

# Socialist Organiser

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No.263 20 March 1986 30p Claimants and strikers 15p

## Kinnock's new model Labour Party

# BOSSES WELCOMED, SOCIALISTS EXPULSED

"I have no doubt," declared Larry Whitty, the Labour Party's General Secretary, "that British industry will recognise that Labour is, indeed, the party of production."

He was talking to a select meeting of industrialists. Roy Hattersley has spent half his time in recent months going round bosses' conferences, saying he believes in "high profits". All the Labour leaders' efforts these days are to get themselves in favour with the bosses.

### Meanwhile they expel socialists.

The Labour leaders have declared that they will abandon all Labour Party commitments for the goal of reducing unemployment. How? By establishing a 'partnership for production' between the trade unions and the bosses.

Trade unions will have "new opportunities and responsibilities", while businesses who "develop a business plan with their trade unions" will get hand-outs from a Labour government.

### Socialism

No mention here of nationalisation, or even re-nationalisation, let alone any more radical commitment. No mention of socialism at all.

Larry Whitty, Neil Kinnock and company want a "partnership" with British capitalism, for the benefit of British capitalism.

The Labour leaders' policy is one for cosy chats over glasses of sherry. They'll sit round a table with managing directors and trade union

tops, and sort it all out with toleration and restraint.

Mobilising workers on the street? The Labour leaders want nothing so disruptive. And if you are a socialist active in a real fight against the bosses, a fight against their Tory government, or a fight against cuts and unemployment, expect no kind words from Labour Party HQ.

### 'Crimes'

Socialists in Liverpool are to be expelled from the Labour Party for daring to organise a struggle. Embarrassing Neil Kinnock by fighting back, and alleged 'membership' of Militant are their major crimes.

It is a pitiful travesty. Militant made mistakes in Liverpool's battle with the Tories; but that is not what angers Kinnock. Nor is it corruption — which as Kinnock knows is a feature of many Labour councils.

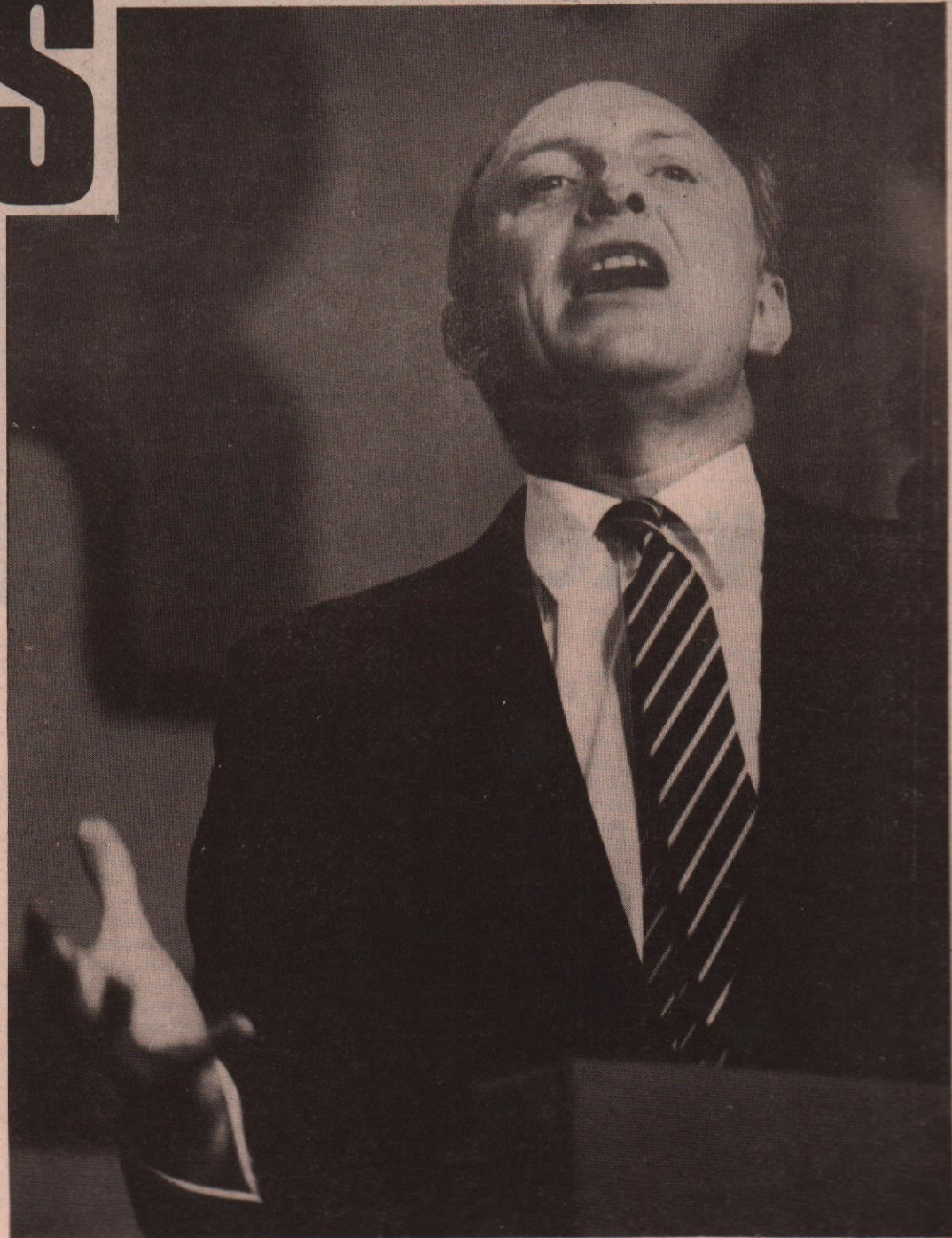
Liverpool District Labour Party is beyond the pale for Labour's leaders. But Robert Maxwell, the press baron who talks nicely to his workers and then sacks them, is allowed to go on being a Labour Party member.

Sun journalist Malcolm Withers is not only a Labour Party member, but is a Parliamentary candidate for Stevenage. And he is currently scabbing at Wapping.

Kinnock's Labour Party, it seems, is quite happy with scabs and union-bashers, but can't put up with organised left-wingers.

Militant are the sacrificial lamb in Kinnock's drive to make Labour palatable to the managing directors and the Tory press.

Labour Party activists must resist. We must call a halt to the witch-hunt, and call a halt to the stampede to the right being led by the Labour leaders.



Kinnock (Photo: Stefano Cagnoni, IFL)

Labour needs socialists, and it needs socialist policies — policies in the interests of working people. Labour needs to involve working class people, and to be involved in their daily

struggles.

We need a Labour Party that fights the Tories and fights the capitalist class; that fights for socialism.

## Report from the Philippines

See centre  
pages

# MASS PICKETS CAN WIN!

The huge turn-out of over 7,000 and the fact that we stopped lorries from Fortress Wapping for five hours on Saturday 15 March shows that mass pickets can beat Murdoch.

The rank and file must now take control of this fight into their own hands. Saturday's victory was won by the London District Council of SOGAT picking up the mood among striking FoC and MoCs, and organising a serious mass picket for the first time in the dispute.

## Block

Thousands of printworkers turned out from across Fleet Street and outside. Stewards with walkie-talkies directed pickets to the key sites to block the road. A police line

By Cate Murphy,  
London SOGAT Clerical branch

was broken and a fence pulled down; make-shift barricades were put across the main road running past the plant, The Highway.

The Highway was blocked off at both ends and nothing came out of Wapping between 9pm and 2.30am, although a large proportion of newspaper lorries are usually out by midnight.

This mood needs to be built on. The FoCs and MoCs should be getting over the arguments for shutting down the whole of Fleet Street — because only united action by the printers can beat back the united bosses' offensive across the whole of the national

newspaper industry.

We need the whole of Fleet Street's 30,000 printers down on the Wapping picket line.

This kind of action will act as a focus to draw from other trade unionists the solidarity action needed to win this strike — boycotts and picketing. Other workers want to help the printers. Arthur Scargill has made a pledge of support from the miners, and it only needs the word from Brenda Dean and Tony Dubbins to get hundreds of miners to Wapping.

## Action

Let's go and organise this action. A determined stand can beat Murdoch. He wants to

negotiate because the presses at Wapping can't take the strain, nor can the scabs. It's showing in his distribution figures which he refuses to reveal.

## Haggle

But a settlement cannot just involve a haggle about the price of sacking 6,000 workers. Every striker must get their job back. The print unions must be let into Wapping and not on the basis of Murdoch's slave's charter which banned strikes and is designed to smash union organisation.

Reinstatement must be on terms that will allow union organisation to survive. Murdoch can be beaten.



Wapping confrontation. Photo: Andrew Moore

## Labour must kick out Maxwell

By Stan Crooke

Since the beginning of March, Robert Maxwell — Labour Party member, millionaire, and admirer of the Soviet Union police state — has been on the rampage at the Daily Record/Sunday Mail plant at Anderston Quay in Glasgow.

For refusing to work on an Irish edition of the Daily Mirror, to be produced there, Maxwell declared on March 2 that all print workers and journalists at the plant had sacked themselves, and shut down production.

The following day he sought an order from the High Court in London instructing SOGAT to lift what he termed 'blacking instructions' on production of the Irish Daily Mirror. The High Court rejected his application.

Maxwell's next move, a day later, was to demand 400 redundancies at Anderston Quay. SOGAT members responded by going on strike, occupying the bulk of the plant, and blocking off entrances to the plant.

Maxwell immediately returned to the courts, where he won an injunction against SOGAT on the grounds that a ballot held by SOGAT before the strike did not conform to the Tory anti-union legislation: at the same time, SOGAT called off the strike when Maxwell withdrew the redundancy notices and agreed to talks without pre-conditions.

The first week of March finished after one lock-out, one strike and occupation, and two appeals to the court by Maxwell and with Maxwell threatening further sackings at Anderston Quay if SOGAT went ahead with another ballot in preparation for further strike action should it prove necessary.

The second week of March began with another shutdown in production, and that remains the situation today.

The editorial in the March 10 issue of the Daily Record, entitled "Riddled with lies", was an attack on a resolution passed in condemnation of Maxwell at the Scottish Labour Party conference which had been held that weekend. The editorial claimed that the resolution was riddled with lies, though this was more accurate as a description of the editorial itself.

SOGAT members demanded a right to reply of equal length to the editorial. Management refused to give them any right of reply. SOGAT

members refused to accept the editorial. Management, again, shut down production.

As the precondition for resumption of production, Anderston Quay management demanded a written apology from the local SOGAT branch officials for their members having interfered in the 'freedom of the press', and a written undertaking that this would not happen again.

SOGAT rightly refused to make any such apology or undertaking.

On March 13 Maxwell declared that the entire 1200-strong workforce was sacked. The mass sackings were to be completed by March 31, the eve of the launching of two new companies by Maxwell — one to print the Daily Record and Sunday Mail, and one to publish the papers.

In his own erratic and clumsy way, Maxwell is just following in the footsteps of his colleague Rupert Murdoch. By sacking the entire workforce and setting up two new companies to carry on production of the same titles, Maxwell will make industrial action by his employees against the new companies illegal, and also make illegal solidarity action between NUJ members employed at the new publishing firm and SOGAT members employed by the new printing firm.

A common strategy by Murdoch and Maxwell underlines the need to link up the two disputes. The unions' approach to the Anderston Quay dispute has been to tell us that it would be safe under Scottish capitalism, thus ending up in a ridiculous competition with the Scottish nationalists that they cannot hope to win.

The same line is being pursued by the Scottish Labour Party. Instead of attacking Maxwell as a ruthless employer who should be turned out of the Labour Party, they call for a 'Scottish press' and resumption of production as soon as possible.

The labour movement must purge itself of the poison of Scottish nationalism and regional parochialism — Mass picketing at Wapping and Kinning Park! Mass picketing at Anderston Quay as soon as Maxwell attempts to resume production! For a national strike throughout the newspaper industry. Kick Maxwell out of the Labour Party and out of ASTMS.

## Low-key in Glasgow

SOGAT officials are playing things so low-key at News International's King Field plant in Glasgow that they should all go and join a male-voice bass choir.

Picketing remains limited to half a dozen at any one time, with NUJ members now having joined the picketing rota since journalists started operating from Kinning Park. The pickets' main activity is taking the number plates of vehicles leaving and entering the plant.

One attempt at a mass picket was made by members of the Flashlight rank and file grouping in the EETPU at the beginning of March. But, despite being well publicised, some 200 or so turned up to it, mostly left wing paper sellers. The print union had clearly not mobilised in support of it.

By Stan Crooke

A week later SOGAT called a demonstration at Kinning Park. And the event, it was stressed, was a demonstration, not a picket. Almost 1,000 people turned up six hours before the papers were due to leave the plant, stood on the opposite side of the road from the plant for an hour, heard a brief speech and went home.

SOGAT's strategy in Glasgow is clearly to keep a tight grip on the dispute, maintain only token picketing, call the occasional demonstration to give the appearance of militancy, and rely on the consumer boycott of the Wapping publications to open the door to a compromise settlement.

