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Labour
Party**

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Socialist Organiser

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THE Polish labour movement is in danger.

Since last August it has changed the face of Poland. Street demonstrations to express what the workers want, not what the bureaucrats require them to feel on anniversary dates; their own newspapers; the right to complain about bureaucratic abuses and get some redress — these are all new, and all won by Solidarnosc.

Solidarnosc has kicked open the door of the drab, sterile prison-house bureaucratic regime and allowed the real voices of the workers to be heard above the bureaucratic drone of the self-proclaimed "workers' state".

It has allowed the workers to gain awareness of their strength and solidarity as workers, and of how that strength and solidarity has to develop in conflict with the privileged bureaucracy.

Role

It must have made many realise that the road to real socialism lies through the overthrow of the bureaucracy by the workers, and the reorganisation of the nationalised economy under workers' control.

Seen from the point of view of the Kremlin bureaucrats, who identify 'socialism' with their own police-state control of society, this is... "counter-revolution".

They are right to think that Solidarnosc, even under cautious, moderate leadership, is a mortal threat to their rule. For the Stalinist bureaucracies are not full-formed ruling classes with a stable, necessary role in the whole system of social production. They can maintain their domination only by ruthlessly stifling all real social initiative from below.

Polish CP chief Kania, who was for years the boss of the secret police, wants to stifle Solidarnosc just as much as Moscow does. But he sees that is impossible, short of massive repression. The Polish bureaucrats no longer have the power to organise that scale of repression. And they don't want Moscow to organise it over their heads and on their backs.

Ruse

So Kania has opted for stealth and ruse.

So far Moscow has let Kania try it his way. But they see that his way is not working. Solidarnosc remains alive and active — but the bureaucracy's main political weapon, the CP machine, is being infected by Solidarnosc.

Russia threatens Poland

Hands off Workers' Solidarity

CP members are demanding the right to elect their own delegates, the right to discuss, the right to secret ballots, the right to link up at rank and file level. For a 'party' which is not a real party, but rather a mechanism for the bureaucracy's top-down control, this ferment spells break-up.

Oust

Twice now Moscow has given unconcealed backing to groups in the bureaucracy seeking to oust Kania. Both times it has failed. There is one course left for Moscow — invasion. And the deadline is set by the CP congress on July 14th.

The Polish workers need all the support we can give.



RALLY FOR JOBS CARDIFF 4 JULY

ASSEMBLE: 11am
NATIONAL MUSEUM
RALLY: 1.15pm
PONTCAUN FIELDS

TGWU Left pushes for vote on Benn

STRESSING the links between Labour Party democracy and trade union democracy, Dennis Skinner MP told Tuesday's (23rd) meeting at the TGWU Conference:

"We have to make sure decision-making extends as far from the top as possible. One reason why trade union leaders don't like reselection is that they fear it will catch on."

Back in the conference, the TGWU leaders — many supposedly left-wingers — were giving proof of the links. They were using all sorts of tricks to try to stop the conference voting on the Labour deputy leadership.

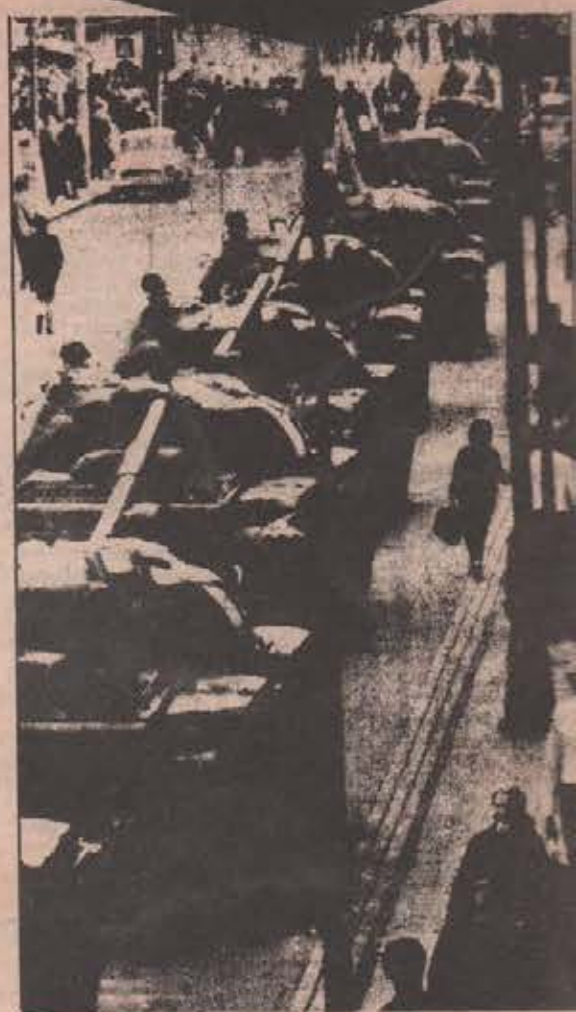
Emergency resolutions had been submitted. They were ruled out — no emergency. Amendments had been put to the relevant section of the Executive report. That section was withdrawn so that the amendments would fall.

As we went to press, TGWU left-wingers were preparing to move a reference-back on Thursday (25th), so that the conference could decide. If they fail, the TGWU leaders will have their hands free — probably to cast the vote of Britain's biggest union for John Silkin, a man

most TGWU members have hardly even heard of.

It shows once again that, by challenging the convention that the Left are just pious spouters who will always let the Right take all the decisions, Tony Benn's campaign for deputy leader has helped raise the issue of democracy right throughout the labour movement.

1968, Prague



1981, Poland

INSIDE: FOUR PAGES ON THE CIVIL SERVICE STRIKE

Don't separate the unemployed

SOCIALIST Organiser has recently argued that unemployed workers should join existing unions and at the same time a special union for unemployed workers should be established. It is in fact incorrect to raise the call for a special union of unemployed workers at this point in time for three reasons.

The vital necessity today is to stress the unity of unemployed and employed workers. It is the latter who have the muscle and power to help their wageless brothers and sisters.

We must emphasise that the unemployed are workers and should have full rights in the existing labour movement organisations.

We do not argue for separate organisations for blacks or women but for specific facilities and treatment within the existing workers' organisations. We should do the same with the unemployed, otherwise we institutionalise and give greater strength to the argument that they are different from employed workers.

Secondly, this demand lets the leaders of existing unions off the hook. All too often they see unemployed members as a burden and/or as a militant danger. They would be only too pleased to be free from their responsibilities and see the TUC establishing a token unemployed workers' union.

The way to push these leaders into action and mobilise the employed to fight unemployment is to have a strong presence from aware unemployed workers inside the TGWU, AUEW, GMWU, ASTMS, etc.

I know that the demand is a dual one, but the additional call for a separate organisation removes the stress and emphasis from the central objective of getting the unemployed into the existing unions and provides a way out for those who oppose such moves.

Thirdly, a separate unemployed workers' union is likely to be extremely weak. To a strong degree they are dependent on the aid of the employed. In practice a separate organisation can provide a means of isolating and disenfranchising unemployed brothers and sisters, as energy and imagination is diverted into organising separately rather than recruiting to existing organisations.

The Ansell workers, for example, have maintained their TGWU branch with access to all labour movement bodies. They should put their energy into recruiting to the TGWU and forge links first of all with other TGWU unemployed workers such as the Liverpool unemployed branches. Then as TGWU members they should attempt to forge links with unemployed members of other unions.

How this process develops, we cannot say. At some time in the future the demand for a separate organisation may be valid. Now we need to put all our energies into getting the unemployed into the organisations which have the power and capacity to lead the fight against unemployment and the system which breeds it.

SEAN SOUTH,
Manchester.

H-block demo called for July 18

THE Manchester Hunger Strike Committee was set up at the beginning of the hunger strike to win support for the prisoners' demands.

Its activities have included regular leafletting and street meetings in many areas of Manchester, including Moss Side and Longsight. We have also regularly leafletted the city centre.

As well as supporting all regional and national demonstrations, we held a demonstration in Manchester on April 11th, but this was poorly attended.

Support has been noticeably greater both from left-wing organisations and the public more recently, and vigils to mourn the death of each hunger striker attracted over 100 people in the city centre in each case. A means of attracting support has been the showing of a video film about the hunger strike at a number of meetings in colleges and at public meetings around the city.

Supporters who are Labour Party members have also noticed the tide beginning to turn among party activists, with many resolutions supporting the prisoners being passed at ward and GMC level, as well as the level of debate around Ireland rising.



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

To capitalise on this growing support, and after the success of the last demonstration in London, the Manchester Hunger Strike Committee has decided to hold a national demonstration in Manchester on July 18th, around the slogan 'Victory to the Hunger Strikers'.

Supporters should assemble at All Saints, Oxford Rd, at 1.30pm.

IAN MCCONDACH,
Manchester SO group.

Hypocrisy on H-block

MARGARET Thatcher and the British Government stand accused by world opinion over their intransigence towards the hunger strikers.

The world now realises that H Block is a direct result of Britain's occupation of Ireland. Does anyone believe that we would have men dying on hunger strike if partition was ended? Surely not.

An example of Britain's hypocrisy is that both Thatcher and Atkins say they have no political prisoners in either Britain or Ireland. They also claim that the five demands of the H Block prisoners amount to political status.

Well, for those who are not aware, here in the cages of Long Kesh (approx. 200 yards from the H Blocks) are almost 350 Republican and Loyalist prisoners who are presently enjoying the status which Thatcher and Atkins say amounts to political status. We wear our own clothes, refrain from prison work (although we organise the cleaning of our huts and cages), receive and write as many letters as we wish, receive parcels, associate freely, and have our own command structure recognised by the prison administration.

The reason why special category status was withdrawn from our men in the H Blocks was because of the British Government's attempt to criminalise the war of liberation here in Ireland. This policy of criminalisation has been a disaster for the British Government, as no-one believes the H Block prisoners to be criminals, ordinary or otherwise, regardless of what propaganda the British government use.

So why don't the Brits concede the five demands of the prisoners? Maybe the answer lies with the Tory Government's disastrous economic policies!

It wasn't lost on many people here that Thatcher chose the day on which record unemployment figures were released (100,000 unemployed in N.Ireland for the first time) to pay a 'surprise visit' to the Six Counties. Surely an attempt by her to draw attention away from those awful figures.

She came here crying crocodile tears for our people in her speeches and she never mentioned the critical unemployment. The cuts her Government are making affect the working class people and are surely responsible for many untimely deaths among the underprivileged both in Northern Ireland and in Britain. Yet in spite of this the media make her out to be some kind of hero who battles against injustice and 'terrorism'.

Her own self-righteous attitude is sickening, since her and her kind care nothing for the working class — neither here nor in Britain. As long as she can use the Irish Problem to draw attention away from her economic policies she won't mind coming here now and again to present her concerned face to the ordinary people.

In reality she doesn't care one little bit about the ordinary working class people either in the occupied Six Counties of Ireland or in her own country.

REPUBLICAN PRISONER
OF WAR,
Long Kesh.



UNDERMINING PATRIARCHY

I READ with interest Gerry Byrne's article, *The strings and the trap*, which appeared in SO 43. While I would agree with Gerry when she points out that the vast majority of women have no choice about whether or not they stay at home, I feel that by concentrating on this aspect she has lost sight of what the original article in Spare Rib was actually about.

I am a single parent and as such do not fall into the category of being either a housewife (paid domestic slave) or of being unemployed. I am not required to register for work and don't get dole. Instead, as a single parent, I am eligible for a supplementary benefits allowance.

I am therefore in the 'privileged' position of being treated as an independent person — this being changed only if I decide to live with a man, in which case I would, like a married woman, become his dependent.

Zoe's article addressed itself to ways in which women with children who are living with or married to men can still be treated as independent people. Surely as feminists we would support treating women as independent people.

We should be against the cohabitation rule and support the consequential extension of such payments (perhaps called caretaker payments) to any women or men who cannot work because they have to look after children.

I feel that it is about time we addressed ourselves to the reality of most women's lives and stopped trying to find theoretical justifications for not fighting to give these women the independence they need to enable them to take part in the struggle to determine their

own future. Gerry's approach of fighting for more jobs is one side of the fight — but on its own it is not going to have much immediate effect on the millions of women who do not even have the 'luxury' of the same benefits as the unemployed.

I would be interested to know whether Gerry regards housewives as being workers within the capitalist system, or does she see them as being unemployed (housework thus being separate from the capitalist mode of production). The adoption of either stance would appear

to require some form of payment.

Personally I feel that neither argument holds up under Marxist analysis, and that domestic labour, whether it is compared with productive or non-productive labour in the market, cannot be treated as work in the same sense. To regard people who look after children as being unemployed (or as constituting a special reserve army of labour) is equally wrong. Such an approach fails to say what domestic labour actually is, and in the main such arguments are functionalist whereby they view capitalism as

some form of conspiratorial body which uses women's labour only in times of war, etc.

For me domestic labour (which existed before capitalism and could theoretically remain after the ending of the capitalist mode of production) constitutes the major mainstay of Patriarchy.

It provides the basis for women's exploitation by men in the home and enables capitalism to reproduce this oppression within the workplace, an example of this being the sexual division of labour at work. Out of this material basis arises the ideology of

sexism, whereby all men (not just bourgeois ones) regard women as their property, rapes and battering being just two examples of the consequences.

Zoe's approach of paying people a caretaker allowance seems to me to be one way of attacking the material basis of women's oppression. It gives women with children (the vast majority of housewives) independence, without it necessarily having to fall into the trap of reinforcing a woman's role in the home. Like demands for maternity/paternity benefit, it need not and indeed should not be a payment just for women.

With regard to Gerry's argument about payments to women being used as justifications for the closure of nurseries, I would point out that this need not be the result or even the logical reaction of the state. Witness the fact that day nurseries, practically the only full-time state nursery provision available, are accessible mainly to single parents who would otherwise be on social security.

The consequences of the introduction of such payments would be in the hands of the labour movement, which would now have the support of all those women who could previously not have been able to afford to engage themselves in political activity. These women would be no more content to accept such payments as alternatives to work if that's what they want than unemployed workers are willing to accept the dole as a permanent alternative to work.

DON'T BOYCOTT SCARMAN

I WISH to express my disagreement with the view that the Scarman inquiry ought to be boycotted.

There is no doubt that the terms of reference of the inquiry and Scarman's own record (Red Lion Square inquiry etc.) indicate that this inquiry too will be a whitewash and that every effort will be made by the authorities to prevent the black community and the Left from using the inquiry as a platform.

However, these considerations in themselves are no grounds for boycott.

Surely we should participate in the inquiry, expose its tensions from within, and use this weapon of the state to our own ends. In particular, the following considerations seem to me to favour the tactic of 'critical use':

• If the radical representatives of the Brixton community do not turn up to represent their community, then other regressive elements will do so and will go unchallenged.

• Scarman and government inquiries of this kind may be discredited in our minds and perhaps in the minds of many residents in Brixton; however, to most people they still appear legitimate and have to be exposed and fought against in practice. We cannot bypass this process.

• The inquiry provides a favourable opportunity to make propaganda not only about events in Brixton but also about the nature of state legality. The Left and social justice movements need to be active in exposing what is going on.

what publicity is made on 'confidential' police reports and files, etc., as well as putting our version of what actually happened in Brixton.

• A 'labour movement inquiry' is not of course wrong in itself but it is not a substitute for making use of the official inquiry. First, there already has been a labour movement inquiry into the police in Lambeth and it was explicit and comprehensive in its condemnation of the police.

Second, we should be wary of isolating ourselves from those who still believe in the impartiality of the judges: rather than cut ourselves off from them, we should participate with them in the official inquiry, reveal to them its class and racial partiality, and then show them how even the weightiest of the state's weapons can be turned against itself. It is vital that we do not cut ourselves off from such people unnecessarily.

Third, the public impact of a boycott is far less than the impact we could achieve by working from within, arguing, exposing, and demanding.

The general point is that we should learn to use bourgeois legality and not merely to denounce it. This approach was used to great effect by the black families at the Deptford inquest. Failure to do so is in my view ultra-leftist.

There may be tactical reasons for abiding by the decision of the Brixton Defence Campaign, but this does not mean we have to agree with them.

BARRY FINNEGAN
London



POLAND IN PERIL

THEY are taking control of one position after another. Counter-revolution is using the extremist wing of Solidarity as a striking force. It has tricked workers who have joined a trade union to drag them into a criminal plot against people's power.

The depths to which Stalinist 'thought' has degenerated are shown by the caricatured mendacity of the Russian Politbureau's letter to its 'brothers' in the Central Committee of the Polish Communist Party.

Lie is piled upon lie. The forces of 'good' (read: the hardline careerists of the Stalinist parties and police states) are portrayed in a life and death struggle against the forces of 'evil' (read: millions of Polish workers, farmers, and students, and their democratic organisations).

Worried by the approaching extraordinary 9th Congress of the PUWP on July 14th, Brezhnev and the Russian Politbureau have sought one more last-ditch attempt to whip the Polish leadership and Party into line.

As they interpret the situation, "the continual concessions to the anti-socialist forces and their demands have led to a situation in which the PUWP has retreated step by step under the pressure of the internal counter-revolution, which is supported by foreign centres of imperialist diversion".

Virus

The Moscow bureaucrats have delayed remarkably. After all, they invaded Czechoslovakia in 1968 at a stage when the mass movement had advanced nowhere near so far as in Poland today.

They have conceded much, in terms of the instability and uncertainty that the virus of Polish workers' democracy has injected into the Eastern bloc.

Yet they have stayed their hand, despite ominous and clear warnings like the protracted military exercises of Soyuz '81.

No matter what was conceded in the short-term, they banked on the unity of a privileged and bureaucratised Communist Party, enmeshed within the State apparatus, which would at the crucial point begin the slow but relentless counter-attack, watering down the gains, emasculating the democratic procedures, demoralising the working class through increased economic hardship — while buying off those most under the influence of the Catholic hierarchy into some form of collaboration.

Trojan

The consolidation of bureaucratic power in Eastern Europe in the late '40s, or its reestablishment in Poland after 1956, are the models.

The plan has backfired. The Trojan Horse of millions of Communist Party members entering Solidarnosc after the August 1980 accords to undermine the movement from within, is crumbling away to nothing.

The Stalinists' own peculiar conception of 'democratic centralism' has evaporated, as long-standing Communist Party members are swept along with the wave of change. In many regions Party members were spearheading Solidarnosc activities against the Party and State bureaucracy.

The spillover into the Party itself was only natural.

The 'horizontal movement' took off, with rank and file militants establishing alternative

unofficial bodies and meetings of PUWP members — and many a timeserver has fallen victim to its wrath. Secret ballot elections have been pushed through to replace the yesmanship of raised hands under bureaucratic supervision, and pressure has forced the convening of a Special Congress in July.

Many of the existing members of the Central Committee assumed their posts in the early part of 1980, when Gierk was still Party General Secretary. Most of them are hostile to the social and political convulsions

which have rocked the country, and distrustful of the rank and file. The distrust is returned in equal measure. No more than 20 or 25 per cent of the CC members are expected to be elected as delegates to the forthcoming Congress.

So far have events progressed from last year that an unofficial congress of party delegates committed to reform and work within Solidarnosc was to be held before the official one on July 14th — to plan an organised and effective intervention to ensure recognition for the democratic gains.

The brutal struggle at the 11th Plenum of the Central Committee, where the curt hints, innuendos and implications normally used by Stalinists to express disapproval gave way to blunt denunciation and accusations, showed the leadership apparently incapable of rallying its forces.

The 'reformers', around the Kania-Rakowski-Barcikowski trio, were pitted against hardliners like Grabski and others, traditionally seen as the voice of the economic managers, who desired greater pow-

ers of decentralised economic decision-making but with a firm control over the working class.

