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# Socialist Organiser

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## Hands off low fares!

by Rachel Lever

"Our pledge to cut fares was a central plank in the election", Islington North GLC councillor Steve Bunder told Socialist Organiser. "If three Appeal Court judges want to run London Transport, they should have

run in the May election".

And a spokesperson for the GLC Labour group told us: "We are expecting to appeal to the House of Lords. We view the decisions of the court as overturning not a decision of the GLC but the decision of the electorate, as expressed through the ballot box on May 7th, when we made it clear what we intended to do and the electorate voted for that".

On Tuesday 10th Lord Denning and two other Appeal Court judges reversed a High Court decision and ruled that the Labour GLC policy of cheaper bus and Tube fares on the rates is illegal. The case had been brought by the Tory council in suburban Bromley.

The GLC's mandate from the local elections in May this year is irrelevant, said Denning, because lots of voters don't read manifestos!

Earlier this year Denning said the courts should step in if a Labour government tried to abolish the House of Lords. Tony Benn told Socialist Organiser: "Denning... said an appointed judge should have the right to determine whether the views of the British public, expressed in an election, are acceptable or not... In the guise of maintaining standards, Lord Denning is arguing in defence of the interests of those who own the land and the capital".

The three million unemployed, or the huge financial penalties imposed by the Tories on the GLC and other councils, or the daily price rises in the shops, weren't anybody's manifesto promises. Yet there's no judge to rule them illegal!

The GLC expects the House of Lords to reverse the Appeal Court decision, as it has done with some other recent rulings from Denning. But we can't count on it.

Shortly before the Appeal Court decision, the bosses' group Aims of Industry announced a £200,000 campaign to get rid of GLC Labour leader Ken Livingstone. We need a massive campaign by the labour movement to get rid of this ruling.

Every labour movement organisation should be sending emergency resolutions:

\* congratulating the GLC on its fares cuts,

\* calling on the GLC and the London Transport unions to stand firm on those fares cuts whatever the House of Lords decides,

\* calling for, and pledging, action in support of such a stand and to force the government to make up the money due from the 'illegal' supplementary rate.

## Fund

We're still totting up the regular bankers' orders that came in at the beginning of the month. But our calculation is that we need a minimum of £750 on top of them this month just to keep our heads above water. And so far movement on the fund has been pretty slow.

£25 from a North-West London reader; £6 from Coventry; £15 from Sheffield; £5 from South London; £11 from Nottingham; £2 from Hull; and £7.50 from East London - that's about it.

Jumble sales - collections at meetings - asking regular readers for contributions - however it's done, we need the cash! Send to Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

## Scotts, Staffa, anti-union laws; it's

by John Lister

THROUGH brute force and through legislation, British employers have embarked on a consistent, coordinated campaign to crush the power of the unions.

Anyone who doubted this before should have been convinced by the combination of events last week.

The legislation now being prepared by Norman Tebbit, Thatcher's hatchet-man against the unions, will include moves to restrict the right to strike; steps to open up unions to lawsuits for damages; provision for bosses to carry out victimisations; and measures to break up the closed shop.

But already a new, harder line can be seen from the employers. Michael Edwards' threat to sack the whole BL workforce in the event of a strike may have been withdrawn in the face of the militancy of the workforce - but the 'revised offer' accepted by the General Secretaries includes provisions for a stringent no-strike clause, and a time-limit for its implementation.

A new spate of victimisations has begun in the health service, as management attempts to crush opposition to further cuts and closures: a TGWU steward has been suspended at St Mary's hospital, London W9, and a NUPE branch secretary sacked in Hammersmith.

Brute force and police violence also figure prominently in the anti union offensive. At the Laurence Scott plant last week, over 100 police kept pickets at bay as two helicopter loads of scabs flew out motors trapped by the 27-week struggle to save the jobs at the plant.

And three weeks ago another factory occupation - Staffa Products in East London, where 400 jobs are at stake - was smashed apart by a squad of 300 police who drove out the occupiers.

But the strikebreaking plans go further still: apparently Thatcher intends to use as many as 12,000 army scabs to run supplies of fuel in the event of a strike by tanker drivers.

The workers' movement is under daily threat, facing a conscious and determined enemy, trading on every weakness.

Yet our prime weakness is our *leaders*, who are conscious only of preserving their own cosy relationship with the employers, and - as the BL sell-out showed - determined above all to prevent an all-out confrontation with the Tory government.

Foot and Duffy are both now eagerly claiming the credit for finally knifing the BL struggle and giving the Tories an extended lease of life. This offers a grim warning of what they would try to do under a returned right wing Labour government.

In fighting now for action at shop floor and national level to defend the unions and defeat the Tory attack, we must take up the fight also against Thatcher's fifth column within the labour movement itself. That means fighting for new policies - and for a new leadership willing and capable of carrying them out.

# WAR ON THE UNIONS!



# Women in struggle Nasreen's victory! Tough fight at Glencroft

NASREEN Akhtar heard on November 2nd that her appeal against deportation had been accepted.

Members of the defence campaign feel that this establishes two important precedents.

• That marriages contracted over the telephone in Pakistan are valid in Pakistani law and are therefore sufficient proof of marriage in English law; and that,

• Women separated subsequent to entering as married people are entitled to stay. This was important because prior to this deci-

sion, members of the Council for Racial Equality in Rochdale had felt bound to warn women at risk of battering etc. from their husbands that they would be at risk of deportation if they left home.

The Friends of Nasreen Akhtar are continuing to campaign for the other Asian women and families similarly threatened, like Mumtaz Kiani and Aziz Malik.

Also they are applying for £20,000 compensation to Nasreen and her girls for the way their life has been disrupted.

by Stan Crooke

A WEEK LAST Friday officials of the National Union of Hosiery and Knitwear Workers (NUHKW) told their 15 members sacked from Glencroft Knitwear (Glasgow) for joining the union that the union's support for the dispute would continue until November 20th, but then be 'reviewed again', depending on how much support came in during the intervening three weeks.

But since the beginning of the dispute, three months ago, the union's support has never gone beyond financial support and a half-hearted attempt to get Glencroft products blacked at airports. The union will probably make no attempt to mobilise real support for the picket lines during these three weeks, and then use the lack of support (for which they are themselves to blame) as an excuse to ditch the dispute.

## Challenged

This is underlined by events at the November



meeting of Glasgow Trades Council, where Glencroft was once again on the agenda.

A letter from the NUHKW District Secretary handed to all delegates referred to "the genuine disappointment of my members that greater numbers have not been in attendance (on the picket line)", but when the District Secretary was challenged as to why he did not call on the Trades Council to help organise mass picketing, days of action and blacking, he ducked giving a direct answer and talked vaguely of the illegality of such proposals (he is a member of the Communist Party).

"In effect he spoke a load of rubbish. All he said was a lot of riddles — he hummed and hahed and ended up by saying there was nothing he could do", is how one Trades Council delegate summed up his performance.

An appeal to the Glasgow labour movement through the Trades Council would have mobilised hundreds, if

not thousands, for the picket lines.

The scabs have become more aggressive than ever towards the women on the picket line. Apart from the usual verbal abuse, the scabs now spit at the pickets as they enter and leave the building and have also physically attacked them.

## Offensive

The police too have cracked down on the pickets. Once, for example, when only four pickets were on duty, the police threatened them all with arrest for obstruction unless they stood against the building's wall. And when two of the pickets left for a tea break, the two remaining were again threatened with arrest for obstruction if they dared move away from the wall.

The general harassment of the pickets by the police, who are now starting to be on duty throughout the day rather than just at clocking on and off times, even goes so far as threatening pickets with arrest if

But in spite of this renewed offensive by the scabs and the police, the union officials fail to build support for the picket lines. Their only idea of increasing the numbers picketing the firm is to tell the 15 women that they must now drop the shift rota for picketing and instead all turn up 9 hours a day, 5 days a week. (The union officials themselves are now however a rare sight on the picket lines.)

Effective blacking at the airports and real mobilisation for the picket lines must be organised now. And not just in order to deprive the union of any excuse for ditching the dispute, but because that is the only way the dispute can be won.

## Donations

Donations to: NUHKW, 44 Kelvingrove Street, Glasgow. Picketing: Monday to Friday, 7.30am-4.30pm, Glencroft Knitwear, 128 Ingram Street.



Nasreen Akhtar with Mumtaz Kani, Jaswinder Kaur and Cynthia Gordon

# Labour women back BL strike

AT THE second West Midlands regional Labour women's conference, in Birmingham on Saturday October 31st, an emergency resolution from Coventry Women's Council deploring Michael Edwards' threat to the BL strikers was carried unanimously.

The conference pledged its support to the strike (due to begin the day after the conference), and several activities were proposed from the floor and received very well.

If the strike continued, it was stressed, women strikers and female relations of BL workers must be organised, and support committees established to help the BL workers defeat the Tory government.

About 150 women from all over the West Midlands attended the conference. It was a successful event with a good feeling of sisterhood throughout the day.

## Assumed

A resolution calling for positive discrimination for women and ethnic minorities was carried unanimously, after conference had heard horrific tales of how some sisters were told by a District Party that women didn't want to be involved in politics and would rather stay at home, keep the house, and look after the children.

Another emergency resolution was put about a woman's right to work, noting

that the Tory cuts have affected women's jobs terribly, and calling for support for the women's right to work demonstration next year. This was again carried unanimously.

Important discussions were also held on the sex-discriminatory social security regulations, such as the cohabitation rule, which assumes a woman sharing a house with a man is economically dependent on him.

The high peri-natal death rate in the West Midlands was highlighted in a resolution by Wolverhampton Women's Council, and several suggestions were made, such as:

\* Decentralising ante-natal clinics so that they are easily accessible to pregnant women,

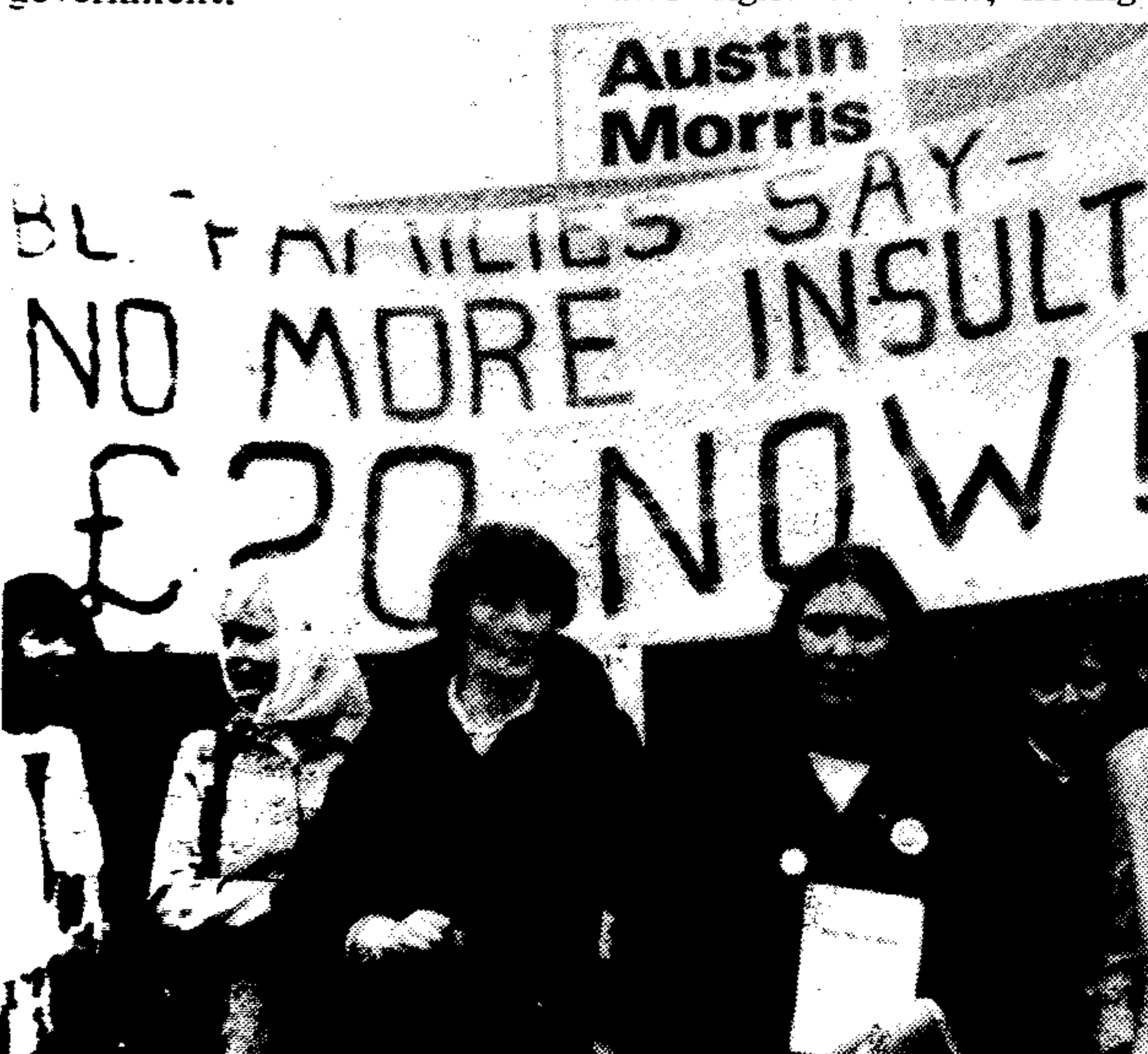
\* Making sure that hospitals in areas with large numbers of non English speaking women employ appropriate interpreters.

## Scared

All the suggestions were made to improve the ante-natal service so that it fits the women, instead of the women fitting the services.

Unfortunately, the representatives from South Worcestershire CLP didn't turn up to put their resolution, calling for the women's conference to be abolished — scared that they would get the same reception the resolution got last year, maybe!

KATE WILLIAMS, chairperson Wolverhampton IPYS



The women were there on the BL picket lines, every bit as strong and as angry as the men

# NALGO women organise

On Saturday, November 14, over 200 NALGO members are meeting in Leeds to discuss a wide range of issues affecting women local government officers.

The National Conference on NALGO and Equal Opportunities has been organised by the Leeds NALGO branch, to continue some of the debates and discussions started at this year's annual conference.

On paper NALGO is by far one of the most progressive unions for women. Recently it launched a campaign on sexual harassment at work, the first union in Britain to do so.

Unfortunately, many of NALGO's policies have not been translated into practice. The union has a policy of support for fully comprehensive childcare facilities for

women at work, as well as adequate paid maternity and paternity leave facilities, but it is left up to the local branches to organise for the implementation of these policies.

In addition, the union has a clear policy of support for the dispute by the City of Liverpool typists which is taking place at the moment. Although the NEC has urged other branches to take similar action, they have done little to initiate action by typists elsewhere.

The Leeds conference could play a major role in changing this situation. It will bring together many women activists who are involved in local struggles in the branches.

As Liz White, one of the organisers of the conference pointed out:

"There is a national network of women who are active in the union but this is not reflected

in the formal network of the union on the committees and in the hierarchy"

The conference will provide the opportunity to learn from other branches' experiences in organising locally and also to develop and extend these local struggles. A national network of rank and file women activists to coordinate and lead national campaigns is long overdue.

Among the workshops at the conference are:

\* A workshop on NALGO's reaffiliation to the Women's TUC.

\* The rights of working parents, workplace nurseries, how to develop policy into practice.

\* Local work in branches

\* Feminist activities in the trade unions

\* Women and New Technology

\* Sexism and Women at Work

| November |    |    |    |    |    |    |
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# WHAT'S ON

Oxfordshire County Association of Trades Councils conference: Ireland — where does the labour movement stand?

Saturday December 12, 10-5 at West Oxford Community Centre, Binsey Lane, Oxford. Delegate's credentials £3, observers £1.50 (unwaged £1) from Marie Campbell, 167 Walton St, Oxford.

Greenwich Labour Party DAY CONFERENCE: IRELAND—A WAY FORWARD?

Saturday 28 November 9.30-5.30

Goldsmith's College Students Union

New Cross, London SE14

Creche available. Lunch provided. Registration £2.50

Details from Greenwich Labour Party, 32 Woolwich Road, London SE10

Lambeth Socialist Organiser educational programme.

Sundays at 7pm: for venue, phone 609 3071.

Oct.25: Labour theory of value.

Nov.29: State and revolution

Dec.20: The Russian revolution.

Jan.31: Stalinism

Feb.28: The origins of the Labour Party.

Leicester Socialist Organiser Alliance — weekly Marxist forum.

Sundays at 7.30, at the Leicester Socialist Centre, High St (above Blackthorn Books).

Nov.1: Labour and Ireland

Nov.8: BL and the 4% limit

Nov.15: 1956-81, 25th anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution

Nov.22: Workers' control

Nov.29: Chile/Bolivia — the role of the military in Latin America.

St Mary's Hospital, London W9: support conference for the struggle against closure.

Saturday November 21, from 11am at Porchester Hall, Porchester Rd, London W2.

All-London Labour Left meeting called by Lambeth Labour Left, to discuss how to organise against the Heseltine legislation and prepare for the London Labour Party conference on December 12.

7.30, Friday November 27, at County Hall, SE1.

'Imperialism and the Middle East: a Labour response'.

Day school organised by six Labour Party branches, with speakers from Turkey, Iran and Palestine.

Saturday November 21, from 2pm at Napier College Students' Union, Merchiston Place, Edinburgh.

Leigh Socialist Organiser discussion meetings.

Sundays at 7.30 at the White Lion Hotel, opposite the Market.

Nov.15: Which road to socialism?

Nov.29: Poland, the working class, and Stalinism.

Dec.13: Ireland and the British labour movement.

Southern Africa workshops.

A series of meetings to re-examine campaigning methods and develop new strategies to help make Southern Africa a more urgent public issue will begin on Thursday

November 19 at Archway Development Centre, 173 Archway Rd, London N6, at 7.30. Details Gloria 341

0144 or Christina 348 3030.

# A slice-by-slice strategy

THE TORIES' new anti-union measures will—according to press reports—be the following:

\*The definition of a 'trade dispute' will be narrowed down to exclude inter-union disputes and solidarity action with workers in other countries. Workers taking industrial action which is not a 'trade dispute' can be sued for 'breach of contract', and already the definition of a 'trade dispute' has been narrowed down a great deal by James Prior's Employment Act and by court rulings over the last five years.

\*Employers will be able to bring claims for 'breach of contract' not only against individual shop stewards or union officials, but against collective union funds.

\*Employers will be able to sack strikers selectively—i.e. victimise militants—without this being classed as 'unfair dismissal'.

\*Workers sacked for refusing to join a closed shop will be able to claim bigger damages; and closed shops will have to be confirmed by a vote of the workforce every three years.

\*Firms and public bodies will be banned from insisting that contractors doing work for them must employ only union labour.

The package will be officially presented in a 'consultative paper' soon, and a Bill will be put to Parliament in the New Year.

Tebbit and the Tories are continuing Prior's step-by-step strategy of shackling the unions, rather than going for the sort of all-at-once assault rumoured in the press when Tebbit was appointed. In this they

are in line with mainstream opinion among the bosses.

The Financial Times commented: "On trades union reform, we would urge restraint..."; and at the CBI conference early last week, opinions were similar.

CBI Midlands chairperson Chris Walker said, "I hope the new Employment Secretary does not put as much emphasis on the closed shop as the Conservative Associations of Cheltenham Spa or Ascot do."

And the FT reports: "The debate on industrial relations law drew a substantial number of speakers who urged caution on the further use of legislation in this area."

This approach does not mean that the Tories and the bosses have gone soft. It means that they are still wary of the strength of the working class.

Discussing trade union law on the same day as thousands of militant pickets massed at the gates of BL factories, the CBI knew that a false step by the Tories could lead them into a holocaust of working class fury. One week-day of strike action by workers in one big company, and the press was already wondering how long the government could survive if the dispute continued!