This was abundantly clear at the Scottish TUC shop

stewards' conference held in Glasgow at the beginning of March in support of SOGAT. Opening the conference, Jimmy Milne, General Secretary of the STUC, pointed out that negotiations had become impossible under the present government, and concluded his speech by calling for — a return to the negotiating table.

More ominously, SOGAT officials announced at the conference that plans were being drawn up to establish a network of printworkers' support committees through the local trades councils in Scotland.

## Committees

While setting up such support committees would be a step forward, to take them under the control of trades councils, as SOGAT officials know full well, means, in a Scottish context, taking them under the control of the Communist Party.

The stage would thus be set for a rerun of the miners' strike, when the trades councils through CP control of local support groups acted as agencies for blocking the development of effective and militant solidarity.

Worst of all, no attempt was being made to link up the Murdoch and Maxwell disputes, despite the obvious fact that they are merely different aspects of a single

offensive in the print industry.

Insofar as any connection is being drawn between the two disputes, it is on the basis of the tortuous argument advanced in issue no. 2 of SOGAT's 'Wapping News and Kinning Park Chronicle': "Murdoch's competitive tactics threaten Scottish papers... That could undermine the Scottish press... Scotland will be left with an industry dominated from London with a London perspective."

Thus, SOGAT rallies to the cause of Scottish nationalism under the guise of Scottish parochialism, instead of seeking to link up the struggle at Kinning Park and Anderston Quay, as the basis for extending the dispute through the entire newspaper industry nationally.

The Union of Printworkers Support Groups has been set up. It aims to link together all the printworker support groups in the country.

The next meeting is on April 3 at Camden Town Hall, Judd Street, at 6pm. Contact Steve Masterson on 01-435 5652.

**PICKET WAPPING**  
**Assemble 8.30pm**  
**Tower Hill Tube**  
**Saturday March 22**  
**Called by SOGAT**

# Rainbow alliance or class politics?

## A FRENCH LESSON

Should socialists support autonomous movements of specially oppressed? What does this support mean? How far does it mean that socialists must take their cue from women's, black or lesbian/gay groups rather than having distinct judgements or (as it is sometimes put) 'imposing' a line?

The working class, Marx said, is a class with 'radical chains'. It is a class which, in liberating itself, can liberate the whole of humanity from all forms of exploitation and oppression. Working class rule over society will be merely a step towards the abolition of all classes, the disappearance of institutions of social and political rule by one group of people over another. We will move 'out of the realm of necessity and into the realm of freedom'.

But the labour movement in Britain is ill-equipped to carry out a struggle for socialism. It is saturated with reactionary prejudices: national chauvinism, racism, anti-semitism, sexism, anti-lesbian and gay bigotry.

These prejudices have historical roots — they did not drop down from the sky, and white, male, heterosexual workers were not born with them. Often they rest on a degree of material privilege. They are based upon, and reinforce, divisions within the working class, not just in Britain, but internationally (and internationally the divisions run far deeper).

The British labour movement has often proved weak and ineffective in fighting for the most basic rights of white, male workers within capitalism. It has proved even less effective in fighting for the interests of the most downtrodden and dispossessed.

It was the Labour Party, for example, that introduced the 1968 immigration laws designed to keep black people out of Britain.

And with a history of such failure it is not surprising that women, black people, lesbians and gay men, have sought to build movements separate from the existing labour movement structures.

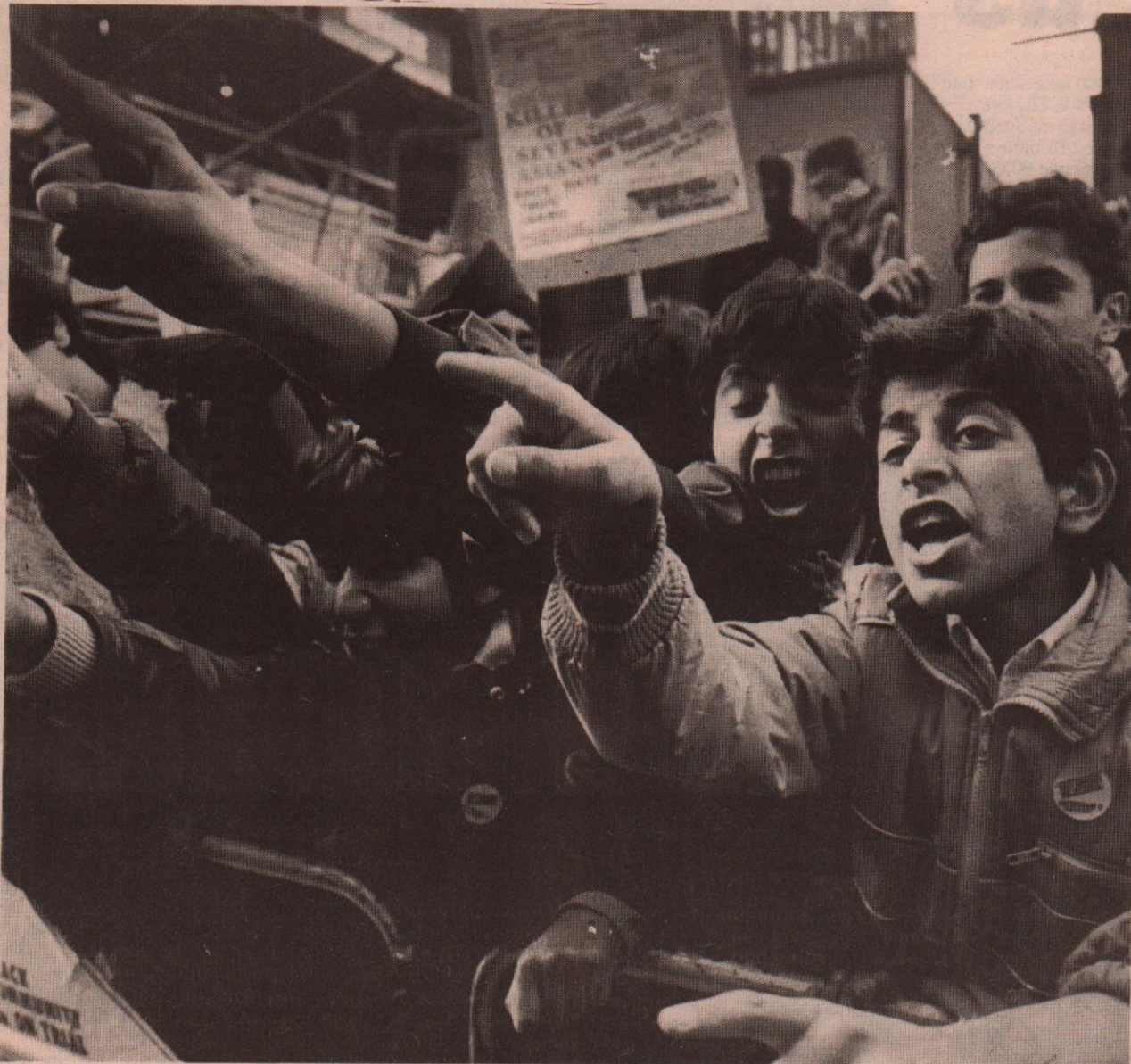
It is not surprising, either, that these movements have generated ideologies hostile or skeptical towards organised labour.

Marxists should not dismiss, scorn or simply denounce these movements.

But in and of themselves, these movements are not the answer. The working class seizure of power will not automatically do away with racism, sexism and prejudice; but those systems of oppression cannot be destroyed without the working class seizure of power. They are bound up with capitalist class oppression — even where, as with women's oppression, they predate it.

Our task is to make the labour movement fight for the interests of the working class as a whole, and for a recognition that the liberation of the specially oppressed is part of this fight.

Self-organisation, or what is often called 'autonomy', is a necessary part of the fight to unite the working class and equip it ideologically to overthrow capitalism. Autonomous organisation like women's groups, black groups — Labour Party black sections, for example — and so on, can be a powerful force in helping to transform the labour movement, to guarantee that it does fight. It can be a central part of making the labour movement a real force of and for working class people.



Newham 8 Campaign

Many socialists, however, talk and act as if the socialist movement is defined by its support for 'autonomy' and that alone.

The Greater London Council most strikingly has projected a vision of socialist politics that is based upon the drawing together of various different autonomous movements into an 'alliance' of oppressed groups. Socialist Action's 'alliance for socialism' seems to be a variation on this theme.

The working class, from this perspective, is merely one more 'oppressed group' in an alliance with women, black people, lesbian women, gay men, the disabled, the Irish, and so on and so on.

'Positive discrimination' has come to mean the automatic deference by socialists to a representative of an autonomous organisation of the oppressed. The Labour Party Black Sections have recently suspended a black supporter of Socialist Organiser, Keyvan Lajevardi-Khosh, for backing a candidate for the LPYS place on Labour's NEC against the Black Sections candidate, Kingsley Abrams. Socialist Organiser has been condemned as 'racist' for refusing to stand down our own candidate. Supporters of 'International' have gone so far as to walk out of 'Youth Fightback' over the issue.

### Undemocratic

This is a dangerous conception of socialist politics, and for the Black Sections it implies an extremely undemocratic internal regime.

An 'alliance' of various different 'autonomous movements' of the oppressed can never be an alliance for socialism. A success-

ful socialist movement will be one with a unified political strategy, common and coherent ideas. It will be the movement of a united working class. Current divisions — based upon race, gender or sexuality — will, to at least a significant degree, have been conquered.

How will they be conquered? By free debate and discussion. If small groups of activists take it upon themselves to speak as 'the' voice of women, of blacks, of lesbians and gays, etc., then unity will become impossible. Indeed it will even become impossible for socialists to take their line from the oppressed groups. When Jewish feminists demand that socialists support them as an oppressed group by backing Israel, and Palestinian feminists say that support for the oppressed means opposing Israel, how do we decide?

Unity can only be created by a revolutionary working class movement through free discussion within its ranks — ranks which include women, blacks, lesbians, gays.

### Temporary

In contrast, the 'alliance' strategy is based upon the idea that the common interests of different oppressed groups are only ever partial; and therefore the 'alliance' is temporary. If the divisions run as deep as proponents of the 'alliance' suppose, lasting unity around a coherent socialist programme is an impossible dream. Who can or will create it?

And so an 'alliance' of this kind can only be a movement for short-term reform: its objectives can only be better representation, more equality, within capitalism. It is no accident that the 'rainbow coali-

tion' idea has been pioneered in the USA by liberal, pro-capitalist politicians like Jesse Jackson. The 'alliance' is inescapably reformist.

An alliance based upon continuing divisions imposed by capitalist society, with no perspective for lasting unity beyond the divisions, is a dangerous idea. Its proponents could do worse than to learn from the South African liberation movement: non-racialism is counterposed by all progressive forces to 'multi-racialism' — an alliance of different ethnically-based groups. Our future, says COSATU, will be non-racial; and so must be our present practice.

### Politics

But what defines a socialist movement is its ideas, its politics. Socialist politics is fundamentally to do with the self-emancipation of the working class.

There can be no autonomous 'path to liberation'. Socialism will not be made by 'autonomous movements': it will be made by the working class. The class is not only — or even mainly! — white, male heterosexual workers. But it will not be a multifarious 'alliance'; it will be a united working class.

We need to guarantee that the specially oppressed do win representation. We need to make sure that women and black people in particular are brought forward to leadership positions: self-organisation and positive discrimination can be extremely important in seeing to it that the specially oppressed are not ignored.

But organisational forms and organisational changes can only ever supplement political ideas; they cannot substitute for them.

Parliamentary reform, they used to say, is a slow road to socialism, but a sure one, free from the risks of revolution. In truth it has always been not so much a slower road as one towards a different goal.

In today's chaotic capitalist world, battered by slumps, it is worse. The Socialist government in France under Francois Mitterrand has brought not slow progress of any sort, but a gallop to the right.

It tinkered with the system. That failed, and it turned to full-scale retreat, which has demoralised the working class and emboldened the right wing.

In 1981 it looked like a new dawn. 23 years of unbroken right wing rule were over. France had a Socialist/Communist government, with only minuscule representation from a bourgeois party, for the first time ever.

Now, in 1986, the fascist National Front has some 34 seats in the French parliament. Overall the right has a 55-45 majority over the left. The Communist Party, which despite everything represents the militant core of the French working class, is down below 10% of the poll; the voters have turned away from it, not to anti-Stalinist class-struggle politics, but to the right or into apathy.

The trade unions are in decline: the CFDT federation has lost a quarter of its membership, and the larger and more militant CGT, a third.

The left government started out in 1981 by nationalising big companies (the state-owned industrial sector was doubled), cutting the work week to 39 hours, and increasing public expenditure. But this policy created a huge trade deficit for France and put its inflation rate way above other Western countries.

The government surrendered to the logic of capitalism. In mid '82 it brought in a wage freeze; in early '83 it started a full-blown austerity programme. It took the axe to basic industries like steel and coal in a way that Ian MacGregor would envy.

Now unemployment is 11%, as against 6% when the Left took power. Wages have been kept down. The share of profits in value-added has gone up from 23% in 1983 to 30% in 1985. Public spending has been cut, although the Left has continued France's nuclear weapons programme and sent troops to Chad.

So the right wing is back. And President Mitterrand, instead of leading working class struggle against the right, intends to work with the right-wing government.

