

Join the
Labour
Party

Socialist Organiser

Against all bans and proscriptions!

Paper of the Socialist Organiser Alliance No.100 SEPTEMBER 16 1982
(Claimants and strikers 10p) 25p

WITH THE HEALTH WORKERS



Health Workers for the Full Claim - bulletin no. 6 out now! 10p from
78 High Street, Atherton, Lancashire.

Next Health Workers for the Full Claim national meeting: Saturday
September 18, 10.30am-1.30pm, Room 402, County Hall, New
Bristol, Bristol 2.



By Anna
Lunts

AGAINST THE TORIES!

FOR THE first time since 1926 the TUC has called on all its members to strike in support of a particular section of workers.

Despite the fact that the TUC's call for a day of action on September 22 is not a clear-cut call for a general strike, and that many of the TUC barons want anything but a general strike, the 22nd is a big step forward in the health pay campaign and a potentially massive blow to the Tories' union-bashing laws.

Already some key sections of workers have taken the strike call to be what it should be - a 24 hour general strike. As we go to press, the miners are committed to 24 hour strike action, as are SOGAT 82, the seamen, and the firemen. The NGA is almost certain to call all-out one-day action. The Scottish TUC has also come out for a complete 24 hour strike.

At the TUC conference, Arthur Scargill said that the main job was to get everyone out on the 22nd, and he is right. We have to use the time between now and the 22nd to make sure that the stoppage is as complete as possible.

This means getting round to local shop stewards' committees, union branches, and workplaces. Flying pickets, a real revolution on the day, will also be needed.

Local trade union/health action committees

should be created to mobilise for the 22nd, to continue solidarity work afterwards - and to prepare for an immediate industrial response if an employer tries to use the courts against workers who strike on the 22nd.

Despite all attempts to wheedle round the fact, the solidarity strikes on the 22nd are unlawful under Prior's Law. They are, whether the TUC leaders like it or not, not just industrial action on a wages issue, but a political challenge to the Tory government and indeed to the ruling-class state machine.

They are an assertion that working class standards of justice - which tell us that active support for the health workers' claim is a basic duty - rank higher than the laws legislated and enforced by the ruling class.

It is nonsense to believe that the campaign against Tory anti-union laws can be a diversion from the health pay campaign - or that either can be separated from the fight to drive the Tories from office.

The way to win on all counts is the same - to make the challenge to the Tories conscious and deliberate, and to increase the solidarity. We should use every rally and demonstration on the 22nd to press the TUC for all-out indefinite strike action in the NHS, with accident and emergency cover only, backed with solidarity action from other workers.

ITUC '82

HARRY SLOAN
reports on an
unusual TUC

AFTER THE LORD MAYOR'S SHOW

FOR A DAY or two it seemed as if the customary bottomless barrels of booze which fuel the bureaucrats at the TUC Congress had been additionally 'spiked' by some exotic hallucinogen.

Everyone went wild. Terry Duffy called for defiance of the Tebbit Bill and cast AUEW votes against talks on wage controls with a returned Labour government.

Moss Evans volunteered to go to jail, while TGWU National Secretary Mick Martin called in effect for a one-day General Strike.

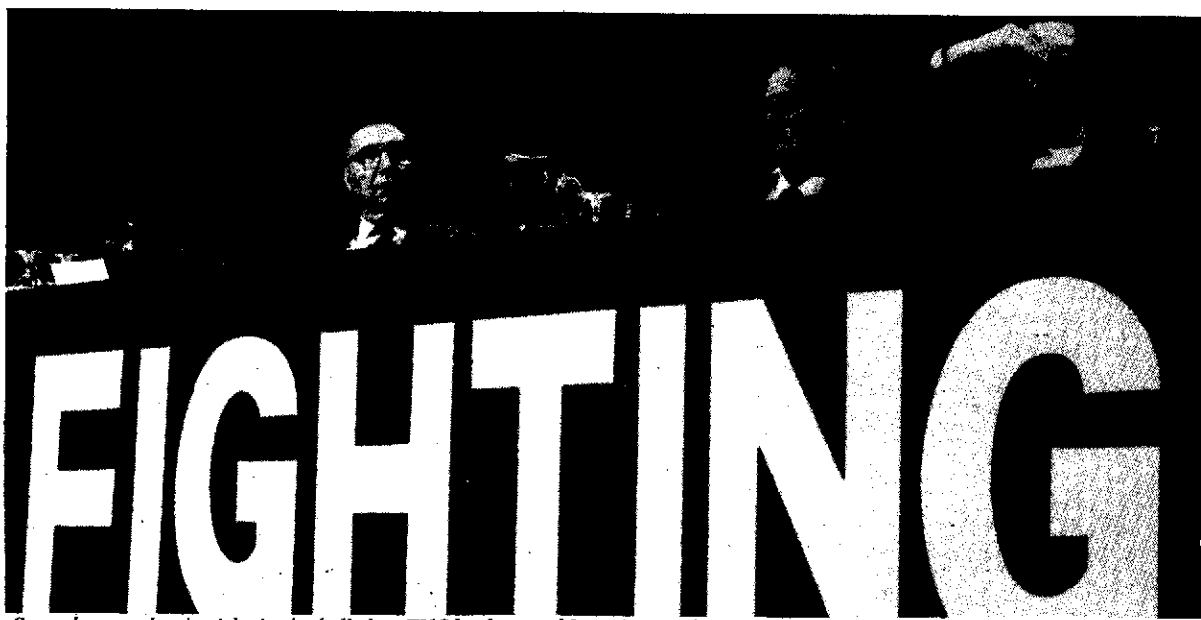
Len Murray and General Council right-wingers had to fight to repel moves to break off TUC collaboration with the Tories and CBI in the NEDC and similar tripartite bodies.

Post Office Engineers' leader, right-winger Bryan Stanley, announced an unlawful 24-hour political strike against the privatisation of British Telecom, while Tom Jackson — a leading advocate of wage controls — rose in the NHS pay debate to welcome the fact that — 11 years after the postal workers were sold out by the TUC in their pay fight — at last there was solidarity behind public sector workers.

NALGO leader Geoffrey Drain, too, welcomed the fact that, for the first time since 1926, the TUC was taking the lead in calling industrial action on September 22.

Even Jim 'Concordat' Callaghan, far away from the Brighton revellers, fell victim to the hysteria and made a wild statement suggesting that trade unionists have a right to break Tory anti-union laws.

As the Congress ground to a halt, it was left to an increasingly irritated Len Murray, like an unwilling host picking through the wreckage of an all-night party and trying to sober up the hung-over survivors, to begin the task of attempting to limit the September 22 action, and straighten up the political furniture.



Scarcely a worker in sight in the hall: but TUC leaders could not ignore the mood of the rank and file

He began with a few stern words to public sector workers who might have opted for solidarity action: water, gas and electricity should be kept going on September 22, he ordered.

In addition, "continuous process" industries should not be disrupted.

And — on the flimsy pretext that the TUC's demonstration in London requires transport on September 22 — transport workers, and in particular the rail unions, were told to stay at work.

This line had been firmly answered from the Congress rostrum. TGWU spokesman Mick Martin had stressed that the union was not satisfied with the General Council decision on transport; he wanted everything stopped. Arthur Scargill too stressed that the way to have the biggest impact was not just to travel to London, but to take 24 hour strike action — and join a local picket line.

ASLEF has now called for joint talks with NUR and TSSA on what action should be taken on the railways.

Murray's salvage job has been assisted by Michael Foot and by Labour's key 'man-on-the-make'

Neil Kinnock. Foot went on television at the weekend in an attempt to retrieve Callaghan from his predicament as an advocate of unlawful and extra-parliamentary action.

He was careful to avoid any statement of solidarity with the NHS workers, saying only that he will be "giving the strongest appropriate support" on September 22.

Asked if he himself favoured trade union action in breach of Tory anti-union laws, Foot went further to the right than any union leader except Frank

Chapple. "No, I don't approve of people breaking the law, and I don't believe that Jim Callaghan believes in people breaking the law".

Callaghan himself, still dripping from a bucket or two of cold water in the face, began claiming that his remarks applied only to the health workers.

Meanwhile former 'left' Kinnock was among the cynical Labour leaders who dismissed the setback suffered by the advocates of wage control when the TUC voted not to discuss this with any government,

Tory or Labour. "It is simply a matter of presentation", he pointed out calmly.

Indeed, despite the embarrassment of this year's mandates, the Labour leaders know that all of the main union leaders — AUEW, TGWU, GMWU and many others — have already accepted the principle of a further round of wage controls under Labour, and confidently expect to swing the formal vote for acceptance next year, despite the fact that, as AUEW (Construction) leader John Baldwin pointed



Spot the woman: only 108 out of 1,200 delegates were women

NEVER MIND the votes — let's get on with the wage controls! That is the gist of a decision by the TUC/Labour Party Liaison Committee at the weekend to press ahead with the publication of a pamphlet setting out proposals for 'economic planning', including control of wages, under a new Labour government.

Labour's General Sec-

retary Jim Mortimer had pointed out that this stands in need of re-drafting in the light of the TUC vote for free collective bargaining and rejection of talks on wage controls with any government.

But his views — and those of the TUC Congress — have been brushed aside in the hope of bulldozing through the plan.

out, they have no support for this from their members.

Murray and the Labour leaders no doubt hope that the litter can be cleared and the carpets restored after the Brighton carousel: but the Tebbit Bill, the privatisation offensive, and the militancy that has fuelled the NHS dispute, will not fade away as quickly as the bureaucrats' hangers.

The more militant statements that were made were not some individual quirk by union General Secretaries, but a response to pressures in the membership.

We are more powerful than we realise. And if we organise to fight, we are powerful enough to push these same leaders right off the platform and build a real fighting leadership.

Labour Party slams

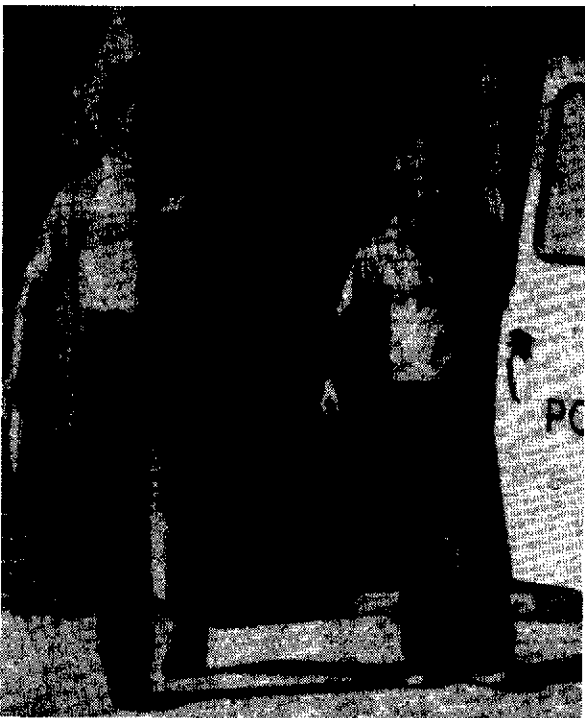
The following statement is issued by the Executive of Oxford City Labour Party

THE Oxford City Labour Party wishes to express its extreme disquiet at the following aspects of the 'Operation Major' police operation and the subsequent magistrates' hearings and trials in Oxford:

1. Wrongful arrest of over 100 innocent people.

During the day-long police operation on Thursday September 2 all members of the public who were claiming Social Security or accompanying claimants were held under arrest. Det. Supt. George Hodgson is reported in the press (Daily Telegraph 3/9/82) as saying 'We knocked off everyone who went into the building today.' In all 114 members of the public were released without charge, innocent of any offence. They had been held under arrest for periods up to 8 hours.

The holding of over a hundred people just because they attended a



Police lead off a claimant

Social Security office is an outrage. If innocent people attending a tax office were arrested and held for hours while a tax fraud investigation was being conducted, or if

innocent people in a department store were arrested and held for hours while a shoplifting case was being investigated, there would be a public outcry. We regard this mass

arrest as an illegal and wrongful arrest, which shows on the part of the police organisers of this operation a complete contempt for the legal rights and civil liberties of members of the public exercising their statutory rights to claim Social Security. We demand a public investigation into these mass wrongful arrests.

2. Photographing and Fingerprinting of innocent people.

All those arrested were photographed and many fingerprinted without choice. The necessary magistrates' orders for fingerprinting were not obtained by the police. When people were released by the police on Thursday without being charged they were not given their photographs and fingerprints despite asking for them. We regard this as an outrageous misuse of police power and a breach of the law protecting citizens' rights. Again we demand a full public investigation.

3. Conditions in which people were held under arrest on Thursday.

We protest at the appalling conditions under which

people were held in South Oxford Middle School on Thursday. One 18 year old who was released without charge is reported as saying that: 'there was no room to stand or move about. It was like Belsen' (Sun 3/9/82). In particular we consider it disgraceful that one young man, who was later released without any charge, was publicly strip-searched.

4. Denial of legal representation.

During the course of the police operation none of those arrested were allowed legal representation despite request. Even when brought before magistrates on Thursday for remand hearings some defendants were denied legal representation despite requesting it. Probation officers were unable to make reports at the remand hearings. There is a strong indication that both police and some magistrates were bypassing the legal rights of those charged to set up a system of conveyor-belt trials.

5. The Trials.

We are alarmed at the rate at which the trials



Guess what! We're going to ignore the vote on pay policy!

JOHN HARRIS

JOHN HARRIS

Sept. 11 conference TURN NUMBERS INTO ACTION!

by NIK BARSTOW
(delegate from Islington South CLP and a member of the steering committee elected by the conference)

Labour witch-hunt



STRANGELY, it was the one speaker who was at the 'Fight the Tories, not the Socialists' conference who was there NOT to talk about the witch-hunt who spelled out most clearly what it was all about.

A member of the Air India strike committee was at the conference to explain their strike and the issues behind it:

"We are not so afraid of the dole queue as to sell our rights to organise as workers. The future of the labour movement is in the balance right now. We can't look out at the dole queues and say fight some other time. We know there is no other time."

Substitute the word 'witch-hunt' for 'dole queue' in her speech, and the lessons of today's class struggle for today's fight in the Labour Party are clear. The Air India speaker herself put it more directly when she appealed for Party members' support: "Sitting in a hall passing resolutions for a day isn't enough — we need solidarity every day."

Whether the September 11 conference has lived up to the task of building the day to day fight against the witch hunt, before the Labour Party conference and beyond, remains to be seen. But with over 2,000 Labour Party and trade union delegates, it certainly was a show of the strength that can be mobilised.

Speaker after speaker at



SO supporter Nik Barstow argues for the Brent East/Islington South amendments at Wembley

the conference hammered away at the theme that the witch-hunt is a diversion from the fight against the Tories, and that Militant supporters, in contrast to the red-baiting disrupters, are actively building the Party.

'Dear Tony'

Tony Mulhearn, prospective Parliamentary candidate for Toxteth and a prominent Militant supporter, read out two notes of thanks he had received from Michael Foot after taking him on a guided tour of the Toxteth area after the riots. These 'Dear Tony' letters, praising the work of the local party, contrasted oddly with being described by Foot in all the papers as a 'pestilential nuisance'.

But on the issue of how actually to fight the witch-hunt, hardly a word was said. The statement to the conference was a surprisingly good one, pledging opposition to the register before and after Party conference, but it was scarcely referred to.

Indeed, Militant editor Peter Taaffe, in a speech which received a standing ovation from half of those present, seemed to dismiss any need at all to discuss what to do. As far as he was concerned, "The ideas of Marxism are back on the agenda", and "For every one Militant supporter expelled, another ten will take their place, because the ideas of Marxism will always remain in the Party".

Indeed, the main argument seemed to be whether

ten (Taaffe) or a hundred (Derek Hatton) would take the place of each one expelled. For Ted Grant, too, there was no problem. "The working class and labour movement will become Militant..."

Brent East Constituency Labour Party and delegates from Islington South CLP took a more sober view. We put an amendment to the statement calling for support for CLPs who refused to carry out expulsions. The Conference organisers recommended acceptance of this, and it was unanimously carried. This marks a shift — at least on paper — on an issue on which Militant has been extremely equivocal, often arguing against refusal to expel in the CLPs.

