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Labour
Party**

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Socialist Organiser

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by John Lister

THE TORY government appears endlessly inventive. Every day brings a new idea to boost the profits of the employers and cut the living standards or curb the rights of the working class.

Their latest scheme is an all-round master-stroke. To cut the numbers of youth unemployed they propose to urge employers to take on young workers at pay below the current normal rates.

Thatcher offers bosses a £15 a week bonus if they take on young workers under 18 years old — provided their pay is less than £40 a week! This gives the green light to ditch older workers and exploit youth at slave labour rates.

In other words, the Tory plans, masquerading as concern for the unemployed, mean nothing other than shifting the burden of unemployment from the young to older workers, while acting to smash down existing rates of pay, destroy trade union rights, and slash manning levels.

The Tories act consistently in the interests of the capitalist class — seeking ways and means to drive up the rate of profit.

But no such single-mindedness or inventiveness can be seen among the so-called 'leaders' of the labour movement.

Indeed, as the situation gets worse for the working class, the TUC and Labour leadership prove once again that they have learned nothing and forgotten nothing in two years of Tory rule.

Last week saw Foot and Len Murray peddling a weary rehash of the old, discredited social contract. Once again they are arguing for an 'alternative' which pretends to offer the hope of jobs through increased capitalist investment, but in reality offers falling living standards, speed-up, and a permanent working alliance between union leaders, Labour leaders and the employers.

Evidence

All around them is the evidence that the Thatcher government is demolishing the old forms and methods of class collaboration. Unemployment has been stoked up to three million; social services cut or destroyed; civil service unions have been provoked and confronted; in BL, Michael Edwards is setting about the destruction of the shop stewards' movement — soon to be followed by bosses in other nationalised industries; Heseltine is press-ganging local councils into draconian cuts and the sale of scarce council housing; chronic deprivation in the inner city areas has already provoked outbreaks of street violence from frustrated and angry youth, to which Thatcher's response is to increase police pay and stock up their armouries.

The Tories have made no secret of the fact that they are engaged in a war against the working class. But sooner than fight back, the TUC has time and again run up the white flag — even while union members have clamoured for action.

Steelworkers, BL workers, civil servants and others have embarked on action, only to find themselves held back, isolated and betrayed by union leaders.

Hospital workers, textile workers and engineering workers have occupied their places of work to oppose redundancies and closures — only to face isolation and bureaucratic sabotage at the hands of their union leaders.

Now the TUC comes forward with Foot to endorse a long-term plan which would continue these policies indefinitely.

At the centre of the new 6,000-word document is the call for a 'new national understanding' — based on the idea that both employers and workers should 'work together' to resolve the crisis.

And implicit in the whole document is a new attempt by Labour and TUC leaders to impose a system of wage controls — the policy which helped lose the last election.

"Alternative"

In other words the Labour "alternative" in reality, just like Thatcher's plan, seeks to "create new jobs" through cutting real wages.

But what else can be done? Must workers simply accept the rising tide of unemployment?

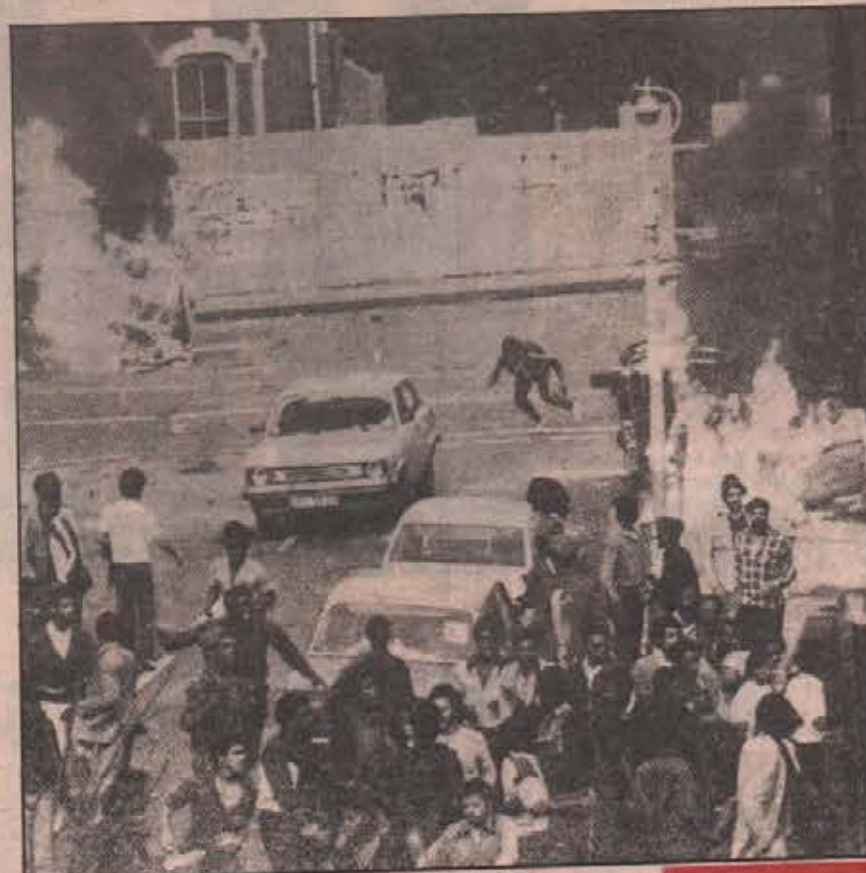
No — there are policies that do offer a real alternative. But they require united action of both employed and unemployed workers.

This is increasingly a possibility. Right now the Tories are planning to extend their fraudulent Youth Opportunities Programme to offer six month's work to over 400,000 young unemployed.

These workers receive only the dole plus fares — £23.50 per week; many are desperate for money; some have already begun to organise in unions and even to take strike action.

Trade unionists in every area should ensure through trades councils and other bodies that all the youth on these schemes are recruited into unions. The perspective must be for a combined fight for trade union rates of pay and to force the employers to provide a proper job for the youth on YOPs.

YOUTH NEED REAL JOBS, REAL WAGES



Youth riot — labour movement must fight for jobs

Other unemployed workers should be organised with unemployed workers unions, seeking the closest possible links with the labour movement.

Together, employed and unemployed must organise to take up the fight for the shortening of the working week in industry to create new jobs for those out of work — demanding a system of work sharing on full pay.

And at the same time, by supporting every struggle against redundancies and closures, every battle against the Tories, a movement must be built that can drive Thatcher from office and press home the fight for a crash programme of useful public works to create the 3 million new jobs that are needed, at trade union rates of pay.

AS we go to press it has been confirmed that the executive of the NUTGW has withdrawn official support and strike pay from the women workers in the Lee Jeans occupation. Background see page 4.

HUNGER STRIKERS NEED ACTION NOW

53 RESOLUTIONS for this year's Labour Party conference call for a united Ireland, and many of them for political status.

It's a great advance. But while the sedate process of processing resolutions and drafting amendments goes forward, Kieran Doherty is dying. As we go to press he has been 68 days on hunger strike.

He, and also perhaps Kevin Lynch (67 days) will probably be dead by the time Socialist Organiser reaches our readers.

Behind them there are more H Block hunger strikers — fairly ordinary, average, young working class men, who are prepared to face slow, painful, solitary death in order to defeat the Tories' efforts to brand their national liberation struggle as 'criminal'.

They can't wait for the conference timetable. They need support from Labour activists, on the streets, now.

Kieran Doherty is an elected member of the Southern Irish parliament and Garret Fitzgerald, Dublin's conservative Prime Minister, may even be forced to withdraw his government's envoy from London when Doherty dies. Yet the prospect of British Labour cutting friendly relations with this stone-faced Tory government is far off.

Greater London's Labour leader, Ken Livingstone, last week had the courage to say that the hunger strikers were "people fighting for the freedom", who had his support.

To show the Irish people that the militant left wing of the British labour movement, at least, is willing to come out clearly against the Tories, we need to see at least those tens of thousands of activists represented by the 53 resolutions out on the streets, proclaiming the same message openly and actively.

Benn greets our weekly

FROM a monthly 12 pages in January 1979, Socialist Organiser has now developed to 16 pages weekly.

It will give us more scope to combine hard-hitting revolutionary agitation with broad debate in the labour movement.

TONY BENN told us, "The decision of Socialist Organiser to publish on a weekly basis will strengthen the Left press in Britain and allow more people to join in the debate now going on in the Labour Party. Good luck!"

JON LANSMAN, secretary of the Rank and File Mobilising Committee for Labour Democracy, also welcomed the weekly.

"Our fight for Labour democracy depends on an informed, active, and politically aware rank and file. And that in turn depends on the development and expansion of papers like Socialist Organiser."

JEREMY CORBYN, of the London Labour Party executive and NUPE, greeted the weekly as "a great boost to the struggle to spread genuine socialist ideas in the rank and file."

Lothian councillor NEIL LINDSEY was appreciative of the support Socialist Organiser has given to Lothian's fight against the cuts. "I welcome the paper going weekly, and the attempt Socialist Organiser has made to build a broad, fighting left."

And GEOFF



WILLIAMS, convenor of University Hospital, Cardiff, told us: "Our weekly will more than double Socialist Organiser's usefulness in the industrial struggle. I'm expecting a coverage second to none."

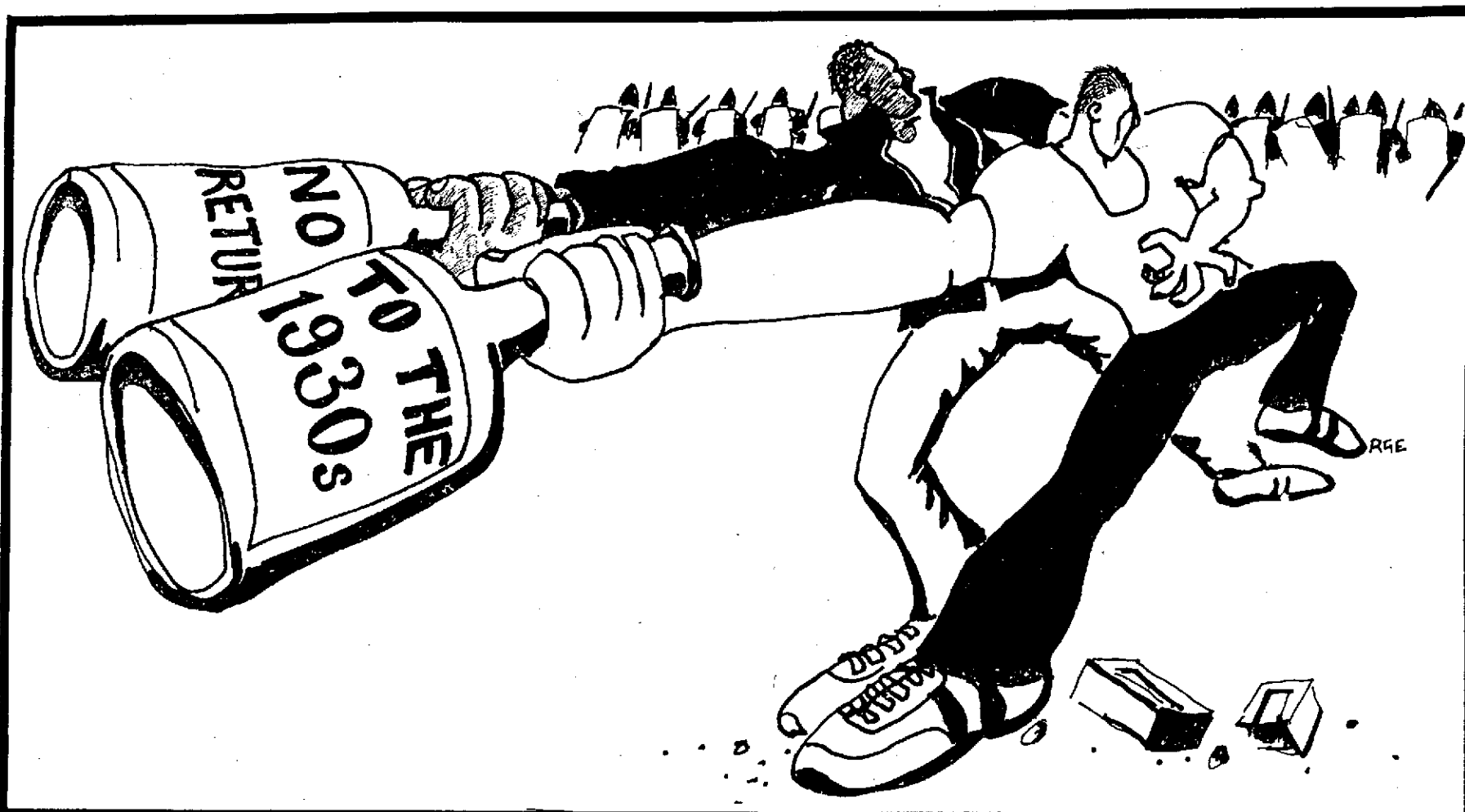
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Making me pay for Tory crimes

A young worker jailed in the Midlands tells how the rioters were 'welcomed as heroes' by the Borstal kids

FOR THE 'crime' of walking the streets after 11 o'clock on a Saturday night, I was thrown into a police van, beaten up, thrown in a police station cell for two days, and then off to Borstal for seven days' remand.

Of course, I wasn't the only one in that position. In the Borstal there were rioters from all over the country, 60 from Leicester, 120 from Liverpool and Moss Side, 30 from Birmingham, and many more.

Usually when you go into Borstal you have to compete with the other kids in order to get through your term. But in the words of the screws, we were 'treated like heroes' by the others in the Borstal.

Many of the youth said they would have joined us outside. They could see they were all in the same boat against the police.

Something that surprised me was the amount of support inside for the H-Block hunger strikers.

H-Block

When we were locked up on the first night, there were chants of 'Smash H-Blocks', which lots of youth joined in.

There were some skin-heads in there who said they were National Front and British Movement, but they weren't too keen to discuss their politics among the West Indian and Asian youth in there.

They all put down on the legal aid from that they wanted Reed-Herbert (the British Democratic Party leader recently exposed on 'World in Action' as a Nazi gun-runner) to represent them in court.

They had a shock when, of course, he never showed up. Instead he, like other fascists, will be calling for the jailing of rioters along with the repatriation of blacks.

This certainly made them think what they were doing in the organisation.

Most of the youth in there were against the fascists, and saw them as lunatics.

Tory looters

Whether we were inside for burglary, or for just walking the streets, we realised that we were not being locked up for 22 hours a day for OUR wrong-doings.

The reason we were there was because the Tories and their supporters, the police, see youth as a threat to their system of exploitation and profits, and intend to go on intimidating them.

The time has come to take a stand and organise together to point out the real looters — the Tories — and make them pay.

DROP THE CHARGES!

Brixton orgy of cop violence

by Les Hearn

THE POLICE in Brixton have succeeded in dispelling all illusions with their brutal dawn raids on 15th July.

Hundreds of police smashed their way into premises in Railton Road and indulged in an orgy of destruction on the pretext of searching for petrol bomb making equipment. This involved breaking into unlocked rooms, intimidating and insulting the occupants, looking inside TV sets, guitars, hi-fi, toilet bowls (and irreparably damaging them) and even demolishing a false wall.

An off-licence proprietor was put out of business as a result and several people were arrested for possession of small amounts of drugs (considered no great crime by most people) or even obstruction of the police!

No bomb-making equipment was found, though possession of paraffin for heating was thought to be rather suspicious.

Front line

These raids can only have been a deliberate provocation of the Brixton community, and the universal anger led swiftly to new uprisings in the subsequent nights.

No doubt it was the intention of the police to isolate the people of the 'front line' from public sympathy and to pressurise the government to accede to police demands for more 'effective' methods of repression. While they may have succeeded in the latter aim, in the former they were wholly unsuccessful and have merely revealed themselves to be as vicious as the police.

Socialist Organiser supporters in Lambeth will be attempting to raise emergency motions at this

week's GMC meetings of the Lambeth Labour Parties. These will call:

- for the removal of the police forces of occupation from the Railton Road area,
- for Lambeth Council to sponsor a meeting to discuss community-controlled alternatives to state policing,
- for the release of those arrested and imprisoned

Fascist threat faces Stoke

by Arthur Bough

FASCISTS seem to have dropped a plan to march on August 1st through one of Stoke's black communities, and instead aim to bring in a lot of people from outside to distribute Nazi literature at a large rock concert at Vale Park (Port Vale's football ground). This poses somewhat of a problem for the left in Stoke.

A few months ago North Staffs CND organised a march and festival for August 1st. About £300 has already been spent on it, but it looked as if the whole thing could be called off because of a threatened police ban on marches requested by the Labour City Council.

It now seems the CND march can go ahead, though with changed details. That means that many people who could be stopping the fascists will be at the Festival.

The hard-core Left in Stoke is not very big, and a division of labour is not really possible. Many people involved in CND will prefer to avoid confrontations, and choose the Festival rather than fighting the fascists. It is important,

as a result of this provocation,

- for the Greater London Council to withhold the Metropolitan Police precept and use it to fund community-controlled defence.

Socialist Organiser supporters elsewhere should also take up these demands.

therefore, that the hard left in Stoke mobilises to stop the fascists, and that we get support from surrounding areas.

For details nearer the date, phone Socialist Organiser at 01-609 3071.

by Mick Liggins [chairperson, National Council for Young Workers]

An acknowledgement of the growing militancy of the youth on the so-called 'Youth Opportunities Programmes' was shown when the National Executive Committee of the Labour Party had a discussion on the YOP schemes last month.

Out of the discussion came a motion put forward by Tony Benn for the next Labour government to give full trade union rights to YOP workers and the right for them to negotiate pay.

