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20p

Tory threat to St Mary's

AS WE go to press, District Management have called a meeting for this afternoon (Wednesday) to inform workers at St Mary's Hospital of Health Minister Vaughn's decision to close the casualty ward.

The decision, announced yesterday, would result between 100 and 120 beds in the 300 bed hospital being lost. The small rheumatology unit is to be retained, it is believed as a result of publicity given to the unit which was also threatened with closure.

A mass meeting of the workforce who are already occupying the hospital against the threat of closure, will take place later this week.

See page 13 — workers plan day of action.

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LABOUR

RANKS VOTE

BENN

by Martin Thomas

ANY democratic choice by labour movement activists would make Tony Benn deputy leader of the Labour Party.

He has 226 nominations from constituency Labour Parties, as against 31 for the choice of the entire Fleet Street press, Denis Healey, and eight for the wretched John Silkin. He also has 12 union nominations (Healey has nine, and Silkin none).

But the way the vote goes will depend on the unions, and specially on the biggest union, the TGWU.

The political colour of TGWU branches is not very different from that of local Labour Parties.

Majority

Like the Labour Parties, those branches must have a majority who want a leadership in

the movement committed to carrying out conference policies rather than flouting them.

Probably the TGWU's Biennial Delegate Conference this June would have reflected that. And so the platform used every trick available to stop a vote.

Now it seems that the top officials want to cast the TGWU's vote for John Silkin — the one-man 'stop Benn' campaign who tries to be for Healey and Benn what the SDP is for the Tories and Labour. And when Silkin is eliminated, they probably want to abstain.

No support

In other words, they are pushing a policy that would get practically no support among TGWU activists. It would not even get support in an opinion poll of all TGWU members — so much for the bureaucrats' standard excuse that they "represent" the silent majority as against the "unrepresentative" activists!

Some unions have decided more democratically. But Healey's chances will depend crucially on block votes decided by top union officials.

Lobbies

Resolutions, lobbies and protests inside the relevant unions can apply enough pressure to swing

the decision at Labour Party conference. But that can only be the start of a fight for thorough union democracy.

Democracy

The opening-up of the Labour Party by the recent democratic reforms is inseparable from union democracy. The entrenched, unaccountable elites in Parliament and in the union offices have a common interest and a common outlook.

Formally, TGWU acting general secretary Alex Kitson is closer to his ideas to the average union activist than to Denis Healey — formally he supports unilateral nuclear disarmament and opposes incomes policy.

Acted

But when the union and Labour activists start demanding a real say — start demanding that the formal policies should be acted on, and leaders unwilling to act on them should be replaced — then Healey and Kitson are thick as thieves.

Win

In the month between now and Labour conference, we need a drive to swing the crucial unions. And beyond that we need a fight to win real democracy in the unions, starting with regular election and right of recall over all officials.



FIGHTING CUTS IN LOTHIAN

On September 1st, Lothian Labour Council completed its collapse before the Tories by voting for further cuts — making a total of £24 million.

The panic freeze on spending decided at the last council meeting was ended, but all the protests and fine words about 'no cuts' are gone forever. The councillors protest that defying the Tories would mean breaking the law — as if they didn't know that all along.

JIMMY BURNETT is one of the seven councillors who opposed cuts. He spoke to FIONA MENZIES and DAVE MILLIKEN.

Can you tell us what you think the Labour Group position will be at Tuesday's council meeting? (Sept. 1)

It's fairly obvious the Labour Group will, in cooperation with the trade union leadership, put forward another round of cuts midway between £5 and £10 million, over and above the £15 million already cut, with a view to approaching the Secretary of State for a compromise.

Chaos

In my opinion they will also lift the moratorium which has caused chaos in the Region and the services. And they will be reissuing the temporary contracts to the 900 teachers.

Fight

I would assume the seven who voted against cuts at the last council meeting would continue our policy of no cuts and calling on the trade union movement to mobilise to fight against these cuts.

Will you vote for the Labour Group cuts as 'the lesser of two evils'?

The difference between the Labour Group and Tory proposals will be £5 to £6 million. That might not appear much, but between

now and the end of the year it would mean 3,000 redundancies. Over and above 1500 non-filling of vacancies it would involve doubling home help charges, increasing by 250% meals on wheels charges, closure of schools, closure of some old folks' homes, and the closure of half a dozen social work area offices.

Ability

I wouldn't underestimate the ability of working class people to understand the position of pragmatic realism, when it is explained why we attempted to mobilise support within the Labour Group and unions for the no-cuts position; how we've failed; how we have nevertheless, taken the principled position of breaking the Group Whip and publicly stating why we believe the authority should not make cuts; publicly stating what that will mean; and then at the end of the day, the necessity of defending somewhere between £5 and £10 million of public services by nevertheless voting for the lower amount of cuts.

Truncheon

If we were living in the 1920s, when there were tremendous layers of working class people ready

to take to the streets at the drop of a truncheon, so to speak, then I think we would be much less perturbed about abstaining.

Our problem, at the moment, is, like it or lump it, we are in the position of taking decisions which affect people's lives and their services, and while there appears no mass movement to defend these services then we feel it would be grossly irresponsible simply by our abstention to allow bigger cuts to happen.

There were 30,000 out on strike on June 30, and 20,000 of them prepared to go out on the streets. How has it come about that people who were prepared to show that level of fight have done virtually nothing since?

There was a lot of effort put into the 30th.

It was an exercise that hasn't taken place in local government politics for 20, 30 or even 40 years. Labour councillors were running round half a dozen meetings a day and addressing mass meetings of workers, urging them to come out on the streets and defend not only jobs but services, and telling them that the only real protection for jobs and services lay in mass industrial action.

All-out

A one-day strike by no means suggests that people are prepared to take all-out action. Fairly soon after that, at a large NALGO meeting, the motion for all-out industrial action on the first withdrawal of the Rate Support Grant failed by quite a substantial margin, and the vote for industrial action when the first redundancy was announced was passed by no means a huge majority.

But there's no doubt that the gains that were made up to June 30 were not built on. And I suppose all of us must bear responsibility for that to varying degrees.

I think, however, that the office bearers of the local

union branches must bear the brunt of that responsibility.

You said earlier you'd vote for Labour Group cuts as opposed to the Tory proposals. What effect do you think the Labour Group's position has had on the unions?

Even before the £15 million cuts, I think the trade union leadership were certainly of the opinion that cuts were inevitable. I think however the imposition of these £15 million cuts has taken us down a particular path which seems to me to go inevitably towards further cuts.

Elections

With the RSG being reduced next year, cash guidelines being tightened and elections coming up, you could well find, with non-filling of vacancies next year, within two years we'll lose 3-3,500 staff, which will take us down to the staffing level which we were at 3-4 years ago. And all the gains will have gone.

So why vote for the lesser evil?

People are already pointing the finger at the seven of us for having caused supposed chaos at the last council meeting — people such as John Lambie, Alistair Macrae, Alistair McQueen, Terry Weir, and the whole gamut of the trade union leadership locally.

Blamed

If we did not support the lesser evil then the seven Labour councillors who abstained would be blamed by the trade union movement, via its leadership, for having sent 5,000 down the road and having decimated services.

I'm not at all convinced that it would be desirable to be seen for principle's sake to have allowed that to happen.

But you recognise that the working class need some kind of leadership, and that Labour councillors could give that leadership even though the trade union leaders play a reactionary role.

Well, I think that the leadership can continue to be provided by those members of the Labour Group. It does make it harder to give leadership when you have voted in favour of cuts, albeit to save £10 million or £5 million worth of services.

Apathy

Nevertheless, I believe it's a position which working class people can understand.

It's a question of judgement about the political and economic situation, and I would describe the situation at the moment as one of resigned apathy.

The Regional Labour Party policy is for no cuts. 18 councillors voted against that position. Do you think that people who are prepared to say at panel interviews that they will follow RLP policy, then change their minds and follow their individual policy



Next step: reorganise the Action Committee

by Joe Baxter

NALGO Regional and Branch officials have drawn out the full absurd conclusions of the political path down which they and the majority of the trade union and labour movement leadership have led the working class of Lothian.

At a branch meeting on Thursday 27 August the officials proposed and won a resolution which calls on the officials to participate in discussions with the Region Labour Group over which cuts should be made — and also reminds NALGO members that national policy is for no cover for unfilled vacancies.

Needless to say, the cuts being negotiated will result in unfilled vacancies.

The Labour Group have managed to get themselves in an even bigger mess, too. By the time Socialist Organiser reaches its readers the cuts will total around £25 million, possibly more, since

the Secretary of State George Younger is unlikely to settle for less than £30 million.

According to the Region's Chief Executive, Robert Tegg, "Failure to achieve the target must result in a continuation of the moratorium on expenditure."

He is therefore recommending cuts of £30 million.

His proposal includes increasing bus fares, and increasing charges for home helps, meals on wheels and school dinners.

Against

And the £30 million cuts could even go through with the help of seven councillors who previously voted against any cuts.

The response in the Labour Party is still gathering momentum, with West Edinburgh CLP calling for disciplinary action

against the councillors who voted for the last round of cuts.

But certain sections of the left are heading off the anger, arguing that the matter of disciplinary action should be let go. For them the priority is to get a good budget... next year.

What we need now is to reorganise the Regional Action Committee to include on it tenants and community groups willing to fight the cuts. Shop stewards committees should be invited to send delegates on the basis of planning to fight the cuts even if this means they have to come along unofficially.

And an effort should be made to involve the unofficial cuts campaigns which are springing up.

The Labour Party has to show that it is not represented by councillors who are willing to make cuts and who play with the hope and fears of the working class in Lothian.

whatever that may be, have any right to remain on the Regional Labour Party's list of approved candidates?

We were informed that a "no cuts" position would be illegal. So it seems to me that to suggest that the councillors should be removed from the panel would be flying in the face of conference policy, which has always said that Labour councillors should not be asked to break the law.

Unless the Labour Party nationally agrees that councillors should be mandated to break the law, then there would seem to me to be very little argument locally for removing councillors who are only carrying out national policy.

Removed

If 18 members were removed from the panel, then it would just be a six week job of appealing to the National Executive and being reinstated. Whether or

not that's a valuable exercise is a matter for debate.

If that sounds a bit weak and reformist, then I don't think it is, it's a matter of wondering how useful it is to throw folk off the panel when they're just going to be reinstated again.

Lessons

English councils are going to find themselves in almost exactly the same position, what would you suggest are the lessons to be drawn from Lothian Region for them?

They have a stronger initial position than we were in.

They've just had a round of elections and many stood on a platform of massive expansion of public services.

Without going into detail on the old rates rise question they also stood on a policy of supplementary rates rises and received a massive mandate for that in advance.

So the central government will find it hard to

justify moving in under the guise of protecting rate-payers.

But nevertheless there will be an attempt to restrict public expenditure via legal means. The lesson that can be learned from up here is that links have to be built with the public service unions at grass roots level and the industrial wing of the trade union movement. An understanding has to be developed among industrial workers of the value of public services and they have to realise that unless they're prepared to give more than token paper support to the defence of these services, they will be nibbled away or chopped to death.

Organise

Labour councillors should now be encouraging the public sector unions to organise workplace meetings, getting speakers at trades councils and going around branches of industrial unions and public service unions.

Coventry's farce

LAST Thursday, 27 August, Coventry Council carried out its 'referendum'. The choice that was put before the electorate was whether the council should increase rates or make public spending cuts worth £2.2 million.

From the outset, the Labour council made it clear that it would not be bound by the verdict.

Some cuts were already being implemented before the referendum.

It was obviously just an expensive way (costing £90,000) to legitimise the council's decision to cut services.

Flouting local Labour Party policy, which is to oppose all cuts and rate rises, these Labour Tories have only demonstrated their desire to follow Heseltine's directives to the hilt.

The exercise turned out to be a total farce. There was only a 25% turnout, and the Labour leaders announced that despite the outcome of the referendum (88% in favour of cuts), rate rises were inevitable.

Choice

Local bosses had campaigned to get workers to vote against rate rises. Jaguar management sent out a circular to all its workers saying "The choice is simple. If you vote for an increase you could well be voting yourself or a colleague out of a job."

"Vote no and urge your friends and neighbours to do the same."

An urgent and principled fight within the public sector unions and the Labour Party is of paramount importance.

The three main public sector unions strongly opposed the referendum and NUPE has threatened industrial action.

Only joint union action, prepared for all out strikes and occupations to defend jobs, can protect working class living standards and expose the role of these Labour misleaders.

The fight must also be taken up in the Labour Party to kick out those leaders not prepared to fight the government policies.

The Coventry Labour Left actively campaigned for a boycott of the referendum. It must now mount a campaign against all cuts and rate rises and support and help coordinate industrial action within the labour movement as a whole.

Pyushi Kotecha

Socialist Organiser EDITORIAL

Breaking the consensus

"ALMOST every policy change has been met with objections by senior officers, a waving of standing orders and then the threat of the district auditor. It's even against standing orders to raise the CND flag above County Hall on Hiroshima Day."

Labour GLC leader Ken Livingstone faces the passive resistance of the County Hall top brass, as documented in the New Statesman. He faces an outcry from the Tory press, which started before his election and has grown louder ever since.

He faces a special campaign by London's evening paper, the New Standard. He faces right wing members of the GLC Labour Group, like Andrew McIntosh, feeding tales to the press about the Labour Group ousting Livingstone.

And now he even faces talk of prosecution. He gave an interview to a freelance journalist for the British Forces Broadcasting Service, in which he said British troops should be got out of Ireland. Now the BFBS is taking legal advice on whether Livingstone's statements were 'seditious' under the Incitement to Disaffection Act, 1934.

Socialist Organiser had differences with Ken Livingstone over the tube workers' pay dispute, and we have differences with him over the use of rate rises to get round cuts. But on the issues the press denounces him for, he is dead right.

It is an index of the strength of conservative prejudice — and of the cowardice of nearly all Labour leaders — that Livingstone gets pilloried as practically the only well-known public figure in

Britain willing to break the conservative consensus, or the silence, on many issues.

Many Labour leaders would privately support gay rights. Practically none would publicly defend discrimination. The National Executive Committee has published a document supporting gay rights. But the leaders keep a discreet silence.

Apart from gay rights, Livingstone has spoken out on the Royal Wedding. One or two MPs — Dennis Skinner, Willie Hamilton — did the same. All the rest are either ardent monarchists or keep their views to themselves.

Livingstone has spoken out against police brutality — doing no more than voicing the policies of the London Labour Party. Official Labour and TUC policy is to disband the SPG. But how many Labour front-benchers were vocally campaigning for that during the recent riots?

On Ireland, Livingstone spoke for a view represented by some 30 resolutions to this year's Labour Party conference. "I think there would be no greater move for peace than if the British Forces just refused to carry on carrying out the role that they have got there, and just packed up and went."

And on Ireland, too, he is dead right. With all the airs of someone defending a great principle, Thatcher condemns one hunger striker to death after another. Yet there is no principle, but only the squalid needs of 'keeping face' and keeping the Protestant bigots sweet.

Special courts, special laws, and special interro-

gation centres all testify to the fact that the Republicans in the H-Blocks are prisoners-of-war. The Tories gave them special status in 1972 — and indeed there are still 'special category' prisoners in Long Kesh to this day.

Likewise, with all the airs of defending great principles, British governments both Labour and Tory have prescribed repression and more repression as the solution for Northern Ireland. From time to time, some feeble political manoeuvre is tried — but the hard-core of the policy is always the effort to beat down the Catholic community.

And here too, the 'principles' of the official consensus have been thought up to justify policies based on sordid material and political interests.

Northern Ireland was never a nation. After centuries of trying to beat down Ireland's struggle for freedom, the British ruling class helped rouse the Protestants of North-east Ireland against the Catholic majority, and then round that rearguard constructed a new state and a new redoubt for British imperialism, crudely chopped out of Ireland's territory.

For fifty years after the Partition of 1920, the sectarian statelet divided the Irish working class, imprisoned the Catholic community of the North as an oppressed minority, and served as the framework for cementing a pro-Tory coalition of the Protestant population.

In the late '60s, the Catholics began to demand civil rights. They protested peacefully and met

brutal repression. The British Army went in to 'hold the ring'. And that was the cause and the origin of the armed struggle.

For nearly ten years now, Britain has been unable to find any way to keep the Northern Ireland state functioning except military occupation and direct rule from Westminster. There is no future along that road, except the continuation of the brutal and brutalising war to beat down the Catholics. And the Catholics are not willing to be beaten down.

Britain should stop propping up the Northern Ireland state. That is the first step to any solution.

Certainly, the Protestants have rights that should be defended. But the 'right' to maintain a sectarian state, oppressing a 35% Catholic minority, and propped up by an army of occupation, is not one of those.

Socialists argue for uniting Protestant and Catholic on the basis of a socialist, working class struggle, aimed against the Green Tories of the South as well as the British and the Northern state. But even short of that, a united, independent Ireland would be a framework making it possible to cut away the sectarian conflict of communities. The struggle for a united, independent Ireland is a just and progressive struggle.

Much more than 'keeping the peace', the British Army is maintaining the war in Northern Ireland. Ken Livingstone deserves every support for stating this truth.

PHOTO: J.M.B. HARRIS



SIX MONTHS FOR THROWING STONES !

THE REAL face of Tory justice was shown last week in Leicester when a 19 year old youth appeared in court charged with threatening behaviour and criminal damage (smashing windows).

The police (probably using their "positive" methods) managed to get a confession out of him.

When he got to court it turned out that he had been out all night well away from the 'scene of the crime' and was innocent.

Obviously he had been intimidated into admitting to something he had not done but unlike many other youth in that position he had a sound alibi that the police couldn't contend.

In this position you would expect the police to be apologetic and argue that this was the 'course of justice', etc.

But just as the police have convicted the obviously innocent youth in the past they were determined not to look like they were in the wrong. They said they were considering charging the youth with wasting police time but had decided that

the 36 hours he had spent in custody was punishment enough.

This shows the real role of the police in the riots and that they are determined to make the youth guilty and not them.

It also goes to show that trying to make deals with the police is no answer.

Only independent, labour movement action, exposing what really happened in the riots and why they happened and defending all the youth with the demand that all charges be dropped, will be effective.

Last weekend, the Steering Committee of the National Left Wing Youth Movement heard reports of what had been happening to youth arrested in the riots from all over the country.

In Liverpool the Liverpool 8 Defence Committee is continuing to come under attack from the police. They are claiming that the Defence Committee is run by a bunch of criminals.

In Wallasey, a 17 year old youth was sent down for six months for throwing stones and a 46 year old man was given 40 days for

assault.

Many more jail sentences are expected. In Bradford 12 Asian youth have been singled out for exceptional treatment and face charges of conspiracy to make petrol bombs.

All except one have been refused bail. They face possible maximum sentences of life imprisonment.

Round the country, in Manchester, Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Coventry, the story is the same. No matter what the youths' story is, they are guilty if they were on the streets during a riot.

