

Socialist Organiser

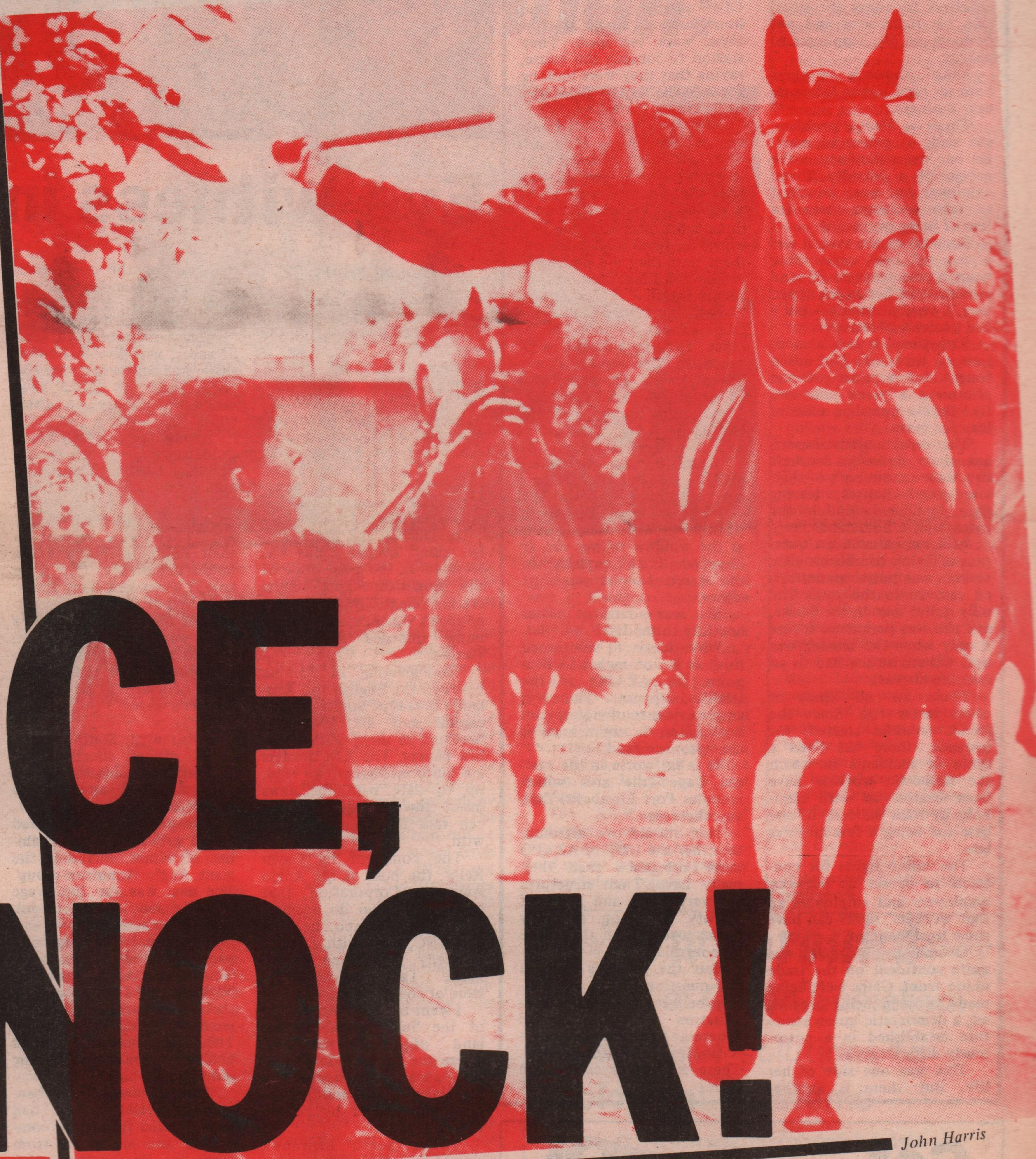
No.245 September 26 1985 25p Claimants and strikers

**Lobby
Tory
Conference** **Oct
10th**

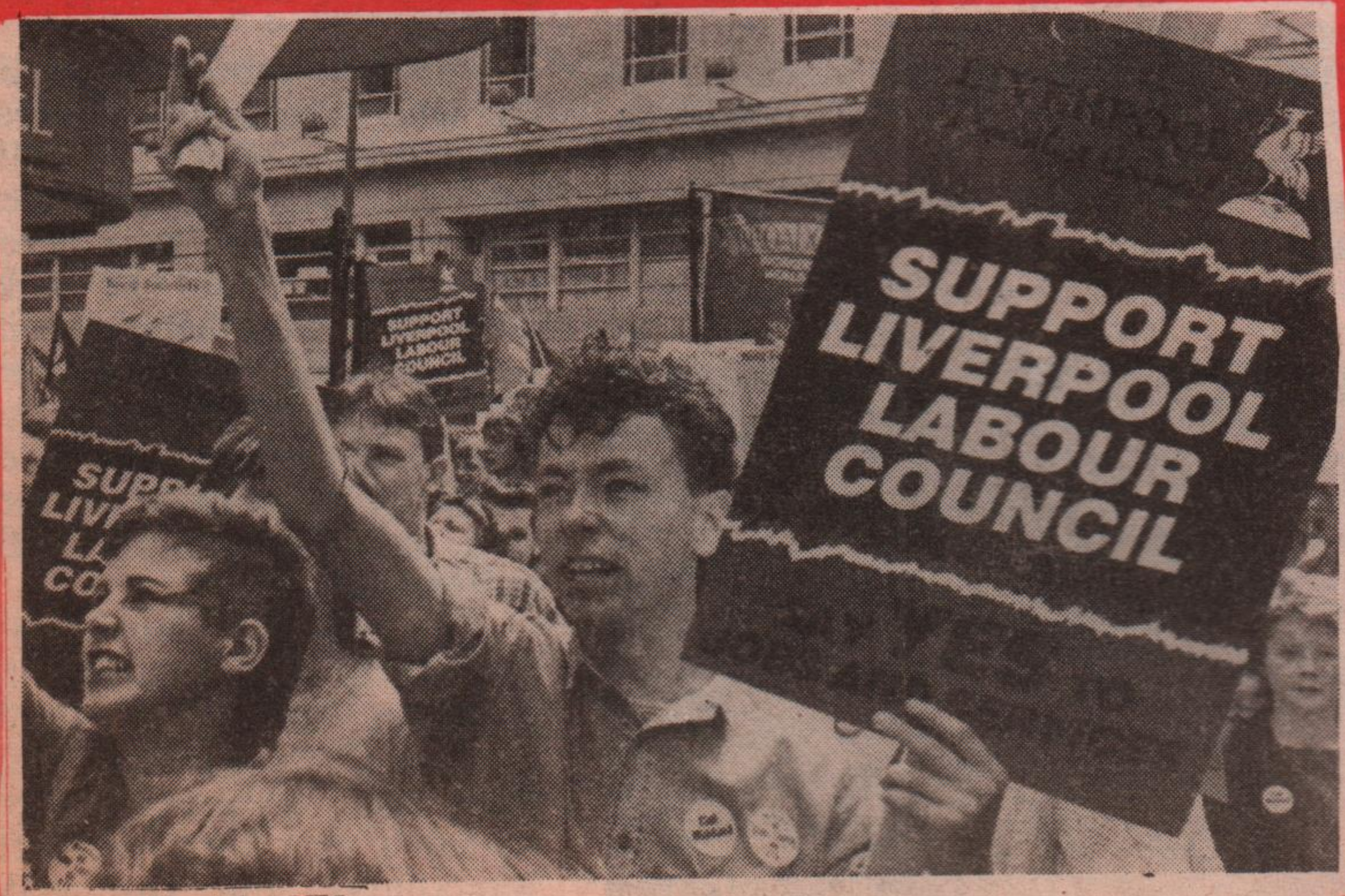
Manchester and Tyne Tees Areas of the National Union of Students are calling on all youth to demonstrate on October 10. No college cuts, no closures! Real jobs, real training! No conscription onto YTS! Full grants for all! Assemble 12.30pm Blackpool Coach Park. Coaches from many areas. Details: Simon Pottinger 01-609 7459 or Rachel Kennedy, MANUS, 061-273 5111.

Support Liverpool, support the miners

OFF THE FENCE, KINNOCK!



John Harris



John Smith, IFL

INSIDE: Eye-witness report from South Africa by Bob Fine — pages 12 and 2
Liverpool — page 3

TWO KEY issues confront delegates to the 1985 Labour Party conference — Liverpool and the miners.

Thousands of Liverpool council workers may already be on strike as the conference meets. The Tory government is reported by the Mail to have plans to use troops in Liverpool, and on the present course it cannot be long before the Tories try to take the council out of the hands of the elected Labour majority — by disqualifying them and having the Liberal councillors rule instead, by the permanent council officials taking over, or possibly by special legislation to send in a commissioner.

The 49 Labour councillors face a surcharge of £106,000 for their delay in setting a rate: this could mean bankruptcy and disqualification from office.

Conference must declare itself fully in support of Liverpool and commit the next Labour government to undo any penalties imposed by the government or the law courts. Delegates should commit the Party right now to help Liverpool

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Organising domestic slaves

Back in the city I was talking to a woman who is an organiser in the domestic workers' union. She told me of the street committees of domestic workers who would elect their own street stewards. When a domestic worker had a problem with her employer she would report to the street committee who would send the steward and other representatives to assess the situation for themselves and put pressure on the employer to change.

Since domestic workers have no legal rights, this is no easy business.

There is also a problem, she said, of where to meet. On one street they met in the garage of a friendly liberal employer but were reluctant to take decisions there for fear of being overheard.

Sometimes, she said, it was a case of low wages. One woman who received 20 rand a month got her wages upped to 120 rand a month — not a bad percentage increase.

Sometimes it was a question of time off. The union fought for a norm of one afternoon a week and two free days a month, a massive leap for most.

This is particularly important since domestic workers live alone at the back of their employers' houses, leaving their families behind in the townships or homelands.

In some cases it is a question of living conditions. One woman was put in an unheated caravan in the yard. The only toilet was in the house, and she was permitted to use it only when the 'master' was out. Otherwise she had to go into the bushes.

There are all kinds of other issues too. Since the recent troubles started, for instance, there has been a spate of incidents in which the domestic workers have been beaten up with sjamboks by their masters, in one case for being a few minutes late.

The union fights for contracts to be set up between employers and employees so that workers' rights can have some legal standing.

Overall my informant was quite confident on the trade union front. Gains were being made, women being organised, a democratic union structure established in a notoriously difficult area.

This was one side of her life. But there is another

which is proving less successful.

My informant is not a member of AZAPO, but she has associations with it. There are often AZAPO people staying in her house. In Port Elizabeth, where she lives, there is no love lost between AZAPO, a black consciousness grouping, and the UDF.

One night a large group of UDF people came to her house carrying sticks. Most of them were teenagers. They started to ransack the house, saying that they were looking for AZAPO leaders suspected to be hiding there.

She described the teenagers as her 'black children'. She told her 'children' that they were behaving exactly like the security policemen who had ransacked her house three times. She said that her words made an impression on them, but they did not leave before finishing their unsuccessful search.

Next day she went to the UDF office to cool things down. She met with the local executive to complain about her treatment. They apologised but also declared that they could not tolerate people harbouring AZAPO leaders.

A few days later, she said, a hand grenade (Russian made) was thrown through her bedroom window. She was not there at the time. Another grenade was thrown at the window of her car. It bounced off and exploded in the street. No-one was hurt either time.

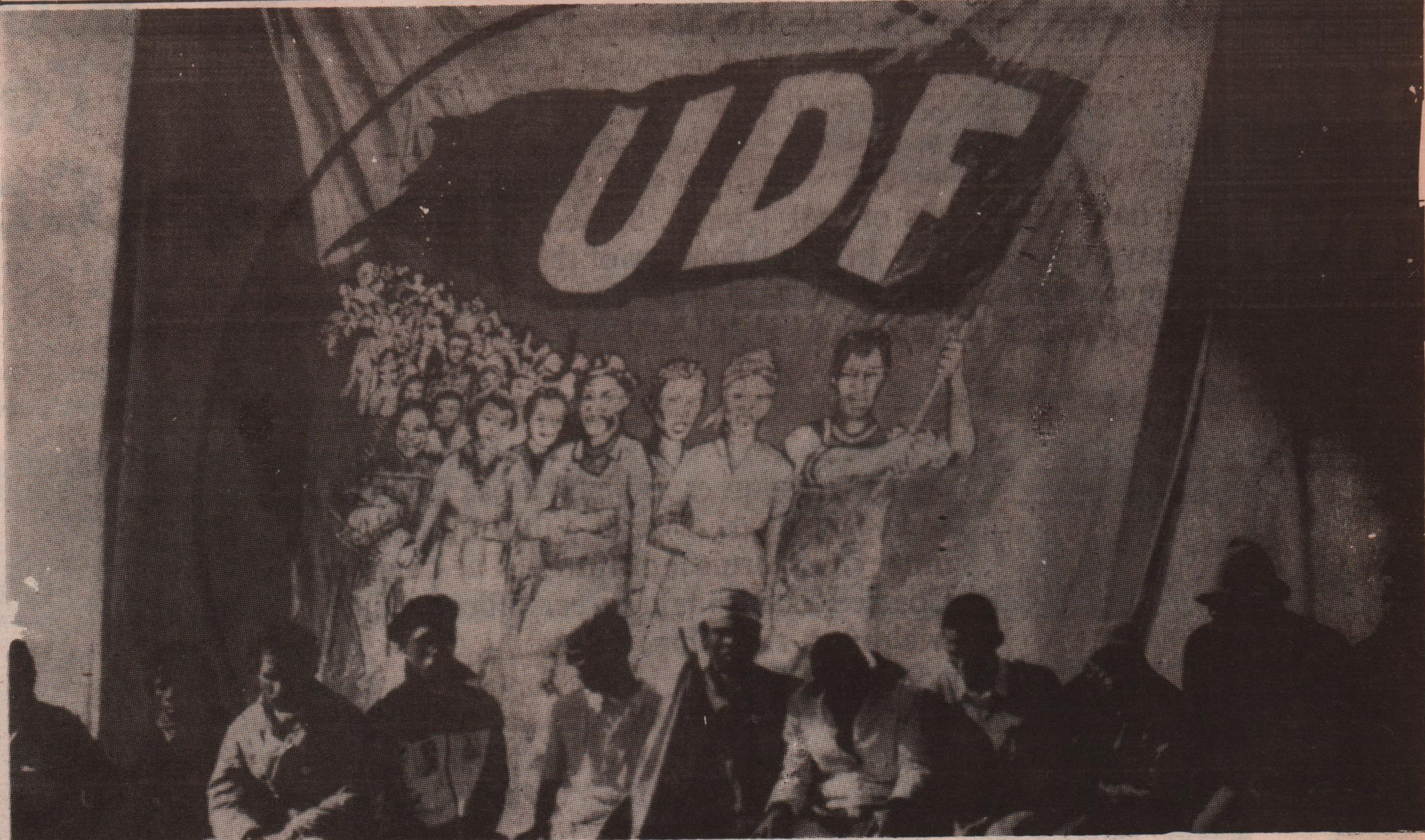
She was adamant in her hostility to the UDF.

