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STRIKE TO STOP THE CUTS!

by Pyushi Kotecha
and Dave Spencer

THE all-out strike against council spending cuts by 4,000 NUPE members in Coventry has offered a beacon of struggle amidst the gloom of union betrayals.

Jobs have been slaughtered in the public services (more school dinner staff, for example, have lost their jobs than steelworkers in the Tory cuts), and working conditions have been destroyed.

Education, health, social services, care of the elderly, have come under the axe — while union leaders have stood back, claiming that their members did not want a fight.

Centres of resistance have been few and far between: but despite the officials, militant occupations have taken place to defend some hospitals and a number of nurseries against closure. Even now the struggle continues to save St Mary's hospital in Padd-

ington (back page).

But in general the refusal of union officials to mount any challenge to the Thatcher government has left such struggles isolated to at most a few hundred workers and their local supporters. And in local government the myth has been carefully created that manual workers will not fight the cuts.

The solidarity of the 4,000 school cleaners, caretakers, school meals staff and baths attendants in Coventry has knocked that myth on the head.

Indefinite strike

They threw out the wretched proposals of the City's Labour council to implement the Tory cuts by imposing a ten per cent wage cut and a reduction of working hours on school cleaners, and they walked out on indefinite strike on November 6.

Two weeks later they also threw out an insulting so-called 'peace formula' — which involved reducing the wage cuts from ten per cent to five per cent and sacking 52 cleaners on temporary contracts.

The strikers — mainly women — have maintained an active campaign of picketing at selected schools and colleges and forced the closure of many educational buildings.

They have named December 3 as a Day of Action by public sector workers against the Labour council's implementation of the cuts. A support fund has raised over £5,000, including £1,000 from the NUT.

Their stand has highlighted the council's treachery in running its fake 'referendum' — offering voters the chance to 'choose' between cuts and rate increases — which they are now using as a 'mandate' to carry out

Thatcher's cuts.

Such councillors must be removed and replaced by socialists prepared to stand with the working class.

The fact that many schools and colleges are still open — with scabs doing NUPE members' work — shows the need to bring out all other local authority unions, including the teaching unions, in Coventry alongside the NUPE strikers.

The TGWU should be called upon to implement

its conference policy of mobilising supporting action behind the NUPE strikers: and NUPE officials must be called upon to mobilise the union's full national strength behind this key struggle.

Indeed, the Coventry strike has thrown the spotlight once again on the scandalous inaction of the officials in NUPE and other public service unions in every other town and city where cuts have been carried through.

Shut down Longbridge!

By Jim Denham

2,200 Longbridge strikers are still out as we go to press. At a meeting attended by over 50% of those in dispute on Sunday morning, the resolution to continue the strike was carried with only a handful against.

However, the strikers remain isolated and to ensure victory it will be necessary to extend the action beyond the areas of Longbridge (powerful as they are) presently in dispute.

At the moment CAB 1, Metro and Mini trim and assembly, the CAB 2 Allegro trim, the rest of the Allegro chain in the West Works and the Number 4 paint shop are on strike.

About 7,000 other workers at Longbridge, parts of Swindon, Llanelli and Dreads Lane are laid off. But the vital 'E' series engine line at the Longbridge East Works is still working, keeping Cowley supplied with engines for the Ital.

At two successive stewards' meetings, militants (including SWP and SO supporters) have attempted to raise amendments calling for a picket to be put on the East Works. On both occasions the Works Committee ruled this out of order, arguing that such a decision could only be taken by the strikers themselves.



JOHN HARRIS



However at Sunday's meeting, strikers who spoke from the floor in favour of such action were ignored by the Works Committee.

The resolution passed on Sunday simply 'invited' other areas of the plant to join the action.

Meanwhile the company has been attempting to draw local union officials into secret meetings to undermine the strike.

This has failed so far because TGWU official John Baker correctly refused to be involved unless the Longbridge Works Committee was also present.

Now the Company are talking about taking the dispute to ACAS where former BL industrial relations boss Pat Lowry (now chairperson of ACAS) can be expected to look with sympathy upon management's case.

The other possible avenue for the bosses is to appeal to the national officials and Duffy has already offered to meet the Company at any time.



Reaction on the march

BETWEEN 75% and 90% of industry in N. Ireland stopped work on Monday 23rd during arch-bigot Ian Paisley's day of action. Perhaps 10,000 members of Paisley's 'third force', many wearing uniforms and masks and carrying pick-axe handles, marched military-style in Newtownards for Paisley's final rally.

Paisley's Newtownards demonstration was announced weeks ago. But the killing of Robert Bradford MP — like a calculated blow on a raw nerve — turned the 'day of action' into a tremendous outpouring of Orange resentment, anger, bewilderment, and anti-Catholic bigotry. On Tuesday 17th a rash of strikes

and commemoration service demonstrations involving tens of thousands had marked the burial of Bradford.

The different Orange factions had opposed the Paisley-initiated 'day of action' — but they came into line. Shipyard workers struck against the advice of their stewards. Paisleyism is in the ascendancy.

Paisley has announced a drive to recruit 100,000 to his private army. To do what? The sectarian agitator spelled it. He demanded that the British government legitimise his Protestant vigilantes by declaring them part of the 'security forces'. 'If you fail to recruit them', he said, 'we will have one decision to make

— to do it ourselves'.

That is a threat to go on the offensive against the Catholics — lynching suspected Republicans, patrolling Catholic areas and, they hope, in alliance with the British Army, inflicting a reign of terror on the Catholics.

Yet Paisley's third force, which can draw on tens of thousands of Protestants who legally hold guns, is allowed to organise itself legally by the British government.

The N.Ireland Catholics are in serious danger of pogroms and mass assassinations. Socialists in Britain must support them and those defending the Catholic ghettos against both Orange pogromists and the British Army.

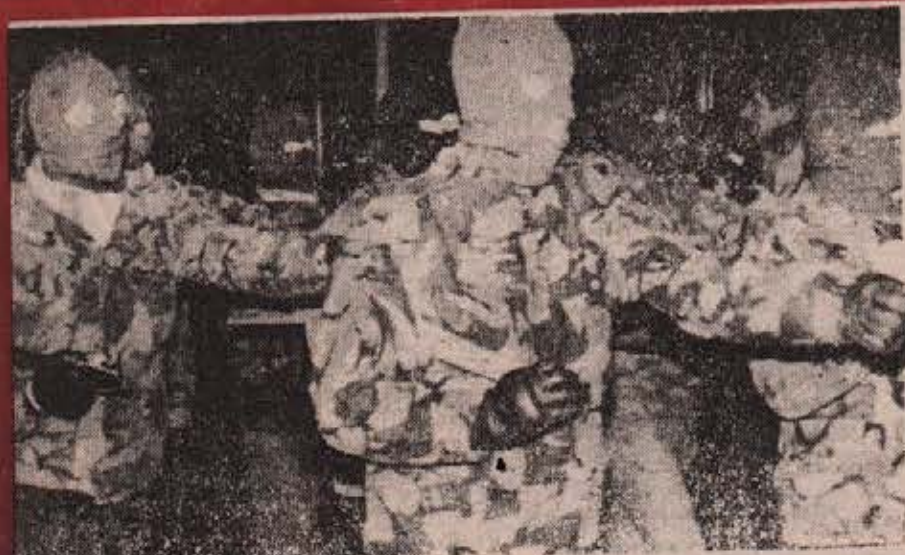
Most strikers expect to receive a sacking threat in the next few days. Before that happens the strike must be spread to the rest of Longbridge and then to the rest of the Combine.

BL have deliberately held back from implementing the 25% reduction in relaxation allowance that sparked the Longbridge dispute, elsewhere in the Combine.

But all BL workers should realise that if the Longbridge strike is defeated the other plants will certainly have the reduction imposed sooner or later.

Despite the media's attempt to trivialise the issue as a 'tea break strike' the issues at stake are important.

Continued, p.15



Paisley's 'Third Force' carrying batons

Women in struggle



SWP silences its Women's Voice

Victory in nursery fight

TOWER HAMLETS' 80 nursery workers have won their dispute with the local Labour council, which has backed down and agreed to pay up!

Better rates of pay than their union, NUPE, was seeking have finally been negotiated as a result of their determined stand.

As well as working to rule for several months, they have lobbied the pay talks, stormed the council chamber, and were threatening total non-cooperation with management [this would have involved a 'fees strike'].

Pressure from parents in the nursery campaign and other trade unionists, and prominent Labour Party members [including councillors], who signed an open letter of protest published in the local press, also helped win the day. This was initiated by Women's Fightback supporters in the women's section.

Overdue

Councillors are now claiming as a face-saver that they did not realise that the pay rise was overdue by two years! The NALGO stewards reported this fact many times during the negotiations — but it took mass action to bring it home to the council.

Nursery workers, while voting to accept the offer, which brings them into line with other boroughs, have decided to continue to work strictly within DHSS ratios, with a no cover policy, until the council restores the 15% cuts in staffing. They are also refusing to undertake the many cleaning duties for so long expected of them.

SUSAN CARLYLE

WOMEN'S FIGHTBACK

SUPPORT ST. MARY'S



By the way, the Council...

New issue of Women's Fightback — 10p plus postage from 41 Ellington St, London N7

At its recent conference the Socialist Workers' Party (SWP) decided to shut down the associated Women's Voice groups. Rachel Lever, secretary of Women's Fightback, writes:

WOMEN'S VOICE has been packed up—on the assurance that the SWP will itself campaign against women's oppression just as energetically.

That assumption is one that has been increasingly challenged by the women's movement. The spread into the broad labour movement of the idea of separate women's organisation, e.g. women's committees of trades councils and union branches, is witness to the continuing, and indeed growing, need for women to organise themselves around their own oppression.

With the end of Women's Voice, there is now only one national women's newspaper with a socialist perspective and an orientation to working class struggles—and a commitment at the same time to the women's liberation movement.

Women's Fightback



Women's Festival: 'the idea of women's organisation is spreading...'

started out in January 1980. Some of us had been in Women's Voice, but not being in agreement with the SWP on many issues, had found ourselves unable to stay with WV after it had drawn closer to the SWP in September 1979.

We've concentrated on trying to focus a national opposition by women to the Tory attacks; and on strengthening women in the

Labour and trade union movement and demanding that this movement take seriously a fightback on behalf of its women members.

Emphasis

We worked in the Festival Planning Group (for the May 9 Festival against the Tories) for this sort of emphasis, and argued

successfully for the continuation of that group as an Action Committee for a Woman's Right to Work, to broaden the campaign we had begun for a national demonstration for a woman's right to work. We will now be encouraging our local groups and our supporters in the trade unions to take the lead in mobilising for this demonstration.

In February we are

organising a national day-school on New Technology and women's jobs and working conditions; and in March we will be holding a major conference for rank and file women trade unionists, with the aim of developing a framework for action

Commitment

Running through our work is a commitment to

supporting the struggles women for jobs, for rights at work, for defence of services and health care and against the ideological offensive of the Tory government. In particular we worked to support the R. Pride strike in Manchester, Lee Jeans, the Longwall and St. Mary's Hospital occupations and the Bridlington strike.

Similar courses

With the exception of two things, the work of Women's Fightback and Women's Voice followed very similar courses. The exceptions are the ties of Women's Voice to the SWP; and, on our side, the development of struggle for women's rights in the Labour Party, which many—but not all—of our members and supporters have been engaged in.

There seems no reason why the work of Women's Voice should come to an abrupt end, rather than continue to build a framework for action that both our forces engaged in. (In Women's Voice members have already been active in some of the Women's Fightback groups, such as the Chester and Medway, rather than try to keep two separate groups going.)

Join Us!

Women's Fightback invites Women's Voice supporters to discuss in various ways we can continue our common struggle. If you who would like to continue the tradition of Women's Voice and join together as a group, we would like to come in with Women's Fightback as a group, with no reason why this should not be possible, and we be happy to make space for our Steering Committee representatives of group.

We would also like that the sisters of Women's Voice help to build the trade union conference and join us in the mobilisation for the women's strike to work demonstration June.

BETRAYAL AT GLENCROFT

LAST Friday, 20 November, National Union of Hosiery and Knitwear Workers officials ordered an end to the picketing of the Glencroft Knitwear firm in Glasgow, which for the 15 weeks previously had been picketed by 15 women sacked from the firm for joining the union.

The withdrawal of picketing is only the latest stage in the tortuously slow

killing off of the dispute by the union full-timers:

*No appeal for mass picketing has ever been made by the union.

*No efforts have been made to ensure effective blacking of Glencroft exports due for export.

*Moves by the women to launch a boycott of Glencroft products in shops were blocked by officials, who argued that it was illegal to

appeal to people not to buy them.

*Throughout the dispute officials have cast a veil of secrecy over what, if anything, they were up to.

Tribunal

Now, on top of all this, comes the end of picketing, allegedly on the grounds that the key focus of attention must now be the forthcoming

Industrial Tribunal which will preside over the dispute.

But the real purpose of this move is to facilitate the delivery of the death blow to the dispute.

The women are now isolated from each other (and from the revolutionaries who turned up on the picket lines) and it is no longer possible to use the picketing as a focus for building support for the women.

The stage has thus been set for the final execution.

The union will take the case to an Industrial Tribunal, lose it (legally they haven't got a leg to stand on) and then call it a day.

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

STAN CROOKE

Why Lestor?

THE appointment of a front-bench spokesperson on women's rights is to be welcomed. But the obvious question is: why on earth Joan Lestor?

First, she has never shown the slightest interest in, commitment to, or understanding of, the fight against women's oppression. She isn't, for instance, a member of the NEC Women's Rights Study Group, or of the Women's Sub-committee of the NEC.

The obvious, indeed the only, candidate for the job is Jo Richardson. She has been the point of contact between Labour at that level and the women's movement.

She campaigned tirelessly, in committees and on the streets against the Corrie Bill. Before that, as a new MP, her Private Member's Bill brought the issue of

domestic violence into Parliament.

She has fought for every positive change that has been won for women in the Labour Party—including the creation of the post that Joan Lestor has just landed herself out of the blue.

Not only is the appointment of Joan Lestor a slap in the face for Jo Richardson, it actually threatens the work she is trying to do by elbowing her out of the way.

The explanation for the inexplicable is not hard to find. Jo Richardson, though a long-standing associate of Michael Foot, and his campaign organiser in the leadership election a year ago, made the mistake of also campaigning for Tony Benn for Deputy Leader. Joan Lestor got the prize by abstaining in that election.

RACHEL LEVER

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Unite on class struggle platform!

TONY BENN'S defence of conference policy on renationalisation without compensation has set the congealing fluids of Labour Party politics running hot and fast again.

At the Brighton conference Michael Foot and the 'centre left' gained dominance on the National Executive. Their strategy has been to draw the teeth of the struggles for democracy and left policies, using the justifiably popular banner of unity. And it seemed to be working. Benn's call for a new Labour Left movement — a 'Labour Representation Committee' — faded away. In return Foot backed Benn for a place in the Shadow Cabinet.

Foot's appointment of John Silkin as front bench spokesperson on defence shows the method. As the Guardian put it: "Mr Silkin is a long-standing supporter of unilateral disarmament but has never been a strident spokesman for that approach. The odds, therefore, are that Mr Silkin will be in a strong position to knit together the widely differing views in the Shadow Cabinet".

Denis Healey has stated clearly that he will refuse to serve in a Labour government committed to unilateral nuclear disarmament. So this 'knitting together' can only mean one thing — unilateral nuclear disarmament will *not* be carried out, and instead we will have the recommended formula of

Peter Shore and Roy Hattersley, 'unilateral initiatives'. A project or two may be cancelled, but the arsenal of mass annihilation will remain. And conference policy will be gutted.

Neil Kinnock — the star of the Shadow Cabinet elections, rising from 12th place to 7th — is another leading spokesperson for this version of unity. The Right concedes everything but the essentials, and the Left gains everything but the essentials!

Many of the right wing MPs are unhappy with the Foot/Kinnock strategy. They dislike the limited concessions to the Left, or they don't think the strategy will work. But the aggressive attacks on the Left by Healey, Hattersley and Shore mesh together with the Foot/Kinnock strategy in a division of labour. They shift further to the Right the centre of gravity around which a fudged unity must be built.

But the centre-left strategy forbids Labour Party leaders to speak out clearly and uncompromisingly for Labour Conference policy on controversial issues. Tony Benn's speech on renationalisation without compensation challenged the whole project of Labour consensus politics. And that shows what's wrong with the unity aimed at by the centre left — it's a unity based on seeing the majority rank and file view as just one element to be stirred into a vague compromise.

The centre left will probably still press to sink the differences — but now with Benn excluded. It is not so clear that they can succeed. 66 MPs voted for Benn in the Shadow Cabinet elections, reflecting a strong current in the Labour rank and file that is not willing to see the last few years' struggle to transform Labour seep away into old-style anti-Toryism.

Several hard-fought reselections are coming up, and the right wing MPs are becoming more warlike. At the Parliamentary Labour Party last Wednesday, Benn faced repeated demands to 'repudiate' an article in London Labour Briefing which detailed the record of some London MPs and argued that "To 'de-select' such an MP [who turns his/her back on the CLP] is both legitimate and democratic". (Benn had not written the article — it was by Nigel Williamson. Benn had only contributed to the same issue of Briefing. Imagine the scenes if right wing MPs were asked to repudiate other articles in the paper every time they wrote for the Fleet Street press! And isn't it conference policy that re-selection is 'legitimate and democratic'?)

The sugar-sweet slogans of unity could soon show their bitter after-taste: in an offensive against left-wingers hypocritically accused of disrupting that unity. And so two tasks face socialists.