Mysteriously

But you'd never know any of this from the daily papers. The 3,000 youth arrested during the riots have mysteriously disappeared.

And we've heard less and less about the riots from the Labour and trade union leaders as the weeks go by not that we heard much from them at the time.

The Labour and trade union movement must say clearly whose side it is on — the side of the youth against the police.

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. We have to win these youth to the ranks of the labour movement. If we don't — many could end up demoralised, desperate or dead like Sean Grant and Graeme Rathbone.

We need a national campaign of labour movement meetings, pickets and leaflets showing we're on the side of the youth.

Get your Constituency Labour Party or trade union branch to affiliate to and work with the local defence committee. Set one up if there isn't one already.

Collect information on what's happening in the courts (no one else will).

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

Tories gave them no jobs, Labour gave them no hope

LAST WEEK, unemployment figures were officially cut by two.

Graeme Rathbone and Sean Grant from Widnes are not on the dole any more because they are dead. The youths, aged 18 and 19, stole a car, fixed a hose-pipe to its exhaust and sat together waiting to die from carbon monoxide poisoning.

The note they left for their parents said "What have we got to live for now there is no work for anyone?"

The coroner, John Hilbert, refused to duck the implications. "It is not for me to get into a political discussion," he said. "But this is a clear result of the economic situation in this country."

"It looks to me as if we are going to get more cases like this. These two boys had the courage to take their own lives. It is not an easy thing to do but they felt the world didn't hold a future for them."

Both were out of work.

by Patrick Spilling

Both complained of police harassment. Both faced court cases for "criminal damage" — the serious crime of spraying their names on a public wall.

A friend told the Daily Mirror "I am not saying they were saints. They were just typical. That's all."

There are dangers in drawing general lessons from particular cases.

But if it was Thatcher and the Tories who provided the material oppression on these two young men, then it was the Labour leadership and the TUC who provided the despair itself.

These youth could have been soldiers in the class battle against Thatcher and her system. They could have been filled with the hope that comes to those who are fighting to change the system.

But what hope did they have? Where could they go to fight? What role can unemployed youth play when the only strategy of the official leaders of the labour movement is to call on Thatcher to have a heart.

The coroner is not typical of his breed. For his outspoken comments he came under sharp attack.

The youths' former headmaster was dragged onto television to speculate on less worthy motives for their deaths. There were wild accusations that the parents faked the suicide note.

The police joined in the smear campaign. One officer said "They were well known in the area as layabouts. There was constant trouble with these two."

But nothing can alter the fact that Graeme and Sean are martyrs to a barbaric system and to those who will not lead a fight to overthrow it.

Ban weakens anti-Nazi demo

by Chris Donnison

A RATHER poorly organised and small group of Anti Nazi League supporters opposed the fascists in Fulham last Sunday when the National Front held a rally there. (It was a rally rather than a march because of the 28 day Home Office ban on marches).

Prior to the confrontation, about 200 of us gathered in Fel Brook Common for the ANL rally to begin. After 90 minutes it was announced that the Front had been sighted and several brief speeches were then made calling for an end to racist legislation and support of those arrested in the riots. Socialist Organiser supporter Richard Laria called for the rebuilding of the ANL to its previous strength.

Following stewards, we then split up into groups in search of the Front, threading our way through residen-

tial streets with SPG vans at every corner while a police helicopter circled overhead.

We finally came upon them herded into Jordan Place, behind two rows of police with only their banner 'Free Speech for White Racists' showing. The ANL crowded onto the pavement opposite and hurled a continual barrage of anti-Front slogans at the fascists for well over an hour until the Nazi meeting broke up and both groups dispersed.

Police

It was clear that massive police presence — it was claimed they outnumbered demonstrators by three to one — and the banning of the march itself made the whole event relatively low key.

However, blanket bans on marches backed up by armies of police are obviously not a solution to the problem of fascism on the

streets, and a complete reshaping of ANL strategy is required, involving a permanent link-up with black self defence groups, if the organisation is to be effective and credible.

At the end of the demo the police, in their infamous 'cleaning up' operations, arrested 100 demonstrators, including three Socialist Organiser supporters who told us:

"We were told that the fascists were coming and decided to get out of the way."

"A minute later we were arrested with others, including some fascists, and in custody overnight. The next morning we appeared in court and were charged with 'threatening behaviour'."

The ANL is a money for the time being arrested. Don't get sent to ANL. P.O. Box London SW1.

Black workers unite against police attacks

REPRESSION is an every day reality in South Africa. But over the last weeks, there has been a significant escalation of state attacks on sections of the workers' movement. A central part of this has been the ongoing series of attacks by police on workers squatting in the Cape Town area.

According to the crude logic of the apartheid government of the South African ruling class, African workers who are not useful to profits must be kicked out of the urban areas - to battle against starvation at no cost to the state in the bantustans.

The threat of explosions of anger in the urban areas by millions of unemployed workers is defused - by banishing those workers to the rural areas. The costs of providing any social services for those workers are removed - by dumping them without any social services in the bantustans.

The problem of housing expenditure is solved by the state - by a conscious policy of creating a housing shortage, and then banishing those without housing.

Stooges

The bantustans are concentration camps policed by stooges who compete in brutality to prove how well they have learnt from their masters in the South African government.

Inside the towns the workers are enclosed in heavily policed townships, dragged down by terrible poverty and chained by repressive laws, courts, officials and armed police.

This is the system through which the profiteering of capital in South Africa is protected and promoted. But it is being hit at every turn by a growing movement of resistance spearheaded by black workers.

Strikes have spread from one factory to the next, through the mines, from one part of the country to the other.

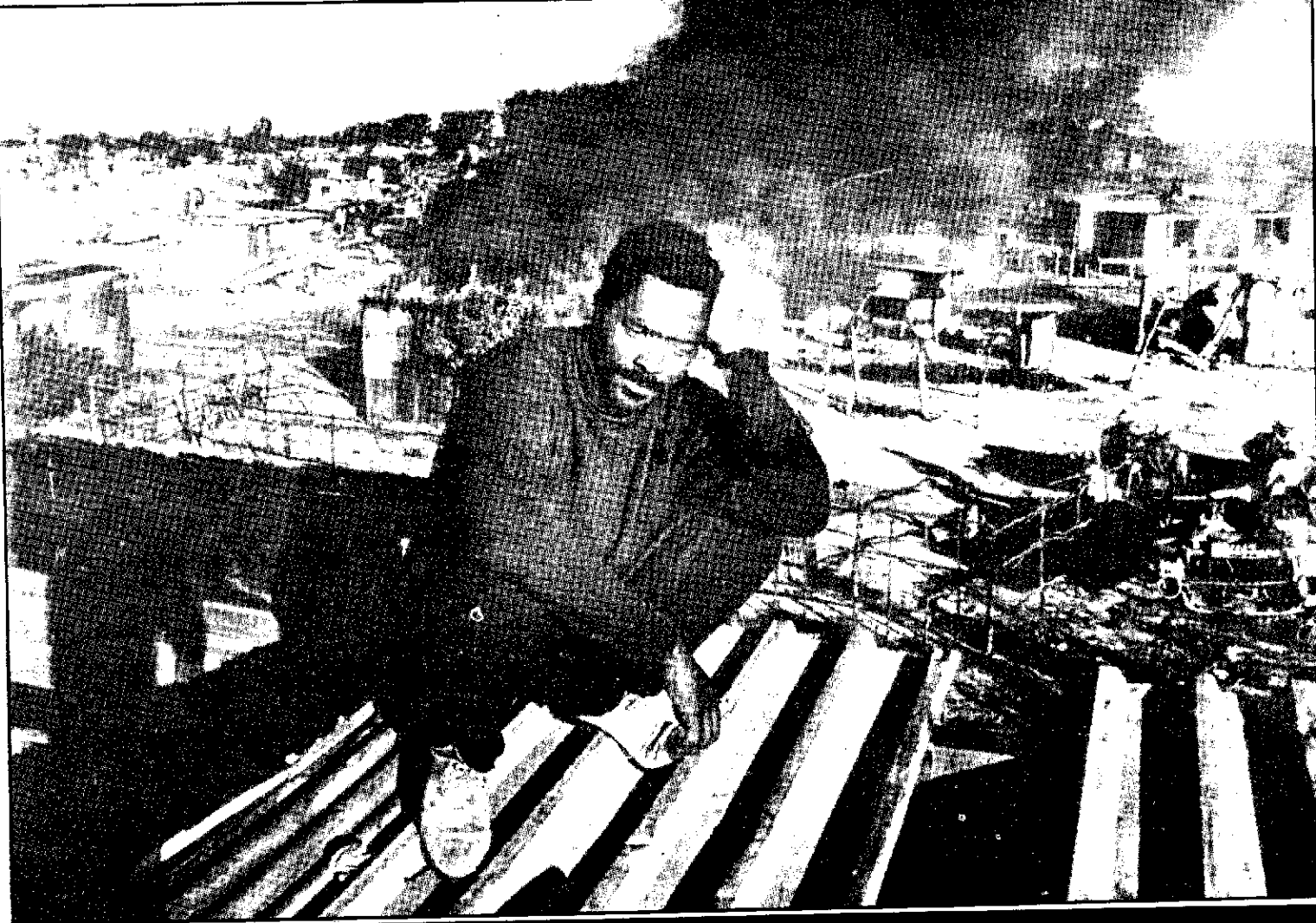
There is an unparalleled growth in workers' organisations. The militancy and confidence of the black working class are growing as workers find in struggle after struggle that despite the repression, whatever the law, they can use their class strength to organise, to mobilise and to force concessions against the class enemy.

The ruling class is weakened by its capitalist crisis, and as the boom based on the high price of gold disappears, it is being forced to look for ways of making workers pay the costs of the crisis. Inflation is soaring - currently at least 15%, with the basic essentials on which workers rely going up by much more: food by well over 25%, rents in some regions by the same, transport set for a 35% rise.

Widespread

All of this is fuelling the anger and militancy of workers. The demand for a genuine living wage is becoming more and more widespread. Often this means a doubling, tripling, even quadrupling of existing wages - a demand which capitalism can never concede.

Faced with the growing strength and level of workers action, forced to attack workers to maintain their profits, the capitalists have no option but to lash out at the working class. They are



But they don't just sit there thinking

hesitant, divided and confused about how to do it.

But to defend their profits, there is no other course open to them - the strength of the working class must be broken.

The current attacks on squatters in the Cape Town area represent a conscious effort by the bosses' apartheid government to isolate and smash what they regard as a more vulnerable section of the working class.

There are three aspects to this - firstly to demonstrate the might and determination of the state to intimidate all workers; secondly, to weaken the workers' movement as preparation for attacking stronger sections; thirdly, to discipline the working class and take back gains won by workers over the last period.

Crossroads

In Cape Town this means

above all to attack the gains made in the Crossroads struggle.

In 1979, massive united resistance from over 20,000 squatters became a national focal point of workers' struggle. Faced with determined resistance, and fearing the mass response which a state attack could provoke, the government was forced to make major concessions on two crucial issues - provision of housing and the Pass Laws.

Intensified

But in the current deepened conflict, the victories of yesterday are no longer strong enough to win the victories of today. Over the last year, attempts by the government to drive out squatters have intensified.

A prelude to the current attacks was armed state action against a workers' occupation of a hostel. Although the occupation

was broken, the efforts by the government to drive these workers into the bantustans have been repeatedly defied.

After arrests, crippling fines, and banishment at gunpoint, these workers, mainly women, have repeatedly returned to the urban area.

Solidarity

And the struggle is drawing massive solidarity from workers with some legal rights in the towns. A support committee based on trade unions, community organisations, women's and youth organisations, has been organised.

Through supportive strike action, these feelings of solidarity could be mobilised into class action which would massively strengthen the squatters' resistance.

The squatters have repeatedly defied the efforts of the police to crush them.

Mass mobilisations have confronted police. Workers in nearby communities have helped them to evade arrest.

There have been protest marches, massing in demonstrations outside the courts. And arrested workers have defied their banishment by returning immediately.

All of this shows a willingness and ability to defy which exposes as a complete lie the picture of passivity and hymn-singing acquiescence portrayed by the liberals.

In fact, it is the liberals and the big capitalists who at every point have tried to convince workers of their defencelessness. In doing this, they try to turn workers away from the escalation and broadening of class action necessary for victory.

The big capitalists and their liberal mouthpieces complain about the harshness of some government actions, not because of concern for the victims, but

because of fear of the anger and escalation of struggle which such actions could provoke.

They, and some of the imperialist governments, whine and bleat about the brutality of their apartheid government. But no capitalist whines at the profits of this system of cheap labour.

Repression

And it is only through vicious repression and the system of migrant labour that the massive exploitation of black workers - and therefore the massive profits for the capitalists - is possible.

The class which lives off and grows rich from the exploitation of workers can never be the real ally of the black workers in South Africa. It is only the working class in Britain and internationally which can ever be relied on for support.

JIM FARNHAM

Poland:
workers
demand
access
to media

by Tony Richardson

FOLLOWING on the two day strike of print workers aimed at the growing attacks on Solidarity, the union has now taken up the question of the reporting of its forthcoming Congress.

The technique of the bureaucracy has been to try to win over the Solidarity leadership, but also to prepare for any other eventuality by putting out a stream of 'anti-wrecker' propaganda aimed at the union.

It is to counter this latter method that the union leadership has been forced to threaten a national black-out of the press, television and radio.

This is a further important development towards what would be a part of a transitional programme for the political revolution in Poland, i.e. workers' control of the media.

It's not seen this way by the Solidarity leadership but the objective forces drive that way.

The offer by the government of two half-hour TV slots leaves the bureaucracy in control of the media and leaves the Walesa leadership in control of those slots. This is not the same as workers' control even though it is embarrassing to the bureaucracy.

WHAT MAUROY MISSES

by Martin Thomas

THE Guillotine will be scrapped. A dozen big industrial groups plus the big private banks will be nationalised.

France's top-heavy administrative system will be decentralised. Work will be suspended on some nuclear power stations. Some reforms are planned for immigrant workers.

The first hundred days of the Socialist-led government have not been empty. Last Wednesday, August 26, a major programme of legislation was announced for the coming months.

But it has one big gap. Unemployment continues to rise in France, and inflation continues to cut workers' living standards. And Mitterrand's measures fail to touch those problems.

The legal minimum wage has been increased. But Mitterrand's election promise of progress towards a 35-hour week has produced no result beyond a 39 hour week.

And with all the loopholes in the law, that does not mean much. There has been a legal working week have still been doing 50 or 60 hours.

The government's other policy for jobs is... subsidies to private business.

For the present, Mitterrand and Mauroy have stocks of unexhausted credit with the French working class. And though the right wing press is screaming loudly, privately the bosses are not very worried either.

But neither side's good-will will last forever - or even very long, in capitalism's present world crisis.

ATROCITY IN VIENNA

On Saturday 29 August a Viennese synagogue was attacked by two Arabs with hand grenades and guns.

200 worshippers attending a Barmitzva celebration were inside at the time. Two people died.

A woman, Ulrike Kohut, was killed trying to protect a friend's child. Two policemen and one of the attackers were also injured.

The injured attacker was thought to be a student at the University of Vienna and a member of Al Assifa, a pro-Syrian breakaway group-

ing from the PLO.

The PLO has officially denied any responsibility for this attack which is in fact the second in Vienna in the last month.

In a previous attack, a bomb exploded in a garden adjoining the Israeli embassy.

Whether the central PLO leadership knew about this attack or not, the fact remains that grenade attacks against unarmed civilians cannot in any way aid the cause of the Palestinian people against Zionism.



Israeli army patrolling occupied land

-Iran-

'THE END OF THE REGIME IS NEAR'

Terror fuels coup danger

by Martin Thomas and Mary Corbishley

THE PRESIDENT and prime minister of Iran are only the latest victims of the near civil war in the country.

Opponents of the regime are being slaughtered by the hundred. And at the funeral of the president and prime minister, Prosecutor General Ayatollah Amlashi demanded that "revolutionary prosecutors" should act like the ancient Imam Ali "who chopped off the heads of 4,000 in one day".

The Mojahedeen, the Islamic opposition movement, report, "Today in Iran the life of all political prisoners is in danger. Up to now (August 25) over 800 people have been executed, and the number of executions is rising."

"Last week in three days the daily number of executions was more than 40..."

"The charges for which innocent young people have been executed have been ridiculous: 'participating in demonstrations', 'possession of a leaflet', 'believing in all the positions of the Mojahedeen'."

"Many of them have been... girls aged 10 to 15 - more of them have received a summary trial which normally last about two minutes".

(Reports in the western Press confirm this - except for the one paper which conceals these facts, Gerry Healy's Newsline. It responded to the killing of the president and prime minister by giving over a centre page to mourn these "martyrs", "killed in the second bomb blast in two months directed against the country's revolutionary leadership", and to print a statement by Ayatollah Khomeini - or, as Newsline reverentially calls him, the Imam).

The Mojahedeen have not claimed the major assassinations as their work; but they have not disclaimed them either. Individual assassinations of the regime's

leaders is their openly proclaimed policy. "Many of those responsible for the execution of the people have received their just punishment and have been killed", they boast.

It seems that the Mojahedeen have wide popular support. Certainly the regime is weakening.

There have been desertions from the Pasdaran - the Revolutionary Guards, the Islamic Republican Party's private army. And there is opposition to the bloodbath within the Majlis, the IRP-dominated parliament.

The Mojahedeen base themselves on their experience of guerilla struggle against the Shah's regime, and hope that their present campaign of assassinations will be followed by mass uprisings like that struggle was.

But the battle of terrorism and counter-terrorism can only encourage passivity and fear among the masses. Despite the fact that repression in Iran now is by no means so systematic or uniform as under the Shah, there is practically no report of mass action by the opposition - strikes, demonstrations, etc.

The more the disorder of the regime, the bloodshed and the passivity of the masses, the greater the chances of a military coup. Bani-Sadr, quite probably, is consciously counting on this. He must have strong links with army commanders; and for American-trained officers hostile to the IRP autocracy, Bani-Sadr represents the best alternative.

So the working class, which bears the brunt of the IRP's despotism and demagoguery, could also be among the main sufferers from its overthrow. It needs to organise independently, to join the struggle against IRP tyranny but also to fight for its own solutions to the crisis.

LESS than 48 hours after the return of the second group of French people from Iran, the strict measures taken by the French authorities to keep the press away from the Iranian leaders who recently took refuge in Paris vanished as if by magic.

The police who had for several days been taking care that no journalist should make contact with Bani Sadr or Massoud Rajavi, now are only concerned with the protection of the foreign guests, installed in a modest summer house in Auvers-sur-Oise.

"The situation is now normal", Massoud Rajavi, chief of the Mojahedeen, said to us. "We can now begin our work. I have not come to stay in France. I intend to return to my country as soon as possible after doing what I came to do in Paris."

What did you come to do?

