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Socialist Organiser

No.48 AUGUST 13, 1981 (CLAIMANTS AND STRIKERS, 10p) 20p

**NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION
AGAINST POLICE HARASSMENT
AND FOR THE SACKING OF
CHIEF CONSTABLE OXFORD**

3pm, Saturday 15th August, from
Sefton Park Obelisk, Liverpool.

Called by the Liverpool 8 Defence Committee
Liverpool Black Organisation, and Charles
Wootton Centre. Supported by North West
TUC and Liverpool District Labour Party.

LAND OF THE FREE?

by John Lister

IN REAGAN'S America — the self-styled defender of 'democracy' throughout the world — trade unionism is now a crime.

The US government has set itself the task of *destroying* the air traffic controllers' union PATCO, which had sought to exercise the democratic right to strike.

The government onslaught has been brutal.

- * All 12,000 strikers have been sacked.
- * The union has been effectively bankrupted by huge fines.
- * Individual union members face fines of up to 100,000 dollars each.
- * Union officials have been arrested, led handcuffed and chained into the courts, and dispatched to serve jail sentences.

In a desperate attempt to keep the USA's domestic and international air services going, army scabs have been brought in to work alongside non-union air controllers and the tiny handful of PATCO members who defied the strike call, while Reagan sets about rebuilding the air control staff from scratch.

Why did Reagan decide to go to such lengths to crush a union which — far from representing a radical challenge to his administration — was one of the few to endorse his candidacy in the Presidential elections.

The PATCO pay demands were large: but the PATCO membership is small. The union is scarcely in the mainstream of US pay bargaining. The total cost to the Reagan government was next to nothing in comparison to the £17 million per day losses the dispute is heaping on financially desperate airlines.

The fact is that Reagan has selected PATCO as a sacrificial victim to ram home his government's determination to confront the power of the US labour movement. He needs such a defeat to create conditions to impose his budget cuts.

But in doing so he has severely miscalculated. PATCO leader Robert Poli a year ago was endorsing Reagan: but under pressure of the present confrontation he is now calling for a nationwide *general strike* against the government.

PATCO members have traditionally been a well paid and conservative section of workers. Indeed, at the start of the strike they were offered a two-day sympathy strike by West Coast longshoremen and *refused*, saying that they wanted to win on their own! But now these same conservative workers are mounting 24 hour pickets on the airports, calling on other airport unions to shut them down.

Reagan hoped that threats and quick use of military scabs would break the strike and ensure continuity of air travel: now, as the strike gathers strength and attracts international solidarity from Canadian, Spanish, Portuguese, Australian and New Zealand air controllers, the US faces virtual quarantine in the skies.

And Reagan's 'pre-emptive strike', designed to cow the US labour movement, has in reality given new impetus to political debate within the unions. US workers see union leaders in chains, see the refusal of Democratic Party leaders to defend the right to strike, and hear the words of Robert Poli:

"PATCO was one of the unions that endorsed Reagan, and they put our union members in shackles. What are they going to do to other unions that didn't support him?"

Right across the USA, militants are contrasting Ronald Reagan's verbal support for the struggles of Polish workers for free trade unions with his brutal measures to repress trade union rights in the USA.

In fighting to mobilise maximum solidarity action among airport and other unions in the USA, the call for a *Labour Party* to defend the democratic rights of the majority in the 'land of the free' must be raised.

But in Britain, the workers' movement also has a duty to rally round the beleaguered PATCO strikers.

It is a *scandal* that British airlines — piloted by TUC-affiliated BALPA members, guided by CPSA and IPCS air traffic controllers, and serviced by TGWU and AUEW members — are being allowed to scab on the PATCO strikers.

We must demand a black on all flights to and from the USA until such time as the PATCO members are reinstated by the Reagan government.

Let us not forget that Reagan's iron-fist action is being eagerly scrutinised by the iron lady in Downing St and by right wing governments throughout the world.

If the *working class* does not recognise the need for international action, the capitalist class will not be so slow to spread the US anti-union offensive. Act now! Defeat the Reagan/Thatcher onslaught!

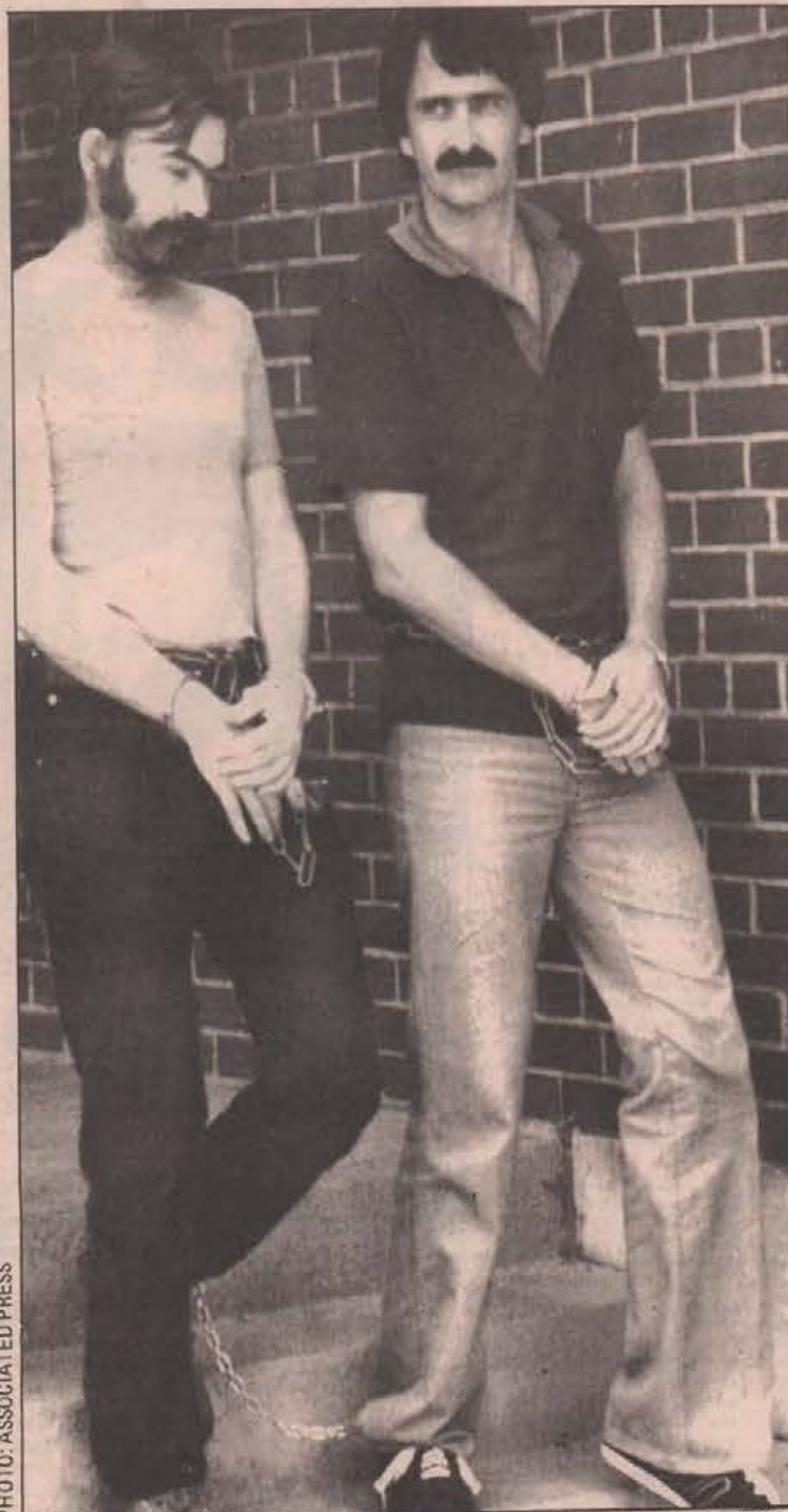


PHOTO: ASSOCIATED PRESS

Chained victim of Reagan policy — Steve Wallaert, president of PATCO local 291



Reagan's pledge

PATCO was one of the few US unions to endorse Ronald Reagan's presidential candidacy. In exchange PATCO leader Poli received the following letter:

October 20, 1980

Dear Mr Poli,
"I have been thoroughly briefed by my staff as to the desperate state of our national air traffic control system.

"They tell me that too few people working unreasonable hours with obsolete equipment have placed the nation's air travellers in unwarranted danger.

"In an area so closely related to public safety, the Carter administration has failed to act responsibly.

"Rest assured that if I'm elected President I will take whatever steps are necessary to provide our air traffic controllers with the most modern equipment available, and to adjust staff levels and workdays so that they are commensurate with achieving a maximum degree of public safety.

Harmonious

"As in all other areas of the Federal Government where the President has the power of appointment, I fully intend to appoint highly qualified individuals who can work harmoniously with the Congress and the employees of the government agencies they oversee.

"I pledge you that my administration will work very closely to bring about a spirit of cooperation between the President and the air traffic controllers.

Such harmony can exist if we are to restore the people's confidence in their government."

Yours Sincerely,
Ronald Reagan.

The letter is now being used as a leaflet by striking PATCO members manning 24-hour picket lines on US airports.

Black all US flights!



Defend the Bradford 11!

THE TRIAL of the Bradford 11 will be a focusing point for the state's ruthless attempt to crush black people's resistance to racism.

It is a major issue for the labour movement. The 11 Asian youths, aged between 17 and 25, are mainly supporters of the Bradford-based United Black Youth League, and some of the accused, particularly Gat-Aura and Tariq Ali, are prominent anti-fascist organisers.

They have been accused of manufacturing 38 petrol bombs and storing them for use against the police and skinheads.

But the charges, related to two sections of the reactionary conspiracy laws show the ruthlessness with which Home Secretary Whitelaw and the Director of Public Prosecutions will pursue this case.

Despite the fact that their "crime" has been the wish to defend Bradford's Asians against fascist and police provocation, the first charge carries a maximum prison sentence of ten years, the second life imprisonment.

And despite the fact that some of the accused have worrying home situations, for example, dependent relatives, two applications for bail have been refused.

The hammer is falling on the Bradford 11; for the state it is a test case. We must mobilise the maximum labour movement resistance to the show trial.

The rapidly formed July 11 Action Committee has

taken important steps towards this. Pickets and all-night vigils have been organised.

A national demonstration is being built for.

But this trial is an attack by the state on the very notion of anti-racist defence. In that sense it is highly political.

And that is why the action committee is launching an independent inquiry into the nature of racist attacks and the police response to them in Bradford since the mid 1970s.

Hopefully when the trial proper actually begins it will be possible to provide information on the real background, a situation where racist harassment is a daily occurrence for Asian workers, and where the police have failed to defend communities against, for example, arson attacks on Asian homes and premises in Bradford.

Relatives of the defendants have reported that the 11 youths are under severe intimidation inside. Whatever our political differences with them, the primary issue is their defence against a show trial by the Thatcher government.

*Drop the charges defend the Bradford 11!

Self defence is no offence build workers defence squads!

Send money, telegrams or messages of support and inquiry evidence to: July 11 Action Committee, c/o 2nd Floor, Textile Hall, Westgate, Bradford.

DALE ACKROYD

Moss Side youth "like caged animals"

by Gareth Caley

"WE ARE like caged animals. But as you know, you can keep kicking caged animals, and one day they are going to fight back."

"We must support our brothers in Liverpool, and say they should keep on fighting to the end. Thatcher must U-turn. If not, then the place must burn."

A Moss Side youth was speaking at a 200-strong meeting, called by the local Community Action Group, which took steps to set up a defence committee.

Members of the Liverpool 8 Defence Committee were there, too, and emphasised the need for cooperation and liaison. They called for support for the 15th August demonstration in Liverpool, and ended by saying, "You help us get rid of our chief pig, and we'll help you get rid of yours."

During the riots, the Moss Side Community Action Group provided first aid, places to sleep for youth too scared to attempt to walk home, lifts to hospitals outside the area, and legal help.

150 arrests were reported, but the central detention centre was overflowing. There were two or three people to a cell, and three wings with some hundred cells per wing.

Many arrested youth were faced with pre-typed charge sheets. A Community Action Group speaker said that the solicitors and the courts cannot be trusted. The central demand of the campaign must be: drop the charges.

Socialist Organiser supporter Pete Keenlyside called for community self-defence groups to replace the police, and asked for support for the picket called by Socialist Organiser of the Greater Manchester Police Committee on Friday 7th August.

About 50 people attended the picket, but the police committee agreed not to discuss Moss Side until the official inquiry was finished.

There is a need for an inquiry — but an inquiry by the community, used to counter press distortion and to show why the police must be kicked out of Moss Side.

LAST AUGUST, Home Secretary William Whitelaw, shrewdly assessing the kind of anger being stoked up in the inner cities by Thatcher's policies, called on Chief Constables to review their plans to combat "spontaneous disorder".

By that time their plans were in most cases well in hand. The British police force, though still basking in its image as an amateurish, unarmed force, now comprises no less than 12,000 riot-trained police organised in Police Support Units and Special Patrol Groups.

And the whole method of policing the inner cities has changed to prepare for confrontation.

For the last fifteen

JOHN LISTER surveys the build-up of police power

two-way radios, backed up by lavish computer networks and elaborate systems of communications to provide instant support.

Police and army chiefs, alarmed by the upsurge of revolutionary struggle in Europe and the mass demonstrations against the Vietnam war in 1968 in Britain have devoted a great deal of attention to training forces to deal with picket

be acceptable to the majority of the citizens" the army is "the final repository of arbitrary force", and needs no such acceptance.

In 1971 a Home Office working party concluded that a new "Third" force would be unacceptable to British public opinion. Therefore, it proposed, sections of the existing police force should be retrained and reequipped to do the job.

Saltley

This conclusion was reinforced by the evident impotence of an outnumbered squad of police in the face of the mass picket of Saltley coal depot during the miners' strike of 1972.



US riot police in action

years police chiefs have adopted a strategy described as "fire brigade policing" in which heavy forces are held in reserve to be rushed at short notice to deal with incidents.

The growth of unemployment and poverty in inner city areas has meant that working class and immigrant communities are openly regarded as areas to be contained and repressed, rather than "protected".

"Bobbies" on the beat have been replaced by patrol cars equipped with

lines, marches and riots.

The late 1960s saw some debate on whether this was best done by setting up a European-style "third force" of riot police, with their own sophisticated equipment (water cannon, CS gas, armoured personnel carriers, pistols, rifles and sub-machine guns).

The limitation of the traditional-style British police were summed up by Brigadier WFK Thomson who pointed out that while the police "must

Army units, which had been on standby with shields and truncheons, were not used: the depot was closed, and the Heath government was eventually forced to concede to the miners. But from then on the police preparations went ahead with increased vigour.

The objective was the training of police units which could act with the necessary "arbitrary force" and distance themselves from any dependence upon "acceptance by the majority of

citizens".

The outcome was the establishment of Special Patrol Groups as a fully fledged paramilitary corps within the police force. Initially masquerading as units to "fight crime", the SPGs soon equipped themselves with vans carrying riot shields, pistols, rifles, sub-machine guns, smoke grenades, truncheons and visors. In Manchester the armoury is supplemented by Armalite rifles: in Hertfordshire the SPG carries pump-action shotguns.

The SPGs are trained in the use of CS gas, and many train with military units, in SAS-style operations.

These elite groups are supplemented by additional riot-trained officers in Police Support Units, in which the paramilitary nature of their assignment is only slightly lower key. Indeed "crowd control" or riot work is now a basic part of police training.

Anti-fascist

PSUs have played a role in attacking anti-fascist mobilisations such as that in Leicester in April 1979. PSUs from no less than 20 forces outside the city were mobilised (including a 42 vehicle convoy bringing 600 heavies from Manchester).

In the riot at St. Pauls in Bristol last year police withdrew and held back — waiting for reinforcements of trained riot police to arrive from other areas.

The brutal physical tactics of the SPGs and PSUs are supplemented by an increasing police programme of firearms training. 12,000 police officers currently receive regular handgun training. And the occasions on which guns are issued go up in number each year.

The growth of these armed detachments and paramilitary forces and the spread of "fire brigade policing" also has its impact on the police force as a whole. Officers serve only a 2 year term in the Special Patrol Groups, for example: but the training remains a part of their response to daily situations — and SPG techniques have become standard police practice.

Para-military

The last ten years have therefore brought a substantial shift in the character and conscious role of the police force. And not every police chief is happy about it.

One Chief Constable, John Alderson from the rather more placid rural area of Devon and Cornwall, has been among the most prominent critics of the slide towards paramilitary tactics, which has gained most momentum in the main indus-

trial cities.

The traditional notion of the police as a preventive force, focussed on civil issues is under attack, he has warned.

"Social pressures tend more and more to seduce police thinking and public awareness away from this towards a quasi-military reactive concept."

This, he warns, could lead to a style of policing "more akin to that of an occupying army."

The hard-pressed residents of Brixton, Toxteth and other inner city communities will know exactly what Alderson is talking about.

But they will also know that if Alderson represents the liberal wing of the police, police chiefs in their own areas are emerging as openly political figures, backing up every reactionary movement by the Tory government, pressing for sweeping new powers, and making their main target the repression of strikes, demonstrations and working class resistance.

They will know that even at a time when there are more police than at any time in British history — 113,000 at the end of 1979 — the Thatcher government continues to hand policemen lavish pay rises (60% in 2 years) and to seek further recruitment.

