

Socialist Organiser

Disarm the cops!

No.246 October 3 1985 25p Claimants and strikers 10p

CONFERENCE...

OR THE LEADER



WHO MAKES LABOUR POLICY?

THIS Wednesday (2nd October) the Labour Party conference may vote that the next Labour government should give back the money taken from the NUM by the courts during the miners' strike, reinstate all sacked miners, and review the cases of all miners still in jail when Neil Kinnock moves into Downing Street.

But Neil Kinnock has said flatly that he will not be bound by such a conference decision, that this policy will not be in Labour's election manifesto, and that under no circumstances will he, as a Labour prime minister, give the miners back their money.

Kinnock is playing the strong, tough and 'moderate' Party leader for the media. He may well choose to make the same sort of speech of defiance at conference that stone-age right-wing Labour Party leader Hugh Gaitskell made when he lost the vote on unilateral nuclear disarmament in 1960: the notorious speech in which the Labour Party leader told conference that he would "fight, fight and fight again" — against Labour Party policy.

Kinnock probably wants to exaggerate and intensify the conflict so that he has a chance to show himself to the bosses and their media to be the big bold trustworthy leader in

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ACCORDING TO figures released when Stephen Waldorf was shot by police in 1983, the cops carry guns 15 times a day in London alone. One London police officer in five is authorised to carry firearms.

Put those facts together with the growing arrogance and brutality of the police since the miners' strike, and you have the certainty that innocent people will get shot.

On Saturday morning, 28th, at 7am, Cherry Groce had her front door in Brixton kicked down by police. Stumbling out of bed to see what was happening, she was gunned down in front of her three youngest children. She may be paralysed for life.

Word got round in Brixton, and that afternoon a small demonstration marched on Brixton police station. The police turned out in riot gear to disperse the protesters. Through Saturday evening, and again on Sunday evening, riots and street fighting spread, between mainly black youth and the police.

According to the very respectable Guardian, "Whatever the motives of the trouble-makers, they appeared to have wide support from many hundreds of people on the streets, including blacks, whites, Asians, women, young and old. At each spot where the rioters and the police appeared the cry 'murderers' went up".

In Brixton, two households in every three are on supplementary benefit, and as the riot continued several shops were looted.

Guns are not safe in the hands of Britain's police. There is no evidence that more gun-toting police reduce violent crime: on the contrary.

The police should be put under the control of elected committees, and disarmed.

More on Brixton and the police — page 11

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Labour Conference '85

WITH THE MINERS

Paul Whetton's Diary

Frightened

Paul Whetton was the secretary of the Notts miners' rank and file strike committee.

WE NEED to look very clearly at Kinnock's attitude on reimbursing the NUM's fines. What's the reason behind it?

I believe that Kinnock is fairly confident that the Labour Party is going to win the next election and he is going to be prime minister. He sees problems, not so much over repayment of fines and all the rest of it, but in the event of any miners' dispute during a Labour government.

He is frightened of the power of the miners' union in the event of him getting elected as prime minister. He doesn't want to have to be prime minister and face the miners.

Nice

He wants a nice quiet trade union movement while he does his thing in Number Ten.

In Nottinghamshire the ballot date has been announced. It's 17-18 October. We're quite confident we're going to get a fairly good score.

I'm suggesting that it may be 50-50. Some of the lads are saying 60-40 against us, but 55 per cent for Lynk would not be a victory. And with 45 to 50 per cent we can still build an organisation within the Notts coalfield.

Lynk is in trouble and he knows it. This Wednesday a whole series of Stalinist trials are being held at Berry Hill [Notts area HQ]. Individuals from branches are being asked to present themselves in front of the Executive on various complaints, and it looks as though it's the day the ice-picks come out.

They've taken leading lights from the branches and are after silencing them. It won't work, but it just shows how desperate they're getting. They've left this ballot too late, I think. If they'd gone ahead with it a lot earlier we would have had

problems.

But now people in the pits have had time to think and our information is getting to them.

I see that the Leicestershire area council has voted in favour of staying with the NUM. Even people who never lost a shift during the industrial dispute are recognising exactly what Lynk is.

Kinnock has been saying that Lynk's organisation is "not a bona fide union but not a company union either". He's trying to have a foot in both camps.

It will be a company union. There was no way that MacGregor directly could put money into it, but certainly he engineered finance for Lynk.

We've had riots in Brixton. I said at the time of the Handsworth events that it would break out again, and I think we're going to see more and more and more of it.

At the present time it's happening in places where you've got large ethnic minorities because of the years they have lived with high unemployment, bad housing, bad education, and all the rest of it. But I believe that it could well happen in white areas quite soon.

Youngsters who have had no job for a number of years and don't look like getting a job are going to boil over.

Maggie Thatcher and the government do exactly the wrong thing. They go in with a heavy hand and try to put the lid back down. That is only going to bottle up more steam for bigger explosions.

The police are now going round openly toting guns. It's becoming an everyday occurrence. Controls over the police are obviously totally unsatisfactory. We've got no control.

I accept that it was a Labour government that started it. It just shows what things can lead to. Getting control of the police again is going to be a major job that the Labour Party must commit itself to.



Miners and their families lobby TUC. Photo: John Harris (IFL)

Jeremy Corbyn MP

A radical policy

The Campaign Group of MPs has produced a detailed and extremely radical economic policy statement, which is intended to move the focus of economic discussion away from the "advancing retreatism" of the leadership and the NEC to the needs of the poorest people.

It outlines a strategy for public ownership of the major financial institutions, domination of investment and very strict control of the flow of capital. Its objective is control of capitalism, rather than the poorest people being the victims of the casino economy of Thatcher.

Even the Financial Times ruefully admits there is nothing remotely radical or socialist about Roy Hattersley's economic plans. Under his proposals, the investment fund managers would have more influence over a Labour government than the TUC or Labour Party conferences combined - a recipe for defeat.

The Campaign Group

covered in next week's Socialist Organiser. The purpose is to generate a serious debate about economic strategy and, early next year, I hope we will be calling a conference to review how that debate has gone and to use it to influence union conferences throughout the summer.

The conference has seen a return to the most disgusting type of leadership arm-twisting since Deakin and Bevin. The conference is constantly under threat from the leadership's well-placed press leaks, which aim to subvert the wishes of the ordinary trade unionists and Party members.

Support

However, conference is voting to support the miners, it will be Party policy to reimburse the miners. We will reintroduce the Miners' Amnesty Bill in full as soon as Parliament reassembles and we will continue to campaign around it.

This conference is becoming

statements by the Leader. He is saying that he will pursue his policy irrespective of the views of conference, and merely seeks endorsement for his candidature as Prime Minister.

My Party, Islington North, after much debate, supported the principle of the right of black people to organise in the Party.

We didn't win the vote yesterday on this issue, but it won't go away, despite the claims that it is now dead.

Black sections will come to be recognised in the Party.

A number of the fringe meetings on peace, arms and international issues have all raised a serious inconsistency in Party policy concerning NATO. I fully support unilateral nuclear disarmament but believe in the need to debate and discuss the case for withdrawal from NATO urgently. I can see a future Labour government, having been elected and having its key policies on foreign affairs and disarmament ruined by its continued membership of

Eric Heffer says

Full support

I hope that conference will decide tomorrow to give its full support to the miners.

I've never been in favour of Black Sections. I would have liked conference to adopt the compromise I have been working on, which is that every Afro-Caribbean, Asian and other ethnic minority group will be able to organise sections and affiliate to the Party at national and local level. That would give them more representation than they are asking for.

My compromise never got anywhere. The issue is not going to die. Sooner or later something will be done. When people fight, it always is. If they don't get everything they want, a compromise of some sort will be made. And the logic will be a strengthening of our case for better representation.

The composition of the new NEC is about the same. No loss on the left as far as the constituencies are concerned. In the trade union section two new comrades from the print, have been put on. We will have to see how they shape up.

We want an amnesty for all

From the Women's Fightback bulletin

Kath Chapman was on a picket of conference on Monday morning

"Neil Kinnock has sat on the fence too long, and we can have no respect for the man.

We want to see reinstatement of all our lads, and that means the Welsh lads as well.

It wasn't murder. They shouldn't be serving life sentences. Many times during the strike I felt like throwing something myself.

Where are the murderers of David Gareth Jones, 25 years old, killed on the picket line in Ollerton? Where are the murderers of Joe Green, 55 years old, killed by a lorry in Yorkshire? Why aren't they behind bars?

We must fight for a full amnesty for all miners. We are Women, we are Strong, and the Fight Goes On!

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OR AGAINST THEM?

Who makes Labour policy? (From page 1)

Continued from page 1

the Gaitskell/Wilson/Callaghan model, facing down the 'red rabble' at Labour Party conference and putting them in their place as election foot-soldiers for the parliamentarians.

Thus even before a Kinnock government takes office — and when it is not at all to be taken for granted that Labour will win the next election — the issue is once again posed sharply before the Labour Party: who decides what a Labour government does? Party conference or an entrenched, autocratic, office-obsessed leadership?

Kinnock and his supporters base themselves on two arguments: that the electorate would not vote for a party committed to the miners; and that reimbursing the NUM would be interference with the integrity of the

courts and would damage the very fabric of democracy.

How do they know what the electorate would vote for?

A campaigning Labour Party could win the electorate for socialist policies, just as a campaigning militant TUC could have helped the miners win their strike.

The second argument is more serious. Law courts that are impervious to political pressure and protected from arbitrary interference are indeed worth preserving and defending.

But is that what happened in the court cases which imposed crippling fines on the NUM? When the High Court appointed a Tory solicitor to declare 'I am the NUM' was that the law above politics?

The NUM was fined and penalised — and the miners now in jail were put there — fund-

amentally because in a bitter class war their opponents had the State and the law on their side. The miners are the victims of class justice.

For the labour movement to make a god of the decisions of the law courts that backed up the scab-herding, strike-breaking police sent by Margaret Thatcher against the miners, would be to accept our own paralysis in our future struggle.

The miners were picked on and fought back despite unfavourable conditions. The idea that the decisions of the courts under such circumstances are sacrosanct is the idea that the labour movement should lie down and let the ruling class walk all over us whenever they decide on a serious offensive.

The labour movement in office should undo what the police and the courts did. Such retrospec-

tive lifting of penalties has happened before under governments both Tory and Labour: Kinnock rejects it now not because he has been studying the theory of abstract justice, but because he wants to demonstrate his acceptability to the bosses and bankers.

It is not that socialists should lack respect for the ideal of impartial justice and courts 'impervious to praise or blame'. It is that we do not have such courts, or such a legal system. Or at any rate the miners didn't have the benefit of such law courts and such a system.

The jailed miners and their almost-pauperised union present the labour movement with a basic test case. Anybody who does not side with the miners now will never be any good for anything the working class needs to achieve.

Delegates' diary

Kneel Kinnock

By Patrick Murphy, delegate from Stockport CLP, and Alan Fraser, delegate from Basingstoke CLP

FOR SOME time now Neil Kinnock has been telling Labour Party members that we have to unite to attack the real enemy, the Tories and the Alliance.

On the Sunday of the Labour Party conference (September 29) Kinnock gave us an example of what he meant by this. He launched a scathing attack on the Liberals and SDP... for outrageous behaviour towards the Queen.

