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Labour
Party**

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Socialist Organiser

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LONGBRIDGE FIGHTBACK

THE PRESS and TV sneeringly refer to it as 'the tea break strike'. Fleet Street editors denounce the BL workers' alleged obsession with tea. The ATV news shows a picture of a cup and saucer everytime the item comes up.

Managers throughout the country have had all their prejudices about lazy tea-swilling car workers confirmed.

What are the facts? First of all, the dispute is not about tea breaks. It is about the right of workers to adequate rest periods during the working day (and night), and it's about how the nationally agreed 39 hour week is to be implemented.

The agreement to reduce the working week was reached in 1979 as part of the settlement of the national engineering dispute. The unions, however, accepted a clause committing them to no loss of production as a result of the shorter working week. BL is now using this clause to justify cutting rest allowances (RA) from 52 to 40 minutes a shift. That works out at an hour less RA a week — while, according to BL's own figures, production has increased 30% per worker since 1979.

Even at the old RA levels, working at Longbridge was very hard, especially in the CAB1 Metro trim and assembly where the dispute first broke out. With track speeds at 35 jobs an hour, many workers find it virtually impossible to keep up with the job. Those who can't keep pace with the track, or who drop a spanner or run short of materials go 'out of station'. When that happens, the next worker down will also often be pushed out of station in turn, and anyone working out of station or not completing a job risks disciplinary action.

The truth is that the Longbridge strikers, frustrated by yet another sell-out on their annual wage review, and faced with yet more attacks on their working conditions are fighting for what most professional people and white collar workers (and certainly the Fleet Street hacks who denounce them) take for granted — the right to a break during the working day during which they can read a paper, go to the toilet, drink tea — or even play a game of squash, like Sir Michael Edwards...

Benn's reply

When the Tory Government first decided on a policy of privatisation, both the TUC and the Labour Party agreed at their Conferences that, to deter would-be purchasers, a future Labour Government

would reacquire the assets without compensation.

This decision was affirmed last year in the following words:

"We will take North Sea Oil into public ownership and we will restore public ownership, with compensation, the assets of our public sector industries sold off by the Tories".

These words appeared in 'Peace, Jobs and Freedom', accepted by the Wembley conference May 31st last year by over five million votes to one thousand.

This Conference policy has never been amended, rescinded, and it remains the latest statement of Conference policy.

When the Government announced the sale of North Sea assets, the Shadow Cabinet, on October 20th, and, later, the National Executive Committee on October 28th, issued a statement which I supported, and still support, because it reiterated our position.

That statement was presented to us, at our meeting, as constituting an amendment to Conference decisions or as being compatible with them.

Nor could it have contradicted Party policy.

JOHN HARRIS



Coventry NUPE workers are fighting the cuts with strike action. See report, page 15

Benn stands for Party policy

THE Thatcher government is wrecking and ruining Britain, spreading mass unemployment and poverty, putting down the welfare state and subjugating millions of workers to a regime of Tory barbarism.

The vandals in power are also pillaging and asset-stripping Britain. Loot is the point of it all.

Enclosures

The plan to sell off the profitable sectors of British Leyland are now public knowledge. The selling off of North Sea oil and gas is the most scandalous piece of naked capitalist robbery of public assets since the enclosure of the common lands two centuries ago.

Should the speculators and profiteers be allowed to keep the loot if Labour wins the election? Tony Benn, in the Commons, spoke for Labour conference policy when he told them a Labour government would renationalise without compensation. Anything less means accepting in advance that the Tories can do what they want and get away with it.

Foot

Yet Benn has been publicly upbraided by Michael Foot, who has refused to endorse him for the Shadow Cabinet, and condemned by many leftists, even by many who supported him for deputy leader.

Foot and Co have no intention of carrying out

YES! SEIZE THEIR LOOT!

Labour Party policy. Others fear that Benn is losing them votes.

Healey

Vocal in the attacks on Benn are supporters of Denis Healey, who openly and with impunity uses his position to denounce Labour policy for unilateral nuclear disarmament, and says he will not serve in a government committed to that policy.

In fact Benn's speech has focused on the central issue facing the labour movement now. Is the next Labour government going to be like the last one, or is it going to carry out party policies? Do we have a real alternative to

the Tories?

Foot says, 'Labour Party business as before'. Very large chunks of the left seem to be saying the same thing.

Yet if we say that we are saying that the labour movement is politically bankrupt. Only real socialist policies will even begin to solve Britain's problems.

This shows how far we have yet to go to ensure that the next Labour government is a government that will be accountable to and will serve the working class. Benn has clearly decided to fight on for a real change, and not to be seduced back into the Labour Establishment.

This opens up a new stage in the fight for democracy and accountability — and for new party policies, real socialist policies in place of the tinkering with capitalism of the Alternative Economic Strategy.

Benn will not be elected to the Shadow Cabinet. Trade union branches, Labour Parties and YSSs should send him telegrams of support and encouragement instead, and condemn the Shadow Cabinet's attempts to hi-jack party policy.

by John O'Mahony



Women in struggle

Force council to pay nursery workers!

AFTER another derisory offer, described by NALGO convenor Derek Relf as "the stingiest I've ever come across", nursery workers in Tower Hamlets (East London) last week at their mass meeting voted overwhelmingly to escalate their action.

From November 19 they intend to follow a policy of non-cooperation with management. Fees will not be collected nor registers forwarded. Staff will refuse to communicate with management, and therefore no referrals from the council waiting list will be taken — except that in an emergency situation children referred by social workers will be accepted for day care.

How does such a situation arise with workers who are now owed at least £1,000 each in back pay from a nationally arbitrated agreement from nearly two years ago? Whatever the outcome of the present negotiations for the future pay scale, the council owes money that it has to pay by law from a previous agreement. All other councils have to settle on this agreement, and the majority have done so.

Trick

Why does Tower Hamlets Labour council not pay up? Why does it continue to prevaricate?

They are pursuing the oldest trick in the book, to delay money owed and offset any money that they have been unable to calculate and are in the process of losing from the Tory government's Heseltine cuts. They can't work their sums out before new cuts are announced. This inability stems from an arrogant and unclear attitude to fighting these cuts in the first place.

They have never gone to the people or even the Labour Party to say that we must fight this one together. They continue to undermine and oppose union action and pressure if it is ever put on them.

Under-6s policy has never responded sufficiently to the needs of the children and parents, and the necessity to pay proper

wages with good working conditions for its workers. Top management is male, yet the workforce in the nurseries, with one exception, is female.

Decisions over the years have reflected the insensitivity of management, and the pay struggle is another example of this, although the nursery workers are now showing that they are not taking any more of management's bullying tactics.

The way that the under-6s management has tried to cut its budget by trying to close two nurseries — to gain time and money with the expected cuts next spring — was incredible in its ignorance of people's reaction.

The management strongly resent the fact that parents have found a voice and have organised a campaign. And they find it even more unpalatable

that the parents have linked up with nursery workers and the unions.

The council on the other hand is still looking for the 'soft' targets to please Heseltine. Anything rather than fight alongside the people of the borough and the unions and other Labour councils. It's easier to quietly reduce social services spending, to which it does not have a deep political commitment.

This is the same council who were the last to settle in the national social workers' strike. It took ten months and many Tower Hamlets councillors still maintain that they were right to stand firm, even though people died without social work provision.

(At present NALGO social workers' offices are not open for a full week. They have a no-cover policy after 15 per cent cuts in staffing).

The nursery workers started to ask for negotiations several months ago, and after the normal requests to gain the council's ear found they had to resort to a work to rule. In the eight nurseries, conditions have improved, with lower staff/children ratios, but during the summer holiday period some children had to be excluded which the staff found a very difficult policy to pursue.

However, since then, some children have moved on to schools and fewer children have come from the waiting list. The work to rule has stabilised, and staff are finding that they can give a lot more time to the children.

If the council were to negotiate a proper basic wage and expand the nursery sector, children in Tower Hamlets could become the recipients of much improved nursery

care.

Unfortunately the council has chosen to delay the closures of the two nurseries, but only on a temporary promise until the spring — and have offered the nursery workers the lowest rates of all the London boroughs.

Lobby

In an area of exceptional high unemployment for the south-east, and an area known for its inner-city deprivation, many parents are going to be waiting even longer for nursery places.

The nursery campaign which was formed in response to the closures is trying to link parents and nursery workers in the area. After successful joint fund-raising events and petitioning, a huge lobby of the pay talks was organised at the Town Hall.

Nursery workers and parents crowded into the council chamber where the pay negotiations were taking place, and were ill-received. Rather than suspending orders, the councillors preferred to turn their backs and refused to talk to the workers (perhaps they had nothing to offer). But in fact they were waiting for the police to arrive to escort the crowd away.

The outcome of that afternoon's events was that all matrons were summoned the next day to have their wrists slapped by management. When leaned

on to give the names of staff at the lobby, they refused — so management will have difficulty in docking the pay for half a day.

This was a very brave stand by matrons who have been received by management with quite substantial pay rises and given preferential terms over nursery nurses in the negotiations.

Hopefully they will continue to stand firm, since they are responsible for the collection of fees, and will bear a lot of the pressure from management when the action starts on November 19th.

In London there is a precedent for this type of action. One member of Hackney's nursery workforce came, and spoke to a Tower Hamlets mass meeting, and described how she and others had to stick it out for 18 months before the Labour council there agreed to a local formula.

Nursery workers in Tower Hamlets should be under no illusion that their employers will be any quicker to settle, given some of the reactionary ideas around the council on the importance of providing day care facilities and allowing women out of the home to work.

Precedent

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There were some signs on the social services committee that the written material being sent by the nursery campaign is being read, or that councillors are being successfully influenced by parents.

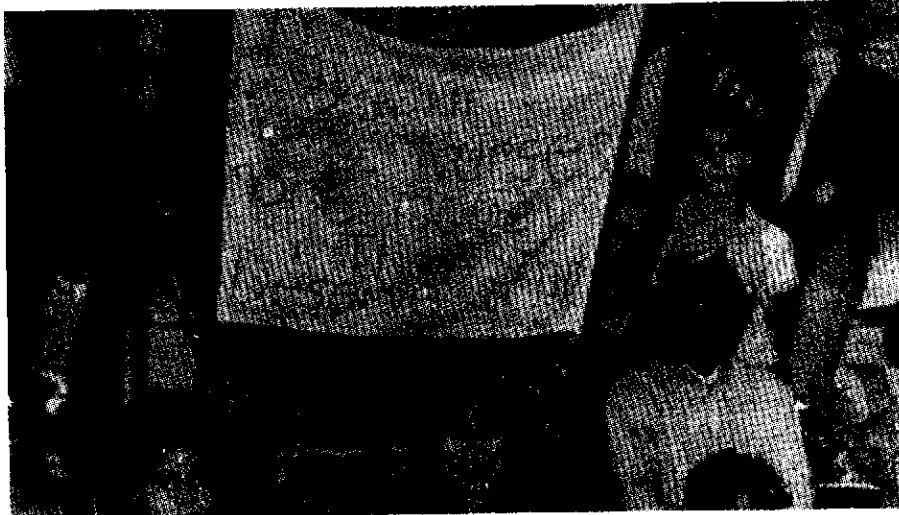
Decent

Two councillors have signed an open letter of protest to the leader of the council which calls for an immediate settlement of the nursery workers' pay issue, and was published in the local press.

Organised by the 'Save Tower Hamlets Nursery Campaign', the letter also carried signatures from parents and trade unionists, Labour Party branch secretaries, and women's section nursery supporters, as well as the Executive of the Trades Council.

On the same morning that the letter was published, the 'East End News' was phoned by the council's publicity department, to say that the council would be replying.

We wait for a decent offer.



Courts recognise Pre-Menstrual Tension

By Sue Lister

IN THE few days before menstruation, many women develop the pre-menstrual syndrome, also known as "pre-menstrual tension" (PMT).

Even if they do not know what it is called many women are aware that their

emotions and in some cases even their physical well-being alters in relation to the monthly cycle.

In the last few days we have all become aware of PMT as it has now been accepted by the legal profession. This could be a major step forward for women who do suffer from PMT because even members of the medical fraternity have refused to take it seriously and when a doctor cannot quickly pinpoint the organic cause of a woman's complaint, they are quick to suspect psychosomatic causes and prescribe tranquillisers.

Unstable

Now that the existence of PMT has been acknowledged by the establishment, women who do suffer have more chance of getting medical assistance.

But unless we are careful and look at PMT in perspective, this recognition could be a very mixed blessing, and the "sickly woman" image be reinforced.

In fact the tendency of doctors to diagnose women's complaints as psychosomatic shows that the medical view of women has not really shifted from "sick" to "well". It has shifted from "physically sick" to "mentally ill". And unless we fight this attitude, PMT will be

used to prove "scientifically" that women are unstable and emotional.

Therefore they can be "legitimately" discriminated against when jobs require stability and emotional strength, whether these jobs are in the field of employment or political leadership.

Strength

What we have to realise is that in fact the opposite is normally the case.

PMT is different in each woman. For a few it is a time of great achievement e.g. some athletes perform at their best in this part of the cycle. In some women it is not noticeable while for others it is a time of depression and stress. But most women cope with the continuous change in their nature which is beyond their control as well as coping with home, children, work, training, relationships, politics, or a combination of these with only an occasional acknowledgement of a regular problem.

If anything, this shows that women can cope better with jobs requiring stability and emotional strength because they have to learn from puberty to regularly cope.

The question of women being "unstable" and "emotional" is much greater

than hormones. By education and upbringing, most women have a lower self-image than men and in general feel inferior.

But unless we acknowledge this and fight to overcome it, by taking it into account and not ignoring it, we will fall into the same trap as male dominated organisations (especially the trade unions). We must constructively fight the attitude that all workers are equal, therefore all workers are men and stop ignoring the fact that women have different problems to men that do not make them inferior and that the male way of doing things is not necessarily the only way or the best.



CLASS FIGHTER

NEWSPAPER OF THE NATIONAL LEFT-WING YOUTH MOVEMENT

YOUTH CONFERENCE

21st - 22nd NOVEMBER

Caxton House
St. John's Way,
Archway,
London N19

November						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

WHAT'S ON

YOPs LOBBY AND DEMONSTRATION
11.30, Wednesday 25 November at MSC Headquarters, Selkirk House, High Holborn London

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

London Workers Socialist League classes on basic Marxism: a fortnightly series, alternate Fridays from December 4. For details and venue, write to PO Box 135, London N1 0DD

LABOUR COMMITTEE OF IRELAND
Public Meeting
"Ireland and the Missiles"
Monday 23 November 7.30 p.m.
Basement Theatre
Manchester Town Hall

Lambeth Socialist Organisation educational programme.
Sundays at 7pm: for venue phone 609 3071.
Nov.29: State and revolution
Dec.20: The Russian revolution.
Jan.31: Stalinism
Feb.28: The origins of the Labour Party.

Leicester Socialist Organisation
Alliance — weekly Marxist forum. Sundays at 7.30, at the Leicester Socialist Centre, High St (above Blackthorn Books).
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 League
meeting called by Lambeth Labour Left, to discuss how to organise against the Heseltine legislation and prepare for the London Labour Party conference December 12.
7.30, Friday November at County Hall, SE1.

March for Jobs and Job's Express
Sunday 29 November
Hyde Park to Jubilee Gardens, South Bank
Rally starts at 2.00

Leigh Socialist Organisation
discussion meetings.
Sundays at 7.30 at the White Lion Hotel, opposite the Market.
Nov.29: Poland, the war, class, and Stalinism.
Dec.13: Ireland and the British labour movement

LEIGH YOUTH CAMPAIGN AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT MARCH AGAINST UNEMPLOYMENT
Mosley Common to Leamington via Tyldesley & Atherton
Saturday 28 November
Assembly: 11 am outside Mosley Common Labour Club

A CHAOTIC CONFERENCE

by Gill Clark (delegate from Cardiff CND)

THE outstanding growth in support for unilateral disarmament over the past year helped to make CND's annual conference both chaotic and partly successful.

The inadequacies of the present structure of national CND became apparent during the first session of conference, and did not improve as the weekend progressed.

Under the present constitution, voting rights are allocated to both affiliated groups and individual members. This results in an undemocratic and proportionately unrepresentative assembly.

The obvious shortcomings of the voting apportionment were compounded by the difficulties delegates had in either gaining a fair hearing or receiving adequate advice on voting procedure from the chair. This led to an electric and acrimonious atmosphere in the conference hall for much of the proceedings.

It is to be hoped that conference arrangements for next year will take

account of these points and allow business to be conducted in a more organised and just fashion.

Having said all this, the 1981 conference itself marked a significant step forward for CND's political maturity.

National Council statements were presented on nuclear energy, 'Sanity' (the CND magazine), Youth CND and direct action. Perhaps the most significant of these was on direct action.

Direct

Despite disapproval from headquarters, the Women's March for Disarmament set up a Peace Camp outside Greenham common USAF base. They have received overwhelming support for the action, and finally have national CND approval.

Following on from this, the National Council's statement pledges:

1. support to local and regional groups undertaking considered non-violent direct action, and
2. that national CND will organise and lead national

direct action if the occasion arises.

This statement precludes, at least for the time being, a split in CND ranks such as that in the '60s between national CND and the Committee of 100.

In other sessions, constitutional amendments and aims and policy for the coming year were discussed. Debate on the constitution was drastically and tragically short as chaos overtook the conference and next business was moved. This meant no agreement was reached on changes in individual and group voting rights.

The National Council, therefore, should be pressed to present proposals regarding these as soon as possible.

