

We're at war with the Tories

by John Cunningham
(Yorkshire NUM)

THATCHER has declared war on the miners. The announcement by the National Coal Board of its intention to close 50 pits is nothing more than a calculated cold-blooded attempt to break the miners and the working class.

The Tories believe that they can do it. Just as Heath risked everything in 1972 and 1974, it could be the same with Thatcher now. We must send her packing like we did Heath.

The Tories, in pursuit of their monetarist madness, are following the same pattern with the miners as they did in steel. 'Break-even' dates, closures, redun-

dancies, a freeze on recruitment and 'economies', all for one reason — to make us pay for their crisis!

To hell with them!

Miners cannot and will not allow our industry to be carved up again like it was in the '60s.

Our whole future is at stake — not just our jobs, but the jobs of the next generation of miners and the well-being of the mining communities.

The NUM executive which met the day after the NUM/NCB talks took the right decision — to call for strike action if necessary to defend our pits.

Going to see Thatcher is obviously a waste of time. Thatcher and Joseph don't respond to

pleading. They understand only one thing — force!

So we must hit them with everything we have. Already the talk in the pit canteens and on the 'Paddies' is that 'this one will make '72 look like a picnic'.

The miners need the entire class behind them. This mighty army can smash Thatcher's regime. It will be a bitter, hard fight, but it will come, it must come, and we shouldn't put it off any longer.

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Claimants and strikers 10p

20p

Miners lead the fight

by John O'Mahony
(18th February)

A STRONG group of workers has finally said 'No' to the vandal Tory Government! The working class retreat is over: the fightback has begun.

26,000 miners in South Wales voted with their feet and struck work on Monday 16th. Then 3,000 in Kent. Then thousands more in Scotland and Durham.

By the weekend there will be a national miners' strike — unless the government backs down.

The NUM has said that there will be no speeded-up closure of pits — whatever Thatcher's demolition-squad Tories decide. Or that if some close, then all will close in a general strike of miners.

The miners, without waiting for the ballot which the non-militant majority on the NUM Executive opted to call, are saying to the Government that there will be jobs for either all miners or for none.

It is a rallying cry that the entire labour movement should pick up and mobilise around — in the first place to back the miners with solidarity action and picket-line support.

It was perhaps inevitable that the wrecking crew in charge of Britain, having so far got away with blitzing whole communities and industries, should become so

the champions of all the workers whose lives and livelihoods stand to be devastated by capitalist slump and a monetarist government.

The miners won't back down, even if Joe Gormley is making noises like he wants to.

So either the government will change its plans, or we are in for a bitter

must be fought with a record volume of coal in stock — effective.

The government could sit out a miners' strike for months — if it can curb flying pickets and solidarity action. But that means a full escalation, and would quickly pit the whole labour movement against the government. So far the government shows every sign of

The superstitious Tory barbarians, the arrogant and inhuman priests of monetarism and market economics, have offered human sacrifices to their ravenous idol literally by the million. But watch them now that the miners have stirred themselves.

Watch life-snatcher Thatcher begin to change her tune.

The Daily Express summed up the first result of the miners' industrial offensive. 'The Government was on the run last night'. It is now insisting that the proposed immediate closures are in the order of 20 rather than 50.

We must keep them on the run.

If the government capitulates, the lesson for other workers is that we can do it too.

For more than a year, a general strike would have been the appropriate response to what Thatcher has been doing to the working class — the only reaction that would have stopped them devastating Wales and other areas of Britain. But it has been a year of slump-induced

• Work-sharing under workers' control with no loss of pay — cut hours, not jobs.

• Re-training for the unemployed, under trade union control and at trade union rates.

A general strike could also cripple and topple the government.

A full-scale confrontation between the miners and the government, with the government using the police and perhaps the army to enforce the law against flying pickets, would put a general strike on the immediate agenda.

Right now we must raise maximum support for the miners. Solidarity action committees should be set up, where possible by Trades Councils or Labour Party GMCs calling together delegates of working class organisations. They should organise support for the miners, explain their case, raise money, and help organise mass picketing.

As we went to the printers, it was reported that the Coal Board had backed down: no pit closures!

It is a lesson and an inspiration for all workers.

Direct action saved the miners jobs. And it can save the jobs at Linwood, in BL, in steel, and in other industries.



Saltley, 1972: Mass pickets won then, they can win again

JOBS FOR ALL

bold as to challenge those who buried Edward Heath in 1974. Now they have overreached themselves, and the miners have called them out.

Now that the miners are roused, angry and mobilised, they will not back down. In South Wales, the rage of the whole community against Thatcherism and Toryism is welling up behind the miners, who are

struggle. And it cannot remain only a miners' struggle.

Under the Tory anti-union laws, flying pickets are unlawful. So are sympathy strikes.

The miners will use flying pickets. Already the 'Triple Alliance' between railworkers, steelworkers, and miners exists and will play a key part in making the miners' strike — which

desperately wanting to avoid that. They may not be able to.

The labour movement should not want to avoid it. The worst social, economic and political onslaught on the working class since 1931 has been borne with incredible feebleness for the last 18 months. We have taken blow after blow with a docility not seen in decades.

working class depression and retreat. A general strike is still the best way to settle with Thatcher.

It could win immediate measures to stop the jobs massacre:

• No cuts. Stop the nuclear arms programmes and put the money into house-building, hospitals, and useful public services instead.

• No closures.

EEC: the issues haven't changed

JOHN McILROY (SO 34) tells us that circumstances have changed. In 1973 and 1975, it was wrong to take sides in the in-or-out argument over the Common Market. But today, he says, we should support withdrawal as part of a socialist programme for a future Labour government.

But circumstances have not changed. Many opponents of the EEC in the mid '70s argued for a united socialist Europe (not just a socialist Britain) as the alternative to a capitalist Common Market. But because they said, 'Britain Out', they acted as the left-wing tail of

the nationalist dog. The same is true today, and can only give aid and comfort to the import controls, 'blame the foreigners' lobby.

Of course, a government taking socialist measures would have to free itself from EEC regulations. And from the IMF, and from the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, and from most of the international commercial contracts signed by the capitalists.

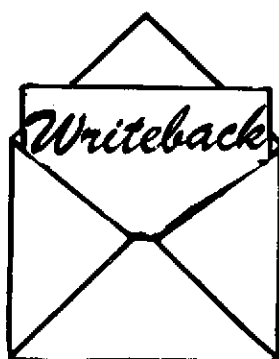
All these things would be consequences of a serious struggle for socialism — rather trivial consequences. Making a special point of

the Common Market can only de-focus attention from the main threats to socialism in Britain — the British ruling class and the world bourgeoisie's mutual insurance organisation, NATO.

Joining the anti-EEC bandwagon only makes sense as part of a nationalist and reformist strategy by which socialism will be enacted by the House of Commons with the working class reduced to off-stage noises. Had he survived the Chilean coup, Salvador Allende might have told us where that strategy leads!

But John does make one good point. The debate has been conducted at much too abstract a level. If those of us who oppose the anti-EEC furor are to win our arguments, then we must develop concrete political answers to monstrosities like the Common Agricultural Policy.

SIMON TEMPLE, Birmingham.



Write back to Socialist
Organiser, c/o 214
Sickert Court, London
N1 2SY.

Time to clean up the NUT rule book

IAN Hollingworth's article in SO 34 on democracy in the NUT provides a welcome and useful starting point for a campaign to bring our large but stand-offish union into the mainstream of the labour movement.

The NUT suffers from all of the problems of bureaucratic conservatism that most others do, and these are further aggravated by a very thinly veiled attitude that teachers are really something special and a big cut above those who have to get their hands dirty to make a living.

Branch

It may be of interest to point out a few branch level examples of just how profoundly undemocratic the NUT is. The Association (branch) of which I am a member is of about average size, having 365 members, and is therefore entitled to send three 'representatives' (notice: not delegates) to National Conference.

In the national rule book it is stated that conference representatives shall be elected. In the NUT, delegate and branch officers' elections are by postal ballot, an arrangement which is used by the right wing to encourage uncontested elections on the grounds of financial economy. But even this conservative and passive form of democracy is often denied to the membership in practice.

I discovered to my horror at a recent AGM that a set of local rules which I had never seen before allowed two of the three places to be filled by the President and Secretary automatically — no opposition allowed!

Active

It is also specifically against the rules to mandate those who go to conference on any issue whatsoever.

I'm sure that there are many other choice little horrors like these in the structure of the NUT which I haven't come across yet. In my view any campaign undertaken by socialists inside the NUT should give a large part of its attention to establishing a proper system of branch delegate democracy based on active membership participation and getting the union affiliated to the Labour Party to help kill off the pretentious and rather pathetic illusion that the NUT is a 'non-political' professional association.

ALASDAIR JAMISON
(President, Basingstoke NUT; personal capacity)

But football is political, too

HOW MANY times have we heard people say they are not interested in politics, and the only thing they read in the paper is the football reports?

But this attitude itself is part and parcel of politics, with football in the role of 'opium of the people' which Marx once assigned to religion. And many of the everyday conversations of football fans are also really about economics and politics.

Take, for instance, the discussions about footballers' salaries, and transfer fees. Football clubs, like any capitalist firm, are interested in making profits. Like every other firm, the clubs like to keep their costs down, so little is spent on facilities at the ground. High wages for some footballers are a fairly recent phenomenon, due to the work of the Professional Footballers' Association. And they are only for a few players in top clubs.

The clubs defend the ridiculous transfer fees which are paid for some players by arguing that the money stays in the game, but the effect of these transfer fees is to create a situation in which only a few clubs with plenty of money can afford to buy the best players — keeping the monopoly of success, and therefore of profits, in their hands.

This is just the same tendency towards concentration that we see in other capitalist industries, where the big firms are able to monopolise production as the amount of capital needed to produce increases. Now as the recession begins to affect football, transfer fees are tumbling,

just as capital is devalued and destroyed in other firms.

And the capitalist market economy's war of all against all is mirrored in the competition between teams. With players' fortunes tied to the success of their team, and the fanatical support which the football industry whips up, is it any wonder that violence flares on and off the pitch?

So when someone next says, 'All the workers are interested in is football', or when a football fan says he or she isn't interested in politics, don't despair. Just explain to them that politics affects football too.

Yours comradely,
ARTHUR BOUGH



Slipman slides from CP to CSD

WHEN SUE Slipman was president of the National Union of Students, she headed up the Broad Left slate. Penny Cooper was then Treasurer of the Union.

As members of the Communist Party they were outspoken opponents of socialist ideas and left initiatives. It is no exaggeration to say that as leaders of the Broad Left they were champions of the NUS right wing.

Now Sue Slipman, who until just over a year ago was on the Party's National Executive, has joined Penny Cooper, who left the CP earlier and joined the Labour Party, in announcing support for the Council for Social Democracy.

According to Slipman, this is a practical expression of her belief in the CPGB's programme for 'a broad, democratic strategy for social advance'. No comment.

In the Council for Social Democracy she joins other ex-CPGB luminaries like Frank Chapple [whose union is notorious for its bureaucratic butchery]. But it would be missing the point to see Sue Slipman's slide to the right as the same as Frank Chapple's 25 years before.

Chapple was one of that enormous exodus from the CPGB after the double-disorientation of the 20th Congress revelations followed by the Russian invasion of Hungary. A small part of that exodus turned left and moved towards Trotskyism; the vast majority became inactive or headed into the Labour Party's right wing, carrying with it in many cases the virus of the CP's own special brand of bureaucracy.

Chapple turned right with his mentor Les Cannon, his predecessor as leader of the electricians' union, to become a pillar of British anti-communism. Only last week he attended the inaugural meeting of the British branch of the Committee for the Free World, a new political water-hole for right-wing historians [Lord Blake and Lord Bullcock], Labour Party defectors [Lord Chalfont], and pro-CSD MPs [Mike Thomas and Neville Sandelson].

Sue Slipman's route has been quite different, even if her destination is the same. When Chapple left the CP, he clearly saw himself as switching from 'communist' to anti-communist. Sue Slipman believes — correctly — that she has not changed her basic politics at all. In her letter in the Guardian, she just draws her own conclu-



sions from the pseudo-democratic gobbledy-gook of the CP and the pseudo-radical personal politics of some trends in the women's movement.

While many supporters of the central ideas of 'Beyond the Fragments' are looking for a role within the ranks of the Labour Party, Sue Slipman has used those ideas as an excuse to turn her back on working class politics altogether even in purely verbal terms.



Sue Slipman

The fair face of racism

BRITISH Leyland has been found guilty of racial discrimination in its plant at Acocks Green, Birmingham. The case against Leyland was brought by a West Indian worker, Rolston Deson.

Rolston Deson had been working at the same job for three years when Mick Caffery, a National Front candidate in the last election, was moved to work with him in a two-man team. Caffery started a campaign of racial abuse, but stewards refused to let management move Caffery unless Deson was moved too. When both workers were moved, Deson objected and brought his case.

The judgement is important because it overturns an earlier ruling in this case

by a Birmingham Industrial Tribunal which claimed that for racial discrimination to be proven, the victim would have to show that he or she had suffered detriment.

The worst aspect of the case is the light it throws on the racism of the stewards.

Frequently trade unionists object to the idea that fascists and open racists should be thrown out of the labour movement — 'that's not democratic', they say. Here we see the result of this attitude: the attempt to be equally fair to a racist and to the racist's victim ends up treating the victim in a racist way.

Whether the Acocks Green stewards concerned are racists or not, their refusal to be prepared to deal with Caffery themselves has led to them in effect siding with the racist.

Keep out of the courts

ACCORDING to the AUEW Executive Council, Jack McPherson Quinn had made a nuisance of himself at last year's Labour Party Conference. This, they said, gave them the right to ban him from the union's delegation to the Special Conference although he was a properly elected delegate.

Quinn took his case to the High Court and won. He was able to attend the Special Conference.

The case is a good example of just how cynical the AUEW leaders' claims to be democrats are.

But Socialist Organiser would not agree that this is the way to fight Duffy and his sort. We want no court interference in the labour movement.

What we want is the building of a movement for democracy in every union and in the Labour Party. That is the only guarantee of permanent democracy and the fullest rank and file participation. Going to the courts can only occasionally produce the right result. It cannot guarantee democracy, and it decreases participation.

Nevertheless, we draw readers' attention to Quinn's appeal for help with his large legal costs: donations should be sent to Fred Eastwood, President Camberwell AUEW, 5 Derryn Court, Trewharry Rd, London SE26.

a socialist organiser 20p
broadsheet
**the fight for
trade union
democracy**
20p from 214 Sickert
Court, London N1 2SY

JOHN McILROY argues that the new Nationality Bill is merely the latest link in a long chain of racist legislation by Labour and Tory governments alike.