We also argued for the re-creation of a body like

the Rank and File Mobilising Committee which spearheaded the Benn campaign, in order to unite the Left and mobilise the campaign as effectively as possible in the weeks left before Party conference, and to organise afterwards if we are defeated.

No debate

Without any discussion this amendment was lost on the say-so of the conference organisers, who argued that there wasn't enough time to build such a body. However, a steering committee was set up by the conference to organise activity. Pressure should be put on the secretary, Tony Saunio, to ensure that it meets as soon as possible to broaden the campaign.

Joint Labour Party conference meeting: SCLV and South Wales Campaign for Labour Party and Trade Union Democracy.

"A QUESTION OF LEADERSHIP"

The film most ITV Regions wouldn't show. Showing followed by discussion including: Ken Loach (film producer), Ray Davies (film participant; Llanwrn Steel Action Group), Alan Thornett (film participant, BL shop steward), Reg Race MP, Peter Tatchell, Anna Lunts (NUPE, Health Workers for the Full Claim), and Andrea Campbell (CoHSE, Group 81).

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 27, 5.30pm
at the Lobster Pot restaurant (Kingfisher Room),
Market St, Blackpool. Entrance 50p.

Labour Party Conference Meeting WHAT SOCIALIST ORGANISER STANDS FOR

Speakers: GERRY BYRNE (Socialist Organiser Editorial Board, Women's Fightback Steering Committee), ANNA LUNTS (Shop steward, NUPE), ANDREA CAMPBELL (Asst. branch secretary, CoHSE), WINNIE MURPHY (NUTGW). Chair: Wendy Mustill (Mobilising Committee for the Defence of Trade Union Rights).

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 30, 5.30pm, Chamber of Trade, 53 Queen Street, Blackpool.

LABOUR PARTIES AGAINST THE WITCH-HUNT

Conference of delegates from CLPs, LP branches, affiliated trade union branches, women's sections, YSSs etc.

October 30, County Hall, London.
Contact: Labour Parties against the witch-hunt, 60 Ferndale Road, SW4.

mass DHSS arrests

are being processed — roughly one case every fifteen minutes — with automatic custodial prison sentences being applied even in the case of first offenders, and the absence of the usual social welfare reports.

The solicitors appearing for the defendants seem to have inadequate opportunity in some cases to prepare proper defences. We consider that these defendants are not being tried as individuals but are being made public scapegoats.

We consider that the sentences are incompatible with the Lord Chief Justice's guidance in R v. Upton (1980) that 'Non-violent petty offenders should not be allowed to take up valuable space in prison'. The cost of trials and especially the cost of keeping these defendants in prison for periods ranging upwards from 30 days to 6 months far outweighs the sums of money involved in the cases.

6. The negligence of the Department of Health and Social Security.

We consider that a large part of the responsibility for the situation dis-

closed in the police operation lies with the DHSS who ignored over a period of seven years repeated information about these practices from the director of the Oxford Simon Hostel and from CHAR, together with their repeated requests that administrative procedures be tightened up to prevent the possibility of these practices. These requests were ignored for years while the practices grew — indeed the DHSS continued throughout this period to refer claimants to the lodging houses identified by the director of Simon Hostel, and were doing so up until the day before the police operation. We demand a full public investigation of this negligent official inaction which allowed this practice to grow.

7. General Comment.

Finally we are extremely concerned at the following more general aspects which arise out of the cases:

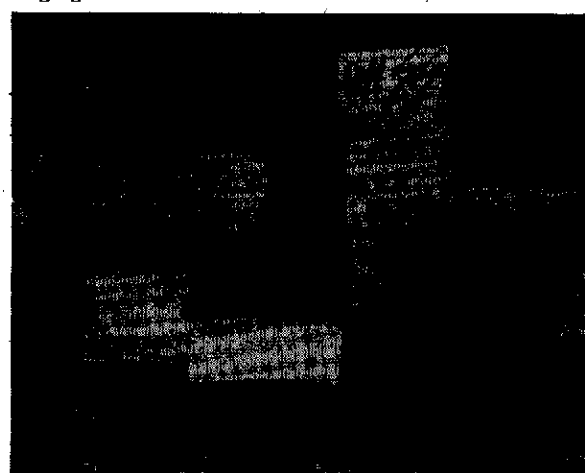
1. The inadequate level of Social Security benefits for single homeless people. £18.50 a week is completely inadequate to keep body and soul together. One defendant of 56

with no previous convictions who was sentenced to 45 days imprisonment explained that after leaving the lodging house where he was Bona Fide staying he still claimed the higher rate because he needed to buy a pair of shoes and some underclothing. £18.50 a week consigns people to a slow deterioration and dehumanising degradation.

2. The inadequate housing provision for single people. Some of the lodging houses concerned

were housing people 5 to a room in squalid conditions were charging each individual £42 a week rent. We demand that the Government and the responsible local authorities make this provision of decent housing for homeless single people an urgent priority, and take urgent action to prevent this Rachmanite profiteering.

On behalf of the Executive Committee of the Oxford City Labour Party.
Councillor Alan Griffiths



60-yr old told to 'sleep rough'

THE MASSIVE 'Operation Major' in Oxford had nothing to do with the alleged coordinated fraud totalling millions of pounds: it was a brutal clampdown designed to victimise and intimidate a particularly vulnerable group of homeless people.

The Oxfordshire branch of the National Association of Probation Officers has pointed out that when the 'conveyor belt' court cases are completed, they will show fraudulent claims totalling only a few tens of thousands of pounds.

Meanwhile claimants have been refused their usual payments until they have been visited, and 'urgent needs' payments have been turned down.

One claimant in his 60s with a heart complaint was last Friday told to sleep rough for the weekend. He contacted the Claimants' Defence Committee. When a solicitor and members of the Claimants' Union arrived at the DHSS, they found other claimants with the same problem.

They occupied the offices — only to be threatened

with prosecution by police. The elderly claimant was taken ill and collapsed — and was admitted to hospital.

He didn't sleep rough — but no thanks to the DHSS. On his release from hospital, it was left to ambulance men to lend him the deposit for a place to sleep.

Last week saw 'justice' meted out to over 90 of those 'caught in the trap'. Some had hardly had time to speak to a solicitor, and it was embarrassing to watch client and solicitor forced to discuss aspects of the case in open court.

No rights

Trade union representatives have time guidelines laid down for the defence of members against disciplinary procedures. Claimants have no such rights.

But the magistrates have their 'guidelines' on sentencing — irrespective of mitigating circumstances. The sentences ranged from 30 to 45 days for one charge of deception, to 60 days and over for two charges.

Those monitoring the proceedings could see that many claimants were pleading 'guilty' just to get it all over with, having had their 'trial' in the newspapers and on TV.

One, an epileptic, pleaded guilty because he had had a fit in prison on remand: he did not realise that pleading guilty meant another 30 days inside.

Meanwhile the scandalous exploitation of the homeless by the 'bed and breakfast' lodging houses in the city continues unabated. No landlords have yet been brought to court — indeed at least one is expected to give evidence for the prosecution in the 'not guilty' cases this week. The labour movement must rally to the support of the Claimants' Defence Committee and the call for an inquiry raised by Oxford CLP and Trades Council.

• Donations and affiliations (£5) are urgently needed by the CDC, which can be contacted at 44b Princes Street, Oxford.

Anne McKinley

International News International News International News

MEXICO FALLS TO THE WOLVES

MEXICO'S debt crisis has caused alarm in very different quarters, for very different reasons.

Wealthy international bankers are worried about \$80 billion owing to them. Mexico is going to pay the interest on these loans — and at over-the-odds rates — but will make no repayments on principal this year or next. The bankers are concerned about their total of \$465 billion loans outstanding to 'Third World' countries, many of them much worse off than Mexico.

While the bankers are worried about their balance sheets, many of the people of Mexico are worried about basic survival.

One of the Mexican government's first crisis measures was to cut subsidies on basic goods. On August 2 electricity prices went up 30%, the price of tortillas and bread 100%, and petrol prices 67%.

With inflation running at about 90% a year, the main trade union federation (CTM, linked to the ruling 'Institutional Revolutionary Party', PRI) has agreed to delay any across-the-board wage demand until the end of the year. 'It would be vulgar to ask the government for a rise when the public sector has no money', said one CTM leader.

Cooperation

Even the non-PRI unions, who according to the Guardian, 'originally planned a mass march this week to demand an immediate 50% salary rise, will now parade in Mexico City to 'defend' the nationalisation of the banks'.

Such cooperation is important to enable the government to carry out the austerity measures which will be demanded by the IMF.

Mexico finds itself short of dollars to pay its debts as a result of years of borrowing on spec. Mexico's industrial production grew by an average of 9.1% a year in 1960-70 and 6.6% in 1970-80. To finance the expansion — especially the big imports of machinery and equipment necessary for it — Mexico borrowed.

It was a workable eco-

MARTIN THOMAS looks at the facts behind the most spectacular debt crunch of the current crisis.



President Lopez Portillo with his predecessor Echeverria

nomical strategy, as long as the rapid industrial expansion, and the growth of Mexico's oil income, kept abreast of the growth of debt and payments due on the debt. But as soon as Mexico stumbled, the moneylending wolves would be on it.

Now Mexico has stumbled. Oil prices have weakened. The world capitalist slump has restricted its exports. Interest rates — which during much of the 1970's were less than the rate of inflation, making borrowing cheap — have soared.

The state budget deficit increased. The Mexican peso — which from 1954 to 1976 had had a fixed exchange rate with the US dollar — lost value, making Mexico's dollar debts more expensive in pesos. The government tried to stave off the problem by more borrowing — which only made the crisis worse.

The crisis in turn makes it more difficult for Mexico's capitalists to find cash for investment and for imports — and thus creates a

vicious circle.

Mexico is not the worst off of the world's poor countries. On the contrary, it is one of the success stories of Third World development. Its current crisis shows just how fragile and partial that success is.

The ground for capitalist development in Mexico was cleared by long revolutionary struggles in 1911-25, consolidated by the radical reforms of the Cardenas government in 1934-40. Cardenas expropriated the railways and the British and US-owned oil companies, and pushed through a sweeping land reform.

He reorganised the ruling party (now called the PRI) as a coalition of four 'sectors' — the unions (CTM), the National Peasant Confederation, a military 'sector', and a 'popular' sector.

Stable

Unusually for Latin America, Mexico's governments — invariably PRI governments — have been relatively stable, have spent very little on military purposes (what Mexico spends on the military, as a percentage of national income, is one-tenth of what Britain spends), and have used the state effectively as a driving force for capitalist development.

By 1980 Mexico's industrial production ranked it 10th among the world's capitalist powers — ahead of the Netherlands, Belgium, and Sweden.

The dependent character of this development is indicated statistically by the fact that by level of manufacturing exports Mexico ranks only 26th — but for all that, the share of machinery, equipment and other manufactures in Mexico's exports rose from 8% in 1960 to 36% in 1979.

It's been a success story for the multinationals which have invested heavily in Mexican industry — but not so much for the Mexican people.

40 per cent of the workforce is unemployed or gets only occasional and casual work. About half the population exists on or near bare subsistence level, untouched by the industrial development. The average infant mortality rate is as high as China's.

Inequality of incomes is acute and increasing. The poorest 20% of the population get only 3% of the national income. Real wages have dropped as industry has risen. Official Mexican sources estimate a 38% drop in the real income of the poorest 40% of the population between 1950 and 1975.

In 1980 Mexico attracted more net direct private investment, and more public and publicly guaranteed long-term loans, than any other country in the world. Of the 300 biggest manufacturing enterprises in Mexico in the early 1970's, some 40-odd or 50-odd per cent of the capital was foreign-owned [mostly US].

So the result of Mexico's development is the enrichment of a small elite in Mexico itself, and a big flow of profits and interest to the bankers and bosses of the US, while the mass of the people of Mexico are stuck in poverty.

Austerity

The latest decrees of the Lopez Portillo government are partly measures of national self-defence, but partly also preparations for implementing the austerity plan that will be imposed by the bankers of the IMF.

The private banks, now nationalised, have been making huge profits. \$12 billion of foreign-



Cardenas - nationalised oilfields

currency (mostly dollar) accounts in Mexico's banks have been converted by decree into peso accounts at a low official rate

INCOME DISTRIBUTION

	Poorest 20%	Richest 20%
Mexico 1958	5%	63%
Mexico 1977	3%	58%
Britain 1979	7%	39%

(Sources: World Bank, K. Matthies, 'Transnationale Unternehmen in Mexiko')

MEXICO'S DEBT BURDEN

	1967	1976	1980	1982
Debt (\$billion)	2.5	16	33	80
Debt service as % of export income	24%	37%	32%	60%

of exchange, and exchange controls will be imposed. This will block the flight of capital from Mexico estimated at \$22 billion over the last two or three years. Many Mexican bankers and bosses have denounced the measures, and in Monterrey are planning a one-day protest lock-out.

But the bank nationalisation — carried out with full compensation — is not comparable to the oil expropriation of 1938. The Financial Times points out:

'If the PRI is to keep control, it must whip up enough patriotic and nationalistic fervour to allow it to implement the stringent economic programme which the IMF is now preparing.

'This in turn is a major reason why the Government nationalised the country's private banks and took such pains to portray the takeover as a revolutionary and populist measure.'

Independence

One banker told the Wall Street Journal: 'The leftists seemed to have won the conceptual battle, but the conservatives have won the operational battle for now.'

The struggle by Mexico's workers to find a voice independent of the PRI is a long and difficult one. But it has started. And it is the only way to free Mexico from the exploitation of imperialism and of its own ruling class.

FOREIGN CAPITAL'S SHARE IN LEADING FIRMS IN SELECTED INDUSTRIES, MEXICO, 1972

Industry	No. of firms	US	Percentages of total capital		
			Other foreign	Mexican state	Mexican private
Food and drink	50	20	6	7	67
Chemicals	48	54	14	20	12
Vehicles	18	70	9	13	8
Metals	27	31	10	24	35
Metal manufacturing	17	48	8	11	33
300 biggest firms in manufacturing	300	36	16	16	32

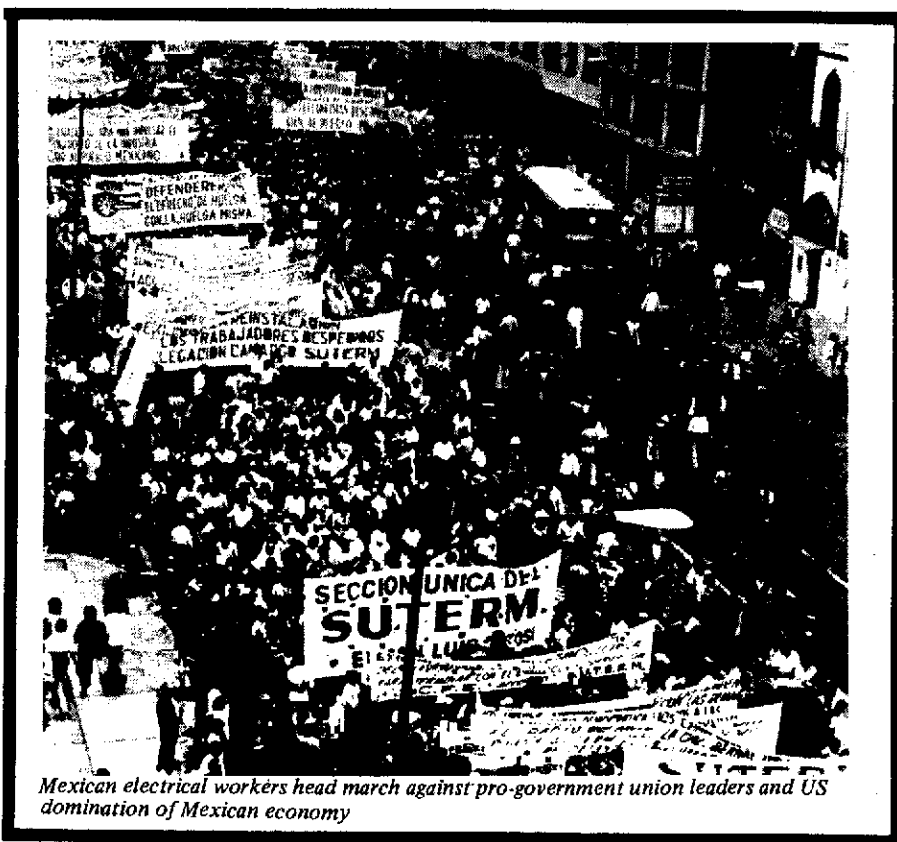
(Source: Klaus Matthies, Transnationale Unternehmen in Mexiko)

In 1960-70 foreign investment (including reinvested profits) was 5% of total investment in Mexico. The Mexican state was responsible for about one-third of total investment.