The French workers' bitter experience is a warning to us. A labour movement which puts piecemeal reform politicians into power without also preparing for a fight against them, paves the way for its own demoralisation.

Neil Kinnock is scrapping Labour Party policy wholesale, basing himself on a mood that any sort of Labour government would at least be better than the Tories. Maybe. But France shows us that a Kinnock-model Labour government will fail and — unless a strong independent left-wing is built which defends workers' interests against it — will lead to something much worse than Thatcher.

**We have successfully completed the first stage of our move, and this is the first issue of Socialist Organiser produced from our new offices in South London. Our new phone number is 01-639 7965 and the address is PO Box 823, London SE15 4NA.**



## Taxing us

Will Nigel Lawson cut taxes in the Budget? And if so, by how much?

The experts argue, but one thing is certain: Lawson will still leave working-class people paying a lot more in tax than they did in 1978-9.

All taxes — income tax, national insurance contributions, VAT, tobacco duties, and so on — took 33% of the earnings of a person on three-quarters average pay in 1985-6. That's a 9% bigger cut than in 1978-9.

Meanwhile people on £25,000-plus are paying less in income

tax and national insurance than they did in 1978-9. The very highest-paid have enjoyed the biggest tax cuts. £1 billion of tax cuts has gone to just 90,000 households with a gross income over £50,000 a year, giving them a windfall of £11,000 a year each on average. That far outweighs the effect on them of higher indirect taxes.

The share of the top few per cent in total income and wealth has been rising under the Thatcher government after decades of very slow but fairly steady fall.

# Silence

Dear comrades,  
I came upon the following unpublished letter from the dark days when Trotsky's followers — under Trotsky's



guidance — still thought telling the truth to the labour movement to be an important responsibility of theirs.

Those were the days when, scandalously, they refused to understand that the first duty of solidarity with those 'on our side' targeted by their bourgeois and their labour movement agents was silence about (and thereby complicity in) their faults, failings, and crimes.

Written, I believe, by the famous Communist Party writer Pat Sloan (author of 'Soviet Democracy', etc.) it is published here for the first time.

Bas Hardy.

IT WAS with some amazement — and not a little shock — that we read Leon Trotsky's article 'Moscow: The Truth', which under a pretence of support in effect aided and abetted the witch-hunt against the Soviet Union whipped up by the capitalist press and now under prosecution by Ramsey MacDonald and his officials.

A careful examination of the language shows, in effect, that this is the case. When you ask yourself why the trade union leaders were able to undermine the Communist Party's support you have nowhere shown how crucial a role in this has been played by the ILP and its fellow-travellers, who in addition provided a structure for the fake 'Labour Left' that was organised to attack the Communist Party and the Soviet Union.

The accusations of 'counter-revolutionary activity' and the further references to 'bureaucratic parasitism' and 'much of the wrongs of the Tsarist era' show that the language is not accidental.

The picture does not improve when Comrade Trotsky calls for the removal of two main targets of the capitalist media — Joseph Stalin and Maxim Litvinov. Trotsky repeats allegations that Stalin runs the Soviet Union 'as though the CPSU were a criminal brotherhood and Moscow Al Capone's Chicago'.

Whatever the results of MacDonald's enquiry, it is plain that these comrades (Joe and Max) have been found guilty in your eyes. At a time when the capitalist press — the sole foundation for these accusations — is whipping up an atmosphere of witch-hunt to near hysteria, these remarks by Trotsky can only add up to gross irresponsibility, as well as a sectarian animosity that well oversteps the mark of legitimate polemic.

# FIGHT Purge in Liverpool

Martin Thomas reports

12 leading members of Liverpool District Labour Party will be hauled before Labour's National Executive Committee on 26 March to face possible expulsion.

The proceedings are supposed to arise out of an NEC inquiry into out-of-order behaviour in the Liverpool District Labour Party, but the inquiry report stated no specific charge against the 12.

As Militant commented last week, "John Hamilton, DLP Treasurer, is not charged with anything, unlike secretary Felicity Dowling who is. One vice-president, Terry Harrison, is faced with charges while the other vice-president, Eddie Loyden MP, is not."

"The mystery is easily resolved. Charges have only been laid on the basis of political ideas — the only EC members and DLP officers held responsible for the conduct of the DLP are supporters of Militant."

Support for Militant is the hard core of the charges. Other items used to fill out the charge sheet include the fact that the DLP elected two vice-presidents instead of one! This is not an attempt to clear up maladministration, but a political purge.

Extra proof is the fact that round the country Militant supporters and other left-wingers are being purged for no other reason than their political affiliation.

In Tribune of 14 March David Blunkett tries to make the 'soft left' case for the witch-hunt. There were no normal delegate meetings of the DLP between 5 September and 27 November, but "the executive met continually" and several aggregate

meetings were held, sometimes at short notice.

Council trade unions had rights to nominate members to fill vacant jobs; this created a system of patronage and blocked equal opportunities measures.

Such is the case for the prosecution. Even if it is all true — and Militant supporters argue that it is at best half the truth — it's a pretty scanty fig-leaf for a purge.

If the council was acting corruptly, then leader John Hamilton and finance chair Tony Byrne should be in the dock with the Militant comrades. In fact, many right wing and soft left councils and District Labour Parties do much worse than is even alleged against Militant.

Aggregate meetings rather than delegate meetings? Very bad, says the NEC. But these are the self-same people who want to replace delegate votes for MP selections and Labour leadership elections with general membership ballots!

The level of hypocrisy and cynical injustice in the current purge is shown by the fact that its victims have been able to get a fairer hearing in the capitalist courts than in the Labour Party! Cardiff South and Penarth constituency Labour Party has been forced to reinstate three alleged Militant supporters and to pay legal costs of over £4000 after a court hearing.

Broadgreen Constituency Labour Party has called a mass lobby of the NEC on the 26th, from 8am at Walworth Road. All Labour activists should attend, and back it up by resolutions from their CLPs and trade union branches condemning the witch-hunt.

## Our AGM

Socialist Organiser's AGM will be on 26-27 April, in London. Our last National Editorial Board, on 8 March, began the preliminary discussion and set the agenda.

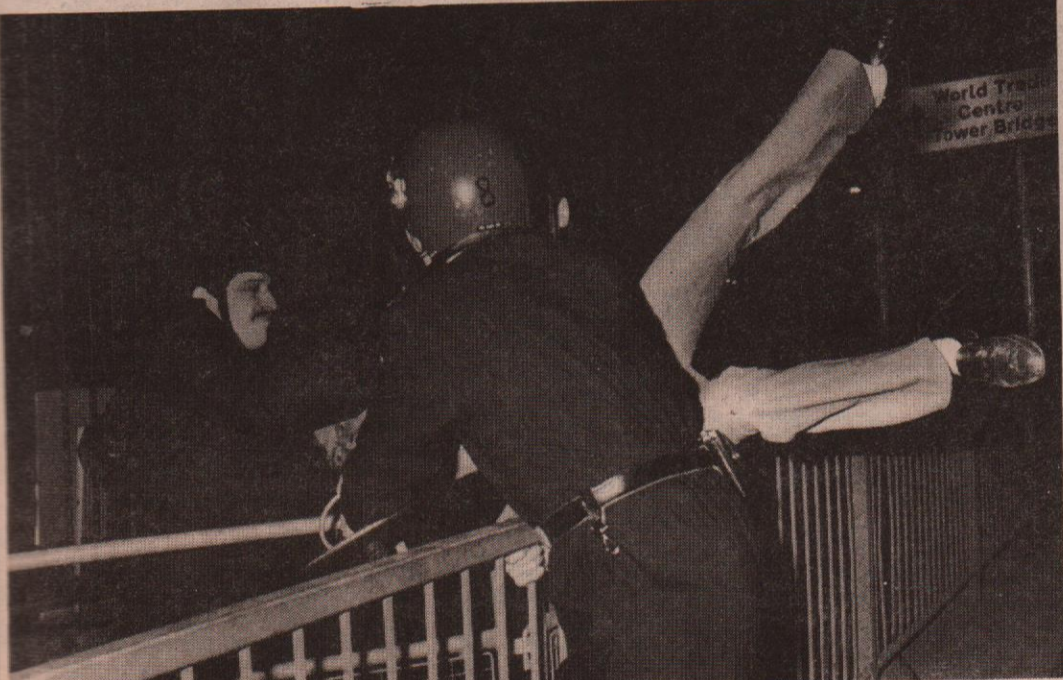
We'll be discussing South Africa: how can solidarity best be organised not only with the ANC but also with the other forces in the liberation movement? How can we help the left and the working class movement in South Africa? What are the prospects for a workers' party in South Africa?

Ireland will be on the agenda. Unlike most others on the left, we've assessed the Anglo-Irish agreement as a significant shift towards Dublin government involvement in remoulding Northern Ireland. Within their own terms of reference, the Protestants have real reasons to rebel. That rebellion is

likely to grow, making more and more urgent the question of a policy which can win Protestant workers away from the bigots.

A central discussion, of course, will be overall perspectives for our work in the Labour Party and trade unions. Separate sessions will deal with our contribution to Women's Fightback and with our youth and student work, which has expanded greatly with the success of Socialist Students in NOLS. The issue of positive discrimination, discussed in our editorial this week, will also be on the agenda.

The National Editorial Board commissioned documents on the various items, but the discussion will also be open to amendments and alternative documents from other Socialist Organiser supporters.



Riot police attacked this peaceful picketing printer outside Wapping by smashing a riot shield into his stomach and then bundling him over the fence. Photo: Andrew Moore.

## GLC object

A stunned public in Crouch End Broadway, Haringey, were recently confronted by a 15 feet phallus. Inscribed on a plaque, the aghast public were told that it was a council scale-model of a 30 feet phallus which was to replace the clock tower as Haringey's monument to the defunct GLC.

Furious debate ensued for the two hours or so it remained. Sides were taken as to whether it was a good way to spend rate-payers' money. After all, do we need to commemorate the GLC?

It was rumoured that council press officers were contemplating suicide as they cast around for a line to explain away the monster.

Fortunately, sighs of relief were soon heard. At an emergency meeting, Labour councillors found that no committee, sub-committee or individual had authorised this monument. It was duly carted away and responsibility has been claimed by the only sane man in the borough, a Mr Irving, editor, writer, producer and bill-sticker of a little known paper, the Daily Twit.



Palestinian refugees

## Proof

Seventy per cent of the first wave of the 'Arab exodus' from Palestine, in the 1947-8 war that led to the foundation of Israel, resulted from military action by the Zionist forces.

This is the conclusion of research by Dr Benny Morris, an Israel historian. Previously unpublished archive material, he says, proves it conclusively.

Morris's case is in sharp opposition to official Israeli history. In the official account, the Arabs left of their own accord, encouraged by their own leaders and by Arab governments.

According to Morris's docu-

mentary evidence — a secret Israeli army intelligence report dated 30 June 1948 — 70 per cent of the first wave fled from Zionist military activity. Of this, 15% was the hard-right militias such as the Irgun of Menahem Begin.

Morris has caused a stir in Israel. His discoveries are not news to those who have been fighting for Palestinian rights; but proof is proof, and to have it said by an Israeli historian is significant.

Morris also stresses that the evidence does not support the view that the Zionist campaign was a long-premeditated and systematic attempt to drive out the Arabs; their flight was a by-product of military action, he says.

## Inquiry

If those around 'Tribune' who say they oppose witch-hunts but support Neil Kinnock's Liverpool enquiry are still not convinced by events of the falsity of their position, they could try looking at Roget's Thesaurus.

Under 'Witch-hunt', the index lists the following headings: 'Enquiry, search, pursuit, defame'...

# THE WITCH HUNT!



"And my answer to Neil Kinnock . . .". Photo: Ian Swindale

## The case of Kath Crosby

By Patrick Murphy

On October 20 1985 Stockport Constituency Labour Party selected Kath Crosby as its Prospective Parliamentary Candidate. Kath is a left-wing working class woman, one of the few to be selected in winnable seats. The decision was an important one for Stockport and for the Labour Party generally.

It also seemed that a lot of important arguments had been won over previous years; the need for MPs with experience of the problems faced by working class people, the need to see women represented and the need to select candidates with solid socialist politics.

On the second ballot Kath Crosby polled 26 votes against 23 for the remaining candidates and was selected. Shortly afterwards the Labour Party National Executive Committee endorsed this

selection.

The prospect of campaigning for a socialist woman with some idea of the life of our working class supporters was refreshing after previous right wing candidates in Stockport. It would mean changing our whole approach to campaigning and electioneering. It would mean unashamedly arguing for left-wing politics. It would mean local public meetings, all-year round activity involving the maximum number of people. Such a campaign would have to be controlled and developed democratically by the local Labour Party.

The selection of Kath Crosby implied a total transformation of the public face of the Labour Party in Stockport.

That was fine by most people but not with the existing public face of Labour in Stockport, the opposition

Labour group on the council and others who regarded themselves as local luminaries.

A vicious campaign soon began against the new candidate, and came to the surface in the New Year.

At the selection meeting each candidate was asked if there was anything in their past that might cause embarrassment. Kath Crosby answered that she had rent arrears to Manchester City Council which prevented her from getting onto the panel of council candidates there. No-one pursued this matter.

