

MARGARELLA, THE MOLES, AND THE MONEY TREES

PANTOMIME about the Miner's Strike by Yorks Art Circus. Based on the book - which features the Female Support Groups, Scartha the Red Squirrel, Badger Benn; and the villains - Margarella the Wicked Witch, Weaseltine Minion of the Fence, Willy Potomus of the TUC, the battle of Oakgrove, and much more.

At the ICC, 61B Mansfield Rd, on Friday 14 Feb at 8pm. £2 waged, £1 unwaged, 50p children. Tickets from May



(623646), Mary (604659), Tina (703671). Any profits to sacked and jailed miners. Come and enjoy yourself and contribute to our victimised NUM comrades.

Nottingham Women Against Pit Closures



WHO DOES THE DIRTY WORK?

UTILITY Theatre Company's **Who Does the Dirty Work?** is an exciting piece of new devised theatre. Starting with domestic servants in the 1900s, the play examines women's work experience right through to the present day, focussing on domestic labour at home and in the workplace.

Derived from interviews and the memories of a past generation, the play is set against a background of popular culture from different decades - featuring song, dance, fashion and entertainments of the era. Utility Theatre Company blend humour, music and anecdote in a way that appeals to people of all ages today.

It is both entertaining and stimulating provoking questions about issues which

CENTRAL AMERICA LABOUR GROUP

SEVERAL senior Parliamentarians and over 80 delegates attended the founding conference of CALG in London.

The intensification of the political, economic and military crises in Central America which threaten to escalate the present localised wars into a full-scale regional war has made it a number one priority in Labour's foreign policy.

CALG's functions will be to co-ordinate input from constituency parties with the expertise of local Central America Solidarity Campaigns to formulate Labour Party policy on Central America and to ensure that policy is implemented by a future Labour Government.

For further details please ring 582369.

John Truscott

Discussion Groups

Asian Women: 6pm, Tues 11 Feb, Forest Fields Neighbourhood Centre, Wiverton Rd.

Women & Work: 7.30, Wed 12 Feb, ICC, 61B Mansfield Rd.

Lesbians: (Thursdays, 7.30, ICC). Check with Unit.

Further details from Equal Opportunities Unit (418571).



RENT INCREASE

RENT increases for city council tenants are being kept down to £1 a week this year, and not £2.60 as predicted.

The main way of achieving the reduction without cutting spending was by "capitalising" repairs. Over £3 million of repairs will be paid for out of capital receipts from the sale of council houses.

The council is only allowed to spend 20% of these receipts

on capital investment in housing, eg improvements and new build. As a result, around £30 million is sitting in the bank doing nothing except making interest.

But the council is allowed to spend this money on repairs - particularly the extensive repairs needed on those houses over 30 years old which can't be improved because the money can't be spent on improvements!

STUDENTS HIT BY FOWLER

HIGHER Education students are facing cuts in their income of upto £300 a year. That was the message from the Fowler Green Paper which proposes that students should lose:

- the right to claim supplementary and unemployment benefit in the short vacations.
- the right to claim housing benefit.
- in the near future, the right to claim any benefits during the summer vacation.

This, together with the inadequate 2% grant increase announced for next year (a 20% real reduction since 1979) makes the government's message to students clear: "Forget independence! College is only for those whose parents can pay."

Jon Collins

EQUAL TREATMENT FOR VOLUNTARY SECTOR WORKERS

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE Combine of Voluntary Sector Trade Unions meets again at 7.30pm on 18th February.

We will be discussing, amongst other things, campaigns to press the County Council to stop dragging its feet and open up the Pension Fund for workers in community organisations (with levels of grant sufficient to allow the latter to use it!), and the campaign to get equal treatment/no redundancy agreements for voluntary sector workers with the local authorities.

The meeting is open to all workers in community organisations - details on 410437.

Sally Morawetz

NOT APPROVED

IN On Yer Bike No 5, an article by Zahoor Mir of the Jimah Youth Society stated that a County Council report which had recommended funding for Jinnah had been approved by the Deputy Chief Executive.

