

**Join the
Labour
Party**

Write to 150
Walworth Rd.
London SE17.

Socialist Organiser

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31,000 say: SMASH H-BLOCK!

by John O'Mahony

TEN DEAD men. And still the grim reaper in Downing Street continues to hone the edge of the scythe.

Still more hunger strikers, in single file, edge painfully towards death.

Still the official British Labour movement continues to support the Irish policy of bloody Margaret Thatcher.

And more and more completely, as death follows death, the Catholics of Northern Ireland commit themselves to the hunger strikers — and the youth, no doubt, to the hunger strikers' army.

On the day Micky Devine of the Irish Republican Socialist Party died, Owen Carron held the Fermanagh/South Tyrone seat won for the H-Block campaign by hunger-striker Bobby Sands in April.

The hunger-strikers, captured prisoners of war, have found a terrible but most powerful way to continue their military struggle by other means. As part of her war effort Mrs Thatcher — like Wilson and Callaghan before her — brands them as mere criminals, but their deeds in captivity prove them to be what they say they are — political militants and soldiers.

Now two elections have proved that they have mass popular backing in the Catholic community.

The massive support for

the hunger strike prepares the conditions for a new military offensive by the Provisional IRA.

Mrs Thatcher may find that if she breaks the hunger strike, she will have unleashed a new large-scale, and probably more bitter, military campaign, in which the spirit of the dead of Long Kesh will still confront the British government, but as armed men, hundreds of young Republican soldiers for every one of the prisoners of war allowed to starve to death in Long Kesh.

Simultaneously, sectarian hostility is hardening in the Protestant community. The grim risk of large-scale

bloody communal conflict mounts.

The only way out is for Britain to abandon its attempt to beat down the Catholics who are in open rebellion against being an artificially created minority within an artificial sub-state where they have been politically, socially & militarily oppressed for 60 years. (The Catholics are a bigger minority in the Six Counties than the Protestants of all Ireland would be in a 32 County state).

Britain must end its occupation and abandon its commitment to maintain the partition of Ireland.

From any point of view

that policy is a manifest failure. Even the exercise of majority rule by the artificially created Protestant majority within the Six Counties had to scrapped by the British overlord — a full decade ago!

Still Britain refuses to seek and negotiate a new settlement in the only place it can be found — in the broader framework of a united Ireland.

The Provisional Republicans, shaped by the experience of 50 years of Orange rule and by a decade of war against Britain, fight in the best way they can according to their tradition in the just cause of breaking the

communal-sectarian bearpit of Northern Ireland.

Britain was responsible for the original 1920 gerrymander that locked the people of Northern Ireland, Protestant and Catholic alike, into that statelet.

Britain fights now to preserve partition.

Britain, especially by its refusal to grant the prisoners' five demands, is responsible for letting the communal antagonisms boil towards lethal heat.

The British labour movement must understand what is happening, and what can happen, before it is too late, and insist on the granting of the five demands.

STOP T&G ANTI-BENN PLOY

by Jim Denham

THE supposedly 'left-wing' leadership of the Transport and General Workers' Union could prove to be Denis Healey's saviour in the Labour deputy leadership contest.

Moss Evans and Deputy General Secretary Alex Kitson denounced Benn's decision to stand as soon as it was announced. And despite a number of pro-Benn resolutions and the evident support for them from the majority of delegates, T&G President Stan Pemberton bureaucratically prevented a vote being taken on the question at the last Biennial Delegate Conference.

So now the decision rests entirely with the Labour Party Conference delegation, which is not due to meet until the day before the conference! They are expected to cast the union's vote in favour of Silkin in the first ballot.

And it is beginning to look increasingly likely that they'll either abstain or even vote for Healey in the second ballot (if there is one).

But to give a democratic gloss to their covert participation in the 'stop Benn' campaign, the T&G bureaucrats have organised a farcical 'consultation' process with the regional committees.

Region 1 (South East) and Region 5 (Midlands) have at least contacted the branches. But in Region 6, the letters weren't received until 20th August, and replies have to be back by 11th September — making it impossible for many branch secretaries to consult a branch meeting (even if they wanted to...)



Pemberton

Worse still, the Region 5 letter includes election addresses from Silkin and Healey, but not Benn. Regional Office says there weren't enough copies of Benn's address to send out. In Region 6 (North West) the Regional Committee hasn't even bothered to contact Branch Secretaries. The Committee took a vote on the matter, where a resolution to support Benn was defeated by one vote. And that's as far as their consultation went!

The vote should have been taken at the BDC. And now all the evidence (including numerous branch resolutions) suggests that a genuine consultation at branch level would come down heavily in favour of Benn — especially in Region 6.

TGWU members should put resolutions to their branches condemning this farcical 'consultation' demanding all three election addresses be circulated to all branches, and that adequate time be set aside for all branches to take a vote on the question.

The secret 'Stop Benn' plot must be stopped!



INSIDE

IRELAND

Micky Devine 1954-81 page 10

Behind the by-election page 6

BENN CAMPAIGN

Letter to the unions page 6

Who pays for the AES? page 6

Lothian union leaders cover Labour council sell-out

by Joe Baxter

LOCAL TRADE union officials in Lothian are moving in to cover the tracks of the Regional Council Labour Group's climbdown on cuts.

Lothian Joint Trade Union Committee chairperson Alistair MacRae last week told the press that the committee 'now accepted the inevitability of further cuts'. "No other council group in Britain has tried harder to protest the interests of the trade unions and the citizens" - but, he said, "There is a limit to the sacrifices anybody can make".

At a joint meeting of the Trade Union Committee and the Lothian Action Committee on Friday 21, all resolutions were ruled out of order, and the full-time officials steered the meeting onto a discussion of which cuts to support.

Panic

The Labour Group, meeting on Thursday 20th, voted to repeal the freeze on new spending imposed in panic when it capitulated to the Tories - but also to go for further cuts. No emergency council meeting has been called, so these decisions cannot be implemented until the next regular meeting on September 1.

It is still not clear whether the scrapping of the freeze will mean that all of the 900 teachers sacked on August 16 get

their jobs back.

The Regional Labour Party executive has passed a resolution opposing further cuts. But since it also urges "no recriminations" against the councillors voting for cuts, this opposition cannot have much weight.

Casualty

Many rank and file Labour Party and trade union members are not so willing to casually tear up all Lothian's resolutions about 'no cuts' and 'industrial action against cuts', and all the promises made to the working class of Lothian.

At the full Regional Labour Party meeting on September 6, there will be resolutions calling for the councillors who voted for cuts to be removed from the panel for the next elections.

And the NALGO Region Executive, meeting on August 24, defeated proposals to negotiate on details of the cuts. There is a NALGO Region branch meeting on Thursday 27 August and militants are preparing resolutions calling for all-out strike action to restore the cuts in jobs and services, and for joint trade union workplace committees to organise the fight against the cuts.

No cover

The teachers' union EIS has officially called

on its members not to cover for the sacked teachers, and there too resolutions are being pushed for strike action.

Lessons

Confusion and demoralisation is, predictably, still strong after the sell-out, but Socialist Organiser supporters in Lothian are determined not to 'forgive and forget' but to draw the lessons and help build a solid class-struggle left wing that will prevent future sell-outs.



Promises—but no action

STIRLING District Council, one of the 'front line' Scottish councils penalised along with Lothian, has agreed to make cuts of £700,000. But Tory Scottish Secretary George Younger isn't satisfied with this. He is withholding £1 million of the Rate Support Grant until the £700,000 is not only cut, but refunded to the rate-payers.

John Wyles, chairperson of the Labour Group on Stirling District Council spoke to Rowland Sheret.

Since the Rate Support Grant will be cut anyway because of your refusal to hand back the money, would it not have been better to refuse cuts in the first place?

Our main consideration was the defence of jobs. The cuts of £1½ million originally demanded by Younger threatened jobs. Cuts of £700,000 will only touch

our planned build up of services.

We have consulted with the unions involved.

Did Stirling Labour Group ever see itself in a united fight with Lothian and Dundee, hoping to pull in other Local Authorities?

The task of co-ordination was really for the Scottish Council of the Labour Party. The advice we got from them was that retention of jobs was the main priority.

I was disappointed with the role of the STUC and the trade unions who have promised so much but have produced very little practical action.

We have been very conscious of Lothian's position. However in the end we had to act as a Labour Group.

The Party has not had a

united response throughout Scotland. We have had no enquiries about our local position from either the Scottish Council of the Labour Party or the Council of Action they have set up since 27 June.

What lessons have been learned from the struggle so far?

This is only Younger's first round. Next year he will be looking to cut jobs drastically.

As far as the Scottish Council of the Labour Party and the STUC are concerned I can only say that as long as the labour movement continues to recognise the law as the only ultimate judge, then we only shackle ourselves.

Do we have to reach a riot situation, like Liverpool, before the labour movement reacts? These are the questions we must ask.

Reinstate Lothian teachers

PHYLIS Heriot, of Lothian Region Labour Group has refused to give a categorical assurance that all the 944 short term contract teachers currently sacked under the freeze on new spending in Lothian Region will be given their jobs back when the freeze is lifted on September 1 (and a new package of cuts is substituted).

The Lothian Region Executive of the teachers union EIS has decided to call on the national executive to authorise all-out strike action in Lothian if any of the teachers are not reinstated.

But these fine-sound-

ing words from the Executive must be looked at in the light of the fact that when the 944 sackings were first announced, the same Regional Executive voted against immediate strike action.

The National Executive (which does not meet until 9 September anyway) is not exactly renowned for its militancy, and unless considerable pressure is applied, it will veto the action and leave the Regional Executive playing the role of frustrated militants, with relieved and happy smiles on their faces

by Callum McRae

Boycott backsliding

by Brian Edmands

COVENTRY Labour Left is leafletting and campaigning for a boycott of Coventry Labour Council's 'cuts or rate rises' referendum on August 27.

But an emergency resolution from Coventry South West Labour Party, calling for a boycott, was defeated by 10 votes at the District Labour Party meeting.

The defeat was helped by delegates from Coventry North East LP, who went against their own constituency decision, taken the night be-

fore, to oppose the referendum. These 'delegates' moved and seconded a boycott resolution, but then voted against it!

This appalling backsliding shows the importance of maintaining the struggle in the Labour Party to make councillors, MPs, delegates, etc. accountable.

And this struggle must go hand in hand with the fight to attract more members, to make the Labour Party more habitable for ordinary workers, and to sever the links with class traitors embedded at all levels in the labour movement.

Clampdown on paper sales

by Brian Edmands

FOLLOWING the recent anti-racist activity in Coventry, the national demonstration against racist attacks on May 23 and the series of precinct rallies initially organised by the North East LPYS, the right-wing Labour controlled City Council has introduced a strict system of control of all newspaper sales in Coventry precinct.

These new regulations include limits on the number

of sellers - only four named people are permitted to use each licence - the times, and the places of sales. The police are given powers to harass and move on - and arrest for obstruction - any paper-seller without a valid permit.

Permits are being issued free until November 1, when the system will be reviewed. So far no applications have been refused, but each one is scrutinised for its 'suitability' and can be withdrawn.

Socialist Organiser SCIENCE

No-one ever died from radiation?

by Les Hearn

24 years after the fire at Windscale which resulted in up to 1,000 times more radioactive pollution than the Harrisburg incident, someone has actually worked out the probable effect on the health of local inhabitants.

Peter Taylor, of the Political Ecology Research Group estimates that between 10 and 20 people may have died as a result of the fire. The final effect may be greater when people who were foetuses at the time of the fire have had time to show ill-effects, as some cancers can take up to 30 years to appear. And yet there are still those who claim that no one has ever died from nuclear power.

Readers may remember my writing in SO 34 about a fire at Cap La Hague nuclear fuel reprocessing plant in France resulting in "accidental" release of radiation. A recent report in Environmental Pollution makes it clear that the plant normally discharges large

amounts of radioactive rubbish into the Channel. This is concentrated by seaweed up to 10,000 times (this is because seaweed takes in the radioactive metals plutonium and americium but is unable to get rid of them).

Unfortunately many food growers in the Channel Islands use the seaweed as fertiliser so the radioactive metals enter plants or become further concentrated in animal food chains.

This may be a serious problem for those who eat a lot of local produce - in other words, the Channel Islanders - and particularly the poorer ones. Things will probably get worse when the French start running the series of pressurised water reactors planned along their northern coast, pouring low-level waste into the sea.

President Mitterrand, that scourge of French capitalism, has suspended some nuclear projects as a sop to anti-nuclear campaigners, but these are likely to be started up again when a coal-

ition of right wing Socialists, Gaullists and "Communists" vote on nuclear plans in the French parliament. The "Communists" are worried about the jobs to be lost from these projects but don't seem to care about the proven hazards of nuclear power.

Yet more evidence of the perils of radioactive pollution. Among the 1.5 million people living within 20 miles of the nuclear weapons plant near Denver, Colorado, there are at any time some 500 extra cases of cancer caused by escapes of mainly plutonium from the plant. For

men the extra cases of cancer ranged between 8% and 24%, according to how near the plant they lived, while for women the range was 4% to 10%. Cancers thus caused included leukaemia, cancers of the lung, bronchus, liver, pancreas and gonads. And that's before they let the bombs off!

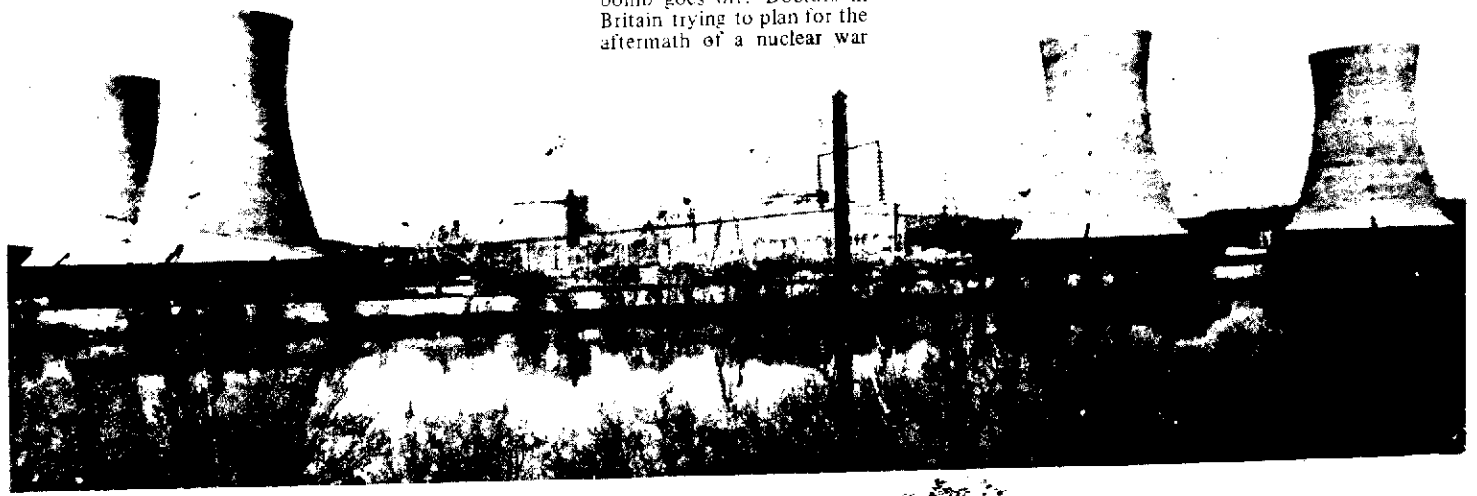
What about after the bomb goes off? Doctors in Britain trying to plan for the aftermath of a nuclear war

have found that much of the information they require is classified. Research has been carried out by the Army, but its results remain secret.

Meanwhile, the East Anglia Regional Health Authority has produced an analysis of post-holocaust

health services. It gives a list of herbal remedies to use in the absence of conventional

drugs - apparently juniper could be used to cure cystitis, hawthorn to cure angina and mistletoe could reduce high blood pressure! Protection against fall out could be afforded by a plastic bag over the head with a hole for a medical gauze to breathe through. SO readers may think it advisable to forget about the hole.



IS THATCHER SHARPENING PRE-CONFERENCE KNIFE?

"Turn back?
Hell, no; we only
just got here."
Margaret
Thatcher

MARTIN THOMAS
looks at the coming
Tory reshuffle

A RESHUFFLE in the Tory
Cabinet seems certain in the
next few weeks.

Press speculation has it
that the reshuffle will be in
the direction of strengthening
the hard-line Thatcher/
Howe monetarists within the
government.

'Wet' Employment Secretary
James Prior may be sent
to the Northern Ireland
Office and be replaced by
Thatcherite Norman Tebbit.

And Tory Party chair-
person Lord Thorneycroft
could be sacked for giving
too much comfort to the
'wets'.

Such moves will run
directly counter to the trend
of opinion in the capitalist
class and even in big sections

"The economy
is in the deepest
recession I have
ever known.

"I don't see it
picking up where
I am. My friends
don't detect
bottoming out.
It clearly has not
bottomed out.
It's very, very
rough indeed."

Lord Thorneycroft
speaking to the
Observer, 2nd
August 1981



of the Tory Party. Howe's
Budget this March was des-

cribed by the CBI as "a kick
in the teeth", and their views

have not softened since.
Recent figures show a sub-
stantial decline in big-bus-
ness donations to the Tories.

But the entire philosophy
of the Thatcherite leadership
is based on pig-headedness
elevated into a principle.

The top Tories drew two
conclusions from the fiasco
of the 1970-74 Heath
government.

'Reflation' in economic
slumps is, they believe, use-
less indeed harmful. Public
spending to reduce unem-
ployment just pushes prices
up faster.

But at Tory conferences
they also concluded, "We do
not want to return to the
hostility and bitterness
which was seen in the 1970-

4 period. We do not want to
go through the humiliation
of an Official Solicitor."

Norman Tebbit himself
told the 1977 Tory confer-
ence:

"I am a hawk and not a
kamikaze pilot. We are right
to disavow any heavy-
handed legislation."

Rigid

So their policy is to take
on the unions cautiously
and selectively while a
rigid monetary and public-
spending policy makes indus-
try 'leaner and tauter'.

Milton Friedman and the
other economic witch
doctors assure them that it
will all come right in the

end. The Tories are not quite
sure how.

Keith Joseph declares:

"We do not really know
the secret of economic
growth or how to generate
it... Economic growth
began thousands of years
ago, as a result of people
following self-interest..."

But the hope that liber-
ated cut-and-plunder econ-
omies will lead to revival is
all they have to cling to. It
will take more than a few
bad by-election results or
defections to the SDP to
shift them.

Thus the 'wets', who
want less of a blunderbuss
policy, probably cannot
change the government's

direction decisively without
getting rid of Thatcher. And
to get rid of a leader in the
ultra-hierarchical Tory Party
is not easy.

Chaos

For the labour move-
ment the task now is to take
advantage of the chaos and
division in the Tory ranks.
The Tories are half-unable to
govern already.

A decision by the labour
movement to break all
collaboration with this
government, and to launch a
serious offensive, could
cripple the Tories complet-
ely and drive them from
office.

"This recession is proving deeper
and longer than anyone expected, and
its effects on particular sections of
society are very acute indeed.

"The British people will not be
prepared for very much longer to
tolerate the worst effects of the
recession if there is not a clear sign that
the sacrifice will have been
worthwhile."

Francis Pym, speech in
Northumberland, August 1st 1981



THE ARISTOCRACY may
have their Glorious Twelfth
when they begin massac-
ring fat game-birds, but
for the wobbly left it marked
the open season for a
different type of game —
'Trot-spotting'.

A rather tongue-in-cheek
piece in Tribune's 'Diary'
suggested the Labour Party
should welcome the affilia-
tion of the Communist
Party for their undoubted
talents at 'Trot-spotting'.
This was answered the fol-
lowing weeks by Kay Beau-
champ, long-time CP mem-
ber and self-proclaimed
crack shot at this sport.

