

Socialist Organiser

No. 10 July 1979 10p

Defend the picket line!

by STEPHEN
CORBISHLEY

WITH THE decision of the National Union of Mineworkers to go for £140 for face-workers in November rather than waiting till their agreement comes up for renewal in March, the Tories look like having a fight on their hands.

As the miners were making their decision, news leaked out that the Tories were bringing forward their proposals for attacking trade union rights. According to the *Guardian* (Tuesday July 3rd), the government's proposals will be on the desks of the CBI and TUC by the time this appears in print. Tory pro-

posals will cover the closed shop, ballots, and possible action regarding the payment of social security to strikers' families, but their real target is picketing.

The package will probably be an opening gambit in what is likely to be a long war of words between Thatcher and the trade union leaders. What the Tories are after is TUC agreement to laws on picketing or, at the very least, tighter internal discipline over union members in dispute.

Despite the moral indignation of the Tory rank and file, the Government is not really worried by the closed shop. In many unions strike ballots

might well be a democratic reform which could aid the left. In the NUR and in the NUM ballots have resulted in decisions to act which upset the Tories' hopes.

What then of laws on picketing? The leaders in most unions are already implementing the 'code of conduct' agreed with the Labour Government in last winter's Concordat — armbands for official pickets, no more than six on a line, advance notification to the police of intended pickets. In a lot of ways they are already meeting the Tories halfway.

The problem for the union leaders is that they themselves were frightened by the

tremendous upsurge of rank and file discontent last winter. At the same time they fear that moves to legislate against pickets will make their task even more difficult. Most of the TUC General Council can be guaranteed to bend over backwards to accommodate to the Tories' demands in order to 'prove' new laws are not 'needed'.

Encouraged by this, and flushed with their election victory, the Tory hawks may well force the pace against the caution of Employment Secretary James Prior.

So-called 'secondary' picketing will be attacked, blacking of goods, mass pick-

ets and sympathy actions will all come under threat.

The Tories aim to break the basic elements of working class solidarity and prevent non-striking workers coming to the aid of their brothers and sisters in dispute. Even collections for strike funds may be threatened. The Tories want to take the trade union movement on a few at a time and defeat it.

Our response must be united action behind all those in dispute, and a fight to force the trade union leaders to break from the Concordat proposals and organise the movement to defend the picket line.



Zimbabwe: No backing for Smith & Muzorewa

by GEOFF
BENDER

THE TORIES are hellbent on recognising the internal settlement regime in 'Zimbabwe-Rhodesia'. This was made clear by Margaret Thatcher at the Canberra Press Club.

Sanctions, which have been renewed every year by Labour and Tory governments since 1965, come up for renewal in November. Thatcher said she 'doubted if' it would go through this time. And after the lifting of sanctions, formal recognition of the racist regime would be the next step.

Thatcher is also canvassing support for the Smith-Muzorewa regime from other, more cautious, western governments. The Americans are still opposing recognition, as is the right-wing Australian premier Malcolm Fraser.

In Rhodesia itself, against

a background of escalating military conflict, the black supporters of the internal settlement have split. Sithole, one of the three original champions of the sell-out, has remained sullenly aloof from the Muzorewa government, loudly complaining of his defeat in the rigged elections. Another of the sell-out leaders, Chikerema, has left Muzorewa's government and talks of establishing his own organisation.

This leaves Muzorewa clearly dependent on the support of the 28 members of Smith's Rhodesia Front who occupy the 'whites only' seats in the new parliament.

Thatcher claims that there has been a real change and that the choice is no longer between a black or a white government but is about which black government should rule.

But black faces in parliament are not the same as

black majority rule. The repressive apparatus of the state remains solidly in white hands. White generals control the armed forces, running vast areas of the country which are under martial law. White police chiefs send Africans to court and white judges send them to prison and the gallows.

White farmers own the bulk of the country's cultivated land, whites own the mines and mineral resources and whites control the industry.

Muzorewa's government is powerless to change any of that.

Big interests are at work pushing for the end of sanctions and for recognition of the new regime. In the USA, where the Senate has voted to drop the sanctions, the Rhodesia Information Office has been conducting a massive public relations operation. Smith's tour of the States last year received con-

siderable support from various business interests.

British-based firms such as Lonrho and RTZ have a clear interest in the success of the internal settlement. Other British interests in Rhodesia include Turner and Newall (asbestos mining), British American Tobacco, GKN (engineering) and GEC (electrical engineering). Dunlop, ICI and British Electric Traction. The British government through British Steel and British Leyland also has holdings in Rhodesia.

The internal settlement — the Muzorewa administration, the new name — are a thin veil across the face of a Rhodesia that hasn't changed, and that is fighting a bloody war to stave off a real black takeover.

At the moment, Rhodesia has no chance of winning this war against the Patriotic Front and the people of Zimbabwe. But with international recognition for the

settlement that Smith engineered, this war would be redefined in the world's press as a part of the global struggle against 'terrorism' and against the Soviet Union's influence in Africa.

The result could only be a bloody prolongation of the conflict and the possibility of imperialist intervention against the forces of the Patriotic Front.

The road to this is clearly marked out: the lifting of sanctions leading to recognition, and recognition leading to military aid for Smith.

The labour movement must raise a great outcry against any steps in this direction.

- No lifting of sanctions!
- No recognition!
- No support for Smith and Muzorewa in their bloody war!

The ground must be prepared now for blacking of all military aid to Smith and his hired quislings.

IN THIS MONTH'S PAPER

Labour councils and the cuts p.4-5
LCC; Housing cuts p.2
The unions p.3
LP conference motions; abortion p.6
Gay Pride 1969-79 p.7

BACK PAGE:
Ireland: An appeal
to the labour
movement.

Stuart Holland replies on the LCC Putting alternatives on the agenda

Comrades,
Christopher Hird wrote a typically succinct criticism of what he called 'Bennites' and the Labour Coordinating Committee in Socialist Organiser last month. But it suffers from over-simplification, and some vilification, of his target.

First, LCC includes many activists in the Labour Party who certainly are sympathetic to the positions argued by Tony Benn over at least a decade. But both its aims and impact are wider than the 'support Benn' position which Christopher Hird, with much of the establishment press, assumes. Also, its economic analysis has more depth than he alleges.

Essentially, Christopher Hird maintains that the case argued by the LCC (and not incidentally by the Labour Party NEC and Conference) is weak inasmuch as British capital, in his terms, now earns profits of only 6 per cent, or half the level at the end of the sixties. Recovery of big business profits, in his book, is mainly due to the North Sea oil bonanza, plus devaluation of sterling.

This, he claims, undermines the case for new public owner-

ship such as the NEB, or a strategy such as that of Planning Agreements. As he puts it, 'how credible is it that British business will do something which it believes is not in its own interest?'

For one thing, the profits crisis is marked in British manufacturing as a whole, but not in the big league. Over nearly a decade since 1968, manufacturing companies have made profits averaging a 7 per cent increase. But profits of the top 25 manufacturing companies have increased by a cool 70%, or ten times the average. Even inclusion of the oil companies does not account for this disproportion, which anyway is based on UK rather than foreign operations (which makes his devaluation argument irrelevant). The plain fact is that some 100 companies represent around half of manufacturing employment, output and pricing, more than half of banking, insurance and construction, and nearly two thirds of our visible export trade. If public ownership and planning controls are not relevant to transforming their role in the economy, what is?

In addition, Christopher Hird maintains that the argu-

ments put forward by what he calls the 'Bennites', on public spending, are unsound and unrealistic. But while claiming that the case some of us have argued on public spending and its self-financing is false, on the grounds that the government would have to borrow money to finance such spending, he produces no argument to support the claim.

As some of us have argued, at least half of any £1 billion increase in public spending would be 're-couped' through tax and reduced unemployment and supplementary benefits, through the simple strategy of putting people in useful work rather than leaving them on the dole. Otherwise, he does not meet the argument that increasing corporation tax, if we spent the revenue through an expanded public sector, would generate resources, demands and jobs in the system. This would reduce unit costs of production in enterprise and, with price controls, make possible a transcending of the present capitalist contradiction apparent in stagflation.

None of this gains a mention in Hird's dismissal of the alleged 'Bennite' case. Of

course he is right to maintain that the City and its financial institutions would oppose such intervention. But he neglects to remind your readers that there is hardly a 'Bennite' in sight who does not support public ownership of the main banks and financial institutions. Also, he fails to grasp — as much as Margaret Thatcher and Keith Joseph — that public spending mainly benefits the private sector of the system in what remains a fundamentally unequal mix in the economy. Or, in other words, that those capitalists who supported the Tories in their claim that public spending is a drain on the economy have mainly lived off public spending in the postwar decades. At a minimum, they are hoist on their own petard by welcoming the current Howe cuts in public spending.

If the Labour Coordinating Committee is putting such a case, it is at least putting credible alternatives to monetarism of either the Healey or Howe variety onto the agenda of Labour politics. If that case is inadequate, it is not seriously challenged by the arguments which Christopher Hird has so far ventured.

STUART HOLLAND

LCC: Trying to put the lid on

ONE of the main items for discussion at the July 14th meeting of delegates from Socialist Organiser groups will be SO's relation to the Labour Coordinating Committee.

In a circular letter to LCC members, organising secretary Nigel Stanley has announced 'the long-awaited process of democratising the LCC'.

The LCC was launched at last year's Labour Party conference. In four issues of its paper Labour Activist it has pushed for anti-EEC Labour candidates in the Euro-elections, an alternative Labour election manifesto, and a censure on the NEC and Cabinet for failing to include abolition of the House of Lords in the manifesto.

Though its launch committee was dominated by 'Bennites' the LCC presented itself as an open forum and campaign alliance for rank and file Labour activists. Now it has responded to demands that it call a conference and elect its steering committee.

But at the same time it has erected a barrage of undemocratic safeguards, apparently intended to make sure that activists representing harder and more militant left policies than those of the Bennites do not get the upper hand.

According to the constitution circulated by the launch committee, LCC members must 'subscribe to the policy of the LCC... in particular the policy statement contained in Labour Activist 3'.

So activists who joined the LCC before LA3 was published (in March 1979) are now told that their membership is conditional on agreeing with that

statement — which they had no part in drawing up! It includes import controls, continued immigration controls ('non-racist' ones, if such a thing is possible), opposition to the EEC, and other policies by no means supported by all left-wing Labour activists.

Then the constitution provides that the Executive Committee can expel people from the LCC on the grounds that their membership is 'not conducive to the best interests of the LCC'.

The EC is to be elected, not at the conference but before it, and by the Tory press's favourite method of the postal ballot. Nominations are now open — but only those who joined the LCC before June 26th (ie before the election was announced) can vote in the ballot, which is scheduled for September, and at the conference, set for November. In addition, the EC can co-opt four voting members with no election at all.

The conference will be able to amend the launch committee's draft constitution only by a two-thirds majority. And the constitution gives the conference no sovereign powers over the policy of the LCC or over the EC.

Not a very good start for a campaign which made democracy in the labour movement one of its leading themes! It amounts to trying to impose a 'Bennite' faction leadership on a supposedly broad grassroots movement.

The July 14th SO meeting will have to discuss how to organise SO supporters who are also LCC members to make a strong protest.

COLIN FOSTER

How the Tories will cut housing

by Cllr
VALERIE VENESS

their services. This is said to represent a cut of some 3% or so, depending on how one does the calculations. In London this means a cut of £1 million to the average borough, more in inner London, and for some boroughs the equivalent to a 4 to 5p rate. The precise amount will be announced in November but the pattern is fairly clear already.

The second prong, capital expenditure, is money paid by governments directly for major building, hardly any of the cost of which comes from rates. Municipal housing is the prime example of this, but it also covers other large-scale council building. An immediate cut of £440 million was announced, made up of the following:

House building £180m
Land acquisition £285m
Municipalisation £85m
Community Land Act £50m
Housing improvement £33m
Inner city partnership £7m

For residents of the decayed properties still under private landlords, this package spells disaster. The Tory administration has made clear that it will not countenance any further council inroads into the private sector and Howe stated bluntly 'I expect municipalisation to cease in Britain'.

The Community Land Act, passed by the last Labour Government and still to be fully implemented, is going to be repealed — thereby depriving local authorities of the power to acquire unused land. Howe has also said, via a DoE Circular, that authorities 'are advised not to embark on any fresh purchases of land' on the open market. The reality of this is that councils are to be effectively debarred from helping private tenants by buying

them into the public housing stock. Yet experience shows that no amount of toothless legislation or pleading can get bad landlords to do repairs or respect tenants' rights. Only the power of taking over can do that. This power is now to be stymied.

