

A Socialist ACTION

BREAK ALL LINKS WITH SOUTH AFRICA!



THE DECLARATION of the state of emergency in South Africa means a massive stepping-up of repression against the black population by the apartheid regime.

Murder, mass arrests and indiscriminate brutality, which have already been the order of the day, will be stepped up as the security forces attempt to crush the rebellion in the black townships. The apartheid regime faces the most widespread black revolt, and deepest crisis, in its history.

Not surprisingly, the friends of apartheid are moving in to protect the Botha government. The Reagan administration has stated that it feels 'deep sympathy for South Africa'. The British government, one of South Africa's chief international allies, has said that the solution to the problem is a matter for South Africa's citizens, black and white.

But if Thatcher's reply was predictable, many labour movement members will feel deep anger with Neil Kinnock's call merely for the 'withdrawal of the British ambassador for consultations'. This is something even Reagan has already done!

The fact is that a particular responsibility falls on the labour movement in Britain for the situation in South Africa. Britain is South Africa's largest trading partner and foreign investor. Over 30 per cent of South African exports go to Britain, and 19 per cent of British overseas investment goes to South Africa.

Six of South Africa's 10 largest firms are directly owned or controlled by British companies.

In the USA, the Senate and the House of Representatives have voted in favour of token economic sanctions. American imperialism is attempting to hedge its bets — it has no wish to go down with the Botha government.

More to the point however was the refusal of the International Longshoremen and Warehousemen in California in November to unload a South African ship. It is this kind of action which can give a real focus for campaigns against the apartheid regime.

The labour movement in Britain must now turn towards developing such a mass campaign at every level.

The aim must be to win in every way the demand to 'break all links with the apartheid regime.'

There will be demands for economic sanctions. These should be supported but no effective steps on this will be taken by the imperialist governments — they would have to be implemented by the labour movement.

The first political step must be to demand that Britain immediately break all diplomatic links with the South African regime. The second should be for the Labour Party and TUC to send an official delegation to see the situation in the black townships and to meet with the leaders of the black community and trade unions.

Doubtless the South African regime would refuse to admit such a delegation to the country. But that would only serve to highlight the apartheid regime's repression.

Thirdly a massive campaign must be launched for the release of Nelson Mandela and all other South African political prisoners.

Complete support must be given to the struggle of South Africa in the British labour movement.

● South Africa in Crisis p9

Photo: GM COOKSON

Stay national!

THE SPECIAL Notts July issue of *The Miner* put the key questions and answers for miners on the Notts breakaway.

We are printing the article in full.

QUESTION: What do I have to do to stay a member of the NUM?

ANSWER: Nothing at all. It is the splitters who must get you to sign a piece of paper to deprive you of your membership.

But why should anyone want to split the NUM? Who would benefit from it?

Ultimately, MacGregor and the Government whose big business pals want to see a divided and weakened mining workforce.

Why?

Such a workforce would not be able to resist the closure of so-called uneconomic pits nor the selling off of large highly profitable sections of the British Coalfield to big business. Government ministers themselves have admitted that's the ultimate aim.

So why have certain Notts miners gone along with the splitting tactics?

Over the years a diet of one-sided information has been fed via the mass media and *Coal News*. Where a workforce is kept ignorant of the facts, confusion and misrepresentation follow. *The Miner* for example has hardly been distributed in the Notts area over the past 18 months.

Is it true that a split from the national union will leave Notts miners in political isolation?

Most certainly. Already the TUC and Labour Party are clear on this point: the Labour Party will only accept sponsorship for its MPS and councillors from a trade union affiliated to the TUC. A Notts breakaway would not get that recognition. As the TUC General Council said on January 23rd: "The General Council wish to make it clear that any breakaway bodies from their national unions will not be eligible for affiliation to the TUC."

Wasn't a breakaway caused by adoption of a new rule book which the Notts NUM had no part in?

This is one of the greatest myths around. Notts NUM did participate in the vote and when they lost, walked out. The important part to remember is that by participating in the vote, they helped to give birth to the new rule book — a book incidentally, largely established to defend the union against cleverly worded government legislation. Many unions have introduced similar changes with hardly a media whisper.

By sitting tight what would happen to my union contributions?

You will pay 79p a week — considerably less than at present — of which 8 per cent will be fed back to your local branch.

Finally, what would happen to all the other issues I care about — pay, allowances, protection of earnings, early retirement, safety, holidays, etc., if the national union were badly split?

For a time, nothing. Then, when the Coal Board/Government judged the time to be right, many gains and agreements would be destroyed as is already happening in some areas. Years — decades — of advance would be unilaterally abandoned in the face of a divided workforce too weak to retaliate. What remains of the industry would then be delivered on a platter to private enterprise and the clock turned back nearly half a century.

Arm yourself with this information, raising the various points at your branch meetings. Do not allow yourself to be silenced. You have the right to be heard.

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JUST OVER a week since the Lynk breakaway was announced, the situation in the Notts coalfield remains unclear. Last week, an opinion poll showed 53 per cent of Notts miners in favour of sticking with the national union. But Lynk, the Coal Board, and the press barons are doing their utmost to turn that around.

Since the Notts NUM Berry Hill headquarters have consistently suppressed literature sent from the national union throughout the 12 months of the strike, information is at a premium in the Notts coalfield.

Miners from Pye Hill and Moorgreen pits in the south, which are being closed, are reporting to places like Bevercotes for transfer only to be told by management: 'no strikers, no Scargill supporters, no NUM members.'

The whole weight of the Coal Board and their collaborators in the area is being brought to bear to convince the miners that they have no choice but to go with the 'Nottinghamshire Union of Mineworkers'. Such a move would make it easy for the Tories to consider privatisation of the coalfield, not to mention the damage they would dearly love to inflict on the NUM.

At the moment Roy Lynk and his cohorts are investigating 'merger' deals with breakaways in other areas, faced with the High Court ruling for a ballot, these 'super-democrats' are looking for a back-door way to break with the NUM.

CAROL TURNER reports from Notts.



Notts delegation at NUM conference

Who is backing Lynk in Notts?

WITH THE experience of Spencerism in mind, Notts militants feared from the start of the strike that the right wing area leadership was to form a break away union. The moves in this direction were stepped up at the end of 1984, when those same area leaders organised a Notts rule-change ballot aimed at undermining the power of the national union.

The proposed change was simple: delete Rule 30, which said that in any conflict between area and national rules, national rules applied. Notts area council, on 20 December 1984, confirmed the change.

Among those campaigning hard for the Notts rule changes were the National Coal Board — who issued soothing statements about the coalfield's rosy future — and the *Nottingham Evening Post*. The latter carried a series of 'exclusives' extensively quoting unnamed 'moderate area leaders'.

The changes would, claimed the *Post*, 'put thousands of working miners in Nottinghamshire beyond the disciplinary powers of President Arthur Scargill.' It was consistently denied by all that such moves represented any threat to break with the NUM.

In July this year, the Notts miners voted by 73 per cent — with 8000 not voting — to reject the upcoming rule changes. Once again, the *Post* and the Coal Board campaigned alongside the area officials for that vote.

When NUM national conference voted to sack the new scab general secretary of Nottinghamshire, Roy Lynk, Notts area had already appointed him. The *Notts Evening Post* shed crocodile tears at the treatment of the 13-person delegation in Sheffield. 'It takes a special sort of courage to endure what Roy Lynk, David Prendergast and the rest of the Notts lads are going through.'

No ballot

Two days later Lynk and Co had walked out of conference proclaiming their breakaway. There would be no ballot they said, the men had already voted overwhelmingly against the rule changes.

That weekend, representatives from the 31 Notts branches voted 228 to 20 for a resolution dissociating the area from the national union with immediate effect. The Monday editorial

of the *Post* again welcomed the decision as a 'return to traditional principles and values of British trade unionism'. One in the eye, it said, for 'playground bully' Arthur Scargill.

The same day Ray Chadburn was locked out of the area offices. He hasn't been readmitted since.

Chadburn and Henry Richardson have challenged the area decision in the High Court. Lynk told the *Post* he'd undertaken not to change the rules except in the 'proper' manner. 'But,' he said, 'we are not subject to, and will not obey, the national union. As far as I'm concerned, we are not in the NUM.'

Superscab

Superscab Lynk poses as a super-democrat. He describes the decision to split from the NUM as 'The beginning of what I believe will be a major new force in moderate trade unionism in this country.'

He explains: 'We are determined to maintain our links, both political and financial, with the Labour Party'. But in Notts it is widely rumoured that he was on the verge of joining the SDP before the split took place.

Despite the efforts of the NUM-sponsored MPs, Cannon and Haynes, to back Lynk up, Kinnock's statement to the Durham miners' gala formally called for unity and distanced the party from the breakaway. Notts NUM loyalists want clearer action from the Labour Party and the TUC.

'Kinnock appealed to the Notts miners to stay national,' says Les Dennis, who was picket manager at Linby pit throughout the strike, 'but that is not enough. Him and Willis must go public. They've got to get on the telly and ex-

plain they're not going to accept a scab union.'

Les summed up the situation in Notts: 'We changed our Notts rules last December. The Linby men as a whole voted against the changes, but when it got through the area we accepted we'd been out-voted.'

Out-voted

'In Sheffield a fortnight ago, it was the same system. Lynk and them took part in the vote — then they came back screaming they didn't like it. Those are the "true democrats" for you.'

'On the Notts balance sheet it said we won't accept the rule changes, and if need be we would break away or be expelled. But that's two separate questions. Men had voted not to accept the rule changes, but not a lot had voted to break away.'



Victory demonstration of the Notts miners in 1972

NOTTS NATIONAL!



Photo: MARK SALMON

Demonstration in support of the strike Mansfield May 1984

SINCE THE Notts delegation walked out of the mineworkers national conference there has been much confusion in the Notts coalfield. What union are the miners in, the gaffer's or the national?

Breakaway leaders have organised a series of branch meetings to try and tell the men that they're now in the Nottinghamshire Union of Mineworkers. 'We've got our hands tied behind our backs with this legal business', said Mark Hunter from Welbeck colliery. If we controlled the meeting, it was national. If they controlled it, it was a scab union meeting.'

At Linby pit, Les Dennis went along to his branch meeting with 80 or so other strikers. They clearly outnumbered Lynk and Lynk supporters. After attempts by the chair to stop questions and evict questioners, a resolution of support for the national union was ruled out of order.

At Welbeck, Mark marched out with others when branch officials made it clear the meeting was of the Notts breakaway. At Ollerton and Blidworth it happened in reverse. Both branch meetings confirmed their loyalty to the NUM.

Miners have been told: 'If you don't want to be in the Notts union, stop your dues.' Area management have circulated miners asking if they want to 'opt in' to the NUM, a de facto recognition of the breakaway.

If dues are stopped they are in no union whatsoever. If they take up management's offer to make pay-

ment direct to the national union they automatically recognise the breakaway. 'It's our union. We're not giving it to Lynk and Co.', said Billy Seeton from Welbeck.

