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Socialist Organiser

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BRITAIN IN 1981

Rotten to the core

THE THIN pretence of a well-ordered, satisfied society with little else on its mind but the Royal wedding has broken down. Whole areas of Liverpool and London have been gutted in riots that resemble the explosion of the American black ghettos in the 1960's: except that white youth, and very young children have been involved too — and here the resemblance to Belfast or Derry is closer.

Poison in a human body, or lack of oxygen, produces paroxysms and convulsions.

Likewise, the organism of British society is experiencing convulsions not known in living memory.

CS gas has been used in this country for the first time. The Liberal leader of Liverpool council (remember the flower-power, community politics Liberals of yesteryear?) demanded that the Home Secretary put the Army on standby for the next time round.

Water cannons, plastic bullets, special riot gear, the militarisation of youth in a form of National Service, and more riot police have all been thrust forward as politicians' bright suggestions for dealing with the situation.

What has caused the paroxysms? The Tories are evidently puzzled. But it doesn't take a genius to work out the answer.

Mass unemployment. (Up to 46% for black youth in Toxteth). Savage attacks on services. An arrogant Tory government stamped with the accents and spite of the middle class.

A labour movement unclear, offering no real lead for action now, assaulted and misrepresented by the press in its efforts to sort itself out.

Blacks alienated and driven into a corner, even if they've been here for generations, by the shrill pitch of official racism.

Youth only too aware that heavy repression is all that society has to give those for whom it has nothing to offer.

The Tories in Parliament sneered and booed Labour spokesperson Roy Hattersley for even talking about social deprivation and unemployment in connection with Toxteth. They're out for



Ripe for socialism

blood, vengeance and the big boot.

And even if they do turn on the crocodile tears and come up with schemes and grants, it will be only to cover their main priority, of showing just who owns and controls our streets.

And it isn't just on the streets where Tory repression hits. Councillors in Lothian are facing heavy penalties for not making cuts: cut that will turn their city into dead-end slums like Toxteth.

The only answer to despair and repression is a fightback. The energy that went into

petrol bombs and barricades, the anger at the system and the hatred of the Tories, can be harnessed to the strength and growing militancy of the labour movement.

It isn't a matter of Tory law or no law at all: repressive capitalist police, or street chaos, looting and burning.

The labour movement is a highly sophisticated organism with a long tradition of fairness and democracy.

Strikers decide where to hit and where not to hit. Flying pickets regulate themselves and (despite what the Tory press says) do not go on the rampage.

Mass demonstrations are orderly events.

In the past the movement has been paralysed by its excessive awe and respect for capitalist legality. But it can free itself from that poison. It is beginning to free itself from it. And the convulsions and sickness of capitalist order should help socialists to speed the process.

The organisation by the labour movement, together with the local community, of self-policing, with authorised and controlled street patrols, could bring order without repression and begin to involve

the unemployed and disaffected youth into a movement fighting for an alternative world to the one they have known. It should be coupled with a call for the removal of the police from areas like Toxteth and Southall.

The labour movement needs to gear itself to replace capitalist disorder by its own vigilance and control — and not only on the streets of Toxteth or Southall, but in the whole of society.

Just as we can't afford to let fascists and racist police boot-boys rampage through Southall or Liverpool, we can't afford

to let the Tories and their class, lashing out as their crisis deepens, devastate our jobs and our services.

The labour movement has the means to purge the poison: nationalisation without compensation of the banks and main industries, work-sharing with no loss of pay, an end to massive arms spending, and workers' control. What we need is the will to win control over our leaders, to replace them where necessary, to fight to win, and to take on the bastions of state power that protect this deadly-sick system.

Poland reprieved?

ON JULY 5th, nine days before the opening of the Congress of the ruling party in Poland, the Kremlin announced — effectively — that it would let the Congress take place and would not invade Poland.

Had study of the Congress preparations convinced the Moscow rulers that Poland's top bureaucrats would be able to retain solid control? Or did the Kremlin just conclude that even a risky and uncertain policy of trying to keep control via Kania and his men was preferable to the problems of an invasion which would

probably be resisted not only by armed workers but also by the regular Polish army?

Either way, the slackening of tension can only be temporary. The independent workers' movement Solidarnosc, however conservative its leadership, poses a threat to Poland's bureaucratic police-state regime by its very existence.

Either the workers will crush the bureaucrats, and open the way to genuine socialist development on the basis of the nationalised economy — or the bureaucrats will crush the workers.

**New
paper
will be
weekly**

This is the last issue of Socialist Organiser as a fortnightly. The next issue will appear on July 31, after a holiday break, as a 16-page weekly.

With weekly publication, Socialist Organiser will be better able to respond to the convulsions which are shaking Thatcher's Britain and to help organise the left to replace Thatcher with a Workers' Government.

One other change: a new address. From now all correspondence should be sent to Socialist Organiser, c/o 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

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What the London Left must do

by Mick O'Sullivan

THE LONDON Labour Briefing conference on Saturday 11th comes at a crucial time for the Left, with Heseltine's new legislation, the penalties in Lothian, and the backtracking of the GLC.

The conference can either take a lead to organise a fight, or remain yet another talking shop.

From the first conference on local government, initiated by the SCLV in June 1979, through the two Lambeth conferences, the central dividing line on the Left was the question of rate and rent rises.

From those who supported such rises as a tactic to buy time and to build a campaign, no campaign has emerged, only attacks on working class living standards.

Now it is no longer a question of buying time. With Heseltine's proposed legislation and penalties, time has run out.

Even at such a late stage, the conference can rally a fightback against the Tories and in defence of working class living standards. It should be clear from the outset that the fightback has to go outside the Labour Party and look for support from the shop floor and the states. The only alternative is collapse at the feet of the Tories and further cuts, dressed up by promises to do better once we have a Labour Government.

If the conference is to have any credibility, it must dissociate itself from the GLC Labour Group on the tube workers' pay and demand that the GLC pay the 15% claim.

A resolution of support should also be sent to the Lothian Action Committee, and the conference should set up a small working committee to approach Lothian for a national conference to call industrial action against the cuts. It should call on the GLC Labour Group to be a major sponsor of this conference.

The resolution passed at the recent T&GWU conference, pledging industrial action to back councils standing firm against cuts, provides a ready-made platform for building support.



by Jo Thwaites

THE LONDON Underground workers' claim is 15%, and London Transport have offered 8% — which is below the level of inflation, and thus a wage-cutting offer. The tube workers will strike on July 20th if their claim is not met.

So the Labour Greater London Council (GLC) is rapidly approaching a situation where it will be doing exactly the opposite of what it was elected to do — represent the interests of the working people in London.

The GLC Manifesto said: 'A Labour GLC will primarily act to defend and improve the living standards of working people in London. Labour will support working people's industrial and political struggles for a better life and against the Tory government'.

What are the tube workers doing but struggling for better living standards?

The cut and pegged tube fares will better the living standards of everyone in London — but (if the GLC sticks to 8 per cent) at the expense of the workers in the industry. The Left council has chosen to administer London Transport for the 'general good' and to cut loose from the interests of the tube workers who say that such improvements should not be at their expense.

Interviewed in Socialist Organiser before the election, Ken Livingstone (now leader of the GLC) said: 'Whenever there is an industrial dispute in London, we shall go down and support it. Local GLC facilities will be put at the disposal of the strikers'.

And indeed, in the first week the GLC was in

GLC, pay the tube workers!

power. County Hall was handed over to the People's Marchers. The Time Out strikers have been well supported by the GLC with premises and publicity.

And the GLC has scrapped 'civil defence'. The ILEA Labour group has voted to go ahead with cutting school meal prices, despite threats of surcharge, though there is doubt whether they will impose a whip to force through the price cut at the full ILEA meeting.

So why oppose the tube workers' claim? Ken Livingstone now says: 'To meet the NUR claim would require a supplementary rate and lead to more grant losses'. There will be a supplementary rate anyway, and if meeting a pay claim isn't worth fighting for against the Tories, then what is?

If the Labour GLC can't side with workers who claim 15% on wages when inflation is running at 15% or so, then what use are all its gestures and actions as benevolent administrators?

Livingstone's argument comes down to — we can't do much with a Tory government, as they keep on taking grants away from us. We'll have to wait until the next Labour Government.

On the NUR side, there is no doubt that Sid

Weighell is cynically using the tube workers' claim as a stick to beat the Left as represented by the GLC Labour group.

Sid Weighell is not normally known for his willingness to go along with strike action for better wages — far from



Ken Livingstone: is he seeking the 'general good' at workers' expense?

it. But to use the right-wing motives of Weighell as a reason to deny the tube workers their claim is equally cynical.

Also, the fact that the bus workers settled for 8% before the new GLC came in is not an argument either. The rank and file bus workers were not consulted about the settlement, and were pressurised into settling under the Tories so as not to embarrass the new

Labour administration.

The Labour GLC is supposed to represent the interests of workers, and the fact that Sid Weighell is a right-winger has got nothing to do with it. The Left should attack Weighell for his failure to support militant action elsewhere, not the tube workers for their determination to protect their living standards.

If the GLC won't take a stand on this and risk losing more grants, then what will it take a stand on? The argument that this is not the time to go all out against the Tories, that the mass campaign hasn't been built yet, is the same as that used by Ted Knight in Lambeth.

If the time isn't right now, with Lothian set for confrontation, then it never will be: if the GLC doesn't stick to its word and file trade unionists — the tube workers — then we can never hope to build a mass campaign to take on the Tories.

And this is recognised in the GLC Manifesto: 'Understanding that the Tory Government does not listen to pleas, but responds only to pressure, a Labour GLC and ILEA will appeal to the Labour and trade union movement to take action, including industrial action, to support its stand'. The GLC, no

the GLC's intention to take on the Tories. But the fact that it could all disappear like this when the tube workers' claim came up reveals a lack of a clear set of principles behind it.

The issue is the same in essence as that involved in the decision of Lambeth, Camden, etc. to go for rate increases which cut living standards as a supposed way round a confrontation: the same choice is involved of administering an area as benevolently as possible within the limits and terms set by the Tory government. Choosing to be administrators, the Left are on the road to ceasing to be militants.

It reveals the need for a real organised Left in the London Labour Party to remind Ken Livingstone and all the rest of their manifesto commitments — and the fundamental commitment, to stick with the working class.

Appeal grows

IN A message to us from their National Committee, the Jewish Socialist Group 'unreservedly condemns the attempt by the Workers Revolutionary Party, through cynical manipulation of the capitalist legal system, to use its money to silence criticism of its activities in the labour movement.'

'The JSG considers Socialist Organiser's offer to open its columns to the WRP in exchange for similar facilities for socialists attacked in the pages of Newsline a properly socialist method of resolving the issue.'

'Please be assured that we shall use our modest resources wherever possible to draw attention to your appeal and the issues involved'.

Other messages of support and donations are still coming in for our fight against the libel case brought against us by Vanessa Redgrave of the WRP. The legal mechanisms are still grinding away, slowly but expensively, and we need

all the additional help we can get, to force the WRP to back down and accept our demand for a labour movement inquiry, not resort to the bourgeois courts.

Appeal for funds

LABOUR MOVEMENT PRESS DEFENCE FUND

Send donations to Jonathan Hammond (Hon. Treasurer), c/o 214 Sickert Court, London N1 2SY. Cheques payable to 'Labour Movement Press Defence Fund'.

Name:

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The toll of Lambeth's cuts

by Cheung Siu Ming

THIS APRIL, the left-wing Labour council in Lambeth — after years of saying there was 'no alternative' to rate rises — decided there was 'no alternative' to cuts.

Now Carisbrooke House, the council's training unit for its own staff, is under occupation by its 20 workers. The action has been taken to prevent the Council from closing the unit and selling the site.

Either by mistake or design, the council budget apparently included no estimate for the centre, according to Lambeth NALGO.

The Council's social services training pro-

gramme has been cut by 66%, with secondments, external and internal courses heavily reduced. Commitment to equal opportunities and raising levels of staff qualification are now undermined by the cuts in training.

The direct action taken by the unit's workers follows on other council workers' fight against cuts. Last month, residential homes workers were provoked into banning overtime. According to a Lambeth NALGO social services cuts bulletin, 'When the council introduced the present round of cuts, it said that priority for recruitment would be given to children's residential and day care. How

had this worked out? One in every five posts was deliberately left vacant, and no jobs in children's homes were filled... homes are nearly on the point of collapse due to acute staff shortages'.

Within 24 hours of the action, the council backed down. It agreed to advertise 40 posts and to carry out no changes in designated use of children's homes without agreement.

NALGO members' no cover action has also unfrozen another post — fostering placements officer.

Staff in Borough Development have been threatened with compulsory redeployment. They have taken action by refusing to

fill in time-sheets. The council has now agreed to negotiate voluntary redeployment with NALGO for this department.

The social services department has so far come under the heaviest pressure. Apart from cuts in children's homes, a new Day Centre at Kennington, part of a new estate development, was to have been scaled down to a luncheon club. After protests by both NALGO and tenants, the decision has been deferred to the next Labour group meeting.

The Lambeth NALGO branch sent a delegation up to the recent march in Lothian. Lambeth Council leader Ted Knight was

there too, and made a speech calling for a fightback. Yet in Lambeth he put pressure on the NALGO branch to accept voluntary severance and justified it by listing all the powers now in Heseltine's hands.

Direct action and increasing vigilance will be necessary in the coming months. This must be combined with a political fight in the GMCs to bring the Council to account for its recent actions.

The April budget might not have been passed so easily if the Labour Parties had realised the extent of the cuts and the free hand given to council officers to roam around departments looking for 'savings'.

A LABOUR INQUIRY, NOT THE COURTS

We, the undersigned, condemn Vanessa Redgrave'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 investigate the statements made in the Socialist Organiser article.

NAME ORGANISATION

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

Time to break off all links

LEN MURRAY of the TUC has responded to the CBI's call for new, tougher anti-union laws by saying that the TUC will break off informal links with the CBI.