A more serious example of Kinnockite unity was Michael Meacher's treacherous betrayal of the miners. Meacher, a member of the left-wing Campaign Group of Labour MPs, cast the decisive National Executive vote against the NUM motion.

During the black sections debate on Monday we saw the usual unholy alliance between the Militant and the right wing to deny black men and women the right to self-organisation in the Labour Party.

Seven speakers were called in the debate, six men and one black woman. The argu-

ments in favour of black sections were distorted, and the motion was defeated.

Another disappointing feature of the conference so far has been the scandalous 'debate' on Ireland. Only three speeches were taken from the floor, and two of them were front-bench spokespeople.

But early on in the conference we discovered that it is possible to overturn the National Executive's attempts to stage-manage us. The first debate was on overseas aid and the African famine. Only one of the motions demanded the sort of measures needed to deal with this horrendous crisis.

The NEC asked the mover (Patrick Murphy) to remit. In my reply I pointed out the stupidity of asking for remission on a subject as urgent as the famine.

The conference supported me and duly carried the resolution.

Generally, our feeling is that the party leadership in the run-up to a general election want to have total control over the party's public image and policy. We need to renew and strengthen the fight for democracy in the party.

A letter from prison

Comrades,

I write this from Maidstone Prison in Kent, not many miles from the coal mine where I used to work. I have been imprisoned for four years for daring to fight Thatcher for my job at that mine, and at the same time, in prisons up and down the country, there are some 60 other miners jailed for daring to do the same thing.

During the conference

week you will be voting on a resolution by the NUM in support of these men, asking, in part, for a review of our cases when a Labour government comes to power. When the next election comes there will only be two miners left in prison — two 21-year old Welsh boys jailed for life. They are who you will be voting for.

During the strike and since I have met hundreds of

Labour Party members who, without exception, expressed horror at the treatment of these two boys at the hands of Thatcher's puppets in the judiciary. They were not jailed for life as a punishment to them but as a lesson for you to learn. Their futures are in your hands. Your votes will effectively determine whether they remain in prison for twenty years or more.

My sentence of four years is hard enough, what must they be suffering? Please don't desert them now.

We have given for the labour movement our livelihoods, freedom and in some cases our lives. All I ask for in return is your vote for the NUM resolution. At least allow me to retain my pride for the movement I hold so dear.

TERRY FRENCH

A gerrymandered debate



Andrew Ward, Report.

I thought the Black Sections debate was shockingly gerrymandered. They only called one woman.

Keith Vaz and Bernie Grant — both PPCs — they could have called, but they didn't, because they know they would have spoken in favour of Black Sections.

Alf Dubs was appalling. "Black people told me..." That kind of argument was used in the 1960s, it's patronising race relations stuff, said by him to keep his seat.

Above all it was appalling

to see left trade union delegates applauding Roy Hattersley. His package of positive discrimination suggestions was the race relations equivalent of the social contract. They are bankrupt.

These left comrades need to think about what company they are keeping.

We're going to come back next year, with more resolutions and more delegates. And we are going to keep on organising Black Sections on the ground. They can't stop us meeting. Dianne Abbott

Stage managed

I think the debate was stage managed. None of the four black PPCs were called, yet they called Alf Dubs, whose contribution was appalling.

Hattersley — who voted for the racist Immigration Acts brought in by the Labour government — made the most amazing statement when he said that one of the ways forward is changing the Immigration Acts and had the cheek to use this as an argu-

ment against Black Sections.

Many speakers mentioned how they had talked to black people who had told them they were opposed to Black Sections. Well, I'm prepared to challenge Hattersley to publicly debate before a black audience anywhere at any time about whether they are in favour of Black Sections or not. I issue that challenge to him now.

Bernie Grant



Red Ken

By Paula Watson

The majority of the GLC Labour Group have once again demonstrated their complete contempt for the London Labour Party and the principle of democratic

accountability. This time the issue was over the spending of the £174 million of newly discovered money which has to be allocated before abolition next May.

The finance committee can find so few uses for these funds that a proposal was floated, notably by Ken Livingstone, to use some of the money to reduce the rate precept.

Since rate reductions, like tax cuts, tend to benefit the wealthy, in this case big business, large property owners and rich boroughs such as Westminster and the City of London, rather than those in need, the suggestion aroused considerable opposition.

So much so, that Livingstone eventually gave an undertaking to the Regional Executive of the Greater London Labour Party to hold a joint meeting on Monday September 23 with the Executive, the ALA and the GLC Labour Group to thrash the whole thing out. This meeting was later cancelled after Livingstone had given a categorical assurance that no decision would be taken by the Labour Group without full consultation with the boroughs.

So what happens next? In place of the cancelled meeting, the GLC Group holds its customary pre-Council get together and the chief item on the agenda is a recommendation from Alex McKay, chair of the finance committee, that the Group should 'agree in principle to set aside a sum for precept reduction'.

John McDonnell promptly moved a point of order: since such a decision would breach the leader's clear promise not to proceed without consultation, Livingstone should clarify his commitment to the Regional Executive which had led to the cancellation of the joint meeting.

Despite a brutal barrage of heckling and abuse from other group members, McDonnell, supported by Leslie Hammond, Deirdre Wood and Jenny Edwards, stood his ground; but Livingstone refused to be drawn.

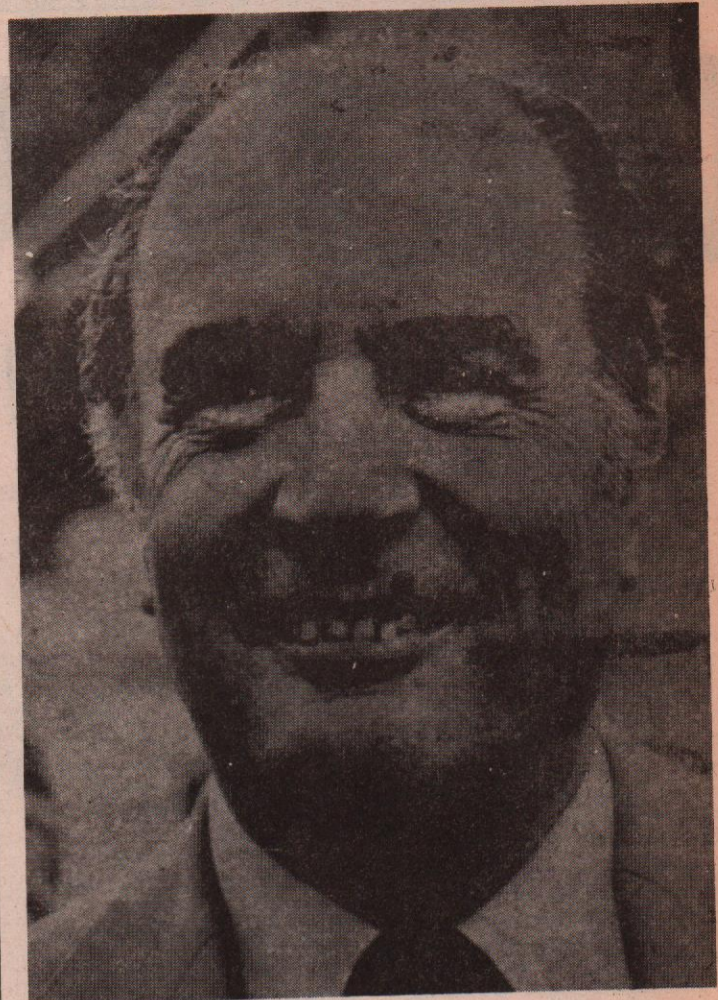
When it became obvious that another shameful sell-out was inevitable, the four walked out, leaving Livingstone, who had sneered at them for 'scoring brownie points for the benefit of selection meetings', to justify himself on the grounds that a decision had to be taken before the next council meeting to avoid a further legal challenge.

If this is true then the cancellation of the joint consultative meeting is even more sinister.

Afterwards, Vidya Anand, the Regional Executive delegate to the Group said, 'It is absolutely disgusting that the undertaking given to the Executive has been broken in this way by the leader of the GLC. The accountability of elected representatives is very vital and a decision like this once again shows that the party is held in contempt.'

Fortunately, subsequent pressure from the Executive and the ALA has forced Livingstone to accept an amendment that no decision to cut the rates will be taken without consulting the boroughs.

It is very much to be hoped that CLPs will question their GLC member very closely on these events and all those who connived with Livingstone's attempt to bounce the decision through should be rejected for parliamentary selection both in their own and any other constituencies. Let democratic accountability mean something at last.



No more smiles

A new disease?

There's a long list of reasons why the vote for a strike was lost last week in Liverpool.

First and foremost, the council's disastrous ploy of trying to issue redundancy notices, and the weakness of its campaigning over several months.

But Socialist Worker (28 September) focuses on another reason: 'ballotitis'.

SW does criticise the redundancy notices, but the main mistake, it argues, was to call a ballot of the council workers. "Another case of 'ballotitis,'" reads its editorial headline.

Why are ballots bad? Basically, according to SW, because they sometimes go against strikes.

"Ballots break the confidence that comes from a mass show of hands at a strike meeting. Ballots give time for the employers, the press and TV to blow up the doubts and fears of working people about to risk their livelihood."

As a criticism of postal ballots this is fair. But in Liverpool the ballots were not postal. They were held immediately after mass meetings where there was full discussion.

The close outcome shows that a ballot majority was possible. So surely the main point is the mistakes that prevented a majority.

SW argues that the workers who came out to occupy the Town Hall on Monday 16th should have stayed out and tried to pull other workers out, section by section, by picketing.

Sometimes such an approach is necessary. When a worker is victimised, for example, every trade unionist knows that it is vital to pull out workforce - starting with the victimised worker's section - at once, without waiting for a ballot or even for a mass meeting.

We can't make ballots a god. But there's no sense in making them a devil, either.

Liverpool City Council has been heading towards a financial showdown for several months. The council workers have had plenty of time to consider the issues.

So what would have happened if they had suddenly found a militant minority trying to bounce them into a strike? In the circumstances you would probably have had some workers out on strike against the government, some continuing work - and a general outcry for a ballot.

SW's basic assumptions are firstly that strike action is

WHAT WE THINK

Another case of 'ballotitis'

Socialist Worker

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Socialist Worker

Neither Washington nor Moscow but International Socialism

25p

more likely if workers are pitched into it suddenly without time for reflection, and secondly that the goal of Marxist policy should be to get as many strikes as possible regardless of other considerations.

Such ideas are more likely to make ordinary not-very-militant workers be wary of Marxists than to persuade them to trust us. Thus they play into the hands of the right wing.

Obviously we always argue for self-reliance rather than waiting for the powers-on-high maybe to sort things out. And there are cases - like victimisations - when it is important to strike immediately and with the minimum of formalities.

But in Liverpool the trouble was not too long to

reflect and develop doubts. It was rather too short a time to dispel the damaging effect of the council's redundancy notices ploy.

And all other things being equal formal democracy is important. Workers can be convinced that ballots should be taken at work, after collective discussion, etc. They can be convinced that sometimes ballots should be skipped, and that we should utterly oppose laws which prescribe Tory-decreed forms and schedules of ballot for every strike.

But they cannot reasonably be convinced to forsake ballots altogether for the sake of having more strikes.

SW's argument is wrong as a diagnosis of Liverpool and counter-productive as a response to the Tory laws.