Thoresby

Paul Galloway described the Thoresby meeting. 'It was conducted under the national minute book', he said, 'but the branch officials made clear their allegiance lay with the Nottinghamshire Union of Mineworkers, not the national.' 'We tried to use the meeting as a platform to get our views over to as many miners as we could, explaining the significance of the Spencer Union. We will resist any attempt to break up the union.'

'It's a bosses union like it was before,' said Mary Hallum, whose Edwinstowe sacked miners support

group helps look after Thoresby's sacked striker, Alexander Denham. 'But it's difficult to get this through to people of this area when they're thinking only of money and not their future. It's hard when you're on your own, but there's a lot more could be done.'

Distributing the latest issue of *The Miner* has been, for some, the first step towards a campaign to keep Notts national. But reinforcement is urgently needed. Regular meetings are held between the national union and NUM supporters from the Notts area. Plans are already under way for more literature and for public and pithead meetings, as well as a demonstration and rally in Hucknall on 24 August.

Railroaded

Support from the wider labour movement is only just beginning. Resolutions condemning the breakaway and refusing it recognition are filtering through some of the Notts Labour Parties.

The Nottingham Trades Council met last week and heard Henry Richardson describe the situation for the NUM. We can win in Notts, he said, by putting our case in defence of the national union and explaining the

need for it. He believes that Notts miners are being railroaded into support for a breakaway, that there won't be a ballot for Notts because Lynk and co will find a way round that.

The trades council is circulating its affiliates with a resolution condemning the breakaway's attempts to divide the NUM and calling upon all unions to refuse it recognition. Their decision to support the Kent NUM's lobby of the TUC on 2 September, was taken with the breakaway in mind. And trades councillors will be further discussing what steps can be taken to stand firm with the NUM.

Publicity

One such is Welbeck colliery's plan to write to every support group in the country publicising the Notts position. But, with official literature invariably locked in the Berry Hill Notts area office, getting through to local miners, especially those who worked during the strike, is a big problem. 'We're fighting to regroup the union in Notts', said Mark. 'It's not just a strikers' association we're after, even though it's those after, even though it's those who were on strike who are taking this lead in the Notts pits.'

Notts women get organised

TRUE TO their role throughout the strike, Notts women were among the first to organise support for the NUM in Notts. Notts Women Against Pit Closures, a delegate body of all the women's support groups in the coalfield, is circulating the resolution printed below to help build support for the national union. As soon as the latest issue of *The Miner* arrived, women were at the pit gates handing it out.

Notts WAPC chair, GWEN McLEOD was among them. She's been to Silverhill, where her husband Ian was picket manager during the strike, and to Sutton. Gwen told us:

THE response has been quite good. At least 80 per cent of the men took *The Miner*. Only a very few refused it, or threw it in the bin when they realised what it was.

I think if we can give it to them in their hand, then they'll read it. If it's delivered properly throughout the coalfield then we'll get a good response.

But it's no good giving them *The Miner* this week then forgetting it. We've got to keep up the pressure on the Notts coalfield by having another edition, or a broadsheet within a few weeks.

We need a high profile, and to organise as many public meetings as possible with national figures. Hopefully we'll get enough information out and enough publicity that we'll actually

get a lot who worked through the strike to attend these meetings.

If they hear the arguments — the truth — then we'll get a decent return on the vote.

If it's left like it was in the strike, if the Notts new union uses the same propaganda, the same type of anti-Scargill literature which was aimed at frightening men by talking about violence — if that same profile's kept up, then I think Lynk will achieve his two-thirds vote.

But if there's a counteraction to that by the national union, and the facts are put forward — the facts of what happened at the annual conference — and the truth's brought out, then the men will know that if their officials had stayed in the union they could have

changed certain rules democratically.

They're always talking about that but they never intended to carry it out. If the men realised, then we could have success and win the ballot.

The women feel they've got to take a lead. It's our coalfield. We'll do whatever's necessary to make sure that the Notts area doesn't break away from the national union. And if it does eventually happen, we want to make sure there's enough men who stay with the national to be able to go on and campaign to bring people back.

The Notts Women Against Pit Closures is trying to get out as much publicity as possible to people who supported them during the strike — to inform them what's going on in the coalfield, and to make them aware that whatever's happening to this union could happen to their union.

The problem is not only a breakaway, right-wing union. It will be the non-union membership which would also come out of this.

That's what this government is hoping will happen. In the long run that's what it's all about: the destruction of the trade union movement.

NOTTS WOMEN AGAINST PIT CLOSURES MODEL RESOLUTION

This ... condemns the formation of the breakaway union within the Nottinghamshire area of the National Union of Mineworkers and any other breakaway unions from the NUM. The 'breakaway' union represents the efforts of the government's and the National Coal Board's attempts to divide and weaken the National Union of Mineworkers and its continuing struggle against pit closures.

We call upon the ... to refuse to recognise the Notts breakaway union and any other breakaway union from the National Union of Mineworkers as a bona-fide trade union and thus consider it ineligible for affiliation to both the TUC and Labour Party at national, regional and local levels.

Other important aspects that could be incorporated into this resolution are:

- An individual's membership of the breakaway union from the NUM is not counted as bona-fide trade union membership qualification.

- We call upon the ... to take a clear position on this issue by reaffirming full support for the National Union of Mineworkers as affiliated to the TUC and Labour Party.

- We call upon the ... to mobilise public support for the NUM and assist in the campaign in both practical and financial ways.

... And in Leicestershire

DURING THE past fortnight big winds of change have been blowing through the Leicestershire mining areas around Coalville. After Notts announced the breakaway scab leader Jack Jones, Leicestershire general secretary, announced that the area would go to its membership to decide regarding any breakaway from the NUM. On Tuesday 9 July Jones began to sow the seeds for action when he stated in the *Leicester Mercury* that the Notts breakaway would get a far better deal from the NCB than the NUM could ever get.

The Dirty 30 Leicestershire striking miners responded by declaring that they would reform the Leicester NUM and remain in the national union if there was any breakaway.

Jones and the scab delegates from Bagworth and Ellistown, the two major pits in Leicestershire, have already planned, along with the South Derbyshire executive, to join Notts. The Bagworth delegate had openly announced at a meeting on 9 June the minutes of secret meetings with Lynk and co.

It is obvious to us that Jones and the executive have planned for a breakaway. Members of the Dirty 30 are taking the arguments to young miners who are beginning to listen.

On 17 July Malcolm Pinnegar and Mick Richmond issued a statement to the *Mercury* which declared that miners were

being misled over the split. Most of the working miners had little understanding of the situation. This was not surprising as the union's official paper had not been distributed in the pits for 16 months.

By Mick Richmond

The statement condemned talk of balloting on the issue in Leicestershire as a smokescreen. The executive had already planned a split. What would happen now was that South Derbyshire would ballot first. There was likely to be a strong majority there, and this would boost the split vote in Notts, where it seems the majority do not want to break away.

The day after the statement appeared in the *Mercury*, copies of the June edition of *The Miner* appeared at Leicestershire's four pits. In the afternoon I was approached by a

young miner, obviously very nervous, who asked to meet me in the car park. He asked: 'What will me and my mates do if Leicestershire breaks away? We know you were right but we were scared by Jones' words that violence would be met with violence if pickets came here. Will you help us who want to stay in the NUM?'

I told him that he and his mates were not the only ones who wanted to stay in the NUM. Men from Bagworth and the other three pits in Leicestershire also wanted to stay, and we would reform the Leicestershire NUM. He left me thanking me for talking to him and helping him. His last remark was 'You won't forget us will you Rico?'

I drove home from the pit feeling a sense of achievement, a feeling of warmth like a lovely glow. A feeling not felt for a very long time. If Jones and the scab officials had listened to and educated the young miners, indeed all miners, they would have joined the strike in March 1984 without a ballot. It is these scab leaders that have to go.

The Dirty 30 will encourage young miners to remain loyal to the NUM, even if some of them are only looking after themselves.



Scargill launches amnesty campaign

Arthur Scargill launched the NUM's amnesty campaign at a packed meeting in London last Thursday. Speaking to over 1,000 people in overflowing Friends Meeting House, Scargill called the imprisoned miners 'political prisoners' and demanded the reinstatement of every single sacked miner. The meeting was jointly organised by the Kent NUM and the South East Region of the TUC.

Scargill was backed up by Joan Maynard of the Campaign group of MPs — whose petition demanding amnesty is being supported by the NUM. Maynard pointed out that if the Thatcher government could pardon the murderer Ian Smith in Zimbabwe, it could easily arrange an amnesty for miners in Britain if it wanted.

Jack Collins, secretary of the Kent NUM, said the imprisoned miners 'are working class heroes and we salute them.'

Women

A standing ovation was given to Liz French wife of imprisoned Kent miners' leader Terry French. Making the collection speech she said the release of the imprisoned miners was the responsibility of the entire labour movement. 'What we want is our men back and it is up to you lot out there to get our men back.'

Over £10,000 was raised in the collection from trade union branches and miners' support groups.

Amnesty

It was a beginning to the amnesty campaign which has to be followed up with similar meetings and platforms around the entire country, building up to a lobby of the TUC Congress called for 2 September and a mass lobby of Parliament called by the NUM for October.

• Copies of the national petition on amnesty can be obtained from the National Union of Mineworkers, St James House, Vicar Lane, Sheffield.

For information on the campaign in the South East contact Jack Collins, general secretary of Kent NUM (phone 0304 206661).

The Orgreave frame-up

'THE WORST scene of public disorder in Britain this century' stated assistant chief constable Clement at the beginning of the trial in May.

'The worst example of a mass frame-up in this country, this century,' concluded defence barrister Greg Taylor as the prosecution announced the collapse of its case in the Orgreave 'riot' trial. CLIVE TURNBULL reports on the demolition of the police case.

Fourteen miners walked free from Sheffield crown court on 17 July after 48 days on trial for riot. A 'frame-up' is exactly what the prosecution case showed itself to be. The frame-up had already started to be exposed weeks earlier when the charges against a fifteenth defendant, Brian Moreland, a Durham miner, had been dropped.

In this case the defence challenged the authenticity of the signature to the witness statement of arresting officer PC Thomas Brophy. When the court reconvened following the challenge the original statement had 'mysteriously' disappeared from a locked court room.

A photocopy was sent to a handwriting expert, however, who testified that PC Brophy had forged another officer's signature.

The defence also established that some twenty arresting officers' witness statements started with virtually identical first three paragraphs.

Some PCs denied any collusion, but PC Fred Browning testified that a plain clothes officer had dictated a 'scene setter'. 'We just wrote down what we were told', Browning admitted, as he agreed that his statement was partly inaccurate.

The defence successfully established from the start of the case that if

any 'riot' had taken place at Orgreave on 18 June it was a police riot. The police confrontation with the pickets had been deliberately decided upon.

Under cross-examination assistant chief constable Clement admitted that there were alternative courses of action that could have been taken that day — the closure of Orgreave, as has already happened once before, or the use of road blocks to divert pickets as Nottinghamshire police did with 12,900 miners on that day alone.