This is no accident. It flows from the conscious policy of successive Tory and Labour governments to strengthen the machinery of the capitalist state. They do so in order to withstand the anger and mass action of a working class driven to desperation by unemployment, poverty, and social service cutbacks.

CND demo

By Arthur Bough

NEARLY 300 people marched in the sunshine from Newcastle to Hanley in Stoke-on-Trent on August 1 as part of North Staffs CND's festival against the bomb.

About 500 people later listened to bands and sketches by local CND theatre group Limited Theatre Warfare in Hanley's Forest Park.

Though there was little support from surrounding areas the Festival is seen as a success by North Staffs CND.

There are about 500 members of CND in the area, and many people believe that the local turnout for the march and festival would have been higher were it not for rumours that the fascists were going to attack the demonstration, and the fact that there was a large rock concert the same day only a couple of miles down the road in Burslem.



WHEN Polish workers occupied their shipyards last summer, the police and managers were kept out.

Yet there was perfect order. The place was kept tidy, machines were protected, food was distributed, posters were produced, all in an orderly way.

The Polish workers did not need the police. They organised themselves, chose stewards from among themselves, and created their own 'community self-policing'.

The socialist alternative to the present police force is the extension of that working-class self-organisation from individual workplaces to the whole of society.

In the present police force, men and women are separated off from the rest of society and locked into a rigid, closed hierarchy. But organised workers in each area could set up their own rotas from among themselves, to patrol the streets and

How to replace the police

help in emergencies.

The police force is tightly controlled from above by Chief Constables closely linked with the ruling top five per cent. Workers' patrols in each area would be directly controlled by the local community.

To many people it seems that the police are necessary to establish formal equality before the law. We may reform them, but we can't remove them.

But formal equality, in a class-divided society, can only be half-equality. 'Impartially', the police stop effective picketing for everyone alike; 'impartially', they protect multi-million accumulations of property for whoever owns them.

Protecting established privilege and power, the police are the weapon of the wealth top five per cent. Holding the monopoly of licensed the police force recruits the least class-conscious kids from the working class, and trains them in a hot-house of corruption, brutality, authoritarianism, racism and sexism.

And so blacks, trade unionists, women and youth cannot expect even formal equal treatment

from the police.

Can the police be reformed? Disbandment of special groups, dismissal of police chiefs, greater public control, and democratic rights in the force, should be demanded and sometimes can be partially won.

But in a society dominated by class struggle, the police are the weapon of the ruling class — and the ruling class will never allow the defences of their power and privilege to dissolve peacefully and gradually. They will use their weapons while they still have them, to suppress any dangerous reforms.

The police of the capitalist class must be replaced by the self-organisation of the working class. The school for that self-organisation is picket lines, demonstrations, meetings — any activity where working people democratically organise our own law and order.

Right now, working class communities like Liverpool 8 and Moss Side need to stop police vans tearing down their streets at 50 mph, killing and maiming those who are too slow getting out of the

way. They need to stop brutal revenge-raids and house searches.

Working class law and order in those areas means getting the cops withdrawn, and establishing organised labour movement/community patrols.

When we kick out the Tories, we need a workers' government — a government really accountable to the labour movement.

Already Labour and the TUC have demanded disbandment of the SPG. But a workers' government will have to go further.

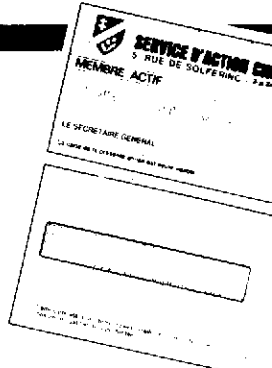
In Britain's cities now, every section of the police is being turned to 'SPG' tactics. Anderton, Oxford, and McNee, and their colleagues and deputies, are all determined to make the police a combat force against the working class.

The whole police force must be disbanded — and replaced by workers' patrols, drawn from and accountable to the communities where they operate.



Shady role of secret society in murder campaigns

SAC card: 'The cardholder pledges himself on his honour to give unconditional support to the objectives defined by General de Gaulle'



THE POLICE AND THE NETWORK OF POWER

THE parliamentary road to socialism depends on the idea that the police are 'neutral' and will do whatever Parliament tells them.

This idea is contradicted every week now, with James Anderton, Kenneth Oxford, and David McNee openly appearing as spokesmen for hard-line repression.

And more spectacular evidence about politics and the police has come from a recent case in France.

Twelve members or sympathisers of the Service d'Action Civique (SAC: the strong-arm squad of the Gaullist movement) have been charged with involvement in the murder of Jacques Massie and five of his family, including an 8-year old child.

Massie was also an SAC member, and a police inspector in Marseilles.

One of the SAC thugs, Jean-Bruno Finochietti, has admitted to the murder, saying it was done on 'orders from above', and another, Didier Campana, says the purpose of the attack on Massie was to recover 'compromising documents'.

No-one knows what those documents were. But among the 12 men charged is Pierre Debizet, secretary general of SAC since 1968.

Gaullist

Gaullist politicians — calculating that SAC's useful life is finished — have protested Debizet's innocence, but also claimed that links between SAC and Gaullist politics are now just history. Meanwhile, it has been revealed that one in four SAC members in Marseilles is a policeman, but a number of the accused have criminal records including hold-ups and arms thefts.

Campana, it turns out, was active in left wing circles as an agent provocateur. And Finochietti, a known neo-Nazi, has suggested that the French secret police, SDECE, was also involved.

Debizet's police file is empty — because of a 'general clear out' just before the new Socialist



The four leaders of the 1961 coup in Algeria

government took office!

But the SAC is a shadow of what it once was. Its membership is 5,000; it was 20,000 in 1968.

It ends in a trail of petty crime, but it started in major struggles for political power.

The forerunner of SAC was the Service d'Ordre (steward squad) of the RPF, the Gaullist movement of the 1940s.

This squad was 16,000 strong, armed, and well-financed.

From money provided by several bankers (Morgan, Lazard Freres, Credit Lyonnais) and by the Dassault aircraft firm, its members were paid a substantial wage.

It had a training school, cars, vans, radios and a military police unit at its disposal, allocated by the army general staff — against the express orders of the minister of defence.

De Gaulle had resigned as President in 1946, after the National Assembly had rejected his plans for a presidential 'strong state'.

He launched the RPF as a right wing, violently anti-communist, movement.

The Service d'Ordre, recruited from Gaullist ex-Resistance fighters but also from right wing thugs of all varieties, smashed up CP meetings, helped create company unions in firms like Sinca, and developed its links in the police and armed forces.

Salan

But, as the post-war political turmoil subsided, so did the RPF's chances of seizing power. In 1951 de Gaulle dissolved the RPF and later retired to the countryside.

Gaullist politicians continued to operate in the National Assembly, but de Gaulle was contemptuous of 'sterile party politics'. He was waiting for a crisis, when he could overturn the constitution and come forward as the 'saviour of the nation'.

The Algerian war produced that crisis. After France's defeat in Indochina,

the Algerian Muslims' bitter hatred of French colonialism broke out into open war.

Soon the French government was caught in a dilemma. It could not win. But it dare not make peace. The one million European settlers in Algeria had hardened in racist determination to maintain their privileges over the eight million Muslims.

In this crisis the Gaullists plotted. In January 1957 settler-extremists tried to kill General Salan, newly-appointed commander of the French army in Algeria.

The killers said they were operating under orders from a group of politicians — notably de Gaulle's future Prime Minister Michel Debre — who were preparing for a coup in Paris. No-one knew for sure, because the case was allowed to drag on until July 1958 and then the chief assassin was allowed to escape.

Salan was suspected of Socialist sympathies, but soon proved his commitment to 'French Algeria'. On 13

May 1958 a motley alliance of fascists seized power in Algiers, and installed a 'Committee of Public Safety' led by Generals Salan and Massu.

Most of the leaders of the coup just wanted to stop a 'sell-out' of 'French Algeria'. But the Gaullists had a clear programme.

Gaullist agent Leon Debecque — sent to Algiers by Jacques Chaban Delmas — prepared plans for an invasion of France. Support was certain from units stationed in France. As a warning shot, paratroopers seized Corsica.

The government in Paris — now led by Pierre Pflimlin, with the Socialist Guy Mollet as his deputy — dithered.

They had all the pomp and authority of parliamentary democracy to support them. But they had no bodies of armed men — and the last thing they wanted was to arm the workers.

On 27 May de Gaulle announced he was forming a government. On the 28th Pflimlin resigned, and on the 31st the Socialists decided to support de Gaulle.

The National Assembly scrapped the constitution, voted full powers to de Gaulle, and sent itself on holiday for four months.

De Gaulle's men slid into the posts of power. And the SAC was set up. Its hard core were men like Debizet, from the old Service d'Ordre of the RPF.

Most of the leaders of the Algerian coup had been tricked. De Gaulle moved slowly but unmistakably towards independence for Algeria — the only way out.

The Army, and the Europeans of Algeria, reacted angrily. In April 1961 four generals, including Salan, seized power once again in Algiers.

This coup collapsed after a few days because the generals had no clear aims — and de Gaulle did what neither Socialists nor Communists had dared do in 1958, appealing to rank and file soldiers to defy their officers' orders.

Salan and most of the other leaders of the coup went underground, and started a bloody terrorist campaign in the cause of 'French Algeria'. From January 1962 their 'Secret Army Organisation' (OAS) killed an average of ten people a day.

There was frequent, indiscriminate slaughter of Muslims — and also a whole string of attempts to kill de Gaulle.

Some SAC members — Debizet among them — had dropped out, disillusioned by de Gaulle's Algeria policy. But the remainder were thrown into counter-terrorist operations against both the OAS and the Algerian FLN.

The general strike of May-June 1968 brought the SAC to the fore again. De Gaulle announced an amnesty for all the ex-OAS leaders sentenced after 1962, and brought people like Debizet back into SAC. Jean-Jacques Susini, one of the most notorious leaders of the OAS, also worked with SAC.

May 1968

SAC organised the Gaullist 'Committees for the Defence of the Republic', and mobilised for the mass demonstration in Paris on 30 May which backed de Gaulle with slogans like 'Cohn-Bendit to Dachau'.

There were also more ambitious reserve plans. SAC circulars gave lists (obtained from the secret police) of 820 left wing activists and asked local SAC chiefs to be ready to seize them as soon as orders came from Paris.

When de Gaulle resigned in 1969 the SAC announced that it would 'clench its fists' and 'continue the struggle'. But its activity declined.

It was still used for heavy-handed stewarding of meetings by Gaullists and other right wingers.

And SAC had all sorts of side activities. Debizet, as well as being secretary-general of SAC since 1968

has also been a 'technical adviser' to the President in Gabon.

In 1979 a man named Robert Luong, who had been having an affair with the President's wife, shot dead in France.

Ben Barka

No-one knows for what the SAC did murder; but in another murder case linked to former French African colonies SAC involvement is almost certain.

In 1965 Mehdi Barka, a Moroccan opposition leader, was stopped in Paris by two men presenting police cards — and seen again.

The SAC has also been closely linked with counter-terrorism against politicians for self-government in Corsica.

Indeed, the SAC has a finger in almost every reactionary pie.

When gunmen fired a picket line in Reims in 1977, killing one of workers, the killer was found to be both a member of France's fascist union federation, the CFT, and a card-holder.

When de Gaulle's personal regime went, so did the usefulness of the SAC to the French state.

As early as 1969 a wing Minister of the Interior, Raymond Marcellin, calling for SAC to be banned. This latest may finish it off.

But the network links between right wing politicians, policemen, businessmen, strong arm men and the military exist.

The strongest link in their common class will certainly be a crisis.

Unless the left is organised and prepared to meet them on, we will be less as the parliament of May 1958.

MARTIN THOM

World news

Reagan's new Euro bomb

by Alexis Carras

THE REAGAN Administration has announced to a stunned world its intention of going ahead with the production of the neutron bomb.

This bomb was first proposed by Carter in 1978. Then, the outcry was so fierce, the reaction so furious, that Carter had to back down.

Only after prior consultation with European governments, we were told, would any firm decision be taken about the neutron bomb.

But President Reagan is made of much sterner stuff. Representing the more warlike ambitions of the American ruling class, he has contemptuously pushed aside all pretence of consultations with his (unreliable) "European allies" and announced that neutron bomb production will commence immediately.

The "ultimate capitalist weapon", disposing of people but leaving property relatively intact and undamaged, the neutron bomb is an integral part of US imperialism's decision to risk a 'limited' nuclear war.

US imperialism has put detente with the Soviet bureaucracy on the backburner, and relaunched its cold war offensive with a vengeance.

Behind this new war drive, the huge defence industries are reaping enormous profits as they jealously compete for military contracts like the enormous MX missile system.

The Russian invasion of Afghanistan, conveniently for imperialism, has temporarily obscured the real causes and roots of the present drift to war, and allowed imperialism to rattle on hypocritically about "the defence of the free world".

But by the "defence of the free world" these warmongers mean they want to prevent a repeat of the humiliating defeats which imperialism has suffered in Vietnam and in Africa.

The new war drive is 'justified' in terms of halting a supposedly inevitable Russian advance into Central Europe. According to the scenario of the warmongers, the neutron bomb — a weapon of intense but geographically limited

radiation spread — will destroy the Soviet armies and tank crews, and military equilibrium will be reestablished as NATO armies move in to fill the vacuum.

No proof has been offered that the Russians will advance. But the US government and its apologists are peddling the fantastic idea that it is possible to engage in a limited nuclear war, and win!

The labour movement must not have the slightest illusions about this. If the European working classes East and West have been chosen as imperialism's expendable pawns, then their fate will be shared by the rest of humanity as well. Nuclear war, once commenced, will almost certainly engulf the entire planet in a holocaust.

We must build the CND campaign, and give it a firm labour movement orientation, demanding unilateral nuclear disarmament and withdrawal from NATO.

No to Trident, no to Cruise, No to the Neutron bomb, no to NATO!



South African troops on 'hot pursuit'

S.African racists invade Angola

by Jim Farnham

IN RECENT weeks, the South African army has launched a massive invasion of Southern Angola, from its bases in occupied Namibia.

The South African government and its military chiefs have boasted loudly about what they call their 'hot pursuit' operations against Namibian freedom fighters of SWAPO, whose bases and supply network are concentrated in Angola.

But it is clear from the scale of the latest invasion, and from the six years of South African military aggression against Angola, that the terrorism of the South African capitalist class and their apartheid state is part of an even wider strategy.

This strategy is aimed both at crushing Namibian resistance, and at attacking the political gains of the Angolan working class and oppressed.

Behind the conspiracy of silence, behind the diplomacy and the verbal 'opposition' to apartheid and South African colonial rule in Namibia, lies the active support of this strategy by the imperialist powers.

Guerillas

In 1975-6, the joint South African/imperialist efforts to crush the mass uprising in Angola were defeated.

The Angolan working class spearheaded the struggle that broke the chains of Portuguese colonialism, swept the MPLA to power, strengthened the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe, and opened up a base of support for Namibian guerillas.

In Namibia itself, workers and peasants were advancing against colonial rule, drawing confidence from the Angolan struggle. From that time on, the South African government has not ceased its military attacks into Angola —

trying both to hammer SWAPO and to discipline the Angolan masses.

In May 1978 they launched a murderous attack on Kassinga refugee camp. Hundreds of Namibian workers, peasants and their children were blown up, bayoneted and mutilated by these butchers.

In June 1980, the daily raids escalated into a full-scale invasion of Kunene province in southern Angola.

Thousands of South African troops, with jet-bombers and helicopter gunships, massacred Angolan peasants and Namibian refugees, destroyed villages, carried out massive economic sabotage and attacked MPLA and SWAPO fighters.

Invasion

The current invasion has seen the same terrorist murders and economic devastation. The imperialist governments have voiced the same token criticism of the South African government — while in reality their interests and their power are behind the South African ruling class.

The Reagan government in particular has moved to strengthen imperialist support for the South African state, as the crisis of imperialist control and profits in Southern Africa deepens.

Imperialism is facing a crisis of political control on every front, as the working masses of South Africa have driven forward in struggle.

The great strike waves in Namibia and South Africa in 1972-3, the smashing of Portuguese colonial rule in Mozambique and Angola in 1974-5, the 1976 Soweto uprising in South Africa, the toppling of the racist Smith regime in Zimbabwe — these have been the landmarks of the forward movement of the struggle which has weakened the grip of imperialism.

That movement contin-

ues to develop — with a mighty upsurge of the black working class in South Africa; powerful strikes by mineworkers in Zambia; mounting anger and struggle against Mugabe's neocolonial bosses' government in Zimbabwe; the struggle of workers in Angola and Mozambique to carry forward their anti-colonial victories, against the obstacle of the MPLA and Frelimo governments which they put in power; and the courageous and unbroken struggle in Namibia against vicious colonial rule and forced cheap labour.

The butcher Reagan, his hands dripping... with the blood of El Salvador, has taken up the question of Angola as part of his anti-working-class cold war campaign.

He has seized on the presence of Cuban troops in Angola, and the limited military and economic support by the Soviet Union for the MPLA government and SWAPO — using these to justify the policy of the iron fist.

And for imperialism, the iron fist in Southern Africa is the South African state.