The blunderbuss Industrial Relations Act of 1972—once the unions had refused to register under it—made almost all industrial action unlawful. The Tories headed into one confrontation after another, and were humbled.

Now, with the Tories' and the bosses' own ranks

more split and shaky than in 1972, they want a more selective approach, one that enables them to choose their battles and win them.

They introduce only such laws as they are fairly confident they can make stick, and then send in masses of police to enforce them—as at Brixton dole, Adwest, Staffa and Laurence Scotts. Then they hope to build on each victory and impose further curbs... and achieve the same aim as the Industrial Relations Act, by different methods.

All the disputes the Tories have chosen as test cases for their union laws have been small ones. There were no police squads outside Cowley on Monday 2nd counting heads to see if there were more than six on a gate! The Tory strategy of picking fights selectively, and gaining ground step by step depends on the workers' resistance remaining piecemeal and isolated.

And on this point too Tebbit and the CBI had recent experience to guide them last week. Their biggest asset in splitting up the workers' struggle is the trade union and Labour leadership.

While BL workers were organising for the mass pickets on Monday 2nd, Duffy, Kitson and their other leaders were scrambling to fix a sell-out and avoid a showdown.

Joe Gormley had already postponed the miners' pay talks so as to avoid simultaneous strike action. The Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering

Unions had put back their pay talks until BL was settled (and now they're trying to put the issue off again until after the Ford pay review is over and done with!)

The CBI conference decided to approach the TUC for new talks. Having slapped the TUC leaders down with a few threats like Edwardes', the bosses are convinced they can do business with them.

The slice-by-slice strategy, proceeding with the cooperation of the union leaders, is as deadly a danger to workers as the headlong attack of the Industrial Relations Act.

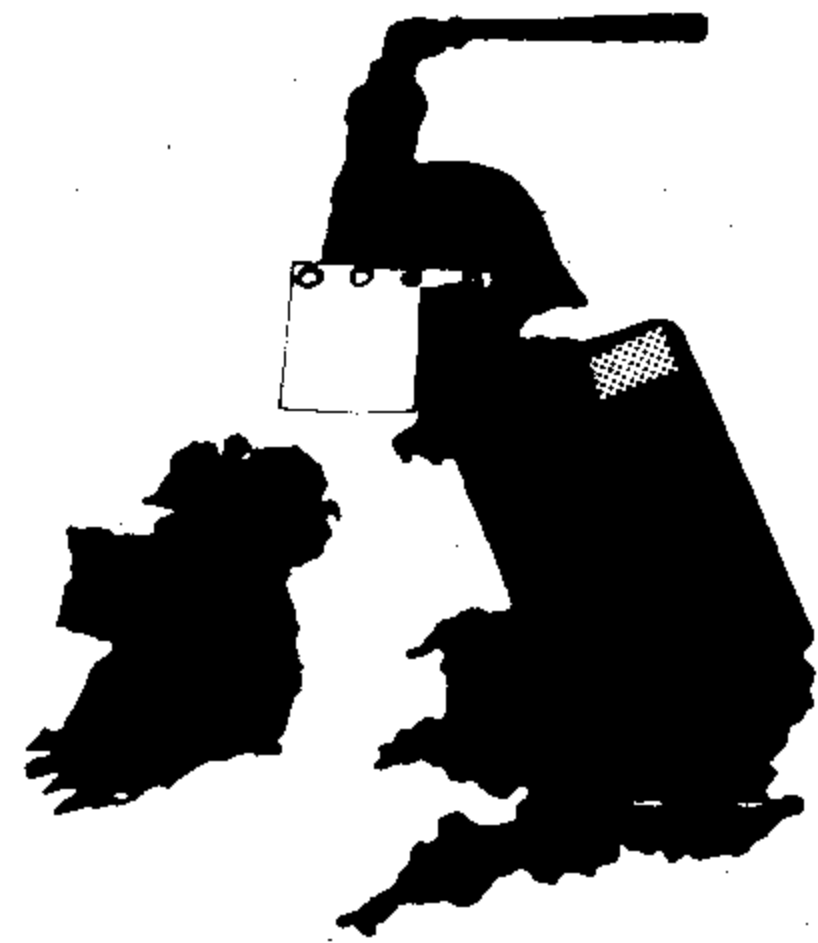
The fightback must start by breaking the treacherous tie-up between the labour movement's leaders and the Tories. Tony Benn's call for the labour movement to 'disengage' from the institutions of Thatcherism must become a practical reality.

Trade unions should force their leaders to withdraw from talks with the Tories and CBI, from the NEDC, from other official committees and from boards of nationalised industries. The Labour Party needs to commit its MPs to obstruct the Tories in parliament and its local councils to refuse to draw up cuts budgets.

And leaders who refuse to part ways with the Tories must be replaced.

That is the way to rally a common front of the labour movement, to surround any test cases the Tories pick on with a wall of solidarity, to defeat their laws, to drive them from office, and to replace them with a workers' government—a government based on and accountable to the labour movement.

## Catholics face a wave of sectarian murders



by John Lister

THE daily toll of violence meted out to the Catholic community in the North of Ireland by the forces of the British state has been supplemented by a vicious Loyalist murder campaign.

The month of October saw a machine gun attack on

a crowded Catholic club in the Ardoyne—leaving Larry Kennedy dead and Michael Lagan wounded—and the cold blooded murder of a Catholic worker and an elderly Catholic woman.

Loyalist firebomb attacks have been aimed at a Catholic chapel in Derry and also at the home of a Catholic family in West Belfast—leaving 28 year old Helen Smith severely burned.

The violence has been stepped up in the wake of what Loyalists regard as Tory concessions to the 'H' Block hunger strikes.

And it has been fanned in particular by the ranting of Ian Paisley, who recently had delegates at the 'conference' of his Democratic Unionist Party roaring their support for a 45 minute speech threatening armed resistance if the Tories did not toe the line of the Loyalist leaders.

"When I say fight, I mean fight," he thundered. And, on the streets, the legal paramilitary thugs of the UDA were already eagerly putting Paisley's views into a savage practice.

### Withdrawal

The freelance violence of these defenders of Protestant privilege comes on top of the regular doses of plastic bullets, street searches, beatings and harassment administered to the Catholic minority by the British army, RUC and UDR.

Such violence and intimidation cannot be ended

within the framework of the sectarian six county statelet of "Northern Ireland".

It can only be ended by the forced withdrawal of British troops and the struggle for a united workers' republic in which the rights of both Catholic workers and protestants are secured.

In the absence of such a settlement, British workers must lend their solidarity to the struggle of the oppressed minority to defend their communities against attack.

\*The Loyalist murder gangs have also undertaken their first internal killing for several years, with the shooting of UDA activist Artie Bettice. Bettice was accused of being a 'police informer' by the UDA's illegal death squad, the Ulster Freedom Fighters. He had apparently fallen out with fellow UDA leaders over the question of further sectarian killings.



Victim of Loyalist attack



## Offering youth a way forward

LAST FRIDAY night, a young woman spoke on a programme on BBC 2 explaining her views about the Tories, the bomb and other issues. She said that anyone who wanted to discuss with her, or agreed with her should meet her in Victoria on Saturday night and they could go for a drink.

She said she expected 2 or 3 people to turn up.

In fact over 200 youth from as far away as Manchester turned up at a pub in Victoria. That was followed by a vanload of police turning up and harassing us. We went to a square where we discussed what we could do and decided to set up a meeting the next Wednesday.

### Positive

That's a good enough answer to anyone who says that youth don't want to fight. It comes at a very good time for the National Left Wing Youth Movement.

Last June, 160 youth met in Coventry to discuss what they could do about the Tory attacks on youth. We decided to set up a new youth movement, NLWYM, as part of the Labour Party Young Socialists.

We don't agree with the

leaders of the YS, the 'Militant' who prefer preaching their programme to positive action. We want to become the leadership of the YS, that means fighting to build a movement that is capable of turning the YS from a stale propaganda group to a mass fighting YS.

### Apprentice

At the conference there are discussions on young women, youth at work, youth unemployment, YOPs, Gays, Ireland, CND and Youth Culture.

As well as that we're having a special feature on the recent sell-out at British Leyland, where 300 Cowley Assembly Plant apprentices were given company cars and told to go out and post 5000 copies of advertisements that appeared in national papers from general secretaries begging the members to go back. There will be BL workers speaking of their experience at the conference.

### Threat

Also there will be films throughout the weekend, and also a gig on the Saturday night.

If you want to take a

stand on this Tory government and the rotten system that it represents, come to our conference and join with us in building a movement that can create a real threat to them.

The conference is on November 21st and 22nd at Caxton House, St.

John's Way, London N19. Food and accommodation are available. For more information ring 01-609 3071 or write to NLWYM BM Box 5277, London WC1 3XX.

Transport is being arranged from all areas.

Mick Liggins



# CLASS FIGHTER

NEWSPAPER OF THE NATIONAL LEFT-WING YOUTH MOVEMENT

# YOUTH CONFERENCE

## 21st - 22nd NOVEMBER

Caxton House, St. John's Way, Archway, London N11

## Fascists in Rochdale

TWO Anti-Nazi League members in Rochdale were taken to hospital with cuts and injuries last Saturday, 7th, after fascist attacks.

60 thugs, some with swastika armbands, turned up despite an official police ban on a planned British Movement march. And for several hours they roamed the area, attacking ANL members who had been leafletting earlier in the day. The police did nothing.

The uselessness of police bans was confirmed: not only are such bans a danger to the Left, they are not enforced against the fascists.

But the ANL is becoming more active, with increased support from the local Asian community.

SUE ARNALL

# World news

# French stooges move back into

## Chad

by Andrew  
Hornung

LIBYA has withdrawn its troops from most of Chad, though it is still occupying the mineral-rich Aozou strip.

But France has arranged and given logistic support to a new occupation force, under the banner of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), consisting of troops from a number of Chad's neighbours, to shore up the Oueddei government and replace the Libyans.

This move has delighted the big capitalist powers, which are trying to pressurise and isolate the Gaddafi regime in Libya.

The maintenance of the French connection proves that the new government in Paris is just as much an imperialist agency as the previous one. Indeed, Mitterrand's low-profile approach may have worked much better than Giscard's open intervention.

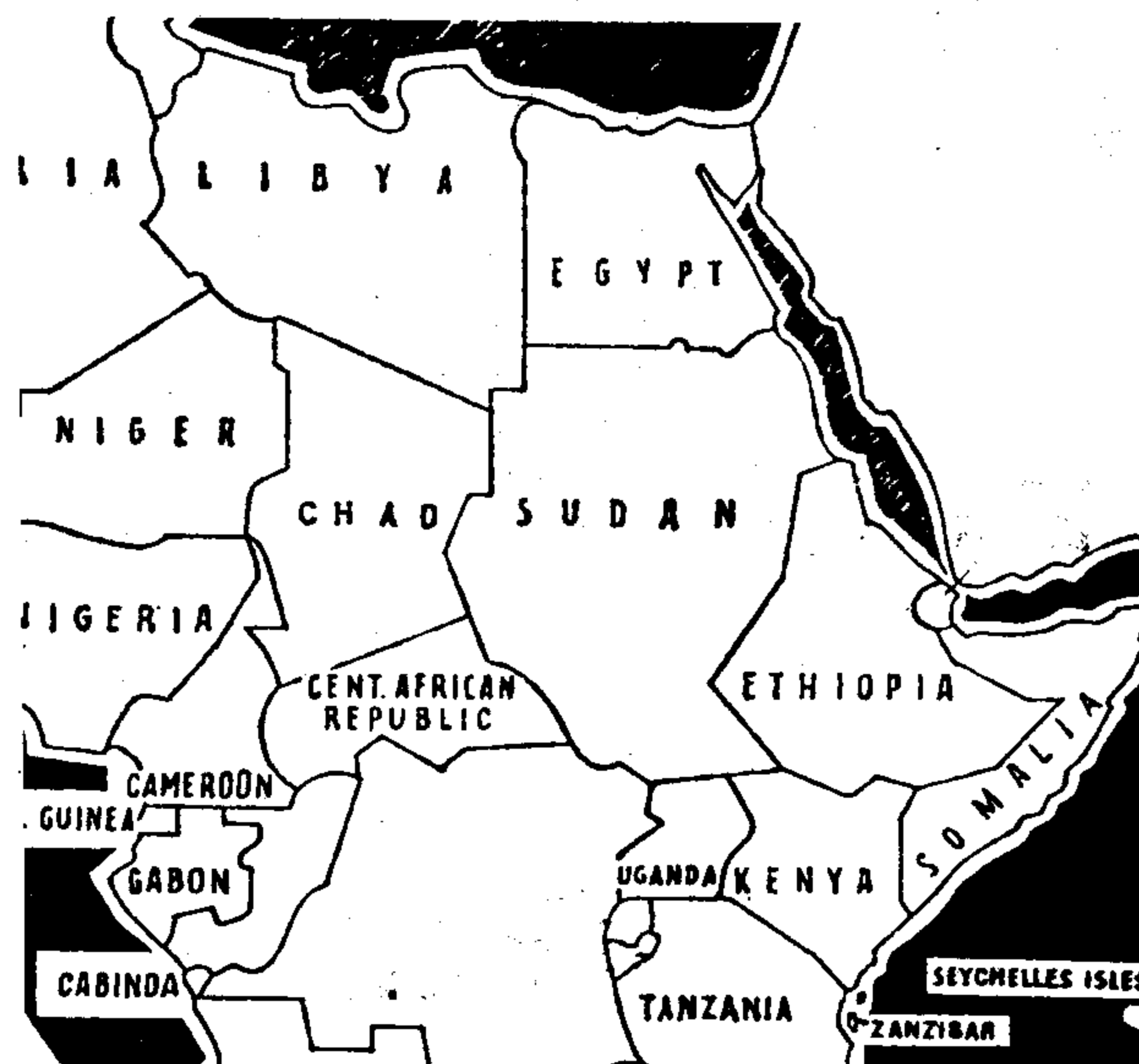
For most of its 21 years since independence, this thinly populated and desperately poor former French colony has been torn apart by civil war. That civil war

expressed the extreme backwardness and the artificiality of this landlocked republic, wedged between Muslim-Arab North Africa and non-Muslim black West and Equatorial Africa.

### Overthrown

Its first president, Francois Tombalbaye, ran a corrupt bourgeois-landlord regime shaken by regional, religious and class conflicts, which included peasant revolts in 1964, 1966 and 1967. Despite massive political repression and military intervention by France, the Tombalbaye government failed to contain these conflicts.

Tombalbaye was overthrown by his own army in 1975. The military coup forestalled the impending victory of FROLINAT (National Liberation Front of Chad), an umbrella movement set up in 1966 to co-ordinate the anti-government military actions of several armed oppositional groups. Two external factors also



contributed to Tombalbaye's downfall: Sudan's support for FROLINAT and Libya's occupation of a 100-kilometre deep strip along Chad's border with Libya.

Libyan troops had entered Chad in 1971 and claimed this Aozou strip, basing themselves on a 1935 agreement between Italy (which then ruled Libya) and France (which then ruled Chad). They also supported FROLINAT.

The army coup established former Chief of Staff Felix Malloum as president, but he soon proved no more independent of France than his predecessor. Malloum could only stave off defeat by trying to split FROLINAT.

To this end he appointed a FROLINAT leader, Hissen Habre, as prime minister. A 'transitional government' followed, which consisted of several FROLINAT tendencies



Gaddafi

that agreed (on paper) to integrate their armed forces into the national army. That unstable unity existed until February 1979, when troops supporting President Malloum (backed by the French) fought it out in the capital with troops supporting Prime Minister Habre.

Such was the political disintegration of Chad that one commentator described it at this time as "a mere geographical expression

overwhelmed by an inferno of domestic violence".

After several rapid changes of government, Goukouni Oueddei emerged as head of a new government. He tried to counter secessionist tendencies in the South by including some of

their leaders in the government. Some FROLINAT tendencies remained outside the government and continued to oppose it militarily.

Libya had sent troops into Chad, and tacked between supporting opposition trends and backing the Oueddei government, its policy being basically determined by its hopes of getting a government in Chad that would concede the Aozou strip. (The Libya-Chad merger talked of in the Western press was never a real issue).

The OAU initiative will not solve the crisis in Chad. It will not end the misery there. It can only provide imperialism with more stable conditions in which to exploit Chad's huge untapped mineral wealth.

By preventing the breakup of this African state, the OAU states also hope to firm up the territorial legitimacy of the artificial units they control. Nigeria, above all, hopes to impress the big capitalist powers with its potential role as a guarantor of order.

## Tri-partite meeting in Poland

by Alexis  
Garras

ON WEDNESDAY November 4, a meeting was held between General Jaruzelski (Poland's prime minister and general secretary of the Communist Party), Lech Walesa, and Mgr Glemp, head of the Catholic Church in Poland.

Jaruzelski undoubtedly hopes that these meetings, called to discuss the impasse which the country now faces with winter approaching, and where everything 'negotiable' is apparently discussed, can become the take-off for some more formal governmental coalition, encompassing the major political and social forces in the country.

Walesa has come in for increasing criticism by Solidarnosc's national commission.

Although in theory the national commission is the supreme policy-making leadership elected by the Congress, it has time and again been usurped in its functions by Walesa and his acolytes in the presidium of the union.

Walesa arbitrarily decided to go ahead with the tripartite meeting — to which no other Solidarnosc leader was invited — and in fact informed the national commission only hours before. Walesa and his presidium are in a powerful position, given that they control the day to day activities of the union, at a time when new decisions have to be made continually at very short notice.

But the souring of relations in the leading bodies of the union came out starkly when Walesa more or less presented an ultimatum to the national commission that if they did not accept his right to carry on talks, they

must go to the country and explain their objection.

This was a thoroughly demagogic gesture. Walesa knows perfectly that the entire working population desires the resolution of the economic crisis and the lifting of the shadow of possible Russian intervention. Yet whether talks such as these with the prime minister and the Church hierarchy, without proper consultation with the union's leadership (let alone the rank and file) are the best way, is another matter!

And while Walesa 'gets tough' with the union militants, he is increasingly compliant to the Stalinists — faithfully expressing the attitude of the Church leaders.

The national commission did adopt a three-month moratorium on strikes, but the resolution was couched in exceptionally irate terms and left an enormous loophole — the right to strike would still be recognised by the Solidarnosc leaders during the three month period when necessary for 'the security of the workers'. This clause could tear the moratorium to shreds.



Jaruzelski

## Mass struggle in Brazil

The workers and urban poor of Brazil are mobilising in a wave of class action on the issues of housing and transport. Recent increases in bus fares and rent and the continuing chronic shortage of adequate housing have sparked off actions that have rapidly developed into a mass movement.

Most employed workers earn around \$65 a month — and transport alone often eats up 15%, with rents taking up to 30%.

### Takeover

The most powerful mobilisations have been in Salvador city, where an increase in bus fares was met by a 3 week rebellion in the working class districts that halted all buses. Now the buses are running thanks only to military escorts — and the militancy and anger of workers continues to mount.

The 'Movement against the Cost of Living' has been organised on this upsurge of working class action. In the city of Belo Horizonte, bus fare increases had to be withheld for fear of provoking a national mobilisation on the issue.

They have now been imposed on the basis of an army takeover of the entire town centre. Victoria, Manaus and Fortaleza have also seen class battles over transport.

### Squatting

As the capitalist crisis throws more and more workers out of jobs, leaving them without any form of unemployment benefits, payment of exorbitant rents has become a sharper and sharper focus of struggle. Workers have turned to mass boycotts



Dictator-Figueiredo

and mass squatting.

In Sao Paulo this month, about 3000 families occupied an empty plot of government-owned land and set up shacks. They

were attacked and expelled by a night raid of cavalry and armed troops with dogs.

### Strength

These struggles are part of the growing class movement against the military regime and the bosses behind it.