Rainbow Warrior affair

Caught by their own commitment

IN JUSTICE the Rainbow Warrior affair should lead to the disbandment of the French secret service, the DGSE, and an end to French nuclear bomb tests in the Pacific.

More likely it will make sure that the Socialist Party government is swept out in next year's elections, and probably President Mitterrand with it.

The story so far is this. On July 10 this year the Rainbow Warrior, a ship being fitted out by the protest movement Greenpeace in order to monitor French nuclear tests, was sunk in harbour in Auckland, New Zealand. A crew member was killed.

Two DGSE agents were quickly arrested in New Zealand in connection with the affair. The French government first insisted that the DGSE was just watching the ship and had not sunk it. At most DGSE agents might have been involved in the sinking as freelancers.

Press revelations have made that story increasingly untenable. Last Friday, 20th, the French defence minister, Charles Hernu, resigned, and the head of DGSE was sacked.

On Sunday 22nd prime minister Laurent Fabius announced miraculously rapid results from new inquiries made by Hernu's replacement Paul Quiles. DGSE agents had been officially ordered to sink the ship.

Fabius has declared that Hernu was ultimately responsible. Hernu maintains a firm silence.

The government is still under pressure, though. Now Quiles

has announced that documents about the operation have disappeared from official files.

The government has already admitted that funds for the Rainbow Warrior operation were approved by General Jean Saulnier - head of President Mitterrand's personal military staff at the time, and now chief of staff of the armed forces.

The money came from a secret fund, and the order to release it had to be counter-signed by another senior official in the president's office. So who counter signed it? And were the politicians ignorant of all this, as they claim to be?

The DGSE has a long history of shady operations. Set up in 1946 under the name SDECE, it has long been France's agency for organising coups and pulling strings in France's African ex-colonies. Its most notorious operation before the Rainbow Warrior was in 1965, when the Moroccan opposition leader Mehdi Ben Barka was kidnapped in Paris and killed.

When the Socialist Party government came to power, the DGSE, like some other branches of the police, burned vast masses of records. But they need not have worried so much.

If the government had been prepared to use this incident to open a campaign against the secret police and against nuclear weapons, then the DGSE would be in trouble. But the government is firmly committed to nuclear weapons, and ultra-anxious to maintain good relations with the military hierarchy.

APARTHEID FACES ITS WORST CRISIS EVER

What is the significance of the talks the African National Congress has had with representatives of South Africa's capitalist class?

The most far sighted sections of the South African bourgeoisie have long been critical of the apartheid system because it creates social tensions that could at some point explode, threatening the very existence of capitalism. That is not to say that apartheid is not in the interests of the bourgeoisie — it provides them with cheap labour and boosts their profits. But it is to say that the less ideologically blinkered capitalists can recognise the contradictions that the system creates.

The crisis in South Africa now gives a new urgency to the attempt to find a 'reformist' solution — that is one that can minimise potentially revolutionary violence and therefore minimise the losses to the capitalist class itself. President Botha recognises this too in his own way: he has been attempting to find some middle road that allows the introduction of reforms without seriously alienating the extremists among the white supremacists.

Problems

For Botha there are two big problems: he is himself an extremist bigot who can barely bring himself to announce even the very minimal reforms that have been announced; and there is in any case no middle road for the apartheid system — it is not possible to reform it sufficiently to syphon off the black revolt and keep it, in essentials, intact.

For the big bourgeoisie, who for the most part are outside of the Nationalist — that is the Afrikaner — establishment, it is possible to experiment with more radical tactics to achieve the same basic end. To that effect Gavin Rely of Anglo-American, the largest and most powerful of the mining houses, has proposed reform measures that would go much further than Botha is prepared to, though still fall short of ending the racist system. And further to that effect, a number of South

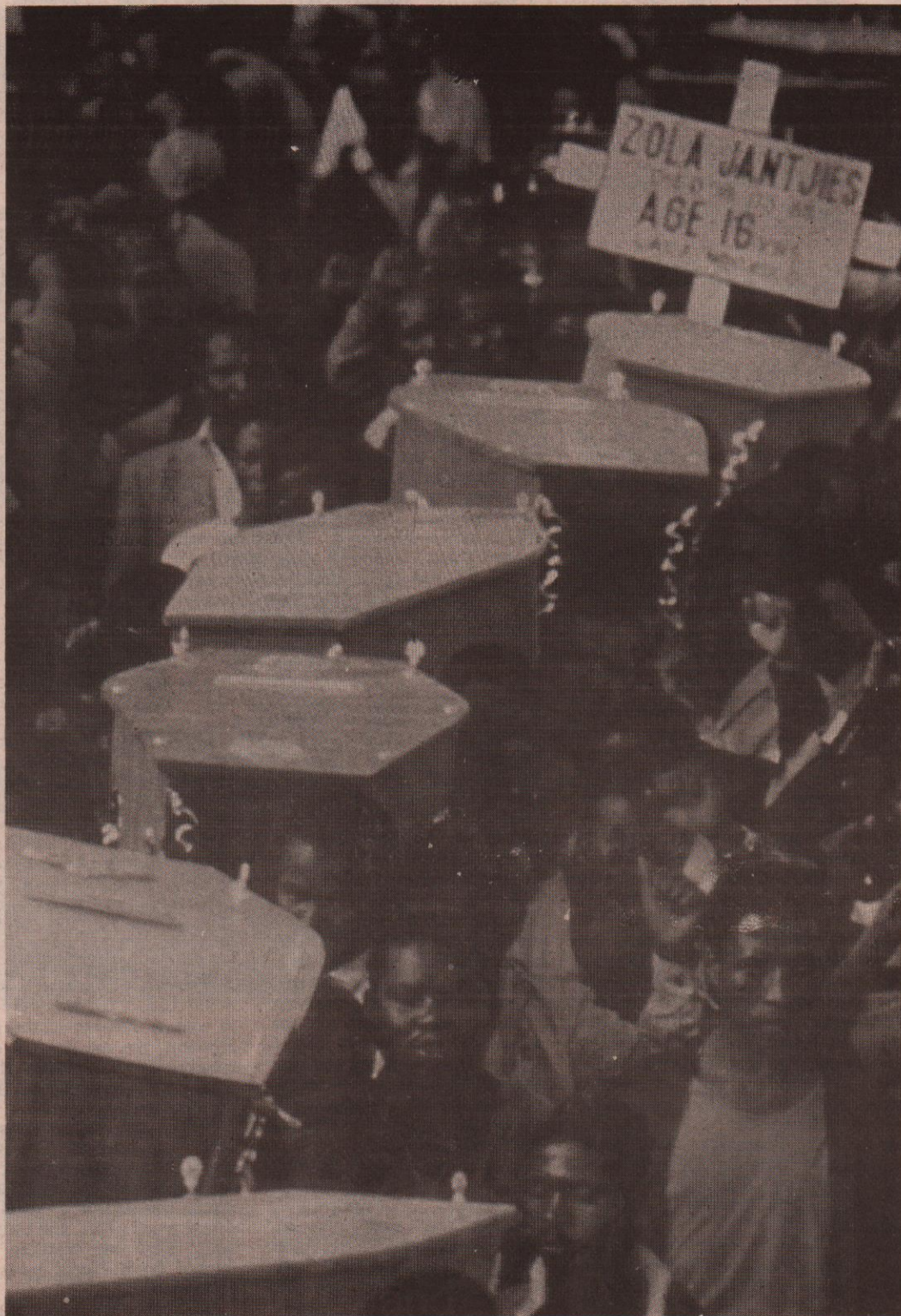
By Clive Bradley

African bourgeois have actively pursued 'talks' with representatives of the ANC.

From their point of view it is vital to cultivate good relations with the ANC. Sooner or later, they calculate, the apartheid regime will end and there will be black majority rule in South Africa. According to a recent survey by the Sunday Times the majority of South African whites agree with this assessment. Many who are half-hearted white supremacists, like many American capitalists who have a stake in the apartheid system in the shape of investments, consider it wise counsel to prepare for the future by making friends with political forces likely to be important in any black majority settlement. The ANC is an obvious candidate for courtship from that point of view. In particular, therefore, it is considered to be crucial to demand the unconditional release of Nelson Mandela: make friends and influence people. There are of course some pretty major stumbling blocks for these South African bourgeois in their efforts to be nice to the ANC. First, the ANC is committed, and has been committed since the early sixties, to 'armed struggle' as a strategy to bring down apartheid. Executives of Anglo-American are unlikely to welcome such a commitment. And in any case it could be politically embarrassing to be too closely identified with forces openly calling for violence — indeed the ANC is currently calling for the street violence to be taken into the white areas.

Circumstances

Dr Zac de Beer, a former opposition MP, an Executive in Anglo and a participant in last week's talks, commented: 'We obviously cannot support' the ANC's 'armed struggle' policy; but that policy is 'the product of many circumstances. Perhaps the time will come when those circumstances will change'. Even more problematic is



Despite the shootings the struggle continues

the ANC's apparent commitment to the nationalisation of the mining industry. In an interview with Newsweek magazine, ANC leader Oliver Tambo said: 'South Africa is basically very wealthy, but that wealth is owned by very few people — three major companies, Barlow Rand, Anglo-American and Sanlam...The blacks have virtually nothing...The distribution of wealth is quite inequitable, and these monopolies will go'.

But Tambo added: 'But below that level, there will be plenty of room for private enterprise'.

Talks

After the talks de Beer noted that both sides believe in a mixed economy. He commented that their side had tried to persuade the ANC that nationalisation is 'not a remedy'. Nevertheless, some closer political agreement than that is going to be necessary if these talks are to come to much as far as the bourgeoisie are concerned. Meanwhile further steps towards organising South

African liberalism have been taken with the setting up of a new 'convention alliance'.

Table

Founded by the leader of the main white opposition party, the Progressive Federal Party, and Zulu Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, the new alliance, which brought together over 150 politicians, business people, lawyers and civil rights campaigners aims to bring everybody — from the ANC through to the ultra-racist Conservative Party — round the negotiating table.

It is not just a naive and futile gathering of political children. The white opposition groups are representative of the big bourgeoisie — of people like de Beers. And Buthelezi is barely describable even as a liberal. His Inkatha movement, judged by its role in attacking more radical opponents of the racist regime, is in fact closer to being a proto-fascist movement — complete with armed thugs.

But these developments should give us cause for some

hope; they indicate the extent to which the ruling class is beginning to split in South Africa — and from that point of view it is worth recalling that a crucial feature of all revolutionary situations is the splitting of the ruling class.

The other feature is that the oppressed can no longer go on being ruled in the same way. And mass resistance continues, particularly among the youth in the townships. The ANC's call for the country to be made ungovernable has met with a huge response. The content of the call is questionable: Tambo, while calling for an insurrection, is also predicting that apartheid may survive another decade; but there can be no doubt that the black youth are answering the ANC's call.

Knowledge

It is the certain knowledge that they cannot beat down the coming revolution indefinitely that is forcing South Africa's ruling class into its greatest ever crisis.

Human folly made the quake worse

One of the biggest shocks about the Mexican earthquake is that human folly made its effects even worse.

According to reports, a third of the buildings in Mexico City's north-east quarter were reduced to rubble by the earthquake. Many of those buildings may have been built hurriedly — and, more to the point, cheaply and ultra-profitably — without observing quake-resistance codes in their design.

