

Socialist Organiser

Paper of the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory

NO TALKS WITH THE TORIES

IF THE Tories expected trouble from the TUC when they were elected, then their minds will have been set at rest by now. The General Council motion, 'Campaign for Economic and Social Advance', is completely toothless, and all the more militant alternatives have been composed out of existence.

Indeed there is a danger that the toothless General Council resolution will be replaced by another —

sponsored by an unholy alliance of EETPU, ISTC, TASS and SCPS — that is not just toothless but gumless too.

Last time the Tories were in, they were battered and

then swept out of office by three years of militant trade union struggle to defend standards of living and trade union rights.

The trade union leaders are terrified of a return to

those days. They want 'national unity' and they want 'good industrial relations', or class collaboration as it is usually called. They don't want a militant rank and file struggle and un-



compromising class hostility to the Tories.

The issues in the fight against the Tories are the same as they were under Heath. The methods have to be the same — strikes, mass pickets, flying pickets, occupations, general strike — and the guiding idea, too — 'No talks with the Tories! Tories out!'

In one vital respect, however, we have to go beyond the militancy that brought Heath down. We have to fight for clear solutions to the problems of anti-union laws, low wages whittled away by inflation, unemployment, and cuts in social

services.

- No state interference in union affairs!

- Big across-the-board wage increases and an adequate national minimum wage (and benefits to match). Automatic wage increases in line with the cost of living.

- No redundancies. Cut the hours, not the jobs.

- Work-sharing with no loss of pay and under workers' control. 35 hour week now!

- Nationalisation without compensation and under workers' control. Expansion of social services to meet the needs of the working class.

Save socialists sentenced to death by Khomeini's courts

Counterrevolution in Iran

by Andrew Hornung

TWELVE Iranian Trotskyists, members of the Socialist Workers Party of Iran, have been sentenced to death by an Islamic Revolutionary Court in the oil city of Ahwaz. The two women SWP members (out of 14 SWP members jailed since June) were given life sentences.

The new attorney-general in Ahwaz has threatened to quit unless there is a retrial. Objections have also come from the former attorney-general, the Director of the Petroleum Institute of Ahwaz, and the Governor of Khuzistan. So there is still a chance that the socialists' lives can be saved.

The day the sentences were handed down, an office of the SWP in Tehran was occupied by Revolutionary Guards. Twelve SWP members were arrested, two being members of the Central Committee. The same day, two members of the left-wing Fedayeen Khalk were sentenced to two years

for distributing leaflets. An unconfirmed report also claims that people were killed when the house of an official of the Tudeh (Communist) party was attacked.

A ceasefire was announced in the war between government troops and Revolutionary Guards on the one side, and Kurdish militias on the other, after intervention by ayatollah Taleghani. But ayatollah Khomeini quickly reversed the announcement, reaffirming his intention of 'crushing' the Kurds. There are still large groups of Kurds being held under arrest, whose lives depend on the mercy of ayatollah Khomeini, the fanatical head of the Revolutionary Courts who has been dispatched to Kurdistan.

Every day there is news of more and greater attacks on democratic rights throughout Iran, with the Kurds and the socialists as the main target of attack. Meanwhile the self-appointed champion of democracy and 'human rights', President Carter, has switched his line on Iran. The United States has swung round to full support of the government, supplying them with arms.

It is six months since the Shah was put to flight. In that time there have been numerous attacks on the left, on the national minorities, on workers' organisations and on those demanding de-



A picket of the Iranian Embassy organised by the Association of Kurdish Students Abroad and supported by several far left groups drew 200 people on Saturday 25th. (See report, p.8). There was also a picket of the Embassy on Friday 24th, organised by Workers' Action.

democratic rights.

At first, with the army in chaos, with the gendarmerie disorganised and the political police disbanded, the Khomeini regime was forced to hide its real face. Plans to create worker-employer syndicates instead of trade unions were shelved, the Kurds were told that their demands for autonomy were being 'seriously studied', and draft laws restricting the right to demonstrate and outlawing 'disruptive'

activities in the workplace stayed in cold storage.

Nevertheless, what could not be legislated could be encouraged. There was no law introduced requiring women to wear veils or headscarves, but those not wearing them were denounced by

continued on p.9.
See also p.8: interview with Iranian socialist.



IN AN attempt to quash the sentences imposed on the Iranian Trotskyists, a deputation (above) handed in a note at the Iranian Embassy in London on Tuesday 28th. On the deputation were (left to right) Reg Race MP, Andrew Hornung (Workers' Action), Tariq Ali (International Marxist Group), Ernie Roberts MP, Hojabr Khosravi (SWP of Iran), and Max Egelnick, London District Organiser of the Communist Party.

The note, which was also signed by Michael Meacher MP, Stan Newens MP, Alf Dubs MP, Tony Benn MP and Fred Halliday, protested at 'serious breaches of democratic rights' in Iran. It particularly denounced 'the sentence of death imposed on 12 members of the Iranian SWP' and 'the life imprisonment imposed on two women members of the party'.

It went on: 'We ask that the sentence is quashed and the prisoners released. Our protests extend to the executions carried out in Kurdistan, particularly those of the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Tudeh Party members'.

A similar protest has been lodged by Alex Kitson on behalf of the international committee of the Labour Party.

SCLV FIRST NATIONAL MEETING MAPPING OUT BATTLE PLANS

THE STEERING Committee of the SCLV had its first extended national meeting on July 14th. 17 voting members plus a number of observers attended.

Socialist Organiser/SCLV groups were represented from Leicester, Coventry, Cardiff, Basingstoke, West London, Islington North, Haringey, and Hackney North, in addition to the London Steering Committee members.

To follow on from the successful SCLV-sponsored London conference on local government, Labour, and the cuts in June, it was agreed to promote conferences in other areas on the same theme and to mobilise support for the 'Defend London' conference on September 22nd called by the London Labour Party EC against the Tory cuts.

Near-unanimous agreement was reached in condemning Lambeth Council's decision to make cuts of 4½% following the Tories' £3 million slashing of the rate support grant. It was decided to seek a statement from council leader Ted Knight putting his case, with responses from councillors and local trade unionists. (These appeared in an August SO special).

The idea of a demonstration to Whitehall against the cuts led by as many Labour councillors as possible was canvassed. It was reported that the South East Region

TUC might be organising a demonstration for November, and SCLV should fight for a massive Labour contingent. However, since then Ted Knight and the Lambeth CLPs have taken up the call for a demonstration, which should be backed by all Labour activists.

The meeting also decided to reaffirm the SO/SCLV position of opposition to rent and rate rises agreed at the founding SCLV conference, although a minority argued that the June local government conference decisions were a more representative guide to action.

Other important decisions included the formation of a committee to draft a statement as part of the preparation for the SCLV recall conference in November.

■ ■

It was also agreed to write to the Labour Coordinating Committee proposing a meeting to discuss activities and the possibility of open discussions. SCLV and LCC members share many common aims, and it was felt that closer relations could be mutually beneficial.

Don Flynn criticised Colin Foster's article on the LCC draft constitution in the July SO (see his letter in this issue). While several comrades shared Don Flynn's reservations about the tone of the

Constitution piece, the meeting agreed that the substantive points remain valid and not of secondary importance.

First, the draft constitution represents not a democratisation of the LCC but a narrowing of its political base. Second, those Labour Party members who joined the LCC on the basis of the three aims published in Labour Activist no. 1 are now confronted with a constitution which proposes possible exclusion of those who do not agree with the programme in LA 3 (March 1979) — essentially a Benn-type alternative economic strategy, adopted retroactively and in advance of the conference.

Also members are, it appears, to have no clear right to discuss or change the programme, because the draft constitution gives the annual meeting no sovereign powers over the policy of the LCC or the proposed Executive Committee.

The draft constitution itself, adopted by the launch committee, requires a two-thirds majority to make changes.

Third, the concept of the LCC as a relatively open left forum (one of its basic aims) is further undermined by introducing a postal ballot before the annual meeting, in place of that meeting electing the EC on the basis of informed discussion and debate.

While we continue to urge SCLV supporters to join with

the LCC in a comradely manner, promoting debate on strategy for socialism and welcoming moves towards a more structured organisation, we believe that the draft constitution's proposals can only hinder that process.

It was agreed to organise a public meeting at Labour Party conference in October, and produce a SCLV briefing for delegates and visitors. On the August 12th Ireland demonstration it was agreed Socialist Organiser should build for a large labour movement presence on the Troops Out Now contingent organised by the United Troops Out Movement. An appeal for support had already been produced, backed by prominent labour movement figures.

■ ■

On the Corrie anti-abortion bill, it was agreed to approach the Labour Abortion Rights Campaign, to offer support in the production of propaganda and to promote the campaign through Socialist Organiser.

The next national meeting of the Steering Committee/EB will be on Saturday September 8th at 2pm, in London. A pooled fare will operate. All local SCLV/SO groups and supporting organisations are encouraged to send a delegate. The affiliation fee for local groups is £2.

MIKE DAVIS secretary, SCLV

Gay activists meet

THE Gay Activists' Alliance (GAA) held a national meeting in Manchester Polytechnic Students' Union on the 14th to 15th July. About 40 men and women representing 10 local groups were present.

The objective of national GAA meetings is to exchange information on local

every two months, and every six months the 'secretariat' revolves to another local group — the idea being to stop over-bureaucratisation and unrepresentative concentrations of power and skills at the centre.

At Manchester, some of the weaknesses of this structure were glaringly obvious: the local host group had done almost no pre-meeting planning, and without chairpeople and a working agenda, the meeting almost collapsed on the second day.

The Edinburgh delegation proposed changes which will be discussed at the next national meeting in Leicester in October. In future, if the proposals are adopted, GAA will meet nationally twice a year with regional meetings to fill any felt gaps.

The revolving secretariat will, however, be maintained, with the additional task of organising the half-yearly meeting.

Edinburgh also wants to see an orientation to the labour movement at the forefront of GAA discussions and the active participation of even more women.

IAN DUNN



campaigns and to assess the direction of the major national campaigns. GAA grew out of the 5000-strong demonstration protesting against the state's attack on Gay News (via the blasphemy laws) last February. National meetings are held

LCC: 'We don't want a Bible'

A RANK and file conference is to be held in Manchester in November, sponsored by the Labour Coordinating Committee, the Institute for Workers' Control, the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, and Independent Labour Publications. The Conference is also backed by the TGWU and NUPE, and will be open to all Labour Party members in constituency parties, trade union branches, and branches of the sponsoring organisations in the North West.

Socialist Organiser spoke to Michael Meacher MP, chairman of the LCC Launch Committee, about the aims of the Conference and the LCC's own first annual meeting, to be held at the same time.

■ ■ What are the aims of the conference?
□ □ The LCC sees the rank

and file conference as part of the regional conference we are planning, aiming to bring together activists in the regions to decide on our political priorities and how to carry them out. As far as the LCC is concerned, there has been little discussion on the left's priorities. We've suggested our four main goals in Labour Activist 1

and 2, and a wider policy platform in LA 3.

■ ■ What do you say to criticism from LCC supporters who joined on the basis of the broad aims outlined in LA 1 & 2 — for democracy in the party, for accountability of leaders, and for the provision of a forum for discussion of left strategy — that the proposed constitution

narrows the base of LCC by making membership conditional on support for the policies in LA 3, and pre-empts discussion of policy by the Annual Meeting?

□ □ We wouldn't expect everyone to agree with all the items in LA 3. What was in the minds of the Launch Committee when we published that platform was that we

believed these were the policies most LCC supporters would broadly subscribe to.

If people find they have differences with points in the platform, we can discuss them. We don't want a Bible. On the other hand we've got to decide the parameters of the LCC.

It was not intended to be exclusive.

■ ■ Surely one of the most important functions of LCC is to provide a forum for debating out strategy and tactics for socialism. Some comrades say that the way the constitution has been drawn up could prohibit a full discussion of strategy because the Annual Meeting will not have powers to decide on policy.

□ □ At the LCC annual meeting and the rank and file conference we want to discuss the issue of strategy. If people want to put alternatives, that's fine.

The Left needs to debate strategy for the next Labour Government and examine the strategy of the last Government and the left alternative, to see if it is adequate or changes need to be made with particular reference to the extra-parliamentary struggle.

We must have democracy inside the left

The ballot for the first Executive Committee of the Labour Coordinating Committee will close on Sept. 2nd.

Three Socialist Organiser support-

ers, John Bloxam, Nik Barstow, and Peter Tebbutt, are standing. They say:

□ The first and basic commitment to develop the fight for democracy and accountability inside the Party by the launch committee must remain central. Our ability to do this means

that the LCC itself must be fully democratic, with the AGM sovereign and no 'bans and proscriptions'. For the "political campaign at grassroots", the LCC must remain an open forum of the left inside the Party and a campaign alliance for rank and file Labour activists, and not become an undemocratic grouping run exclusively for just one view of the way

to socialism. We have criticised parts of the proposed Constitution and Rules as going in the latter direction, and have put forward amendments to it. To fulfill the important potential of the LCC, we will continue to argue for a democratic and fighting body, and for policies taken up by the papers Socialist Organiser and Workers Action.

Letter: Let's have less cynicism on the LCC

COLIN FOSTER really needs to develop some sense of proportion in his analysis of developments within the mainstream Labour Left. His article on the Labour Coordinating Committee ("Trying to put the lid on", SO July 1979) accuses these comrades of all manner of bad faith, duplicity and general anti-democratic manoeuvring in the proposed draft constitution of the LCC.

Irrespective of comrade Foster's specific criticisms, the fact which cannot be ignored is that the LCC is involved in a transition from being an ad hoc body ans-

werable only to itself to being a campaign open to all people who support its basic aims, with an elected steering committee which has to produce an account of its activities to an Annual General Meeting of its entire membership. While criticisms can be made of particular proposals in the draft the overall thrust of the development of the LCC is away from being an ad hoc elite, and in the direction of a broad membership campaign, with accountability of the national committee to the membership through the Annual General Meeting.

How this can be presented as being a stab in the back, or 'putting the lid on democracy' is beyond the present writer and I suspect beyond the majority of people who support the LCC.



The SCLV should be in the forefront of welcoming all moves in the direction of opening up dialogue and debate between sections of the Left, regardless of how partial and limited these developments might be in

their initial stages. We should be clear that the LCC represents just such a development and our criticisms of specific features of its organisational procedures are secondary to our desire to take maximum advantage of whatever opportunities for comradely debate and united action have been created.