Constitutional amendments that were passed resulted in a larger National

Council (20) and extra regional representation. Joan Ruddock, Labour parliamentary candidate in 1979, was elected chairperson after standing against veteran CND activist John Cox.

Whatever happened at this conference, however, remains largely irrelevant to the majority of local CND members — that is, those who work in the local grass roots organisation. They will continue to do the necessary slog of leafletting, speaking, demonstrating, and activating the public and media, whatever decisions are reached at national level.

The two-tier system of membership, both local and national, with a substantial national membership subscription, ensures a national membership thousands lower than the actual active CND supporters at local level, and therefore places control at present in the hands of an unrepresentative minority of supporters.

Ego trip

I did begin to wonder at one point whether the whole idea of the national conference of the CND elite is not just a waste of time and energy, but also a real ego-trip for all of us there.

The CND conference last weekend (13th-15th) was big, chaotic, and marked some progress. Gill Clark and Martin Thomas present two reports.



...VOTES TO FIGHT NATO

by Martin Thomas

THE conference made a step forward by voting for CND to campaign for withdrawal from NATO. CND has long had policy for NATO withdrawal, but until now has not made it a campaigning issue.

Around 1000 attended the conference — delegates from local CND groups and affiliated organisations, and individual CND members — representing a movement which has grown enormously over the last year.

There are now about 1,000 local CND groups, some very large. (Exeter CND, for example, reports 1400 members, with another 100 joining each month). A conservative estimate of their total membership is 100,000, though only 30,000 have paid the £6 subscription for national CND membership.

Some trade union delegations attended, but nowhere near as many as would reflect the importance of the TUC and Labour Party decisions for unilateral nuclear disarmament. The conference was dominated by the CND groups activists.

Though successful on withdrawal from NATO, the left at the conference was defeated in the other big debate, on whether the organised working class, or the general public conscience, is the key force for fighting nuclear weapons.

A composite supported by the Socialist Workers' Party (SWP) called for 'the major focus' of CND work to be 'building support in the organised working

class', with a view to 'winning support for industrial action against nuclear weapons'. It was amended to make such activity 'one focus', with a view to 'giving support'. A call for CND to adopt the slogan 'Jobs not Bombs' was deleted.

Another composite, supported by Socialist Challenge, included the same ideas in a broader labour movement orientation, specifically calling for campaign work in the Labour Party and aimed not just at industrial action. That was defeated on a card vote.

A strong body of opinion at the conference evidently felt that CND should remain a single issue peace movement steering clear from class politics.

Leading CND author Dan Smith argued that a NATO

withdrawal campaign would 'put us back on the margins'. Others argued that CND should 'try to divide military thinking', that NATO withdrawal 'would isolate us from other countries', or that CND should take one issue at a time.

But they were in a minority.

There were two resolutions calling for a NATO withdrawal campaign — one supported by Socialist Challenge and one by the SWP. Supporters of both argued similarly: that nuclear disarmament without withdrawal from the NATO nuclear alliance is a nonsense.

Reference to NATO non-nuclear powers like Norway and Canada is irrelevant: these countries are simply marginal parts of the whole NATO nuclear

military machine that have other hardware than the actual nuclear weapons sited on them. CND must challenge the Cold War arguments head on.

Surprisingly, the resolution supported by Socialist Challenge was easily carried and the one supported by the SWP was easily rejected.

The best guess as to why is that additional clauses in the SWP-dominated text — supporting the fight against US imperialism in El Salvador and the workers' struggle in Poland — as well as the brasher profile of the SWP in the conference, made that resolution seem more like an identification of CND with left wing politics.

Continue

Despite the conference votes, the realities of politics will inevitably make trade union and Labour Party activity a more important side of CND — as the mass movement develops — than the petition campaigns and the UN Special Sessions.

What socialists must do is convince the thousands of individual activists to consciously recognise this priority and the links between the fight against war and class politics.

If labour movement militants start getting more involved in CND, especially in the new NATO campaign, that should be possible.

Affiliate your trade union branch, Trades Council, or Labour Party to CND: write to CND, 11 Goodwin St, London N4 3HQ

PRESS GANG



by Patrick Spilling

ONE OF Britain's biggest publishing groups, Associated Newspapers, is winding itself up to launch a Sunday Tabloid to do for Ken Livingstone's day of rest what the Daily Mail does for his weekdays. It is to be called — with that flash of wit and ingenuity for which Fleet Street is famous — the Sunday Mail.

Horrible as this new paper will certainly be it is not the content that has made most impact but the news that the launch costs have already been raised by half a million pounds.

'Aha', I hear you say to yourselves, 'Greedy printers, killing the fatted calf that lays the golden egg before it is hatched.'

'Typical', you no doubt continue.

No sooner does some enterprising management get off its bum to create new wealth in which we all share and at the same time create real jobs out of the kindness of its heart than some bleeding shop steward marches in the door and wants more money for settling the word Sunday because it's longer than the

word Daily And wants to do it with a hammer and chisel because this mob are still resisting the introduction of printing presses!

Not quite correct. No, the extra loot which Associated will have to fork out is not for the printers, nor even increased bounty payments to its team of vigilante journalists.

Say it softly, but it is for gambling.

Bingo.

First a little lesson in a free economy. The beauty of a free economy is that anyone is free to join in. If you want to start a newspaper you just start one and if it's good enough you will find a place in the market. All you need is £5 million or so for a national paper and you are away. That's the difference between us and those so-called socialist paradises.

Now back to bingo. This is an example of a free market in operation. Where in a communist country could you get such freedom of choice. The Daily Mirror has bingo, the Sun has bingo, the Star has bingo, the News of the World has bingo, the People has bingo, the Sunday Mirror has bingo, The Times does not have bingo (but it only just got news on its front page) and the Daily Mail has bingo.

Being the Mail it doesn't call it Bingo, but Casino which allows its readers to imagine they are joining in some sophisticated jet-setting flutter at the tables. (They don't shout 'House' but 'Chateau') But they are playing bingo like all the others.

The fact is that the cut-throat circulation war now

in progress (which undoubtedly send weekday national papers the wall) means that the 'non-quality' papers now forced to offer large sums of money for nothing so that they can stay afloat against expecting something for nothing.

Mind you it's a game skill just to understand rules. Turn to page 14 of last Saturday's Mail there — beside the ad for warm lavatory seats Winceyette nightdress is new that two real have just won £17,500. Eagerly the Mail plains: 'They just miss the £70,000 prize as the ringed number they called off on their Game cards was number an odd number.'

'Had either of completed the game or earlier even number one of them would won the whole £70,000. "Little wonder that the intriguing game whole country is about".'

Bingo

Probably they are about having a contest to fill in their cards but they have revealed the true spirit of the free of which we are so After all you can't in Izvestia and Pravda in a circulation war by bingo. First prize week on manoeuvres Poland. Second prize two weeks.



World News

LABOUR MOVEMENT CONFERENCE

ON IRELAND

MARIE CAMPBELL of Oxford Trades Council writes about its forthcoming conference on Ireland

OVER THE last year the H Block hunger strike, the election of Bobby Sands and the subsequent deaths of ten hunger strikers have brought the question of Ireland to the forefront internationally and in Britain.

In many countries — for example, France, Spain, Portugal and the USA — there were big demonstrations in support of the hunger strikers. In Ireland itself, North and South, there was limited industrial action.

In Britain, where solidarity action could have pressurised an intransigent Tory government, there was little response from the organised labour movement. Even the left failed to organise around the issue.

If there had been a mass movement in this country in

support of the hunger strikers, their defeat would have been impossible.

However for the first time in years Ireland has been discussed and the labour movement been forced to reexamine its policy.

This year's annual conference of trades councils in June passed a resolution which called for the ending of bipartisan policy on Ireland, for a commitment to withdrawal of troops and for restoration of political status. It was passed by a substantial majority despite the opposition of Len Murray and the platform.

This was an important development as it meant that Ireland was now a legitimate subject for debate in the trade union movement and that trades councils could no longer be

withheld and disaffiliated for holding conferences on Ireland.

It was in the wake of this decision that Oxford Trades Council and Oxfordshire County Association of Trades Councils agreed to organise a labour movement conference on Ireland.

Concerted

In the meanwhile the TUC annual conference overturned the policy passed by the annual conference of Trades Councils and the trade union block vote at the Labour Party Conference ensured that no positive policies were passed on Ireland. This was all owed to happen because there has been no concerted campaign to change the policy of individual national



British troops break up funeral of hunger striker Joe McDonnell

unions on Ireland.

The purpose of the Oxford Conference is to continue the debate on Ireland in the trade union and labour movement and to open up the discussion at

a rank and file level so that a basis can be laid for a movement within the unions for troops out and a united Ireland.

The conference is on Saturday December 12th

from 10 to 5 at West Oxford Community Centre, Binsey Lane, Oxford. Delegates' credentials £3, observers £1.50 (unwaged £1) from Marie Campbell, 167 Walton Street, Oxford.

Ronnie Reagan's flying circus

By John Lister

MORE like an episode of 'Soap' than 'Centennial', the saga of the Reagan administration spluttered into a new chapter last week.

The feuding warmongers and arguing axemen added new indiscretions, a full blooded recession and a whiff of scandal to their ten-month catalogue of disasters.

The first setback came when Reagan's whizz-kid Budget Director David Stockman was extensively quoted in 'Atlantic Monthly' magazine expressing profound self-doubts on the government's economic strategy.

He confessed that his own budget cuts—still being rammed through Congress—were "hastily prepared and enacted". He derided the central tenet of "Reaganomics"—the theory that tax cuts alone are the key to increased productivity and industrial activity.

Metaphor

And—perhaps most damagingly—Stockman (who should know) described Reagan's programme of sweeping cuts in income taxes as "a Trojan Horse designed in reality to favour the rich".

Across-the-board tax cuts were, he admitted, designed primarily as a means of securing a lowering of the top rate of tax on the rich from 70% to 50%.

The interview created an immediate furore in the Reagan camp—particularly when Stockman was forced to acknowledge that the quotes are an accurate record of his comments.

He was forced to issue an immediate grovelling apology—which, however, simply underlined the cynicism of Reagan's economic policies. It was wrong to use the Trojan Horse analogy, he



Stockman (left) with Treasury Chief Reagan

said, because "The Trojan Horse is a wooden beast without a brain. If I had recalled that, I never would have used that metaphor."

In other words the tax cuts policy is not an unconscious but a conscious move to con and rip off American workers in the interests of the richest employers!

And his shrewd analysis in the interview of his own package of policies was unconvincingly passed off as "my own careless ramblings to a reporter."

Stockman's attempt to repair the damage might have carried more conviction if the whole affair had not blown up in a month which has confirmed that Reagan's economic programme is heading even more rapidly towards disaster than Thatcher's monetarist experiments in Britain.

Slump

The figures for US unemployment show a rise of over 900,000 in the last two months, as a full-scale recession has brought lay-offs and a drop in production throughout US industry.

At the same time

inflation is back up to the 15% level, with no signs of relief in sight. And, as a result of this headlong plunge into slump, Reagan's budget deficit is now certain to go soaring way above the \$60 billion previously anticipated.

Assault

More savage cutbacks in Federal spending are therefore on the way. But one sacred cow unlikely to be touched by the Reagan axe is military spending—the unbridled scope of which has been one of Stockman's gripes.

Last weekend saw major US military manoeuvres in the Middle East and North East "Horn" of Africa involving the Carter/Reagan "Rapid Deployment Force" in an airborne assault on an empty strip of Egyptian desert.

The aim of 'Operation Bright Star' was, in the words of commander-in-chief General Kingston, to prove that he could get an airborne battalion anywhere in the world within 24 hours.

The manoeuvres include

exercises in Sudan, Somalia, and Oman designed to reaffirm US military domination over the Gulf area—which has been weakened since the fall of the Shah of Iran—and to register a dire warning to the Libyan regime of Colonel Gaddafi.

Whether Gaddafi or the Arab masses will be impressed by the possibility of one battalion of lightly armed troops arriving by air (with their tanks and personnel carriers arriving some days later) is one thing.

The memory of the fiasco of the US attempt to rescue the hostages from Iran will no doubt console them.

Inevitable

But the operation confirms the aggressive nature of US policy in the Middle East. And Reagan's military build up is designed to expand and improve the rapid deployment force as a threat to workers' struggles in the Middle East and throughout the world.

This is particularly the case in relation to Central America, where US imperialism, faced with the weak-



Ringmaster Reagan

ening of the right wing junta in El Salvador, is attempting to stop the rot by making threats against the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua, and even Castro's Stalinist regime in Cuba.

Both the Sandinistas and the Cubans have responded by putting military forces on the alert against any possible US-sponsored attack.

The fact is that the Reagan government, faced by continuing threats to its authority, is contemplating desperate measures—ranging from sabre-rattling through "conventional" invasions through to the nightmare of a "limited" nuclear war in Europe.

One Reaganite who does not believe that nuclear war can be limited or avoided is Security Advisor Richard V. Allen. He believes that full-scale war with the Soviet Union is inevitable. And if the world is to be blown to bits, why should he miss out on some of the perks of office?

Allen has now been caught with his fingers in the till—having accepted a \$1,000 kickback for arranging an interview between a Japanese paper and Nancy Reagan.

His case lends the missing element of scandal to the pattern of crisis and confusion that characterises the Reagan administration—and his disgrace and possible removal may lead to an unexpected resolution of the feud between him and Secretary of State Alexander Haig.

Unions

In either case the plight of US imperialism—and the American working class—is not a happy one. The task in this situation is to build a labour party based on the interests of US workers and spearhead the struggle against Reagan and the capitalists of the Democratic Party as well.

Iranian blood bath

LAST WEEK the Khomeini regime in Iran announced that there had been a "blood bath" in the Kurdish town of Bikan. First reports spoke of over 70 dead, among them a number of soldiers and pro-government Revolutionary Guards.

Within a few days the number had fallen to seven and the story was that Kurdish nationalist guerrillas the Peshmergas, had fired on innocent people.

The truth appears that about 700 people may have been killed by pro-government forces. It was certainly one of the biggest massacres in Iran since the fall of the Shah.

Bikan, though not one of the biggest towns of Kurdistan, was a central base for the different leftist nationalist currents. About a year after the fall of the Shah, a fierce battle was fought there which resulted in the pro-Khomeini Islamic Guards being driven out of the city and to their being replaced by armed Peshmergas belonging to the main nationalist trends.

A joint committee with representatives of the Kurdish Democratic Party, the far-left Komala, the Fedayeen Khalq and the supporters of Sheikh Ezzedin Hosseini was set up to run the town.

Prior to this a committee had been set up under the name Association for the Defence of the Toilers, and this organisation took a leading role in setting up a network of such councils throughout southern Kurdistan. Peasants and workers organisations in and around the town were also very active and militant.

The crushing of this important centre of Kurdish resistance and leftist activity would be a decisive step forward in the attempt by the central government to subdue Kurdistan.

ANDREW HORNING



Sudan crisis

CAUGHT between the anger of the masses and the grasping hands of the imperialist bankers, President Nimeiri's regime in Sudan has run into profound crisis.

Finance Minister Suleiman was forced last month to agree to a package that will devalue the Sudanese pound and raise prices of fuel, wheat and sugar. Only on this basis did the IMF agree to loan the bankrupt regime a further £122 million.

In a bid to forestall mass revolt at such policies, Nimeiri last week sacked his entire cabinet: but the policies have to be implemented if Sudan is to re-schedule its huge foreign debts — exceeding £2.3 billion.

-World news- Rightward evolution of PASOK

Since 1974 and the publication of its founding declaration of principles—PASOK has moved step by step to the right.

The 1974 declaration talked of 'socialisation' of big capital. This 'clearly Marxist' term has now been paired down to mean the placing under state supervision of *certain* industries (specifically pharmaceutical and other related ones) which will *eventually* be bought up by the state. PASOK has dropped all references to large industrial and merchant capital.

Decisive

PASOK describes itself as a movement rather than a party. It has organised branches throughout the country. It has organised currents within the workers' and farmers' movements, and enormous strength within local government and amongst middle professional ranks, etc.

The Central Committee of PASOK is the decision making body and although local branches have a wide degree of democratic functioning with scope for discussion, in the last instance they do not make the decisions. However PASOK does not have a

strict internal discipline. The leader plays the most decisive role, balancing between different groups.

Obscure

Given the ease with which this enormous movement was created and came to power within seven years, it is also just as easily foreseeable that it will begin to disintegrate when the growing conservatism of the leadership comes into conflict with the demand of the masses for real change.

The rise of PASOK has been so significant and irresistible that at the same time it has managed to obscure many of the features of political reality in Greece today.

This can be seen even at the level of terminology. The term 'socialism' is used so indiscriminately that it blurs the difference between capitalism and communism. By talking about the 'people' PASOK manages to obscure the difference between the two main class protagonists: workers and bosses. References to 'the movement' have obscured the class struggle, while the 'Right' is used as a catch-all, obscuring within it the real class interests of the bourgeoisie.

But what was the role of



Demonstration in Athens

the working class, in PASOK's victory?

The trade union movement in Greece is controlled in part by the Communist Party and in part by PASOK itself.

PASOK dominates in the service sector unions. The majority of these unions organise the better-off workers—bank employees, teachers, lecturers, telecommunications workers, power workers, airline workers, etc.

On the other hand workers in the other economic sectors—mining, manufacture, light engineering—are in the overwhelming

majority represented by the Communist Party trade union organisation.

From this fact alone one can see that the more organised and class conscious sector of the working class does not express itself through PASOK.