(Source: same)



Mexican oil workers: recession has cut revenue



Mexican electrical workers head march against pro-government union leaders and US domination of Mexican economy

International News International News International News



Turkey's two years of state terror

THIS September 12 marks the second anniversary of the military coup in Turkey. For the working people in the country, these two years of military rule have been an unprecedented period of impoverishment and repression.

On taking power the Generals unleashed a reign of terror, crushing all opposition and imposing a grim and harsh dictatorship. The parliament and government were immediately dissolved, to be replaced by the Generals' National Security Council. The constitution was dissolved and rule by decree became the order of the day.

All democratic institutions were either suspended, banned or dissolved, including political parties, trade and professional associations, the trade union confederation DISK and numerous trade unions.

In 'military operations' that followed the military coup, thousands of trade unionists, socialists and potential opponents to the regime were rounded up and interned. Torture, savage beatings, arbitrary sentences by military courts and all forms of intimidation awaited the 100,000 political prisoners, while thousands fled into exile in Europe and the Middle East.

Especially ruthless measures were taken against the Kurds in Turkey. The Generals hurriedly mobilised extra army divisions to crush any possible resistance in North Kurdistan

From the Turkey Solidarity Campaign Information Bulletin

TSC is a broad-based, democratically organised campaign. All decisions are made in National meetings by members and representatives of affiliated organisations, including many trade union and Labour Party branches. Local committees organise meetings and public events, and raise funds.

Please help us by joining TSC and subscribing to the Turkey Information Bulletin.

and to stifle the national and democratic aspirations of the Kurdish people. Secessionist movements were picked on for a particularly savage repression.

Devaluation

The austerity programme dictated by the IMF and aimed at rationalising the economy and opening it to foreign capital has resulted in the devaluation of over 200% of the currency, an inflation rate of 50-60% and a protracted economic crisis.

The recent bankruptcy of the country's leading broker house with a deficit of \$0.5 billion has sent the financial establishment into turmoil and has accelerated the crisis. Payments of foreign debts have had to be rescheduled once again because of the country's inability to meet its commitments.

A series of mass show trials against the 52 leaders of DISK, the Underground Miners Union, the 30 leaders of the Turkish Peace Association, the Teachers Association, as well as a number of Turkish and Kurdish political organisations are being staged. 4,000 defendants in these trials are charged with 'subversion' and face the death penalty.

Diversion

As the Generals approach the second anniversary of the coup, they are attempting to divert attention from their increased repression with promises to return Turkey to democracy in the next year. Last month the Consultative Assembly, nominated by the Junta, approved the new constitution in principle by 135 votes to one. The draft is expected to be ratified by the Junta in September.

But the form of democracy the Junta proposes with the new constitution is rigid and authoritarian. For the generals, 'democracy' is only a facade in their drive to establish a lasting repressive regime in Turkey; the constitution providing them with a legitimate basis for the de-facto extension of military rule.

The Junta's constitution has already been called the 'restoration of the Sultanate taking back Turkey 106 years' by a former cabinet minister, and Dr. Sever Tenolli has described it as 'a constitution that is against even the most basic human rights. Not democracy but only fascism can be established with it'.

Arab rulers exploit PLO defeat

HARRY SLOAN examines the Fez 'peace plan'

THE BLOODY Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the defeat it inflicted upon the PLO and the Lebanese Left has — as hoped by the American imperialists — brought a substantial shift in Middle East politics.

First President Reagan was able to float a US 'peace plan' without it being rejected by any of the major Arab leaders.

Then, only days later, the summit meeting of Arab states and the PLO in the Moroccan capital of Fez came up with its own 'peace plan'. This, like the Reagan scheme, offers de facto recognition of the right to exist of the Zionist state of Israel.

The Lebanese invasion successfully combined the task of weakening the Palestinian resistance while exposing the hollowness of the rhetoric of the 'rejectionist' Arab states, who failed to lift a finger in any significant action to defend the PLO.

Impotence

The overwhelming superiority of the Zionist military machine has also revealed the impotence of the Syrian land and air forces in Lebanon to continue the struggle without external support. Syria's vocal opposition to any deal with Israel has therefore been undermined.

Under these conditions the more overtly reactionary and pro-imperialist Arab regimes — of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Tunisia, and Morocco — have been given the excuse they wanted to step up the pressure for a political settlement with the Zionists and their imperialist sponsors.

The eight point plan from

the Fez summit calls for:

- Israeli withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied in 1967, including Jerusalem.

- The dismantling of Zionist settlements on these territories.

- Guaranteed freedom of worship.

- The recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and of the PLO as the Palestinians' sole legitimate representative.

- The West Bank and Gaza Strip to be placed under UN control for a transitional period.

- The establishment of an independent Palestinian state, with Jerusalem as its capital.

- A UN guarantee of peace among all states in the region.

- UN guarantee of respect for these principles.

The plan goes further than Reagan's proposals

(see last week's Socialist Organiser) in that it calls explicitly for an independent Palestinian state (opposed by both the US and Israel); and it fails to make any explicit reference to Israel.

But Reagan's scheme called for the establishment of 'Palestinian self-government' on the West Bank and Gaza, in association with Jordan; and the Fez plan calls only for Zionist withdrawal from the territory invaded in 1967 — thus implicitly recognising the long-term continuation of a Zionist state, even though its borders are not defined, so large as might have been expected before, and the summit confirms the ascendancy of pro-US regimes in the Arab world.

This does not mean, however, that the Begin government in Israel is satisfied. It has branded the

Fez plan as worse than the previous tentative Arab plan drawn up by the Saudi monarch King Fahd. And it has vociferously denounced the Reagan initiative.

On the ground — or rather in the air over Lebanon — Israeli forces have stepped up the pressure on the Syrian troops and missile placements dug into defensive positions in the Bekaa Valley — plainly hoping to force them into a further retreat.

But Begin plainly recognises the potential impact of the Reagan plan on Israeli voters and on the 'Jewish lobby' in the USA — both of whom are far more willing than Begin to contemplate exchanging the West Bank and Gaza for a longer-term peace treaty, and more reluctant than Begin to defy the wishes of US imperialism.

Israeli 'Labour' leader Shimon Peres has declared his support for the Reagan plan and offered to fight an election on the issue. Begin has responded by anguished complaints that Reagan is attempting to overturn his government.

Pointing out that it is 'known US practice' to try to topple governments which do not suit it, Begin accused Reagan of 'gross interference' in Israel's affairs. 'Our American friends must remember that Israel is not Chile and I am not Allende', he added.

Reagan of course is attempting not to oust Begin but to convince him and his Zionist colleagues of the way in which their interests — and those of imperialism — can best be served by a grand alliance of the forces of reaction against the oppressed and exploited Arab and Jewish working classes.



Begin with Reagan — they need each other

IN BRIEF

Poland

THE underground leadership of the illegal Solidarnosc trade union confederation in Poland has issued further calls for demonstrations against the martial law imposed by the Stalinist regime.

On September 30, Solidarnosc supporters are called upon to commemorate those gunned down by riot police during the demonstrations on August 31.

On October 21, they are urged to mark the second anniversary of the formal registration of Solidarnosc as a union, in the wake of the momentous strikes of 1980.

And further peaceful demonstrations are called for on the 64th anniversary

of Polish independence, on November 11.

Warning against provocations — particularly appropriate in the wake of the Polish embassy siege in Switzerland — the Solidarnosc leaders urge supporters to ignore all calls to action not sanctioned by the Provisional Coordinating Committee (TKK) or by regional union leaders.

THOUSANDS of prisoners 'suspected' of belonging to the Palestine Liberation Organisation or to the parties of the Lebanese Left are being held by Israel.

By Israeli reckoning, a doctor in a PLO hospital, or teacher in a school set up by

BOLIVIA'S military junta last week informed the world's bankers that their economy cannot even pay the \$10.2 million in interest immediately due on the country's \$4 billion external debts.

The official economy has run profoundly into crisis with the recession having produced a collapse in prices of Bolivia's tin exports. But at the same time the illicit cocaine trade — largely run by the army top brass — is booming.

the PLO in the refugee camps, is also a 'terrorist'.

Many eye-witness reports have been collected of prisoners being beaten to death or shot in cold blood. Most of the prisoners are held in camps in south Lebanon, crowded into tents on bare

According to the Financial Times one of the leading cocaine traffickers a few weeks ago 'offered to pay off the national debt out of his own pocket in exchange for government favours'.

And in April bankers were irritated at rescheduling \$450 million in loans to Bolivia when they knew that 'the Bolivian narcotics and military fraternity could easily have paid this money out of their current bank accounts' (FT, September 11).

There are no sanitary provisions, and diseases are becoming epidemic.

It seems that the Israeli authorities want these people to die.

An international campaign to save them should be organised urgently.



LABOUR'S PROGRAMME

Can liberation live by Parliament alone?



THE CHAPTER on 'Women and women's rights' in the Labour Programme 1982 notes that "over half the population are women" — and proceeds to devote four pages to us, or 1.5% of the total programme.

Still, this is over twice as much attention as is paid to gay rights. And in these four pages, and in some 30 other references (six more than the number to 'public ownership'), Labour commits itself to some very important reforms.

Important — or obvious, and not enough? And 'commits itself to' — or 'expresses good intentions on'?

Consistently, the programme links the achievement of women's equality with our right to paid employment: surely a victory for the 'Women's Right to Work' campaign. The Tories' philosophy that married women have no right to a job is attacked, and the way in which women especially have suffered from Tory economic policy is condemned: female unemployment, cuts in social services turning women into unpaid carers for the elderly, disabled and sick, discrimination in welfare benefits, etc.

Stereotyping

The programme, quite rightly, sees this discrimination as further enforced by sexual stereotyping, in the trade unions (though not, apparently, in the Labour Party!), in the media, in advertising, and in an all-pervasive general attitude.

To right this, Labour proposes three main strategies.

First, the Programme addresses itself to women's position in the home.

Child-care facilities must be expanded, and paid employment reorganised to stop sole responsibility for child-care falling con-



sistently on the woman.

The Tories' policy of paying child benefit monthly will be reversed; local authorities will be expected to provide suitable facilities for battered women to seek refuge from their 'marital homes'.

There will need to be a shorter working week, better paid parental leave, and more flexibility of working hours (part-time work, job sharing, etc.).

A vital omission is the necessary guarantee that shorter working hours are achieved without loss in pay. And also omitted from the whole Programme is an adequate policy to make sure there are any jobs available at all, for women or for men, flexible or inflexible.

The proposed reforms would be a big step forward for married women, but we can't let Labour deal with us as if we are all married, or potentially so. Certainly the programme makes provision for single

parents by promising to make child and single-parent benefits realistic and weekly. But 'major expansion of child care facilities' is a woolly phrase compared with the demand for free 24 hour child care facilities which is what women need.

And child care, although an enormous part of the problems that tie women to the home and define their role in capitalist society, isn't all. Rearranging working hours so that a husband can help look after the children is all very well, but it won't help if all it does is liberate women to go shopping and cook that same husband's tea. The demand for free 24 hour child care facilities must be linked with a programme for access to communal laundry and cooking/eating facilities, for women to be liberated from domestic drudgery.

The second strand of Labour's strategy is to challenge sexual discrimination at work. This idea is taken quite far.

For once it is realised that stereotyping begins in school, and Labour pledges to work towards redressing the sex balance among teachers, eradicating sex bias from textbooks, and "giving girls and boys equal learning experiences to develop all types of capabilities and interests".

The most far-reaching proposal, however, is for the introduction of 'positive action plans'. These will be begun by civil service and government contractors, and expanded to include local authorities, other employers, and training and educational bodies.

Their aim is to remove the job segregation that follows from traditional stereotyping in recruitment, education and training. It will be backed up with a code of practice to control both sexism and reinforcement of sexual stereotyping in the media and advertising.

Doubtless, such a lead from the top is long overdue. But this is where the emphasis of Labour's

programme falls down.

The document is full of references to "building on the Sex Discrimination Act". But surely the experience of this piece of legislation has shown that legislation in itself, no matter how well-founded, doesn't work to change attitudes.

Where are the suggestions to bring women into politics so that they can have their own influence on forming the legislation that affects them — even in the limited form of the attempts made by the Greater London Council and Islington council women's committees?

Labour women have shown, by the doubling of the number of delegates at this year's Labour Party Women's Conference, that they want to be at the meetings and involved in the decisions about the politics that shape their lives. And this drive forward by women has been met by Parliamentarians putting forward legislative proposals on what they see as best

for women.

The Labour Programme admits that the Sex Discrimination Act and the Equal Opportunities Commission haven't succeeded, but does not draw the conclusion that Labour may be using the wrong methods. Instead, they seek only to use these same methods more extensively!

Legislation is important. But a party which identifies politics purely with parliamentary legislation will change little. Success depends on women organising, and using the strength this gives them by fighting together.

Why not rush through proposals for Labour Party workplace branches (and workplace women's sections?) which would give women workers a structure to organise with?

The focus on legislative proposals, to the neglect of the other conditions for change, is evident in the third strand of the Programme. Labour recognises that comparing a woman worker's pay with a male worker's is not very effective, given the concentration of women in certain jobs which are low paid for everyone.

So Labour will introduce the concept of equal pay for work of equal value, to help women who are not able to compare their jobs directly with a man's.

Good. But who will assess the 'value' of jobs? The same 'impartial' industrial tribunals.

The woolliness on child-care is matched by a lack of clarity on abortion:

"... legislation is necessary to ensure that all women have a right of choice in the termination of a pregnancy, within the time limits currently allowed by legislation. We shall give priority to improving NHS facilities... so that choice can be effective wherever the woman lives".

Women have been campaigning for years for free legal abortion on demand, and don't need telling that "legislation is necessary". We want a firm, precise

commitment that "we will introduce a law".

The promise to improve NHS facilities sounds very positive. But it must be remembered that the standard of the NHS has been severely eroded by years of Tory (and Labour) cuts. Will Labour give a pledge to restore all these cuts immediately, and to improve facilities much, much further still? If not, aren't the promises about effective choice just empty words?

Not coherent

It's as if the Labour Party is making a genuine attempt to use its future legislative power to improve women's situation, where women's problems have been spelled out and made obvious to the Programme's authors, but lacks any coherent analysis of why women are oppressed (from which measures which follow) or how the resources to change society can be mobilised (from which a strategy to make the measures practically possible would follow).

This is apparent from the emphasis on how legislation decided by the (men in) Parliament can help, at the expense of encouraging women to organise and be influential themselves.

Marriage, and therefore monogamous heterosexual relationships for women, is not questioned at all as a legal, economic, and social institution, despite a willingness to reduce the discrimination for women within it.

'Lack of time'

One major promise is to end the financial discrimination against married women by taxing married people separately. But here too there is little to make us confident that this is more than a good intention which of course a future Labour government will find 'impossible' to implement because of 'priorities', 'lack of Parliamentary time', 'the crisis', 'the difficult situation', or some other reason.

"Our aim", says the Programme, "is to create a very different society, in which women are no longer oppressed".

The Programme seems rather to suggest that, far from 'creating a very different society', all the Labour Party seriously intends to do is tamper around a bit with this one.

The Programme assumes that legal improvements are what's needed to remove women's oppression. But the society where women are no longer oppressed must, above all, be defined by women.

What is needed can only be defined and fought for by mass organisations of women: it is this which the Labour Party must encourage. And it must also consider whether the kind of society which no longer oppresses women is in Parliament's power to grant.

from LCGR

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500 at Gay Festival

FOR the first time in his political life sexual politics were on the agenda in the Labour Party in a major way, Bootle M.P. Allan Roberts said recently.

He was speaking at the national Gay Festival, held in Sheffield over the August Bank Holiday weekend. Over 500 lesbians and gay men attended the event, which, as usual, was almost totally ignored by the media.