Buildings that were 'earthquake proof' — like the 43-story Latino-American building — survived the devastation. If all the City's buildings had been built like that, the number of deaths would have been greatly reduced.

And the aftermath of the earthquake spells more problems for Mexico. The wolves of the International Monetary Fund are still baying at the door.

Debt

Mexico owes \$96 billion in foreign debt — three years ago its threat to default sent money markets into crisis. And the IMF are not going to let them off the hook, or even given them much leeway, just because of a little earthquake.

The Economist magazine starkly spells out the thinking of the capitalists: 'The temptation to abandon the whole IMF policy must be resisted', they say. The IMF policy, of course, is for the Mexican poor to 'tighten their belts' to pay off the debt.

And, The Economist goes on: 'the earthquake may have shattered some of the old lies. Perhaps the immediate and generous response of the United States will undermine the old... dogmatism against foreign investment.'

How to get rich on a natural disaster.

Mexico should be given massive aid without strings to help overcome the effects of the quake. The Mexican people should not be made to suffer more for the benefit of multinational bankers.



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LIVERPOOL: WHA

THE jackals are out for a feast. The vote last week by Liverpool city council workers against an indefinite strike will be used as a lever by every self-serving bureaucrat in the labour movement to "prove" that confrontation doesn't work.

In fact the 47 per cent strike vote indicates the opposite.

If Neil Kinnock and the national union leaders had supported the strike call, there would certainly have been a majority. And with the strike under way and solid, Liverpool would have been in a very strong position to win the £25m it is demanding — a fraction of the central government grant cut from the city in recent years.

The big-business magazine *The Economist*, on 21 September, soberly outlined the odds:

"Suppose the Militants persist in saying no? Mr Baker's [the Tory minister's] trouble in this game of chicken is that he dare not, in the last resort, force Mr [Derek] Hatton [the council deputy leader] off the road... He can hardly afford chaos in Liverpool... Yet, except by giving way himself, he has little power to avoid it, if Mr Hatton and the council labour force — not necessarily the same thing — insist".

The treachery of Kinnock and the national union leaders is not, however, the whole story. Mistakes have been made in Liverpool, too, and they need careful analysis.

The story starts in May 1983. On May 5, as in three years out of every four, one-third of Liverpool City Council's seats were up for re-election. Labour won control of the council with tremendous gains — 11 extra seats, a 40% increase in the Labour vote.

Traditionally Labour had been weaker in Liverpool than in other big cities. There was a strong Orange working class Tory vote. Since 1973 the city council had been the tawdry jewel in the Liberals' gimcrack local government crown, controlled by them with the help of the Tories.

Five thousand jobs cut in six years; high rents; not one new council house started for three years; moves to privatisation; and cuts all round — that was the Liberals' record.

Committee

In the fight against the Liberals the Labour Party had become stronger, more active, and more left-wing, and the council unions had developed a powerful joint shop stewards' committee.

Labour's election promises included no privatisation; a £2 rent cut; no spending cuts; a drive on housing repairs, 6,000 new council houses and 4,000 new council jobs.

There had been other left-wing Labour councils elsewhere promising similar things: Lambeth since 1978, the GLC since 1981, a clutch of left-wing London borough councils since 1982. On the whole they had done a bit better than their Tory or right-wing Labour predecessors; but it was mostly a matter of responding to central government grant cuts by rate rises instead of cuts in jobs and services.

The left-wing councils were more benevolent administrators, but still administrators within the existing system. As adminis-

Liverpool's Labour council has stood out against the Tories longer than any other. But this week its fight seemed to be collapsing in chaos. NALGO was on strike and the NUT was planning court action, against the council's issuing of redundancy notices (as a 'legal device'). Why? Martin Thomas reports.

trators they frequently clashed with their workers. Their promises of struggle against the government got no further than rhetoric.

Liverpool, however, was partly different. The new council Labour group, unlike any other, was pledged not to raise rates to compensate for central government cuts.

Other left-wing Labour councils were alliances of individuals of different shades, held together more by the arts of committee-room politics than by a definite strategy. In Liverpool the Militant tendency commanded a leading role in the Labour group; a majority in the District Labour Party; and a strong presence in the council unions.

A unified strategy by the whole Liverpool labour movement was thus possible. And Militant's national network should have made it easier to win national support for a struggle in Liverpool.

The new Labour council started well, building new houses, creating new jobs, going well over the budget prepared by the Liberals for 1983-4. By October the Tory government was already warning the council about 'overspending'. The council responded with a vigorous campaign among council workers and the local community. 20,000 people joined a march on 19 November.

By February 1984 Derek Hatton was explaining to Militant that "the crunch" would come "probably at the end of March".

"We will refuse to balance the books and this can be challenged in the courts by any creditor or ratepayer... The courts could then appoint receivers who could take over the financial control of the city council..."

A campaign committee mapped out plans to include a possible all-out strike from March 29.

But Labour's majority in the council chamber was only three — and a number of Labour right wingers declared that they would never vote for an unbalanced budget.

On budget day, March 29 — despite a one-day strike by council workers, and a huge, enthusiastic demonstration at the Town Hall — there was no majority on the council for Labour's unbalanced budget or the Liberals' alternative cuts budget.

The campaign continued right through to the council elections on May 3. Labour gained another seven seats, securing a solid majority for its unbalanced budget.

A survey by the University of Liverpool showed that 80% of council workers living in contested wards had voted, 75% of them for Labour. It also showed that they were ready to 'go over the top' with a local general strike and a rent and rates

strike. According to a poll published in June, 55% of Labour voters would back a general strike if the Tories sent in commissioners.

Meanwhile the miners' strike was at its peak. Nearly half the Notts miners were out, and the strike was 100% in all other major areas. On May 7 Arthur Scargill appealed for solidarity: "If ever there was a time to join with this union, to come out on strike... now is the time".

But things started going wrong. Instead of stepping up their campaign, pushing through the unbalanced budget and going fast and hard for confrontation, the Liverpool council leaders dawdled. The campaign dwindled. The unbalanced budget was not put to the council again. Instead, the council leaders went off to talk to Tory minister Patrick Jenkin.

Conference

On June 23 some 2000 delegates attended a labour movement conference in support of the council. But there were no specific plans for action. As Militant itself reported, "The mood of the conference was... more akin to a rally". Socialist Organiser put it less blandly: "Workshops planned for the afternoon were called off in favour of an orgy of self-congratulation about the 'strength of the Marxists'. For many delegates this was an annoying missed opportunity".

What was going on? Militant continued to talk about "struggle", "campaign", "mobilisation", even "unavoidable confrontation". But their policy on rate rises had been subtly changed from "no rate rises to compensate for government cuts", to "no massive rate rises to compensate".

Early in July the council leaders announced a deal with the government. The Tories would give them a little extra money — much less than they were demanding — and permit various financial tricks to shift the problem into the next year. Liverpool could then get through with a 17% rate rise.

This, said Militant, was a "95 per cent" victory. Socialist Organiser commented: "According to Labour leaders in Liverpool, about 45% of the problem has been shifted to next year. In other words, the real confrontation has just been put off..."

"If Liverpool is to take on the Tories, then the time to do it is when the working class is involved in the biggest class war in a decade. 'Next year' there may well not be a miners' strike or a docks strike..."

In Liverpool, however, there was strong support for the deal. The prospect of immediate confrontation had been fading, and clearly the Tories had conceded something, if not 95%. No council had ever before won concessions by standing up to the gov-

ernment.

The deal had a big impact on other Labour councils. Seeing the talks with the Tory minister and the failure to set a rate — and ignoring the campaign before May and the miners' strike — councillors thought they had hit on a way to defy the Tories and win concessions without going over the brink into illegality and direct action.

They argued that Labour councils — in particular, those facing the Tories' new rate-cap regulations — should refuse to set a rate at the normal budget time in April 1985.

And as budget time approached, in early 1985, the miners, against all odds, were still on strike. Liverpool would have a second chance to come to the crunch with the Tories under favourable circumstances.

On February 1, Militant reported: "With Liverpool's crisis worse this year, shop stewards back united campaign". Liverpool Labour believed that an unbalanced budget was best, but for the sake of unity would initially not set a rate. And then?

"Liverpool proved last year that a mobilised working class with a Marxist leadership at its head took on the Tories and won a major victory". Militant gave no more specific indication of what sort of mobilisation would be needed. It did not suggest that it would be more than the demonstrations and rallies that sufficed in 1984. And it gave no hint of any urgency about bringing the struggle forward so as to give aid to the hard-pressed miners and ensure the Tories were attacked on two fronts.

On March 2, just five days before Labour councils were due to vote in defiance of the government, the miners met at a recall conference. Unsure of the council's determination, they decided to return to work.

Sadly, the miners' doubts were well-founded. The GLC and ILEA immediately broke the 'no rate' front, by setting legal rates. Ten Labour councils did refuse to set a rate. But by early June every one of them had backed down except Liverpool and Lambeth.

Liverpool was not central until June. In contrast to other councils, Hackney in particular, it faced no legal threats, and indeed Militant said (14 June) that because of the 1984 delay in setting a rate Liverpool "councillors remain technically in a 'legal' position".

But by June, once again, Liverpool council faced a sharp choice. Confrontation or not?

Councillors proposed a 20% rate rise which with some financial juggling would allow Liverpool to scrape through the year. The unions said no. So Liverpool set an unbalanced budget — 9% rate rise, £265 million expenditure, £148 million income — on 14 June. It demanded from the government the return of £29 million grant and £88 million penalties.

So far, so good. Maybe chances had been missed, but now, as 'Militant' put it (21 June), "After two years of shadow-boxing... the gloves are off".

Instead of general calls for a "mass campaign", Militant said boldly: "Strike to defend councils".

Despite everything, Liverpool was still potentially in a strong

position. In 1972-4, a single tiny Labour council, Clay Cross, defied the Housing Finance Act, a Tory law to increase rents. The councillors were surcharged and disqualified. But the Tories never managed to collect the rent arrears. The Housing Finance Act was repealed by the Labour minority government in 1974, and the Tories have never tried to reintroduce it.

Liverpool could beat the government. It needed only two things: determination and unity, what the rate-capped councils had lacked.

They had talked of mobilisation, struggle, defiance, confrontation. But the councillors would only go "right up to" the brink, as Islington's Margaret Hodge put it, not over it.

They called for their workforces and local working class communities to unite with them. But it was a unity in which the workers were a stage army, manipulated and manoeuvred according to the tempo of council chamber tactics.

Local

Most of the rate-capped councils had, in their capacity as managers of the local state, conducted bitter disputes with sections of their workforces in the run-up to their defiance of the government. The workers still supported the councils when they showed some signs of fighting the Tories. But quickly they found that they were being manipulated again.

In July 1984, for example, Islington council declared, "If we were to give in to rate-capping, we would have to sack 750 of our staff". In March 1985, the council refused to set a rate, and called on workers to back it in a fight to the end with central government. Two and a half months later the council leaders announced that they had after all found financial tricks that would enable them to comply with rate-capping while making no cuts; they thanked the workers for their support and told them to go home.

Other councils did similar Grand Old Duke of York acts.

One lesson was clear: a council seriously taking on the government would need to be absolutely open and honest about its finances. Otherwise right-wingers would always be able to paralyse the struggle at the crucial point by producing this or that "new" financial trick to allow for some sort of muddling through.