The central task is to link these community-based struggles with the demands and struggles of the workers in the factories, mobilising the massive industrial strength of the Brazilian working class as the spearhead of the mass movement of the oppressed.

## Slaughter in Guatemala

### El Salvador

At least 400 people have been butchered this year. And still the heroic fighting spirit of working people is unbroken. More and more are turning to the Guerrilla Army of the Poor and other organisations to build their defences and take forward the struggle.

### Alliances

As in El Salvador, the danger is that the top leadership of the guerrilla armies, trade unions and mass parties will seek to tie the workers and oppressed to alliances with their political parties and their supporters amongst the army officers.

### Independent

These people may stand opposed to the Lucas regime and its imperialist

## Huge march in Argentina

LAST Saturday, hundreds of thousands of workers marched in Buenos Aires in the biggest mass demonstration since the army takeover of 1976. The workers were protesting against unemployment [estimated by union leaders at over 12 per cent in the urban areas] and massive inflation.

The march was called by the General Labour Confederation of trade unions — whose top leadership has been forced to respond to the huge anger and militancy rising up in the Argentine working class.

These leaders have long been involved in collaboration with the military dictatorship, while continually trying to channel the mobilisation and militancy of workers behind the political leadership of Peronism

[Peron was the populist head of state from 1946 to 1955 and again from 1973-4].

The march follows a series of strike waves in recent months, as the deepening economic crisis and chaos have hammered into the already miserable living standards of the working people. The strikes and the march show the combativity and the growing movement into struggle of the working class — the only force in Argentine society capable of leading the masses in the overthrow of military dictatorship and the bosses' profit system behind it.

In this life-and-death struggle, the cancer of Peronism in the labour movement will have to be destroyed, along with all the political tendencies of class collaboration.

backers — but they are even more opposed to the independent strength and interests of the working people.

### Gunpoint

They stand for the reorganisation of capitalist rule — while the most basic needs and demands of the mass of the people can only be met through the overthrow of all forms of capitalist exploitation and oppression.

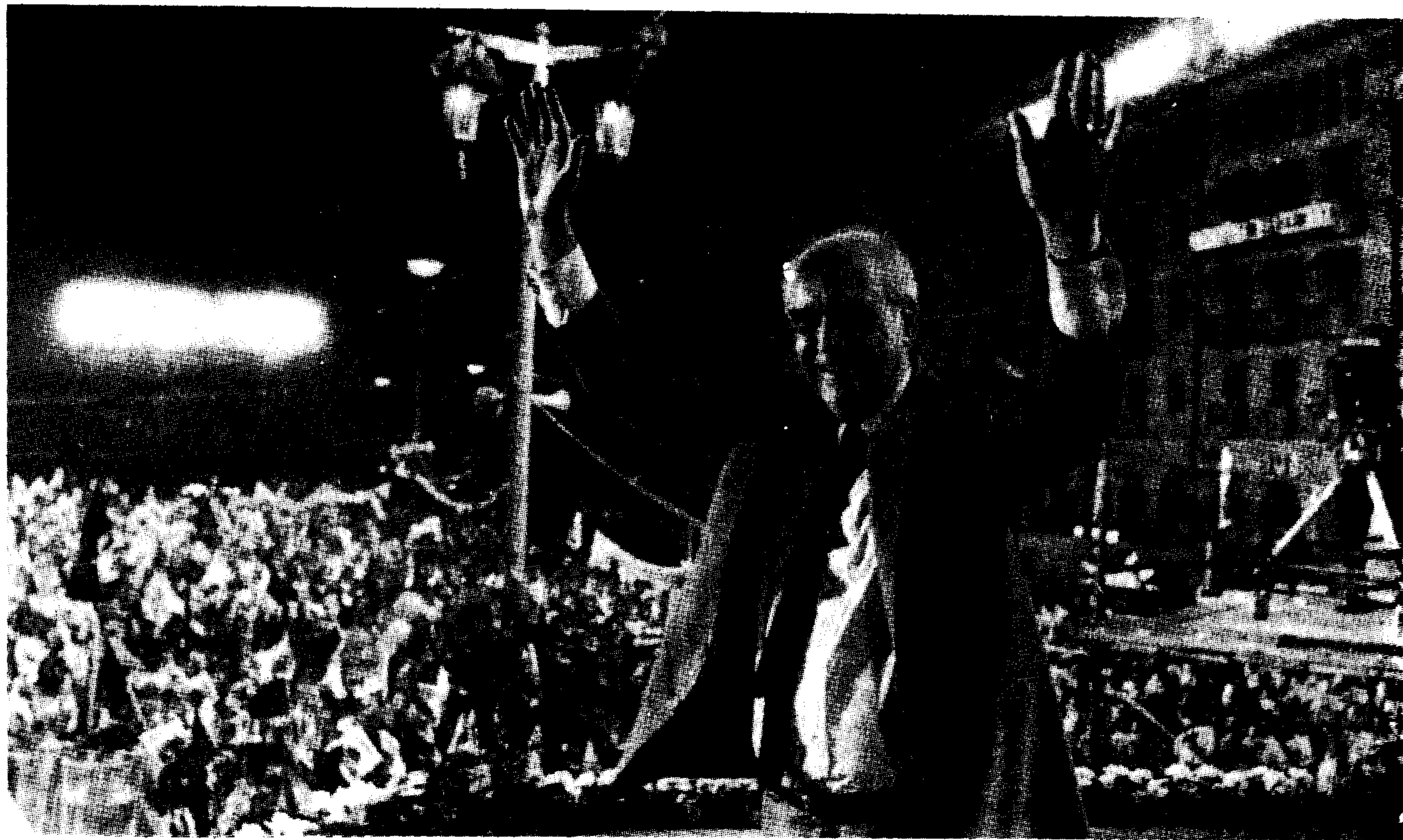
Mexico's Lopez Portillo who like to parade as a 'democratic' supporter of the Salvadoran oppressed, recently showed his true colours in relation to the struggle of the Guatemalan oppressed. In July, he expelled 2000 Guatemalan refugees at gunpoint, fearing that they might give ideas to the oppressed Mexicans.

When it comes to the crunch, 'democratic' bosses and their spokespersons will always act in defence of the private property and profits of their class.



Lucas Garcia

# WHAT KIND OF CHANGE AFTER



Papandreou at Socialist election rally

# GREEK ELECTIONS?

THE exceptional advance of PASOK in the October 18 elections represents a truly historical victory for the workers' and mass movement in Greece.

PASOK, with its crushing 48% of the vote, delivered a fearful blow against the parties of the Right and against the ruling class as a whole. These right wing parties have been continuously in power since 1945 with a brief exception in 1964-5 and, of course, during the dictatorship.

The slogan of "change" which was crucial in PASOK's electoral victory, expressed the hopes of millions of workers, farmers and middle class people bearing the full brunt of the economic crisis. The victory expresses the indignation of the masses at the economic state of the country and at the pro-imperialist policies of the Right on the EEC and NATO.

A fresh wind of change has blown over Europe since the victory of Mitterrand in France and undoubtedly this benefited the rise of PASOK in Greece. Its victory in turn will greatly influence the course of European and Middle East politics.

This is above all true due to PASOK's enormous strength amongst the population and in its parliamentary representation.

## Bankruptcy

Apart from PASOK, the Communist Party took 11% of the vote while the Communist Party (Interior) scored 1.5%, thus giving the parties of the Left 60% of the electorate. The liberal bourgeois parties were clearly decimated, getting only 1-1.5%, and the Right along with its extreme right wing allies fell to 37.5%.

To understand fully the massive turn towards the Left which the country has experienced, it is worth noting that in the previous elections of 1977, the Right, along with the fascists, got nearly 50% of the votes, bourgeois liberalism, 13%, PASOK 25%, the Communist Party, 10% and the Communist Party (Interior), 2.7%.

The electoral campaign was sharply contested. The huge rally of the Communist Party and PASOK, led the Right to lose its nerve, exposing its complete political bankruptcy after its alliance with the forces of the fascist right, which up to then it had kept at arm's

Cissy Vovou in Athens looks at the recent election victory of the Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) and what it will mean for the Greek working class.

length.

The Right sought refuge in scaremongering about the 'Marxist threat', 'totalitarianism', 'the destruction of the motherland' and the 'undermining of the armed forces', etc.

This latest electoral campaign was the fiercest since 1963, but it occurred in conditions (and this is the difference) of democratic freedoms which the mass movement has gained with its own struggles.

## Reaction

However, what is PASOK and what is the change that it promises?

In order that the British reader understands the significance of the present change and its scope, a brief historical review of post-war Greece will be necessary as well as an outline of the ideology and policies of PASOK.

After the betrayal of the resistance movement—which in effect ran the country after the retreat of the Germans in 1944—by Stalin and the Communist Party, which led to the disarming of the guerrillas—the blackest of reaction engulfed the country from end to end.

Thousands of Communists were executed, hundreds of thousands were exiled to remote torture camps for years on end, tens of thousands fled to the East European states, where they live to this day.

## Strident

The communist movement was defeated and drowned in blood, the trade unions trampled under foot and persecuted. Any even vaguely progressive movement in the arts, education or existing organisations of the masses was dealt with by terror and exile.

The bourgeoisie began to rebuild its post-war state on the basis of a strident anti-communism. Its previous fear when faced with a revolutionary situation was converted into an analogous,

impassioned hatred. Its offensive against the masses was aided by the surrender by the Stalinists of the weapons of the People's Army.

Anti-communist security battalions, informers and rascallions were the foundation of the resurrected state.

Despite the terror, by 1958 however, a thaw began yet again in political life.

Liberal bourgeois personalities united under the leadership of George Papandreou, who began his so-called "unyielding struggle" against the entrenched Right.

The same Papandreou was Prime Minister of the Popular Front government in 1944 when the police attacked an unarmed demonstration in Constitution Square, resulting in countless deaths.



Socialist support after victory

Papandreou's 'unyielding fight' was in fact carried out on two fronts. Not only against the governing Right wing and its party, but eventually, above all, against the left. The fight against the left was crucial given that in the 1958 elections, EDA (Union of the Democratic Left) the Communist Party's legal front, had scored a major share of the votes with 25% of the poll.

Papandreou promised to bring under control the excesses of the state and a better deal for the workers, farmers and destitute middle classes.

In 1964 Papandreou's Centre Union swept to power; the workers' movement gained some significant democratic freedoms while the level of mobilisation and militancy soared.

## Reappearance

Papandreou found himself increasingly squeezed between this emergent mass movement and the three pronged alliance of the Palace, the Parliamentary right and their supporters in the secret services and the armed forces, which would not countenance the slightest concession.

His government was torn

asunder and a year and a half after assuming office it was dismissed by the Palace in July 1965.

The "July Days" were the peak of mass mobilisations and strikes against the monarchy. The movement was sold out by the EDA (the only significant left force in the country). The bourgeoisie began piecemeal to regain the ground it had lost. After a whole series of parliamentary 'coup d'états' a military dictatorship was imposed in 1967, lasting for seven years.

The backbone of today's PASOK, as well as its leader Andreas Papandreou, has its origins in the left wing of the Centre Union. PASOK was formed in 1974 by activists of the anti-dictatorial movement and expressedly in conflict with the old Centre Union which with the legalisation of political parties in the summer of 1974, made its reappearance on the political stage.

It presented a socialist programme to the country, which despite its vagueness and ambiguities, was exceptionally radical compared with what the two Communist Parties (also legalised openly for the first time since 1947) were putting forward. However it was neither Marxist, nor Leninist nor revolutionary—and can be considered as socialist only in the context of European social democracy.

It acquired its political base amongst the workers and farmers but had as its central political axis the "anti-imperialist and anti-dictatorial" fight, expressed by its slogan—"Greece belongs to its people".

## Dabbled

On the original 'Out of NATO' position—PASOK has now changed to talking about a referendum to see whether Greece should leave the alliance. It was against EEC entry. Now withdrawal will occur only if the President of the Republic will allow it . . . and so on and so forth.

In general the PASOK of today is unrecognisable from the PASOK of 1974. This applies not only to its policies but also to its leading cadres.

In 1974, PASOK's leading members were active against the junta. Today the majority of its MPs are either lawyers, republican officers who came into conflict with the royalist Right

in the armed forces, or former cadres of the liberal Centre Union (all of whom, of course, have dabbled to a greater or lesser extent in the anti-dictatorial struggle).

The physiognomy of PASOK's leadership is a far more comforting sight for the ruling class, than it was in 1974.

## "Privilege"

Hand in hand with this gradual swing to the right, has been the orientation towards the conservative forces and voters of the old Centre Union. To this end, PASOK in the working class and student movement has consciously acted as a brake, whenever they have threatened to go beyond the bounds of peaceful protests.

In this it collaborates with the Communist Party which because of its superior organisational methods and 'experience' in dealing with the 'ultra-lefts' is generally recognised as the 'political police' of the worker and student movement.

It contends that society is divided into 'privileged and non-privileged' people and privileged and non-privileged nations. PASOK insists that this is a Marxist idea since the concept of 'privilege' is an updating and modification of Marx's idea of class.

On the basis of this 'theory' is erected a political programme with the following main features:

\*The expansion of co-operatives in the rural areas. The establishment of agro-industrial units which aid the modernisation of agriculture. Replacement of the powerful middle men who have ruthlessly exploited the farming communities in the entire post-war period.

\*Democratisation of the state machinery and the army. The creation of a meritocracy to eliminate the Right's traditional monopoly of politically motivated appointments to the civil service, etc.

\*Modernisation of Public Administration and rationalisation of the massive and parasitic bureaucracy.

\*Increase in state intervention and formulation of a plan for industrial development, stepping up an extensive mining and exploration programme and the decentralisation of economic activity away from the major urban areas.

\*Concessions and credits to light manufacturing which

is being severely hit by Greece's entry into the EEC.

\*Out of NATO.

\*No to the EEC.

\*Alliances and treaties with Arab and East European states in the Balkans.

\*Against the doctrine of "belonging to the West" (the prevalent tenet of bourgeois political thinking and practice since the days of Truman and the Cold War).

The majority of these aims are couched in exceptionally strident chauvinistic terms.

PASOK's electoral slogan was 'PASOK in government, the people in power'. What does PASOK mean by this?

PASOK insists that up to the present, power has been formally centred on Parliament whereas the real decision making centres have lain elsewhere. To reverse this, PASOK aims to firmly entrench popular power in Parliament, local government and the trade unions.

## Collaboration

As far as Parliament is concerned—PASOK promises to change the electoral laws which have been fashioned in the interests of the Right.

The existing electoral system is one of reinforced proportional representation. This favours the big political parties. For example in the recent elections PASOK with 48% of the vote got 172 MPs (57% of all Members of Parliament). New Democracy, with 36% of the votes, got 115 MPs (39%) while the Communist Party Exterior with 11% of the electorate managed only 13 MPs (4%). PASOK has promised the introduction of simple PR.

Local government is promised much greater powers and economic resources. As for the trade unions, apart from the crying need for democratisation, PASOK aims to draft a law which will make provision for worker participation on the boards of all enterprises employing more than 50 workers.

By this institutionalisation of class collaboration PASOK hopes it will be easier to get the working class to bear at least in part the burden of the crisis. This is especially true given that PASOK has not even promised the nationalisation of any of the enterprises concerned.

Continued  
next week

# Labour Party IS NOW THE TIME TO STEP UP THE OFFENSIVE?

In the weeks since the Brighton conference Socialist Organiser has given space to the debate taking place in Labour's left wing on the next steps necessary.

Socialist Organiser of September 10 printed an open letter to Tony Benn entitled 'Time to Organise the Left!', and an article by Nigel Williamson set out one possible form of a new movement of the Labour left. Reg Race MP and Bob Cryer MP have also argued (SO October 8 and October 1) the necessity for a new left group of Labour MPs.

But many on the left of the Party disagree. In particular Vladimir Derer of the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy has argued (October 15 and 22) that now is not the time for a new offensive, which would, he believes, only isolate the left.

Anne Pettifor (October 29) argued against Vladimir that it is vital to take the fight into the wider labour movement.

This week (below) we carry Vladimir's reply, together with a further contribution to the debate from Gerry Byrne.

## Press home lose ground

If there is one law in politics it is that nothing stands still. Either you go forward and press home victories or the ground already gained gets taken back.

Vladimir Derer's two articles, arguing for "low profile", non-divisive tactics misses this vital point.

His argument that if we keep our heads down and don't antagonise the opposition, then they'll accept that we're for unity too and will leave alone the democratic gains already achieved is the wisdom of the ostrich.

It credits the right with a gentlemanly Queensbury Rules view of politics. It's a recipe for turning a temporary retreat into a rout.

### Whizzkids

Of course it is necessary to make a sober assessment of where we are at. False optimism is only slightly less dangerous than Vladimir's crushing defeatism.

But, accepting the need for sober realistic assessment, it's clear that Vladimir Derer's evaluation of the Deputy Leadership battle is entirely negative.

Was there really nothing gained? Was it really only the distasteful diversion Vladimir Derer sees it as?

I think a lot was gained from the Benn campaign, and its 'style' for which Vladimir Derer can barely conceal his scorn, offers



Issues - the way to win mass support

several pointers for how we should pursue the fight from here on.

Vladimir bemoans the fact that so many CLPs opted for "issues" this year rather than constitutional changes; but surely one of the important advantages of the Benn campaign was the linking of the democracy and policy questions for the first time in the minds of a whole mass of Labour Party members.

Unfortunately most activists, even in the CLPs, find constitution baffling and tedious. The Benn campaign helped to link these with the need for different policies and a different kind of Labour government to implement them.

The short term effect of losing ground on some of the constitutional issues is less of a disadvantage when seen in the light of a real advance in politicising the labour move-

## "Radical policies are ahead of mass support"

ANN PETTIFOR (Socialist Organiser no.59) is critical of some aspects of my assessment (SO 57) of the situation arising out of the Brighton conference.

According to her, they are based on two false assumptions.

First, she claims that I erroneously assume that it has now been widely accepted that unless there is more accountability within the Labour Party, the PLP will merely continue to uphold the status quo.

In fact I have made no such assumption. What I said, possibly with insufficient emphasis, is that because mandatory reselection is now widely accepted it may have seemed that the principle of greater accountability per se was equally widely accepted.

One agrees with Ann Pettifor that this is far from being the case, since there is still widespread ignorance of the important role of the PLP in relation to Labour governments. Our disagreement, therefore, is not due to any underestimate on my part of the continued need for CLPD 'to do a lot more work in broadening support for constitutional issues'.

Where we differ is the method that is to be adopted to achieve this aim.

Ann suggests that the support for constitutional reform would be broadened if arguments in its favour were more directly linked with those in favour of nuclear disarmament, withdrawal from Europe, and the alternative economic strategy.

In fact, CLPD's success in the past was largely due to the separation of our advocacy of democratic reforms from that in favour of any particular policies. This enabled us to receive support from those who might in fact be opposed to any of these policies.

### Ultra-left

If CLPD were associated with, say, the proposal to withdraw from the Common Market, this would be unlikely to induce MPs and others who wish to see Britain out of Europe to associate themselves with constitutional reform.

What Ann is proposing is that CLPD should adopt what is at present the conventional left wing. Perhaps she, and others who share her view, should ask themselves why the conventional left, whether of the Tribune or ultra-left variety, was so singularly unsuccessful in achieving anything at all, while CLPD, with its much smaller forces, managed significantly to contribute to major victories.

### Genuine

Ann's second proposal, in favour of what amounts to reorientation of CLPD policy, is a variation on the same theme. Once again she advocates a course of action which was pursued often enough in the past, but with negative results.

She is critical of CLPD's

strategy, which limits our activity to the framework we know and understand well - the party, its constitution and procedures.

Such a strategy, she concludes, will merely further entrench the left's permanent minority status in the Party.

Instead, she advocates 'mobilising outside this narrow base, either in the unions or, as Tony Benn did, in the wider political arena.'