The festival was significant for lesbians and gay politics in the country and the Labour Campaign for Gay Rights held three meetings with the women and the men. The women's meeting was held in the evening and the men's in the morning. The women's meeting was held in the evening and the men's in the morning. The women's meeting was held in the evening and the men's in the morning.

ed, with around 100 people packing the meeting addressed by Allan Roberts.

He said that a lot of people who had not previously joined the party were now joining and a lot of other people were leaving because of the hardening of its commitment to socialist politics. "It is all for the good," he stated.

It was very important not only that the Labour Party addressed itself to gay rights, but also that gays were involved in the party in order to change society. He believed that the only way that gays could have equality would be in a socialist society.

Conference members expressed concern over the N.E.C.'s decision not to implement proposals in 'The

Rights of Gay Men and Women' discussion document. Anger was voiced about the proposed moves to counter the illegality of homosexuality in the armed forces and merchant navy and the dropping of the commitment to implement the Campaign for Homosexual Equality's draft Sexual Offences bill, which would ensure the end of all legal discrimination.

John Shiers of L.C.G.R. told people at the meeting that the organisation intended to fight these discriminatory proposals through to total victory. L.C.G.R. would be mounting a lobby of the party conference in an attempt to increase delegates' awareness of discrimination against gays and to urge the conference to amend the N.E.C. state-

ment to get a commitment to full equality.

Fringe meeting

The organisation has also arranged a major fringe meeting on Tuesday September 28, at the Cliff Hotel, Blackpool, to be addressed by Joan Lester, Jo Richardson, Ken Livingstone and Peter Tatchell. A speaker from the Gay Youth movement and the Judith Williams Defence Committee will also attend the fringe meeting.

In recognition of the importance of this year's conference for gays, Gay News, the country's only national gay newspaper will be producing a special Labour party conference edition.

ISSUES TO WATCH FOR AT LABOUR CONFERENCE

Campaign for LABOUR PARTY Democracy

Once again this year, questions of democracy and accountability will be central at Labour Party conference. The register is the big issue, but there are others. And once again, too, rank and file delegates will have to be able to cut their way through procedural manoeuvres in order to assert their voice.

The CLPD gives a guide to the agenda.

Contrary to the fashionable assertion that Labour Party members are losing interest in constitutional issues, some 133 resolutions and amendments in this year's agenda are on 'Party Administration' - some 60 of these reflecting CLPD proposals. In addition, out of 12 resolutions and amendments on 'Public Ownership', 7 contain the CLPD demand to 'bring into common ownership at least 25 of the largest 100 private sector manufacturing companies.'

Despite this relative success, one of the main features of this year's Conference will be the struggle between the various issues to be time-tabled for debate. This is because Conference will spend much time debating the draft of Labour's 1982 Programme. Normally 7 resolutions and amendments are sufficient for subject to qualify for debate. This year the minimum number may well be higher.

Above all the limited time available is likely to be used as an excuse for excluding subjects Labour's establishment finds particularly inconvenient.

ent. They will either not be time-tabled at all, or else time-tabled at the end of a day so that in practice they will never be reached. It is important that delegates representing resolutions on CLPD subjects should be alerted to these dangers.

The above pitfalls are unfortunately not the only ones. Thus resolutions and amendments on what is essentially the same subject have been artificially divided into two sections.

This is almost certainly no accident, but a further manoeuvre by the Conference Arrangements Committee to deny Conference the opportunity to consider positive alternatives to the Militant Tendency Report. The Conference Arrangements Committee could well now advise that the subject of the 'Register' should be taken separately from that of 'Party Unity', and that it should also be taken first.

Since the 11 excluded amendments were all added to a resolution which appears under the 'Party Unity' head-



ing (Resolution 3 from Manchester Withington and Plymouth Drake - see Agenda p. 15, also see Appendix), the Conference Arrangements Committee could thus prevent them being put to a vote even if Conference rejects the ruling that they are out of order.

Once the Militant Tendency Report is endorsed as a result of the 'Register' debate, the positive alternatives coming up in the 'Party Unity' debate will simply be deemed to have fallen.

Taken together

It is therefore of the utmost importance for affiliated organisations to press for these subjects to be taken together.

It is equally vital that both the alternatives - outright rejection of the Report and the proposals included in the 11 amendments and also in Resolution 4 from Bermondsey CLP (agenda pp 15-16, also see Appendix) - should be taken first and the Militant Tendency Report put to a vote only if they are both rejected.

Last but not least it is also imperative that the other issues raised under the 'Party Unity' heading can be dealt with separately - namely, the right of CLP's to select their Parliamentary candidate

without political interference from the NEC, and the right of CLP's to decide on the eligibility of those applying for Party membership. This means a separate composite resolution.

Travesty

It would be a travesty of justice to use the pretext of the Militant Tendency Report to deprive these key issues of proper consideration in their own right.

Altogether 13 resolutions and amendments (see Agenda pp 35-36) were submitted on the subject of party leader. 8 of them demand that no changes in the present structure of the electoral college should be considered this year. The others ask the NEC to submit to next year's Conference proposals for the election of the Party Leader and Deputy Leader by individual ballot.

The importance of the first proposal becomes clear when it is realised that there is a constitutional amendment on the agenda which demands that the share of MP's of the electoral college should be increased from 30 to 50%, and the share of trade unions and CLP's reduced to 25% each.

The constitutional

amendment was submitted last year by the Union of Communication Workers (UCW), and in accordance with the present rules it will be put to a vote should the movers wish. A number of large unions would prefer this change, but some of them are also mandated for 'no change this year' if the question arises in this form. It is important that they should be given this opportunity.

It is not certain, however, whether a composite resolution based on the 8 resolutions and amendments will be time-tabled and if it is to be taken before the UCW constitutional amendment. Once again the Conference Arrangements Committee could be attempting a manoeuvre to get a major reactionary constitutional amendment taken and carried without Conference having any opportunity to consider an alternative.

Reject

The NEC has rightly recommended rejection of the UCW proposal. Nevertheless, for the above reasons it is vital for affiliated organisations to ensure that a 'no change' composite resolution is time-tabled for debate and that it is taken before the constitutional amendment.

In the case of mandatory re-selection, a major constitutional change which has already taken place has been widely undermined by the shortlist of one. The Paddington Constitutional Amendment (see NEC Report, p 27) seeks to uphold the decision of successive Conferences by blocking the loophole which was subsequently discovered in the rules, while the NEC recommendation to reject the Paddington amendment would gravely weaken a fundamental democratic reform.

The NEC has allowed its own memorandum on the selection of Parliamentary candidates to be flagrantly disregarded in a large number of constituencies, so the reason given for opposing the Paddington amendment ('the NEC reject this in favour of its own memorandum on the selection of Parliamentary candidates' - Report of the National Executive Committee 1982, p 27) cannot be taken seriously. The NEC recommendation should be rejected.

Unfortunately only 5 resolutions and amendments were submitted on this subject. Thus while there is going to be a 'postal composite resolution', this is unlikely to be enough to ensure full debate unless there is a powerful demand for it.

However, the issue will come before Conference as the Paddington delegate will insist on a vote, and there is a strong case for this to be preceded by a proper debate. It is vital that Conference should support Paddington when the demand for a proper debate is made, and of course it should also support the amendment when this is put to the vote.

A composite resolution on the Parliamentary Labour Party was remitted, after debate, to the NEC (see 1981 Conference Report, p 205). It asked the NEC to submit to this year's Conference.

All the necessary constitutional amendments to fully incorporate the Parliamentary Labour Party's Standing Orders into Party Constitution, and at the same time to review:

'those Standing Orders so as to make the weekly Parliamentary Party meetings a vital policy forum to ensure the implementing of principles laid down by the Labour Party Conference.'

Yet if we look up this year's NEC Report, the section 'Action on Resolutions Remitted after Debate at Conference' makes no mention of this Composite. Could this be because the NEC would like to see it quietly forgotten?

In asking for remission on behalf of the NEC last year, the reason given by Eric Heffer was the 'need for further discussion to get this matter right, to get the relationship right ...'

Yet not only has the NEC failed to report, but there is even some doubt if the CAC will recommend a debate, despite the same demands being raised again in eight resolutions and amendments. Delegates should be mandated to ensure that it is given a hearing.

The subject of Women's Rights has attracted considerable support - twenty six CLP's chose this issue as their resolution or amendment for the 1982 Labour Party Conference.

The resolutions centre on four main demands: the right of the Women's Conference to send five resolutions to Annual Party Conference, the mandatory inclusion of at least one woman on parliamentary shortlists, the election of the Women's Section of the NEC by the National Conference of Labour Women, and the election by the Women's Conference of its own executive.

It is essential that each of these issues is debated and voted on separately. This means that where resolutions contain several demands, CLP's should try to reach agreement prior to the pre-Conference compositing meeting to produce a separate composite resolution for each demand. To maximise the chance of winning each individual demand, it is necessary to avoid losing support by linking a demand to others which may not attract the same support. Delegates should be mandated to this effect.

CLPD slate

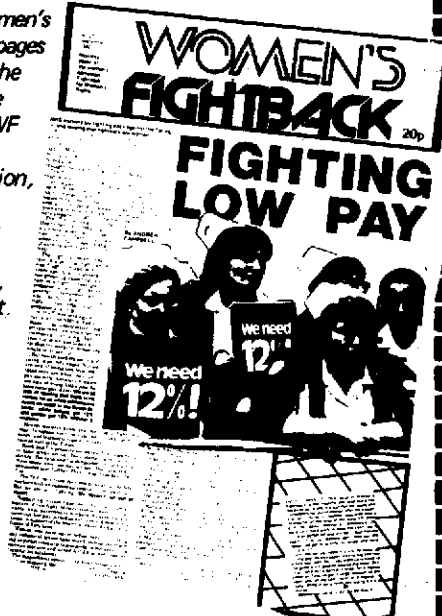
CLPD urges affiliated organisations to support in:

NEC Division I - Trade Unions: Eric Clarke, Terry Fields, Douglas Hoyle, Alex Kitson, Charlie Kelly, Sam McCluskie, Teddy O'Brien, Terry O'Neill, Tom Sawyer, Syd Tierney.
NEC Division II - Socialist, Co-operative & Other Organisations: Leslie Huckfield.
NEC Division III - Constituency Labour Parties: Frank Allaun, Norman Atkinson, Tony Benn, Eric Heffer, Jo Richardson, Dennis Skinner, Audrey Wise.
NEC Division IV - Women Members: Margaret Beckett, Judith Hart, Joan Maynard, Frances Morrell, Barbara Switzer.



Heffer
NEC Treasurer: Michael Meacher.
Conference Arrangements Committee: Peter Williams.

New issue of Women's Fightback - 16 pages and articles on the NHS dispute, the jobs campaign, WF summer space, sexism in education, Judith Williams, Labour women's conference, etc. 20p from WF, 41 Ellington St. London N7.



COMING UP Women's Fightback AGM. October 23 County Hall, London. Open to all women, but only members and delegates from affiliated groups can vote. For conference details send s.a.e. to 41 Ellington St, N7; to join WF too send £3 (or £5 to include regular mailings and the paper).

DO THIS WEEK

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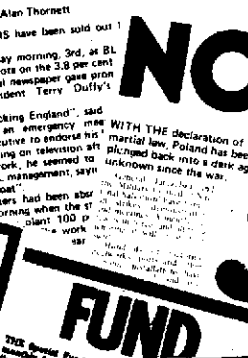
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Rank and File Mobilising
Left to fight for Labour

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BETRAYAL! WORKERS NOT SLAVES

'WE ARE NOT SLAVES'

Socialist Organiser
Against all bans and proscriptions!

Solidarnosc

Tebbit
Union leaders must **BREAK LINKS WITH TORIES NOW**

Socialist Organiser
Against all bans and proscriptions!

THE ENEMY IS AT HOME!
WITHDRAW THE TROOPS!

Tony Benn MP

Britain desperately needs a proper left press to allow a wide discussion about socialism, and the more socialist papers we have the better. Good luck.

Gay Rights (LCGR)

JOHN SHIERS

Socialist Organiser was the first, and remains the only, left paper to which LCGR has been asked to make regular contributions.

We very much appreciate this, and it is an indication of the fact that the paper considers gay liberation to be an essential political issue. We consider it important that Socialist Organiser has provided us with space to develop discussion on the politics and practice of gay, particularly gay men's, sexuality. This understanding is vital in combatting discrimination and increasing awareness.

We intend in the next year to remedy our poor coverage of issues particularly affecting lesbians.

The battle, however, has yet to be won on the left in general, where gay rights, if it is mentioned at all, is seen purely as a civil rights question, of no relevance to the 'real' political struggle. The fact that Labour's NEC could propose a blatantly discriminatory policy on 'homosexuals' in Labour's Programme 82, with so little outrage from any section of the Party, shows the problem we are up against.

This proposed policy would reduce the age of consent for gay men to 18, not 16, and keep lesbian and gay male relationships completely illegal in the armed forces and merchant navy. It also fails to recognise lesbian sexuality in any real sense, or link the struggle of lesbians to the struggle of all women against sexism and for the right to control

their own sexuality.

If it becomes Party policy, the Left must act swiftly and confidently to ensure that a non-discriminatory policy is passed at next year's conference. We are looking for Socialist Organiser's active support in this battle.

As far as improving coverage on gay issues is concerned, it is very important that gay rights is not simply ghettoised into a column appearing when we are able to produce it. All socialists, whatever their sexuality, should be seeing it as part of their struggle. Material on lesbian and gay male issues, and campaigns against discrimination, should be covered by the paper in its mainstream news items. This means that Socialist Organiser's contributors should develop active contacts with gay organisations in their areas, and ensure that these campaigns are reported in the newspaper.

Finally, we wish Socialist Organiser the best in the future development of the paper and in our common struggle for a society based on the principles of equality and freedom of personal expression.

Vidya Anand

London Labour Party Executive member

"I would like to add my comradely greetings and congratulations on the hundredth issue of your paper.

"Let us hope that long before the next hundredth issue we'll be celebrating the return to power of a Labour government that Socialist Organiser has been calling and campaigning for.

"Needless to say, at times like these, when the labour movement is under severe attack both from its traditional Tory adversaries and their subterranean Liberal allies, with the massive support of the anti working class media, an organ like Socialist Organiser has its work cut out more than ever.

"Now is the time for holding fast to our socialist convictions. Keep the presses rolling, keep the flag flying".

Reg Race MP

The 'centre left' on the NEC is moving very fast to the right with the prospects of office as the election looms closer. And the right wing obviously think that everyone on the Left is a Militant supporter.

We need a concerted, united campaign against the witch-hunt — to include defending the rights of the 'unregistered' socialist press in the Labour Party.

I look forward to continued cooperation with Socialist Organiser in working for this united campaign.

Mobilising Committee for Trade Union Rights

WENDY MUSTILL

The initiative of Socialist Organiser supporters to set up the Mobilising Committee was an important development in the fight against the present round of Tory anti-union legislation.

The still small but growing number of supporters of our campaign have been helped both by the general coverage and by the in-depth analysis of the Tory offensive which has appeared in Socialist Organiser.

This unfortunately stands in marked contrast to the rest of the Left, who seem to have retreated to the 'fall-out shelters', occasionally surfacing to rattle their sabres at Thatcher.



Massive Chartist demonstration, 1848

WHEN RED LED BRITISH

The People's Charter was drawn up by the London Working Men's Association in 1838. Its six points were: * Universal manhood suffrage * Parliament to be elected annually * MPs to be paid, so that even the poorest could afford to be elected to parliament * elections to take place by secret ballot, to end bribery and intimidation * equal electoral districts * abolition of the property qualification for parliamentary candidates.

In 1842 the Chartists assembled a petition of 3.3 million signatures supporting their demands, and workers took to the streets in support. There was a general strike. The failure of this movement to secure these sweeping reforms led to the increasing division of the Chartist movement between the 'moral force' wing and advocates of 'physical force'. The movement declined and vanished after 1848.

Here David Harris examines the revolutionary politics which mobilised a mass movement in Britain.

THERE was a time when Marxists, or to be more precise, people who worked with Frederick Engels and Karl Marx and were associated with them as members of the first significant international workers' association, the Society of Fraternal Democrats, stood at the head of the workers' movement in Britain.