Left

Instead it was decided to deploy riot police for the first time in Britain to follow guidelines set out in the *Public Order Tactical Options* manual drawn up by the Association of Chief Police Officers in 1981.

This manual includes Police Support Units advancing to: 'disperse the crowd and incapacitate missile throwers and ringleaders by striking in a controlled manner with batons about the arms and legs or torso so as not to cause serious injury.'

These instructions contradict the official guidelines on the use of truncheons — supposedly only to be used in self-defence. In the view of defence barrister Paddy



Arthur Scargill being arrested at Orgreave

O'Connor, 'They are quite clearly an incitement to police officers to commit criminal offences, such as causing bodily harm.'

Many miners were injured at Orgreave that day including some of the defendants in the trial. Arthur Critchlow received serious head injuries when he was arrested.

The police went to fantastic lengths to explain how Critchlow supposedly received his injuries. Arresting officer PC Paul Norris claimed that Critchlow had run backwards five yards as he was throwing a stone, tripped on a kerb, and hit his head on a wall.

Defence barrister Paddy O'Connor produced photographs of the scene, measurements of the pavement and the wall, and asked PC Norris if he seriously expected the court to believe that anyone could run backwards, throwing a stone, with such force as to clear six feet of pavement and hit the top of a wall three feet high.

Unless ... 'are you familiar with the phrase flying picket,' O'Connor asked!

Arthur Critchlow, a miner from Silverwood, pointed out what had really happened after the trial: 'This was a political trial because last year the government and all the media were against us. Leon Brittan in his infamous speech to the House of Commons had stated that miners involved in serious acts of violence and crowd disorder would face life imprisonment.'

Experience

'In this trial the majority of us were arrested for a breach of the peace, and then charges were changed overnight. They came to the cell in my case and charged me with riot the following day. A lot of the other lads were arrested for unlawful assembly and their charges were changed to riot.'

'The police didn't do that off their own bat. They had to have word from somewhere, and it's

obvious where it came from.'

Critchlow added, 'It's a definite victory for the NUM, without a doubt. It's a political victory.'

'Those leaders of the Labour Party and trade unions who were attacking miners for violence, and for violence at Orgreave, should be coming out now openly for us. It's been proven now that we were not the type of people portrayed by the media. All it was was a basic case of self-defence.'

'Orgreave was a police riot, although they'll not admit to it. No two ways about it. They were going to take us on and show us who were gaffers.'

'It proves what Scargill said all along that the violence lay with the police, and it's they who Labour leaders should have been condemning.'

'The barristers who defended us in this case are asking for a public enquiry into the policing at Orgreave. Kinnock and Willis should be saying, "now what really went on here."

'If you look at the majority of miners in prison, or those who are sacked, their cases were at the height of the strike, with a massive media campaign against us. If they had gone on trial like us, a year later, it wouldn't have happened. Without a doubt they are innocent men.'

'There are another eighty facing charges for Orgreave, thirty-five for Coal House. All those charges should be dropped.'

A review of the impending cases against the more than one hundred miners awaiting trial for riot at Orgreave or Coal House has been ordered by Attorney General, Sir Michael Havers.

However the trial of eight miners facing charges of riot and unlawful assembly arising from a picket of Rossington colliery near Doncaster opens on Monday 22 July at Sheffield crown court.

Stop press: Following the collapse of the Orgreave and Coal House frame-ups the prosecution accepted the ending of the Rossington trial on the same day it started. The defendants agreed to be bound over for a year for £100 — with charges dropped.

The judge made a declaration implying that agreement to be bound over meant accepting guilt. The defence totally rejected this — if the prosecution could prove guilt it should have gone forward with the trial. In reality the prosecution felt it could not win its case.

The fight against the other 'riot' frame-ups is still going on.

Coal House trial

ANOTHER POLICE frame up collapsed last week when on Monday 15 July, the fifteen miners in the eight week long Coal House trial were found not guilty on charges of riot and unlawful assembly. TERRY LYNKEY, Hatfield Main colliery, one of the defendants in the trial explained the events to Socialist Action.

'A small team of COSA members had mounted a loyal, dedicated picket line outside the Coal Board headquarters in Doncaster from day one of the strike.'

But despite two large pickets seeking support for the NUM the Coal House staff showed no loyalty to the miners whose negotiating strength had secured such enviable wages and working conditions for the clerical workers.

After the events at Orgreave, the relationship between police and pickets had seriously deteriorated. At the same time Leon Brittan was publically advocating more severe charges and penalties against miners.

On 26 June 1984 we deployed at Coal House. The plan was to seek support for the NUM, and to show solidarity with the loyal few who were out on strike. This subsequently led 15 men to appear in Sheffield crown court.

A large gathering of pickets greeted the clerical staff from 7.30am onwards. Many of these staff made their way past the pickets without any interference whatsoever. The police and senior NCB staff decided to marshal the clerks in the police station access road until police reinforcements arrived. They were then to escort them into the building behind a cordon of police.

Crime

This was unnecessary and deliberately provocative. If they had been left alone, they could have gone in — as many of their colleagues had. It is clear that a very large number of staff went in without any police escort.

The pickets were mainly orderly and good humoured, urging the staff to 'support your union,' 'stand by the miners,' 'it's your job as well as ours.'

A small minority were shouting insults and abusive remarks. I saw no physical violence or stones thrown. It was the heavy handed methods of the Police Support Units that led to scuffles and arrests. None of the 15 men on trial were accused of attacks on the Coal House staff.

The minor offences alleged by the police bordered on the ridiculous, and they would probably have secured convictions against us in a magistrates court if the usual offences, for example obstructing a police officer, had been put.

But a political decision had been taken, obviously at a senior level, to deter miners from taking part in further pickets. All 15 of us were charged with unlawful assembly. At a subsequent magistrates hearing the charge of riot was added.

A feature of this trial was the lies and distortion of evidence by the police. Time after time, defence cross examination exposed lies and conflicting evidence. Many of the police statements had been dictated, or made in collusion with other police.

I was confident throughout the trial, that

we would be acquitted of those ridiculous, malicious charges.

It was the fight for jobs which led to so many miners facing serious charges and dismissal from their jobs. The number of pits closed since

the strike, and the thousands of jobs sacrificed, clearly shows the urgency to continue the campaign.

Sadly, many miners have learnt no lessons as a result of the longest strike in our history. Divisive

bonus schemes are being implemented in the Yorkshire coalfield turning miner against miner and giving huge coalstocks again for the bosses to use against us.

THE FIGHT GOES ON!



Police attack demonstrators at Orgreave

NO PIT CLOSURES!

ON 8 JULY the *Financial Times* and the *Daily Telegraph* jointly leaked the NCB's plans on pit closures. They showed the Coal Board intends to close fifty pits under the next phase of its programme and

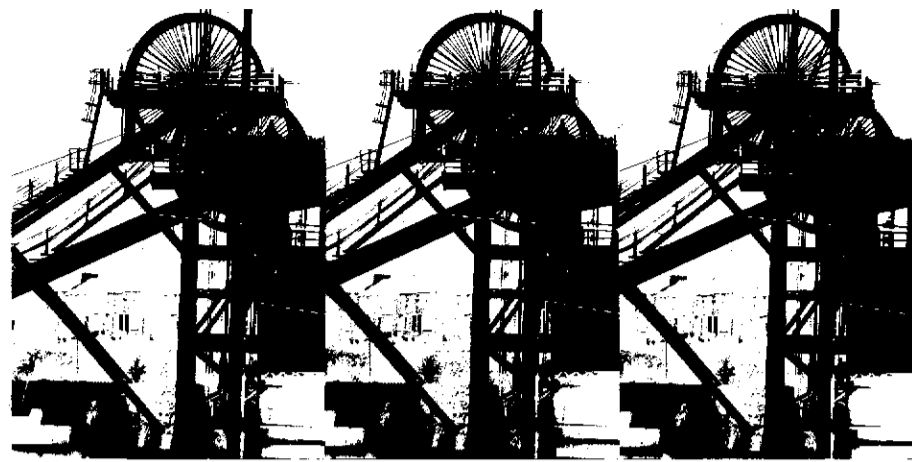
axe a minimum of 50,000 jobs.

These 'leaks' totally confirm Arthur Scargill's claim that the real long term aim of the Coal Board and government is to close 70 pits and lose more

than 70,000 jobs. The NUM's claims had always previously been dismissed by the government and NUM right wing as 'alarmism'.

The brunt of the threatened closures

are to be in the peripheral coalfields of Scotland, South Wales, and Kent. NIGEL BEVAN, GRAHAM ATWELL, DARRYL HILLGROVE, and ROGER GODFREY report.



South Wales under the hammer



Photo: GM COOKSON

Penrhiwceiber closure demanded

By Nigel Bevan, Penrhiwceiber Lodge Committee (personal capacity)

ON THURSDAY 18 July the NCB announced the closure of Penrhiwceiber colliery. The pit is situated in the Cynon valley, where the loss of 569 jobs plus the jobs related to the pit will send unemployment soaring. The NCB has used the economic argument to close the pit because they have no other excuse.

On the Coal Board's estimate the pit has lost £21 million which means that we have lost, on average, £67 per ton. The NCB has played a very clever public relations game and has said that it has given us a £1 million coal face which is not producing enough coal to make it profitable — and that it would be cheaper to mine the existing reserves from the Deep Navigation, a neighbouring pit.

These statements are true but without other information are completely misleading. In fact the pit has had no investment in the key areas, and it is this that makes it difficult to mine coal at Penrhiwceiber. The systems we use are more suited to a mining museum than a producing coal mine.

We have the conditions to produce our target easily. In the NCB engineer's own words, the coal faces are in very good and excellent condition. But because of the time spent waiting for clearance efficient working is not made

possible.

With regard to the reserves in the pit, the coal board spent £1.5 million developing access to a new seam which would give 20 years' life to the colliery. Then it abandoned the project — wasting all the time, effort and money spent. The management has robbed us of the right to mine this area.

The coal board also claims that vandalism during the strike has damaged the future of the pit. We have been asking for increased security for years and have been told that the police were not available.

Yet when Watson, the scab at the Phurnacite plant, broke the strike there were over 400 police on hand at once to escort him through the gates.

We calculate that given investment in transportation of coal to the pit top we could make a profit in a year even on NCB figures.

Our next step is to oppose closure and take the pit into the review procedure. The tactics we employ will be crucial to the future of Penrhiwceiber.

Campaign

We will be campaigning in the community around a petition and will build a more widespread public campaign drawing in all the forces possible — such as the All Wales Congress for the Defence of Mining Communities, Women Against Pit Closures, the Campaign group of MPs and others willing to help. If necessary there will be further industrial action.

If all these measures fail not only will the community lose its lifeline but the NUM will lose one of its most militant lodges in South Wales — one which up to now has been a scab-free zone.

LAST THURSDAY the NCB announced their intention to close Penrhiwceiber colliery. The announcement drew an angry response from Cynon Valley MP Anne Clwyd who pointed out unemployment in the Valley is in excess of 35 per cent.