### Excuse

But the rent arrears became the excuse for Kath Crosby's right-wing opponents to refuse to bury their differences. While some branches took the candidate into activity others seemed reluctant.

Kath Crosby attended a successful anti-fascist demon-

stration on November 16, the Labour Party organised a social with her on November 22, she attended a couple of public Anti-Apartheid events, and later a Community Fair organised by the Labour Party and the Asian community.

Behind the scenes a vicious campaign was being planned. It was a difficult period because no-one made any accusations, there were only rumours.

On December 11 Kath attended the Stockport General Committee, gave a report of her activities and answered questions. No-one pursued the rent arrears issue. The January constituency meeting was not controversial. The public attack on Kath Crosby began at the end of January 1986.

### Reporter

On Friday 24th a Burns Night had been organised with Robin Cook MP and Kath Crosby speaking. At a press conference before the event a reporter from the Manchester Evening News, Peter Sharples, took Kath to one side and quizzed her about her rent arrears.

He had 'found out' about her Manchester arrears and also discovered that she had arrears in Stockport dating from 1975. Kath had told anyone who had asked her in the Labour Party about this. Our attitude was that rent arrears were no crime.

Some people felt that the Stockport arrears should have been mentioned at the selection meeting together with the Manchester problem. But that's as far as it went.

In the next month the whispering campaign and the rumours exploded into a classic witch-hunt, the right wing of the party and the press uniting and helping each other to remove a democratically selected candidate on the basis of what she stood for.

On Tuesday January 28 the Manchester Evening News published the first attack. Under the headline 'Candidate must go', the paper mentioned the rent arrears but concentrated on a move by Labour Party members to remove Kath Crosby. The first paragraph read: 'Labour Party rebels in Stockport today called for the resignation of a local parliamentary candidate'. In a long article, the only 'Labour rebel' mentioned was the District Party Press Officer, Dave Greaves. This man is not a member of Stockport Labour Party. He is an officer of the District Party which is supposed to supervise local government affairs.

This report was more or less copied by the local Stockport Advertiser the next day on the front page.

Now observe how a good witch-hunt operates. The press were fed information from the Labour Party about a candidate and a call was made on the candidate to resign.

Edgeley branch immediately passed a resolution calling on the District Party to discipline Dave Greaves. Many party members phoned him to protest at his antics. But Labour Party democracy was powerless against the press. Greaves appeared in the Manchester Evening News again on Saturday February 1 to renew his call for her to

resign and claiming that he had received huge support for his 'brave stand'. The ever-elusive 'one member of the District Party' said, "Mr Greaves is to be congratulated. He's shown the party knows when it has a problem."

By this time the rent arrears had been paid off in full and the issue was very clearly the politics of Kath Crosby.

On February 6, the Stockport Advertiser reported Kath Crosby stating that she was not intending to resign. They referred to calls from 'some party members' for her to stand down but still named none.

Now that the press had four times printed stories which talked of 'Labour rebels', 'some members' and 'calls to resign', the ground had been prepared for the right wing to come out into the open by asking for an 'inquiry' into the 'affair' generated by the press.

The Co-op Party passed a resolution calling for an investigation into Kath, the Trades Council Executive Committee attacked her and finally Heaton Mersey branch of the Labour Party asked the NEC to begin an inquiry into Kath Crosby's background. All of this happened within a week. It was organised and it was devastating.

All these resolutions were leaked to the press by Labour Party members and were reported as part of a 'mounting campaign' against Kath Crosby.

The officers of the Constituency Labour Party, with one exception, opposed the candidate and they began to bleat their spineless complaints. They didn't support the press, they'd rather not comment on the resolutions, but nobody could deny that these attacks had created a 'situation', a serious problem, and voters were coming up and telling them to sort it out or they could not support the Party.

### Attacks

The Women's Section had a constructive suggestion, to hold an open meeting for all party members at which Kath Crosby would speak and answer questions. In the meantime we defend her against attacks.

There were two other important tasks. One was to fight as a constituency to remove the District Party Press Officer. The other concerned his ally, the Evening News reporter. It turned out that he is a member of Stockport Labour Party and Heaton Mersey branch! He attended the branch meeting at which the NEC inquiry motion was passed on condition that he did not report the decision. The CLP needs to discipline this scab.

But what of the resolutions? They couldn't be taken at the next GC as that was the Annual General Meeting. The officers proposed a special meeting to discuss them. We wanted an open meeting to answer the doubts of members but with no powers.

The Special Meeting was the victory the right wing had been planning for. It was a chance to unite every discontented delegate, whatever the reason, whatever the politics, whatever the differences in the past, with one aim: remove that woman!

Tony Benn, Dennis Skinner and Eric Heffer wrote letters opposing the witch-hunt. Ann Pettifor welcomed the selection of Kath Crosby and encouraged the CLP to resist attempts to remove her. The members of the Greater London Labour Party Executive sent very welcome messages of support.

But the press campaign was causing extreme distress and hardship to the candidate. The Manchester Evening News and the Stockport Advertiser reported that Kath Crosby owns a house in Manchester from the time when she lived there. This was a very unremarkable revelation but the implication was that she is making money out of the house as an absentee landlady. In fact she is losing money on the house and rents it to friends.

### Evict

But the campaign continued. The Daily Mail on Friday February 21 quoted a spokesperson for Tory Wandsworth Council, who are landlords for Kath in her council flat in London, saying that they were looking into how she was allocated a council house in London while she owned a house in Manchester. If they are not happy with the explanation they could evict her!

A few days before the meeting she received threats that even more information of a very personal nature would be revealed if she did not resign. She could take no more and offered her resignation. The Constituency Chair refused to accept it and asked her to fight on. She insisted.

The Special Meeting lasted five minutes. The resignation was announced and the meeting dispersed.

Two years ago Kath Crosby, aged 43, a single parent with three children, moved to London to take up a new job. She needed somewhere to live and she ended up in a council flat in South London.

The attacks on her by the press recently threaten her home, her job and her personal life. They have been led and encouraged by members of the same party that she wants to represent in Parliament.

For decades that party has been represented by well-off conservative men, men with businesses, directorships, private clubs, a private education and no doubt fat overdrafts, bank loans and credit card debts. For decades they have defended a system whose whole basis is the debt of the poor and exploitation.

Kath Crosby has rent arrears. She is not fit to join the club.

The truth is that Kath Crosby never wanted to join that 'club'. She wanted to represent the working class — not as a Parliamentary windbag, not like a town-hall dignitary and not like a trade union bureaucrat, but as a fighting socialist.

That's what worried the time-servers, the machine politicians and the local barons. It worried them so much that they were willing to destroy a woman's life in order to remove her as a threat.

The task of achieving socialism is a huge one. People like this have got to be fought and defeated if we are to stand any chance of success.

# Scotland shifts right

By Stan Crooke

Interviewed on television during his visit to the recent congress of the Soviet Communist Party, Hamilton MP George Robertson expressed his preference for Labour Party conferences: they were not stage-managed, there were not uniformly unanimous votes, and not everything had been decided in advance.

After this year's annual Labour Party Scottish Conference (March 7-9) comrade Robertson could be forgiven for thinking that perhaps the gap between CPSU congresses and Labour Party conferences is not that great after all.

There were not uniformly unanimous votes at the Scottish conference, but there was certainly a lot of stage-managing.

Astute pre-conference lobbying by members of the Scottish Executive the Party dominated by the Labour Coordinating Committee, ensured adoption of a working party document which ended the previous policy of unconditional opposition to the sale of council houses.

Pressure exerted by members of the NUM Scottish Executive led to a resolution from Clydebank CLP being remitted. The resolution called for the next Labour government to release of all miners imprisoned for "offences" committed during the miners' strike. This was too radical a demand for the stomachs of the Eurocommunist-dominated NUM Scottish Executive.

The conference's Standing Orders Committee also successfully ensured that none of the six emergency resolutions submitted opposing the threatened expulsion of Militant supporters in Liverpool were discussed, for fear that the Party's display of unity might be impaired.

The local government debate saw another defeat for the Left: a composite resolution advocating total opposition to Tory attacks on local government, including defiance of the law, was heavily defeated thanks to the casting of the union block votes against it.

However, a strong composite on South Africa was

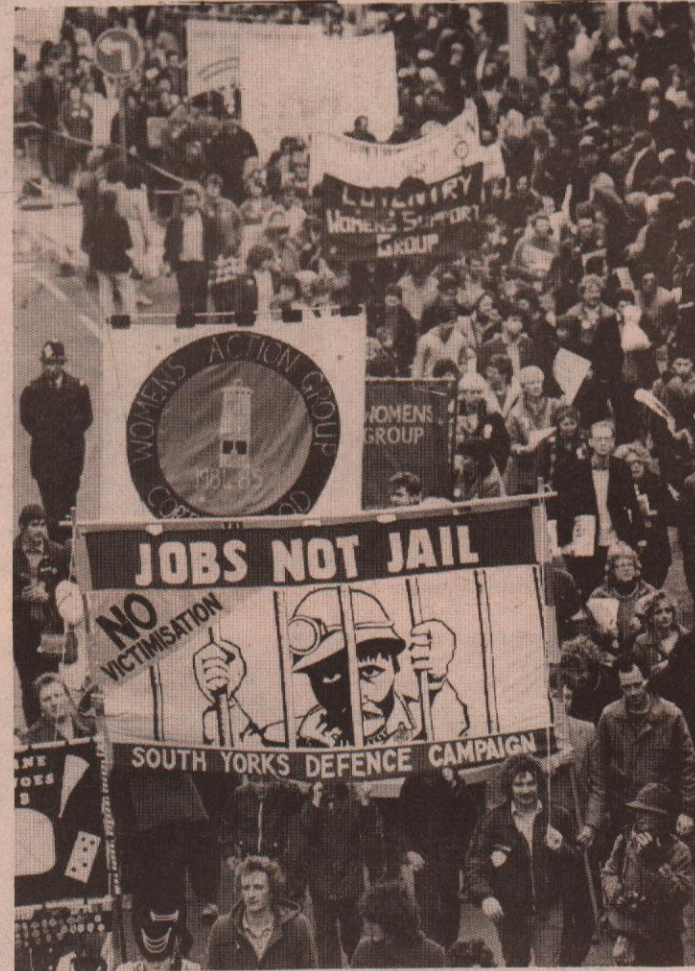
passed, and an emergency resolution was passed supporting SOGAT in its disputes with Murdoch and Maxwell. One of its movers declared that Maxwell's behaviour was incompatible with his membership of the Labour Party.

Another emergency resolution did put the Scottish conference at odds with Kinross, who, in a theatrical display of party unity, had been warmly greeted when he addressed the conference. The resolution called for the reimbursement and reinstatement of the right to hold office of councillors victimised by the Tories for defending local government democracy. Also, elections for the Scottish Executive saw the unceremonious removal from it of EETPU full-timer Pat Hanlon, who had been in-

involved in recruiting scabs to work at Rupert Murdoch's Kinning Park plant. He received only 117,000 votes, mainly those wielded by himself (45,000) and the AUEW (67,000). The AUEW delegation vote was a narrow 9-7.

The conference was further evidence of the continuing shift to the right by the Scottish LCC. Its fringe meeting provided a platform for a Liverpool NUPE full-timer and LCC member to call for the expulsion of Militant supporters. No-one in the Scottish LCC challenged her position.

But the growing opposition to LCC domination of the Scottish Labour Party was reflected in the turnout for the CLPD-Campaign MPs-Labour Left Coordination fringe meeting with Tony Benn which dwarfed the attendance at the LCC fringe meeting.



Marching in Sheffield. Photo: John Harris

# Political funds victory

Over 90% of miners have voted to keep the NUM's political fund in the recent

poll under the Tories' Trade Union Act. The turnout was 76%.

## Hattersley challenged?

The NUM has been seeking a candidate to stand against Roy Hattersley as deputy leader of the Labour Party.

The Guardian on 13 March reported that Michael Meacher had been approached but had refused. Meacher is an odd choice, because at last year's Labour Party conference he helped to sink the NUM's resolution calling for amnesty for sacked and jailed miners and for reimburse-

ment of money seized by the courts. The NUM must have reckoned that Meacher would be a more successful candidate than someone further left.

According to the Guardian "Members of the Campaign Group of MPs... believe that further attempts to secure other left wing candidates to stand against Mr Hattersley will be made."

Since then the Fire Brigades Union have become the 35th union to vote to keep its political fund. Every ballot so far has gone in favour of keeping the fund.

And last month the Hosiery and Knitwear Union became the first union to start a new political fund through a ballot under the Trade Union Act. They had previously voted twice in ballots against a political fund. This time, however, they were 84% in favour.

According to the TUC, at least 11 other unions which at present do not have political funds are planning to set them up.

# The workers gathers strength

Vassili Manikakis, an Australian socialist, visited the Philippines for two weeks at the time of the recent elections. He told Socialist Organiser what he saw.

I was in the Philippines during the recent election period. My time was spent on the island of Luzon, which includes Manila. A military red alert was current, so travel to other centres was banned.