In contrast, no cuts are planned in either mortgages from councils or in loans for council tenants to buy their own properties. But the tatty utopia of Thatcher's home ownership dreams will not come about in practice. The bottom third of the population have never earned enough for a mortgage, and the next third can only afford older and smaller properties which the building societies balk at giving money out for. The choice for any person earning less than £8000 a year in London, if public housing is to be blocked, is the Rachman landlord — or the streets.

The much vaunted Inner City Partnership scheme, under which areas like Docklands, Islington/Hackney, and Lambeth, receive money for a basic cosmetic use, is also cut by an average of 5%.

If this were all, it would still constitute a disaster. But consider the following: the rate of VAT is now 15%, the Minimum Lending Rate was increased by 2%, employers' contributions were raised, the wage comparability study for manual workers will be announced shortly and finally inflation is set to take off catastrophically again. For local councils this package can only be appalling.

Without any new provisions, the average London borough has already got to raise the rates by 20% for next year, and some may be forced into supplementary increases this year.

The Tories are not motivated simply by blind prejudice.

They are keen to repay their big business backers — the property tycoons, the land speculators, the building magnates and the under-taxed and over privileged minority generally. Such is the nature of the beast. The only way this can be done is out of the pockets of the working class, and by destroying the 'social wage' of decent housing, social services and a safe environment.

To contain all this, large rises in pay for police, judges and the Armed Forces had to be given. The Tories will certainly need all of these and more in the coming period.



For Labour councils there is now a stark choice. Despite all the recent confusion on the left over this year's big rate rises, it can now be seen that those who voted for no cuts and a large rate increase were basically correct. In the circumstances this is the very minimum any Labour councillor can do. To contemplate carrying out any of the Tories' cuts for them is treachery plain and simple and any person who votes for this must be called to book by the labour movement.

However, the actual prohibitions imposed by Whitehall dictate cannot be circumvented by rate rises alone. An all-out struggle against the government is now posed — and only the united political and industrial power of the labour movement can ensure the defeat of Thatcher.

In the immediate period ahead, Labour councils can help to begin the forging of this movement. Whether the present leadership of Labour in municipal authorities is prepared to do this remains to be seen. I have severe doubts!

SOCIALIST ORGANISER extended Editorial Board,
with delegates from local groups:
Saturday July 14, in London.

For details of venue, write to SO, 5 Stamford Hill, London N16, enclosing the £2 affiliation fee for anti-racist local group.

COMING EVENTS

SATURDAY 7 JULY. Campaign Against Immigration Laws: Picket, from 2pm, at all prisons and detention centres where detainees under the Immigration Act are kept.

SATURDAY 7 JULY. National engineering shop stewards' meeting: 'Win our claim'. 10.30am to 4pm, Sheffield City Memorial Hall (Barkers Pool). Send delegates' names to: E. Walker, 138 Netherthorpe St, Sheffield 3.

MONDAY 9 JULY. Coventry Socialist Organiser meeting. 'Council Housing: Fight the Cuts'. Speaker: Les Bennett, Coventry Temporary Tenants' Association, and an ex-Clay Cross councillor. 7.30pm, Elastic Inn, Cox St.

THURSDAY 12 JULY. West London SCLV meeting. 7.45, Isleworth Public Hall, South St, Isleworth.

THURSDAY 12 JULY. Manchester Workers' Front meeting. 'The United Front'. 8pm, The Packhorse pub, near Deansgate station.

SATURDAY 14 JULY. Anti-Nazi League conference, at Central London Poly. Details and credentials for delegates from local ANLs: ANL, PO Box 151, London WC2.

SUNDAY 15 JULY. 'Who killed Blair Peach?' 7.30 at the Royal Court Theatre, Sloane Sq, SW1. Tickets £2 from the Blair Peach Memorial Fund, c/o Phoenix School, Bow Rd, London E3.

SATURDAY 21 JULY. Picket of Harmondsworth Detention

Centre, Heathrow: 'Smash all immigration controls'. 2pm. Organised by the Revolutionary Communist Tendency, supported by black and anti-racist organisations.

SATURDAY 21 JULY. Haringey labour movement Anti-Racist and Anti-Fascist Campaign. Assemble 1.30pm Manor House (Finsbury Park), march to Duckett's Common for festival. Speakers: Ted Knight, Reg Race MP.

12 pages
15p.

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Published by Socialist Organiser, 5 Stamford Hill, London N16, and printed by Anvil Press [TU]. Signed articles do not necessarily reflect editorial opinion.



CPSA: New threat from right

by
**STEPHEN
CORBISHLEY**

THE National Executive Committee of the civil service workers' union CPSA came out of its meeting on June 29th facing a threat of being sacked by the union's right wing president Kate Losinska.

The last item of business was her ruling as President (against which there is no appeal under the union's rules) that the 1979 Vice Presidential elections must be re-run.

At the union's conference, middle-of-the-road candidate Len Lever was elected to one of the VP posts with 115,000 votes; Peter Coltman, a Broad Left candidate and Communist Party member, was elected to the other VP post with 94,000 votes. Just a few hundred votes behind Coltman was Spike Wood, the other Broad Left candidate.

The basis of Losinska's ruling is the report of the Returning Officer on differences in the times the three ballot boxes for this election were closed on Monday May 14th. The Returning Officer says that in respect of the closing time of the Post Office section ballot box 'there are differences of opinion in the time of the close of the ballot over a period of ten minutes'. The fact that the Post Office ballot box may have been closed 'up to ten

minutes' before the Civil Service ballot box underpins Losinska's ruling that 'at least two branches have been disenfranchised in these circumstances and a re-run of this ballot is now the only way of putting matters right.'

The vice-presidential election will be re-run with the same candidates. The tortuous calculation behind Losinska's manoeuvre is that the new VP elections will lead to a change of result. (Wood, with more votes from the Post & Telecoms area where he himself works, may oust Coltman.) Then the NEC elections can be declared invalid because Coltman, having been apparently elected vice-president, could not run for the NEC, and be run again with Coltman included among the candidates. The current 20-to-six left NEC majority (with two waverers) can, Losinska hopes, be overthrown.

Last year the same thing was done by Len Lever (then president), using ballot irregularities as a pretext to re-run the NEC elections. A Broad Left majority of 22 to 6 was then turned into a right wing majority of 16 to 12, amid press stories hinting a ballot rigging by the 'left' (though in fact the irregularities mostly involved right wing branches).

Wood has refused to withdraw, citing 'a sense of commitment to the Post & Telecoms'. This shows the opportunism in the Broad Left list, and also how sectionalism in

the CPSA hinders the fight against the right wing.

If Wood still stands and is elected, and the NEC poll is re-run, the right wing and the full time officials will have nothing but praise for him. The rank and file will condemn him.

The basis of the ruling is of course questionable, but Losinska clearly felt confident that the left will not challenge her in the Courts. Some left wingers, supporters of both the CP and Militant, want to do just that. But socialists cannot allow the ruling class reactionaries on the judges' benches to decide on the internal affairs of the workers' movement. We can expect no justice from the bosses' courts. It would be a political mistake to go to the Courts, or use legal means to win a reversal of the decision.

What we need to do is fight against the absolute powers of the CPSA presidency, and organise within the union to win the new elections. Action in the High Court does not do that.

Also, a move to the courts would plunge the union into legal battles in the very midst of a campaign (however inadequate) to fight the Tory threat to cut 150,000 civil service jobs by the end of 1982. In the election campaign we must put forward policies for fighting the cuts and for building more effective rank and file defence of jobs and services.

Losinska's threat could finally be the very thing to destroy her and her cohorts.

WHY THE POST IS IN A MESS

by
AL CRISP

PEOPLE who read the capitalist press can be forgiven for not understanding what is happening in the Post Office.

Contrary to popular myth, the UPW, which represents postmen/postwomen and telephone operators among others, is not taking industrial action. Letters are not being delayed for that reason.

The postal supervisors did go on strike for one day on June 14th, but that in itself could not have created the backlog of 40 million letters that existed on June 30th.

The CPSA and SCPS, who represent the clerical and computer staff in the Post Office, have been involved in selective strikers and large numbers of them have been suspended by the Post Office. This means no one is getting telephone bills and the Post Office is having to borrow money in New York to keep going. But it does not account for the backlog of letters.

So why is the post so bad? The basic rate for most UPW members is still £60 a week, and nobody wants the job. So the Post Office is seriously understaffed. It is short of 7,000 postmen.

At the recent UPW conference the union's Executive Council were censured for trying to sell their members a deal involving attacks on their conditions 'in order to improve their efficiency'. The deal, having been rejected 6 to 1 in a national ballot, was the focus of considerable resentment among UPW members.

Finally the dam burst and the wage deal was rejected. In theory the UPW is going back for more. In practice, the EC is unwilling to fight.

London workers earn more because of London weighting, but this is often eaten up in travel costs alone. Delivering letters can mean a 6am start. In London this often means getting up at 4am. In the central London sorting offices many workers have to travel long distances, as they cannot afford to live locally.

Many other workers in sorting offices do a shift from around 1pm to 2pm through to around 9pm or 10pm, and then have to travel long distances home.

Night shifts are very common in the Post Office. Not surprisingly the sorting offices and telephone exchanges are a job of last resort, and many workers also dislike the uniforms and the rigid discipline.

Many Tories have already called for the removal of the Post Office monopoly. If the Post Office cannot do the job, then private enterprise can.

But no private postal service could provide a national service for everybody, wherever

would be a loss-making public service, and probably would be cut to ribbons.

The Post Office has already suggested charging 12p for calling Directory Enquiries (and that was two years ago). The unions and the labour movement must be very wary of moves to divide the Post Office into separate parts, as this could lead to hiving off to the likes of IBM.

For many years Post Office unions have just fought among themselves. One of the problems creating the present industrial strife is the Post Office proposals for a massive restructuring of jobs within the Telecoms side. The unions are just demanding parity with one grade or maintenance of the differential with another. Some of the demands are incompatible. The UPW and the CPSA are also arguing about who should get particular jobs.

Yet this is no time to fight fellow workers.

Surely the first stage to a public sector alliance (which is UPW policy) would be for the unions to get together in the Post Office and hammer out a common programme to resist job cutting and tackle low pay. If the leaderships do not show the initiative, then the left wingers inside the union must lead the way to unity across the Post Office unions. The task will not be an easy one, but the alternative is fighting among ourselves for the crumbs we are thrown.

The public demand for a more efficient service is not being blocked by the unions, but by a shortage of workers in the sorting offices, caused by low wages and poor conditions. Any hiving off would starve the public service of the more lucrative bulk business and make the service to the wider public worse.

Ultimately the responsibility for the poor postal service rests with the system within which it has to operate, namely 'free' enterprise. The more immediate cause is the aftermath of the wage-cutting 'social contract'. The hope of Tom Jackson learning the lesson is extremely remote. Let us make sure UPW members do learn it.



Tom Jackson

er they live, as cheaply as the Post Office. A private postal service could provide a less expensive service in the major cities, between big users, and indeed this already exists in embryo with Mercury Dispatch or Security Express. But most people would have to pay far more for a reduced service with the Post Office.

The Tory government has already announced the intention of selling off the profitable parts of publicly owned industries and services. Presumably they can then demonstrate how inefficient nationalised industry is.

The Post Office contains many profitable sectors. The automatic telephone and telex system is very profitable indeed. It is no secret that the operator service is not profitable.

If the profit-making automatic service were sold off in whole or in part, this would make the operator service much more vulnerable. It

DEFENDING THE UNIONS: NOT BY MUSCLE ALONE

ANDREW HORNUNG

HAVE YOU heard the story of how the Sheriff of Nottingham landed up in his own court accused of hiring gangs of strike-breakers? That's what nearly 1100 people packed into Manchester's Rank and File organisation's *Defend Our Unions* conference heard from a Nottingham NUJ delegate.

The Sheriff of Nottingham in this case is the notorious Christopher Pole-Carew, managing director of the Nottingham Evening Post, who is still trying to smash the NUJ in the area.

Have you heard about the Glasgow ladders who spent Christmas sitting-in in the offices of their employers, Kitsons (part of the Pilkington group)? Eight months ago fifty of them arrived home from work to find telegrams informing them they had been sacked. Since then, one of the strike committee told the conference, the ladders have been fighting the boss and the police — without any help from the union.