Firstly, to make known to the whole world the extent and the importance of the resistance to the bloody and savage dictatorship which prevails in Iran, to denounce Khomeini's lies, things which it was difficult for us to do while in hiding.

Our journey was also necessary to assure the safety of the President, Bani Sadr, and my own. That is not to say that we were in a weak position in Iran, but we did not want to take any risks as regards our security.

What is the position with regard to the formation of the National Council of Resistance?

Up until now, because of the uncertainties of our situation in France we have not been able to do a great deal. But now we will be able to redouble our efforts to put onto a sound footing a really representative resistance organisation.

Everybody will be able to take part if they accept our principles of liberty and independence, on the condition that they have not collaborated with the Shah or Khomeini.

Are you in favour of the Islamic republic?

We are for a democratic Islamic republic, but different from Khomeini's, which is essentially reactionary and anti-Islamic. If we condemn Khomeini, it is not to award any good marks to the monarchists, but on the contrary, our condemnation of Khomeini is a direct consequence of our condemnation of the Shah.

One of the most appalling legacies of the Shah is Khomeini himself.

I repeat again, we will not resolve our problems through a return to the past. What we want is to create an independent, non-aligned, free, democratic and truly Islamic Iran.

You think then that the regime is aligned. Why?

I would say that it is on the way to becoming aligned and dependent. To assure oneself of that it is only necessary to look at the commercial relations it has entered into with Israel for the purchase of armaments, the repression of progressive forces and the way that the American hostage operation unfolded.

On the scene they were injuring each other while behind the curtain they were holding hands.

Masoud Rajavi, leader of Iran's Mojahedeen, and former president Bani-Sadr, explained their assessments and perspectives recently in interviews with the Paris daily Le Monde. We publish extracts.

In other words you are accusing the present regime of being pro-American?

I say that the Khomeini regime is a reactionary regime which is preparing the ground for a return of the exploiters, and then of the United States and all those whose ambition is to pillage Iran.

The Shah accused you of being Islamic Marxists?

Not just the Shah, also Khomeini. For them, everybody who is not reactionary and servile must in effect be a Marxist. We are Moslems, and our philosophical ideas are fundamentally different from Marxist theories.

On the practical level, what is the nature of your activity in Iran?

Our essential objective is resistance to a reign of terror which understands no other language than that of force.

You have been accused of being the originators of the terrorism.

We condemn terrorism. For us, terrorism is the action of a small group separated from the people, who hope to make their point of view prevail by means of attacks on individuals. We consider that in no case can attacks against individuals lead to the modification of social conditions or to the objectives that we are struggling for.

For us, the name of terrorism is Khomeini: a bloodthirsty animal who pretends to be god on earth. Who is at the origin of the terrorism? The one who suppressed all our liberties, or us?

For our part we call our action 'resistance'. If you know any other way to resist Khomeini tell us and we will be grateful. Our resistance does not harm the innocent. We condemn vigorously those who place bombs in cars and in public places to discredit the revolutionaries.

You have neither condemned nor approved the blowing up of the headquarters of the Islamic Republican Party. However it was an act of terror as you have characterised them.

The IRP is known in Iran as the knuckleduster party. We have in our possession a multitude of documents proving that that party is at the origin of the repression and the mass murders. It is very unpopular and is hated by the population.

Did you or did you not dynamite the headquarters of the IRP?

I have not yet received any report from my friends about that affair. But what I would say here is that the resistance in Iran is totally legitimate.

Don't you think that an act of 'resistance' such as dynamiting the offices of the IRP will only strengthen the

Bani-Sadr declared that he was opposed both to Khomeini and to "the pro-Americans led from abroad". He assessed the attacks on leaders of the regime as "inevitable", and stressed the weak position of the IRP.

You have yourself often spoken about the army, and assured us that 90% of them supported you. How do you explain the fact that they have made no move since your sacking? Do you count on them to regain power?

The army could not move because it was at the front. I myself demanded that they continue the fight. I was and I remain opposed to the idea of a military rising. It is the people which must change its own fate.

On the other hand, it was me, and I am proud of it, who changed the mentality of the army, which is now loved by the people and prestigious, because for the first time in its history it is participating in the defence of Iranian independence.

But the total war you are waging against the regime in Tehran must contribute to the weakening of the war which the army is waging?

The army is not fighting to defend the regime, but to protect the country. Any soldier in Iran would say the same thing.



Rajavi

most reactionary elements in the party, who are aiming to step up the repression?

The only thing I would be able to say on that subject is that the end of the IRP is near. The intensification of the repression is proof of it.

Don't forget that towards the end of the Shah's regime we saw a similar acceleration of the operations of repression. History seems to be repeating itself.

Abridged from Le Monde, August 16-17. Translated by John Plant.

You act and speak as if the IRP had no influence in the country any longer. Are you so sure?

Khomeini himself shows otherwise why would he be carrying out such blood executions, the number of which increases daily. It is clear that the Imam has lost his popularity. In fact he has only got about 15% to 20% of the population with him.

Are you sure of this figure? Remember that the day after your election you said 'The IRP no longer exists' but yet...

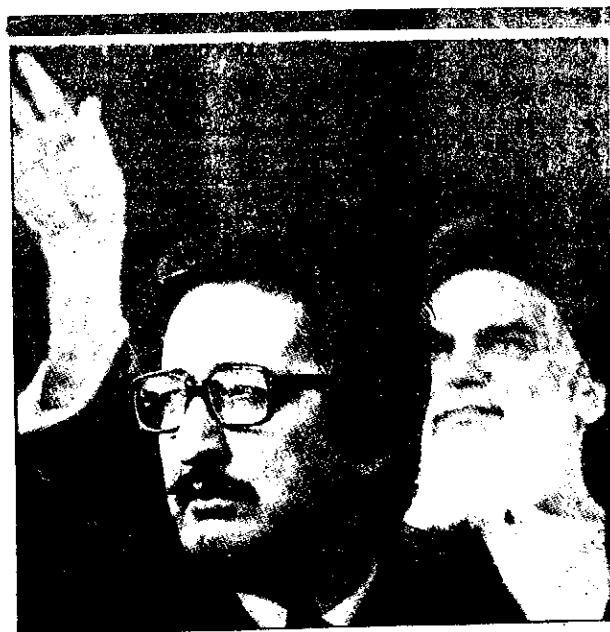
You are making a mistake. The IRP no longer exists. It is not in power. It is no more than the Rastakhiz party under the Shah, a cover which has no political reality but justifies and legitimises the actions of the Islamic institutions, of the Pasdaran, the revolutionary tribunals, the committees, the organisations of the Moustazafin (disinherited).

And the affair of the American hostages?

Let us speak openly. It was this affair which opened my eyes and made me understand that the tendency was towards dictatorship.

The hostages affair changed many things, notably the balance of power between the Mullahs and the intellectuals. Previously it had been the intellectuals who made use of the Mullahs, and afterwards it was the Mullahs who made use of the intellectuals.

I began to explain the development to the people. Despite my functions as President I became the leader of the opposition. In this role I succeeded in changing many things, and that is why I do not consider myself the vanquished but the victor.



Bani-Sadr looking to the army?



Can Khomeini control Iran's poor?

Democracy is still issue no. 1

ANDREW WIARD, REPORT

Vladimir Derer (secretary of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy, writing in his personal capacity, contributes to the discussion on the block vote opened by Derek Cattell (Socialist Organiser, August 11).

Derek Cattell's letter is well timed: a discussion by the Left of this controversial subject is long overdue and, as he stresses, considerations such as that the trade union block vote may sometimes favour the Left should not determine the Left's attitude towards it.

Unfortunately he does not make clear whether he is opposed just to the present overwhelming weight of the trade union block vote, or whether he would like to see the whole conference voting structure changed.

His comment on the Wembley election "the new electoral college which gives 40% of the votes to the unions can only help to increase the union domination" seems to indicate that he inclines to the first view.

In fact Wembley demonstrates that there is nothing necessarily rigid and sacred about the present distribution of the voting strength under the existing conference structure.



Callaghan: his betrayals in government encouraged the move towards an accountable leadership

Comrade Cattell is also right to suggest that the role of the block vote should be considered in terms of whether it helps or hinders the Labour Party in adopting a socialist programme, and one might add, in carrying it out.

Here Comrade Cattell seems to suggest that the block vote is a hindrance. It is true that the trade unions, if left to themselves, will only pursue aims which are compatible with a capitalist framework. What finally determines their attitude, however, is the leadership offered by the political party of the working class.

Accountability

After all, it was not the block vote which was the cause of the failure of the successive Labour governments to introduce socialist measures. Far from initiating policies of wage restraint, for example, trade unions had to be persuaded by Labour's parliamentary leadership before - in the mistaken belief that these were part of a socially just policy - they accepted them.

Nor is it true that the "bulk of the Labour Left" saw the main problem in terms of accountability of



The Labour Party Special Conference: the fight for accountability remains the key to a successful fight for socialism

the leadership, as Comrade Cattell suggests. Whether they regarded the 1973 Labour programme as a socialist one or not, the Labour Left in its broadest sense (from the Militant tendency and other far left sects to the parliamentary Tribune group) never made accountability of Labour's leadership its first priority.

Only CLPD, joined later by the Rank and File Mobilising Committee did so. Both Militant and Tribune in fact always gave preference to other "more important" issues.

Most CLPD supporters were, of course, never under any illusions about the relative inadequacies of the 1973 programme. Yet the policies this programme advocated, with all their imperfections, were significantly more radical than anything the parliamentary leadership was willing to pursue.

Support

More importantly they had the support of the rank and file activists and trade unionists.

The problem for socialists within the Labour Party had never been that they did not have a "socialist programme", nor that they were stopped from preaching its relative merits. The problem always was that they were unable to get majority support for such a programme by means of propaganda and educational work alone; the exclusive pursuit of which activity is the sacred cow (or chronic obsession) of the Left.

So long as the Left limits itself to this, the unintended consequence of such activity is merely the upholding of the status quo.

What during the seventies changed the situation was not the decades of socialist preaching but the successful mobilisation of the rank and file behind the demand to democratise the party structure. A socialist road ahead leads through the support of similar demands (from a "socialist" point of view no doubt totally inadequate) and the defence of what had already been achieved.

It is a pity that Derek Cattell should advise socialists to go back to the old position which has been confirmed to be ineffective. He is in "good company", in line

with Tribune, LCC, Clause Four, all of whom are claiming now that the democratic battle has been won, we must focus attention on other issues.

The fact that Comrade Cattell wants us to give priority to explanations (such as that parliament is really a bourgeois institution) is not all that different from the ILP/LCC/Clause Four argument that what is important now are the details of the Alternative Economic Strategy.

Propagandist

In both cases, whatever the justification, we are asked to divert our efforts from mobilising the rank and file behind such demands as are attainable at this stage, to propagandist activities which, by themselves, will achieve nothing.

Comrade Cattell's call for a Labour Party converted "from an electoral machine to a party which actively intervenes in the daily struggles of the working class" and for setting democracy "in this context" is, like the LCC's (and ILP's) call for a "Campaigning Mass Party", bound to remain a piece of empty "radical" rhetoric.

Labour's rank and file still need to learn that only by concentration on and mobilisation for a few prioritised aims that are crucial in the context of the existing situation are genuine changes likely to be effected from which eventually a campaigning mass party which would intervene in the daily struggles of the working class might result.

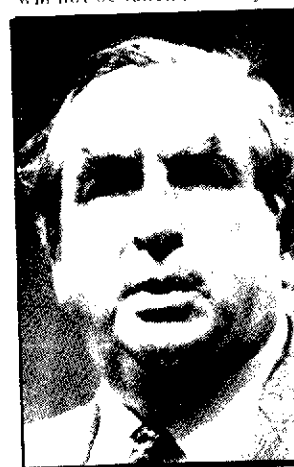
But notwithstanding the above, Comrade Cattell's implicit emphasis on the need to build a socialist core



Benn: emerged to lead the rank and file

within the Labour Party has considerable relevance to the question of the block vote.

It is not possible to build a socialist core without at the same time demanding that the constituency parties be given a voting strength at conference that corresponds to their contribution. Without this their efforts will not be taken seriously.



Healey: fighting a desperate battle against party democracy

The "right" proportion of the voting power to be allotted to the constituencies has been a matter of some debate among the relatively small circle of those constituency activists and trade unionists who realise the urgency of the need to redress the balance in the present pattern of conference voting.

To relate voting strength to the financial contribution may seem plausible but it is an expedient which lacks moral justification. However an equal share in the political influence of unions and constituencies reflected in their command over conference votes does meet this requirement, and incidentally the sums spent on the Party by the trade unions and CLPs are, at the present level of regular financial contributions, also roughly the same.

The "left" opposition to the reform of conference voting is based on several considerations.

One is that with the disappearance, or even a minor modification, of trade union dominance of conference, its social composition would favour the middle class members of the Party.

Positive discrimination in favour of the working class

Labour supporters is, of course, desirable, but preferential treatment of trade unions is hardly the only possible or ideal form of it. Indeed past record shows that trade union dominance of conference frequently failed to safeguard working class interests.

Another objection to a reform of conference voting derives from the failure to differentiate between the character of a political and a trade union organisation.

Politicisation

Trade unions are organised on a narrowly conceived defence of economic interests of their members. For this reason trade unions cannot fulfill the functions of a socialist party.

Obviously a high level of politicisation of trade unions is vital, but it is also important to realise its limits. The strategy of relying on the trade unions to counter the middle class influence within the Labour Party is constructed on a romantic conception of both the trade unions and the working class.

Its immediate consequence is the neglect of the task to build a socialist organisation of the working class.

Traditionally it is the socialist sects which most rely on the trade unions to influence the Labour Party policy in a socialist direction when they grudgingly acknowledge, or at least tacitly accept, that the Labour Party is the political organisation of the British working class. Since most of the sects refuse to join the Labour Party the only way they can enter the Labour Party politics is through the trade unions.

Pathetic

It is not without irony that in terms of the ideology to which they claim allegiance, trade unions are an organisation the aims of which are circumscribed by the framework of capitalism. It is therefore somewhat pathetic that they should strive to influence the Labour Party in a socialist direction through their efforts within such organisations.

No doubt there must be a sound dialectical explanation for this seeming contradiction.

SO DELEGATE MEETING

THIS weekend (September 5) is the first Socialist Organiser Delegate Meeting since the paper went weekly.

The Socialist Organiser secretariat will be proposing to the delegates from local groups that a big priority for the coming months should be a conference on labour movement democracy.

The aim would be to link militants from the Labour Party democracy struggle with militants in the unions, bring out the general tasks and perspectives of the fight for labour democracy, work out a comprehensive policy, and discuss how to fight for it.

In reality, Labour Party democracy and union democracy are only two aspects of the same struggle. Yet many activists still separate them, soft-peddling issues like regular election of full-time officials.

The Delegate Meeting will also discuss the perspectives for the Labour Left after the Brighton Conference.

Groups like the Labour Coordinating Committee are arguing that the united Rank

and File Mobilising Committee for Labour Democracy has finished its useful life.

There is a danger of the Left once again scattering - some continuing to focus on the fight for Party Democracy, some turning their attention to tighter definition of the Alternative Economic Strategy, and others going their various ways.

At least, that is what's happening at national level. Locally, 'Labour Left' groupings are developing in several areas. Some of them are local Mobilising Committees. From the point of view of constituency activists, it is not at all so clear that the advantages of unity are dead and gone!

The Delegate Meeting will discuss these problems. Ideas put forward by the Secretariat will include the extension of local Labour Lefts and Mobilising Committees, a policy of continuing to argue for a united front of the Labour Left nationally on those issues where it is possible - and a broad debate on these perspectives in the pages of Socialist Organiser.

A checklist for Brighton

The Campaign for Labour Party Democracy column this week is by Francis Prideaux.

THE LABOUR conference agenda is understandably dominated by topics such as jobs, arms and Ireland. But "victories" on these issues will remain as scraps of paper unless the underlying constitutional issues are finally sorted out. The state of play is as follows:

1. Mandatory reselection. Its old opponents are now busy undermining Re-selection by means of the "shortlist of one" manoeuvre. Trade Union and other nominees are being eliminated from consideration without so much as a hearing. At West Bromwich West Betty Boothroyd MP was re-elected without a selection conference even though Cllr. John Edwards (IFBU) received 8 valid nominations.

At Pontefract and Castleford the NUM and ASTMS nominees were both denied an interview even though 41 members of the GC wanted to hear them speak.

Paddington's constitutional amendment would outlaw "shortlists of one" except where only one valid nomination has been received. This proposal must be supported, and so must the large bunch of procedural amendments demanding that it is debated. A proper Reselection Conference remains the cornerstone of MP's accountability.

2. The Election of Party Leader. Despite the huffing and puffing of the "Gang of 150" Solidarity MPs, only the UCW and a solitary CLP eventually submitted anti-Wembley amendments proposing to restore the PLP's former domination of our leadership elections. The TGWU, NUPE, USDAW and a host of smaller organisations have all now reaffirmed their support for the Wembley formula. And 3 unions which previously opposed it (NUM, NUR, NUTGW) have also now decided to put their combined total of 1 1/2 million votes behind it. No contest is therefore expected.

3. The Manifesto. The proposal to give responsibility for final approval of the Manifesto to the NEC was defeated at the 1980 conference by a mere

117,000 votes. The Annual Conference of APEX (109,000 votes) has since been won over and other changes make victory at Brighton more likely. The main struggle will now be to ensure the success of the procedural resolutions and amendments insisting that this crucial issue is debated.

3. The Three-Year Rule. The 1980 Conference voted to bring back the notorious gag of the 3-year rule for constitutional topics even though the 1979 Conference's overwhelming vote to abolish this troublesome divisive procedure had the unanimous blessing of the Conference Arrangement Committee itself.

The 1981 Conference will now be offered a choice between an all-embracing type of 3-year rule which would apply to all topics without distinction - and more sensible type which would at least allow Conference to debate a topic if 3 or more affiliated organisations felt so strongly about it that they made it the subject of their conference resolution or amendment. It is vital that Conference chooses this second type if the Party is to be able to show flexibility in responding to the priority concerns of its members.

5. PLP Democracy. Alleged threats of 'UD' make reform of the PLP more vital than ever.

More than 20 Agencies on this issue attest the widespread feeling that the PLP must be democratised if Labour ideals are to be properly implemented. Labour's MPs must owe their first allegiance to the Party as a whole and not the tiny section of it which works at Westminster.

PLP meetings should start to be properly conducted and have recorded votes. In return, the PLP should be allowed to elect Labour Cabinets as well as Shadow Cabinets.

Eight 1980 Constitutional Amendments cover these points will come this year as part of the NEC Report. Only if they are properly debated and carried will Labour's MPs be obliged to serve the movement which sent them to Westminster in the first place.

The task of Labour's MPs is to deliver the goods to the movement. Anything less cannot afford.