It still looks to the Communist Party. The Communist Party however only increased its electoral share by 1.5% (although it scored bigger swings in working class areas and stayed the same or fell in rural constituencies).

This exceptionally small increase in the Communist

Party's vote—shows that in this historic contest between the "underprivileged" and the "Right" the working class found itself on the side lines as a spectator.

But the Communist Party crawls cravenly behind PASOK's electoral campaign and quest for 'change' offering here and there a few left criticisms which would have been more usefully aimed at its own policies and practices.

"PASOK is the government of all Greeks". This was Papandreou's first

Cissy Vovou in Athens continues her assessment of the Greek socialists' election victory.

Papandreou

declaration upon coming to office, "No politics in the army" was another of his pronouncements after taking over the crucially important Ministry of Defence post. "No purges of the Right" from the state machinery, etc., etc.

These are the first practical indications of PASOK's backtracking.

But as Papandreou himself stated in the course of the campaign, "Change is not an electoral promise, it is a popular demand". And this demand has to be realised. This is what the workers, farmers and radicalised petit-bourgeoisie expect.

If from the kick-off PASOK sinks in the mire of conservatism and compromise with the Right, how can it begin to take on the ruling class and deal with any possible sabotage by the ruling class?

Promised

How will it drag the country out of the economic crisis if it dare not touch the interests of big capital?

How will PASOK 'place the state at the service of the people' if it won't purge any of the right wingers and

open fascists who are rife in the state apparatus?

These are the many questions which shall be asked in Greece in the coming period. One thing is certain however.

The mass movement which has resulted in this victory for PASOK represents a danger and threat to the ruling class. PASOK has promised its supporters a lot. And although they are prepared to wait awhile they are not prepared to be sold out.

Precondition

PASOK's foreign policy will equally be different to what has gone before, and will weaken the US in the Middle East and imperialist interests in the region as a whole.

For all these reasons, PASOK's victory is a far more radical and uncertain event for the bourgeoisie than the coming to government of the Labour Party in Britain, Schmidt in Germany or Mitterand in France.

The strength of the workers' movement will continue to remain the precondition for social change, with or without PASOK.

Act to support South African strikers!

By Jim Farnham

THE militant strike movement of the black working class of South Africa is reaching new heights as workers take forward the struggle for their needs against the profit-hungry bosses and their vicious apartheid state.

October saw an unprecedented monthly figure for workers on strike—at least 20,000 according to newspaper reports, with probably thousands more involved in unreported strike action. The main demands of the workers have been for improvements in the starvation wages, against victimisation by bosses, against a new law that threatens the already inadequate pension scheme system, and for union recognition.

Thousands of strikers have been sacked, with hundreds more arrested. Mass meetings have been banned. Many strikers have been evicted from their accommodation. But this brutal repression has not broken the militancy and fighting determination of the workers' movement.

Effective

The workers' movement of South Africa needs the maximum supporting action from the labour movement in Britain. In particular, workers on strike at British subsidiaries can be given effective support of their class brothers and sisters in Britain.

Two such strikes have developed in the current wave of action—and the workers involved urgently need effective solidarity action from our labour movement. At Johnson Tiles (whose British parent company is Norcros), about

300 strikers were sacked after demanding union recognition, re-instatement of a dismissed shop steward, and the dismissal of a supervisor.

Appealed

At Telephone Manufacturers (controlled by GEC and Plessey), 1600 were fired after striking in solidarity with three victimised workers. The strikers were attacked by police when they gathered at the plant, and at least nine were arrested and charged.

MAWU (Metal and Allied), the union at the TM plant, has appealed to the International Metal Federation of unions for support in the workers' struggle for unconditional re-instatement. BSAWU (Building, Construction and Allied), the union involved at Johnsons, has appealed directly to the TUC.

Reports suggest that TUC officials have met Norcros bosses to discuss the case. But the strikes of workers in South Africa will never be given the support and strength they need through discussions between TUC bureaucrats and bosses. It is only action by workers in Britain—through appropriate blacking and supportive strikes—that can add a real strength to strikers inside South Africa.

Allies

The strike at Wilson-Rowntree (subsidiary of Rowntree-Mackintosh) illustrates this.

It continues today, without any move being made by the TUC bureaucracy to give British workers

any information—let alone mobilise class action.

When the needs of South African workers are so great, the bureaucracy must not be allowed to stand in the way. The bureaucrats must face an organised pressure from workers, demanding mass meetings with union officials being forced to give information on the requests received from South African unions, and to take steps to mobilise the strength of the unions in supportive action.

Socialist Organiser calls on workers and militants to take up the fight in the

labour movement for a programme of class solidarity action in support of our class allies in South Africa. The outlines of such a programme are contained in the resolution sent to the recent Anti-Apartheid Movement AGM by Oxford Trades Council. The resolution called for:

- 1) The building of direct workplace-to-workplace links so that the needs and demands of South African workers can be directly conveyed to workers in Britain;
- 2) For workers to open the books to investigate the

links of every capitalist with South Africa, and so lay the basis for immediate solidarity action as necessary—for appropriate blacking and strike action;

3) For the labour movement to fight against all secret diplomacy and to uncover the imperialist deals and links with South Africa;

4) For full blacking action against all military and related supplies to the apartheid regime;

5) For the nationalisation under workers' control of all companies and banks involved in South Africa.

In the fight for effective class solidarity action, the leadership of the AAM also stands as an obstacle. Their politics of class collaboration leads them to line up with the labour bureaucracy, against moves to mobilise independent workers action.

Strangled

At the AGM, the Stalinists and reformists in the AAM leadership managed to sabotage even a debate of the crucial Oxford Trades Council resolution—it was remitted to the AAM's bureaucratic National Committee, where it will no doubt be quietly strangled.

While union bureaucrats and AAM leaders continue to manoeuvre, the struggle of workers at Telephone Manufacturers and Johnson Tiles continues, and the need for solidarity action grows.

Messages of support for strikers at Telephone Manufacturers and Johnson Tiles: MAWU and BSAWU, 1 Central Court, 125 Gale Street, Durban, South Africa. For the Wilson-Rowntree strikers: SAAWU, PO Box 7002, East London, South Africa.



Strikers need urgent support

INTERNATIONAL ACTION

CRACKDOWN ON TURKISH LEFT

By John Lister

THE TURKISH military junta has stepped up its repression of left wingers and other opponents.

Two waves of arrests last week saw the seizure of 35 alleged members of the Turkish Communist Party, and 72 alleged members of the left wing Dev-Yol organisation.

The Dev-Yol members — claimed by the junta to constitute the whole of the leadership of the organisation — face sweeping charges including the killing of a policeman and four political opponents, and running businesses as a front for their political work.

In the meantime one of the main 'liberal' bourgeois politicians, RPP leader Bulent Ecevit, was last week sentenced to four months in jail for criticising the junta.

This was after General Evren's regime — balanced uneasily in the stance of impartial 'arbiter' between forces of right and left in Turkey — had come under renewed pressure from its

main imperialist backers to take steps towards restoring some semblance of 'democracy'.

The West German government has reacted against General Evren's move to outlaw political parties in Turkey, and is apparently unhappy at Evren's plans to retain power for at least two more years.

Stability

But their pressure for reforms plainly takes second place to their concern for the preservation of capitalist stability in Turkey.

It is only the Turkish workers' movement backed by solidarity from the international working class — which can put an end to the repression of left and establish a workers' and peasants' government which alone can guarantee democratic rights in Turkey.

★ Contact: Turkey Solidarity Campaign, BM 5965, London WC1N 3

Labour Party Right wingers prepare to tear the Party apart

THE right-wing are now preparing for the biggest witch-hunt in the Labour Party for years.

The lever they are using to force the issue is the selection in Bradford North of Pat Wall to replace the sitting MP, Ben Ford. Pat Wall, in addition to being President of Bradford Trades Council, is, of course, a prominent supporter of 'Militant'.

Sixty MPs from the extreme right-wing Parliamentary faction, the so-called 'Manifesto Group', have issued a statement demanding that the National Executive refuses to endorse Pat Wall's candidacy and launches a witch-hunt against supporters of 'Militant'.

Consort

They are demanding that the NEC expels 'Militant' by invoking Clause II(3) of the Party constitution which says that organisations 'having their own Programme, Principles and Policy for distinctive and separate propaganda... shall be ineligible for affiliation to the Party'. Under Clause II(4)(b), members of such organisations are ineligible for membership of the Labour Party.

But you could be forgiven for thinking that this was a better description of the NATO-backed 'Labour Committee for Transatlantic Understanding', of which Duffy, Boyd, Sirs and Co. are leading members; of the Tri-Lateral Commission in which the likes of Healey and Owen consort with leading world capitalists like David Rockefeller in what bears an uncanny resemblance to that fabled beast the 'International Capitalist Conspiracy' (See 'The Global Manipulators' by Robert Eringer, Pentacle Books).



Peter Shore

Before Pat Wall's success, the right were looking to undermine mandatory re-selection by persuading the NEC not to endorse the candidacy of Bob Wareing (not a Militant supporter) who defeated sitting MP Eric Ogden in Liverpool West Derby. Unfortunately for them, Ogden joined the SDP before the NEC heard his appeal. Before he left, however, he actually asked Michael Foot to back him as an 'independent candidate'!

Ben Ford, who Pat Wall defeated, appears to be a similar character. He told his local party that he would refuse to be a Labour candidate if the Party's manifesto included commit-

ments to unilateral disarmament and withdrawal from the EEC.

Given Party policy on these issues, his constituency had no option but to select someone else. Yet Michael Foot still wrote a letter to the constituency in support of Ford!

Sinister

But the selection of Pat Wall is just the pretext the right are using for the general campaign they are now

waging against the left under their blood-curdling war-cry of 'unity'. It is amazing how they manage to turn such an innocent little word into a sinister and menacing threat. If the NEC refuses to agree to their demands, the Manifesto Group 'will determine their next step', they warn us.

Any setback for Labour is now being laid at the door of the Left, and is being used as further fuel to demand expulsions. Ken

Nigel Williamson replies to the red-baiters' offensive



Weighell wants to purge left

Weetch, the treasurer of the Manifesto Group, went on London's commercial radio station on the very day of the St. Pancras by-election denouncing Trotskyist/Marxist infiltration of the Labour Party in exactly the same terms used by the SDP in the election campaign! Meanwhile, Peter Shore wounds the Party further by making yet another speech about 'self-inflicted wounds'.

The right would like to bring back the old 'proscribed list' which was abolished in 1973. The NUR attempted to get a resolution calling for this debated at conference. They failed but the resolution must now be considered by the new NEC. If the list was reintroduced, groups like 'Socialist Organiser' would certainly feature on it.

Strangely, Sid Weighell will tolerate fascists in the NUR, but not Marxists in the Labour Party. In April 1978 he wrote in the Daily Mirror "We are not proposing to expel members from the NUR, nor to get them sacked simply because they are misguided enough to become members of the National Front. No one wants a witch-hunt or restrictions against the beliefs of individuals".

Two recent publications have added further fuel to the witch-hunting hysteria. 'The Far Left - An expose of the Extreme Left in

Britain' by Blake Baker, and 'The Labour Party and the New Left' by David Webster (Fabian Pamphlet). Both of these publications are, in many ways, extremely funny, and I am proud to be included: not to be mentioned would be a slur on one's socialist commitment!

But they have a serious aspect in that they are part of the concerted campaign to expel those members of the left who will not acquiesce to the hypocritical Manifesto Group 'unity' which papers over their own defiance of Party policy.

How can we best prevent a return to the bad old days of the 1950's when the right ruthlessly expelled left-wingers and excluded them from Parliamentary selection lists?

Primarily by continuing our campaign for democracy and accountability in the Party. But perhaps even more importantly, the left cannot afford to be divided itself. We cannot present a credible case against intolerance and expulsions when leading groups on the left like the LCC withdraw from the Rank and File Mobilising Committee, apparently because they will not work with 'Trots'. We can only stop the right-wing purges if we are united ourselves.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

Backing for Benn's stand

THE Rank and File Mobilising Committee today took issue with the doctrine of collective responsibility in the form apparently demanded by the Shadow Cabinet.

Divisive

An RFMC spokesperson said: "If Shadow Cabinet collective responsibility is to mean that 20-odd MPs are to decide the policies Labour advocates in Parliament while preventing other MPs advocating policies decided by conference, then it is a recipe for perpetuating the party inside and outside Parliament. That sort of divisive doctrine can only prevent unity around our policies, which we need to win the next election."

Reg Race, chairperson of the RFMC, said: "We believe in collective responsibility. All members of the Shadow Cabinet must be collectively responsible for advocating party policy as decided by conference. But we do not accept that collective responsibility can ever legitimately be used to fudge or undermine party policy."

Silence

An RFMC spokesperson also criticised the inequitable manner in which collective responsibility has been used to silence some, while others have been allowed to campaign against party policy from the front benches of the House of Commons.

The spokesperson recalled the front page headline in The Times of May 7 this year 'Healey Backs Tories on Nuclear Weapons'.

CLPD to debate the next steps

NEW!

WORKERS
Socialist
Review 1

50p

'Capitalist Crisis and Socialist Alternative', a detailed study of the breakdown of the boom, by Bob Sutcliffe. 50p plus postage from PO Box 135, London N10DD.

Rachel Lever continues the debate about where the Labour Left is now by looking at some of the resolutions submitted to the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy AGM, and the decisions taken by the CLPD Executive on which to recommend.

CLPD, and the warnings of its secretary Vladimir Derer on the pressures for conformity and 'unity' in the Party after Brighton, featured prominently in the press last week. An article by Patrick Wintour in the New Statesman quoted Vladimir, and the Guardian picked it up and told the world that CLPD was giving up the fight for Labour democracy.

But a glance through the resolutions submitted for the AGM on December 12 shows that this interpretation is far from true.

Two motions propose a continued fight for an accountable and democratic Parliamentary Labour Party. These are along the

lines of proposals that appeared on this year's Conference agenda but which were withdrawn when it became clear they would be defeated and, under the three year rule, would be out of the running until 1985.

There will also be a further attempt to pin down the Manifesto, with an amendment to Clause 5, "That major policies agreed by Annual Conference must be included in the election manifesto".

And there would be a major campaign to demand that "Shadow Cabinet spokesmen should stop attacking Annual Conference policies within their remit in the press or on television".

The EC is putting a motion on defence of the Wembley electoral college, "in particular the principle of annual elections and recorded voting", which it believes will best be achieved "if the decision about how affiliated organisations cast their vote in the election of the leader and

deputy leader becomes part of their normal routine processes".

Warned

An amendment proposed by Vladimir Derer, but not supported by the EC, warned against the election becoming "the subject of a special and separate campaign", but doesn't specify how such a campaign could be prevented if a candidate chose to mount one - or whether, if this did happen, CLPD would oppose the candidacy.

Other motions, proposed by John Bloxam, Ann Pettifor, and Jon Lansman, with EC support, advocated a campaign to get other elections, and conference card votes, recorded and published.

Other motions reaffirm the fight for positive discrimination for women, opposition to the 'shortlist of one' manoeuvre, and extension of the principles of democratic accountability to town hall Labour groups.

For the second year running, the AGM will debate the controversial question of changing the voting proportions at Annual Conference to give the constituency parties a bigger say. Last year all the options were defeated. This year the EC is backing a motion 'to obtain a balance between constituencies and affiliated organisations which more fairly reflects the political and financial contributions of individual Labour Party members'.

Will the right wing and its Fleet Street chorus toler-

ate CLPD's quiet, routine campaigns on these questions? Or will they extend their definition of what constitutes a threat to Labour Party unity wider and wider?

One of the motions opposed by the EC states that "there can be no unity as long as Labour's parliamentary representatives insist on their right to sabotage Party policy, and no 'peace' as long as the right wing organise to reverse the democratic reforms".



A BLOW TO BALLOT BOX POLITICS

**Socialist
Organiser
EDITORIAL**

THE HOUSE of Lords will consider the Labour Greater London Council's appeal on its cheap fares policy starting next Tuesday, 24th. Whether or not it reverses the ruling of Lord Denning and the Appeal Court that the cheap fares are illegal, its decision will be entirely political.

Under the last Tory government, Clay Cross council defied the government's orders to raise rents. Lord Denning ordered that the councillors should be disqualified.

But when, in 1976, Tameside Tory council refused to implement Labour government policy for comprehensive education, the judges found that the councillors were within their rights!

How the cheap fares case will go we can't predict. Thatcher has made her preferences clear: she told Parliament that Denning's ruling "will have been greeted with great relief", and "congratulated" Bromley council, who brought the prosecution against the GLC.

But fear of the labour movement's anger, and the damage that declaring the cheap fares illegal could do to people's faith in British constitutionalism, may lead the Lords to overrule Denning.

The labour movement must start mobilising now — putting pressure on the Lords to overrule Denning, and defying their decision if they don't. Socialist Organiser and some supporters of London Labour Briefing have made a joint appeal to the London labour movement (see back page).

We must also think about the lessons. Here the role of the courts has clearly been a matter not of impartial legality or eternal justice, but class against class.

Apparently not even a reduction in local bus fares can be won by the normal, peaceful ballot-box procedures of municipal and parliamentary democracy, without coming up against resist-

ance from the permanent, unelected state machine! What then would be the fate of any attempts at serious anti-capitalist measures by an elected Labour government?

Denning has already proposed that the courts should block any effort by a Labour government to abolish the House of Lords. Imagine what would happen if a Labour government attempted more serious measures — the sort of measures needed to deal with unemployment, like widespread nationalisations with minimal compensation.