The motion — opposed by both Dennis Healey and



'Community policing' in Handsworth

PHOTO: J.M.B.HARRIS

Benn backs YOPs youth

Michael Foot — was passed by 12 votes to 5.

While this obviously means a significant step forward in the YOP struggle, the position has to be strengthened by committing the Labour Party to a policy of paying full trade union rates.

And the fight must not be left until the next Labour government. The labour movement has to take a lead in fighting for unionisation of the Tory cheap labour schemes NOW.

Meanwhile the strike by the 250 YOP workers in Durham in June has led to them going around to other YOP schemes, recruiting for the union and seeking

the support of thousands of YOP workers for a one-day strike backed by NUPE next month.

Employment secretary James Prior has indicated that the YOP 'allowance' of £23.50 will remain the same for the second year running.

Last November the rate was due to be increased to £27.50 — but this was cancelled by Chancellor Howe.

A worried NUPE official warned: 'If that happens, even NUPE will not be able to control what these youngsters do'.

A fight has to be taken up to spread union organisation and strike action

throughout the YOP schemes nationally. That is the job of all trade union members, not just YOP workers.

The National Council for Young Workers is fighting to coordinate this action and to unionise all YOP schemes. Trade Union and Labour Party branches should support the workers by affiliating to this body and taking up the fight to expose YOP cheap labour schemes through independent trade union/Labour Party inquiries.

★ National Council for Young Workers, UMIST Students' Union, PO Box 88, Manchester M60 1QV. Tel: 061-861 0317.



North, South, Midlands Riot round-up

THE INCIDENT that started the Toxteth riots was typical of the tactics of the police in the area over the last few months.

A black youth riding a motorcycle was stopped and harassed by police. But this time the local youth decided to show their anger at this police provocation and attempted to rescue him.

The next day, Saturday, coachloads of police were shipped into the area, and the already inflammable police/youth relationship finally blew up.

Rioting went on throughout Saturday night, with stone-throwing youth capturing part of Upper Parliament Street. The fighting began again at 7am, this time more organised. 600 youth threw petrol bombs and some of them captured police helmets and riot equipment.

Buildings used by the local community, such as the Caribbean Centre and local pubs, were left alone. The hospital that the Tory press said was attacked, was left alone by rioters and guarded by them from police while ambulances and taxis evacuated it.

Shops were emptied and burnt out, and cars were set alight and used for barricades to keep out the police.

MANCHESTER Fuhrer James Anderton first described the Moss Side rioting as a 'serious crime', and simply a case of 'arson and serious looting'.

He tried to diffuse the riots, saying he was not interested in confrontation. But he soon changed his tune.

On the third night of rioting, he described the riots as 'guerilla warfare and real anarchy'.

With the help of the Tactical Action Group (Manchester's SPG), Anderton went on the offensive, and there were vicious police attacks.

In other parts of the North, Blackpool, Newcastle, Preston, Blackburn, Leeds, and parts of West Yorkshire, there were riots resulting in 500 arrests.

WHEN Leicester finally erupted — on the 11th, 12th and 13th — after days of an intense atmosphere in the city, the SPG came straight in from London.

Most arrests were made outside the main riot area of Highfields, where the SPG spent three days (in their words) 'taking a hiding', dodging in and out of the estate, not knowing where they were going.

THE RIOTS in Birmingham exposed the idea of 'community policing' for what it is. While the riots in Toxteth, Brixton and Moss Side were going on, the community 'leaders' and the police were saying that it could never happen to the multi-racial town of Birmingham...

The riots and their direction against the police showed that 'community policing' is nothing more than a delicate pact between the police, race-relations people, and middle class community leaders that has nothing to do with the black or white youth in the area.

THE DETERMINATION of the youth in Wolverhampton was expressed not only in the riot — in which 40 youth were arrested — but later in the attempt in court to rescue youths appearing in the dock. The 'quiet-looking' policemen standing around quickly responded, truncheons in hand.

With unemployment at 13%, and much higher for youth, there was certainly going to be an uprising in the Midlands. Other towns affected were Nottingham and Derby.

TURKISH LEADER SHOT

KENAN BUDAK, a leather workers' leader in the DISK trade union federation, was shot dead by Turkish police on 26th July — 'while trying to escape', they said.

Another 500 DISK leaders are being held in jail by the military regime, and the military prosecutor is demanding death sentences for 52 of them.

DISK had about a million members before it was abolished by the military regime immediately after they seized power. The 52 are being charged with 'advocating the domination of a social class over other

social classes', under the notorious Articles 141 and 142 of the Turkish Penal Code, which were borrowed directly from Mussolini's in the '30s.

Meanwhile, the Tory government is planning to give Turkey's generals £15 million in military aid as part of a NATO package — £3 million of it as a free gift!

The Turkey Solidarity Campaign is calling for union branches, Labour Parties, and campaign or community groups to pass the following motion:

'This...
• condemns the threat to

the lives of DISK members in Turkey and in particular the attempt to execute 52 of its leaders,

• demands their immediate release,

• resolves to campaign for their release throughout the labour movement by: a) calling on MPs and MEPs to express this view in Parliament, European Parliament, and the Council of Europe, and to demand an immediate end to all economic and military aid to the junta; in particular the promised £15 aid from the Tory government to the junta must be withdrawn,

b) calling on our union executive to raise the matter with the TUC, urging them to campaign for the release of the DISK members and to seek ways to assist them in their struggle against dictatorship,

• further resolves to send a copy of this motion to both General Evren, Head of State, Ankara, Turkey, and Mr V. Asiroglu, Turkish Embassy, Belgrave Square, London W1.

[Please send a copy, too, to the Turkey Solidarity Campaign, BM Box 5965, London WC1N 3XX].

PRESS GANG



A NEW home for a not so new column. Press Gang welcomes the rest of Socialist Organiser to its company.

The point of this column is supposed to be to berate mock or otherwise denigrate that last and worst graveyard for dead trees — newspapers.

The press is capitalist society's distorting mirror. It admires the ridiculous, fawns on the bully; elevates the worthless and trivialises and debases everything that is noble in humanity.

Despite its arrogant swagger however it is also frightened; frightened of the workers movement; frightened of socialism; frightened of the power of the working class.

The Tory press plays the role of the geese which grazed on the hill-sides of ancient Rome — setting up a hysterical cacophony every time danger threatens (which these days is a fine excuse for a daily paper).

The object of Press Gang is to hold its own

mirror up to Fleet Street in the hope of comic results.

Sometimes however, despair seems a more appropriate emotion. The Royal Wedding juggernaut thunders on. No self respecting publication whether 'quality' or 'gutter' was complete without its 72-page pull-out-and-vomit-into supplement which detailed everything from the names of the horses to the order of precedence amongst the footmen's children.

The Sunday Times says:

'The vulgarity of the media coverage and of the commercial cashing in, has often been hard to stomach,' which would have sounded a great deal better if it had not been in the introduction to a four-page special on the wedding.

Partly those supplements were so long because they had to give space to the numerous and complex restrictions that the police were bring to bear. They warn for example that the population of London must

'use only the designated pedestrian crossing points' but that such crossings may be closed from 8.45 am until after lunch. ('Get to know your policeman. Stay handcuffed to him!')

What isn't Royal Wedding is Warrington or revolution.

Fleet Street's choice for the Croydon by-election, Shirley Williams, failed to make the ballot paper despite the biggest pre-election launch since British vodka.

(It's Shirley or Bust — Express, Shirley by a Mile — Star).

The Daily Mail (courtesy of the Economic League 'exposed' the secrets of the Trots' training centres for revolution' but these only turned out to be the WRP centres and everyone knows that the most revolutionary programme on offer there would be next week's cinema guide.

The Daily Mail (again) headlined Hattersley's attack on Trotskyists under the headline 'Purge the

Parasites' in which the most notable feature was the absence of an attack on the Militant tendency.

Hattersley's words about the IMG, WSL and other groups was that they should be 'rigidly excluded from influence in our affairs'.

The next day the Guardian reported Hattersley as saying he was opposed to expulsions but wanted to see the left 'politically defeated'.

Maybe sharing our scepticism the Daily Mail did not report this modification.

Then there wasn't much room for anything else. The royal wedding launched itself at our jugulars. Lady Di runs screaming from the photographers. Prince Charles discusses the difficulties of watching polo. Lord George Brown starts another tour. Labour's right wing warn of a closing down sale if Benn is not defeated.

Which leaves you wondering. Is life a media event?

Benn speaks

TONY BENN told Socialist Organiser:

'The decision of the Executive on a non-nuclear defence strategy for Britain puts the Labour Party in line with the growing movement throughout the whole of Europe to make it a nuclear-free zone and end the tyranny, waste and danger of the nuclear arms race.

'Millions of people in Britain will agree with us, provided we get the message across. This now the settled policy of the Party, as some of the big trade unions' decisions, taken at their conferences this year, make clear, and the Labour Party is entitled to hear from its representatives in Parliament.

'The moves towards more democracy in the Labour Party greatly increases the likelihood that party policy will be heard in Parliament.



Foot backs Healey, Healey backs the Bomb

**Socialist
Organiser
EDITORIAL**

IN 1960 Michael Foot was the leader of Labour's left wing, fighting for unilateral nuclear disarmament.

In July 1981 he is one of a minority on the National Executive fighting to evade a clear Labour commitment to scrapping the Bomb.

He explains that he still believes in unilateralism, but wants the NEC to wait until he has talked to Brezhnev.

And though Foot doesn't back the Bomb, he does back Dennis Healey — who is 100% in favour of keeping nuclear weapons.

Foot's record sums up a whole epoch of the Labour left. Gestures, days of glory, protests

— even brave protests — but all without any will to win.

Whenever victory has been within the Left's grasp, people like Foot have fearfully handed it back to the outraged right wing, and advised the rank and file, once again, to wait.

The National Executive decision to table a resolution this October calling unambiguously for unilateral nuclear disarmament reflected the way things are changing in the Labour rank and file.

Last conference passed a call for unilateral disarmament, but also voted for 'multilateralism' — thus giving the backers of the

Bomb some room for manoeuvre.

The NEC still supports NATO. But some eleven Labour Parties will be pressing at October's conference for a commitment to get out of NATO.

They will explain that it makes no sense for Labour to scrap the Bomb and still to support NATO, which uses the threat of the Bomb to maintain imperialist power (and, in particular, US power).

If the Labour Left is beginning to change at rank and file level, the Labour Right hasn't changed at all. They'll follow the same line as they did in the early '60s.

There will be soft words — why not wait, why not compromise?

There will also be harsh defiance of conference policy — like the Shadow Cabinet's recent refusal to oppose the Tories on defence — threats to quit, and witch-hunts against the Left, like Roy Hattersley's outcry against 'parasites'.

Shadow Defence Spokesperson Brynmor John threatened to resign from the Shadow Cabinet if Conference endorses the NEC policy.

In short, they will use any means necessary to tailor Labour's policy to the needs of the ruling class.

The NATO warmongers who stand behind Healey and the Labour Right are ready to blow humanity to bits to defend their power and privilege. And Labour's NATO men, in their turn, are willing to tear the labour movement to bits in order to keep it safe for imperialism.

This isn't a debate which can end in compromises and smiles all round.

The Left must fight to win — to beat down the right wing. And Marxists must organise to make sure the Left can do that.

Disarm Labour's right wing

Lee Jeans struggle at the crossroads

CP call to withdraw support

by John Lister

THERE ARE four members of the Communist Party on the 15-strong executive of the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers.

But instead of using this strong position to build support for the occupation at Lee Jeans, the CP members have been arguing for the union's minimal support to be withdrawn!

At the last meeting of the executive there were several speakers who argued that the dispute was doomed. Many were unconvinced by reports that a new buyer was about the take on the remaining workforce and lift the threat of redundancy that has stood behind the determination of the workforce to occupy the plant.

But it was the Communist Party members who went further and — stating that the dispute was no longer winnable — called (unsuccessfully) for the union to withdraw its official support from the workers in struggle.

None of these debates were reflected in the pages of the *Morning Star*, daily paper of the Communist Party. Its readers have received regular and enthusiastic reports of the resistance by the 170 women workers at the Greenock factory.

The CP bureaucrats in the NUTGW, like their comrades in the Scottish TUC, have from the outset resented the fact that the occupation broke out spontaneously, from factory level, outside the direct control of the union officials.

This measure of independence was increased when, instead of giving immediate official support, the union's executive sent a 'fact-finding mission' to the plant, giving no strike pay until the occupation was seven weeks old.

By that point the women had recognised how unreliable are their 'leaders', and they had recognised also the strength of support they can command in the labour movement.

Such direct appeals to the working class run counter to the Communist Party's conception of trade union work — which rests on forming cosy working relationships with the right wing bureaucrats.

So while the *Morning Star* has been forced to go along with popular opinion, lending empty verbal support to the struggle, CP members at the top level of the union concerned have got together with the right wing in a bid to sell out an occupation which has become the only focus for defence of jobs in the textile industry.

Their moves were defeated at the time. And despite the pessimism of the right wing and the conscious sabotage of the CP, the Lee Jeans women stand determined not to relinquish the factory.

Whether or not a buyer emerges, they intend to stay put.

The need is greater than ever for the occupation committee to convene a labour movement conference to debate the next steps forward in the struggle to save the jobs at Lee Jeans and throughout the textile industry, as part of the fight to defeat the Thatcher government.

Members of the NUTGW should press for more active union support to Lee Jeans — and members of the CP should perhaps ask themselves (and their leaders) what kind of a party they are in.

AFTER six months of the sit-in at the Lee Jeans factory near Greenock the workers' hopes are focused on the possibility of finding a buyer for the factory — probably Nigel Wright of the 'Dickie Dirts' firm.)

Convenor Helen Monaghan spoke to SO.

HM: Vanity Fair have said they want £750,000 for the factory and machinery. Mr Wright had an independent firm do an evaluation and offered what they said the place was worth.

He's not said how much he has offered exactly, but it's about a third less than the value VF has put on the factory.

VF say they want to sell the factory as a going concern, but how can they, when they want to make us all redundant?

And when VF announced the redundancies they said it was because there was no market for jeans. But Mr Wright has offered them an order for 30,000 pairs a week, and told them they can keep us on if they want, rather than him take the place over. So why can't Vanity Fair come to some agreement with him?

Mr Wright made his offer on 10 July and VF said they would give a reply

one way or the other at another meeting held within a week or ten days at the most. But we still haven't heard anything.

SO: Have there been any discussions about pay and conditions if Wright buys the factory?

HM: We had a meeting with him straight after his meeting with VF when he made his offer. He would pay us more or less the same wages, plus the increase we were due from VF but never got.

SO: How about the size of the workforce?

HM: We've worked out who's here and who's gone, and who can do what of them that's here. We'd need to take on a few more people: a cutter, an engineer and a manager. But we've already had people up here who are interested in taking up these posts. With them we could start producing 14,000 jeans a week right now, and if Mr Wright wants more then he can increase the workforce.

The plans we've drawn up for running a cooperative can be used if Mr Wright buys the factory — or for setting up a cooperative if the deal falls through, so we won't need to start again from the beginning if that happens.



Edinburgh workers gave the Lee Jeans women a great welcome at the end of their 'Right to Work' march. But CP members are pressing to ditch the struggle.

We'd set up the co-operative in the old factory down the road, and rent the machinery in here from VF. We've approached them about this, but had no definite answers from them, because, they say, of the possible deal with Mr Wright.

SO: What impact has blacking of VF products at the docks had?

HM: We've no idea how effective it's been. We've been told over the phone that some stuff is supposed

to be tied up, but really we don't know what impact it's had.

SO: How about the possibility of organising boycotts of shops selling Lee Jeans?

HM: We've not made a decision about this yet. We were going to do a leaflet but never got round to it with all the talks that have been going on. We thought things would be tied up weeks ago. But we should know one way or another this week.

SO: What has the STUC been up to recently to help you?

HM: The STUC is going to help Mr Wright. For example if he buys the factory then the STUC would take Mr Wright to the bodies he'd need help from once the deal goes through. If the deal is done this week, then by the end of August we could finish off the unfinished jeans still here belonging to VF and get started on the new stuff for Mr Wright by 1 September.

A token conference on women's health

VIV JONES reports from the TUC women's conference on women's health (17th July)

THIS was a token conference for 200 token women!

The TUC were instructed at last year's Congress to discuss women's health. Now they will obviously feel they can cross it off their list of duties which have to be performed for no reason, except shutting up a few stroppy women.

The attendance was unlike any women's conference I have attended before.

The average woman trade union activist who has got far enough up the bureaucracy to attend such conferences as a representative of a national union or a Regional TUC is as much a part of the bureaucracy as her male counterpart.

The morning was spent with speakers talking about health education, Parliamentary positions from the Social Services Select Committee, breast and cervical screening and hazards for pregnant women in the workplace.

This provided a lot of information but basically set the tenor of the discussion — that women's health means we can only discuss our reproductive system!

The Deputy General Secretary of the TUC, Norman Willis, opened the afternoon discussion on a TUC document.

They didn't even have the sense to find a female bureaucrat to introduce it!

The discussion went from personal experiences, which varied from boasting about mastectomies to fighting for cytology screening in the workplace to the need for a political struggle for better housing and standards of living.

There was also some disagreement about the best form of screening for breast cancer, with the platform advocating mammography (x-rays of the breast) and a radiographer delegate opposing this by pointing out the long term dangers of x-raying soft tissue.

The most exciting part of the conference was when the ASTMS delegation challenged the chairperson's refusal to let the ASTMS Health and Safety Officer speak

(on the grounds that an ASTMS delegate had spoken during the morning session).

It was not until well into the afternoon session that the chair announced they would only take one speaker per union.