This conference, like many others organised by the Rank and File movement, (run by the Socialist Workers' Party) was rich in anecdote and loud in angry militancy.

Its size, the spirit of the delegates and their determination to build a movement against the Tories ought to have made this conference a really important step forward. But there is every danger that the organisers' political cowardice will hold the movement back and dissipate its anger.

The conference was arranged around the theme of *Defend Our Unions*. At its centre was the so-called Rank and File Code of Practice — a militant's answer to the backstabbing and bureaucratic blocking of the trade union leaders.

Of course, the Code was not contentious. No one even asked to vote on it. It was all part of the SWP's present obsession with the need to do 'molecular' work — to avoid anything too strident, and concentrate on strengthening the shop floor organisation, the picket line and the rank and file in the unions.

Accordingly, nearly all the set piece speeches concentrated on the need to develop the most basic elements of

strong shop floor organisation. Speakers lamented the fact that even trade unionists scabbed, and listed the weaknesses that beset the movement. It was as if the issues that lay behind the Grunwick strike, the Garners strike and the Sandersons

ing out important trade union rights. The problem therefore is one of defending strong trade union organisation and developing it where it doesn't exist.

It's a very convenient line. Because, posed in that way, there is hardly a need for political direction at all: the issues are basic and simple. In this way the conference organisers tried to keep the conference firmly away from political debate and on course for militancy alone.

In line with this notion the conference chairman, Dick North, refused to give one delegate an assurance that he could move a resolution that his branch had submitted to the conference. Instead he referred John Douglas of USDAW CWS Packing (Manchester) to the Conference Arrangements Committee — who would not report back to conference until the afternoon. The resolution was clearly too political. Indeed, when the CAC did report, it recommended that the resolution should be moved, but not discussed or voted on.

But the delegates — many of them not SWP members — weren't as afraid of debating and voting on political issues as the SWP, and they overturned the CAC's recommendations.

The delegates approved the motion's opposition to import controls but unfortunately voted down the demand: 'Workers' committees to open the books as part of the fight for workers' control' (The issue of *Socialist Worker* following the conference complains that the *Morning Star* completely ignored the conference. Their complaint is justified, but SW is not on very strong ground — they gave four pages to the conference but omitted all references to any resolutions other than the Code of Practice.)

The Rank and File organisation could be a very powerful one; it could emerge as the leader of significant working class struggles. But so long as it suppresses political discussion, so long as it refuses to give political direction, it will end up being nothing but a chorus cheering the struggle but not helping it develop the ideas needed to win.

The USDAW CWS Packing resolution

■ No redundancies or job loss. Full and automatic support for all workers fighting such attacks.

■ Cut the hours, not the jobs. No overtime and a 35-hour week now. Share the work with no loss of pay and under workers' control.

■ All unfilled vacancies must be filled. No job flexibility or covering of any such vacancies.

■ Occupation of firms threatening closure to fight for their nationalisation without compensation and for workers' control. Workers' committees to open the books as part of the fight for workers' control.

■ The social services should be expanded, not cut. Make the bosses pay, not the working class. Millions for hospitals — not a penny for 'defence'. Nationalise the banks and financial institutions without compensation. End the interest burden on council housing and other public services. Freeze rents and rates. No sale of council houses. Defend direct works departments.

■ For a united fightback by trade unionists, tenants, local Labour parties and Labour councils. No repeat of the isolation and penalties on the Clay Cross councillors for those Labour councils determined to fight.

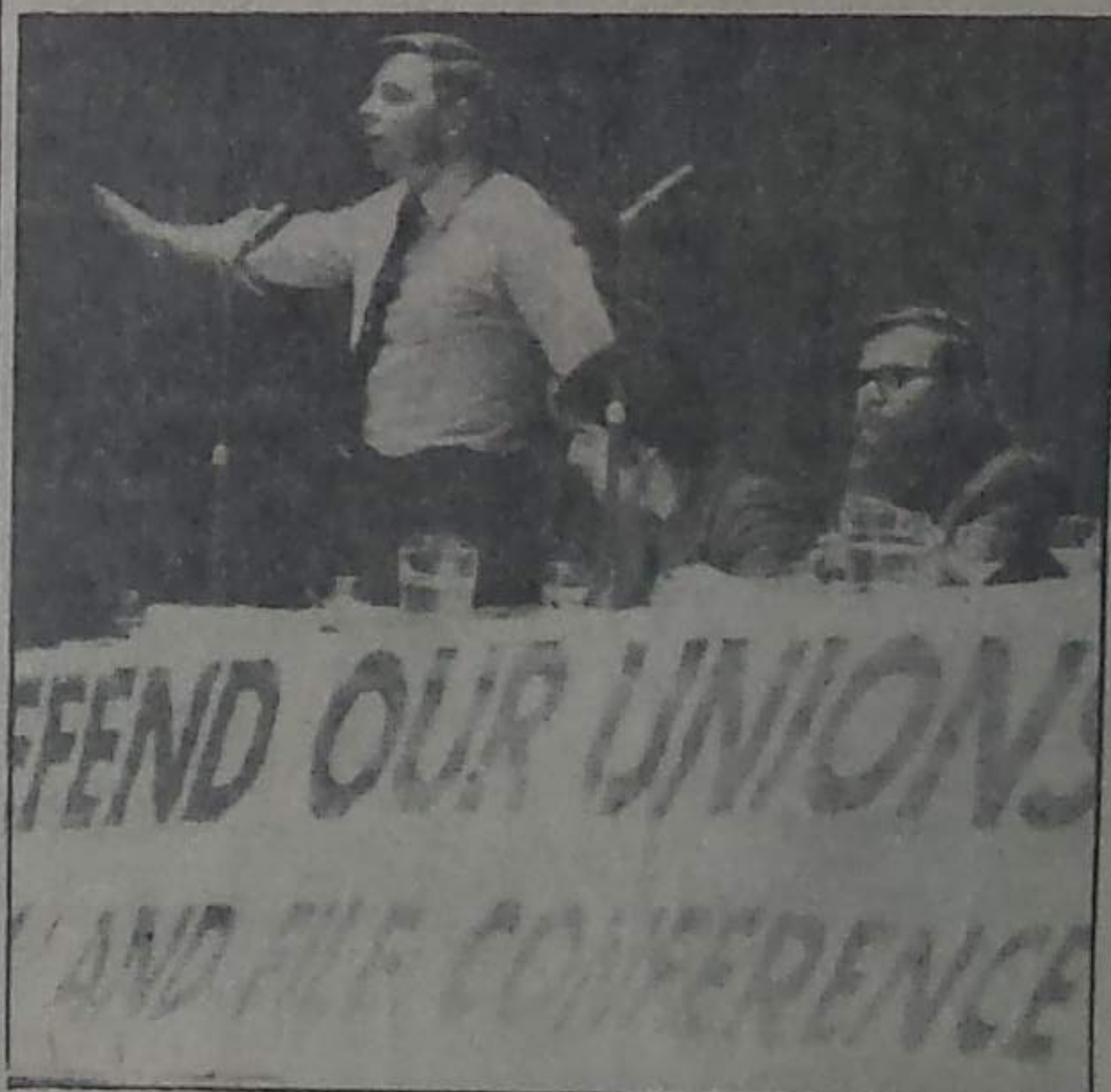
■ For unity between employed and unemployed workers. Full trade union rights for the unemployed.

■ The way to fight the multi-nationals is to build rank and file links between workers in different countries. No to import controls.

■ Occupation of firms threatening closure to fight for their nationalisation without compensation and for workers' control. Workers' committees to open the books as part of the fight for workers' control.

strike — all of them strikes for union recognition, for basic trade union rights — were the dominant issues of the movement.

The Tories, we were told in addition, are intent on wiping



The platform. Phil Gilliatt of Sandersons, John Deason, Dick North.

The Code of Practice

- 1 No crossing of picket lines.
- 2 For defence of 100 per cent closed shop and for sanctions to be applied against any individuals breaking closed shop.
- 3 For full rank & file discussion and decision making by traditional democratic procedures — no enforced secret ballots.
- 4 Strikes to be run by elected strike committees. Pickets to be positioned at whatever locations necessary to win the dispute and in sufficient numbers to ensure that picket lines are observed.
- 5 All appeals for blacking and financial assistance for disputes to be carried out wherever practicable.
- 6 Support calls made by strike committees for mass and sympathy pickets.
- 7 No settlement of disputes without full report backs to, and decision making by, the members concerned — no enforced 'arbitration' or enforced 'official' settlements.

Labour and the cuts

ISLINGTON IS STILL FIGHTING THE CUTS

OVER 1,000 demonstrators waited outside Islington Town Hall on Tuesday June 19th to protest at the cuts in services and the housing programme which the new right wing majority of Islington's Labour council were trying to push through.

The demonstrations were supported by many actions throughout the day in the borough. There was an all-out strike by all the voluntary workers in the T&GWU 1/122 branch whose wages are funded by the council. Voluntary and council workers shut all playgrounds in the borough in order to bring large numbers of schoolkids to the demonstration.

The pickets were supported by large groups from tenants associations and was officially backed by the Islington Federation of Tenants' Associations and the local Trades Council.

The cuts included:

- Three neighbourhood community centres to be completely shut.

- The community worker on Kerridge Court (a very old council estate) to be sacked.
- All funding to the North London Claimants' Union to be stopped.

- A large number of schemes using the Government's 'Inner City Partnership' money cut.

- Extra staff for children's home and social service projects — cut.

- All assistance in removals for the elderly cut off.
- and many other cuts, most importantly the refusing of nearly £10 million of Government subsidies towards the housing programme. This saves the council only £230,000 (equivalent to 1/2p rate), but

loses something like 1,000 new homes.

The left on the council forced recorded votes on each cut. They were usually passed by only four or five vote majorities. The two Tory councillors voted gleefully with Labour's right wing.

The fight, however, is not over. The T&GWU 1/122 branch is now planning an all-out strike against the cuts, to save their members' jobs. They plan to picket a number of key council depots, besides their own workplaces.

The district officer of the T&GWU, Peter Hopson, told us, "The cuts have been made, but they will never be implemented. We will resist them with every means possible. For instance, if all T&GWU members in Islington council came out, or refused to cross our picket line, that would create enormous pressure. We will put pressure on the council every way we can — through other unions, through CLPs, anyone who is prepared to listen. The fight has only just started".

Labour Party members in the borough are furious over the abandonment of the manifesto commitments that Islington's Labour council was elected on, and moves are already afoot to discipline Labour councillors who voted for the cuts.

SCLV supporters are fighting for a conference in late September called by the three CLPs to plan and organise a long-term fightback against both the cuts of the Labour right wing in Islington and the newly announced policies of the Tory government.

KEITH VENESS

by
MARTIN COOK

THE Conference on 'Labour and the Crisis of Local Government Finance and Services' initiated by Haringey Council Labour group and the SCLV surpassed expectations in drawing 225 labour movement activists to Hampstead Town Hall on June 16th.

Lambeth Council leader Ted Knight kicked off with the grim scenario of the Tories' cuts. Local government is thrust into the forefront of struggle, first with the cut of £335 million in the Rate Support Grant, and second by the failure to raise cash limits to take account of the NUPE settlement, the NALGO claim, and general inflation. This will mean a cut of £2 or £3 million for many local authorities.

Money is being shifted back to the shires to 'pay off' the Tories' loyal supporters.

Knight argued that council house sales will have little impact in Inner London. More important will be the cuts in housing subsidies. These can either be cut altogether, or tied to rent rises. (It is not like the 1972 Housing Finance Act. Heseltine does not need to issue a directive, but can just assume a certain increase in calculating payments).

Investment cuts will wipe out municipalisation. The transfer of Greater London Council estates to the boroughs will also do financial damage. Where Labour authorities are refusing to accept transfer, the Tory GLC housing boss, Tremlett, will simply fail to maintain the estates, and blame the Labour councils.

Similar considerations apply on social services, the Inner City Partnerships, staffing

levels, and direct labour organisations. Options, even for the best Labour councils, are very limited. Supplementary rate increases on top of the existing ones are a dubious proposition: Lambeth would end up needing a 100% rise next year, for instance.

Use of the local authority publicity machine plus a London-wide and nationwide coordination with CLPs, trade unions, tenants' associations, and community groups is needed. Meanwhile the Greater London Labour Party's 'Defend London' Campaign seems likely to follow its predecessors into oblivion.