Once again she disregards the positive experience of the recent past (the achievement of mandatory reselection and the electoral college) and overlooks that mobilisation for the purpose of attending mass meetings is not a genuine mobilisation, but merely a phony substitute for it.

### Narrowness

It is simply an illusion that lack of success in mobilising a mass support for further democratic reforms in the Party can somehow be overcome by seeking support outside it.

The Party may offer us today no more than a 'narrow base', but it is the only base (this base, incidentally, is not as narrow as that to which the 'left' is habitually reduced when mobilising forces for any of its ritualistic protests, e.g. anti Common Market gatherings or Debate of the Decade).

We may, of course, regret the narrowness of the Labour Party membership base, but a wider participation in

Labour politics will not be produced by an appeal to Labour voters over the heads of the Party's members. In order to obtain greater involvement in Party activities on their part, it is necessary for Labour to regain its credibility as the champion of the interests of the working class and other disadvantaged sections of our society.

Genuine changes in that direction can only be brought about by patient work within that framework which, at any given time, is central to the existing political struggle.

This at present means the existing political structure. It is the failure to identify this framework as the only relevant one, and not as Ann suggests, the circumscription of our activities, which is the one sure way of courting defeat for democratic reform.

Sects ranging from the CP to WRP are forever appealing 'directly' (i.e. not through the Labour Party) to the 'wider labour movement'. We all know just how successful they have been.

### Critical

Such direct appeals are generally made on the assumption that the 'masses' are more radical than the Labour Party. There is, of course, some truth in this assumption: Labour voters are critical of the performance of past Labour governments.

However, when it comes to the advocacy of any

specific radical policy, it is the 'narrow base' which in terms of its views is ahead of the mass of actual or potential Labour voters.

The reason why most trade unionists expressed their preference for Dennis Healey rather than Tony Benn was that Tony was identified with more radical policies. The reason why the majority of CLPs opted for Tony was precisely due to their more direct involvement in Labour Party work.

The basis for their judgment was therefore, at least to some extent, their own experience, rather than the 'information' disseminated by the media.



Healey

routine trade union business - a suggestion deplored by Ann - rather than a rare event highlighted by hostile media coverage.

It is important that after each setback one should critically review the situation. It is clear enough that more work needs to be done if the Labour Party is to adopt socialist policies, but there are no short cuts.

Many Labour Party members - and trade unionists - now feel that democratic reform has gone far enough, and that it is necessary to concentrate on fighting the Thatcher government. The inroads made by the SDP into the two-party system make party unity seem even more imperative.

To ignore this mood would be a grave mistake. In the long run, democratic reforms will give the party greater unity. It would be idle, however, to deny that in the short run the struggle for reform exacerbates divisions.

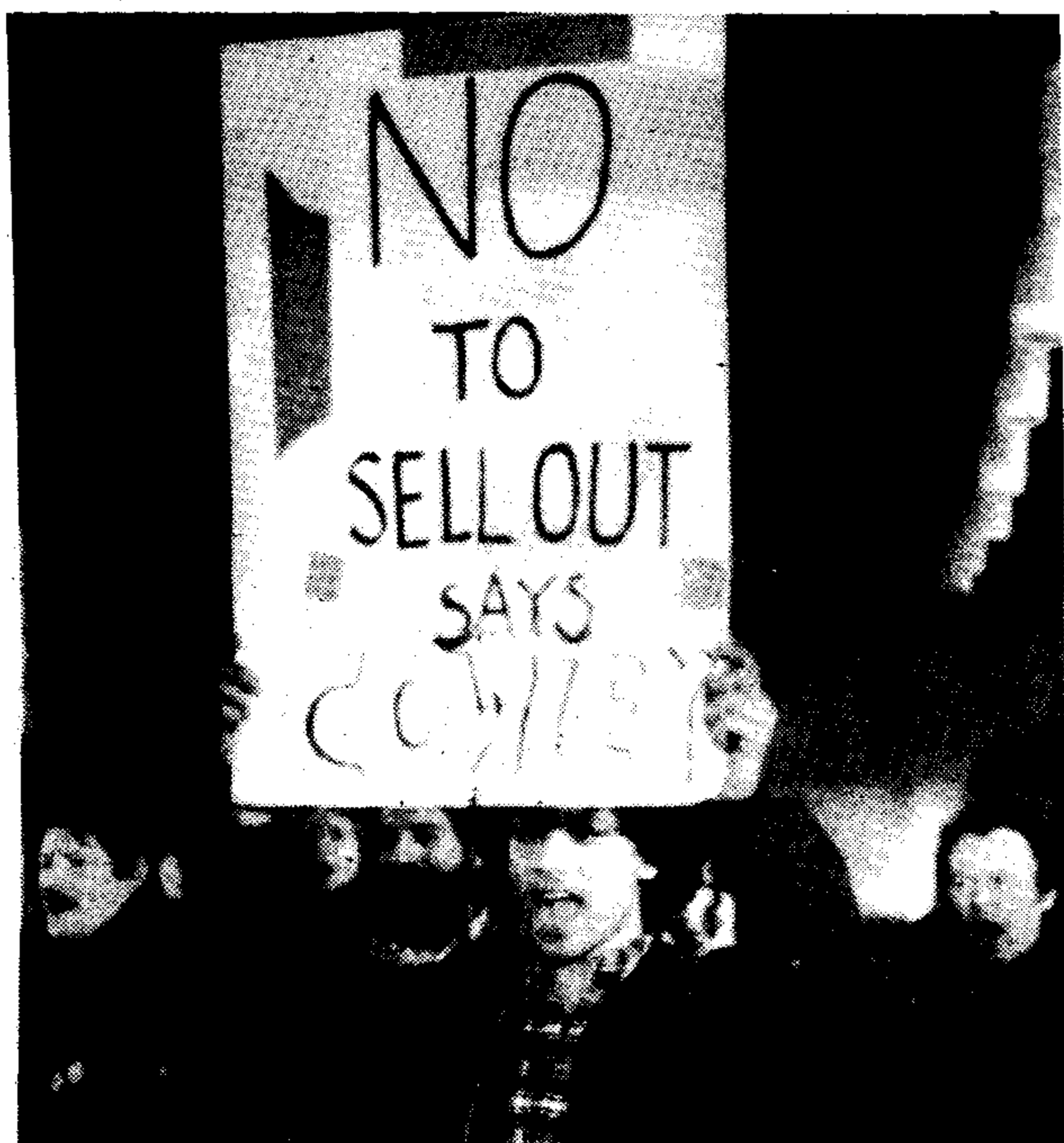
This is not so important so long as the tide is in our favour, and so long as the reformers can carry the majority of the party with them, divisions can be contained.

To persist with an offensive tactic once the majority perceives further reforms as a major threat to party unity and hence its credibility as an alternative government, is to exhibit indifference to the outcome of such political struggles as are being fought out at present.

Since the great majority of Labour Party members

# victories won - or to right wing

by Gerry Byrne



BL - militancy on the shop floor

ment. One can't help feeling that Vladimir Derer sees as one of the disadvantages of that campaign what I would count one of its strengths, the widening of the debate to far greater numbers of people both in the CLPs and more especially in the unions and the intrusions of raucous working class politics into the previously cosy, undisturbed world of committees and professional constitu-

tional whizz kids.

Why else his almost obsessive uncomplimentary references to "extraparlimentary politics" and "circuses and jamborees"?

This is reminiscent of the line of the "Left" traitors during the Benn campaign: "I don't disagree with Benn or most of his

policies, it's his supporters that worry me".

It reflects the same elitist revulsion from mass politics—specifically working class politics. Free speech is only for the men on the platform with the microphones, the rest of us had better just shut up and bloody listen.

That same elitist conception is repeated in Vladimir Derer's comments about the "trade unions": "Among the trade unions a halt to democratic reforms was called already last year when there was overwhelming support for the reimposition of the three year rule." (SO 51).

"Overwhelming support" among whom? Certainly not the membership. Not even the union conferences. When Vladimir says "trade unions" he can see no further than the general secretaries and their apparatus.

In fact, I think, one of the gains—though a negative one—of the Deputy Leadership campaign was to show up the unreliability of the "Left" allies in the trade union bureaucracy and the need for a thorough-going democratisation of that wing of the labour movement.

If Vladimir Derer's assessment of the conference and the Deputy Leadership elections is disastrously one-sided, then his views on the way forward from now are even more blinkered.

He talks of a new mood in the Party, which is quite evident, but he sees it entirely from the perspective of internal organisation. Yes, there is a new mood and it's one that is not particularly advantageous to what we're trying to do. Enormous pressures are being extended, but the question is how do we react to them?

The pressures are real. The devastating effects of this government; mass unemployment and slashing of the public sector, combined with a total failure from the official movement, trade unions and Labour Party, to respond adequately, create an atmosphere of demoralisation and defeat.

The threat of the SDP is felt quite acutely by the ordinary members. The immediate response is to close ranks, try and create unity—any sort of unity—in order to gain the overriding objective of winning the next election.

Bringing up the record of the leaders of the labour movement is seen as nit-picking, an unnecessary luxury we cannot afford when faced with this horrendous government.

How you react to that pressure is the clincher. Vladimir's answer is to go with the stream, to buckle under that pressure.

But that is not a solution

either to the problems of the labour movement or the country in general.

The right wing's calls for "unity" are a ploy, a manoeuvre they can afford to make because they hold the strings of power.

How hollow it is can be seen from the cries both from the right (Manifesto, etc) and the ex-left for purges of leftists, and for overturning properly constitutional de-selections of MPs.

If unity were their overriding aim would they really be so keen to launch the Party into another round of bitter strife? "Unity on our terms" is their battle-cry.

## Pressures

I don't think it's a coincidence that the witch-hunt calls have come at precisely the time when most of the left is drawing back from the fight—both CLPD and (as Vladimir Derer points out) LCC, NOLS and Clause 4.

The right feels strengthened by their conference victories, but even more so by the disarray and timidity of the left.

But if the "low profile" won't solve our internal problems, it certainly can't answer the problems faced by the working class confronted by the most shattering assaults of the Tories.

The problem with the "Let's unite behind the leadership we've got" argument is that that leadership is part of the problem.

The objective pressures which create the felt need for unity at all costs are precisely that this system is in a crisis that allows of no half-way solutions.

## Weak-kneed

The SDP or a Labour Party led by SDP politics—which is what a "low profile" from the Left would actually result in—cannot resolve it.

The Tory government or similar continuing the attacks until the working class is definitively smashed could resolve it one-dis-

trous-way.

Or a government based on active working class control (the "extra parliamentary" "circuses and jamborees" which Vladimir Derer so despises, taken to a higher level) can resolve it in the interests of the mass of the exploited and oppressed.

To make that second option a possibility means extending the process set in motion during the Deputy Leadership campaign. This means the widening of participation to the mass of Labour Party and trade union members; following through the fight for democracy in the unions; linking the democracy struggle with the policies needed to offer a real alternative to the Tories and with the actual class struggles taking place against the Tories; and extending the fight for accountability to local government against both Heseltine's anti-democratic, anti-working class plans and the weak-kneed refusal by Labour councils to fight him.

The "effectiveness of extra-parliamentary action" is not a "fantasy". It is precisely extra-parliamentary action or the lack of it, which has created the climate of demoralisation which Vladimir Derer feels so keenly.

## Paralysis

It is only such action in halting the Tories' onslaught and re-instilling confidence into the working class which will create a more amenable climate for the changes so dear to Vladimir Derer's heart.

He seems to have fallen into the trap of taking up a mirror-image of the attitude of groups like the SWP who see the fight for Labour Party democracy as totally irrelevant to the class struggle.

Only a clear understanding of the relation between the two will carry us forward. Vladimir Derer's road is the road of crippling paralysis.

## -Derer

and indeed of Labour voters do not regard Labour's electoral defeat as a matter of indifference to them, they will rightly utterly reject those who do.

This does not mean that those who are aware that increased accountability is a necessary condition for any future Labour government implementing socialist policies, should abandon their aims.

It does, however, mean that if these aims are to be eventually realised, they must be pursued by taking full account of every change in the situation.

Where the situation is not particularly favourable, patient explanations must replace some immediate demands, and only such immediate demands should be pressed which have some chance of being actually realised. In this context one might usefully recall what Lenin wrote 60 years ago:

"It would be absurd to formulate a recipe or general rule (e.g. 'No compromises') to suit all cases. One must use one's own brains to be able to find one's bearings in each particular instance."

"To accept battle at a time when it is obviously advantageous to the enemy, but not to us, is criminal, political leaders of the revolutionary class are absolutely useless if they are incapable of 'changing tack, or offering conciliation and compromise' in order to take evasive action in a patently disadvantageous battle." (Collected Works volume 31, pp.68, 77).



Cuts struggle - puts Labour's left on the spot

## RESOLUTIONS FOR LONDON

SOCIALIST Organiser supporters and others in Lambeth Labour Left last week discussed amendments to the Regional Executive statement for the London Labour Party conference on December 12.

We suggest removing para 6.2:

"Some may refuse to make budgets in February so as to bring the confrontation forward. Others will plan to maintain the level of services and hope to see the Tory proposals or even the Government itself defeated before the final damage is done."

and replacing it with an amended version of the Socialist Organiser model resolu-

tion printed in last week's paper:

"a) Labour councillors should oppose all cuts in jobs and services,

"b) 1982-3 budgets to be drawn up on the basis of defence of jobs and services, a freeze on rents and rates, and a fight for the full restoration of government grant.

"c) organise now for the backing of community groups and trade unions for this stand, including industrial action in the event of Tory commissioners or surcharges.

"d) the May election to be fought on the basis of the above policies. Labour councils should commit themselves to suspend interest pay-

ments and payment of the Metropolitan Police precept when any single council in London reaches bankruptcy, is surcharged or replaced by commissioners.

"e) Conference instructs the Greater London Labour Party to organise now for the above, and for the reimbursement of surcharged councillors."

The motion printed last week would be ruled out of order as an amendment for dealing with two topics: better to submit one as above and a second one on the council workers' wage claim.

CHEUNG SIU MING

## WITCH-HUNT IN ISLINGTON

LABOUR MP John Grant isn't saying whether he will join the SDP. Grant — a leading backroom man for the right wing, who drafted the 'Better Way' document with pro incomes policy trade union leaders in 1978-9 — has already announced that he will not stand for selection in his Islington Central constituency. And in Parliament this week he launched an attack on Michael Foot for being soft on the Left.

In a letter to constituency officers, he refers to, "the lengthy article in the Times newspaper of Wednesday September 23rd" which "refers in some detail to Ms Rachel Lever, a prominent and voluble member of Islington Central Labour Party's General Management Committee".

"If the allegations are true, then it appears that Ms Lever is a leading Trot-

skyst. She is identified by the authors as an executive member of 'the Trotskyist SCLV'.

"...It seems quite extraordinary that the GMC's decisions should be directly affected by anyone with such views, though I am well aware that there may be others in a similar position who are also delegates. I should be grateful to know what steps are to be taken."

Keith Veness, a leading activist in the CLP, told Socialist Organiser, "The days when revolutionary Marxists could be scared by such smear campaigns are long past in the Islington Labour Parties. Things aren't done on a MP's say-so any more."

And we should be grateful to know what steps John Grant is taking — into the SDP, or where?

## LCC must turn to class struggle

THE switch-over from "constitutional issues" to building an extra-parliamentary base marked the 1981 AGM of the Labour Coordinating Committee held in Glasgow last Sunday and attended by about 80 members.

The decision whether to fight for the deputy leadership has been left until the Spring, dependent in part on the "conduct of the Labour Party's right wing on the NEC and the Shadow Cabinet".

The main strategy motion passed recognised an urgent need to reformulate the alternative economic strategy, to make it more specific and more radical than the resolutions passed at this year's Labour Party conference.

There was no denying that sharpening up the alternative economic strategy and popularising it is necessary.

## Fixated

Constitutional reform would still be a priority, but as Audrey Wise put it: "We can't let ourselves be seen as fixated" on one issue.

One constitutional issue raised in the Executive motion calling for moves to parity of CLP and trade union votes at Labour Party conference was amended to call for moves to "adequately reflect political and financial contributions to the party" while an amendment from Socialist Organiser supporter John Bloxam deleting the parity suggestion was defeated.

On advancing trade union democracy, the AGM went for a vaguer amendment to the resolution put by Stephen Corbushley, and Jon Lansman accepted an amendment to his resolution on maintaining a Rank and File Mobilising Campaign-type body which left both issues less precise to say the least.

The AGM was notable for the lack of discussion on the class struggle that is taking place.

The debate on the cuts showed this when the delegates argued for a position of majority opposition. Joe Baxter spoke on an SO supporters' resolution which called for a move from a defensive campaign centred on the council chambers to a fight involving the strength of the working class.

The AGM voted against any form of wage restraint under capitalism but against a guaranteed increase of wages in line with inflation.

## Extra-parliamentary

A resolution was passed on gay rights, based on the positions of the Labour Campaign on Gay Rights supporting the Labour Party taking up a fight for gay rights.

The AGM has given the LCC a harder position in some areas, such as incomes policy and building an extra-parliamentary base. But policy is developed in the class struggle and not in ballroom of a British hotel.

To build the rank and file base the LCC needs and wants, they have got to take sides with the rank and file in struggle.

# THE SIT-IN: A FOCUS OF RESISTANCE

by Andrew Hornung



TEN YEARS ago, in the summer of 1971, began a struggle against redundancies at Upper Clyde Shipbuilders that was to become a focal point of resistance to the attacks of the Heath government.

For the first time in recent British history, a large workforce moved in and took over the shipyards which the Tories had planned to carve up.

Since that time the tactic of occupation and even the particular action of "work-in" developed by the leadership at UCS have become well-known and popular within the broader workers' movement.

The last few years of struggle against cuts and closures have seen occupations of factories—including Gardners, Laurence Scotts, Lee Jeans—and also hospitals and even nurseries.

Yet in every case such occupations have faced major political obstacles—both in the limitations of their own leadership, and in the refusal of trade union officials at national level to mobilise the kind of supporting strike and blacking action needed to ensure victory.

Indeed no occupation since the UCS work-in has been in such a powerful position to reach and grip the imagination of the broader labour movement.

Yet the leadership at UCS, dominated by Stalinists of the Communist Party, never had the slightest intention of developing from the shipyards a generalised movement of the working class to defeat the Heath government.

For the CP the main question was preserving their cosy relationship with the top layers of the trade union bureaucracy and developing further support for their own politics of parliamentary reform and 'peaceful coexistence' with capitalism. Such politics remain unchanged today.

In looking back at the UCS experience we must draw the lessons from a missed opportunity to mobilise action against the Heath government. But at the same time we must see the possibility that a firm stand in struggle against Thatcher in 1981 could likewise, given a supporting struggle within the labour movement, offer a focus for the whole working class.

TO CHEERING crowds of Clydeside shipyard workers, Jimmy Reid responded to the previous day's government announcement that Upper Clyde Shipbuilders would be shut down with the declaration that:

"We are not going to strike. We are not even going to have a sit-in. We do not recognise that there should be any redundancies and we are going to work-in."

Reid was the key member of the co-ordinating committee which linked up the four UCS yards, Clydebank (where Reid was a shop steward), Govan, Scotstoun and Linthouse.

The Tories' announce-

ment showed that they were determined to kill off what they couldn't carve up: if they carried out their plans to sell off Govan-Linthouse and close the other two, thousands of workers would be directly affected and up to 20,000 might lose their jobs altogether as the effects of the closures worked their way through the system.

## Millions

The decision to stay and fight did not just inspire the thousands of workers who listened on 30 July 1971. It inspired hundreds of thousands—perhaps millions—

General meeting of work-



Reid (centre) with Benn:

throughout the country many of whom were following the UCS example.

Reid was not quite alone when he claimed that "this is the first campaign of its kind in trade unionism," it struck hundreds of thousands of workers as a novel and brave.