It was obvious the platform did not want the ASTMS Health and Safety Officer to speak

because they thought she would challenge the complacency of the platform and demand action.

With more democratic organisation and more rank and file representation, this could have been a very important conference and developed the delegates to go back and fight.

It could have taken decisions for the TUC to

fight with the trade unions.

But instead it was a sort of information session which would have been better (and cheaper!) if the information had been written down and sent out.

Whatever the aim of the conference, it did not achieve it — except in easing the consciences of the bureaucrats.



by Rachel Lever (secretary, Women's Fightback)

WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK's yearly conference, our AGM, at the end of August, is to be combined with two days of political discussions and practical 'self-help' sessions. It will be held at a residential centre over the August bank holiday weekend.

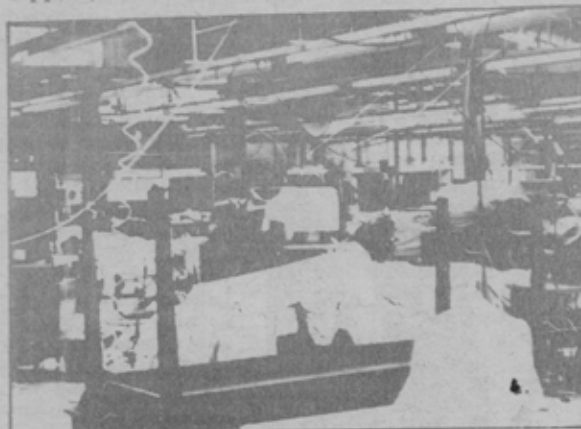
Days one and two (the 29th and 30th) will cover basic self-education on socialist ideas, guidelines on campaigning and the labour movement, and sessions on practical and organisational skills.

Day three will be the AGM — and in between there will be evenings free for informal discussions, relaxation, and entertainment.

The AGM will be open to members, delegates and visitors, but only members and delegates can vote.

Please register, and send in resolutions, by August 14th. All inquiries to Women's Fightback, 41 Ellington St, London N7.

Women can join Women's Fightback for £2 a year, and organisations can affiliate for £5 a year (£20 for national organisations).



In line for a buyer?

Polish CP Congress: the old guard cling on to power

by Alexis Carras

THINK OF an East European 'Communist Party' congress, and the picture which springs to mind is one of stiff-necked, rigid delegates, with crew cuts, dark suits, and unmoving, expressionless faces, thunderously applauding the marathon speeches of 'the leaders'.

The elite, ritually going through the motions of 'discussion' and 'democratic debate', matches an entire society locked in an ice-age of conformity and murderous authoritarianism.

The Ninth Extraordinary Congress of the United Polish Workers' Party was different.

Caught up in the tumult of the last year — the junking by a massive and well-organised workers' movement of sacred Stalinist practices, and the rebirth of working class action, posing a mortal threat to their political stranglehold and economic privilege — even the apparatchiks and careerists of the Stalinist party have had to move with the times, in a desperate attempt to understand and control a society slipping out of their grasp.

Different wings

The Congress of 1,962 delegates was a rowdy and at times bitter and acrimonious affair, as different wings of the Party machine fought it out for power and influence.

Expulsions of seven leading PUPW members, among them Gierek, ex-prime minister Babuch, and old trade union boss Szydlak, followed hard on the heels of embarrassing documents circulated around the Congress Hall firmly implicating the General Secretary of the Party, Stanislaw Kania, in the brutal repression and murder of workers in the Baltic ports in December 1970, when he was head of the secret police.

Small farmers

And instead of orations droning on for hours, in speeches signifying nothing but the speakers' own unabashed servility, this year the bureaucrats had to think of their audience. The 'extreme liberal' of the bureaucracy, Mieczyslaw Bakowski, brought the Congress to its feet in genuine enthusiasm as he called on Polish Communists 'to cease being afraid of the small farmers of who want to be masters of their own land, and of workers' self-management'. They should, he said, no longer be in awe 'of all those who say that without them everything will fall apart'.

Even the Russian CP delegate, Grishin, throw-



Hunger marches and protests have forced the bureaucrats into a 'concession': meat rations will be cut 20% 'only' until September, while food prices rise by up to 400%

ing in his contribution on how Moscow would 'fraternally aid the country to offer a decisive rebuff to all manifestations of anarchy and instability', was at least brief. He seemed to spend much of his time in walkabouts, explaining to workers in a Warsaw radio factory that workers in the Soviet Union (the land of 'developed socialism') 'actively participated' and 'identified with' their work.

The reactions of the Warsaw workers were not recorded in *Pravda*.

Of the outgoing Central Committee only 18 members (one in eight) were re-elected in the secret ballot. The newly-elected Politbureau of 11 includes only four from the outgoing one.

It is more or less equally balanced between the conservative and 'liberal' wings of the party. Those knocked off the Politbureau include not only 'ultras' like Grabski, but also the 'liberal' Fizbach.

Thus despite the sweeping changes in personalities and in style, political control has

not changed significantly. A balance has once again been fairly evenly struck between the hardliners and 'liberals' in the bureaucracy.

Same Clique

The supposed great victory was the election to the Politbureau of Zofia Grzyb, a woman member of Solidarnosc and a worker at a Radom shoe factory. Yet Zofia Grzyb has been a member of the PUPW since 1949. She was a member of the outgoing Central Committee and Control Commission of the PUPW, and has a record stretching back into the Young Communists and even the Scouts.

Real power in the Politbureau will still remain in the hands of the same clique — even though they have been warned that they cannot exercise that power in the same way as before.

In the new Central Committee the balance of tendencies is roughly similar, although 20 per cent of its members are involved in one way or another with Solidarnosc.

The Congress has been unique in the annals of Stalinist Parties holding state power.

The rigid uniformity was washed away, in the midst of undoubtedly real and bitter debates. Powerful challenges were directed against Kania, not only by exposing his past, but also by changes in voting procedure which might have seriously diminished his chances of reselection. Open canvassing and corridor wheeling and dealing replaced the ritual acclamation of infallible leaders and infallible lines.

Party hacks

Yet despite this ferment, which is no doubt only a pale reflection of an even deeper ferment and dissidence at the base of the Party, the impact of Solidarnosc was remarkably slight. For a movement of 12 million workers and three million farmers, one representative and the Politbureau and a fifth of the CC is hardly a breakthrough — especially when the 'representatives' are in fact long-standing Party hacks.

There are terrible dangers if Solidarnosc allows itself to be satisfied by the changes in style and methods and personalities, while real power remains in the same hands.

A Stalinist party totally enmeshed with the state apparatus cannot be gradually reformed. It can break apart or it can re-consolidate itself. In either case, a counter-offensive by the top bureaucrats is inevitable.

They will ensnare Solidarnosc, draw it into being 'moderate' and 'responsible', and then choose their time to smash it up.

If Solidarnosc's impact on the PUPW is to be more than a 'left cover' for the Stalinist reformers in their attempt to reach a compromise with the rest of society and push through economic reforms which will mean unemployment and worse conditions for Polish workers, then a more democratic structure and a clearer policy in Solidarnosc itself are needed.

Iranian leftists executed

by Mansur Hallaj

THIRTEEN members of the Mojahedeen [PMOI] were executed as polling took place in Iran last weekend for a new president to replace the ousted Bani Sadr.

We have also learned that a Kurdish comrade, Gharani Karimi, who wrote for the socialist paper *Workers' Action* under the name 'Simko', has been executed by the Islamic Republic after being held in prison in Tabriz for almost two months.

The election of Mr Mohammed Ali Rajai, the favourite candidate of the Islamic Republican Party, was no surprise. Everything had been done to boost the power of the Islamic fundamentalists.

As proof that they had voted, people were ordered to produce their identity cards for stamping. Those with unstamped cards can now expect to be the victims of the Islamic Republic's relentless drive against opposition.

Divine wrath

Ayatollah Khomeini, considered to be the sole representative of God and the prophet Mohammed, denounces any opposition to himself and the Islamic regime as opposition to God and the Koran. The radical currents have taken the brunt of the 'divine wrath', and the PMOI have been the main target, along with the Fedayeen Minority, Peykar, and other smaller revolutionary organisations.

ations.

A new turn in the strengthening of opposition to the regime was marked by a communique issued by the PMOI in Tehran on July 2nd. They hold Khomeini personally responsible for the brutal repression, the war, and the economic chaos now reigning in Iran, and they call upon the people of Iran to give 'spiritual and material support' for their struggle against the regime.

They have also declared themselves 'the soldiers of Bani Sadr'. Bani Sadr can now also claim the support of the Kurdish Democratic Party and the Fedayeen Minority.

It is a strange opposition front, in which the PMOI have given uncritical support to Bani Sadr. It is left up to those smaller revolutionary organisations which have not capitulated to Khomeini to try to organise the working class as an independent force.

PICKET THE IRANIAN EMBASSY: from 12 noon, Sunday 2nd August, at Princes Gate, London SW7.

Organised by Fedayeen Minority, Peykar, Communist Unity, and Unity of Communist Militants.

Precarious halt to Zionist bombing

by Andrew Hornung

With the Israelis straining at the leash, the US has forced a precarious ceasefire, ending for a short period at least the Zionist blitzkrieg on Palestinian camps and guerilla positions in Lebanon.

Hundreds have been killed and hundreds more injured by Israeli raids, shelling, and bombing. The worst atrocities were in Beirut, where hundreds were killed and injured in a raid that could not possibly make any distinction between civilian and military targets.

The bombing raids were part of a long series of attacks. Even official Israeli

pronouncements now call them not 'reprisals', but pre-emptive strikes. Of course, the Israeli attacks met with resistance and also counter-attacks, which were then used as excuses to step up the assault even further.

In addition to the raids, the Zionists have reinforced their troop commitments in southern Lebanon, where they operate both on their own and in conjunction with the right-wing rebel army of Major Haddad.

While Israel has not actually extended its borders, it has extended the area it controls directly — an area which it is also gradually integrating

economically and administratively. For instance, Israeli General Avigdor Ben-Gal told a radio interviewer that no amount of long-range pounding, whether by the air force or by the artillery, would defeat and dislodge the PLO positions from southern Lebanon. "You've got to be in there", he said.

This latest escalation does not mark a decisive shift in Israeli policy. But it has exposed the real face of Zionism to hundreds of millions. In the United States, it is reported, support for Israel has plummeted.

Echoing this feeling, the western press, almost always in support of Zionist

actions, is now white-faced with fear at the reckless warmongering of Israel.

The imperialist powers and the Soviet Union fear that the latest round of raids has brought a major war in the Middle East much nearer, and both are exerting maximum pressure on their clients and allies to prevent this.

The US insistence on a ceasefire has another reason too: the prospect of a 'comprehensive peace plan' under US control — the subject of the Camp David talks — was almost obliterated by the Beirut bombing.

But Israel has scored a signal success with the bombing raids. Not over

the Palestinians, but over Syria.

The tension that provoked Reagan to dispatch his aide Philip Habib to the Middle East arose, after all, not over Israeli raids, but over Syria's threat to use SAM missiles against Israeli raiding planes and thus surely unleash a war between Syria and Israel.

But Syria has backed down. It has not used the missiles, indeed it has not been actively engaged against the Israelis at all.

Syria's military passivity is complemented by Saudi Arabia's diplomatic activity. Again, the Palestinians find themselves without the hoped-for protection of the self-proclaim-

ed pan-Arabists of the surrounding states. This will not go unnoticed by the Arab masses.

Real danger

The real danger, as far as imperialism and the bureaucrats of the Stalinist states are concerned, is therefore not so much war as a general destabilisation.

The fact that, for the moment, the US is holding the Zionist dogs of war in check in no sense means that the US is playing the role of peace-maker in the area. Its own plan is for the Palestinians to be wiped out by the Lebanese Right, with or without the Syrians.

Don't let up on Labour democracy...

AMENDMENTS NEEDED TO IMPOSE ACCOUNTABILITY

ILEA ducks meal price fight

by Steve Macarthur

AT THE Islington South Labour Party GMC meeting in June the constituency's GLC councillor and ILEA deputy chief, Frances Morrell, confirmed the news that Labour plan to cut the cost of school meals would fall foul of the District Auditor.

The ILEA had sought legal advice and had been told that a cut in school meals would be illegal. If it was implemented GLC councillors would face surcharges and disqualification.

Frances asked the GMC for its support for a vote against the cut because she had her family and home to think of.

When she asked, the GMC wanted her to make such a sacrifice and further would members of the GMC be prepared to endure such a loss themselves?

The delegates decided that they would not and passed a motion calling for meal charges to be frozen, for an improvement in the quality of the meals and for publicity to place the blame for this broken pledge where it belonged — with the District Auditor and the Government.

When it came to the vote most of the left abstained. Frances Morrell later voted for the price cut in the full ILEA meeting — but by then the policy was clearly lost.

None of the delegates asked the obvious question, why was the problem of intervention by the District Auditor not examined and considered when the manifesto was being written? As the local Socialist Organiser bulletin later pointed out, legal advice was sought as long ago as January, and the same legal opinion was given then.

If GLC candidates thought that they would be unable to implement the manifesto they had the opportunity to say so at the time.

Clearly the movement needs strategies for confronting the Auditor, involving the Party in full support of its councillors.

The Campaign for Labour Party Democracy and other campaigns have been invited to contribute regular columns to Socialist Organiser. This week, NIGEL WILLIAMSON of the CLPD Executive explains the CLPD's recommended amendments on this year's Labour Party conference agenda.

THE large number of resolutions submitted to this year's Labour Party Annual Conference on disarmament, Ireland and economic policy are to be welcomed.

It illustrates the concern of both constituency activists and trade union members to arm the Party with a coherent alternative with which to fight the Tory government.

Nevertheless, without the mechanisms to ensure the implementation of these policies, Conference resolutions remain a futile and meaningless exercise.

For in the past it was not the lack of appropriate Conference policies which presented the problem.



CLPD fringe meeting

Rather it was the utter disdain with which Labour's elected representatives, unresponsive and unaccountable to the rank and file, treated those policies.

Therefore it is a source of concern that only a small number of resolutions on the major democratic reforms still necessary to democratise the Party have been submitted to this year's Conference.

Many Labour Party members feel, in fact, that the democratic reforms already won have ensured the accountability of Labour's elected representatives. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Not only have we witnessed frenzied attempts to undermine the new



Triumph at Blackpool — but it must be consolidated this year

electoral college (which happily now look certain to fail), but, despite everything, mandatory reselection has still not yet been won.

Those who have opposed it from the outset now seek to prevent selection conferences from taking place by the 'shortlist of one' subterfuge. This means that branches are being disenfranchised through the arbitrary elimination of their nominees.

As a result, CLPs are prevented from making a genuine choice, MPs are not truly accountable and the PLP fails to reflect the views of the rank and file, as expressed through Conference.

Shortlists of one cannot, therefore, be

allowed where there is more than one validly nominated candidate, and we suggest that the following amendment on 'shortlists of one' to Conference Resolution 34:

"To this end, Conference welcomes the NEC decision to confirm that Parliamentary shortlists of one when there is more than one nominee are not normal practice. However, Conference considers it essential for this ruling to be incorporated into the Constitution, to prevent any further misuse of shortlisting to bypass the selection conference. Conference therefore directs the Conference Arrangements Committee/ Standing Orders Committee to waive the 1968 Conference decision on constitutional amendments submitted on this subject, so that these can be debated and voted on this year".

But even given properly contested selection conferences, accountability will not be effective while the PLP itself remains fundamentally undemocratic. When the Party is in power, all decisions are taken by an unelected cabinet.

The vast majority of MPs are no more than lobby fodder, unconsulted and taken for granted.

Proposals to democratise the PLP mean that all MPs would be involved in deciding how best to implement Party policy.

In turn, their accountability will be ensured by verbatim reports and voting records of PLP meetings being made available to the Party as a whole.

Therefore we suggest the following amendment to Conference resolution 22, submitted by Melton CLP:

"Furthermore, Conference believes that the Parliamentary Labour Party can only be made truly democratic when it ceases to act as an autonomous

body and its Standing Orders are incorporated into the Party Constitution. Therefore, it instructs the National Executive Committee to bring before next year's Conference the constitutional amendments necessary to effect this, and to allow a full debate this year on the eight constitutional amendments on the Parliamentary Labour Party which were referred to the National Executive Committee by the 1980 Annual Conference".

Finally, the Parliamentary leadership must not be allowed to veto crucial Conference policies from the manifesto as they did in 1979.

Then years of consultation, working parties and study groups were either ignored or torn up as the manifesto was rushed through in a matter of days, in precisely the fashion it was always hoped to avoid.

Therefore, on the manifesto we suggest the following amendment to resolution 15, submitted by Woolwich East CLP:

"and instructs the Conference Arrangements Committee/ Standing Orders Committee to waive the 1968 Conference decision on constitutional amendments and place on the agenda of this year's Conference any constitutional amendments on this subject submitted this year".

It is crucial that all three of these Constitutional issues are properly debated at Conference this year.

Amendments on all three are necessary to be able to exert sufficient pressure to ensure that these issues are debated.

Finally, the problem in getting issues debated in the past has often been the obstructive role played by the Conference Arrangements Committee.

This year the rank and file will have their own voice on this powerful body in the form of one constituency delegate who will be elected by other CLP delegates alone.

We believe that our assistant secretary, Pete Willsman, is the ideal candidate. Pete will be a delegate from Woolwich East CLP and we urge other CLPs to nominate him to the CAC.

His written consent, which is necessary to make any nomination valid, can be obtained by writing to him at 322 Plumstead High Street, London SE18.

Pollok: battle for James White's seat

THE reselection contest being waged in the Pollok CLP on the south side of Glasgow has taken a new turn with the decision of Mike Connarty, prominent figure in Stirling District Council and Secretary of the LCC in Scotland to stand.