We must square up the ranks of the Left. Already the Labour Coordinating Committee is proposing to turn away from the struggle for Labour Party democracy — in favour of vague, allegedly more radical, but certainly less controversial, extra-Parliamentary activity. Many people who backed the fight to transform the labour movement when victories were apparently easy, will retreat now when the backlash turns nasty. But we must unite as many as we can.

Simultaneously we must fight to clarify and sharpen the policies of the Left. Existing Labour policy of support for NATO gives a tremendous weapon to the right wing in their fight to whittle down the commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament. And the Alternative Economic Strategy lends itself ideally to fudging. There are twenty different versions and no-one knows which is which, how it will work, or why it is being proposed instead of straightforward socialist measures.

We've gained a lot of ground in the Labour Party, and the trade unions, over the last two years. But we could lose it all very quickly unless we consolidate our forces, building a strong organised class-struggle left wing on socialist policies. That's what Socialist Organiser must do.

DENNING'S LAW

DENNING'S Law is often chided as eccentric, but it is not vastly different from the law as pronounced by 'normal' judges.

After all, two other Appeal Court judges agreed that the law forbade the GLC from offering a half-way decent alternative to the one-man, one-car chaos that passes for a transport system.

Denning echoed some of our comrades in the Labour Party when he declared that "a manifesto issued by a political party to get votes was not to be regarded as a gospel" and that the GLC had given "undue weight" to their election promises by daring to carry them out.

But his pal, Lord Justice Oliver, agreed that transport facilities had by law to be "economic, not wasteful and cost-effective". And Lord Justice Watkins pronounced it to be "a counsel of despair" to say that London Transport "could not be run at a profit"; and declared the fares cut an "abuse of power that totally disregarded the interests of rate payers".

Anyone can see that in this case the law and right-wing politics are intimate bed-fellows.

What's special about Denning is the overt and shameless way in which he subordinates the laws and his own fine-sounding principles to his political prejudices.

The man who declared that the courts stand "between the executive and the subject" to see that "discretionary power is not misused", was less zealous about judicial checks on the executive when it came to the Home Secretary's powers to detain aliens under the Immigration laws.

Deter

Then he insisted that a Minister could "exercise his power for any purpose which he considers to be for the public good" and that "sending back illegal immigrants" would "help to deter others".

However, when it came to the question of a local authority attempting to introduce comprehensive education in Enfield, Denning once again upheld the right of the courts to scrutinise in the minutest detail executive discretion.

He managed to interpret the duty of a local authority to "maintain" a school as meaning in this instance that the school has to retain "its fundamental character" and thus not be turned comprehensive!

Denning offers fine phrases to paint the law as guardian of individual freedom: The words ring out: "Where there is conflict between the freedom of the individual and other interests no matter how great or powerful, the freedom of the humblest citizen shall prevail over it."

Expulsion

Except perhaps if you happen to be a suspected illegal immigrant, in which case Denning pronounced that even the most elemental individual liberty—that of 'habeas corpus'—did not apply.

"If the immigration officer acts honestly and on reasonable grounds (in detaining an alien), that is sufficient and the court will not further inquire into it."

In Mark Hosenball's case,

similarly, Denning said that when there is a conflict between national security and individual liberty, then "the balance between the two is not for a court of law. It is for the Home Secretary"; and so approved Hosenball's expulsion.

However, there was no firmer defender of individual freedom than Denning when it came to the rights of Grunwick not to be pressured by a trade union or when it came to the liberty of the Home Office not to have its confidential documents on prison conditions—even when already read out in open court—published in the press. Individual freedom is a flexible phrase in Denning's vocabulary.

Prejudice

Denning's prejudice pours out in every judgement. For example, about immigrants he said: "If the men are allowed to remain, it will be difficult to refuse the wives and children. If this were allowed, the numbers of immigrants

would be increased so greatly that there would not be room for everybody."

Enormous power

Denning is not a different breed of animal from his fellow judges. But as Master of the Rolls he has enormous power, presiding over the court of appeals in all civil cases, only a fraction of which are taken further to the House of Lords for final appeal. (Denning's court deals with an average of 800 cases a year of which about 50 are further appealed.)

Alongside his great power lies a shameless cynicism toward any legal principle beyond his own conception of "justice" and a shameless disregard for even the limited democratic process which currently exists.

Whatever happens to the GLC appeal to the Lords, the ousting of Denning must become part of a movement to open up this unaccountable reserve of judicial privilege and power.

Bob Fine



'The law and right-wing politics are bedfellows'

Witch-hunt in Durham

by Jane Ashworth

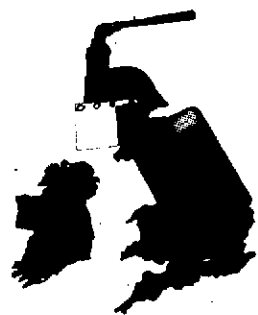
A CAMPAIGN has been launched against left-wing members of Durham University students' union.

Four members of the student union executive, two of them Socialist Organiser supporters, are being viciously attacked by Tories for their views on Ireland.

They support the nationalist movement against the British Army and say that, as there is a war going on, one must expect mainland bombings. They also say that 'in a war, military bases etc. are legitimate targets, civilians are not'.

The Tory witch hunters circulated a petition calling for signatures with 'Do you support the IRA? No' emblazoned across the top, and are using the signatures they collected as a basis for getting rid of the four executive members who replied 'unfavourably' [in the Tories' eyes] to the same question, put to them at a student union council meeting.

However, the student newspaper has defended the Exec members, the Labour Club is calling a meeting on Ireland, and a Labour Committee on



Ireland group is to be set up.

PRESS GANG



by Patrick Spilling

THE SICKEST game of 1982 was banned today after it was attacked by Prince Charles as 'an insult to the heroes of this country'.

Last night shellshocked store managers were removing the game from the shelves of department stores up and down the country.

MPs were preparing to ask the Home Secretary how a game which vilifies some of the bravest men this country has ever seen got into production.

Last night reporters from this paper bought one of the vile compendiums at Harrods, the top people's store.

The game is called Monopoly and it has brought outrage from relatives of some of the property developers who gave their fortunes in the service of the country.

In the game young children are invited to play at being property developers. They are insultingly represented by symbols such as an old boot or a

toff's top hat. At the throw of the dice they land on — and buy — whole areas of London with a few thousand pounds.

The developers are then forced to proceed round the board paying 'rent' to their competitors. If they can't pay, the bank forces them to sell their houses and hotels.

It is this that has caused leading property developers to protest to the government that their worst nightmares are made jest of. Harold Wilson has threatened to sue. 'It was land reclamation', he said. 'And it wasn't Whitechapel'.

Former executives of Slater Walker enterprises, many of whom have firsthand knowledge of Hong Kong prisons, have demanded an inquiry into how 'Go To Jail' cards have been included in the pack.

The son of one leading magnate said, 'I bought the game for my family thinking it was about oil fields. I was sickened at what I found inside. Fortunes are wiped out in the wink of an

eye. 'That was how my father bought his. This is an insult to the people who brought you Centre Point and other monuments to humanity'.

Jokes are made out of housing repairs, income tax and parking developments.

A group of SDP councillors and MPs have put down a motion condemning the low property value placed on Islington. 'The so-called "low rent" policy at Fenchurch St station has wiped out the value of our second homes', said a spokesman.

Prince Charles added his criticisms while he was opening a Mothercare branch in Cardiff. 'My wife can't be here today', he said. 'She's at home playing Monopoly'.

* Small is beautiful, says Prince. See Page 18 for our exclusive account of the speech in which the heir to the throne says how much he envies common people in poky houses, and why he wishes some of his houses had fewer floors.

The 6 County cockpit

THE ORANGE camp is fragmented by political differences and personal rivalries. For ten years now, the Orangemen have wriggled like a fish on two hooks – torn between unwillingness to compromise with the Catholics and their dependence on Britain.

The Loyalists want to restore their supremacy in the Six Counties, but Britain is firmly opposed to that and will do no more than try to beat down the Catholic revolt. The logic of their bitter resentment at being deprived of the right to exercise their built-in majority would be a break with Britain and some form of independence. But whole swathes of Northern Ireland industry – Harland and Wolff's shipyard, for example – are dependent on British government subsidies.

Restoration of Protestant rule in a Six County Parliament: full integration with Britain; independence – these are the options bandied about among the Orangemen.

Central to the Orangemen's dilemma is the incompatibility of what they want for Northern Ireland with what Britain – intent on a deal with the 26 County bourgeoisie within the EEC – wants for it.

They learned painfully in the early '70s that what British imperialism gave them in 1920, it could also take away. But they are not reconciled to it.

Monolith shattered

THE ATTEMPT to find a solution has in the '70s shattered the Orange political edifice, which had been a monolithic multi-class block (especially since proportional representation was abolished in 1925).

Britain has found it impossible to find political instruments to carry through its objectives in Northern Ireland. Successive Northern Ireland prime ministers – O'Neill, Chichester-Clark, Faulkner – were shattered by a revolt of the Protestants, culminating in the general strike of May 1974 which brought down the last Six County government, the power-sharing executive.

Results of Partition

WITH Partition in 1920-1, Britain created a Six County sub-state, with a built-in Protestant majority, in disregard of the rights of the majority of the people of Ireland and of the Catholic segment of that majority locked against their will into that sub-state.

Having designed and created the Six County cockpit, Britain finds that now it cannot control it. So long as decisions are confined to the Six Counties, the Protestants have the tremendous weight and power that the sub-state's population balance was designed to give them.

When Britain and the 26 Counties drew closer together in the 1960s, and moved towards EEC membership, Britain began to put pressure for reform on Northern Ireland.

Previously the Protestants had had control of the police, and had had one-party rule in their own Stormont parliament for 50 years. A mass Protestant militia, the B-Special Constables, beat down the Catholics. Britain had not interfered: a Westminster convention

which lasted until the late '60s ruled out any London intervention in Six County internal affairs.

Catholics were terrorised with a permanent Special Powers Act, under which imprisonment without trial was frequently enforced. Electoral gerrymandering and frauds deprived them of control of local government even where they were a majority.

They were discriminated against in social amenities. There was always – even in the boom years – mass unemployment in Northern Ireland. There grew up a system of job preference on the basis of religion: inevitably that in turn influenced the composition and therefore the attitude of the trade unions.

The working class

The working class was chronically split and divided: the Protestants regarded the Catholics as the US white workers regarded the blacks.

Class politics were prevented from emerging. The Protestant workers were in a bloc with the capitalists and landlords, against the Catholics. When the Northern Ireland Labour Party developed, it was repeatedly shattered by sectarian and constitutional issues until it became a Protestant union.

The Catholic workers were dominated by Republicanism, or, more often, by

John O'Mahony sketches in some of the background to the latest Loyalist mobilisations in Northern Ireland – why the Loyalists lash out, what they are fighting for, and why there is no solution while Partition and British occupation remain

man, one job; one man, one vote (Six County voting included property qualifications); and one man, one house.

Protestant workers understood this as meaning: divide houses and jobs. Had the issue been posed in transitional demand terms (e.g. public works to build houses and create jobs), it might perhaps have made a difference and avoided or reduced Protestant/Catholic worker polarisation. Some of us argued for this at the time: but the socialists involved were mainly Stalinists and those like Michael Farrell (of People's Democracy) trained by Tony Cliff of the SWP to regard transitional demands as 'Trotskyist superstition'.

Polarisation deepened to the point that in August 1969 the RUC, B-Specials, and civilian bigots attempted pogroms in Derry and Belfast. Pitched battles followed, with the Catholics defending themselves with petrol bombs and the odd gun (the

side. In October 1969 the British Army declared a curfew on the Protestant Falls Road and fought gun battles with Orange militants.

The problem was that they could not satisfy the Catholics, especially the masses of youth radicalised in the civil rights movement and in the period of Free Derry and Belfast.

The fundamental civil right the Catholics lacked was the right of self-determination. This fundamental lack had led to the loss of the other other rights they mobilised for. The Six County Catholics were locked in the Northern Ireland statelet against their will.

The civil rights movement steered clear of nationalism, but the logic was inevitably nationalist. The nationalist movement began to revive. A primitive form of Republicanism mushroomed, drawing on social discontent and on the discrediting of the socialist Republicans

ish Army was fighting Catholics. Britain's commitment to stabilising the Six Counties led to a policy of beating down the Catholic revolt, which in turn rallied the Catholics to the Republicans. In April 1970, the Ulster Defence Regiment – a part-time regiment of the British Army – was set up, to become a Protestant-dominated armed force.

Its membership has overlapped seriously with the Orange paramilitary groups.

The decision of Stormont (backed by London) to introduce internment in August 1971 led to a mass revolt throughout the Catholic community. Hundreds were picked up, and without charge or trial put in concentration camps. Many were tortured.

Britain's basic role

In two years the civil rights movement of the Catholics had reached its logical development – mass revolt for the right of the Irish people to self-determination – and Britain was openly playing its basic role: military guarantor of the Protestant state, and agent for repressing those in revolt against it.

Terror, torture, internment, mass raiding of Catholic homes, culminated in January 1972, when the British Army in Derry shot down 13 unarmed men taking part in a peaceful political demonstration.

The reaction internationally and in the 26 Counties – where the British Embassy was burned down – shocked the British government out of synch with the Stormont regime. In March 1972, when Northern Ireland prime minister Brian Faulkner refused to agree to 'security' powers being removed from Stormont by London, the Heath government abolished Stormont and took direct control.

Immediately there was a mass Protestant strike and the UDA was born (with some encouragement from the British Army, which saw the IRA as the main enemy).

The destruction of Stormont was the high point of the IRA offensive. It was less than complete victory. Britain merely retreated to its basic position, remaining committed to the Partition state while wanting to tinker with it and reform it.

After consultation, the Heath government reiterated the British guarantee that the Northern Ireland unit was to stay until the majority wanted otherwise. Except that the majority could no longer be allowed to act as a majority! The sub-state had democratic validity, said the British government: but if majority rule is exercised, it will erupt in civil war.

Logic was and is on the side of the Protestants when they claim the democratic right to rule as a majority – unless it is admitted that the state itself is illogical, and the majority is not a legitimate political majority but a communal-sectarian one.

But Britain has refused to admit that. Instead, in late 1972, the search was on for a form of power-sharing in the Six Counties and for a formula to satisfy the Catholics by recognising an all-Irish dimension.

Britain was to hold the ring of the sectarian statelet and that, in the circumstances, meant beating down

the Catholics – while searching for a solution within the partition framework.

In March 1973 a referendum was held on the constitutional position of Northern Ireland (referendums were scheduled to be held each decade). It was boycotted by the Catholics and the result was a foregone conclusion.

In June 1973 elections were held for a Northern Ireland assembly to create a provincial government minus 'law and order' powers. Under pressure of Britain and the South, a majority was created within it for power-sharing between the Faulkner Unionists, the Catholic SDLP, the Northern Ireland Labour Party, and Alliance.

Amidst rowdy scenes, including fist fights in the chamber and (at one stage) the ejection of Ian Paisley and 17 other Orange bigots, the new coalition hoped to prove itself, using patronage and the subsidies from the British government. A Council of Ireland was set up. There was seething Protestant discontent.

Protestants felt, with some cause, that Brian Faulkner had cheated them. But the majority block held. Then the British miners forced Edward Heath to call an election, which allowed the Protestants to express their views by electing 11 anti power-sharing Westminster MPs out of 12 (Robert Bradford was one of them).

The coalition limped on, utterly discredited. When the power-sharing executive won a vote of confidence by 44 to 28 on May 14, it triggered industrial action by the power workers, backed by paramilitaries. The action quickly became a general strike.

The 1974 strike

In two weeks during which the British government was paralysed, unsure if it could rely on the British army, a revolutionary general strike in support of sectarian counter-revolution paralysed Northern Ireland. On May 28 the Unionists resigned from the executive and it collapsed.

Almost immediately, in July, Britain announced new elections – for delegates to a constitutional convention. They were held in May 1975, producing a vote that reflected the communal blocks. The one Unionist leader of any standing to fight for power-sharing, William Craig, found himself isolated.

There were Catholic fears that when the convention sat the Protestant majority would declare itself the democratic government and appeal to the Orange population. That would have triggered civil war, which is probably why, in the event, it was not done.

For most of 1975 there was an IRA ceasefire and a rash of Protestant assassinations and bombings. From 1972 to about 1975, there were hundreds of sectarian assassinations of Catholics picked at random. The Republicans rejected a tit for tat response, through some sectarian killing of Protestants did occur.

A report demanding majority (i.e. Protestant) rule was rejected by the British government, and the convention dismissed in March 1976.

All this was predictable with a fair degree of certainty.

From the end of the

convention to the present strike wave is one distinct period. Britain gave up trying to find a solution, and settled in to hold on within the Partition framework.

The new period of British policy was ushered in when political status for newly convicted prisoners was abolished on March 1, 1976. Britain had granted political status as part of the attempt to find a solution after Bloody Sunday, January 1972. Its withdrawal was the measure of the recognition of failure.

The Republicans, who had been taken to discuss with the British prime minister in 1972, were now to be criminalised. Raids on the Catholic areas were stepped up to the extent that even the leading Catholic clergyman, O'Faich, protested publicly. The Republican prisoners' blanket protest for political status dragged on its terrible years-long course before it culminated in the hunger strikes and the mass rallying of the Catholic population to the prisoners.

The Troubles opened, as many revolutions in history have, with attempts at reform from above which stimulated revolt below – and then massive Protestant backlash. That was the Six County twist to the pattern.

