

Socialist Organiser

Paper of the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory

by JOHN BLOXAM
[Mobilising Committee organiser, in personal capacity]

INSTEAD OF fighting the Tories, the top union and Labour leaders are cuddling up to the bosses in the CBI and trying to work out a new Social Con-Trick for the next Labour Government.

On June 30, Sid Weighell, the right-wing general secretary of the railworkers' union, rammed a resolution through his union's conference calling for an incomes policy. "Considerable restraint will be required in the wages field", he said.

Then on July 9 Weighell was followed by Moss Evans of the TGWU, who is supposed to be a left-winger of sorts. He told TGWU-sponsored MPs that he wanted a new social contract. It would include wage controls, though not 'rigid, inflexible' control.

On July 5 the big-business magazine the *Economist* could report:

"At a recent meeting with union leaders Mr Denis Healey and Mr Roy Hattersley argued that the Labour party needed to arm itself with an incomes policy. Mr Murray, in effect, replied: not yet — but we'll come to it later."

Imports

"So, despite the vigorous opposition to such policies expressed at the Wembley special party conference last month, Labour would probably be able to flaunt an incomes policy at the government at a politically opportune moment..."

The TUC and the Labour shadow cabinet will be meeting on July 21 to draft a statement on the economy, and it may well include at least strong hints at incomes policy.

Meanwhile the TUC is pressing hard to get a joint campaign with the CBI on import controls. Instead of a fight against the bosses, the TUC wants a joint workers/bosses campaign against foreign goods — which means,

inevitably, against foreign workers!

For months, the TUC leaders have been whining on about how reasonable they would be if only the Tories would talk to them more. But since they have drawn a blank on the beer-and-sandwiches round at Downing Street, they make do with talks with the CBI.

In the political philosophy of the TUC leaders, these talks are the only way to get anywhere near 'power'. The power of working-class mass action, mobilised against the Tories and the bosses, is something they hardly understand and totally fear.

Talks

The next stage could well be the TUC talking to the Tories about how to operate under the Employment Bill when it becomes law. In spite of TUC commitment on paper to non-cooperation, some right-wing unions have already said they will take Tory money for ballots.

This behind-the-scenes backstabbing clearly shows the link between the fight against the Tories and Labour and trade union democracy.

Incomes policies under capitalism have been rejected by Labour and TUC conferences. But the bureaucratic leaders manoeuvre and manipulate to negate conference policy.

They push the line that wages must be 'restrained' to save capitalist industry. They give no real support to vital wages struggles like the steelworkers' early this year.

After the miners' conference had voted to demand a £100 minimum wage, Joe Gormley made a speech reassuring the Tories. It was just a conference resolution, he said — it didn't mean Gormley was actually going to fight the Tories!

All this at a time when wage rises are running way behind inflation; at a time when all-out working class action is urgently needed to beat the Tory bonfire of jobs and public services.

Some left-wingers get confused by the argument that an incomes policy is all right

if it goes together with dividend, price, and investment controls. Tony Benn, interviewed on television on July 7, said he might favour an incomes policy as part of overall planning within a new 'class partnership'.

Don't be fooled! There can be no class partnership between bosses and workers, any more than there can be peace and friendship between sharks and the fish they eat. Any incomes policy under capitalism is swindling

and robbery.

A government really representing the workers cannot just try to nudge the capitalists into being less ruthless, or go in for shams like the last Labour government's price controls. It must openly assault the wealth and power of the top 5%, and fight for workers' power.

The bureaucrats who want to sabotage democracy in the labour movement are also sabotaging the fight

against the Tories. The rank and file must call them to account, and fight for:

- An end to all collaboration with the Tories and CBI.
- Preparation for solidarity with all workers' struggles, and all-out strikes against the Employment Bill.
- Renovation and democracy in the labour movement.
- A workers' government, controlled by and democratically accountable to the labour movement.

STAB IN THE BACK

INSIDE



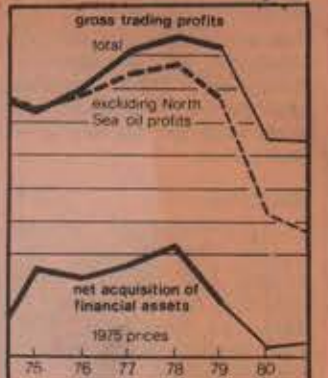
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Labour democracy — Keep up the pressure

WILLIAM RODGERS' best friend Jim wants Party unity. So why doesn't Callaghan start with his best friend Bill?

At the May special conference, the Labour Party agreed a programme on 'Peace, Jobs and Freedom'. Shortly after it held an anti-Cruise missile demonstration. Rodgers labelled some of the marchers 'parasites' and 'infiltrators' because they wanted to go further than the May decisions.

Now this arch right-winger has penned a pamphlet supporting Cruise missiles in Britain. The pamphlet is published by the Labour Committee for Transatlantic Understanding, which was recently exposed as being a NATO front organisation.

With those connections, it is not surprising that Rodgers

couldn't take a tough line against the Tories' plan to buy £5 billion worth of Trident missiles. The most he could say was "Many of us are deeply sceptical about the decision".

CALLAGHAN — looking like a prosperous butcher just back from Majorca — emerged from a well-protected car to go into the NEC meeting on July 16 and saw Reg Race MP among those lobbying.

"Who's organised this then, Reg?", asked Callaghan.

"The Rank and File Mobilising Committee", answered Reg.

"Ah, but why don't you aim for unity? Why don't you mobilise the whole of the Party?", grinned Callaghan.

"Don't worry", came the

reply. "We will". The grin disappeared.

NEIL KINNOCK is increasingly being referred to as 'a marshmallow' — that is, one of the softies on the NEC (or is it one of those that melts in the leader's mouth?).

After a brisk talk to two lobbyists on how the power of the trade union block vote had to be smashed, he heard Reg Race call out, "No compromise, Neil!"

Kinnock flushed with anger and called Reg aside. "Don't say that to me, Reg, for the sake of comradeship. You don't need to lecture me about compromise".

Reg Race may be quick with repartee, but there's nothing you can say to that.



I'm keen to get down to the grass roots too...

Ivan Wells

MOBILISE FOR LABOUR DEMOCRACY

- 1 Defend mandatory reselection
- 2 DEFEND THE NEC
- 3 NEC must decide the manifesto
- 4 The Party must elect the Leader
- 5 MAKE THE PLP ACCOUNTABLE

Rank & File Mobilising Committee
Launched by:

Contributors include:

20p

Contacts, activities

BASINGSTOKE

Contact address: not yet fixed, but phone Martin Timmins, 59582. Rally: 7.30pm, Tuesday 2 September, Chute House, Church St.

BIRMINGHAM

Contact: Simon Temple, 40 Landgate Rd, Handsworth, (554 1503). Public meeting planned for Wednesday 30 July, rally for beginning of September.

BRISTOL

Contact: George Mickelwright, 10 Hanbury Rd, Bristol BS8 (39249). Open meeting 8pm, Tuesday 22 July, at Shepherds Hall, Old Market. Rally planned for September.

CARDIFF

Contact: Martin Barclay, 21 Dago St, Canton; or phone Marguerite Games, Rogers-ton 4320. Rally: 11am, Saturday 26 July, Plant Science Lecture Room, Main Building, University College Cardiff.

CHELMSFORD

Contact: John Brownfield, 516 Linnett Drive, Chelmsford (81534).

COVENTRY

Contact: John Lowe, 124 Kenilworth Court (503480).

EDINBURGH

Contact: Joe Baxter, 4 Glen-gyle Terrace (229 4591). Public meeting: 2pm, Sunday 31 August, at the Trades Council, Picardy Place.

GLASGOW

(No joint committee established because LCC unwilling to take part).

LEEDS

Contact: Barry Winter, c/o 49 Top Moor Side, Leeds 11. Phone: 703664.

LEICESTER

Contact: 38 Portland Rd (700498). Public meeting: 7.30pm, Wednesday 30 July, Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate. Leicester West CLP has backed the Mobilising Committee.

LONDON

BRENT

Contact: Ron Anderson, 128 Dollis Hill Lane, NW2 (450 4509).

HACKNEY

Contact: Ann Cameron, 12 Palmsthorpe Rd, N16 (229 7554). Hackney North CLP has backed the Mobilising Committee. It has agreed to ask every Party member to take one copy of the broad-sheet for themselves and another copy to sell at work or in their trade union.

HARINGEY

Contact: Jeremy Corbyn, 28 Lausanne Rd, N8 (340 9069), or Hornsey Labour Party, 28 Middle Lane, N8.

ISLINGTON

Contact: Jenny Morris, 56b Grosvenor Ave, N5 (226 7079).

LAMBETH

Contact: Graham Norwood, 25 Fawnbrake Ave, SE24 (274 0042).

NEWHAM

Contact address: not yet fixed, but phone Mike Foley, 555 9957.

PADDINGTON

Paddington CLP has backed the Mobilising Committee and is planning a rally in early September. Contact: 39 Chippenham Rd, W9 (286 9692).

TOWER HAMLETS

Contact: c/o 12 Tredegar Square, E3.

MANCHESTER

Contact: Dave Gardner, 312 Robert Adam Crescent, Hulme, Manchester 15 (226 6879). Next planning meeting: Thursday 17 July. Rally planned for September.

MERSEYSIDE

WIRRAL

Contact: John McCabe, 10 Heyes Drive, Wallasey (639 2739).

LIVERPOOL

Contact: Andy Dixon, 30 Church Rd, Roby, Huyton (489 4242).

NEWCASTLE

Contact: Martin Lightfoot, Trade Union Studies Information Unit, Southend, Fernwood Rd, Newcastle.

NORTHAMPTON

Contact: John Dickie, 2 Western View, Black Lion Hill (22188), or Steve Schofield, 24 Hallam Close, Moulton (499543). Northampton North and South CLPs have both backed the Mobilising Committee.

NOTTINGHAM

Contact: Pete Radcliff, Flat 1, 8 Vickers St (625499). Next planning meeting: Thursday, 17 July. Rally planned for September.

SHEFFIELD

Contact: John Cunningham, c/o 10 Burns Rd, Sheffield 6 (686773). Open meeting: 7.30pm, Monday 28 July, 'Prince of Wales', Division St. Rally planned for September.

STOKE

Contact: Arthur Bough, 23 Russell Rd, Sandford. Public meeting: Thursday 24 July, at WEA, Cartwright House, Broad St, Hanley.

OTHER MEETINGS

TUESDAY 22 JULY. Iranian Women's Solidarity Group re-launches its public campaign against recent attacks on women's rights in Iran: compulsory veiling and sacking of women from government offices. 8pm, 'Roebuck', Tottenham Court Rd, London.

WEDNESDAY 23 JULY. South London Right to Work Campaign, with Stuart Holland and John Deason. 7.30pm at Stockwell Hall, Stockwell Park Walk, London SW9.

THURSDAY 24 JULY. Manchester SCLV meeting, 8pm at the 'Packhorse', off Deansgate.

THURSDAY 24 JULY. Smash the Prevention of Terrorism Act, defend free speech on Ireland. Speakers: Gerry MacLochlainn, Plaid Cymru, Troops Out. 7.30pm at the William IV pub, Newport.

SATURDAY 26 JULY - SAT. 2 AUGUST. Labour Party Young Socialists summer camp. Bracelands campsite, near Coleford, Gloucestershire. Booking fee £5 (cheques to LPYS Summer Camp Fund) to LPYS, 144 Walworth Rd, London SE17. Cost for full week £35.

Socialist Organiser Conference on the FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY IN THE TRADE UNIONS
Saturday 1 November 11.5.30, in Birmingham
Open to Labour Party members and to trade unionists.
Inquiries to John Bloxam c/o 5 Stamford Hill London N16

Where we stand

SOCIALIST ORGANISER is the paper of the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory, an alliance of Labour and trade union activists sponsored by six Constituency Labour Parties, four Trades Councils, and several trade union branches and LPYS. We aim to build a class-struggle left-wing in the Labour Party and trade unions based on a revolutionary socialist platform.

- ★ Organise the left to beat back the Tories' attacks! No to attacks on union rights; defend the picket-line; no state interference in our unions!
- ★ No to any wage curbs. Labour must support all struggles for better living standards and conditions! Wage rises should at the very least keep up with price increases. The same should go for state benefits, grants and pensions.
- ★ Start improving the social services rather than cutting them. Stop cutting jobs in the public sector.
- ★ End unemployment. Cut hours not jobs — share the work with no loss of pay. Start now with a 35-hour week and end to overtime.
- ★ All firms threatening closure should be nationalised under workers' control.
- ★ Make the bosses pay, not the working class. Millions for hospitals, not a penny for 'defence'! Nationalise the banks and financial institutions without compensation. End the interest burden on council housing and other public services.
- ★ Freeze rents and rates.
- ★ Scrap all immigration controls. Race is not a problem; racism is. The labour movement must mobilise to drive the fascists off the streets.
- ★ Purge racists from positions in the labour movement. Organise full support for black self-defence.
- ★ The capitalist police are an enemy for the working class. Support all demands to weaken them as the bosses' striking force: dissolution of special squads (SPG, Special Branch, M15, etc.), public accountability, etc.
- ★ Free abortion and contraception on demand. Women's equal right to work, and full equality for women.
- ★ Against attacks on gays by the State: abolish all laws which discriminate against lesbians and gay men; for the right of the gay community to organise and to affirm their stance publicly.
- ★ The Irish people — as a whole — should have the right to determine their own future. Get the British troops out now! Repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Political status for Irish Republican prisoners as a matter of urgency.
- ★ The black working people of South Africa and of Zimbabwe should get full support from the British labour movement for their strikes, struggles, and armed combat against the white supremacist regimes. South African goods and services should be blacked.
- ★ It is essential to achieve the fullest democracy in the labour movement. Automatic reselection of MPs during each parliament, and the election by annual conference of party leaders. Annual election of all trade union officials, who should be paid the average for the trade.
- ★ The chaos, waste, human suffering and misery of capitalism now — in Britain and throughout the world — show the urgent need to establish rational, democratic, human control over the economy, to make the decisive sectors of industry social property, under workers' control.
- ★ The strength of the labour movement lies in the rank and file. Our perspective must be working class action to raze the capitalist system down to its foundations, and to put a working class socialist system in its place — rather than having our representatives run the system and waiting for the crumbs from the table of the bankers and bosses.

Gays unite against the bigots

by ALEXIS CARRAS

IN AUGUST 1979, John Saunders, a worker at a youth camp, was dismissed by his employers, the Scottish National Camps Association. The reason?

"Information was received that you indulge in homosexuality. At a camp accommodating large number of school children and teenagers it is totally unsuitable to employ a person with such tendencies."

John Saunders did not deny that he was gay. There had been no complaints about his work at the camp.

In November 1979 he took the case to an Industrial Tribunal. The Tribunal upheld the sacking. In April 1980 an Employment Appeal Tribunal also upheld the findings of the Industrial

Tribunal.

The EAT supported the Tribunal because it maintained that the Scottish National Camps Association, as a 'reasonable' employer, decided that the defendant's sexual orientation constituted a 'risk' to young people and a source of anxiety to their parents.