This makes it now a three cornered fight with two left wing potential candidates, Davie Dick, Secretary of the CLP and prominent 'Militant' supporter, and Connarty as against James White, the right wing MP for Pollok.

In an interview recently in the Glasgow Herald, Connarty said that he had been asked to stand by "some people in the constituency" and that his aim was to express the opinion of the "traditional left" as against the "pie in the sky" policies of the 'Militant' tendency.

It is unfortunate that Connarty should be so coy

about the credentials of the "some people" he refers to.

It is a fact that he was nominated at a meeting of the Socialist Educational Association in Glasgow where a number of teachers and lecturers from the Pollok CLP were present.

But it is difficult to conceive of these people as representing the "traditional left" within the Party. On the contrary, at a recent meeting of the Pollokshaws-Campbell ward two of these same people voted for a resolution calling for a ban on factions within the Labour Party.

If these are among the "some people" Connarty refers to, and we suspect that they are, then he has indeed gained some dubious allies.

On the other hand, Davie Dick has a long record of principled struggle within the Labour Party in

the area. He has built up a sizeable support over that time and bids fair to oust White in the reselection process.

Connarty must ask himself what are the motives of those people who have persuaded him to stand. Surely it can be none other than to split the left wing vote, thus allowing White to regain the candidacy.

Tactical voting by some of the right wing could possibly lead to the elimination of Dick in the first round and then open the way for a switch of support back to White in the final run off.

We do not support 'Militant'. But the clear indication is that Connarty is being used by the right wing to split the left vote. The only honourable course for Connarty is to recognise this, and stand down.

IAN McCALMAN

Support gay rights

AFTER being virtually dead for two years, the Labour Campaign for Gay Rights [LCGR] has been revitalised. In Huddersfield on 4th July, LCGR selected a National Coordinating Committee.

The Campaign aims to win the Labour Party to a full and firm position and ACTION on gay rights. Speakers from the Campaign are available now to address Branches and CLPs, and LCGR plans to invite prominent members of the Labour Party NEC to introduce their Discussion Document, 'The Rights of Gay Men and Women' [40p from 150 Walworth Rd, SE17] at regional meetings.

The first meeting will be in Glasgow on Saturday 31st October. The Scottish Council of the Labour Party and the Scottish TUC Gen-

eral Council will be approached for their support, and union and Labour Party branches invited. OXFORD C.L.P. have selected a gay rights motion for 1981 Labour Party conference.

Comrades should move tactical amendments at their next CLP meeting to show the NEC that there is grassroots support for the motion.

Campaign Co-ordinator is Chris Beer, 10 Burstock Road, London SW15 [01-785 9515], and Campaign Treasurer is David Etherington, 181 Coal Clough Lane, Burnley, Lancs [to whom affiliations, only £2, should be sent].

Scottish Gay Rights conference information from Ian Dunn, 031-557 1662, or John Wilde, 041-339 3679.

Chance to debate child care

THERE IS a good chance of a debate on child care at this year's Labour Conference.

There may possibly be debate on abortion rights and on women's right to work.

And if a huge campaign is mounted, there is just a chance of winning a debate on a vital constitutional change that will, if carried, ensure that every year there is, without scheming and plotting, a debate on women's needs.

Seven motions are down already on under fives, providing between them the makings of a good composite.

Two resolutions in the section on unemployment (232 and 235) refer explicitly to women.

Amendments to either of these could call for a massive mobilisation for a demonstration for a woman's right to work, or could call for immediate action to support the fight for jobs and services and urge Labour councils to adopt positive action programmes on women's jobs.

Either or both these points could be tacked on to 232 or 235, simply start "Conference further calls/declares etc".

There are two motions on abortion rights, aimed at strengthening the chances of a woman's right to choose being included in Labour's Manifesto.

There are also two motions to curb MPs freedom to vote against party policy on abortion.

But these can't all be composited together, as the call to mandate MPs on how to vote is almost certain to be defeated, and should not, therefore, be locked in with the general principle of a woman's right to choose.

Supporting amendments to the first two motions (372 and 373) could stress immediate campaigning; joint work and official recognition of the abortion campaigns NAC and LARC; trade union action to defend threatened facilities; defence of family planning and pregnancy testing services from cuts.

Motion 29 on party organisation calls for the Labour Women's Conference to have the right to submit five motions for debate at Annual Conference.

This doesn't stand much chance of a debate as it is a single resolution, but if there are lots of amendments we can mount a campaign for it to be debated.

The CLPD's model amendment would add at the end of Motion 29:

"This conference also suggests that the NEC set up a working party to investigate other forms of positive discrimination in the party to ensure that women are equally represented at all levels of the party."

RACHEL LEVER,
secretary, Women's
Fightback

by Bruce Robinson (vice-chair, Labour Committee on Ireland)

WHEN Labour Party conference bothers to discuss Ireland, it usually gets an hour's debate on the last morning of conference.

This year will be different. Over 50 CLPs have sent in resolutions on Ireland, the overwhelming majority favouring an end to bipartisanship, a United Ireland, and British withdrawal.

Nine of them support the demands of the prisoners. Only a few have taken up Benn's call for UN troops to replace the Army.

A separate section of the agenda has been given over to Labour Party organisation in Northern Ireland. Nine CLPs, largely inspired by Militant, have sent in resolutions calling for the British Labour Party to put resources into setting up a 'non-sectarian Labour Party based on the trade unions' in Ireland.

Warrington warning to socialists

by John O'Mahony



Roy Jenkins

AT Warrington Roy Jenkins had everything going for him. A former Home Secretary, exceedingly famous, nourished on the respect and sympathy of the entire press, he was facing a massively discredited Tory government, with a moronic right-wing Tory prole to compete for Tory votes in Warrington. He was a joint leader of a recent split in the Labour Party standing in a natural Labour constituency. His Labour opponent Doug Hoyle was branded as a 'Bennite extremist' and wriggled like a fish on a hook over the issue, thereby probably impressing the voters as shifty and unreliable. Opportunities like that to achieve famous defeats don't come very often!

Jenkins got 42½% of the vote to Labour's 48½% and the Tories' 7%. (Labour was down from 61.3% in the election and the Tories from 29%).

wrong — and nearly dead wrong.

It is estimated that for every vote Jenkins took from Labour he took two from the Tories. So the SDP, Labour's long-time closet Tories look like a far more serious threat to the Tories than to Labour. Thatcher thinks so. Coming on top of the youth rebellion, Warrington has pushed the Thatcherites into announcing the cheap labour youth jobs scheme: the government's proposals look remarkably like what pale pink Tory Jenkins proposed during the campaign.

Fairground

Despite the fairground barkers' gasps of amazement over the Jenkins vote, though remarkable, it is not so singular as they pretend it is. Under the unpopular Heath government, in 1972 and 1973, when Labour was, as now, still discredited by its record in office, the Liberals got massive protest votes. They got 53.6% at Sutton and Cheam, 38.6% at Chester-Le-Street and 36.5% at Manchester Exchange. Yet they lost all these seats in the first 1974 election (though they did get about six million votes).

According to computer prediction if the Warrington results were repeated throughout the country in a General Election, then Labour would win 113 seats, the Tories 1 and the SDP over 500. But, by their nature, contrived or freak events aren't easy to repeat wholesale.

The Liberal-SDP block's inability to sustain its bandwagon by going for a probable victory in Croydon with Shirley Williams as candidate probably says more about where they are at than the Warrington vote does. Incumbent Liberal candidate Bill Pitt has refused to be 're-elected' to make way for Shirley Williams. Running away from the advance of democracy in the labour movement, she has failed foul of democracy in the Liberal Party!

Wriggles

Yet the SDP vote may not collapse in the General Election — or collapse sufficiently. The press will continue to brand Labour as 'extremist'. If it wriggles and squirms like Hoyle did instead of picking up the brand and using it as a proud banner to rally support for a positive working class alternative to Thatcher, the Social Democrats may get enough votes to rule out a majority Labour government after the next election. Tony Benn said six months ago that that was what they were out to achieve.

To stop this happening and to reach the electorate across the din of the Tory press, we need to build a mass Labour Party membership, enthusiastic for socialism and organised to rouse the working class.

There is no room for complacency. The left must mobilise and fight back — the meaning of Warrington may yet prove to be that there will be no majority Labour government when Thatcher falls.

Challenge

Hoyle has reported to the Labour Shadow Cabinet that in the campaign, "Tony Benn was the issue. Once that was raised the door was closed on you". Labour had the disadvantage of being branded as standing for radical change but not campaigning for it. Labour could therefore not counter the press and the SDP. Hoyle fought the election in the obvious belief that he only needed to brand Jenkins as being pro-EEC to win. He was

tion on policy on Ireland rejecting this project of a Labour Party in N. Ireland.

Status

It is also important to get amendments supporting political status onto the agenda. That way we can guarantee that it will be debated, and show to the Republicans that their cause does find support in the ranks of British Labour.

of British meddling in Irish politics.

As these resolutions will presumably be voted on separately from the main policy resolutions, there is a danger that they will be passed with the support of the block votes, even if they are in direct contradiction to the policy passed in the other debate.

CLPs should therefore move amendments to suitable resolutions in the sec

But history shows that a labour party which tries to ignore the question of Partition will fail to overcome the divisions between Unionists and nationalists. At the moment there is the shell of a pro-Unionist Labour Party, and a 'Social Democratic & Labour Party', without trade union links, which is based almost entirely among Catholics.

The project would widely be seen as another example



Few CLPs back Benn's call for UN troops

YARD IN ACTION

IT WAS no surprise to find Scotland Yard denying allegations by the 'World in Action' programme that they had obstructed Operation Countryman, the investigation started in 1978 into corruption in the Met.

According to 'World in Action', Countryman officers believed they had achieved few results because of obstruction, particularly from some officers of the Flying Squad. This included failure to disclose potential evidence, an attempt to fabricate charges against a key witness, and a security leak.

That wasn't surprising either. What was surprising was that Arthur Hambleton, Chief Constable of Dorset, who led the Countryman inquiry, responded to the Scotland Yard denial by confirming that "I saw the programme. It was factual".

Indeed, he went further, implicitly calling the senior police officers who appeared in the programme liars. "I don't disagree with any of the presentation but I don't agree with some of the statements made by persons in authority". He was referring to Met. Commissioner McNee and



his deputy Patrick Kavanagh.

Hambleton now insists that a statement he signed in 1979 denying obstruction was a lie, and that he only signed it because he thought that if he didn't Countryman would be closed down completely.

QUEEN Victoria is not well known as an advocate of women's liberation, nor would you have thought she had much to feel oppressed about.

But sometimes the barbs of male chauvinism pierce even the softest cushion of privilege. Commenting on the marriage of her eldest daughter to the heir to the German throne, she wrote: "After all, it is like taking a lamb to be sacrificed".

Elsewhere she wrote, "Oh! if those selfish men — who are the cause of all one's misery — only knew what their poor slaves have to go through".

ACCORDING TO the Vatican, the Catholic Church is facing bankruptcy: it might be sitting on billions worth of treasure, but the day-to-day financial flow is running dry, they say.

One of the reasons seems to have been huge losses as a result of their heavy

investments in the banking operations of the crook Michele Sindona, for a period a financial consultant to the Vatican. Another reason seems to be the mysterious operations of the Vatican bank, 'The Institute of Religious Works', run by Massimo Spada, who is also under investigation.

OBVIOUSLY the Church of England is suffering from financial strain, despite being the biggest property owner in the country. It has banned the sale of souvenir Bibles from St Paul's on the grounds that they don't bring in enough profit.

Tourists visiting the Cathedral, we are told, "can choose from Royal Wedding souvenir tea cloths, mugs, plates, scarves, pendants, sweet dishes, note-books and other items" — just not Bibles (though Prince Charles confirms that they make 'compelling reading').

So keen are the 'profit-seekers' of St Paul's to use their shelf space to best advantage, that they have even refused to put up a sign in the building telling people where they can buy a Bible.

Huddersfield march frustrates bigots

"Hey, look at THIS!" And out the pub they came, two dozen straight men to stare silently at 2,500 gay people who were singing, clapping and marching their way up Market Street to the National Gay Pride March and Rally in Huddersfield on 4 July. The dozens of brightly-coloured banners made a big impact.

Gay Pride Week is an annual event: a mixture of defiance and celebration, parallel to black communities' festivals, and celebrated all round the world where homosexuals are organised.

Huddersfield was chosen because the local police force had singled out the gay community for rough

treatment earlier this year. They had closed "The Gemini" (local gay club) and had made midnight raids into gay homes.

The gay community fought back, and Huddersfield became the national focus for gay pride this year.

Elsewhere, there are many problems: Labour Salford Council upheld homosexual Gordon Wiseman's sacking. Labour Barking Council upheld lesbian Susan Shell's dismissal, and the Labour Group on Tory-controlled Trafford Council asked for and got the Deputy Mayorship after the Tory Mayor advocated the killing of homosexual women and men.

Socialists in the Labour Party have obviously got a long task ahead of them.

At the Rally, the atmosphere was sunny and relaxed. A contingent left to go on to Leeds to support the anti-fascist march the same afternoon. As the rally was dispersing, a group of about 150 skinheads gathered near the park gates.

80 gay people then bunched together and walked through the skins, who backed off, jeering and spitting insults. Incidents like this marked a weekend of frustrated Nazi activity in the Midlands.

IAN DUNN

NORTHERN IRELAND: A V

Falls Rd.

THE Lower Falls is a shabby, derelict area very near the city centre. Here can be found the H Block headquarters and the offices of Provisional Sinn Féin.

The latter are protected by large boulders along the kerb outside, a wire cage over the door which is opened electronically from inside the building and two closed circuit TV cameras.

We go in and fix a time for our interview with Sinn Féin.

Shortly after we leave an army foot patrol comes along the Falls Road. One of the soldiers pauses briefly to peer into the Sinn Féin bookshop next to their offices. We walk up to the Royal Victoria Hospital on the corner of Falls Road and Grosvenor Road.

There we take a taxi to Andersonstown [“Andy”].

The Falls Taxi Association [FTA] provides cheap transport from Castle Street in the city centre to West Belfast.

Busy Bee

You just find a taxi that's taking your way and all pack anything up to nine at a time.

It's cheaper than the taxis which are always cancelled anyway.

Daily London's West End have more taxis than West Belfast!

We get out at the Busy Bee shopping centre where the Democracy share bookshop with the H Block committee.

The shop fronts are covered with boards or mesh and make a depressing sight relieved by the Tricolours and slogans which create an atmosphere of resistance to British repression.

Today is the funeral of Joe McDonnell, and the area is decked out in black flags.

We meet PD councillor McAuliffe and our interview him. Then a local whose brother is on blanket in Long Kesh us on a tour of town.

We walk around the

huge council estate on our first day in Belfast the massive support for the hunger strikers is apparent everywhere.

400 black flags have been hung up overnight from lamp posts, and the Tricolour flies from several buildings including the newly built Andersonstown Leisure Centre.

Posters

Walking around the estate of red brick council houses with small, neat front gardens we could be on a working class estate on the outskirts of any British city. Except for one thing: in every window there's a poster. And on the poster is a photo of a hunger striker. And underneath the photo the hunger striker's name and the words 'We support the hunger strikers'.

There isn't a single house that hasn't got at least one such poster.

Walls are covered with elaborate murals of flags and slogans. From time to time the Brits come along and throw white paint over them.

But the mural painters are not deterred and new murals soon appear.

Everywhere you look you see the open defiance of the Nationalist people in the face of repression.

By lunchtime the coffin of Joe McDonnell has been moved from his house up the road in Lenadoon to the local chapel. While the Mass is being said a huge crowd gathers and the streets are lined all the way down to the Milltown Cemetery.

Widow

The coffin is brought out of the chapel and Joe McDonnell's widow, Goretti and their two children, show the only signs of emotion they are to allow themselves for the whole afternoon.

A line of stewards stretches across the road in front of the funeral cortege, forcing the 40 or so members of the press forward ahead of the procession and keeping them at a distance.

The coffin bearers are

flanked by masked, uniformed members of the IRA and every few minutes four new men step forward to relieve those carrying the coffin.

Overhead several army helicopters follow the procession on the lookout for the IRA firing party.

Every so often the stewards out front stop and crouch down. Everyone wonders whether the volley is about to be fired and TV camera crews ahead of the cortege rush back to where the stewards are crouching.

But it is another false alarm. The stewards are waiting for the cortege to catch up.

Goretti McDonnell, holding her head up high and looking calm and dignified, leads the mourners with her two children. Her daughter is 11 today.

Local youth predict that the volley will be fired at the Busy Bee where they volley was fired for Bobby Sands. They prove to be right.

Volleys

The crowd surges forward, young people scramble on to the shop rooves and in front of several thousand people three masked, uniformed IRA men step forward with rifles and fire several volleys over Joe McDonnell's coffin.

There is a spontaneous burst of applause and cheering from the whole crowd.

And as the firing party slips away there is again spontaneous applause.

But within minutes soldiers move in to try and arrest the firing party.

Immediately hundreds of young people rush up the side street to protect them. Shots ring out and children begin to cry. Parents grab their kids and carry them away to safety.

Live rounds

In St Agnes Drive the troops open up with plastic bullets and live rounds. They leap over garden walls, guns firing as they pursue the young people.

RUC vehicles — grey armoured Landrovers with narrow slits through which they fire plastic bullets — charge along St Agnes Drive and down into Andersonstown Road where the funeral cortege is still moving slowly towards Milltown Cemetery.

The RUC fire plastic bullets indiscriminately into the main road and suddenly elderly women and children are being carried, injured, into nearby houses.

The funeral procession is all but broken up and the local community — despite 12 years of repression are clearly shocked by this attack on a cortege in which thousands of women and children are participating.