Britain would have been happy to be rid of Northern Ireland in the '60s. It found its own sectarian creation uncontrollable, and in 1969 civil war ignited in one of the provinces of the UK – civil war that would probably have spread to cities like Glasgow and, perhaps, Liverpool. The British ruling class held on, to serve its interests in Britain and in both parts of Ireland.

It granted the Catholics reforms, but not enough, and then tried savage repression in alliance with the Orange state in its traditional form. Then it tried a more radical restructuring. Instead of the sectarian Orange dictatorship, it tried to make the Six County entity act against its nature by creating an institutionalised sectarian coalition.

The Orangemen rose in revolt, repudiated their own politicians, and wrecked the only form of local government Britain could then give them. So, with the agreement of the Southern Irish government, Britain settled in to maintain the Six County status quo and beat down the Catholics. Then the terrible weapon of the hunger strikers drew world attention to what was happening, and pressure for a new British 'political initiative' became irresistible.

Now, at the beginning of new British moves to find a solution while maintain partition, there occurs a new Orange backlash, helped into existence by a seemingly calculated act of the Provisional IRA, which shot Robert Bradford.

Oxfordshire Trades Councils conference on Ireland

Saturday, December 12, 10 to 5 at West Oxford Community Centre, Binsey Lane, Oxford.

Delegates credentials £3, observers £1.50 (unwaged £1), from Marie Campbell, 167 Walton St, Oxford.



Paisley leads a crowd through Belfast

Green Tories calling themselves the Irish Nationalist Party.

Privileges are relative. A crust amidst starvation is an enormous privilege. Better chances of houses and jobs (or better jobs) in Northern Ireland were great privileges, which cemented the Orange cross-class bloc.

When the British government pressed for reform and an end to too blatant sectarian discrimination, the Protestant backlash began.

The upper classes and their professional politicians, like O'Neill, feebly moved to comply with Britain's wishes. The Irish prime ministers visited each other in Belfast and Dublin (1965). The working class Protestants became alarmed for reasons of their sectarian bigotry and social insecurity.

In response to the beginnings of reform from above – too little, too slowly – the Catholics began to agitate on the streets for civil rights, in the style of the anti-war movements and student revolts of late '60s.

They campaigned for one

Orangemen were armed).

Whole streets were burned out in Catholic Belfast, and there was a beginning of the population shifts – which, over 12 years, have been the largest in Europe since the late '40s.

The artificial state was decomposing into communal civil war. The British Army was sent in by the Labour government to take control. The strategy was that it would be an emergency scaffolding to shore up the state structure and allow reforms to be carried out urgently.

Catholic West Belfast and Catholic Derry maintained the barricades thrown up for defence from August to October 1969, and declared themselves free areas with their own governing councils and defensive militias (armed with sticks).

The British Army respected the barricades (until they got them taken down by agreement) and Britain rushed through reforms – disarming the police, disbanding the B-Specials, and seemingly taking the Catholic

who had been inadequate defenders of the Catholic ghettos in August.

In the 1960s the Republicans had begun to understand James Connolly's criticism of pure Republicanism – that formal independence was not enough, and there had to be a break with the capitalist system. The understanding was clouded by Stalinist influence. The Provisionals, breaking away from the Official Republican movement, had a simple message: full national independence is the goal, armed struggle is the way to get it.

The Provisionals

They recruited the radicalised youth because they could cut through all the complications. The British soldiers on the street corners epitomised imperialism; and the Provisionals gave the youth guns and, pointing to them, said: 'That's imperialism, shoot it!'

Less than one year after going on the streets, the Brit-

World news

BOLIVIAN MINERS APPEAL TO BRITISH SOCIALISTS

Santiago Fortin calls for solidarity with workers whose strikes are met with massive armed force and the cutting off of food supplies.

BOLIVIAN miners embroiled in battle have issued an urgent appeal to the British working class.

Their struggle has erupted just one month after the dictatorship of General Torrello received US recognition and proclaimed itself confident of ruling for three years without the slightest vestige of democratic liberties.

The junta has been faced with the unambiguous reply of the working class.

Token strike

On November 13, the miners of Huanuni called a meeting and unanimously resolved to reject all union officials appointed by the regime (relacionadores), demand full trade union and democratic freedoms and wage increases which compensated for the massive cuts in subsidies of the prices of basic necessities and an inflation rate of over 50 per cent. To back these decisions, made for the first time in an open assembly of the entire workforce, a token 24-hour strike was called.

The strike was designed to be a token stoppage since the union, which is illegal and forbidden to collect dues, possessed less than \$300 in its reserves and the poverty of the workers meant that a long period without even the minimal wages they receive (\$35 a month) would be disastrous. Nevertheless, when within a matter of hours the army had



'The class struggle is posed in a particularly acute manner in Bolivia.'

mobilised and sent in two local regiments to invade the camp, the strike was prolonged for a further 48 hours.

The Minister of the Interior, Colonel Mercado, declared the stoppage 'subversive... led by known

extremists and agitators', and promptly ordered the arrest of workers' leaders. The response of the Huanuni workers in such an event had been agreed in the meeting and was realised without delay: an indefinite strike.

The dictatorship responded to this in the time-honoured fashion of capitalist rule in Bolivia: it cut supplies of food, water and electricity to the camp. With no funds left and a rapidly diminishing stock of basic supplies the position

of the 10,000 miners and their families reached an absolutely critical point in the middle of last week.

However, last Thursday, in response to the army's moves, the workers of the large Siglo XX-Catavi complex and the smaller San Jose plant called open meetings in defiance of the military present in their own camps and declared indefinite strikes in solidarity with their comrades in Huanuni, who have now been out for a fortnight.

The result has been the most forceful working class mobilisation against the dictatorship that came to power in the bloody coup of July 1980, when the miners fought a three-week battle against the troops of Garcia Meza, with the loss of hundreds of lives.

Desperation

Brothers and sisters in Britain who have some experience of strike action will appreciate only too well the position of a workforce of this size embarking on a strike with only a couple of hundred pounds of funds; they will have to exercise their imagination to grasp the extent of desperation and resolution that exists when this can take place in the full knowledge that it will be followed by military occupation and the cutting of all food, water and power supplies. The only hope then is solidarity action, both from their comrades in

the other mines and from the international working class.

Responsibility

Socialist Organiser is read in Bolivia every week; articles on Bolivia are translated and circulated in the larger mines. This might bring us a bit of prestige but it also carries with it an extremely important responsibility: to live up to the words of solidarity expressed in these columns.

We have now been asked to realise this. Last Friday we received an urgent message from the Sindicato Clandestino of Siglo XX and the departmental union federation of Oruro to send funds for the strike as rapidly as possible. They asked us if we could manage a thousand dollars and we said yes.

We want to reach and exceed this figure, with the greatest speed and it should not prove difficult if supporters of the paper make every effort not just to raise an individual contribution but also to take the request into their trade union and Labour Party branches with the utmost urgency.

The class struggle against imperialism and dictatorship is posed in a particularly acute manner in Bolivia and the fundamental responsibilities of internationalism require that we act without delay in support of our comrades.

Move this motion

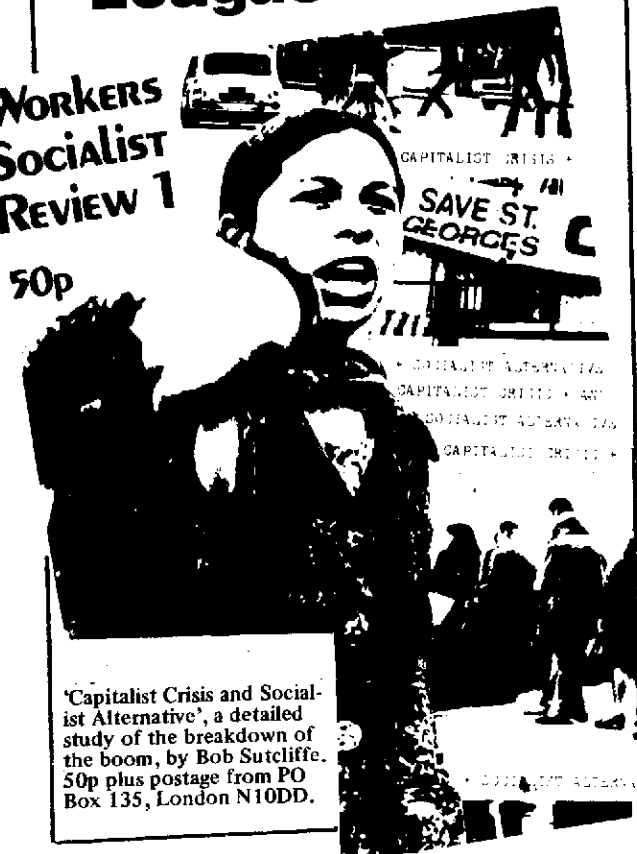
This trade union/Labour Party branch expresses its full support for the strike action taken by the Bolivian miners of the Huanuni, Siglo XX and San Jose Camps in defence of the right to independent trade unions and full democratic liberties. It condemns the actions of the regime of General Torrello in arresting democratically elected union leaders and cutting off supplies of basic necessities and electricity to these areas as an attempt to starve the population into submission. In support of this struggle, this branch resolves to make a contribution of £... to the Bolivian Workers' Support Fund to be sent immediately to Bolivia in aid of the workers and their families.

All contributions should be sent to the Bolivian Workers' Support Fund, 54 Studley Road, London E7 9LX [01-471 6008]. Receipts will be given and all messages of support sent on to the miners.

NEW!
Magazine of the Workers
Socialist League

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.

Witch hunt against French CP ministers

by Alexis Carras

AFTER the Socialist Party victory in the French elections this May and June, and Mitterrand's decision to bring four Communist Party members into his Cabinet, the right wing has not been slow in hitting back.

On June 24, the leadership of the Force Ouvriere trade union federation declared: "Concerning the participation of Communists (in the government), we wish to solemnly

express, for posterity, our total disagreement".

This pompous rubbish was the opening salvo from FO leader Andre Bergeron in a slowly escalating witch hunt against the Socialist government and the Communist Party ministers.

Bergeron, backed by the right wing press, has accused the CP ministers of placing their own men in key civil service posts.

Earlier this month he hypocritically declared,

"It has never been a question of drawing up a blacklist or whatever else for that matter... We simply want the Communist ministers to conduct themselves in a manner acceptable to FO and its organisations. This has not been the case so far. We shall say this openly and prove it with actual documented cases".

Empty

Bergeron is play-acting — following in the tradi-

tion of Joe McCarthy during the 1950s, who would appear before the cameras and press at the House Un-American Activities Committee brandishing a mysterious white envelope and declaring, 'I have here five names of Communists who occupy leading positions...' etc.

Someone eventually opened the envelope and discovered that it was empty.

Bergeron's attacks are equally devoid of any truth. Allegations that the French CP is infiltrating the state and 'planting' members in key positions are simply fantasy.

The CP members occupy minor cabinet posts (transport, civil service, vocational training, and health), and have been very tame junior partners to the Socialists.

Bergeron is significantly silent about Mitterrand's decision to incorporate bourgeois ministers in his government — like Pompidou's former no.2 Michel Jobert. He has until now studiously posed as simply 'an a-political trade unionist'.

This supposed reluctance to become involved in the murky world of politics was the pretext for opposition within FO to the pre-election movement 'to kick out Giscard'.

Kicking out an openly anti working class capitalist party was too political for Bergeron! It seems he is now making up lost ground, however, by witch hunting Mitterrand's class collaborationist government.

One question that Marxists will ask is how the French Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI) will respond to Bergeron's latest antics.

The OCI — the largest self-styled Trotskyist group in France — has had a long-term political accommodation to Bergeron and the FO leadership, as a result of which dozens of OCI members hold down bureaucratic posts within the union federation.

But the OCI has also given its ecstatic greeting to the Mitterrand election victory. Will it now defend Mitterrand's government against Bergeron's attacks? Or will OCI members in FO continue to keep their heads down?

The task in reality is to campaign within the French working class for the ousting of the bourgeois ministers from Mitterrand's pro-imperialist, pro-capitalist government, and for mass action to fight unemployment and defend working class living standards.



Workers called for an SP-CP government — and got bourgeois ministers

WHAT'S ON

Ads for Socialist Organiser events and many campaigns are carried free. Paid ads: 5p per word, £4 per column inch. Send to: Socialist Organiser (What's On), 28 Middle Lane, London N8.

IRELAND

Greenwich Labour Party Day conference: Ireland — a way forward? Saturday November 28, 9.30 to 5.30, at Goldsmiths College Students' Union, New Cross, London SE14. Creche available. Lunch provided. Registration £2.50. Details from Greenwich Labour Party, 32 Woolwich Rd, London SE10.

Sinn Fein Manchester Martyrs commemoration: Sunday November 29, assemble 1.30 at Patrick's Church, Livesey St, off Oldham Road.

POLAND

Polish Solidarity Campaign. Public meeting: Poland's crisis — is Solidarity to blame? Monday November 30, 7.30, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London WC1. Speakers: Jimmy Reid, Neil Kinnock MP, and Phillip Whitehead MP.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Socialist Forum for Southern Africa Solidarity: meeting on 'Women and the Liberation Struggle in Namibia'. Saturday November 28, 3pm to 6pm, at Caxton House, St Johns Way, London N19.

WOMEN

Public meeting on Women's Right to Work demonstration to be called by the National Executive of the Labour Party. Wednesday, December 9, at 7.30, South Hank Poly Students Union, Rotary St, London SE1. Invited speakers: Joyce Gould (Labour party women's organiser), Jo Richardson MP, Frances O'Grady, Susan Shell, and a speaker from the trade union movement.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Scottish unemployed conference

Saturday November 28, 10.30-5.30, at Cowane Centre, Cowane St, Stirling.

Called by Stirling and Edinburgh Unemployed Workers' Associations, and open to all unemployed and employed workers.

March for Jobs, to mark the end of the Jobs Express. Sunday 29 November, Hyde Park to Jubilee Gardens, South Bank. Rally starts at 2pm.

Leigh Youth Campaign against unemployment: March against unemployment, Mosley Common to Leigh via Tyldesley and Atherton. Saturday November 28, assemble 11am outside Mosley Common Labour Club. Eve of march social: Friday 27th, from 7.30, at St Paul's Labour Club, Leigh. Adm. £1.

LABOUR LEFT

All London Labour Lefts meeting called by Lambeth Labour Left, to discuss how to organise against the Heseltine legislation and prepare for the London Labour Party conference on December 12. 7.30, Friday November 27, at County Hall, London SE1.

London Labour Briefing fringe meeting for London Labour Party conference: 12.30pm, Saturday 12th, at Camden Town Hall. 'The Battle for Power': speakers, Tony Benn, Ken Livingstone, Jo Richardson. Adm. 50p.

London Labour Briefing social: Saturday December 12, Caxton House, St Johns Way, London N19. Hot food, curries, disco, bar. Adm. £1.

MARXISM

London Workers' Socialist League classes on basic Marxism: a fortnightly series, alternate Fridays from January 8. For details of registration and venue, write to PO Box 135, London N1 0DD.

Socialist Organiser meetings and forums

LAMBETH: 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: Sundays at 7.30, at the Leicester Socialist Centre, High St (above Blackthorn Books). Nov.29: Chile/Bolivia: the role of the military in Latin America.

LEIGH: Sundays at 7.30 at the White Lion, opposite the Market. Nov.29: Poland, the working class and Stalinism. Dec.13: Ireland and the British Labour Movement.

OXFORD: Wednesdays at 8pm, at 44b Princes St. Dec 2: The crisis of the Fourth International Dec.16: The nuclear threat.

ISLINGTON: Socialist Organiser meetings every other Tuesday at the 'Florence', Florence St, near the Town Hall. Next meeting December 8.

Brighton Socialist Organiser meeting. Thursday 3 December at 7.30 pm, Sussex University Students Union. Video showing of the Ken Loach documentary, A Question of Leadership.

Labour Party

Take the fight into the unions!

Arthur Bough continues the debate on organising the Labour Left

VLADIMIR DERER (SO 61) says that the 'ultra-left' (presumably he includes SO supporters in this term) should ask ourselves why we have been so unsuccessful in achieving anything when CLPD 'with its much smaller forces' has managed to contribute to major victories.

The majority of us 'ultra lefts' have supported CLPD as its individual members, and many more 'ultra lefts' have supported its aims in the Party branches and trade unions. But I think Vladimir is deluding himself if he believes that by abstaining from committing itself on political issues CLPD has won any measure of support from right wingers in the party.

Fragmentation

The left's weakness lies not in its advocacy of clear socialist policies but in its fragmentation. When we 'ultra lefts' in SO initiated the Rank and File Mobilising Committee, we were able in some measure to overcome this fragmentation and achieved a lot for democratic reform in one year.

It is totally false to say that most trade unionists expressed a preference for Denis Healey. Most trade unionists were never consulted.

It is also false to say that support for Healey was because of Benn's policies. The democratically decided policies of most unions are far more in sympathy with those of Healey. It would be more logical therefore to say that it was the Left's past failure to take the argument about democratic reforms to



the unions and the wider movement which cost Tony Benn votes.

Vladimir Derer's disdain for extra Parliamentary activities seems to show a static view of workers' consciousness.

Workers' consciousness

does not rise in a straight upward line. It may rise sharply as a result of a particular event (as happened with steel workers during their strike) or in relation to a particular issue (e.g. nuclear disarmament) and then fall again just as sharp-

ly as a result of a defeat, or worse, a refusal by the leaders to fight.