Psychiatrists' advice that heterosexuals are just as great a 'risk' to young children as gays was totally dismissed.

The road is now clear. Any 'reasonable' employer, any 'reasonable' little bourgeois can appeal to that great amorphous body of 'reasonable' public opinion and uphold their totally arbitrary sacking of employees, simply on the basis that

they are gay.

No gay person, especially if s/he has had the courage to take a stand and openly identify himself/herself as such, is now safe in their job.

Although on the front-line of attack, gays are not the only ones who will suffer

as a consequence of this ruling. Anyone with different views, attitudes and lifestyle is also under threat.

To fight the coming carnival of 'reasonableness' (read: bigotry, repression, and institutional neurosis), gay people have launched the Employment Protection

Appeal, an umbrella group of five gay organisations with the main aim of overturning the Tribunal's ruling at the appeal to the Court of Session in Edinburgh in the autumn.

The appeal has received support of several national unions (GMWU, NALGO, NUPE, SCPS), the Scottish Trade Union Congress, the Aberdeen and Edinburgh Trades Councils, several Constituency Labour Parties, and some MPs.

They have organised a picket of the TUC General Council in June, and during the Gay Pride Week March at the end of June, they presented a petition with thousands of signatures to the Prime Minister.

The appeal calls on all groups and individuals to help the campaign in several ways:

- ★ lobby for an amendment to the Employment Protection Act so that gays are explicitly protected;
- ★ join or support your union's gay caucus or group;
- ★ write a letter to your organisation's journal publicising the John Saunders case and calling for action;
- ★ secure commitments from local authorities and other employers that they will not discriminate against gays in their employment;
- ★ launch a boycott where possible of school camps run by the Scottish National Camps Association Ltd.

For further information and for financial contributions which the appeal urgently needs, write to: EPA, c/o SHRG, 60 Broughton Street, Edinburgh EH1.



No unity without democracy

by JON LANSMAN,
secretary of the
Mobilising
Committee

"THERE IS a deep groundswell throughout our movement to bring this continuing debate to an end". So said Jim Callaghan recently, and this may be the case. But the groundswell is driven by a desire for the democratic changes to be made this year, not by a loss of concern. And Jim is not just asking for the debate to cease, but actually for a reversal of the Party's decision on reselection and the manifesto.

So it seems that he was not really talking about a feeling amongst the rank and file at all. Perhaps he was talking about the storm that has always blown in the upper reaches of the Party hierarchy, in the minds of people whose interests would not be served by an extension of democracy and rank and file influence. Certainly it is this storm and not any groundswell that is in favour of closing the debate.

After all, on the Commission of Enquiry, it is the Parliamentary leadership and the trade union leaders who could not agree and who prevented the Enquiry from reaching a conclusion on the democratic questions. It is they who proposed the Enquiry in the first place to re-examine decisions that had already been made, and who are now proposing the reintroduction of the three year rule, which has already prolonged the debate. But there was a clear consensus amongst the submissions to the Enquiry, and amongst the Party's six representatives on the Enquiry. It

may be that the rank and file are tired of the debate, but they hardly want to return to the position before the debate began.

Michael Foot last week compared the preoccupation with "so-called constitutional issues" to the medieval scholars arguing about how many angels might dance on the point of a needle, when the Thatcherite barbarians were at the gate. He forgets that it was the last Labour government's abandonment of Party policies, which brought the Thatcherite barbarians to the gate. It is a pity that Labour's Parliamentary leadership should once again try to avoid the future implementation of Labour policies by pretending that accountability is irrelevant.

The rank and file are determined to avoid a repeat of the last Labour government's failures. The so-called preoccupation of Party members with constitutional issues is to prevent a repetition by making Labour's elected representatives more accountable to the Party. It is this democratic principle which prompted the formation of the Rank and File Mobilising Committee for Labour Democracy, and which unites all its constituent organisations. This

unprecedented unity lays the foundations for the co-operation that is essential to overcome the formidable obstacles on the road to socialist policies.

The Mobilising Committee is not concerned with who leads the Party. It is a rank and file campaign and concerned only with wider participation. There can be no compromise on accountability. If the issues are lost this year, the fight will continue. Jim will also not compromise; no doubt he will also "fight, fight and fight again to save the Party we love". But let it not be said that the party is divided in a struggle between Left and Right. The conflict is between the interests of the rank and file and the interests of the leadership.

We must unite and fight the Tories, but true unity can only be on the basis of a democratic Party, and an accountable leadership. There will not be much enthusiasm for a campaign to restore to power another Labour government which will ignore the wishes of the Party, and impose the very policies of deflation, wage restraint and spending cuts on which our opposition to the Tories is based. Enough is indeed enough.



NO DEMOCRACY WITHOUT A FIGHT TO THE FINISH

LABOUR'S Right Wing is accusing the Left of tearing the Party apart, quarrelling over constitutional irrelevances, and diverting attention from the vital battles with the Tories.

Hypocrisy! How can 'unity against the Tories' be an excuse for the Right Wing wanting to stop any fight against the Tories on issues like nuclear arms or Ireland?

The Right Wing deplores and condemns the battles over Party democracy — and at the same time, fights those battles, ruthlessly, aggressively, and going all out to win.

They are right about the importance of the battles in their actions, not in their hypocritical words. There is no point wishing that the conflict over Party democracy would go away. It is there, and it has to be fought out.

Like every serious political battle, it represents a clash of class interests. The Right Wing wants the Labour Party to remain an alternative capitalist governing team, loosely tied to a passive electoral machine.

It is led by the Parliamentary chiefs, the right wing trade union bureaucrats, and a large part of Labour's local councillors — the sections of the Party most tied to careerism and

most remote from its working class base. Its chief advantage in the struggle is the loud support of the capitalist press.

The democratic reforms fought for by the Left would enable Labour "to mobilise our full strength to change society, as distinct from sending some people into government as Ministers"



William Rodgers, tribune of the Right (as Tony Benn puts it).

The driving force of the Left has come from the rank and file, who have continued to press ahead even when the National Executive Committee has compromised — and when Benn himself was silent after being "sent into government as a Minister".

Jon Lansman, secretary of the Rank and File Mobilising Committee, writes on this page: "The Mobilising Committee is not concerned with who leads the Party...

let it not be said that the Party is divided in a struggle between Left and Right".

The Mobilising Committee unites activists with the most diverse views on many political questions for a joint effort on the key immediate issue of democracy. As such, it cannot align itself with one particular policy trend or one particular candidate for leader within the Party.

But the Party is divided between Left and Right. The conflict between rank and file and leadership will be resolved only by getting a new leadership in tune with the rank and file — and striking out against capitalism — or by the leadership stifling and taming the rank and file. Either way, the struggle has to be fought to the end.

That's why the stakes are so high. That's why the pressure is so great. That's why there is a risk that the National Executive Committee will crumble and compromise. And that's why the fight for Labour democracy can be won only by mobilising working class activists for a struggle just as ruthless as the pro-capitalist Right Wing's.

MARTIN THOMAS

Organising the left

ONLY A FEW months ago, most people seemed to assume that conflict over democracy and accountability in the Labour Party would be settled in favour of the left. The gains of last year's Brighton conference and the disorganised state of the Labour right encouraged many Labour Party left wingers into a kind of creeping complacency that all was settled. The democratic reforms would go through and the right wing leadership swept from power.

Now things are looking rather different. The big guns of the trade unions have swung decisively behind Callaghan and the outcome of the Commission of Enquiry has been a boost for the right. And yet this is at a time when the policies advocated by the Parliamentary leadership look more and more like 'wet' Toryism, and the rank and file of the Party are clamouring for a change of direction. How is it that events seem to be slipping out of the left's control?

A key to this can be found in the way the left in the Labour Party is organised. Since its inception there has been a continuous current of left wing opposition in the Party, based mainly on the rank and file with the support of a few MPs. At times there has been no formal organisation — at other times there have been organised bodies, like the Socialist League of the 1930s, or more recently the Tribune groups.

Whatever the style of organisation, the main aim of the left has been the same — to change the policies of the Labour Party, in and out of power, and to replace the right wing leadership with its own candidates.

Usually, Labour MPs have been at the head and have greatly influenced the tone and methods of the left. This has especially been the case since the post-war Labour government, when we've had the Keep Left group during the Attlee government, the Bevanites during the '50s, and the Tribune group.

Screams

All of these groups have shared the same basic and fatal weakness. The rank and file of the Party are simply not involved except as a cast of walk-on extras cheering the stars at big conferences and rallies. This is not surprising, since the leaders have seen change in the Party coming about through the simple diffusion of their ideas and policies.

All that was needed, in this view, was more pamphlets, extra meetings, and a receptive audience — everything would follow. The essential Fabianism of the left wing leaders was turned upwards into the Party itself.

This style of political activity is still very much with us. The Labour Coordinating Committee, set up a couple of years ago, proclaimed its aims as "building

real popular support for socialist ideas outside Parliament", and increasing "the responsiveness of the Labour Party leadership to the broad movement".

From the chorus of outraged screams from the press and the Labour right, you would have thought that here was a left wing movement in the Party that was going to be radically different from those of the past. Not a bit of it.

After a spasm of activity, the LCC seems to have settled down into the old comfortable style — broadsheets, rallies, meetings, circulars — and makes almost no attempt to organise local activity. For example, in Manchester a local branch of the LCC has been formed; its main activity — in the summer will be... a meeting. In the steel strike earlier this year the LCC said nothing and did nothing.



Stafford Cripps and Sidney Webb: the same approach from the left winger and the Fabian?

Other tendencies in the Labour Party also exhibit the same symptoms of passive propagandism. The Militant tendency is notorious for its single-minded devotion in pushing its own policies forward... and refusing to be involved in anything else! Similarly the ILP, which has recently returned to the Labour Party, sees political activity as being little more than preaching socialist ideas to the rank and file.

Indeed, the ILP is so committed to this view that its principles declare "it is a publications organisation" which "seeks to develop Socialist ideas, analysis, perspective and policy within the Labour movement and throughout society as a whole".

Very little attention is paid to possible activities for its supporters, and when this does happen, like the Militant, the activity is safely confined around the Labour Party. No attempt is

made to link up work in the Party with struggles going on outside. Both tendencies see the real world solely as it relates to the Labour Party, and consequently shy away from struggles like those of women and black people, which do not slot neatly into the "traditions" of the labour movement.

No wonder Callaghan feels able to claim that the rank and file of the Party want to see an end to "constitutional bickering". It is true that rank and file activists will eventually get cheesed off with continuous rown over constitutional issues — if that is all the left can offer!

We do need to explain the issues at stake as far as Party democracy is concerned, we do need to argue for support for the campaign objectives of the Rank and File Mobilising Committee — but we also need to be able to involve activists in meaningful local activity. We have to show that it's not just a matter of changing the rules and some of the personnel, but of changing the whole basis of political activity in the Party.

There are signs of some steps in this direction. Recent weeks have seen a flurry of anxious activity by the LCC, and, much more hopefully, the formation of the Rank and File Mobilising Committee to coordinate the efforts of the left in the run-up to this year's conference. This is not shutting the stable door after the horse has bolted.

Pulpit

Despite all the machinations of the right wing and the clamorous campaign of the Press, the left can still win the day at conference if a vigorous campaign is launched to defend and extend the gains of Brighton. But, whatever the outcome, we have to look further than that. Time and time again in the history of the Labour Party the left has frittered away its advantages through its inability to organise the rank and file. We must not repeat the same mistakes yet again.

Socialist Organiser, and its local groups, aim to involve Party members in the widest possible activity — not only campaigning for socialist ideas and policies within the Party, but also linking up Party activity with work in and around local factories and communities. That is the type of organisation that the left needs.

The struggle for socialism is inseparable from the actual day-to-day struggles of working people. It cannot be conducted from an ivory academic tower, nor from a pulpit.

Sadly, that is a lesson that many on the left still have to learn. We hope they will recognise that and join us in the fight to build a really effective left organisation.

NEAL SMITH

CLEANING OUT THE TOWN HALL STABLES

by KEN LIVINGSTONE, Camden Council and GLC

THE NEC Organisational Sub-Committee has proposed changing the rules and standing orders of Labour Groups on Councils so that policies are not determined exclusively by the councillors, but by the LP as a whole. And this has produced the predictable anti-Party attacks from *The Times*, Shirley Williams and the rest of the far right.

Given their track record of support for Roy Jenkins and Reg Prentice, the views of the elitist wing of the Party are predictable. They

claim that only councillors can decide policy; that councillors are answerable to all the voters (including Tory and NF supporters?); and that only councillors are in a position to know all the facts.

The Right also claims that councillors have statutory obligations and run the risk of surcharge if they break the law.

But all these protestations overlook the fact that no-one is forced to be a councillor. At the moment, London Labour Parties have over 270 Party members competing for 92 GLC nominations.

The truth is that a large minority of our councillors have nothing in common with the Labour Party, have long since forgotten why they

were first elected, and are just hanging on to a comfortable position with food and drink and chauffeur-driven cars paid for out of the rates.

Some leading Labour members on the local authority associations spend months each year on trips abroad, discussing problems of other cities and then flying home in time to vote for cuts in jobs and services in their own. These characters have been parasites on the Labour Party for too long and now is the time to clean out municipal stables.

The first step in this task is to give the Labour Party control over the policies of Councils it has won. The only reason Parties lack the information necessary to make policy is because many

Council leaderships withhold it.

Several councils have already asked the NEC to agree to those changes, and also to have the Parties elect the council leaders and chairpersons. If these changes are agreed, rest assured that we will see much more of our Councillors and have all the information we need to take decisions.

Many Councils have won respect from Labour voters in their areas, but on some Councils the Freemasons have more influence than the local Labour Party. The time has come to bring Labour Councils back into the mainstream of the Party and to use them fully in the struggle to rid ourselves of the present government.

ACCOUNTABILITY: ONCE IN 4 YEARS IS NOT ENOUGH

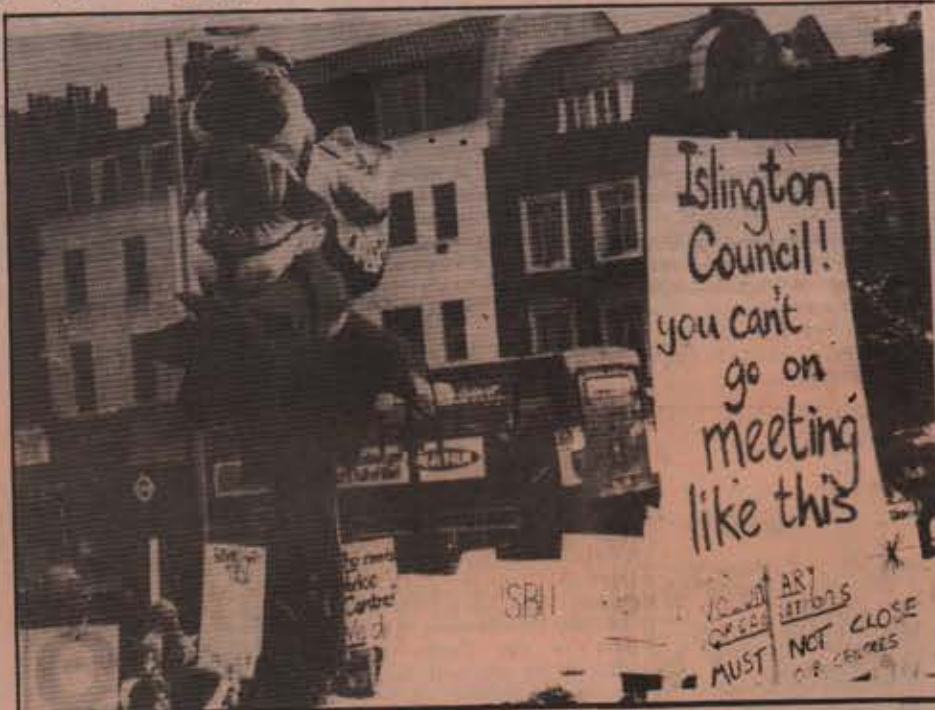
by JENNY MORRIS, Islington Councillor

PREDICTABLY; the press has attacked the recommendations of the Organisation Sub-Committee of the Labour Party's NEC to make Labour Councillors more accountable to their local Labour Party. But it has failed to point out that the NEC is in fact reacting to a situation of an ever-widening gap between a large number of Labour Councillors and the CLPs who put them in the Town Halls up and down the country.