It is particularly ironic that Colin Foster's cynical article should have appeared alongside a piece by LCC member Stuart Holland MP which attempts to argue, in a very fraternal tone, why the Left should be support-

ing the alternative economic policies advocated by the LCC. This rather contradicted comrade Foster's invective about attempts to 'impose a "Bennite" faction leadership on a supposedly broad grassroots movement.' The impression left after reading Holland's article is that the LCC places a high premium on having its position properly understood by activists in the Party and the trade unions, including the supporters of the LCC.

While no doubt many SCLV supporters do not support the policies advo-

cated by the LCC we should recognise that there is much that is positive in the attitude of comrades like Stuart Holland and we should seek to build a constructive relationship between our two campaigns. We will be aided in doing this if it can be ensured that there is less cynicism in the pages of Socialist Organiser and a great deal more willingness to seek out ways of cooperating with other left wing currents within the labour movement.

Comradely,
Don Flynn

Devolution only after revolution

Dear comrades,
Martin Barclay's letter on devolution deserves a reply. He points out that capitalists avoid areas where they expect poorer profits and that Scotland often falls into this category. Devolution of any kind, he argues, should be opposed as a diversion from the profit system and a cause

of 'internal division' in the labour movement.

The evidence points the other way. Far from retarding working class unity throughout and beyond Britain, the pro-devolution Scottish labour movement has, if anything, been among the leaders of left wing struggle. For example, in the devel-

oping momentum of the lorry drivers' strike or earlier in the gearing up of the anti-Tory struggle under Heath (UCS, etc.). There is no serious prospect of Scottish or English workers being played off against one another on the basis of national feeling. Rather the dangers of negative differences and div-

isions in the movement stem from attitudes epitomised by Martin Barclay's letter, which appear to argue that the spread and mediation of formal political power under capitalism is not an issue for the labour movement. I expect that all these problems will be solved after the revolution...

There is more to it than the economic decisions capitalists make when choosing to invest (some US corporations seem to have a positive bias in favour of Scotland). Finally, I still want to know why Martin Barclay advocates a Scottish Assembly to which he is opposed?

BRYNLEY HEAVEN

TORIES KEEP THEIR RACIST PROMISES

A demonstration against the new Nationality Bill is being planned for the winter by several black and anti-racist organisations, including the Campaign Against the Immigration Laws.

No one knows exactly how the Bill, whose publication is expected in the next few months, will affect the civil rights of blacks living in Britain now. The Green Paper on Nationality, on which the Bill will probably be based, is so unclear that many black groups have feared the worst, even the very unlikely outcome that British born blacks will be deprived of British citizenship.

Socialist Organiser has no spies in the Tory cabinet. But the signs are ominous. Already, black people who came from the Commonwealth before 1973 are denied the same rights in relation to the EEC as other British citizens. Since the Nationality Bill will be aiming to tidy up anomalies in time for the common EEC passport scheduled for 1980, this could mean that either two classes of citizen would have to be created, or that huge numbers of black people would be denied British citizenship altogether.

Even before the law is changed, the Tories are keeping their racist promises. They deported three children because they hadn't been through 'Entry Clearance' in India. The current wait for interviews to gain Entry Clearance in India is now four years, by which



Picket of Heathrow detention centre on July 7

time some of these children would be too old to have the right to join their mother in Britain.

Yet not even the Home Office are suggesting that the Patel children didn't have the right to enter. They simply hadn't been right through the mill yet.

A Whitby man, Afzal Mohammed, is under threat of deportation because the Home Office claim that his

marriage is not genuine. They tried to prove that his children weren't his children but failed. Then they charged that his marriage had broken down.

Awaz, an Asian women's group, called a picket of the Home Office in protest.

There has been one victory. Abdul Azad, an O'dham youth, came home a few months ago to find his mother had been murdered.

When police arrived they were far more interested in whether Abdul was perhaps deportable. He was carted off to jail amid police claims that he wasn't his mother's son. A powerful campaign was mounted in the local Bangladeshi community and anti-racist movement, and eventually he was released and the charges against him dropped.

The campaign is now sug-

gesting to the police that having persecuted Abdul they could now try to find his mother's killer.

One solace for those who get caught up in such nightmarish experiences reminiscent of Nazi Germany or South Africa is that their MP might intercede for them with the Home Office. (Afzal Mohammed's MP took blood test results to the Home Office to refute the

police charges.) MPs can intervene when someone is stopped from entering Britain or threatened with expulsion, and call on the Minister to consider the case and 'exercise his discretion'. Now Timothy Raison, minister responsible for Immigration, has suggested abolishing the rights of MPs to intervene, and replacing it with some 'independent' judicial procedure, the details of which haven't been made clear.

On July 7th this year, the Campaign Against Immigration Laws coordinated a series of pickets outside every prison in Britain where people were being detained under the Immigration Acts and their regulations. Harmondsworth Detention Centre, Holloway, Pentonville, Lincoln, Lewes, Winslow Green, Risley, Armley — if suspected illegal immigrants were inside, protestors were outside.

As a follow up to these pickets, and in preparation for the demonstration against the Nationality Bill, CAIL are planning a speaking tour for most big towns and several parts of London. Meetings will be organised by the local anti-racist groups who will give CAIL a platform. (More details in next month's SO.)

CAIL invites personal affiliations from SO supporters (£2) and from any organisations they belong to (£5), and will send speakers. Send money or ask for further information to Box 133, 182 Upper Street, London N1 or phone Bernard at 720-2328

ON September 10th several important test cases will be coming up before Barnet Magistrates Court in the series of show trials of those arrested at Southall last April.

One of these will be Clarence Baker, member of the Reggae band Misty, who was so violently attacked by the police when they ransacked Parkview Buildings that he was hospitalised for several weeks with a blood clot on the brain. (The clot is still there, leaving him constantly in danger of a brain haemorrhage if it bursts.)

These trials will be the first to be held after the summer recess and are significant as none of the defendants was even on the streets of Southall — they were inside a house which the police are claiming was the source of Molotov cocktails.

During this summer recess, suspicion of another killing has fallen on the police. On the night of August 1st Sarwan Singh Grewal was arrested in Southall as

'drunk and disorderly'. The next morning he was dead, the police claiming he had choked on his own vomit. When his wife and the family doctor eventually saw the body nine days later they found it badly bruised, particularly about the head. The doctor has said there were definite signs of assault.

So far in the Southall trials 36 cases have been heard. Four have been acquitted. Two men have received jail sentences of three months and one month; and the rest have been fined between £50 and £500 each, totalling £2,500.

700 people were arrested on April 23rd, and 342 were charged. The charges to be heard on September 10th are more serious than those so far heard.

The prosecution and police statements in court have con-

sisted of blatant contradictions and clumsy lies. But with the magistrate observed snoring on the bench, they no doubt feel they can say what they like and get away with it.

The police have admitted that they had orders to arrest 'trouble makers' they found on the streets, whether they were demonstrating or not. (It turns out that their definition of trouble makers is any 'C121' — their code for a person of Indian or Pakistani origin.) With the arrest of the people in Parkview Buildings the arrestable offence seems to be widened to anyone who is black and was in Southall on April 23rd. In the view of the Asian community, the whole of Southall is on trial.

The same confident cynicism is evident in the attitude of the SPG to the 'inquiry' into the death of Blair Peach.

At present one SPG officer has been away on holiday, on full pay, for not divulging what he knows about the identity of Peach's murderer. In Southall, identity parades have had all the seriousness of an episode from the Keystone Cops.

Yaqoob Bhatti, who saw Blair Peach clubbed to death, had described the policeman as not being tall. He was shown an identity parade of short policemen. Explaining that he didn't think the man was that short, Bhatti was then shown a parade of tall policemen.

He could not identify the suspect, and was finally shown a parade of bearded policemen, none of whom he thought was the suspect. Later the police admitted that the suspect did not have a beard and had since grown one.

This sort of farce, the show trials and the death of Sarwan Singh Grewal in a police cell, decisively confirm the fundamental distrust the people of Southall have for the police and their courts. There is little sympathy for their MP Syd Bidwell who recommends a 'guilty' plea, as people know that those on trial are being penalised simply for being black and living in Southall. If they are 'guilty', then Southall is 'guilty'.

The Southall trials will be a test also for the labour movement, which if it means anything by its professions of anti-racism will mobilise and join the campaign to drop all the charges and stop the show trials.

Immediately, the following activities should be supported:

■ A public meeting called

by the Southall Campaign Committee on Saturday 1st September in the AUEW halls, 2 Woodlands Road, Southall.

■ A mass picket outside Barnet Magistrates Court on September 10th, starting at 9.30am.

■ Donations for the Southall Defence Fund should be sent to Southall Rights, 54 High Street, Southall.

■ On September 22nd and the following Thursday an Open Door programme called *Southall on Trial* will be screened. Help to publicise this at workplaces, colleges and schools and in your union or Labour Party branch

JO THWAITES

SEPTEMBER 29th.

Demonstration called by Newham Defence Committee and other organisations of the black community to protest at:

- ★ racist murders;
- ★ the Southall trials;
- ★ the Tories' plans for new immigration curbs.

From Hyde Park to Downing st. Details from Sept. 29 Committee, c/o 247 Mare St, E8.

POLICE POWER LAW PLANNED FOR SCOTLAND

THE TORY Government is planning a new law for Scotland to extend the powers of the police.

The Bill will probably follow the lines of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Bill which was introduced by the last Labour government and fell when the government fell. That Bill included:

- Full power for the police to detain a person at a police station for up to four hours — without charge, without the right to remain silent, and without the automatic right to inform a relative or solicitor — any person 'reasonably' suspected of having committed an imprisonable offence. (In practice, most offences are

imprisonable). The 'reasonable suspicion' clause, as the 1975 Thomson Committee report noted, would allow the police 'to take into account matters that could not be put in evidence at all, such as demeanour or appearance'.

- Full power for the police to detain people in a place 'other than a police station' for the purpose of stop-and-search and to obtain the name and address of a suspected person.

- The power for the police to detain 'any other person... who [the policeman] believes has information relating to the offence' in order to obtain names and addresses. This would in-

clude the power to detain witnesses.

The rationale was to legalise what are presently routine, but nonetheless irregular and in many cases illegal, police practices. Similar arguments have been offered by Police Commissioner David McNee to the Royal Commission on Criminal Procedure, and the Scottish law would probably be followed rapidly by similar legislation for England and Wales.

At present the police cannot legally detain you without arresting and charging you. There are only very limited exceptions, apart from a supposedly

emergency measure, the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

Under the Labour Bill there would have been no protection and no remedies for the detainee, except to pursue an expensive, impractical and ineffective civil action for damages for wrongful detention.

The police would in practice be fully empowered to seize people at random from pickets, meetings, and demonstrations.

The Campaign to Stop the Scottish Criminal Justice Bill was set up initially to oppose the Labour Bill. It acts as an umbrella organisation, providing written information, material and

speakers, holding public meetings, and organising discussion groups.

Malcolm Rifkind, under-Secretary of State in the Scottish Office, has already informed the Scottish Council for Civil Liberties that in his view the time for public debate has passed. It is thus urgent for people to raise this question with their MPs and within their organisations.

Information is available from the Campaign office at 58 Broughton Street, Edinburgh. Please enclose a stamped addressed envelope. Donations and help are urgently needed.

RICHARD KINFLEY

by
PETE ROWLANDS
(secretary, Houns-
low Trades Council)

ONE OF THE key debates at the Trades Union Congress in Blackpool will be on the Tories' proposals to amend trade union law.

Their 'Consultative Document' proposes to amend the law in three crucial areas: picketing, the closed shop, and secret ballots. The Tories clearly intend to implement their proposals in statutes early in the next session of Parliament, consistent with their rapid moves in other areas, and this is why this issue is now the most important one facing the British trade union and labour movement.

Plans

If the Tories can get away with imposing a massive diminution of trade union rights, they will also find it much easier to impose cuts in social services, to cut jobs, and to push down living standards.

In the Tory election manifesto, the union law proposals were featured together with plans to amend the Employment Protection Act to make it easier to sack workers, to withdraw the right to strike for those in essential services, and to withdraw social security benefits from strikers.

These are still under consideration. Specific changes have already been proposed in the Employment Protection Act, to raise the qualifying period for complaints of unfair dismissal from 26 to 52 weeks' employment (104 weeks for workers under 18). They also cut the 60-day consultation and notice period for redundancies in firms with under 100 workers to 30 days.

Although the Tory union law proposals were given impetus by the hostile (Tory) press reaction to last winter's strike wave and particularly to secondary picketing, they should be seen as part of a process extending over the last decade. Both Tory and Labour governments have sought to curb trade union strength. This reflects the alarm the ruling class feels at the use of new and effective tactics — occupations, the flying picket, secondary picketing — in a period when class conflict has become more acute with the ending of the long boom.

Left

However, since the Shrewsbury Pickets affair of 1973, insufficient attention has been paid by the left to the use of law against militant trade unionism.

A notable exception is the Campaign against a Criminal Trespass Law, who have documented the increasing use of law in a booklet, *Whose Law and Order* (published in January, and therefore somewhat out of date, but valuable nevertheless — available from 35 Wellington Street, WC2).

As this booklet shows, court rulings have already severely restricted workers' rights over the last five years, despite the repeal of the Industrial Relations Act.

Injunctions gained by NAFF against the blacking of the mail by the Union of Post Office Workers over Grunwick and South Africa, and the injunctions granted against the NUJ and TGWU during last winter's strikers, have already legally undermined secondary picketing

Tory anti-union laws

THE BIGGEST THREAT SINCE TAFF VALE

and blacking — i.e. the most common forms of solidarity action. Picketing was also undermined in 1974 by a House of Lords ruling that pickets have no right to stop vehicles. The Prebbles case (1975) established that there was no right to picket outside of industrial disputes. Police rules limiting pickets to six were enforced in the recent Garners dispute.

The police have also used their powers under the Public Order Act 1936 to ban demonstrations in Lon-

don and Leeds in 1978, and the recent spate of local authority bills (no doubt police-inspired) requiring seven days' notice for demonstrations are now likely to become law. The Labour government generally did not seek to change the law to reverse the reactionary effect of Judges' rulings. Indeed it appeared to actively condone the winter injunctions against secondary blacking and picketing. Labour also passed the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 1977. This Act restricts sentences for conspiracy in trade union matters (the charges used against the Shrewsbury pickets) but introduces new penalties which can be incurred in occupations (the Criminal Trespass law). The first successful prosecutions under this law have now taken place. The Prevention of Terrorism Act 1974 provides, and has been used as, a means for the victimisation of trade union militants.