Vladimir's view, in my opinion, is a direct result of years of conditioning and seeing everything in the narrow terms of fighting for limited changes in the Labour Party—in other words, routinism. It ignores the possibility of rapid and qualitative growth and change in times of sharp class struggle.

Mobilisations

Such rapid growth of consciousness does not always flow neatly through the channels of constitutional reform.

This is why Vladimir ignores the big mobilisations outside the Party in the ANL and CND for example. We cannot appeal to such people, he argues, until Labour's credibility 'as the champion of the interests of the working class and other disadvantaged sections of our society' is regained.

But this begs the question, How can this credibility be restored if Labour Party policy (or its interpretation by the leadership) is anti-working class, and how are we to overcome this if we are not prepared to fight here and now for socialist policies to be adopted, and for a leadership prepared to carry them out?

Hostile

What chance is there of Labour gaining credibility in the eyes of the hundreds of thousands of CND supporters when we have Defence spokespeople who are totally hostile to unilateralism?

We should be turning to mass movements like CND, pointing out that Labour has a policy of unilateralism and that through the reselection procedure they can ensure it is carried out. We should be turning to the trade unions to ensure that the process of democratisation is extended and that Chapple, Duffy, Basnett and the rest of the right wing mafia cannot overturn the decisions on the electoral college, and reselection.

Lastly, to tone down campaigning for reform and for socialist policies because the right wing accuse us of creating divisions could only appear to most workers as an admission on our part that we were responsible for the divisions in the Party, and for Labour's poor performance. Instead we should argue that much more that it is the right who are the splitters.

It is they who refuse to be bound by democratic decisions; it is they who attack Tony Benn for arguing Labour Party policy in Parliament; it is they who constantly appear on TV attacking party policy as ludicrous; it is they who by refusing to provide a clear alternative to the Tories and by suggesting that the Labour Left want a totalitarian regime are responsible for Labour's lack of support.

At the last election the working class was given a choice between two Tory parties, and many workers chose the real one. If at the next election we give them a choice between two SDPs, they will do the same again.

ARTHUR BOUGH
Stoke

A voice for women in the block vote

In the Campaign for Labour Party Democracy column this week, Mandy Moore reports on the CLPD Women's Action Committee conference.

MORE than twenty people came to the annual meeting of the CLPD's Women's Action Committee.

The meeting was opened by Ann Pettifor with a stimulating introduction on the tasks facing Labour women. We had, she said, to learn map-reading and know where we are going; we had to get the engine in working order — with constitutional changes to give us a functioning organisation, and we had to move into the driving seat.

Her talk was followed by a relaxed discussion, in which the only discordant note was struck by one woman who thought men had more important things to do than make tea, and that an understanding wife knew that working men had to recoup their dignity by being masters in their own home.

Several women reported on the problems of organising when a male-dominated local Labour Party considered that doing anything for Labour women was 'sexist'.

Much of the discussion centred on the problems of getting more women into parliament. Ann Pettifor had given disturbing figures on the number of women selected so far: out of 170 completed reselections, less than 20 had been women and only seven of those could be counted as safe seats. So the idea of positive discrimination isn't enough: it's still necessary to pin it down constitutionally.

Various suggestions came up for how a women's section could help, such as to raise the money to 'sponsor' the cost of one woman, and take on themselves to help her out with any child-minding she might need in order to run for selection.

WAC secretary Heather Gaebler reported in the afternoon on the successes of WAC over the year,

notably winning a reference back at Annual Conference on positive discrimination, and the successful fringe meeting there.

The three resolutions tabled were debated, raising some interesting new points. The main resolution, moved by Mandy Moore for WAC, set out three priorities: abolition of all-male shortlists; election of the NEC women's section by the women's conference; and continued campaigning to enable the women's conference to table five motions to Annual Conference, to be debated as of right in whatever part of the agenda they related to [as against a 'women's debate'].

Election of the NEC women's section by women's conference raised the controversial question of the block vote. Harriet Harman warned that if we built up support for this demand and looked like winning it, the unions would reply with a demand to have a block vote for their delegates at the women's conference.

Campaign for Labour Party Democracy

Harriet thought this would badly inhibit the ability of the conference to break new ground, especially as women in the union delegations at women's conference are often dominated by full-timers who instruct them on how to vote.

The discussion was taken up by Mandy Moore, Ann Pettifor and Rachel Lever, who all felt that the block vote should not be opposed in principle, as in theory it represented hundreds of thousands of women workers who we would wish to draw into our political debates. But it was necessary to establish that these rank and file women had control of such a block vote, and not the men in the unions who totally dominate conferences like the TGWU's Biennial.

Contact

Another point was the need to make a special point of making contact with and organising the trade union delegates at the women's conference.

A motion from Rachel Lever suggested that CLPD should campaign for an extension to the unions of the idea of an extra woman delegate for every so many thousand affiliated women members. This is a little known rule in the Labour Party which allows for extra women delegates to come to Annual Conference, and could be used to get more women in trade union delegations to Annual Conference, without provoking too much paranoia from the men.

Carried

The motion was carried, while an amendment to stiffen it by making it mandatory fell.

Ann Pettifor's motion, reaffirming our commitment to the demand for women's conference to elect the National Committee of Labour Women, was also carried.

Mandy Moore, Ann Pettifor, Heather Gaebler and Glenys Thornton were elected from WAC to sit on the main CLPD executive.

Fightback for accountability in Labour's women's sections

Rachel Lever, secretary of Women's Fightback, explained Fightback's view on how the Labour women's organisation must be transformed in an interview with Mary Mills in the official Labour women's bulletin, 'Focus'.

Women's Fightback has had a lot to say about the Women's Organisation. Don't you fear that women who have been building women's sections for years before Fightback existed may accuse you of being just a trendy young Londoner putting out bright ideas that aren't really relevant?

It's true I live in London, but I'm neither young nor trendy. More important, though, is that what Fightback has been saying about women in the Labour Party has got support and raised interest all over the country, and not just in the big towns—we get inquiries, letters of support and orders for the paper from Norfolk and Somerset to Scotland. I've noticed that when I've spoken at meetings of local Labour Parties, some of the most enthusiastic responses are coming from older women.

How did Women's Fightback start?

We started by a group of us calling a conference, in March 1980. It was at the time of the Corrie Bill, but we were also concerned about the cutback in maternity rights included in the Employment Act, and the growing signs that women were losing out most in the cuts. The other big issue that concerned us, were the attacks on black women with the new Immigration rules.

Did you see the Fightback campaign-taking on all these issues?

Yes, if we could. But we also wanted to fight for the trade unions and the Labour Party to make women's rights a priority. We saw that this would mean big changes in the way that women were organised in the Labour movement, and big changes in the structures and attitudes which at the moment at best, only pay lip-service to women.

Do you think the Women's Organisation is able to do this?

The Women's Organisation is changing very fast. There's a new generation that wants to make it work but, if I can put it this way, they don't feel that it is actually on their side.

There was a lot of bewilderment at the last conference, and many women were very alienated by the way it was run, and angry that they had to fight against a platform that they hadn't even elected. They also felt that the 'old-timers' knew what it was all about and had it all sewn up, which I'm not sure is true: for instance I spoke to one older woman who had come to conference for the first time on her own, and didn't even know that she could get up and speak in the debates if she wasn't down to move a resolution!

Fightback has been identified with very distinct calls for changes in the Women's Organisation. What are they?

resources, and a popular campaigning newspaper. Then there are a number of changes in the way it functions. Finally we want to see its position in the Labour Party strengthened.

To take the last of these first, we argue that since we can't make policy ourselves we should have channels through to Annual Conference. We put forward a very simple idea, and we thought a modest one, that the Women's Conference should be able to send five resolutions through to Annual Conference. That way we could be sure of a routine, continuing debate on women's rights (or other things that women considered important). Constitutionally it would mean that for this particular purpose we would be treated as an affiliated organisation.

Rejected

We were really disappointed that even this simple idea was rejected and opposed by the National Women's Committee. It was argued that Regional and Young Socialist Conferences would want the same 'privilege', but it's easy to see that women are in a very different situation—we're half the population and are totally cut out of decision making. You couldn't say that about the others.

Another thing is that it would be a really good



Labour Women's Conference: 'many women were very alienated by the way it was run'.

answer to those women who say they don't want to be hived off into the Women's Organisation. A bridge between the Women's Conference and Annual Conference would mean that women's concerns weren't hived off into a safe corner any more.

What about the Women's Section of the NEC?

We think they should be elected by, and be accountable to the Women's Conference, in the way that the LPYS Conference does. At the moment all the pressures on the Women's Section come from male trade unionists. Of course that raises another big question: I think some of the trade union section should be set aside for women. And though the Party can't legislate for this

in its own constitution, I think it should bring strong pressure on the unions to ensure that their delegations to Annual Conference are properly balanced between men and women, to represent their own members better. All we see at the moment is men supposedly representing their women members.

You said you also wanted to see changes in the Women's Organisation itself. What would your priorities be?

The crucial thing is to have the National Committee elected at the Women's Conference. Open election at regional conferences, which was agreed this year, is a very big improvement on the old postal ballot. But it still leaves

a huge dislocation between the platform and the delegates at Conference, it doesn't give any representation to the trade union delegates at the Conference, and above all there is no accountability for the decisions of Conference. This isn't just a pet idea of ours. The whole party is up in arms over accountability. Until we get this changed, I don't think there will be any real accountability in the Women's Organisation.

Don't you think we might end up with a London-based National Committee?

There are ways we can guard against that—don't forget that the weight of votes at Conference will be from the regions anyway. If necessary, there can be a separate regional section—and a

separate trade union section, come to that!

How do you see such an accountable leadership functioning? What difference would it make?

That would depend on what Conference wanted it to do. At the moment, most of the resolutions are focused on the 'next Labour Government'. But there's a lot we can do in opposition, and even with a Labour Government we'll have to keep up the pressure on it. We've got to become an effective campaigning body. The other thing that I think is important is for the Women's Organisation to look critically at the structures and methods of the party, to make them less alienating towards women.

The resolution that was

carried from my own Women's Section calling for a National Demonstration for a Woman's Right to Job, is a chance to launch a really big campaigning initiative. If we had an accountable National Committee, it would automatically take up a call like that and do it seriously. At present everything is optional. I hope that they'd take it up—it would be a good sign, and help to get more positive feel about the direction of the Women's Organisation.

Contact: Women's Fightback, 41, Ellington St., London N7.

Reid slams Benn's stand

by Ian McCalman

MEETING on Saturday 14th, the executive of the Scottish Council of the Labour Party issued a statement backing Tony Benn, stating that "a Shadow Cabinet which does not include Mr Benn would not be wholly representative of the Labour Party".

The motion went on to say, "It is quite clear from the results of the deputy leadership election that Mr Benn commands broad and significant support in the labour movement. Therefore the executive expresses the hope that the Parliamentary Labour Party

will take cognisance of clearly expressed feelings of the party in the country when casting their votes in the election"

Attack

But in the Glasgow Herald, on the same day, James Reid, erstwhile 'hero' of the UCS shipyard closure struggle in 1971, launched an attack on Benn's defence of conference policy, denouncing his statement on the renationalisation without compensation of North Sea Oil assets sold by the Tories as leading a future Labour government to the position where it would (Reid recoils in horror) actually 'confiscate property'.

Concentrated

Of course socialists might sometimes favour compensation for small investors, but that is not what we are concerned with here. Most of the shares in North Sea Oil offered on the market by the Tories will be snapped up by the major oil companies and the big financial institutions, or be concentrated in the hands of the richest five per cent of the population who already own 96 per

cent of company stocks and shares.

The anti-Benn forces in the Party are not anxiously defending the savings of 'indigent gentlefolk', but the sanctity of the wealth and power of monopoly capitalism.

Credentials

Reid has recently contributed to a work entitled 'Manifesto', in the company of several supporters of Tony Benn. There he paraded his credentials as a staunch antagonist of monopoly capitalism. Now when the chips are down in the Labour Party, Reid rushes to the defence of the right wing.

The virus of accommodation to the needs of capitalism that Reid contracted in the Communist Party lives on to pollute his present political environment.

Perhaps he is not unmindful of the fact that the day on which his article appeared Michael Foot was addressing a rally of a thousand people in Glasgow. Foot said that the Labour Party must be transformed in a radical way on the basis of the following principles:

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Reid: The virus contracted in the CP lives on

We think it needs its own

FIGHTING FOR

OUR CONFERENCE

LAST weekend 21st/22nd over 100 youth came to London for the founding conference of the National Left Wing Youth Movement. The conference came at a time when youth are under tremendous attacks from the Tory government from all angles. The aim of the conference was to launch a movement that will involve working class youth from the queue, from work, and from the schools to in building a movement capable of challenging Thatcher and the bosses' system.

As Jo Thwaites, joint editor of our paper 'Class War', explained, we are trying to turn the existing youth movement youth organisation, the Labour Party Young Socialists, into fighting revolutionary youth movement.

"We are part of the YS, the biggest youth movement in Britain and recognised as such by the Labour movement. At this

conference we are setting ourselves the task of challenging the existing leadership of the YS, the 'Militant' group.

"This is a serious business. And that's why this conference is so important. We're working out through discussions and our experiences the policies which will guide our work and win youth to the banner of revolutionary socialism.

"Everyone here has something to contribute to this through the workshops, amendments to the policy documents and resolutions. Let's get on with the job."

For the rest of the weekend we thrashed out the policies that would take us through the next year guiding us in our struggles. The policies were finally incorporated into a document which when produced in its pamphlet form will be both a guide to action and also a statement and explanation of where we stand.

All through the conference we heard of the attacks on the basic rights of youth — the right to a decent job, the right to live without the threat of being blown up at the push of a button, the rights of young women to live as equals and the rights of our brothers and sisters in other countries to live without the oppression of imperialism — all these rights are denied us by the rotten capitalist system, the bosses' system.

The mood right the way through the conference was that the only way we can gain all these basic rights is by smashing the system and replacing it by socialism.

The massive mobilisations of youth on the CND demonstration and the riots showed that we are prepared to fight back. The conference recognised that the fightback has to have a correct leadership. That's what we're trying to build and the conference on the

whole represented a step towards achieving that.

In his summing up of the conference, Mick Liggins, secretary of the movement, emphasised the need to go out and organise.

"The conference has shown we are serious about taking the leadership of the YS. We won't achieve that simply by arguing that we're right.

"What we've got to do is go back to our areas and build. That means leading struggles to win, and bringing youth from those struggles into the YS and behind the banner of the National Left Wing Youth Movement."

The conference succeeded in winning a lot of new youth to the movement. The attitude of the youth that had come to their first political event was summed up by one of the comrades who had travelled through the night from Glasgow, "Don't forget to tell me when your next conference is. I'll be there."



We need action - not just protest

IN THE youth unemployment workshop, Bob Towers, from a TGWU branch in Liverpool that organises the unemployed, spoke of the reluctance of the national trade union leadership to organise the young unemployed.

The TUC had organised the People's March for Jobs (which Bob was on), and a demo at the end of it attracted 100,000 workers showing their support for the young unemployed. But the TUC did nothing to build on the strength of that.

Instead they are organis-

ing a train load of youth to go round the country 'protesting' against unemployment.

The feeling of the workshop was that we have to put pressure on the unions and build a movement that the TUC cannot ignore. Many areas had already built groups linked to the National Unemployed Workers' Movement.

In the YOPs workshop Dave Curtis, a YOP worker from Merseyside, explained that he was doing a building labourer's job for £23.50 a week. We didn't need to say what a rip-off YOPs is because

we already knew.

We talked about how we could organise YOPs into the unions, and passed proposals for branches to set up local YOPs bulletins, to write more for Class Fighter and Socialist Organisation on YOPs, and to produce a pamphlet.

We decided to work in the campaign the YS has set up for YOP workers, but we emphasised the need for it to go further than the unions do in its demands, and to involve YOP workers rather than YS hacks like Andy Bevan and Kevin Ramage in the leadership of the campaign.



Discussing positive discrimination for women

World struggle and CND

THROUGHOUT the world youth have played a major part in struggles such as Vietnam, El Salvador and Nicaragua, with the liberation armies made up mainly of youth.

The conference passed the section in the document on internationalism which was presented by a young comrade who comes from Chile. The document outlined the need to organise international solidarity as well as making links with youth in struggle around the world.

A workshop on Ireland

discussed the latest developments with Ian Paisley and his bigots trying to stir up hatred against the Catholic minority in the North, as well as emphasising the need to defend the Republicans against British imperialism unconditionally whilst having criticisms of their methods. The role of the Labour government and the Labour 'opposition' on Northern Ireland was emphasised strongly in the document as well as in the workshop.

The discussion on CND

centred around the debate on the defence of nationalised property relations in the Soviet Union against imperialism. After a constructive discussion an amendment opposing defence of the Soviet Union was heavily voted down.

The need to work in CND and Young CND was shown by the massive turnout of youth on CND demos, and the conference emphasised a serious approach to this work. We opposed the call by national CND to reduce the age limit of YCND from 21 to 18.

THE LPYS AND THE SOCIALIST WAY FORWARD

THE workshop on the politics of Militant was introduced by Dale Ackroyd, an ex-Militant supporter, who pointed out the differences we have with 'Militant' on Ireland, on women and on the peaceful road to socialism which 'Militant' now advocate.

He argued that it is impossible for the working class to take power without a fight, and highly dangerous to suggest that the bosses will concede their wealth by popular demand. The answer to women's or gay oppression is not just the nationalisation of the top 200 monopolies but a fight for the immediate interests of the oppressed.

