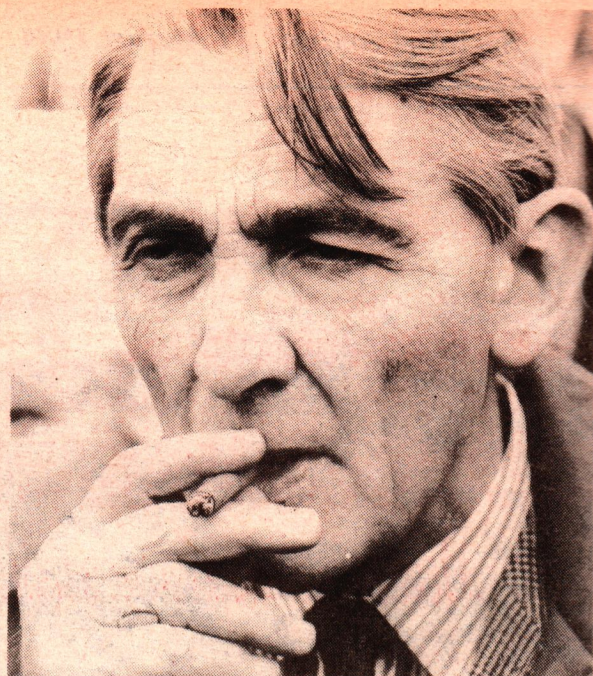


A Socialist ACTION



THE DECISIONS of this TUC conference will be the most important since the predecessors of Murray, Sirs and Duffy sold out the General Strike in 1926.

After six months of struggle the miners' strike is at a crucial stage. The sequestration of the funds of the South Wales NUM, and the scabbing by the ISTC at Hunterston, makes action in support of the miners by the whole movement vital.

by Pat Hickey

The use of the anti-union laws, which will be stepped up after the TUC if the right decisions are not taken, means that the vital interests of the whole trade union movement are involved — just as centrally as in the fight against job losses themselves.

The right wing is well aware of this. They are fighting as openly as Sirs has to scab on the miners.

This right wing are the key obstacle to the successful conclusions of the strike, and to the greatest trade union victory for the working class since the Second World War. These scabs must be openly fought and defeated at this conference.

Last year the right wing won the day, and celebrated their victory by betraying the NGA, running away from GCHQ, and refusing to support, indeed openly attacking, the NUM. The left leaders have to take up this challenge — the vital interests of the working class are at stake.

Nothing could be worse at this TUC than hollow formulas for 'unity' which simply concealed inaction and scabbing. The resolutions calling for support for the miners, for respect for picket lines, and for boycott of all coal should be pressed to the vote no matter what the opposition of the right wing or the 'diplomacy' of the General Council.

The right will seek to get some formula that will commit them to nothing. They will claim that the NUM and left are intervening in other unions. Bill Sirs and Eric Hammond have no qualms about doing exactly that when it suits their book, as Hunterston demonstrates. The left of the TUC *should* intervene in every single union against the likes of Sirs and Hammond.

The left must reject any formulas that fudge on the question of full support for the miners — including coal boycotts and actions of 24 hour general strike proportions. A call for action from this TUC is essential.

Up to now the NUM has kept the General Council out of the strike. But Congress is not the same thing as the General Council and resolutions can be fought for there and won. It would be better to fight for resolutions for action and be defeated than allow the scabbing role of the right to go unchallenged.

Even if the right wing were to resist or attempt to sabotage action after the Congress, as they certainly would, there is enormous support for the miners throughout the labour movement. More than enough to stop the country and defeat the government. But the campaign for that action has to start this week with a fight at the TUC Congress itself.

Photo: GM COOKSON

The dock strike must win!

WHEN IT comes to strike-breaking the laurels must go to the super scab Bill Sirs. Not only was it his attempts to break the miners' strike that triggered the dock dispute, but now, cool as a cucumber, the same Sirs is organising steel union members to break the dock strike.

At Hunterston it is steel union officials who are overseeing the unloading of coal. This makes the steel union leadership the first to attempt to break both a miners' and a dockers' strike.

The dock strike itself was deliberately provoked by British Steel and the Port employers, probably with government backing. With the coal strike costing in the region of £75 million a week, and the winter months looming, the government urgently needs an end to the miners' strike. They calculated they could break the unity of the TGWU.

At Hunterston the difference between what the TGWU was prepared to unload (18,000 tons) and what BSC was demanding (21,000 tons) was relatively small. The fact that BSC was not prepared to compromise, but insisted on its own figures, was not simply to do with keeping Ravenscraig open. It had everything to do with provoking a confrontation in the docks.

But after an initial success it now looks like an extremely risky gamble for the government. The intervention of the TGWU leadership has reversed the no strike decision at Immingham and Grimsby. All the other main freight

By Jane Watson

ports are out, with Felixstowe the main exception.

The most serious threat to the dispute now comes from the unofficial no strike movement at Tilbury in London.

The first element in the bosses tactics is clear. The dockers must be divided, two, three, many Nottinghams should be created in the ports.

Events over the summer have encouraged the view that this is possible.

At Immingham officials have been dragging their feet over confronting further breaches of agreements since the conclusion of the last dock strike in July. Felixstowe and Dover only grudgingly participated in the earlier strike, and Dover's capitulation to pressure from independent freight drivers forced its speedy conclusion.

Clearly there is opposition to the strike among dockers, and the vote at Tilbury will be a major test. But the TGWU must learn from the NUM in responding to this situation.

At the outset the miners' strike went far from smoothly. But when the NUM leadership turned full square into winning the strike, and began the organisation of massive picketing in the working areas, it was not long before Nottingham was entirely isolated.

The same must be done in the dock strike. The success at Immingham and Grimsby must be followed up with a campaign to win strike action at Tilbury.

And then every port that fails to strike should feel the pressure of mass picketing to isolate the strike breakers and extend the action.

This is vital as the dock strike can be crucial to the whole development of the miners' strike.

Up and down the country striking miners and their wives have taken new heart and determination from the dockers' support. A defeat on the docks would mean a huge escalation of the attempts to break the strike through bringing in foreign coal. Alongside this, demoralisation among the miners themselves would give a new boost to the bosses' failed back-to-work campaign.

Groundswell

For the dockers it would be an enormous blow, doubtless becoming a prelude to full-scale attacks on the Dock Labour Scheme, which the Tories and the port employers have been threatening since last April.

Relaunching solidarity with the miners is the central task of the next weeks. Over the summer the pressure has come on, with money running low. The NUM has already announced it has to limit the distribution of free literature as its funds have reached bottom.

Money for the independent women's groups is being restricted. And in every area there is deepening hardship and increasing pressure on limited sources of funds and donations.

Through the TUC and the Labour Party conferences the support work must be pushed forward. The money has to roll in to keep the strike going.

But the key now is to ensure the victory of the docks strike.



Thatcher go home!

THATCHER couldn't get away from the miners' strike, even while on holiday in Switzerland. Members of the Swiss socialist youth organisation, the RSJ, dumped 300 kilos of coal on the drive to her holiday home.

The youth, supporters of the Fourth International, called for support for the miners, and for Britain out of the north of Ireland.

Who's backing 'back to work'?

THE MEDIA and NCB's back to work campaign is a total farce, but the backing it receives shows the urgent need of the government and bosses to bring the miners' strike to an end.

In South Wales an organisation calling itself the Nationwide Miners Wives Back to Work Movement has been active with a poster campaign. One of them shows a donkey with Arthur Scargill's head.

But the movement is a failure. In the last week one man has been trying to cross the picket line in Bedwas, and a meeting has been organised to start up picketing to stop him.

Abertillery pit was one of the last to come out on strike in South Wales, and a meeting of

250 was held to discuss a return to work, but only 12 miners voted for it.

By Nigel Bevan,
Penrhwi-ceiber NUM

The national organiser of the so-called 'nationwide movement' is a woman called Irene McGibbon from Deal in Kent. Last week the *South Wales Echo* revealed that she had been involved in breaking a strike at the Cowley car plant in Oxford in 1974.

At that time her husband was working at Cowley. After the strike he left and immediately got a job in the pits in Kent. The recent stay-down at Betteshanger was organised against his attempts to work.

Irene denies she has any big business backing

and says she has built the movement over the phone. She explained that she 'rings up people who appear on television or are in the papers with anti-strike sentiments'.

Her counterpart in South Wales is June Sjaelberg from Beddau, who has refused to appear in public without a representative of the *Sun* newspaper.

Miners' supporters in South Wales are asking themselves a few questions.

How did Irene's husband get a job in the pits so soon after leaving Cowley? How does Irene get the phone numbers of people who 'appear on the television or in papers'? And how will she pay her phone bill?

Who is paying for the poster campaign across the country? And who is paying to send out letters to every miner suggesting they return to work?



Scotland faces test

THE ISTC'S STRIKE breaking at Hunterston and Ravenscraig has highlighted the weaknesses of the Scottish trade union leaderships' strategy for the miners strike. TONY SOUTHWALL looks at some of the lessons.

On Wednesday 9 May the Scottish TUC organised the first of the series of regional days of action in support of the miners. There was a mixed response but with strong support from public sector workers. All in all however it got solidarity action off to a good start and held out the hope that it would escalate.

Large sections of the trade union movement in Scotland understood that the miners could not win alone — and that the stakes in the struggle involved the entire working class movement.

But since that time the lack of a national lead coming out of the Labour Party and the TUC has been accompanied by a great deal of rhetoric in Scotland, but few proposals for sufficient action to bring the strike to a speedy conclusion. The original deal negotiated by the Scottish NUM leadership over Ravenscraig un-

doubtedly created difficulties.

Some of the problems were shown up by the events in Scotland over last weekend. In Glasgow 300 shop stewards, mainly from the CSEU, met. The meeting was to plan the Scottish TUC/CSEU/Labour Party demonstration to be held in Glasgow on Saturday 15 September. Unfortunately, no detailed plans to build it were put forward and participants went away without even the leaflets and posters that would be needed.

More seriously only

one speaker criticised the calling of the demonstration on a Saturday — as opposed to the day of action in work time on 9 May.

There were also three demonstrations over the weekend at Dalkeith near Edinburgh, Bathgate in West Lothian, and Cumnock in Ayrshire. Speakers included Arthur and Ann Scargill and numerous Scottish trade union and Labour spokespersons.

Scathing

The demonstrations were mainly miners but with considerable support from other parts of the movement. The speakers were scathing about the one per cent of scabs getting all the media publicity and about the ISTC's breaking of ranks. They showed a solid determination to win the strike.

But there's the nub of the problem. As this article appears a fleet of scab lorries is moving the

Ostia's coal from Hunterston to Ravenscraig. If we're talking seriously about winning the strike every one of these meetings should have been used to popularise the call for the entire Scottish trade union movement to respond the moment the coal began to move.

Boycott

What is needed is not a march of thousands of unionists through Glasgow shopping centre, no matter what its value, but stopping that scab coal getting to its destination. Important work has been done in Glasgow raising £3,000 a week for support for the miners. But mass pickets, actions to cut off Ravenscraig, and the decision to boycott coal are what is needed to win.

The Scottish dockers are taking the lead in solidarity that can win. Now they have to have effective backing and solidarity.

3 September

Lobby the TUC!

FOR SIX MONTHS now the miners have withstood the greatest attack launched on any union for fifty years.

- A police operation that is costing £3 million a week and has turned parts of the country into a police state.

- An unrelenting campaign of financial attacks. Single miners with no income for six months and families with £15 a week deducted even from miserly social security payments give the lie to the idea that capitalism has ever changed its spots. Starving trade unionists back to work remains the only policy of capitalism in any serious dispute.

- An unequalled campaign of press lies and denunciation by every right and 'centre' politician from Margaret Thatcher's call for a new 'Falkland's spirit', through David Owen's support for the use of the courts against the NUM, up to Neil Kinnock's miserable demands for a strike ballot and condemnation of miners' 'violence'.

Chancellor Nigel Lawson let the cat out of the bag concerning government policy in his famous slip in the House of Commons debate at the end of July when he admitted Thatcher's cabinet saw the strike as 'a worthwhile investment for the good of the nation.'

Immediate

What is more the attack the miners are facing is not just an immediate response by the government. The Conservative Party has been drawing up, and preparing, its plans to defeat a miners' strike for ten years — ten years that the TUC first spent negotiating 'social contracts' with Wilson and Callaghan and then used in capitulating to Thatcher over ASLEF, the NGA, the health workers and a dozen other major disputes.

While the TUC makes the absurd pretence that this is not a 'political' dispute the government has no such illusions. The famous 'Ridley report' drawn up by the Conservative Party, and leaked to the *Economist* in May 1978, already called for the massive use of scab lorry drivers (as seen now at Ravenscraig and Llanwern), for the large scale use of imported coal (as with the Ostia), for building up central coordination of the police (as in Nottinghamshire), and that the best way to defeat a strike would be 'to cut off the money supply to the strikers and make the 'union finance them'.