Speeding the job cuts

ACCORDING to the Daily Telegraph (August 30), British Steel's job-cuts programme is running six months ahead of schedule.

20,000 jobs have been cut since the strike, though British Steel's schedule gave until March 1982 to get rid of them.

So much for the steel unions' line of fighting for pay first and then for jobs afterwards. Steelworkers knew that if they could not save their jobs while mobilised and powerful, during the strike, they had no chance after the return to work.

IT LOOKS like Scotland Yard may back down on its sacking of police surgeon Arnold Mendoza.

The Sunday Times reported that it had "established that his [Mendoza's] appearance as an expert witness for the defence in two Old Bailey cases... led to the yard decision."

Mendoza is London secretary of the Police Surgeons' Association, and

the Association's president-elect commented, "We have to be unbiased... We must be able to give evidence for the defence without fear of repercussions."

Frederick Shepherd, sacked at the same time as Mendoza is apparently not contesting the dismissal. "I can't do much about it," he said, "because it is true that I am over age."

Over-65 police surgeons are nonetheless usually kept on and according to the press Shepherd's sacking is related to his complaints, after the killing of Blair Peach in April 1979, that police doctors were not given an opportunity to examine people with head injuries before they were marched off to other stations.

WAGE RISES below the rate of inflation are now pretty standard. But the bosses are not satisfied. Now there are moves for money wage cuts.

First the Financial Times told its workers that -

unless they would agree to 7% job cuts - it wanted a 7% reduction in wages. Then last week Pan Am proposed 10% pay cuts to all its workers, world-wide.

A Pan Am spokesperson told the Guardian that workers in India and Italy had already agreed to the cut, "and American employees were on the point of ratifying their agreement."

British Pan Am unions responded by opposing the 10% cut and suggesting an 8.3% cut instead. They have proposed that workers give up their annual bonus.

FT unions are just "discussing" the seven per cent cuts there. And in another airline, British Caledonian, the unions have supported wage cuts.

Voluntarity

This May, British Caledonian sent out letters to its 6,000 workers asking them voluntarily to give up two 4% cost-of-living increases due this year. The airline

branch of the pilots' union, BALPA, not only supported the appeal but also offered to hold all claims for meal and night-stop allowances to November!

Chunk

British Caledonian's way of doing it asking workers to give up a chunk of their wages, while saying that anyone who insisted would get their full cost-of-living money - could hardly be extended to the car factories or the mines.

But employers everywhere will welcome anything that boosts the idea of workers sacrificing wages to help the bosses through the crisis.

On Monday 31 the vice-chairman of the regional CBI, Reg Parkes, suggested that West Midlands bosses would follow the example of Pan Am in demanding money wage cuts.

RECENT government figures show that average living standards fell 1.5% in the first



quarter of 1980. And the increase in total personal income over that quarter was the smallest for ten years.

Meanwhile, 16% of jobs in manufacturing disappeared during 1980. That's the equivalent of one factory in six shutting. In metal manufacturing, the decline was 25%.

Relief

When the Pieta was attacked by some loony, resentful of Michaelangelo's greatness, anger jostled side by side with bewilderment and sorrow at this individual's act.

When Organ's portrait of Lady Diana Spencer (recently metamorphosed into the Princess of Wales) is slashed

and a whole bit gouged out of the middle, ecstasy jostles side by side with relief. (Someone's hit back. Anyway, what a lousy painter. Doing a sculpture of the Madonna is OK! - but Organ's obsequious offering to The Family is simply bad taste.)

The Pieta. attacker was clearly out of it.

20 year old Paul Salmon from Belfast was remanded in custody for psychiatric examinations until his trial. The prosecution will undoubtedly do everything to prove the poor bloke mad - not just, like the rest of us, fed up to the back teeth with Charles and Di beaming benignly from cups, saucers, neon lights, loo paper and every possible other vantage point.

Cuts: learning the lessons

by John O'Mahony

"SOONER or later we have to recognise that we are losing the arguments in favour of maintaining services at the cost of high rents and rates (emphasis added).

"We are losing because Labour voters simply cannot afford to pay any more. In council homes the length of Britain, Labour councils are being 'blamed' for the high rates and rents which are the direct result of Tory policies.

"If the slide is to be halted, Labour must take a stand".

This is the balance Chris Mullin draws in last week's Tribune of 27 months of Labour local government since Thatcher was elected.

Socialist Organiser has fallen out with a lot of people on the left because of our refusal to believe that rent and rate rises are an alternative to the Tory cuts, and our advocacy of confrontation as the only realistic option.

Tribune has belatedly arrived at the same conclusion, on the basis of experience.

"The Tories have been very clever in getting Labour councils to do their dirty

work for them. In Lambeth the combined rents and rates of the average council tenant will by October have increased from £12 to £20 a week in little more than a year...

(This is) "because this year alone the Tories have confiscated £14.8 million in cuts and penalties out of a total central government contribution of £55.1 million".

Last year's Local Government Act aimed, via fines and penalties, to prevent local authorities evading the Government's cuts drive by recouping lost funds through raising rates.

Honour

"As a result the 1982 election will simply be a competition between two - and possibly three - main parties to see which shall have the honour of administering the cuts decreed by central government. Opposition to cuts is no longer an option. Instead the parties will be reduced to arguing that 'our cuts are more humane than yours'."

The official Labour response has been "frankly pathetic". The emergence of

"progressive" council leaders "has yet to be reflected in a policy of more active resistance".

"Not only is Labour losing the battle over cuts, it is also getting most of the blame for the consequences. Sooner or later there is going to have to be a confrontation".

Mullin advocates the following strategy for confronting the government.

* Cast-iron Shadow Cabinet guarantees that surcharged councillors will be indemnified by an incoming Labour government.

* Labour Local Government Committees must co-ordinate a mass refusal by Labour councils to either increase rates and rents unreasonably or slash services.

* If the Tories send in

the commissioners, councillors could occupy Town Halls and organise resistance by staff.

But wouldn't this mean council employees not getting paid? "The alternative", says Mullin, "is steady attrition in which thousands of council employees will lose their jobs for ever anyway. Lothian have already been told to discard up to one third of their workforce".

The problem of course with this strategy is that it gives the central role to Labour Party leaders like Roy Hattersley. While it is right to call on them to take up their responsibilities, the Left - in the first place, Lambeth's Ted Knight - were well-placed to give a lead whatever the Labour front-bench did.

ANDREW WIARD, REPORT



Lambeth Council pretended rate rises were the answer to cuts. The result: rate rises and cuts - and SDP by-election gains.

FUND

Not a bad start to our new monthly fund - £1500 in August, but our target is £2,000 and we must very quickly start achieving that target if we are going to be able to do everything we want with the new weekly paper.

Meanwhile, our thanks to the many SO Groups and individual supporters who sent in money, including a 74 year old Labour Party member from Glasgow.

Send us a donation to the September fund and help us make that £2,000 target. The address is Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.



'The Long Creche': a basic guide to organising and running creches. 50p plus postage from the National Child Care Campaign, 17 Victoria Park Sq, London E2

What's on

PUBLIC MEETINGS TO LAUNCH THE NEW WEEKLY SOCIALIST ORGANISER

GLASGOW
Saturday September 5
SO Day School
Maryhill Community Centre
Maryhill Road, Glasgow
11 am - 5 pm
Admission £1 (50p unwaged)
Creche provided

CARDIFF
Wednesday September 9
Rhymney Hotel
Adam Street, Cardiff
7.30 pm

OXFORD
8.00 pm
next to East Oxford
Community Centre
Princes St., Oxford

LEICESTER
Thursday September 17
'Build a fighting left'
7.30 pm
Leicester Socialist Centre
(above Blackthorne Books)
High Street, Leicester

'New Socialist'
DEPUTY DEBATE
Tony Benn, John Silkin
Denis Healey
Thursday 10 September
5.15 pm
Pavilion Theatre, Winter Gardens, Blackpool
Open to TUC delegates and visitors and 'New Socialist' subscribers.
Admission £1.50

MOBILISE FOR LABOUR DEMOCRACY
TUC Rally
Tuesday September 8
5.15 pm
Speakers: Tony Benn MP
Joan Maynard MP
Arthur Scargill
Ray Buckton
Bernard Dix
Norman Atkinson MP (Chair)
Spanish Hall, Winter Gardens, Blackpool

TURKEY SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN
Week of Action to mark the first anniversary of the military coup
Monday 7 September meetings in Oxford and Bradford.
Wednesday 9 September meetings in Newcastle and Leeds.
Thursday 10 September picket of Turkish ambassador's residence and Chilean Embassy, Devonshire Street, London WC1.
Saturday 12 September, 11 am, picket of Downing Street, 2 pm rally at NUFTO Hall, Holborn, London WC1.

The fightback is here!

Laurence Scotts convenor or DENNIS BARRY told us:

There is no picketing or blacking of other plants going on at the moment. To tell you the truth we are beginning to feel a wee bit isolated.

John Boyd is said to have specifically contacted T&GWU bosses asking them to ignore any requests for blacking or other support from Scotts workers, as they are 'unofficial' and 'unconstitutional'.

I understand exactly the position of John Tocher and Duggie Daniels. Right up until the agreement was cobbled together by Boyd and Snipe they did their jobs well and gave us every support.

The problem now is that just as the Manchester South District Committee is in the grip of the right-winger Wally Mather, so at the end of the day Tocher and Daniels are in the grip of Boyd and Duffy.

It's the same on the Confed Exec. From what

I've been told TASS put up the most resistance to the sell-out, but wouldn't you expect CP veterans like George Guy and Ken Gill to have given a more inspiring lead?

Some of the Labour Party MPs have done a reasonable job publicity-wise.

It seems as far as the national Press is concerned, we're dead already. However, I'm still optimistic in that we've got 300 still on the picket rota, which isn't bad going.

The dispute has brought home to me the importance of your national organisations both at union and Labour Party level. A shop stewards' committee needs delegates at all levels of both organisations. You'll never know when they'll come in useful.

As for me and the rest of the stewards, we are as determined as ever to see this one through.

If you're looking for a fightback against the Tories — here it is.

THE LEE Jeans and Plansee disputes have both been settled. After 20 weeks the Laurence Scotts strikers are still fighting for their jobs against owner Arthur Snipe, against the crisis, and against the Tory government.

This dispute is now at the turning point. If there is no immediate escalation, then the strikers will start rolling down the slippery slope — and Boyd and Duffy will be able to call in the undertakers.

The strikers are now on their own. Their union leaders are holding a pistol to their heads and demanding that they sign their own death warrants.

Yet it could have been and still can be very different.

Here Socialist Organiser prints interviews with JOHN TOCHER (AUEW divisional organiser), DUGGIE DANIELS (AUEW Manchester North district secret-

ary) and DENNIS BARRY (convenor, Laurence Scotts), by John McIlroy and Noel Hibbert.

We believe that the strikers must reimpose picketing on Snipe's main company, Mining Supplies of Doncaster, and blacking in the mines and on the docks.

This brought Snipe to the bargaining table before. It can do so again.

We call on all trade unionists seriously interested in fighting the Tories, and dockers and miners especially, to move motions in the stewards' committees and branches criticising the leadership of the AUEW and demanding immediate blacking of all Mining Supplies products.

The lessons of Laurence Scotts must be argued in front of the whole working class.

Like the Laurence Scotts workers, none of us has anywhere to run from the Tories and the capitalist crisis. The best way for all workers to protect their interests is to support the Laurence Scotts workers now.

Problems, programme, policies for the main unions.

a socialist organiser 20p
broadsheet

the fight for trade union democracy



20p plus postage from Socialist Organiser,
28 Middle Lane, London N8.

Laurence Scott fight for jobs

BETRAYED, STILL FIGHT

PHOTO: JOHN SMITH, IFL



Despite being evicted on August 18, the LSE workers still fight on

What do you think about the role the Executive has played in the dispute?

Duggie Daniels: In a word, disgraceful. I placed Bob Broughton's letter before my District Committee last night, and they voted unanimously to endorse its sentiments and to forward it to the Executive.

As for Boyd's reply — "The factory was to close quite definitely" — well, Snipe swore blind that if the dispute was not settled his whole operation would go into liquidation by July 24. It's still operating.

John Tocher: Yes. The basic question is one of union democracy.

The Executive decided matters were so urgent that their representative Ken Cure should meet with the employers and negotiate an agreement.

Refused

When they came to an agreement Duggie did his job and put it to a stewards' meeting. When they refused to endorse it, I put it to the mass meeting, leaving it open to them. They voted to reject it.

OK, the Executive wanted a second bite at the cherry. They sent down Ken

Cure, and the agreement was again voted down.

The correct course for the EC was then to accept the members' verdict, return to the employers, and renegotiate it.

What do you think about the agreement itself?

Daniels: If it had been left to the local officials we would not have left the room without a 'no redundancy' clause. Moreover, the clause referring to the return of their redundancy money turned out to be an embarrassment to everybody. I don't think it could have been implemented.

Collective bargaining for the full-time official has to be the art of the possible. Our leadership has a limited idea of what is possible.

There were differing estimates as to the success of the picketing of Mining Supplies in Doncaster. And there were problems.

United

For example, URTU [United Road Transport Union] were on to us saying that because they refused to cross the picket line Snipe had withdrawn their contract and 12 men had been laid off. You need a

whole united organisation behind you if you are to deal with this type of situation.

You can see the problems in our union. But the picketing certainly opened up a whole new game.

Another factor in making Snipe negotiate was supposed to be Joe Gormley pressurising [Coal Board boss] Ezra — who pressurised Snipe.

Robinson

The problem with Boyd and Duffy, as illustrated by the Robinson affair, is that they accept that the employers mean what they say all the time. They've no idea of bluff and testing them out.

When Snipe threatened to close all six factories then, by a certain kind of logic, if you accept the closure of one, you're saving the other five.

Denigration

John Boyd claims in his latest circular that, "What is motivating certain people is denigration of the Executive rather than the most important objective, namely, that of saving the plants in six districts".

Where we differ from Boyd is in believing that the members involved should be the final arbiters of their own fate.

However, there's a more cynical view of the employers' threats. After all, Snipe had £3 million of orders inside the Manchester plant, and the main aim of the agreement was to get them out.

Overall, his enterprise was booming — why close down, then? Snipe's in Majorca now — but his workers in the other plants are still pumping out the profits, even though Manchester is shut.

What are you doing now?

Tocher: First of all, we've been taking legal advice about taking the Executive's interpretation of the Rules to the [AUEW] Final Appeal Court.

Daniels: The deadline for Final Appeal Court has gone, but there is a discretionary period, and given its present make-up the Court might be favourable to us. But it all takes time.

Right now I'm trying to get as many branches and shop stewards' committees as possible to send critical resolutions about the Executive. I've had letters from District Committees in Bradford, Leeds and Nottingham — by no means all left wing — critical of the Executive's behaviour.

Les Howard, the AUEW convenor from Kellogg's, told us that he'd raised Bob Broughton's letter to Boyd at the Manchester South District Committee the other night, and Wally Mather (the 'moderate' District Secretary) refused to allow it to be debated...

Tocher: The Manchester South DC is supposedly left-wing but they ended up actually endorsing the Executive's stand on the matter.

What about the rule used over the Derek Robinson affair by which 10 per cent of branches can request a ballot to remove the Executive?

Daniels: Yes. You need a two-thirds majority [in the ballot]. I just don't think that's on.

But wouldn't it publicise the issue provide an opportunity for propaganda and debate?

Daniels: I think that in terms of winning at Laurence Scotts, the problem is a deep one. If the National Committee, for example, was recalled now, it would probably support the Executive's line. It's a right-wing body.

Back the picket lines*Send money*

EVICTED, TING!

Surely picketing Mining Supplies, the docks and mines, would still provide a fighting chance. What have you got to lose?

Daniels: I can't understand why they lifted the picketing. It was the best way forward.

But don't underestimate the difficulties when you've got a national leadership that isn't backing you.

Reputation

There's always two sides to every problem. Take someone like Arthur Scargill, whose role could have been vital. To put it mildly, he left a little bit to be desired given his reputation.

On the other hand, he argued that he would initiate action when the rest of the Laurence Scott workers in other plants were taking action. An old-style trade union position.

Dockers

Should he have shown an example? And the dockers? If they acted on every request for blacking, they'd never do a day's work.

But the alternative explanation is that if they do black goods swiftly and efficiently, then the employers would concede very quickly indeed. Short and sweet. Why aren't you organising the picketing in other areas?

Daniels: I think that would be an adventure. I'd be open to discipline. I think I'd be in front of the Executive sharpish. It's up to the lads. They know what my position is.

Surely an attempt to discipline the full-time officials would crystallise the issues in the dispute and provide a clear focus for a fightback?

"I TOTALLY and utterly deplore the behaviour of Duffy, Boyd, Ken Cure and the rest of our executive.

"They have completely distorted the meaning of our National Committee resolutions.

"They have refused to accept the aspirations of the members directly involved and have sought to ram the settlement down their throats. We haven't seen union leaders like this since Atilla the Hun and Genghis Khan!"

STEVE TAYLOR, AUEW senior steward, Massey Ferguson, Trafford Park.

Daniels: It's all right you two passing the ammunition! I'm by rule answerable to the Executive.

I don't underestimate people like John Boyd. He's been a full-time officer for 35 years. He's a shrewd operator and he knows all the tricks.

I might end up as the caretaker's assistant!

Do you think the lads are still in with a prayer?

Daniels: The fact that the dispute is no longer official must tell against them. T&G officials have been on to me talking of pressure from lorry drivers to cross picket lines. Some of the lads are starting to talk about unemployment benefit, which they can't get while in dispute.

Blacking

Unless picketing and blacking are successful, they'll run out of steam and money. I think Boyd and Duffy have won it for Snipe.

In the longer term then, how do we get rid of them?

Daniels: Well, the main problem is the postal ballot and the role of the media.

But aren't the problems deeper than that? Workers don't believe everything they read in the paper, otherwise we wouldn't ever have had a Labour Government. Hasn't there been a shift to the right, and hasn't this been partly due to our failings?

Daniels: You can't underestimate the influence of the Press. I'm telling you, it's so detailed and spot-on that Boyd obviously rings Wyatt

THERE ARE now over 60 MPs supporting the strikers. Rather than spending their time sermonising about the number of bailiffs and their socio-economic background, they could more usefully raise the demand for a labour movement inquiry into the affairs of Laurence Scott and Mining Supplies.

Legal action is already pending against two ex-directors of a Scotts subsidiary who used inside information to purchase a company offered to LSE in their own name, allegedly conspiring with Hambros Bank to weaken LSE so that LSE itself could later be purchased cheaply.

When Arthur Snipe pur-

chased LSE it was valued at £18 million by Extel, yet he paid only a third of that figure.

He then applied for Temporary Employment Subsidy knowing already that he would close the factory down.