Above all, it seemed to promise a militant fight for the right to work—not wrangle over redundancy money or silent submission to capitalism's surgery.

The UCS work-in followed by a whole series of factory occupations, sit-ins, and sit-ins—some against redundancy and some in support of wage claims, claiming to be following the Clydeside example.

UCS mass meeting: the workforce was never fully mobilised to take over



in the Lip occupation: mass involvement and struggle against the bureaucracy was the key to victory



sell-out was to come from Stalinist leaders among UCS stewards

Unfortunately the tough talk was not followed by tough action. The 'work-in' represented neither an effective tactic to force the government to concede the right to work for the Clyde-side workers, nor did it represent a first step towards mobilising the working class for a take-over of industry.

#### Liquidator

The insistence that the government-appointed liquidator, the Glasgow accountant Robert Courtney Smith, would never be permitted inside the yards was followed by his being allowed to work in peace from the Linthouse administrative headquarters of the company.

Worst of all, the work-in was clearly going to be nothing more than a cynical stunt in which the men would finish off the ships in the yards for free, unless there was a clear decision that no ships would be released until the workers' demands were met.

That is, until they could be sure that there would be no sackings and that the solution covered all four yards as a single unit.

Quite the opposite happened. After insisting that all the ships under construction during the work-in would be held, the stewards backtracked on this on November 3.

It was promised that the three ships then released, however, were to be the last.

Yet in late January 1972, the "New Westminster City" was also released. This time there were angry protests, and again there were solemn promises that "this is definitely the last". But on April 3 two more ships left the yards.

The 'work-in' never took on the bold form proposed early on, when it was said that the stewards would get new orders and workers at other plants would be asked to see that UCS got the materials it needed to work on these orders—a plan which necessitated an enormous rank-and-file mobilisation and the abolition of the targets set by the employers in favour of those decided on by workers.

It was never even used as a means of holding hostages—sea-going steel-hulled hostages—against a guarantee of no redundancies.

#### Stunt

The work-in was in effect a stunt to prove that the workers weren't lazy and were "not strikers". Reid insisted on many occasions: "We are responsible people and we will conduct ourselves with dignity and discipline."

The Heath government and British capitalism could not be threatened by such attitudes. They could only benefit.

Not surprisingly, when the final agreements on UCS were signed, saving for a limited period a large part (but not all) of the jobs, it came in the form of a productivity agreement with a no-strike clause plus a reduction in wages.

Capitalism was not quaking with fear; it might well have been shaking with laughter... that so energetic a struggle, so determined a workforce and so thrilling a battle could so meekly be led back into the normal channels of capitalist life.

Crucial in this campaign of political containment, making sure that the struggle never developed its real potential in political and organisational terms, was the Communist Party, whose members above all Reid, Jimmy Airlie of Govan and Sammy Barr of Scotstoun dominated the shop stewards' committee.

#### Cheap phrases

General anti-capitalist phrasemongering for militant occasions was cheap: a meeting of 80,000 was told. "If the government can't

provide the right to work, and if the system can't provide it, then we are ending it."

But Reid's words were different when faced with placards from militants of far left groups calling for a general strike to end the Tory government. He had them excluded from demonstrations where he could.

#### More success

Exactly two years later in the French town of Besancon, near the Swiss border, the workers at the Lip watch factory decided to fight under the slogans: "No shutdown, no sackings". Their struggle was quite different—and vastly more successful—than that of the UCS workers. But again, the occupation and work-in were the central tactics.

Far from trying to prove that the Lip workers would be responsible and loyal employees for any future employer, the militants there broke through the norms of capitalist legality almost from the outset.

For instance, immediately the workers heard that the firm had filed for bankruptcy, they invaded the offices, captured the provisional company directors and, while they were locked up, helped themselves to the firm's secret files.

(At UCS it has been so different. Tony Benn and even Harold Wilson identified themselves with the workers' aims and actions "so long as they didn't break the law", gaining publicity but never being put on the spot).

#### Whole workforce

The entire Lip workforce was soon organised into various commissions—production commission, security commission, propaganda, administration and sales.

This policy followed the line of the Defence Committee (later called Action Committee) established by left-wing militants in the works earlier on.

Unlike at UCS, the Lip workers decided that they wanted daily mass meetings, more frequent delegations, more demonstrations and the involvement of the surrounding firms' workers.

The leaders of the Lip action well understood the need for maximum involvement and for every effort to break down the isolation of the workforce. In this they had a much harder job than the UCS stewards, situated as they were in a working class community with strong

militant traditions.

There were frequent street blockades when Lip workers would force the traffic to stop so that motorists could be given leaflets explaining their fight against redundancy.

The decision to occupy and produce watches was widely seen as an experiment in workers' control. But the Lip militants were less starry-eyed about what they were doing.

They understood that there cannot be real workers' control in one factory, that what they were doing was providing the best conditions for a fight to force the government to guarantee all the employees work.

In this they had an easier job than the UCS workers. Firstly the Besancon works was largely an assembly plant and there were plenty of parts there to work on; secondly they managed to capture a treasure-trove of 25,000 watches that had already been completed but not delivered; and thirdly, watches can be readily sold (particularly when they are being offered at about half-price by bypassing the retailers) but ships cannot.

#### Driven out

The daily paper published by the occupying workers explained precisely why working-in without selling was nonsense, since it was only a way of working for the creditors. "How can we accept," asked the paper, "the idea of working simply to pay the creditors and then, if it comes to it, find ourselves made redundant?"

After two months in occupation, and despite elaborate precautions by the security commission, the workers were driven out of the factory by CRS police in mid-August. The solidarity movement was loud in its protests and there were strikes in many parts of France.

The farmers of nearby Larzac sent the following telegram: "We protest at the invasion of your factory by the police. We are interrupting our harvest work to stop the traffic on the A9 to tell people of our support for you. Victory will be ours."

But the invasion didn't stop either the watch production or the sales and payment of the workers. Operations continued in secret workshops which the police searches failed to find (just as they failed to find the 25,000 watches).

New meeting places were also found—as was a new canteen.

The UCS workers faced little repression and quite favourable publicity in the media. The Lip workers, on the other hand, faced arrest, police brutality, attacks from fascists and the constant attacks of the media.

Throughout the struggle, the motive force had been the Action Committee of militants—a committee which was self-appointed and open.

#### Ditch struggle

It managed to put pressure both directly and indirectly—through the mass meetings—on the majority union, the CFTD, which took quite radical positions in the fight.

The Communist Party-dominated CGT, however, the other main trade union federation at Lip never broke from its ultra-bureaucratic routine. It was at once ready to ditch the struggle—and far more eager to stop the far-left gaining the attention of the workers than to fight the government.

After a huge march on Besancon in late September, the CP weekly 'France Nouvelle' was obviously worried at the widening scope of the struggle and warned, "It is not the time to make this struggle into the focus of the national or international class struggle."

In the following month, the CGT recommended acceptance of the government's Giraud plan (which did not guarantee that the works would stay open without job loss).

When this was overwhelmingly rejected by a mass meeting, the CP joined the barrage of press abuse, accusing the workers of the dreadful crime of "letting themselves be influenced by adventurists of the ultra-left who are taking them down a very dangerous road."

#### Victory

Despite increased repression against the Lip workers, the CGT ceased to be active in the struggle after that.

The increased repression did not cow the workers, nor was the workforce eager to prove their meekness to any prospective employer. Indeed, when the industrialist Arbel opened a works in Besancon as part of a plan to employ a reduced workforce, the works was demolished by the Lip employees

in a night-time raid.

Despite numerous refusals by the government to countenance the re-opening of the entire works, the workers finally won.

The Dole agreements—named after the city not the queue!—were approved by a mass meeting in late January 1974. Work could start "as normal" once the police had left.

Both the Lip and the UCS actions, despite the enormous limitations of the latter, had the effect of providing an inspiring example to the working class of fighting unemployment not by begging but by occupation and control.

Naturally these struggles could not become the practical starting points for a fight for real workers' control—outside of a general revolutionary situation.

This isolation—though in both cases there were enormous efforts to overcome it by developing a solidarity movement—was also felt at the political level: even at Lip there could be no more than talk about general anti-capitalist strategies against unemployment, while demands were limited to the fate of Lip itself.

Certain lessons are clear. The illegal action of the Lip workers—their temporary capture of the provisional directors and their sales of the watches they held and made—did not distance them from the French working class nor was it an obstacle in dealings with the government.

Indeed the challenge of the occupation and its tactics to capitalist law and property rights—something felt by many UCS workers, although they did not go so far—was important in raising the level of consciousness of the workers.

The Lip occupation, and to a lesser degree the UCS action, revealed the power of the occupation tactic as a way of forging a fighting unity among the workers.

The UCS action, however, because of the dominance of the CP, did not develop the forms of participation and control by the mass of the workforce that existed at Lip.

The politics of the UCS leaders also guaranteed that the trade union and labour leaders would get an easy ride.

In fighting for occupations today we must recognise also the need for a new leadership independent both of the trade union bureaucracy and of their hangers-on in the Communist Party.

# NALGO campaign has blossomed

THE Campaign for NALGO Affiliation to the Labour Party was set up around 1976, as a pressure group that came to life once a year around conference, and was dominated by the Militant Tendency. After one or two abortive attempts to get the issue of an affiliation ballot on the agenda, we carried it hand-somely at 1981 conference.

Since then the campaign has really blossomed with large numbers of 'non-affiliated' people getting involved. There is no doubt we are an open, non-sectarian campaign — certainly in the London area. Anyone can join for a quid.

There is also FLAG — Fight for Labour Affiliation Group — which consists basically of NEC members and apparently sees itself as complementing and not competing with us.

Nationally, the aim is to raise several thousand pounds so that a whole series of relevant leaflets can be produced in the

run-up to the ballot. These would relate to individual services and to regions, if possible.

A really big national rally in London is proposed as the pinnacle of the campaign. There is already one basic leaflet out, with a message from Michael Foot and a brief history of the Party. There seems to be a general consensus that we want to appeal to the membership on the broadest possible basis — not just to those with radical, left-wing policies.

The fact that even the 'activists' at the Metropolitan District Council only agreed to support affiliation by a narrow 92-86 majority shows just how much work needs to be done clarifying the issues. We have to face opposition from the ultra-left as well as the right wing.

My own view is that we need to argue for the connections between trade unionism and political action to change society at

all levels in a very basic way, not taking even the most minimal pro-socialist viewpoint for granted. The idea that unions should keep out of politics and vice versa is very strongly rooted in NALGO.

The London area campaign is being run by an ad hoc steering committee, which is open to anyone who wants to take part. This is obviously not enough to carry out an active campaign in all the branches.

## Campaign

We are calling a meeting for all CNALP supporters and sympathisers in the London Area on the 17th November, at 6.30 at County Hall to decide how much further we can push the campaign.

For further information contact Martin Cook (GLC/ILEA liaison person) on 633 6364 or Bob Patten (London Convenor) on 633 8520.

MARTIN COOK

## Low-Pay Pinkos

THE feather-bedding pinkos and Guardian-reading trendies of the Low Pay Unit are at it again.

Mrs Joyce Smallman was perfectly content with her £14 for 54 hours until she was persuaded by interfering busybodies to ask for more.

Her employer did the only decent thing a small businessman can do in the circumstances—he sacked her (in the national interest!)

This would have been the end of the matter if the bureaucratic tentacles of the corporate state in the form of an industrial tribunal had not reared its ugly head.

This quango granted her a grossly inflationary £400 for unfair dismissal and £3,000 back pay, as well as issuing the provocative demand that such people should earn £53 a week as a minimum on the unrealistically flimsy grounds that the law requires it.

There is no prospect for a renewal of British industry and a defeat of inflation if these closet commies continue to make such settlements to the hundreds of thousands of workers who have the honour of working at the base of the pay pyramid.



## ILL-SUITED?

THOUSANDS of out-of-work navvies are reportedly up in arms at the allegation that they look as scruffy as Michael Foot.

This follows a weekend of feuding within the Labour Party over the leader's generally eccentric appearance.

Foot's leadership qualities apparently do not include matching the sartorial tastes of right wing Labourite Walter Johnson—a patriot whose fanaticism obviously extends to vetting the clothing of those labour movement leaders who turn out on Remembrance Day parades.

But Johnson's remarks also seem to have stung Foot. Indignantly he assured

reporters that his jacket was only two weeks old.

And, warming to the theme, he slammed Johnson's remarks as deeply offensive—not to Foot himself but to his wife, Jill Craigie!

She always goes to a great deal of trouble to see that I am well turned out, snarled an angry Foot.

Which only goes to prove that while Foot still obviously wears the trousers in that household (and who else would wear Foot's trousers?) the task of looking after them is firmly allocated elsewhere.

And if a potential Prime Minister is incapable of smartening himself up it's not his fault—but that of the woman he lives with!

## Loving it

DON'T believe all that rubbish about apartheid. Black workers really love it.

How do we know. Because we have the assurances of 70 anonymous Welsh choristers who have just completed a tour of South Africa—with the eager support of Lord Chalfont.

Another chorister insisted that: "The propaganda in Britain about apartheid is all lies. The blacks are happy."

"We did not see a policeman throughout our stay", argued another, claiming that South Africa is not a police state.

By the same token any black workers unfortunate enough to bump into the tour could have concluded that there were no anti-racists in Wales—since they wouldn't have seen any in the delegation.

But in fact the hostility to the tour from the Welsh community has been so strong that the songsters were forced to masquerade under the collective pseudonym of 'Jones', and went to great lengths to conceal their identities from the British media. Some names have, however, leaked out.

Hopefully Welsh workers will keep an elbow in the hillside for those who go to such lengths to comfort the racist oppressors in South Africa.

# Fighting bureaucratic privilege

THE massive strike wave which gave birth to the Solidarnosc trade union movement had its immediate origins in wage demands: but the power and scope of the movement arose from the pent-up revolt of millions of Polish workers against state repression at the hands of the privileged ruling Stalinist bureaucracy.

Within days of the strikes gaining their full strength in Gdansk, the demands had been widened to include an assault on the dictatorial powers and economic privileges of the bureaucrats.

Strikers demanded the closure of the special "commercial" and "privilege" shops, selling scarce food and commodities at prices only top bureaucrats could afford.

They demanded the release of political prisoners, the reinstatement of victimised militants, access to the mass media, and freedom of the press.

And they demanded the publication of the full information on the social and economic crisis facing Poland—effectively calling for the 'opening of the books' on the whole nationalised economy and its dealings with the capitalist countries.

## Developed

Such demands confirm the general line of analysis of the struggle against Stalinism mapped out by Leon Trotsky in the Transitional Programme of 1938:

"A fresh upsurge of the revolution in the USSR will undoubtedly begin under the banner of the struggle against social inequality and political oppression. Down with the privileges of the bureaucracy! Down with Stakhanovism [the glorification of speed-up in industry] Down with the Soviet aristocracy and its ranks and orders! Greater equality of wages for all forms of labour."

But in two important respects Trotsky's analysis needs to be developed in order to explain and to effect a change in today's

## Marxism and the Polish revolution

John Lister continues his series on Poland

situation in Poland.

Firstly, the extension of Stalinist rule into Eastern Europe in the wake of World War 2 has left many weaker links in the chain of bureaucratic rule than the Soviet Union itself.

So while Trotsky writes confidently of the prospects for revolutionary struggle that will directly overthrow the Kremlin leaders, the post-war period has in fact seen major struggles along these lines only in the 'buffer' states of Eastern Europe—in East Germany, Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

A problem confronting each of these struggles has been the lack of any simultaneous uprising by the working class elsewhere in the Eastern countries—and particularly the absence of any substantial working class opposition to the Soviet bureaucracy itself.

This difficulty—a development since 1938—highlights the need for an internationalist leadership in the struggle for political revolution, recognising the importance of links with workers throughout Eastern Europe.

## Regeneration

Secondly the experiences of political revolution have all occurred in countries in which capitalist property relations were overturned from above, while bureaucratic control was maintained by a state machine completely out of the hands of the working class.

Unlike the Russian Revolution, Eastern Europe after the war saw no emergence of soviets as mass organisations of proletarian power.

Trotsky however had looked towards the regeneration of the Russian soviets as a key component in the struggle for political revolution:

"The struggle for the freedom of the trade unions and the factory committees, for the right of assembly and freedom of the press, will unfold in the struggle for the regeneration of Soviet democracy."

## Spontaneous

The bureaucracy replaced the soviets as class organs with the fiction of universal electoral rights—in the style of Hitler-Goebbels. It is necessary to return to the soviets not only their free democratic form but also their class content. As once the bourgeoisie and kulaks were not permitted to enter the soviets, so now it is necessary to drive the bureaucracy and the new aristocracy out of the soviets."

In the light of post war experience, a rather different conclusion must be drawn. Just as the soviets emerged as spontaneous organisations in the revolutionary upheavals against Tsarism and capitalist rule in Russia, so now, independent organisations have arisen in the struggle against the state machinery of the Stalinist bureaucracy in Eastern Europe.

The working class in Poland and Hungary has turned in the main *not* to the existing "trade unions" and bureaucratised "Communist" Parties as vehicles for its demands, but to the building of independent unions and workers' councils outside and in competition with the old organs.

It is fair to assume that such developments would also be paralleled in the Soviet Union itself—by-passing the ossified bureaucratised remnants of the former soviets and establishing new trade unions and workers' councils as a direct challenge to the Kremlin leadership.

Indeed it is necessary to

recognise that the revolutionary overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracies is a task which requires the same kind of political preparation, programme and leadership as the struggle against capitalism.

In Poland, capitalist property is nationalised—a historically progressive development which workers must defend: but the state machinery is designed to protect the power and privilege of the party bureaucrats by repressive means just as brutal and reactionary as those employed in any capitalist dictatorship.

There can be no hope of

the workers taking power in Poland without the *smashing* of that state machinery and the establishment of a new state power arising from the mass organs of the working class.

Far from being some kind of 'half way house' to socialism, the deformed workers' states are *counter-revolutionary* states, antagonistic to the working class at home and abroad.

They require not piecemeal 'reform' or a reshuffle of groups of individual leaders or managers, but a wholesale *revolution* in which the whole parasitic caste of bureaucrats must be driven out and the adminis-

tration must be taken into the hands of the working class.

To create conditions for this to happen requires political preparation, in which workers begin to focus their attention on what needs to be done to develop the nationalised economy in their interests, and recognise their ability to take the lead in these changes.

In other words the centre of political agitation in Poland needs to be the fight to assert *workers' control* over the economy and every aspect of Polish society.

Next week's article will look at this question in some depth.



by Les Hearn

# Chemicals out of control

## SCIENCE



British industry seems to have had quite a bit of trouble keeping dangerous chemicals under control recently. First, there was a fire at the Nor-Cal swimming supplies warehouse in Wallington, Surrey.

Unknown to the Health and Safety Executive and to the local fire brigade, large amounts of sodium hypochlorite, used for making chlorine, were kept on the premises. Unfortunately, fire tends to produce chlorine when it encounters sodium hypochlorite, and a great cloud of it caused the evacuation of 500 residents in their night-clothes one night in August.

Even though chlorine is highly dangerous (it was used to gas soldiers in the First World War), Nor-Cal was under no legal obligation to report its dangerous stores to the government.

### Injuring

The second incident did involve government regulations, though the company appears to have avoided them quite legally. Storage drums at the Chemstar plant in Manchester exploded in early September, killing one worker and seriously injuring another.

200 people were evacuated.

The council had already ordered the firm to move some 750 tons of chemicals in 40 gallon drums away from nearby houses at Stalybridge, but the firm had appealed, saying there was no danger to residents, and had been given till December to move them. There is an official list of 500 industrial sites in Britain with "major hazards" but the Chemstar plant was far too small to be on it. It would have needed 10,000 tons of solvents to make the list.

In case you were wondering, the list is secret. This is so you don't worry too much.