Knight's sober conclusion was that there is no point calling on local authorities to 'stand firm' where no mass campaign exists. Individual councils cannot BE that campaign: they will be isolated and picked off, with the Government making concessions to some and splitting Labour groups wide open.

"To call for martyrs is not on in this campaign", he went on. "Clay Cross is an example to learn from, not one to be blindly followed".

Finally, we need not just an anti-Tory campaign but a socialist one to get rid of our right wing leaders and ensure the Party's policies are carried out.

Mike Ward, ex-Labour councillor from ex-Labour Wandsworth, was the second keynote speaker. Labour Wandsworth was always accused of being 'spendthrift'. Yes, said Mike Ward, we gave money to housing co-ops and family centres — and to banks and insurance companies! The Tories were most furious about the £350 given towards the cost of the celebrated mural by Battersea Bridge, lately demolished by Morgan Crucible. It had been a standing affront to the property speculators. The joy to the local populace. The local bus garage contemplated a one-day strike over the vandalism.

How Labour can fight

Mike Ward had four basic propositions:

- Basic class issues are involved.

- There are no 'neutral' technocratic issues.

- We need to relate to environmental and ecological issues.

- While finance is important we need a 'Minimum Programme' going way beyond this.

This would include such items as:

- Commitment to low council house rents.

- No municipal junketing or prestige projects.

- No to means tests

- Nursery day care

- Democracy for tenants/employees

- 'Clean', polite and friendly administration

- Support for groups of workers in struggle against wage restraint and cuts

- Positive discrimination for women and blacks.

Though many of these policies have been around for decades, they could motivate a clear, straightforward, popular campaign.

What are we doing, Ward asked himself in conclusion. Building socialism or running municipal government? Why bother?

The press hysteria about 'Red Ted' shows how much the reactionaries fear our potential success, with the prospect of Labour landslides in 1981-2. Tory GLC chief Sir Horace Cutler's 'candyfloss society' is prostituting the London economy to the point that there will be no jobs but hamburger salesmen and fruit machine repairers!

The task is to mobilise the working class in taking over the decaying resources and building a Socialist London.

The five workshops which took up the middle of the conference were a forum for more detailed debate. They dealt

with finance, de housing, direct labour unions, as well as the of Clay Cross and Pop

The final plenary session focused on several movements and resolutions. The whole gamut of Debate centred on the matter of the rates.

Jeremy Corbyn (Labour council) moved the motion for a referendum on the council's appeal, signed by London councillors. For for exploding the 'Inner City decay' cover up the rape of areas by Capital, for through debt charges Hackney to carry out its festo commitments which require a rate rise of The struggle needs consistent activity with Labour Party, not just issue' politics.

Geoff Bender (CLP), introducing a statement, stressed that isn't a simple solution

Defend our gains, build support

by
MIKE DAVIS

WHATEVER views participants at the SCLV-sponsored Local Government conference held, all were agreed that the conference was a resounding success and bodes well for the future. The conference struck a chord with many militants active in local government and community politics who recognise that local authorities will be first in the Tories' line of fire and that they compose a vital arena of class struggle for socialists to intervene in.

230 delegates and visitors from most London CLPs came together to map out a strategy, policies and tactics for resisting the Tory offensive on the jobs, services and living standards of working class people. It was the first such conference since the one called by Clay Cross Labour Party in 1974.

It met as the first blows of the Thatcher government were being swung in the form of the Howe budget cuts of £335 million in the Rate Support Grant, reductions in housing subsidies, council house sales, attacks on the homeless, school closures, dismantlement of direct labour organisations. It was an ideal forum to prepare the politics of the fightback.

The problems confronting conference were how to co-

ordinate and unify the struggles which councillors, CLPs, trade unionists and tenants would be mounting and avoid the isolation of the Clay Cross struggle against the Housing Finance Act; how to implement the commitments in the radical social reform manifestos had been elected on, pledging expansion of services, nurseries for all, more community centres, women's refuges, law centres, minimum wages and conditions for council employees, crash housing improvement programmes, etc.

Chartist supporters submitted a statement (in the names of Geoff Bender and Mike Davis) accepted by conference, outlining a perspective for struggle which involved using all sorts of tactics and means to prepare the movement politically and organisationally for the fightback. We argued it would be even more difficult to get increased central government funds and an end to cash limits following the election defeat. Hence we had to build much more powerful popular movements in the localities, coordinated into a united force.

This involves a combination of propaganda and practical measures to raise consciousness of: (1) The relevance of the services provided by the local authority and the need to expand them and employment — the capitalist crisis must not be borne

by the working class.

(2) The need to democratise and turn outwards the whole bureaucratic structure of local councils.

(3) To explain through every means available (council newspaper, local press, leaflets, public meetings, conferences) the dilemma facing Labour councillors who reject capitalist solutions to the crisis: namely the dependence on central government and banks for the bulk of their finance and the very limited local means of fund-raising — rents, rates and charges. To use the position to expose profiteering landlords, money-lenders who take one third of council revenue, the private contractors who force the price of building and land up, and so on. Councillors are administrators of the local state bureaucracy but also potentially subverters of that very structure.

(4) That the effective power to challenge the government and finance capital rests with the industrial muscle of the trade unions combined with the militancy of tenants, squatters and community activists.

We argued that no-one who took Labour Party work seriously could wash their hands of the problems facing Labour councillors or advocate a course of action which we ourselves would not take.

We opposed rent and charges increases. We opposed rate rises as the solution. But we also argued

MIKE DAVIS [Socialist Charter] and JOHN BLOXAM [Workers' Action] continue the biggest debate of the 16th conference: what attitude should socialists have to rate rises?

that if rate rises were used as a means of defending jobs and services (Clay Cross, Lambeth), improving working conditions (Camden's way of financing the local settlement with manual employees), and most importantly of buying time to prepare popular resistance, they could be defended in these circumstances. This small redistributive tap can not be turned on indefinitely, and the scale of rises needed simply to defend services and jobs in the face of the Tories' cuts will soon reveal the inadequacy of rate rises. We have but a short time to build up the necessary bonds between councillors who want to fight for services and jobs and trade unionists and other allies.

No council has really publicised the stranglehold of the

banks and central government over local authorities. Councillors must do strengthen the links with trade unions.

We rejected a political suicide: refusal to pay interest or going into bankruptcy as a totally ineffective means of mobilising back. The unemployed workers and tenants will hardly rally to council's defence mainly not at this political preparedness.

However, the need for us all must be to the successes of the defence and work for a turnout for local government throughout the country to organise the fightback for the special conference planned by the Labour Party.

Conference

THE Greater London Regional Council of the Labour Party must be a vital motor for campaigning to defend working class living standards.

The Executive have a responsibility to coordinate policy of Labour local authorities and to unite the Labour movement in London. Since the General Election the Executive has established a 'Defend London' campaign to unite opposition in London, but also to take the initiative in the whole effort so that the Labour Party is seen as the vanguard of the working class counter-attack in London.

SCLV supporters on the Executive (Ted Knight, Ken Livingstone, Mike Ward, Andy Harris, Mike Grabner, and myself) strongly supported a motion to establish a Labour Movement conference to act as a catalyst for action.

Further to this initiative Norwood Labour Party are circulating London labour movement organisations urging them to support the call for a recall conference to be held before the October Party conference.

JEREMY CORBYN

Tories go to court

JEREMY CORBYN, a councillor of Haringey Labour council and a London NUPE official, has been reported to the Director of Public Prosecutions. His 'crime': chairing a meeting that discussed rises for manual workers in the borough.

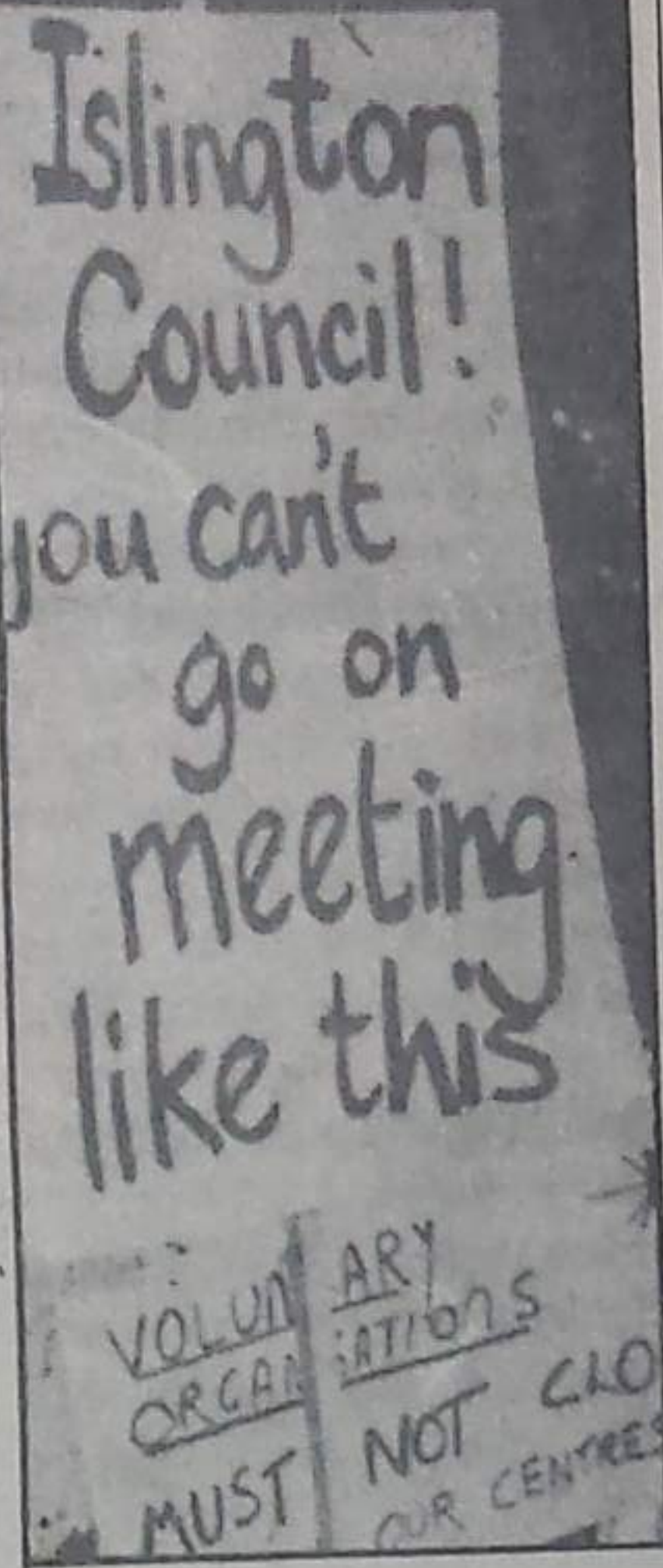
The Tory leader in Haringey is accusing Corbyn of offending against section 94 of the Local Government Act, claiming that as a trade union official he had a 'pecuniary interest' in the deal under discussion.

The accusation is of course absurd: the wages of council

employees were being discussed, not the salaries of trade union officials, and, of course, Jeremy's connection with the striking manual workers was hardly a secret.

According to Jeremy, it is "a totally political attack on the left of the council and on the trade union and I shall fight it as such. I have already had expressions of support — particularly from my ward Labour Party".

If this attack sticks, it will seriously curtail the rights of trade union officials and even of ordinary trade unionists on councils.



Labour the cuts

democracy, labour and the lessons of Poplar. A plenary session on several state-resolutions covering the gamut of issues. On the fraught rates. Corbyn (Haringey) led the initial campaign, signed by 35 councillors. He called the myth of 'decay' used to justify the rape of these budgets, for example hospital charges. For carry out its Mani-festations would re-duce rise of 233%! He needs long-run activity within the party, not just 'single

are not going to flood the streets on account of a 'handful of agitators' with the 'correct slogans'. He suggested a major problem is relating the council to ordinary people — a hard job, given that most councils still have the contrary, reactionary/authoritarian, position, Southwark and Tower Hamlets being notorious. Trade unions and tenants need to be drawn into the decisions, as well as mobilised on immediate policies. This relates to the struggle for power in the Labour Party and the unions — against Callaghan's cowardly policy of not using trade union muscle for political ends. The main alternative proposition came in a resolution moved by Andrew Hornung (Islington North CLP), who argued that rate increases could only conceivably be excused if the councils implementing them had already pulled out all the stops as far

as alternative methods went — this clearly not being the case. Otherwise you end up like Callaghan, managing the system at the expense of the workers and hoping the labour movement is too weak to fight back. His resolution called for Labour activists to start organising "an escalating campaign, leading up to industrial action and councils refusing to pay debt charges, with the aim of forcing central government to provide more funds". John Suddaby, moving a resolution from Camden NUPE, similarly argued that it was no use waiting for all Labour councils to act together: someone has to take a lead. However, Hackney activists Tony Millward, Mike Davis and Keith Lichman put a different point of view. They denounced the prospect of councils going bankrupt and laying off people, arguing instead for

COUNCIL STAFF IN 'NO CUTS' DEMO

work fight back

Spending cuts not necessary — walk-out councillor

increase sparks rent threat

We'll fight tooth and nail — teachers

Angry tenants will picket town hall

STAFF CUTS PLAN IS DEFEATED

MASS PROTEST AT £200m CUTS AT INFIRMARY

Haringey Labour says: no cuts, no rate rises

by JEREMY CORBYN

THE Local Government Committee of Haringey Labour Party has decided to fight any cuts in jobs and services — even if it is the Labour council that is responsible for them.