There is a widespread belief that Penrhiwceiber is being closed due to its long tradition of militancy. GRAHAM ATWELL reports.

Pit closures in South Wales have become an almost weekly occurrence since the end of the strike. The NCB no longer needs to make any secret of their intention to axe many more collieries. So far the board has announced the closure of Bedwas and St Johns in mid-Glamorgan, Markham and Celynen South in Gwent, and Treforgan in West Glamorgan, as well as Penrhiwceiber.

The number of lost job places in these pits will total more than 3,500 although only a few hundred miners have left the industry so far.

Whilst Bedwas, Celynen South and Treforgan have voted to accept the closures, miners at St Johns, Markham and Penrhiwceiber have rejected the board's plans despite intense pressure especially directed at older miners.

The closure plans will now go to the new review procedure, although the NCB are adamant that the collieries will definitely close.

The South Wales NUM has remained almost completely silent whilst the closures are going through. Last week vice president Terry

Thomas ruled out any further industrial action. Despite its so called 'alternative strategy' for taking the fight into the community the Wales Congress in Support of Mining Communities has also remained silent.

The response of the Labour Party in mid-Glamorgan to the pit closures has been a campaign by Ray Powell, MP for Ogmore, to expell from the Labour Party St Johns lodge secretary Ian Isaacs as a supporter of the *Militant*.

Unity

It has been largely left to individual lodges to develop their own campaign against closures. St Johns has led a vigorous public campaign culminating in an independent enquiry in Cardiff last week chaired by Lord Fischer — former

secretary of NUPE.

The enquiry received economic reports from Andrew Glyn of Oxford university, as well as a full geological survey from a former NCB geologist. The reports all emphasised that the cost of closing St Johns is far in excess of the loss at present being sustained, and that further investment could result in the colliery becoming profitable even in the NCB's terms.

Clearly if there is to be any chance of stopping the Coal Board carrying through their plans South Wales NUM must launch a general campaign against all the pit closures. With little prospect of any action from the present area leadership it is vital that lodges under threat link together and produce their own plan of action to fight back against the NCB's closure plans.

Kent under attack

THE KENT coalfield, like other NUM areas with a militant tradition, has been progressively run down by the NCB.

In 1956 5,000 miners were employed in Kent. This had dropped to 3,500 in 1972. Now, after the latest spate of redundancies, there are only 1,500 mining jobs left. Fifty miners from Kent were sacked during the 1984-5 strike.

In 1969 the Chislet pit closed leaving only three pits in Kent — Betteshanger, Tilmanstone and Snowdown. Snowdown was one of the five 'hit list' pits whose threatened closure sparked off the 1984 miners' strike. On 29 June this year the NCB announced that it was closing Tilmanstone.

DARRYL HILLGROVE talked to ROGER GODFREY, secretary of Tilmanstone NUM, about the threatened closure.

THE NCB has been accused of planning the closure of an additional 50 pits with the loss of 50,000 jobs. How was the closure of Tilmanstone revealed?

There was no negotiation about Tilmanstone or any other pit. The closure was announced by the coalboard at a reconvened review meeting at Dover. We were summoned to a meeting by the NCB where they told us that Tilmanstone would be closing in a short while whether or not it made a profit.

Do you think the closure of Tilmanstone is a way of "getting even" with Kent for its militancy?

The coalboard has for some time wanted to close Kent as they have with all the other peripheral coalfields in the country. The peripheral ones are often the most militant, for many different reasons. And the miners in those areas have been in

the forefront of fights against social injustice.

Kent area, coming in the affluent South, is something of an anomaly. A lot of victimised miners have ended up there, hence its tradition of militancy. There is a little sea of militancy in an otherwise Tory area.

What is the future for the Kent coalfield?

The closure of Tilmanstone, if achieved, will be the beginning of the end for Kent. Betteshanger has been told it will go the same way if it is not profitable.

The region where the Kent coalfield is based is in a non-industrial low employment area. What are the possibilities for sacked and redundant miners to get other jobs?

Our area has an unemployment rate of 28 per cent. Having said that a large number of scabs

have already left the industry locally, with the redundancies that have gone through, and they seem to be getting jobs. Perhaps employers are looking for strike breakers, but on the face of it, they are not finding it difficult to get other work.

When was the Kent coalfield taken out of the South Midlands area?

We were in the South Midlands area financially and administratively. Three weeks after the recent strike ended an announcement was made, without any consultation with the NUM, that we were now out of the South Midlands area. No reason was given for this. We can only assume that it is the forerunner to the closure of the Kent coalfield. Just after the decision to take us out of the South Midlands area the closure of Tilmanstone was announced.

How are the workers at Tilmanstone fighting back?

We reject the plan for closure so we are going to the new revised review procedure which will give us some time. Meanwhile we have produced an alternative plan to that of the NCB, which involves going down to another seam of coal.

All the tests show that this seam is better and thicker than any we are working at the moment. We believe this seam would secure a future for Tilmanstone and Kent.

Our own engineers have approved this plan. In the mean time we are looking to all the labour movement and all the public to apply pressure on the Government and the NCB.

The appeal meeting won't take place for a number of months. We have leaflets, stickers, petitions and speakers who will speak anywhere about the proposed closure.

The Kent area is dependent on the coalfield. Everyone is going to suffer. The coalfield puts £24 million into the local economy each year. That will end if the pits go. We are trying to broaden our fight out so the local community realises what is at stake.

The Aylesham miners and miners' wives are organising a 'Mines not Missiles' event for three days over the August Bank holiday. This will be broadened out to take in the defence of Tilmanstone.

The proposed closure of Tilmanstone appears part of a pattern of action by the NCB that has been revealed since the end of the strike?

A number of closures have been announced and about ten of these have reached the appeal procedure. This is a procedure that has not been agreed. The Coal Board has imposed it upon us.

• Tilmanstone and Kent NUM are appealing for help in the fight against the closure of their pit. Contact the Tilmanstone Colliery Defence Campaign, c/o The Secretary, Benga, P.O. Farmgate, Kent.

No break

Defend t

INTERVIEW WITH

CAROL TURNER interviewed **PETER HEATHFIELD**, general secretary of the NUM, in Sheffield on 19 July on the breakaway Notts and the outcome of the conference.

THE RULE changes that Lynk claimed precipitated the breakaway went very much in favour of those the national leadership had been campaigning for, didn't they? How do you feel about the results of your conference?

It was a useful conference with a large measure of unity. The fact that 75 per cent of the delegates present voted for acceptance of the new rule book was important.

Secondly, concern about some of the new rules was reflected in the two thirds decision to amend six of those rules. Significantly, had the Notts delegates remained in the conference a further eight could have been amended.

It was democracy at work. The new rules were not an attempt by the leadership to impose more central control on the NUM. The new rule book recognises we're a federal organisation. So to suggest, as some of the media have, that it was making Scargill's control over the union greater was nonsense.

The rules are not changed at 40 year intervals — they can be changed each year. The rules of the NUM have been modified. If the new rules create some difficulties then I'm sure they'll be modified again.

The main changes in the rule book arise from new legislation. We had to respond to the Tory anti-trade union laws in order to protect the interests not only of the national and area leaders, but rank and file delegates who needed protecting. That was done. The legal changes to political funds also had to be recognised and some provision made in the new rule book.

So, it wasn't an attempt to introduce new rules designed to discipline people who didn't participate in the strike — far from it. It was necessary to modernise the rule book, to rid it of the

language and attitudes of the 1940s. That was approved in 1983. Unfortunately, it's taken us this long to do it.

The closest vote was on associate membership for women, wasn't it?

The national leadership were disappointed. We saw associate membership as bringing together the women's groups because of the role they played during the dispute, and a recognition that we need that movement to continue.

We need the women's groups to prosper. If we are continuing to campaign for the preservation of jobs and mining communities, then they have a very important role to play. We wanted them to be identified closely with the union.

The vast majority of the women's groups are still in operation. They're having an annual conference here in Sheffield in mid-August, which indicates they're alive and kicking. They are an important group, not just in the industry but in the mining communities. We will do all in our power to continue to encourage them.

Significantly, in the last three months, the women's groups on the coalfields have been helping to sustain this organisation financially. We've got no cash — we're still under the receiver. They've helped considerably.

Can you say something about the NUM resolutions to the Labour Party and TUC conferences?

We sent one to the Labour Party and two to the TUC. We're calling for a future Labour government to completely review the sentences and imprisonment of miners. Although, all things being equal, the overwhelming majority of those imprisoned will be out before the next general election — 9 month, 12 month and 18 month

sentences will have been completed — we still feel that an amnesty or a review is essential.

This has been highlighted by the nonsense of the riot cases that have collapsed: Orgreave, Coal House in Doncaster, Cardiff. It's highlighted the hypocrisy and lies that have been levelled against the miners. The cost to the state and the cost to miners have been exorbitant.

What was the mood of delegates at the conference? What sort of feeling did you get about the lessons they'd drawn from the strike?

I didn't detect any despondency. I thought there was tremendous spirit to carry on the struggle. Obviously, life's very difficult, for miners and for trade unionists.

To all intents and purposes the industry is now being privately managed. Relationships are being destroyed by MacGregor, who is applying an autocratic style of management that's creating a determination and a unifying approach. MacGregor will learn he can't produce coal by an autocratic method. He can only produce coal by cooperation. The quicker he does that, the better for the industry.

I've just spent the last few days in Notts, where the situation is very confused. There are letters from the Coal Board trying to get miners to sign away their NUM membership. There have been branch meetings where Notts officials are telling NUM members they're now members of the Nottingham Union of Mineworkers. Can you say, from the national union's point of view, what the situation is?

We are mindful of what's taking place in Nottingham and have endeavoured to get a judgement to clarify the situation. From our point of view, we firmly believe that Lynk is in breach of the last judgement and, in consequence, the actions that are taking place are in contempt.

Our concern is that the National Coal Board is doing its utmost to persuade miners to associate with the sweetheart union being promoted by the present leadership in Notts. We have now an organisation that is planning a great deal of work in the coalfield, to try and arrest the movement that Lynk is developing and, importantly, to persuade people to stay with the NUM. We are pretty confident that we will achieve that objective.

Would you go back a bit, to the point at conference when Lynk and the Notts delegation walked out, and explain what's happened since then?

Well, it was rather a strange action for 'democrats' to participate in a ballot on



Funeral of Joe Green

the merits and demerits of a rule book and to vote against it, and then, because the ballot went the wrong way, to leave the conference.

But it's not really a question of the new rule book because the Notts leadership have distanced themselves from the old rule book of the NUM way back in December last. So it's a nonsense to say it's the new rules that they are unwilling to accept.

It is pretty obvious that they made up their minds to break away many months ago. We knew in April that that situation was developing, we knew from our solicitors that the Notts baristers were prefixing their discussions with 'when we break away' — and that was in February and March before the strike had ended. That was common knowledge.

The Notts leadership would have preferred for us to expel them, but we didn't embark on that action because of our knowledge of what they were planning.

Their actions, as far as we were concerned, are illegal: the rule book clearly states that they are members of the NUM. Their attitude to loyalists of the NUM is illegal — the implication being that to remain in the NUM they must sign a form.