Liverpool and Militant had shown more determination than councils like Islington. Would they now show enough determination and skill to win?

Unfortunately they didn't. Like the other left councils, though in a different way, they had drawn the wrong lessons from 1984. In truth, the concessions that Liverpool won from the Tories were a by-product of the miners' strike and the willingness of a broad spectrum of the Liverpool working class to take direct action. Councils like Islington saw it as a victory for council chamber mock-heroics;



John Hamilton (left) and Derek Hatton at a march. Photo: John Smith, IFL.

the Militant in Liverpool, apparently, saw the crucial factor as their "Marxist leadership".

Militant has always had a mechanistic view of the world according to which increasing economic crisis will steadily and automatically bring triumphs and new recruits to "the Marxists". There is no need to adjust and develop this "Marxism" in line with living reality: everything has been foreseen and provided for in Militant's "perspectives", and new events do nothing but confirm them. Less complacent Marxists are flibbertigibbet irrelevances — "the sects".

Arrogance

The inbuilt arrogance of this view was given a boost by Militant's puffed-up self-satisfaction after July 1984. They felt themselves all-powerful. In October of that year they launched themselves into an utterly destructive and divisive conflict.

Sampson Bond, a Militant supporter, was appointed as council race relations officer against the strong opposition of the Black Caucus, a committee of black groups set up to liaise with the council under the Liberal administration.

The Black Caucus said that

"The treachery of Kinnock and the whole story. Mistakes have been made. A more careful analysis."

T WENT WRONG?



ton (second from right) on the

Bond had got the job only because he supported Militant policies — policies that opposed any positive discrimination and resolutely insisted that the problems of the black working class were no different from those of the white working class. Militant replied that the Black Caucus just wanted the job for their own people.

Caucus

But the Black Caucus had after all been recognised by the Labour council as more or less representative of Liverpool blacks. Liverpool City Council NALGO boycotted Bond. The Trades Council, the council joint shop stewards committee, the regional TGWU, and most black groups, called for the appointment to be reconsidered. Militant climb down? Never!

The "Marxist leadership" tried to bulldoze all the objectors. A year later, the issue is still inflamed. The Black Caucus has moved from objections to Militant towards hostility to the whole labour movement. Militant, outraged that the Caucus will not recognise the enthroned "Marxist leadership", denounces it as a gang of "pimps and gangsters" and has called the police against black demon-

strators. The council joint shop stewards committee has been seriously strained and disrupted by the affair.

Despite all that, in June the joint shop stewards' committee voted unanimously to support the unbalanced budget.

On July 26 Militant explained that this budget would mean the council running out of money around late August or early September — unless the courts stepped in first.

Yet the council's campaign remained low-key compared to 1984. Instead of becoming bolder and sharper as the crunch came nearer, the coverage in Militant became vaguer and softer. The urgent calls for strike action were replaced by appeals for general "support" in a long-term campaign. In late July, without explanation, the council budget was reduced from £265 million to £255 million, and the date at which the council would run out of money was put back to "late November".

Emphasis

What was happening? What were the council's plans? Workers in Liverpool and elsewhere weren't sure.

More and more emphasis in campaigning was put on the sur-

charges threatened against the councillors for not setting a rate until 14 June, rather than the prospect of the council running out of money. Yet those surcharges were a secondary issue.

The councillors (as Militant had indicated in its issue of 14 June) had a strong legal position on this point. And long before the legal processes were completed on that surcharge, the council was due to run into a position with its finances exhausted, the workers on strike, and the councillors in open and flagrant illegality!

Confusion

Militant of 13 September summed up the confusion. Page 1 and most of page 3 were given over to the surcharges and a one-day protest strike against them on September 25. Two short and inconspicuous articles announced that the council would start running out of money at the end of September and that it planned to issue 90 days' redundancy notice to all employees!

On 16 September a council meeting was called to decide on the redundancy notices. Workers blockaded the Town Hall to stop it taking place. Council leaders joined the demonstration.

Why did they ever propose the divisive redundancy notices? "Purely a legal device," explained Militant. By discarding the need to budget for wages after December, the council could restore its credit and keep going longer. And not issuing

the redundancy notices could make councillors liable to huge surcharges.

Council workers could see no sense in starting a fight for jobs by issuing redundancy notices so that any strike had to demand not only more money from central government but also reinstatement. And why this concern for petty legal devices? Was this confrontation with the government or wasn't it?

The redundancy notices policy was the exact opposite of what was needed to galvanise the Liverpool labour movement for a fight. Inevitably it was divisive, diversionary, confusionist. Inevitably it split the workers — section from section and shop stewards from the rank and file.

Tamely

The 31,000 were asked to tamely accept dole cards and trust the council's promise to take them back on April 1. The workers — no more than a stage army in Militant's scenario — were being put out to grass for three months. Instead of the councillors standing on the line and giving a self-sacrificing lead in the fight for the city they offered up the workers instead, demanding that the 31,000 passively give up their jobs at the say so of people who were unwilling to put their own heads on the block. This wasn't Marxism — and it wasn't leadership either.

Within a few days the front had apparently been straightened out by Derek Hatton promising not to issue redundancy

notices, and the stewards calling an all-out strike from September 25.

But immense damage had been done. The council should have explained clearly and in advance how and when it would run out of money; continued spending up to the last possible moment, thus forcing the banks and/or the senior council officials to take the responsibility for stopping wage payments; demonstratively stopped debt payments to the banks before wage payments; and brought the campaign to a climax by mobilising councillors and workers together to picket or occupy the offices of the officials or bankers refusing to pay wages.

That way everyone could have seen that the councillors were prepared to put themselves in the front line — that they were undertaking a real struggle against the government, not just a manoeuvre or a gesture.

As it was, many workers thought that the redundancy notices were a ploy to save the council three months' wages and get it through the year. Or was the strike call a version of the same thing? "I won't strike to bail out Derek Hatton", said some workers. They were wrong — but their confusion was not surprising in the circumstances.

In early September the city treasurer had come up with a scheme to get through the financial year by taking money from next year's housing repairs budget. This plan was now taken up by right-wingers and the Communist Party.

The media and the national Labour and trade union leaders also played their part in shaping the 53%-47% ballot result against strike action. But they had been hostile all along. It was the council's blundering tactics that gave them their opening.

And since the vote there has been worse. Militant declared that the vote was only a minor setback: its lead article on 27 September spoke blandly of "the success of our campaign". And on that same day, 27 September, redundancy notices started going out — those same redundancy notices that had provoked a workers' demonstration to stop the council meeting on 16 September.

In the aftermath of the ballot defeat, the GMBU [in which Militant is strong] was swung to supporting redundancy notices. Militant explained: "This is purely a legal device to enable the council to keep paying wages until 18 December... This device will give the councillors and the union (?) valuable time to extend the campaign of explanations..." — especially to the members of NALGO and the NUT, who had been against the strike.

For regaining lost ground inside NALGO the council's tactics could hardly be worse. NALGO is strongly against the redundancy notices; the council is like a general who prepares his shaky regiments for battle by trampling them underfoot in the course of his retreat! And insulting them, too: both the NALGO members in general ['pen-pushers', not 'real' workers] and their leaders ['traitors'] have been freely denounced and blamed for the ballot defeat.

In fact the NALGO branch leaders argued for a strike. Not as vigorously as was necessary, to be sure; wrongly but understandably, they were jaded and

unenthusiastic after a year of being bounced about by Militant and trying to puzzle out what the council was really up to.

But the NALGO branch officers are not, and do not claim to be, "the Marxist leadership". They are trade unionists doing a trade union job as best they can. The job of "the Marxist leadership" is to win the confidence of trade unionists, not to lay down the line and denounce the trade unionists when they fail to live up to Militant's "perspectives".

"Success of our campaign"? By Monday 30 September 3,000 NALGO members were on one-day strike and marching through Liverpool's streets against the redundancy notices. Teachers picketed the building where bundles of redundancy notices were due to be issued to head teachers, and the council sent them out by taxi instead. At least one college principal has been suspended for refusing to issue redundancy notices.

Local NUT leaders, with the support of their members, are taking the council to court to stop the redundancy notices. A council committed to saving jobs will be in the ridiculous position of defending in court its "right" to issue redundancy notices — and probably losing the case.

The Tories could have cut the process short at any point — by getting someone to bring a court case to declare the unbalanced budget illegal, by telling the banks that Liverpool's credit was not good, or simply by stopping central government grant payments. They chose to wait and see — and now they can sit tight and watch the Liverpool labour movement wound and perhaps tear itself apart.

NALGO and the NUT have gone for the City Treasurer's option of "capitalisation", also favoured by the Liberals and the Tories. This means "borrowing" money from next year's housing repairs.

Device

As a device for retreat it is a lesser evil than the redundancy notices. In principle it could win time for a fight next April to ensure that enough money was won from central government to return the money to housing repairs and maintain other services.

In practice it wouldn't. Particularly because of NALGO's and the NUT's opposition to the strike from 25 September, GMBU and TGWU see "capitalisation" as a scheme to keep NALGO jobs safe while putting manual jobs at risk. "Capitalisation" would be scarcely less divisive than the redundancy notices.

Any orderly retreat requires a fairly high level of trust in the people carrying out the retreat. And, as a result of Militant's blunders over the last 18 months and especially the last three months, that doesn't exist in Liverpool.

The first thing necessary to mend the situation is that the council should withdraw the redundancy notices.

According to Militant of 27 September, without the notices "The City Treasurer has said that he would refuse to sign cheques for fear of being liable for fraud."

Then let the councillors change the signature on the cheques and dare the State to

Continued on p.8

national union leaders is not the
de in Liverpool, and they need care-

Knowledge as a luxury

What went wrong?

Continued from p.7

prosecute them for fraud! If the City Treasurer or the banks try to stop them, let them organise demonstrations, pickets and occupations to highlight who is responsible.

Let all the council workers see that there is no question of manoeuvres, that the councillors are unambiguously in the front line, and that a strike is forced on them by the Tories and their agents not by any political gimmick of the council. Let the issue be posed as the council and the workers jointly fighting the Tories in defence of jobs and services, rather than the workers being conscripted as rather bewildered foot-soldiers "to defend the council" while the council pursues "legal devices".

Would such a change of tack recreate the necessary unity? Guarantees are impossible. But there is a chance. The council has a tremendous fund of goodwill won by its solid work, like the building of 4,000 new houses, and the basic arguments about Tory responsibility for local government cuts and the need for a fight have got through to many thousands of workers.

The full reasons for everything Liverpool council has done over recent months are not clear. The record suggests divided or unsure counsels. It is not clear exactly what the council leaders have in mind now. Not even they can believe that "Marxist leadership" can win support from people by means of issuing redundancy notices to them against their will and denouncing them.

A general pattern does however emerge from the council leaders' and Militant's policy since May 1983.

According to Militant's addled version of Marxism, iron laws of history drive the working class ever onward towards Marxist politics. The job of the organised Marxists [i.e. Militant] in the meantime is to make general propaganda and to build their own following.

Victory is inevitable in the long term: so why take risks now? If the situation is favourable now, it will certainly be more favourable in the future. And it makes no sense to risk positions, prestige, and propaganda platforms for the sake of 'ephemeral' struggle.

So Militant have tried to maintain a delicate balance: on the one hand giving Liverpool a profile as a fighting, socialist council; on the other trying to make sure they keep the council in office and themselves in the leadership of the council.