Just so no-one got over-excited, the TUC also assured the press that "TUC and CBI



Len Murray

leaders meet regularly at formal functions like the National Economic Development Council and the Manpower Services Commission [which runs the infamous YOP schemes] and there is no question of these links being severed".

The main point of the informal talks was anyway for the TUC to try to coax the CBI into making a joint approach to the Tory government in favour of import controls. Since that effort has failed, the loss of one extra whisky-and-sandwiches session is not too big a gesture for the TUC leaders.

But breaking off collaboration with the Tories and the bosses is the right direction to move. Only, the TUC — and the Labour Party — should do it seriously.

All trade unions should be withdrawn from the NEDC and MSC and similar bodies, and from nationalised industry boards. Labour MPs should start systematically obstructing the Tories' work in Parliament, and Labour councils should defy the cuts.

That way, we could make sure that the labour movement was not helping the Tories govern — and that a signal could be given for a mass fightback through direct action capable of stopping any new anti-union laws.

by John McIlroy

THE TORY government is closing in on the closed shop. It now seems almost certain that a Bill will be introduced in the Autumn placing further limits on workers' rights to force 100% trade union membership.

In 1980, Employment Minister James Prior won his battle in the Cabinet to limit what went into the Employment Act. He argued then that diluted medicine was less likely to produce convulsions and immediate confrontations like those Heath had faced with the Industrial Relations Act.

His idea was that once the Tories' economic policies had zapped shop floor strength, once falling membership made union leaders even more reluctant to lead a fightback, once the Act had become an established part of the industrial furniture, then would be the time to build further on its foundations.

Six months ago Prior and his base in the Tory Party and in industry had to pay the price for this line of argument, in the Green Paper on Trade Union Immunities.

It outlined and discussed the more draconian measures supported by

Closing in on the closed shop

the right wing — proposals that had been part of the Tories' baggage for nearly twenty years.

Here once more were to be found proposals for make collective agreements legally binding; to limit blacking, picketing and the closed shop; to allow employers to sue unions directly instead of going for individual members and officials, thus hitting union funds; and to introduce secret ballots and cooling off periods before strike action.

But the whole emphasis was on caution and realism, and the problems of enforcing these measures were heavily underlined.

Prior saw this document as the basis for inaction. He even introduced far-reaching questions, such as whether the whole basis of trade union law should be fundamentally remodelled to give positive rights rather than the present negative immunities which give unions piecemeal protection against other laws.

There would be, Prior considered, a confused re-

sponse which would enable him to buy time.

He reckoned without the dissatisfaction among employers and Tories with Government policies, as inflation remains high, wage rates decline too slowly, bankruptcies continue apace and the unions have suffered no decisive defeat.

He also underestimated the tenacity of Thatcher, and the aggressive anti-union mood among Tory MPs and bosses wanting to 'pile on the pressure while the unions are on the defensive'.

Having personally orchestrated the Joanna Harris case in Parliament and the media, Thatcher's advisors (notably John Hoskyns, head of her Policy Unit) called meetings of big bosses at Downing Street to synchronise their response to the Green Paper.

Industrialists, the Observer pointed out, 'were left in no doubt what the Prime Minister wanted to see.' Her supporters Geoffrey Howe and Keith Joseph were kept fully informed and the rank and

file played their part, 119 backbenchers signing a motion calling for tighter legislation on the closed shop.

By the time of the closing date for comments, there were still major differences between the various proposals coming from employers' organisations.

Bodies like the Institute of Personnel Management, representing a professional interest in old-style incorporation and the softly, softly approach, called for 'voluntary initiatives' while the Employment Act is given a chance to work.

At the other end of the spectrum the Freedom Association want the closed shop completely outlawed, and the Institute of Directors argues for putting the boot in good and hard straight away.

The CBI wants 'gradual but steady change on a time scale determined by events and by pressure of public opinion'.

They want:
■ damages against

strikers if they walk out before procedures are exhausted;

■ unions to be responsible for the actions of their members so that employers can hit union funds;

■ blacking to be legal only after a secret ballot and a period of notice to employers;

■ unions rather than individuals to be held responsible for picketing that violates the Employment Act; and

■ political strikes to be banned.

What they want immediately is action on the closed shop.

The closed shop is the lowest common denominator of most of the evidence in response to the Green Paper, and will represent the basis of a new compromise culminating in a new Bill in the Autumn.

How will the law be changed?

The Employment Act already protects workers who opt out of a closed shop on 'genuine grounds of conscience or other

deeply held personal convictions' — an easy enough escape route. Moreover, a new closed shop needs 80% approval of all those eligible to vote in a secret ballot.

The new Bill is likely to double the compensation for those sacked in closed shop situations to around £30,000, outlaw 'union labour only' clauses in commercial contracts, introduce periodic review of existing closed shops and outlaw the pre-emptive closed shop.

It may also ban political strikes.

The closed shop is essential to effective trade union organisation. As the Institute of Directors point out, it is not only a 'moral' question but the basis of shop floor power.

The comments of TGWU proprietor Alan Kitson to the effect that he opposes pre-emptive closed shops do nothing to help a fightback against the Tories.

Neither, of course, does Britain's biggest union connivance in the Employment Act, as exhibited by Brian Mathers' restriction of blacking. Ansell, and the recent withdrawal of secondary pickets at Chloride.

A fightback must come. But whereas some unions were prepared to make an official (if limited) stand against Heath's Industrial Relations Act, the fight will now have to come from below.

Andrew Hornung reports from the Labour Party jobs march in Cardiff on July 4th.

THE CROWDS lying listlessly in Pontcanna Fields after the march looked dejectedly towards the platform, from which a choir sang such political anthems as "I'm just a girl who can't say 'no'", "People will say we're in love", "Swing Low Sweet Chariot", and "Hava Nagilah".

Denzil Davies MP, the first speaker of the afternoon's rally, evoked a little response against the odds when he reminded the audience that "Hitler came to power in the 1930s on the back of unemployment, not on the back of inflation".

Then Ron Hayward, General Secretary of the Labour Party, took the platform and read out a message of greeting to the marchers from someone who couldn't be there. Still no response.

Then he said that the message was from Tony Benn. Suddenly the audience came alive. The cheering started, the audience got to its feet to give the absent Benn a standing ovation, clapping their hands overhead and chanting, "Tony Benn, Tony Benn!"

After a couple of minutes Hayward called for quiet, but the audience wanted to make its message unmistakably clear: they were Benn supporters. They wanted Foot on the platform to hear their message. They wanted Healey — grinning to cover his embarrassment — to hear the message: the rank and file want Benn for Deputy Leader.

It took several more minutes until the marchers were sure they had made their point.

The platform was full of Labour Party and trade

union worthies... chairpersons of this, General Secretaries of that, MPs for this constituency and executive members of that committee. Not one was now involved in direct action in defence of jobs, many never had been.

Not one referred to actual struggles. There was no mention of strikes, of occupations, of pickets or solidarity action.

We sat through Eric Varley's calls for 'social cohesion and social harmony', through Alan Fisher's lame rhetoric, through Stan Orme's warnings about the growth of the fascist right, his attacks on the Militant tendency and his nationalist economic programme, through Eric Heffer's advocacy of the left's Alternative Economic Strategy and Michael Foot's completely indeterminate 'alternative' strategy — "We'll borrow, that's what the capitalists do..." — until Denis Healey rose to

speak.

Again the crowd sprang to life: "Tony Benn! Tony Benn!", "Healey out!", "Off, off, off!"

Healey tried to bulldoze on, hoping the hecklers would get tired, but it was no good. Finally Foot had to rescue him. Using his dwindling popularity with South Wales workers, Foot appealed for Healey to be heard. Again the right wing's candidate for the Deputy Leadership started a recitation of Thatcher's crimes.

Gradually the heckling grew again. Healey turned away from attacking Thatcher to attacking 'minorities' within the Labour Party, though it was clear that on that day it was Healey who represented the minority — the minority who since the founding of the Party have seen to it that it would not fight for socialism or even for the minimum needs of the working class.

AMONG THOSE heckling Stan Orme's calls for import controls was a worker from the Redlands concrete pipe works near Bournemouth.

"What Orme says doesn't make any sense. He starts off warning us about the fascists and ends up telling us to be good little nationalists."

"If ever a bloke was needed here today, it's Tony Benn. He's the only one that's trying to change things. This lot'll only do what they did last time. They starve the Tories,



'I know he won't listen to you, but you should listen to him'

but they didn't do much better; they started this unemployment and the cuts"

A Liverpool building worker added: "Just look at that Healey. He looks well-fed, doesn't he? I bet they all eat at the best places. They're an embarrassment really."

"But what can you do? Who else can you vote for? If you clock on of a morning you've got to vote Labour, haven't you?"

"Some of the blokes I

work with think I'm mad: they don't think you can change anything, but things are changing in the Labour Party."

"Years ago we would have been made up if we could have got Foot in as Deputy. Now he's with the right wing, but I think we've got a good chance with Benn."

"Of course, Benn'll likely go the same way as the others, but it won't half shake them up if he gets in."

A Welsh miner agreed

NUR backs Wembley vote

The National Union of Railwaymen's conference has voted to back the Wembley election college — 40:30:30 — and the vote for Healey against Benn 42:29 — was narrow for a union led right-winger Weighell.

In the National Union of Mineworkers however, the right wing leadership held its ground preventing conference debate on a motion backing Benn.

Both these developments show how the Labour Party democracy issue is now being linked to trade union democracy.

with a lot that Eric Healey said, adding:

"There's all this about socialist politics. Even Healey says he's a socialist. What they do to do when they get what they're doing in France — nationalise banks and cut the wage week."

"Why don't they say that? People won't understand that. But people don't want socialism. The rank and file. That's why there's so much support for Tony Benn."

Why workers want Tony Benn

by Gerry Hoffa

Laurence Scott's boss Arthur Snipe, after telling the workers that "the sit-in constituted a termination of contract and therefore employees relinquish eligibility for redundancy pay", has now sent a redundancy cheque to every worker.

This move by Snipe is undoubtedly a response to the agreement struck on July 1st by Laurence Scott's stewards and Arthur Scargill whereby a blacking and mass picket is to be put on the key Mining Supplies factory in Doncaster. Realising the noose was tightening around his neck, Snipe turned to his last remaining card: he contacted Boyd and Cure.

Snipe contacted Boyd, or "Black Jack" as he's known to LS stewards, at the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions Conference at Ayr last week with a simple proposition: "Call off the

Snipe's Uriah Heeps vs Mass Picket

blackening and scheduled mass picket and I will open up discussion on the future of the Manchester factory."

Like a pair of Uriah Heeps from a Dickens novel, Boyd and Cure immediately instructed regional CSEU officials to call off the prospective mass picket of Doncaster. When LS stewards got wind of this, an emergency Shop Stewards' Committee meeting was called which voted 18 to 4 to go ahead with the mass picket, for Monday 6th July.

As Peter Rowan, Chair of the Joint Shop Stewards Committee said, "We've not come this far simply to let Boyd hand it to Snipe on a plate. Within half an hour of the stewards meeting

that agreed to go ahead with the picket 114 people had volunteered. And we'll be sending two bus-loads every day until Snipe surrenders."

But all is not roses and light with the dispute. The arrival of redundancy cheques through the post has caused a problem for the leading stewards. Peter Rowan put it in a nutshell:

Problem

What's more the BOC Combine Committee are stopping the delivery of crucial oxy-acetylene and Snipe knows he can't last long. On the financial front the occupation is receiving £3,000 a week with an extra £1,400 a week "coming on stream" from a levy of the Manchester North AUEW District. This compares with £10,000 a week during the two-month long Gardner's dispute.

"What do you say to a bloke who has had no money at all for ten weeks then all of a sudden a cheque for £3,000 drops on the mat? At first we thought of setting up a trust fund into which all the money would be paid until after the dispute. But on second thoughts this was quite unrealistic. The key thing to hammer away on is that this struggle is about jobs not money, and though we have no intentions of stopping members from spending their redundancy

pay, we think that those faint hearts who have simply held on for the cash should go. What we are willing to do is negotiate a deal with Snipe whereby after it's been decided to keep the factory open, the workers will pay back a nominal amount back to the employer each week."

Law

But there could be a double edge to the issuing of redundancy pay. It could foreshadow Snipe appearing before the courts and saying: "I've fulfilled all my obligations under the law, now can I have an injunction to evict these trespassers." This event-

uality has been prepared for, however. John Tocher (AUEW Divisional Organiser) has stated that if so much as a Panda car was to appear with an injunction, all Confed convenors in Greater Manchester would be requested to assemble their members at the Openshaw plant, promptly!

Moreover, an important feature of the Scotts struggle has been its effect in animating pre-existing political divisions within AUEW officialdom. For while Boyd and Co's role speaks for itself, LS stewards think that John Tocher and Duggie Daniels (Manchester North District Secretary), given the bureaucratic constraints of their position, have played an important role in supporting the struggle. Indeed

for the LS activists the politics of your officials do matter.

The stewards were also elated after their visit to Scargill last week. It was only afterwards when they read Arthur's press statement that they noticed an ambiguity. According to Pete Rowan, Scargill said, "We'll start the blacking, as soon as you stop Mining Supplies". But if LS pickets stopped Mining Supplies — they would not need any blacking! Maybe Arthur's coyness stems from the proximity of the NUM Presidential elections?

What is clear though is that the week beginning July 6th will be the most crucial in the whole struggle. The mass picket will begin, and it'll be the biggest test yet of Prior's secondary picket rulings.

Volunteers for picketing should ring 061-223 3815. The coaches will leave every morning at 8 am from Louisa Street, Openshaw, Manchester.

STUC dampens Lee Jeans march

STAN CROOKE and FIONA MENZIES report

"THERE comes a point where you have to ask yourself if you can win. The sit-in is official and we will continue to back the Lee Jeans workers, but we have advised them that they probably haven't got the necessary muscle to win."

With friends like John Howard, West of Scotland officer of the Tailor and Garment Workers' Union, the Lee Jeans workers hardly need enemies.

The march across Scotland by a contingent of the Lee Jeans strikers seemed the ideal chance to raise the 'muscle' they need to win — and to use their combativity to rally other workers to stand up and fight for their own jobs.