The Grabski group was encouraged by the Russian Politbureau letter, and pressed for a vote of no confidence in the Kania leadership. Kania pressed for no such vote, and won, but only by the abstention of over half the CC members.

Although the hardliners are discredited careerists, determined to cling onto their power and privileges even at the cost of putting down the Polish workers' movement in blood, they are the possible future quislings of a Russian-imposed government.

And Kania's differences with them, though possibly sharp, are purely tactical. Whatever conceptions or feelings motivate the 'reforming' bureaucrats personally, they differ in their ultimate aims from people like Grabski only in terms of how they are to be achieved.

The strength of this 'reforming' wing of the PUWP is the support of the army chiefs, who know the disaffection in

the armed forces and the unwillingness of the army to become a mere instrument of the ruling class.

Let's Wales and the people in the Southern leadership most influenced by the Catholic Church clearly see their best course as backing this wing of the bureaucracy against the other Walesa incessant appeals for calm, no strikes, and space to allow the PUWP to become 'a strong party', because the country needs a strong 'Communist Party'.

Yet it is increasingly clear to many Solidarnosc militants that the 'step by step' strategy is not working. Either the Russians invade, in which case all talk of gradualism and 'small step' strategies becomes irrelevant, or the workers' movement will have to turn on itself and destroy its own autonomy and democracy.

And, irrespective of Moscow's decision to invade or not, the working class of Poland, the poor farmers who spearheaded the Rural Solidarnosc movement, the students, and all those who have chafed under decades of arbitrary rule, can only secure their victories by reliance on their own strength, not on the goodwill of some wing of the bureaucracy. If it is a question of negotiations with the Stalinists at home or abroad, the best negotiation is from a position of strength.

Rather than offering concessions in the hope that the Russians will be appeased, the Solidarnosc movement must begin to mobilise fully for the arming of the workers and peasants, and for fraternisation with the Polish army conscripts. If the Russian dictators and the Polish bureaucrats are determined to deprive our class of the most basic democratic rights and of its natural and proven capacity to run the country, they have to be resisted.

Either a historical defeat will be inflicted on the Polish workers, and a return to the age of Stalinist cant and oppression, or a determined political and military resistance will show the Kremlin that the old ways are gone forever.



Socialists in Britain say: Hands off workers' Poland!

IRAN: MULLAHS GO FOR A CLAMPDOWN

by Andrew Hornung

IN IRAN, the government is set to murder the President. No amount of 'constitutional' language about the 'political competence' of President Bani Sadr can cover up this simple fact.

With the diversionary hue and cry over the American hostages now over, the reactionary clergy has mounted a consistent campaign to defame and now depose Bani Sadr. The campaign has climaxed in a parliamentary vote declaring the President to be 'incompetent'.

Ayatollah Khomeini (who recently threw his weight behind the anti Bani-Sadr campaign by removing him from his position as commander of the armed forces) reacted to the Parliament's decision by calling on the President to stay at his post so long as he agreed to remain within the law.

At the same time, however, he is widely referred to as a criminal, a wanted man who must at all costs be seized. Certainly preparations are underway to put him on trial if the groups of thugs on his trail don't kill him first.

The latest campaign against Bani Sadr began in early March with daily accusations by Prime Minister Rajai and his followers in the Islamic Republic Party.

On March 5th, 150,000 people marched and participated in a rally organised by Bani Sadr to commemorate Mohammed Mossadeq, a hero of the secular, republican, anti-imperialist movement of the 1950s. Bani Sadr was desperately trying to build himself an organised base.

When the rally was attacked by Hezbollahis ('members of the God-party'), organised by the IRP, the police refused to

get involved. Bani Sadr called on his listeners to take matters into their own hands. The result: the attackers were led away bleeding.

The next day Bani Sadr was accused by the IRP of "clubbing down the just movement of Islam". Since then the cry to indict him has increased, the offices of the movement he was trying to build have been closed down, and he has been threatened with death.

Now that the clergy have purged the Majlis (Parliament) of any opposition (there was only one vote against the condemnation of Bani Sadr), they will feel even freer to attack the Left.

Unfortunately the Left is very weak. The biggest group, the Fedayeen, split last year, with the majority going over to support of the clergy and full-scale support for the war effort against Iraq.

The Tudeh ('Communist' — i.e. pro-Moscow) Party has long been an apologist for Khomeini's clerical cut-throats. The recent attacks on its paper Mardom have still not stung these opportunists into taking a stand against the government.

The Mojahedeen organisation, which has considerable support, has taken a much more critical attitude towards the government, despite being committed to Islam and having a rottenly soft attitude towards Khomeini. Consequently it has been the target of physical, 'legal' and propaganda attacks by the authorities, with many of its members being beaten up, arrested, and executed. It has now come out on the streets in defence of Bani Sadr.

It is difficult to assess the strength of the independent organisations of the working class and the village

councils in the countryside.

What the government most fears, unfortunately, in its current campaign, is the reaction of the army. When the Iraqi invasion attempt began, it was widely thought that the increased strength and popular standing of the armed forces might lead them to seize power at some opportune moment.

Perhaps this development was afoot and prompted the mullahs to try to head it off. Certainly the clergy have been quick to tell the armed forces to keep fighting and keep their noses out of political affairs.

The mullahs' influence on the raw recruits and their still considerable popular standing could be enough to undermine any attempt by the military leaders to throw off the shackles of clerical control.

But in the longer run, the highly technocratic and strongly US-influenced army chiefs cannot be happy to take orders from the religious authorities. If the military defend Bani Sadr, then it will not be for the sake of democracy, but because he represents more modern capitalist culture and a better bridge to the imperialists than the followers of Khomeini.

The mullahs are attempting to stamp out every element of independence from their reactionary influence. Iranian socialists worthy of the name will defend every democratic gain of the gigantic movement — the true movement of the Iranian masses — that swept the Shah from power.

The murderous drive against Bani Sadr is entirely reactionary. No socialist would have voted for him,

but he was the choice of the majority of the Iranian masses.

But a defence of democratic rights cannot be based on the slogan, 'Support Bani Sadr'. The course of events in Iran has shown more clearly than the most brilliant text-book that 'democratic' trends within the bourgeoisie cannot in practice defend even bourgeois democracy.

Bani Sadr compromised with the right-wing mullahs, led campaigns like the Islamic purge of the universities, opposed the right to self-determination of the Kurds and other nationalities, and made himself the spokesperson of capitalist reconstruction.

He deserves nothing but distrust from the Iranian workers and peasants. His own policies doomed him to political isolation. Yet the workers and peasants stand to be the chief losers from the campaign which has led to his downfall.



LABOUR WOMEN DEMAND ACTION

Rachel Lever reports from the Labour Party women's conference.

LAST YEAR, when delegates at the Labour Women's Conference began to complain that their resolution were going nowhere, Chief Women's Officer Joyce Gould assured them it wasn't so. After this year's conference, delegates felt less than ever inclined to trust to the goodwill of Joyce Gould, the National Labour Women's Committee, or anyone else not elected by the Women's Conference and accountable to it.

One delegate, in a state resembling shock, got up and related that chairperson Charlotte Ellis had told her that the whole discussion on the women's rights document and the forty recommendations formulated by the National Women's Committee was on the agenda purely for the purpose of giving delegates a chance to air their views.

It turned out, too, that no record of the Women's Conference is ever published. It's up to delegates' memories and their determination to follow up the fate of their own resolution whether anyone even checks on the action taken.

More assurances from the platform: why don't you read the report at the start of the agenda and you'll see what we did with last year's resolu-

tions? To which Paddington Women's Section delegate Diane Abbott replied: "We shouldn't have to read about it. If our resolutions were being implemented, we'd know about it. It would be part of our experience."

Conference did, in fact, air its views on many vital subjects, passing resolutions on the economy and unemployment, women's rights, benefits, nuclear power and disarmament, many calling on the next Labour government to do this or that good thing.

But the big controversies came over the motions which meant something here and now, or which challenged the whole advisory ethos of the women's conference.

The platform opposed a detailed amendment on housing from Tower Hamlets, which called on Labour councils to unite and confront Heseltine, oppose rent increases and called on the Party to support all actions to prevent council house sales. We were told to vote against because if we objected to Heseltine telling councils what to do, how could we, too, presume to instruct Labour councils... And conference should vote for nothing that condoned illegality. This produced a tied card vote, 154 each way.

And a motion from Stafford (eventually moved by Audrey Wise after the Conference Arrangements Committee had failed to timetable it and every other speaker had demanded a debate on it) called on the whole of the labour movement to unite to defend Labour councillors threatened with surcharge by the District Auditor. It was carried unanimously, and one wonders what delegates made of the plat-

form — first trying to drop the resolution, then recommending a vote for it...

Delegates approached the debate on the Women's organisation in a confident mood. We knew it would be close, and the platform meant to oppose all the composites calling for democratic changes. But we'd just carried a reference-back of the CAC's proposals by a good majority, demanding a debate that morning on the Deputy Leadership contest. (A pro-Benn resolution had been dropped off the agenda.) And delegates were armed with a briefing leaflet from Women's Fightback explaining the importance of the resolutions.

Unfortunately the composites had been clumsily drawn up, making it impossible to get even the less controversial ideas through the platform's blockade, and the nearest we came was within 20 votes of winning.

But cracks had opened up in the National Committee. Probably fearing total defeat next year, they recommended acceptance of a Militant motion to end the archaic system of postal ballots for regional and national women's committees in favour of election at regional conferences.

In the coming year there will be tremendous chances to build the women's organisation. After October, GMCs will no longer be able to block the formation of women's sections. And at a well-attended caucus meeting on the last day, called by Women's Fightback, delegates resolved to keep in contact through Fightback and undertook to help newcomers at next year's conference.

WOMEN'S Fightback held the biggest fringe meeting, attended by about 150 women, despite the fact that Tony Benn, who was due to speak, was still in hospital.

The meeting was entitled "Can Labour lead women against the Tories?" Elsie Broad, from the Royal Pride strike, told how she had come into conflict with the boss she'd worked for over the last 15 years, joined a union, gone on strike, joined the People's March and become interested in social-

ist politics.

She recalled how Labour canvassers had come for her vote in the Council elections, seen her People's March tee-shirt and assumed she would be voting Labour. "I told him — When I see the Labour Party down on our picket line I'll consider whether I'm voting Labour."

Other speakers were Barbara Switzer of TASS and Jo Richardson, who in the short time left both echoed Elsie's words. "If Labour fails to lead women against the Tories"

Barbara said, "it doesn't deserve to exist".

At the CLPD Women's Action Committee meeting that evening, Militant emerged as the standard-bearer of committed anti-feminism, arguing against positive discrimination for women, against all the changes that had been proposed to make the women's organisation more democratic from the bone-headed standpoint of bread-and-butter struggles counterposed to a fight to understand and overcome our oppression as women.

On the Monday, Labour Solidarity appeared, with a fringe meeting addressed by Gwyneth Dunwoody and Helen Eady of the GMWU, alternating between demagogic appeals to the older members of the audience against these nasty youngsters who don't care about the party and vicious attacks on the rest of us.

After the opening speeches purporting to unite the party against the Tories, the rest of the meeting divided between pro- and anti-Solidarity speakers having a go at each other...



Elsie Broad speaking at the Fightback fringe meeting

Conference passed Islington Central's motion calling for a demonstration for a woman's right to work, despite opposition from Marie Patterson of the TGWU, who tried to incite the trade union delegates against it on the grounds that its suggestion that "nothing had been done" to highlight unemploy-

ment was an insult to the unions.

It was hard to fathom the real reason behind her opposition, other than fear of a repeat of the aggro between the TUC and feminists on the anti-Corrie demo.

The demonstration of opposition from Marie Paterson (supported by Mel

Read of ASTMS) was useful in showing that this demand won't be easy to win, and will be achieved not

by lobbying sympathetic women in the bureaucracy but by gathering strong rank and file support for the demand that the demonstration be called. Islington Central

Women's Section has resolved to keep up the campaign, and is writing to delegates to the conference asking them all to send resolutions to the NEC for action to be taken.

Apart from anything else, the resolution is a challenge to those who claim that the Women's Conference is not ignored.

These paper policies don't beat sexism

On paper, the local government white collar workers' union NALGO has a relatively good record on women's rights.

But there is a big gap between promise and performance, as Mary Corbishley found at this year's NALGO conference (June 6th to 13th)

THIS WAS my first time at Annual Conference. Coming from a NALGO branch where we have made some headway in getting women's issues treated seriously, I found it quite a shock to hear glaring sexist remarks go unchallenged.

The Mayor of Blackpool, opening the conference, peppered his speech with quips about 'vital statistics' and 'chorus girl breakfasts'. There were a few hisses,

drowned by howls of laughter.

Early in the conference there was a debate on a proposed rule change to enable action to be taken against members who openly discriminate on grounds of race, sex, sexual orientation, marital status or religion. In opposing the motion, one NALGO member brought loud laughter when he stated, "I discriminated recently. I got married and chose a woman... I opted for normal sex".

To be fair, the National Executive speaker who followed did dissociate himself and state that NALGO was against discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation. But the National Executive was not prepared to back this up by supporting the motion. The rule change was lost, and the jokes of that speaker seemed to set the scene for the women's debate the next day.

The debate on reaffiliation to the Women's TUC (from which NALGO withdrew five years ago) showed complacency and lack of interest — a good part of the confer-

ence walked out when the debate started, and there was continuous talking on the floor while the speeches were made.

The main arguments against reaffiliation were that the Women's TUC has no power, and that it hives off women's issues which should be taken up by the whole trade union movement.

The first point is easily answered. If the women's TUC has no power, then let's give it some!

As for women's issues being hived off, the fact is that they are hived off already, if only because a lot of unions don't take them seriously in the first place.

It was because of the Women's TUC that the TUC organised a mass demonstration against the Corrie Bill. If women had the opportunity to develop and strengthen their own organisations, such as the Women's TUC, then they would make sure that the issues affecting women at work and in the trade unions were placed firmly and squarely on the agenda of the whole trade union movement.

NALGO does recognise

that women have special problems and do suffer discrimination, but we are not encouraged to meet separately to discuss them. The issues are subsumed under Equal Rights committees and District Discrimination committees, which also deal with discrimination against ethnic minorities and the disabled.

Two further motions were defeated in this session. One called for affirmative action programmes to be devised by branches (with educational course, the provision of creches at meetings, and the establishment of equal rights committees) to encourage greater participation by women members.

It seemed uncontentious and was even supported by the NEC. But a woman who might have stepped out of the Tory Party women's conference argued that "I am ashamed of my sex... This discriminates against men... What we have to do is to change the attitudes of husbands" — to maybe do a little more housework!

The next motion, call-

ing for a National Women's Officer, was clearly lost before it was debated, given the atmosphere that now prevailed in the conference hall.

It's a measure of how deeply sexism runs when such a debate could be followed by overwhelming support for the Lee Jeans occupation.

On the first day of conference, at the Local Government Group meeting, support for the Liverpool typists newly brought into struggle for improved pay and conditions was shown by a decision to go against the Local Government Group committee and vote for the use of national funds to pay the strikers.

Both these were important examples of solidarity and must be built on. If the typists' fight takes off in other branches, then women will begin to see that at last some of their interests are being taken to heart by the union.

50 per cent of NALGO's members are women, but only 20% of the National Executive; and, despite many fine paper policies, NALGO has done little

about the low pay and low status jobs that most women NALGO members do, namely clerical, typist and telephonist work.

The typists' campaign is a change of direction, but the conference agenda chose to leave to last a motion on maternity and paternity leave. Needless to say, it didn't get taken.

Many women have recognised that the present structure of Equal Rights committees is inadequate. Women need to be better organised in the union.

A women's fringe meeting at the conference (planned at the NALGO workshop at the Festival Against The Tories in May) attracted over 50 women. We agreed to try to be better prepared for next year's conference.

We can start with some other branches passing motions like Haringey NALGO's, whereby 50 per cent of the conference delegation places are for women, so that next year's conference is more representative of the membership.

Benn debate smothered

THE DEPUTY leadership contest loomed large at the women's conference from its opening minutes, when Jim Byford, chairperson of the local High Peak CLP, castigated Michael Foot for joining with the Tories to attack "a man who is fighting for the policies we all support".

Tony Benn for Deputy badges were in hot demand. And delegates waited impatiently to see when the pro-Benn emergency motion was going to be taken.

On the last day, patience ran out. Reference back was carried by a good majority, leaving the CAC only one option — to put it on the timetable for that morning.

But back they came, an hour later, with a recommendation not to debate the motion!

A re-vote, which they had no right to call, was taken in a classically confusing manner, with up to 50 delegates voting for the CAC's recommendation in the belief that they were voting for the motion to be debated. Calls for a card vote or re-vote were refused, and the conference steam-rolled on.

Stop Tory rates clampdown

THE TORIES are rushing the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill through Parliament. Their plan is to get it through before next year's local authority budget rate-fixing meetings are held.

It means that industrial, commercial and domestic rates will all have a maximum limit. Supplementary rates will be limited and a referendum or full council elections will have to be held before any supplementary rate is levied.

Fightback

Ken Livingstone, Leader of the Greater London Council, told Socialist Organiser:

BB If this Bill is passed, it's the end of local government. Power

would then be completely centralised at Westminster.

"The Tories are intent on forcing us to make a choice — between implementing their cuts or going bankrupt. My position is that we should go bankrupt or into opposition — I will not implement the Tory cuts. Hopefully that will be the position of the GLC.

"The Tories are precipitating the debate that's going on in the Labour Party about the rates and fighting the cuts. They plan to make local government come to a dead stop. Basically what they're doing is trying to overturn the results of the May elections.

"Fighting this is not just the concern of local authorities or the public

sector unions. It must be fought by the whole trade union movement. We need an all-out fight.

"This must be extended to Parliament as well. It would take only a few MP's to obstruct and filibuster Parliamentary business to reduce it to a dead-stop.

This must be done. Otherwise it's the end of local government.

LOTHIAN MUST NOT FAIL

by Callum McRae

"THERE'S not much more we can do now. It's up to you to win this fight". So said councillor John Mulvey to a meeting last week of 600 shop stewards representing Lothian Regional Council employees.

The meeting, which voted 600 to 5 for a 24 hour strike of all regional employees on June 30, was called to plan action to prevent George Younger, secretary of state for Scotland, deducting £53 million from the region's funds.

Younger's proposals would devastate the region's services. The council estimates that a cut of only £40 million over a whole year could result in nearly one in five of its employees facing the sack. A cut of £53 million does not bear thinking about.

service is currently the best and cheapest in Britain).

This 'option' has given as it was designed to do boost to a local campaign set up to fight the rate increases implemented by the region last year. The campaign, 'Ratepayers' Action Group Executive RAGE' (more popularly known as the Reactionary Association of Gormless Eejits) has received almost total support from the local media and has significant backing in the wealthier areas of the region.

The second 'option' Lothian Region is to pay back the £53 million to the government. This means the government would deduct £53 million from the rate support grant still remaining, which is paid in weekly instalments of £3 million.

Lothian region has pledged themselves to neither of these options and to fight to the death. That, according to Younger's timetable, could come in August, when he would start to deduct the £53 million. It is then that the region will be bankrupt. Pay cheques could bounce and the council would be replaced by a commissioner.

Media

The timetable for the cuts is frightening, and the task of developing the level of action needed to defeat them is daunting indeed. But it can be done.

Parliament, with little real opposition from Labour MPs, this month passed the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Scotland Act. Under its terms, Younger has given Lothian region two options.