LSE products are used in the miners, the power stations and in ICI and Shell. Workers in these industries therefore should support Laurence Scott strikers in demanding:

Open the books!
Set up a labour movement inquiry!
No acceptance of capitalist viability!
Keep the factory open with no redundancies!

and Levin. It's then picked up by the leg-men in the local press.

Fact

We know it for a fact. For example, when I ran for election last time the Eccles Journal didn't criticise me, they simply said vote for Jim Milner - Boyd's man.

He's so good a candidate that his own stewards in his own factory didn't know he was standing! I'm well known and I still only won by three hundred votes.

Yes, there is some swing to the right, some workers are scared and confused and can't see any way out. The level of backwardness in some well organised factories in Manchester would terrify you.

Overtime

One steward from British Vita was working 23 hours overtime a week. The rates there aren't bad, but when I dissuaded him he took up taxi-driving during the evenings.

At Wilsons Breweries, we got them £155 for a consolidated 40 hour week. All they could say was, "What about our overtime?"

The right-wing machine is fantastically well-oiled and of course their control of the union apparatus is vital. A young opportunist these days is going to be right, not left.

Blatantly

Look at the way Boyd blatantly uses the Journal for electioneering purposes. There's supposed to be a moratorium during elections. Before Duffy beat Bob Wright he was never out of the Journal, while Bob was almost confined to Peckham Road.

Record of a sell-out

Resolution 545, AUEW National Committee, Eastbourne, April 27 - May 8, 1981.

We further instruct Executive Council to fight against all redundancies and closures and to support all our membership involved in the struggle against the continued plant closures and the decimation of our industry.

10 July 1981: AUEW national officials decide to end seven week old Laurence Scott strike and withdraw

pickets and requests for blacking on the basis of an agreement with the employers which commences, "1. The unions agreed that some redundancy is inevitable...."

23 July 1981: The strikers decide democratically at a mass meeting to continue their fight.

24 July 1981: Executive withdraws all support from strikers in flat violation of Resolution 545.



General Secretary Boyd

A call to order

THIS STATEMENT, motivated by Socialist Organiser supporters of the Laurence Scotts dispute, was sent to Boyd for publication in the AUEW Journal. It has also been adopted by Manchester North District Committee and sent to the Executive Council.

Dear Brother Boyd,

Our Union has always been distinguished from younger organisations like the general workers' unions by its traditions of grassroots autonomy, by the strong decision-making powers of our District Committees, by the belief that the man in the shop should rule the roost in his own District with the District Secretary answerable to him.

However, we have again in distinction to other unions a strong and small National Committee capable of deciding most matters in details, giving the Executive a clear mandate over most

matters and being recalled quickly and efficiently where necessary. The Laurence Scotts dispute highlights the problem of union democracy faced by all trade unionists today, and particularly within an organisation such as ours. Indeed the objective of our detailed and lengthy Rule Book is clear: to ensure that the wishes of the members, not the wishes of their representatives, prevail.

Ignoring

It seems to me, Brother Boyd, that you are ignoring our proud traditions.

1. You have a decision of the National Committee to support the Laurence Scott strikers. You have ignored this with the Executive and made the Strike unofficial.

2. You have a decision of Manchester North District Committee unanimously disapproving of your behaviour and pledging renewed

support. You have ignored it.

3. You have a decision of three mass meetings of the Laurence Scott workers, the latter in the presence of our Executive member Bro. Cure. Both Bro. Cure and the Executive have ignored them.

4. The support of Divisional Organiser Bro. Tocher and District Secretary Bro. Daniels for these decisions has been consistent, and they have requested you to do likewise, in line with our proud and historic traditions. You have ignored them.

We call upon you to come to order. We are sure you are familiar with and comprehend the importance of Rule 28 (Clause 3), Rule 28 (Clause 9) and Rule 14 (Clause 16). You hold your authority by mandate of the members. You are abusing it.

ROBERT BROUGHTON, Manchester 15 AUEW.

BOYD'S REPLY

Boyd omits to mention the real details of the agreement. "The company will provide a minimum two-day week for three months. The future position will be reviewed at the end of the three-month period... This may necessitate some redundancies..."

He gained two days for three months, nothing else, in return for calling off all sanctions.

Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers (ENGINEERING SECTION)
110 Peckham Road London SE15 5EL 01-703 4231
Telegrams EDIFYING LONDON SE15

SIR JOHN BOYD, C.B.E., General Secretary to whom all communications should be addressed

Our ref JB/OBT
Your ref

25th August, 1981.

Mr. R. Broughton,
341 William Kent Crescent,
Hulme,
MANCHESTER, M15 5DP.

Dear Colleague,

I refer to your letter of the 19th August, 1981, and although it does not contain a Branch seal I have chosen to reply. In so-doing I am enclosing an explanatory document which has been sent to all of our 2,700 Branches and District Committees.

I would only emphasize one point, the factory was closing quite definitely. The Executive Council's intervention brought a reprieve and meant that the factory would remain open for the ensuing three months, and thereafter the matter would be reviewed. The Executive Council made it clear that they would not accept its closure.

The duty, therefore, of our membership, having placed the issue in the hands of our Executive via the National Committee, was to accept the Union's leadership and not defy it.

Yours fraternally,
John Boyd
GENERAL SECRETARY.

Pass resolutions * Black Snipe

Battle of ideas

TONY BENN

AND SOCIALISM



TONY BENN'S politics are strangely at odds with his reputation and his standing with both the bourgeoisie and the working class.

This has never been so starkly expressed or more clearly brought out than in his important new article, 'Britain as a Colony', which ties many of the threads of his thinking into a dangerous nationalist/populist knot.

Reading 'Britain as a Colony' forcefully reminded me of the story of one of Karl Marx's most profound works. The story is illuminating, and with the reader's permission I will re-tell it briefly.

Marx's 'Critique of the Gotha Programme' is one of the central texts of Marxism. Written in 1875, it was published after Marx's death, by Engels, 16 years later, in 1891.

Criticised

In this well-known document, whose proper title is 'Marginal Notes to the Programme of the German Workers' Party', Marx rigorously criticised the draft programme which was to be the political basis on which the two separate segments of the socialist workers' movement in Germany were to unite at Gotha in 1875 — the followers of Ferdinand Lassalle with the supposed disciples of Marx and Engels, the so-called Eisenachers.

Marx analysed the draft's loose 'socialist' and 'revolutionary'-sounding ideas and phrases — for example, the idea that beside the modern working class all other classes are "one reactionary mass", the notion that labour is the source of all wealth, etc. He showed them to be grievously mistaken, wrong, unscientific, and, despite the socialist commitment and conviction of the draft's authors, ideas which would confuse and therefore harm the young German labour movement.

Demolished

The Gotha Programme was essentially — so Marx demonstrated — a compilation of obsolete pre-Marxist socialist ideas of the sort which Marx and Engels had criticised and demolished 30 years later, replacing them with the ideas of the Communist Manifesto.

The 'Critique of the Gotha Programme' is one of the basic documents of Marxism because, in opposition to the ideas of the draft, it critically expounded Marx's ideas and historical perspectives. It remains an

incomparable text for educating revolutionaries to think like Marxists, because of the powerful and vigorous way it carves out and establishes the distinction and difference between serious working class ideas and politics, on the one hand, and the bandying about of mere 'socialist' and 'revolutionary' sounding words and phrases — 'phrasemongering' without science, system or even the aspiration to think things through rigorously, like for example the 'revolutionary politics' which flourished on the left after 1968.

But little heed was taken of Marx's privately circulated 'Marginal Notes' by the German Socialist leaders. The two organisations duly united on the programme that Marx had attacked as confused and even reactionary.

Marx and Engels were outraged. They considered their associates Wilhelm Liebknecht and August Bebel to be guilty of little less than an ideological betrayal. They decided that they must separate themselves publicly from the theoretical/political document adopted at the Congress at Gotha.

Held fire

In the event, however, they did not break with the new organisation, nor did they publicly criticise it. After Marx's death Engels held his fire for eight years until the time came to write a new party programme for the congress at Erfurt in 1891, and then published it as a contribution to the discussion which helped prepare for the congress.

Writing to August Bebel on October 12, 1875, Engels explained why Marx and he had not, finally, felt obliged to come out with public criticism.

"The whole thing is untidy, confused, disconnected, illogical and discreditable. If the bourgeois press possessed a single person of critical mind he would have taken this programme apart phrase by phrase, investigated the real content of each phrase, demonstrated its nonsense with the utmost clarity, revealed its contradictions and logical howlers ... and made our whole [international] party look frightfully ridiculous.

Intentions

"Instead of that the assinine bourgeois papers took the programme quite seriously, read into it what it does not contain, and interpreted it communistically. The workers seem to be doing the same.

"It is this circumstance alone that made it possible for Marx and me not to dissociate ourselves from such a programme. So long as our opponents and likewise the workers view this programme as embodying our intentions we can afford to keep quiet about it".

JOHN O'MAHONY looks at the politics of Tony Benn.

The movement could develop, and did, despite the limitations and confusion.

Tony Benn today is very like the German Workers' Party and its programme then in his relationship to the bourgeoisie and to the working class.

Not since Nye Bevan 25 years ago has anyone been so maligned and misrepresented by the bourgeoisie and its press as Benn is.

Destabiliser

He is depicted as the wild eyed incendiary, the fomenter of revolution, the destabiliser of the political system, a crazed Samson trying to pull down the pillars of bourgeois rule in Britain, the gravedigger of the old Labour Party, the impresario of 'picket-mob rule'.

In short Benn, the former minister, Privy Councillor, etc., has become the personification of a radicalising labour movement which is becoming dangerous.

So the increasingly unnerved and baffled British bourgeoisie and their agents in the press (and in the labour movement too) go for him, wildly and repeatedly, blood in their eyes.

If the TV and press lynch mob which bays so ferociously at Benn, could

use rope instead of lies then Benn would be dead by now. Instead they have killed his 'respectable' reputation.

Now there is some justice in this attitude to Benn from the bourgeoisie's point of view. Not since Nye Bevan's crusading meetings of 26 and 27 years ago have there been labour movement meetings like those that assemble for Benn.

Enthusiasm

No-one since Bevan then has been able as Benn is to evoke such interest and enthusiasm among workers for socialist politics, to draw out and focus the anger workers feel at what is happening to our society and to create confidence in masses of workers that their desires and hopes for a better existence and a different system count for something now and can be made reality in the future.

Standard bearer

The high general regard in which Benn is held by rank and file labour movement activists — more because of than in spite of the media campaign — is the proof that the media, the bourgeoisie, and the right wing and soft left of the Labour Party are not entirely misdirecting their hatred.

Benn is today the standard bearer and the personification of a labour movement reviving itself and trying to ready itself to meet the onslaught of Thatcherism in Britain and the challenge of the worst capitalist crisis for four decades.

Like the German socialists in the 1870s and after — or, according to his own favoured analogy, like the Labour Representation Committee which created the Labour Party — Benn, whatever his ideas, is building and rebuilding the labour movement, and playing a great part in helping it to shake itself awake politically from the long wasting torpor of the '60s and '70s.

The labour movement would be reviving even without Benn and his activities. But it happens that the revival has so far taken the form of a 'Bennite' movement, led by Benn and influenced, if not quite dominated, by his ideas.

Christian

Yet Benn, measured by his formal political ideas, political proposals and positions, is not very radical. His political ideas and proposals lag far behind the role he is playing.

Not only is he not a revolutionary — which of course he does not claim to be — he is simply not yet even very left-wing in formal and conventional labour movement terms.

He is not a Marxist — though against the witch-hunters he insists that Marxism is an integral and legitimate part of the labour movement: Tony Benn is a Christian.

Fabian

He is still a member of the Fabian Society that anti-Marxist academy of middle-class socialism which was deliberately created to

combat Marxism in the labour movement, and historically has been the ideological breeding ground and nursery for the bacillus of reformist class-collaboration that has helped tie the labour movement to the ruling class for 100 years and has stunted and wasted its strength and potential.

Benn combines a tremendous work of agitation, using his own very wide experience in Parliament and government, against the existing system, with the most limited conclusions and recommendations on what to do about it.

Of course, many of his devotees favour radical or revolutionary solutions and many more will come to do so, partly on the basis of Benn's agitation: those who hate Benn so much understand this and dread it.

Civil service

For example, he proves in speeches and writings that enormous, even the decisive power in Britain, is not exercised by elected representatives at all, but by the permanent civil service, linked by a thousand threads of wealth, family, education and social intercourse with the bankers, industrialists and landowners. What does he propose to do about it?

Break the power of the civil service? Adopt a version of the system of the US Republic, under which key

public officials would be elected?

Nothing of the sort: he just wants to set up countervailing pressures from the labour movement to balance the pressure on 'the Minister' and keep him from buckling!

He speaks convincingly about the dangers of a military coup in Britain to stop radical socialist change. He does not propose agitation and action to make that impossible by, for example, disarming the officers, or replacing the standing army with a militia

Opposed

He rightly insists that the monarchy's reserve powers, and constitutional formalities whereby things are done in the name of the monarch, could be used against the labour movement, and would be, to stop radical change. Is he a republican? No, he is not!

He is now against nuclear weapons and for British unilateral nuclear disarmament, and the expulsion of US nuclear bases from Britain. NATO is entirely dependent on such weapons. Does Benn want Britain to leave NATO? Not that he has said.

He denounces the decisive power of the giant multinational companies, British-based and others over our lives. He does not advocate or favour the nationalisation of these firms. He successfully opposed a resolution at last year's Labour Party conference to commit Labour to nationalise firms declaring redundancies.

Other points could be added to the list. In terms of policy, Benn remains confined to proposals to put a Labour government in 'control' of the economy by way of tariff barriers against cheaper foreign goods, withdrawal from the EEC, and planning agreements between the government and privately-owned firms. He favours workers' participation in the control of these firms, and profit-sharing also, where appropriate co-ops.

People

Most significantly, while Benn is devoted to the labour movement built by the working class, he rarely speaks of class, instead preferring people on one side and establishment on the other.

Evidently Benn recognises the class struggle as a 'fact of life', and sympathises with the right side in it. The decisive thing, though, is to accept it as something to be fought to a conclusion, and won by our side.

'Britain as a Colony' displays all Benn's strength and political weaknesses, and accentuates the weaknesses.



What workers on the big Labour Party demonstrations hear is not the same as what Benn says. One worker at the Cardiff demonstration, speaking to Socialist Organiser, condemned the platform call for import controls and drew the conclusion, 'If ever a bloke was needed here today, it's Tony Benn'.

* Published in issue no.1 of the Labour Party's theoretical journal, New Socialist, and in a fuller version as the first article in Benn's new collection, 'Arguments for Democracy', edited by Chris Mullin, which comes out later this month.

Continued next week

-Red Shelley-

POET AND AGITATOR

WENDY FRANKLAND
reviews Paul Foot's "Red
Shelley", published by
Sidgwick and Jackson,
£5.95.

BACK IN 1887, a certain Mr. A.G. Ross (BA) informed the Shelley Society that:

"Now no-one can contest the right of anyone, even though he may be a mere sans culotte who runs around with a red rag, to quote Shelley when or where he pleases, but when the blatant and cruel socialism of the street endeavours to use the lofty and sublime socialism of the study for its own base purpose it is time that with no uncertain sound all real lovers of the latter should disavow any sympathy with the former."

To judge from the general reaction to Paul Foot's book on Shelley from the academic literary establishment and the bourgeois press, the spirit of Mr Ross (BA) is still alive and well.

For a journalist — of all people — to write a book about a great poet and thinker would appear to be bad enough. (The critic of the Times Literary Supplement criticizes Foot for not having the same mastery of style as Shelley!

But when a socialist attempts to free Shelley from his "academic prison" — to pass on Shelley's political enthusiasms to today's socialists, radicals and feminists in the hope that their commitment will be strengthened and enriched by Shelley as mine have been" — well the image of hordes of 'sans culottes' lefties quoting Shelley for their own 'base purpose' is obviously sufficient to send the scholars into apoplexy!

For many of us, Shelley, along with most of our liter-

ary heritage, has probably been successfully killed off by the English educational system. If any image remains of him it is that of a bit of a pookah who wrote about skylarks — or to put it more kindly "a beautiful but ineffectual angel."

The life-long political agitator who was kicked out of Oxford for publishing a pamphlet on atheism, who railed against the monarchy and who incited the masses to:

"Rise like lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number
Shake your chains to earth
like dew
Which in sleep had fallen
on you —
Ye are many — they are few"

is severely suppressed. The opening chapter of Foot's study describes the background of social and political oppression that prevailed in Britain during Shelley's adult life (1810-22).

The governments of Castlereagh and Eldon attempted to stop the spread of revolutionary ideas from across the Channel by Riot Acts and censorship, and the exploitation of the working class through such measures as the Speenhamland system of poor relief.

Labelled as an atheist and republican, publication of his writings stifled, Shelley lived most of his life on the move, much of it in exile in France and Italy. This isolation no doubt led to inconsistencies in Shelley's political thought; his horror of

physical violence led him to cling to a notion of peaceful revolution that intellectually he knew would not enable the workers and peasants to achieve power.

He was, however, capable of great political insights, such as the need for political parties or 'associations' in which workers could achieve their aims by collective action. His awareness accentuated, perhaps, by his own isolation and that of the philosophical reformers of his time, he wrote that political change:

"... will not be kept alive by each citizen sitting quietly by his own fireside and saying that things are going on well, because the rain does not beat on him, and he has books and leisure to read them, because he has money and is at liberty to accumulate luxuries to himself."

'Individuals acting singly, with whatever energy, can never effect so much as a society... for carrying by united or individual exertion such measures into effect when determined on.'

A major part of Foot's book is on Shelley's view of feminism. His assertion 'Can man be free if woman be a slave?' can well be considered today, as much as in Shelley's time when divorce and property laws allowed women virtually no freedom whatsoever.

As Foot points out, however, there is some controversy (not only amongst feminists) that Shelley's own relationships with women did not fulfill his ideals — his first wife committed suicide after

Peterloo Massacre, 1819



he had left her for Mary Godwin. However, lines such as those he wrote to Mary during her sadness after the deaths of her two children show the love and respect he held for her: 'My dearest Mary, wherefore has thou gone And left me in this dreary world alone? Thy form is here indeed — a lovely one — But thou art fled, gone down the dreary road, That leads to sorrows most obscure abode; Thou sittest on the hearth of pale despair, Where for thine own sake I cannot follow thee.'

'Ironically, soon after Shelley met his death by drowning in Italy, the laws on publishing were liberalised in Britain. This could have enabled him to return to take an active role in workers' struggles, as he had done whilst he had been in Wales.

His early death led to the gross sentimentalisation of him and his work. Nonetheless, his political writings were widely read amongst working class people in the 19th century — prompting Mr Ross's outburst.

A statement attributed to Marx comparing Byron and Shelley says that whereas Byron, had he lived, would have undoubtedly become a reactionary bourgeois, "Shelley was a thorough revolutionary and would have remained in the van of socialism all his life."