But all the signs are that the Scottish TUC, which organised the 67-mile protest, put the damper on it. Instead of a triumphal progress greeted with walk-outs, demonstrations and solidarity along the way, such as the People's March had been the month before, the STUC made sure it was a non-event from start to finish.

The march began on Saturday 27th June, led off by 20 women from the occupied factory. Behind them was a band, a few trade unionists — and over 400 members of the Scottish National Party.

Fiasco

Jimmy Milne, General Secretary of the STUC, had the gall to denounce the SNP for "political opportunism of the worst sort" and for trying to take over the march. To which SNP leader Jim Sillars easily replied, "If the SNP contingent is bigger than the STUC's, I suggest Mr Milne turns his anger in another direction".

The second day was an even worse fiasco. Paisley and District Trades Council had been given just four days' notice of the march, and less than fifty people set off from the

desolate Talbot Linwood factory and marched through a deserted Paisley town centre, followed by not a single trade union or Labour Party banner.

The rally at the end of the 2½-mile march was held in the corner of a park. Jimmy Milne addressed the "trade unionists and girls", and deplored the small turnout. He had a lot to say about "forcing the government to alter its policies", but nothing about how to help the Lee Jeans workers win the fight for jobs.

Monday, the day the march arrived in Glasgow, was also the day of a rally celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Upper Clyde Shipbuilders work-in.

It was a temptation no STUC bureaucrat could resist: to combine a rally about the UCS sell-out (the deal which finished the sit-in involved job losses, no strike agreements, flexibility deals, penalty clauses etc.) with the Lee Jeans fight which the STUC would give their back teeth to be rid of.

Cheered

At the rally the Lee Jeans marchers and the rest of the audience were treated to an orgy of backslapping about the UCS 'victory' by the platform speakers, who included Jimmy Reid (ex-UCS leader, now more of a show-biz personality and raconteur), and representatives of the SNP, the Communist Party and the Labour Party.

But there was no speaker from Lee Jeans! Nor any effort to ensure a decent turnout for the next stage of the march, with the result that when the marchers set off again on the Tuesday the only company they had was half a dozen trade unionists and a posse of Newsline sellers.

Last stop Edinburgh. The women from Lee Jeans started out from Westerhailes, a large housing estate nine miles from the city centre,

around half past ten in the morning. They were greeted by a delegation from the Fire Brigades Union, people who had come out from Edinburgh, and the Westerhailes Unemployed Workers' Centre.

Throughout the week before, a lot of work had been done by the Edinburgh Unemployed Workers' Association to get workers from factories the demonstration was to pass to come out and greet the women.

Bus drivers left their depots, and workers waved and cheered from office buildings and shops. At the Ferranti electronics works the workers joined the marchers for their dinner break.

Spirited

Spirits were high as the march reached the Scottish Office to present a petition signed by supporters en route from Greenock.

But even this spirited end to their march could have been so much more powerful if it had been timed to coincide with the 15,000-strong anti-cuts strike and demonstration that had filled the streets of Edinburgh just two days earlier.



FOR YEARS the medical profession has told women that giving birth in hospital is far safer than giving birth at home.

Many women have had it put to them that they are being selfish in preferring to give birth in the supportive surroundings of their own homes rather than endure production-line maternity wards with chronic understaffing and routine inducement of births.

Nowadays, over 90% of births take place in hospitals (70% in 1970), with about 6% in General Practitioner Maternity Units (GPMU) and under 2% at home.

It is therefore rather a shock to read, in an article by Marjorie Tew, a research statistician at the Nottingham University Medical School, in the Guardian (23.6.81) that, after allowing for

abnormal and risky births, not only is it more dangerous to give birth in hospital than at home or in a GPMU, but that this has been known to the medical profession since statistics were first collected in 1958. Thus in 1970 it was found that the perinatal mortality rate (PNMR: the rate of stillbirths and deaths in the first week of life) in hospitals, for normal births, for was nearly three times that for births at home and in GPMUs (17 per thousand and six per thousand respectively).

Unfortunately, the article raises more questions than it answers. How have these figures been arrived at? What do new-born babies die from at home and in hospital? Are there fewer problems when a full antenatal course has been followed, or in 'natural childbirth' units, as opposed to when induction of birth has

taken place? Why are PNMRs higher for working class women?

The answer to this problem is not to dump hospital births, though more home births can probably be justified, but to put more resources into providing the sort of environment that the mother wants and needs rather than what the medical profession thinks she needs.

Watt of the wolf pack

President Raygun's latest top government appointment is fast threatening to make Carter's administration look like Lenin's Council of People's Commissars. I've already mentioned Secretary of the Interior James G Watt, responsible for America's public lands, who said 'my responsibility is to follow the scriptures which call upon us to occupy the land until Jesus returns.'

Dan Greenberg, who writes in New Scientist on the Washington science scene, gives an up-to-date list of Watt's colleagues this week.

Dr. C. Everett Koop, originally intended to be the US's top health official and now one of them, believes that abortion will lead to infanticide, followed

by passive euthanasia, active euthanasia, and finally 'the political climate that led to Auschwitz, Dachau and Belsen.' By 1987, he prophesies, no child will be declared alive until three days after its birth, so that the parents can decide if they want it or not!

Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights is Ernest W Lefever who believes that human rights should not be a factor in dealings with other nations. He has also been quietly circulating propaganda material for baby food manufacturers seeking to avoid sales curbs in the third world.

The head of the Environmental Protection Agency, Ann M Gorsch, is known for opposing federal or even state supervision of toxic waste disposal.

Chief Negotiator for the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency is Gen. Edward L. Rowny [Retd.] who denounced the SALT talks with the USSR.

There is also an opponent of occupational safety and health regulations heading the agency that runs it; a leading supporter of timbering on public lands looking after these lands; and a lawyer who previously represented foreign nuclear industries looking after nuclear non-proliferation affairs.

This is all rather like appointing a pack of wolves to look after the health of a flock of sheep.

by Andrew Hornung

THE BOMB blast that claimed the lives of Ayatollah Beheshti (leader of Iran's ruling Islamic Republican Party), 27 Parliamentary deputies and 44 others, has not shaken the hold of the right-wing clergy one bit.

It has merely contributed to the growing sense of chaos, disintegration and powerlessness among the Iranian masses.

By contrast, the massive demonstration organised in Tehran by the People's Mojahedeen and supported by the Fedayeen (Minority) a few days before, on June 20th, clearly stung the government.

Hundreds of thousands — the People's Mojahedeen claim 500,000 — marched in protest against the clerical counter-revolution which had just removed President Bani Sadr. The chief slogan of the Mojahedeen today is for the return of Bani Sadr.

The Islamic Republic Party reacted by dispatching its club-wielding thugs against the marchers and then ordered troops to fire on the demonstrators. A doctor who treated those injured on the demonstration was later executed along with

After the bombing...

Iran's Left under fire

Iranians arrested for self-defence

his wife and eight year old daughter.

(This is not the first case of children being executed. The Tehran 'revolutionary' prosecutor, Hassan Lajevardi, denied that anyone under 18 had been executed, but then added: "We cannot show clemency towards young girls of 13 or 14 years of age who

SUPPORTERS of the Mojahedeen and Fedayeen [Minority] were arrested in Manchester recently after they had fought back against an attack on them by supporters of the regime.

The comrades have now been released on bail.

have transformed themselves into inhuman elements and attacked revolutionary guards with knives... If the hypocrites [the in-term for the Mojahedeen, on account of their claim to be true interpreters of Islam] wish to use little girls nine years old that will not affect our sentiment...").

but every effort needs to be made to get declarations of solidarity with them.

There is no guarantee that an attempt to deport them will not be made. Certainly, if they are deported, they will face the firing squad on arrival.

The Mojahedeen continue to be the target of government attacks along with the Fedayeen Minority and the Peykar organisation — most other large movements having completely capitulated to 'the Imam's line'. In the last ten days of June, 90 people were executed in Iran — many of them for the 'crime' of



A Mojahedeen member attacked by right-wing thugs — a year ago. Now the attacks are increasing.

waging 'war on God'.

Sometimes these executions are preceded by a token trial of a few minutes, sometimes there is no trial at all — as in the case of four students who

on returning to Iran were summarily executed at the airport.

Those that are arrested — an estimated 1,500 left-wingers have been arrested since late June — are

frequently tortured... in some cases in the same jails that held them while the Shah was still in power.

The purge of state institutions goes hand in hand with the witchhunt against the Mojahedeen. The population has been told through the mass media that the Mojahedeen have declared their intention to overthrow the government militarily. This is not true.

The communiqué issued by the Mojahedeen spoke only of defending their leading members with arms if necessary. It was issued after thugs acting on behalf of the IRP attacked the home of the father of one of their leaders, Mehdi Abrishamchi.

The Mojahedeen, despite their sizeable following, are still fairly isolated. The Fedayeen Majority directs its attacks against liberalism (!), the Tudeh (pro-Moscow 'Communist') Party has failed to respond to the banning of its paper, Mardom, except by increasing its praise of the mullahs. And even organisations calling themselves Trotskyist compete with these movements for the title of the most servile supporters of the regime.

A-A Movement rejects factory-level links with South Africa

RECENTLY A resolution was put to the Anti-Apartheid Movement executive calling on it to assist in developing fraternal links at factory-to-factory level between South African and British unions involved in fights against the same multinational companies, and to promote exchange visits and international combine committees.

Last week the AAM executive replied, rejecting the resolution. They asserted that all links with South African unions must be channelled through SACTU, the trade union wing of the South African Communist Party and the ANC.

They argued that "most active trade unions in South Africa are organised in semi-legal or clandestine conditions" and that direct contacts would "provoke further harassment" from the state.

This is not true. Most trade unionists work openly in legal unions, though there is intense repression. Direct contacts with British unions have never been harmful, quite the contrary, but contacts mediated through the outlawed SACTU would indeed be dangerous.

The AAM exec argued that visits to South Africa are not necessary, since trade unionists can learn the facts about apartheid here. [But the nature and strengths of the black union movement are scarcely publicised in this country].

Third, they argued that international combine committees are impractical and dangerous for workers in South Africa. [However, workers from NUMARWOSA recently participated in just such a committee for GM, in Detroit].



AAM general secretary Abdul Minty

Finally, they attempted to substitute their disinvestment campaign for the trade union struggle, asserting the need to ensure that "workers in this country are aware of and campaign against involvement of their companies in South Africa".

The fact is that in the last ten years unions have developed in South Africa quite independently of SACTU and in some cases in antagonism to SACTU. SACTU itself is largely an exile organisation.

It is therefore quite wrong to insist that SACTU should monopolise channels of support for South African unions. Such a policy can only hold back solidarity with those unions that are actually organising, mobilising and representing black workers in South Africa.

by Bob Fine

A NEW success in the growing struggle of the black working class against the apartheid regime was scored last week at Colgate-Palmolive.

The union there — the Chemical Workers' Union, an affiliate of the Federation of South African Trade Unions (FOSATU) — demanded that the company negotiate directly with them over wages and conditions.

The management refused, saying that they would only negotiate through the 'Industrial Council', the highly bureaucratised and white-dominated official negotiating channel.

The union threatened a strike. It was potentially the first legal strike in South African black trade union history — legal because the union had gone through the lengthy maze of tortuous procedures required by the state before industrial action can be undertaken.

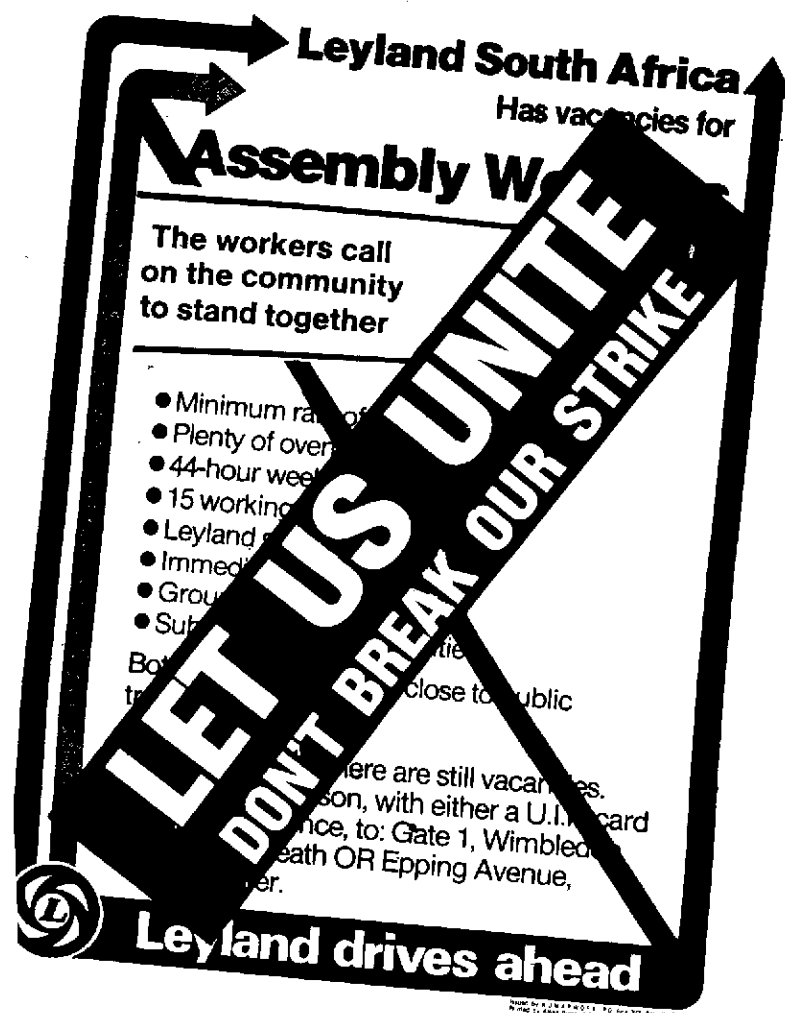
The company subsequently surrendered: they agreed to negotiate directly with the union, outside the oppressive rubric of the Industrial Council.