I visited Manila, and a fishing village called Maravilem, which is located in an export processing zone — an area where the New People's Army have a strong presence.

Militant trade unionism in the Philippines is represented by the unions in the KMU (or May 1st movement). Trade unions grew rapidly in 1980-1. The KMU grew from the influx of workers from the "yellow" or company trade unions of the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines.

In the early 1970s, a militant trade union organisation called KASAMA had been active, and its rapid growth and militancy had been one of the major reasons for the imposition of martial law. KASAMA was outlawed after martial law was imposed.

Then a major strike by workers at Latonderia — a Marcos-owned liquor company — broke out. It was the first major strike under martial law, and it gave fresh impetus to the growth of militant trade unionism.

The KMU was formed, essentially built by Communist Party members. It has been able to organise approximately 40% of the industrial working class. Rural workers are organised in separate unions.

Filipino industry is organised into "export processing zones". The village of Maravilem, which I visited, was part of such a zone, and as an NPA stronghold, had minimal government presence. AMBABALA (the local branch of the KMU) had organised 90% of workers within this zone. This encompassed 17 companies, one of which, the Intercontinental Garment Company, was a British company.

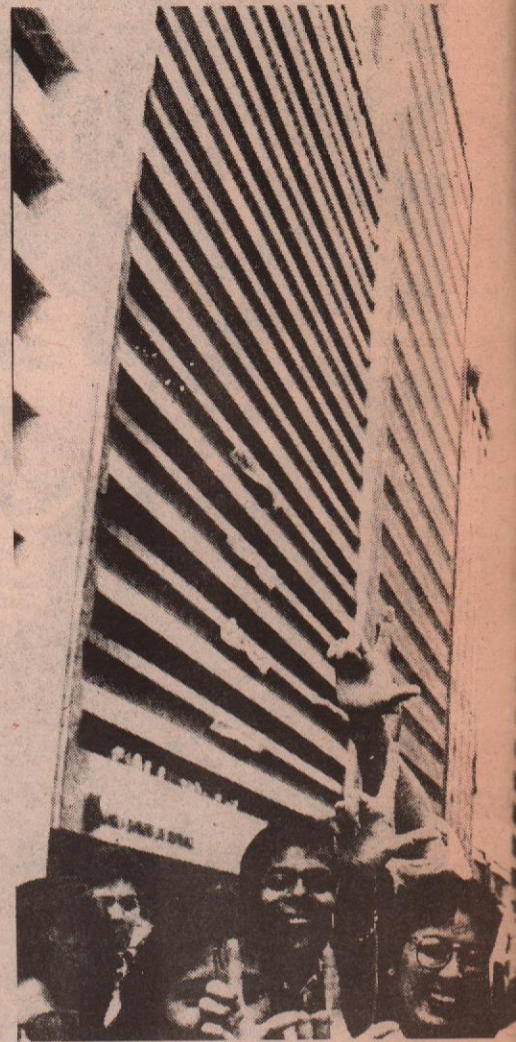
While I was there, three workers who were organisers of the union within the company were sacked. A strike was called, which included all-night pickets, and I visited the picket line. The strikers demanded the reinstatement of the sacked workers.

The very high level of local union organisation meant that virtually the whole export processing zone workforce could be brought out on a general strike to ensure the reinstatement of the workers.

General strikes in the region had also occurred in June and November 1985, in protest at the presence of a nuclear power plant. The region is volcanic, so the risk of a nuclear disaster was very real. Local organisations, church groups, unions, and even some Marcos supporters took part in general strikes against the plant.

The strong union involvement and the NPA presence meant that the Marcos military could not intervene to put down these strikes.

The region was very strongly anti-Marcos, but was also heavily committed to a boycott of the election. The boycott position was put



forward by the Communist Party, by the National Democratic Front, and the BAYAN (a legal organisation of various opposition groups, including the KMU).

These groups argued that a boycott of the elections was necessary since Cory Aquino had not put forward any policies to differentiate herself from Marcos; and since a dictatorship cannot be dismantled merely through voting in an election.

In Manila, sentiments were rather different. The KMU there had also called for a boycott, but with little success. Bayan was divided there, with some members not wanting to boycott the election. Support for Aquino's candidacy was strong in Manila, especially among the petty bourgeoisie. Her base also included many workers who preferred to vote rather than boycott the election, despite their belief that voting would not fundamentally change things.

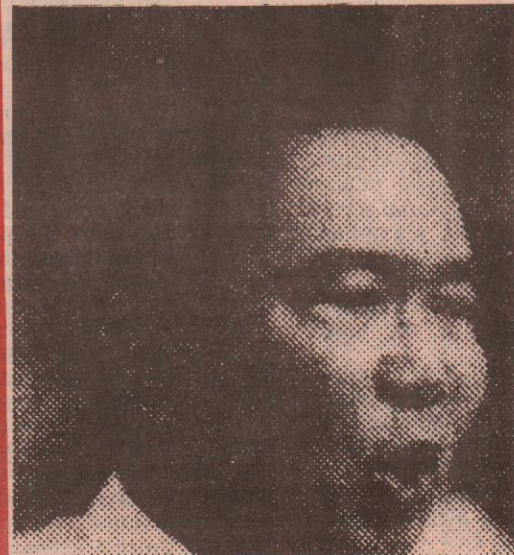
BAYAN probably erred in underestimating the desire of people to become involved in the Aquino campaign and in the work of the election-monitoring group NAMFREL. Some workers were involved to the extent of guarding ballot boxes, and monitoring the vote-counting which proved Aquino the clear winner over Marcos. BAYAN's position that a people's struggle — an armed struggle — rather than elections, was needed to topple the dictatorship, gained little support.

### No calls

BAYAN's pre-election position also meant it made no calls on Aquino to support the political and economic demands they had fought for under Marcos. These demands had included the call for an end to martial law and to the smashing of strikes; the repeal of all anti-union legislation; and the nationalisation of basic industries such as steel, coal and telecommunications.

However, since the elections, BAYAN has begun to make demands on Aquino. The main demand is for a 25% increase in wages for all workers. BAYAN is so far giving critical support to Aquino, but without abandoning its own struggle for the basic democratic demands they fought for under Marcos.

How to push ahead with this struggle is still under discussion in BAYAN. Since the election, BAYAN has attempted to mobilise people actively, to build street committees



Marcos

ino manoeuvres

# 'movement length



and street demonstrations and to educate people. This was in contrast to Aquino's calls for more passive forms of civil disobedience, such as boycotts of water and electricity rate payments, and the boycott of Marcos's cronies' banks and industries.

BAYAN has also organised house-to-house and street discussions, meetings and workshops on political issues such as imperialism, and has tried to help build what Aquino calls "organs of people's power". During the elections, some such groups were spontaneously formed, but the trade unions are also behind these. In the rural areas, peasants would form the bulk of the members, but in the cities where BAYAN is active, workers are also involved.

These "people's power" organs have as yet no formal structure, and their demands have yet to be worked out. The basic economic and political rights denied under Marcos's rule have still to be fought for.

### People's power

The formation of "people's power", the street demonstrations and meetings, the political activity of BAYAN, trade unions and other groups indicated an escalating involvement in the political process by large sectors of the population. That's when the rebel military forces made their move.

Their action was welcomed by many people, but it left the military apparatus largely intact, and it opened the way for the return of former Marcos ministers.

Relations between demonstrators and the military were initially cordial, but no attempt seems to have been made by the left or by the trade unions to organise support among rank and file soldiers.

It is still uncertain what the role of these "people's power" organs will be, and what relationship Aquino will form with them. It is also unclear whether Aquino would support the call for the trial of the corrupt military and landlords who prospered under Marcos, or support the struggle for better conditions by workers, should "people's power" take up the fight on these issues.

The inability to travel beyond Luzon necessarily limited my experiences. Certainly workers in Maravilem had formed strong organisations which included church and women's groups as well as workers' organisa-

They were keen to establish international links with other workers and were pleased that during a strike at SAFCOL, a fish processing company with plants in Australia and the Philippines, Australian workers had organised support and sent money to the Filipino strikers.

### Educationals

Debate is currently underway within the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) as to whether to recognise the KMU as the official representative of Filipino workers. Opposition to such recognition is coming from right wing elements within the ACTU.

While I was at Maravilem, the local trade unions organised educationals on Marcos's rule, on the US role in the Philippines, and as a consequence of both, the lack of control Filipinos have over their own country and economy. Political discussions stressed the need for nationalisation of big corporations and of basic industries as a means of gaining control over the economy.

Whether this control was to be national control only, or whether workers themselves would take over and control these industries, remained unclear, as did the means of achieving these ends.



Aquino

# RAPE-

## THE WOMEN'S ANSWER

Jean Lane

All of a sudden, the press headlines are screaming 'Rape!'

We women have known about it for a long time. But the press, it seems, have only just discovered it. Perhaps they have been too busy following virginal princesses about, or photographing tits and bums.

Personally, I don't care what they say about it. They never got it right or attempted to report it truthfully. And I know what rape is. There are few women about who don't know about sexual assault or abuse of some kind.

Rape is something which is invariably written about by men, reported by men, photographed by men, theorised about by men... and carried out by men.

And no amount of reading out men's names in court, changing police procedures in the back of police stations, raising prison sentences or bringing back hanging is going to stop them doing it to us.

Because, as far as the judge on the bench, the policeman with his nice (or not so nice) procedures, the newspaper man with his 12" zoom camera lens that looks like and is used in the same manner as (and probably thought of with the same amount of affection as) the weapon in this case, along with an awful lot of the rest of the male population - as far as all these men are concerned, women are here to provide a sexual service for them.

And a lot more of them than you realise, think that if we cannot be persuaded to give it freely of our own will, it is their right to take it.

This goes whether you are a working class mother in an inner city, a prostitute in a red light district or a vicar's daughter and a "nice girl" and who, when married, will be providing the same service as victim number two.

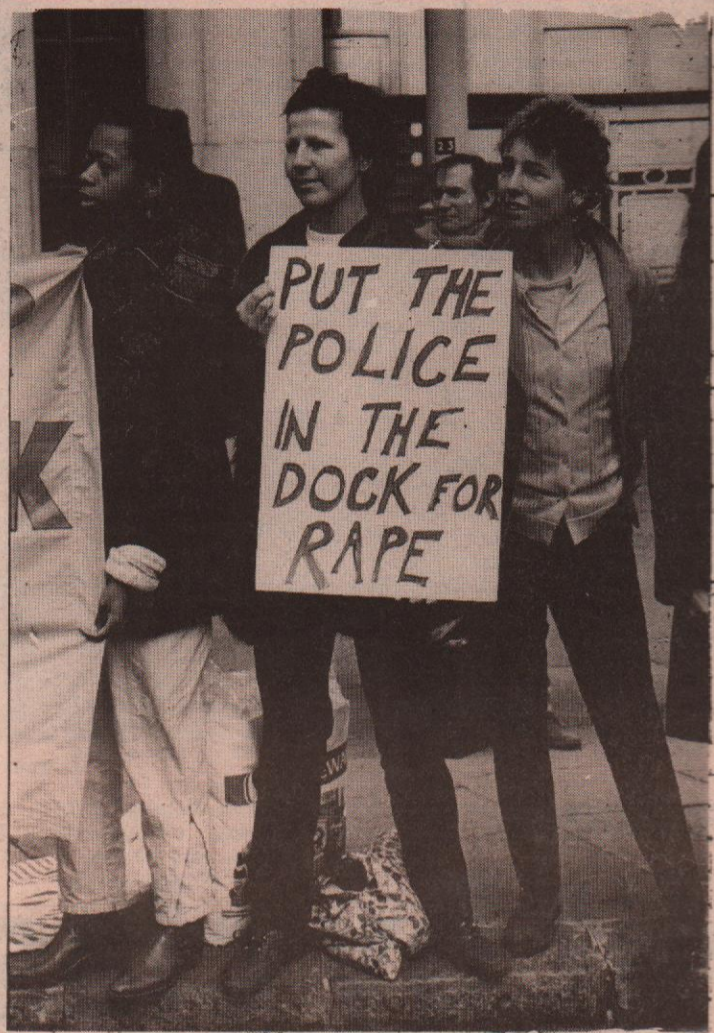
Rape is not, as the press would have us believe, an occasional, sensational incident which shatters world opinion. It does not occur, in most cases, on a dark street by a dirty old man in a raincoat, or during a break-in by total strangers.

A survey done by Women Against Rape in London called 'Ask Any Woman', showed that the majority of rapes occurred at home, committed by a member of the family or a close friend.

Three out of four rapists who came up in this survey knew their victim.

Of the women in the survey who had been married, one in seven were raped by their husbands. Over one in five had been either raped or sexually assaulted as children, at least one-third of these more than once.

A majority of these had been assaulted by a member of the family, (father, grandfather, uncle, etc),



Women's protest in support of Jackie Barclay, a Manchester woman raped by police. Photo: Andrew Moore.

and the rest by someone in a position of authority (e.g. teacher, doctor, babysitter).

The press prefer to present the rapist as figures like 'The Fox', or the 'Yorkshire Ripper'. And what do they tell us to do? Stay at home!

