



10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister.

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You may be interested to see the attached report in the New Statesman about the NCCL report on pocket line violence. If true, it marks a considerable move away from our normal expectation of the NCCL

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## NCCL TO INSIST ON 'A RIGHT TO GO TO WORK'

THE NATIONAL Council for Civil Liberties (NCCL) interim report on the miners' strike, due out on Monday (10 December) is expected to contain a major shift of emphasis for the Council. MARTIN BROWN reports

WE LEARN that while NCCL will strongly support the right to picket, including the right to hold mass pickets, it will give equal support to the right to free passage to work and will say that the police have a duty to enforce that right. The report will also call upon miners' leaders to condemn picket line violence by NUM members.

The report was called for by this year's NCCL annual meeting (14-15 April) in the wake of the first police road blocks and accusations of phone tapping of NUM offices. The motion asked for an independent enquiry into the civil liberty aspects of the policing of the miners' strike. The interim report goes beyond that to include statements on picketing of individuals' houses and free passage to work.

On the committee of enquiry are Larry Gostin, general secretary of NCCL since November 1983, John Alderson, ex chief constable of Devon and Cornwall, Ian Martin of the Fabian Society, Sarah McCabe, a criminologist at Oxford University, Christopher Mason of Strathclyde police authority, and Peter Wallington, professor of law at



Searching for the 'pure' civil libertarian line — Larry Gostin

Lancaster University.

The interim report doesn't set out the evidence collected by NCCL observers in mining areas, but it is a statement of the civil liberty principles the committee of enquiry believes are at stake in the strike. As such it will set the ground rules for the final report, which won't be written till after the dispute is over.

### 'Depoliticised' NCCL?

The shift of emphasis in the report is an indication of the direction Gostin would take the NCCL. In the past the Council has been accused of being simply a left wing pressure group. Gostin is keen to develop what he terms the 'pure' approach to civil liberties, free from considerations of

party politics.

Of late the NCCL has had close connections with the Labour Party. Patricia Hewitt, ex general secretary, is now press secretary for Neil

Kinnock, and Harriet Harman, ex legal officer, is Labour MP for Peckham. Gostin was a civil liberties campaigner in America before coming to Britain to become legal director of MIND — the mental health campaign.

Monday's interim report is to contain strong statements in line with NCCL policy on the right to picket, phone tapping, police road blocks, bail procedures, snatch squads and the use of outside police forces. But it's the statements on freedom of passage to work that are likely to attract the most attention, and may not be welcomed by some of the affiliated trade unions and individuals who provide a significant part of the financial support for the NCCL.

## Shock! GLC accuses Fleet St of pollution

THE LEVEL of lead pollution around Fleet Street is one of the highest in London due to contamination from newspaper printworks, according to a major new scientific study by the Greater London Council.

The concentration of lead in dust in dozens of samples taken from around newspaper works was found to be substantially in excess of the GLC's designated 'action level'.

In the worst case, levels of between 20 and 25 times the GLC's limit of 5000 parts per million were found near *The Times* offices in Gough Street. Levels around the *Daily Mirror* in New Fetter Lane were up to nearly 16 times the limit; around the *Sun* and the *Daily Mail* up to nine times the limit; and near the *Financial Times* up to six times the limit. Lower, but still excessive levels were detected near the *Guardian* and the *Observer*.

Urgent talks have already been held between local authorities, the Newspaper Publishers' Association, and the Health and Safety Executive with the aim of ameliorating the situation. The pollution is said to be caused by small particles of lead escaping from the printworks, where it's extensively used for typesetting.

Over the last four years the GLC's Scientific Services Branch has been monitoring lead 'hotspots' in London. Only in Fleet Street was the average concentration of lead in dust found to be in excess of the limit. In order to pinpoint its source, researchers undertook further sampling and analysis and established that the proportion of tin to lead in the samples matched the proportions found in linotype and other print metals.

Given the considerable concern about the possible health effects of lead pollution on young children, the GLC's ultimate aim is to reduce concentrations of lead in dust to a tenth of its 'action level'. While acknowledging that some positive measures have been taken to deal with lead in air, the Council is very critical of the government for not setting minimum levels for lead in dust.

Its monitoring work also uncovered three roadside sites where the concentrations of lead in air were in excess of the European Community limit of two micrograms per cubic metre. On Talgarth Road, Hammersmith — London's busiest main traffic route — it was nearly double the limit (3.9 micrograms per cubic metre), while roads in Greenwich and Kingston were just on or above the limit.

Rob Edwards

### BELGRANO ENQUIRY

## Lewin on the dating puzzle

FORMER Chief of Defence Staff Lord Lewin directly contradicted a senior officer of the submarine that sank the *Belgrano*, in his evidence to the Commons select committee investigation this week.

Lewin said the submarine's report that it had sighted the *Belgrano* didn't reach Naval HQ in Britain until 'about midnight' the day before the sinking — but Narendra Sethia, the officer responsible for all the paperwork on the submarine, said on Granada TV's *World in Action* last weekend that it had signalled Naval HQ at Northwood at 4pm London time on 1 May 1982, and that Northwood immediately acknowledged the signal.

Lewin first knew the submarine was in touch with the *Belgrano*, he said, on the morning of 2 May. Asked why he wasn't told at midnight, in view of the Prime Minister's claim that the ship posed an immediate threat, he said candidly: 'There's a problem with this word "immediate".' The first priority, he said, was to alert the 'man on the spot', task force commander Admiral Woodward, who knew that he wouldn't get authorisation to sink the *Belgrano* without assembling the full war cabinet, due to meet for lunch on 2 May.

Lewin came close to admitting that the *Belgrano* was sunk not because it posed a threat, but because, before it turned round, it made life difficult for the task force commander, who was trying to land commando squads on the Falklands at night to gather intelligence about the positions of Argentine forces there.

## Diary conundrum

What is it in *Conqueror* officer Narendra Sethia's unofficial diary that Defence Secretary Michael Heseltine is so worried about? Much of the diary has been published in the book, *The Sinking of the Belgrano*, in the *Guardian* and, most recently, in the *Observer*.

Several people, including Labour MP Tam Dalyell, thought to be in possession of full copies have been summoned to the Ministry of Defence. They all said they hadn't got it. Heseltine was courteous enough to telephone Dalyell *in person* at 8am last Saturday to ask him to come to see him about it. Heseltine refused to elaborate, saying he didn't want to discuss it on the telephone.

Surely he must know that his government has given assurances that MPs' telephones won't be tapped?

John Rentoul