The discussion that followed centred around the method of 'Militant', which, we said, is propaganda rather than action.

The need to fight 'Militant' with action amongst youth was stressed.

The section on the workers' government spelt out the need for a government that was accountable to the working class rather than the bosses. It pointed out that previous Labour governments had done the

bosses' dirty work for them, and this must be stopped.

As the conference recognised, if we are to achieve all the aims we want, then we are going to have to have a government that can begin to implement them — a workers' government.



Dale Ackroyd

The discussion was introduced by Andy Dixon of Stockport YS. He felt that the section could be improved, and proposed that conference adopt it, but submit it to the new steering committee for further discussion. We agreed.

Young women's rights

IN THE introduction to the women's workshop, Kate Williams of Wolverhampton YS explained how women's oppression is related to capitalist society. She also discussed the question of sexism in the labour movement, and how young women were particularly oppressed.

There was a discussion on the age of consent and other legislation, whether we are in favour of abolishing it or lowering it. There was some discussion on Women's Fightback and also whether we should

SOCIALIST

THE conference decided to sponsor the paper Socialist Organisation, recognising the assistance both political and practical SO has given to the movement, as well as the political agreement that we have with SO. In the

NATIONAL LEFT-WING YOUTH

A FUTURE!



AFTER THE RIOTS...

IN THE workshop on the riots of June and July of this year, we looked at why the riots had taken place. We decided that they were a mixture of anger by youth at attacks on them and provocation by the police. We said the police were acting on behalf of the Tories, trying to impose social discipline on youth to go with the political discipline (unemployment) that they have inflicted on the working class. It obviously misfired.

We passed a resolution saying we should argue in local defence organisations for a national conference bringing together organisations that are, or should be, fighting to defend

the youth arrested, like the trade unions, Labour Party and NCCL.

In the anti-racist workshop there were discussions on the recent escalation of racist attacks, and the situation in London where the fascists are taking over areas to sell their papers while the labour movement and a good proportion of the left, like the national ANL, sit back and let them get on with it.

The workshop emphasised the need to organise proper defence against the fascists and to mobilise strongly for all anti-racist demonstrations.

A resolution calling for special defence groups was defeated by the conference,



Morag Sarkar (from Leicester) spoke on the Bradford 12.

although the conference document which was accepted emphasises the need for us to be organised against fascist attacks.



Linda Mouldsdales (right) explaining her view of what sexism is

try to relate to the feminist movement or not. Most of us thought we should.

There was a discussion on positive discrimination during which some Militant ex-members were con-

vinced of the need for it. Out of the discussion came a proposal that the steering committee be elected with positive discrimination, to be half men and half women.

After discussion the conference decided to endorse the proposal as well as a resolution on starting a women's campaign from the NLWYM in conjunction with Women's Fightback.

SOCIALIST ORGANISER

fight for democracy in the Labour Party, in the fight to defend youth arrested in the July riots, and on many other issues our movements have worked closely together.

Sponsorship does not

mean NLWYM is automatically committed to all the politics of Socialist Organiser, but that we endorse it as a valuable contribution to the labour movement's press — our alternative to the Fleet

Street lie machine. Many comrades felt there should be more youth articles in SO, and some of us agreed to write them on YOPs and on the defence of arrested youth — as well as writing this report.

MOVEMENT



Kate Williams

ELECTED

The new Steering Committee elected at the Conference is:

Ruth Davies [Wallasey], Jo Thwaites [Islington], Mick Liggins [Wolverhampton], Constantin [Camden], Caroline Lees

[Bristol], Kate Williams [Wolverhampton], Judith Bonner [Coventry], Peter Cashman [Wallasey], Jim Kearns [Glasgow], Chris Marsh [Woolwich], Linda Mouldsdales [Ware], Phil Sharpe [Nottingham], and Baz [Coventry].

GAY RIGHTS

THE major problem at the workshop was lack of time, but we managed to cover a wide area, including the law; differences between the oppression of lesbians and gay men; sexism within the gay movement; gay culture; gays and the labour movement; and gay youth.

It was obvious that the labour movement has a long way to go in relating to gays and tackling the question of sexual oppression as a whole.

Although there have been recent positive steps, e.g. the Labour Party paper 'The Rights of Gay Men and Women', we've progressed very little beyond 'demanding' gay rights to actually organising any fight to achieve the demand.

That's one of the major changes we hope for from the workshop. Class Fighter supporters will be stepping up the fight for the labour movement to recognise that gay rights is part and parcel of the struggle for socialism.

This means having serious discussion and education on gay rights at Labour Party and trade union meetings — and not just passing resolutions in support of gay rights, but getting out on the demos and pickets alongside the gay men and lesbians.



Clive Bradley

We also decided that we need to organise ourselves into a group. So the gay comrades at the workshop will be meeting in the near future to co-ordinate activity, to continue the discussion, and to make sure the work is done consistently.



Class Fighter, paper of the National Left Wing Youth Movement.

10p plus postage from NLWYM, Box 5277, London WC1N 3XX.

Betrayals whittle down CP

THE British Communist Party continues to lurch deeper into crisis. Last week's 37th Congress saw not only the (now routine) annual announcement of the loss of 2,000 more members and a drop of 2,000 in circulation of the Morning Star: it also brought open divisions reflecting political impasse.

On virtually every policy decision there were sharp differences: but there was unanimity in silence over the betrayals perpetrated in the class struggle by CP members since the last annual congress.

Under heavy pressure from delegates, the Party leadership supported a resolution criticising its own slowness in changing the Morning Star.

Delegates slammed into their Party's paper: West of England district secretary Neville Carey complained for instance that,

"The paper is all too often dull and boring", and that he often read it only as "a chore". With support like that, small wonder sales have slumped!

Class

Some critics of the Star complained that it was losing any class character and dissolving itself in the "broad democratic movement". John Foster, Scottish organiser for the Star, criticised the leadership's resolution as "a disaster", and argued the need to develop a base in the working class.

But such a base could only be developed on the foundation of a clear political challenge to the Labour and trade union bureaucracy — with whom the CP seeks to coexist.

Affiliation to the Labour Party was a big issue at the conference. If the CP really had anything to offer for the struggle for socialism, it would be vigorously joining with those fighting inside the Labour Party. But in fact the CP is considerably to the right of substantial sections of the Labour Party, and the CP leaders can't support involvement in the Labour Party — because their organisation would just disappear into the Labour Party's soft left!

Crisis

The vote against an immediate campaign for affiliation was three to one.

The crisis of the CP in Britain is no accident. It is part of the world-wide crisis of Stalinism. The rise of class struggle both in the capitalist countries and in the deformed workers' states — in particular Poland — has sharpened the conflict between the working class and their bureaucratic leaders.

The British CP can no longer rely on the once unassailable prestige of Stalin's Kremlin leadership, the former monolithic conformity of the world Stalinist movement, or its own former ruthless suppression of opposition to hold the line.

Intensify

As workers turn increasingly to the left of the Labour Party and/or the revolutionary left to advance the struggle for socialism, the crisis of the CPGB can only intensify.

This opens up great opportunities for Marxists in the unions. Socialist Organiser supporters should press home this advantage by drawing the best militants away from the CP and its front organisations towards the Socialist Organiser Alliance.

There was no criticism, for example, of Sheet Metal Workers' general secretary George Guy for knifing the BL workers' pay struggle this year, or of Longbridge convenor Jack Adams for sinking the pay struggle last year and isolating the battle against the victimisation of six Longbridge workers last November.

Nor was there any criticism of the CP line on the People's March, which was to struggle against giving the March a working class character and to press for the involvement of so-called 'progressive' bourgeois figures — local bosses, bishops, and even Tories.

Pressure

This line of class collaboration, and a commitment to the Parliamentary politics spelled out since 1952 in successive versions of 'The British Road to Socialism', represents common ground between the CP leadership and its various oppositional currents — including the split-away New Communist Party.

But for some years the other pole of CP policy — commitment to support the foreign policy of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union — has come under growing internal pressure, which erupted last year into outright opposition by the leadership of the CPGB to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.

Invasion

This year again saw a fierce debate on Afghanistan, with the Party divided down the middle on the issue. Pro-Moscow loyalists rallied a surprisingly strong 115 votes against a leadership vote of only 157.

The complete absence of a principled opposition within the CP was underlined by the debate on Poland. The hard-line Stalinist opposition argued in favour of a Soviet intervention to crush the new Polish workers' movement: the 'Eurocommunist' leadership majority, guided in this by 'theoretician' Monty Johnstone, replied that invasion was not necessary since the Polish Stalinist party was doing the job itself.

But at least one challenge to the leadership came from a progressive direction — with moves to overturn the CP's opposition to the demand for immediate withdrawal of troops from Ireland.

UNDERSTANDING Marxism and the Polish revolution

SOLIDARNOSC

John Lister concludes his series on Poland

To understand Solidarnosc — the new Polish labour movement that has arisen from the strike wave in 1980 — is to probe into a bundle of profound contradictions.

Among its supporters and active members are to be found Polish nationalists, devout Catholics, and sections of workers with illusions that the IMF and Western banks can help bail out the bankrupt Polish economy.

Solidarnosc has been praised by Reagan, by Frank Chapple, by Thatcher and by Pope John Paul II; it has secured financial backing from the anti-communist leaders of the American AFL-CIO trade unions.

Condemned

And of course it has been roundly and predictably condemned as 'pro-capitalist' and 'anti-socialist' by Stalinist leaders in Poland, the rest of Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union and some Communist Parties in the West.

The Stalinist criticism can be dismissed as a cynical attempt at self-defence by totalitarian regimes which stand in fear that their parasitic power and privilege might be stripped from them by a mobilised working class.

And the fact that Solidarnosc is supported in Poland and by some confused and even reactionary forces shows us only one side of a complex social movement, which comprises ten million Polish workers and represents the most substantial and sustained challenge to Stalinist rule since the second world war.

No evidence

Despite the propaganda claims of the Stalinists, for example, there is no evidence of any substantial current within Solidarnosc favouring the overturn of Poland's nationalised property relations and the restoration of capitalism.

Nor is there evidence that Reagan, Thatcher or anti-communists within the labour movement seriously expect such a current to emerge.

Solidarnosc has rather been hypocritically used for propaganda purposes by the imperialism to attack the lack of 'democracy' and poor living standards in the deformed workers' states — while Thatcher and Reagan themselves move to slash workers' living standards, destroy social services and attack the trade union movement through legislation and confrontation.

But at the same time as slapping the Polish workers on the back and warning the Soviet Union against an invasion, the imperialist leaders have taken important steps to prop up the flagging Polish regime.

Reagan has lifted the US embargo on the sale of grain to the USSR; the EEC has provided increased shipments of scarce foodstuffs; and Western bank-



Solidarnosc: 'The most sustained challenge to Stalinist rule since the Second World War'

ers have rallied round with new and extended loans to reduce the pressure of Poland's \$27 billion international debts and give the Stalinist leaders the leeway to contain the struggles of the workers.

Far from believing that Solidarnosc offered the prospect of toppling Stalinism in favour of capitalist restoration in Poland, the imperialist leaders have recognised that the revolutionary struggle in Eastern Europe could, if successful, spill over into revolutionary struggle in the capitalist countries too.

In the same way the role of the Church as supporter of Solidarnosc must be understood. While the Catholic leaders are prepared to use the popular movement in order to improve their position within the Polish society, they have no interest in sponsoring any direct challenge to the power of the bureaucracy.

The development of relations between the Church and the Stalinist regime has been an uneven one.

Established

In the 1940s the Church strongly opposed some of the progressive reforms war regime—the legalisation of abortion, divorce and civil marriage.

But in 1950 a deal was struck in which the Church leaders carved themselves out an established place in society in exchange for

support for the regime. The bishops called upon Catholics to 'respect the laws and institutions of the state', and lent their support to the Stalinist show trials taking place throughout Eastern Europe.

In exchange they were granted a Catholic university — the only one in Eastern Europe.

Support

The struggles of 1956 which brought the emergence of workers' councils in Poland, saw the bureaucracy, led by Gomulka, turn to the Church and peasantry for further support against the proletariat.

In a complete capitulation to the peasantry and in an abandonment of any socialist plan for agriculture, virtually the whole of the land was decollectivised, with only 10% left in the hands of the state. And the Church was granted the right to its representatives in Parliament and to publish newspapers.

In exchange the Church threw its weight behind a vote for Gomulka in the elections.

By the end of the 1960s such collaboration had borne impressive fruit for the Catholic hierarchy: there were, for instance, three times more nuns and twice as many monks as there had been in the 1930s, and bishops were paid more than Central Committee members of

the Polish Stalinist party!

In 1970 Gomulka's successor Edward Gierek turned again to the Church leaders to support the bureaucracy against the uprising of the working class — securing a call from Cardinal Wyszyński for an end to the strike.

The Church does not therefore see its role as directly counterposed to the bureaucracy: indeed much of its power has flowed precisely from its alliance with the bureaucracy. And it is by no means certain that the ousting of the Stalinist regime by a mass, militant, popular movement of workers would increase the power and influence of the Church.

While Wyszyński was quite willing therefore to allow the Gdansk strikers to make demands for the broadcasting of mass and other concessions to the Church, he was quick to call for a return to 'calm and honest work' on the outbreak of the struggle.

And on August 26th, while supporting the strikers' demands, he warned again that long strikes were a threat to the nation. So embarrassing was this speech that Catholic spokesmen were obliged to claim it had been falsified by the Polish press.

By December 1980 a Council of Bishops state-

ment declared unambiguously that:

'It is forbidden to undertake actions that could raise the danger of a threat to the freedom and statehood of the fatherland.'

'The efforts of all Poles must be aimed at strengthening the initial process of renewal and at creating conditions to fulfil the social contract between the authorities and the community.'

More recently still Wyszyński's successor Glemp has been formally drawn by the Jaruzelski regime into tripartite talks designed to stabilise the situation in advance of this winter's coming shortages.

Far from riding on the backs of Solidarnosc to inflict their own defeat on the bureaucracy, the church leaders have themselves been frightened of the mass movement.

Defeated

And while the close working relationship between Walesa and the Church leaders has been clear for all to see, the recent Solidarnosc conference throws some doubt over the influence of the Church on the union as a whole.

A proposal to make morning mass compulsory was defeated: only a small minority of delegates attended an optional morning service. Opposition to

Walesa from radical forces not so closely associated with the Church gathered strength — and it must be said that everyone of the Church exhortations for an end to strikes has been disregarded.

Solidarnosc is not therefore a stalking horse for Reagan or for John Paul II. But neither is it a ready-formed revolutionary leadership of the Polish workers' movement. Nobody but a daydreamer could expect it to be so. The theory and practice of revolutionary socialism has been repressed throughout Polish history — not least in the last 35 years.

Neither wing of Solidarnosc's leadership — whether 'radical' or 'moderate' — has a Marxist understanding of imperialism or the nature of the Soviet bureaucracy.

The 'moderates' (who include reformist layers of Warsaw intellectuals as well as more conservative layers of workers and sections influenced by the Church) consistently fight to limit the demands of the membership in order to seek a peaceful relationship with the bureaucracy. Their position coincides with a genuine fear amongst many workers that excessive demands may provoke an intervention.

This does not of course prevent Walesa on occasion making extremely radical speeches in order to win the support of sections of strikers and facilitate negotiations with the regime.

Threat

The 'radicals' on the other hand refuse to be restricted by the threat of Soviet intervention, and seek to give full rein to the most militant struggles. But just like the moderates their response to the bureaucrats' pleas of bankruptcy is to look towards the IMF and new loans from Western banks as a possible solution to the economic crisis.

Such a view is not that different from the bureaucrats' themselves, who have now applied to join the IMF.

The lack of any developed Marxist alternative means that such leaders continue to command the allegiance of the most determined and advanced workers, accurately reflect-

ing both the strengths and weaknesses of the movement.

And it is the lack of any recent Marxist or internationalist tradition in Poland, together with Poland's particular historical development as an oppressed nation, which has fuelled the strong element of nationalism within Solidarnosc.

This nationalism has a progressive side. It is not the chauvinism of a great power seeking to dominate a subject nation. Nor does it reflect the aspirations of a Polish capitalist class. Rather it spearheads and focusses the struggle of the Polish masses against Kremlin domination.

But it also offers a basis for intellectual forces to foster a cult of support for the reactionary nationalist regime of General Pilsudski in the 1920s and for outright anti-communist positions. As such, nationalism offers workers only confusion and misdirection. And it has also been repeatedly exploited by the bureaucracy itself — particularly in the form of anti-Semitic propaganda.

The fight for the overthrow of the Polish bureaucracy and the establishment of a revolutionary workers' government in Poland is of course bound up with the fight to prevent a Russian invasion and thus with the struggle for self-determination in Poland.

But in demanding and fighting for the removal of Soviet and Warsaw Pact troops from Poland it is important to guard against anti-communist positions. They could well Polish workers off from the necessary lessons of the Russian Revolution and Trotsky's struggle against degeneration at the hands of Stalin and the Kremlin bureaucracy.

The potential for the development of a Marxist leadership within the ranks of Solidarnosc, capable of offering a consistent way forward to the Polish workers is enormous: the ideological ferment within the movement is opening up discussion on every political issue.

Only by understanding the contradictions of the movement and recognising its significance can Marxists play their necessary role and construct a vanguard party for the Polish revolution.

Solidarnosc

THE TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM FOR SOCIALIST REVOLUTION
LEON TROTSKY

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



Labour movement must fight racist deportations

Vanessa and Matthew Kirkpatrick report on the campaign in defence of Mumtaz Kiani and her daughters Nadia and Attia.