Four out of the five members of the Chartist Executive in 1847 and 1848 were members of the society; by 1848 leaders of the Chartist organisation in London and in towns throughout England and Scotland were members; its members were prominent in the National Association of United Trades and had no difficulty in winning a majority of the votes given in parliamentary elections in the public show of hands, in which working people could participate. (The actual parliamentary seats were decided, of course, in a ballot where very few could vote).

In the 1847 General Election, for instance, Ernest Jones was the Chartist candidate at Halifax against the Chancellor of the Exchequer. At

By David Harris

the nomination (Northern Star Aug. 7th 1847), 'there could not have been less than twenty-five thousand persons' present, and when the show of hands was called for by the returning officer: 'For Sir Charles Wood not a hundred were held up, for Mr. Ernest Jones, nearly the whole of that magnificent meeting.'

Among other Fraternal Democrats who also received a majority in the show of hands were Julian Harney, the Society's secretary for Britain and editor of the main Chartist organ the Northern Star, standing against the Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston at Tiverton, John West at Stockport, John M'Crae at Greenock, Samuel Kydd at Greenwich and William Dixon at Wigan.

The movement made no secret of its connection with

Marx and Engels. Engels was a correspondent of the Northern Star. The enthusiastic reception given to Marx when he spoke at a meeting of the Fraternal Democrats on November 29 1847 was reported in the Northern Star. The Northern Star, June 24 1848, described Marx as 'one of the ablest of the defenders of Labour's rights in Europe'.

Leading Fraternal Democrats, including Carl Schapper, the Society's secretary for Germany, and Joseph Moll, a member for Germany of its committee, were the leading members of the League of Communists for which Marx and Engels wrote the Manifesto of the Communist Party. 'If one may resort to a risky comparison,' Trotsky wrote in 1925 in Where is Britain Going?, 'one may say that the Chartist movement is



NOT SO VERY UNREASONABLE!!! EH?

like a prelude which gives in an undeveloped form the musical theme of the whole opera.'

If we are to ensure, as far as it is possible to do so, that the 'opera' is a successful 'production'; if Marxists today are to stand like the Fraternal Democrats at the head of the movement and enjoy a similar mass support; if we are to see soon 30 or 40 Marxist Labour Party MPs; if Marxists are to win the fight for the leadership of the Labour Party and the unions, which requires the setting up of a daily paper — then we need to study closely the Chartist prelude, to revive the Chartist spirit.

International

The Fraternal Democrats stressed that the struggle of the working class is international. As Harney put it (Northern Star, 26 Feb. 1848), the proletarians had to refuse to follow 'at the tail of the bourgeoisie', but rather 'to put forth the gigantic energies of our own order, to take fully and entirely that which is our own', to achieve which however 'with the certainty of success, we must unite the Proletarians of all lands.'

The enemy of the working class was not foreigners but its own ruling class. When attempts were made to rouse anti-French feeling the Fraternal Democrats declared (Northern Star, 8

Jan. 1848): 'Working men of Great Britain and Ireland your country is already invaded and subjugated by enemies within... You will not dislodge these enemies by increasing the physical force power of your rulers.' The enemy of both the French and British working men was the 'triumphant moneyocracy' in their own countries.

General Strike

Speaking in London on 28 March, 1848 (Northern Star April 1, 1848), Ernest Jones observed that at certain moments 'Physical force comes like an electric shock... it requires no telling. I would not give a straw for a movement created solely by a few leaders — it must be indigenous, racey, of the people's hearts; but it is the duty of all good men to prepare the soil for its reception — to lay the wires so that when the electric fire flashes from heaven, it may not be lost in an unmeaning tumult, but, guided by the links of organisation, strike home to its goal... Now, then, it is the time to prepare, it is too late in the eleventh hour when oligarchy may have surrounded us on all sides, and organisation be rendered impossible.'

inadequate, was demonstrated by the great strike of 1842 against wage reductions and for the People's Charter.

This eruption, which approached General Strike proportions, was described in the Manchester Guardian of Aug. 13 1842 as 'really an insurrection' and later by Harney (Neue Rheinische Zeitung, July 5 1948) as 'that great turn-out, that strike of the factory proletarians which for a moment truly threatened the downfall of all England's social institutions'.

In the Socialist Organiser of Feb. 4, 1982, John O'Mahony noted that, 'Since 1917, soviets — workers' councils elected from factories and districts — have been thrown up in a large number of countries in conditions of large-scale working class struggle.' He described how a soviet was set up in Russia in Petrograd in 1905.

More than sixty years before, in the 1842 strike, this form of struggle was adopted in Britain.

Although workers in other parts of Britain, notably miners in Staffordshire and Scotland, were already out, the strike can be said to have begun on August 8 in the Manchester area and already on August 9 a meeting was held of delegates from all the power-loom factories in Manchester.

On the 12th a meeting of 200 delegates 'representing

the various trades and mill hands of Manchester and its vicinity, as well as various parts of Lancashire and Yorkshire' (Northern Star, Aug. 13, 1842) called for the strike to be extended and maintained until the Charter was granted.

The following day these delegates issued a call for an enlarged 'Great Delegation Conference' to meet on the 15th.

The assembled delegates described themselves in an address issued on August 16 (Times, August 16, 1842) as 'the true and bona fide representatives of the people of these districts'.

At the same time a conference of the Chartist party, the National Charter Association, the delegates to which had been elected at mass meetings in various parts of Britain, also met in Manchester on the 16th.

Significantly, as the 'turn-outs from Saddleworth, Oldham, Ashton, etc., mustering from 5,000 to 6,000' entered Huddersfield on the 13th 'stopping the mills and turning out the hands', they 'advised the Huddersfield men to call a public meeting for 4 o'clock on Monday morning... and at the meeting to select a delegate, and send him to meet the 'national delegates' at Manchester on Tuesday next' (Times, August 16, 1842).

A leading article in the Times, August 18, 1842, observed: 'The march of the rioters from mill to mill, and from town to town, was for several days almost like an unobstructed triumph.'

Nevertheless, the march of the 'rioters' was stopped. How they were stopped was reported in the same issue of the Times.

When between 5,000 and 10,000 workers marched from Leek into Burslem in the Potteries on August 16 they were met by 'about 36 of the troop of Dragoons' whose 'commanding officer gave the order to charge and fire. The men in front of the mob stood firm, one more prominent than the rest. This man was aimed at as their leader, and a Dragoon with his carbine shot him through the head, and his brains were literally blown out, with a hole as large as an egg, in a mass.'

Similarly the army fired on and killed workers in other towns. There were also mass arrests.

There were signs however that the army could not be completely relied on. A correspondent in Manchester reported in the Northern Star, August 20, 1842, about the situation in Preston, where the military had fired on the people on August 13, killing two and wounding others: 'A report has reached us that fourteen of the Rifle Brigade have been brought into the town prisoners,



Workers had already suffered for trade union organisation. Above — meeting to petition King George IV on Tolpuddle Martyrs, 1834

REPUBLICANS WORKERS

under a strong escort, for refusing to fire upon the people of that town.

It also became clear that the Chartists had not built up their strength enough in the trade unions. Dr. M'Douall observed (Northern Star, August 27, 1842): 'the trades are not wholly with us.' In Sheffield Harney complained (Sheffield and Rotherham Independent, August 27, 1842): 'In some trades there might be a majority of Chartists, but the acting and leading men, the committee-men and the secretaries, and the speakers of trades, were not Chartists.'

Opposition

But the strike failed above all because although Chartists led the strike movement and the Chartist Conference and Executive declared for it, some leading Chartists, particularly the editor of the Northern Star, opposed it and others, notably the foremost Chartist leader O'Connor, gave it no more than formal support, having no intention of conducting a struggle for power.

Moreover the Chartist party was not organised to conduct such a struggle.

Among the Chartists leading or supporting the strike movement who were later to become members of the Society of Fraternal Democrats or the Democratic Committee for Poland's Regeneration (in effect a sub-committee of the society: the restoration of a united and independent Poland was a great revolutionary cause of the day) were, as well as Dr. M'Douall, who was prominent in the Chartist Executive, Robert Wild of Mottram, David Morrison, who was a delegate at both the Chartist conference and assembly of trades' delegates, Christopher Doyle, who became a member of the Chartist Executive in 1844, and Thomas Cooper.

Cooper proposed the resolution seconded by Engels at a meeting held in London in August 1845 that 'a public meeting of the democrats of all na-



A Chartist meeting demanding universal suffrage - many of the men carry guns or pitchforks

tions, residing in London, be called to consider the propriety of forming an Association for the purpose of meeting each other at certain times' (Northern Star, August 23, 1845), chairing the founding meeting of the Fraternal Democrats that was held soon afterwards.

Wild and Cooper were sentenced to two years in prison. Dr. M'Douall went abroad to avoid being arrested. Morrison and Doyle were found 'guilty' of two 'charges' but did not receive prison sentences.

National unions

Following the strike, Chartists, including men who were to become Fraternal Democrats, took the lead in building national trades' unions, notably the Miners' Association of Great Britain and Ire-

land, founded at Wakefield, on November 7, 1842.

They also took the lead in founding in 1845 the National Association of United Trades, which sought to unite all the unions. It was a forerunner of the Trades' Union Congress, although it aimed to be something more than a TUC.

Approved

In a letter from the Miners of Durham and Northumberland of which William Daniells (who became a Fraternal Democrat in March 1847) was as chairman a co-signatory, to the conference held in London to prepare the formation of the National Association (Northern Star, March 29, 1845), it was stated that although it was impossible for them to be represented because of the protracted strike in the two counties and their poverty, 'nevertheless, the Miners of these two counties most heartily approve of a Consolidated Union of all Trades, being convinced that, until such a union is effected, single Trades may struggle with oppression in vain, and we hereby pledge ourselves to use our utmost exertions to carry out so desirable an object.'

Political power

After the February 1848 revolution in France the Fraternal Democrat James Goulden, Manchester district secretary of the National Association, was one of those who took the initiative in setting up an

early Labour Party, 'The Northern Trades' Association for obtaining political and social reforms' composed of trades collectively and individual members, which aimed, its chairman, the Chartist J.W. Parker, explained, 'to show the necessity of the working classes obtaining political power, and of the trades' unions uniting together for that purpose.'

The outbreak of the February Revolution found the Chartist body once more unprepared. At the great demonstration on Kennington Common on April 10 Harney observed that (Times, Apr. 11, 1848), 'The Government had taken military precautions against their own people, for proposing to hold a public meeting and procession, of so murderous a character, that if the French had landed at Dover, and were in full march for the metropolis, they could not have been more extensive or complete.'

Civil war

According to the Bradford Observer of April 13, 1848, although actual hostilities had not broken out, it was 'hardly a figure of speech to say, that England at present is in a condition of civil war.'

However soon afterwards important steps were taken towards the construction of a party with both the leaders and the type of organisation needed for a successful struggle for power. The Chartist party was re-organised in May by the National Assembly which was

called by the Chartist National Convention which met on April 4.

Soon after the election of the Bradford Observer of April 27, 1848, described the situation in this way:

'Good Friday was never celebrated by the working classes of England as it was in this 1848. Instead of repairing to church to pray to be preserved 'from foreign enemies' and domestic divisions,' as the Queen and her Council had commanded, they assembled on the moors and commons over the length and breadth of the land, and their talk was of arms and war! They virtually repudiated their allegiance to 'the powers that be,' by choosing delegates to represent them in a National Assembly!'

The nature of the organisation of the National Chartist Association adopted by the National Assembly, which met on May 1, was succinctly described by Ernest Jones at a meeting held in Leicester on June 6 (Leicester Chronicle, June 10, 1848). It 'consisted in the division of the country into districts, which again were to be divided into wards of 100 each, sub-divided into classes of 10: each division and sub-division having a secretary or leader, and thus forming a chain for the conveyance of orders or arrangements from the executive in London: so that with great facility, without any previous public notice, and yet without secrecy, any number of men might at any time be

taken to any given point, and concentrated there.'

Moving a resolution in the National Assembly on May 12 recommending 'that every man supply himself with arms' (Northern Star, May 13, 1848), Ernest Jones said: 'When they had got 5,000,000 people enrolled among their number, they then might have hope of getting their object. Their great task was the physical organisation of the country.'

Supporting a resolution the following day for the Assembly's dissolution, Ernest Jones said (Northern Star, May 20, 1848): 'Let them enrol their names in the books, now the test and the sign of membership; let every man be prepared with a musket in his hand, and he could tell them that the Charter would very quickly be made law of the land.'

The following day a meeting convened by a bill requesting 'members of sections and national guards' to attend (Halifax Guardian, May 27, 1848), to which (Bradford Observer, May 25, 1848) 'bodies of men came ... in military order ... the various cries of the commanders of these bodies ... as they took up their positions on the ground with mechanical regularity' having 'a strange effect' was attended by perhaps 20,000 (Observer) or 30,000 (Guardian) people, estimates reaching as high as 100,000.

There seems little doubt that if the whole country had been up to the mark of Bradford the government could have been defeated.

In London, the Fraternal Democrat Thomas Frost, a Chartist leader at Croydon, later described how (Forty Years' Recollections, p. 145):

'The new organisation well stood the test applied to its capabilities on the evening of May 29, when, without any public notification, vast assemblages took place on Clerkenwell Green and Stepney, whence processions moved towards the City by routes converging on Smithfield. Uniting on that area, the whole force marched down Snow Hill, along Holborn and Oxford Street, down Regent Street, and through Pall Mall, the Strand, Fleet Street, and Ludgate Hill, into Finsbury Square, where they dispersed. The number of men who marched in that procession was estimated at 80,000. Blackaby, who assisted in the demonstration, told me that he looked back and forward as they tramped along Fleet Street six abreast, and could see neither the head nor the rear of the enormous column, whose sudden and unexpected appearance inspired fear and misgiving both in the City and among the dwellers at the West End.'

Speaking in Manchester on June 6, Ernest Jones said (Manchester Guardian, June 10, 1848):

'The same measure of nominal reform, if carried by the middle classes, would not be the same thing as if it was carried by the working classes: labour was the ruling principle, and therefore the labourers must be the ruling class ... The triumph

of the people was secure, if they adopted the scheme of organisation, resolved upon by the national assembly. They knew that five or six regiments were on their way home from murdering the Afghans and Sikhs, to murder the English, but they knew also that the soldiers were beginning to mutiny. There was a mutiny last week at Woolwich, and another at Windsor Castle, in which the officers were obliged to yield to the men.'

Dr. M'Douall said at a meeting in Ashton-under-Lyne on July 10 (Manchester Guardian, August 30, 1848), that 'several regiments have already revolted, and there is no fear from them. The whole of the troops stationed at Woolwich have in one night revolted; and I tell you that there is a committee now sitting at the Horse Guards, of men belonging to the Horse Guards, to consider their grievances.'

In the event, the Chartists were not given time to build up their organisation. The government arrested Ernest Jones, Dr. M'Douall, John West and other Chartist leaders, decapitating the movement.

Soon afterwards capitalism entered a long period of expansion in Britain and the kind of opportunity which had arisen in 1842 and 1848 did not present itself again until the General Strike of 1926, when, the lessons of Chartism not having been learnt, no principled and capable leadership existing which commanded wide support in the working class and its mass organisations, the opportunity was again lost.

In an address issued on July 4, 1848 (Northern Star, July 8, 1848), after the bloody defeat of the workers in Paris in the June days and after the arrests of Chartist leaders in Britain had begun, the Fraternal Democrats affirmed:

'The flag of the Red Republic is the flag of the Proletarians throughout Europe. The time has gone by when the masses might have been conciliated by political phrases and nominal political rights. Millions of working men in France, England, and Germany, now understand that the best of paper constitutions cannot include all the Rights of Man, nor the most important of those rights. The red flag, struck down in the Faubourg Saint Antoine, is not conquered. The faith of which that flag is the symbol, is not confined to Paris, but lives and grows in every hive of human industry; and not one, nor fifty defeats, will prevent the triumph of that faith.'

In spite of treason, massacre, proscription, and calumny -

'Labour's battle once begun, Bequeathed by bleeding sire to son, Tho' baffled now shall yet be won.'

We have to ensure that when the next big crisis comes up the battle is won, which means that now, before the eleventh hour, a successful struggle must be conducted for the leadership of the movement both in the Labour Party and the unions.