At Leyland, the strike of black workers continues to hold its ground. Organised by NUMARWOSA, the 17,000-strong affiliate of FOSATU, the black workers have so far successfully resisted the company's offensive.

After management fired the entire black workforce (illegally and in violation of prior agreement with the union, claiming that the workers had 'dismissed themselves' by going on an illegal strike), it went all out to break the strike. It sent long telegrams to each employee, urging them to return to work.

It sent cars to the homes of workers to bring them to work. It flooded the local townships with propaganda to attract

BL in South Africa goes all out to recruit scabs



scabs.

So far, Leyland's vile campaign has not worked. Somewhere between 250 and 500 workers have entered the factory: the skilled and semi-skilled workers have remained solid. Joe Foster, regional secretary of NUMARWOSA, told a public meeting that, "according to workers who have been

inside the plants, there is no work on the go. There is no production".

The union's success has been based on an energetic campaign for support and solidarity in the townships. It set up action committees to coordinate solidarity work; it has won the support of other unions, church and student bodies; and has

countered the company's propaganda.

Foster described the strike as "a small skirmish of the main war". He said that NUMARWOSA was not a political movement and would not substitute itself for one, but the union was trying to 'politicise' the workers and make them

class conscious. "This is where the struggle lies".

A further demand of the union is that Leyland should open its books. When NUMARWOSA negotiated a wage agreement last year, the local management claimed that the financial position of the company was bad, that Sir Michael Edwardes was threatening to close it down unless profits improved, and that they would 'reconsider' the wage agreement if profits improved.

Now Leyland refuses to divulge the figures. What the union does know, however, is that Leyland's turnover in South Africa has increased from R110 million in 1979 to R160 million in 1980. They also know that Leyland have embarked on a national advertising campaign to assure their customers that it would not close down.

The demands of the striking workers are:

- unconditional reinstatement of all illegally dismissed workers,
- negotiations to commence immediately for a wage increase of 0.25 cents per hour and a minimum wage of R2.00 per hour to be introduced over the next four months,
- no victimisation of workers.

In this country, pressure on Leyland to meet these demands — and to open their books — is coming from some sections of the Leyland workforce, who recognise well the heavy hand of Sir Michael Edwardes. We must do what we can to extend this solidarity.

Moreover, when a nationalised company kicks its workforce around like so many cattle — and when the workforce shows itself capable of standing firm — the least we can expect from the Parliamentary Labour Party is that some accountability be demanded for the actions of a company taken in 'our' name.

Labour begins to look at gay liberation

by John Wilde

THE LAST Socialist Organisation delegate meeting agreed to support the recently revitalised Labour Campaign for Gay Rights in its campaign to get a manifesto commitment on gay rights at 1982 conference and to develop debate around the National Executive Committee's discussion document, *The Rights of Gay Men and Women*.

This document is a new departure. The Labour Party has traditionally seen gay rights as a matter of conscience — something the Party should leave up to individuals to decide on, without having a Party policy. Now this document, though not a Party policy statement itself, presents itself as a preparation for a "full debate" in the Party "about the best means of removing the discrimination and uncertainty faced by gay people".

It begins by pointing out the limitations of the Sexual Offences Act of 1967. This Act decriminalised homosexual acts in private if the parti-

groups which worked for a change in the law in the '60s. Lesbians and gay men have asserted their right to be heard. And that is reflected in this document.

It rejects a number of myths about homosexuality: the idea that it is a sickness that can or needs to be cured; the irrational linkage of child-molesting with homosexuality; and the 'danger' of young people 'being diverted' at an impressionable age into a life of homosexuality.

In a number of areas, it points out, gay people "unlike black people and women who have some legal protection" have no protection at all.

The document calls for reform of the present Sexual Offences Act, so that homosexual conduct will be classed as criminal only if comparable conduct involving persons of different sexes would also be an offence. The age of consent, it is proposed, should be lowered to 16 for all consensual relationships, homosexual or heterosexual.

Probably the most important area where

agents provocateurs to secure convictions, is criticised (though somewhat mildly given the nature and extent of this particular problem).

The document ends with a call for labour movement bodies to speak out on the issues.

A major element missing is the significance of the fight of gay people themselves in the last decade or so. The proposed changes in the law, though it is clearly said that in themselves they cannot end discrimination and prejudice, are paralleled with the Labour Government's legislation on racial equality, sexual discrimination, and equal pay.

But the shortcomings of these laws are well-known.

Gay people face daily oppression not only through legal discrimination but through the sexist nature of capitalist society. The challenge that gay self-assertion makes to sexual roles and to ideas of 'masculinity' is a real threat to current capitalist ideology. So discussion must not be limited to an appraisal of

It's racism behind the riots — not race

Liverpool — police harassment

BAS HARDY reports from Liverpool.

ON FRIDAY night, 3rd July, a black motor cyclist was stopped by police in Liverpool 8 for some kind of traffic offence. He started to argue with the two arresting officers, and they sent an emergency code message for assistance.

Within minutes, 35 panda cars and a Black Maria arrived in the road just off Upper Parliament Street.

A crowd gathered, surged forward, and successfully released the motor-cyclist from a police car.

After that, every police car in the area was stoned. The police patrolling the area on foot that night, however,

were not attacked, and roamed freely in the riot area. They were wise enough not to try any arrests.

After rioting had died down in the small hours of Saturday morning, a policeman was knocked down and killed by a stolen car in the city centre — one and a half miles from Liverpool 8. It was put about in police circles that the occupants of the stolen car were black, although that surely would be hard to tell at that time of the morning.

This event strengthened the 'bash the blacks' brigade in the Merseyside police force, who

Over 40% unemployment, a history in of such incidents as Jimmy Kelly's death exploded...

went in even heavier on Saturday night.

The rioting spread, off-licences were looted, and a tyre remoulding factory was burnt down.

Racism, not race, was the problem which caused these riots. Liverpool 8's black community goes back for over 300 years. Apart from a few Asians and Somalis, most of the area's blacks are British-born, and so were their parents and grand-parents.

But they ilated into The area ployment 40%, high bane in Ireland.

Despite Orange l strong in — the a blacks ha recent year crease in The rioti 50/50 bla



icipants were over 21, if they lived in England or Wales, and were neither in the Armed Forces nor the Merchant Navy.

It also tightened the law with regard to 'minors' and male importuning.

The definition of 'in private' was absurdly restricted: 'in public' meaning anywhere where a third person was likely to be present. Homosexuality as such was not legalised.

Even these 1967 reforms did not reach Scotland until last year, and have not reached Northern Ireland yet.

In the late '60s and early '70s the gay movement emerged and developed into something qualitatively different from the earlier reform

homosexuals are discriminated against is in employment. It is now, since the John Saunders case, possible for a gay person to lose her/his job simply on the grounds of being homosexual.

The document supports the National Council for Civil Liberties' amendment to the Employment Protection Act.

Other areas mapped out for legal reform are discrimination in housing, services and immigration.

The contribution of the media and the education system to reinforcing the stereotypes of gays is singled out as a block to any rational view of homosexuality. And the role and attitude of the police in both verbal and physical attacks on gays, as well as covert operations using

the various legal changes that could be made. Too often, token acceptance of the so-called civil liberties questions goes by on the nod.

If the labour movement is really to combat the oppression of gay women and men and support them actively in their fight, then gay liberation must become an integral part of the fight for socialism.

★ 50 supporters should make sure that their Labour Party and trade union branches send for copies of the document, get it discussed, and submit views of the NEC. Copies available from the Labour Party Publication Department, 150 Walworth Rd, SE17: 40p per copy, cheaper in bulk.

Ireland: real debate

by John O'Mahony

THERE IS more political ferment in Ireland and around the question of Ireland than for five or six years.

Joe McDonnell is on the point of dying of starvation at Long Kesh, the first of a new squad prepared to die to gain the five demands of the Republican prisoners of war.

Still Thatcher and Atkins dig their heels in: nothing, they say, that 'amounts to' political status can be conceded to the hunger strikers. The installation of the Fine Gael coalition government in Dublin, with Garrett Fitzgerald as prime minister, probably strengthens the resolve of the British government.

Insult

Defeated Fianna Fail prime minister Charles Haughey gave the most loyal support to Thatcher and Atkins: but it was conceivable that he might have made trouble for them. Fitzgerald certainly won't.

Fitzgerald has demanded that the secret two-way discussions of the 26-County (Southern) and British governments should be broadened to include representatives from the Northern Six Counties. In this way

some of the ground can be cut from under demagogue Paisley, who has been denouncing 'Thatcher's sellout' of Northern Ireland to the 26 Counties.

With the help of the counter-polarisation of the Protestants against the Catholic rallying to the hunger strikers, Paisley and his Democratic Unionist Party have gained a massive growth of support.

Six County politicians may well be right when they explain Atkins' new 'initiative' as an attempt to find a third corner. The proposal is to set up an advisory council consisting of Six County politicians.

Potentially the most important movement is taking place in Britain. Bipartisanship is breaking down, or its political foundations are, though it survives on the level of attitudes and a common agreement against the hunger strikers. Mr Concanon could go to Northern Ireland to insult the dying prisoner-of-war MP Bobby Sands, and tell him emphatically that 'Labour' would never support his demands, but the ground back home has begun to shift under his feet. Whatever the Parliamentary Labour Party thinks, Concanon no longer speaks for 'Labour'.



The Labour Party study group has called for a long-term commitment to a united Ireland. Which is a very late acknowledgement that no other solution is possible and that the partition of Ireland has been a crime against the Irish people, North and South, Protestant and Catholic, Green and Orange alike.

Built-in

Even Michael Foot has said publicly that the solution is a united Ireland. Labour's commitment to the guarantee given to the Orange majority in the artificial Six County

state in 1949 seems about to disappear, with no-one on the Front Bench willing to champion it convincingly.

The abandonment of this guarantee is the beginning of the abandonment of the lie that there is democratic validity in this artificial state, that the majority within it is a political majority to be accorded the democratic rights of such a majority. It is the beginning of a recognition that it is a communal majority within an area selected to give the Protestants a built-in majority.

In fact, both Labour and Tory governments have for nine years rejected the Orange appeal for the 'democratic right of the majority' to rule Northern Ireland. Imposing direct rule, in practice therefore they have repudiated the notion of the democratic validity of the Protestant majority. They have, of course, continued to maintain the sub-state which was set up to allow that Protestant majority to exercise control over their own affairs and those of the one-third Catholic minority in their artificially walled-off area of North East Ulster.

Now Labour is moving towards an explicit abandonment of the guarantee and the lie it rested on.

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and both rioters and po-
lice saw it as a rebellion
against authority.

In the subsequent loot-
ing, the majority of the
looters were white —
many from outside Liver-
pool 8.

Even in times of pro-
sperity, black unemploy-
ment in this area was high
— despite its proximity
to the city centre, few
blacks could find jobs in
the shops. And police
harassment of blacks has
been going on for years.

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es.
Callaghan is
a recipe for

civil war, massive popula-
tion movements (and/or
massacres in Belfast)
and probably repartition
(which is also being
discussed in the bour-
geois press for the first
time since the mid-
1920s).

Callaghan was home
secretary in 1969 and
directly responsible for
Northern Ireland when
that state began to
disintegrate into sectarian
civil war. He put the
troops in and began
feeble reforms, instead of
recognising that the Six
Counties were *unreform-
able*, that sectarianism
was programmed in so
radically that a solution
could only be sought on
an all-Ireland (and prob-
ably federal) basis.

Twelve years later —
after the Tories in 1972
were forced by events to
take a much more radical
approach, that of dump-
ing Six County majority
rule and imposing direct
rule; after the failure of
the power-sharing execu-
tive in 1974 and of the
Constituent Assembly
in 1975; and after that has
been followed for over
five years by a basic
British policy of holding
the ring and beating down
the Catholic resistance —
Callaghan can think of
nothing more responsi-
ble than to cut the un-
governable Six County
structure loose and leave
it to its own devices!

A war mentality has built
up in the minds of the
police.

Two years ago, when
the BBC did a series on
the Merseyside police,
they quoted a police
'expert' as saying that
Liverpool-born blacks
"were the products of
liaisons between black
seamen and Liverpool
prostitutes".

Decades and centuries
of remarks like that, and
actions to suit, lay behind
the weekend's riots.

The ferment of discus-
sion is at an early stage
yet. But *already* it has
shown that the men who
died on hunger strike and
those who are following
them have achieved a
great deal. The Left in
the labour movement
must seize the chances
that the opening of real
discussion on Ireland in
the movement give us,
and explain why there
can be no Six County
solution.

Issue

If Foot & Co. are be-
ginning to say that the
only solution is a united
Ireland, then they cannot
also continue to say that
Six County Republican
militants who have fought
to break out of the Six
County prison-house in
which Britain has for six
decades penned the
Northern Ireland Catho-
lics are *not* political
prisoners.

Their methods will be
deplored by large sections
of the movement. That is
not at issue. Whether
they are political prison-
ers and prisoners of war
is. Plainly they are, if
part of the problem is the
partition of Ireland.

We must explain this
to the labour movement,
and urge it to try to save
the life of Joe McDonnell
and those following
closely behind him.

Street groups

by Dave Spencer [West
Midlands County Councill-
or and chairperson, Earls-
don Labour Party]

A MEETING of 120 local
activists last week in Earls-
don, Coventry, decided to
form an anti-racist commit-
tee with the broadest possi-
ble base in the area.

Representatives were at
the meeting from local Par-
ent-Teacher Associations,
trade union branches, a
local community paper, and
the Labour Party and var-
ious left groups.

The area was split into
12 zones, each with a lead-
er and a remit to form
street committees, using a
petition as a means of
approaching people.

The meeting was called
in response to the murder
of Dr Amal Dharry outside
an Earlsdon chip shop —
the latest of a series of
brutal racist attacks in
Coventry. Sponsors of the
meeting were two Labour
Party branches, Earlsdon
and Whoberley, and the
student union of Coventry
Technical College.