Paul Foot convinces us of this, describing his own discovery of the power of Shelley's writing. "He became for me like a great tree of knowledge and I like a squirrel scampering down each undiscovered branch."

Anyone interested in sharing this enthusiasm and drawing inspiration from Shelley's political thought should read Red Shelley.

TOO MUCH REALITY?

"I deeply regret that a journal which I regard as being part of the broader labour movement should carry a review which denigrates a film in which all the participants were representatives of the working class and which was made with the intention of presenting a working class point of view."

Two angry letters from steelworkers in Tribune last week responded to Chris Jones' review of 'A Question of Leadership', Ken Loach's TV film on the steel strike.

The film was practically the only time workers have appeared on television discussing their struggles — indeed, practically the only time workers have appeared on screen speaking directly to the audience rather than via an interviewer, or that ordinary people have appeared collectively discussing a common effort.

Jones' verdict: "Trots, loudmouths, professionals." "Much of what they had to say was very predictable. They did not add to the sum total of our knowledge."

"Leadership" was the cry but it had an air of unreality. Messrs. Thornett and Connolly, who confronted Bill

Sirs and George Wright of Wales TUC in the late addition to the film, are both self-consciously obstreperous individuals. Definitely not forelock touchers.

"When they talk about lack of leadership they mean that the leadership is not heading in the direction they want. They really want to be the leaders themselves."

Having disposed of the "would-be leadership" as vulgar loudmouths, and their views as unrealistic (The TUC, through its democratic structure, is not geared to quasi-revolutionary industrial action"), Jones also distances himself from the trade union leaders: "Between them lay the yawning gulf of reality..."

And for the "realities", he appeals to the "steelworkers who had taken redundancy payments, and thus undermined the union policy of opposing redundancies..."

One of the following week's letters, from Swansea comments sharply, "It is news to many South Wales steelworkers made redundant that the unions opposed redundancies..."

The truth is that Jones' hostility to the film comes not from its "missing real-

ity but from it being too close to reality."

TV normally presents an artificially bland 'balanced' picture of the world. And many semi left-wingers in the labour movement have a similar glossed-over vision.

There are lots of problems, and progress is very difficult, so the story goes. Nevertheless, it advances at its own sweet rate. The present leadership is, all in all the best leadership possible at the present stage. Our job is just to nudge it forward, continue our day-to-day work and be sure that it will all turn out for the best.

It's a comforting vision — and one that allows, or rationalises, a friendly, passive attitude to the present bureaucracy of the labour movement.

The programme revealed a reality very different from that vision — a reality of harsh conflict between workers in struggle and their present leadership, and an urgent need for a new leadership if future defeats are to be avoided.

MARTIN THOMAS



Shelley



Writeback to
Socialist Organiser
28 Middle Lane
London N8

Dole swindle

MOST OF us are only too aware of the class conscious Thatcher government's attacks on the hard won rights of the working class: massive cutbacks in housing, education, welfare and the health service; depriving people of the right to earn a living; attacks on basic trade union rights; policies designed to increase inequality and to prop up a crisis-ridden capitalist system.

However, until now, most of you will not have been aware of one particular attack which means that the Tories are depriving workers of sickness and unemployment benefit.

You will not have been aware, because the decision to withhold benefit has not been made openly, but in a manner so as to attract the least amount of attention.

During the recent period of industrial action by the Civil Service unions, the Records Division at Newcastle was closed down. This made it impossible to pay claimants sickness and unemployment benefit on their individual records.

In most cases, flat rate benefit has been paid under an emergency procedure, but unless claimants were aware, and able to produce duplicate P 60s, earnings related benefit was not

paid. Staff are now busy clearing the backlog of work.

However, those claimants who both 'signed-on' and 'signed-off' during the period of industrial action are going to have to wait an awful long time for their full benefit entitlement!

These particular claims were filed separately in Benefit offices, to be dealt with when normal work was resumed. But, instructions have now been given to Benefit offices that these claims are to remain "filed away" and no further action taken on them. Consequently, many claimants will now be deprived of their benefit entitlement, unless they present themselves at the benefit office and demand their rights!

CLPs, trade unions and trades councils should mount campaigns to expose this secretive and underhand way in which the Tories are depriving working people of their rights.

They should be supporting workers fighting to bring down this class-ridden Thatcher government, and should lead the struggle to form a workers' government which will represent the interests of the working class.

Yours fraternally,
TOM GUTHRIE
SO supporter
Manchester

We must break up the EEC

THE LATEST moves of the EEC to block subsidies to the British steel industry exposes the extent to which the McGregor rationalisation schemes are subject to the dictates of the Eurocrats at Brussels.

McGregor hopes that this hurdle will provide an opportunity to force into the open the price-fixing, dumping and subsidising methods of other members of the Common Market, especially Benelux and France, but this does not disguise the fact that the success of his plans is entirely dependent upon political concessions made by the European Commission, an unelected body whose last President was Roy Jenkins.

All of the closures and pay-offs, as at Corby and Shorton, were made in the name of rationalisation to 'save' the industry and workers are now to be told that these 'sacrifices' are to be set at naught because of the refusal of the institutions of the EEC to allow the final £560 million of the rescue package.

What hopes can there be for a left Labour government, a foreseeable outcome of British politics in the next few years, wishing to extend further subsidies to steel and other industries?

Time and again they would confront the veto of the Commission and other

reactionary, unrepresentative European institutions.

Imagine how much more hostile these institutions would be to further measures of nationalisation embarked on by such a government.

Any expansion of the productive forces within the framework of the EEC, through improvements in productivity, can only be at the expense of the working class. There is no validity in the concept that somehow the Market is a progressive formation analogous to the Zollverein (customs union) which preceded and paved the way for the creation of a united Germany in the mid-nineteenth century.

The EEC is not a creation of capitalism in its youthful vigour but of the system in its senility. It is essentially a political formation which will not brook any 'socialistic' measures by a left Labour Government.

The rebuilding of British industry by a government truly representative of the interests of workers can only come about in conflict with the EEC. The struggle for socialism is therefore inseparable from the break-up of the Common Market, to which end British withdrawal will be a decisive step forward.

IAN McALMAN,
Glasgow

Not muddled but cowardly

AS A former supporter of Militant I was very interested to read Ray Saunders letter (SO 48) comparing the Militant's position on Algeria with their position on Ireland.

Ted Grant and his pals certainly owe us an explanation. A graphic example of the point Ray makes was Pontecorvo's film 'Battle of Algiers' which showed what Ted then called liberators and now would call terrorists indiscriminately shooting up the colons in a manner technically more reminiscent of the UDA than the Provos.

However, we all make mistakes. Perhaps Ted thinks that Mitterand should send troops back to Algiers to arrest the Algerian leaders on the basis that they were terrorists all along?

After all there were French settlers in Algeria long before the actual military occupation of 1832 - nearly as long as the planters in Ireland in fact - and some of them were undoubtedly workers.

Shouldn't we support their right to return, or is Ted Grant just mixed up?

No, he isn't. This line of reasoning is all wrong. It is not a lack of clarity but cowardice that makes Militant take up their positions on Ireland.

It was relatively easy to defend the FLN or the Vietcong in the British working class movement. But to call for Catholic and Protestant workers to unite is not marked by woolly-headed idealism but by rank fear and spinelessness.

Finally, in a recent article

in The Guardian, the French Gaullist leader Chaban Delmas was quoted as saying:

VICHY

"Today in the French Establishment it's about as popular to admit that you opposed withdrawal of troops from Algeria twenty years ago, as it was to say you supported Vichy and collaborated with the Nazis."

GRANT

One can imagine in a few years time when children ask: "Who actually opposed the withdrawal of troops from Northern Ireland?" The reply would begin "Well, there was Ted Grant ..."

ROBERT BROUGHTON
Manchester AUEW 15

REPORTING THE HOUSING CRISIS

WHILE NOT agreeing with everything D.J. Wells wrote in his letter (Socialist Organiser no.49) - for instance, where he refers to the 'weakness of organised labour', I would see this as the weakness of a leadership in the working class - I agree about the issue of housing.

The massive rent and rate increases have in some areas met some fightbacks in the form of rent strikes. And many tenants must be in extreme difficulties with payments and in arrears.

Many families may find themselves in the position of being evicted and homeless.

A report recently published, called 'Homeless in Hackney' and compiled by the homeless themselves with the aid and support of local groups, is available from Hackney Homeless Action, Box 39, 136 Kingsland High St, London E2. (Price £1).

The foreword states: "This Report details not only the sad plight of the homeless in Hackney, but

also highlights the weakness of the Council in controlling 'bed and breakfast hotels' and its failure to provide alternative temporary accommodation.

"The pressure on public housing and the restrictive financial policies of central government are part of this problem, but so too is the attitude of officials and councillors towards the homeless, who in the Poor Law tradition are blamed and punished for their predicament."

I would ask and encourage D.J. Wells to read the report and review it for Socialist Organiser.

I would myself, but I'm totally committed to the child care issues that D.J. Wells praises Socialist Organiser for not being tokenistic on!

Perhaps similar reports could be initiated in other localities, and we could help work out some socialist alternatives and recommendations.

ANN MCKINLEY,
Oxford.

Union is the wrong word

I DON'T know whether Mick Jarman (SO 49) confuses workers, but his letter sure confuses me.

In para 3 Mick tells us that through the Unemployed Workers' Union in Leicester he has encouraged those who have never been in a trade union before to join one, and then in para 5 he claims that union rules don't permit this and that it will take years before rule changes will allow it.

Is Mick like the late lamented Martin Peters, years ahead of his time?

In any case he's wrong. The broad picture was shown in a recent Labour Research survey.

This showed that of Britain's 50 biggest unions, six (in the Civil Service and the Post Office) do not allow unemployed members.

24 have rules which prevent the recruitment of

the unemployed. 12 have rules which are either silent on this matter or specifically state that the unemployed may be recruited but at full contributions.

Three allow members in training to join with limited rights to benefit; and five permit the unemployed to join with full rights and reduced contributions.

The problem is obviously influenced by the size and coverage of different unions, but apart from the rules, the contributions barrier should not be underestimated.

However, there are loopholes which can be exploited. In the TGWU, for example, there is no explicit exclusion by rule.

Moreover, avoiding full contributions does not depend on awaiting the next rules revision but on favourable interpretation of

a rule which provides for special categories of membership to pay 20p and receive half benefit.

This is far from satisfactory but it provides the starting point for a fight within Britain's biggest union.

There are similar provisions in other rulebooks, and the TUC's position provides legitimacy and a lever.

The Unemployed Workers' Unions have made clear that they support dual membership. The problem is that this position can play into the hands of those who are opposed to a powerful unemployed movement within the unions.

The TUC has stated its opposition to specific unemployed workers' unions. The Guardian recently

reported the case of Bob Cooper, who claimed that the T&G had removed him from a Trades Council and tried to expel him from the union on the grounds of dual loyalties because of his involvement with an unemployed workers' union, which had gone as far as applying to the Certification Office for listing as an independent trade union.

I do feel that John McHeath (SO 46) is right, and that the use of the term unemployed workers' union rather than group or council is important.

It is a tactical error which gives a pretext and legitimacy to those who wish to wilfully misunderstand and use arguments about dual unionism to mobilise the genuinely confused.

CAROL HOBBS,
Bolton.

Discrimination on the dole

BEING unemployed is frustrating and humiliating for everyone, but women are often subject to even more harassment in an attempt by the government to tie them both ideologically and economically to the home.

Under the present rules, married women are excluded from certain benefits and it is therefore assumed that women are dependent on their husbands, or in my case on the man who happened to live in the same house!

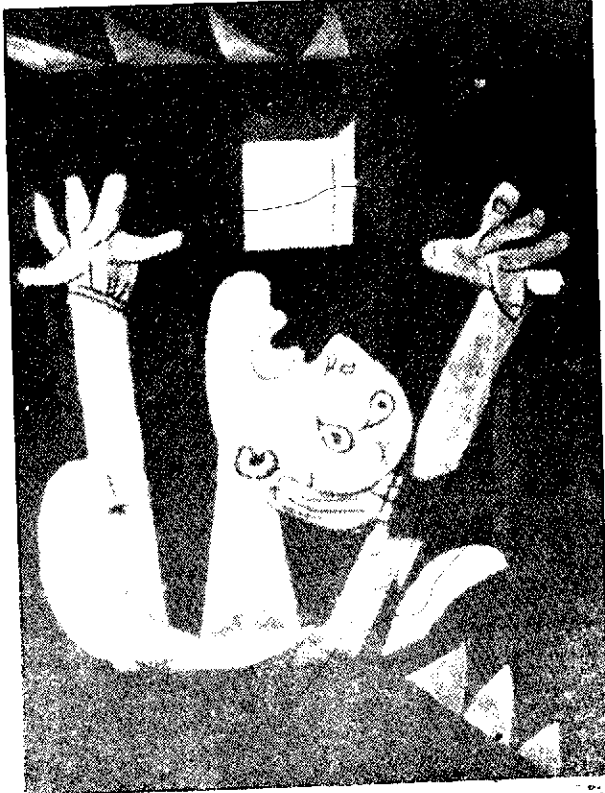
After a temporary job lasting only two weeks I was made to wait almost a month before a visitor was sent round to 're-assess' my claim for Supplementary Benefit. The questions asked included, "Has this man proposed to you and if so, why did you refuse?", "Have you any children, by this man or by anyone else?", and "Do neighbours treat you as a married couple?"

The man who shared the same house (the one on the left) happens to be a friend who needed a temporary place to live.

I was lucky in that I received all the back-dated money owing to me, but this 'co-habitation rule' is used in many cases as an attack on the right of women to claim benefit independently, and is often 'proved' on the basis of very dubious evidence.

The unemployed must organise to fight against Tory attacks on jobs and wages. This can be done through Unemployed Workers' Unions which seek to unite the employed with the unemployed as a basis on which to take up all issues relating to the working class, including those specifically relating to women.

KAREN HARRIS,
Leicester Unemployed Workers' Union.



MORE ART!

THE INTERESTING article on 'Picasso's Picassos' in Socialist Organiser no. 49 was welcome.

Art (not just painting and sculpture, but also novels, drama, poetry and the various types of music) is, like all the positive creations of humanity, distorted by the restrictions of bourgeois society. It is oriented towards a minority and is restricted by the commercial processes of capitalism.

A regular 'SO Arts' feature (along the lines of the useful 'SO Science')

would be a positive addition to the paper. It would go further towards fulfilling one of the important functions of a socialist newspaper - analysing important and relevant aspects of life from a working class viewpoint.

Discussion of art in all its varieties - revolutionary, conservative or reactionary, should be encouraged in a balanced labour movement newspaper. Perhaps other comrades can contribute articles, reviews, and opinions?

ANDY DIXON,
Liverpool

Combined strength

AS A reader of Socialist Organiser who used to follow Socialist Press, I would just like to say how much the new Socialist Organiser has impressed me: both in coverage of industry, and the general layout.

It is not to say that Socialist Press did not do its job, but there is a great improvement. To me this must reflect the strengths of Socialist Organiser and Socialist Press supporters combined in the weekly.

KEN BALL
Princess track, Cowley
Assembly Plant, BL



RIP for a loudmouth

by Pat Longman

THE TIMES management have found themselves a perfect Industrial Relations Officer - Reg Brady, NATSOPA machine Father of Chapel at the Sunday Times, and an ex-member of the NATSOPA executive.

Reputation

For many years Brady paraded himself as a militant and left-winger. He regularly attended trade union and labour movement rallies, and was never far from the platform.

He got himself a reputation for militancy,

particularly during the Times dispute, where he was regarded as having taken an uncompromising attitude towards management during the 11-month lock-out.

Shock

Many people doubted his motives, but the complete sell-out has still come as a shock.

Presumably, Brady believes that the £20,000-plus a year that he will pocket will compensate for any misgivings he has about stabbing his work-mates in the back and joining up with the bosses.

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Brady

St Mary's sets day of action for Oct 3

A DAY of action in support of the occupied St Mary's Hospital, London W9, has been set for October 3.

After assembling at 11am outside the hospital, workers, local people and other supporters of the fight to keep St Mary's open will have a march. In the afternoon, Health Minister Gerard Vaughan has been challenged to come to the hospital to debate the closure.

Delegations

A special appeal is being made for delegations from

by Dettie Clinton

unions and tenants' associations.

Meeting

Meanwhile the Occupation Committee is going ahead with other plans to strengthen the occupation. A meeting with doctors is planned for September 21, to win their support for the occupation and make sure they keep referring patients to St Mary's W9.

And NUPE is doing a

survey among nurses to ask them if they think that there are enough nurses in the hospital.

Support is needed on the regular 8am-8pm picket line - especially from delegations from trade union and Labour Party branches. Saturday afternoon is the best time.

Support

Messages of support and money should be sent to: John Dolan, c/o Cashier's Department, St Mary's Hospital, Harrow Rd, London W9

YOP youth rally

by Mick Liggins

IN NEWCASTLE on August 28, a rally against the slave labour Youth Opportunities Programme brought together hundreds of youth willing to take up a fight against the Manpower Services Commission and the Tory government to increase the present rate of £23.50 to full trade union rates.

Presently 18 year old youth are earning 10p a day more than the dole after paying travelling expenses.

The rally was given the backing of NUPE, who are calling on youth on the schemes to join the union in order to be in a position to

fight.

The rally was the first significant step in organising the YOP workers, a task that will prove very difficult and is the responsibility of all trade unionists. It is also in the interests of trade unionists whose jobs are being taken by YOP workers.

Employers do not have to pay YOP workers - they actually receive an allowance for taking them on.

But all this goes on without a word from most TUC leaders - except calls on employers to take on young workers!

Slight pressure was put on the TUC bureaucracy with a motion by the TGWU for the TUC to approve

work experience schemes only in firms that have unions. According to the Sunday Times, this proposal if passed would have "crippled" YOPs.

The pressure however was shortlived, as the TUC has composed the resolution and the compromise now just calls for six month courses to have a bigger 'training element' and for a greater drive against YOP workers substituting for regular employees, greater hopefulness than the present 'drive', which involves Len Murray, Terry Duffy and Joe Gormley begging employers to take on YOP youth and to get paid by the government for it.

SACKED FOR STRIKING!

by Stan Crooke

15 women members of the National Union of Hosiery and Knitwear Workers at Glencroft Knitwear, Ingram Street, Glasgow, are in the third week of their official strike, after a walkout over redundancy and subsequent threats of sacking of all 15 by the boss, Mr Leon Newman.

They went back initially on the advice of the Scottish Secretary of their union, Mike Humphries, so that a meeting could be arranged, but Newman refused to see them collectively as union members, so they came out again.

Efforts to get Newman to negotiate have been fruitless and he has issued

undated dismissal notices to the women.

Deliveries of buttons and thread have been stopped. Postmen are refusing to pick up goods for despatch but the rest of the workforce (30 non-unionised workers) are crossing the picket line, have torn up leaflets asking them to join the strike, and are also despatching the goods blacked by the postal workers.