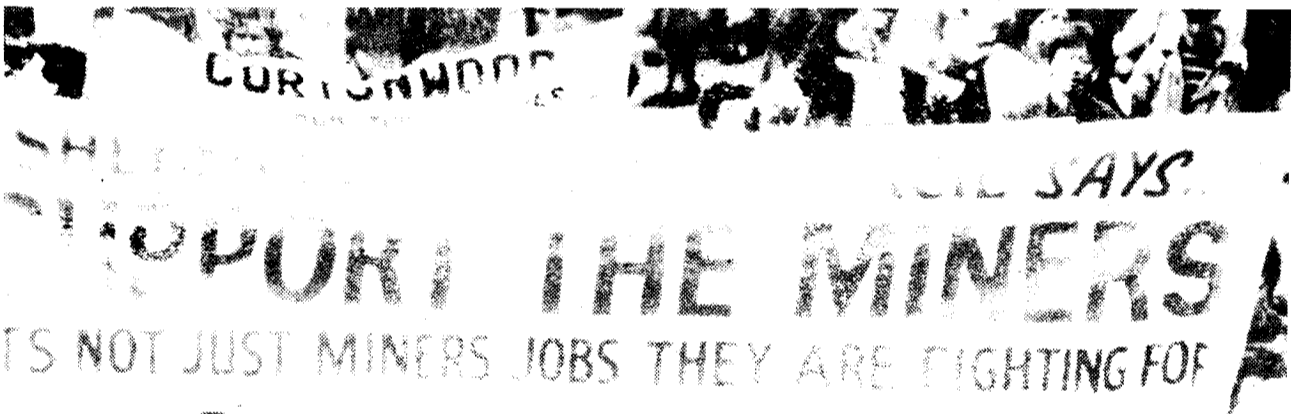
In short while the government has been carefully preparing and carrying out a long term plan the TUC has been aiding Thatcher to isolate the miners.

Yet despite this incredible assault there is not the slightest serious sign of the striking miners cracking.

The practical results of the 'back to work' movement are tiny. Of the



Food arrives in Yorkshire for the miners



Yorkshire's successful day of action

miners on strike before the 'back to work' campaign 99.85 per cent have stayed on strike and 0.15 per cent have gone back. That doesn't even merit the name of a 'trickle' back to work.

This strike can still clearly be won. The steel plants can be closed. The government's claims on coal stocks at the power stations are enormous exaggerations — as we show in the article in this week's centre pages of this paper. The entire weight of Thatcher's laws, police, and press campaign has not defeated the miners — and nor is it going to.

Today, as from the very first days of the strike, Thatcher is totally dependent for her chances of victory on the right wing of the trade union leadership. It is just necessary to list some of their actions in the strike

- On 21 March, as the strike was only getting underway, the EETPU, GMBATU and the Electrical Power Engineers Association immediately

issued statements for their members to keep working normally — a position which today, and in the future, means using scab coal brought into the power stations through miners' picket lines.

- On 15 May Eric Hammond, general secretary of the EETPU, made his infamous attack on the NUM as 'nursery revolutionaries'.

- The same day Alistair Graham, general secretary of the CPSA announced, 'What our members will not put up with is narrow facile political rubbish' and accused militants of 'trying to link two separate issues to one glorious all out revolutionary campaign of industrial action.'

- Later the same month Len Murray publicly attacked the Yorkshire and Humberside day of action in support of the miners — a day of action which successfully brought out on sympathy strike bus, rail, dock, health, and local government workers.

- At the beginning of June Kinnock took the opportunity of the police riot at Orgreave to denounce the violence ... of the NUM!

- Roy Hattersley decided to address the ISTC conference on 21 June to urge them not to allow any action with the NUM which would 'jeopardise steel making capacity'.

- And finally there is king scab himself — Bill Sirs. The man who now openly collaborates with British steel management, and the Tory government, to break both miners' and docks strikes.

If the TUC had given even the limited support it did to the miners in 1972 and 1974 — above all the simple decision not to cross miners' picket lines — this strike would already be openly on the road to victory.

Instead some individual unions have given the type of backing which can win — above all the NUR, ASLEF, NUS, and parts of the docks

section of the TGWU. But for most of the rest scabbing is widespread — and openly encouraged.

For what the miners are demanding from the TUC is not some new and outrageous policy. It is simply the elementary policies which built the British trade unions in the first place.

Solidarity — don't cross miners' picket lines. *Solidarity* — don't allow a section of the working class to be starved into submission. *Support* — no use of coal.

What is more the policy of the right wing at this congress is an unholy alliance of ostriches with their head stuck in the sand and lemmings heading for self-destruction — with a few simple stinking rats added in for good measure.

Huge pressure

Ravenscraig itself was only kept open after 1980 because of the huge pressure of the labour movement in Scotland. If that labour movement is dealt a crushing blow with the defeat of the miners Bill Sirs can forget about throwing his members on the tender mercies of Thatcher and the BSC management to keep the plant open in the next recession.

The key steps at the TUC, and the key steps for the labour movement, remain to break the isolation of the miners. 'Unity' at the TUC which consists simply of diplomatic phrases used as an excuse for doing nothing, as proposed by Basnett, would be a bigger betrayal even than an open rejection by the TUC of the demands put forward by the NUM to win the strike.

The number one task at the TUC is to pass the three resolutions supported by the NUM — for every trade unionist to respect all miners' picket lines, for a boycott of coal, for a 10p levy on every trade union member.

Added to that are two other key demands. For a national Labour Party/TUC demonstration in support of the miners, for a national day of action, a twenty four hour general strike, called by the TUC in support of the miners.

These are the key demands that have to be raised on the 3 September lobby of the TUC.

ASTMS No. 3 Division resolution

The No 3 Divisional Council of ASTMS, at its last meeting, carried the following resolution:

'This Divisional Council calls upon the National Executive Committee to use all the influence at its disposal to extend active solidarity to the NUM.

It commends all those who today have expressed and organised solidarity at a local level, and urges them to continue this vital work.

This DC notes however the absence of a national focus for solidarity action and therefore calls upon the national executive to:

1. Propose through the appropriate leadership bodies of the Labour Party and TUC, a national demonstration in support of the miners.
2. To further call for a national 24 hour stoppage in support of the miners, through the TUC and the Labour Party.
3. To circulate guidelines on local solidarity initiatives with the miners, and examples of where these have been effective.

Sat 18 Aug

SE LONDON LABOUR MOVEMENT

BACK THE MINERS
THEIR FIGHT IS OURS

KILL UNION POWER

The March and Rally have been jointly organised by Greenwich, Woolwich & East London Parties, Greenwich Trades Council, Greenwich Miners Strike Support C'hoice, Kent NUM & other local Trade Union branches

MINERS MARCH & RALLY

March: 2pm, Sat. Sept. 8th, Abbey Wood Station (BR)

Rally: 3.30pm, General Gordon Sq., Woolwich.

SPEAKERS: Mick McGahey (NUM), Joan Maynard, MP, John Austin-Walker, Guy Barnett MP, Debra Wood (GLC), Lesley Phillips (TUS), Ken NUM, Durham NUM.

Kent & Durham Miners, their Families & Colliery Bands will be present.

THE 'NEW REALISM', adopted as policy at the 1983 TUC Congress, was the most coherent right wing policy put forward in the trade unions for decades. Despite the setbacks suffered by the TUC right since last year's congress, JOHN ROSS argues that the 'new realism' continues to be the only coherent, and therefore most dangerous, reformist policy within the unions.

The policy of class collaboration, the view that somehow the unions and the employers can come together to solve the problems that face 'Britain', is as old as the modern trade union movement itself. But what makes the 'new realism' so striking and coherent is that it inextricably combines both an industrial and a political strategy.

While Frank Chapple is the most outspoken 'theorist' of new realism the real power which transformed Chapple's old ideas from fringe rightism into a powerful force was the AUEW right wing. Every single idea of post 1983 new realism was prefigured by Duffy, Boyd, and Gavin Laird during the first Thatcher government.

The starting point was a supposedly irreversible success of Thatcher in attacking the unions. Drawn from this is a political policy for the trade unions based on weakening links with the Labour Party, limiting or eliminating industrial action and preparing, if necessary, for collaboration with the SDP/Liberal Alliance in a Labour/Alliance coalition government.

Opposition

At the April 1982 AUEW national committee Duffy already announced that the Thatcher government had 'embarked on a policy of sapping the financial and numerical strength of the trade union movement', and that 'Unfortunately, they are succeeding'.

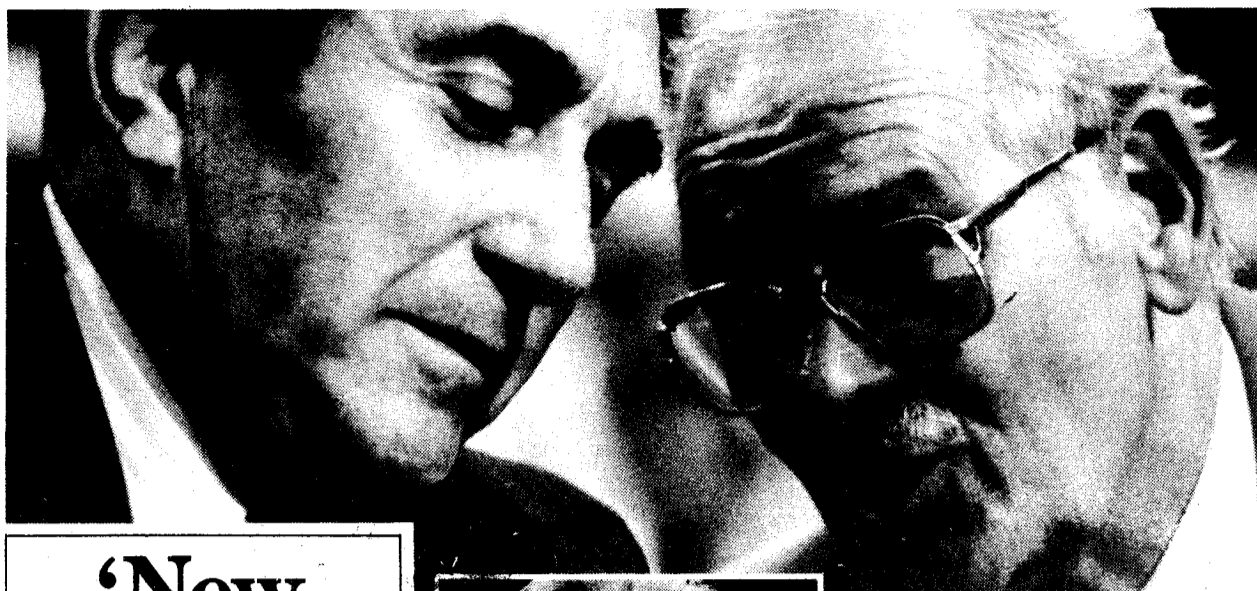
By a year later, at the April 1983 AUEW conference, Duffy was already openly drawing the political consequences which he believed flowed from this analysis. He declared 'I don't believe the trade union movement will tolerate a Labour Party in permanent opposition', and that the AUEW's policy of outright opposition to the Common Market must be changed because 'In the event of a hung parliament Labour will not be able to work with the SDP/Liberal Alliance unless we agree to a referendum on the EEC.'

Before the June 1983 election Chapple and Duffy's views still remained a 'fringe' opinion. The only other trade union leaders to openly back policies of cooperation between Labour and the Alliance were Bill Sirs, in the ISTC journal, and Roy Grantham of APEX — who called for a vote for Liberal candidates against Labour in a number of constituencies in the June election itself.

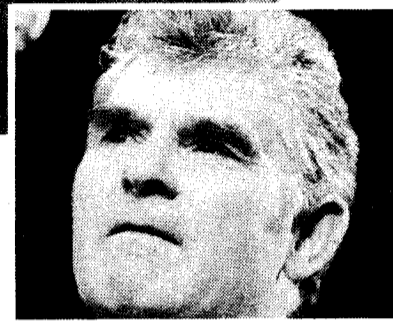
These policies were backed externally by the *Guardian* newspaper, which called for an Alliance/Labour vote in June, and the *New Statesman*, which called for voting Liberal or Scottish Nationalist against Labour in a number of constituencies. The chief theoretical gloss for the Labour right wing policy was provided by Eric Hobsbawm and the pages of *Marxism Today*.

The real bombshells which openly cemented 'new realism' in place however were the analyses made by Frank Chapple and Len Murray of the 1983 election.

In a major article Chapple specifically wrote for *The Times* after the election he announced the need for a change in trade union policy and that 'I am convinced that it will not be long before some rank and file members start suggesting that instead of giving our money to a no-hope Labour Party, we should donate it to the cause of proportional representation.' The conclusion was that, 'If we had not been so completely tied to the (Labour) party's coat-tails we could have urged our members to vote SDP,



'New Realism' - one year on



Chapple, Duffy, Murray, and the scab Sirs — architects of the 'new realism'

Photos: GM COOKSON AND JOHN HARRIS

or Liberal if they had a chance of winning. Over and over again our loyalty to Labour let the Tories in on June 9.'