This has not ruled out the possibility of drawing the SWAPO leadership into a new neocolonial bosses' government in Namibia, designed to politically weaken and control the mass movement.

Option

In fact, the strength of the mass resistance forces imperialism to keep this option alive, and the necessary secret diplomacy continues. But the depth of the crisis, and the power of mass militancy and struggle throughout the region (and therefore of mass pressure on the leadership) mean that there is less and less room for manoeuvre.

Reagan has more and more openly tied the question of Namibian independence to the overall need to strengthen imperialist

domination over Angola and the whole region. And this demands an escalation of attack.

The working masses face the crucial task of strengthening their defences — and they need the maximum support from the labour movement in Britain and internationally.

The immediate and urgent focus of international class solidarity must be the defence of Angola and SWAPO against South African/imperialist attack.

This defence cannot be left in the hands of the MPLA government and the SWAPO leadership, whose politics of class collaboration are incapable of mobilising and building the independent strength of workers and oppressed.

It cannot be left in the hands of the Soviet and Cuban governments, who have been looking for ways of withdrawing from Angola, and who put their own interests as privileged bureaucracies above the interests of the working masses internationally.

Blacking

And it cannot be left in the hands of the bureaucrats at the head of the labour movement in the imperialist countries — who have long shown that they stand opposed to independent workers' action on every issue.

The working class — and it alone — has the power to give real help to the Angolan and Namibian masses, and to mobilise real obstacles in the path of the imperialists and the South African capitalists. The fight for such action must be taken up in the labour movement.

The labour leaders must be forced to back up their anti-apartheid words with deeds to mobilise class solidarity action.

A crucial part of such action must be the fight to organise blacking against military and related supplies to the South African state.

Change of generals in Bolivia

FOUR IMPORTANT tin mines are still on strike in Bolivia, while the generals try to settle the country's future between them.

On August 3rd, a section of the army led by General Natusch launched a rebellion against the corrupt right-wing regime of General Garcia Meza.

The elected government in exile overthrown by Garcia Meza has backed the uprising, and the leaders of the COB union federation called a general strike in support.

Seeing defeat ahead, Garcia Meza handed over to a junta led by army chief-of-staff General Bernal, which is now negotiating with Natusch.

But the workers at the

four striking mines have refused to line up behind any of the generals. And the Bolivian Revolutionary Workers' Party, in a statement on 4th August by its Central Cell in Europe, has declared:

"The Bolivians do not forget either of the murderous generals, Banzer and Natusch. The latter was the main actor in the November Massacre of 1979.

"Nor do we forget Guevara Arze, Siles Zuazo or Siles Salinas, 'democratic' lackeys of imperialism [and leaders of the government in exile], who are backing the present coup, giving all their support to the oppressors of the past whose crimes still remain in the memory of the Bolivian people."

"Now is the time for the masses to go out onto the streets and use the crisis of power provoked by the present coup to seize the chance to solve the crisis according to their own interests — occupy the factories, universities, radio stations, etc.

"The working class, leading the Bolivian exploited masses, will smash the fascist dictatorship so that it never rises again. For that purpose it has to finish with the bourgeoisie itself.

"That is why, more than before, we need moral and material international solidarity from the international workers' movement..."



This week is the first anniversary of the founding of the free Polish workers' trade union movement — Solidarity.

More demonstrations and street marches are planned, to protest against food shortages and win the release of political prisoners. But the government of Stanislaw Kania is threatening to take reprisals.

And to back up the Polish government's appeal for 'order', for the last few days the Russian fleet has been cruising off the coast of Poland, Russian, East German, Czech and Polish army units have been carrying out training exercises in Poland, in the south east of the country.

The struggle for a Labour Party in the USA

STEVE BRYANT, a member of the Socialist League (Democratic Centralist) in San Francisco, spoke to Socialist Organiser at the recent Trotskyist International Liaison Committee summer school. The SL(DC) has just fused with the Detroit-based Revolutionary Workers' League, and the fused RWL is a sympathising group of the TILC.

COULD YOU explain about the fight for a Labour Party?

The trade unions openly support the capitalist parties in the US. Most of them supported Carter, some support Reagan, very few are supporting a Labour Party.

One small Stalinist-influenced union, the United Electrical Workers, has come out for a Labour Party, but they still support Democrats.

There is discussion going on in the trade union movement nationally around the question of a Labour Party.

William Winpisinger, the head of the million-strong Machinists' Union, is also a member of the Democratic Socialist Organising Committee. He has said he thinks that there should be a discussion about a Labour Party, and a resolution was passed at his union convention calling for this discussion.

In the Oil Workers' Union Tony Moussaki is running for president, arguing for that union to break from the Democrats and launch a Labour Party.

One of our supporters, involved in a coalition we helped to build, is running for president of the Carpenters' Union in the US on a Labour Party policy and for autonomy for the Canadian unions.

So there is a movement among a small number of union locals around the question of a Labour Party. And the head of the State Federation of Labour (AFL-CIO) in California, John Henning, has called a number of conferences to

talk about Labour and the two-party system. The Californian unions have 1.8 million AFL-CIO members.

We have built a coalition of trade unionists — people on executive boards, some officials, and rank and file members — who are campaigning for a Labour Party, putting out literature and organising union locals to support independent Labour candidates.

We've been involved in a number of struggles in that area.

Have there been previous attempts to set up a Labour Party in the USA?

There have been regional Labour Parties in the USA — the American Labour Party in New York and the Farmer-Labour Party in the '30s in Minnesota.

Both ended up supporting Roosevelt and the Democrats.

They were taken over by the Stalinists, who then turned to the Democrats; and then there was a witch-hunt of Communists and others in these parties.

And the other Labour Party movements have always been regional, too, and have always ended up back with the Democratic politicians.

Apparently Tony Benn was over recently to speak on the Labour Party. Do you know of any response to that?

What Benn said was that the way to build a Labour Party was to work in the capitalist parties in the USA.

But the reality is that



Los Angeles dockworkers at anti-Reagan rally

first of all a lot of workers don't even vote. Most workers are not involved in the Democratic Party, and most workers don't like

their unions.

They need their unions, but they don't like them, because the bureaucracy basically has a business-

union orientation and doesn't support their fight for better conditions.

Benn doesn't see the movement for a Labour Party as a movement among the rank and file, and as a struggle within the labour movement.

He sees it rather through progressive union leaders who will come out for a Labour Party.

Union

The reality is that the trade union leadership in the US in general does not want a Labour Party, because it would open up a Pandora's Box of political questions.

At the conferences we have had in Los Angeles and the Bay Area, every question arose in relation to a Labour Party — the question of racism; of defence committees against the KKK; the question of South Africa; US intervention in El Salvador, and the fact that the AFL-CIO openly supports it (through the American Institute of Free Labour Development).

Discussion also took place on the question of unemployment and plant occupations. All these political problems are immediately raised in a discussion of 'What programme for Labour?'

The union leadership are aware that a Labour Party would accelerate that political discussion, and promote political struggle in broad layers of the labour movement.

Conscious

So they are very conscious in their opposition to

GAINS FOR LEFT AT RIVER ROUGE

THERE IS a new force to be reckoned with in UAW Local 600 [the carworkers' union branch at Ford River Rouge, in Detroit — and the largest union branch in the world].

That force is the United Front Slate (UFS). The UFS is made up of 19 workers from several plants at the Ford Rouge complex, including assembly, stamping and engine. They are black and white, skilled and unskilled, and include a leading woman militant.

But most important of all, they are united on a class-struggle programme. For this reason, their campaign is important to all of us.

Slimy

The UFS calls for skimming off the slimy layer of labour traitors that has been floating on our hard-earned dues dollars for too long.

It spells out the need for independent working-class political action. It calls for nationalising oil, energy and utilities under workers' control and without compensation.

The UFS candidates also argued for the formation of

a workers' party based on the unions.

The United Front Slate was formed when the Committee for a Militant and Democratic UAW (CMD-UAW) — a caucus based mainly in production and supported politically by the Revolutionary Workers' League — began to meet with the 600 Organiser (a caucus based mainly in skilled trades) and a leading independent militant from skilled trades.

The meetings hammered out a programme of class-struggle demands to serve as the basis for an election slate.

The sight of two militant caucuses crossing fists for a common assault on the company and its friends, the union bureaucrats, inspired other militant workers to join the United Front Slate.

From the beginning, the United Front Slate agreed that all tendencies on the slate had the right to present their differences on political and tactical questions not covered by the UFS programme.

This was a real blow to

Abridged from 'Fighting Worker', the paper of the Revolutionary Workers' League of the USA.

sectarianism and a real lesson for everyone involved.

It proved that political differences do not have to be barriers to joint action, in this case the fight to overthrow the bankrupt leadership of the largest UAW local in the world.

The recent election campaign at UAW Local 600 represents a modest gain for class-struggle opposition forces in the UAW.

Percentage

Although the percentage of votes for each socialist candidate increased little over the last election, the number of higher seniority black and white workers willing to stand on such a programme increased dramatically, and consequently

there was a dramatic increase in the actual number of votes won.

United Front Slate candidates received, on an average, between 15 and 30% of the votes received by the top bureaucratic vote-getters, and came in ahead of many out-bureaucrats.

They also out-poll Communist Party-supported candidates running on a reformist programme.

This demonstrates that there is a significant percentage of autoworkers who are interested in a class-struggle/socialist alternative to their union leadership, and that the number of workers willing to stand openly for this alternative is increasing.

The task that now faces class-struggle militants at Ford is to consolidate the gains of this united front and move forward into a broader arena of struggle.

The RWL is convinced that the quality and seriousness of the militants actively involved in this united-front effort will make further joint work a real and exciting possibility, as well as a real step forward for the workers at Ford Rouge.

a Labour Party.

But they are going to have to mobilise at least protest action against Reagan.

On September 19th there is going to be a mass demonstration in Washington, called by the AFL-CIO, protesting the policies of the Reagan government.

The union leadership see it mainly as a pressure on the capitalist politicians. We intend to organise trade union locals to go there with the Campaign for a Labour Party and to fight for general strike action against the Reagan government as an answer to his budget cuts.

What about the fight for women's liberation?

In St Louis we've been active in the struggle against discrimination on the job, where women are harassed. One of our comrades who is a shop steward campaigned to defend a woman cab driver who was harassed.

In San Francisco we've campaigned among hotel and restaurant workers against discrimination. The maids do the hardest work in the hotel, but are paid the least.

What about positive discrimination?

There is a women's committee in the local, but the problem in most unions is the total lack of democracy. It's a battle just to get an election.

And this women's committee has been set up with the proviso that it can't get involved politically in the union.

It goes along to demonstrations, sets up stalls, etc., but it's not really organising on the job against harassment.

Recently there was a strike in Wayne, Massachusetts, in an electrical plant. A woman clerical worker was taken in a car to a bar by two bosses and harassed and fondled by them.

She reported this to her union, and the employers didn't do anything; but the workers at the plant went on strike.

Clerical and production workers shut the plant down, forcing the transfer of these bosses.

It was a very significant strike, the first one against harassment of women in the US.

What about work among gay people in San Francisco?

With the election of Reagan, the attacks on gay people have really been stepped up.

Firstly, they passed a law which would outlaw legal rights for gay people.

There was also a ruling that gay people could not come into the country. But the main thing is the attack from the Congress and the Senate, where they are passing a Family Home Act which would discriminate against gay people and keep them from teaching in schools.

There is a general increase in harassment and attacks on gay people from the right wing.

On Gay Freedom Day, the largest demonstration was in San Francisco, about 300,000. For the first time there were contingents from trade union locals — about ten to fifteen contingents, including the hotel and restaurant workers.

We supported these contingents, and the Labour Party Coalition had a leaflet connecting the struggle for gay and lesbian rights with the struggle for a Labour Party and against the Democrats (some of whom are supporting attacks on gays).

Gay workers

A large part of the gay movement in the past has been controlled by a petty-bourgeois leadership.

But, particularly in the Bay Area where there is a large concentration of gays, Reagan's offensive has politicised more and more gays. They see now that they have to organise. They can't simply have a free life-style without assault and repression from the Government.

Also, the gay petty bourgeois leadership, in their businesses, bars and restaurants, have prevented unionisation, saying that the unions are anti-gay.

So now there's an organisation called Solidarity in San Francisco which is fighting to defend gay workers victimised at a gay hotel in San Francisco. They were fired because they didn't want their wages cut, and they wanted better conditions.

There was a picket for a couple of months by the gay workers and other workers from the Hotel and Restaurant Workers who support their struggle. One of the slogans was, 'A gay boss is still a boss'.

What about the black community?

There have been a number of attacks on the homes of black workers in the East Bay area. A door was blown in with a shot-gun, and the KKK and racists attempted to burn the house down.

So there was a committee formed against the Klan attacks. When the Klan staged a counter-demonstration in Richmond, there was a meeting of 600 trade unionists and workers to organise against it.

The CP and the priests did not want any mass demonstration, and the union officials did not want any demonstration by the union.

The leaders said, 'We'll hire guards [rentacops], as they're known in the States] to be in front of the homes', and in this way they prevented any kind of union defence guards being formed.

There is still racism in the unions, and whites have better jobs than blacks.

Reagan has cut a lot of jobs from minorities in particular. The Budget cuts, combined with mass unemployment, are going to create a very explosive situation in the ghettos.

— Women in struggle — BLIND WOMEN VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

by a member of the
Liberation Network for
People with Disabilities



Leeds demonstration against violence against women: blind women face special problems

WHEN I tell people that I have been sexually assaulted, they throw up their hands in horror, finding it disgusting that someone should take advantage of me.

They think it only happens to "normal" women. I am what society is pleased to call blind. I have a visual disability and use a white stick.

Every day, wherever I am, people are touching me,

taking my arm to guide me, pushing me about. Some people have used my situation and the body contact involved to assault me. This happens on the streets, on public transport and in public buildings.

When I was an undergraduate, I lived in a student hall of residence, at the back of our college. There were two routes to it — through a desolate street, badly lit, or through the main college building.

One night, I was returning from the student bar and chose to take the "safe route". The college porter let me in, locking the door after us, as was the practice, and he took my arm to lead me.

Guise

We made polite conversation. After a while, he began to touch my breasts. I shook him off and tried to distract his attention back to

our conversation.

Then he pounced on me, tried to kiss and embrace me, running his hands over my body.

I pushed him away and continued walking down the corridor, trying to pretend it hadn't happened. Then he pounced again. I became angry, broke away from him and ran down the corridor.

As I got to the door at the other end, I slipped and fell. Struggling to get up, I remembered that the door was

locked.

He made as though to help me up and tried to embrace me again. I pushed him away and began screaming. After a while he seemed to think better of it and opened the door.

I was in my local railway station, late at night. I had been into the ladies' toilets, which lead out into the waiting room.

When I emerged, I found a man standing in front of the door. I said that I wanted to get out. He grabbed me.

I shook him off, but he grabbed me again, this time, touching my breasts. I pushed him away, but he advanced, pinned me against the wall and began running his hands over my body. I was struggling and started screaming.

Then he pushed me more violently, so I hit him around the head and face, screaming again. No one came. He got angry and I kicked him and screamed even more. Then I was alone.

I thought about these incidents and why they were happening to me. Then I realised that both these men, alone with me late at night, under the guise of assisting me, had the excuse and the body contact to touch me sexually.

Since society has told me that I must accept all assistance offered to me with gratitude, I accepted the

initial contact. I did not feel that I had the right to refuse, that I did not want their help, that I did not need their help. And, because I did not discourage them, they took advantage of me.

I have thought much about how to behave in these situations, when people try to manipulate me. It is their natural reaction to wish to control something they don't understand. They are afraid of me and feel guilty about my situation.

Thinking about themselves, if they couldn't see, either they can't imagine what it is like for me or, worse, they try to imagine and conclude that it's terrible.

But I am used to my situation and know what is best for me. I know that to be grabbed disorients me, as they are pushing me in front of them and I don't have any control.

I know that it is best that I take their arm, since then I am touching them and the control is in my hands, so that I can let go if I want to. It is hard to release myself from a tenacious grip.

People are like this to me because it is deep in our culture, right back to Oedipus, Tyresias, Milton and Blind Pew.

Oedipus blinded himself to atone for the horror of his incest. It was an act of castration and he became

sexless. The gods comforted Tyresias for the loss of his sight by giving him the power to prophesy. Blind Pew is a figure of fear and loathing, while Milton imbued his writings with anguish and despair over his blindness.

To many people, because of this heritage, we are seen as sexless objects. But we are contained in a female body, which our culture tells us, is not our own, but an object of fantasy and eroticism.

Men are brought up to believe that a woman's body is something for them to possess and control; that they can do what they like with her and society will acquiesce.

When a man comes into contact with a woman who is blind, his instincts are confused. She looks like a woman, but she can't see. When he takes her arm, he feels a woman's arm. Yet his culture tells him that she is sexless and something to be feared. So he becomes confused.

How can this be stopped? I say to all men: "Get your hands off me! Ask me if I want any assistance. Don't push me about, but let me take your arm."

"I don't want your attention. If you are confused about the situation, then leave me alone." Then I am in control.

This is only one facet of the whole issue of women and sexual harassment. It is an area which has been grossly ignored, by the women's movement and by the labour movement and I feel that it is time that this issue, and the struggle of people with disabilities in general, was actively supported by the women's movement and the labour movement.