The first is to pay back to ratepayers the £53 million they have paid in 'excessive rates'. In reality this would mean a paltry £15 in the pocket of the average ratepayer, a sum which would be eaten up virtually overnight in increased prices for school meals and buses. (The Lothian bus

Support

A one-day strike took place weeks ago by NALGO workers in the region called at four days' notice. It was an impressive belated beginning of fightback. The 24-hour stoppage called for the 3rd of July was a magnificent demonstration of willingness of ordinary trade unionists to resist these cuts.

United public sector support is not enough on its own. We will require active support of private sector workers, wider national support, all-out strikes, occupations, fly-pickets, and so on.

There have been suggestions of selective action in a few areas. That will not be enough. It will both demoralise and divide, and will effectively place control of the action in the hands of a small committee of union bureaucrats.

How this campaign should be coordinated and led is critical. Yet the current structures have been dangerously inadequate.

Urgency

The Lothian Action Committee, a joint Labour Party/trade union body, is constituted on the union shop full-timers and officers. It has neither the willingness to fight, nor the confidence of rank and file activists. If that body is to play its role, it must be democratised and open to the rank and file as a matter of urgency.

The shop stewards conference must be called immediately, at the 30th — certainly before the teachers go on holiday on 3rd July — to plan escalation of the action. A shop stewards committee should be set up from the meeting to coordinate action between future conferences.

Lothian region has potential to show the Tories can be beaten. It must not fail.

Using Parliament for the struggle

by Martin Thomas

Parliament is usually the graveyard of radical causes. Filtered through the polite ritual of the Westminster gentlemen's club, promises and intentions diminish into mild tinkering.

But it need not be. Just recently, a determined group of Labour MPs effectively blocked John Corrie's anti-abortion bill — and strengthened the abortion rights movement outside Parliament — by energetic obstruction.

Back in the 19th century, a handful of Irish MPs did much more. Backed up by a mass agitation in the Irish countryside, they rammed the 'Irish question' into the centre of British politics, pushed the Liberal Party into supporting Home Rule for Ireland, and forced a series of land reform laws for Ireland.

Irish MPs had sat at Westminster since the Union in 1800. Mostly landlords, and elected by a very limited minority suffrage, they played little independent role — until the 1870s, when an independent Home Rule League

appeared in Parliament, and more middle-class MPs began to get elected.

In 1875 Charles Stewart Parnell, a maverick landowner, and Joe Biggar, a Belfast pork merchant, a Republican (and, like Parnell, of Protestant background), began to organise a group of MPs who would systematically obstruct the workings of Westminster on the principle that a British Parliament had no right to legislate for Ireland.

At first they had barely half-a-dozen hardliners. But their 'ungentlemanly conduct' won them increasing support. By 1881, for example, they were strong enough to block the Liberals' Coercion Bill for so long that the Speaker eventually scrapped the rules of Parliament and arbitrarily closed debate after a continuous session of 41 hours.

The day after the closure, the arrest of the Irish tenants' leader Michael Davitt was announced — and the Irish MPs protested noisily again. Debate continued only after 36 of them had been suspended from Parliament.

Parliament's rules were

changed to stop the Parnellites — but they continued to make Ireland centre-stage until Parnell was driven out as their Parliamentary leader after a divorce scandal in 1890.

What the most militant of the Irish middle class could

do for their nation, a solid group of left-wing Labour MPs could do for the working class — particularly if Tony Benn took the lead. And by doing it they could give a huge boost to the anti-Tory movement outside Parliament.



Parnell



Demonstrators and MPs stopped Corrie

CAVING IN TO THE CRIMINALS

THE TORIES are bringing in legislation to prevent prisoners serving sentences of 12 months or longer from standing in elections. This is to prevent another H Block prisoner getting elected like Bobby Sands in Fermanagh and South Tyrone.

The defenders of the 'rule of the ballot box over the rule of the bullet' are concerned that even ballot boxes, in the wrong hands, can be dangerous weapons. The people of Fermanagh and South Tyrone will be denied the opportunity to express their views through the ballot box until the Tory Government legislates its safeguards.

Michael Foot wanted at least a two-line whip on Labour MPs to vote against the government. But then the war criminals in the Shadow Cabinet revolted.

Don Concannon [the shadow Northern Ireland Secretary and the man who came to Bobby Sands' deathbed to 'promise' Labour would not support the hunger strikers] and



other front bench spokesmen on Northern Ireland said that whatever the vote in the Shadow Cabinet they would either abstain or support the Tories.

Faced with the prospect of 10 or 20 Labour MPs — including some of the Shadow Cabinet — defying the whip, Foot caved in and allowed a free vote.

Some contrast with the outcry when Benn defied the Shadow Cabinet over defence.

Will Concannon be challenged to stand against Foot for the leadership of the Party? Or does that only apply to those who seek to implement Party policy and vote against the Tories?

REAL WAGES ARE FALLING — OFFICIAL

The 'tax and price index' was brought in by the Tory government when the Retail Price Index was proving embarrassing for the government's claim to be winning the battle against inflation.

They included tax cuts

in the index to demonstrate that the average worker was not really so badly off under the Tories. The index shows the rise in pre-tax earnings needed by the average wage-earner to maintain the real value of take-home pay.

But now even this little ruse has backfired: the index is 15.7% up over the last year while earnings have only gone up by 14%. So the government's own figures show that real wages are actually falling. This is largely due to the increased National Insurance and failure to raise tax allowances and thresholds in the last budget.

And there's little chance of the government being able to cook the figures: tax cuts have been ruled out for the foreseeable future, despite election promises.

And now for the bad news...

The Bank of England Quarterly Bulletin says that wage awards for a number of years will have to be 'negligible' in both the public and private

sectors to improve the competitive position of British goods. And they want improved productivity on top of that.

Gee, life's good under the Tories.

KILLING MILLIONS AND WASTING MILLIONS

"The Reagan administration will hate it", says Howard Stringer, the executive producer of a series of five one-hour programmes on defence by CBS, being shown in the US. And well they might.

One of the programmes looks at Reagan's pet project, the Rapid Deployment Force, which will cost more than the proposed budget cuts in education, social security, Medicaid, Medicare, transport and energy put together. It concludes that the RDF is a 'bureaucratic juggernaut' of dubious military effectiveness.

Another programme films a NATO exercise simulating a limited nuclear war in Europe. It ends in chaos and the programme concludes that even a limited escalation along such lines would be a disaster for all concerned.

But perhaps the most stunning example is the F-18 Hornet. This US navy all-purpose aircraft was originally costed at \$5 million each, and is now reckoned at \$30 million.

They filmed it in exercises with the smaller, less sophisticated F-5, and it was consistently beaten.

But there is little chance of its being scrapped — as 20,000 companies in 44 states are involved in making parts for it.

There is some grim satisfaction to be got from the fact that even in its own genocidal militaristic terms, the massive spending on arms is a waste of money. But it's small consolation to know that you are being blown to pieces by a load of over-priced junk...



Reagan

HOMES FIT FOR

'The right to buy' was the slogan under which the Tories launched the sale of council houses. The picture presented was of council tenants having the chance to buy the houses they had lived in for maybe twenty or thirty years, a little security for their old age.

In Wandsworth, a Tory-run wilderness in South West London, the 'right to buy' has taken on a tanta-

lising new meaning. The St John's Estate, Battersea, was a crumbling pre-war estate which the previous Labour Council in Wandsworth began moving tenants out of in order to repair and modernise.

After £1.5 million of repair work and with a Tory council now in power, it has become the juiciest piece of property speculation in years. The Tories sold the whole estate to a West End property company, Regalian Properties, for £3.7 million.

The property company has now sold 50 of the flats, about a sixth of the total, for nearly £2 million. At a conservative estimate they should get back three times what it cost them, and make £8 million clear profit.

Meanwhile, there are 14,000 on the waiting list for council houses. To subsidise policies like these, Wandsworth tenants have just had rent increases of up to £6.75 in April, and have seen spending on repairs for their (unsaleable!) estates cut to an all-time low.

The tenants of St John's Estate were prevented from moving back after their houses were done up, because, in the words of the Council's Property Sales Committee chairman, "This was the worst slum estate in the Borough. Its reputation would have gone on. The sort of council tenants who would have wanted to go back there would have led to further deterioration".

BRITISH BOSSES PROFIT FROM APARTHEID

The state against strikes

SOME 60 per cent of foreign firms in South Africa are British-owned. These British companies, despite the so-called 'codes of conduct', continue to implement job reservation, segregation, wage discrimination and the migratory labour system.

All the major multinat-

ionals, such as ICI, Rio Tinto Zinc, and GEC, are involved; so are nationalised firms like the British Steel Corporation.

In the coming months and years, foreign firms in South Africa will come under increasing attack from the black working class — British workers

must be ready to take effective solidarity action, standing together with our fellow workers against the hypocrisy and exploitation of the bosses, who care only for their profits, never for the workers, black or white.

• Get your union to take a stand against the apart-

heid capitalism of South Africa and to affiliate to the Anti-Apartheid Movement.

• Get your union to investigate the links between parent companies in Britain and subsidiaries in South Africa so that effective solidarity action can be easily organised.

• Fight for the Anti-

Apartheid Movement to take a class position and work in the labour movement.

Messages of support for the Leyland strike to: NUMARWOSA, PO Box 322, Bellville South, South Africa.



Black workers on the march in Soweto in 1976

ROWNTREE AND LEYLAND STRIKERS NEED SOLIDARITY

by Colleen Molloy

THE STRUGGLE continues at Rowntree-Wilsons in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. 500 workers were sacked when they came out in support of three victimised workers and demanded recognition for their union — the South African Allied Workers' (SAAWU).

Just as in many other disputes in South Africa, management prefer to recognise an undemocratic and racist organisation, the Sweet Workers' Union.

SAAWU represents the majority of the workers in Rowntrees and is fighting for reinstatement and for the right to organise in democratic unions. The Ciskei Security Police have moved in, and most of the SAAWU represent-

atives are now in jail, where they have been on hunger strike.

Solidarity has spread throughout the working class in the form of a nationwide boycott of Rowntree sweets. Many workers recruited to replace strikers from the 'homelands' where their families are starving have resigned as soon as they heard about the background to the mass sackings.

Meanwhile, British workers in the parent company, Rowntree Macintosh, have heard nothing from their unions after the national officers of TGWU, GMWU, and USDAW had secret talks with Rowntrees management on the issue.

Rowntree workers here can ensure the victory of their fellow workers in South Africa by

taking direct action in support of their demands.

To do this they need to break their unions' collaboration with Rowntree Macintosh through the Joint Negotiating Council (JNC) and demand true representation and accountability to the membership, who have been kept in the dark.

At British Leyland in Cape Town, the National Union of Motor Assembly and Rubber Workers of South Africa (NUMARWOSA) is still fighting for the reinstatement of 2,000 workers sacked after striking for better wages.

The struggle for £1.15 (the present rate is 80p an hour) follows from a national strike wave in the motor industries in South Africa: Ford, Volkswagen and General Motors in Port Elizabeth,

and the Sigma plant in Pretoria.

Most of the BL strikers in Cape Town are 'coloured' (i.e. of Asian origin), but this struggle shows how workers can crush the racial divisions that the apartheid state has created between 'black' and 'coloured'.

Along with youth organisations and community groups, NUMARWOSA is organising a solidarity campaign to stop recruitment of scab labour and to support the families of the strikers.

This solidarity has already been extended to Britain — where the Leyland Action Committee, some T&GWU branches, and TASS at BL's plant in Leyland, Lancashire, have sent messages of support and pledged to fight for blacking and strike action. Convenors from the BL

Combine Committee are investigating links between BL in the UK and South Africa to assess what blacking action can be taken against supplies.

Any protest action in Britain — even a token one-day solidarity strike — would be a big boost to the struggle in South Africa. Most effective would be blacking action — refusal to load any parts for Leyland South Africa until it agrees to reinstate all workers and grant the wage increases.

Such action would also hit the apartheid state machine. BL supplies large numbers of land-rovers to the police and army, and the land-rover is the no.1 vehicle of the riot police.

Mitterand goes slow

by Martin Thomas

SLOWLY but surely is how François Mitterand says he will implement his reform programme in France. And the results of the two rounds of the National Assembly elections, on 14th and 21st June, show that most French workers are prepared to give him the benefit of the doubt.

The Socialist Party has won a huge victory with over 280 seats of the 491 in the National Assembly. The right wing has been decimated. The Communist Party — with nothing to offer politically except shallow jibes at Mitterand and nationalist, anti-immigrant vote-catching — lost half its seats.

The revolutionary left also got squeezed. 159 candidates from the Trotskyist movement Lutte Ouvrière scored little more than 1 per cent each — in previous elections LO has consistently got 2 or 3 per cent.

There is a tremendous mood of hope and enthusiasm. But how long will it last? After we ended 13 years of unbroken Tory rule in Britain, in 1964, Labour's popularity continued to grow until 1966 at least. But then the Labour government's progress became not merely slow but in the wrong direction — and the goodwill rapidly turned into bitter disillusion.

In today's terrible crisis of world capitalism, can the programme of slow, steady, piecemeal reform last even two years? And is Mitterand's appointment of ex-Gaullists like Michel Jobert as senior ministers a good sign?

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by John O'Mahony

THE ISOLATION of the Catholics in the North of Ireland has been broken by the results of the elections in the South.

Two H-Block candidates were elected, both from border constituencies. All the others did respectably, averaging about 10% of first preference votes.

Thus the issue of the North has now been thrown into the centre of Southern politics in a way it has not been since the arms trial of 1970. (Charles Haughey and others were put on trial by prime minister Jack Lynch for supplying arms to the northern Catholics. They were acquitted, but the trial was a clear signal from Lynch that the southern government would stand for anything Britain did in the North. As indeed it has).

Thus one of the central, underlying features of the stalemate — the isolation of the northern Catholics by the seeming indifference of their 'natural allies' in the South — is changing.

For 12 years the Catholics have been in revolt — with mass demonstrations for civil rights or, recently, for the hunger strikers, and with active and passive support for the guerrilla war of the IRA, which is, whatever the propagandists say, the militia of their community.

Given that the Catholics are one third of the population of the North, it was an unwinnable war; but the Catholic community has proved unbeatable, at least in face of the repression which British governments have found it politic to throw against them.

Sporadically the South

H-BLOCK VICTORIES BREAK ISOLATION

has rumbled, as when the British Embassy was burnt down in the aftermath of the Bloody Sunday massacre of 13 unarmed Catholics in Derry, in January 1972. But it has always settled down again.

Now it will be less easy for things to settle down. Two members of the Southern Parliament are in a northern jail, convicted by no-jury Diplock courts, and one of them is perhaps only two weeks from death.

In the next election —

which will most likely come inside a year, because no party emerged with an overall majority — H Block campaigners will probably contest all the seats. The hunger strike is proving an engine for destabilising the politics of the South while it mobilises the Catholics in the North (and polarises the Protestant against them, too).

It is difficult to gauge and important not to exaggerate the effect so far. The most likely government

seems to be a Fine Gael minority administration, sustained by Labour (which had heavy losses, especially in Dublin), and independents. Prominently pro-H-Block Fianna Failers, notably Sile De Valera, lost their seats.

Whatever government is formed will continue to collude with Thatcher. And politically the H-Block campaign is crippled by its own limitations. The limited breakthrough in the election is not the same

thing as a breakthrough to active, still less to effective, support.

The H-Block campaign was demanding that Haughey breaks off talks with Thatcher and expels the British Ambassador, and supporting the five demands of the prisoners:

- The right to wear their own clothes,
- The right to abstain from penal labour,
- The right to free association,
- The right to organise their own educational and recreational facilities,
- Restoration of remission.

But to overcome the vested interests which determine the passivity of the South, it is necessary to rouse up the Southern working class — to rouse them against southern Irish capitalism as well as in support of the Catholic

population in the North.

The politics of the H-Block campaign were narrow in focus and are narrow in real potential.

Much workerist rhetoric colours the campaign, and talk of working class actions (strikes) for limited Republican ends is the common demand of the far Left in particular. But this is not enough, and it is not class politics.

The most likely result of the election will be to spur the British and Southern governments to more energetic new efforts to find a way out of the present impasse — a way out short of the only real solution, an end to partition and a united Ireland with as much autonomy for the Protestants as is compatible with the democratic rights of the majority of the Irish people.

BEFORE the 1979 general election, top Tories drew up a secret 'hit list' of relatively weak and poorly-organised workers to be taken on and defeated. Four groups were singled out: steelworkers, British Leyland, the rail unions and the civil servants.

The idea, of course, was to move on to the big battalions — miners, dockers and so forth — on the basis of victories over these weaker groups.

Setback

The militancy of rank and file steelworkers took Thatcher by surprise. But in BL things have gone very much according to plan so far — and employers everywhere have begun copying Michael Edwards' anti-union methods.

As with BL, a defeat for the civil servants would give a massive boost to the Tories' attack on effective trade unionism everywhere.

And it would be a major setback for all public sector workers. Already, the Tories have set a 5 per cent ceiling on the next round of public sector pay rises. Nurses and ambulance

SUPPORT THE CIVIL SERVICE STRIKERS

men are currently up against exactly the same arrogant Tory intransigence that the civil servants have been battering against for the last 16 weeks.

Hitting

Clearly, it is in the interests of all workers that the Tories' strategy for the public sector is

defeated. But so far, the weak-kneed approach of the civil service union 'leaders' has kept the struggle isolated from other trade unionists. Instead of hitting the docks and airports with an all-out strike, and appealing to other workers for support, the leaders went instead for selective action with high strike pay, involving

very small numbers in complete isolation from the rest of the trade union movement.

Vague

Largely as a result of these tactics, many trade unionists do not identify with the civil service struggle as strongly as they should do. There seems to be

'Forget the white collar, bowler hat image. They are as dedicated trade unionists as anybody...

'Do not be gulled by the media. They are fighting for the right to negot-

iate which was set up 25 years ago. The Government has not only taken that off them but also the right to arbitration'

Emlyn Williams, President, South Wales Miners.

a vague feeling, even among militants, that this isn't a 'proper' strike and that civil servants are not 'real' trade unionists.

To counter this, we need to stress that most

civil servants are low paid workers. Two-thirds earn less than the average wage.

Clerical Assistants are on between £59 and £72.60 before tax.

They are claiming a

15 per cent increase (with a minimum of £10) — hardly enough to keep up with inflation. The Tories, after laterally tearing up civil servants' pay comparability agreements and refusing even to lease the results of official comparability study, have offered seven per cent.

The average civil service pension — contrary to popular myth — is only £29 a week. And 37,000 civil service jobs have been slashed since May 1979 — with another 65,000 scheduled for the chop if Tories have their way.

And as for their right to be considered 'real' trade unionists — 45,000 CPSA members vote for an indefinite strike (with no strike pay) as did 20,000 in other civil service unions.

Despite the cowardice and incompetence of the leadership, there is no doubt about the courage and determination of the rank and file.

The civil service struggle is the central anti-Tory fight taking place at the moment. A victory by the civil service workers would be a massive boost to the whole anti-working class strategy of the Government.

HOW TO WIN

by Stephen Corbishley

FOR OVER 15 weeks the national leaders of the civil service unions have argued that carefully selected strikes, with high rates of strike pay, would defeat the Tories.

The key weapon was going to be the blockage of tax, VAT, and other revenue to the Government. And over £5 billion has been blocked.

But Thatcher has not given in. In desperation the national union leaders made feeble attempts to step up the selective action, and combined that with going cap in hand to the Tories, begging for a compromise of 8 or 8½ per cent.

The Tories said no.

'Unity'

The CPSA leaders had already consulted their members through the annual May conference, and had been instructed to immediately shut down the airports and the docks.

The Council of Civil Service Unions (COCU) refused. Instead they just brought out the Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS) and Department of Employment (DE) computer centres.