Crimes

She justified her pre-
viously-quoted assertion
that 'Trots' are totally hos-
tile to all that the Labour
Party stands for in a rather
rambling letter which
identified the major crimes
of the 'Trots' in her 50
years' experience of them.

They were 'critics who
were not to be pacified'.
'They want to take every
battle further than it can
go' (maybe she had in mind
the Laurence Scotts occu-
pation, where the CP firmly
decided 'thus far and no
further'), they do not see it

as one battle in which you
can win what you can' (a
sadly familiar phrase to
workers who try to pursue
their struggles in the teeth
of opposition from their
'leaders').

Without wishing to nit-
pick, it does seem a rather
feeble catalogue of crime
compared to the mass
murder of workers and
peasants by Stalin, the
backstabbing of the work-
ers' movements in Europe
after the war, the brutal
suppression of the Hungar-
ian revolution, the scabb-
ing and sell-outs of work-
ers' struggles, to name but
a few of the points which
were after all the substance
of the political issues on
which the 'Trots' were so
unpleasantly intransigent.
Bottom of the barrel stuff,
really.

Disgusting

Ignoring this for a
moment (and there are
plenty of nice lefts who will
ignore it, feeling that it's
rather bad taste to dredge
up the disgusting political
record of one's opponents
in a debate) it is an unfor-
tunate fact that Kay Beau-
champ's words will seem as

sweet music to the ears of
many who are tired of the
struggle in the Labour
Party, who fear that it has
gone too far, who wish to
return to the good old days
before the right wing and
the press called us bad
names.

The era of meaningful
collaboration between the
CP, the shaky left and the
right wing is now officially
opened. Stand by your
stakes, witches.

SO THE last bastion of
'workers' control' in the
nationalised industries has
fallen.

Steel boss Ian McGre-
gor, with the backing of
Keith Joseph, has refused
to accept two nominees
from the ISTC [the biggest
union in the industry] as
worker-directors on the
BSC board.

The 'control' element
was never very evident —
the ISTC claims that their
previous worker-directors
were never even shown the
McGregor plan for restruct-
uring the industry with
massive closures and re-
dundancies.

And a look at the two
rejected nominees — one
a manager at Shotton, the
other a full-time union
official! — makes the term
'workers' look a little
strained, too.

BSC, however, seems
unabashed and has
appointed that well-known
son of toil, Sir John Boyd
of the AUEW, as a part-
time member on the board.

The ISTC's response is
that 'in no circumstances
would they take part in this
charade'. They threaten
non-cooperation with the
plan and an overtime ban.

It may be a disastrously

belated death-bed conver-
sation, but with luck other
workers may take the point
about phoney 'worker-
director' schemes.

THE MANAGEMENT and
unions at Remploy, a gov-
ernment-sponsored enter-
prise with 85 factories
employing 8,200 severely
disabled workers, have
come up with their own
unique contribution to
1981 — the Year of the
Disabled — cheap labour.

Under a new pay compar-
ability formula worked out
last year, Remploy work-
ers should have received a
17% rise this year, equi-
valent to £12. Instead they
will get only £5, giving
them a basic of £60.06

a week.

The original formula,
agreed by both sides, was
seen as something of a
breakthrough. It was based
on a comparison with male
manual workers' earnings
in seven different groups,
such as furniture and
textiles.

This year, mindful of
government spending cuts,
the unions, led by the
G&M, agreed to the inclu-
sion of another group of
workers in the comparison
— low-paid women work-
ers in packaging and light
assembly — thus dragging
down the average.

If 'woman is the nigger of
the world', then disabled
people fare little better.

Socialist Organiser Alliance

To make **Socialist Organiser** a real campaigning paper that
can organise the left in the movement, it needs its own
organised activist support — and money.

Local supporters' groups have been established in most
big towns to build a real base for the paper.

Supporters are asked to undertake to sell a minimum of
six papers an issue and to contribute at least £1 a month
(20p for unwaged). So becoming a supporter helps build
our circulation and gives the paper a firmer financial base.

If you like **Socialist Organiser**, think it's doing a good
job, but realise that it can't possibly do enough unless you
help, become a card-carrying supporter.

Fill in the form below and send it to: **Socialist Organiser**,
c/o 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

I want more information ☐ I wish to become a **Socialist
Organiser** supporter ☐

Name

Address

..... Phone

CLP TU

Chopper Bristow, the North Sea pirate

THE HARD-faced piratical
nature of capitalism feeding
off the profits of North Sea
oil is epitomised by Alan
Bristow, chairperson of the
helicopter firm.

The week before last,
within 36 hours of each
other, two Wessex helicopt-
ers owned by Bristow's com-
pany came down in the
North Sea. One life was lost
in the first crash, and 13 in
the second.

Bristow's comment was
that, looked at in perspec-
tive, 'this tragedy doesn't
seem quite as tragic'. He
went on to arrogantly
defend the reliability of his
machines and their safety
record in the North Sea.

But he was soon to
change his tune with a deci-
sion to suspend operations
of his Wessex craft and to
level accusations against
their makes, Westland, his
former employers.

Bristow's buccaneering
attitude is no better than can
be expected from a man
with a record of being a
mercenary attached to the
French Foreign Legion in
Indochina and a notorious
strike-buster over the last
20 years.

When one of his pilots
refused to accept an over-
seas posting in 1976, he was
sacked. Fifty more pilots
who took sympathetic
action then lost their jobs,
and Bristow lambasted the
union, BALPA, as 'fanatical
and destructive'.

Despite his bluster,
Bristow has no doubt been
shaken by the revelations in
the Sunday Times of August
16 of 14 serious crashes by
Bristow-owned helicopters
over the last ten years, with
59 deaths and many injuries.

Private operators have
constantly evaded adequate
safety standards in the
North Sea. There are serious
problems of overloading, and
whereas Dutch, Danish and
Norwegian operators must
use two pilots, British heli-
copters have only one, even
in 'blind' weather.

The whole question of
safety in the North Sea op-
erations, as well as the
particular circumstances
surrounding the recent
crashes, urgently require
investigation and action
by the Scottish TUC and
affiliated unions involved in
the industry.

World news

NICARAGUA: ON THE TIGHTROPE

GROWING hostility from the bourgeoisie and the United States, coupled with pressure from the workers and peasants have now forced the Sandinista junta in Nicaragua into new measures.

The Sandinistas have organised huge rallies and made a concerted call for expropriating decapitalised industries and lands.

Slaughterer

Workers have brought proof of indiscriminate slaughter of livestock and the sabotage of harvests for example. Many are also calling for 'mano dura' (iron hand) to be exercised against right wing terrorism, inflation, shortages of consumer

goods, bureaucracy, poor public services, the inadequacy of labour law reforms and the conflict between work schedules and militia training.

At a Sandinista trade union rally on June 18, leader Enis Melendez said:

"It is true that we beat Somoza's National Guard, but we haven't yet beaten our main class enemy, the stubborn bourgeoisie."

On July 19 about half a million Nicaraguans converged on Managua for a rally on the second anniversary of the revolution - including about 700 truck loads from Matagalpa, the northern region most hard hit by right wing terrorism. They were addressed by Daniel Ortega, the junta's coordinator, who in a recent interview admitted:

"The pressure from the rank and file is high. We've got to realize it and give it a goal, otherwise we are going to find ourselves without the people and with the bourgeoisie against us."

To a storm of applause he announced measures which were adopted by acclamation.

Law

The first was a new law enabling the government to place enterprises under its control on receiving a charge of decapitalisation from the workers. If after investigation the complaint is dismissed, workers are protected from reprisals.

Fourteen enterprises were to be immediately expropriated but he rejected

the roar for the confiscation of the leading bourgeoisie paper, Prensa.

The property of Nicaraguans leaving the country for more than six months was also to be immediately expropriated, domestic distribution of sugar is to be under government control and government controls of foreign trade are to be strengthened.

After the revolution two years ago, when the Somoza dictatorship was overthrown by a coalition of forces including a major sector of the bourgeoisie, the country was on the verge of bankruptcy.

It still has a shortfall of 100 million dollars in foreign exchange income this year.

The Government of National Reconstruction has walked a fatal tightrope by

evicting workers and peasants from occupied lands and factories belonging to the anti-Somoza bourgeoisie, making tax concessions to the private sector and leaving the two main export crops, sugar and coffee almost entirely in private hands in an attempt to encourage local investment by the local bourgeoisie and appease the US and win aid and loans in order to buy wheat.

The response of the US was to cancel loans and aid (wheat has finally been donated by the Soviet Union and Sweden, Switzerland and Canada), harbour and train former National Guard militias in Florida to carry out terrorist campaigns from the Honduran border and poise the 10,000 strong Rapid Deployment Force in

Miami.

The private sector in Nicaragua has been similarly uncooperative. Its representatives have walked out of the Council of State and set up the right wing Nicaraguan Democratic Movement (MDN) which speaks through the daily Prensa. Wealthy industrialists and agriculturalists have decapitalised at a phenomenal rate, and bureaucracy in the civil service has continued unimpeded and even worsened.

Balance

The latest measures still leave the country in the grip of capitalism and committed to pluralism and the mixed economy. However they show that the Nicaraguan revolution is still in the balance and has not been

able to stabilise at a level comfortable either for its leadership or for the forces of reaction.

The way forward surely lies in the expropriation of all major privately owned industry under workers' control and the transformation of the militias and defence committees into soviet-style bodies - and also in the success of revolutionary upheavals particularly in neighbouring Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.

After the so-called 'final offensive' in El Salvador failed to change the deadlock between government forces and the guerrillas, a directive was sent out by the Nicaraguan government forbidding any spokesperson to appear on a platform with Salvadoran representatives.

This failed in its aim of favourably impressing the US and it is clear that unless the rest of Central America rises up against its oppressors Nicaragua will find itself increasingly isolated and doomed within a relatively short period.

Miners strike as generals make a deal

As Bolivia's generals try to reconsolidate their control after the crisis provoked by the recent coup, SANTIAGO FORTIN sent us this report from La Paz.

LA PAZ, August 9.

TERRIFIED at the very real prospect of a civil war and their own destruction, as in the revolution of 1952, the rebels and the ruling Junta have patched up a compromise by which both sides concede ground, but the sole guarantor of capitalist rule in this backward capitalist country, the armed forces, remains intact for the time being.

The rebel generals, Alberto Natusch Busch and Lucio Anez Rivero, finally managed to remove, year-long dictator General Luis Garcia Meza but underestimated the unity of economic interests in the ruling apparatus (the cocaine trade) and failed to dislodge the Junta that he appointed.

One set of lame dogs follows another; the final deal 'among brothers' pledged to the nation' has altered little.

Natusch's original demands were for a transitional regime, free elections, full constitutional rights, free trade unions, and a free press. In the end he happily settled for the reincorporation into the military of 200 purged officers; an act that will assuredly engender further unrest as old institutional scores are settled.

Scores

Nevertheless, the officers were only too aware that the sixth and final coup against Garcia had to be brought to a precipitate halt, for it had unleashed a series of strikes in the mines, and factories of La Paz and threatened a wave of mass mobilisation.

This was the unceremonious end for Garcia, a vain, cunning creature who attempted to emulate Pinochet with a regime established in the bloody coup of 17 July 1980 with the



Natusch

perspective of staying in power for "5, 10, 20 years, whatever it takes to purge Marxism from Bolivia."

After a year Garcia is packing his bags with one eye on the \$40 million he has stashed away in Europe as the proceeds from his share of the cocaine trade.

Yet Garcia has not yet gone; last week his birthday was celebrated by colleagues in the Military Academy with the conspicuous return to Bolivia after several months' absence of Col. Luis Arce Gomez, principal butcher of the ousted regime, known 'narcotraficante' and 'capode tutti cappi' of the SES - Servicios Especiales de Seguridad the extensive paramilitary network with which Bolivia is still ruled by an iron hand.

Thugs

The power of SES, which numbers at least 10,000, is still very evident. These hired thugs dominate La Paz in their unmarked Toyota trucks and ambulances, and since the end of the coup there has been a new wave of arrests.

Any comment in the press during the uprising which conflicted with the flaccid pronouncements of

the Junta's propaganda or revealed their lies for what they were drew physical attacks not only on the newspaper offices but also on members of the public carrying that paper and even on the children many of whom are blind or disabled - who sell the papers on street corners.

The streets of La Paz, and especially Santa Cruz - the centre of the revolt, remain quiet except for the movement of armoured cars and the more sinister vehicles of the SES. Work is at a halt; people are angry but remain scared.

This is especially true in Santa Cruz, the main support for the rebels, where significant numbers of officers and drug traffickers viewed Garcia's isolation with dismay and, in line with a progressive transfer of cocaine capital into legitimate enterprises, sought to achieve the re-institution of Bolivia into the traditional imperialist nexus under a veil of democratic verbiage to gain popular support.

Strike

They were stopped in their tracks by a declaration issued by the trade union federation COB late on 5 August calling for an indefinite general strike in defence of trade union, democratic and human rights, a total amnesty and 100% wage increases. The first indication of the support the outlawed COB still has was when the regime had to cancel a rally for lack of support.

This abstentionism was particularly important and a major boost to popular morale because failure to obey government orders means immediate firing and the attention of the SES.

The COB strike call was vigorously presented as an action independent of the coup; "it has nothing to do with either of the two military groups in conflict" This line accurately reflects

the swelling confidence and radicalism of the rank and file against the corrupt and bankrupt leadership outside the country. Lechin, the UDP, and the MIR who have all along consorted with a string of disgruntled generals in an effort to ride back to their bureaucratic privileges on the wings of a coup.

Collusion

The degree to which these forces, and particularly the petty bourgeois MIR and the Communist Party have betrayed the workers' movement is fully evident in their unswerving and shameless backing for Natusch, dictator for 14 days in November 1979 when over 300 people were slaughtered.

Leading militants of the self-same parties have acted in direct collusion with the Garcia regime as official government appointed labour 'relacionadores' in place of the legitimate, popularly elected and mandated union officers.

One CP member, a leading figure in the ESTMB (miners' union), Oscar Salas, has held such a post at the huge Siglo XX-Catavi complex while at the same time being responsible for the disbursement of funds sent in international solidarity with the miners' struggle against the dictatorship.

Salas has consistently sabotaged this work although he was quick enough to sign the latest COB strike call in a frantic effort to save his skin.

Others, such as Oscar Sanjines and virtually the entire external leadership of the MIR, have failed to yield literally tens of thousands of dollars sent to Lima. These facts were made known to us two days before the coup when a very modest sum from the Bolivian Workers' Support Fund was handed over directly to a meeting of section leaders in Siglo



Bolivian political prisoners

XX itself, 450 miles to the south of here. This meeting of some 20 popular elected stewards of the clandestine union specifically requested that the corruption and treason of the external 'official' leadership and the 'relacionadores' be publicised and that it be known abroad that "when the time is right we will proceed to apply justice, however severe, in line with the traditions of the workers' movement."

We attended the meeting for three hours and the whole feeling in the camp was one of frank radicalism, in line with the traditional militancy of the Bolivian miners who have proved such a heroic vanguard in the struggle against imperialism and dictatorial barbarism. Yet less than four miles away over 1,000 troops were stationed and in the camp itself the SES was highly active.

We were forced to leave hurriedly when a further two regiments arrived at the nearby airstrip, and the

security forces began to mobilise, clearly in anticipation of the coup and the subsequent strike.

Today, a week later, the Siglo XX strike remains firm in repudiation not only of the forces of imperialist capital but also the MIR and CP which, in league with the supposedly 'progressive' church, are scrambling to regain their old positions once more in careful cohabitation with the junta while continuing to talk to Reagan.

Purge

The sole blessing of censorship here is that we are entirely ignorant of the brave verbiage being peddled by the heroic bureaucrats in the exterior. Blowing hot and cold by turn, they are totally isolated from the struggle of the Bolivian masses who are only just regaining that confidence and radicalism necessary to purge their betrayers.

Nobody in the mass

movement held the slightest illusion in the coup or in Natusch's ambitions which were perceived as an effort to weaken the forces of the class enemy.

The political crisis of the Bolivian bourgeoisie continues to follow its extraordinarily consistent downhill course. The almost daily divisions in the armed forces, the almost total bankruptcy of the economy (\$4 billion of unpaid debts), extensive speculation and runaway inflation and the political failure to please even Reagan will continue whatever tragicomic reconciliation is patched up by the increasingly confused generals.

The bourgeoisie's last card is Banzer who backed the last coup from the secure distance of Miami and has declared he will only return to power through elections.

Nobody here discounts this possibility as the mass movement accelerates. A dog in a corner does not always bite first.

World news

Pitched battles in Teheran: Mullahs say 'ALL MARXISTS WILL BE SHOT'

by Mansur Hallaj

On Sunday August 23 the Iranian government announced over state radio the capture of 500 oppositionists.

Among those captured, according to the government are almost the entire leadership of the Mojahedin.

The arrests followed almost three days of street fighting in Teheran; reports conflict as to how it began, the government claiming that the Revolutionary Guards (Pasdarans) had launched an attack on the Mojahedin headquarters in Western Teheran; other reports saying that it started with an attack by the Mojahedin on the infamous Evin prison.

Battle

But in any case the government has now been forced to admit that it is engaged in an open battle with opposition forces, and its facade of being in control is gradually crumbling.

In recent weeks a number of hated Islamic judges have been killed by the opposition, and so have Pasdarans and leading IRP members.

In Tabriz, the Islamic judge Nuri was shot down in front of a crowd of people and the attackers escaped without any interference.

When the news had spread people came out onto the streets and handed out sweets to show their delight at Nuri's death.

In Kurdistan there are now daily reports of clashes between government forces and the Peshmergas. Despite repeated onslaughts on Kurdistan by the Islamic regime since 1979, it has failed to take control there.

The regime has dropped all pretence at trying prisoners and the security forces have now been given carte blanche to shoot armed opponents on the spot.

Executed

'Anyone who admits to believing in Marxism will be executed immediately' announced Lajevardi, the public prosecutor, some weeks ago, announcing the stepping up of executions.

He declared that anyone letting accommodation to, or sheltering oppositionists, would be dealt with under 'Koranic Law' - that is, executed.

In addition, the regime is trying to step up its network of 'spies' and 'informers'. Nightly TV programmes screen people denouncing their friends or relatives. Khomeini has asked people to watch at least 2 or 3 houses in their vicinity for signs of anti-government ele-



Now Allah's will is civil war

ments. So far it appears that the government has met with little co-operation, though the pro-Moscow Tudeh party and the Fedayeen (majority) unashamedly continue to support the regime and have even co-operated by reporting on oppositionists.

Another sign of possible weakness in the regime is its changed attitude towards the police, who have never really given their whole-hearted support to it.

Just a month ago Hassan Ayat, a leading member of the IRP who actively partic-

ipated in the downfall of the Mossadeq government in 1953, was assassinated in front of his house. He lived next door to a police station but the police did nothing to pursue his attackers. As a result they were severely criticised by the IRP particularly by Rafsanjani.

But at Friday prayers on August 1, Rafsanjani made special efforts to praise the police force. There are also signs of disunity amongst the clergy. Some leading mullahs would like to slow down the rate of executions, but little heed is paid to this call locally as

many are in fear of assassination.

Ex-President Bani-Sadr, now in exile in France with Mojahedin leader Masoud Rajavi, now calls for the downfall of the regime. But the political nature of the opposition forces still remains unclear; certainly Bani-Sadr himself while in office beat down revolutionary forces within Iran and (as commander-in-chief of the army) was responsible for bombing raids and attacks on Kurdistan.

In opposition he has become more radical but is clearly not to be trusted.

Almost certainly he is banking on support from the Army top brass. The National Resistance Movement set up jointly by Bani-Sadr and the Mojahedin has not yet published a statement of its political aims.

There are reports that KOMALA (a left Kurdish organisation) and the Kurdish Democratic Party of Iran have welcomed the setting up of the National Resistance Movement and are negotiating with it to co-ordinate activities as are the Fedayeen (minority) and Peykar.

It is vital that the left forces do work together because, despite the weaknesses of the regime, they have suffered severe casualties. Almost all of the leading members of Peykar have been executed, and the Fedayeen (minority) have lost 100 members.

