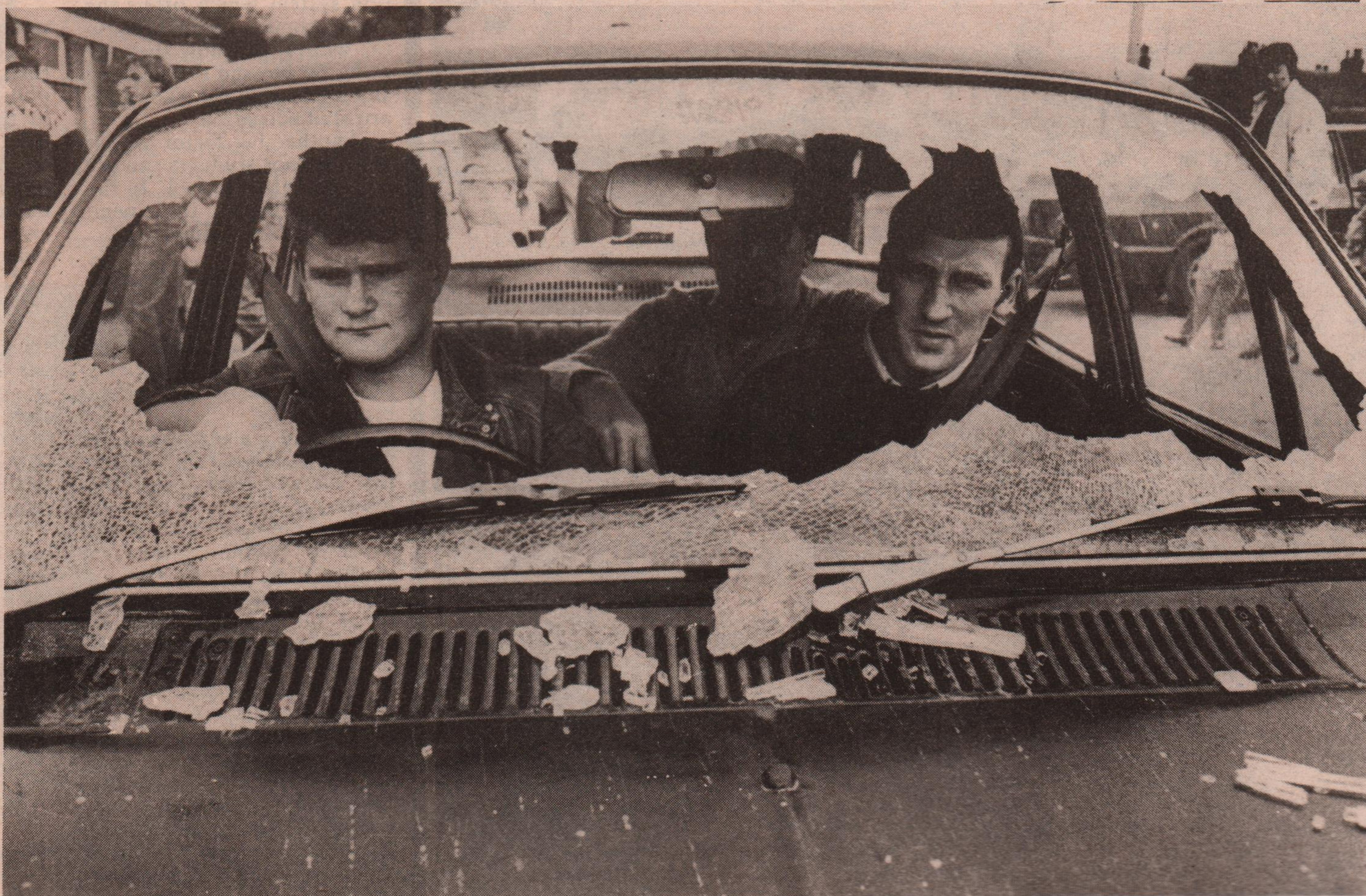
This could undermine the Tories and set the stage for the revival and regeneration of the labour movement.

As Lenin put it:

"Even in England [i.e. not just in Tsarist Russia, or Imperial Germany] we see that powerful social groups support the privileged position of that institution (the Civil Service). Why?"

"Because it is in the interests of the proletariat alone to democratise it completely; the most progressive strata of the bourgeoisie defend certain prerogatives of the bureaucracy and are opposed to the election of all officials, opposed to the complete abolition of electoral qualifications, opposed to making officials directly responsible to the people, etc., because these strata realise that the proletariat will take advantage of such complete democratisation in order to use it against the bourgeoisie."

"...when economic and political issues, and socialist and democratic activities, are united into one whole, into the class struggle of the proletariat, this does not weaken but strengthens the democratic movement and the political struggle, by bringing it closer to the real interests of the mass of the people, dragging political issues out of the 'stuffy studies of the intelligentsia' into the street, into the midst of the workers and labouring classes."



Pickets' car attacked by riot police in Notts. Photo: John Harris

Mine leader jailed

By Chris Ford

"The Polish government has no right to behave like a mine-owner and to dispose of the national wealth as it pleases. Only the damned capitalists and dictators act in this way".

That's what the underground Solidarnosc in Upper Silesia said about the Polish regime when it trebled its export of coal to Britain during the miners' strike.

And for such crimes as this



Jaruzelski

expression of solidarity with fellow miners, the leader of the Silesian miners, Tadeusz Jedynek, was arrested on June 17 by the Stalinist secret police.

He has not been allowed to see his wife or lawyers. This is how the so-called "socialist countries" treat trade unionists!

Never formally charged, Jedynek may now face charges of "attempting to overthrow the political system of the Polish People's Republic by force" or with treason, according to Jerzy Urban, the government press spokesman.

Jedynek has long been a prominent opponent of Stalinist rule in Poland. In the late '70s he was a member of the left-wing Workers Defence Committee (KOR).

When the wave of strikes swept Poland in August 1980, creating Solidarnosc, Jedynek was one of the leading organisers of the Silesian miners for the first time the miners of one of the most repressed regions of Poland took mass action against the slave labour conditions they had to work in.

Abolition

The miners won substantial commitments from the government at Jastrzebie, including the abolition of a 24 hour working pattern in some mines.

Jedynek, who was a signatory to the agreement was elected to Solidarnosc's National Commission. He remained a leader of Solidarnosc until the attempted suppression of the ten million strong workers' movement on December 13 1981. Jedynek was captured in the first wave of arrests.

Meanwhile vigorous resistance to martial law spread throughout the Silesian coal-fields. There was fierce fighting between miners and the army and police at the Wojec mine. Seven miners died when the murderous ZOMO Riot Police, backed by tanks and armoured cars, attacked the occupied mine.

When Jedynek was finally released almost a year later he was refused any employment in coal mining. Rejoining the underground, he went into hiding and for three years worked to rebuild Solidarnosc. He represented Silesia on the union's Underground Provisional Coordinating Committee. Recently he was involved in

opposition to price increases.

The price increases were introduced alongside a wave of arrests of leading opposition organisers. Over the past few months Polish prisons have been filling up again until today there are almost 300 political prisoners.

Solidarnosc expects another wave of arrests in an attempt to strangle opposition to October's "Parliamentary" elections which Solidarnosc is boycotting.

Taking into account Jedynek's record of militancy and his position in the underground it is possible that a show trial will be held as part of the regime's campaign of terror.

Heroic

When the rulers of Poland's Stalinist police state sent millions of tons of scab coal to help Mrs Thatcher defeat the miners' strike, Jedynek and the Silesian miners did what they could to help the British miners in their heroic year long battle with the NCB and the Tory government.