And they consulted the members again. The CPSA leaders agreed to

recommend all-out strike action, strongly expecting to lose the vote and thus have an escape route for giving in.

But CPSA members voted 45,336 for all-out action, 24,124 for escalating selective action, and 33,744 for giving in. In other unions the votes were weaker for 'all out', but decisive against the 7 per cent. The Inland Revenue Staff Federation voted 22,923 to 18,371 against all-out. But when those who voted against all-out action were polled again on escalation or giving in, 17,328 voted for escalation and only 3,199 to give in.

The Major Policy Committee of COCU, on Thursday 18th June, voted to step up the selective action. And the CPSA leadership, under the guise of 'unity', went along with it.

But militants and socialists must prepare and build for all-out action now. If the leaders will not lead, then action must be initiated by the rank and file.

Militant

We should call for the selective action to close docks and airports immediately. These are the crucial areas: strikes in driving tests, DE/DHSS benefit computer centres, etc, are not

designed to, and cannot hope to, decisively hit the bosses, the bankers and the Tories.

The strikes need to be backed up by mass pickets. The COCU full council, at its meeting on July 2nd, should pledge to make any action decided by rank and file members official — and mobilise the militant striking offices for flying pickets.

In areas like Scotland and the North, very high votes were registered for all-out action, particularly in the DHSS and DE offices.

Failure

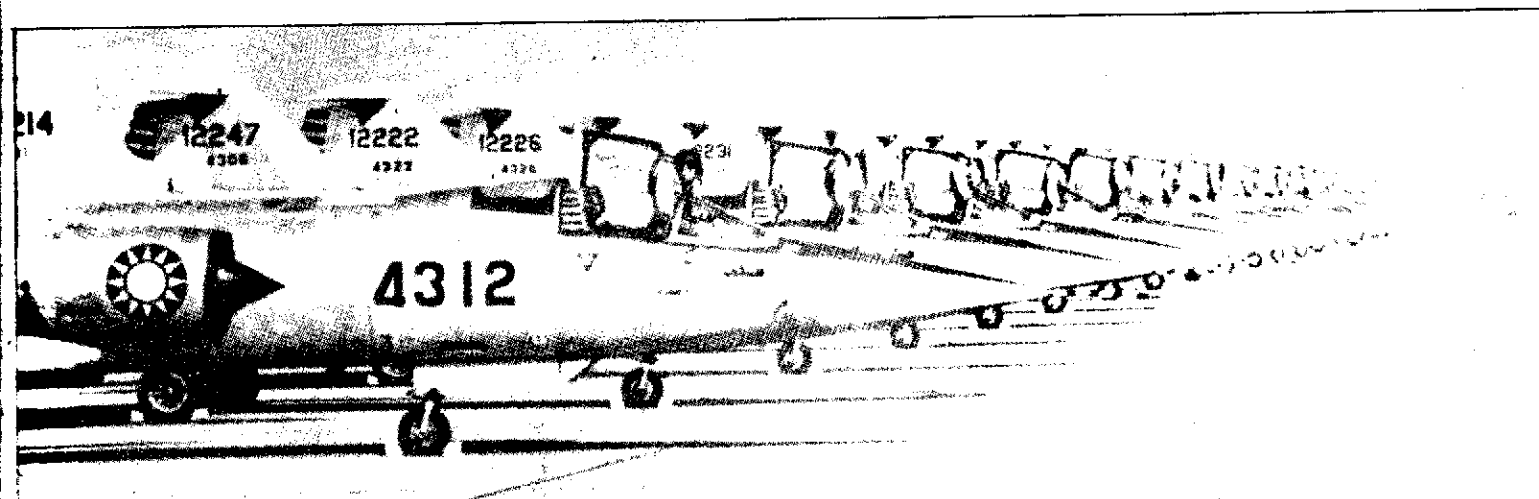
More demonstrations and publicity — especially for claimants — are also needed.

The local COCUs must be democratised, made more accountable, turned out towards the wider labour movement, and linked among themselves.

The first step towards links, with the national meeting of COCUs in Manchester on June 6th, were very important. The failure to hold the agreed meeting on June 20th was a setback.

From now on these meetings must be held weekly, thus providing the basis for leading the rank and file despite the dithering of the bureaucrats.





The power to cripple state power

by John Lister

TOP SECRET radar tracking stations have been forced to close. Monitoring stations vital to the British intelligence services have been strike-bound.

Lethal cargoes bound for nuclear submarines have been halted, and warships kept paralysed at dock-sides. NATO communications and rehearsals for war in Europe have been disrupted. Customs checks in British and Irish ports have been suspended.

Flow

The legal system has been dogged by the closure of courts and the pile-up of paper work. And the flow of cash to central government from taxation has dropped to a trickle.

Many of these actions have been partial and temporary — carried out as part of a wave of militancy that has swept through the civil service unions. But the implications are wide-reaching.

Many civil servants bemoan the fact that they had no industrial muscle to bring to bear against the Government. Yet the fact is that seldom before has a group of workers had such capacity to take action striking right at the nerve centres of the capitalist state machine.

The extension of trade unionism into the bureaucracy of the state poses new

questions not only for the Tories, the capitalist class, and the military elite, but also for the workers' movement as a whole.

Who can doubt now that trade unionists have it in their power to control, disrupt or halt some of the most basic repressive and aggressive activities of the state?

They can interfere with war plans, block surveillance mechanisms, impede or even halt air and sea traffic, prevent the operation of immigration restrictions and customs searches, and strangle the government economically.

Indeed, the potential power of the civil service unions is far greater than has been shown so far, since the selective action that has been imposed has enabled the armed forces and non-union members to focus their strike-breaking efforts on particular operations. An all-out stoppage would pose far greater problems to the government.

Six

The determination of the Tories to uphold their six per cent public sector pay limit has alienated and antagonised a section of workers until recently regarded as completely integrated into the state apparatus.

The state is no neutral body, impartially administering to the needs of all. On

public services — social security, health, education, airports and roads, post and telephones, etc. Some of these public services have been won by working class struggle; all reflect the inability of pure capitalist market economics to provide for society's basic needs. But all are also trimmed and adjusted to capitalist control.

Rule

The functions of the state bureaucracy are dictated by the material and political requirements of the capitalist class. Seeking a low-wage workforce and minimal expenditure on public services, for instance, the Tories have chosen to spend on unemployment benefit and social security rather than creating jobs through programmes of useful public works.

Some sections of capitalists and most Labour politicians would prefer a different strategy — by which the state would levy increased taxes and use that revenue to create additional jobs and thus defuse the mounting anger over unemployment.

But in either case the state acts as the instrument of capitalist rule, and its repression is aimed at those who challenge this rule.

The police on the streets of Brixton, the troops on the streets of Belfast,

the contrary, the state rests first and foremost on the conflict of interests between the ruling minority capitalist class and the exploited majority which forms the working class.



Now they're trade unionists... civil servants in Brixton.

Central to the state is the necessity for the defence of the private property of the capitalists against the demands of the working class. The two inseparable bases of this defence are the operation of a judicial system of law based on private property and the repressive powers allocated to special bodies of armed men — police and armed forces.

To staff, supply and finance these, a state bureaucracy is required to levy taxes and administer the day-to-day operations of the various wings of government.

The state bureaucracy also administers a range of

immigrant officials harassing blacks, social security spies harassing claimants, and Special Branch spies compiling files on trade unionists, all play their role in the preservation of the system of exploitation which brings prosperity to the few and poverty to the many.

Yet the civil service unions have shown that this can be undermined by determined actions.

A refusal by immigration officials to enforce racist laws could undermine the government's strategy to divide black workers from white.

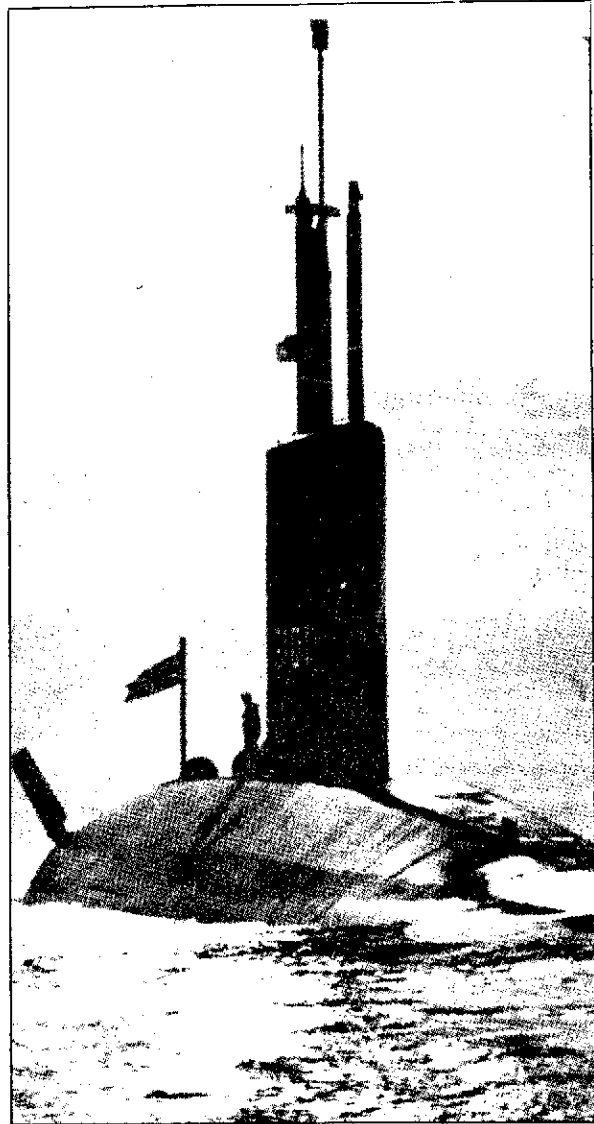
Strike action by key workers in defence establishments could cripple Thatcher's reactionary war drive.

Join

The more that civil servants recognise that they, too, like other trade unionists, are exploited and oppressed by the state machinery which they operate, the greater the chances that they will see the need to join with the working class in the struggle to overthrow the existing system.

And thousands of civil servants know from their own experience how much the state machine is tied to the existence of capitalism.

Visions of simply moving from capitalism to socialism through reforms legislated



Polaris submarine

through Parliament and administered by the state are no more than deluded pipe-dreams.

Marx, Engels and Lenin all stressed that there is no way in which the exploited majority can simply take over the state and wield it to their own advantage. History — in particular the Chilean catastrophe of 1973 — has proved them right.

State

Only mass action by the working class can overthrow capitalist exploitation. The basis of the capitalist state machine must be smashed — the standing army and the police disbanded and replaced by workers' militias as the basis of a workers' state.

Private ownership of the banks, trusts and major industries must be replaced by nationalisation, without compensation, under workers' management. And a new system of law appropriate to these property relations must be established.

The majority must assert its rule over the old minority of exploiters.

And in the drawing-up of a workers' plan to utilise and expand the productive forces left languishing by the capitalist class, sympathetic experts from the present civil service must be enlisted alongside rank and file trade unionists.

Only then can the apparatus of the state — a workers' state — become an instrument genuinely operating for the benefit of the mass of the people. Civil servants must play their role in this fight.

THE PICKETS MUST FLY

By Simon Temple

STRIKES have to be won actively. If you just walk out, go home and hope for the best, you'll probably lose.

The bosses have every chance to get at you as individuals, divide you up and convince you that there is no possibility of winning, while the union bureaucrats get a free hand to fix up a sell-out.

But there's been plenty of experience in the last ten years of how to win.

It was obvious from the start of the 1979 lorry drivers' strike that picketing the transport depots was not going to achieve much. The management could simply sub-contract the work to owner-drivers and scab firms, and hold out more or less indefinitely.

So the factories, warehouses, docks and railway yards that the drivers normally loaded out of and delivered to were picketed. In each area, strike committees were set up to run the action with delegates from each TGWU road transport branch in the district.

The Hull strike commit-

tee succeeded in virtually sealing off the town, while the Warrington committee got national publicity as a result of its careful vetting of the issue of exemption certificates. (Issued to allow the movement of medical supplies.)

But where the full time officials got control of the committees there were problems. For instance, drivers picketing the Cadbury's chocolate factory in Birmingham were surprised when the union told them to go away because they were holding up vital food supplies! (They kept the picket on anyway.)

The drivers won even though there weren't enough of them to go round the thousands of places that needed picketing. When scabs turned up determined to cross the line, they usually couldn't be stopped.

But back in 1972 the miners were able to mobilise thousands of flying pickets during their strike and concentrate them on the places where coal was still moving. They took the trouble to explain their case

to workers in the local factories and mobilise their support.

At Saltley Coke Depot in Birmingham 700 miners fought for several days to stop cowboy drivers taking loads out, and didn't quite succeed until local transport and engineering workers struck for the day and several thousands marched down to join in.

The police and the scabs knew they were beaten, and the depot stayed shut for the rest of the strike.

The key to that victory was that the miners saw what they had to do to win, and then went out and did it. They refused to be bound by the Heath government's Industrial Relations Act or the furor about 'mob rule'. Other workers saw that they were serious about winning their strike, and supported them.

Likewise when the Southampton dockers were locked out last March they went out and picketed all the ports (as far away as Hull and Felixstowe) through which their work was being diverted. They took no not-

ice of the laws against 'secondary picketing' and were able to get the support of other dockers and lorry drivers in most areas, and they were quickly re-integrated.

The Civil Servants should be in a really good position to put the screws on the government if the lessons of the past ten years are learned.

While picketing city centre offices is obviously worthwhile, it shouldn't be the main priority. The places to hit are the ones that affect the economy of the country.

Large-scale picketing of docks, airports, inland container depots and the like would soon have the government crawling for a settlement.

But it isn't enough to leave it up to the small number of customs and air traffic control staff to picket their workplaces. There are not enough staff.

What it needs is workers from the sections with a large membership, such as the DE and DHSS, to join in.



See workers picket in last year's strike

The unemployed

ORGANISING

SUPPORTING THE STRIKE

The TUC, working hand in glove with the Manpower Services Commission, has succeeded in its bid to 'tame' the Newcastle Unemployed Workers' Centre. The Centre was set up in 1978, financed by the City Council Urban Aid fund and the MSC. It was, in fact, the inspiration behind the TUC's plan to set up a national network of unemployed centres.

However, the activists (mainly trades council delegates) behind the Newcastle centre had a very different idea from the TUC about the aims of such a centre and how it should be run.

They wanted an organisation controlled by rank and file trade unionists and the unemployed themselves, with the emphasis on campaigning — leafleting dole queues, supporting workers in struggle, demanding free public transport for the unemployed, and so on.

They also worked closely with the local Unemployed Workers' Union.

Last January, the Newcastle centre called a conference to discuss establishing a national federation of unemployed centres. It was at this conference that a TUC representative turned up with a set of 'guidelines' for the centres.

The guidelines were not up for discussion — they were a fait accompli from the TUC Organisation Department.

The Guidelines effectively rule out any campaigning activity. They limit the objectives of the centres to

counselling and advice, opportunities for training, channeling requests for assistance to tribunals, educational classes, and promoting schemes under the MSC's programmes.

Firm rules for the make-up of a centre's management committee are also laid down: half from the TUC Regional Council and half from the Local Authority. Representatives of the unemployed have no voting rights.

The document also includes the following menacing passage: 'Should any trade union body seeking to establish a centre or any management committee of an established centre act outside TUC guidelines in any way that damages the interests of the unemployed or the trade union movement or could put at risk the funding of centres, it would be for the TUC Regional Council concerned to inform the TUC and the appropriate local authority'.

The Newcastle conference was split between those who wanted a concerted campaign against the guidelines, and those who favoured attempting to manoeuvre within them.

Newcastle Trades Council voted to oppose the Guidelines as 'ill-conceived and negative', but shied away from a confrontation with the TUC over the issue.

Meanwhile, the Newcastle centre continued with its campaigning activities, and maintained its link with the Unemployed Workers' Union.

The crunch came at the end of April.

Newcastle Trades Council received a letter from the MSC telling them that unless the TUC Guidelines were adhered to, their funds would be cut off from May. In particular, the MSC objected to the centre's links with the UWU, and demanded 'no further physical contact with the Unemployed Workers' Union'.

One of the leading Newcastle activists told us: 'We felt weak because there had been no real campaign against the Guidelines after the January conference. It would have been an unequal fight between us and the MSC, given that they control the purse strings,

and were clearly acting on behalf of the TUC as well.'

'So we've had to temporarily knuckle under and accept their demands. We've had to agree to a new management committee, including four councillors, someone from the Careers Advice Service, an MSC representative, and someone from the Regional TUC.'

'And we've had to cut off all formal links with the UWU. We even have to exclude them from our new premises. How we'll be able to work as a campaigning organisation I don't know.'

The lessons of Newcastle must be taken to heart by all those who want to build a fighting movement

against unemployment. The TUC want these centres to be tightly controlled, limited to recreational and welfare activities and, at most, 'respectable' pressure politics.

And they'll make sure their wishes are obeyed — unless we organise an all-out, national campaign against the guidelines, and for democratic, rank and file control of the centres.

Most importantly, any money from the MSC or local authorities must be on a 'no strings' basis. If this proves impossible, then the local labour movement must organise and raise the necessary finance itself.

TUC straitjacket

THE T.U.C.-appointed organisers of the 'People's March' have decided to keep the campaign going — but it will remain firmly under their bureaucratic control.

The major proposal is for a 'Youth Festival for Jobs' combined with a lobby of Parliament in November. There will also be a trans-Pennine march from Leeds to Blackpool, to lobby the Tory conference.

The marchers are being encouraged to turn up in their green 'uniforms'

and march as a contingent on the Cardiff demonstration on July 4th, and local demonstrations are planned in most major towns the 'People's March' passed through.

All these initiatives must be supported, but we must ensure that they aren't used by the TUC to channel the anger of the unemployed into a futile round of protests, divorced from the fight against closures and redundancies.

The national 'Coordinating Committee' and the

local support committees must be made accountable to the rank and file of the labour movement [at the moment they are appointed by the Regional TUCs] and — most important — the campaign must be thrown behind struggles like Lee Jeans and Rover SD1.

In the West Midlands, for instance, rank and file marchers are pressing for maximum support for the 'Save Rover SD1' march called by the BL Combine Committee for August 15th in Birmingham.

UWU aims

THE Statement of Aims proposed by the Leicester Unemployed Workers' Union states:

"The capitalist method of production can only offer the working class one crisis after another, and never any long-term gains in their standard of living. It needs to be replaced by a planned socialist economy, under the control of the working class, to produce for the needs of the majority, not the profit of the minority."

The UWU, it says, will "help the unemployed with any problems they may have regarding their benefits, rights, etc. We also campaign for facilities to be opened to the unemployed... We reject all proposals that the unemployed should do voluntary work in return for their dole money..."

"We demand that all the unemployed have jobs with wages at Trade Union rates. Temporary working schemes are being cynically used as a means of cheap labour for the employers... We demand all such schemes be under strict control of the Trade Union movement..."

THE PEOPLE'S March for Jobs fired the enthusiasm of workers and unemployed, especially those who lined the routes of the March or joined it when it passed through their towns.

But now the TUC and its unemployment centres offer no prospect of a real fight against unemployment.

Before the March many local unemployed action groups and unions were set up. One of these unions, in Leicester, has decided to carry on the initiative set in motion by the unemployed workers' centre in Newcastle in January this year, and to call a national conference of Unemployed Workers' Unions, to take place at Leicester Polytechnic Students' Union on June 27th.

Pam Owlawe, secretary of the Leicester UWU, told us:

"The Newcastle conference was originally called to discuss the problems of organising the unemployed, but became dominated by a discussion of TUC guidelines for unemployed workers' centres. This effectively split the conference down the middle."