It is the final piece in the jigsaw of racist laws to stop black workers entering the UK which both Tory and Labour governments have been putting together since the early 1960s. Its provisions were first outlined in Labour's Green Paper.

When British capitalists plundered and colonised the world they handed out British citizenship as freely as lasses, honestly believing that this dubious advantage would help reconcile any rational being to a life of super-exploitation. As late as 1948 the British Nationality Act gave all citizens of the Commonwealth, whether they lived in a colony or an independent commonwealth country, equal citizenship rights including freedom to enter and settle in the UK, and the right to vote and to stand for Parliament.

The fact that blacks in the 1950s started to exercise these rights in response to labour shortage in the UK put a completely different complexion on things. As economic necessities shifted restrictions on immigration were introduced.

These laws were racist. They were intended not to stop immigration but to stop black immigration. They did this by distinguishing between patrials whose

A Bill to legalise racism

parents or grandparents of either sex were born in this country, and non-patrials who possessed no such connection. The first group were white and the second black. The first group received much greater rights to enter than did the second.

The central purpose of the present bill is to rationalise nationality law, thus bringing it into line with the 1971 Immigration Act. The purpose of Nationality Law is no longer to give blacks formal equal rights but to make British citizenship more of a racial category and defeat the formal argument that those being kept out by immigration laws are British citizens. As even The Economist points out, the bill is

intended quite bluntly to marry citizenship to the exigencies of British immigration control... (and)... demonstrates the increasingly

racial loading of the concept of British citizenship'.

The Bill basically introduces three categories of citizenship to replace the existing citizenships created in 1948. The largest of the three, and the only one carrying rights to entry to the UK, will be British Citizenship. This will apply to anyone born in the United Kingdom before the Act comes in, anybody who has been registered or naturalised in the UK, British Patriots (i.e. those who were born here but live abroad) and Commonwealth patrials (i.e. two million largely white Commonwealth citizens who have the descent connection with the UK and who generally come from the old Commonwealth). Black people in Zimbabwe will not be British citizens; whites whose families have lived there for a century will be.

When certain colonies became independent certain minorities who had landed up there as a result of Britain's policies of mobile exploitation and encountered hostility as a result of Britain's policies of divide and rule decided not to become citizens of the new state but to retain British citizenship. People of Chinese or Indian descent in Singapore, Malaysia and part of East Africa are examples. These people will now become British overseas citizens. Those living in the UK who have been here free from conditions on their stay for five years will become British citizens as will those who are here now when they attain the five year qualification.

Even those living in existing British colonies will not get British citizenship. If you live in Hong Kong or Gibraltar (and are not patial or white of course), you become a Citizen of the British Dependent Territories, again with no rights of entry.



The Bill also tightens up on the position of those whose parents are not British citizens, but who are living here with conditions attached to their stay, so that children born to work-permit holders, visitors overseas and students, would not acquire citizenship as they do now. Neither would children of illegal immigrants, although the illegal entry (and that is becoming a very wide concept) was discovered years later. These, and others who have managed to enter the country, will be able to apply for naturalisation or registration, which can be expensive and intimidating.

Naturalisation will in future be for both alien and commonwealth country citizens applying when adult following a period of residence.

Applicants will have to show that they have some command of the English language and that they are 'of good character'.

The decision to grant citizenship will be entirely at the Home Secretary's discretion; no reasons need be given. There is no right to appeal.

Registration will be by entitlement for minors whose British citizen parent becomes a British citizen by naturalisation or descent provided the child has settled here for three years with its parents; or for minors born in the UK neither of whose parents had been legally admitted for settlement at the time of birth but at least one of whose parents had been subsequently admitted.

Registration at the Home Secretary's discretion can be allowed for a minor child adopted outside the UK or where a minor child of a British citizen parent has acquired his or her own citizenship by descent.

Provisions to deprive naturalised or registered citizens of their status if they attained citizenship by fraud or by false representation or if they have been 'disloyal to the Queen' will continue, and are likely to be used more in the future.

Unlike any logical nationality law this bill provides no definition of the rights and duties of citizens. It gives overwhelmingly arbitrary powers to the Home Secretary. It will throw Britain's black population into confusion over their status. The Bill represents not only the abandonment of black British citizens overseas to legitimise their exclusion from the UK, but it will, as part of the present racist legal framework, add its own small contribution to greater stigmatising and harassment of blacks already here.

It does, however, raise once more the issue of state racism and the potentiality of forging greater unity between white and black workers in the context of agitating against its implementation now and fighting to pledge the next Labour government to its repeal — and of the Immigration Acts as well, of which this Bill is the unhealthy offspring.

Support the 'Massacre' march

by Jeff Slee

ON MONDAY 10th February Paul Ruddock became the 13th person to die as a result of the New Cross massacre. His sister Evonne was one of the other victims of the fire that erupted towards the end of a party held at their home on January 18th.

Many of London's black community believe that the fire was started by a racist fire-bomber, copying the bombing of a French synagogue by Nazis last year.

One young West Indian, Carl Wright, was coming away from the party when he saw a man throw something through the front window of the house, then run to a waiting Austin Princess and drive off.

Carl ran back to the scene of the party to find the front room ablaze.

And on the night of the fire, two police officers separately told Mrs Ruddock — the mother of Paul and Evonne — that a petrol bomb caused the fire.

The NF are believed to have been responsible for a series of firebombings in the New Cross area, including the fires at the Moonshot and the Albany centre, both meeting places for black

youth, in December 1977 and July 1978 respectively.

The police have been very reluctant to look for the suspected racist bomber, and some black activists are accusing them of a deliberate cover-up. A meeting of several hundred local people three days after the fire decided to set up their own fact finding commission to investigate the fire independently of the police. The commission's preliminary report argued that the police should have interviewed all known active racists in the area.

The police say that forensic evidence suggests that the fire was started with paint thinner and in the middle of the room. But Mrs Ruddock is adamant that there is was no paint thinner in the house and that the fire did not start in the centre of the room.

In contrast to their inactivity on the racist attack theory the police have been very imaginative in thinking of possible alternative theories — all far-fetched.

The Massacre Action Committee has called a demonstration on March 2nd to protest at the misreporting of the fire by the police and the press, and the absence of any expression of concern from

Parliament or public figures. Thousands of black people from all over the country are expected to assemble outside the Moonshot Community Centre (Pagnall St, SE 14, close to New Cross station), at 10am, and march to the scene of the blaze for a silent vigil.

From there the march will go through Fleet Street past New Scotland Yard to Downing Street. It is important that white socialists and the labour movement give their full support to the black community in their grief and anger, and in particular to the black people's demonstration.

Donations to the fund for relatives of the victims should be sent to: The New Cross Massacre Action Committee, 74 Shakespeare Rd, London SE24.

PROTEST MARCH

Saturday March 2nd

Assemble 10am, Moonshot Centre, Pagnall St, SE14, near New Cross Station, and march to Downing St.

Is Valium as safe as Smarties?

by Les Hearn

Since I wrote on Valium and cancer in SO 34, there has been a lively correspondence in the scientific press and enough has come out to make it obvious that research into ill-effects could and should have been started years ago. In partic-



ular, Dr. June Marchant of Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham, has presented an alternative theory of how Valium might promote cancer. Briefly, Valium has been known to encourage production of the hormone prolactin (which stimulates breast growth and milk production in women, but is

also produced in men) since at least 1972, with evidence as far back as 1966. Prolactin acts on such organs as the breasts, ovaries, prostate and kidneys and promotes the growth of tumours of the breast and prostate. It may also promote cancers of the ovaries and kidneys. Potential victims now include

the 5-10% of men and the 15-30% of women in Britain who take Valium. Just by the way, other drugs causing increased levels of Prolactin include some very common tranquillisers, anti-histamines and drugs to lower blood pressure.

Hoffman-La Roche (makers of Valium) have responded to the controversy by releasing studies purporting to show that Valium is as safe as Smarties, but unfortunately for them, Dr. David Horrobin (who originally publicised the cancer link) and others have shown that La Roche's evidence is at best irrelevant and at worst actually supports the other side! As Horrobin says, 'The inadequate La Roche response... only emphasises the need for urgent initiation of human

studies', while Marchant points out that 'only by seeking for causes and remedying them, rather than suppressing symptoms with drugs (like Valium) can we hope to deal with the mental conditions which plague developed societies today.' Which brings me onto another topic.

In this alienated and lonely society, many of the people visiting their doctors with symptoms like depression really want someone to share their problems with. Now many doctors are too busy to talk to their patients but are able to show a minimal amount of interest by writing them a prescription for something (like Valium?). But researchers have found that for a whole range of mood-

LISTINGS

Socialist Organiser offers free listings for labour movement events. Send copy to Socialist Organiser, c/o 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY, to arrive by the Saturday one week before publication date.

S.E. LONDON youth march against unemployment, organised by LPYS, Saturday 21 February, 12 noon from Welling Corner.

CND Labour Movement conference. Saturday 28 March, UMIST Students' Union, Manchester. Two delegates each from TU and LP branches, etc; credentials £3 from CND, 11 Goodwin St, London N4.

LAMBETH Socialist Organiser forum: Bob Sutcliffe on the Alternative Economic Strategy. Thursday 12 March, 7.30pm at Lambeth Town Hall.

COVENTRY NORTH-EAST LPYS defence campaign for three comrades arrested on the anti-British Movement demonstration on November 23rd last year. Benefit gig, Saturday 21st February, Lanchester Poly, Coventry, with bands 'Urge', 'Eyeless in Gaza', and 'The Solidators'. Picket of Marylebone Magistrates' Court, 9.30am Monday 9th March.

THE GREENSBORO assassinations: protest meeting about the shooting of five members of the Communist Workers' Party (USA) in Greensboro, North Carolina, in November 1979, and the acquittal of their KKK/Nazi assassins by a picked racist jury. Tuesday 24 February, 7.30pm at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Organised by Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!

NORTH WEST LONDON march against the new Nationality Bill. Saturday 7th March, 12 noon, from Bobson Rd, Roundwood Park, London NW10. Supported by Harlesden ANL, NW London Action Against Racism, and the Paddington Committee Against Racism.

MANCHESTER demonstration against state repression of lesbian and gay people. Saturday 28 February, 1pm from under the Mancunian Way, Oxford Rd.

LARC/NAC labour movement conference on abortion rights and positive legislation. Saturday 14 March, from 10am, at Starcross School, Risinghill Street, London N1. Fee £4 per delegate, £2.50 for observers.

CENTRAL LONDON Poly Students' Union Labour Club: Thursday 12 March, the Bishop of Namibia on British support of apartheid in Southern Africa. Civil Liberties Society, Tuesday 24 February, Elizabeth Ball (NCCL) on Nationality, Immigration and Women (joint meeting with Women's Group). Both meetings 5pm at Student Common Room, PCL, 32-38 Wells Street, London W1.

Must women wait for socialism?

THE INTERVIEW with Tony Benn in *Socialist Organiser* (7.2.81) illustrated a misconception rife among male members of the Labour Party. It ignores the reality for it rests on the presumption that socialists are not sexist. If this were the case, we would not need to press for positive discrimination, for not only would the men who were elected adequately uphold their interests, but women would be elected in their own right. What the current under-representation of women in politics reflects, however, is that the choice for women to represent themselves or not is in effect denied — by a series of socio-economic, political and psychological barriers that ensure the whole of women's socialisation, education, job opportunities and childcare commitments prevent them from competing on an equal footing with men, something that has been well documented by now.

Despite this indefensible situation, when it comes to change, every excuse is brought to bear. Just as the overall discrimination which women suffer outside politics has more to do with being women than with the 'merit' they may possess (and since opportunities to develop 'merit' are unequal, the criteria used to judge them can hardly fairly reflect their potential), so in politics. Their under-representation does not reflect their 'merit', quality or competence. Rather it reflects the fact that they are women.

Bias

It would be very reassuring to think that the criteria on which male candidates are selected accurately reflected their 'merit'. The record however reveals that this is not the case. Indeed, the dissatisfaction of rank and file members has been the major impetus in the campaign to adopt re-selection, as being the only satisfactory method of ensuring that MPs carry out the wishes of the wider Labour Party membership. So reliable are the criteria on which the politics of individuals can be evaluated! To presume that these same criteria can, given the record to date on the number of women in Parliament, be used in an impartial manner is really stretching the realms of credibility very far.

It is because of the existing bias against women that positive discrimination is necessary. The reason why women's rights cannot be given priority now is that

male socialists — as well as non-socialists — do not consider them important. (Just how unimportant is demonstrated by Tony Benn's argument).

The fact is that we have not convinced our male comrades that in the long run, the unequal position of men and women in the way society is presently structured benefits no-one. In economic terms it places a heavier burden on men by making women dependent upon them, to support them and their children (due to the lower earning capacity of women). It creates a high level of resentment in women who are financially dependent on men. Politically this is a disaster for both sexes. It prevents them from working for socialism in a united way.

First

Tony Benn would like to see women's groups affiliating to the Labour Party, and also black groups. But why should they? The present situation is that women in the Labour Party face a long fight to get their views listened to. The party is not seen outside, or indeed inside, to be particularly concerned about women. The failure to see that socialism is not a panacea for all groups who feel themselves to be oppressed reveals a fundamental failure to identify the problem correctly, let alone to suggest viable solutions.

It is in fact just another way of sweeping the problems of discrimination under the carpet, of telling us that we have to wait, that we are not a priority — women's issues do not and have never come first.

But this is not really news. The reason why the CLPD women are fighting for positive discrimination is that we see this as a means of ensuring that in the party, mechanisms are set up to counter the existing bias. But it must first take responsibility for the part it plays in limiting the choice women have of whether or not to be active in politics. At present, they are forced to be inactive because of their circumstances. If this were to be acknowledged on the left, it would be one small step in the process of getting an equal deal for women. It is obvious, however, from the behaviour of many male socialists, even those who claim to be sympathetic, that women have a long fight on their hands.