What are Britain's miners going to do to help Jedynek and the other jailed and victimised trade unionists in Poland? Nothing, it seems. Not officially, anyway.

During the strike Arthur Scargill said that perhaps he owed Lech Walesa and Solidarnosc an apology, seeing that those who banned Solidarnosc were helping Thatcher. Now he seems to have forgotten about that. Scargill is busy setting up an international miners' organisation together with the police state fake "unions" of the Stalinist states — "unions" which are nothing but state agencies for controlling, regimenting and disciplining the workers and are therefore the

literal opposite of a real workers' organisation, such as the NUM.

When Hamilton LPYS, who are running a campaign in support of Jedynek, wrote to the NUM Executive asking them to support the campaign for Jedynek, Peter Heathfield replied on day 15, asking for "more information". Neither Solidarnosc in London nor Hamilton LPYS have heard from the NUM since then.

NUM branches should call on the leadership to demand the release of Tadeusz Jedynek and break all links with the Stalinist state unions.

You should get your Labour Party branch, union branch, LPYS, students union, etc., to write to the Polish Embassy or direct to Warsaw demanding to know the reason for Jedynek's arrest and conditions of his imprisonment. Demand that

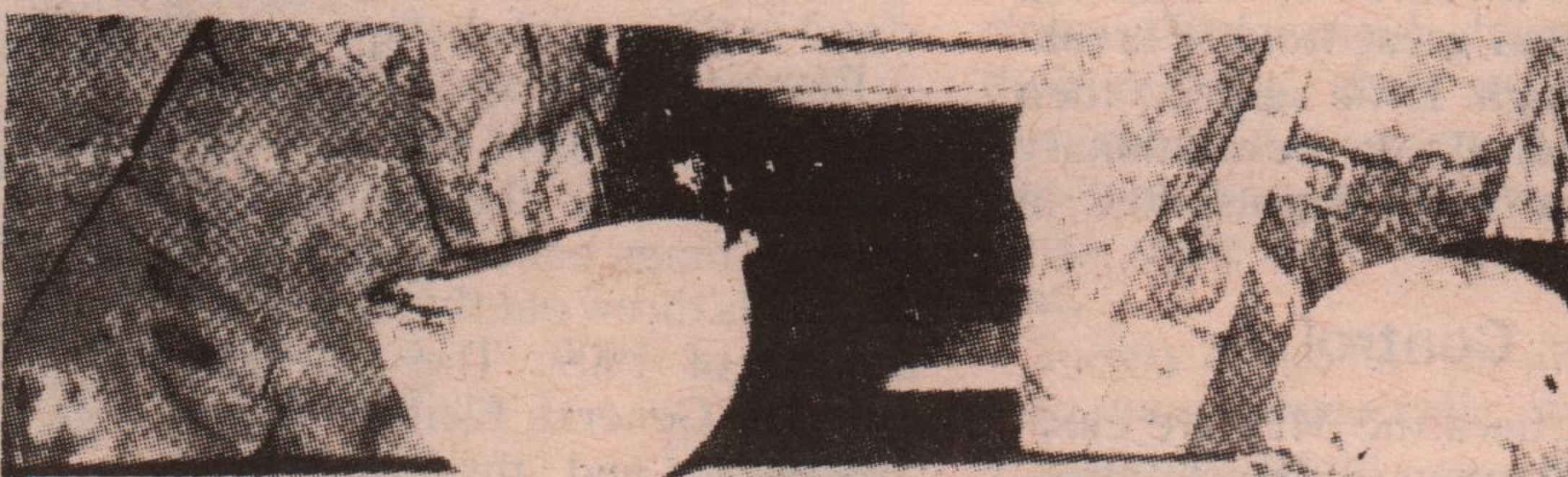
while he is detained that his wife and lawyers be allowed to see him without restriction.

Write to your union executive committee asking them to protest to the Polish government. Demand that the Polish state stop ill-treating Jedynek's family — Maria Jedynek has been threatened with eviction by the Coal Board who own the house because Jedynek isn't a miner any more.

Aid

Hamilton LPYS plan to send material aid to Jedynek's family. Donations from labour movement organisations would be most helpful.

Write for more information and send donations to: Hamilton LPYS, 53 Eliot Crescent, Hamilton ML3 6SP, Lanarkshire, Scotland.



Silesian miners



'Television lies' reads the slogan on the pavement outside the Solidarnosc delegate conference, October 1981.



Arrest under the pass laws

The 'National Forum' is a major force in the South African liberation movement, alongside the United Democratic Front and the non-racial trade unions.

Embracing many currents which come from the black consciousness movement, it now sets its aim as a socialist revolution.

In this interview — given in early August, soon after the declaration of the state of emergency — a leader of the National Forum argues that South Africa is 'a classic situation of permanent revolution' (where the working class takes the lead in a democratic revolution and merges it with a socialist revolution). The interview is translated and abridged from the German socialist paper Was Tun.

How did this revolt start, and what are its centres?

The revolt has economic and political reasons. I would put the political reasons in first place.

Not only the Blacks, but also the great majority of the Coloureds and Indians, rejected the new constitution. But when in the constitution the government excluded those classified as Blacks from any political representation, it drove the urban black youth into revolt.

On top of that you have the economic misery and the intensive politicisation of black society. The black school students' movement has played a leading role in this.

Their militant stance, of course, goes back a long way in South African history: the Soweto uprising was initially a school students' movement. They demand a better education system which offers the blacks similar possibilities to the whites. But now they are going far beyond this demand and are aiming for a socialist-oriented education.

Another big factor is that most school students can get no work after school. In the eastern province the unemployment rate is almost 40%.

Is the movement restricted to the cities?

No, although there have been no uprisings on the land like in the cities, perhaps with the exception of the eastern province.

The movement draws in the contract workers working for white farmers, and the miners, of course. And poverty and hunger are much worse in the countryside than in the cities. I think that an explosion is brewing, especially in the so-called 'resettlement camps', which are a sort of concentration camps.

These camps may become the starting point for guerilla or other action against the regime, like the Palestinian refugee camps. They are the result of a policy that has turned more and more Blacks into wage-workers, but wants to stop them becoming urbanised.

ion movement play in this revolt?

Without a doubt the trade union movement has played an important, in many respects decisive, role.

The strikes that began in September in the 'Vaal triangle', the industrial area of the Transvaal and Orange Free State, and which flowed into a two-day regional strike in November, were the beginning of the revolt. This movement was led primarily by the two big black union federations, FOSATU and CUSA.

Until then FOSATU and CUSA had been able to avoid acting in too openly political a way so that the regime could attack them. After the strike some FOSATU unionists were arrested — they are now being charged with high treason.

Are the trade unions winning masses of new members?

Yes, especially among the miners.

The unions encourage their members to take part in political class-struggle actions in the townships, though indeed not as trade-unionists, because the South African government would then immediately ban them, but in civic committees and in spontaneous revolts.

Like Solidarnosc they try to avoid open political action as trade unions at the current stage. But many trade unionists think that a political workers' party must emerge from the trade union movement. In this respect too we have learned much from political experience. I think it is tactically right.

However, the trade union movement is very divided. I would distinguish three different groups. On the left there are the unions that consider themselves as belonging to the black consciousness movement.

In the middle there are the two big trade union federations that I mentioned, who now want to unite. Further to the right is the South African Congress of Trade Unions which is close to the ANC.