The union have taken the case to a tribunal, to be heard on September 2.

Meanwhile efforts to get the firm's washing operations at another plant blacked are being made.

Messages and donations to NUHKW, 44 Kellingrove Street, Glasgow.

FT unions' eyes still shut

by Clare Russell

OFFICIALS of the print unions NGA and NATSOPA are deep in discussions with the Financial Times management, trying to avoid the showdown set for this Friday, September 4.

NGA machine minders have set a strike for September 4 - and FT bosses have said that if the strike goes ahead, they will lock out all 600 printworkers and publish a scab edition 'by any means necessary'.

The officials must be confident of making a deal. In any case, they have done nothing to prepare for the event of a deal not being made.

The NUJ is currently engaged in merger talks with the NGA, and is obliged to support the NGA in any dispute. But the NGA has made no request to the NUJ to black a scab edition of the FT.

And the FT NUJ chapel is not likely to impose blacking of its

own accord.

Support from the union which organises the distribution workers, SOGAT, would also be crucial in the event of a lock-out. But again the NGA has made no appeal.

The FT bosses undoubtedly have made their preparations for a showdown. And if the union officials won't prepare, it is time that the Fleet Street rank and file raised the alarm.

CORRECTIONS

In last week's article on the TGWU and the Labour deputy leadership, we said that branches in Region 5 had received only Denis Healey's and John Silkin's election addresses. In fact they have received only Silkin's.

In the article on the Financial Times we said that the FT NATSOPA chapel had not met. This should have read: the NATSOPA clerical chapel has not met - even though its FoC has received a lock-out notice.

UCW ranks rally against sell-out

by Ann McKinley

UCW MEMBERS in British Telecom recently had a ballot on this year's wage deal. UCW members in the past have seen claims supposedly amounting to 24% yet at the end of the day have ended up with only 9% plus a lot of strings. For Telecom grades this

year is no exception.

The shorter working week claim is to be left on the table as a matter of "continuous discussion and a report to be presented to conference in May 1982".

A 15% pay increase was the claim, and the offer is a 9% increase on scales from 1 July, plus 2% productivity from last year to be consoli-

dated.

A 10% increase was demanded to close the gap between telephonists and supervisors, but there is no mention of this in the deal.

The deal also includes a one year productivity scheme, amounting to 2% payable in December 1981 and April 1982 if earned; and a 1% productivity payment to cleaners, doorkeepers, liftpersons, postpersons employed by British Telecom if the 2% productivity is earned by main UCW grades.

This was the deal after only three meetings and a few letters.

Management stated "that outside industries, particularly in the trading part of the public services were accepting settlements substantially lower than the Retail Price Index" - and they expected UCW members to go along with this.

The Broad Left supports inflation proofing of wages in its programme, and should be popularising and pushing for this in next year's wage claim.

In reference to the productivity deal, management stated:

"There is always the possibility that during the year, for some unforeseen reason, and contrary to the spirit of this agreement, a union or sections of its members decide to reduce cooperation or even take some form of industrial action.

"There can be no guarantee of a minimum payment irrespective of results and in any circumstances."

This year alone we've seen in the postal side overtime bans, selective action, walkouts and lockouts over the "improved working methods" productivity scheme.

The new British Telecoms management have said that it is their intention to suggest some form of local productivity scheme for the next financial year commencing April 1, and are obviously worried that some Telecoms members will take action.

At conference this year, UCW General Secretary Tom Jackson went through the motions of having a debate on the shorter working week, and said that the Executive accepted the policy of a reduction in the working week without loss of pay. "The Executive was determined to try and support TUC policy to increase the number of jobs in the Post Office by reducing the amount of hours worked."

Yet when it came to the Telecoms pay claim Jackson stated:

"If British Telecom are prepared to accept the payment of the 9% plus 2% and a separate productivity scheme then we for our part, and with a good deal of reluctance, will not insist on hours reductions at this stage.

"We will however leave the claim on the table and expect that meaningful discussions will take place in order that we can report to our conference in May an agreement to be implemented on July 1 next year."

The productivity scheme will mean low staffing and nil recruitment.

The 3-year productivity scheme for international telephonists will result in the closures of switchrooms and exchanges.

The UCW Broad Left is holding a rally in Birmingham on 6 September and must show for disillusioned UCW members that there is an alternative to the politics of yesterday - job losses, falling living standards and bad working conditions.

The Executive is already paranoid about the Broad Left. In the union journal's conference report, a speaker who had a Broad Left badge on when his photo was taken had it scribbled out in the photo, and all references to the Broad Left from the Executive in the Deputy Leadership debate have been edited out!

UCW BROAD LEFT RALLY

2 p.m. Sunday 6 September Dugbeth Hall, Birmingham. More details about the UCW Broad Left and its journal, Communicate, available from: P. Dodd, 11 Whitley Street, Longsight, Manchester M13 0WR.

Black MAXWELL!

CRUCIAL meetings of Observer and Sunday Times NUJ members are due to take place this week to discuss 'blacking colour magazines printed by Robert Maxwell's empire.'

The call comes in support of Pergamon Press NUJ

members, sacked more than six months ago for striking on pay and conditions.

All possible support and total blacking against Maxwell is the only way to win back these victimised workers' jobs.

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BL wage review

Hawley cons convenors

by Bill Peters

TGWU convenors from BL Cars, meeting last Friday blocked one attempt to impose a totally unrepresentative negotiating committee on BL workers and opened the door to another.

The convenors were meeting in Birmingham to determine their position on the annual wage review; both the nature of the claim and how it will be negotiated this year. (The original, grossly unrepresentative National Joint Negotiating Committee [NJNC] was disbanded last year and despite pressure from the plants both management and national officials have deliberately dragged their feet in negotiating its reconstruction on democratic lines).

Last Friday's meeting was confronted with a blatant attempt by TGWU national car industry officer Grenville Hawley to manoeuvre it into a decision which would effectively put all negotiating rights in the hands of the national officials of the eleven unions involved.

Noone would have known from Hawley's report to the meeting that the policy of the TGWU is to fight for a democratic, proportionately representative NJNC.

Noone would have known from his report that this is the policy of every TGWU committee at local and regional level and even the National Committee to



Alex Kitson

which he is responsible.

Everything which has been done from the plants and the committees over the past year to achieve that policy was ignored.

Instead Hawley gave a report based on the meeting of national officials which he had taken upon himself to convene four days earlier over the heads of the convenors.

He reported that the officers' meeting had adopted a six point claim including a "substantial increase" and then asked the convenors to endorse his report.

Had it been endorsed it would have established by precedent a procedure putting everything in the hands of the national officials with himself as convenor.

A sharp two-hour debate resulted in Hawley's report being rejected and a decision taken to send a delegation to see Alex Kitson as acting General Secretary apparently to complain about Hawley's actions.

The meeting then went on to endorse the Combine Committee claim of £20 across the board.

But it didn't end there. Hawley then proposed that

the meeting demand the resurrection of the old NJNC on a "once off basis" — a body which has been repeatedly denounced as unrepresentative of TGWU members and which the TGWU has been trying to get rid of for two years.

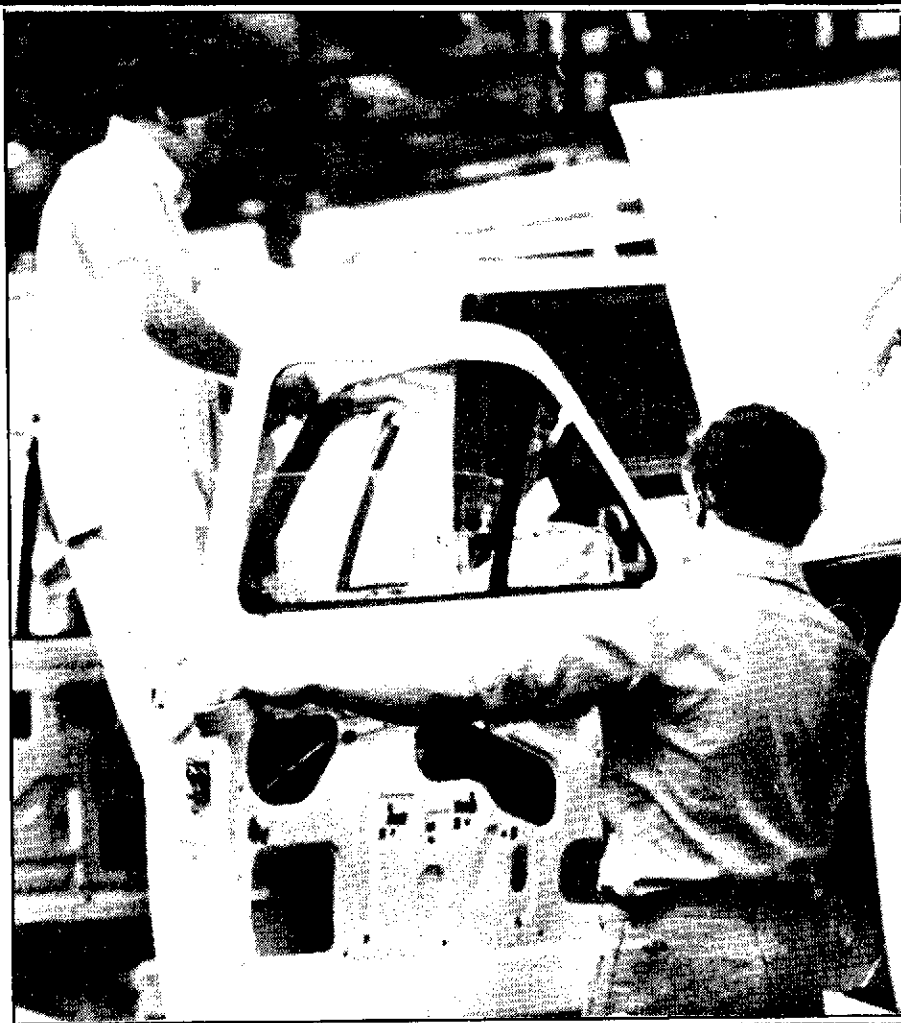
Hawley informed the convenors that he had already discussed this proposal with management who had rejected it out of hand. They were quite determined that they would only negotiate the review with national officials.

The meeting then voted to accept Hawley's proposals, effectively abandoning previous TGWU policy, and giving Hawley what was in reality his fall-back position from the start.

Neither the Combine Committee alternatives of a properly reconstructed committee on democratic lines or a temporary committee on equally democratic lines was discussed nor was the policy adopted at the Cowley Assembly Plant mass meeting. This had called for either a democratically reconstituted committee or alternatively for the TGWU, as the major union representing the vast majority of production workers to elect its own democratic structure and demand to negotiate directly with BL.

The vote was a serious retreat by the convenors, coming before the wage claim has even got off the ground. They seem to think that BL will continue to reject the resurrection of the old committee and have decided to meet again on 1 October to consider the position if deadlock remains.

BL, however, are out to get the best deal they can. If they fail to get a committee of 100% national officials, they will be happy to resurrect a body which has served them well in the past.



30% more output for less wages

by Tony Richardson



In cars, the report says, "Output per man is 30% up." This comes in three waves: modernisation of

plants such as on the Metro, fewer lay-offs, and (mostly) the greater exploitation of the workforce through speed-up, greater mobility and flexibility of labour.

Reduction

In exchange for this 30% increase in productivity the Leyland workers have received a wage reduction — our wage increase was below the inflation rate.

The one profitable area mentioned in the report is "overseas operations" with "India doing particularly well". No doubt the anti-working class nature of Mrs Gandhi's government has helped.

South Africa is discretely not mentioned.

PRESS GANG



THE Daily Star is running a competition. It wants to know if any of its readers can work out how much Michael Edwardes, chairman of BL, gets paid.

To help its readers it has published a statement from the Company's Press Secretary designed to put the record straight.

To the workers on BL assembly lines it looks quite simple. Edwardes had exempted himself from the sacrifices he was inflicting on everyone else.

His rise from £64,500 a year to just under £100,000 a year worked out somewhere around 36%.

No doubt it is simple thinking like this which explains why these workers are stuck on the shop floor while Edwardes trundles off to another business lunch.

The Daily Mail puts us right. His rise came "at a compound annual rate of only 5%." The paper quotes the Company Secretary as saying this was less than increases to shop floor workers. (How about a whip round down the line to

help him out?)

But back to the Star and its helpful guide to his salary. This tells us that comparing Edwardes pay now with what he was on when he was on loan from Chloride is like comparing apples with pears.

The Star competition (you are too late, it has closed) offered free apples and pears for a year to the reader who could make Edwardes pay coincide with a figure worked out on a computer.

There was more to the prize. "The equivalent of 21 months emoluments at £4.08 per calendar month plus 16.7% obscurity allowance. In short, one hundred quid.

There were few other jokes as BL announced its half-yearly loss. The main thrust of the press comment was to contrast that loss with the "unreasonable" demand for an extra £20 a week.

The battle to cow BL workers into submission has started early. Industrial reporters have been thumbing the pages of their dictionaries of insults to hail down on the workers who

keep Edwardes in luxury.

One way of getting two bites at the cherry is to predict the losses one day (and attack the workers) and then report the official announcement of the losses the next day (and attack the workers again).

The Sun started it with "The Big Question" in a centre-page spread. The big question — in large type is apparently the following. "British Leyland is losing £1,000 a minute. It's your money — can you really afford it any longer?"

Each article on the page ended with an estimate of how much BL had lost in the time to read it — disappointingly there was no estimate of how much Edwardes had 'earned' in the same period.

The Sun article was only the first in a series in a variety of paper searching for the final solution for BL, all of which are very nearly as nasty for the workers as that sounds.

BL workers should stand by for further in-depth scrutiny. And it won't be into the size of Edwardes' take-home emoluments.

Longbridge: rebuild stewards' movement

by Jim Denham

SIX OF THE eight members of the Longbridge Works Committee have been put back on their jobs on the shopfloor.

Only convenor Jack Adams and Chairman Brian Chambers remain as fulltime stewards.

Rough

It was participation that made a lot of senior stewards, full-timers, and in exchange for this and other perks many of them saw themselves as "firemen", dampening down militancy and telling workers to put grievances through procedure instead of taking action.

Now that the last rem-

nants of the cosy participation set-up have disappeared, many of those who sought positions when the perks were around are now selling their jobs and getting out as the going gets rough.

Earlier this year the clerical staff convenor Bill Linthwaite took voluntary redundancy because (he told the council) he was "not prepared to stand for the continual harassment and vicious nitpicking to which my colleagues and I were continually being subjected."

Pressure

A few weeks ago, Vic Poulton, an AUEW member of the Longbridge Works Committee also took voluntary redundancy.

One good aspect of the

increasing management pressure on senior stewards is that those who put themselves forward for such positions now are likely to do so for principled reasons rather than for perks and privileges.

Now the Works C'ttee must give a lead to militancy, rebuild the strength and credibility of the Joint Shop Stewards' Committee and improve communication with the shopfloor.

Ironically, management's decision to put Works Committee members back on the shopfloor could have the effect of strengthening the union organisation at Longbridge in the long run.

But putting Senior Stewards "back to work" is only one small part of the bosses plan contained in their "procedure document"

The other more dangerous items include a new national negotiating committee controlled by officials, a new disciplinary code giving BL the right of summary dismissal and a clause making the new procedure legally binding — making unofficial strikes a sackable offence!

The fight against this procedure document could well be won or lost in the course of the fight around the 1981/2 wage review.

If we can force the Company down on its proposal to bring in the new official-dominated NJNC and if we can then go on to win a worthwhile rise, then Edwardes will be unable to impose the document, and can all set about regaining all the ground we have lost at BL in the last few years.

Racist reprieved

by Patrick Spilling

THE SECURITY chief who ordered a 'stop all blacks' alert at BL's Cowley Assembly Plant has kept his job despite a severe reprimand from the company.

The fact that former policeman Ray Coxon has not been removed from his job rests heavily on the failure of the plant union leadership to launch a united and determined campaign to have him thrown out.

As reported in Socialist Organiser last week, Coxon instructed gate guards at the Assembly Plant to stop every black man and hold him until his identity was checked. The reason he gave was that a black worker on a subcontract firm had been sacked for theft.

The sporadic stoppages by individual black workers reported last week grew into fairly large meetings of black workers on the plant. At the first of these, 200 workers, all but 40-odd black, were told by AUEW convenor Doug Hobbs that trade unionists could not demand the sack for Coxon.

TGWU convenor Bobby Fryer was loudly applauded when he dismissed statements that the letter was 'silly' and nailed it as racist. But Fryer said that protest action should be confined to 'those most directly affected', i.e. black workers.

Socialist Organiser supporters argued for co-ordinated stoppages of

black and white workers to force Coxon's removal, pointing out that to leave black workers to fight 'their' battles was playing into the hands of management racism.

Kenny, a black assembly worker, told SO: "I believe what the union did was bad. It shouldn't have been just the black workers. At the second

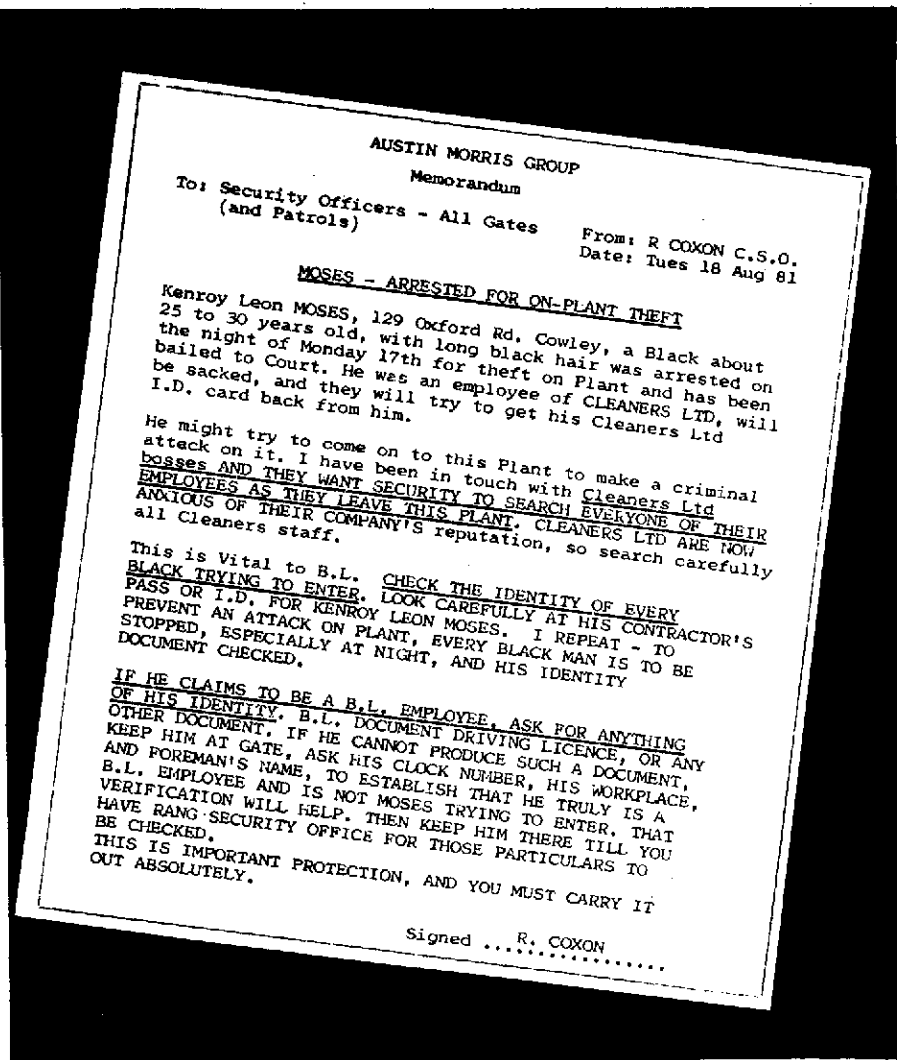
meeting the lines didn't even stop running".