## Not so dusty?

You expect top security in a top nuclear weapons laboratory, don't you? At Los Alamos National Lab in New Mexico, they've got special monitors to detect any radiation in workers leaving premises. Unfortunately, they don't seem to work.

A couple of weeks ago there was what only US officialdom would call a "potentially significant" accident. 11 workers were

exposed to deadly plutonium dust. One received more than a lifetime's permitted dose—he is still under observation.

But another worker didn't realise he had been contaminated and he left the plant without detection, contaminating his car and the home of a friend whom he visited. Subsequently, he was found to have received a "relatively" minor dose. Just as well, really!

## Computers for disabled

I WROTE recently about the potential value of computers to people with disabilities. One area where computers could be crucial is in schools for children with disabilities, where they could enable many children to start communicating fully with other people and to gain fuller access to knowledge.

But while the government is spending £9 million over four years to put com-

puters into ordinary schools, a mere £500,000 has been earmarked for the 16000 special schools catering for children with physical and mental handicaps. This will fund the setting out of four centres to show teachers how to use computers, but will not be enough to allow development of the necessary software (programmes specially written with the needs of such children in mind), to allow develop-

ment of suitable interface switches (switches operated by feet, fingers, mouth, etc) so that children with physical handicaps can actually use the computers.

As one teacher said recently, "Computers are useful aids for normal children, but they are not absolutely essential. For some disabled children, computers means that, at long last, they can be educated to the limit of their abilities.

Our movement needs to take up issues such as this, as well as just defending what we already have.

# PRESS GANG

## PREGNANCY SPECIAL



ISN'T IT marvellous how in the darkest hour a little ray of sunshine, or stardust in this case, lights on our sorry world and shows us how trivial our own little troubles are in comparison with the wonder of Life Itself?

What matters a few million dole scroungers unable to get on their bikes? Death and destruction, torture and nuclear annihilation, pale into insignificance beside the wonder of a well-filled womb.

11am, November 6th: the world held its breath, and then exhaled in a gentle collective sigh of awe and contentment. Barefoot children on the dark continent thrilled to the news with lofty duchesses. The universal human soul stirred to one refrain: Ah, the glory of motherhood. God save our Di. God bless the babe. God help us all.

Even hedonists and heretics were hushed. The cynical and sarcastic, the spiteful spinsters, the loud-mouthed lesbians, were silent. The Mystery of His Ways was revealed in all its opacity.

He moved, for we see the evidence, but how he moved we know not.

The Lord Mayor of London proffered this insight: 'Babies are bits of stardust, blown from the hand of God'.

A trifle unromantic perhaps, the reference to so

carnal an activity as insufflation, but it does, with the acuity so characteristic of his eminence, capture the cosmic significance of the event. One cannot imagine such poetry issuing forth from the commie canaille at County Hall.

Indeed, it has been rumoured that Mr Ken Livingstone, the IRA bomber and self-styled leader of the so-called Greater (!) London Council, has ungraciously declined to be present at the birth.

Good riddance! You can be sure he would only attend in order to perpetrate nefarious acts with the obstetric forceps.

If there is one thing that is guaranteed to detract from the rightful solemnity and dignity of the occasion, it's Marxists among the midwifery.

Like every mum-to-be the world over, our Princess will be asking herself The Question: will it be British?

Statistically there is a 58.8 per cent chance of lovely Di's baby being British.

Modern science has ways of discovering these things, even before the birth. Sophi-

sticated scanning equipment can reveal foreign babies while still in the womb.

But like most expectant girls, Di will probably choose to remain in suspense.

Yet modern researchers believe it is even possible to determine such things before conception. Diet has a lot to do with it. The foreign genes thrive on rich spicy foods and garlic, while brown sauce, mushy peas and mugs of tea give good old British genes a push in the right direction.

Of course, Di will have to look after her health. Though as Major General Bloodbaker, an authority on royal breeding, points out, 'Healthy young girls, like thoroughbred fillies, can usually take anything that pregnancy cares to throw at them, short of a hefty kick in the flanks. Even then, a linseed rub-down and a bag of oats is generally sufficient to restore them to their customary high spirits'.

The other question which will concern the lucky Princess as her elfin figure blossoms into the opulent ripeness of maternity, is how to clothe her new-found abundance. News is that the contract has already gone to Emmanuelle 2, who was responsible for that fairy-tale matrimonial ensemble.

The christening robe, it is said, will comprise 15 miles of hand-knotted silk macramé. Maternity socks and nursing gloves, from individually plucked mouse hair, will be imported from strife-torn Guatemala.

Don't miss next month's special free preview packet.

# Review It'd be madness to miss it!

by Everton Williams

'TAKE it or leave it' isn't a brilliant film. Its acting, photography and direction ain't particularly much. However, it is good and well worth seeing.

It's about the formation and development of a group of nutty Camden youth into one of the best bands around, Madness.

The film, which was decided on the spur of the moment when the band had a few weeks free, is an example of the versatile, refreshing and spontaneous skills of Madness.

The movie's extraordinary quality is that it is so totally working class. It is perhaps the most impressive aspect and strength of Madness that they are able to sing about ordinary dull problems in exciting, danceable, and challenging ways.

It is encouraging to know that they can continue this process of presentation and theme in a simple, direct and highly enjoyable way onto the screen.

The film soundtrack, which is obviously excellent, starts off with a point the movie often obscured. It's a point many of their fans and those critics who give the band a racist tag could do with listening to.

"As far as I'm concerned/ You don't have to be black, white, Chinese or anything/ Just enjoy/

Shut up, listen and enjoy'.

The visuals start off with Barso and Chrissey boy nicking rock'n'roll records. It goes on to the early problems of getting gigs, personality clashes and arguments over the band's direction.

It's interesting to see what an arrogant personality Barso could be to those who were letting the band down.

### Rucking

The main thing about the movie is having fun. It's pretty much the 1979 Madness phrase, 'Fuck art, let's dance' polarised.

There's a really funny scene of Suggs and a skin playing with Underground lighting tubes (like Star Wars) and being chased by cops. But it's also those normal laughs you have, like rucking, going on the piss with your mates, dossing around and mucking about, like on estates or trains.

It's so normal and typical a script, and thus relevant and realistic to working class youth, that you'd expect it to be boring like Coronation Street. But it's got the extra element, that nutty sound, which changes everything.

### Memories

As a Madness fan I found it pretty funny to hear them play rock'n'roll and you realise then how

down to earth they are.

Another thing I liked about 'Take it or leave it' was that it didn't try to have any messages or morals to put over to its fans. Also, it didn't try to portray Madness as any different or better than its fans, like all those boring old Presley and Beatles movies did.

'Take it or leave it' was better than its nearest counterpart, 'Dance craze'. This was because it wasn't just a soundtrack with pictures, but a funny, interesting, scripted movie of our lives.

The only thing that I didn't like was when they became the North London Invaders (prior to being called Madness). This brought recollections of when I was given free tickets to see them in 1978, when they played a fund-raising benefit gig for NUSS, and I didn't go. Bad memories.

I think it would be good if the old two-tone bands could have got together and made a documentary about what the movement stood for. But this wasn't the task of 'Take it or leave it', which is for the fans, not the analysts. Also it'd probably bore all the rudies, nutty boys and skins.

Anyway, if you've enjoyed the nutty sound and the videos, go see the movie. It'd be madness to miss it.

# RED ROCK



...Searing analysis...  
Hi-Fi Today

by Andrew MacDonald

MOST working class youth form groups or gangs round schools, workplaces, estates, football teams or rock groups.

There seems to be a vague second sense, a feeling for security and stability and above all a cultural identity.

And hence, for this column's purpose, the punk, skin, ska, etc. phenomena in post-war capitalist Britain.

Middle class youths are different. From a different upbringing, different environment and different culture, comes the tendency towards individualism in outlook, habit and of course rock music.

The Human League cater for the middle class, individualist 'Human-ists' (not exactly!). It's the 'Human' League, definitely not the Workers League or the

Bosses League.

The Human League continue where the idol of the 'cult of individualism' — David Bowie — left off. I bet that a lot of copies of Dare (their recently released album) have already found their way into teenagers bedrooms bursting with Bowie records!

"We knew we were going to be a top group two years ago. Definitely. We'd got all the names trade marked so people couldn't rush out and make T-shirts because we were going to be so popular," modestly remarked lead singer and chief instigator Phil Oakey.

But I suppose you should give credit where credit is due. The Human League have obviously hit on a winning formula. I just find it the same old boring story. There's nothing 'Dare'ing about Dare. Which doesn't in itself mean it's an awful album. But let's have a look.

A group of on-the-make musicians, lumped under the 'new romantics' catch-all, make a couple of non-commercial singles and look promising. But they don't get any mass success, only a semi-underground cult following, so they split up and Heaven 17 is the by-product.

Next step—bop up the style, buy some new make-up and add two attractive 18-year old women (who subsequently fail their 'A' levels).

Next write a good old fashioned heterosexual love song and call it 'Love Action (I Believe in Love)'. "When you're in love, You know you're in love. No matter what you try to do. You might as well resign yourself. To what you're going through."

(Absolute meaningless

nonsense). Then go on Top of the Pops and whizz up the charts and then release Dare...

Same old boring story! Generally the consensus is that rock music is at the moment bland and that we deserve something better. Every other record seems to be a re-make or a re-release.

Elvis Costello has gone back to Country and Western, Joe Jackson, a decade earlier to swing. So some of the Human League appeal is that they are actually stepping in the right direction.

Or are they? Certainly the technology is. What with Roland Micro-composers, Drum computers and assorted synthesizers, it isn't exactly the stuff that garage bands are made of.

But isn't it really the same old reactionary 'pop' ideology to a different tune?

# Letters

## Our task - "to give a lead"

CLIVE Bradley (Socialist Organiser 57) describes the comment by Carol Hobbs that the Laurence Scott workers were 'slow off the mark' as 'ludicrous'. He should consider the following points.

It was more than two months into the dispute before the workers took the step of picketing the main plant of their employer at Doncaster. The efficacy of this step and the justification for those who had urged it from the start were soon apparent. Within days the employers had agreed to talks.

Many of the workers themselves felt that they had been slow off the mark and commented that they should have picketed the Mining Supplies plant earlier.

### Wrong

Unfortunately, the stewards' committee, in return for open-ended talks, agreed to lift the picketing. Not surprisingly, with the pressure off the employers, concessions were minimal and unacceptable.

In arguing for the re-imposition of the picketing, socialists obviously attempted to point out these lessons and urged the workers to rely on their own actions, not on decisions of the AUEW Final Appeals Court, which has previously been simply ignored by the Executive.

Not only is Clive wrong on the facts, but a more important point is raised.

### Criticisms

The Scotts workers have shown heroic persistence and tenacity in the face of overwhelming odds. But socialists may still be fraternally critical of many of the tactics they adopt.

We should be prepared for them not to embrace our criticisms enthusiastically, particularly when we are

not directly involved in the dispute. The way we argue is important. However, Carol Hobbs' comment was in fact contrasting the militancy of the workers ('even if slow off the mark') with the attitude of the officials.

### Resisted

We cannot simply agree with whatever tactics workers are employing in the hope of avoiding argument and currying favour. We would reduce ourselves to the workism that informs the pages of *Socialist Worker* and its second-rate imitator *Socialist Challenge*, simply describing events, passively supporting the existing level of struggle, and pointing no political way forward.

*Socialist Organiser* has resisted this course, and I think that Clive could have found solid evidence in

the coverage to support the comment.

As the letter from the Iranian comrades on the same page points out, "Communists are not narrators of the events. Your duty is to interpret and analyse the situation so as to change it".

ALAN CAMPBELL,  
Manchester.



Duffy

## Product of a loony group

I FEEL I have to reply to Linda Mouldsdales letter 'A god-awful leaflet' in SO 60.

What had this leaflet to do with 'the Church'?

There is no way any of the established churches would come out with a line like that.

The leaflet was probably produced by one of the hundreds of small loony religious groups.

Far from falling apart, like the Anglicans and Catholics, many of these groups are still, tragically, growing.

To claim that religion is based on bullying is as ludicrous as the Russian Stalinist claim to have disproved the existence of God by not finding him in space.

As Marx put it: 'Religion is the (imaginary) heart of a heartless world'. Gods

represent all the things we want, things we feel should exist and don't. People believe in religion because they want to, not because they fear hell and the devil.

(Surveys have shown that 'millions of people believe in God but not heaven and vice versa').

### Crude

Both anarchists and Stalinists see religion as superstition or insanity to be bullied out of people with constant propaganda and intimidation.

If we take up comrade Mouldsdales crude attitude to beliefs we don't understand we could end up with a liberal version of the Stalinist position.

Fraternally,  
PAUL BARKER  
London

## Don't call it Israel!

YOUR article published last week on the letters page about the so-called 'working class' and 'labour' bodies set up by the Zionists in Palestine was very useful especially in rebutting the propaganda put out by Zionists who allege they are also socialists.

### Colonialists

However, the letter suffered from the use of the term 'Israel' in the headline. The writer of the letter did not use this term and the paper should not either - it is the name used by colonialists for their state and should not be repeated by socialists no more than we say 'Rhodesia' for 'Zimbabwe' or 'Gold Coast' for 'Ghana'.

To do so is to accept the institutions and the state whose hollow credentials were clearly shown by Comrade Ledez, and which must be opposed in every way by all socialists.

Yours fraternally,  
ALAN CLINTON



## Weakness of Marxists?

JOHN Shiers' anger at the Left ('A Manifesto that leaves out sexual oppression') is generally quite justified, though I do feel a little hurt that Trotskyists are lumped together with Bennites without distinction.

After all, the virtual denial of sexual oppression by the Bennite 'Manifesto' is a quite logical accompaniment to the hotch-pot of reformist and nationalist ideas in it.

On the other hand, the ignoring of sexual oppression by the Marxist left (which *Socialist Organiser* has made some small but real steps to overcome) is a disastrous weakness in developing and

redeveloping a body of theory to inform the struggle of the working class and oppressed groups against capitalism and imperialism.

### Ignored

John Shiers is right to say "the body of theory and action which has emerged from the socialist feminist current of the women's movement and the gay liberationist current of the gay movement continues to be largely unread and ignored by the mainstream left", though some of that theory and action has been accepted piecemeal and largely without acknowledgement (the contributions of the radical and revolutionary feminists have also been ignored).

Worse, some would-be Marxists have accepted bourgeois liberalism as the last word in sexual matters. This is particularly true with pornography, where the dominant left position is "no censorship, free speech". If these positions on sexism were transposed to the subject of racism, those promoting them would truly deserve to be "branded with infamy, if not with a bullet!"

### "Patriarchy"

Marxism has failed to see women's oppression as central and still fails. I can think of no recent original contribution from the Leninist-Trotskyist tradition in which we stand. So it is not surprising that the women's movement is at best unconvinced of the validity of the Marxist method.

As a contribution to women's struggle against oppression, we Marxists should take up the concept of "patriarchy" mentioned by Ann Evans (Insight into the Women's Movement, SO 58). We should also incorporate in our platform condemnation of, and a call for organisation against, male violence against women, including all forms of sexual harassment.

I. S. HEARN,  
Southport.



Writeback to  
Socialist Organiser  
28, Middle Lane  
London N8

## Too hard on Sandinistas?

THE ARTICLE on Nicaragua in *Socialist Organiser* no. 60 struck me as being remarkably philistine in its approach to developments in Nicaragua since the overthrow of Somoza.

Although beginning by formally making the correct points (the Sandinistas' attempts to balance between the classes, their limited responsiveness to pressure from the working class and peasantry, etc.), the author goes on to claim that "the Sandinistas have directed their main force against the militant workers and organisations... the main target (of the recently introduced state of emergency) is the working class. Many militants have been arrested since the Sandinista leaders came to power".

It would have been useful if some examples could have been provided to try to substantiate such claims. The degeneration of the SLL into the WRP of today is a fairly good lesson on what happens when analysis of reality is subordinated to factional point-scoring against centrist opponents.

Surely the bankruptcy of the Sandinista regime lies in what they have not done, rather than what they have: the failure to lend active support to the struggles in El Salvador and elsewhere, and the failure to expropriate the industrial bourgeoisie.

Because of their failure to act decisively against capitalism in Nicaragua, the Sandinistas dig their own graves: their attempt to balance between the classes means giving the Nicaraguan bourgeoisie and agents of American imperialism the time and freedom they need to undermine the Sandinista regime.

### Crushing

The Sandinistas boast that 'Sandinismo' is based on pragmatism, not Marxism. In practice this means being buffeted by pressure

from opposing classes, expropriating capitalist firms one day and banning strikes the next.

But the article gave the impression that the Sandinistas were remorselessly crushing the working class in a manner not dissimilar to Margaret Thatcher.

If the Sandinistas' 'main target' is indeed the working class, then there would hardly be any point in American imperialism working to overthrow them, since they could be relied on to serve its interests. (And it would have been useful if the article had found space for the minor matter of the American counter-revolutionary offensive throughout Latin America).

The self-styled 'United Secretariat of the Fourth International', turning a blind eye to their political inadequacies, relies on the Sandinistas' introducing socialism in Nicaragua.

An analysis would suggest that this is an extremely unlikely development. But that does not mean that the Sandinistas are a stable counter-revolutionary bloc out to smash the working class (which is not to deny that the policies now pursued by the Sandinistas will in all likelihood lead to massive defeats for the Nicaraguan working class and peasantry).

And the most immediate and concrete task facing revolutionaries in this country with regard to Latin America is not simply pointing out the political failings of the FMLN, FDR, EGP, etc.: it is also to build active solidarity with the anti-imperialist struggles of the Latin American masses, a task completely ignored in the article.

STAN CROOKE,  
Glasgow

Editor's note: While many of comrade Crooke's points are quite valid we would point out that the article was not a detailed analysis but a brief news item only - indeed less than half the length of his critical letter!

## Where we stand

\* Organise the left to beat back the Tories' attacks! No to attacks on union rights; defend the picket-line; no state interference in our unions! No to any wage curbs. Labour must support all struggles for better living standards and conditions.

\* Wage rises should at the very least keep up with price increases. For a price index calculated by working class organisations, as the basis for clauses in all wage agreements to provide automatic monthly rises in line with the true cost of living for the working class. The same inflation-proofing should apply to state benefits, grants and pensions.

\* Fight for improvements in the social services, and against cuts. Protection for those services against inflation by automatic inflation-proofing of expenditure. For occupations and supporting strike action to defend jobs and services.

\* End unemployment. Cut hours, not jobs. Fight for a 35 hour week and an end to overtime. Demand work-sharing without loss of pay. Organise the unemployed - campaign for a programme of useful public works to create new jobs for the unemployed.

\* Defend all jobs! Open the books of those firms that threaten closure or redundancies, along with those of their suppliers and bankers, to elected trade union committees. For occupation and blacking action to halt the closures. For nationalisation without compensation under workers' management.

\* Make the bosses pay, not the working class. Millions for hospitals, not a penny for 'defence'! Nationalise the banks and financial institutions, without compensation. End the interest burden on council housing and other public services.

\* Freeze rents and rates.

\* Scrap all immigration controls. Race is not a problem; racism is. The labour movement must mobilise to drive the fascists off the streets. Purge racists from positions in the

labour movement. Organise full support for black self-defence. Build workers' defence squads.

\* The capitalist police are an enemy for the working class. Support all demands to weaken them as a bosses' striking force: dissolution of special squads (SPG, Special Branch, MI5, etc.), public accountability, etc.

\* Free abortion on demand. Women's equal right to work and full equality for women. Defend and extend free state nursery and childcare provision.

\* Against attacks on gays by the state: abolish all laws which discriminate against lesbians and gay men; for the right of the gay community to organise and affirm their stand publicly.

\* The Irish people - as a whole - should have the right to determine their own future. Get the British troops out now! Repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act. Political status for Irish Republican prisoners as a matter of urgency.