In most inner city areas, where Council budgets have been particularly tightly squeezed by Government cutbacks, the majority of Labour Councillors have failed to put up the kind of fight for housing and local services which their local Labour Parties would like.

Accusations of Labour Councillors "doing the Tories' dirty work for them" are common, and many local Party members are understandably bitter that these Councillors seem contemptuous of the work put in to elect them to office.

At the same time, the press has failed to give any details of how the NEC



sees accountability of Councillors working in practice. Instead, it has given prominence to the fears of the leadership of Manchester Council, itself under attack from local Party members, that CLPs will not take account of the fact that Councillors have legal obligations and are vulnerable to the possibility of surcharging.

(No-one has pointed out

that in the majority of cases where Councillors have been surcharged, it is the Councillors who have given the political lead with the full backing of their CLPs and usually without the backing of the Labour Party establishment — Poplar, St Pancras, Clay Cross, etc.)

As things stand at the moment, it is the District or Borough Labour Party which draws up the local

manifesto on which Council elections are fought, but the Labour Group elects the Leader and chairpersons of Committees and determines the policy of the Council between elections.

The Organisation Sub-Committee proposes that in future, the District or Borough Labour Party should have the responsibility of electing the Leader of the Labour Group and the

Chairpersons of Committees. These elections take place each year so there would be far more accountability than now, with Councillors only subject to reselection every four years.

The difficulties experienced now with making Councillors accountable illustrates, in fact, that reselection of MPs every 4 or 5 years is not going to be a big enough step in the direction of Party democracy.

These proposals seem particularly appropriate to the situation within the Islington Labour Party, where the leadership of the controlling Labour Group has consistently flouted Labour Party policy and recently delivered the final insult of selling off Council houses on the open market.

A few weeks ago, two of the three CLPs in Islington called on the Borough Labour Party (the Local Government Committee) to "reform the Labour Group to include only those Councillors willing to abide by Labour Party policy on the sale of Council houses".

As the constitution of the Labour Party stands at the moment, the LGC does not in fact have the power to do this. Yet even the General Secretary of the GLRC, George Page, has admitted that "something must be done".

Last week, he chaired a

joint meeting between the Executive of the LGC and the leadership of the Labour Group in an attempt to resolve the situation. So far, no solution has been found.

The Labour Council shows no sign of reversing its policies of selling off Council houses, closing down advice centres and playgroups, reducing its housing programme below the level necessitated by Tory cutbacks — and now locking out workers in its own Building Works Department.

Next May, party members will be out on the streets in Islington canvassing for GLC Labour candidates on policies which are opposed to most of those being carried out by Islington Council. And a year after that they will be out on the door knocker again trying to get a Labour Council elected in a Borough whose electorate is more and more of the opinion that there is little difference between the policies of Islington's Labour Council and the country's Tory Government.

Naturally, party members are worried about the damage that the leadership of Islington's Labour Group is doing to the Labour Party. The attempt by the NEC to make Labour Councillors more accountable is therefore a welcome step on the road to a more democratic party.

by GRAHAM NORWOOD

WITH THE Labour Party leadership still refusing to pose an alternative to the Tory government, the crisis developing between local authorities and the Thatcher administration is moving to the apex of the class struggle in the country.

That confrontation has been heightened by another move by Michael Heseltine, the Environment Secretary, to curtail public expenditure by local Labour councils.

A few weeks ago, a letter entitled 'Local Authority Current Expenditure 1980-81' came to all councils from the Government, saying that on average, local authorities were planning spending 5.6% more money than the Thatcher government expected when it allocated the Rate Support Grant in November of last year.

Cheekily discussing the "voluntary relationship" between central and local government, the document — personally inspected before release by Michael Heseltine — emphasised the need for more cuts, by saying: "The government does not believe that local authorities will be able to achieve and sustain the reductions in current expenditure implied by its public expendi-

ture plans without more substantial reductions in manpower than have been achieved or planned so far."

And because local government did not cut in line with Heseltine's wishes, the circular to councils insisted that the government's overall guidelines on public spending would necessitate a 2% cut in the 1980/81 spending by local authorities. The specific areas of potential cuts outlined by the circular were the fees and charges, and manpower.

In reply to this, councils have been expected to submit their plans to follow the Heseltine line by August 1st.

Behind all of this is the shadow — as revealed a few weeks ago in the *Financial Times* — that Thatcher and Joseph are hawking Heseltine into a new, tighter rein over local spending. The Treasury, with the Prime Minister's backing, has come up with the threat of a moratorium on all new capital expenditure by local government in Britain, including council housing, roads, schools, and other essential projects.

But there is one all-important legal characteristic to such a moratorium. It is not legally binding on councils. Needless to say, the Department of the Environment could refuse loan sanction if some author-

CUTS AND RATES: THE CRUNCH IS COMING

ities needed it, but pioneering councils held by Labour could still ignore the moratorium.

However, while Tarzan Heseltine is being beefed up by Thatcher and the other government hard-liners,

there seems equal pressure mounting on some more strident Labour councils to put up a similar battle. A growing voice — illustrated in some strength at the London Labour Briefing 'Resist Heseltine' conference recently — is asking Labour councillors not just to avoid cuts by putting the bill for increased costs at the foot of the ratepayers, but instead by tackling the Conservatives head-on with a challenge.

Instead of avoiding reductions in services, or increases in charges, by putting up the rates — a cut by the back door in effect — we need to avoid rent rises, avoid rate rises, and simply hold out against the Tory government, campaigning for mass action to save Labour-held local government services from the Tories.

In the now-infamous example of Lambeth, where rates went up by 49.4% last spring, at least some councillors who endorsed that rate rise are now openly saying that rate rises of that order are no longer viable as a political strategy. Others, less publicly, are saying that they will not vote for cuts (albeit even if that means voting for further huge rate rises). Yet there is some unity in that feeling — and that unity is revealed in the common feeling that the crunch is coming in Lambeth and in those other Labour-

held councils.

Very soon, either in November or at the latest next spring, the choice will have to be made between cuts, or outright confrontation. No longer will no-cut-but-massive-rate-rises be viable as an alternative, simply because the requisite rate increase could be around 60% or 70% or 80%.

In Lambeth, council leader Ted Knight has revealed his possible strategy for the year. It starts with an autumn conference, at which comrades from Labour groups, town hall unions and CLP delegates will thrash out a programme which could involve nationwide strike action by town hall employees.

But if the option for high rate increases is still open — and Ted Knight has not ruled such an option out for next year — then the real fight for working class rights still exists. It is now up to us to fight in the constituencies and in the unions to push still further the growing acceptance that high rate increases is only a euphemism for cutting standards of living for ordinary people.

And without such acceptance, no positive strategy, of rallying round fighting Labour councils which challenge the Tories in Westminster, can be undertaken. The fight is now up to us.

Beating the dole-drums

by
LOL DUFFY

WALLASEY YS's campaign to organise the local unemployed is getting under way. We have leafleted the local shopping precinct, and two of the estates, as well as holding a picket outside the Job Centre, which gained us some support for our public meeting that night.



Unemployed YS members are starting a local Unemployed Workers' Bulletin called 'Dole-drums'. And another picket is planned: outside the surgery of our MP, who is Lynda Chalker, Tory junior minister for Health and Social Security.

Wallasey YS also organised a demonstration when the Duke of Edinburgh visited an adventure playground on the Leasowe estate. We leafleted the estate before his visit calling for a protest against the way money is thrown away on the monarchy, and others, to do their trips among the peasants, while the health service and basic facilities are run down.

The demonstration went off well, apart from the usual harassment by police and the arrest of one protester.

But the local Labour councillors who were with the Duke didn't like the leaflet that criticised them for being with him. Wallasey Constituency Labour Party passed a motion that all leaflets from the YS would in future have to be approved

by the officers of the Party.

So our campaign to win support for the demo on the 22nd June against Cruise missiles ran into some obstruction. The draft leaflet by the LPYS was not approved by the officers of the CLP because it called for unilateral nuclear disarmament, Britain out of NATO, and millions for hospitals, not a penny for 'defence'.

A leaflet with those demands was put out just the same — in the name of *Barricade!* Most members of the YS support *Barricade!*

After giving out the leaflet in the shopping precinct and the local estate, we took a coachload to London.

Wallasey YS is growing.



and it's growing because we are taking up issues which affect local youth, and we are offering them some way of fighting back against the system.

We have helped set up a branch of the NUSS in a local school, and hope to spread the union to other schools. We have also had our own weekend camp, which didn't try to ram politics down everybody's throats and bore them to death as some camps do. We tried to give people a break and a chance to get to know each other.

YS rock nights are being negotiated with local bands.

We are attempting to turn our YS out to the youth in Wallasey, and to help them get organised to fight back against the system which offers them no future.

On the right: part of the Wallasey LPYS contingent on the June 22nd march against Cruise missiles.

Below: Issue No.3 of *Barricade!* 10p plus 10p postage from PO Box 135, London N1 0DD. Issue No.4 out soon.



barricade

YOUTH FOR SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

YOUTH'S VIEW

no 3 June 80

ONLY 10p!

Lobby, Sep. 30

BARRICADE SUPPORTERS in the Labour Party Young Socialists are organising a lobby of the Labour Party conference in Blackpool on September 30th, on Youth Unemployment.

We think the Tories' outrageous suggestions for community work or scabbing require a little more than polite requests that they change course. The Labour Party should organise and lead a campaign to force the Tories out of office.

Right now, we need to fight for a 35 hour week and an end to overtime. If there's not enough work, then the work should be shared out.

Companies closing down should be nationalised under workers' control, without any compensation to the sharks that have run them up till now. Dole money should be increased.

The unions should organise the unemployed alongside employed workers. The labour movement must fight the cuts, and the Labour Party must give a commitment to restore and expand the services that the Tories have cut.

Barricade supporters have been leafletting dole queues, and will be organising to get a big contingent of unemployed youth to Blackpool for the lobby. Get your local YS to send a contingent.

JOHN O'MAHONY examines the rolling manifesto and finds it wanting

THE FIRST instalment of a Labour Party 'rolling manifesto', based largely on Labour Party conference resolutions, was published by the National Executive Committee on July 10th — to great hostility from the Parliamentary Labour Party, which challenges the right of the NEC to issue such a document.

The official Labour Party press conference to launch it was cancelled at the last moment by general secretary Ron Hayward, at the behest of the Parliamentary leaders.



In fact the NEC manifesto is very much a mixed bag.

- It proposes to:
 - Abolish the House of Lords,
 - Bring in a Freedom of Information Bill,
 - Reject Cruise missiles for Britain,
 - Restore school milk, meals and transport to 1978-9 levels,
 - Massively increase nursery schools,
 - Index benefits and relate unemployment and sickness schemes to earnings,
 - Tax wealth annually by 1% to 5% on incomes over £125,000,
 - To take into public ownership major companies in pharmaceuticals, medical equipment, micro-electronics, and construction and building materials,
 - Abolish the 'Sus' laws and the SPG,
 - Nationalise the whole power plant and parts industry
 - Re-nationalise Tory-denationalised industry without compensation.
- All of these deserve support.

A dud shot across Callaghan's bows

It also includes a number of half-measures, surrounded by 'ifs' and 'buts'.

• 'Movement' towards a 35 hour week over the lifetime of the Labour government. That is, if Labour wins in 1984 we will have the 35 hour week by 1989! Next year there will be two million unemployed, and maybe three million in 1982.

We need action now to fight for worksharing and the shorter week. We need a commitment from the Labour Party to bring in the 35 hour week, at least, immediately on its return.

- A significant public stake in important sectors of industry. Why only a stake?
- 'Progressive' abolition of NHS charges. By 1989?
- Withdrawal of restrictions on immigration for husbands — a small humane gesture while keeping the infamous racist legislation we have now.
- No new British nuclear weapons. Explicit rejection of unilateral nuclear disarmament.



• It will take powers for the House of Commons to amend or reject EEC legislation. ... much better than the full 'withdrawal' demanded by the chauvinist left. But not enough. We need a policy to unite with the workers of the EEC and fight for an EEC-

wide system of democracy.

The manifesto includes a number of commitments obnoxious to socialists. For example, it supports NATO.

In addition, it includes proposals for dealing with the economic decline of Britain which are no more than unrealistic tinkering with capitalism.



They are:

- Strict controls over international capital movements,
- Control of all prices and powers to control all price increases.
- Planning agreements, including with international companies, using price policy to ensure compliance.

These are either impossible or hopelessly inadequate, while the international and national capitalist market remains the major economic regulator.

Prices regulate profits, and therefore affect investment, movements of capital between different sectors of the economy — all the forces that are the mainspring of the capitalist economic system. While private ownership exists, such controls would burk or stifle the economy, interfering with its 'natural' mechanisms, preventing and restricting them from operating, but without replacing them with any alternative mechanism. It is

a certainty that nothing (with the exception perhaps of a few trifling controls like in 1974-5) will come of such a commitment.

This is a 'left' mirror image of the economic quackery of Thatcher and Joseph. They superstitiously appeal for a magical solution to Britain's problems to the once vigorous and progressive market mechanisms of capitalism's youth — though those mechanisms became seriously atrophied with the coming of monopoly capitalism almost a century ago! The NEC appeals to an imaginary future in which a Labour government can ignore the mechanisms of the decrepit and moribund economy and magically make it operate according to laws and regulators other than its own.

The real socialist programme is to replace capitalism. In any event, it cannot be made to operate other than according to its existing mechanisms. The mechanisms must be replaced, or capitalism must be lived with.

Both the hard-nosed Right and the Marxist Left, each in their own way, understand this and make their choice accordingly. But the political significance of fantasy projects like the NEC's is that they sound radical now, commit nobody to anything here and now — and can only be jettisoned when Labour forms a government.

If control of international capital movements were really

strict there would be a capital strike. In fact it could not be strict.