After all, the struggle of people with disabilities concerns the same aims — the right to benefit from the advantages of this society, without discrimination or open hostility. The liberation of people with disabilities is a political struggle.

Partial victory on equal pay

by John Lister

A TEN-DAY strike by 1,500 local government workers in San Jose, California, has brought a major step forward in the fight for equal pay to women.

The strike, by Local 101 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, was supported by both men and women workers.

Its demands — for equal pay for comparable rather than simply equal work — stood to benefit not only women workers but also male workers in women-dominated jobs.

Stretching

The demands arose following a report which showed that jobs in which women were in the majority were paid anything from 2% to 20% less than male-dominated jobs.

But the demand for equal pay has repercussions stretching far beyond the municipal administration in San Jose.

The city is at the centre of the electronics industry, in which thousands of largely unorganised women workers are subjected to particularly heavy exploitation.

Any concession on equal pay to the strikers — in the first-ever US strike on the issue — could send ripples of militancy throughout the electronics plants, and spread rapidly to the USA's two million women trade

unionists.

It was with this in view that the city council at first rejected a four year package deal to phase in equal pay for comparable work, agreed between unions and the council's own negotiator.

This had a particular irony — since the city is regarded as the "women's capital of the USA", in which a majority of councillors are women, as is the Mayor, Janet Gray Hayes.

With electricians and

plumbers respecting the AFSCME picket lines, and angry strikers lobbying and even bursting into closed council meetings, the council leaders were eventually forced to agree a compromise two-year deal, together with a substantially improved pay offer.

The funds allocated to work towards equal pay allow for an average upward adjustment of 9.6% for women in the underpaid jobs — with some increases as much as 15%.



San Jose women on picket lines

Nursery closures

by Susan Carlyle

CONTRADICTION reports in the local press, saying that no decisions have been made yet about the nursery closures, are not deterring an all-borough campaign against threatened cutbacks in Tower Hamlets, East London.

Shadwell day nursery is set for closure, and Queen Mary for transfer with loss of places.

The campaign committee plans to circulate a petition and letters in the community and in the labour movement.

Shadwell nursery has had its first meeting to gather support and find out more about the council's plans. Queen Mary has drawn the support of local London Hospital paediatricians.

The council has 'suspended' the waiting lists for these and other nurseries — not only sending out misinformation and rumour, but actually carrying out a policy of not referring children, so that places go begging.

Their argument then will be to close the nursery for lack of interest. Councillors have said that with so many women out of work, we don't need nurseries any more!

The nursery campaign intends to find parents still waiting for places, and make sure the nursery facilities are used by the people who need them.

* Contact the campaign c/o 36 Bradmore House, Jamaica Street, London E1.

THE ALTERNATIVE Talking Newspapers Collective has already got the second issue of its socialist magazine *Left Out* underway and is about to launch a feminist magazine, *Women's Tapeover*.

The magazines consist of articles, features, letters, etc., from a variety of socialist and feminist newspapers, magazines, etc.

The Collective needs assistance from sighted people with administrative work and with looking

through magazines and reading them onto tape.

Anyone interested should write to ATNC, Box 35, 136 Kingsland High Street, London E8 2NS, stating on the envelope if it is about helping or whatever and which magazine they want to help with.

The subscriptions are £3 per year for 12 monthly issues, and anyone who is blind or partially sighted or who for other reasons cannot read is welcome to subscribe.

Don't miss the Fightback AGM!



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 near Scarborough 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.

Cost: £18 for the whole weekend (including food), £7 for unwaged, small charge for children.

We must have registrations (and AGM resolutions) by Aug. 14th. All inquiries to Women's Fightback, 41 Ellington Street, London N7.

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

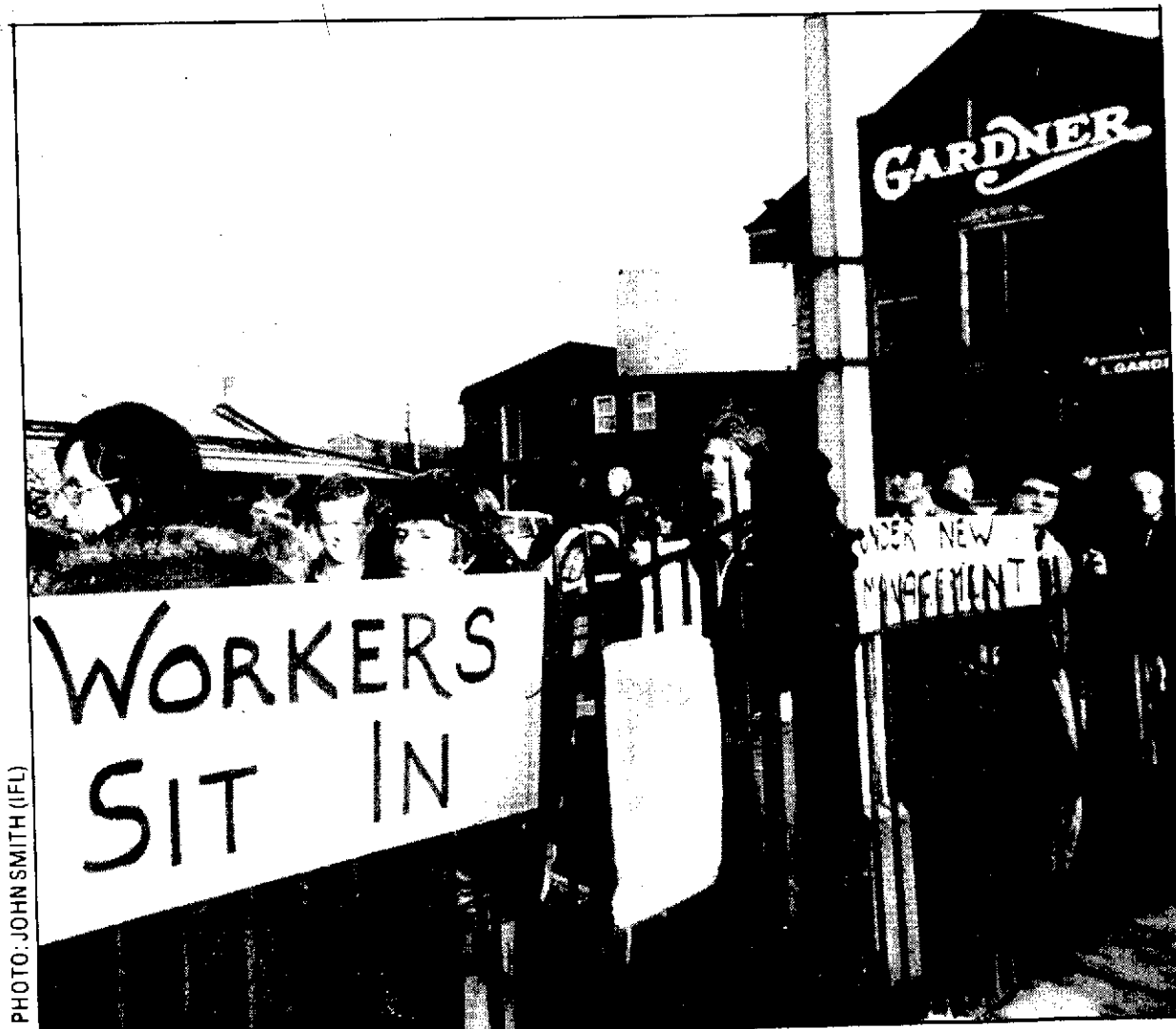


PHOTO: JOHN SMITH (FL)

The Gardners occupation — ended with 300 voluntary redundancies



Royal Pride: a pay fight grew into a fight for jobs

RIGHT TO WORK VERSUS RIGHT TO PROFIT

Where are we at in the jobs fightback? JOHN McILROY takes stock.

WHEN THE Eastern Leg of the People's March reached Sheffield it was met by the Plansee strikers who had for many weeks been actively fighting against unemployment.

But march stewards prevented the strikers collecting for their dispute and Plansee convenor Ian Paisley was refused permission to speak from the platform.

When the march reached the Midlands, TGWU regional secretary Brian Mathers was given a prominent place in the platform to condemn the Tories and argue the need to fight rising unemployment.

Yet Mr Mathers had just had a golden opportunity to do just that in the strike by TGWU members at Ansell's brewery, opposing closure.

In fact he did everything possible to get the strikers to accept unemployment. The Ansell workers present heckled and booed his contribution.

These incidents illustrate a central problem in the labour movement today.

Momentum

Since the Tories' retreat in the face of the miners in February the Labour Party-TUC campaign against unemployment has gained momentum. In the workplaces the fight against unemployment has flared at several small but important potential centres of resistance — Laurence Scotts, Lee Jeans, Ansell, Plansee.

But the leadership has done nothing to develop and link up these struggles, and

make them the centre of its campaign. It has carried on its campaign quite separate from these struggles and left them isolated.

The official 'campaign' refuses to build links. It offers words as a substitute for the failure to place all the resources of the movement behind existing struggles.

Dissipated

The mass shop floor support for the demonstration and the People's March shows that the makings of a fight are there but it is being dissipated.

Support for the fight that is actually going on now is ignored in favour of Michael Foot's vague rhetoric about the future, "... need to get the Tories out at the earliest possible opportunity."

We agree with Michael Foot on this objective. Unlike him we believe in creating that opportunity. To wait on the next election provides no answers to the problems workers face today.

It means allowing the Tories to batter away at the workers' movement for another 24 months. It means a disillusioned, demoralised movement which can swing to the right.

We support Lee Jeans and Laurence Scotts: "Because they are actively fighting unemployment and defending the movement. They are doing, not talking. Victories for them will strengthen the unions and raise the confidence of other workers."

"Because their struggles

open up the possibility of unity with other groups of workers whose interests are the same, and the potentiality of an escalating movement to achieve what Foot just talks about — bringing down the Tories.

We therefore call on Michael Foot and Len Murray to make available to the fighters the resources they are making available to the talkers.

We are not saying that there are not problems in moving in this direction. We are saying that the official leadership is not attempting to confront and grapple with these problems.

The present fightback is limited. There is genuine fear on the shop floor. Many workers cannot see a direct answer to the dole queue.

Let us look at some of the practical problems which will have to be overcome if these struggles are to be made more effective and develop into the kind of challenge to the Tories the leadership are not prepared to mount.

Central to success is winning the battle of ideas.

Earlier this year the Coal Board set about closing 30 pits.

Sell Jobs

They had a case. They argued that the existence of these pits pushes up the average price of coal and pulls down NCB profits. The loss the NCB makes is directly attributable to them.

What did the miners do? Start arguing within this framework of capitalist commonsense that the pits were really viable? Bring in their accountants to show they knew better than the Coal Board? Try to negotiate increases in the redundancy payments of up to £28,000?

No. They didn't allow this kind of argument to distract them from the real struggle. They acted on the basis that nobody has the right to sell working class jobs at whatever the price; that the needs of the workers come before the needs of state capitalist industry; that all the employers understand is the

application of well organised and swiftly administered brute force; that it was no good waiting on the leaders before taking action.

They didn't allow themselves to be sidetracked. They got stuck into the real struggle and they forced Thatcher to retreat.

We need to learn all these lessons, but above all that our starting point must be *work sharing on full pay, not enterprise profitability.*

The viability argument may even allow some workers to win a short term victory — but at the price of dividing the workers from brothers and sisters elsewhere and binding them tighter to the capitalist logic.

What shall we say to workers who have fought on the basis of profitability when our accountants later tell us the cupboard really is bare?

It is the years of basing pay claims on the need of capital, on the bosses' ability to pay rather than the workers' necessity to live which makes so many officials and stewards today hypnotised by workers making sacrifices to boost productivity, by increased redundancies and no-strike clauses.

Viability

Whilst avoiding the temptation to brand every single settlement as a sell-out, we also need to point to the limitations of victories won largely on the viability argument. At Gardiners, for example, the settlement involved 300 voluntary

redundancies, a short time working scheme and a single figure wage deal.

Workers struggling in plants not owned by profitable multinationals might receive an impetus from the fact that Gardiners fought and organised. How far the example of Gardiners would help when the going gets tough is another matter.

Open the books? Yes! But not to debate on the terrain of viability but to educate in the workings of the system, to take the workers forward to self-management.

Immediately

A threatened workforce must act *immediately* in the face of redundancies. Otherwise enthusiasm can be dissipated. At Talbot's Linwood plant, like at Dunlop's plant on Merseyside, much time and energy was put into lobbying on the basis that the plant was viable and good will promises before the workers took any action.

This was a diversion from mobilising the workers inside the plant. Outside support can be lined up once an occupation starts. It is no substitute for a struggle to achieve it.

The initial battle must be won *inside* the workplace. When Linwood stewards talked of a meeting of 700 West of Scotland stewards, many of the more cynical workers, aware of the limitation of this, shouted 'promises, promises'.

Yet at Laurence Scott's the officials put to the

"The platform on which the dispute was no close to redundancies. So if it would amount to a strike force who have studied heartedly throughout difficult dispute."

"Scotts has become a local struggle. It's a resistance against the Tories. That's why we can't

workers that in view of the employer's threat to withdraw redundancy money if they occupied, they might end up with nothing; but they were still prepared to occupy.

More and more workers are seeing the limitations of redundancy pay as a substitute for a job when there is no alternative work. The sugar on the pill is wearing thin. The miners for example fought against the acceptance of six or seven times the maximum £4,000 accepted at Chrysler.

A lot, of course, can depend on the past traditions of struggle and politics. The irony is that it is often sections relatively new to struggle such as Laurence Scott's, Royal Pride and Lee Jeans who have come to the front with aggression and determination.

Lee Jeans

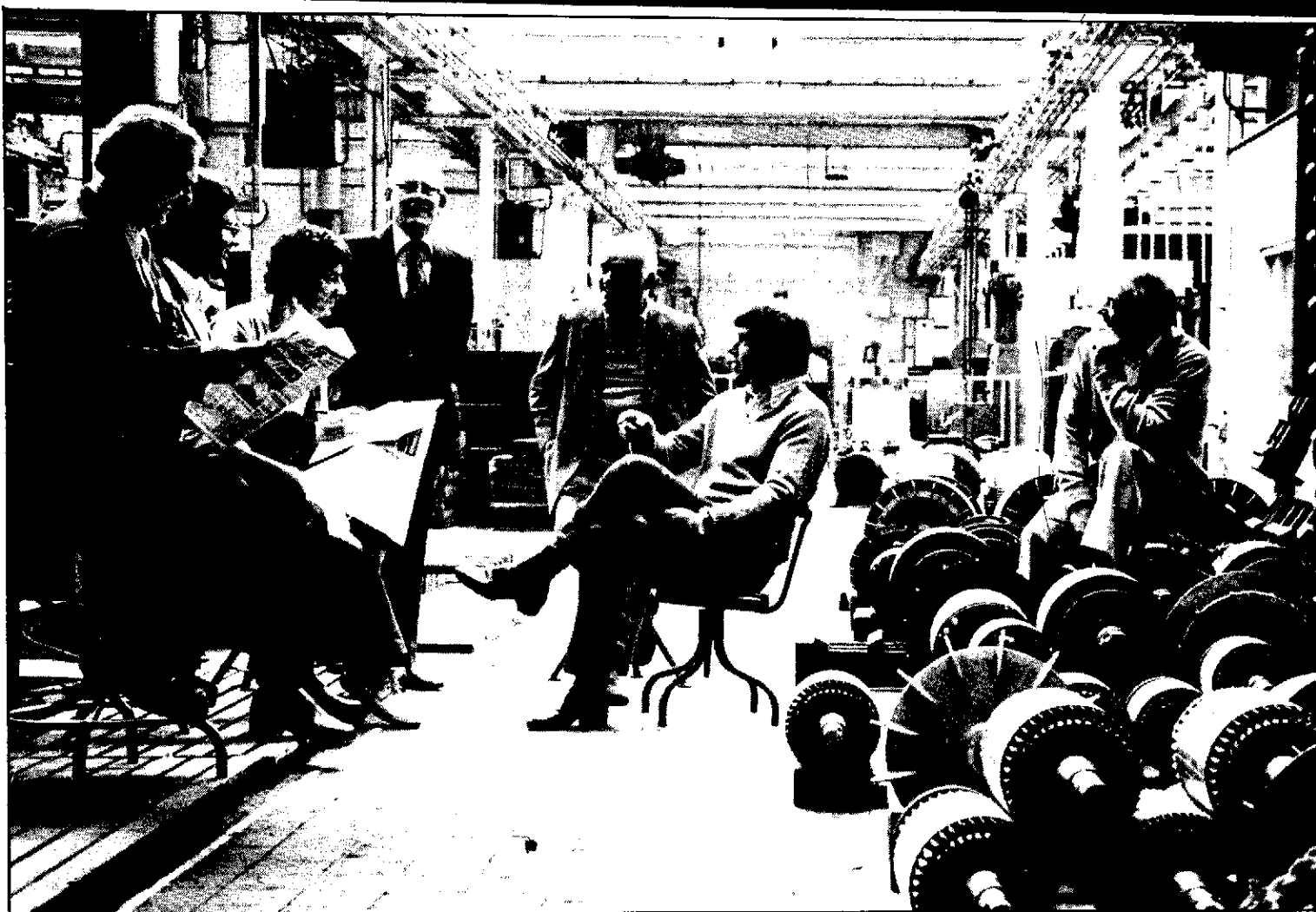
Lee Jeans, for example, have only recently been 100% organised and had never previously been in an important strike. They looked at the situation simply: "with 16% unemployment we'll never get

"If the NUM can be persuaded to black the products of Snipe's companies, then I would predict that this (Laurence Scotts) dispute can be brought to a victorious conclusion within one week"

John Tocher,
AUEW Divisional Organiser, May 1981



PHOTO: JOHN SMITH (IFL)



Inside the Lawrence Scott occupation

JOHN SMITH (IFL)

SUS THE RIGHT

which we fought this
and no enforced
settled for less it
out of the work-
together whole-
this long and

more than just a
national beacon of
the dole queue.
back it in".