Murray himself had been attempting to lead the TUC openly and sharply to the right ever since 1981. He played a direct and decisive role in sabotaging the ASLEF strike in July 1982. At the congress the same year Murray finally piloted through, by a tiny margin, the new rules on the election of the general council.

Within two days of the June 1983 election, and without any discussion at the general council, Murray announced an open reversal of TUC policy on questions such as talks with the Thatcher government.

Responsibility

Murray argued that, 'the TUC had always made clear its preparedness to work with an elected government which offered genuine involvement and real responsibility,' and that 'sooner or later if the economy expanded and the country began to pull out of the recession, then the government would have to win the willing cooperation of the working people.' From then on new realism was up and running as TUC policy.

At the September 1983 TUC congress Chapple and Murray seemed to sweep all before them. The structural reorganisation of the general council to prevent congress as a whole voting on its composition was carried. A position favouring talks with the government was carried. A resolution proposed by Alistair Graham calling for the general council to 'prepare a statement on the principles of modern trade unionism' was adopted.

So extreme appeared the decisions of the congress that even sections of the Labour right and centre were concerned. Jack Straw, speaking in his constituency during the congress, accused Frank Chapple of using his 'fiefdom' in the EETPU, 'not only to

weaken the links with our party, but to destroy them.' He stated that Chapple sought 'a sanitised, centrist trade union movement,' whose reality would be, 'a politically neutered movement...at worst as corrupt and morally degenerate as the American Teamsters Union of Jimmy Hoffa and Mafia fame.'

The new realism in practice reached its peak with Murray's, and the general council's, savage defeat of the NGA in December 1983. By January 1984, with Len Murray apparently at the peak of his power, the promised TUC document on union policy, *Strategy for the Future*, was urging trade unionists to remember that 'the basis of current TUC involvement in government owes much to Churchill's wartime coalition and subsequent Conservative governments.'

Compromises

The same document called for a policy in which 'the essence of accommodating industrial change through collective bargaining is the need for compromises reflecting both union objectives and those of the employers.'

Yet one year after the famous 1983 congress the new realism on the face of it appears to have disappeared, disintegrated. A month after *Strategy for the Future* was adopted the TUC withdrew from the National Economic Development Council over the government's policy on GCHQ. Then Murray resigned amid rows over the same issue and criticism of his role over the NGA dispute. Basnett issued statements praising 'old virtues' as a contrast to new realism. Above all the miners strike has shaken, radicalised, and divided the entire trade union movement. This year it is the left which is making the noise coming into congress and not the right wing.

But it would be a total mistake to

believe that the new realism has gone away. The left may now be making the noise and is on the offensive, but it is the new realist right which both knows where it is going and is proceeding systematically to get there.

First none of the really powerful union bases of the new realist right is under threat. Neither Hammond nor Duffy and his successors are under real threat in the EETPU or AUEW. Right winger Roy Evans was chosen to replace the scab Bill Sirs as general secretary of ISTC. The open new realist right remains the strongest coherent force in the TUC — although still a definite minority as yet.

No-strike deals

The EETPU has pushed rapidly ahead with its practical plans for a new business unionism. The no-strike deals signed by the EETPU with Toshiba, Sanyo, Inmos, AB Electronics and Hitachi are just the widely publicised spearhead of its campaign.

Furthermore while the EETPU no-strike deals will be verbally attacked at the TUC other unions are going down the same path. The GMBATU has signed a deal for compulsory binding arbitration with NEK Cables. Nissan demanded a single union 'Japanese style' agreement from either the AUEW or GMBATU for its new factory. Tyne Ship Repair in South Shields has a four year no-strike pledge signed by the boiler-makers. The civil service unions, and the TUC as a whole, offered a no-strike deal at GCHQ.

At the level of the general council the structural changes in election piloted through by Murray guarantee a strengthened position for the right wing. There is no serious opposition, or even amendment to the TUC strategy document.

On the political level the distancing of the new realists from exclusive links with the Labour Party has con-

tinued. The EETPU has become the first union to appoint a member of the SDP as editor of its union journal. The AUEW has withdrawn from Trade Unionists for a Labour Victory. Chapple's passing testament to the trade union movement, his new autobiography *Sparks Fly*, announces that, 'If all that the trade unions can see out of their relationship with the Labour Party, is a never-ending struggle to put them in power, which doesn't bear any fruit for the unions, then the unions are not likely to keep paying their money to the Labour Party.'

Asked in the *Guardian* about the implications of this, and that such a financial boycott would make Labour incapable any more of being a 'party of government', Chapple announced, 'In that sense, right.'

Today, at this TUC congress, the open proponents of new realism will be holding their silence for tactical reasons — first and foremost because of the impact of the miners strike. Second because of the long list of major pay claims — Vauxhall, Leyland, Rolls Royce, Ford, and others — which are coming up. There may well be a new autumn, or winter, of discontent.

Collapse

But at present, and this is why the first new realist thrust collapsed in the spring of 1984, the fundamental problem for the TUC right is that *the government* does not want to talk to them. The craven no-strike offer at GCHQ was contemptuously rejected by Thatcher. All attempts to mediate over the miners strike have failed. As the government itself refuses to talk, the TUC has to put on a temporarily more militant face to try to maintain its position and get someone to talk to.

This is why it was traditional leaders of the centre-right, Basnett of the GMBATU and Tuffin of the UCW, who took the initiative to withdraw from the National Economic Development Council. Do not forget Murray's original formulation for new realism that, 'sooner or later if the economy expanded and the country began to pull out of the recession, then the government would have to win the willing cooperation of the working people.' As during any economic upturn the unions recover their power, and militancy increases the TUC, packed with new realists, is prepared to offer its services for 'negotiations' — that is new measures to police the working class.

Strategy

The whole basis of TUC strategy is to persuade capitalism that it should dump Thatcher's attempt to dominate the working class and labour movement without the help of the trade union bureaucracy. Instead the TUC demands to be allowed to join in the police operation. If the Tories are unwilling to grant this, and Labour is too weak, the SDP/Liberal Alliance should be brought in on the act. The business unionism of the EETPU, the increasing toying with collaboration with the Alliance as well as Labour, are the different sides of the same coin.

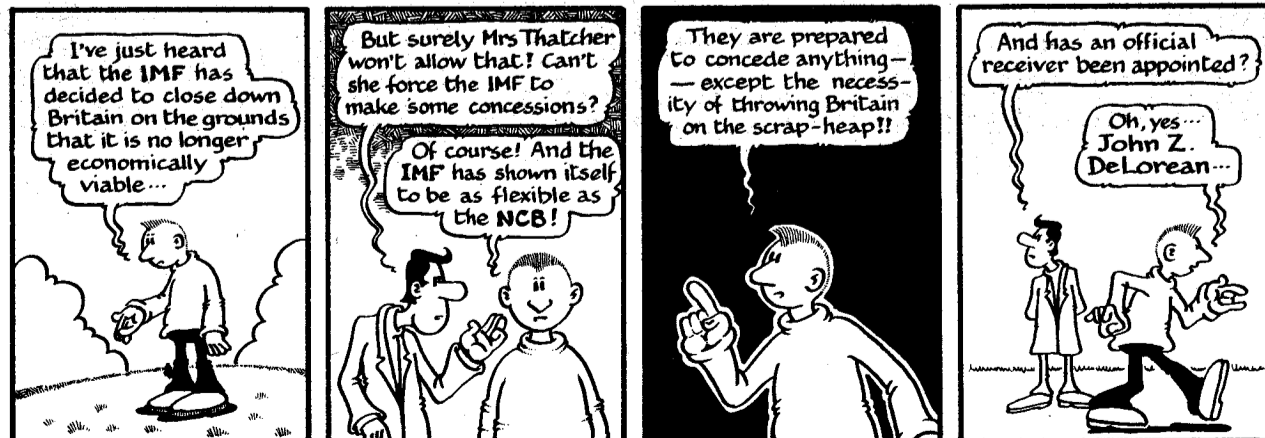
The new realist right is the *only* reformist force within the TUC with a coherent strategy. The left united around the miners has a militant line for one, or several, disputes. It may — this remains to be seen — be capable of winning some major specific struggles and severely denting, or even breaking Thatcher.

But the reformist left has no policy for taking forward the TUC. No one seriously believes in a return to the old days of Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon with their relative industrial militancy and 'social contracts' with Labour governments. The bedrock strength of the new realist right is that they do have a strategy and no other reformist does.

The new realists are not dead. They are just waiting their time. The fight against them remains a fundamental part of socialist strategy in the unions.

A PIECE OF THE ACTION

© GORMAC



The left and the TUC

THE MOST urgent task at this year's TUC Congress is to give the support which can win the miners' strike. Without this there cannot be a serious discussion about strategy for the labour movement as a whole.

But this is not enough. The fundamental strategic weakness remains the lack of any policy for the trade union and Labour left to put together a popular majority capable of confronting Thatcher and the strategists of 'new realism'.

On this page JOHN ROSS looks at the strategy that's needed and JUDE WOODWARD explains why women are central to the new alliances Labour must build.

THE BASIC problems can be stated simply. Thatcher took advantage from the tremendous divisions within the working class created by the incomes policies of the last Labour government.

Wage controls, and their associated policies, very severely hit the better off sections of the working class — the types of workers concentrated in the South and South East of England, skilled workers throughout the country.

The result was the pattern seen at the last elections. The polls showing the Tories actually leading Labour among skilled

manual workers, a huge Tory landslide in the south east, the 'north-south' geographical division between Labour and the Tories. Within the trade union movement the Tories and the Alliance won in the same layers that are today the base of the right wing inside the EET-PU and AUEW. Only 39 per cent of trade unionists as a whole voted Labour.

Thatcher's political policies, her 'two nations' approach, is designed to consolidate the alliance created in 1979. Rejection of incomes policy, increasing of pay differentials within the working class, encouraging of council house sales and so on are all designed to create a so called 'common interest' between the Tories' capitalist backers and the

better off sections of the working class.

The economic basis for the entire social alliance is created by the oil revenues — revenues used not to build up investment in the British economy but to fuel foreign investment and an enormous consumer boom. Out of this Thatcher is able to build the social alliances reflected in the steady 40 per cent of the vote around which Tory support fluctuates.

The 'new realist' right have at least half a strategy. Labour in alliance with the SDP-Liberals could command an electoral majority. As the SDP-Liberal Alliance is closely tied to big European capital in the EEC the 'new realists' hope that periodically Labour would be allowed into office as a partner of supposedly 'progressive' sections of the capitalist class.

Such a policy would of course mean accepting the EEC, British nuclear weapons, some form of incomes policy, etc. It would, in short, mean abandoning every progressive policy held by Labour, create a government far to the right of even Wilson/Callaghan, and produce new and disastrous splits within the working class.

The long term problem for the left within the



Tens of thousands of activists, hundreds of thousands of trade unionists support the miners strike today.

Photo: GM COOKSON

Labour Party and trade unions is that it has no strategy capable of confronting either Thatcher's government or that proposed by the 'new realism'.

The left can win individual major struggles. The old team of Scanlon and Jones finally did smash Heath's Industrial Relations Act — and finally his government. In principle, though with much greater difficulty, the 'lefts' can produce enough solidarity to win the

miners strike — although this cannot at all be considered certain. Even Thatcher's government could be defeated.

But the problem is what is Thatcherism to be replaced with? The old high point of the Labour left's struggle — the policy realised up to 1974 — was major industrial struggles followed by a Labour government with a 'social contract' with the unions. But that policy, the Callaghan government,

led to disaster. Furthermore precisely because of that disaster, such a policy cannot even be projected today as credible.

There are today the elements of a totally different course for Labour. A national minimum wage to knit together and unify the low paid; defence of the health service, local government and the social services which affect all sections of the working class; a resolute and uncompromising fight for the liberation and rights of women; a fight against racism and in support of black self-organisation; abolition of nuclear weapons and elimination of the capitalist 'defence' budget; these and other policies are the means whereby Labour, based on the trade unions, could build a massive political and electoral dominance.

These policies provide the platform to defend the political levy and fight off the legal organisational attacks on the labour movement. Elements of such a social alliance have come together in the big cities such as London and Liverpool — where Labour strength has held up far better than other areas of the country.

But so far these policies are only elements of an alternative and are not tied together in a coherent and widely

understood strategy. The reason for this is simple. The social alliances necessary for such a majority for Labour cannot be constructed within an acceptance of the existing distribution of wealth and, even more, under conditions of capitalist domination of the economy.

Today capitalism means four million unemployed and the poverty of Thatcherism. Any measures attempting to reflate the economy, or increase wages or social benefits, no matter what their short term effects, will in only a short period of time collide with a capitalist domination of the economy which already means a refusal to invest and asset stripping of the domestic economy.