Deputy Chief Executive Michael Suter has written to Mr Mir pointing out that the report was a draft prepared by one of his officers and did not have his approval, and asking for this to be corrected in On Yer Bike.

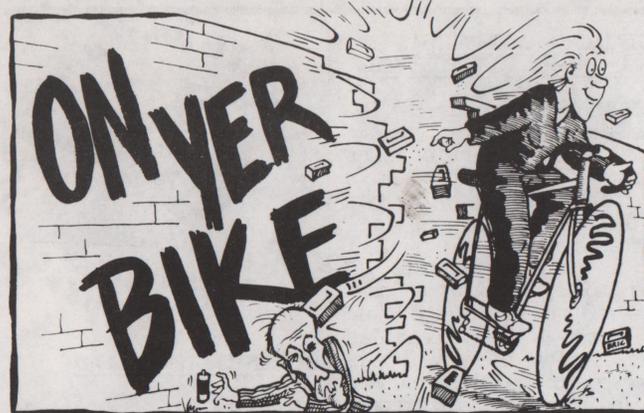
CONTRIBUTIONS to On Yer Bike are welcomed and should be sent to the editor: Nigel Lee, 51 Braidwood Court, Hyson Green (tel 788059). Priority will be given to items which are signed, less than 100 words, and relevant to the broad labour movement in Nottingham. Items longer than 100 words will be cut. Deadline is the second monday of the month (Feb 10 for March issue).

As a trial, for the next few months one page of each On Yer Bike will be offered to a group to describe their work in greater depth, as long as this is of broad relevance within the Greater Nottingham area. Contact the editor for further details.

ADVERTS: Small ads free to labour movement and voluntary groups. Personal ads 1p per word. Display ads on request.

BULK RATES are available on request - from only 2p per copy. Orders must be received by the second monday of the month and will normally be printed by the fourth monday.

Printed by NUSU Printshop, Nottingham University.



No 7 February 1986 5p FOR THE NOTTINGHAM LABOUR MOVEMENT

ON YER BIKE is a monthly information service aimed at members of the labour movement in the Nottingham area. It is edited independently. Contributions are particularly welcome from women's, black, lesbian/gay, disabled and other disadvantaged groups; campaign groups; and from organisations and individuals within the labour movement.



HEALTH AUTHORITY WON'T DEFEND GOVERNMENT

TRENT Regional Health Authority has refused to defend government policy on emergency planning for nuclear war.

The Region's document on emergency planning had been attacked by Nottingham Medical Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons as "a malicious piece of misinformation". Amongst other things it suggested voluntary groups could help after a nuclear attack by "bereavement counselling".

The Region was invited to attend a meeting of the City Council's Health Sub-Committee to explain its policy.

But Regional Health Emergency Planning Officer Mr Costley refused to attend saying, "It is not part of our role to defend government policy." The City Council has written

back asking him to come and defend the Regional Health Authority's policy.

"MOBILISING FOR PEOPLE'S SANCTIONS"

Regional Anti-Apartheid Conference, Sat 22 Feb, ICC, 61B Mansfield Rd, 10am-5pm, £2 per delegate.

As the struggle against apartheid has intensified in South Africa, so has the interest in and support for the work of the Anti-Apartheid Movement grown in this country.

In order to bring together discussion of the various



CHRISTMAS HANGOVER

IT APPEARS that both the editor and contributors to On Yer Bike took a long time to recover from Christmas. By the deadline of Jan 13th only 5 articles had been submitted.

As a result, the space has been filled by two major features in this issue instead of one originally planned. Normal service will hopefully

be resumed from the next issue.

* Race and Education. Nottingham African-Caribbean Convention says they will resume public protests to root out racism from our schools because the authorities continue to treat it as a very low priority. Page 3

* Government Bill to gag Councils. Page 2

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SINCE 1981 the County Council's Economic Development activities have created or maintained around 4,500 jobs. Recent decisions taken by the County's new Economic Development Committee should, over coming months, sharpen the approach.

First, more discussion is taking place with trade unions and community groups. Discussion has taken place with interested members of the County Labour Party.