The NUM is the recognised organisation of the Notts coalfield; if they choose to break away, it is they who must disassociate from the

NUM. All the agreements are with the NUM, not with some other organisation. As far as we're concerned, our actions will be to retain that situation.

Sadly, again, we look like being drawn through the courts — using the courts to resolve our problems.

The anticipation of the breakaway was fairly obvious when they voted against rule 30, which gave the national rules precedence over the local rules. Through the press and to their own members Lynk and Co consistently denied that their intention was to break away. What do you think was actually behind the intention of the breakaway? What do you think they're after?

I think it's a modern variety of Spencerism. It's an attempt, really, to take advantage in the short term of the high levels of productivity in Notts.

It's a mercenary attitude, because they see themselves as high earners, and hope that by going it alone they can push that advantage further. What they fail to appreciate is that MacGregor is hellbent on fragmenting the NUM, and they've fallen for that.

By fragmenting the NUM, you obviously weaken the unity and solidarity that would normally prevail, and that makes it easier for the employers to get their way.



Womens demonstration in South Wales

Breakaway!

the NUM!

PETER HEATHFIELD



Peter Heathfield



Photo: JOHN HARRIS

Do you intend to put national resources into Notts in order to persuade the miners to stay in the NUM?

We will be having meetings throughout the period; we will be making arrangements to have discussion with the women in the coalfield, and the campaign will be developed around loyal miners and the women's support groups.

What should the NUM members in Notts actually do themselves? The ones at pits who have got hold of *The Miner* I know have been distributing them, but this hasn't got all the way round yet as far as I've heard. But there is some confusion as to how to campaign. They're very concerned to get word from the national union, so that what they do isn't cutting across national plans...

We've got a very close relationship with the representatives of branches, and it's important that the representatives have meetings with loyalists at the pit. It's at that level that the work's really got to be done. We're pretty confident that when we've got the leaflets out and we've got the distribution network operating, those problems will be overcome.

The main thing we've got to kill is the confusion, because there's been that much poison circulated by the present leadership in Notts, and we've got to overcome that first and foremost.

Lynk — and the *Nottingham Post* has backed him up — has done quite a good job of persuading the Notts miners that he is the true democrat — that is how the *Post* describes him — so actually there are some quite straightforward arguments to be fought out.

The *Nottingham Post* is an anti-trade union newspaper, and they're quite happy to project the image of Roy Lynk. I find their actions in Notts far from democratic. Their dismissal of Henry Richardson was not part of a democratic process; the people who elected him weren't invited to participate in the merits or demerits of disposing of him.

Getting rid of Henry Richardson was a decision by the Area Executive Committee who also had a vote in the Area Council, so those who convicted him also dealt with his appeal. That is not 'democratic'.

The confusion that was referred to earlier arises because men in Notts are not being kept informed by the present leadership. There is a small caucus of people who are controlling the affairs of the area. So the *Nottingham* paper will say that Lynk's a democrat, but he's far from being democratic.

Turning to the broader labour movement, the Nottingham trades council

has passed a resolution that's similar to the one which the women's groups recently passed. And I know that there are resolutions going through various Labour Parties in support of the NUM and the Notts miners remaining loyal. We've also had a statement by Kinnock. Would you like to comment on what the rest of the Labour leadership should be doing?

Well, obviously we've been concentrating on the Notts situation, and Nottingham trade unions. The fact that trades councils have passed resolutions and constituency parties are now getting involved was part of the original campaign approach within the coalfield.

Obviously, we've had discussions with the TUC and also with the Labour Party, because, constitutionally, if Lynk breaks away they will lose the recognition of the TUC, and, in consequence, the recognition of the Labour Party.

What we are saying to NUM members who are elected representatives in Nottingham — whether they be MPs or local councillors — is that if they remain loyal to the NUM then we will continue to sponsor them as we're entitled to do. They're not sponsored by Notts, it's the national political fund that sponsors Labour Party candidates in that sense.

We will be looking to the TUC to reaffirm its earlier decision that the breakaway can't be recognised, and we'll be looking to the Labour Party to exert pressure on the consequences of disaffiliation.

I take it that you're correct in what you say about the Labour Party, but Cannon and Haynes have actually made

statements to the contrary, haven't they?

I was speaking to Haynes in the House of Commons and I told him that we were eager to retain their presence in the miners' group. Haynes made the point that the overwhelming majority of miners in his constituency thought that Scargill would throw them out. I was able to reassure him that this was not the case, and events have proven that. I recognise that there is a role for them within the NUM, and as sponsored members of parliament, but in the end the decision is theirs.

The statement that Kinnock made at the Durham gala was a help in that it was a call for unity. But I don't think that a statement is really enough: it would be a great help if prominent people within the Labour Party actually supported the campaign actively. Can you say what sort of things you'd like them to do?

We've had discussion with people on the NEC of the Labour Party, and we will be looking to them for more positive declarations, and indeed, an identification with the campaign to retain Notts as part of the NUM. Similarly with the TUC General Council; we would hope that many trade union

leaders would be identified with our campaign, and many have already committed themselves.

Going back to the campaign in Notts, is that going to be organised from Sheffield? What sort of input is the national union going to have?

The national leaders and members of the NEC will be identified with the rallies and meetings, and the local people will be organising them. We hope that other prominent trade union leaders will share platforms with us across the coalfield, so that we remove the doubt and misunderstandings.

What do you expect Kinnock and the Labour leadership to do?

I would expect them to clearly declare their support for the NUM, a long-standing affiliate of the Labour Party. And I would expect both Kinnock and Hattersley to be closely identified with the campaign that we are conducting.

It's important to the Labour leadership that we retain a substantial influence in Nottingham, and hopefully win some of the marginal seats in that coalfield; so it's important that they are closely identified with us in the campaign.

So you'll be asking people from the Labour leadership and the TUC to come down to Nottingham to speak at public meetings and so on?

I would hope that they'd make themselves available. I would hope that Larry Whitty would make himself available for the meeting — it's a wonderful opportunity to create a platform for people like Whitty, who's new.

But of course, it's early days yet. How long do you think this campaign is going to run for, given that it's still the holiday period?

I would think September will be a crucial month of activity...

That's also, of course, the TUC. Do you know if Lynk and the breakaway have any plans around the TUC?

I'm aware that they've communicated with the TUC, and the TUC will give them the traditional answer.



Photo: MARTIN SHAKESHAFT (IFL)

Miners picket at Port Talbot

THIS YEAR, 1985, marks the end of the United Nations Decade for Women. Governments will be meeting in Nairobi, Kenya to mark the end of the decade and to discuss how much they have supposedly done for women in the last ten years. Of course, the reality is that anything women have achieved, they have won through struggle and collective action. This is nowhere more clear than on the issue of the right to abortion and contraception.

In Britain the right of women to control their own bodies has come under renewed attack with the Powell Bill and the Gillick ruling. Although Powell's Bill was defeated the government has made clear it intends to push ahead with its own measures to implement the Warnock report, which defines life as beginning at 14 days, and to reduce the time limit for abortions from 28 to 24 weeks.

JUDITH ARKWRIGHT looks at the mounting worldwide attacks on abortion rights.

Pope John Paul is by now fairly well-known for his extreme views on contraception and abortion. In one talk he declared that sex 'ceases to be an act of love', whenever any kind of birth control is used. Such a view is in direct contradiction with the famous 1968 papal encyclical which stated that in certain cases contraception may not be a 'deadly sin'.

In the context of the renewed anti-abortion offensive, and in the context of an economic crisis, governments around the world are looking toward a strengthening of the family. Control on women's abortion and contraception rights fits in with the need to emphasise women's primary role as that of child-bearer and mother, with the need for women to provide a flexible pool of labour.

Racism

In Europe, moreover, there is a growing debate on population control which has taken on racist connotations. In April 1984 a proposal was adopted by the EEC (from the French 'socialist' government) to investigate ways of promoting a baby boom in Europe because of the declining (European) population.

Attacks on abortion rights have not gone unanswered however, as the following examination of the situation demonstrates.

In the USA itself in 1984, there were an estimated 300 attacks on abortion clinics with at least thirty of those involving fires and bomb attacks. Doctors and nurses working in abortion clinics have been harassed as have the women using them, in a tactic which has become known as 'sidewalk counselling'.

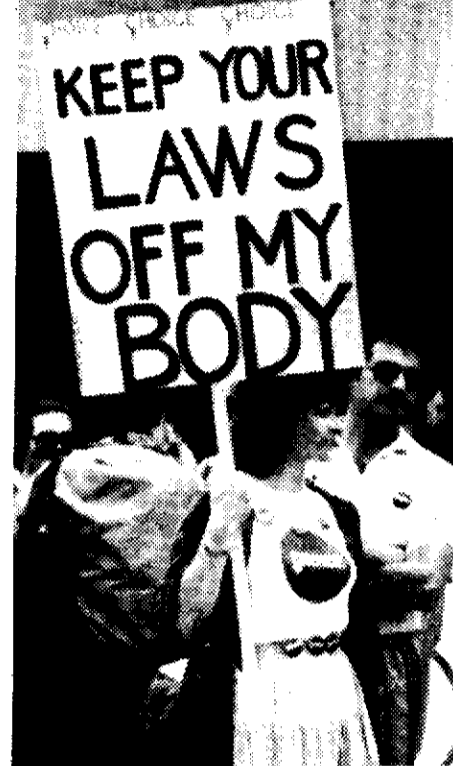
Women who have had abortions have been telephoned in their own homes and called murderers. Few convictions have been made as a result of these activities but Catholic priests and Catholic-sponsored organisations are known to have been involved. In Alabama recently one Reverend Markley was finally convicted, after two previous acquittals, of attacking the Birmingham women's clinic with a sledgehammer.

Such extreme activity is the work of a whole network of small pro-life groups such as the Pro-Life Action League, the Pro-Life Non Violent Action Committee, the Vietnam Veterans against Abortion, Catholics United for Life, People Expressing Concern for Everyone (PEACE), Feminism for Life and Women Exploited by Abortion (WEBA).

The Right to Life League aims to introduce an amendment to the US constitution which would say that the 'paramount right to life is vested in each human being at the moment of fertilisation, without regard to aid, health or condition of dependency'.

Whilst condemning violent activity, important figures in the Catholic hierarchy have recently become more

Worldwide attack on abortion rights



Demonstration in support of abortion rights in Toronto



Dr. Henry Morgentaler

involved in the public debate. John O'Connor, the archbishop of New York, for example, compared the 'murder of one and a half million unborn human lives ...' to Hitler's holocaust. He does not of course mention that the Nazis outlawed abortion and contraception, reducing women to the status of breeders for the nation.

The campaign against women's right to choose was given a tremendous boost earlier this year when president Reagan himself spoke by telephone to over 70,000 anti-abortion demonstrators in Washington (the largest number of anti-abortionists ever assembled in the capital), assuring them that he supported an amendment to the constitution. He has also sponsored the film *Silent Screams* aimed at convincing congress members to vote against women's abortion rights.