Why have I mentioned this? It is not meant to be a point for AZAPO at the UDF's expense. There is ample evidence of violence on both sides. In some areas it has become a feud.

It is far worse in the eastern Cape (the area which includes Port Elizabeth) than anywhere else.

Nor should we attribute to either the UDF or AZAPO more substance than they really have. Their structures are very loose and a lot of activity goes on in their names over which they have no control.

But the point is to raise the question of the relationship between trade union organisation in the economic sphere and community organisation in the political sphere. There is a sharp contrast in style.



Eye-witness in South Africa

Continued from p.12

would probably be released in a few days. There was no room in the prison. So it proved.

Everywhere in South Africa there is double talk. 'Apartheid is over' said the headlines in the Capetown newspapers, as Botha toured the homelands, praying for rain, and announcing this or that reform, in fact any reform but giving blacks the vote as equals.

In Durban the proto-fascist 'chief' of the Zulus was elevated as the great hope of the English-speaking liberal establishment. Buthelezi denounced violence, even as his impis imposed their own version.

The meeting in Zambia between the English and Afrikaner bosses of South African capital and the ANC was heralded in most of the English papers. The ANC leaders are quite intelligent, we read, up to date with the news inside the country, men we can talk the same language with.

The comment by Gavin Relly, the boss of the Anglo American Corporation, that he would rather do business with Oliver Tambo, head of the ANC, than with Edward Kennedy, was given prominence. Tambo's comments were of course censored.

I went to Mafeking, capital of the 'independent' homeland of Bophuthatswana. There the ultra-modern stadium, government house, and university lie in a middle-class oasis surrounded by relocation camps.

"We're South Africans", one of the university students said. "When abroad, when you do not recognise Mangope, the Bop chief, remember those who live under him".

Important work and education are being conducted in the university but it's very uneven. There are a number of progressives. Mafeking is a bit of a haven for draft evaders.

Mangope, unlike the Ciskei chief Lennox Sebe, plays his cards shrewdly and has some money to throw around. When Botha visited Mafeking students demonstrated. Mangope met them in person and said "I'll respect your right to demonstrate if you respect my right to invite my guest".

the rear of the conference hall. 'Free Mandela', 'Freedom Charter', 'Long live Mangope' mingled together.

The commuter workers, however, who live in Bophuthatswana and work over the border in South Africa, have no such loyalty to their 'chief'.

At my meetings with trade unionists I was struck by the very high level of organisation and discipline. Workers are hungry for educational programmes provided by the union. They were fervent in their commitment to trade union democracy. Can it be true, I was asked many times, that Arthur Scargill is president for life? Say the workers don't want him in the future. Should not the president be a worker rather than a full time official? Is he paid a worker's wages?

I visited the South African NUM offices shortly after their strike. Inside there were 150 dismissed and evicted miners living there.

The union had negotiated a deal with 80% of the Chamber of Mines, including the giant Anglo American group. The deal was for 23% wage increase and an end to job reservation.

However, two mining companies refused to negotiate: Gencor and Anglo-Vaal. The NUM called a strike against these two hard-line companies for their full 23% increase. The falling rand had pushed profits in the gold-mining industry sky-high.

The 150 men in the Johannesburg NUM office had been evicted from their compound and dismissed from work for joining the strike. The NUM was attempting to keep them together to fight for reinstatement.

I talked at length with one young miner from Mafeken in Bophuthatswana, mainly through an interpreter.

He told me that union

men came to the mine with the union flag and leaflets announcing the strike. The men were arrested but the word got through. He was due to be on the night shift when the strike broke out.

With the others, he stayed in bed in the compound instead of going to work.

The mine police took the strikers to the manager's office. They were seen one by one. The manager told them that the union had called off the strike and they would be dismissed if they continued. Most held out.

My informant said he slipped out of the compound to walk eight miles or so to the union office to tell them what was happening. The NUM officials, however, were surrounded by Defence Force soldiers and could not leave.

He slipped back into the compound in time to be rounded up by the mine police, many of whom were South African Defence Force soldiers in mine police uniforms, he thought, together with the day shift in the early dawn.

After threats and heavy beatings with sjamboks, about three quarters of the miners went back to work. The remaining strikers were herded into the quarantine camp which had been used for cholera cases among miners from Malawi.

My informant is nothing if not resourceful and again slipped out before the other strikers were herded into the camp. He made his way to the NUM office.

Some of the strikers were kept in the enclosure from morning to midnight without food or drink. At midnight trucks arrived to transport the strikers to a small town on the edge of Bophuthatswana.

They were given small sums up to 75 rand, a fraction of what they were owed. Their possessions were left

behind in the compound. They were ordered to make their own way home. Most are now dispersed beyond the union's reach.

My informant was very worried about the future but 101 per cent committed to the union. He said that he had one rand in his pocket. His wife and child are in Mafeken, and he fears that he and his family will lose their home.

The union called off the strike after a day in order to pursue a number of legal actions which are still in train. Through the Supreme Court and the Industrial Court they have been taking action over evictions from the compounds, over dismissals in a legal strike, and over theft of miners' possessions.

They are also suing management for contempt of court for failing to obey interim orders, and have perhaps a wild long-shot hope of putting management in jail.

The NUM has shot up to the status of a giant union in just a few years. It now has around 100,000 members and is ably led by Cyril Ramaphosa, a lawyer.

Most people I talked to thought that he had led negotiations with the Chamber of Mines very well until the last moment.

The union had won 23% increase in 80% of the mines and also the scrapping of job reservation. They had played on splits within Chamber of the Mines. However, the splits were then turned in the Chamber's favour.

The union could not call a general strike throughout the mines. It had threatened to do so if miners were victimised.

The two mining companies which refused to agree were those in which the NUM was least well organised. Perhaps it would have been better to hold off the strike until they were better organised, showing to the workers the example of what organisation could achieve elsewhere.

But it was a difficult decision, and the outcome is still in question.

The union is faced with the task of consolidating organisation among a rapidly growing militant membership. Most trade unionists I talked to had a very high regard for Ramaphosa and the NUM. 'A potentially great working class leader', was one FOSATU official's comment.



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In the balance

As this issue of SO is put together, Liverpool is in the balance. It is not clear whether the council shop stewards will be able to pull off a strike in face of sabotage by local and national full-time union officials.

A major factor, of course, will be the degree to which Liverpool workers feel confident of support from outside Liverpool. And they should reap advantage here from the fact that the major organised group in the council unions, the council Labour group, and the District Labour Party — *Militant* — also has a national network of supporters.

On September 17, for example, the day after the shop stewards announced their plans for a strike, Liverpool council deputy leader Derek Hatton spoke at a *Militant* rally in Glasgow.

But Hatton made no specific call for supporting action. He did not discuss the possibility of workers striking in Liverpool apart from council workers, or employees of other councils striking in solidarity.

He did not suggest that other Labour-controlled councils could help Liverpool by suspending their debt payments. He did not even appeal for financial support for the Liverpool council workers' strike.

Apart from urging Neil Kinnock and union leaders to back the strike, Hatton said nothing more specific than that "We need support. People must understand what is happening in Liverpool. This is not just a Liverpool struggle. Other local authority workers must understand that our fight is their fight. If we go along that path, then we can't lose".

It seemed strange, too, that the chair of the meeting — a local district councillor and *Militant* supporter — should state that when the meeting was being planned a fortnight ago, none of its organisers had foreseen what would happen.

If no-one else knew the exact state of Liverpool City Council's finances, surely *Militant* must have known. So what else did they think could happen apart from the current confrontation?

GMBU votes for a strike

IT IS still not clear as we go to press on Tuesday afternoon, September 24, whether or not there is to be a major strike in Liverpool in defiance of the government.

The GMBU, the biggest of the council's manual unions, has voted to strike from Wednesday September 25. Ian Lowes, GMBU convenor and chair of the joint shop stewards committee, rightly described the vote — 4345 to 2934 for a strike — as 'magnificent'.

The result of the NALGO ballot is due out later today. A big question now is: if the NALGO vote goes against a strike, will the G&M go it alone? The G&M representatives told the conference in Liverpool last Saturday, 21st, that they would go out on their own if necessary. But the regional council of the G&M has now instructed its members not to strike.

Some smaller unions in the council workforce — the TGWU and UCATT — are solid behind the call for a strike, though the EETPU vote

was narrowly against striking.

In any event, before long the council will have no money to pay its workers, strike or no strike.

The council is under pressure to solve its financial crisis by capitalisation, that is, by spending money planned for such projects as building council houses. The District Labour Party and the council itself have stood firm against this pressure. The widest possible support is the best guarantee that they continue to hold firm.

There are problems. The Labour leaders nationally are hostile to the battle in Liverpool and they have weakened attempts to build support for it. It is unfortunately true that *Militant's* 'bureaucratic centralist' style of operation has alienated many potential supporters.

But this struggle is a test for the whole labour movement. The whole labour movement must rally to Liverpool. Other local government workers should strike in solidarity with Liverpool; other Labour authorities should suspend debt payments in solidarity.

Return the 25 million!

Alan Johnson reports on the labour movement conference in Liverpool on September 21

OVER 600 delegates from all over the country attended the 'Defend Local Councils' conference in Liverpool on Saturday.

The concern of every delegate was how to build for the all-out indefinite strike of city council workers called for by the joint shop stewards committee, to start from Wednesday 25th.

Liverpool City Councillor Tony Mulhearn set the tone of the conference in his opening speech. He pointed out that Liverpool's fight had national significance, that it was the most important fight since those of the Poplar councillors in the 1920s and Clay Cross in 1972-4.

"We are fighting because we have no choice. Anything else would be betrayal".

Shield

To much applause, Mulhearn pointed out what Kinnock's call for moderation and a dented shield would mean. "A dented shield means 6000 redundancies, drastic cuts in services, and an end to the housing programme. These are alternatives that Liverpool City Council is not prepared to contemplate for a moment".

The 'alternative' of capitalising £27 million of next year's housing repairs money



Fighting cuts in Liverpool. Photo: John Smith, IFL.

was similarly dismissed as unacceptable.

The action of the joint shop stewards committee in stopping the issue of redundancy notices last week has changed the tone of the whole campaign. It is clear that the fight is on, and it is on now.

United

Mulhearn announced that since the joint shop stewards committee action the council would not try to gain legal advantages by issuing notices, and has given a written guarantee to that effect.

"This council and this workforce are united in fighting the Tory government".

Many of the speakers voiced the anger of the conference at the Labour Party leadership's scarcely veiled hostility to Liverpool's fight. Keva Coombes, leader of Merseyside County Council, said "I want to ask Kinnock to state clearly to the labour movement: which side is he on?"

The conference was united in demanding of a future Labour government that it should annul any legal action taken against councillors. Lambeth council leader Ted Knight pointed out that "If the Labour leadership cannot support the miners and the Liverpool and Lambeth councillors, how can it stand up to the IMF?"

Ian Lowes, convenor of the largest city council union, the GMBU, explained why the joint shop stewards committee had taken its decision to block the council issuing redundancies and to call for an all-out indefinite action from the 25th.

He argued that only two options were available: to fight now or to wait two weeks until the money ran out. As he put it "we can't ask for solidarity action from other workers unless we take

action ourselves. That is why the decision on the 16th [ie to call for the strike] was right".

He pointed out that the ballots of the G&M and NALGO were being run on the basis of mass meetings to thrash out the arguments before the vote. He argued that the key to success in the ballots would be active campaigning and explanation of the issues to the workforce.

The statement passed by conference demanded the return of £25 million out of the £350 million stolen from Merseyside since 1979, and the withdrawal of surcharges against 49 councillors. It resolved to call for solidarity action from local authority workers nationally and to set up support groups similar to the miners' support groups not just in Liverpool but nationally.

National

The potential for a mass national fight was drawn out by the deputy leader of Southwark council. Labour councillors in Southwark received warnings of surcharge from the district auditor last week for setting their rate late, and so did Lewisham. They clearly have an interest in linking their fight to that of Liverpool and Lambeth.

The experience of the local government left has been a depressing one of left rhetoric followed by climb-downs. In Liverpool the fight has reached the crunch. Workers have been called on to take direct action. Initiatives must be taken at grass roots level.

Coordination and feedback from councillors must be maximised. A democratic and open organising committee should be established to organise and lead the campaign, ensuring that the workers and the community are

Left bulletins unite

ONE THING will be missing at this year's Labour Party conference — Socialist Organiser's highly successful daily Conference Briefing, given to delegates and visitors each morning.

For the last five conferences it has been established as one of the best daily guides to what is going on. The positive comments and financial contributions of both delegates and visitors testify to how much it has been valued.

The Briefing won't be there in Bournemouth. But our comments and analysis will still go out daily to delegates.

This year SO is collaborating with other left-wingers in the production of a new Rank and File delegates' Briefing. The new bulletin will incorporate the daily Briefings produced by Socialist Organiser and Labour Briefing, which have appeared side by side over the last two years.

One advantage of the joint bulletin will be to cut down the bewildering proliferation of papers at the Party conference. But the basic reason for the joint bulletin is not ecological but political: the need for the serious left to unite when it can and present an united front against the rightward drift of the Party. Campaigning left unity is the best possible answer to Kinnock's threats to defy a Party conference decision to back Liverpool and the miners.

Since the joint Socialist Organiser/Labour Briefing conference briefing produced on the last day of the conference two years ago, SO has argued for a regular joint bulletin. Now we've got it. The new Briefing will be produced jointly by Socialist Organiser, Labour Briefing, and the groups and campaigns involved in 'Labour Left Coordination'.

It will increase the impact of the serious fighting left on the conference.

Back Liverpool!

Continued from p.1

local government workers convince other local government workers in every part of the country to back them if they strike. Delegates should commit the national party to build Liverpool support committees everywhere and themselves go back home and build such committees.

A labour government that does not pay back the crippling fines confiscated from the NUM during the miners' epic strike will thereby brand itself as a neutered and tamed government from which the bosses have nothing to fear.

A Labour government that leaves victimised miners to rot in jail or on the dole, thereby underwriting and backing up the savage class 'justice' of Thatcher and McGregor — such a 'Labour' government will cover itself and the labour movement that puts it into power with shame and infamy.

Neil Kinnock and the party leaders in Parliament have made it perfectly plain where they stand on the miners. Kinnock has allowed it to be reported in the press without contradiction that he will veto any Labour Party conference decision to pay back miners' money.

No-one should misunderstand the Labour leaders. They will not release miners still in jail when Labour comes to power. They will not pay back money confiscated from the miners.