While the capitalist monopolies continue to own and dispose of the major wealth of Britain, planning agreements can only be an empty pretence. The companies' option of moving capital around will mean that they can largely ignore or subvert any such agreement. Certainly it means that any 'demands' a Government would make would be tailored to fit the monopolies' needs and to meet their operational requirements, on profitability for example. Any overall plans would have to be shaped to fight them too.



It would be like the circus act where the trainer moves his hands and the elephant appears to move in compliance, while really the trick is that the elephant dances and the man adapts his gestures. It would be pseudo-planning.

The only real socialist planning will be when a democratically controlled central government interacts with the producers in plants and industries owned by the producers and jointly planned.

The NEC's proposals are recipes for hacking away at the rusty mainspring of the existing capitalist system. The NEC does not propose to replace it

with the socialist spring — working class needs regulating a democratically planned and socially owned economy. But to provide such a new dynamic and purpose for the economy on which all our livelihoods depend is the main task of socialists.

The NEC's appeal to a fantasy future is no more answer to the situation the working class is in now than the ancestor-worshipping Thatcherites' appeal to a dead past.

Official Labour Party policy — for example, on nationalising 25 top monopolies — is actually much nearer to a serious answer. Why has the left wing NEC abandoned it to substitute feeble fantasy projects in its place?

The Manifesto lacks both a coherent view of capitalism and its crisis, and a vision of a truly realistic working-class socialist alternative.

Its essential focus on the 'mixed economy' (mixed according to a more 'left' formula) sees the regeneration of British industry as the first priority — that is, the regeneration of an economy that will remain fundamentally capitalist. The last two Labour governments showed that this is a recipe for pushing everything else aside, even basic working-class immediate interests. And also... that it is highly unlikely to lead to the regeneration of industry. More than tinkering with capitalism is necessary.

The Left must do three things about the NEC manifesto:

- Support the right of the NEC to issue it.
- Criticise the NEC for backsliding from Labour Party policy in favour of nationalising the 25 leading monopolies.
- Step up the political fight to educate and arm the truly realistic militants in the Party with the politics necessary to settle accounts with the Tories and their backers for good and all.

Dark at the end of the tunnel

by MARTIN THOMAS

"THERE'S nothing these people like, but there are a few things they goddamned well hate", a Reagan official said about his man's supporters at the Republican Convention in Detroit, opening on July 14th.

Hundreds of well-fed white businessmen and women sat in the convention hall, applauding every speech that expressed their hatred of social reform, equality for women, abortion rights, and everything else they blame for gumming up a system where the rich get richer and the poor know their place.

Decay

Outside, in the city of Detroit, that system is decaying round about them. Over 20% of adults are out of work, and 62% of non-white youths.

The car industry, a driving force of America's prosperity for many decades, is now the sharp point of its slump. For the first time ever, all the major car firms are simultaneously running at a loss. It was not that bad even at the worst of the depression in 1932.

Mid-June car sales were 27% down on 1979. One in three car workers are out of work. Chrysler, the no.3 firm, is so hard up that it had to stop paying its suppliers last month.

Along with the car industry, the rest of the US economy is slumping. US steel production in the first 5 months of 1980 was 11.9% down on 1979. Housing starts in April 1980 were 43% down.

The downturn began last summer, and lurched sharply into slump this spring. And now the whole world capitalist economy is following the US downwards. Industrial production in the advanced capitalist countries is falling, and expected to continue to fall for at least the rest of this year. Even in West Germany, Italy and Japan, which last year were relatively prosperous, recession has arrived.

Vital

Crude steel production is down 2.4% over 1979 in the first five months of this year in the EEC, and expected to fall 2.8% year-on-year for the advanced capitalist countries as a whole. In Italy, Fiat is planning to reduce car production 30% in the second half of 1980; in France, Peugeot has had a 12% drop so far this year.

Unemployment in the advanced capitalist countries is over 20 million — and will probably be over 11% this year among youth.

Sectors like the car industry are strategically vital in modern capitalism. By its very nature, capital must constantly seek new areas to expand and make profits. The car industry, developing new needs and new markets, helped draw the whole economy up with it.

But this capitalist expansion is not based on any rational planning, but on an unstable balance between investment, accumulation of capital, production, and market demand. As capital expands, it strives to replace living labour by machines. So the surplus squeezed out

of the living labour eventually tends to fall in proportion to the capital employed.

The rate of profit falls — but jerkily, not smoothly. In their competitive rat race, each striving to get a bigger share of the booty, the big capitalist firms inevitably tend to over-invest and over-produce. When the rate of profit falls, and investment slows down, workers are laid off, consumer demand falls, expansion suddenly halts, and recession snowballs.

Dozens of secondary factors influence the timing, extent and nature of the downturn. The most important factor today is the instability of the world monetary and trade set-up, arising from the weakness of US dominance. US industrial productivity has hardly grown at all since 1973; Japan has overtaken the US as the world's biggest car producer, and West Germany as the world's biggest exporter. So the dollar no

longer rules — and yet the capitalist world must still rely largely on the dollar for international trade.

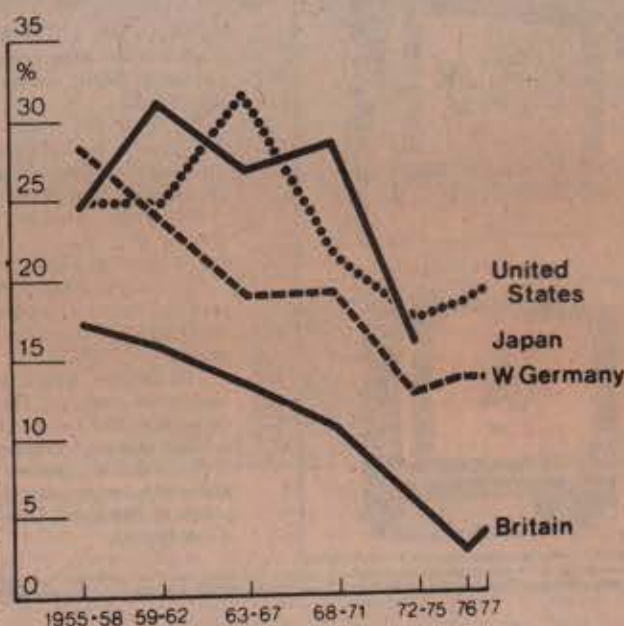
But the root cause of the crisis is the inbuilt self-destruct mechanism of capitalism: capitalism produces on a scale and in a way which demands large scale planning and cooperation; but the profit of a wealthy few remains the essential regulator of production.

The world crisis hits Britain specially hard. In fact, Britain never really recovered from the last world capitalist slump, in 1974-5.

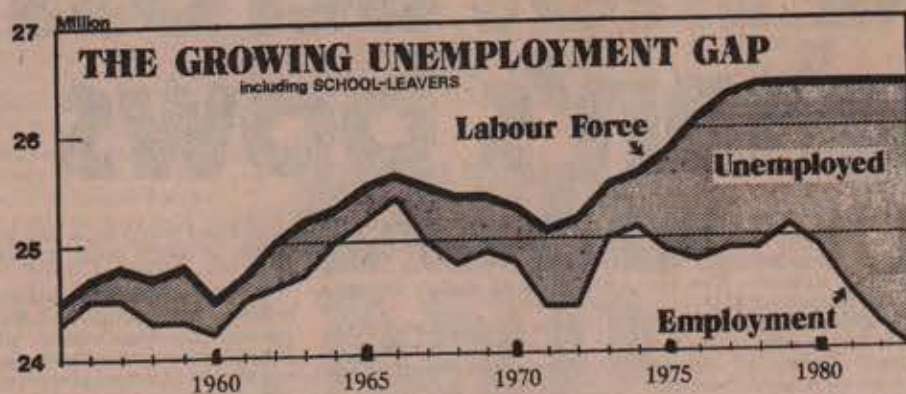
Dwindle

Britain's basic industries are outdated and decaying. Until the late '60s or early '70s, they still grew, though slowly and inefficiently. Then when world capitalist prosperity broke down, and competition sharpened, they started dwindling.

Net rate of return in manufacturing



The downward trend of the rate of profit



Who can't afford what?

HOSPITALS close, schools are run down, housing gets worse and worse — and the excuse is, 'the country can't afford it'.

But capitalist Britain is not short of huge accumulations of wealth. Between 1967 and 1978, the total assets of banks in Britain grew from £8½ billion to £219 billion. Total assets of the building societies have expanded sixteen fold to £40 billion. Assets of the life assurance and pension funds have risen from £7 billion to £69 billion.

These funds are used in many different ways — but very rarely in productive or socially useful investment in Britain.

Labour Party Conference has demanded that the financial institutions should be nationalised. This could create the basis for economic expansion and planning — and also lift the crippling burden of interest charges on local council services.

Nationalisation is not

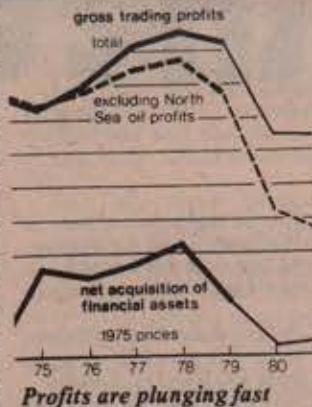
enough. Its potential benefits will become reality only if the state and the management of the economy is in the hands of the working class. But it is a step in the right direction.

And so... the Labour government set up a committee.

That committee, chaired by Harold Wilson, has now produced its report. Nationalisation? No need for it, it says. The Stock Exchange? It's doing a good job.

The nearest the report comes to a proposal for reform is in a minority note signed by Wilson and four trade union leaders. They want a public investment agency — to the tune of £1 billion out of their total £300 billion plus! In other words, a revamped National Enterprise Board.

So 'the country' still won't be 'able to afford it'. How much longer can we afford this capitalist chaos, and the Labour politicians who pander to it?



Profits are plunging fast

Car production rose until 1972. This April it was only just over half the 1972 level. The proportion of British car production which is for export grew until 1969. Since then it has fallen from 69% to 35%.

Steel production in 1979 was 23% down on its 1970 high.

Orders received in construction are now 18% below their slump level of 1975. The total output of the engineering industry has been stagnant (this April, it was 3% below 1975's level).

Employment in manufacturing industries overall rose until 1966 — and since then has dropped by 18%.

Unemployment has never been under a million since 1975. So the sharp lurch downwards of the last six months or so (manufacturing output has dropped about 6%) is only another episode in a long-term, basic decline, only partly masked by the North Sea oil bonanza.

Wealthy

Profit levels in Britain are specially low by international standards. The pre-tax rate of return on capital (excluding North Sea operations) slowly declined in the 1960s, reached 9% in 1973, slumped to 5% in 1974-6, recovered a bit in 1977 and '78, then went down to 4% last year and (so the Bank of England

overseas and did 59% of its capital spending there; and Babcock now uses only 30% of its funds in British operations.

Stagnant

Investment is chronically low, and has been stagnant or declining since 1974. So the prospects of a new industrial structure, which would allow capitalist growth in Britain on a new basis, are remote. Long-term misery, stagnation, and relative decline, punctuated by painful crises, is the outlook for capitalist Britain.

The 1964-70 Labour government attempted a restructuring. It succeeded in promoting many capitalist mergers. But it did nothing to come to grips with the roots of the crisis. The National Plan of 1965 soon became so much waste paper.

Needs

The human and technical resources are there to reorganise British industry. But the scale of the task demands common ownership of the means of production, coherent overall planning, and a system of democratic control which links production rationally to human needs — in other words, working-class socialist measures.

The Tories represent the capitalist alternative. They hope the free working of the capitalist law of the jungle will devour the weak and create a new, leaner and more competitive structure. And they will supplement the free market rat race with state intervention — to hamstring the unions and drive down wages to the benefit of profits.

Already the share of wages in output has dropped about 13% since 1975. Now real wages are falling, and the Tories want and expect them to fall faster and further.

Wary

But even the Tories have had to prop up British Steel. They may let BL collapse, but they are wary about that. Businessmen like the West Midlands regional chairman of the CBI tell them: 'The Government must look again at its strategy. If at the end of the day we have no industrial base, where do we go? There is a great deal of talk about the phoenix rising from the ashes. But what if we are left with just the ashes?'

Anguish

The Tories will respond, though perhaps in a fumbling and hesitant way, to the cries of anguish from their own class. For the working class they have nothing to offer but more and more efforts to increase the rate of exploitation.

They offer the same sort of politics as Reagan's convention: mean-spirited, exasperated, lashing out at scapegoats, seeing nothing to like and everything to hate. The answer to them must be not outdated half-measures — planning agreements, National Enterprise Boards, investment controls, and all the other wishy-washy schemes for soothing the crisis — but an all-out fight for socialism and workers' power.

Blood

But the money is invested where it is most profitable — and that means probably abroad, perhaps in speculative operations in Britain, but almost certainly not in productive industry in Britain. As the *Economist* puts it, 'Britain's big engineering companies, for more than a century its lifeblood, are surging abroad'. For GKN, 44% of its 1979 profits came from overseas, and 39% of its capital spending went there; Dunlop got 97% of its profits from



SLU

by JO THWAITES

'HOMES fit for Heroes' — well, that was the idea behind the provision of council housing after the war. But the thousands who lived in prefabs far longer than the five years they were meant to last might be forgiven for thinking that trench warfare was still going on.

In many areas where housing was flung up (and up...) in the sixties, replacing the prefabs anything up to twenty years later, people had to put up with shoddy buildings, put together with the minimum of cost and care, dampness, and isolation from shops, community centres, schools, pubs or any basic social amenities.

The politicians of the '60s, from Macmillan to Mellish, exhorted local authorities to build high, fast and cheap. The number of new starts in 1960 was 309,000. By 1964 it was 426,000, and then the number went down again. Now the TUC reckons that less than 30,000 new council

houses are this year.

And the city in Britain, where haven't last year's Ronan Point collapsed 12

Ronan Point using the E system with rene panels units of acc built using t Nothing else yet, but co have includ crete falling ing panels, in the metal caused by co

But at le there was a by Govern who could had a right house to li Tory govern to the run housing stve Labour gove Since Ma house build by more th there are m

THE PRESS had a field day in early July over the Appeal Court's ruling that Hillingdon council, the borough covering Heathrow, should house Sophia Streeting, under the provisions of the Housing (Homeless Persons) Act.

Sophia became homeless when her husband, a British citizen, died. Hillingdon council's argument that she was not a British citizen because her marriage was bigamous, was dismissed by the Appeal Court, as Sophia had not known that her husband was still married to another woman.

Sophia Streeting's case is an exception rather than the

rule. In most come under t cil refuses to do with the p that s/he F himself hom ally', or if s/ area covered

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One solution: DEMOLITION

THE ONE BEAUTY of living in Hulme V is that no-one will expect you to buy your own council house. In fact, the council can't give them away.

It is a strange epitaph for housing which the designer, Lewis Womersley, described as "a solution to the problems of 20th century living which would be the equivalent in quality of that reached for the requirements of the 18th century in Bloomsbury and Bath". Manchester Council named four crescents after the famous architects John Nash, Charles Barry, Robert Adam, and William Kent. It looks a little stupid 15 years later.