Rights eroded

The demonstration in fact marked the twelfth anniversary of the legalisation of abortion in the US. Since that time abortion rights have actually been eroded away without any votes being taken on the issue.

In 1976 government funding for abortion was stopped and today 80 per cent of all county and city hospitals do not perform abortions. The clinics currently under attack are therefore of vital importance for American women.

Moreover, young women have been singled out for attack. Legislatures in 12 states are considering passing bills that would require

women under the age of 18 to notify their parents or get consent before a clinic, hospital or doctor can perform an abortion. Parental notification statements are already required in eight states. Such measures highlight the hypocrisy and irresponsibility of a society which deems that a young woman can be forced into an unwanted pregnancy but that she is too young to make up her own mind about whether or not to have a child.

The women's movement in the US has not let such attacks go by without a response. Vigils have been organised at 25 of the clinics most constantly under threat and escort services have been set up to take women to and from the clinics.

Demonstrations and other activities have also been organised by groups such as Abortion Rights Action League and the Coalition to End Clinic Violence as well as local chapters of the National Organisation of Women.

In Canada similar violent attacks on abortion clinics have been launched by right-wing extremists and, as in the US, such attacks form the backdrop to potential legal threats to abortion rights in different provinces.

Such attacks have been met with the largest mobilisations in the country's history on the issue. The movement has gained a new confidence following the acquittal (for the fourth time) of Dr Henry Morgentaler who recently opened an abortion clinic in Toronto. The opening of such a clinic and Morgentaler's acquittal for offences connected with this in fact challenge Canadian law directly since it stipulates that abortions must be performed in hospital with the consent of three doctors.

In Switzerland a recent attempt to introduce a change in the country's constitution to protect the rights of the foetus has been defeated by a two to one majority in a referendum. However, the right wing were able to use the opportunity of the referendum to launch a massive propaganda offensive on the issue.

In its platform address the 'Right to Life' committee which launched the initiative labelled women seeking abortions as 'selfish', saying that any woman who wanted 'to control her own womb' was no more than a 'modern day witch'.

In Belgium there have been trials of doctors in Brussels, Bruges Furnes and Ghent. In Ghent, an abortion clinic was recently raided by police supposedly investigating tax frauds.

Women patients in the clinic were harassed and interrogated in an attempt to get them to admit to having an illegal abortion. The attack on abortion is also coming from the top levels of government.

Doctor charged

A government minister has appeared against the acquittal of Doctor Van Haelen from the town of Nivelles accused of procuring illegal abortions. The doctor was acquitted of this charge on grounds of a 'situation of moral distress'. If the appeal is upheld other doctors will find themselves in an increasingly difficult situation.

In Spain the socialist-dominated government was elected on a promise of liberalising abortion. It has still failed to do so because it has capitulated to the right-wing offensive despite the highly active campaign by the women's movement. In 1983 the Cortes adopted a bill allowing abortion in cases of damage to the health of the woman or the foetus and in cases of pregnancies brought about by rape.

It is calculated that this would help only three per cent of Spanish women, the majority of whom have to either suffer unwanted pregnancies or go abroad to procure abortions.

A constitutional tribunal consisting of one woman and 11 men recently challenged even this pathetic proposal, saying that it did not guarantee enough rights for the foetus. The women's movement has thus had to take up the cudgels against both the government's thoroughly inadequate proposal and the attempts by the tribunal to prevent anything that would further the cause of women.

Broken promises

In Greece the PASOK government, recently re-elected, has similarly failed to introduce promised legislation despite a massive campaign by feminists who have signed a petition stating that they have had an (illegal) abortion.

This type of hesitation by social democratic governments has allowed the extreme right to get the upper hand on this as on so many other issues, and has done the most tremendous disservice to women. In Brazil for example the left-wing governor of Rio de Janeiro, Leonel Brizola, recently gave in to pressures from the Catholic church not to make abortions more easily available.

Such examples are manifold and only serve to contribute to the worldwide offensive on women's abortion rights and on their right to control their own bodies.

If the women's and labour movement worldwide lose the battle on this most basic right that women must have, then the prospects for any advance for women, in this decade or the next, will begin to look very grim indeed.

What is required is not polite discussions in a luxury hotel in Nairobi, but an international campaign to defend abortion and contraception rights worldwide and to make a reality the universal demand of the women's movement — 'Not the church, not the state, women must decide their fate'.

Violence

In New Zealand violence is also being used to prevent women obtaining safe legal abortions. In November 1984 there was an arson attempt at the Auckland Medical Aid Trust hospital (a private abortion clinic). More recently, on 7 May this year, a molotov cocktail was thrown at a building in Christchurch which is currently being converted into a free standing abortion clinic. A group named Christians for Life had previously picketed the local hospital board when the decision to establish the clinic was taken.

South Africa in crisis

THE DECLARATION of a state of emergency by the apartheid regime in South Africa marks a significant escalation of the crisis of the regime. The decree affects 36 of the 332 magisterial districts in South Africa — in particular the Eastern Cape and a 50 mile radius around Johannesburg. These are the most populous regions in the country. The decree will involve about 5.3 million people.

The state of emergency decree is more a symptom of the crisis of the regime than any need for increased powers for the South African security forces.

As Brigadier Jan Coetzee, divisional commissioner of the police in Soweto stated before the state of emergency was declared, 'In our operations the South African police and the South African defence force operate as one.'

The last time a state of emergency was introduced in South Africa was after the Sharpeville massacre in 1960. Then it lasted for 156 days and effectively suppressed the revolt.

Today the situation is very different. The depth and spread of the revolt is qualitatively deeper, and the crisis of apartheid far greater.

Inflation in South Africa is running at 16 per

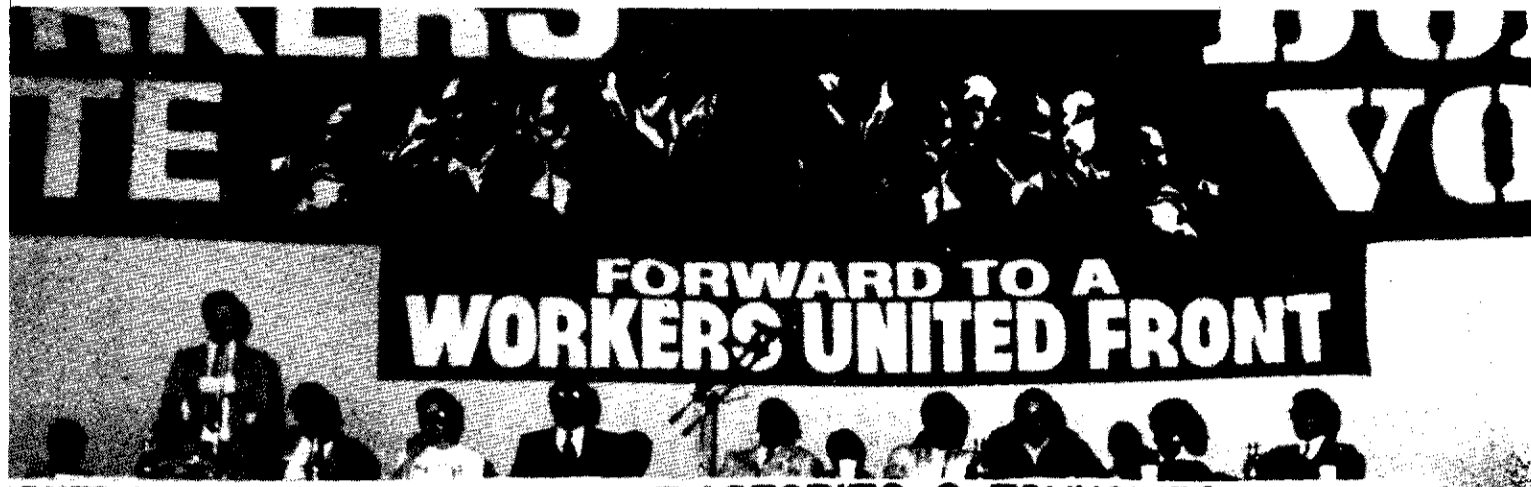
cent, and unemployment for blacks at 25 per cent.

Last years reforms made no concessions whatever to the black population — thereby excluding 70 per cent of South Africa's population from elections. Instead the Botha government tried to introduce a 'second tier' of government based on black councillors and mayors in the townships. By these means it hoped to develop a layer of collaborationist black community leaders.

by Pat Hickey

But the elections for these collaborators positions were boycotted.

Last September, when the regime introduced rent rises and cuts in the already inadequate services in the black townships, the revolt



450 deaths. Repression, however, has not quelled the movement.

It is no longer simply well-known names such as Soweto, Sharpeville, and Langa which figure in the news headlines.

In the last few months, black anger has been directed at the regime's collaborators in the townships. More than 360 police, 240 councillors and 27 mayors have had to be evacuated. Most of the

townships are 'no-go areas' — known locally as free zones — for whites.

There are also now more blacks in trade unions in South Africa than whites — for the first time in the country's history. In Soweto last week workers at the Ikwezi bus depot forced the company to provide buses to take youth from the township to Protea where 105 young blacks were on charges of attending an illegal meeting.

The links between the

youth of the townships, student organisations, and the trade unions are continuing to deepen. The extent of this organisation is today unprecedented in South African history.

Power

The United Democratic Front (UDF) now embraces 500-600 student and community associations. Its very heterogeneity enables it to throw up new leaders to replace those murdered or arrested by

the regime.

In the last few months, black anger has been directed at the regime's collaborators in the townships. More than 360 police, 240 councillors and 27 mayors have had to be evacuated. Most of the townships are 'no-go areas' — known locally as free zones — for whites. The police enter only in armoured cars and in massive force. The young blacks face this force with intransigent courage. At the funeral in Craddock,

of four activists murdered by the death squads, they carried placards saying 'Tambo, we demand AK 47's'. (Tambo is the leader in exile of the African National Congress and the AK47 is an assault rifle).

The radicalisation today is far deeper than after Sharpeville or the Soweto rebellion in 1976. Its geographical spread, its political depth, and the far higher level of black self-organisation are the beginning of a prolonged crisis for the regime.

NEC confront black sections

Last week the Labour Party NEC voted by a majority not only to reject black sections but also to oppose a compromise resolution put forward by Eric Heffer. The result shows the complete contempt of Neil Kinnock for the right of black people to organise inside the Labour Party.

Eric Heffer's proposition to the NEC — which would have accepted black organisations as affiliated bodies to the Labour Party — was a genuine attempt at a compromise which would have allowed the party leadership to withdraw from its head-on confrontation with the black community.

The national black section had indicated that it could not drop its campaign for black sections in the Labour Party under any circumstances. However the black section was prepared to put the Heffer proposal for discussion to its membership as a possible compromise at the present time while further discussion took place in the party.

Sham

But Kinnock was determined to smash any self-organisation by black people and would accept no compromise whatever. Eight members of the NEC — Benn, Clark, Heffer, Hoyle, Richardson, Skinner, Maynard, and Wise voted against Kinnock and to support the Heffer proposal.