Web

All this must be squared with the undoubted advances contained in the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act and the Employment Protection Act. These laws have improved the rights of trade unionists, but they have also weakened their capacity to defend themselves through a traditional mobilising of shop floor strength, by isolating militants and imprisoning them in a web of procedures and tribunals.

This combination, of course, is exactly what the Labour and trade union right wing want. They fear the potential strength of the rank and file. At the same time their position is based on the existence of large and effective trade unions. (At least, they must be deemed to be effective — otherwise they would not be large). They want the unions controlled from the top, but on a voluntary basis — by the leaders rather than the state.

that legislation such as the Industrial Relations Act, threatening rank and file and bureaucracy alike, was more likely to arouse opposition than the use of the criminal law, which enabled them to characterise the Shrewsbury pickets as criminal thugs rather than trade unionists defending their rights.

Shrewsbury was a bad defeat and gave the Tories heart.

The TUC's attitude was shown again in their failure

"Unions should in general, and save in exceptional circumstances, confine picketing to premises of the parties to the dispute or the premises of suppliers and customers of those parties". And the Guidelines agreed that pickets should be kept small. "The police may regard a large body of workers as obstructing entry to premises or as intimidation towards those who wish to enter. And trade unions need to be aware that it can sometimes be difficult to control a



Police tried to limit Grunwick pickets to six to 'stop intimidation' ... but who was intimidating whom?

The most right wing of trade union leaders will not willingly surrender the power on which their own position is based, although they equally dislike militant action.

This combination of atti-

tude to give the minimal support necessary to secure victory at Grunwick in 1977. But the biggest capitulation is contained in the February 1979 'Guidelines' accompanying the so-called 'Concordat' produced after the

large group of pickets".

The TUC even gave way to the Tories on the closed shop: "The closed shop need not be a rigid arrangement. Its scope can be as flexible as the parties concerned wish it to be and unions might



TUC, echoing Tories, calls for ballots, not mass meetings, before strikes

tudes has determined the trade union leaders' attitude to attacks on workers' rights in recent years.

In 1973 they capitulated disgracefully over the Shrewsbury pickets. In the wake of the July 1972 defeat of the Industrial Relations Act, it would have been easy to mobilise the trade union movement to defeat the victimisations. However, the Tories gambled, correctly, that this would not happen, precisely because Shrewsbury was a pure rank and file action involving tactics disliked by many union leaders, and involving a weaker union in a relatively remote part of the country.

The Tories had learned

winter strike wave.

This desperate attempt to return Labour to power by demonstrating 'responsible' trade unionism misfired, with the TUC General Council itself before the declared intention of the Tories to curb the unions' power.

Ballots

The Guidelines called for "ballots [not mass meetings] to be held where a strike is contemplated". In strikes, there should be "arrangements... for the maintenance... of supplies and services essential to the health or safety of the community".

bear this firmly in mind".

Despite the TUC Guidelines the proposed legislation represents a considerable gamble for the Tories. The more level-headed sections of the Tory party and of big business are concerned about it — even the militantly right-wing Engineering Employers' Federation has said that some of the proposed laws would do more harm than good.

Some Tories foresee a confrontation which they will win, others think the trade union movement is weakened by adverse publicity and therefore prone to compromise. But many also remember that the last Tory government was brought down by trade union action, and that

voluntary codes under Labour are completely different from enforced statutes under the Tories, even if the content is similar.

What are the specific proposals of the 'Consultative Document'?

On the closed shop they propose to extend protection against dismissal for those refusing to join a union to those who object on grounds of 'deeply held personal conviction' (this already applies for grounds of religious belief) and to those already employed. It also wants an 'overwhelming majority' in favour of a closed shop and a statutory code of practice.

These proposals can be regarded largely as ideological gloss for the Tories' middle class supporters rather than a major threat to trade union organisation. No closed shop agreement is instituted without overwhelming support, and most are 'post entry' anyway.

Money

The Tories also propose to provide money for secret ballots to cover union elections, changes in rules, and strikes. The offer should be boycotted. This should not be difficult to achieve in the current hostile climate — but the danger lies in the provision getting onto the statute books and then being taken up by right-wing union leaders after a period of lying passive.

It is the proposals regarding picketing which are most dangerous. They would limit lawful picketing to those party to the dispute, at their own place of work. While other forms of picketing would not be illegal in themselves, they would be subject to charges like inducing breach of contract.

This attack would extend far beyond 'secondary picketing', for picketing of, say, another factory owned by the same company, or even a different part of a large factory complex, would not be protected.

The proposals envisage either removing the present general immunity (under the Trade Union and Labour Relations Act) for inducing breaches of commercial contract, or specifically removing the immunity on inducing breaches of commercial and employment contracts for pickets outside the new limitations. Workers involved could thus be sued and have injunctions taken out against them. Full-time union officials would have no protection on picket lines.

Threat

These proposals go well beyond those contained in the Industrial Relations Act and if enforced would reduce trade union rights to those prior to the 1906 Trades Dispute Act. They constitute the biggest threat to the trade union movement since the 1901 Taff Vale judgment.

It is the latest stage in a decade of attempts to curb the fighting strength of the trade union movement, a process marked by the collusion of the Labour and trade union right and the ever more significant role played by the courts and the police. The proposals may go onto the statute book — whether they can be successfully implemented is another question.

It is up to us to make sure they don't get on the statute book, or if they do that they are made unworkable. At the same time we must fight for a restoration of those powers so dangerously eroded over the last few years.

TUC: Will it get bogged down in Great Britain Ltd?

by STEPHEN CORBISHLEY (CPSA NEC, in personal capacity)

THE CAUSE of 'anti-Toryism' can cover up any number of sins. In the main debate at this year's TUC — on 'Economic and Social Policy' — unions ranging from the right-wing EETPU and ISTC to the supposedly left-wing AUEW(TASS) and SCPS are proposing a joint composite motion.

The composite's opening paragraph reads: "the dogmatically anti-egalitarian June Budget is cause for very great concern and not only because it is divisive at a time when national unity should have been paramount". And it goes on in this spirit of preaching national unity and class collaboration, promoting the supposed common interests of bosses and workers in Great Britain Ltd.

It approves the Labour government/TUC Concordat. It wants "the subordination of the activities of large companies, often multinational in operation, to the national [?] interest" and "the introduction of import controls". It calls for price controls, as if they were seriously possible in a capitalist economy.

It mentions "higher investment", "the development of small industries and enterprises", "improved training within industry",

and "a proper [?] sharing of the nation's wealth" — but nowhere does it go beyond this sort of advice on how to run capitalism. Nowhere does it make a call for class struggle.

The composite, also supported by the NUR, NALGO, the IRSF, and NATFHE, will stand alongside the General Council's motion, no.45. The General Council asked all unions to withdraw their motions on economic policy in favour of no.45, which is similar in its basic politics to the composite.

But both the right-wing EETPU and ISTC, and the nominally left-wing TASS and SCPS objected to the vagueness of the General Council motion; it does not mention the Concordat and it is evasive on import controls and price controls.

The civil service clerical workers' union CPSA, at a joint meeting of its National Executive and its TUC delegation, decided (against bitter opposition from full-time officials) to oppose both the General Council resolution and the EETPU/TASS composite. CPSA will argue that militant working-class action, not fettered by any concepts of class cooperation or national unity, is the answer to the Tories — and that a struggle against

the right wing in the labour movement is also needed. But most supposedly left-wing unions will probably knuckle under.

It is the same picture in the debate on anti-union laws. In the motion which has come out of compositing, the Bakers' Union call for a national day of action and "for all affiliated unions to support any union defending shop stewards in diffi-

culty as a result of Tory legislation" is lost. So is the ACTT's call for "a campaign as powerful and effective as those organised in opposition to 'In Place of Strife' and the Industrial Relations Act".

The most the composite calls for is "vigorous resistance" and a campaign to "combat dishonest and misleading impressions" about present industrial relations.

It also calls for the TUC to "provide advice and assistance to affiliated unions about the practical implications" and "to alert the Parliamentary Labour Party".

It is a programme for compromise, for doing nothing, and for allowing the TUC General Council to continue talking to the Tories despite all the fiery words. The composite also kills UCATT's call "to withdraw from the voluntary Code of Conduct agreed with the last Government" and "to withdraw from all discussions with the Government based on their proposals as published".

As the bosses' magazine, the *Economist*, put it: "Mr Murray does want to carry on talking to government. He hopes and believes that the Blackpool conference... will not forbid this".

All the resolutions on public spending cuts have been condensed into one composite, which says very little about fighting the cuts the Tories are now organising. It calls for a campaign "e.g. a day of action", on

a programme including such right-wing ideas as: "Britain's economic recovery depends on a constructive partnership between public and private enterprise".

The composite on the shorter working week does at least propose some action, though how far it will be carried into practice is another matter. "Congress calls upon the General Council to initiate a national campaign to assist affiliated unions in their efforts to negotiate a 35 hour working week".

All the composites represent a policy of pleading with the Tories to listen to the trade unions and throw a few crumbs — and they also reflect a deadly fear of the sort of rank and file action which defeated the last Tory government's attacks.

The Tories do not intend to listen to any pleadings of this sort from the TUC. Only the use of working-class power will stop the Tories. And if the TUC will not mobilise that power, the rank and file must.



TUC leaders talk of 'vigorous resistance' to Tory anti-union laws. But all they've done is go in and out of Downing Street all summer.

Cornwall under the candy floss

by PETER TEBBUTT

FALMOUTH is in holiday mood. Hotel, restaurant and gift shop owners have taken on extra staff to cope with the influx of holidaymakers, so the winter nightmare of unemployment has receded. But wages are appallingly low — 60 pence per hour is not uncommon, with the record low 30p an hour for dishwashing.

With fewer on the dole the local library reading room is almost deserted, which is just as well, as the Tory council in the interests of economy has axed all the daily newspapers except the *Guardian* and *Telegraph* — and the local (Beaverbrook and Northcliffe) papers.

These do often give an insight into Cornwall politics. A recent event they reported was the retirement of the local full time TGWU official, who was presented with a cheque (yes, money) by the local Tory MP on behalf of the local employers. In his tribute the MP congratulated the retiring official for 'containing trade unionism in Cornwall to a responsible level'. And he might have added, for helping to keep wages at starvation level.

The successor to this official has been invited to join the Labour Party, but so far has not responded. Perhaps

that would be 'irresponsible'. Needless to say, neither of them did a thing for Labour at the General or Euro-elections.

Other news is that Falmouth Docks are still partially open employing 150 workers. The Tories, in spite of pre-election talk, seem reluctant to sell to private enterprise in the person of Mr. Robin Bailey, boss of Bristol Channel Shiprepairers and well known for his anti-union attitudes and opposition to public ownership. Bailey is of course furious at this Tory turnabout and is off to see Thatcher about it.

Crawl

Sadly, the redundant workers in Falmouth see no option other than to bring back private enterprise, and are preparing to seek talks with Bailey. This deplorable situation was of course directly the result of the non-action of Department of Industry ministers in the former Labour government who allowed British Shipbuilders to shut down Falmouth. These ministers — honest straightforward right-wingers like Varley and Kaufman and so called left wingers like Les Huckfield (NEC candidate and recent new member of the CLPD) must bear the blame for the present situation in which workers have to

crawl to Bailey for jobs which a Labour government denied them.

Over on the other side of the constituency, Teddington Autocontrols is closing. A part of the United Gas Group, it occupied a Government Advance factory and received massive government aid. The company now says that unless they get more government money they cannot carry on. As usual it is the workers who will suffer, and an area of already above average unemployment will decline still further.

The one bright spot for capitalism is the proposed reopening of the Wheal Jane tin mine, closed by Consolidated Goldfields, and kept from flooding by pumping for by the then Labour Government and continued by the Tories.

The new bosses will be Rio Tinto Zinc, another multinational conglomerate not well known for its concern for workers' rights.

RTZ say that with the advent of a Tory government they feel confident to proceed.

While Labour ministers held talks with RTZ to get the mine reopened, Falmouth Labour Party put forward another proposal — public ownership of all Cornwall's mineral wealth under a locally established Tin Board made up of one third workers, one third trade union represent-

atives, and one third local people with an intimate knowledge of the tin mining industry. This idea was put to the Government but was rejected in favour of international capitalism in the form of RTZ. What a condemnation of Labour's ministers in the Department of Industry!

What are the lessons to be learned?

Capitalism is the direct opposite of socialism — you cannot compromise with capitalism by propping it up and trying to make it work to preserve workers' interests and jobs as the last Labour government did. It does not make any difference whether it is private enterprise, or state capitalism in the shape of British Shipbuilders. The profit motive comes first and social responsibility second.

Fails

The Labour Party must demand that the next Labour Government embarks on a socialist programme taking into public ownership the financial institutions and all industry and land under workers' control and management. If an elected Parliamentary Party fails again, then workers themselves will have to form a new democratic system of government which will create a decent society for the workers of this country.



Wheal Jane will work again — but under Rio Tinto Zinc.

Lothian council says no cuts, no rate rises

LOTHIAN Regional Council have taken a stand against the Tory government. The tactic of rate rises will not be used as a method of offsetting the effects of the cuts. Indeed, there will be no cuts of any kind in the Council's budget this year.

Lothian Regional Council is the only local authority in Scotland to defy the government so far, though attempts

to galvanise the other regional Labour groups into action are being made. Significantly, Lothian regional councillors are accountable to the regional Labour Party, unlike the other regional Labour groups in Scotland.

Ian Christie, treasurer of Lothian Regional Labour Party and a Socialist Organiser supporter, told us: "We are now

looking at all the options for the years that lie ahead, including deficit budgeting and a moratorium on interest repayments. The regional Labour Party and councillors consider that the most important way of resisting the cuts is to involve ordinary working people, trade union organisations and others in banding together to fight the cuts. We

want to drive home the inequity of the Tory attacks on valued social services and at the same time to raise the level of political consciousness so that the people of the region realise the only long-term solution to the problem lies in the replacement of the capitalist system by a socialist one."

Other initiatives against the cuts include a campaign ag-

ainst council house sales and a local demonstration against the cuts on September 22nd, organised by the Edinburgh District Labour Party, with support from the Trades Council.

The Trades Council is also organising a conference in conjunction with local Labour Parties on how to fight the cuts.

To build for the conference, and to lay the basis for a united, coordinated fight against the cuts, Socialist Organiser is holding a public meeting on September 9th with the sponsorship of several councillors, a local MP, and other labour movement activists: 7.30pm at the Trades Council, Picardy Place, Edinburgh.