Hulme V was built as part of a slum clearance scheme in the mid-60s. 70% of the first batch of tenants were from clearance areas. 30% of these were on Supplementary Benefit and 25% were single-parent families.

Any family with enough housing points to move out did so rapidly and a second batch of tenants were brought in — those in immediate desperate need of housing. 44% of them were on Supplementary Benefit and 35% of them were single-parent families.

Ken Wilson, then head of Direct Works, wrote in "Operation Clean-Up" as early as 1973, "A number of

reasons could be expounded for the conditions of almost wanton human disregard that pervades the whole of the Hulme V environment, but none so much as the apparent delay identifying the physical problems in the estate and the general inability of management to cope with the unusual and abysmal conditions in which they found themselves enmeshed."

The most obvious problem is the inadequate rubbish disposal facilities, which turn every stairway into an open tip, but there is worse.



Original plans included a gas central heating system, but in the aftermath of Ronan Point this was found to be too risky. So the council installed (at an additional cost of £313,000) an electric powered fan warm-air system — a system described by one constructional expert as "the quickest and most expensive way to thermal discomfort".

Coupled with inadequate ventilation and insulation, this system causes condensation, chest trouble amongst tenants and large patches of damp, green mould on outside walls.

Tenants also face massive bills with this heating

system. Often they are forced to turn to Calor Gas or paraffin after being disconnected and then the condensation problems get worse.

There are structural faults: not only caused by the flat roof design but also by inadequate jointing of ill-fitting pre-fabricated pieces.

Penetrating damp gets in, causing black patches of wet mould on the walls. I have seen flats with water running down the walls.

The original cost per dwelling, estimated by the architects, was £288 per annum. Today the costs are around £900, according to council estimates. £600 of that is the cost of paying crippling interest charges on the building loans.

The likelihood is that Hulme V will have fallen down of its own accord before the loans have been repaid. The dilemma this poses to the council is less acute than the tenants' dilemma: how quickly can they get out?

Present Council policy is to (slowly) rehouse the families above ground floor level and put in single people, mainly students.

So Hulme is an area of low incomes, high unemployment, nasty overpriced shops and non-existent social facilities. Every cosmetic

improvement by the council has been met by determined vandalism from the youth who are fed up with being treated like guinea-pigs in a cage.

On a more sinister note: the design of the crescents is in line with US studies on the best lay-out for the state to be able to squash any rising in the area easily.

The crescent design means that all movements along the gangways can be watched by one policeman — and this is done regularly.

There is only one solution for the crescents — immediate demolition and provision of decent housing for everyone — this would require a socialist housing policy unfettered by interest charges and fly-by-night contractors.



It means the people planning their own areas, not architects who live in the Lake District, like Womersley.

Liverpool demolished the piggeries. It's time Manchester did the same to Hulme V.

MICK WOODS

Many of the statistics and ideas in this article were provided by the CSE Political Economy of Housing Workshop in Manchester.

A socialist policy for housing

HUNDREDS of thousands of people in Britain need a decent house to live in. Thousands of building workers are on the dole. There is no shortage of space and materials for building houses.

It is madness not to build the houses that are required.

Tenants living in the rotten houses and flats that have been flung together by private contractors can see that. Building workers on the dole, or with their jobs threatened by the Heseltine Bill, can see it. So should local councils who spend millions of pounds repairing the shoddy work of private contractors, and who are crippled by the huge sums of money paid out to the finance houses in interest charges.

In capitalist society the main reason for building houses is not to house homeless people, but to make profit from selling or renting them. The private contractor can then go on to build more houses, to make

more money.

What we need is a united campaign to kick out the unscrupulous profiteers and bankers who live on our backs.

We need to nationalise the building industry without compensation and under workers' control, so building is done properly and safety standards are guaranteed. This would also ensure that 'casual' employment, endemic to the building industry as long as it is geared to profits, is eliminated.

The banks and finance houses will have to be nationalised, to cut the burden of interest repayments to the money lenders.

Committees of tenants, building workers and the local labour movement should organise to draw up plans for what is needed in each area and where. If enough good housing can't be built quickly enough, then the plush offices and the big houses of the rich should be taken over.

DUMP AND SLUMS

likely to be built in any major — except, of the buildings that long, like which partially years ago.

int was built son wall-frame pre-cast conc- 50,000 other umodation were e same method. has fallen down umon problems d lumps of con- off from cladd- ue to corrosion reinforcing bars densation.

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1979, council g has been cut n a third. And re than a mill-

ion people on council waiting lists. Each year about 70,000 homes become unfit to live in. Improvement grants for major conversion work are being slashed, and as a result tens of thousands of homes are likely to fall into complete disrepair. In some areas of London, 10% to 20% of council houses and flats are uninhabitable.

The Tories' new Local Government Bill could destroy Direct Labour Organisations — a large part of whose work is repair and maintenance of council properties, shoddily built by private contractors. That's the Tories' present to their backers among the building industry bosses.

The Tories are also pressing ahead with the sale of council houses. In the words of the Right Honourable Michael Heseltine, MP, Secretary of State for the Environment, "Selling council houses saves public money". Actually, selling council houses does not save money. Most houses are bought on a council

mortgage, so the council just receives mortgage repayments instead of rent.

But that is not the major point. Most people living in council houses could not afford to buy them even at the reduced rate the councils are selling them at, and... horror of horrors, many wouldn't want to own them.

Aside from that, when there is a council waiting list of over a million, to sell off council houses indicates quite clearly that the right to live in a decent house is not one of the rights that are granted in Tory Britain. As long as we have enough money, we have the right to buy a house, but otherwise, too bad.

The idea that we should be grateful for a council place, and that we're lucky to have got something at all, runs through housing departments administration. Councils provide housing 'out of the goodness of their hearts' and the tenants shouldn't forget it. Council tenants are subjected to all sorts of petty restrictions and regulations over pets,

alterations, transfers and decoration, and have no choice about where they live. You're expected to take the first offer you get and are regarded as some sort of troublemaker if you complain about dampness or leaking roofs.

Many councils have policies of segregating 'problem families' off into estates that are particularly run down, along with other 'social misfits' like single parent families.

Working class families are forced to live in strictly functional box-type houses or flats on estates or schemes, placed away from desirable residential areas lest

they detract from the value of private accommodation.

And council rents have been going up steadily, much faster than in general. The London boroughs of Enfield, Hackney and Redbridge are increasing rents by 25% or over this year, and Wandsworth has an increase of 33% lined up — that's £3 a week on average, with a maximum of £4.50.

Rates increases also bump up the cost of living in a council house.

What bugs the Tories about council housing is that, despite all its defects, there is the embryo of the idea that everyone should

have the right to a decent house. Council estates could be places which served the needs of those that live in them.

If local authorities were genuinely accountable to the people that elected them and were responsible to the tenants of their houses instead of the financial institutions, and the private contractors that built them, then the whole idea of the desirability of home ownership and the 'freedom' to buy your own house would have little hold.

Council tenants can organise to fight a rent increase or to take up a dampness campaign much more readily

than private tenants, as the basis of the organisation is already there in the estate. This organisation can be combined with the strength of the council employees' unions NALGO and the GMWU, who stand to lose their jobs from the Tories' cuts, and the Direct Works union UCATT.

An effective joint campaign could stop the Tories' attacks on council housing and begin to take up the fight for councils to provide facilities that the local community actually wants, rather than tenants being told by the Tories and the private contractors what they're going to get.

Hulme. Now the only answer is to knock it down.



Tories' scapegoat

uses that should Act, the coun- ve anything to son if it thinks made her/ less 'intention- is not from the e council.

nt is Hillingdon It accepts for far fewer le than most boroughs — nd out of 33. mples of peo- considered to mselves home- ly are battered n's Aid refugees ntry are filled hom the local

council won't rehouse under the Act because they have left their husbands 'voluntarily' and therefore have 'made themselves homeless intentionally'.



Recently, in Wandsworth, the council refused to house a family who had left their house when it was badly damaged by a fire. According to the council, this was an example of making yourself homeless intentionally!

As a result of the fracas, the Tories are now considering changing the Act. The Tory leader of Hillingdon council

calls the Act 'a scroungers' Charter', as apparently the suspicion and prejudice that councils mete out to the homeless are not sufficient.

Added to this, Sophia Streeting is black. What better scapegoat could the Tories find for the shortage of housing in Britain?

But as Nick Raynsford of the London Housing Aid Centre pointed out, "The council has deliberately chosen to cut back on its house-building programme and is actively selling council houses. People who are on the waiting list need look no further than those two reasons to see why they do not have a home."

APARTHEID: THE INVISIBLE BLOWS

Reviewed by
MANDY WILLIAMS

IN Athol Fugard's new film about South Africa, 'Marigolds in August', the whites' power is all the more evident because they hardly appear in the film. They have everything sewn up so as to avoid all but the most minimal contact with blacks. For whites, blacks are almost invisible.

The film is shot in South Africa, with very strong acting. Tiny details and gestures belie the whole way in which whites and blacks relate, and how blacks relate among themselves.

At the beginning of the film, Daan, a black who does casual gardening jobs at the white holiday resort of Schoenmakerskop, is limping the six miles to work where he is passed by a white - out jogging for the pleasure of it.

The white is picked up in a car when he has had enough. Daan, who had hoped for a moment that the car might be stopping for him, continues on his journey.

Later, he is paid by a white hand reaching through a window to him. And another black, hat in hand and

bush. Paulus forces Daan to face Melton's needs, to put himself in Melton's place and imagine what he would do. Daan eventually softens, and is prepared to offer Melton his job for a day.

But Melton has reached his limits of helplessness and frustration. He has been driven from the area where he has always lived, because it is now a "white area". Even the taps of the water butts are locked - "The rain belongs to them". He has just buried one of his children, and the other is very sick.

One day's wages aren't enough. He decides to raid the shop on Daan's patch, and gains the support of both Paulus and Daan, as they realise that to fail to do so means starvation.

When he breaks in, he is at first wary and intimidated by his surroundings. Gradually he gains confidence - deliberately throwing down a sweet paper in a white man's house - and exploring all the rooms.

His trance breaks when he finds the family photos - smiling, intact families; lots of healthy children. He sweeps them to the ground. As if acting for all blacks, his anger and despair be-

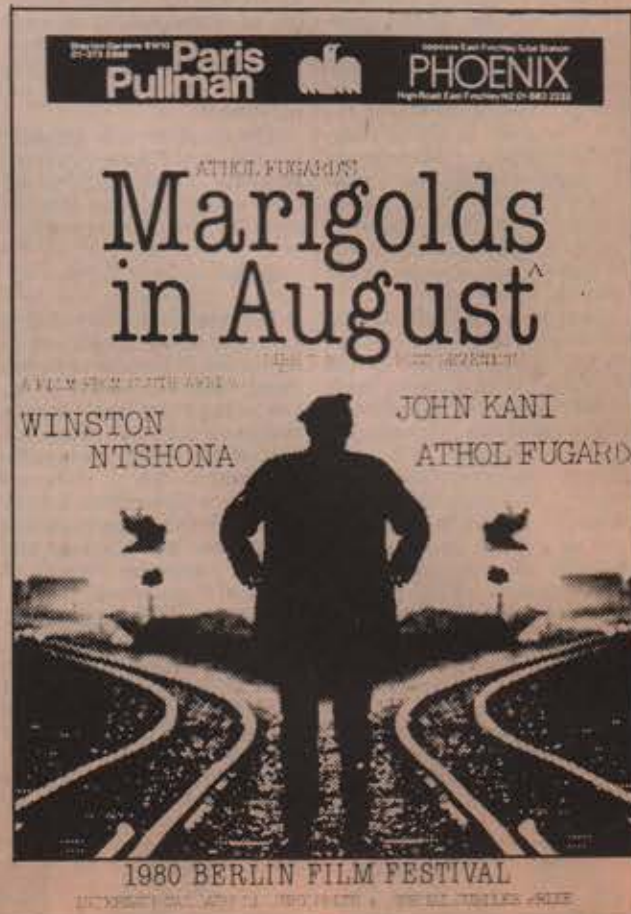
comes uncontrollable: he destroys (the image of) his oppressors, and takes from them what he needs.

All the conflicts expressed are rooted in apartheid, in inequality and in starvation. Daan appeals to Paulus for judgement on Melton being wrong to compete for jobs, or to endanger his livelihood by raiding the shop. But Paulus dismissed the concepts of right and wrong when Melton's survival, and his wife's and child's, are his paramount concern.

Daan desperately seeks to control his life - but he can't, any more than Melton can. All of them have been imprisoned and fear it again; all have been drastically affected by apparently arbitrary decisions (about "white areas"; about Paulus being Coloured, not white). And there is little that Melton can do to prevent the starvation of his remaining child.

Daan compares them all to the marigolds he is ordered to plant in August - they won't and can't root and grow in that season, in that ground.

Contemporary Films Release: showing at Paris Pullman, Drayton Gardens, London SW10 from July 10.



PATRICK KODIKARA is a Hackney Labour councillor and a militant prominent in the Hackney Asian Association. His speech at the recent Afro Asian Caribbean Convention attacked the police and called on blacks to withdraw co-operation with them.

Socialist Organiser asked him about the efforts black people are making to organise themselves and about the project to set up a national co-ordination of all black organisations.

WHEN YOU TALK about blacks, you have to differentiate between the situation here and that in the US. There is no homogeneous black community here. There are many communities with different historical experiences.

What unites us all is our sense of being oppressed. The laws, the state, the police, the immigration officials, the Home Office, the education system, housing - we see that oppression everywhere. And these are the things that matter to ordinary people.

The Home Office was probably behind the attempt by CARD (Campaign against Racial Discrimination) to create such an umbrella organisation through some hand-picked blacks. That was in the late '60s.

The Gulbenkian Foundation sponsored a conference in the early '70s, but that ended in chaos over the fact that the Indian Workers' Association had not been invited.

The Afro-Asian Caribbean Organisation was set up out of the conference, but it never represented much and has now all but disappeared.

We are not being financed by any state organisation. Our Afro-Asian Caribbean Convention is a grass roots initiative. It was started by the Hackney Asian Organisation.

But while the Convention, which had over 100 people



Above and below right: Patrick Kodikara leading Asian protests in East London.

attending, representing about 60 organisations, was organised by black people for black people, it is in no sense isolationist. The press, of course, is keen to present it in isolationist and vanguardist terms. "Are there Maoists in it?", they ask. "Communists? Black Power advocates?"

No. We want to ally ourselves with predominantly white organisations on equal terms. Not as the victims. The Left has used the race issue to project its own image. The way the campaigns were conducted left the black person out in the cold. The ANL is a case in point.

That was clear at the time of the Brockwell Park Carnival. They made it clear what their focus was by not defending Brick Lane. They

did their thing in the Park while blacks were being smashed up in the East End. That really opened our eyes.

Of course, we shouldn't have expected the Left to deliver the goods without our involvement.

That's what we're trying to change: whites talked about racism, but those who suffer the effects were missing - they have to be involved in the struggle.

We have seriously looked at the question of whether we are a civil rights group or not. I think it goes further. Our fight is in certain aspects a liberation struggle.

It is difficult to draw parallels with the national liberation struggle in Africa. But Britain has long been a great imperialist power and many who come here, come

from places where they or their parents fought imperialism.