When the Local Government Committee — which is composed of rank and file Party delegates — met on July 1st, they were faced with the Tories' latest diktat on cutting-back on public services as well as the problem of finding over £2½ million to make up the current deficit.

The proposals initially presented were the traditional package of rent increases and cuts. But the LGC members revolted: this time they were not prepared to stand by and act as a passive transmission mechanism for the Tories' attack on the working class.

By a big majority the committee agreed: "This LGC urges the Haringey Labour Group not to be intimidated by the irresponsible cuts in public expenditure presaged by the Tory budget, and affirms its total support for the Party's May 1978 Manifesto."

"This LGC calls for the Labour Group to consult frequently with the CLPs and LGC in order to adhere to the Manifesto, and to determine the best methods to resist cuts in services, as we learn more about the reductions in Rate Support Grant and other reactionary measures inflicted by the Government."

The motion went on to call for a meeting on the following Saturday of "representatives of labour movement and community organisations throughout the Borough to discuss what can be done to defend living standards against the Tory attacks..."

"Meanwhile", it concluded,

ed, "the LGC opposes any rent and rate increases or cuts in services. Our task at this stage is to mount a concerted campaign by the labour movement against the Tories".

The meeting will try to organise the local working class for a fight-back. Unlike those meetings at which councillors put before the workers the fait accompli of council cut-backs and ask for their approval, this meeting sets its sights on mobilising the local working class and providing the first step in a much bigger alliance aimed at defeating cuts.

The Haringey Labour group — which dominates the council — refused to be bound by this motion. Representatives of workers employed by Haringey council are calling on their members to join a picket of the Town Hall at Wood Green to protest at the councillors' decision.

This situation is of immense importance for the labour movement in London and elsewhere. If Haringey's stand and their example of trying to mobilise the working class for a fightback gets support in other London boroughs, a big enough force could be built to smash the Tory attacks.

The Labour minority on the Association of Metropolitan Authorities is holding a meeting in London on July 9 to discuss ways to 'protect and preserve' public services in spite of the cuts. This meeting will provide the Haringey Labour councillors who want to fight the government with a platform from which to call on others to do likewise.

All 50 supporters should try to get their Labour councillors and Party and trade union organisations to take the same stand as the Haringey LGC: no rent rises, no rate rises and no cuts! Fight the Tories to save jobs and services!

Health, not cuts

"THE TUC should organise a national demonstration against the Tories' cuts, or we'll take action ourselves", was the message Andrew Jack, chairman of the South East Region TUC Cuts Campaign gave to the FIGHTBACK conference on June 30th.

Jack also told the conference, attended by 230 delegates from 76 trade union branches, 21 trades councils, cuts campaigns, women's groups, and community organisations, that the SERTUC would be staging an October conference to organise the fight against all social spending cuts. The FIGHTBACK campaign, which grew out of the Hounslow hospital struggle in 1978, had organised the conference to build a united, broad-based movement against health service cuts and for a free National Health Service based on meeting everyone's needs.

Candy Udwin of the 'Save the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson' campaign, warned of the Tories' devious plans to introduce the charity principle at the EGA, a women's hospital in Euston Rd, London. This had proved divisive and dangerous and amounted to introducing private health care

through the back door. It was likely to be an important theme of Tory thinking for the rest of the NHS.

Other speakers covered a wide range of topics: women and health, hazards at work, racism in the NHS, the causes of ill-health, hospital workers' struggles, housing and public health. A Chilean health worker, Petrisio Rojas, talked about the struggle for a better health service in Chile before the Pinochet coup. Jeanette Mitchell (Brent Community Health Council) spoke on the need to work out a positive perspective for socialist health care and to eliminate the root causes of ill health, stemming from our class society.

Numerous speakers from platform and floor stressed the need for a broad-based movement to defend and extend the NHS. The conference backed the Coordinating Committee resolution calling for an offensive programme to monitor and fight cuts through methods including occupations and strike and for a massive improvement in health facilities.

Affiliate to FIGHTBACK and join the campaign's work. Write to 30 Camden Rd, London NW1.

PETE ROWLANDS

Our duty to give a lead

by JOHN BLOXAM

EVEN TO maintain existing services in Lambeth, rates would have to be raised about 100% next year, as council leader Ted Knight pointed out at the conference.

Rate rises of that size would be an appreciable slice off working class incomes. A sizeable chunk of rates do come from business premises. But rates are also a tax on ordinary working people.

The choice cannot be evaded now. Either the labour movement starts a fight against the Tory cuts, or Labour councils will more and more be cogs in the machine of capitalist exploitation. And it is certain that no fight now will only pave the way for bigger attacks in the near future. It won't be rate rises or cuts, it will be rate rises and cuts.

In Lambeth, where there has already been a 40% rate rise and the council is left wing, a document by Ted Knight presents the following prospect:

"Our social services capital programme will have to be scrapped for at least three years".

"An overall reduction in the [direct] labour force".

"Each [staff] vacancy that arises is being considered to see if it is absolutely essential... to fill the post".

The Workers' Action resolution at the June 16th con-

ference pointed a way forward for those councillors and activists who want to fight. We should go out, it argued, organise local workers and tenants, form joint committees, and mount "an escalating campaign, leading up to industrial action and councils refusing to pay debt charges, with the aim of forcing central government to provide more funds".

For all their talk of realism, those who argued against our resolution evaded the realities. Yes, they spoke about struggle. But that was in the misty future. It depended on a new Labour government coming in, or a big industrial upsurge, or local working people being rallied behind the council by its good management of services.

For most of the councillors, their only answer in terms of action now was rate rises. The arguments were different.

Some said that rate rises redistribute income away from the middle class to the working class. That's doubtful. And if socialists try to make the middle class pay for the capitalist crisis, it can only drive them into the arms of the Right. It is no solution.

Others argued that the working class had been so seriously demoralised that no struggle was possible — or that fighting both cuts and rate rises would mean an all-out confrontation with the state and certain defeat.

In this last argument there was at best misunderstanding, at worst misrepresentation. The misunderstanding or misrepresentation shaded over into something near witch-hunting when Mike Davis spoke of people who wanted immediate confrontation and 'shouldn't be in the Labour Party, but should join the WRP'.

Our resolution did not call for councils to launch a kamikaze attack on the Government. It spoke of an "escalating campaign", and we did not deny that compromises, including rate rises, might be forced on a council conducting such a campaign.

What we did say is that councils have put through the rate rises — without the campaign. The problem is to start the campaign. And the first step in starting the campaign is to galvanise those willing to fight, give them a political perspective, and organise them in opposition to the Great Corruption of business-as-usual Labour town halls.

On the most abstract level, the Socialist Charter position is almost indistinguishable from ours. In practice, however, at the June 16th conference, it amounted to lining up with left wing councillors who in turn were dragged along by the broad ranks of play-it-by-the-rules town hall management. Rate rises, certainly, now; struggle, perhaps, given certain conditions, in the future.

The comrades ended up



Mike Davis (above) and Andrew Hornung: for or against rate rises?

supporting rate rises; and not just rate rises as against cuts, but rate rises as against starting a struggle.

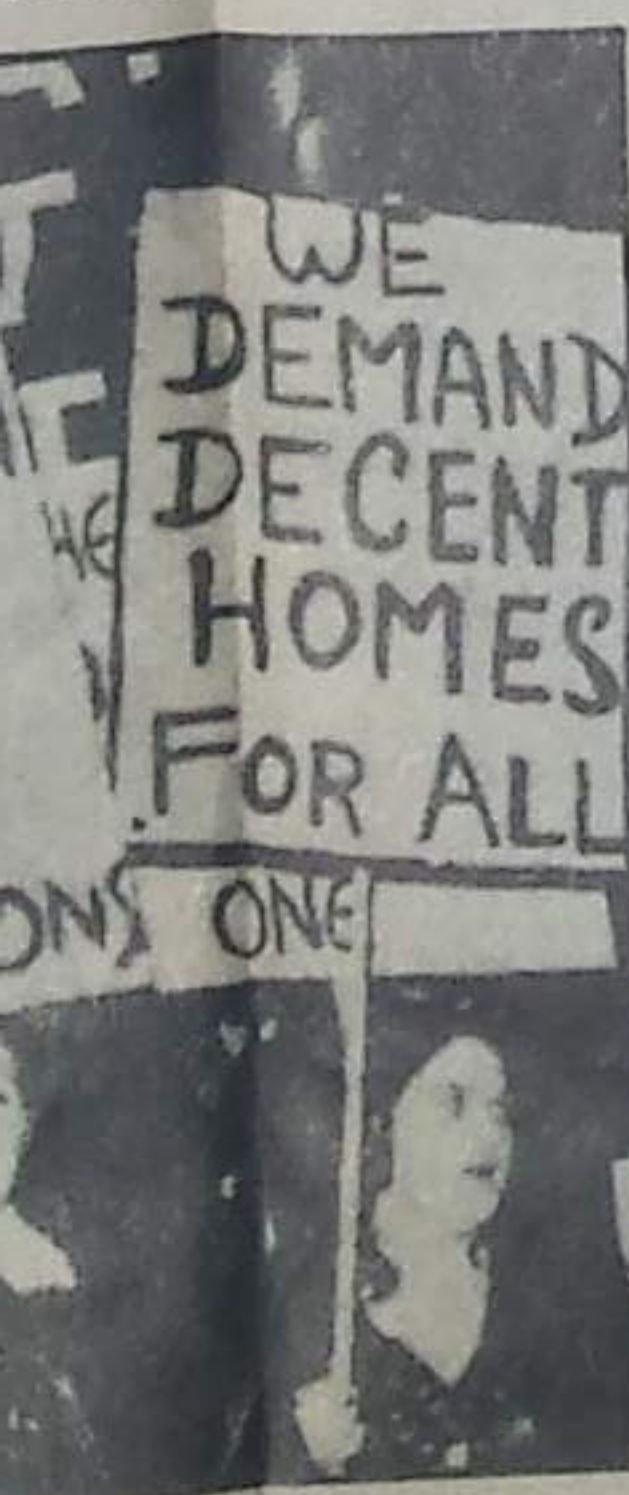
In Haringey, as a result of an initiative by a WA supporter through his ward, a resolution for a fight against cuts and against rate rises has been passed by the Labour Local Government Committee. It points the way to defending jobs and services, not through techniques of municipal finance, but by working class struggle. It can start a campaign.

Once the campaign is started, those involved can and must assess what compromises are necessary. But to put the compromises first, and the struggle second, is in practice to postpone the struggle. It is to abdicate the responsibility of Marxists to give a lead.

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STOP THE CORRIE BILL

Clare Russell spoke to MANDY MOORE of the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign about the new anti-abortion Bill.

The second reading of Corrie's Bill is on 13th July. At the first reading, only the title was announced: the Abortion (Amendment) Bill. When it goes to the Committee stage they can add as much as they want.

They will probably put forward 4 proposals. To cut the time limit from 26 weeks down to 20 weeks; for one of the two doctors who have to approve an abortion to have been registered for at least 5 years; for all referral agencies to be licensed; and for any doctor or nurse to be able to refuse to do an abortion without giving a reason.

Only 1% of abortions are after 20 weeks. But late terminations are usually carried out only in extreme circumstances. Many women are delayed because of the existing difficulties such as unsympathetic doctors and because they have to wait too long for their appointments. Many teenagers and also often afraid by the idea of being pregnant and delay seeking help.