In effect they are saying that we must place ourselves under curfew. To go out is to provoke it. Don't wear short skirts, don't wiggle your bum when you walk. Don't walk! Get a car, that's if you can afford it. If you can't, well stay at home.

Home! The most common place for rape to happen! What they really mean is let it happen where we can't see it. Let us not recognise it for what it is.

### Little concern

This latest attack in Ealing, London, has been leapt on by the press in the same sensationalist way, showing little concern either for the truth about their subject or feelings for the (and their) victim.

As with all rape cases, the attack on this woman was an unasked-for, vicious sexual assault. Unlike other rape cases, they could not claim that this one was 'provoked'. Women's attitudes, the permissive society, and 'women's lib' cannot be called upon any more to make excuses for the attacks that we sustain and have sustained from men since before the 12" zoom lens was invented.

Let's get it straight once

and for all. Men rape, women don't. Rapists are to blame, not their victims.

Rape in marriage must be brought up in court. Tougher sentences must be imposed on rapists. Police procedures must be improved. All of these are steps forward for women. But they will not stop rape.

The survey, 'Ask Any Woman', saw these measures as sidestepping the issue. Most of the changes the women in the report wanted to see were demands on local and central government such as better transport (cheaper and more frequent with more staff on at nights), better lighting, more security on housing estates, automatic rehousing of women and children who wish to escape violent husbands, and financial independence from husbands and co-habitees.

At the time that this survey was being carried out, (it took three years), the government was making cuts in all these areas as well as cutting local government and giving the police extra powers.

As long as women are seen as possessions of men, as men's sexual providers, as sex objects for men's pleasure, rape will occur. No amount of fiddling about with the niceties of the law or court procedures will change that. But the demands of women themselves are those of making our lives safer and the quality of our lives better.

# Don't let the Liberals in!

By Kevin Feintuck

The decision by the courts to not only disbar the 48 Liverpool Labour councillors, but also to threaten each one personally with bankruptcy, is another blow aimed at the Liverpool labour movement.

### No consolation

Those of us in the Liverpool Party who pointed out the failings in the way the campaign against the Tories was fought, find no consolation whatsoever in either the revenge of the Tory judges or in the attacks by the careerists and bureaucrats who made up and supported the NEC's inquiry.

We argued and continue to argue that to stand any chance of success we have to have a campaign which would have had a very different character.

The direction of the campaign had to be taken out of the committee rooms, a political structure had to be developed to allow for mass participation, the insulting and/or patronising attitude to groups with special interests had to be abandoned, and of course clever tactics such as the 30,000 redundancy notices had no place whatsoever in a fight for jobs and services.

But now the labour movement in Liverpool must both provide defence to the 48 and to protect those

positive aspects which have emerged in the last three years, particularly the house building and urban regeneration strategy and also the defence of council staffing levels.

An indication of the uphill struggle which socialists in Liverpool face was the failure of any significant layer of the trade unions locally to respond to the judges' decision.

The only positive response was from the Council Joint Shop Stewards' Committee which is little more than a rump following its collapse in the last 12 months.

Even the Joint Stewards' call for a day of action on Friday 7 March was a disappointment with only a smallish number of council workers attending the rally.

### Appeal

One immediate question which has to be decided is whether or not a further legal appeal should be made to the High Court. Because of the suspension of the District Party, the normal decision-making process has been thrown into disarray on this and all other questions dealing with the present crisis for the councillors.

The indications are that the supporters of Militant are still intent on pursuing the



November 1983 in Liverpool. The campaign needs to be rebuilt. Photo: John Smith (Report)

appeal to keep the case running as long as possible. There is a sizeable bloc of councillors who will not be happy about appealing unless the full costs can be guaranteed in advance. But that position is likely to be accommodated within a decision to pursue the appeal in any case.

The alternative position, which is possibly the stronger, argues that there is little or nothing to be gained from further appearances in the courts.

At the end of the day,

the real problem which confronts us is that the city's financial problems continue to go from bad to worse. The fact is that Liverpool is faced with yet another year in which there is no other way of producing a balanced budget unless massive cuts are to be made.

### Shortfall

Even on the basis of a standstill which is incorporating the cuts in last year's settlement, and allowing for a 16% rate rise, the maxi-

mum allowed under rate-capping, the city will still face a shortfall of some £37 million.

Before the end of the month the Labour councillors will have to either set a rate within the Tory parameters or again break the law.

Following a meeting of Labour Party members held on Monday 17 March, it now seems that a budget will be presented which includes a 16% rate increase. Such a budget will probably save the

councillors from a fresh round of legal action, but will mean either an effective fight for more cash or else the collapse of services.

The position will become even more acute at the point where the 48 councillors are expelled from office. Local Liberals have already discussed the wholesale transfer of council housing to local co-operatives. The abandonment of the housebuilding programme and the decimation of the direct labour organisation would be absolutely certain. Privatisation would be firmly back on the agenda.

### Trough

If the Liverpool Liberals are allowed to get their snouts back in the trough, courtesy of the judges, it will be no use complaining about the injustice of such undemocratic procedures. Plans involving as many people as possible must be developed to stop the Liberal-Tory takeover. Activists in Liverpool must start preparing the groundwork for such resistance irrespective of any legal manoeuvres.

There is still a desperate shortage of cash arriving for the expenses of the initial court hearing. Donations should be made payable to: "Liverpool Fighting Fund" and sent to Councillor Tony Hood, Chairman's Room 42, Municipal Buildings, Dale Street, Liverpool L69 2DH.

## Lambeth

# Hit by class justice

By Ian Swindale

In an overtly political judgement, the High Court has rejected the appeal of Lambeth and Liverpool councillors against disqualification and surcharge. Although it could not be established that a specific legal deadline existed by which time the councillors had to set a rate or even that the failure to set a rate earlier had resulted in a financial loss to the ratepayers, the judges felt confident enough to hand down an obviously political judgement in which they alleged that the councillors had reached the "pinnacle of political perversity".

It was a classic example of ruling class representatives handing down class law against representatives of the working class for carrying out their election mandate not to cut jobs and services.

31 Lambeth Labour councillors now face disqualification, surcharge and possible bankruptcy. They have until April 2 to appeal against the court ruling. Legal costs are already well in excess of £100,000 and an appeal will cost at least another £50,000.

Speaking at a rally in Lambeth Town Hall on Sunday Ted Knight rejected the "hardship fund" being established by Labour shadow environment spokesperson Jim Cunningham as nothing more than charity. "We don't want to be means-tested by some Labour minister", he said. Instead, on Wednesday Lambeth councillors will be launching their own appeal to raise more funds - £120,000 has been raised so far.



All alone. Has Labour abandoned Lambeth? Photo: Ian Swindale

Having carried out Labour Party Conference policy they argue that the whole labour movement has a duty to come to their aid now.

If the appeal goes ahead on April 2 it could cause complications for the May local government elections if it is not concluded by April 8. On that date nominations close for council candidates and many of the 31 Lambeth councillors have been nominated. If they lose the appeal after nominations close their names will appear on the ballot papers on polling day.

It will then be up to the Tories to challenge their right to sit in the council if elected. This would create a situation

in which the Tory minority would be able to take control of the council while by-elections were being held.

Should the Lambeth councillors not proceed with an appeal, the Tory rump could take over the council in the next week or so.

### Unions

Jim O'Brien, representing Lambeth local authority unions, promised Sunday's rally that the local government unions would not permit an unelected Tory council to overturn the priorities established by successive Labour councils and wreck their fight to protect jobs and services.

As on every other issue where the working class has engaged in struggle against the Tories, the Labour leadership has dragged its feet.

The duty of socialists is clear. We must give full support to the Lambeth councillors; we must back any action by the local government unions to prevent the Tory rump from taking control of the council without winning the election; and we must demand that Kinno and Cunningham, when elected to power, implement Labour Party policy and pass retrospective legislation to reimburse the councillors and lift the disqualifications imposed on them.



# Mortgaging the future

MANY left-wing councils plan to borrow to bridge the gap between their rate-capped income and no-cuts expenditure.

In Islington, council leader Margaret Hodge's latest report to the local Labour Party estimated a rate-cap limit of £106.7 million, expenditure of £140.£145 million — and no real difficulty in making ends meet through bank loans.

Local authority finance has turned out to be more flexible than anyone thought, and paradoxically the banks have become left wing councils' best friends. It's good business for the banks. Even if a local council were to organise a local general strike and confront the government, the bank could not possibly lose out — either the council gets more cash from the Tories and pays out, or the bank gets its money from commissioners sent in by central government.

Margaret Hodge's perspective is that left wing councils can

keep going in this way until 1988 — at which point either rescue will come from a Labour government or the Tories will be re-elected and all hope will be lost anyway.

But in the meantime the Tories will be pressing other attacks against left-wing councils — over privatisation, over political publicity, and so on. Do we duck fights on all these issues too? If 'financial defiance' catches on among a lot of councils, almost certainly the Tories will outlaw it. What then? And will a Labour government rescue left-wing councils up to their ears in debt? According to Margaret Hodge herself, the Labour front bench has been "very negative" when approached for assurances.

At best the policy of 'mortgaging the future' can only be a short-term expedient to win time — time to prepare for a fight, not for a hoped-for rescue from on high.



# Fighting the lump and the law

**Mick O'Sullivan, a UCATT shop steward in Haringey DLO, reports on an epic battle for trade unionism in the construction industry.**

Since the late 1970s, with the decline in construction, trade union organisation on building sites has taken a massive dive. The 'lump' (casual cash-in-hand labour) has come to dominate.

The big contractors have moved into a 'management-only' role. Where they win a contract they manage it but sub-contract out all the work to others, who in turn may well sub it out to other contractors. This fragments the workforce and makes sites difficult to organise.

Sometimes workers are in the union — either the TGWU or the main building union UCATT — but they do not even know it. The employer buys a block of cards for the workforce and uses check-off payment of union subs directly from wages.

One effect of this is more unsafe sites. Over 150 workers are killed each year and thousands are injured although the workload is declining.

## Supplement

Often workers are paid cash-in-hand, supplementing this money by signing on the dole, and thus have no legal rights as employees at all.

Within this free-enterprise anarchy militants have been fighting to organise sites from the ground up. Minor victories have been won but in the main we have failed to make any substantial breakthrough.

The militants' reward has been derision from the official labour movement, blacklisting, intimidation and often physical violence.

The most notorious incident was three years ago on the Crouch's site in South London where two militants were beaten up. One received nine stitches and a head wound. The other had a fractured skull and was so badly injured it is unlikely that he will ever work again. Nothing was done about this assault.

But because of the tenacity of the workers involved a small struggle which started last year is escalating into a fight of national importance with implications that stretch throughout the labour movement.

In the autumn of 1985, seven UCATT members started work at Laings home job in Surbiton. As a bricklaying gang they were working for Jonoroy, the brick sub-contractor. One of the directors of Jonoroy had been a director of Whites Brickwork, the subby employing the two bricklayers assaulted on the Crouch job.

However, trouble came initially not from Jonoroy but from Laings, the main



Members of the Laings Lock-out Committee picketing Laings British Library site. (Photo: Ian Swindale).

contractor, who instructed the subby to sack them. Jonoroy duly did so on October 18.

Refusing to accept their fate the gang took a stand against Laings use of the blacklist (they are all well known activists) and lump labour. They demanded the right to be directly employed. All this was in line with UCATT policies and the London Region supported their stand.

The first phase of the struggle lasted until early December. The seven workers began picketing other Laings jobs as a means to put pressure on their persecutors. Arrests took place. Lumps of concrete were dropped on them which would have killed them if they had hit them.

There was also run-of-the-mill harassment and intimidation.

But the picketing with the help of other militants began to meet with success, getting a response from rank and file building workers and hitting Laings. The disputes procedure in the industry also seemed to offer them a settlement.

Its main points were that Laings should reinstate them at Surbiton (as soon as the site reopened it had been closed down to facilitate the sackings). Jonoroy should re-employ them directly, and the issue of lump labour at the Surbiton site should be discussed. When the union officials turned up to discuss this Laings refused to enter negotiations, while Jonoroy didn't even bother to attend.

At this point the full timers of UCATT and the TGWU parted company with the workers. While the lads locked out began to step up their actions, the officials moved against them.

Branding the action as unofficial, they made it their business to inform management. This 'joint' action by management and officials, with an increasing policy pre-

sence on picket lines, began to isolate the militants from other building workers.

With defeat staring them in the face, the workers decided to picket Laings most prestigious job, the Hayes Wharf site at London Bridge. It was a breakthrough. They got a meeting with the best of the stewards on that site, explained their case and won support. The Hayes Wharf stewards threatened to close the site down. Within the hour Laings gave in and the heavy police presence melted away.

The gang was restarted by Jonoroy on a job in Banstead. There they were able to negotiate toilet facilities with hot and cold water, canteen facilities for hot food, a changing room, and wellington boots and gloves for the bricklayers.

Victory was short-lived. After Christmas they put in two official requests to be returned to the Surbiton site in line with the findings of the national panel. Jonoroy refused and started using the working rule agreement over time keeping.

## Transfer

January 24 saw the workers outside the gate again, this time picketing the site for their transfer to Surbiton. By midday management had caved in.