Dennis Barry,
or, Laurence Scotts

another job. We had to
fight."

The miners have a tradi-
tion of successful struggle
and were confident of
victory. Similarly Gardiners
workers, after a successful
struggle in the mid 1970s
became one of the best
organised factories in Man-
chester.

Wage-cutting

But in British Leyland
the failure at Rover must be
seen in the context of parti-
cipation, union sponsored
job selling, wage cutting and
victimisation — a recent tradi-
tion of betrayals,
unsuccessful struggle, demor-
alisation and cynicism.

In many plants too the
centralisation of decision
making negotiations and
procedures and the separa-
tion of senior stewards and
committees from the shop
floor has weakened sectional
stewards and grass roots parti-
cipation and confidence.

In an evenly balanced
situation the ability to con-
vince, certain particularly
crucial sections of the neces-
sity to fight before the issue
is taken at factory level can
be decisive. If helped at

Gardiners where sectional
autonomy was based on
piecework.

There is also the need to
grasp the bosses' longer term
strategy. If there had been a
leadership in Chrysler over
the last year's campaigning
on the basis that the employ-
ers had one ultimate objec-
tive — total closure — the
affair might have been con-
cluded very differently.

United Glass in St Helens
is typical of other situations.
The bosses asked for 80
forced redundancies and
came down to 65. When the
workers struck they added
changes in working condi-
tions to their demands.
The compromise was 50
voluntary redundancies. The
workers claimed that they
had saved 30 jobs.

An occupation rather
than external picketing is
essential. So is official sup-
port and preparation for the
use of the law.

It is rather important to
ensure that the service of
eviction notices does not
lead to demoralisation, by
campaigning for immediate
supporting strike action and
mass demonstrations by
other workers.

Whilst an occupation hits
the employer (valuable
machinery and millions of
pounds of goods can be held
as at Lee Jeans) and provides
an essential base for organis-
ing, it is the organising of
an outside struggle involving
other workers which is vital.

Time is vital

There is a need from day
one to establish a map of the
pressure points which must
be hit to win the dispute.
Take Laurence Scotts. Given
the parent company's essen-
tial use of British Oxygen
products, their use of Hull
Docks for valuable exports,
and the supplying to the
mines with essential
machinery, *blacking* was
required — which, if effec-
tive, could have shut the
company down in days.

Similarly in the Lee Jeans
case the key was stopping

the movement of goods to
and from the company's
Irish factories, which
required support from the
docks.

Time is vital here. Yet
in both cases it was months
before even an attempt to
win this blacking was
seriously mounted.

The Lee Jeans strikers for
example, seem to have
accepted the advice of their
officials that to ask for sup-
port would damage their

exhausting for a small group.

In the present situation
workers in small workplaces
particularly look for a lead
to the full time officials.

The extent to which this
comes from particular offi-
cials may vary — but in the
end all are operating under
bureaucratic pressures.

In the Gardiners and
Laurence Scotts disputes the
broad left AUEW officials
did give a lead and were far
to the left of Peckham Road.

**"Strike fast, strike hard, and don't
depend on officials, councillors, or
'public opinion' — only on your own
strength and the support of other rank
and file workers"**

Barry Blinco, Ansells shop steward,
talking on the lessons of defeat.

image. Yet every day that
passed the Irish plants were
undermining their struggle.

Images never won a
dispute. Financial and emo-
tional support is welcome,
but it is *blacking* that scores
the goals.

It is also clear that
pressure for this has to come
from the workers them-
selves. Offers to black are
like swallows in winter. 'If
the TUC gave a lead and
threatened the government
with direct action we would
get somewhere', said Arthur
Scargill at the end of the
People's March: but Scargill,
a General Council member,
has done nothing to encour-
age that direct action by
trying to get the Yorkshire
miners to black Scott's
machinery!

Moreover it is obvious
from recent struggles that
workers cannot rely on their
own officials to organise
essential secondary action.
They have to do it them-
selves.

This can be difficult and

And the increasing
problem is that the right
wing leaders *will not go
away*. They will show an
increasing tendency to inter-
vene.

Duffy and his executive,
for example, were quite
willing to let Scotts workers
get on with it as long as they
stayed innocuously in
barracks. When they started
picketing other plants with
some success Duffy moved
in.

Faced with a membership
declining because of a lack
of leadership in the fight for
jobs, Kitson and the TGWU
bureaucracy are now instruc-
ting officials to cut out long
expensive disputes and avoid
potential confrontation with
the Employment Act.

Sabotage

So at Ansells Brian
Mathers moved in quickly to
sabotage the picketing at
Romford and Bolton.

When a dispute at Leeds
provided the possibility of
extending the Ansells
struggle, the workers left it

**"With a daily picket outside, the gates
chained and cemented together, and
the keyholes blocked up, there haven't
been many buyers"**

Plansee picket, July 1981

to Mathers — and Mathers
left it to the birds.

With the struggle isolated
and with no apparent solu-
tion, he was then able to
run his own secret ballot
with 'well bent' questions.
With Mathers around who
needs — the Employment
Act?

Isolated

The Bestobells lagers in
Scotland fell into all these
traps. A group with a strong
tradition of self reliance,
they failed to take the
struggle outside their
occupation.

TGWU Regional Secre-
tary Hugh Wyper failed to
make the stoppage official
and, isolated, they were
hailed before the courts for

defying a writ and fined —
with the result that the dis-
pute collapsed.

These kind of obstacles
can only be overcome if they
are clearly understood from
the start, if a firm campaign
is mounted to prepare the
members to meet them, and
if regular mass meetings are
held to keep up participa-
tion and resist demoralisa-
tion and official manoeuvr-
ing.

There is no magic wand
which will conjure up over-
night success. We need
patient argument, careful
planning, better organisation
and a fight for a new leader-
ship.

Our support is at the
moment tiny and generally
outside positions of influ-
ence, whilst socialist ideas
have a minority hold in the
workplaces.

However we have to
organise, and increase that
minority and work for the
most ambitious development
of each dispute, remember-
ing all the time that whilst
we fight for a government
which will act in the
interests of the working class
the best guarantee of that
will be the intensification
and unification of
struggles against the Tories
now.



Duffy: after Plansee will he succeed in knitting Laurence Scott struggle?

PROVISIONAL SINN FEIN'S VIEW OF SOCIALISM

KEVIN O'DONOGHUE of Sinn
Fein explains to IAN SWINDALE

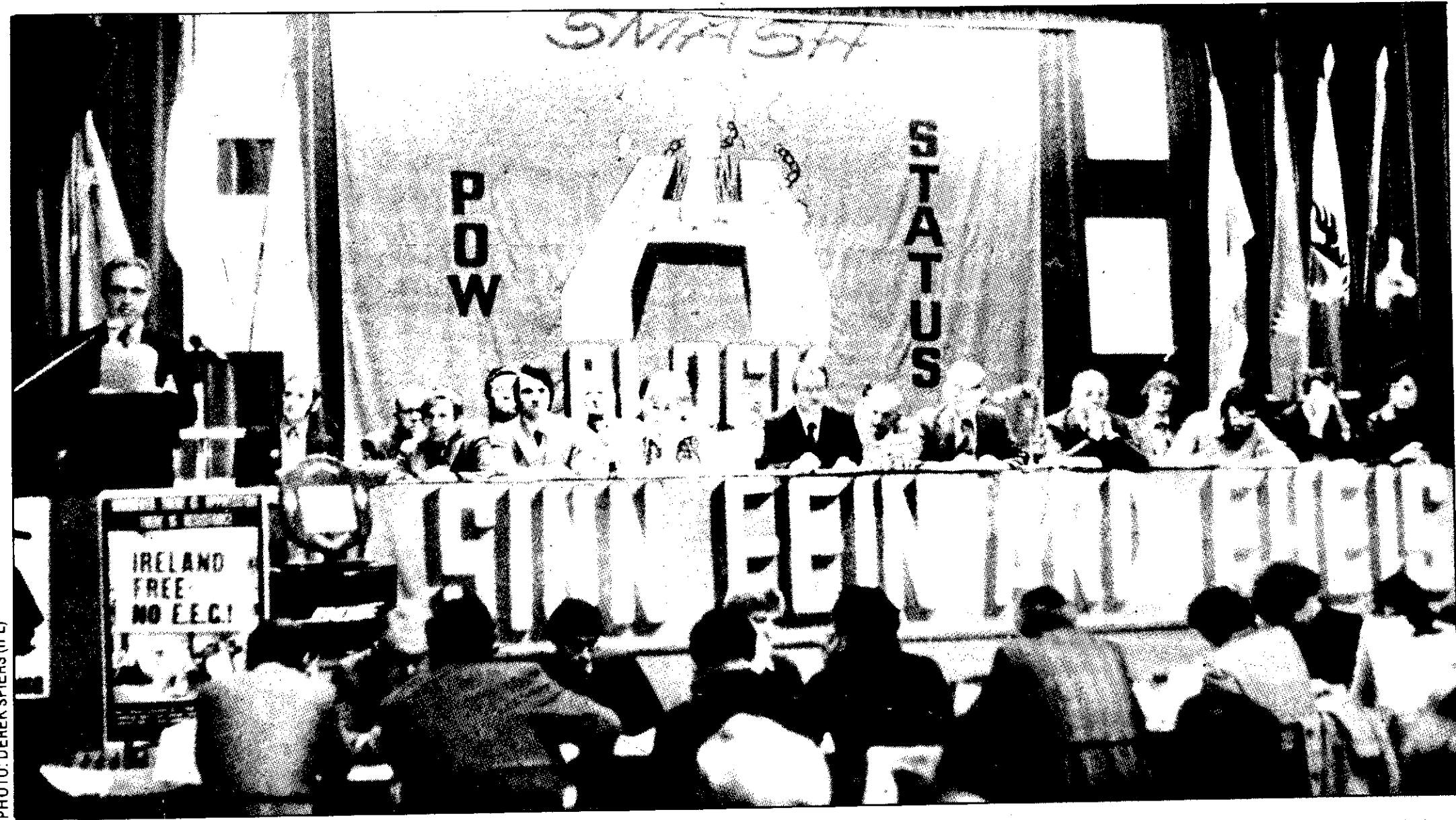


PHOTO: DEREK SPIERS (IFL)

In the interview that Ruari O Bradaigh gave to your magazine 'Isis' he talks about PSF being both anti-imperialist on the one hand, and 'democratic socialist' on the other.

Can you explain how you see 'democratic socialism'?

Very broadly, our analysis is that Ireland since partition has been functioning as two states. The state in the north — the Six Counties — has been a colonial state; the 26 Counties in the south have been a sort of neo-colonial state.

Ireland has suffered because of imperialism. Our objective at the present time is to remove the British army from Ireland and get a declaration from the British government that they will withdraw militarily, politically and economically from Ireland. That is our first objective — British withdrawal.

Because of the artificial division of our country, we have a division within the working class — we have a division between the working class in the north and the working class in the south. To complicate matters further, in the north the working class is divided again between Catholic and Protestant.

It is only possible to build socialism after we have been able to unite the working class, and the cause which divides the

working class is the British presence.

On the prospects of building socialism — a lot will depend on the circumstances of British withdrawal, and the circumstances which exist both during British withdrawal and for a period after that.

First step

Our programme at the present time is maximum unity on the issues of 'Brits Out' and national independence. We regard 'Brits Out' and Irish unity as a first step towards a socialist republic.

We don't know how we will implement socialism, because we don't know the circumstances. But we believe that national independence without socialism is really meaningless.

With the EEC, the demands of capitalism when it comes out of this recession will be for a united Ireland. Capitalism would best be served by a united Ireland because you would have all the political problems out of the way.

But we see that socialism would be the only positive thing to fight for in Ireland.

Because the war is lasting as long as it is, more and more people have become mobilised. Because of the failures of capitalism in Ireland, the disaffection and disappointment, the fact that capitalism cannot deliver

the goods, there are forces which can be harnessed and organised.

I'm talking here about the unemployed in the major cities, the small farmers who are affected by EEC policies, the people who suffer because of the economic situation caused by capitalism.

These people can be organised; they should be encouraged to organise themselves under the leadership, or the encouragement at least, of the Republican movement.

In the struggle for socialism, the people who suffer most because of imperialist and capitalist policies will be our natural allies. The organisations that they form to defend their living standards will be the organisations that we will use to build socialism in Ireland.

When people organise to defend themselves, whether it is their standard of living, or their right to a living, those organisations are basically democratic, and that's what we mean when we talk about democratic socialism.

It will be a socialism built from the base up. How we actually get into the mechanics of making that work is another thing.

Of course you start out with an ideal, and you go along the road to achieving that ideal. It always happens that somewhere along the line part of your ideal doesn't come to pass. But we

believe that it's important to have a target, a goal to work towards, and do the best we can on the road towards it.

Ultimate aim

If your ideal is a 'democratic socialist' country, why is it that you don't propagandise for that at the same time as campaigning for 'Brits Out' and Irish unity? Is it because you think that to do so would prevent you from building maximum unity on the question of 'Brits Out' and Irish unity?

It could be divisive in an Irish context, but through 'An Phoblacht/Republican News' we make no secret of the fact that we are for a socialist republic. Spokespersons of our organisation have always expressed the view that our ultimate aim is a democratic socialist republic.

We have to qualify that by saying a democratic socialist republic, because our political enemies will use cash and any means at their disposal to discredit our movement.

I'm thinking here particularly of people like Fianna Fail and others, who also claim to be republicans except that they don't implement republicanism.

We have to qualify exactly what we mean by socialism and democratic socialism so that we

don't give our enemies ammunition.

Since 1976

In trying to build a democratic socialist society, how do you think you would have to relate to workers in the 26 Counties who have undergone a very different experience from those in the north...

Unfortunately, because of the war in the Six Counties, because of the intensity of the war and the resources which were needed, most of the talent in our organisation went to supporting the war. The role of our organisation in the south has been to support the war in the north.

Since about 1976, we have been going through a change. The people in the south now see their task as becoming more identified with trade union struggles, women's rights in the south (which is very important), and the struggle of small farmers.

In the past they have seen their role as supporting the struggle in the north, but they have realised for some time that that type of struggle alone will not be adequate to carry us from the stage of 'Brits Out' to the social struggle which will follow that.

I am sure that people like yourselves will realise that political work takes a lot of dedication.

You don't see results immediately. But our movement in the south has moved towards more and more open trade union work and work in those other fields.

We realise that socialism can only be built through the unions, through the unemployed organisations insofar as they exist, and the other areas where people are affected by capitalism and imperialism in Ireland.

Ballot box

When you talk about democratic socialism, presumably you do not mean that it can come through the ballot box?

Socialism can never be established through the ballot box. Those who control the wealth will never let those who don't vote it out of their hands.

Parliament — which is not a workers' government — is only there to allow the capitalist class to go on being a capitalist class.

And when we say democratic socialism, we don't mean social democracy. We mean democratic socialism. We call it a decentralisation of power.

Federal

How does this tie in with the Sinn Féin programme for a Federal Ireland? Does that still apply?

No. A federal Ireland is

possibly a thing which we can work towards. But when that plan was drawn up, in a sense we underestimated the strength of Orangism.

We now feel that if we seriously tried to find a solution along federal lines, then we would be creating an Orange state in the north and institutionalising it.

We're not against Orangemen. But what we are against is the position of the Protestant working class as regards the Protestant capitalist class, and we realise that under a federal solution the Protestant bourgeoisie could still have that power over the Protestant working class, and we would not be creating conditions that would allow them to liberate themselves from capitalism.

JOIN THE LABOUR COMMITTEE ON IRELAND!

Join the fight to win the labour movement to support for the Irish struggle!

Affiliation for trade union branches and Labour Parties, £2; individual membership, £1.

Contact: Don Flynn, Secretary, 43 Lee House, London N19.

HOW SPORTING LINKS BOLSTER

RACIST STATE

by JOHN McILROY

RACISM runs through world sport like a poisoned stream. "There's no way I'm going to lose my title to a black man", snarled Alan Minter just before meeting Marvellous Marvin Hagler and winding up ex-World Middleweight Champion.

"What is worse than losing is the idea of this strange black man coming at us from the mountains", moaned Brendan Foster after the pride of Geordie land had lost yet again to the great African runner, Miruts Yifter.

At times, racism becomes orchestrated. Larry Holmes, the world's best heavyweight, recently condemned the growing publicity round 'White Hope' 'Irish' Mike Cooney. "It's bad because what they are really saying is beat that nigger boy. Show them white is best."

The growing protests against the South African Rugby tour of New Zealand have, however, placed in the limelight once more the one country where sport is formally and legally organised on the apartheid lines that govern the soc-

iety as a whole.