Later the most appalling stories of army brutality are recounted.



Goretti McDonnell [right foreground] at her husband's funeral

The funeral cortege regroups and moves on to Milltown Cemetery where the Republicans have a plot for members killed in action.

That very morning 16 year old John Dempsey — a member of the Junior IRA shot dead by British troops — had been buried. A few yards from his grave, the freshly-dug earth now covered with flowers, Joe McDonnell is lowered

into the ground.

It is hard to imagine a more moving sight than to watch a young boy shovel earth onto his father's coffin. Little wonder that new generations of Irish republicans take up the struggle against British repression.

As we walk back up to the Busy Bee rumours fly. Had three people been killed? Had all the firing party been arrested?

In the event Patrick Adams, brother of Provisional Sinn Féin vice-president Gerry Adams had been seriously wounded, shot four times in the back and a woman and four men arrested.

The IRA try to put a brave face on it, claiming that the army was reduced to attacking funeral corteges to capture a few guns. But there can be no doubt that the IRA's

security for the firing party was very poor.

St Agnes Drive is sealed off for several hours. A dozen or so Brits crouch behind walls and in gardens and half a dozen Saracens are parked menacingly in the street.

The army are gloating at their success. And as we turn on the radio we hear the chief of Belfast RUC telling us that they had to go in to "protect the community".

South Armagh



Bernadette McAliskey speaks at a H-Block demo

EVERY two weeks the H Block Committees hold a demonstration in support of the hunger strikers. Each demonstration takes place in a different part of the six counties.

This Sunday we are to march in South Armagh from Camlough (where the family of dead hunger striker Ray MacCreesh have their home) to Belleek the home of hunger striker Paddy Quinn.

Four coaches are booked from different parts of

Belfast but when they meet up on the Andersonstown Road there are only enough people to fill one coach. The expense of a coach trip every fortnight is taking its toll, particularly on the unemployed. And there is a growing feeling that the demonstrations are pointless as Thatcher seems as inflexible as ever.

But when we arrive at Camlough there are enough people from other areas to make up a respectable sized demonstration.

This is important as one

aim of the demonstration is to boost morale in the area.

As the march forms up with a piper at the front followed by flag bearers carrying the Starry Plough, Sunburst and Tricolour, and followed by a dozen young women carrying portraits of the hunger strikers the inevitable army helicopter drones overhead.

The march sets off through the rugged and very beautiful countryside of South Armagh — "Bandit

Country" as the Brits would have it.

The marchers take up the whole road marching in three columns on the left, centre and right hand side of the road. Banners proclaim support for the hunger strikers from Andersonstown, Newry, Short Strand and from all over South Armagh.

We pass the spot where Frankie Hughes lay injured for 15 hours before the

Brits finally captured him and sent him on his way through the "H Block conveyor".

Unfortunately there are no villages on the route so the march does not swell very much with supporters along the way. Two hours and six miles later the march enters the village of Belleek.

A large tricolour hangs from a building in the centre of the village and a lorry trailer serves as a platform.

A variety of flags fly from makeshift poles at the back of the trailer and a tannoy system has been set up around the village.

As the marchers arrive, the towns named on their banners are read out over the tannoy and the helicopter which disappeared shortly after the march began makes its noisy return.

It is impossible to conduct any outdoor political activity in the six counties

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VISIT TO THE WAR ZONE

Derry

have come to Derry to review the Irish Republican Socialist

own to us as we the train at Belfast, Hurson has just

died unexpectedly of pneumonia after only 45 days on hunger strike.

It is July 13 and the 12th having been "the Sabbath" the Orange Parades are taking place today—a

bank holiday.

Trains pass us on their way to Belfast full of Orangemen in their full regalia.

The train takes us along the northern coastline and we can see the sea on one side and the Sperrin Mountains—Fenian

country—on the other. The train pulls into Derry and we cross the River Foyle and head for the Bogside.

We are met at the IRSP bookshop and driven to a house to conduct our interview.

On the way we are shown the spot where the 13 unarmed civilians died on Bloody Sunday. The streets are full of hooded youths—some holding petrol bombs—and the streets are strewn with broken glass.

We hear of the death of Martin Hurson. So that explains why there's been rioting so early. As we wait to begin our interview a blast bomb goes off nearby.

We are shown a rubber bullet and find it hard to understand how they could

be regarded as more dangerous than the baton round (plastic bullet).

The rubber bullet is shaped like a bullet but is the size of a small shell. It is made of black rubber but is soft enough to be bent. Plastic bullets are made of a much tougher material and are completely solid. They are also heavier than rubber bullets.

Our interview over, we are taken to see Marie, the sister of INLA O/C and hunger striker, Micky Devine.

She has not been involved in the campaign previously. But she desperately wants to save the life of her brother. She lives high up on the Creggan Estate with her husband who works as a coalman.



What happens when a plastic bullet hits you...

Exhausted

She is unwell and looks exhausted. Her life has become a perpetual round of meeting after meeting and demonstration after demonstration.

We talk to her for a while and all head off for a demonstration for Martin Hurson in the town centre.

She doesn't really feel up to it but tells us that if the relatives of the hunger strikers don't turn out how can you expect anyone else to.

On the way down to town Marie points out the spot where the two youths were run down and killed by an army vehicle shortly before the death of Bobby Sands.

We cut through the Diamond and join the demonstration. It is silent.

There are no placards, just a large black flag.

The silence is short lived. An RUC vehicle is parked provocatively in William Place on the route of the march.

A couple of stones are thrown. Some of the demonstrators cry out to stop it and the demonstration proceeds at full speed. But the youth are angry at the sudden death of another hunger striker and suddenly the window of a dress shop is pushed in.

Seconds later petrol bombs rain down into the shop window setting clothes on fire.

The RUC Landrover revs up and the demonstration breaks into a run.

We make our way to the Bogside and come to a ground floor flat which

serves as a 24 hour first aid post for injured rioters. Rioting is accepted as an inevitable, almost daily, occurrence in the Bogside.

Older people don't condemn the youth for rioting—they are just concerned about the possible injuries that the youngsters might sustain.

Inside the First Aid Post four young men are dressed in white coats and wear white helmets with red crosses on them.

They are the snatch squad.

When a youth goes down, hit by a plastic bullet, they rush into the riot and grab him (practically all the rioters are male) before the army or RUC get him and pull him out of the way.

When we go in a young man is being treated. He received a glancing blow on the skin and his injury is comparatively slight.

Suddenly pandemonium breaks out. A youth has been hit in the face by a plastic bullet. His face is covered with blood and the wound looks serious, although we are told that the blood makes it look worse.

It is feared that his jaw may be fractured. After a few minutes of attention it is decided that he must go to hospital. It is a hard decision because it inevitably means that he will be charged by the RUC for riotous behaviour.

But his injuries must be seen to. The phone call is made and within minutes he is being helped to an ambulance just outside.

As the ambulance drives off, onlookers speculate that the youth is the victim of a "double charge". The RUC put two explosive caps into the gun to make the plastic bullet travel faster and cause more damage.

The snatch squad—who buy all the first aid equipment out of their own money and rarely manage to get home—head off again for the riot area which has now moved up the street.

As we leave the riot area for the train back to Belfast the youths are stoning four or five Brits and some RUC men who are holed up behind a wall.

They emerge occasionally to take careful aim and fire a volley of plastic bullets, before hastily retreating behind cover as the bricks crash down.

As we reach the edge of the Bogside the deep boom of blast bombs exploding echoes across the River Foyle.



Derry

WINDALE and TIM HAIG
Northern Ireland in mid-July,
Martin Hurson, the sixth of the
hunger-strikers, died

the constant
motor blades over-

s of present and
er strikers are
t on the platform
meeting begins.

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provisional Sinn
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Lawrence Quinn,
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turned to be
the funeral of
Donnell the

Friday. He says
not in America

the South that
to be awaken-

fighting for the five
demands, but "right here
in the six counties".

Of course people care
about the issue, but not
enough is being done.
Not enough people are
mobilising on the streets.

Next comes a local Sinn
Fein leader who tells us
that the end of the struggle
for Irish liberation is at
hand and the job is being
done by "the boys in the
hills with their Armalites."

His demagogic speech
is frequently interrupted
by wild applause but he is
quickly put in his place by
the final speaker, Berna-
dette MacAliskey.

She warns against
listening to those who only
talk about Armalites. "If
our struggle for liberation
is all but over, she says,
then it would be possible to
say that Kieran Doherty
will not have to die."

But, she continues, "I
cannot honestly say that.
He may have to die. They
may all have to die."

The answer, she argues,
lies largely in the South.
Kieran Doherty was elected
to the Irish Dail at the
General Election.

She outlines plans to
hold a national demon-
stration the following
Saturday to occupy the
British Embassy in Dublin
and do what Fitzgerald
won't do—expel the
British Ambassador.

She speaks very well and
the audience applaud



enthusiatically. They are
clearly thinking more
deeply as a result of her
speech.

As we are about to board
our coach a member of the
Newry H Block Committee
asks us to come and photo-
graph two youngsters
badly beaten by the RUC.

One, a 17 year old girl,
was beaten after being
arrested the previous night
on her way home from a
disco. When we see her,

she is in a terrible state—
badly bruised all over and
continually lapsing into
unconsciousness.

She is charged with
riotous behaviour and
assaulting the police.

The boy, also in his
teens, has had his eye
closed-up and his back is
badly marked from being
dragged across a concrete
courtyard.

We spend several hours

talking to the H Block cam-
paigners who extend to
us a trust and friendship
that is so warm that one
can hardly believe it given
the continual oppression
they suffer at the hands of
the British army.

Since we had missed our
bus back to Belfast they
offer to drive us back them-
selves.

Successfully negotia-
ting a UDR roadblock,
they take a detour to show

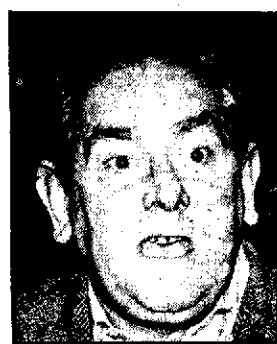
us Long Kesh concentra-
tion camp.

The vast prison network
takes on an eerie appear-
ance at night under the
dozens of orange neon
lamps that illuminate the
cages.

We all lapse into momen-
tary silence at the thought
of the terrible suffering
taking place behind the
wire.

The point however is to CHANGE it...

Stan Crooke reviews the Socialist Workers' Party's latest pamphlet, 'The Labour Party, myths and realities', by Duncan Hallas



Duncan Hallas

IN 1899 the TUC passed a motion calling for 'an increasing number of Labour members in the next Parliament'. The next year, trade unionists and the socialist groups came together to set up the Labour Representation Committee. By 1906 the LRC had become known as the Labour Party. In other words: the Labour Party was essentially the extension of the trade union movement into Parliament.

But Duncan Hallas begins his history of the Labour Party in 1918 when Clause Four and individual membership of the party were adopted.

Why does he omit the first 18 years of the history of the Labour Party? Because he wants to ignore and deny any connection between the trade unions and the Labour Party, in order to justify the SWP's practice of being active in the unions but not in the Labour Party. To do this Hallas has to slide over the creation of the Labour Party by the trade union movement itself.

And the same method runs through the pamphlet. Facts are cited to show the conservatism and treachery of Labour leaders and Labour governments: the reality that the Labour Party is the political wing of the mass labour movement, and that therefore those leaders must be fought within the movement, is slurred over.

After 1918

Post-dating the origins of the Party to 1918, Hallas simplistically portrays its creation as a cunning plot to "head off dangerous (that is, revolutionary) forces" by reformists who "rode the wave of post-war radicalism, the better to combat it". About the masses of workers who moved towards the Labour Party after World War 1, and how Marxists could have fought with them against the reformists' misleadership, Hallas has nothing to say.

Post-dating the Party's origins has an added bonus for Hallas: he can duck the question of how Marxists should have related to it at the time of its founding.

The main Marxist organisation in Britain at the turn of the century was the Social Democratic Federation, an organisation as sectarian as the SWP is today. Engels wrote scathingly of it: "it has ossified Marxism into a dogma and, by rejecting every labour movement which is not orthodox Marxism... it renders itself incapable of ever becoming anything else but a sect".

The SDF's attitude to the Labour Party was a close parallel to the SWP's today. Having failed to get its programme accepted, the SDF pulled out of the Labour Party in 1902 and decided it was not worth



Ramsey MacDonald outside no.10, 1924

bothering with since it was not a revolutionary party. That is why Lenin, in 1907, criticised the SDF for their inability "to envisage the theoretically helpless but vital, mass, powerful labour movement which is marching side by side with them".

Was the SDF right to ignore the Labour Party on the grounds of its political inadequacies? Or were Engels and Lenin right in their criticisms of the SDF?

Ever since its origins, the party has been "an essentially conservative force", Hallas tells us, "not, of course, an ordinary conservative party but a conservative workers' party". And what is a "conservative workers' party"? Hallas goes on to clarify this: "a party wedded to capitalism but depending on a working class base".

Conclusion? Apparently, to ignore the contradictions in the basic nature of the Labour Party; to ignore the possibilities of mobilising the 'working-class base' against the Party being 'wedded to capitalism'; to leave the leaders who are 'wedded to capitalism' a free run within the Party.

But trade unions too are 'wedded to capitalism but depend on a working-class base'. Unions organise workers and fight (sometimes) to get a better deal for their members within the framework of capitalism. They are dominated by reformist bureaucracies. So why should socialists fight just in the unions and not in the Labour Party, given that both are 'wedded to capitalism'?

Lenin's view

Lenin (in 1920) was much harsher in his verdict on the Labour Party than Hallas is, but argued for the British revolutionaries to join it. "The Labour Party", said Lenin, "is a thoroughly reactionary

party... led by reactionaries, and the worst kind of reactionaries at that". But Marxists should join it to find a road to the masses and fight those leaders.

Now was Lenin right or wrong? This is a question of no small importance. But it is another question which Hallas does not even ask, never mind attempt to answer. On page 10 the reader is told that the Communist Party was then "a real but small revolutionary party", and on page 14 the reader finds out more or less by chance that the Communists tried to affiliate to the Labour Party in the early '20s. That's all.

The fact that Hallas does not even attempt to tackle Lenin's arguments underlines how little the pamphlet has to do with revolutionaries and the Labour Party. The omissions from the pamphlet, even more so than its contents, show it up to be a one-sided rehash of history aimed at justifying a preconceived conclusion — the syndicalist (narrowly trade-unionist) sectarianism of the SWP today.

The Left

Having side-stepped the origins of the Party in the unions, and Lenin's call for the Communist Party to affiliate to it, Hallas zooms in on the record of the 1924 and 1929-31 Labour governments.

He reveals... that they did not overthrow capitalism.

Is this then what exposing the myths about the Labour Party amounts to? The revelation that after three years of Labour government prior to the last war, British capitalism was alive and well?

Hallas also looks at the record of Labour left-wing movements in this period. Unfortunately he is too clever for his own good.

"From the beginning", writes Hallas, "there had been two kinds of left-wing members in the Labour Party. They can conveniently be called the 'hard' left and the 'soft' left".

Trotskyists

The 'hards' were those members influenced by the Communist Party. But in 1929, Hallas correctly points out, the CP went ultra-left, denounced the Labour Party as just a third capitalist party, and called on workers not to vote Labour (which is what the SWP would do as well, if they took their politics to their logical conclusion).

Because of this ultra-leftist binge, the 'hards' isolated themselves and were unable to "influence or win over the large number of Labour Party members who were undoubtedly open to the appeal of revolutionary politics after MacDonald's betrayal in 1931" [when Labour leader Ramsey MacDonald broke with the Labour Party to join the Tories in a coalition government].

As for the 'softs' — they didn't believe in a revolutionary road to socialism, they failed to put up a serious fight against the Party leadership, and they got sucked into the class-collaborationist Popular Front politics that the Communist Party turned to after 1934.

But what Hallas wants all this to prove, and what it actually does prove, are two completely different things.

In this section of the pamphlet, as in the pamphlet as a whole, Hallas is trying to prove that left-wingers in the Labour Party can make no significant impact and are wasting their time.

But the record of both the 'hards' and the 'softs' does

not prove this at all. They failed not because they were in the Labour Party but because of their own political inadequacies, ultra leftist in the case of the CP, reformist in the case of the 'softs'.

Hallas says nothing about another sort of left-winger: the Trotskyists in the Labour Party in the '30s.

After their expulsion from the Communist Party, the first British Trotskyists organised as the Marxist Group in the Independent Labour Party, a tactic which soon spent itself with the decline of the ILP and the tightening up of its internal regime. One faction in the Trotskyist group, headed by Matlow, now argued for joining the Labour Party, while another faction, headed by Cooper, opposed this.

Trotsky commented: "In my opinion, Matlow is 100% correct... I consider that the rigid, formalistic position of the Cooper paper has no relationship to Marxism at all. It shows a complete lack of comprehension of the class struggle... Tremendous possibilities unfold themselves inside the mass reformist organisations... It is absolutely essential to be within the mass organisations while there is the possibility of doing revolutionary work within them. Any such sterile, sectarian and formalistic interpretation of Marxism in the present situation [as Cooper's] would disgrace an intelligent child of ten".

The Trotskyists who joined the Labour Party and set up the Militant Labour League do not fit into Hallas's convenient division between the 'hard lefts' and 'soft lefts'. They were revolutionaries, insignificant in number, but fighting to root themselves in the working class.

The second half of the

pamphlet follows the record of the post-war Labour governments and the failure of the 'soft' lefts in the Labour Party. It does no more than state the obvious: no Labour government has ever abolished capitalism.

As with the first half, the second half of Hallas's work is more interesting for its omissions than its contents. Again, there is no discussion of what Marxists could do, or tried to do, to change the reality of pro-capitalist domination of the Labour Party.