Organise against the Tebbit Bill with the new broadsheet from the Mobilising Committee for Trade Union Rights. 10p plus post from MCDTUR, 28 Middle Lane, London N8

MOBILISING COMMITTEE
IN DEFENCE OF
TRADE UNION RIGHTS

STOP
THE
TORY
ROOTBOY!



Writeback



We invite readers to send us their letters, up to a usual maximum length of 400 words. Send to 'Writeback', Socialist Organiser, c/o 28, Middle Lane, London N8.

Councillors get organised

THE first steps are being taken to organise the socialists on Councils throughout London, at a conference due to take place in London on October 9.

Following the successes of the 'Target 82' campaign to ensure that serious candidates were selected as candidates in last May's London Borough elections, and the success of a reasonably large number of these candidates in many parts of London, we have to think about taking the next steps to ensure that socialist councillors make the best of the opportunities their elected positions give them.

This means sharing ideas and experiences, and it means finding a common political basis from which to fight, which is adaptable to a wide variety of conditions. The problems faced by a left wing Council like Islington are not the same as those faced by a left minority within a right wing Labour Council, and those suffering under Tory majorities are in a different position again.

The London Labour Briefing magazine issued a basic policy statement before the May elections, and collected a large number of candidates' agreement to it. Shortly after the election they called a meeting to talk about setting up an Association of Socialist Councillors, which in turn established an Organising Committee, which was given the job of setting up a formal founding conference and drafting the basic political and organisational documents of the association.

A shortened version of the Organising Committee's draft statement of principles was printed in last week's Socialist Organiser. It is intended to be a basis on which socialist councillors can fight together and avoid unproductive disagreements.

It seeks to bring together in one body all those who intend to refuse to make cuts in services, and it seeks to spell out all the consequences of such a refusal so that serious campaign planning can be carried out together.

All Labour Councillors in London are being invited to attend the conference on October 9, and GMC's are also being invited to affiliate to the Association.

Party members who worked to get Target 82 candidates selected and elected should now work to commit both their councillors and their GMC's to the positions in the Draft statement, so that the Association can begin to play its proper part in organising the struggle against the cuts throughout London.

John Plant

Hoods, not Robin Hoods!

The Editor, Writeback, S.O.

I wish to reply to Mr. Atwell's letter in Socialist Organiser, August 26.

As a socialist, I find Mr. Atwell's attitude regarding the Kray twins puzzling to say the least.

How does Mr. Atwell expect socialists to give the Kray twins unconditional support? He cannot be serious.

It's one thing to feel sorry for some unfortunate who through circumstances may turn to crime to feed his family or make a living.

But does Mr. Atwell really think that organisations like the Mafia, local or worldwide, are something sympathetic to socialism? Of course not.

The Krays and highly organised crime are not some kind of modern Robin Hoods who will aid the poor underprivileged, they are no friends of socialism, and just because one or both of the Krays were gay doesn't alter the fact that they committed some awful crimes and to

suggest that they were an oppressed minority is a red herring to say the least.

There is nothing revolutionary about highly organised crime or criminals.

What did the mafia or groups like that ever do for the working class?

There is a vast difference between people or groups who commit crimes of violence for political ends and people like the Krays whose motive was solely financial gain or personal pleasure.

I would suggest that Mr. Atwell is mistaken when he suggests we should support the Krays unconditionally.

Having said that, however, I would concede that there are people in prison who should not be there, and there are probably people in both Houses of Parliament who should be in prison.

As socialists we should support justice and fight injustice. The Krays were not put in prison for political reasons and I have very little sympathy for them.

Pat Byrne

PRESS GANG

Daily Mail
Daily Express
Financial Times
The Daily Telegraph
The Sun

THE FUGITIVE peer, Lord Carrington, has been found alive and well and living in Britain.

Months after he vanished charged with complicity in the murder of hundreds of British and Argentine youth, Lord Carrington has been discovered running a modest multinational manufacturing company - GEC.

The small income he takes from this business, thought to be not more than a paltry £60,000 a year, has helped to restore Carrington to his former life as an inveterate company director.

Before his elevation to Foreign Secretary and subsequent disgrace, Carrington held directorships in five multinational companies, including Rio Tinto Zinc, Barclays Bank, and Cadbury-Schweppes. He would be known to sit up far into the night gambling his directorships with his friends.

The discovery that Carrington is alive after all came after months of rumour and counter-rumour. The peer's friends put it about that he was dead, having jumped without a parachute into the Falklands, stricken by what he called "a humiliating affront".

But that was a story put about to throw police and the public off his scent. The first reliable sighting came a month or so ago when Carrington was seen in the company of another international fugitive from justice, Henry Kissinger - known as Mr Biggie.

After this sighting, Carrington sat back out of the news. Friends said it was a false alarm, and put the rumours down to a Carrington look-alike.

But now we have definite proof. The man running GEC is none other than Carrington himself. He was able to hide himself among the

145,000 (but declining) labour force and the 150 separate factories.

Yesterday the man in charge said he was not Lord Carrington, and had never heard of him. But his secretary was still calling him 'Minister'.

Moreover, a secret phone conversation tape in our possession shows that the man was rung last week by Norman Tebbit, asking if he could find a use for 'about one million unemployed youth' to replace his entire labour force.

Tebbit's proposal was that the youth - whom he referred to as riff-raff - would manufacture electronics and defence equipment as well as electric kettles in exchange for luncheon vouchers and free membership of the Young Conservatives.

When he encountered some mild resistance to his idea, Tebbit warned the Carrington figure that he would 'blow the gaff' on his alias.

Confusion reigned last night over the role of the SAS. Mrs Thatcher said she had no comment on reports that the elite homicidal squad had kidnapped her former Foreign Secretary and were using him to test Britain's version of the Exocet.

Asked if she thought it was right that an internationally acknowledged criminal, hunted in 34 countries, should be secretly running Britain's largest manufacturing industry, Mrs Thatcher said Sir Michael Edwards could answer for himself.



Don't trust animals!

SCIENCE

THIS week's column is based on 'Why Animal Tests?' in Science for People No. 52.*

Most animal experiments in Britain are carried out to test the safety of various chemicals (e.g. drugs, cosmetics) to humans. The fundamental assumption then is that the results actually apply to humans. Unfortunately, there is little evidence that this is so.

Let us look more closely at how chemicals are tested in animals.

Chemicals intended for human 'consumption' must be tested to see if they cause cancers and/or if they have toxic effects on living tissue (including the unborn).

Tests for cancer-causing compounds involve giving the chemical to animals such as mice or guinea-pigs over a period of time, often in doses relatively

much higher than humans would take.

The most common animal test is the LD50 test (Lethal Dose 50%) which attempts to identify poisonous chemicals by seeing how large a dose will kill 50% of animals given it. The test lasts for 2 weeks, or until death (whichever is sooner) and no pain relief is given. Common signs of toxicity of chemicals tested are 'tears, unusual vocalisation' (I assume this is a euphemism for cries of pain or distress), diarrhoea, discharge and bleeding from the conjunctiva (outer membrane of the eye) or mouth, (and) convulsions.

Now, though at a very basic level, living organisms are remarkably similar (e.g. our DNA operates on the same code as the humblest bacterium) at the level where most chemical reactions go on in our cells, we are remarkably dissimilar from even quite close relatives. So what is poisonous to us may not be poisonous to other species - and vice versa! E.g. Eraldin (ICI's latest disaster) caused blindness only in humans, while aspirin causes birth defects in rats, but not humans - luckily, as it was never tested on animals! Also introduced before animal testing came in were

'laughing gas' (the dental anaesthetic), digitalis (the poison in fox-gloves, used to stimulate weak hearts, and cinchona bark (natural source of the anti-malarial drug, quinine).

As well as being an unreliable indicator of risk to humans, the LD50 test is frequently unreliable even with the same species, with different labs reporting wildly different results! As well as being cruel, LD50 cannot even be justified in terms of its value to human health.

Testing chemicals on unborn animals is even less reliable as the differences in embryo development between humans and other animals are even greater than the differences in cell chemistry.

Cancer testing is also quite unreliable. Firstly, too high doses in experimental animals may result simply in the killing of sensitive cells which might, with lower doses, become cancerous. Secondly, a chemical causing cancer in one species may be converted in the body of another species to a harmless chemical.

Why, then, are these misleading tests used? One answer came from Geoffrey Finsberg MP of the DHSS in 1981.

"LD50 results are required by drug regulatory authorities in countries to which we export, contributing to a net favourable balance of trade in pharmaceuticals of over £500 million".

Another answer came from R.W. Smithells, Professor of Paediatrics at Leeds University and former member of the government watchdog Committee on the Safety of Medicines, who said that tests on animal embryos were 'more in the nature of a public relations exercise than a serious contribution to drug safety'.

As a result both of protests by animal welfare campaigners and of a realisation by researchers that animal tests are unreliable, alternative test systems which are both more humane and more reliable are being developed (see SO 92 for testing anti-epilepsy drugs on moong beans).

Influential

The most influential development in this field was the Ames test, introduced about a decade ago. The theory behind this was that, because all cancers involve some alteration of the cell's DNA, testers could give the suspect chemical to bacteria and look for mutations in their DNA. These could be spotted very easily, in a short time, often in a day.

Possibly more reliable still are tests using human cells - either cancer cell lines such as the HeLa line (which came from a cancer victim who died in the 1930s), or cells from specific human tissues, such as glands, liver, gut cells etc,

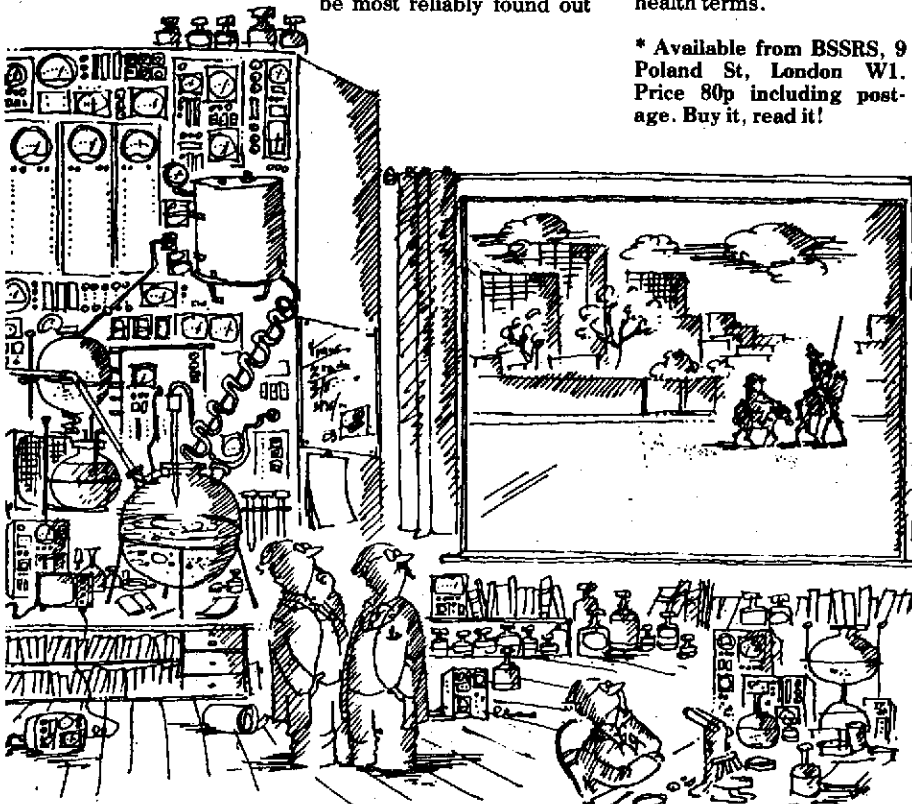
By Les Hearn

which might be particularly susceptible to certain types of damage. An individual person's reaction to certain anti-cancer drugs (which can be unique) can perhaps be most reliably found out

by testing the drugs on cancer cells from their body.

Being kind to animals may not be profitable, but it seems to make sense in health terms.

* Available from BSSRS, 9 Poland St, London W1. Price 80p including postage. Buy it, read it!



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Interested in science and interested in socialism?
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IN REVIEW

IAN SWINDALE looks at ITV's new series

The Cold War Game

ITV are currently running a six-part, peak viewing time series on the division of Europe into two armed camps, dominated on the one hand by the United States and on the other by the Soviet Union.

In the second part, shown last Monday, 13th, Jonathan Dimbleby set out to put the division in the context of a ten-minute history of Europe since 1800.

Dimbleby's basic argument was that a Europe of peasant-based societies, ruled by the heads of Empires who maintained an uneasy balance of power among themselves and sent their peasants to war when that balance of power broke down, had now been totally transformed. A new balance of power had been established.

The hammer blows of industrial revolution, World War and revolution had destroyed the old society, replacing it with a post-war Europe dominated by a Soviet Union intent on maintaining a protective barrier, around its own borders and a United States determined to 'contain communism' and challenge its 'expansionism' anywhere on the globe and particularly in Europe.

Arriving breathless at today, Dimbleby argued that there is little to choose between the two superpowers. The US sends its troops around the world to fight and die to protect unsavoury dictatorships in the name of 'democracy', while the USSR sends peace-loving tanks into satellite capitals to crush 'counter-revolution' by killing socialist citizens fighting for their freedom.

If the USSR can be blamed for Afghanistan, then the US is responsible for El



Salvador. If the USSR repressed the people in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Poland, then this was balanced in the West by military dictatorships in Spain, Portugal, Greece and Turkey.

The Cold War conflict is fuelled by an arms race which made the game so dangerous that the rules had to be changed. That's why the USA under Carter took up the policy of detente offered by the Soviet Union.

Now that policy is dead. Reagan no longer believes in detente.

A spokesperson for the Soviet government, interviewed by Dimbleby, followed on by arguing that detente is the only guarantee against nuclear war.

There was a US spokes-

person, too, who argued to an incredulous Dimbleby that it is a serious foreign policy goal of the US government 'to put Marxism-Leninism into the trash-can of history'. He argued that future relations between the USA and the Soviet Union will be better now that the US has abandoned detente and begun a huge arms build-up!

Far cry

The programme concluded by suggesting that the Cold War game is not in the interests of the people of Europe, and asking whether Europeans will accept it for much longer.

The whole argument is of course a far cry from the official position of the British ruling class that America is the friend of 'free' Europe and Russia its enemy. No doubt Thatcher and the Tory backwoodsmen and women will see such a programme as further evidence of the Marxist takeover of television.

But the description of Europe as the victim of two superpowers who care nothing for us except as a potential battleground for World War 3 does not explain much. And the implicit argument for the 'people' (undefined) to create a neutral, nuclear-free Europe, does not tell us what to do about the threat.

With four more parts of the series to come, it will be interesting to see what answers (if any) Dimbleby will offer.

Analysis

What was certainly missing on Monday was a class analysis which can explain why the blocs exist; why the main threat of nuclear war comes from the imperialist system, and not from war-crazy individuals; why the Soviet policy of detente is no guarantee against nuclear war; and why the working class of Europe can only combat the increasing danger of a Third World War by fighting for its own class interests and the overthrow of capitalism in Western Europe and the Stalinist bureaucracies in the East.

As a symptom of the 'European pacifism' so dreaded by NATO chiefs and as a reflection of the growing concern of millions of European workers that we may be sacrificed in World War 3, the programme was interesting. But for answers look elsewhere.

• 'The Cold War Game', ITV Mondays 8.30pm.



A lean year for wages

by Wendy Mustill

THE 1981/2 wages round was a lean year for pay bargaining according to a comprehensive survey of agreements covering 14 million workers, recently published by the Labour Research Department.

Almost all the workforce took a pay cut in real terms in the last twelve months, because 94% of all pay agreements were below 9%, the lowest rate of inflation during that period.

A combination of the economic recession and fear of unemployment and lay off reduced pay rises to 5% or below for millions of workers in the industries most severely affected by the Tories' kamikaze monetarist policies: in engineering, vehicles, textiles and clothing, and other manufacturing. Only eight out of the total 365 major pay settlements examined received a pay rise equal to or more than the inflation rate during the period.

Cops top league

Top of the pay league were Thatcher's chosen elite, the police, who with their 13.2% increase in September 1981 far outstripped the rest of the public sector.

Low basic pay is a continuing feature of British collective bargaining for manual workers, with the vast majority of nationally agreed minimum rates in most major industries well below £100/week.