Back at Surbiton on the Monday, they were informed that Laings refused to allow the gang to restart. They would let three of them onto the job but the others would have to go back to Banstead — which would undoubtedly mean the sack.

As a gang the workers decided they had once again been locked out by Laings and Jonoroy. They immediately decided to picket the new British Library site. But this is a largely non-unionised site, and the success at Hayes Wharf couldn't be repeated. However, concrete lorries

were stopped entering the site despite TGWU and UCATT officials trying to sell them out.

In this second stage of the struggle Laings upped the ante by major proportions. In a certain amount of desperation and panic they took out a High Court injunction under the Tories' 1982 anti-union laws — not against the union, after all what more could they ask from UCATT and the TGWU? — but against individual workers.

Three basic rights are directly under threat from this action — the right to picket, the right to associate and the right to speak.

Picketing is restricted to the site they work on and to those people directly employed by their employer, Jonoroy, and to site deliveries relating to that contractor.

Such restrictions, especially in the building industry, make pickets almost useless. Any main contractor can use subbies as a shield against union activities.

The injunction also means that the workers are not allowed to go to other workers for either physical or financial support.

At present this injunction has not been acted upon by Laings. However, it could mean fines, surcharge, or imprisonment of the workers.

These workers were faced with a choice when Laings went to Court — either to bow the knee and be intimidated by the state and its anti-working class laws, or to carry on the fight. Courageously they decided to fight on.

Very few socialist militants or trade unionists in Britain are ever faced with such decisions. The workers were bad-mouthed by many sections of the movement for wanting to be martyrs.

But their decision was based soundly and rationally on their refusal to throw away the gains the working

class has made in 200 years of struggle. To agree that you as a striker will not talk to a fellow worker because the law forbids it would be to betray past generations.

## Rotten

While the strike has been kept out of the media and has only affected a few sites in the London area, it has begun to blow open the whole rotten system of the lump in London. Reports have come back that Laings are beginning to put workers on cards on their more prestigious jobs and they are withdrawing their 714s (that is, workers who are directly self-employed on the jobs). This action of a few people shows what an effect it would have if UCATT were to launch a serious campaign against the lump, instead of moaning and saying that nothing can be done about it except recruit the self-employed into the union.

It is of crucial importance that these workers are supported in their fight and that the threat of jail which is hanging over them is publicised as widely as possible within the movement, particularly in UCATT branches.

The following model reso-

lution has been drawn up by the Laings lock-out committee:

This . . . . . supports the right of the Laings Lock-out Committee in their struggle for the right to work and negotiate in the building industry. We call on this body to support the stand of these workers against the attack on their basic democratic rights by the use of the 1982 Tory anti-union laws.

The injunction served under the Act, if successful, will remove the freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom to picket.

In line with TUC policy of opposition to the Employment Act and opposition to the blacklist we finally call on our regional bodies and national executive to support the following basic demands:

1. The lifting of the High Court injunctions and the threat of jailings.
2. The re-instatement as a whole gang at Laings homes job at Glennbuck Road, Surbiton.

Send donations and requests for speakers to Laings Lock-out Committee, PO Box 551, London SE5 8jj.

**More on Laings on page 11.**

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# Quakes

## EARTHQUAKE THREAT

More blows have struck Sellafield, British Nuclear Fuels Ltd and the British nuclear power industry since I wrote (20.2.86) of the cavalier way in which Kinnock and Cunningham have flouted Labour policy on phasing out nuclear power.



Science

First, there was the inquiry into the ability of Calder Hall and Chapel Cross reactors to withstand an earthquake. This was carried out in 1983 and has been sat on until now.

In it, structural engineer Peter Phelan examined the specifications for these two early reactors (Calder Hall was the first to be commissioned). He was amazed to find that no provision for earthquake resistance had been made.

Now, contrary to popular belief, Britain is not free of earthquakes. Admittedly, they are weak, damage is rare and deaths are even more so. In the East Anglian earthquake of 1884 between three and five people are said to have died while one person was killed by falling masonry in the earthquake of 1580.

The latter was Britain's strongest earthquake of historical times, causing the ground to move sideways with an acceleration 40% of that of gravity.

Future British reactors are to be built to withstand an earthquake causing a sideways acceleration of 25% of gravity. This reduces changes of destruction to only one in 10 million.

However, Phelan showed that an earthquake causing only a 5% of gravity acceleration would cause permanent damage to the bolts holding the reactor vessels of the two reactors he studied. Such earthquakes occur about once every hundred years. One occurred six years ago in Carlisle and may in fact have already damaged the bolts of the nearby Chapel Cross reactor.

Phelan further showed that just three seconds of a 12½%-of-gravity shake, enough to rattle windows but not break them, would cause the 2,000 tonne reactor vessels to plummet six metres to the floor below.

This might crack its concrete shield, releasing radioactivity. It would also sever the cooling pipes, causing immediate overheating, bursting the pressure vessel and starting a disastrous fire.

This knowledge should have led to the closure of all plants affected by the problem. BNFL's response was to wait a year before asking Phelan to try again, using new criteria which he rejected as unrealistic. This provided the soothing answers BNFL wanted and the reactors continue to react.

## NUCLEAR WASTE

The next major blow to the credibility of the nuclear power industry came with the Commons Environment Committee's report on nuclear waste.

Its main conclusion was that BNFL's fancy new fuel reprocessing plant being built at Sellafield be abandoned since the uranium obtained from the spent fuel would be more expensive than digging it up.

It also questioned the whole question of reprocessing spent fuel, since this was a major source of pollution.

It recommended investigating ways of storing spent fuel for long periods.

The report lambasted Britain's nuclear waste disposal practices as amateurish, haphazard and complacent. It cited the case of Drigg, next to Sellafield, where waste is dumped in a trench with rain-water washing through to the sea.

It also called for waste to be transported by rail where possible and ruled out air transport, the method planned for the new plutonium reprocessing plant at Dounreay.

## CUNNINGHAM MUST GO!

These and other developments are conspiring to isolate John Cunningham who is using the alleged threat to jobs in his constituency that includes Sellafield to justify ignoring a 62% conference vote for phasing out nuclear power.

Despite the support of Neil Kinnock, criticism is slowly mounting, the latest being a straight call from the more-Kinnockite-than-Kinnock Labour Coordinating Committee that Cunningham should go. LCC members accused him of 'publicly repudiating' Labour Party policy, saying that Kinnock should "give him another job where he could promote Labour policies".

## SCOTTISH LABOUR GOES ANTI-NUCLEAR

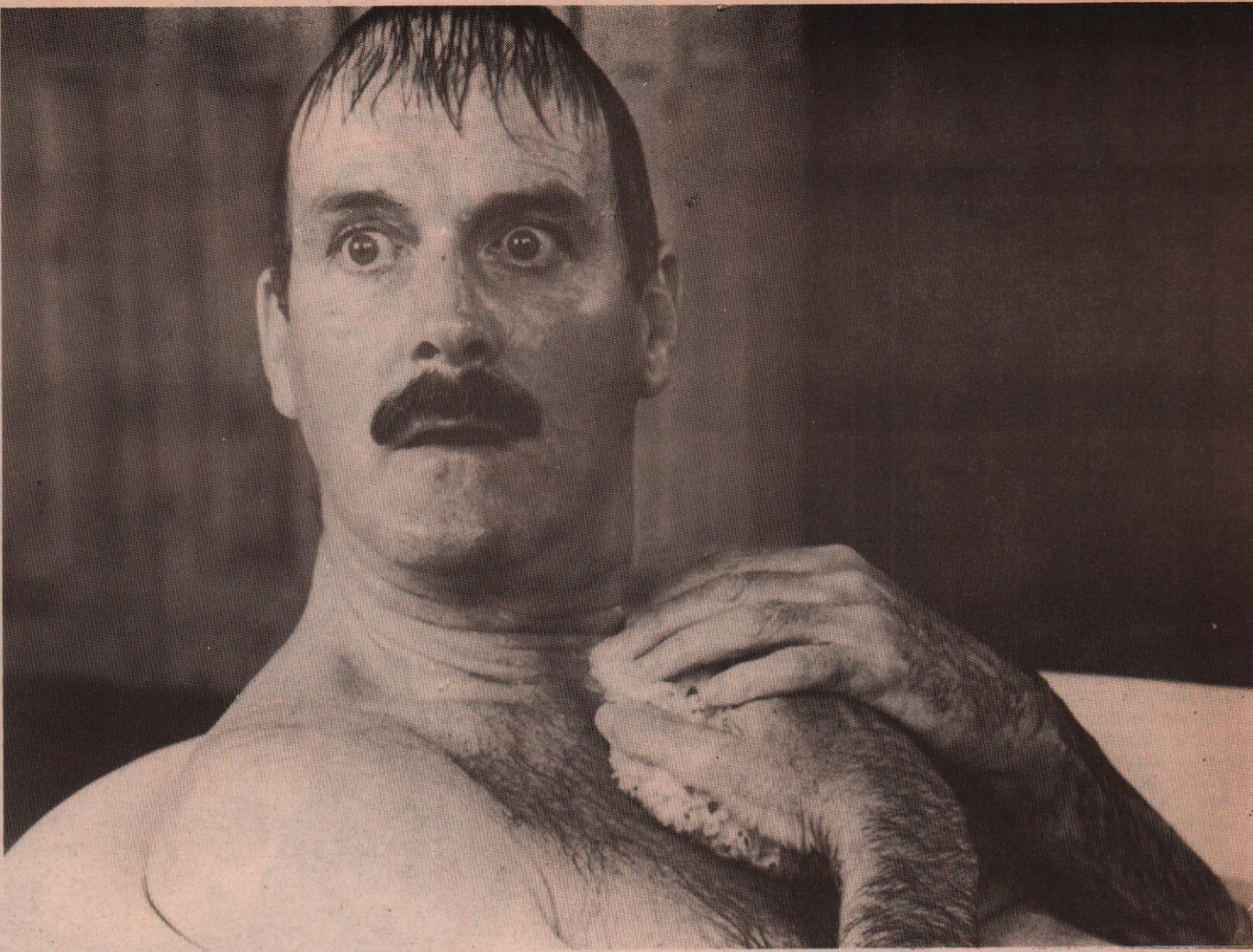
At the Scottish Labour Party Conference a fortnight ago, nuclear power was top of the agenda.

First rejection of the Executive's report opposing the development at Dounreay was lost. This was despite the efforts of delegates of the pro-nuclear AUEW who represent most Dounreay workers.

Since a motion condemning the Dounreay expansion was to be debated later, the AUEW delegates contacted TGWU members at Dounreay and persuaded them to lobby the delegation of the anti-nuclear TGWU. Eventually the delegation decided to abstain (reportedly after its 600 Dounreay members threatened to join the EETPU). In the event, however, the motion was withdrawn on the grounds that it was already Labour Party policy, following acceptance of the executive report. A general anti-nuclear motion was then passed by a 63% majority.

## NEW GROUND

The spring issue is now out, price 60p. Subs £3 (special offer - send 6 12p stamps for introductory copy). Membership of SERA (includes New Ground subscription): £7/£3 unwaged/£12 organisations. Cheques to SERA at 9 Poland St, London W1V 3DG.



Cleese: the naked truth

# Python bore

Edward Ellis reviews the new film 'Clockwise', which stars former Monty Python actor John Cleese.

Is it really necessary, I wonder during this film, for the person next to me to comment on every line that John Cleese speaks? I want to turn to him and demand: 'Do you have to comment on every line that John Cleese speaks or are you just naturally stupid?'

Cinemas bring out the worst in people.

Before 'Clockwise' has even started there is row upon row of half-drunk, half-wits repeating in chorus, and still finding it funny, the one about Eric the fish who is a halibut. Beside me someone is doing a very inferior rendition of the Parrot sketch. 'It has gone to meet its maker...' he yells nasally. A pity it's only the parrot, I think.

## Nazi

To one side four men in their late twenties are screaming 'Don't mention the war!' and making Nazi salutes.

John Cleese has got a lot to answer for.

Can't you just imagine the misfortune of innocent London Transport travellers when the film is over? There will be tubes full of failed Basil Fawlty clones endlessly reciting the Master's greatest moments in his new masterpiece at the tops of their voices. 'It's not the despair. I can take the despair. It's the hope,' they will shout, 'at each other, roll about laugh-

ing and then say it again.

John Cleese and his colleagues have relieved the British public of the necessity to think up their own jokes. Who needs to? Who needs even to make conversation when we can bore each other to death with Monty Python sketches? Who needs politics, philosophy, art, science, or any intellectual pass-time, when the Last Word on it or any subject has already been said by the Great Cleese and can be found somewhere in Monty Python's Big White Bok, if only you care to join the inner sanctum of the Pythonian initiates?

## Generation

'Clockwise', for all the fact that the multitude of Cleese imitators are a generation of pathological bores, is a very funny farce.

Perhaps even the most die-hard, stalwart, devoted disciple might be forced to admit that the Monty Python films were getting pretty bad. 'The Meaning of Life' was not funny at all - unless you are the sort of person who finds puking into a brimming bucket no different from splitting your sides with laughter.

And Python spin-offs, like 'Jabberwocky' were pretty second-rate. Cartoonist Terry Gilliam's 'Brazil' was, however, one of the best films of last year.