Labour, or any government, then faces only one choice: either break the capitalist control of the economy or be broken itself. That is the final logic of any struggle launched against Thatcherism in the present situation.

Today tens of thousands of activists, and hundreds of thousands of workers, are supporting the miners. That is a great start in the class struggle. The task of the next year is to hammer that out into an entire strategy capable of confronting and defeating Thatcher and 'new realism'.

Women won't wait

'DON'T WORRY, I won't take long. I'm only trying to change the habits of centuries and the prejudices of lifetimes.' That was the comment of one woman delegate at last year's TUC, mounting the rostrum amid wolf-whistles.

The delegate's comment summed up the feelings of thousands of women when they look at the traditions and history of the great British labour movement.

The failure of the TUC is most graphically illustrated by the membership of the TUC General Council. The only women members of it are those elected to the six places reserved for women. Every post where a man can be elected, a man is.

This is not at all surprising when the sexual composition of the delegates is taken into account. When the TV cameras scan the conference hall, just see how many women you can spot!

But women now make up 29 per cent of trade union members in Britain, an increase of nearly 50 per cent since 1960 that has yet to be reflected in the composition of the TUC.

That's why there are no resolutions up for debate at this TUC on specifically women's issues. The only discussion on women will be around the platitudinous Women's Advisory Committee report.

From the discussion that's planned you wouldn't believe that 1984 is the year that has seen the most massive mobilisation of women in an industrial dispute in the whole history of the British labour movement.

By Jude Woodward

You wouldn't know this was the year that police repression was used to prevent women protesting for peace outside Greenham Common airbase. Or the year when Asian women travelled in protest right across Europe to demand the same rights to live in Britain as men.

The TUC has not even begun to absorb the lesson being learnt by the NUM. Put best by Mick McGahey saying that had women been involved in 1926 the way they are in the miners' strike today, then the outcome of the General Strike might have been quite different.

Yet when women see this situation and begin to demand more power for the women's TUC — in particular the right of the women's TUC to refer resolutions for automatic debate to the full TUC — they are denounced as 'separatist'. But it's the TUC itself that is a white, male separatist organisation. Women only participate by invitation.

This has been reflected in all the policy issues raised by women. The TUC dragged its feet for years before adopting policy in favour of equal pay. It has



Spot the woman at the TUC

adopted positive action for jobs, but doesn't campaign for it. The question of a Statutory Minimum Wage was the subject of a twenty year fight, finally resolved at last year's TUC. But this year the only mention of it is in an amendment submitted by the Tailor and Garment Union.

This year there is no mention of abortion, homeworking or the rights of part-time workers. Nothing on child benefit, nursery provision or maternity leave.

Above all, nothing refers to the massive explosion and radicalisation of women that has taken place over the last few years, and especially around the miners' strike.

Yet in failing to get to grips with any of these issues the TUC not only fails women, it deepens its own problems. One of the major concerns of the

unions over the last few years has been the decline in union membership brought about by the recession. This year trade union membership has dropped to 9.5 million.

While this is not yet a disaster, it does mean that serious campaigning has to go into recruitment to maintain and rebuild numerical strength. In this women are key.

Today in Britain around 68.8 per cent of male workers are in unions, while only 39.2 per cent of women workers are unionised. These are significant figures.

Firstly they indicate something new about the relationship of women to the labour movement. While it is still a minority of women who are in unions, over the last ten years it has ceased to be unusual for women to join a union. Two out of every five women workers in a union means that women

take the unions seriously, and any recruitment campaign directed at women would have a solid base to work from.

Secondly, women today constitute about 40 per cent of those in work at any particular point in time (around 9.25 million). This is an increase of nearly 120 per cent in the proportion of women working since 1951.

Limited

While the public sector unions — especially NUPE, COHSE, NALGO and the CPSA — have had some success in building up their female membership, it remains limited. The potential for the unionisation of women workers remains largely untapped (from the point of view of the trade unions) and ignored (from the point of view of

women workers themselves).

Of course the unions argue that a very high proportion of women workers are part-time or homeworkers who cannot be unionised in the short term without major struggles. But, quite apart from the fact that the unions should seriously take this campaign on board, this does not even account for the majority of the 6.5 million women in work who are not in unions.

But such a campaign to recruit women would demand a fundamental reorientation by the unions. The majority of women will remain outside the unions as long as they appear to be men's organisations — with all men on the TUC General Council, with no serious campaigns for the demands of women and the low paid. As long as women who do get up to speak get wolf-whistles

and sexist comments.

Women could wait forever for the present leadership of the TUC to take the initiative. But women are not just waiting.

The miners' wives have shown dramatically how women can make their presence felt in the labour movement. The NUM is 100 per cent male, but women fought and the NUM had to let them in on the organisation of the strike, including at a national level.

Now the TUC is going to have to learn the same lesson. It confronts a clear choice, further narrowing of its base as it looks for deals with Thatcher or the Alliance. Or a massive campaign to draw new forces more centrally into the labour movement on the basis of policies that meet their needs.

And women could nearly double the size of the trade union army.

IN BOTH THE 1972 and 1974 miners' strikes the Heath government claimed it had the coal stocks to last out the strike 'indefinitely'. In both cases it lied — and lost.
 Now the government is provoking a national dock strike by attempting to keep Ravenscraig in production. Just how strong is the government's real position on coal stocks? And what is the real cost of the strike?
SOCIALIST ACTION looks at some of the answers.

Here

The economics of the

PONTIFICATION ABOUT the miners' strike is now Britain's only growth industry. Ministers, stockbrokers and journalists all pronounce on the likely date for power cuts. Old friends fall out. Stockbrokers Phillips and Drew go for early December, while Energy Secretary Peter Walker insists the government can keep the lights on well into 1985. The *Economist* initially put its money on early October.

Have you ever wished you were better informed? Socialist Action's DIY Insight team of GEORGE BLAZYCA, JOHN HARRISON and BOB MORGAN dig deep to mine the truth.

The government can win the strike only by avoiding lengthy power cuts. The economy cannot function without electricity and the miners can stop generation. The Central Electricity Generating Board (CEGB) is the major customer for coal, taking about three quarters of coal production (1.5 million tons a week).

But predicting the onset of power cuts by simply dividing stocks by weekly consumption is mickey mouse analysis. Some stocks are unusable. During the 1974 miners' strike the *Economist* estimated that over four million tons of stocks were useless, much due to waterlogging.

The distribution of stocks also matters. In the 1972 NUM strike, Heath pulled the plug with eight million tons of coal still in CEGB hands but poorly distributed.

Pit head stocks are useless until transported to power stations. They usually move by rail, but the NUR and ASLEF boycotts are hitting deliveries hard. The government estimates that roughly a half a million tons of coal a week is getting through to power stations. The NUM estimate is a quarter of a million tons.

Peanuts

Some coal is moving by rail but to shift the normal 1.5 million tonnes a week by lorry would require a fleet of well over 8,000 12-tonnes lorries, making two trips a day, seven days a week. The Ravenscraig convoys, dominating recent TV news footage, are peanuts.

The CEGB can also substitute other fuels for coal. Electricity is generated in three main ways: oil, coal and nuclear. In 1983 the split was 7 per cent, 73 per cent, and 18 per cent respectively. This ratio roughly held until March 1984. In April oil burn shot up. The CEGB burnt almost as much oil in a month as it usually does in a year.

Any calculation of when the machinery will be shut off is sensitive to assumptions about fuel substitutability, current stocks, their usability and future deliveries. (Production is less relevant; deliveries to power stations from either current output or the 20 million or so tonnes of pit head stocks are what counts.)

Most commentators agree that the CEGB is currently using nuclear and oil capacity to the hilt. Walker confirmed this on *Weekend World* on 22 July. Our calculations also bear it out and it would indeed be surprising if the Board



were not doing so. But Peter Walker, anxious to minimise the impact of the strike on TV, inadvertently let the cat out of the bag. He maintained that CEGB coal stocks were falling by only 1.5 per cent a week. Given the latest official figures for stock levels (May), this implies current stocks of about 16 million tonnes.

Candlelight

Assuming electricity consumption in June and July ran at last year's level, and a maximum oil and nuclear burn, we can calculate weekly deliveries to power stations at approximately a quarter of a million tonnes. This is well down on May's delivery figures. And agreement between the NUM and rail unions over a tighter boycott of coal should have reduced that figure since July.

If deliveries continue at this rate, and we assume, as do most commentators, that some five million tonnes of CEGB stock are unusable, and that nothing else much changes we will all be dining by candlelight come November.

But other things probably will change. The government knows the score. It is doing its own calculations

and rehearsing contingency plans. As the Darkness approaches other options will grow more attractive, including action over secondary picketing and using troops to shift coal.

So don't rush to Ladbroke's to put your shirt on November. Our dateline is less a prediction than an index of the pressures the government faces and of the effectiveness of the NUM's action.

Power cuts are the government's chief worry. But riding out the strike also costs money. The biggest item is additional National Coal Board losses. City analysts put these at £34-35 million a week. Switching away from coal costs the CEGB £17-18 million a week. British Steel's losses are up by some £5-8 million a week and British Rail's by around £5 million.

The government also loses tax revenue from miners (£5-7 million a week), and forks out on extra social security benefits (£1 million or so a week). Policing the strike costs around £3-5 million a week. So the bottom line is £70-79 million a week, or around £4 billion a year.

Seventy five million pounds a week is well over a quid for every woman, man, and child in Britain. It is also the total subsidy to John DeLorean's disastrous car operation in the North of Ireland.

The centrepiece of the government's economic policy — described by the *Financial Times* economic commentator S Brittan as the only significant innovation of the Thatcher government — is the so-called Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). This plans to shave the difference between government revenue and expenditure.

Since governments are aware that projections of income and spending are dicey, they include an item called the Contingency Reserve — cash in hand for unexpected difficulties. For 1984-5 this was £2¾ billion.

But the reserve has already taken a battering. The government aimed for a rise in the public sector wage bill of only three per cent over the year. But to date settlements have averaged five per cent (many conceded to head off support for the miners). Since every one percentage point addition to the public sector wage bill costs nearly £¼ billion, this implies that pay deals will whittle away some £½ billion off the contingency-reserve.

Stockbrokers Simon and Coates suggest that: 'if the (miners) strike ends today the eventual accounting cost (including the cost of the overtime ban) would probably be £1 billion. What is worse the costs are mounting rapidly....any substantial prolongation

of the miners' strike would certainly necessitate a re-think.' In other words, it would imply seriously overshooting the MTFS.

Tory rhetoric about 'sound finance' and the evils of government 'profligacy' square awkwardly with their approach to this dispute. Thatcher, supposedly dedicated to tax cuts, is riding out a strike at a cost of well over £3 a week for every British taxpayer. A Mori poll on the question: 'Do you think it's worth paying £3 a week to defeat the miners?', might be more interesting than the ones recently conducted.

Interest rates

The price to the exchequer is not the only cost. Stockbrokers Messel estimate that the strike is knocking one percentage point off UK output growth. This implies a loss of some £3½ billion in a year. So the average male manual worker will be some £1.50 a week worse off (in addition to facing a higher tax burden).