A union for the unemployed

The employed in the trades councils and trade unions were prepared to try and negotiate within the guidelines. The unemployed and the organisers of the conference wanted more independence. They also decided that a recall conference was needed to discuss the original tasks of the conference.

Leicester was chosen because of its geographical location and because the Leicester delegates had won respect at the conference because of their contributions on the need for independent organisations.

The People's March, and the experience of Leicester UWU members on the Eastern Leg of that march especially, have made us realise more than

ever that if we're going to get more than cups and tea and sympathy from the TUC centres, then an independent National Unemployed Workers' Union is needed.

The NUWU will aim to unite the employed with the unemployed to actively campaign against unemployment and to support those workers taking direct action to save jobs.

A major aim of the union will be to campaign for all trade unions to accept the unemployed into their ranks and to have dual membership of the NUWU and the appropriate trade union.

An Unemployed Workers' Union is needed because some sections of the unemployed can't be taken into the present trade union structures,

e.g. some unions only keep members on their books for twelve months after they have been made redundant.

At the conference, amendments will be taken to the main resolution drafted by us, the 'Statement of Aims', and the Draft Standing Orders, already circulated to over one hundred groups and to contacts made on the People's March.

We've also allocated plenty of time for discussion on the fight to democratise the TUC unemployed centres, and how the UWU relates to the task of organising YOPs schemes and jobless youth.

To help link the UWU with employed workers' fights for jobs, speakers from British Leyland and Ansell's (the latest victims of trade-union sell-outs of rank and file action to defend jobs) and from the National Union of Mineworkers will be speaking in the afternoon session.

Over 50 groups have replied and will be sending delegates. All indications are that this will be the take-off point for the building of a mass national unemployed workers' union."



National conference

WE'VE HAD THE MARCH—NOW LET'S ORGANISE!

Organised by Leicester Unemployed Workers' Union

SATURDAY 27 JUNE 10.30–5.00pm
Leicester Polytechnic Students' Union

Sessions on Organising the Unemployed and The Fight for Jobs

Accommodation available on the Friday and Saturday night

Social events on both nights

Further details 52 Wyville Row, Leicester
or phone 0533 857828

By Norman Jacobs
(CPSA NEC, in personal capacity)

THE right wing CPSA National Executive Committee has found itself in something of a dilemma following the recent consultative exercise.

The voting went as follows:

■ For all out strike action, 45,336.

■ For escalating selective action, 24,124.

■ For accepting the offer, 33,744

Over 60% of the membership voted.

There was therefore a quite clear majority in the CPSA to go for all-out strike, and a negligible vote for giving in.

For most of the right wing on the executive this

CPSA leaders cop out

was the wrong result. The consultative exercise had fairly obviously been a manoeuvre to engineer a return to work vote — or at worst a close result on a low poll, that could then be discounted.

ALL-OUT

This much had been obvious from contributions made by several right wingers during the NEC debate on whether to hold a consultative exercise in the first place.

Fortunately for the right wing, the other eight unions on COCSU came to their rescue, as every one of them rejected the call for all-out action. This allowed the senior vice-president, Pat Womersley (in the President's absence) to make a ruling forbidding any discussion of CPSA going it alone with all-out action.

Her reason for this was that this was a COCSU campaign and members had voted for an all-out strike of all civil servants, not just CPSA members!

On being challenged, her ruling was upheld by 13 votes to 7. (Len Lever, the only 'independent' on the NEC, voting with the Broad Left.)

UNREAL

The debate which followed on from this ruling therefore took on a quite unreal air as, in spite of the large majority of members in favour of all-out strike, the NEC were not allowed to discuss such action except in

the context of bringing out all COCSU unions.

The NEC were not even allowed to discuss a motion calling for a deferral of all-out action pending further discussions with the other unions.

CPSA members have shown clearly where they stand on the issue of furthering the fight on pay.

PACK UP

They want all-out strike action.

It is absurd to argue

that CPSA members were saying they would come out only if everyone else did. If that was the case we may as well pack up now. It doesn't take a genius to realise that the FDA or AIT or even IPCS are not going to go down that line.

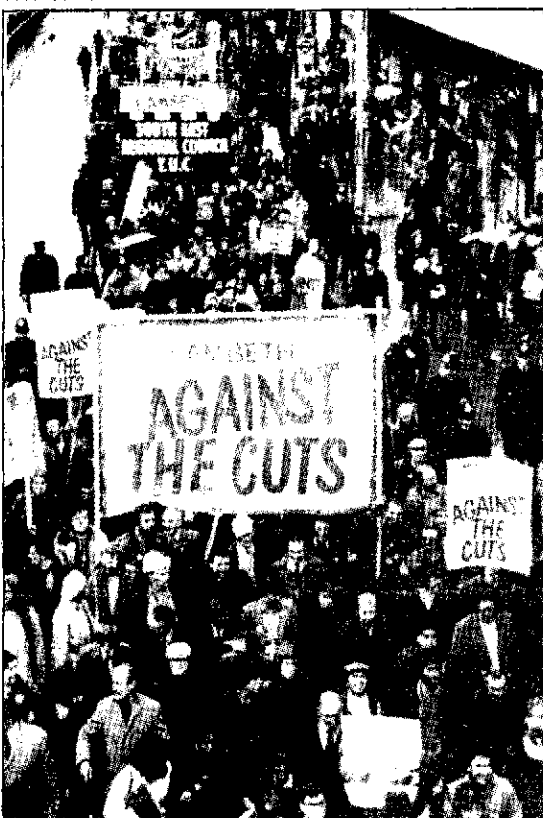
The right wing NEC have been completely out of their depth throughout this whole dispute. At CPSA Annual Conference this year they failed to give any kind of lead. There was no motion on

the conference agenda from them pointing the way forward and in fact they opposed every single motion coming from branches that called for any stepping up of action.

EXERT

If we are to win this campaign, CPSA members will have to exert the maximum pressure possible. The result of the ballot was a good one but it will be wasted if it is merely left up to the NEC to make the decisions.

The ordinary members up and down the country will have to lead by example. It will be the only way to win this campaign.



Help to change the Labour Party

THE Tories have cut 37,000 civil service jobs and plan to cut 65,000 more. There will be even harsher cuts if the Tories win the present struggle over wages.

But the cuts didn't start in 1979. The previous Labour government blazed the way.

How can civil service workers make sure that the next Labour government does not continue the cuts? How can they avoid the cuts struggle becoming just one long fighting retreat in face of aggressive governments?

Paper promises from notorious arch-cutters like Denis Healey mean nothing.

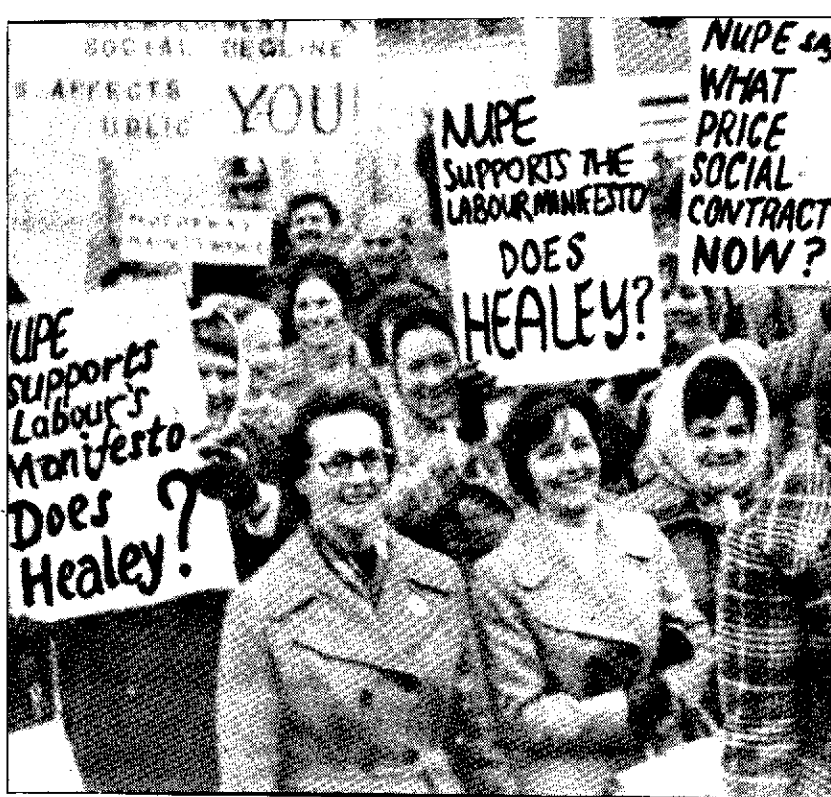
Strong industrial action is vital. But by itself it is not enough: the state is a strong, centralised emp-

loyer, able to choose the time and place for battle.

The industrial action must be clearly linked with political action.

The fight for Labour democracy is all about getting a government committed to the labour movement's policies and willing and able to carry them out. It is about making the conference decisions on better public services not just pious soft soap, but binding commitments for a future Labour government, backed up by mechanisms of accountability which have real teeth.

That's why the civil service unions should be affiliating to the Labour Party and throwing their weight behind the fight for democracy.



NUPE workers fight to hold Labour to their promises

The need for a new leadership

by Ted Eames

"THE national leaders in our pay campaign have shown a complete mixture of incompetence and naivety", declared one rank and file union member on an Oxford tax office picket line last week.

"More than that", added another, "they have been trying to sell us out and the only reason they have not succeeded is that Thatcher won't give them room to do it".

It would scarcely be possible to make a clearer assessment of the leadership's role from the day last October when the Tories broke the civil service pay agreement to the day last week when they totally 'mishandled' the consultation with the membership on whether to go for an all-out strike.

Fuel

The problem of leadership can be traced back to one root cause — the complete failure of the Council of Civil Service Unions (COCSU) to achieve even a minimal political understanding of their Tory opponents.

This was apparent right from the outset, when the scrapping of the Pay Research Unit was present-

ed to the membership merely as fuel for moral indignation. The whole orientation of the union bureaucracy was to keep the question of pay separate from the other big issues affecting civil service workers, issues such as the cuts, new technology, and victimisation.

The effect was to allow a political onslaught by the government to gather momentum while the union leaders were desperately trying to turn the clock back by deploping the 'intrusion' of politics into civil service industrial relations.

They even complained publicly that Thatcher was acting just as the Trotskyists in the unions said she would, and that her tactics were playing into the hands of the 'reds'.

This failure to understand the nature of the Tory government was the fundamental failing from which sprang a series of tactical mistakes both before and after the campaign began on March 9th.

The decision by the leadership to stick by the PRU and ignore the fact that it was a corpse was one such blunder. They were able to hold onto this position in the CPSA only by the narrow-

est of margins.

In addition, the claim of 15% with a £10 underpinning had only just been launched when Kate Losinska, right-wing president of CPSA and chairperson of the COCSU, went on TV to reveal that the union leaders might be willing to accept an offer in the region of 9 per cent.

Fetish

On the surface one strength in the union leadership's approach was to arrange an unprecedented unity between the nine civil service unions on the pay campaign. This was desirable for obvious reasons, but it soon became clear that the bureaucrats had created a fetish of unity, and that the problems inherent in maintaining unity with management associations and ultra-moderate groupings were being ignored.

So when the IPCS insisted that members should be given the option of voting to continue selective strikes in the consultation process on an all-out strike, the CDCSU went along with them, for the sake of unity, ironically producing waves of confusion and disillusion in the rank and file.

Most crucially the right wing assumed that a more intensive version of the tactics that had been used against the Labour government in 1979 would be sufficient against Thatcher in 1981.

However, selective action against a Labour government reeling from the wages offensive of the working class in 1979, and with an election imminent, is very different from selective action against the determination and confident class programme of a Tory government not half way through its term of office.

Despite this the union leaders maintain a desperate adherence to the selective action policy, right into the 12th week. The CPSA leadership, for instance, went into the union's Annual Conference without even a recommendation of any kind on the pay campaign. As a result of the mauling they took there, and the continued unwillingness of the Tories to up the 7% offer by even a half per cent, the CPSA lurched to a position of recommending all-out strike with just one membership circular to argue the position, after weeks of official propaganda had boosted the merits of the selective action.

At the same time, es-



Ken Thomas

calation of the campaign was presented as an option, with acceptance of the 7% as a third possibility. This was done despite the fact that the levy to support the strikers on 85% pay was known to be in dire trouble, and that it would have to be increased eight-fold.

This resulted in the confusion which led to a strong 'all-out' vote being weakened by a substantial vote for acceptance, and about a third voting for the unrealistic continuation of the selective action policy.

In addition to these points other more sinister manoeuvres have been carried out by the likes of Alistair Graham, would-be heir-apparent to CPSA General Secretary Ken Thomas.

Graham saw the in-

volvement of the DHSS/DE section in the escalated action as an opportunity to isolate and witch-hunt the Broad Left leadership in these sections.

This is why the whole question of the leadership is so central, and why the lessons must be drawn at each stage.

If it were only a question of the 1981 pay award, it would be important enough. But at stake in this campaign is also the future mechanism of pay dealing, the fight against the cuts, the battle over new technology, resisting victimisation arising out of the strike, and a whole list of Tory proposals like

regional pay, merit payments, and re-grading.

This is also why the victory won at CPSA conference on the election of senior full-time officials is such a breakthrough in the fight to establish a democratic and accountable leadership. The conditions for overthrowing the present leaders in the main civil service unions are clearly ripening.

The membership is rapidly learning that only a politically strong and well armed leadership is capable of defeating the Tories, and that only socialist policies can defend our living standards and win improvements.

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BENN FOR DEPUTY

Rachel Lever, a member of the Benn Campaign committee, replies to the New Statesman's articles calling for an abstention in the Labour Deputy Leader contest

THE WEEK Tony Benn went into hospital, the editorial staff of the New Statesman were engaged on putting together five pages of pompous, inconsequential attacks on him.

Some members of the Editorial Board did suggest that the journal should come out and support Denis Healey. They might as well have done so, for in the editorial it is suggested that members of the PLP should abstain in the Electoral College — which would have the effect of weighting the votes for Healey.

The only pertinent and understanding comments in the whole issue of the New Statesman are made by Roger Woddis, in a parody of Lewis Carroll's 'The Hunting of the Snark'.

No prizes for guessing who today's Snark (or Zark, 'a zealous creature said to guard the Ark of the Conference') is:

"They hunted till darkness came on but they found/ Not a button, or feather or mark;/ And they knew from the rumble that grew underground,/ They would have to kill more than the Zark".

The august editors of the NS, immersed in the clubby atmosphere of parliamentary shoulder-rubbing, are quite incapable of hearing "the rumble that grew underground". They are capable, it seems, of writing "personalities apart, there is nothing to prevent a committed left-winger from treating

Denis Healey with respect, as a substantial Parliamentary performer, and a vote-winner on the hustings". (Just like Shirley Williams?)

Bruce Page and Peter Kellner devote a breathlessly admiring page to these "committed left-wingers" and their attempts to field a "Stop Benn" candidate once they had failed to forestall him in the Tribune group.

Finally, they describe the braggart Silkin as "coily backing into the ring".

Under the cover of the "intensely felt" reaction against Benn of all these "committed left-wingers", Page and Kellner go on to dissect Benn's record.

They excuse their lack of interest in the record of the respected Healey or the coy Silkin on the grounds that they "excite no interest at all": which, if the truth be told, actually means that whereas Benn is by no means above criticism, Silkin and Healey are both so abysmal as to be beneath criticism.

In much the same vein, many women I have spoken to say they have doubts about Benn because he came off so badly in the interview Spare Rib did with him; but can anyone for a second imagine Spare Rib even interviewing Healey?

The thought of it is so absurd that it says more than all the policy statements can about the gulf that exists between Benn on the one hand and any of the likely candidates that may stand against him.

But whereas the attitude of these women is unconsciously very flattering to Benn, the New Statesman is not so naive. Far from subjecting

The rumble that grows underground

Benn's record, writings and speeches to scrutiny because they think he is worth it, they are doing so to undermine his campaign and muffle "the rumble that grew underground".

That much is clear both in their recommendation to abstain, their glorification of the Silkin camp,

Bob Cryer MP resigned from the last Labour government over its lack of support for the KME cooperative. One of the New Statesman's arguments against Benn is his record on KME. Cryer told us:

"It was a nit-picking article which failed to recognise that the money was given to KME against the wishes of the civil servants, against the wishes of other Labour ministers and against a minute issued by the permanent secretary of the department opposing the expenditure.

"It's difficult to understand why the New Statesman should have joined the pro-Healey bandwagon, which is the effect of their article.

"And Bruce Page's promising attitude of two years ago is now declining into plaintive whining against the democratic changes that are taking place in the Labour Party and which are symbolised by the arguments in the Deputy Leadership campaign."

and their contradictory attacks on the Benn campaign for over-reliance on "the classic devices of the smoke-filled room" on the one hand, and, on the other, for going too fast in "encouraging a new kind of democracy to ferment".

Nor is the New Statesman the first to discover that the Namibian Rossing mine contract delivered under Benn as Energy Minister is nothing to boast about, or that Benn's expansive optimism and his talk of workers' self-reliance sit un-

easily with his years as a minister under Wilson and Callaghan.

Many of those campaigning for Benn (including a wide political cross-section of the RFMC Deputy Leadership Campaign) are well aware of these things. That's why they say the campaign isn't about personalities so much as about policies. Or, to take the point further, it is about changing the whole system and relationships between personalities and policies.

It we can replace trust and virtue by account-

ability, and personal integrity by freedom of information and rank and file control, that will be far more significant than finding an unstained candidate.

Meanwhile Tony Benn, warts and all, is the standard-bearer of that accountability. If he fails in this year's election, many good things happening in the Labour Party (not least a 25% increase in individual membership, a rapid growth of new women's sections, and a mushrooming of interest in the Labour Party among trade union-

ists) will be set back.

And if he wins, those developments will be accelerated and the left strengthened, so that it may go on to formulate better policies and find better candidates than Benn himself.

Reg Race MP told us

"The New Statesman is now showing its true colours. Far from being a committed, radical, socialist newspaper, it has been exposed as supporting the right-wing and fake left tendencies which represent the worst face of the PLP.

"Their two-faced attitude to politics will be understood by the socialist readership of the paper. And they might start reading a paper which puts a clearly left-wing perspective."



by John McIlroy

BEHIND THE scenes of Labour's big campaigns for democracy, policies for the next Labour government are being prepared — quietly and none too democratically.

Left-wing commitments are being watered down. And vague references in TUC and Labour Party resolutions to planned wages in a future planned economy are being used to try to negate clear TUC and Labour Party policy opposing wage controls in the present unplanned capitalist economy.

The TUC-Labour liaison committee is discussing a document, *Inflation: towards a Socialist Approach*, which claims that wages help cause inflation and some understanding on wage restraint must be reached with the TUC.

Price control, this document says, should limit profit margins, but allow price rises to cover costs. The overall aim would be to freeze the share of wages, taxes and profits in the economy. Wages might be index-linked.

In return for wage controls, the unions would

be offered planning agreements and representation on company boards.

This wage-control policy is not yet agreed. So far the liaison committee has endorsed eight points:

- Price controls.
- Devaluation.
- Selective import controls.
- Increased public spending.
- More State borrowing.
- Planning agreements, an expanded National Enterprise Board, and a National Investment Bank (note: no mention of nationalisation).
- A 'National Economic Assessment'.
- More job training.

So what is taking shape is a gutted version of the already limited Alternative Economic Strategy. It bears a close resemblance to the failed strategy of

the last Labour government, and only the most deluded supporter of the Alternative Economic Strategy could argue that these proposals, clearly intended to operate the existing system, are in any way transitional towards socialism.