But the SWP did not, after all, emerge from nowhere. It was previously the "International Socialism" group, and before that the 'Socialist Review' group.

For nearly 20 years, from the early '50s to the late '60s, they existed as a loosely organised series of discussion groups inside the Labour Party.

Hallas cannot admit that his own organisation was a group within the Labour Party for nearly two decades without exposing the hollowness of his stance.

Hallas comes perilously close to dismissing the whole issue of leadership. "The working class will in all probability have to renew its leadership several times before it creates a party really answering the historical situation and the tasks of the British proletariat", wrote Trotsky in *Where is Britain Going?*

Hallas takes a diametrically opposed view: It "is an all too easy way out for many socialists in the Labour Party: blame the leadership. It also follows for them that the only way to change things is to get a better, more left-wing leadership".

In fact the SWP supports Benn's campaign for deputy leader — within the unions. But when the SWP refuses to join the same struggle inside the Labour Party, and justifies itself by saying that changing leaders won't really help, what does it do but help the right wing?

There is a similar inconsistency on trade union affiliation. If individual socialists are wrong to be in the Labour Party, what justification is there for us voting for unions to affiliate? Yet usually in the unions SWP members vote for affiliation — seeing that otherwise they would line up with the right wing.

If the pamphlet serves any purpose at all, it is not to expose the 'myths and reality' of the Labour Party, but to expose the fundamental political inadequacy of the SWP: a party which likes to think of itself as revolutionary, but which ignores what the greatest Marxists have had to say about the Labour Party and which abstains from the struggle within the labour movement's political wing.



Support the LCI, work to change it

Anti-racist stopped by police

THE LETTER from Jane Andrews and Jenny Morris (SO 45) raises a number of questions about the tactics of the Labour Committee on Ireland.

Firstly, Jane and Jenny aim their criticisms of the LCI a bit too widely. To take just the local example of Islington, LCI members were instrumental in fighting to get resolutions on Ireland from two of the three local parties to Labour Party conference this year. In my own party (Islington South), LCI members got LCI policy — including political status — adopted as party policy.

Having said this, there is substance in some of the criticisms that Jane and Jenny made — though they shouldn't be used to write off the work of the LCI as a whole.

Not pushed

Although the LCI's founding conference added support for immediate withdrawal and political status to its platform, those demands have never been consistently pushed by the LCI nationally.

A number of comrades in the national leadership

feel that pushing the issues would 'ghettoise' the LCI and confine it to people already convinced about Ireland. In my opinion, Jane and Jenny are quite right to attack this view: it's only by fighting (in a non-sectarian way) to convince people who are vaguely uneasy about Labour's bipartisan policy, and win them to a clear alternative, that we'll make progress.

Part of the problem behind this is that until

now the LCI has been a bit top-heavy, concentrating on lobbying, with few active local branches. Only now is it really beginning to combine that with widespread grassroots organisation.

One example of this was the demonstration on July 4th in Mansfield. Of the 500 people who attended, a large proportion were LCI activists with sufficient commitment to face the attack by the combined forces of the NF and Don Con-

cannon's supporters.

This was the first time the LCI had organised such an event on its own, and it was generally felt that despite difficult conditions it had been a success.

Unfortunately, rather than follow it up, the National Council voted against a proposal to hold a demonstration at Labour Party conference.

Nevertheless the picture Jane and Jenny paint of a conservative LCI being by-passed is

far from true. You only have to look at the resolutions to Labour Party conference this year.

Fight inside

The solution to the problems they raise is not denunciation of the LCI, but building it and fighting with it and within it for the policies of political status and troops out now.

BRUCE ROBINSON,
vice-chair LCI, in personal capacity.



500 joined the LCI demonstration against Don Concannon

Swimmers beware!

SOCIALIST Organiser readers may have seen something in the national press on the state of Britain's beaches.

The source of those reports (and this article) is a survey in the New Scientist ('The Unspeakable Beaches of Britain', by Fred Pearce: 16th July).

Basically, the problem is that, in medieval fashion, the majority of coastal towns pipe raw sewage straight into the sea. Some 400 sewage outfalls dispose of sewage from six million people in summer, more than half of them discharging their raw sewage onto the beach or into shallow water.

It doesn't take much thought to work out that with winds and tides, a lot of this crap will just get blown back to land before it has a chance to be broken down or made harmless by natural processes. And this is exactly what does happen.

About 30 per cent of the beaches surveyed by the Coastal Anti-Pollution League are at risk of sewage pollution, and this includes most major resorts.

What does this actually mean for those who go to the seaside during their hard-won and meagre holidays? One couple who wrote to CAPL found that during a holiday in Lowestoft they observed "contraceptives washed up on the sand, turds floating in the surf, and a nasty taste to the water"! The man became ill with a bug found

in faeces (shit) and the woman caught cystitis.

The beach at New Brighton, near Liverpool, is liberally scattered with "faecal matter, contraceptives, fat balls, vegetable wastes, household refuse, and sewer scum".

At Blackpool the sewage outfall discharges raw sewage overflows straight onto the beach. Other popular resorts with problems like this include Brighton, Eastbourne, Hastings, Bridlington, Scarborough, Weston-super-Mare, Margate, and Broadstairs.

Industrial pollution on top of sewage pollution affects areas like Swansea Bay (with the worst mercury and lead contamination in Britain) and Durham.

Campaigners against polluted beaches hoped for improvements when the Common Market published its bathing water directive in 1976. This set a limit of 2000 coliform bacteria of faecal origin per 100 ml (about one-fifth of a pint). (Coliform bacteria can cause gastro-enteritis and cystitis but are perfectly harmless in the large intestine, where they are normally found).

Full figures aren't available for Britain, but it seems likely that about 40% of all beaches were outside this limit, and it would cost several thousand million pounds to bring them up to scratch. Not likely, given the cuts!

So top civil servants found a way of getting round the threat. The EEC

required a list of beaches where swimming is "traditionally practised by a large number of bathers", and insisted that the directive would have to be obeyed there by 1985.

You would probably guess that Blackpool would be on the list of 'Euro-beaches'. Wrong! Blackpool would have cost £25 million to get it below the limit, so it was excluded. Also not on the list are Eastbourne, Hastings, and Brighton! In fact there are only 25 beaches on the list.

Dangerous

Is coastal pollution merely unpleasant, or is it actually dangerous? US surveys show significant increases in cases of vomiting, diarrhoea, nausea, fever and stomach aches, among swimmers in polluted waters. At 1000 bacteria per 100 ml about five per cent of swimmers got gastro-intestinal diseases. And this is only half the EEC limit!

So, as this government cuts still further, and as the overloaded sewage system gets more and more decrepit, Britain's beaches, source of low-cost recreation for the working class, are going to get filthier and more dangerous, unless we refuse to put up with it.

Perhaps Socialist Organiser supporters should organise collections of beach muck for delivery to the doorsteps of councils and government departments responsible for this situation.



by Les Hearn



hose-down after your swim?

Separate unions for the unemployed?

BRITAIN's biggest union, the TGWU, has lost 250,000 members in the last 15 months. These and other unemployed workers must not be lost to the labour movement. They must be brought into the unions even if the generals — the union leaders — who left them on the battlefield are not over-anxious to see them fighting for jobs once more.

On this subject, Sean South (SO 44) talks a whole lot of horse sense. The term 'unemployed workers' union' is misleading and can confuse and alienate unemployed workers. We should urge all unemployed workers to join a TUC-affiliated union and affiliate through their relevant branch both locally and nationally to cross-union Unemployed Workers' Councils. The use of this terminology will avoid the idea that separate unemployed workers' organisations can in any way substitute for a trade union.

In Liverpool, for example, I have talked to many unemployed workers who are suspicious of the idea of a separate union but who

Three and a half hours later I was charged with using insulting words etc. 'Am I entitled to ask what I'm alleged to have said', I asked, and a copper with a great big satisfied smile said, 'Oh yes, I'll tell you what you said, you said "Support the National Front"'. I said, 'You wouldn't get me to say that if you screwed my balls off', but he just kept grinning.

In April 1979 I demonstrated with thousands of other people against the presence of National Front supporters in Southall. After witnessing Asian youths being chased and beaten indiscriminately by police, I made statements to the Indian Workers' Association and the National Council for Civil Liberties.

I am very proud of my half-Asian grandchildren.

Would any people who witnessed my passing the Hambrough Tavern between five and six o'clock on 4th July please contact me at 567 5287 or give your information to any of the appropriate organisations.

Do not fail to picket the Ealing Magistrates Court on July 16, when the charged Asian youths will need your support even more than I do.

D. TOMSON,
Ealing, London W5.

would see the logic of the above framework. Many of them are TGWU members who maintained membership on redundancy. They are able to influence the union at district, regional level, and played a role in stimulating and organising the People's March.

It may be remarked that this is fine and dandy for those who have maintained initial membership. What about those who have never been in a union and who may have to fork out not inconsiderable contributions before they qualify for concessions under rule?

Well, it's certainly no good trying to short-cut the problem and pretend that they are joining a union with all its potential power and leverage when they are in fact joining an unemployed workers' group which can never be a substitute.

And can it honestly be said that a serious struggle against the conservative rules and bureaucratic attitudes within the unions has even been initiated, let alone exhausted?

JOHN McHEATH,
Manchester

WSL and ICL vote to fuse TROTSKYISTS UNITE

"BRITISH Capitalism is rotten to its foundations, and a very weak link in the chain of advanced capitalist countries; the British working-class movement is one of the most powerful labour movements which has ever existed.

"The combination of these two things means that a working-class revolution can be made to occur in Britain in the period ahead of us. The labour movement is faced with the task of politically rearming itself so that it can respond to what capitalism is doing to us now by taking the necessary action to bury capitalism."

This was the keynote of the discussions and decisions at the fusion conference of the Workers Socialist League and the International-Communist League which was held in Oxford on July 26th. Whatever viewpoint you choose to look at it from, this was a very important event on the revolutionary left.

Invited to cover the fusion conference for *Socialist Organiser*, I found a wide spread of trade union militants, revolutionary youth, and women's liberation and gay liberation activists in attendance, numbering perhaps 270 in all.

There were some, though not many, black people, and a large number of women present.

The conference had a markedly more working-class look about it than the average gathering of leftists, though still the majority were probably middle-class.

Turn to youth

There was a sprinkling of middle-aged workers and a notable number of young people: Simon Hunt, just out of a remand centre after being arrested during the recent clashes between youth and police, made a rousing call from the platform for a turn by the new organisation to youth, whose revolt has erupted far in advance of the revolutionary left's capacity to respond adequately to it.

Alan Thornett for the old Workers Socialist League and Tom O'Keefe for the International-Communist League jointly presented the platform which the conference eventually accepted as the political basis of the new organisation, which is to keep the name Workers Socialist League (the better known of the two previous titles: its survival is one testimonial to the constructive spirit in which the fusion is made).

Lenin defined the pre-conditions for revolution as these: that the exploit-



ers should not be able to live and rule in the old way; that the exploited do not want to go on in the old way; and that the exploited are ready and determined to find a new way.

The first two conditions have partly come into existence — in fact the ruling class has had its right to 'rule' successfully challenged on a number of key occasions in the last 15 years. Time after time the workers have refused to let them rule as they did in the past.

But the Labour government which followed the workers' defeat of Heath in 1974 was the proof that the third condition was lacking: the labour movement was not yet ready with an alternative, because it was led by traitors.

Creating the third condition is really what the present civil war in the labour movement is all about.

Labour's rethink

The British workers' movement has very many decades of struggle behind it, struggles within the immensely rich and historically privileged motherland of industrial capitalism. For more than 100 years these have been, usually though not invariably, struggles for better conditions by a labour movement whose dominant philosophy and

social existence committed it to working in an uneasy partnership with capitalism, to achieve the best deal possible for the working class.

Only now, for the first time in over 50 years, in disgust at the betrayals of working-class interests by recent Labour governments and in self-defence against the Thatcherite onslaught, is the labour movement beginning to rethink its political philosophy and critically examine its own history and reformist traditions.

Marxists' task

It is a process of rethinking, renewal, regeneration and reorganisation. If it is brought to a successful conclusion, then there will be a renewed and transformed labour movement.

Whether or not the revolutionary Marxists can organise themselves as a coherent force within the existing labour movement (both trade unions and Labour Party) — that is the decisive question on which will depend the fate of the British labour movement.

Alan Thornett and Tom O'Keefe both insisted that concretely this was a question of building the new WSL.

In fact, the fusion conference was the culmination of a seven-day festival of revolutionary

socialism, an international festival linked to the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee, which groups a number of small Marxist organisations.

Party nucleus

The new organisation does not present itself, nor regard itself, as the fully-fashioned nucleus of a mass revolutionary party. It does argue that the best immediate steps that can deliberately be taken towards that goal are for serious working-class militants to join the work of building the WSL.

It criticises the existing organisations of the revolutionary left as being inadequate, and in many or most instances irrelevant to what the working class needs.

The Socialist Workers' Party, containing many good militants, nevertheless continues to be politically maimed by a sectarian rejection (that is, by an infantile pretence at rejection) of the political labour movement that has actually been created so far by the working class and which must be changed before anything decisive can be done to win socialism in Britain. It combines this sectarianism with blunted politics: for example, its comment on the Labour Party conference last year was that the Bennite Left was

The WSL originated at the end of 1974, when about 200 members of the Workers Revolutionary Party [formerly SLL] were expelled from that extremely bureaucratic organisation. They included the main working-class base of the WRP, around Tony Richardson and Alan Thornett at the Cowley car plants in Oxford.

The experience marked the severing of the WRP's last links with the labour movement.

Alan Thornett is one of the best-known working-class militants in Britain. He has faced repeated attempts by the employers and by the union bureaucrats of the TGWU to get rid of him, and survived them thanks to the solid support of the workers at Cowley.

The I-CL was created by a fusion of two groups in 1975, but the larger of those groups, Workers'

Fight, originated in 1966 in a small breakaway from the rightward-moving 'Militant' tendency.

Politically Workers' Fight had its origins in the early '60s SLL; it considered the SLL irredeemably sectarian from 1964 onwards, after the SLL broke with the Labour Party and attempted to break the November 1964 engineering apprentices' strike in the North-West.

too far ahead of the working class!

Militant, the most working-class of all the left groups in Britain, continues to be dominated by passive propagandism and by adaptation to aspects of the existing labour movement — its routinism, and its attitudes to minorities and women for example — which serious socialists must oppose and fight to change. The tragic marginality and propagandist irrelevance of the Labour Party Young Socialists (which it leads) in face of the revolt of the youth, shows up what is wrong with *Militant*.

Early in the week, Alan Thornett, with more than a little justification, hit off the International Marxist Group and its international co-thinkers when he said of their latest 'turn to the working class' that it was, for self-proclaimed Trotskyists, at least 40 years too late!

The platform summed up the WSL's alternative to the theories, precepts and practices of the existing forces — which it considers inadequate. It deals with the crisis of leadership — the fact that the Labour organisations are almost everywhere in the grip of self-serving officials who hinder the working class in pursuing its interests in calm times and who lead it to bloody defeat in every situation of mortal clash with the bourgeoisie. Chile is the worst recent example.

It deals with the need for a workers' government as the only way forward for the British working-class movement now. It explains that there can be a British working class response to the crisis of capitalism, that the British workers can take power in Britain, but that a purely British solution does not exist: that it is necessary to have an international socialist answer to the crisis of capitalism, which is a world system, and necessary to forge working class international unity to achieve it.

For itself, the WSL is committed to fight to politically regenerate

and to reconstruct the world Trotskyist movement, and to develop the Trotskyist International Liaison Committee as a contribution to this long-term goal.

Much stress was laid at conference on the oppression of women, and what needs to be done about it. It was accepted that one of the problems was how to make the revolutionary organisation habitable for women — how to organise things so that the social bias against women — women with families especially — being politically active could be countered, and how to ensure that degrading sexist practices, attitudes, expectations and comments did not debase comradeship relations between members of the organisation.

Sharp criticism of the I-CL on this score was expressed by Maxine Landis, an activist in Women's Fightback, and the general feeling was that a fight to change things was necessary if the commitments were to be more than pious hopes.

Of the Labour Left the WSL says essentially what *Socialist Organiser* has been saying: that it is hamstrung by parliamentary reformism, and hypnotised by utopian projects to set up a World War 2 style protectionist British economic system, leaving the essentials of capitalism intact. These projects are probably unrealisable in life, and if realised they would be reactionary.

Above all, the mainstream Labour Left does not ground itself on the struggles of the working class, though it often reflects them in a distorted way.

The WSL and I-CL come from different traditions (see box above).

With such divergent backgrounds, it is to be expected that there should be differences between the two organisations, and that some would continue to exist in the fused organisation.

There are differences on the history of the Trotskyist movement in Britain and internationally.

There are disagreements on Afghanistan:



IN BRITAIN

the I-CL called for the withdrawal of Russian troops; while condemning the Russian invasion the WSL believed that reaction in Afghanistan and internationally would gain from Russian withdrawal now.

There are differences on the EEC: the I-CL believed that the call for British withdrawal panders to British nationalism and to the myth that there can be a British solution to the crisis, and stressed instead the creation of working-class links within the EEC. The WSL, repudiating

the call for import controls of the Tribune left and Communist Party, nevertheless thought that the widespread support in the labour movement for withdrawal has an anti-capitalist content and can lead to a blow being struck against the ruling class.

And there were differences on how best the call for a general strike should — when it is appropriate — be raised.

The WSL and the I-CL decided that these issues should be discussed in a non-factional way in a fused organisation

At the fusion conference a comrade questioned the procedure of leaving some questions open for later decision. The majority felt that there was in fact no slide towards discussion-circle politics, such as dominates certain petty-bourgeois Trotskyist groups for whom nothing is ever settled and discussion is a way of life.