Great pressure is being exerted from left and from right on the federations in the centre to come out more

What role does the trade union centre to come out more

"Many trade unionists think that a workers' party must emerge"

openly in a political way. They reject this — and rightly, I think. At this time it would be organisational suicide and would only lead to the arrest of their leaderships.

What are the differences between the two big alliances in the liberation movement, the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the National Forum?

Both originated about the same time in 1983.

The NF remained true to the original idea of building a common opposition of all forces that rejected the new constitution, the so-called 'New Deal'. The main organisations taking part in the NF were the Azania People's Organisation (AZAPO), the only legal national organisation of blacks, and the Cape Action League.

Both alliances are made up mainly of black workers. The workers are organised in the townships, and their organisations belong to one of the two alliances. The black petty bourgeoisie and intellectuals are also represented in both alliances.

In the UDF there are also bourgeois (mainly white) elements, liberals and business people with links to big capital. Of course the organisations of the National Forum also have white members from community organisations, student organisations, and trade unions; but not this bourgeois element.

CUSA, one of the two big black trade union federations, belongs both to the UDF and the NF.

The NF campaigned against the constitution much more seriously than the UDF, in which a right wing time and again proposed using the constitutional institutions as a platform for legal propaganda.

The basis of the NF is the 'Manifesto of the Azanian People', which is of course not a socialist programme, but in any case puts socialism on the agenda. On the other hand the UDF has not even been able to unite on the Freedom Charter, the ANC's 1955 manifesto for an anti-apartheid coalition.

We are ready for joint

work with the UDF, but not for a political alliance, because we reject collaboration with the liberals.

Consequently we rejected the visit of US Senator Edward Kennedy which the UDF welcomed. With that visit important capitalist circles in the US and in South Africa itself wanted to push the Botha government into reforms.

So is socialism on the agenda in the consciousness of the movement's activists?

Quite definitely. Obviously most people have no scientific, disciplined conception of socialism. But since about 1980 most activists have been clear that apartheid could only be removed by socialist solutions of some sort.

The trade unions on one side, the community organisations, tenants' organisations, etc. on the other, are building an organisational foundation for a socialist movement.

It is still not a workers' party, but the foundation for such a party has already been established.

And some member organisations of the NF, like the Black Alliance of Mining and Construction Workers' Unions, have already progressed very far on the road to a socialist strategy.

As against that, the old and new left belonging to the UDF start from the idea that the movement should not go beyond national and democratic goals — though there are socialist-orientated organisations affiliated to the UDF too.

The bourgeois camp, internationally and in South Africa itself, is split in its attitude to the Botha government. Some bourgeois forces in the US call for a boycott. How do you explain this?

The strategic situation in South Africa is differently assessed.

There are capitalist politicians who consider that the Afrikaner National party and the Botha government are the only force that can carry through reforms without endangering the system itself.

Others, further to the left,



Black strikers, Durban 1973

are on the contrary convinced that such a reform can be carried through only by the cooption of the moderate leadership of the African nationalist movement. And these forces, who are aiming for a new power bloc, propose an economic boycott.

Is such a reform solution possible, and is there a social basis for it?

Even so far-reaching a concession as legal equality can no longer integrate the blacks, above all the youth.

As against the national-democratic theoreticians of the UDF it must be maintained that the revolution in South Africa has a permanent character.

The caste system indeed implies that in time many

more Indians and Coloureds can be politically neutralised than blacks. The many black collaborators in the townships show, however, that fundamentally even classified Blacks can be neutralised.

On the other hand the youth of precisely these intermediate layers rejects this government and the new constitution most sharply, and takes part in the revolt. Other than repression the government has no means to solve the question of apartheid. It does not have enough time.

I believe that in the next five or ten years the capitalist powers of the West will see themselves forced to bring the moderate wing of the liberation movement to power somehow, as in Zimbabwe. But the attempt to put a limit to the movement by that means will fail.

Of course we cannot predict how the revolution will then proceed, but it is the classic situation of a permanent revolution.

Is South Africa on the eve of revolution?

In the National Forum we have tried to warn against two dangers since 1983: a premature uprising and a Latin-Americanisation of the country. Both are now threatening.

It was clear that a revolt was coming. It must be in the interest of the Botha government to provoke a premature outbreak of the revolt, so as to stifle it quicker and eliminate its leadership through a wave of arrests or through the state of emergency.

The precise moment may not be favourable for the government, because it is in

a very difficult situation economically. But there can be no doubt of the government's preparedness to impose the state of emergency.

This state of emergency will not last very long, but in that time organisations will be destroyed or have their leaderships removed, and it will take some years to build them up again. The aim of the state of emergency is a breathing-space in which the so-called 'reform movement' can be extended and the black middle class neutralised.

The moderate leadership of the United Democratic Front (UDF) did not think this wave of repression was possible. It assessed not only the international situation but also the relation of forces inside the country falsely and expected that the government would be forced into negotiations. In reality we are moving towards Latin American conditions.

That means that the regime allows a limited political debate so as then to remove the leadership that shows itself openly, either legally or illegally through death-squads — as has already begun with the murder of the oppositional lawyer Victoria Mxenge.

The movement should have prepared itself for this. But it is clear that the UDF and also parts of the National Forum and even the unions were not quite prepared for this wave of repression.

The unions will probably come out of it best, because they hold back from open revolutionary activity and have only carried on general political education among

their members.

But won't the brutal state intervention lead to a further politicisation and extension of the revolt?

Politicisation, yes, but not necessarily an extension of the open revolt.

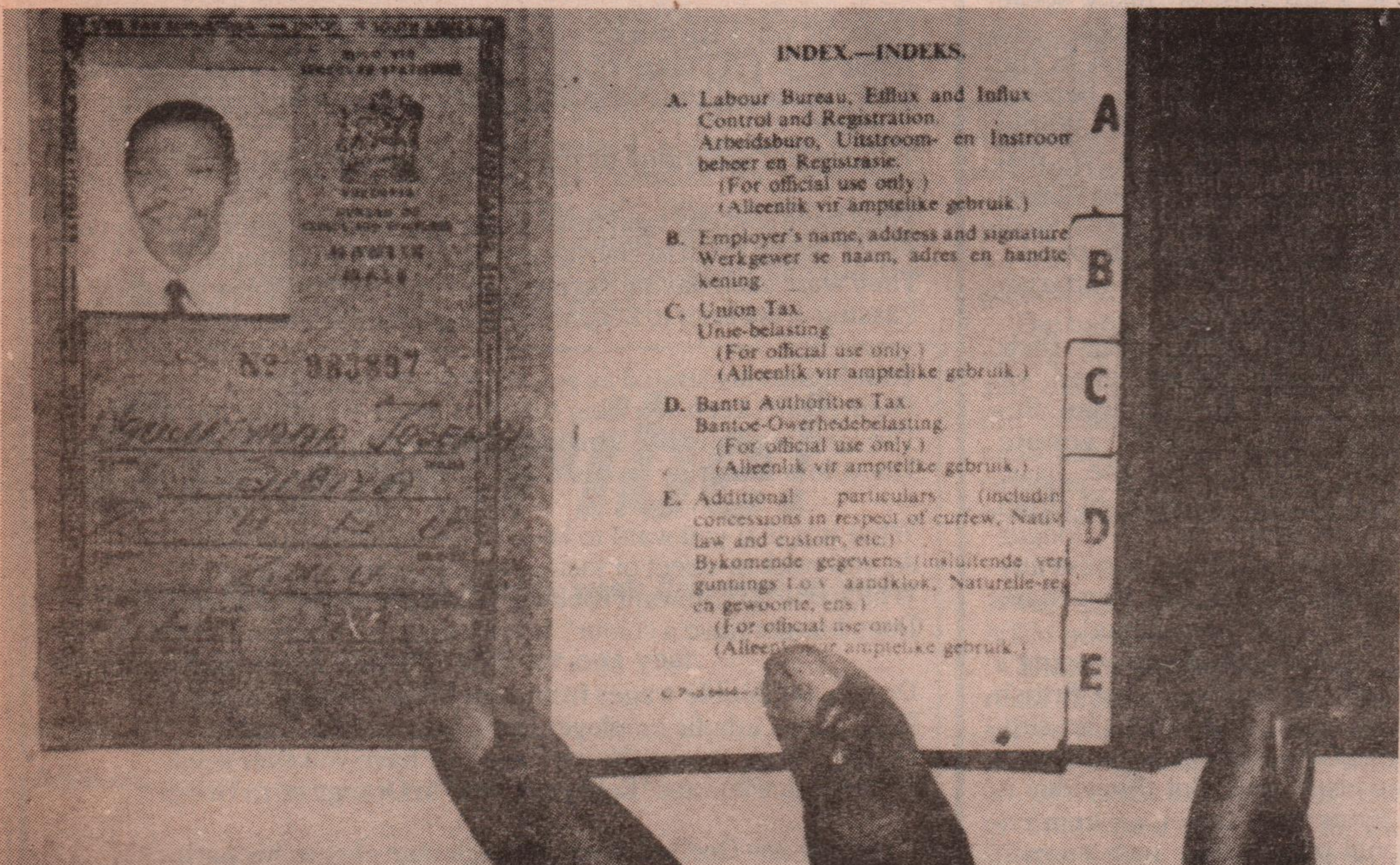
We are in a situation very similar to Northern Ireland. The government can forget, once and for all, the idea of bringing over the black youth and the black population to their side: integration is excluded.