Support for incomes policy has come from the APEX and AUEW conferences, which rejected free collective bargaining in favour of "a policy of sensible cooperation with a future Labour government". Sid Weighell (NUR) has called collective bargaining, "the philosophy of the pig trough". And Clive Jenkins has stated that the ASTMS executive will be reviewing the union's support for free collective bargaining.

But the Welsh and Scots TUCs have rejected incomes policy, and so has TASS.

Socialists should argue

firmly against the whole framework of *Inflation: Towards a Socialist Approach*, or even the adoption of vague formulas by the Liaison Committee.

Of course, inflation is a problem for workers, but it is a different problem for workers than for capitalists. For an employer the problem is rising wages threatening profits, for a worker the problem is rising prices eating into real wages.

A government which attempts to operate the existing system cannot act in workers' interests. Profit is the engine of the system. Profit is what makes everything else work. Giving the falling rate of profit, such a government must try to boost profits at the expense of wages.

This is the logic of the incomes policy argument. During periods of incomes policy, between 1948

and 1976, real wages fell by 2%. During periods without, they rose by more than 45% (family with two children).

The pattern was the same under the last Labour government. It will be the same under the next, if we accept the incomes policy argument.

No socialist would idealise free collective bargaining. It can reinforce sectionalism and disunity in the working class. However, in an unplanned capitalist society it is our most effective means of defence.

It will be desirable in a planned economy, as a corrective to any bureaucratic trends; and it is essential so long as the economy remains unplanned.

But in *Inflation: a Socialist Approach*, planning is an empty formula designed to veil the real meaning: "Allow

your wages to be cut in order that the capitalists' coffers may be filled and we may entice and entreat them to invest."

But what about the proposals on industrial democracy and planning agreements? They are cosmetics — aimed to weaken collective bargaining and strengthen workers' identification with 'their company'. How much use have the worker-directors in British Steel been?

Voluntary planning agreements, relying on persuasion, will be a farce, like the Chrysler planning agreement under the last Labour government. You cannot persuade large-scale capital to act against its fundamental interests. Penalties like nationalisation of recalcitrant companies are not considered. Moreover, they would ignite a major investment strike.

It is impossible to plan investment, production, and prices, if the major companies remain in private hands. Yet the liaison committee retreats even on the conference decision to nationalise 25 major companies.

Most importantly, we must take up the struggle within the unions and the Labour Party for a clear commitment to no wage restraint. Otherwise we shall be in for a re-run of 1979, with the workers once more clashing with a bosses' government.

The Left must take up these arguments and must mobilise against any attempt by the liaison committee to foist a slightly refurbished 1974-9 programme on us. We must fight for a programme which starts from the existence of an unbridgeable conflict between employers and workers and sides with the workers.

Such a programme would not propose workers on the board and planning agreements. It would propose the immediate introduction of the 35 hour week, the nationalisation under workers' control of bankrupt enterprises, and government support for workers in disputes with employers. It would raise the share of wages in the economy while extending nationalisation and public works.

By Nigel Williamson
(Treasurer, Deputy
Leadership Campaign)

Yet another smokescreen
has been raised to ob-
scure the policies which
are the real meat of the
Deputy Leadership cam-
paign.

Following the full-
page advert in *Labour
Weekly*, paid for com-
pletely by rank and file
Labour supporters, John
Silkin has written to Tony
Benn demanding that
audited accounts of the
campaign be submitted to
the party's General Sec-
retary.

The truth is that Sil-
kin's attitude is nothing
more than sour grapes.
He himself does not have

The funds furore: it's a smokescreen

the support on the ground
to organise in this fashion
and now seeks to curb the
activities of Benn's
supporters and to imply
that the success of the
Benn campaign is a
matter of money rather
than politics.

There are dangers, too,
in the apparently reason-
able suggestion that there
should be rules governing
campaign expenditure.

Clearly the richest
candidate must not have

an unfair advantage. But
this is not the situation
with Benn's campaign,
where all expenses have
been donated by rank and
file Labour and trade
union members, reflect-
ing Benn's wide popular
support.

If fringe meetings at
union conferences had
to be accounted for inside
a set spending limit, this
could have the effect of
curbing political discus-
sion and activity. Most of

the meetings that Benn or
his supporters have
addressed have not been
exclusively concerned
with the Deputy Leader-
ship, but have been used
to further the develop-
ment of left wing political
activity in the unions, and
have introduced a healthy
political debate into those
unions.

Due to overwhelming
demand from those who
were not included in the
first advert, another will
appear shortly. If you
wish to be included, write
in to the Deputy Leader-
ship Campaign c/o Jon
Lansman, 16 Tyler Street,
SE10, including £3 or
more towards the cost of
the advert.

WHEN WRP CALLED GADDAFI A FASCIST

Gold? Yellow, glittering precious gold?
Thus much of this will make black, white; foul, fair;
Wrong, right; base, noble; old, young; coward, valiant.

... Why this

Will lug your priests and servants from your sides;
Pluck stout men's pillows from below their heads:

This yellow slave

Will knit and break religions; bless th' accursed;
Make the hoar leprosy adored; place thieves,

And give them title, knee and approbation,

With senators on the bench...

(Shakespeare, *Timon of Athens* — much quoted by K. Marx)

RECENTLY Col Gaddafi,
Libya's dictator, was
reported by the French
newspaper *Le Monde* as
saying that Nazism only
had such a bad reputation
today because Germany
lost World War 2.

In *Le Monde's* quotation,
he seemed to be saying that
Nazism did not deserve
this reputation. In response
to comments in the left
press, Gaddafi's British
fan-magazine *Newsline*
(which misrepresents itself
to the British labour move-
ment as a working-class
newspaper) fulminated
that Gaddafi meant nothing
of the sort. *Le Monde's*
story and the comments
were all part of a CIA (etc.)
campaign against Gaddafi,
in preparation for the inva-
sion of Libya.

But the publishers of
Newsline didn't always
think that it was a CIA-
inspired slander to link
Gaddafi with fascism.

Their previous daily
paper, *Workers' Press*,
said Gaddafi was himself
a fascist, indeed a Nazi ('na-
tional socialist').

In an article by Ian
Yeats on September 9th,
1971, entitled Gaddafi's
'National Socialism' (quot-
ed in original) *Workers'*
Press responded to a
speech by Gaddafi.

"The two hour long
address must be one of the
most complete statements
of the canons of fascism
since Mussolini or Hitler.

"All the ingredients are
there. The appeal to the
past, the emphasis on the
historic and divine destiny of
the Arab race, the hatred of
capitalism and equality of
communism, and the fertile
soil of mass poverty and
deprivation.

"Class differences are
glossed over by the deliber-
ate veneration of labour —
'just, righteous and produc-
tive forces'.

"The national socialist
foundation of Gaddafi's
ideas is pointed in his bitter
hatred and vigorous con-
demnation of commun-
ism."

Workers' Press was not
impressed by Gaddafi's
anti-imperialism.

"Imperialism comes in
for as much hatred as cap-
italism. Gaddafi points
proudly to their break with
imperialism by kicking all
foreign bases off Libyan
soil — a naive view of
imperialism.

Yeats quotes Gaddafi:
"Pointing proudly to the
armed forces, he added:
'The words of a strong
people are heard. Today we
feel we are building the
real power in this world.

"When nations are
strong, the world becomes
strong... when great
nations, like the Arab
nation, are weak, the
world becomes weak.

"When the German
nation weakened and was
lost, what happened to the
world? The world stood on
the edge of a volcano up
to this day."

Yeats concludes his
analysis of Gaddafi's
politics: "These regimes
cannot give what they pro-
mise to the peoples — the
slump will see to that —
and the 'glorious armed

forces' must be turned on
workers and peasants in the
fight to survive...

"The infantry of the
counter-revolution is
massing. Whether it will
succeed depends on the
emergence and strength of
Trotskyist revolutionary
leadership."

Workers' Press's classifi-
cation of Gaddafi as a fasc-
ist or Nazi is too schematic,
in my opinion, defining him
by his political ideas alone.
Fascism is a product of the
class struggle in more or
less developed capitalist
societies, a mass move-
ment to beat down the
working class and labour
movement, mobilised on a
mish-mash of ideas such
as Yeats reports.

Gaddafi is the populist —
if eccentric — dictator of an
extremely backward Mus-
lim society. Himself rooted
in nomad Bedouin tribal-
ism, he is seemingly moti-
vated by naive goodwill for
his own people, running a
society buoyed up with
enormous oil wealth.

To call Gaddafi a fascist
is anachronistic and a typi-
cal example of the arid
political formalism of the
Healyites when they were a
political movement. (Typi-
cal also is the notion that
there was a crippling slump
in 1971).

The quotations, how-
ever, do seem to establish
that Gaddafi's sympathetic
musings about Nazi Ger-
many don't begin three
months ago.

So what changed in
Libya?

Libya's fusion with Egypt
was long ago aborted. The
regime uses a more radical
brand of populist rhetoric
now. Its techniques of
control include mobilisa-
tion of the Libyan people.

But the army dictatorship
continues, the Islamic
ideas are still dominant,
and so are the ideas that
Yeats itemises, quite use-
fully though one-sidedly,
above.

The change is in the
WRP leadership, who em-
brace now what they once
defined as full-blown fasc-
ism.

And not only the compar-
atively benign Libyan
regime gets their support.
Newsline publicly justifies
the shooting of members
of the Iraqi Communist
Party, in these terms:

"It is true that 21 Com-
munist Party members
were executed early last
year for illegally forming
cells in the armed forces.
The purpose of these cells

was to fight against the
government.

"There are no prizes
for the answer to what
would happen to Ba'ath-
ists who set up cells in the
Soviet army. They would be
ruthlessly purged" (2.2.79).

"The fact is that [21] CP
members were executed
according to military codes
which the Iraqi CP discus-
ed, approved and agreed to
implement. To this day the
Iraqi CP has not called for
the repeal of the mili-
tary laws which ban the
formation of secret cells
in the Army.

"It has never contradic-
ted the fact that the arrested
officers were guilty of the
charges brought against
them. This is a case of
Moscow trying to set up
the cells in the Iraqi armed
forces for the purpose of
undermining the regime.
It must accept the conse-
quences..." (8.3.79).

In fact the Iraqi regime,
the rule of a section of the
Ba'ath Socialist Party, with
a nationalist programme of
economic development,
through a military dicta-
torship, is perhaps the most
vicious in the Middle East.

When it was a political
organisation, the WRP
(then SLL) said this about
the Ba'athist regime in
Iraq: "... Everything that
Marxism Today [the CP
magazine] says about the
Iraqi Ba'athist regime is
true. It is stained with the
blood of thousands of
murdered workers and
communists... The Ba'ath-
ists killed two delegates to
the Iraqi CP congress..."

And it denounced the
Russian CP for inviting two
"fascist thugs" — i.e.,
Ba'athist officials — to its
congress. (18.5.71).

There is good reason to
call the Iraqi Ba'athists
fascists for what their
regime does. So what's
changed in Iraq?

A different faction of the
Ba'ath party now rules
through the army. By all
accounts other than those
of its propagandists, the
present regime is narrower
and more terroristic than
the Ba'ath regime of 1971
which the *Workers' Press*
denounced.

At an earlier stage in the
degeneration of this
tendency, it supported (for
about a year, in 1967) the
Mao faction of the Chinese
bureaucracy during the
great devastation known as
the 'Cultural Revolution'.
Michael Banda, now WRP
general secretary and then
editor of their paper
Newsletter, memorably
wrote in self-justification
that if necessary his organ-
isation would 'march' even
under the portrait of Stalin
(which the Maoists carried
in abundance).

Now it seems that Mr
Banda and his Ayatollah,
Mr Healey, have reconciled
themselves to marching in
the ranks of those they
used to call fascists.

The truth about the manifesto

CHIEF WHIP Michael
Cocks' arguments against
Benn on the question of
the Manifesto are irrele-
vant point-scoring — with
the points being divided
pretty evenly between
Benn and Cocks.

Benn's statement that
the introduction of a
wealth tax was ruled out
is substantially true.
There was a mention of it
in the Manifesto, this left
out any reference to either
the Joint Statement of
December 1977 or to the
TUC-Labour Party liai-
son committee. Without
these references the
commitment was a mean-
ingless mockery of Party
policy.

Benn was right to claim
that there was no commit-
ment to "substantial cuts
in arms expenditure".
The Manifesto spoke only
of a reduction in the
proportion of expenditure
used for arms. And even
this was not firm, being
phrased as: "continue
with our plans to reduce
etc."

This is the wretched
language of political
escapologists. It is what
all the arguments on the
Manifesto are about:
whether the Party will
commit itself to doing
something, or merely
'aim towards', 'plan to
ensure', 'negotiate the
conditions for', and so on.

Moreover, since the
election it has been
revealed that the Call-
aghan cabinet in-crew
were actually planning
just the opposite. If we
had a Labour government
now, it would be buying
Trident and accepting
Cruise missiles.

On 'reflation of public
sector spending', Benn
seems to have been
wrong, strictly speaking.
But the Institute for
Workers' Control, in a
briefing to delegates at
last year's conference,
made clear what the inclu-
sion of 'reflation' in the
Manifesto actually meant.

"... The Labour Gov-
ernment had publicly
indicated its rejection of
the Party's 'alternative'
strategy (reflation, import
controls, a much stronger
NEB, etc); and we there-
fore knew that the words
in the Manifesto meant
completely different
things to Ministers".

Cocks, of course, side-

steps the very thing that
Benn's speech was about.
It was about the method
of drawing up the Mani-
festo.

Benn said: There were
no elected members of
the Parliamentary Labour
Party apart from the
Leader and Deputy Lead-
er on the committee draw-
ing up the Manifesto. No
backbencher even saw the
draft before it went to
the committee. The same
went for the unions.

Also, the document is
always drawn up so late
that the Party can only
campaign on it in the
three weeks prior to an
election.

Lastly, Party leaders
can veto items: Benn gave
the example of the exclu-
sion from the Manifesto
of the clear policy of
abolishing the House of
Lords, passed by six and a
half million to a derisory
91,000.

Benn is calling for the
right of the NEC "after

consultation with the
Leader of the Party and
the Parliamentary Com-
mittee of the PLP" to
decide on what goes in
the Manifesto. The 'joint
responsibility' of the Par-
liamentary Committee
(Shadow Cabinet) and
the NEC works against
accountability and means
in practice Cabinet or
Shadow-Cabinet rule.

Of course, Benn's
proposal — and the sim-
ilar but clearer one drawn
up by the Campaign for
Labour Party Democracy
for the coming Confer-
ence — still would not
stop some familiar larks
of the Leader like threat-
ening to resign just before
the election if he doesn't
get his way.

But it goes a long way
to asserting the principle
that Conference is king,
and between conferences,
the body elected by Con-
ference, the NEC, has
responsibility for Party
policy.



Silkin



Healey



Benn

What a Healey win would mean

TONY BENN voted for
Michael Foot for leader of
the Labour Party against
Denis Healey, the 'favour-
ite' at the time. Now Mich-
ael Foot is leader and is
doing everything he can to
support Denis Healey for
deputy leader against Tony
Benn.

No doubt Benn support-
ed Foot because a victory
for Healey would have been
a victory for the Labour
Right. It would have
signified complete satis-
faction with the record of
the Wilson-Callaghan
nightmare.

Token

And a Healey victory now
would mean the same
thing.

A victory for Benn will
not give him any real
power. It will not give the
Left any real power. It
will, however, do some-
thing very important: it
will confirm the hard-
won gains of the last years'

struggle in the Party, and it
will serve as a clear signal
that this time the Left will
not be content with token
gains but will push for
power within the Party.

Because the Right have
lost the ideological argu-
ments on Party reform —
and lost some of their
main ideologues, too, with
the defection of Rodgers,
Williams and Owen —
they dredge up the usual
crap: "Benn is personalis-
ing things", "Benn's a
liar", "Benn's an ambi-
tious scoundrel", and,
of course, "We need unity,
not division". Anything but
political argument.

Chief Whip Michael
Cocks has gone on the at-
tack, accusing Benn of
being a liar. Addressing
the General and Municipal
Workers conference, he
told delegates that Benn
had lied at the last Labour
Party conference when he
claimed that the union's
policies were not in the el-
ection manifesto.

Breaking silence with all

the intelligence of a baby
breaking wind, Cocks
announced that he was cir-
culating a tape-recording
of Benn's speech with
excerpts of the manifesto
read out to prove Benn's
bad faith.

At the same time Robin
Cook, a Tribune MP, has
attacked what Benn said
at the ASiEF conference
earlier this month, refer-
ring to "allegations of
personal deceit".

He finds it deceitful to
suggest that "the Shadow
Cabinet has not been argu-
ing and voting for confer-
ence policies from the Front
Bench". Yet the Front
Bench patently did not
argue Party policy on dis-
armament in the recent
defence debate.

Vetoed

He finds it improper to
suggest that "key confer-
ence policies might be
vetoed when the next elec-
tion manifesto is drawn

up". He thinks that Call-
aghan's confession that he
did just that is meaning-
less.

And he finds it indecent
to suggest that "the next
Labour Government might
rat on these policies".
Here's a political rabbit
that wants to give every
fox the benefit of the
doubt before he's eaten up.

Truth

The fact is that while the
press presents the protests
of Cook and Cocks as the
voices of reason and re-
spectability, everybody
knows the simple truth:
Labour manifestoes tone
down or ignore any radical
Party policies, Labour
Opposition front benches
are not the champions of
conference policy, and —
who can deny it? — Lab-
our Governments do nei-
ther what the Party wants
nor even what the Manifesto
promises.

A LABOUR INQUIRY, NOT THE COURTS

We, the undersigned, condemn Vanessa Red-
grave's and the WRP's use of the courts against the
labour movement press. We support the proposal
that a labour movement inquiry be set up to invest-
igate the statements made in the Socialist Organ-
iser article.

NAME ORGANISATION

Return to Labour Movement Press Defence Fund, c/o 214
Stuart Court, London N1 2SY.

THE REAL RECORD OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY AT COWLEY

Alan Thornett reviews "Politics of the Production Line — an autobiography of an Oxford Carworker", by Arthur Exell, published by History Workshop Journal, price £1.45

The author of this review started work in the Cowley Assembly Plant in May 1959. In September of the same year I joined the Communist Party. I began to be active in the trade union movement and became a shop steward.

Soon afterwards I was discussing with the TGWU branch secretary Tony Bradley. Since anti-communism was much stronger in those days I decided to tell him that I intended to become much more active in the branch and that I was a member of the Communist Party.

His reaction took me completely by surprise. He said he had no political prejudice against the Communist Party, but in the vast majority of strikes which had taken place in the factory, the best known CP member in the plant, Arthur Exell, came into work.

I found this view to be expressed even more strongly by the Works Convenor Bob Fryer who organised and led the paint shop where Arthur Exell worked.

He said that in successive strikes in the 1950s (and this certainly proved to be the case in the 1960s) they had never been able to get Arthur Exell out.

Today, *The Politics of the Production Line—Autobiography of an Oxford Car Worker*, published by the History Workshop and written by Arthur Exell is being presented by the Communist Party as an authoritative account of the CP's principled history in the Oxford car plants.

This makes it important that the book is reviewed and the record put straight.

Unfortunately much of the book is of little relevance except to those who wish to cultivate romantic notions about factory life or enjoy earthy accounts of life on the production line.

This will no doubt make it standard reading for the inhabitants of Ruskin College and students of the WEA. But there is a more serious side.

Arthur Exell started work at the Radiators plant in North Oxford—supplying components for assembly at Cowley—in November 1929 after coming from South Wales on the hunger marches.