Particularly notable in the vote was that Michael Meacher and David Blunkett — two out of three members of the 'realigned left' on the NEC — voted solidly with Kinnock against black sections.

Mark Wadsworth, national vice-chair of the black section, indicated the tactics that would now

be adopted by the black sections.

Firstly the black section would turn to campaigning outside the party — as well as continuing the fight within it. This would mean in particular closer linking up with the struggles taking place in the black community.

Secondly the black section would be supporting its national chairperson



Marc Wadsworth

Sharon Atkin for the constituency section of the NEC — and Diane Abbot for the women's section of the NEC.

Thirdly the national committee of the black section would be discussing specifically supporting a black woman candidate being selected in Hackney North.

With five black candidates having been selected, but all men, the black section would be putting its full weight behind ensuring the selection of black women challenge.

Statement

THE FOLLOWING statement was issued by MARC WADSWORTH, national vice chair of the black section, THE latest setback at the NEC demonstrates that our Labour leaders are lurching towards a fatal crisis of confidence among the party's black support. They have got themselves in a fix over our legitimate demand for black self-organisation in the Labour Party.

The only way out is for the white leaders to stop their mischief and accept black sections. Only once they've done that can black and white members of the party come together as equal partners at all levels of the labour movement and begin to forge radical policies aimed at eradicating racism.

It will take such committed policies, formulated in this way, to attract the substantial black support that Labour needs to win at the polls.

We make this plea because 'electoralism' seems to be the only thing that appeals to Neil Kinnock whose declared aim seems to be number 10 at any price.

The existing splits on the left on the question of black sections are testimony to the crisis the Labour Party is facing. When we are slate-making for NEC representatives in the constituency section we should remember that so-called left wingers Michael Meacher and David Blunkett have voted against black sections repeatedly.

It is the experience of all oppressed groups that the confidence and freedom to speak of our oppression is developed

through excluding outsiders — while that experience is developed into collective political action. Therefore if women, black people and workers in particular trades chose to come together to self-organise groups within the Labour party it is grossly patronising for the leadership to say they won't 'allow' this to happen.

Members of these groups will themselves make the decision to organise in the way they choose and the leadership must recognise the right of autonomy.

The Labour leadership will have at conference a further opportunity to hear the message from the NUM, NUPE, Labour women, and large sections of the CLPs, to support black sections.

Traditionalists have the notion that there is an automatic unity of all sections of the British working class. But the fact is our supporters are made up of people from a society divided along three main lines — class, gender and race.



Mrs Kassam and her three sons

Racist massacre

POLICE REACTION to the arson attack which killed Mrs Shamira Kassam and her three sons aged five, six and four, in Seven Kings Ilford has caused massive anger in the black community.

Two days after the attack detective superintendent Bill Peters, who is in charge of the investigation, claimed that the fire did not have the 'hallmarks' of a racist attack. He added that there was nothing left behind to indicate a racist motive. This was despite the fact that the wall opposite the house was daubed with the letters BNP (British National Party) and a large Swastika.

The fire was started in the early hours of Saturday morning, by someone who broke into the house. There have been two previous attacks on the house. Three weeks ago petrol was poured through the letter box and set on fire. In February 1982, when the house was occupied by another Asian

family, petrol was poured through the letter box and set ablaze.

The readiness with which the police ruled out a racist motive has infuriated community leaders.

Four years ago four members of the Khan family were murdered when petrol was poured

through the letter box of their home and set alight. No arrests have been made. The Newham Monitoring Project has recorded 1200 cases of racist attacks in the past four years.

Crime

The police have responded by arresting Asian youths who organise to defend their communities.

Community leaders believe that the police are only going through the motions of an investigation. The attack, and the failure of the police to respond, has created a climate of fear in the community making people reluctant to talk.

Right wing offensive in TUC

'New realists' defy congress decisions

THE TUC leadership has, at last, taken up the challenge from the AUEW on opposition to the government's anti-union laws. By a vote of 13-1 the finance and general purposes committee has decided to begin the disciplinary process against the engineers for their decision to take government money for ballots under the Employment Acts.

The engineers' executive defied the decision of the union's highest body, the national committee, in order to ballot the membership on the issue. The stacked result was a 10-1 majority for taking the money.

The AUEW is not alone in its stand. The EETPU supports its position, as does ASTMS and UCATT. The decision to take the money is a clear breach of the 1982 TUC Wembley Conference decision that 'Affiliated unions shall observe congress policy and not seek or accept public funds under the Employment Act 1980.'

If the AUEW were to be expelled from the TUC, which is theoretically possible under the procedure, it would probably be joined by other right-wing unions. The EETPU

would almost certainly join them — and would be liable to expulsion anyway for its own policies.

by Pat Hickey

The AUEW's decision to defy the TUC is however clearly taken with the view to eliminating the TUC's formal stance of opposition to the laws, rather than with a view towards a split at this stage. The AUEW and the electricians are the leaders of the 'Mainstream' group of trade unions — a right wing bloc which also in-

cludes the Notts NUM. They were the architects of the 'new realism' unveiled at the 1983 TUC congress in the wake of Labour's electoral defeat.

The miners' strike threw off course Hammond and Duffy's project of pushing the TUC decisively to the right, but after the defeat of the strike they have resurfaced with renewed vigour.

Although 'new realism' appeared defeated at the 1984 Congress on the question of support for the miners, its supporters helped successfully undermine the implementation of Congress decisions.

Both Gavin Laird and Eric Hammond have openly defied the TUC to expel them. Laird is quoted as saying, 'We are strong enough to stand on our own feet'.

There is no doubt that if expulsions took place the 'Mainstream' group would constitute a strong

alternative pole to the TUC. The fight however is extremely unlikely to reach that stage. The TUC has been considerably less than 'consistent' in implementing the Wembley decisions. In fact at the first big test, at Warrington, it betrayed the NGA. Then it betrayed the miners.

The 1984 Congress decision left the TUC formally facing both ways on the anti-union laws. While a resolution was passed condemning the TUC's actions on the NGA so also was a statement that support for unions in conflict with the laws would not be automatic and that each case would be treated 'on its merits'.

The TUC has already retreated on all the substantial points of the Wembley decisions. The present policy of the TUC, as set out by the employment committee, allows unions to hold pre-strike ballots — something

Wembley did not support. The TUC is therefore in no strong position to deal with the AUEW. Despite the formal moves to discipline the AUEW it is in fact the right which is on the offensive within the TUC.

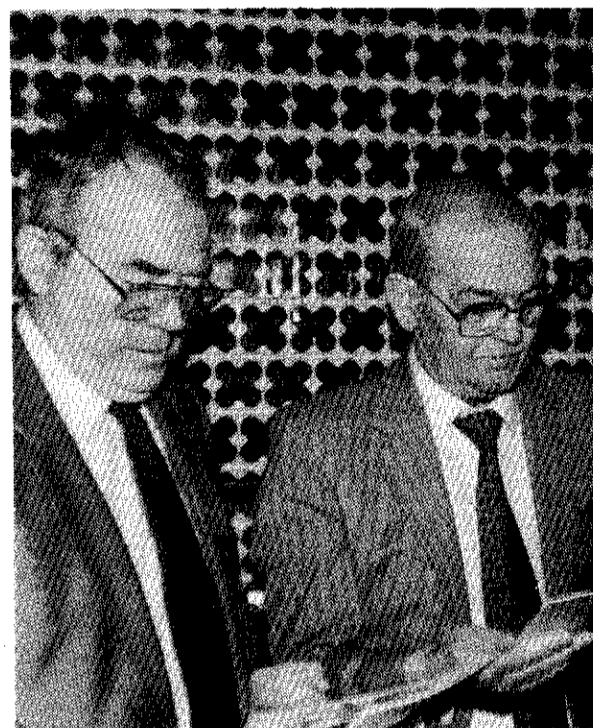
Both the AUEW and the EETPU have, since the 1983 congress, simply continued to implement their own position — most clearly in the no strike deals that both have been involved in. The EETPU's deal with Eddie Shah underlines the point.

If the TUC is to take seriously the task of disciplining the right wing it will have to take seriously the task of fighting the Tories. Otherwise it will leave the initiative with a group of trade unions which would welcome with open arms the Notts breakaway and all the consequences that has for the trade union and labour movement.

THE NEW realist right in the TUC stepped up its offensive last week with two major new moves. The EETPU signed a no-strike deal with Eddie Shah that openly bypassed the print unions. The AUEW leadership took drastic new steps to impose compulsory ballots on its

members. Inside the TUC the AUEW and EETPU are continuing their defiance of Congress policy on taking money from the government for postal ballots.

PAT HICKEY and **JON SILBERMAN** look at the latest developments.



Hammond and Duffy

Photo: GM COOKSON

Duffy at it again

TERRY DUFFY may be retiring his post as President of the AUEW, but the union's executive council has served notice that it intends to carry on in the Duffy mould. Its latest piece of 'leadership' has been to rule in favour of engineers complying with the 1984 Trade Union Act and organise secret ballots before taking any industrial action.

On 26 June, the AUEW executive council issued circular D.15/85 to district secretaries with the instruction that it be sent to all shop stewards. This circular lays down 16 'guidelines' which, it states, must be 'followed strictly'.

Just in case there is any doubt in the minds of stewards reading the circular, its author, general secretary Gavin Laird spells it out in detail. 'District Committees and Full-Time Officials should therefore be careful to avoid doing anything which suggests the Union supports any industrial action until a successful ballot has been held.'

If this circular is allowed to go unchallenged then, as from now, no strike by AUEW members will be declared official, and no dispute benefit paid, unless the members involved have had a secret ballot under the conditions laid down by Section 10 of the Trade Union Act 1984. This circular will be of great comfort to the Tory government — particularly coming on top of the AUEW's decision to accept Tory money for secret ballots for the election of full-time officials.

The decision of the AUEW executive council goes further than any

The policy-making AUEW national committee met in April/May. The executive council made no attempt to place this issue before the Committee. Instead, it waited until the national committee had closed and then unilaterally issued the circular in breach of national committee policy.



This is the second time that executive council has by-passed the union's proper channels in its attempt to force its stance on the Tory laws down the throats of the membership.

The previous occasion was the executive council's decision to ballot the membership over accepting money for ballots in full-time official elections — again carried out over the heads of the National Committee. For this act, executive council was overwhelmingly censured by the national committee when it finally met.

By Jon Silberman

The circular is bound to stimulate a tide of opposition within the union. AUEW militants remember the role played by the union in defeating the Heath government's Industrial Relations Act in the early 1970s and are proud of that tradition. More than that, many will see the executive council circular as a manoeuvre by Duffy, Laird and co. to skirt round the Union's policy-making machinery.



NGA picket of TUC during its struggle with Shah

Carve up with Shah

NEW REALISM took a major step forward this week with the EETPU's agreement with Eddie Shah for a single-union, no-strike deal at Shah's new London printing plant — from which the Warrington union buster aims to launch a new national daily paper. The EETPU agreement includes such clauses as total flexibility, no closed shop, and private health care. The key to the no-strike deal is the Japanese style 'pendulum' agreement.