There is some vague talk of reimbursing victimised Labour councillors. But who can trust Kinnock and his like? The famous Clay Cross councillors got no help from the 1974-9 Labour government, nor did the jailed building workers (the Shrewsbury Two) who were forced to serve their full sentences imposed under the conspiracy laws for picket duty during the 1972 builders' strike.

Delegates should commit the Labour Party unequivocally to the miners and the front-line councillors — and then go home and organise the fight to make sure that it conference which decides, not Kinnock.

☆☆☆☆ New Ground ☆☆☆☆

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JACK CADE'S



Black solidarity with Liverpool: why and how

NOT ALL the rioters in Handsworth were black, but a lot of them were. Add the reaction of some on the left to Handsworth to the bitter conflict in Liverpool between the Militant-led Labour council and the Black Caucus, and you have a dispiriting three-dimensional picture of how the left relates to black people in Britain.

By now it seems impossible for outsiders to know the detailed rights and wrongs of the conflict between Militant and the Black Caucus, or of the 'Sam Bond affair'. On both sides it has taken on the character of a vendetta with a terrible momentum of its own.

There are reports that the Black Caucus is not backing the Liverpool Labour Party's call on workers to strike in defence of the council. If so, then it is an indictment of them — and of everybody responsible for letting the conflict get this far.

On the 'Sam Bond affair' the Black Caucus say he was appointed race relations officer without proper qualifications because he supports Militant. Militant says the Black Caucus just want jobs for their people.

Militant alleges that violence has been done to its supporters by Black Caucus activists. Yet what was the council's calling in of the police to remove demonstrating blacks if not violence?

Militant's threat to 'take the political struggle' into the heavily black Liverpool 8 is in this situation to risk provoking a race riot. That's the measure of how serious things have got.

Yet for all the convoluted nature of the dispute it is perfectly clear where the main polit-

ical responsibility — and therefore blame — lies. It lies with Militant and the Labour council leadership.

What on earth sense is there in imposing a race relations officer against the bitter opposition of the most vocal and active people in the black community? Not to allow the community the main voice in such a matter is to make nonsense of the whole idea of having a race relations officer.

The labour movement, and the leading political tendency in it, had the responsibility to unite the black and white communities, and they have failed miserably. The Black Caucus don't call themselves Marxists or revolutionaries — Militant does.

Of course the Bond affair is not the whole of the matter. Though the Labour council has created many jobs in Liverpool, no effort has been made to take account of the special unemployment problems of blacks. Many Labour councils elsewhere have operated positive discrimination, but Liverpool has been a bastion of entrenched white male bureaucratic power.

Instead of sensitivity to the blacks there has been brutal disregard and steamroller tactics. Militant has always opposed positive discrimination. The consequences so far include the bitter alienation of the vocal black community, and division of the forces that should be united against Thatcher.

Amidst mass unemployment, for a Labour council, by refusing positive discrimination, to put sections of the black community in a position of publicly agitating for a fairer share-out, is to risk a massive worsening of rela-

tions between black and white workers; it is to risk major racial conflict in Liverpool.

The situation has some frightening parallels with Northern Ireland in the late '60s, when the Catholic demand for fairer shares helped push the Protestant workers back into bitter Orange bigotry.

Whatever the faults of the Black Caucus, those in the leadership of the labour movement in Liverpool who have let this dangerous situation develop deserve to be condemned.

The caricature opposite of Militant in Liverpool is Socialist Action on the Handsworth riot. Yes, the outbreak expressed the anger and despair of youth. But to glorify it as an 'insurrection', presenting it as part of a serious 'fight back' against Thatcherism, as Socialist Action did over five (of 12) pages last week, is to indulge in preposterous romanticism and fantasising.

The black organisations in Handsworth itself, grouped in the Handsworth Defence Campaign, strike a very different note in their statement on the events, printed elsewhere in Socialist Organiser this week.

On the one side, stone-age bureaucratic, traditional, white labour movement indifference to

the blacks, and implacably sectarian hostility to politically active blacks when they protest and show their resentment — all of it buttressed and reinforced by the sect-ish 'Marxist' arrogance and self-righteousness of Militant. On the other hand, vapid romanticism and an ideological nullity that glorifies and paints up an outbreak of dead-end despair.

Integrated

The black workers and unemployed need to be integrated into the labour movement — into a movement that lets them be equals, by taking account of their special concerns and problems, and respecting their right to their own distinct identity as long as they want it. They need patronising romanticism as little as they 'need' the foul behaviour of Liverpool council.

Despite their conflict with Militant and backward sections of the Labour Party in Liverpool, blacks in Liverpool should support the council's call for strike action. Settling accounts with those, including the 'Marxists', who reflect the traditional backwardness of the labour movement, is an urgent task, but right now Thatcher is the main enemy!

The blue swimsuits

Mrs Thatcher's recent appointment of novelist Jeffrey Archer to act as her PR supremo seemed like an inspired move.

Who better than a top-selling fiction writer to brush up the Tory image, especially in these difficult times when the triumphs of Thatcherism seem to be losing their appeal to the punters, and moaning minnies stalk the land?

Young Jeffrey has the added advantage of not falling into either of the usual Tory categories: he's not your crude boover-boy type like Norman Tebbit, nor is he a geriatric crusted port quaffer à la White-law. No, our Jeff is very much one of your actual whizz-kids and a bit of a smoothie.

In the '70s he won Louth for the Tories to become the youngest MP in the House. He looked all set for a bright future on the front benches until Aquablast, a Canadian industrial cleaning firm in which he had invested heavily, was found to be a fraud, and his career in politics took a nose-dive.

But even the Aquablast un-

pleasantness proved to be a blessing in disguise for our boy: with Mrs Deborah Owen (wife of fellow smoothie David) as his agent he wrote a fictionalised account of the debacle ('Not a Penny More, not a Penny Less') and soon he was a multi-millionaire again.

How strange, then, than Jeffrey should drop such a clanger as agreeing to be a judge in this year Miss World contest. Sexism, of course, is quite OK in Tory circles. But there are limits.

YCs getting a little over-excited at their cattle-market discos is one thing. The Miss World contest is quite another. It's so gauche and common. And Jeffrey's crude remarks like "blue swimsuits will be an obvious advantage" didn't help either.

The last thing the Tory party needs at the moment is to be publicly associated with an event specifically designed for the delectation of dirty old men and sweaty voyeurs. At least Cecil Parkinson made an effort to draw a discreet veil over his extra-mural activities.



The issues at Bournemouth

AT LABOUR Party conference I'm looking for a clear statement of an economic strategy that will move the party in a socialist direction and not lead us into the trap of wage controls and attacks on working class living standards like the last two Labour governments.

I'm also hoping that the party will give an overwhelming majority to the NUM composite motion. I hope and trust that all other parties that have submitted motions or amendments will withdraw them in favour of the NUM composite motion, so that we have one motion and one clear debate.

There's clearly going to be a long debate on the demand for black sections. My own party has voted to support the right of Constituency Labour Parties to establish black sections if they wish to, and I think it's essential that the Labour Party recognise the right of self-organisation for the black community.

The National Executive working party actually came out in favour of black sections, but that's been rejected by the National Executive itself. Particularly if we're establishing the Labour Party anew at present, black sections have to be an integral part of it.

The position in Liverpool highlights the fact that local councillors are expected to bear the financial responsibility for any decision they take, whereas Members of Parliament are not.

For example if the MPs who voted to loan so much money to John De Lorean now had to pay for it, then there'd be an awful lot of bankrupt MPs around.

The clear demand must be that local councillors must not be put in a position of financial danger for decisions they have genuinely made to help their local community.

And it's essential that the Labour Party recognise what the law on local government is intended to do. It's intended to criminalise councils, and they're trying to do just that in Lambeth and Liverpool. We've got to support Liverpool council.

Labour Party conference must declare its support for the council, and it must pass a motion promising reinstatement and reimbursement of councillors who are dismissed or surcharged. If any councillor is removed from office by the Tory government that is an attack on the democracy of the labour movement itself and the rest of the movement has got to organise in the

councillors' support.

I think sympathetic strike action is important and should be worked for. The experience of the last period over rate-capping is that it will not necessarily happen. It's a question of the leadership the Party conference can give, and in some ways the decisions of Labour Party conference are now more important than ever on this kind of issue.

The Lambeth councillors have gained and kept overwhelming support in their community because of their stance on rate-capping, and they're getting the support of the rest of the movement. That is clearly a lesson to the rest of the movement. If you stand up and fight, people are prepared to recognise what you're doing.

Accountability will be a huge issue in the conference. The attitude on the miners from the party leadership and the Shadow Cabinet is quite disgraceful.

The miners in prison are there because they stood up for their jobs and their communities and their trade union. It's essential that the Labour Party doesn't vote to keep them in prison, which is what it will do if it rejects the NUM motion.

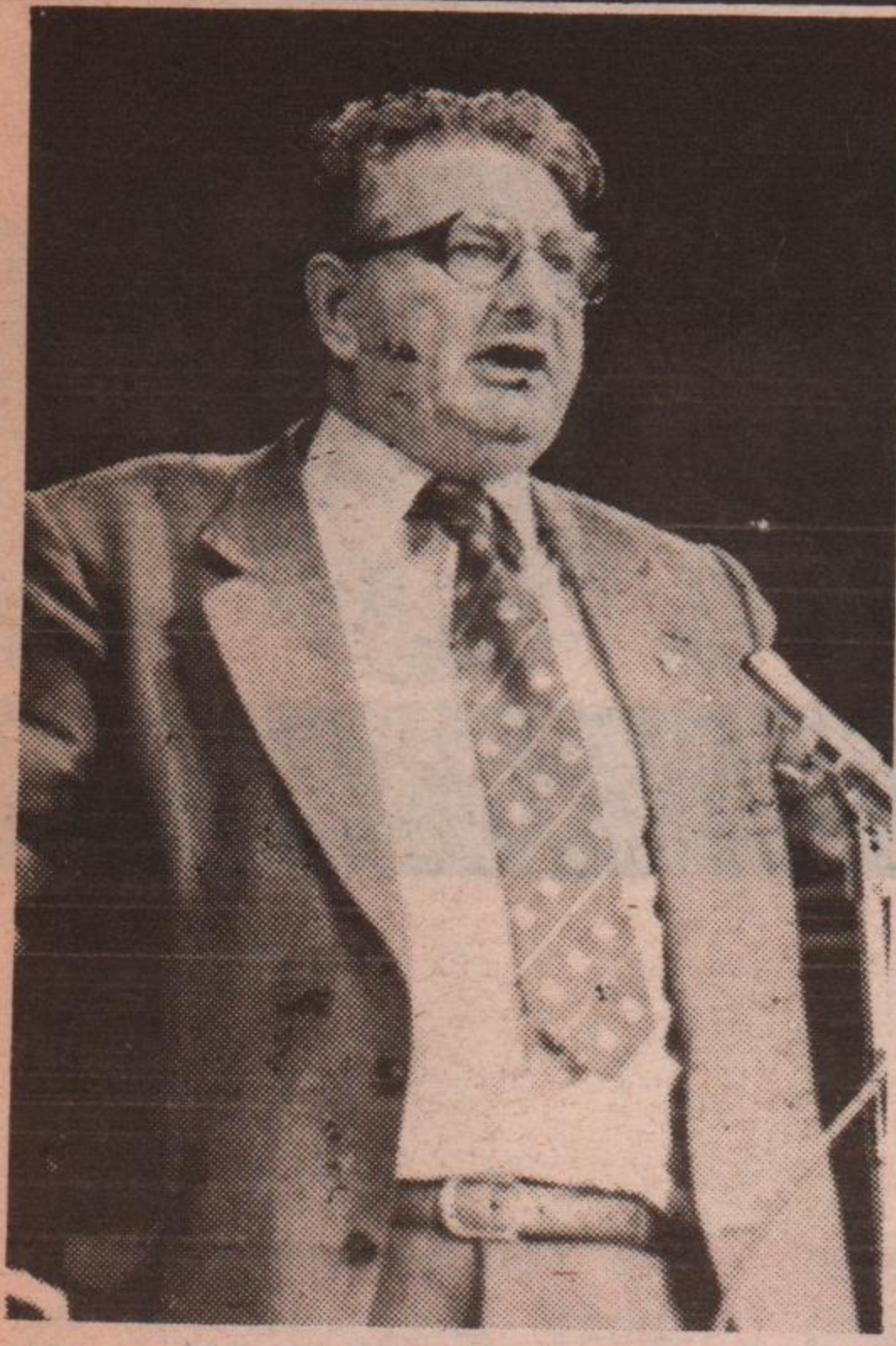
I've a hunch that there may also be a serious debate on international policies and strategies. I hope that the issue of membership of NATO will be debated. I don't think we can go on saying we support unilateral nuclear disarmament — which I emphatically and totally do — and at the same time tie ourselves to a North Atlantic Treaty which is essentially an aggressive nuclear alliance.

My party has put forward a motion on gay rights which we very much hope will go through. In the past we've regularly put forward motions calling for the withdrawal of British troops from Northern Ireland and the reunification of Ireland, and I'm pleased to see that increasingly more and more organisations are taking up these issues.

It's very important and a very welcome development that sections of the hard left have got together on a joint daily bulletin. I will certainly be supporting and contributing to that daily broadsheet, and I think it could become a major feature of conference. It's essentially that all the groups on the left do stick together, through the Labour Left Co-ordination, and we recognise the danger of fragmentation of the serious left.



Aftermath in Handsworth



Eric Heffer MP told Socialist Organiser:

As far as Labour Party conference is concerned, I want to see a very clear reiteration of the basic policy of the party which has been developed over the past two years, and I want to see very clear support for the miners.

I want to see clear support for the Liverpool councillors and the workers who are involved in that struggle.

And I want to see the party really exposing the Liberals and the SDP as the other side of the Tory coin, and demonstrating to the country that we are prepared to go out as a united force on our basic socialist policies.

On Liverpool, I want to see the Party executive reiterate the resolution it passed in June, and I want to see the conference go on record in support. I want to see financial aid developed, and trade unionists giving whatever support is possible.



Tony Benn:

I HOPE that the 1985 Labour Party conference is clear on its support for the miners' resolution; endorses the women's demands; agrees to black sections.

Those are three immediate questions.

I hope also that it reaffirms its basic policies on nuclear weapons; takes them a step further on foreign policy — and I think we should have a good debate on that —; carries the debate on Ireland a stage further forward; and above all gives a high focus to how to create full employment, because the task of dealing with four and a half million unemployed will require very radical measures indeed. This conference would be a suitable occasion for trying to get those policies subject to a great deal of detailed scrutiny.

There's plenty of help that can be given to the Liverpool and Lambeth councillors. There is a story that will be repeated in local authorities all over the country. It so happens that Liverpool and Lambeth are in the front of the queue, but just as the miners fought for all trade unions so Lambeth and Liverpool are fighting for all the Labour local authorities.

All types of practical support that can be given should be given.