In South Africa, sport is big business, heavily subsidised by private enterprise, often US and UK owned. Last year, South African Breweries spent a million dollars on sponsorship, General Motors \$500,000, and Datsun \$200,000.

White virility

Sport in South Africa has something of the importance it had in Nazi Germany. It plays a central role in justifying theories of racial supremacy and celebrating white virility. Former Sports Minister, P.J. Koornhof, felt that it was so central to the white psyche that he went so far as to argue that "play and sport are strong enough to cause political and economic relations to flourish or collapse".

Because of these attitudes, South Africa has spent the last decade and millions in a co-ordinated offensive, aimed at convincing the world that its sport is increasingly integrated and luring prominent



The whites laze in the shade, the blacks toil in the sun

sportspeople to South Africa to legitimise and publicise sport in the apartheid state.

The aim is to get back into international competition. The so-called Committee for Fairness in Sport received over £5 million in government money. The advantages for visitors are recalled by Rugby international Gareth Edwards. "We stayed in the best hotel in Pretoria, all expenses put down to our room numbers. No one was to be out of pocket. You name it, we had the very best."

Uncle Tom

Showpiece multi-racial events such as the recent Mathebula-Laciari and Coetze-Weaver World Boxing Championships are set up to provide evidence

of integration. Selected Uncle Tom blacks are sponsored to compete against whites in official events. In reality integrated competition makes up less than one per cent of all sporting fixtures in the Republic.

Ghettos

As Sam Ramsamy, Chairperson of the South African Non-Racial Olympic Committee points out, the blacks are "elevated to equality for the duration of a sports fixture and then sent back to the ghettos."

The photographs of black and white together used by the South African government in a UK national paper campaign last year look very convincing. But about the same time Abe Louw, President of the Transvaal Rugby Union, punctured the showpiece

policy by refusing to allow a team of black boys to compete in a tournament. He said that they might make friends with whites, and the South African cabinet were forced to intervene.

SANROC has recently been successful in drawing attention to these cover-up activities, particularly through its blacklists of those who play sport with apartheid. However, there are still far too many sports people like Robin Jackman, who precipitated the expulsion of the England cricket team from Guyana last winter.

He had spent the last eleven winters playing cricket and coaching in South Africa and the then Rhodesia. "Every team he worked with was 'Whites only'."

Creatures like Jackman receive strong backing from

the British Sports Council. Both chairman Dickie Jeeps and committee man Bill Hicks, have ended up on SANROC's blacklist. The latter recently visited South Africa for six weeks, and on returning held a press conference to declare his intention of pushing for the apartheid regime's return to the world sporting stage.

The Springboks have arrived in New Zealand against a background of hunger strikes, demonstrations in more than thirty towns and cities, and an important legal case testing the validity of their entry into the country. The team was unable to fly direct as Australia and Fiji refused transit rights.

This was in pursuance of the Gleneagles agreement signed in 1977 between all Commonwealth countries committing governments to

"combat the evils of apartheid by taking every practical step to discourage contact or competition with sporting organisations, teams, or sportsmen from South Africa."

Despite pressure from the labour movement, New Zealand's right-wing Prime Minister, Robert Muldoon, has blatantly disregarded this agreement and sided with racially segregated sport. His country's participation in future world sporting events, and indeed in the Commonwealth, is now open to strong question.

South Africa's racial policies will not in the end be changed by sports boycotts. But they can help encourage black Azanians' own struggles which will ultimately bring about the demise of this barbaric system.

Review

MEGABUDGET EPICS

Clive MacMuddle reviews 'Excalibur' and 'Clash of the Titans'

IF YOU are bored to tears with the Royal beanfeast, there is currently a rash of megabudget epics available for your entertainment.

First and foremost in the New Wave of these are 'Excalibur' (King Arthur and a host of heaving flesh) and 'Clash of the Titans' (Perseus meets assorted growling puppets).

After the unromanticised blood and thunder films of the earlier 'seventies, and as capitalism starts to rot itself to death, the film industry is beginning to churn out undisguised escapism. At the same time the media serves up endless rhapsodies to the Fairytale Princess and her husband with the large ears.

The message is simple: keep your eyes fixed firmly on the firmament and think as little as possible about trivia like the hunger strikers, unemployment and state repression. If

the rate of profit is dropping over the precipice, the ruling class can still make a packet on celluloid kitsch.

These two films reach new depths. Here we have the two sides of this escapism.

In 'Excalibur' we have the king who is the personification of the land he rules — this right to rule is cemented by the possession of the all-powerful sword, Excalibur. The king without a sword is the land without a king; as Arthur prospers so does the land, as he declines into illness, starvation and pestilence plague the good folk of Ancient Britain.

What we need is a strong king with a faithful Queen — preferably one who doesn't burst into tears at jousts (or polo matches). In the month of the Royal Wedding this feudal drivel may not seem so very archaic.

Was such a high budget

really necessary just to tell us that the solution to starvation and all our other ills depends on fighting a gold cup (made out of plastic) with a loud voice that acts in the service of the Realm? Maybe not.

But if you find the curious mixture of Catholicism and Celtic lunar symbolism a bit heavy, you can always sit back and enjoy the sporadic battle scenes with liberal doses of dry ice and red lighting.

And if that doesn't satisfy you, there's always the gorgeous Sir Lancelot.

'Clash of the Titans' is a different, bastardised myth-cycle altogether. Instead of dingy castles and dungeons, and sordid decay, we have the glittering Olympians meddling in human affairs as is their wont.

Take a large number of celebrated actors, some dated Ray Harryhausen special effects, and add an irritating metal owl (R2D2

with wings) called Bubo, and you've got it: a celebration of individual heroism and womanly faithfulness much more in keeping with the real needs of our society than all the Arthurian nonsense about kings and swords and stuff. No degenerate mortals in this story.

While in 'Excalibur' they screw in suits of armour, in 'Clash of the Titans' they keep their hands properly to themselves (except of course for the lustful Olympians — but that's all off-stage anyway).

Perseus meets Godzilla is all good clean fun. And in these days of rioting youth and underage passion, a bit of solid, moral gallantry is just what this country needs — with a bit of back-up from CS gas and plastic bullets.

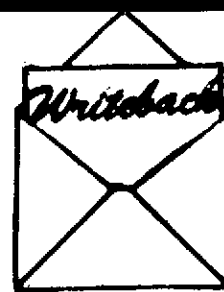
But I can't help feeling it won't ever quite catch on like Star Wars.



Clash of the Titans: Olympians meddling in human affairs

Letters

Time for a debate on the block vote?



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

THE decision of Labour's Wembley Conference to establish a new system for electing the Party leader may have put the right wing in retreat but it appears to have further confused the left on the question of the block vote.

Just over one year ago the Rank and File Mobilising Committee published a 16 page pamphlet entitled "Mobilise for Labour Democracy". Whilst it dealt with questions such as the re-selection of MPs, accountability, and electing the leader, it had nothing to say on the subject of the block vote. Yet this issue is crucial to any debate on party democracy.

At present the unions' voting strength at Labour Party conferences outweighs the Constituency Parties by over 9 to 1. The new electoral college which gives 40% of the votes to the unions can only help increase union domination within the Party.

The block vote is an historical legacy. The unions formed the Labour Party in order to have their interests represented in Parliament. But socialists should be fighting to make Labour the party of all sections of the working class - youth, unemployed, blacks, tenants, etc - and not just the unions' mouthpiece in the House of Commons.



'To change our views on the block vote because some unions have moved left is the height of opportunism'

The question the left must ask themselves is: does the electoral college, and the domination of the block vote help the process of converting the Labour Party from an electoral machine into a party which actively intervenes in the daily struggles of the working class? The whole democracy debate within the party must be set in this context.

Unfortunately the bulk of Labour's left do not see the democracy issue in this light. For them, the Party already has the political programme but the leadership lacks the will to carry it out. The problem is therefore

seen as an organisational one to win the accountability of the Parliamentary Labour Party. It is not seen as a step towards questioning the institute of parliament itself.

Marxists within the Labour Party must show that while democracy is important, the central question is the need for a socialist programme to replace the present one which is based on trying to breathe new life into capitalism.

At present the strength of the unions via the block vote means that they can get what they want without the responsibility of taking part in the daily activities of the

Labour Party. The historical divorce between the political and industrial wings of the labour movement is therefore reinforced by the existence of the block vote.

For years the left in the Labour Party opposed the block vote and its cynical manipulation by right wing General Secretaries.

However, now that some major unions have shifted to the left, the opposition to the block vote has gone very quiet.

The Tribunites have found some Marxist allies in arguing that the major problem with the block vote is the lack of union consulta-

tion with their members to give the opportunity to mandate delegates.

Their other objection to the block vote is that union delegates at Labour Party conferences are top heavy with full-time officials.

The question of consultation with the membership of the unions and the composition of the delegations is of course important. But it is the nature of the block vote, not the way it is cast, which is the real issue.

A single union like the GMWU or AUEW can out-vote all the combined votes of the Constituency Parties. All socialists must condemn such absurd situations. The block vote is a travesty of democracy and it will remain so regardless of whose hand is on the voting card - right wing General Secretary or rank and file activist.

To change one's opinion of the block vote because certain unions have moved to the left is the height of opportunist politics.

Full debate within a union on what its position should be at Labour Party conferences is essential. The composition of union delegations and their method of selection needs to be scrutinised. However, mandation is not the solution to our problems.

Firstly it is impossible to mandate union delegates for every conceivable debate. And more importantly, if every delegate attends conference knowing which way to vote, why should they bother to listen to the

debate?
The decision has already been made. Unions might as well send their votes in by post and forget any conference.

The unions' voting strength within the Labour Party is in urgent need of revision. Discussing mandation and delegations is to side step the issue.

The Wembley Conference decision must be welcomed by socialists. But it must be seen as part of a process of moving towards the supremacy of the annual conference. Having conference decide who is to be leader, and what the manifesto will be, must mean abolishing the block vote.

Following the Wembley decision our task is to start a debate on alternatives to the block vote and how whatever replaces it can help unite the political and industrial wings of the movement.

Several ideas have emerged on what should replace the block vote. One is that instead of unions affiliating nationally to the Labour Party they should affiliate their members' paying the political levy through the constituencies. This would bring about the involvement of trade unionists at the grass roots of the Labour Party.

The present system of trade union delegates to Constituency GMCs and District Parties would be extended to cover the national conference.

At present the political levy of an individual trade unionist amounts to 40p per year.

But when the voting strength of the unions is worked out this 40p is counted as being equal to the £5 yearly subscription of an actual Labour Party member.

One proposal is for the unions to have the equivalent of a financial vote, but this could be manipulated by unions who frequently revise the numbers they affiliate on.

Another area which needs reviewing is the fact that at present a union's vote is cast for or against a proposal even though the union may be divided on the question. It should be possible to reflect the political divisions in unions like the AUEW in the way the union casts its vote at conference.

Some proposals to break down the national votes of unions and incorporate them into the local life of the Labour Party contain many dangers: none more so than the proposal for Labour Party factory branches.

No one should oppose Labour Party members being politically active in their place of work. But an actual factory branch contains the danger of becoming dominated by trade union politics and paralleling the official union structure in the factory.

Shop stewards committees may well become hostile to what they see as a rival body. If we are seeking unity between all sections of the working class, and sympathetic middle class people, then factory branches won't help this aim.

Whatever option is finally taken up the task is to develop the social and political objectives of the whole movement by discussing the role the union should play within the Labour Party. Some of the above ideas may or may not be the solution, but they indicate the areas which any debate on the block vote must look at.

Such a debate is long overdue.

DEREK CATTELL

NGA setback

Dear Editor,

Your NUG correspondent was unfortunately wrong in one respect in the Pergamon article last week. It is true that Ken Hall was not elected Oxon and Berks branch secretary of the NGA - but only because he did not stand.

I am sad to have to report that he was elected as president of the branch after beating a Broad Left candidate. It would be nice to think that people like him were not being elected to position like that. The fact that they are shows that the impact in structural terms of the NGA of last year's lock-out is still small.

Yours fraternally
PETER McINTYRE
NUG

Militant logic on Ireland

"THE military campaign has given the British ruling class the excuse to step up repression. The prisoners and the occupants of the Catholic ghettos are the people who suffer most."

In terms like this the Militant justifies its dismissal of the Provisional IRA as "sectarian killers", and its refusal to side with the Republicans against the British Army.

Yet for wars further away from home, Militant has been able to understand that socialists should side unconditionally with fighters for national liberation against imperialism despite our criticisms or even condemnations of some of their military tactics.

The forerunners of Militant supported the FLN in its fight for Algerian independence against France from 1954 to 1962. Many differences can be drawn between Algeria and Northern Ireland, but also many similarities.

Like the Northern Ireland Protestants, the Europeans in Algeria fiercely opposed the national liberation struggle.

Many of them were working class, only marginally better off than the Muslims. (Indeed, before World War II the main European working class area of Algeria had voted solidly Communist).

"To the saying 'All natives are the same', the colonised person replies 'All settlers are the same'". wrote the FLN's theorist Frantz Fanon.

And sometimes - not always - the FLN acted on that principle. Its atrocities were far worse than anything the IRA has done.

In 1955 an FLN-led mob slaughtered 71 Europeans at random in Philippeville (in reprisal, Europeans and the Army killed some 12,000 Muslims).

In Algiers in 1957, FLN commanders told their squads to "kill any European between the ages of 18 and 54. But no women..." in

reprisal for the execution of FLN prisoners.

49 people were killed at random in four days. Later in the year, a campaign of cafe bombings killed 18 and injured over 150.

Yet Militant, like other Marxists, correctly supported the FLN against the French: not only because the atrocities of the French were ten times worse than the FLN's, but crucially because of the socialist principle of supporting oppressed nations against their oppressors.

Can Militant explain why the same principle should not apply in Ireland?

RAY SAUNDERS
London

How the neutron bomb works

by Les Hearn

LAST Thursday in London, the skies went black at noon and the heavens opened.

At this point, I realised with a sense of shock that it was Hiroshima day, the 36th anniversary of the first use of an atomic bomb against an unsuspecting and unprotected civilian population.

If I had been superstitious or religious instead of a scientific socialist, I might have read an omen into those amazing thunderstorms. Anyway, this week's column is about nuclear war (information from the Guardian, New Scientist, and Science for People).

President Raygun is busily upping the stakes in the nuclear war game, firstly with his decision to produce and stockpile the "enhanced" radiation weapon (ERW) or neutron bomb, which can only



result in the Russian bureaucrats following suit, and secondly with his decision to use spent nuclear fuel from commercial nuclear reactors as a source of weapons-grade plutonium, using top-secret isotope separation technology

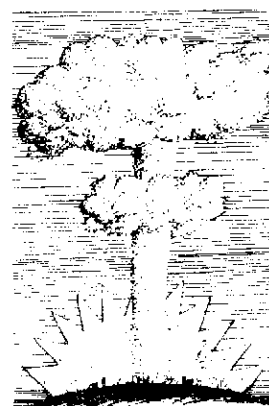
to remove unwanted contaminants.

The US government thinks this is necessary, as several reactors which usually produce plutonium for bombs have been closed down recently, while 'demand' for bombs is rising.

The particularly nasty thing about the ERW is that it is supposed to selectively kill people without damaging property (hence its nickname, 'the capitalist bomb'). They are also supposed to be usable in 'theatre wars' (where the war is confined to a relatively small area, rather than the whole world). The relatively small area designated by the Americans at present is Europe).

How is all this supposed to be achieved?

The typical A-bomb, which works through the breakdown or fission of uranium or plutonium,



releases its energy as blast (50%), heat (35%), fall-out (10%), and immediate radiation (neutrons and gamma rays: 5%).

A pure fusion bomb (where two types of hydrogen are joined together to make helium in the same

way as the sun produces its energy) would produce its energy mainly as immediate radiation (80%), with only 20% as blast and heat, and little as fall-out.

All existing fusion bombs (H-bombs) have a smaller fission bomb as a trigger, and this makes them more 'dirty' than a pure fusion bomb. The ERW is 'cleaner' than most, but would release only 30-40% of its energy as immediate radiation. The rest would be blast, heat, and fall-out.

So it's far from being the 'clean' weapon that is sometimes claimed.

It is also intended to be a smaller sort of bomb than the usual ones found in the military stockpiles. This is supposed to be so that it can be used to knock out the enemy's troops while avoiding damage to civilians who are quite a way from the field of battle



(but if the field of battle is all Europe, that's not very reassuring!)

To this end, a typical ERW has an explosive yield of 1000 tons of TNT (1 kiloton), while the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs had yields of about 13,000 tons of TNT.

Of this yield, about 350 tons would be given out as radiation (fast, penetrating neutrons) while the other 650 tons worth would be heat and blast. This is equivalent to about 30 blockbusters (the largest conventional bombs used in World War 2).

But the ERW would not do what is claimed even if it produced all its energy as

radiation. The amount of radiation to immediate incapacitate a tank crew is a phenomenal 16,000 rads. Exposure to more than 600 rads leads to a lingering death, but this may take a fortnight. Imagine the rage of an army that knew it was going to die anyway.

As a by-product, a 0.1 kiloton neutron bomb would release 150 rads over an area of 1.1 square miles (killing 10% of the population in about two weeks, 30 rads over 1.7 square miles (doubling the rate of mutation in fetuses), at 14 rads over 2.1 square miles (causing a plague of leukemia and other cancers up to 20 years later).