We have not yet arrived at a clear and united conception of our tactics. Still, the statement we made about the police was an important lesson, it was a warning. Last month's conference said, "This conference calls on African, Asian and Caribbean people living in Britain to show their opposition to the racist police by withdrawing all cooperation from police activities, especially by rejecting recruitment into the force, by rejecting participation in identity parades, and by rejecting any part in police liaison schemes."

That seems to have shaken people. It is a challenge to the state. The response was scary. We had obviously hit on one of our tactics.

But a healthy sign is that the organising committee is not looking anxiously to the left or right, looking over its shoulder. We are doing what we have to.

We are in our infancy in terms of organising and developing policy and tactics. The struggle in the States depended on having branches, like NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People) branches, everywhere. If we attempted to do that, it wouldn't succeed. We want to work through existing organisations, hoping that they would become increasingly politicised.

Our next step is to organise a very representative convention of blacks. Time and again groups claimed to represent blacks without any legitimacy. We want to avoid that. We want to avoid a situation where great claims are made, but when it comes to a demonstration there are only enough people to hold

each of the two banner poles and no-one to march behind it.

Obviously the immigration issue is going to be central as well as the police. The recent raids in Edmonton and Brent are really worrying blacks. At one time the police would go into Brick Lane and drag some workers and some customers out of a cafe on suspicion of being "illegal immigrants". Now it's affecting far more people, and it's 40 cops at a time with dogs.

The government's new citizenship proposals will also be an important issue. A lot of black people are going to be disenfranchised. Whitelaw, when asked on the box the other night a specific question as to whether he would guarantee that blacks who entered Britain before 1973 could have British nationality, said that all those who applied before the White Paper could. The implication is that if

someone doesn't apply in time, they will lose their rights.

Separated families is a connected issue. In Britain people watch television and think it's so terrible when they see families on a South African Bantustan where the breadwinner is some 300 or 400 miles away. Here it is often a case of breadwinners being separated by 7 or 8000 miles. For instance, you don't get tax relief for children overseas.

Employment is another crucial issue - and it is difficult to fight because there is no single issue.

Black people are political but to talk about working class or labour movement politics is meaningless to many. They see themselves outside it.

When we talked at our conference about allying with the working class, very political people were saying how racist the working class and the trade union movement is. People would say, they're all racists in my bus garage. I have to walk around with the other black brothers. People shout "Wog" and "Coon" at us.

It will be quite a time until such people see that the black cause has to be fought in relation to the labour movement.



Reviewed by
JOHN O'MAHONY

The Wobblies

"AND WHAT does this entitle me to?" asked the newly-joined member of the union on being given his red membership card — thinking, no doubt, of sick benefits and things like that.

"Between two and five years in Sing Sing prison", answered the union organiser, who tells the story in Steward Bird and Deborah Shaffer's film *The Wobblies*.

The red card 'entitled' many of the militants who carried it to deportation, jail, shooting and hanging. The union was the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), nicknamed the Wobblies, founded in Chicago in 1905.

Even the nickname and the story IWW militants told of how they got it says a great deal about the Wobblies. A Chinaman joined the IWW but could only pronounce himself to be a member of the 'Eye Wobble Wobble'. So 'the Wobblies' they became.

There were many terribly exploited and oppressed Chinese workers in America then, but there were no Chinese in the 'respectable' American labour movement, the elitist and craft-union American Federation of Labour. The AFL was a racist 'lilywhite job trust', with a very small membership, opposed alike to Chinese, to blacks, and to the masses of the white 'unskilled' workers, including of course the women 'factory hands'.

The IWW set out to build a union which would embrace the whole working class of all creeds and colours, of both sexes; a movement, moreover, which would be animated with the spirit of class solidarity and whose members would dedicate themselves to the class war against capitalism until it would be overthrown.

Every strike was seen and fought as a battle in the class struggle. And almost every strike in the USA at that time was, literally, a battle: strikers and those willing to brave the picket-line in their support, on one side, and on the other the police, 'company' thugs, professional scabbers, and private detective agencies, all armed. IWW members would congregate to organise, mobilise support, and help in the picket line battles.

At its beginning the IWW united both political socialists (who fought elections) and militant trade unionists. In 1905 Daniel De Leon, an important Marxist theorist and leader of the small and select Socialist Labour Party, stood on one platform in



IWW strikers in Paterson, New Jersey, 1913

Chicago with Eugene V. Debs, a revolutionary socialist of a less doctrinaire stamp and presidential candidate of the loose Socialist Party, and William D. Haywood, leader of the Western Federation of Miners, a spokesman for direct action industrial unionism.

They split in 1908 and, rejecting 'politics' (elections), the Wobblies became a purely industrial movement — part of the international current of syndicalist workers who rejected politics out of disgust with the official labour movement.

At its peak (1917, the year USA entered World War I), the IWW had 100,000 members, and then it declined. Savagely persecuted during the world war, its leaders and members suffered jailings and deportations, mass trials and lynchings, and, inevitably, defections.



But perhaps more important as a cause of its effective disappearance was the Russian Revolution. Many of the militants who had stood the test of the war turned from the IWW to learn the lessons the Russian revolutionaries could teach — away from one-sided syndicalism and towards a newly reinvigorated militant Marxist politics. The same sort of thing happened wherever syndicalism had been a force. The IWW ceased to be an important force in revolutionary politics about 60 years ago.

How to bring the IWW alive for an audience in 1980?

Bird and Shaffer have found a marvelous group of a dozen veterans in whom the IWW is still alive and who bring it alive for us. We encounter the spirit, the true tones and accents, the stark simplicity of the IWW's message, and the attitudes, sympathies, and aspirations which animated the Wobblies as they were seven decades ago.

The film intercuts their reminiscences with newsreel film of strikes and of working conditions in lumber camps, docks, textile mills, of police attacks on strikers, and with the songs of the Wobblies.

The result is a moving evocation of that great movement of the unskilled and the migrant workers in early 20th century USA.

All the veterans must be in their 80s at least — though they don't look or sound like it. (Roger Baldwin, the narrator, is in his mid-90s!) An old woman stands around as her male companion remembers, chewing gum and wearing a badge proclaiming 'Senior Power'. A black docker recalls the battle to organise the ports.

Someone looking like the double of James P. Cannon, the great American Trotskyist (himself an old Wobbly), recalls his battles as an IWW hard man with the thugs and predators the IWW had to reckon with. The IWW organisers riding the freight cars faced pickhandle-wielding train crews demanding passage money and 'hijackers' in gangs trying to rob them. The IWW mercilessly beat some train crews and carved 'IWW' on a hijacker's face, for a warning.

He is proud of it, reliving it, his face hard.

With different emotion, another recalls a cold-blooded massacre (of which he was a 'survivor') of Wobbly org-

anisers on a ferry boat, sitting ducks for the sheriff and his 'citizen's committee'.

Asked what she thinks now about the IWW ideas, a thin, spectacled old woman, white hair swept back and tied behind her head, quavering-voiced and terribly frail-seeming, spits on her hands and rubs them together, as if she is about to take hold of a shovel or a pick. Then she eloquently stretches them out to the camera palms upward.

"Without this", she says, "nothing moves".

She figures on the credits as 'a miner's wife'. If the mere 'wives' are like that 60 years later, no wonder the Wobbly miners, lumberjacks, and textile workers scared the US government into panic repression!



In fact women workers played an important direct part in the IWW. Some of the most celebrated strike battles involved women textile workers. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn — the 'rebel girl' of Joe Hill's song — was an important strike organiser and IWW agitator.

"Do you want to have soft hands and leisure like the bosses' wives and daughters?", she asked a meeting of striking women. "Yes", they answered. "Well, you can't have them", she shouted back.

The IWW message, popularised in characteristic songs (often parodies of pop songs) which expressed their

beliefs or their scorn of the society around them, was extremely simple and effective.

There were two classes in society, and they had 'nothing in common'. The whole working class had to organise to take over. This could not mean sectional, elitist, racist unions like those of the then AFL, but 'one big union'.

The irreplaceable weapon in the daily struggle, the union was also building a scaffolding for the future socialist commonwealth, here and now. The union would parallel in its structures existing industrial society; through those structures the workers could seize industry after they had got rid of the bosses and administer it in their own interest.

The IWW was the One Big Union a-building.

"There is power, there is power in a band of working men."

When they stand hand in hand,

That's the power, that's the power, that must rule in every land.

One industrial union grand."

This rock-basic message of two classes with nothing in common, and no possible social peace until the working class was organised in the one big union and could take over, gave a tremendous elan to the IWW. And, after all, it is the irreducible central idea of every great movement of revolutionary workers that has ever existed or ever can exist.

It can be armed in its own cause with science, knowledge of the lessons of history, refinements of strategy and tactics — all the extra dimensions that it needs to grow from a gut proletarian revolt into a force that can remake society. It can even be encrusted with perverse and anti-socialist ideas, as in the Stalinist Parties when they relied on would-be revolutionary workers. But without it no real revolutionary movement is possible.



Yet the IWW found it was not enough. Their anti-political organisation took no official position on World War I. Some supported it, some were lynched for opposing it. Frank Little —

'half Indian, half whiteman, all IWW' — was lynched while in the uniform of the US Army. The entire IWW was repressed.

Then the Russian Revolution set the Wobblies discussing politics again. In the film one old-timer recalls a discussion in a lumber camp. "The Russkis have beaten us to it". So, what could the Bolsheviks teach them! Many joined the Communist International.

Those that did not were soon marginalised, and then the fierce repression continued until 1921 or 1922.

The worst weakness of this excellent film is that it does not establish a clear enough narrative framework for the newsreel and the reminiscences. Too much depends on allusions. It is extremely vague about the fate of the organisation and its militants after 1917.

I also found myself itching to know where the dozen old people had been for all these years. The film leaves you to surmise and accidental clues (e.g. the hard man makes a slip and half-refers to the persecution of 'Communists' instead of IWW...).

For the Wobblies did continue to play a part in the US radical and labour movement after the IWW had become a withered stump.



In the '30s, the CIO industrial unions picked up the Wobbly thread — weaving it into the fabric of a different, conservative, social outlook, to be sure — and created powerful industrial unions. The class struggle politics of the Wobblies, reworked into a multi-dimensional Marxist political outlook, were continued by the American Trotskyists after the Communist Party of the USA became Stalinist. By World War 2 it was the Trotskyists who were repressed, tried and jailed (though treated much more gently than the IWW in World War 1).

Their spokesman was a one-time Wobbly, James P. Cannon, who often proclaimed that he was continuing the IWW tradition.

The Wobblies present an account of a heroic period in the history of our class, and at the same time puts us in touch with an important and still alive culture of working class revolt and struggle.

If it is not likely to be shown where you live, it can be hired. It should be: it would do every reader of *Socialist Organiser* a lot of good to see it!

Reviewed by
KAREN BRODIE &
ISAAC JULIAN

A Short, Sharp Shock

IN THEIR PLAY 'A Short, Sharp Shock', Howard Brenton and Tony Howard attempt to show the vicious attack the Tory government has made (and is still making) upon working-class people.

Tony Howard stated: "We wrote the play to cheer up those people who hate the government, to provide a celebration for that broad spectrum of the left. And to 'hurt' the government".

Although I'm sure the group in this play try very hard to do this, there is no possible way that they can, because once you have left the theatre after a good

laugh and two hours of entertainment you have to come right back to reality.

It's all very well sitting in the theatre watching a piss-take of the Tories, but when you can't even afford a pint of lager after the play because the dole is so low (and we might even have to work for it soon) it's not very funny!

The characters in the play (the Tory government) are performed brilliantly by women. Margaret Thatcher is played excellently by Gwen Taylor. But most of the

credit must be given to Darlene Johnson, who plays Sir Keith Joseph.

She has to be a good actress to play a madman! In the play, Keith Joseph replies to a young lad who writes telling him that he can't afford to live.

"If you are finding things difficult at the moment, when you go to a supermarket tell the cashier that you are fighting inflation for the Government and I'm sure they will let you have the goods for half price. And if you find the need to buy new

clothes, again just tell the shop-owner that you're fighting inflation and they too will give you the clothes for half price".

Margaret Thatcher is portrayed as a kind of mother figure of the Tory party. She refers to the males in the Tory cabinet as 'her boys', while receiving kisses on the cheek from them. She carries round a snuff box which contains "a little bit of Airey", and she also keeps hearing his voice saying things like "Margaret! Margaret! The dead are all

communists".

But the live 'communists' that appear in the play are Old Man Yuke, who was an 'old mad lefty', his granddaughter Jean, who was 'too political to join the Labour Party', and Milly Stacker and her husband Arthur.

Milly is a Labour Party member and goes out canvassing for the Labour Party, and Arthur is a Communist Party member who ends up an alcoholic.

So although Tony Howard says that the play is a celebration for the left, it is al-

most a denigration for us.

The first time we saw the play, it ended with cynical bitching, showing the socialists in the play squabbling and bickering among themselves, giving no positive answers or solution.

But on a second viewing of the play, the ending had been changed to the socialists going off the stage arguing but saying, "We'll be arguing until breakfast time tomorrow, but we'll have an answer by then". Then Margaret Thatcher comes on stage and says, ending the play:

"You know you'll have to vote for me in the next elections, because if you vote Labour you'll have to fight for socialism, and you daren't do that, dare you?"

Gedling [Notts] conference delegate GORDON SKINNER spoke to Pete Radcliff

■ At the conference, Gormley made a well-reported attack on those fighting for democracy in the Labour Party. He pushed the South Wales emergency resolution off the agenda. What do NUM members think?
□□ What Gormley said was that we, the trade union leaders, hold the key to the problem, and we want unity and an end to the bickering.

But the policy of the NUM, as was passed at the 1978 conference at Torquay, remains to support the Labour Party leadership being elected democratically by the Party. I hold the view that the NUM should not have changed the vote at the 1979 Labour conference.

■ What can be done to ensure that the NUM delegation at this year's Labour Party conference sticks to its union policy?

□□ The union delegates have just got to be prepared to do something at the pre-conference meeting on the Sunday morning at Blackpool. They've got to be prepared to push it.

Last time I went, I got the

MINERS' CONFERENCE

35pc and no closures - let's stick to that!

impression that the delegates tend to leave everything to the NEC of the union. One would hope that this year there would be some leadership from the likes of Scargill and McGahey.

■ The union passed a motion for a 35% increase on minimum rates. What were the issues raised in that debate?

□□ Before the claim has been presented for those at the top of the scale, at the

coal face, but this time the claim has been presented for those at the bottom of the scale. The 35% is what the lower-paid workers, at the moment on £70 or so, would get.

The only argument at

the conference was whether when £100 minimum had been met, other workers would receive the same flat rate increase, or a percentage rise.

The £100 minimum is not exorbitant, and the government would have difficulty in making miners accept less. Furthermore, the composite resolution planned also called for a special delegate conference should the £100 minimum salary not be met.

It means that rather than diving into a ballot in industrial action, and facing a barrage of attacks from the right wing press, there will instead be the special delegate conference. The delegates will report back with the recommendations from the conference to the pit-head, and the miners will make up their own minds. It could have a very different effect on the ballot.