Handouts to the bosses?

HANDOUTS to the bosses — that's the new socialism, Neil Kinnock style.

The central economic policy statement to be presented to this year's Labour Party conference is entitled 'Investing in Britain'. It proposes a National Investment Bank.

Pension funds and other financial institutions would be compelled to limit their overseas holdings, and to put some of their money into the NIB, on pain of losing tax concessions.

The money thus gathered together would then be doled out to industrial capitalists.

The statement also proposes increased public investment — building houses, sewers, roads, hospitals, etc. It says that the double boost to investment, both private and public, will create new, useful jobs (though it avoids any promises about reducing unemployment by definite amounts in any definite time-scale).

Nationalisation is no part of this strategy. The whole statement is hinged round a policy of pushing and nudging British capitalism into expansion by judicious (and, as the document repeatedly insists, "prudent") use of state money.

As a socialist policy this is nonsense. Its theoretical assumption is that British capitalist investment in Britain is *socialist*; foreign capitalist investment in Britain is *dubious* (the statement makes no reference to it; its general attitude to investment being a Good Thing apparently breaks down when the investment is foreign); and British capitalist investment *abroad* is positively *evil*!

"The Conservatives are the anti-investment party", it says. But investment, under the present system, is another name for *increasing capital*. What Labour's NEC is trying to tell us is that the Tories are the anti-capitalist party, and that Labour can expand capitalism better!

How does the statement stand up as a *capitalist* policy? Not very well.

In principle National Investment Banks and the like can work. Indeed, the NEC's proposals are only a very tame version of policies which have been advocated by many capitalist economists for 50 years now, and put into practice in many countries.

But, from a capitalist point of view, there are good reasons why the Tories are pursuing a different policy.

Capitalism is an international system, and Britain's economy is very highly integrated into that international system. Production will be sited in Britain if it is profitable to site it here, and not otherwise. A National Investment Bank is of little force against that fundamental constraint.

The massive funds which have flowed overseas since 1979 are not "wasted". They yield excellent profits.

Schemes like the NIB — in much more radical forms — have been used by some Third World capitalists to build up local basic industries (steel, for example) and thus reduce their dependence on imports. But Britain is not a Third World country initiating basic industries. It is the world's first industrial power, now in decline.

The capitalist state as nursemaid for infant industry is a dif-

By Martin Thomas

ferent proposition from the capitalist state as attendant to senile enterprise.

The NIB will help some enterprises. That does not mean that will increase the overall number of useful jobs. If profit remains the regulator of the economy, and if profit levels in Britain remain low, then the only effect of the NIB will be to shift investment from one area to another.

It could well end up like the last Labour government's National Enterprise Board, as an agency which does little more than help declining enterprises to chop and purge their workforce in a more gradual, efficient manner.

The capitalist economists who advocate state-organised investment schemes are clear that an essential condition for their success is control over wages to allow a rise in profits. The NIB scheme is either hot air, or part of a package with incomes policy. And even together with incomes policy, and even in capitalist terms, it may not work.

A socialist policy would have to start from the principle of breaking the rule of profit, rather than manipulating it; from common ownership, rather than coaxing the bosses with handouts; and from internationalism, rather than the statement's narrow nationalism.

The NEC's main complaint against Britain's capitalists is that "Because of their overseas interests, they often fail to put Britain's needs first". As if workers have, or should have, no "overseas interests"! As if the issue is "overseas" versus "Britain", not bosses versus workers.

The NEC is also presenting to conference a statement on the Third World — much shorter

and more perfunctory than the one on investment.

The statement condemns the Tories roundly, but its own proposals are utterly inadequate.

In this context the NEC is able to see something wrong with the notion that if resources go outside Britain they are therefore "wasted". It does propose increased aid to the poorest countries and use of the resources of British industry to help those countries develop suitable technologies.

It is all on a miserable scale, though. The statement promises that the next Labour government will increase aid from 0.33% of Britain's national income to 0.7% over five years. Cutting military spending by half and putting those resources into saving lives rather than accumulating the means to kill people would put four or five times as much into aid — nearly 3% of national income. Putting the four million unemployed to work and dedicating half the extra production to aid would put in maybe twice as much again — six per cent or so.

So far Labour has done practically nothing to *campaign* about the terrible famine in Africa — a result of international capitalism which makes Britain's decay and dole queues seem like flea-bites in comparison. The statement promises no change.

The best it does is "call on the government to promote joint international action to reschedule and where possible write off the debts of the poorest countries. No commitment to *cancel* the debt burden which cripples many famine-stricken countries.

The economic policy proposed by Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley is nationalistic, capitalist-oriented, and at best a recipe for a re-run of the 1964-70 and 1974-9 governments. It should be rejected.



Neil Kinnock. Photo: John Harris

Red and green

THIS YEAR'S Labour Party conference agenda contains some 30 motions falling loosely into the environmental, ecological, or health categories.

The largest group are the nine on *Fuel Policy* (394-400, 402-3). All are opposed to the further expansion of nuclear power but tend to be more cautious about existing plants, some calling for a rundown and for alternative work to be provided. They are generally pro-coal, calling for more research into coal gasification and liquefaction and into ways of reducing acid pollution from coal-burning. They also call for renewable energy research.

Acid rain crops up again in the section on *Environmental Pollution* (489-493), as do toxic and nuclear waste pollution.

In a *separate* section entitled *The Environment* motions 501-2 call for an Environmental Protection Agency and a Minister for Conservation. A detailed amendment to the EPA motion brings in a reversal of the rundown of the Health and Safety Executive, full implementation of the Control of Pollution Act 1974, implementation of EEC standards on pollution, and the involvement of trade unions and the community in local Environmental Health Departments.

In the field of health come seven motions on improving cervical smear test facilities (428-434 in *Women's Health*); three in *Health and Safety* (503-5) demanding an improvement in the effect of the Factory Inspectorate, research into the health effects of New Technology and for a comprehensive campaign against asbestos; two on pollution in *Water Supplies* (476-7); one on *Public Health* (522) calling for more spending to reverse the deterioration in hospitals, water supplies and sewers; and one on *Medical Research* (527) calling for more.

Lastly, in *Rural Policy*, motion 393 calls for less intensive, more natural, ecological and humane methods of farming.

The Autumn number of the Socialist Environment and Resource-

es Association quarterly *New Ground* has just come out and is a special issue on 'Greening the Labour Movement' — getting environmental policies into the trade unions and the Labour Party.

Timed to be on sale at the Labour Party conference, it highlights motions with an ecological slant. With its *Charter for the Environment* just published, the Labour Party seems to be giving Green policies an unprecedented prominence. It may actually pass a motion against nuclear power for the first time ever. Unfortunately, many environmental motions are split up on the order paper and may therefore not be discussed.

Several articles look at environmentalism and the trade unions. The mover of the successful anti-nuclear-power motion at the TGWU conference reports on the debate that went with it.

An article on public health looks at how public sector unions are linking the fight against privatisation with the fight for improved standards in hospitals, sanitary services and water supplies.

SERA's intervention in the unions is described in a third article, recent examples including the argument for a 'Clean Coal' policy during the miners' strike, pressure for a socialist energy policy, the development of workers' plans for alternative production, etc.

There are discussions and critiques of Labour Party policy in other areas as well as a tantalisingly brief piece on the struggle of former employees of the Union Carbide plant in Bhopal to implement an alternative workers' plan. Their fight needs international support and there is to be a conference in London on November 2 and a national demonstration in Sheffield on November 30.

With this issue *New Ground* continues to increase its appeal to activists in the labour movement and is well worth its price of 60p.

Lynk and Labour

DID YOU know it was official Labour Party policy not to recognise Roy Lynk's breakaway 'Union of Democratic Mineworkers'?

It is: general secretary Larry Whitty has made it clear in a letter to Newark Constituency Labour Party, at the north end of the Notts coalfield (reproduced here).

Majority

But the majority of miners, who depend for their impressions of Labour Party policy on what they hear Neil Kinnock and other leaders saying on TV, won't know about it.

The closest that Neil Kinnock has come to making a statement was at the Durham miners' gala. In about five minutes' worth of circumlocution, he said that a breakaway would be a *mistake*, but certainly did not rule out recognition.

Just before that he had been lavishly praising Mansfield MP Don Concannon, a faithful supporter of the scab leaders. And during the crisis over possible expulsion from the TUC of the AUEW and EETPU, Labour leaders indicated that unions

The Labour Party
160 WALKER ROAD, LONDON SE17 1JT
01-592 9910

Dear Mr. Taylor,
NUP AFFILIATION TO THE LABOUR PARTY

Thank you for your letter of 8 August. There has been no formal request to the NEC to accept affiliation from any breakaway union of the National Union of Mineworkers. If such a request came, there would be no question of the Party accepting affiliation of an organisation not recognised by the National Union of the TUC.

I hope this makes the position clear to your constituency.

Yours sincerely,
Larry Whitty
General Secretary

cc: J. L. Whitty, dictated by Mr. Whitty and signed in his absence

expelled from the TUC would very well retain their Labour Party links.

Weaseling

Such weaseling helps Lynk to confuse and corral doubtful miners.

The Party nationally should stop helping the scab-herders. Neil Kinnock should come out publicly with the policy stated in Larry Whitty's letter.

Back the NUM!

Albert Bowns, Kiveton Park NUM (South Yorkshire) told SO:

I think the NUM composite will be passed. But I'm wondering whether Kinnock will abide by it. I think he could ignore it. He's that type

of bloke. I think it'll cheer up the sacked and jailed miners no end if the resolution is passed. At the moment they're getting nothing except from individuals and papers, like yours.

NEW SOCIALISM? OLD

6 • TRIBUNE • 20 SEPTEMBER 1985

DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM — A TRIBUNE RELAUNCH STATEMENT

The following statement, which was drafted by a group of Tribune supporters in the Parliamentary Labour Party and outside, was circulated last month to generate political support for the relaunched Tribune.

By the time of going to press, the following had expressed their support for the statement.

Kevin Barron MP
Margaret Beckett MP
Rodney Bickerstaffe (NUPE)
Roland Boyes MP
David Blunkett (leader Sheffield City Council)
Gordon Brown MP
Richard Caborn MP
Ann Clywd MP
Christine Crawley MEP
Robin Cook MP
Ken Coates
Keve Coombes (leader Merseyside County Council)
Paul Convery (secretary Labour Co-ordinating Committee)
Jack Dromey (TGWU)
Michael Elliot MEP
Derek Fatchett MP
Mark Fisher MP
Glyn Ford MEP
George Galloway
Bill Gilby (chair Labour Co-ordinating Committee)
Bryan Gould MP
Peter Hain
Fred Hasson
Harriet Harman MP
Peter Heathfield (NUM)
Stuart Holland MP
Bob Hughes MP
Doug Hoyle MP
Joan Lester
Ken Livingstone
Ron Leighton MP
David Martin MEP
Michael Meacher MP
John Maxton MP
Lewis Minkin
Bill Morris (TGWU)
Stan Newens MEP
Stan Orme MP
Martin O'Neill MP
Terry Patchett MP
Peter Pike MP
Jo Richardson MP
Clare Short MP
Chris Smith MP
Clive Soley MP
Gavin Strang MP
Graham Stringer (leader Manchester City Council)
Tom Sawyer (NUPE)
Jack Taylor (NUM)
Carol Tongue MEP
Keith Vaz
Mike Ward (deputy leader GLC)
Bob Wareing MP
David Winnick MP

For too long the Left has allowed its political opponents to caricature and distort socialism. While we have debated our own particular notions of socialism internally, the public has grown increasingly confused about what a socialist Britain would be like to live in.

There is a real need to restate, develop and argue for socialist values in a way that can build popular support and convince the electorate that socialism is relevant to the problems of modern Britain.

In this task there are two underlying themes which characterise the democratic socialism we seek to promote.

(i) DEMOCRACY

Socialism is fundamentally concerned with the extension of democracy. It must be our purpose to extend the responsibility for decision-making in our society to the greatest possible number of people. This should be reflected in our style of politics, which should emphasise not only parliamentary activity but also political involvement at all levels in our communities and at work.

(ii) OPPORTUNITY

We live in a society in which class-based inequality is widespread. That inequality shows itself in education, housing, health care and at work. Inequality is further aggravated by sexual and racial discrimination. Socialism aims to eradicate all forms of social inequality so that every individual has the opportunity to develop his or her talents to the full.

These two themes should be central to the Labour Party's campaigning and underpin the development of our policy. **Economic power:** Economic power must be made publicly accountable through an extension of social ownership, planning and industrial democracy, not merely to make the economy more efficient but to restructure it so that power and wealth are used for the public good rather than for the benefit of a few individuals.

Political power: Democratic socialism must also involve a redistribution of political power. This is why open government, the reform of parliament and the civil service and the restoration and extension of powers to local government must form part of any socialist project.

It is also in this context that we believe Britain must retain the option of withdrawal from the EEC.

International power: The search for peace, a determination to disengage immediately from the nuclear arms race and the pursuit of policies to provide self-determination and basic human and material rights for those in the Third World must form the basis of our international approach.

We believe a Britain not aligned to any major power is best placed to advance these policies.

We wish to see a Labour Party which:

- clearly puts socialism on the political agenda
- is open and outward-looking in the expression of its values
- campaigns in a way which clearly links our policies with the underlying socialist policies which must shape them
- encourages the presentation of ideas and debate in a spirit which recognises the legitimacy of minority views.

To achieve power and to use power effectively, Labour needs to campaign on broad socialist themes. We do not simply want to replace Thatcherism; we must win people's hearts and minds for a better alternative.

'WE MUST win the ideological battle against the Marxists', said Neil Kinnock to Tribune's newly-softened soft-left editor Nigel Williamson, who interviewed him in last week's 'relaunched' Tribune.

Tribune was out on the battlefield ahead of him. The crowing glory of the 'relaunch' was a manifesto grandiloquently entitled 'Democratic Socialism — a Tribune Relaunch Statement', and signed by 54 dignitaries, 33 of them MPs or Members of the European Parliament.

Signatories include black sections advocate Keith Vaz; Peter Hain; NUM general secretary Peter Heathfield; Jo Richardson; Ken Coates; and, of course, the future Lord Redken, the hero of the local government struggle who left Liverpool in the lurch. Conspicuously absent are the names of Eric Heffer, Tony Benn, Dennis Skinner, and Jeremy Corbyn.

Despite some signatures that should not be there, the statement is a sad example of the politics of the increasingly depoliticised if not a-political careerist left. An example of the political ad-man's art, rather than of the politician's — the 'cynical soft-sell', as Ken Livingstone himself described it, talking about his publicity campaign for the GLC.

Echo

Echoing the opening paragraphs of the Communist Manifesto of Marx and Engels, published in 1848, Tribune says: "For too long the Left has allowed its political opponents to caricature and distort socialism... the public has grown increasingly confused about what a socialist Britain would be like to live in".