But the workers cannot sustain an open revolt indefinitely in South Africa any more than they can anywhere else. There will continue to be sporadic revolts in the townships.

If we had an army, as in Iran in 1979, that was recruited from the 'sons of the people', then it would perhaps be possible today to talk about a successful revolution. But it will be years before we have such a situation. You can't talk about a successful revolution when you don't know how to neutralise the army and the bureaucracy. And they are still 85% white.

The government will not let the proportion of blacks in the state apparatus increase quickly, because it knows that is their own power-base. Anyone who says that a successful revolution is possible in the next two or three years does not understand the situation.

It would be different if an international war neutralised the army in South Africa and gave us the opportunity to come to power. But no neighbouring state is strong enough even to threaten South Africa.



The hated pass books. Photo: IDAF.

Health in Nicaragua

Under Somoza, Nicaragua's health record was one of the worst in Latin America. Infant mortality was 130 per 1000 births, average life expectancy was 53 years, and tuberculosis, malaria, diarrhoea and other preventable diseases were common.

Since the revolution in 1979, the Sandinista government has made great efforts to improve the situation, and by 1983 infant mortality was down 40%, life expectancy was up to 59 years, malaria was down 50% and infectious diseases were also dramatically down.

This was the result of building new clinics and providing free health services even in the most remote areas. Before the "contra" war, some 80% of people had access to health care.

Just how much these gains have been rolled back was revealed in a letter to the Lancet, a long-established medical weekly, last June. In it, American visitors to Nicaragua described how the American-sponsored "contras" have attacked new health services.

Money

Of course, money has been diverted from other sectors into defence and so growth in health spending has ceased. But to make things worse, the "contras" have stolen or destroyed medical vehicles and supplies and have destroyed 45 health facilities, including centres for the control of diarrhoea, a major killer of children.

The result has been the interruption of vaccination and nutrition programmes, while malaria and water purification programmes have also been affected.

Shortage of foreign exchange has made it difficult to purchase even cheap spare parts for medical equipment, so for example x-ray machines and incubators for premature babies are lying idle.

The "contras" also exact a psychological toll, with some 25% of cases of depression being connected with the war (mainly close relatives of war victims).

The letter concludes by pointing out how the agents of "democratic" America violate the Geneva Convention regarding the neutrality of medical workers and the sick and wounded. The authors call on medical personnel throughout the world to expose the consequences of the "covert" war in Nicaragua.

It is a pity such testimony is not considered newsworthy in publications with a wider circulation.

In my last article (August 28) I described some of the effects of the cuts in NHS spending. Here are some more examples.

Infertility clinics are now so starved of funds that treatment has become a sick farce for some women. Waiting times are so long that they may be too old to have babies by the time their turn comes. Investigations that should take six months are taking six years and even in one case fourteen years.

In Sheffield and Bristol, couples may wait a year for their first appointment, while women in Manchester wait four years for in vitro fertilisation (IVF)*

At least they will eventually be treated as the North Western Regional Health Authority is the only one to fund an IVF clinic.

Elsewhere, funds have been



Science

refused and IVF programmes have to squeeze into existing fertility clinics.

Shortage of funds and staff mean that some clinics have stopped treating new patients or have even closed their waiting lists.

Yet infertility is frequently a treatable problem, particularly in view of recent developments.

Inevitably, better off couples are finding that they can buy treatment, but these are not just private patients. NHS patients too are being asked to pay hundreds of pounds in "donations" to research funds, without which fertility programmes cannot keep going.

The government's attitude to the estimated one million infertile couples is the callous one that "no-one dies of infertility".

Staff shortages due to low pay also play a role in affecting patient care. Patients on the waiting list for heart transplants at Papworth Hospital are dying not because no organs are available for their operations, but because of a shortage of nurses in the intensive care ward.

Organs for transplant are being wasted as Papworth is forced to choose between its ordinary work of open heart surgery and transplant work.

The review body on nurses' pay pointed out that there is a national shortage in intensive care units, presumably because nurses see this very exacting work as being particularly ill paid.

Meanwhile, news from the USA of the latest medical test — the "wallet biopsy"***. More and more private hospitals perform a wallet biopsy before deciding whether to admit a patient. If their wallet biopsy "shows a low green count" (i.e. if they don't have enough dollars), they are turned away, regardless of their condition.

In a study of 587 "transferred" patients, 40% required emergency room treatment and another third were sick enough to require admission. Three-quarters of the 587 had no or minimal health insurance.

A glimpse of the future under the Tories?

*IVF — egg and sperm are allowed to meet and join in a laboratory when the normal method has proved impossible. IVF can be used where a woman has blocked Fallopian tubes or produces anti-bodies to the man's sperm, or the man produces too few sperm.

**Biopsy — removal and study of a sample of tissue to see if cancer or some other condition is present.

Review

Can Irish people be united?

By Stan Crooke

SINN Fein's recently produced video 'Bodenstown — the legacy of Wolfe Tone' asks the question of whether Wolfe Tone's commitment is still relevant today, "to substitute for the various denominations of Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter, the common name of Irishman".

Wolfe Tone was the pioneer of Irish Republicanism and leader of the 1798 uprising of the United Irishmen, who sought to unite all Irish — Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter — in a common struggle against British interference in Irish affairs and for the democratic ideals of the French revolution.

Captured after the defeat of the uprising, Tone committed a grisly suicide. His grave in Bodenstown, in southern Ireland, is now the scene of annual Republican demonstrations.

The video answers its question by providing an outline history of Ireland and the Republican movement from Tone's time down to the present day.