EAST Enders Borough of targets for a Tory spending Labour Council little to resist government's roused by its calling a pub October 27th Tory cuts. T not yet decid implement th

In the area education th gathering po The Labour-c London Educ (ILEA), under falling school much of the the Tory chop school clous gamations in redundancies.

ILEA is close five of fifteen second has been vir calls for a re posals to use numbers (pro are themse improve the o ation with s and better ratios. This po ward by the H Stay OK Cam supported by e parents and tr

Two of the CLPs have con ILEA's plans Council. How Communist Pa ist Education

Leicester: Cuts close a nursery

THE TORY cuts are further eroding the rights of workers and of women workers in particular. At the end of June, Southfields College creche in Leicester was closed down, with no prior discussion with the parents who use it or the nursery nurse. The parents were given a mere one week's notice, the nurse received only 10 days warning of her redundancy.

The nursery was run and funded by the Child Development Department as a training ground for nursery nurses. The organisation of the opening hours around the college timetable meant that this nursery was already inadequate to serve the needs of many working women, but the fact that the total lump cost of the cuts in the Department's budget, £10,000, has been met by the closure of the nursery, has limited still further the facilities available to mothers.

The parents, with no support from the staff unions in the college or from the trade union movement, have felt unable to fight directly to keep the nursery open. Instead they have applied to the Inner City Area Project for a grant to open the nursery facilities for the community in the Towers/Nuts area in Leicester. This means that in order to keep a nursery in this area, other projects will have to be turned down.

Equally it means that woman will compete with woman for a place for her child in this nursery. This is politically divisive at a time when women should be united in a fight to prevent their already limited rights being further eroded by Tory cuts.

It is important the cuts such as these are viewed as a whole. We must not be deluded that each cut is solely the problem of those affected. Each cut accepted without a fightback is a step backward for the working class.

There will be a Day of Action on Wednesday 5th September. SUE REID

COVENTRY: A FAKE FIGHT

by RICHARD PAINE

THE DECISION of Coventry City Council Labour group on 15th August to oppose the Tory government's proposed cuts does not mean the council is going to fight. This was made clear on Thursday 23rd at a special meeting of the district Labour Party.

The meeting was a face-saving exercise to justify the Labour government cuts which the council is imposing now. Its intention was to inform the district party of the Group's decisions on the present round of cuts.

At first there was an attempt to make the meeting only advisory, but that was defeated. Then Group leaders, full of 'fighting' talk a week previously, proposed that their document be taken section by section. There was no question of opposing the cuts.

Dave Nellist, a supporter of *Militant*, spoke in favour of opposing cuts, but was condemned as wanting huge rate rises. (In fact, he opposed both cuts and rate rises). A move to take the document as a whole was defeated by 40 votes to 12, so that the meeting could only debate the details of which cuts the council would impose.

The major votes on cuts in each section were decided by similar margins, apart from the section on social services, which was referred back for further consideration.

The Labour Council has decided to cut the budget up to April 1980 by a total of £3.4 million. Cuts to pay for the Clegg report wage rises for council workers have not yet been planned for, but neither has a budget been prepared taking them into account. £3.4 million represents 4.4% of the Coventry City Council budget of £78 million.

The cuts include £2.1 million off the education budget. This will involve £1.25

million worth of cuts in jobs, or possibly £1.5 million.

Social Services are to be cut by £257,000, and the cuts here will bite especially hard into the budget for nurseries and meals on wheels.

Already, Coventry NUPE secretary Joe Little has stated, "In the past we have been gentlemanly and have given warning of our actions. This time... It is our jobs we are fighting for". They are planning lightning strikes and a strict work to rule.

Resistance to the cuts has come from other areas too. The Trades Council policy is that the council should fight the cuts. The TC has taken a decision to oppose rent and rate rises and has called for the Labour City Council to refuse to pay interest charges and for the nationalisation of the banks.

The TC is using its delegates on the CLPs to put forward resolutions demanding that the council oppose the cuts, and that the Labour Group fulfil their election manifesto commitment to protect and promote services. They have also supported the Council's decision not to implement next year's cuts.

The TC has called a lobby of the Council for Tuesday 11th September at 6pm, at Coventry City Hall.

The Labour Group has used its opposition to the Tory cuts to create a smoke screen for imposition of Labour cuts now. Rather than organising a fight-back, they will hold a public meeting in October to 'explain' the situation, for which Roy Hattersley has been suggested as a speaker. Blame the Tories and absolve yourself, seems to be the message.

As for opposing the Tory cuts, the Labour Group has

been advised by Transport House to organise a meeting of all Labour authorities and council Groups nationally — likely to take place in late November or early December. Presumably they still hold to their original announcement that the intention is to go as a united group of Labour authorities to the Tories asking for the right to continue to spend at the present level. And what if the Tories say no?

The lack of any initiative from the Group to organise a campaign in the labour movement against even the Tory cuts has a clear logic behind it. Any real campaign, as distinct from pressure group politics, would undoubtedly move towards taking a stand on all cuts, not just the Tory ones.

Resolutions pushed by Socialist Organiser supporters on Coventry South East Labour Party GMC and Coventry Trades Council for an organising conference against all cuts were effectively ignored by last Thursday's district meeting. The task now is for Coventry SE CLP and the TC to take the initiative in making the conference a reality. Coventry SE GMC will have an emergency meeting on Wednesday 29th, and the Trades Council public services sub-committee (to which the full Trades Council has delegated responsibility for the cuts conference) meets on Tuesday 6th September.

In addition NUPE has circulated all its branches nationally calling for joint anti-cuts committees with all public service unions. In Coventry Socialist Organiser supporters will be pushing for these committees to be widened out to include Labour Party delegates and to link up with any action committee which may emerge from a cuts conference.

STOP THE CUTS NOW!



Poplar councillors march to the High Court

How Poplar Council fought the State

by SIMON TEMPLE

WHEN LABOUR gained control of Poplar Borough Council in November 1919, the newly elected councillors were faced with a choice: were they merely for the more efficient administration of the existing system, or were they there to change it?

This was the choice facing councillors not just in Poplar but in 11 other London boroughs where Labour, for the first time, had a majority or formed the largest party. Despite the rhetoric of Sunday Socialism, most Labour councils ended up as mere administrators, priding themselves on reduc-

ing expenditure and on efficient management.

They got their come-uppance in the 1922 elections when Labour control was reduced to four boroughs. In Hackney, where Herbert Morrison had preached 'economy' louder than anywhere else, every single Labour councillor lost his or her seat.

But in Poplar, the councillors were determined to stand up for the interests of the overwhelmingly working class electorate of the borough. Inevitably, this brought them into conflict with central government.

The first major dispute erupted over the (at first sight) rather unpromising issue of equalisation of rates.

At that time, there was very little central funding of local government, and each of the metropolitan boroughs collected rates to cover not only its own spending but also that of the London County Council, the Metropolitan Water Board, the Metropolitan Asylum Board (which ran Poor Law Hospitals), and the police.

In addition it had to finance the work of the local directly elected Board of Guardians, whose job it was, in the days before social security, to administer poor relief.

The result was that poor boroughs like Poplar, where unemployment was high and wages low, had to levy high rates to provide the most

basic services, while the richer boroughs had fewer calls on their resources and could thus keep their rates low.

Even where the government did offer aid, for example for road improvement, it was tied to giving the jobs created to ex-servicemen — a policy which Poplar rejected in favour of giving preference to those with the largest families.

It had long been argued that the costs of providing local services should be pooled in the same way that the LCC rates were, so that the rich boroughs would contribute more than the poorer ones, but this had actually been done. Now the Poplar councillors, constant-

ly rebuffed in their deputations to the Home Office and the Ministry of Health, were determined to force the issue.

After getting the support of a conference of local trade union branches, the council decided, in March 1921, to refuse to raise rates for the various London-wide bodies such as the LCC and the Water Board, and only to collect enough for their

own needs and those of the Board of Guardians.

By doing so they presented the Government and the LCC with a difficult problem. As they soon discovered, they had no powers to step in and collect the rates themselves, nor did the alternative of seizing and selling the council's property seem very attractive. Instead they got a writ instructing the councillors to pay up.

The council through all this, the court pro much as possi Poplar ratepaye advantage of lo as long as poss order to get publicity for thei At the same hoped to get of controlled borou the protest. disappointed. T

HACKNEY: strike set for September 13

the London Hackney are the barrages of But the having done last Labour its, has been road Left into meeting on to fight the council has whether to cuts.

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and others, alongside the rich and high powered lobby for federal schools (made by merging existing schools into larger multi-site units) have conceded much political ground to the cutters and closers and have prevented a united campaign.

There has been more unity against the health service 'economies'. Hackney's share of the Tories' proposed £36 million to be cut in London (despite election promises not to cut the NHS) mean real cuts of £4 million. Unlike Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham Area Health Authority, the City and East London AHA rejected a motion put by Hackney councillor Steve Scott to resist these cuts and the inevitable hospital closures.

In response both the council's AHA delegates resigned and are encouraging other local authority and special representatives to do likewise in order to render the AHA unconstitutional.

Meanwhile a borough-wide Hackney Health Campaign for Better Services Now has been launched to roll back these cut plans and prevent the closures of St. Leonard's Hospital casualty department (used by 22,000 people last year) and of St. Matthew's Hospital, and cutbacks at Barts. These closure plans follow in the footsteps of previous Callaghan government-inspired closures and cutbacks in East

London involving the loss of the Metropolitan and Barts hospitals, the rundown of the German Hospital and the loss of casualty and acute services at Bethnal Green hospital.

Besides resisting closures, the campaign intends to wage a positive battle to improve health facilities and spending in an area with the highest infant mortality rate in the country, a 30% higher rate of hospital admissions, a 300% higher incidence of TB and a 9.2% higher death rate.

The poor health of working class people in the borough can only be exacerbated by the cuts, not just in health but in housing and social services.

The action committees at St. Leonard's and St. Matthew's hospitals, the Health Campaign and the district stewards' committees are calling for strikes and a Day of Action on September 13th to lobby the AHA. On the same day the Hackney Schools Stay OK campaign is joining in the action, highlighting the connection between the rundown of schools and diminishing health facilities.

Thursday 13th September: assemble at 1pm outside St. Leonard's Hospital, Kingsland Road, E2 for a march to City and East London AHA meeting. Lobby at 2.30 outside AHA, Addison House, Chart Street, N1

ISLINGTON: Labour, unions, tenants unite

THE BATTLE against cuts in the London Borough of Islington is hotting up.

During July, both Islington North and Islington Central Constituency Labour Parties passed resolutions calling for a major conference against the cuts in spending by the Labour council.

A meeting was arranged by the 20 councillors who had voted against the cuts and the two CLPs. Though called at one week's notice, it attracted over 70 representatives and an ad hoc committee of 15 was set up to arrange the conference.

The committee includes delegates from the CLPs, the Islington Federation of Tenants' Associations, the Trades Council, the Community Health Council, the Old Age Pensioners' Federation and various individual union branches and tenants' groups.

A welcome new feature of the fight is that key sectors in the Camden and Islington Area Health service, like the local Community Health Council, the area joint shop stewards' committee, and local NUPE and EETPU branches, have joined in the battle.

This conference needs the backing of every SCLV supporter in Islington, and its surrounding area. So make sure your organisation delegates you to attend. All bona fide labour movement and tenants' groups are invited to elect delegates, and visitors are also welcome.

KEITH VENESS

Islington Conference against the Cuts

Saturday October 6th, 11am to 5pm.

Essex Rd Library, Essex Rd, N1. Buses: 38, 171, 271.

Underground: Essex Rd.

Delegates £1, visitors 50p.

Speakers: Mike Taylor (district officer, NUPE), Cllr Simon Turney (GLC & ILEA), Cllr Jane Streather (former chairperson, Islington Social Services Committee), Cllr Chris Smith (member, Housing Committee, Islington Council). Credentials from Rosie Dale, Mayville Estate Tenants' Association, 8 Elton Place, N16. Other details from Cllr Valerie Veness, Flat C, 155 Green Lanes, N16 (359 7055).

Monday 3rd September.

3.30pm, Islington Town Hall, Upper St, N1. Lobby against Area Health Authority cuts, called by Camden and Islington NHS Joint Shop Stewards' Committee. Details from Jim Warner, c/o Royal Free Hospital.

Wednesday 12th September.

7.30pm, at Islington Town Hall. Meeting to protest against housing cuts, called by Old Estates Action Cttee.

NUPE: Charter for union action

NUPE rank and file members took militant action against Labour's 5% pay norm last winter. Now NUPE is the first of the big public service unions to announce clear opposition to the present Tory cuts onslaught.

The National Executive is circulating all three-quarters of a million members with a four page pamphlet, 'Don't get cut up - how you can take action to protect your jobs and your pay packet against the cuts'. Rejecting any redundancies, loss of pay, increase in workloads, or use of private contract labour, the pamphlet suggests members organise

demonstrations, work-to-rules, and token strikes. NUPE's leaders are calling on the TUC for support.

The Evening Standard called it a Wreckers' Charter, and the Guardian lamented the 'petty, self-righteous viciousness' of NUPE members. But the hypocritical defence by the press of the sick, old and young stands in contrast to their conspicuous silence over the real causes of the plight of the needy.

It is not NUPE members who close hospitals, lengthen waiting lists, cut money from much-needed facilities, and pay poverty wages.

Yet to be seen, however, is the degree of sincerity behind the NUPE leadership's aggressive noises. NUPE activists are still bitter about the blatant sell-out over pay in February. They will be watching closely to see how much national influence is directed to help build support for their real local struggles against cuts and closures.

In Hackney, for example, we are gathering forces now to fight the loss of yet another much-needed hospital, St Leonards, and of five of our secondary schools.

RICHARD SHIELDS [NUPE shop steward, Hackney schools]

Socialist Organiser

Lambeth conference tells the Council:

STOP THE CUTS NOW!

By CHEUNG SIU MING

Socialist Organiser has produced a broadsheet on Lambeth and the cuts, with news of the campaign and views from local Labour and trade union activists. 5p plus stamp from 5 Stamford Hill, London N16.

LAMBETH: About-turn

IT WAS a bitter blow to many of us this July when the council of the London Borough of Lambeth, the most left-wing in the country and led by Ted Knight, who has been pilloried in the gutter press for his Marxist views, caved in to the Tories with a 4 1/2% cut in council programmes. Worse still, while town hall vacancies were frozen and the new maternity leave scheme was dropped, three new top-level bureaucrats were to be appointed on £15,000 p.a.