HEATHER GAEBLER
Secretary
CLPD Women's Action Committee

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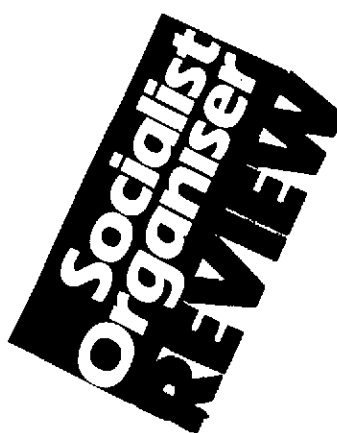
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CLP Trade union

It's a rich man's game



by Jo Thwaites

Working from nine to five in a typing pool, looking pretty for the male junior executives and the boss, running errands for the boss to get his wife something nice ('you know what she'll like'), making coffee on command, being polite and well-mannered and getting paid half of what the boss gets, is irksome at best — and at worst is guaranteed to transform you into a psychopathic murderess.

Nine to Five is a film about three women, Lily Tomlin, Jane Fonda, and Dolly Parton, who decide for various reasons that they've had enough one afternoon. They walk out of the office and meet up in the bar down the road. They decide to make a night of it, get stoned, and work out elaborate stratagems for getting back at their boss. Won't tell you what they are as that would spoil the film!

Their fantasies are mysteriously realised in the course of the following day at work. The boss is incapacitated (to jubilate applause in the cinema) and the women take over the running of the office.



They bring in reforms like work-sharing for women who want to work either a morning or an afternoon, a workplace creche, flexi-time, decorating the office as the workers like, and raising the wages. Some of these are things that the bosses might do to get more efficiency anyway, but this time the women in the office are making the changes because they want them.

Unintentionally, the women achieve a 20% increase in productivity, much to the delight of the managing director. But of course he congratulates the boss [when he returns to the office] and promotes him. It is inconceivable to him that the hundreds of women who work in the office could have had anything to do with it.

The main problem with the film is that it presents the achievements of the three women, getting rid of the

boss and improving wages and conditions, purely in terms of their 'womanly wiles'.

They don't organise to get rid of him: it's actually a mistake. There's no generalisation from their experiences to that of other offices. The question of unionisation of the office workers doesn't come up at all.

While in general, the unions in the USA have not shown much interest in unionising office workers or women, there is one that does, the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees. It is now the largest and fastest growing union in the country.

There are also examples of women not waiting for the reluctant unions and forming their own groups to fight for their wages and conditions. Working Women in Cleveland has 8000 members and has inspired similar groups

in other cities. There is a group in Boston actually called 'Nine to Five' which has organised itself into a union branch and has won negotiating rights with employers who include a university, a publishing house and a law firm. Clerical workers for the State of Illinois struggled for several years to win the right to join the union.

So, while from the point of view of the film makers you get better entertainment from the 'womanly wiles' approach, in reality, in the real American offices, there is a basic struggle for unionisation.

One final point. If it wasn't for typists, secretaries and office workers, none of the thoughts of the mighty would even be communicated to anyone else, let alone spelled or punctuated correctly. So bear that in mind, all you budding theorists!

Socialist Organiser



The invisible syndrome

by Jo Thwaites

ACCORDING TO a Nationwide programme shown a couple of weeks ago, four million women suffer seriously from premenstrual syndrome. It can range from complete loss of self-control and loss of memory, to a general feeling of operating below par.

The Nationwide programme highlighted the case of Sandra Craddock, a woman from the East End of London who was well on the way to becoming 'a hardened criminal'. She was on trial for murder before Dr Katerina Dalton, who visited Sandra in jail at the request of her father, discovered that her crimes followed a regular monthly cycle.

Katerina Dalton diagnosed premenstrual syndrome and prescribed a series of natural hormone injections.

Dalton is one of the very few doctors who have taken women's menstrual problems seriously. In her book,

'The Menstrual Cycle', she says that menstrual problems are based on hormone imbalance, and her form of treatment involves hormone supplements using pessaries or injections.

For Sandra Craddock, the treatment seemed to work. She no longer had the blackouts, the bursts of violent aggression and deep depression that she had been having monthly for years. In court, the judge saw such a reformed case that she was given a three-year suspended sentence.

Happy ending to a tragic story? Maybe. The feminist book 'Our Bodies Ourselves' argues that it's early days yet to assess the long term risks of this particular hormone treatment, or the hormone treatment claimed to be so effective for women going through the menopause. Very little research has been done.

And what about the rest of the four million women with premenstrual syndrome?

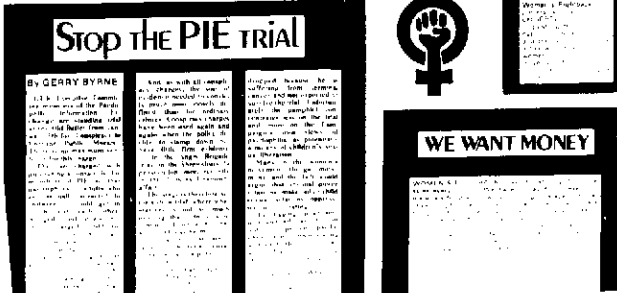
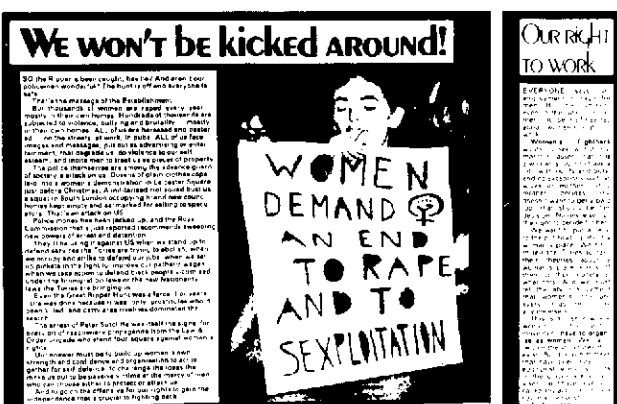
Most women go to the doctor at some point in their lives with bad period pains, depression and so on. The normal response is a greater or smaller ration of valium or some other tranquilliser.

These things are problems, little 'inconveniences' that women just have to live with. Inconveniences that no-one takes account of except other women. Employers don't make allowances for monthly time off just before the first couple of days they feel downright ill! Indeed, the stereotyped beautiful woman would appear not to have periods at all, let alone any menstrual problems.

At least Katerina Dalton's work has shown that women need not simply accept that period pains, premenstrual syndrome, and other recurring monthly discomfort, are inevitable. They are not. She at least has made a beginning. What's needed now

is enough money to make sure of sufficient research into safe methods of dealing with premenstrual syndrome. Katerina Dalton is a Harley Street practitioner, and her methods are difficult to obtain on the NHS.

If there were four million people suffering from any other equivalent form of discomfort, on such a regular basis, wouldn't there be at least some attempt to tackle it on the NHS?



February's Women's Fightback — 10p plus postage from 41 Ellington St, London N7.

Poland: new face, same bureaucracy

by Alexis Carras

The Polish bureaucracy faces a new challenge — occupations and demonstrations by millions of small farmers. The state has half-heartedly replied that although a Rural Solidarity union structure is 'out of the question', an 'association' of farmers is not. Once again the bureaucracy has to hide behind legal obscurities and terminological tricks.

However the partial retreat can only strengthen the resolve of the farmers to continue with their fight. If they are not granted recognition, the farmers say, food supplies to the major cities will cease this coming spring.

It is these events which explain the latest government reshuffle in Warsaw.

The new Prime Minister is Jaruzelski, an army general. He will continue to be Minister of Defence too.

For the first time in the history of Polish Stalinism, a major military figure is head of the government. Yet the general comes dressed in the robes of a 'moderate' — a Polish nationalist widely believed to have refused to use the army against the striking workers in Gdansk last summer.

We can be sure that this reluctance had more to do with the deep sympathy of

rank and file conscripts towards their striking fellow workers, than with any liberal humanitarianism on Jaruzelski's part.

Mieczyslaw Rakowski has been appointed vice-premier. A member of the Communist Party's Central Committee and editor of the influential weekly 'Polityka', he is known for his 'liberal' views within the party apparatus. He has been a critic of the government's unwillingness to stick by the Gdansk agreement to loosen up censorship and allow oppositionists access to the mass media.

The Education Minister Gorki has appealed to students occupying several faculties at the University of Lodz to end their action and call off their threat of a national student strike. As concessions, he has agreed that compulsory courses in Russian and the Stalinists' own petrified version of 'Marxism-Leninism' will no longer be compulsory as in the past.

Clearly the Stalinists hope that with these liberal credentials the new government will be able to fool the workers, peasants and intellectuals, that real progress is being made in reforming the regime.

Jaruzelski, trying to cash in as quickly as possible on his supposed popularity, has,

for the time being, refrained from attacking the Workers' Defence Committee (KOR), who act as advisers to the Solidarnosc leadership. Denunciations of KOR had been a constant theme in government propaganda over the last month.

He has appealed to the free unions for a 90 day moratorium on strikes and disturbances, for the sake of 'social peace'.

The leaders of the workers' union Solidarity, acutely conscious of the danger of all-out repression or Russian intervention, has been eager to seize on any seeming chances of peaceful progress. They have said the union will not engage in any strikes 'if the authorities refrain from attacking it'. In a move to tighten the reins on local rank and file activity, the central leadership of Solidarnosc has threatened to disown any industrial or political action not in accord with the new concordat.

Similarly, KOR has agreed not to push for the publication of unofficial papers and journals which might find disfavour with the Communist Party leadership. They are placing hopes, it seems, on government promises about the relaxation of official censorship.

In the negotiations over the recognition of the farm-



Walesa hopes for a compromise with the new Stalinist team. But is it even possible?

ers' union — Rural Solidarnosc — Walesa has tried to pacify the small peasantry by stating that, although their claim for recognition at present 'has no basis in law', it will not be forgotten when the new Labour Code is drafted later in the year.

The urgent desire of Solidarnosc's leadership, or sections of that leadership, to arrive at some agreement with the Polish Stalinists is visible in this feeble argument over the 'law'. Had industrial Solidarity given in to such arguments about legal niceties last summer the present mass political

movement in Poland would simply be a wild dream.

Walesa has also had secret talks with Rakowski, at the end of which Walesa stated that the new government and the attempt at some concordat, is 'our last hope'.

But the present rise of the 'liberal' and 'nationalist' elements of the bureaucracy has a parallel in all the crises of the bureaucracy since the 50s.

In 1956 Gomulka — a 'liberal' in Stalinist terms then, a 'national communist', a man who (like Jaruzelski) had been disgraced and imprisoned by the Russ-

ians — managed to calm the mass movement which was sweeping the country in the wake of Khrushchev's de-Stalinisation and the Hungarian revolution.

There is no doubt that Gomulka would have been prepared to fight the Russian army if the latter had tried an invasion. In fact the streets of Warsaw and other cities were being barricaded and army defences set up.

But at the same time Gomulka used the threat of a Russian invasion as the stick to beat down the workers' and farmers' impatience. Then Gomulka's regime drifted more and more to the 'right', gutting all the initiatives and organisations of workers' control which had sprung up. Within years the working class was once again firmly in the grip of the Stalinist political machinery — with none of its demands satisfied. The faith and confidence which the Russian bureaucrats placed in Gomulka to patch up the crisis was well justified.

And it is highly dangerous for people like KOR and the Solidarnosc leadership to place any faith in the re-run Gomulka of today.

Political and social victories for the working class and Poland's national independence will not be guaranteed or furthered by capitulation to such bureaucrats, but only by a political revolution led by the workers themselves with all the attendant risks and uncertainties. If the demands of the Polish workers, blocked since the establishment of the Stalinist regime, are to be realised and a farcical re-run of 1956 avoided, resolute and increasingly militant opposition rather than concessions is necessary.

PAISLEY ON THE CARSON TRAIL

IAN PAISLEY's attempt to pose as a second Carson, saving 'Ulster' from the 'sell-out' of the Thatcher-Haughery talks, reminds us of Marx's remark that 'history repeats itself, the first time as tragedy, the second as farce'.

Instead of thousands of men with rifles openly drilling, 500 men on a dark hill brandishing firearms certificates. While Carson's Ulster Covenant was signed by thousands, Paisley's badly-spelled petition has met with a lukewarm response.

But there is a serious side, and more is at stake than electioneering for Paisley's Democratic Unionist Party. Firstly, the firearm certificates are a reminder of how well-armed the Paisleyite bigots are.

Paisley refused to say

whether Royal Ulster Constabulary or Ulster Defence Regiment men had been involved in his manoeuvres in Co. Antrim — a fairly clear indication that some were. In any case, Paisley's supporters clearly have legal access to quantities of weapons. This contrasts with the case of Bernadette McAliskey, who despite police warnings of a likely attempt on her life was unsuccessful in three attempts to get a gun to use in self-defence.

Paisley wants to demonstrate to Thatcher that ANY agreement between Thatcher and the southern prime minister, Haughey, will be opposed by Loyalists who wish to ensure their supremacy in the North. Of course the Thatcher-Haughery talks are unlikely to lead to a united Ireland — but Pais-



ley wants to make sure they lead to nothing at all.

Paisley also wants to raise the level of tension among the Protestants at a time when a hunger strike is due to begin, and stir up a new pogrom atmosphere. 'Hitting the Carson trail', as he himself cynically puts it, is his means to these ends.

HUNGER STRIKE PLANNED AGAINST 'BRITISH DECEIT'

by Bruce Robinson

THE REPUBLICAN prisoners in the H-Blocks and Armagh jail will be starting another hunger strike on March 1st.

They declared: 'We... have had enough of British deceit and of broken promises. Hunger strikes to the death if necessary will begin commencing from March 1st, 1981, the fifth anniversary of the withdrawal of political status... We are demanding to be treated as political prisoners, which everyone recognises we are'.

This time it is clear from the start that deaths are likely to occur. Neither side is prepared to give in. The British government made that very clear by refusing to implement the 'step-by-step' agreement on prison conditions that formed the

basis for the end of the last hunger strike. The Republicans are also clear what the new hunger strike implies.

In An Phoblacht/Republican News, they write, "The next hunger strikers will be more convinced than ever that death will be the price of political status".

The fact that the new hunger strike will focus on the demand for political status, rather than the prisoners' five specific demands on their conditions, is also an indication of the determination of the prisoners not to be fobbed off again with concessions that can later be withdrawn.

In Britain, we must explain why the new hunger strike is occurring in order to win new support in the labour movement for the prisoners' demands, and make sure that bodies

which took up the issue last time continue their support in what will be an even more crucial situation.

This means:

- Putting resolutions in the labour movement supporting the prisoners on hunger strike and protests in their support;
- holding meetings, rallies, and demonstrations to put their case;
- a campaign of letter-writing to the local press, trade union, and left-wing papers, putting the case which the media will try to suppress.