Students must get organised!

by Dale Ackroyd

LEAKED confidential papers from the Environment Department show the full extent of the Thatcher government's attack on the education system. Between 1981 and 1984 an estimated 100,000 jobs in education are to go — including 50,000 teachers and lecturers.

The figures are realistically likely to be greater — as they are based on the government's own pie-in-the-sky forecasts; inflation is now running 2% above target and education spending 3% above target.

This 'overspending' is likely to be the excuse for more savage cuts by the Government in the future.

It is absolutely clear that the Tories are embarking on the full scale destruction of the education system. Students have to be roused from apathy into joining a working class fightback in defence of our own independent interests.

However the recently imposed cut of 2,000 university places and the annual erosion of the real value of grants has provoked no clear lead for students from the NUS leadership.

An endless round of innocuous protests, prayers and picnics is all that is on offer.

Socialist Organiser has always pointed out the reactionary role of the Communist Party in selling out industrial struggles.

The calibre of the CP faithful in the student field is shown up by SDP recruit Sue Slipman, who resigned from the Communist Party after many years in its leadership because she thought the SDP had more of a chance of implementing 'The British Road to Socialism'!

Socialist Organiser students are committed to transforming NOLS into a campaigning students' organisation based on revolutionary politics.

This means not only a

relentless struggle against the "Clause Four" leadership of NOLS and its bureaucratic rule, but also against the fake-Trotskyist Militant Tendency with its sterile propaganda approach, backward positions on women and gays and a profoundly British chauvinist position on the question of Ireland and the Republican hunger strikers.

It is against this background that the first national **Socialist Organiser** Student Caucus is being convened. Open to student members and supporters of SO, it will agree our programme and activity for the next year, based on our experiences in fighting for revolutionary politics in NOLS, the SSA, NUS and the Labour Party.

SO STUDENT'S CAUCUS
Saturday 22nd August at Barnes Wallis Building, UMIST, Manchester.
Pooled fare. Ring Bradford 666629 for further details.



Just more protests — or will students start fighting to win?

PRESS GANG



THERE IS nothing like a dying child to bring out the worst in the press.

Remember the little Italian boy who died a slow and agonising death after falling down a well shaft? How could you forget it? It was good box office with close up shots of grieving parents on television and line drawings in the papers, both quality and gutter, to illustrate where the child was lying.

Now less rich in detail, but richer by far in satisfying moral humbug comes the case of the Mongol child 'condemned to live' by the Court of Appeal.

(Different though each case is, they both differ dramatically from the thousands of children in Britain and other 'advanced' capitalist societies whose brains and lives are being dimmed by lead poisoning. Bourgeois morality is ideally tailored to 'individual' agonising but falls apart when confronted with perfectly avoidable mass suffering).

Mongolism — more accurately known as Down's Syndrome — produces children who are able to learn to walk and run but whose mental age never passes that of a small child.

The problems for parents are immense in a society where care of the mentally and physically handicapped is pushed back 99% (and now more and more) onto the family.

In children who survive through their 20s into their 30s the effect on a family (and inevitably mostly on

the woman) is devastating.

(There are even special voluntary societies sprung up to help the brothers and sisters of mentally handicapped children).

As the parents grow old they have to cope — usually alone and with a monthly or bi-monthly visit from a social worker — with a large and uncontrollable child whose physical sexual development is complete, and whose need for attention is more than that of an active two year old child.

It is little wonder that the most common wish of Down's Syndrome parents is that their child dies before they do.

That is the background to the court of appeal ruling and the sensational publicity it attracted.

In a socialist society the question would be one of what kind of life a child could expect from society (it is at least possible that the decision would superficially be the same as that made by the appeal court).

But in capitalist Britain the question is posed in a different way: who has ownership rights over the child?

In the first place the parents are left to 'agonise' over the decision. Whatever the final outcome it is 'their' decision. Once the court has decided otherwise the child is a 'ward of court' — or to put it crudely the state decides to transfer the rights of ownership from the parents to the judges.

Had the parents been working class the press

would no doubt have had a different angle. But we are told (by the Daily Mail) that they are "responsible cultured people". (In fact the Mail goes on to give enough detail about the parents to invalidate the judges' ruling that the family be not identified).

All the papers posed the question as balancing 'moral questions' or as the parents' QC put it most crassly: "the case touches upon the value of human life itself."

Language

Not one of the gutter papers explained anything about mongolism and what kind of nursing and care a Down's Syndrome baby needs. Instead their headlines expressed themselves in the language of the murder court.

"This Baby Must Live" — Sun and Express; "Judge Saves Baby's Life" — Star; "A Chance of Life" — Daily Mail.

Their first paragraphs (which are supposed to summarise the essence of the story) also captured bourgeois methods of thought precisely.

The Sun said: "A Battle over whether a new-born baby should live or die was fought out in court yesterday."

The Star — continuing with gallows language — said:

"A 10-day old Mongol girl condemned to die was given the chance of life by two Appeal judges yesterday."

The Daily Mail, somewhat long-windedly but capturing all the various strands — said:

"A desperately ill mongol baby was given the chance of life by two senior judges yesterday after her parents had taken the heartbreaking decision to let her die."

There is an obvious and alarming extension to the court (and the press) reaction, particularly as Down's Syndrome foetus are aborted when they are picked up in screening (how about an inquiry into why this one was missed). With courts and the press ruling in favour of medical intervention in the case of this baby, how long before they extend the argument to argue against abortions.

The case will be hailed by the Life lobby (who invariably portray Down's Syndrome babies as happy, lovable little darlings) and will use it to argue for court intervention against abortions.

Screamed

But the liberal press, which takes a cautious view of the judges' ruling and believes that courts 'ought not to interfere' has nothing progressive to offer. Their solution is simply to dump the problem back onto the family's lap. Back to the agony, the big headlines.

Meanwhile, according to the Star, after the case:

"The mother screamed: 'Leave me alone'. Whom did they think she was shouting at?"

Caribbean Labour solidarity

by Ken Fuller (Caribbean Labour Solidarity)

SINCE the elections in Jamaica last October 30th, there have been firm indications that Edward Seaga's right-wing Jamaican Labour Party government is moving to limit effective opposition to its monetarist policies.

Most blatant has been the attack on the media. At the Jamaican Broadcasting Corporation, there have been numerous sackings and 'redundancies' (these jobs were immediately advertised, until the journalists obtained a Supreme Court injunction).

The Daily News, in which the State has the majority holding, and which has shown that it has the courage to carry material critical of the Seaga government, is currently up for sale.

The Struggle, fortnightly paper of the Workers' Party of Jamaica, which supported the previous government of Michael Manley's PNP, was informed earlier this year by its printer that it must post a \$5,000-dollar bond, and that its print costs have been trebled.

Meanwhile, D K Duncan, general secretary of the PNP,

has had a series of charges levelled at him since the elections.

Most have either been dropped or thrown out of court, but the most serious, illegal possession of a firearm, remains.

Duncan will appear in the Gun Court in September. If found guilty, he could face a life sentence.

Duncan is reckoned to be a fine political organiser, and is the leader of the left within his party.

The London-based Caribbean Labour Solidarity is conducting a campaign on these issues, which it sees as politically connected. The campaign calls for protests to Seaga regarding his treatment of the media and the victimisation of Duncan, and requests donations, to be divided between Duncan's legal expenses and Struggle's drive to acquire its own printing press.

CLS will be holding a public meeting at Conway Hall on Thursday September 17th. Donations and requests for copies of the appeal should be sent to: Ken Fuller, CLS, 13 Alexander St, London W2 5NT.

Brains of Labour's right wing?

ROY Hattersley, fast making a name for himself as the brains of Labour's Right, has called for the Labour Party to commit itself to discrimination in employment in favour of young blacks.

"The time has come to change the law so employers, both public and private, are obliged to give them a fair deal. Without such affirmative action, young blacks and Asians will be held back permanently."

He's clearly worried that a society that offers them "nothing except despair and the dole" is driving itself down the road to increased urban chaos. But there's another side to it: when he floated the idea at the TUC-Labour Party Liaison Committee, it laid bare the "Left's" soft underbelly of nationalism and pandering to the backwardness that exists in the labour movement.

Norman Atkinson stated bluntly that the trade unions would not accept a "black draft" into the factories — a remark rightly condemned as "parroted prejudices" by Alan Fisher who argued it was the job of the labour

movement to argue against such ideas.

Eric Heffer said that if the Labour Party discriminated in favour of blacks it would open the way for the fascists — a logic that would justify the mass deportation of the black population as a way of preventing racist violence.

Hattersley's not daft. He repeated the call, throwing down a clear challenge to the NEC that if they can support other "unpopular" policies and win the support of the electorate: "I hope they are prepared to evangelise for a fairer employment deal for the ethnic minorities. If they are not, there are others who are prepared to fight on their behalf."

It's up to the real Left in the Party to fight for positive discrimination and root out the racist muck that clings on to the boot-heels of the Labour Party's nationalism. If the Labour's right wing will support a stick to beat us with, they'd be right.

E.P. Thompson, labour historian and anti-racist publi-



Hattersley

cist, has had his invitation to deliver the Dimbleby Lecture withdrawn on instructions from Ian Trethowan, Director General of the BBC.

Perhaps they were worried by the apparently magical power of the Dimbleby Lecture to transform odd ideas into reality. Previous lecturers have been Roy Jenkins, floating the idea of a Centre Party, and Lord Denning arguing that judges should be given more power over politicians.

Thompson was intending to speak on the break-up of war structures and ideology. One whisperer said the air waves and we might have lost all our nuclear bases. Phew, near miss!

THE Labour Party is launching a campaign to get people



to claim all the benefits they're entitled to. It's estimated that £340 million in benefits go unclaimed. This is not what the Tories mean, however, when they talk about abuse. They spent 5,640 person years and £54 million on specialist anti-fraud and abuse investigation in 1980/81. And according to Hugh Rossi, Minister for Social Security, they estimate they've saved £40 million. You said it, Hugh!

YOUTH unemployment: first the good news... you are not alone. In nearly every OECD country (i.e. Western industrialised nations) the unemployment rate for youth is higher than for adults, and the gap is widening. In Italy and Spain youth unemployment is pushing 30%.

Now the bad news: it's all your fault — you've been pricing yourselves out of a job. Different wage rates between adults and youth have been narrowing since the 1960s.

In Britain the average hourly earnings of young

males rose from 45% of an adult male's in 1948 to 62% in 1977.

Not to worry, though, a solution is at hand: cheap labour. The Dutch have been forging ahead here. They have a legal minimum wage which applies to people of 23 and over, for every year below 23 it was reduced by 7%. But now they've upped (or is it downed?) it to 10% for every year under 23.

Lest our national pride takes a tumble here, Margaret Thatcher has rigged up a fiendishly clever scheme whereby employers are actually bribed to pay young workers peanuts. Informed sources, though, think the idea won't take off because employers prefer the even cheaper labour scheme of XOF, which costs them nothing.

Some devilish colleagues have suggested it could be the road to employment — with every one having a job and nobody getting paid.

Industrial

A STEP TOWARDS

CONFRONTATION ON

BL PAY

by BILL PETERS

BL workers took a step towards confrontation with Michael Edwardes in a series of meetings which took place last week.

The current wage agreement for BL workers terminates on November 1st and the claim for the 1981/2 period is due to be lodged with management in the month of August.

But BL workers have many problems before they can take Edwardes on, not least the problem of the committee to negotiate the claim.

Currently, there is no National Joint Negotiating Committee (NJNC) in existence within BL. There is therefore no one able to submit or negotiate a new wage claim.

The General Secretaries of the main unions in BL, principally Moss Evans and Terry Duffy, agreed to reconstitution of the NJNC as part of the sellout formula for the 1979/80 wage review — when Edwardes said accept the deal and clock in on Monday morning or be sacked.

Both Edwardes and the General Secretaries saw it as a move towards a less representative body, dominated entirely by the national officials.

The NJNC was finally disbanded after the sell-out of last year's 1980/81 review, when a series of mass meetings voted no

confidence in it. Since then Edwardes has taken the initiative and tabled a very dangerous new procedure document, which among other things, calls for an NJNC comprised entirely of full time officials.

Ken Cure

In July TGWU Senior Stewards threw it out, but Ken Cure, the AUEW Executive Council man responsible for BL, has obstructed such a decision being taken within the AUEW.

BL workers are therefore now faced with a complicated situation. They have to tackle the problem of the negotiating committee before they can begin to effectively tackle the wage review itself.

Already it is clear that militancy is very high. The bulk of production workers are on a flat rate of £94 — the product of repeated sell-outs. On top of this they have seen Edwardes' own recent 38% increase.

But T&G National Automotive Officer Hawley will check this militancy if he can. He has now sent a letter to the convenors asking their opinion as to what the claim should be and asking them to reply by August 21st.



This effectively puts everything into his hands. He can then decide the claim and the method of negotiations — which, as far as he is concerned, will be through the national officers.

Faced with this situation, the role of the Combine Committee is particularly important, since it is the only representative body which can coordinate a claim. (It is also the correct body).

But the CP-led Combine Committee, which is overdue a meeting by more than a month, is not due to meet until August 28th — by which time

Hawley and Cure will have stitched the claim up.

This situation has resulted in various plants formulating their own claims, some with very dangerous implications.

Longbridge has called for 17% across the board. Not 17% on the basic rate but 17% of the basic rate plus the full bonus potential of £22.00.

This is a very dangerous move indeed. It will be management who will want to negotiate on bonus and forget the basic rate and this plays straight into their hands. The mere mention of

bonus gives management a loophole.

The bonus scheme was not in any case negotiated or agreed by the trade unions — it was imposed by Edwardes. Management controls all the criteria. This means that Edwardes can give bonus money away with one hand, take it away with the other and cut jobs at the same time.

Ad hoc

The other dangerous position adopted at Longbridge is to call for an "ad hoc" committee to negotiate the review.



Don't leave the claim in the hands of Grenville Hawley [above] and the full-timers!

Such a committee would simply allow negotiations to proceed with no solution to the problem of the NJNC. The door would be left wide open for Edwardes to force in his new procedure document and establish an NJNC for next year comprised entirely of full time officials.

But Longbridge is not alone in adopting dangerous policies.

Jaguar

Jaguar convenors have proposed limiting their claim to £12.50 arguing that jobs are more important than money. They, of course, have spent the last few months giving jobs away by the hundred.

The clearest lead on the wage review has been given by the stewards at the Cowley Assembly Plant.

They met off plant last Friday (7th), after being refused facilities by the management, and passed the following resolution:

* £20 across the board on the grade rate — no negotiations on the bonus;

* An emergency meeting of the Combine Committee on Saturday August 15th to agree a common claim;

* Reconstitution of the NJNC as an elected body, on the basis of

proportional representation and accountable to the membership. If this is not achieved, the T&G, as the major union, should negotiate the claim separately.

Spearhead

That resolution was put to a mass meeting on Tuesday 11th and carried by a big majority.

With the backing of the mass meeting it should become the spearhead of the review.

The Combine Committee should adopt it on Saturday 15th and move quickly to take the initiative from Edwardes.

The betrayals of recent years have given Edwardes some very important advantages.

Not only is there no negotiating committee but Edwardes has a rigidly centralised wage bargaining structure. It bars any negotiations at local level, yet the bonus structure creates widely differing rates in every plant.

Shop stewards

But these potentially divisive conditions can be overcome by the militancy of the BL workforce if they are given a clear lead from the shop stewards' movement.

If Company tactics alongside the betrayals by the national officers, prevent a united response to Edwardes, then the obligation will be on the strongest plants to give lead and call upon the rest to follow.

If this kind of initiative is taken the call will be answered by BL workers they have had enough of low wages; they have had enough of Edwardes; they have had enough of compromise and retreat.

Stirling jobless organise

by Stan Crooke and Hugh McClung

FOLLOWING on the example set by Trades Councils in Alloa and Falkirk, an "Unemployed Workers' Association" has now been set up in Stirling as well, at an inaugural meeting held at the end of July.

Such an association, linking up the unemployed and employed, is badly needed in Stirling and the rest of Central Scotland: in the past 12 months unemployment in the Central Region has shot up by 54% and in Stirling itself by 43%.

The principal aims of the UWA, as laid down by the constitution accepted by the inaugural meeting, are: to set up and run unemployed centres; to provide advice on unemployment and supplementary benefits; to encourage the unemployed to be in a union; and to organise support for workers struggling against short time and redundancies.

The UWA also aims "to impress upon the government and local authorities the need for increasing employment. Failing this to assist in bringing about the conditions to replace these representatives" — a formulation which represents an uneasy compromise between the STUC "strategy" of "forcing the Tories to change their policies" and a fight to force the Tories out of office.

Demonstration

Members of the UWA have already been active in carrying out such policies.

When the July unemployment figures were announced, a demonstration was held outside the Job Centre in Stirling (the Department of Employment offices were closed because of the civil servants strike). At a meeting held immediately after the demonstration it was agreed to hold such a demonstration every month, when the unemployment figures are announced.

ounced.

Members of the UWA have also been active in boycotts of local shops selling Lee Jeans, which have been initiated by the "Right to Work Campaign"/SWP, and have already produced the first issue of "Broo Bulletin", a monthly newsheet which provides information on the activities of the UWA, advice on claiming benefits, and coverage of both local and national industrial disputes.