The courts would declare them illegal. The Queen would refuse Royal Assent. The civil service top brass would block implementation. Capitalists would refuse to hand over. And if the Labour government fought that sabotage, then the Army would step in, saying no doubt that it wanted to defend the traditional safeguards of the British Constitution and install a government of national unity!

Early this year Field Marshal Carver, former chief of the British Army, admitted in a debate with Pat Arrowsmith that in 1974, "fairly senior officers were ill-advised enough to make suggestions that perhaps, if things got terribly bad, the army would have to do something about it...". In 1974 the top commanders told them to shut up. In a more serious crisis, they wouldn't.

About four out of five judges are products of public schools, of Oxford and Cambridge, and of course of one of the tightest closed shops in Britain, the legal profession. About 89% of them come from the 'upper' or 'upper middle' classes; and the other 11%, by the time they become judges, are solidly-established members of the wealthy classes.

Senior civil servants and top commanders in the armed forces are similarly solidly Tory.

And the whole massive permanent state machine — which is not elected, and which generally has a great deal more influence on the actual running of the government than the elected parliament — is a bastion for the defence of the capitalist class, not only through the personal connections, interests and views of its personnel, but also by its hierarchical structure and the rules and codes by which it operates.

That permanent state machine can be defeated. It is a foolish picket organiser who reckons on the police being impartial towards the picket lines; but a hopelessly timid one who does not see that sufficient numbers, militancy, and organisation on the picket lines can overwhelm the police.

The workers can win — provided that we are not cowed by the 'majesty of the law', and we are prepared to answer force with force.

But this has important implications for every militant who wants to make sure the next Labour government is not like the last one. The options for a future Labour government are very limited. It can remain within the boundaries of what the permanent state machine finds acceptable — and in the present crisis, that will confine the government to a re-run of 1974-9, modified only in detail — or it can challenge that state machine, and mobilise the working class to smash it and replace it.

Denning today in Britain — and the far more bitter experience of Chile in 1973 — have shown that if we are out to challenge the system, then ballot-box politics — majority 'consent' for change — is not enough. Militant, organised majority activity for change is vital. And for that we have to start now, mobilising in every struggle and building a leadership to educate the movement to understand the class nature of the state.



FOOD CHAIN

THE Guinness Book of Records has closed its record on eating bicycles. However fast you eat your bicycle now you won't get an entry in the august tome. They claim it's for safety reasons — bicycle-eating can damage your health.

But we know different. This horrifying new craze that has replaced glue-sniffing as the No.1 hazard

for jobless teenagers was all the result of a misunderstanding.

Norman Tebbit [whose brain dimensions might well qualify for an entry in the aforesaid Book] has been widely misreported. What he did say to the young jobless is, 'On your bike!'. He did not, and we must repeat this, he did NOT say 'Let them eat bicycles'.

Don't be vague, ask for...

ANOTHER gem of clarity and concision from US Secretary of State Alexander Haig.

"I think it behoves the United States, as we have done, to make it clear to all concerned that this kind of activity is a profound danger to world peace and stability. I think it would only be prudent of the United States to view this activity with the utmost concern, as we do."

Translation: Mr Haig is not happy with foreign powers interfering in the internal affairs of Central American states.

Have you got that clear now?

Good. In answer to a request for assurances that the US "is not and will not participate in or encourage in any way direct or indirect efforts to overthrow or destabilise the current regime in Nicaragua", Mr Haig said, with uncharacteristic brevity, "No, I would not give you such an assurance".

Got it now?

Haunted butcher

JOHN Butcher, Conservative candidate in the Crosby by-election, is haunted by the fear of meeting a fate worse than death — losing the Tories' 19,000 majority.

But not to fear. Help is at hand. 200 SPUC supporters will be out calling for a Tory vote. For unlike his opponent Shirley Williams, who is also anti-abortion, Mr Butcher has promised if elected to join the 'pro-life' MPs in further restricting women's right to get an abortion.

Being 'pro-life', Mr Butcher is, of course, in favour of capital punishment.

Caring for profit

"WHILE in essence the NHS general practitioner is a caring and concerned doctor, he does not have the resources to enable him to satisfy and meet the expectations of his patients. Surgeries are often crowded and ill-equipped. Because of congestion in the waiting room, house visits are often delayed.

"The quick prescription is often the instant panacea" — a sorry picture of NHS GP services is painted by Mr Raymond Francis, director of Medicover. And it probably accords with most people's experiences, especially in Central London.

So what does Mr Francis intend to do about the appalling lack of resources? You guessed it. He's going to turn it into a quick profit for Medicover.

He plans to open a string of private surgeries, linked by computer (this being hi-tech profiteering), and charging £20 annual subscription and £8 per visit.

Parliament ideal for disruption - Wise

"WE ARE all aware that while Parliamentary procedure is not helpful to the introduction of constructive changes, it certainly lends itself to obstruction", Audrey Wise wrote last week in a letter on behalf of the Labour Coordinating Committee to Tribune MPs.

"Normally this is not our method, but at a time when central government is disrupting and destroying local government, then MPs are justified in using every possible Parliamentary weapon against that government. If our MPs fail to do this, then they are allowing the time to come when Labour councillors will be faced with impossible or illegal choices."

Through such Parliamentary obstruction, Audrey Wise argues, the Tories' plans to tie local councils hand and foot to central government "cuts policy can be beaten back — or at least a big boost can be given to the fight against them."

"Central government is disrupting and destroying", Audrey Wise told Socialist Organiser, "the proposal is for obstructing this. I am not contemplating 'disorderly conduct' or 'disruption', but using all the existing procedures to block government as much as possible."

"What is different is that we are now proposing a constant and consistent use of all these procedures."

MPs have no chance of preventing particular gov-

ernment Bills if action is confined just to those Bills. The possibility of talking out legislation, which exists with 'Private Members' Bills like the Corrie anti-abortion bill, does not exist with government Bills because of the guillotine.

Nod

"But", Audrey Wise pointed out, "people underestimate the amount of business that goes through Parliament, and the scope for obstruction if the normal Parliamentary 'consent' is withdrawn,

even if just by a few MPs.

"There are many possible suggestions, all of which have been used before.

- Don't let any items go through on the nod.
- Object to every item.
- Call divisions at any time.

• Use the procedure of 'I spy strangers'. (If any MP says this, the automatic procedure is then to clear the strangers' gallery and debate whether to allow the public in).

- Refuse to operate pairing arrangements with the Tories.

"The two main objections to our proposals are that they would be 'irresponsible' and that they would create a dangerous 'precedent' for the next Labour government."

"But we are proposing to use existing procedure against a government intent on disrupting and destroying local government."

"None of the procedures were the creation of the Left, or even of the Labour Party. They are there because, theoretically, one of the functions of MPs is to restrain government..."

"We are not asking MPs to do anything illegal, or to lose any salary. They will be faced with much less of a problem than people contemplating going on strike, or councillors faced by surcharges or disqualification."

"One reason why the Tories don't use such methods more is because they've got the House of Lords... the only delaying tactic open to a Labour opposition is by using the procedures of the House of Commons."

"I pointed out in the letter to Tribune MPs that the Greater London Council Labour Group's policy includes 'parliamentary obstruction'. When I've been explaining this tactic over the last week, it has been very well received."

"It puts the MPs in the front line, trying to defend Labour councillors, local services, and local jobs."

Grant comes clean

LAST WEEK we reported on Labour MP John Grant's indignant letter to his constituency party in Islington Central, demanding to know 'what steps would be taken' about the fact that a member of the party GC, Rachel Lever, was a Trotskyist.

We asked what steps John Grant would be taking — towards the SDP, or where?

Now John Grant has given his answer, by joining the SDP — just after one other party shot, his postal vote for the Shadow Cabinet elections!

Grant is well qualified for a leading role in the SDP not only by his political morals but also by his strong connections with right wing trade union leaders. He was front bench spokesperson on Employment, a former industrial correspondent of the Daily Express, and also responsible for producing the newsletter of the right wing Labour Solidarity faction.



Roy Hattersley



Audrey Wise

BL: NOW FIGHT NO-STRIKE CLAUSES!



THE eyes of the working class were on the BL strike two weeks ago. Coming at a crucial stage in the life of the Tory government—when Thatcher needed to ram home her 4% wage norm, push forward her anti-union offensive and establish her authority to govern for the second half of her term of office—the strike was destined to be a watershed for the trade union movement in Britain.

Edwardes' threat to sack all manual workers and liquidate the entire corporation clearly made it an issue which went far beyond wages.

To victimise 58,000 well organised workers whilst on an official strike on an annual wage review would have inflicted the biggest defeat for the trade union movement since the 1920s.

It was also clear that a defeat for BL workers on the 4% would be a heavy blow to every group of workers in the public and private sector facing a struggle over 4% wage offers.

Victorious

Coming at a time when there is already a concerted, coordinated and well financed war being carried out against the trade union movement, a victory for Edwardes would be another victory for the style of management of which Edwardes had been the pioneer for British industry.

It would strengthen the government in their ability to introduce Tebbit's anti-union laws and other measures against the working class.

If on the other hand, BL workers were victorious it could even have brought down the government and put an end to the Thatcher regime.

In the event the open and cynical betrayal by top trade union leaders of the militant three-day strike produced conundrums under which only some of these possibilities were realised.

The sell-out was certainly

a big victory for the Tory government. It has strengthened their hand on the 4%.

And anyone who watched the Queen's Speech 24 hours later should be under no illusion. It has lent confidence to the anti-union offensive.

But in BL itself the effect has been rather different. BL workers have returned to work angry that they have been betrayed again and that the 3.8% settlement has been foisted on them.

Confidence

But far from returning to work defeated, they have returned to work more militant. There are some particular factors which need to be taken into account to explain this.

The strike was the first-ever national strike in BL. In the past BL workers have always been successfully split and divided by the leaders at the top.

Now for the first time since BL forced in corporate bargaining three years ago, BL workers have seen and felt their own strength in action.

They drew confidence from the success and power of the strike which was total from the word go in all plants—with the exception of a couple of isolated found-

dries.

They were strengthened by the militancy and scale of the picketing—which reflected, and probably partly arose out of the experience of the steel strike last year.

There were 2,000 pickets on the gates at Cowley and almost as many at Longbridge. The Daily Telegraph described how "for three hours in Cowley the pickets controlled the streets."

It was an uplifting experience and in sharp contrast to recent history in BL where the workforce has been under constant attack and has always been denied the opportunity of a united response to management.

In 1974 Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon gave an undertaking to BL management to keep production going at all costs and stamp out strikes. Since then, there have been constant victimisations. I was victimised by BL in 1974 and remain non-recognised as a senior steward to this day.

Collaboration

Derek Robinson was victimised in 1979 and is out of the industry. And six stewards were victimised at Longbridge last year, accused of leading a riot following the sell-out of last year's wage

review.

Since 1974 there have been three years of "participation"—which successfully softened up the shop stewards movement and sucked most of the convenors into collaboration with management.

Then, after being weakened by that and by waves of voluntary redundancy the shop stewards' movement was faced with Edwardes' hard line management.

They had faced a full scale attack on everything from jobs to wages and conditions of work.

At the same time every wage review for the past 3 years has been sold out before any action could get off the ground—despite the labour force voting on each occasion for strike action.

The last three sell-outs caused widespread demoralisation. Workers saw the twisting and turning and devious moves at the top of the unions but never saw their own strength.

The difference this time was that the strike started, which is something quite different.

Workers saw not only their own strength but also that many of the old right wing arguments about the ineffectiveness of a BL strike in today's conditions were rubbish.

The most important thing to capitalism is the point of production. BL is

the point of production. When BL stops, the effects quickly spread outwards through the component suppliers to the engineering industry and beyond. Half of Midlands industry would quickly come to a halt.

BL workers also saw Edwardes and his hard line management in a state of panic. The day before the strike, leading mass occupations, management brought covered lorries into each of the 30 plants and moved out all confidential files.

They took them to a 'secret' destination which turned out to be the Gaydon experimental division where they planned to try to administer BL as a 'management in exile'.

Liquidate

In each plant everything was locked and keys taken away. Tax discs were taken off all vehicles.

It was obvious to all that Thatcher was panicking as well. A policy of "non-intervention" ended up with frantic meetings between the ministers and the unions.

The government was caught in the worst possible situation. Which ever way they moved seemed to lead to their resignation.

If they carried out the threat they had made, through Edwardes, to liquid-

ate BL in the event of a strike it would lead to an enormous political crisis with Midlands industry devastated. This would lead to industrial action, probably more occupations, and certainly riots on the streets.

Compensate

If on the other hand they conceded to BL workers, the 4% policy would be smashed. Their only hope was the treasury of the trade union leaders.

But after these experiences the return to work soon turned into militant action.

In Cowley, the Honda Acclaim track struck within hours of the return to work when a car body fell out of a hoist and management gave them 15 minutes to get the track running or be sent home.

All assembly workers at Longbridge struck two days later when management cut relief times to compensate for the 39 hour week and are still out.

But the fact that something positive could come out of the pay strike does not detract from the magnitude of the betrayal carried out by the top leadership.

In August they asked the shop floor what claim should be put in and received the answer £20 across the board. All unions adopted the

claim and the JNC put it to management. On receiving the reply 3.8% they recommended an all-out strike from November 1.

They called a senior stewards' meeting for October 19 and a series of mass meetings for October 16.

On the day before the mass meetings Edwardes issued his infamous letter threatening to sack anyone who went "on strike and liquidate any plant affected."

Despite this the result was a massive 8-1 vote for all-out strike action.

The resolution put to all the mass meetings was clear—demanding money on the basic rate—no juggling with the bonus—which had been the basis of last year's sell-out.

Manoeuvres

"In the absence of a substantial improvement in the amount of money offered on the grade rate—paid equally to each grade—we recommend industrial action to commence on 1 November 1981 to the Senior Stewards and members."

After the vote all unions except the EETPU made the strike official in advance. Even Terry Duffy was making public statements attacking BL management who he said had lost its "best friend".

Leyland ACTION

The Leyland Action Committee brought together militants from different BL factories to get the £20 claim adopted and then to help develop the strike. Now it will be working to draw out the lessons of the betrayal and organise to prevent repetitions.

Contact: Leyland Action Committee, 194 Dawlish Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham 29.



But inevitably as the deadline approached, and it became clearer to them that what was posed was a major political confrontation with the government which could well bring it down, the manoeuvres began.

And the manoeuvres were not just within BL. As with the steel strike last year, moves were being made to isolate the strike once it began in order to stop it spreading to other sections of workers and thus becoming a generalised strike against the government, which could quickly go outside the control of the leaders.

The NUM negotiations postponed further talks and Joe Gormley's attitude was summed up in the Telegraph of October 20.

"Mr Gormley, NUM president, said: 'Why should we always be in the forefront? Why should it be seen to be so urgent that we are always leading things?'"

He admitted that the British Leyland pay conflict was "one reason" why the next meeting on the miners' pay claim was not scheduled before November 11."

Accountable

Nor was there so much as a word from Arthur Scargill against this move. Five days before the strike deadline the JNC were called for last ditch talks with BL.

The danger bells were quickly ringing. They had talked about the possible consolidation of some of the bonus into the basic rate—a complete departure, without authority, from the strike resolution and the £20 claim.

Although the meeting ended in deadlock, dangerous seeds had been sown.

The need for a democratic and accountable JNC was once again painfully apparent.

After the deadlock, Edwardes appealed to Michael Foot as leader of the opposition. This resulted in a three hour meeting in a Commons Committee Room between Edwardes, Foot and Stan Gane, the shadow industry minister.

Architect

Foot claimed in the Daily Star the following week that the deal which was eventually accepted had been worked out by him at that meeting.

The Foot meeting led to a new initiative by ACAS, a supposedly "independent" body which is headed by Pat Lowry, until recently BL's Director of Personnel.

Lowry presided over my victimisation in 1974. He also devised the existing pay system in BL and has been the architect of repeated wage cuts over the last ten years which led to this year's militant strike decision.

Lowry made the move which was key to the eventual sell-out—the involvement of the General Secretaries of the eleven unions in BL.

They were called to a

meeting in Congress House at which Len Murray was invited to attend as an "observer".

The JNC were called to Congress House as well but were put into a separate room and ignored. Even the existing undemocratic and unrepresentative JNC which Lowry himself had created and relied upon in the past, was pushed to one side.

At first the General Secretaries told the JNC they would not be negotiating. Any negotiating, they said, would be done by the JNC. But 13 hours later, they emerged with a document which they said could not be altered and which, with the exception of Alex Kitson of the TGWU, they were recommending for acceptance.

Nairobi

Edwardes had got what he had always wanted—direct negotiations with the General Secretaries over the heads of the JNC. It is something which has far reaching implications for future negotiating procedures in BL.

It is something which has always been implicit in the Measured Day Work (MDW) system of payment. Those of us who fought against MDW in the late 60s and early 70s argued that it would quickly lead to corporate bargaining and that corporate bargaining would quickly put the power to negotiate into the hands of people increasingly remote from the shop floor.

First it would remove the shop stewards from the process and then the convenors. It would ultimately place all power in the hands of the General Secretaries.

We even argued at that time that ultimately MDW would put the power in the hands of the TUC, which is as remote from the shop floor as it is possible to get and still be a part of the trade union movement.

At their meeting with Edwardes the General Secretaries reached agreement less than one hour before the strike was due to start.

Murray (the "observer") along with Bayl and Chapple wanted to call off the strike and put the deal to fresh mass meetings the following day (Sunday).