Second, the Co-operative Development Agency which has helped create 22 new workers co-ops is to be expanded. Greater emphasis will be given to working with women. The level of grant to I.C.O.M.'s Women's Link-Up which undertakes co-operative training is to be increased.

Finally, provision has been made for staff to be employed to analyse the key sectors of the County's economy and to work with community businesses.

Patty Tipping

CITY TORIES ATTACK YOUTH

AT a recent City Council meeting, students representing a number of colleges in Nottingham were amazed to hear Tory councillors attacking the National Union of Students Youth Policy Document.

Led by Cllr Ted Hickey, their main objection seemed to be a

call for a reduction in the homosexual age of consent to 16.

However other demands for adequate financial support, more jobs and quality training also came under attack.

Most astonishing, however, were comments from Cllr Barbara Ricks whose references to "the glorious idyll of childhood", "fashionable equality", and her description of "inequality as a blessing to humanity" appeared particularly out of touch.

Support, however, from Labour councillors was comprehensive with the resolution "This Council does not support the NUS Youth Policy Document" finally being defeated by 27 votes to 24.

Jon Collins

MAY DAY MAY DAY MAY DAY

WE have booked Arnold Labour Party Club for Thursday 1st May.

Wanted: Ideas. Offers by performers. Volunteers to help organise. Everyone's support on the night.

Rewards: Profits to be shared by constituencies involved. The celebration of May Day the socialist way.

Contact: John 625173 (day), Sylvia 265509 (evening).

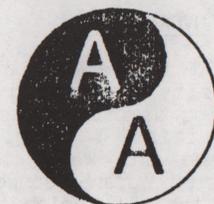
GEDLING TORY HYPOCRISY

"HERE IS THE GOOD NEWS" was the 1st January Trader's heading reporting Gedling Tory Council's "support for the Coalfield Communities Campaign. Gedling Socialists reacted angrily.

In November Arthur Palmer, a face worker for 36 years, asked the Council to support local miners by installing coal-fired central heating in the new bowling alley. The Tories opted for gas.

Arthur and Vernon Coaker, the prospective parliamentary candidate, tried to reveal the Tories' hypocrisy in the Trader. Unfortunately, local miners know nothing of this affair unless they read On Yer Bike for the Trader has yet to print the article.

Sylvia Parsons Gedling Labour Party Press Officer



initiatives already taking place, stimulate further action and focus on the movement's campaigning priorities for the coming year, one of a series of regional Anti-Apartheid conferences is being held in Nottingham. Discussion will take place on the consumer boycott, and on how campaigns can be taken up by different sections of the community.

Geoff Morris (472440)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL TO GAG COUNCILS

A BILL to gag local councils is currently going through the Houses of Parliament at breakneck speed. The Local Government Bill has a number of aims. It will force councils to fix a rate by April 1st each year. And it will make it more difficult for them to sell mortgages to raise much needed capital. But the most serious section is aimed at preventing councils from entering into public political debate. It goes much further than stopping them using public money to make party political statements. Curbs are to be placed in a number of areas:

* Any publicity which "can reasonably be regarded as likely to affect support for a political party" will be illegal. For example, a Community Relations Council would no longer be able to use council funding to campaign against National Front racism. It would also prevent Tory councils from promoting council house sales.

* Councils will not be able to fund publicity campaigns outside their specific functions. For example a campaign against drug abuse would be illegal even if it was supported by the government!

* Councils will have to "have regard" to Codes of Practice issued by the Minister. A draft proposal has been produced which is draconian in its effects. It extends the powers of the Bill to council reports and even press conference statements and media interviews. Councils will be ordered to restrict comment to "facts and explanation, not the merits" of proposals.

DEFEND LOCAL DEMOCRACY

CHIEF EXECUTIVES AGAINST THE BILL

EVEN the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives has weighed in against the Bill. "Whether a party is cutting or increasing expenditure in a local authority, information about it is likely to affect public support for that party", they say. (Such information would be illegal.) They also point out that the Bill could prevent: - a district council "help-the-police" campaign. - activities to help the local economy. - a campaign against closure of a local hospital.