All of the other proposals will make it even more difficult for women to get an abortion. The people supporting this Bill say they are against late abortion, and yet all of these measures will make it even more difficult to get quick, safe early abortions.

The five years' registration for doctors is required for no other operation. Doctors will also be allowed to refuse an abortion outright to a woman and will not be required to refer her to someone else; no positive help will be given if after all the other hurdles she's been through she gets turned away at the hospital.

Lies

There has been a concerted campaign against the 1967 Abortion Act, and most of it proved to be lies or twisted facts. There has definitely been a conspiracy to ruin this Act. These people want to destroy it at all costs and have no interest what damage they do to women.

Defeating the Corrie Bill will be more difficult than defeating the Benyon Bill. The Benyon Bill was wide ranging; a lot of people were against it for a whole number of different reasons. This one focuses on a few things.

Also, of course, the make-up of the House of Commons has changed for the worse. The number of women MPs has gone down from 26 to 19 and the number of anti-abortion Labour MPs has increased. And, of course, there are more Tories.

The Labour Abortion Rights Campaign (LARC) was set up in 1976 to coordinate activity within the Labour Party. We also saw that it was important to link up with what was happening in the trade unions. At least 30 MPs support the campaign.

Our main work was trying to get abortion raised at the 1977 Labour Party conference and getting it seen as an important issue. There had been vague mentions of it before that time, in resolutions relating to the NHS, but not in its own right. Our motion was overwhelmingly carried at that conference, calling for abortion on request.

There was a dispute as to whether we should link it to the issue of the free vote (whereby MPs can vote as they please instead of according to party policy). In the end the resolution was split in two and taken separately, and we lost on the question of the free vote — so Labour MPs can still ignore conference policy.

LARC fights for abortion on request and a woman's right to

choose, and also against the idea that MPs should be let to make up their own minds. That often only means they are more influenced by anti-abortion lobbyists like SPUC in their constituencies than by what the labour movement decides.

We also campaign for the extension of abortion facilities in the NHS.

Push

LARC recently organised a trade union school together with the National Abortion Campaign. Abortion on request is the policy of the TUC as well as the Labour Party, but little has been done to win the mass of the members to fighting for abortion rights.

My own union APEX has now written to all Labour MPs reminding them of what Labour Party and TUC policy is and calling on them to follow that policy.

The issue of abortion can't be separated from the question of accountability. When the free vote question has come up, we've seen them insisting that they're not accountable to the party.

Apart from that, many are just irresponsible. These anti-abortion private member's bills are taken on Fridays,

outside the time allotted for the main business. Many MPs don't bother to turn up even. That means that if they don't care much either way about abortion they'll take the day off. So it really is important to write to MPs and insist that they attend and vote on party policy.

The TUC is pledged to call a mass demonstration in the Autumn against the attacks on the 1967 Act. We must make sure that this is done, and now is the time to push for it through your union branch.

If we defeat this Bill we must go on the offensive this time. We can't just make do with the 1967 Act. We have to take it out of the doctors' hands and put it into women's own hands.

If we are mobilising, it will be the anti-abortionists who will be put in the position of having to defend the 1967 Act!

Protest against Corrie's Bill
Friday 13th July
Meeting 3pm Central Hall,
Westminster. Rally 6.30pm,
Caxton Hall
Organised by the National
Abortion Campaign
01-278-0153

LARC can be contacted c/o Ann Kingsbury, 23a Birkbeck Hill, SE21, or Mandy Moore, tel: 01-778-0688

Leak exposes Tory cuts plans

THE ARROGANCE of the Tory government towards the civil service unions is well exposed in a confidential circular from the Civil Service Department to main Government Establishment Officers, which is now widely circulating in the CPSSA and SCPS.

The circular, dated 12th June, from a 'R W L Wilding', spells out the attitude to be taken by Establishment Officers towards the unions in the civil service. It begins by gloating over the National Staff Side meeting with the Civil Service Department on 11th June. "The meeting went off quite quietly".

At this meeting CPSSA was represented by the favourite son of the right-wing 'Moderates', Assistant General Secretary John Raywood, and its President, Kate Losinska. Plans for cutting the civil service by 10% to 20% by 1982 were put forward as options by the Tory Government — and it 'went off quietly'!

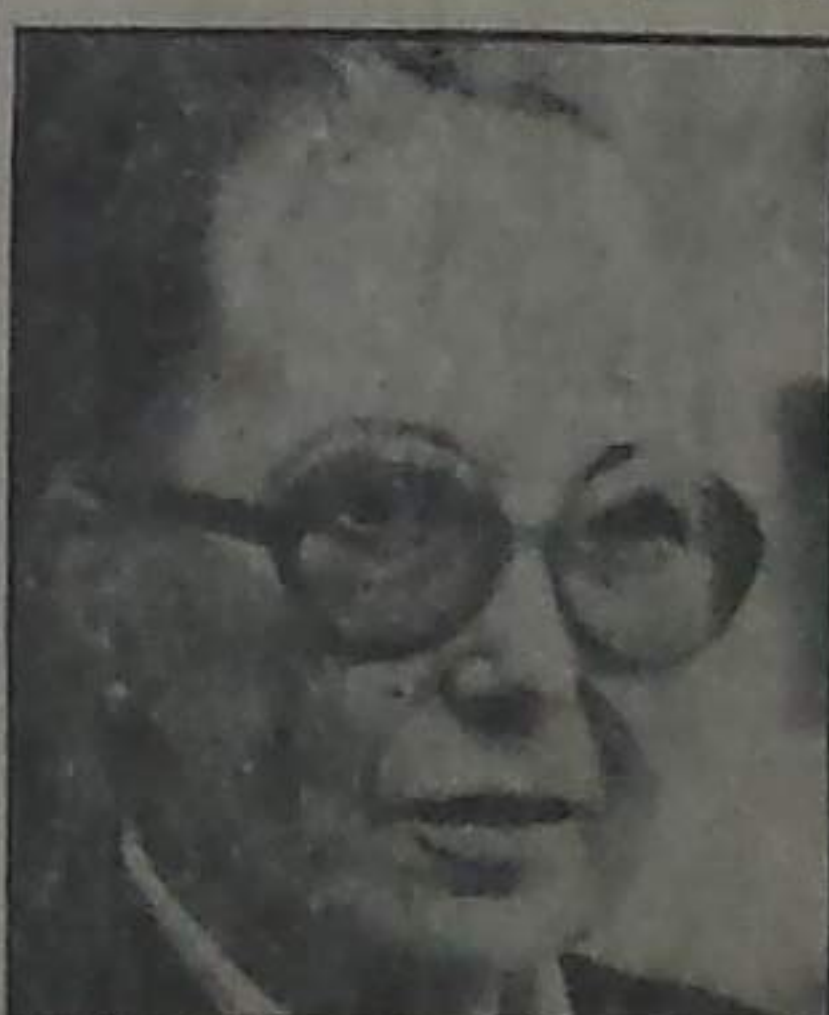
The circular continues: "On particularly sensitive measures [the Government] would not want discussions with the staff side before decision"; "we suggest that the general stance should be to consult except where there is good reason for not doing so"; "as regards redundancy, no guarantees can be given that there will be none".

The intent is to cut the Civil Service, union opposition or no union opposition. A 20% cut would mean up to 150,000 civil service jobs going by the end of 1982, and that on top of the 22,000 posts being cut as a direct result of the current three-month ban on recruitment.

The civil service unions' reaction so far has been very muted, with the bureaucrats clearly wanting to agree that where the work to be done is cut, then staffing can be reduced without opposition. And these full-time hacks further want to hand over responsibility for any campaign (as long as it involves no strike action) to the TUC Public Services Committee, or the General Council. Tragically, the Communist Party and Militant on the CPSSA National Executive support this direction of the 'fight' against the cuts.

One initiative to undermine this drift of the civil service and other public sector unions is the call that the CPSSA National Executive agreed to make for a mass lobby of the September 1979 TUC on cuts. The motion, put by Workers' Action supporter Stephen Corbishley, also calls on other unions to support this lobby at national and local level.

SUE CROSS
[CPSSA DE(TSD) West Midlands, in personal capacity]



Kate Losinska: quiet about the cuts and noisy about the left.

This year's Labour conference: Putting the leaders on the spot

As Socialist Organiser goes to press, CLPs are finalising and sending off their resolutions for annual conference.

Accountability and party democracy will probably be the main issues at Conference. Conferences over the past several years have adopted left-wing policies against wage controls, for the 35-hour week, for further nationalisations, and for expanded public services. Yet the Labour government imposed wage controls, beat down the post office engineers' fight for a 35-hour week, failed even to enforce its planning agreements (a weak half-substitute for nationalisation) and cut vital services on the orders of the IMF.

Re-selection of MPs has been a big issue at recent Conferences. It was thrown out

last year only thanks to Hugh Scanlon casting the AUEW's block vote contrary to the union delegation's decision.

It is not yet clear whether further debate on re-selection will be allowed this year or forbidden under the 'three-year rule'. The National Executive is due to decide at a special meeting on Wednesday 4th July.

Another resolution pushed by the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy proposes that "the NEC alone would take the final decision as to the contents of the Labour Party general election manifesto".

A more limited resolution on the same issue is being pushed by the Labour Coordinating Committee. It would censure the NEC and Cabinet for failing to include conference policy for abolition of the House of

Lords in the 1979 Manifesto.

Debate on election of the leader of the Party is blocked by the 'three-year rule'. But the LCC is pushing a resolution for election of the Cabinet and Shadow Cabinet; unfortunately, a resolution which does not call clearly for election by Conference, but leaves open the options: 'election by the Parliamentary Labour Party, by conference or by a special electoral college'.

It seems that these resolutions have gone through many CLPs. Hackney S. and Shore-ditch, for example, has adopted a resolution combining the LCC's censure on the NEC and Cabinet and the CLPD's call for the NEC to decide the manifesto.

Calling the leaders to account in relation to Labour's existing policies is not, how-

ever, the only issue. Policy needs to be strengthened in many areas.

One key issue is the class nature of the state. The labour movement has often protested at police violence against pickets and trade unionists, but rarely generalised the protest to an understanding that 'law and order' is never class-neutral. A resolution pushed by Workers' Action and passed through Moss Side (Manchester) and Edinburgh Central CLPs calls on Labour to start campaigning against the police's anti-working class role.

Another — closely connected — blind spot for the labour movement is Ireland. Socialist Organiser chose a motion calling for troops out now, Irish self-determination, and repeal of the Prevention of



Terrorism Act as its priority this year. So far this motion has been adopted by Brent East CLP.

Ireland, however, is the issue which always gets left off Labour conference agendas — supposedly for lack of time. The fight to make sure Ireland is debated this year will link up with the general fight for democracy.

AS ITS resolution to Annual Conference this year, Moss Side CLP has passed a hard hitting motion condemning the way the police are used against the working class and black communities.

In moving the resolution at the GMC Pete Keenlyside, Moss Side Branch secretary and Workers Action supporter, said that the way most people viewed the police was coloured by what they saw on television cop programmes. There it was always a case of goodies against baddies. The labour movement, however, had cause to see the police in a different light.

In the last century the pioneers of our movement had to face constant harassment and attack from the forces of the state. And the role of the police in the twenties and thirties in attacking the hunger marches and defending the fascists of the Mosleyite movement is well known.

As the resolution points out this role hasn't changed at all. On the contrary, as the crisis of this system deepens we can expect to see the police take on an even greater political role in defence of ruling class interests. It wasn't for nothing that the Tories have them a huge pay rise. They will be in the front line in beating down working class anger at Tory

measures. And if new laws on nationality are passed, then no black person could feel safe from their attentions.

It is time the labour movement took a clear position on the role the police play in a capitalist society and start campaigning against their

anti-working class, anti-black activities.