THE STRUGGLE against racism has recently focused on a series of campaigns against deportations. The success of the appeals by Anwar Ditta, Cynthia Gordon, Nasira Begum, Jaswinda Kaur and most recently Nasreen Akhtar, proves the effectiveness of broadly-based campaigns in preventing deportations.

In West Yorkshire there are currently three people we know of under this threat: Mahmoud Khan, Aziz Malik and Mumtaz Kiani.

Mahmoud Khan lost his appeal and his case has gone to a judicial review which is assessing the legality of the tribunal. Aziz Malik is presently in jail. He is technically an illegal immigrant as a result of mistakes made by the agent he paid to arrange for him to come here. He has lived and worked here for ten years.

He left Pakistan when an army reservist to avoid being conscripted for a war with which he did not agree. He will therefore be in danger from the military regime if

her returns. Malik believed he was here legally. If he had known of his illegal status he could have acquired legality in the amnesty of 1973.

Mumtaz Kiani's case is of particular importance, for if she loses it will set a precedent. She came to Britain as a visitor in 1975. In April 1977 she married Mr Kiani and in 1978 she was given indefinite leave to remain in the United Kingdom.

In 1980 the Home Office alleged that Mr Kiani was a seaman deserter and that therefore the amnesty

granted to him in 1973 was invalid. He was deported in February 1981.

Mrs Kiani learnt that she too was to be deported and she decided to stay and appeal against the decision to 'secure a future for my daughters'.

Though both of Mrs Kiani's daughters, Attia and Nadia (aged 20 months and 4 months) are British citizens, Mrs Kiani has no right to stay here and look after them. Three people are therefore under threat of deportation because of

allegations that do not directly refer to them and which have never been proven in court.

Mumtaz Kiani told Socialist Organiser.

"The Home Office says that I have been here without leave since 1977, which is when I married Mr Kiani, even though in May 1978 they gave me indefinite leave to remain here. I am extremely angry, the fault is not mine.

"It was the job of the Home Office to find out whether Mr Kiani was here legally or illegally. I went through the legal channels and they gave me indefinite leave to remain. Now pressure has been put on the family and friends and the children are suffering."

If this case is lost it will set the precedent that the Home Office can rescind an earlier decision that granted the right to stay. This further illustrates the sexist nature of the 1971 Immi-

gration Act.

Mumtaz Kiani's right to remain here is wholly dependent upon her husband's legal status. That she came to Britain independently and was candid with the Home Office is deemed of no consequence as her husband was allegedly an illegal immigrant. Mrs Kiani told us:

"We know that immigration laws are racist but they are also an attack on women. Cases in the past have proven this. I know men have been victims but I, as a woman and others, believe that it is an attack on women and mainly black women."

Mrs Kiani has written to Mrs Kiani informing her that he has no accommodation and does not want her back. Therefore, if she returns she will have nowhere to live and no source of income. She has no relatives in Pakistan. She lives with her only brother in Bradford.

Mumtaz Kiani needs your

support. An effective campaign is her only hope. To help, you should:

1. Write a letter of protest to her MP Edward Lyons at the House of Commons, London. The Home Office Reference is K.265598 and is to be quoted on all correspondence.

2. Write a letter of protest to Timothy Raison the Minister at Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1.

3. Affiliate to the campaign. Get your organisation, union etc. to affiliate to send moral and financial support.

4. Organise a public meeting in your area.

5. Send a donation to Mumtaz Kiani Defence Committee, c/o The Fourth Idea Bookshop, 14 Southgate, Bradford 1.

As Steven Cohen, Mrs Kiani's Solicitor at the Manchester Law Centre told Socialist Organiser: "The success of Mrs Kiani's appeal depends upon the level of political activity".



Mumtaz Kiani had 'indefinite leave to remain'; her daughters Nadia and Attia were born in Britain. Yet Whitelaw and Raison want to deport them—because of irregularities in the position of Mumtaz's husband.



Tories fuel race violence

PRIOR to the last General Election, Margaret Thatcher declared in an interview that British people were understandably concerned about being 'swamped' by people of a 'different culture'. The capitalist press dutifully responded—the Daily Mail, for example, with an article on immigration entitled 'They've taken over my home town'.

The racist pledge to arrest and reverse black immigration was undoubtedly part of the Conservative's election platform.

Racist laws

Since coming to government, the Tories have pursued their policy in many ways, one being the more rigorous application of the existing racist immigration laws. The activities of Immigration Officers in preventing the entry of black people are infamous for their callous inhumanity. Coupled with this has been a concerted series of attempts at deportation.

The racism of the immigration laws has to be placed in a context of institutional racism. Black people frequently have to show their passports at hospitals and the DHSS. Black people suffer a higher level of

unemployment, and what work they do get is generally located in the lowest paid areas.

Police harassment is widespread and met its response in the riots this summer. Speaking about the police operation 'Swamp 81' in Brixton which led directly to the riots, a local member of the CID said:

"More than 1,000 people were stopped... and there were just over 100 arrests. It was a resounding success." (New Standard, 13.4.81)

A Bradford policeman, Detective Superintendent Holland said recently that 'prejudice is a state of mind brought about by experience.' He then identified 'athletic' West Indians in jeans and t-shirts as likely muggers.

Spurious charges

Twelve Bradford Asian youths are currently awaiting trial on spurious charges of conspiracy to cause damage to property and life. All of them were interrogated for days without being given access to a lawyer. For many weeks they were denied bail. In contrast, two white youths who attacked a local Asian shop with petrol bombs were immediately given bail.

The consequence of this is to set a climate in which the level of attacks on black people, their homes, clubs and places of worship has increased. The government and police have responded to this problem with insouciance if not complicity. Countless examples could be given, but three serve to make the point.

In January 1981, 13 black people died in a fire in New Cross. The inquest returned an open verdict despite evidence that a missile was thrown through a window shortly before the fire started. The evidence of

an anonymous white 'passer-by', that no missile was thrown, was preferred. Demonstrators marching down Fleet Street made clear their resentment at the bare coverage given by the press. This was in stark contrast to the coverage given a previous fire in an Eire disco.

Likewise, the capitalist press has failed to draw the parallel with a similar incident that occurred in Leeds. In July of this year a disabled Sikh woman was burnt to death in a fire at her home. Her husband says that he saw something burning projected through the window and smash on the opposite wall.

A neighbour confirmed that he saw 'something fly through the air with a flash light' and he heard a window break. However, the police say that 'there are no suspicious circumstances'. Mr Poran Singh stated that when he was being questioned, police insisted he was lying.

On 2 July 1981, Mrs Purveen Khan and her three children were murdered when petrol was poured through the letter box of their Walthamstow home and set alight. For 36 hours after the murders, Scotland Yard similarly refused to accept that there were any 'suspicious circumstances'.

Guilty

The police will not defend black people against racist attacks: indeed they are often guilty of racist harassment themselves.

The responsibility for anti-racist defence falls to the labour movement — by giving our support to self-defence groups formed by the black community, by creating united labour movement defence patrols, and by linking the fight against racism to the struggle to overthrow capitalism.

Soviet scientists on hunger strike

By Les Hearn

I WROTE in Socialist Organiser 40 of the case of Dr Anatoly Koryagin. He is now serving 12 years in a Russian labour camp for exposing the use of psychiatry to suppress political opposition. Meanwhile, the case of another dissident scientist seems about to come to a climax.

Andrei Dmitriyevich Sakharov is one of the world's most brilliant physicists. Described as the 'father of the Russian H-Bomb', he did a lot of the original research into nuclear fusion (possibly a safer method of generating nuclear power), contributed greatly to the acceptance of the quark theory of the structure of matter, and

came up with some very original theories on the nature of gravity. His is the sort of intellect that any socialist society would be only too happy to use, particularly since he is also a socialist.

However, he didn't confine himself to science. In the late '50s he became worried about the health dangers of testing atomic bombs in the atmosphere, and tried to get it stopped. In 1961, Khrushchev said that Sakharov might be a good scientist but he should leave politics to the politicians.

Sakharov became more involved in resisting the suppression of opposition by the Stalinist bureau-

SCIENCE



cracy, and in 1968 his security clearance was withdrawn. He was effectively demoted to more mundane work.

In 1980, after years of harassment of himself, his wife Elena Bonner and his family, he was sentenced to five years' internal exile in the closed town of Gorky, where he still attempts to carry on his scientific research.

The last straw for Sakharov and Bonner came when, after their son was allowed to emigrate to Australia, their daughter in law was refused permission to join him. This petty bureaucratic spitefulness has caused Sakharov and Bonner to embark on a hunger strike, demanding that Lisa Alexeyevna be allowed to join her husband.

To the shame of the labour movement in Britain, we usually leave defence of Russian oppositionists to groups like Amnesty or to

the anti-socialist press or politicians. I feel strongly that we have a duty to put what pressure we can, through our movement, on the Russian bureaucrats who are busy covering the name of socialism in yet more filth.

I urge readers to try to get resolutions passed in their union or Labour Party branches etc or write to Pres. Brezhnev (Kremlin, Moscow) condemning the imprisonment of Koryagin, the exile of Sakharov and the refusal of the Russian government to allow Lisa Alexeyevna to join her husband abroad.

You could also try putting pressure on Labour MPs and trade union officials, many of whom are only too keen to hobnob with leaders of Russian so-called trade unions, to raise these issues. Lastly, messages of support to Sakharov and Elena Bonner would probably be welcome [Gorky, USSR].



Letters

Don't hide behind workers' conservatism!



BL strikers

How to deal with sexism?

BRITISH Leyland, miners, Ford, and other pay disputes all came up around the same time: yet they have been successfully isolated, not through lack of confidence in the working class, but by the tenacity of the trade union bureaucracy.

To me this confirms the correctness of raising the general strike demand at the time when BL went out, as Socialist Organiser did.

Comrade V. O'Brien in his letters (nos. 56 and 62) clearly doesn't agree.

The world that comrade O'Brien lives in seems to be very different to the way we see it. Somehow the trade union bureaucracy is detached from what he sees as the 'reformist consciousness of the working class as a whole'. He ends up hiding behind the conservatism of the masses.

Comrade O'Brien dismisses workers' chants for a General Strike on demonstrations as 'gut reaction' against Thatcherism. He says that they 'don't understand what precisely a general strike is'.

'All-or-nothing'

How many workers in Britain in 1926 actually understood the 'precise' nature of the General Strike? Not many. Perhaps comrade O'Brien would say that — and not the brazen treachery of the TUC leaders — was the reason for its defeat? But if workers had the advanced Marxist understanding that comrade O'Brien requires, we wouldn't need a general strike!

The 'all-or-nothing' ultimatum that O'Brien puts on a general strike could easily be true of any strike in this period. At

BL, for instance, if Edwardes had defeated the workers in a long dispute he would have gone on to smash up the unions. Was the logic of this to argue that it was wrong or premature to argue for a BL strike?

O'Brien claims that we don't take the demand seriously since we did not raise it every week. But in the four issues following September 24 we argued to spread strike action — to create the basis for a general strike in a way that relates to the day-to-day struggle.

O'Brien says it is 'self-deceiving' to claim that we have a dialogue with the masses. Of course I never claimed that we had a majority on the TUC General Council or anything like that. We develop our de-

mands from our dialogue with the masses, through our agitation. We learn from the practice of our limited forces — not (as comrade O'Brien seems to) from an empirical and cynical look at the state of the class struggle.

What comrade O'Brien does not present is historical examples to back up his argument. Recent history has proved that the general strike can be successful, even short of revolution. In Quebec in 1972 there was a successful general strike to release 50 union leaders from jail. And of course in Poland the general strike has been used with great success.

History has of course also proved that the bureaucracy can contain a general strike — as in 1968 in France. But even then the

action can give a tremendous boost to the development of a new leadership and a new confidence in the working class.

The fact is that we can either challenge the existing 'reformist consciousness' of the working class or tail-end it.

As long as we tail-end it we'll carry on being beaten back by the Tories. In no way can avoiding advanced forms of struggle save us from Tory attacks! And it is only through struggle that the reformist consciousness can be fundamentally challenged.

That is what the General Strike demand is designed to do: and that is why we take it very seriously indeed.

MICK LIGGINS,
Wolverhampton.

A disappointing report

Dear Comrade Editor,

I have long regarded Socialist Organiser as being one of the saner newspapers on the left, so I was especially disappointed to read the garbled report of the Liverpool Typists' Strike by Sue Erswell in the 5 November issue. She makes a number of points which are totally inaccurate, and are based on an obvious ignorance of the dispute.

Such ignorance is understandable, as the issues are very confusing, but there can be no excuse for rushing into print before the facts have been fully clarified.

Let me pick out some of the more blatant errors:

1. Sue Erswell says that NALGO's negotiators let Council Leader Trevor Jones off the hook by "offering" him arbitration.

2. She says that the typists only accepted arbitration because NALGO threatened to withdraw strike pay if they refused it. She feels that "it is not clear" why the Branch Officers recommended acceptance of arbitration.

3. She says that the typists had to picket NALGO HQ to get strike pay.

4. She also says that NALGO's "national officials" should be replaced by leaders who are account-

able to the membership.

Let me answer all of these points.

In a letter sent to all members of the Branch on 14 September, the Typists' Strike Committee said: "Councillor Stephenson (Chairman of Personnel Committee) claims our salaries are fair when compared with other authorities and the private sector. Let him try to prove his case by coming to arbitration!" (emphasis in original). The typists themselves then moved a motion at a Branch meeting on 21 September, which called for "negotiations or arbitration". All this took place a month before the Branch Officials are supposed to have "offered" arbitration to Trevor Jones!

It was on this basis (i.e. that the typists were being "reasonable" and that the Liberals were refusing to accept arbitration) that we were able to win the support of hundreds of NALGO members for the typists' cause.

Collapsed

If the typists had — a month later — turned round and refused arbitration, the Branch-wide industrial action would have collapsed like a pack of cards and we would have lost everything.

The typists agreed to arbitration at this point because they were desperate, and felt that they might be totally defeated. We were saved from defeat by two things:

a) solidarity action taken by other members who do not stand to gain financially from the dispute;

b) a decision of NALGO's National Emergency Committee to pay the typists and other NALGO members who were on strike or suspended, 55% of gross pay. With tax rebates this amounts to something approaching normal salary!

The picket at HQ was to get this 55% — NALGO has

paid £20 a week strike pay throughout the dispute, without any questions! The NEC decided to increase the strike pay precisely because Jones and Co. had refused NALGO's and the typists' earlier offer of arbitration.

Too late

It is understandable that some typists then changed their minds and felt that arbitration was not good enough, but by then it was too late, whether we liked it or not. The typists accepted the eventual arbitration formula with only one vote against.

As it happens, NALGO's National Emergency Committee is made up of annually elected, lay officers, not paid officials. We have the chance to get rid of them every year, but they keep getting re-elected by the membership. This is unfortunate, but we can hardly say that they are totally unaccountable.

Maybe this goes some way to clearing up your reporter's confusion as to the Branch Officers' actions. But I must say that there is no excuse for making innuendoes about fellow socialists without first establishing the facts.

Even the local capitalist press ring us up before printing stories about the strike. They don't always publish our views, but at least they know them! Why is such a common courtesy and journalistic precaution beyond Sue Erswell?

Expected better

I expect Socialist Worker to make vicious sectarian attacks on me — after all, I am a member of the hated Labour Party; I know that the Liverpool Echo will never give us a fair hearing; I must admit that I expected rather better treatment from Socialist Organiser.

Yours fraternally,
PETER CRESSWELL,
Branch Secretary,
Liverpool Branch, NALGO



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 parliamentary election 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 over the economy, 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.



Writeback
Socialist Organiser
28, Middle Lane
London E8 3ET

But is all erotic literature sexist?

And what about Chatterley's Lover? Henry Miller's novels are undoubtedly sexist. Is graphic? The prose is thought so. Shouldists have been denouncing the defenders of freedom as bourgeois liberals?

Have bans on pornography ever contributed to women's liberation? More than to sexual repression and greater oppression of women?

Les's letter also points out that we 'take up' thecept of patriarchy.

But Sheila Rowbotham, mentioned by Evans in her review, shows that 'archy' is a vague term.

If it's just a posh word for male domination, the use is a matter of course. Usually it has more political content, referring to 'mode of reproduction' existing alongside the capitalist mode of production.

As such it obscures a variety of family structures that have existed since the epoch of male domination — and their connection with modes of production. It often leads to a lament of any attempt to develop a unified standing of socialism in favour of 'on the one hand patriarchy, on the other hand capitalism'.

Separate

It leads to political confusion. The 'fight against patriarchy' as separate only loosely associated with the 'fight against capitalism'. And justification of crude attacks on the oppression of women simply a by-product of capitalism should us to that.

So it seems to me concept obscures understanding rather helping it.

COLIN FOSTER.

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Scottish workers' battles against 1930s unemployment

Robert Duncan recalls some lessons from the past



The unemployed movement of the '30s—huge demonstrations, but a failure to link employed and unemployed on an adequate programme

FIFTY years ago this winter, the number of registered unemployed in Scotland climbed up to the 300,000 mark; in the industrial west of Scotland the level of male unemployment was 25% on average; and in some of the Lanarkshire towns, where coal mining and heavy industry had collapsed in the slump, unemployment levels were unprecedented, the Motherwell area being among the worst hit, with 48%.

In the October General Election, a coalition National Government with an overwhelming Tory majority came to power, ready to carry out ruthless anti-working class policies.