At the crunch they may fight. But, contrary to all intelligent tactics, they have tried again and again to postpone the crunch and to extend the time in which the council stands in opposition to the government but not quite in collision with it.

On 22 September, with the Liverpool council workers' vote against indefinite strike, that approach led to a serious defeat. The consequences of that defeat concern not only Militant but also the whole of the labour movement and especially the left.

There is a serious risk now of long-term division and dislocation in the Liverpool labour movement, and of the door being opened for witch-hunts against Militant and other leftists.

The left must do battle against the jackals and witch-hunters, and at the same time fight for a change of line by the Liverpool council and Labour Party.

The Tory campaign against public spending has had a devastating effect on scientific and medical research, as I have previously written.

Anything not obviously profitable, such as basic research or research which merely benefits people, is a target for Tory cuts. However, they are also harming some profitable research, probably because of the bureaucratic way in which cuts are made.

These cuts and their effects have been well described by New Scientist, particularly in their present series "Research in Peril". Here are two examples of some environmental "Research in Peril".

The Transport and Road Research Laboratory researches into a part of the human-made environment. Examples of its

concerns include seat-belt safety and ways of reducing noise from heavy lorries.

It used to have a lot of knowledge on boring tunnels (like the proposed Chunnel) and on automated public transport, but has now lost it due to staff cuts of nearly 50% in six years.

It has also had to stop research into the efficiency of freight operations (which might reduce the assault on our roads by heavy lorries). Tests on motorways to check damage by heavy traffic have been replaced by cheaper but less meaningful computer simulations.

Staffing levels are now so tight that no-one is available to show visitors around the lab and even one person away sick disrupts the work of the lab.

The Natural Environment

Research Council (NERC) has had to announce a cut of one-third in research over the next five years. Only the British Antarctic Survey will be spared and even expanded (due to its Falklands connections).

Ecology

One research facility under threat by NERC cuts is the River Laboratory of the Freshwater Biological Association. This body studies the ecology of rivers and comes up with some valuable findings. Just one of its recent discoveries could actually save about fifty times the cost of keeping the River Lab open.

River weed is an attractive but expensive menace. If left to its own devices, it grows uncontrollably and chokes the rivers,

causing flooding.

Water Authorities deal with it by cutting it regularly with heavy equipment that can only be used if bushes and trees on the banks are cut down.

Unfortunately, this increases the light reaching the weed and it grows faster, requiring more cutting, etc.

River Lab botanists also discovered that the weed will naturally thin out after four years if uncut. Cutting stimulates it to regrow rapidly.

The simple and cheap solution is to plant more trees on the banks, shading the weed and curbing its growth (and reducing erosion of banks).

The River Lab has also put in seven years of work on types of invertebrates living in rivers. This has resulted in the discov-

ery of a method of identifying pollution of rivers.

Simply put, similar rivers should have similar mixtures of species of invertebrates. Some invertebrates are more susceptible to some types of pollution, so finding out which ones are missing from a river will identify individual types of pollutant present.

Other longterm research of the FBA and its River Lab has included 30 years of measurements of acidity levels (invaluable for judging the effects of acid rain) and years of measuring nitrate levels (caused by overuse of artificial fertilisers). Nitrate pollution is dangerous to newborn babies and may cause stomach cancer in adults.

Clearly, the work of the FBA is not a luxury.

By Les Hearn

Hatton meets the press

TV. Review by Mick Ackersley

"GODZILLA meets the monsters"? "Jesus Christ meets Pontius Pilate and his legionnaires"? "Derek Hatton meets the press"?

Well, Hatton did 'Face the Press' last Sunday, 29th, on Channel 4.

'Face the Press' is a serious programme in which a panel of journalists grill the week's guest. I saw Militant's Peter Taaffe get a very rough ride on the same programme a couple of years ago.

After a week in which things seemed to fall apart in Liverpool, when the council's call for an all-out strike had been rejected by a decisive section of the workforce and the council had then decided to give 31,000 workers redundancy notices, Hatton might have had some difficulty in keeping up a front against the probings and prodings of hostile hacks.

Most non-'Militant' leftists on Merseyside believe that there is a powerful 'Hatton factor' at work there among council workers and others, and that this 'Hatton factor' — dislike and distrust of the deputy leader — doesn't do the council or the left any good at all.

In fact Hatton did remarkably well. With a lot of hair tight on the back of his neck, as if a Tarzan wig had been clamped onto a short back and sides, he looked oddly out of place, like he'd had to borrow the natty blue suit he was wearing from the wardrobe department. But of course Derek always looks like that — the well-heeled, hard-faced man who is doing quite nicely, thank you, out of

Liverpool's 'revolution', the one that he hasn't delivered yet. That's one aspect of the 'Hatton factor'.

And Hatton can talk! In the set-piece speeches for the big occasion he has always seemed to me to deal in cumbersome 'Militant' Chinese-eggs vintage rhetoric, decades old and thoughtless. Under close questioning he came across as sharp and nobody's fool, though the Militant-speak still came in floods.

Deliver

He insisted that Labour should now deliver the support promised to Liverpool by last year's conference — whatever about the law. He rightly insisted that Terry Fields' 1983 victory in a Liverpool Tory marginal gave the lie to Kinnock and co. who say that Labour can't win with socialist policies. He insisted that there was a place for private investment in Liverpool, indeed that Liverpool offered investors the best deal in the country, though 'of course' the long-term goal was to eliminate capitalism. "You can't control what you don't own", said Hatton.

Crunch

He said Sheffield and other councils had only put off the crunch. Why was Liverpool exceptional, deserving a government handout? He wasn't sure it was. Lots of other places, Glasgow, Newcastle, etc. were just as badly off. Liverpool was deserving because Liverpool wouldn't let the government push it around.

Polls showed that most people under 35 in Liverpool backed the council.

But Hatton got lost in his own evasions over the suicidal, divisive policy of making 31,000 workers redundant. The council didn't want to make anyone redundant, Hatton said. "We will inform 30,000 workers that because there is no money to pay them... it is a Tory lock out".

But who will this convince,

other than supporters of Militant? Redundancy notices are the council's policy, chosen instead of alternative policies. Instead, for example, of a policy of the councillors going illegal, standing out the government, going to jail, and thus showing a real lead to the workers of Liverpool.

Surely the point in dispute between the serious left and the rate-raisers like Knight, Livingstone, and Blunkett was precisely this. The council is not just a passive agent of the government. At any rate it shouldn't be.

Still, Hatton put himself over quite well, addressing the sharp but basically friendly chair Gillian Reynolds familiarly as 'Jilly', and snarling at 'The man from the Daily Mail', Robin Oakley.

Soft

In fact the journalists gave him a soft ride. A representative of the serious left press — or of the Liverpool council workers — on the panel would have given dapper Derek a far rougher ride, I felt.



Songs of liberty and rebellion



The True Freedom by P.B. Shelley, from The Masque of Anarchy, written in memory of the "Peterloo Massacre" in Manchester, on August 16 1819.

Men of England, heirs of
Glory,
Heroes of unwritten story,
Nurslings of one mighty
Mother,
Hopes of her, and one
another;

Rise, like Lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number,
Shake your chains to earth
like dew
Which in sleep have fallen on
you—
Ye are many — they are few.

What is Freedom? — ye can
tell
That which slavery is, too
well —
For its very name has grown
To an echo of your own.

What art thou, Freedom? O!
could slaves
Answer from their living
graves
This demand — tyrants would
flee
Like a dream's dim imagery.

Thou art not, as impostors
say,
A shadow soon to pass away,
A superstition, and a name
Echoing from the cave of
Fame.

For the labourer thou art
bread,
And a comely table spread
From his daily labour come
In a neat and happy home.

Thou art clothes, and fire,
and food
For the trampled multitude —
No — in countries that are
free
Such starvation cannot be
As in England now we see.

STUDENTS

Making links with the workers

Simon Pottinger (National Union of Students executive, personal capacity) puts the case for revolutionary Marxism

Famine in the Third World. Terrible, grinding poverty for most of the world's population. War from Central America to the Middle East. The permanent threat of global nuclear destruction.

In Britain, too, a system that demands that the poor get poorer in order to keep the rich in power. A system that is racist to the core; a system that degrades and exploits women; a system that maintains itself through violence and oppression.

And yet, in the Third World, in Central America, in South Africa; in Britain — in the pit villages, in the inner cities — a will to resist; a spirit of solidarity to face adversity united.

This is the world that we live in. The black people of South Africa, facing the bullets and whips of one of the foulest regimes on Earth; and the miners facing up to a militarised police force in defence of jobs and communities, show that the world over, working class people are prepared to struggle for their interests against all the apparent invincibility of governments.

Success in that struggle does not come easily, as the miners found. And success in the future will depend upon the extent to which we can learn the lessons of the past. It will depend upon the extent to which socialists organise themselves here and now to fight for a socialist future.

Students can play an important role in that fight.

Students are involved in revolutionary movements. In South Africa, for example, students — in schools and colleges — are a vital force in the struggle against apartheid.

But in South Africa, no more than in Britain, students by themselves do not have the power to overthrow the system. Only the organised working class can do that.

But the organisations of the working class are ill-equipped even to defend the immediate interests of the working class, never mind make a revolution.

During the miners' strike, for example, it was clear to anyone with eyes that a momentous

movement in solidarity was necessary to make sure that the miners won, and that in practice that would mean industrial action from other trade unions. But the TUC failed to deliver — failed to deliver even the minimal promises of support that they made. Neil Kinnock failed to give the kind of support that the Labour Party should have given — although rank and file Labour Party members were the backbone of efforts to build solidarity with the miners.

Sluggish

That accurately reflects the state of the labour movement: bureaucratic, sluggish, with a leadership and officialdom who are not committed to the real demands of the class struggle — who are timid and afraid of serious mobilisations of workers; and whose timidity helps to undermine the confidence of the rank and file and make them timid too.

We need radically to change the labour movement. It needs to be overhauled and completely democratised, and new leaders who are prepared to fight are needed to replace the old ones who don't fight or even betray.

But organisational regeneration of the movement needs to be combined with a new political direction. What the movement lacks is its own independent political outlook.

In Thatcher's Tory Party, the ruling class has a determined, ideologically committed political voice. The Tory Party fights militantly for the interests of big business. They planned, years in advance, for the miners' strike; and it was that planning that helped them defeat it.

The labour movement by contrast has no coherent political outlook at all; no worked-out ideology. The main ideas of the Labour Party are another version of pro-capitalist ideas. And so it can provide no class alternative to the Tories.

Most of the 'socialist' ideas that do have currency in the labour movement are not really socialist ideas at all. They are generally elitist — looking to bring about change from above — and often are tainted with Stalinism. A conscious socialist



Carlos Augusto (IFL)

labour movement would be bitterly hostile to the so-called 'socialist' countries, and be the champion of the rights of workers in those countries, and of all those oppressed by their dictatorial bureaucracies.

But the main leaders of the labour movement are barely committed even to a perverted version of socialism.

Repeat

A Labour government under Neil Kinnock would undoubtedly be a repeat performance of the last Labour government — it would in practice side with the bosses against the working class. In fact, given the economic climate, it would be worse than the last Labour government.

But lacking any clear political vision, the leaders of the labour movement — trade unions and Labour Party alike — are unable to imagine anything better than such a miserable government.