It will be more difficult to win support again after the end of the last hunger-strike. But we can't just leave the men and women in the H Blocks and Armagh to die; we must fight to raise a campaign much greater than the last one.

The news that doesn't get into the news

by Simon Collings

ON FEBRUARY 28th the NUJ and ACTT are jointly sponsoring a conference to examine media censorship of the war in Ireland. The initiative came from the NUJ, following a resolution to the union's last Annual Delegate Meeting.

The conference will undoubtedly attract mostly media workers, but it is open to delegates from any labour movement body. Needless to say, it has met with hostility both from other trade unions and from within the ranks of the NUJ itself.

NATSOPA, NGA, SOGAT, SLADE, and ABS were all approached about sponsorship; ABS will be sending delegates, the rest have, in varying degrees, given the conference the cold shoulder (in the cases of SOGAT and NGA, on the advice of their Northern Ireland branches).

Within the NUJ, those on the Executive who have wanted the conference to be a success have faced attempts to have it stopped or limited by other NEC members and officials. Only when an organising commit-

tee was elected which involved people who wanted the conference did anything begin to move.

That was late in December. The union's annual conference had called for the conference to be organised by the end of January. Even now, publicity for the conference has gone out barely one month before the event.

Despite these attempts at sabotage, it is obviously important that the conference is a success. It should be publicised as widely as possible. The morning will begin with a series of opening contributions by, among others, Mary Holland, Roger Bolton (editor of Panorama), and Austin Currie (an SDLP member of the one-time Stormont parliament). In the afternoon the conference will break up into workshops, and then come back together after a teatime break for a final plenary session.

There are at present three areas covered by the workshops. The first is the actual restrictions on news and on journalists engaged in news-gathering. This will include an analysis of army news management and surveillance of journalists. The second workshop will deal with what happens in the media apparatus itself in terms of 'editing' or banning of material and self-censorship.

The final workshop will examine the way war is reported, the use of the terms 'terrorism' and 'national liberation struggle' in the media, etc.

Forms from the conference can be obtained from Ron Knowles, NUJ, Acorn House, 314 Grays Inn Rd, London WC1.

ACTT/NUJ
CONFERENCE ON
MEDIA CENSORSHIP
OF NORTHERN
IRELAND

Saturday 28 February,
11am at Digbeth Hall,
Birmingham.

Open to the wider
labour movement on a
representative basis.

Labour and Ireland meeting: March 14

THE LABOUR Committee on Ireland will be holding its second AGM on March 14th in London. In the year since its foundation it has made a considerable impact in the Labour Party, illustrated by the number of CLPs who sent the LCI model resolution to the Labour Party conference last year.

The AGM will be deciding on a constitution for the LCI and electing the National Council. But most important of all, the AGM must decide a programme of activity for the next year. Campaigning for resolutions to Party conference, responding to the NEC's working party Consultative Document and Report, explaining issues such as the hunger strikes — these issues provide a good basis for organising a national campaign of rallies and meetings and for trying to set up local branches of the LCI across the country.

Despite the shift to the left in the Party and the gains on democracy, Labour's bipartisan policy on Ireland remains intact, if not as secure as before. The LCI must ensure that Ireland becomes a major issue in the Party so that the Labour leaders cannot continue to act as the Tories' backers, helping them to maintain partition.

Labour Committee on
Ireland

Annual General Meeting
1981: Saturday 14
March, 11am at Caxton House, St John's
Way, London N19.

Open to all LCI members
fully paid-up on 28
February. A pooled
fare will be organised.

WANDSWORTH TENANTS SAY: WE WON'T PAY!

by Gerry Byrne

1200 ANGRY tenants, shouting "Chop Chop" (leader of the Tory council), "Tories out" and "We won't pay" besieged Wandsworth Town Hall last Tuesday. They were there to protest at the 37% rent increase proposed for April by the Tory council. Tory councillors arriving for the council meeting under police escort were jeered, and inside the council chamber they came in for plenty of abuse both from Labour councillors and from a very vocal public gallery. The demonstration was fed into by six marches from local estates and joined by hundreds of other tenants from outlying estates. It was called by Wandsworth Tenants' Association Group who had held 30-odd public meetings up and down the borough about the rent rises covering every estate. The

response of the tenants at most of the meetings was to decide to build for a borough-wide rent strike — with non-payment of rent and rate increases from April. Many estates where there was no active tenants' association before have decided to form one in preparation for April.

These increases, which will mean that council rents will have risen by 143% since 1979, are part of Wandsworth Council's £21 million package of cuts and increases. They intend to raise £7 million each from rent rises, rate-rises and cutting 700 jobs.

Council tenants will be faced with rent rises of up to £6.75 a week plus rate rises of £2.3 a week. For some, with increased heating and garage charges, it will mean an extra £10 a week to fork out and this at a time when maintenance on the estates is at an all-time low.

The council has already had to retreat somewhat on the job cuts in the face of a one-day strike and non-cooperation from NALGO members which brought council business to a standstill. They have now guaranteed that there will be no compulsory redundancies while negotiations are going on.

However they are still going ahead with plans to cut nurseries, old people's lunch clubs, day centres for the mentally ill, adventure playgrounds etc., but on the basis of volunteers for early retirement and redeployment.

If council tenants get themselves organised in the run-up to April and the links are built with the Council unions, then we may be able to turn the Tories' partial retreat into a real rout.



SAS? No, the AHA!

by John Lister

COUNTRY roads sealed off by police cars. Bus loads of police held in reserve. Telephones cut off.

A snatch squad arrives, manhandles the pickets, lifts the gate off its hinges, busts in to the quiet country hospital, bundles out four confused and distressed elderly patients, and shunts others downstairs. They rip out fuses and smash the hospital's boiler in a frenzied move to shut off power and heat.

"It was just like an SAS operation", said COHSE Shop Steward Myra Bungay in the aftermath of the traumatic raid last Tuesday on the occupied Longworth hospital in Oxfordshire. It was carried out by the Area Health Authority with the enthusiastic help of the chairperson — leading Labour Party member Lady McCarthy.

McCarthy has set her sights on smashing the work-in by fair means or foul since it began in early December. She has been angered by the growing militancy of the COHSE members and the hospital, and their steadfast resistance to her planned cuts in the health service in the Oxford area. These cuts include the closure of the top floor at Longworth as a prelude to total closure — in an area already

200 geriatric beds short of requirements.

The night before the raid McCarthy had learned that COHSE members at Longworth voted unanimously to reject an AHA deal which simply postponed the loss of beds for a few weeks. This rebuff, following on the failure of an earlier AHA attempt to snatch patients from the hospital under the guise of "taking them on holiday", prompted the go-ahead for the raid.

The full destructive savagery of the AHA management as they set about rendering the top floor of Longworth unusable — at considerable hazard to the remaining patients — smashed up the pickets' shelter by the gate, and tore down and destroyed posters, petitions and other material in the occupation of the hospital.

When the pickets refused the management instructions to leave the gate they were threatened with police action. A mass picket of over seventy quickly assembled, drawing wide support from the Oxford Labour movement while police, despite urging from the AHA, were reluctant to intervene.

As dusk settled after the raid, the AHA has been daunted to discover that the occupation committee remains strong and is actively campaigning for trade

union action to force the re-opening of the top floor that proved so hard to close.

COHSE members at Oxford's Littlemore Hospital have been approached and asked to black the admission of female geriatric patients until the beds at Longworth are restored and filled. While there is a sympathetic response to this policy at Littlemore, staffing levels at Longworth have been driven so low by the AHA that official COHSE action is needed to increase them.

Meanwhile the St. Clements ward of Oxford City LP has spearheaded the struggle against McCarthy — whose actions flouted not only socialist principles, but also the specific policy of the CLP to support the Longworth work-in.

An emergency motion has been tabled calling for McCarthy — a general committee member — to be expelled from the Labour Party.

Trade unionists and Labour Party members throughout the country should take up this call. The Longworth struggle has become the prime focus for the fight against the cuts in the NHS.

It must be defended against both the attacks of McCarthy and the action of the COHSE bureaucracy, which has left the struggle isolated on a national level.

by Cheung Siu Ming

THE BACKLASH against the Lambeth Labour Council's huge supplementary rate rise has spread to many solid Labour-voting council estates.

Many tenants' associations have held meetings, with hundreds of tenants angry, exasperated, and simply unable to pay the extra £50 or so. One or two meetings have also voted against cuts.

The protest against the rate rise was started by the Tories and organisations such as ratepayers' associations and the Chamber of Commerce. The NF, which has recently moved its HQ into the south of the borough, in Streatham, has joined in to exploit the situation to the full.

The Tories have demanded an immediate rent increase, and their petition calls for the Tory government to use legislation to stop Lambeth Council from raising the rates. Trivial examples of wastage are being used to build up pressure among local residents for cuts.

Meanwhile, the four constituency Labour Parties in the borough will be meeting in late February or early March to discuss Lambeth's budget plans for 1981-2.

Tories

The outlook could be grim. Unless the labour movement works out a clear anti-cuts, anti-rent/rate rises policy, to undercut

BACKLASH

the local Tories and turn the current working-class protest towards a fight against the Tory government, the right wing will make big gains.

With the Greater London Council elections this May and the local council elections the following April, the Labour Councillors are now victims of a vicious doublebind which they themselves have created by their repeated use of rate rises to put off a confrontation with the Tory government.

To maintain existing services with a big rate rise will mean further Rate Support Grant penalties by central government, possible rent and rate

strikes, and the lapse of the rates. Even somehow Labour will lose elections.

Cuts in jobs would have been a significant loss of industrial support. Wages for defence would have been paid in many other



Let the start

Ten Labour councillors have made a call for a fight against the cuts

WE, the undersigned Camden Labour councillors, were elected, with twenty-two colleagues, to protect and enhance the living standards of the people of this Borough, and in particular those who are in most need of such protection — the poor, the sick and the otherwise disadvantaged. We make no apology for the fact that, to meet this objective, Camden has been and is a high-spending local authority: it provides the best services in the country and opinion polls and election results have shown that the people of Camden are proud of the achievements that public spending has brought.

But since the advent of the Tory government, local authorities — and Camden in particular, precisely because of those high standards of provision — are facing an unprecedented onslaught on their programmes, whereby not only are services threatened but the whole concept of local democracy is being called into question. While thousands of Camden residents wait desperately for Council housing, the government has, by heavily reducing the housing subsidy, cut our housing programme to ribbons, so that not only are we unable to build new homes and modernise our older ones, as we were elected to do, but we cannot even properly maintain any of our existing housing.

Thus, if the government has its way, we shall be forced to watch Camden's

housing, its capital assets, and the same time, a grant is being made that to maintain the people are being rates to a quarter extent in order of services tagged may be fortunate.

As if this we and the Councillors accountable are now there charge and we do not oblige the District merely appropriate Departmental money and payable to no-one.

The District asking the surcharge a for seeking our lowest decent wage (£260 a week) the then new wage which nearly twice take-home this, he has us that, unless by at least £600, he will surcharge.

Thus we two fronts, a surprise that, in threats, many leagues in the find themselves resist the pressure that they believe to have been they can see to giving way. We, the other hand

Builders fight 600 sackings

JANET KREngle, a UCATT shop steward in Camden direct works, spoke to Mick O'Sullivan about plans to fight the 600 sackings which the Council plans to impose on the Tories' instructions.

We took a decision before Christmas that if the Labour Group went for redundancies, then we would throw all sub-contractors who were doing work the DLO could undertake off the borough — and industrial action would take place immediately.

This was overwhelmingly endorsed by a mass meeting, which also threw out any idea of voluntary redundancies or early retirement, and voted for a 50p a month levy for an action fund.

So at the last stewards' meeting the proposal was put to call a mass meeting the day before the council decision [18th February] and push for an all-out indefinite strike. But it was overwhelmingly defeated.

Strike

Some people thought we should wait until after the Council finally made their decision. But, more important, many stewards felt we had to look for other action than an all-out strike.

The reason for this was quite simple. What would the DLO going out on strike mean? With the exception of the effect it would have on tenants, it would be negligible. And the mem-

bership would be sitting at home in despair.

That's what the stewards felt.

But one day strikes were proposed. And we voted in support of building a campaign for a rent and rate strike in the borough. The other local authority unions in Camden already have this policy.

Unfortunately, the problem of getting the shop floor directly involved in this was not discussed. We need a clear programme of action which can bind together DLO workers, other local authority workers, and the tenants.

Estates

This should include leafletting of estates, explaining the DLO's case and calling for a rent and rates strike. Basically, the problem is that the leadership of the stewards' committee has been faced with a totally new situation and their old methods of struggle are no longer adequate to cope with the present Tory attack.

Also, a vigorous campaign needs to take place in the branches to get a clear and unequivocal support from the union nationally.

As far as I'm aware, UCATT has said to all intents and purposes that they are not going to back us if we take strike action.

While they talk about defending DLOs against the [Heseline] Local Government and Land Act, they are not willing to defend DLOs against Labour Councils.

Unions and Labour Left lead fightback

by Mick O'Sullivan

THE MAJORITY of Labour Councillors in Camden are fighting back.

On the London Labour Council, the councillors' statement of capitulation to NALGO is a disgrace. The Labour Party must lead the fightback.

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A paper from the Coun-
cil's officers outlines the
facts and figures.

To maintain the present
services, a rate rise of 72.6p
or 57.9% on last April's
rate of 125p, will be need-
ed. If the council opts for a
council rent rise of £3.25,
as dictated by Heseltine,
that would bring down the
rate rise to 63.3p.
At present, the average
council tenant pays £8.50
rent, £6 water and heating
charges, and £5.90 rates;
total, £20.41. After the pro-
posed increases, the pay-
ments would be: £11.75
rent, £6 water and heat-
ing (assuming no further
increase here!), and £8.89
rates: total, £26.64.

This means biting deep
into the living standards of
all council tenants in the
borough. Moreover, the
rent/rate rebate scheme is
reaching a critical situation.

Rebates

Under the present scheme,
many tenants have already
reached the rebate ceiling
as a result of the supple-
mentary rate rise. After
April 1981, as a result of
the Housing Act 1980,
section 119, the council
will have to revise its pres-
ent scheme downwards.

Moreover, the officers'
report states: "... the pre-
viously satisfactory collec-
tion of rates was beginning

to deteriorate in the second
half of the current year,
1980-1. The Chief Rating
Officer expects that a large
rate rise in 1981-2 would
continue this trend because
of an increasing genuine
inability to pay, the possi-
bility of a first time ever
rates strikes, and because
of increasing delays in
payments from formerly
prompt commercial and
industrial ratepayers".