Workers were also hit by a fall in sterling. Buying more oil to generate electricity costs dollars. Between March and May the oil import bill rose by

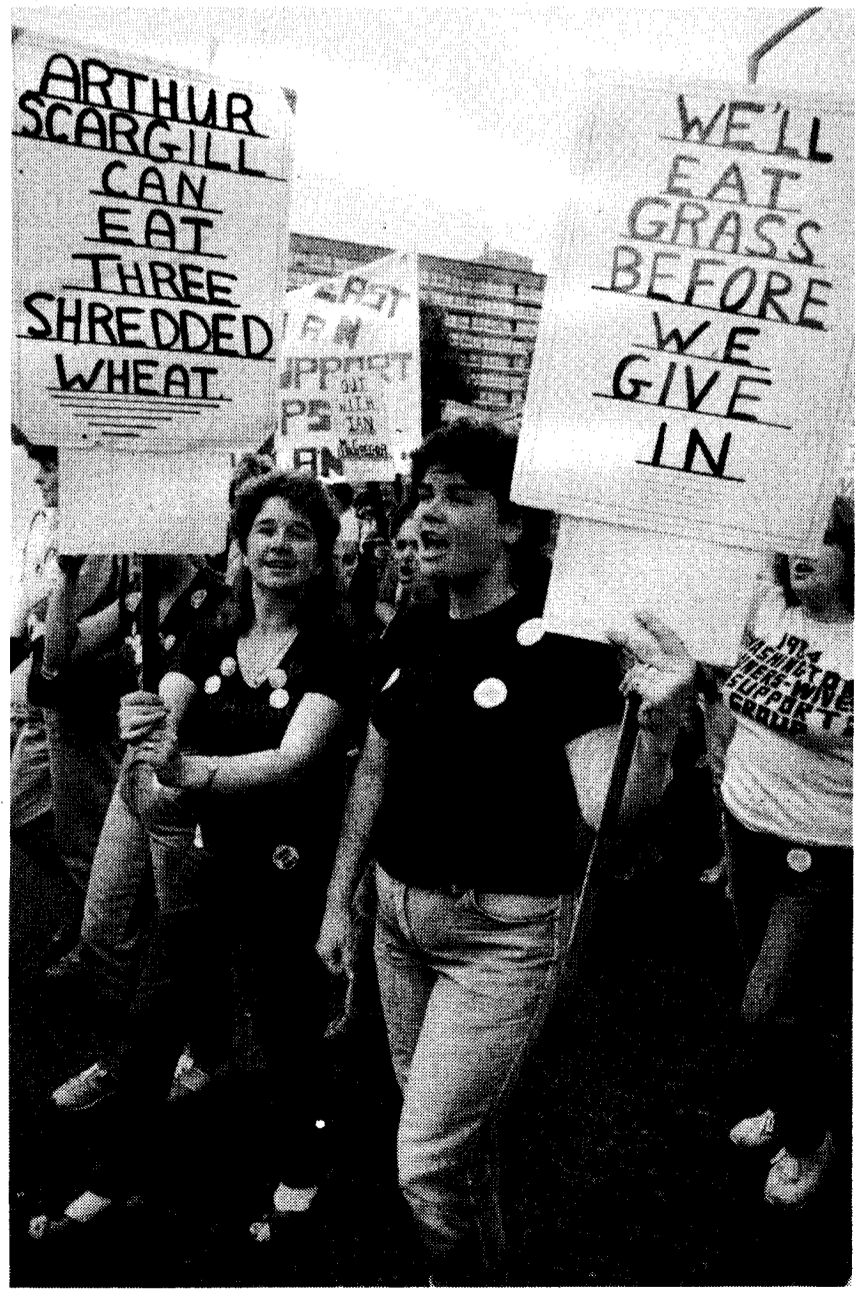


Photo: JOHN HARRIS

We go!

The miners' strike

about £3.5 million. This hit the balance of payments, and so undermined confidence in sterling. The government responded to the resulting collapse in the pound by jacking up interest rates costing the average mortgage payer (with a £20,000 mortgage) £40 or so a month.

So how do the National Coal Board, the government and Fleet Street commentators justify not acceding to the NUM's demands? They deploy several arguments.

One is that the strike is self-destructive. Ian MacGregor has suggested that the dispute will close as many pits as he's demanding, since pits are deteriorating through lack of maintenance.

The strike is certainly taking a toll on the mines. But MacGregor may be worried about which pits are suffering most. The pit deputies union NACODS argues that the more profitable the pits, the greater the destruction. The faster machinery has moved along a seam, the more susceptible it is to collapse.

A second argument is that taxpayers cannot be expected to subsidise 'uneconomic' pits. This apparently commonsense idea is riddled with holes. On official figures the NCB subsidy runs at some £500 million a year. The costs to the taxpayer of the dispute annualise at eight times this amount. The need for subsidy also largely flows from Thatcher's crashing of the economy when she came to office in 1979. Were the industry running at its 1979-80 level (some 15 million tonnes up on MacGregor's current target) losses would be more or less eliminated.

Pricing coal

The whole notion of 'uneconomic' pits and 'subsidies' is highly dubious. Both the Coal Board and the CEBG are state owned. So their profits and losses largely depend on government pricing policy (since it is largely buying from and selling to itself). Were the government to charge the CEBG more for coal, the Coal Board would show a profit and the CEBG a loss, reversing the present situation.

The NUM's *Fact Sheet* noted that: 'Between the first quarters of 1982 and 1983 the price of coal to large industrial customers increased by only 4.7 per cent. The price of electricity went up by 8.1 per cent. If the price of coal had risen to the same extent the Board's operating loss of £97 million would have been virtually eliminated.'

An 'uneconomic' pit is simply one unprofitable to the NCB. The closure of such a pit reduces Coal Board operating losses. But it also cuts coal production. People who were previously mining a socially useful product now producing nothing. Society, and not just the sacked miners, lose.

The National Coal Board estimates the losses from collieries producing the least efficient 12 per cent of coal at £275 million for 1982-83 (about half total losses). The closure of these pits would throw 40,000 miners out of work, and Andrew Glyn has calculated that an additional 35,000 workers would also lose their jobs as miners spending fell (*Guardian* 28 May). An unemployed worker costs the government £6,000 in lost taxes and higher benefit payments. So closing the NCB's major loss-making pits would cost the exchequer about



£450 million — almost twice the Coal Board's losses.

The government's long term plans involve axing far more than 40,000 mining jobs (let alone MacGregor's target of 20,000). The 'justification' is the relative future cost of different fuels. But this whole area is a minefield of guesswork. The oil price rises of 1973-74 and 1978-79 threw everything into the melting pot. And initial claims about cheap nuclear power fell foul of long delays and increasing concern about safety standards, which both cost money.

Governments have burnt their fingers over energy policy before. The NCB has closed 'uneconomic' pits and later reopened them at considerable cost, when oil prices rose. However, whilst future energy prices are uncertain, Scargill's claim that Britain currently produces the cheapest deep mined coal in the world appears to be true, if transport costs are taken into account.

The *New Statesman's* detailed examination, based on Shell Coal International figures, concluded that: '...once freight costs to Europe are taken into account, only South Africa has a clear edge over Britain. Once

transshipment costs of around £9 per ton from the major leading ports of Europe (Rotterdam, Antwerp) are added British coal looks increasingly competitive' (1 June).

100,000 jobs

So why is Thatcher so intent on butchering the industry? One objective is to pare British mining down to a few capital intensive, high productivity pits, which could be successfully privatised. Bradford University's Environment Research Group suggest that this strategy would imply a loss of 100,000 jobs by March 1988.

Another motive is the push to go nuclear. This derives in part from the highly powerful lobby of multinational nuclear capital. More importantly, it stems from a desire to break the NUM once and for all. A leaked 1979 cabinet minute stated: 'A nuclear programme would have the advantage of removing a substantial proportion of electricity from disruption by miners and transport workers.'

The NUM has long been the Tories' Industrial Enemy Number One. The 1972 miners' strike smashed Heath's 'n-1' incomes policy. Fifteen thousand Yorkshire miners and Midlands' engineers, in the most effective mass picketing then seen since the war, closed Saltley Coke Depot in Birmingham. The 1974 miners' strike brought down the Heath government — the first time in British history that an administration had been ousted by industrial action.

The Tories held a post mortem which recommended a strategic approach in future. As the *Financial Times* recently reminded its readers: 'The "Ridley Plan" advised that a Tory administration should be prepared to face up to the big unions, such as the miners, only after several years of careful preparation.' 'There should be a large and mobile squad of police equipped and prepared to uphold the law against violent picketing. Good non-union drivers should be recruited to cross picket lines with police protection.' This report provided the blueprint for Thatcher.

The Tories backed away from confrontation with the NUM in 1981, when the NCB responded to tighter government cash limits by announcing that 10 million tonnes of annual coal production and 30,000 jobs were to go. The NUM prepared a strike ballot and Welsh miners struck. The NCB then withdrew closure notices on 23 pits, and the Energy Secretary agreed to look at ways to cut coal imports and gave the Board more money.

The government didn't feel strong enough to move against the NUM until the summer of 1983. MacGregor's appointment signalled that an offensive was on the way. 'When Thatcher appointed Ian MacGregor to be Coal Board chairman a year ago it was a mandate to close pits.' (*Economist*, 12 April).

Having opted for confrontation Thatcher is now prepared to effectively ditch the MTFs, to add hundreds of thousands to dole queues, and to spend the equivalent of a Delorean a week of taxpayers money to try to smash the NUM. She must not succeed.

LIGHTS OUT TIME: Predictions from the gurus

Economist (21 June) — Early October

Philips & Drew Stockbrokers —
Late November/Early December

Observer (22 July) — Late November

Weekend World (22 July) —

Minor Power Cuts: November/Major Power Cuts: January

Peter Walker, Energy Secretary — Never

Socialist Action DIY Insight Team — November (the 5th?)

Acid rain — a bad trip

THE ISTC IS THE only union to put forward a resolution on acid rain at the TUC this year. For Bill Sirs it is simply an attempt to provide himself with an ideological cover for his scabbing on the miners' strike. But while Bill Sirs' concern is a fake, the issue itself is not.

Acid rain is becoming a question of major political importance in many European countries. In West Germany this summer the government had to return for a special session during the summer recess, for the first time ever in post-war Germany, to take an emergency debate on the issue.

But in Britain we hear little about acid rain. And the fact that the ISTC is the only union to take it up at the TUC this year would not indicate it was a pressing matter for socialists here.

Yet Britain is by far the worst culprit in the whole of Western Europe when it comes to looking at the causes of what is fast becoming an ecological and environmental disaster.

The causes of acid rain are straightforward. The burning of coal and oil — the fossil fuels — releases sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides into the air. The massive combustion of coal and oil, for electricity in particular, but also generally in industrial production, releases large amounts of these chemicals into the air, to return to earth at a later date. Some of these chemicals come back to earth as dust, but the rest, pumped high into the atmosphere through tall chimneys, combines with water in the air to produce sulphuric and nitric acid. This returns to earth as rain, hail, sleet or snow.

Small scale pollution of this type has taken place ever since human beings started burning coal. But since the industrial revolution the amount of chemicals pumped into the air has achieved mammoth proportions. In 1950 12 million tonnes of sulphur dioxide was being pumped out over Western Europe each year, by 1970 this had doubled to 25 million tonnes.

In Britain sulphur dioxide is pumped into the atmosphere at the rate of

roughly 100 kilos per person per year. Staggering and unpleasant — even if Britain is in the fortunate position that prevailing winds send most of it out over the North Sea, Scandinavia and the rest of Europe!

By Jude Woodward

The effect of this massive pollution has had a dramatic effect on the acidity of rain. Britain is one of the least affected countries in Europe, yet in the last 30 years British rain has become on average 50 to 80 times more acid. In Pitlochry rain with the same strength as lemon juice has been recorded.

Acid rain is now having devastating environmental effects right across Europe — destroying forests, reducing crops, killing fish, eating away at monuments, and causing

countless respiratory, skin and other diseases. Three million square miles of Europe and North America are now seriously affected.

In West Germany the destruction of the Bavarian and Black Forests has all the features of a near-irreversible national disaster. The Black Forest covers mountains higher than the British lake district and Pennines with greenery. The forest keeps the water table high and the soil in place.

If the forest dies the water table will drop, and the top soil will dry out and soon be blown away. Sand storms will affect the area until the soil is dispersed. Eventually green slopes and agricultural land will be replaced by bare rock, prone to avalanches in winter, bleak and bare in the summer.

The West German forestry commission gives the forest six or seven years to live! We're not talking about some future millennium but right now.

In Scandinavia lakes, rivers and forests are affected, with some lakes already technically 'dead' — empty of fish. In Eastern Europe the forests of Czechoslovakia, Poland and the Soviet Union are dying.

In Athens the Parthenon, which stood

almost as new for 2,400 years, has suffered more deterioration in the last 25 years than in its whole preceding history. Virtually every historic building in Eastern Europe is suffering.

Acid fogs, generally more acidic than rain, are a prime cause of respiratory diseases, and are frequently fatal to those already suffering with ailments like asthma. Increased acidity in water courses means more lead is dissolved with consequent effects on the quality of drinking water. West German scientists have suggested a link between 'cot death' and increased atmospheric pollution.

In Britain itself the Thatcher government firmly refuses to accept the existence of the problem, therefore very little money has been available for research into its effects.

But what is known is that for over 100 years Britain has been the largest producer of sulphur dioxide emissions in Western Europe, and this is the case today.

If Eastern Europe is included then Britain's guilt is second only to the USSR — but the USSR unlike Britain is a net receiver of acid rain, and it has promised a 30 per cent reduction in sulphur emissions over the next 10 years. With the USA, Britain is



the only country in Europe and North America to refuse to set a target for the reduction of sulphur emissions.

The Thatcher government has consistently refused to even acknowledge the problem, announcing that research still needs to be done to prove the problem exists. This has meant that Thatcher has not been able to employ an argument used by many right-wing governments — that nuclear power should be developed as a 'safer' alternative.

This argument is a complete joke, as Three Mile Island has already proved. The 'risks' of sulphur pollution are replaced by the 'safety' of a number of enormous nuclear bombs dotted round the country and pile-ups of radioactive waste. The current law suit against British Nuclear Fuels over radioactive leakage at Sellafield shows that the British nuclear industry is no safer than any other. So what is

the answer?

Even in West Germany, where the environmental effects are so devastating, the government has not seriously grasped the nettle of dealing outright with the problem. Yet a solution is within arms reach.