In supporting the resolution a delegate from Alexandra branch quoted from the recently published report of the Manchester police force. There, for the first time, details are given of the activities

of the Special Branch. Not only is it used 'as an intelligence gathering agency to counter terrorist activities and provide the Chief Constable with early warning of public order situations' but also against people suspected of being illegal immigrants: "...investigation

Labour against the cops

Conference notes with alarm the increasing powers and resources of the police force, and its use against the labour movement and black communities: in particular

a) The installation of the National Police Computer at Hendon which can store information on 40 million people.
b) The use of the Police Immigration Unit for mass surveillance of black people.
c) The use of the Public Order Act against labour movement demonstrations e.g. the Leeds Trades Council May Day march, and the anti-National Front march on 29th April 1979.
d) The harassment and arrest of pickets in numerous

disputes e.g. the bakers' strike, Grunwick, Garners Steak Houses, Nottingham Evening Post.

e) Massive police mobilisations to protect a handful of the fascist National Front while holding provocative marches and meetings in multi-ethnic communities recently in West Bromwich, Leicester and Southall while not providing protection for black people against fascist acts of violence.

f) The increasing use of the SPG, mounted police and dog patrols in strong-arm operations, in particular in Southall where hundreds of local residents were brutalised and where Blair Peach, London teacher and anti-racist activist, was killed. The expansion of

the police force's anti-working class activities under the last Labour government has now paved the way for the Tory Government to gear up the police force for future use against all who dare defy the Tories' repressive policies.

Conference demands
1. The scrapping of the SPG, the Special Branch and other similar units.
2. A full inquiry into the police action in Southall in April 1979.
3. The ending of police harassment of black communities.

* The same resolution has also been passed by Edinburgh Central CLP.

is carried out into matters relating to illegal immigration'. The report also contains the information that 95% of the Tactical Aid Group (Manchester's SPG), part of whose job it is to attend 'politically orientated meetings', were authorised to use guns.

The only real opposition to the motion came from the Militant group. These so-called Marxists objected to the police being labelled anti-working class. As far as they were concerned, rank and file policemen were merely misguided workers in uniform and could be won over to the socialist cause by appeals for solidarity and by allowing them to form unions to fight for higher wages.

As YS secretary Anna Twentyman pointed out, however, the police who attacked her at Southall and called her a 'Communist slut' were very much rank and file policemen and they seemed very sure of what they were doing.

The logic of the Militant's stance became clear when the vote was taken to decide which of the resolutions should go forward to conference. The right wing on the GMC voted for Militant's motion on nationalising the monopolies...

JOHN DOUGLAS
Moss Side CLP

Gays: breaking the silence



by
BOB CANT

THE week of June 23rd-30th saw a celebration of Gay Pride up and down the country and across many countries of the Western world. June 29th marked the tenth anniversary of the Stonewall uprising in New York.

The Stonewall was a gay bar which, like all other gay bars in New York, was constantly subject to police raids. On June 29th 1969, however, the gay men in the bar didn't run away or beg forgiveness; instead they fought back, and went on fighting off wave after wave of police contingents for three days and nights, arousing the whole gay community to self-defence.

There had been small pockets of isolated gay protest before then, but after Stonewall there was a mass movement. Since then, June 29th has held a special significance for the gay movement.

The ideas and practice of gay liberation have now spread worldwide. The Gay Liberation Front was set up in London in 1970. Since then all kinds of groups, organisations, publications, services and so on have been set up to advance the gay cause. There are many tendencies within this movement but the one issue on which we are all agreed is the need to 'come out'.

In London as in New York and other large cities, there had long been pubs and clubs where gay men could meet, discreetly and anonymously. But the fear of exposure was ever present. In many towns, too, there were 'cottages' (or public toilets) and parks where men went to have sex with each other. Here too, the fear of exposure and of police traps

and ambushes was ever present, and especially so in smaller communities where exposure might not just result in a fine but also in loss of job, friends and family.

Lesbians, although their relationships were not illegal in the eyes of the British law, met with subtler and more deeply-rooted forms of oppression. There were almost no places of any sort for them to meet. The gay movement has encouraged us to come out of these closets and supported us when we did so.

What we now have is a gay community no longer based to the same degree on fear and isolation. There are a number of gay publications, including the fortnightly *Gay News*, the less frequent but more theoretical *Gay Left* and *Outcome*, as well as the lesbian magazine *Sappho*.

There is Gay Sweatshop, a theatre company which presents plays by and about both lesbians and gay men. Two of its members recently wrote a play 'Only Connect' which was shown on BBC2. A feature film about a gay teacher, *Nighthawks*, was released recently and shown on the commercial circuits in many of the larger British cities. And Tom Robinson reached the top of the Capital Radio charts with *Glad to be Gay*.

All kinds of counselling and befriending services exist now, such as the radical Icebreakers, Parents' En-

activity has been research into gay history. When we began to come out in the early 1970s many of us imagined that we were the first people ever to have done so. Since then we have discovered that our history had been ignored and/or destroyed by bourgeois heterosexual historians — in a manner not unlike the history of the working class, of women and of blacks.

We found out that Oscar Wilde was sent to prison not just as an isolated figure but as the most outrageous member of a growing gay sub-culture. We heard how Edward Carpenter, an early member of the ILP, had written about what he called the third sex in the 1890s.

Jeffrey Weeks in *Coming Out*, his history of British gay politics (published by Quartet, 1977) argued that the exclusive homosexual role only appeared in the late 19th century when the family unit was becoming increasingly important as a form of social control. The existence of the 'homosexual deviant' helped keep the rest of society heterosexual, pure healthy and law-abiding.

In Germany the emergence of a gay community made a far deeper impact than in England. The scientific work of Magnus Hirschfeld, who was himself gay, and his associates, treated homosexuality as valid instead of something to be cured, pitied or destroyed.

Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party had agreed to support measures to repeal Paragraph 175, which outlawed homosexuality.

The crash of 1929 ended the hopes for such reforming legislation. And the Nazis' advance to power brought disaster to the gay community as it did to the labour movement and the Jews.



On the march in London...

The Nazis set out to annihilate the gay community. Early on they closed Hirschfeld's Institute for Sexual Science and destroyed the research. Not only were gay bars and hotels closed down but in 1935 the Gestapo ordered local police departments to submit lists of sus-

These facts also were not widely known before the recent resurgence of the gay movement.

In England since 1967 male homosexual practice has been legalised — for those over 21 and in private. Scotland, Northern Ireland and the armed forces are explicitly excluded. And apart from the obvious anomalies the law has not even be-

rated on the open assertion of a gay life-style. For instance, Orange arch-bishop Ian Paisley has said that if ever male homosexual acts are legalised in Northern Ireland he will introduce legislation to make it illegal to openly declare one's gayness. And in a referendum last November the voters of California were asked to approve a proposal which threatened the livelihood of gay teachers and teachers who openly defend gayness. (The proposal was rejected).

The assertion of a gay life-style is obnoxious to the Establishment because it implies that there is a positive alternative to heterosexual monogamy. The growth of a gay community does call into question the 'natural', 'God-given' form of family life. And, as socialists earlier this century such as Edward Carpenter and Alexandra Kollontai understood, such a family unit is the ideal form of bourgeois social control and a major source of oppression of all within it.

Since the emergence of Stalinism and the predominance of modern social democracy, there has been little discussion on the left of the political significance of family life. The family has often been accepted as a refuge and a haven from the capitalist world 'outside'. For many working class adults, particularly men, it is the only place where they seem to have any control over their own lives and surroundings.

Despite the problems which must arise, it is incumbent on revolutionary socialists to raise the question of the family. It is there that we learn how to see ourselves, how to relate to authority, how to relate to individual women and men, how to love, how to express joy and anger. Much of how we learn to live in the world we learn in the family. We take these lessons with us into the workplace, into the labour movement, into all our politics.

Gay Pride Week was a celebration of our attempts to seize control of our lives. It is an expression of the fact that increasingly large numbers of lesbians and gay men are no longer prepared to live their lives in an isolated, fragmented and distorted way. We are struggling out of the closet and we are fighting on our own terms. But our struggle is also the struggle of all those who look towards the possibility of a socialist society.

Are you with us?



...and on the offensive in San Francisco

quity, Friend and the Gay Teenage Group. Gay Switchboards have been established in many parts of the country.

It still isn't easy to be gay. But it must be a lot rarer than it was ten years ago for a gay person to imagine he or she is the only gay person in the world.

One very important area of

He began his work before the first World War and continued it in the 1920s and early 1930s.

The Weimar period in Germany saw the height of the gay movement with gay groups, organisations and meeting places of many kinds all over the country. Shortly before Hitler came to power both the German

pected homosexuals. Later on these lists facilitated the rounding up of gays for the concentration camps.

There they were required to wear a pink triangle to show who they were. The number of gays who died simply because they were gay runs into tens of thousands — the lowest estimate is 50,000.

I want to be an engineer

KAREN BRODIE is the only girl on the engineering course at Hackney Tech.

WHEN I first came to the college I didn't quite know what to expect. I was looking forward to the course and actually being able to train in engineering. I had thought about working with just men, but I hadn't much idea of what it would be like.

The first few days at the college seemed very strange. We all came into the class room and I sat on one side of the room and everyone else sat

on the other side. You know, like you do at school, girls on one side, boys on the other. Even when waiting to go into the class, I stood near the class room door, leaning against the wall and the men stood against the facing wall.

I didn't like that at all. When we went into the canteen I felt like running out. I'd never been so scared, it was completely full of men! I felt sick.

After a few days it got easier. I wasn't getting stared at quite so much.

Engineering has been considered to be a man's job for so long, there are a lot of things women have to overcome. Women have been pushed into the role of being a wife and a mother, and that is supposed to be our main aim in life, to

get married, have children, a nice house, shopping at weekends and washing and cleaning. Not many women want that anymore.

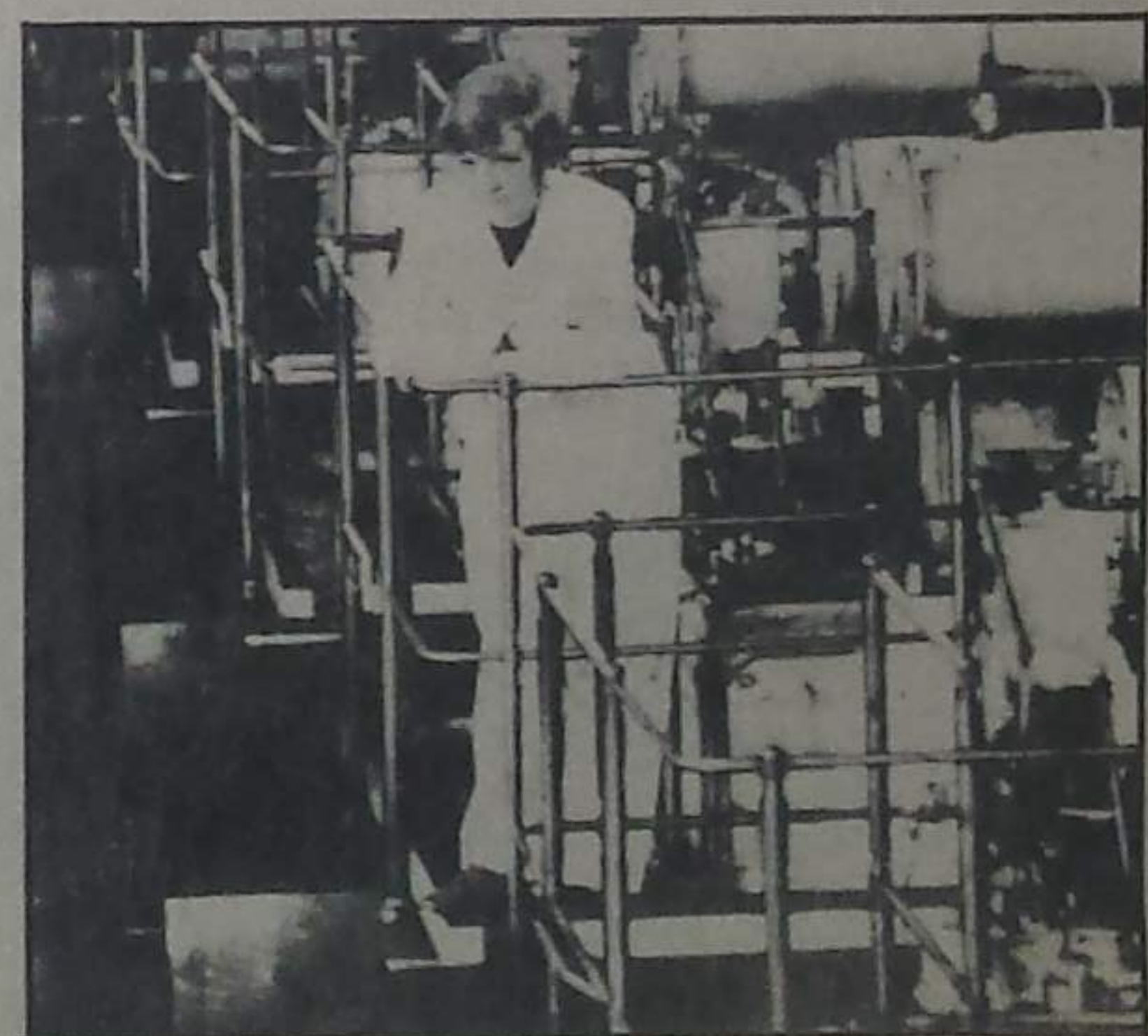
Men are going to have to snap out of this sorry state they're in and wake up to realise women aren't like that anymore and we can do jobs such as engineering. Women aren't supposed to want to 'get on' in life. Well, that's just a myth.