Interspersed in this history are scenes of balaclava-clad and combat-jacketed Republicans marching up and down leafy country lanes, or shooting it out with 'the Brits' on the streets of Belfast against a background of lilting Irish melodies.

The video's argument is that Wolfe Tone's goal was valid in his day, but now, in the aftermath of partition and the creation of a sectarian Northern Ireland statelet, no longer.

Tone's enemy was an alliance of the landed gentry (many of whom lived in England and only drew rents from Ireland) and the Established Church (to which everyone in Ireland to pay tithes though only a few belonged). Against this it was possible to unite Dissenter and liberal Anglican craft workers and merchants with mostly Catholic peasants.

Unviable

The 1798 uprising was an expression of the validity of Tone's ideas. But subsequent developments made the basic tenet of the United Irishmen increasingly unviable.

The emergence of the Orange Order — a sectarian Protestant organisation — in the late 18th century, the industrialisation of North-East Ireland, the growing discrimination against Catholics in the emerging industry, and, above all, the partition of Ireland and the institutionalisation of sectarianism in the North, destroyed the basis for the realisation of Tone's ideal.

Thus the Sinn Fein video concludes "today there is little or no hope of using Tone's original formula of uniting Protestant, Catholic and Dissenter into a force against the British".

It is true that the social conditions of Tone's time no longer exist. The landlords were bought out by the British government in the late 19th and early 20th century, and the process was completed by the Southern government in the 1930s. The Church was disestablished in 1870. Partition has hardened the divisions and created a sort of 'Ulster nationalism' among the Protestants.

For sure, simple opposition to Britain is no longer a programme capable of uniting Prot-



estant and Catholic.

Irish Marxists have argued that this means that a new programme and a new social basis are needed to realise Tone's ideal — a working-class socialist programme. Sinn Fein's conclusion is essentially to maintain the same narrow nationalist programme but to base it only on the Catholic community.

The video thus provides a kind of theoretical justification for Sinn Fein's decision of the early '80s to drop the policy of a federal united Ireland after British withdrawal. Although tinged by an Irish nationalist mysticism, that policy was at least an attempt to placate Protestant fears about a united Ireland meaning Catholic domination.

Dropping the policy of a federal Ireland and the abandonment of "Tone's original formula" are two sides of the same coin: a retreat into a nationalism based narrowly on the Catholic community, and thus into a hopeless war of attrition against the Protestants.

Many on the British left are starry-eyed about Sinn Fein's left turn on many social and economic questions, and will doubtless find much in the video about which to become even more starry-eyed. Within limits, that left turn is real enough. And there is no reason to doubt the video's sincerity in stressing the need for Republicans to be both non-sectarian and anti-sectarian.

But Sinn Fein make their sincerely-proclaimed aims of socialist and non-sectarian Republicanism an empty gesture when they dismiss the basic tenet of the pioneer of Irish Republicanism as no longer applicable, and they dismiss any attempt to placate Protestant fears as a 'sop to loyalism'.

The Republicans are waging a justified struggle against British oppression, and should be supported by socialists in Britain and elsewhere. But this video is a reminder — albeit an unintentional one — that such support cannot be at the price of socialists abandoning their political independence.



Songs of liberty and rebellion



I don't know when this song was written or who wrote it, but it has all the marks of the late '60s. Those were the days when the left was in the ascendant in Northern Ireland — or seemed to be — and we thought that the war cries of Orangemen and Nationalists had lost their power to control events. Of course it is politically naive and hopelessly 'economic'. For all that the song's sentiments are good ones. It goes to the tune of 'The Rocks of Bawn'.

The Orange and the Green

Come all you Irish workers and listen unto me
While you're fighting with each other, your country can't be free
Your foes are in the North and South, they're cunning and they mean
To keep you separated by the Orange and the Green.

They have sold the land from under you to the Yankee and the Gaul
From Dublin town to Galway and from Cork to Donegal
They work each day in Stormont and in Leinster House are seen
Passing cruel laws to keep the Orange and the Green.

Your bosses are united as you work hard every day
Their profits keep on rising but they never raise your pay
The landlords and the bankers keep their hands so neat and clean
The colour that they love is Gold, not the Orange or the Green.

What is it that you want to keep? How much do you have now?
As you work in street or factory or else behind a plough
Which one do you want robbing you, a president or a queen?
Does hunger have a colour? Is it Orange, is it Green?

Do you get double wages from your kindly Orange boss?
Does your Catholic employer ever, ever make a loss?
Do they share the profits with you? Or have you ever seen
A landlord who says 'Rents are free' to Orange or to Green?

So follow any God you wish, let each man choose his faith
But God won't lift the pick for you, it's you must turn the lathe
Unite and fight together, against them turn your spleen
Then we'll have a workers' country with no Orange and no Green.

By Les Hearn

Miners strike over sackings

By Bryan Edmands

MINERS at Keresley pit near Coventry staged a 24 hour strike on Tuesday 17th in protest at the Coal Board's decision not to reinstate five NUM members sacked last year during the strike.

The five, who were roughly arrested one evening whilst at a neighbour's house in Keresley village, were subsequently charged, found guilty, and then sacked. They have been fighting ever since to win back their jobs.

An industrial tribunal found in favour of reinstatement, yet the Coal Board re-

mains intransigent.

Over 70 pickets were on the gates first thing in the morning, and token pickets remained throughout the day.

Justice for Dean Hancock and Russell Shankland!

Peaceful vigil at Brixton Prison and at the Appeal Court, October 21-22.

Called by Newport Miners' Support Group, Oxford Miners' Support Group, Bristol & Avon Miners' Defence Committee.

Further details: Cllr Ray Davies, 0222 886695.

Gartcosh and the 'whole nation'

By Joe Baxter

THE SCOTTISH Trade Union Congress is campaigning to save the Gartcosh strip mill and Ravenscraig steelworks. But not very well.

Always keen to take the fight into the enemy camp, Donald Dewar MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Scotland, got the campaign off to an encouraging start. Under headlines in the Scottish papers such as 'Gartcosh would not jeopardise privatisation, say Labour MPs' Dewar reassured the British Steel Corporation that the £11 million needed to keep Gartcosh open would not stop British Steel becoming a desirable target for private investors.

A week later, at a conference on the closure threats, Jimmy Milne, general secretary of the STUC, was hopeful that 'our friends in the Conservative Party' would be able to persuade Thatcher to discuss the BSC proposals.

Dewar, at the same conference, stressed his unwillingness to alienate George Younger, Secretary of State for Scotland, by being too critical of his role. It was "the last thing he wanted to see".

The platform speakers included a Tory MP (only one Scottish Tory MP has come out in support of the Gartcosh closure) and Roy Jenkins of the SDP.

Any hopes that such breadth of support might impress Thatcher crumbled a few days later. On a visit to Scotland she told an STUC delegation that she fully sup-

ported the BSC plans. The delegation was reported to be 'disappointed and depressed' by her reaction. They must have felt even worse when the Scottish CBI voted to back BSC too.

Readers of Socialist Organiser may wonder what role there is in all this for the rank and file in British Steel and other sections of the working class. The answer is, of course, very little.

Rank and file action has no place where the main thrust of the campaign is to recall the House of Commons Select Committee on Steel, or for the Commons Select Committee on Scottish affairs to instigate an emergency inquiry.

At the TUC Keith Brookman, the assistant general secretary of the Iron and Steel Trades Confederation, told delegates that 'the Scottish nation, in total, is opposed to the BSC plans. Churches of all denominations, scholars, newspapermen and works management are opposed to this closure'.