The WSL would organise discussion to reach conclusions, in the spirit of a serious workers' organisation.

The issues raised and the discussions undertaken by such an organisation are regulated by the rhythm, norms, and concerns of the class struggle and of working-class life, not by the latest 'bright idea' thrown up in the discussion circle.

Alan Thornett wound up the conference by pointing to the wide range of work the new organisation would be doing and coordinating. He said that the process of fusion had lasted 11 months, but that the actual fusion was a qualitative break-

through for both organisations, not a mere addition of their forces. He appealed to sympathisers present to commit themselves to joining the new organisation.

Trotskyist

Of course the 'fine words' in the platform and the good intentions of the new organisation will have to be made into deeds in the labour movement before the hopes that the conference obviously aroused in the participants will have been justified. My own feeling is that the chances that they will be high.

A most moving incident, and an instructive one, was when Alan Thornett, proposing the Draft Platform, read out a very long quotation from Leopold Trepper's book on his experiences in Stalinist Russia and Nazi Germany. A former Stalinist, Trepper (as quoted by Thornett) penned a horrifying account of the Stalinist terror in Lenin-grad in the mid-'30s,

blaming himself and his comrades for silence and collusion in such horrors.

He ends with a tribute to the incorruptibility and the political strength of the Trotskyists who stood out against Stalin despite slaughter and imprisonment in the Arctic wastes of the USSR.

The conference was clearly moved. It felt itself profoundly to be, and to want to be, part of the great tradition of international working-class revolutionary struggle. Speakers like a recently victimised Midlands car industry shop steward got up and spoke about it.

Trotskyist tradition

The most striking thing about the conference was the way it combined sobermindedness and a measured critical-mindedness (as shown in the debates on Afghanistan) with an adherence to a tradition. It was free from both the fashionable iconoclasm that usually denotes the pressure of anti-Marxist or anti-revolutionary moods and perspectives;

and free too from sectarian religiosity and from that brittle edginess and intolerance that is the unmistakable mark of underlying ambivalence or uncertainty.

There was ardent commitment to a tradition and a doctrine, but also a commitment to developing that doctrine.

Commitment

Finally, there was commitment to democracy in the organisation, in the labour movement and, through workers' revolution, in society generally — commitment to work for the only answer to our present crisis, that the workers should take control of their own destiny.

This fusion is a small step towards uniting the forces of revolutionary Marxism in Britain — but a very important one. It is part of a self-renewal of Trotskyism in Britain, and therefore a contribution to the general self-renewal of the labour movement.

The politics and concerns of the new organisation are, essentially, those of the Socialist Org-

aniser Alliance and the other supporters of Socialist Organiser. While the SOA is a loosely linked coalition of trade union and Labour Party activists, the WSL is more intensively organised, with a much higher general level of commitment from its activists.

We are not in competition. Our concerns parallel each other. It is a legacy from the past that the WSL, which does not run election candidates against the Labour Party, cannot apply for affiliation to the Labour Party.

Socialist Organiser is already sponsored by a number of labour movement bodies and individuals, and is appealing for more sponsors. We do not support bans and proscriptions. The WSL plans to produce a magazine, perhaps bi-monthly — it will not be in competition with Socialist Organiser.

For myself I came away from the conference convinced that Socialist Organiser should invite the new WSL to become one of its sponsors. Does any reader think differently?

AT ITS conference the new Workers Socialist League collected over £2,000 as the first instalment of a £10,000 fund to get new equipment — especially a printing press for its magazine — and premises.

The address they give for contributions is WSL, BM Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX.

The platform records the differences and the commitment to discussion.

One of these issues — Afghanistan — came up for discussion more than once during the week preceding the fusion conference. The discussion was occasionally heated, but not to the point of forgetting a common purpose — to work out a working-class political line independent of both imperialism and Stalinism.

St Mary's hospital occupation gathers strength

by Ann Evans

THE OCCUPATION at St Mary's Hospital, Harrow Road, is gathering strength despite the management's attempts to split the workforce among themselves.

The occupation began on June 24th, after a four year campaign of meetings, lobbies and petitions to stop the proposed closure.

The health authorities were not impressed by the enormous community support for the hospital, and are going ahead with their plan to run it down.

The first stage of the rundown, the closure of 127 beds and the restriction of the casualty unit, is currently being considered by Health Minister Vaughan. Rather than wait for his decision — which is anyway a foregone conclusion — the staff at the hospital decided to occupy first, to stop the rundown and show the Minister, the health authorities and their own supporters that they are determined to fight to defend their health services.

The management have obviously been alarmed at the workers' action, and in fact have been warned for some time that they will not be able to shut down the hospital without a major struggle. In preparation for this, a new administrator, Nettal,



has been appointed. By strange coincidence, this character is one of the few administrators in the country with direct experience of a hospital occupation.

It was Nettal who oversaw the defeat of the St Benedict's Hospital occupation last year.

He has obviously been appointed with a definite

purpose in mind — to oversee the dismantling of yet another important sector of our health service.

But Nettal is not the only one with experience of hospital occupations.

The St Mary's Hospital Defence Committee is also cooperating with workers from previous occupations, including

Longworth and St Benedicts.

The St Mary's management offensive against the workforce has for some time been concentrated on the domestics.

The domestics — a strong and militant group, mainly West Indian women, have been attacked in the past, as

the management have tried to increase their workload and reduce staffing through natural wastage.

When the women resisted this, their shop steward, Rita Maxim, was victimised and is now on her final warning.

The authorities have now stepped up this attack on the domestics, with the obvious intention of isolating them from the rest of the staff and weakening the occupation.

On Monday 20th July, new 'working practices' were introduced, which were to force Grade 2 domestics to scrub floors, work which they have never had to do before.

Badge ban

By breaking down demarcation, the management hope further to reduce the domestic workforce.

While one section of the domestics, organised into the GMWD, have accepted the management's 'offer', the TGWU domestics are determined to have nothing to do with it.

They have refused to do this work, and two have already received disciplinary notices.

As Rita Maxim pointed out, one of these women has worked at the hospital for 15 years — and yet

the management have no compunction about throwing her out of the door.

However, the Occupation Committee is determined to prevent this, and the defence of the domestics is being made a central part of the occupation.

The domestics were refusing to recognise the disciplinary procedures — ignoring their letters and not going to any hearings.

By challenging the management's 'right to manage' in this way, the occupation will be strengthened and the workforce united in the fight against closure.

Joe Beckles, the TGWU branch secretary, explained that the domestics are strong in their determination to fight.

It is vital that the domestics are immediately given support throughout their union, the TGWU.

The TGWU conference resolved that occupations against cuts should be supported by strike action.

Domestics

If any of the domestics are sacked, Socialist Organiser supporters in the TGWU should fight for this resolution to be implemented.

The management has

also tried to attack the occupation in other, more petty, ways.

For instance, they decided to ban the distribution of badges and occupation literature inside the hospital. But the occupation committee and workers have refused to comply with this childish ruling.

The occupation has already gathered an enormous amount of support from trades unions and Labour Parties.

But Socialist Organiser supporters should be raising the issue in their organisations, arguing for donations and, in London, pressing their branches to take part in regular picketing.

Besides the daily picket from 8am to 8pm, there is also a special 'vigil' on Saturdays from 8am to 7pm, to publicise the occupation among local people and make it a focus for support.

The Defence Committee is also organising a public meeting on Thursday 30th July (at which Ken Livingstone will be speaking, as well as occupation speakers).

Donations, messages of support, etc. should be sent to John Dolan, Hospital Defence Committee, c/o Cashier's Office, St Mary's Hospital, Harrow Road, W9.

Plansee, Laurence Scott... AUEW leaders knife fight for

jobs

by Rob Dawber

IN the week that George Caborn, AUEW District Secretary and Communist Party member retired, the only fight for jobs in the Sheffield area, the Plansee's dispute, finally collapsed in defeat.

The loss of these 120 jobs didn't happen because Caborn was no longer there to lead the fight but as Ian Paisley, AUEW convenor at Plansee's, told SO:

"All along he has just wanted to get us off his back. It wasn't till we had been on strike for 11 weeks that he stopped being a hindrance."

George Caborn joined the Communist Party in 1941 just as the CP made one of its infamous turns — this time to total support for the British war effort (and thus against strikes) because Germany had just attacked the Soviet Union and the Nazi-Soviet Pact had gone out of the window.

Caborn learnt well from this experience of collaboration. As the former Chairman of



Brown Bayley steel said to the Sheffield Star in a full page tribute on Caborn's retirement:

"In serious industrial negotiations I would as

soon see George Caborn on the other side of the table as anyone. When we did have problems and we asked him to come in, he was one trade union official who could be relied upon. If George came down to the works, I knew we would get some sense into the situation."

But it wasn't just one man. The AUEW in Sheffield has no campaign against redundancies and doesn't react positively to initiatives from elsewhere.

Blacking

From the Plansee's workers came calls for blacking, a demonstration, lobbies. Eventually they were supported, but meanwhile the strikers were constantly pressured to talk about redundancy money with the EEF.

Finally a delegation from the strikers went to see members of the AUEW executive in Scotland where John Boyd told them that he had heard that the factory

was not going to re-open and so there seemed no point in carrying on. Why don't they talk about redundancy money?

Back in Sheffield the delegation was told that the District Committee would back whatever decision the strikers took

over a new redundancy offer from the EEF.

Strike pay

But it was understood that strike pay and official backing was going to be withdrawn in any case by the AUEW executive.

Not surprisingly the workers voted to end the strike after 21 weeks, bitter and disappointed, and took the money.

"We had hoped to stem the tide of sackings and redundancies by winning at Plansee's," says Ian Paisley. "With support from the start

we would have done that. We went to Laurence Scotts during our dispute to see how we could help each other. They seem to be getting more help from their District Committee, which is just what we needed. It's up to them to win now."



Duffy and Boyd sell out — and CPer Caborn [left] goes along with it

Laurence Scott vote to battle on unofficially

by Gerry Hoffa

ON TUESDAY 21 July the AUEW Executive Committee voted to withdraw official status and strike pay from the 650 workers of Laurence Scotts in Manchester.

In one of the most scandalous examples of treachery in recent trade union history, Terry Duffy and John Boyd have delivered a smashing blow to the occupation against plant closure.

Whilst TUC leaders mutter platitudes against unemployment, and do nothing, the AUEW bosses have gone one step further — they are attempting to actively break up resistance to unemployment. But the Scotts JSSC, however, has decided that whether its official or unofficial, the occupation goes on.

On Friday 10 July a six hour meeting between CSEU officials and Snipe took place, at which Boyd and Duffy accepted Snipe's proposals, which were:

1. The unions agree that some redundancy is inevitable.

2. The workforce should return to work by Monday 20 July.

3. Workers should return redundancy cheques to the company, or will be allowed to pay back the money at £5 a week.

4. Management will have access to the factory from 14 July, and the summons

for repossession will be withdrawn.

5. If return to work is agreed, there will be no recrimination and all picketing will cease.

6. The Company will provide a minimum 2 day week for 3 months and attempt to maintain a viable future though this may have to be on reduced premises.

7. During this 3 months, labour needs will be reviewed and this may necessitate redundancies.

8. The Company will make application for the Government's Temporary Short Time Working Compensation Scheme.

9. Anyone unable, due to sickness or holidays, to present themselves for work on 20 July will be given favourable consideration.

The national Confed officials' response to these points was "we've won". They immediately instructed local officials and stewards to accept. However, at a stewards and local officials meeting on Saturday 11 July, these proposals were unanimously thrown out and a mass meeting of the workforce called for Tuesday 14 July. But what did Boyd and Duffy agree to?

1. Snipe's main goal was to lift the increasingly effective secondary picketing of his Doncaster plants, and to remove the blacking.

Agreed.

2. A return to work was established for 2 days, a week for 3 months on the basis of the government paying the wages through the TSTWCS. Snipe incurs no financial losses.

Agreed.

3. The workforce loses the crucial bargaining counter of the £2.4 million in orders that they are sitting on. Snipe will then remove them to Norwich.

Agreed.

4. All redundancy money is returned to Snipe.

Agreed.

5. No guarantees against enforced redundancies after the 3 month period has passed.

Agreed.

Only a fool could call this "agreement" a victory. Snipe loses nothing — the workers lose everything.

As one steward put it:

"What can you expect from Terry Ductyl and his Dinosaurs", as Duffy and the right wing AUEW Executive have been christened. "We've been expecting this for a long time."

Immediately the stewards responded with the following counter-proposals for the mass meeting:

a. No enforced redundancies.

b. That levels of redundancy be negotiated to allow a settlements.

c. Severance pay to be agreed for employees who volunteer for redundancy.

d. The 8 days to be accepted as payment in lieu and not to affect holiday entitlements.

e. Some form of ex gratia payment to be made for loss of wages during this prolonged dispute due to Snipe's refusal to negotiate.

f. No recriminations both on this site and against any transport company who have refused to cross our picket lines (e.g. Aldreds Transport of Doncaster).

At the mass meeting — the local Broad Left officials meekly put forward the Duffy/Snipe "agreement", and it was interesting to note the word "agreement" was deleted for "recommendations". The officials were greeted with uproar, and the stewards proposals were given an overwhelming vote, 600 for to 24 against.

Denis Barry, the newly elected convenor said to the cheers of the membership:

"The platform on which we fought this dispute was no closure and no enforced redundancies so if we settled for less it would amount to a sell-out of the workforce who have stuck together wholeheartedly throughout this long and difficult dispute. The recommendation for settlement as it stands would mean us putting a

hell of a lot of trust in Snipe's willingness to negotiate and promise of no recriminations. Anybody who knows Snipe will understand our mistrust.

The whole document is a blank cheque for Snipe to do as he wants. Nowhere does Snipe state what size of workforce does he intend to retain at the end of 3 months. It could be as few as 10 people which was Snipe's original offer rejected by union officials and workforce alike.

Some victory — 640 up the road and ten in work. We wouldn't need a factory — a telephone booth would suffice.

Scotts has become more than just a local struggle. It's a national beacon of resistance against the dole queue. That's why we can't pack it in." (Thunderous applause)

During the run up to the mass meeting, rumours were circulated from Peckham Road (AUEW HQ) that if the "agreement" was not accepted, then official status would be withdrawn. Accordingly 200 workers travelled to the AUEW Executive meeting in London on the 21st to lobby for continuation of the occupation.

When the result was announced, the workers spontaneously walked into Duffy and Boyd's offices — where they pilloried

them for their strike breaking role.

Amusingly, one steward parked himself in Duffy's swivel chair; to whom the President said "get your arse out of that chair".

The steward said "I've been sat on this backside for 14 weeks at Scotts, and no way are you going to shift me."

Duffy then called in the police to remove his own members who were in occupation of the offices.

As steward Eric Palfreyman said:

"The real reason for Duffy making us unofficial, was because he was petrified of AUEW members challenging Prior's employment rulings. But we're keeping on fighting because we've nowhere to go."

Furthermore, Duffy has instructed his toady Ken Cure to call another mass meeting at the Free Trade Hall for Thursday 23 July where there will be a final attempt to force-feed the workforce with the sell-out proposals.

One of the stewards put it in a nutshell "Most of our people live in or near Openshaw and Duffy's stab in the back will travel round the pubs on Ashton Old Road like wildfire. Ken Cure will be impaled on a spit and roasted over an open fire if he turns up to this meeting." It is up to socialists in the



Ken Cure: LS stewards say: 'we'd roast him on a spit'

trade unions and particularly the AUEW to table motions of censure against Duffy and Co., and make it known to the wider movement.

STOP PRESS: The mass meeting on Thursday 23 July at the Free Trade Hall voted overwhelmingly to back the stewards' proposals "even if it means going unofficial".

Ken Cure's speech for a return to work was treated to jeers of derision.

Thursday 23 is also the date when the Court repossession order for the factory is to take effect.

Messages/money to JSSC, c/o George Fryer, 20 Round Crost, Romilly, Cheshire SK6 4LL.

After Rover defeat PREPARE FOR NEW EDWARDES ATTACK

by Jim Denham

THE ROVER SD1 plant at Solihull has become the latest victim of the Edwardes 'recovery plan' — and another 2,000 workers will join the dele queue in the West Midlands.

That was the result of the mass meeting held on Wednesday 8th July, when the workforce voted 2:1 to reject the stewards' recommendation to resist closure and prevent the movement of plant and materials to Cowley.

The company's threat that non-cooperation with the closure would result in loss of redundancy money was undoubtedly the immediate cause of the surrender. But this threat need not have been decisive if the workers had been given a strong lead from national T&G officials and (perhaps even more importantly) if the unions' record in BL over the past few years had been one of backing the fight against Edwardes instead of selling it out



Michael Edwardes

at every turn.

Events outside of BL also served to demoralise the SD1 workers: when stewards pointed to the

T&G's promise of official support some workers shouted back, 'What about Ansell's?' — a reference to the recent Birmingham brewery strike made official and then stabbed in the back by T&G officials.

So the vicious circle of management attacks followed by union sell-outs, followed by rank and file demoralisation, followed by more management attacks, continues.

The 2:1 vote was, of course, a terrible defeat, but it also showed a surprisingly large hard-core minority willing to fight come what may.

That hard core was there from the moment the closure plan was announced in May. The question is, if the stewards had decided to put a clear-cut call for occupation to the workforce back in May, could they have carried the day?

Most SD1 stewards argue that they would have been defeated had they gone for the 'all or nothing' option from the outset. *Socialist Challenge* supporters in particular argued throughout that the only hope was to play for time, go for general commitments to 'resist' the closure, and attempt to build up support for an occupation through propaganda and shopfloor debate.