So: "It is high time that Communists should openly, in the face of the whole world, publish their views, their aims, their tendencies, and meet this nursery tale of the Spectre of Communism with a Manifesto of the party itself".

That was the Communist Manifesto! Tribune is a lot less clear: "There is a real need to restate, develop and argue for socialist values in a way that can build popular support and convince the electorate that socialism is relevant to the problems of modern Britain". Not only this limp sentence, but also the whole manifesto, makes the reader wonder whether the statement's authors are themselves "convinced".

There are, says Tribune, "two underlying themes which characterise the democratic socialism we seek to promote". These are "Democracy" and "Opportunity".

"Socialism is fundamentally concerned with the extension of democracy".

True: but, as we shall see, Tribune does not have much to say about how to do it.

On the level of political insti-

The left-wing Labour Party weekly Tribune has just 're-launched' itself as the voice of born-again Kinnockism. John O'Mahony examines the 'Democratic Socialist' manifesto put forward for the re-launch.

tutions, we have yet to win the battle for democracy in Britain. It's no use saying 'we have more democracy than the USSR or Chile'. That's true, but irrelevant.

We have the right to elect the 'central committee of the ruling class' who will govern us, once every five years. Real power is in the hands of a permanent non-elected civil service.

When a reforming Labour government is elected, it must vie for control with this permanent bureaucracy, which is linked with the ruling class and the Tory party by a thousand strings of wealth, education, family and sympathy. In fact Labour Cabinets slot into the system. Even under a Labour government basic decisions are not taken by parliament, but by the Cabinet, by the prime minister alone, or sometimes by the permanent officials without any reference to politicians.

For example, the decision to build the British atom bomb in the late 1940s was an executive decision that was not even announced to Parliament, let alone voted on.

We need an extension of democracy, that's for sure. The programme of democracy inscribed on the banner of the first mass working-class movement, the Chartists of the 1830s and '40s, has never been realised in full.

The Chartist demand for annual parliaments would make a continuation of the present government with its present politics impossible: with the exception of the period immediately following the Falklands war, the Thatcher government would have been likely to meet defeat at the polls at most times since 1979.

If we had a proper democracy they would not have been able to hang on in office, to manoeuvre, to secure their base by beating down and demoralising the working class, and then to choose the best time for the five-yearly poll as Thatcher did in 1983.

On the level of the economic affairs which in the final analysis govern society we have no democracy at all. The Tories waged a sustained propaganda war on the miners during their heroic strike, demanding that they have a ballot. None of the Tories or the Fleet Street editors, and not even any of the Labour Party leaders, suggested that there was anything wrong in fact that miners were not balloted on pit closures.

There is no economic democracy in Britain. On the most basic things in their workaday — or dole-a-day — lives, fifty million people in Britain have no say. We are at the mercy of an industrial and financial oligarchy, an oligarchy that doesn't even accept that workers have the right to live except on condition that they can be exploited for profit.

Yes, we need democracy.

Lenin summed up how to get it in a single sentence: "The workers, after winning political power, will smash the old bureaucratic apparatus, shatter it to its very foundations, and raze it to the ground; they will replace it by a new one, consisting of the very same workers and employees, against whose transformation into bureaucrats the measures will at once be taken which were specified in detail by Marx and Engels:

"(1) not only election, but also recall at any time;

(2) pay not to exceed that of a worker;

(3) immediate introduction of control and supervision by all, so that all may become 'bureaucrats' for a time, and that, therefore, nobody may be able to become a 'bureaucrat'."

What does Tribune say? "It must be our purpose to extend the responsibility for decision-making in our society to the greatest possible number of people". How? Tribune doesn't know. But it is sure that "This should be reflected in our style [their emphasis] of politics, which should emphasise not only parliamentary activity but also political involvement at all levels in our communities and at work".

End of programme for democracy!

A serious fight by the labour movement — under Neil Kinnock's leadership or even under Roy Hattersley's — for an extension of democracy would be a tremendously energising and progressive development. Marxists would argue that we will not get a linear extension of democracy from now to working-class democracy as described by Lenin without a revolution; but we would support any, even limited, fight to extend democracy.

Resist

Tribune wants democracy. Good for Tribune! What does it propose we do about it? Nothing! Nothing at all!

Well, Nigel Williamson might say, we do want to do something: we want to elect a Labour government. That's the standard response to everything these days.

So do we want to elect a Labour government — even the one we are likely to get under a Neil Kinnock premiership.

But that is not going to change the system: it will slot into it. Socialists and democrats will have to pressure, resist, and fight against that government in defence of working class interests. We will have to do battle against the operation of the present state machine, which will not change its character by having Neil Kinnock and Roy Hattersley perched on top of it.

What about the second 'theme', 'opportunity'? "Class-based inequality is widespread... aggravated by sexual and racial discrimination". On the other hand "Socialism aims to eradi-

cate all forms of social inequality so that every individual has the opportunity to develop his or her talents to the full".

Individual opportunity is not quite all there is to socialism, and it's about developing capacities for enjoyment as well as 'talents'. But leave that aside. What does Tribune propose we do to achieve equal opportunity? What is about our society — which politically is not a tyranny, and economically rests on equal exchange — that produces, reproduces, and perpetuates inequality?

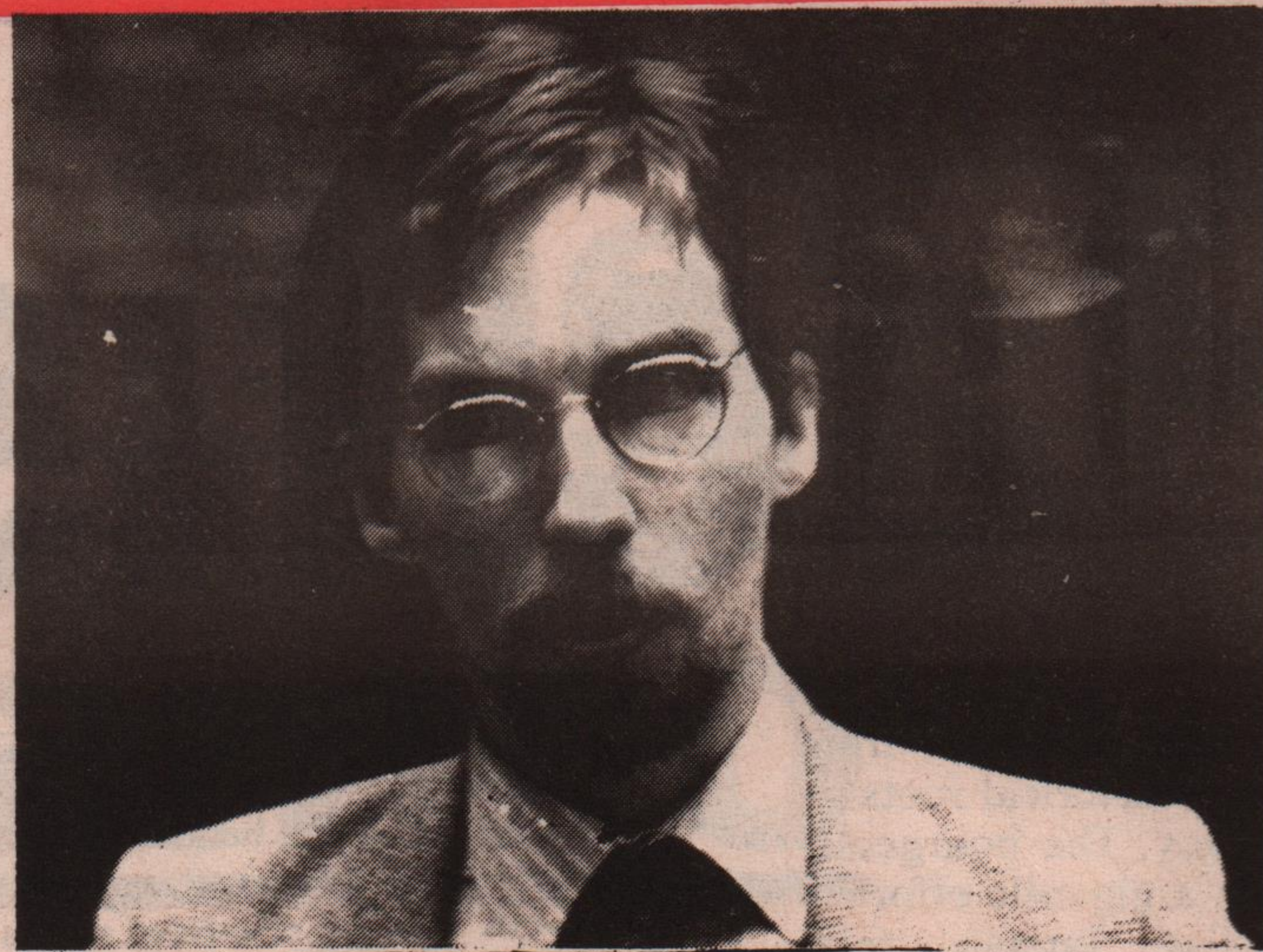
Socialists say it is the private ownership of the means of production, which enables the capitalists to exchange a pittance of wages for the worker's capacity to produce new value, and which thus lets them exploit the working class.

Clause Four of the Labour



Chris Mullin, the previous editor, speaking at the Labour Party conference. Now a victim of the centralised witch-hunt of Militant.

D CAREERISM



Nigel Williamson. Photo. John Harris

Party constitution commits the party to do something about it — to take industry out of the hands of the capitalists. Tribune? Tribune has nothing to suggest except empty phrases. It merely talks about "themes" which should be "central to the Labour Party's campaigning" and "underpin the development of our policy".

"Economic power must be made publicly accountable through an extension of public ownership, planning and industrial democracy... so that power and wealth are used for the public good rather than for the benefit of a few individuals".

Talk

What does this mean? What is "an extension" of public ownership? Why less than what Clause 4 talks of? Why less than the replacement of the capitalists? Without replacing the capitalists all talk of serious planning is nothing but talk of a Labour government co-ordinating a capitalist economy.

Without nationalisation of the commanding heights of the eco-

nomny (to use an expression appropriated by Nye Bevan from Lenin) there is no way that the economy will not be used "for the benefit of a few individuals".

Either live with the capitalists and serve them, comrades, or oppose them and overthrow them. That's been the choice for every Labour government and will be the choice for the next one. Each time the Labour government has served capitalism. Manifestos such as Tribune's are part of the preparation that will ensure that a Kinnock government will do likewise.

"Power must be made publicly accountable"? Socialism and equality, comrades, are about breaking capitalist power, not about trying to make it accountable.

Those are Tribune's proposals about "economic power". It also proposes "a redistribution of political power... the reform of parliament and the civil service and the restoration and extension of powers to local government". But we can't just "redistribute" power in any funda-

mental way: either the bosses hold the power, as on all essentials they do now, through the state machine and their control of the economy; or we do. To talk of mere "redistribution" is to talk of leaving the decisive power where it is now — with the class that Mrs Thatcher serves.

The manifesto talks not of unilateral disarmament but more vaguely of "a determination to disengage immediately from the nuclear arms race" (an arms freeze?).

On the EEC they say "Britain must retain the option of withdrawal from the EEC". That's better than the little-England chauvinism that Tribune has peddled for the last quarter of a century — except that it is not a re-think, but only a diluted version of the old line. They propose no international perspective, and probably still think that an island siege economy is the best road to socialism — only they dilute the policy in self-prostration before the new Labour Party establishment, which has no intention of upsetting the EEC arrangements.

Alert

The manifesto sums itself up with four inspiring paragraphs that could have been drafted by the SDP PR expert whom Ken Livingstone commissioned at a lavish fee to work on his GLC campaign.

"We wish to see a Labour Party which:

- clearly puts socialism on the political agenda
- is open and outward-looking in the expression of its values
- campaigns in a way which clearly links our policies with the underlying socialist policies which must shape them
- encourages the presentation of ideas and debate in a spirit which recognises the legitimacy of minority views"

And that's all? Well no. Here is a last paragraph.

"To achieve power and to use power effectively, Labour needs to campaign on broad socialist themes. We do not simply want to replace Thatcherism; we must win people's hearts and minds for a better alternative".

The statement begins by mimicking the Communist Manifesto, but instead of going on to define itself boldly and clearly, in socialist and class terms, it bandies about vacuous phrases. On questions of real policy it rants on nuclear disarmament, nationalisation, and even on the shibboleth of the broad left (though not of SO) over the last 25 years, hostility to the EEC expressed in the demand to get Britain out.

The nasty truth about Tribune's Democratic Socialist manifesto is that it is a piece of ad-man's patter, devoid of serious politics, and its political significance lies in its function: to ease the slide of a section of the Labour left away from any concern other than getting back into office.

Government office and 'power' for its own sake; a general amnesty for the Labour establishment from the party; self-induced amnesia about the bitter experience when Labour

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AMERICAN bases will go, pledges Kinnock

TRIBUNE

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ANN PETTIFOR
proposes how Labour can campaign against apartheid
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The new-look Tribune – refreshing the parts other papers don't reach

TRIBUNE RELAUNCH CONFERENCE – SEPTEMBER 21
County Hall, London SE1, 10am-5pm

INTERVIEWS

Socialist Organiser Labour Party conference fringe meeting

SOUTH AFRICA: BLACK WORKERS BREAK THE CHAINS

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

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

EASTERN EUROPE SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN PUBLIC MEETING
STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS IN EASTERN EUROPE AND USSR
MONDAY 30th SEPTEMBER 8.00PM
The Pavilion
Hampshire and Spanish Lounges
Speakers: Bob Clay MP (subject to confirmation)
Robin Cook MP
Piotr Egides (Russian Socialist)
Eric Heffer MP
Marek Garztecki (Solidarnosc)
Phillip Whitehead
Chair: Ron Keating (Nupe)
Discussion Admission: 75p
V. Dorer, 10 Park Drive, London NW11 7SH

CAMPAIGN FOR LABOUR PARTY DEMOCRACY Pre-Conference Rally
WHO DECIDES? PMs or PARTY?
SUNDAY 29th September 1.15pm
Winter Gardens Theatre
Speakers: DIANE ABBOTT
MARGARET BECKETT (other duties permitting)
PAT OLLEY
DENNIS SKINNER MP (NEC duties permitting)
GAVIN STRANG MP
Chair: ANDREW FENYO
CLPD Conference Briefing
Discussion Admission 50p



of Tribune, sits second from a left at a meeting with witch-hunt under Nigel Williamson, Tribune counsels Kinnock to have a de- rather than a centralised one... Photo: John Harris.

was last in government; eyes tightly shut, ears blocked, and minds rigidly locked against any consideration of what exactly a Kinnock government will do in office to achieve either 'democracy' or 'socialism' — and all wrapped up in soothing words about "our style of politics" — that's what characterises the 'democratic socialism' of Tribune.