The majority decided it was too late to call off the strike and called a convenors' meeting for Monday and fresh mass meetings for Tuesday.

The following day Duffy who had been in Nairobi all week, cut short his trip and dashed back to London to add his weight for a return to work.

He subsequently described it himself in an article in the News of the World of November 8:

"Last Saturday I heard the news of the breakthrough on the radio. The only plane back was a jumbo jet but it was packed full. British Airways found one cancellation and squeezed me aboard."

If I had missed the plane I would not have been back in Britain in time to make

that TV appeal on Monday night before the vote was taken."

He was calling for a return to work before he had even got off the plane.

But Duffy's role was no more treacherous than that of Alex Kitson who refused to recommend either way.

Kitson's stance was naturally presented by the media and interpreted by BL workers as tacit acceptance of the deal.

He was in clear breach of the TGWU Executive Committee policy, which is clearly to back any group of members prepared to take action against the 4% limit.

It was even in flat contradiction to an article he had himself written for the TGWU Record, which was published soon after the sell-out, saying the union would back any members prepared to take action against employers like Edwardes.

Monday's convenors' meeting voted overwhelmingly to recommend the rejection of the offer and the continuation of the strike.

It was an important decision which had been urged on by coachloads of strikers from the Cowley Assembly Plant who arrived to lobby the convenors and along with other strikers from Longbridge poured into the meeting hall. They eventually withdrew after appeals from Cowley Assembly Convenor Bob Fryer.

The convenors' decision was important, but in the event it was not enough to counter the effects of the General Secretaries' call for a return to work.

Every national newspaper carried a front page statement by Duffy and many workers were demoralised and felt they could not win if those at the top of the unions were against them.

Influence

The meetings voted 25,000 to 19,000 to accept the deal and return to work. Only in places like Cowley where the convenors gave a very strong lead could the effects of the General Secretaries be nullified.

The vote to accept at Longbridge was the most damaging. This was partly due to a very weak speech by Jack Adams.

Management appeared to expect to lose the vote. At Cowley they took the desperate step of sending the personnel managers to leaflet the mass meeting outside the gates of the sports field!

There they found themselves standing next to the Spartacists, also handing out leaflets.

In some plants where the vote had not been taken at the time when the Longbridge vote was announced, managers ran around shouting out the result in order to influence the vote.

At Llanelli they announced the result over the works PA just before the vote was taken.

Workers who voted to continue the action should not blame the plants who voted to accept. The key role remains that of the General Secretaries. They stabbed the strike in the

back. They must shoulder the responsibility. And that must be shared equally by the Communist Party members present—George Guy of the Sheet Metal Workers and Ben Rubner of FTAT.

Although at some mass meetings very full reports were given, it is still the case that few BL workers know just how dangerous the final settlement actually is.

At most mass meetings it was presented as a very marginal involvement over the original offer and therefore unacceptable.

The fact is that it is infinitely worse than the original rejected offer.

It is true that the £3.75 guaranteed bonus—which most people get anyway—and the £1 per week increase on premium rates might be seen as a slight monetary improvement; but that was not the guts of the document.

By far the most dangerous is a completely new element which was brought in. This calls for a new procedure document to be negotiated "with the aid of the TUC if necessary" by January 1.

This is actually presented in the deal as a concession to the unions, as part of the new 'reformed' management attitude which we were told would exist after the dispute. Duffy put it this way:

"The BL management is now offering a new era of cooperation. The workers are being offered a say, not only in dealing with industrial problems but also in the future decisions over management and how best to sell those they make."

BL workers knew how much Edwardes has been "reformed" as a result of the deal when they got back to work and management put the boot in.

But the new procedure models and how best to sell those they make."

Concession!

BL workers knew how much Edwardes has been "reformed" as a result of the deal when they got back to work and management put the boot in.

But the new procedure agreement called for in the deal is not an attitude it is a document. It is not a new document. It is well known. It is the same document which Edwardes has been trying to get in for the past year and which many of us feared would be attached as strings to this year's review. Now we have it presented as a concession!

The document is the result of discussions between BL and national officers in March this year, which produced a revised text from BL's (Pat Lowry's!) original draft.

At the first meeting of this wage round BL tried to introduce a commitment to discuss it after the review: it was rejected by the union.

It has been thrown out by the Combine Committee and by the TGWU Senior Stewards. In the AUEW the convenors were effectively prevented from taking a decision on it.

It is a very dangerous document indeed. It arose after the rejection of a previous BL document termed the Relationship Agreement, which contained among other things a legally binding no-strike clause.

The March document achieves the same objective in a slightly more subtle way. Its most dangerous provisions are these:

*A joint works committee in every plant which would be the final level of plant procedure.

*A new discipline procedure which gives the management the right to the summary dismissal of any worker who they consider has been guilty of gross industrial misconduct.

*It ends all full time facilities for convenors and senior stewards and requires them to go back onto their jobs and be released "as required". (Full time positions are crucial to the organisation in most car plants).

*It provides for a new JNC which would be entirely appointed by the Executive of the eleven unions and almost entirely composed of full time officials. No-one inside BL would have any say as to who negotiated for them.

*Most dangerous of all is the fact that it requires the new disputes procedure to become a part of each individual's contract of employment. This would mean workers would be regarded as having sacked themselves if they were in breach of procedure.

It is a no-strike clause under another name. If it is introduced it will be a very major setback for BL workers.

Fighting it however again means taking issue within our own unions since it is actually a logical extension of the "keep working" statement of Jack Jones and much more recent policy of the TGWU.

It is important to be

aware of this if the new procedure is to be stopped.

Early this year the TGWU commissioned Euro Finance, a Paris based firm of industrial consultants to produce a report on the problems and the future of BL.

One of its conclusions was that BL was not getting enough cooperation from the TGWU to keep production going.

Out of this report the TGWU commissioned its own document on the future of BL, ironically entitled "BL: the next decade" which is the same title as the Ryder Report in 1976.

The guts of the document is the section "The need for action" which says the following:

"There are five major actions which, when taken together, we see as being necessary conditions for BL's long term expansion."

*Drastic but selective controls over imports.

*Declared movement towards a full scale partnership.

*Substantial revitalisation of engineering resources.

*Continuity of physical output.

*Adequate facility and model investment."

"Continuity of physical output" is quite simply a no-strike clause. That document was submitted to Michael Edwardes as a proposal. It is not clear whether he has formally replied. It would in any case be unacceptable to Edwardes because it calls for the expansion of BL, which is hardly his policy.

Gullible

But Edwardes is bound to take advantage of a proposed ban on strikes.

The TGWU report illustrates exactly the kind of leadership problems BL workers face. New leaders are needed—not only in BL but in each of the individual unions as well.

Not only new leaders but also new policies. The problem with our leaders is not that they are the most gullible bunch ever to negotiate for a large section of workers (although you could make a good case for that), it is their politics.

They all fell for participation, whether they were members of the Communist Party or the Labour Party.

The only ones in the stewards' movement who fought participation throughout were the

Trotskyists and a few principled individuals.

It is the same issues involved now. The vast majority of our leaders are reformists, in other words they accept capitalism and want to reform it, and want to reform some of the excesses out of it.

It leads them to take into account the problems of capitalism and its economic crisis and to take into account BL and its profitability.

They are incapable of starting from the principles for which the trade union movement was built—to defend the interests of the working class.

The only people who can do that are those who see the necessity to end capitalism and establish socialism. They can start clearly from the interests of the working class and defend them at every stage. We should not be accepting what BL says when they claim they are bankrupt. Where has the money gone? What about the £100 million a year interest charges? Open the books! Fight for workers' control!

Default

Those in BL who became involved in the strike for the first time and saw clearly the betrayal of their leaders must now think about these issues. It is no good getting involved once a year on a wage review. There has to be a fight for democracy in the unions and a fight in union elections for those with the right policy and programme.

We have to get a democratic negotiating structure in BL. The Leyland Action Committee which has fought most consistently on these lines for a long period of time must be built and strengthened. We have to ensure that the new procedure document does not get through by default in six weeks' time.

We have a responsibility to see that every BL worker is fully informed about it. The Combine Committee must meet and organise a fight against it. Every branch and shop stewards' committee must mobilise against it.

Above all we must use the ferment in the class at the present time to build a new leadership and ensure that sell-outs such as the one we have just witnessed are not possible in the future.

By Alan Thornett

POLICE STEP UP HARASSMENT OF GAYS

In this week's contribution from the Labour Campaign for Gay Rights, Chris Beer continues his discussion of gays and the police.

LAST TIME we wrote about the more obvious forms of police attacks on lesbians and gay men, illustrated by extracts from The Report of the Working Party on Community/Police Relations in Lambeth. Because many of the things that heterosexual couples ordinarily do to express sexual desire or affection — holding hands or kissing in public, for example — are effectively if not specifically illegal for gay people, and because of other legal bars on male gay sexual behaviour (age of consent, etc), attention has been focused in the past exclusively on the reform of discriminatory laws.

Criminalise

The liberal argument is that the police are only doing their job: give gay men equality with heterosexuals and the police will leave us alone. Merely to do this, however, would leave other aspects of male gay sexual behaviour such as public cruising and cottaging (having sex in toilets) as illegal as they are now. Ultra-liberals therefore extend the reforms to allow consensual sex which may only be illegal if a member of the public, not the police, complains.

Reforms in these laws will certainly change the tactics of the police, but just as the changes in the sus law have not stopped the police attack on black people, so I believe that the simple reform in criminal sex law will not prevent the police attack on gays.

The form of their

Contact: Labour Campaign for Gay Rights, c/o 61A Bloom St., Manchester, M1 3LY.

approach is different from the way the police normally and more openly attack blacks, the working class,

trade unionists and, often less openly, women (see the Lambeth Report for analysis). It does however have a great deal in common with their approach to left-wing political groups.

Usually the object of the strategy with black people is to criminalise them and to tacitly encourage racist attacks. If all else fails, the police aim to keep blacks off the streets. Similarly, the police have reacted violently when women

acting together have taken the struggle against male dominance onto the streets: they have attacked the National Lesbian Conference, the Reclaim the Night demonstrators, and the NAC women's parliamentary lobby with greater physical force per person than most male demonstrators have ever encountered.

But they cannot adopt these tactics so easily in the case of gays and political activists, because on the streets and even in the

home they cannot be visually identified as being part of these groups.

Suspicion

The police therefore have to rely heavily on gathering what information they can about sexual orientation or political activities. And here the similarity ends. For all too often gay people are not politically active, not even self-organised. For many, only their sexuality is subversive.

But that apparently is

sufficient for the police to reach for their computer consoles.

What they want to know is if a person is 'queer'. Once they form their opinion — or suspicion — then it is recorded and as far as we know it is never deleted, regardless even of its accuracy.

The Home Office has confirmed that the records of those prosecuted for gay 'offences' are not erased from Police National Computer Bureau records even if individuals are found not guilty, regardless of how long ago the case occurred or how flimsy the evidence. So that is one way of gathering information.

'Eliminate'

A second way is to use a reasonably serious crime — the police particularly favour murder for this purpose — as a pretext for a 'fishing expedition'. The police approach is to connect the crime with gay sexuality in some way and get gay people to 'eliminate' themselves — either by coming forward voluntarily to assist the police by catching the person concerned or by the police rounding up gay people, getting them to make statements, and recording the contents of address books.

Thus recently the police descended — for one night only, apparently — on Putney Townpath (a late-night open-air venue in pleasant riverside surroundings where men meet to have sex with each other) in order, they said, to question people about Vishal Helvota, the eight year old boy who went missing in July.

Immunity

Now there has been absolutely no suggestion anywhere that Vishal may have been abducted for sexual motives. Much more important is that if the police seriously thought this a possibility, then their response has been unbelievably superficial and slapdash (as of course it was in the case of the 'Yorkshire Ripper') in failing to seek the willing co-operation of the gay community.

A single raid — exciting as it may have been for the police involved — is unlikely to turn up anything to do with the case. It is much more likely that they used it as an excuse to build up their dossiers of 'known homosexuals'.

You may think this fear is exaggerated. But our

experience has been that wherever the police can compile any evidence to convict anyone of a gay 'offence' then they will do so. There is no immunity.

Notorious police adventures of this type have taken place for example in Cornwall and a number of cities. For this reason all gay organisations now advise all lesbians and gay men not to go direct to the police but to contact an intermediary such as Gay Switchboard or Gay Legal Advice who will convey the relevant information without revealing the individual's identity.

The third way the police gather information is simply by taking down the numberplate details of cars parked outside gay pubs or other meeting places. In one case the Thames Valley police compiled details of those attending the Windsor group of the Campaign for Homosexual Equality — hardly the most radical organisation in the country. A quick check with the Department of Transport's computer at Swansea would give further names to their list of gays (even if — as the computer lists only owners — they are inaccurate).

Preparation?

So there seems no doubt that the police are gathering a good deal of information on those they think are gay. It is difficult to think of any legitimate reason for this. It could be that an intensified form of the current criminalising attempts is planned — a 'known homosexual' (i.e. someone who had been to a gay pub once) must have been looking for sex in a public toilet, mustn't he?

Or is there a connection with the views of the senior Lambeth policeman who told one of the Enquiry's witnesses that they were biding their time until the revolution — the right-wing revolution?

Gay people were second only to Jews in the number of victims of the Nazi holocaust. Our history has taught us to suspect the kind of activities the police forces of England, Wales and Scotland now carry out, every day, week in and week out.

Is this just the police keeping their conviction rate as high as possible by picking off easy victims? Or is it a preparation for a massive assault on gay men and lesbians?

[* This article does not necessarily represent the views of LCGR].



Pickets and defendants outside Bow St. Magistrates Court, August 1980. The protest was in support of those arrested by the police when they broke up the 1980 Gay Pride March in London. At this picket several more gay people were arrested by the police

Unemployment can kill!

by LES HEARN



MORE information is coming out about the hidden costs of unemployment in terms of poor health and premature death.

One American professor estimates that for an increase in unemployment of one million over a period of five years there could be 50,000 additional deaths and 60,000 more cases of mental illness, not to mention other ailments such as ulcers.

His research also shows that unemployment will kill more people in Scotland where poverty is worse and unemployment has been higher for longer, leaving the average Scot with worse health than the average English person.

But how does unemployment kill? Results from research into the causes of coronary heart disease (CHD) were analysed recently in New Scientist.

Traditionally, bodily factors such as high blood pressure, cigarette smoking and high levels of cholesterol in the blood, have been con-

sidered when looking at a person's risk of heart disease.

However, these only explain about half the new cases of heart disease each year. So now, psychological and social factors are being considered as well. Experiments in which healthy animals are exposed to unavoidable stresses such as overcrowding or repeated electric shocks show that the heart muscle becomes damaged.

A final burst of anger, excitement, joy or fear can then cause the already damaged heart muscles to go into fibrillation—instead of beating strongly to pump the blood around the body the heart just flutters ineffectually. This is what happens in a human heart attack.

Another finding in animal experiments is that in animals with artificially caused CHD, putting them in an unpleasant environment can cause upset to the

heart's natural rhythm—this is called arrhythmia, and can develop into fibrillation, i.e. a heart attack.

This is similar to the way that many other human heart attacks happen. Remove the unpleasant environment and the arrhythmia disappears.

So, stressful situations can damage the heart in the first place and then serve to hasten a heart attack.

How does this happen? One way is through the release of adrenalin into the blood stream. Adrenalin prepares the body for 'fight or flight', sending blood to the muscles and mobilising extra sources of energy, mainly fat.

This is turned into fatty acids (not as bad as it sounds!) and then build up to produce energy.

In a 'natural' environment there wouldn't be a lot of adrenalin in the blood all the time. But in modern society people are often

excited, angry or stressed for hours, days, weeks at a time.

In these conditions adrenalin can damage the heart muscle. Worse, the excitement, anger, stress does not lead to activity—you can't thump the boss or run around screaming if you want your job or to stay out of hospital.

The fatty acids just circulate in the blood and aren't used up for energy.

This can cause arrhythmia and blockage of coronary arteries. So it is regular situations of conflict and arousal that can kill people through CHD.

That just about sums up working class life, with low pay, bad conditions, boring unpleasant work, excessive overtime and poor housing.

These stresses may be worse for women, coping as well with the demands of

children and men (one result is the increase in smoking by women).

Sustained unpleasant feelings lead to anxiety, depression, and . . . heart disease.

Some humans have behaviour patterns which encourage CHD. American doctors are helping people like this who have had heart attacks to change their behaviour patterns and reduce their adrenalin levels (so they don't have another attack).

That's all right for middle class Americans, but what about working class people?

Nuclear Bum Warning.

Radioactive bird droppings have been found near the Windscale nuclear power plant with up to 8 times the natural level of radioactivity. If you're walking in that area, take a broom!

THE TRANSITIONAL PROGRAMME FOR SOCIALIST REVOLUTION
LEON TROTSKY

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

The fight for workers' control

Marxism and the Polish revolution

John Lister continues his series on Poland

THE CALL for workers' control of production is now echoing throughout the ranks of Poland's new labour movement Solidarnosc. Yet few, if any, of the leaders of Solidarnosc recognise the implications of that demand or its potential power.

Ever since the development of the agitation of the Bolsheviks under Lenin's leadership at the beginning of the century, the call for workers' control has represented a political challenge to the existing controllers of industry.

Context

That challenge is equally powerful whether the controllers be capitalists and bankers (as in Britain) or whether control is in the hands of a bureaucratised Stalinist state (as in Poland).