By the end of 1931, the government had imposed a 10% cut in unemployment benefit and ordered the hated Means Test on family incomes.

Confrontations

They continued to give local Public Assistance Committees powers to decide their own rates of benefit, which were often pathetically low.

From September 1931 into the winter of 1932 there was a spate of open confrontations between police and unemployed demonstrators.

In Scotland during this period, Glasgow, Dundee, Kirkcaldy and Port Glasgow were scenes of pitched battles.

Conflict

Starting in September and October 1931 Glasgow was the major centre of conflict. The National Unemployed Workers Movement, led by McShane, Bob McLellan and Peter Kerrigan—all Communist Party activists—were holding regular demonstrations and marches into George Square.

On September 23, about 20,000 peaceful demonstrators were harassed by the police, but next day nearly 50,000 turned out, this time with a defence corps of 500 men, carrying heavy sticks. The police left them alone.

On October 1, a rally was called in Glasgow Green, prior to a march on the city chambers. Before the unem-

ployed could move off, the police attacked with batons. Running battles and skirmishes raged for hours afterwards.

Demonstration

Significantly, Glasgow workers with jobs responded against this police brutality. Four days later, a united demonstration of 100,000 protested against government policies, the police, and unemployment. On the 9th, the day after the announcement of cuts in unemployment benefit, 150,000 marched in an evening demonstration, perhaps the biggest single protest in Britain during the inter-war years.

Strong-arm methods were used again in Glasgow on January 12, 1932, when a police attack provoked a pitched battle; and on March 3, a monster demonstration in Dundee was violently charged down, many arrests being made, and a ban imposed upon all local marches and demonstrations.

In Motherwell and Wishaw, the police did not attack local meetings and marches outright but chose

instead to arrest leaders who did not observe bye-laws concerning permits for holding meetings in certain places.

In Lanarkshire alone, the National Unemployed Workers Movement had 22 functioning branches by 1932. They organised protest deputations to meetings of parish and town councils, urging the local authorities to refuse to operate the Means Test, to increase allowances, and to reduce the rents in council houses occupied by unemployed families.

Experts

Some members became experts in welfare rights legislation, and, as in Wishaw, Workers Rights Committees were set up, meeting weekly in the ILP Hall, for giving advice, and preparing cases to represent members before the boards dealing with means testing, insurances and pensions.

However, between 1929 and 1933 it must be recognised that the National Unemployed Workers Movement, under Communist Party direction had severe

political limitations which isolated both itself and the unemployed from the mainstream of the labour movement and especially from the workers in trade unions.

During these years, while it built up a following among the unemployed, the ultra-left and revolution-mongering policies adopted by the NUWM leadership had the disastrous effect of alienating Labour supporters and the bulk of trade unionists—who were disgusted and alarmed at being called 'social fascists', and, not surprisingly, would have nothing to do with either the Communist Party or the NUWM.

The ruinous political stance and posturings of the Communist Party also gave Labour and trade union bureaucrats all the excuses in the world to deny any co-operation with the NUWM, and in Scotland, trade unions and most trades councils consciously obstructed or otherwise did not help to organise the unemployed industrially or politically.

Thus, when the NUWM organised county marches across central Scotland to

Edinburgh in 1932 and 1933, they did so without the financial help, organisational and political support of these bodies, who boycotted the initiatives because of the association with 'communism'.

Undoubtedly, the dominant presence of right wing Protestant and Catholic direction of the Labour and trade union movements in the different Lanarkshire towns encouraged this strong anti-communist feeling and reinforced divisive tendencies.

If Hunger Marchers got support on their way to Edinburgh and thereafter on the route to London in these years, this was almost entirely due to local sympathetic gestures from co-ops and Labour Party and ILP branches who defied the 'official' attitude taken by Labour leaders, the TUC and STUC.

In 1933, the Scottish Hunger Marchers, having converged in Edinburgh, claimed a moral victory, all 1,000 of them camping down on the bourgeois precincts of Princess Street after backing up a deputa-

tion to the Secretary of State. In order to get rid of them, the corporation was obliged to pay for their rail transport home.

However, such stunts on their own were not effective in bringing about any improvements in the material condition of the unemployed or in changing the policies of the National Government.

Not until 1936 was a common approach finally worked out between the NUWM, the Labour Party and the Scottish TUC.

The Labour Party in Scotland and the STUC gave their support and blessing to the 1936 Hunger March which set off from Edinburgh on an east coast route, joining with the Jarrow contingent on the trek to London.

By this time, the Communist Party had changed to reformist ideas.

Ultimately the 1930s were a study in failure, but the fight for socialist alternatives and organising the unemployed here and now will proceed all the better by taking careful account of these past experiences.



Learning from Big Brother

by Tony Richardson

Game for anything

Haig's atrocity

WHERE Graffiti leads the world follows... well... America's 70,000-strong National Council of Teachers of English, it seems, concur with our view of Alexander Haig's linguistic prowess. He wins their 1981 'double-speak' award for 'atrocities to the English language'.

Some of his crimes are merely amusing, though possibly personally painful — e.g. 'saddle myself with a statistical fence' — but there's a more sinister political content to it.

George Orwell, who coined the term 'double-speak', pointed to the technique of politicians who camouflaged themselves in a kind of verbal rhubarb in order to speak the unspeakable.

Haig's tortured and tortuous language is clearly aimed at making his indefensible policies appear bland and boring. Still, he can console himself he's in good company. Last year's winner was Ronald Reagan.

YOU CAN'T help feeling that there's a double standard operating over the withdrawal of the 'explosively funny' Bombshell game.

It's apparently not 'offensive' or 'bad taste' for kids to be bombarded with adverts for guns, tanks, and your very own Cruise missile. That is, after all, deadly serious, and not poking fun at our heroes.

Could the outrage be that

with Bombshell 'our heroes' risk getting killed, whereas everyone knows that nuclear warheads are completely safe, hygienic, and not at all harmful to your health?

We're thinking of marketing a game called 'Outrage', where characters such as Prince Charming, White Willie, etc, compete on the smirkometer for hypocrisy points.

Getting out?

SECURITY fears were being voiced after a top-level break-out from Wormwood Scrubs. John McCarthy, who describes himself as the manager of a 'large penal dustbin', has managed to leap the wall of bureaucracy and secrecy, and smuggle himself into the letters column of the Times.

There, he reveals, he has been driven because 'his patience and tolerance are finally exhausted'.

He 'did not join the prison service to manage

overcrowded cattle pens, nor did I join to run a prison where the interests of the individuals have to be sacrificed continually to the interests of the institution'.

There is a strong hint in his letter that if conditions do not improve, he and other prison governors will look for early retirement or other ways of making a living.

The idea of early retirement from prison is, reportedly, very popular among the inmates, too.

STRAIGHT after the British Leyland sell-out, key union bureaucrats could be seen boarding planes for Eastern Europe.

Len Murray went to Hungary to discuss with the Stalinist hacks who head the official 'trade unions' there.

And a TGWU delegation headed for Russia to meet Brezhnev's top union bosses. On the delegation were Grenville Hawley, noted anti-communist Cowley body plant convenor Bill Roche, and the CP convenor of Longbridge, Jack Adams — whose plant was at a standstill through strike action as he climbed aboard the plane.

It might be argued that the exit of these people could only benefit the Longbridge strikers, since there were that many less struggling to sell them out.

But there is a serious point to be made. What links these bureaucrats from East and West Europe is their hostility to the

strength and militancy of the working class, which they see as a threat to their power and privilege.

The British delegation's visits took place at a time of rising demands for independent unions in the USSR and Hungary. The impact of the visits is to strengthen the hand of the official 'unions'.

Accomplished fact

The visits also confirm that in recognising Polish Solidarnosc, the TUC leaders are simply accepting an accomplished fact rather than siding with the Polish workers' movement.

After all, they know which side their own bread is buttered. Grenville Hawley said in Russia that he realised the delegation would only be shown what the official unions (i.e. the Soviet bureaucracy) wanted him to see.

But when did Hawley last see the working conditions on the shop floor of British industry?



by Gerry Byrne

Killer YOPs

FROM THOSE wonderful folks that brought you cheap labour, an added twist: death and mutilation.

Not only do YOPs schemes not solve the problem of youth unemployment. Not only are employers using young people as cheap labour to fill jobs that would normally be done at full rates of pay. Now it transpires that they are also dangerous.

The Department of Employment has confirmed that in the year up to this June, over 3,000 accidents had happened on YOP schemes, including five

deaths and 23 injuries leading to amputations.

YOP workers need unions not just to improve their pay and conditions but to save lives.

FIRST: the good news. French dockers at Cherbourg have refused to unload used nuclear fuel. The fuel was going to be reprocessed at the Cap La Hague reprocessing plant. Now, the bad news: the fuel has been taken to Windscale instead.

Industrial News

Scotts pickets hit by Tory anti-union laws

by Noel Hibbert

THE Laurence Scotts workers, who in the last seven months have had to fight their employers, their union leaders, sledgehammer wielding bailiffs breaking their occupation, and helicopters breaking their picket lines, have now become among the first victims of the Tories' Employment Act.

Last Monday and Tuesday, Scotts workers supported by trade unionists from other Manchester plants, miners from Brodsworth pit, and members of the Right to Work Campaign, picketed Mining Supplies, the Doncaster headquarters of their boss, Arthur Snipe. All six gates were picketed, and there was a good deal of success in turning back lorries carrying important supplies.

The Brodsworth miners

have blacked all Laurence Scotts products, and are seeking to extend the blacking via the Doncaster panel of local pits and the Yorkshire NUM.

Fire

However, Scotts boss Arthur Snipe is determined to answer fire with fire. On Wednesday he applied for an injunction in the High Court against six named Scotts workers — Frank Stubbs, Dennis Barry, Pete Rowan, Dave Halls-worth, Billy Partlan, and Phil Penning.

The Employment Act forbids workers to picket anywhere other than their own workplace. The judge therefore had no hesitation in finding that the Scotts workers had no right to picket other premises of their employer, and issued

an injunction on the grounds that none of the six had ever worked at Doncaster, forbidding them to attend the picket line again.

Pete Rowan, chairperson of the Joint Shop Stewards Committee, pointed out that none of the six had even been present in the court to hear and answer the charges against them.

"This shows", he said, "that trade unionists cannot simply forget about the Employment Act. It is still waiting to be used, and the Tories intend to strengthen it to break strikes like ours".

The case will come before the Chancery Division of the High Court in Manchester again on November 30. It is important that all trade unionists should make even greater efforts to intensify support for the Scotts workers.

And union conference decisions opposing the Employment Act must be upheld in practice. If this Act is used successfully against the Scotts strikers, then other employers will be encouraged to use it against their own workers. The injunction should be ignored, and there should be a mass picket of the next court hearing on November 30.

The Yorkshire NUM also needs to take up the requests for blacking — which are now six months old.

Arthur Scargill has made the nationalisation of mining supplies a key point in his election programme — a demand to open the books of the National Coal Board and suppliers such as Scotts should be used to deepen and clarify this call.

★ Mass pickets every Monday at Mining Supplies, Carrs Hill Industrial Estate, Doncaster. Messages/money: G.Fryer, 20 Round Croft, Romilly, Cheshire.

Stabbed by Scargill

by John Cunningham (Dinnington NUM)

Laurence Scotts strikers received yet another kick in the teeth when Arthur Scargill again blocked a call from delegates to the Yorkshire NUM Area Council for blacking of LSE and Mining Supplies products.

This is despite the fact that the Doncaster panel of the NUM (Regional Committee) has already called for the blacking of LSE products in their area.

Despite a fierce argument, all that was passed was a motion of support for the LSE strikers which said nothing about practical steps.

In answering criticism, Scargill said why should miners be laid off when Mining Supplies men are still working.

This was all the more tragic because two local haulage contractors who move much of Mining

Supplies material had agreed not to cross the picket line at Doncaster under the threat of blacking.

As Dave Douglass, Hatfield Main delegate remarked: "A picket line is a class line and anyone who crosses it has gone over to the other class".

Scargill's action is a disgrace to the Yorkshire NUM, many of whose members are campaigning tooth and nail to get him elected as national president. NUM branches should condemn his action and demand the reversal of his totally negative approach.

He has said on numerous occasions that he would not prostitute his beliefs and principles to get the president's job. But what is he doing now if not precisely that?

Whatever happened to the spirit of Saltley Gate in 1972?

Rolls Royce: a vote to end the strike

by Stan Crooke

AT A mass meeting held last Thursday (19 November) direct workers at the Rolls Royce plant in Hillington (Glasgow) voted to end their four-week old strike. The outcome of the strike can only be described as complete victory for management — and the harbinger of further victories for them unless the dominant influence of the misnamed "Communist" Party on the shop stewards' committee can be broken.

Instead of working to spread the strike, the convenor at Hillington, Communist Party member George McCormack, acted in such a way as to isolate the striking direct workers, and thereby paved the way for defeat.

Foal

The goal of the strike was fixed by McCormack as a pay-rise for direct workers, only, although the speed-up affected the whole workforce; indirect workers were excluded from mass meetings; the only support McCormack sought from other plants in the combine was purely financial; and McCormack paved the way for the indirect workers' lock-out by having them clear the stock-piled production after the direct workers have walked out.

Dire

Management made the usual dire noises about loss of orders and jobs, sent out the standard threatening letters... and waited for the collapse of this needlessly isolated strike action.

The workforce has voted unanimously that the 39 hour week, now due under the 1979 Confed agreement, should be implemented by finishing one-hour earlier on the Friday. But management has said it must be implemented by knocking twelve minutes off each weekday.

So now, if workers click out one hour earlier Fridays (as their brothers and sisters at East Kilbride are already doing), the management will implement three of the return work formula: no industrial action until exhaustion procedure.

Despair

Both before and after Thursday's mass meeting, McLean, director of Rolls Royce operations in Scotland, publicly stated that more jobs will definitely disappear, allegedly because of the strike.

So, in the shadow of the strike's defeat, workers Hillington return to face another attack on jobs, on the heels of 500 "voluntary" redundancies pushed through.

And management now are reckoning on getting away with a minimum increase in this year's review, now overdue.

The shop stewards' convenor's elections are due at Hillington. Opportunity must be taken to vote out those stewards responsible for the fiasco of this strike, and replace them with representatives committed to union democracy rebuilding the militant tradition at the plant.

BL jobs axed

by Dave Snape

Friday 20 November another phase of the course in Tory unemployment as the Edwardes fell at three centres of BL truck and bus divisions.

1855 redundancies declared at Leyland, 13 Bathgate (Scotland), 7 Guy Motors, Wolverhampton and 140 at the Albion in Glasgow.

This represents a cut in the workforce of 20%. The unions' reaction only just beginning to emerge.

At Leyland workers angry about the redundancies. Over the past two at Leyland alone, redundancies including those announced on Friday amount to 4500.

At Bathgate the redundancies will also be over. Over the past three Bathgate has suffered reduction in manning.

This factory will be the centre for drastic reduced Leyland engine production and is likely to be in the long-term.



Courts act against union officers

by Kevin Feintuck

YET another instance of the courts being used against the organised labour movement was highlighted at the Liverpool Trades Council meeting on November 20.

The Trades Council gave its unanimous support to the TGWU 6/541 (Commercial Drivers) Branch in its fight on an issue which could have serious implications for the whole of the trade union movement.

The case concerned injunctions obtained by the Mersey Docks and Harbour Company against five members of the branch and were issued as a result of the blockade of the Seaford Docks complex during the summer.

The injunction against the Branch chairperson, secretary, two Branch EC members and the full-time official effectively prevent them from entering the docks premises to perform any union business. The company is also claiming £200,000 damages.

Most disturbingly, though, the company did not use the 1980 Employment Act. Instead the injunction was taken out under the law of private nuisance. When the injunction was originally granted the defence lawyer pointed out that such a decision would have the possible effect of making any and every picket illegal.

There are many in the branch who strongly suspect that because of the potential of these injunctions, the company is being backed by Aims of Industry or similar bodies.

Although the appeal is due to be heard in London within the next two months, the union's legal section have been extremely reluctant to provide any support despite a recent call from the No. 6 Regional Committee.

The 6/541 branch is next due to meet on December 13 by which time a date may well have been set for the appeal. Hopefully, the union's legal aid section will have, by then, guaranteed every possible support.

Scottish campaign to defend picketing rights

Stan Crooke reports on a fight which the union officials tried to stifle

THIS WEEK sees the launching of the 'Campaign in Defence of the Right to Picket', in connection with the coming trial of ex-Hunterston shop steward Abie Courtney.

Abie Courtney, a member of the boilermakers' society (ASOB) was one of the 48 pickets arrested and charged during the dispute in September of last year at the Hunterston oil rig yard.

On 10 September the police launched a military-style operation against the picket lines, arresting over 70 and later charging 48 of them with charges such as obstruction, breach of the peace, damage to property, etc.

The first eight of the pickets to be tried were

found guilty, but appealed to the High Court in Edinburgh. The High Court confirmed the verdict, whilst reducing the fines imposed on each of them to £50.

Political

Pressure was then exerted by their lawyers upon the other 40 pickets to plead guilty when their trial came up in October. The lawyers (who had been supplied by the Scottish Council for Civil Liberties) stated that they would not represent anyone who pleaded not guilty, and that if anyone did plead not guilty it was simply because they wanted to make political capital out of the case.

Bui Abie Courtney, one of the leading militants at

the yard, refused to be intimidated. At the trials in October he pleaded not guilty and must now appear for the final hearing on February 19 in Kilmarnock.