Lambeth already faces
further RSG penalties.
"Lambeth is likely to be
some £14½ million above
the government's 1981-2
penalty threshold... The
likely combination of a
deterioration in rate collec-
tion and further Rate Sup-
port Grant penalties arising
from the Government's un-
yielding determination to
reduce local authority
expenditure, produces a

situation in which current
Council programmes can-
not be pursued without the
risk of a further Supple-
mentary Rate, and in an
extreme situation a collapse
of the proper administra-
tion of the Council's fin-
ancial affairs".
The only alternative now
is a policy of confronting
the Government, and re-
fusing to go along with
rules imposed by the
Tories. Only a policy of no
cuts and no rent/rate rises
will allow the council to
break out of its present
position and win back the
support it has handed over
to the Tory cutters through
its supplementary rate rise
policy.

There is very little time
left. We must win the Lab-
our Parties, the council
unions, and the tenants'
associations, to this policy.



the battle in Camden!

people's chief
gradually dec-
lums. At the
rate support
g reduced, so
ain services to
f Camden, we
forced to raise
e unreasonable
that the cost
the disadvan-
shared by the

was not enough,
or colleagues,
democratically
to our electors,
tened with sur-
squalification if
by the dictates of
auditor, himself
ointed by the
of the Environ-
bly account-

Auditor is now
High Court to
d disqualify us
n 1979 to give
paid workers
and conditions
two thirds of
tional average
as now risen to
their minimum
pay). Besides
effectively told
s we raise rents
£25 a week and
labour staff by
seek a further
re attacked on
d it is no sur-
the face of such
of our coll-
Labour Group
ves unable to
sure. It is not
ve our policies
wrong: it is that
no alternative

ndersigned, on
t, wish to make



it clear to the people who
elected us that we will not
surrender. We were not
elected to carry out Tory at-
tacks on the living standards
of the people we represent.
We respect the people's
democratic right to throw us
out of office at the next elec-
tion if they so wish — that is
what local democracy is all
about.

But we are not prepared
to be dictated to by a non-
elected accountant, or by a
Minister and Government
elected on an express man-
date to increase, not to dimin-
ish, local democracy.

Accordingly, we will op-
pose by all the means open to
us the proposal to withdraw

the Camden supplement,
which would mean no wage
rise at all for two years for
our lowest-paid employees in
the face of an ever-rising cost
of living; we will oppose the
proposal to increase rents as
dictated by the District Au-
ditor; and we will oppose the
decimation of the direct
labour organisation since this
would mean, besides even
longer delays in housing
maintenance work, and with
2000 building workers
already unemployed in
Camden, desperation for the
redundant and their families.

We call upon our col-
leagues in the Labour group
and in the Labour Party,
the trade unions, tenants'

associations and all those
who care about local democ-
racy and the welfare of Cam-
den people, to join with us in
this struggle.

Somewhere the dismant-
ling of local government has
to stop; somewhere the
Tory policy of solving this
country's economic crisis by
massive unemployment and
further impoverishment of
the poor has to be confront-
ed; somewhere local democ-
racy has to be fought for. Let
the battle start in Camden!

Councillors Anna Bow-
man, Tom Devine, Pat
Driscoll, Neil Fletcher, Joan
Hymans, Ken Livingstone,
Sally Peletier, Phyl Turner,
John Tysoe, Jenny Willmot.

llivan

RITY of Cam-
Group has cap-
the Tories, but
our Left and
unions are

lative of Cam-
Left, ten left
ave put out a
nouncing the
UCATT,
NUPE all
cuts and no
s, and one of
tenants' assoc-
Camden is org-
left.

meetings of
NUPE will be
day's strike
March 4th, the

day of the rate-making.
NALGO workers in the
building department are
already blacking any new
contracts which are not
earmarked for the direct
labour organisation.

The majority of the Lab-
our councillors will vote to
do the District Auditor's
bidding at a council meet-
ing on Wednesday 18th.
600 DLO jobs will be lost
over 18 months, rents will
be increased by £3.25.
(With a rate rise of 50 to
60% and higher heating
charges, that will mean
between £8 and £13 in-
crease for tenants).

The 'Camden supple-
ment' of between £5 and

£10 a week for council
workers, won in the 'low
pay' strike of 1979, is to go.
For a home help, this will
mean that her take-home
pay will be £52 a week.

At the end of January,
the Labour group were told
by the District Auditor (a
government official) to
carry out these measures or
face court prosecution. The
District Auditor is taking
Camden Labour group to
the High Court anyway
over the 1979 pay settle-
ment — but the majority of
the councillors apparently
think that their quick cave-
in on the present ultima-
tum will help them defend
themselves against the
charge of 'financial irres-

ponsibility'.

But the local labour
movement is resisting.
There is one major weak-
ness. The Communist Party
dominated DLO stewards'
committee are at present
not calling for strike action
on the 4th, and it is rumoured
that they will go directly
against the policy of last
year's mass meeting and
accept voluntary redundan-
cies.

Events have placed Cam-
den in the forefront of the
struggle against the cuts.
Any action taken, in the
Labour Party or on the shop
floor, must get the maxi-
mum practical support
from the broad labour
movement.

LOTHIAN GOES FOR RATE RISES

by Joe Baxter

THE controlling Labour
Group on Lothian Regional
Council will raise the rates
by 50% this year — and
continue to raise rates year
after year until the Tories
change their minds about
cutting back on public ser-
vices or a new Labour Gov-
ernment restores public
expenditure.

That was the outcome of
a conference held by Lothian
Regional Labour Party on
Saturday 14th February.

With over 170 delegates
present from Labour Parties,
trade union organisations,
tenants' associations and
other groups, there seemed
to be a real chance of build-
ing a campaign against both
cuts and rent and rate rises.
But the Council's chairman
of finance, Eric Milligan,
opened the conference by
stating that the Regional
Labour Group saw only two

alternatives — either the
rates go up, or cuts are
made.

In the afternoon, an
amendment to the Regional
Labour Party Statement to
the conference was produced
by the Trades Council,
NALGO, UCATT, T&G and
UCW delegations, arguing
for no cuts and for raising the
rates.

No rate rises, they said,
could only mean local gov-
ernment employees losing
their jobs. Supporters of
Socialist Organiser, SWP and
Militant, and tenants'
delegates, argued that this
was ignoring reality.

What do we say to tenants
in West Lothian who face a
£3 rent rise imposed by a
Labour Council, £2 a week
rates rise, plus increases in
electricity, gas and fares?

Wouldn't we want to help
them organise a rent strike,
and wouldn't that inevitably

mean a rate strike?

Instead of taking a clear
stand and rallying trade
union support for it, some
delegates were effectively
hiding behind the trade
unions. Left wing regional
councillor Jimmy Burnett
argued that the council
"wouldn't get anywhere
adopting positions which
trade unions don't agree
with". "The Tory govern-
ment are responsible for
rate rises", he said. "Rate
rises are inevitable until the
labour and trade union
movement kicks out the
Tories".

But as Ron Brown MP
said, "The problem is one
of leadership. The kind of
leadership we have was
responsible for a farce like
the STUC Convention on
unemployment." And if the
regional Labour Group
won't lead the fight against
cuts and rises, then others
must.

Socialist Organiser NEWS

Socialist Organiser
Campaign for Demo-
cracy in the Labour
Movement

CUTS: A
CONFERENCE TO
ORGANISE THE
FIGHTBACK

10.30am-5pm, Satur-
day 21 March, at
Central Library, Field-
way Crescent/Hollo-
way Road, Islington,
London N7.

Creche provided.

Tickets £1.50 [75p for
claimants, etc.]. Tick-
ets, credentials, and
details of transport
available c/o 66 Brok-
esley St., London E3.
Cheques payable to SO
or CDLM.

Socialist Organiser
DAYSCHOOL:
BUILDING A
MARXIST LEFT WING

10.30am-4.30pm,
Sunday 22 March, at
the Trade Union and
Community Centre,
Brabant Rd, London
N22.

Cuts: a conference to organise the fightback

SPEAKERS from Basing-
stoke's Tenants' Action
Group, from the Long-
worth Hospital occupa-
tion, from the Southend
dustmen, from nursery
campaigns, from Direct
Labour Organisations,
and from left-wing Lab-
our council minorities
in Camden, South Wales,
and Coventry, are all
expected at the Socialist
Organiser/Campaign for
Democracy in the Labour
Movement cuts confer-
ence on March 21st.

Former Clay Cross
councillors are expected
too. They'll be explaining
how they fought their
battles against the last
Tory government.

The SO/CDLM will
aim to organise militants
for action around the poli-

cies already decided by
the two 'Lambeth Confer-
ences'. It is open to all
labour movement bodies
and campaign groups to
send delegates, and in-
dividual activists are also
welcome.

After a general intro-
duction in the morning,
the afternoon will look at
particular aspects: fight-
ing rent and rate rises,
fighting attacks on council
workers, education cuts
and the NHS.

And the dinner break
will be a 'practical' ses-
sion in itself. It is timed so
as to allow comrades at
the conference to join
Islington Labour Party's
march against cuts and
rent rises, which is sched-
uled to arrive outside the
conference hall at 12.30.

SO delegate meeting

A Socialist Organiser nation-
al Delegate Meeting on Sat-
urday February 7th discuss-
ed recent activity, especially
campaigns against cuts and
rent rises, and future plans.

Since SO went fortnightly,
the sales have nearly doubled
and so has the number of
comrades regularly selling
the paper. We have gained
comrades in several new
areas. But the Delegate
Meeting felt that the paper
still needed improvement.

What sort of readers were
we aiming at? Some com-
rades put more emphasis on
Labour and trade union ac-
tivism, others felt we should

orient more to workers not
yet regularly active in the
movement — but almost
everyone agreed that the
paper needed to be lighter
and more popular.

The meeting also discuss-
ed the sea strike, the Rank
and File Mobilising Comm-
ittee, SO finance and the
Longbridge struggle. On this
last point, Jeremy D'Lemos
from Bristol expressed the
feelings of the whole meeting
when he congratulated the
Birmingham SO comrades.
"You have shown that a
fightback is possible," he
said. "In the end you lost,
but you achieved a lot."

Martin Thomas

DEBATE

by Vladimir Derer*

COLIN FOSTER [SO, 7.2.81] claims that "the debate between Vladimir Derer and John O'Mahony... raised the question whether power can be taken from the ruling class gradually and peacefully".

In fact there seems little disagreement on this point. In my comments (SO, 10.1.81) on comrade O'Mahony's article (SO, 11.10.80), I explicitly stated that "the possibility that the ruling class may resort to force in order to safeguard its privileges must always be taken into account, as must the need to prepare appropriate counter-measures".

I did, however, argue that in the situation we now face the reiteration of old truths is not the first priority, because a crisis of the bourgeois-democratic regime is unlikely to occur until the Left decides to engage in real political class struggle and abandons its present preoccupation with charging at windmills.

VAGUE

It is only when this happens that there is any chance of the assertion made by Peregrine Worsthorne of the *Sunday Telegraph* (whom Colin Foster treats as the authentic voice of the British bourgeoisie) that "if the hard men behind (Honn's) government try to push Leftwards regardless poor Tony" would "suffer the British equivalent of Allende's fate" might have any substance. Except, of course, that the presence of "hard men" would make it much more likely for any British Pinochets to end up as the White-Russian General Kornilov.

But if the argument is not about the possibility of a peaceful transition to socialism, what is it about? Comrade O'Mahony complains that it is unclear what kind of reform programme I suggest should be pursued now: "Would it be limited to what was considered... possible without having to shake or overthrow capitalism?", he asks. "Or would it be drawn up according to the minimum that the working class can settle for if it is to begin to solve the problems loaded onto it by the crisis of capitalism?" I am being advised "to think out" that even a modest reform, like the 35 hour week, can be won only "on the basis of struggles which shake the capitalist system".

But why should comrade O'Mahony allege that I was being vague about this? Did I anywhere suggest that the problems of the working class can be solved within the capitalist framework or that our demands should be limited by it? If so, why was the whole emphasis of my argument on socialist tactics that must be adopted if the masses are to be convinced that radical changes are necessary?

No. The disagreement is not about whether radical changes are needed, but about how to bring these changes about: how can the working class and the masses be convinced that their problems are not soluble within the capitalist framework?

Comrade O'Mahony claims that "Vladimir Derer's picture of the situation is too pessimistic". Why? Apparently because I believe that "only reforms are likely to be accepted as goals by the mass of the workers now". What evidence is there that this is not so?

Is there any other explanation for the fact that year after year, decade after decade, the British working class votes Labour? Surely comrade O'Mahony does not share the view of Militant that Labour candidates would do better if they tried to get

This week we carry the first part of a reply by Vladimir Derer to John O'Mahony, continuing the debate on socialist strategy. Lack of space means that other contributions to this discussion have been held over to the next issue.

themselves elected on a 'revolutionary programme'. Comrade O'Mahony does not tell us.

The only other explanation for comrade O'Mahony's 'optimism' would be the assumption on his part that the radicalisation of the British working class will somehow take place outside the existing political channels — perhaps following an economic collapse which would shatter the existing political structures. Such ideas were widespread in the twenties and thirties. But bourgeois-democratic institutions in advanced industrial societies have shown themselves to be much more resilient than most Marxists of that period imagined.

The theory that material conditions for the continued existence of bourgeois democracy are fast disappearing had considerable plausibility during the thirties, when one parliamentary regime after another crumbled like a house of cards. However, what about the fact that after the collapse of German fascism there was a complete

Is it optimism or wishful thinking?

absence of any spontaneous mass movement (on a scale experienced in 1917-20) to set up workers' councils, and instead a successful restoration of parliamentary institutions took place.

This not only undermined the theory that bourgeois democracy is dead, but also threw serious doubt on the theory that working class rule (in any meaningful sense) must take the form of soviet democracy as it appeared in Central and Eastern Europe in the years 1917-20. It now seems more likely that this form of direct democracy owed more to the political vacuum created by the collapse of autocratic regimes in countries in which the traditions of representative government were weak, rather than to any historical trend to set up organs of workers' power in this form. Soviets that were set up during that period lacked stability and may have been no more than a transitional political phenomenon.