The workers are too, presumably, but then they are not 'opinion-formers'.

Scottish Tories, scared of losing their seats at the next election, are not reliable allies for a workforce fighting Tory plans to rationalise their industry. The rank and file in the steel industry need to formulate a response to the Tories' attacks on their own terms, not rely on the ability of Labour MPs and others to out-argue Thatcher and the BSC Board.

Fight beats closure

By Will Adams

THE ACCIDENT and emergency service at London Hospital, Mile End, has been relieved following a decision of the Tower Hamlets District Health Authority last Thursday, 12th.

This represents a victory for a long campaign by hospital workers and local groups.

The campaign organised a march to the District Health

Authority meeting to present a petition signed by 20,000 local people. Francis Cumberlege, a city merchant who chairs the DHA, refused to come out to receive the petition but we went in to the meeting to give it to him and to make sure the DHA voted the right way.

The occupation of the DHA meeting also forced the police to release the chief steward of the march, whom

they had earlier arrested.

Last September the DHA voted to postpone a decision of the future of the accident and emergency unit for a year, with the following options to be considered: complete closure; closure overnight, or to exclude children from the service (which would fit in with a planned closure of the children's wing).

The year has been used to build a big campaign. Leafletting and petitioning in markets and door to door has made people aware of the threat to a local hospital. The accident and emergency services has already been closed at St Andrews Hospital, Bow, which is in Tower Hamlets but run by Newham DHA.

The Tower Hamlets District Management Team was forced to conclude that the Mile End accident and emergency service should remain open, and the DHA supported this.

Health services in Tower Hamlets are not safe, however. The DHA will have to argue with the North East Thames Regional Health Authority why it should have two accident and emergency units in its district rather than one as the RHA has instructed. With Mile End accident and emergency staying open the DHA will have to find other areas to cut the £1 million they have been told to find to finance the nurses' pay award.

And there is always the threat of gradual rundown of the accident and emergency or other services by management.

The key to resisting this is the hospital workforce. If this victory can be used to build up organisation and increase confidence in the hospitals, then we can start to turn the tide of demoralisation and despondency caused by years of cuts.

Rail: halt the slide

By Rob Dawber

By 66 votes to 11 the National Union of Railwaymen Special General Meeting (SGM) gave general secretary Jimmy Knapp overwhelming endorsement of his project to negotiate Driver Only Operation as part of a package involving the reinstatement of sacked guards.

This does not mean that 11 delegates opposed negotiations. The opposition came from those who argued that the guards should be reinstated first before any negotiations, and those who said that it was not enough for Knapp to say that the resolution meant no agreement without reinstatement - it should be in a resolution for voting.

The SGM was sold on the idea that a 'package' would be enough. However, letters already received by the union from British Rail make clear that more far-reaching concessions are required on as yet undisclosed subjects.

BR demand that the NUR National Executive prove that it will negotiate freely on future productivity. 'Freely'

here can only mean free of the internal democracy of the union that has set limits on productivity talks.

Since the SGM BR has repeated that negotiating the introduction of Driver Only Operation is not enough. And each further statement erodes what is on offer to NUR members.

Knapp has so far succeeded in selling an illusion to the members. He did hint that he may have to come back to the SGM. This can only be to seek further concessions to BR when his negotiations do not win reinstatement.

Rather than continue down this road, branches must put pressure on the National Executive to set a date for reinstatement of the sacked guards. Otherwise BR will happily let the matter hang as a threat over every other member.

If this date is not met, action by all grades must begin, to win their jobs back with no loss of service, grade or pay.

Only in this way can we halt the slide to conceding everything that BR wants - total capitulation.

Scottish teachers march

By Ian McCalman

TEN THOUSAND teachers marched through the streets of Glasgow last Wednesday to a rally in George Square to show that their morale and determination in their pay fight remains high.

In a day of strike action called by the Scottish teachers' union EIS, marches and rallies took place throughout Scotland. It was a further step in a pay battle now over a year old.

Paid strike action will now proceed in different areas, and a ban has been imposed on most aspects of pupil registration. The EIS leadership has also rejected the local management-floated pay-and-conditions package.

The level of paid strike action planned is, however, disappointing, and sections of the leadership are still angling for an improved package backed by some more government cash.

The way forward must clearly be for a salaries claim to be launched fairly soon for 1984-6. To achieve any substantial settlement out of that will require an intensification of action.

Members fear that such a claim and settlement may fall short of what they need to restore 1974 standards. The settlement of the claim, however, need not mean an abandonment of a variety of forms of industrial action which can be maintained until we achieve a specific commitment from government, either Labour or Tory, to restore 1974 standards in a fixed period of time.

Penrhawceibr fights closure

What's the feeling at the pit since the closure announcement?

The NCB put the pit into the closure review procedure on the Thursday before the summer holiday shutdown, so it was three weeks before we could call general meeting.

Despite that delay the mass meeting accepted the Lodge Committee's recommendation to fight the closure by a majority of 2 to 1.

The timing was deliberate, though, because it gave the management unions, BASM, COSA and NACODS, a chance to campaign in favour of the closure and they managed to get the support of a small number of NUM members who are looking for the redundancy and transfer payments.

The battle has got to be fought inside the pit as well as outside and the minority of doubters in the NUM must be convinced, especially over the false rumours about withdrawal of redundancy and transfer money.

What about the majority of NUM members?

The majority feeling is that we must fight, not only for ourselves but in order to buy time for the lodges in the next wave of pit closures. Ours is one of only three pits left in the Cynon Valley and it employs a bigger percentage of local men than the other two - and that

A press leak last week indicated that the NCB wants to close a pit a week over the next year. So far only one pit, Polkemet in Scotland, has been definitely closed since the end of the strike. At risk are Horden and Bates in the North-East, Yorkshire Main, and St Johns and Penrhawceibr in South Wales. Mark Thomas of Penrhawceibr NUM spoke to Socialist Organiser.

makes it a mainstay of employment in a Valley with the highest rate of unemployment in South Wales. If the pit closes, the community will be shattered, it's as simple as that. Not only that, but the local council would lose a big ratepayer and services would be the first to suffer.

What is the Labour council doing about the closure threat?

The Labour council is campaigning within the community, producing its own literature, for example, while the lodge coordinates the fight within the industry, although the lodge has the overall say in the campaign and a veto on all the material that goes out.

Cynon

What about Ann Clwyd the Labour MP for the Cynon Valley?

She has given us a lot of support and set up a series of public meetings up and down the valley to protest against closure. The other side of it though is that she has invited Thatcher down to see the community for herself - as if that would

change the Board's decision!

What level of support has the South Wales NUM Executive given so far?

Pontypridd

Pontypridd have given us full support for the campaign and have offered any assistance the lodge requires. They haven't been closely involved yet because we are still putting together the information to argue the case in the review procedure.

It seems the campaign is based on arguments over geology. Given that the union won the Deep Duffryn closure campaign in 1979 but the pit still closed, do you think this approach will be effective?

Deep Duffryn won a reprieve, but then didn't get the money it needed for development. We have got two new faces coming on stream and losses of £150 per ton just after the national strike are now down to under £30. These are development faces and they will make the pit more

profitable.

But can you fall back on the argument about profitability? After all wasn't the national strike about jobs and communities versus profits?

Of all the lodges in South Wales we were among those who preached against 'economics' in the strike, but if the pit does produce coal profitably it cuts away the Board's arguments. It exposes the fact that the Board doesn't want the pit to close because it is uneconomic but because the lodge has been one of the most militant in South Wales and a real thorn in their side for many years.