The Mojahedin although much larger and more able to survive its casualties has also suffered heavy losses. With better organisation and united work such losses could be avoided.

It is also necessary to develop the nature of the opposition; to begin to organise broader layers of people, especially workers, to take action against the government. Without this, even if the downfall of the regime is inevitable, the Left will not be the victors.

Polish workers reach for control

by Alexis Carras

WHAT would a British manager think if one day s/he arrived at the office and found a note saying that henceforth his/her 'services' were no longer required by the factory workers?

It would be like a declaration of civil war.

In Poland, the opening salvoes of such a civil war sounded over a year ago - when workers on the Baltic, occupying their shipyards and factories, raised the entire working class to its feet against Stalinist rule.

From one crisis to another, each following the next in rapid succession, the Polish workers have kept the bureaucracy reeling, without a moment's respite.

From the factory occupations and mass strikes, the workers moved to more partial fights. Now the question of press freedom, then political prisoners, the next day fights on food shortages, price rises, democracy within the Communist Party and the elimination of corrupt bureaucrats and careerists.

The entire last year has been a series of flashpoints and struggles, affecting every aspect of social and economic life, from the countryside to the cities.

After the major demonstrations of the last few weeks against price rises and food shortages, the focal point is now once again moving back to the terrain opened last summer - workers' control.

At Katowice, steel workers have placed a wheelbarrow outside the management's office, stating that the workers have decided to run the factory themselves and that an open vote will be taken in the workforce on this.

Management bit off more than they could chew when they immediately shut down the plant's Solidarnosc newspaper, for daring to print anti-USSR cartoons.

This looks like shaping up to a new spate of attacks on the bureaucracy's control (and sabotage) of economic life.

Dockers in Gdynia have refused to load meat for shipment to the West.

Some western observers vaguely hope that the Solidarnosc movement will lead to a restoration of what they term the 'free world' (read capitalism), but the logic of the Polish workers' fights leads to exactly the opposite direction.

It points towards direct workers' power in the factories, the direct control of foreign trade and the right to control the country's means of information.

Last week, Polish papers were repeatedly prevented from being printed in protest at television slanders of the workers' movement.

In Olstyn workers are still refusing to print Olstyn Glos after the media alleged that some printers were being intimidated from turning up to work.

The 300 printers voted to continue the stoppage with none against and one abstention.

What would Polish workers make of the slander and vitriol which the media in this country heaps on the workers' struggle? On the chaining and imprisonment of American trade union leaders?

They must be distinctly unimpressed by the 'free world'.

British Labour can save Turkish socialist

Dogan Tarkan was a member of DISK, an ex official of the Maden-Is trade union (metal workers) and editor of the socialist journal 'Kurtulus'. He managed to flee Turkey after the coup, making his way to Britain, where he asked for political asylum on May 18.

On August 12 the Home Office turned down his request. Dogan Tarkan now faces the danger of being deported back to Turkey.

If so, he faces certain imprisonment, torture and probably death.

Dogan Tarkan's only crime was that he was an active working class militant.

With the coup of 12 September 1980, the Turkish ruling class is trying to resolve the massive economic and political crisis rocking the country.

The aim of the coup is the suppression of all opposition against the anti-working class attacks which the bosses find necessary to carry out.

All democratic rights have been suspended. Thousands of militants and revolutionaries have been arrested and tortured.

All working class organisations have been banned - among them DISK which was the most combative and militant trade union confederation. Hundreds of its officials are now on trial, 52 facing the death penalty.

*What you can do to save Dogan Tarkan:

1) Write to the Home Office requesting that it reconsiders its denial of political asylum.

2) Write to your MP to

take the matter up in Parliament.

3) If you are a member of a trade union, pass an emergency resolution, along the following lines:

"This branch supports the former Turkish trade union official Dogan Tarkan in his request for political asylum in Britain.

We urge the Home Office to reconsider its decision to refuse him political asylum in the interests of democracy and trade union solidarity, as we understand that he will be persecuted if forced to return to Turkey."

Send a copy of this to the address below, to the Home Office and to your MP.

Ask your delegate to the TUC Conference in Blackpool (7-11 September) to table or vote for an emergency resolution along these lines.

4) Collect signatures and send them to the address below as soon as possible.

It is only a matter of days or at most weeks before Dogan Tarkan is deported. Only immediate action can save his life.

Friends of Dogan Tarkan, c/o TSC, Box 5965, London WC1N 3XX.

Bradford Labour Movement Campaign for Palestinian Solidarity.

PUBLIC MEETING Turkey - One Year After the Coup

Speaker - a Turkish member of the Newcastle Turkish Solidarity Committee.

Bradford Central Library Meeting Room 2 Monday 7 September 7.30 p.m.



TURKEY SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

Week of Action to mark the first anniversary of the military coup

Monday 7 Sept. Meetings in Oxford and Bradford

Wednesday 9 Sept. Meetings in Newcastle and Leeds

Thursday 10 Sept. Picket of TUC in Blackpool

Friday 11 Sept. Picket of Turkish ambassador's residence and Chilean Embassy, Devonshire Street

London WC1 5.30 7.30.

Saturday 12 Sept. 11 am, picket of Downing Street

2 pm, rally at NUFTO Hall, Holborn, London WC1

IMF behind Gandhi's ban?

THOUSANDS of workers protested in Delhi's streets on Monday August 17 as prime minister Indira Gandhi prepared to get parliament's rubber-stamp for her ban on strikes in essential services.

India is about to be granted the biggest loan in IMF history - \$5.8 billion - and the opposition in India is sure that the strike ban is linked to the IMF's secret conditions.

AT DAWN on Wednesday August 19 a column of trucks half a mile long descended on squatter camps outside Cape Town, South Africa, and 2,000 squatters were arrested.

Their miserable huts - branches covered with plastic sheeting - were ripped down, as the overwhelmed squatters sang hymns but offered no resistance.

Most of them were charged with not having their 'pass book'. Generally blacks are not allowed to enter city areas except on specific contracts - and without their families.

But the alternative for the blacks is to stay in the so-called 'homelands' - and starve to death.

Who pays for the dawn?

GUESS WHO'S going to pay for it all when the glorious Day of the Alternative Economic Strategy dawns?

Constructing models of capitalist expansionary measures which might with luck and no countermeasures begin to mop up unemployment, Michael Meacher (billed as 'a prominent supporter of Tony Benn') gave the answer in the New Statesman (August 14).

Labour could start by a massive devaluation of sterling. If other currencies did not retaliate, this could, it's been calculated, come up with one million jobs. If...

If workers take a cut in living standards. One condition for success is that 'unions and professional and managerial associations accept a firm policy on incomes so that the huge job-creating potential of this exercise is not dissipated in a pay spiral to protect real living standards'.

How depressingly familiar. Workers pay for crisis. And workers pay for 'recovery'.

(The inclusion of 'professional and managerial associations' is also depressingly familiar as a lie — when have these well-heeled types ever taken a cut in their standards, by the time they've worked through the perks, evasions and exemptions they're so good at wangling?)

Of course Bro. Meacher throws in a 'quid pro quo', which, he says, amounts to more than just dressing up 'naked pay restraint'. What is it? Participation schemes! (Participate in your own pay cut).

Plus, maybe, a tax return five years later or some shares in 'the firm's capital appreciation tomorrow to match pay limitation today'.

RACHEL LEVER, a member of the Benn Campaign Committee, replies to Michael Meacher

Just in case we still had too much to spend that we were daring to buy up some of the good meant for export, 'it would be inappropriate' to expand public spending for the first couple of years, until the 'devaluation effects have reasonably fully worked their way through the economy'.

So meanwhile there's another four million out of work, prices are going sky-high because devaluation

will have driven up the price of everything that moves and much else besides, and we're still stuck with the Tory cuts.

And when reflation does come, in three stages 'in the latter half of a five-year parliamentary term', it'll be concentrated on capital projects: so don't expect a rise in your dole, grant, SS or pension.

Meanwhile, a completely free measure to increase jobs will be a ban on overtime: i.e. another cut in workers' income, since Meacher is not suggesting a cut in hours with no cut in wages.

It's interesting that nowhere in Meacher's models do the financial effects of unilateral nuclear disarmament figure. But maybe that is too much to expect for 'one parliament'.

Certainly full employment is reckoned 'too

much'. Meacher adds up only three to 3½ million jobs, as against five million needed to absorb the unemployed and new school-leavers — leaving one and a half to two million unemployed!

To improve this prospect, Meacher suggests that we test out a range of AES options 'on an appropriate [computer] model of the economy (not necessarily the Treasury one) to discover the optimum mix'.

None of these computer models, of course, has an equation for the effects of nationalisation without compensation and workers' control.

But now we know what Michael Meacher's AES looks like. And it's time we heard from other leaders of the Labour Left exactly what they mean by an 'Alternative Economic Strategy'.



New Statesman, 14th August

STOP THE SHORTLIST OF ONE

Our column from the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy this week is by **CHRIS MULLIN**, on the 'shortlist of one'.

It has also been published as a letter in Labour Weekly.

LABOUR Weekly's report (August 7) states blandly that the MP for Pontefract, Geoffrey Lofthouse, was re-elected 'unopposed'. Like hell he was. The facts are as follows:

Two other candidates were nominated. At the executive meeting to draw up the shortlist the chairman (Councillor Jack Smart) allowed a letter to be read out saying that one of the candidates have attended meetings with communists.

The executive then voted by 11 to nine to slice the two other candidates off the shortlist.

The regional organiser, Harold Sims, then suggested the executive vote on whether or not all 20 members should be mandated to support a shortlist of one at the general committee. They duly voted to do so.

(As Harold Sims will be aware, there is no provision in the party rules for an executive to mandate itself in parliamentary selections).

When the matter came before the GC, delegates voted 43-41 with four abstentions in favour of a shortlist of one. At least two of the abstentions were executive members who could not bring themselves to uphold the mandate.

The regional organiser, Sims, was again present to impartially oversee the proceedings.

Contrary to the NEC's instructions, he did not circulate advice that shortlists of one were inadvisable where more than one candidate had been nominated and was only persuaded to mention the subject when one of the delegates reminded him.

This is only the latest in a series of similar cases all of which create a great deal of unnecessary bitterness. The solution is simple: the NEC must instruct the National Agent's office that shortlists of one are not allowed except in cases where only one candidate has been nominated.

Benn appeals to the unions

THE OUTSTANDING trade union votes will be decisive for the Labour Party deputy leader election. Last week Tony Benn released a letter sent to the General Secretaries of trade unions for them to put before their executives.

Benn outlines the Tory attack on the unions, and then reviews 'Lessons from the past'.

'It is over 55 years since the first Labour Government was elected... But the balance of power — and the pattern of privilege — in our society has never been fundamentally changed. As a result many of the gains made have been halted or reversed.'

'We have seen cuts in health, housing and education, and serious social unrest has emerged. Indeed, it was pressure from Capital on Labour Governments — to reduce public expenditure

— which opened up a rift with the trade unions and played a major part in our defeat in 1979.'

'Most real power in Britain still rests outside Parliament with those who control finance and industry.'

'... Only the Labour Party can achieve a real social control over private capital so that the needs of society can be met. Only Labour can transform Britain, for the first time, into a true Parliamentary Democracy, where social justice and not the pursuit of private profit is seen as the basis of our life...'

He then recalls the five points of his platform for deputy leader — full employment, increased public services, women's rights and democratic rights, withdrawal from the EEC, and nuclear disarmament.

He continues: 'If we are going to achieve all this we

shall need to build a much stronger partnership between the party and the unions.'

'First: from now on — and right through the lifetime of the next Labour government — we must work closely together in developing detailed plans, campaigning for them, and implementing them, as a team, when in office.'

'Second: we must repeal all the anti-union legislation at once, and replace it with laws that would re-establish the full legal rights that the unions need to do their job by free collective bargaining.'

'Third: we must renounce the policies of cuts and wage restraint, masquerading as 'incomes policy' introduced under the pressure of Capital and which helped to put the Tories in power.'

'Fourth: we must create a new framework within which trade unionists can play a much bigger role at

every level from the workshop and the company right up to annual party conference, in addition to the top level links with ministers.'

'Fifth: we must ensure that all this takes place by supporting and developing all the democratic reforms which are now under consideration...'

As the letter makes clear, the real issue in the deputy leader election is not this or that policy, still less 'personalities'.

Many trade union activists will find ideas like 'social control over private capital' inadequate. (What does it mean? Planning agreements? Why not replace private capital by common ownership?)

Many will ask how the AES creates full employment, when leading AES theorist Michael Meacher thinks that is impossible. Many will wonder whether Benn's opposition to 'wage

restraint masquerading as incomes policy' leaves the door open for an incomes policy of the sort advocated by Meacher.

But the point is that Benn is the only candidate committed to accountability and to supporting Labour conference policies. And getting better policies through conference will mean nothing unless we win the principle of accountability.

In every union whose vote has not yet been decided, Benn's letter should be put on the agenda, and the rank and file should demand a full say in the union's vote for deputy leader.

MARTIN THOMAS

Behind the by-election

JOHN O'MAHONY discusses the Fermanagh/S.Tyrone results

OWEN CARRON'S victory is good news for the H-Block campaign. But there are other sides to it, and socialists need to look at those, too.

The Fermanagh/South Tyrone constituency can be taken as Northern Ireland writ small. Catholics are in a majority there (by 5,000) while there is a Protestant majority in the Six Counties of about two to one. But despite the numerical details Fermanagh/South Tyrone brings out starkly what communal 'politics' in Northern Ireland is, and what Northern Ireland is.

For it was scarcely an election that took place in Fermanagh/South Tyrone. Before polling day there had been a sorting-out of candidates in both communities.

Given the fine numerical balance between the communities, everything depended on whether the rival community blocs held together, and, decisively, whether the Catholic bloc did.

Last April Unionist candidate Harry West was reckoned to have lost 1000 disgruntled hard-line Protestant votes which had favoured a Paisleyite candidate. This time, with UDR major Ken Maginnis, the Official Unionist Party had a hard-line candidate as the only Protestant standing.

In April Bobby Sands was the only Catholic candidate. The SDLP (which got 10,785 votes in 1979) withdrew. Carron had two Catholic standing against him, Seamus Close for the Alliance Party and Thomas Moore for the Republican Clubs — a potentially fatal disadvantage, threatening to split the vote and let Maginnis in.

Both Carron and Maginnis ran campaigns that could appeal only to the votes of their own community, and could not but antagonise the members of the other community.

Carron campaigned exclusively on the hunger strike issue. A member of Sinn Féin, he pledged not to go to Westminster if elected. He called Maginnis 'the UDR candidate' and 'the British government candidate'.

Maginnis campaigned on housing and... 'security', which is the Protestant community's equivalent of 'H-Block'.

The only candidates even notionally appealing to both communities were Close of Alliance (liberal, anti-sectarian Unionists) and Moore of the Republican Clubs (the Official Republican Movement).

They might have taken enough votes to let Maginnis in. But both were extremely hostile to the IRA, Moore

very outspokenly so, calling for an end to hunger strike and to the IRA's military campaign.

They failed to damage Carron's status as the candidate of the Catholic community, bound together by sympathy with the hunger strike. Even Moore and his supporters decided 'to maintain a low profile' after the announcement, 50 minutes after polling had started, that Devine had died.

Close got 1,930 votes and Moore 1,152 to Carron's 31,278 and Maginnis' 29,048.

(In April Sands polled 30,492 and West 29,046. Harry West explained Maginnis' vote by the rallying to Carron of some Catholic farmers who had voted for himself, a former Northern Ireland Minister of Agriculture).

Fermanagh/South Tyrone is a paradigm of Six County politics in the last 60 years.

Frozen communal antagonisms wiped out normal politics, especially class politics, there.

A ruling Unionist bloc congealed in the 1920s on the basis of having a common fear of the Catholics and state patronage to offer, with marginal privileges for Protestant workers (jobs amidst permanent unemployment,

houses).

Northern Ireland Labour Parties flowered into significance more than once, only to be wrecked and gutted when communal antagonisms erupted, as they did, repeatedly. By the 70s, the NILP was a puny Unionist party.

The trade unions, affected by Protestant job preference practices, kept united by avoiding all relevant questions, especially discrimination against Catholic workers.

Everything healthy in politics was blighted by the communal animosities made especially intense under the rule of an artificially created majority in the gerrymandered six county state.

At times of crisis the polarisation has tended to reach incipient civil war level, community starkly pitted against community.

Listen today to the chilling responses of the Protestant politicians at Carron's victory. Paisley's DUP said: 'Every one of Mr Carron's 31,000 had given their support openly for the thugs who have committed murder and genocide...' The vote indicated 'genuine support among the Catholic population for those who have perpetrated vile murders among the Protestant population'. Paisley's supporters will read here the Bible's grim injunction, 'An eye for an eye'.

And Maginnis himself: 'My Catholic neighbours are prepared to point out to gunmen the various Protestants, various Unionists, and vulnerable Catholics who do not toe the IRA line'.

When sectarian assassinations swept Northern Ireland in the early 70s, the fingers mainly pointed not at but from the Protestant community. But the comments, which are meant to incite the Protestant community, indicate the intensity of the polarisation being generated by the struggle in the H-Blocks.

Carron's victory is a blow on behalf of the hunger strikers but at a cost of massive intensification of communal bitterness and antagonisms — and even from the point of view of Irish nationalism that is a very large negative.

For socialists in Britain there is a double responsibility: to side clearly with the nationalist revolt, against 'our own' army and government; and to give all assistance we can to the building of a socialist movement in Ireland, North and South, which can develop a revolutionary struggle in the South and a joint fight by Catholic and Protestant workers.



NEC must stop conference policy being flouted

FIGHTBACK AGM

Arming ourselves for new battles

by Gerry Byrne

THIS WEEKEND (28-30) sees the Annual General Meeting of Women's Fightback.

The campaign, which Socialist Organiser has solidly supported and in which Socialist Organiser women have played a leading role, has shown that it is possible to gain a wide response for militant campaigning politics among women who may have little experience of the organised labour movement - some of whom may even have been deeply suspicious of it because of its male domination.

It has shown that women are prepared to organise in support of their sisters in struggle on a wide range of issues.

But there will be no time for self-congratulation. It will be an occasion for sober assessment of the last year, of honest weighing up of strengths and weaknesses and lessons learned.

Some of the strengths are clear. "Women's Fightback" paper is lively, easy to read and easy to sell. "It's like giving away pound notes" - one seller commented.

It has done an invaluable job reporting, publicising and building support for women's struggles whether in defence of jobs like Lee Jeans, or nurseries or the fight of black sisters against the racist Home Office. It has helped to break the isolation and spread the word that women are fighting.

But it needs to do more than that. It will be one of the jobs of this AGM to crystallise out the lessons that women have learnt through sweat and tears in these struggles. We need to build up a stock of experience, of political wisdom, so we can come to new battles armed and ready to give a lead.

Fightback set itself the task of taking the fight for women's liberation into the labour movement, of boldly going where no woman had gone before. We wouldn't run away from the all pervasive sexism and male dominance, but fight to have women taken seriously and issues we raise taken to the heart of the movement, not ghettoised as "women's issues" unworthy of the attention of august male



trade unionists.

This has been a big factor in the increasing respect for socialist ideas in the women's movement, breaking down some of the barriers of suspicion towards socialist women.

One of the areas where this has borne fruit is in the Labour Party, where issues of positive discrimination and a serious stance on women's rights has moved very much to centre stage. (One wonders whether, for instance, Tony Benn's prioritising of women's rights in his deputy leadership platform would have happened without the ferment in the Labour Party on women which we had no small part in creating?).

But this only highlights our weakness in another area, the trade unions, where we have made very much smaller advances. This is one area that must be strengthened.

At a time of downturn in industrial struggle and a degree of demoralisation in the face of mass unemployment, it is significant that very often women have taken the lead, for example in fighting for jobs, with enormous courage in the face of their own inexperience and lack of confidence the opposition from the men who claim to "lead" them, and the patronising sneers of the media.