GOAL

To base socialist strategy on the expectation of their reappearance in one form or another — as all those who exalt the importance of extra-parliamentary action do — is not optimism but an attempt to replace politics by wishful thinking. But even were the unlikely situation to recur, and soviets on a mass scale make a spontaneous appearance, political influence in such bodies could only be gained by parties which have already struck deep roots within the working class as the result of their participation in the political struggles during the previous period.

Comrade O'Mahony outlines two contrasting conceptions of pursuing the struggle for a socialist society. One conception he attributes to the pre-1914 Socialist Inter-

national. The other he associates with what he considers to be a programme of transitional demands.

On the first conception he comments: "Essentially it was an apparatus-building, bureaucratic and propagandist view. It led to a situation where in fact the goal of socialism was forgotten... the day to day struggle came to be everything; the goal came to be nothing". Unfortunately for comrade O'Mahony's argument, things are not so simple.

In the case of Russian Social Democrats there was a clear link between 'organisational' opportunism and opportunism in politics. No such link existed in the pre-1914 German Social Democracy. If anything, on organisational questions the German opponents of revisionism occupied common ground with the Russian revisionists. This, incidentally, also accounts for their political failure. Rosa Luxemburg put her faith in the spontaneity of the masses as a counter to opportunist 'organisation'.

Lenin's view of German Social Democracy was very different. To a very considerable extent his conception of the party was in fact derived from the German model. Was this simply "an apparatus-building, bureaucratic view..." as comrade O'Mahony indirectly implies? This is what Lenin actually said: "Take the Germans. It will not be denied that theirs is a mass organisation, that in Germany everything proceeds from the masses, that the working class movement has learned to walk. Members of the hostile parties have often taunted socialists... 'Fine democrats you are indeed. Yours is a working class movement only in name; in actual fact the same clique of leaders is always in evidence...' But the Germans only smile... at these

demagogic attempts to set the 'masses' against the 'leaders'... the Germans have accumulated sufficient experience to understand that without a 'dozen' tried and talented leaders... no class in modern society can wage a determined struggle" (What is to be done?).

Propagandist view? Let us once again look at Lenin's experience of German Social Democracy. "Everywhere the Social-Democrats are found in the forefront, rousing political discontent among all classes, rousing the sluggards, stimulating the laggards, and providing a wealth of material for the development of political consciousness" (Ibid). He approvingly quotes Engels, "It must be said to the credit of the German workers they have exploited the advantages of their situation with rare understanding. For the first time since a workers' movement has existed, the struggle is being conducted pursuant to its three sides — the theoretical, the political, and the practical-economic — in harmony and in its interconnections, and in a systematic way" (Ibid).

BLAME

There is no direct causal connection between the undoubtedly hierarchical features of the workers' organisations and the fact that their leaders eventually jettison socialist goals. When in 1914 the Social Democrat group in the Reichstag finally betrayed the working class, it did not occur to Lenin to blame Social Democratic organisational methods. He put the political responsibility for this squarely on the shoulders of the Social Democratic leaders.

It is, of course, possible to blame 'organisation'. Robert Michels, writing in 1911, paraphrased Bernstein's

"the goal is nothing, the movement is everything", in the dictum, "Who says organisation, says oligarchy".

It is a pity that comrade O'Mahony should echo these sentiments when he claims that in the Second International "day to day activity came to be everything; the goal came to be nothing".

More recently, attacks on effective forms of organisation have masqueraded as the rejection of "democratic centralism". The organisational principles of the pre-1914 German Social Democratic Party (as adopted by Lenin for Russian Social Democracy) are being held responsible for the totalitarian regimes in the East European states and the USSR.

Here the Left's emotional distaste for work within the existing political framework is being passed off as the need to concentrate on the 'self-activity of the masses' — a general term which for some reason is being extended to a variety of extra-parliamentary activities organised by sectarian or semi-sectarian political groups and to their expectation of what will emerge from 'communitary politics'.

Whatever view we take, whether we blame 'organisation', the 'system', or just the concentration of power in the hands of the central government, the gist of it all is that the responsibility for reactionary policies is being transferred from people to impersonal mechanisms. Not only does this give party leaders virtually absolute power, but above all it diverts our attention and energies from the struggle in areas which matter most.

* Vladimir Derer is secretary of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy. He writes in a personal capacity.

This article will be continued in the next issue of SO.



Rosa Luxemburg: spontaneity against opportunist 'organisation'

The Council of one hundred has-beens

"CLAIMING to have received slightly over 8,000 letters of support (slightly less than a character in Crossroads gets when they have a birthday) the Gang of Three have got 100 to sign their 'Limehouse Declaration'". But, as an article in the new issue of the rank and file paper *Building Worker* notes, hardly any of them are trade unionists.

Sake

"Frank Chapple, it's true, is a trade union official (when he's not writing for the *News of the World* and *Daily Express*), but of the sort 'better out than in'".

"UCATT has provided two of these leading 'moderates'".

"Danny Crawford, president of UCATT, is one — and he has changed his turn since last year's presidential address, where he said, 'The purpose of my political remarks is not to apportion blame for blame's sake, but to stress the need for unity of purpose in the movement in the future. That and that alone will secure the election of a Labour Government'".

"As Brother Crawford was elected to office as a member of the Labour Party, we should ask: is he going to stand again as a member of the CSD?"

Relieved

"Another is Clive Wilkinson, leader of Birmingham City Council, who also comes from the right wing of UCATT. The *Building Workers' Charter* (Vol.3 no.9) describes the sort of person who can be relied on to put country and self above the working class."

"He is a member of the Northfield WE118 branch of UCATT but he has never been part of the movement as such. He is a self-employed carpenter by trade... and has called (as his contribution for International Women's Year) for legalised brothels to cater for tourists using the new National Exhibition Centre. A career-minded man who has willingly carried out the Government's cuts".

BUILDING WORKER: FOR RANK AND FILE MILITANTS IN THE BUILDING INDUSTRY

New issue out now:

- A fightback against subcontractors?
- Court acquits UCATT militant
- Costains sackings
- Shirley's backers in UCATT.

10p plus postage from 223b Queens Road, London SE15.

No retreat on reselection!

CHRIS MULLIN's 21-page pamphlet contains a comprehensive guide to the mechanics of selection and re-selection. It opens with a very timely quotation from a speech by Bill Rogers in October 1980: 'The time has come to assert the rights, duties and role of the Parliamentary Labour Party without equivocation. It should be said loud and clear that Conference cannot instruct the PLP.'

What Rogers and his ilk are in effect saying, of course, is that they do not believe in the programme they are elected to implement and have no intention of carrying it out.

The bitter experience of Labour governments since 1964 has driven this message home so many times that the struggle for reselection gained widespread support throughout the party.

Re-selection means at least some measure of accountability. But as Mullin points out, accountability is a two-way process which confers responsibility on the CLP as well as the MP. For instance, the CLP must develop a meaningful reporting-back procedure.

Abuse

The re-selection process commences with the freezing of delegations to the GMC. The freezing date for affiliations and delegations for the period of the selection of a parliamentary candidate is the day on which the Regional Organiser meets the Executive Committee of the Constituency to arrange the timetable (or in the case of a Parliamentary by-election, the day the seat falls vacant).

In the case of an MP announcing that he/she will not be seeking re-election, the freezing date is the date on which the MP announces his/her intention to retire at the next General Election. This particular rule is open to abuse, as the MP can time the retirement to suit his/her favoured candidate.

No new or increased affil-

PETE WILLSMAN looks at the new CLPD/IWC pamphlet, 'How to select or reselect your MP'.

iations can be accepted after the freezing date and no new Party organisation established after that date shall be allowed representation on the GMC during the period of the selection of the candidate.

Only accredited delegates may be present at meetings throughout the selection procedure.

Delegates entitled to attend are those appointed by organisations entitled to representation on the GMC and no additional or sub-

stitute delegates shall be allowed after the freezing date (with the exception of where there has been a change of Labour Party branch secretary).

In addition an important reform was introduced at the 1978 Annual Conference to prevent rigging of GMCs. This laid down that to be eligible to attend a selection meeting of the GMC a person must have been a member of the Constituency for at least 12 months prior to the date of

the relevant meeting and have attended at least one previous meeting of the GMC during the same period.

It is important that every branch (including affiliated trade union branches) should participate fully in the re-selection process and make a nomination.

The Secretary of each affiliated organisation will receive a yellow nomination form to be filled in following the decision of the branch. The normal practice is for each branch to hold its own mini selection conference. Some also hold panel sessions before the formal interview to enable members to get to know candidates better.

Attached to the pamphlet are the guidelines governing parliamentary selections drawn up by the National Agents Department and agreed by the NEC. Although they are made available to Regional Organisers and their assistants, they are not widely available.

This has meant that responsibility for interpretation has usually resided with full time party officers who attend every stage of the selection procedure, which has led to several problems in the past. CLPD have done a great service to the rank and file by publishing these guidelines.

Clear

A reading of the guidelines makes some hitherto ambiguous points crystal clear.

For instance, when they are shortlisting, members of the Executive Committee do not have to use all their votes on each ballot, despite what has often been said by Regional Organisers in the past. In fact, it is wise not to use all the votes, since otherwise EC members may find themselves trapped into voting for candidates who they do not feel should be short-listed.

The guidelines also make it clear that the delegates at the selection meeting can insist that the voting figures be announced after each ballot vote or after the

final vote.

Also included in the pamphlet as an appendix is a short history of the struggle for mandatory re-selection from the inception of the CLPD in 1973. Although it contains several inaccuracies, taken as a whole it gives a useful account of the tenacious battle waged by CLPD.

Another appendix details the decisions made by the Organisation Sub-Committee of the NEC on 12th January 1981.

This sub-committee recommended that Executive Committees should only draw up a short list of one in those circumstances where the sitting MP is the only nominee.

List

This is obviously the only proper ruling that can be made with regard to short-listing, since the short-listing process is supposed to be merely a formality to reduce the list to manageable proportions. Instead, the short-listing meeting and the meeting of the GMC which considers the Executive Committee's short list, will be turned into acrimonious vote of confidence meetings. In other words, it is the discredited and defeated Mikardo compromise entering by the back door. Under the compromise GMCs had to carry a vote of no confidence in their MP before they could proceed to re-selection.

Unfortunately by 14 votes to 13 the NEC on 28th January did not accept the Organisation sub-committee's recommendation and referred it back. It is very significant that Shirley Williams has said that she and Tom Bradley attended the last NEC only in order to vote on this issue.

A campaign must now be mounted to insist that the original recommendation of the Org. Sub. be upheld. Readers should make every effort to ensure that their CLPs immediately write to the NEC to this effect. This matter must be given top priority.



Roy Mason: a suitable case for re-selection?

WRP witch- hunts BL militant

by John Lister

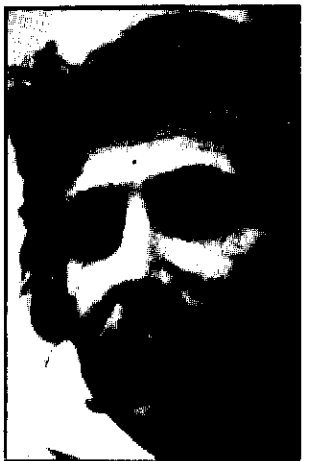
GERRY HEALY'S WRP seems to have taken over the job of the Economic League in witchhunting militants in factories.

In a 'money no object exercise' last week, Healy sent a bus load of leafleters from London to the BL Cowley Assembly Plant in Oxford to flood the factory with a disgraceful personal attack on Alan Thornett, Deputy T&G Convenor of the plant.

The lavishly produced four-page, two colour broadsheet carried a banner headline 'Thornett - WHAT EVERY WORKER SHOULD KNOW'. Thornett is accused in hysterical language of being a 'scab', 'crossing a picket line', 'violence' and 'thuggery' and of being a police agent.

It is five thousand words of personal invective containing barely one coherent political point. The distribution of such a document outside the factory should be condemned throughout the labour movement.

It purports to 'answer' a WSL leaflet which Healy claims was distributed outside the Cowley plant. He knows this is not true. The leaflet



Alan Thornett

to which Healy refers was distributed at the WRP's rally in London last month, condemning the WRP's support for rate rises in Lambeth.

It is true that an advance copy was given to the WRP's only member in the plant - Central Committee member Tom White - since White defends the WRP position in Lambeth and is refusing to support a rent and rates strike on his own estate in Oxford.

The WSL would not polemise with another group by denouncing them in factory gate leaflets or by personal attacks and a smear campaign. It has taken other groups up politically in Socialist Press and at appropriate political meetings and rallies.

The only beneficiaries from Healy's slanders are the right wing and the management. The left and the militants in the plant are outraged by the leaflet: any remaining credibility the WRP may have had has been destroyed.

Healy is clearly not out to build but to destroy. His answer to serious political criticism is a witchhunt. His answer to his inability to develop anything in Cowley since the mass expulsions from the WRP in 1974 is to try and poison the plant against revolutionary politics, to stop anyone building a marxist leadership.

Healy's hysterical and paranoid sect now plays an entirely negative role in the class struggle. It is a stain on the banner of Trotskyism.

Fight to make councillors accountable

Scottish LCC

THE Labour Party cannot guarantee that Labour councillors will carry out the policies for which they stood... says a discussion paper on Local Government Democracy produced by the Scottish LCC.

Though parts of the paper deal with the particular problems of Scottish Regional and District Councils, there is much of wider interest.

The paper suggests democratic standing orders to ensure that policies are carried through. The proposals centre on binding all Labour Group members to the manifesto policies on which they

were elected. Members could be allowed to vote contrary to those policies only after joint meetings between the Labour group and the Regional/District party and a vote by the party.

Methods of drawing up the Manifesto are also discussed.

Chairs of council committees should be obliged to produce documents to be approved by the Group. manifesto conferences should be held dealing with Group statements and resolutions from Labour Parties and affiliated bodies.

A manifesto sub-committee elected at the conference should produce a document for amendment/ratification by District/Regional parties, which would then be binding on Labour groups. The document proposes that Labour group leaders should be

elected by a joint meeting of the group and the Regional/District party.

The document is not intended to be the final word on Local Government democracy, but it is a basis for activists in other areas to study.

Manchester: Morris against the aliens

A FIGHT to the death against alien beings was the response of Labour leader Norman Morris after Manchester City Labour Party carried by 64 to 25 votes proposals to the NEC on the accountability of Labour Groups to District Parties.

The alien beings referred to were the executive and delegates of the City Party

which called for:

1 Group leaders, deputies and chair of committees to be elected by District Party and not as at present by Labour Groups.

2 That the whip should not be removed without the agreement of a District Party.

3 Observers from District

Parties to group meetings be increased and have the right to speak.