No-one can guarantee there was a majority for action in May. But every recent experience — notably, Speke no.2 in 1978 and Linwood earlier this year — suggests that the 'softly, softly' approach certainly doesn't work. It allows the closure to grow into an accepted fact, and gives the 'grab the money and run' brigade an opportunity to develop. From now on the message must be: strike while the iron is hot.

This is why the BL Combine Committee conference planned for August 8th must go ahead despite the Rover defeat. If more job loss and plant closures are to be stopped, then a strong rank and file based movement must be built now, ready to fight on the immediate issues facing all BL workers — the new Procedure Agreement (which will make striking a sackable offence!) and the 1982 pay claim due for settlement on November 1st.

These are the issues that supporters of the Leyland Action Committee will be fighting for in the plants and at the combine committee.

BR digs in

by Rob Dawber

BRITISH Rail seems determined to squeeze productivity concessions from the three rail unions, ASLEF, TSSA, and NUR. Arbitration recommended

a 10.5 per cent increase, and the unions want that with no strings. However, BR is digging in, and talks broke down last Friday with an agreement to meet again on August 3rd.

NUR members voted for a 'substantial' increase at their last conference, and this was reckoned at 12.5 to 13 per cent, with BR offering 7%. Now BR, with the arbitration findings out, have upped this to 8% from April and 3% from August financed by a productivity deal.

Both ASLEF and NUR have conference policy against productivity packages, but while Buckton (ASLEF) appears to be holding ground, Sid Weighell (NUR) looks like he might concede.

Railworkers should make sure no sell-out deal is accepted. Strike action should be prepared for and carried out if BR don't pay up. The claim is a perfectly reasonable one. If anything is unreasonable, it is that it's far too low with inflation at thirteen per cent.

There will be a number of free places, and a grant for help with fares has been applied for from the Equal Opportunities Commission.

For further details and a booking form apply to: Bob Cartwright (Childcare School), Education Department, Co-Op Union Ltd, Stanford Hall, Loughborough, Leics.

★ The next national meeting of NCCC — open to all affiliates — is on Sunday 22nd August, from 11am, at 17 Victoria Park Square, London E2. Nearest tube: Bethnal Green.

Child care conference

THE NATIONAL Child Care Campaign is holding its first major conference on research — and theory, titled *Childcare And The State*, from 5pm on Friday 18th September until 3pm Sunday 20th September, at the Cooperative College, Stanford Hall, Loughborough, Leicestershire.

It has been organised jointly by the NCCC and the Co-Op Union Education Department.

The Conference programme includes:

- War in the nursery, by Denise Riley,
- Conspiracy or chaos, by Linda Challis,
- Variations in local authority provision, by Andrew Bebbington,
- Example of Third World childcare in the Caribbean, by the Grenada Women's Organisation,
- The overlap between voluntary and state sectors, by Linda Haddock,
- and a paper to be presented by Pat Petrie on what childminding has to offer.

There will also be a paper on 'Men's Appropriation of Women's Labour: Childcare', to be presented by Diane Leonard, and directed at a panel of men who (directly or indirectly) have responsibility for provision or policies on childcare.

While the agenda (and the cost — £28 for a residential place and £17 for non-residential) is specifically aimed at academics, it is important that there is a presence, however small, from working-class women active in struggles for child-care provision.

Nursery workers in NALGO staged a one-day strike on Thursday 9th July after Oxfordshire's Education Committee recommended a further attack on nursery provision in the county.

From September 1982 the adult-child ratio is to be 1:13 in nursery schools, and 1:15 in classes.

The Department of Education and Science recommends 1:10 in schools and 1:13 in classes, yet in Oxfordshire the average ratios are 1:11 in classes and 1:10 in schools.

Also, seven nursery schools are to close and their places will be established in classes of first schools.

Originally, the council planned to close ten of the

twelve nursery schools in the county, but after much campaigning agreed to recommend only seven.

There can be no question that it is those schools that have fought the hardest which have been reprieved.

The ratio changes will mean a loss of over 30 jobs, the closing of much-needed facilities, the worsening of standards, and an unsafe environment for the under-5s. In the ballot for industrial action, only two nursery workers voted against the strike.

Over 80 people attended a public meeting at the Town Hall on the day of the strike.

This shows once again that workers will take action if given a strong

lead. But they must not be left isolated. NUT members, who will be left having to cope with these ratios, need to take action alongside NALGO.

The most recent similar attack was in Nottingham in 1979, when over 136 nursery workers lost their jobs. When teacher Eileen Crosbie then refused to take a class with inadequate staffing, she was sacked. In the recent County Council elections Labour gained control, and Eileen Crosbie and the nursery workers have now been reinstated.

Victories can be won: like the two victories of the Leicester Nursery Campaign. Staff were being run down in order to close

CoCSU leaders take 'Judas money'

by Stephen Corbishley

20 WEEKS of industrial action in which the Civil Service unions have spent over £9 million on strike pay and strike organisation, led to the Tories offering £30 extra on top of the 7% offer made at the start of the strike action.

This pathetic increase (worth another ½% on average) satisfied the national CoCSU leadership. They agreed to put the extra money (nicknamed 'Judas money' by some militants) to a vote along with an offer of arbitration for 1982 — as long as Parliament agrees to the result!

In return the union leaders agreed to be bound by the Tories' demand that no recommendation on the offer be made.

As a result of this move by the CoCSU leaders, national all-membership ballots are being organised throughout each union to be concluded by Tuesday 28 July.

As well as the CPSA and SCPS Executive Committees agreed to freeze the current industrial action in DE/DHSS; in return the Civil Service bosses agreed not to suspend any more staff.

The results as we go to press indicate a strong possibility of an acceptance of the extra £30, and a vote for ending the strikes.

Yet all the indications are that the IRSF will produce a clear vote against acceptance and for all out strike action.



CPSA general secretary Ken Thomas

And the likelihood is that any such action would be delivered.

In contrast, the feeling for action in the traditionally 'left' union, the CPSA, is clearly collapsing, with the vote at time of press running 2:1 in favour of giving in.

The main reason for the differences in development between IRSF and CPSA is that for the IRSF members, the selective action in the two computer centres — Cumbernauld and Shipley — have also required extensive supporting industrial action in local offices (particularly in the Collection service).

In CPSA on the other hand the vast majority of the membership have not been involved in any action for over two months, and the fall-off in the collection of the levy has been a direct indicator of the mood of

a rank and file that has not been organised or allowed to fight.

Socialist Organiser from the beginning has argued that only an all-out strike could win

We have pointed out that the union leaders' commitment to selective action was to prevent the sort of radicalisation that has occurred in IRSF; and since the round of union conferences ended in May, and after the first round of ballots, these union leaders have been turning over every stone to find a pretext for surrender.

These bureaucrats know that they will return to safe jobs, except in CPSA where later this year there will be the first ever election of senior full time officers.

The rank and file in CPSA must seize the chance to bring a corrupt leadership to heel.

Maxwell pulls back at BPC

by Peter McIntyre

ONE OF the BBC's most prestigious projects this year, the all-action nautical-themed Royal Wedding edition of the *Radio Times*, was fortunately not available in many parts of England and Wales.

Mr Robert Maxwell, the entrepreneur whom a Department of Trade and Industry report once described as not a fit person to run a public company, managed to foul up production of the *Radio Times* within weeks of it coming under his control.

His demand for redundancies among SOGAT members at Waterlow, Park Royal, London, was met by all-out strike action backed by other workers in the plant.

Embarrassment in the BBC, who were forced to announce almost hourly that their programme of events would not be available, forced Maxwell to make concessions. This was not before he had had a slanging match with SOGAT chapel officers and had crashed his car in full view of their membership after storming out of a meeting and ordering his unlucky chauffeur to move over.

His plan to transfer 750,000 copies of the *Radio Times* to East Kilbride in Scotland was foiled by blacking from Scottish SOGAT members. But details of the settlement are impossible to obtain, and it looks highly likely that the tough-talking Central London SOGAT branch backed down and accepted anything up to 35 redundancies.

This is no example to set SOGAT members at the MacDonald Futura warehouse in Camberwell — another part of the newly acquired BPC — where members are preparing to fight 27 redundancies. The 'survival plan' accepted by officers of all the print unions can only be resisted if shop floor workers unite their struggle

not only from one plant to another, but also across the traditional craft divide.

This means, also, linking up with the nine NUJ members at the Pergamon headquarters in Oxford who have been on strike and sacked since early March. An excellent start would be to send delegations to the next Pergamon rally on the picket line on Monday August 10th.

Camden- more delays

by Peter McIntyre

JOURNALISTS at the now defunct London weekly newspaper *Camden Journal* must wait at least another week to learn their fate.

The chapel met an 'arbitrator' last week to present their case for saving nine jobs which the company decided to axe three days before Christmas.

NUJ members, with support from colleagues on the *Islington Gazette* and in Rugby, Leamington and Wales, have struck for varying periods up to six months to beat off this attack both on jobs and on one of the best-organised small chapels in the country.

Their battle ended in June after the NGA leadership first promised long-overdue support and then withdrew it when the owner of the paper, Stanley Clarke, chairman of Courier Press, promised to go to arbitration.

With the arrogance of his profession, the arbitrator told chapel members last week that he was too busy to decide on the future of their lives in the next week or so.

Nursery workers strike

Socialist Organiser

Lothian votes for strike

by Rowland Sheret and
Ricky Houston

"NO CUTS, no job losses
and no compromises".
That was the message from
a 200-strong conference of
Labour Party members
and trade unionists in
Edinburgh on July 25th.

The conference also
called for all-out strike

action in the event of any
cuts or job losses.

The previous day, 200
shop stewards also unani-
mously voted for industrial
action to save jobs.

Lothian Regional Council
is on the front-line of the
cuts fight. The Tories are
slashing £47 million of its
Rate Support Grant, and
supplementary rates are
illegal in Scotland.

The weekly RSG instal-
ments of £3 million are due
to stop at the end of Aug-
ust, and Lothian unions
have calculated it could
mean a loss of 15,000 jobs.

A strike by NALGO
members, a 15,000-strong
demonstration at the end of
June, and well-attended
conferences of Labour
Party and trade union

members have shown the
will to fight in Lothian.

But the issue goes
beyond Lothian. "If the
Government destroys Loth-
ian now", said GLC lead-
ers Ken Livingstone, "we
will be next. Lothian's
fight is our fight, and we
look to all London MPs
to help local democracy".

A campaign office for
Lothian has been estab-
lished at County Hall. Now
not only Labour Parties,
but also trade unions, must
start organising to spread
any strike action beyond
Lothian.

The TGWU must be forc-
ed to stand by its recent
conference decision com-
mitting it to strike action in
support of Labour councils
defying the cuts. A resolu-
tion calling for a national
action conference was
carried on July 25th in
Lothian. Trade unions and
Labour Parties should
start contacting the Lothian
Action Committee now to
get this conference set up.
There is no more time left
for empty declarations.

A petition calling for the
national conference, put
out by Socialist Organiser,
has been supported by Ken
Livingstone, Ted Knight,
Tony Banks, Frances
Morrell, Bernard Dix,
Gordon Wills, Derek Greg-
ory, 70 delegates at the
London Labour Briefing
conference and 300 at the
Labour Coordinating Com-
mittee conference.

Ron Brown, MP for Edin-
burgh Leith, has been haul-
ed out of the House of
Commons and suspended
for 20 days for staging a
protest on the Lothian cuts.
What are the rest of the
Labour MPs doing? They
can disrupt the workings of
Parliament — they should
do it!

In Lothian itself, there is
a debate on all-out action or
selective action. The union
leadership has not been
ready to go for all-out
strike.

But at the joint shop
stewards' conference on
the 24th, CPSA militant
Steve Cardownie pointed
out that 20 weeks of select-
ive action in the civil ser-
vice have led nowhere.

Rank and file support
for all-out action has been
shown at the July 25th
conference, and by the
NALGO social workers'
shop stewards' committee.
The Lothian Action Com-
mittee and Labour Party
members should challenge
the union full-timers'
timidity, and put out an
appeal for bold action to
the whole movement.

★ Contact: Lothian Action
Committee, Ruskin House,
15 Windsor St, Edinburgh.

An appeal to the labour movement DEFEND YOUTH AGAINST TORIES

by MICK LIGGINS [secretary, National Left Wing
Youth Movement]

OVER 2,500 youth have
been arrested in the recent
riots.

The charges range from
threatening behaviour
(which I've been charged
with) to criminal damage
and burglary — with alleg-
ed damages as high as
£3,000.

To commit 'threatening
behaviour', all you had to
do was walk the streets of
a town where riots had
been going on.

When they take you to
court, they make up all
sorts of stories about what
you were supposed to be
doing. They told me I
was 'throwing bottles at
police cars'.

They admitted they had
no witnesses except the
police. But although I have
witnesses as to where I
was all night, I don't have
much chance of presenting
a case. They refused me
legal aid, and I can't afford
the £150 it would cost for a
solicitor as I am on the dole.

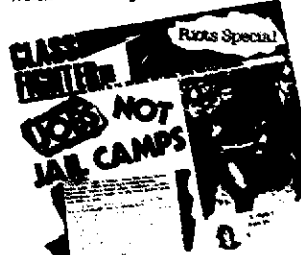
Some of the others
brought in had other
charges added on. For
every window that was
smashed, the police wanted
to charge someone. The
CID used their well-
known tactics to get con-
fessions.

The threatening
behaviour charges were
ridiculous. One lad who
was in the cell with me had
been arrested having
only just come out of hospi-
tal with a walking stick.
He was charged with
threatening behaviour and
'possessing an offensive
weapon'! He just happened
to be West Indian.

When they took us to
court, they talked a lot
into pleading guilty, saying
that they'd get dealt with
straight away and wouldn't
be remanded.

This was a lie to streng-
then the police's case. One
lad was certainly 'dealt
with'; he was given three
months at a detention
centre for threatening be-
haviour and others got two
weeks' remand rather than
the one week they would
have got if they had plead-
ed not guilty.

When the CID interview-
ed us they wanted to know
what our politics were.



Paper of the NLWYM
fighting for a revolutionary
policy in the LPYS.
Riot Special, 5p plus
post from PO Box 135,
London N1 0DF.

They asked us whether we
were in the British Move-
ment or 'coon lovers'.

When the police arrest-
ed us, we all got beaten up
in the police vans. So much
for 'community policing';
this is what 'beat bobbies'
are all about!

The majority of those
arrested were snatched to
make up the numbers,
and to make it look as if the
police had things under
control.

When we got out of
prison, we thought that a
lot of people would
support us and see that the
real reason for the riots was
a fightback by youth
against mass unemploy-
ment, exploitation as cheap
labour, racism and police
harassment.

Year after year, the
police beat up youth and
lock them up for no reason,
and the newspapers and
TV are quiet.

But when youth strike
back for a few hours,
they're up in arms calling
us all hooligans and de-
manding that we're thrown
into jails or army camps.

Even the leaders of the
labour movement wouldn't
give support. Michael Foot,
leader of the Labour Party,
wouldn't even speak out
against the use of CS gas
and water cannon. Roy
Hattersley congratulated
Whitelaw and said: 'Long
may he continue in office'!

Foot asked Thatcher to
go to Liverpool and see for
herself. She did. Then she
came back and blamed the
parents of the rioters. Some
step forward!

Not only does she throw
the parents out of work,
drive them into poverty
and slash social services,
but she attempts to turn
working class men and
women into an unpaid
police force.

The Labour left-wingers
at least blamed the govern-
ment and its policies for the
riots. But even they
wouldn't stand by the
youth.

Tony Benn said he
wouldn't tolerate police
being injured in the course
of their duties. But what
are the duties of the police?

Thatcher has created this
present situation, and the
police's duty is to make
sure that we endure their
attacks without fighting
back.

If Benn is against this
government, he should also
be against its uniformed
supporters who attack
workers.

A lot of workers will
accept much of the garbage
that's printed in the press
and see us as hooligans.

When they have attacks
made on them by the gov-
ernment, they can fight
back through strike action.

Unemployed youth don't
have that weapon. So some



Toxteth: it's the one in the middle who gets charged with
'threatening behaviour'

have turned to more violent
methods through frustra-
tion and lack of leadership.

If the labour movement
gave some support to
youth, by taking up a fight
for jobs, and defending
youth against police brutal-
ity, then youth would look
more towards the labour
movement for direction and
more effective ways of
fighting back.

The labour movement
can play an important role
in bringing out the truth
about the police action and
the real causes of the riots
by setting up its own
inquiries, independent of
the police and their
supporters such as Lord
Scarman.

A lot of the magistrates
are actually trade union
officials. These stooges
for the Tory state machin-
ery should be thrown out
of the unions, and a fight

should be taken up for the
dropping of the charges.
We should put the real
looters on trial — the
Tories.

In the aftermath of the
riots, police are raiding
homes and smashing them
up — as they have in Brix-
ton.

The Tories and the
police will take advantage
of this to arm themselves
to the teeth, and even bring
troops out on the streets.

How long will it be before
heavily-armed riot police
are out on picket lines
smashing strikes?

These communities
should be rid of the police.
It is the responsibility of
the labour movement as
a whole to take up the fight
to make these areas no-
go areas for the police.
Workers' defence squads
need to be organised now to
do that job.

FUND

AFTER beating our
target of £500 in June,
we've fallen behind
again in July, with only
£426 by the 28th.

With the weekly, we
need to raise our sights
a great deal. Nothing
less than £2,000 a
month will enable us
to keep going.

But on the basis of
guarantees we've
already got from many
supporters, we're
confident we can make
it.

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to: Socialist Organiser,
28 Middle Lane,
London N8.

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our circulation and gives the paper a firmer financial base.

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