Something better is possible. The labour movement could decide to ring the changes; to mount a serious fight against the Tories in defence of jobs, living

standards, women's rights, the rights of black people, democratic freedoms, and against the threat of war. The movement could decide to force its leaders — in the trade unions and in the Labour Party — to abide by democratic decisions and fight, or get rid of them if they refuse.

It is possible to go further than that. The working class movement could become conscious of its own interests, and of its own real strength. Just as the young workers' movement in South Africa is beginning to spread its wings and think about a whole new way of running society, of destroying apartheid and capitalism and putting in their place a workers' democracy, that prepared the way for socialism; so too the British labour movement, the oldest in the world, could shake off the bureaucratic prejudices of its past and organise itself to overthrow the sick capitalist system and begin to create socialism.

It could be part of a struggle for socialism worldwide.

But for that to happen, the socialists need to be organised. We need to build a Marxist

organisation, an organisation that tries to work out and develop an independent working class world view; an organisation rooted in the labour movement.

That means fighting to change the Labour Party. The Labour Party is the political wing of the trade unions — the labour movement's political voice.

Abandon

Not to be in the Labour Party is merely to abandon it to the right wing and the soft left. If we are to see a revitalised and, ultimately, revolutionised labour movement, battles to transform the political wing of the movement are as important as battles to change its industrial wing.

The revolutionary movement of the future will be built out of the labour movement of the present or it will not be built at all.

It is to make sure that we do see the creation of a revolutionary movement that Socialist Organiser exists. Students who want to help see that future become a reality should discuss with us.

What to do now

By Jane Ashworth

THROUGHOUT the country Labour students will be in the forefront of campaigns over South Africa, against cuts and against the Gillick ruling.

Socialist Students in NOLS (SSIN) is the left wing of NOLS (the National Organisation of Labour Students). We organise to get students involved in their union and in the wider labour movement.

SSIN supporters are active in building support for the march on Tory Party conference on October 10, and in using the march to link up students in higher education with YTS trainees in Further Education colleges.

Already, before term starts, many activists in the universities have agreed to campaign to force their college management to refuse to carry out the cuts. This will be done through close links with the campus unions, which can be turned into action if the college does try to push through more cuts.

This 'non-implementation' campaign needs to be spread now to the polys.

The Law Lords are about to pronounce on the Gillick case. Whether it goes for or against the right of young women to obtain proper advice on abortion and contraception without their parents' consent, we will be campaigning for young women's rights. And that includes demanding that the National Union of Students supports doctors taken to court for advice on contraception and demanding that sex education in schools is improved with or without parental consent.

Along with that goes the need to campaign for improved access to abortion on the NHS.

A SSIN supporter, Simon Pottinger, is on NUS executive, and he has responsibility for NUS activity against racism and fascism. NUS has affiliated to the Anti Fascist Alliance, and we will be encouraging students to get involved with local anti-racist work.

And building solidarity with the liberation struggle in South Africa will be a priority. In addition to local activities — holding meetings, picketing Barclays — we will be working to get people on the Anti-Apartheid demonstration on November 2.

To contact SSIN, phone Simon Pottinger on 01-609 7459 or write to 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.

Women and reproductive technology

What policy should socialists have on reproductive rights? Michele Carlisle opens a debate. Contributions from our readers are welcome.

In 1979, when John Corrie attempted to revise the 1967 Abortion Act, the issue for the labour, trade union and women's movements was clear cut. These forces united to defend the 1967 Act, which allows abortion on specific conditions, and the Corrie Bill was defeated.

Today, with technology even further advanced and the economy sinking further into crisis, the issues are more complex. The recent threats to women's reproductive rights have raised controversial questions which the Labour Party must address if we are successfully to counter these attacks.

The debate surrounding experimentation on embryos was raised by Enoch Powell in his Unborn Children (Protection) Bill, and the poor response from the Labour Party highlights the need to discuss the issue fully. The Bill attempted to ban all embryo research, thus jeopardising research into genetic disorders and restricting the likelihood of successful in vitro (test tube) fertilisation (IVF) treatment.

Furthermore, because the Bill gave the embryo a legal status, the proposals had grave implications for abortion.

The Warnock Report, on which the government will base its own legislation, allowed research on embryos up to 14 days old and its position on IVF was less restrictive. However, while the intention of the committee may not have been to endanger abortion rights, that will undoubtedly be the effect.

Embryos will be protected from research at 14 days and fetuses from abortion at 24

weeks. Anti-abortion groups would not allow such a contradiction in the law to go unexploited.

With only 40 Labour MPs voting against the Powell Bill at its second reading, it is vital that by the time the next Bill on embryo research comes along, the Labour Party has a clear policy to which its MPs are committed.

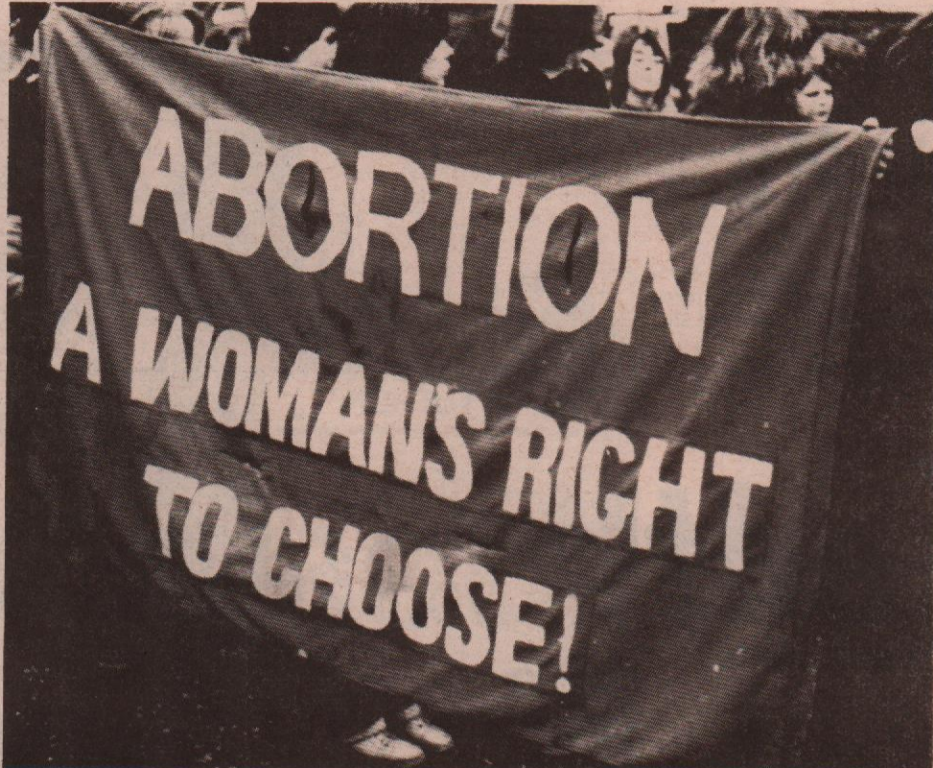
The basic principle is that women must have control over their own fertility. Research which will uncover some of the mysteries surrounding infertility must be supported. Similarly, the procedure for IVF must be made available to all women, regardless of marital status, sexual orientation, race or financial means.

At the same time, adoption should be more accessible and less bureaucratic. We must challenge the ideology which tells women that they should have children, while supporting the right of women to control their own fertility.

Research which can reduce genetic disorder should also be supported. This is part of our attempt to improve the quality of everyone's life, without devaluing the lives led by disabled people. We are not in favour of genetic engineering in order to create a 'superperson', but if disabilities and deaths can be avoided through embryo research, then they should be.

Obviously, improvements in the NHS and diet and living conditions would also reduce the number of disabilities. Unlike many doctors seeking personal acclaim, we

technology



are not interested in science for science sake, but in what scientific advances mean for ordinary people. Embryo research is not an alternative to the political and social change which is necessary if women are to exercise real control over their bodies.

We should also oppose a 14 day limit on embryo experimentation.

Obviously there is a need for a licensing body to regulate research, with lay representatives from feminist and women's health groups, but to award a legal

status to a 14 day old embryo would only endanger the abortion law and thus restrict women's rights. In a society in which the state exercises control over women's fertility, rights are only ever given to an embryo/foetus at the expense of women.

Another issue which the Labour Party must be clear upon is that of time limits on abortion. The 1967 Abortion Act does not specify an upper time limit for abortion, but relies on the 1929 Infant Life Preservation Act to distinguish between abortion

and infanticide. The 1929 Act makes it an offence to kill a child 'capable of being born alive' and pinpoints 28 weeks as the time when a foetus becomes viable. This year, a report supported by groups such as the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the BMA recommended that a foetus should be considered viable at 24 weeks because of advances in technology.

Kenneth Clarke, the then Minister of Health, informed the two private clinics which performed late abortions that their licences would be with-

drawn if they did not comply with a 24 week limit. They have complied.

The few doctors who perform late abortions on the NHS must make a personal choice as to whether they are prepared to risk prosecution and continue the practice.

In reality the 28 week time limit meant 24 weeks, because the difficulty in estimating the date of conception made doctors cautious. Most women who need late abortions do so because they have been told that the foetus is abnormal, or they were slow in being diagnosed as pregnant or being referred to a clinic.

NHS bureaucracy is to blame for many late abortions. A time limit on abortion does not protect the foetus - a woman who is desperate for an abortion will always be able to get one (even if it is self-inflicted, at great risk to her own health). A limit criminalises women and doctors who take part in late abortions.

We must argue for the abortion service to be better funded and streamlined so that referral is quick, and for effective and safe contraception to be available to all women, including the under-sixteens.

We must also fight to change the society that forces women to have abortions because of lack of money, or inability to cope with a child, or possibly a handicapped child. We must oppose any move which makes criminals of those affected by these conditions.

The Labour Party needs a firm commitment to defending women's reproductive rights.

The women in Britain's prisons

On August 17 a 'Freedom Camp' was set up outside the gates of Styal Prison in Cheshire. Women from all parts of the country went to show their support for those locked inside.

Their action also drew attention to the increasing number of women stuck in prisons for what can most accurately be described as 'crimes of poverty'.

Women locked up for such crimes are swelling the numbers in the already overcrowded women's prisons. The treatment they receive at the hands of the authorities serves to degrade and demoralise them. The camp at Styal was an attempt to show these prisoners of poverty that they are not forgotten.

Response

At first the police responded with their usual viciousness when the women from the camp went, at night, to sing to those inside.

Gradually, though, it dawned on our boys in blue that exchanging songs was not part of a desperate attempt at a breakout.

Settling down to 'normal' police harassment the women I spoke to said they would stay as

By Jane Goodland

long as the women inside wanted them to (or until they got evicted by the council).

The camp was set up by some 'Peace Women' (their label not mine) from Nottingham. In their own words, "over the past few years many peace women have been imprisoned for short (and recently longer) periods of time. These women have been horrified by the conditions and treatment which all women in prison are subjected to." The experiences these women have had has led to an important broadening of the "alternative" middle class women's movement. Just like the shared experience of police brutality encouraged links between the miners support groups and Greenham women, so the shared prison experience has brought greater mutual understanding to women previously separated by social background.