He joined the CP in 1934.

He gives interesting accounts of the work of the CP both in the Radiators factory and in the town.

He describes the victimisation of CP members for attempting to become shop stewards and a rent strike organised on the Florence Park estate (with the help of students from the colleges—notably two young students by the names of Dick Crossman and Patrick Gordon Walker). Arthur Exell and several CP organisers were evicted as a result of the strike.

Exell's account shows how hard it was to organise a union against employers who took their lead from William Morris, the leading employer in Oxford and fanatically anti-union.

Union recognition in the Radiators plant was there-



While Stalin talked to Churchill, the CP backed factory slavery

fore painfully slow. By 1934 there were only four union members in the plant—all members of the CP.

In most cases CP membership came first, since joining the union could well mean the sack. Active Labour Party members did not join the union at that time.

The outbreak of war brought changes. The plant was turned over to war production and workers from traditionally unionised areas were moved in.

The Essential Works Order which meant that workers could not leave their job also meant that employers could not sack them. It became easier to organise.

Another factor however was more significant—that was CP policy towards the war (although Exell appears to be confused about the exact period).

From his account the Oxford CP—well to the right of national policy—appears to have given full support for the war effort right from 1939, which had dramatic effects in the factories.

When Churchill's government brought in a system of Joint Works Production Committees (JWPC's) to help the war effort the CP were completely behind it.

The Committees were class collaboration bodies similar to the more recent exercises in "Workers' Participation", but with far more power.

In Radiators, Arthur Exell became the Secretary of the JWPC and set about making the factory more efficient.

From his account he settled enthusiastically into his new role. "Absenteeism was terrible" he explains:

"One of the things we promised was that we would see to it that people came to work".

But this could only be done effectively, he says, if the workers were in a union:

"If they weren't in the union we had no control over them."

The anti-union management was quick to catch on. After all, they had a fortune to make out of war contracts. Suddenly they wanted everyone into the union.

Exell explains:

"That was when Mr. Donol, the works manager, sent for me and said 'look, I'll give you full permission, you've got all the time you

like, get ever woman into the union. Go and talk to them and get them in."

The result was 100% trade unionism—but at what a price! The JWPC was literally the policeman of the plant with Arthur Exell holding the truncheon. He explains how it worked:

"This one certain girl did lose a lot of time. So we had her in front of our committee, and our committee was the trade unionists in the factory and the manage-

scribed into industry for the first time and required to work under the most appalling conditions—which Exell himself describes.

but even using the union apparatus to threaten workers with prison did not satisfy the appetite of the Radiators CP branch in their support of the imperialist war effort. Exell explains:

"The Communist Party factory group then made another outstanding offer to the management. We were

While visiting his parents in Liverpool Exell attended a meeting addressed by Stafford Cripps. He explained the activities of the JWPC and Cripps was very impressed.

He awarded the Radiators plant an additional contract.

Unfortunately management considered it was more than the factory could cope with and turned the contract down.

But Arthur Exell was

German invasion of the Soviet Union. If recruitment to the CP had been slow up to that point there was now a dramatic change.

Membership of the Radiators CP branch rose almost over night from 4 to 50. By the end of the war they had 150.

Management gave permission for a CP branch library of over 500 books to be kept—appropriately enough—in the foreman's office!

the management, but dissidents got little sympathy from the party.

Exell recalls Pat Mills—who was still in the Oxford CP in my day—arriving at the Rads.

"The most remarkable fellow in our branch was Pat Mills. He was a character on his own... he was drafted into Radiators. And he was always laughing at everything: he said 'well, that's one thing, they can't sack me now—I'm under the Essential Works Order'. They sacked him within a couple of days! Yes he was sacked. I think they said he was being awkward. Maybe he was [original emphasis] trying to be very awkward there—you know, it's very silly to be awkward: you go there to do a job. If you can get away with trying to push the party line, all right. But if you were trying to put over propaganda and it was detrimental to the production that wasn't a good thing."!!

As soon as the war was over, all this collaboration had little impression on the hard-nosed motor bosses. No sooner had the victory celebrations died down and the Essential Works Order been lifted than they began the wholesale sacking of the militants at the Rads and



The last of war production side by side with the first peace-time cars

ment. We had to talk to her and told her of the necessity of doing the work properly or else she would have to take the punishment which the government [the Churchill government! AT] had authorised us to give.

The punishment first of all would be suspension, but the chance of imprisonment was in the document. I don't remember any case where they were, but it was there for us to use our judgement on it."

Exell retains a reactionary, patronising attitude to women. But this is worse. These were women being

prepared to form a shock brigade, which meant that the management could call on anyone of us to do any job in the factory, in any place at any time.

We had big coloured posters put up in the factory stating the facts and our names. The scheme was used but unfortunately the management used it to give us the jobs that others wouldn't do. But we proved our case."

Presumably the case was proven that the CP was totally servile to the management. But even that was not enough for Arthur Exell!

not prepared to settle for this. A meeting of the JWPC was called and they sorted the problem out:

"The trouble was caused by a bottleneck. Men lost hours of their time through waiting at the test for leaks to be repaired and so I suggested that a second set of testing tanks be installed much nearer to the main section.

I am pleased to say that management acknowledged my suggestion and must have told Cripps, for I received a letter from him thanking me for my endeavours."

In 1941 came the

Exell comments: "They couldn't grumble at us, because we worked, really produced, which is what a foreman likes."

He goes on:

"The library was fantastic, we didn't know how to cope with it. 200-300 people borrowed books... They were in series: the Little Lenin library and the Little Stalin library."

They sold hundreds of copies of Soviet Weekly in the canteen and 2-300 Daily Workers a day in the factory.

It seems that not all the party members were able to accept this relationship with

including the convenor—apparently without resistance.

Exell explains:

"This meant the firms came back into their own, and the first thing they did was to remove all the trade union militants within their power... I wasn't touched just then because I had long service having started in the '20s, so I at once took the convenor's job."

IN PART TWO: From 1947 on: keeping quiet while the militants are witchhunted.

Going into its twenty-third week, the Lee Jeans occupation is still strong.

Last week the women voted to reject an offer from a London business to place a regular order which would maintain 20 and possibly 50 jobs.

There are 170 jobs at Lee Jeans, and the women would not accept an offer throwing the majority of them on the dole.

But as one of the strikers told SO, 'This doesn't mean we reject the idea of cooperatives in principle — but we couldn't possibly accept saving only 50 jobs.'

There is a committee being set up with represent-

atives from the women's union (NUTGW), the Scottish TUC, the Scottish National Party, and the Liberals, to investigate the possibility of a workers' coop.

But a coop under workers' control makes sense only as a holding operation

until the firm could be nationalised under workers' control by a future Labour government.

PUSH

The women would

have to gain support from the working class to maintain it. That kind of action would not be supported by Liberals or the SNP, who are interested only in making a viable (and profitable) project out of Lee Jeans.

A new push to get more support for the occupation, blacking and boycotting of the jeans has been launched by the STUC. A march through the industrial belt of Scotland led by the Lee Jeans women is planned to start from Greenock on

Saturday 27th June, going to Kilmarnock and arriving in Glasgow on the 30th, then on to Motherwell and Bathgate to end in Edinburgh on 2nd July.

There's not been much time to organise the march as the STUC didn't send

out the notice to trades councils until June 17th. But delegates to factories are being planned, with Edinburgh Trades Council trying to organise a walk-out of civil servants from the Scottish Office at New St. Andrews House in Edinburgh where the final rally will take place.

VITAL

Support and delegations on this march are vital.

Support and messages of support to: Helen Monaghan, 55 Cambridge Road, Greenock, Glasgow.

by Gerry Hoffa

THE LAURENCE Scotts occupation has reached an impasse. Not because of a lack of fight from the workers: on the contrary, the mass meeting of 31st May voted unanimously to continue the occupation and defy Arthur Snipe's closure.

Nor because of a lack of financial support from other workers. Over £1600 was raised on the People's March alone.

Even more, the national CSEU (Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions) executive agreed on June 4th to request a national blacking from the National Union of Mineworkers of all Snipe's companies.

No, the impasse has stemmed from the refusal of national AUEW officials to carry out agreed union policy.

Sir John Boyd, AUEW general secretary, revealed this attitude in a hostile letter to John Tocher (AUEW divisional organiser) on May 18th.

'We would draw your attention to the fact that while Executive Council have made this dispute official, they cannot and have not approved of any action taken by our members at this factory which does not come within the provisions of our rules, and by this we are referring to the plant occupation.'

Tocher's reply was that

STRANGLE SNIPE!

'if the NUM can be persuaded to black the products of Snipe's companies, then I would predict that this dispute can be brought to a victorious conclusion within one week'.

Handle

Having lost the vote on the AUEW and Confed executives, Boyd manoeuvred both to block the issuing of strike pay — hundreds of workers have received no strike pay for two months — and to appoint the 'incurable' right-winger Ken Cure as the official to handle blacking discussions with the NUM.

As one LSE steward said, 'These characters are more a product of Woodrow Wyatt's sick mind than the working class movement'.

Indeed, when Boyd obstructed the issuing of strike pay in the Gardner's dispute, a delegation of

strikers permanently parked themselves outside his office in Peckham Road.

It is clear now that the onus for bringing victory at Scotts must lie with the stewards themselves. An offensive strategy is needed that can strangle Arthur Snipe into submission. For while money is absolutely essential to keep the occupation going, fund-raising in itself has never won a struggle.

The fight must be taken into Snipe's own backyard. The essentials of such a policy are:

Test

• A mass picket should be launched of his key Mining Supply factory in Doncaster, with requests for physical support from other trade unionists. This will entail challenging Prior's new proposals on secondary picketing — but now is as good a time as any

to put this to the test.

• Similarly, it is a known fact that Mining Supplies uses large quantities of oxyacetylene cylinders in manufacturing, and what's more Snipe's plants have only 12 to 14 days of supplies in stock. The BOC Combine Committee should be asked to inform the Yorkshire depots not to deliver to Doncaster.

Future

• In the last couple of years Mining Supplies exports have grown rapidly. In 1979 MS exports were £657,265, in 1980 £2,168,215. Assuming the same growth rate for 1981 (and according to press reports it might be even greater), this will mean exports of £7 million, or roughly a quarter of MS's turnover.

And much of this trade goes to South Africa, USA and Australia, and leaves

via Hull Docks.

Both the latter and the National Ports Shop Stewards Committee should be lobbied for an embargo. After all, blacking MS goods is now the official policy of the CSEU.

• But most important of all is the support of the miners. The Government has just given £300 million to the NCB for the renovation of the mining industry, and this means a big increase in the demand for mining machinery. There is a bright future for mining companies — particularly if LSE was nationalised under the NCB.

The Yorkshire miners have sent a £500 cheque to LSE: but as far as the 'other Arthur' is concerned, there is a marked disparity between militant speeches and real action.

Accordingly, LS stewards are drawing up an 'Open Letter to Arthur Scargill', hopefully to be published in the Yorkshire Miner, calling for an immediate blacking, and picketing support against Snipe in Doncaster.

The struggle at Scotts is about the fundamental issue of our time. It has to be won.

Watch out for products from the following companies: Mining Supplies Ltd, Mech Forge Ltd, Mech Cast Ltd, Mech Construction Ltd, American Longwall Mining Corporation.

Sacked by Labour council for being gay

by Alexis Carras

ON MAY 13th Susan Shell was sacked from her job as night attendant at Woodlands girls' hostel in the London borough of Barking.

Reason? Susan is gay. The Deputy Social Services director said that the 'difficult and disturbed' girls at the hostel could be 'influenced by her [Susan's] lifestyle as a practising homosexual'.

Susan's case comes in the wake of the sackings of John Saunders, a maintenance worker at a Scottish youth camp, and Gordon Wiseman, a lecturer at Salford. These are only the most publicised cases.

The legal precedent has now been well established — that gay people can be sacked for being gay.

Susan Shell must be defended, and any moves to force gay people back into lives of secrecy and fear must be vigorously resisted.

The 'reason' that all

employers have used basically amounts to the old caricatured myth of the 'predatory homosexual'. But in fact heterosexual violence and 'predatory' behaviour is far more common. Should this logically lead to the sacking of people on the grounds of heterosexuality?

We have to fight the prejudices about the 'undesirability' of gay relations, and fight for the repeal of all discriminatory legislation. SO supporters are urged to put motions to unions and Labour Party branches, on the following lines:

'This branch condemns the action of the London Borough of Barking in sacking Susan Shell because she is a lesbian. It demands her immediate and unconditional reinstatement'.

Copies of these motions and/or equivalently worded petitions should be sent to: Gay Rights at Work, 7 Pickwick Court, London SE9 4SA.

by Les Hearn

I HOPE some SO readers managed to see the Making of Mankind series by Richard Leakey on BBC2 recently. I only had time to see two episodes, but I was struck by how the arguments of Marxists about human nature had for once been supported in TV programmes available to millions of people.

Leakey's studies on the primitive humanoids of one to four million years ago indicate that the first humans were not primarily hunters, though they probably ate dead animals left by other carnivores. What made them specifically human was that they took food back to share with other members of their group.

Leakey also had some-

thing to say about aggression and wars. Next to film of children of different colours playing happily with each other was shown film of children with wooden rifles, rounding up other children, pushing them around, hitting them with rifle-butts, spread-eagling them against walls, and searching them, before marching them away at gunpoint.

Inborn aggression? That footage was shot in Northern Ireland and illustrated Leakey's point that aggression is learnt.

There was also film of the !Kung bush people of Southern Africa who even now have a sharing (dare I

say communist?) way of life though it is breaking down as the racist regime covets their land and introduces elements of capitalist commerce and private property.

The !Kung people were traditionally a peaceful people. The South African army has recruited hundreds of these peaceful people to use their skills as trackers and hunters against the Namibian freedom fighters.

Now the murder rate among the !Kung has risen ten-fold.

A REPORT in a recent British Medical Journal high-

lights the risks of addiction to benzodiazepine drugs (which include Valium, Librium, and Mogadon).

Two psychologists found withdrawal symptoms such as anxiety, panic, insomnia, nausea, shaky hands and changes in perception when 26 patients were taken off a course of low doses of Frisium, which they had been taking for at least a year.

Frisium was originally marketed as having no effect on perception and movement and as not being addictive.

Once again the inadvisability of putting people

on long-term courses of mood-altering drugs is highlighted. Capitalist medicine does not cure people's problems — but it may add the further problem of drug addiction.

★ My source for the last two SO Science columns (and for about 75% of my material) was New Scientist magazine. This acknowledgement was left out through an oversight.



Socialist Organiser SCIENCE

ENQUIRY INTO PLANSEE CALLED FOR

by Oliver Maurer

ROTHERHAM Trades Council are calling for an enquiry into the operations of the management at Plansee Tooling.

It seems that the Austrian company took over the Rotherham factory purely to establish a trading base within the EEC, with no intention of maintaining production there.

The blacking of Plansee products seems to be taking a firm grip now, with management admitting to losses of £10,000 per week — so after nearly four months of strike, occupat-

ion, and picketing, the Plansee workers' fight to save their jobs is still very much alive.

Messages/money to: Len Godbeheve, 138 Greenhow St, Sheffield S6.

TWO DAYS STRIKE THEN VICTORY

500 council manual workers in Haringey who struck against the police being brought in to internal disciplinary proceedings have won a victory.

The strike (reported in

SO 43) took place because CID officers burst into a meeting between six dustmen and the management at the Council's Park View depot. The meeting had been called at the insist-

ence of the Council's auditors to look into an accusation that the men had stolen materials from a site they were clearing.

The six were not charged with anything, despite

being held for a day, but feeling ran high. After two days of the strike, the Council suspended their Chief Auditor.

NIK BARSTOW

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Socialist Organiser aims to help build a class-struggle left wing in the trade unions and Labour Party, based on a revolutionary socialist platform. It is sponsored by the Socialist Campaign for a Labour Victory. Sponsorships are welcomed from other groupings and organisations in the labour movement which agree with the basic lines of our platform.

THE NATIONAL Executive Committee (NEC) of NALGO was defeated on some important issues as the local government white collar workers' union NALGO took some surprising steps forward at its annual conference on June 6th-13th.

The major debate on cuts focused on Scotland. The immediate effects of Heseltine's latest penalties will be more drastic there because supplementary rates are outlawed.

In Lothian alone, at least 4,000 staff, and maybe 10,000, could be sacked because of a cut of £53 million in the rate support grant.

A successful emergency motion instructed the NEC to call on the TUC to seek joint action with the National Execu-

NALGO votes to fight cuts

tive of the Labour Party in coordinating the activities of trade unions and local authority Labour groups in the fight against the cuts.

Law

This motion was given its real backbone later in conference by a motion moved by the Scottish District Council which "instructs the NEC to local authorities in their resistance to the Government, and further instructs the

NEC to give full official support to members taking industrial action... in support of their employing authority's stand against the Government".

The NEC argued that this gave carte blanche to authorities breaking the law, but conference felt that it was time to wage a real fight on cuts, whether that means breaking the law or not!

The debate took place in an atmosphere of euphoria generated by a decision (after long debate) to go against the NEC and vote for unilateral nuclear disarmament and affilia-

tion to CND, and by a powerful speech from Pan Kukula of Polish Solidarity. His conclusion, "Long live Socialism! Long live the international trade union movement!" was greeted by a standing ovation.

The stand against cuts was not carried over into the debate on council house sales. Conference narrowly rejected a motion calling for NALGO to oppose the sale of council housing in principle and to support action against sales. (Present policy is merely to support action taken

where there is insufficient staffing to administer the sales).

Picket

In addition, despite instructing members (against NEC recommendation) not to cross TUC picket lines, conference failed to support a set of proposals for industrial action which sought to give greater autonomy to branches and to enable branches as well as the national union to take

industrial action.

Another major decision was a vote (again against NEC recommendation) to hold a ballot of the membership before next year's conference on affiliation to the Labour Party.

A rather tame motion calling for an unemployed section for NALGO members, but without voting rights, was carried unamended. A number of amendments had sought to extend the right to join to unemployed school leavers who work in local authorities through job creation schemes, and to give un-

employed members the right to vote and the right to take positions.

Despite the setbacks, the NEC has a mandate on two major issues, the fight against Heseltine and affiliation to the Labour Party.

The fight in Scotland will be the first test. The Scottish TUC must implement their decision to call a meeting between Council groups and representatives of the trade union movement. NALGO branches around the country must be made aware of what is happening and get prepared to take supporting action.

And preparations should be made for the ballot on Labour Party affiliation by organising local meetings to discuss the issues.

by John Cunningham

FOR THE second time in recent years, the NUM's annual conference is being held in that well-known mining area, the Channel Islands.

This is all very well for Bro. Gormley, our soon-to-depart (thank god!) president, who is renowned for his fondness for the good life. Not so good, however, if you want to organise rank and file miners to lobby the conference.

It won't be all sunshine and balmy breezes for Bro.

Gormless when the conference opens on July 6th. The motions to the conference contain a number of militant propositions which with any luck will give poor old Joe a heart attack and hasten his departure to the House of Lords.

The Scottish Area, South Wales, and Yorkshire, all have motions in for a £100 per week minimum wage for surface workers, consequential increases for other grades to be paid on a salary basis. If the claim is not met, the motions call for a special conference to be called to sanction a

Not all sunshine for Gormley

national ballot for industrial action.

Another motion from Yorkshire calls for retirement at 55 for underground workers by 1986 and for surface workers the following year. Again the motion ends by calling for a conference to consider a ballot for industrial action if the claim is not met.

A Derbyshire motion

calls for holiday pay at time-and-a-half. At the moment holiday pay is at basic rate, which means a huge drop come holiday time.