Knight and his supporters justified their action on the grounds that a handful of councillors could not substitute themselves for a non-existent mass movement in a kamikaze defiance of the

Government. A supplementary rate increase seemed to be ruled out, since rates had already gone up 40% in the spring.

However, the local Trade Union Council and the borough NALGO branch were not impressed by these arguments, and pledged all-out opposition. And a special local government conference of the four constituency Labour Parties on July 29 called on the council to resist all cuts, if necessary to the extent of resigning en bloc, and to reject rate rises as a solution.

Ted Knight and other councillors have promised to take due note of this, so it looks as if many of the cuts may be reversed when the

council reconvenes in September. The majority of Lambeth Labour activists feel they would be hypocrites to denounce the Thatcher cuts while their own council was implementing those same cuts.

Lambeth Trade Union Council is now launching a broad-based campaign, 'Lambeth Fightback', to involve the left political parties and community groups as well as the trade union branches - so that when the big crunch does come, any Tory commissioners sent in to run the borough's affairs are met with fierce resistance from a determined working-class movement.

MARTIN COOK (Treasurer, Lambeth TUC)



tactic to delay as so that had the rates for and in maximum e, they Labour- to join were majority

chance of getting their money, while a massive protest against prison conditions quickly developed.

At the beginning of October, Stepney and Bethnal Green councils decided to join the protest, and it rapidly became apparent that the Government would have to retreat. In the end, a legal formula was cooked up to enable the High Court to save its face and release the councillors, and a settlement was reached under which all poor law spending up to a certain scale laid down by the Ministry of Health was to be pooled over the whole of London.

It was a victory that benefitted Poplar more than any other borough (providing a subsidy of nearly £350,000 in its first year) but most other London boroughs gained. The councillors had proved that it was

possible to take on the Government and win, despite the limited support they received from other Labour authorities.

The settlement of the rates dispute set the scene for Poplar's next confrontation, over the issue of poor relief. Determined to provide a standard of relief which would allow the unemployed to survive, they paid poor relief well above the scales laid down by Sir Alfred Mond, the Minister of Health, and refused to operate the various degrading means tests which were supposed to be applied.

Even so, the councillors were unable to meet the scales of relief demanded by the National Unemployed Workers Committee Movement, and attempts to do so. Threatened with surcharges they refused to retreat and eventually won

the right to pay relief on their own scales.

Another struggle developed over the council's insistence on paying a £4 a week minimum wage with equal pay for women, and refusing to cut pay in line with other employers. They saw their stand as part of the struggle by the unions against wage cuts. They were finally forced to retreat in 1924, by which time their wages were well above the average for the area.

In the end, Poplar's councillors were unable to stand against the defeats suffered by the working class as a whole in the mid-1920s, but they were able to gain significant concessions from the Government and to act as more than just administrators of capitalism.

Perhaps if they had held consistently revolutionary

Marxist positions, and organised for them, they could have achieved more. But Noreen Branson's book shows what even a hotch-potch of Christian Socialists, Fabians, trade union officials, and the odd communist can achieve if they are prepared to fight.

Although in many ways conditions have changed today, the fundamental problem facing Labour councillors today is the same: are they to be mere administrators of the present system, or are they to see themselves as part of the struggle to change it. For that reason 'Poplarism' is well worth reading.

* 'Poplarism 1919-1925: George Lansbury and the councillors' revolt', by Noreen Branson. Lawrence and Wishart, £7.50.

200 picket Iranian Embassy

"RELEASE the socialists in Khomeini's jails", and "Defend the Kurds! Down with Khomeini!" — these were some of the slogans of a 200-strong picket of the Iranian embassy on Saturday 25th August.

The picket, called by the Association of Kurdish Students Abroad, was supported by a number of Trotskyist organisations and by the Kurdistan Solidarity Committee. AKSA handed in a letter protesting at the war against the Kurds in Iran launched by the Khomeini regime, and Stephen Corbishley of the National Executive of the Civil and Public Services Association handed in a petition signed by many leading figures in the CPSA.

After the picket, at a meeting of representatives from the organisations which had supported the picket, an ad hoc committee was formed to organise a series of public meetings in London and the provinces. These meetings will campaign for solidarity with the socialists, democrats, and national minorities under attack in Iran, focusing particularly on the trial of 14 militants of the Socialist Workers' Party of Iran and on the struggle of the Kurds for self-determination.

AKSA is calling another picket for Saturday September 1st.

Trade unionists protest

BEFORE the downfall of the Shah, the left in the British labour movement gave support — albeit not enough — to the socialists and democrats fighting against his dictatorship. It is just as necessary now for the labour movement to support the Iranian left against the rapidly developing Islamic dictatorship.

Last week 34 leading members of the civil service clerical workers' union CPSA signed a petition to the Iranian Ambassador in London.

We the undersigned members of the Civil and Public Services Association National Executive Committee and the 1979 Trades Union Congress delegation are deeply concerned about the increasing attacks by your regime on the national minorities [Arabs, Kurds, etc.], working class organisation and socialists, which we see as an attack on the democratic rights won by many of the anti-Shah fighters.

We condemn the trials and executions that your regime, your supporters and armed forces are now carrying out. In particular we wish to intercede for the lives of the members of the HKS (Socialist Workers Party) under immediate threat of death.

Trades Union Congress delegates

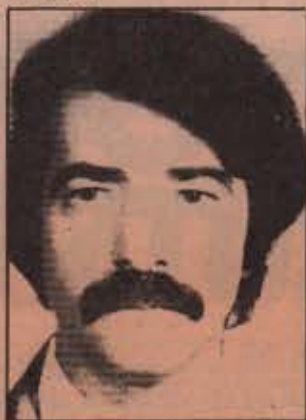
M McGrath, C Kirk, F Kemp, R Lewis, C Baugh, J Baugh, J Gingell, G Byrne, M Rennard, S MacLennan, D McClelland, B Fuge, C Oughton.

National Executive Committee
S Corbishley, S Harding, J Mahony, R Alderson, J Ellis, P Thomson, W Roberts, G Lobo, K Roddy, P Byrne, F Bonner, T Adams, J Macreadie, K Gibbs, N Jacobs, M Witham, F Taylor, G Tromans, J Billouin, L Lewis, R Wood, P Colman.

'They crush democracy to save capitalism'

FOURTEEN Trotskyists, members of the Socialist Workers' Party of Iran [Hezb-e Kargaran Socialist — HKS], were arrested in the southern Iranian city of Ahwaz in June. They have just been tried by the Revolutionary Court there: the two women among them have been sentenced to life imprisonment, the men are sentenced to death.

HOJABR KHOSRAVI, a member of HKS [a sister-organisation of the IMG] was arrested in June but then released. Andrew Hornung of Socialist Organiser talked to him about the trials and the campaign to defend democratic rights in Iran.



Hojabr Khosravi

Why were the members of the Hezb-e Kargaran Socialist arrested?

Ever since the foundation of our party, we took the question of the national minorities very seriously. Other parties of the left didn't. When the Kurds demanded autonomy we ran a series of articles in our paper, *Kargar*, supporting the Kurds' right to self-determination, and these were sold in many towns in Kurdistan.

We wrote many articles in support of the Arabs, and our branch in Ahwaz worked together with the Arab militants. There had in the past been a front for the liberation of Ahwaz, but now the Arabs are organised in an organisation called Sazeman Farhangi Va Siyasi Khalgh Arab — Political and Cultural Organisation of the Arab people — which is centred in Ahwaz and Khorramshar.

In their support we distributed thousands of leaflets and our paper was sold in the various cities of Khuzestan. When the government started its attacks there and banned the SFVSKA — that's when our comrades were arrested, that is the first nine of them.

Seven of the nine were arrested at home and two while walking along the

street. In their homes the Revolutionary Guards found leaflets that we had put out defending the Arab people and in defence of the democratic rights of soldiers. You see, there is a barracks in Ahwaz and a week earlier soldiers supporting our group distributed these leaflets, which called on soldiers not to kill their Arab brothers. The leaflets also explained the Arabs' cause and why the government was attacking them.

Because of these leaflets the comrades were charged with "conspiracy against the government" and being "agents of imperialism". Satarian, the attorney-general of Khuzistan who made these charges, later withdrew the second charge, though he continued to use it as a justification of his ruling forbidding parents of some of those arrested the right of visiting the prisoners.

These first nine were kept in prison and several were beaten badly. Two weeks later, seven other members including me went to Ahwaz to defend the nine, to see lawyers and to find out the exact nature of the charges and the trial facing the comrades. We were all arrested at our hotel. All that was found on us were brochures defending the nine.

Where I was wasn't a jail exactly. It had been a school and was now used as a detention centre for those awaiting trial. Of the second group that were arrested, two of us were freed: after a week in my case and after a month in the case of the other. This was due to pressure on the government nationally and internationally.

The trials of the fourteen started several days ago and the government prosecutor right at the start called for executions. The trial was held in secret and no independent lawyers were allowed in. Now we know the verdicts: life for the women and death for the men. The women, Mahsa Hashemi and Fatima Flahi, are to be held in prisons outside Khuzistan and Kurdistan.

Slander

According to the daily paper *Bamdad*, the charges against the women (we do not know if the men faced the same charges) were: activities against Islam and against the people; provocations against the central government; spreading slanders against the government, claiming it to be repressive and claiming it has suppressed democracy and carried out arbitrary attacks; causing the rising in Naqadeh (a rising in Kurdistan that took place while the comrades were in jail); praising counter revolutionary Kurds; encouraging armed struggle against the

central government; preparing a tense and explosive atmosphere; publishing poisonous thoughts and sex magazines and being members of the Executive Committee of HKS.

What are the conditions in the jails like?

Karoon jail in Ahwaz is very bad. It is simply one of the Shah's prisons. There are ten or twelve people to a cell, twenty cells in each section and three sections in all. The food, of course, is terrible. The first month was the worst because there was no ventilation. That is very serious when the temperature is 46C — without ventilation you die.

The attitude of the members of the Islamic Committee towards political prisoners has been particularly harsh. They are allowed no newspapers, no personal belongings, and in the case of our comrades, no legal advice — in the case of some of them, no visitors either.

Three weeks ago when seven of our comrades were singing revolutionary songs, they were thrown into the basement where they were



Fatima Fallahi and Mahsa Hashemi, HKS members sentenced to life imprisonment

beaten and kept in isolation. Others staged a sit-in protest and they too were beaten up. Recently the prisons have brought in expert thugs who have threatened the prisoners.

There were three very important workers' leaders — leaders of the oil workers — in the cells with our comrades. They were arrested as soon as the autonomy movement took to the streets in Khuzistan. This made a national impact, and they have since been released after protests from workers.

There are also Arab militants, supporters of the Fedayeen Khalk in jail there. These were well known militants who were not picked up for anything they had done, but rather for what they were — something the Revolutionary Guards and Committee had learned from the SAVAK files they are using to track down leftists. They were simply picked up without warning — one was arrested as he was getting married. There are about 200 of these Arab militants.

The reason the authorities gave for not allowing lawyers

in was that they did not recognise them as they had been lawyers under the Shah's regime.

The two women that have now been sentenced to life imprisonment were kept separately from the others. One was suffering from internal bleeding and asked for medical attention, but was refused until, after three weeks, the Guards relented. She was given a few days in hospital and then thrown back into jail.

Support

How does this fit into the general situation?

Since the election for the Council of Experts three weeks ago, the government has closed down all the left bookshops and banned all the press and activities of the democratic and left political parties, and now it is going to produce a list of 200 whom they intend to arrest.

Given the level of consciousness of the masses immediately following the



a picket of the Justice Ministry — something very unusual in Iran; I think it was the first time people had seen such a thing. Then they started a campaign in defence of their comrades, but, as yet, not one supporting ours. The Fedayeen got their 41 members released after a campaign of sit-ins by the families of the prisoners. The only ones who supported us were the Kurds and Arabs, who sent representatives, and the National Democratic Front of Matine-Daftari.

And the Tudeh Party?

The Tudeh (Moscow-orientated Communist) Party was absolutely silent until a few weeks ago. Then they wrote in their paper, *Mardom*, that they defend democratic rights and specifically called for the release of the 14 and a jailed member of the Moujahadeen, adding that their members too have come under attack. In fact it was reported the other day that two were executed in Kermanshah.

When the paper *Ayendegan* was first banned, most parties objected. We, for instance, brought out a special supplement protesting against the banning. Tudeh's line then was that while they supported democratic rights, some articles in *Ayendegan* were provocative, implying that it had deserved the banning. The statement ended up giving full support to the Islamic Republic. To all intents and purposes this was a support of the ban.

Three weeks ago, when *Ayendegan* was again banned, most papers objected, including the Tudeh Party. Apart from the list of banned papers, the government has produced a list of papers that it has not banned but may consider banning. These include the Maoist press that so far has not been touched as it is indistinguishable from the Islamic press and carries many attacks on the Tudeh Party.

Campaign

What form has the campaign taken outside Iran so far?

There have been many pickets and protests. In France there have been pickets and a huge meeting in Paris. In Germany there has been a campaign and in the United States. In Australia a protest petition has been signed by Labour Party MPs and leading trade unionists. A few days ago the comrades of our Swiss sister party occupied the Iranian Embassy in Geneva demanding the release of the 14.

There have been some pickets here. But what is needed is a broad-based non-sectarian campaign against the mounting repression and in defence of all democratic rights.

Kurdish ceasefire unlikely to last

THE LATEST news from Iran is that there is to be a ceasefire between the government and the Kurds. Over the last weeks Khomeini has mobilised troops to "crush the allies of Satan".

Brigades of Revolutionary Guards, the spearhead of the counterrevolution in Iran, have been sent to Kurdistan and West Azerbaijan, where they have tried to impose a reign of terror. The Kurdistan Democratic Party of Abdul Rahman Ghassemlou has been banned. Its officials and the

Kurds' most popular leader, Sheikh Eseddin Hosseini, have been outlawed.

The government's assault was not directed against the "threat of separation" or "foreign infiltration" as Khomeini has claimed. The government, the defender of the landlords and the capitalists, is alarmed at the depth of the social struggles in Iran, and the growth of peasant leagues and workers' organisations.

It is also in Kurdistan, above all, that the weakness

of the army is shown up. Troops have refused to fight the Kurds and in some cases they have handed over their arms to the local population.

The significance of the ceasefire is unclear. It is likely that the resistance of the Kurds, tens of thousands of whom are armed and experienced fighters, is too great for the government given the state of the army.

In Salmaz, in West Azerbaijan, a fuel storage tank was blown up. Elsewhere soldiers and Guards have

been captured and held hostage in order to stay the hand of the Revolutionary Courts which have ordered the execution of captured Kurds.