From Lee Jeans to Anwar Ditta to Beal Street nursery, women have

slammed home the message to an often incredulous labour movement women can fight, and with the support we can win.

One of the vital tasks that faces the AGM and the weekend school that follows it, will be to infuse that confidence in our own strength and the bitterly fought wisdom from those struggles into every woman round Fightback.

For that will be the real test of the campaign whether we can go beyond commenting on struggles to build a self-confident, politically sure-footed network of women who can lead tomorrow's battles, and draw round themselves wider forces, thoroughly steeped in that same fighting spirit.

Detailed policies and programmes for the struggle will be discussed, summing up the lessons.

And much of the emphasis in the school is on self-development in political discussion ranging far wider than what is generally patronisingly deemed women's province - drawing on Marxism and feminism, reform or revolution, Stalinism) and building organising skills.

Women will have the priceless opportunity to draw on sisters' experience of fighting nursery and hospital closures, organising unemployed women, unionisation battles, occupations and battles against sexism at work.



Winnie Murphy - socialist candidate for the NUTGW, backed by the Broad Left

NUTGW election: 'Lee Jeans exposed the leadership'

WINNIE MURPHY, a supporter of Socialist Organiser, has declared herself as a candidate in the forthcoming elections for the Executive of the National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers.

This union was shot to prominence when 240 of its members occupied the Lee Jeans factory in Scotland to stop closure.

Winnie spoke to Socialist Organiser about the problems facing clothing workers.

THE CLOTHING industry is notorious for bad conditions and low wages. Is this inevitable?

No! Low wages result from bad organisation.

In the past, not much capital was required to set up in business, so the clothing industry was dominated by small firms, 'fly by night' bosses, a fragmented membership, and sweat shop conditions.

Now the industry is dominated by multinationals, and we have the possibility of better organisation. With combine committees, it is now feasible to raise the question of national planning of the clothing industry.

The industry doesn't have a vital role in the economy, but no boss can do without his profit. We need to discover our own strength.

The major issues for clothing workers are:

1. Jobs. In 1980, 50% of clothing workers were either redundant or on short time. Union membership has dropped from over 120,000 to about 85,000.

Lee Jeans shows the way to fight back, but the union has failed to see its political significance.

2. Wages. The clothing industry has the highest proportion of any industry on piecework, which means fluctuations in wages, either through shortage of work or through management attacks. We need a campaign

for a guaranteed minimum wage.

3. Women's rights. The NUTGW has the largest percentage of women members of any union. We must raise women's issues in the membership.

If things are so bad for the membership, why is the NUTGW so conservative?

This results from the lack of rank and file activity, which in turn has many reasons.

The high labour turnover leads to difficulties in building shop-floor leadership. There is a lack of branch life because of the centralised union structure.

But Lee Jeans shows a 'wind of change'. More and more women are unwilling to work for 'pin money'.

The Lee Jeans occupation was a great embarrassment to the union leadership, after many years of complaining about the lack of fight from women workers and how their hands are tied by this 'lack of militancy'.

The show of strength by Lee Jeans exposed them for what they are. It showed how divorced the union bureaucracy is from the feelings of the shop floor.

Many factories would be willing to occupy in defence of jobs if they had a leadership capable of fighting not just at trade union level but at a political level. This is crucial for all workers, not just in clothing, but in all industries where jobs are being lost.

A national conference should have been called for in defence of those workers, and the question of national planning for the clothing industry and workers' control of that industry as a priority under the next Labour Government should have been raised.

But of course that requires a political leadership, which must be fought for by the leaders of the Lee Jeans factory and all the women and men in struggle for their jobs.

The NUTGW is a strong supporter of import controls. What do you think?

The problem must be put in perspective. More jobs are lost by increased productivity and government policies than by far East imports.

The slave labour factories of the far East are set up by western multi-nationals. We should use the fact that Hong Kong is a British colony to highlight British complicity in sweated labour.

We are the Hong Kong of

Europe.

But the most rapid rise in imports is from the better paid countries, e.g. USA, Sweden, and elsewhere in Europe. This is due to better productivity.

If we go for the idea that imports are the problem, then we can't blame the bosses; instead we should join with them against imports. Look at where that would take us - class collaboration!

Nurseries fight grows

by Susan Carlyle

EARLY MORNING phone calls from the Social Services Directorate to one of the campaigners and to all matrons of nurseries in Tower Hamlets, forbidding entry and placing a 'ban' on all campaigning on behalf of nursery workers, have been greeted with amusement by supporters of the 'Save Tower Hamlets Nurseries' campaign.

Links

Links had already been made anyway, and we are amazed at the arrogance of local government workers who, facing redundancies and cutbacks themselves - think that just one word from them will stop support being built for the two threatened nurseries in this East London borough.

Management, however, are under pressure. Letters written to Peter Shore MP, who has passed the buck in typical fashion, are landing thick and fast on their desks. They also have several telexes from the Shadwell nursery giving them one week to declare in writing what decisions have been made.

Failing any decent replies the Shadwell parents and staff will assume the nursery is down for closure and act accordingly.

Parents are now preparing to reply to management and protest about the attempt to exclude the campaigners. And the fight has been strengthened by the production of a bulletin. Trade unions and Labour Parties have been circulated, and a petition will be put round on local estates and markets.

The Council is not placing any new children and is running down the numbers in the threatened nurseries - even trying to force some parents to transfer when they clearly don't want to.

They have gone to real lengths - phoning parents at work, finding out their work hours and how they arrange their travel to fit in with the nursery hours.

Despite the parents' refusal to move, they keep on asking.

List

But lobbies and public meetings are planned for autumn with Trades Council sponsorship, and contacts are being made with health visitors to make a written list that nurseries can use in order to thwart the Council manoeuvres.

Contact: c/o 36 Bradmore House, Jamaica Street, London E1.



Lee Jeans - women leading the struggle

The French CP and the Mitterrand government CRISIS IN V

FOR THE first time in nearly 40 years Communist Party members sit in the government of a major advanced capitalist country.

When François Mitterrand appointed four members of the French CP to his government in June, it might have appeared that the advocates of the 'parliamentary road to socialism' had at last got some of the power they needed to carry that strategy out. To judge by the reactions of the American government, the Communist Party ministers pose a real threat to the stability of capitalist rule in Europe.

The reality is very different. The CP ministers occupy four relatively junior ministries (transport, health, public services and administrative reform, and vocational training). They enter the government at a time when the CP is at its weakest electorally since 1945.

The victory of the left in the Presidential and legislative elections in May and June marked a shift within the left from the CP to the Socialist Party. In the first round of the Presidential elections, the CP General Secretary Marchais slumped to 15% of the vote, while Mitterrand's vote soared to 26%.

Dropped

In the elections to the National Assembly, the CP dropped from 86 seats to 44, while the Socialists went from 107 to 273. The CP even lost 4 of its 9 seats in its stronghold of Seine St. Denis - in the 'red belt' around Paris - to the SP.

Yet despite this setback for the Communist Party and the fact that Mitterrand had a majority in the Assembly without CP votes, the CP was invited to send ministers into the government.

It was not a major concession to the CP, as the Reagan government and the French right-wing parties argued. Rather, Mitterrand took a shrewd decision that he would be able to dictate terms to the CP and the CP would be less trouble inside the government than on the outside. In the run-up to the elections, the CP, which was attacking Mitterrand and the Socialists for 'playing the right's game', threatened general strike action if the SP came to power without agreement with the CP on their policies.

The CP has far less room for manoeuvre with their members in the government. The French right-wing paper 'Le Figaro' was quite direct about it:

Naught

"The success of a socialist experiment in France is only possible to the extent that the Communist Party supports it more or less directly.

"Thrown back into opposition Georges Marchais' party would still have the means, even after its electoral setback, to reduce the socialists' ambitions to naught. Its implantation in the world of labour and its control of the CGT [the major union federation] are weapons which are effective in a different way than its Parliamentary strength".

The CP will have to take



Workers demand 35 hour week; Mitterrand's not so sure...

responsibility for Mitterrand's policies without being able to change them.

The terms of CP participation in the government were humiliating. Since 1977, the CP has violently attacked the SP for not renegating the 'Common Programme' of the Union of the Left (between the CP, the SP and the Left Radicals) so as to include a more extensive programme of nationalisations. In the negotiations the CP had no choice but to accept the more limited proposals Mitterrand had campaigned on in the elections.

But in the field of foreign policy the CP had to concede still more. The agreement specified that France would 'respect her alliances' and spoke of international negotiations to remove both the American Pershing missiles and the Russian SS-20s from Europe.

It also calls for 'the simultaneous dissolution of military blocs', that is, NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

Afghanistan

The French CP, which in 1980 went out of its way to support the Russian invasion, has now signed an agreement calling for non-interference in Afghanistan's internal affairs and the withdrawal of Soviet troops. As 'Le Monde' put it, 'The Americans should have seen this as considerable grounds for satisfaction.'

The CP also accepted cooperation with the Socialists in local government, and, more importantly, in the factories - something the CP has always refused in the past. The SP obviously wants to limit the CP's freedom of manoeuvre in the unions when the Mitterrand government begins to push through anti-working class policies and the pressure from the CGT ranks builds up.

The CP prefers to face both ways. Charles Fiterman, the most senior of the CP's ministers, says, to pacify the Socialists - and the capitalists - 'We are not delegates of the Communist Party. We respect the Constitution.'

At the same time, Paul Laurent, a member of the CP's secretariat, says, with one eye looking over his shoulder at the workers that expect the Mitterrand government to act in

their interests, 'trade unionists are totally independent in their actions and, if they feel they have to show a bit of impatience or a wish to go faster or to settle problems in their own way, well, I suppose that will go on just as before.'

For the time being, however, Mitterrand is clearly in control. The CP has made its peace with him. Mitterrand has in turn taken pains to assure the capitalists that he won't go too far and has the Communists under his control.

Whatever their private and not-so-private dislikes of their subordination to the Socialists, the CP are prepared to accept their subordination to the bourgeoisie and the political framework laid down by them - particularly De Gaulle's reactionary constitution. Fiterman declared, 'We deny to anyone the moral right to doubt our loyalty to France.'

The more far-sighted French capitalists recognise that four Communist ministers are no threat to the stability of their rule. The Reagan government, however, reacted very strongly against the

appointment of the CP ministers, saying that 'the tone and content of our relations as allies will be affected by the Communists getting into the government.'

George Bush, the American Vice-President and ex-CIA boss visited Mitterrand in Paris just as he was announcing his ministers, to make Reagan's views known to him.

Mitterrand did all he could to reassure Bush that his government would not do anything to jeopardise the links between France and the US. Mitterrand is rumoured to have told Bush that questions about national defence would be discussed in the Cabinet in the absence of the CP ministers.

Although Cheysson, the Foreign Minister, denied this, NATO Headquarters in Brussels stated that the French government had given satisfactory assurances that information vital to the defence of the West would be protected.

(Although France is not a member of NATO, France cooperates with NATO's defence plans).

The American response

is partly based on Cold War paranoia about the intentions of Communist Parties. But Reagan and his allies are also worried about the overall effect of the Left's victory in France on the situation elsewhere in Europe.

Now the French CP has ministers it is more difficult to continue to refuse the Italian CP any role in government.

The French CP has proved in the past that it is not the red ogre that Reagan and Bush believe.

In 1936, an acute social crisis brought to power the Popular Front government (led by the Socialist Leon Blum) on an upsurge of working class militancy. The CP had signed a common programme and electoral pact with the Socialists and the bourgeois Radical Party.

The Popular Front consisted merely of anti-fascist and 'democratic' platitudes, but the working class took its election as a sign to take on the employers and fight for its own demands, with a wave of strikes and factory occupations.

The CP wholeheartedly

supported the Popular Front alliance, in line with Stalin's need for 'democratic anti-fascist' bourgeois allies for the USSR against Italy and Germany - at the cost of strangling independent working class action.

Blum offered the CP places in the government, but the CP refused.

Trotsky described their motives as follows:

"Most criminal and infamous in this situation is the conduct of the Communists: they have promised to give unswerving support to the Blum government, without entering it. 'We are much too revolutionary' - say the Cachins and the Thorezes (CP leaders) - 'we might frighten our Radical colleagues to death. It is best for us to remain in the antechamber'.

Outward

"In point of fact, the Communists wish to preserve an outward semblance of independence in order the better to subject the working masses to the Popular Front, i.e. to the discipline of capitalism".

The CP helped derail the strike wave - Thorez made the infamous statement 'It is necessary to know when to end a strike' - and were guided above all by their wish not to offend the French capitalist class, even the part of it opposed to the Popular Front.

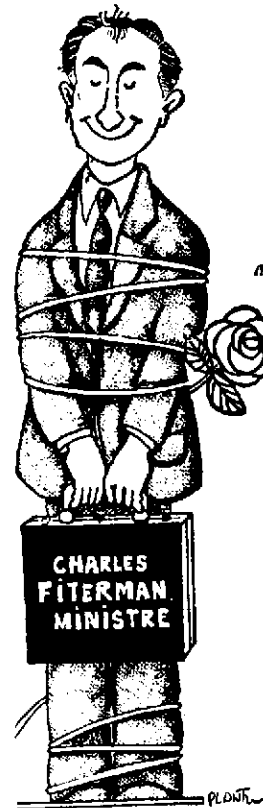
Even the limited reforms Blum introduced were attacked on this basis - 'the time was not ripe for an act of Marxist expropriation', they commented as Blum tried to nationalise the Bank of France. Having served its purpose of staving off militancy, the Popular Front government fell after only a year in office.

At the end of the war the CP did actually enter government. In 1944 the CP were given the Ministries of Health and Air in De Gaulle's Provisional Government in Algiers. They remained in the government until 1947 when the Socialists showed them the door. It was in 1946 - presumably with Stalin's approval - that Thorez put forward for the first time the line of a peaceful road to socialism 'in the French style'.



The CP's role is best described by the participants. Fernand Grenier, a CP minister in 1944-5 said in a recent interview, 'De Gaulle no doubt chose me as he appreciated my national feelings and because he knew I wouldn't take advantage of my position to boost the positions supported by the CP'.

Another CP minister, Marcel Paul, said, 'There was solidarity between ministers. It's true that there was no debate on changing society and modifying the country's structures. We had other things to do!'



De Gaulle himself paid tribute to the CP's 'national feelings':

"Of course, day after day, the Communists produced their invective. Yet they did not make any attempt to start an insurrectionary movement. Even better, while I governed there wasn't a single strike".

"As for Thorez, while he tried to push communism forward, on several occasions he rendered a public service.

"From the day of his return to France, he helped put an end to the 'Patriotic Militias' that some of his



Thorez (far left) and de Gaulle - together in government from 1944 to 1947

VICTORY

The French Communist Party has achieved its main aim for the last 30-odd years — to get CP ministers in the government. Yet the CP faces an insoluble dilemma: to reaffirm its links with the Kremlin bureaucracy is to marginalise and discredit itself; to focus on its own bureaucracy in the CP municipalities, the unions etc., is to become a pale, second-rate version of the Socialist Party. Bruce Robinson reports.

people wished to keep in a new state of clandestinity... the opposed attempts to encroach on the Committees of Liberation and acts of violence which over-excited units tried to commit.

"To those — many — workers, particularly the miners, who listened to his harangues, he never stopped advising them to work as hard as possible and produce at any cost."

The CP was thrown out of government as relations between the USSR and the big capitalist powers began to worsen seriously in 1947. From then until now, the CP has been in opposition in France.

There is one very important difference between the CP's governmental policies in 1936 and in 1944-7 and its present policy. Before the CP's policy was entirely determined by the needs of the foreign policy of the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy. Today that is not the case.

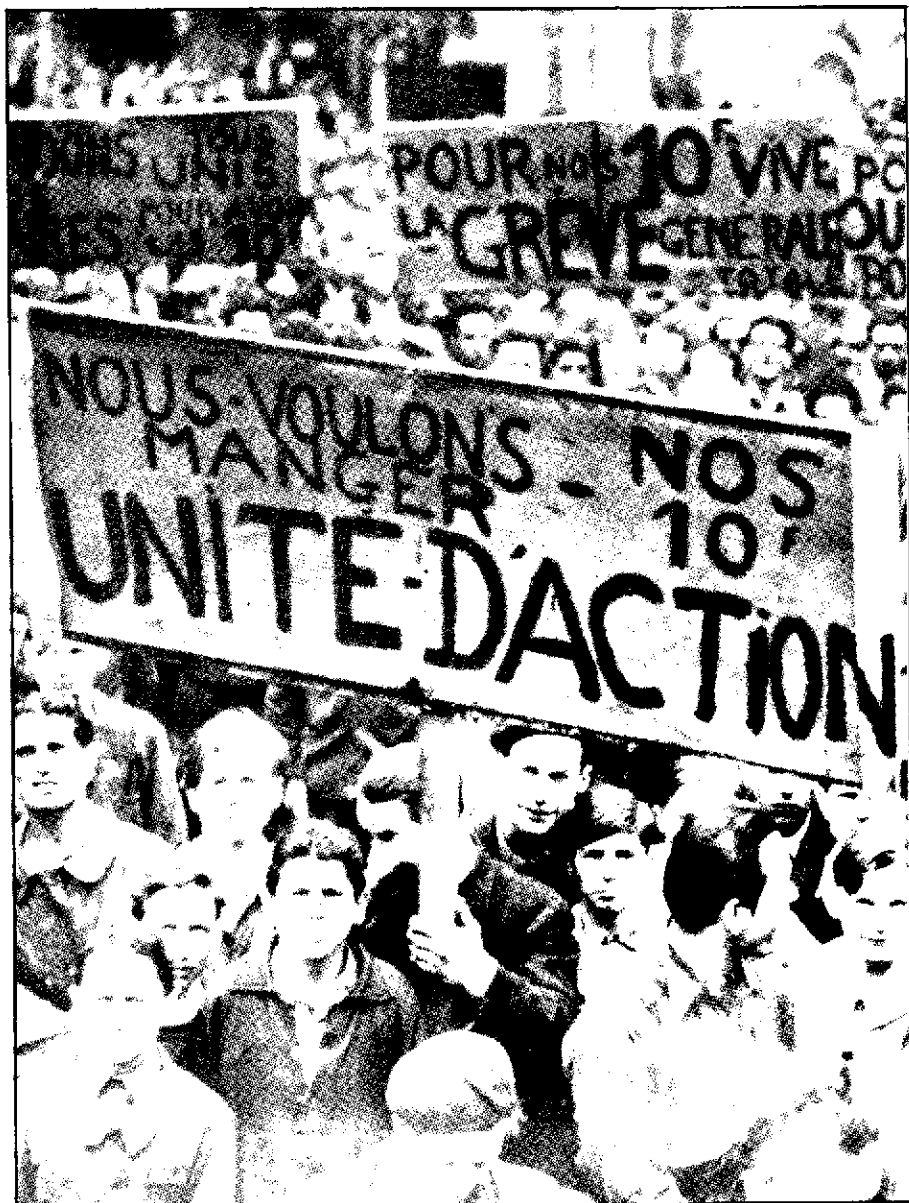
Though less ideologically 'Eurocommunist' than the Italian CP or the majority of the Spanish CP, the French CP's policies — and particularly its relations with the Socialists — are determined as much by considerations of its own national interests as by orders from Moscow.

The Soviet bureaucracy did not want a victory of the left in the Presidential Elections. Until the extent of Mitterrand's victory was clear, they were supporting Giscard d'Estaing on the grounds that Mitterrand would be less independent of the USA than Giscard and his nationalist Gaullist allies. Moscow is also at least lukewarm towards the French CP entering the government — none of Marchais' demands for CP ministers were ever published in the Russian press.

Pressure

At best, the advantages for Moscow lie in the pressure the CP could bring to bear on Mitterrand on foreign policy. But Mitterrand has already made it clear to the American government that the Socialists will not take any notice of the CP's views on France's alliances or on defence.