In either case fighting for workers' control is part of the fight to make the working class conscious of its own strength and its ability to take industry into its own hands.

And it is part of the struggle to convince not simply the most militant minority but also far broader layers of workers that their problems cannot be resolved within the existing social and economic framework.

It is for this reason that the slogan of "workers' control" has also been so chronically misused and misrepresented by leaders and tendencies who in practice oppose revolutionary politics, and wish merely to reform the conditions of the working class within the context of capitalism.

Thus in the recent past the British Communist Party for instance has described the various schemes of "worker participation" in industry as forms of "workers' control"—whereas in reality they offer only a structure for more comprehensive collaboration between shop stewards and management against the demands of the workers on the shopfloor.

Argued

It is the very essence of workers' control, on the other hand, that the organised power of workers on the shop floor be pitted against, and be made to predominate over the power and authority of management and the owners of industry.

"Workers control through factory councils is conceivable only on the basis of sharp class struggle, not collaboration." (Trotsky).

As Lenin argued in July 1917:

"What we do suggest is workers' control which should develop into complete regulation of production and distribution by the workers, into nationwide organisation, etc... Is commercial secrecy to be left intact? Yes or no? Are the workers to be enabled to exercise control? Yes or no? ... Not regulation of and control over workers by

the capitalist class, but vice versa..." (Collected Works, vol 25, pp 44-45).

Elitist

The Bolsheviks used the agitation for workers' control of production as a central part of their mobilisation of the working class in the period up to and following the October 1917 revolution. Indeed important sections of industry were only nationalised in 1918, after a period of workers' control. Lenin was arguing as late as April 1918 that:

"Until workers control has become a fact, until the advanced workers have organised and carried out a victorious and ruthless crusade against the violators of this control, or against those who are careless in matters of control, it will be impossible to pass from the first step, from workers' control, to the second step towards socialism, to pass on to workers' regulation of production." (Collected Works, Vol. 27, pp.254-5).

Such arguments shot down completely those who argue that the Bolshevik leaders had a haughty or elitist attitude in the carrying through of the Russian Revolution; everything was done to mobilise, organise and raise the consciousness of the Russian workers to their tasks in the new Soviet workers' state.

Dynamics

Such concerns were of course jettisoned by the bureaucratic leaders who emerged under the leadership of Joseph Stalin to exploit the difficulties of the isolated revolution and consolidate their grip on the State apparatus in the mid 1920s.

But the lessons of these early struggles by the Bolshevik movement live on in the struggle of Trotsky and the Left Opposition, and in the programmatic positions which laid the basis for the Trotskyist Fourth International.

Trotsky in the pamphlet Workers Control of Production, for instance, spelled out in crystal-clear terms the dynamics of the struggle for control:

"What regime corresponds to workers' control of production? It is obvious that power is not yet in the hands of the workers. Otherwise we would have not workers' control of production, but the control of production by the workers' state, as an introduction to the regime of state production on the foundation of nationalisation. What we are talking about is workers' control under the capitalist regime, under the power of the bourgeoisie. However, a bourgeoisie that feels it is firmly in the saddle will never tolerate dual power in its enterprises. Workers' control, consequently, can be carried out only under conditions of an abrupt

change in the relationship of forces unfavourable to the bourgeoisie and its state. Control can be imposed only by force upon the bourgeoisie, by a proletariat on the road to the moment of taking power from them and then also the ownership of the means of production.

Thus the regime of workers' control, a provisional, transitional regime by its very essence, can correspond only to the period of the convulsing of the bourgeois state. The proletarian revolution in the fullest sense of the word.

If the bourgeois is already no longer the master, that is not entirely the master, in his factory, then it follows that he is also not completely the master in his state. This means that the regime of dual power in the factories corresponds to the regime of dual power in the state."

(The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany, Pathfinder, p. 78).

Veto

Such conclusions are equally valid in the context of a militant workers' movement struggling against the dictatorial rule of a ruling Stalinist bureaucracy.

The Solidarnosc movement has seen workers on the shopfloor successfully organising not only to compel their management to implement reforms in working conditions, but even to force the removal of managers. This kind of action has in many cases developed still further into successful struggles to oust city police chiefs and state administrators, and to veto price increases proposed by central government.

The rise of "dual power" in Polish workplaces—mushrooming outwards from the strike committees set up in the occupied Gdansk shipyards and Baltic ports last year—has thus flowed directly over into a situation of "dual power" in the state.

Extinction

Unlike the rulers of capitalist states, however, Poland's bureaucratic rulers depend for their power and privilege not upon ownership of the means of production, but upon their monopoly hold on the levers of control over the nationalised economy.

For them the emergence of workers control brings the immediate threat of the extinction of their position.

Yet the leaders of Solidarnosc, seeking in the main simply to press for a package of social and economic reforms, see overthrowing the bureaucracy as impossible.

The struggle for demands to develop systematic workers' control in Poland is therefore lop-sided and incomplete.

As Trotsky pointed out in the context of the fight for political revolution in the Soviet Union, a key element

in this struggle should be the demand for:

"A revision of the planned economy from top to bottom in the interests of producers and consumers! Factory committees should be returned the right to control production. A democratically organised consumers' cooperative should control the quality and price of products."

(Transitional Programme) Such changes in the administration of the economy require for their implementation a fight to open up the books of the State-run industries, of the state banks, and of the financial dealings with imperialist governments, firms and bankers, to inspection by elected representatives of Polish workers.

The information uncovered would reveal the corruption, the incompetence, waste and gross inefficiency of the Stalinist bureaucrats in thirty years of dictatorial rule.

Rigid

It would demonstrate to those Polish workers who currently lack any understanding of the issues, the extent to which the Western banks have been allowed by the bureaucrats to cream profits from the Polish economy through a proliferation of loans and debts.

Already in Poland an ad-hoc grouping, calling itself

the Siec (Network) has drawn together representatives from 18 key workplaces in order to campaign for self-management. The Siec relies heavily on the involvement of technicians and engineers who are walled off from any hope of promotion or influence in their industries by the rigid bureaucratic control at the top.

Political

Such experts are vital in the development of the necessary proposals to "revise the planned economy". Trotsky in the Transitional Programme stresses the need for factory committees to involve "specialists sincerely devoted to the people, accountants, statisticians, engineers, scientists, etc." in the project of formulating a workers' plan.

"The working out of even the most elementary economic plan—from the point of view of the exploited, not the exploiters—is impossible without workers' control, that is without the penetration of the workers' eye into all open and concealed springs of the (capitalist) economy. Committees representing individual business enterprises should meet at conference to choose corresponding committees of trusts, whole branches of industry, economic regions and finally of national industry as a whole. Thus workers' con-

trol becomes a school for planned economy. On the basis of the experience of control the proletariat will prepare itself for direct management of nationalised industry when the hour for that eventuality strikes."

(Transitional Programme) No such conscious development has as yet taken place: indeed Walesa and the majority "moderate" leaders of Solidarnosc have steered well clear of any such fundamental challenge to the power of the bureaucracy.

A fight to extend workers' control in this way is one contribution a Trotskyist party could make in the current struggle.

At the same time by taking militant action to press such demands as the release of political prisoners, the removal of hated local managers and state bureaucrats, and an end to state censorship, the Polish workers have embarked upon a political challenge to the Stalinist regime, without fully organising themselves for the task in a system of local and regional workers' councils.

Focus

Solidarnosc's development as a trade union-cum-social movement of Polish workers has massively increased its membership—but to a certain extent diluted the potential power

of the initial strike committees in Gdansk as decision-making bodies of delegates from a wide range of workplaces.

Such workers' councils must be built to focus and extend the necessary challenge to the Stalinist rulers.

And, by the same token, steps are needed to defend workers in struggle against the growing threat of violent repression from the forces of the state. Factory committees and local workers' councils must organise their own self-defence groups and centralise these in the formation of a workers' militia to defend the working class districts against Stalinist police/military violence.

Upsurge

Workers control therefore, as a system of dual power in the factory and in the state, already forms the starting point for the next period of revolutionary struggle in Poland.

But the failure of the new leadership thrown forward by the upsurge of the Polish workers to grasp the possibilities and dangers implicit in this situation underlines the necessity for a conscious Marxist leadership.

Next week's concluding article will look at this question in the context of an examination of the strengths and weaknesses of Solidarnosc.



Letters

Implications of the 'Downs Syndrome' case

I THINK it was a very serious omission that Socialist Organiser 61 last week had no article on the outcome of the trial of Dr Arthur.

Though the case centred around the consultant being charged first with murder then a lesser charge of attempted murder, if he had been found guilty this would have had profound implications for the right of women to make a fundamental choice about their lives and their children's.

This trial was the first of its kind: yet another attempt by the state to further oppress women. The attack up till now has centred more on curtailing abortion rights. But this case comes at a time when women are being encouraged to see

their role in terms of working in the home, caring and maintaining the family, often having little option with the government's attacks on nursery facilities and the high rate of unemployment.

Tragedy

Much of the trial centred around fine legal distinctions, and the choice which is open to doctors in such cases whether to actively intervene with medical care, or withhold medical intervention without which a baby would not survive (as in the case of baby Alexandra who was also suffering from Down's Syndrome, where the courts intervened to order such an operation against the wishes of the parents).

But as was taken up in a Panorama programme, different doctors have different ideas about this, and what treatment if any should be given once it has been decided that the baby should be allowed to die. This seemed to be the crux of the case against Dr Arthur: that by giving a drug, in his opinion to alleviate suffering, he had caused the death of the baby. This should be a matter between the parents and the doctor: and surely no-one would underestimate the tragedy of having to face this situation.

Prosecution

Because women have to cope with most of the burden of living with a handicapped child — in a

society which doesn't provide much in the way of long-term or even short-term facilities to help either the child or to relieve the pressures of coping — the decision must be theirs.

A lot of the media coverage was very biased in presenting handicaps as 'slight abnormalities' where children as they grow older are able to play some part in society. But Panorama did go some way to redress the balance, showing the other end of the scale: institutions (of which there are very few) which care for handicapped people who are unable to respond to any stimulus, may be blind, doubly incontinent, etc.

We find ourselves in the position now that many new born babies can be kept

alive due to the developments of medical technology; but doctors and parents have had to make some sort of decision about the quality of life, taking into account the inadequacies of back-up care.

Organisations like Life only make it harder for women faced with this sort of dilemma, as doctors will be reluctant to become involved in carrying out their wishes if they are liable to prosecution.

It is a great relief to many

that the outcome of this trial was not guilty and 30 other cases have been dropped by the DPP. But there are still many women whose doctors do not allow them any choice, and a society that does very little to help but builds a myth around a woman's fulfilment in the home and caring for others less fortunate.

If Socialist Organiser is serious about the struggle for ending women's oppression in the home and

at work, and drawing women into this fight, then the paper must take up these sorts of issues immediately they arise. Until women are given the opportunity of seeing the possibilities of what life could be like if there were equality in their roles in life, and fighting for it, then they will be confined to the role which society dictates.

KATH MUNBY, Oxford.

LCC Conference EVADING THE KEY ISSUES



Writeback to
Socialist Organiser
28, Middle Lane
London N8



Workers and students take on the police during the May 1968 French General Strike which almost toppled the government of De Gaulle.

LAST WEEK'S article on the AGM of the Labour Coordinating Committee appeared appropriately on the same spread of pages as the continuing debate on the strategy now for the Left in the Labour Party. But, unfortunately, by confining itself simply to recording the events of the meeting, the article failed to bring out what was important for the strategy debate.

Retreat

The fact is that Socialist Organiser supporters put forward resolutions and amendments on a variety of important issues — the constitutional struggle, the deputy leadership contest, the block vote and the constituency party vote in conferences, trade union democracy, the Rank and File Mobilising Committee and local government strategy — and we lost all of them. More importantly, the division was about the same on all the important issues.

In addition, Socialist Organiser supporters did not do well in the elections to the LCC Executive — John Bloxam, who did best, came in 27th in the field.

Of course, the AGM was very small — according to the article, 80 people — and therefore not very representative. Also, being held in Glasgow, it naturally had a disproportionately large Scottish contingent — and the Scottish LCC is both unusually cohesive and, as we have seen in the past, anti-Trotskyist.

Still, some general conclusions can be drawn.

Firstly, while some militants are moving our way under the impact of the Tories' offensive, the organised left reformists are not. In fact, although

they disguise their retreat with left-sounding phrases, these ideologically committed left reformists are moving to the right.

As part of this movement to the right, there is an increasing desire on the part of these people to demarcate themselves clearly from what they see as the revolutionary left. While Scottish LCC chairperson George Galloway did say: "In the morning they'll come for Militant and Socialist Organiser, and in the afternoon they'll come for the LCC", the hostility to any organisational connection with the far left through the RFMC was worrying.

Another striking feature of the AGM was the contradictory position adopted by the majority on the question of fighting on constitutional issues. On the one hand they argued for a lower profile on these issues (and really the talk about 'extra-parliamentary activity' serves only to cover this retreat with left wing phrases); on the other hand they argued for taking up the fight to upgrade the constituency vote at conference relative to that of the trade unions.

Struggle

Why the apparent contradiction? Because, I think, the deeply bureaucratic traditions of the Labour Left mean that they see the fight against the trade union bureaucrats as being a constitutional one, not one based on the struggle inside the unions for trade union democracy.

The majority at the AGM also evaded key issues of struggle by remitting the motion on local government strategy.

JAMES DAVIES, Hackney

Why I oppose call for a General Strike

DESPITE the unfortunate heading Socialist Organiser gave to my letter on the general strike slogan and its cutting by the editors, may I defend the letter from Mick Liggins' reply (Socialist Organiser, 8 October).

Mick wonders if I want a general strike at all. He goes on to say that a general strike does not mean dual power or anything, and attempts to use Trotsky's writings on the situation in France during 1934-38 to prove this.

The comrade adds that we can't wait for the perfect moment to raise the demand. The working class, he says, is not in retreat; it is being held back by a treacherous bureaucracy and

because of the crisis and events in the Labour Party they have been educated.

The demand he concludes is particularly relevant in the light of events at BL.

It is quite true that those workers with good organisation, a tradition of struggle and in the front line against the Tories (like at Rolls Royce) feel a great reaction to Thatcherism. They feel that militant action should be taken. Sometimes they express this feeling by chanting for a general strike at marches like the recent one in Blackpool.

Demoralisation

But do those workers understand precisely what a

general strike is? Furthermore, is there a generalised feeling in the working class to consciously enter into what would be a struggle for state power?

At my trades council I shall be arguing for assistance to be given to those workers confronting the 4%. I will also argue that any strikes be agreed, but this is not the same as calling on the TUC to lead a "general strike".

A general strike differs from a national stoppage. An indefinite general strike, even if entered into for limited demands (like in 1926), would raise two governments in the land.

On the one hand the government of the ruling class, on the other that of the working class. One would have to give way.

If it was the ruling class that gave way, we could advance towards socialism. If the workers gave way, it may, as Mick Liggins says, increase the "self-confidence and consciousness" of the workers. It could equally destroy the organisations of the working class, lead to confusion and demoralisation, or even the triumph of reaction (like in Italy in the 1920s).

Comparison

It all depends on what political conclusions the working class learns from the experience. What did they learn after 1926?

One thing is certain — any

comparison with Britain in 1981, and the period in France prior to the election of Leon Blum's Popular Front government is just not on.

Of course we objectively need a general strike! Mick is right in inferring that if you don't call for something it will never happen. The question is whether or not it is tactically correct to pose this ultimate demand at the moment.

Dangerous

Is the working class as a whole capable of measuring up to the political tasks involved by a general strike — particularly under its present leadership?

BL workers look certain of breaking the 4%, but what about the weaker sections of the working class? Many workers would see the demand for a general strike as irrelevant, or would mistake its significance.

Comrade Liggins believes that the prerequisites for a general strike exist as capitalism "has outlived its usefulness" and the "working class has been educated through developments in the Labour Party".

International capitalism outlived its usefulness over 100 years ago. Should we have been calling for a general strike ever since?

As for developments in the Labour Party, these have educated rank and file members, who, as the crisis mounts have understandably moved leftwards in advance of the bulk of the working class.

But Mick Liggins says "the working class" has been educated.

There can be no doubt

that politically "the working class" is to the right of constituency activists. Look at the loss of working class votes from Labour to the SDP in Warrington.

The main thing absent from Mick's reply is its failure to respond to my criticism of the paper calling on the TUC to declare a general strike. I can only repeat my view that as the existing leadership is a waste of time, to wish to place the future of the working class in the TUC's hands is highly dangerous.

Comrade Liggins says that the paper's demand for a general strike is taken "from our dialogue with the masses". At its very best the Socialist Organiser Alliance can be called an interventionist group which in certain situations is able to get a hearing from sections of workers.

To believe that you have a "dialogue with the masses" is self deception.

Irresponsible

At the end of Mick's reply we witness a collapse into the age-old position of believing that it is just the treacherous bureaucracy which stands in our way rather than the reformist consciousness of the working class as a whole.

In any case if the time is ripe to call for a general strike like the editorial of September 24 says, why did this call to battle stations disappear from sight for the next four issues?

This is highly irresponsible and means that you don't even take the demand seriously yourself.

Fraternally,
V. O'Brien
Liverpool 2

NO LECTURES!

WHILE Linda Mouldsdales letter attacking a religious leaflet handed out on the CND demonstration packed a punch, the heavy-handed, lecturing reply to it from Paul Barker seemed to want to soft-peddle Marxists' opposition to religion.