Arson

A young Asian woman
and her three sons
were burnt to death
after petrol was
squirted through the
letter-box and their
home in Walthamstow
[East London] was
set on fire last Thurs-
day, 2nd. The
woman's husband was
severely burned. And
local community
leaders are convinced
that it was a racist
attack.

Fascist gangs in Southall

by Jim Denham

FACED with a vicious
racist provocation from
marauding gangs of fasc-
ists, protected by
the police, the Asian
youth of Southall last
Friday (3rd) took the only
course open to them —
they mobilised to defend
their community and to
drive out the racists.

Darshanlal Kalhan, an
Asian whose shop was
attacked and family
threatened by racist skin-
heads, summed it up:
"Whatever our boys did,
it was purely in self-
defence. It was an unpro-
voked attack. There will
be no foolish action from
our people, but if anyone
comes again and tries the
same thing, God help
them. We can control our
children so far, but no
further".

The trouble started as
skinheads — many wear-
ing swastikas and Nation-
al Front regalia — con-
verged on Southall for a
'gig' (in reality a thinly-
disguised fascist rally)
featuring a well-known
racist band, the '4 Skins',
at the Hambrough
Tavern.

As they walked up the
Broadway, Southall's
main street, they began
smashing shop windows
and abusing Asians.

Black youth reacted
swiftly to defend their
community, and it was
only then that the police
arrived in force — clearly
determined to protect the
racists. As the blacks
lay siege to the Ham-
brough, the racists shout-
ed Nazi slogans and hurl-

ed stones from behind
the police lines.

As it became clear
that the blacks were not
prepared to allow the
racist 'gig' to continue,
the police escorted skin-
heads away from the pub
and many of them into
nearby Delamere Road,
a quiet residential street.
There, about 50 skinheads
ran riot, while a police
cordon kept angry Asians
away at the top of the
Delamere Road.

They were running
up and down asking
where the Indians lived",
said a white resident"
(Sunday Times).

The racists would cer-
tainly have smashed
through whole areas of
Southall had not more
Asian youth, some armed
with molotov cocktails,
arrived.

But it was not a 'race
riot'. The battle was
between the young Asians
on one side and the racists
and their guardians in
blue, on the other. White
residents were not attack-
ed, and black and white
people cooperated in
putting out fires.

As in Coventry, the
black community of
Southall has realised that
they cannot place any
reliance on the police to
defend them from racists.
Increasingly blacks —
especially Asian youth —
are gaining in confidence
and organising their own
defence.

It is up to the labour
movement to mobilise
support for this, and to
cooperate with the orga-
nisations of the black com-
munities to build workers'
defence squads.



Home Office loses one round

ONE SMALL victory ag-
ainst the stony-faced racists
at the Home Office. Jas-
winder Kaur and her three
year old son will be allowed
to stay in Britain.

Jaswinder was faced with
deportation when her
husband was sent back to
India after being con-
victed of violently assault-
ing their son. She won her
case after a three-year
campaign convinced the
Home Office that she and
her son would be endan-
gered if they were deported.

But the Home Office has
given no indication of
changing its attitude to
others faced with deporta-
tion — including many
women in a similar
situation to Jaswinder.

HESELTINE'S HIT-LIST

Five Labour councils have
been removed from Hes-
eltine's hit-list of councils
that were dragging their
feet over council house
sales.

Barking & Dagenham,
Stoke on Trent, Wolver-
hampton, Newham and
Sheffield have now satis-
fied Heseltine that they will
make offers to all those
wanting to buy. Greenwich
is still on the list, although
their policy is to carry out
the law, albeit reluc-
tantly.

They are, to quote Hous-
ing Committee chairperson
Aleyne Friesner, 'amazed'
that Heseltine has not
accepted their assurances.

So, yet another heroic
stand against the Govern-
ment crumbles as Labour
councils scamper for cover
and offer meek promises
to implement Tory laws.

MISREPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE

The passage of the Misrep-
resentation of the People
Bill through the Lords has
not been without its hum-
orous side.

Their Lordships were
concerned that the Bill,
attempting to prevent
hunger strikers from using
Parliament, might have
unfortunate repercussions
for their kind of people —
convicted of fraud, etc, and
in the process of appealing.

No mention was made of
that unwholesome crew
[their number just swelled
by the unlamented desert-
ion of James Wellbeloved
— by whom, one wonders]
who have defrauded the
electorate by standing on
one Party ticket and plat-
form, and left to join the
SDP without resigning their
seats.

THE DUFFY TURNS?

"Engineering workers will
need increases of around
20% to maintain living
standards", said Terry
Duffy, after the meeting
to draw up the annual
Confed claim. Has the
worm finally turned?

It's certainly a blow to
the Government's efforts
to get wage claims down to
small single figures. But
despite Duffy's statement,
the claim for a 'substantial

increase' still leaves far
too much room for man-
oeuvre for the weak-kneed
leaders of the AUEW.

How soon before the
20% gets whittled down
under pressure, to single
figures?

HOW THEIR MINDS WORK

Since abolition of exchange
controls in October 1979
there has been a massive
boom in investment in
overseas currencies and
overseas stock markets —
hitting an all-time high for
the first three months of
this year with net port-
folio investment outside
the UK of £1.15 billion.

It has been pushed up,
apparently, by fears of
what the present ferment in
the Labour Party might
lead the next Labour gov-
ernment to do. One witty
investment manager has
termed these offshore
investments, 'Wedgie
Hedgies'.

Perhaps we should give
them something to really
worry about.

COMPETITION TIME 1

With summer holidays
approaching, a chance for
Socialist Organiser readers
to tax their brains.

This one was submitted
by Lionel Murray of Con-
gress House, London.
"Who are the CBI speaking
for when they call for
tougher laws against trade
unions?"

Answers in words of less
than one syllable, on the
back of a £5 note, please.
The prize: General Secre-
taryship of the TUC. [The
present incumbent is
reported to be thinking of
resigning, as "his brain
hurts"].

COMPETITION 2

Devotees of the Huch-
hikers' Guide to the Gal-
axy will be familiar with the
phenomenon of the 'Sho-
Event Horizon' — where
planets, following a storm,
disappear under the weight
of proliferating shoe shops.

The inimitable Guide has
got it wrong again. It's
not shoes but hats that pre-
sage the end of capitals
as we know it.

It seems, in times of
recession, that sales blas-
om. Edward Mann, one
Britain's leading exporters
and manufacturers, esti-
mates that their turn-
is up 25% on last year.
Harrods buyer Kate R.
cliffe draws parallels with
the hat boom in the
slump.

Can any enterpris-
romance-writer predict
collapse of capitalism under
the weight of all this
millinery?

COMPETITION 3

A massive outcry
animal-lovers followed the
publication in the US of
cartoon book, '101 Uses for
Dead Cats'. We are pro-
to announce the launch-
of a search for '101 Uses for
Ex-Prime Ministers'.

There's a lot of the
undead creatures around
and they're clearly look-
ing for a role. We do not ex-
pect a public outcry — as
we have yet to locate any
of these extraordinary fu-
creatures.

Budding cartoonists,
scribbling.



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 FIRST part of this review, in the last issue of Socialist Organiser, covered Arthur Exell's account of his activity in the Radiators plant in North Oxford in the '30s and '40s.

As a member of the Communist Party, he pushed a policy of all-out class collaboration in the war to back British imperialism's military effort. For example:

"The Communist Party factory group then made another outstanding offer to the management. We were prepared to form a shock brigade, which meant that the management could call on any one of us to do any job in the factory, in any place at any time".

The bosses were ungrateful. As soon as the war ended, they began sacking militants. Exell records: "I wasn't touched just then... so I at once took the convenor's job".

Two years later in the January of 1947, management moved again.

"Things went on improving until the fuel crisis. The country was still staggering from the aftermath of the war, no coal stocks, and transport still in chaos, and then this terrific snowstorm: 22 January 1947, that was the day everything closed down, right the way throughout Oxford, including the factory. On 23 January a car arrived at the house driven by the chauffeur from Radiators asking me to go to the factory for an interview with the general manager.

I went there as convenor and insisted that the chairman of the Stewards Committee should also be there, as I never believed in interviews on your own.

So Billy Brooks was sent for—a very sincere Salvation Army man. We sat and listened to what was going to happen.

We couldn't argue but we wanted to know about the restarting of the place, and how we would be informed.

They talked quite freely and it sounded common sense—little did I know that they were going to use the great upheaval to get rid of me.

Anyway they said the men would be sent for, starting with the boilermen, electricians, and maintenance men, and then start building up production and we all would return as time went on.

So back to the dole, where I was able to tell most of the men from Radiators what was planned. A fortnight went by and there was no change in the weather but Cowley had sent for a lot of their men.

Soon the maintenance men were sent for, and then I found they were recalling men from my own department with less service than I had.

I kept chasing the management and there was lots of correspondence and lots of excuses, saying that I would be sent for as soon as they could fit me in.

I kept going to the AEU District Committee too, and reporting to them.

I was told to be patient, but that wasn't my idea of a trade union—the convenor being outside and all the men inside. I said, 'Look, it's about time you had an interview with the management of Radiators, because I think they've got no intention of having me back!'

And they used to pooh-pooh the idea, the union people did. But it was true. They never intended having me back. When we had the final, the real, meeting with the management and Longworth, who was the divisional organiser, they said, 'Well, we have come to the conclusion, Mr Longworth, that he is a communist agitator, and we don't want that sort of thing in the factory,' and that's when Longworth said, 'And I don't blame you either.' So that was it. That was the final blow. Out I went."

Having been sacked after years of collaboration with the management, Exell even opposed a strike in his defence!

"I remember there was a couple of party members who did get around, you know, and try to organise a strike. But I couldn't see a strike doing any good when the union was against me."

Arthur Exell's account of the war period is very interesting for what it shows of the long history of class collaboration of the Oxford CP, but it shows an incredible ignorance on Exell's part

Yet Exell must have known that elsewhere in the country workers were striking for wages and conditions and that the CP was having to fight against militant resistance in order to persuade workers to back the imperialist war effort.

Surprisingly in May 1947 Arthur Exell got a start in Morris Motors. William Morris, now Lord Nuffield, now owned the Radiators plant and management used this to grant him continuity of service from when he started at Rads.

This, he explains, gave him more redundancy money when he finally took voluntary redundancy in 1975.

He justifies selling his job by saying "I am always appreciative of anything the working class can get from their employers." Principles we can assume, don't come into it.

To say that his account of the 28 years in the Morris plant is highly selective would give it credibility it doesn't deserve.

He actually managed to reduce those 28 years to four pages of his 76 page book and unbelievably doesn't even mention Bob Fryer who has been the TGWU convenor and dominant personality of the plant since 1959 (with a break from June 1974 to December 1979).

Exell even fails to mention the major AUEW convenors outside his CP/Broad Left "everyday tale of country folk".

To achieve this distortion he concentrates almost exclusively on the period of the 1950s—where he was at least active in the shop stewards' movement although he managed to separate this from any kind of militant role within the plant.

He was active on—or at least attended meetings of—



Assembly Plant convenor Bob Fryer

of the official CP line or of what was going on in the world as a whole.

He never attempts to deal in political terms with the CP. And none of the major world events—like the Moscow Trials or the 1939 Hitler-Stalin pact feature in his description of the pre-war period. At the end of the war the CP's initial support for Churchill's national government goes by without a mention.

During the war it is all one long story of "keep your nose to the grindstone."

the early AUEW-dominated Joint Shop Stewards Committee (the AUEW were by far the majority union at that time) and was a right wing body which had failed to organise the still largely non-union plant.

Under pressure from the Midlands CP branches Exell was also active in the early combine committee set up throughout the Nuffield factories and later broadened to other car combines.

He still attended when I began to go to the meetings in the early 1960s.



The CP's role as a brake in Leyland struggles continues today

In 1956 (he wrongly dates it as 1953) he took part in an official strike against selective redundancy which was led by stewards from the minority TGWU.

The TGWU, under the local leadership of people like Bob Fryer and Tony Bradley were fighting to bring a new, more militant, brand of trade unionism into the plant.

Management responded by sacking the TGWU convenor Frank Horsman. The AUEW opposed the strike but Exell claims to have supported it as an individual.

The strike was a catalyst for the development of the TGWU, who were soon to become the majority union.

Significantly, Arthur Exell never mentions a strike he ever led, which is not surprising, since as far as I have been able to establish he never led anything in Cowley.

Immediately after the 1956 strike a meeting was called to begin a unionisation drive in the plant.

It was spearheaded by the paintshop where Bob Fryer was the TGWU shop steward. Exell was an AUEW steward in the same shop.

A series of strikes dramatically improved pay—and 100% trade union membership was achieved along with the first £20 wage packet.

Arthur Exell was one of the few in the paint shop who consistently refused to support those strikes. He played no role in the struggle to unionise the rest of the plant (which was organised late by motor industry standards), which proceeded under very bitter conditions, up to its final achievement in 1966.

This culminated in the period of the infamous "Cowley Moose Trial"—used by the Tories as the basis of their 1966 election campaign.

The successful unionisation struggle resulted in a very militant period in the plant during the second half of the 1960s. There were over 1,000 strikes in the plant between 1965 and 1970.

Arthur Exell was not involved in a single one of them. During that whole turbulent period he was an irrelevance on the plant, rarely attending stewards meetings even in his own section.

But perhaps the clearest indication of what Arthur Exell really saw as the "politics of the production line" is contained in the penultimate paragraph of his book.

I was gratified, when I left, he says: "to see a fine, strong trade union movement had been left behind me."

He is speaking of 1975. This was one year after the back of a very militant shop floor movement had been broken in the events following my victimisation as Deputy Convenor of the TGWU and the strike resulting from it in April/May 1974.

Although I was successfully defended, Jack Jones, then General Secretary of the TGWU moved in and removed Bob Fryer from office.

Reg Parsons became the convenor and the ultra right were put in control.

Jack Jones was acting in line with the commitment

the TGWU had made with the Labour government to "clean up" the union and control the militant plants. BL placed massive financial resources at the disposal of local management to back the move.