The cost of fitting the relatively simple mechanisms to filter sulphur dioxide from the smoke of power stations and industry in Britain or West Germany would cost around £1.5 billion — about the same as the cost of constructing one nuclear power station. This would deal with around 60 per cent of all atmospheric pollution caused by the burning of fossil fuels.

But of course capitalism can no more do anything to protect the environment than it can prevent nuclear war or provide full employment. Where profit rules the value of the Black Forest is reckoned on the basis of how many telegraph poles could be made out of the

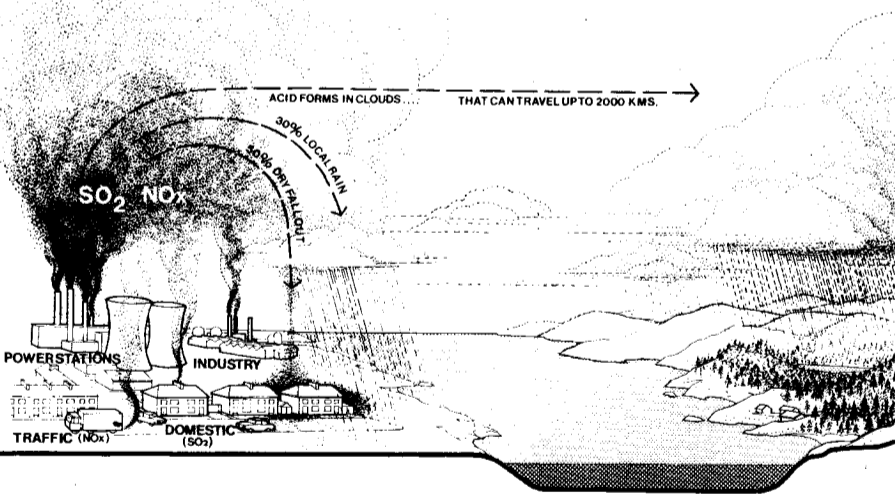
trees. And that's what is weighed up against the cost of saving it.

Nor will trade union leaders like Bill Sirs do anything. The green of the ISTC at this year's TUC is simply a veiled attack on the miners.

In fact the miners themselves are precisely who have to be looked to to solve the problem. The underinvestment in coal has many aspects: one is closing pits, another is the failure to spend money on cleaning coal smoke. In the future Britain's industry can be healthy on the basis of cheap coal and clean smoke.

At next year's TUC it would be good if there were an NUM resolution calling for the spending of that £1.5 billion to clean the air and end the scandal of Britain's role in the destruction of Europe's environment.

● For more information on acid rain, read *Acid Rain* by Steve Elsworth, £3.95, just published by Pluto Press.



March for miners not missiles

IN JULY a group of women met in Leicester to discuss the links that could be made between women active in the peace movement and women involved in the Women Support the Miners groups.

A large number of women turned up and decided on a series of joint actions to focus on the links between the closure of pits and the loss of coal and the planned expansion of the nuclear power industry as an alternative source of energy.

As the Leicester women's leaflet says: 'Why is it that money can be found to finance expensive and unnecessary projects such as the Trident nuclear submarines, but not to maintain the coal industry and save jobs?'

The first action they decided on was a Mines not Missiles march from Capenhurst Uranium Enrichment Plant to the Nottinghamshire

coalfield, from Friday 17 August to Monday 20 August. We chose to march through this area of the country to go through areas where the miners' strike was not well supported.

Capenhurst was decided on because it is the link between the civil and military nuclear programme. Capenhurst produces a waste product — plutonium — that is used

to make nuclear weapons.

Uranium, the raw material used, comes from Namibia. It is mined by black workers at below subsistence level wages, who are forced to work in appalling conditions with no safety measures despite the high risk of radiation poisoning.

By Helen John

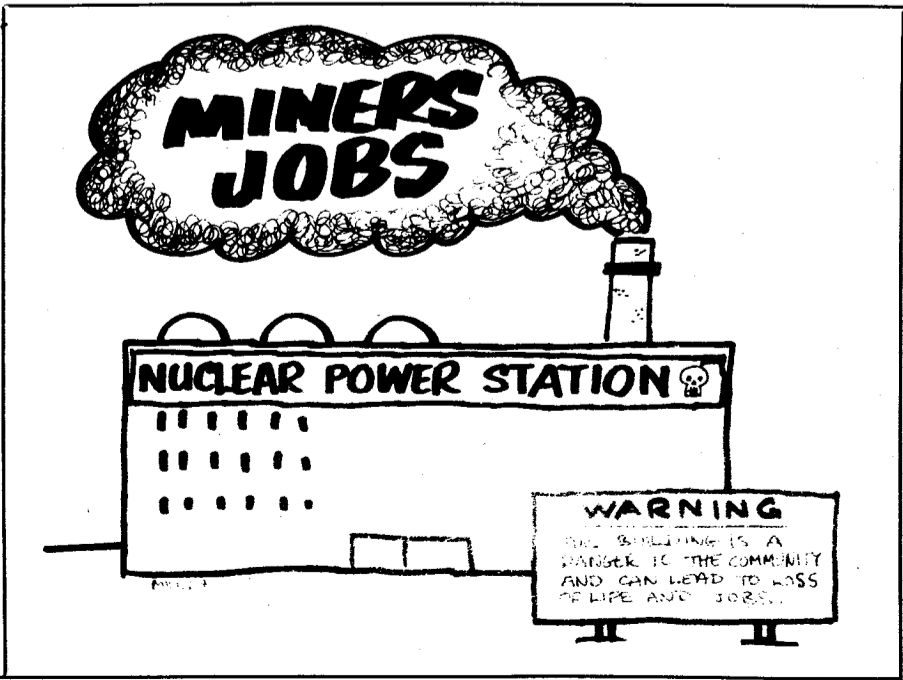
Nuclear power is expensive and dangerous. Workers have died from exposure to radioactivity and recent research has found links between radioactive waste and high incidences of leukemia in

children and with the birth of Down's Syndrome babies.

We first went to Chester on Friday night and on Saturday we marched through Stoke and Hanley, an area where the majority of miners are still working. It was a tremendous boost for the striking minority when we marched into their town.

On Monday morning we went to Sutton colliery and it was here that two Greenham women were arrested picketing.

● Make a donation to 'Women for Mines not Missiles', Yorkshire Bank, Leicester, Account number 29797100, Bank number 050560.





Ten million women needed for peace

IN SEPTEMBER NATO is undertaking a major exercise on the border with East Germany, code named 'Operation Lionheart'. Greenham women are calling on the 10 million women who live in Britain to take action to coincide with it.

By Helen John, Greenham Women Against Cruise

In local areas actions can focus on opposing local government civil defence preparations, and showing where the money should be spent — on education, health and housing.

Women are also being encouraged to come to Greenham where the 16 cruise missiles that can destroy us all are based.

Michael Heseltine has appealed to employers to release the largest number of men ever for territorial army duties in West Germany as part of the Lionheart exercise.

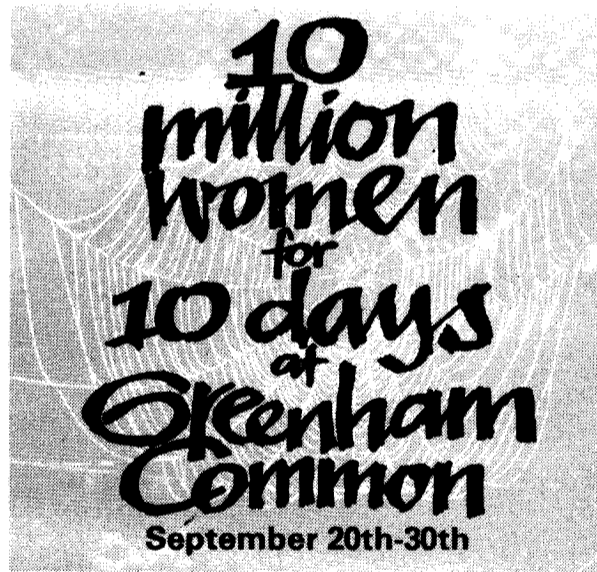
We appeal to trade unions and Labour councils to follow the example set by Derbyshire County

Council and NALGO, that is to release women to go to Greenham to work for nuclear disarmament. This is vital to counter the impression given by the press silence, that the protest at Greenham ceased to exist after the April evictions of this year.

If large numbers of women go there it will prove that even if the government spends its proposed £3.5 million on a new

high security fence at Greenham, the American missiles will still not be safe in our country.

● 10 Million Women at Greenham posters and leaflets are available from: the Peace Centre, 18 Moor Street, Queensway, Birmingham B4 7UB. Donations to the Spider Web Poster Fund should be sent to the same address.



Scottish CND — opposing Trident

FREEZE HAS been dropped at this year's annual meeting of Scottish CND, but not Trident. Opposition to Trident is popular in Scotland for obvious reasons. People are horrified at the prospect of further expanding the nuclear arsenal that is only 25 miles away from the centre of Glasgow.

The resolution to Scottish CND AGM — in Glasgow on 8-9 September — calls for support for the national demonstration against Trident, in Barrow on 27 October. It wants Trade Union CND to give priority to opposing Trident contract work of any kind and CND backing for local authority obstruction of the Trident project.

NATO is on the agen-

da too. The two resolutions calling for stepped-up campaigning against the nuclear alliance shouldn't be watered down with the Glasgow West amendment.

Tony Southall, Scottish Labour CND

CND supporters in the Labour party will understand the importance of this, when the new NEC statement on defence opens up the whole issue in the party with a firm commitment to stay within the North Atlantic alliance. For CND that means meeting the contradiction of Labour head on by continuing to campaign for wider support for withdrawal from NATO.

Scottish CND lags behind many other regions in having no TUCND. Glasgow South proposes

to change this with a Scottish TUCND Group. But all local CND groups should be involved in its founding conference and the fight to win affiliates, and proposal to the contrary should be defeated.

Resolutions to the annual meeting will be debated on Sunday, while Saturday includes a lecture from *Fortress Scotland* author Malcolm Slaven.

Labour CND will be highlighting two areas of our campaign in the coming months:

● Ian Leitch from Strathclyde Regional council will examine ways to combat the new civil defence regulations

● Les Robertson, formerly from the Faslane Peace Camp and now a Dumbar-ton councillor, will consider how local authorities can best obstruct the Trident programme.

NATO and the TUC Out of nuclear club!

AMONG THE resolutions calling on this year's annual Trades Union Congress to campaign for peace and nuclear disarmament, the EEPTU's one-line affirmation of Britain's NATO membership stands out like a sore thumb. An attempt by SOGAT '82 to compromise on the electricians' full-blooded commitment to the American nuclear alliance — by adding a rider that such support is given only if it accords with other TUC and Labour Party policies — is a sad reminder that the real role of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation is still not understood by many labour movement activists.

Nowhere is this better demonstrated than in Labour's new NEC statement, *Defence and Security for Britain*, which attempts the impossible: full commitment to Britain's unilateral nuclear disarmament under Labour, together with full support for continued membership of NATO!

The document proposes to campaign within the alliance for a nuclear-free defence strategy. Labour may just as well demand that NATO generals fly. Since its inception, nukes have formed the bedrock of NATO war-fighting strategy.

Over the years the strategies themselves have changed. The Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles 'hit 'em with everything ya got' plans

of NATO's early days have turned into the sophisticated (and phoney) concept of a 'limited' nuclear war in the 'European theatre'. But the basic element — nuclear weapons — remains the same.

By Carol Turner

In Labour's attempt to reconcile the irreconcilable, something will have to go. (Cynics suspect it will be our unilateralist policy.)

There is no attempt this year — at either conference — to openly ditch unilateralist policies. But the Frank Chapples and Dennis Healeys would have it otherwise. Introducing support for NATO onto the TUC con-

gress agenda is the first sign.

The TUC's recent policy has been one of silent compromise with NATO membership; the EEPTU's resolution represents the first attempt to get congress' active support. It must be completely rejected.

Labour

Labour's defence document introduces a 'non-nuclear' defence policy in the form of a promise to rid Britain of all nukes, but to up spending on conventional forces — particularly the navy and the central European front (Germany). This will involve an increase in military spending and offers the least threat to our stable membership of NATO.

Hence keeping NATO sweet is responsible for losing a Labour policy close to the unions' heart: diverting military spending into socially useful production. This will begin to cast doubt on the whole of Labour's commitment to radical social change.

Trade unions, of course, exist to protect

their members' interests, first of which is having a job at all. For years, many have been chary about unilateralism because of the possible loss of jobs involved in getting rid of nuclear weapons.

The TUC's own discussion document, *Defence Spending and Jobs*, shows that the nuclear industry is not jobs producing. Mrs Thatcher's war-fighting policies will result in a net loss of 80,000 jobs by 1988 (compared to 1979 figures). And putting massive resources into military expenditure blocks productive and potentially job-creating investment.

NATO membership does nothing to safeguard the interests of Britain's millions of trade unionists. It locks Britain into a war fighting alliance.