From Moscow's view-



Trotskyists led Renault strike (April-May 1947) which led to the CP leaving the coalition government

point, the dangers are also clear. In accepting the ministries, the CP had to give up those of its foreign policy positions that were most closely identified with Moscow (on disarmament and Afghanistan).

After 1978, when the Union of the Left with the Socialists and Left Radicals collapsed, the CP turned back towards an alliance with Moscow. The Soviet bureaucracy clearly fear that the entry of the CP into the government means a move back towards 'Eurocommunism' and fear that this might mean a

revival of a flagging 'Eurocommunism' in other European CPs.

The Italian CP, which has particularly bad relations with Moscow and which has in recent years developed relations with the French Socialists, was quick to greet the shift in French CP policy reflected in the agreement signed with the SP. The Italian CP stated "We are happy with the positions taken today which will facilitate relations between our two parties."

This can only have strengthened Moscow's reservations at the French CP's participation in government, and the Soviet bureaucracy's feelings that, as 'Le Monde' put it, "a better solution would be... 'support without participation', allowing the reconciliation of contradictory demands: maintaining doctrinal purity and keeping an eye on a government still suspected by Moscow of being tainted with atlanticism."

Failure

The terms on which the CP has entered Mitterrand's government marks the latest — and possibly the most far-reaching — episode in the failure of its strategy and in the political crisis that it has faced over the last 10 years.

With the exception of two short periods between 1939-41 and after 1947, the French CP's strategy since 1935 has focussed on achieving governmental power in alliance with other left parties and 'progress-

ive' sections of the bourgeoisie.

The form this has taken has altered depending on the realities of French politics. In the 30's it emphasised winning as much of the bourgeoisie as possible for a 'patriotic' government. In the 50's it took the form of asking to be admitted to centre-left coalition governments.

In the 70's it took the form of the 'Union of the Left' with the Socialists and the Left Radicals.

The constant factors are that the CP is not strong enough to come to power alone and carry out its 'Parliamentary road' and also that the CP wants to reassure as wide a section of the bourgeoisie as possible that it will be careful to respect their rights.

The roots of the 'Union of the Left' strategy lie in the CP's attempts in the mid-60s to get the Socialists and their allies to agree to a joint programme and to work together electorally. In 1965 the CP supported Mitterrand's candidacy for President.

But it was the events of 1968-9 that provided the real spur for both the CP and the Socialists. After the general strike of May-June 1968, the left was resoundingly defeated in the ensuing general election.

But the groups to the left of the CP and SP had massively increased their strength.

The CP drew the conclusion that they needed a central governmental strategy to counter the danger of being outflanked on the left. In December 1968 they drew up a manifesto focusing on three planks: the Union of the Left (on a programme of 'advanced democracy'); nationalisation of the monopolies; and the leading role of the working class (expressed politically as the leading role of the CP).

The presidential election of 1969 confirmed to both sides the usefulness of such a 'union'. The Socialist candidate, Deferre, only got 5.1% of the votes. To the CP it appeared that they could use the ailing Socialists; to the Socialists, after some wrangling, it appeared the only way to grow at all.

In 1972, the Common Programme was signed (along with the Left Radicals) and the Union of the Left came into existence.

Things did not go as the CP expected, however. Far

from allowing the CP to dominate the left, the Union of the Left provided the means for the Socialist Party to re-establish itself as a major force both electorally and in terms of membership, and become more and more of a direct threat to the CP.

Since 1972 the CP has responded in two ways to this, but neither has prevented it from going from one crisis to another.

Sometimes the CP has gone out of its way to emphasise its moderation and democratic credentials, in order to win over floating middle-class voters whose support is necessary for the CP to gain electoral dominance in the left.

To do this, the CP needed to distance itself from its Stalinist past and its identification with Moscow. Hence its 'Eurocommunism', largely dropped in 1979-80 when the CP zig-zagged to violent attacks on Mitterrand and the SP.

At other times the CP has emphasised its differences (or alleged differences) with the Socialists — often in a violently sectarian manner.

In such periods the CP brings forward its claim — still believed by large numbers of workers — to be a 'revolutionary' party fundamentally different from the reformist Socialists. The CP has also at times appealed to the Gaullists — with whom it shares a fanatical nationalism — over the heads of the Socialists.

None of these ploys has prevented the SP from continuing to gain strength.

The CP was caught in a cleft stick. If it emphasised its differences with the SP, people who took the Union of the Left seriously would be attracted to the SP as the party of 'unity'. If the CP emphasised its links with the SP, it would become more and more subordinate to the SP and voters would go to the SP as the more dynamic, less 'dogmatic' and non-Stalinist party.

The CP has switched from one position to

another with a speed that has thrown its own members into confusion and brought forward open and organised opposition in the party. The most fundamental turn came in 1977-8 and led to the break-up of the Union of the Left.

Leading up to the Parliamentary elections in March 1978 — which the left was widely expected to win — the negotiations on updating the 1972 Common Programme were marked by more and more noisy disputes between the CP and SP, particularly about nationalisation.

The CP broke off negotiations and publicly accused the SP of planning to do a deal with Giscard to form a centre-left government. Although the SP's vote beat the CP's for the first time, the CP managed to hold its own — and the left lost the election.

One result of this was a crisis inside the CP. Oppositions, loosely organised and largely based among intellectuals, came into existence in the period running up to the CP's 23rd Congress in May 1979.

This antagonism to the Socialists was carried on from 1978 right up until the results of the first round of the presidential elections were announced. In 1979-80 the CP put on a left face and at the same time began to orient to the worst backwardness in the working class.

This included open use of racism, as in Vitry-sur-Seine, where the CP mayor led a demonstration last year which demolished a hostel for immigrant workers. For years the CP has campaigned to reduce the number of immigrants in CP-controlled municipalities, and it also demands a total ban on immigration.

Humiliation

The CP's humiliation in the elections forced Marchais to do another 180° turn. To get into the Mitterrand government — which would have been formed with or without CP participation — the CP had to make peace with the SP and accept their terms. This is leading to another crisis in the CP.

At the first Central Committee meeting after the elections, Marchais gave a series of excuses for the CP's performance. The date of the next Congress was fixed for January 1982. Discussion in the Party had already begun, however.

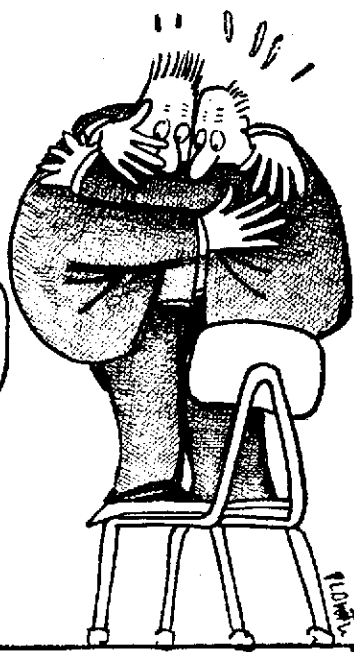
Eleven members in the Paris region have been expelled for publishing 'Rencontres Communistes', an oppositional magazine, and for trying to hold public meetings to discuss the recent politics of the party.

The internal crisis of the CP will continue for as long as the party lurches around in a desperate attempt to revive its waning popularity. The entry of the CP ministers into the government will do nothing to reverse that. It simply marks a new stage in the CP's crisis.

If the government is popular, the credit will go to the Socialists. If not, the unpopularity will rub off on the CP — though in that case the CP might withdraw its ministers and start again attacking Mitterrand from the left.



Union of the Left, 1972



What??? Haven't you seen a CP minister before?

Review, Letters

A comedy of oppression

STEPHANIE MALTMAN reviews 'Restoration' by Edward Bond, which can be seen at the Royal Court Theatre, Sloane Square, SW1, until September 5. Tickets from £2 (£1 student standby).

RESTORATION is an exceedingly funny play, but there is a sting in its tail.

It is set at a time when divisions in society were more clearly defined. It opens with a ludicrous episode. Lord Are (the inevitable pun comes later) is posing, poetry book in hand, in a pastoral setting (so fashionable at the time) in order to impress the lady on whom his designs (not, it is worth mentioning, his affections) are set.

Have things changed that much?

Boost

His object is to marry the daughter of a wealthy manufacturer, nouveau riche, in order to boost his own financial position. Simon Callow is sublime in

his excesses as Lord Are and Edward Bond accurately parodies the species of comedy on which the play is supposedly based.

The ruling class, Arc and his mother, are clever and amusing. And yet the sinister reality is that this can only be maintained by the security of position that comes from the insecurity of others.

The only time that Arc succeeds in doing anything effective (apart from murdering his wife) is when he withholds a pardon from his wrongly accused servant (and that in an underhand and despicable way). It is the only time that Arc gives way to passion and perhaps true feeling, and yet success for him means literally life or death for another.

The most poignant

moment in the whole play comes when Arc gives the pardon to the servant's mother to light the fire with. She uses it, because she can't read.

Three other characters in the play are important because of what they appear to represent.

Rose, Arc's black maid, stands for political awareness. She has inherited the knowledge from her mother that all in her position are slaves, and tries to explain this to her husband, who will not listen.

Her husband represents the illogical reasoning that ultimately leads to fascism. He is exploited in every way and yet still believes that his master must be right.

Arc dupes him into believing that he has committed a murder. The

murder was committed by Arc himself and even when it becomes clear what has happened, Bob will not see the truth and continues to believe that 'justice' will prevail in the end.

Frank, a third servant who gets caught trying to steal the silver, is betrayed by Bob, again out of a mistaken sense of duty, and seems to represent a half-consciousness. He is fighting back in stealing the silver, but does so in the wrong way and is doomed to failure.

The play was directed by Bond and contains some particularly strong visual images. There is a scene in which Arc's wife appears draped in white as a ghost, perhaps echoing the hostage in the 'Worlds', an earlier Bond play.

PHOTO: JOHN HAYNES



Restoration sharp but not subtle

At one point Frank, the servant, is tied to a chair with white tape while he is sleeping and, unable to get free, he jumps around the stage still helpless in the chair.

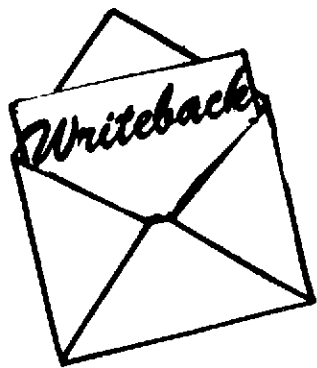
Later he is locked in a trunk which is left alone on stage with his muffled banging and shouting going on

inside.

Nearer the end of the play there is a scene in which the grouping of the players presents a painter-like quality to the whole and their movements on stage are almost a slow dance. These things add an unexpected dimension to disturbing situations and in a sense lend

them greater dignity.

Restoration is an entertainment. It is not a subtle work. The message is very clear. Maybe if we looked at them carefully, we could draw the same conclusions from other restoration comedies, but maybe we still need to be reminded that is what Bond intends.



SOCIALIST Organiser needs to develop a more positive attitude to the fight for public accountability of the police.

In Liverpool it is clear that the removal of chief constable Kenneth Oxford is a real possibility. The authorities are scared that they will be forced to grant this demand and that it will set a precedent for asserting the power of the 'community' in other areas too.

Our task is not to sneer at this struggle, but to give it more force and more direction.

Energies

If a police chief is sacked it will give confidence to workers. It is then up to us to make sure that this confidence is used to take the struggle with the police further, and not to allow the reformist leadership to scatter the energies.

On the front page of Socialist Organiser no.47, John Lister declares that "there is no way that the police, these hired defenders of the capitalist class, can be made accountable to the workers' movement". This half-truth reveals that the police always have been and will be a class force at the disposal of the bourgeoisie.

What it obscures, however, is that the character of the police in capitalist society is not determined only by who 'hires' them, but by the relations between the classes and in particular the struggles of the working class.

The police in South Africa and the police in Britain are both capitalist, but only a political cretin would ignore the differences between them.

More important, perhaps,

CURBING THE POLICE

the police in Britain in 1980 are different from the police in 1960. They have become less accountable to any democratic body and they have become an increasingly aggressive class force.

Socialists must relate to these distinctions, and not bury them under the general truth that the police are merely capital's mercenaries.

While the working class cannot control the police, it can impose - and has imposed - curbs on the power of the police. The labour movement does not of course control the state, but it does - as a result of its struggles - wield influence.

The struggle for that influence is, as Marx and Lenin constantly reiterated, crucial. In part our influence over the police has been mediated by the law (e.g. by winning and defending rights of defendants not to be arbitrarily detained, rights of trade unionists to picket, etc.); in part mediated by official political channels (local police authorities, parliamentary scrutiny of the Home Office, etc.); and in part wielded directly through our resistance on the streets and in the factories.

Now the ruling class has launched an attack on these avenues of democratic accountability. It has strengthened and centralised the police itself and assailed the legal rights of defendants, pickets, etc. It has neutered the powers of local police authorities and is now pondering their abolition, as part of a wider attack on democratic forms of local government.

Local authority is being transferred to Chief Constables, while at the same time the force is being centralised under the shadow of the Home Office.

Whether we like it or not, the state has taken up the



question of accountability with a vengeance. If we ignore it, it is we who are the dreamers.

It is true that there are those who just 'plead' for accountability, declaring that it is in the state's best interest, and that their only goal is to 'improve police-community relations'.

But their pleas are becoming increasingly hollow-sounding. The smallest grumbling from the Merseyside police committee or from the GLC is met by denunciation and counter-attack by the police and the government.

In the name of 'serving the public' the police can bear less and less actual public intervention. Criticism itself appears in police eyes as a sin against the holy.

The reality is not, as the leaders would have it, that accountability will soften the contradictions between the police and society. Quite the reverse. It will, as we should appreciate and clearly argue, sharpen these contradictions under the present circumstances.

And the struggle has moved on. The politics of pressure groups have moved to the background, and the Liverpool demonstration for

Oxford's sacking can hardly be called pleading.

Even the defensive struggle to maintain the very restricted democratic accountability over the police which previously existed contains the potential, already visible, to move onto the offensive: that is, for the 'community' to demand new powers over the police - to hire and fire chief constables, to disband special forces like the SPG, the PSUs, the Special Branch etc; to disarm the police; to refuse entry to the police into sensitive areas; to scrutinise the hidden world of police stations; to have access to police files; and so forth.

This momentum will not automatically be maintained, should appreciate and clearly argue, sharpen these contradictions under the present circumstances.

Our task as socialists is not to sit on the sidelines of the fight for accountability, but to engage in the fight, to seek constantly to break through the narrow horizons of the reformists, and to use any concessions the workers win to extend the struggle further.

BOB FINE, London.

LSE needs action

YOUR EXCELLENT coverage of Laurence Scotts points out the need to fight for democracy in the AUEW and the need to publicise the dispute in the wider labour movement.

What we must emphasise and re-emphasise right now, however, is the central weapons which might just still bring home the bacon: picketing and blacking. And it's no good just picketing the LSE plant itself.

If Duggie Daniels and John Tocher are, as they claim to be, still supporting the dispute, then let's see action rather than words.

They must be pushed to point the finger specifically at Arthur Scargill, Walt Greendale (the Hull dockers' leader and Scargill's fellow General Council member) and the British Oxygen stewards, who

have in the past acquired a reputation for militancy.

They should say publicly to them: 'Are you serious? Do you really want to get rid of Thatcher? If so, call on your members to black all Mining Supplies products'. [Mining Supplies is LSE owner Arthur Snipe's main company].

And rather than relying on other workers, Daniels and Tocher should organise picketing of Hull docks, the Yorkshire mines, and British Oxygen plants - and of course Mining Supplies itself.

If the officials are not prepared to do this immediately, then their support means little and the strikers must act themselves.

Tony Benn, Bob Wright and Peter Hain, who have declared support for the workers, should also be

pressed to ask Scargill and Greendale what they are doing rather than saying about the strike. If rhetoric is converted into action, victory can still be snatched from the jaws of defeat.

RODERICK McCORLEY

P.S. I showed this letter to a member of the Communist Party, who argued that it personalised matters and divided the left.

My answer was that if Arthur and Walt are not prepared to put their money where their mouth is, they increase cynicism about left leaders, and it is they who divide the movement, because their inaction must help the bosses, Boyd and Duffy, and of course Margaret Thatcher.

What do other readers think?

My Grandma was more of a revolutionary



Dear Comrades,

I feel I must tell you of my recent experience with the Militant tendency.

After being a contact for three or four weeks I went along to a group meeting and was accepted into the Militant. At this time I was still finding out about their programme and politics.

I was led to believe they were a revolutionary tendency fighting within the Labour Party, and I was asked to join the Labour Party.

Ward

I filled in a Labour Party form and it was sent to my ward, where it was accepted and sent on to the constituency. At the con-

stituency EC someone told the committee that I was a member of the SWP and my membership was referred to the General Management Committee.

At the GMC (after some wrangling) it was put to a vote and I lost.

My membership was then referred back to the ward and I have to go on September 9 to give my explanation.

(I should just tell you that before becoming involved with the Militant I did attend some SWP meetings, but I broke any links I had with them before joining the Militant).

I was very curious as to who had said I was an SWP

member, so I made it my duty to find out. When I did finally find out I was absolutely dumbfounded for it was a member of my own Militant group who had deliberately tried to stop my Labour Party membership, and the Militant didn't do a thing about it, (apart from telling him what a naughty boy he was and not to do it again!).

I have now seen the error of my ways and have disowned the Militant, for they are not revolutionaries (or at least not as I see it). My Grandma was more of a revolutionary and she knew nothing about politics.

Yours fraternally,
Ex-Militant
P.CAIN

Micky Devine 1954-1981

"H-Block is a festering sore... It must be smashed"

by Mary-Ann Todd

THE NEWS of Micky Devine's death was deliberately eclipsed by the British media's glorying at Pat McGeown's relatives' request for medical aid. In some papers it wasn't even mentioned.

Most just reported "a tenth hunger striker dies. Micky Devine, aged 27 died in the Maze after refusing food for 60 days."

As always in the British capitalist press, the dead hunger striker is described only in terms of his alleged 'crime', length of sentence, etc.

Any information that could result in a reader relating personally to the life and struggle of the dead man is assiduously omitted. The only opportunity you get to see any humanity behind the bald "facts" is a blurred photograph.

But still the humour, youth and sincerity comes through the "mug" shots issued of Micky Devine.

And his life history contains the explanation of why this red-haired, chubby faced, dishevelled lad with his schoolboy specs and softies grin became a freedom fighter of such courage and determination.

Slum

Micky Devine was born in the spring of 1954 in Springtown camp on the outskirts of Derry city - a former American army base from the Second World War, which Micky himself described as "the slum to end all slums".

Hundreds of families - 99% Catholics because of Derry Corporation's sectarian housing policy - lived or rather existed in huts which were not kept in any decent state of repair by the Corporation.

Micky Devine's earliest memory was of lying in a bed covered in old coats to keep the rain off the bed.

His sister, Margaret, recalls that the huts were OK during the summer but they leaked and the rest of the year were cold and damp.

Although Springtown was meant to provide only temporary accommodation, official lethargy and sectarianism dictated that such inadequate housing was good enough for Catholics.

The Devines had been moved into the camp in 1948 but it was 1960 before they got their new home in the Creggan.

Hatred

The first civil rights march in Derry city took place on October 5 1968. The sectarian RUC batoned several hundred protestors.

Micky was 14. As he said:

"Like every young person in Derry my whole way of thinking was tossed upside down by the events of October 5 1968."

"Overnight I developed an intense hatred of the RUC... within a month everyone was a political activist... I was by no means politically aware but the speed of events gave me a quick education."

In January 1969 there was another now infamous loyalist attack on Civil Rights marchers in Burntollet and on August 12 1969 the Apprentice Boys and the RUC attacked the Bogside.

On both occasions Micky Devine ended up on the wrong end of an RUC baton and was hospitalised. After August 1969 British troops

arrived.

For the next three years he worked as a shop assistant in three local furniture shops. When he could, Micky manned the barricades of 'Free Derry' - armed with a hurley and full of nervous bravado.