And Cleese did manage, with his chaotic hotelier, to create one of the great TV comic characters.

Mr Stimpson, the time-obsessed headmaster in 'Clockwise', owes a lot - despite a great effort to avoid the comparison - to Fawlty. It is Cleese the disaster-prone maniac, in this case attempting to get to Norwich for a Headmasters'

Conference through a sea of misadventure.

He has made his 'common-or-garden comprehensive school' as he calls it again and again, a major success by making everyone observe the most rigid time-keeping. His speech to the conference is to concentrate on the necessity of punctuality.

Yet by the simple mistake of getting on the wrong train he sets in motion a sequence of events destined to wreak havoc across England.

Cleese has a wonderful ability to express our frustration with inanimate objects. His confrontation with three public telephones - one of which is occupied, one doesn't work, and the other has a blocked coin-slot - is truly brilliant. He concludes with a fit of heart-felt vandalism.

Who can honestly say that at some time or other in their lives they haven't vandalised a public telephone? I know I have.

And his triumphant, digni-

fied conquest of his bewildered headmaster audience in the film's finale is a classic of comic timing.

It is, of course, a film dominated by Cleese from start to finish. But others have some good moments. The three senile old English ladies who get wrapped up in the plot, and who are somehow reminiscent of old-style Ealing comedy, are a source of much amusement, albeit not a very novel one.

## Voice

As all and sundry are caught in the trail of disaster, old Mrs Way comments usefully, 'What an exciting day! How lovely!' She is, of course, despite the fact that she is oblivious to it all, the only voice of sanity.

Cleese's cult following could do worse than to follow the example of the Jones Cult in Guyana, who committed ritual suicide.

But as for the film: it's a good laugh.



Cleese: telephone rage



## AN ORANGE EASTER RISING?

By John O'Mahony

EASTER Monday, 31 March, will be the 70th Easter Monday since 1916, when Irish Republicans started the insurrection in Dublin now known as the Easter Rising.

This Easter Monday, 1986, there is a serious chance that Orange military activity will not fall too far short of insurrection.

On 31 March a march by the ultra-Orange Apprentice Boys is scheduled to go through the Catholic area in Portadown, Co. Armagh. It looks like being a mass rallying of Orangeists to show that they will not accept the Anglo-Irish agreement.

Last year the Portadown march was re-routed, and intensely bitter battles were fought between Orangeists and the RUC. 200 RUC policemen were injured, and some policemen's families were forced to leave their homes because of intimidation arising out of the clashes.

Much of the bitterness had been generated by the Orangeists' belief that the re-routing of their 'traditional' sectarian march was a by-product of the Anglo-Irish negotiations then going on. This year they are certain that any attempt to stop them marching on their traditional route will be the result of the deliberations of the Inter-Governmental Conference, which links Britain and the 26 Counties in the running of the North.

Rumours of Orange military conspiracies are rife in Northern Ireland, and it is possible that the UVF or the UDA will use the occasion and the symbolic date to show they mean business.

Events may of course move more slowly than that. But big clashes seem inevitable sooner or later.

The one-day general strike of 3 March was a spectacular success as a political-industrial stoppage — though its political consequences are likely to include splits and divisions in the hitherto united Orange ranks. Though a few Catholic-run factories worked, industry was paralysed throughout the Six Counties. A factory where 200 Catholics tried to continue working was burned out, and the workers had to be escorted to safety. 655 road blocks were erected, and about one in three of them remained undisturbed by the police.

At the end of the day, the RUC came under machine-gun fire in the heartland of urban Orangeism, Belfast's Shankill Road.

As long ago as October 1969 gunfights took place in the Shankill Road, and the first policeman to die in Northern Ire-

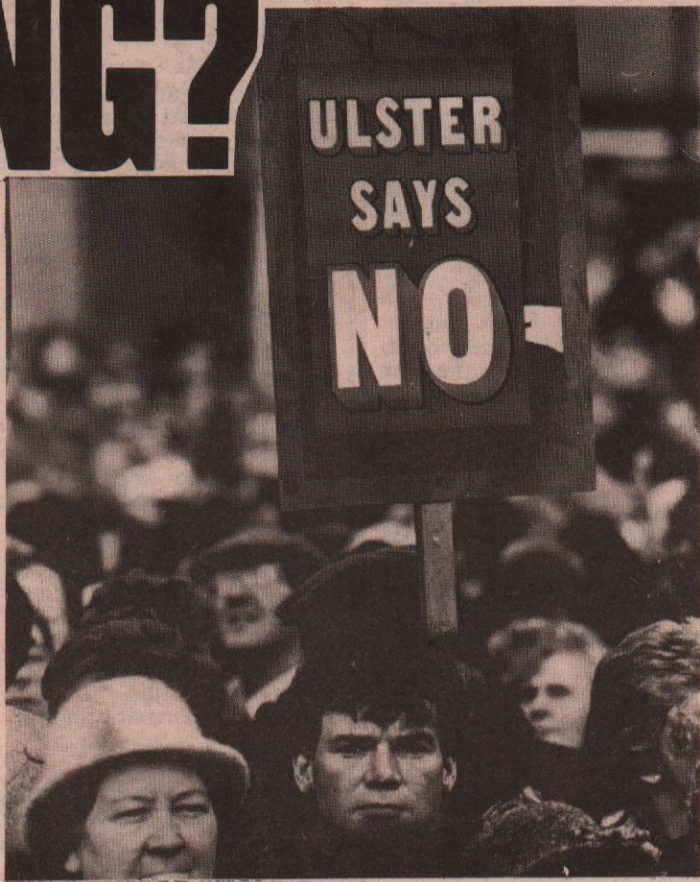


Photo: Dick Speirs (Report)

land during the present 'Troubles' died then. But the Anglo-Irish agreement, which gives Dublin a serious degree of joint responsibility for running Northern Ireland, has created an entirely new situation in Northern Ireland.

The big majority of the Protestant-Unionists could scarcely be more alienated if the decision had been taken to create some variant of united Ireland. The question for the Orangeists now is: what next?

Four months after 15 November, when the Anglo-Irish agreement was signed, the Orangeists have already tried most of their weapons against the deal, and found that each one of them is impotent. First they challenged the constitutionality of the deal in the courts. Then they used the 15 by-elections on 23 January to demonstrate that the majority of Unionists oppose the deal. Then they organised the one-day general strike. And now?

It was always inevitable that the impressive unity of the Orange groups and politicians would shatter against the intransigence of Mrs Thatcher's government. It began to shatter during the one-day general strike.

Gangs of uncontrolled and uncontrollable youths roaming around stoning and burning; intimidation at illegal road blocks; IRA-style attacks on the 'forces of law and order' — these activities are not likely to recommend themselves to middle-class Unionism. The leader of the Official Unionist Party, James Molyneaux, says that never again will he support an industrial stoppage like the last one.

A political process is probably going on in which those prepared to engage in all-out IRA-style opposition are being separated from — having been partly generated by — the hard-talking politicians.

The UDA has been recruiting energetically. The largely rural-based Ulster Clubs claim 10,000 members. While a Molyneaux is scared off by the use of a working class weapon like the general strike, the para-militaries will draw from its failure to have any effect on Thatcher the conclusion that an all-out stoppage is needed, on the model of the successful 1974 general strike which wrecked the Sunningdale agreement.

They may also conclude that military action is needed, directed at the South.

### Violence

As Ian Paisley's deputy, the Westminster MP Peter Robinson, says, "People believe violence works". A leader of the UDA, John McMichael, puts it even more plainly.

"At the moment a lot of people are saying that the South is the weaker partner, the soft underbelly of the Anglo-Irish agreement. You have a long border there, more and more people view the South as a tangible physical enemy".

March 31 may mark a clear turning point in the development and hardening of Orange opposition, and the emergence of an 'Orange IRA'.

In the political arena the best measure of what is happening in Northern Ireland is that Ian Paisley is now, comparatively, a 'moderate'. At the end of February Paisley and Moly-

neaux reached agreement with the British government to hold discussions on the restoration of devolved government in the Six Counties, only to be immediately forced by their 'followers' in Northern Ireland to repudiate this commitment and to back the 3 March strike.

They backed it, but they did not lead it. They have come out of it visibly not in control of the forces they supposedly lead. Like the Sorcerer's Apprentice who conjured up a demon he could not control, Paisley and Molyneaux are now seemingly at the mercy of the bitter Orange opposition to the Anglo-Irish deal they helped bring into being.

It is simply stupid — probably no more than falling for a Tory-government-orchestrated propaganda campaign — to think that the relatively mild violence of 3 March has so horrified the people of Northern Ireland that there will be no more such strikes. It will be very surprising if attempts are not made in the next few months to organise an all-out stoppage.

The failure so far of the various constitutional and legal weapons resorted to by the Orangeists must inevitably push the para-militaries to the fore.

At the same time the politicians are looking for possibilities to return to discussions with Thatcher, looking for a political deal that will restore some sort of local power to politicians in Belfast. The Anglo-Irish agreement provides for the devolution of most of the powers of the Inter-Governmental Conference to a Belfast administration acceptable to both Protestants and Catholics. The existence of the agreement and of Dublin involvement thus generates tremendous pressure on the Unionists to agree to some form of Belfast power-sharing.

The precondition for any developments here is the agreement and collaboration of the constitutional nationalist SDLP, which has a veto on any devolved government in the Six Counties short of Catholic-Protestant power-sharing. It is a sign of the times perhaps that Official Unionist Party deputy leader Harold McCusker now says that he would rather serve under a Catholic Northern Ireland prime minister than allow the present back-door Dublin involvement in the running of Northern Ireland. It seems likely that some of the Unionist politicians will soon try to negotiate a deal with the SDLP.

Ian Paisley and John Hume of the SDLP, both Euro-MPs, recently held discussions over lunch at Strasbourg.

An open attempt at a political deal would signal a formal split in the Unionist ranks between those who feel that opposition to the deal cannot legally go much further and those willing to go all the way into full-scale illegality.

31 March at Portadown will probably give the paramilitaries the chance to demonstrate what their methods can achieve.

This is the first issue of Socialist Organiser produced from our new offices in South London and using our new process camera.

We've had more than our share of teething problems this week, and renovation work at the new offices is not yet complete, so we are operating on a makeshift basis. But in weeks to come the improvement should be visible.

We've spent some £14,100 on the move so far — the total spending is clearly going to go over the £15,000 budget that we estimated — covering it about £9,000 from fund-raising, £3,000 from loans, and £2,000 from regular income. So we very much need to get over 100% of that £15,000 fund target!

### Abolition

On April 1 the metropolitan counties are to be abolished. To commemorate their (partial) passing, and to raise money for the SO premises fund, two comrades from Manchester are going to cycle around the Greater Manches-

ter County boundary on April 1.

They feel this will be their last opportunity to do this route safely: with massive post-abolition cuts in public transport, the roads will soon become jammed with cars. They also hope that their gesture will not go unnoticed by those metropolitan councillors from across the country who fought such a bold rearguard action against abolition — all the way towards parliamentary careers!

Thanks this week to: Ann Duggan £25; Cath Boddy £10; Sally Page £10; Andy Barrett £20; Manchester social £45; Pete Keenlyside £10; Manchester drinks levy £5; 'John McIlroy/Sean Matgamna Wine Club' £25; Ian Hollingworth £4; Stoke South £100; East London readers £11.60; Shepton Mallet reader £5; Will Adams £22.50; Bruce Robinson sponsored slim £87.25 (and more to come); John Hogan £50; North London readers £2; Les Hearn £50; South London readers £5.11; donation for science column £5; Belinda Weaver £2; and a Midlands reader £500.

| Local group       | Target       | So far         | Per cent   |
|-------------------|--------------|----------------|------------|
| North London      | 1600         | 1240.79        | 77%        |
| Nottingham        | 1000         | 955.01         | 96%        |
| South London      | 800          | 896.26         | 109%       |
| Manchester        | 1000         | 778.95         | 78%        |
| East London       | 760          | 610.12         | 80%        |
| Merseyside        | 500          | 487.50         | 98%        |
| Cardiff           | 600          | 462.50         | 77%        |
| Glasgow/Edinburgh | 560          | 362.00         | 65%        |
| Durham/North East | 200          | 281.80         | 140%       |
| Sheffield         | 400          | 251.91         | 63%        |
| York/Harrogate    | 300          | 213.10         | 71%        |
| West London       | 500          | 200.00         | 40%        |
| Coventry          | 350          | 200.00         | 57%        |
| Stoke South       | 200          | 198.00         | 99%        |
| Stoke North       | 200          | 172.75         | 86%        |
| Basingstoke       | 560          | 127.47         | 22%        |
| Birmingham        | 100          | 65.00          | 65%        |
| Colchester        | 100          | 47.80          | 48%        |
| Aberdeen          | 20           | 46.00          | 230%       |
| Oxford            | 40           | 40.00          | 100%       |
| Canterbury        | 90           | 38.00          | 42%        |
| Southampton       | 60           | 16.00          | 27%        |
| Leeds             | 60           |                |            |
| Central/general   | 5000         | 1525.30        | 30%        |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>15000</b> | <b>9188.74</b> | <b>61%</b> |