Local trade unionists and Labour Party members have set up the "Campaign in Defence of the Right to Picket" (CDRP) in order to build support for Abie, who is fighting his case on the basis of the right of trade unionists to carry out effective picketing without facing attack from the police and the courts (and also your own trade union officials).

Abie's union branch, Glasgow 11 branch of the ASOB, has already passed the following motion in his defence:

"Glasgow 11 branch of

the Amalgamated Society of Boilermakers, Shipwrights, Blacksmiths and Structural Workers condemns the recent judgements and fines imposed on 45 trade unionists for the 'crime' of picketing the Hunterston yard in September of last year as straightforward examples of the capitalist courts penalising trade unionists for carrying out legitimate trade union activities.

"We further condemn the role of the lawyers in these trials (who pressurised many of the accused into pleading guilty) and the concerned union officials (who failed to back their members both in the dispute itself and in the ensuing trials).

"We pledge our full support for our member,

Brother Courtney, who has refused to be criminalised by the capitalist courts, and is carrying on a fight not just in his own defence, but in defence of the rights of the labour movement as a whole.

"Recognising that the victimisation, sacking, and subsequent blacklisting of the militant trade unionists at the yard, and the use of the courts against 48 of them is part and parcel of the bosses' overall offensive against the working class, in which unemployment plays a central role, we therefore urge the rest of the labour movement to back our brother's stand."

And the CDRP is doing a mailing to December branch meetings, calling for:

*donations to help cover

the cost of the campaign (cheques payable to 'Campaign in Defence of the Right to Picket');

*support or sponsorship for the campaign and for a meeting to be held in Glasgow in the New Year;

*active support for the picket being organised for Abie's trial in February;

*letters to the Procurator Fiscal demanding the dropping of the charges;

*invitations for Abie to speak;

*motions condemning the arrests and the role of union officials in the dispute.

The Campaign in Defence of the Right to Picket can be contacted c/o Abie Courtney, 72 Tallant Road, Drumchapel, Glasgow.

Industrial News

Unite against 4% limit

AT A conference in Southampton on November 10, delegates from public sector unions and trades councils called for a united mass campaign against the government's 4% pay ceiling.

The campaign is being run by the Hampshire Campaign Committee of the South-East Regional TUC, and promises to give assistance and organise solidarity where members take industrial action.

Meetings of public sector shop stewards, trades council delegates and union officials will be organised in major towns in Hampshire. Local co-ordinating committees will be formed to organise mass meetings with national speakers. A leaflet is to be produced leading up to mass demonstrations and meetings in the New Year.

Some delegates at the conference spoke of apathy or fear in the rank and file union membership—but apathy and fear is not solely due to government policies. It is also the result of sell-outs by our national trade union leadership—best illustrated in BL recently.

At local meetings in this campaign, that point should be driven home. The rank and file doesn't need to be convinced of the need to breach the 4%—they do need to be convinced that their national leadership is fighting with them, not against them.

CARLA JAMISON

CPSA no to 'fraud' squads

30 DHSS workers in Dudley, West Midlands, who belong to the CPSA and SCPS civil service unions, are refusing to prepare cases for investigating squads hunting for people fraudulently claiming benefits.

Staff at Halesowen are being asked to take similar action.

Union leaders see Dudley as a test case. The CPSA said that if any of its members are suspended the dispute could be widened.

Claimants have long suffered the activities of these investigators. Now new super squads called Specialist Claims Control (SCC) are continuing their work after trials in the West Midlands and the North West.

Local DHSS union branches should be calling for national action against these squads.

Local groups of the National Unemployed Workers Movement and the Right to Work Campaign should invite local DHSS workers to their meetings to explain the problems of workers in DHSS and to discuss solidarity action by the unemployed to back DHSS workers taking action in their defence.

Todd ducks Ford pay battle

AS negotiations dragged on up to the last day of the old pay contract—November 23—rank and file workers in Ford plants were ignored.

The demand for a £20 claim has not been pushed by Ron Todd, TGWU National Organiser.

The argument between management and the unions has been over increasing the offer of 4.5% on the basic rate and over management's plans to bring in a fixed-bonus type efficiency agreement. This agreement, centred on mobility for all workers, would be linked to a new penalty clause, controlled by plant

managers.

Reports leaked on Monday indicated that the penalty clause idea had been dropped by Ford management in negotiations.

The betrayal of the BL strike for a £20 claim has affected the mood of the rank and file.

Avoid

There will be a series of mass meetings to be held before Christmas.

However, Todd, in an attempt to avoid taking responsibility for the progress of the 1981 pay

claim, is trying to get senior stewards and the JNC to make a recommendation on Ford management's final offer.

A vote at this stage will be undermined by the extent of short-time working in many of the smaller Ford plants and the closeness of winter and of Christmas.

One sign of progress is the willingness of militants in the Leyland Action Committee and the Ford Workers Group to discuss and plan together a joint campaign, sharing the lessons of the respective struggles—in particular the role of the paid national officials.

Tanker talks drag on

THE threatened strike of tanker drivers planned for 16 November didn't take place. TGWU officials delayed the strike for further talks with the employers at ACAS.

The dispute arose over pay when Mobil drivers accepted an 11% offer earlier this year.

Tanker drivers from other companies with the exception of BP have rejected the employers' offer of 8%.

Talks with Shell over the weekend broke down at ACAS when the company refused to go above 8%.

Esso met TGWU officials this week at ACAS.

United action by drivers from the three main companies—Esso, Shell and Texaco—can win a pay rise in line with Mobil and strike action is still on the cards for December.

Evans Lifts: stop the oxygen!

"IF WE stop the oxygen, then it will have been worth it", said one of the women pickets at Evans Lifts, Leicester, last Monday.

The 68 TASS members at the factory, part of the American multinational Otis since the takeover on October 24, have taken the decision to begin 24 hour picketing.

AUEW members are still working on the shop floor, but work is coming to a standstill, according to the TASS office committee. A delegation has been to the British Oxygen Company depot at Rotherham in an attempt to stop the supplies at source. Further

delegations to other suppliers have been suggested.

However, deliveries are still getting through, and can only be stopped by effective picketing.

If the decision by the locked-out TASS members to stick it out until they are reinstated is to have any meaning at all, then the local labour movement, employed and unemployed, should be encouraged to join the picket and to raise the issue in their own organisations.

Messages/money: B. Dixon, 42 Elmfield Ave, Birstall, Leicester. STEVE AKERS

Seamen's union backs sit-in

ON MONDAY 23rd the Executive of the National Union of Seamen voted to block all shipping links between Britain and Northern Ireland. This move is in support of 120 NUS members sitting in on the P&O's Ulster Queen and Ulster Prince in Liverpool.

The Executive also decided to stop the sailings of P&O ships from all UK

ports, and narrowly rejected a call to immediately block the sailings of all P&O ships from British and continental ports.

The decision means that Townsend Thoresen and Sealink are drawn into the dispute alongside P&O.

P&O closed its Liverpool-Belfast service on November 11th, and NUS General Secretary Jim Slater is

calling for the government to keep the service operating on a temporary basis until a new operator is found.

The call for the service and the jobs to be retained must be supported in all ports, and NUS members must hold Slater to his promise of organising an international strike if necessary.

BOB TOWERS

St Mary's...

from
back
page



with the fight for St Mary's. Administrators had planned to have Casualty and all the threatened wards closed by November 16th. The occupation and the vital support given by the London Ambulance Service has stopped that plan. Last week a consultant publicly condemned the rundown of the hospital.

This fight against closure can be won, with massive support from the labour movement.

Regular
Build the mass picket. Get regular contingents from your trade union branch, Labour Party, or

community group. Call for strike action in your branch. Support the demonstration on December 4th.

★ Messages/money: Occupation Committee, St Mary's Hospital, Harrow Road, London W9 [phone 286 4884 x372/544/220].

Dunlop strike

ALL 650 TGWU production workers at Dunlop Polymer Engineering in Leicester have gone on indefinite strike in defence of a colleague sacked for alleged industrial misconduct. Pickets have been out on all gates, but office workers and staff are not being prevented from going in.

Freddy Martin, works branch secretary, has told the Leicester Mercury that the sacking is essentially a secondary issue, and that what is wanted is a disciplinary appeals procedure acceptable to both sides.

At the moment, a manager who dismisses a worker can also hear the appeal. Further, the company is not prepared to suspend or reinstate.

The union has decided to fight this procedure, and so far management show no sign of giving way.

Forefront

Throughout the engineering industry as a whole, BL is again in the forefront of the employers' offensive.

The Financial Times of 16 November says:

"Talks between National Officials of the Confed and the Engineering Employers Federation in the past week have brought agreement that the 50-100 engineering companies which intend to offset the one hour reduction mainly by cutting down rest periods will not bring in such cuts without agreement from local union officials."

How long that situation would last if the BL bosses break the Longbridge strike doesn't take much guessing.

So all engineering workers and certainly all BL workers must give the Longbridge strikers maximum support. Immediately we must:

*Spread the action to the rest of Longbridge.

*Push for other BL plants to come out as well.

*No secret deals.

*For an elected strike committee accountable to mass meetings of all strikers to control negotiations.

2 weeks locked out in pay battle

by John Shields

AFTER being locked out of their factory by management on November 5, the 270 AUEW employees of J.H. Fenner, Hull, returned to work two weeks later not much better off.

The lock-out came after pay negotiations had been exhausted and management had refused to move on their offer of £6 for grade 1 and

pro rata for other grades.

The original demand from the shop stewards was for £30 across the board.

Letter

Leading up to the lock-out management had tried to undermine the shop stewards committee by first sending a foreman down to the shop floor to try to sell the deal to the men. When this failed they resorted to a typical Michael Edwards tactic and every employee received a letter from the company and a stamped addressed envelope and a ballot paper.

The management clearly thought that by giving the men a weekend in which to think it over they would get a vote in favour of the company's offer.

In fact on Wednesday 4 November management informed the District Secretary that 53% of the ballot papers returned had voted in favour of accepting the deal.

A mass meeting was held on November 5 at which the District Secretary asked for a show of hands of those who had voted for acceptance of the deal.

Out of the 270 men at the meeting only 31 voted in favour of the deal.

When management were told of the result by the District Secretary they said they could not understand the change in the attitude of the men.

Nevertheless, they finally got the message that the pittance they had offered was not acceptable and issued a letter stating that because of the industrial action they had undertaken, the workers would be taken off the clock.

Never

This referred to the fact that the men had been working to the nationally negotiated minimum time rates for day work, which management do not recognise.

Immediately the lock-out came into effect, the men mounted a blanket picket on all gates leading into the factory. This in itself knocked the management sideways since the AUEW had never picketed the factory before.

GMWU workers in the rubber division action who had settled their wage claim

the day before the lock-out of the engineers, soon found themselves running out of work as the picketing began to bite.

With only three to four days supply of rubber, the management were over a barrel and the engineers were strongly placed to win the dispute.

But unknown to the shop stewards committee the District Secretary had gone behind their backs and approached management for informal talks to come to some settlement and get the men back to work.

Despite the willingness of the men to fight on the shop stewards, because of the underhand actions of the District Secretary went into talks with management who offered £2.30 on the bonus.

At a mass meeting the District Secretary was able to sell the offer to the men after going into print in the local paper arguing that now was not the time to take on the management.

Despite the sell-out and the bitter feelings amongst the men as they returned to work, the possibilities now exist to build on their new-found militancy.

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.

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Socialist Organiser

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DEFY THE COURTS! DEFEND CHEAP FARES!



EVEN before Heseltine's local government finance Bill is finally put before Parliament, the power of the judiciary and Establishment has shown what they mean to do to any 'radical' manifesto that Labour produces.

Denning's judgment on the GLC fares policy and his incredible statements that a manifesto is not 'holy writ' show just what we are up against.

The GLC fares policy in itself is a modest matter; the levels of 'subsidy' for Londoners' fares are less than for other cities in Britain and far lower than almost any other European capital. The policy is a simple, tried and trusted way of making cities a little bit better to live in by

THE Lords' verdict on the Labour Greater London Council's cheap fares will be announced by the time Socialist Organiser reaches its readers.

GLC councillors are still making no plans for action if the Lords declare the cheap fares illegal. But is it tolerable for a Labour council to cooperate with huge fare rises and the destruction of its main manifesto pledge by right-wing judges?

Socialist Organiser, together with some comrades of London Labour Briefing, has been campaigning for a

call to:

- the GLC to defy the judges and instruct London Transport to keep the cheap fares,

- LT unions to black any fare rises,

- the London labour movement to start a mass campaign of agitation,

- all London Labour council groups to go into majority opposition if the Tories surcharge or sack the GLC councillors.

JEREMY CORBYN, a member of the London Labour regional executive, explains the political implications.

encouraging the use of socially responsible public transport in alternative to wasteful private cars.

Every activist in the labour movement must ask a question from the Denning judgment.

If the legal Establishment tries to defeat this moderate policy, what are they going to do to a Labour government that nationalis-

es the banks, unilaterally disarms, and redistributes wealth?

Denning has posed the issues of power in a way that everybody can understand, and shows that the Tory establishment are quite prepared to use extra-parliamentary means to defeat socialist measures. They have done it before by investment strikes and

exporting capital to prevent Labour governments achieving their aims, and other financial measures. Nobody in any of the mass media then said that these over-priced lackeys were 'holding the country to ransom'. That verbiage is left for workers fighting for decent living standards.

We must use this opportunity to tell people very clearly that there are two sorts of law in this country. One for the rich to preserve themselves, their privileges, their system and their domination; and one for the rest, which tries to smash Labour controlled councils from housing the homeless, providing decent education for all our kids, or social services that are deserved for the elderly.

System

Our task is not to provide or search for some sort of legal balance that will somehow allow us to do what we want, and the rich to do what they want to preserve their inequality. We must warn the whole Establishment that if it is 'illegal' for democratically elected Councils to keep their pledges to the electorate, then it is their system that is at fault, and we must look outside the Courts, Parliament and council chambers for support to carry out our policies that have received such massive backing.

Dockers fought Heath's anti-union laws in 1972

Tebbit unveils new laws

ON MONDAY 23rd Norman Tebbit announced the details of the new fetters he plans for the unions. Almost simultaneously Arthur Snipe threw the existing Tory laws at strikers fighting closure at his Manchester factory, getting a court order to stop them picketing his HQ at Mining Supplies in Doncaster (see page 14).

'Union labour only' contracts are to be outlawed. The definition of a 'trade dispute' will be narrowed still further, to straight employer/employee disputes. For example, blacking of a ship not paying union rates will not be a 'trade dispute'.

Under existing law, action which is not a 'trade dispute' is generally unlawful because it m

'breach of contract'. Te proposes that union fu as well as union offi should be sued for b of contract.

Ballots

Closed shops will have to be confirmed by every three years. workers sacked for ref to join closed shops w able to claim ma damages.

Step by step, the are trying to restrict trade union action to mildest, meekest, and limited forms.

The new Tory law used selectively — n against the massive BL lines, but against the tively small dispute Laurence Scotts. But by step, they can dead as the all-a Industrial Relations 1972.

The SDP's Shirley iams said Tebbit 'did far enough'.

No proposals

Labour and TUC have condemned T plan. They warned i 'create industrial m — but made no pr for themselves to o this 'mayhem' in stop Tebbit.

Not empty thre future chaos, but or action now, is what our movement nee our leaders.

• A campaign o mum obstruction a cooperation in Parli

• Concerted strik to stop the propo coming law and to victims of the exist anti-union laws — ing with the Scott strikers.

Continued, p.15

St Mary's demo: December 4

by Andrea Campbell

A LABOUR movement conference on November 21 broadened the battle to save St Mary's Hospital, London W9, and brought the fight into the trade unions.

Over a hundred delegates from hospitals, schools, British Rail, and other public sector unions gathered to decide what action they could take in defence of the hospital.

Speakers from St Mary's outlined what closure of the wards would mean, and how management had been reducing services even before the final decision on closure had been made by the Tory Health Minister, Gerard Vaughan.

Devastated

Myrto Angelolou, a local GP, told us how the cuts would affect people in an area which is already devastated by unemploy-

ment and bad housing.

26 general practitioners have made a public statement about their opposition to the closure of the wards. Already, booked admissions are being cancelled and patients are discharged before they normally would be.

Mockery

The Area Health Authority has made a mockery of the 'statutory' consultative procedure by asking GPs whether they would like a 'community hospital' in the area, but not giving any hint that this would be a 'replacement' for St Mary's — a large acute general hospital.

Mick Woods, a T&G shop steward who was sacked for refusing to cooperate with the raiding of Ward 2, moved the resolution which called for:

- A demonstration on

December 4. National executive committees and London regions of T&G, NUPE, COHSE and ASTMS and other public sector unions were asked to support the demonstration by calling London-wide stoppages on December 4 in defence of St Mary's.

- Establishing regular Monday morning mass pickets from 7 to 10am at the hospital.

- Election of a coordinating committee to organise the defence of W9 and to link it with other struggles against victimisation, cuts and low pay campaigns in the NHS.

Official support

Full time officials and NEC members from NUPE, T&G and COHSE attended the conference. They stressed that the fight against closure has official support, but they were left

in no doubt that the members want the officials to take the initiative for supporting action outside St Mary's.

The conference was not prepared to listen to the officials' usual excuses of lack of militancy by the members and isolation.

Throughout the Health Service, activists and militants are being victimised, and the conference made it clear to officials that supporting strike action in defence of Mick Woods and any others who may be singled out is being called for.

The steering committee will link struggles such as management's lock-out of porters at the London Hospital and the strike against victimisation at branch officials at Hammersmith Hospital,

CHRISTINE CADIN