Empty

In truth it is neither democratic nor socialist: a sad and empty example of the politics of the increasingly de-politicised careerist new left, who are forced to rely on the vague catch-phrases and vapid 'themes' of the advertising agency because they have dropped all clear commitments in their scramble for office.

They will 'win the ideological battle against the Marxists' armed with a manifesto like this only if they use it as kindling for the auto-da-fé that Neil Kinnock talks of to Nigel Williamson in the same issue of Tribune.

Pacifism and war

PACIFISM springs from the same historical roots as democracy. The bourgeoisie made a gigantic effort to rationalise human relations, that is, to supplant a blind and stupid tradition by a system of critical reason.

The guild restrictions on industry, class privileges, monarchic autocracy — these were the traditional heritage of the middle ages. Bourgeois democracy demanded legal equality, free competition and parliamentary methods in the conduct of public affairs.

Naturally, its rationalistic criteria were applied also in the field of international relations. Here it hit upon war, which appeared to it as a method of solving questions that was a complete denial of all 'reason'.

So bourgeois democracy began to point out to the nations — with the tongues of poesy, moral philosophy and certified accounting — that they would profit more by the establishment of a condition of eternal peace.

Such were the logical roots of bourgeois pacifism.

Economic

From the time of its birth pacifism was afflicted, however, with a fundamental defect, one which is characteristic of bourgeois democracy; its pointed criticisms addressed themselves to the surface of political phenomena, not daring to penetrate to their economic causes.

At the hands of capitalist reality the idea of eternal peace, on the basis of a 'reasonable' agreement, has fared even more badly than the idea of liberty, equality and fraternity. For Capitalism, when it rationalised industrial conditions, did not rationalise the social organisation of ownership, and thus prepared instruments of destruction such as even the 'barbarous' Middle Ages never dreamed of.

The constant embitterment of international relations and the ceaseless growth of militarism completely undermined the basis of reality under the feet of pacifism. Yet it was from these very things that pacifism took a new lease of life, a life which differed from its earlier phase as the blood and purple sunset differs from the rosy-fingered dawn.

The decades preceding the present war have been well designated as a period of *armed peace*. During this whole period campaigns were in uninterrupted progress and battles were being fought, but they were in the colonies alone.

Proceeding, as they did, in the territories of backward and powerless peoples, these wars led to a division of Africa, Polynesia and Asia, and prepared the way for the present world war. As, however, there were no wars in Europe after 1871 — in spite of a long series of sharp conflicts — the general opinion in petty bourgeois circles began gradually to behold in the growth of armies a guarantee of peace, which was destined ultimately to be established by international law with every institutional sanction.

Capitalist governments and munition kings naturally had no objections to this 'pacifist' interpretation of militarism. But the causes of world conflicts were

Can disarmament talks, summits and arms limitation treaties keep the peace? Is the balance of terror between nuclear arsenals a guarantee against war? In this article written early in 1917, Leon Trotsky discussed very similar issues debated in the run-up to World War 1. He argued that not 'official pacifism' but only socialist class struggle could stop war.

William Jennings Bryan, mentioned in the article, was a politician connected with the more radical wing of the US Democratic Party. Woodrow Wilson, also a Democrat, won the US presidential election in 1916 on the slogan 'He Kept Us Out Of War', and in 1917 took the US into World War 1.

accumulating and the present cataclysm was getting under way.

Theoretically and politically, pacifism stands on the same foundation as does the theory of the harmony of social interests. The antagonisms between capitalist nations have the same economic roots as the antagonisms between the classes. And if we admit the possibility of a progressive blunting of the edge of the class struggle, it requires but a single step further to accept a gradual softening and regulating of international relations.

The source of the ideology of democracy, with all its traditions and illusions, is the petty bourgeoisie. In the second half of the 19th century, it suffered a complete internal transformation, but was by no means eliminated from political life. At the very moment that the development of capitalist technology was inexorably undermining its economic function, the general suffrage-right and universal military service were still giving to the petty bourgeoisie, thanks to its numerical strength, an appearance of political importance. Big capital, in so far as it did not wipe out this class, subordinated it to its own ends by means of the applications of the credit system. All that remained for the political representatives of big capital to do was to subjugate the petty bourgeoisie, in the political arena, for their purposes, by opening fictitious credit to the declared theories and prejudices of this class.

It is for this reason that, in the decade preceding the war, we witnessed, side by side with the gigantic efforts of a reactionary-imperialist policy, a deceptive flowing of *bourgeois democracy* with its accompanying reformism and pacifism.

Chloroform

Capital was making use of the petty bourgeoisie for the prosecution of capital's imperialist purposes by exploiting the ideological prejudices of the petty bourgeoisie.

Probably there is no other country in which this double process was so unmistakably accomplishing itself as in France. France is the classic land of finance capital, which leans for its support on the petty bourgeoisie of the cities and the towns, the most conservative class of the kind in the world, and numerically very strong. Thanks to foreign loans, to the colonies, to the alliance of France with Russia and England, the financial upper crust of the Third Republic found itself involved in all the interests and conflicts of world politics.

And yet, the French petty bourgeoisie is an out-and-out provincial. He has always shown an instinctive aversion to geography and all his life has feared war as the very devil — if only for the reason that he has, in most cases, but one son, who is

to inherit his business, together with his chattels.

This petty bourgeois sends to Parliament a radical who has promised him to preserve peace — on the one hand, by means of a league of nations and compulsory international arbitration, and on the other, with the cooperation of the Russian Cossacks, who are to hold the German Kaiser in check.

This radical deputy, drawn from the provincial lawyer class, goes to Paris not only with the best intentions but also without the slightest conception of the location of the Persian Gulf, and of the use, and to whom, of the Baghdad railway. This radical 'pacifist' bloc of deputies gives birth to a radical ministry, which at once finds itself bound hand and foot by all the diplomatic and military obligations and financial interests of the French bourse in Russia, Africa and Asia.

Never ceasing to pronounce the proper pacifist sentences, the ministry and the parliament automatically continue to carry on a world policy which involves France in war.

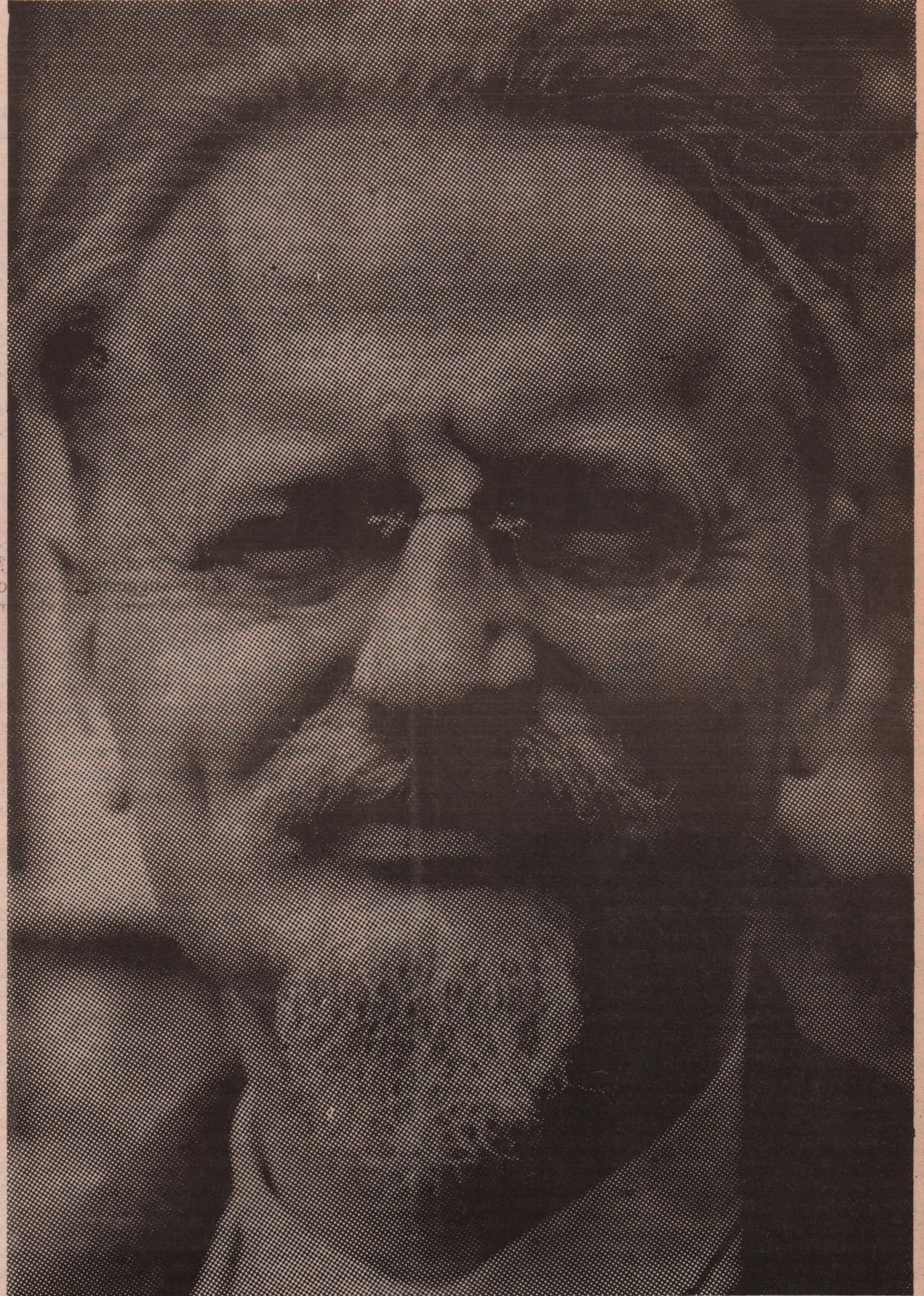
Differences

English and American pacifism, in spite of the differences in social and ideological forms (or in the absence of such, as in America), is carrying on, at bottom, the same task: it offers to the petty and the middle bourgeoisie an expression for their fears of world cataclysms in which they may lose their last remnants of independence; their pacifism chloroforms their consciences — by means of impotent ideas of disarmament, international law and world courts — only to deliver them up body and soul, at the decisive moment, to imperialism, which now mobilises everything for its own purposes: industry, the church, art, bourgeois pacifism and patriotic 'socialism'.

"We have always been opposed to war: our representatives, our ministry have been opposed to war", says the French citizen, "therefore the war must have been forced upon us, and in the name of our pacifist ideals we must fight it to the finish". And the leader of the French pacifists, Baron d'Estournelles de Constant, endorses this pacifist philosophy of an imperialist war with a pompous *jusqu'au bout*.

The English Stock Exchange, in its prosecution of war, has need first of all of pacifists of the the Asquith (Liberal) and Lloyd George (radical demagogue) type. "If these people go in for war", say the English masses, "right must be on our side". Thus a responsible function is allocated to pacifism in the economy of warfare, by the side of suffocating gases and inflated government loans.

More evident still is the subordinate role played by petty bourgeois pacifism with regard to Imperialism in the United States. The actual policy is there



Leon Trotsky

more prominently dictated by banks and trusts than anywhere else. Even before the war the United States, owing to the gigantic development of its industry and its foreign commerce, was being systematically driven in the direction of world interests and world policies.

The European war imparted to this imperialistic development a speed that was positively feverish. At a time when many well-meaning persons were hoping that the horrors of the European slaughter might inspire the American bourgeoisie with a hatred of militarism, the actual influence of European events was bearing on American policy not in psychological channels but in material ones, and was having precisely the opposite effect.

United States

The exports of the United States, which in 1913 amounted to \$2,466 million, rose in 1916 to 5,481 million! Of course, the lion's share of this export fell to the lot of the war industries.

The sudden breaking off of exports to the Allied nations after the declaration of unrestricted submarine warfare meant not only the stoppage of a flow of monstrous profits, but threatened with an unprecedented crisis the whole of American industry, which had been organised

on a war footing.

It was impossible for this thing to go on without some resistance from the masses of the people. To overcome their unorganised dissatisfaction and to turn it into channels of patriotic cooperation with the government was therefore the first great task of the internal diplomacy of the United States during the first quarter of the war. And it is the irony of history that official 'pacifism', as well as 'oppositional pacifism', should be the chief instrument for the accomplishment of this task: the education of the masses to military ideals.

Bryan rashly and noisily expressed the natural aversion of the farmers and of the 'small man' generally to all such things as world-policy, military service and higher taxes. Yet, at the same time that he was sending wagon-loads of petitions, as well as deputations, to his pacifist colleagues at the head of the government, Bryan did everything in his power to break the revolutionary edge of the whole movement.

"If war should come", Bryan telegraphed on the occasion of an anti-war meeting in Chicago last February, "we will all support the government of course; yet at this moment it is our sacred duty to do all in our power to preserve the nation

from the horrors of war".

These few words contain the entire programme of petty bourgeois pacifism: "to do everything in our power against the war" means to afford the voice of popular indignation an outlet in the form of harmless demonstration, after having previously given the government a guarantee that it will meet with no serious opposition, in the case of war, from the pacifist faction.

Roll over

Official pacifism could have desired nothing better. It could now give satisfactory assurance of imperialist 'preparedness'. After Bryan's own declaration, only one thing was necessary to dispose of his noisy opposition to war, and that was, simply, to declare war. And Bryan rolled right over into the government camp.

And not only the petty bourgeoisie, but also the broad masses of workers, said to themselves: "If our government, with such an outspoken pacifist as Wilson at the head, declares war, and if even Bryan supports the government in the war, it must be an unavoidable and righteous war..." It is now evident why the sanctimonious, Quaker-like pacifism of the bourgeois demagogues is in such higher favour in financial and war industry circles.

FIFTY years ago this month, as a front page article in a recent issue of "Soviet Culture" (paper of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union) forcefully reminded its readers, saw the emergence of "Stakhanovism" in the Soviet Union.

Alexei Stakhanov was a miner in the "Irmino-Central" pit in the district of Voroshilovgrad. On International Youth Day in September 1935 he achieved a coal output on his shift 14 times [sic] higher than the norm, and thus gave his name to a Soviet Union-wide movement committed to raising productivity.

At the time, Stakhanov was portrayed like an early Soviet version of Rambo. While Rambo expresses the sick ideals of American capitalism by running round shooting Vietnamese and Russians, Stakhanov expressed the ideals of a recently consolidated Stalinist bureaucracy who needed to win the war for increased productivity against the passive or covertly active resistance of the Soviet workers who by then had been deprived of all rights. "Stakhanovism" was the name given to the merciless speeding up imposed on the defeated Soviet workers by their Stalinist oppressors. Naturally, they called it "socialism".

"Stakhanovism," declared Stalin, was the "preparation of the conditions for the transition from socialism to communism". It was not an expression of the Soviet masses striving to build socialism, but a reflection of their struggle for existence in an economically backward Stalinist police-state.

Piecework

In the years preceding Stakhanovism, the ruling bureaucracy employed a variety of measures to try to boost productivity and efficiency in the economy, but with little or no success: the first Five Year Plan, the encouragement of "shock brigadism" and "socialist competition" and the introduction of a form of piecework payment.