The Chief Executives conclude that "this Bill will prevent local authorities from setting out plain facts in relation to issues of vital public importance leaving the government of the day (whatever its political hue) to argue a case which may have far-reaching effects on local issues in the area."

DEFEND LOCAL DEMOCRACY

SILENCING THE CRITICS

TORY MPs made it quite clear what they are after in the Commons debate before Christmas on the Bill. To silence their critics. Leicester South MP David Spencer picked on Leicester City Council's Low Pay Unit as an "abuse" which would be curbed by the Bill.

"It is designed quite nakedly to attack the government's social security reforms," he said. "The low pay unit and its cosmetic concern for those with low pay merely conceals the true nature of the exercise. My only question is whether the Bill is now enough for the job."

DEFEND LOCAL DEMOCRACY

OPEN GOVERNMENT?

ALL FOUR of the main local authority associations covering almost all local authorities in England Scotland and Wales have expressed "grave concern" about the Bill which they describe as "A Lawyer's Paradise".

"Local government must be able to speak for the people it represents and the interests of its area. This is a vital element of our democratic political system," they say.

"It is odd that the government seems to be bent on curbing publicity at a time when it is generally agreed that there should be more openness of local government."

NOTTINGHAM JOURNALISTS CALL ON MPs TO OPPOSE BILL

NOTTINGHAM Branch of the NUJ has expressed "utter dismay" at the government's plans which, it says, could virtually prevent journalists from reporting council matters.

The Branch resolved unanimously to provide local MPs and members of the House of Lords with a detailed explanation of why it is opposed to the Bill, and has called on them not to support the proposed legislation.

National Union of Journalists

NOTTINGHAM BRANCH

Branch chair Rochelle Wilson described the government's draft Code of Practice as "a bombshell which could prevent both journalists and many in local government, particularly our members working in public relations, from doing their jobs."

"This Branch takes the view that - far from imposing new restrictions - central government should be allowing public bodies to make far more material available to the media and public, and to start pulling back the curtains of secrecy which veil so much official business in Britain today," she said.

Whitehall gag will threaten free speech

COUNCILLORS Care to be banned from attacking government policies in radio, TV, or newspaper interviews.

The amazing gag is part of a package of proposals aimed at stifling opposition to Tory attacks on local government.

The full extent to which free speech is in danger is revealed in a Whitehall-drafted code to cover the new

EXCLUSIVE
By Chris McLaughlin

local government bill outlawing "political" publicity. Proposals in the pipeline take the definition of publicity much further than advertising. As well as outlawing political statements in paid adverts and leaflets the gagging charter will extend the ban to:

DEFEND LOCAL DEMOCRACY

- * council and committee reports;
- * consultation documents;
- * press releases and press conferences statements;
- * all media interviews. Councillors will be ordered to restrict any public comment to "facts and explanation, not the merits" of local authority proposals.
- * The code specifically tells councillors they must "not directly attack policies and opinions of other political parties or groups".
- * And councils which give financial assistance to any other group - such as a voluntary body - which subsequently comments

adversely on government policy will also fall foul of the law.

"Any support for a policy different from government policy will be against the law," said Judy Mallaber of the Local Government Information Unit. "This code is a threat to free speech - a catch-all that will be a lawyers' paradise."

The code will not be published officially or come before the house of commons until the bill introducing it has gone through parliament. The government has already rushed the bill through committee stage in the commons and wants it on the statute book by April - just before the local government elections.

When the commons resumes after the christmas recess, the bill will go straight to a third reading and is expected in the lords before the end of the month.

Labour MPs fear that any concessions to limit the sweeping definitions of publicity in the bill itself will be overridden once the code is implemented.



LEICESTER TAKES LEAD

LEICESTER City Council has taken a lead in opposing the Bill. They are putting stickers on 60,000 letters from the Council during January, and on all their buses.

They have also led a campaign by East Midlands Association of District Councils. This will probably involve a lobby of parliament in late January with town cryers wearing gags representing each council. Nottingham will probably be represented.