The UWA, despite some political limitations, marks a real step forward in building a united fight of both unemployed and employed against job losses in and around Stirling.

Conference

The next step for Stirling UWA, along with other Scottish UWAs, should be to call a Scotland-wide conference against unemployment along the lines of the one recently held in Leicester.

TUC maps out youth 'campaign'

ONE IN two school leavers will not get a job.

Youth in despair, fighting against the daily harassment of the police and the racists, have poured onto the streets in their thousands in a wave of riots, rocking the country to its foundations.

And the response of the leadership of the 11 million strong organised labour movement?

Would you believe — a train ride round the country?

This massive assault against unemployment has been unveiled by Len Murray, a Job Express carrying 400 unemployed young people will tour all the country's main black spots in the last week of November.

On 28-29-30 November, the campaign will climax with rallies, festivals and lobbies of Parliament in London. The TUC will be working with the National



Len Murray

Union of Students, British Youth Council, Youthaid and the National Association of Asian Youth.

Instead of a real fight-back, drawing in the millions of unionised workers to fight for a 35 hour week and for work-sharing without loss of pay, and an effective campaign to unionise

the unemployed, the TUC just plans another big publicity exercise.

And at the same time it is doing its best to make sure unemployed centres round the country remain "non-political" and under the firm control of union officials, councillors, and the Manpower Services Commission.

Large rallies will be held, anger against the Tories will reach new heights, Thatcher will be begged to do a U-turn — but in the end nothing will happen except resentment among militant youth at having been taken for a ride yet again.

Socialist Organiser and Class Fighter supporters must get organising now to be present at the rallies, the demonstrations, and the lobbies, and to offer the youth a real alternative for fighting the bosses.

ALEXIS CARRAS

LEYLAND BULLETIN



Available from 194 Dawlish Road, Birmingham 29 (send SAE)

SOLD DOWN THE RIVER— BUT MORE DETERMINED THAN EVER!

Backing for rail strike

LAURENCE SCOTTS workers are continuing their fight for jobs despite union leaders' sell-outs and court writs. **PAUL MUDDLE** reports.

"THE most grievous bloody thing about this is the way the AUEW and the Confed have sold us down the river". That was the general view at the 400-strong mass meeting of Laurence Scotts workers on Monday morning 10th August.

Bailiffs

But, as convenor Dennis Barry told Socialist Organiser, there is now greater commitment than ever by the workers occupying Laurence Scotts to prevent closure.

The meeting agreed to remain in occupation until the bailiffs arise, not to resist physically, but to continue to picket the factory and prevent movement of the £2 million worth of work still inside.

The writ served on the

workforce last Wednesday, 4th, came in the wake of the union leaders' betrayal. Official backing was withdrawn when LS owner Arthur Snipe put forward insulting 'settlement' proposals — a reprieve for three months, on a 2-day week!

Now not only the AUEW but also other Confed unions, including the T&G, have stopped strike pay and told their members to return to work.

Pickets

A campaign is needed now to condemn the Confed union leaderships, to get financial support for the workers, and to give practical backing on the picket lines.

* Messages/money: JSSC, c/o George Fryer, 20 Round Croft, Romilly, Cheshire.

"I'VE PUT all the compromises to them I can think of, and I don't know how we can go from there", said rail union leader Sid Weighell after talks with BR bosses.

No amount of wriggling will get round the fact that BR is simply refusing to pay an official arbitration award. And rank and file railworkers are strongly supporting the unions' call for a strike from August 30th.

£58 basic

'Railman' grade workers get a basic £58.75 a week. They have to work an average 52 hours a week for a living wage, and BR workers' overall average work-week is about one-third longer than railworkers anywhere else in western Europe.

The arbitration award — 11%, in two stages — will do no more than stop this miserable standard of living being made much worse by inflation. Yet BR bosses are demanding a productivity deal as their condition even for 11%.

The deal would mean 38,000 redundancies over the next five years.

Railworkers need to organise now, to prepare for the strike, and to stop Weighell thinking of even more and worse compromises!

NGA General Secretary Joe Wade has called upon Pergamon Press boss Robert Maxwell to negotiate with the NUJ.

Nine journalists have been on strike at Pergamon for 22 weeks. But NGA members at the Oxford firm continue to cross the picket lines, despite the fact that part of the dispute is over the NUJ chapel's insistence on an agreement which would protect NGA jobs against new technology.

Donations and messages should be sent to Strike Committee, 5 Union Street, Oxford.

FT attacks unions

by Clare Russell

THE FINANCIAL Times is set on breaking the strength of the print unions.

Nineteen NGA machine managers have rejected the bosses' proposed pay-and-conditions agreement, and scheduled a strike for September 4th. The Financial Times has replied by announcing that it will lock out all 600 printworkers from September 4th, and continue publishing the paper 'by any means it can'.

Frankfurt

This probably means printing abroad — perhaps on the FT's existing Frankfurt presses.

When the Times locked out its workers, it tried printing in West Germany, too — and had to give up the idea after demonstrations by West German trade unionists.

Blackening action by SOGAT distribution workers could equally block the FT's union-smashing plans.

Organising for solidarity should start now.

Lee Jeans deal this week?

by John Lister

HOPES ARE high that this week will see the conclusion of a deal for the sale of the occupied Lee Jeans factory in Greenock to a new buyer.

The workforce, originally 240, has fallen to 140 during the marathon sit-in struggle, which has been the sole example of resistance to the closures and redundancies now rife in the textile industry.

But right up to the last moment there are doubts if the deal will go through. The owners, Vanity Fair, are sticking firm on their asking price for the plant, despite the fact that their figures for the last quarter show profits up by more than £1 million compared to the same period last year.

New buyer Nigel Wright, of the Dickie Dirts chain, has offered £150,000 short of the VF price.

And if the deal were to fall through at the last minute, the women occupying the plant would find themselves left high and dry. Their union, the NUTGW, made its final payment of strike pay in the first week in August, and insists that it is no longer in dispute with Vanity Fair — before any deal has been signed to change the ownership of the plant.

Whatever the outcome of the present financial negotiations, NUTGW members should take up a campaign against this treacherous behaviour of their Executive Committee, and in particular the Communist Party members of that committee who proposed the withdrawal of official support.

Management threat to break into St Mary's union office

by Brian Yates

AS THE OCCUPATION at St Mary's Hospital, Harrow Rd, enters its eighth week, we have started to see how management plans to implement the cuts.

Documents from the Unit Management Team have fallen into the hands of the workers' Occupation Committee, and show that they plan to close down three wards — Wards 4, A2, and A3 — cutting our bed-state to 308.

This follows the two wards and the rheumatology unit which have shut in the last 12 months.

But last week we won a small victory.

A leak from District on Thursday 6th told us that nurse recruitment would be frozen. Student nurses and others would not be taken on, as from September.

Hurried

A hurriedly arranged meeting in the canteen on Thursday evening decided to hold a mass meeting on Friday afternoon.

On the Friday morning, management announced that it was all a terrible mistake, and adverts for new staff went to the nursing magazines before dinner time.

Under these circumstances only 45 people turned up for the meeting on Friday afternoon. But those who did included many nurses previously inactive.

They heard the Occupation Committee spell out the lessons of what had happened, and stress that unity was the key to

saving the hospital.

St Mary's staff are hoping now that unionised nurses will apply for these vacancies.

Management harassment of staff continues, and a domestic has received a warning for not conforming to instructions to clean floors.

Management has also threatened to break into the TGWU offices. The union has refused to move to make way for the new handicapped unit that they are erecting until management offer adequate alternative facilities — which they refuse to do.

Meanwhile, nothing has been heard from the Minister. It is possible

that the decision about closures has already been taken, but has not been announced because of the occupation.

On Saturday afternoon, 8th, only one doctor was working in the threatened casualty unit, and patients were forced to queue for five hours and more. Management had ruled that staff could not call in extra doctors.

They are apparently intending to run down this hospital by giving it a bad name and making patients suffer.

If they are incapable of providing an adequate service, and spend their time harassing staff and attacking the unions, then it's time they were



CHRISTINE CADIN

T&G branch secretary Joe Beckles

put out of the occupation!

Messages/money: John Dolan, c/o Cashier's De-

partment, St Mary's Hospital, Harrow Rd, W9.

*Support the picket line: 8am to 8pm every day.

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OXFORD TRADES Union Council president GERRY CASEY told us:

"I welcome the weekly edition of **Socialist Organiser** as an informed and highly interesting paper on the left."

"Its well-researched features, some of which are fortunately retained from **Socialist Press**, should provide its readers with up-to-the-minute information, as well as in-depth political debate."

"Best wishes for the paper's future."

Despite the holidays, many supporters have reported better-than-average sales.

Now we need to turn the goodwill into material support — fund contributions, new card-carrying supporters, and sponsorships.

Send contributions to: **Socialist Organiser**, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

Socialist Organiser

Lothian test of tenacity

by Rowland Sheret

ON 27 June, the Scottish Council of the Labour Party decided to set up a Council of Action to fight the new round of local government expenditure cuts in Scotland.

At the special conference held that day in Glasgow, George Galloway, Chairperson of the Scottish Council, described the action committee as a 'council of war' which would involve the Scottish Parliamentary Labour Group and the General Council of the STUC along with the Labour controlled local authorities.

No concessions

At the special conference delegates were urged to ensure that local authority Labour Groups made no concessions to George Younger, Secretary of State for Scotland. In return the Scottish Council were to co-ordinate the labour movement in Scotland through the Council of Action to give support to the Councils and councillors defying Younger.

The one tangible sign of action is the demonstration in Edinburgh called in support of Lothian Regional Council on Saturday 12 September.

However much more needs to be done in encouraging a united front from the councils under attack and in gaining support from Scotland's trade union leadership by a campaign among the membership for industrial action to be taken against the cuts.

Cracks

Cracks are appearing in the ranks. Stirling District Council Labour Group are considering making an offer of cuts to Younger. At a time when Lothian is reaching a crunch situation such an offer would be disastrous.

Stirling, Dundee and Lothian, in all of whose Labour Groups the Labour Coordinating Committee has a big influence, are the front line councils under immediate threat from Younger. For Stirling to break ranks would put greater pressure on the other two.

Stirling District Labour Party has still to discuss the Labour Group's report on the latest developments and they meet next on Monday 17 August.

Stand firm

Delegates have to be encouraged to advise the Labour Group to remain firm and refuse to make the cuts.

The Scottish Council of the Labour Party should make that advice clear and point out to the Labour Group the effect on the



THIS WEEK the Tories are imposing their \$47 million penalties on Lothian Council.

The Labour-controlled Region has refused Tory demands to slash its budget, and will now be penalised at the rate of £1.5 million a week.

On Thursday 13th the council meets. The Tories, Liberals and SDP will be proposing a £26 million cuts package — mutilating services and freezing job vacancies, but not sacking council workers immediately.

Last week's Labour Weekly announced that the Labour group "is resigned to the fact that it will have to make cuts once Younger has withheld the money... probably around £21 million".

The story was untrue — and no help to the struggle! But, unfortunately, left-wing Labour councillors are likely to go for a £10 million cuts package on Thursday.

This package is supposed to avoid all cuts in jobs and services, and trim the budget by £10 million merely through juggling amounts like a £5 million subsidy the council wanted to pay which was blocked by the Tories. And it is supposed to gain time.

But it is surely more likely to blunt the struggle and muddy the issue.

Meanwhile, the Lothian Action Committee is meeting on Wednesday 12th. Socialist Organiser supporters will be pressing for urgent steps to convene the national action conference called for by a July 25th conference in Lothian and by many activists right across the country.

★ Contact: Lothian Action Committee, Ruskin House, 15 Windsor St, Edinburgh.



Cuts supremo Heseltine

overall fight of them making a separate peace.

Support for Lothian's stand has been building up. Local authorities in England and Wales such as the GLC have given statements of support.

Scottish local authorities

such as Glasgow District Council who will face the next round of cuts have stated their determination to resist Younger.

The Council of Action should act to maintain a united front and campaign for more tangible support action for the councils under fire.



From Wallasey YS

Campaign to defend arrested youth!

3000 YOUTH have been arrested over the past few weeks, charged with threatening behaviour, criminal damage, breach of the peace, and countless other charges.

Most of them are being held for the "crime" of being on the streets a night when there was a riot.

We know what the Tories think. We've had it all screamed at us day after day from the bosses' press — 'Hooliganism', 'Inadequate parents', 'Greed...'

We know what the Labour leaders think: "OK, the cause is unemployment, but really the police should be allowed to get on with their job."

The TUC see the regeneration of inner city areas as the solution. Big deal. But what have we heard about the 3,000 youth arrested — many of them still in the detention centres where they have been sent to keep them off the streets, many of them refused bail or legal aid?

Some of them have been beaten so badly they're scarred for life. One is dead.

What has anyone had to say in their defence? The truth is that the Labour Party and trade union leaders have been absolutely silent. Only a few Labour Parties have come out and demanded that the charges all be dropped.

Whose side is the labour movement on?

If the labour movement still won't hear the youth

after these riots — where will the youth turn?

What's needed is a campaign to defend the 3,000 who were arrested for finally turning round and saying "That's enough — we won't take any more" — something we are still waiting for the Labour Party and trade union leaders to do.

For taking desperate action youth are now being physically kept off the streets, many facing sentences of months, even years in jail.

Crippling fines of hundreds of pounds are normal. These youth are being made an example of — the state is saying loud and clear "Shut up, and stay home — or you'll get locked up."

Defence

The labour movement must not stand by and let this happen. These youth must be defended and won to the ranks of the labour movement.

We need a national campaign of meetings, pickets of the courts, statements, mass leaflettings to show where the Labour Party and the trade unions stand — on the side of the youth in jail.

The National Left Wing Youth Movement and its paper Class Fighter as part of the LPYS, is organising defence meetings and has produced a special Class Fighter broadsheet on the riots.

But that is not enough. We appeal to Labour Party branches, trade unions, youth organisations, community groups to side with the youth — to demand that the charges are dropped and to organise a campaign nationally to side with the youth against the police and the courts.

There's a lot to be done — many youth still haven't been located by their relatives as they've been sent to detention centres all over the country.

We need to publicise what's happening as there has been a virtual press

blackout on the sentences being handed out.

We need national and local meetings. Pickets of courts have to be organised. Money has to be raised to help pay fines.

The whole labour movement has to be stirred. The youth have shown where they stand — there's 3,000 arrested to prove it. The Labour Party and trade unions now have to show to the youth where they stand.

*Defend the youth!
*Drop the charges!
*Police out of Toxteth, Moss Side, Brixton!



Lodge Lane burning

Support the hunger strikers!

THE DEATH of Thomas McElwee, the ninth republican hunger striker to die in the struggle for political status, went almost without a mention in the British media.

And it went completely without mention in the British labour movement.

Labour and trade union leaders, reluctant to fight the Thatcher government in Britain, are even more reluctant to take a stand against the government's brutal policies of repression in Ireland.

Ruthless

Duffy and other union leaders move ruthlessly against workers at Plansee, Laurence Scott and Lee Jeans who take action in defence of jobs: likewise the TUC and Labour leaders join the Tory onslaught on the republican militants who fight to rid their country of British troops.

But in Ireland the support for the hunger strikers remains solid: it is even making political advances.

Last week saw a successful lobby of the SDLP constituency party in Fer-

managh/South Tyrone. The lobby helped persuade the local party to defy their national executive and not to stand a candidate against republican Owen Carron in the by-election caused by the death of Bobby Sands.

Thus the main vote-splitter in the nationalist camp emerges as Tom Moore of Sinn Féin the Workers Party, running on a pro-imperialist platform of "peace, employment and civil rights".

Meanwhile claims by the British government that the hunger strikers and their families are acting under threat from the republican movement were movingly and effectively refuted by a meeting of over 300 relatives of the prisoners on hunger strike and the long list who have volunteered to take the places of their dead comrades.

The meeting was unanimous in its support for the prisoners' stand.

How long must it be before the British labour movement rallies to support this courageous struggle?

We urge all readers who have not yet done so to fight within their union branches,

and Labour Parties, for resolutions of support to the hunger strikes, for solidarity meetings, pickets and lobbies.

Political status for Irish prisoners of war!

troops out of Ireland now!

Self determination for the Irish people!

TROOPS OUT OF GAMBIA!

AT THE end of July there was a left-wing coup in the Gambia. Britain's response was: send in the SAS.

The SAS intervention — probably arranged while ousted president Dawda Jawara was in London for the Royal Wedding — helped troops from neighbouring Senegal to rescue hostages and put down the rebellion. A former SAS major was already in the Gambia, serving as a military instructor.

Now the Senegalese/SAS invasion has reconquered the Gambia for Jawara, one of imperialism's most reliable allies in Africa. It has also kept the ground-nut plantations, backbone

of Gambia's economy, safe for Unilever.

The SAS and the Senegalese have no more right to be in the Gambia than the Americans in Vietnam, Iran, or El Salvador, the French in Zaire... or the SAS in Ireland.

But meanwhile, last week, Timothy Creasey, chief of the British Army in Northern Ireland, was discreetly transferred to Oman, where he will command the Sultan's forces in their war against left-wing rebels. The SAS has already been active in Oman, helping to keep the oil supplies from the Gulf safe for imperialism.