"I don't really know what we would have done if someone had attacked, but we reckoned that we were the defenders of the people and that was good enough."

Between 1970 and 1971 Micky Devine became involved in the civil rights movement and the local (uniquely militant) Labour Party Young Socialists.

In 1971 the British army shot dead two unarmed civilians in Belfast and in August 1971 internment was introduced. Micky Devine joined the Official Republicans.

Dogs

Barricades had gone up again in Derry. Micky Devine not only did his barricade duty but was eager to contribute in any way, often tidying up the office and doing other small jobs.

In 1972 on January 30, British paratroopers shot dead 13 unarmed civil rights demonstrators in Derry.

Micky Devine was on the march. "Can you sit back and watch while your own Derry men get shown down like dogs?" he said.

"I will never forget standing in the Creggan chapel staring at the brown wooden boxes... that sight more than anything convinced me that there will never be peace in Ireland while Britain remains."

"When I looked at those coffins I developed a commitment to the republican cause that I have never lost."

Micky Devine then became involved not only in defensive operations but in various gun attacks against British troops.

At the end of July the British army's 'Operation Motorman' removed the Free Derry barricade by massive force of arms and armour.

In 1973 Devine married and lived in the Creggan with his wife Margaret. They had two children, Michael

now aged 7 and Louise, now aged 5.

Micky Devine was becoming increasingly disillusioned by the Officials openly reformist path - the 'fireside republicans' he called them.

In late 1974 he joined the newly formed Irish Republican Socialist Party and in early 1975 became a founder member of the Irish National Liberation Army, the IRSP's military wing.

Blanket

After a raid on an arms shop, he was arrested on September 20, 1976 (the same day as his granny, with whom he had been brought up, died).

He was held on remand and not sentenced until June 20 1977 when he was given 12 years for 'possession' of arms.

He went "on the blanket".

Inside the H blocks Micky Devine learnt fluent gaelic and ran regular quizzes in A wing of H5 block.

On Sunday 21 June he completed his fourth year on the blanket and joined the hunger strike. Before going on the hunger strike Micky Devine wrote the following words about the strike - a moving testimony to the life and death of a man who was no unique, romantic folk hero but an ordinary Derry lad, a furniture shop assistant, driven by the constant repression of British imperialism to the biggest sacrifice anyone can make.

"There is nothing that any human being values more than life... Not only to die but to choose a death which is slow and agonising, further serves to illustrate the depths of courage and sincerity amongst the men in the H Blocks of Long Kesh."

"What it takes to willingly undergo suffering, some of us can possibly imagine."

"As each day passes, the death shadow of the shroud descends ominously on each of these



'We reckoned we were the defenders of the people, and that was good enough'

brave Irishmen and it has done oft times before...

"H Block is a festering sore on the face of

Ireland. It and those responsible for it must be smashed.

"We here are helpless."

All we have to give is our lives. We simply ask you to do your share and prevent tragedy."

PRESS GANG



THE FUNERALS of republican hunger strikers have been attacked by the press more often than by the army.

The family of one of the first hunger strikers to die flew his young son from Britain to the funeral. The child followed the coffin as other children have followed the coffins of their parents bewildered and grief-stricken.

For the press he and his family were a natural target. They accused the Provisionals of using the child as propaganda.

But now those same newspapers show us that it is they themselves who are the master craftsmen of the propaganda of the gutter.

Bemused

The Paisleyite council of Ballymena sent three children aged between nine and 13 to London to stage a confrontation with GLC leader Ken Livingstone. Their mother had been killed in a bomb blast in 1976.

Hunger striker Tom McElwee was "convicted" of her manslaughter and it was his mother who was publicly welcomed a few weeks ago by Livingstone.

Needless to say the children's first engagement in London was a press conference.

The Evening Standard had already published a photo of the children flying to London (their photographer presumably just happened to be passing along the fuselage).

The accompanying story said they came to tell Livingstone "what they thought of his support for the Maze hunger strikers".

The paper reported that the children were "overwhelmed by the reception from Conservative Party members and officials at County Hall." They were



Livingstone and children before the tears

"quiet, reserved and seemed bemused."

This should have been a warning for those who fixed the visit of the PR disaster they were about to engineer.

When the children were ushered in to see Livingstone he immediately agreed to be photographed with them. The tongue-tied children failed to produce the outburst that had been drummed into them.

The councillors who had brought the children began to give Livingstone a horrifyingly graphic account of how the children's mother had been burned to death. The children - no doubt to the satisfaction of their escorts - burst into tears and were led away.

The next day photographs of Livingstone with the children appeared in every national daily and in several papers the story was given precedence over the Fermanagh by-election vic-

the dead soldiers.

But sections of the press are now gripped by war weariness. The Sunday Times - previously a firm opponent of making concessions - has for two weeks running published major editorials calling for a date to be set for withdrawal.

Even the Daily Mail and the Telegraph have included in otherwise standard editorials hints that the government could do a deal over the H Blocks.

The election of Sands and now Carron has robbed the press of its most frequent war-cry - that the Provisionals have no popular support.

Only the Times - after rehearsing all the arguments in favour of giving way - stuck firmly to the Thatcher line. Its editorial said winning the demands would be a "more solid political asset than the passing sympathy of mourners."

Movement

"It is by convincing their constituency that they are bound to win that insurrectionary groups make the qualitative leap from being a conspiracy to leading a movement."

But the Guardian - which has no trace of liberalism on Ireland said "There is no issue of principle on the government's side which is worth the gathering momentum of paramilitary politics. There is no issue of principle which is worth the alienation of opinion, misinformation no doubt but influential, in the United States and elsewhere abroad."

The children's visit to Livingstone showed the SAS side of Fleet Street, still up to its dirty tricks; but the despair creeping into the leader columns shows that the staff officers are losing faith in their generals.



Micky Devine

Labour must back the Bradford 12!

by Barry Turner

THE ASIAN community in Bradford is rallying behind 12 youths charged with 'conspiracy to cause grievous bodily harm' and 'conspiracy to endanger property and life'.

800 people at a meeting in the Arcadian Cinema on August 12 angrily called for the dropping of charges.

But last week, in a court room partially empty due to the police's refusal to allow relatives entrance, bail was refused to 11 of the 12. Their solicitors pointed to a recent case where white racist youths were bailed on a charge of conspiracy in connection with the burning of Asian property.

Frame-ups

The twelve Asian youths have all been actively involved in campaigns against police harassment and frame-ups in Bradford, and supporting Anwar Ditta and Jaswinder Kaur against the racist immigration laws.

Now, lovingly referred to in the Bradford press as the 'Bomb 12', they face possible maximum sentences of life imprisonment. The charges rest on so-called 'voluntary statements' which the police claim to have taken from them.

All the youths were subjected to constant and prolonged police interrogation after their arrest on July 11. Concerned friends and relatives were not allowed to speak to them or visit them, nor were they allowed to see solicitors until half an hour before their first court appearance on August 1.

Not guilty

All of them are pleading 'not guilty to both charges'. The petrol bombs supposed to have been made by them have not been seen by members of the defence campaign

and were not found in the houses of any of the defendants.

The Bradford police have consistently failed to take action on serious racist attacks, and now they clearly intend to hide their racism behind a smokescreen of hysteria fuelling the Tory myth that youth discontent is merely the result of the stirrings of a handful of ruthless revolutionaries.

IN THE early hours of Sunday August 23, the top floor of the Textile Hall, Bradford, was gutted by fire.

The top floor was a West Indian social club, and the building also houses the Trades Council, trade union offices, Labour Party meeting rooms, and the July 11 Action Committee.

Police are 'satisfied' that it was an accident. But fascists threatened to burn it down in a phone call to police on July 10.

Messages to Bradford Trades Council and July 11 Action Committee, c/o Fourth Idea bookshop, 14 Southgate, Bradford 1.

They also want to terrorise the black communities away from any realistic policy of self-defence, at a time when the police are organising nationally to step up their attacks on communities, picket lines, unemployed youth, etc.

Despite the complete failure of the police to link the petrol bombs to the defendants, the press coverage has raised a debate in the Bradford labour movement on the question of self-defence.

It is this question that



Asian youth on the streets

the press hope to use to divide black and white workers in a town where their unity is vital for the health of the labour movement.

Basis

Socialist Organiser supporters have argued that self-defence is the very basis of the labour movement; but due to the failure of the leadership of the trade unions and Labour Party, the organised power of the movement has not been used to defend black communities, and so we are calling for labour movement support for community self-defence.

An inquiry into racist

attacks in the Bradford area has been set up by the July 11 Action Committee to catalogue the incidents and the police record on dealing with them. We are arguing for labour movement involvement in that inquiry.

The Militant tendency, numerically strong in the Bradford Labour Party, have ducked both the general issue of self-defence and the particular question of the denial of democratic rights to the defendants.

They have attended neither pickets nor meetings, sending only one supporter briefly to the 800-strong Arcadian meeting.

It is particularly import-

ant that resolutions of support, donations and messages are immediately sent to the July 11 Action Committee, c/o Fourth Idea bookshop, 14 Southgate, Bradford 1.

Also the Action Committee is calling for letters and telegrams of protest to:

* The Director of Public Prosecutions, Sir Thomas Hetherington, 4/12 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1.

* William Whitelaw, 50 Queen Anne's Gate, SW1.

* The Lord Chancellor, House of Lords, SW1.

* Ronald Gregory, Chief Constable West Yorkshire, Police Headquarters, Wakefield.

NAZI THREAT TO CARNIVAL

by Robert Mansell

This year's Notting Hill carnival is under threat. The anti-fascist magazine Searchlight has recently exposed an international fascist plot to bomb the carnival.

Such threats should be taken seriously; remember the 14 people who were killed at the Munich Oktoberfest by a fascist bomb.

The National Front are also planning to mobilise on Carnival Sunday in an attempt to sabotage the event. According to Front leader Martin Webster they intend to create a situation where Home Secretary Whitelaw is forced to order a total ban on all marches and processions including the two day carnival.

The Front plan to rally in Fulham, 2½ miles from Notting Hill, and then march on the carnival. If their march is banned they will still be able to rally and intend to do so.

The local trades council, which covers both Fulham and Notting Hill, along with the Labour Party and the Anti Nazi League have launched a campaign to oppose the fascists.

At a recent ANL meeting some local community

activists thought that the answer to fascist attempts at disruption was to let them march unopposed.

But an Anti Nazi League speaker argued for a counter demonstration. If the fascists are allowed to march unopposed on the day of the Carnival their morale will be boosted. It will give them the confidence to take bolder steps and increase their attacks on blacks and the labour movement, and it will swell their ranks with disillusioned white youth.

Obviously there are genuine fears among those who have put time and effort into the carnival that it could be ruined. This could be overcome to a degree by the carnival organisers and the local community taking the question of defence seriously.

For this, community defence groups need to be built in collaboration with the labour movement.

The carnival must be defended, the fascists must be stopped.

Join the counter-demonstration!

Assemble 11.30 am, Fulham Broadway Tube, Sunday 30 August. All London SO supporters should attend.

Save Bridget's job!

BRIDGET Parsons, a Birmingham teacher and SWP member, has been jailed for six months for 'threatening words and behaviour' - a charge that usually results in a fine of £100 or so.

The police and the courts (egged on by the notorious Tory MP Jill Knight and the equally reactionary Birmingham Evening Mail) have long been itching to send Bridget down. In 1979 she was arrested during a picket of 'Pollyannas', a club that operated a colour bar. She was found guilty of actual bodily harm to a woman PC (despite no medical evidence being produced) and fined £540.

But the Evening Mail wanted more. In a series of witch-hunting articles it demanded her sacking. Bridget lost her job as a maths teacher and was only reemployed (on a 'supply' basis) after a campaign by the local NUT.

During the steel strike Bridget was arrested for obstruction during a demonstration in Corby. Earlier this year she was again arrested for obstruction while giving out H Block leaflets.

Now, after being arrested during the Handsworth riots and refused bail for six weeks, Bridget faces six months in jail. Again, the Mail is calling for her to be sacked, and the local NUT

leadership advised her to resign before the trial.

But left wingers in the NUT are planning a campaign to save Bridget's job. Even a spokesperson from the Birmingham education department described her as a 'caring and competent' teacher.

Bridget Parsons is already paying dearly for her socialist commitment. We must ensure that this courageous comrade does not lose her job as well.

McNee calls for riot act

GIVING evidence to the Scaman Inquiry on Friday August 21, London's chief cop David McNee demanded the right to clear the streets.

He proposed a new Riot Act - enabling the police to arrest anyone just for being on the streets after a senior police officer had 'designated a particular area as one of public disorder' and ordered people to disperse.

And he also called for strengthening of the Special Patrol Group that killed Blair Peach.

Support the 3,000

by Jo Thwaites

THE RIOTS may have stopped, but the penalty the youth arrested have to pay hasn't.

Many youth are still being held in remand centres. In Risley remand centre, where many of the people arrested in Liverpool 8 were sent, Anne Harris has gone on hunger strike as a protest against her being refused bail.

But the press has been silent. As far as they are concerned, the 3,000 arrested might as well have been wiped off the face of the earth.

Bones

"Even for those who do get bail, it is often on the basis of a 9-5 curfew and others have to report to the police every day. Complaints made against police treatment when in jail go completely unheard."

In Moss Side, when Anthony Doyle went to the police station to make a complaint he was beaten up. 'Positive policing' in Merseyside has led to numerous injuries, broken bones, and the killing of David Moore.

A Birmingham youth sent to Brockhill Remand Centre after being beaten up told Socialist Organiser:

"Conditions at Brockhill were awful. A remand centre only designed for 180 youth had 370 people in it."

"The screws had a free hand to harass and beat up any youth who stood up for themselves and kept their pride."

"It's a terrible feeling being locked up - especially when you know you've done nothing."

"The three screws who are suspected of having murdered Barry Prosser in Winson Green Prison have been transferred to Brockhill. The attitude of the screws, combined with overcrowding and the fighting spirit of the youth led to a riot inside the remand centre."

"Youth were being dragged into the corridors and beaten with riot sticks to 'restore order'."

Kangaroo

And in Nottingham youth were refused legal representation before they went into court.

Police said they'd better plead guilty or they wouldn't get out. One officer told them they had no chance as this was a kangaroo court.

Sentences have been three months or even six months for threatening



Skirmish in Liverpool - now labour must defend the youth

behaviour. The NCCL and the trades council in Nottingham have set up inquiries into the behaviour of the police.

And what of the leaders of the labour movement? What have they been saying? All we've got from the TUC has been the programme for the regeneration of the cities - nothing about the arrested youth.

Nothing about the treatment handed out to the youth.

We must not stand by and let this happen.

The National Left Wing Youth Movement of the LPYS is organising defence

meetings all over the country and has produced a special broadsheet on the riots.

But that is not enough. 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, and leaflets by Labour Parties and trade unions - to show they stand on the side of the youth in jail.

Support the Labour Youth Defence Campaign initially sponsored by Wallasey LPYS, c/o Wallasey Labour Club, Church Rd., Seacombe, Merseyside.

WORKERS SOCIALIST LEAGUE

Rally and festival to launch the fusion of the Workers' Socialist League and the International-Communist League. Saturday October 10, from 11am at Digbeth Civic Hall, Birmingham. For details of transport contact WSL, PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

RIGHT TO WORK MARCH TO TORY PARTY CONFERENCE

From Liverpool (October 8) to Blackpool (October 16). For sponsorships and details contact Right to Work Campaign, 265a Seven Sisters Road, London N4.

Out now! BUILDING WORKER no.19

Articles on: new wage agreement, role of the CP in UCATT, Labour Party democracy, asbestos, Costains, and 'one union for building?'

10p plus postage from: 223B Queens Road, Peckham, London SE15.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!!

RECENTLY three Class Fighter supporters in Ware LPYS were told by the Militant caucus (not even by the YS as a whole) that since Class Fighter is a minority in the YS they are not allowed to sell the paper!

In fact there are no rules in the YS about what socialist papers members can or can't sell. And that is as it should be.

The Militant majority often seems to want to run the YS as a disciplined centralist organisation, where the major condition of membership is agreement

with Militant's editorial line. And since that way of running the YS has no basis in the rules, they try to enforce it by browbeating or wearing down new YS members.

In reality all currents of working class opinion have the unconditional right to express themselves in the YS.

Class Fighter supporters are determined not to tolerate any repetition of such tactics. The YS is our organisation just as much as Militant's.

ALEXIS CARRAS

TUC CONFERENCE A WIDENING GULF

JOHN LISTER
reviews the TUC
agenda

THE TUC Congress has never been noted for its spirited and spontaneous, straight-from-the-shoulder debates.

The endless stilted speeches are generally drafted by research departments. They are delivered by General Secretaries or hand-picked hacks to an audience typically composed of middle aged, white, corpulent, male, time-servers who always seem to be a million miles from the realities of the class struggle.

But since Thatcher came to office, the stodginess of the TUC has lapsed further and further into complete somnolence.

Even verbal references to the Tories have been largely weeded out of the bland and blithely irrelevant motions passed up from snoozing National Executive Councils.

Breaking the silence this year as on previous occasions is the lone voice of the Bakers Union, which is the only one to call for a joint TUC/Labour Party campaign which:

"should clearly aim to bring down the Tory government and bring to power a Labour Government pledged to the socialist policies contained in clause 4 part 4 of the Labour Party Constitution."

Although the Bakers' Union signally fails to attach any concrete form to their call for a "campaign" or to make specific "socialist policies" they seek, the resolution will stand as an embarrassment to the TUC bureaucrats, and there will as usual be pressure for it to be withdrawn.

Elsewhere on the Preliminary Agenda there is little that could cause offence to even the most rabid right wing bureaucrat. The



Moss Evans - bellows

Grantham leadership of APEX, for instance, emerges as an advocate of its own variety of the supposedly "left wing" Alternative Economic Strategy - complete with APEX calls for "selective import controls", a "revitalised NEB", and "a National Investment Bank".

Public sector unions are conspicuously muted in their demands. NUPE calls vaguely on:

"all affiliated unions to unite in a campaign to defend the welfare state and the public services."

Yet NUPE does not explain what this campaign should consist of - or why no such action has yet been mounted while many public services have been decimated by the Tories.

Elsewhere there are warnings that union chiefs are contemplating another

round of futile and demoralising selective strikes over public sector pay, in a motion again tabled by NUPE:

"Congress therefore instructs the General Council to develop a coordinated campaign, which will include the use of industrial action, to unite all public sector unions in opposition to the Government's policies."

But possibly the most pathetic of the public sector resolutions is that from the National Union of Teachers on the demolition of the education service by the Tories.

It rambles on for four wordy paragraphs, "condemning", "deploring" and "regarding as morally indefensible", before proposing - no action at all against the government or local councils!

There are few constructive notes in an agenda which includes only one resolution (and that a reactionary endorsement of current policy) on Ireland, and only three on nuclear disarmament.



Alan Fisher - poses



David Barnett - puckers

The FBU however spell out a correct demand for unions to recruit unemployed workers and youth, and for unemployed centres to be staffed by:

"democratically-elected unemployed officers, controlled by the unemployed themselves and funded by trade union donations."

And the Society of Civil and Public Servants takes a stand opposed to military training for youth, opposed to the "WLEP" work experience programme, and drawing attention to the special hardship of young women and black unemployed.

But in general the TUC agenda exhibits only the widening gulf that separates the top level of the union bureaucracy from the problems, struggles, debates and aspirations of the working class on the shop floor, the estates and the dole queues.

Seldom has the need for a new, revolutionary leadership in the British workers' movement been more starkly expressed.



Brighton 1978 - police harass Right to Work lobby of TUC

GLC must 'come out' on gay rights

by Bob Sutcliffe

KEN Livingstone's widely publicised speech to the Harrow Gay Unity Group last week was the most important public defence of gay rights yet by a Labour leader.

Livingstone's vigorous defence of gay sexuality, his sharp condemnation of the ignorance and bigotry of public officials and politicians and his call for the ending of anti-gay discrimination should help to open up a new offensive for gay rights within the labour movement.