But, as Trotsky explained, the attempts at piecework payments "came to grief against the spectral character of the valuta and the heterogeneity of prices...only the abolition of the card system, the beginning of stabilisation and the unification of

Stakhanov- the Stalinist Rambo

prices created the conditions for the application of piecework payment."

By 1935, after years of falling living standards and rising prices, piecework payment had become a viable possibility. Workers were encouraged to achieve more technical progress, cut costs and increase productivity. Success in such goals, given the use of piecework payment, would allow workers to claw back some of their living standards which had slumped so disastrously in the early 'thirties.

Whip

Stakhanovism, therefore, was anything but the spontaneous expression of the workers' self-sacrificing love for their "socialist fatherland". It was rooted in the efforts of the bureaucracy to overcome economic backwardness and the under-use of contemporary technology, while workers were "motivated" by the whip of the struggle for survival.

Stakhanov's own record-breaking feat was far from spontaneous. In fact it was more of a stunt than a real event. Fundamentally, it was achieved by better use of existing resources, both human and physical, to support the star performer, Stakhanov.

As Konstantin Petrov, Communist Party organiser in Stakhanov's pit in 1935, explains in an interview in "Soviet Culture"

"Several months before the record we passed around questionnaires in the pit: what

50 years ago Alexei Stakhanov, a coal-miner in the USSR, achieved output 14 times higher than his norm and put his name into history. Stan Croke tells the story.

should be done to raise productivity of labour of face-workers? One of the suggestions was to introduce different methods for extraction of the coal, which would leave the face-workers free from auxiliary operations. Moreover, many miners lacked trust in the new, at that time, techniques of coal-extraction".

The scene was thus set for Stakhanov's feat: "In that night Alexei worked as never before — masterfully, with great inspiration. The noise of his tools, it seemed, never ceased... Stakhanov hewed the coal joyfully, enthusiastically"

Publicised

His example was followed by others at the pit: "At the first meeting of the workers (after Stakhanov's record-breaking shift) 40 volunteers enrolled, wanting to work according to the new, Stakhanovite, method". Publicised by the regime throughout the Soviet Union, Stakhanovism also spread rapidly to other branches of the

economy.

Productivity certainly rose with the spread of Stakhanovism, though not as much as individual enterprises or the regime as a whole claimed. In any case, existing norms were often low, given that they were based on the inefficiencies of the early 'thirties.

Blockages

But Stakhanovism could also lead to a fall in the overall output of an enterprise, as Stakhanovite workers raised their own level of productivity out of line with the rest of the workforce and thus created blockages in the production process. Some times the non-Stakhanovite workers would also deliberately work even slower than usual to frustrate the Stakhanovites' exertions, thereby further lowering the rate of output.

Nor did Stakhanovism have anything in common with the transition from socialism to communism. Stakhanovism was inseparable from piecework pay-



What the USSR in the 1930s was really like: a famine victim

ment, accurately described by Marx as that form of payment "most suitable to capitalistic methods of production". Apologists for the Stalinist regime invented the fiction of a "socialist" piecework payment.

But even under capitalism, piecework payment drives people to work in violation of their natural instincts and abilities, whipped on by the "stick" of the norm and attracted by the "carrot" of the bonus for exceeding the norm. In the Soviet Union of 1935, with its rigid labour discipline — administrative fines for absenteeism, expulsion from the union and thereby partial loss of social benefits, dismissal and eviction from factory housing — the use of piecework payment was a savage violation of socialist values and principles.

Crude

As Trotsky wrote: "In the struggle to achieve European and American standards, the classic method of exploitation, such as piecework payment, are applied in such naked and crude forms as would not be permitted even by reformist trade unions in bourgeois countries... As to the preparation of a "transition from socialism to communism" that will begin at exactly the opposite end — not with the introduction of piecework payment, but with its abolition as a relic of barbarism."

The use of piecework payments and the development of Stakhanovism in the Soviet Union also led to even larger differentials than under capitalism — Stakhanovite workers could pick up as much as twenty or thirty times the earnings of

"ordinary" workers, whilst Stakhanovite specialists could be paid even 100 times the wages of an unskilled labourer. On top of this, Stakhanovites received all manner of perks and privileges as well.

But this, of course, was of benefit to the Stalinist bureaucracy: the artificial creation of an upper stratum of the working class, enjoying many of the privileges of sections of the bureaucracy, strengthened the position of the bureaucracy in Soviet society. The ordinary Soviet workers had good reason for hating the norm-busting Stakhanovite star performers.

Rebirth

Stakhanovism was the wrong answer to the wrong question. It was not a socialist, working class solution to the economic backwardness of the Soviet Union. And it did not address itself to the real obstacle to rational planning and growth of the nationalised Soviet economy on the basis of democratic workers' control of the economy: the rule of the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Today, as the Soviet Union celebrates, by order, the fiftieth anniversary of the beginnings of the Stakhanovite movement, and a new cult around Stakhanov seems to be reemerging, that fundamental obstacle of the Stalinist regime continues to exist. What is needed is not the rebirth of Stakhanovism to help the regime overcome chronic stagnation and crisis of the economy which it mismanages. We need the rebirth of socialist democracy in the Soviet Union and this will only be achieved by the Soviet workers overthrowing that regime.



Герой Социалистического Труда,
зачинатель массового движения
новаторов производства

А. Г. СТАХАНОВ • 1906 — 1977



Commemorative envelope cover for Stakhanov issued in the USSR

Desperately seeking



Rosanna Arquette as Roberta, Madonna as Susan

Martin Thomas reviews Susan Seidelman's film 'Desperately Seeking Susan'

ROBERTA wants to be someone else. She is a housewife in suburban New Jersey, married for four years to a dull and prosperous bath salesman.

She longs for a world of glitter and real feelings — the world in which she imagines the mysterious Susan to live.

Roberta is fascinated when she reads a series of personal ads in the newspaper by which a lover is evidently keeping in touch with Susan. Each ad is headed, 'Desperately Seeking Susan'.

Roberta herself becomes desperately eager to find out about this romance. She travels to run-down, sleazy New York to observe a rendezvous announced in the personal ads. Then, through a bizarre series of events, Roberta loses her memory; she is mistaken by others for Susan herself; she half-believes she is Susan; and both she and the real Susan are pursued by a murderous jewel thief.

This story forms the framework for a brilliantly-crafted and extremely funny farce.

The sharp edge of the humour slices up Roberta's husband Gary and his know-all sister Lesley. Roberta ends up — a bit cornily, but the film is slick enough to carry it off — leaving

Gary for Des, a bewildered nice guy from Susan's gimcrack world.

Is this the escape that Roberta has been desperately seeking, or not? It seems it is. Excellently made though the film is, its satirical dissection of suburban petty bourgeois life (a sitting target anyway) does not cut very deep.

Susan is played by Madonna, who since the making of the film has become a pop superstar, and the character is in the mould of the singer's stage image — tough, brash, adventurous, a drifter, but safe and accessible.

Madonna's keenest fans, apparently, are very young girls, and the storyline of the film effectively casts Roberta as a child.

The comedy depends on the cross-cutting of the two worlds, Gary's and Susan's, and on Roberta's naive distance from both. In Gary's world Roberta is stronger and more clear-seeing than Gary or Lesley gives her credit for. But in Susan's world Roberta is an innocent and no more.

Despite crooks, police and jails, this is the world of the drifter with all the glitter and very little of the grime and strain. And Roberta ends up, not becoming street-wise herself, but being co-opted into the world by picking up the right man.

She doesn't become someone else, she gets someone else. The storyline is not so far removed from the dreadful Lesley's admonitions to Gary that he should have paid more attention to Roberta.

I greatly enjoyed this film, but it's a pity that there's not a dash more acid in the comedy.



Songs of liberty and rebellion



Babiy Yar

YEVGENY Yevtushenko, who wrote this denunciation of Russian anti-semitism, was the USSR's licensed-rebel poet in the period of the liberalising 'thaw' during the late '50s and early '60s, under Nikita Khrushchev.

In his autobiography Yevtushenko says that he had been a vehement anti-semitic, typical of his group of young 'communists' in the late '40s and early '50s. Those were the years when Stalin publicly rehabilitated Russian anti-semitism — which had been so central a part of the Christian ideology of Tsarist Russia — and made it official again, thinly disguised as 'anti-Zionism'. Amongst ordinary Russians Stalin's 'anti-Zionism' translated into a recognisable variant of the old idea: the Jews were still the enemies of Russia even though the Christian God and the Tsar had both officially gone out of fashion, to make way for the man-god Joseph Stalin.

Written in 1961, Yevtushenko's poem Babiy Yar seems to me to have jarring false notes. Even a 'rebel' Russian poet had to pay homage to Official Truth. Thus lines like: 'O my Russian people, I know you/ Your nature is international'

etc. But the core of it is real and sincerely felt, and Babiy Yar was a courageous challenge to the official and semi-official racism rampant in the Stalinist states.

It was as one who knew something about Russian anti-semitism that Yevtushenko wrote: 'When the last anti-semitic on earth/ is buried forever/ let the International ring out'.

Babiy Yar is the name of a ravine near Kiev where thousands of Jews massacred by the Nazis during the Second World War were buried.

Dreyfus was an officer in the French army convicted of espionage because of anti-Jewish prejudice and jailed. Anne Frank was a young Jewish girl who lived in hiding for three and a half years in Nazi-occupied Europe.

After 1881 anti-Jewish pogroms were regular occurrences in Russia, organised by the Christian-monarchist Society of the Russian Race, the notorious 'Black Hundreds'. One of their slogans was 'Thrash the kikes (Jews) and save Russia'. The Black Hundreds ran in tandem with the Tsarist police, whose political section, the Okhrana, forged the notorious 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion', which purported to outline the Jewish plan for world domination. This document has been well described as a 'warrant for genocide'.

P. Dollard

Over Babiy Yar there are no memorials. The steep hillside like a rough inscription. I am frightened.

Today I am as old as the Jewish race.

I seem to myself a Jew at this moment.

I, wandering in Egypt.

I, crucified, perishing.

Even today the mark of the nails.

I think also of Dreyfus. I am he.

The Philistine my judge and my accuser.

Cut off by bars and cornered,

ringed round, spat at, lied about;

the screaming ladies with the Brussels lace

poke me in the face with parasols.

I am also a boy in Belostok,

the dropping blood spreads across the floor,

the public-bar heroes are rioting

in an equal stench of garlic and of drink.

I have no strength, go spinning from a boot,

shriek useless prayers that they don't listen to;

with a cackle of 'Thrash the kikes and save Russia!' the corn-chandler is beating up my mother.

I seem to myself like Anna Frank

to be transparent as an April twig

and am in love, I have no need for words,

I need for us to look at one another.

How little we have to see or to smell

separated from foliage and the sky,

how much, how much in the dark room

gently embracing each other.

They're coming. Don't be afraid.

The booming and banging of the spring.

It's coming this way. Come to me.

Quickly, give me your lips.

They're battering in the door. Roar of the ice.

Over Babiy Yar

rustle of the wild grass.

The trees look threatening, look like judges.

And everything is one silent cry.

Taking my hat off

I feel myself slowly going grey.

And I am one silent cry

over the many thousands of the buried;

am every old man killed here,

every child killed here.

O my Russian people, I know you.

Your nature is international.

Foul hands rattle your clean name.

I know the goodness of my country.

How horrible it is that pompous title

the anti-semites calmly call themselves,

Society of the Russian Race.

No part of me can ever forget it.

When the last anti-semitic on the earth

is buried for ever

let the International ring out.

No Jewish blood runs among my blood,

but I am as bitterly and hardly hated

by every anti-semitic

as if I were a Jew. By this

I am a Russian.

Two weeks to October 10

THERE ARE two weeks left until thousands of youth march on the Tory party conference in Blackpool.

Activists in student unions, Labour Clubs and Labour Party Young Socialists branches are gearing their organisations up to get as many young people as possible onto the Blackpool streets on October 10.

30,000 leaflets have been distributed, and 2000 posters. Some colleges are reprinting the leaflets, having run out already.

Manchester Area National Union of Students expects to send at least 20 coaches to the demonstration. Colleges, dole offices and areas with high student populations are being flyposted every night, and local colleges are being leafleted every day.

Comrades in Nottingham followed up their success at the Basford Hall and Clarendon Fur-

ther Education colleges by taking a stall at the Polytechnic pre-term student societies fair. All the new Labour Club members will be seen next week and invited to Blackpool.

In London many of the colleges are now arranging transport and comrades are leafleting as many students begin their first term this week.

School students in North Yorkshire are booking minibuses to take them to the march. They are contacting the local teachers' union to make sure they are not victimised for taking the day off.

The speakers at the rally will include 'Karen' from TV's Brookside, miners from Bold NUM and Labour MPs. The appearance of Billy Bragg has yet to be confirmed.

There is still time to get more people on the march.

Things to do:
1. Order leaflets from 214 Sic-

kert Court London N1 2SY (01-609 7459 or 01-354 3854). £1 per 100 leaflets. A2 posters 10p each. Cheques to MANUS, Waterloo Place, Oxford Rd, Manchester 13.

2. Approach your local NUS, asking them to arrange a coach. If that fails ask your Labour Club or your LPYS to book transport. Try to get sponsorship from Labour Parties and local union branches.

3. Take leaflets to YTS schemes, schools, sixth form colleges. Try to see a rep from the YTS supervisors' union first.

4. If local colleges are returning this week take leaflets along to their Societies, Fair or introductory week. Sign people up for coaches!

For more information phone Simon Pottinger on 01-609 7459 or Rachel Kennedy (MANUS) on 061-273 5111.

Teachers set work-to-rule

TEACHERS in England and Wales are set for more industrial action this term, after the latest breakdown in pay talks.

NUT members who were balloted before the breakdown had voted overwhelmingly for a much tighter work-to-rule and for half-day strikes to attend rallies. Deputy general secretary Doug McAvoy said 'We're not giving them a list of don'ts, we're giving a list of do, and it's singular — teach your class'.

This means absolutely no cover for absence, no lunch supervision, and a total ban on evening meetings, exam development work and all the things that teachers used to do without pay in their own time.

Keith Joseph's attempts to drive a wedge between the NUT and other teachers' unions have failed. The moderate non-TUC AMMA are also working-to-rule after balloting their members. The head teachers (NAHT) have told Keith Joseph that the October 11 deadline for accepting his 'offer' of extra cash in return for changing work conditions and pay structure is not on.

They also told him that the new GCSE exam, due to replace O levels and CSEs, should be postponed.