Before the meeting a front page press campaign carried the thoughts of comrade Norman in language akin to H G Wells' War of the Worlds. The proposals would make councillors puppets of soviet-style bureaucracies, and be in conjunction with

Polish workers, would fight to the death to make the Labour Party a better place to live in!

His policies would not commend themselves to Polish workers... as he is calling for compulsory redundancies after March, and for swingeing increases in rent and heating charges.

Support the Lambeth Nine

by Cheung Siu Ming

NINE Inner London teachers have been suspended from membership of the National Union of Teachers. They include all the officers of Lambeth NUT, who refused to carry out an instruction from NUT General Secretary Fred Jarvis to rescind a branch motion calling for strike action in support of the February 4th Lambeth march against the cuts.

The others are Inner London division election candidates. Their 'crime' was including in their election material a call to all London NUT members to support the march.

These suspensions were clearly linked to the Inner London elections, where

Inner London Teachers' Association (ILTA) secretary Bob Richardson was desperate to secure re-election. Even before the suspensions, he led a delegation of ILTA ex-officers, including all the prominent CP teachers in London, to protest to the Union's National President, who then, 14 days before the ballot closed, sent a letter to all schools denouncing the three Left candidates for supporting the February 4th march.

NUT rules require branches to go through a tortuous procedure and get permission from the National Action Committee (chaired by Richardson) for any industrial action. A request from Lambeth for official support this time

received no answer from Richardson. Instead, on the Friday before, taxis delivered the union's instructions to Lambeth officers to call off the strike.

A similar request for the November 7th, 1979, day of action in Lambeth got an evasive reply, but no action was taken by the union when 500 Lambeth teachers joined that march against cuts.

What is at stake this time is the control of the union's strongest division, Inner London. At a time when the NUT leaders are failing to give a lead against massive cuts, militant teachers have been taking action and voting for Left candidates.

Support for the suspend-

ed teachers has already come from six NUT branches in London, from Lambeth's three Labour MPs, from Lambeth Council leader Ted Knight and other Labour Councillors on the Inner London Education Authority, from Lambeth Trades Council, and from other labour movement bodies.

We can build up a massive protest to embarrass the NUT into dropping all disciplinary charges against the nine and unconditionally reinstating them. Rush donations and messages of support to the defence committee, 12 Albion Drive, London E8. Cheques payable to Lambeth NUT defence campaign.

After a count which took four days, the Inner London Teachers' Association election results were finally announced. Richardson and his allies were narrowly voted back in. However:

- There was never a count of the total votes cast.

- The votes were counted by retired teachers, including ILTA past presidents who were the same people who complained to the Union about the ILTA nine's support of the February 4th march.

- The same people also validated the votes, in a first time ever procedure which was haphazard and inefficient, with over 500 votes declared spoiled or invalidated. None of the winning candidates had a majority greater than 500.

WHAT WE LEARNED FROM LONGBRIDGE

NEARLY 100 militants, many of them delegates from union branches, attended the Longbridge Defence Conference in Birmingham on 14th February.

Sacked T&G shop steward Jim Denham told the conference "We have to accept that the fight for reinstatement is now over. But we believe that a vital task still remains — to take the lessons of recent events in BL into the wider labour movement."

"The management's blackmailing tactics and the treachery of the union leaders are problems that are going to confront more and more workers throughout industry. We have to make sure that the whole working class is made aware of what has happened to us at Longbridge, and is equipped to deal with similar dirty tricks from both employers and union leaders in future."

An AUEW steward from the Longbridge Defence Committee then outlined the present situation in the plant. "Morale is obviously low at the moment", he said. "But it isn't like the aftermath of the Robinson sell-out. Then, militants on the shopfloor felt isolated. This time, we have suffered a severe setback

The rank and file must keep control

but we haven't been smashed.

"Even after all the delays and hesitations from the officials the mass meeting vote was very close, perhaps even 50-50."

"The main problem has Longbridge is the plant leadership — the works committee. They don't even keep the rank and file informed. They are mainly concerned with keeping in with the officials and doing deals with management."

"We've got to build a fighting rank and file movement in the plant and throughout BL."

The conference then heard from Barry Blinko and Dicky Murphy from the Ansell's strike committee. They described their fight against redundancies and the threatened closure of the brewery.

They pointed out how

Ansell's management had copied all the tactics of the BL bosses — enforcing a changed working practices document, sending letters and telegrams threatening closure to workers' homes and attempting to divide the workforce by offering some people alternative work. "The difference is we've stood firm", said Dicky Murphy. "We're not going to let the officials sell us out. We're making sure the membership are kept fully informed at every stage of the dispute and the rank and file are in control. That's something we've already learnt from what has happened in BL."

Conway Xavier, former NUPE branch secretary at Great Ormond St hospital in London, described his own victimisation for 'disloyalty to management'. He pointed out that events

at BL have emboldened employers everywhere. "In my own case", he said, "the management actually came up with the slogan, 'Reinstate Red Conno', to remind people of the Derek Robinson fiasco."

Bob Cryer MP was the final platform speaker. He reminded the conference that BL boss Michael Edwardes had been appointed by a Labour government. "That's why the present struggle inside the Labour Party is of vital importance to every industrial militant. We must make it clear that we won't tolerate another Labour government like the last one, we won't tolerate Labour leaders who attack working class living standards, break strikes, and put in Tories like Edwardes to run nationalised industries more viciously than any



Jim Denham

private employer would dare."

Speakers from the floor included a number of BL workers. Several stewards from Cowley criticised the role of the Communist Party-led Longbridge Works Committee. "Why hasn't this conference been called by the Longbridge Works Committee, why isn't Jack Adams here?", asked one Cowley steward. "The answer seems to be that Adams never wanted a real fight over these victimisations. And that's why he supported calling off the strike in favour of an inquiry, even though he now condemns the outcome of the inquiry."



The resolution passed at the Conference included:

- A campaign in the trade union movement to ensure that full support is given to any workers or stewards victimised by management; no inquiries, joint or otherwise; immediate strike action; full official support from the unions concerned.

- To draw up a report of the conference and circulate it in BL plants and within the trade union movement.

- To draw up petition sheets and send them to the trade unions involved, condemning the action of those unions in relation to the victimisation and the inquiry.

- To organise a series of local meetings to be addressed by the victimised workers, in order to publicise this campaign.

FUND

Nearly half way to our £500 target so far. An extra effort in the second half of February should allow us to get more than the bare minimum and start dealing with our debts. But we'll need a lot more to enable us to get a surplus for improvements.

East London supporters are leading the way so far — with £100 from the secretary of Limehouse Labour Party ["to annoy the neighbours"] and a further £15 from a £5 per head levy of supporters in Tower Hamlets. Another £5 from Chelmsford, £19.50 Birmingham, £28.80 Coventry, £7 Manchester, plus £42 from various parts of the country, bring our total to £217.60.

Send contributions to 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY. Cheques payable to Socialist Organiser.

Brewers try to do an Edwardes

from the Ansell's brewery Shop Stewards' Committee

IN THE first week of the New Year, Ansell's directors issued a statement to use to inform the transport, production and maintenance employees that they would be discontinuing the guaranteed week and implementing a four day week.

Our members went on strike, as it was felt that the directors were introducing car industry tactics and certainly wanted to administer a dose of the Michael Edwardes medicine to our members.

The company eventually withdrew the lay-off notices (on the four day week) but said they would require 96 redundancies, and set out their proposals for a reduction in earnings levels of about £30 per week and acceptance of new working practices.

Our members have voted overwhelmingly to continue their dispute, which is now in its fourth week, and they resolved not to return to work until they have a negotiated settlement.

On 3rd February, management announced that they

would recruit unemployed workers straight from the dole queue. The office workers all refused to conduct any interviews with people to take our jobs, and we made it clear on the picket line that we would not let anyone through.

Allied Breweries management then upped the stakes and announced the closure of the brewery, with a loss of at least 600 jobs.

Our strike to force the re-opening of Ansell's Brewery and to retain union organisation may well be a long one. We are, therefore, asking fellow trade unionists to show us their solidarity by sending money and messages of support to: Bro. J. Bond, 23 Barnett Rd, Erdington, Birmingham B23 6JJ, cheques made payable to the '5/377 TGWU branch levy account'.

If you would like a speaker to attend a meeting to explain the issues further, please telephone 021-356 4296 after 1.30pm, or 021-643 6221 from 10am to 5pm.

JOE BOND
branch secretary,
KEN BRADLEY,
chairman.

Linwood will fight back!

by John Wilde

WITH unemployment in Glasgow now one in six, the bosses of Peugeot Citroen have dropped a bombshell. They decided to throw 4,800 workers at the Talbot plant at Linwood Renfrewshire on the dole heap by June.

Reactions to the closure are varied. A mass meeting of the workers decided on a fight but not on immediate industrial action. Jimmy Livingstone, the TGWU convenor, warned against taking the "fool's gold" — £20 million redundancy pay. Workers at Linwood shouldn't sell their jobs but stay on and fight.

But Jimmy Milne, General Secretary of the STUC, has been on TV and radio to say that they want to get round a table with Peugeot to try and talk them out of it, though he

didn't seem to hold out much hope.

A committee has been set up including the STUC, Scottish CBI, various shop stewards and MPs and is calling on the Tory government to intervene and carry out a holding operation until something turns up or get Nissan-Datsun to take the plant.

A spokesman for Peugeot said, "Our conscience is clear, volume production at Linwood is not high enough". So that's that. Profit rules and all the well wishing in the world won't change it.

Nine years ago the plant employed nine thousand workers. In 1975 the Labour government 'rescued' the ailing Chrysler plant (as it then was) and injected £135m. In the following year 1800 were made redundant.

In 1978 Peugeot-Citroen took over Chrysler and renamed the plant Talbot. At the end of the first year 1,250 were made redundant, then in May 80 another 1325. Then came short-time working — first three days a week, then from last November two days. Now complete closure.

The workers accepted voluntary redundancies last year, hoping to keep the plant open. Productivity had gone up and there were no "industrial relations problems". For being 'responsible', the Linwood workers got a kick in the teeth from Peugeot bosses.

Now or never is the time to fight back. Joint committees with the bosses won't help. Seizure of the plant, and an appeal for supporting industrial action is the only way to save the jobs.

Seafarers: stay organised!

by Geoff Williams

ON FRIDAY 13th — 'Black Friday', in the words of Cardiff National Union of Seamen full-timer Tommy Hanley — the NUS leadership decided to settle with the shipowners by going to arbitration.

The majority of branches see this decision as a complete sell-out. Arbitration will decide the union's claim for time-and-a-half for overtime during the week, and double time on Sundays. But the claim for a 'substantial' increase in

basic pay has already been settled — at 9.5%.

In Cardiff, seafarers decided to continue the strike from Monday mid-day until Tuesday mid-day to show their disgust. They have also organised a lobby of the Executive Committee meeting at Maritime House on Wednesday 18th, to protest against the sell-out.

Similar action has taken place in other ports. Seafarers have no confidence whatever in the ACAS talks, but because of the Executive Committee's

decision, it is very difficult for local branches to continue the struggle on their own.

Now the seafarers must maintain the local disputes committees, which have functioned exceptionally well in all the ports. Through these committees, rank and file seafarers now have a developed democratic organisational network which, if consolidated, could become strong enough to stop or overturn sell-outs by the right-wing leadership in future national or local disputes.



Can we break the Tory 6pc? 1. Hospitals

by Charlie Sarell (NUPE Steward, Leicester Hospitals Branch)

THE HOSPITAL ancillary staff, after waiting five weeks, have at last been made an offer of only 6%. The national union leadership rejected it immediately and, alongside the management, have pressed the Tory government to raise the cash limits on the NHS.

With the water workers, already preparing for industrial action, does this mean another major dispute in the public sector? Unfortunately, this doesn't seem to be the plan of the union's leadership. Ron Keating of NUPE made it plain before the offer was even made that he felt 7½% was quite reasonable. 7½%!!

If the union leadership thinks that 7½% is a reasonable offer, an offer which would add around £3 to the wage packet, then they are very out of touch. It also shows only too plainly to everyone, the Tories included, that the union leadership is not about to lead a major fight. No doubt, arguing against shopfloor militants, they will say that the membership won't fight. In this there is an element of truth. It is obvious that the membership is not going to be willing to fight for another 1½%, another £1.50 on the week's wage.

At NUPE national conference the wage claim called for a substantial increase. 7½% is definitely not that. But a substantial increase is what hospital ancillary

staff need. Last year we got 8.9%, when inflation was over 20%, this year we need 15% just to keep up with inflation, and more if we are to get back to where we were at the start of 1980.

The ancillary staff would fight for a decent rise if they felt the union leadership was with them. They won't fight for peanuts, which is very different from not being willing to fight at all.

The main task now facing militants on the shopfloor is to organise a fight against this offer of 6% and the 7½% which the leadership want to settle for. We must fight for a minimum wage, ⅓ of the national average, and linked to the rate of inflation, as monitored by union committees.

2. Civil Service

by Stephen Corbishley

THATCHER'S Cabinet, faced with a joint claim from the Civil Service unions for an increase of 15% with a £10 minimum, told them they could only have 6%.

Then they offered 7.5%. But the unions rejected this and decided to campaign for the claim, and for selective strike action in key government computer centres.

Votes in the IRSF as well as IPCS meetings have indicated a strong feeling for action. IN the two computer centres organised by the IRSF, in Shipley and Cumbria, the vote was around 80% in favour of a strike. But the prospects of a real struggle will be decided by the result of the branch consultative exercise in the biggest Civil Service union, the CPSA, due to end on February 24th.

The fight for a Yes vote in CPSA is undermined by the inadequacy of the claim, which even the union leaders admit is less than what's necessary to maintain living standards. Further, the proposal for action, to be confined to key computer areas, tightly monitored and controlled by national full-time officers, and mass action limited to one or two national one day strikes, tends to undercut confidence in the rank and file. Few believe the Civil Service union leaders know what they are doing, never mind being committed to it.

The Government has laid its plans. There are strong indications, spelled out in a recent Times article, that they will go for suspending civil servants who refuse to scab on selective strikes and thus hope to drain the union fighting funds, currently

standing at a joint level of £3 million. This policy (quaintly called 'the slaughter of the innocents') can only be beaten by retaliating with direct action. We should shut down the benefit computer centres, and organise mass pickets at docks, airports and container depots to back up the total withdrawal of customers workers.

We must build up links between the different Civil Service unions at branch level, and democratise the official local coordinating committees now being set up.