The ceasefire is likely to be very temporary: it will probably last only long enough to give the government time to ensure that the right wing of the Kurdish national movement (the Bazarnis and the tribal leaders of West Azerbaijan who between them many tens of thousands of armed men) is won back to the government camp.

Brent Indians oust rightists

SYMPATHISERS of a fanatical right-wing Hindu party have been ousted from the leadership of the Brent Indian Association.

This is just the latest turn in a controversy which has rocked the borough's predominantly Hindu Asian community since the beginning of August.

It began when local anti-fascist leader, Paul Franklin, recently returned from an extensive tour of the sub-continent, accused the UK-based Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS) of having links with the notorious Indian paramilitary organisation, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

POGROMS

The RSS is widely held to be responsible for a recent spate of vicious killings across India. Pogroms against Moslems, Christians and low-caste Hindus have left thousands butchered. Especially vulnerable have been the country's 100 million so-called Harijans or 'Untouchables'.

Despite frantic denials of any formal link, the storm of local press comment and correspondence has revealed

the HSS to be, at the very least, strongly sympathetic to the Indian party. Letters from anti-fascist Hindus, including a vivid account from a former member of the RSS itself, have made complete nonsense of the HSS denials.

FASCIST

None of the groups members were re-elected to the BIA's executive committee at the Association's Annual General Meeting. One candidate who was re-elected, Mr. Umesh Navapurkar, made no bones about it in his assessment: "In my opinion, they are part and parcel of the RSS", he said.

Now Brent Trades Council and the local Labour Parties have been drawn into the battle. Jack Dromey, who played a leading role in the local Grunwick strike, has demanded that the Council fully investigate the HSS before continuing to allow them to use the school premises.

"In no way is it okay to keep your head down in this country while giving support to a fascist organisation abroad", he said.

Alf Filer, secretary of the

Gladstone ward and a Socialist Organiser supporter, whose branch contains a large number of Indian members, has called for an enquiry into the whole affair. "I am particularly disturbed by the way certain leading Labour councillors have given, and even now continue to give, uncritical support to this organisation. Have they consulted the Indian community?"

Meanwhile, Paul Franklin, who is a member of Brent East CLP, intends to take the matter further: "The HSS is a registered charity in this country and I know that at least two Labour councils, Bradford and Birmingham, have given them grants to the tune of £38,000

CORE

"But leaving that aside, the RSS is the biggest and fastest-growing paramilitary organisation of the far-right in the world today. It has a combat trained hardcore of over 1 million, and its close support is at least 10 times that number. In 1977 it received over 30 million votes. When had you heard of them before?"

Counterrevolution in Iran

continued from p. 1

the religious leaders and their collaborators.

The Kurds were denounced as 'separatists', although the right of separation for the Kurds, if they wished it, would be elementary democracy, and although in fact no Kurdish organisation had called for anything but autonomy within Iran.

The far left was not banned, but condemned as collaborating with foreign powers. And every socialist or democrat was branded an 'enemy of Islam' — including the members of the Tudeh (Moscow-line 'Communist') party who shamefully supported the slogan of the 'Islamic Republic'.

All this while the Khomeini-Bazargan regime was trying to consolidate a state force out of the shambles. Criticism of the old Imperial military leaders stopped; members of the old secret police, SAVAK, were re-employed in a new force

named SAVAME; the organisations of pro-Khomeini Revolutionary Guards, the Pasdaran, were reformed, given training, and put under the leadership of police and military leaders of the Shah's regime. In addition the state media acted as a megaphone for Islamic reaction.

Since the farcical election for the Council of Experts to discuss the new constitution, the open attacks by the regime on its opponents have multiplied into a huge wave of reaction. That election's massive pro-Khomeini result — not surprising given the widely reported ballot rigging and the abstention by Kurds, Azerbaijanis, Arabs, Turcomans, the National Front, and the National Democratic Front — has been taken as the green light for repression.

The religious leaders have managed so far to galvanise by means of a kind of Islamic populism a huge right-wing movement amongst the poor. But however misled these

millions are, the pro-Khomeini workers and peasants will soon be looking towards the government for real improvements in their standard of living. And the government cannot provide that without attacking Iranian capitalism, which it is certainly not going to do.

There are hundreds of militant factory committees, strikes, seizures of land and so on. But if the working class and poor peasants do not begin a coordinated political fight-back soon, it might be too late. If there is no speedy resistance, the government may contain the struggles of the national minorities, crush the organisations of the left, smash its democratic opponents and thoroughly consolidate its still shaky state forces.

If it manages to do that, Iran will have discarded one (secular) police state for another (Islamic) police state. And before long the Islamic one will, in all essentials, be just as friendly to imperialism as the Shah was.

CHILE:

'My husband was murdered because he stayed to fight'

A FIERCE wave of repression is sweeping Chile, almost six years after the coup that brought the present military junta to power.

The beginning of a revival in the mass movement has made the junta act against specific targets — members of political parties and members of semi-legal and legal organisation who take a stand against it. Since April 1979 eight people have died in suspicious circumstances. Dozens of people have been arrested and a new Anti-Terrorist Law has been passed which is so wide-ranging that it gives the junta 'legal' excuses to arrest anyone it chooses, however indirectly they are connected to the opposition forces. The present wave of repression has mainly been directed against the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR).

A member of the MIR, Juan Carlos Gomez Iturra, was murdered by the junta on 21st June 1979 in Chile. His wife, Rayen Larenas, who lives in exile in Sweden, visited London to denounce his death and to pressurise for an investigation. Her husband was an ex-political prisoner, detained in Tres Alamos concentration camp and then released in 1976.

She described what life is like in Chile.

"Although Juan Carlos was released in the amnesty of September 1976, he had never been properly tried and the Naval Police were still looking for him to make him stand trial. It was never made clear either when he was in prison or afterwards what the charges were. I myself was always watched and followed. I only went out to try and get legal aid for Juan Carlos.

"The Junta has always treated ex-political prisoners in the same way, always harassing and threatening them. For example, Gaston Munoz, an ex-political prisoner, was forced into hiding because they are looking for

him everywhere. One of the sailors tried in 1973 for denouncing the impending coup, Alberto Salazar Briceño, died with Iris Vega, the wife of a disappeared prisoner, in a bomb explosion just after they had been

to stop them rejoining the struggle and their political organisations, and to force people on the left to leave Chile."

■ ■ In such circumstances, why did Juan Carlos decide to stay in Chile?



The following 14 British MPs have already sent a letter demanding an investigation into the case of Juan Carlos Gomez Iturra. If your MP is not on the list, please write to her/him asking that he or she should do the same. Also press through your trade union or trades council for such an

investigation.

• Martin Flannery, Una McDonald, Ernie Roberts, Kevin McNamara, Stan Thorne, John Tilley, John Maxton, James Johnson, Stan Newens, Ernie Ross, Jo Richardson, John Evans, James Lamond, Bob Edwards.

□ □ "Firstly, he never thought about leaving the country. He thought that there were comrades who should leave, because of ill-health, because of the seriousness of their economic situation, or because life in

Chile offered them no security whatever.

"He thought that he had a contribution to make and that his situation was not as serious as that of other comrades who left. He also believed he had a right to live in his own country.

"Secondly, his analysis of the situation in Chile confirmed for him that he should stay. When he came out of Tres Alamos the resistance movement was beginning to gain strength, growing in breadth and quality. He believed that it was important to take part in the ideological struggle inside the resistance movement. The Christian Democrats, the main expression of the bourgeois opposition, are trying to take control of the mass movement, to gain strength for themselves. But the Christian Democrats can never provide an answer to the real problem that Chile faces since they will always maintain exploitation and the capitalist system.

"So Juan Carlos and other ex-political prisoners started a campaign for the right to remain in Chile. They demanded freedom from harassment and persecution and the right to work. The ex-prisoners who remain in Chile are very vulnerable since they are known to the repressive forces. Many of them do not have visas for other countries, which can provide protection and help people to go on working in Chile. There is a tremendous need for solidarity of all kinds for those who decide to stay.

"Juan Carlos worked with the resistance movement — committees such as the Relatives of the Disappeared Prisoners Committee, the National Trade Union Coordinating Committee, the Human Rights Committee, the Ex-Political Prisoners Committee; activities such as the 1st May demonstration, the expropriation of milk and food for distribution in the

shanty towns, clandestine resistance committees in factories, shanty towns, and suburbs, and the clandestine activities of the political parties — all form part of the resistance movement.

"Juan Carlos worked with the ex-prisoners committee, with a Popular Dining Room

ACCORDING to the company paper 'Austin/Morris Express' 2,000 Minis from the Longbridge plant of British Leyland, a nationalised firm, are to be sent to Chile.

Southampton dockers have said they will black the Minis. And in Longbridge the fortnightly Workers' Action factory bulletin said:

"The 'Express' doesn't mention that Chile is ruled by a bloodthirsty bunch of army generals who seized power six years ago by overthrowing the elected Government of that country. Since then countless political oppositionists and ordinary trade unionists have been imprisoned by the regime. We shouldn't be building [the Minis]".

(community-based organisations which try to feed children suffering from the brutality of the junta's economic policies) and with the relatives of the disappeared prisoners. Later he worked underground".

■ ■ Why did you come to Britain?

□ □ "I came to ask international solidarity to demand an investigation into Juan Carlos' death and into the others who have died recently in such mysterious circumstances; to demand that the new forms of repression that the junta is using today be denounced, especially the systematic persecution of the ex-political prisoners, resulting in the death of some of them; to denounce the new Anti-Terrorist Law which institutionalises widespread repression and terror; to denounce the intimidation

of the Chilean people when they demand their rights; to demand that the junta stops concealing the truth about Chile; and to ask for financial aid for the Relatives of the Murdered and Disappeared Prisoners".

Rayen lives in Sweden. Although Sweden has a Conservative government, it can issue a visa for a refugee in danger in 17 hours, has no security checks on refugees who apply for visas, and offers refugees language and technical training schemes.

Security checks under the Labour government in the UK made it impossible to help those in immediate danger. The Home Office refused to finance English classes and the UK supported the resolution in the United Nations ending the Ad Hoc Commission on Human Rights in Chile, replacing it by one observer.

The Tory government has already withdrawn the limits on export credit guarantees, which means that there are now no trade restrictions. The restoration of full diplomatic relations "is under urgent review" (the British Ambassador was withdrawn in 1977, after a British doctor, Sheila Cassidy, was tortured by the Chilean military).

Though the Tories are only interested in removing all restrictions to investment in South America, they realise that Chile is a sensitive issue and should be pressurised not to restore the Ambassador, not to sell arms, and not to support Pinochet's regime.

National Demonstration September 16, 1979

- No deals with Pinochet!
- Bread, work and freedom for the Chilean people
- Freedom for all Latin American political prisoners.

Speakers: Michael Foot, Jonathan Dimbleby, British and Chilean trade union leaders. Details from Chile Solidarity Campaign, 129 Seven Sisters Rd, London N7.

'Stop Corrie' movement gets going

OVER THE past decade anti-abortionists have been on the offensive. A mixture of Tory backbenchers and church people have patiently and persistently attempted to erode the 1967 Abortion Act, which makes some provision for safe, legal abortion.

Two Private Member's Bills — White's in 1974 and Benyon's in 1976 — have so far failed to cut back these limited provisions. The third anti-abortion bill, by Tory MP John Corrie, now on its way through Parliament, is likely to return for a final reading at the beginning of next year. Most sources agree that the effect of his proposed restrictions would be to reduce by two-thirds the number of safe, legal abortions.

The main thrust of the bill is in three directions. First, it will be almost impossible to get a doctor to perform an abortion unless the woman's life is in grave danger or there is a substantial risk of serious injury to the woman's physical or mental health or that of her children. These three words will make it practically impossible for the majority of women to get abortions.

Second, the time limit — currently 28 weeks — will be reduced to 20 weeks. In effect this means that doctors will not perform abortions after the 16th week, to allow for error. The only exception to this is if the foetus is severely handicapped — and few tests can prove this conclusively.

This tightening up will

place doctors, even sympathetic ones — and these are in short enough supply — under the risk of prosecution for performing terminations.

Finally, to make sure that these provisions cannot be countermanded by sympathetic non-national health service sources, the bill will smash the abortion charities. Corrie says there should be no links between referral agencies and the clinics where abortions are performed. At the moment, 25% of women wanting abortions go to the charitable clinics. Under the new law these charities will not have the funds to continue their present service.

Why are anti-abortionists hysterical about a woman's right to determine whether or not to have a child?

SPUC would have us believe they stand for the 'sanctity' of life and against the murder of innocent children. But what evidence is there that these campaigners care for the human beings these 'protected' foetuses become? None. These same forces are strong proponents of a 'survival of the fittest' social order. The real reason for their determination lies elsewhere.

The rationale for women's oppression rests on the edifice of woman as child-bearer. Destroy this, and what is left? If women did control their own bodies, they might challenge the centuries-old myth which relegates them to a second class status.

They might demand equal rights to men — in practice as well as on paper.

They might demand decent job opportunities and decent pay. They might, in fact, show up the system for what it is — one in which profit dominates.

Even before the '67 Act, rich women were able to have unwanted pregnancies terminated — by private doctors, at a price most of us could not afford. This new law is yet another part of anti-working class legislation. An attempt to force women off the job market and back into the home.

All around the country opposition to the bill is being organised. The Southwark group had 85 people attend its first hastily-called open meeting, and regular activities have taken place on the streets of the borough ever since. Our

activities are geared towards the demonstration on 28th October called by the TUC and supported by the National Abortion Campaign.

The response is tremendous. During our Saturday morning sessions at local shopping centres both men and women have queued to sign the pro-abortion petition organised by NAC. In just six weeks we have collected over 1500 signatures.

There is little doubt in the minds of most women: this law will not safeguard innocent foetuses — it will consign to backstreet butchery the thousands of women who are unable to face an unwanted pregnancy.

CAROL TURNER
Southwark Abortion Campaign

IN THE NAME of equality for working women, but in reality against their interests and for the benefit of the bosses, the Equal Opportunities Commission has recommended to the Government the repeal of almost all protective legislation for women. Such a repeal would leave them as exploited by their employers as men, and doubly exploited by the system that also demands of them society's childcare, domestic work, and an ever-increasing role in the care of the sick and the elderly.

Predictably enough, the CBI fully supports repeal.

The EOC is mainly concerned about the Factories Act of 1961, which restricts the total number of hours worked per week, and shift patterns particularly where they involve night work.