What was, of course, significant, was that the day after we passed this resolution, Joe Gormley, in a speech, told the government not to worry too much. He didn't want to bring the government down in a major dispute.

■ What was the mood of the conference about fighting closure threats?

□□ When I went to the special conference in February, I can remember there were many long faces over the fact that South Wales had tried to do something about closures on their

own. George Rees, of the South Wales miners, told me that the earlier opposition had collapsed because the men had become ballot-weary.

The press had picked it up, and were trying to frighten the men out of the consequences of their actions. They also felt premature, that perhaps the closures weren't in fact going to happen.

No-one dwelt on the earlier disastrous vote in South Wales. There was instead a clear commitment from the conference never again to allow the pits and areas to be picked off one by one. They intend to stand united against closures.

McGahey said he would be quite prepared to go over the borders to help in Durham, should they face closures, and the Durham delegate said much the same thing.

These are fine words at conference — we will have to see if this unity can be maintained when it comes to the crunch. I wonder what Ray Chubb (the Nottinghamshire Area president) would say, for instance, if Scargill were invited into the Notts area to link up the opposition to closures.

I believe there would be problems, but at conference, at least, everyone was happy with the unity so far established.

Dole strikers determined to win

AS THE Brixton dole office strike goes into its third week of unofficial action, the strikers are coming up against many pressures. The weight of the full time officials and the right wing-controlled National Executive Committee has been swung against them.

The General Secretary has sent out a circular to all members which gives all the management arguments about the numbers of scabs working, which deliberately emphasises every point of potential weakness in the strike organisation, and which condemns the unofficial levy now being organised throughout CPSA and other civil service unions.

And it ends with a call for unity, not division!

The Brixton campaign has put out a reply calling for: Unity yes, but leadership, not cowardice!

A lower level union official has repeatedly tried to undermine the strikers' weekly meetings by insisting on involving all the CPSA scabs who have crossed the picket line every day in them. This is the only "assistance" this official has given the Brixton strikers.

Meanwhile, the police have begun to step up their presence on the picket line.

Last week, one of the sacked members, Richard Cleverley, was charged with criminal damage to a car, in an incident in which he had been violently attacked by a scab, with no police interference to stop the assault. The magistrate banned Cleverley from the picket line and anywhere within half a mile of Brixton until mid-October!

Inside CPSA, the struggle to support the unofficial strikers is clearly dividing the militants from the pseudo-lefts. Already over £2,500 has been collected to finance the strike. For the first time in the history of the civil service trade unions, an unofficial strike, unconnected with pay, has been organised and sustained by an unofficial network of branch activists and members.

A conference will be held later this week of workplace delegates from all DHSS and DE branches in the London area to discuss the fight-back, the fund raising and possible blacking action to give solidarity.

Again, the bureaucracy will attempt every move to block it, undermine the left and give a boost to employers.

The strike must be supported by the rest of the trade union movement, and by activists in the Labour Party.

Donations and messages of support to Brixton Dole Office Campaign, 16 Knowlton House, Cowley Road, London SW9. (01-582 1645)

STEPHEN CORBISHLEY

Bakers fight back

BAKERS' UNION members at King Henry Meat Products, Levenshulme, walked out on strike at 1pm on Monday July 7th. This was their answer to arbitrary dismissals, atrocious safety standards and low wages.

This dispute is being speedily made official and a 24 hour picket has been put on the plant. A mass picket is being called for 6am on Thursday 17th.

It is doubly important that this strike is won. Since the national strike, baking bosses in Manchester have systematically attempted to destroy union organisation through redundancy and victimisation of militants. At King Henry Meats, the boss, Holling, is fanatically anti-trade union.

The Bakers' Union is calling for support for the picket line and support for the mass pickets.

Messages of support and donations to: Bakers Food and Allied Workers' Union, Room 4, George House, 30 Dudley Road, Whalley Range, Manchester M16 8DE.

MICK WOODS

Stop the containers!

TANDY Warehouse at Wednesday, West Midlands, have been out on strike since Wednesday May 21st for union recognition.

The warehouse is a national distribution centre for Tandy Hi-Fi shops and has always been non-union. As a result the regime was strict and the wages lousy.

£1.20 an hour was considered a good rate, and one fork truck driver was being paid as little as 63p an hour. The wage rises due to young workers at each birthday were often paid 4-6 months late.

Determined to do something about this and to improve their job security, most of the workers joined the TGWU earlier this year, but when the full-time officials went in to ask for union recognition and discussions over wages, the company refused and a strike began.

The part-timers among the strikers have been "made redundant" and scabs employed in their place. But the biggest problem they face is scab drivers crossing the picket line.

Tandy's distribution is done by a non-union firm called Roden Transport and they still go in and out. Worse, before the strike they only took goods from the warehouse to the shops. Now they are bringing in material as well.

But the key to winning the strike is in stopping container traffic, as the great majority of Tandy's products are imported from the USA or the Far East. No containers are now being delivered direct but it seems likely that they are being diverted elsewhere and transhipped.

A scab driving a Bedford artic, registration number JAW 214 N, has brought in several loads since the strike began and the strike committee is trying to find out

where he is getting them. They urgently need any information on the movement of goods to the firm, who also use the trade names 'Realistic' and 'Micronta'.

Although the strike is official, the T&G's £7 doesn't go very far these days, and donations are urgently required. All information, donations, messages of support etc. should be sent to the Tandy Strikers, c/o J.Jones, Transport House, 32-33 Bury Street, Wolverhampton, W.Midlands.

SIMON TEMPLE

Half win, half lose

THE STRIKE of GEC electricians at Metro-Cammell in Birmingham is over.

The sparks had originally struck [on May 16th] for a 20% wage claim. GEC immediately sacked all 150 of them.

On June 24th, eleven of the strikers broke ranks and returned to work. As a result, the other strikers voted to go back to work on GEC's terms.

But then the company refused to reinstate ten of them. The strike continued after that on the basis of 'All back or none back'.

One of the strikers told SO: "It isn't a victory and it isn't a defeat. We were forced to give up on our wage claim after eleven blokes broke ranks. Even though we finally forced GEC to reinstate everyone, ten of us have been barred from holding union office for three years, and several of us have now been sent off to different plants."

"The obvious danger is that now we're split up, GEC may try to victimise some of us in the future, but on the other hand, we held out against the odds for reinstatement."

"GEC's original list of the ten blokes they wouldn't reinstate included four who weren't militants and hadn't been particularly prominent in the strike. We realised at once that what the company would try and do next was to offer to reinstate those four to make it look as though they'd compromised."

"GEC were banking on us being forced to accept that 'compromise' because of the EETPU's refusal to make the strike official."

Giving a good image

ON WEDNESDAY 2nd July, about 400 workers from Cammell-Laird shipbuilders, Birkenhead, part of British Shipbuilders, went down to London, supposedly to protest at the lack of orders being given to the yard. What really happened is a different story.

After months of delay, waiting for Frank Field, Labour MP for Birkenhead, to organise the lobby, all that happened was that about 150 from the delegation went into Parliament to lobby MPs and got nothing out of them.

The rest of us, or at least some of us, went off to Downing Street to hand in a petition. The petition's call for more defence work was not supported by all Lairds workers. Anyway, at Downing Street it was very hard to tell the workers from the tourists.

Due to the appeal by Frank Field and the Confed leadership in the yard, no union banners or placards were taken, and great stress was laid on giving a good image of Liverpool's workers while in London.

In effect, this meant acting

from a position of weakness rather than of strength. Rather than a demand for work by Liverpool's workers, we asked if the nice Tory government would consider throwing a few orders our way.

A lesson must be learned from this.

No MP, Labour or Tory, can save our jobs. It's been tried in other areas and seen to fail. The only people who can stop this attack on our jobs are ourselves and our fellow trade unionists.

Workers in shipbuilding need to realise that British Shipbuilders won't reduce the workforce to the minimum with the least degree of trouble. Those who have orders at present need to support those yards threatened with more redundancy or closure as it could be their turn next.

There must be joint action nationally, and the stewards in the yards and dependant industries must build a national organisation. The Tories are slowly cutting us down and we need to call a halt to their attacks.

LOL DUFFY

"On Wednesday July 9th the EETPU effectively voted to put off making the strike official for another month — that's after we'd already been out for nearly two months!"

"If it hadn't been for the support we'd received from militants round the country and from left-wingers [particularly members of the SWP and supporters of Workers' Action] we probably would have had to return at that point."

"But we were able to hold on despite the treachery of the union leaders."

"Some of us involved in the action were well-known opponents of the Chapple mafia in the EETPU. The rest of the blokes, having seen what a bunch of scabs and bosses' men we've got in the leadership of our union, are now determined to get involved in the fight to kick out Chapple and his henchmen."

No comment

YOUR excellent magazine

comes to me each month with the Parliamentary 'House Magazine', and I am always interested to read it. Your April issue features a cover photograph of some Lancashire police at a clay pigeon shoot.

I am very pleased to see this evidence of police participation in shooting sports, which are rapidly growing in popularity all over the country.

However, someone should tell these officers that pieces of cotton-wool stuffed into the ears are totally inadequate protection against muzzle blast. It is most important to use properly designed ear muffs or ear plugs, otherwise cumulative and irreversible damage to the ears will inevitably result. Proper protection may cost a bit more than cotton wool, but it is surely preferable to a hearing aid and possible premature retirement.

I should know — I have been shooting at Bisley for over thirty years, and I wish that I had started to protect my ears sooner. It is too late now!

LORD SWANSEA
from Police, May 1980

by BRUCE ROBINSON

ON JULY 14th, the Daily Mail devoted its main front page article and two centre pages to an article 'exposing' the Workers' Socialist League.

There were the usual fantasies of red-baiting journalists. For example, a general strike "would bring down the government and WSL activists would organise 'soviets' of workers to run factories and communities. Life in Britain would then assume some of the horror of Cambodia."

The article also claims that a darkroom at the WSL's headquarters is used to develop pictures of callers to the house!

But the articles have a more serious side. Firstly, they aim to paint a sinister picture of the WSL at the centre of an international grouping of criminals and terrorists. They express horror at the WSL's contacts in other countries, and at a conference of Trotskyists that they have organised.

"Some", we are told, "face arrest in their home countries" — not surprising when those include Chile and Turkey. "Others are actively involved in armed struggles", the Mail claims, offering no evidence for this, let alone the absurd claim that the WSL

THE MAIL TRIES ANOTHER WITCH HUNT

is involved in the Irish National Liberation Army — the armed wing of the Irish Republican Socialist Party, who killed Airey Neave.

After these lunatic allegations, Tory MPs and Home Office ministers are planning to get police reports on the summer school, and possibly to refuse entry to delegates from abroad when they try

to enter the country.

The Mail is also trying to use its 'Exclusive' to stir up another witchhunt in the Labour Party. It claims that Ted Heslin, who was recently readmitted to the Labour Party by its National Executive Committee after being expelled by Oxford Labour Party, organised the "international school for subversion".

The Mail offers no evidence for this claim, and no argument about why the school is so evil, but uses it to attack the whole of the left in the Labour Party.

The front page headline was "As Benn welcomes the left..." (in small letters), followed by "Row over school for reds" (in very large type).

On the inside page, the Mail invites such great democrats as Frank Chapple, Neville Sandelson and Sid Weighell ("These links with foreign organisations should be investigated" — a good internationalist is Bro. Weighell) to make calls for a new witchhunt and to call for the NEC to reverse its decision about Ted Heslin.

All the necessary ingredients for right wing hysteria are there. Firstly, take a group of Trotskyists, who organise openly for their views and are active in supporting strikes; associate them with "foreigners" who "face arrest in their own countries", and with "terrorists"; give their addresses in case anyone feels sufficiently outraged to throw a brick through their windows; paint them as if they were at the centre of a massive world-wide subversive plot which includes undermining the 'moderates' in the Labour Party; attack Benn for good measure; and try to set off another witchhunt in the Labour Party.

Out of sight out of mind

THE MOST recent estimates of the numbers of people in and on the margins of poverty are for 1977. The Tory Government has stopped publishing new figures.

Why? Perhaps because they are worried about what the figures would show.

By 1977 there were more than 6 million people, in just under 4 million families, living in poverty.

Of those in poverty in 1977, nearly 3½ million were below retirement age. Nearly 1½ million were children.

Between 1974 and 1977, the number of people living in poverty increased by 20% and the number of children by more than 40%.

But there are even more people who are not in poverty but whose incomes are so low that they are hard pressed to meet their basic necessities.

In 1977 there were more than 7½ million such people and more than two million of them were children. These are increases since 1974 of just under 50% and just over 70% respectively.

Troops out - of schools!

A FEW WEEKS ago, a careers convention was held at a school in Brent, NW London. Without prior publicity, the Army was present, on a recruiting drive. During the course of the evening, one of the soldiers said to a 13 year old boy, "Why don't you join up when you leave school and go and shoot some Paddies in Northern Ireland?"

The boy's mother, who is Irish, complained to the school and the Army recruiting office. She also wrote to the Irish Post, in which an article appeared on 22nd June.

The NUT representative at the school, having seen the article in the Irish Post, approached the Headmaster to find out what had been done about the incident. The Head, obviously surprised that the mother had taken it to the Press, would do no more than apologise to her over the phone. He had to be pressed to write a letter of complaint to the Army.

He bluffed his way around this in a staff meeting by saying that he had written to the Army without reply, even though he had only agreed to write a few hours earlier!

At the staff meeting, some teachers raised the issue of whether the Army should be invited into the school at all. After attempts were made to brush them off with arguments that the soldier had been "indiscreet" and "tasteless", the Head stopped further discussion when he thought it was getting too heated.

Meanwhile, at the previous meeting of the local National Union of Teachers branch, a resolution of opposition to the use of schools for Army recruitment and propaganda had been discussed but talked out. Despite being put away down the agenda at the next meeting, on July 8th, the resolution was reached — and passed.

Alan Woods, who is also an activist in the Troops Out Movement, moved the motion, basing his argument on the conditions for school-leavers joining the Army, the use of the Army to break strikes, and the role in running Britain's concentration camps in Northern Ireland.

The opponents of the resolution (mainly the officers of the branch, including Communist Party members) had no real counter-arguments beyond saying that the motion would be ignored, that it was censoring information to school students, and that careers teachers would leave the NUT if it were passed.

Now that opposition to Army recruitment in schools is branch policy, it is up to the left to ensure that this policy is put into effect. The union's officers have made it clear that they will do nothing.

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A scab army of unemployed? NO WAY!

THE TORIES have come up with "new" ideas on how to carry out more cuts in public expenditure, and ways in which to use the potential pool of cheap labour — the unemployed. But with a new twist: they now want to bring about forced labour. That is, to draw unemployment benefit, the unemployed will have to "earn" it by "voluntary" work for a few days a week!

Unemployment has always had advantages for the bosses, and is deliberately increased for their ends.

By introducing a ruling that to draw dole, people must work a few days a week "for free", bosses will gain not only cheap labour, but a body of potential scab labour, undercutting other workers.

Take hospital workers, for example, who could be thrown out of work with health cuts, and then forced to return to work for nothing. What a saving in wages!