\* The black working people of South Africa should get full support from the British labour movement for their strikes, struggles and armed combat against the white supremacist regime. South African goods and services should be blacked.

\* It is essential to achieve the fullest democracy in the labour movement. Automatic reselection of MPs during each parliament and the election by annual conference of party leaders. Annual election of all trade union officials, who should be paid the average for the trade.

\* The chaos, waste, human suffering and misery of capitalism now - in Britain and throughout the world - show the urgent need to establish rational, democratic, human control over the economy, to make the decisive sectors of industry social property, under workers' control. The strength of the labour movement lies in the rank and file. Our perspective must be working class action to raze the capitalist system down to its foundations, and to put a working class socialist alternative in its place - rather than having our representatives run the system and waiting for crumbs from the tables of the bankers and the bosses.



Masses in Managua



John Cunningham (Yorkshire NUM) reviews the new pamphlet, 'Miners in the Eighties', by Yorkshire miners' president Arthur Scargill. The pamphlet is in effect Scargill's manifesto for the NUM presidential election now underway.

# DEEP HOLES IN SCARGILL'S ARGUMENTS

SCOTTISH miners' President and Communist Party member Mick McGahey says of Scargill's pamphlet, "I recommend this pamphlet to be read by all British miners and the wider labour movement. It epitomises the policies which the miners and the union need."

And indeed it is tightly argued and well backed up with facts, slamming successive Labour and Tory governments for their short-sighted and stupid energy policies, which led to the near destruction of the mining industry in the sixties only to see a quick about-turn in the early seventies when the price of oil rocketed up.

Here the pamphlet is at its strongest.

On the question of closures, Scargill takes a strong stand: from now on pits should close only on grounds of proven seam exhaustion. He also argues for the expansion of the mining industry, for the opening of 30-40 new pits and for subsidies to the industry equivalent to those of other EEC countries.

We should oppose hiving off any parts of the industry (there are rumours that the Tories are considering hiving off the profitable open cast mines), Scargill argues, and support the extension of nationalisation to take in private retailers of coal and manufacturers of mining equipment.

## Antiquated

On pay, conditions and safety, the pamphlet contains all the policies which Scargill has fought for over the last ten years or so. The £100 per week minimum, opposition to wage restraint, a four day week and earlier retirement policies which all miners, indeed all workers should



A fighting union must be responsive to the rank and file

support with utmost vigour.

Many miners, particularly the branch activists, have long been dissatisfied with the internal democracy within the NUM. The NEC needs to be transformed.

The antiquated system of representation on the NEC bears more resemblance to the 'rotten boroughs' of the early British electoral system than a trade union in the 20th century, and a system of proportional representation is called for (though Scargill does not use the phrase himself).

This is not democracy in the abstract a fighting union must be democratic and responsive to the rank

and file. A flock of sheep cannot fight.

Finally the pamphlet calls for the next Labour government to implement policies "... which are in the interests of those we represent and future generations".

It is the last part of the pamphlet that is the weakest in my view, but first let's look at some more specific points.

In line with most of the Labour left and trade union bureaucracy Scargill calls for import controls. The argument is deceptively simple.

At the end of 1980, imports of coal were over 7,000,000 tonnes per

annum. This coal could be produced by British pits, giving work to British miners and their sons. So we must either stop foreign coal altogether or impose high tariffs.

The reality isn't so simple.

First, controls do not work. Let's look at the track record.

## Bemoans

In 1931 the National Government introduced import controls to protect "basic industry" (textiles, iron and steel, shipbuilding and coal). Unemployment in the basic industries actually

increased after 1931.

Figures for the South Wales coalfield show this clearly. In 1931 the coalfield employed 158,162 workers. By 1939 this figure had fallen to 128,774. (Import controls operated up till 1939).

And imports of coal into Britain were prohibited completely between 1959 and 1969 precisely the period when the mining industry suffered its heaviest manpower losses, as the national figures show.

Manpower in 1959 stood at 658,200 and fell, by 1969 to 336,300.

Is there any reason to believe that the situation would be any different today? The advocates of import controls have yet to come up with any answer.

The situation gets even more complicated when you consider that Scargill bemoans the importing of cheap Australian coal, yet a major investor in Australian mining is the National Coal Board!

The facts have to be faced. Capitalism is international and multinational—the days when Britain could put up the shutters and let the world go its own way are gone.

A retreat toward protectionism would mean a further downturn in the British economy, due to the restriction of export markets. Result? Closures and redundancies.

One section in the pamphlet asks the question "What kind of industry?" Here, as in a number of other sections, it is not so much what the pamphlet says as what it misses out that is important.

## Resurrected

He says "In 1947 we had a vision of a truly socialised public industry owned by the people and run by the miners. That vision has long since evaporated." What is lacking is any proposals or strategy as to how this vision can be resurrected and fought for. Apart from the correct demand for no private contractors and an extension of nationalisation to cover private retailers etc., there is very little concrete.

What is missing, and it was the crucial element missing in 1947, is any concept of workers' control.

Arthur Scargill has often in the past criticised workers control, and in a pamphlet "The Myth of Workers Control" (written jointly with Peggy Kahn) he explains why.

## Vision

Unfortunately Arthur gets it nearly all wrong. His main fire is aimed at the Institute of Workers Control (IWC), whose vision of workers' control—never clearly worked out—has varied from co-operatives to worker-participation on

boards—usually along the lines of class partnership or cooperation.

Yet a revolutionary concept of workers' control—as an imposition of workers' power in struggle against the bosses—is also possible, and necessary.

Another concrete demand, linked very closely to the question of workers control, is the right of elected NUM representatives to have access to all NCB business and transactions, minutes, etc. This has taken on a particular relevance just recently with the revelations of financial skulduggery in the case of Arthur Snipe, Mining Supplies, Laurence Scott and the NCB.

## Mandatory

"Miners in the 80s" correctly calls for a £100 per week minimum wage; but to unite the workforce on the wage front and at the same time to challenge the basic system of bargaining (in which Scargill places so much reliance) we should also call for automatic inflation-proofing of wages—another demand which goes beyond ordinary trade union militancy and extends the struggle into the political field.

There is a big chunk missing from the section dealing with internal reform in the NUM. The proposals for NEC proportional representation must be welcomed but there is no mention of mandatory reselection of officials and recall. This has been a vital part of the struggle for accountability and democracy in the Labour Party—so why not the same for trade union officials?

There is no democracy in positions held for life... such as the presidency of the NUM.

The pamphlet's position on what the next Labour government should do is also very inadequate. While it gives a 'shopping list' of measures—e.g. withdrawal from the EEC, unilateral disarmament—it doesn't say anything about how this will be achieved.

## Intensification

It needs to be said and said clearly that the next Labour government must be of a type never seen before, one that challenges capitalism and doesn't just administer it on behalf of the bosses.

A workers' government is needed, one which will respond to the unions, the Labour Party and the working class, and come under the control of the workers' movement. This will be achieved through the renovation of the basic organisations of the class, through the struggle for democracy in the Labour Party and the trade unions and the extension and intensification of the direct fight against the Tories.

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# Industrial News

## Ferry staff sit in

WORKERS on the P&O Liverpool/Belfast ferry are occupying their ships to save the service and their jobs. They are also calling for supporting action throughout the P&O fleet. A 48-hour national strike has been suggested.

The closure of the service is due to take place on Wednesday 11 November. Last weekend, two ships, the Ulster Queen and the Ulster Prince, were occupied. Officers who are in dispute over redundancy pay joined with the crews. Since then Liverpool/Larne and Fleetwood/Larne services have also been blacked.

Similar action earlier this year won a postponement of the closure. But this time it looks like the showdown.

Speaking to workers in Liverpool last Friday 6 November, seamen's union general secretary Jim Slater said, "We are capable not only of a national strike, but an international one. We will get support from all our members no matter what company they work for."

Seafarers need to hold him to that promise.

## Sheffield sit-in

by John Cunningham

WORKERS at Davy Instruments, Sheffield have occupied their factory to prevent its closure. DI employs about 140 people and is part of the large Davy-Loewy Group, which makes equipment for the steel industry. 35 workers have been sitting in round the clock and have received support from Davy-Loewy shop stewards and five South Yorkshire Labour MPs.

# Leadership crisis in Rolls Royce dispute

AS THE strike by 1,500 production workers at the Rolls Royce plant at Hillington (Glasgow) enters its fourth week, shop stewards' convenor and Communist Party member George McCormack remorselessly continues to "lead" the strike in the direction of defeat.

The 1,500 direct workers (workers doing work directly related to production) walked out on 20 October in protest at a 7½% speed-up. A week later management announced a lock-out of the other 2,500 shop-floor workers (the office staff are still in work).

McCormack's scandalous role in this affair has consisted of driving a wedge between the direct and indirect workers and thereby helping to isolate the strikers, failing to keep both those on strike and those locked-out informed of what is going on, and raising demands for the strike which not only deprive it of potential support but also pave the way for future job losses.

Particularly when orders

are low at the plant, a speed-up will mean job losses as less people are needed to produce the same amount. But McCormack has completely ducked the question of job losses, and instead has called for a 10% increase in the bonus as the basis for negotiating a return to work. To trade off jobs for higher bonus payments is bad enough in itself, but in the context of the present situation in the Rolls Royce combine it is diabolical. A month before the strike began, management at Hillington demanded 500 voluntary redundancies and, at national level, the Rolls Royce bosses want a total of 15,000 jobs to disappear in the period ahead, so as to restore the company's profits.

If the strike were to take up the demand for a cut in the working week, then the basis for a combine-wide fight against the bosses' offensive on jobs would be laid. But by limiting the demand to 10% in the bonus, McCormack is blocking off the possibility of

spreading strike action throughout the combine, especially since the new standard data times (which led to the 7½% speed-up) are already operating in most other plants in the country.

At last Thursday's mass meeting, McCormack stressed time and time again that the strike was about higher bonus payments "exclusively" for direct workers. He thus raises a pay demand for just one section of the workforce, although all workers at the plant would need to work even harder before it could be paid out.

McCormack's attitude to the indirect workers is nothing short of absolute contempt. It is craft chauvinism taken to extremes.

### Concede

McCormack thus leaves the road open for management to mobilise the laid-off indirect workers against the striking direct workers. For while McCormack may not have contacted the indirect workers, management

by Nik Barstow

"HANDS off our branches" was the unanimous call from a meeting of 100 rank and file EETPU members in London on Nov. 9th. The meeting, called by the suspended Central London branch, drew together activists from most of the 14 London branches now threatened with closure by Chapple and his Executive.

The new wave of closures began with the EC's attack on the large Central London Branch because it defied their diktats, and now an all-out attack on left-wing branches is underway.

It is not only the wholesale closures. The new 'industrial' branches the

## Staffa goods blacked

by Andy Chapman

THE BLACKING of Staffa products in support of the workforce's fight for jobs in East London is beginning to bite.

Following the decision of the National Port Shop Stewards Committee to support blacking two weeks ago, the national container shop stewards' committee has also blacked all Brown and Sharpe products. Brown and Sharpe is the combine which owns Staffa.

Blacking pledges are also coming from the pits, where Staffa motors are widely used. The South Wales NUM executive has pledged support, and similar decisions are expected from Yorkshire and Scotland soon. Already three pits in Yorkshire have blacked Staffa unofficially.

The shop stewards on the Thames Barrier, which also uses Staffa motors, have given full backing to the dispute and say their management need spare parts soon or they will have to take the contract elsewhere.

This action appears to be having an effect. Reportedly the management has approached ACAS.

The morale on the picket line is good, and shop steward Roger Owen made it clear that although the workers are prepared to talk to management, they will accept no less than a guarantee of jobs.

If the dispute is to be won, however, money is still required. The AUEW's strike pay, due since October 16, has only just arrived.

Messages/ money: Staffa AUEW strike committee, 39 Somers Road, Walthamstow, E17.

EC proposes to put in their place will be run by full-time officials, in place of the lay committees which exist at present. Even branches like the London Film and TV Branch, not affected by the closures, are to have full-timers imposed on them on January 1st.

The meeting drew up plans to fight this attack. A mass lobby of the union's head office at Hayes Court is to be held on Monday 7th December, and the meeting set up a committee from among the branches to build it and co-ordinate other activities.

The key to the fight, as many members at the

meeting said, is convincing the many members who aren't regular branch attenders to be involved.

The attack on branch democracy will strengthen Chapple's ability to shove through the 'reasonable' and 'responsible' pay deals he's now talking about. Every EETPU member needs to be told what's going on and shown how the attack on democracy is tied to the employers' attacks on their living standards.

Many members stressed that what was needed was industrial action in the strongest branches against Chapple's plans... but this can only come about if a strong campaign is built that wouldn't leave areas like the Press and Film and TV out on their own.

Plans are being made to make a national link-up as well as one between the London branches. Branches need to make plans to disrupt the EC's decision — refusing to transfer members out of or into the remaining branches. The closed branches should continue to meet and keep up their affiliations to wider labour movement bodies.



Chapple planning for his retirement?

## Buyer for Robb Caledon?

by Stan Crooke

IT NOW looks as if the sit-in at the Robb Caledon shipyard (Dundee) will result in the yard being 'hived off to Kestrel Marine.'

The sit-in began on September 19th, when 159 workers moved into the yard to fight for their jobs and retention of the yard as part of the nationalised shipbuilding industry. The Confederation of Ship-

building and Engineering Unions (CSEU) implemented a ban on overtime and weekly one day strikes in support of the sit-in — for just four weeks.

### Retention

It is the CSEU's stab in the back of 23rd October, when it announced it was dropping all national sanctions in support of the sit-in that has forced the workers at Robb Caledon to drop

their demand for retention of the yard as part of British Shipbuilders and to reluctantly accept privatisation if it guarantees their jobs.

Negotiations are now under way for British Shipbuilders to transfer the yard's lease to the Scottish Development Agency, which could then sub-let the yard to the Dundee-based firm of Kestrel Marine.

## SCOTTS RAIDED

by Paul Muddle

"OPENSHAW International Airport", reads the poster stuck in a window of the office used by the workers at Laurence Scotts, Manchester. It refers to the use of helicopters last Wednesday, November 4th, to defy pickets on the factory and remove Admiralty motors.

Since Monday the workers had heard rumours that there was to be a massive police presence outside the factory on the Wednesday, but they suspected it would just be another attempt by management to gain access to the site.

On Wednesday morning, 150 police, including some on horseback in full riot gear, surrounded the factory and limited the pickets to six per gate. At the time there were only 30 pickets present.

Workers' suspicions were aroused after the police chief superintendent reportedly said that 'this time there were going to be enough police to handle anything'.

At 10am two helicopters arrived, and landed in the factory carpark. About ten men in paramilitary gear

jumped out and ran to the dispatch bay, where four Admiralty motors (pumps for surface vessels) were waiting.

Within an hour the helicopters had gone, but with the assistance of local air traffic controllers the Scotts workers were able to ascertain their flight path. The first port of call was Ringway airport, where the pilots attempted to refuel.

Scotts workers had already contacted the staff at Ringway, and T&G workers refused to refuel the aircraft. Undaunted, the helicopters flew on to the parent company, Mining Supplies of Doncaster, where the motors were unloaded.

But who were the scabs who loaded the motors? According to Arthur Snipe, owner of Mining Supplies, they were 'volunteers, prepared to serve in the interests of their country'.

The following night, the local community held a very well-attended meeting at which it was decided to complain at the presence of low-flying helicopters. Residents are particularly incensed because two primary schools lay in the helicopters' path.

### Reimposed

A local councillor is also going to complain to the Greater Manchester police committee about the provocative police presence.

Meanwhile, Scotts workers have sent delegations round the country to ensure blacking of the motors. Workers at the Vickers yards in Barrow have already promised to black them.

This week delegations are going to Faslane, Rosyth, Chatham, Portsmouth, and naval bases all over the south.

Finally, any supporters of the Scotts workers in Yorkshire should be aware that there is a possibility of the picket at the Mining Supplies base in Doncaster being reimposed. The LSE stewards will decide definitely on this issue on Monday November 9.

This, and any other action taken outside Manchester, would be a great step forward. Hopefully the LSE conference being held in Manchester on November 14th will be an appropriate forum for discussion on the issue of blacking and supporting action throughout the country.

Messages/money to George Fryer, 20 Roundcroft, Romilly, Cheshire.

Laurence Scotts support conference: Saturday November 14, from 10am at the University of Manchester Institute of Science & Technology

Stan Crooke reports on the strike at Hillington (Glasgow)

certainly has.

The day of last week's mass meeting they all received a letter which told each "Dear employee" that the strike was a waste of time since there was no way in which management would ever concede higher bonus rates for the introduction of standard data times.

### Moaning

The whole direction of this dispute must be changed. The divisive demand for 10% extra bonus for direct workers only, which McCormack sucked out of his thumb a fortnight ago, must be dropped.

Instead the dispute must take up this year's pay claim: incorporation of bonus payments for all workers into the basic, and a pay rise at least in line with the real rate of inflation.

The strike is inseparable from present and coming attacks on jobs and possible factory closures. This means fighting now for work shar-

ing with no loss of pay, rather than waiting for management to announce the next batch of redundancies. As soon as management threatens closure of another factory, as it inevitably will, immediate occupation is the only answer.

Management is already moaning about the lack of money to cover any significant pay rise. Irrespective of just what condition Rolls Royce finances are in, workers must push home the pay claim, but at the same time demand opening of the books to establish just what kind of financial wheeling and dealing the Rolls Royce bosses are involved in.

McCormack and his fellow travellers on the combine committee will fight tooth and nail against such demands, just as they now sabotage the present strike. They stand in the way of fighting for a real pay rise and in defence of jobs; they must be turned out and replaced by representatives who will be accountable to, and recallable by, the workforce.

THE TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM FOR SOCIALIST REVOLUTION  
LEON TROTSKY

30p from Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8



## LUCAS 'NO' TO VDUs

by a Lucas shop steward

STRIKERS from the Lucas Aerospace plants at Shaftmoor Lane and Marston Green in Birmingham are attempting to spread their strike.

They have been out since October 14, after management suspended workers who were refusing to operate Visual Display Units (VDUs).

The workers are now picketing the Spring Road and York Road plants.

At a works conference at Shaftmoor Lane on October 8, the company had refused to come to an agreement on new technology, but they promised continued local discussions. Then, on Thursday 13th, they tried to introduce VDUs in the stores at Marston Green and Shaftmoor Lane.

When the T&GWU and AUEW members involved refused to work them, they were taken off the clock. APEX members were then told to do the job, and in turn were suspended when they refused.

The next day a mass meeting of TASS, APEX, TGWU, and AUEW members voted to strike from the following morning if the workers were not reinstated.

The strike has been supported by the joint manual workers' combine committee in Lucas Aerospace, and has been made official by APEX, TGWU, and the AUEW.

Workers at other Lucas Aerospace factories outside Birmingham have been able to reach agreement on the introduction of new technology. Only in Birmingham has the company refused to settle.

The key to winning the strike is spreading it to involve other Aerospace division factories throughout the country, even though they have already got new technology agreements. There is no doubt that if the company wins this battle, they will use it as a lever against the other plants.

# BLOODY - BUT UNBOWED

BILL PETERS



BL WORKERS have returned to work angry and militant. They have seen Edwardes reduced to a state of panic and they have seen their own power on the gates.

They have seen more clearly than ever before the open treachery of the leadership of their unions.

In Sunday's News of the World, Terry Duffy revealed that he and other general secretaries had attended a secret meeting at Michael Edwardes' home a week before the strike and that one of the good effects of the deal is that it will have a "moderating" effect on the wage round.

Michael Foot claimed in Monday's Daily Star that he and Stan Orme had set up the return to work formula at a three-hour meeting with Edwardes in a Commons committee room.

Although BL workers have not had time to fully assess the effects of the betrayal on their future conditions, particularly in relationship to the new procedure agreement, they have quickly seen the cynicism of

Edwardes "promise" to the general secretaries to establish a more conciliatory management attitude.