In fact, the Act is very limited. It does not even cover all factories. It covers no 'service' jobs such as catering, nursing, laundries, etc. Factories operating a 5 day week, or seasonal or 'emergency' work are outside the Act. Where the Act does apply, it is easy to apply for exemption to its conditions, and the application is rarely refused.

The EOC estimates that 30% of full-time female manual workers work hours covered by exemption orders. The number of workers outside the norms set down by the Act may well be considerably larger, since around 20% of the factories in the EOC survey were not registered under the Health and Safety Executive which monitors the Act. (Where infringements of the Act are found, it is almost universal practice to obtain an exemption order rather than for the HSE to prosecute.)

Repeal

Despite all this, the EOC's concern is not for workers unprotected by the Act but for big business, which it feels does not have sufficient powers to apply for exemption.

It argues for repeal on the basis that employers are using the Act in order to avoid employing women.

In order to investigate the possibilities of women doing shift work if the law were altered to give 'equal opportunity', the EOC commissioned a survey of 1700 women in a community with a high proportion of unskilled women factory

AN EQUAL RIGHT TO BE UNEQUAL

workers, some of whom worked shifts. The average take-home pay of those in manufacturing industries was £25 to £32 per week, a figure on which the EOC did not comment.

The National Council for Civil Liberties, in its pamphlet 'The Shift Work Swindle', accurately describes this survey, and the use the EOC makes of it, as 'a truly astounding blend of distortion, understatement, vagueness and blinkered prejudice which

a woman is, the more likely she is to disapprove of working shifts and of a change in the law. It is then surprised to find that only 11% (predominantly younger women) express even qualified willingness to work shifts.

Then the reasons for not wanting to work shifts are examined: 'Most women's reasons for not working shifts were expressed in a personal context... The problems foreseen ... in-

who suggests that "good housing, small families and happy marriage seem to be conditions for successful night shiftworking".

The EOC seems blind to the main factor forcing women into shift work: the need to earn, and the fact that those with young children can only go out to work when the children's father, or some relative or friend, is home from work and can take care of them.

In the case of both parents working shifts, the EOC sees the main obstacle as the husbands' alleged insistence on a regular domestic routine! Adequate childcare, the provision of public transport, the sharing of housework and domestic responsibilities, and the care of other dependants are at most afterthoughts for them in their attempt to show that many women are prevented from doing shiftwork only by protective legislation. It adds that repeal would provide equality of employment to women "who do not have significant domestic responsibilities".

Health

By virtual sleight of hand, the EOC 'proves' that women suffer no more than men from shift work (there is no evidence against this as there has been no comparative research). They take evidence only from a state-sponsored research doctor who conveniently found no long term harm to health from shift work, and no immediate adverse effects on safety, in contradiction to practically every independent survey on the issue.

The NCCL, in a report 'Women Factory Workers' (1975), found clear evidence of the danger and disruptiveness of shift work. It is done exclusively because of need. All the women said they would prefer day work if the wages were the same.

The EOC considers the

problem of job security, and in this case is prepared to concede that women may need protection from conditions of employment which are impossible to combine with their families' needs: a recent judgement by Lord Denning in an appeal eroded what rights the law provides women with in this case by pointing out that the woman has a free choice — to work the hours demanded by her employer, or to leave her job.

Halt

But at a time when, in the words of the EOC 1978 Annual Report, "there is strong evidence ... that progress towards equality in more measurable respects, in terms of earnings, has almost certainly come to a halt", the EOC has decided to pursue an illusion of equality by levelling down legislation which has been of some limited value in protecting a vulnerable section of the workforce.

The employers consider only their profits, and the EOC endorses their judgement without question. Nowhere does it seriously suggest that protection should be extended to men, and nowhere does it suggest that adequate childcare facilities, and relief from the burden of domestic responsibilities, should be a precondition for women working unsocial hours.

The NCCL in their reply to the EOC call for more democratic procedures for deciding on shift work and on the areas in which exemption to protective legislation is justified; for better facilities for night and shift workers; better maternity and paternity leave, with either partner entitled to work day shift only until the child reaches school age; and better protection for men in terms of safe lifting, lead processing, radiation, and meal breaks,

where women at present have an advantage.

In the NCCL 1975 report, there is a quotation from a woman shop steward of the TGWU at a Welsh British Leyland factory: "We see it as very important that we get the male workforce backing us on this issue. We should explain to them that shift work only benefits the bosses."

"It has a ruinous effect on health and on family life and it would be even worse for women with responsibilities for running the home."

"There are some places where night work is essential like hospitals. Night work in factories meets only the need for profits: machines won't suffer any pangs if they are turned off at night."

"There's nothing progressive about insisting that yet another section of workers accept the norms which men have allowed to be established over the years to their own disadvantage. I hope this will start men considering doing away with anti-social working hours".

The Health and Safety Executive has not yet reported. It is unlikely that their conclusions will be very different from those of the EOC. The TUC is in favour of retention of existing legislation, and some extension of it: we must supplement this with concrete demands in trade unions and in the Labour Party to achieve equality by raising standards of health and safety at work, by challenging the bosses' monopoly of deciding working hours, and by working out democratic procedures for agreement on shifts.

Choose

The EOC echoes the bosses' organisation in assuming that all workers who work shifts do so willingly: workers know better, and it is no step forward to put women under the same pressures in the guise of equality. We must demand free 24 hour nurseries if women are to engage in shift work, and for the extension of maternity and paternity rights so that either parent can choose to be more involved in his or her children's upbringing.

MANDY WILLIAMS

* 'The Shift Work Swindle', by Jean Coussins. 45p from NCCL, 186 King's Cross Rd., London WC1X 9DE.



1973 Conference of those fighting for an anti-discrimination law.

can only suggest that the EOC was strongly predisposed to make the findings it did, whatever the evidence."

The survey first examines women's approval or disapproval of shift working, and their attitude to a change in the law. It finds that these are related to age: the older

cluded a need for management of domestic routine; possible help with domestic organisation; a need to rearrange social life; not seeing enough of husband and children; and the need for additional child care."

The EOC's attitude is summed up by their doctor

Labour Conference '79: Democracy the biggest issue, Ireland the sharpest

TWO ISSUES are going to dominate the debates at this year's Labour Party conference. The first of these is the perennial subject of internal Party democracy, and the second is how the fightback against the Tory government is to be organised.

There are sixty-six resolutions on the agenda for the debates on Party administration. Among the subjects raised in this section are the relationship between the

Parliamentary Party and the Annual Conference; the block voting system; election of Party Leader; re-selection of Members of Parliament, as well as many resolutions on the nuts and bolts of constituency-level organisation.



Party Leader James Callaghan has already been en-

deavouring to set the scene for a major confrontation between the right and left wings of the Conference. In a speech made to trade union leaders a month ago, he defended the principle of the Parliamentary Party having the right to overrule the policies decided by the Party at large at Annual Conference. No doubt the whole of the left will be united in support of resolutions such as that proposed by Stockport North CLP: 'The Parliamentary Labour Party should base its policies, and especially its manifesto, closely on the views of the Party as a whole — as democratically decided by annual conference'.

On the subject of the election of Party leader, there is a divergence of opinion on how this should be done. Hammersmith North CLP simply calls for the Party Leader to be elected by Conference. On the other hand, a number of resolutions, such as those moved by Roxburgh, Newham North-East, and Putney CLPs, call for the establishment of an 'electoral college', representing in proportion the PLP, the CLPs, and the affiliated organisations.

Interestingly enough, not a single CLP or trade union has moved a resolution advocating the continuation of the present system of leaving the election exclusively to the PLP.



The biggest single group of resolutions outside of the Party administration section covers the subject of renationalisation. No less than 63 resolutions come under this category. All these resolutions condemn the policy of selling off public industries and services to private enterprise. They call on the next Labour Government to ensure that such losses to the public sector are promptly re-nationalised by the next Labour Government. A large number go further to specify that this should be done 'without compensation'.

The question of unemployment is taken up in 16 resolutions, a number of which propose policies to reverse job loss by introducing a 35 hour week, the adoption of public works schemes, and earlier retirement.

Concern with the growth of unemployment is also reflected in resolutions under

the heading of 'New Technology' and 'Public Expenditure'. The Tories' cuts are condemned and the Party is called on to mount a vigorous campaign in defence of the public sector as a provider of both jobs and essential services.

Sixteen resolutions call for defence of the National Health Service, a number linking this to the very important issue of supporting the Health Service trade unions' campaign against pay cuts and the private sector in general. Given the reluctance of the last Labour Government to act decisively on these issues, it is particularly important that Conference gives full support to trade unionists who are taking direct action to resolve this matter.

There are very many other resolutions that deserve solid support, amongst them a group of five on the subject of the Police, all of which raise the need to abolish the Special Patrol Group, responsible for the death of anti-fascist Blair Peach on April 23rd in Southall.



But one other subject has to be brought to the attention of all delegates in the hope that they will support pressure being placed on the Conference Arrangements Committee to ensure that sufficient time is allocated for a full debate. This subject is Northern Ireland.

This year, four resolutions are on the agenda, all condemning the record of the Labour Government in Northern Ireland and call for a drastic change of policy.

The beleaguered people of Northern Ireland are entitled to see a debate take place on the way successive Labour and Tory governments have imposed their rule through Army raids, police torture, no-jury courts and the inhuman system of H-Block prisons. There have been only two debates over the last ten years.

No doubt there will be many people who are implicated in the policies of both the last Government and the present Labour opposition who will be doing their level best to ensure that they are not condemned by the Conference of their own party. That is why the debate on Northern Ireland could turn out to be the most important, in many ways, at this year's Labour Party Conference.



Part of the 400-strong Socialist Organiser contingent on the August 12th Troops Out demonstration. There were seven CLP banners, three Trades Council banners, and two trade union branch banners, as well as a number of YSSs, with SO on the 5,000 strong march in London.

Edinburgh moves 'Troops Out'

AT THE August meeting of Edinburgh Central GMC, Workers' Action supporter Alice Pfister proposed an amendment to the Labour Party conference resolution from Hemel Hempstead, which recognises the right to self-determination of the Irish people and demands an 'orderly withdrawal of the troops from Northern Ireland' and 'a speedy termination of British interests in the North'. The amendment deleted these two

demands and replaced them with 'Troops Out Now'.

We argued that as Britain has been an oppressor country in Ireland for the last 800 years, and is the cause of the creation of the Northern Ireland statelet through partition in 1921, it is the immediate task of socialists in Britain to call for British troops out now.

The amendment was narrowly won by the chairperson's casting vote.

THE FIGHT for a debate on Ireland at this year's Labour Party conference received a setback when Brent East's motion was ruled out of order on a constitutional technicality.

Brent East passed a motion calling for troops out now and self-determination. However, as a mere 25 of the constituency's affiliation fee had not been paid to Transport House on time, the Conference Arrangements Committee took the opportunity to throw the motion out.

All that Brent East has managed to salvage is an amendment to Hemel Hempstead's

motion in order to get a chance of a speaker.

The motion was passed overwhelmingly at the GMC, with no other motions being submitted in opposition. The CAC move surprised and angered many GMC delegates, who feel that it is vital that the Labour Party can debate Ireland freely and come forward with a socialist solution.

The feeling in Brent East is that the Labour Government's record in Ireland from 1974-79 was one of the most reactionary aspects of its policy, and that the leadership should be brought to account.

COLIN ADAMS

TWO CLPs SAY: DISBAND THE SPG

The scrapping of the SPG, the Special Branch and other similar units such as the immigration police, a full inquiry into the police action in Southall in April, and the ending of police harassment of black communities, were the main demands of a resolution for Labour Party conference passed at the June meeting of Edinburgh Central GMC.

The resolution was adopted by Holyrood/Meadows branch as against one on the moribund issue of devolution, proposed by the right wing, and came through the GMC as

against a resolution on nuclear power which was also passed but not selected for the Conference resolution.

The proposer, Socialist Organiser supporter Richard Kerley, argued that in view of the vicious police attacks on the black communities of Leicester and Southall, the question of police harassment and disbanding the SPG was of major importance for the labour movement.

Manchester Moss Side CLP has put in a similar resolution.

JO THWAITES

45 resolutions say 'no compensation'

STOCKPORT South's resolution to Labour Party conference, no. 145, is one of a total of 62 resolutions calling for the Party to commit itself to the renationalisation of any part of nationalised industry sold off by the Tory Government.

The fact that 45 of the resolutions call for no compensation reflects a healthy gut feeling of grass roots activists against the merry-go-round of nationalisation/denationalisation which has typified the post-war alternation of governments. Naturally this has led to howls of outrage in the Tory press, accusations that this represents 'blackmail', that the threat of repossession by a future Labour government represents an interference in the freedom of the market, and that this is tantamount to being unconstitutional and illegal. This, above everything, underlines the desirability of fully supporting these resolutions.

It is noticeable that resolu-

tions on the subject from the POEU and ASTMS do not specify non-compensation, and it seems that this will be the crux of the debate at conference. This was certainly the case in Stockport South, where the right wing wanted no mention of 'no compensation', and their tear-jerking visions of little old ladies having their meagre life savings seized by the State will no doubt echo round Brighton in October.

In Stockport South, this argument enabled sympathisers of the 'Militant' to insert their well-worn fetish about 'compensation only in cases of proven need' as a form of compromise.

It is important that no such lifelines are thrown out at conference. This debate is, in its limited way, concerned with an attack on capitalist property rights: the call for renationalisation without compensation must be supported by all socialists.

PETETOWEY

Defy this Tory law

RIGHT-WINGERS in Basingstoke CLP ended up voting for resolutions supporting the campaign for democracy in the Labour Party rather than backing the resolution on council house sales that's going to the Party conference.

The resolution which was carried, by a close vote, came from the Basingstoke branch of the Boilermakers' Union and called for Labour councils to defy Tory legislation designed to force them into selling council houses. Other resolutions supporting re-selection and accountability came from two wards and they undoubtedly had a lot of support as Basingstoke CLP has a record of active support for the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy.

Martin Timmins, a Socialist Organiser supporter who moved the Boilermakers' resolution, pointed out that he supported the fight for democracy in the Labour Party and thought it was important, but stressed that action had to be organised

against the attacks on working class living standards which are being made at present.

Objections to the resolution came down to an argument that 'it's alright calling for defying the law in Basingstoke, where there's a Tory council, but if a Labour council actually did it, they'd end up just like Clay Cross'.

Councillor Malcolm Marshall, a SO supporter, pointed out that in Basingstoke there has been a drastic increase in the waiting lists for council houses while the Tories have been busy selling off land previously designated for council house building.