Under this system wage deals are decided by an independent arbitrator, who must choose between the management offer and the union demand. There can be no 'splitting the difference'. The idea is to force both sides to make 'moderate and reasonable' demands. Not surprisingly, a key role in concluding the deal was played by Lord Harris of Greenwich who is on the Messenger Group board and a member of the SDP. Harris arranged the meeting with Shah through EETPU press officer John Grant — also a member of the SDP.

The Shah deal is undoubtedly the most signifi-

cant no-strike deal concluded by the EETPU so far — although it has 12 others.

By Pat Hickey

This deal strikes at the heart of a major industry. New technology has made possible major changes in the production of newspapers, and Fleet Street employers have been attempting to break the power of the unions in the industry. The aim is to force through changes which will mean the loss of thousands of jobs, and the employment of less skilled and cheaper labour.

The NGA has been to

the fore in resisting these changes. Its members are most at risk from the direct input operations which are now possible.

Since the defeat of the NGA at Warrington in 1983 — where Shah successfully fought the union — the Fleet Street unions, led by the NUJ and SOGAT '82, have been jockeying for the most favourable position with the employers.

Both the NUJ and SOGAT '82 have been fighting the NGA's 'follow the job' strategy — which would mean the NGA organising in areas previously dominated by the other two unions. The EETPU has now been able to take advantage of these divisions to play the employers' game.

The EETPU is currently negotiating a similar deal with Rupert Murdoch's News International group. Murdoch has a new printing plant in East London which has been mothballed for two years

because of union opposition. Other Fleet Street employers will be quick to take advantage of the new opening to press home their attack on the unions. Unless the NGA, SOGAT and the NUJ can present a united response to the problem they will all be the losers.

But the issue has important implications for the whole labour movement. The Shah deal shows the true face of new realism — an explicit alliance with the employers against other sections of the labour movement. The TUC's failure to confront single-union no-strike deals, and its failure to back struggles against the Tories, has opened the door for Hammond and Duffy.

The fight against this scab deal must be taken to the TUC in September. No-strike deals should be condemned, and clear backing given to the Fleet Street unions in the fight against them.

In the Unions

Crisis in rail BR impose 'Driver Only Operation'

GUARDS AND DRIVERS at Margam freight depot in South Wales have been on strike for a week. They walked out when train crews were sent home for refusing to start training on 'driver only' freight trains. Railworkers were also sent home at Immingham freight depot and at Kings Cross, Hitchin, and Cambridge Passenger depots. British Rail is imposing 'driver only operation' (DOO) of trains at these depots without going through the machinery of negotiation and with no national agreement with the unions.

Sir Robert Reid, BR's chairman, said that guards were being taken off freight trains to pay for the £250 million losses during the miners' strike. This kind of lie will multiply over the next few weeks as BR try to impose DOO.

A campaign has been mounted in the union to convince workers of the need to take on British Rail management. By contrast there has been an effective campaign around the political fund ballot with over a thousand activists going to special union schools and resources put into large amounts of propaganda. Activists have consistently called for this campaign to be linked with the fight to defend jobs, and for a campaign against productivity to be built using similar methods.

By Rose Knight

The vacuum in leadership has left workers under attack in the workshops, and the depots isolated and vulnerable to management and Tory lies. In areas which were directly

involved in refusing to move coal, such as Immingham and Margam, workers stood firm against driver only operation. But in London, at Kings Cross, Hitchin and Cambridge NUR shop stewards have called for the union to negotiate on DOO because they are not confident that a fight to defend jobs is really on the agenda.

Without any sign of a serious fight against low pay and productivity workers begin to see DOO as 'inevitable'. For the drivers this means repeating the mistakes on London Transport and calling for DOO on their terms. The Kings Cross ASLEF branch which built a magnificent campaign in defence of miners jobs has asked to change Rail Federation policy to include acceptance of DOO — with improved terms for drivers and job protection clauses for redundant guards.

Kings Cross ASLEF are arguing that a campaign for more time off during shifts, and a four day week, will free up footplate jobs for guards and other displaced rail

workers. This is hardly likely when the industry contracts daily, and it fails to take on the fight against productivity. With a deafening silence from the rail union leaderships it is not surprising that guards are demoralised and drivers slipping back into grade sectionalism.

What the ASLEF leadership is not making clear is that drivers too will lose jobs.

Drivers

There are a minority of drivers who have signed the Kings Cross NUR petition against DOO and who are against receiving a pay increase at the expense of guards jobs. 35 per cent of guards jobs are going in the first stage of DOO at Kings Cross. The drivers there are still carrying out their head office instruction not to start training for the present, and, without any clear national lead, guards are responding to this solidarity by refusing to co-operate with management and do overtime. Both ASLEF and NUR should build on this joint action.

What the NUR and ASLEF leaderships should

be making clear to railworkers is that you cannot prettify productivity. Driver only operation is not a cosmetic change — a simple redistribution of jobs throughout the industry.

It is about smashing the grade of guard — traditionally the most militant grade in the NUR, dividing the base of the Rail Federation, and further setting back the building of one united rail union.

The union leaderships should be explaining that the extra money being offered to drivers, signalmen, and supervisors is a carrot on the end of the stick used by management to divide workers, pit grade against grade, and ASLEF against NUR.

NUR

Instead, ASLEF has agreed to DOO in principle, and is just waiting for the NUR to concede on DOO before it negotiates a separate agreement.

Meanwhile, whatever happens at Kings Cross, the struggle at Immingham and Margam will affect the

whole industry. They are clearly strategic test cases to see how far the rail unions are prepared to go in defending jobs.

The truth is that even the most basic publicity campaign on safety and customer care is not being organised by the union.

Guards should insist that the EC of their grades conference immediately reconvene the guards and shunters conference to plan a fightback nationally and from the base.

Mass meetings of guards should be organised in every depot with NEC members present, not just those directly affected, to explain the attack and put the facts. District council meetings on DOO and other aspects of productivity should be taking place regularly. Links must be made with workshop staff whose jobs are also threatened, and a call put for national industrial action against productivity and for defence of all jobs.



Railworkers and miners

THE FOLLOWING review of the pamphlet *Railworkers and Miners*, published by Socialist Action, appeared in the June issue of *The Miner*.

AS ALMOST everyone must know by now, down in deepest Leicestershire something quite extraordinary happened in the strike.

A tiny handful of the county's striking miners 'The Dirty Thirty' managed to have an impact which was, pound for pound, greater than that of a steam hammer.

They linked up with the railmen of Coalville and blocked the transport of millions of tonnes of coal giving NCB and BR managements ulcers on ulcers.

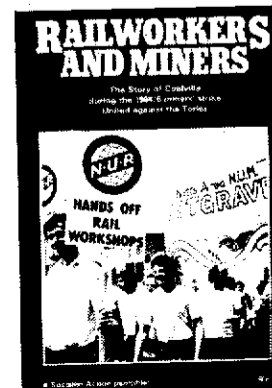
Considering that the thirty were little over one per cent of the Leicestershire coalfield manpower, their actions put them in the category of labour movement heroes; as for the railmen, they taught the whole world a thing or two about solidarity action.

All of those involved suffered, of course, the most extreme harass-

ment and pressure, with management adopting the profiles of sewer rats in a bid to break the men's spirit. Needless to say the bosses failed, and it is left to a timely little booklet* to draw the lessons of what can be achieved with just a handful of very courageous and determined people.

No doubt management will be drawing their lessons, too. That makes this booklet important reading for us.

* *Railworkers and Miners* (published by Socialist Action, PO Box 50 London N1 2XP). Price 50p plus postage (reduction on bulk orders).



Cuts

38,000 jobs have been lost in the industry since 1980. Reid's quip that some railworkers are under the impression that they have a job for life suggests that it won't be long before the 'no compulsory redundancy' agreement goes the same way as the closed shop, putting guards on the dole queue.

The NUR has had an AGM policy against productivity for two years, but no consistent cam-

Knapp leads retreat

OVER the past few days British Rail bosses have launched a massive attack on railworkers' jobs and conditions of service through the stepped up campaign to impose driver only operation on the industry. This has been carried through outside any negotiations with the rail unions.

British Rail management got a go-ahead for this attack from the Annual General Meeting of the NUR held at the beginning of the month in Ayr, Scotland. At the conference NUR General Secretary Jimmy Knapp led a bitter struggle to overturn TUC policy opposing the compulsory holding of ballots before national strike action.

After Knapp's position was narrowly passed, he went on a further offensive to hamstring attempts by the rank and file to get more control over their union and to protect jobs. A delegate to the NUR AGM draws a balance sheet of Knapp's two years since he took over from the disgraced Sid Weighell.

On the basis of the NUR's support for the miners strike Jimmy Knapp has traded on his credibility as a left winger. The reality behind the rhetoric became apparent in stark fashion at this year's conference — and any doubts that Knapp intends dragging the NUR to

the right were dispelled on the very first day during the debates on the Labour Party.

Conference opened with Knapp opposing attempts to give the rank and file more involvement in, and more accountability over, the election of representatives to ex-

ecutive posts in the Labour party. He refused to answer charges that Charlie Turnock, right wing Assistant General Secretary, had voted against union policy at the Labour Party NEC.

In a permanent alliance with the right wing, Knapp defeated a Glasgow motion opposing witch-hunts in the party. Despite the evidence produced, he refused to accept that any witch-hunt was taking place and attacked 'the ultra-left — people like *Socialist Action* who say I'm as bad as Alistair Graham'. (By the end of the week some delegates might have been feeling rather sorry for Graham!)

Conference

The overriding concern of the conference was job loss and unanimous decisions called for a campaign of industrial action to de-

fend jobs in British Rail Engineering Ltd, and opposed further productivity deals including driver only trains. Conference rejected the cuts and closures in the Strathclyde rail plan and called for the renationalisation of any rail subsidies hived off under the Tories.

Yet despite the rhetoric — Knapp warned the threatened Brel workers to be prepared to lock yourselves into your factories — many feared that the ballot question would be used by the leadership to undermine any real fight over cuts and closures. If there is a failure to link up the fight in the different sectors then the ballot issue could be divisive.

The situation in the rail industry is similar to that faced by the NUM in early 1984 with management implementing their programme within weeks rather than months or years. Unless a coherent national policy is developed urgently by the leadership workers will be picked off one by one.

Election

Knapp opposed attempts to have the position of General Secretary made open for re-election every five years — at present the job is for life. This directly contravenes his promises during his election campaign in 1983. He also opposed attempts to prevent any General Secretary from holding paid positions outside the labour and trade union movement.



British Rail management hailed Knapp's lead on ballots

A *Socialist* **ACTION**

Special Issue
**KEEP NOTTS
NATIONAL**

DON'T TIE THE NUM IN OTTS

Keep it National

INSIDE: Interview with Peter Heathfield p6-7,
The campaign in Notts p2-3, The Orgreave frame-up p4,
South Wales and Kent closures p5

With thanks to the NUM