We must of course understand that lots of people are religious, and understand why this is. But at the same time we should take opportunities to expose the folly of religious ideology, as Linda Mouldsdales did quite well.

Hundreds of millions are

bullied and intimidated by the Church into beliefs that stunt and cripple their lives. Let's do what we can to enlighten them!

HARRY PILKINGTON,
London.

Shorter!

Letters are getting longer and longer. Many weeks, we can't get them all in. So we're asking readers to keep to 400 words in future — and warning that we may have to cut longer letters.

Review

America's moral majority'

'The moral majority' (ITV, 3rd November), narrated by David Frost, was a disturbing documentary which outlined the evangelical revival in America — apparently growing at a phenomenal rate (A present mailing list includes 4,500,000 subscribers).

It was disturbing because this movement represents a new strand of reaction which complements Reagan's policies. It was particularly alarming because of their attitude towards women.

Institution

According to the fundamentalists no-one is a person in their own right. We are merely vessels for 'God's will'. The traditional

family (i.e. the father out at work and the mother at home raising children that are totally answerable to their parents' demands and expectations) is seen as the most important institution in life, and the state should therefore 'interfere' as little as possible.

Pillars

The logical follow-on from this, of course, is that abortion is totally immoral because it takes away 'God-given' life; that promiscuity is the result of the pill; that homosexuality is a disease to be stamped out; and that women should stay at home to produce good, clean-living upright pillars of American society.

This movement is pre-



dominantly white and middle class, and it has substantial financial backing to buy air time on tele-

vision and radio and spread its message.

Legitimised

One supporter, when challenged by Frost about the similarities between the new evangelical movement and the Muslim fundamentalists in Iran, said that the difference was that he in no way sought political power or office but was merely a 'humble soldier of God'. This however, does not explain the wheeling and dealing behind the scenes in Washington, one result of which is a 'Christian' blacklist of Senators and Representatives.

These fundamentalists believe that excessive public spending is morally wrong because it causes inflation which adversely affect the poor. This kind of

ideology reinforces Reagan's monetarist policy, which seeks to mutilate welfare services and let the weakest go to the wall, in the drive to reverse capitalism's falling rate of profit.

Forcing women to go back into the home through cuts in the public services to perform the same tasks but for no pay, is central to this programme (as in this country) but is now further legitimised by this new wave of religion, which preaches the removal of every right that American women have fought for over many years.

Ignorance

This attempt to turn the clock back is the result of economic decline coupled with fear and ignorance. It

provides a seemingly simple answer to society's 'ills' — i.e. to buckle down and accept your lot (which is all very well if you're white and middle class).

Evangelical

The belief that we should all sit back and accept the working of 'God's will' is a ludicrous concept for the working class, particularly working class women who are bearing the brunt of unemployment and low wages both here and in the US.

This evangelical revival should be exposed for the backward and reactionary force that it is and must be opposed with demands which will take the working class forward, rather than being driven back into the dark ages.

KAREN HARRIS

Two cases for Open the exhibition!

From the CPSA Bulletin of the British Library

UNLESS you work at the British Museum and happen to pass through the farthest reaches of the King's Library on your way to or from an office, you probably won't know that a small, two case exhibition of material from Solidarity, the Polish workers' union, is currently on display there. The reason you won't know about it is that Sir Harry Hockway has ruled that the exhibition should not receive any publicity.

It falls to CPSA, therefore, to inform the world that an exhibition entitled 'Solidarity/Solidarnosc (the latter is Polish for the former), can currently be found in the King's Library between the Campion exhibition and the Philatelic display.

It was originally intended to go into a case right in the middle of the King's Library but that would have been right in the middle of a Hungarian exhibition and the Hungarians might have been embarrassed. So now it has been tucked safely away where very few people at all will find it.

The exhibition consists of newspapers and pamphlets published by Solidarity over the past year.

Even though most of us cannot read Polish, it is still useful material for people in the West to actually see.

Prison

It shows how Solidarity conduct their everyday struggle and communicate with workers in a country where the official press and media are rigidly controlled by the State.

The exhibition also helps to illustrate that Solidarity is, before anything else, a

militant trade union, dependent on strong organisation and solidarity with a small 's' to achieve its advances.

One of the great hypocrisies of the past year has been that committed by the Western press and media in praising and encouraging Solidarity, whilst unremittingly attacking and slandering trade unions and trade union organisation in their own countries.

They would have howled with rage if Lech Walesa and the executive committee of Solidarity had been led away to prison in chains, yet they shed no tears when that happened to some of the

striking US air traffic controllers this summer.

Solidarity needs support from trade unions and trade union members in the West, not from the enemies of trade unionism—not from those who would be the first to condemn Solidarity if they were agitating and striking against a Capitalist government.

Craven

As for Sir Harry's ruling, what is the point of mounting an exhibition in the first place if you're not going to tell people it exists? Perhaps Sir Harry wants the Library to remain 'above politics'. But surely a straightforward 'neutral' way of advertising the exhibition could be found. Perhaps he's worried in case the Russians find out? But if they do send the tanks into Poland, it will hardly be because of a small exhibition in the British Library.

Perhaps he doesn't want people to know that one of Solidarity's principal demands is the right to hire and fire their own managers? Ideas like that can spread!

Management should stop behaving in such a craven manner and publicise the exhibition. If they won't, others will.

goodie. Vintage Books, New York); P. Kinnersley, The Hazards of Work—How to Fight Them, Pluto Press. KATHY SHERLOCK

Catch up on Health & Safety laws

SINCE the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974, which made employers responsible for safety in the workplace, and required the appointment of workplace safety reps from amongst the workforce, there has been a plethora of booklets offering guidance and theory about workplace hazards. (Compare the review of 'Office Workers' Survival Handbook' in Socialist Organiser some weeks ago).

This booklet is largely a guide to the legal maze which will confront the workplace safety rep in the form of Regulations, Codes of Practice, Guidance Notes and the like. It sets out simply and clearly the rights of a safety rep to inspect, the kind of inspections to make, and how to keep records, how to cope with a legal inquiry into accidents etc. as well as giving a brief run-down on some of the commoner hazards.

Toxic

The booklet is intended to supplement training courses, but is useful in its own right, especially for providing a useful entry into more specialised literature on specific areas of interest.

One of the advantages of this booklet is that it does recognise the fact that employers may not always be too keen to implement the Health and Safety at

'Hazard Spotting — a Guide for Safety Reps', published by the Labour Research Department, 78 Blackfriars Rd, London SE1 8HF, price 60p.

Work Act and may resist attempts by safety reps, for example, to make more than the legal minimum of inspections, to follow up workers' complaints, to take photos of accidents or samples of suspected toxic substances, or even to have an office to work from.

The booklet frequently suggests that agreements will need to be "negotiated" with management on these kinds of things, leaving it up to the imagination of the reader to interpret the word "negotiate" as they wish. But the book does not offer any helpful suggestions about how to negotiate with the kind of employer that doesn't see any particular reason to bother with safety reps or who have "never heard of the Health and Safety at Work Act" or who employ some management stooge as the rep.

Nor does the book point out that safety legislation always lags behind experience, particularly in relation to toxic substances—so that many people have to become ill, have miscarriages, become sterile or die before the toxicity of a substance is recognised.

Obviously, problems like that are outside the scope of this short booklet, but it is still a useful handbook to have, not just for the workplace rep, but for any workers who may be concerned about safety in their workplaces or who do not have a safety rep.

Goodie

Further reading list: Women's Health at Risk, TUC, 35p. N. McDonald and M. Doyle, The Stresses of Work: A. LeServe and others. Biological Hazards, the Hidden Threat: A. LeServe and others. Chemicals, Work and Cancer: These three all published by the Workers' Educational Association. Also in this series: Radiation, Noise and Vibration—price £1.40.

J.M. Stellman and S.M. Daum, Work is Dangerous to Your Health, (oldie but

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Industrial News

Scotts restart Doncaster picketing

by John McIlroy

"The Laurence Scott workers have given the finest example in the land of fighting for jobs. The reason we have had to struggle on for seven months is because of the people who have dragged us back: the right wing leaders of our trade unions. What an experience. It's like being kissed on both cheeks by the Mafia."

With these words Convenor Dennis Barry introduced the Laurence Scott Solidarity Conference in Manchester on Saturday.

He sounded an important theme that ran right through the day: the role played by the trade union leaders as a group in confusing and holding back genuine attempts by workers to struggle against the employers backed by the Tory government.

As Bernard Connolly (BSC South Yorks Craft EETPU) later commented: "... our leaders are inadequate, inept, and in league."

The AUEW executive's view on union democracy were encapsulated said Dennis Barry, in Terry Duffy's statement to one of the LSE stewards when the strikers sat in at the union headquarters in Peckham Road.

"Listen, boy, I'll tell you what democracy is... doing exactly what I tell you."

Encouraging

Whilst the strikers will continue to prosecute their fight within the union machine they now see that if the dispute is to be carried forward it is essential to take it into the lair of Mining Supplies boss Arthur Snipe in Doncaster.

The Joint Shop Stewards Committee decided last week to reimpose picketing.

They are calling on all trade unionists to join them, particularly for mass pickets every Monday, and are intensifying pressure for blacking of all Mining Supplies products.

An encouraging sign of changing times was the presence on the platform of three local Labour Party MPs and local party leader Graham Stringer. (There were however all too few constituency activists present).

Charles Morris pointed out the growing pressures to fight for jobs.

Unemployment in Greater Manchester had soared from 90,000 in July 1979 to 163,000 in July 1981.

Collusion

He raised the question of breach of Civil Aviation Authority regulations by the helicopters which had snatched submarine motors from the Openshaw plant and deplored the role of the bailiffs who heavily armed, evicted the workers from the plant in the dead of night last August.

Whilst Morris has played a valuable role in publicising the dispute he obviously hasn't any strategy for winning this or similar struggles apart from "injustice propaganda" and parliamentary pressure, both likely to be ineffectual.

A more realistic note was sounded by Ken Eastham: "The Tories openly scoff when we take up unemployment in the House. The only way to take on the Tories is in the street and in the factory."

This was echoed by Michael Meacher: "We can't wait 2½ years for the next election. We need action now. Resistance can and will be successful. It was successful at Gardners and it will be here. The political wing and the industrial wing must stick together."

Meacher went on to underline the collusion of

the police: "We talk about political control of the police, but there is political control of the police: it is exercised in the interests of the employer."

Reservoir

Playwright Jim Allen stressed the unity of fighting both in the unions and in the party. If Labour lose the next election then it can be laid at the door of the Foots, Hattersleys and Healeys who refuse to take up the struggle against the Tories now.

Scotts steward Steve Longshaw pointed up the role of Arthur Scargill: "He doesn't like to be reminded of Salford Gates which more than anything made his

reputation," said Steve. "The Engineers helped the miners there: will the miners help the Engineers at Scotts?"

The conference represented a step forward. It enabled the Scotts workers to recharge their batteries, regroup and relaunch their struggle.

The Scotts dispute has reached a crisis point. It is now time to test the fine words and arguments in action on the picket lines, in the factories, the pits and the docks to combat the employer, sectionalism, the police and the Employment Act.

We must fight for a complete boycott of all Mining Supplies products, thus bringing Snipe to his knees.

SHUT P&O

SOLIDARITY action in support of the seafarers occupying the two P&O Liverpool-Belfast ferries has already confined nine other P&O ships to port.

And Tuesday saw a call by a meeting of NUS port committee chairpersons and branch secretaries to extend the struggle into an all-out stoppage on all P&O ships.

350 jobs are at stake in the proposed closure of the Liverpool ferry service, and the occupation has provided the necessary stimulus for militant support in an industry where jobs are increasingly under threat.

NUS General Secretary Jim Slater had said that the union would back whatever action was sought by the 18-port committee: and by that token he is now com-

mitted to instruct all NUS members on all P&O vessels to cease work at their next port of call.

But as yet the union has not even made the strike official. And the suspicious 18-port committee voted to give a deadline of 12 noon on Friday for its strike call - after which, if no official action is forthcoming, they will act to bring all coastal shipping to a halt.

Such pressure on union leaders is also a model example to other sections of workers entering the struggle in defence of jobs or wages.

But the call should now be extended for solidarity action from dockers and other transport workers to support the seafarers' action and defeat P&O's closure moves.

11 weeks out at Evans Lifts

by
Steve
Akers

"MORALE is high and we are still determined but the longer this goes on and the more people management get to replace us, the more difficult it is to see a victory," said Carmen Wootton when Socialist Organiser spoke to Evans Lifts staff at Leicester, now entering the eleventh week of being locked out.

Relatives of management being brought in to do the work of the sacked workers is just one of the problems the strikers have had to confront.

Crucial to their fight for reinstatement has been the role of the AUEW Engineering Section stewards on the shop floor. They have completely undermined the TASS workers' struggle by shifting deliveries to the plant and on occasions even driving lorries across the picket lines themselves.

Jack Carr, the convenor, has offered his services to management, in the shape of a letter sent out to the management's suppliers, in which he is quoted as saying that the dispute is not official.

The AUEW District Committee instructed AUEW

Engineering Section members not to do TASS members' work but this has not been complied with as there is a shop floor worker in the office now.

The shop floor must immediately black all work being done by scab labour in the offices.

Management, following a now established national pattern, have employed a private security firm who have played a deliberately provocative role, telling delivery drivers that the dispute is not official and intimidating the pickets.

This strike breaking role has been physically and actively assisted by the local police. A phone call by management whenever a delivery is turned away always brings a flourish of fresh police activity. The police are keen to implement the Employment Protection Act and have threatened pickets with arrest for obstruction.

Just as serious for the workers is the Communist Party domination of TASS nationally. The "play it respectfully" line characterises the local leader-

ship's approach to the dispute.

At the November meeting of Leicester South GMC it was reported that the workers may have to ask the local TASS full timer Frank Hyde to savage what he can from the dispute in two to three weeks time.

Scab

To prevent a complete defeat the office committee must immediately welcome all the support they can get on the picket line and demand that the AUEW Engineering Section District Committee instruct all TASS work being handled by scab labour to be blacked and fully involved the sacked workforce in the decision-making of the office committee.

The dispute can only be won initially by an all-out fight at the Leicester plant not by relying on workers elsewhere.

Messages of support and donations are urgently needed and should be sent to Mr B. Hickson, 42 Elmfield Ave., Birstall, Leicestershire.

NUM must fight on pay!

by John Cunningham
(Dinnington NUM)

TALKS between the National Union of Mineworkers and the Coal Board will resume on 25th November. This follows a unanimous rejection of the NCB's latest offer by the NUM's National Executive on 12th November.

The NCB's original

offer was put on October 6th and repeated on October 19th. The package presented was a £4.25 increase for surface workers (lowest paid), £6 for face workers and £1 a week on the incentive scheme. This worked out at about 5.2% on the basic rate.

The NUM claim decided at annual conference is for a 23% increase to bring surface workers up to £100 a week. In take-home terms the offer means about 3.8%.

Government figures put inflation currently at 14.9%.

At the last round of talks, on 12th November, the board raised its offer to £8.70 for face workers and £6.30 for surface. The £1 on incentives remains and some new proposals were forthcoming on service-related holiday bonus. But that was all.

This, the board claimed, would add an average of 9.1% to the wage packet.

Despite President Joe Gormley's much publicised approval of the deal, the executive which met the day after the 'final offer' voted unanimously to reject it.

Both right and left on the NEC voted to reject the offer. Obviously the forthcoming NUM Presidential elections were a spur to Trevor Bell and Ray Chadburn to try to impress the rank and file by a sudden display of newly discovered militancy.

Only recently, Trevor Bell, the original right-wing candidate, was reported in the press as supporting 3-year contracts instead of annual reviews and Ray Chadburn's moderation

has already been praised enough by the capitalist press to warrant no further comment.

It is absolutely vital to rank and file miners pressure the NEC to go for the full claim and not accept a few more pence on top of the 9% already offered. If we accept another rise like the last year of 9.8% on basic rates, then we are in for further hefty drop in living standards.

Streets

An all-out fight on and hours by the NUM would spur the world class movement to join behind the miners as 1972 and 1974. The government's pay limit and picketing restrictions would be decisively smashed. Thatcher would be forced to do another 'U-turn' would probably end like her predecessor 1974, Ted Heath, out on the streets.

Change course at Rolls Royce!

by Stan Crooke

DIRECT workers at Rolls Royce, Hillington (Glasgow) voted by 670 to 610 at last week's mass meeting (12th November) to continue the strike begun on 20th October.

Shop stewards' convenor and Communist Party member George McCormack summed up the situation after the vote by saying "With only 60 votes in it, we have to recognise that we don't have a real mandate to continue the dispute. We're walking on a tightrope".

Friction

The strike began as a fight against yet another speed-up at the plant, due to the implementation of Standard Data times. But within a week, McCormack had transformed the goal of the dispute into 10% extra on the rates for direct workers in exchange for the introduction of Standard Data times.

Whether this demand is won or lost, the dispute (unless its nature is fundamentally changed) can only result in victory for management.

If the 10% increase were

conceded, it would mean trading off jobs (lost through the speed-up) for money and increase the differentials and friction between direct and indirect workers.

And if the workers go back empty-handed (which at the moment looks the most likely outcome), then this would obviously be a defeat also, and encourage further attacks from management.

"If they go back now, then we're in for a hiding. Like one of the BL workers said on TV after their vote, it means going back for a beating from management - and when they give you a beating, they don't stop at one. It's like lambs to the slaughter", is how one shop steward summed up the situation.