NATO exists to protect the interests of capitalism in general and American imperialism in particular. It threatens, not safeguards, jobs. Congress should clearly reject the EEPTU resolution as a first step towards committing the TUC to a policy of withdrawal from the bosses nuclear club.

Youth Trade Union Rights Campaign

End cheap labour scandal

THE YOUTH Trade Union Rights Campaign has launched a Health and Safety Charter for trainees to fight the appalling safety conditions on the government's Youth Training Schemes.

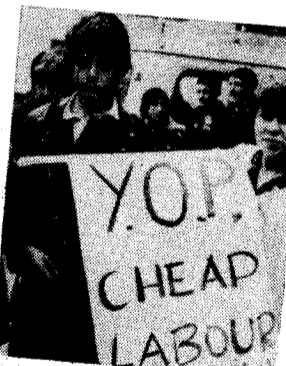
Since 1980, 23 young workers on government training schemes have been killed. Over 10,000 have been injured, with more than 1000 amputations.

By Peter Wells-Thorpe, YTUR Campaign

Employers taking advantage of the nine months' free labour under YTS have shown that they are not prepared to pay even the slightest attention to basic health and safety standards.

The MSC which is responsible for the scheme has refused to guarantee that they will inspect trainees workplaces to make sure that they are safe, and despite five deaths and over 1000 accidents in the last year, the MSC has still not got a single full-time safety officer in any of its 55 area offices. Each office is responsible for, on average, 6000 trainees.

Young people are being forced by government policy on to the schemes. Over 7000 people had their



benefit cut between December '83 and May '84 for 'unreasonably refusing' to join a scheme. Many trainees are forced to work in non-union workplaces or in privately run schemes.

George McCormack of West Lothian, Scotland, was one such trainee. On July 27th 1984 he was killed in a head-on collision between a minibus carrying trainees and a lorry. Twelve days later his family received a letter from MSC explaining that their son was not entitled to compensation as he was not legally employed. Instead they got a cheque for £78.

The scandal of this cheap labour scheme which offers young people no real training, no protection under the law, and no real job at the end of the time on the scheme must be ended. The TUC should throw out all proposals to collaborate with such schemes.

YTUC Campaign Health & Safety Charter for Trainees

Trainees rights:

- 1) Health & Safety legislation to be extended to cover trainees in all premises used in their scheme.
- 2) Trainees to receive full N.I. coverage and the right to state sickness and industrial injuries benefit.
- 3) Trainees to be given free use of safety equipment, protective clothing and footwear.
- 4) Trainees have the right to refuse to join a scheme, or leave their scheme, at any stage, if they believe their safety is at risk — without loss of benefit.
- 5) Trainees have the right to elect their own safety reps and to receive union training in health and safety, without loss of pay.

Schemes:

- 6) All schemes to be in unionised workplaces/ training centres only.
- 7) No scheme should go ahead without the written approval of the Health & Safety Executive (or local authority environmental health officer) and approval by a local trade union safety rep.
- 8) All schemes should receive regular safety checks by trade union safety reps and the Health & Safety Executive; with continual, on-the-spot monitoring by trainees and trade union.

MSC and area manpower boards:

- 9) Improved collection, by MSC and area boards, of statistics and information on YTS health and safety.
- 10) Improved training for MSC local staff responsible for monitoring trainees' safety.
- 11) Full and published investigation of every serious or fatal accident; local MSC and area boards to publish details of all accidents reported by trainees.
- 12) Legal liability for any accident to rest with MSC, where managing agents/sponsors are not legally liable.
- 13) MSC to take legal action against managing agents/sponsors who break legal safety requirements.
- 14) Area boards have the right to withhold YTS funds and withdraw the license from any scheme where the managing agent/sponsor fails to meet MSC safety requirements.

National safety policy:

- 15) An immediate reversal of Govt. cuts in the Health & Safety Executive since 1979, as a first step towards a major increase in funds and staff for the Health & Safety Executive.

Ireland at the TUC

THE FIFTEENTH anniversary of the troops being sent into Northern Ireland was marked by TV images of the most appalling brutality of the RUC. A symbolic gesture if you like to underline the irrefragability of the sectarian Six County state.

Even Official Unionist Thomas Passmore remarked 'our police force needs investigation and enquiry like they need a hole in the head'. Confirmation of the armed struggle from an unusual source!

Liberal opinion at least has the merit of occasionally being able to see what is going on when presented on peak time TV. David Steel responded immediately with the charge that this was a police riot. Even Shirley Williams had comparisons to make with the murder of peaceful protestors some time earlier — at Peterloo.

There is no solution to the 'problems of Ulster' to be found inside the gerrymandered North. Only the die-hard loyalists of the Militant tendency persist in the idea that the 'croppies will lie down' and bigots will evolve into democrats. Belatedly supporting the campaign against plastic bullets, their response to Sunday's events carried the acidic sting which laid the blame for Sean Downes' death at the door of Sinn Fein — on the grounds that their provocative stance did nothing to ease sectarian tension.

The publication in the *Guardian* of Benn's draft Withdrawal Bill is to be welcomed. It cuts across all the manoeuvrings of the Tories and Labour's 'not-so-bipartisan-as-were-before' front bench team trying to ensure a 'new' Ireland which is just as subservient to the international bankers and investors as the present.

It says what the far left have been saying since 1969 — there can be no

British solution — Ireland as a whole must decide its own future government and structure. It dismisses the so-called constitutional guarantee to loyalist ascendancy without a backward glance, and is well timed to stimulate debate in the movement.

By Martin Collins

There are those who wish to delay or phase withdrawal; there are those who think that a Labour government should set about disarming the sectarian state apparatus its predecessors have created. To whom should the keys to Ireland's jails be handed? What future is there for the trade union movement in the North which chooses to affiliate to London rather than Dublin?

Such questions are for the Irish to answer. It is thanks to the Labour Committee on Ireland that we will have the opportunity for discussion with them. With visits of Sinn Fein no longer arousing national headlines, the barriers to dialogue are being lowered.

The TUC will have a chance to hear Irish TUC leader Matt Merrigan explain why Irish trade unionists are in favour of Irish reunification and independence. Labour Party conference will be hearing the views of the Republican movement, the women's movement and unions in Ireland. We should listen well.



Belfast: eyewitness report

THE ANTI-Show Trials demonstration in Belfast on 12 August showed once again the brutality of the Royal Ulster Constabulary. Their vicious attack left Sean Downes dead and more than 20 injured. TANIA WEAR and CERI EVANS were there. Here they describe what really happened.

THE MARCH was about 4,000 strong which included a British Troops Out delegation, a delegation from the United States and people from all over Europe.

We marched peacefully, three abreast from Dunville Park along Falls Road to Andersonstown. There was a huge army and RUC presence along the route, with groups of Saracen tanks and armoured cars every few hundred yards.

When the march arrived at the Busy Bee shopping centre in Andersonstown it was met by tens of armoured cars and Saracen tanks. A few stones were thrown by youths and the RUC immediately opened fire with plastic bullets.

The crowd scattered and four people were left wounded. The crowd then reformed and a rally was held outside the Sinn Fein centre on Falls Road.

At this point the rally was surrounded by the RUC and the army, as they sealed off the crowd. As soon as the banned Noraid leader Martin Galvin appeared the RUC moved in.

They drove their tanks and cars straight into

peaceful protesters who were sitting in the road.

Police in riot gear attacked marchers with batons and deadly plastic bullets, firing into the crowd at close range. Shots were also fired at and inside the Sinn Fein centre.

Attack

After this unprovoked attack had begun it seems that Sean Downes ran across the road to aid his comrades. An RUC man raised his gun, fired and Downes fell to the ground as the bullet hit his chest at over 100 miles an hour.

Marchers fled in all directions, and many ran into the Peoples Democracy bookshop around the corner from the Sinn Fein centre.

The RUC were firing on these running demonstrators, hitting the grill on the window of the bookshop many times.

Their work over, the RUC withdrew leaving Sean Downes dead and more than 20 others, including small children, injured.

This was not just a few RUC men going wild. It was a planned attack, authorised at the highest levels, with the aim of arresting Martin Galvin and driving the nationalist population off the streets.

It failed. Galvin got away. And the next day at least 10,000 people joined an illegal black flag march to remember Sean.

Being in Ireland and being eyewitnesses brought home to us how the RUC and the media lie and distort events.

First the RUC claimed they were attacked by

rioters and that their action was defensive. Then they claimed that they shot most of their bullets into the air. They even said there was a witness who saw Downes being hit by a ricochet bullet.

All this was disproved by many eyewitnesses and by film taken of the event.

Head of the RUC Sir John Hermon even said that people who demonstrate in Northern Ireland can expect this sort of thing. This means that anyone who attends a legal, peaceful demonstration should be expected to be shot dead by RUC thugs.

Tiny stick

The media, despite many newscasters being attacked, also did their bit! By Tuesday morning Sean Downes was an ex-IRA rioter, who was seen with a stick in his hand.

No mention that he had probably seen friends being beaten and shot at before he ran across the road with a tiny stick.

The people of West Belfast didn't believe these media lies. They turned out in their thousands for his funeral. And workers at his youth training centre went on strike in his memory.

This attack is just one in a long line of brutalities carried out by the British army and the RUC. In the Six Counties their aim is to smash the nationalist opposition and defend the sectarian Six County state.

It is clear that the number one task for British socialists is to build a mass campaign to ban plastic bullets and to get the troops out of Ireland now.

South Africa

Blacks say No to collaboration

ELECTIONS WERE HELD last Wednesday for the coloured sections of South Africa's new three-chamber legislature. They were the first step in trying to legitimate the new constitutional deal that claims to settle democratically the country's long term future by giving the vote to the entire population.

The bottom line of that is the total exclusion of the 22 million black Africans by their being deemed citizens of 10 'independent homelands'. This, despite the fact that only a minority — around 10 million — live within the borders of these artificially created, impoverished statelets; and despite the fact that the states so far created have been recognised by no other country in the world and state machinery, particularly the police, totally depends on the white state for finance and often personnel.

The rest of the population — whites (4.5 million), coloureds (2.5 million), and Asians (800,000) — are represented in a tricameral parliament with a ratio 4:2:1. The present all-white House of Assembly

(166 seats) becomes the white chamber with 83 in the coloured chamber and 43 in the Asian.

By Tony Southall

All of each chamber's votes will be recorded in favour of whatever decision the chamber as a whole makes. Thus 84 white votes will ensure practically anything.

The same principles apply to election of the executive, president and president's advisory council — whose members cannot be in the parliament, and 25 out of 60 of whom are appointed by the president himself. The latter also appoints the cabinet which is not responsible to parliament.

The purpose of this scheme is to create in each section of the black



population, behind a thin veil of democratic institutions, a small group of amply-rewarded collaborators with white people. South Africa's coloureds gave their answer to this charade last week.

Despite an intense campaign to get people to register to vote, backed by

police savagery against any peaceful demonstration of opposition, only 60 per cent registered. Of these, only 30 per cent turned out to vote nationwide — that is, 18 per cent of all those eligible.

In Cape Town where nearly half of coloureds live, and where less than 50

per cent registered, only 10 per cent voted — less than five per cent of eligibles. One MP won his £24,000 a year seat with 118 votes.

This boycott success is only the latest in a tradition going back 50 years. It is further proof the vast majority of South Africa's black majority do not ac-

cept any form of collaboration with white rule.

It lays the ground for rapid political development which could be nurtured by three factors in particular. First, the formation of new federations of black organisations, notably the United Democratic Front, but

also the more radical New Forum Committee.

The second factor is a critical crisis of the economy, with a plunging gold price and interest rate. And third is an impending national strike around wages demands by the two year old National Union of Mineworkers.

DEFEND THE GLC... DEFEND THE GLC...

20 September by-elections campaign

"It is crucial we win as socialists"

JOHN McDONNELL was chair of the GLC's Finance Committee before the by-election called in his constituency of Hayes and Harlington/Hillingdon. He explains why Labour is fighting the campaign, and how it's being run.

LABOUR IS at the mid-point in our campaign to save the GLC. The legislation scrapping next year's elections is through parliament but won't be triggered until the main legislation is carried. We expect that to be introduced in November.

So we wanted something to start off the next stage of our campaign with a bang. That's what the four by-elections on 20 September are all about. A victory will be a real stimulus to the campaign.

We chose the constituencies we did because we wanted marginals and also a geographical spread. And we chose four because that's our majority on the GLC. We came up with Hayes, Lewisham, Edmonton and Paddington where Ken Livingstone is standing.

The constituency campaign is launched on 28 August with our press conference. During the election we're having street meetings every Saturday with a whole range of speakers including Ken Livingstone, Tony Benn, and various trade union leaders.

We want to ensure that people realise the by-elections are about saving the GLC and the right to vote — but also that this is

only one part of the struggle against the government.