Labour councils should not be allowed to do the same, he argued: a fight has to be made now, and can't be avoided.

The right-wingers who voted for re-selection resolutions didn't really support them, they argued for changes like postal ballots for selection of candidates.

CARLA JAMISON

Perks to make the wealthy wealthier

70% OF ALL new cars sold in this country are bought by private industry for selected staff. The purchase and running of these cars is set off against the payment of tax, to the tune of an estimated £4½ billion.

Set that against the proposed cuts of £4 billion in public spending, and you get some idea of where the money is going. And company cars are just one of the perks for the bosses and their assistants.

Others include:
* Interest free loans for buying houses,

* Free medical insurance so they can be treated privately when ill,

* School fees paid for their children's private education.

Perks have been used as a means of getting round pay restraint, but they have grown so large that now even the Thatcherites feel the need to do something to meet mounting public criticism.

The most iniquitous twist of all is that the working class, through their taxes, provide the money for many of the tax-concession perks. In 1978, out of a total tax collection of £56½ billion, only £4½ billion came from

industry. Much of the tax on industry is clawed back through formulas like deferred tax payments and lucrative takeovers by companies of their creditors.

At the same time the cuts in public expenditure are falling most heavily on the areas where the capitalist class is most protected. The state provision of health care, education, transport, and housing is to be cut — conveniently it is only the working class who rely on the state to provide these essentials.

Any Tory tinkering with

the perks system must be a whitewash — they can hardly set about reducing the standard of living of the class whose interests they are there to foster. No matter what superficial changes they make to the perks system, they will still ensure that the managers of capitalism are kept sweet.

They will simply attempt to find a less blatant way of doing it, in the hope of continuing to hide from working class people just how much they are being robbed of the fruits of their labour.

JOHN SWEENEY

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Socialist Organiser

Talbot strikers fight isolation

AFTER two months the Peugeot-Citroen bosses have still failed to lick into shape the workers of the Talbot plants in Coventry, on strike at Ryton since the end of June and at Stoke since July 10th.

Despite High Court writs, the police, strike-breaking, threats of the sack, and insidious personal letters to workers, the strike has succeeded in closing down the Linwood assembly plant in Scotland and crippling Talbot (previously Chrysler) production in Britain.

Mass meetings held a few weeks ago at both plants were firm in support of the claim for a 25% pay rise, guaranteed lay-off pay, a 35 hour week, 25 days' annual holiday, and improved maternity/paternity leave.

The bosses' offer of 5½% was accompanied by a productivity deal. They have said this deal might mean £10-£15 a week (instead of the £5 originally quoted) if the workers work harder. Seeing the last '£5 per week' productivity deal actually amounted to less than £2

a week, this statement was treated with derision by the strikers.

Behind the strike stands the threat to the workers posed by the drive of Peugeot-Citroen bosses to rationalise their operations after taking over Chrysler Europe.

What this means for the Talbot workers is that ultimately Peugeot-Citroen would like to produce all their parts in large French plants, and even do most assembly work in France. In other words, Peugeot-Citroen bought Chrysler Europe for its distribution and marketing networks, not for its factories.

As rumours fly round, each plant feels isolated and threatened. Talbot Ryton assembles Alpines. It is said that a week's production of Alpines at Ryton can be done in a Saturday morning shift at Talbot (Simca) Poissy, in France.

Talbot Stoke produce kits for Iran, and the order only lasts for another two years. 1400 Stoke workers were laid off from January until only two weeks before the strike began as a result of

the Iran crisis.

Talbot Stoke also produce engines for the Avenger, which is being phased out. The factory is run down. One worker told us that before he retired recently, he was still working on the same machine that his father worked on before him.

Plant-by-plant isolation is a danger not only for future struggles on jobs but also for the present battle on pay. Already Linwood has been split off by a bigger pay offer. In Coventry, the two plants have followed very different tactics.

The Ryton strike committee has concentrated on shutting the plant tight through the use of mass pickets, meetings and marches. In this way they have involved a high proportion of the workforce, though recently management and some TASS members have been getting in with the energetic assistance of the police.

At Stoke the strikers have been allowing the bosses, clerical and essential maintenance staff through the picket on a pass system

granted by the unions in return for a £1 per week donation to the strike fund. Should any attempt to take equipment in or out of the plant be made, the passes will be withdrawn.

The Stoke committee's main energy has been turned towards winning blacking and financial support through the use of flying pickets to docks and factories in London, Newport, Liverpool, Hull, Nottingham, Sheffield and Leeds. A number of stewards feel that Peugeot-Citroen goods must be prevented from entering or leaving the country altogether. (Some stewards also feel that the job of informing and involving the Stoke members has been neglected, and a strike bulletin should be produced).

Talbot factories in France are now returning from a month's holiday. TGWU official blacking is needed on the docks, and if it is not rapidly organised, secondary picketing should be extended to do the job.

NICK LAWRENCE

IRELAND: War until the troops get out

by JOHN O'MAHONY

ON MONDAY 27th the IRA killed Earl Mountbatten, a most prominent member of the British Royal Family, off the coast of Sligo, and blew to bits 18 members of the Parachute Regiment in Northern Ireland — five victims more than those claimed by the same regiment when British soldiers opened up on unarmed civilians in Derry City on Bloody Sunday, January 30, 1972. They also killed any last justification for the British labour movement to continue to hope that the war in the North of Ireland will fade away.

Clearly it will not. It will go on until the British ruling class gets its troops out of Ireland: until the IRA drive them out, or until the British working class forces them to get out.

In his long life, Lord Mountbatten's major service to his class was as a 'civilised' servant of the decaying British Empire. He presided over the giving of independence when Britain was no longer strong enough to hold the Indian sub-continent in bondage.

The British 'solution' in India has produced communal/religious slaughter on a vast scale during the partition between India and Pakistan [1947], communal strife in Sri Lanka [where the Tamils were exploited as tea plantation workers and some of them were also set up as an elite by Britain against the Sinhalese majority], wars between India and Pakistan, and the breakup of Pakistan and war in Bangladesh.

The 1920-1 'British solution' in Ireland, imposed on the majority of the Irish people, was also produced by a combination of imperialist weakness with sufficient remaining strength to impose a botched and intrinsically false, artificial and unstable 'settlement'.

Unlike in India, in Ireland Britain has let itself get trapped into having direct military responsibility for maintaining the 1920 settlement and the artificial sub-state of the Six Counties [Northern Ireland], in which the Catholics are a bigger minority than the Protestant population would be in a 32-county Ireland. And Britain is now 60 years on in the decay and decline of its imperial strength and power. In ten years it has not mustered the energy for more than feeble stopgap shifts in policy, backed up with vicious repression against the Six County Catholics.

Everything in Lord Mountbatten's life work for the crumbling British Empire thus points up the symbolic justice

of the manner of his leaving it. No-one in the British labour movement will be pleased at the death of an old man and his family, nor indeed at the deaths of the 18 soldiers — though, reading the Royalty-obsessed British press, you would hardly know about the ordinary soldiers. Both, however, were legitimate targets for those trying to break out of the prison house which Britain has made for the Catholics in Northern Ireland, where the British Army is still the chief gauler. [The IRA has said that the killing of two youngsters together with Mountbatten was the result of a 'blunder'.

What British rule means, in fact, as distinct from its ruling class propaganda, was shown yet again in mid-August, when the Ulster Defence Association — an Orange paramilitary organisation which claims tens of thousands under arms — announced its intention to resume assassinating Catholics if the British Army repression against them was not massively increased.

The UDA spokesman, referring to the indiscriminate slaughter of hundreds of Catholics between 1972 [when British tanks broke through and removed the defensive barricades of the Catholic ghettos, in their Operation Motorman], and 1975, admitted that time round the victims were '8 out of 10' ordinary non-political Catholics to every 2 Republicans. Now, he said, 'intelligence' is such that a much larger ratio of Republicans can be ensured.

Most observers agree that this is likely to be true.

The UDA is a legal organisation. Its intelligence about the Catholic ghettos and their people can only come to the UDA from the security forces, who have access to the Catholic ghettos, and now have on computer extensive details about an estimated 400,000 people in the Six Counties [population 1.5 million].

In 1975, towards the end of the last round of widespread sectarian assassinations, the Sunday Times published proof that the British forces were handing over dossiers of suspected Republicans to Orange assassin squads. The Army pointed the finger and the Orange sectarian assassins pointed their guns.

On the day after Mountbatten and the 18 soldiers died, a Catholic man was killed in front of his seven children in the New Lodge area of Belfast, in circumstances which suggest sectarian assassination. For the people of Northern Ireland, this may well prove to be a more significant news item than the fate of Lord Mountbatten.

NUJ: Lord Denning's double-standards

LORD DENNING, sitting with two colleagues in the Court of Appeal, has ruled that the National Union of Journalists' 1978-9 strike against the Newspaper Society (provincial newspapers) was unconstitutional.

Giving judgment in favour of Birmingham Post and Mail scabs who had brought a court case against the union, Denning declared that although the strike involved only a minority of the union's membership, the NEC should not have given the go-ahead without first balloting the whole union membership.

He based his finding on his interpretation of the Union's Rule 20(b), which reads: 'No withdrawal from employment affecting a majority of the members of the Union shall be sanctioned by the NEC unless a ballot of the whole of the members shows a two-thirds majority of those voting in favour of such action', and the fact that all members of the NUI were instructed to black Newspaper Society papers for the duration of the dispute.

Delivering his verdict, Denning stated: 'It seems to me that a withdrawal from employment includes not only a total withdrawal by way of an all-out strike, but also a partial withdrawal from the workaday world by refusing to handle certain material or not doing proper work'.

Though the NUI has sought leave to appeal to the House of Lords, the judgment has very serious immediate reper-

cussions and implications. His Lordship has not, at the time of writing, deigned to deliver a written judgment, so the full extent of the damage he has wrought to the Union cannot yet be assessed. But on the face of it it means that every NUI strike, no matter how small the chapel involved, could be the subject of a High Court injunction by disaffected members if a ballot of the whole membership had not first been carried out. Instructions to union members not to break the strike would count as the dispute 'affecting a majority of the members'.

Because the written judgment is not yet available, the NEC has not decided what action to take in respect of it. Obviously, at the NUI's next annual conference in April 1980 (which happens to be a rule-changing one) it will have to ask delegates to change the offending rule, preferably by removing altogether the requirement for a compulsory ballot before a strike.

In the meantime, it may well have to take its courage in both hands, announce to the Court of Appeal its intention to carry out in full its disciplinary action against Newspaper Society scabs, and also continue to authorise strikes by individual chapels without a general ballot. A Special Delegate Meeting of the union may be necessary to ratify this approach.

JONATHAN HAMMOND
[NUJ Executive,
in personal capacity]

Mass picket to beat the Sheriff of Nottingham

NOTTINGHAM and District Trades Council, in conjunction with the print unions SLADE, National Graphical Association and National Union of Journalists, has called a demonstration and mass picket of the Nottingham Evening Post for Saturday 1 September.

The NGA has been in dispute with the company since 1973, when printers were sacked after the unilateral introduction of new technology. The journalists' union continued to work on the paper until last Christmas, when 28 members were sacked during the winter's provincial newspapers pay dispute.

The last joint mass picket, attracting more than 1,000 trade unionists, failed to stop the paper after police smashed into the demonstrators in a Grunwick-style operation. But this time the paper can be halted and Post boss Christopher Pole-Carew, the High Sheriff of Nottingham, brought to his knees.

Over 50 coaches are being organised from throughout the country. For details, contact the NGA or NUI FoC at your local newspaper office, or ring NUI headquarters on 01-278 7916. The demonstration itself assembles at 12.30 at Forest Recreation Ground, Nottingham. JAMES RYAN

Free Annette Bahner

A MASS protest has been called at the East German Embassy, 34 Belgrave Sq., London W1, for Wednesday September 5th, starting 11am.

It will demand the immediate and unconditional release of Annette Bahner from jail in East Germany.

Bahner, a 23-year old social worker from Cologne

and a member of the Social Democratic Party, has been held in jail since July 9th, and is threatened with charges of 'espionage'.

An international campaign has been organised in defence of Bahner. For the campaign in Britain, contact Ken Stratford, 1 Moberley Cres., SE19 (771 0202).

ENGINEERS: IT HAS TO BE ALL OUT

by MARK HALL

THE MOOD among engineering workers is more and more for an all-out strike for their pay claim.

The leaders of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions are proposing a weekly series of two-day strikes starting September 3rd. This action must be fully supported. But many workers feel that the union leaders are bleeding militancy, letting it dribble away in doses too small to really hit the bosses.

With order books very low, the bosses can sit out the two day strikes for a while. But many workers will be worse off financially losing two

days' pay a week than they would be going on all-out strike and getting social security for their families.

In Leeds on Monday 20th August, a meeting of 250 workers voted unanimously for all-out action. In Birmingham on the same day, the mood at a meeting of 1,000 workers ran strongly in favour of an all-out strike, though the platform refused to take a formal vote on it.

Some right-wingers, especially in the Midlands, are using the lack of democratic involvement of the membership as an excuse for scabbing (though what they want is not mass meetings but secret ballots). There are even people who excuse

scabbing on the grounds that they would support all-out action but two-day strikes are no good.

These excuses must be rejected. But militants should also recognise that the Broad Left's line of uncritical support for the Confed leaders' handling of the dispute plays into the hands of right-wingers and anti-union cowboys.

So far the three one-day strikes have been well supported, and so has the national overtime ban in force since July 30th, despite the fact that the claim is a very weak one.

It calls for:
• £80 minimum time rate for skilled workers, £60 for

unskilled.

- A 39 hour week with progress to 35 hours by 1982.
- Two days extra holiday.
- A common implementation date on April 1st, 1979.

Many workers are over the claimed minimum rates already through local agreements, and this claim cannot have the same mobilising power that a call for an across-the-board rise, an immediate 35 hour week, and automatic inflation protection for wages could have. Yet the rank and file have shown themselves willing to respond when the unions give a lead.

All-out action is needed not only to combat demoralisation and demobilisation,

but as the only way to defeat the bosses. With order books low, profit margins slumping, and cash flow tight, the Engineering Employers' Federation is in no mood to compromise.

Their backs are stiffened by the Tory government. Unfortunately there are no signs of any backbone at all among the leaders on our side.

The same attitudes that dominate the no-fight main motions for the TUC conferences, and the main union leaders' coming alliance with Callaghan at the Labour Party conference, also dominate the way the struggle for the pay and conditions of 2½ million workers is being conducted.