RACE AND EDUCATION

THE education authorities should by now have no doubts about the resolve of local black parents in their quest to root out Racism from our schools. But it is abundantly clear to us in the black communities that the issue of Racism despite various proclamations by the authorities is still very much a low priority matter on their agenda. (It must be pointed out that the term authorities in this case refers not only to politicians and officers of the County Hall but also to teachers and trade union officials.)

What else can we conclude in the light of the complacent and dismissive attitudes demonstrated by all these parties on the burning issue of the disproportionately high number of black children suspended from schools. A close examination of suspension patterns highlights the callous conspiracy by all parties.

First we had the denial by officials at County Hall refuting the evidence produced by black organisations, showing that black African children were seven times more likely to be suspended from school than all others. When their own survey revealed this to be true, we then heard from the Chairman of the Education Committee linking the high rate of suspension with single parent families and declaring that there is a high incidence of this in the African-Caribbean communities.

The response from teachers is very much in line with County Hall's, whereby in the first instance we had attempts by certain headmasters to repudiate the facts produced and in one particular instance threatening legal action to stifle black protest. perhaps the most disappointing aspect of this whole affair is the continued refusal by all parties to seriously take on board proposals put forward by black parents, which were developed out of resolutions passed at a public meeting of over 300 people.

These proposals were sent and given to members and officers at County Hall and officials of the teaching unions in February 1985, and despite promises to discuss these and come back on them this has not been done. Among the proposals put forward was the need to set up an independent public inquiry into Race and Suspensions chaired by someone independent of the authority and agreeable to black community organisations with the following proviso:-

- A) Black community and Trade Union representatives to be part of the investigating panel.
- B) All statistical and other relevant information to be released to the investigating panel.
- C) The panel to be given authority to interview teachers, officers of the Education Department, and sit in on suspension hearings.
- D) The terms of reference of the Panel to include ruling on what sort of evidence should be admissible in a suspension hearing.



(1) **REVISION OF SUSPENSION PROCEDURE.** Notwithstanding the specific findings of the independent enquiry, the suspensions procedure to be revised immediately to deal with the disproportionate numbers of black children currently being suspended. The revision to incorporate the following proposals:-

- a) Short suspensions should be the only form of suspension available to a school BEFORE a suspension hearing. In respect of 'B', 'C' and 'D' suspensions, these should take place ONLY AFTER a suspension hearing.
- b) Pupil witnesses should be permitted to give evidence directly to a suspension hearing. Where the pupil elects to make only a written statement, this should be taken by a senior teacher not directly involved in the alleged incidents - or preferably by a teacher from another school.
- c) Parents to have the right to representation at suspension hearing.
- d) All previous suspensions and other disciplinary action to lapse as admissible evidence at a suspension hearing after an agreed period of time.
- e) There to be two black parent nominees to the school Board of Governors for an agreed list of schools. The process by which such governors are selected should be agreed with community groups. Additionally, at least one of these nominee governors should be present at all suspension hearings involving black pupils.

(2) **CODE OF PRACTICE.** Given the recent increase in the level of suspensions, a code of practice should be devised based on a set of standardised criteria for each type of suspension. Each set of criteria should include a racial dimension and also specify those circumstances under which the police is to be involved. The code of practice should state that the suspension procedure itself is mandatory and if not adhered to, all following proceedings are null and void.

(3) **WORK PROGRAMMES DURING SUSPENSION.** Steps should be taken to ensure that work programmes are set by schools for suspended pupils, pupils awaiting transfer, and excluded pupils.

(4) **DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES.** Instances of racist practices on the part of teachers should be made a disciplinary offence and incorporated into existing disciplinary procedures. In as much as such complaints are likely to come through the parents of pupils, an independent element should be added to any disciplinary panel hearing complaints.

(5) **ANTI-RACIST CURRICULUM.** A working party to be established with representatives of the black community to set out the broad framework for the development of an anti-racist curriculum in Nottingham's schools.

Needless to say we are not optimistic that any of these proposals will be taken on board, so we are left with no option but to resurrect the public protests first started in February last year.

Nottingham African-Caribbean Convention