Coxon's previous attacks on Cowley workers have not been confined to racism. The company denied several months ago at a meeting with union representatives that there were plans to allow gate guards to body-search workers. Coxon had just organised

for the gate guards to receive training in body searches.

Coxon is off the plant, on an extended training course.

There is no doubt that when the dust has settled he will return, and BL's racism will be strengthened by the failure of the unions to force his removal.



Slush, mush and trash

Not a very good start for SO's rock column by Andrew MacDonald

ARMED with Roget's Thesaurus (15p from a jumble sale) and the new edition of the Oxford Pocket Dictionary (Christmas present from little sis) I set out with the idea of a new, snappy, punchy column for Socialist Organiser.

This is it. It is intended to be a regular thing covering not just rock music but the whole aspect of "youth" culture.

Why bother? At best, young people, who are a fair chunk of the population are patronised - more often than not simply told to shut up and do as they are told.

One way youth have defined their own existence is through rock culture.

Why should a socialist paper be worried about that?

A record is a record, a punk is a punk, a hit is a hit.

Not quite. The record industry isn't just a multi-million pound rip-off machine. The main stream definitely is, but now and then the teenage rebellion and desire to turn the world "topsy-turvy" shines through.

This curious situation - youthful imagination versus monopoly capital morons is what is going to be examined - or in rock's very own jargonese - "move with the groove or be removed".

A lot of the so-called 'youth culture', first of all, isn't all that youthful and is rather messy. Just have a

look at the charts at the moment.

The charts, as everyone knows, are the planet which the rest of the industry orbits around. They're fundamental to the whole set-up.

Most people also know that secretly the charts are rigged by record promoters. Every so often a case comes to light - like last week, RCA got caught and had to foot the bill for a £5,000 inquiry - but generally it's all done outside the lime-light (you know, the old public school boy network stuff).

Charts

In any case the BBC have the apparatus sown up via Radio One and Top of the Pops, which more or less determines which records are bought and which ones are left on the shelf. A few favours here and there can decide record sales running into thousands of pounds.

And in the eyes of the CBS, RCA, EMI etc Board of Directors, music comes second. Well it must do, with the trash, slush and mush which finds its way into the charts!!!

Last week there were no less than seven compilation singles in the hit parade. They are the records you hear on the radio which sound at first like an original hit, then there's three hand claps and the punch line from another 'smash'

(cringe) is regurgitated. Banal, tasteless, limp, trite and hackneyed puke.

Record buying teenagers need these records like AUEW members need Terry Duffy and John Boyd. Star on 45 Volume 2 by Star sound was bad, really bad, but another dozen sound-alikes! It's enough to make the rest of the slush, mush and trash look good.

But is anyone truly inspired by any one of 95% of the records in the single charts with such gems as 'Love Song' by (couldn't put it better myself) the 'Simple Minds'; 'Caribbean Disco' by 'Lobo' (as in lobotomy) and 'I Love Music' by Enigma (as in enemic).

The album charts are a loathsome, too, and can be easily categorised as follows:

The irremediable: the official BBC album of the Royal Wedding; Clive Richards' 'Love Songs' and Bucks Fizz!

The Wretched: No Sleep till Hammersmith by Mott the Headless, Bruce Springsteen 'The River' (watch it, ed and Disco Daze and Disco Nights).

And the unwholesome: Koo Koo by Debbie Harry, Kings of the Wild Frontier by Adam and the Ants and Neil Diamond's Jazz Singer.

It's a depressing picture looking at the bulk of the charts. Perhaps something nicer will appear by next week.



by Les Hearn

Bit by bit or jump by jump?

Healy's recipe for BL: revolution or nothing

by Bill Peters

GERRY Healy has managed (Newsline August 26th) to produce a full page feature on British Leyland - entitled 'The Issues facing Leyland workers' - which fails to address itself to any of the current acute leadership problems faced by workers in the Corporation.

He talks about giving support to the £20 claim "drawn up by the 11 unions" without mentioning that the national officers of the 11 unions have been trying to set themselves up as a self-appointed negotiating committee.

There is not a word about the sharp struggle going on in BL for a democratically elected and accountable negotiating committee - the outcome of which will largely determine whether an all-out confrontation with Edwardes and Thatcher is on this autumn.

Instead, the completely abstract statement speculates that Thatcher will close BL if there's a strike. "If workers leave the BL factories on strike, then

Thatcher will shut the gates behind them, never to return."

Michael Edwardes made a similar point in an interview with the Sunday Times last week. "If the pay thing comes to a crunch then the company closes."

Edwardes, of course, has said that before. In fact he says it every time he faces a confrontation with the workforce. This time it will be said a bit louder and a bit more often because the probability of a confrontation is very real indeed.

Closed

Healy's prognosis concedes everything to him. It backs up his threat by making the closure of BL look simple for Thatcher when in reality it is very difficult; otherwise she would have closed it long ago, not providing new funding.

That is not to say that she will not close it if a major strike goes ahead, but it is a decision fraught with political difficulties - not least another 1/2 million on the dole at a stroke.

To talk about closure as inevitable at this stage does nothing to advance the wages struggle in BL.

Healy says that the wage review has to be approached politically. That is true. But he presents some very dubious politics indeed.

The article makes its starting point the need for an efficient industry:

"There can be an efficient, modern and expanding car industry in Britain, but it cannot happen under the greedy stranglehold of the profit system and the leeching banks. It will occur only under revolutionary socialism when the bankruptcy of the capitalist system and its state machine has been smashed and replaced by a planned socialist economy."

How many Morning Star editorials have carried that line?

For Trotskyists the starting point is not "efficient industry", even if the conclusion is that socialism is necessary to get it. It is mobilising the working class against capitalism to end it and thereby establish socialism.

How Healy sees the struggle for socialism is hard to see since the article doesn't even mention bringing down the Tories.

Instead it lays out a schema in which plants which have been closed are maintained by occupation committees in conjunction with Community Councils until they can be reopened after the social revolution.

BL workers should reject Healy's ridiculous schemas (if they come across them, since Healy's member in BL has not mentioned any of this) and strike for their full £20 claim in a direct challenge to the government.

Occupied

If Edwardes and Thatcher respond by closing the Corporation down then all plants should be immediately occupied in defence of jobs, calling for the Tory government to be brought down and replaced by a Labour government prepared to reverse Thatcher's attacks on the working class.

THERE'S been a storm in a test-tube about the way evolution takes place over the last year, kicked off by a letter to Nature from Prof. L.B. Halstead of Reading University accusing the National History Museum of promoting cladistics in their exhibition on the evolution of dinosaurs.

So what? Well, according to Halstead, cladistics not only supports creationism (i.e. that all life was specially created for the occasion by God and has not changed since) but also espouses an essentially "Marxist" view that all evolution has occurred in sudden "revolutions" rather than by gradual reforms. Not bad, eh?

Cladistics is a technique for working out how closely related species of animals or plants are.

The word comes from the Greek word klados, meaning branch or group and the technique relies on dividing species into groups or clades in which all the members share at least one feature not shared by any other clade and have a common ancestor not shared by any other species.

It is assumed 1) that species are related (i.e. that life evolved once only on this planet), that each species has a nearest relative and 2) that none of the species considered is the ancestor of any of the other species.

Poor old Halstead thinks that this means that no species can evolve into any other species.

Cladists however say that they assume that new species

arise by old ones splitting into two.

Halstead further accuses the cladists of not believing in gradual evolution and indeed of being violently opposed to it, believing only in rapid evolution.

Now why should this be, asks Prof. Halstead? Why, it's obvious! According to J.V. Stalin (quoting Engels) "the world outlook of the Marxist Leninist party is in the recognition of "a development in which the qualitative changes occur not gradually but rapidly and abruptly - taking the form of a leap from one state to another".

The implication is that the cladists are a Marxist fifth column in the scientific world and the National History Museum are "unwittingly or wittingly" (!) committed to foisting Marxism onto our children.

So I cycled eagerly off to the National History Museum to witness the blatant subversion of our youth. Very interesting it was too, and I would recommend the dinosaur exhibition, but I couldn't find any backing for the Enoch Powell of palaeontology.

Cladistics seems a better way of organising our knowledge because it shows relationships much better than just grouping species into birds, reptiles or mammals, etc. For example, birds are a clade because they share a unique feature (feathers) and represent all the descendants of one ancestor.

Mammals are also a clade (their unique feature is the mammary gland).

Birds, reptiles and

mammals are a clade - they represent all the descendants of a common ancestor and they share a feature not found in any other animal - the amnion, a membrane around the embryo containing a fluid similar to seawater which allows the embryo to develop elsewhere than in the water.

But reptiles are not a clade - the ancestor of the reptiles was also the ancestor of the birds.

The living reptiles most closely related to the birds are the crocodiles (!) and birds and crocodiles form a clade.

Where do dinosaurs fit in? Well, it seems that birds, crocodiles, pterosaurs, and pterodactyls and dinosaurs are a clade called archosaurs. Birds and dinosaurs are the most closely related of the groups, and form a clade.

And birds are right in the middle of one group of dinosaurs, being quite closely related to tyrannosaurs, the largest bird carnivore ever.

This clade is then related to another clade of dinosaurs before being more distantly related to the crocodiles.

The exhibition experts said that all these different species must have evolved through gradual change - there is little comfort in doubtful Marxist in exhibition. But it was interesting to discover the sparrow is second to Tyrannosaurus Rex.

Information from the National History Museum, (Information from last week's column in the Guardian and New Scientist).

S. AFRICAN

TROOPS OUT OF ANGOLA!

by Jim Farnham

SINCE THE independence of Angola, troops of the South African apartheid regime, together with hired mercenaries, have launched repeated raids into southern Angola.

Over the last weeks, these have been escalated into a full scale invasion. South African generals have brought in tanks and have massively stepped up air attacks on towns in the Cunene Province.

These attacks have been designed to massacre SWAPO guerrillas and Namibian refugees, and assert a terrorist discipline over the Angolan masses. At the same time, they are useful to the South African ruling class as a method of stepping up the militarisation inside South Africa — which more and more is being used to attack the black workers' movement, as well as to assert control through military discipline over the base amongst white workers and the white

middle class on which the government depends.

This new invasion has been met by expressions of opposition from sections of the imperialists. It is not concern for the welfare and well-being of the masses of Angola which prompts these statements.

During the entire period of the Portuguese colonial occupation of Angola, the imperialists were delighted to share in the spoils of profiteering and to support the brutal colonial repression which made that profiteering possible.

New challenge

But the escalating struggle of the oppressed masses of southern Africa has created a massive new challenge to imperialist control.

However much they have to say in condemnation of the raid, the imperialists are forced to depend more and more on the maintenance and stability of their central agent in the area — the South African state.

In reality, their opposition to the raid comes from fear of the escalation of

conflict in the region that the raids could provoke.

The imperialists are determined to contain and control the development of struggle. Their international crisis of profits forces them to hit out more and more viciously to defend capitalist control and profits.

Divided

But faced with a developing movement of struggle, the imperialists are divided and confused as to how best to crush the threat to their rule.

Many of them do not yet have the confidence for the massive and vicious attacks on a world scale to which they are propelled if their capitalist system is to be defended.

At the same time, not one of them has hesitated for a second when it is their immediate interests which are at stake. Thatcher moralises about the brutality of her class allies in South Africa, while the defence of capitalism in Britain has meant the brutality of more than three million unemployed and the defence of British imperialist rule in the

north of Ireland has meant open military-police terror.

In reality, the brutality of the forces of the South African state in Angola is an indicator and a fore-runner of the brutality which faces the developing struggle in other places.

The haste with which the imperialists acted to crush a left wing coup in The Gambia, the open support from Reagan for right wing butchers in El Salvador, the declared intention of Reagan to provide more support for the right wing forces of UNITA in Angola — all of these have emboldened the South African regime to launch its attack.

More and more, the South African government can count on the support of the Reagan government which has openly launched an international offensive against the workers and peasants movement internationally. It is absolutely no coincidence that the South African raids were escalated in the aftermath of the American sabre rattling and shooting down of Libyan planes.

In Angola, southern Africa and internationally,

the imperialist offensive can only be defeated by the strength of the working class, mobilised behind workers' revolutionary parties, drawing behind them their oppressed allies. The military brutality of the South African state through-out southern Africa underlines the crucial importance of the workers' struggle in South Africa itself.

Threat

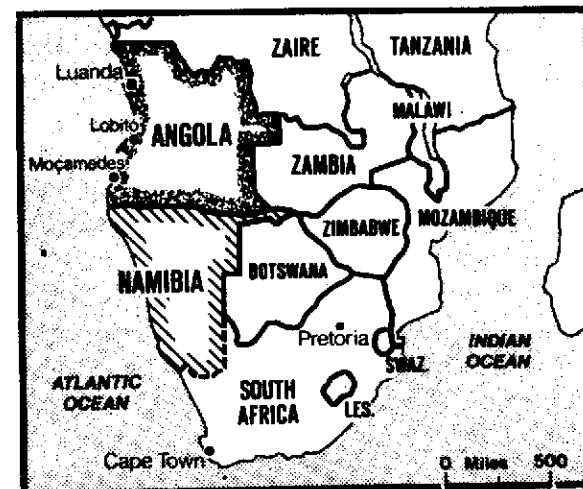
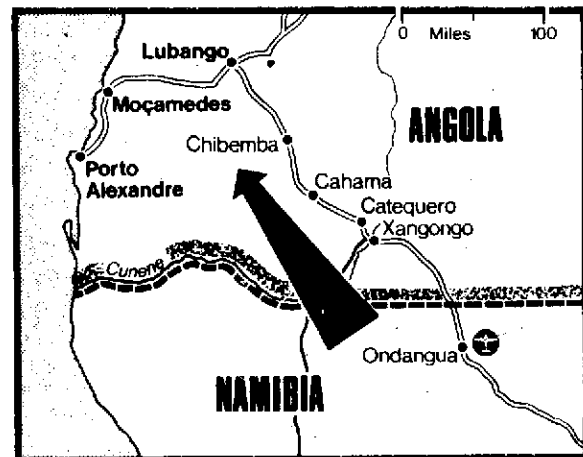
It is only the victory of the working class in South Africa that can free the countries of southern Africa from the immediate threat of constant attacks. And it is only through the building of workers' power inside South Africa that the great wealth and developed productive forces there can be unleashed from the destructive grip of capitalism and used to the benefit of all in the area.

Real ally

The defence of Angola and SWAPO against South African/imperialist attack is an immediate task in the struggle for the liberation of the southern African working people.

The only real ally of the workers and peasants of Angola and Namibia in this task is the international working class.

In Britain, the fight must be taken up in the labour movement for solidarity action that can strengthen our class allies in Angola and Namibia, and obstruct the ongoing material and political aid to the South African state from its imper-



alist backers. The South African armed forces must not be allowed to move against the oppressed with weapons produced by other workers.

*Full blacking action against all military and related supplies to the South African regime!

*Maximum support to the working people and fighters of Angola and Namibia!



Cuban troops in Angola — not yet involved in the conflict



S. African troops in illegal occupation of Namibia

March bans hit the left

by Alexis Carras

FROM the moment the Home Secretary granted McNeen's request for a one month blanket ban on marches in Greater London it was obvious that the turn out against the fascists in Fulham last Sunday would be no more than perfunctory.

As it was, in fact, had the police not been there, we probably would have been smashed!

A combination of bans on all marches (except those "customarily" held) and police/SPG swamping operations in the relevant area, immediately reduced not only the numbers attending, but also any purpose or direction to a counter-demonstration.

Cat and mouse

The anti-fascists are reduced to playing a pointless cat and mouse game, with the Met in the role of the cat!

Since March 5 of this year, there have been 18 bans under the provisions of the Public Order Act of 1936.

In other words in seven

months of this year we have had six times as many bans as in the entire last decade.

In London alone, out of about 190 days, only 89 have been free from ban restrictions.

Without exception, all the bans have been imposed in response to threatened marches by one of the fascist groups, NF, BM or NNF.

Riff-raff

Simply at the drop of an application to march at the local constabulary, the fascists are able to cancel the right to protest.

David Bruce, activities organiser of the NF may bombastically ask "why are they so frightened of us?" but the answer certainly does not lie in a fear within the ruling class of the NF's riff-raff processions.

Since the Tories' coming to power, the use of the Public Order Act has surpassed anything known since the late 1930s, when three month rolling bans were regularly renewed (though it's not just the Tories: Labour councils are responsible for requesting many of

the bans).

And, as in the '30s, so today: the bans are formally aimed at the fascists but actually hit harder at the left and the labour movement. It was not fear of Mosley that prompted the 1936 Public Order Act but the fear of more Cable Streets.

Peter Hain of the Anti Nazi League suggests that a way around this would be if the state would only ban fascist demonstrations. Perhaps the "incitement to hatred" section of the 1976 Race Relations Act could be used.

Councillors

Many in the leadership of the ANL and many Labour councillors suggest banning fascist marches because they genuinely view fascist marches as a problem of "keeping the peace" — clear the fascists off the streets by invoking some administrative measure.

Unfortunately they have realised only slowly that these bans have hit the labour movement more than the far right.

Cancelled CND demos, solidarity events, trade union marches — this has been the real toll of the bans. Plus massive and unwarranted publicity for the fascists.

Foolhardy

To think the state will relinquish such a useful weapon against the labour movement is foolhardy, in the least. And to think that the state will use the Race Relations Act to ban only fascist marches and events is to ignore how such reformist laws are every day more and more an irrelevance as the state tightens its grip over the black and Asian communities.

Gangrene

The problem is not enabling the state to 'keep the peace', but enabling the labour movement to deal with the fascist gangrene in this society.

It can in no way be in the interest of the labour movement to demand the state banning of fascist marches. We must deal with our enemies ourselves.