For 3½ years they pursued their openly proclaimed policy of "smashing Trotskyism" and driving those who had organised the plant and built the union out of the union and out of the industry.

To achieve this they systematically smashed up everything which had been built.

They broke up the giant 5/55 TGWU branch of which I was chairman and the JSSC of which I was chairman.

They organised the victimisation of militants—driving many of them to despair and then to redundancy.

Throughout this period the right wing were selecting CP members for appointed full time trade union positions in the plant knowing that they could be relied upon to uncompromisingly fight the militants and support the management.

Although Parsons was voted out in 1977 and the old leadership re-elected, damage was done to the structure of the shopfloor movement which has still by no means been repaired.

Arthur Exell reflects the CP in that period. CP members were the most loyal supporters of the right wing in every single move they made.

When I was sentenced by the TGWU to expulsion from the union and thereby faced the prospect of

being sacked from the plant as a non-unionist, and Bob Fryer sentenced to be banned from all office for life, the CP were the only stewards to vote against a motion from the TGWU stewards committee to resist these victimisations to the full.

Arthur Exell's book is not so much an "autobiography of an Oxford carworker" as a cover up of the CP in Cowley.

Ironically the publishing of Exell's book coincides with the ending of the role of the CP in the Cowley Assembly Plant—at least for the foreseeable future.

All five of their active members have now followed Exell's lead and taken voluntary redundancy.

Ron Jones, Exell's fellow veteran in the paint shop went 2 years ago. Two more left the factory for the greener pastures of Ruskin College. And the remaining two—Mick Soanes and Tony Gallagher—both very leading CP members in the area—went VR last week.

Ironically enough, Gallagher had until that time been prominent on the committee organising the Peoples March for Jobs!

Those of us whom Arthur Exell did not have time to mention (or maybe he could not bring himself to pronounce our names) are still there. And unlike Exell and his ilk, if we can survive a few problems (like the current management offensive; the collapse of the car markets; the rundown of BL and periodic attacks from trade union bureaucrats) we will be there for a long time yet.

Cooley sacking: broaden the fight!

Mike Cooley's workmates have stepped up their action against Lucas's decision to sack him.

On June 26th TASS members from other Lucas sites took part in a mass picket of the Willcesden site where Mike has worked for 18 years. Workers came from plants in Burnley, Wolverhampton, Birmingham, Hemel Hempstead, CAV Acton, Girling Pontypool, Rolls Royce Anstey and British Aerospace Weybridge.

TASS members at Willcesden started a 4-day strike on that day, ending it with an urgent call that the TASS National Negotiating Committee meeting on July 3rd should broaden support.

But the NNC failed to give an immediate push to the struggle. Instead, accepting in principle the need to fight Mike Cooley's victimisation, TASS leaders dragged their feet asking for more time to identify the key sectors that would have to be mobilised for strike or blacking action.

The struggle is at a crucial stage, yet the

union leaders drag their feet. So far what has been achieved has been achieved by the Combine Committee — though the union's endorsement was, of course, important. Now it's time for a broader response.

From 'Lucas Aerospace TASS Committee, bulletin no. 4'

MIKE COOLEY has been sacked for having 33 days off. Most of these days were unpaid, due to the amount of time he had to take as holiday. Mike has not had a family holiday for a number of years. All these days were notified in writing to his Departmental Head and were devoted to important Trade Union work.

In many countries Trade Unionists have already won the right to pursue educational and cultural activities within paid working time. The Metalworkers' Union in Naples are allowed 150 hours each year. Yet Mike Cooley gets penalised for working to develop these initiatives in this country.

Meanwhile the Lucas directors' days off go unchecked, like their salaries. There is no record of their absences because they do not have to get permission, but a quick look at some of their activities makes it clear that their time is not only spent at Lucas.

"For example:

"Sir Anthony Part is Director of 7 other companies besides Lucas, and is on the Board of Governors of both the London School of Economics and the Administrative College, Henley.

"Mr. Bond-Williams is Director of 5 other companies besides Lucas. Mr. Hull is Director of 7 companies besides Lucas. Rt. Hon. Lord Rookes is Director of 7 companies besides Lucas.

"Should Mike Cooley be sacked for working to retain and extend trade union rights, developing positive initiatives to fight closure and redundancy, while the directors who pursue policies of closure and redundancy are able to take days off unchecked...?"



Mike Cooley: victimised

TGWU must back Lothian!

THE LABOUR council in Lothian Region (the area round Edinburgh) stands to be thrown out and replaced by commissioners within weeks.

It has refused to make cuts to meet a £53 million penalty and cannot raise a supplementary rate (because it is illegal in Scotland). So the scene is set for a Tory-appointed commissioner to come in and make drastic cuts, sacking thousands, over the councillors' heads.

All the debates in the labour movement about 'buying time' with rate rises, or 'choosing the issue to fight on' are outdated now. The labour movement must mobilise to defend Lothian now or never.

NALGO in Lothian had a one-day strike on 9th June, and all the council unions supported a day of action on the 30th. A one-day strike got a 100% turnout by firemen and busworkers and 75% by teachers; and there were 15,000 on a demonstration, with contin-

gents from local pits, from BL Bathgate, and from many NALGO branches outside Lothian.

There's a Lothian labour movement conference to plan further action on July 25th. And after the demonstration on the 30th, 100 rank and file activists met to plan a campaign for an all-out council workers' strike from the moment any cuts are made.

The Scottish Council of the Labour Party has declared support for Lothian council. But if the Tory assault on Lothian is to be defeated, what's needed is stronger support — industrial action, and industrial

What's needed is the sort of action taken by workers at St Mary's Hospital, Harrow Road, London — where, for the first time in a major acute and general hospital, they have started a work-in, backed up with picketing to prevent closure.

But the action must be spread nationally, not just in Lothian.

The TGWU is committed by its recent conference to take such action. Resolution 147 stated, "This conference is totally opposed to cuts in the public services and supports direct action against the cuts."

"Where workers take direct action and occupy to defend jobs and services, the TGWU will call for strike action to support such occupations to create the best conditions for success."

"In addition, the TGWU will support Labour councils who refuse to implement the cuts, put up rates or refuse to pay interest debts to the banks."

And straight after that conference decision, the Daily Mail quoted TGWU acting general secretary Alex Kitson as predicting "that the decision could soon force the TGWU into strike action in support of the left-wing Lothian regional council in Scotland, which faces a £53

million cut in rate support grant that could mean the loss of 6,000 jobs."

Now we need to make good that commitment. TGWU-ACTSS branch 1/524 passed a resolution on Monday 6th which called on "the General Executive Council and Regional Committee to implement Resolution 147... by: [1] calling on TGWU members to support industrial action in support of Lothian's stand, [2] contacting the Lothian Action Group in order to organise a national labour movement conference to decide on national industrial action in support of Lothian."

Similar resolutions need to go through TGWU branches and committees throughout the country.

The fight must be taken up in Labour Parties and in other unions, too. For this is the time when every speech or resolution against the cuts has to be turned into direct action, or prove itself empty words.

Ferranti — nein to the ninety nine

by Noel Hibbert

NINETY-NINE redundancies have been announced at the Ferranti Measurements plant at Hollinwood, near Oldham.

The decision has really been made by Siemens AG, the West German electronics colossus that has a 51% holding in the Hollinwood complex. And this comes after 130 jobs were chopped last year.

Doubtless, Siemens' reasons for job cuts will be 'contracting markets and falling profits'.

Interestingly, Siemens-Ferranti's decision comes soon after the publication of a United States Congress Report ('The International Electrical Association: A Continuing Cartel') that discloses how leading UK and West German electronics companies have been involved in defrauding Third World governments of up to £250 million a year through overpricing goods by 40 per cent. Needless to say, Siemens and Ferranti are leading forces in the cartel: indeed, up to 1977, as far as we know, Sebastian Ferranti and Hans Schmid (Siemens) sat on the IEA General Council.

The report reveals, "IEA

members have signed agreements among themselves that stipulate, among other things, the terms of sale for electrical equipment, mechanisms for arranging meetings in advance of tenders, guidelines for coming to price fixing agreements, and procedures for allocating orders among members. Also provisions are made for successful tenderers to compensate losers with cash payments — exchanges that amount to millions of dollars annually."

And the cartel agreements stipulate that financial measures will be taken against non-cartel companies that charge 'fair prices' for the same tenders.

So what have they been doing with all this money?

One answer is, building new factories — like the one Siemens are erecting next to the Hollinwood plant. The convenor, Mick McAuley, believes this may foreshadow a complete takeover of the company by Siemens.

What's more, in the late 1960s Ferranti were receiving a 40 per cent per

annum return on investment, and if you combine this with the £700 million a year that Siemens spends on Research and Development alone it's clear these companies are simply using the recession as an excuse to impose job cuts.

However, neither Siemens nor Ferranti can be accused of being liberal with their cash as far as Hollinwood is concerned. A chargehand, recently retired, informed the convenor that his dad had served his time on the present machines in the plant!

In the present recession we see both the devastation of truly bankrupt companies, and profitable companies (like Ferranti and Siemens) using the recession as an opportunity to 'internally restructure' and 'cut costs' in preparation for exploiting future economic upswings.

Taking their cue from Laurence Scotts, the Ferranti stewards are prepared to fight the redundancies. The promise of financial support has been obtained from other Ferranti plants in the north west, and the Siemens management's sackings have been met with a clear response — 'Nein to the Ninety-nine!'

Plansee strikers call demo

by Rob Dawber

THE Plansee's dispute has received enormous support from all over the country and locally — judging by

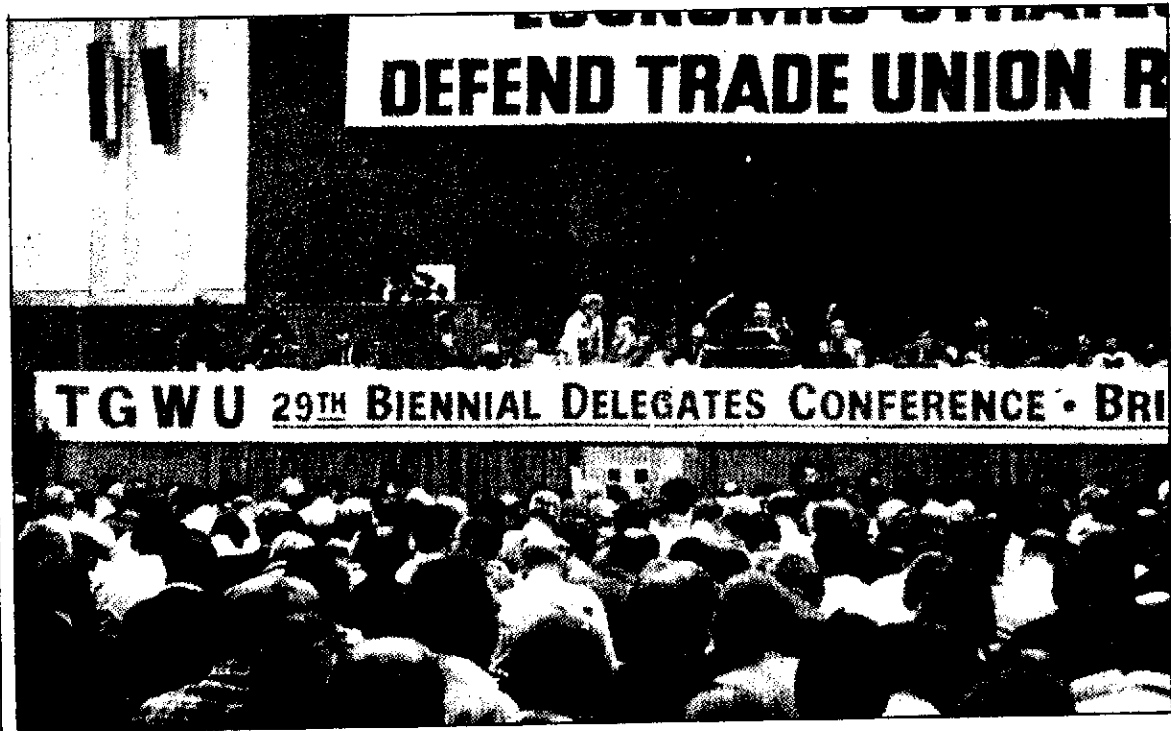
Published by Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London, N8. Printed by East End Offset(TU). Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of the Socialist Organiser Alliance.

donations and messages. The time has now come to demonstrate that support actively. With 120 jobs at stake, a demonstration in support of the Plansee's strikers and in defence of jobs in general begins at the Plansee's works, Eastwood Industrial Estate, Fitzwilliam Road, Rotherham, 10.30 am July 11th.

The bosses are trying to clear out of Rotherham and shut down the works. They now turn up nearly every morning with the aid of the local constabulary to get

inside and take a few things out. The factory is also up for sale; but as one picket said, "With a daily picket outside, the gates chained and cemented together and the keyholes blocked up, there haven't been many takers."

But the strike grinds on — it is now in its 21st week — and the bosses have begun to talk about more money to buy the strike off. The men and women insist they have no right to sell jobs and they need your support.



CONFERENCE VOTE TO BACK CUTS FIGHT

TGWU biennial conference this year voted to back a policy of occupations and supporting strikes to fight cuts.

It also defeated the platform on "workers' participation" and "planning agreements".

Former Talbot convenor Eddy McCluskey told conference that he had been the secretary of the planning committee drawing up a five-year agreement with Chrysler management — only to discover that the firm had been sold while the negotiations were in progress!

All amendments backing Benn were ruled out of order when the Executive withdrew the motion they amended. But there were only 28 at a fringe meeting for the support of Healey, while a meeting called to support Benn drew over 300 delegates.

By Thursday the bureaucrats were rattled. They ran roughshod, manipulating the agenda and brushing aside all objections, to

obstruct support for Tony Benn as Deputy Leader.

Conference also voted for a motion supported by the platform calling for unilateral nuclear disarmament. But such routine leftism from the leadership was not combined with any break from support for British imperialism in Ireland, or any break from nationalist calls for EEC withdrawal and import controls to protect 'British' employers against 'foreign' competition.