Links with other public sector workers (NHS ancillaries, teachers, ambulance-men, water workers) currently facing up to Thatcher are also important. With this united front of workers the 6% policy of the Tories could be broken.

Reckitts workers fight jobs threat

by Julia Garwolinska

THE T&GWU has made the two week old strike at Reckitt and Colmans, the biggest factory in Hull, official.

Workers staged a mass walkout on 28th January when the management ignored the union negotiations that were going on at the time, and installed the 'new technology' machinery that had been under dispute.

The thirty women who refused to operate this machinery were suspended. This prompted an immediate walkout of all three plants of Reckitts, situated in East Hull. Picket lines were immediately formed.

The T&GWU said that "the management is particularly out of order because we have tried for many months now to get them to seriously negotiate with us an agreement to protect our members in the future in the face of the introduction of new technology".

The union was seeking

agreement on four points: that there should be no redundancies due to new technology; workers' earnings should be permanently protected; if workers do lose their jobs, through new technology, they should be properly compensated; and training should be given to those forced to lose their jobs.

Management claims to have been exceptionally patient during talks with the union and has assured the unions about jobs and new technology. The union and management have agreed to cooperate with ACAS but the management has said that it will not negotiate with the union while the strike continues. It claims to be "under the duress of an unnecessary and potentially damaging ban".

One of the strikers told Socialist Organiser that "management's claim that these new technology machines will not cause redundancies could be correct,

but it has happened before. Management have persuaded unions to accept new technology into the factories and mines, and then the unions have been unable to stop management putting more and more machinery into the plants, causing massive redundancies. We are hoping to stop it. At worst, we hope to delay it."

In all disputes over implementing advanced technological machinery into workplaces, the management presents itself as forward-minded people who want to make workers' lives that much easier. They make the unions look conservative in their desire to keep things as they are. In fact, if advanced technology was used for the benefit of society, it would be aimed at aiding the third world, or housing, or health. But it's not. It's used to make money for the employing class at the cost of our jobs.

BPC: occupation is our weapon

by Andrew Hornung

IT'S not difficult to get into the occupation at Hollywell House. The place isn't ringed by hard-faced security guards or patrolled by dogs. Friendly people working in the rest of the building show you up. In the lift they tell you how much they support the BPC 65 and how you have got to stick out for the right to work these days.

There's a relaxed atmosphere inside. Some people are out getting food; some are playing cards; some are organising a picket rota. The majority of the occupiers there at the moment are women.

Their strike has been going on for 12 weeks now. Last November management sacked all those who refused to return to work from a mandatory branch meeting of the NUJ. The meeting, which was discussing the redundancies management was demanding, was one of the tactics of disruption the workers had agreed on to force the company to drop their redundancy demands.

Annabel is the Mother of the Chapel, the workplace NUJ branch: "There's a very high level of morale here. I think it's because over the past few years we've operated a rule that no-one stays in a union post after one year. Consequently a very big proportion of those on strike have been union officers."

"We're very democratic locally. We decide something collectively and we go ahead and do it. Now that we're in occupation there are daily meetings of this chapel."

"We haven't been told what to do. We've made the decisions and these have been backed up by the union leadership."

"There's been a lot of support for our stand, with weekly levies within the Book and Magazine branches."

"Some chapels are stupendous, others not. It's a bit patchy", was John's view as he leafed through an accounts book with a treasurer's customary caution.

"There is a group on the National Executive Committee that wants a quick settlement", thought Annabel. "And there was a period with the management contacting the General Secretary and he would contact them. There's a bit of a dispute on the NEC about us. But we're not a bunch of hotheads, we know what we're doing. We've impressed them with our understanding and they've responded."

"We're lucky we're in a union with a good deal of democracy. If we'd been in some of the print unions, we might have been ordered back to work by now."

I wondered what the print unions were doing to help the BPC workers. Not much, it seems. "We're getting some unofficial support, but offi-

cially it's a different story."

The occupation had started as a work-in, but that had stopped. It had been a way of saying to management, "We refuse to recognise the sackings. You haven't gone through procedure: withdraw them and we'll talk". So what do they do now?

"We've just worked out a new three-shifts a fortnight picketing rota", said Annabel. "We're picketing our head office, Poulton House, the fourth floor of this building, and a part of the Atkinson Parrish Building, a section of which has been sublet to Caxton who have got people to do our work. There are three other pickets. In some cases we're just leaf-letting to give out information. Then there are some where we're trying to stop everything going in, scabs, supplies including the mail".

John felt, "The impression has changed as the dispute has gone on. The sympathetic people stop turning up — even the Securicor man just waves and drives on, and the mail is left at the sorting office."

"That means that the ones who turn up are mainly the antagonistic ones. So, on the one hand there's less traffic; on the other, there's a tougher mood."

"But one thing's sure, we're having a considerable effect. We're going to force them to give in".



Socialist Organiser

Water workers reject 10pc

by Alexis Carras

ANGERED by the unwillingness of the GMWU and NUPE leaderships to confront the Tories over their insulting 10% pay offer, water workers have started to take unofficial action.

In the North East, about 200 water workers in the Tyne/Wear and Northumberland divisions of the Northumbrian Water Authority have imposed an overtime ban.

The only emergency calls

they will deal with will be at hospitals and old people's homes. The workers involved are members of the GMWU. Signs are that the action will spread to Consett, Durham and South Shields.

Over the weekend of 14th-15th, a regional delegate conference voted overwhelmingly in favour of official strike action at the end of the month. Local officials tried to prevent the unofficial action, but the

rank and file feeling was too strong.

Welsh NUPE water workers have tabled a motion of no confidence in their national union negotiators for failing to call official action. And Welsh GMWU workers have voted seven to one against the 10% offer.

Votes from the rest of the country will come in during the week — and it looks like there will be a strong demand for all-out strike.

This is how to fight rent rises

THE TORY government is insisting that all council rents must go up a minimum of £3.25 this year — at the same time as it is holding public sector pay rises down to 6% or only a little more.

Many Labour councils are giving in to the Tories' pressure. And many Tory councils are going further, and raising rents even higher — 66½% in Basingstoke, 37% in Wandsworth.

But tenants are fighting back. The Scottish Tenants' Organisation has put out a call to stand ready for an all-Scotland rent strike, and it has started organising for it with a 'no rent rise' petition which already has ¼ million signatures.

A rent strike is planned in Wandsworth, too (see centre page). And in Basingstoke, trade unions, the Labour Party, and tenants' groups have all got together to show how to fight the Tory rent rises.

Skulk

Carla Jamison reports from Basingstoke.

On 5th February the Basingstoke and Deane Council met to 'discuss' the proposal by the Housing Committee to raise council rents by an astronomical 70%.

The Housing Committee meeting had been taken over by angry demonstrators, who then held their own rents action meeting, while the councillors skulked off under police escort to make their decision in a secret session.

Estate meetings and leafletting resulted in some four or five hundred people outside the Civic Offices for the full Council meeting.

The police, there in force from surrounding areas, restricted the public gallery to 25, and searched those going in. From 5.30pm onwards demonstrators kept up deafening chants of 'More Jobs, Less Rents' under the windows where the Tory majority were seated. There were banners and placards from various estates. Labour Party, Trades Council, G&MWU, and Socialist Organiser.

As the freezing cold evening wore on, the demonstrators were told that two Labour councillors had left the meeting giving notice that an injunction was to be served on the Council, claiming that the Housing Committee had acted illegally by holding their meeting in secret. The injunction has since been granted — meaning that all the decisions on rents are null and void, and the Tories have to reconvene the Council on 23rd February to try again.

At 10.15pm, after nearly 5 hours' continuous chanting, the demonstrators were told that the likely outcome was to be 66½%. The crowds dispersed, bitter and angry, many shouting for a rent strike, and others wanting to storm the building. The Tories' final insult was to transfer the massive £1 million surplus generated by the rent increase into the General Rate Fund, rather than house repairs.

Rise

(And the Tories have promised council tenants a further 50% rent rise next year).

The campaign Steering Committee, under the chairmanship of Alasdair Jamison (a SO supporter, and secretary of the Trades Council), met on 10th February to draw up future plans.

Already money has been pledged from USDAW, TGWU, the Trades Council, G&MWU, TASS, Haskins AUEW shop stewards' committee, ACTSS, and APEX to finance factory and estate leaflets. A further public meeting in the Town Hall will send out canvass forms to assess feeling for a rent strike on the increase. More estate meetings are scheduled, and there will be a march through the town on Saturday 14th March.

A massive mobilisation is planned for the recall Council meeting on the 24th.

The unity built up in the demonstration must be strengthened to the point where we can beat the rent rise and throw the Tories out.

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Glasgow's grass-roots fightback

by Stan Crooke

GLASGOW is not only the scene of the great jobs march on February 21 — but of growing local struggles against cuts, to save jobs and services.

★ FIRSTLY, 'Parents Against Nursery Education Cuts' (PANEC) has been set up to save two nursery schools that the Labour-controlled council wants to close. The trade unions affected — EIS (the Scottish teachers' union), NALGO, and the TGWU — have been contacted to block the transfer of children from the threatened nurseries and to stop the rundown of amenities.

Mailings have been sent out to Labour Party branches all over Glasgow and to a number of trade union branches. Support for PANEC has been won from Crosshill-Prospecthill Labour Party, Rutherglen YS, Oatlands Tenants' Association, Springburn Tenants' Association, and Glasgow Cuts Campaign.

★ SECONDLY, there has been a massive reaction against the Regional Council's plan to close the Adelphi Secondary School. At a meet-

ing called by the teachers and parents from the school, attended by over 100 people, two councillors and an MP tried putting the Council's case.

They were met with continuous heckling. As one speaker from the floor said, 'We're speaking to dummies. They're leading us up the garden path. You try to come across as the good guys, but you sold us out last time and you're going to do the same this time'.

★ A 6-LANE MOTORWAY, running through the Gorbals at 6th floor level, is what the council is 'offering' in exchange for the closure of the two nurseries and the Adelphi school. Over £100 million is to be spent on motorways in Glasgow, and tens of million on this particular stretch.

But there's a campaign to stop this too: Glasgow Resistance to Incoming Motorways (GRIM). Its purpose is to stop motorways coming into Glasgow at the expense of demolishing whole areas of the city, and it has support from all the areas affected by the new motorways. (Especially from the Gorbals, since less than one family in three there owns a car).

★ People who live in the Gorbals also face chronic dampness in the council houses on the Gorbals Estate. Fungus on the walls, and clothes turning green with mould, are commonplace. Carpets are full of bouncing life, with the underlay of fungus and vermin below.

The council says it's not structural dampness, so they don't have responsibility to correct it. Instead, they claim it's poor ventilation, and make the stunning suggestion that couples should leave the windows open when making love to reduce condensation from heavy breathing!

TO CAP it all, the Council is putting the rents up by 31% in April, that's an average of £2 a week, and the rates are going up from 35p in the pound to 46p. Unemployment in Glasgow is one in 6.

These campaigns plan to link up. What's needed is not a simple arithmetic adding up of all the demands of the different campaigns, but a united campaign opposing any cuts in living standards, whether through cuts in services or through rent and rate increases.

JOIN SCOTLAND'S MARCH AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT
SAT 21 FEB
ASSEMBLY: MYRTLEWOOD SQUARE
11 AM. RALLY: QUEEN'S PARK, 1 PM
MAIN SPEAKER: MICHAEL FOOT MP
LEADER OF THE LABOUR PARTY

by John O'Mahony

Labour Right mobilises

AS Williams-Owen-Jenkins-Rodgers continue to move, glacier-slow, away from the Labour Party, the serious Right and the fake Left have launched their offensive against the Wembley decisions.

A new organisation of Labour MPs — including some Tribunes — has been set up to campaign for 50% of the electoral college for the MPs.

They aim also to change the composition of the National Executive Committee in favour of the Right at this year's conference in Brighton. They say that their aim is to 'restore Labour Party democracy' and to 'overturn decisions taken by small and undemocratic minorities' (like the Party Conference!)

The name these self-

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righteous careerist time-servers have given themselves is even more grandiloquent than their aims. They are the 'Labour Solidarity Campaign', no less! Which proves that the airwaves are as tolerant of humbug as paper, on which you can write anything you like, is proverbially patient. (Probably it means also that they misunderstand, thoroughly, what the Polish workers' movement is all about).

Dennis Healey has sat in on a meeting of General Secretaries whose trade unions collectively dispose of a bloc of two million votes at Labour Party conference (Roy Grantham, APEX; Terry Duffy, AUEW; Sid Weighell, NUR; and Bill Sirs, ISTC) to plan a campaign against the Wembley decisions.

Foot is playing his allotted part. He has delivered a mild public attack on Williams and Co — together with a virulent attack on the Marxists, and, by name, on Militant, which is, he said, 'a pestilential

nuisance'.

Thus the 'balance' is kept by coupling the Williamsites with the Militant group, whose supporters are probably the most religiously loyal members the Labour Party has ever had!

Foot does it in a nuanced and fastidiously precise way, describing Militant as 'sub-Marxist' and insisting that a witch-hunt is not the way to deal with them. In fact, though, Foot is setting Militant up for ghettoisation and political ostracisation (above and beyond what they normally choose for themselves), if not for expulsion. And not only Militant.

Meanwhile, Williams has said definitely that she will leave... and the Social Democrats have set up an 'organisational' framework. Roy Jenkins, who has been assigned the responsibility for developing policy, chose to deliver his first policy statement in a speech to the American Chamber of Commerce in London!

Even more candid was

his response to this question from John Mortimer (Sunday Times, 15 February): 'Then if there isn't going to be any socialism, why not join the Liberal Party?' 'We believe we can tap more support by a friendly relationship with them. We have no real differences with the Liberals — at least in the short term'.

The CSD is resolving itself into a problem of the relationship of the labour movement to hostile external forces. The Labour Solidarity Committee looks a far more serious opponent of the democratic renewal of the political labour movement.

Despite Bill Rodgers' presence, the CSD was not the Gaitskellite fightback in 1960-1. With the backing of enough of the trade union bureaucrats, the new 'Solidarity' group might prove to be.

The best answer the serious socialist left can give them is to bring militant workers into the Labour Party.

Even people signed up on a door to door canvass will now only join the Labour Party if, in the light of the press campaign against us, they approve of the drive for democratic renewal.

And it is all the more urgent to pull the Left together, and especially to turn to the trade unions and rouse the militants in defence of Wembley. That's where the October party conference will now be won — or lost.

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