The NUT leaders have consistently refused to trade off work conditions for more pay, and they have so far kept the other unions in line, espec-

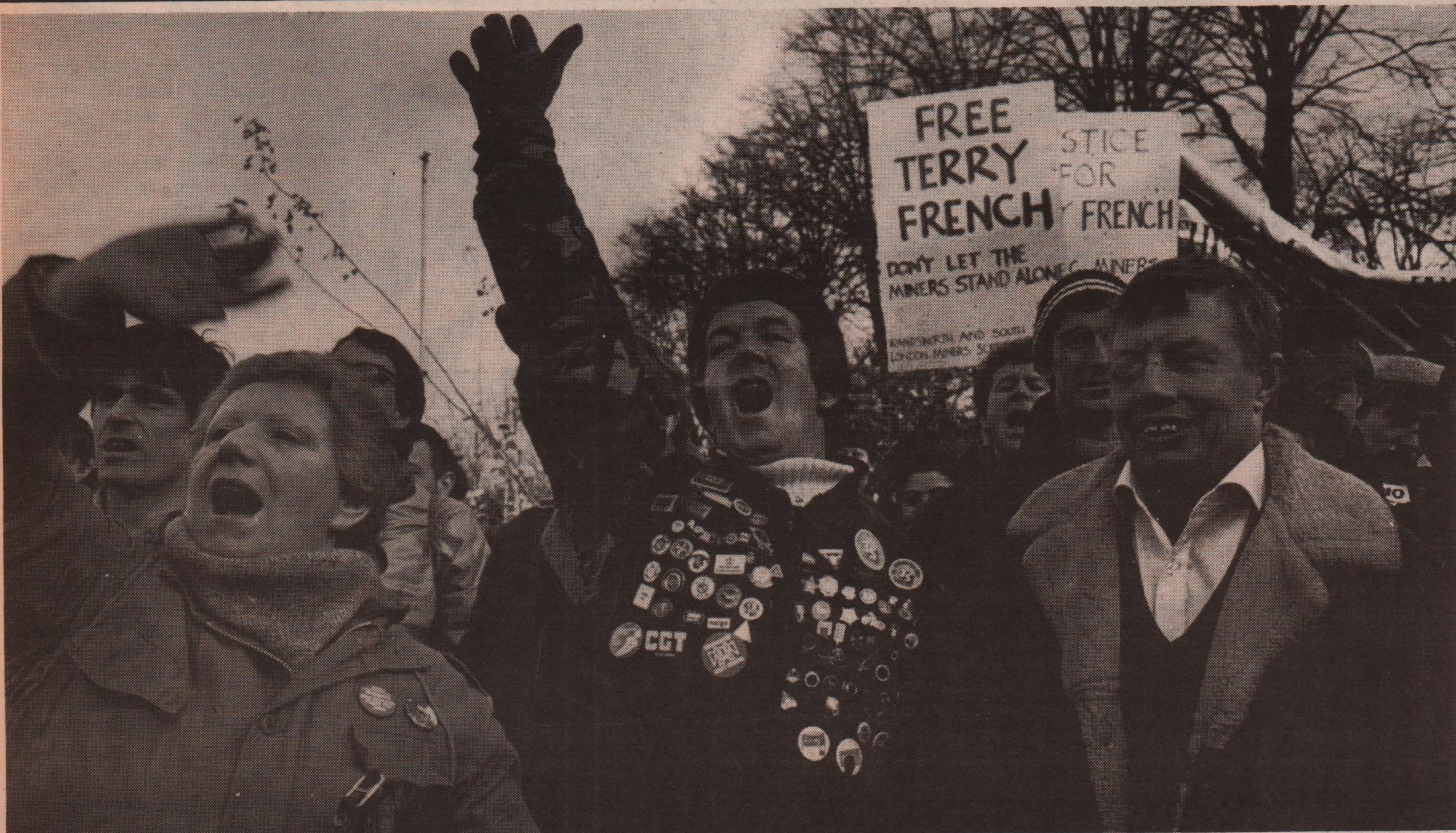
ially the NAS/UWT leaders who make militant noises but often grab extra cash regardless of whatever strings are attached.

The NUT half-day strikes and rallies in September are due to be followed by ballots for similar action in the next three months. The more organised regions and associations are impatient and pressing for extended strikes.

The 'teach your class' ballot indicated that members are prepared to go beyond the scale of action decided at the union's April conference, and there is every indication that they would support levies, and maybe even striking on reduced strike pay. (At present the NUT grants strike pay at a rate which makes any long strike by any number of members financially impossible). The NUT executive itself only narrowly (17 to 15) voted down boycotting autumn O level re-sits, despite the April conference's decision not to disrupt exams.

Union activists should keep up the pressure on the NUT executive for more action. On the strength of recent ballots and the size of the rallies, a recall conference now would probably mandate the exec to take the struggle much further.

The relatively large pay offer to council manual workers can only spur teachers to fight both for their own claim and for joint work with other unions in the public sector.



Picket of Wandsworth prison in support of jailed miner Terry French. Photo: Andrew Moore

NUR retreats

By Rob Dawber

JIMMY Knapp has denied reports in the press that the NUR has done a deal with BR over future productivity talks.

But it is difficult to believe how all guards have been reinstated unless the union — from a position of weakness — has met BR's demand that not only should driver only operation (DOO) be accepted, but that union should be prepared to discuss all other productivity items in any other spheres of BR operations.

BR had demanded 'an undertaking that NUR are prepared to discuss and negotiate freely on future productivity proposals made by the Board'. Knapp made no reference to this at the Special General Meeting, saying that he only wanted a mandate to negotiate DOO.

Since those negotiations a form of words has been drawn up between the NUR and the Board: 'the Board welcomes the decision of the NUR to negotiate an agreement for DOO of trains, and it is accepted that changes in working practices and other proposals will be considered within the Machinery of Negotiation'.

This effectively means that the Board won't impose such changes — as with DOO — but will use normal channels; and a nod and a wink has been given by the NUR that BR will more or less get what they want.

The badly organised ballot of the signals and telecoms staff — called at short notice, with no little or no campaign — resulting in a vote against action, will be used by leaders who didn't want to fight anyway to show that the rank and file won't do anything.

Scab picket

SCABS recently picketed strikers in the Morris furniture factory dispute in Glasgow.

The strike there began at the close of May, when a number of workers at the factory clocked out after completing 39 hours, in line with the national agreement between furniture employers and FTAT (the Furniture, Timber and Allied Trades union).

Robert Morris, the owner of this family firm, sacked them along with everyone who refused to cross their picket lines. 35 workers thus ended up on strike for reinstatement, union recognition, and a shorter work-

ing week.

The scabs' picket took place on Tuesday September 10 when the Labour District Council held a civic reception for the strikers and their families.

The strike has cut production both in quantity and quality, and the hectic atmosphere in the factory has led a number of scabs to resign. But the dispute is far from won.

More support is needed financially, on the picket lines, and in particular from TGWU members at Morris's other factory at Campsie, near Lennoxton, just outside Glasgow.

Contact: FTAT, 46 Carlton Place, Glasgow (041-429 5507).

Pit village strike

ON THURSDAY September 15 most of the 300 workers at Sutherland Food factory, Kiveton Park, South Yorkshire, struck for union recognition.

It was the first strike in the history of the factory. Previous attempts at unionisation had resulted in rapid victimisation.

The strike has had solid support from the casual workers, a large number of whom are employed at the factory. On the Friday morning, over 100 picketed the factory, supported by some Kiveton Park NUM members.

A number of the women involved in the strike live in the surrounding mining communities and were very active in the women's support group during the strike.

Initially management responded to the strike by trying to run the factory with scab labour. Managers' wives, security staff and even the works nurse went on the production line. But within 36 hours they had backed down.

They withdrew the threat of mass sackings, agreed to pay wages for the days on strike, and promised to 'reconsider' the issue of union recognition by next January. The strikers accepted this and returned last week.

But there is a catch. Management's agreed deadline for

'reconsideration' conveniently falls after the Christmas rush, at a time when many of the part-time workers are usually laid off. The bosses have already started their campaign against a union in the factory.

Last Saturday all the workers received a two page letter from the Managing Director, Nicholas Sutherland, telling them how hard he works for them — "Although I do not spend much time in the factories now, I am continually working for the Company's benefit and I would like to give you a few examples of this".

After the hard luck story, he gets to the point on page 2. "It seems to me that over many years, I, my managers and many of you have worked together in this business successfully when many others have failed. I think it is unreasonable to demand that this Company should recognise a trade union when it has such a good employment record..." Then he finishes with a threat to close the factory if there are more strikes for recognition.

Most workers laughed when they received the letter. There is a feeling of confidence that they are strong enough to win union recognition this time round. The aim, however, must be to get recognition before next January, when the workers are likely to be at their weakest.

York health workers strike

By Richard Bayley

OVER 300 domestics in York hospitals came out on a one day strike last Wednesday against the District Health Authority's attempt to cut their wages by as much as 45 per cent.

The pay cut, which involved a 20 per cent loss in bonus and a slashing of hours by up to 25 per cent, is part of the DHA's in-house tender for the cleaning services in York hospitals. The government has ordered all health authorities to put hospital cleaning and some other services out to competitive tender.

The strike was time to coincide with the DHA meeting which was due to consider the tender. About 100 of the health workers broke up the meeting, at one stage threatening to barricade in the authority members until they withdrew their proposals.

The meeting was hastily adjourned, and the domestics,

overwhelmingly women, immediately went outside the District Hospital (the largest in the area) and mounted pickets.

The strike was extremely solid in the three hospitals involved, Bootham, Naburn, and the District. In one hospital not one domestic worked all day.

An action committee has been set up, and another strike, this time for three days, has been planned for September 25-27. Picket rotas have already been worked out, and on the 27th there will be a big demonstration at the reconvened Health Authority meeting.

A demonstration in support of the health workers is planned for Saturday October 5 in York, and a strike fund is being set up.

Messages of support and donations to NUPE area office, 413 Beverley Road, Hull (tel. 442233).

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Handsworth calls for a public inquiry

Powell again

ENOCH Powell, specialist in all forms of bigotry and Official Unionist MP for South Down, last week added his distinctive bark to the reactionary chorus that followed events in Handsworth.

He called for the repatriation of black people. "A sufficient (?) proportion of the African and Asian population must be enabled (!)... to quit a scene where... catastrophes await them..."

Back in 1968 Powell made his notorious speech predicting 'rivers of blood' unless blacks were removed from Britain. Powell has not changed. But the Tory party has.

In 1968 Edward Heath dismissed Powell from the Tory shadow cabinet. In his speech last week Powell confidently demanded to know if Thatcher disagreed with him, commenting 'I am not sure that she does'. Later Mrs Thatcher said she always listens 'with interest' to Enoch Powell.

What about the Labour Party? Labour leaders rightly condemned Powell, but Labour too has an utterly dishonourable record. Powell won notoriety for his rivers of blood speech, but it was Home Secretary James Callaghan who did the foul racist deed by withdrawing British passports earlier given to the Kenya Asians then being expelled.

The record of Labour in office and the failure of both the Labour Party and the trade unions to fight for the rights of black people has contributed to the outbursts of despair, as in Handsworth, that Powell and his like pick up on to spread their racist filth.

To put a stop to Powell, and to make unity possible between black working-class youth and the white majority of the working class, the labour movement needs to actively champion the struggle against racism.

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Inside Apartheid

Eye-witness report by Bob Fine

THE FIRST thing that struck me about my month's stay in South Africa was the warmth of the welcome from all sections of the left.

I met trade unionists from an array of different organisations, political activists in the UDF, AZAPO and the new Unity Movement.

At no time did anyone raise any objection to my coming over. On the contrary: there was in my limited experience strong support for the development of links between the left in South Africa and in Britain.

It is not often that individuals from the British left go over to South Africa to feel for themselves the texture of the struggle there. My personal view that solidarity is enriched by immediate contact — even though a visitor's experience is very restricted — was, I think, shared by those I met.

I should also add that I personally encountered no significant instances of racism against white people, though of course there was no shortage of racism against blacks.

As for the violence: apartheid is quite successful in isolating black areas from white and insulating the white areas from the worst manifestations of violence.

Police assaults on white university students have

dedented this wall of insulation. So too do the rumbling of military vehicles on the highways, and the daily newspaper reports of killings by the police and army.

While I was in Capetown 32 black people were shot dead.

The first time, so one well-informed Afrikaner intellectual told me, that the National Party government became conscious of a crisis as opposed to a policing difficulty, was after Botha's Durban speech when the rand collapsed and so did South Africa's capacity to repay foreign debts.

When you go into the black townships, you may see a different story. I went to a Soweto police station, the garrison filled with military, with a lawyer friend, to see if we could help secure the release of over 600 school students arrested that day.

Inside, the soldiers were tense, silent and hostile — in their own vision, men at war. We were grudgingly told that the students had been detained under emergency provisions for not attending school. We asked where they had been arrested. 'In school',

True Alice in Wonderland.

The students were being marched under heavy guard into prison vans for transportation to prison. No visits, no legal aid, no clothing, no medicine, no doctors, no nothing. Emergency laws at work.

Outside parents and friends congregated. We collected names and addresses of detained children. Without this information no legal case could be entertained.

It's a Catch-22 situation, danger out of school and danger in school.

The atmosphere was angry but controlled. They were worried about their children.

On the way back the lawyer pondered his options. There was not much he could do. An application to court for abuse of discretionary powers? We both thought however that the students

Continued on p.2



Socialist Organiser Labour Party conference fringe meeting

SOUTH AFRICA: BLACK WORKERS BREAK THE CHAINS

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

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

The Handsworth Defence Campaign, a group uniting radical Afro-Caribbean and Asian groups in the area, has responded to the police inquiry into the riots there with a call for a public inquiry. Its statement says:

1. To counter the misinformation projected by the media coverage of the events of Monday afternoon and evening, we would like to bring to the attention of the general public that the causes triggering off the disturbances were as follows.

(a) A white vigilante group at a recent residents' association meeting declared its intention to burn down the old Villa Cross bingo hall to stop it becoming 'a drugs den in response to moves that it be turned into an amusement arcade;

(b) Around 5pm on Monday 9th September the police, in pursuing a minor traffic offence, proceeded to manhandle a motorist in such a way that a black woman felt compelled to intervene.

She was punched in the face by one or more of the officers. At this point black youth intervened on her behalf.

(c) The police presence was increased by a series of hoax calls claiming there was a fire at the disused bingo hall;

(d) The fire was mysteriously started after these calls.

2. The rebellion itself was not racially motivated in any way as suggested by the police. White, Asian and Afro-Caribbean were involved.

3. We extend our condolences and sympathy to the relatives of those who have died.

4. We condemn the white establishment who through the BBC have prejudged the issue by labelling the deaths as murder before any inquiry has taken place while at the same time failing to disclose the fact that several youths have been beaten by the police, and some of these are reported to have been seriously injured.

5. We condemn the police on their clear lack of sensitivity.

6. It is our belief that the fire was started by the vigilante group and the hoax phone calls were made to draw the police and fire brigade into the area and create confrontation between our community and the police in order to cover their tracks.

7. We call upon the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary to call a public judicial inquiry into the causes of the rebellion.



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