The 'debate' on Ireland was as curtailed and reactionary as any in recent years. Acting General Secretary Alex Kitson delivered an almost empty and largely reactionary speech extolling trade unionism as the solution to the war in Ireland, and no resolution was put to the vote.

A resolution calling for wage claims to incorporate cost of living clauses to provide increases linked to inflation came within an ace of being carried for the second conference running.

The chair's attempt to declare the motion lost was countered by demands for tellers to be brought out to count the vote. But the right wing hand raisers were chivvied out of bars and tea-rooms, and it was lost 348-437.

The 350,000 women members of the TGWU may as well not have existed for all the attention given to their problems by the Conference. During the whole five days, the only women to appear on the platform were the menial helpers handing cups of tea or paper-work to the leading male bureaucrats.

Region 5 Secretary Brian Mathers was stung into publishing a leaflet in reply to a damning account of his sell-out of the Ansell's brewery strike.

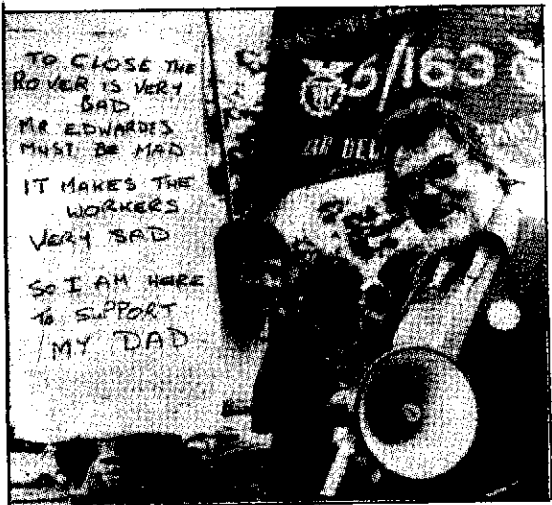
The exposure, entitled 'The Strike Mathers Broke', was distributed at conference, but unsigned and emphatically disowned by the Ansell's branch secretary.

But he jumped to his feet to declare that Mathers' 500-word reply was a complete distortion of the facts. Mathers was unable to offer any substantive reply to the statement that his intervention resulted in a 'settlement' including:

"700 jobs lost. An ex gratia payment of £1,000 for the first two years of service and £100 per year thereafter. 300 jobs with approximately £50 wage cut, far worse working conditions and, so far, no representation or agreement. Re-engagement not reinstatement."

He offered no reply to claims that pickets had been told not to operate outside Birmingham, or that TGWU drivers had been told by Mathers to cross picket lines in order to avoid the threat of legal action.

He also did not deny organising a secret ballot using company envelopes and the company's addressograph.



Will Rover bite Edwardes?

by Jim Denham

THE STRUGGLE to save the 2,300 jobs at BL's threatened Rover SD1 plant in Solihull hangs in the balance as we go to press.

On Monday 29th, the campaign received a serious setback when a mass meeting of all SD1 workers voted to reject shop stewards' proposals to prevent the transfer of plant from Solihull to Cowley during the summer break.

The proposals would have meant refusing to work on paint-shop equipment due to be moved to Cowley, and picketing the plant to prevent a 'rolling road' and tyre bay facilities being moved during the break.

This was rejected amid shouts from some workers for increased redundancy pay.

But since the meeting stewards have stepped up the 'propaganda war' on

the shop floor with bulletins, debate, and argument.

On Monday 6th, SD1 stewards registered a 'failure to agree' at a national conference with management. They were supported in this stance by TGWU automotive secretary Grenville Hawley.

But Hawley has refused to address a vital mass meeting at Solihull on Wednesday 8th.

At this meeting, the workforce will be asked to back 'industrial action' to prevent the movement of work from Solihull. If this is rejected, then the fight is effectively over.

But even if it is carried, militants at Solihull will still have to argue strongly for the vague formulation of 'industrial action' to mean an occupation of the SD1 plant, as the basis of a fight throughout BL against Edwardes' jobs carve-up.

by Bill Peters

LAST week the press gave wide coverage to BL's proposal to force full-time convenors back onto their jobs. It is important that these reports are seen in the context of the overall situation facing BL workers.

Over the last two years BL have launched an increasing onslaught on the shop stewards movement. Victimisations, alongside threats of and preparation for more victimisations, are now an everyday fact of life on the shop-floor in BL. Day by day, dossiers are prepared on shop stewards; 'investigations' are carried out by management; and the discipline procedure is used against stewards following stoppages on sections.

Managers obstruct the release of stewards who need to deal with problems on their sections, and there is a clampdown on stewards' meetings. *There is no doubt that BL have set themselves an objective of destroying the shop stewards' movement; and they don't see this as a long-term project.*

The proposals to clamp down on convenors are an aspect of this all-round attack, but they are not the spearhead of it.

BL strategists are well aware that the role which most convenors play is too important to them for the convenors' system to be made a prime target too early. That will come later if they can successfully crush the shopfloor movement.

BL's comments on convenors are no new development.

They are contained in a document tabled to the unions in March this year covering new negotiating

BL: The real attacks are coming

and disciplinary procedures. The most dangerous clauses have — of course — not been mentioned by the media. They include:

★ A new National Negotiating Committee dominated by full-time officials;

★ A new disciplinary procedure giving BL the right of summary dismissal for what they choose to define as 'gross industrial misconduct';

★ A clause making the new procedure legally binding, which would

make every worker on unofficial strike in breach of his/her contract of employment and therefore liable to instant dismissal

TGWU convenors have rejected the document, while the AUEW National Officers under the leadership of Ken Cure, have equivocated. BL are tabling the document again for 'discussion' this month; after which they are likely to try to force it in, perhaps as part of

the forthcoming November wage review.

So, if the document is four months old, why did the clause on convenors hit the headlines last week? It is not simply that this is the issue which concerns convenors the most.

In fact the press took it up when it was raised from the rostrum of the Confed conference last week by former BL Longbridge Clerical Staffs convenor Bill Linthwaite. Linthwaite was until recently Chairman of

the National BL Clerical Staffs Negotiating Committee. He reacted to the Confed Conference that he recently taken voluntary redundancy because was "not prepared to stand for the continuing harassment and victimisation to which my colleagues and I were continually being subjected." He had decided, therefore, not to fight the Company but to add his name to the long list of Senior Stewards who have taken voluntary redundancy in the last year.

But he still had nerve to turn up at Confed Conference, claim expenses from the union and give everyone the benefit of his opinion. He told the conference "The regime in Longbridge is now like Colditz. The atmosphere is a powder keg". That is certainly true and — unlike Linthwaite — 13,000 workers still have to work there.

Linthwaite's example says a lot for the crisis leadership that exists in BL. There are dozens of similar examples. Senior stewards who sought positions under participation and before, who the perks were around now sell their jobs and out when management clamps down.

BL workers must have a leadership at combat level which is prepared for an uncompromising struggle against a brutal and ruthless management and who are prepared to see that struggle out to the end. That is why we urge BL workers to support and join with Leyland Action Committee in its fight for a new leadership.

Civil service leaders: GIMMICKS BUT NO FIGHT

by Stephen Corbishley

AT A FULL delegate meeting of the Council of Civil Service Unions on July 2nd, the union marked time. The motion for all-out strike from the CPSA was defeated by 20 votes to 43; a motion from the IRSF to continue with selective action but to meet again on July 14th was carried 43 to 20.

Now the union leaders are manoeuvring harder than ever to extricate themselves from the dispute.

The national union leaders should be fighting

to raise the morale of the rank and file with a clear strategy to beat Thatcher: all-out action, or at least an all-out indefinite strike in ports and airports, backed up with mass pickets.

But instead they are going for gestures and gimmicks. The IRSF leadership had issued an instruction to all its members in tax collection not to bank any cheques from 1st July: but when management then threatened to suspend 400 IRSF members in Manchester, the leadership backed down and instructed

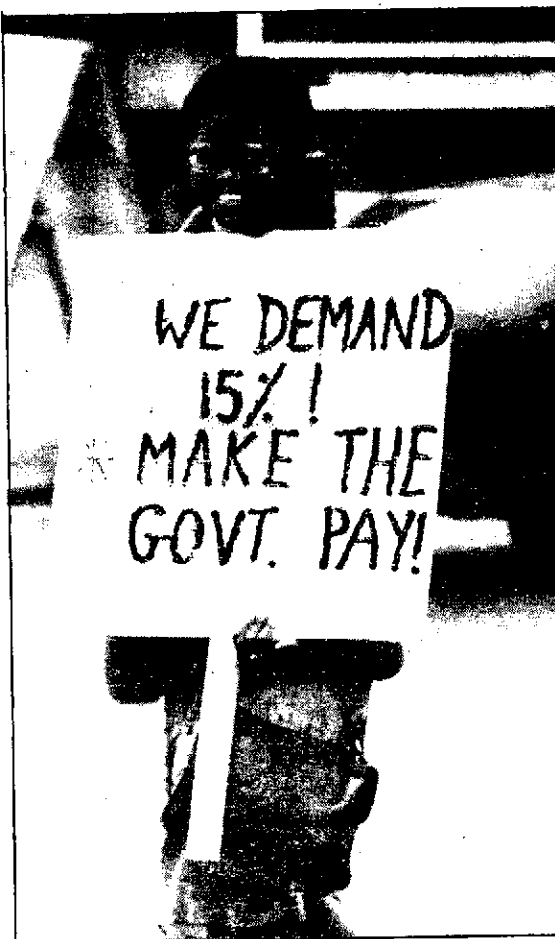
those members to bank cheques.

CPSA and SCPS leaders have put a blacking on giro blanks for Department of Employment offices, calling out some members on strike to prevent the issue of these giros to local offices. Apparently they aim to provoke suspensions. This strategy, if it is a strategy at all, is not trusted by the activists in local offices, who fear a bureaucratic manoeuvre to sell them out if the fight gets too tough.

And now the right wing in CPSA are pushing for another referendum on the question of unilateral all-out action or giving in. They calculate the vote will go for giving in, and then they can blame the members for the result.

The rank and file must maintain the fight and attempt to build a movement for all-out action. The national meeting of lay Council of Civil Service Unions delegates that was called on Saturday 5th July was a disappointment, and the recall meeting in Leeds on July 11th needs to be better supported — or the bureaucrats will get their way.

Support from other workers and the TUC is also vital. A defeat would be a serious blow to civil service trade union organisation — and for the whole trade union movement.



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.

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LABOUR COMMITTEE

TRADE UNIONS AND SOCIALISM

Credentials: £2.50 from LCC, 9 Poland St. London W1.

EVENTS

LOTHIAN Regional Labour Party conference against the cuts. Saturday 25th July, 10.15 to 5pm, at Edinburgh Trades Council, Picardy Place. Credentials for delegates from TU branches, LP branches and tenants' organisations from Ruskin House, 15 Windsor St, Edinburgh.

WALES CND carnival. Saturday 25 July. Assemble 11am, Museum Place, Cardiff, and march to Sophia Gardens. Carnival in the afternoon, bands in the evening.

HACKNEY Socialist Organiser public meeting on 'The Strike Wave in South Africa'. Speakers: Bob Fine and a South African speaker. 8pm, Hackney Trades and Labour Club, Dalston Lane.

GLASGOW 'Rally in support of the revolutions in Central America'. Saturday 11 July, 10am to 4pm, Partick Burgh Halls.

July 18th

Central Hall

Westminster

NORTH STAFFS

march and festival. Saturday 1st August: assemble 11am at Blackfriars, Newcastle-under-Lyme and march to Hanley Park.

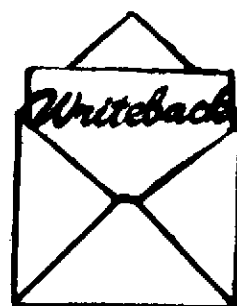
IRELAND: a conference Labour Party members sponsored by 10 and several CLPs. Saturday 25th July, 1pm, Central London Party, Marylebone Rd, London W1.

Class Fight

New revolutionary youth paper

10p plus postage from P.O. Box 135, London N1 0DD.

Don't drop the demand for Political Status!



Write back to Socialist Organiser, c/o 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

ISLINGTON Central Labour Party has just submitted a motion to the Annual Labour Party conference which calls on the next Labour government to immediately begin a process of full political and military withdrawal from Ireland.

The motion also sets out what would have to be part of any socialist strategy of withdrawal, i.e. the abolition of the Diplock courts, the repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, and the reversal of previous British governments' legitimisation of the Ulster Defence Association.

There is one glaring omission from this motion — the reintroduction of political status for political prisoners in Armagh and H-Block.

The story behind this omission contains important lessons for the left in the Labour Party.

On the day that Bobby Sands died, the Labour Committee on Ireland (a body set up to campaign for a Labour Party policy of withdrawal from Ireland,

whose aims include political status) issued its model resolution for Labour Party conference.

There are two major criticisms to be made of this resolution: the first being that its unfortunate wording means that, if passed, it would still fail to give the Labour Party a positive policy on Ireland;

the second that there is no commitment to the reintroduction of political (or special category) status.

At the June meeting of Highbury Ward Labour Party, a member of the LCI put this resolution. Amendments were put to add repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act and reintroduction of political status.

The LCI member accepted the first amendment and argued against the second. In doing this, he implied that the important thing was to get a motion on Ireland to Conference, and that the demand for political status would jeopardise this.

Many members of the Ward considered him to be

an 'expert' on Ireland and in the subsequent confused voting either abstained or voted against. Ironically, he, to preserve his political purity, voted in favour of political status, but the vote was lost by 19 to 15.

Meanwhile, another Ward which did not suffer the handicap of having an LCI member present successfully amended the model LCI motion to include political status and a demand for the Labour Party to affiliate to the National H-Blocks Campaign. A further Ward (Mildmay) rejected the format of the LCI motion and passed a motion including political status.