Such a defeat, for whatever reason, would come at a crucial time for the workforce. This year's pay agreement runs out on November 19th. To return to work defeated is, for the workforce, hardly the best opening for negotiations about this year's pay claim.

And four weeks on unofficial strike, with no strike pay or donations of any significance, has also drained the direct workers' savings.

thus reducing the chance of another strike in the immediate future over this year's pay claim and coming attacks on jobs.

Moreover, the 39 hour week, due under the agreement which ended the 1979 Confed strike, should be implemented on resumption of work. A defeat now would leave the door open to all the kinds of chicanery now going on at BL in connection with its 'introduction'.

Democratically

This is the gravity of the present situation at Hillington. It underlines the need to fight to spread the strike throughout the combine to avoid defeat, by taking up the question of this year's pay claim and threatened job losses.

Even last week, three weeks into a divisively conducted dispute for a divisive pay claim, the tables could still have been turned on management.

On Wednesday, the day before the mass meeting, McLean, director of Rolls Royce operations in Scotland, publicly stated that further job losses at Hillington would definitely

take place, allegedly because of the strike.

McCormack could easily have called a mass meeting the following day for the entire workforce (instead of just the direct workers) to launch a united fight for a shorter working week to preserve jobs.

And since it was the last mass meeting before expiry of this year's pay agreement, the opportunity could have been used to formulate a pay claim democratically agreed upon by the whole workforce, and fought for as of that meeting.

But McCormack did none of these things. Instead of looking for ways of broadening out the struggle and sharpening its demands, McCormack covered the same old ground about the need for more money to compensate for the introduction of Standard Data times.

Jockeying

Workers at Hillington and Communist Party members/supporters in particular, must recognise that this is the outcome of McCormack's CP politics in which jockeying for positions in

the unions and cross-class alliances are given priority over independent rank and file mobilisations against the union bureaucracy and against the capitalists.

Revolutionary socialists must fight to change the course of this dispute, away from the divisive demand for 10% extra solely for direct workers, and instead fight for: work-sharing with no loss of pay, inflation-proofing of wages and opening the books.

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Industrial News

Council workers - firm against cuts

by Pyushi Kotecha

THE indefinite strike by NUPE workers against Coventry Labour Council's attempts to enforce the cuts and break local union agreements has now entered its second week. Class solidarity is building up fast against the reformist council which now faces the prospect of one-day industrial action by TGWU local authority workers.

Bus drivers in the TGWU will also be organising lightning strikes and busmen threatened with changing conditions of work are also likely to join in.

It is essential that all these workers push to link these struggles immediately.

The basis now exists to inflict a major setback on the Tory onslaught and to provide a lead to the whole labour movement.

As yet the teaching unions have made no gesture of active support towards NUPE and are still under the instruction of their union leadership to cross the picket lines.

However the NUS held a day of action at one college where students were instructed not to cross the picket

line.

It is being increasingly understood that NUPE's struggle is not an isolated one.

Last Tuesday 350 NUPE pickets and supporters from the Ad Hoc Rank and File Committee picketed and later invaded the Council House to challenge the treacherous policies of the misleaders of the labour movement.

On Thursday night pickets assembled outside the District Labour Party meeting which was to discuss the issue.

In the event the chairperson, a leading TGWU full time official, ruled emergency resolutions in support of the strike out of order and closed the meeting when he was challenged.

Agitational

Militants in the local authority unions have come together to form an Ad Hoc Rank and File Committee which has produced several strike bulletins, distributed to local factories, explaining the issue.

It has also helped to collect over £2,000 towards the NUPE strike fund and demanded the disciplining of scabs in the unions and that no NUPE work is undertaken.

It is essential that the Ad Hoc Committee continues to organise at a rank and file level. The one-day strike should be seen as an important focus against the Council's package of £2 million spending cuts and must be an agitational platform for all-out strike action to defend the public sector and workers' living standards.

The NUPE stand must also be seen as an important spearhead to politically discredit Coventry's fake referendum which the Tories so eagerly seized upon to use as another weapon with which to attack the working class.

The Labour Left must take up the necessary political struggle inside the Labour Party against the right wing class collaborationist councillors who are daily betraying the class they claim to represent.

Total

The 12 rebel councillors must now be unequivocally called upon to give total support to NUPE on the following demands:

- * Full support for the NUPE strikers.
- * Organise for the one-day sympathy strike.
- * Fight for all-out strike action now.
- * Campaign for no cuts and no rate increases.

and no employee is dismissed until the proposal to cease trading has been fully investigated and appraised by the appropriate union, community and government representative."

A union leadership which thinks that fighting unemployment consists of going cap in hand to the Tory government is obviously going to be equally bankrupt when it comes to fighting for the reinstatement of its members when they've been sacked for being in the union.

Although the union's support for this strike so far has not really gone beyond paying out strike pay, it will be a serious setback if the union does withdraw support, especially in terms of the encouragement it will give to other sweat shop owners to sack unionised sections of their workforce.

Directly

The answer to withdrawal of union support is for the women to set up their own campaign and appeal directly to the labour movement for support, as well as fighting to bring the union officials under the democratic control of the rank and file so as to prevent any similar sell-outs in the future.

Messages/money: c/o NUHKW, 44 Kelvingrove St, Glasgow G3.

Ford: prepare for action!

AFTER THE bitter experience of the BL pay sell-out and a week which saw weeks of deliberate delay and confusion-mongering produce a vote to accept a four per cent offer by Vauxhall workers at Luton, Ford workers may well be sceptical about their leaders' renewed threats of strike action.

The strong statements rejecting Ford's latest offer came this time from chief negotiator Ron Todd (TGWU). Union representatives agreed to recommend to the executive of all 13 unions an all-out strike



Ron Todd

from November 24.

But no preparations were put in hand to mobilise the strength of the membership on the shop floor. Union officials spoke

simply of the 'ball' being in 'management's court', and angled for a further top level meeting this week.

Ford workers must recognise the danger that their leaders will leave the struggle to drift, before cashing in on post-BL demoralisation to let them off the hook of strike action.

The offer of 4.5 per cent plus strings is completely unacceptable: no amount of talks between now and November 24 will make it acceptable. All out action is the only way to win.

Fight now for mass meetings to discuss the offer and demand that the officials press home the fight to defend living standard and working conditions!

Garment union folds up on pay

THE National Union of Tailors and Garment Workers recall conference on the issue of wages fizzled out with a dismal acceptance of a 5% pay increase for 80,000 workers in the clothing industry—except where the employers can prove they can't afford it.

Unity

The best that can be said is that the 15-man board refused the derisory offer of 6.25% which included one day's extra holiday to the minimum time rate and nothing to the piece workers who make up 90% of the industry.

After the regular union conference in April, when a debate on wages was held down by the General Secretary, Alex Smith, a call was made for a substantial increase on the guaranteed minimum time rate, at present £54 for 40 hours. It was obvious at the conference the employers would make no decent offer—unless the union leadership openly confronted the employers' organisation and

spoiled the cosy relationship which seems to exist at the moment.

But the Broad Left showed no organisation for this recall conference, and after the sell-out by the Communist Party on the Executive Board over Lee Jeans it remains to be seen if the present so-called unity of the Left can be a force within the union.

One candidate for the Executive election spoke against the 5% offer.

"We are sick to death of hearing about the plight of the employers and the state of the clothing industry. We know the state of the industry. We face daily redundancies, claw backs on our incentive rates, cuts in safety, canteen facilities, etc.

Discontent

No way can we go on paying for the crisis of the capitalist system. At the risk of appearing ultra-left, if the employers are having such a bad time of it and such a hard time raking in their profits, why don't they pack in and hand it lock, stock

and barrel to the workers in the industry and let it be nationalised under workers control. (A few gasps of horror from the platform).

It's time we made a stand. Three years ago we were asking for £60 for 35 hours and here we are with 13% inflation accepting £57 for 39 hours."

The vote to accept was 3-1, but the debate over wages and conditions will go on. The discontent felt by the shop floor must be brought into the open through branch meetings, shop stewards committees and combine meetings.

Frightened

As the union membership showed, even when we do come out and fight, the leadership are so frightened they take months to recognise the occupation or strike and will withdraw support as soon as possible.

It is clear we must organise a real left base which will generate confidence and discussion in the branches and accountability of Executive Board members and full time officials.

NO TO SELL-OUT AT GLENCROFT

By Stan Crooke

THE day this issue of Socialist Organiser appears officials of the National Union of Hosiery and Knitwear Workers (NUHKW) will be deciding whether to continue their nominal support for the dispute at Glencroft Knitwear (Glasgow) where 50 women workers have been fighting for 15 weeks for union recognition and reinstatement.

Their decision will be based on whether they think the dispute has won sufficient support to make it worthwhile carrying on.

But quite apart from the union's own failure to build support, union officials have become an increasingly rare sight on the picket lines—so how can they judge anyway whether more support has been coming in for the women?

Surprise

And when union officials have put in a surprise appearance, is it to test the level of support or to check that all the women are there?

Three weeks ago the officials stopped the picket rota and instructed the women to turn up all day and every day).

A recent article in the Morning Star quoted a NUHKW official (a CP

member) as saying: "They (the women) have been getting very generous support from the movement. We are asking for a further all-out effort in the next few weeks in the hope that we can achieve definite progress when we review the situation again on November 20."

In fact, though, support from the local labour movement has been practically non-existent, and inevitably so when the union has failed to seriously appeal for any.

Performance

And, as the NUHKW official's performance at this month's trades council showed, the union is doing anything but appeal for "further all-out effort".

So all the signs are that the continuing dispute, in which Newman, the firm's owner, clearly has the upper hand, since he has been able to maintain production, will be used by the union as a reason to ditch the dispute rather than as a reason to finally get their finger out.

The weak-kneed approach of the union officials to this dispute is reflected in the NUHKW motion to this year's STUC Women's Conference, being held this month in Motherwell.

The motion argues for a "fight" against unemployment in which "no company is allowed to cease trading

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.

CATHOLICS

FACE LOYALIST

BACKLASH!

Socialist Organiser

We need more cash!

Money for the fund is still dribbling in at a painfully slow rate.

But there is a lot to be done: helping the Leyland Action Committee to organise the new militants from the BL strike; mobilising in the TGWU to defend shop steward Mick Woods, sacked for his resistance to ward

closures at St Mary's Hospital, London W9; rallying the labour movement to fight Denning's Law; organising the Labour Left to defend conference policy against the centre/right offensive.

We need at least £750 this month on top of the bankers' orders. Send to Socialist Organiser, 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

by John O'Mahony

TORY MINISTER James Prior was almost lynched on Tuesday by an Orange mob at the funeral of Rev. Robert Bradford, the MP shot by the Provisional IRA.

As a Tory newspaper put it: Protestant Ulster is on the point of rebellion. A 24 hour general strike has been called for next Monday. The Ulster Defence Association, the 10,000 strong legal Orange paramilitary organisation which wants an independent Northern Ireland, has called on Unionist MPs to 'come home and set up a democratic (i.e. Protestant!) system of Parliament' in Northern Ireland.

Orange local authorities in Northern Ireland are to withhold cooperation from the British government. 500 armed Protestants have demonstrated in Enniskillen

(Fermanagh) and a similar number, wearing masks, demonstrated in Derry City: both Fermanagh and Derry City are heavily Catholic.

The Official Unionist Party has given the British authorities an ultimatum to increase 'security' operations dramatically, or else it will set up a 'third force' of armed Orangemen. Mr Paisley says the 'third force' (between the British and the IRA) already exists.

Thus the Catholic population of Northern Ireland is in imminent danger of attack from Orange pogromists.

The keynote was struck by the murder of an 18 year old Catholic, Thomas McNulty, within hours of the killing of Bradford.

Robert Bradford was an outspoken Orange leader:

McNulty was chosen at random and lynched. When the Protestant militants call for increased 'security' against the Catholics, it is mass lynchings and jailing without trial that they call for.

The British Army raids, searches, and continuously harasses in the Catholic areas. To do anything that the British Army is not already doing, the 'third force' would have to organise large scale attacks on Catholic enclaves and shoot suspected Republicans.

What the Orangemen want in a third force is a sectarian militia to terrorise and hold down the Catholics, as the B Special constables did for 50 years.

The Catholic enclaves will defend themselves.

Civil war is looming in Northern Ireland.



Loyalists parading: now they're rallying for pogroms

The catalyst for the Protestant backlash was the killing of Bradford by the IRA. In fact the main concern of the Protestants is that Britain and the Irish Republic are in the process of reaching a settlement of the Northern Ireland situation.

Throughout the year, as the Catholic community mobilised in support of the hunger strikers, the communal polarisation has been stretched drum-tight.

Britain is making a show of increasing its 'security' operation in response to the Official Unionist Party ultimatum. Nothing that the

British government can do, or is likely to try to do, will satisfy Paisley and his supporters, who are seizing their opportunity to get maximum Orange mobilisation and organisation.

It is impossible that the Provisional IRA, whose central leadership has claimed responsibility for it, did not expect that the killing of Bradford would trigger a Protestant backlash and help Paisley. Why they should want that is not clear. To judge by the predictable results of what they did, it is most likely that the intention was to create conditions to scuttle the London-Dubl-

in deal now being set up: it was the Protestant general strike of 1974 that scuttled the last attempt at a deal.

Drum-tight

Such deliberate stoking of the sectarian fires is a radical new departure for the PIRA. It follows the decision of the recent conference of the Provisional Republicans to formally abandon the policy of conciliating the Protestants and offering them special arrangements in a united Ireland to which the Republicans have been committed since 1972.

Whatever the explanation, the Catholics are likely to suffer for it. If the sectarian conflict escalates seriously, the Catholic community would be in danger of widespread pogroms and massacres. The Catholics are the minority. Areas like Catholic West Belfast exist in a Protestant sea.

The UDA would be the core of a sectarian 'third force'. Tens of thousands of Protestants legally hold guns.

The Orange drive is a drive to restore their sectarian dictatorship over the Catholics in the six counties. In the final analysis, the ferocity of the IRA campaign is a direct result of their belief that within the six county statelet, under either British or Orange rule, life would not be livable for the Catholics. They are quite right.

Socialists in Britain must take a stand on the fundamental questions of Irish self determination and the role of the troops. We must continue to support the oppressed Catholic minority against the Orange supremacists and po groomists, and against the British Army.

Axe over St Mary's

St Mary's support conference: November 21, 11am to 2pm at Porchester Hall, Porchester Rd, W2.

AS THE PAPER goes to press the axe is hanging over two wards in St. Mary's Hospital W9. As part of management's closure plans Wards 4 and 7 are due to be closed after two weeks in which doctors have been forced to stop admissions to the wards and to run them down.

Patients on Ward 4 have already written a letter to the Kilburn Times indicating that they'll resist being forcibly moved, and over 100 nurses have also signed a petition indicating that they supported the actions of Adrian Herzmark, a staff nurse who was disciplined for refusing to take part in an earlier ward closure.

Hospital workers are better prepared this time, and plan to give management a very hard time if they snatch patients off the wards again with the support of security guards and police.

Meanwhile TGWU shop steward Mick Woods has been suspended for three weeks now and is due to have his contract of employment not renewed because he refused to move a patient when management closed Ward 2.

Mick is the first hospital workers to be sacked during the course of an occupation, and since he is a shop steward this is a challenge to the TGWU.

If any gains for trade unionism have been made in the hospitals, it is essential that the TGWU leadership take urgent steps to ensure his reinstatement. Staff at the hospital have been visiting other hospitals in the past week urging support for the conference and appealing for sympathetic industrial action to defeat the union-busting management of the Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster AHA.

SO appeals to all its readers and supporters to commit their branches to send delegates to the St. Mary's Support Conference and/or attend in a personal capacity.

Act to defeat Denning!

EDITORIAL: see page 7

LAST YEAR, Tony Benn announced at the Labour Party conference that the next Labour government would abolish the House of Lords. Lord Denning said that the courts would step in to stop it.

Now Denning has put his principles into practice, declaring the Labour GLC's cheap fares policy illegal. As soon as Labour starts to use parliamentary or local democracy to change anything seriously, the Establishment changes the rules!

Cheap

The cheap fares policy is not only one backed by the electorate, but one decided by the London labour movement after full democratic debate, with the unions playing an active part. If the Lords upholds the Appeal Court ruling, the labour movement must mobilise to defend our policy.

We urge Labour Parties, union branches, and trades councils to pass resolutions:

*Congratulating the GLC Labour Group on its implementation of the cheap fares policy.

*Asserting that the judges and the House of



Lords, a particularly hide-bound section of the wealthy classes, have no right to politically override this policy;

*Calling on the GLC Labour Group to defy the judges and instruct London Transport to retain the cheap fares;

*Calling on London

Transport unions to black any moves to increase fares;

*Urging the London Labour Party regional executive to approach other labour movement organisations for a joint appeal for industrial action to force the government to make good the money due to the GLC under the 'illegal' supple-

mentary rate.

*Pledging support for such action, and for a mass campaign to rouse opposition to the Lords decision.

*Calling on all London Labour Groups to go into majority opposition if, despite such a stand, the Tories move in to surcharge the Labour councillors or instal commissioners.

Lesson

Finally, the lessons should be learnt.

If such legal decisions are the response to the GLC's cheap bus fares, then what will be their response to serious socialist measures by a Labour government?

Not just court decisions, but all the might of the State machine—from civil service sabotage to guns and tanks—will face us.

MARTIN THOMAS

Islington Central CLP

GRAHAM BASH

Ilford South CLP



St Mary's workers after a court hearing last week to evict them from an office they were occupying