Male manual workers are still dependent on average for a quarter of their earnings coming from overtime, shift and bonus payments, to earn anything like a living wage.

Even if this was a desirable status for men — which it isn't — it is one major reason for the continuing difference between men's and women's earnings.



Bye bye living standards!

Family commitments and legal restrictions mean that women are unable to boost their incomes in this way, and their average earnings are only about 72% of men's, a proportion which has been falling for the past three years.

Working time

Shorter working time

For those lucky enough still to have a job, significant advances have been made in reducing working time. Indeed, shorter weekly hours and longer holidays represented the only real gains made by the unions in the last pay round.

Three and a half million people have won a shorter week in the past year, but there is still a very wide gap between manual and non-manual workers. Over three quarters of the workforce now work 39 hours or less before overtime. But only half a million manual workers (less than 6%) are down to the TUC

target of a 35 hour week, whereas 25% of white collar workers are. Another 2 million manual workers have already negotiated shorter working time to come into effect in the coming pay round.

Improved paid leave was also an area of substantial gain last year, with one third of all organised workers winning longer holidays. We in Britain are still trailing behind the rest of Europe in the holiday stakes, but one in two people are now on 22 days plus Bank Holidays, and one in eight get 5 weeks or more. There was less movement on holidays among non-manual workers. This is a depressing indication that areas of white collar work — offices, shops, banks, drawing offices, etc. — where new technology has been most rapidly introduced in the past two to three years have won very little in return in the form of shorter working time.

Here to stay!

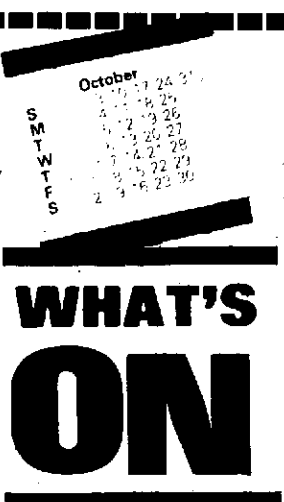
IF YOU oppose racist deportations or internal passport checks; if you want the Government to immediately let in foreign husbands and fiancés of women living here; if you want them to let in United Kingdom passport holders, and wives and children of black people settled here (like Anwar Ditta's children who were only allowed in after a fierce struggle); or if you are already campaigning against these injustices, then you should come to the Campaign Against Racist Laws conference at County Hall on October 23 [10am]. If you can't go — make sure someone else (any number of delegates) from your Labour Party/union branch/etc can go.

The Conference, as its name suggests, will organise action — support for local anti-deportation campaigns and for national initiatives these campaigns may propose; pressure on local councils to stop asking for passports for jobs and in housing and education; work to get unions to adopt and to implement policy against passport checks and racist laws generally; a lobby of the Home Office to end the waiting lists; action in support of foreign husbands and fiancés; a national demonstration in the Spring.

Speakers include: Darcus Howe, Jo Richardson MP, Harpal Brar (IWA GB), Prem Singh (IWA GB), Alf Dubs MP, Fiona McTaggart, Tarlochan Gata-Aura, Pal Luthra, Pete Alexander, Dave Cook.

Sponsors include: The Labour Party, ACTT, NALGO, NUPE, Bakers' Union, L.Gardners and Shipley Metal Box shop stewards' committees, Bradford 12 Defence Campaign, Vishnu Sharma, Paul Boateng, Anwar Ditta, John Tilley MP and others.

Campaign Against Racist Laws: contact 56 Edithna St, SW9 9JP



Paid ads 5p per word, £4 per column inch. Send to Socialist Organiser (What's On), 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

Women's Campaign for Jobs conference

Saturday September 18, 11am-5pm, County Hall, London SE1.

Women only. Details: Rachel, (01)-607 5268.

SHEFFIELD Socialist Organiser. September 22: The Labour Party witch-hunt. At the Brown Cow, The Wicker, starting 7.30.

LAMBETH/ SOUTHWARK Socialist Organiser group forums: 8.30pm at 41 Camberwell Grove, London SE5. September 16: The fight against black oppression. September 30: Fighting women's oppression.

NOTTINGHAM Socialist Organiser meets every Friday 7.30pm at the International Community Centre, 61B Mansfield Rd.

TURKEY Solidarity Campaign activities to mark the second anniversary of the coup in Turkey.

Thursday September 30 12.30-2 pm. Circle lounge Bar, Winter Gardens, Blackpool. Speakers include Reg Race, MP.

SPARTACIST Truth Kit. New pamphlet on the politics and practice of the Spartacist League, by John Lister. 70 pages, £1 plus 26p postage, from WSL, PO Box 135, London N1.

MANCHESTER Socialist Organiser discussion meeting on Poland, with speaker from PSC.

Sunday September 19, 7.30 in the Lass O'Gowrie, Charles St.

Health Workers for the Full Claim: next meeting

Saturday September 18, 10.30-2.30, Room 143, County Hall, Waterloo, London.

LABOUR Committee on Palestine (Yorkshire Region).

Speaking tour on 'The Palestinians and the lessons of Lebanon'. Speakers: Omar al-Ahmed, Barry Turner, Garth Frankland, Roland Rance.

HALIFAX. Friday October 8, 7.30 at AUEW Club, opposite Bus Station.

LEEDS. Monday October 11, 7.30 at Trades Council Club, Saville Mount.

KEIGHLEY: Wednesday October 13, 7.30 at Keighley Library Theatre.

BRADFORD: Friday October 15, 7.30 at Central Library, Meeting Room 2.

POLISH SOLIDARITY Contact addresses. Solidarnosc Trade Union Working Group, Acorn House, 314/320 Gray's Inn Road, London WC1X 8DP. Tel: 01-837 9464.

SOCIALIST ORGANISER North of England day school on 'The International Class Struggle'. Sunday October 31, 10am to 5.30pm at Manchester University Students' Union, Oxford Road, Manchester. Lots of workshops, speakers, discussions, etc. Registration £1.50 waged, 75p claimants, from 78 High St, Atherton, Lancs. Cheap lunch available, crèche provided.

MIDLANDS People's March for Jobs. September 15 to 18: a five-pronged march from Stoke, Derby, Rugby, Hereford, and Shrewsbury, converging on Birmingham. Coordinator: Sid Platt, (021 643 6084).

ISLINGTON Socialist Organiser: next meeting Sunday September 26, 3pm, at Thornhill Neighbourhood Project, Orkney House, Caledonian Rd. Tea, coffee, and sandwiches provided. For babysitting phone Nik, 607 5268.

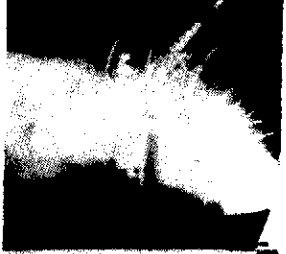
HARINGEY Socialist Organiser: fortnightly meetings at Brabant Rd trade union centre. For details phone 802 0771 or 348 5941.

OXFORD Claimants' Defence Committee benefit disco: Saturday September 18, East Oxford Community Centre. Unwaged 50p, waged 75p minimum.

Public meetings every Saturday at 11am, 'B' block, 44b Princes Street.

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Workers' Socialist Review no.2



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Save Croxteth comprehensive

CHRIS ERSWELL
reports on a
Liverpool campaign

THE Croxteth estate, on the outskirts of Liverpool, is in a state of decline: derelict properties, boarded up windows, unemployment, non-existent facilities for youth.

And then we were told that the local comprehensive school would close at the end of the summer term.

Children were supposed to travel two miles into the city to Ellergreen comprehensive school - a post first world war slum school with no playing fields. (Croxteth is a post second world war building surrounded by acres of playing fields).

The council later voted to keep Croxteth open, reversing its original decision, but Keith Joseph over-ruled it.

So parents, organised as the Croxteth Community Action Committee, took over the school buildings in the final weeks of the summer term in order to stop the movement of equipment from the buildings. Electric sewing machines were being shipped out to Ellergreen in the boot of a teacher's car.

Unfortunately, the electricity was cut off by a NWEB intruder before the parents were able to stop it. The power is still off.

A summer school pilot scheme was begun in the buildings a fortnight ago to keep up the momentum of the occupation.

Local unemployed and retired teachers have responded to appeals by the parents to put on courses which include: a writers' workshop, Art, 'O'-level and 'A'-level English literature, 'O'-level science, computer theory and practice, classical guitar, 'O'-level and 'A'-level sociology, 'O'-level and 'A'-level social and economic history, theatre and drama.

There are 12 volunteer teachers, and the summer school hopes to get 100 students.

The majority of the previous staff have played a passive role.

Since the teaching staff has been guaranteed no loss in status or salary, they have had nothing tangible to lose, except inconvenience. The minority who have participated in the protest demonstration have correctly feared victimisation if they become involved in a major way in the occupation and summer school.

After four weeks of occupation it is clear that a substantial number of parents are resigning themselves to the closure especially as the holidays reach their end.

A new initiative is needed. A tactic that should be seriously considered is a rent strike.

This would bring more pressure to bear on the vacillating council, and their cynical Tory govern-

ment backers.

It would also strengthen the ability of the parents to seek city wide supporting action such as one-day strikes via the trades council and District Labour Party.

Council rents include a rates element. The parents should campaign for a rent strike on the basis that the estate and school is being starved of services - educational, housing, repairs, general community and recreational facilities, etc.

The struggle must be spread outside of the estate - a demonstration in the city centre, further pickets and occupations of the education offices, Council

chamber, etc.

Appeals for blacking of the council by supplies, and picketing of the council offices and depots to turn away supplies would further escalate pressure on the council.

Pickets of the NAS and NUT and manual union meetings should also be considered to demand supporting strike action.

The needs of school children should come before big business profits. The education service should be protected from cuts and inflation (higher amongst education suppliers) by a sliding scale of public spending on education (and services generally).

LT cuts held back

CUTS in London underground services due for introduction on September 20 have been postponed again, but possibly only for 7 days.

This latest attempt to bring in the cuts was personally authorised by the new LT boss, Dr Keith Bright, and follows the 'failure' of the joint union/management working party (set up after a strike in June blocked these same cuts) to find other 'savings'.

Last week union leaders reaffirmed their all-out opposition to the cuts, and repeated their instruction to tube workers not to work the new timetables. The prospects however are none too bright. Despite their formal position union leaders have done little to organise. And LT is also planning a much larger round of cuts for December.

ANDREW ROSSING

Bombay support to strikers

ABOUT 100 workers at Air India have been on strike since July 2, demanding reinstatement and a commitment by management to abide by signed agreements. The strike was provoked by the bosses unilaterally imposing new rosters and sacking shop steward Alroy de Silva, and Air India have since sacked 91 strikers.

ALROY de SILVA told us about the latest developments.

"OUR TWO convenors have just returned from Bombay, bringing a resolu-

tion from the combined Guilds [unions] in Air India and Indian Airlines [the short-haul operator] that unless our dispute is resolved in a week to ten days, they will start sympathy action.

A total strike there is forbidden by law, but they are planning work-to-rules and other tactics.

While they were in India, our convenors were followed about everywhere by police. There is panic there at this international link-up. Gandhi has made a statement about our dispute, saying that the management should concede.

Bombay is electric just now. The textile workers there have been on strike for eight months. There is a strong feeling that something could develop which will challenge the whole system.

Inspiring

It's quite inspiring, but it's a shame that someone in a Third World country has to help out because the mighty T&G here can't deliver.

We're meeting a group of T&G officials, including Ron Todd, on Wednesday, to discuss solidarity action."

- Picket lines: 24 hours at Heathrow Cargo, 8am to 7.15pm at New Bond St.
- Messages and money to TGWU Air India branch 1/1305, Transport House, 7-9 South Road, Southall, Middlesex.

Witch-hunters break the rules

Loser 'elected'

Bill Peters looks at some strange manoeuvres by TGWU officials in the Midlands

ONE THING can be said about the right wing - at least the right wing in TGWU Region 5: once they start a witch-hunt, they never give up!

For eight years they have been trying to destroy the left wing in BL's Cowley Assembly plant. In 1974 the plant leadership was removed by a Regional Committee inquiry and the method of election was changed in order to install a right-wing convenor. The powerful TGWU branch in the plant was split up twice, once in 1974 and again in 1977.

In December 1977 the right wing lost the convenor position to the left. Then in January this year they suffered the final blow - the entire left slate for convenor and five deputy convenors was elected and the right wing wiped out.

Now, eight months after that election, Brian Mathers, regional secretary of Region 5, has moved to reverse that defeat in a move which is scandalous even if measured against his own notorious record in such matters.

The method of election was determined in 1974. There would be a shop floor ballot for convenor followed by a second shop floor ballot for seven deputy convenors (since reduced to five). Obviously the winner of the first ballot would be the convenor, and seven (or five) votes in the second would establish the deputies. It worked that way in 1975, 1977, 1979, and in January of this year.

Now Mathers has ruled, as a result of representat-

ions from the right wing branch, the 5/837, that the key position of first deputy convenor will not be held by the deputy with the highest vote, as in the past, but by the runner-up in the convenor's election!

The runner-up, of course, was the right-wing candidate - who received a derisory vote against the left.

He then stood in the deputies' elections - and failed even to win one of the five positions balloted for.

The reaction in the plant has been one of outrage. Which is not surprising, since the effect of Mathers' decision is that the right wing candidate, on the basis of losing both elections, is elevated to the second highest position in the plant.

GOLDING'S 'SOLIDARITY'

Ricky Houston (Edinburgh POEU External Branch) looks at how the POEU leaders have joined in the witch-hunt against Militant

ON January 27 of this year a letter was sent to POEU branches, sincerely and fraternally addressed by David Norman, the General Treasurer, on the question of the Militant Tendency of the Labour Party. Militant wanted to speak to branches on the Labour Party witch-hunt, and were requesting donations for their fund to publish literature opposing the witch-hunt.

David Norman (who in a speech at the Union's Special Conference last year lost his normal cool composure, and in the best Prince Philip type accent began deriding 'Trots and Marxists', i.e., the conference delegates), ruled that donations to 'any other political faction' than the Labour Party proper would be a direct breach of Union rule 5 paragraph 4 and the 1913 Trade Union Act.

Letters from any other political factions were not proper to the branch agenda, he advised branches.

But the balmy summer weather has apparently changed the 'climate' of the POEU leadership's rulebook. On August 4, a certain John Golding, M.P., Political Organiser of the POEU (sponsored by the union on his way into Her Majesty's Parliament) wrote a letter to POEU branches calling upon POEU delegates to Constituency Labour Parties to support the Labour Party

anger of POEU delegates at CLP meetings when the correspondence was read out! Golding, Norman & Co. are not adverse to witch-hunts in their own union. Last year the POEU leadership which is dominated numerically by the Mainstream faction, a right-wing organisation in the POEU, (they do not consider themselves a faction, they say, but rather a collection of individuals) attempted a witch-hunt

It is therefore apparent that the Union leadership are in breach of their own rules.

Not content with writing to POEU branches, a further letter was published dated August 5 and was sent to most if not all Constituency Labour Parties informing them of the POEU NEC's decision to call upon POEU delegates to support the register.

Generous man that he is, John Golding, M.P. and Political Officer of the POEU, sincerely (but not fraternally) writing to the CLP's also gave them a gift of the aforementioned Labour Solidarity Campaign comic.

Golding, of course, did not inform POEU branches of this later letter. Imagine the surprise, confusion and

anger of POEU delegates at CLP meetings when the correspondence was read out!

Golding, Norman & Co. are not adverse to witch-hunts in their own union. Last year the POEU leadership which is dominated numerically by the Mainstream faction, a right-wing organisation in the POEU, (they do not consider themselves a faction, they say, but rather a collection of individuals) attempted a witch-hunt

against the POEU Broad Left faction - but failed at that attempt.

There's little reason to suppose they will not try again, especially if a witch-hunt is successfully carried out in the Labour Party.

Supporters of democracy and open-discussion and decision making in the POEU should refuse to comply with the NEC call and argue the case in POEU branches for opposition to the Register.



Generous? - Golding

Clydebridge talk-shop

"SHADOW boxing" - that's how last week's public meeting against the closure of Clydebridge steelworks should have been billed.