The urgent need for this offensive is shown both by the recent sacking of Susan Shell (for being gay) by a London Labour Council (Barking) and by the reactionary howls which greeted Livingstone's speech in the right wing press.

Livingstone urged that the GLC should "come out" in support of gay rights and should implement the anti-discrimination demands put to it by gay organisations.

The Inner London Education Authority (part-controlled by the GLC) was responsible for the notorious dismissal of a teacher, John Warburton, for discussing homosexuality with his students.

It is important that this long standing wrong is now righted by the new ILEA.



John Warburton should be unconditionally reinstated and the ILEA should declare its support for the demands made by the Gay Teachers Group.

Among these demands are steps to develop a positive attitude to homosexuality within the school curriculum.

Ken Livingstone is reported to have agreed that the ILEA should "pursue a policy in schools which would help gay teenagers rather than repressing them". And he linked this with reducing the overall oppressive hierarchy in the running of schools.

If Livingstone's words are to be converted into action by his colleagues in the

Labour GLC and ILEA, then a lot of pressure will be necessary. Some of this will be coming from the Labour Campaign for Gay Rights and gay members of the Labour Party should fight to make this campaign into a really effective pressure group within the Labour Party.

The Labour Campaign for Gay Rights will be having a fringe meeting at this year's Party conference to demand a more positive gay rights policy from the Labour Party.

A strong motion from Oxford City CLP (resolution 502) is unlikely to be debated and the party leadership has practically buried the document 'The

Rights of Gay Men and Women' issued by the NEC.

Labour Parties should discuss this document and let the NEC know that there is real concern on the issue of gay rights. We should make it as difficult as possible for Labour leaders to ignore what Ken Livingstone has said.

Labour Campaign for Gay Rights
Scottish Conference
Saturday October 31
Queen Margaret Union
Glasgow

Discussion on the Labour Party NEC document, 'The Rights of Gay Men and Women'
Speakers include Susan Shell and a local NALGO representative; speakers from Labour Party NEC, Scottish Council of the Labour Party and STUC also invited.
Contact Ian Dunn, 52, Broughton Street, Edinburgh

OUT NOW!

'Gay Socialist' No. 1
Newsletter of the Labour Campaign for Gay Rights
Free to LCGR members; membership or affiliation is £2 (£1 unwaged) from Paul Fairweather, Gay Centre, 61a Bloom St., Manchester M1 3LY

THE SECRET POLICEMAN'S BALL

LAST SUNDAY the 'Workers' Revolutionary Party' held a rally to commemorate the 41st anniversary of Leon Trotsky's death.

Outside the meeting, supporters of Socialist Organisers lobbied with members of the Workers' Socialist League, protesting at the way that the WRP has turned to the capitalist courts to silence its critics in the labour movement by issuing writs against Socialist Organiser for articles criticising the WRP.

The WSL put out a leaflet arguing that the WRP's loud 'revolutionary' pretensions cover up for unscrupulous right-wing politics on issues like rent and rate rises and its support for the regimes in Libya and Iraq.

A couple of us went into the rally.

Mike Banda, WRP general secretary, made the opening speech. "The biggest blow we can deal the Stalinists is to build the WRP, the ATUA (All Trades Union Alliance) and the Youth Training Centres".

From Vanessa Redgrave of the WRP Central Committee and David North of the US Workers' League we learned that there would be no more Labour governments, left or right, that the State was planning to put us all in labour camps, that the youth who attacked the police on the recent Liverpool demonstration were highly-trained police and army provocateurs, and that the American Trotskyist movement was riddled by CIA agents.

I'd heard a lot about

Gerry Healy, leader of the WRP, and so I was not really surprised at what happened immediately before he spoke.

Chairperson Alex Mitchell told the stewards to get everyone in from the foyer and to make sure no-one moved out.

Mitchell then spotted a member of the audience taking notes, and Healy called for him to be removed.

When Healy finally began his speech, the hall was silent. Even the baby that had been crying miraculously stopped.

Healy began by telling us that the world was the centre of the universe and everything else was subordinate to it, and went on about 'dialectical materialism', with a long spiel about Hegel being a 'materialist idealist'. At this point someone in the

audience whistled. Healy took this as an 'accusation of Hegelianism' (not the way I saw it).

The final part of his speech was dedicated to the major issue of the moment (in Healy's view) - security. The state was out to destroy the organisations of the working class and its revolutionary party. Security was a life and death struggle.

By this time I was getting quite worried. The number of 'heavies' around where we were sitting had increased and they were going up to the platform conferring with Mitchell.

At the end of Healy's speech we were approached and asked to come outside to explain why we had been taking notes.

We managed to bluff our way out of that. But we didn't stay for a second go. M.L.



Healy - the fight is on against police agents and neo-Kantians

St Mary's climbdown!

by Dettie Clinton

MANAGEMENT at St. Mary's W9 was humiliated last week when it attempted to harass and victimise TGWU shop steward Rita Maxim.

A "counselling" session she had been summoned to by Mrs Slaven, the Domestic Service Manager, turned into a show of support for the fight against the union-bashing and run-down of the hospital.

On Thursday 20 August Rita Maxim and another domestic were working on ward 12. The sister in charge of the ward told them that the floors in the Labour Wards weren't clean. They examined the floors and found they were perfectly clean as they had already been washed.



Joe Beckles

Enforce

After the other domestic finished work, Mrs Slaven tried once again to enforce management's attempt to include floor cleaning in the duties of domestics who have not previously done this work. She ordered Rita to clean the floor.

Rita obviously refused. On the next day Rita received a letter to appear before Mrs Slaven for "counselling". Some 30 members of the TGWU decided to join her as a token of support when she went to the office.

Counselling

They found that Mr Payne (Secretary of the

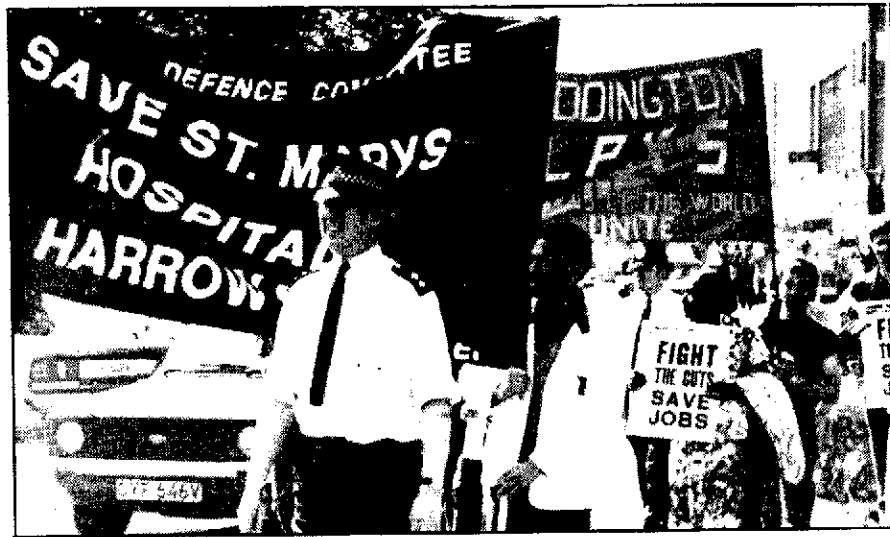
Appeals Panel from St. Mary's Praed Street) was there for this alleged "counselling session".

The attempt to intimidate Rita failed and management scuttled off, complaining that they wouldn't recognise a meeting where the membership turned up in numbers. (Which is fine by us). Mrs Slaven herself was looking very sick-faced with this angry group of workers.

Vindictive

This isn't the first case of harassment - a few weeks ago another Grade 2 was so upset by continuous harassment that her doctor put her on the sick because of her nerves.

But the response last Friday showed that trade unionists in the hospital will



not allow victimisations by this vindictive management. And next time they try it on more positive steps will be taken to stop their attacks!

Meanwhile, the effects of the cuts and penny-pinching of the administrators daily become more obvious.

Last Saturday the TGWU branch secretary, Joe Beckles, was summoned by one of his domestics to Ward 8, which is a medical ward full of patients.

The refusal to provide adequate domestics on the ward has resulted in the ward and adjacent sitting room being in a disgraceful state. The patients themselves and the sister in charge of the ward complained of the mess.

An official complaint has

been sent to the AHA and local administrators. Other wards, e.g. Ward 2 have also been left at busy times during the day with only one domestic to clean the wards, prepare trays, sterilise utensils and generally act as orderlies.

It is clear more staff are needed.

Ailments

The rheumatology ward which has been closed for quite a while, last week received some attention from a television film crew looking into the provision of facilities for those with arthritis, rheumatism and related ailments.

The support from outside the hospital continues to boost the fight. The Licensed Taxi Drivers Assoc-

iation are producing 10,000 car stickers to publicise the campaign. It is very morale boosting when donations and messages are received; £5 this week came from Cardiff Royal Infirmary.

Delegations are still urgently needed to maintain a presence on the gates. Get your trade union, trades council or Labour Party to commit themselves to an hour per week on the picket line and bring your banner. Saturday afternoon is an especially important time.

Contact Alyson Bunn, Ward 15, St Mary's Hospital, London W9, Joe Beckles, (TGWU office) or Cecil Campbell (NUPE office).

We will be leafletting the Notting Hill Carnival on Monday 31 and will need help.

SCHREIBER: Share the work, save the jobs

by Brian Howman

A ROUTINE shop stewards committee meeting was interrupted late on Monday 10 August by the works manager informing the stewards at Schreiber Runcorn that nearly 100 jobs were to be cut.

The following day workers were told this news in a casual manner and rumours started to spread. At 10.30 a mass meeting was called to 'discuss the issue'.

A motion was passed by an overwhelming majority to fight the redundancies with whatever means available and instead accept 3-day working. (A subsidy from the government had already been offered to Schreiber, and short time working has been in operation since last summer).

On Thursday FTAT area official Jim Allen came to the factory and told us that everything was Thatcher's fault. He said that he was fully behind "us lads" and any action would be made official.

Stewards' chairman Roy Callon informed us that it was now 88 jobs to go, and

we should ignore any notices given to workers over the weekend.

I discussed what would happen after the six month subsidy ran out, with Roy Callon. He indicated that he would be willing to fight the redundancies then.

On being asked what he thought of the workers' chance of victory, he replied that he thought we held two aces.

1) That there is no redundancy payment owed to the workforce, so therefore none can be lost by taking action.

2) Schreiber (the man still exists and runs the factory) had been granted £6 million each from GEC (the umbrella company), the EEC and the British government and he could have difficulty covering up the fact that he has spent nothing like £18m on the Astmoor factory at Runcorn.

Further developments are expected soon.

Manchester workers in the Schreiber group have put out a call for work sharing throughout the group. We should modify that call and press for work-sharing on full pay!

GRATRIX: It's a lock-out!

by Chris Erswell

IN THE shadow of the giant, empty building that once housed the Tate and Lyle sugar refinery, a six week old strike against redundancy and victimisation is currently reaching a critical stage.

The sugar refinery, a symbol of gloom and depression provides a fitting backdrop to the small but bitter struggle at the builders merchant firm of Graham-Gratrix.

Whilst Tate and Lyle went down without a fight despite the fact that it was a citadel of trade unionism, the 40 odd workforce at this small warehouse have battled on with grim determination against a cavalier management who locked them out on June 14.

This year's negotiations on pay saw the coming together of three branches of the Thomas Tilling group of which Graham-Gratrix is a part. This show of solidarity was met with a unilateral attempt by management to impose 7% pay rises. The Liverpool, Manchester and Walsend warehouses called a one-day strike and management responded by declaring redundancies.

At Liverpool, a transport manager popular with the workforce was the first victim of this vindictive policy.

Only a year away from retirement, he received an instant redundancy notice.

As a result of the shock from this, he suffered a heart attack and died. He had worked 23 years for the firm.

Management refused to rearrange a negotiating meeting to allow senior steward Peter Bryant to attend the dead man's funeral!

Instant

A few weeks later, five shop floor workers were given instant notice of redundancy. The five just happened to include the senior shop steward!

The five sat-in until a meeting was fixed up with the union officials, but police were brought in and they were forced out.

The rest of the workforce were working to rule in protest until they were locked out on June 14.

If the workers are unimpressed by the fraudulent management chatter about poverty, then it may not be totally unconnected with the fact that 600 managers and executives were recently given a three week holiday in Miami.

They are, apparently, planning to go to Monte Carlo next summer, presumably to demonstrate their concern about the viability of the firm.

Picket lines have been boosted by contingents from the TGWU 6/612 unemployed branch.

The dispute was made official on Friday 14 July by the TGWU and union blacking is said to be in the process of being organised. Meanwhile the workers have been round the combine to ask for support.

The Walsend factory has been particularly supportive, whilst the unorganised Huddersfield headquarters of the Tilling group remains to be shut down.

Messages of support should be sent to Peter Dwyer, c/o Transport House, Islington, Liverpool.

YOPs rally



YOPs workers in Durham, with the help of the union, NUPE, have called a protest rally on Friday August 28 at Eldon Square, Newcastle, from 11 am to 2 pm.

These young workers recently struck against the Manpower Services Commission (YOPs bosses) rule that they had to spend four pounds on travel before they could claim any money back. The MSC locally gave in.

From this experience they have seen the need to organise on a wider basis and have gone round all the local YOP schemes.

This year it looks like the YOP wage rise that has been due since last November is going to be dropped again and there must be calls from the platform for action nationally to

fight the Tories' cheap labour schemes.

YOPs is also very much on the agenda in the Labour Party at the moment. The National Executive Committee has called for the next Labour government to grant full trade union rights to YOP workers.

But what about now? If it's good enough for a Labour government to implement then the NEC should be giving a lead now, to fight not only for union rights but for full trade union rates of pay on YOPs.

The National Council for Young Workers is currently fighting for this and for action on a national level. More information from NCYW, UMIST Students Union, PO Box 88, Manchester M60 1QV, or phone 061-861 0317.

Who will control Stoke unemployed centre?

by Arthur Bough

WHEN Socialist Organiser supporters set up the North Staffordshire Campaign against Unemployment last year, with the bulletin Dole Mirror, we demanded an unemployed centre. The local labour movement conference in Stoke last December decided to set up a centre, and we felt we were making progress.

However, when the local trade union bureaucrats found they were in a minority in the Campaign against Unemployment, they went off and set up their own Standing Committee for Unemployed Workers. This body of union officials and invited individuals goes along with the TUC guidelines for centres for the unemployed - guidelines which propose that the centres should be run by committees with a majority of Regional TUC people and local council representatives, rather than unemployed workers.

Structure

Socialist Organiser supporters had argued for a structure where the unemployed could play a full part together with affiliated labour movement delegates. The bureaucrats wanted a two-tier system: officials and full-timers with all the money on top, and the rest of us, who are actually fighting unemployment, down below.

The result has been what

Socialist Organiser supporters predicted. Dole Mirror has been forced to rely on donations from individual union branches and ward parties and its own fund-raising activities.

Meanwhile the Standing Committee, when it actually got round to getting a building for its centre, found a lack of activists to do the decorating. Fortunately for the bureaucracy, the SWP had gone along with the Stand-

ing Committee and were glad to oblige.

The centre is now open - and the bureaucrats are trying to get rid of the SWP! They are horrified that the management committee wants real power to run the centre.

We can still make the unemployed centre into a useful tool in the fight against unemployment, but it will take a fight to ensure that control of the centre rests in the hands of the unemployed.

Time Out: Giving in for utopia

TIME OUT journalists have abandoned their fight against the journal's owner, Tony Elliot, after 14 weeks.

The chapel split decisively when 40 members voted to leave the dispute and build their own little socialist island in a marriage between their strike paper, "Not", and some unspecified city finance.

The 11 who stayed behind are not expected to slug it out with Elliot. They seem happy to negotiate a return to work, which does not include equal pay or a greater share in editorial control, which were the original demands of the strike.

The majority includes all the most radical elements, as well as the Time Out chapel leadership. But whatever they say about working outside the constraints of capitalism, by abandoning the fight against Elliot, they have capitulated in the struggle against the employer for the sake of utopia.

Tony Elliot himself could be seen complaining on TV shortly before the chapel vote that Time Out journalists had always blurred the issue of what kind of publication they were working for. He himself had no doubt it was a capitalist operation.

The NUJ Executive have cut off funds to the 40 and intends to investigate whether dispute money from the union has been used to research the new publication.

A sharp battle can now be expected not just between Elliot and his former employees, but between all the publications which are claiming the vacant crown in this highly profitable field of publishing.

It is doubtful whether good intentions and advice from the New Statesman which has been advising the Time Out strikers is the best recipe to survive.

Rail

SELL-OUT!



by Rob Dawber and Mick Sidaway (NUR Sheffield City).

"It's a sell-out, a cock-up. Management's got all they wanted", said one railworker in Sheffield on hearing the news of the deal that got the rail strike called off.

11% was awarded by the Rail Staffs Tribunal but BR said they would pay 8% plus 3% with productivity strings - i.e. jobs lost and Sunday becoming a normal working day for many workers so as to 'cut' on overtime.

The unions demanded the full payment with no conditions and threatened to strike in support of this.

The deal was a typical sell-out. The agreement was that BR should pay the 11% (though 3% will not be paid till January 1982 - while back dated to August 1981) and the unions agreed to conclude discussion on productivity by October 31.

BR has publicly stated that they don't regard the 3% as payable in January unless agreements are made by that date; though Sid Weighell and Ray Buckton have sold the agreement to

their unions on the grounds that 'conclude' doesn't mean the acceptance of productivity.

The deal was accepted by both ASLEF and NUR Executives with only two voting against on each. And since BR decides whether or

not to pay the 3% extra in January 1982, we've achieved nothing extra.

This sell-out underlines the need for militants in the railways to turn the unions into fighting organisations to properly represent the interests of railworkers.

This means getting rid of the likes of Hissing Sid and Ray Buckton.

We can start by making sure that there are no job losses or worse working conditions and preparing for strike action in support of local resistance.

What the deal means

BY SIGNING a sell-out deal with British Rail, union leaders have opened the way for major attacks on railworkers' conditions.

In 'return' for a pay rise recommended without strings by an official tribunal the union leaders have pledged to reach agreement on major changes.

*'Flexible rostering' will mean that railworkers will face continental shifts, widely differing starting times from one day to the next, and shifts of six or ten hours instead of a standard eight. Sunday will be made a normal working day.

*Drivers' assistants' jobs are to be eliminated, and trains will begin to run without guards.

*Jobs will also be lost through the withdrawal of

all staff from some stations.

*'Negotiations will continue' on other BR proposals. These include measures to effectively break up BR's trade-union negotiating machinery, the LDC. BR wants to "release LDC representatives from the task of scrutinising programmes, thus making them available for train working" - i.e. remove trade union scrutiny of shift organisation.

Already, BR's veto on the official tribunal award is notice that the bosses will respect the negotiating machinery only as long as it is convenient.

*Also among the 'other proposals' is the ending of mileage bonuses - which make up a big part of some railworkers' wages. Train crews' 'physical needs

breaks' will be abolished, so will the present ban on doing more than 1750 miles a week.

Annual leave will be spread over the whole year, and lieu leave cut back. Training periods will be reduced.

The railworkers were willing to fight to defend their jobs and conditions - the leaders well knew that, but decided to avoid a strike which would have threatened the government directly.

Railworkers will now be calling for recall conferences of the rail unions, to bring the leadership to account - and for local District Councils and branches to pledge themselves to resist attacks on conditions by industrial action.

Print

BLACK PERGAMON!

by Patrick Spilling

ROBERT Maxwell, millionaire publisher, has had his most outrageous offer yet slung back in his teeth by NUJ members at Pergamon Press.

Maxwell's first meeting with NUJ leaders came almost six months after he sacked nine NUJ members at his Oxford base for daring to strike in defence of their rights to a wage rise.

His long-awaited offer deserves a special footnote in the history of union-busting employers.

It was: for six members - reinstatement; for three, including two chapel officers - deportation.