If you win the economic argument but the Board still go ahead with closures, what do you think the lodge should do?

The lodge is committed to campaigning against closure not just on economic grounds, but for the sake of the community as well. Strike action against closure looks impossible at the moment, but if it came to it we would have to involve the Joint Lodges Committee which brings together lodges in the central coalfield. The Joint Lodges would support us, but it would still be difficult to win the arguments for action at a lodge level. At the moment we are taking on the Board's economic and geological arguments and taking the campaign out into the community.

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Anti-apartheid victory for Dublin strike

THE ELEVEN workers on strike at Dunnes Stores in Dublin have forced their employer to make concessions.

For 14 months they have been on strike against handling South African goods. The strike started when one of them, Mary Manning, was sacked for refusing to check out South African goods.

Boycotting

The workers' union, the IDATU, has an official policy of boycotting trade with apartheid, and has supported the strikers.

Now all major supermarkets in the South of Ireland — inclu-

ding Dunnes — have agreed to talks with the Minister of Labour that they "will seek alternative sources of supply" to South Africa.

This deal will be considered by the IDATU executive and the strikers this week. It may lead to negotiations on specific issues at Dunnes, like reinstatement of the worker suspended, or the strikers may decide to stick out for more now that they have got the employers on the run.

Pious

These eleven workers have achieved more by their strike

action than thousands of pious politicians' speeches. Several other stores in the South of Ireland have stopped stocking South African goods in order to head off similar confrontations.

Armed guard

In July the strikers were invited to South Africa by Bishop Desmond Tutu — but at Johannesburg airport they were held for eight hours under armed guard before being flown back.

Trade unionists in Britain should follow the example of the Dunnes strikers, and boycott trade with apartheid.

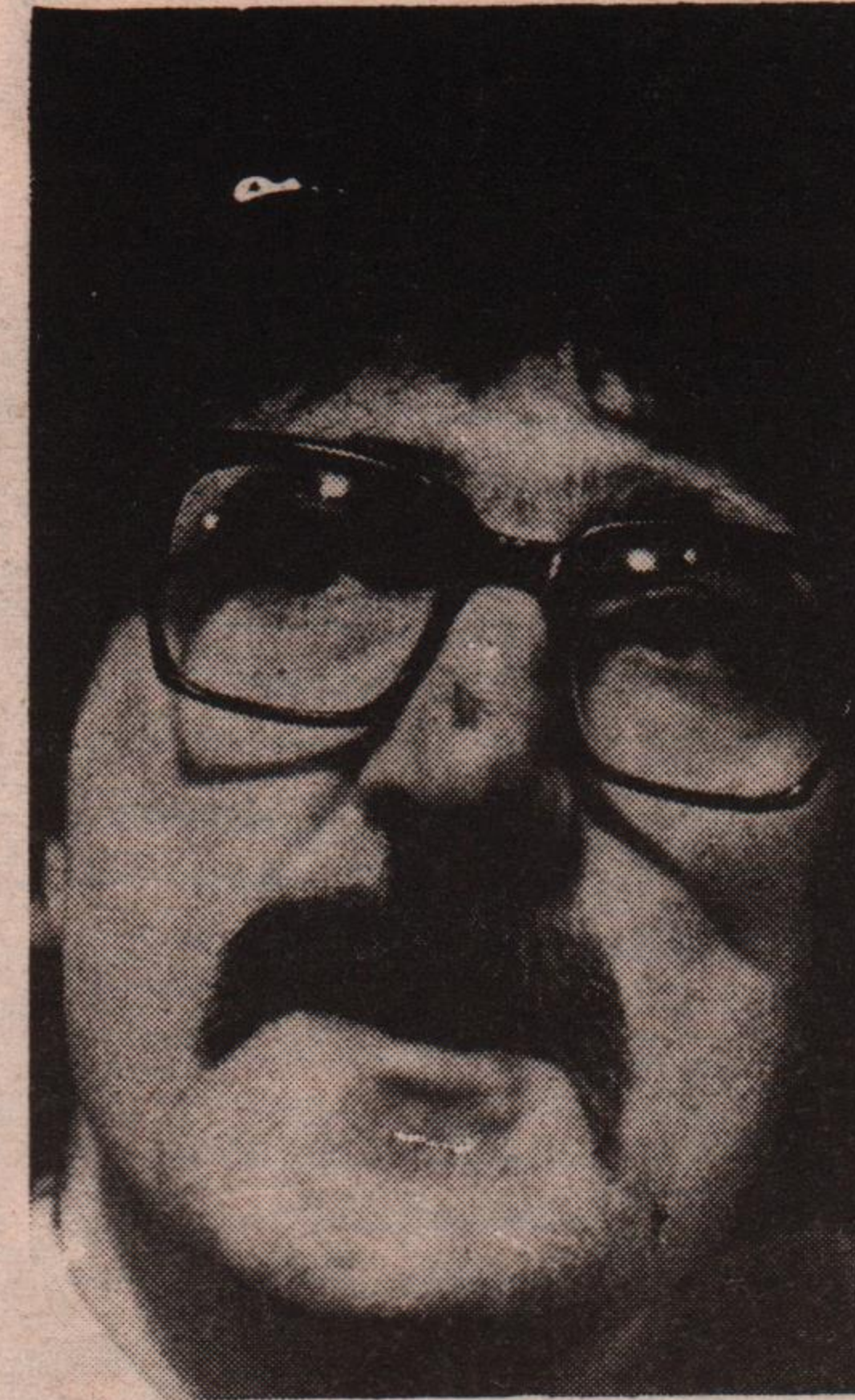
Boost for 'Keep Notts National'

By Paul Whetton

LAST THURSDAY (12th) we had six or seven hundred people to a meeting in a Nottinghamshire miners' welfare. It was absolutely packed and we had quite a number of ex-working miners.

Because I was on afternoon shift, I missed most of it, but I got in for the last half hour or so. Everyone said what excellent speakers there had been.

Eric Clarke was good. Arthur Scargill was his usual self. There was somebody from the TUC there, making the point that the TUC would not recognise Lynk's organisation. Ex working miners were actually asking questions at the end of the meeting and being answered by the panel. A considerable number signed the pledge form saying that they wished



to remain with the national union.

It was an excellent meeting all round.

There was a meeting yesterday at Harworth. That too was extremely well attended. The indications we're getting

is that the longer they put that ballot off, the worse it is for them.

People in the pits are starting to ask questions. We're starting to get our literature moved round. Every day we seem to be attracting more people who realise what's going on.

Ken Toon has been made president of this new 'Union of Democratic Mineworkers' and nobody has had a vote on that yet. The explanation we got in our branch was that they were going to appoint him and have the ballot later on — which seems to stand democracy on its head.

We were told that the decision has already been taken about the breakaway — the ballot will not be about the breakaway but simply about a rule change. That's upset quite a few people.

Every time Lynk makes some explanations he digs himself in a bigger hole.

I understand they have sent a draft of their rules to the Certification Officer and he has sent it back — he's not satisfied. They're going to have to rewrite their proposed new rules.

We've asked: what happens if the ballot goes against you. What they've said is that they'll just go away and write another set of rules, but in the meantime we're still broken away.

That sort of statement is explaining to people a damn sight better than we can exactly what their democracy is all about.

Firm

Yesterday at the Notts county Labour Party we had two resolutions against recognising any breakaway organisation which were overwhelmingly carried. We need that firm commitment at all levels.