We will have speakers from the miners' union on our platform, and local trade unionists in struggle — the CPSA from the local job centre which is being closed, and local UCW workers whose sub-post office is also threatened with closure. We want people to recognise that the GLC is part of a broader struggle.

Rail strike

The rail workers strike on 12 September is in the middle of our election campaign. Hayes is a railway constituency, with a big railway estate and a large and active NUR branch in Paddington. We hope to have Ray Buckton and Jimmy Knapp down during the campaign and, on the day, we'll have David Wetzel and rank and file rail workers on our platform.

The issues for this area are stark. There is a large British Rail workforce and many London Transport workers in Hayes, all of



whom stand to lose their jobs.

Our opponents in the Hayes by-election are an independent Tory, an SDP candidate and the National Front.

Tory MP for this area, Terry Dicks, is described by the *Guardian* as the Fred Flintstone of the Tory Party. He is a neanderthal racist who has followed Thatcher's dictat of refusing to allow the local Conservative Association to run. But an unofficial candidate came forward.

The SDP candidate is the former Labour GLC candidate, Peter Russell. He defected in the 70s

straight after losing the selection battle to myself on a two-to-one vote.

The National Front are fielding candidates in all the constituencies. Their activities here were smashed about 10 years ago. From what we hear they had difficulties getting 10 people to sign the necessary forms. We intend to ensure they're trounced and don't come back again.

The Conservative candidate supports the line of Alan Greenross of County Hall — abolish the GLC but have some form of democratic tier of government for London. The SDP said they favoured abolishing the GLC at the general election. Because it's a popular issue, they're now in favour of retaining it with reforms.

Labour has found a fantastic response on the doorstep so far. People want the opportunity to vote on the issue and they feel they're being deprived

of that right next year by the government's proposals to scrap the elections.

In addition to that we're getting quite an amazing reaction on our canvasses to the Labour GLC, specifically to its policies locally. We've introduced a range of policies to tackle unemployment and bring back the social cohesion our community had in the 50s and early 60s.

In the 70s the community began to deteriorate environmentally and socially because of high unemployment and the airport coming along. The GLC has introduced environmental protection polices, assistance to local volunteer groups and local ethnic minority groups.

So there's a popular reaction to the Labour GLC, and against the Conservative candidate. In Hayes the GLC is the only authority protecting local interests. The Conservative council has been making a range of cuts.

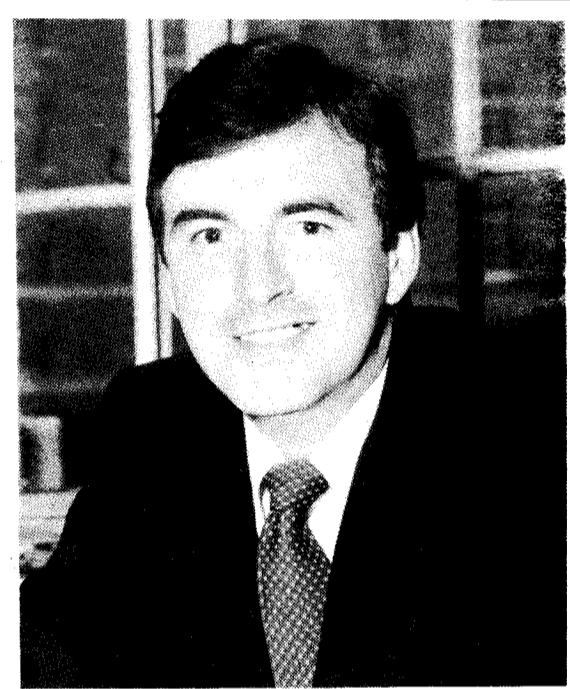
Local people closely identify the GLC as the protectors of our community, whereas they identify the Conservatives as the people who are ravaging it.

The critical part of this campaign is winning the struggle as socialists, not just a broad alliance of people opposed to abolition of the GLC. It is important that we win the right to implement our policies — policies of providing assistance for working people within our community. That, I think, is crucial.

EVERY LABOUR ACTIVIST in London and beyond must turn out in support of the GLC for the four by-elections on 20 September. Constituencies are being allocated to work in one of the four areas by the London Labour Party headquarters (01-703 6511). Make sure your constituency plays its part.

By-election HQs:

Paddington	286 9692
Edmonton	807 1627
Hayes & Harlington	573 2778
Lewisham West	699 2001



John McDonnell says:

We work from the Labour Hall, Pump Lane, Hayes, Middlesex. Telephone 01-573 2778. We're here every day from 10am till 11 at night. We desperately need canvassers and leafleters. And we need any financial contributions that people can make. We've got a whole series of public meetings, soap box and street activities you'd be welcome to come along and attend. Why not ring our number, or just call in?

Not just any old elections

THE FOUR GLC by-elections taking place on 20 September will be a major test for the government's strategy of removing any and every obstacle to its programme of crushing the living standards of working people by smashing effective trade unionism and abolishing Labour's strong-hold in the cities.

The attacks on trade unionism and the proposed abolition of the GLC and metropolitan counties must be stressed. Nowhere is this clearer than the attack on London Transport.

As soon as control of LT was transferred from the GLC to the government-appointed LRT, a programme of roll-

ing job cuts totalling 16,000 was announced. The GLC's policies of defence of jobs and services are the real reason for abolition.

It is because the GLC under Livingstone's leadership has broken with the past practice of most Labour councils of implementing Tory policies 'under protest' and cutting

in a 'humane' way. Instead they have tried to unite working people and defend their interests in the face of the Tories attempts to divide and demoralise the working class. They have done this by policies such as their cheap fares policy, grants to community groups and organisations representing local working class interests, anti-racist policies, statements against the British occupation of Ireland, and support for women's and gay rights.

By Fred Carpenter, Paddington Labour Party

In recognition of this Paddington Labour Party, with its candidate Ken Livingstone, will raise these issues as part of its election campaign. We will be campaigning on the right of Londoners to vote, a right removed by the abolition of next year's GLC elections, but in the context of supporting a GLC committed to Labour's policies — like housing and transport.

miners' strike will be integrated into the election campaign, through the presence of miners on the platforms of our public meetings and through continuing to collect money and food for the strike.

Picket lines

Also, on the day of the transport strike, 12 September, Ken will visit some of the picket lines in the area and a speaker from the strike will be invited onto the platform of that night's public meeting.

At present details of the public meetings have not been finalised, but invited speakers reflect Labour's concerns. Arthur Scargill has been asked to the constituency's major rally on 17 September and an all-black platform is proposed for our eve-of-poll rally on the 19th. And we are producing leaflets weekly, focussing on various aspects of the GLC's work — like housing and transport.

What is lacking at this stage is a London-wide focus, to bring together all these issues and to reach out to the millions of Londoners who will not be able to show their support by voting in one of the by-elections.

The best way to do this would be a major demonstration on the weekend before polling day, organised by the Greater London Labour Party and the South East Region TUC.

The Tories have tried to boycott these elections by refusing to stand. But maverick Tories — three in Paddington alone — are contesting the seats, as well as the Alliance and other fringe candidates. But it is still likely that Labour will retain all four seats.

These are not just any old elections however. They amount to a referendum on abolition. To be successful Labour needs not just to hold the seats, but to qualitatively increase its vote. This is why

mass canvassing is particularly important.

Opportunity

It won't be enough to ask people how they're voting and then walk away. Canvassers will have the opportunity to persuade electors of the importance of voting by ex-

plaining the positive policies of the Labour GLC.

Already many activists have been phoning in to find out how they can help. The London Labour Party is allocating constituencies to particular by-elections. To find out what you should be doing, contact your constituency secretary. And do it now!

Paddington's Public Meetings:

Monday 3 September
speakers: Jo Richardson, David Blunkett
venue: Marble Arch English School, Star Street

Thursday 6 September
speakers: Merle Amery, Brent councillor
venue: to be arranged

Wednesday 12 September
speakers: Dennis Skinner, Valerie Wise
venue: to be arranged

Monday 17 September
speakers: Arthur Scargill invited
venue: to be arranged

Wednesday 19 September
speakers: Merle Amery, Diane Abbott and others from the black community
venue: to be arranged

Socialist ACTION

12 September Rail, tube and bus strike: No more job loss!

FORGET WHATEVER ELSE you may be told. The national work to rule on British Rail, starting on 12 September, and the London Region one-day transport strike on 12 September are about defence of jobs. With management and the media playing the numbers game more desperately than 'millionaire bingo', it is difficult to get a true picture of just how many jobs are at stake. Suffice to say that anybody working on BR or LT who thinks that any less than 50,000 jobs are under the axe during the next five years is living in cloud cuckoo land.

By fighting on the jobs issue, the transport unions will be struggling alongside the miners and the dockers. It will be a logical extension of the support that has been unstintingly given to the miners by the vast majority of NUR and ASLEF train crews, who have been refusing to cross NUM picket lines and who have extended the same support to the dockers.

With winter — the miners greatest ally — rapidly approaching, it will only be a matter of time before the BR Board begins to make the same moves to break the coal-movement boycott by the rail workers that the British Steel Corporation

has taken at Hunterston. The best form of defence is attack. Already 35,000 jobs have been lost for ever on BR during the last five years.

**By Patrick Sikorski,
East Ham NUR
(pers cap)**

As usual far from being satisfied management are coming back for more and more. This is clearly the time to launch an all-out fightback.

Ever since the Tories came to power they have waged a vendetta against the nationalised transport system.

This has been done

against a background of constant cuts in subsidies and resulting productivity and job loss for the workforce. The Tories having taken over LT now insist on slashing the subsidy by 50 per cent from its present £190 million to £95 million by 1987-88. Between 16,000 and 20,000 jobs are at stake.

Deregulation

Now the Tories are rushing complete deregulation of the bus industry through parliament. This will mean that private taxis and minicabs can act just like buses.

They have awarded a £60 million contract for the building of a new London docklands light railway to a consortium of GEC and John Mowlem. As far as the Tories are concerned this is the railway of the future.

Its 16 stations will all be unstaffed and equipped with automatic barriers and videos. There will be 11 new trains which will run entirely automatically.



The time for one-day protest is over. The only language the Tories understand is all-out indefinite strike action

It is against this background that the antics of the unions head offices over the last 10 days must be seen.

First the actions were called, but the work to rule is called 'non-cooperation' and not all BR trains in London will be stopped because 12 September only involves London area managers' districts. This means for example, that Victoria will strike but Clapham Junction (Southern Region) will not.

Then more talks were held with management and the action seemed to have been called off despite the fact that management have not withdrawn a single cut — only promised not to table any more official cuts at present.

More talks

At the end of last week the action was reaffirmed. But there are to be more talks ...

Meanwhile London Transport management have announced the

unilateral imposition of the first round of job cuts.

The union side of the Sectional Council concerned has stood firm. But we are told that in the interests of 'unity' with ASLEF in the Federation of Rail Unions the NUR executive cannot yet call all-out indefinite strike action. There are to be further talks after which unless management withdraws the cuts action will be 'escalated' from 12 September.

Two choices

The rank and file on both BR and LT know that there are only two choices ahead: accept the inevitability of cuts in the interests of what management call 'a more competitive and cost efficient railway' or fight.

There is only one way to escalate the action from 12 September. The time for one day protests is over. The only language the Tories understand is all-out definitive strike action.

Tory strategy for transport

Four Tory transport secretaries of state have launched six transport acts with just one aim — to take the 'public' out of public transport. Their acts have been concerned with:

- allowing private operators to cream off profitable services
- asset-stripping profitable enterprises
- extending Whitehall control over the metropolitan and London Transport authorities.

The massive handouts and hidden subsidies to private transport are hardly every publicised. They include:

- new roads are built with a 100 per cent government subsidy
- 'uneconomic' rural railway lines are threatened with closure but the same criteria is never applied to roads
- company cars get around £2000 million a year in tax subsidies, double the amount going to support passenger railway.

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Back to work on the fund drive!

WHILE READERS have holidayed far and away in sunny climes, Socialist Action has been hard at work looking for a new building.

Although the regular weekly issues of the paper have not appeared over the summer, we have produced — with a £500 special collection from readers — an 8-page issue at the end of July during the first docks strike, and a 4-page broadsheet for the Women Against Pit Closures demonstration on 11 August.

Our thanks this week to our reader in the USA for another donation — this time of \$500 — keep it coming; and from readers in Southampton who sent £30 which makes their running total £55 towards their target. To cap it all a meeting over the summer of Socialist Action readers collected the magnificent sum of £750 — that's the sort of figure we're looking for.



The next issue of Socialist Action will appear on 12 September, in two weeks' time. And from then on we're back to weekly business as usual — with a post mortem on the TUC, a preview of the Labour Party conference, and regular coverage of the miners' struggle.

But no reader should imagine that this means the fund drive can be forgotten. We still need to meet the £50,000 target to change our address and keep the weekly paper alive and kicking.

Now that you're back from your summer hols, you should start thinking about local events that will raise money for our building fund. And keep watching this space for news of national fund raising events in the weeks to come.