The FoC, Jim Boumelha, was offered a transfer to Paris; the deputy FoC and NEC member Simon Collings had a chance of New York or Australia; and Carol Russell, group chapel MoC, was offered Aberdeen on account of her Scottish accent.

Of course none of these offers was anything more than a flippant jibe at the

chapel leadership. The real offer came in Maxwell's alternative - several thousand pounds if they would go away.

Any humour in the offer was savagely outweighed by the fact that NUJ president Harry Conroy promised Maxwell he would recommend it for acceptance.

The chapel stood firm, rejecting the sell-out by nine votes to nil. They stepped up demands for the action to be spread with strikes throughout the British Printing Corporation which Maxwell recently bought and of which he is now chairman, and by blacking all Maxwell printers.

This key demand for blacking would involve NUJ members at the Sunday Times and the Observer taking action to stop the colour magazines. It would also hit the Radio Times, TV Times and a large number of IPC magazines.

Such is the extent of Maxwell's monopoly in colour printing.

The chapel's fight is being hampered by the refusal of key people in the NUJ leadership to fight for the demands and by a high-level spy somewhere in the union keeping Maxwell well informed.

Even as Pergamon members pressed for action, NUJ officials were urging their London colleagues in BPC to settle their own claim with Maxwell by withdrawing it completely and staying out of the fight.

Vincent Hanna - the Newsnight TV reporter - declared that Radio Times members were disciplined enough to obey an instruction. But he and other broadcasting leaders were advising them they would be lemmings to do so.

The National Newspapers Industrial Council went one better, and did not even instruct relevant Fleet Street chapels to meet. That at least has now been overturned, and the Sunday Times and Observer chapels will hold mandatory meetings.

Meanwhile promising reports in favour of blacking have come from several magazine and book-publishing chapels.

Tamely, the NUJ emergency committee decided to wait three weeks before taking a decision on blacking. Meanwhile, industrial councils were asked to "draw the facts of the Pergamon dispute to the attention of their chapels and canvass these chapels on the prospect of escalating the dispute".

It says much for the Pergamon nine that they shrugged off their disappointment and began preparing a new campaign for the blacking to be put into effect.



Robert Maxwell

It also says much for the lack of sharpness on the NUJ left that both Jonathan Hammond and Dave Chapman - who genuinely were trying to help the Pergamon members - went along with the Hanna formula.

It is only by challenging such sham resolutions that the tide can be turned in such disputes.

The Pergamon dispute has become a test for the whole union as well as a challenge to the attacks Maxwell has launched throughout the printing industry.

Blacking and strike action can blow Maxwell apart, but it can only be won if the NUJ leadership is forced to take off the gloves and start fighting for real.

Enter the officials

FULL-TIME officials are trying to take over the BL workers' wage claim, without forming a democratically-elected negotiating committee. BILL PETERS reports.

MILITANCY remains high in BL following the opening shots in BL's 1981/2 wage review which is due for settlement by November 1.

The Princess/Rover build line in the Cowley Body Plant walked out last Friday when management circulated a letter threatening disciplinary action against anyone stopping the track for

any reason other than safety. On Monday morning they walked out again.

On Tuesday a mass meeting in the Body Plant imposed an overtime ban throughout the plant in protest against a drop in the bonus which will severely cut production.

In the Assembly Plant groups of workers struck when management circulated a virulently racist instruction to the guards on the gate.

The strikes are a reflection of the militancy of the working class as a whole reflected in the response of BR workers to the original

strike call by the NUR and ASLEF and the response of civil servants before they were sold out.

But in BL three years of drastic wage cuts and ruthless management has created a level of militancy well in advance of the general level which potentially puts BL workers in the forefront of this year's wage round.

Unfortunately the high level of militancy in itself will not necessarily lead to an all-out strike against the government.

Although the Combine Committee and now the AUEW convenors have

accepted the £20 across the board claim there is still no joint negotiating committee existing in BL to negotiate it.

In the absence of an elected joint negotiating committee, national officials of the eleven unions met last Monday - and ignored the Combine Committee decision, proposing instead a 'substantial increase' claim.

Despite a call by a mass meeting two weeks ago in Cowley for the immediate constitution of a democratic and accountable committee, the national officers are moving towards constituting themselves into a de facto

committee.

This must be opposed vigorously and immediately.

On Friday there is a full meeting of TGWU convenors to consider the wage review. The meeting must back the Cowley membership both in their £20 claim and in their demand that either a joint elected committee is agreed or the TGWU elects its own democratic and accountable committee and demands the right to negotiate with BL independently.

Stewards and workers in each plant should find ways of putting maximum pressure on the TGWU senior stewards' meeting.

Longbridge job cuts

BL IS planning yet more job cuts - this time at Longbridge.

The bosses say 500 engine builders' jobs must go from the Power and Train area - but the real total is likely to be nearer 1,000.

Production of the three engines made at Longbridge has already been cut back by 20% due to falling demand for cars, with "E" series engine production virtually stopped since Maxi production ended at Cowley a few weeks ago.

The company plan to achieve the cut-back through voluntary redundancy and "natural wastage" - a method that they have used repeatedly at Longbridge in recent years, reducing the hourly paid workforce from 18,000 down to 13,500 with minimal resistance and sometimes even with the collaboration of the plant leadership.

This time the CP-dominated works committee are at least going through the motions of opposing the cuts. But instead of attempting to mobilise the member-

ship to fight to defend jobs around the demand for work-sharing on full pay, the Longbridge leadership is, instead meekly requesting a meeting with management to "discuss" the cuts, and bleating about BL's plan to use Volkswagen gearboxes in the new LC10 model - which has nothing to do with these cutbacks!

Longbridge workers, though demoralised by recent events like the collapse of resistance to the Rover SD1 closure, are increasingly unwilling to let jobs go, and increasingly aware that with each cut-back, the work load for those who remain increases.

To defend jobs we must fight for a policy of work-sharing on full pay, restoration of "mutuality" in determining manning levels and work loads, and make sure that the demand for a 35 hour week (part of the Combine Committee's recommended claim for the annual review) is made a priority this year.

JIM DENHAM

LAC leads the fight

FOR THE 1981-2 wage review in BL the Leyland Action Committee took the initiative in pushing for a £20 across the board claim, against the proposals from some convenors for modifications to the bonus scheme to be included in the claim,

or for a smaller claim "to save jobs".

The LAC proposals (based on the resolution from Cowley Assembly) were outlined in a four-page broadsheet distributed in most Midlands plants, and won the day at the BL Com-

bine Committee.

At that meeting, stewards and convenors from plants that the LAC had not been able to cover took bundles of the broadsheet to distribute themselves.

The response on the shop floor has been enthusiastic.

At Longbridge and Cowley workers stuck up the bulletin's front page as a poster. It undoubtedly had a big effect in swaying the Combine Committee and in motivating rank and file BL workers.

But the LAC is still a small group, and the task facing us at BL is a massive one. The bulletin alone cost us £70 to produce.

If we're to keep it going on a regular (hopefully, monthly) basis we need a lot more supporters throughout BL.

The basis for building that support undoubtedly exists. The LAC plans to organise a series of meetings in Oxford, Birmingham, Coventry and Cardiff in the run-up to the November 1 wage review deadline.

Militants in BL who want to fight Edwardes and the sell-out merchants on the union side should contact the LAC for copies of the bulletin and details of meetings and activities.

Leyland Action Committee, c/o 194 Dawlish Road, Birmingham 29.

Leyland ACTION

No.1 August 1981



1981-2 Annual Review:

£20

Across the board!

FT demands 7% cuts

by Clare Russell

FINANCIAL Times bosses want a seven per cent cut in wages, or jobs, or both, by the end of October.

This new ultimatum follows the FT's threat to lock out all its printworkers from September 4 and publish 'by any means necessary' probably using its Frankfurt press.

The FT, part of the huge business empire headed by Lord Cowdray and also including Penguin Books, Lazard Freres bank, Royal Doulton potteries, etc., is shaping up for a showdown with the unions.

The lock-out threat is in response to a strike notice by NGA machine minders demanding a pay rise. And the 7% cut decree is part of the FT's plans to trim 200

from its 1900-strong workforce over the next two years.

A firm stand by the print unions could rapidly torpedo the FT's threats. NUJ journalists should refuse to provide copy for the planned scab edition. NATSOPA members to do clerical work, and SOGAT members to distribute it.

But, although NGA full-time officials are currently supporting their FT members, other unions have done nothing. NATSOPA at the FT has not even called a chapel meeting.

It is clear that if the FT succeeds in beating down the NGA machine minders, more attacks on other FT workers will soon follow. And other Fleet Street bosses will be quick on the trail.

THE Fleet Street bosses got a big boost last week. Reg Brady, NATSOPA FoC at the Sunday Times and one of the best-known trade unionists on Fleet Street, turned his coat and took a job as industrial relations officer for Times Newspapers at £20,000 a year. Story next week.

Hands off Libya!

GRINNING gleefully, US Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger announced on August 19 that the US had shot down two Libyan planes off the coast of Libya.

The US may be wallowing in a slump, its inner cities may be sordid jungles with 35% unemployment and collapsing public services, it may be unable to do anything about Nicaragua or Iran, but it sure can push the Libyan Air Force around.

Reagan had decided on a deliberate challenge to Libya. Before the air clash, Newsweek magazine reported:

"After months of debating how to neutralise Muammar Gaddafi, the Reagan Administration this week will offer its first direct challenge to the Libyan strongman. On instructions from President Reagan, Defence Secretary Caspar Weinberger has ordered the Sixth Fleet to conduct manoeuvres off the Libyan coast in the Gulf of Sidra, which Gaddafi declares to be Libyan territory..."

"US pilots and sailors have orders not to fire at anything but practice targets unless fired upon. Washington officials are also eager to see how Gaddafi will react to what they insist is a coincidence: Egyptian troops will conduct manoeuvres along the Libyan border at the same time".

The Libyan air force - relatively poorly armed and skimpily trained - tried to drive off the Americans. F14 planes (capable not only of evading the Libyan attack but even of flying faster than the missiles fired by the Libyans!) seized the chance to down two Libyan planes.

Oil-rich Libya has become an irritation to Reagan because of its erratic nationalist policies - support for opposition movements in Tunisia, Morocco, etc. invasion of Chad, and high oil-price policy.

The conflict is not absolute: the US controls 15% of Libya's oil industry, US purchases are one-third of Libya's revenue, and Gaddafi has excluded the oil industry from his 'people's committees' scheme. Yet Reagan would dearly like to see Gaddafi overthrown and replaced by a regime like Sadat's in Egypt, solidly committed to furthering US influence in a crucial area.

Above all, Reagan and Weinberger want a show of US power. They want to go back to the days of the early '60s, when the US could arrogantly assert that

missiles in Cuba were a threat to US security. They want to reassert the double standard that would deny Libya any control over massive US forces sailing just 60 miles off its coast, and yet would assert the US's 'right' to be world policeman hundreds of miles beyond its own shores.

They want to make the world - and in the first place the US people - accept that 'right'.

And Reagan and Weinberger have the most deadly military machine in world history to serve their beaming, boneheaded arrogance. They are willing to risk blowing us all to bits for the sake of their drive to dominate 'lesser' nations.

The Libyan people, like millions of other people all across the Third World awakening to a sense of their rights, their power and their dignity, will not accept Reagan's warmongering. Nor will a substantial section of the US people.

And nor should the British labour movement. We should redouble our efforts to get US bases out of Britain, to stop Cruise and Trident, to win unilateral nuclear disarmament, and to get Britain out of NATO.

**Sack
this
racist**

"EVERY black man is to be stopped, especially at night, and his identity document checked... If he cannot produce such a document, keep him at gate, ask his clock number, his workplace and foreman's name... then keep him there till you have rung security office for those particulars to be checked."

Those were the orders issued to BL security officers at the Cowley Assembly plant last week. They were contained in a memorandum dated 18th August, and signed by Ray Coxon, head of security at Cowley and a former Oxford police chief.

When news of the memo reached the shop floor, black workers in a number of areas immediately walked out. But anger is not limited to blacks; white workers too are furious about the memo, and there is strong feeling throughout the workforce that Coxon should be sacked.

In sharp contrast AUEW convenor Doug Hobbs opposed the call for Coxon's sacking and simply bleated about the memo being "bound to cause offence among our coloured workers".

When news of the instruction reached the press, an embarrassed BL "spokesman" said the memo had been withdrawn and an investigation would be held. Later it was reported that Coxon had been warned that he would be sacked if he did anything similar again.

But racism is still rife throughout BL. Michael Edwards himself is a white South African, and BL's treatment of its black workers in South Africa recently led to a major strike there.

At Longbridge, only a tiny minority of black workers can get onto 'direct' (better paid) jobs, while the majority of 'indirect' (badly paid and dirty) jobs are black. And to transfer from an 'indirect' to a 'direct' job, workers have to pass an insulting 'progression' test.

Racist abuse from managers and supervision is commonplace in every plant, and usually black workers feel they've no choice but to accept it.

Senior stewards in the plants rarely take a strong stand against racism, and at Longbridge the works committee has actually supported the 'progression' test.

But times are changing. Black workers are fighting back, and the Cowley walk-outs are a warning to racists throughout BL.

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SACKED 12,000 NEED SUPPORT

THE 12,000 striking US air-traffic controllers stay sacked; their union, PATCO, is being de-certified as a negotiating body; seven PATCO leaders have been indicted; the Justice Department is bringing criminal charges in 21 cities for the "crime" of striking.

But still 75% of scheduled flights continue, and Reagan gloats over his triumph: "There is no strike, what they did was terminate their own employment by quitting."

Only international solidarity can win this strike. But sympathetic action by Canadian controllers (who control the "Gander

Oceanic" quadrant of the international air traffic system) and the Portuguese controllers (who operate the "Santa Maria Oceanic" quadrant) lasted only 48 hours each.

J. Lynn Helms, chief of the US Federal Aviation Administration admitted, "if both Santa Maria and Gander went down, we would have major difficulties."

Elsewhere there has been no solidarity at all. In Britain CPUSA and IPCS controllers continue to guide flights to and from America, and TUC-affiliated BALPA members continue to pilot the planes.

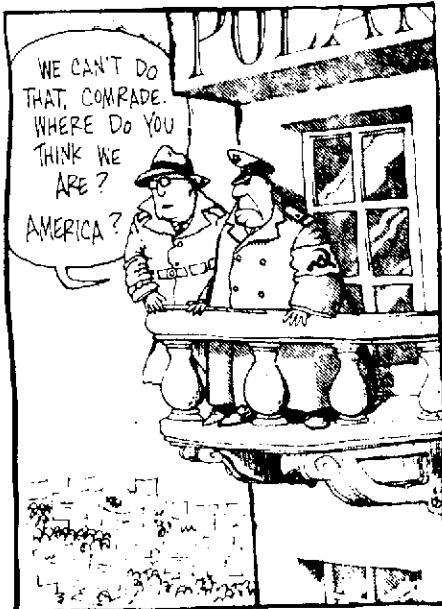
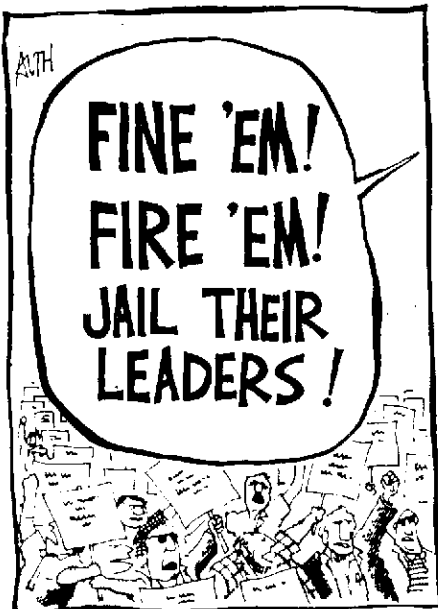
The International Federation of Air Traffic

controllers meeting in Amsterdam on Sunday 23 August, drew up plans for international action to force Reagan to the negotiating table.

But these plans have been kept secret because "it was felt that President Reagan would never react favourably to a public threat or ultimatum".

Trade unionists in Britain must not sit back and wait for the IFATLA's secretive plans to unfold: members of CPUSA, IPCS and BALPA must insist that the British labour movement defends its American brothers and sisters.

*Black all US flights!



LEE JEANS SCOTTS BLACK SNIPE!

ON MONDAY August 24 Vanity Fair Corporation finally announced that they were selling off the occupied Lee Jeans factory near Gourrock.

But the new buyer is not (as widely expected) Nigel Wright of 'Dickie Dirts'.

The factory's new owner is Robert Charters, who until only a few months ago was Vanity Fair's director of operations for Britain and Northern Ireland.

Charters and his consortium are setting up a new company called Inver Jeans, producing denim jeans and skirts. Wright will not have any share of ownership in the factory, but has guaranteed an order for 10,000 pairs of jeans a week.

Shop stewards' convenor Helen Monaghan commented "It has been a long hard fight and sometimes we have despaired - but now it is all worth it".

And Jimmy Milne, the do-nothing general secretary of the STUC, hypocritically joined in the celebrations, "I think Helen Monaghan and her colleagues are to be commended on the stand they took. Time has proved them right".

Production at the factory is expected to resume at the end of September, and all members of the sit-in have been promised a job with the factory's new owner.

Full report in next week's Socialist Organiser.

STAN CROOKE

by Carol Hobbs

THE campaign to stop £3 million orders still in the Laurence Scotts factory, Manchester, from leaving will continue from outside on the pavement. 500 people were present and local Labour MP Charles Morris spoke, at a mass demonstration outside the plant on Sunday 23 August.

After the workers sitting in to save jobs were evicted on 18 August the stewards issued a statement to the press saying "The manner in which the factory was repossessed will make the workers even more determined to pursue their fight from the streets outside."

Armed with sledgehammers, axes and pickhandles, a force of fifty thugs smashed their way into the factory in the early hours.

Shop steward Phil Penning said:

"At about a quarter to three there was suddenly one almighty rumpus. We heard windows being smashed and

we knew the bailiffs were getting in through the jib and back room drawing office.

"They approached the people on the sit in who were absolutely terrified. It was obvious that if we did not get off the site they would do something about it."

"Suddenly the wall collapsed into the canteen and we saw what looked like 50 men with pickaxe handles, axes and sledgehammers.

"They didn't actually say anything - but what's the use of carrying these things if you're not going to use them?"

The national campaign of support involving over 30 Labour MPs has got into full swing - but unfortunately the need to concentrate resources at home has resulted in the lifting of the picketing of Snipe's Doncaster factory.

The real set-back to the success of the occupation came not from lack of will-power of the members or Snipe's tactical brilliance -

but quite simply the withdrawal of official support by the AUEW executive.

The local officials of the union have been arguing for a recall of the AUEW National Committee where it would be expected the occupation would have been re-endorsed and the Executive's decision overturned.

Rule

However, when Duffy was confronted with the fact that he was "out of rule" and that it is up to the AUEW District concerned to decide on the acceptability of any return-to-work formula he replied by saying "You are absolutely right - but there's nothing you can do about it."

So what can be done? Every AUEW branch in the country has been circulated with the stewards' case for continuing official backing. They should also be asked to pass resolutions demanding an emergency National Committee.

But as for the workers in Manchester - the struggle goes on.

PHOTO: JOHN SMITH (JFL)



The sit-in has ended - but the fight continues on the picket lines

TONY BENN says: 'The fight for jobs by workers at Laurence Scotts Electromotors has given hope to millions. I hope the entire British labour and trade union movement will support this campaign'. And PETER HAIN of the Labour Coordinating Committee told the workers: 'Your occupation and courageous stand has shown the way for many other workers in the fight to save their jobs. I can only deplore the total withdrawal of support by the Executive of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions against the clearly expressed democratic wishes of the membership at Laurence Scotts.'

'I would urge every trade unionist to ignore that decision and to give as much practical support as possible to the struggle. Obviously it will now be especially important for all local branches of the Labour Party and the trade unions to organise financial support for Scotts'.

The money is needed c/o George Fryer, 20 Round Croft, Romilly, Cheshire.