We sent our amendment for conference from our Constituency Labour Party to Walworth Road, and we got a letter back from the general secretary:

"Thank you for your letter of 8th August. There has been no formal request to the NEC to accept affiliation from any breakaway union of the National Union of Mineworkers. If such a request came, there would be no question of the party accepting affiliation of an organisation not recognised by the national union or the TUC. I hope this makes the position clear to your constituency".

That's a firm commitment from the bureaucracy of the Labour Party, if you like. We need to bring it all together at conference.

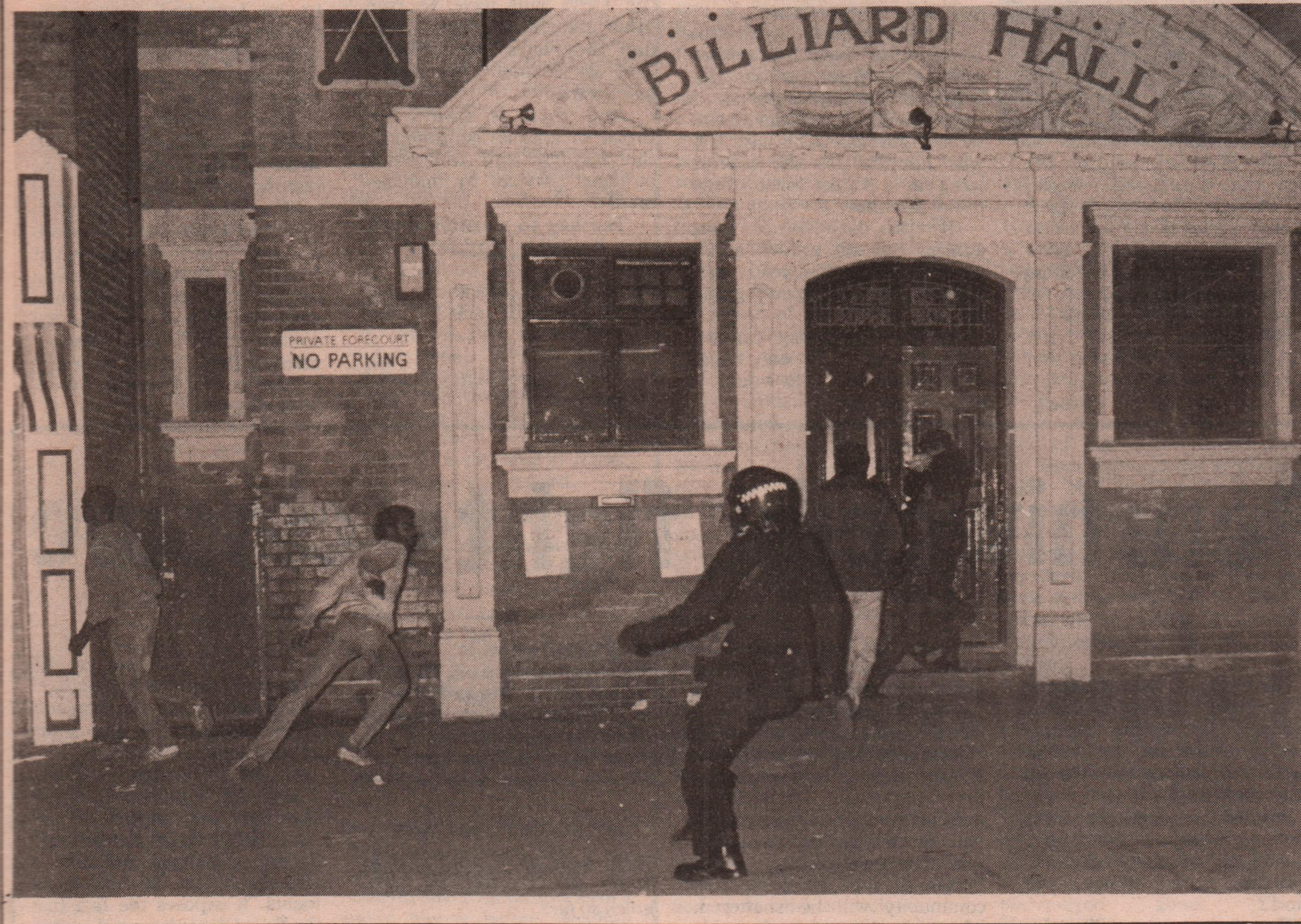
Riot

Facts emerging on the background to the Handsworth riots last week suggest that heavier policing was the spark that ignited a social mixture made explosive by mass unemployment.

Only 5% of Afro-Caribbean school-leavers get jobs. And according to the Sunday Times a shift to heavier policing "suddenly speeded up six months ago... a new superintendent... used large numbers of police in drug raids [for soft drugs, not heroin] ... Since spring, attacks on police and their vehicles have increased".

Asian shopkeepers rather than police bore the brunt of the riots, however, and this week Asian members of the local Community Relations Council split away from it.

Left: cop chases a black youth. Photo: Andrew Moore.



21 days to October 10!

PREPARATIONS for the march on Tory party conference on October 10 are well advanced. Over 30,000 leaflets have been printed, and it's looking as though more are needed. 2000 posters have just arrived from the printers ready to send out this week, and 5000 stickers have been promised.

Leafleting started last week as many Further Education colleges went back.

At a tech in Nottingham 25 names of people who wanted to come were collected in just half an afternoon. 60 copies of the Young Socialists local bulletin Red Line were sold, along with 40 copies of Women's Fightback

and 20 Socialist Organiser/Workers' Liberty pamphlets on South Africa.

This week the Nottingham comrades are leafleting societies day at Trent Poly and asking the Poly student union to underwrite coaches to the demonstration. Red Line supporters are planning to help set up a Labour Club at the tech after the demo.

In Sheffield, Hillsborough YS is working on getting local Labour Parties and trade union branches to sponsor seats on the coach so that local unemployed youth can march on the Tories.

In Manchester, fly-posting is being planned, and schools are

being leafleted as well as every college affiliated to the Area National Union of Students (which is calling the picket).

The comrades report that outside one school the feeling against the Tories and against the Youth Training Scheme in particular is so great that students who took leaflets going into school came back out and took bundles to give out inside.

Local Labour councillor and SO supporter Pete Keenlyside is notifying the NUT.

There is still plenty of time to get more people to the march, and comrades should go through the following checklist.

1. Order leaflets from 214

Sickert Court, London N1 2SY (01-609 7459). £1 per 100 leaflets. A2 posters 10p each. Cheques to MANUS, Waterloo Place, Oxford Road, Manchester 13.

2. Visit your area NUS and college student unions and ask them to arrange a coach. If that fails approach Labour clubs. If nothing else get a coach booked through your Young Socialists branch — you'll have no trouble filling it — and follow Sheffield's example by asking the local labour movement to sponsor seats.

3. Offer the student union help in leafleting — preferably on registration day or societies

day.

3. Pick a YTS scheme and a school (with a sixth form) to leaflet. If possible speak to the YTS supervisors' union to try to get agreement.

'Be brave — organise a soapbox meeting to urge students and trainees to come on the picket and join the YS.

Send in details of plans and successes. Don't forget to carry a pen and paper to take down names and addresses.

Comrades needing more information should ring either Simon Pottinger at 01-609 7459 or Rachel Kennedy (MANUS) on 061-273 5111.



Join the Labour Party.
Write to: The Labour Party, 150 Walworth Road, London SE17 1JT.
Subscription is £8 per year, £2 unwaged, 50p OAPs.