I think I've done quite well in motor vehicle. Probably because I expected everything to be really hard work and I thought I wouldn't be able to lift anything, but I'm just as strong as anyone else in the class. We had to take a lorry wheel apart and I did it the quickest. Most of the men

didn't like that at all. I think to most of the men it's a bit of a novelty having a woman at the college, but some of them are really annoyed at the thought of a woman doing 'their job'.

It really helps that one of the teachers is a woman. They listen to her when she speaks about women, and she has a good way of putting things across to them.

It's hard being the only girl in the college, but I want to go into engineering or printing, so I'm going to have to get used to that, and the men are going to have to get used to me and all the other women who are doing jobs like this. Because there are going to be a lot more women going into engineering and the rest of the so-called 'men's jobs'.



How much longer a man's world?

Socialist Organiser

IRELAND: AN APPEAL TO THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

IT IS ten years since British troops were sent onto the streets of northern Ireland. In those ten years 'the troubles' have not gone away. There are still army tanks on the streets, army patrols on street corners and army checkpoints around town centres.

As the military occupation has dragged on, Tory and Labour governments have backed up the army with more repressive measures. First internment without trial, now no-jury courts; the Prevention of Terrorism Act introduced by Labour Home Secretary Roy Jenkins in 1974; the torture of republican prisoners exposed in the Bennett Report earlier this year.

There is a war in Ireland, in which the British army is one side and the nationalist community the other. But the labour movement in Britain has buried its head in the sand, pretending not to notice what is going on, while Labour ministers pioneered the PTA, defended the Royal Ulster Constabulary against the prison doctors who exposed the torture of detainees, and made parliamentary deals with the Ulster Unionists.

Why is the war still going on after ten years of 'peacekeeping' by the British army? The answer is that the army is not neutral, it is defending a set-up which will continually and inevitably cause conflict — the enforced division of Ireland and the treatment of Catholics as second class citizens.

The British army is hated and feared in the north of Ireland. The army is fighting to protect British interests in another country — Ireland. For 800 years Britain has robbed and bludgeoned Ireland and there has been no peace. There is still no peace because an army of occupation is installed there.

The labour movement has an especial duty to defend Ireland and the national rights of the Irish people. The British army is the army of our ruling class and its actions are carried out in our name. But those actions are a preparation for action against workers in Britain, as well as an attack on Ireland's freedom. Trade unionists and socialists have been detained and harassed under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Army chiefs openly regard their operations in Ireland as preparation for 'counter-insurgency' in Britain.

The labour movement, in alliance with the Irish people, is the only force which can defeat the British ruling class's campaign of repression. We have a duty to support Ireland's right to national unity by campaigning for troops out now.

A demonstration calling for the 'British government to commit itself to a policy of withdrawal from Ireland' is to be held in London on August 12th. It has been initiated by the Young Liberals and a number of prominent writers, churchmen and MPs. It is to the shame of the labour movement that its official bodies left this to the Liberals, that they have done nothing over the past ten years.

Labour cannot leave the cause of Irish freedom to the Liberals. That is why we are appealing to labour movement bodies to support the Troops Out Now contingent organised by the United Troops Out Movement on the August 12th demonstration. We must take out heads out of the sand and live up to our responsibilities to Ireland and to the traditions of working class internationalism.

TROOPS OUT NOW!
SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE IRISH PEOPLE AS A WHOLE!

INITIAL SIGNATORIES:

NEIL COBBETT, London regional ctee, LPYS
STEPHEN CORBISHLEY, CPSA National Exec.
JEREMY CORBYN, Greater London LP RC Exec.
DAVE GREEN, Northampton & Wellingborough district committee, AUEW
JONATHAN HAMMOND, NUJ National Executive
NORMAN JACOBS, CPSA National Executive
PATRICK KODIKARA, secretary, Hackney & Tower Hamlets Defence Committee
KEN LIVINGSTONE, Greater London LP RC Exec.
DES LOUGHNEY, sec. Edinburgh Trades Council
PETE ROWLANDS, sec. Hounslow Trades Council
PETE SMITH, deputy AUEW convenor, Acton works, London Transport
GEOFF WILLIAMS, NUPE convenor, Heath Hospital, Cardiff
DEIRDRE WOOD, Greater London LP RC Exec.
SOCIALIST CHARTER
WORKERS' ACTION EDITORIAL BOARD.
(All individuals in personal capacity).

OPENING OUT THE YS

by
NEIL COBBETT

LABOUR'S YOUNG Socialists don't elect their own National Committee at their national conference. Elections are run on a regional basis under rules fixed by Transport House after its purges in the early 1960s.

A Campaign for YS Democracy (CYSD) has been set up to fight these rules but some of the YS leaders seem to think it's all irrelevant. An amendment to one of the CYSD resolutions coming up at the YS conference on July 28-9th shows the type of narrow bureaucratic minds opposing the fight for more democracy: 'All LPYS Regional Representatives [ie National Committee members] should be elected by Regional Conferences so as to save conference time nationally...'

Perhaps they could save more time by cutting out votes

on resolutions. Or how about cutting out debates altogether? After all that would give more time for the National Committee to 'report back' on the debate at every conference session and recommend to the faithful which way to vote, without going through the tiresome, time-consuming formality of actually having a debate.

To eliminate the domination of YS conferences by platform speeches and allow rank and file members a real say would be 'alien to the practice of the labour movement', according to yet another anti-CYSD amendment going to the conference.

This may well be true: but it's hardly something to defend just because it exists!

The YS National Committee (NC) replied to a CYSD statement in the YS paper Left by saying the CYSD doesn't 'put politics first and organisation second'.

The way the YS NC actually dealt with the statement, how-

ever, showed that as far as they were concerned, organisational manoeuvre was their first answer. They didn't want to print the CYSD statement and the editors of the separate 'student page' (controlled by the Labour students' organisation NOLS) put it in instead. The editor of Left, who is appointed by the NC (not the conference) then stepped in and censored the headline, inserting one that read: Clause Four and Workers' Action launch joint campaign [with NOLS NC support].

Quite apart from being one of the world's worst ever headlines, it had a purpose — to appeal to organisational loyalties and try to cover up the fact that some branches which generally support the politics of their own dominant Militant faction in the YS also support the CYSD.

Now the student page of Left has been closed down as a result of NC members putting pressure on Transport

House.

The YS Conference on July 28/9th will be an opportunity to try and bring the National Committee to account for its manoeuvres. There are three major resolutions supporting the CYSD's policies on National Committee elections, on conference procedures and on opening up the pages of Left.

Support these resolutions: from Birmingham Selly Oak, from Leeds SE and from Ruislip-Northwood. And help the YS to become a very different organisation, opening up the possibilities for building a fighting, growing movement.

LPYS Conference: 1pm Saturday July 28th to 4pm Sunday July 29th, followed by Summer Camp til Saturday August 4th. At Bracelands Campsite, Coleford, Gloucs. Cost approx. £25 to include meals. Deposits £5 (£2 children) to Andy Bevan at Transport House, Smith Square, London SW1

COURTS HIT BACK AT MILITANTS WHO ROUTED THE NAZIS

ON April 21st, 5000 uniformed police and large numbers of plain clothes police were mobilised in an attempt to ensure that the fascists of the National Front could hold a provocative and insulting march through Leicester.

In the event they were only partly successful: the fascists had only just set off when they fell victim to a rain of missiles and smoke bombs, and the police had to re-route their march away from the city centre. At one point during the two-hour running battle that followed between anti-fascists and police, the police lines were broken and the anti-fascists came close to directly confronting the NF march.

In the course of this mobilisation, 87 anti-fascists were arrested, and since mid-June their cases have been coming up in the magistrates' courts in Leicester.

In what is clearly an attempt to break the anti-racist movement financially, massive fines have been imposed on those found guilty. The going rates are £250 for threatening behaviour, £350 for having an

The going rates are £250 for threatening behaviour and £350 for having an offensive weapon. 'Throwing a missile' is a bargain at £20, a penalty not updated since Victorian times. On top of the fines, costs demanded by the police prosecutor are going up in the course of the trials. In the first week he generally applied for £39 costs, but by now the standard application is for about £80 and in some cases for over £100. In almost every case legal aid has been refused. Those who try to save the extra money for a lawyer by defending themselves simply end up being given a heavier fine when found guilty: Mick Woods, a Workers' Action supporter from Manchester who defended himself, was fined £300 instead of the usual £250 for threatening behaviour.

Already, two people have been given prison sentences of three months. The first was a member of Miners Against the Nazis from Yorkshire, who was said to have attacked a policeman when trying to break through police lines. The second was apparently a local drunk who got caught up in the demonstration and didn't know what it was all about.

A number of the accused have had fresh charges slapped on them, usually much

more serious than the original ones, such as assaulting a police officer or grievous bodily harm. In some cases this happened just before their trial, leaving no time to prepare an adequate defence. These police 'afterthoughts' seem to be directed against those with previous convictions for the same thing.

Central to the police case is that just by being on the counter demonstration the defendants must be guilty. Police witnesses conjure up terrible visions of a rain of sticks, stones, bricks and half bricks, bottles, smoke bombs

trial it even claimed that no plain clothes police were there and that no truncheons were used by the police — despite photos showing police using their truncheons and non-uniformed police making arrests.

Prosecution witnesses have contradicted each other on where arrests took place, or disagree on whether handcuffs were used. People are accused of punching police when no policeman can be found who even claims to have been punched by them.

But the magistrates have generally disregarded these



Pity the downtrodden copper...

and even cobble stones — 'anything the demonstrators could lay their hands on, and 'scenes of unadulterated violence'. Police officers (a mere six foot tall, weighing some fifteen stone, who were protected by full length riot shields) come into court to tell how terrified they were.

Other police officers, utterly defenceless, it seems (but for truncheons, riot shields, dogs and 5000 other police, never mentioned) suffered 'hand to hand combat' and were 'punched and kicked with great delight'.

After this long recital of the misfortunes of the hapless little policeman, it seems that whatever the defendant is supposed to have done in practice pales into insignificance, and the magistrates decide he or she must be guilty simply by being there — guilty unless proved innocent.

The police evidence has been riddled with discrepancies and obvious lies. In one

discrepancies. And among the most helpful are several luminaries of the local labour movement. On a Monday they include full-time officials of the TGWU (George Bromley, infamous for his racism during the Imperial Typewriters dispute) and from the AUEW. On a Tuesday one of the magistrates is from the local Labour Party. It was Bromley who refused most defendants legal aid, and set the norm for fines by charging £250 for threatening behaviour.

Members of the TGWU and AUEW, and of the local Labour Party, should campaign to boot these bureaucrats out of the labour movement and out of their jobs as union officials.

When Socialist Organiser supporters and readers raise the question of these trials in their labour organisations, there are a number of other things they can argue for:

■ Collections — the 'April 21st Defence Committee',

has collected £1600 so far, but it estimates that about £30,000 will be needed. Cheques and PCs should be made payable to 'Leicester Anti-Nazi League (April 21st Defence Fund)' and sent to: April 21st Defence Committee, c/o 20 Main Street, Kibworth, Leicestershire.

■ Sponsorship — The Defence Committee is calling for a broad campaign to demand the dropping of the charges against the 87 and the disbandment of the SPG. All groups that agree with these demands can sponsor and help build the campaign.

■ Evidence — If you witnessed any arrests or have photos of any incidents on the 21st, contact the address below as quickly as possible. Remember — two people have already been sent down.

■ Demonstration — planned for Saturday July 21st in Leicester, on the slogans: Drop the Charges, Disband the SPG. Start organising now for a big contingent.

Socialist Organiser is making a special drive to collect money for defence costs and fines. Contributions, made payable to the Defence Fund as above and sent to SO at 5 Stamford Hill, London N16, will be passed on to the Defence Committee.

STAN CROOKE
Leicester Workers' Action