Threat

It also constitutes a threat to people with jobs, who may be under pressure to work for less pay because of their need to stay employed.

This idea of forced labour is backed up by the Employment Bill. The Bill attempts to outlaw any organised struggle by workers: forced labour attempts to use the "big stick" to quell any militancy before it develops into organised struggle.

The Tories plan to use unorganised, and to a large extent demoralised, members of the working class to undermine the organisation and rights of those in work.

Thatcher and Co have had discussions with Community Service Volunteers (who play at working in hospitals and homes). In the past, they have always been seen as a supplement to permanent staff, though in practice this is not always true and has led to disputes with the unions.

Alan Fisher of NUPE said feebly that these measures are no solution to unemployment. Does he really believe that a solution to unemployment is what the Tories had in mind?

What they have in mind is: Divide and rule.

Prior told the Employment Select Committee, "It seems basically wrong to me that we pay out large [sic] sums in unemployment and supplementary benefits but get no work from it!"

Wealth

Well, James Prior, it seems basically wrong to us that you and the rest of your class live in such wealth while the rest of us live in poverty. It seems basically wrong to us that you and your class produce so much misery and despair and from it you grow fat and decadent. It seems basically wrong to us that those who don't

work themselves, but live off the sweat of others, should live in the lap of luxury while we struggle from one meal to the next.

Workers must fight back against these attempts to undercut their jobs, and their wages.

As one worker said in reaction to Prior's bright idea: "Work is work and dole is dole, and no way are the two to become confused. If they want me to work, then they must pay me. And if they can't even give me a job, not even that, then it's time we got rid of the lot of them."

That, James Prior, is the workers' answer to you and the rest of your class: get out of the way.

FRAN BRODIE

Wales: campaign against police raids

"THIS IS THE first Welsh Campaign for Civil and Political Liberties march, but, given the attitudes of people like McNee and Anderson, who define any and all demonstrators and activists as political subversives, it will not be the last."

Over 50 people attended a demo called by the WCCPL last Saturday in Cardiff. The Campaign was set up after the police launched 'Operation Fire' in April, supposedly to round up people involved in the holiday cottage fires campaign in Wales.

Some of those arrested spoke at a rally afterwards. They told how they weren't questioned at all about the arson campaign, but were instead grilled for days about their views on Margaret Thatcher.

Gerry MacLochlainn, the Provisional Sinn Féin organiser for Wales, told how he was originally arrested for suspicion of arson. After 8 days in detention, and with no contact with the outside world, he was told he was being charged under the Prevention of Terrorism Act. He was, in fact,

eventually charged with conspiracy, but three months later the police have failed to produce any evidence.

The real motive for 'Operation Fire' was political. It was an intelligence-gathering operation on the left, and on Welsh nationalists. The Campaign deserves full labour movement support when it exposes this police operation for what it was.

Unfortunately, as the low turnout shows, the WCCPL seems to be more concerned with discussing interpretations of Judges' Rules than with building a campaign. Its first meeting drew 100 people, mainly students and academics, less than half of whom turned up for the demo.

The low turnout must be a blow for those Nationalists who believe that the arson campaign is the way to rouse the Welsh working class against the English capitalists. The only way the Campaign will grow is to look for labour movement support and to become more aware of the role of the police as a repressive arm of the state.

MARTIN BARCLAY

by ANDREW HORNUNG

THE POLISH government's announcement of increased meat and poultry prices from the beginning of this month sparked off strikes throughout the country last week.

It had been announced that meat was to go up by between 40% and 70%. So far this year the cost of living has risen 5.4% at official prices (the black market prices that people are forced to pay for goods in short supply have gone up even more).

But the strikes sparked off by the price rises focussed not only on wage issues. In some, plants like an aircraft factory at Mielec struck for and got a return to old productivity norms and a wage rise of up to 15%. The FSO car works in Warsaw went back after being promised a similar deal.

At Zyrardow, two textile plants have struck for wage rises plus improvements in working conditions and an investigation into the wastage of raw materials.

There is no official recognition of the strikes. The phrase currently being used by the authorities for the strikes is "temporary weakening of production dynamics". Similarly, when shipyard workers in Gdansk struck for a day to take place in the annual commemoration of the 1970 rising there, the authorities declared they were closing the yard to conserve energy.

Polish workers strike against price rises



Jacek Kuron

In a recent document, socialist oppositionist Jacek Kuron outlined some of the factors behind the present mood of the workers in Poland. "We are threatened with an explosion of popular anger on a larger scale even than the combined force of June 1956,

December 1970, June 1976 and March 1968."

"A relative increase in real wages at the start of the 1970s sharpened appetites and awakened hopes of prosperity. Thus the current regression [in living standards — AH] is felt with so much more pain. In recent years, starting with June 1976, a radical discrediting of authority as authority has entered the popular consciousness: people lack any faith in the ability of the authorities to direct social life."

"The real factor differentiating the current situation from all previous crises is the universal awareness within society of organised activity by opponents of the system. An analogous function is fulfilled by the unusual triumph of the Church through the choice of a Polish Cardinal as Pope."

As Kuron emphasises, the vital new element is the existence of opposition groups like KOR (the Social Self-Defence Committee) and the Committees of the Free Trade Unions which exist along the Baltic seaboard and in the mining areas of Silesia.

Socialist Organiser

by
ALEXIS CARRAS

IMAGINE a situation where 1400 school leavers compete for 8 jobs. Where unemployment is 14%, twice the national average. Where 65 people chase each available vacancy. Could things possibly get worse?

Yes, if the British Steel Corporation has its way. To compound the misery which the working community of Consett is already experiencing, along with all of the depressed north-east of the country, the BSC is planning to shut down the Consett steel plant, the major industrial works in the area.

However, 1000 Consett workers marched on Parliament on July 9th to show that BSC's decision was not going to be taken lying down.

As one of the marchers told *Socialist Organiser*: "It comes hard having to fight for your job. I've worked in Consett for nineteen years. I'll be too old to get another job; once this goes, I've had it."

"But it's the young ones too. They won't ever have had a job. What a future!"

"It's not just ourselves we're marching about, it's for the young ones' jobs too. They're not our jobs to give away."

Asked what they expected Parliament to do, the marchers' answers varied from a realistic "Nothing" to the more forthright words of a secretary at the hospital in Consett — "We're going to see our MPs but that probably won't make much difference. To tell the truth, the only person I'd like to see

in Parliament is Guy Fawkes."

Clearly, the fight to save Consett is not going to be won on the streets of London nor just by lobbying of MPs. Questions in Parliament are not going to stop the Tories!

There is no substitute for the solidarity and unity which the Consett community has managed to build up. One of the most heartening things about the march was the number of workers from other industries and unions. They see that the struggle is not just for the steel workers but for the entire town. As Marjorie Laverton, one of the women marchers, said: "I work in a fish shop — in fact, most of the women in Consett do shop work; there's nothing but that and the Company. If the Company closes the community will break up. People will start moving away."

The local labour movement has joined in the fight. Of course, activating the official movement was initially very difficult, since, as another marcher put it, "They're not used to getting off their arses and doing



Civil disobedience, that's the only way.

something. But that's what they've got to do, if they are really to be a party of labour and not just a local Mafia."

Derwentside local council has given £6000 to the campaign, and Durham council is also thinking of donating a large sum. The local Labour Party branches have provided cars and PA systems to tour and leaflet the surrounding estates.

But there has been one black spot: the attitude of a Labour Party councillor who is also a foreman at the plant, and along with the management has played a backstabbing role.

The managers "have carried out BSC 'policy',

refusing to give the committee time off work and withdrawing the duplicating facilities. They say the campaign is not part of our regular trade union duties."

"I think management have been bought off, offered a big bonus if they get us shut by the deadline without a lot of fuss", stated a member of the Steel Committee at Consett.

The role of the unions has also been crucial, but not entirely as the workers would have wished. The union officials closer to the rank and file have been very responsive but the ISTC Executive has not appealed to other steel plants to

black the orders the BSC has been redirecting away from Consett, in this case to Scunthorpe.

"I think the EC should have told them not to touch the orders; after all, they stopped the transfers in Warrington. This morning we tried to get an ISTC full-timer, Ray Evans, to call an EC meeting, but they say they can't meet because they say people are on holiday."

"There's a danger that it might look like we're trying to run down Scunthorpe. We're not. We think all the plants should be kept open."

Although the Joint Union Co-ordinating Committee has brought out a broadsheet basing its argument on the profitability and the irreplaceably specialised nature of the work at Consett, many Consett workers do not see the struggle in terms of the narrow sectionalism of other anti-closure campaigns. They reject the approach which argues solely on the basis of their profitability, and why one plant should be spared... at the expense of others.

Anyway, the profitability arguments, the reams of statistics and tables produced by independent market analysts, have not cut much ice with the BSC and the Tories.

"The audit which shows Consett is profitable can't be refuted, but no-one has listened, so perhaps we'll have to behave 'irresponsibly'. We are meeting steelworkers from Lorraine (France). We can learn a lot from them."

"When the Tories and BSC management find out we are talking to French steel workers, they will need to be scared. We have talked to people from Shotton who know about BSC's tricks, and perhaps we can avoid falling into the same traps as they did."

As another of the marchers put it: "Do what they've done at Longwy in France. Civil disobedience. That's the only way... if the works wasn't viable I still don't see why we should be thrown on the scrap-heap..."

"The point is that industry has to be planned for the people."

Only this approach has any chance of ensuring that the Consett campaign does not follow the sorry road of so many other steel fightback struggles. Only this way will demoralisation be avoided, as well as the gradual collapse of the campaign, through workers one by one accepting redundancy pay.

The Consett workers need our support. Messages of support, money and enquiries about the campaign and speakers should be sent to: John Lee, 24 Stockerley Road, Delvesland, Consett.

Fight on a class basis

AFTER Durham District Labour Party's meeting with the Save Consett Steel Campaign, Euro-MP Roland Boyse talked to *SO* about the campaign to save the works and the town.

□□ How do you see the campaign developing?

■ ■ Consett can be saved, but not only by the efforts of the plant workers. Although they are the front line troops who must lead the fight, they need the support of trade union and Labour Party workers. Principled support for a short, hard fight.

□□ As far as I understand, the Economic Audit is a major focal point in the campaign. Is this so? Do you agree with this emphasis?

■ ■ The Economic Audit shows that Consett is a profitable works. This is a source of tremendous support for the community. The fight is strengthened by people knowing that they are not trying to save a 'lame duck'.

But implicit in the argument is that if Consett were not profitable, then it would be more reasonable to close it. And following from this, BSC management can easily change their costing procedure, redirect orders and so on which would make Consett unprofitable, by sleight of hand, almost.

A social audit is just as important as the Economic Audit. Closing the works would mean 35% unemployment in Consett, and as the rest of the region is also under attack, there are no other jobs to go to.

The Economic Audit is useful as an element of the campaign. The social case also needs to be emphasised. □□ How significant do you think Wednesday's march in London will be?

■ ■ It's vitally important to take the battle to the streets of London. Firstly London is the centre of decision-making; secondly it will alert the country to the strength of feeling in Consett — showing that the workforce will not accept the closure.

Most importantly, the fight will be brought to the attention of the southern working class. Consett is a class fight.

At the moment, the north is taking the brunt of Tory attacks, but if they are successful, the 'prosperous south' will be next in line. It's a class, not a regional, problem.

The Tories aim to smash the trade union movement. They will allow unemployment to rise. The demoralisation of fear caused by rising unemployment, the experienced labour activists out of work, and a cheap



pool of labour for the capitalists to turn to, will all help the Tories carve up the trade unions.

□□ You are reported to have contact with the French steel workers in Lorraine. What do you think the Consett campaign can learn from them?

■ ■ I will meet the steel workers next week, if necessary, and if the Consett Committee wants it, I shall arrange a meeting for them.

We must accept that if all else fails, reasoned argument, Economic and Social Audits, peaceful demonstration, it may be necessary to take more militant action.

In Lorraine, their tactics brought 11,000 new jobs in the area. They fought their fight on a class basis: that's what we can learn from them.

We must strengthen the fight, put it on a class basis. Keeping Consett works open and the community alive is a struggle that the whole working class cannot afford to lose.

If Consett goes, then the Tories will have the confidence to take on other groups of workers, and we will see more closures.

Break the cycle of defeats

by Alexis Carras

MANY OF THE Consett workers look to the struggle in France as a model. Workers in Lorraine (Eastern France) and in the North, faced with 22,000 redundancies, replied with a fantastic show of militancy. Roads were blocked, town halls attacked and burned, and on the 16th February 1979 there was a one day general strike with everything from the supermarkets to the Lille Philharmonic Orchestra shut down!

What did the French steel workers get out of this fight? Practically nothing.

Despite the anger, the militancy, and the terrific mobilisations of the workers, no effective rank and file organisations emerged and no clear class policies were fought for. Instead, the reformist 'Communist' Party used the occasion to demonstrate their 'left wing' credentials with spectacular actions often directed against the German steel workers. Out back on German steel imports, was their major cry!

They then negotiated with

the government. The sackings are still going through, the only sop being vague promises of new industries for the steel areas, sometime in the future!

The French experience demonstrates that militant action is not enough. It can actually be used by the leadership as a let-out from a decisive fight.

A decisive fight does not mean burning down Town Halls (although there is nothing wrong in that), but linking up with workers in other steel towns on a rank and file level, in a National Action Committee. The campaign must aim to defend the jobs and pay of all workers, instead of fighting for 'special cases' or for import controls. And it should also draw in other workers from the industries which would be immediately hit by the steel closures: car workers, transport workers, miners and dockers.

The policy should be: ag-
* Against Productivity deals.
* For sharing out the work available nationally among the different plants, under workers' control and with no loss

of pay.
* For the entire nationalisation of the steel industry, including all the profitable parts which the bosses have hived off for themselves.

* International links with other workers (in Germany and France, for example).

If the Consett workers occupy their plant, that could be a crucial first step to break the cycle of defeats.

But they will have to beat the bitter resistance of the bosses, who will not tolerate any questioning of their absolute control of their system.

For us, it is a matter of reorganising this crazy profit based system, in which we make all the sacrifices and get none of the rewards. To do this we need a government committed to our interests — just as the bosses have the Tories ruthlessly carrying out their interests.

We need a workers' government based on the labour movement and accountable to the democratic control of our class organisations, fighting for our needs and our future.

If you want to work, speak out



ON SEPTEMBER 1st, *Fightback for Women's Rights* is organising a Women's Right to Work lobby of the TUC, alongside the Right to Work lobby already organised.

Fightback secretary Rachel Lever told *SO*: "The TUC doesn't take women's unemployment seriously enough. It still tends to regard women's earnings as a dispensable supplement to the family's income, and is often silent about the policy of sacking women first."

"*Fightback* hopes that supporters from workplaces, nurseries, etc, will join the lobby on the 1st. We are planning to present the results of a questionnaire giving some indication of the number of women who are unemployed — who would like work, but who see little point in signing on as they are not eligible for benefit, and are unlikely to be offered work, or to be able to take up such an offer."

"*Fightback* is appealing for donations towards the cost of the lobby, in Brighton, and questionnaires are available from *Fightback*, 41 Ellington Street, London N7."