Conditions in Styal are no worse than in other prisons but that isn't saying much. All categories of prisoners are kept together. Women detained under youth custody provisions

are locked in with veterans. Public indignation was whipped up by sensationalised stories of bullying. Obviously the fuss died down and as the women inside felt deserted, it was decided to set up the camp.

Rules

Like all prisons, petty rules serve to demoralise the prisoners. Some rules have tragic consequences. As soon as you go into prison any medication prescribed by your own GP is stopped. You get what they give you when they give it to you.

This had tragic consequences in January at Puckle Church remand centre when Sarah Hower died from lack of medical care. She was awaiting trial on a 60p shoplifting charge.

The fact that the chief medical officer in Styal is a vet says it all.

Added to the grim conditions of Britain's prisons, many women have to undergo the added torture of having their families broken up, their children put into care, etc. The effect this has on women is impossible to calculate. As the banner outside the camp proclaimed: Locking women up is no solution.



Many 'peace women' have found themselves in prison

Labour calls for controls on the police

LABOUR Party conference this week decided to call for control of the police by elected authorities, and an independent body to investigate complaints.

"The activities of the police during the miners' strike", said the motion, "highlight the trend towards an authoritarian state and the increasingly political role of the police".

Platform

The platform called for the motion to be remitted, but it was carried by a big majority.

At present the police in London are subject to no elected control at all. They come directly under the Home Secretary.

Outside London there are local police authorities, partly made up of local councillors and partly of unelected magistrates.

They have very little power. Some authorities with Labour majorities made some attempts to restrain the police during the miners' strike, but to no effect.

The only real power the authorities have is to demand the resignation of the Chief Constable. (Even then they can't force him to resign, nor can they decide on his successor). Authorities have been nervous about going so far. The Merseyside authority, which has been more critical than most, found its members being put under surveillance by the police.

Political

Chief Constables are largely a law unto themselves, and more and more openly political figures. The police operation against the miners was organised by the Chief Constables without any debate or approval by Parliament.

Complaints against the police are investigated by the police themselves. The only way for someone maltreated by the police to get an independent verdict is to bring a civil action against them, which can be lengthy, complicated and expensive.

Police authorities are supposed to have 'policy' control of the police as opposed to 'operational' control. This means that Chief Constables can do almost anything they want, justifying it as an 'operational' decision.

By Colin Foster

This week's resolution commits Labour for the first time to demanding operational control. A Labour government seriously introducing such a measure could well face sabotage or defiance from the police: after last year's Labour Party conference passed a strong motion about elected control of the police and restraints on police intervention in industrial disputes, a Police Federation representative said that the police might feel unable to serve "loyally" under a Labour government.

Hierarchy

Labour should be prepared to dismantle the whole authoritarian hierarchy of the police, and to replace it by a system of organised labour movement/community patrols, integrated into and accountable to local communities.



Trigger happy cops

THE POLICE account of the shooting of Cherry Groce is that they came to the house looking for her eldest son, Michael, whom they suspected of a shotgun offence (in which no-one was hurt).

Michael Groce says he has never used a weapon. He gave himself up to the police, peacefully, on Sunday 29th.

Shoot him

According to the Sunday Telegraph, "One man who has already been questioned by the police... said that an officer told him: 'We aren't going to talk to Michael; we are going to shoot him'."

All Cherry Groce did was to get out of bed to see what was happening when the police kicked down her front door in the early morning. Unless the police were trigger-happy and out to

shoot, it is difficult to see how they could mistake a 38-year old woman in her nightdress for a 22-year old man threatening them with a gun.

It is only one month since the last serious case of acciden-

tal shooting by police.

On August 24 five year old John Shorthouse was shot dead by police searching his home. The police had come to arrest John's father, whom they said they suspected of taking part in

an armed robbery, but he had already been arrested (peacefully) before the police entered the boy's room.

The police said that they fired accidentally into what they thought was a bundle of rags.

Cops and crime

There is no evidence that increasing the size, armoury and powers of the police force reduces crime.

The Tory government has increased police numbers by 7,000. Numbers in prison have risen rapidly under the Tories.

But between 1979 and 1984 the clear-up rate for violence against the person

dropped from 77 to 74 per cent. For robberies it dropped from 31% to 22%. In big cities like London the rates are lower still.

Increase

Crimes of violence have increased 21% since 1979, robberies by 100%.

The US, with a more heavily armed police force and a

proportionately bigger prison population than Britain, has a higher (and faster-rising) crime rate; European countries with more liberal policies, like Holland, have crime rates rising no faster than Britain's.

Unemployment, frustration, poverty, alienation — in a world, decaying capitalism — are the most potent causes of crime. The growing array of police snatch squads, special units, and riot gear makes matters worse rather than better.

Heavier policing tends to 'criminalise' ever larger sections of the population — and to criminalise the police themselves — without reducing hard-core crime.

Four times worse

Brixton, Handsworth, Toxteth — all riot areas, all ghettos where black youth are concentrated with little chance of a job.

Jobs are hard to find for anyone in monetarist Britain. For black people it's worse.

Four times worse, to be precise, according to a recently-published survey by the Commission for Racial Equality.

Qualifications

The CRE investigated 33 companies in a Leicester shopping centre. Of 1748 white people who were interviewed, 41% were offered jobs. Of 563 black people, only 11 per cent.

In response to investigators' questions, the employers could identify no major difference in the qualifications of black people to account for the lower number of jobs offered.

Photos by Andrew Moore

Photographer Andrew Moore was attacked by the police just after taking this picture. He described what happened.

"I was taking a sequence of pictures of this bloke being arrested, and next thing I knew the police were moving in on me. I was hit with a truncheon and had one finger broken. I also had the motor-drive on my camera smashed. I intend to take this further."

Fund drive

Negotiations still continue for our new premises, but it now looks as if a definite agreement could be very close. And fund-raising continues to cover the cost of putting the premises into repair and moving in.

Thanks especially to Cardiff Socialist Organiser group for £184, raised through "blood, sweat and kebabs". Also to Trudy Saunders, £25; Nottingham SO, £25.07; Liam Conway, £1; Chris Goodwin, £1.40; East London SO, £2; Martin Donohue, £8.05; Debbie Williams, £65; SO readers in Tranent, East Lothian, £10; Tracy Williams, £5; and Nick Doran, £4.80.

Send donations to Socialist Organiser, 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY.



Socialist Organiser

**Demonstrate
against
apartheid**

Saturday 2nd
Nov Rally
Trafalgar Sq

MARCH ON THE TORIES!

In the week before thousands of youth converge onto the streets of Blackpool, hundreds of student, trade union and LPYS activists will be making final preparations for the October 10 March on the Tories.

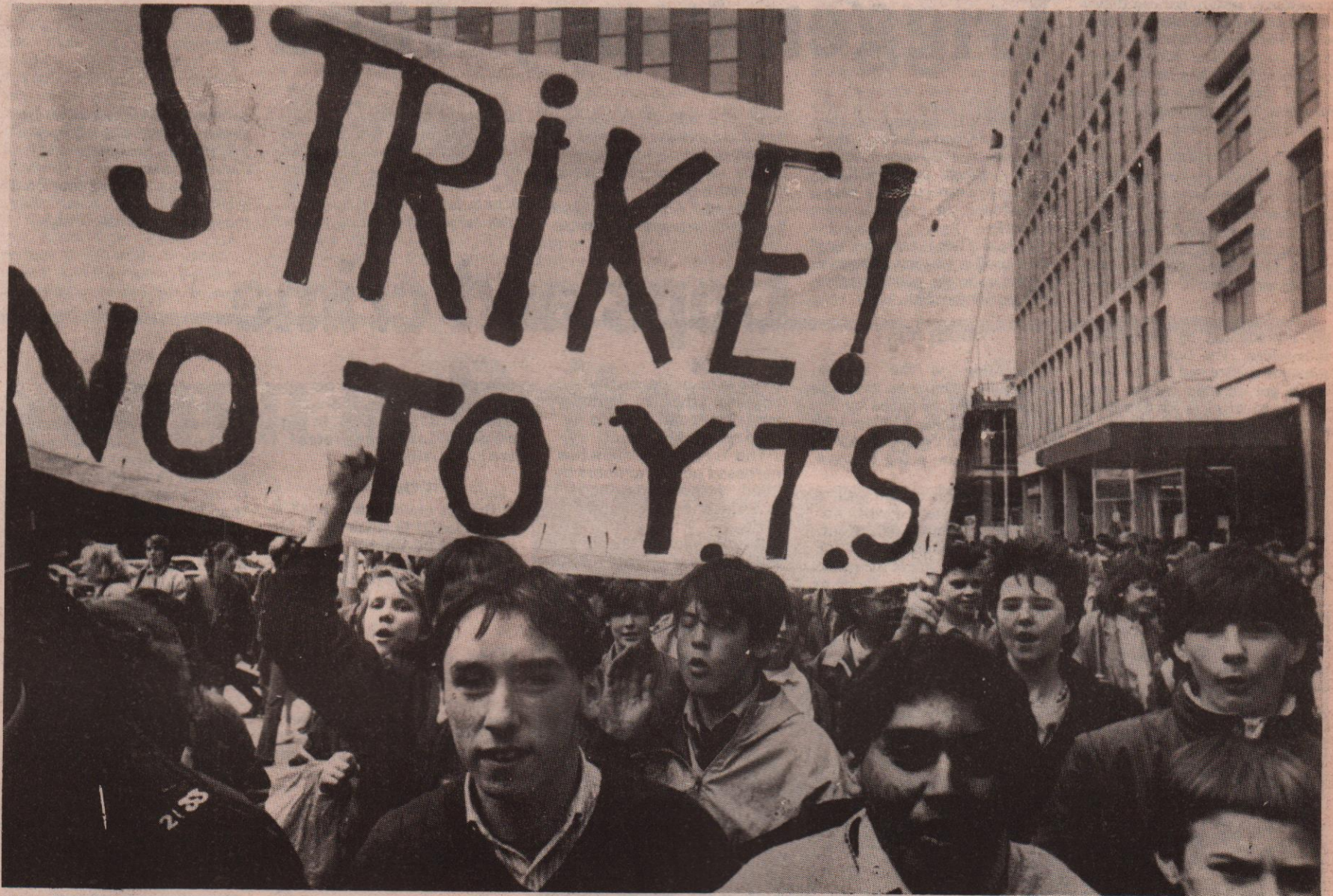
Already dozens of coaches have been booked, from places as far away as London and Glasgow. The organisational centre at Manchester Area NUS reports at least 25 coaches already booked from their area.

The message to activists, in particular delegates at Labour Party conference, to take back to their unions and Labour Parties, is that there is still time to organise coaches, leafleting and flyposting for the demonstration. For more details, or to find out if a coach is already leaving from near you, phone Simon Pottinger on 01-609 7459 or Rachel Kennedy (MANUS) on 061-273 5111 x 204.

The central slogans of the demonstration tie together the struggles of youth: Real jobs, real training! Full grants for all! No conscription on to YTS! Grants not loans! No college cuts or closures!

We aim to strike a blow at the Tory government and its plans to make young people used to accepting poor education, unrewarding, low paid, non-union work and no future past the age of 16. Join the demonstration!

For leaflets/posters write to 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY. Leaflets £1 per 100; posters 10p each.



John Smith (IFL)

**Join the lobby of Tory Conference
Assemble 12.30pm Blackpool Prom**

**OUT
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From 214 Sickert Court
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