Parity in conditions of employment, holidays, rest days, and other concessions for cleaners and canteen workers are advocated in motion no.18 from the militant Kent area.

Kent also calls for a drastic reduction in overtime working. Recently released Coal Board figures show that, at the time of going to press, some 18 per cent of the man shift hours worked in the mining industry are paid at overtime rates. That 18 per cent represents thousands of miners' sons on the dole.

On the question of Labour Party democracy, conference is urged by a Derbyshire resolution [no. 44] to stand by the decisions of the Wembley conference. An amendment from Yorkshire to support Tony Benn was ruled out of order because "it does not in fact constitute a proper amendment to resolution 44".

A move by Kent and No.2 Group Area to make all full-time area officials recallable at five year intervals was also ruled out on the grounds that if carried

it "would be virtually incapable of implementation having regard to age limit, the superannuation rules and existing contracts of employment". If this is taken literally, it means that any move to alter the length of service of full-time officials is automatically ruled out.

Without this elementary democratic step [and the motion, welcome though it would have been on the agenda, is inadequate], it's still a long uphill battle in the NUM. Clearly a fresh approach is needed next year.

Orgreave still at risk

DESPITE the miners' victory against closures in February of this year, the mining industry is still being run down.

Last year some 4,000 jobs were lost, this year the figure so far is 900.

Dinnington Colliery in South Yorkshire, for example, a pit with a workforce of 950, was run down to 916 midway through last year. The workforce is now back to 950, but only after months of continued pressure by branch officials.

The National Coal Board have now given the Yorkshire NUM 'assurances' that recruitment will be stepped up. In response, Yorkshire NUM have shelved plans to implement an

overtime ban throughout the region.

Meanwhile the future of the threatened Orgreave Colliery in Yorkshire is still uncertain as we go to press.

Yorkshire president Arthur Scargill has said that unless assurances are forthcoming, the ballot decision to take strike action will be implemented.

Scargill was quoted in the Sheffield Morning Telegraph as saying: "In order that this will have maximum impact, we shall be taking an emergency resolution to our national conference... calling upon all areas to join us in the industrial action".

by John Cunningham

THE UNITED Mineworkers of America [UMWA] have just voted two-to-one to end their ten week old strike.

The new contract, which will run for four years, is not brilliant, but it contains a number of advances for the US miners. Most importantly, however, the UMWA has successfully defended its organisation against vicious attacks by the coal owners, who were aided and abetted by state troopers, hired gunmen, and the whole Reagan machine.

Miners in the USA have never had it easy. Unlike in this country, there is not 100 per cent unionism. The UMWA membership stands at 160,000 and there are many scab pits. A lot of US coal comes from strip (open-cast) mines, employing mainly non-union labour.

The American miners have fought many hard and bloody battles - Cripple Creek, Ludlow, Harlan County and many other places have seen pitched gun-fights between miners and scabs, often backed by state troopers.

Working conditions and safety are often very bad, particularly so in non-union pits. For example, in US mines burning [by oxy-acetylene burners] is common - it is not permitted in Britain. The techniques used in American mining, surprisingly for such a technologically advanced nation, are far behind those of Europe.

Longwall mining, where the coal is cut by machine along a face and the roof supported by advancing hydraulic chocks [roof supports] is only now beginning to supersede the old 'room and pillar' method. By contrast, longwall mining has been standard practice in Europe for many years.



The strike began on March 27th, when a new contract [accepted by the UMWA executive] was thrown out by the rank and file. The coal-owners offered an 11 per cent wage increase [inflation in the USA currently runs at 12%], some improvements in medical benefits, a pension for widows [\$100 a month] and a company-pension scheme to replace the national one currently in operation.

Other contentious proposals included a new arbitration scheme, a new probation scheme under which new miners ['red-hats'] would not be entitled to a union representation for a certain period, stricter attendance requirements, less power for union safety committees, and seven-day working for longwall operations.

After the rank and file kicked this out the coal owners dropped the seven-day working proposal and improved the pension provisions, but they tried to sneak in new proposals to alter royalty payments. The UMWA has an agreement with the coalowners that for every ton of coal mined by non-union labour the coalowners pay a levy per ton to the UMWA. Of course, it's no substitute for 100 per cent unionism, but these so-called royalty payments are a constant challenge to the owners and of course a benefit to the union.

Negotiations resumed on April 14th. The next day a non-union mine, Dorch Creek no.1 in Colorado, exploded. 15 miners were killed.

The owners were driving a double-entry longwall face - a method of working

which presents almost insurmountable ventilation problems. UMWA men joined in the rescue operations. It was a poignant and grim reminder of what the US miners were faced with.

Picketing was stepped up and the state authorities and the coal owners replied in kind. West Virginia governor John D Rockefeller [of the billionaire oil family], himself a coal-owner, ordered cuts in public spending in a crude attempt to throw mud at the UMWA.

On May 1st the strikers were joined by 2,000 UMWA anthracite miners in Eastern Pennsylvania, and some state authorities tried to get court injunctions limiting pickets to four.

The usual gun attacks and sniping at pickets and UMWA organisers

have taken place. Not that the coal-owners and their hirelings have had it all their own way. In one battle in Eastern Kentucky, three scabs were wounded and hospitalised.

Eventually the coal-owners gave in. There has been a boom in mining since the energy crisis and the strike was tying up too much of their precious profits. They conceded the royalty issue and agreed to increase royalty payments. This clinched it. The miners returned to work with their organisation, solidarity, and strength intact.

While the conditions faced by US miners are very different to those faced by British miners, there is one very basic lesson to be learnt from their struggle.

Years ago the UMWA was an undemocratic, gangster-ridden outfit which did precious little for the rank and file. Wages were appallingly low and conditions even worse than at present. A democracy campaign was built up from the grass roots. It wasn't easy. Many campaigners were intimidated, and the campaign's presidential candidate was murdered.

Eventually the campaign won, and Arnold Miller was elected. Sweeping changes were introduced, and today the UMWA is probably the most democratic union in the USA. During this period the wages and conditions of the American miners have vastly improved.

Not that Arnold Miller is that great - in fact he was voted out and replaced by Sam Church last year - but this struggle demonstrates that democracy in the labour movement is not an abstract issue.

We want democracy because we want to fight. The two go hand in hand. The American miners bear graphic testimony to this fact.

EVENTS

NAC & LARC Lobby of Parliament. Support the abortion facilities bill. June 24th from 2.30 onwards.

H-Block: hear Labour's view. Hackney North LP meeting: Friday 26th June at Edward's Lane Library, Church St. N16. Speakers include Ernie Roberts MP and Steve Bundred [GLC].

NOTTINGHAM Mobilising Committee conference: Labour Councils in the firing line. Introduced by Ken Livingstone [GLC Leader] and John Carey [Nottingham City Council]. 11am Sat. June 27th at International Community Centre, Mansfield Rd.

LONDON Labour Briefing Conference: July 11th at County Hall. Further details from LLB, 158 Thorold Road, Ilford.

AVOID THE WEDDING: Come to the festival against unemployment. July 29th Clapham Common, with Ken Livingstone, Alf Dubs MP, and a speaker from Brixton. Bands include Jam Today. Stalls, beer tent and lots more. Organised by Battersea LP.

TRADE UNIONS AND SOCIALISM Labour Co-ordinating Committee Conference July 18th, Central Hall, Westminster. Speakers include Audrey Wise and Bernard Dix.

The conference will have three themes: [1] to examine the best way to build resistance to the Tory offensive [2] to ensure the next Labour government doesn't go down the same road as the last one;

[3] to increase rank and file influence in the unions as part of building a more political labour movement.

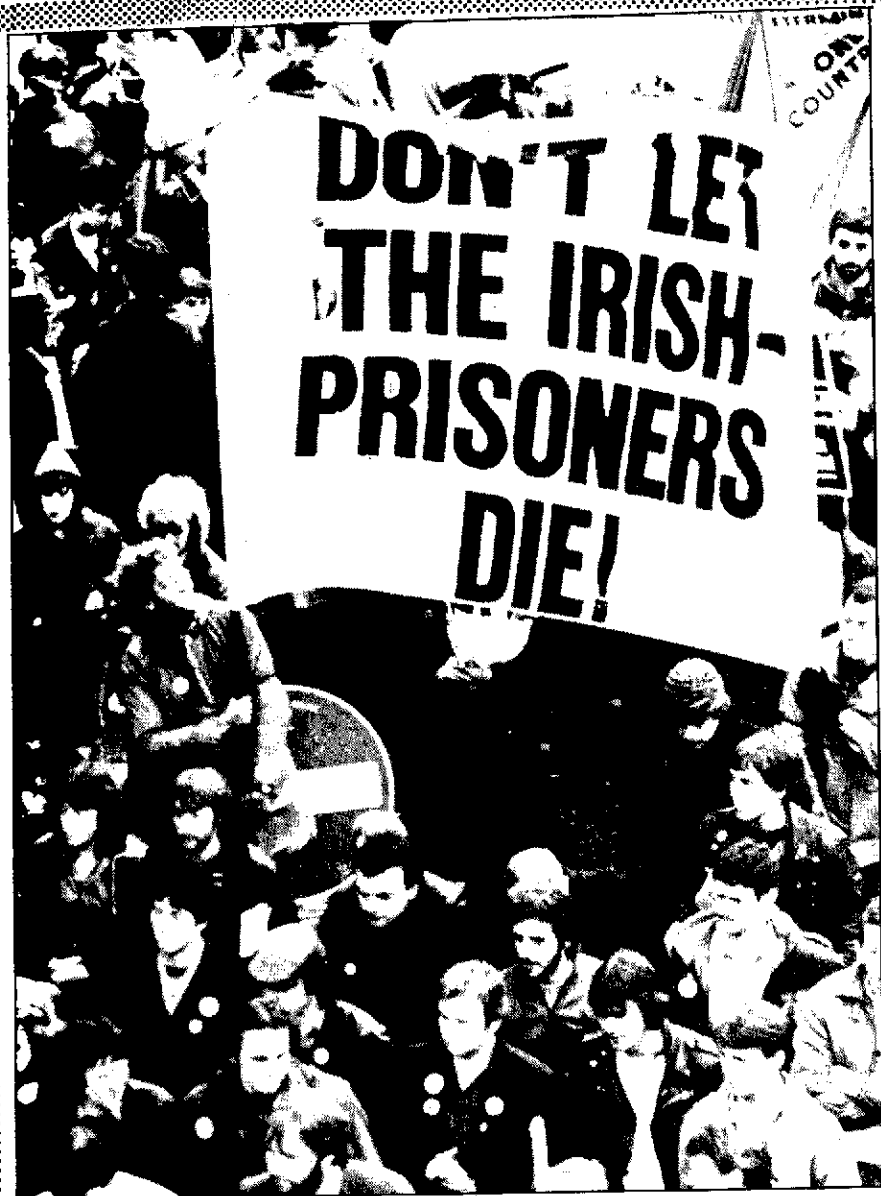
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by Bruce Robinson
(Vice-Chair, Labour
Committee on Ireland)

DESPITE the deaths of four of their predecessors and the intransigence of the Thatcher government, captured IRA fighters in the Maze prison are still coming forward to join the hunger strike and it is again reaching a critical stage.

Joe McDonnell is in his sixth week on hunger strike and Kieran Doherty, now an MP in the Southern Irish parliament, has been without food for over four weeks.

But still the rule for the Tory government and their Labour partners in bipartisanship is — anything other than admit that these are political prisoners.

The Tories are hurrying to push through a bill making it illegal for the prisoners to stand for Parliament. While front-bench spokesman Roy Hattersley is opposing the Tories for reasons of Parliamentary principle, the PLP is to allow MPs to vote for this anti-democratic bill 'according to their conscience'.

The hunger strike has also been a major factor in causing Labour Party members to question the policy of bipartisanship and to start looking for a political alternative. The visit by official Labour spokesman Don Concannon to Bobby Sands on

his death-bed, to tell him that Labour would not support him, has shocked and disgusted many activists.

The Labour Committee on Ireland feels that it is important to show publicly that many Labour Party members are determined to refute Concannon's callous assertion that Labour will not back the H-Block men.

That's why we have called a demonstration in Concannon's constituency of Mansfield on July 4th, under the slogans "Sack Concannon", "End Bipartisanship", and "Support the hunger strikers".

The LCI has met with an unprecedented hysterical response from Concannon's supporters, including Party leader Michael Foot. Foot went on local radio in Nottingham to pledge his support to Concannon and to denounce the LCI.

Labour's National Agent (on Foot's orders?) got the West Midlands Organiser to visit an LCI activist to get her to call off the demo — on the grounds that it might lead to Labour Party members fighting in the streets! An LCI press release describes the pressure to call the demonstration off:

"...It is precisely our success in developing a challenge in the party which has led to the orchestrated hysterical response to our demonstration."

"It does not surprise us that support for a counter-demonstration has come not only from Concannon's cohorts in the Labour Party, but also from Tories, the local rugby club and National Front elements" — Mansfield CLP has since called off its counter-demonstration, perhaps out of fear of being seen publicly in

such company.

"The threat of violence from these groups has been used by the police to ban us from marching through the Town Centre, a ban which we find an unacceptable infringement of our own rights. The Chief Executive of Mansfield District Council has also been pressurised to refuse us an assembly point."

"For our part, we challenge Don Concannon MP to debate with us at the end of the demonstration. We call on all Labour Party members to join us in this demonstration to criticise Mr. Concannon's disastrous record on Ireland and his attempts to suppress our legitimate protest against his collaboration with the Tories."

Demonstrate July 4th in Mansfield. Time: 2pm. Place: Mansfield BR Station. Coaches from London leave Kings X (York Way) at 8.30.

HERE TO STAY!

by Karen Reissman

AS THE Government gets ready to make the new Nationality Bill law, 600 people protested in Manchester in support of four of the victims of the present racist immigration laws.

Although the turnout from outside Manchester was poor, it was good to see the Liverpool branches of the National Union of Seamen and ASTMS, and delegations from Nottingham and Leeds, present alongside many local West Indian, Asian, and Labour Party banners.

Broke up

Of the four women threatened with deportation, three — Nasira Begum, Jaswinder Kaur, and Nasreen Akhtar — have had their rights removed after their marriages broke up and the Home Office discovered that they were no longer living with their husbands.

The fourth, Cynthia Gordon, is a Jamaican who lives in Manchester. She is the mother of two British-born children. She faces deportation because the Home Office are claiming that she is an overstayer. They are refusing to admit that Cynthia lived here for 12 years and that her children were born here.

Visa

Cynthia returned to Jamaica in 1972 to look after her invalid mother. In 1977 her mother died and Cynthia returned to Britain. After receiving false information from the British High Commission in Kingston she returned on a visitor's visa which has now expired.

The Home Office are now refusing to let her change her status to returning resident and want to deport her.

Cynthia's children are adamant that they will not

leave the UK, and that their mother must stay with them.

As Shirley, the eldest, said at the rally after the march, "People ask me why my mother breaks the law. What I say to them is, whose law? Not mine or my mum's!"

"These laws are for the benefit of those who are prejudiced and racist."

"Perhaps what is most ironic is that it is a government which is committed to pushing women back into the home to look after children and ageing relatives and which is now attempting to split my family up because my mother did just that."

Sexist

And Dimal Setti of the Asian Youth Movement said, "The Labour Party must take a stand of full support for the rights of black people."

"Unless we defend all those threatened by the

racist and sexist immigration laws, we will never win the struggle for liberation and equality."

These women still need your support. Pass resolutions at union and Labour Party meetings. Write to

Timothy Raison at the Home Office. Send messages of support and donations (urgently needed) to:

Nasira Begum Action Group, c/o 595 Stockport Rd, Longsight, Manchester



And here to fight: Nasreen Akhtar, Jaswinder Kaur [with her son Manjit], Nasira Begum, and Cynthia Gordon.

ASIANS CONDEMN RACIST JUDGE

by Stan Crooke

"MR YOUNGER'S statement is an affront to the Asian community and an open invitation to white racist thugs to molest and rape Asian women. No language is strong enough to condemn this racist decision of the Conservative government."

This comment by P.K. Bhaumik, the convenor of the Scottish Asian Action Committee, sums up the feelings of the Asian community in Scotland at the failure of George Younger, Secretary of State for Scotland, to sack Sheriff Francis Middleton after racist comments he made in a trial in April this year at Greenock.

The trial involved a 27

year old shipyard worker, who pleaded guilty to having unlawful sex with a 13 year old Vietnamese girl.

Because the girl is Asian, Middleton ruled that sex with her was "just an indiscretion", and fined the worker £750 while admitting that under normal circumstances he would be jailed.

The sheriff went on to say, "Girls mature much earlier in the East. In the form of marriage which takes place there, intercourse occurs before the marriage. This may have

predisposed her to the action."

A Scottish Asian Action committee involving 21 different Asian organisations, mostly from the west of Scotland, was set up to campaign for Middleton's sacking. Local MPs were contacted to raise the matter in the House of Commons, a petition was organised, Glasgow Trades Council backed the campaign, pickets of courts in Edinburgh and Glasgow were staged, and public meetings were held to build support.

On top of all this, in the last week the Scottish Council for Civil Liberties has found further evidence of racial and sexual discrimination in the trial.

In the period before the trial, the police confiscated the girl's passport and insisted on putting her into care, instead of allowing her to stay with her adoptive grandmother.

At the trial itself the defence lawyer made a plea in mitigation, the general tenor of which was that the girl invited the sexual attention of older men by

her behaviour. In his public statement defending his role in the trial, Middleton has repeated such allegations, although not a scrap of evidence has ever been presented to back them up.

The trial and the events surrounding it have shown up the racist and sexist nature of the capitalist legal system. A victory for the Scottish Asian Action Committee would not only be a setback for the racists and sexists who preside over trials, it would also be a real boost, especially in Scotland, for the campaign against the new Nationality Bill.

(Information and donations: Scottish Asian Action Committee, c/o the Trade Union Centre, 81 Carlton Place, Glasgow.

Cov gig rocks racists

3,500 black and white youth attended the Festival Against Racist Attacks in Coventry last Saturday, 20th.

Organised by members of the Coventry Anti-Racist Defence Squads, with the Specials, Hazel O'Connor, the Reluctant Stereotypes and other bands playing free, the festival was a resounding success.

One of the organisers told SO: "The fascists of the New National Front had made a concerted

effort to hold a march on the same day, but had failed to mobilise."

"The march had been banned, but all they could muster was a handful hanging round outside the stadium."

"In view of the racist murders and attacks in Coventry over the past few months, the Festival was a victory. It also means we've raised a lot of money — so we can get the defence of the black community on a serious footing."

Nazis attack another bookshop

THREE fascist youths attacked the worker in the Other Bookshop [run by the International Marxist Group in Islington, North London] last Saturday, 20th June. She is now in hospital with a fractured skull.

A spokesperson for the IMG told Socialist Organiser:

"The youths came in, apparently to buy badges. They put some on the counter and the bookshop worker told them the price."

"Then one of the youths drew an iron bar and smashed her on the head."

"The fascists left a tape

which said among other things, 'Death to IRA scum', and 'God save the Queen'."

"This gives the lie to the police's attempts to imply that the attackers were not fascists. Also, the NF has published a hit-list including the Other Bookshop."

The fascists will stop at nothing. They have already murdered black youths in Coventry and Southall, fire-bombed the SWP bookshop in Birmingham, and broken up meetings. The labour movement cannot afford to ignore the fascists. We must organise to drive them back into the gutters they came from.

A total of £370 so far this month — with only a week to go — means that our accumulated shortfall on the monthly Socialist Organiser fund is due to increase again.

This month we're aiming for the normal £500 plus £313 to make up shortfalls from previous months. And we just can't afford to forget those shortfalls.

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