Local Labour MP Gregor Mackenzie said: "We have to make it plain that this is not the way business should be conducted in Scotland at the present time". And a local Liberal district councillor added: "There is room for a more enterprising approach to marketing British steel. We have to stimulate management".

No mention of 'stimulating' workers to take on the Tories.

Sadly, speaker after speaker continued in the same vein, none going further than general condemnation of the closure.

Only one speaker (myself) argued for organising the local labour movement and not wasting time talking to the Tories and the

bosses.

The reply from the chair was that: "We have to forget our politics" for the sake of the fight against closure!

The meeting passed a resolution calling on the Secretary of State for Scotland to 'intervene'.

The development of an active campaign faces problems - specifically, the local influence of the Communist Party. Their way forward is to build parochial local Popular Fronts and to call for government action.

What we need instead is a working-class campaign which will have the active support of the local labour movement, tenants' groups and unemployed. A committee formed from these groups should discuss the action needed to save Clydebridge and kick out the Tories.

IAN MCLEISH

Leyland Action Committee

New Leyland Action Committee bulletin out now. It contains facts, ideas and proposals on the closure of Leyland. Plus a look at last year's experience and reports from the plants.

For more details contact Denham, secretary, Leyland Action Committee, 29, Birmingham 29.



Mathers

SEPT 22

Make it a General Strike!

NHS PAY FIGHT

HELP

Jenny Fisher surveys local preparations for September 22

THE LEAD shown by the Fleet Street electricians last month in support of the health workers is now being taken up by trade unionists across the country.

The electricians' action showed the boost trade union solidarity can give. Not only did they stand up to intimidation from the bosses then; they seem certain to do it again, and take the other Fleet Street unions out with them.

The NGA has called a one-day strike on all papers — not just Fleet Street. SOGAT 82 officials have recommended to their Executive that the union should strike to stop Wednesday's papers — and that the strike should go ahead regardless of any injunctions the newspaper bosses wave in front of them.

Geraghty

The verdict in the Geraghty case has raised the confidence of Fleet Street trade unionists — but the battle won't stop there.

Even if the Fleet Street bosses have been scared off for now, some employer somewhere is very likely to run to the courts for help and protection against the wave of strike action. The working class movement must be ready to respond and defend its members if faced with a second such attack.

The Fleet Street action has spread to other workers in the media. The TV technicians' union (ACTT) is recommending strike action to its members. This looks likely to black out ITV programmes completely between 5.30pm and 8.30 (peak viewing time). There is also likely to be some disruption of BBC television and radio programmes: probably short, unexpected interruptions.

The publicity around the last electricians' solidarity strike has shown the value of action in the media: disruption of papers and television will really bring the dispute home!

The solidarity action is by no means restricted to the media. All over the country, workers are meeting and making plans to show support.

Way behind

The TUC has called for action at last, but they're way behind what is needed.

The TUC Health Services Committee has let this dispute drag on for months, and only the determination of the rank and file health service workers has forced them to call for any action.

Even so, many TUC officials and union leaders are standing in the way of the action, not encouraging it. For three years they have sat back and let the Tories wage their war unhindered against the working class.

Even now that the need for a class response is so clear, labour movement leaders are hastily qualifying their support.

As little as possible, as late as possible, is their motto. The lead has come not from the top of the unions, but the local rank and file.

Campaign

In Islington, a Health Workers' Pay Campaign has been organised by health workers with the local Labour Party and other unions. It has already called a local day of solidarity strikes on September 3, and is now campaigning for the 22nd.

In Coventry, a shop stewards' conference has been called for Tuesday 14th, to plan for the 22nd. In Scotland, the Scottish TUC called a conference of shop

JOHN HARRIS



Torpedo the Tories!

stewards and officials which voted unanimously for all-out strike action.

This sort of local organising and alternative leadership is what we need to make the 22nd a success.

The best results have come from the areas where trade union activists have already started planning for the day of action.

In South Yorkshire, a Joint Shop Stewards' Committee has been coordinating plans for the past two weeks. They have made contacts in local unions, and organised health workers to speak to union meetings.

Already, steel and engineering workers have pledged action, as have bakers in

Rotherham.

The Trades Council has called a march and rally, which will be the focus for local strikers, together with mass pickets on local hospitals.

In Leicester likewise there will be a mass picket — outside the Royal Infirmary — as a focus for local strikers. Local health

workers expect this to be supported by gas workers and workers from several factories who have agreed to stage 24 hour all-out strikes, as well as teachers, who are likely to stop work for the day.

Workers with a tradition of strong militant action are particularly prominent in the pledges of support to the health service.

Dockers in Hull will stop work for 24 hours. Liverpool dockers too have already voted to come out.

Miners are standing by the solidarity pledge from their union president Arthur Scargill, particularly in South Wales and Scotland.

But every section of the labour movement has a part to play.

In Coventry, for example, the Labour council (following a resolution from Coventry South West CLP) has agreed to cancel business for the day, and is publicising its action.

This occurs in an already militant area. Many hospitals in the West Midlands are already down to accident and emergency cover only. Action by clerical and computer staff has stopped payment of bills to nationalised industries, and one District Health Authority has been threatened with having its phones cut off as a result.

The NHS dispute has now grown into a battle about much more than a 12% increase, and it is the resilience and determination of the health workers which has made it so.

The 12% must be won: but the battle to win it has shown the other important aspects of the dispute.

It has shown the need for trade union solidarity, and why the right for workers to take solidarity action must be safeguarded. It has also

shown — by the backing down of the court in the Geraghty case — that only the very action itself will protect the right to take solidarity action.

It has also made clear that solid trade union action will make the Tories back down — they have done so partly already, and can be forced to do so again.

All out for the 12 per cent means you, too!

What councils can do

by Alan Clinton
(chief whip,
Islington council)

ISLINGTON'S Labour Councillors have been active in recent weeks in support of the pay campaign of the health workers.

At its meeting on August 2, the Council passed a motion expressing its full support for the 12% pay claim.

Before and after that time groups of councillors have supported the picket line at the Whittington Hospital, and supported the campaign in many other ways. On July 21 a 300 strong demonstration in support of the Health workers set out with a speech from the Town Hall steps by Council Leader Margaret Hodge. On August 12 a large group of Councillors supported a street meeting and leafletting at Archway tube station. Deputy Leader Valerie Veness spoke at a public meeting held that evening.

Perhaps more significant was the active support by Councillors for industrial action in support of the hospital workers. The local day of action on September 3 was supported not only by active participation in the picketting and demonstrating on that day.

This support contributed in some degree to the strong turn out on the September 3 Day of Action from large sections of the Council workforce, particularly on the manual side. At least 2,000 of the Council's employees were on strike and nearly 500 marched from Whittington hospital to St. Bartholemew's during that day as part of a further demonstration of support.

Strong efforts are already underway to get further industrial action in Islington on September 22 and it is hoped to exceed the turn out of the earlier day from those who strike also and attend the national demonstration in Hyde Park.

CAPA phone tapped

by Susan Carlyle (Tower Hamlets Labour councillor)

CAPA (Community Action for Police Accountability) was set up in East London last year by a group of people after they were directly involved in an incident with the police.

Their celebration party at the end of a multi-racial project for under-5s was attacked by the police, who were pursuing their business of stopping or being suspicious of any young blacks. Despite overwhelming evidence that the people arrested had a legitimate right to be at a private party, one person was convicted.

The people came together to form an organisation to monitor police harassment and to offer a legal service to anybody needing assistance. With Greater London Council funding, they are now an established form of support.

Recently CAPA was

mentioned in Parliament by local Labour MP Ian Mikardo, who asked the Home Office about the tapping of their phone. Who had authorised it?

Vicki Carter, the worker who heard her own voice played back on the phone from Leman St Police Station, described it:

"I had just had a conversation with an officer about a case we were taking up, and put my hand on the receiver to clear the line prior to making another call. Then I heard my call all over again."

"We would be naive not to recognise that the police are interested in our calls, and we have always had a common sense attitude to the use of the phone. We are not raving paranoids. We are running a service which is basically working for police accountability in an area where no such

thing existed. Obviously we expect to be watched."

Racism

Now CAPA is supporting prosecutions against racists where the police are ignoring, and by neglect condoning, racism. For too long the police have been allowed to run roughshod over people's rights.

They don't want organisations like CAPA, or the louder calls for accountability to the community that the labour movement is putting forward. Thanks to Labour GLC funding and CAPA's determination, many more people will not be wrongly convicted, fewer young unemployed people will be harassed, and fewer racists will escape scot-free.

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Socialist Organiser is not just a paper. We fight to organise workers in the struggle for a new leadership in the labour movement.

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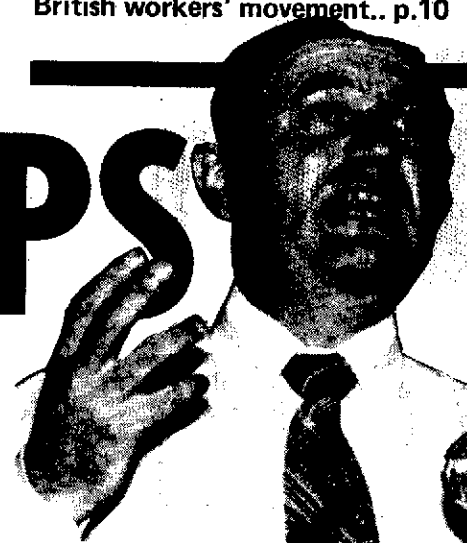


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RIGHT WING GROUPS GIVEN GREEN LIGHT



Pat Wall — Bradford North's candidate, and he'll
stay that way!

by John Bloxam

MONDAY'S meeting of the Labour Party NEC Organisation Sub-Committee passed a report on the register from general secretary Jim Mortimer by 14 votes to seven.

First it tried to clear away some problems. After all, the right wing groups have private meetings, their own sources of funds, etc. So Mortimer's report sets out to excuse them one by one.

Labour Friends of Israel might get substantial sums from outside sources, but with some adjustment the recommendation is that they'll be all right.

Trade Unions for a Labour Victory and the St Ermin's Group of trade union leaders [secretary Roy Grantham] also get a clean bill of health. The fact that their meetings are not open to all party members, and indeed are secret in the case of the St Ermin's group, is no mortal sin for them. It's just "the way we run things in the labour movement".

Complaints against a "tight, self-perpetuating elite governing... organisations from the top with very little reference to the bulk of those who may join the group" [Michael Foot in Labour Weekly] apply only as slanders against the Left.



2,600 Labour activists rallied against the witch-hunt last Saturday, 11th. Report: page 3.

Having squared the circle, the report then deals with the real target. The recommendation is that the first NEC after Conference will be charged with dealing with Militant's "inner core".

There will be a loyalty questionnaire to all MPs and prospective parliamentary candidates, asking whether they are part of

this 'inner core'. If they are, then they're for the chop.

The report doesn't deal with how this strategy is going to win. But clearly it depends for success on rapid demoralisation and willingness to give up among its opponents. We shouldn't give the Foot leadership either of these.

Barry Turner, a Bradford Labour councillor, replies to Michael Foot's call for a purge against Pat Wall and other Militant supporters adopted as Labour parliamentary candidates

CONSIDER these credentials: a man who has been President of his local Trades Council for the past seven or eight years, has been a member of the Labour Party for decades, has held almost every unofficial office in the local Labour movement [election agent, ward offices], and has been a Labour councillor — and who in doing these jobs has become one of the most respected members of the local labour movement.

Quite good credentials for a prospective Labour Member of Parliament, wouldn't you think?

Well, that's what Bradford North Labour Party thought when they first selected Pat Wall, a supporter of the Militant tendency, as their prospective Parliamentary candidate. That's what they confirmed when, on a second vote, Pat won again — by an increased majority.

Yet the views of the local Labour Party — the people who know Pat and his record best — are not good enough for Michael Foot.

Last Sunday, on BBC Radio 4's 'The World This Weekend', Foot warned that should Party Conference accept that 'the Militant tendency is in contradiction of the Party', then local Labour Parties will have to toe the line.

That means, according to Foot, that Pat Wall and seven other Militant supporters who have been chosen by their constituencies as prospective Parliamentary candidates will have to go.

Foot's naivety in talking as if eight constituencies will ditch the candidates they have carefully adopted and choose other ones without a squeak is incredible

— especially in view of the experience of the groundswell caused by the NEC's initial refusal to endorse Bermondsey's choice of Peter Tatchell.

Bradford North are equally determined: Labour Party members have made their choice, and they're sticking to it. They're prepared to fight, too: all of them, every ward, no question.

And so are local trade unionists — the most long-standing supporters of Pat Wall.

What is further contradictory about Foot's statement is that he accepted, in the same interview, that there are many ordinary members of the Labour Party who sell the Militant newspaper, and yet are still able to 'make a good contribution to the Party'. These people he has 'no desire to see expelled'. So what is different about being selected as a parliamentary candidate? Is it that these people are extraordinary?

Or is it that Foot is spearheading the right wing's demand to have Militant-supporting Labour candidates purged — as a blow designed to intimidate the whole of the Left — and at the same time trying to string along Labour Party members who feel that 'ordinary' Militant supporters are OK but maybe there are some 'ringleaders' who deserve the chop?

He should not be allowed to string anyone along. An injury to one is an injury to all: a move to endorse Pat Wall or any other candidate is a blow against the rights of every Labour Party and affiliated trade union. Unite to stop the witch-hunt!

New threat in Lebanon

HOURS after Lebanese Phalangist leader Bashir Gemayel was killed by a bomb, Israeli

planes were screaming over West Beirut and gunfire was crackling.

Whoever planted the bomb (as we go to press, no-one has claimed it), the Israelis and the right-wing Lebanese Christian militias will use it as a signal to redouble the onslaught on the Muslim communities and on the Palestinians who remain in Lebanon.

Already thousands face disease and death in the prison camps established by the Israeli army in southern Lebanon (see report from Haifa, page 5).

What both Israel and the right-wing Christians want is a Lebanon 'stabilised' by the expulsion of the Palestinians, the crushing of the Lebanese Left, and sectarian Christian-Maronite rule.

The recent moves by Reagan to push Israel into policies more in line with US imperialism's overall plans for retaining a grip on the Middle East may encourage Begin to create more 'accomplished facts' by new attacks in Lebanon.

The Palestinians and the working people of Lebanon will pay the price. They should have our solidarity. Black the Israeli war machine!

Jobs not bombs!



North West Youth CND and Labour Party Young Socialists branches are organising a Jobs Not Bombs march from Manchester to Blackpool on September 23 to 27, finishing with a lobby of Labour Party conference. Details. Youth March, Barnes Wallis Building, UMIST, Sackville St, Manchester (061 236 9114 or 4905).

£6000 fund

SPONSOR THE SOCIALIST ORGANISER
RUNNERS IN THE MERSEY MARATHON!

Name

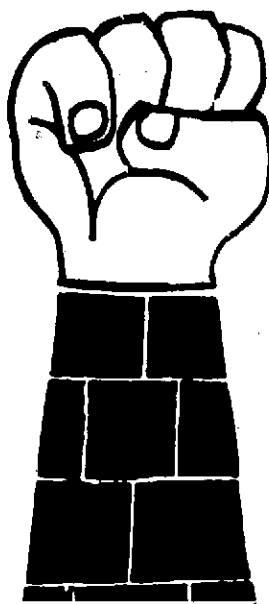
Address

I will sponsor all three runners/two runners (names)/one runner (.....)

for £..... per mile each, plus £..... to finish.

Rush sponsorships to Wirral Socialist Organiser, 1 Wellington Rd, New Brighton, Merseyside, before September 26.

With £9.59 this week from Birmingham, £2 from Sheffield, and £1 from Leigh, the total stands at £3670.07.



Three of the most unfit people in Socialist Organiser intend to put their lives on the line.

They plan to run 26 miles! Yes, 26 miles.

Some people may laugh at the fact that three of Wallasey's idle poor intend to run a marathon. But they can, and will, on Sunday September 26, in Liverpool.

These wonderful specimens of ill-health are not running for the good of their health, or any masochistic tendencies they might have, but for money.

So if these three stupid idiots intend to kill themselves, the least you can do is sponsor their efforts.

So far they have about £250 in sponsorships. You have just over a week to make their ordeal worth it. Make sure you sponsor them now, to give them a reason for finishing this marathon alive.

Albert Ross, chief coach. All money raised goes to Socialist Organiser.