At the General Management Committee meeting, because of pressure of time, the Wards putting the LCI-type motion withdrew theirs in favour of the Mildmay Ward motion. However, the majority of Highbury Ward delegates are firm believers in accountability, and felt obliged to put an amendment deleting the demand

for political status. This amendment was passed by 25 votes to 24, with the majority of Highbury Ward's seven delegates voting reluctantly for it. The amended motion was then passed by 34 votes to fourteen.

There are four lessons to be learnt from this experience.

1. The LCI has misjudged the strength of feeling about Ireland in the Labour Party and the extent to which the argument that the LCI has been waging has been won.

2. The LCI's assumption that there is a need to water down politics to make them acceptable is indefensible on both political and pragmatic grounds.

3. The LCI's reluctance to even engage in the political argument about political status — at a time when the hunger strikers are dying — is the height of political cowardice.

4. Political status is not an isolated 'extremist' demand in the way that the LCI is treating it (nor is it

just a civil rights issue). It is an integral part of the socialist attitude that the British labour movement must develop on Ireland. To see political status in isolation distorts an understanding of the fact that it is an imperialist war which is going on in the North of Ireland.

We are worried that our local experience is being repeated in Wards and General Management Committees throughout the country, with the result that the Labour Party leadership will not be forced to adopt a demand which is vital not only in its urgency but also in its immediate relevance to the republican movement in Ireland.

JANE ANDREWS
JENNY MORRIS

P.S. We're now trying to put an amendment to our own Conference motion, calling for political status.



Paper for the hard Left in the broad movement

CONGRATULATIONS to all involved in the last six months' issues of Socialist Organiser.

The paper has been the only journal on the Left that genuinely and consistently takes up and links the internal Labour Party fight and the direct struggles of workers against the Tories.

The last two issues have been jam-packed with reports of ongoing struggles. This is a sign of health and vitality in an interventionist paper, but over the longer term reviews and longer articles analysing developments must not be allowed to suffer.

Going weekly will help here. It may be useful to plan the weekly paper in terms of design so that there are regular features and regular pages dealing with particular areas such as international matters, the Labour Party, industrial struggles, reviews of books, music and films, middle pages for longer analysis, etc.

I also hope that the additional support for the paper which will enable it to go weekly will not change its broad orientation. The times require a paper which can organise the hard Left in the Labour Party and unions as part of a broad Left. It is important that we continue to relate to the broader Left, while never subordinating politics to it, and that the paper's style should therefore be open, argumentative and fraternal, rather than narrow, assertive and tub-thumping.

Without failing to put across our own analysis, we need to take up in greater detail issues such as the Alternative Economic Strategy and the policies of the next Labour government. We need to debate the concerns of the rank and file in the Party who are looking to Benn, as well as encouraging direct action and appealing directly to the workers not under the influence of AES-type ideas.

We should try to get more contributions and dis-

cussion with the broad Left. They are often attracted by our activism. We must make sure that they are not repelled by any narrowness or dogma. This is why so many are repelled by the Militant, for example.

Finally, hasn't enough space been devoted to the WRP? It is important to deal with the politics of particular groupings from time to time, particularly when, as with the Healy group, they represent open violations of socialist prin-

ciple. The coverage of the WRP recently has been more than it merits.

I would suggest a short leaflet, simply written, to explain the WRP's behaviour towards Socialist Organiser, in the context of its politics, should be produced for mass distribution to workers, and the subject should rest for the moment in Socialist Organiser.

What do other readers think?

GARY OWEN,
Manchester.

Scarman: right to boycott

ON April 10th-12th, the state lost control in Brixton. Its response has been twofold — on the one hand it has made hundreds of arrests and continues with dawn raids and arrests connected with the April battle. On the other hand it has set up the Scarman enquiry with the intention of arriving at improved policing methods and also to show the black community and unemployed of Brixton that the state really does care for them in their plight.

Now Barry Finnegan (SO 44) argues for participation in this inquiry.

This is a purely tactical question: will the self-organisation and confidence of black, unemployed and working people be best served by taking part in the legalistic farce at Lambeth Town Hall, or by building on the break with the traditional subservience to bourgeois law of the British working class?

Few in Brixton have any illusions in Scarman, fewer still are prepared to risk police persecution by testifying to the reality of law and order in Brixton.

Not only would we be fighting on ground not of our choosing, but we would be undermining a boycott tactic which has a high chance of success.

Meanwhile the inquiry draws attention away from the continuing harassment of the community. Only re-

cently, several gays were held, three for 24 hours and one for 48 hours, the latter being charged with possession of petrol. Feminist photographer Pam Isherwood, who spent several hours photographing the events, has been charged with running a Molotov cocktail production line!

As for cutting ourselves off from those who believe in the impartiality of judges I believe we could reach many of these via a labour movement/black community inquiry. The purpose of it would not be to tell the youth in Brixton what happened in the riots, as some on the left have said, but to present an indictment of the system and show that the uprising was an inevitable consequence of the treatment meted out to Brixton by capitalism.

It should also produce some suggestions of how working class communities could maintain their own law and order, and some ideas of how the problems of Brixton and places like it can be overcome by the revolutionary action of workers and unemployed, black and white.

If we follow Comrade Finnegan's advice we will find ourselves marching away from the working class, black and white, who are sick of the police, with some pretty unsavoury companions.

STEWART THOMAS

WE NEED A UNION FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

RECENT pressure, through growing dole queues and sheer embarrassment, has forced the TUC to think seriously about organising the unemployed into the trade union movement.

However, rather than build an active campaigning body of unemployed trade unionists, the TUC are at best supporting 'tea and sympathy unemployed day centres', or forming unemployed branches in existing unions.

As a member of one such branch of the TGWU, based in Liverpool, I find myself attending inactive meetings consisting mostly of correspondence saying how wonderful it is for the T&G to have an unemployed branch.

The branch keeps a very low profile and most people, including T&G members, don't know of its existence. Despite the lack of enthusiasm from many full-time officials, the branch has over 200 members, although less than 50 ever turn up to meetings. The branch sadly fails to reach the masses of unemployed youth. This is basically because of its meetings and organisation.

I challenge the TGWU to find an unemployed youth with no political or trade union experience to come along and sit through one of our branch meetings without being totally bored. Yet this is the type of person we must attract to the trade union movement.

We do this, not by having patronising meetings dominated by right-wing full-timers, but by having meet-



People's March shows the potential for uniting the employed and unemployed

ings that coordinate the unemployed into direct action to fight alongside workers in struggle.

The key to most successful bodies of workers is activity and organisation, and unfortunately the TUC is unable, or unwilling, to provide this (mainly because of its undemocratic structure).

The National Unemployed Workers' Movement of the 1930s discovered that the real power of the working class lay with the people who were still employed, and therefore built for unity between employed and unemployed. This theory still holds true today. While we must call for the right of the unemployed to organise among themselves, and we must also fight for the right of the unemployed to take

an active part in the existing trade unions.

At the moment if you are an unemployed union member you are probably stuck in your 'trade' branch without voting rights or in an unemployed branch isolated from members of your trade and also isolated from the union mainstream.

So we must consider the prospects of an unemployed workers' union, which is already in existence.

Potentially the largest union in the country, the UWW must take up the problems facing the unemployed and must attract all sections of people hit by unemployment at the same time as being an essential part of the trade union movement. And its members must have dual union membership, i.e. a member of the UWW

should also be a member of an established trade union.

The UWW must form a national network of unemployed organisations, and link up and build autonomous unemployed day centres that will offer recreational and meeting places for its members while being a focal point for an unemployed workers' fightback.

The TUC will no doubt turn its back on this movement, as it did with the NUWM, but we must force TUC recognition and affiliation and fight for the present trade unions and Labour Parties to build and finance the UWW both locally and nationally.

On that basis we can truly fight for working class unity and a mass organised fightback for jobs.

BOB TOWERS
Liverpool.

Socialist Organiser

Solidarity is international

H-Block campaigner Vincent Doherty told Callum McRae about the international effort to support the hunger strikers

WE SEE the fight for political status as central to getting rid of the British presence and fighting the criminalisation policy. So does the British government. Why else would they have allowed four hunger strikers to die?

Fight

They recognise that if they are defeated on the five demands then that would give a new boost of confidence to the fight for independence.

I think there's been a wrong direction adopted on Irish solidarity work in Britain over the past decade. While there has been lip-service paid to an orientation to the labour movement, the solidarity movement in Britain has not begun to get near to the size of solidarity movements that have built up in other countries.

A labour movement orientation is vital, otherwise the left is just talking to itself. I mean a live campaign that brings the labour movement out onto the streets, that doesn't rely on the Parliamentary Labour Party, but bases itself on active members of the Labour Party and trade union branches.

That's the medium-term objective.

Murder

But right now there should be H-Block committees set up where there aren't any, so that Joe McDonnell isn't murdered in the same way that Bobby Sands, Raymond McCreesh, Francis Hughes and Patsy O'Hara were. All Labour MPs must be approached with the demand that they break with the bipartisan policy of the Labour Party leaders like Concannon and Foot. Approach the people who would have no qualms about supporting the armed struggle in El Salvador or South Africa, and point out to them that if they don't support the Irish struggle they're being hypocritical.

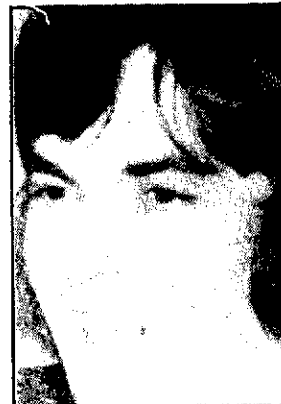
There should be a campaign to dump Concannon as the Labour Party's spokesman on Northern Ireland. These people should be forced to take account of what the Labour Party branches and constituencies are saying.

There have been substantial demonstrations in all the major European capitals in support of the prisoners' five demands. The one in Paris when

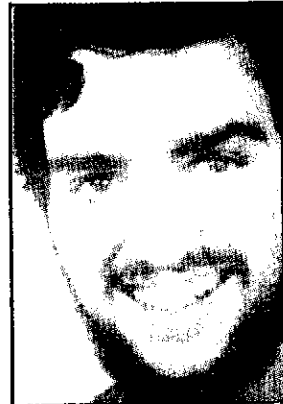
ly been tipped off by the Special Branch in Ireland, where they had been held for 19 hours before getting to France.

The CGT at Orly airport was magnificent. They threatened to close down all air traffic if the comrades were not immediately released — and they were released within 20 minutes.

More people throughout the world than ever before are aware that the



Joe McDonnell: doomed?



Patsy O'Hara: dead

Bobby Sands died was 90,000 strong, led by the Communist and Socialist Parties to the British Embassy. The International Longshoremen's Association in the USA blacked British goods for 24 hours after Bobby Sands' death.

British Army does not play the role that the British government has portrayed it as playing. People can see that they are instituting terror and repression through the Army, the RUC and the UDR.

The notion that Britain has no real opponents in the North of Ireland other than cranks and criminals has gone out the window with the election of Bobby Sands in the North and Kieran Doherty and Paddy Agnew in the Southern General Election.

The international solidarity could well be the straw that breaks the camel's back for Thatcher.

French

There was a particularly heart-warming gesture from the French CGT during the first hunger strike. A number of comrades, including a former blanket man, arrived in France to address a series of meetings. They were held by the French equivalent of the Special Branch, who had obvious-

In the last week of June, our fund drive came to life again, as comrades began to realise that our warnings of financial disaster are not just stories spun for effect.

£195 in that week brought June's total to £565 — reducing our accumulated deficit on the £500 monthly fund to £248. So July's target is £748. If we keep up this effort, we can make it. And we'll need to, if we're to launch the weekly paper properly.

Contributors included: Mary Corbishley £40, Roger Welch £20, Anna and Dave Lunts £20, Bruce Robinson, Stephen and Jan Corbishley, and Leicester SO £15 each and Chris Whytehead £10.

Send money to: 28 Middle Lane, London N8. Cheques payable to Socialist Organiser.



As Labour Committee on Ireland members marched through Mansfield, support for Concannon was shown by ... fascist thugs

Islington Gutter Press

Labour must back political status

by Bruce Robinson

AS A FIFTH hunger striker, Joe McDonnell, nears his death, the Maze prison has again seen comings and going aimed to end the hunger strike via a compromise.

This time the 'Irish Commission for Peace and Justice' has seen the eight hunger strikers, their commanding officer Brendan McParland, and Michael Allison, the junior Northern Ireland minister for prisons.

There is endless press speculation about an agreement. Yet it is difficult to find any basis for one.

Response

The government is not prepared to be seen negotiating with the prisoners and has not offered any concessions to them. Northern Ireland secretary Atkins said, in response

to the outgoing Southern Prime Minister Haughey, that he would make no concessions on the prisoners' demands and would only be prepared to introduce general improvements in prison conditions after the hunger strike had ended.

The prisoners' five demands are: 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 education and recreation, and restoration of remission.

Their reply to Atkins was far more conciliatory, pointing out that they had never been against improvements in conditions applying to all prisoners and giving interpretations of prison work and free association much less wide-ranging than before.

They wrote: "Comrades of ours have died and eight of our other comrades

presently face death on hunger strike. Our people on the outside have died and more may die.

Talks

"That is why we seek immediate talks with the British administration to seek a solution to the H Block protests. It is a reasonable request".

There has been no 'reasonable' response from the British government, and it looks like the best the Tories are likely to grant is something similar to what ended the first hunger strike in December. Then, the prisoners were presented with a document outlining changes in prison conditions the British would make for all prisoners.

When the hunger strike had been called off, they went back on implementing these conditions, causing the second hunger strike to start.

Meanwhile Joe McDonnell is not expected to live out this week. He has great difficulty in seeing, and when his wife first saw him last Sunday, she thought he was already dead.

There are also another seven hunger strikers nearing death, and they still need our support, if they are to win any real and lasting concessions from this hard-faced government.

Nobody should let the negotiations and the rumours of a settlement lull them into complacency. Only when the voice of the labour movement is raised loud and clear, saying that these men and women are political prisoners and should be recognised as such, will the Tories be forced into granting a decent settlement.

The next major demonstration will be in Manchester, on Saturday July 18th, starting from All Saints, Oxford Rd, at 1.30pm.