Far from pulling back, the management offensive has been stepped up but it has met a militant response.

An hour after returning to work last Wednesday, a car body fell out of a hoist on the Honda Acclaim track at Cowley and hospitalised a production worker. The new "conciliatory" attitude was soon evident. "Start the track in 15 minutes or you are off the clock" the labour force was told.

A day and a half strike action won the safety precaution demanded by the workers plus full payment for the strike.

Nor is militancy confined to Cowley where the

vote was strongly in favour of continuing the strike. Management has met with strike action this week at Longbridge where they have tried to force in a reduction in relief patterns to make the workers pay for the 39 hour week.

The reduction of one hour in the working week was negotiated by Duffy during the series of one and two-day engineering strikes called by the Confed in 1979. Duffy agreed that the reduction would be offset against productivity. But BL workers increased their productivity by 30% last year according to Edwardes—far more than enough to offset one hour's production.

Both the Metro and the



## Longbridge stays out

by a TGWU shop steward, Longbridge.

Longbridge workers are showing that although they have been sold out by a gutless frightened leadership over the pay claim, they are still prepared to fight Edwardes in defence of their rights. 1800 workers have gone on strike to stop the management cutting back on their relaxation allowance (RA).

Only a year after they were slashed by nearly a third, management are trying to impose a cut of 25 per cent in breaks allowed to workers during a shift.

Up until last week we were allowed 12% RA or 51 minutes per shift (not including lunch breaks). Management now say we can only have 9%, which works out at three 12-minute breaks a day.

The justification for this is a clause in the 1979 agreement to introduce a 39 hour week which states that the unions will ensure that there is no loss of production due to the shorter working week.

At a meeting with management last Thursday 5th the unions' JNC pointed out that according to management's own figures

there has already been a 35% increase in productivity per worker! Management rejected this and stated that they would shorten the work week by one hour, reduce the total RA time by 55 minutes, and cut manpower in indirect areas by three per cent.

On Monday morning management informed stewards at Longbridge that cuts in the RA would start at 2pm. Workers voted to strike immediately management tried to implement cuts in time or manning levels.

Management backed down and decided to try

its luck with the night shift. But 1000 workers on the CAB1 night shift voted to strike without waiting around to hear the management spiel.

The Tuesday day shift in CAB1 also walked out. The works committee have now called for a mass meeting of strikers on Thursday, and in the meantime management have asked strikers to return to work while conditions are negotiated. This has been rejected by the men and women in the dispute.

Next week, feature on BL.



## Bitterness behind Body Plant militancy

AMONGST the most conservative of BL's workforces has been that at the Body Plant in Cowley.

Most of the leadership of the major union, the TGWU (which represents ¾ of the workforce) are JPs and councillors and the chairman of the branch is a worker-priest.

Yet this plant produced the most determined of the picketing, with about ½ of the entire workforce, i.e. about 1500 on the picket line on the Monday.

### Arrests

The pickets were so determined that until 10.30 on that day most of the staff couldn't get in. The same was the case on the second day and the picketing carried on until the mass meeting held on Wednesday. Even most of the maintenance shift was turned around on Tuesday evening despite the fact that it had been agreed nationally that they go in.

This militant picketing was directly against the wishes of the leadership who agreed to let staff go in and who on the second morning agreed with the police to limit the 'official' pickets to six. Most of the pickets took no notice of this.

There were three arrests on the picket line, the first arrests on the gates since 1934.

This latter fact is a pointer to the conservative tradition that is now beginning to crack.

PSF (the Body Plant) was the first of the plants in Oxford to be unionised in the mid-30s. Its present leadership has not had to struggle for unionisation as in the Assembly Plant or other plants.

### Diverse

It became a very insular plant with high piecework rates and very right-wing leadership. The piecework rates were raised by job-cutting and so the work-rate was very high.

As with all Leyland plants with the development towards centralisation, piecework was abolished and Measured Day

Work introduced. The work-rate was lessened—but the wages were held down.

Over the last 10 years the value of the wages has been so reduced that many workers are now earning the same actual wage that they were earning under piecework. At the same time the company has spent those 10 years trying to drive the work-rate back up towards piecework levels.

So in many ways, the general policy in Leyland is even stronger in the Body plant.

Add to this the fact that because of the diverse types of car bodies produced—ranging from the Rolls Royce, Range Rover to the Ital, the bonus scheme has been particularly bad because it is worked out at a plant level.

Any particular model could be working at 100% but get little or no bonus because of a dispute that affects another model. This happened when the Acclaim dispute in the Assembly Plant affected that body production and the paint shop.

For two months prior to the wages dispute the 3,500 TGWU members had been on an overtime ban because of the way the bonus scheme was working. The bonus had risen to £11, before falling to £6. Two weeks before the dispute it was £4.26. Last week's bonus was 57p.

It is no surprise that both mass meeting votes in the Body Plant, including that on Tuesday morning, were almost unanimously for strike action.

There is a change taking place in the plant. This is shown not only by the picketing, but also by last week's election for Senior Steward—where SO supporter Tony Richardson got 52 votes against right-wing convenor Bill Roche's 64.

Another SO supporter Howard Lloyd got 43 votes to worker-priest Tony Williamson's 67 for chair.

The old leadership is fast becoming politically redundant, not just at the Body Plant, but all over Leyland.

The two days of strike showed the potential forces for change.

## Accrington march

THE Trades Council in Accrington has called a demonstration next week to protest against the rise of mass unemployment. At present 1 in 7 people are out of work in Accrington.

Despite the obvious hostility from the Tories, the local Labour council have given the Trades Council free use of the Town Hall for a rally and also has advertised the demo on local buses.

The demonstration must learn the lessons of the People's March, which was ignored by the TUC as far as action is concerned, and make it a rallying call for action in the area to defend jobs and to organise the unemployed.

Details: assemble 1.30, Saturday November 14, at Ellison's Tenement, near town centre and railway station, for march and rally at 2.30.

## NUS victory

DOCKERS, seamen, and the International Transport Federation jointly blacked the ship Mistita in Swansea dock last week after union officials were called in to inspect the vessel and found it to be in a disgusting state.

There were no lights, no toilet facilities, and the whole ship was falling apart with rust. The blacking forced the Greek owners to have immediate repairs done before the ship would be allowed to sail.

The crew of four Tanzanians were owed a total of £9,000 in back pay, which they have now received. The owners had recruited them in Tanzania, and made them pay £900 to join the ship in Algeria.

GEOFF WILLIAMS

## TGWU Broad Left slams Kitson

by Tony Richardson

MEETING in Birmingham on Saturday, the TGWU Region 5 'Broad Left' passed the following resolution:

"This meeting of Region 5 Broad Left condemns the role of Alex Kitson, acting General Secretary of the TGWU, in the Leyland strike.

"The sum total of his actions was to sell out the struggle.

"He, together with the other General Secretaries and the TUC, went in over the heads of the Leyland Negotiating Committee to make a sell-out deal of 3.8%.

"As General Secretary of the union representing over half of all Leyland manual workers his 'sitting on the fence' when Duffy, Boyd and the other General Secretaries were urging a return to work was

interpreted by everybody as going along with the deal.

"Brother Kitson's actions were directly contrary to union policy which is to fight all government wage norms and he should have been urging Leyland workers to do this rather than holding them back."

### Petition

Region 5 covers most of the major Leyland plants and this resolution was passed after an hour's discussion with stewards from several of these factories participating.

The meeting decided on an active campaign to take the resolution through union bodies and to petition the shopfloor against the sell-out.

This meeting was in

stark contrast to the Birmingham AUEW 'Broad Left' which discussed Leyland for two minutes and didn't decide to do anything.



Kitson

# Crazee Gang in the White House!...

by Jo Thwaites

ARE the days when rulers of the United States felt any embarrassment about their belligerent intentions. Secretary of State Alexander Haig baldly announces Reagan was 'precisely' when he said there be a limited nuclear war in Europe. Not only that, but NATO has plans for firing a nuclear missile as a warning to the Soviet Union. The content of this 'warning' is to be the Baltic or the North Sea!

Fried

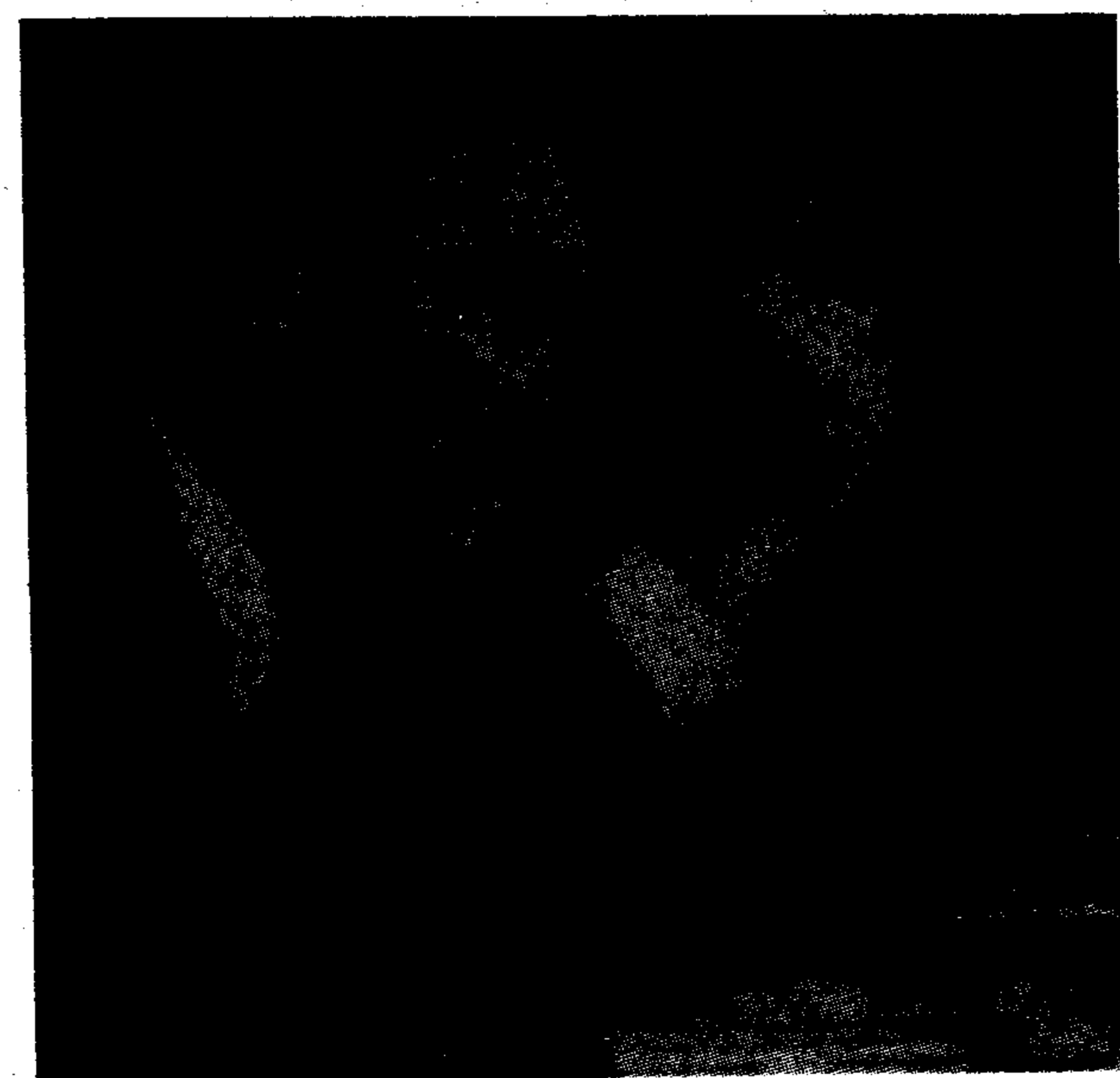
ence Secretary Caspar Weinberger tried to hush it by saying there was 'absolutely nothing in any of that I know of that has anything remotely resembling that'. But it is up sounding more like a pique that he had not been informed.

Department of Defense officials claimed that a nuclear warning shot had been part of NATO planning, and that after all, it ought to know as he Supreme NATO Commander until 1978.

to the kid gloves are no need to beat around the bush—Haig has announced the USA's intentions to the world. Europe, or at least part of it, will be blown to pieces or fried by radiation as a warning to the Soviet Union.

the official US policy is a limited nuclear war. And they also claim that if it spreads into a full-out holocaust, still we can win! George Bush, Vice-president, said last week that the USA could win a nuclear war against the

# HAIG SPELLS OUT BOMB PLANS



Russians... because about 5% of Americans would survive!

Haig's remarks are well-timed. At the moment there

is a large-scale naval exercise going on in the Caribbean, which includes British ships and 41 US ships. Haig is discussing

options for ending the stalemate in El Salvador which include blockading Nicaragua and Cuba, maybe even invading Cuba. US armed forces are also rattling sabres at Libya.

The Tories go along with this, as might be expected. And Denis Healey seems to go along with it too.

He simply suggested to Haig that he ought to tone down his threats. "You must speak softly when you carry a big stick."

Labour leaders like him have to be called to account. Labour Party policy is for unilateral disarmament.

Haig finds the huge anti-

nuclear demonstrations in Europe 'frustrating'. They could, he threatens, lead to a tendency to pull back from Europe's defence!

So we need more huge demonstrations—and to start organising European and American workers against Reagan and Thatcher's warmongering.

The Australian dockers' recent one day strike in protest at the participation of Australian troops in the Sinai peace-keeping force was an example of the kind of action we need to build before we all get blown to pieces as a warning to the Soviet Union.

# Socialist Organiser

## Tankers pay crunch

20,000 tanker drivers are due to strike for an 11% claim from Monday 16 November.

The Tories are already putting into effect plans for the army to break the strike.

These detailed plans have been on file since 1979, the last time a tanker drivers' strike was threatened.

The effects of a tanker drivers' strike could be massive as power stations run out of fuel, road transport is brought to a complete halt and all filling stations are shut down.

So probably the drivers won't just have the army to contend with—there'll be attempts to get fuel out of depots that'll make the Laurence Scotts airlift look like child's play.

Picketing, and secondary picketing, will be absolutely essential. Flying pickets will have to be organised to cover the power stations and depots and stop all movement of oil.

Army

The Tories know how effective that would be. That's why the army is being mobilised.

The fight won't be one just for the tanker drivers. If

they are to win, the whole labour movement will have to actively support the drivers on the picket lines. That will be the key to success.

The drivers want parity with Mobil drivers, who have already settled for 11%. The other companies, Shell, BP, Esso and Texaco have offered 8%. The decision to strike was made at a TGWU delegate meeting.

UNION leaders have threatened to call an all-out strike at Fords from November 24th unless the management improve their offer of 4.5% by this Friday (13th).

Alex Kitson has been quoted in the press as wanting this to be the strike that 'turns' the Tories. The way he's been talking you'd think he was on the other side of the world last week when the BL strike was sold out.

The Labour movement will have to force Kitson to stick to his words: "If the drivers do turn off the taps—there'll be nobody—not the army or anybody going into the refineries. They'll have to pump the bloody fuel into the river".

## Cuts strike in Coventry

by Pyushi Kotecha

DEFINITE strike action by 4,000 NUPE workers in Coventry last Friday has led to the closure of all the city's colleges, junior and secondary schools and 1,000 school students have been sent home.

The Labour council has been public sector workers the first target of their £2 million spending cuts after a referendum for this year.

NUPE members are striking over a package of reductions in their conditions of service. The council is demanding that cleaners be a 10% wage cut and a reduction in working hours.

In doing so the Labour council is breaking all the previous agreements with the unions and are making NUPE members pay for the very policies that they have agreed to implement.

It was in response to this latest attack upon one of the poorest sectors, most of them women workers, that NUPE received a mandate for all-out strike action.

The effect of the strike is instantaneous. However, the Director of Education, Robert Aitken, has made various provisions which the leaderships of the NUT/NAS have agreed to.



Out — and staying out until the cuts are withdrawn!

Aitken issued a directive which asked all head teachers to collect keys from the caretakers to open schools and teachers have to report for work each day.

Aitken has also ensured that school meals are prepared and frozen by non-union staff.

This is a conscious move to sabotage the strike and to set one group of workers against another.

The response of the NUT leadership was to advise their members to explain to NUPE members on the picket line that since they were not in official dispute with the authorities that they would have to cross the picket lines.

Rank and file members in the NUT correctly see

this as a strike-breaking manoeuvre and petitions are being organised in various schools to reverse the decision.

The NUT leadership has, as yet, made no public statement of support for the NUPE workers.

It is vital that this struggle is won. The Labour Council has chosen the public sector workers in enforcing its cuts to make an example of them to the rest of the labour movement.

Militants in the NUT, NAS, NALGO, NATFHE and NUS must take up the fight for solidarity action and join the struggle against the education cuts.

The 12 rebel Labour councillors should also be called upon to give total support to the strike.

by Dettie Clinton

EVEN THE judge hearing the case of the Area Health Authority against 12 named defendants "in the matter of the sector administrator's office on the first floor of the main block, St Mary's Hospital, Harrow Road, London W9", could not suppress a smile.

Administrator Julian Nettal had made himself a laughing stock with his statement concerning the occupation of his office on October 28.

Supported by dozens of other hospital workers who volunteered to be defendant no.13 — "Every other person in occupation" — the Harrow Road 12 squashed into the High Court of Justice in the Strand on November 10.

The judge, listening impatiently, did not want to spend time on the prosecution case.

Some of the defendants, speaking for the others, explained their case. "The occupation of the administrator's office was a non-violent legal action", said Mick Woods, victimised T&G shop steward, "even local OAPs have come along to stand outside in

the cold to show their support for our fight to save this hospital".

The judge commented "It is only natural that these people should feel very upset about that" (the closure), and even added, "I have the greatest respect for those of you who felt incensed in this way".

He could, of course, afford to make these patronising, seemingly friendly statements, as his judgment was never in doubt.

"Possession is to be delivered forthwith. There is no order as to costs. In my opinion justice does not require an order for costs in this case".

No further writ was apparently needed for management to gain re-possession of the room, which was then handed back.

Any tendency to think of this as some sort of ending is entirely mistaken. Of the two workers suspended on Friday October 30 for protesting at a raid by administrators and police to empty Ward 2, one, nurse Adrian Herzmark, has been reinstated with a verbal warning (!), but porter and T&G shop steward Mick

Woods has been suspended until his six month contract runs out on November 20. At the same time three portering vacancies are being advertised!

The T&G has been very tardy in fighting this case. It has not even challenged management's right to carry out this blatant act. T&G branches should demand action in defence of a shop steward from the largest union in the land.

A possible motion would be: "This branch condemns the victimisation of Mick Woods, a T&G shop steward at St Mary's Hospital W9, for carrying out union policy, and calls on the Region 1 committee to ensure that he is re-employed without conditions immediately".

(Branches outside Region 1 would have to modify this motion to inquire what Region 1 is doing).

The continuing struggle to combat patient-snatchers needs to be stepped up. To stop wards 3 and 7 being emptied, constant patrols must be started of the corridors outside the wards.

Other wards where patients are being snatched

to should be encouraged not to receive them by pickets at the wards.

Time is very short now in the vital fight to save the NHS facilities locally.

THE Labour movement conference is now vital to building supporting action in defence of St Mary's W9. Large delegations from all sections, particularly NHS workers, must be fought for.

Already the NHS in London is in ferment. This week workers at the Hammersmith Hospital have been on strike over the sacking of a NUPE branch official, and the London Hospital in Whitechapel has had a dispute over bonus payments and non-filling of beds.

The conference needs to bring together all these struggles into a common strong fight.

Credentials from the Occupation Committee, St Mary's Hospital, London W9. All activists welcome: 11am to 2pm at Porchester Hall, Porchester Rd, London W2.